

My Community: What's the Plan? Engaging Youth and Community Leaders in Community Design & Decisions

APA PA Chapter 2013 Annual Conference

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Session Outline

- Session Objectives
- Planning Education & Relationship to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)
- *My Community: What's the Plan?* Overview
 - Objectives
 - Background
 - Modules
 - Evaluation/Impacts
 - Opportunities
- Planning Application & Experience: Union County Planning Commission

Objectives for Today's Conference Session

Help participants:

- Understand that developing citizen interest in and knowledge of community and planning issues can be a component of encouraging public participation.
- Become aware of options to promote public interest in planning at various age groups.
- Increase your knowledge of techniques for receiving public input.



Planning Education - MPC

- Section 209.1 Powers & Duties of Planning Agency
 - Promote public interest in, and understanding of:
 - The Comprehensive Plan
 - Planning

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. At the top, there's a green header with the PA Governor's Center for Local Government Services logo. Below the header, a large white section features a green arrow pointing right, followed by the text "Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code" and "Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247 as reenacted and amended". A yellow navigation bar at the bottom has buttons for "ready", "set", and "succeed". Below the navigation bar is a row of five small images showing various urban and rural landscapes. The footer is dark green with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania seal, the name of the Governor, and the name of the Secretary.

My Community: What's the Plan?

Program Objectives

Participants will:

- Increase their knowledge of the trends and forces affecting their community, the implications of those trends, and the processes and factors utilized in making community decisions.
 - i.e. environmental, social, land use
- Develop an increased understanding of local government structure, purposes and processes.
- Increase their awareness and understanding of being a productive citizen and how citizens can play a role in the governmental decision-making process.
- Change their attitude about the impacts of personal and public decisions

My Community: What's the Plan

Program Objectives

Participants will:

- Develop intentions for current and future actions relative to community service
- Apply acquired knowledge toward other school subjects
- Follow community issues and discuss issues through peers, parents or other adults
- Express their opinions on community issues
- Develop or enhance skills and abilities to help their community appropriately respond to community needs

My Community: What's the Plan

Program Objectives

Long Term Outcome:

- Participants will become involved in their communities through elected or appointed positions, volunteerism, or citizen input. They will use good community planning practices in their deliberations over issues.



My Community: What's the Plan

Program Background

- Reasons for program
 - Teachable moments
 - Community awareness & appreciation
 - Future leaders, decision makers, organizational members
 - Conduit for adults
 - Benefits planners



My Community: What's the Plan Program Background

- Initiated to meet an identified need for education on land use and community issues
- First programs were at the middle school level
- Expanded into high school and adult leadership programs
 - Partnership with chambers of commerce
 - For high school program, collaborated with community leaders including planning commissions
- Applied to comprehensive plan
- Version for community events
- Included community organizations
- High school classrooms
- Past & current partnerships
 - APA of PPA, chambers, non-profits,
i.e. First Community Foundation of PA, NCP



My Community: What's the Plan

Content

- Program contains various components and modules
 - Wooden Village
 - Community Organizations
 - Middle School
 - High School
 - Has also been used for adult audiences



Wooden Village

Indiana County Fair Kiddie Farm Building youth and their parents learn about the implications of their land use choices at the My Community: What's the Plan? "wooden village" educational activity.

3,215 youth entered the Kiddie Farm building at the Indiana County Fair. Our team of educators and volunteers interviewed 263 of these youth who worked with the wooden village model community. To evaluate the educational value of the program, each youth was asked three questions:

Did you enjoy helping us build this community?

Response --

>99% Yes

< 1% No (this sort of reminds you of the child in the Jimmy Fallon commercials that doesn't want "more money," doesn't it? J)

Have we made you think about where you will live in the future?

Response --

92% Yes

5% No

3% Maybe

Is community planning something you would like to learn more about?

Response --

53% Yes

10 % No

>12% Not sure/Maybe

This youth event was organized and staffed by Penn State Extension Educators Jeff Himes and John Turack, with an additional generous commitment of time by community leader volunteers, and by students and [faculty from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Department of Geography and Regional Planning](#)



Land Use Decisions and Youth -- Reflections from Ag Progress Days 2012

August 22, 2012

Penn State Extension Economic and Community Development Educator and Blogger John Turack summarizes his thoughts on working at the 4-H Youth Building. The Extension Economic and Community Development Team presented "My Community: What's the Plan?" at this year's event.

Middle School Components

- Community Planning & Land Use
 - Community Survey & Needs Assessment Exercise (Optional)
 - Power Point Presentation
 - Property Rights: Interests & Perspectives

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Planning Commission

➤ Questions about the future

- How much will or should our community grow?
- Will we have enough housing?
- Will we need more parks or recreational facilities?
- Will we lose our farmland and open space?
- How will changes impact us?



