

CENTER TOWNSHIP, BUTLER COUNTY

GENERAL ATTITUDE SURVEY

1. The current zoning ordinance has been an asset in growth management within Center Township.

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
396	175	525	58

2. Growth should be managed in order to limit its impact on existing properties.

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
996	78	55	25

3. Agricultural areas should be set aside and development discouraged in those areas.

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
847	151	135	21

4. Center Township's elected officials and residents must both participate in the development of a growth management plan to provide for its' overall health, safety and general welfare.

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
1,057	43	31	23

5. How satisfied are you with the quality of life in Center Township?

VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	NO ANSWER
227	823	62	11	31

6. I approve of the adoption of building codes for the township.

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
709	170	245	30

7. The Supervisors are responsive to the concerns of the Township residents.

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
375	266	472	41

8. If a development was proposed for your area which would extend public utilities (sewer, water, gas) would you oppose it?

YES	NO	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
316	547	233	58

9. Do you feel that the overall emergency network (fire, police, EMS) is adequate at their present levels?

YES	NO	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
780	153	200	21

- 9b...to handle an influx of development?

YES	NO	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
296	404	423	31

10. I would be willing to pay higher taxes to have township roads paved with asphalt rather than "tar and chips".

AGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
182	786	158	28

11. Should the Township contract with one garbage hauler for garbage pick-up?

YES	NO	NOT SURE	NO ANSWER
204	719	213	18

12. Please rank the type of development the Township should aggressively pursue over the next 15 years, with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest:

	1	2	3	4	5	No Answer	Marked no rating	No/None/As is *
single family residential	633	116	86	34	33	127	113	12
multi-family residential	41	271	143	188	189	280	18	24
retail	59	203	294	191	106	263	19	19
light industry/manufacturing	123	141	184	236	176	239	32	23
other (specify)	52	44	51	35	114	790	43	25

13. Please rank the improvements that you would like to be made in the township over the next 15 years, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important:

	1	2	3	4	5	No Answer	Marked no rating	No/None/As is *
recreation	233	163	139	114	186	238	23	58
new township building	30	59	139	284	296	272	7	67
other (specify)	116	56	43	59	113	703	30	34
road improvements	387	256	152	74	37	176	40	32
new fire station	134	223	243	120	108	254	17	55

14. Please rank the following services ***you would like the township to provide*** over the next 15 years, with 1 being the most important, and 5 being the least important service, to you:

	1	2	3	4	5	No Answer	Marked no rating	No/None/As is *
street lights	312	163	119	86	164	173	32	105
garbage pick-up	107	114	141	116	298	250	20	108
full-time police force	179	116	95	110	301	208	16	129
expanded bus transportation	140	221	151	156	157	214	14	101
senior citizens' center	90	111	163	173	256	227	23	111

15. How long have you been a Center Township resident?

< 1 year	1 - 5 yrs	6 - 10 yrs	11 - 20 yrs	> 20 years	NO ANSWER
45	174	141	175	591	28

16. What is your age?

18-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	NO ANSWER
96	240	473	291	54

17. Your household income is:

< \$15,000	15-34,999	35-49,999	50,000 and over	NO ANSWER
83	240	195	404	232

18. Education level:

some high school	high school graduate	some college	college graduate	NO ANSWER
34	278	285	458	99

ATTITUDE SURVEY RESPONSE ANALYSIS

During late January and early February of 1998, the Center Township Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors distributed a survey to approximately 2,700 households in the Township seeking input on a variety of issues as a part of the development process of an updated Comprehensive Plan. The survey included questions pertaining to existing conditions, programs and services within the Township, as well as for future programs and services which may become necessities.

Of the 2,700 surveys distributed, over 1,150 were returned (about 43%), a response which will permit this exercise to forward conclusions based on a relatively high statistical response.

As part of the survey, several questions were including in order to provide on indication as to the "make-up" of the respondents, relative to length of residency, age, income level and education level.

As with any survey exercise, it is a goal to seek responses from all age groups and income levels within the surveyed area. In this case, that goal has been achieved. Question 15 through 18 sought information pertaining to the household background, with the following breakdown:

Question 15 - residency

less than 1 year	---	---	3.9%
1 to 5 years	-----	----	15.1
6 to 10 years	-----	----	12.2
11 to 20 years	-----	----	15.2
over 20 years	-----	----	51.2
no response	-----	----	2.4

Over 51% of the respondents are "long-term" residents, those who have experienced a variety of issues and programs in the Township. Their responses will have the "weight" of experience. The remaining breakdown indicates that the relatively new resident 0-5 years as well as the mid-term residents are also well represented in the returned surveys.

