

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 3: Community Input

Interviews with Community Leaders and Officials

During the months of October and November 2002, the Carroll County Planning Department conducted interviews with several community officials and leaders in the Mount Airy area concerning the development of the next Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan. The same set of 28 questions, dealing with topics ranging from community assets to growth management, was presented to the 12 participants who took part in the interview process. Within each question, participants were asked to talk about what they thought were the most important issues facing the Mount Airy area. Each question yielded a broad range of responses. However, the most prevalent responses to each question, as well as less prevalent but repeated responses, are summarized below. These responses help to illustrate the more critical issues that citizens are facing in the area today.

Question 1 *☞ What are the community's strongest assets today?*

The participants' responses illustrated that they believe the Mount Airy community currently has numerous assets working in its favor. Those most commonly mentioned were the community's geographic location to I-70 and other metro areas, and the sense of community and the people in the community. Other responses included the transportation system, adequate shopping, size of the community, the quality of life, schools, parks, and the areas beauty and rural character.

Question 2 *☞ What will be its strongest assets in the future?*

The responses to this question showed that many of the participants feel some of today's assets (geographic location, schools, close knit community and family atmosphere, I-70 and the transportation system) will continue to be assets in the future. Others mentioned parks and recreational facilities and continued open government.

Question 3 *☞ What are the community's greatest challenges today?*

With continued development pressure in the area, the most commonly mentioned challenges were adequate infrastructure and facilities (school construction/overcrowding, water, playgrounds and parks, traffic and transportation, emergency services) and maintaining a sense of community. Other challenges mentioned were the area's low industrial tax base and the need for a commuter connection to the Washington metro system.

Question 4 *☞ What will be its greatest challenges in the future?*

As seen in the previous question, the participants' views on future challenges reflect the challenges of today. The most common challenges perceived for the future were maintaining adequate infrastructure and adequate facilities. Other responses included balancing jobs and housing, maintaining a sense of community, and taxes.

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Question 5 ☞ *What are the growth management issues that need to be addressed with this plan?*

Some of the issues participants identified reflected those of the present and future challenges outlined above, such as infrastructure (schools, water, and transportation) and slowing growth. Others mentioned the proliferation of low-density development, the loss of agricultural land, the need for Town and County government cooperation, and the need for natural resource areas.

Question 6 ☞ *Do you feel there needs to be a limit to the geographical size that your community will achieve? If so, what should it be? (Not necessarily in terms of specific properties) Do you feel that implementing a Growth Area Boundary in your community would be a beneficial tool?*

Responses to this question were mixed. Some participants were in favor of limiting the geographical size of the community, while others didn't think it was a good idea or weren't sure how the idea could work. Some pointed out that growth around the Town already limited the potential for future expansion.

Question 7 ☞ *From a fiscal perspective, do you feel that the community can support this additional growth?*

Several participants believed the Mount Airy community should continue to grow and could support additional growth as long as the Town had a vision, had the proper infrastructure, and depended less heavily on the residential tax base by increasing the industrial and commercial base. Others thought that residential growth in the area could continue, but wanted to see greater control over the type of houses being built, the pace of development, and impact fees.

Question 8 ☞ *Do you think that waiting until annexation to rezone a property consistent with your comprehensive plan is a tool that would be useful to your community in terms of managing growth? If so, how do you feel about downzoning properties outside the town but inside the growth area until the annexation occurs?*

On the first part of the question, several respondents supported the notion of downzoning properties outside the town but inside the growth area until annexation and felt that it could be used as a tool to control growth. Yet on the second part of the question, respondents generally agreed that they were not in favor of downzoning properties outside the town or were not in favor of annexing and then rezoning. Most were conflicted about this question or were not sure how or if such a policy would work.

Question 9 ☞ *Do you picture your community serving mainly as a residential center or do you feel that your community should also be active in economic development?*

A great number of participants felt that their community should be more active in economic development, citing a need for a higher commercial and industrial tax base and a need for a better balance between houses and jobs. Others felt the area had already missed

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

opportunities for economic development, or that it was essentially a bedroom community/residential center with no drawing potential as an employment center.