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NIMBI

Now
I
Must
Become
Involved



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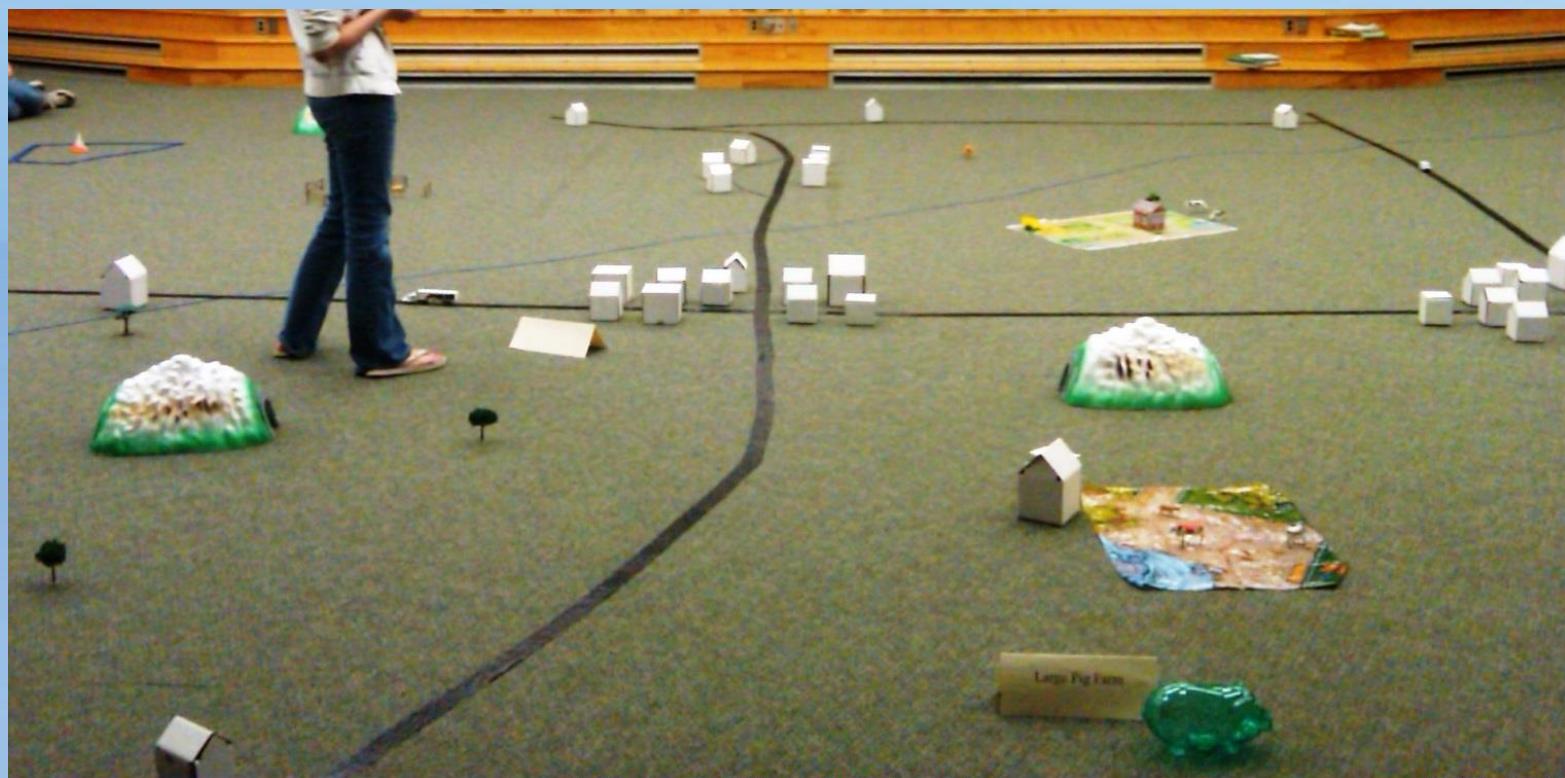
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Middle School Components

- Community Model



Middle School Components

- Community Development Design
 - Land development design overview
 - PA BLUPRINTS
 - Community design exercise

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Community Development Exercise

- Cut two sections of paper for your land
- Decide on a development scenario and uses
- Use cardboard boxes for buildings
- Use markers for development features (roads, parking, waterways, trails, etc)
- Consider good development design and compatibility
- Name your development/town and be ready to present



Middle School Evaluation Results

Example N=340

- **Evaluation Results Example:**
- Of the survey respondents at the My Community: What's the Plan? Middle School Programs: (N=340)
 - 99% increased their knowledge about planning for a community
 - 94% increased their knowledge about locating different land uses in a community
 - 95% increased their knowledge about the importance of board decisions
 - 96% increased their knowledge about design standards such as parking, setbacks, trees and roads
- 99% of the respondents could list a way that the program helped them consider their future role in the community as a responsible citizen or board member.

Middle School Evaluation Results Example

Middle School Teacher Post Evaluation:

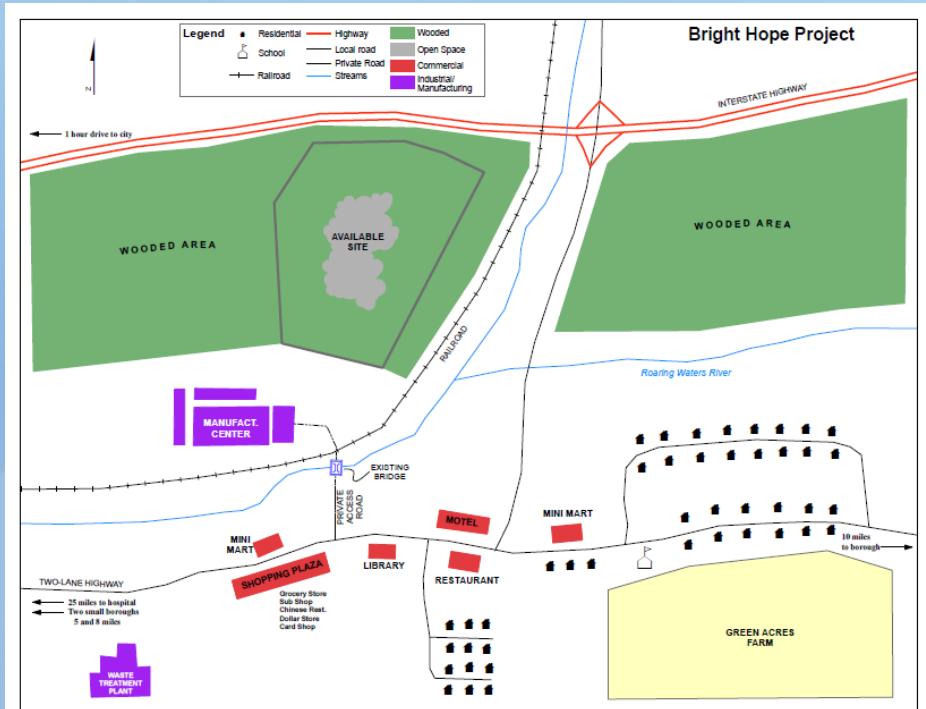
- The program has been found to have great educational and citizenship value to our students and is consistent with PA Department of Education standards. Students have not only gained knowledge but applied that knowledge in classroom discussions for subject areas such as local government. The program has also engaged students' families and the community in educating them about land usage and its impact on their lives.

High School Components

- Similar to Middle School Components
 - More detailed as applicable
 - Addition of economic development slides & activity
 - Data review activity

County Economic Data

- Review the data for your county
- What does it tell you about:
 - Industry strengths and trends
 - Job availability
 - Salaries
 - Educational level requirements
- Implications for jobs and economic development?



