

**2010 Lehigh Valley
Land Use Public Opinion Survey**

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

May 2010

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
SUMMARY OF PLANNING ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SURVEY FINDINGS	1
METHODOLOGY	2
RESULTS OF THE SURVEY	3

INTRODUCTION

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) has learned that one of the best ways to find out what people are thinking about life in the area is to conduct an attitude survey of a sizeable number — 4,500 to 5,000 — of Lehigh Valley residents. This method, involving a mail-out mail-back survey, was used successfully by the Commission in 1974, 1988 and 1999. All of these public opinion surveys were conducted in conjunction with updates to the *Comprehensive Plan for Lehigh and Northampton Counties*. Our last opinion survey was done 11 years ago. We decided it was time to see if opinions on a number of questions relating to land use and growth had changed during the past decade. This report identifies the results of the 2010 opinion survey and provides an analysis of the findings.

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SURVEY FINDINGS

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Preservation of open space is a big issue in the Lehigh Valley. Ninety-two percent of the respondents favor preservation of farmland. Preservation of rivers, creeks, streams and lakes are given high environmental protection priority. Development of trails for hiking, biking, rollerblading and horseback riding and development of nature preserves rank highest in terms of needed park, recreation and cultural facilities. Seventy-one percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that more parks, recreation facilities and open space should be acquired. Farmland preservation and open space protection also rank high in terms of important planning issues.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Respondents were nearly evenly split on the affordable housing issue — 52% think there is a need for more affordable housing, 48% do not. Most of the “no” responses on this issue came from people in the 35-44 and 45-54 age groups. Fortunately, there was a stronger consensus on what to do about affordable housing. The favored techniques were: build smaller houses and permit greater variety in housing (more twins, townhomes, apartments, condominiums, modular housing).

NEW CONCEPTS

Respondents to the opinion survey were very supportive of new concepts in the design of developments. There was very strong support for cluster design concepts, traditional neighborhood development, transit-oriented development (TOD) and mixed uses. Respondents were much less supportive of high density development such as higher buildings, more apartments, high rise condominiums and office buildings. This suggests that developments that are out of character in some neighborhoods might meet with opposition.

FEATURES IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

Major features that are important to people buying a new home are: preserved open space and environmentally sensitive features, public sewer and water and attractive landscaping. Small lots and on-lot sewer and water are not very attractive to buyers of new homes.

TRANSPORTATION

There is interest in improving inter-city commuter service by expanding bus service or building commuter rail facilities between the Lehigh Valley, New Jersey, New York, and Philadelphia. There is also strong support for widening and improving existing roadways to reduce congestion.

ROUTE 22

There is very strong support for adding more lanes to Route 22 and improving the interchanges. Respondents were less enthusiastic about building by-pass roads and improving local roads as an alternative to widening Route 22.

LIKE BEST

The top three things people like best about living in the Lehigh Valley are its close proximity to New York, Philadelphia and shore points, convenient access to many daily needs, and diversity, variety and balance between city and rural environments.

LIKE LEAST

The top three things people like least about living in the Lehigh Valley are traffic congestion, perception of crime and drug problems, too much development and sprawl. The items liked least are not surprising and they are expressed in various ways in this opinion survey. Support for improving existing roads and widening Route 22 is consistent with worries about traffic congestion. Concern about crime is reflected in responses to question 10 where people identified safe neighborhoods as the most important factor in choosing a place to live and in question 13 where nearly 50% of respondents think the quality of life has gotten worse in the past 10 years. Concerns about development and sprawl also are reflected in the identification of loss of open space as a problem in question 12 and in question 11 where 43% of the respondents feel growth should be much lower or slightly lower than projected.

METHODOLOGY

The Lehigh Valley Land Use Public Opinion Survey was mailed to a 1.25% sample of active registered voters in Lehigh and Northampton counties in January 2010. We employed the same survey method that was used in our 1974, 1988 and 1999 voter opinion surveys. Names were selected in a manner to assure that active registered voters in various geographic parts of the Lehigh Valley would be included in the sample. In addition, the LVPC offered survey participants the option to complete the survey online.

A fundamental question in any survey is defining who the population will be and how to select a sample from among them. Years of experience has shown that the registered voters list works best. Registered voters are indeed county government's constituency. Their opinions have a recognized validity when it comes to determining regional goals and policies. Another important factor is that lists of registered voters are accessible through the Pennsylvania Department of State. It was also important, for comparative purposes, to use a survey sample that was similar to the ones used in 1974, 1988 and 1999. Surveying the total Lehigh Valley population would have been far too expensive, difficult and

unnecessary. Lists of other populations, such as property owners, were likely to have other built-in socio-economic biases and were deemed even more problematic. Given this set of assumptions, a sample of registered voters was used for the fourth time.