Question 10 ☞ *What kind of balance do you feel your community should have between residential, commercial, and industrial?*

Many participants saw a need for a greater commercial and industrial tax base within the community, but were also very particular about what they wanted to see. High tech industry, light industry, and business uses were frequently mentioned. Others thought there was a need for more industry and not necessarily more commercial uses in the area, while some felt there needed to be a specific balance or threshold established between residential, commercial, and industrial.

Question 11 ☞ *What are the economic development and employment issues that need to be addressed with this plan?*

Participants offered a variety of responses, including marketing the Town, revitalizing the Main Street corridor, and bringing in larger employers or high tech industry. Others cited a lack of available land and office space, inadequate infrastructure, no facilities for telecommuters, and the desire to fill existing empty retail space.

Question 12 ☞ *What types of employment opportunities do you think need to be available in the community? What can be done to ensure that this happens?*

Many of the participants preferred that a variety of employment opportunities be available in the community such as: professional jobs that can support families, high tech industry, service and retail, office campus, and small manufacturing. Others felt that Mount Airy wasn't going to attract large employers and that many people came to the area to get away from where they work.

Question 13 ☞ *In what areas of your community do you feel commercial development should be located?*

The most specific responses to this question were the Twin Arch Road area, downtown area, Ridgeville Boulevard, Center Street corridor, lower Main Street, within ½ mile of I-70, and south of I-70. Others felt commercial development should generally be located in outlying areas, adjacent to existing commercial, or in existing vacant commercial.

Question 14 ☞ *What are the housing and community design issues that this plan needs to address?*

Many respondents felt maintaining flavor and flow with existing development, a level of diversity by cost and type, and providing open space and playgrounds were the most important housing and community design issues. Other mentioned specific issues ranging from requiring sidewalks, better lighting, and regulating road design and width to letting people do what they want to do.

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Question 15 ☞ *Is the actual use of a property more important to you or how a property looks and blends in with the neighborhood? How do you think both issues can be blended and addressed?*

Responses to this question were almost equally mixed with some saying use is more important, some saying how it looks and blends with the community is more important, and some feeling both issues were essential or interrelated. Others felt that looks shouldn't be a sole factor in how a property develops or that looks shouldn't be governed by a lot of rules.

Question 16 ☞ *Do you feel there is still a need for additional senior housing? How has this or will this affect your community?*

Many participants felt that the area had a continued need for additional senior housing. Others were concerned about infrastructure issues (water, emergency services, and the senior center) and the effects this type of development may have on the Agricultural zone.

Question 17 ☞ *Are additional affordable housing opportunities needed in the community? How can they be provided?*

While most participants were supportive of affordable housing opportunities in the area, many weren't sure if property values and the overall market would allow for it to occur. Participant's suggestions were quite divergent, with some stating that maybe land should be set aside for townhomes, or the Town and County should look into grant funding. Others responded by saying they were uneasy about the idea of providing affordable or mixed housing, felt that it wasn't government's place to get involved, or didn't see a need for the additional growth.

Question 18 ☞ *Do you feel that there are specific areas of your community that should be targeted for redevelopment?*

Participants mentioned several areas that they felt should be targeted for redevelopment. The most frequent answers pertained to the downtown area and Main Street. Other answers included East Ridgeville Boulevard, some of the area's older planned unit developments, Twin Ridge Shopping Center, the MD 144 corridor, and Baker Street.

Question 19 ☞ *What are the transportation issues that need to be addressed with this plan?*

Some sort of commuter bus service to the Shady Grove metro station and improving MD 27 were the two prevailing transportation issues raised by participants. Other answers included improvements to the MD 27 and Ridge Avenue intersection, improvements to the MD 27 and Watersville Road intersection, extending Center Street to MD 27, and handling school traffic on Watersville Road.

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Question 20 ☞ *What are the community facilities issues that need to be addressed with this plan?*

The answers given for this question were fairly concise. The majority of the participants saw recreational open space, ballfields, schools, water, community center, roads and intersections, and emergency services as the community facilities that needed to be addressed in the area.

