

APPENDIX 3 – PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESPONSES

WARREN COUNTY STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN 2003 Public Opinion Survey Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

The survey was conducted as part of the Warren County Strategic Growth Plan by the Warren County Planning Department. It was distributed in the summer of 2003 to 5,627 households. The mailing list was based on a random selection of 10 percent of the registered voters in each municipality in Warren County. There were 749 survey forms returned for a response rate of 13.3 percent.

The questions pertained to attitudes towards development trends in the county, potential goals of the strategic plan and alternative development concepts for the future. In addition, the questions requested key demographic information regarding the respondents. The results are being used by the Planning Department and its consultants (Edwards and Kelcey) to help formulate the recommendations of the Strategic Growth Plan. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix A.

Surveys were conducted by the Warren County Planning Department in 1996 and 1998. The 1996 survey was distributed to local officials to gain their opinion of issues affecting planning and development in their communities and Warren County. The 1998 survey was conducted as part of the Cross acceptance process. It presented some of the concepts in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) and measured reactions to those concepts. The results were used to help develop the County's response to the SDRP. The responses to both those surveys are also being considered by the Planning Department in developing the Strategic Growth Plan.

II. RESULTS

The following are the results for each survey question. The tables include the actual number of responses to each question as well as the number of missing responses. The tables include the "percent" of responses and the "valid percent" of responses. The "percent" reflects the portion of all responses including those missing answers. The "valid percent" reflects only the portion of those that actually answered the question. The discussion below each table refers only to the valid percent.

In addition, the responses to each question have been tabulated for each individual municipality. These tabulations are provided in Appendix B.

A. Are you satisfied with development trends in your municipality?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	257	34.31	36.61
	No	445	59.41	63.39
	Total	702	93.72	100.00
Missing		47	6.28	
Total		749	100.00	

Nearly two-thirds (64%) are **not** satisfied with development trends in their own municipality. Many felt that there was too much development and it was occurring too fast. Sprawl outside of existing centers was another major concern. In addition, the loss of farmland and rural character were frequently listed as major reasons for this dissatisfaction.

Municipalities in which over 50 percent of the respondents were satisfied with development trends in their community included Franklin (52 percent), Hardwick (58 percent), Hope (65 percent) and Knowlton (67 percent).

Among the municipalities in which respondents were not satisfied with development trends in their municipality, strongest responses were in Alpha (88 percent), Greenwich (84 percent) and Washington Township (82 percent).

B. Are you satisfied with development trends in neighboring municipalities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	150	20.03	22.66
	No	512	68.36	77.34
	Total	662	88.38	100.00
Missing		87	11.62	
Total		749	100.00	

Over three quarters of the respondents are **not** satisfied with development trends in their neighboring communities. The most frequent municipality cited as an example of this issues was Greenwich. Other frequently mentioned municipalities include Lopatcong, Mansfield and Blairstown. The Stewartville area in Greenwich Township was also cited as an area of concern.

Among the municipalities in which respondents were not satisfied with development trends in their neighboring municipality, strongest responses were in Alpha (88 percent), Belvidere (93 percent), Franklin (86 percent), Greenwich (88 percent), Harmony (97 percent), Hope 87 percent), Lopatcong (85 percent) Oxford (89 percent), Phillipsburg (88 percent), Pohatcong (90 percent) and Washington Township (80 percent).

The remaining municipalities (except Blairstown) all exceeded 50 percent dissatisfaction with development trends in neighboring municipalities. Blairstown was the only municipality in which over 50 percent of the respondents were satisfied with development trends in neighboring municipalities.

C. Over the next 20 years, what areas of the county should be developed? List three specific areas or sites you think are appropriate for development and the type of development that should occur in these areas or sites.

The most frequently mentioned municipalities that respondents felt should be developed were existing activity centers including Phillipsburg (135 responses), Hackettstown, Washington Borough, Belvidere and Blairstown. The most commonly mentioned sites were in Phillipsburg, including the Ingersoll Rand property, the Laneco Mall and the Delaware River waterfront.

D. Should there be areas or types of places in the county that should be off-limits to development?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	654	87.32	89.84
	No	26	3.47	3.57
	Not Sure	48	6.41	6.59
	Total	728	97.20	100.00
Missing	System	21	2.80	
Total		749	100.00	

Nearly 90 percent of the respondents feel that some areas in the county should be off-limits to development. The types of areas are discussed in Question E below.

