CHAPTER 2

OVERRIDING THEMES

INTRODUCTION

At the county level this plan provides the umbrella of ten issues. With this being the initial attempt to address the plan in this fashion, we may find attempting to target ten issues with all of their listed actions is entirely too much to undertake. Time will be the telltale to determine is the plan is overly ambitious or if it was lacking in effort.

Because the inaugural Community Issues Survey did not qualify what was actually needed to address each identified issue, would we know exactly was meant by the survey responses and suggestions offered during the process? The series of eight taskforce meetings covering the first nine of ten county issues revealed a tremendous amount of information which brought about the concept of themes.

It quickly became evident the four taskforce groups would need to first pin down what systematic problems exist around the survey identified issues. At one such meeting the question was posed, how do we invigorate interest in solving issues? One suggested solution is to frame the issue in such a way to encourage involvement in seeing the issue addressed.

The following general overriding themes have been developed to help pull together the plan goals, objectives and especially strategic actions.

OVERIDING THEMES

1. Lower taxes
2. Protection of open space and agricultural land preservation
3. Economic growth
4. Natural resources protection
5. Transportation infrastructure (highways, roads, streets, bridges)
6. Economic development (manufacturing)
7. Community retail options
8. Transportation improvements (transit, multi-modal, and para transit)
9. Education (job training and workforce development)
10. More efficient comprehensive trash collection

SECTION THEMES

At the municipal level there are five ranked themes which will be the focus of each sub-regional/ Plan Development Section (PDS) plan. The themes are uniformly declared although their existence, absence, or priority order may have changed at the PDS level.
NORTHEAST PLAN DEVELOPMENT SECTION

1. Lower taxes
2. Economic growth
3. Protection of open space and agricultural land preservation
4. Transportation improvements (transit, multi-modal, and para transit)
5. Economic development (manufacturing)

SOUTHEAST PLAN DEVELOPMENT SECTION

1. Lower taxes
2. Protection of open space and agricultural land preservation
3. Economic growth
4. Transportation infrastructure (highways, roads, streets, bridges)
5. Community retail options; and
   Economic development (manufacturing)

WESTERN PLAN DEVELOPMENT SECTION

1. Lower taxes
2. Transportation infrastructure (highways, roads, streets, bridges)
3. Economic growth
4. Protection of open space and agricultural land preservation
5. Natural resources protection

WHAT OTHER CONTRIBUTORS ARE SAYING

The ease of survey taking on the internet has led to a few out-of-county responses. Perhaps they were former residents, absentee landholders, or have relatives residing somewhere in the county. From this limited contribution, the following list was compiled.
1. Natural resources protection
2. Economic growth
3. Substance abuse prevention
4. Protection of open space and agricultural land preservation
5. Transportation improvements (transit, multi-modal, and para transit)

While there are many similarities with this list, what is most noticeable is the absence of the number one county issue, and the number one issue in all three plan development sections (lower taxes). One must assume perception by the outside observer reveals Perry County and municipal taxes are comparatively low.

The next noteworthy issue involves substance abuse prevention is clearly eye-opening. Why would those outside the county responding to the Community Issues Survey perceive this to be a top five issue? Further research has revealed the county has a higher drinking and driving rate, together with a higher number of drinking related fatality hotspots.¹

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

For Perry County and its partnering municipalities to move forward and address the identified issues, the public at-large must readily identify with those issues and be an active partner in addressing these issues. Hopefully the plan developed themes will resonate with county officials and the public alike to the point of wanting to assist. It could very well be the identification of themes may directly interest volunteer groups to help address certain actions.

When it comes to implementation, all non-governmental assistance is welcomed to help address any of the strategic actions listed herein. This provided such efforts do not go unreported to the individuals responsible for implementing the plan.

¹ Analysis of Drinking and Driving in Pennsylvania, Dept. of Geography & Planning, West Chester University, Michael Carroll and Martin Katirai, PhD., pub. 2014, (utilizing 2002 - 2012 PennDOT crash data)