

Appendix B: Public Survey

Introduction

Located in the southeastern portion of Portage County, Ohio, Suffield Township is a community that has traditionally been rural and agricultural but has come under increasing pressure from growth associated with out migration from Cleveland, Akron-Canton, and Youngstown. In many respects, it is typical of rural communities located just beyond the rural-urban fringe. The opinions of residents in communities like Suffield should be taken into account by policy makers when plans are being made for future land use decisions. The results of surveys such as this play a key role in informing elected officials about their constituents’ concerns and will be used to help formulate the goals, objectives, and strategies to guide future development in the township.

The study was designed to reveal the opinions of respondents on a number of activities and initiatives such as planning, zoning, and cluster housing. Initially survey respondents were presented with a number of statements and asked to give opinions ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The results are listed below.

Survey Responses and Comparison

Numbers represent the percentage of respondents. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. The survey results from the 2017 survey are compared to the 2003 results below. Note that some of the 2017 questions were not used in the 2003 survey; therefore, they cannot be compared to the 2003 results.

1. What describes you best?

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
I live in Suffield Township.	89	-
I work in Suffield Township.	1	-
I live and work in Suffield Township.	8	-
I don’t currently live or work in Suffield Township.	2	-

2. Agricultural production in Suffield Township is an important industry.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	65	42
Agree	29	50
Disagree	4	5
Strongly Disagree	0	1
No Opinion	3	3

3. Land fronting on any State Route should be zoned for commercial development.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	10	11
Agree	13	4
Disagree	36	45
Strongly Disagree	35	38
No Opinion	7	2

4. Suffield Township should maintain its rural character.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	67	47
Agree	21	45
Disagree	8	6
Strongly Disagree	2	1
No Opinion	2	2

5. We need to protect the agricultural industry in Suffield Township.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	63	45
Agree	27	42
Disagree	7	8
Strongly Disagree	1	1
No Opinion	3	5

6. Design and management of new development is being properly handled in Suffield Township.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	5	5
Agree	35	35
Disagree	16	16
Strongly Disagree	7	7
No Opinion	36	38

7. It is important that Suffield Township maintains a separate identity from other communities.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	51	35
Agree	34	46
Disagree	9	7
Strongly Disagree	2	3
No Opinion	5	9

8. Coordinating planning efforts with other townships and communities in the county is extremely important.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	14	13
Agree	51	65
Disagree	16	8
Strongly Disagree	9	5
No Opinion	9	9

9. Local recreational areas and facilities meet my needs.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	30	6
Agree	53	51
Disagree	10	20
Strongly Disagree	2	12
No Opinion	5	10

10. The character of Suffield Township should be changed to a more urbanized developed community.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	3	4
Agree	8	11
Disagree	28	30
Strongly Disagree	58	51
No Opinion	3	5

11. Historic and archeological resources should be protected.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	55	39
Agree	39	54
Disagree	3	4
Strongly Disagree	1	0
No Opinion	2	3

12. Commercial development should be restricted to existing commercial areas.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	32	32
Agree	34	44
Disagree	18	16
Strongly Disagree	8	0
No Opinion	8	8

13. What retail and merchandising are needed to meet the needs of residents?

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Clothing Stores	4	-
Hardware Stores	11	-
Drug Stores	14	-
Grocery Stores	39	-
Service Stations	17	-
Coffee Shops	22	-
Restaurants	34	-
More merchandising is not needed	48	-

14. What professional services are needed to meet the needs of residents?

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Accounting Services	4	-
Banks	18	-
Doctors	15	-
Engineers	4	-
Realtors	2	-
More professional services are not needed	76	-

15. What personal service establishments are needed to meet the needs of the citizens?

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Dry cleaners	8	-
Barbers	13	-
Tailors	3	-
Home based business	27	-
More personal service establishments are not needed.	66	-

16. Suffield Township should be served by central water systems.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	8	7
Agree	13	22
Disagree	31	41
Strongly Disagree	34	21
No Opinion	14	9

17. Suffield Township should be serviced by central sanitary sewers.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	12	7
Agree	15	26
Disagree	28	39
Strongly Disagree	35	20
No Opinion	10	9

18. I am willing to pay for my share of infrastructure costs for water and sewer.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	7	-
Agree	18	-
Disagree	18	-
Strongly Disagree	50	-
No Opinion	6	-

19. The Township should change industrial areas to commercial when no industrial use exists.

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
Strongly Agree	11	-
Agree	39	-
Disagree	15	-
Strongly Disagree	16	-
No Opinion	19	-

20. What is your age?

	2017 Responses	2003 Responses
18-24	4.24%	-
25-34	12.01%	-
35-44	17.31%	-
45-54	20.49%	-
55-64	19.43%	-
65-74	19.43%	-
75+	7.07%	-

Discussion

The 2017 and 2003 survey results show an increasing number of residents believe that agriculture is an important industry, it should be protected within the township, and that the rural character of the township should be maintained. A majority of respondents oppose servicing the township by central sewer and water systems, implying growth should not be encouraged everywhere, but rather remain in existing developed areas. While a strong majority believe the township should maintain its own identity as separate from other communities, they also favor joining with these communities in coordinating

planning efforts. This demonstrates that respondents are aware that development trends in adjacent areas will influence the future of Suffield Township.

A majority of respondents oppose servicing the township by central sewer and water systems (63 and 65% respectively). Approximately 68% of respondents are opposed to paying their share of the infrastructure cost to expand sewer and water. This implies growth should not be encouraged everywhere but should be restricted to specific areas.

Approximately 83% of respondents agree that the recreational areas and facilities meet their needs. This was an improvement from 2003 where 57% of respondents believed recreational areas and facilities were adequate.

Views on development and zoning

Respondents were asked to give their views on the township's management of development and locations of new development. Between the 2003 and 2017 survey, there was no change in opinion on the township's proper management of new development (40% agreed, 36% no opinion).

Overall respondents did not want land fronting any state route to be zoned commercial. Half of all respondents (50%) agreed that industrial areas should be changed to commercial where no industry exists; however, 66% of respondents want commercial development to be restricted to existing commercial areas. In general, respondents believe more commercial, professional, and personal service establishments are not needed.

Conclusion

The agricultural character of Suffield Township is important to respondents. Residents would like to ensure the rural character and sense of place remains in the township. They support restricting water and sewer systems to the existing service areas. Future development and redevelopment should be restricted to these areas.