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Franklin Township
2004 Comprehensive Plan/ Open Space Plan Updates
Community Values Survey
FINAL Results with Analysis
September 24, 2004

Overview -

In November 2003, about 1500 Franklin Township Community Values Surveys were mailed to Franklin Township landowners. A total of 406 surveys were received and tallied by volunteers from Franklin Township, representing slightly more than a 25% return rate.

Below are the results of the Survey, tabulated as the number of responses to each option, followed by Commentary on those results.

1. Why did you choose to live in Franklin Township? (Please select the three most important reasons from the following list.)

42	Lived here all my life
350	Rural, quiet lifestyle
118	Housing availability or cost
101	Close to work
63	Family and friends nearby
282	Scenic beauty
162	Quality of schools
20	Low taxes
1	Other

Comments - Two responses (shown in bold above) stand out as the most important factors - "Rural, quiet lifestyle" (86% response rate), and "scenic beauty" (69%). "Quality of schools" rates a fairly distant third (40%), with less than half the 'votes' received by the "rural, quiet lifestyle" choice. More than merely "quality of life" issues or amenities (i.e. nice to have, but decidedly secondary), these factors appear to be central in residents' decision-making processes.

2. Other than a change in your place of employment, which of the following factors would be most likely to cause you to leave Franklin Township? (Again, please select the three most important reasons from the following list.)

235	Changes in unique local character
4	Inadequate parks and recreation

97	Quality of schools
348	Area becoming over-developed
289	Taxes too high
81	Crime rate
3	Inadequate housing opportunities
13	Inadequate shopping opportunities
10	Inadequate community services
18	Inadequate farming opportunities
70	Environmental hazards
5	Other

Comments - By far the greatest reason (86%) some people might leave Franklin Township is if the township is "over-developed." This ranks notably higher than worries over spiraling taxes (71%), which is perhaps why the open space referendum was successful in 2002. In general, respondents do not favor additional tax increases by significant margins (see response to Question 16, below). "Changes in unique local character" scored third place here (58%), which ties in with a fear of over-development. Part of the visioning process for the Comprehensive Plan update could address what these perceived "unique" local character traits are and what being "over-developed" means, though distinct clues are given in the responses to several questions, including Question 11 below, on how to spend the new open space preservation funds.

3. Which of the following issues do you believe are the most important to consider when planning the future of Franklin Township? (Please select the three issues you feel are most important.)

104	Agricultural preservation
8	Community recreation opportunities
195	Conservation of scenic landscapes and views
14	Housing affordability
172	Traffic and road conditions
37	Adequate sewage disposal
111	Conservation of quality water supply
9	Employment opportunities
17	Protection of historic resources
236	Natural resource protection (e.g., groundwater, floodplains, wildlife habitat, woodlands, etc.)
4	Diversity of housing types
14	Shopping opportunities
250	Retention of rural atmosphere
0	Other

Comments - Again, retention of Franklin Township's rural atmosphere received the strongest support (62%), with "natural resource protection" a close second (58%). Both of these contribute directly to the third-placed selection, "conservation of scenic landscapes and views" (48%). "Traffic and road conditions" are worth noting as a close fourth (42%). Interestingly, agricultural preservation ranked only sixth (26% as a planning issue), though that is the usual means used to preserve rural character. It is

often forgotten or ignored. It also relates to the retention of the rural atmosphere.

4. What in your opinion, is the adequacy of the following services in meeting the needs of Township residents? (Please check either adequate, inadequate, or no opinion for each category.)

Category	Adequate	Inadequate	No opinion
Maintenance of State Roads (Map on opposite page)	255	114	37
Maintenance of Township roads (Map on opposite page)	167	194	45
Police protection	247	80	79
Fire protection	273	33	100
Parks and recreation areas	287	58	61
Overall effectiveness of Township government	99	175	132
Trash removal in the Township	283	29	94
Public water and/or sewer service (where applicable)	90	36	280
Cable services	216	87	103
Recycling opportunities	284	35	87
Other			

Comments – Generally respondents felt that most of the services listed did meet their needs, and by fairly wide margins. Two apparent exceptions are 1) Township road maintenance, and 2) Overall effectiveness of Township government, though in neither case was there a majority, if one factors in the “No Opinion” votes (which one probably should). 48% felt the “maintenance of Township roads” is inadequate, and 43% felt Township government is ineffective overall. It is worth noting that most of these votes were cast prior to the Supervisors elected after the November, 2003 elections either took office or had been in office long.

