



Public Open House

NOVEMBER 9, 2016

PRESENTED TO:



PRESENTED BY:



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Open House Public Meeting was conducted on Wednesday, November 9, 2016 by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Engineering District 12-0 and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with Westmoreland County, to discuss the Laurel Valley Transportation Improvement Project (LVTIP) feasibility study.

The LVTIP is a comprehensive approach to identify a series of fundable, attainable, and sustainable roadway improvements to meet transportation needs on or near the existing Route 981 Corridor. The Study Area extends from Route 30 near the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport to the Route 819/981 intersection in Mount Pleasant. The study will consider transportation improvements that will enhance safety, mobility and access consistent with land use and projected future growth in the region. The LVTIP feasibility study will include consideration of, from a future projected traffic standpoint, the possibility of a new PA Turnpike interchange with Route 981, as supported by Westmoreland County and currently part of a separate study of Regional Cashless Tolling by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC).

The purpose of this Public Open House was to:

- Introduce four draft improvement concepts to the general public
- Receive feedback on Draft Improvement Concepts and related potential impacts

One hundred fifteen (115) people registered at the Open House. were encouraged to visit each of the four (4) display stations and talk one-on-one with study team members who were located throughout the display area.

The informational display stations included:

- Registration and Introduction
- Study Overview
- Draft Improvement Concepts
- Comment area

II. MEETING FORMAT

PUBLIC PLANS DISPLAY

Date: Wednesday, November 9, 2016

Time: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Norvelt Roosevelt Hall
2325 Mount Pleasant Rd.
Mount Pleasant, PA 15666

Format: Open House Plans Display

Purpose: The purpose of this plans display is to:

- Introduce the four draft improvement concepts to the general public
- Receive feedback on Draft Improvement Concepts and potential impacts and suggested improvements or refinements of Concepts

Notices:

- Notifications were posted on the project website two weeks (October 26, 2016) before the public plans display.
- Letters were mailed to Public Officials to invite them to the Open House Public Plans Display (October 26, 2016).
- A postcard was sent to KeyS Committee members and members of the general public presently on the general contact list. (October 26, 2016).
- A newspaper advertisement was placed in the Greensburg Tribune Review, and ran once on November 2, 2016.
- Following the newspaper advertisement, issuance of a press release was coordinated with the District Community Relations Coordinator one week prior to the meeting.

Handouts: Informational Handout and Comment Form

Attendance: One hundred fifteen (115) people registered at the Public Meeting. The following Study Team members were also in attendance:

PennDOT

Joe Szczur, P.E., District Executive

Rachel Duda, P.E., Asst. District Executive - Design

Bill Beaumariage, P.E., District Portfolio Manager

Troy Pritts, Project Manager

Valerie Petersen, District Community Relations Coordinator

Kim Ansell, District Environmental Manager

Mary Ann Hadden, Assistant Environmental Engineer

McCormick Taylor

Ty Murcko, P.E., Highway and Transportation Engineer

John Petulla, P.E., Project Manager

Ken Rich, Senior Public Involvement Specialist

John Sada, P.E., PTOE, Transportation Engineer

Dawn (Noel) Schilling, P.E., Feasibility Study Manager

Dana Sklack, Public Involvement Specialist

Brian St. John, P.E., PTOE, Associate, Transportation Engineer

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

Bill Packer, Senior Environmental

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Chuck Imbrogno, Data and Modeling Specialist

Doug Smith, Transportation Planning

Westmoreland County

Chuck Anderson, County Commissioner

Jason Rigone, Executive Director of Planning and Development

III. MEETING DETAILS

The Public Meeting were held at the Norvelt Roosevelt Hall. The Public Meeting began at 5:00 p.m. and attendees where encouraged to view the four informational stations situated around the room and speak with project team members.

OPEN HOUSE AREA

Listed below are the informational stations with a brief description of related displays and handouts.

