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EXTENSION CENTER FOR COMMUNITY VITALITY

# Spring Valley Resident Shopping Survey

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# Spring Valley Resident Shopping Survey

**FINDINGS FROM 221 RESPONDENTS**

**October, 2017**

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In summer, 2017 the Spring Valley Economic Development Authority collaborated with University of Minnesota to conduct a resident survey about shopping opportunities and habits of its residents. Extension helped prepare the survey instrument, provide an online survey tool (Qualtrics) for data collection, and tabulated results. This report provides the descriptive statistics from the 221 respondents without any analysis.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents to the survey have an average of 2.4 members in their household, with over one quarter having a household member less than 18 years of age under their roof.

Eighty-two percent of respondents report living in the city limits. Almost all respondents report living in zip code 55975 and the top place of employment was also 55975. Since a portion of respondents were retired or unemployed or due to recall bias, only 112 of 221 respondents provided a zip code of their employer.

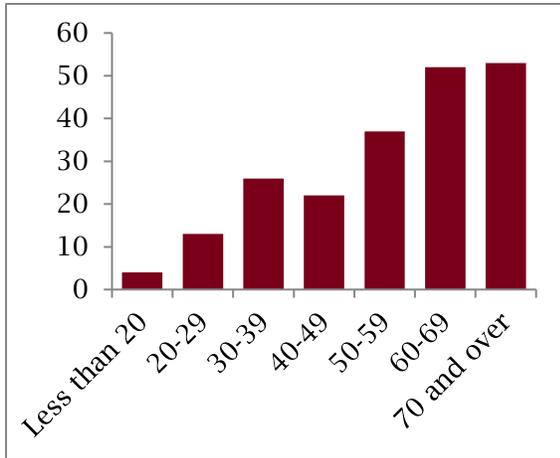
**Figure 1: Employer zip codes with multiple responses (n=112)**

55975	38
55901	22
55904	11
55905	9
55902	7
55965	4
55935	3
55976	3

**Figure 2: Home zip codes of all respondents (n=216)**

55975	206
55965	4
55990	3
55936	1
55961	1
55967	1

**Figure 3: Number of respondents by age (n=207)**



**Figure 4: Percent of respondents by gender (n=213)**

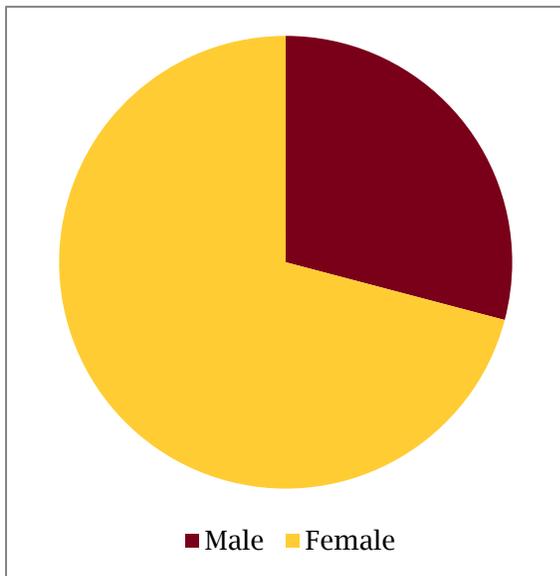


Figure 5: Number of respondents by educational attainment (n=214)

