

Chapter 3

## Trends and Public Involvement

---

## The Future

What might the future hold for the quality of life for the people of Cumberland County? The world as we know it is rapidly changing. Trends are creating shifts in the ways we live, work, and play. In society today we are seeing shifts in how we view the world from:

Living to work.....	to.....	Working to live
Need to disconnect.....	to.....	Need to connect
Conformity.....	to.....	Diversity
Exercise and fitness.....	to.....	Wellness
Aging.....	to.....	Maturing
Bigger is better.....	to.....	Less is more
Desire for escape.....	to.....	Desire for enrichment
Standard of living.....	to.....	Quality of life

These times, trends, and shifts affect the way we need to plan our communities in the future. In public surveys across the State, Pennsylvanians have expressed their support for the development of greenways and trails and the preservation of open spaces. In Cumberland County, 81 percent of the Countywide survey respondents stated that is important to have greenways throughout the County.

### ***Support and Interest in Greenways and Land Protection***

In the last President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, a nationwide goal was established to provide access to a trail within 15 minutes of all Americans. In the ensuing decade, the development of greenways and trails across the nation became a major planning effort. In 1997, Pennsylvania held a Governor's Conference on Greenways and Trails. In 1999, the State hosted an international conference on greenways in Pittsburgh. The Commonwealth has established funding programs designed to support greenway and trail planning and development in the Keystone and Tea-21 grant programs. This year over 4,000 people attended 53 land use forums across the State. The discussions centered on community and open space projects, revitalizing cities, and farmland protection, and the role they play in the quality of life in Pennsylvania. The State has established an initiative to inform the public about sound land use practices and the value of open spaces and advancing the State's economy.

Trail and bikeway systems have been successfully implemented all across the United States. The Federal Highway Administration and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have established major alternative, non-motorized transportation programs. These programs have lead to the establishment of Statewide bicycle plans, intermodal transportation planning, and major funding. Transportation networks that include trails and bikeways provide clean, safe, and healthy choices for both transportation and recreation.

From an economic perspective, greenways help to improve the economy by upgrading the quality of life. This attracts and retains new businesses. They increase property values because communities become more desirable places in which to live and work.

Farmland preservation is a major State and County initiative. Between 1970 and 1997, about 24,000 farms disappeared from the Pennsylvania landscape. In the land use forums, participants called for more State funding of farmland conservation and easements to preserve land for future generations. Preserving the agricultural industry and heritage of Cumberland County is important. Protecting farms is more than just saving the land from development; it requires keeping the land and the environment healthy for future generations.

## Public Involvement

Citizen participation was a key component of the greenway study. Public participation is important for three reasons:

1. The residents have useful information to contribute to the study.
2. It provides a forum in which concerns could be identified, aired, and addressed.
3. Stewardship and trust are established through community interaction and involvement.

It included four components: a citizens' task force, key person interviews, public forums, and a Countywide direct mail survey. Based upon public input, the planning team was able to form conclusions from the data collected. The study findings and recommendations are based upon this information in combination with the other elements of the study.

### *Task Force*

The Task Force was composed of 15 citizens representing the County geographically, County administration, planners, rail-trail groups, conservation organizations, municipalities, and elected and appointed officials. The role of the Task Force was to provide guidance in the planning process; identify community contacts, organizations, and key stakeholders; participate in the development of the Countywide survey; review and assess study findings; work with and apply criteria for greenway recommendations; serve as a sounding board for concepts and actions; and participate in work sessions and forums. The Task Force identified the following issues, ideas, and concerns regarding the greenway study in a brain storming session:

- Expand existing trails
- Educate the public about trails, possibly key into the success in South Middleton Township
- Consider pedestrian and safe access
- Develop a network of corridors
- Use greenways to avoid impacts on streams by providing a buffer between development and streams
- Protect sensitive areas such as birding areas
- Use greenways to connect places and points of interest
- Identify areas that are already developed and determine what can be done with regard to greenway development
- Issue: Extensive development in eastern Cumberland County
- Bring back ecological value to resources
- Find ways to connect greenways for kids
- Issue: There is no Cumberland County Park and Recreation Department. Consider management/maintenance systems that would be responsible for long-term greenway management
- Plan for Cumberland County lands acquisition
- Consider local and County zoning
- A County Park and Recreation Department could provide a regional focus to the development of greenways and trails. If Cumberland County has support and a solid base of information, maybe they would support a Cumberland County park and recreation department.
- Cumberland County has been doing outreach meetings

- There is a need for education regarding trails and greenways
- A recommendation of this plan is to work with civic associations to heighten awareness about greenways and trails
- Identify all funding sources for greenways and trails
- There is a lot of private development in Cumberland County; therefore we must provide educational information to private developers regarding the benefits of greenways and trails
- Need to educate the Supervisors so they understand the benefits of greenways and trails
- Must deal with the rural land owner and farmer. Idea: get representatives from the Cumberland County Farm Bureau on the Greenway Task Force
- Coordinate greenways and trails with surrounding counties and communities. There could be a trail from Chambersburg to Harrisburg
- Access to property by the public is opposed by the private land owner
- Keep streams open and accessible
- Link schools with greenways; new schools are being developed in Cumberland County
- There is a turf issue with homeowners associations
- Classify trails by use: water trails, habitat and natural resource trails, transportation linkage trails, etc.
- Sustainable community for Cumberland County - tie the greenway study with the social, environmental, and economical issues of the County such as tourism. There are two tourism bureaus in the area: Harrisburg/Hershey/Carlisle Area Bureau and Chambersburg/Carlisle Bureau
- Planning Commission investment study into light rail and multi-modal systems with the desire to promote non-motorized transportation
- Vision Capitol Region provides information about land preservation and protection. Vision partners are looking for input.
- Greenways to help control sprawl
- Prioritize corridors
- Cumberland County Open Space Task Force completed a stewardship project that resulted in negative recommendations
- Give local communities guidance to develop strategies for linkages, develop a tool for local community
- Cumberland County and locals need a better working relationship for mutual support of greenways and trails. Support varies by region and subject.
- Support for greenways and trails needs to come from the locals up, get the locals excited and get to them early in the process. There are 33 municipalities in Cumberland County.
- Have a plan and get a couple of municipalities on board to set priorities. Consider a pilot project such as the LeTort greenway. The LeTort Regional Authority needs to educate the public about the local treasure of the LeTort.
- Need to tell local municipalities how they fit in such as the tier concept that was used in the Lancaster County Regional Open Space Plan.
- Tie into local school district newsletters and conservation association newsletters to educate about greenways and trails.
- Issue: security and ADA
- Develop public relations for the project by sending information to the Sentinel and the Patriot.
- Tie in with the Governor's riparian buffer program to plant vegetation along streams by the year 2010.
- Hold workshops on how developers should be tied into the greenway process.

- Tie into fitness and wellness.

The Task Force identified the following potential trails and greenways during the initial brainstorming meeting:

- Rails-to-Trails are being master planned for the Cumberland Valley Rail Trails from Shippensburg and Newville and eventually from Newville to Carlisle and possibly Harrisburg. There is a potential for rail with trail.
- Pine Grove Trail
- Appalachian Trail, existing footpath
- There is an old trolley line that runs between Mechanicsburg and Dillsburg. It has been plowed under, but the right-of-way exists.
- Utilize transmission lines
- Utilize pipelines

### ***Key Person Interviews***

Over 20 key person interviews were conducted for the study. Cumberland County planners, the Task Force, and community contacts identified key contacts and stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the following concerns:

- Local and County agencies
- School districts
- Shippensburg University
- Business organizations: outfitters, Chamber of Commerce
- State Parks
- State Forests
- Conservation organizations
- Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Watershed associations
- Farm Bureau
- Landowners
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- Cumberland County Historical Society
- Audubon Society
- Natural Lands Trust
- Appalachian Trail Conference
- LeTort Regional Authority
- Central Cumberland County Task Force on Regional Development
- Conservation District
- Open Space program contacts in Pennsylvania counties
- Interest groups such as bicyclists, fishermen, hunters, and hikers

Interview findings indicated great support for establishing greenways in Cumberland County. People were supportive of looking at greenways from a Countywide perspective. People expressed a willingness to

work on this effort and asked what they could do to help. This finding indicates the rich potential for orchestrating volunteers to move ahead on identified actions. Interviews revealed fine examples of positive efforts through public/private partnerships such as Seven Gables in Carlisle and South Middleton Township in which public and private agencies came together for a common purpose. Concerns included: the need to work together, avoiding duplication of efforts to make maximum use of resources, finding ways to share the costs, starting out with projects with the highest chance of success while having a great vision for creating greenways Countywide; and the ability of the County to orchestrate a greenway effort with the small staff resources available.

### ***Public Forums***

Three public forums were held in strategic areas in the County. The purpose of the forums was to solicit community input for the greenway study. Although the forums were extensively advertised through the newspapers and direct mail, they were sparsely attended. This may have been due to two reasons. The most important reason may be the fact that the concept of greenway planning is still relatively new in the area. As we found in the survey, it was necessary to define and explain what greenways are. A public education effort about greenways is important. The second reason may be that the people with the most interest and knowledge about this topic were either involved on the task force or were contacted in interviews.

### ***County Survey***

A direct mail County survey was conducted to assess public opinion about greenways in Cumberland County. The 29 percent response rate generated the finding that there is great public support for greenways in Cumberland County. Appendix A contains a copy of the Cumberland County Greenways survey.

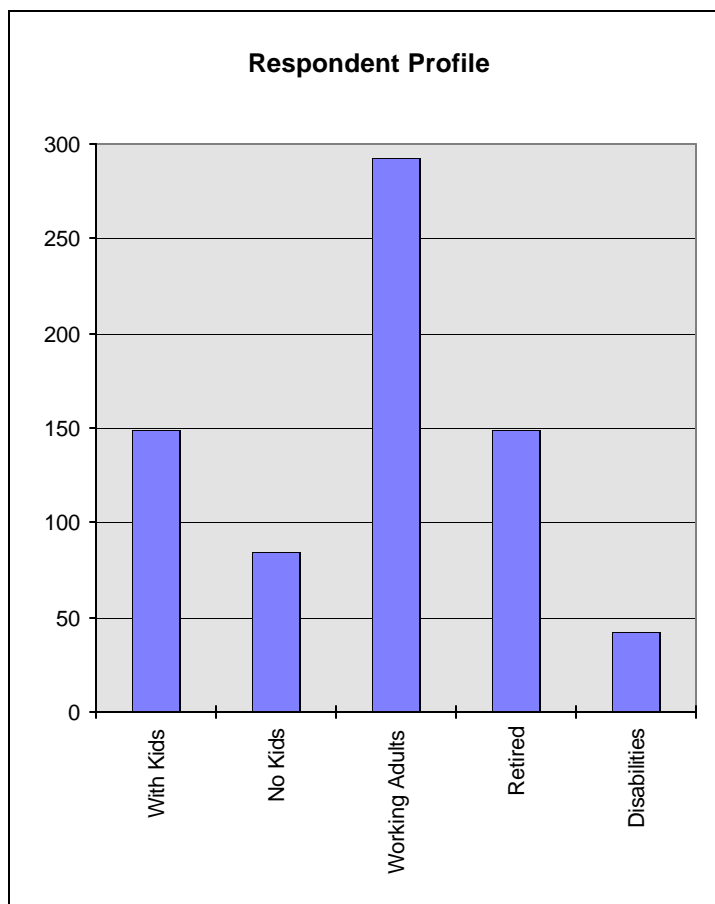
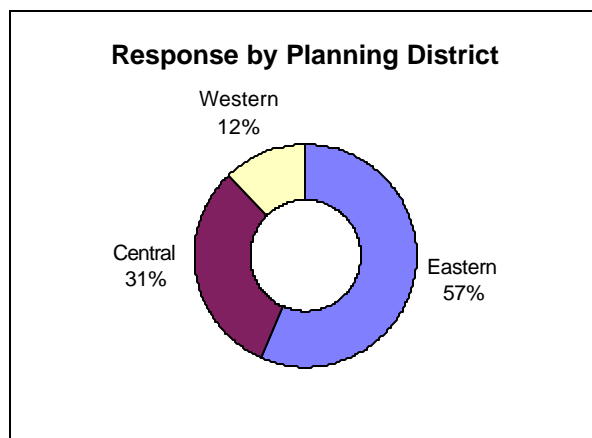
**Survey Process** - The planning team, County planners and the task force worked together in the development of the survey instrument. The survey purpose was to determine the level of support for greenways in Cumberland County, development preferences for greenways, and an assessment of how people would use greenways. The survey instrument consisted of seven multiple choice questions, one open-ended question for public comment, and a space to volunteer to assist in County greenway, parks, or open space endeavors. A cover letter from the County explained the nature of the project and the purpose of the survey.