Station 1: Registration and Introduction	Registration
	Welcome Board
	Informational Handout
	Comment Form
Station 2: Study Overview	Feasibility Study Work Plan Board
	Study Area Map Board
	Purpose and Need Board
	Public Involvement to date and list of KeyS Members Board
Station 3: Draft Improvement Concepts	Roll Plot mapping of all four Draft Improvement Concepts 1-4
	Concepts 1-4 mapping display board
	Concepts 1-4 pros/cons list
	Typical Section
	Impact Matrix
Station 7: Comment Area	Comment Area Identification board

IV. INFORMATION GATHERED

Comments were collected by study team members during the Public Meeting and everyone in attendance at the meeting was asked to submit a comment form either in person, electronically or by mail after the meeting. Comments were also gathered on two sets of mapping of the Draft Improvement Concepts.

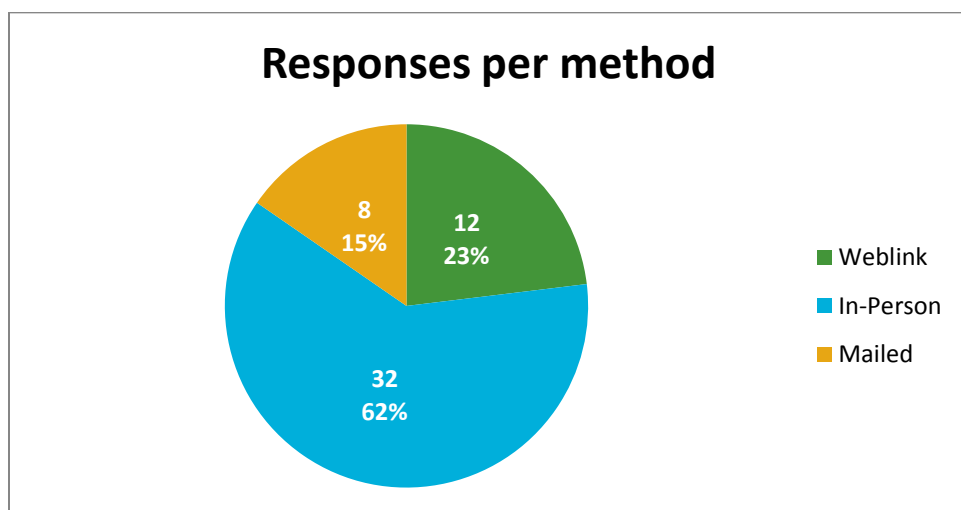
PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

The following comments were provided by attendees and noted by Study Team members during one-to-one conversations.

- On Hill Church Road, near blue station 2280 left is a new house.
- There is an old railroad line from Trauger Lake to the Airport.
- Secondary access to Mammoth Park from SR 2023 – Park officials would like to see that improved with concept #2.
- Flatten grade to go around cemetery to the east with Concept 2.
- Shirley Stoltz (724-423-3793) – In Hecla, near Neiderhiser Road there are abandoned Railroad trusses that need to be taken out.
- Keven R. Forringer (724-320-7648) – At station 4260 – Horse Pasture potential displacement behind the Calumet VFD. We have 3.5 acres of pasture on our 4.2 acre property. If you use the trolley route you will likely have to take 2 of my acres (all pasture) thus destroying my ability to sell this as a horse farm.

COMMENT FORM SUMMARY

A total of 52 completed comment forms were received through November 23, 2017. Comment forms were available in paper and online.