Question No. 16 focused on the age group of the respondents, again with the goal of gaining responses from all age groups in order to provide an equitable base of the responses. Persons younger than 18 were not included, as a rule due, in the most part, to the fact that they would be considered dependents.

Question 16 - age

18 - 34	-----	---	8.3%
35-44	-----	----	20.8
45-64	-----	-----	41
65 and over	-----	----	25.2
No response	-----	-----	4.7

According to the 1990 Census, the median age of Center Township residents was 36.6 years. Taking that data into consideration, and realizing that the population below 18 was excluded from the survey, the age breakdown of the respondents is predictable. Generally, the most responsive age grouping at the local level to activities requesting feedback in the "mature adult" age. This is exemplified by the response in Center Township. The age grouping of all responses indicates that a cross-section of residents has been attained.

Question 17 - Household income: As can be imagined, this question generated many comments, as well as many "no response" entries. About 20% of the total responses failed to respond to this question. The remaining responses were distributed among the income groups. The U.S. Census Bureau indicated that the median household income in 1990 was \$32,118.00. The responses to the survey suggest that the household income in the Township may even be higher at this time.

Question 17 - Household income

less than \$15,000	-----	---	7.2%
15,000 - 34,999	-----	----	20.8
35,000 - 49,999	-----	----	16.9
50,000 and over	-----	-----	35
No response	-----	----	20.1

The final question aimed at determining the background and make-up of the respondents to the survey, pertained to the education level. In Center Township, it

appears that the vast majority of residents have a high school diploma, with another 2.3 of that population going to college. This question also generated many "no response" answers. However, it is quite evident that Township residents feel that education is an important facet to the quality of life.

Question 18 - Education attainment

Some high school	-----	---	2.9%
High school graduate	-	-----	24.1
Some college	-----	-----	24.7
College graduate	-----	-----	39.7
No response	-----	-----	8.6

The "main" body of the survey asked resident's to respond to a variety of issues, some dealing with the development of the Township, some concerning existing programs and services, and yet others seeking input on future activities. This report will "categorize" those survey items which are related.

A. Land Development (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8)

Question 1 asked respondents their opinion on the effectiveness of the existing zoning ordinance. The aim here was to determine the percentage of residents who were at least familiar enough with the concept of zoning to response, whether in a positive manner, or not. In most communities, residents will not "become involved" or "pay attention" to municipal zoning actions unless it affect them directly. In Center Township, it appears, according to the responses, that a good portion of the public is familiar with the zoning ordinance in the Township. Although many do not believe it to be an asset, they are aware of the zoning impacts on the Township

Question 1. The current zoning ordinance has been an asset in growth management within Center Township.

Agree	-----	--	34.3%
Disagree	-----	-----	15.2
Not sure	-----	-----	45.5
No answer	-----	-----	5

As you can see, 49.5% of the respondents were knowledgeable enough of zoning, that they could agree or disagree. This could indicate a willingness of the

residents to stay aware of Township land use activities, or point out that many residents have been "touched" by zoning in the Township.

Questions 2 and 4 were asked in order to determine the Township residents feelings towards the need for a growth management program (2) and (4) to determine their understanding that the development of any growth management program is a joint effort. The respondents to these questions overwhelmingly answered in the affirmative - that there is a need to manage growth and that it is a cooperative action - elected officials and residents.

Question 2. Growth should be managed in order to limit its impact on existing properties.

Agree	-----	--	86.3%
Disagree	-----	-----	6.8
Not sure	-----	-----	4.8
No answer	-----	-----	2.1

Question 4. Center Township's elected officials and residents must both participate in the development of a growth management plan to provide for its' overall health, safety and general welfare.

Agree	-----	--	91.6%
Disagree	-----	-----	3.7
Not sure	-----	-----	2.7
No answer	-----	-----	2

The protection of land values is a key item in Center Township. the responses to Questions 2 and 4 indicate that the residents are seeking municipal input in maintaining property values and providing for their health, safety, and welfare.

