

## CHAPTER 4

### KEY COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

#### Interview Results

As part of the public participation process, thirty Key Community Leader interviews were conducted based on ten leaders identified by each community. The interviews were designed to provide an opportunity for community leaders and residents to participate directly in the joint comprehensive planning effort. Interview topics were developed to poll key leaders on their attitudes, both subjectively and objectively, on a variety of subjects. A total of twelve topic areas were posed to each interviewee. Topics were selected to elicit attitudes toward a series of issues, which included the balance between different land uses, transportation, the preservation of open space, the opportunity for recreation, historic preservation, and environmental protection.

In general, interview respondents stated that it was the rural character of the Townships and the small-town atmosphere of the Borough that either attracted them to the area or influenced their decision to remain in the area. An overwhelming majority of respondents stressed that the pace and intensity of new development are the most important issues facing the area at present. When articulating their vision of the future of the area, an overwhelming majority of respondents stated they preferred to see future development concentrated in areas where it already exists, while preserving farmland and open space where possible. A number of respondents also stated the importance of enhancing and promoting a sense of community. When responding to what they are most dissatisfied with in the area, half of the respondents replied that it was past development trends. A quarter of respondents stated they were most dissatisfied with the loss of farmland and open space, while another quarter replied that they were most dissatisfied with traffic in the area. All respondents felt that agricultural land in the Townships should remain as such. However, respondents were split on the issue of whether or not communities should take an active role in preserving this resource. Half of the respondents interviewed thought that municipalities should take a more active role in preserving farmland, specifically in the form of zoning. Half the respondents, while supporting the continuation of agriculture as a land use, felt that although municipalities should encourage the continuation of agriculture, more stringent regulations were not necessary. On the issue of what are the most important environmental challenges or issues facing the area over the next ten years, a majority of respondents felt that the quantity and quality of ground water resources was most important. A few respondents, residents of the Borough, felt that air quality was an important environmental issue facing the area.

When asked about open space needs in the area, most respondents stated that linkages between existing open space resources were important, such as the Daniel Boone Homestead and Monocacy Hill, as well as access along the Schuylkill River. In discussion concerning recreation facilities, a majority of respondents felt that current facilities were sufficient to support area residents. A quarter of those responding, all residents of either Exeter or Amity Townships, felt that there was a need for a community youth center. When presented with a discussion on Route 422 and transportation in general, half of those responding felt that a bypass to Route 422 was key in addressing transportation and circulation issues along the Route 422 corridor. The other half of those interviewed felt that a bypass would lead to too much additional development and produce even greater growth pressures on the area. Other areas of concern included access management on Routes 562 and 662, traffic volumes on Shelborne Road and the need for a cross-town connector connecting 562 and 422 from the Borough through Exeter Township. In the discussion regarding the amount of commercial, industrial and office development, a majority of respondents felt there was enough commercial development in the area to support residents. A quarter of those interviewed felt that municipalities should support additional industrial development, especially environmentally friendly industries and office campus development. Finally, when asked about tourism in the area, all respondents expressed support but felt that its "growth" was something best achieved on a countywide basis.

### **Planning Questionnaire**

In the course of developing this Comprehensive Plan, planning questionnaires were sent out to households in St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity Region. The people to receive questionnaires in each municipality were identified by Joint Planning Committee members from the municipality. The results of each questionnaire are contained in Appendix I. The highlights of the St. Lawrence, Exeter and Amity questionnaire results are given below.

### **Questionnaire Results Highlights**

1. Respondents appear not willing to continue to accept new residential growth in the area at the same rates of growth the area experienced from 1990 to 2000.
2. The preferred types of development are conservation development in which conservation areas containing special features of a tract are protected and large areas of the tract remain in open space; large individual lots scattered throughout the Townships, cluster developments in which higher density housing concentrations are offset by open space and recreation areas; followed by assisted living facilities and retirement communities.

3. A clear majority of the responses were in favor of industrial development in planned industrial parks or on individual sites near existing industries within the Region.
4. A clear majority of respondents felt that commercial development in the Region should stay the same or decline. Those in favor of commercial development would prefer new restaurants and entertainment, motels, home furnishing stores, and day care centers.
5. An overwhelming majority of respondents were in favor of the agricultural land in the Townships remaining as agricultural land, to keep farmland available for future generations to farm and to limit development in the community.
6. The majority of respondents were in favor of programs to increase landscaping, decorative lighting, benches, building façade appearance and similar amenities in the Borough and villages.
7. The major transportation concerns are a Route 422 Bypass, intersection improvements, inadequate parking, inadequate public transit, lack of bikeways and walking trails, inadequate road maintenance, and congestion.
8. When asked if they would use the Schuylkill Valley Metro, the majority of respondents stated that they would occasionally use it. When asked if it would be an asset to the Region a majority said yes.
9. A majority of residents would use new biking and hiking trails and see a need for these trails to connect existing recreation facilities and settlements.
10. A clear majority of the respondents were in favor of providing additional public recreation facilities in the area, particularly the addition of trails.
11. The majority stated the level of commercial development along Route 562, Route 662, and Route 422 should stay the same.
12. Respondents also felt the level of industrial and office development along Route 562, Route 662 and Route 422 should stay the same.
13. When asked what they liked most about living in the St. Lawrence-Exeter-Amity Region, the majority responded they liked the rural setting/open space and its convenient location.
14. The majority said that the most important issues facing the Region today are development pressure, traffic, and taxes.

15. When asked what kind of community you want the Region to be in the future, people indicated they would like it to be a quiet, safe, friendly community with rural areas retained and residential development managed and less than in the past.