E. If yes for Question D, please list up to three of these areas or types of places you would like to see left undeveloped.

Farmland was the most frequently identified (290 responses) type of place that should remain undeveloped. Other key areas for preservation included waterways, mountainsides and ridgelines, historic sites and rural roads.

F. As part of the planning process, a set of 11 draft goals have been developed by the committee for this effort. From the list below, please rank the goals in order of importance using 1 to 11 with 1 being the most important and 11 being the least important. (Use each number only once).

Average Ranking	Goal Statement
2.3	Preserve and enhance rural character as well as agricultural, natural, environmental, historic and open space resources and provide incentives to achieve this goal.
3.3	Protect and enhance water quality and quantity.
6.2	Encourage population growth in existing centers and provide financial incentives to local government, school districts and developers to achieve this goal.
6.5	Encourage desirable development that provides local employment opportunities in centers.
6.6	Maintain and improve the existing transportation system to provide safe and efficient mobility and access.
6.6	Encourage state legislation to provide localities more control over growth
6.8	Provide safe and efficient alternative modes of transportation to reduce auto dependence.
6.9	Improve existing public infrastructure such as sewer and water to

	support existing centers
7.1	Promote inter-municipal, county and state cooperation.
7.3	Ensure that the benefits and cost of plan implementation are shared equitably among all residents, landowners and businesses in Warren County.
7.6	Increase educational and cultural opportunities.

In this question, the lower the ranking score, the more important the goal. Thus, the most important goal was to “preserve and enhance rural character as well as agricultural, natural, environmental, historic and open space resources and provide incentives to achieve this goal.” The second most important goal was to “protect and enhance water quality and quantity.” These two goals were far more highly ranked on average than the other nine goals.

The other nine goals were actually below the mid-point ranking of 5.5. This does not mean they are unimportant to the respondents. It simply highlights the significance of the first two ranked goals.

The concept of encouraging population growth in centers (which is discussed further in Question I) was the third most important goal.

G. Overall, how do you feel about the above listed Draft Goals for the Strategic Plan?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	167	22.30	24.13
	Support	310	41.39	44.80
	Neutral	168	22.43	24.28
	Oppose	28	3.74	4.05
	Strongly Oppose	19	2.54	2.75
	Total	692	92.39	100.00
Missing		57	7.61	
Total		749	100.00	

The majority (69 percent) of respondents support or strongly support the draft goals for the Strategic Growth Plan. Approximately 24 percent strongly support and 45 percent support the goals. Importantly, only 6 percent oppose or strongly oppose the statements.

H. Do you have an additional goal that you would like to suggest for our consideration? Or any that should be deleted? Please describe.

The responses to this question are provided in Appendix B. Many of the comments pertained to the restriction or prevention of new development, preservation of farmland, and the reduction of property taxes.

I. Would you prefer to see future growth take place under the “Existing Growth Scenario” or the “Centers Scenario”?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Existing Zoning Scenario	156	20.83	24.34
	Centers Scenario	481	64.22	75.04
	Both	3	0.40	0.47
	Neither	1	0.13	0.16
	Total	641	85.58	100.00
Missing		108	14.42	
Total		749	100.00	

The majority (75 percent) supported the centers scenario compared existing zoning scenario. The centers scenario was described as “each municipality may have at least one designated center for growth.” It should be noted however that no potential centers were identified or shown in the survey.

This question only reflects the attitude that center style of development should be encouraged in the county. This style encourages a mix of various types of housing, retail, offices and other land uses in close proximity to one another in designated centers. Areas outside of the centers would remain rural in character with less growth.

Respondents in a majority of the municipalities preferred the Centers Scenario. The only exceptions were Alpha and Hope. However, the number of respondents in these two communities was relatively low.

J. Do you currently work in Warren County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	237	31.64	32.87
	No, work in another county in New Jersey	278	37.12	38.56
	No, work in New York	12	1.60	1.66
	No, work in Pennsylvania	13	1.74	1.80
	Retired	147	19.63	20.39
	Currently not working	34	4.54	4.72
	Total	721	96.26	100.00
Missing		28	3.74	
Total		749	100.00	

Approximately one-third (33 percent) of the respondents work in Warren County, whereas slightly more (approximately 42 percent work outside the county). Importantly, one fifth (20 percent) of the respondents were retirees.

