

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

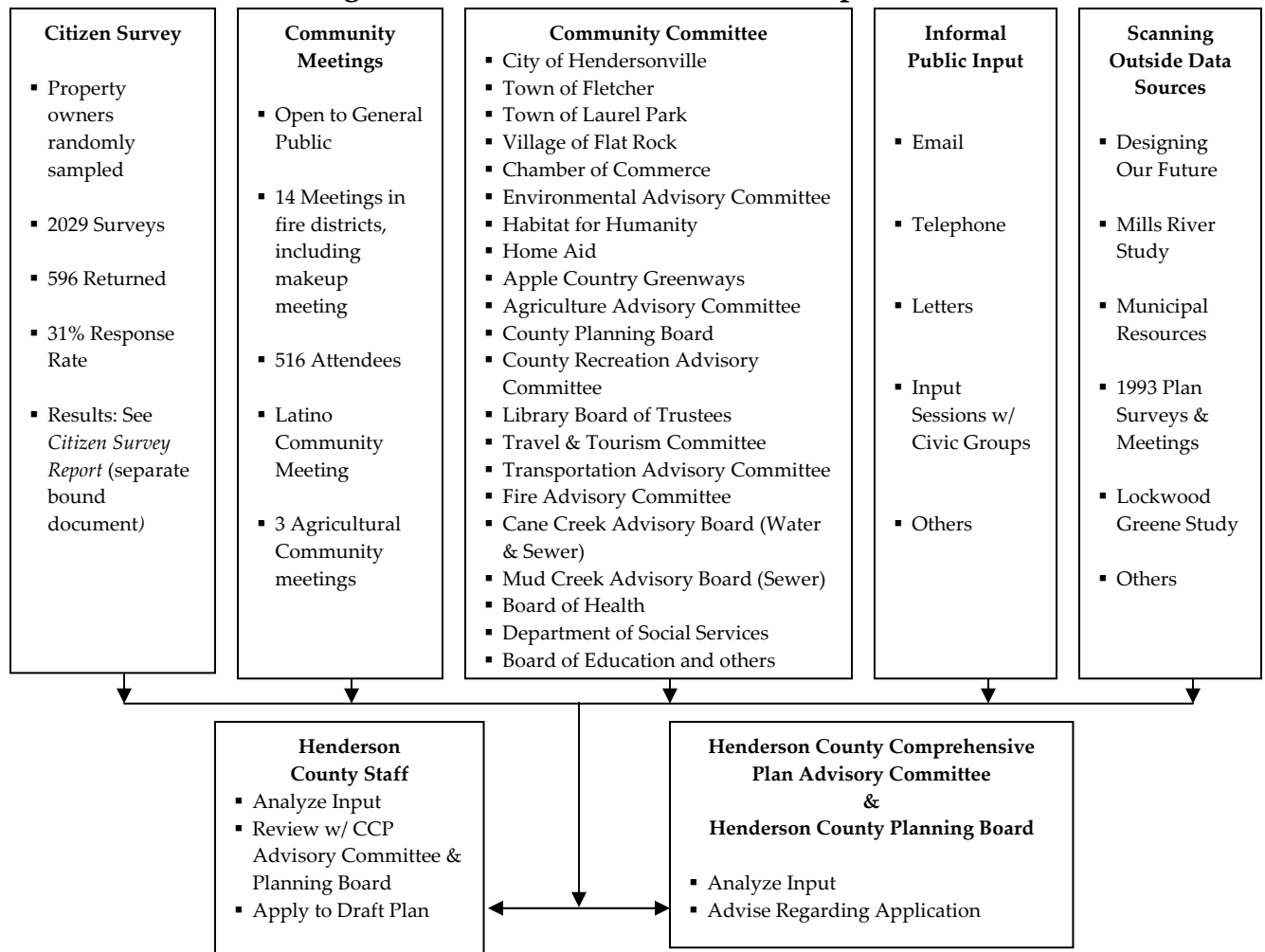
Why Gather Public Input?

As was stated in the *Key Principles of Growth*, “It is the County’s objective to build a planning framework that is based upon democratic ideals, that promotes community pride and ownership in government, and that fosters civic engagement. Citizens should have the opportunity to participate in and influence the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives and their community.”

How Was Public Input Gathered?

Public input for this Comprehensive Plan consisted of five distinct elements, of which the two primary elements were a Citizen Survey and a series of 14 Community Meetings.

Figure PI.1 Five Elements of Public Input



Input gathered via the Citizen Survey and the Community Meetings, in combination with the Latino and Agricultural Community Meetings, conversations with members of the Community Committee, and other sources of informal and external input form a solid foundation of information upon which this Comprehensive Plan was built. Furthermore, it serves as a baseline of information that will prove valuable for future community planning activities.

Citizen Survey

The Citizen Survey collected input from a random sample of property owners living in Henderson County. Samples were derived from the Henderson County Assessor's database of property owners. The Citizen Survey was designed and executed by Insight Research, Inc., in cooperation with the Advisory Committee and Henderson County Staff. A brief summary of the survey is available in Appendix II Public Input, Pg. 1. The survey report may be viewed in full at <http://www.hendersoncountync.org/planning/ccp>, or in the offices of the Henderson County Planning Department.

In general terms, the survey indicated higher levels of agreement that the rural / scenic qualities of the county should be protected, that development should be visually attractive, that development should steer away from flood-prone areas, and that the County should protect the natural environment. The survey indicated lower levels of agreement that the County should support tourism or economic development activities, should provide for affordable housing, or should restrict commercial development in rural areas.

The survey indicated higher levels of agreement that County *regulations and policies* should protect water and air quality, prevent floodplain development, and protect farmland. There was a low level of agreement that County *regulations and policies* should provide for affordable housing, regulate aesthetics via lighting and architectural standards, or limit development in areas not served by utilities.

