

## GENERAL SUMMARY

The following report synthesizes the Ensley Township 2006 survey results, completed as part of the Township's Master Plan update. The purpose of the survey is to assist the Planning Commission and Township Board in developing its Master Plan goals and objectives to guide the use of land and help the community make sound development decisions over the next 20 years.

Overall, respondents of the survey appear satisfied with current development patterns and wish to protect their rural character. A major land use change, such as more industrial, is not desired; however, there appear to be concerns related to traffic and natural resources. We have analyzed the most important results and have included some charts illustrating some of the survey responses that will be significant in the Master Plan update. An analysis of all survey questions is attached at the end of the memo for general reference.



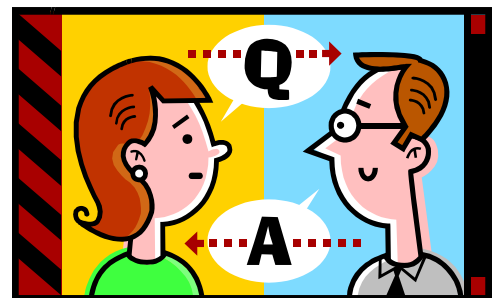
The survey was mailed to 893 property owners of which 191 were returned for a response rate of 21%. It has been our experience with similar projects that similar surveys will not reach a response rate over 20%. Accordingly, this return rate is considered modest, and may have been caused by various factors that discouraged some respondents, or, just as possible, may reflect the general satisfaction felt by other respondents.

On the other hand, those who do respond tend to be individuals who feel strongly about the issues in the survey. These individuals generally provide a more educated view and may be more likely to participate in other phases of the process, making the quality of response more significant than the quantity.

The survey was not intended to be scientifically accurate, such as those that may be seen on the evening news. Rather, the intent of the survey is to provide direction for the planning process and to frame the issues to verify whether existing goals and objectives are relevant for future needs.

## SURVEY RESULTS AND TRENDS

The 2006 survey covered a wide range of issues determined by the Township to be relevant to the Master Plan. Many of the issues covered are integral to the long term character of the community. And while the results need not, and should not, be taken literally – as a “command” from the public, they should be read as showing general trends or ideas.



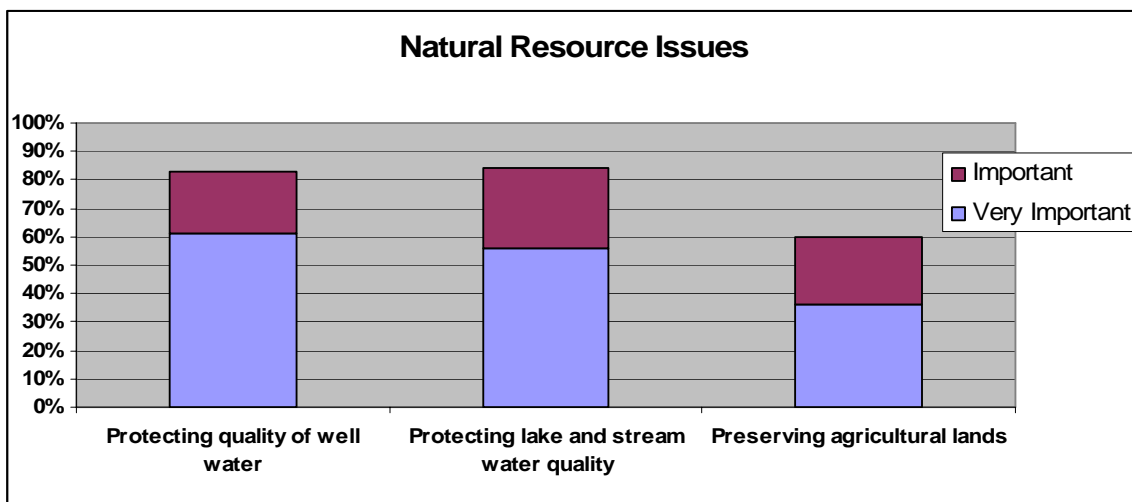
### WATER QUALITY

As is often the case in similar surveys, respondents gave high priority to the preservation of water quality. Question 10 asked respondents to rank the importance of an array of issues in the next ten years. The top two were:

- 1) Protecting the quality of well water sources (83%)
- 2) Protecting water quality in township lakes and streams (83%)

These responses are consistent with 1996 survey results, with “protecting water quality” rising from 71% in 1996 to 83% in 2006.