The 1999 public opinion survey used a 1.25% sample that included 4,000 names. A 1.25% sample of active registered voters was used for the 2010 public opinion survey. The technique to identify the sample was as fair and representative as possible. A stratified sample method was employed, taking every 50th name from each county's voters list, which was arranged in alphabetical order by last name. Every 2nd record from this sample was retained. The remaining names were obtained by taking every 360th name from the original list (excluding every 50th name). Inactive voters were removed from the list. This provided us with a sample of 4,804 names. A total of 1,205 surveys were returned to the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. This resulted in a 25% return rate which is good for a survey of this type.

The opinion survey contains two types of questions: socio-economic and demographic, and attitudinal. All responses were tabulated to determine how many and what percentage of the respondents answered each question. Cross-tabulations were done for a few questions. This allowed for an analysis of how responses to selected questions related to the selected respondent characteristics. Separate tabulations of all questions also were done for each county. The tabulations for each county are available from the LVPC upon request.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

This section presents the results of the land use public opinion survey. Each question is shown as it was presented in the survey. This is followed by a listing of the results presented by number of responses and the percentage breakdown where appropriate. There also is a short narrative. Many of the questions asked in the 1999 survey were included in the 2010 survey. For these questions, a comparison between the 1999 and 2010 responses is given.

1. *In which County do you reside?*

County	Number	%
Lehigh	659	55.2
Northampton	534	44.8
Total	1,193	100.0

No response — 12

The survey responses are representative of the population split between the two counties. The latest population counts are as follows.

County	2000 Census	2008 Census Estimate
Lehigh	53.9 %	53.6 %
Northampton	46.1 %	46.4 %
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %

2. *How long have you lived in the Lehigh Valley (Lehigh or Northampton Counties)?*

Years	Number	%
Less than 1 year	7	0.6
1 to 2 years	23	1.9
3 to 4 years	63	5.3
5 to 10 years	120	10.0
11 to 20 years	150	12.6
More than 20 years	833	69.6
Total	1,196	100.0

No response — 9

Most respondents are long-term residents. Over 82% have lived in the Lehigh Valley for over 10 years. This is fairly close to the results of the 1999 survey when over 86% said they had lived in the Lehigh Valley for over 10 years.

3. *In what type of municipality do you reside?*

Type	Number	%
City	304	25.6
Borough	141	11.8
Township	744	62.6
Total	1,189	100.0

No response — 16

Townships, with nearly 63% of the respondents, are somewhat over represented in the survey. Bureau of Census numbers for 2000 and the latest municipal population estimates show the following:

Type	2000 Census	2008 Census Estimate
City	35.3 %	32.4 %
Borough	16.3 %	15.1 %
Township	48.4 %	52.5 %
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %

In 1999, the survey response by municipality was as follows: cities — 26.7%, boroughs — 15.5% and townships — 57.8%.

4. *In which type of area do you reside?*

Type	Number	%
Urban	253	22.4
Suburban	607	53.9
Rural	267	23.7
Total	1,127	100.0

Don't know — 51

No response — 27

Over one half of the survey respondents believe they live in a suburban area. This was a judgment question since no definitions of the three types of areas were provided. There is a fairly even split between the respondents who feel they live in urban and rural areas.

5. *Please indicate your age bracket:*

Age Bracket	Number	%
18 – 24	29	2.4
25 – 34	96	8.1
35 – 44	160	13.5
45 – 54	282	23.8
55 – 64	325	27.4
65 and over	295	24.8
Total	1,187	100.0

No response — 18

The respondents to the attitude survey are older than the general population. Only 29 (2.4%) persons in the 18–24 age bracket returned surveys. Over 52% of the responses were from people over the age of 55.

6. *How many years of school have you completed?*

Educational Attainment	Number	%
Less than nine years	6	0.5
Attended, but did not complete high school	26	2.2
Completed high school	262	22.0
Attended, but did not complete college	184	15.5
Completed college	392	33.0
Post graduate or professional degree	319	26.8
Total	1,189	100.0

No response — 16

The respondents to the survey are much more educated than the population as a whole. The latest information available on educational attainment is from the 2000 Census. In 2000, 19.1% of the Valley’s population that was 25 years of age and over did not have a high school education. Only 2.7% of the survey respondents have not completed high school. About 60% of the survey respondents have completed college compared with the 23.5% reported by the 2000 Census.