5. Are there any roadway locations or intersections within the Township which you believe to be dangerous or need to be better maintained? If so, please state where.

Comments - A complete tally can be provided on a separate sheet. The two intersections that were the most frequently cited as either dangerous or in need of better maintenance are both along State Route 896:

1. Rtes. 896 and 841 (72 respondents)
2. Rte. 896 and Appleton (69 respondents)

Next were seven roadways/ intersections that received between 15-19 votes each.

6. Do you favor the use of traffic lights as a means to control traffic, or would you prefer to use other means, such as four-way stops or roundabouts? (Please check one box.)

102	Traffic lights
268	Other means of controlling traffic
20	No opinion

Comments – Respondents favored means other than traffic lights by a wide margin (69% - 26%). Several respondents wrote in favoring ‘4-way stops,’ though there are other possible measures, notably including traffic circles or roundabouts. Perhaps these two primary alternatives can be further explored during the Comprehensive Plan “Visioning” and public input processes. This exploration could include investigating

7. If 80 houses could be built on 100 acres, which of the following development patterns would you prefer? (Please check one box.)

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 156 | Houses spread fairly evenly over the entire tract on 1-acre+ lots. |
| 140 | Houses built on 1/4-1/2 acre lots on one part of the tract (as in many 'cluster options', for example) leaving a large amount of permanent open space on the remainder of the tract. |
| 87 | Attached houses and/or houses on very small lots (including less than 1/4 acre lots, as in a traditional village pattern), with the great majority of the tract left as permanent open space and/or farmland. |
| 23 | Doesn't really matter |

Comments – Taking the responses individually indicates a slight favoring (38%) of conventional subdivision design (the so-called “cookie-cutter” approach) over a perhaps less familiar cluster approach that supports preservation of more open space (34%). This may be somewhat at odds with responses on several other questions and especially # 15 below, in which “conventional subdivisions were not preferred over other development approaches. That may indicate a need for further education of the citizenry what the township can and cannot do to protect natural resources, and in planning techniques in general. However, another way of interpreting these results is, if responses two and three are combined, the cluster/ open space proponents have the majority (56%). Some respondents may not have liked the cluster developments they have seen, as opposed to what is possible, and others may not like development at all.

8. Where commercial development is permitted, which of the following development patterns would you prefer? (Please check one box.)

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 69 | Strip centers with linear strips of stores fronting on parking areas, such as exist along the Baltimore Pike in Jennersville. |
| 72 | Commercial development limited to smaller individual buildings, either free-standing or in groups that are broken-up to avoid the impression of long strips of buildings and parking lots, such as along Route 41 between Avondale and the State Line. |
| 219 | Traditional village-style development with relatively small individual buildings fronting directly on the street, with parking generally to the rear, and possibly with mixed residential/non-residential uses (see diagram for example). |
| 34 | Doesn't really matter |

Comments – By far the largest response favored traditional village-style commercial development (56%). A low percentage of respondents (18% each) prefer either conventional strip centers or “commercial clusters.” This could indicate strong support for efforts to blend new commercial development into the township’s only traditional village of Kemblesville.

9. How satisfied are you with the current level of land use regulation in Franklin Township? (Please check one box.)

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 136 | Unfamiliar with the current regulations |
| 30 | Satisfied with current regulation level |
| 226 | Current regulations not strict enough |
| 9 | Current regulations are too strict |

Comments – A small majority of respondents feel that current township land use regulations are not strict enough (56%), while only 2% feel they are too strict. About 7%

9. How satisfied are you with the current level of land use regulation in Franklin Township? (Please check one box.)

136 Unfamiliar with the current regulations

30 Satisfied with current regulation level

226 Current regulations not strict enough

9 Current regulations are too strict

Comments – A small majority of respondents feel that current township land use regulations are not strict enough (56%), while only 2% feel they are too strict. About 7% feel they are “just right.” But again indicating a need for further education of the citizenry is the result that 34% are unfamiliar with the current regulations. This may indicate an important role for the Comprehensive Planning process. But of those who feel they are familiar with regulations, 85% feel they are not strict enough.