**Mailing** - The surveys with the cover letter were distributed via direct mail to 1500 households based upon a random sample taken from the County's occupational tax records. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included to insure a high return rate. A week after the surveys were mailed, a post card follow-up was sent as a reminder for people to send in their surveys or to thank them for their responses.

**Tabulation** - Survey tabulation was processed by professional data processing specialists. The surveys were tabulated according to the findings as a whole as well as by key demographic sub-groups to be identified. Survey results fell within a 95 percent level of confidence with a margin of error of +/- 4.71 according to our statistical analysis.

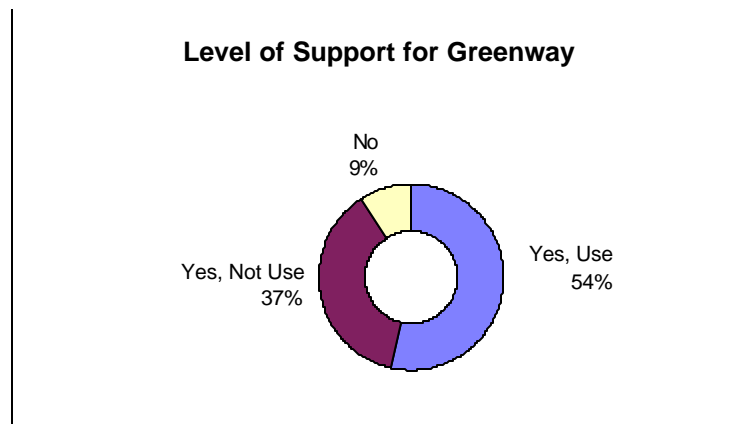
**Survey Findings** - The random survey sample included 1500 citizens. With 433 completed responses, the return rate was about 29 percent in comparison with a typical direct mail survey that generates about a two percent return. Most of the responses came from the eastern portion of the county, which is correspondingly the most populated area. While most of the households were comprised of working adults

(68%), about 34 percent of the households had retired people. Thirty-five percent of the households responding have children.