7. *Please indicate your total household income category in 2009.*

Income	Number	%
\$ 0 – \$ 27,999	113	10.2
\$28,000 – \$ 43,999	152	13.7
\$44,000 – \$ 54,999	111	10.0
\$55,000 – \$ 65,999	96	8.7
\$66,000 – \$ 82,999	147	13.3
\$83,000 – \$109,999	200	18.0
\$110,000 and above	289	26.1
Total	1,108	100.0

No response — 97

Most of the respondents to the survey have good incomes. This is especially true because 20% reported they are retired or laid off. Household income usually declines after retirement. About 66% have total household incomes that exceed \$55,000 a year. It is difficult to compare 2000 Census results with the survey because of inflation during the past ten years. However, in 1999 the median household income in the Lehigh Valley was \$44,259.

8. *How many wage earners are in your household?*

Type	Number	%
One	377	31.9
Two	519	43.9
More than two	47	4.0
None (Retired, laid-off, etc.)	238	20.2
Total	1,181	100.0

No response — 24

Nearly one half of the respondents have two or more wage earners in their household. About 20% are retired or unemployed. This is not surprising because 24.8% reported they are 65 years of age or over.

9. *What type of dwelling do you live in?*

Type	Number	%
Single family detached home	890	74.8
Duplex, twin or double home	96	8.1
Rowhouse or Townhome	80	6.7
Apartment	63	5.3
Mobile home	15	1.3
Condominium	29	2.4
Other	17	1.4
Total	1,190	100.0

No response — 15

This same question was asked in the 1999 attitude survey with the following results:

Type	Number	%
Single family detached home	809	76.8
Duplex, twin or double home	94	8.9
Rowhouse or Townhome	66	6.3
Apartment	54	5.1
Mobile home	12	1.1
Condominium	11	1.0
Other	8	0.8
Total	1,054	100.0

No response — 24

10. *If you were choosing a place to live in the Lehigh Valley, which items would be most important to you? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Safe neighborhood	342	240	144	726
Low taxes	161	149	140	450
Good schools	141	128	82	351
Affordable yet quality housing	106	102	82	290
Pleasant residential areas	90	117	122	329
To live in a rural area	79	35	55	169
Close to my (or my spouse's) job	63	85	90	238
Good emergency services (police, fire & ambulance)	40	87	106	233
Close to parks and open space	36	52	66	154
Close to shopping	28	27	73	128
LANTA bus service	10	11	19	40
Good water and sewer service	10	57	77	144
Close to recreational opportunities	8	14	31	53

The responses to the question have been arranged in descending order for the responses ranked most important (1st). Safe neighborhood ranks at the top of the list and it also got the most total responses — 726.

11. *Lehigh Valley Planning Commission information shows that the Lehigh Valley is expected to grow from 579,156 persons in 2000 to about 767,856 persons in the year 2030, an increase of 33%. I believe future population growth should be:*

Response	Number	%
Much higher	23	2.0
Slightly higher	71	6.1
As projected	238	20.4
Slightly lower	228	19.5
Much lower	284	24.3
No opinion/Don't know	323	27.7
Total	1,167	100.0

No response — 38

Respondents are split on whether they want a lot of population growth in the Lehigh Valley. Nearly 44% want the growth rate to be either slightly lower or much lower than projected by the LVPC. Only 8% of respondents want the growth rate to be higher.

Our 1999 attitude survey contained a similar question, but with a lower growth rate assumption of 7% and a shorter time span of ten years. The shorter span of time may also account for the greater certainty of respondents in the 1999 survey. In 1999, only 15.9% responded with no opinion/don't know, whereas in 2010, 27.7% responded with no opinion/don't know. Overall, the response in 1999 was similar although respondents were less tolerant of growth. Only 2.5% wanted to see a higher growth rate while almost 59% preferred a lower growth rate.

12. *The most significant consequences of growth in the Lehigh Valley since the year 2000 have been: (Please check no more than 3 items.)*

Consequence	Number	%
Increasing traffic congestion	917	28.7
The loss of open space	702	21.9
Increasing crime	511	16.0
Overcrowding in the schools	493	15.4
Increasing property values	285	8.9
More cultural and entertainment opportunities	141	4.4
Improved business climate	71	2.2
More and better job opportunities	68	2.1
There has been no noticeable impact	14	0.4
Total	3,202	100.0

The four top choices — increasing traffic congestion, the loss of open space, increasing crime and overcrowding in the schools — got 82% of the total responses. The same question was asked in 1999. Increased traffic congestion (38.5%) was listed first, the loss of open space (26.8%) was listed second followed by overcrowding in schools (17.4%).