Question Number 3 focused on a specific land use - farming, in an effort to gain an understanding of the residents feelings towards the importance - or lack thereof - of existing farmlands. A second objective in asking this question was whether the respondents felt it important to limit development as well as "protecting" those areas.

Question 3. Agricultural areas should be set aside and development discouraged in those areas.

Agree	-----	--	73.4%
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Disagree	-----	----	13.1
Not sure	-----	----	11.7
No answer	-----	----	1.8

A great majority of those responding appear to believe that the farmland areas in the Township must be preserved and protected from development. This would seem to indicate to Township officials that land use regulations aimed at achieving these conditions would be warranted.

Question Number 6 wanted to know how the residents felt about building codes. Center Township recently enacted for the first time, building codes for all new construction within its boundaries, so it is possible that many respondents would not know, or even be aware of, what building codes may be. The adoption of building codes are an important means of a Township providing for the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

Question 6. I approve of the adoption of building codes for the township.

Agree	-----	--	61.4%
Disagree	-----	----	14.7
Not sure	-----	----	21.2
No answer	-----	----	2.7

The responses indicate that almost one-fourth of those that responded weren't sure or didn't know if building codes were a positive regulation within the Township. A key figure is the relatively low response disagreeing with the enactment of the building codes.

Question Number 8 seeks an answer from the residents reflecting their response towards "new" development and the expansion of facilities/utilities in their neighborhood. This question is one that would have benefited from another background question determining the "type of area" in which the respondent currently lived. The breakdown of the responses indicated a high percentage of residents who would not be willing to accept, or were unsure whether they would accept, the provision of public utilities.

Question 8. If a development was proposed for your area which would extend public utilities (sewer, water, gas) would you oppose it?

Yes -----	--	27.4%
No -----	----	47.4
Not sure -----	----	20.2
No answer -----	-----	5

The response to this question indicates that almost as many residents would oppose the expansion of public utilities into their neighborhood due to new development (assuming those "not sure" would take an opposition position). Another factor which can be gathered from this response is that of the make-up of the Township, that is, part being very suburban, almost urban, and other portions being extremely rural, with existing development being very sparse.

B. Existing Programs & Services (5, 7, 9, 9b, 10, 11)

The purpose behind Question 5 was to generate responses from the residents on their overall perception of the "quality of life" within the Township. This quality of life would include the general feelings toward municipal services provided, programs offered, neighborhood living conditions, municipal administration and staffing, and several other factors.

Question 5. How satisfied are you with the quality of life in Center Township?

Very satisfied -----	--	19.7%
Satisfied -----	----	71.3
Dissatisfied -----	----	5.4
Very Dissatisfied -----	-----	0.9
No answer -----	-----	2.7

Overall, 91% of those responding are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of life in the Township. This indicates a general acceptance of the existing conditions within their neighborhood and the Township, as a whole. Those responding as dissatisfied or very dissatisfied were comparatively small, and not likely, generated due to one specific action or non-action at the municipal level.

Question 7 too question 5 a "step further" seeking responses pertaining to those elected officials that play an important role in creating a maintaining the quality of life in a municipality. This question is included in many surveys by elected officials, as a means of gaining some measure of the residents "acceptance" of current policies and

available services and programs. Many local officials use the responses to this question as a stimulus in creating opportunities through which residents can have direct communication with them and become more involved in local matters.

Question 7. The Supervisors are responsive to the concerns of the Township residents.

Agree	-----	--	32.5%
Disagree	-----	-----	23
Not sure	-----	-----	40.9
No answer	-----	-----	3.6

The most intriguing response to this question was the number of residents who are "not sure" as to their feeling about the elected officials responsiveness to citizen's concerns. It is somewhat understandable that, due to several personnel actions during the past few years, many respondents are "waiting" to see how the current elected officials will operate the Township. Also, it is typical for a resident to respond "not sure" when they have not had a specific contact with the elected officials. Those that have responded either positively or negatively, most like have had dealings directly with the Township elected officials and are responding to that specific encounter.

Question 9 was divided into two parts, based on existing service levels, (a) and future service level needs, (b). One of the primary responsibilities of the elected officials of any municipality, is to provide for the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of its residents. The provision of a public safety program is, quite often, a priority at the local level. The provision of those public safety programs, however, vary greatly among municipalities. those two questions asked for the resident's feelings as to the adequacy of the emergency services today, and how they believe those services will measure up in the future. The results of these questions, when taken in concert with the responses from question 13 and 14, will provide the Township officials with an indication as to whether or not it is necessary to pursue an upgrade of emergency services, or even the creation of a Township service. At this time, all emergency services are provided by volunteer or private agencies. Police coverage, at this time, is provided by the Pennsylvania State Police.