High School Components

- Similar to Middle School Components
 - Community features exercise
 - Individual versus community group
 - Municipal decision making exercise
 - Land use conflict role play



High School Module Evaluation

Results Example N=218

- Knowledge
 - 98% increased their knowledge of community planning
 - 97% increased their knowledge of the importance of decisions by local elected officials and board members
 - 97% increased their knowledge of land use issues.
- Attitude
- 88% changed their attitude about the needs of various types of community groups

High School Module Evaluation

Results Example N=218

- Action
 - 68% are more likely to consider joining a community organization
 - 87% are more likely to become involved in community activities
 - 66% are more likely to consider volunteering for a community board
 - 84% are more likely to become informed about and discuss community needs and issues with others.

Adult Components

- Similar to high school
 - More detailed as applicable
- Data is important
- Discussion/sharing is critical
- Adults also like activities
- Application to work as well as relationship to personal quality of life can promote future public participation

Demographic Trends (DCED)

- Pennsylvania ranked 47th in the nation for natural population increase (the addition of births and subtraction of deaths) between 2000 and 2009
 - Pennsylvania's population increased by 323,696
 - 55 percent of those new residents arrived from other countries
- One out of every five Pennsylvanians is over age 60
 - By 2020, this age group will make up one-quarter of the population



Adult Impact Examples

- Building our community on the floor was a great strategy, taking from the prior conversations and now determining how your community would look. As I drove home, I found myself reflecting on the day and reviewing my community from a different perspective.
- In a follow-up interview, one participant noted that they volunteered for future membership on their local planning commission.

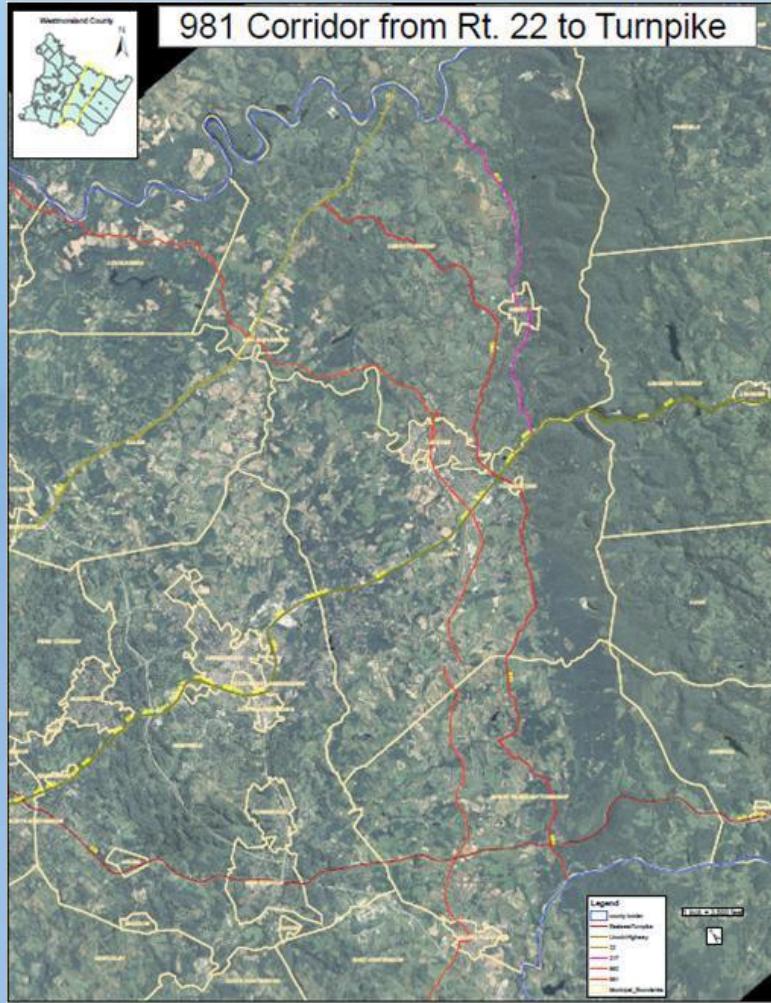


Community Organizations

- Another good avenue for outreach
- Often looking for programs/presenters
- Have used wooden village in lieu of community model
- PA BLUPRINTS still effective
- Use Community Design Component



LATROBE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ECONOMIC EXCHANGE DAY Future Development Plans for the Laurel Valley Project (Route 981 Corridor)



Idea sparked by requests from community leaders for more discussion about the opportunities and challenges of the creation of a new/enhanced North-South highway through the Southwest PA region.

LATROBE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ECONOMIC EXCHANGE DAY Future Development Plans for the Laurel Valley Project (Route 981 Corridor)

7:30 AM – 2:00 PM

May 1, 2013

Derry High School Auxiliary Gym

BACKGROUND: The Economic Education Committee addresses the goals and mission of the Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce. The volunteers on this committee actively work in area schools to conduct programs that help students understand our economy, our free enterprise system, and the expectations that employers have of prospective employees. One of these programs is Economic Exchange Day. Economic Exchange Day (EED) has been occurring in Westmoreland County for about 30 years. The day links students from Derry Area HS and Greater Latrobe HS to tackle a pressing community issue from an economic and community vantage point.

GOALS FOR ECONOMIC EXCHANGE DAY

- *Meet PA Department of Education Secondary level Micro/Macro Economics learning objectives*
- *Introduce students to the concept and the economic value of undisturbed and harvested natural resources*
- *Introduce the students to concepts related to community planning and geography including: -- Government, ecology, community engagement, community and economic development*
- *Challenge high school students with real world economic problems without “Black and White” answers*
- *Remove the barriers between students of both schools (get the students working together)*
- *Connect students to the current efforts to improve their communities.*
- *Motivate the students to stay in the area after high school or after they complete their post-secondary education.*

Educational Objectives

- SWBAT (Students Will Be Able To) evaluate a given “real life” developmental plan pertaining to the area between the PA turnpike to Blairsville (981 Corridor).
- SWBAT create a vision statement pertaining to a specific area of growth and development in the area (PA turnpike to Blairsville: aka “981 Corridor”).
- SWBAT explain economic/environmental factors that influence future development in the 981 Corridor area.
- SWBAT compare and contrast the “pros” and “cons”, economically and environmentally, that those factors have on the area.
- SWBAT identify concerns and actions landowners should be aware of regarding their property or nearby properties in regards to the 981 Corridor development.
- SWBAT identify laws/regulations pertaining to the development and growth of the 981 Corridor.
- SWBAT identify potential career opportunities in the area due to potential development pattern changes in the area of the 981 Corridor.
- SWBAT present the best possible outcomes for the developmental plan of the 981 Corridor after evaluating presenters’ information, gathering additional information from community resources, and working as a team.
- SWBAT formulate an opinion on how they feel regarding growth factors impacting the region, and specifically the 981 Corridor.
- SWBAT create community connections with students from other schools, various educators, industry professionals, local government, lawyers, and environmental organizations relating to the topic of EED through presentations, socialization, and group work.