Question 21 ☞ *What are the most significant recreation needs of your community? Are there specific areas of your community that you think could be designated for future recreation areas?*

Recreational open space and ballfields ranked at the top of most participants lists just as it did for the previous question. Other needs mentioned were keeping the carnival grounds for recreational purposes, requiring developers to set aside land for recreational use, creating additional programs for children and teens, building an indoor recreational facility, and the general opinion that the County or Town should secure additional land.

Question 22 ☞ *What are the environmental and/or natural resources issues that this Plan needs to address?*

Most of the participants agreed that the community's water supply was the most important natural resource to protect. Other responses included protecting the land reserved for Gillis Falls, not allowing heavy industry, preserving greenspace, preserving scenic views, well protection, and maintaining buffers and regulations.

Question 23 ☞ *What are the historic preservation issues that this plan needs to address?*

The majority felt there was a need to preserve the more historically significant sites like Main Street, Pine Grove Chapel, the railroad station, the elementary school, and various historic homes. Others felt the need for a balance between preservation and property rights while some stated they wouldn't know where to draw the line or that there wasn't much to protect.

Question 24 ☞ *What are the community involvement issues that this plan needs to address?*

When dealing with public issues, many participants felt that the most effective ways of reaching the citizenry are through the print media, websites, e-mails, newsletters, schools, the local Chamber of Commerce, conducting evening meetings, and coordinating with Town officials. In contrast, some participants stated that they felt area citizens were fairly involved, while others cited public apathy or an overall lack of interest, involvement, and commitment.

Question 25 ☞ *What aspect of coordination and communication between the County and the local citizenry do you think could be improved through implementation of this plan?*

Participant's answers to this question covered a variety of topics. Some of the top suggestions were that the County become more accessible to area citizens, work closer with the

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Town, communicate through the media, set up citizens advisory groups, and take advantage of shared interests (EMS, library, senior center, etc.).

Question 26 ☞ *What aspect of coordination and communication on a regional basis – with the State, neighboring counties, and/or BMC – do you think needs to be addressed in this plan?*

A couple of participants mentioned the need for better coordination between Carroll and Frederick Counties. Some felt that developing a regional philosophy was important, while a few stated that ample communication already existed. Others thought the recent political shift at both the County and State levels would help in this area.

Question 27 ☞ *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current Town/County coordination efforts?*

An equitable number of strengths and weaknesses were given in regard to current coordination efforts. Participants mentioned recently elected County officials, the idea of a Council of Governments, and Carroll County staff attendance at local meetings as strengths. On the other hand, the Town and County not knowing what each other was doing or planning, lack of communication, and fiscal and budget issues were perceived as current weaknesses.

Question 28 ☞ *Are there any other issues that you feel also need to be addressed in this plan?*

A few participants expressed other issues of concern that weren't previously mentioned. One was concerned about the continued effects of Frederick County's growth on the area. Another questioned the effectiveness of current growth control measures when it came to schools and other facilities.

These responses provided insight into what the participants believe about the current conditions and future directions of the Mount Airy environs community. The answers to the broad range of topics included in the interview provided input on the many issues that were addressed by the plan. This input, in turn, helped shape the preparation of the Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan.

Community Survey Results

To ensure that the maximum number of community residents had the opportunity to provide input toward the process of identifying the community's future, a survey was developed that could be sent to every household in the study area. The survey allowed people who were not able to attend the community workshops an opportunity to still contribute. The property owner records from the Maryland Property View database, maintained by the Maryland Department of Planning and the State Department of Assessment and Taxation, were used to assemble the mailing list. Known apartment complexes were also added to the list. More than 1,400 surveys were mailed out to community residents (all households in Election District 13) in January 2003. Approximately 31 percent (442 out of 1,414) of the surveys that were sent out were returned. The results of these surveys were factored into the development of the vision

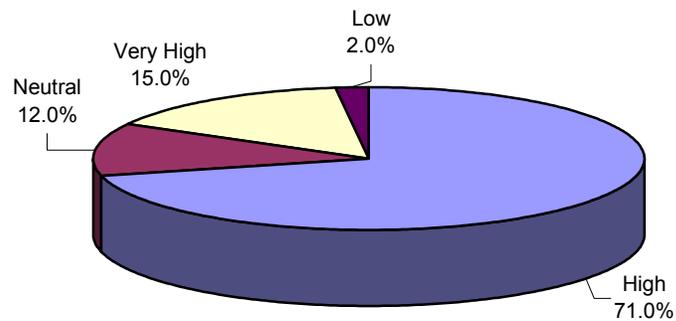
Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

statement and goals for the community. They were also used to provide an overall direction, along with the results of the other community participation opportunities, for the plan and the recommendations within the plan.