While 83% residents felt that protecting water quality would be important in the future (83%), 40% felt that it was already a problem (Question 7).



Other concerns related to natural resources involved the preservation of agricultural lands that 62% identified as important, even with the qualification that it would mean the loss of development rights for farmers. Other immediate concerns included “loss of wood lots to residential use” at 61%, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> out of 8 possible choices.

These concerns were further demonstrated by 69% of respondents who felt that preserving the environment while accommodating growth was an important issue for Ensley Township (Question 10). Taken together, these responses show that respondents placed a high value the natural assets of the township; therefore, land use planning and goals should account for preservation of natural features and water resource protection.

### FARMLAND PRESERVATION

The natural resource concern of farmland preservation was further clarified as a development related issue. As noted, survey respondents supported farmland preservation, by a 62% margin, even if it meant the loss of development rights for farmers.



But when asked about their growth philosophy, some

respondents (34%) were more inclined to allow growth to take “its own course”. This free market growth philosophy was the largest majority response out of five options for growth management. . However, more than 69% of citizens felt that a loss of large parcels to small splits was a significant problem in the township, a legitimate growth management concern for agricultural preservation.

These responses, when compared against options given in the survey for farmland preservation showed that nearly ¾ of respondents did not favor allowing higher density housing as a means to provide open space. Similarly, a housing preference response in Question 1 found that respondents tended to favor less dense residential development. (Use of the phrase ‘high density housing’ may have influenced this strong response, since a majority of residents relate this phrase with apartments or manufactured home parks.) This may indicate a need to educate residents about agricultural preservation options during the master plan update to assist in clarifying options for land development techniques.

### **RURAL CHARACTER**

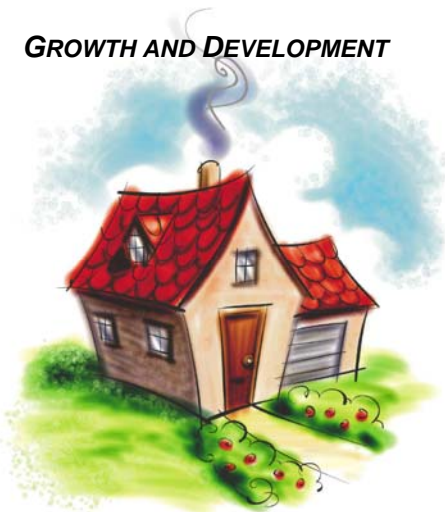
**T**ownship residents consider preservation of the rural and agricultural character important. Overall, 84% agree or strongly agree that Ensley should be a residential, farming community, as noted in Question 4.

While not anti-development, over 70% of respondents agree that development should be allowed as long as the Township remains primarily residential, farming and rural in nature. While many communities approach rural character preservation through open space development, residents were not supportive of higher density growth with common open space, with nearly 74% of area residents against this concept.

Again, as a matter of education, it would be helpful to provide area residents with visual depictions of this type of development to verify this finding since ‘high density’ evokes the negative images noted above.



### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

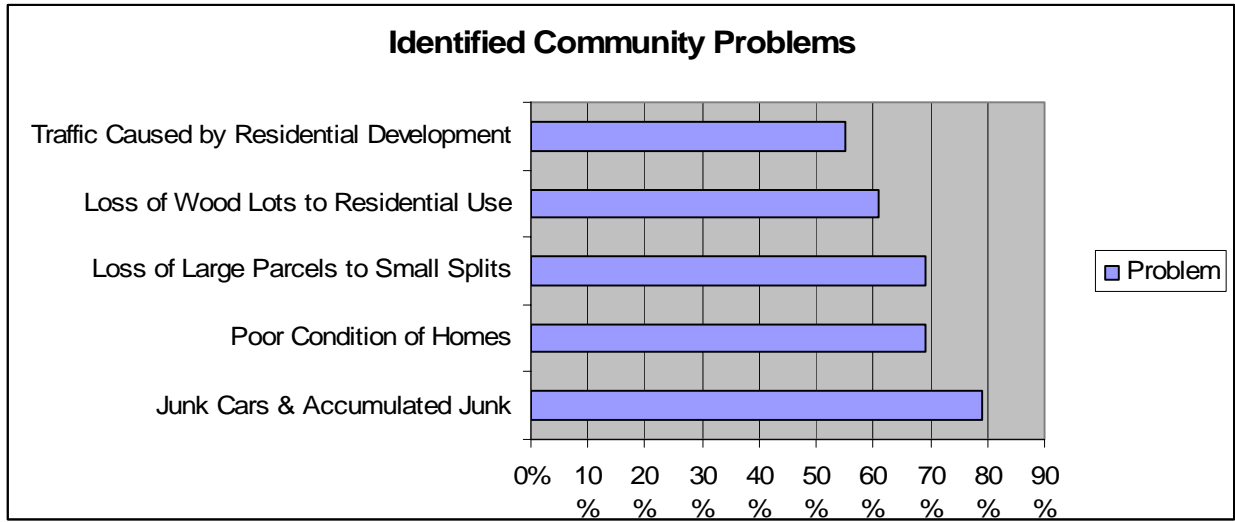


**T**here were several survey fields which inventoried the perceptions of growth and development for area residents. An overall majority of responses show a general satisfaction with existing types of housing and overall development; however, a large majority (69%) ranked the loss of large parcels to small splits as a problem for the township.

Housing preferences appear to favor single family homes on large lots, with approximately 91% of the respondents wanting to continue this type of development as well as the continuation of double wide modular homes. While the definition of large lot was not explored in the survey, decreasing the minimum lot size was not important (65%). An overwhelming

majority of respondents indicated that they do not want any alternative housing options, such as rental apartments, multiple-family condominiums, mobile homes or gated communities. Most residents feel that families moving to Ensley Township can find affordable housing (64%) within the existing housing stock.

Respondents appear inconsistent in their responses to home maintenance. While Question 2 finds that most residents (53%) agree that homes are well maintained throughout the township, and that homes in their neighborhood are well maintained (60%); Question 7 ranked the poor condition or lack of home maintenance as the number two problem in the township at (69%).



Existing problems felt by Ensley Township residents are indicative of many rural communities. Junk and accumulated junk is seen as the top problem in Ensley Township at 79%. This is an identified problem for many rural communities and one that requires a comprehensive education and enforcement program. A rural population that is spread out over the entire township weakens the ability to have area neighbors monitor the activities of other landowners, such as accumulating junk. Loss of wood lots is also a concern and a rural environment issue, and can be documented in the Master Plan by identifying areas of tree cover on a natural feature inventory map.

**NEW DEVELOPMENT**

Over 69% of area residents do not support requiring existing high density development to provide community water and sewer services, however, most residents did feel that any major new development should not be approved unless community water and sewer is available (66%). Township residents do not wish to pay the burden of new infrastructure, and prefer that new developments should bear the costs of these services, with approximately 71% responding that sewer and water should be paid through a special assessment district.

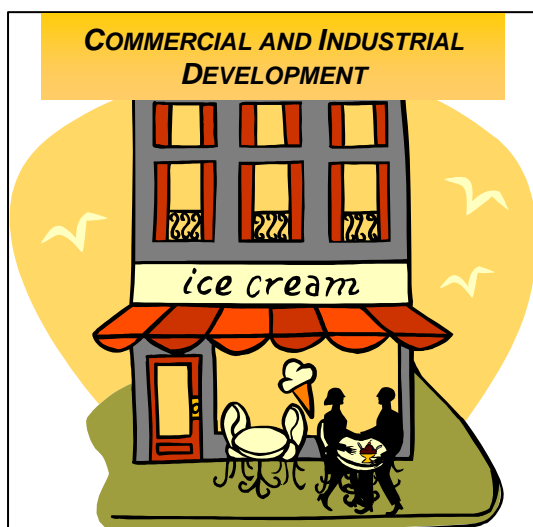
Many water quality related issues around inland lakes are related to the function of underground infrastructure, such as septic tanks. While most residents do not support requiring sewer and water in existing areas of high density, such as lakefront development, many do support the importance of protecting water quality in township lakes. Providing more education on the relationship between residential use and water quality may improve overall support for local planning initiatives to improve water quality.