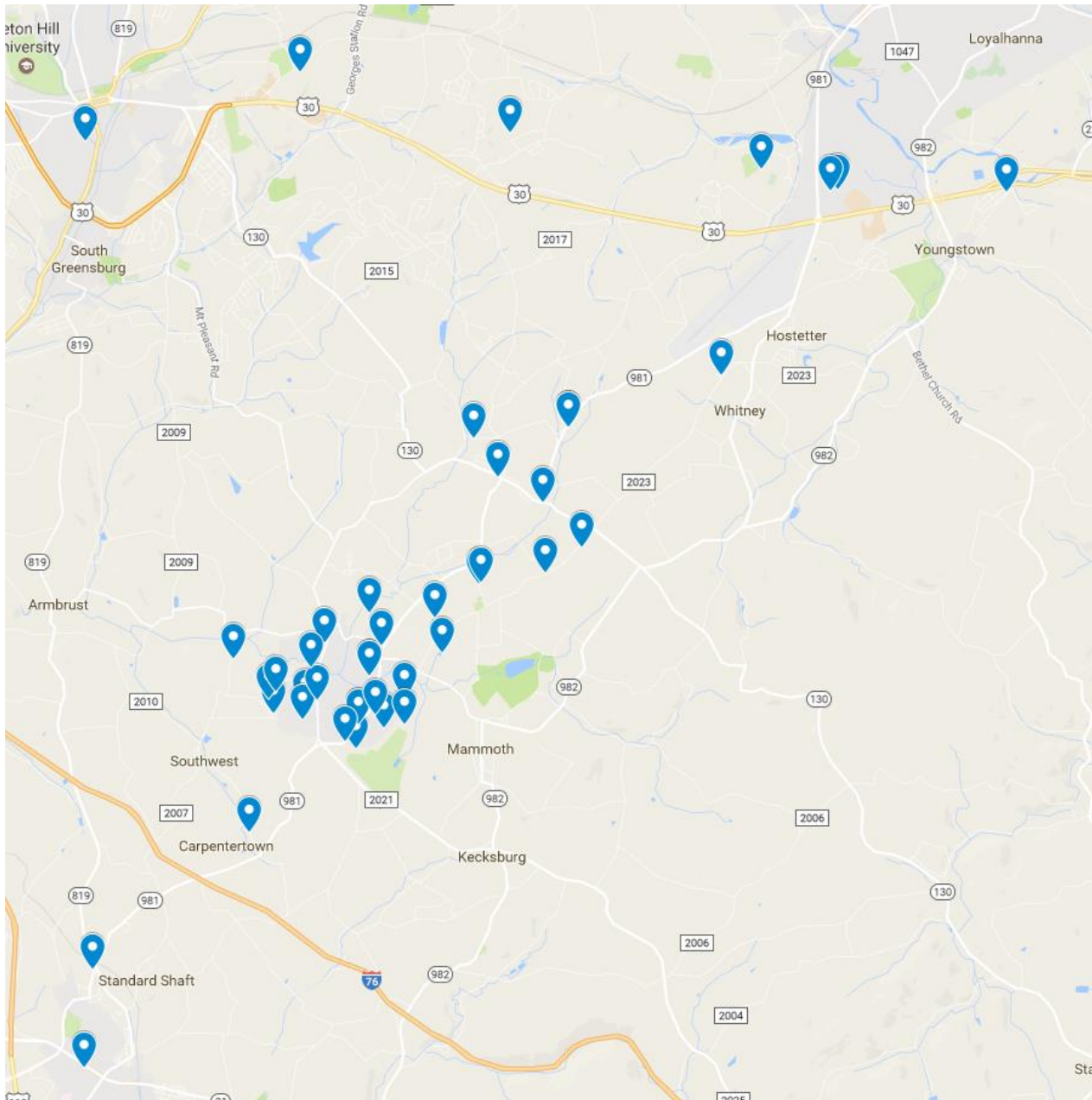


The most common form of response was in-person at the meeting.

The comment form consisted of nine questions. Below is an overview of the responses received by question.

