

## CHAPTER 2 - LIVINGSTON TOWNSHIP CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS

To assess the wishes of the citizens of Livingston Township and to provide the basis for this plan, the Livingston Township Planning Commission prepared a survey that was distributed throughout Livingston Township. The results of that survey, as in the past, serve as the basis and guide for the actions and directions identified in the *Livingston Township Comprehensive Plan*.

Approximately 1,100 surveys were sent to property owners in Livingston Township in 1999. Of the 1,100 surveys, 253 were completed and returned to the Planning Commission. The return rate was slightly less than the original survey that had 117 respondents to the 437 surveys mailed.

The residents of the Township had very clear ideas about the future of Livingston Township, and those opinions were very consistent with past surveys and the *Citizen Forum of 1996*.

The results of the *Livingston Township Citizen Survey* were tabulated by the Livingston Township Planning Commission. The results described a preference for rural living, maintaining the rural character of the Township, and severely limiting commercial growth. Based on the return rate of approximately 23 percent of the residents, the Planning Commission believes that this response constitutes a representative sample of the Township's residents. A normal representative survey will have a response rate of approximately 10 percent. Consequently, the Planning Commission is very comfortable in utilizing the responses in the survey to plan for the Township.

The following is a general overview of the responses and direction the Planning Commission believes the residents want for Livingston Township. To further support the conclusions of the survey, it was noted that the results from the latest survey were very much consistent with past surveys. The direction the citizens of the Township want for its future are clear and consistent and are reflected in this plan.

Approximately 90 percent of the respondents indicated that they will be living in their existing Township residence for at least six more years, and 48 percent plan to live in the Township at least another ten years. The rural character of the Township is the reason 83 percent of the respondents live in Livingston Township.

In terms of general development in the Township, the respondents were split. However, the majority of respondents, 66 percent, wanted no further development in the Township, while 34 percent favored some economic expansion in the Township. When questioned about commercial and industrial development in the Township, 2/3 of the residents (66 percent) were not in favor of commercial development, and 75 percent did not favor industrial development. Fully 95 percent of the respondents wanted stringent controls on the future location of businesses in Livingston Township. When asked about the establishment of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), 62 percent of the respondents were opposed to forming a DDA, and 38 percent supported the idea.

When asked about the specifics of additional growth, the 34 percent of those in favor of commercial growth responded as follows: 100 percent of them wanted a grocery or general store in the Township; 28 percent were interested in clothing stores; 17 percent wanted recreational or sporting goods stores; and 49 percent wanted other stores such as, department, gas stations, farm equipment, shopping center, or convenience stores.

By contrast, 75 percent of the respondents favored the preservation of agricultural lands in the Township, and 62 percent favored the preservation of forestlands in the Township. To accomplish these goals, equal numbers of respondents favored land use controls and/or conservation easements. Correspondingly, 76 percent of respondents wanted additional recreational lands for Township resident use. However, only 44 percent wanted additional recreation lands for tourists.

Residents indicated that development should be directed toward residential uses, with 68 percent favoring single-family residences and subdivisions. Sixty-two percent of the respondents also indicated that developers should be required to provide infrastructure for new developments. When asked about further annexation of land to the City of Gaylord, 76 percent were not in favor of any further annexation for the purpose of providing water and sewer for new development.

Specific questions on the survey were directed toward issues and services the Township could address through the planning process. They included snowmobiles and ORVs, roads, and garbage pickup.

When asked if residents would be willing to support a millage for road improvements in the Township, 61 percent were against a millage, while 39 percent supported it. In regard to garbage pickup, there was a much narrower difference, with 55 percent against and 45 percent in favor of curbside pickup. The residents overwhelmingly (97 percent) indicated that snowmobiles and ORVs should be restricted to only marked trails on State land. Only three percent indicated that snowmobiles and ORVs should not have any restrictions.