## Township Growth Objectives

Area residents ranked several issues as very important for the guidance of growth in the township and two of the top five responses request the involvement of area citizens in the decision making process.

1. Involvement of residents in making decisions about growth in the township – 98%
2. Protection of existing neighborhoods from traffic and incompatible uses – 90%
3. Adequate revision of township ordinances to anticipate growth – 86%
4. Educate citizens on the impacts of growth – 86%
5. Availability and adequacy of utilities – 84%

At the opposite end of the spectrum, area residents do not feel that attracting affordable housing, in the form of manufactured home parks, attracting commercial business or attracting retirement communities is very important, with all three responses ranking over 50% not important.



The survey showed little desire to attract additional nonresidential development, particularly industrial in a variety of separate survey responses. Only 34% agreed or strongly agreed that “Industrial development should be encouraged as long as it is located where residential development is not affected” and over 68% disagreed or strongly disagreed that there should be industrial zoning in the township. The majority of township residents continue to support rural character over industrial uses. It can be assumed from these responses that residents do not wish to see industrial uses in Ensley Township which is similar to the 1996 Master Plan Update results.

There appears to be a slight majority of respondents in support of commercial development (48%), as long as

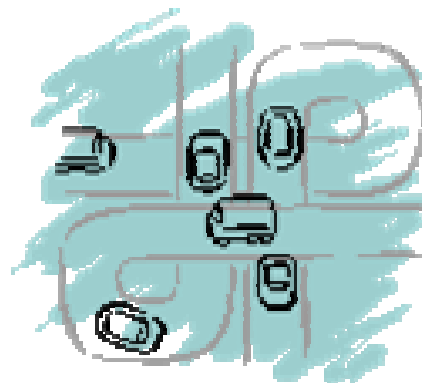
it is located where residential development is not affected. This response is narrowly balanced by 40% of respondents that did not support commercial development. With most residents favoring a rural environment, 51% (Question 12) did not feel that attracting commercial business was important (51%).

### Traffic

Several questions were targeted at identifying traffic and road problems in the township. While there were several items identified, the questions that received the most consensus within one category were those items that were not problems.