Question 1: Introduce yourself to the project team

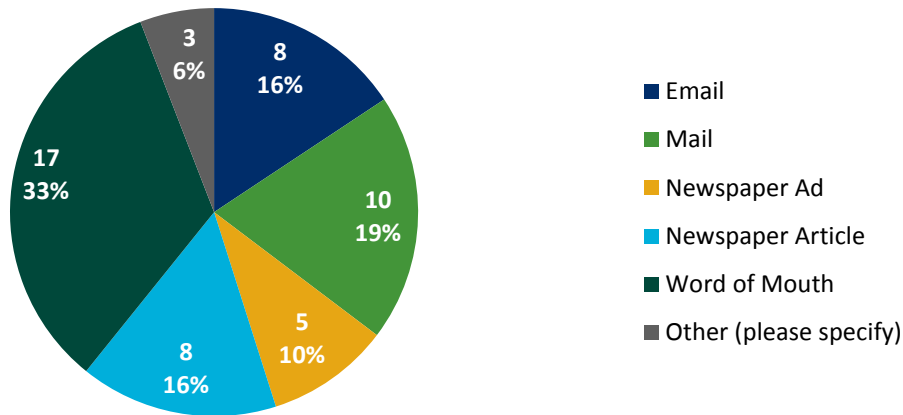
This question asked participants to provide their contact information so that they may be contacted with future project updates. Forty-four (44) of the 52 participants included their mailing address and were added to the project's mailing list. Below is a map that shows the location of those participants in relation to the project area.



Question 2: How did you learn about this meeting?

The goal of this question was to see how well the varieties of meeting announcements were received.

How did you hear about this meeting?

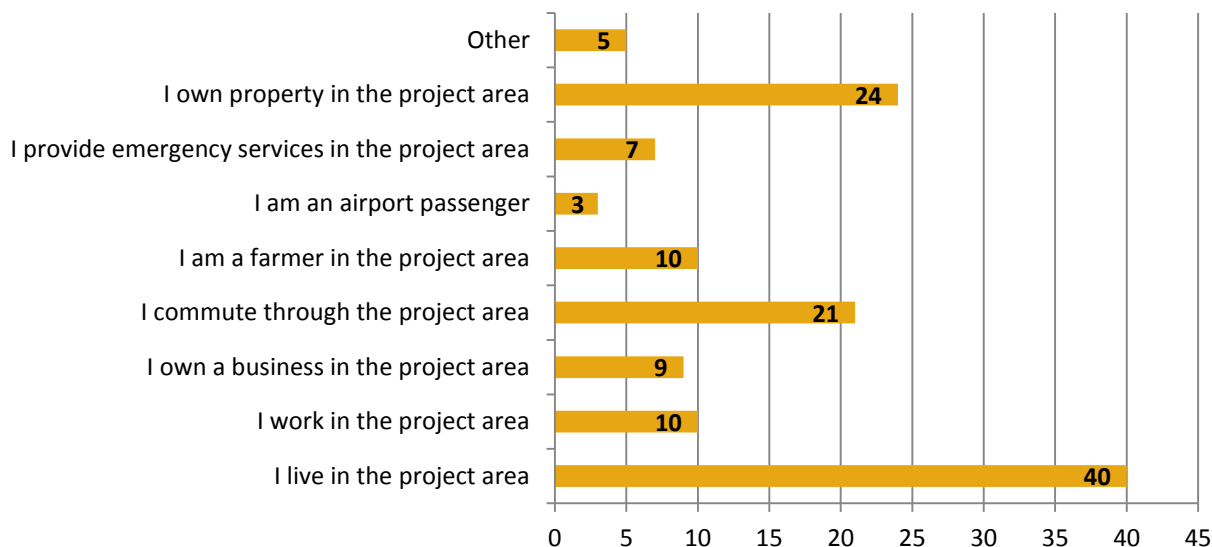


Those who selected 'other' identified a local radio station or a combination of two of the above options.

Question 3: Please check which statements represent your interests in the project.

The most popular response was that they live in the project area followed by owning property in the area and commuting through the area.