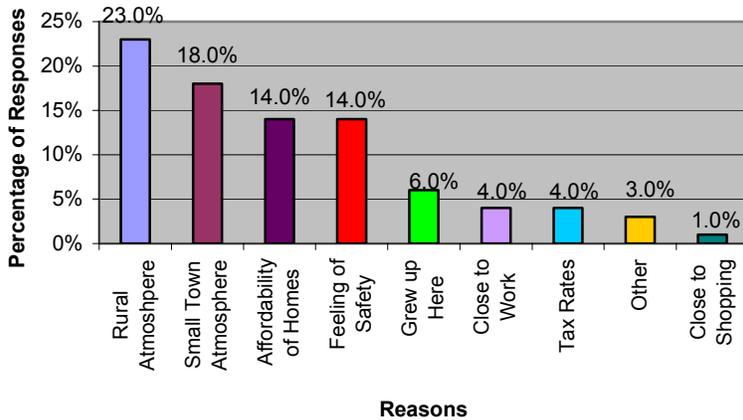
Questions on the survey dealt with topics like what people might like most and least about living in the Mount Airy area, where they commuted to, how long their commute was, and amenities they think the area will need or not need to more fully function. The following is a summary of the analysis of the results of the survey. Each question within the survey dealt with a specific topic or idea along with giving the participant a specified range of answers from which to choose. A certain amount of flexibility concerning possible “other” responses was also provided.

Respondents shared how they felt about the quality of life in their area. The scale given ranged from very high to very low. Most of the reaction was neutral or higher. Out of those that responded, 98 percent were in that range. It is also important to note that 86 percent perceived their quality of life as high or very high with only 2 percent feeling that their quality of life was low or very low.

Quality of Life in Mount Airy Community 2003
Quality of Life Levels



Reasons to Live in Mount Airy Community 2003



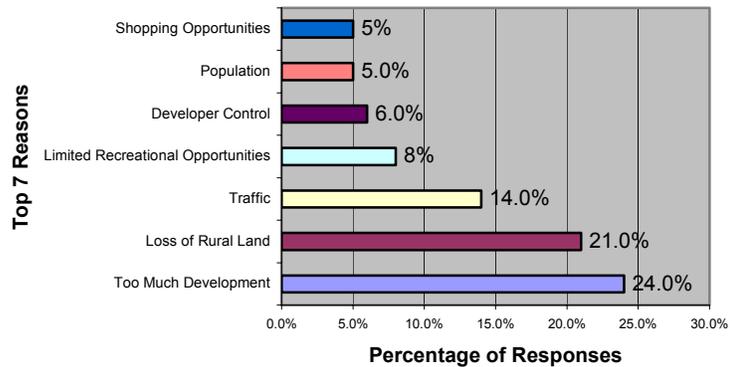
Residents were also asked to identify the reasons why they chose to live in the Mount Airy area. The majority of participant responses pointed to the rural atmosphere (23%) and the small-town atmosphere (18%). The feeling of safety (14%) and the affordability of homes (14%) also accounted for a large percentage of responses.

Another question drawing a broad range of responses dealt with what things people might like most about the area. The answers most frequently given pertained to the rural setting (23%) and quiet community (15%). Other responses, such as the atmosphere (12%), location (12%), friendly people (10%), and safety (9%), also stood out.