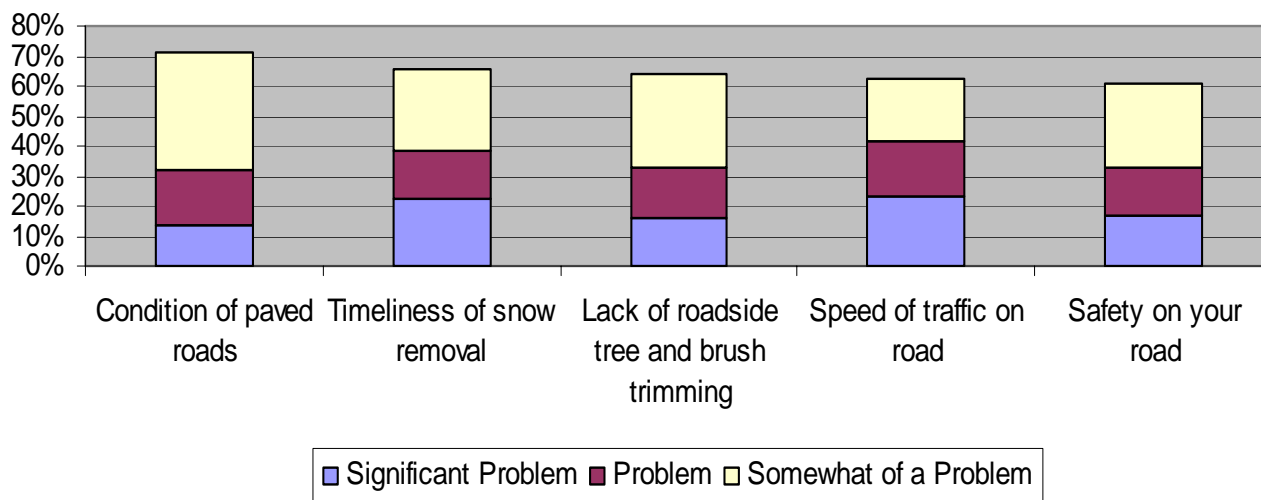
#### NO PROBLEM

- 1) Number or location of driveways on roads (72%)
- 2) Congestion on township roads (71%)
- 3) Lack of sidewalks and bicycle paths (65%)



The above responses are all reflective of the expectations of living in a rural community. Residents generally do not feel that sidewalks and bike paths are necessary, and congestion on township roads is not a problem. While the above items were not a problem, other key areas identified as problems relate to the overall safety of area residents. The top five transportation issues are listed in the graph below:

### Transportation Issues



Improving the condition of existing road systems is an issue that also emerged during the 1996 Master Plan survey process, receiving the largest response in 2006 for questions related to public service improvements. Question 7 found that many residents feel traffic from residential development to be a current problem within the township, and a large majority (90%) wants to protect existing neighborhoods from traffic and incompatible land uses.

While issues of speed on rural roadways is a local enforcement issue, Ensley Township can provide development control along high volume roadways through adequate site plan review standards of adjacent driveways and intersections to calm traffic entering on local road systems.

#### **Local Environmental Programs.**

Respondents were almost evenly divided between agreement and disagreement of a recycling center. Fifty-four percent of residents agree or strongly agree that the Township should conduct pickup of bulk trash more than once a year. This may also assist in the perception that junk cars and accumulated junk as an issue in the township.

Over 59% of participants agree or strongly agree that Township funds should be spent on programs that protect local wildlife. This may be sought through the purchase of area lands, coordinating site plan reviews to preserve contiguous areas of open space and cooperating with area land conservancies.



## SUMMARY

The survey will be an important tool for drafting goals and objectives for the Master Plan. Based on the responses, many of the existing master plan goals appear valid for today's residents.

### Goal – Land Use

New Home developments built in the township will reflect the rural character of the community emphasizing its residential, agricultural nature and respectful of existing natural features.

*Summary: This goal appears relevant to today's survey respondents. Residents favor low density residential development and do not support the idea of having alternative housing, such as condominiums, manufactured housing parks or gated communities. Essentially, residents prefer farming and residential uses over industrial and commercial development.*

### Goal – Agriculture

The Township will recognize and support the needs of agriculture in Ensley Township.

*Summary: Survey respondents agree that agricultural preservation is important. Area residents do not support cluster development with shared open space, however, there is concern that a loss of large parcels to small residential splits is an issue for Ensley Township. It appears the Township has support to explore agricultural preservation techniques, such as sliding scale, which limits the total number of divisions allowed based on total lot size.*

### Goal- Commercial and Industrial Development

Commercial and industrial development will be limited in size and located where traffic, noise, and other effects will not adversely affect residential and agricultural uses.

*Summary: There is little support for new commercial development, and no support for new industrial development. These responses are also consistent with 1996 public opinion polls, where area residents are primarily concerned with preserving the rural atmosphere of their community. This goal may need to be revised or eliminated in order to incorporate public opinion and general direction for growth and development.*

### Goal – Public Service

The Township will provide a level of public services that is appropriate for a rural and agricultural community.

*Summary: Issues in 1996 appear relevant today regarding the condition of local roads and enforcement of ordinances. Area residents feel new development should provide and pay for their sewer and water and that the township should provide at least one bulk trash pick up per year. Almost 60% of area residents feel that Township funds should be spent to protect local wildlife which may also become a relevant goal for the Environmental section. Residents provided a strong response to their desire to be involved in the planning process and also for more information on related planning issues.*

**Goal- Environmental**

Protection of surface and groundwater resources, natural features, and other environmental characteristics will be a primary consideration of the Township when reviewing development proposals.

