

4.0 Public Involvement

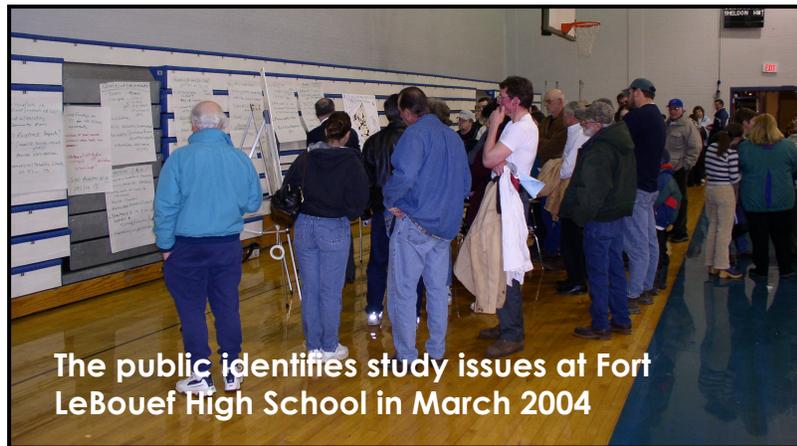
Public Involvement Highlights

- Public involvement sessions had extensive community interest and involvement that added more value in scenario development and plan implementation.

4.1 Public Involvement 1

This summary covers the key results from the study's first public meeting, which was held on March 10, 2004 at the Fort LeBouef High School. Approximately 400 attended.

The Erie County Planning Department held the open house to introduce the study to the general public. The public's input on the existing and future land uses and



transportation system issues affecting the US 19 Corridor Study Area was received.

All landowners in the study area received a personalized meeting invitation. A meeting advertisement was also placed in the local newspaper and was announced on a local television station.

The consultant team made four formal presentations at the open house. Before and after the presentations, meeting attendees were joined in informal groups at work stations in the school gymnasium to discuss their ideas, concerns and opinions regarding the existing and future development issues. The planning team facilitated and recorded comments at the work stations. An exit survey was also distributed to capture meeting attendee comments on study issues. Public input was subsequently used to develop the study's preferred development scenario. Key survey results are summarized below. A sample of the survey instrument can be found in the report appendix.

4.1.1 Work Station Summary

The following highlights common themes expressed at the public meeting.

Quality of Life

- Rural preservation is important; preserve the small town feel of the corridor
- Corridor Quality of life issues include:

- Improving safety
- Preserving green space
- Historic Preservation
- Preserving the community image of Waterford Borough

Environmental

- Watershed issues are a concern south of I-90 (French Creek Watershed)

Turning Movements/Turning Lanes

- Turning lanes present in the corridor are being illegally used as passing lanes
 - Center lane at Robison Road is being used as passing lane
 - US 19/Robison – people are using the turning lane as a passing lane
- Lefthand turning lanes are needed in Waterford Borough.
- Turning lanes are need throughout the US 19 Corridor from I-90 to Waterford.
 - Primary areas of need include at Townhall Road, Lee Road and Dorn Road
- It is difficult to turn onto US 19 north bound from Dorn Road during peak periods. Also difficult to make left turns onto Townhall Road as well as Cherry Street Extension to Zwilling Road.
- Making a left turn south onto US 19 is difficult from many side roads.

Utilities

- Identify location of fiber optics in Corridor. (This is important for development.)
- Identify water/sewer future locations.
- New water/sewer – look at road/impacts on cost
- Relocate utilities underground
- Water/sewer not being installed simultaneously, this affects traffic flow (Coordinate the process)
- There are water/sewer feasibility issues in the southern portion of the study area (from the Nissan Dealer to Waterford Borough).

Sight Distances

- Robison Road is too narrow for current traffic volume. Sight distance is a problem at Old French Road and Robison Road (the posted speed limit is 45). Sight distance is also a concern at Parson Street and Cherry Street.
- There are visibility issues at US 19 and PA 97, Townhall Road.
- Billboards at intersections limit sight distances. (e.g., Elk Creek onto US 19)
- Sight distances approaching Townhall Road are a concern.

Parking

- There is a lack of parking in Waterford Borough.
- Explore two story parking development on Main Street.
- Ballpark in Waterford is not used much anymore. Consider making it into a parking lot for Borough parking.

Traffic

- Traffic problems in Waterford Borough:
 - Waterford Borough traffic relief must consider other points like Union City
 - Create a one-way pair through Waterford Borough to help with congestion
 - Traffic using local streets is mainly through traffic. E.g. Chestnut Street, East Street (AM/PM Peak).
 - Post Office Annex is needed to cut down traffic to existing Post Office.
 - When there is an accident on I-90, traffic is rerouted through Waterford Borough. Congestion and backups occur.
- Explore commercial traffic limits on PA 97/US 19.
- Construct traffic relief East-West before I-90 and at Cherry Street Extension to US 19.
- Long backups occur on US 19
 - From “Y” (PA 97 to the north) from 3 to 5 pm (peaks)
 - There are problems accessing US 19 from Waterford Borough side streets
- Possible future use of railroad corridor for traffic alleviation.
- Signalize the US 19/PA 97 intersections.
- Signal phasing East/West at Robison Road and US 19 is too short all day.



Paving

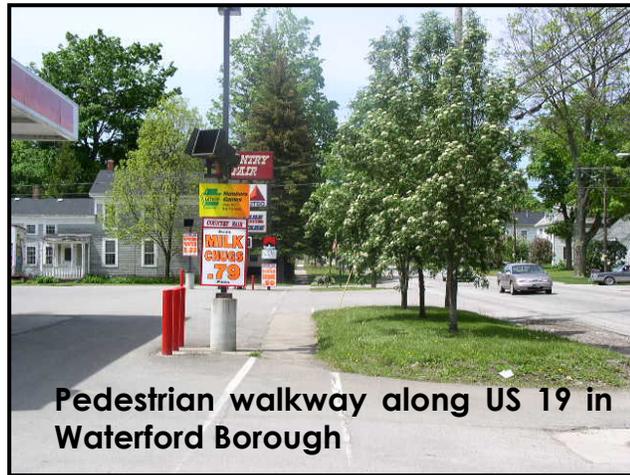
- Use paving material that reduces noise on roadways.
- Pave Flatts Road. – People traveling into Waterford could bypass the borough using this road.
- Pave Himrod/Talcott Roads. Both are currently dirt roads.
- Resurface PA 97.