10. Should a tract which includes sensitive natural features like wetlands, woodlands, and steeply sloping areas, be permitted less development than one which does not? (Please check one box.)

373

22

9

Comments – A full 93% of respondents feel that a tract with sensitive natural resources should be allowed less development than one without. Respondents to this question cut across all ‘lines,’ or in other words, they cut across any other categorizations that might be made about the respondents. For example, many respondents who want no new taxes want natural resources protected (see question 16 below). This response should also be related to the responses to questions #7 and #9 above.

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11. In light of the new Open Space Funding that was approved by Township voters in 2002, please rank the following types of open space in terms of which you would most (1) and which least (7) prefer to see preserved: (Please rank 1-7.)

- Farmland
- White Clay Creek corridors
- Elk Creek corridor
- Woodlands
- Wetlands
- New active recreational lands (e.g. ballfields)
- Other (please describe):

Responses -

Open Space Type/ Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Farmland	162	45	46	26	76	19	4
White Clay Creek corridor	104	74	70	61	28	4	1
Elk Creek corridor	17	76	65	77	84	17	0
Woodlands	77	94	78	68	22	4	1
Wetlands	39	56	67	54	76	29	2
New active rec. lands	15	8	15	11	37	231	21
Other	1	1	-	-	2	4	9

Comments – Farmland clearly received the highest number one votes. Yet if the top three ranks are summed, farmland (253 votes) is virtually tied with the White Clay Corridor (248 votes) and woodlands (249 votes). Thus, those three types of open space comprise the top tier. In fact, a White Clay Creek corridors (there are two branches in Franklin Township) preservation effort would include all three of these preferences. Meanwhile, the Elk Creek Corridor and wetlands comprise a second tier. Notably, new active recreational lands (e.g. ballfields) received by far the fewest high-ranked votes and the most 6th and 7th placed votes.

12. A few Chester County townships like West Fallowfield and West Marlborough (and most in Lancaster County) have strong agricultural zoning ordinances allowing only one house lot per 20 - 30 acres. Others, such as London Grove, use 10-acre per lot zoning to encourage farming and discourage dense subdivisions. However, this agricultural zoning can be written to allow farmers to sell off a small lot or two to support the farm. In Franklin Township today, the largest zoning district allows one house lot per two acres. Should Franklin use this agricultural zoning approach to protect some of its farmland and best soils? (Please check one box.)

- 181 Yes, use the 10-acre per lot zoning approach
- 153 Yes, use the 20-acre per lot zoning approach
- 49 No, keep it the way it is now
- 19 No opinion

survey own less than ten acres of land, and so would not themselves be affected by such a change. But, this does not mean larger land owners do not also support it. Further investigation would be necessary to determine to what degree and under what circumstances this may be supported by a majority of larger land owners. For now there is clearly a large amount of support for farmland preservation, and more research is warranted into a rezoning effort as one tool to achieve that.

13. Another way to protect farmland and open space is through a voluntary transfer of development rights program or "TDR." In TDR "sending areas," such as farmland where we don't want development, landowners have the option to sell their development rights to some other party - a developer. The developer then uses these additional development rights to add to whatever he or she would normally be allowed to build in a "receiving area." Should this approach be seriously considered to help preserve Franklin's historic agricultural character and natural resources? (Please check one box.)

145	Yes
95	No
27	No opinion
132	Do not understand question

Comments - While more respondents supported the use of TDRs (36%) than any other choice, nearly as many people and one third of all respondents (33%) did not understand the question. The use of a TDR program holds significant potential for a township like Franklin. Citizen 'buy-in' can be very important to a successful program, so it may be worth the effort to better educate the citizenry on how it works.

14. Recognizing that residential development will occur, what type(s) of new dwelling units would you like to see in the Township? (Please check as many as apply.)