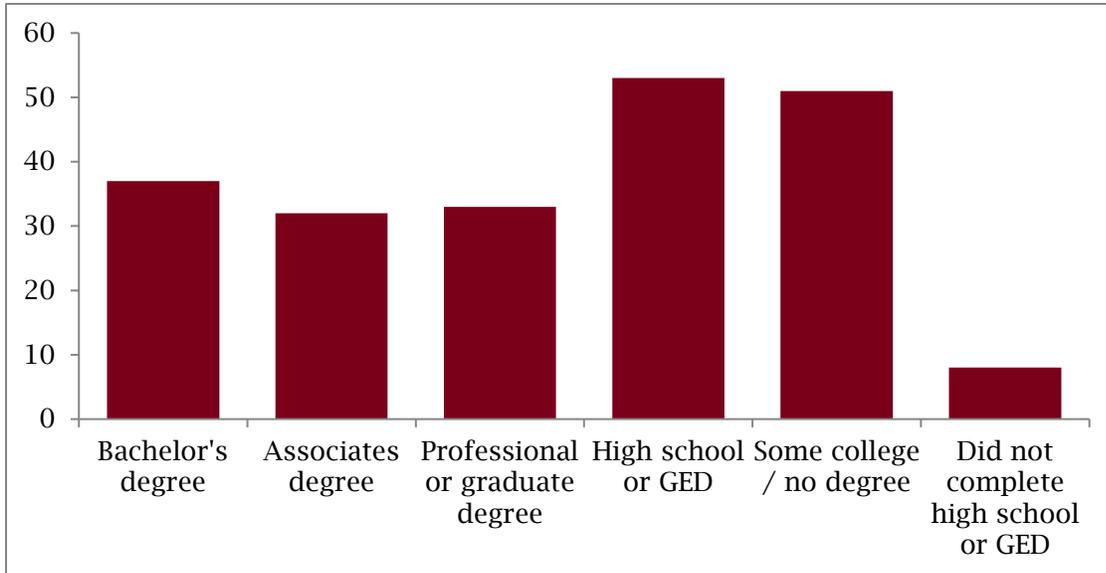
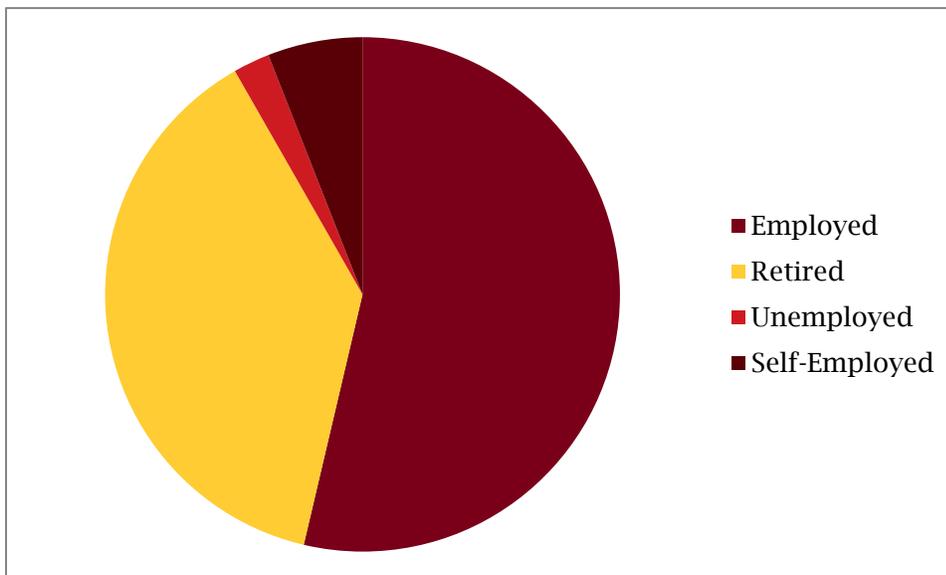


Figure 6: Percent of respondents by employment status (n=219)



### TOP REASONS TO SHOP IN SPRING VALLEY

When asked for their top two reasons to shop in Spring Valley, respondents ranked convenience very high, followed at a distance by 'support local.' Some specific establishments or goods such as gas were mentioned 20 times. Since this was an open-ended question, these findings summarized responses by category; for example, instead of writing in 'convenience' many offered similar language such as 'nearby' or 'save a trip to Rochester.'

**Figure 7: Top reasons for shop in Spring Valley (n=210)**

Convenience	210
Support local	98
Service	25
Specific establishment or good *	20
Affordable	6
Other	15

\*establishments or goods mentioned multiple times include gas, food, Kwik Trip, and last-minute items.

## **BUSINESS SUGGESTIONS**

When asked about businesses they would like to see in Spring Valley, the top two names shared were Shopko and Alco, both of which are general merchandise operations. Smaller scale than a Walmart or a Target, respondents may be searching for variety of general merchandise in a more convenient location. Like any open-ended query, this question received a wide variety of many individual suggestions.