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

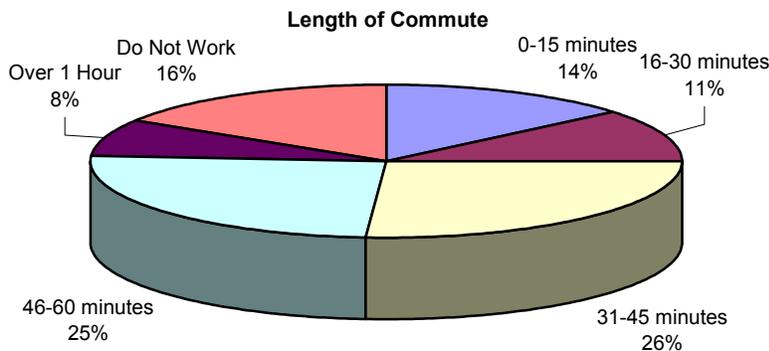
Participants were also given an opportunity to share those things that they might like least about the area. Responses varied, but a few topics were broadly mentioned. Too much development (24%) and loss of rural land (21%) seemed to be a primary concern with most participants. Other than that, limited recreational opportunities (14%) and traffic (8%) were the only other responses that received a noticeable consensus.

Things You Like Least About Living in Mount Airy Community 2003



Participants were then asked to indicate where they worked the majority of the time. The greatest number of respondents (24%) indicated they worked in Montgomery County. Carroll County (14%) Howard County (10%), and retired (14%) also drew a noticeable number of responses.

How Long Does it Take to Get to Work 2003



As a follow up, respondents were asked how long it took them to get to work. Responses covered the entire range and were as follows: 0-15 minutes (14%), 16-30 minutes (11%), 31-45 minutes (26%), and 46-60 minutes (25%). Several commutes were over an hour (8%), and 16 percent of the participants said they were not employed.

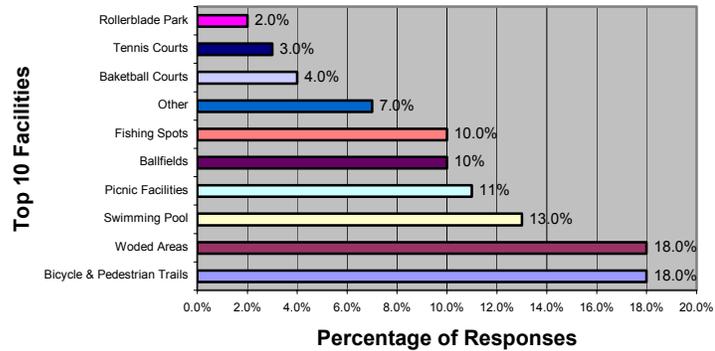
When asked which service they would use if commuter bus service one way during peak rush hour times was provided, 71 percent responded that they would not use the service. While bus service between Mount Airy and Shady Grove (11%), Mount Airy and Frederick (6%), and Mount Airy and Baltimore (5%) were among the top responses from those indicating that they may use the service if provided.

Participants were then asked if they felt there were enough park-and-ride lot parking spaces available in the community. The largest percentage of respondents felt that there were enough spaces available (46%) with those answering as undecided not far behind (44%). Only 10 percent of the respondents felt there weren't enough spaces available within the community.

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

As recreation is an important component of residents' perception of their quality of life, participants were asked to indicate what additional recreational facilities they felt were most needed in the community. Bicycle and pedestrian trails (18%) and wooded areas (18%) were the most frequent responses. Other top answers were a swimming pool (13%), picnic facilities (11%), ball fields (10%), and a fishing spot (10%).

Recreational Facilities Needed in Mount Airy Community 2003



Participants were then asked what type of pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities were most needed within their community. Separated bike and pedestrian trails along roads (19%), bike lanes on existing roads (17%), and bike and pedestrian trails linking residential and commercial areas (17%) were the most common responses. Other top answers were bike lanes on new roads (12%), sidewalks installed in existing residential areas (12%), and sidewalks in new residential development (11%).

Residents were then asked if additional senior housing was needed in the community. Forty-two percent of those responding to the question were undecided, while 37 percent believed that no additional senior housing was needed, and 20 percent felt that it was needed.