13. *What do you think has happened to the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley during the past 10 years?*

Type	Number	%
Has improved	214	18.2
Has gotten worse	562	47.7
About the same	321	27.3
No opinion/Don't know	80	6.8
Total	1,177	100.0

No response — 28

The results of this question are very similar to the results obtained from the 1999 attitude survey. Just as in the 1999 survey, almost one half (47.7%) of the respondents in the 2010 survey think the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley has gotten worse in the past 10 years. Only 18.2% believe it has improved.

We decided to do some cross-tabulations to see how the responses to this question broke down by age bracket, type of municipality and county. The results of these cross-tabulations are shown below:

Responses by Age Bracket (by % of responses)						
Type	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +
Has improved	7.1	22.3	24.7	19.7	18.9	12.0
Has gotten worse	39.3	29.8	36.1	51.8	49.0	55.1
About the same	39.3	30.9	29.1	25.2	27.7	25.7
No opinion/Don't know	14.3	17.0	10.1	3.3	4.4	7.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Responses by Type of Municipality (by % of responses)			
Type	City	Borough	Township
Has improved	20.7	12.9	18.1
Has gotten worse	43.7	49.3	49.4
About the same	29.2	30.0	25.8
No opinion/Don't know	6.4	7.8	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Responses by County and Lehigh Valley (by % of responses)			
Type	Lehigh Co.	Northampton Co.	Lehigh Valley
Has improved	16.7	20.3	18.2
Has gotten worse	52.6	41.7	47.7
About the same	25.4	29.2	27.3
No opinion/Don't know	5.3	8.8	6.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

All age groups think the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley has gotten worse during the past 10 years. A clear majority of the people in the 35 and over age brackets think the quality of life has gotten worse in the past 10 years.

The percentage of persons who believe the quality of life has gotten worse is fairly similar for all three types of municipalities — 43.7% to 49.4%. Respondents from the cities and townships are more likely to believe the quality of life has improved than borough residents, but not by much.

Over one half (52.6%) of the Lehigh County respondents believe the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley has gotten worse during the past 10 years. Only 41.7% of the Northampton County residents feel this way. A greater portion of Northampton County residents (29.2% to 25.4% for Lehigh County) believe the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley has remained the same during the past 10 years.

14. *It is important to preserve farmland in the Lehigh Valley.*

Response	Number	%
Strongly agree	756	64.2
Agree	328	27.9
Not sure	37	3.1
Disagree	30	2.5
Strongly disagree	9	0.8
No opinion/Don't know	18	1.5
Total	1,178	100.0

No response — 27

There is strong support among respondents for the preservation of farmland in the Lehigh Valley. All total, 92.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement. Almost two thirds (64.2%) strongly agree with the statement. Only 3.3% do not think it is important to preserve farmland

and only 4.6% were not sure or had no opinion. The breakdown by county is very similar. For Lehigh County, 92.4% think it is important to preserve farmland. For Northampton County, 92.0% feel it is important.

The 1999 opinion survey contained the same question about preserving farmland. In 1999, a total of 91.4% of the respondents agreed with the statement. Almost two-thirds (61.3%) strongly agreed with the statement while 2.6% did not think that it was important to preserve farmland, and 6.0% were not sure or had no opinion.

15. *If you agree, or strongly agree, with the statement in Question #14, which is the 1 most important reason for your opinion?*

Reason	Number	%
Because preserving farmland is a means of maintaining open space	373	33.9
Because preserving farmland helps maintain the rural character of portions of the Lehigh Valley.	313	28.4
Because of the farmland's value in food production	220	20.0
Because farming is important to the Lehigh Valley economy	120	10.9
Other	39	3.5
Not applicable	19	1.7
No opinion/Don't know	18	1.6
Total	1,102	100.0

The majority (62.3%) of the respondents want farmland preserved because it helps maintain open space or the rural character of parts of the region.

16. *The amount of new industry and business locating in the Lehigh Valley during the past 10 years has been:*

Response	Number	%
Much too great	41	3.5
Too great	131	11.2
About right	406	34.7
Too little	315	27.0
Much too little	126	10.8
No opinion/Don't know	150	12.8
Total	1,169	100.0

No response — 36

About one third (34.7%) of the respondents to this question believe the amount of new industry and business locating in the region has been about right. Approximately 15% believe it has been much too great or too great and 37.8% believe it has been too little or much too little.

There has been a significant shift in the belief of respondents over the past 10 years. In 1999, about one half (47.6%) believed that the amount of new industry and business locating in the

region was about right. Twenty-seven percent believed it had been much too great or too great and only 16.9% felt there had been too little industrial and commercial development.