Question 9. Do you feel that the overall emergency network (fire, police, EMS) is adequate at their present levels?

Yes	-----	--	67.6%
No	-----	----	13.3
Not sure	-----	----	17.3
No answer	-----	----	1.8

Question 9b. ...to handle an influx of development?

Yes	-----	--	25.6%
No	-----	-----	35
Not sure	-----	----	36.7
No answer	-----	----	2.47

It is clear that most residents believe that today's emergency service levels are adequate, and according to written comments, more than adequate. However, when asked about the emergency services ability to respond to future needs, that feeling of adequacy declines drastically (42%).

For now, the responses indicate that the township does not need to create any local public emergency service programs; however, future local officials may need to consider municipal programs and services to provide for the require coverage.

Question Number 10 is the first to seek residents responses to a current Township practice, the paving/improvement of local municipal roads. The Township officials are concerned with the rising costs of the services provided and materials necessary to provide those services. This question really had two (2) points - the first dealing with the residents attitude towards the possibility of increasing taxes, and the second pertaining to the construction materials of the roads themselves - will the residents be willing to accept a less expensive road surface system in lieu of raising taxes to provide a more durable surface?

Question 10. I would be willing to pay higher taxes to have township roads paved with asphalt rather than "tar and chips".

Agree	-----	--	15.8%
Disagreed	-----	----	68.1
Not sure	-----	----	13.7

No answer ----- 2.4

As one would readily assume, the thought of higher taxes is not one that would win many contests. By over a 4 to 1 margin, the respondents do not want to see an increase in taxes. This question generated many comments on the returns, indicating the respondent's acceptance of the existing policy of using "tar and chips" to resurface roadways, as long as the taxes do not go up. Many respondents also commented on their preference for asphalt resurfacing, however, not if taxes would have to be increased in order to accomplish it.

Question 11 was included in the survey for the sole reason of gathering a response from the residents concerning an action by the Township pertaining to garbage/refuse collection and possibly including recycling collection. This activity has been given some thought, and the elected officials felt that, at this time, it would be a legitimate survey question. Many municipalities do contract garbage/refuse/recycling collection with a single hauler, thereby gaining some control as to the routing, timing, frequency, etc. for all residents.

Question 11. Should the Township contract with one garbage hauler for garbage pick-up?

Yes -----	-- 17.7%
No -----	---- 62.3
Not sure -----	---- 18.5
No answer -----	----- 1.5

It appears, according to the responses collected, that the Township residents want to maintain control over the collection of their garbage/refuse. By a count of 3.5 to 1, the local residents have indicated an unwillingness to have the government get involved. This is quite normal in rural communities. In most municipalities where recycling is not mandated, garbage/refuse collection is still handled by the property owner.

C. Future Programs, Policies & Development (12, 13, 14)

This portion of the survey hoped to generate responses from the residents, identifying how they felt towards some specific land use types, municipal improvements, services and programs. Each respondent was asked to rank, in order of importance, a variety of issues, for future action (or non-action) by the Township.

The ranking system that was suggested on the survey was a numerical system, with the number one (1) being the highest priority, or most important, and the number five (5) being the lowest priority, or the least important activities. Each of these three (3) questions included five (5) items, with the opportunity for the respondents to write-in items that they felt should be included. By asking the respondents to rank these items, the survey can generate a priority list of the people which can then act as a guide for action by the elected officials and, even more so, be included in the Township's updated comprehensive plan as part of the community development objectives.

Question Number 12 asked the residents to rank various types of development - in very general terms - which should be encouraged within the Township by the local officials. This question generated many written comments, as well, most which stated, in general, that the Township is "not in the development business" and should not pursue any development.

For this specific question, respondents were asked to rank, 1 to 5 (most important to least important), four (4) general land use types - single family residential, multi-family residential, retail and light industrial/manufacturing, along with a fifth catch-all category, "other, " where they were asked to specify another land use type.