Truck Traffic

- Truck speeds and blind spots are issues on PA 97
- US 6 North Truck Traffic – There is a bridge restriction in Mill Village because of a railroad overpass. This traffic is rerouted to Waterford Borough. Approximately 50 to 100 trucks a day are rerouted. Clearance of bridge is 12'10". Possible road relocation/bridge raising. (There is poor advance traveler information and verification.)
- Move trucks out of Waterford. Truckers desire a bypass.

Pedestrian and Bicycles

- Place share the road signs on the roadway, in particular along PA 97.
- There have been pedestrian fatalities at the Post Office and 1st Street.
- There are pedestrian issues at the intersection of US 19 with Oliver Road. There are no sidewalks, but many children are using Splash Lagoon, and Family First Center.
- Pedestrian/Bike
 - Crossing Peach Street is hazardous...consider a pedestrian bridge
 - There are long waits to cross US 19 to mailboxes
 - Shoulder conditions are poor
 - Replace deep ditches and swales with culverts
 - Snowmobile crossing on US 19 two miles of Waterford Borough—culverts at crossings is a safety concern
 - Consider snowmobiling as part of tourism of Erie
 - Pedestrian access for walkways or bikeways.
- Lee Road – need sidewalks for pedestrians and dog walking etc.
- Make railroad right-of-way a multi-use area (bikes, pedestrians, snowmobiles, etc.) instead of using as a railroad.
- Traffic on intersecting roads is becoming more dangerous for pedestrian use.
- It is difficult to cross US 19 in Waterford Borough.



Bypass

- Bypass Waterford Borough (East side), North 19/97 to South 97 Southeast of Waterford or create truck route around the Borough
- Consider residential impacts of a Bypass
- Community/Business impacts +/- of bypassing should be examined
- Edinboro-Waterford-PennState Baron Campus – vicinity of I-79 → Beltway Concept

- Bypass US 19 – use Trask Road.

US 19/PA 97 Merge and Circuit Street

- Circuit Street traveling east bound – Sight distance is a problem traveling on PA 97 north bound. High accident location.
- US 19/97 intersections (traffic congestion). PM traffic...school traffic in morning.
- Make Circuit Street – right turn only at the 97/19 merge going into Waterford Borough.
- Improve “Y’s” at both ends of Waterford.
- Close Circuit Street at 19/97 split right now.
- Cloverleaf, traffic circles, or other methods of keeping traffic moving at 19/97 merge (both north and south bound) should be considered
- Better signage is needed at the intersections of PA 97 and US 19
- Through roads between 19/97 to connect the two roads
- Make Circuit Road a busway to help with bus traffic into the schools
- Small through road at Beer Distributor – people cut through to jump traffic.

Development

- The racetrack would be better on the Bayfront instead of in Summit Township
- Cognizant of community development flavor for each segment (e.g., concentrate development in the corridor's northern section).
- Coordinate with existing community plans.
- Business flood lighting is having a negative impact on residential areas (e.g., Humes).
- Keep an eye on developments in study area.
- The costs of growth and who pays must be addressed in the study.
- No new development, leave the corridor the way it is.
- Would like to see low impact manufacturing in the corridor
- Route 97 racetrack impacts?
 - Check traffic impact study (Summit Township)
 - Possible 3/04 decision
- Development plan review in contiguous areas.
- Planned residential development in southern part, just outside of study area (200 acres) – approximately 250 units.
- Limited frontage on route 97 regarding future improvements
- Make PA 97 main route into Waterford instead of US 19.
- Consider Spur Roads.
- Curbing in Waterford Borough (Check business impact) and alongside both parks is needed.

- Road extensions/driveways into plazas?
- Worsening economy is resulting in more commuting to Erie.
- No local police force in the study area.
- Examine US 19 impacts down to Route 505.
- Talk to the railroad to see what is happening with the railroad tracks.

Safety

- Fire safety/emergency response/equipment access issues with increased traffic.
 - Time of day issues now on US 19 and PA 97.
- Ditches are too deep along US 19 and are very dangerous.
- High accident locations at Track Road and US 19.

Interstate 90

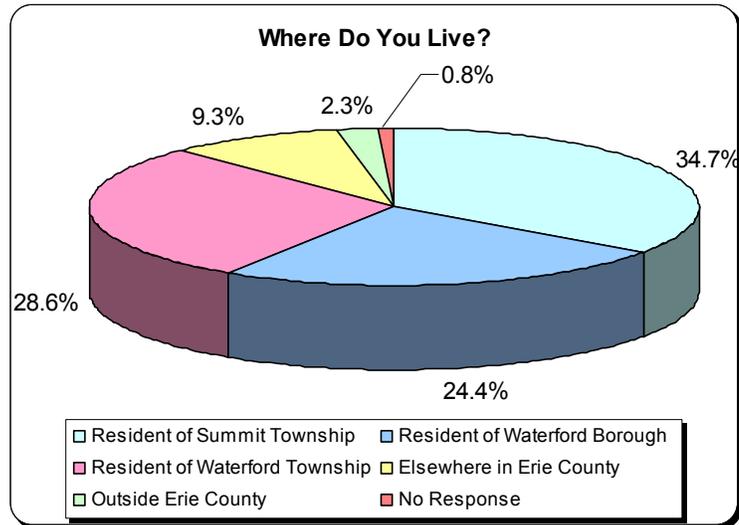
- Use available capacity under I-90 Bridge over US 19 for south bound moves
- Need more exit lanes on I-90 going East or West. (Backups occur at signal)
- PA 97/Schultz Road north of I-90—need to turn this back to an intersection instead of off ramp.
- Widen intersection at the I-90 bridge.