In 2010, about 42% of the Lehigh County respondents feel there has been too little industry and business locating in the region. In Northampton County, 32.4% of the respondents feel that way.

17. *In comparison to 5 years ago, my employment situation is:*

Response	Number	%
Better job opportunities	52	4.7
About the same job opportunities	380	34.5
Decreased job opportunities	267	24.2
Unemployed	60	5.5
Retired	294	26.7
No opinion/Don't know	49	4.4
Total	1,102	100.0

No response — 103

About 24% of the respondents report that they had decreased job opportunities in comparison to five years ago while only about 5% report that they have better job opportunities in comparison to five years ago. For the 1999 attitude survey, 10.1% reported better job opportunities while 11.9% said they had decreased job opportunities. Fewer persons (26.7% in 2010 vs. 28.7% in 1999) responded that they are retired. It appears that Lehigh Valley residents perceive that they have fewer job opportunities than they did in 1999.

18. *In which of the following areas do you feel better policies and programs regarding job opportunities are needed in the Lehigh Valley? (Please choose 2 items and rank them 1 and 2, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked		Total Responses
	1st	2nd	
Bringing more jobs into the Lehigh Valley	446	208	654
Creating higher paying jobs	309	253	562
Creating a larger variety of jobs	200	347	547
No opinion/Don't know	83	6	89
Improving work opportunities for disadvantaged people	67	98	165

The table above shows the responses arranged, in descending order, by the number of 1st ranked responses. Most respondents believe there is a need to bring more jobs into the Lehigh Valley. This was followed by the belief that more needs to be done to create higher paying jobs in the Lehigh Valley. A similar question was asked in the 1999 opinion survey. The belief that more needs to be done to create higher paying jobs in the Lehigh Valley ranked first and was followed by the need to have more jobs brought into the Lehigh Valley.

19. *On what type of site should new industrial development occur?*

Response	Number	%
Redevelop sites that were previously used for industry (brownfields).	1,027	90.3
Develop new "greenfield" sites.	37	3.3
No opinion/Don't know	73	6.4
Total	1,137	100.0

No response — 56

The great majority of respondents, 90.3%, want to see industrial development take place on previously developed sites. Only 3.3% want industrial development on greenfield sites.

20. *Which of the following should be promoted for future job growth in the Lehigh Valley? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
High technology research firms (computers, pharmaceutical, etc.)	419	246	128	793
Manufacturing	267	240	137	644
Services (health, legal, personal, customer, education)	163	199	179	541
Agriculture	88	107	136	331
Tourism and cultural attractions	61	105	205	371
No opinion/Don't know	59	1	6	66
Warehousing and distribution facilities	48	91	124	263
Retail and wholesale trade	22	59	99	180

The table above shows the responses arranged, in descending order, by the number of 1st ranked responses. The promotion of high technology research firms got by far the largest number of first place responses. A similar question was asked in the 1999 attitude survey. Promotion of high technology research firms received the largest number of first place responses in the 1999 survey.

21. *Which of the following are the major transportation needs in the Lehigh Valley over the next 10 years? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Improve inter-city commuter services by expanding bus service or building commuter rail facilities between the Lehigh Valley, New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia.	368	194	129	691
Widen and improve existing roadways to reduce congestion.	265	202	101	568
Build new roads to reduce congestion.	99	96	76	271
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other pollutants created by cars, trucks, buses and other transport vehicles.	92	84	99	275
Provide better linkages between different modes of transportation by creating more park and ride facilities, terminals and connections between roads and other travel modes.	79	198	189	466
Improve transit service offered by LANTA.	64	86	108	258
Improve safety of using the transportation system.	54	52	87	193
Maintain existing transportation system.	44	60	103	207
No opinion/Don't know	38	0	3	41
Improve and expand bicycle facilities, sidewalks and walking paths.	36	100	132	268

The table above shows the responses arranged, in descending order, by the number of 1st ranked responses. Improve inter-city commuter services by expanding bus service or building commuter rail facilities between the Lehigh Valley, New Jersey, New York and Philadelphia got the largest number of first place responses. Widen and improve existing roadways to reduce congestion received the 2nd greatest number of first place responses. A similar question was asked in the 1999 attitude survey. Providing better linkages among different modes of transportation received the largest number of first place responses in the 1999 survey.