For an unknown reason, this question appeared to meet with apathy from the respondents with many surveys returned with no ratings given, or possibly a note saying "not necessary," "leave as is," or just a check mark by the preferred type of development. It also appeared that many respondents did rate their "top" one or two types of development, and neglected the remainder of the question. The type of development which a clear majority of the respondents would like to see pursued in the Township is single-family residential. Of the total number of "votes", single-family residential received 70% as the top ranked type of development.

Not surprising, the second type of development which should be pursued, is multi-family residential. Of the 775 responses, 35% ranked this type of development as the second highest of those that should be pursued by the Township. Retail development garnered the most third place "votes", and the third highest total number of "votes" behind single-family residential. The fourth place development was light

industry/manufacturing; however, this type of development was most "consistent" in its placement in the ranking, and was only 42 "votes" behind single-family residential.

If you prioritize the type of development strictly by the highest number of "votes" per type per rank, the breakdown would be as follows:

- Single-family residential
- Multi-family residential
- Retail
- Light industry/manufacturing
- Other

However, to get a more realistic interpretation of the overall rankings by the respondents, we have assigned "points" to each rank:

Rank	Points
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

So, for each response ranking a development type as the top priority, 5 points will be awarded. By including all responses in the ranking it is possible to produce a listing which responds to each and every ranking by each and every respondent. The ranking of the development types using this method is somewhat different:

Single-family residential	----	---	3,988
Retail	-----	---	2,477
Light industry/manufacturing	---	---	2,379
Multi-family residential	-----	---	2,283
Other	-----	----	773

By reviewing the written responses as well as the total tally for each type of development, it can be surmised that the latter ranking is more representative of the respondent's interests, than the former.

Question 13 asked the residents to rank four specific improvements, plus an option to write-in a fifth improvement. Some of the identified improvements have been discussed in the recent past and have generated much interest among the residents. This survey question wanted to provide an additional opportunity for input on those possible improvements.

This question was aimed at determining whether any of the identified improvements would have backing by the residents. Reviewing the chart, at a glance, gives one the impression that road improvements are highest on a majority of the surveys, with a new fire station and recreation facilities vying for the next place on the priority list. A new municipal building was at the bottom of the list, along with a variety of "other" improvements.

In terms of "raw numbers" for each position, the improvements which the respondents would like to Township to provide over the next fifteen (15) years, were ranked as follows:

- Road improvements
- Road improvements
- New fire station
- New Township building
- New Township building

It is quite apparent that a new Township building is not considered a necessary improvement at this time.

By using the point system identified in Question 12, the overall ranking changes. Again, this listing is based on overall responses and the position listed (with total points in parenthesis):

Road improvements	-----	---	3,600
Recreation	-----	---	2,648
New fire station	-----	---	2,639
New Township building	----	---	1,667
Other	-----	---	1,164

Road improvements made almost every respondents list somewhere, indicating that the respondents have interest (be it positive or not) in the improvements. This question will assist the elected officials in determining future capital improvement projects by providing a guide to those improvements and services (as found in question 14) which are believed to be most important to the respondents.

Question 14 was specifically aimed at a variety of services which the respondents felt the Township should (or could) provide during the next fifteen (15) year period. As with the improvements identified in Question 13, respondents were asked to rank five (5) specific services which could be provided by the Township, over the next fifteen (15) years.

This question generated many "no responses" or "remain as is" responses. However, as you analyze the numbers per rank, it can be seen that each of the services generated a significant response as the "least important." Ranking the identified services by total responses is easy. However, none of the services were clearly the leader in overall responses. Only 68 "votes" separated the first and fifth service. Ranking the services strictly by the number of responses per rank, would have the list appear as follows:

- Street lights
- Expanded bus transportation
- Full-time police force
- Senior citizen center
- Garbage pick-up

Using the point system corresponds completely with the total number of responses per service rank:

Street lights	-----	--- 2,905
Expanded bus transportation	---	2,506
Full-time police force	-----	--- 2,165
Senior citizen center	-----	--- 1,985
Garbage pick-up	-----	--- 1,944

The numbers responding that the services "do not need to be changed" or "leave as is" were relatively high in comparison to the other questions of this section (554) indicating that many of the respondents feel comfortable with the way things are, and do not want to see any change.

The completion of this survey by over 43% of the residents of the Township indicates an interest in the community and the direction it should be taking. The responses do provide an indication of that direction and will be used, in concert with the Township planning meetings, to assist in the creation of the updated Township community development objectives.