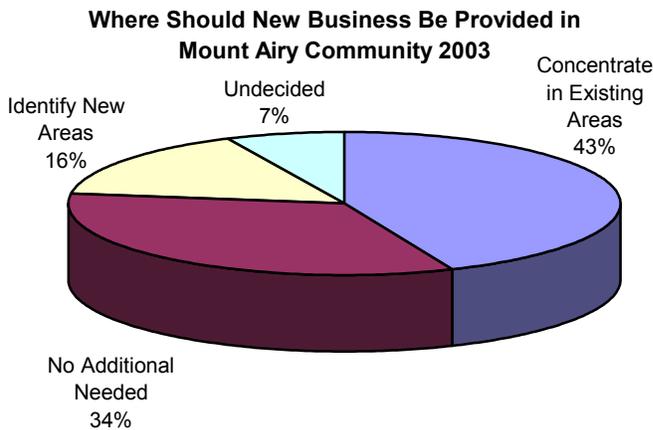
Participants were also asked whether or not additional affordable housing opportunities were needed in the community. The majority of respondents (58%) felt that additional affordable housing was not needed with 25 percent answering that more was needed and 18 percent answering undecided.

As a follow up, participants were asked how they would like to see affordable housing provided if they answered "yes" to the previous question. Moderately priced dwelling units interspersed with higher priced homes drew the greatest response (19%).

Participants were then asked which was more important to them, the actual use of a property/site or how it looks. How the property looks was favored for residential development (by a 60% to 40% margin) and for commercial development (55% to 45%). However, actual use was favored with regard to industrial development (52% to 48%).

Another development related question asked participants if future residential developments in the Conservation Zoning District should be required to cluster houses onto smaller lots, preserving the remaining land. Responses to this question were split with yes (38%) and no (36%) fairly even followed by those that were undecided (26%).

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan



Participants were then asked if they currently have available all the businesses they would like to see in their community or are there additional businesses they would like to see nearby. Fifty four percent felt they had enough businesses in the community, while 39 percent thought additional businesses were needed. Seven percent were undecided.

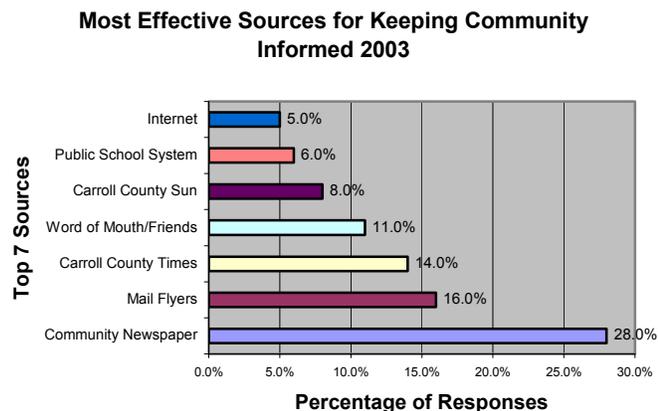
As a follow up, participants were asked where they wanted to see future business growth located. Of the choices given, concentrating new business in existing areas received the highest total (44%) followed by no additional business needed (34%), identify new areas (16%), and undecided (6%).

Participants were then asked if they felt that making additional land available for light industrial development would help the community. Seventy-one percent answered “no”, with 17 percent answering “yes”. Twelve percent were undecided.

Participants were then asked which means of controlling growth outside of the Town they supported. Preservation of agricultural land through permanent easement (74%) and downzoning land currently zoned for residential use (23%) were the most common answers.

Residents were asked how many meetings held by County or Town elected or appointed officials they attended within the last year. Seventy-three percent indicated that they had not attended any meetings, while 23 percent had attended 1 to 3 meetings and 4 percent had attended 4 or more.

Participants were then asked to point out what they thought were the most effective sources for getting information on public decisions, meetings, and community participation opportunities. Those sources receiving the highest response were community newspaper (28%), mail flyers (16%), Carroll County Times (14%), and word of mouth (11%).



Participants were then asked what ways they would be most likely to participate in the plan update process. Survey mailed to the property (38%), survey in the Mount Airy Gazette (26%), and internet survey (12%) were the most common responses.