Agenda

7:00 am – EED team arrives at Derry Area High School and sets up room.

7:30 am Welcome and Set-Up For Speakers (Include coffee time, donuts, etc.)

7:45 am Mingling and Speaker Meet and Greet with Students

8:00-8:15 am Kickoff/Introductions

8:15 am **Begin Panel Discussion: Each speaker allowed 10 minutes to speak in general and 5 mins for questions.**

Presenters: Airport Representative -- Gabe Monzo, PennDOT -- Joe Szczur, Economic Development -- Chris Bova and Brian Lawrence, Agricultural community -- Jon Lohr, Visitors Bureau -- Julie Donovan, Energy/Resident -- Gary Sheppard, Boroughs -- Jeff Landy, Township Supervisors -- Mike O'Barto.

10:45 am End Panel Discussion

BREAK

11:00am Lunch served at 11:00 for speakers, 11:30 for students.

Working Lunch/Students reconvene in Table Groups (10 table groups) and Explain Task:

Create a Vision Statement for how you would like to see the area grow from the PA Turnpike (Laurel Valley Connector) through Blairsville, centered on the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport. We are calling the area the 981 Corridor.

Presenters who can assist after lunch will be asked to “work” the room to assist students in their challenges.

11:30am **Students Create a pros & cons list of “building up” the 981 Corridor.**

12:00pm **Using Maps, students will map out (draw) what they would like to see in the development of the 981 Corridor. (Create a Vision Statement?)**

12:20pm **Students address the following questions (with the assistance of remaining presenters) regarding their maps:**

- 1. What are the steps to reach your vision/map?**
- 2. How long will it take to get there?**
- 3. How much will it cost to reach your vision/map? Where will the money come from?**
- 4. Who needs to be involved?**

12:50pm Answers are posted and presentation prepared.

1:00pm Presentations begin – 5 minutes max per group

Students present their group's vision statements, explanation of their maps, and the answers to their questions.

1:50 pm Evaluation and group processing of results and Closing Remarks.

2:00 pm Latrobe High School Students depart.

News Coverage of the Event Creates Additional Engagement

Students create new visions for region's future at Economic Exchange Day

By Chris Ulicne, Bulletin Staff Writer

Area high school students on Wednesday worked with local and regional officials to come up with plans to improve the quality of life and the economy in their communities during Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce's Economic Exchange Day, hosted this year by Derry Area High School (DAHS). [> More](#)



Laurel Valley project for the future development of
(See Local on Page 3)

Discussing ideas to help improve the quality of life in the region, local high school students Robert White, Crystal Lauda, Heather Fabery, James Good and Kahlil Jiggetts create a list of the pros and cons of developing the Route 981 corridor at Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce's Economic Exchange Day at Derry Area High School.

http://www.smartgrowthpa.org/news_detail.asp?ID=1314

Biggest Spin-Off Benefit? Panelist Interactions and Ongoing Engagement!

Panel Speakers:

Julie Donovan-- Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Resident

Gary Sheppard -- Energy educator/agriculture expert; Resident

Joseph Szcjur, P.E. -- PennDOT District 12 District Engineer

Jon Lohr --

Agricultural community perspective and expertise; Resident

Chris Bova and Brian Lawrence -

Westmoreland County Planning Department; Residents

Gabe Monzo --

Arnold Palmer Regional Airport Executive Director; Resident

Mike O'Barto -- Unity Township Supervisor, Chairman of the Westmoreland County Supervisors Association; Resident

Jeff Landy -- Mt Pleasant Borough Manager; Small towns and villages perspective; Resident



Latrobe Bulletin
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What's Inside
—Sports—


Despite winning three of four meets, Greater Latrobe girls eliminated from WPIAL track playoffs; GL baseball team suffers key section loss to Kiski Area while Ligonier Valley romps past Penns Manor Area in three-inning mercy-rule game; GL boys' lacrosse team clinches first-ever WPIAL playoff spot; GL boys' tennis team draws No. 4 seed Hampton in first round of WPIAL playoffs; St. Vincent College reaches first-ever PAC men's lacrosse title game; kids enjoy KVS Fishing Derby despite bad weather.
See Pages 9-11

Local high school students Nicholas McNutt and Tyler O'Barto discuss their ideas with Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) student Jess Bruckhart, who joined other IUP students and their professor, Dr. Whit Watts, in assisting the younger students with the planning process.
Photos by Chris Ulicne

Local students create new visions for region's future
LACC Economic Exchange Day
BY CHRIS ULCINE
BUREAU CHIEF
Area high school students on Wednesday worked with local and regional officials to come up with plans to improve the quality of life and the economy in their communities during Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce's Economic Exchange Day, hosted this year by Derry Area High School (DAHS).
"The idea behind it is to get the kids to look at and apply the economics they've learned throughout the year," said Derry Area Chamber member Jeff Kelly. "We want them to look at economic development situations, because when you're sitting in a classroom just looking at this stuff, it gets kind of boring."
The event kicked off with a panel discussion that included leaders from many local municipalities and organizations. The discussion focused on the Penns

Route 981 corridor, from its intersection with the Pennsylvania Turnpike near Moore Pleasant to Route 22 near New Alexandria and Blairsburg, with a focus on growth around Arnold Palmer Regional Airport.
"We're looking at how we can accommodate commercial vehicles while improving the (Route) 981 corridor to and from the airport or improving the surrounding roadways," said Joseph Szcjur, PE, PennDOT District 12 district engineer. "We're very early in the planning stages and we want the local business and communities to be involved in the process. This is a neat forum by which we can get young people helping us make sense of the key decisions."