**Figure 8: Top business suggestions by number of responses (n=194)**

Shopko/Alco/General Merchandise	108
Restaurant	62
Clothing or shoes	46
Entertainment (movie theater/rec center)	21
Gift/Sewing/Craft	20
Grocery (Fareway, Aldi)	18
Other	68

## **PRODUCT OR SERVICE SUGGESTIONS**

When asked to provide their suggestions for products or service they would like to see in Spring Valley, respondents provided a wide range of suggestions. When analyzing the responses, clothing was the top suggestion followed by electronics..

**Figure 9: Top 10 product or service suggestions (n=148)**

clothing	57
electronics/computer	12
shoes	9
sporting goods	8
furniture	7
gifts	7
movies	5
computer repair	4
entertainment	4
fabric	3

## SHOPPING IN OTHER COMMUNITIES

Ninety-two percent of respondents report shopping in Rochester, an average of 7.3 times per week. Over a quarter report shopping in the Twin Cities Metro, but at a significantly lower frequency. Survey participants were asked to share the names of other communities in which they shop. Stewartville, Austin, and Cresco had six or more responses. Other communities mentioned included Decorah, Preston, Chatfield, and Mankato, however, less than two respondents offered up these communities.

**Figure 10: Communities where respondents shop by number of respondents and average number of times per month (n=210)**

Community	Average times per Month	No. of respondents
Rochester	7.3	194
TC Metro	0.5	64
Stewartville	4.0	25
Austin	3.3	12
Cresco	2.0	6

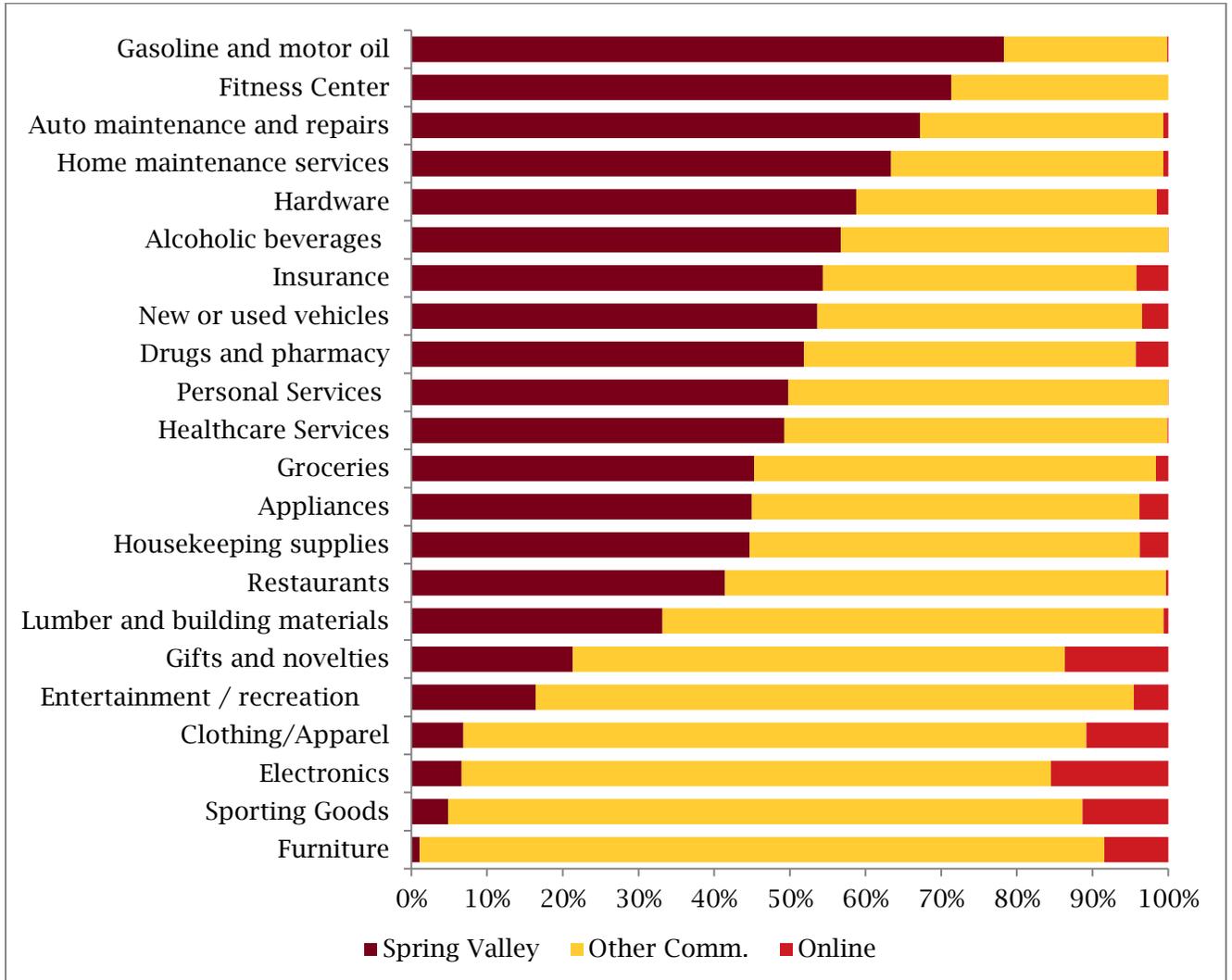
Not unlike other communities in which Extension has done consumer surveys, the most common types of stores frequented are general merchandise operations like Walmart, Target, and Shopko. Grocery stores also rank high, including HyVee, Fareway, and Aldi's.