22. *Route 22 carries the highest traffic volumes in the Lehigh Valley. What do you think are the best long-term options for Route 22? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Add more travel lanes	400	183	132	715
Build a by-pass around the congested portions of Route 22	239	158	158	555
Improve interchanges	187	344	186	717
Improve local roads as an alternative to Route 22	160	226	276	662
Reduce the number of interchanges	39	50	71	160

The table above shows the responses arranged, in descending order, by the number of 1st ranked responses. Residents of the Lehigh Valley recognize the importance of Route 22. There is strong support for adding more travel lanes to Route 22.

23. *Do you think there is a need for more affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley?*

Response	Number	%
Yes	579	51.6
No	544	48.4
Total	1,123	100.0

No response — 82

Respondents to the opinion survey are split almost 50/50 regarding the need for more affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley. No similar question was asked in the 1999 attitude survey.

We decided to do some cross-tabulations to see how the responses to this question broke down by age bracket, type of municipality and county. The results of these cross-tabulations are shown below:

Responses by Age Bracket (by % of responses)						
Type	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +
Yes	53.6	53.4	40.8	47.2	53.9	59.0
No	46.4	46.6	59.2	52.8	46.1	41.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Responses by Type of Municipality (by % of responses)			
Type	City	Borough	Township
Yes	64.5	62.8	44.3
No	35.5	37.2	55.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Responses by County and Lehigh Valley (by % of responses)			
Type	Lehigh Co.	Northampton Co.	Lehigh Valley
Yes	52.0	51.0	51.6
No	48.0	49.0	48.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Most age groups are split about 50/50 regarding the need for affordable housing. Over 59% of respondents in the 35–44 age group believe there is not a need for more affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley. Over 59% of respondents in the 65 and over age group believe there is a need for more affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley.

Respondents from the cities and boroughs (64.5% and 62.8%) are much more likely to believe there is a need for more affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley. Respondents from townships (44.3%) were far less likely to believe there is a need for affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley.

Just slightly over one half (52.0% and 51.0%) of the Lehigh County and Northampton County respondents believe there is a need for more affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley.

24. *What action should be taken to create more affordable housing? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Build smaller houses.	343	130	57	530
Permit greater variety in housing types (more twins, townhomes, apartments, condominiums, modular housing).	204	212	73	489
Change local zoning to permit higher housing densities.	63	69	109	241
Provide more public housing subsidies.	44	70	70	184
Provide incentives such as density bonuses to developers.	31	79	98	208

The table above shows the responses arranged, in descending order, by the number of 1st ranked responses. Over 50% of the respondents who answered this question believe the most important action to be taken to create more affordable housing is to build smaller houses.

25. *If you plan on retiring within the next 10 years, do you intend to remain in the Lehigh Valley?*

Response	Number	%
Yes	359	58.0
No	116	18.7
No opinion/Don't know	144	23.3
Total	619	100.0

Not applicable — 482

No response — 104

Most of the people who plan on retiring within the next 10 years intend to stay in the Lehigh Valley. A similar question was asked in the 1999 opinion survey. Approximately 60% of respondents intended to stay in the Lehigh Valley in the 1999 opinion survey.

26. *If you plan to move within the Lehigh Valley after retiring within the next 10 years, what housing type might appeal to you in your retirement years? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Single family detached home on your own lot	239	20	27	286
Active adult community	111	105	70	286
Condominium	65	99	49	213
Apartment	34	25	46	105
Other	31	6	8	45
Townhome on your own lot	21	53	53	127
Personal care/Assisted living facility	14	29	61	104
Duplex or twin home on your own lot	10	54	28	92

Not applicable — 388

No opinion/Don't know — 85

No response — 200

The table above shows the responses arranged, in descending order, by the number of 1st ranked responses. About 46% of respondents who answered this question list a single family detached home on their own lot as the first choice. A little over 21% of respondents list an active adult community as their first choice. Condominium was third with 12.4% of the 1st rank responses.

27. *More parks, recreation facilities and open space should be acquired and/or developed in my County.*

Response	Number	%
Strongly agree	423	37.3
Agree	379	33.5
Not sure	152	13.4
Disagree	96	8.5
Strongly disagree	41	3.6
No opinion/Don't know	42	3.7
Total	1,133	100.0

No response — 72

There is strong support among respondents for the acquisition and development of more parks and recreation facilities in the Lehigh Valley. Approximately 70.8% agree more are needed while only 12.1% disagree. About 17.1% are not sure or have no opinion on the subject.