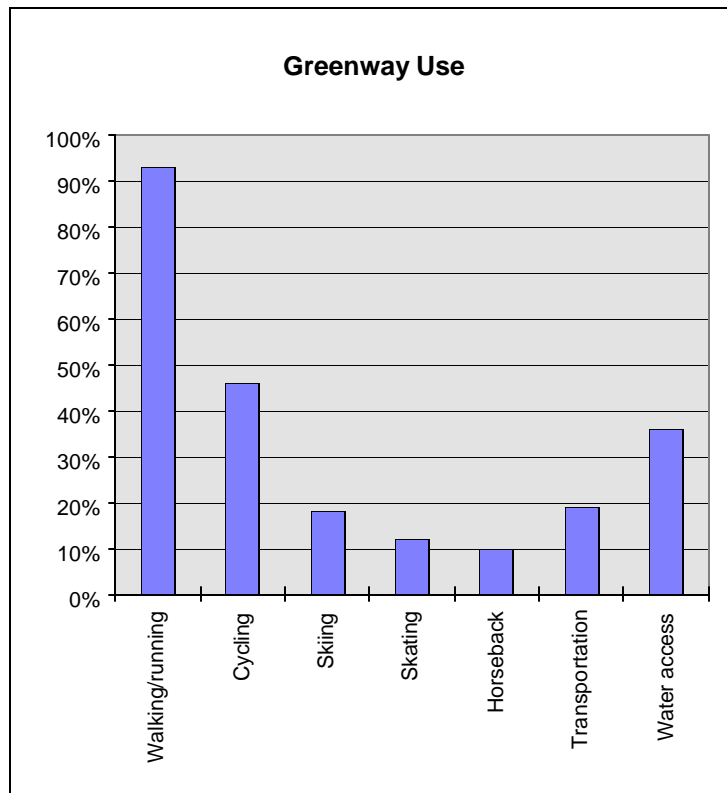
**Level of Support** - Overall, the survey findings indicate support for greenways in Cumberland County. The survey respondents reported that it is important to have greenways throughout Cumberland County. The following points present the survey highlights:

- 81% answered that it is important to have greenways throughout the County; 18% said they were not important
- 66.5% thought they were so important that County funds should be used for greenways while another 19% thought that greenways were nice to have but that County funds should not be used for them.
- 91% of the respondents support greenways