The survey indicated higher levels of agreement that the County should *contribute revenues* to the protection of air quality and water quality, as well as to farmland and open space protection. There was a low level of agreement that the County should *contribute revenues* to support tourism, public transportation, and recreational and greenways facilities.

Community Meetings

A total of 14 Community Meetings were held, one in each fire district (or grouping thereof), including a makeup meeting. Please see Appendix II Public Input, *Community Meeting Summary*, *Community Meeting Coverage Areas*, and *Community Meeting Schedule*. Also, the separately bound document, *A Summary of Phase III, Henderson County Comprehensive Plan*, and the *Compilation of Citizen Input from Community Meetings*, is available for review in the Henderson County Planning Department.

The top 5 issues (“Primary Categories”) of greatest concern to the Community Meeting attendees are shown on Figure PI.2 below.

Primary Category	Number of Comments	Percent of All Comments
Manage Growth	3,772	32.25%
Transportation	2,013	17.21%
Environment	891	7.62%
Recreation	817	6.99%
Total Comments	11,696	

Input gathered at the Community Meetings was further broken down into “Summary Comments”. The following are the top 20 summary comments of the Community Meeting input (see Figure PI.3).

Primary Category	Summary Comment	Summary Comment as % of All Comments
Manage Growth	Value agriculture/ rural landscape; desire protection / preservation / enhancement.	8.23%
Manage Growth	Desire growth, but approve of current measures to manage and regulate growth, including zoning; want additional measures to manage growth; desire consistency and stability in zoning.	5.98%
Transportation	Suggested improvements to specific roads.	5.85%
Manage Growth	Commercial: regulate placement of commercial land uses; protect residential communities from the negative impacts of commercial land uses.	5.77%
Quality of Life	County has high quality of life / sense of place; value high	5.49%

Figure PI. 3 Top 20 Summary Comments		
Primary Category	Summary Comment	Summary Comment as % of All Comments
	quality of life / historic / heritage / family attributes; desire preservation of these.	
Recreation	Citizens value existing parks and recreation opportunities and facilities, but desire more accessible facilities throughout the county.	4.19%
Manage Growth	Regulate placement of industrial land uses; protect residential communities from the negative impacts of industrial land uses.	3.61%
Environment	Value / favor protecting mountains / scenic views / natural beauty.	3.08%
Transportation	Current road system needs repairs and general improvements. Gravel roads need to be paved, and dangerously winding roads should be straightened and widened, potholes filled, etc. Multiple lanes should be added where congestion conditions warrant such.	2.73%
Manage Growth	Property Rights...oppose zoning and other burdensome regulations that impose the will of others at the expense of private property rights.	2.53%
Emergency Services	Emergency Services...value current quality / responsiveness / geographical distribution, and want to see current level of service maintained.	2.48%
Sewer / Water	Current services valued / appreciated. Urbanizing areas currently without water and sewer need such service. Sewer / water are necessary for continued growth and development.	2.22%
Transportation	Support current system and desire to see it maintained and expanded.	2.21%
Recreation	Support greenways / trails / bike and walking paths for recreation and for transportation.	2.11%
Emergency Services	Emergency Services...suggested improvements.	2.11%
Transportation	Traffic congestion in Henderson County is steadily worsening, with negative consequences for quality of life, economic development, etc. Areas of higher traffic congestion and urban density need additional lanes, turning lanes, improved intersections, slow lanes, etc., to improve traffic flow and capacity.	1.98%

Figure PI. 3 Top 20 Summary Comments		
Primary Category	Summary Comment	Summary Comment as % of All Comments
Environment	Value / favor protection water quality, wetlands.	1.95%
Services, Commercial	Services, general...existing commercial services are valued and needed in convenient, accessible areas.	1.88%
Environment	Value / favor protection trees / vegetation / wildlife / nature.	1.66%
Economy	Need economic growth / economic development / development for jobs.	1.60%

It should be noted that the Citizen Survey and Community Meeting results both correlate and vary in a number of ways. Both elements place high value upon the protection of the natural environment, farmland, and scenic views. The Community Meeting results strongly emphasize the management and regulation of growth, including commercial and industrial development. The Community Meetings also placed greater emphasis on parks and greenways than does the Citizen Survey. Both placed low priority on housing affordability as an issue. Economic development was not a key issue of the Citizen Survey, although it was a somewhat more important issue within the Community Meeting results.

Latino Community Meeting

A Latino Community Meeting was held at the offices of El Centro. Thirty-three key leaders of Henderson County's Latino community were identified and invited to attend the meeting. A number of issues identified at this meeting were similar to those identified by the survey and community meetings, as described above. Others were more specific to the Latino community. For a summary of comments received at the Latino Community Meeting, see Appendix II Public Input, Pg. 16.

Agricultural Community Meeting

The Agricultural Community was specifically targeted for input. An open-ended questionnaire was provided to farmers and to other agricultural professionals. Farmers and agricultural support organization representatives were invited to 3 agriculture-specific public input sessions. Included at these meetings were representatives of organizations such as the Henderson County Agricultural Advisory Committee; the Henderson County Soil and Water Conservation District; the Henderson County

Cooperative Extension Advisory Board; federal, state and local non-profit and governmental agency representatives; and approximately 40 farmers. A summary of this input can be seen in Appendix II Public Input, *Agricultural Community Meeting Summary*.

Other Public Input

Several other sources of public input were consulted during this planning process. Among the most important were the following:

- *Designing Our Future*
- *Lockwood Greene Study*
- *1993 Comprehensive Land Use Plan*
- *Planning For 2002 Recreation Forum*

The relevant results of all above-referenced public input documents are discussed as necessary in Section 3 of this Comprehensive Plan.