**Figure 11: Top 10 stores frequented by number of responses (n=210)**

Rochester		Twin Cities		Other Communities	
Target	78	Entertainment	4	Fareway	30
Walmart	78	MOA	4	Walmart	12
Menards	59	Outlet Mall	3	Groceries	10
Fleet Farm	56	Restaurants	2	Restaurants	9
HyVee	37	Target	2	HyVee	8
Shopko	33	Boot Barn	1	Shopko	8
Kohls	23	Dressy clothing	1	Kwik Trip	3
Sam's Club	17	Eddie bauer	1	Runnings	3
Costco	14	Fresh thyme	1	Pizza Ranch	2
Aldi	13	Goodwill	1	Preston Foods	2

When asked to estimate their spending by location, respondents reported a majority of their spending in Spring Valley for convenience goods and services, including fitness center, gas, and auto repair.

**Figure 12: Percent of total respondent spending by location and category (n=217)**



In some instances the chart is deceiving. For example, 71% of respondents report buying their fitness services in Spring Valley, however, 163 out of 216 respondents to that question report purchasing any fitness services. See below to see the number of respondents reporting non-purchase.

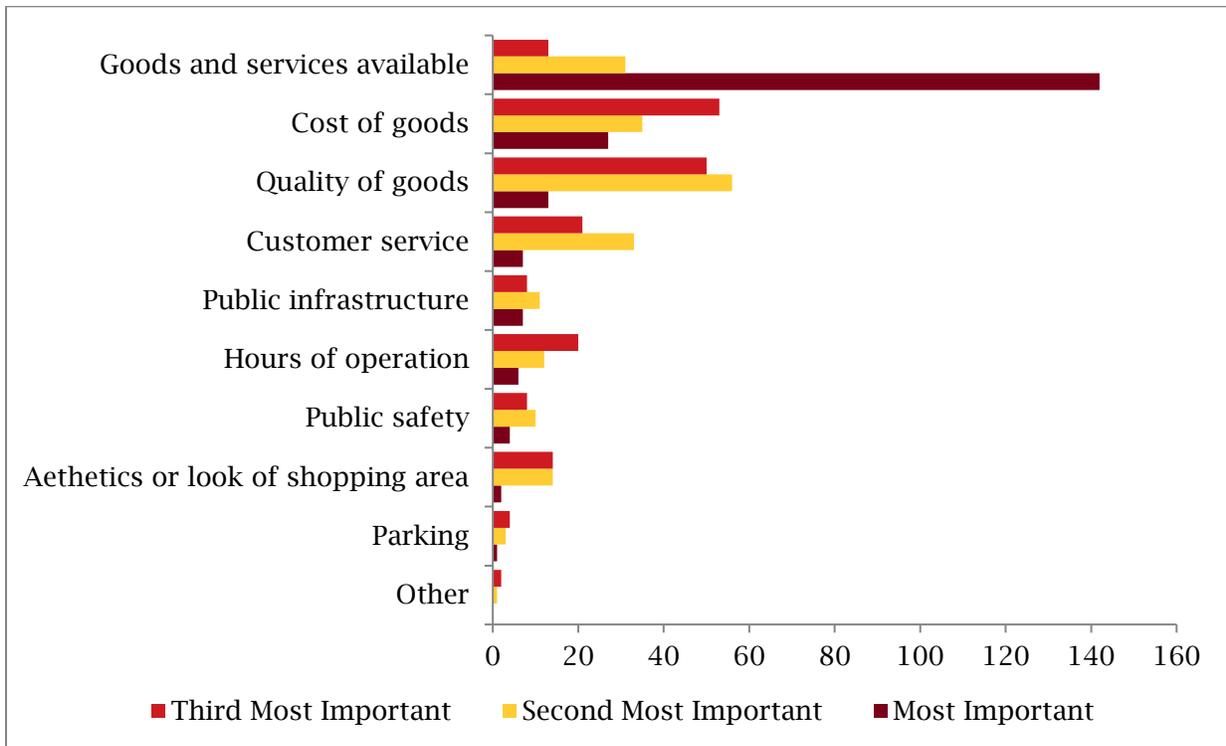
**Figure 13: Percent of spending by category and location (n=217)**

	Did not purchase	Spring Valley	Other Comm.	Online
Furniture	138	1%	90%	8%
Sporting Goods	127	5%	84%	11%
Electronics	75	7%	78%	15%
Clothing/Apparel	18	7%	82%	11%
Entertainment / recreation	55	16%	79%	5%
Gifts and novelties	35	21%	65%	14%
Lumber and building materials	91	33%	66%	1%
Restaurants	11	41%	58%	0%
Housekeeping supplies	11	45%	52%	4%
Appliances	130	45%	51%	4%
Groceries	3	45%	53%	2%
Healthcare Services	11	49%	51%	0%
Personal Services	34	50%	50%	0%
Drugs and pharmacy	20	52%	44%	4%
New or used vehicles	128	54%	43%	3%