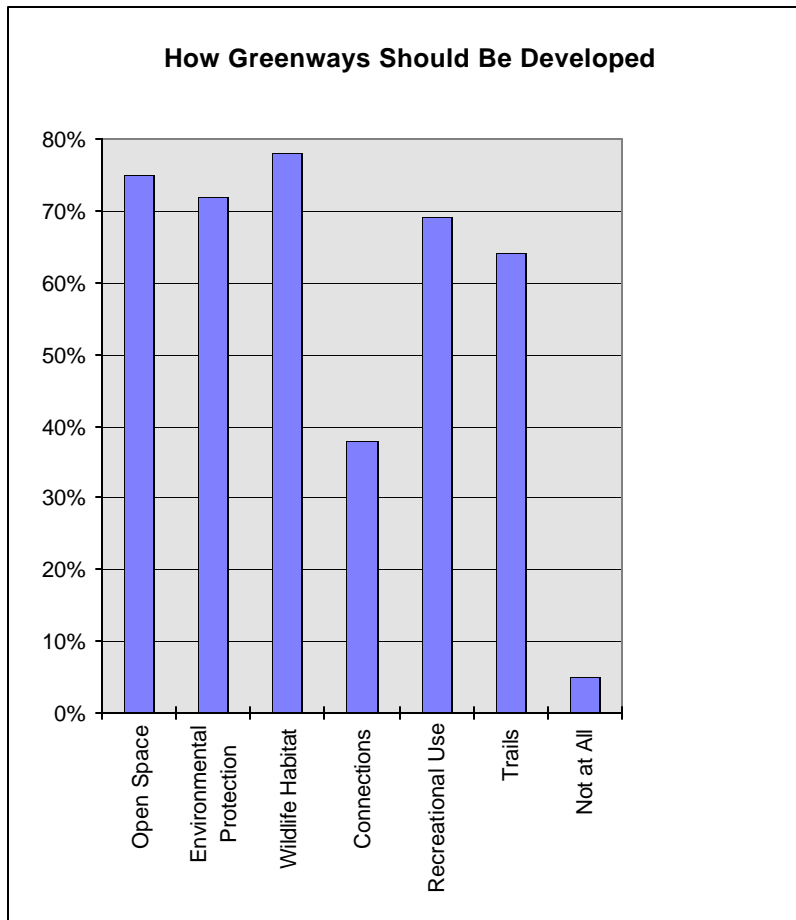


- The level of support for greenways was consistent among all demographic sub-groups ranging from 80 percent support from retired people to 95 percent support from families with children.
- Most of the respondents would use greenways. Walking, running, cycling and water access were the most preferred uses.





- Over 72% thought that greenways should be developed for environmentally related reasons and about 70% thought they should be developed for recreation.
- Typically, survey respondents express the opinion that greenways should be developed for trails. However, in Cumberland County, wildlife habitat emerged as the most preferred purpose for greenway development. This finding held across every sub-group except for people with disabilities, who preferred environmental resource protection as their top choice.



- With the funding available through TEA-21 for transportation alternatives, the question dealing with using the greenway for transportation is of special interest. One out of every five survey respondents indicated that they would be interested in using the greenway as an alternative to driving. According to place of residence, the respondents from the eastern portion of the County were most interested in this.

**Written Comments** - Of the 433 completed surveys, 138 respondents listed written comments. Of the 138 statements, 125 were positive in nature and expressed ideas and suggestions. Only 13 statements were negative. The positive comments had a theme of protecting the County from over-development, protecting habitat for wildlife, preserving natural resources, providing trails for transportation and recreation, and connecting communities. The negative comments centered around two issues: not raising taxes and protecting property rights. Some of the respondents expressed mixed opinions about not wanting taxes increased but still supporting greenways. The comments are presented below and are categorized according to their nature: positive, concerns, ideas, and negative. The number following the statement indicates how many times that statement was written in the open-ended responses. Since many respondents listed several ideas, the ideas are listed separately.

### *Positive*

#### **Greenway/Trail support**

- This is a great idea (13)
- Idea is a good one but is only a dip in the barrel of protecting the environment and does little to halt the widespread development.

- The time is right! (3)
- Do this fast. Hampden already overdeveloped.
- Hurry up - we're losing this beautiful land to commercial development faster than surrounding counties
- Do this now
- Go for it!
- Strongly support any attempt to conserve open spaces with balanced recreational development. Fear destruction of water usage and our land without protection
- How can I get more involved in greenways and helping to do this?
- This is a great undertaking and appreciate the people taking an interest in greenways
- Support taxpayer support of greenways
- Government should support the greenways but without raising taxes
- Should have made arrangements to preserve land a long time ago
- Good to see that greenways are getting a high priority
- Rather spend the money here on this than send it to a foreign country
- Too old to help but not to enjoy
- Okay with this but don't infringe on property rights

### **Importance of Greenways**

- Greenways are important for both moving humans around and protecting wildlife
- Greenways are extremely important to preserve our County to its fullest extent possible
- Need to preserve natural habitat from human development
- Pay as much attention to greenway development as we do to economic development to maintain a balanced way of life
- Greenways are important (7)
- Greenways should be sited as much as possible to create riparian buffers.
- Vital in preserving what we are rapidly losing to development
- After a while, will have no open space
- Life is too short not to leave as much as possible of nature undisturbed
- Important to preserve open space for future in different places for a free place for enjoyment and quiet
- We need this and our children need this
- Good idea for the younger people
- Support idea of greenways even though unable to use them
- Concerned about wasting open space
- I've lived here all my life and I'm heart sick when I see the urban sprawl taking over the beautiful land
- Protect beauty of County
- All for betterment of the County but too infirm to assist
- Thanks for asking my opinion (7)
- Greenways are excellent stress relief. It's nice to have a quiet place to pull your chaotic life back together.

