

Purpose

The Brown Township Agricultural Preservation Plan Steering Committee proposed the conduction of a residential survey to determine the current land use attitudes of residents and property owners in the Township. Specifically the Committee was interested in the strength of the residents' resolve regarding:

- * Growth and development
- * Farmland preservation
- * Protection of the unique natural environment found within the Township
- * Current satisfaction with the Township
- * A general idea of the type of development the residents would be most willing to accept if development were to occur.

The Committee members felt a survey would be beneficial in assisting in the development recommendations they would make to the Township Trustees regarding changes to the comprehensive land use plan.

It would also help to determine the areas where additional education of the residents may be necessary if the recommendations suggested substantive changes. The Steering Committee decided that an attitudinal survey would yield more useful results than asking the residents open ended or specific land use questions.

References

- * Dillman, D.D.2000. Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method. Second Ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- * Miller, L.E. 2001. Instrumentation and Procedures for Data Collection. Course Notes for Agr Educ 888, Department of Human and Community Resource Development.

How the Survey was Conducted

The Steering Committee set out to determine the overall attitude of residents in six different domains:

- * Satisfaction with living in the Township
- * Willingness to accept land use controls
- * Support for development in the Township
- * Support for protection of the natural environment
- * Support for farmland preservation
- * Support for a village center within the Township

In developing an instrument that would accurately measure the attitudes of residents on land use issues and their vision for the future of the Township, The Committee sought advice from various sources. The Township Trustees had contracted with the environmental consulting firm Bennett and Williams (to assist the steering committee in the development of the comprehensive land use plan update.

Fortunately, Bennett and Williams has experience in land use surveys and the statements used in other counties. The instruments used in these surveys served as a starting point for the development of the 2001 Brown Township Resident Survey instrument. The Committee augmented the Bennett and Williams instrument with additional statements that they felt would best address the six identified domains. Additional statements were submitted by outside experts including Dr. Larry Libby of The Ohio State University, Mr. Timothy DeWitt of Bennett, Mr. Timothy Lawrence for Ohio State University Extension, and Williams, and Mr. Timothy Richardson of The Nature Conservancy.

Rating System

A six-point Likert type of scale (i.e. 6 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree) was used to rate the attitude of the residents for the six domains. The six domains were divided into three different sections:

- ✦ Agree/disagree were used for statements 1-57
- ✦ Important/unimportant for statements 58-72
- ✦ Satisfied/unsatisfied for statements 73-83

To avoid bias, a percentage of the statements were worded either negatively or positively with each domain. The percentage of negative statements for the control domain was fifty, for development it was fifty-eight, for the environment twenty-two, for farmland preservation sixty, for satisfaction with living in the Township twenty-four, and for the village center it was twenty.

During the analysis of the data, the score for the negative statements was reversed for comparative purposes. For example, a score of six for a negative statement was changed to a one, a five was changed to a two, a four to a three, a three to a four, a two to a five, and a one was changed to a six. Estimation of the attitude for each domain is a summation for each individual item or statement. Individual items do not stand-alone for analysis. Thus, this change in value allows for their summation. Each of the six domains contains a different number of statements. Therefore, an average rather than a total value was used to compare the differences in attitude between each of the domains.

The questionnaire as a whole was pilot tested for reliability with a group of twenty-eight Brown Township residents. Using the statistical program SPSS to conduct Crombach's alpha a score for reliability for the instrument was .78. This score was deemed an acceptable level of reliability and no additional adjustments were made to improve the reliability. A panel of experts reviewed the survey instrument for content validity.

Survey Distribution

A list of Brown Township residents was compiled by members of The Committee using a combination of property owners from the Franklin County Assessors office and a list of registered voters in Brown Township from the Franklin County Board of Elections. The intended target populations for the survey were resident and property owners within the Township. The list was purged to eliminate duplication of residents represented, so only one survey was sent to each property or address. The final list contained 745 names and addresses. Using an online calculator at Creative Survey Research's website (<http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>) for a population of this size, with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of five a random drawing of 254 names would be necessary.

The original list of names were sorted alphabetically and assigned a number from 1 to 745. A random list of 254 numbers between 1 and 745 was generated at Research Randomizer web site (<http://www.randomizer.org>) and the resulting numbers were used to draw the names from the

alphabetized list.