Miscellaneous

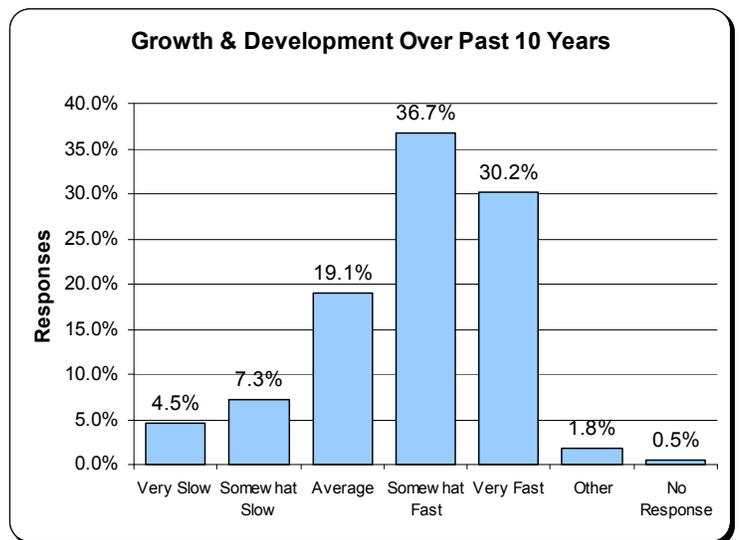
- Snow plow speeds through Waterford Borough are excessive.
- Reroute traffic to I-79.
- Use Railroad (if inactive) as alternate route. Shift PA 97 traffic.
- Turn-back monies have not increased over the years as costs of maintenance have increased.
- Auto dealerships on US 19 conduct test drives on the local roads.
- More transit will be needed for those who do not have cars or have disabilities - especially if more development occurs.

Summary of stakeholder participation – Meeting #1

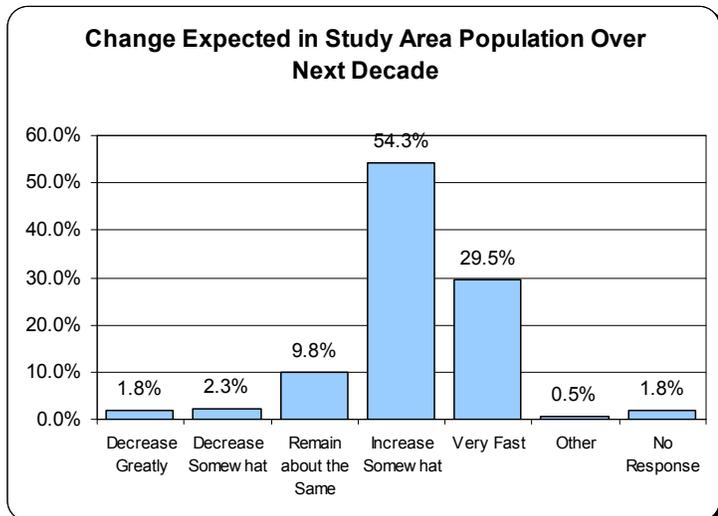
The survey provided a good representation of the study area residents and land owners. All three municipalities in the study area were represented equally in the survey results and 9.3 percent of survey participants resided outside of the study elsewhere in Erie County.



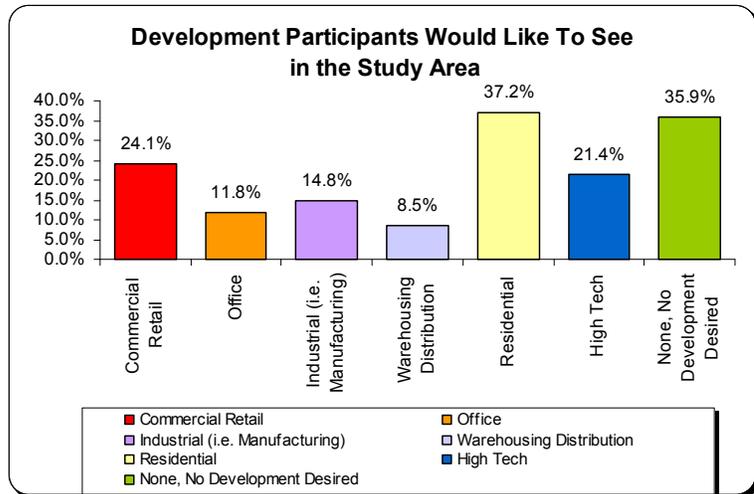
Survey participants were asked in their opinion what best described the growth and development in the study area in the past 10 years. Most survey participants perceived fast growth over the past decade.



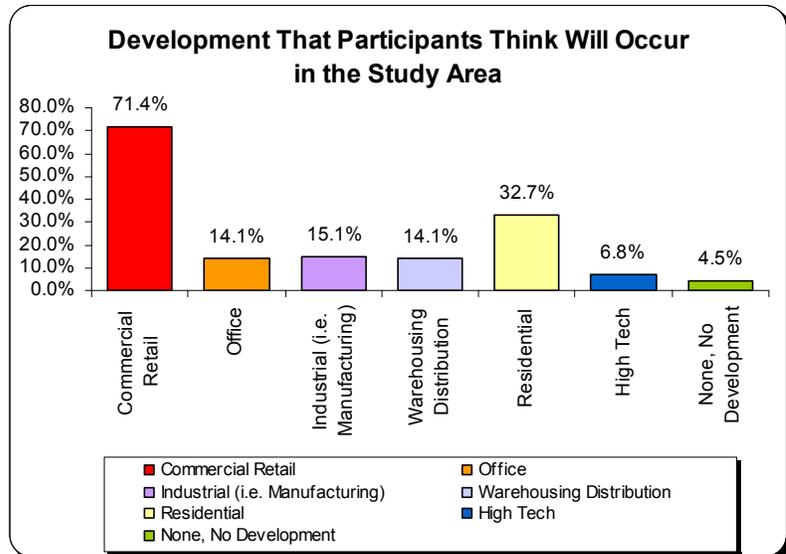
The majority of survey participants expect the study area population to increase somewhat or grow very fast. This corresponds with their expected development and growth rates from the previous chart.