*Summary: Protection of natural features is a strong issue for residents today, just as it was in 1996. While protection of resources is important for development proposals, the majority of development occurs on a lot by lot level, which may require a stronger set of zoning regulations to provide environmental protection.*

## Ensley Township Master Plan Community Survey Analysis Results Highlights by Questions

### **Question 1: How would you like to see the housing progress in Ensley Township?**

A: Single family homes on large lots.

The majority of respondents to this question indicated that they would like to see either *the same* amount of single family homes on large lots within the township or *more*. Approximately 91% of respondents stated a preference for either *more* or *the same* amount of single family home on large lots.

D: Doublewide or modular homes.

Sixty-two percent of survey respondents indicated they would like to see *the same* amount of doublewide or modular homes in the township.

F: Rental apartment units

G: Multiple family condominiums

H: Parks for manufactured housing or mobile homes

J: Gated communities

Survey participants responded similarly to Question 1, Parts F, G, H, and J. An overwhelming majority of responding residents indicated they would like *none* of these housing types (rental apartment units, multiple family condominiums, parks for manufacture housing or mobile homes, nor gated communities) to progress in the township.

### **Question 2: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

A: I am in favor of high density housing with maintained open spaces near my home.

A strong majority of respondents (74%) stated they *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with this statement. When examined in conjunction with the results of Question 1, Parts F, G, and H (residential varieties typically associated with higher density), responding township residents seem to favor residential development that is less dense.

B: Families wishing to move to Ensley Township can find affordable housing.

Survey participants tend to *agree* (64%) that there is enough affordable housing in the township for families wishing to join the community while only 9% *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.

I: I am in favor of industrial zoning in the township.

J: I am in favor of an industrial district in the township.

Respondents indicated almost identical results to these two statements regarding industrial uses in the township. Sixty-eight percent responded with either *disagree* or *strongly disagree* to Question 2, Part I and 69% responded in the same manner for Question 2, Part J. It could be assumed from these responses that residents do not wish to see industrial uses in Ensley Township.

K: The homes in my neighborhood are well maintained.

L: The homes in the township are well maintained.

In general, residents *agree* that homes are well maintained throughout the township. A greater number of residents *agreed* that homes in their neighborhood are well maintained (60%) than those that *agreed* that homes in the township are well maintained (53%).

**Question 3: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

A: The Township should require existing areas of higher density growth to provide community water and sewer services.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicate they *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that existing areas of higher density growth should provide community water and sewer services.

B: Major new development should not be approved unless community water and sewer is available.

This statement is similar in nature to Question 3, Part A, however participants responded with contrasting results: 66% indicated that they either *agree* or *strongly agree* with this statement.

D: Community water and sewer services should be paid for by those who will be using them through special assessments.

Approximately 71% of respondents *agree* or *strongly agree* that community services should be funded by those who are using them. Examining Parts B and D together, it is reasonable to assert that citizens believe development should not begin until community services are available and once completed the occupants or owners of the development should bear the cost of these services.

E: Storm water drainage is a problem in my neighborhood.

Storm water drainage, another critical community service, does not appear to be an issue for most Ensley residents: Seventy-nine percent of responding residents indicated that they either *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with this statement.

**Question 4: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

A: I believe Ensley Township should be a residential, farming community.

C: I believe Ensley Township should have more commercial and industrial use.

Slightly more than 84% of respondents *agree* or *strongly agree* that Ensley should be a residential, farming community. Contrastingly, nearly 70% of residents stated they either *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with Part C of Question 2. Parts A and C, essentially, are asking residents whether they prefer farming and residential uses or industrial and commercial uses in Ensley. This large difference indicates a strong preference to promote and maintain Ensley's rural character.

B: I believe Ensley Township should have a mixture of residential, farming, commercial, and industrial uses with emphasis on farming and residential use.

An equal distribution of responses exists between residents indicating that they either *agree* or *strongly agree* and those that *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with this statement. Slightly more residents, however, *strongly disagree* (16%) than those that *strongly agree* (10%).