Using the Dillman technique for mail survey (Dillman, 2000) all respondents were mailed a letter informing them of their selection for the randomized attitudinal survey of township residents. Four days later they were mailed a detailed cover letter signed by the Township trustees, a copy of the survey instrument, a stamped self-addressed return envelope, and a one-dollar bill. One week later, a post card reminder was sent to all participants in the randomized survey.

Two weeks later, all non-responders were mailed a second survey instrument along with a new letter from The Trustees. A week later members of The Committee called or made a personal visit with all of the remaining non-responders to request their completion of the instrument.

Obtaining Responses

A responder rate of 79.9% was achieved through the five rounds of contact. A random selection of the non-responders was then contacted with a final copy instrument, without any identification number, and a final appeal from the Trustees to complete the survey. This non-responder follow up was intended to determine if there was a difference between the responders and non-responders.

Approximately 12% of the non-responders submitted the instrument, well within the 10 to 20% considered acceptable (Dr. Larry Miller, The Ohio State University, personal communication). While no significant difference was observed between the responders and the non-responders for most of the statements, there were some notable exceptions.

Therefore, the average value for each statement for the responders was multiplied by .8 and added to the average value of each statement of the non-responders multiplied by .2 and the product appears as the "Adjusted Resident Response." This adjusted value does not make a drastic adjustment to the responder mean summated score for each of the six domains. It does allow for the generalization of the result to the entire population of the Township. According to Creative Research Systems, a response rate of 80% decreases the confidence interval from five to four for a population and sample size conducted for this survey. Thus, the generalization of the survey has a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of four.

Parallel Survey

The Township Trustees and the Steering Committee conducted a parallel survey where all of the residents and property owners who were not selected for the randomized attitudinal survey, were sent a survey instrument and a stamped self-addressed envelope. While this survey was self-selecting, conducted without a non-responder follow-up, and is not generalizable to the population of township residents and property owners, the results are nonetheless very interesting.

The response rate for this general survey was a remarkable 50+% with the results within just a few decimal points of the results obtained from the randomized attitudinal survey. In the conclusion, both the randomized attitudinal survey results and the general survey results are reported.

Using the Results

The results of this survey can be used by the Township to give an indication of the response of

residents for recommendations by the Brown Township Agricultural Preservation Plan Steering Committee, or land use decisions by various governing entities. The survey results can also be used to inform both the Committee and the Trustees of the need for educational programming to accompany any land use decision they deem necessary for the Township. To use these data for anything beyond these two areas may go outside the scope of this survey and could result in a non-predicted reaction by the Township residents.

Control

Randomized Survey Result 3.9 (General Survey 3.91)

The Township as a whole seemed open to some form of growth or land use control measures. Indeed the 1.54 rating for the question "Growth control is not necessary for Brown Township" provides the strongest evidence of this statement. The residents appear to favor zoning as the most appropriate means to implement this form of control and are less supportive of options like density bonuses or cluster developments.

However, they are open to housing development that would support or encourage open space. This may suggest that the residents have a preconceived idea of the cluster developments that is inconsistent with some of the current concepts purported by supporters of this concept. The results may indicate that the residents are comfortable with large lot (2.5 acre +) developments.

The residents concern about architectural design for new development and lack of support for affordable housing, likely indicates that the quality of development is important. There is obvious concern that the Township is growing too fast but lower support for growth control regulations beyond what is currently in place.

The residents seem comfortable with the use of septic systems in the Township, but appear somewhat open to the idea of connecting to a centralized sewer system. There does not appear to be strong support for the use of land application of treated effluent in the Township at this time.

The residents support the preservation of the environment, farmland, and historical amenities in the Township and appear to endorse the collaboration with others in this effort.

Development

Randomized Survey Result 2.81 (General 2.67)

There are two messages in the results from the development domain. First, the residents do not want to see the type of development found east of Alton-Darby occurring within the Township. Second, while they are supportive of open space, the environment, and farmland preservation there is very strong concern for retaining property values and the right to sell to the highest bidder.

Clearly, at this time the residents feel the best way to achieve both of these ideas would be for large lot housing development with no commercial or retail development. The residents appear to be willing to support the cost of this type of development and see no or little value in increasing the tax base with commercial/retail development.

There is a paradox in the view of golf course development. On the one hand, there appears to be some support for this type of development being a positive amenity for the Township.

On the other hand, the residents expressed a fairly strong concern for the impact that golf course developments would have on the environment.