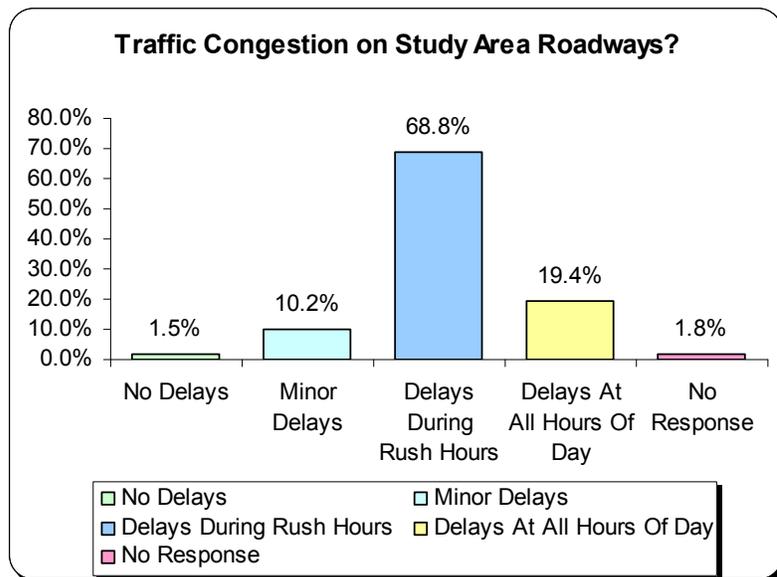
When asked to express preferences for future land use by development type for the Corridor, participants' responses were mixed. Residential development (37.2 percent) ranked the highest preference with no new development (35.9 percent) with a close second. Warehousing distribution and office were the least desirable (8.5 percent and 11.8 percent respectively).



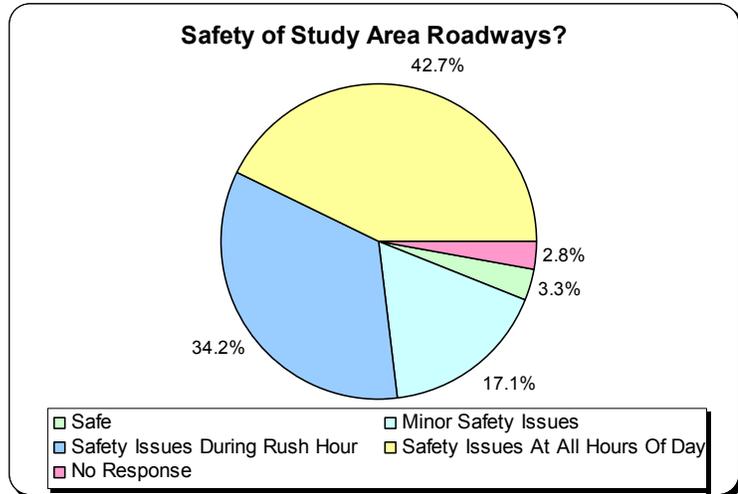
In contrast when survey participants were asked what type of development they think will occur in the Corridor, a majority (71.4 percent) identified Commercial Retail as the primary development type.



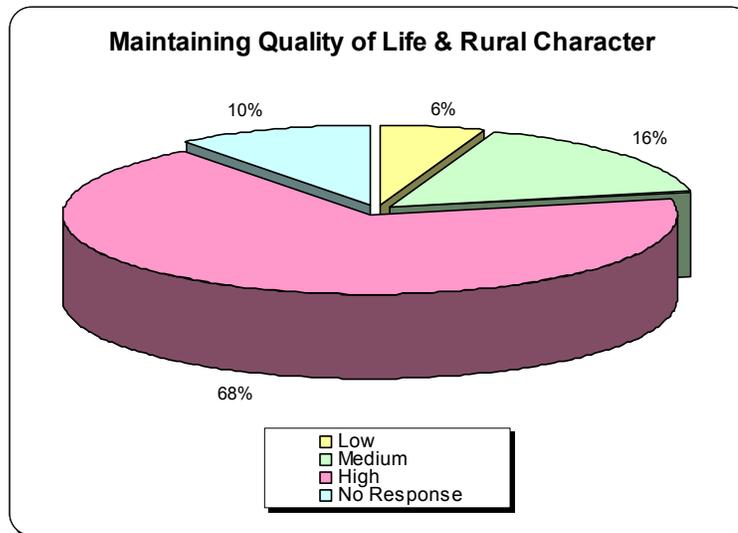
Survey participants indicated that delays on study area roadways are experienced during rush hour periods (68.8 percent). While, 19.4 percent of survey responses indicated that delays were experienced at all hours of the day.



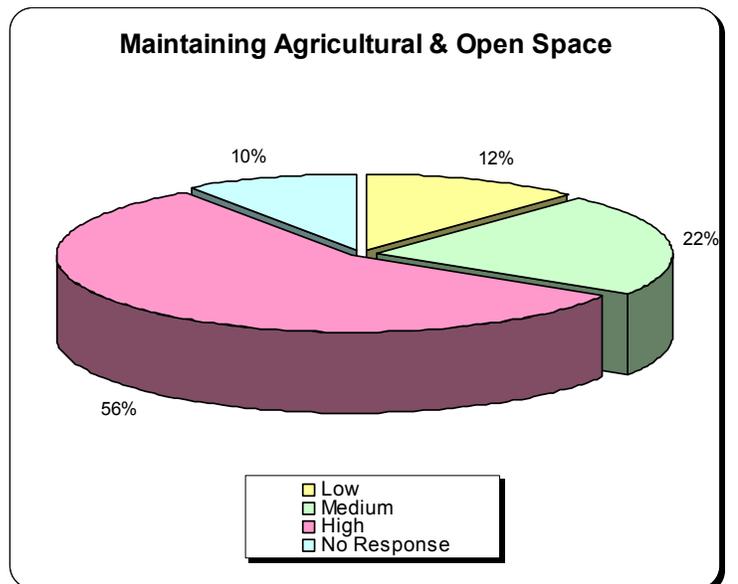
Approximately 42 percent of survey participants indicated that roadway safety was an issue at all hours of the day in the Study Area. Only 3 percent indicated that the roadways were safe.