28. *What are the most needed park, recreation and cultural facilities? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Trails for hiking, biking, rollerblading, horseback riding	209	195	113	517
Nature preserves	208	165	116	489
Large regional parks with facilities or areas for fishing, camping, boating, etc.	136	88	113	337
Preserving historic sites	101	127	159	387
Community recreational center	72	76	96	244
Areas for field sports such as softball, baseball, football, soccer, volleyball, etc.	55	70	54	179
Playgrounds for children	41	60	92	193
Museums and art galleries	32	46	49	127
Swimming pools	30	35	32	97
Other	28	5	13	46
Auditoriums	17	17	8	42
Golf courses	13	8	5	26
Skateboarding	12	15	20	47
Ice-skating rinks	7	15	14	36
Tennis courts, handball courts	6	12	8	26

We don't need any more of these — 93

No opinion/Don't know — 68

No response — 75

The table above lists the responses to the questions ranked in descending order for the responses ranked 1st. Trails for hiking, biking, etc. were listed as the most needed park and recreation facilities. This was followed by nature preserves and large regional parks. A similar question was asked in 1999. Large regional parks ranked first followed by trails for hiking, biking, etc. and nature preserves.

29. *Which of the following do you feel are most in need of attention to preserve the environment? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Rivers, creeks, streams and lakes	319	270	172	761
Air quality	205	185	110	500
Prime farmland	161	121	167	449
Areas subject to flooding	93	86	62	241
Groundwater	86	118	123	327
Wooded areas	85	134	165	384
Global warming	70	34	62	166
Wetlands	23	44	79	146
Hillsides and mountains	19	63	85	167
Other	11	1	1	13

No opinion/Don't know — 48

No response — 81

A similar question was asked in the 1999 opinion survey. The responses to the 1999 survey were similar to what we found in 2010. The results of the 1999 survey were as follows:

Item	Ranked		Total Responses
	1st	2nd	
Rivers, creeks, streams and lakes	397	252	649
Air quality	206	177	383
Prime farmland	176	163	339
Groundwater	100	131	231
Wooded areas	74	116	190
Areas subject to flooding	24	36	60
Wetlands	21	39	60
Other	17	3	20
Hillsides and mountains	9	65	74

30. *Most new residential development in the Lehigh Valley should take place in the: (Please choose only 1.)*

Response	Number	%
Cities	446	40.1
Boroughs	87	7.8
Suburban townships	240	21.6
Rural townships	109	9.8
No opinion/Don't know	231	20.7
Total	1,113	100.0

No response — 92

A large number (40.1%) of respondents prefer that new residential development in the Lehigh Valley should take place in the cities. This was followed by suburban townships which were chosen by approximately 21.6% of respondents. A similar question was asked in the 1999 opinion survey. In 1999, respondents were more evenly split between the preferences for locating new residential development in the cities or the suburban townships (31.7% and 28.4% respectively).

31. *In some areas of the country, planners are designing developments using new concepts. Listed below are these new concepts. Which concepts should be applied to the Lehigh Valley? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Cluster design. (Grouping development together to preserve open space.)	253	223	129	605
Traditional Neighborhood Development. (Making new development patterns look like they did decades ago.)	217	156	121	494
Transit-oriented development (TOD) – mixed use residential and/or commercial area designed to maximize access to public transit.	208	210	174	592
Mixed use. (This means creating development that includes a mix of residential and commercial uses or a mix of commercial and industrial uses.)	155	169	173	497
High density development. (Densities increased, higher buildings, more apartments, high-rise condominiums and office buildings)	54	62	80	196
Don't change the way development is currently designed.	51	16	36	103

No opinion/Don't know — 153

No response — 88

The table above lists the responses to the questions ranked in descending order for the responses ranked 1st. There appears to be a strong interest in new concepts of development. Most respondents prefer to see cluster design followed by traditional neighborhood development and transit-oriented development. Only 51 (5.4%) of the persons who answered the question do not want to change the way development is currently designed. The 1999 opinion survey contained a similar question. The response was fairly the same as in the 2010 survey. In 1999, the respondents preferred cluster design followed by traditional development. Transit-oriented development was not a choice for respondents in the 1999 survey.

32. *If you were buying a home in a new residential development what features would be important to you? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Preserved open space and environmentally sensitive features	421	138	100	659
Public water and sewer	189	171	101	461
Bigger lots	142	103	48	293
Improved traffic circulation	49	122	134	305
Attractive landscaping	48	117	142	307
Smaller lots	42	42	28	112
Neighborhood recreation	38	87	146	271
On-lot water and sewer	33	36	46	115
Other	33	5	7	45
Access to transit	31	70	103	204
Sidewalks	21	95	81	197
Wider streets	13	35	38	86
Narrower streets	1	7	12	20

No opinion/Don't know — 56

No response — 83

The table above lists the responses to the questions ranked in descending order for the responses ranked 1st. Proximity to preserved open space and environmentally sensitive features was the most important feature. Approximately 40% of the first place responses went to this item. Public water and sewer and bigger lots received 17.8% and 13.4% respectively. No other item got more than five percent of the total 1st ranked responses.