Insurance	23	54%	41%	4%
Alcoholic beverages	78	57%	43%	0%
Hardware	24	59%	40%	2%
Home maintenance services	91	63%	36%	1%
Auto maintenance and repairs	20	67%	32%	1%
Fitness Center	163	71%	29%	0%
Gasoline and motor oil	5	78%	22%	0%

**ISSUES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

The survey asked participants to rank issues for improvement in Spring Valley from most to third most important. The clear winner was ‘goods and services available’ ranked as most important by 142 of 209 total respondents. This finding is consistent with all other communities in which Extension has asked this question in other communities.

**Figure 14: Priorities to improve shopping in Spring Valley ranked by importance (n=210)**



## OTHER COMMENTS

All open comments are listed below.

*Spring Valley should work on being a good retirement community. More activities for men and women 60-80. a) Promote Mystery Cave/Forestville/Church Museum. b) Improve trails on southeast part of town. c) cleaner restaurants (women's b.r. especially). d) Monday is pizza buffet, Friday at Rack's - chance to gather e) BCT - more roles for older women. f) Wood working. g) Talent show-annual.*

*We need a week night Farmer's Market/ gathering 4-6pm maybe Wednesday*

*We must keep our pool.*

*Would be wonderful to keep the golf course, maybe have a Chinese restaurant out there.*

*Our city is clean and beautiful!*

*Am pleased with our city services. Great and safe place to live & raise a family.*

*A portable toilet is needed in the park/walking trail at Main St park*

*As a small business owner, I wish we could get more boutique style, unique, run and interesting places. Not just everyday basics.*