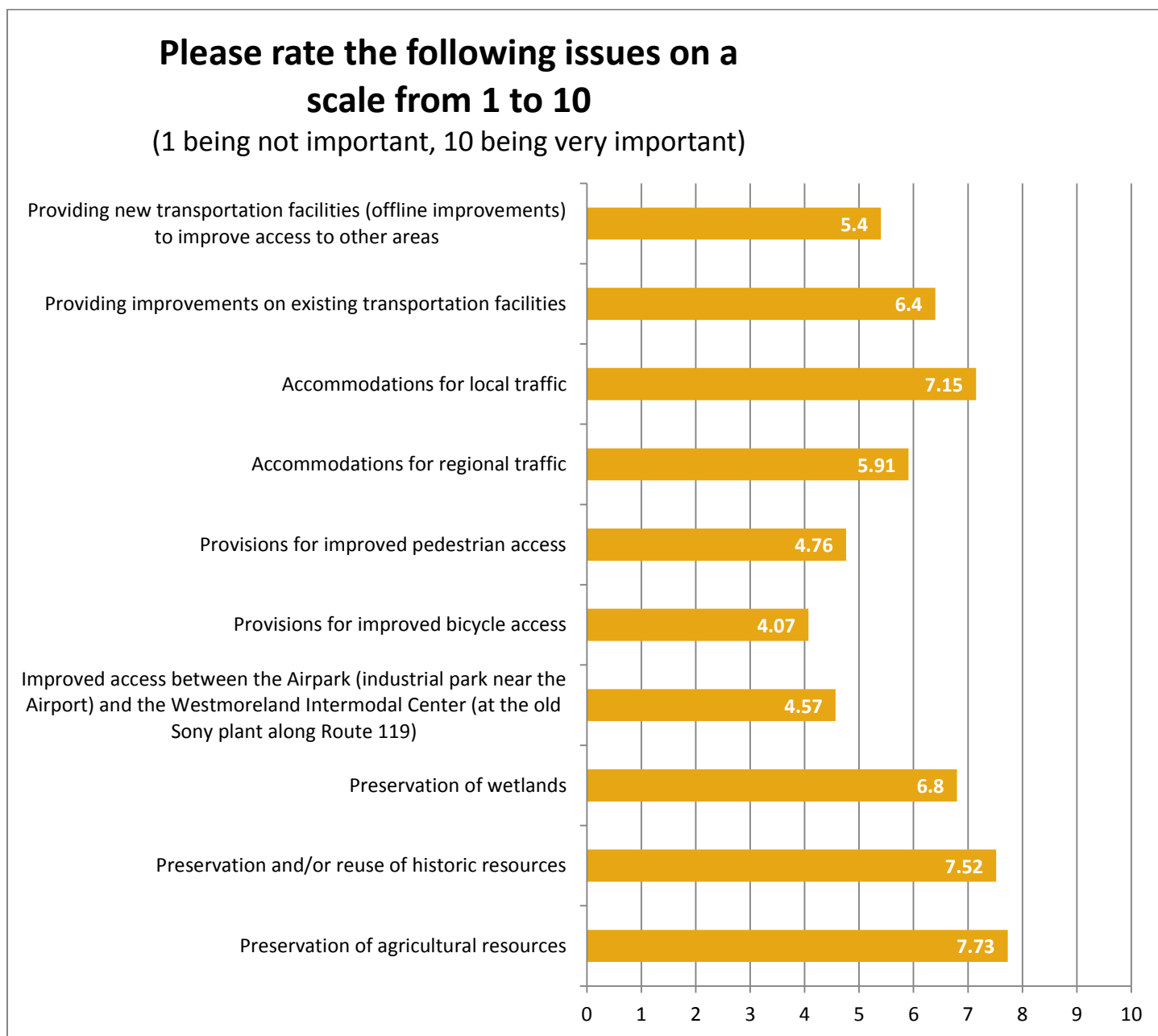
Please check which statements represent your interests in the project.



Question 4: Please rate the following issues on a scale from 1 to 10. (1 being not important, 10 being very important)

This question asked participants to rate ten different environmental elements in the area. On the chart below is the weighted average for each item. The weighted average was determined by adding each participant's rating for a

particular item and then dividing that total by the number of participants who responded. Between 46 and 48 participants responded to each element. Using these averages, the most important elements to the participants were preservation of agricultural resources, preservation and/or reuse of historic resources and accommodation of local traffic.