There are some other very interesting results from this domain that may suggest a willingness to consider alternative forms of development. Most notably the strong support the residents indicated for children being able to walk to school (not currently possible in most areas of the Township) and the establishment of neighborhood schools within the Township. Both of these concepts seem unlikely in an exclusive large lot development pattern. These results may represent nostalgia for an idealized view of "living in the county," but may suggest merit for further exploration regarding how the residents would envision this occurring.

Environment

Randomized Survey Result 4.66 (General 4.49)

The high percentage of positive questions in this domain is primarily due to the large number of environmentally related statements placed in the important/unimportant section of the instrument. While it could be argued that the positive twist on these statements has skewed the results, there is little doubt from both the numerical and written responses from the participants that the Township residents feel strongly about protection of the environment.

Protection of the Big Darby Creek, which defines the entire western boundary of Brown Township, is a very high priority for the residents and property owners. On careful review of the statements, various activities associated with the Darby are responsible for the rating not being even higher. For example, when asked if children playing along the Darby or swimming in the Darby were important, the rating was 3.81 and 3.6 respectively. When asked specifically about protection of the Darby the ratings were generally above five.

The residents not only felt strongly about the Darby, but also wanted to see it remain in a more natural state with forested buffers, limited access (nature trails), and protection for wildlife. There appears to be strong support for additional safeguards and concern about the impact that development as golf courses may have on the Creek. If this or any other type of development does occur, the residents clearly felt that it is the responsibility of the developers to ensure environmental integrity.

The residents appear to be supportive of passive parks within the Township, if they help to protect the environment and open landscape of the Township, though it may be an over representation of the results to assume that some residents would not voice their objection to the idea of additional parks within the Township. From the Control domain, we saw that they are supportive of the Township collaborating with others for this purpose. This would suggest that the residents would be opened to collaboration with a park district to achieve this goal.

Farmland

Randomized Survey Result 3.89 (General 3.91)

Statements on farmland preservation were written to address not only the idea of protecting agricultural land, but to also judge the implications and inconveniences of living next to working farms. When asked specifically, the Township residents are supportive of farmland preservation and are generally willing to live with general farming practices.

There is support for both a purchase of development rights (PDR) program and the continuation of the current agricultural use value (CAUV) tax relief concept to aid in the preservation of farmland. However, there was weak support for the issuances of a tax levy to support a farmland protection program. If the Township pursues a purchase of development rights program, a thorough review of funding options and consideration of an education program on the cost/benefit of supporting such a program should be considered.

There is little support for the Farm Village concept (see page 13 of the Brown Township 1998 Comprehensive Plan Update) within the Township.

Village / Cluster

Randomized Survey Result 3.09 (General 2.9)

Consistent with the residents concern with development in the Township there is only moderate support or consideration for the village center or cluster development. Generally, the residents are concerned that any development project, no matter how confined, will encourage more development. If development is to occur, the residents appear to be most comfortable with the 2.5+ type of development as opposed to clustering homes and preserving large open spaced areas.

As discussed earlier, there may be some interest in developing concepts that promote neighborhood schools and children being able to walk safely to those schools. This, coupled with their preference for living in open landscaped areas, protection of farmland, and concern for the environment, should indicate that these concepts have some potential. However, more education on the concept of village center/cluster development will be necessary before the residents would be willing to accept the idea.

Satisfaction

Randomized Survey Result 4.25 (General 4.24)

Overall, the residents are quite satisfied with living in Brown Township. They are especially satisfied with fire protection services. They do not seem to mind having to travel to commercial activities and are satisfied with the way that the roads they need to travel are maintained.

The residents are concerned about bicycle traffic on the public roads, and seem interested in increasing the number of bike paths or trails in the township. Flooding and storm water drainage appear to be the leading concern for residents.

Resident Comments

* Mother & Dad, Brother, Daughter & Husband, child and youngest daughter all have homes in Brown Township. All have water problems, severe water problems. Nasty smelling well water and standing ground water. Yet all like Brown because of country feel. Ideally, if

Brown "has to be developed" please have more strict zoning rules. Hate the up-back housing. Would sure hate to have Hilliard "no appeal" look. Definitely like the Farm Village look. White fence around set back housing, silos, barns, and etc. look. Similar to Big Bear Farms in Powell. It can be done-hold firm to your ground. Take a look at Cold Sid Griffith farm on Hayden Run. Neat Development!