*Better number of replies if no stamp needed.*

*Forget DMC*

*Broadway should be plowed and cleaned no matter the depth of amount of snow on the street. Have heard many comments from out of towners and visitors on how bad this town takes care of its streets in winter.*

*Build up the younger community, you're too focused on the old.*

*Cable Company (MediaCom) could use some competition. The price is crazy high, one stead price would be nice. 1st year - \$120, 2nd year - \$160, after that \$190. For basic cable and WIFI. My girlfriend lives in Rochester, has the exact same thing I do for \$106 a month. Another example - a 1.75 liter of Captain here is \$28.99, Sam's Club \$19.99. It's always about the money no matter where you are, but Mediacom's prices are crazy and there is no other cable company to pick from that's basic cable/ no movie channels!!!*

*Chamber people - Be good to the businesses you do have in our city! Bring in more like them!*

*Connect trail to other cities*

*Unique shops will draw people in*

*Various family oriented events not revolved around the bars, restaurants, sports or schools*

*Tiny home friendly*

*Cable and internet providers*

*Tourism year round*

*City needs to be welcoming not cliquish*

*Think outside poverty people here drive miles to expensive concerts why not bring people here*

*Get our younger generation help and then they may stay*

*More theater, fine arts*

*Considering moving out of town*

*Daycares*

*Desperately need a store similar to Shopko. Dollar General quality is POOR!*

*Would be nice to have a family restaurant like Denny's or Perkins.*

*Lumber store not open on Saturday!*

*Small engine repair.*

*Quality of bakery has declined!*

*Grocer does not provide fresh quality produce!*

*Grocery prices are so high in spring valley makes it hard to shop here. More people would shop if prices were more in line with Rochester. Coffee is about \$4-5 more here.*

*It is sad we can't support a town with things to do movies, shopping.*

*Having a pharmacy in Spring Valley is very important. Very much appreciated!*

*The 2 hardware stores are great - especially ACE (Todd Jones!)*

*I feel Spring Valley could be a successful rural town to live in; however, there is nothing for kids to do here and nothing to attract us older people either. There has to be a balance.*

*I love Spring Valley.*

*I miss the ALCO-type store that has quality and variety of clothing, shoes, sporting goods.*

*The streets need repairs - embarrassing and dangerous to tourists.*

*I only shop in Spring Valley as I can mostly get what I need. I hire our local contractors for anything big, excellent results with them, all good, honest, hard working people.*

*I shop at the dollar store and sunshine foods*

*I shop for groceries and other things in Rochester because it is so much cheaper.*

*I try to do all my purchases in Spring Valley*

*If Spring Valley had a competitive grocery store, I'd shop locally.*

*And our choices for restaurants are pretty weak. It's often worth the drive to go to Rochester for a meal.*

*I'm impressed with some businesses and how they promote downtown with summer markets on Saturdays. It is not easy doing this, I'm sure. It's disappointing that more people don't participate or attend, our town doesn't have the same spirit of community as others like LeRoy or Wykoff. While we work in Rochester, we try to shop both in our hometown and where we work and is convenient. Many places not open when we are home.*

*Need more engaged Chamber who supports town.*

*It seems like the business owners are not very supportive of each other.*

*Keep your clean up of the town, you still have a long way to go and thank you for your efforts.*

*To the business owners competition is good for everybody. you have 10 plus empty buildings in your town.*

*Many of times the item or two I need at hardware store or grocery store either is not available or twice the cost as a large store in Rochester or Austin....so we shop there knowing we'll find it and at a reasonable cost.*

*My husband and I try to buy locally as often as we can. We'd love to see a "shopko-type" store. We really miss ALCO.*

*My mother and friends and family live in S.V. and I visit quite frequently. Eating places are important.*

*Need a variety store - shopko or alco type.*

*Need an ethnic food restaurant - chinese or mexican.*

*Need a grocery store that CARES about it's customers and image - outdated shelf product, high priced but VERY low quality produce, unfriendly owners, WRONG PRICES charged on EVERY trip to*

*the store (and it's ALWAYS higher priced than what the shelf says). Friendly cashiers though (most of them).*