- Greenways are important for mental health
- Helping with the downtown flowers is a good start. Thanks!
- Retired and would like to see this for our grandchildren (2)
- Greenways would raise property values, make area more attractive to high-skill companies whose employees want to live in a nicer, classier area
- Open space enhances communities economically and socially. In day of sitting behind a computer, greenways offer opportunity to get outside

### **Connections**

- My wife and I are both over 65 and she is handicapped. When we go out she has to be in a wheelchair. About 7-8 a year, weather permitting, we go to Harrisburg to walk along Riverfront and City Island. We have to drive to Harrisburg and it would be nice to have a trail here where we could walk.
- Would like to get around town without a car
- Boy Scout troop likes to bike and safe roads are hard to find. Likes Gunpowder Falls State Park trail
- Brownie/Girl Scout leader of 22 years would like to see greenways to help preserve wildlife areas and keep habitat and nature.
- Great opportunity for people in wheelchairs to enjoy the outdoors with easy access
- All for trails
- Will make bike riding safer (2)
- Use stream banks for trails, like the Conodoguinet and LeTort
- Want greenways to feel safe and be located close to home; don't like to drive 30-50 minutes to take a walk and don't feel safe a lot of places.
- Wants more trails closer to development so they are convenient to use
- Walking trails with native plantings and plant identification would be helpful and interesting.
- Rails to trails is a great program
- Lived in Germany and every highway improvement project got a parallel bike and walking path. This ought to be the law in Pennsylvania
- Would be wonderful for couples if there could be subtle trail level lighting for evening walks so you could see the moon and the stars while the path would be lit
- Want conservation corridor
- Harrisburg Bicycle Club ride leader uses Newville/Shippensburg rail trail about a dozen times/winter. Only place in valley to bike off-road. Need more greenways in valley.
- Develop rail trails
- Want bikeways for children to get to school
- Would be nice to have places to ride horses - places are getting few and far between
- Live near Boiling Springs and enjoy the South Middleton Park greenway. (2)
- Need more places like the Boiling Springs Trail
- Would help to relieve highway congestion and make Cumberland County more attractive to people moving to the area
- Hiking and biking trails are necessary

## **Open Space Protection**

- Must preserve as much green space as possible (3)
- Important to control urban sprawl and connect people in communities
- Green space adds to the quality of life especially when considering over-development.
- Want to see open space made accessible -but not preserved- not more soccer fields and parks , but trails for walking
- Dickinson Twp. Planning Commission is very interested in providing open space and greenways; please provide survey results
- Prevent development like malls (2)
- Keep land away from developers
- Greenways are not paved roads
- Save as much open space as you can with programs like this
- Both of us are retired , disabled senior citizens but we support open spaces.
- Like this idea because of all the houses going up. Don't want a metropolis without parks.
- Nature is beautiful and we need to preserve the beauty we have; streams are peaceful and calming
- Preserving our natural resources is an important economic value to Cumberland: hikers, fishermen, tourists, etc.
- Trails serve one purpose but open space serves multiple purposes that enhance the quality of life
- Protect the wetlands and plenty of space for wildlife. Look at rain forest as example
- Open space offers recreation opportunities, educational opportunities, and relaxation
- Green space land management has worked well in England. Now is the time to begin the process of setting aside land. Clearwater Florida has built bike routes and yet Cumberland County has more pleasant countryside than Florida. Therefore we should have more incentive to do it here.

## **Concerns**

### **Taxes**

- No tax increase (7)
- Concern about burden on retired people (5)
- Greenways are nice - we had them in Florida - but they need to be privately funded - not by taxes
- Asphalt surfaces more costly to maintain.
- Give tax credit for donations of open space

### **Over-development/Loss of farmland**

- Too much random unplanned growth and development has ruined habitat for wildlife
- Save farmland from developers
- Give farmers tax exemption. (2)
- Too many farms being turned into developments (4)
- Suburban sprawl has created serious non-point source pollution and flooding, especially in the eastern portion of the County. Riparian buffer zones of at least 100 feet needed.