The 1999 survey contained a similar question. The responses in 1999 were fairly similar except that improved traffic circulation received a greater percentage of 1st ranked responses (12.5% in 1999) than bigger lots (7.9% in 1999). In the 2010 opinion survey, improved traffic circulation received only 4.6% of the 1st ranked responses.

33. *What do you think are the most important planning issues needing to be addressed within the next 10 years? (Please choose 3 items and rank them 1, 2 and 3, 1 being most important.)*

Item	Ranked			Total Responses
	1st	2nd	3rd	
Preserving farmland	251	146	94	491
Preserving environmentally sensitive features (woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, floodplains)	236	240	101	577
Urban revitalization	132	116	110	358
Economic development	117	104	89	310
Meeting transportation needs	68	88	99	255
Arranging land uses and managing development	64	71	79	214
Energy conservation	39	62	90	191
Preserving historically significant buildings and structures	36	77	126	239
Undertaking human services to meet social needs	31	28	47	106
Global warming	30	20	38	88
Providing public water supply and sewage disposal facilities	27	36	57	120
Meeting housing needs	23	29	33	85
Other	18	5	4	27
Innovative design of new development	14	33	53	100
Preventing stormwater problems	8	19	27	54

No opinion/Don't know — 27

No response — 78

The table above lists the responses to the questions ranked in descending order for the responses ranked 1st. The results of this question are not surprising. Question 14 showed that 92.1% of respondents believe it is important to preserve farmland in the Lehigh Valley. The answers to questions 29 and 32 reveal that survey respondents are interested in preserving environmentally sensitive areas. There also is good support for addressing the urban renewal of the Lehigh Valley's three cities and economic development. A similar question was asked in the 1999 survey and provided similar results.

34. *What do you like best about living in the Lehigh Valley?*

Rank	Response	Number of Responses
1	Close to New York City, Philadelphia, shore points, etc.	287
2	Convenience of many daily needs, good access to many things	196
3	Diversity, variety, balance between city and rural	187
4	Recreation opportunities, parks	179
5	Rural areas, open space, farmland	162
6	Good schools	128
7	Cultural activities	105
8	Quality of life, quiet area	89
9	The people	80
10	Medical facilities	68
11	Safe area, low crime rate	65
12	History, historic sites, architecture	48
13	Near family and friends	47
14	Affordable area, low taxes	43
15	Small town atmosphere	37
16	Lack of congestion	31
17	Climate, 4 seasons	26
18	Close to work	16
19	Job opportunities	13
20	Convenient airport	10

The top five things that stand out as to what people like best about the Lehigh Valley are: (1) the closeness to New York City, Philadelphia and shore points; (2) the convenience of many daily needs, good access to many things; (3) diversity, variety, balance between city and rural; (4) recreation opportunities, parks; and (5) rural areas, open space and farmland. Access to good schools and cultural activities also are appreciated by Lehigh Valley residents.

35. What do you like least about living in the Lehigh Valley?

Rank	Response	Number of Responses
1	Traffic congestion	319
2	Crime and drug problem	201
3	Too much development, too much sprawl	131
4	Taxes	100
5	Too much immigration (people from out of the area)	92
6	Route 22 (congestion, construction and unsafe interchanges)	91
7	Loss of farmland and open space	78
8	Need consolidation of and/or better government	77
9	Too many people/increase in population	66
10	Limited job opportunities/limited decent paying jobs	65
11	Poor public transportation	60
12	Lack of passenger rail service to Philadelphia and New York City	59
13	Deterioration of Allentown	55
14	Poorly constructed and maintained roads	54
15	Deterioration of cities	50
16	Poor, overburdened schools	40
17	Price of homes, too expensive to live here	38
18	Air, noise and light pollution	33
19	Too many warehouses/industrial developments and industrial parks	21
20T	Too many malls/shopping centers and retail	20
20T	Litter and filth	20
21	Need better police protection	18
22T	Lack of building and site reuse	16
22T	Lack of cultural events (theater and arts)	16
22T	Casino/gambling	16
23	Lack of direct flights from airport	13
24	Lack of parking	11
25	Lack of specialty retail and restaurants	10

T = Tie

Traffic congestion and crime and drugs are at the top of the list of things survey respondents dislike most about the Lehigh Valley. Too much development, too much sprawl and taxes also concern Lehigh Valley residents.