Participants were also asked to provide any additional comments. Six (6) participants provided comment. Three of the comments were in support of the current plan or in implementing a more extensive expansion of the road. The remaining three comments were not in favor of the project and expressed concern that the proposed improvement would be detrimental to the area.

Question 5: Do you concur with the Project Purpose and Needs Statements as presented?

A majority of participants (63% of the 46 participants) agreed with the Purpose and Need statements as presented.

Do you concur with the Project Purpose and Needs Statements as presented?

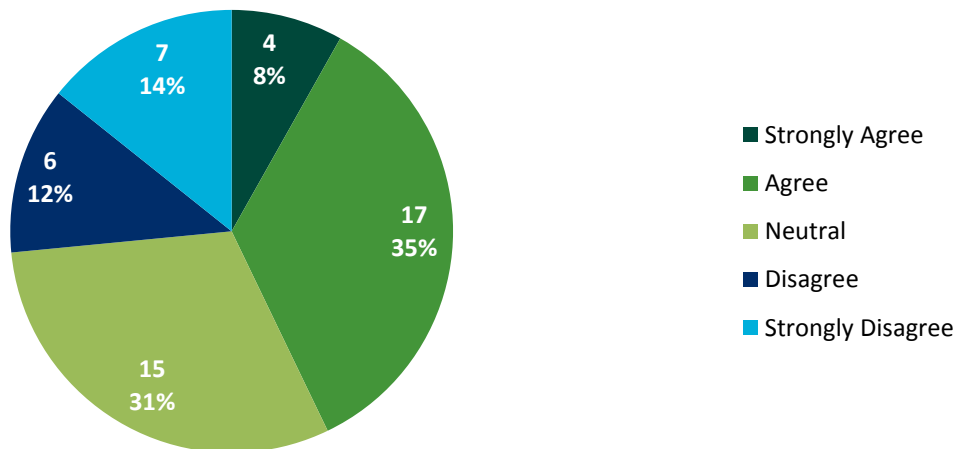


Additionally, participants were asked if they answered 'no' to explain. Fifteen (15) of the 17 participants who responded 'no' also provided comments to explain their answer. These participants mostly agreed that the project is unnecessary and are worried about the increase in through traffic. One participant who responded disagreed with this and instead thought that the current project is moving too slow.

Question 6: The Draft Concepts, as presented, adequately address the needs.

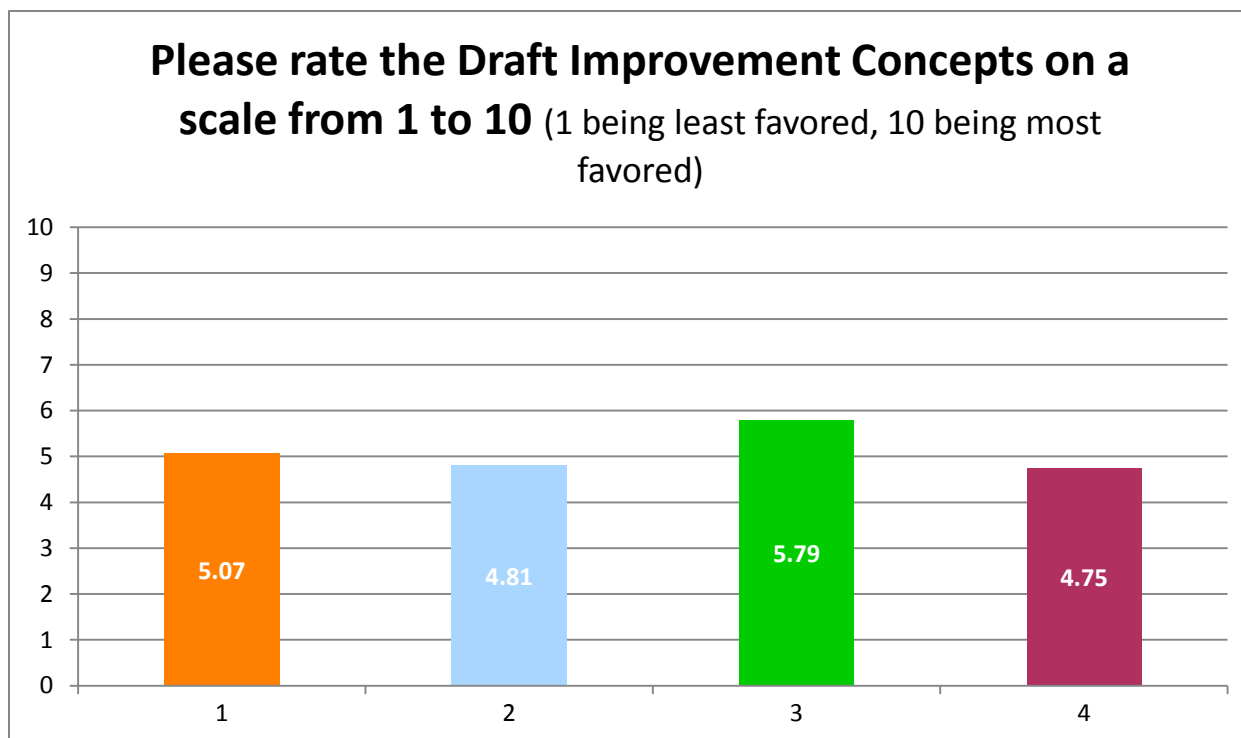
Nearly half of participants (43% of 49 participants) either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