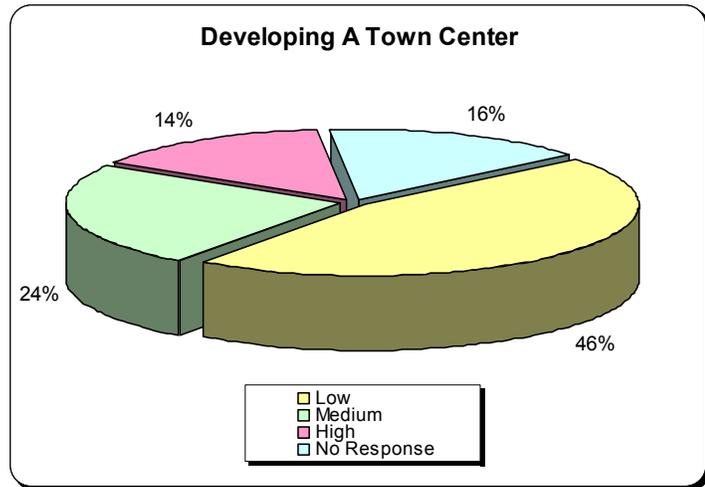
The study area’s present character remains semi-rural with dispersed land use. Residents appropriately associate this pattern with a high quality of life. 68 percent, in fact, assigned high priority to maintaining the area’s rural quality of life.



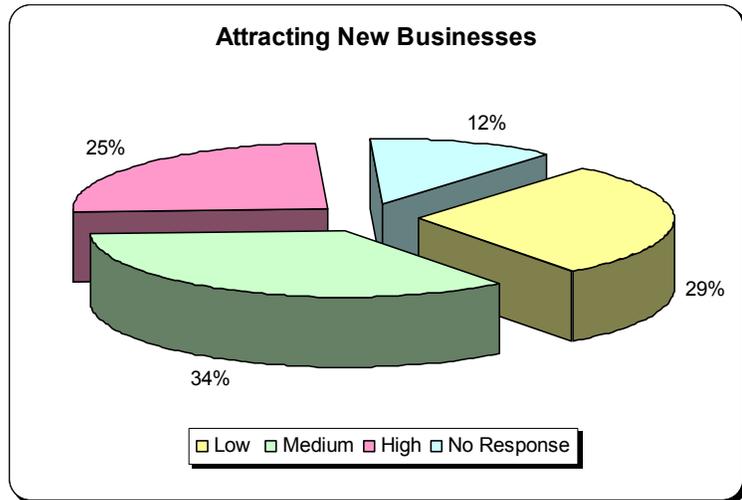
As part of quality of life, maintaining agriculture and open space is important to survey participants. In fact, this was the fourth highest ranked issue by survey participants. Other issues, besides rural character and open spaces that were of high priority to survey participants included traffic congestion and improving roadway safety.



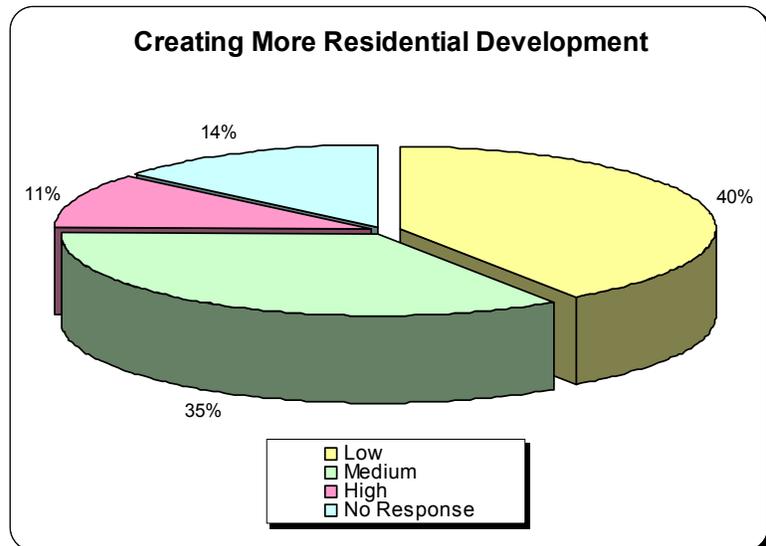
Only 14 percent of respondents assigned high priority to developing a Town Center despite a national trend and interest in downtown/ community development. This result maybe low due to the proximity to the City of Erie and the Borough of Waterford. Survey participants may not be familiar with this concept.



An interesting finding is that 59 percent of respondents placed a high or medium level of priority on attracting new jobs to the area. It could be argued that this is at odds—from a land use-planning standpoint—with the high level of expressed interest in no growth. However, these apparent anomalies are the reason this planning process is so important. Development and quality of life objectives do not have to be incompatible or conflicting--but can be achieved as community goals are meshed with effective strategies for both land use and transportation.

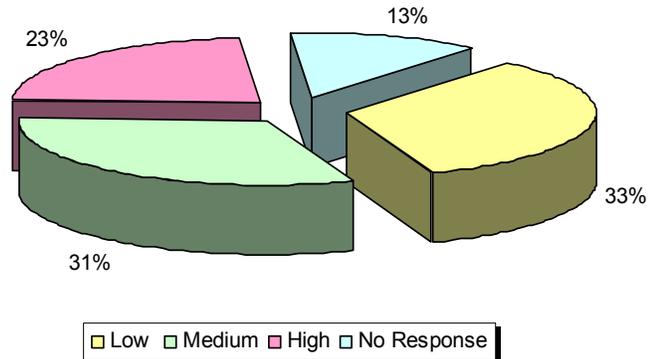


Another interesting finding is the low priority placed on creating more residential development (40 percent). In an earlier question on the survey, participants were asked what type of development they would like to see in the Corridor – 37.2 percent indicated that they would like to see residential development occur in the study area followed by 35.9 percent who indicated they would like to see no new development occur.



Participants were asked to prioritize accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians in the study area. Of those participating in the survey, only 23 percent placed this issue as high priority. In fact, the majority of the survey participants ranked this issue as a low priority.