- ★ I am concerned about the fast pace at which houses are going up. I am also concerned about the speed and number of trucks driving on Amity Rd. from the quarry.

- ★ We do not want development. Stop development at Heritage Lake development at Alton Darby and the Homestead Park at Bike Path at Cosgray.. In our opinion, your petition and decision making process surrounding the Carr Ditch project was very poor. Here's an example of a worthless project in which there was no consideration of our rights as taxpayers. There should have been a clear-cut objective, a guarantee of workmanship and permission from all property owners and taxpayers affected. All costs should have been covered by the county - they are the real beneficiaries. Is Brown Township for sale to developers?

- ★ Growing too fast! No need for more development. No more Housing! Opposed to almost all new development--no more subdivisions!

- ★ Farmers should have the rights to develop the land as they choose. If the township has a desired direction, develop a good offer for them. The Darby Refuge will not accomplish the desired result!

- ★ Is there anything we can do to oppose Hilliard annexation? Storm water drainage is a big problem.

- ★ As more and more development takes place, I've noticed more standing water or land being saturated by water in my yard and surrounding yards. I live on Scioto Darby Rd. and would like someone to address the water runoff issues. Ponds will not be a solution. I would also like the trustees to at least discuss the speeds in which cars travel between Cosgray Rd. and Elliot Rd. Thanks.

- ★ This survey is a twofold questionnaire. It cross-examines character so to confuse the solution. This type of questionnaire is unserviceable.

- ★ I have had eleven phone calls from residents not understanding questions.

- ★ Brown Township should remain a farming community. We have the opportunity to have a rural area that is very accessible to the urban areas. Each home should be responsible for its own salvage, no field treatment or golf course treatment. Any kind of subdivision development or commercial development will create the need for road development, sewage treatment, greater need for public services and eventual crowding of schools. There is no obligation to the township or its residents to provide land for development to the sprawling city. Buying the farmer's development rights should be considered, if in turn hunting, fishing, and hiking privileges to residents of Brown, should be given more consideration by the farmers. Farming is a very unique and beneficial way of life and should be preserved, not for

nostalgia but for purpose. Please call me if there is anything my family can do to help stop development of the township. Thank you.

- * I moved here because I wanted the rural farming surroundings and would like to remain as close to that as possible! If I wanted commercial retail around me then I would have stayed where I was.

- * Pave and stripe township roads, mow bank more frequently. Increase sheriff/police patrol in township. Update communications to allow high speed access (cable modem, DSL line, road runner, optic cable.)

- * We attended a Car Ditch Mtgs. & Hearing, stating water was not a problem for us; the improvement made to ditch have not impacted us at all and I resent receiving a bill for fixing others problems. Given location of Rails/Trails along Hayden Run and high amount of bicycle traffic, bike paths &/or a slower speed limit are needed in the area before someone gets killed. Ditch grading still needed! There are several locations on Hayden Run where the water just stops, probably due to collapsed tiles/blocked ditches.

- * Bicycles on the road is a major problem within the township and needs to be addressed. The majority of people do not live in the township and have no respect for people who live on the roads which they are riding on. Drainage in the township is a major issue that needs to be worked on before any major development occurs.

- * I'd love a golf course but not a golf course development. I'd like the exclusive contract with Adelphia cable terminated and opened up to Time Warner. Correspondingly, I'd like the Township to work with Ameritech or other entities to improve the availability of residential broadband Internet access. The township should work to be considered as Hilliard residents for purposes of the pool, community center, etc. We pay Hilliard taxes. The township should work to get voting rights for Hilliard tax measures, which affect us.

- * New Zoning laws need to be addressed with Brown Township residents. Why have past zoning laws changed? And by who? Golf courses are plentiful for this area and I am a golfer. For example within 5 to 20 minutes away: Heritage, Thornapple, Raymond, Woerner Temple, Hickory Hills, and Wilson Road. Housing lots on less than 5 acres is insufficient. Brown Township has always been an agricultural farming community. To make it something different will change the whole make up and character of our township. The input as to where Brown Township goes should come first from the farmers who have a vested interest in farming into the long-term future. Anyone not having this interest and who own more than 20 acres of ground should not be on any committees or boards or positions that could influence the future of the Township. Thank you.