K. How do you get to work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Car	545	72.76	94.45
	Train	4	0.53	0.69
	Bus	6	0.80	1.04
	Walk	21	2.80	3.64
	Other	1	0.13	0.17
	Total	577	77.04	100.00
Missing		172	22.96	
Total		749	100.00	

The majority (95 percent) of the respondents travel by car to work. Interestingly, more people walk to work than use transit.

L. If working, how long is your commute, door to door?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than 15 minutes	151	20.16	26.77
	15-30 minutes	105	14.02	18.62
	30-45 minutes	90	12.02	15.96
	45-60 minutes	90	12.02	15.96
	More than 60 minutes	100	13.35	17.73
	I work from home	28	3.74	4.96
	Total	564	75.30	100.00
Missing		185	24.70	
Total		749	100.00	

Nearly 5 percent of the respondents work from home. While slightly more than a quarter of the working respondents have relatively brief commutes (less than 15 minutes), there is an even distribution of working respondents among the 15-30, 30-45, 45-60 and more than 60 minutes categories.

M. Are more transportation choices needed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	453	60.48	62.92
	No	168	22.43	23.33
	Not Sure	99	13.22	13.75
	Total	720	96.13	100.00
Missing	System	29	3.87	
Total		749	100.00	

Over 60 percent of the respondents believe more transportation choices are needed. Additional information is provided in Question N below. A majority of the respondents in several municipality answer yes. Respondents in several rural municipalities did not respond yes in over 50 percent of the replies. These municipalities include Blairstown (49 percent), Franklin (48 percent), Frelinghuysen (44 percent), Harmony (38 percent), Hope (37 percent), Oxford (47 percent), and White (49 percent).

N. If yes, what is needed? (circle all that apply)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	More roadways	25	3.34	11.85
	More Buses	70	9.35	33.18
	More Trains	73	9.75	34.60
	More pedestrian pathways/sidewalks	11	1.47	5.21
	More bikeways	12	1.60	5.69
	Other	20	2.67	9.48
	Total	211	28.17	100.00
Missing		538	71.83	
Total		749	100.00	

As noted above, the majority of respondents stated more transportation choices are needed. Of these respondents, the majority (approximately 89 percent) stated that services other than roads are needed. About one-third states more bus service is needed, while another one-third supports new train services. In addition, bicycling and pedestrian improvements were supported more than new roads.

O. What municipality (town, township, or borough) do you live in?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	Allamuchy	43	5.7	6.0
	Alpha	8	1.1	1.1
	Belvidere	30	4.0	4.2
	Blairstown	47	6.3	6.6
	Franklin	23	3.1	3.2
	Frelinghuysen	25	3.3	3.5
	Greenwich	46	6.2	6.4
	Hackettstown	51	6.8	7.1
	Hardwick	12	1.6	1.7
	Harmony	34	4.5	4.8
	Hope	8	1.1	1.1
	Independence	43	5.7	6.0
	Knowlton	13	1.7	1.8
Liberty	23	3.1	3.2	

	Lopatcong	56	7.5	7.8
	Mansfield	35	4.7	4.9
	Oxford	19	2.5	2.7
	Phillipsburg	48	6.4	6.7
	Pohatcong	22	2.9	3.1
	Washington Borough	24	3.2	3.4
	Washington Township	43	5.7	6.0
	White	46	6.1	6.4
	Washington	10	1.3	1.4
	Total	714	94.6	100.0
	No response	40	5.4	
Total		749	100.0	

Some municipalities may be over- or under- represented in terms of percentage of respondents when compared to the percentage of the county's population that resides in those municipalities. The percentage of the county's population that resides in each municipality is provided in the following table.

Hackettstown and Phillipsburg appear to be significantly underrepresented in terms of population by the responses. Knowlton and Mansfield are under-represented to a lesser degree. The remaining communities could be over-represented in terms of population as a result.