Accommodating Bicycles & Pedestrians



Stakeholder Analysis – Meeting #1

The study area participants are to be commended for their outstanding participation and wealth of good ideas and community spirit. The overall direction of these findings is positive:

1. The study area is experiencing growth with associated problems and challenges.
2. The study area participants, however, are prepared to face these challenges and recognized the need for a more proactive, planned approach to development.
3. Participants development wants in the corridor and what they believe will happen in the corridor are different. This illustrates that residents do not believe they have a say in Corridor Planning.
4. That approach can be achieved by going forward in this planning process and beyond to:
 - a. Properly balance the goals of development and quality of life preservation
 - b. Address traffic and safety problems
 - c. Focus development in certain areas that better mesh with available infrastructure and that conflict less with residential areas and other protected land uses (e.g., open space).
 - d. Opportunities for innovation abound—including more cooperative efforts with developers and others for sidewalk construction, tree planting, and other efforts that will be generally supportive of the emerging vision.
 - e. Continue to build on the great public spirit in completing and implementing the study.

4.2 Public Involvement 2

The study team hosted a second public open house on April 26, 2005 at the Fort LeBouef High School. Approximately 200 attended.

The Erie County Planning Department held the open house to provide the results of the first public involvement to the attendees and to present draft recommendations.

All landowners in the study area received a personalized meeting invitation. A meeting advertisement was also placed in the local newspaper and was announced on a local television station.

The study team made two formal presentations at the open house. Before and after the presentations, meeting attendees were joined in informal groups at work stations in the school gymnasium to discuss their ideas, concerns and opinions regarding the proposed recommendations and existing and future development issues. The planning team facilitated and recorded comments at the work stations. PennDOT district representatives were also available to answer questions or concerns. An exit survey was also distributed to capture meeting attendee comments on study issues. Public input was subsequently used to finalize the plan's recommendations. Key survey results are summarized below. A sample of the survey instrument can be found in the report appendix.



Summary of stakeholder participation – Meeting #2

From the survey, the strongest support appears to be at addressing sight distance at Townhall's intersections with US 19 and PA 97 (53% and 45% respectively saying they "strongly support" the recommendation), while 50% voiced "strong support" for a center turn lane in Summit Township.

Favorable public response to the recommendations were as follows (those saying they: strongly agree/agree/somewhat agree):

- 86% - US 19 & Townhall Road sight distance
- 85% - construct center turn lane on US 19 to Townhall Road
- 85% - PA 97 & Townhall Road sight distance
- 82% - US 19 & Dorn sight distance
- 81% - Robison Road & Old French Road sight distance
- 77% - administer a parking/traffic circulation study for Waterford Borough
- 76% - address physical objects in the corridor (swales, etc.)
- 73% - extend Waterford Borough's Main Street character
- 72% - retime Waterford Borough signal
- 68% - express bus service/park and ride
- 65% - joint access management ordinance
- 58% - roundabouts
- 58% - eliminating commercial strip potential

- 47% - limit public water/sewer extensions.

Recommendations registering any kind of "strong disagreement" were:

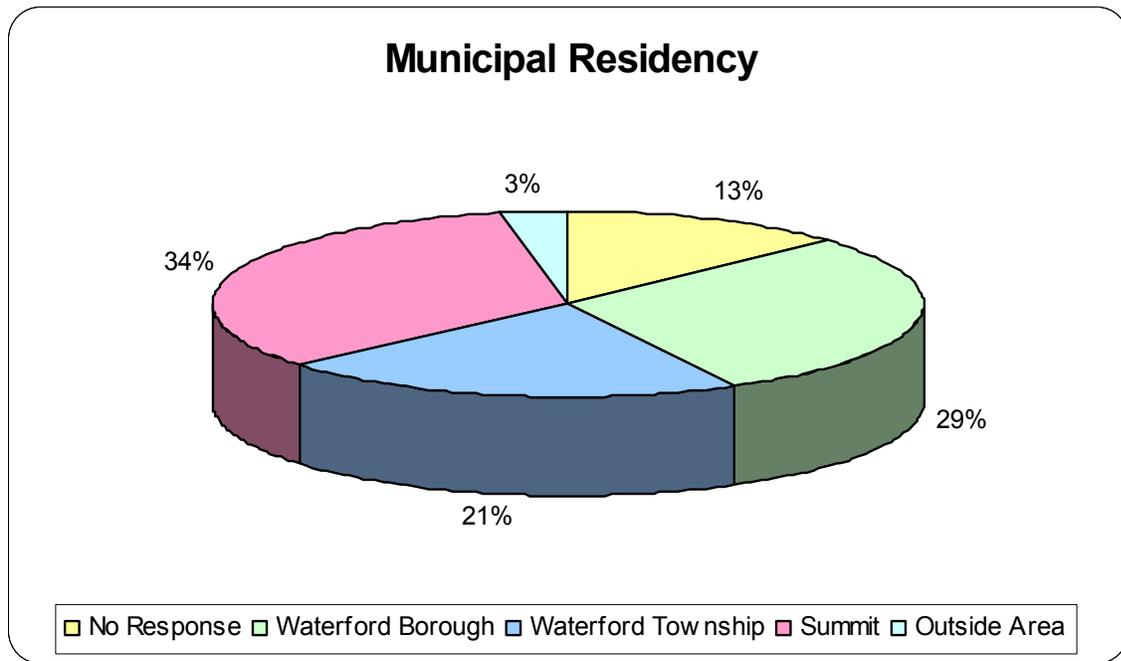
- 21% - limiting water/sewer service extensions
- 17% - roundabouts
- 11% - Eliminating commercial strip potential.

There were a total of 192 surveys; all three municipalities were equally represented in the results.

The following provides more details regarding the exit survey.

The municipalities of the study area were represented equally for the most part. Summit Township had the largest percentage of residents attend the meeting with 34 percent of all those attending.

As part of the exit survey, the participants were asked to rate the proposed recommendations and indicated whether they agree with the recommendations. The following charts illustrate their preferences and views regarding the recommendations proposed at the meeting.