After splitting up into groups and creating a vision statement, and a list of the pros and cons of

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John Turack

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<http://extension.psu.edu/community/ecd/courses/land-use-planning>

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<http://www.smartgrowthpa.org/staff.asp>

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<http://extension.psu.edu/community/ecd/courses/land-use-planning>

<http://extension.psu.edu/>

**SHAWN MCLAUGHLIN, AICP
UNION COUNTY PLANNING
DIRECTOR**

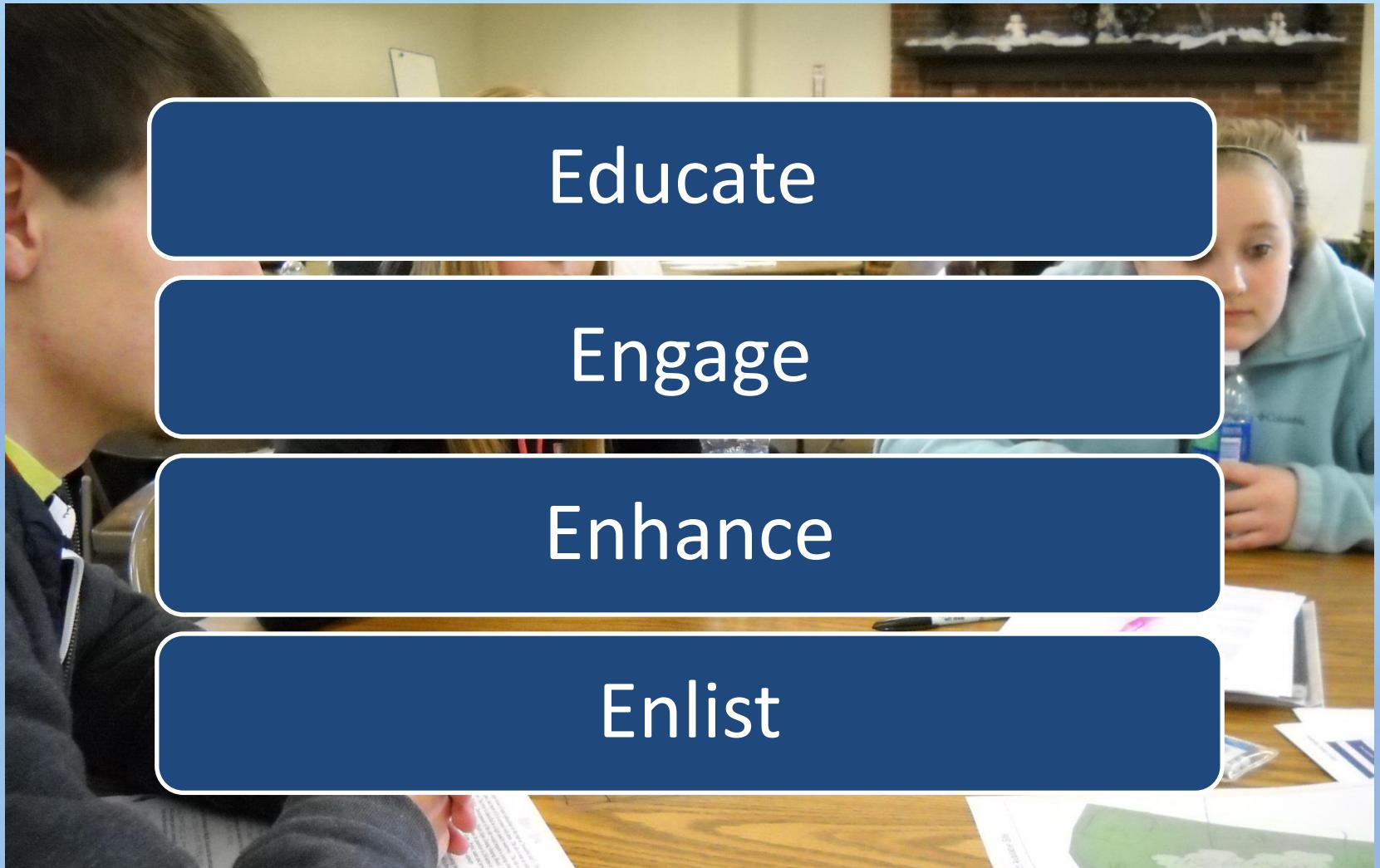
What's the Plan?

Union County's Experience

- I. Planning Commission's Objectives
- II. Role in the Program
- III. Comprehensive Plan Integration
- IV. Program Benefits
- V. Observations to Date
- VI. Recommendations for other Communities



Objectives – The Four “E’s”



Educate



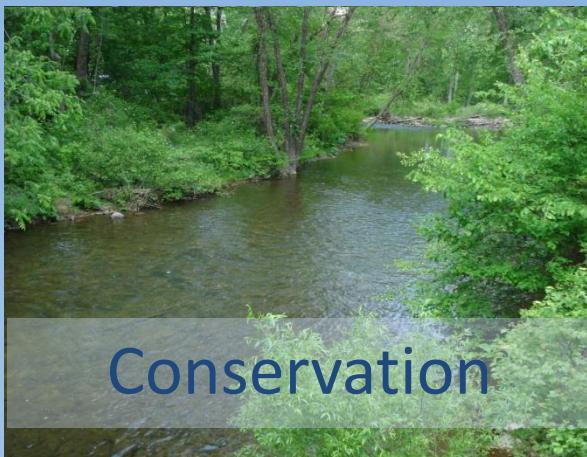
Planning



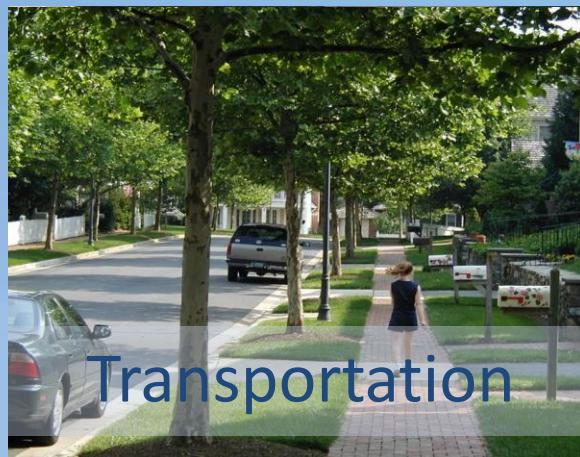
Land Use



Local Government



Conservation



Transportation



Housing

Engage

“Civic engagement should be a priority in every person’s mind. It’s important to get people involved in the democratic process at an early age, helping them build practical skills to be better able to participate throughout their lives.”