Municipality	2000 Population	Percent
Warren County	102,437	100
Allamuchy	3,877	3.8
Alpha	2,482	2.4
Belvidere	2,771	2.7
Blairstown	5,747	5.6
Franklin	2,768	2.7
Frelinghuysen	2,083	2.0
Greenwich	4,365	4.3
Hackettstown	10,403	10.1
Hardwick	1,464	1.4
Harmony	2,729	2.7
Hope	1,891	1.8
Independence	5,603	5.5
Knowlton	2,977	2.9
Liberty	2,765	2.7
Lopatcong	5,765	5.6
Mansfield	6,653	6.5
Oxford	2,307	2.3
Phillipsburg	15,166	14.8
Pohatcong	3,416	3.3
Washington Borough	6,712	6.6
Washington Township	6,248	6.1
White	4,245	4.1

Surveys were distributed to 10 percent of the registered voters in each municipality. The average response rate was 13.3 percent. Alpha, Hope, Knowlton, Mansfield, and Phillipsburg each had less than 10 percent response rates in terms of distributed surveys. Allamuchy, Belvidere, Frelinghuysen, Greenwich and Harmony had response rates higher than 17 percent. These communities may be over-represented in the survey as a result.

Municipality	Surveys Distributed	Percent of Distribution	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Warren County	5,627	100	714	100
Allamuchy	244	4.3	43	17.6
Alpha	125	2.2	8	6.4
Belvidere	152	2.7	30	19.7
Blairstown	359	6.4	47	13.1
Franklin	163	2.9	23	14.1
Frelinghuysen	132	2.3	25	18.9
Greenwich	291	5.2	54	18.6
Hackettstown	463	8.2	51	11.0
Hardwick	91	1.6	12	13.2
Harmony	162	2.9	34	21.0
Hope	116	2.1	8	6.9
Independence	309	5.5	43	13.9
Knowlton	173	3.1	13	7.5
Liberty	160	2.8	23	14.4
Lopatcong	396	7.0	56	14.1
Mansfield	378	6.7	35	9.3
Oxford	132	2.3	19	14.4
Phillipsburg	640	11.4	48	7.5
Pohatcong	193	3.4	22	11.4
Washington Borough	299	5.3	24	8.0
Washington Township	355	6.3	43	12.1
White	294	5.2	46	15.6

P. How long have you lived in Warren County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	0 - 5 years	129	17.22	17.36
	6 - 10 years	98	13.08	13.19
	11 - 20 years	196	26.17	26.38
	21 - 30 years	97	12.95	13.06
	More than 30 years	223	29.77	30.01
	Total	743	99.20	100.00
Missing		6	0.80	
Total		749	100.00	

The largest number of respondents (30 percent) were in the “more than 30 years” category. However, no category had an inordinate number of respondents that would skew the survey responses.

Q. How many acres of land do you own in Warren County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	I do not own land	75	10.01	10.20
	Less than 0.25 acres	75	10.01	10.20
	0.25 to 0.5 acres	149	19.89	20.27
	0.5 to 1.0 acres	128	17.09	17.41
	1 to 3 acres	175	23.36	23.81
	3 to 5 acres	43	5.74	5.85
	5 to 10 acres	41	5.47	5.58
	More than 10 acres	49	6.57	6.53
Valid	Total	735	98.13	100.00
Missing		14	1.87	
Total		749	100.00	

The largest number of respondents were in the 0.25 to 0.5 acres, 0.5 to 1.0 acres and 1 to 3 acres categories.

Approximately 75 percent of the households in Warren County own property and 25% rent. The number of respondents that rent or do not own land is only 10%. Thus, it may be possible that the survey over represents the opinions of homeowners as opposed to renters in Warren County.

R. Please indicate your age:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Under 20 years	4	0.53	0.54
	20 to 30 years	158	21.09	21.27
	40 to 59 years	373	49.80	50.20
	60 to 79 years	177	23.63	23.82
	80 years or older	31	4.14	4.17
Valid	Total	743	99.20	100.00
Missing	System	6	0.80	
Total		749	100.00	

Half of the respondents were in the 40 to 59 age category. Since the survey was distributed to only those over age of 18, there can be no valid comparison made to the average age of residents in the county.

Few respondents were under the age of 20. However, the survey was addressed to registered voters who must be 18 years of age. Thus, only a small portion of this population would actually have received the survey directly.

S. What is your annual income?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	Less than \$25,000	89	11.88	13.03
	\$25,001 to \$50,000	127	16.96	18.59
	\$50,001 to \$75,000	164	21.90	24.01
	\$75,001 to \$100,000	123	16.42	18.01
	\$100,001 to \$150,000	125	16.69	18.30
	More than \$150,000	55	7.34	8.05
Valid	Total	683	91.19	100.00
Missing		66	8.81	
Total		749	100.00	

The largest category of respondents earn between \$50,001 and \$75,000 in annual income. The median household income in the County is \$56,000.