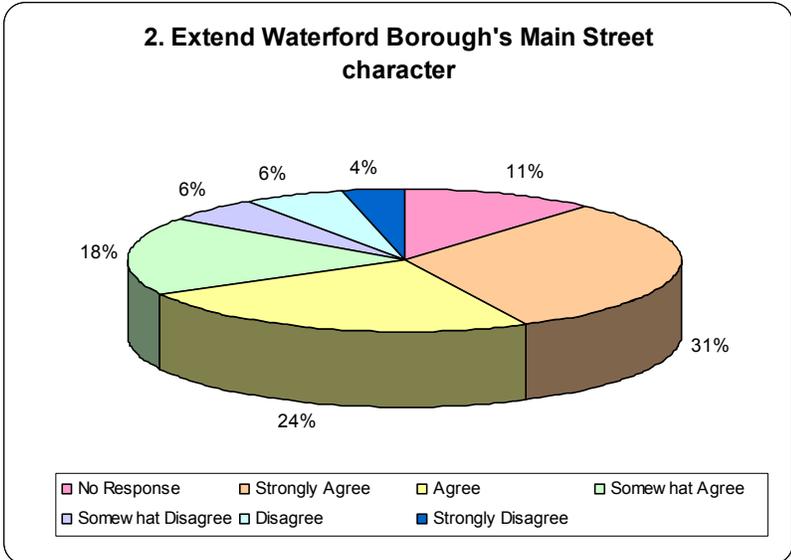


When asked to rate how they feel about eliminating commercial strip zoning within Waterford and Summit Townships along US 19 and PA 97, the majority agreed with this recommendation (58 percent). Please note that invalid surveys were surveys where a participant circled two answers.

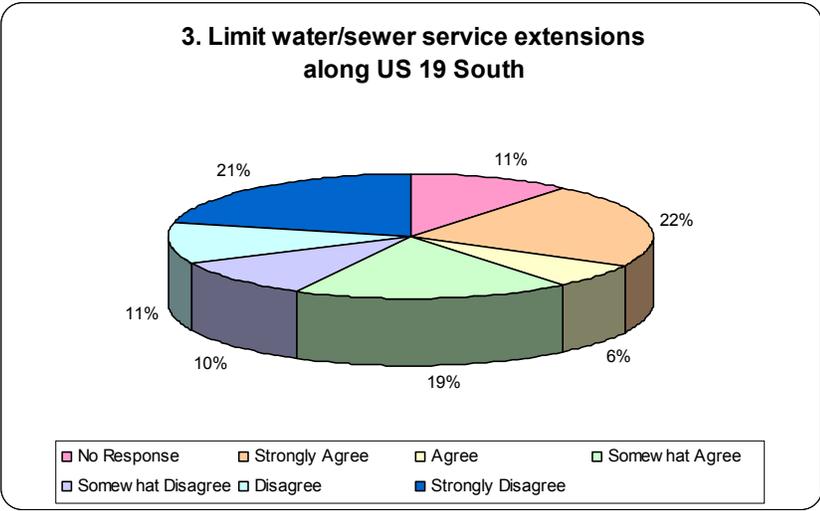
1. Eliminate commercial strip potential

Public Response from Public Involvement 2 - US 19		
Response	Amount	Percentage of Total
No Response	17	9%
Strongly Agree	58	30%
Agree	29	15%
Somewhat Agree	24	13%
Somewhat Disagree	24	13%
Disagree	16	8%
Strongly Disagree	22	11%
Invalid	2	1%

An overwhelming 73 percent of those that answered the survey question, agreed with the recommendation of extending Waterford Borough's main street character.

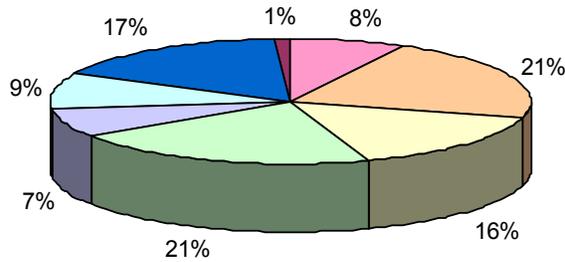


Many of the participants disagreed with the recommendation to limit water and sewer service along US 19. In fact, 42 percent disagreed to some extent. However, the majority (47 percent) agreed with the recommendation.



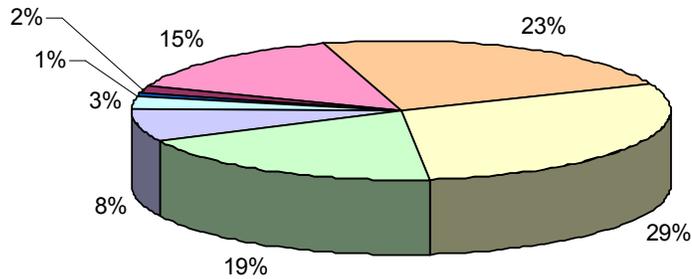
Twenty one percent of the people strongly agreed with the recommendation to construct roundabouts. However, 17 percent strongly disagreed with the recommendation.

4. Construct roundabouts at US 19's intersections with PA 97



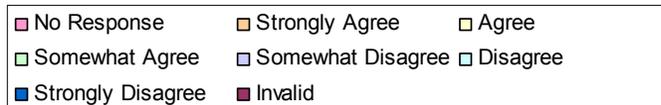
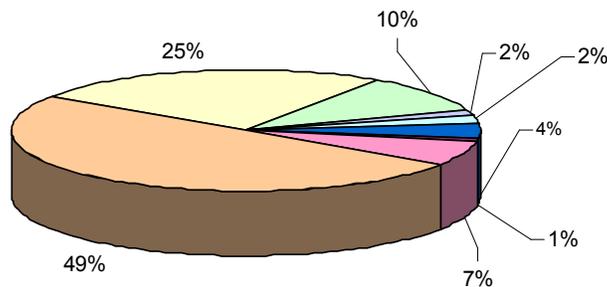
Seventy one percent agreed with the recommendation to retime the signal in Waterford Borough. Only 8 percent strongly disagreed with this recommendation.