- Ramona Mullahey, Author APA report Youth in Community Planning

Enhance (Academic Growth)



Critical Thinking



Public Speaking



Interpersonal Communication



Writing

Enlist



Planner



Volunteer

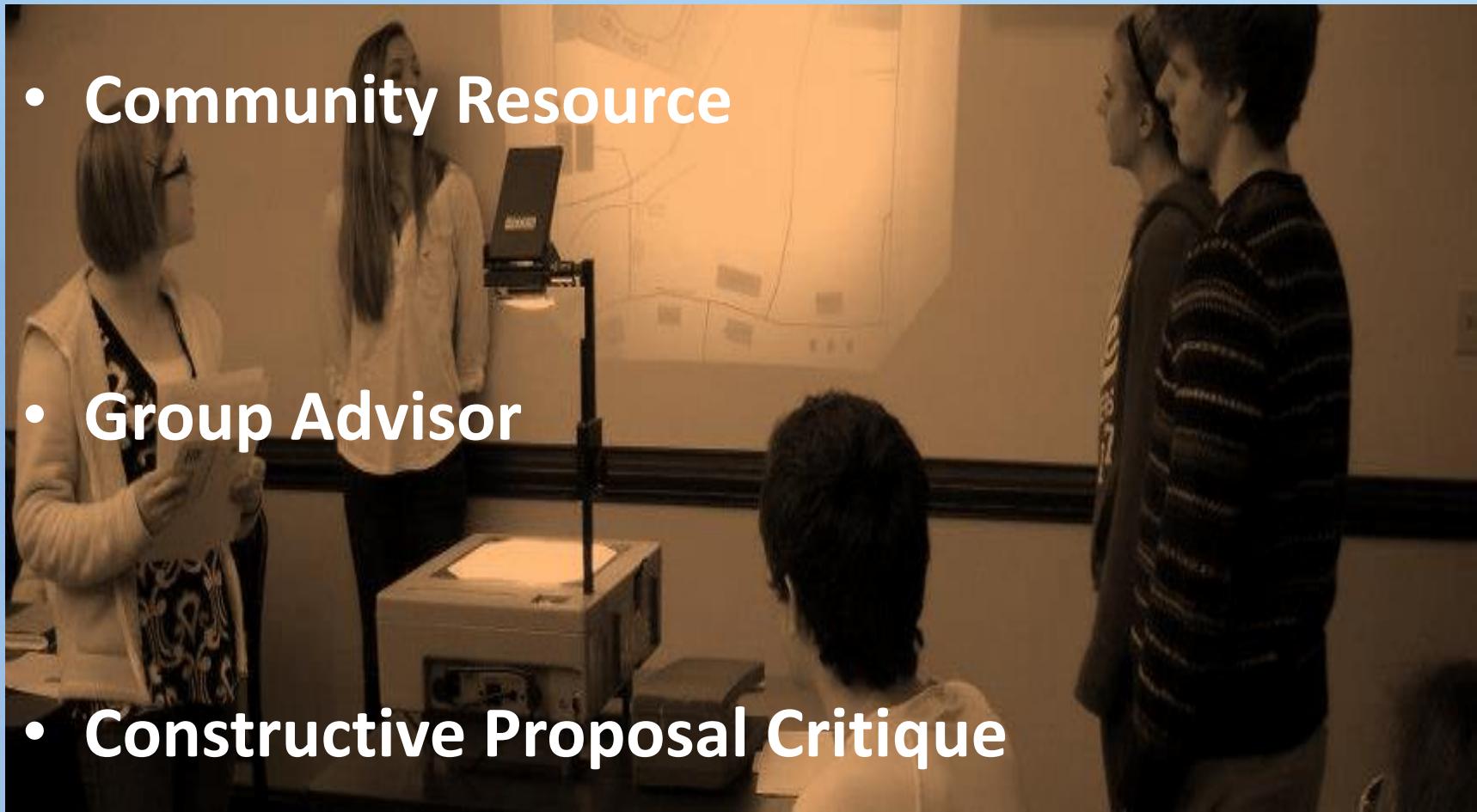


Fan Club

Planning Commission's Role

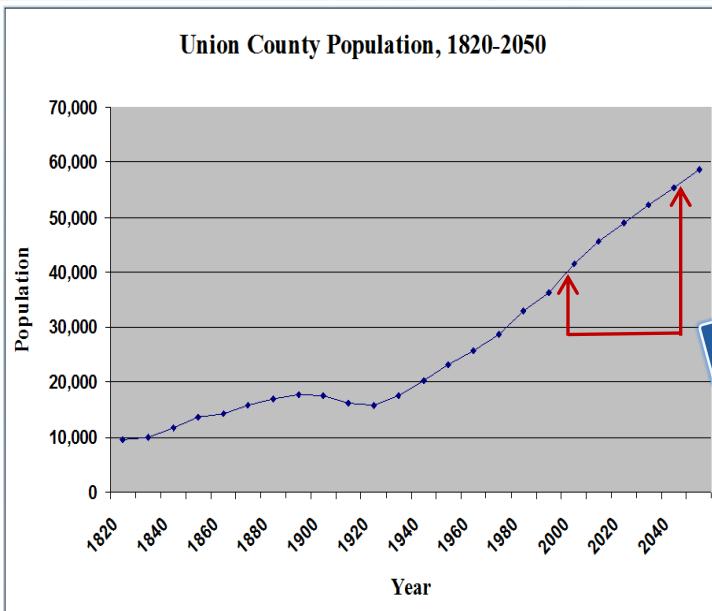
Building Leaders of Susquehanna Valley

- Community Resource
- Group Advisor
- Constructive Proposal Critique



Planning Commission's Role

What's The Plan – Middle School Program



DAY 1



Extension & Union County