The Draft Concepts, as presented, adequately address the needs.



Question 7: Please rate the Draft Improvement Concepts on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being least favored, 10 being most favored)

This question, like question 4, used weighted averages to determine the most favored concept.



All of the concepts scored between 4.5 and 6 with none of the concepts appearing to be a very clear favorite.

Participants were also asked to provide any additional comments they had about the concepts. Fifteen (15) participants provided comments.

Concept 1

One comment directly addressed Concept 1. In this comment, the participant expressed concern about their recently restored 1860 farmhouse that would be affected by this concept's alignment. The owners do own property on both sides of 981 and they hope that if the preferred improvement does go past their home, the property across the street is used rather than taking additional footage from their front yard.

Concept 2

Two comments addressed Concept 2. One comment was in favor of Concept 2 with some minor adjustments and the second comment asked for any concept to be selected except for this one.

Concept 3

Seven comments directly referred to this concept. Two of the comments were in favor of this concept. The remaining comments expressed concerns about the impacts of this concept. For the farmhouse owners mentioned above regarding Concept 1, this concept would mean a large loss in active farmland and move the road very close to their recently restored barn. Additional comments not in favor of this concept identified wetland impacts; large land takes to individual properties; and excess traffic in Norvelt.

Concept 4

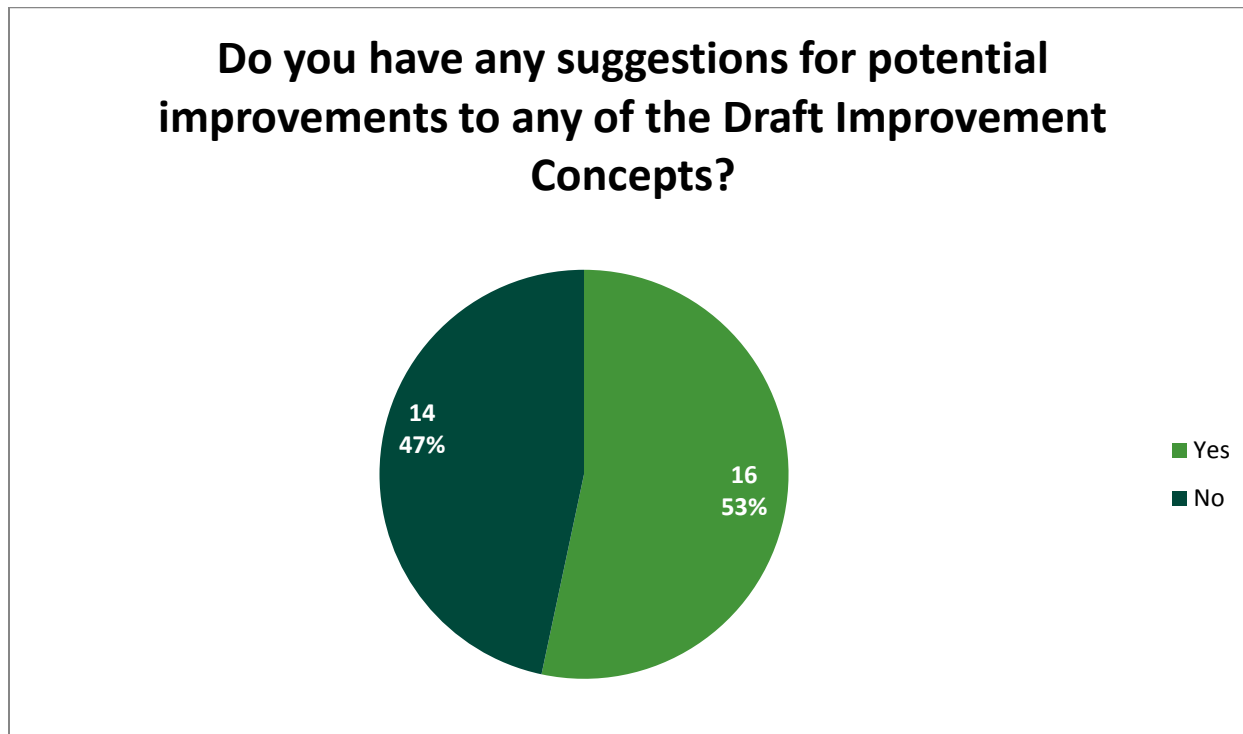
Two comments that were received referred to Concept 4 specifically. Both comments were in favor of this concept.

General Comments

General comments about the concepts included creating a hybrid option, using part of 2023 in the improvements, avoiding farmland, and making the decision in a timely manner to let home and land owners who could be effected know about the preferred concept.

Question 8: Do you have any suggestions for potential improvements to any of the Draft Improvement Concepts?

A majority of participants (53%) answered yes. Participants who answered yes were asked to explain.