- * Most People here don't want commercial development of any kind. It's really quite simple--don't even think of changing our way of living. Just look around Columbus and you can see the cancer of development. Keep out development and commercial business and every one will live happily ever after in Brown Township. We don't want to be another Hilliard with mindless growth.

- * Bicycles should not be encouraged on Walker or Davis Roads. The road is too narrow.

The bicycles cause the cars to go left of center. They cause any cars to be unsafe when going around them. We need walking and bike trails but they need to be off the road. Speed on Walker Road is a problem, especially motorcycles on Sunday afternoon.

- * Parks, trails, and other open access areas need to be more clearly posted/better marketed so the public knows of their existence and can take advantage. Keep us rural. Commercial development is close enough!

- * We wanted to emphasize that we are very satisfied with the residential traffic. However, we are very dissatisfied with the commercial traffic, i.e. Olen Corp trucks. We have experienced several incidents when school buses are stopped to pick up or drop off and the trucks cannot stop. They travel too fast on the roads.

- * We don't need any more new houses being built. This area is being over built now. Senior citizens could use a real estate tax break. Their building houses both sides of Cosgray Rd. every place there is a vacant lot. It's killing the environment and also damaging the water table making it hard for people who depend on well water and septic tank sewage systems. Its time to call a halt to it and give the present inhabitants some consideration.

- * I think these were reasonably tough questions for me to answer-particularly when the question revolved around whether I thought something was a community issue. I have been in my house one month and I have no trouble with septic or water drainage. That does not mean it is not a problem elsewhere-good farmland tends not to drain. That's just an example of a tough question from my perspective.

- * We have a big concern about where these new developments are going to get their water. If they're in an area that gets Cols. Water that's one thing, but the proposed development between Elliott and Langdon roads will not receive that service, so where will they get water for 1200+ homes. If they use ground water, is there enough? Are we protected if our well goes dry because the aquifer is not sufficient? Or are we just left high and dry? Also, sewage, cleaned or otherwise, that is sprayed into the air is not a viable option. A few rainy days in this area will leave it flowing who knows where, as well as being carried by birds and any animals that are lucky enough to be left. I cannot imagine anything that would destroy the integrity of this township more than that. We know development is inevitable, but we are willing to work to keep the township a great place to live.

- * We are against high density home building (3 or 4 homes to an acre) but not against anyone building on a one half or a three quarter acre lot since we were given that privilege in 1961.

- * Keep the Township as is, preserve Darby Creek and the open area's we have. Let's take a lesson from the growth Hilliard has endured.

- * Brown Township is a great place to live. Effort should be made to preserve the rural character of the Township. Darby Creek is a vital asset and should be protected. Our family enjoys canoeing and fishing Darby Creek. We are also bicyclists. Residents need to have a tolerance and respect for bicycles on the roads. As well as farm machinery. With a little patience, the roads can accommodate all modes of transportation.

* Please send out info for the Township meetings via a couple different sources. I would like to attend and I'm sure others would too.

* We consider ourselves to be very fortunate to live in Brown Township. We like the rural atmosphere and close proximity to urban resources, and really feel that we presently have the best of both worlds here. We greatly fear the possible "Machester Farm" housing and golf course development, and feel that using sewage effluent land application methods would be a terrible mistake. That kind of development should definitely utilize a sanitary sewer system to send sewage to a centralized sewage treatment plant. We pray that land application of sewage effluent is never allowed in Brown Township. It just is not appropriate (yes, we know you're talking treated effluent)! Thank you for all of your efforts for the Township's well-being and future!

* Please do not forget to advocate for any compromise that would allow water and sewer hook up. We fear that the contamination of drinking water is or soon will be a factor since there are so many homes being built outside the scope of "developments."

* We are concerned about Hilliard pushing to the west. Living here the past 15 years we have seen countless developments built, would like to see things slow down, the traffic on our road is terrible (Alton Darby creek Rd.) Would like to see the open space stay open.

* We would like to see more police/sheriff patrolling area. Another park like Homestead but smaller would be nice. Please do not allow any further development like that at Cosgray and Scioto Darby (Norwich Township?) This is extremely unattractive, regardless of how nice the homes are, and it causes quite a problem with water drainage, which we don't need more of. We moved here because we could be out in the country with farmers as neighbors and still have the Hilliard schools. We don't want to lose this. We are supportive of anything that will help the farmers keep their land and help preserve the Darby Creek at the same time.



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