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

In order to get an idea of what nights may work best for citizen participation in meetings, respondents were asked which weeknights were they most likely to attend a community meeting. Tuesday (22%) and Wednesday (21%) picked up the highest totals, followed by Monday (17%) and Thursday (16%). Fourteen percent of those responding said they probably would not attend any meetings.

In the final section of the survey, participants were asked to rate how they felt about specific statements that were presented to them on various issues. The response choices given were Strongly Agree (+2), Agree (+1), Neutral (0), Disagree (-1), and Strongly Disagree (-2). Therefore, an averaging of the responses gives an overall result for participants' opinions. The statements that were rated are listed below in italics with the accompanying survey results.

The first set of statements dealt with issues of growth management and land use. *I am aware of what is planned for the community in terms of the amount and location of future development as indicated in the community's adopted comprehensive plan.* The overall rating given by participants was -0.641, possibly indicating that respondents generally felt less informed than they would like to be. When respondents were presented with the statement *I am aware of what is planned for the community in terms of future public facilities and transportation improvements and needs,* the responses yielded roughly the same result (-0.606).

Respondents were then asked to react to a couple of statements pertaining to raising property taxes for community facilities and services. One of the statements, *I would be willing to pay additional property taxes for the improvement of existing facilities and services,* received an average response of -0.454. While another statement, *I would be willing to pay additional property taxes for the provision of additional community facilities and services,* fared even worse with an average of -0.526.

With all of this data and input in mind, the results of the survey assisted in developing the vision statement and goals for the community. It also continued to provide an overall direction, along with other community participation opportunities, for the forthcoming plan and the recommendations within the plan.

Community Workshops Results

In developing this plan, the County provided opportunities for community participation in two phases. In the first phase, the County sent two newsletters and a survey to all the households located within the study area. The first newsletter, issued in December 2002, informed residents of the comprehensive planning process that was beginning for the Mount Airy environs community and of the upcoming survey and workshops.

The *Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan Survey* was mailed in January 2003. It asked questions relating to the quality of life in the community and for opinions on planning-related issues with regard to the comprehensive plan. A series of two workshops were held in the evenings of February 26, 2003 and March 4, 2003 at Mount Airy Middle School. In the workshops, participants were asked to identify their desires for the community's future (i.e., vision) and goals for the comprehensive plan that would serve to achieve the vision. The second newsletter was issued in the summer of 2003. It presented the draft vision and goals that had

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

been developed for the comprehensive plan, a summary of the results of the survey, a brief synopsis of the results that came out of the workshops, and an explanation of the next steps in the comprehensive plan update process.

1 Series 1 - Workshop 1 and 3

A ⇨ Summary of Results - Community Workshop #1

What Is Your Preferred Future?

The first exercise for this workshop asked those in attendance to visualize how they would like or prefer to see the community in the future. The object of this section was to get each member to describe what they would like their community to look like in the future if proper action was taken to change things.

The majority of the participants' responses were related to issues dealing with strengthening the downtown area, preserving farmland and open space, providing additional parkland and recreational areas, expanding employment opportunities, greater community cohesiveness, protecting the area's water resources, and providing adequate pedestrian facilities.

What Is Preventing Us From Getting To The Preferred Future?

In this second exercise of the workshop, citizens in attendance were asked to share the factors they see that may prevent the community from reaching the "preferred future". Although there were a variety of responses, the comments related to issues such as zoning and lack of flexible development regulations, no vision or plan, inadequate infrastructure, land prices, market forces, budget constraints, and people's attitude and mind set.

B ⇨ Summary of Results - Community Workshop #2

A Closer Look At The Vision Statement

The initial activity in the second workshop focused on the draft of the vision statement. Those in attendance were asked to closely examine and comment on the draft vision statement. No comments were received regarding the draft vision statement.

The Mount Airy Environs community is a vibrant community exhibiting strong neighborhood cohesiveness. The community promotes open space and landscaping that enhances the visual aesthetics of the area and development design that is in harmony with the surrounding built and natural environment, preserving rural character. The Gillis Falls Reservoir watershed is a functional and recreational asset to the community, providing both passive and active uses. The community has adequate public facilities and services that meet the needs of the residents. The community has sufficient activities for area youth. The transportation network provides fluid traffic movement on major arterial and collector roads throughout the environs and maximizes the potential brought about by its unique proximity to the I-70 corridor and surrounding regions. The

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Environs looks to the Town of Mount Airy as the center for local commercial and social activities.