*Need more little bus transport to take us around town.*

*Need new grocery store products - outdated, high price*

*Only way I shop in Spring Valley is places that are very good in customer service. I know they can't compete in price, but have to make up in other ways.*

*No jobs, few businesses, little tourism, limited and over-priced. product choices by retailers, downtown looks like crap. Town has to offer incentives to bring businesses and tourism here instead of putting up demands and roadblocks.*

*No more gas stations, no grocery stores*

*Possibly-- Affordable "sr only" apartments (other than NH, assisted living or evergreens complex) that have basic handicap accessibility features--4 units on one level.*

*Replacement of pool (when needed) to a facility like the one in Cresco. add a community room for public and private use, maybe a gym. The pool could be used year round and the school could have swim lessons and phy ed classes.*

*The budget is tight but the students are missing opportunities that other areas schools offer--field trips to the state capital and other twin cities sites, also trips to NY, Washington DC etc (family members could be included too). Maybe use a tour group sponsored partially by business prices too high in town*

*Quality clothing and shoes needed.*

*Really miss Alco (sewing thread, bath towels, gifts, etc.).*

*Appreciate having True Value and Hardware Hank in town! And a grocery store and family dollar and the lumber yard. Love Kwik Trip!*

*Spring Valley is a town that offers nothing for the elderly or children. They have a wonderful pool but the city refuses to put money into the pool to update it. My grandchildren insist on going to Stewartville pool because S.V. pool is boring- City Council open your eyes and ears and listen to the people of the city. I'm only beginning but I feel the youth are so important and this city wants to overlook them.*

*Spring Valley is great but can't compete with big stores such as Sam's/Walmart. Service is great so I try to shop locally.*

*Spring Valley is in need of something in the ALCO building. something like home-town Shopko. This would bring lots of business to Spring Valley. Many towns with ALCO stores did go with Shopko Hometown. This is a higher quality than dollar general and family dollar. For us it would save many trips to Rochester. The community leaders need to get this done - it will be good for Spring Valley. Not one place in SV to buy mens clothes!*

*Spring Valley needs to attract larger employers like some sort of industry who pay a decent wage.*

*Spring Valley also needs businesses that attract tourists that make people want to spend time here rather than just driving through on their way to Lanesboro or Harmony.*

*Stier Welding was a great asset when Hugh was alive, but I doubt if it's economically feasible now.*

*Sunshine foods is way over priced and most of their food is close to, if not past, expiration.*

*DG is a joke, will not shop there. No other choices.*

*Thanks for asking!*

*The businesses we have are wonderful, but we all greatly miss Alco. It was the type of store you could run to pick up a last minute gift and not be trashy. They had a nice selection of clothes too. Decent quality and low price. Dollar General is just not good quality comparatively.*

*The community would thrive with a few more major businesses.*

*The library was a major fund raising project yet the building never gets power washed or painted. The fence line is not adequately maintained.*

*The public relations from some owners does not exist. Their favorite words are "we can't get it any more." Yet other stores in other towns carry the product.*

*Out of town people have told me Spring Valley has the worst streets in Fillmore County in the winter.*

*The streets need improvement - potholes & snow plowing.*

*Spring Valley really needs a clothing and shoe store.*

*They need to do something to bring back a town in spring valley. Look at all the stores closed downtown. When I was a kid, all the stores were open to bed.*

*Too many get special funding then leave. We have bought too many times from businesses here that disappear! We didn't buy any but this didn't cover lawn mowers, snowblowers, small tractors, chain saws or other small engine equipment (or service).*

*Try to encourage business downtown with incentives, too many buildings sitting vacant. Try later hours instead of closing at 5pm when people are getting home from work. Try to be more competitive with pricing, not necessarily same price.*

*Until tax goes down, it's hard to attract any businesses, we can't compete with SD.*

*Walmart all the way.*

*We are new to Spring Valley as of June 1.*

*We have a pretty awesome community for a population such as ours.*

*I wished we had a nice restaurant. We support the Pizza Place but we don't care for the atmosphere of Rack's.*