Fourteen (14) comments were received with this question. Some of the comments echoed comments previously received in question 7. Additional comments included installing a traffic light at the intersection of Route 981 and Mount Pleasant Road, avoiding Bell Memorial Church Road, combining parts of the concepts to create a hybrid concept, and avoiding property takes.

Question 9: Additional Comments

The final question of the comment form asked for any additional comments not already noted. Thirty (30) comments were received. Some of the comments addressed specific concepts.

- Comments about Concept 2 identified it as a safe alternative to the current route of 981.
- Concept 3 comments expressed concern that if this option is selected it would hurt existing businesses, residents, and churches. Concept 3 would need to be refined to avoid these impacts as much as possible.

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- Concept 4 was identified by one participant as being the best use of tax payer money because it minimizes most impacts throughout the corridor. A second participant also identified Concept 1 in addition to 4 as being an overall good choice.
 - Suggestions to create a hybrid concept included:
 - Using Concept 2 or 4 north of Trauger and Concept 1 south of Trauger to Norvelt and then using Concept 3 to the end of the study area
 - Creating a combination of Concepts 2 and 4
 - Using Concept 3 from Mount Pleasant to Norvelt and Concept 1 from Norvelt to the Airport
 - Using Concept 4 from 819 to Norvet and then following Concept 3.
 - A refinement for Concepts 2 and 4 near the intersection with Route 130 was requested.
 - A number of comments mentioned the balance between benefits for residents versus benefits for business and industry in the area. Concern was also expressed about losing the 'country lifestyle'.
 - Participants also voiced concern about improvements being made on the roads that travel through the towns located throughout the corridor.

V. CONCLUSION

All meeting activities were concluded at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 9, 2016. This summary provides an accurate description of activities associated with the the Public Meeting and the information shared and feedback received.

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