**Question 5: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

A: Development should be allowed as long as the Township remains primarily residential, farming and rural in nature.

Similar to Question 4, Part A, the response to this statement reinforces the idea that Ensley residents want the township to remain rural in nature. Just over 70% of participants *agree* or *strongly agree* with this statement.

F: Industrial development should be encouraged in the Township as long as it is located where residential development is not affected.

The majority of respondents *disagrees* or *strongly disagrees* with this statement (55%) while only 34% of respondents *agree* or *strongly agree*.

H: Commercial development should be encouraged in the Township as long as it is located where residential development is not affected.

Responses to this statement contrast those of Part F. Forty percent of respondents *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with this statement while 48% *agree* or *strongly agree*.

It is evident that most recipients value the rural residential nature of Ensley Township and would like it to remain as such; however, they do support development as long as this character is maintained. They are specific in the type of development they wish to see (evidenced by the difference in response to Parts F and H of Question 5). Commercial development would be supported by the residents than industrial development.

**Question 6: How strongly do you agree or disagree that Ensley Township funds should be spent for the environmental programs listed?**

A: Providing a recycling center

Respondents were almost evenly divided between *agreement* and *disagreement* with the idea that Township funds should be spent on a recycling center. A slight majority exists with those who *agree* or *strongly agree*.

B: Central pickup of bulk trash more than once a year

Fifty-four percent of residents *agree* or *strongly agree*, the Township should conduct a pickup of bulk trash more than once a year.

C: Protecting local wildlife

This environmental program received the most support of all three issues listed in the survey. Fifty-nine percent of participants *agree* or *strongly agree*, Township funds should be spent on programs that protect local wildlife.

**Question 7: How much of a problem are the following?**

A significant majority listed all of the following as *big problems* or *little problems* in the Township:

A: Junk cars and accumulated junk.

(28% Big Problem + 51% Little Problem)

B: Poor condition or lack of maintenance of homes.

- (14% Big Problem + 55% Little Problem)
- D: Loss of large parcels to small splits.  
(39% Big Problem + 30% Small Problem)
- E: Loss of wood lots to residential use.  
(27% Big Problem + 34% Small Problem)
- H: Traffic caused by residential development.  
(14% Big Problem + 41% Small Problem)

The loss of large parcels to small splits was indicated as the *biggest problem* and the lack of affordable housing was marked as bring *no problem* among the choices given.

**Question 8: How much of a problem are the following conditions?**

Residents were asked to identify whether various issues within the Township were either a *significant problem, problem, somewhat of a problem, or no problem*. The following are the three issues which received the largest number of responses for each of the categories (*significant problem, problem, somewhat of a problem, or no problem*):

Significant Problem

- K: Speed of traffic on your road (23%)
- F: Timeliness of snow removal from roads (22%)
- J: Traffic speed on main thoroughfares such as Cypress, 120<sup>th</sup>, and Newcosta (21%)

Problem

- K: Speed of traffic on your road (18%)
- E: Condition of paved roads (18%)
- F: Timeliness of snow removal from roads (16%)

Somewhat of a Problem

- N: Amount of roadside litter (42%)
- E: Condition of paved roads (39%)
- I: Condition of unpaved roads (34%)

No Problem

- D: Number or location of driveways on roads (72%)
- B: Congestion on township roads (71%)
- C: Lack of sidewalks and bicycle paths (65%)

The majority of problem issues, as indicated by participants, seem to lie in the area of transportation and transportation systems management (evidence by Parts K, F, J, and E of Question 8).

**Question 9: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

- A: The town hall is adequate for current township needs.
- D: The Fire Barn is adequate for current township needs.
- E: The Rescue Unit is adequate for current township needs.

Residents were asked to evaluate the adequateness of the township services listed above. These three Parts (A, D, and E) received a significant majority of responses indicating residents *agree* or *strongly agree* that these services are

adequate for current township needs (Part A: 71%, Part D: 75%, and Part E: 68%).

B: The town hall should be remodeled to address facility use needs.