*We need more activities for kids to do in town.*

*We need more for elder care quality of life, also veterans home helpfully.*

*I think house taxes going to 20-30% for some people in town when no changes were done to their homes are totally wrong. If this happens to older people, how are they supposed to choose between that and groceries, medical and home?*

*We need to keep park areas clean and lawn mowed. Maybe put a fountain in at willow park to make it more attractive and picnic tables. At South park, keep the volleyball & basketball courts up. They look pretty rough. Put a slide in at the pool for both baby and main pool.*

*Clean up neighborhoods, some houses look bad, wrapped in Tyvek for months, falling down, holes around house - very bad appearance. Drive on high street or "dog town" - many example houses.*

*Clean up at old elementary school - that looks terrible. Clean up the city.*

*We purchase in Spring Valley unless we can't get it or there a significant price difference in Rochester.*

*We really try to support local business; however some items like clothing is not available.*

*When we had the alco store, we felt we had additional shopping. We need to attract the type of business that gives our young adults a reason to stay.*

*Whenever I shopped Alco, the place was so unorganized, bathrooms were nasty, etc., so I started going to Cresco Alco which therefore had me shopping at Cresco Dollar General rather than SVDG. Plus the help at SVDG kinda creeps me out too. So to be honest, I never come to SV unless I stop at Kwik Trip on the way through.*

*Would love a Shopko Hometown*

**RETURN SURVEY TO SPING VALLEY PUBLIC UTILITIES WITH YOUR PAID BILL OR  
CITY OF SPRING VALLEY EDA, 201 SOUTH BROADWAY, SPRING VALLEY, MN 55975**

**1. Name two businesses or types of business you would most like to see come to Spring Valley:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name two products or services you would most like to see available for purchase in Spring Valley:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What are the top two reasons you shop in Spring Valley?**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Where do you currently shop?**

Please estimate where you purchased the following items **in the past YEAR**. Each row should add to 100%.

Spending category	<i>Check the box if you did not purchase that item in the past year</i>	<i>Percentage spent in Spring Valley</i>	<i>Percentage spent in communities outside of Spring Valley</i>	<i>Percentage spent online (via internet)</i>
a. Groceries	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
b. Alcoholic beverages	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
c. Restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
d. Gasoline and motor oil	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
e. Housekeeping supplies (ex: cleaning supplies)	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
f. Pharmacy/medical supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
g. Healthcare (chiropractor, dentist, doctor)	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
h. Clothing/Apparel	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
i. Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
j. Novelties/Gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
k. Electronics	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
l. Hardware	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
m. Personal Services (hair, nails, laundry services)	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
n. Auto maintenance & repairs	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
o. Home maintenance services (lawn, septic, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
p. Entertainment / recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
q. Sporting Goods and Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
r. Fitness Center	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
s. Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
t. Lumber & building materials	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
u. New or used vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%
v. Appliances	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not purchase	___%	___%	___%

← Each row adds up to 100%

**OVER**

**5. Have you shopped in the following communities outside of the Spring Valley area?**

Community	How many times have you shopped in this community in the past <b>MONTH</b> ?	Which stores do you frequent when you shop in this community?
Rochester		
Twin Cities Metro		
Other		

**6. Please rank the top three issues to IMPROVE Spring Valley as a place to shop: (Check ONE for each)**

	Most Important (Please check one)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Most Important (Please check one)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Most Important (Please check one)
Goods and services available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aesthetics or 'look' of shopping area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public infrastructure (e.g. streets, lighting, signage)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of goods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost of goods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hours of operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other(specify _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. How old are you?** \_\_\_ years

**8. Gender**    Male    Female

**9. How many people live in your household?** \_\_\_\_\_   **10. How many under 18 years of age?** \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Education (Check one)**    Did not complete high school or GED    High school diploma or GED  
 Some college/no degree    Associate's degree    Bachelor's degree  
 Professional/graduate degree

**12a. Employment Status (Check one)**    Employed    Unemployed    Self-employed    Retired

**b. If employed, what is the zip code of your primary employer?** \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Do you live within Spring Valley City limits? (Check one)**    Yes    No

**14. What is your home zip code?** \_\_\_\_\_.

**15. Additional comments:**