

## **WAUSHARA COUNTY GROUP F QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

### **Town of Aurora and Town of Bloomfield**

A questionnaire was conducted for the Town of Aurora and the Town of Bloomfield Community Management Committees to gather opinions from residents and landowners regarding land use and development issues. Questionnaires were sent out to all landowners and residents in the two communities. Additional questionnaires were available at the respective municipalities for renters, residents, and landowners who did not receive a questionnaire by mail. Each household was asked to complete one questionnaire. 1,398 questionnaires were distributed between the two municipalities, and 440 were returned. This resulted in an overall response rate of 31.5 percent. Individually, the Town of Aurora had a 22.4 percent response rate while the Town of Bloomfield had a 39.7 percent response rate.

#### **Waushara County Group F Return Rates**

Municipality	No. of Questionnaires		Response Rate
	Sent	Returned	
T. Aurora	665	149	22.4%
T. Bloomfield	733	291	39.7%
Total	1398	440	31.5%

The questionnaire contained 16 questions. There was one open-ended question in which written input was solicited. Some respondents did not answer all the questions.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **General Information**

- Seventy-six percent (76.0%) of the respondents indicated that they were full-time (permanent) residents of their respective municipalities.
- About one-third (32.7%) percent of the respondents indicated they were retired, corresponding to the 24.8 percent of the respondents who noted they were 65 years old and older.
- About two-thirds (65.1%) of the respondents indicated that they had lived in their municipality 11 or more years and 64.1 percent own more than 5 acres.
- Almost 80 percent of the respondents indicated they live on a rural property (57.5%) or a farmstead (20.2%).

### **Rate Your Municipality**

- The majority of respondents rated the quality of environment (83.6%), fire protection (72.6%), schools (68.4%), park and recreational lands (66.8%), and recreational opportunities (62.8%) as good or very good.

- Respondents felt that municipalities were doing a good or very good job at providing road maintenance (77.1%), snow removal (71.5%), law enforcement (69.0%), garbage/recycling facilities (68.9%), and emergency medical services (67.4%).
- Over half (56.0%) of the respondents evaluated economic opportunities as poor to fair.
- People indicated that small town living/rural atmosphere, quiet/peaceful ambiance, scenery/environment, and friendliness of the area were the most valued aspects of their municipalities.
- Citizens considered lack of job opportunities and new businesses; increases in taxes and land prices; and low wages to be the most urgent issues facing their municipalities.

### **Planning for the Future**

- Protection of natural resources was the number one issue in both communities.
- Protection of farmlands and woodlands was the second most important issue in both communities.
- Promotion of economic growth was the fourth most important issue in the Town of Aurora
- The Town of Bloomfield stressed the need for improved coordination and cooperation with neighboring communities.
- Shared interests between the two include balancing individual property rights with community interests and creating a unique, attractive community.

### **Existing Development**

- Generally, the majority of respondents indicated that there was about the right amount of all housing types in both their respective municipality and the overall area.
- Residents of both towns believe there is a need for assisted living/elderly facilities.
- Participants from the Town of Bloomfield indicated the need for condominium development.

### **Future Development**

- Approximately three-quarters of the respondents supported small scale retail (73.6%) and agricultural (72.0%) development.

- Over 70 percent of the respondents indicated they would either support or accept small scale industrial (66.0%/13.8%), service development (53.1%/20.6%), and tourism (52.6%/25.9%).
- Large scale agricultural development garnered the lowest support among all development types.
- Support and acceptance of all remaining development types was dependent of the municipality in which participants resided.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

Overall, 76 percent of the respondents indicated that they were year-round (permanent) residents within their respective communities; this category represented the highest percentage of respondents in both municipalities. Approximately 8 percent (7.8%) of the respondents indicated seasonal status with the highest percentage being from the Town of Bloomfield (10.7%). Approximately one-third (32.7%) indicated they were retired. This corresponds to the 24.8 percent of respondents who noted that they were 65 years old and over. A majority of respondents (65.1%) indicated they were long-standing residents (this figure includes part-time residents). The place of residence for respondents varied greatly between the two communities.

## **RATE YOUR MUNICIPALITY**

Respondents were asked to rate their municipality on the quality of the environment; economic, educational, and recreational opportunities; access to goods and services; and the quality of public facilities and services. In addition, respondents were asked to rank the aspects they value most about their community as well as the most pressing issues facing their municipalities.