- Over development (3)
- Too much growth in Cumberland County. Malls doing poorly
- Selling farmland on Williams Grove Road at 1.8 acre minimum per home site. Review what California has done with land use.
- Roads dangerous now because of over-development (3)
- Loss of wildlife

### **Government Control**

- Landowners should not be required to donate land to greenways
- If someone wants a trail, they should pay land owner for use. Abandoned railroads should be the property of the land owner and County should not try to steal the trail from the landowner
- Don't infringe on property rights (1)
- Concept is good but am opposed to government control
- So many other issues now
- Keep EPA out of the process
- Concerned about how land will be acquired

### **Greenway Issues**

- Safety of people living alone along the greenway, especially an elderly person
- Concerned with keeping the environment clean; from what I've seen the areas look good
- Care and up keep of the greenway

### ***Ideas***

#### **Trails**

- Use old railroad beds
- Use old Cumberland Valley right-of-way
- Have a small real-estate surcharge to establish more trails
- Have east-west and north-south trails
- Roads should have at least three feet of paved shoulders
- Have greenway from Carlisle to Shippensburg; Holly to Carlisle; extend Pine Grove Furnace Bicycle trail towards Carlisle
- Connect greenway biking and walking paths with abandoned railroad beds like from Carlisle to Newville (2)
- Connect people from town to town to avoid the hassle of car traffic
- Connect Cumberland County and find a way to get all the way to the Walnut Street bridge in Harrisburg.
- Look at rail trail in York County as an example of what a trail can do for everyone.
- Develop commuter rail links

#### **Strategies**

- Get easements from property owners
- Use adopt-a-greenway program to keep costs down
- County funds should be partially used with matching funds from private sector
- Teachers could bring their classes here to work on projects as a public service requirement

- If County doesn't have money, have fundraising
- Include a map of the County to highlight areas under consideration
- Every municipality should have a greenway and open space plan.
- Support managed growth and planning on County level
- It's time to review the entire land use and zoning.
- Greenways and economic development should work hand-in-hand
- Do cost/benefit analysis before any County money is used
- Get funding from large companies for greenways - many businesses do not seem concerned about the ugly massive structures they build. (2)
- Use volunteers for planning
- Have separate zoning for "greenway"
- Eliminate trucking and congestion (2)
- Use greenways for hunting
- Use greenways for walking pets
- Developers should only redevelop old businesses and existing shopping centers. Make them plant trees.
- Develop a plan to manage growth and sprawl

### *Negative*

#### **Taxes/Government**

- Another infringement on individual rights (2)
- Stop wasting hard-earned tax dollars
- I would oppose any control of such corridors by the United Nations.
- Own a farm; do not want people using my land
- Few people would benefit from this but many will have to support it financially.

#### **Parks/Open Space**

- There are enough parks around. No need for more!
- We have too much playing. We should be teaching young people responsibility and not depending on the State or government. Protect private property. When you make trails you are making opportunities for rape and murder. No more socialism. Build on the poor land along North Mountain not on the good farmland.

#### **Trails**

- Trail projects have produced negative factors
- Not interested. Spend our money on important issues.
- Against greenways; no time to use them and would only be for rich people
- No need for this project

## **Conclusions**

The extensive involvement of the public ranging from community organizations to the general citizenry expressed support for the greenway project. There was a sense of urgency to move ahead with this idea

because of the rapid development perceived by the public. There was even support from people who expressed the idea that they may not be able to use it but it would be important for the County and for future generations. Concerns centered on taxes and property rights. The message was that people did not want property taken from private landowners for public purposes. Support was evident across all demographic sub-groups and geographic areas of the County with the largest support from eastern Cumberland County.