5. Retime the signal in Waterford Borough

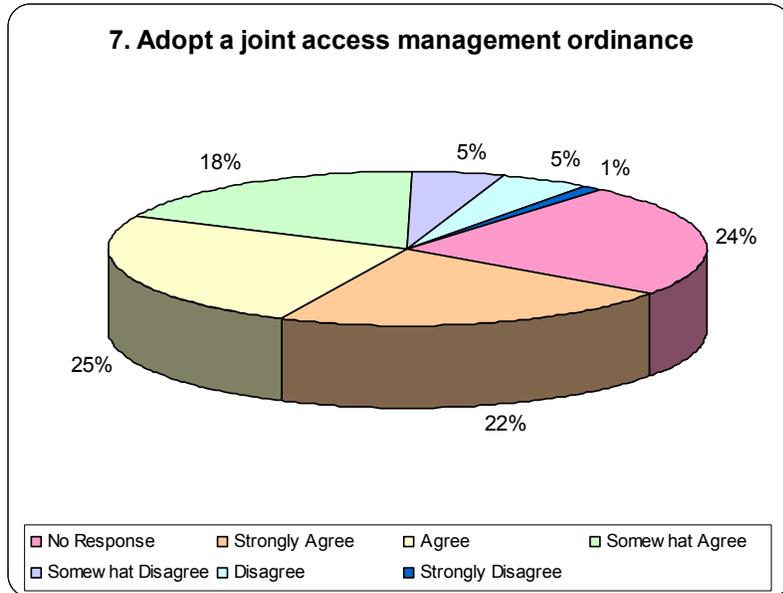


Center turn lanes were a very popular recommendation. Forty-nine percent strongly agreed with this recommendation and 84 percent agreed to some extent. Only 4 percent strongly disagreed.

6. Construct a center turn lane on US 19 between I-90 and Townhall Road



Seventy one percent agreed that "adopt a joint access management ordinance" was a reasonable recommendation for the corridor. Eleven percent disagreed with this recommendation.



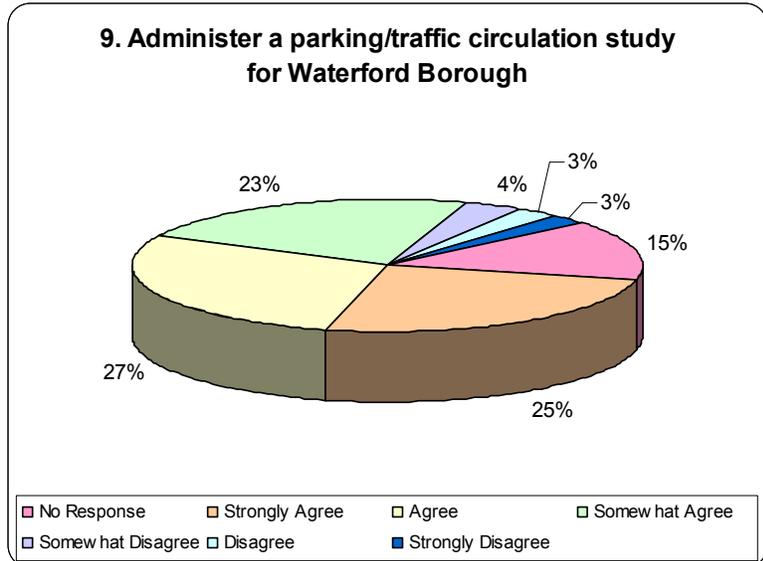
When asked to evaluate the recommendation of an express bus service, 68 percent of survey respondents agreed to some extent with this recommendation. Five percent of the responses disagreed with this recommendation. Please note that invalid responses were those surveys that had two responses for the question.

8. Consider providing express bus service from Waterford Borough with associated park and ride

Public Response from Public Involvement 2 - US 19

Response	Amount	Percentage of Total
No Response	26	14%
Strongly Agree	36	19%
Agree	32	17%
Somewhat Agree	62	32%
Somewhat Disagree	14	7%
Disagree	12	6%
Strongly Disagree	9	5%
Invalid	1	1%

The majority of responses were in favor of a parking/traffic circulation study in Waterford Borough. Seventy percent agreed with the recommendation on some level.



The next set of tables refer to the recommendations addressed as part of the safety audit. The majority of the participants agreed with all of these recommendations. The most favorable of the recommendations was number 12 – Improve sight distance at US 19 and Townhall Road. Fifty three percent indicated that they strongly agreed with the recommendation.

10. Address physical objects in the corridor, including unprotected swales

Public Response from Public Involvement 2 - US 19		
Response	Amount	Percentage of Total
No Response	34	18%
Strongly Agree	33	17%
Agree	69	36%
Somewhat Agree	44	23%
Somewhat Disagree	8	4%
Disagree	3	2%
Strongly Disagree	1	1%

11. Improve sight distance at US 19 and Dorn Road

Public Response from Public Involvement 2 - US 19		
Response	Amount	Percentage of Total
No Response	23	12%
Strongly Agree	72	38%
Agree	58	30%
Somewhat Agree	28	15%
Somewhat Disagree	5	3%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	5	3%

12. Improve sight distance at US 19 and Townhall Road

Public Response from Public Involvement 2 - US 19		
Response	Amount	Percentage of Total
No Response	20	10%
Strongly Agree	102	53%
Agree	45	23%
Somewhat Agree	18	9%
Somewhat Disagree	3	2%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	3	2%

13. Improve sight distance at PA 97 and Townhall Road

Public Response from Public Involvement 2 - US 19		
Response	Amount	Percentage of Total
No Response	20	10%
Strongly Agree	86	45%
Agree	50	26%
Somewhat Agree	28	15%
Somewhat Disagree	3	2%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	4	2%

14. Improve sight distance at Robinson Road and Old French Road

Public Response from Public Involvement 2 - US 19		
Response	Amount	Percentage of Total
No Response	25	13%
Strongly Agree	68	35%
Agree	56	29%
Somewhat Agree	32	17%
Somewhat Disagree	4	2%
Disagree	4	2%
Strongly Disagree	3	2%