The majority of respondents rated the quality of the environment (83.6%), fire protection (72.6%), school facilities (68.4%), park and recreational lands (66.8%), and recreational opportunities (62.8%) as good to very good. Slightly lower approval ratings (fair to good) were given to road maintenance (77.1%), snow removal (71.5%), community attractiveness (70.6%), access to goods and services (69.7%), law enforcement services (69.0%), garbage/recycling services (68.9%), emergency medical services (67.4%), and educational opportunities (60.6%). On the other hand, economic opportunities were rated poor to fair by 56.0 percent of the respondents. High rates of no opinion were expressed on the quality of community centers (38.7%).

The three most valued community aspects included: small town living/rural atmosphere (22.7%); quiet peaceful (21.6%); scenery/environment (12.3%); and friendliness of the area (12.0%).

Respondents were in basic agreement regarding the most critical issues facing their communities. Common issues facing both towns included increasing taxes (first overall); lack of

new businesses (second overall); increasing land prices (third overall); and lack of job opportunities (fourth overall). Too much regulation of natural resources and low wages were tied for fifth.

## **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of various decisions that must be considered when planning for the future. These issues involved the promotion of development that minimizes costs; promotion of redevelopment of land with existing infrastructure; encouragement of coordination and cooperation between municipalities; promotion of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices; the protection of groundwater, wetlands, surface waters, agricultural lands, and woodlands; protection of private property rights; preservation of cultural, historic, and archaeological sites; provision of adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels; attraction of good paying jobs; increased community participation in land use planning and decision making; community aesthetics; and continued high quality of life for future generations.

While residents indicated that all issues were important, some issues emerged as a higher priority than others. Overall, the top issue in the study area included protection of natural resources, protection of agricultural lands and woodlands, balancing private property rights with community interests, creating attractive communities, promoting intergovernmental cooperation between neighboring communities, and promoting economic growth.

Although the two towns shared common planning interests, the importance each community placed on individual goals differed. The top two issues in both communities and the overall study area were protection of natural resources and protection of agricultural lands and woodlands. Both towns placed a priority on balancing private property rights with community interest. The Town of Aurora ranked this issue third while Bloomfield placed less emphasis (fifth) on this goal. Similarly, both communities desired to build community identity by creating attractive communities. Aurora prioritized this as the fifth most important goal while Bloomfield placed greater importance with a ranking of third. Planning concerns varied between the two towns for the final goal. Aurora residents stressed the need to promote economic growth (fourth). Bloomfield indicated intergovernmental cooperation in coordination of services was highly essential.

## **EXISTING DEVELOPMENT**

Respondents were asked to evaluate both the overall availability and selection of housing types within their municipality. Respondents rated housing availability as too much, about right, or not enough for each of the following housing types: single family; low to moderate income; duplexes; multi-unit apartments; condominiums; assisted living – elderly; mobile home parks; and high income development. Generally, the majority of respondents indicated that there was about the right amount of all housing types in both their respective municipality and the overall area.

Several trends were noticed in the housing development for both municipalities. Residents indicated they were satisfied with current development patterns within their respective community and the overall area. Approximately 50 percent or more of respondents indicated that current development trends were about right in most categories. However, both towns indicated that additional assisted living housing for the elderly will be necessary in both their own community and throughout the study area. Bloomfield residents also expressed a desire for additional condominium developments.

Between 10 and 20 percent of the respondents failed to answer individual questions in this category. However, a lower response rate is not calculated into the overall response rate for questions in this section.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Respondents were asked their opinions on the current level of development within the area and what types of new development would be best suited to the area. Survey participants were asked if they supported; did not support, but accepted; did not support; or had no opinion on the following types of development: large, moderate, and small scale industrial development; service and tourism development; small and moderate to large agricultural development; and small and large retail development.

Respondents from both municipalities overwhelmingly supported small scale retail (73.6%) and agricultural (72.0%) development. Although people were willing to support industrial growth, support rates declined as the scale of development increased. Over 70 percent of the respondents indicated they would either support or accept small scale industrial (66.0%/13.8%), service development (53.1%/20.6%), and tourism (52.6%/25.9%). Large scale agricultural development garnished the lowest support among all development types; only 21.9 percent supported it while 49.6 percent opposed it.

Support and acceptance was also dependent of the municipality in which participants resided. Bloomfield residents were more apt to support service development where as Aurora residents supported all other categories more strongly.