384	Single-family houses
85	Semi-detached (twins)
22	Garden apartments
62	Townhouses
3	High rises
5	Mobile homes
0	Other (please describe):

Comments - A large majority of respondents chose single family homes only as the preferred residential housing stock type, although slightly less than half (42%) support alternate forms of housing. It is interesting that anybody supported high rises.

15. If new residential development must occur in Franklin Township, what overall form would you prefer it takes? (Please check as many as apply.)

81	Conventional subdivisions
182	Scattered farm clusters
187	Villages/ hamlets surrounded by open spaces
38	A small town

Comments - Approximately the same number of respondents prefer village-style residences as scattered farm clusters (46% and 45% respectively). Both would presumably include large amounts of open space, whether farmland, natural areas, or some combination of types. What is perhaps more noteworthy is that the distant third

16. Would you support special purpose taxation of real estate for any of the following specific purposes? (Please check yes or no for each category.)

Yes	No	
125	256	Improved Township road maintenance (Please refer to inside back cover for map of Township roads).
94	287	Expanded police protection
36	333	Municipal recycling program
59	317	Public water supply
30	338	Improvements to municipal administration and police building facilities
97	274	Expanded Ambulance service
55	320	Public sewers
2	0	Other

Comments – No new taxes are supported for any of the listed purposes by a wide margin. The closest margin, Township road maintenance, “lost” by a 67-33% margin. This despite the fact that the “maintenance of Township roads” is cited as inadequate in the response to Question #4 above. This makes the victory of the open space taxation referendum in 2002 by a 70-30% margin all the more impressive.

17. For each of the following recreational activities, please indicate those activities in which you and members of your household currently participate, those activities in which you would like to participate if facilities were more available, and those activities for which you would support Township action to facilitate. (Check as many as apply.)

Recreation Activity	Currently participate	Would like to participate	Would support Twp. action to facilitate
Sight-seeing or pleasure driving	189	6	10
Walking/hiking/jogging	289	28	51
Nature enjoyment/study	208	32	41
Hunting	54	10	13
Fishing	95	29	25
Swimming	92	18	14
Soccer/Football/Lacrosse/field hockey	85	18	25
Baseball/softball	68	14	20
Tennis	54	19	12
Basketball	45	11	11
Volleyball	19	15	9
Bicycling	126	33	37
Skateboarding	20	4	4
Organized exercise/fitness activities	60	31	13
Winter sports (e.g., ice skating, cross-country skiing)	39	51	32
Off road vehicle use (including snowmobiling)	23	11	9
Camping	57	17	9
Picnicking	82	20	15
Golf	91	10	6
Archery or target practice	33	18	17
Horseback riding	61	39	34

Comments – The top three responses are the first three: walking, nature enjoyment, and pleasure driving; bicycling is fourth most popular. These are all common activities that require little to no special infrastructure, though, with the exception of pleasure driving, they would be enhanced with special off-road trails. This could be interpreted as support for development of more facilities for these kinds of activities, for example a township-wide trail network. Fishing and swimming are the next most popular activities, followed by golf in sixth place.

18. Where do you generally participate in recreational activities? (Please check all that apply.)

298	At home
145	At local sites within Franklin, including parks
94	At local parks outside Franklin Township (e.g., Elk, London Britain, London Grove, etc.).
151	White Clay Creek State Park (PA)
118	Parks in Delaware
149	Fair Hill NRMA, MD
62	Other State Parks (PA)
158	Alongside local roads (walking, jogging, bicycling)
63	At school
33	At work
180	At private recreational sites (e.g., at YMCA, spas, athletic clubs).
15	Other

Comments – By far the greatest number of people (73%) participate in recreational activities at home (primarily their back yards, presumably), followed by participation at private facilities (44%). This is followed by “along local roads,” and a similar scoring between White Clay Creek State Park, Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area in Maryland, and “At local sites within Franklin, including parks.” Clearly, formal recreational sites are in the second tier of choices, although they are still significant. The popularity of “around the home” choices may indicate the value in and the support for more local open spaces, including those associated with residential developments, as is realized through cluster development and partial TDR options, and possibly local trails.