Related to Part A, Part B asks residents if the town hall should be remodeled because of current needs. Because of the response to Part A indicating that residents feel the town hall is adequate for current township needs, it is logical that residents would feel the town hall does not need to be remodeled. This is reflected in the results for Part B. The majority of responses (44%) *disagrees* or *strongly disagrees* that the town hall needs to be remodeled.

In general, the responses indicated for Parts F, G, H, I, J, K, and L display are mixed between those either *agreeing* with the statements and those having *no opinion* of the statement.

**Question 10: How important are the issues noted below for Ensley Township in the next ten years?**

Participants were asked to indicate whether the issues presented in the survey were going to be either *very important*, *important*, *somewhat important*, or *not important* to the Township in the next ten years or whether they had *no opinion* of the issue. The following are the three issues which received the largest number of responses for each of the categories (*very important*, *important*, *somewhat important*, *not important*, or *no opinion*):

Very Important

- D: Protecting the quality of well water sources (61%)
- A: Protecting water quality in township lakes and streams (56%)
- B: Preservation of agricultural lands even if it means loss of development rights for farmers (36%)

Important

- E: Controlling development and traffic volumes along major roadways (35%)
- F: Controlling development and traffic volumes along all roadways (31%)
- K: Preserving the environment while accommodating growth (30%)

Somewhat Important

- H: Improving emergency services (33%)
- I: Improving the quality of existing roads (28%)
- O: Need for more vigorous enforcement of township ordinances (26%)

Not Important

- M: Decreasing the minimum lot size (65%)
- G: Attracting major employers for commercial development (55%)
- J: Development of more parks and recreational programs (41%)

No Opinion

- N: Increasing the minimum lot size (13%)
- M: Decreasing the minimum lot size (12%)
- C: Providing community water and sewer to lake areas of the township (11%)

The most important issues indicated by residents involve the protection of natural resources; specifically water. Issues of secondary importance are primarily targeting transportation. This is consistent with the issues residents indicated as problems in Question 8.

**Question 11: Please select one statement which best describes your opinion about growth in Ensley Township.**

Residents were given six statements regarding growth in the township. Below are the statements in order from most chosen to least.

- B: I believe growth should be allowed to take its own course (34%)
- D: I believe growth should be limited throughout the township (24%)
- C: I believe growth should be limited to certain areas of the township (15%)
- A: I would like to see growth encouraged in the township (11%)
- E: The township should do what is needed to stop new development (9%)
- F: No growth (7%)

Most respondents believe that limited growth would be appropriate for Ensley Township.

**Question 12: When considering growth, the township must consider several objectives. How important are these objectives to you?**

Participants were asked to indicate whether the objectives listed were going to be *very important*, *important*, *somewhat important*, or *not important* to the Township in terms of township growth or whether they had *no opinion* of the objective. The following are the three objectives which received the largest number of responses for each of the categories (*very important*, *important*, *somewhat important*, *not important*, or *no opinion*):

Very Important

- F: Involvement of residents in making decisions about growth in the township (57%)
- E: Protection of existing neighborhoods from traffic and incompatible uses (43%)
- A: Availability and adequacy of utilities (36%)

Important

- G: Adequate revision of township ordinances to anticipate growth (30%)
- A: Availability and adequacy of utilities (29%)
- E: Protection of existing neighborhoods from traffic and incompatible uses (27%)

Somewhat Important

- G: Adequate revision of township ordinances to anticipate growth (27%)
- J: Attracting long-term care facilities for care of elderly people (26%)
- C: Educate township residents about the impact of growth (25%)

Not Important

- H: Attracting manufactured home parks to provide more affordable housing (69%)

- D: Need to attract commercial businesses (51%)
- I: Attracting retirement communities (50%)

No Opinion

- K: Need to increase available adult foster care capacity (8%)
- B: High quality of development (6%)
- I: Attracting retirement communities (6%)

Residents felt their involvement with making decisions regarding growth was most important. Also, consistent with responses to Question 1, Part H, respondents believe the attraction of manufacture home parks is not important in regards to growth.