

CHAPTER 2

SURVEY ANALYSIS

A survey, which is in Appendix F, was mailed to 957 members of the regional community. These members included representatives of local governments, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, finance, agriculture, real estate companies, organized labor, education, community organizations, the aged, disabled, the unemployed, underemployed, racial or ethnic minorities, and women. Out of 109 responses, there were 108 useful ones, which is approximately an 11.3 percent response rate. Respondents were asked to rank objectives and short-term goals from 1 to 5 with 1 being the most important. Below are the most important goals and objectives, with their respective average ranking. Of the useful respondents, there were 19 municipal governments, six county government agencies, a federal government agency, nine state government agencies, 14 educators and educational institutions, a private citizen, 11 chambers of commerce, economic development corporations and tourism promotion agencies, 13 businesses, two banks, 16 non-profit organizations, two housing authorities, a health care facility and 13 unidentified responses.

Some of the respondents were from public welfare offices, human service offices, community organizations, senior citizens organizations, an organization that works with troubled teens, workforce development associations and organizations that represent the disabled, including the blind. In the education field, respondents were from public school districts, private schools, community and four-year colleges and Penn State Cooperative Extension.

The results of the survey were determined by summing the responses and divided that number by the number of responses for that particular objective or short-term strategy. With 1 being the most important, the following objectives and short-term strategies had an average below 2.000 or if the average were not below 2.000, it had the lowest average. The average is indicated in parentheses and the averages for all of the responses are indicated on the copy of the survey in Appendix F.

Goal One: Increased Economic Growth and Diversification

Objective: Creation of jobs with family-sustaining wages (1.621)

Short-Term Strategy: Assist companies wanting to locate in the region (1.747)

Goal Two: Improvement of Human Resources and Workforce Development

Objectives: Have more highly skilled persons in the workforce (1.871)

Have education and training programs based on projected needs (1.894)

Work with other economic development agencies to address the problem of young people leaving the region for employment after completing their education (1.821)

Short-Term Strategy: Promote the broadening of formal education opportunities (1.854)

Goal Three: Improvement of the Environment

Objective: Protect and maintain our natural resources (1.602)

Short-Term Strategies: Promote regionalism (1.953)

Manage growth through effective land-use planning (1.879)

Goal Four: Improvement in Local Government Operations

Objective: Increased cooperation among governments (1.794)

Short-Term Strategy: Advocate cooperation among governments (1.835)

Goal Five: Improvement of Telecommunications

Objectives: Development of new industries using advanced technology communications (1.695)

Development of broadband technologies to underserved areas (1.760)

Short-Term Strategies: Identify feasible telecommunications system improvements (1.703)

Identify possibilities for the installation of broadband, including wireless communications and fiber optics (1.656)

Goal Six: Improvement of Transportation Systems

Objectives: Improved arterial highway system in urban and rural areas (1.677)

Developed linked transportation modes (1.882)

Short-Term Strategy: Support restoration of passenger rail service (2.099)

Goal Seven: Improvement of the Quality of Life

Objective: Enhanced appearance of communities (2.187)

Short-Term Strategies: Create diverse and vibrant places for cultural and lifestyle attractions and opportunities (1.943)

Assist local municipalities with the identification of alternatives, strategies and actions for community improvement programs (1.653)

The action plan and evaluation for each of these objectives and short-term strategies will be presented in the next chapter.