19. Should the Township promote cooperation with neighboring townships and Maryland regarding regional issues and services, and, if so, in regard to which of the following would you support regional cooperation, involving one or more of Franklin's neighbors: (Please check as many as apply.)

260	Trails
215	Parks and Recreational Facilities
139	Library
158	Police
193	Fire/ Emergency Services
256	Watershed Planning
29	No, the Township should not enter into regional cooperative efforts.
21	No opinion

Comments – Trails and watershed planning emerge as the two items with the most support for regional planning. Both issues are in fact being worked on in neighboring townships, perhaps especially in the White Clay watershed. Both are also aspects of

20. Please indicate approximately where you live (circle the number in the appropriate area on the map below).

Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D
78	82	110	82

Comments – The respondents live fairly evenly distributed across the township, though of the 352 responses to this question, more respondents live in the Elk Creek watershed portion of the township than anywhere else. This includes some of the more rural parts of the township, and notably not the Village of Kemblesville area. Still, it is difficult to draw any connection between the responses and where people live based on this information alone.

21. Approximately how large is your property?

33	Less than 1 acre
200	Between 1 and 2 acres
128	Between 2 and 10 acres
33	Between 10 and 50 acres
6	More than 50 acres

Comments – Most respondents (90%) own less than ten acres of land; almost half own between one and two acres. Over half (57%) own two acres or less.

22. How long have you lived in Franklin Township?

3	Less than 1 year
111	1 to 5 years
98	5 to 10 years
125	10 to 25 years
70	over 25 years

Comments – Almost half (48%) of the respondents have lived in Franklin Township over ten years, and almost half less; another 24% between five and ten years.

23. What are the current principal uses of your property? (Check as many as apply.)

397	Residence
34	Farm
24	Home business
3	Commercial
7	Investment (including residence(s) rented to another)
-	Industrial/Manufacturing
-	None (vacant)
-	Other

24. Please describe your immediate neighborhood

0	Mobile home park
4	Village or hamlet
96	Scattered farms/ open setting
184	Residential subdivision

136 | Scattered residences with varied lot sizes
 0 | Other:

Comments – Compared with the response to Question #15 about the preferred form of new residential developments, many respondents would prefer to see a form they themselves do not live in, the village or hamlet. Why that is and what it might mean for the new Comprehensive Plan are issues that may be worth exploring.

25. Please tally the number of persons in your household in each age group.

Males	Females	Age groups
59	36	0-5 years
82	74	6-11 years
79	96	12-18 years
203	217	19-45 years
179	170	45-65 years
28	34	over 65 years

26. Please indicate the approximate range of your total combined household income.
(This information to verify Census data only.)

3	Less than \$10,000 per year
8	\$10,000-\$29,999 per year
50	\$30,000-\$59,999 per year
120	\$60,000-\$99,999 per year
170	Over \$100,000 per year

Comments – These responses indicate a higher percentage came from those with a household income of over \$100,000 (48%) than occurs in general in Franklin Township (38%, according to the 2000 Census).

27. Where is the principal place of work for employed members of your household?
(Please indicate the general location of employment for each working adult.)

42	Work at home/farm
45	Kennett Square area
35	West Grove/ Avondale
43	Other area in Chester County
28	Delaware County
5	Lancaster County
14	Work elsewhere in Franklin Township
106	Newark, DE area
131	Elsewhere in Delaware (state)
39	Maryland
33	Other (not specifically listed):

Comments – A large number of respondents (237) work in Delaware, as many as indicated they work in Pennsylvania (depending on where the "others" work).

28. How would you describe the current primary occupation of your household members? *(Please check one occupation for each adult household member.)*

13 | Farm related

55	Manufacturing
61	Sales
48	Retired
48	Homemaker or Housekeeper
12	Government Administration
23	Transportation or utilities
11	Student
4	Unemployed
312	Services (including all professional services like banking, insurance, medicine, law, and education, as well as personal types of service including entertainment, social services)
5	Other

29. Please offer other comments on issues which you believe should be addressed by the Township either now or in the future.

See separate photocopied pages ...