Presentation

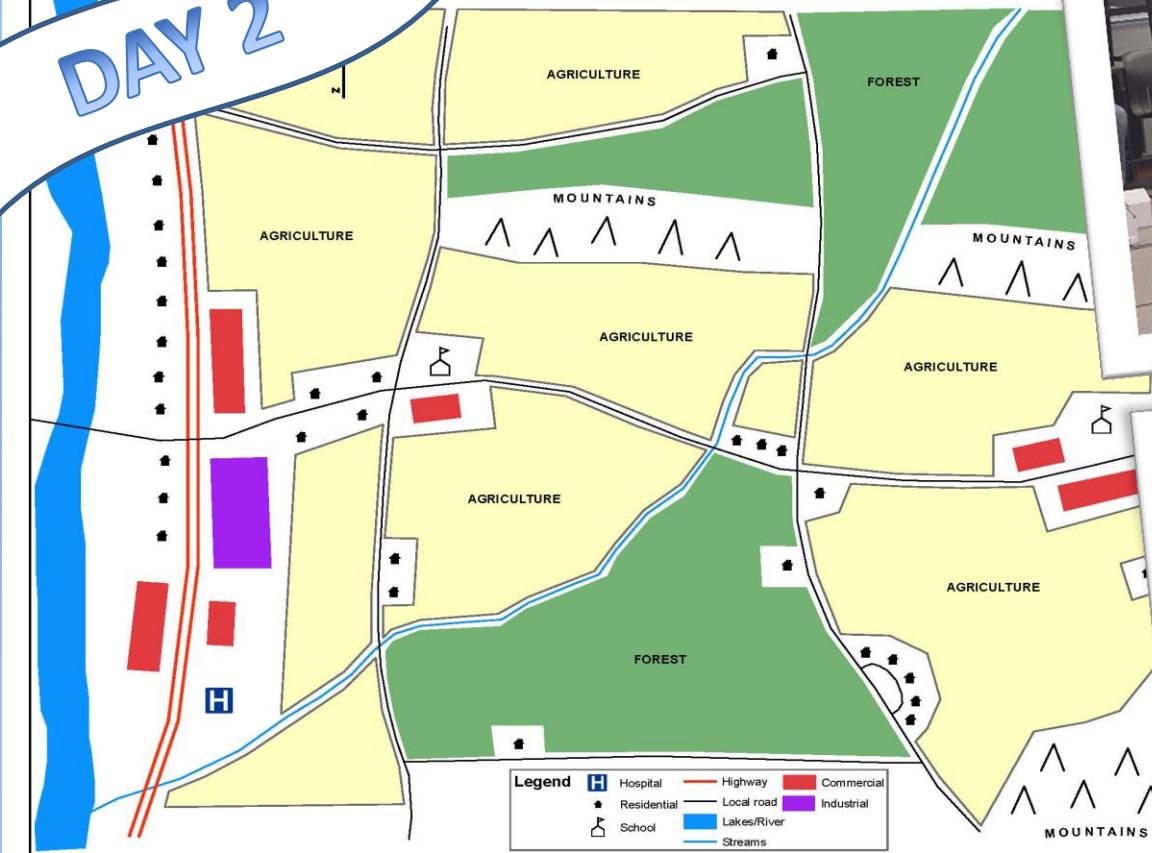
Student

Group Design

What's The Plan – Middle School Program

Mock Planning Commission

DAY 2



Comprehensive Plan Integration

Include Youth Perspectives

Engage in Planning Process

Involve in Plan Development



Youth Perspectives

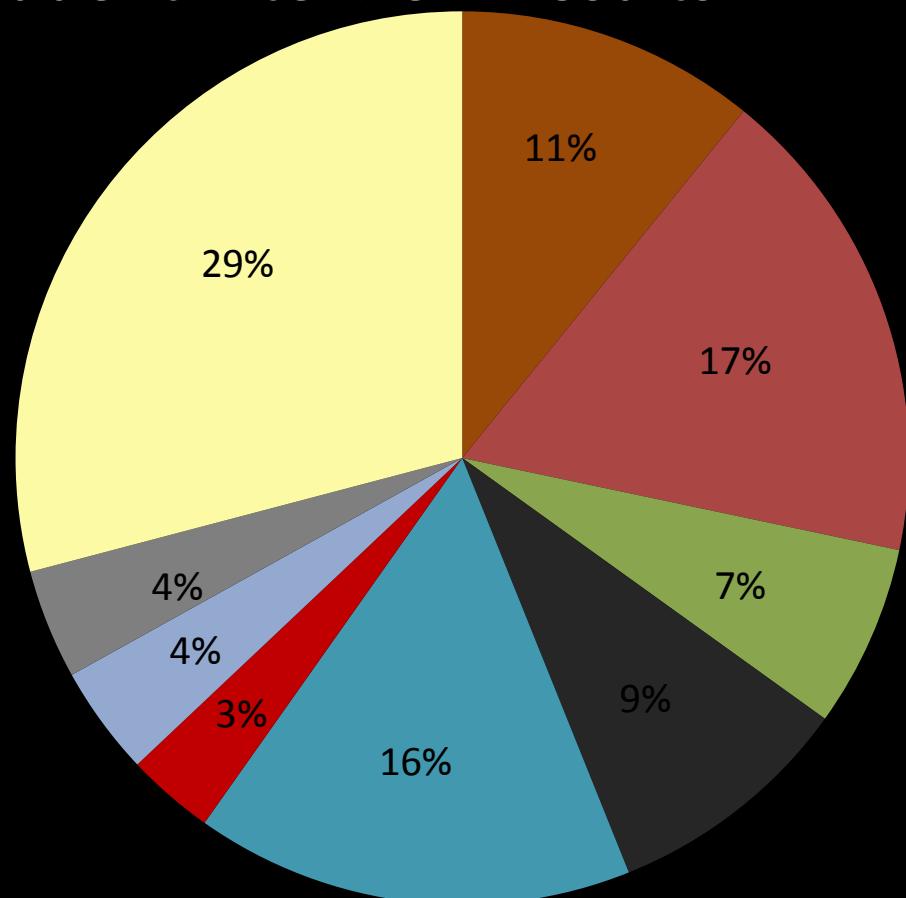
Top 5 Issues for Future

1. Low Crime Rate
2. Small Town Rural Atmosphere
3. Quality Public Education
4. Quality Housing
5. Employment Opportunities



Engage & Involve

Student Interview Results



What do you dislike?