Getting Down To Specifics On Issues

The exercise for this workshop was designed to get more specific direction from participants about what the community may want regarding certain issues that were presented in the first workshop, through the survey results, and through interviews with area citizens and officials.

Where should future growth go in the Mount Airy Environs community? Some participant specifically pointed to areas north of Town along Buffalo Road and along Gillis Falls Road east of Mount Olive Court as potential sites for future residential growth. In broader terms, several participants called for higher density development closer to Town and the preservation of open spaces and sensitive areas wherever possible.

Vehicle traffic - what issues need to be addressed? Most of the comments received dealt with the MD 27 corridor. The issues raised ranged from synchronizing traffic lights along MD 27 to adding turn lanes at a major intersection (Twin Arch Road, Watersville Road) or adding lanes to the corridor in general. Relieving traffic congestion on Main Street was the only other issue to be touched on more than once.

Along what roads would you like to see bike / pedestrian trails? How should bike / pedestrian trails be paid for? Should developers be required to construct bike / pedestrian trails? Overall comments reflected a desire within the community for bike/pedestrian facilities and a sort of connectivity between the Town and surrounding areas. Most wanted to see bike/pedestrian facilities located along major roadways like MD 27, Watersville Road, Gillis Falls Road, and Buffalo Road. However, opinions were split over who should fund them. Some felt that larger developers should bear the responsibility, while others felt a need for the County/Town/State to split the costs with developers.

What locations should be considered for future park and recreational facilities (through County purchase, from private developers setting aside land, etc...)? Participants largely wanted to see future park and recreational space be made available through a combination of County purchase and developer set aside. Several proposed to locate new park and recreational areas within future development sites.

What qualities would you like to see in new development? What should new houses in the community look like? How should new developments be laid out? Participants expressed concern over the appearance of new houses and suggested that there be a greater variety of style and pricing offered. They also wanted to see a higher priority placed on open spaces and recreational areas and an overall greater density in new development design.

How can we foster regionalism and cooperation among the various jurisdictions in which the Mount Airy Environs is situated? The attendees generally felt that communication was the key to fostering better cooperation between jurisdictions. Suggestions ranged from holding joint

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Town/County workshops and meetings to using local publications as avenues to better inform the public of local issues.

2 Series 2 - Workshop 4

Following completion of the first phase of community participation, County planning staff developed a list of recommendations (to achieve the goals identified during the previous workshops) and a draft map indicating proposed land use designation changes needed to accomplish the goals. Prior to the second phase of community participation, the third newsletter, which was issued to residents in June 2004, informed the community of the recommendations developed by staff and of the upcoming workshop. A workshop was held on the evening of June 22, 2004 at the Mount Airy Senior Center. The workshop afforded the community the opportunity to provide feedback on the text recommendations, draft land use designation map, other proposed maps, and present additional suggestions prior to the completion of the draft comprehensive plan by staff.

Following completion of the second phase of community participation, County planning staff finished developing the draft comprehensive plan, incorporating results of the workshops.

The draft comprehensive plan was then placed in a 60-day review period. A community information meeting was held on April 7, 2005 at the Multi Purpose Building on the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Department carnival grounds. The purpose of the meeting was to explain and answer questions on the draft plan to help the community understand it sufficiently to provide well-informed written or oral comments at the public hearing on the plan.

On April 19, 2005 the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on the draft comprehensive plan at the Mount Airy Senior Center. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission reviewed all comments received during the review period and as part of the public hearing record and prepared a final draft comprehensive plan. On September 20, 2005, the Planning Commission approved the final draft plan and forwarded it to the Carroll County Board of Commissioners for adoption. The Carroll County Board of Commissioners adopted the Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan on February 28, 2006.

Throughout the comprehensive plan update process, legal notices (for public hearings) and press releases (for workshops and community meetings) were published in local newspapers to keep the community informed of the planning process and of opportunities for citizen participation.