

Table 1

Frequency of Participant Statements by Topic (n=157)		
Topic	#	%
<b>Positive</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Rte 62 Project</b> (i.e. Roundabouts, sidewalks, street lights)	20	13%
<b>Main Street Project</b> (i.e. Renovations, facades, new/old businesses, retail, properties)	12	8%
<b>Perceptions</b> (i.e. Aesthetics, community, pride, quality of life, interaction)	53	34%
<b>VOH General</b> (i.e. Activities, events, festivals)	4	3%
<b>Negative</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Rte 62 Project</b> (i.e. Sidewalks, landscaping, roundabouts, lack of parking)	6	4%
<b>Main Street Project</b> (i.e. Building exteriors, signage)	7	4%
<b>VOH General</b> (Disapproval or complaints regarding the projects that have been ongoing in the Village, not specific as to which project).	13	8%
<b>Recommendation/Request</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Rte 62 Project</b> (i.e. Landscaping, parking, traffic control, lighting, crosswalks)	16	10%
<b>Main Street Project</b> (i.e. Grocery stores, retail options, jobs)	13	8%
<b>Perceptions</b> (i.e. Historic heritage, preserving integrity of the Village, art within the roundabouts)	11	7%
<b>VOH General</b> (i.e. Events, communication between the Village and the residents/businesses)	2	1%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Perceptions of Improvements Following the Village of Hamburg Main Street Program

Erin M. Carmina, MPA (2013)

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### Introduction

The New York Main Street Program (NYMS), which is based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program (NTHP), began in 2004 and has awarded over sixty-four million dollars of funding to more than one hundred and forty-five communities across the state (Homes and Community Renewal, 2011a & NTHP, 2012). The principle objectives behind these grants are to help businesses become more productive and competitive, revitalize properties, keep property values respectable, encourage enhancement and development of certain areas, and create an awareness of the needs of current taxpayers and homeowners (Village of Hamburg, 2006).

A review of literature surrounding these types of community improvements and revitalization projects indicates an increase in economic prosperity and quality of life within the affected towns and villages. There does not, however, appear to be any type of evaluation survey completed with regards to approval or disapproval among the affected businesses and residents within these communities.

The Village of Hamburg (VOH), NY, is one of many local municipalities that had been experiencing severe disinvestment within the central business district. The village leadership believed that the neglect by a property owner had a domino-like effect on all properties and created a negative perspective throughout the village, impacting the entire community (Village of Hamburg, 2006). Village administrators wanted to help their community rehabilitate and revitalize through the use of the NYMS grant. The village administrators anticipated that the funding would assist to resolve the problems they had identified in the planning stages.

### Methods

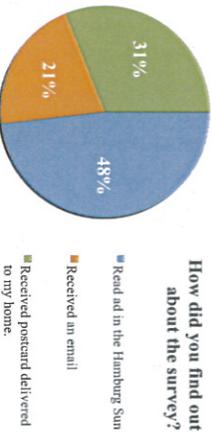
The purpose of this research was to evaluate the anticipated impact from the NYMS grant funding that was awarded to the VOH for four consecutive years starting in 2006. Due to the lack of a preexisting tool, a survey was produced and administered to both village residents and businesses to gauge their perceptions regarding the implementation and completion of the Main Street Program.

Fifteen questions were created that stemmed from the goals of the NYMS and also from the anticipated outcomes voiced by the VOH in each of the applications submitted. The survey asked respondents to rank the possible changes and improvements according to the level they agreed these modifications were made and their importance to the community.

Prior to the survey being distributed the link was added to the VOH website and an article about the survey and its distribution was published in the Hamburg Sun. This article also informed residents that the Junior Volunteer Firefighters would be delivering survey information to the homes throughout the VOH. Surveys were distributed to businesses by Village Business Advisory Council and the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, and an email was sent to all members of these groups.

### Results

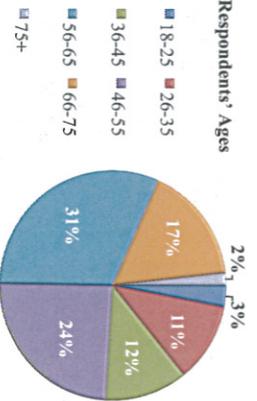
How did you find out about the survey?



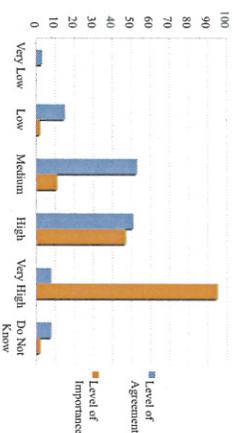
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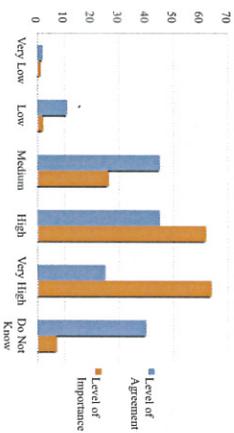
### Respondents' Ages



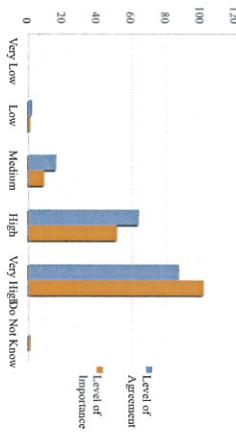
### Increased Number of New Businesses



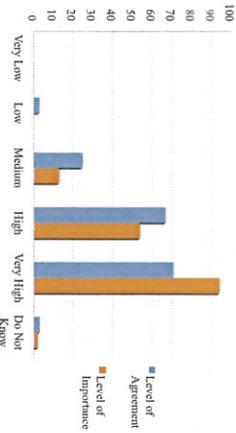
### Increased Property Value



### Improved Appearance of Properties



### Pride within the Community



### Conclusion

The results from this study suggest that both the residents and businesses within the VOH responded positively to the changes and improvements implemented through the NYMS program. More than 84% of the open ended responses were positive remarks regarding the renovations, aesthetics, community pride and quality of life in the VOH.

The increase of pedestrian foot traffic and improved appearance of properties ranked the highest for both the level of agreement and importance within the community by respondents. Pride within the community and a personal sense of belonging also were perceived as being greatly improved and very important to the community.

The information posted in the Hamburg Sun regarding the survey proved to be the most successful method of recruitment, with the door-to-door delivery method to homes throughout the village following. The method for reaching local businesses resulted in a lower than expected response rate.

The renovations and rehabilitation to this distressed community have been found to positively add and improve to the livelihood of those that live and work there. The data gathered will further the VOH's insight into what their constituents perceive to have been accomplished and it's level of importance. The results of this study will assist the VOH in assessing future program planning within the community.

### Recommendations

1. Although not an objective of this study it may prove beneficial to complete a more in-depth statistical analysis of each individual item on the survey.
2. Explore an improved method of distribution to the businesses within the village with a goal of increasing the response rate.

### References

- Homes and Community Renewal. (2011a). New York Main Street Program: Program guidelines. Retrieved from <http://nysdcr.gov/Programs/NYMainStreetProgramGuidelines.htm>
- Village of Hamburg. (2006). NYMS Proposal. Retrieved from The Village of Hamburg, January 2012.