- Farmland loss
- Growth & Development
- Lack of Shopping
- Traffic/Roads
- Lack of Activities
- Taxes
- Crime
- Blight
- Other

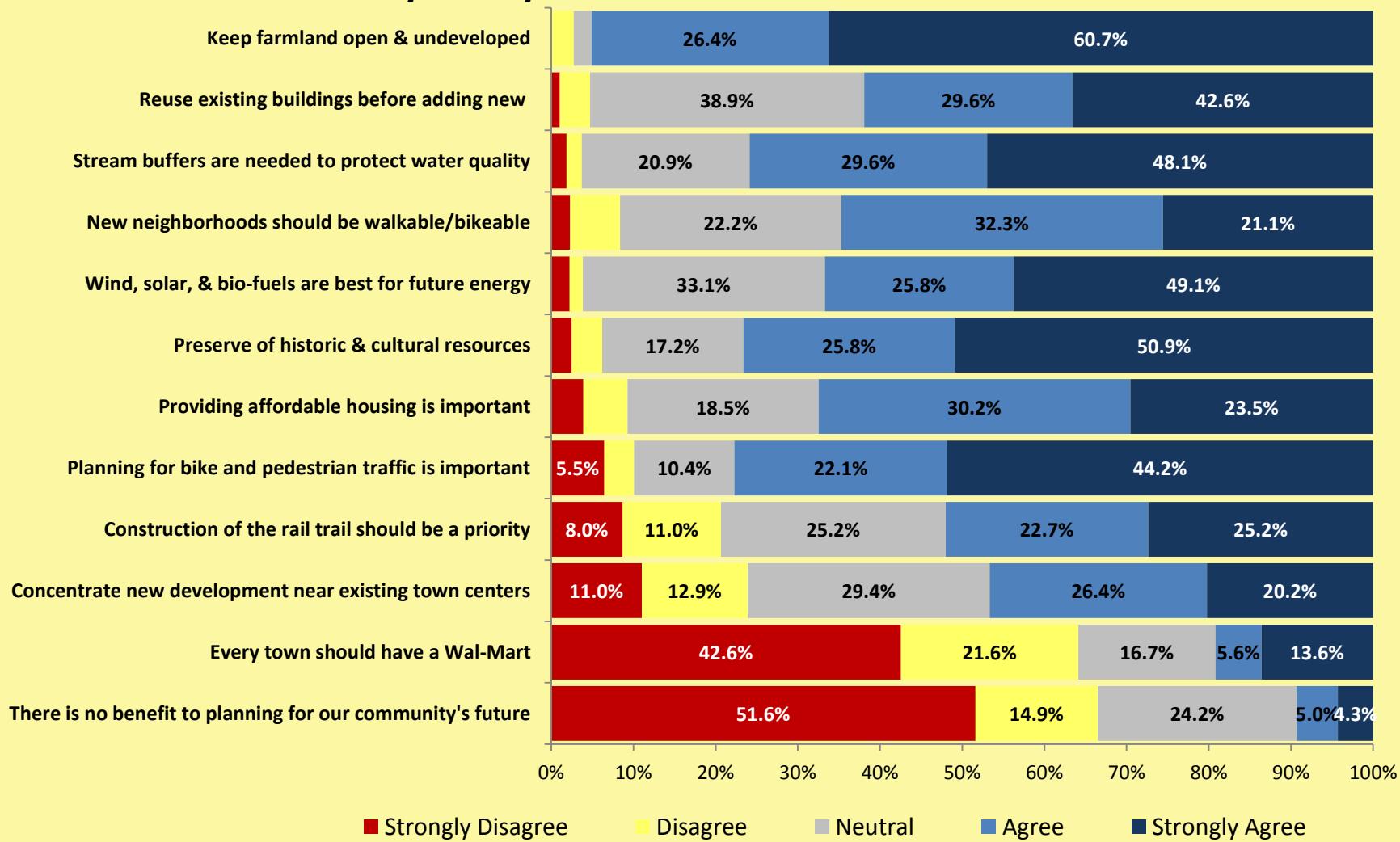
County Benefits



Junior Council Member
Quakertown Borough
Photo courtesy of Quakertown Borough

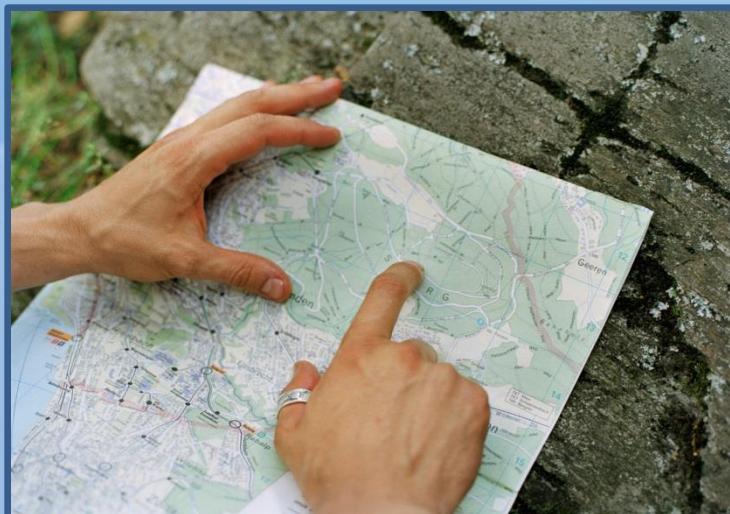
FutureOmeter

2009 Student Community Survey



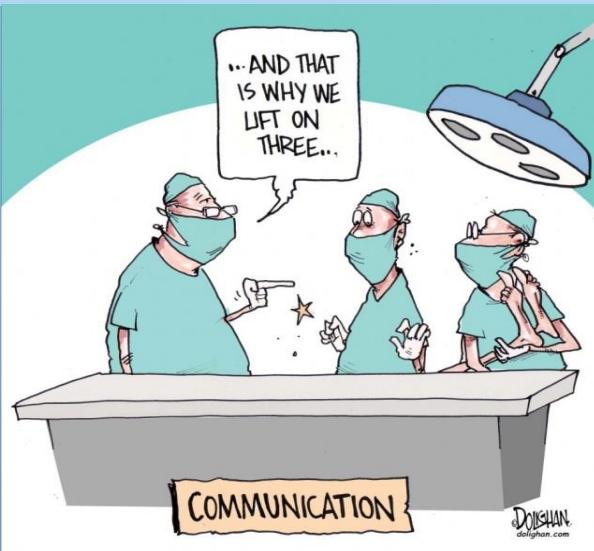
Observations to Date

- Every school is different
- Visual and hands on a must
- Students enjoy role playing
- Long-term investment



Recommendations for Others

Communicate



Know Your Limits



Partnerships



Mock Planning Comm.



Contact Information

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Questions & Discussion