

PORT ROYAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

SUMMARY OF RESULTS



**CAROLINE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SUMMER 2003**

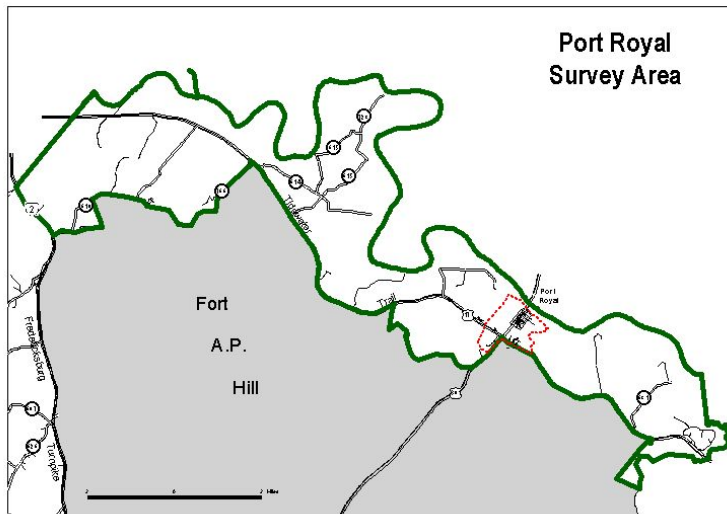
INTRODUCTION

A copy of the survey and the tabulated results are available to review in appendix B of the Port Royal Community Plan. This document uses the tabulated results and tries to draw some conclusions from that data about the Port Royal Community. Typically a response rate of more than 20 percent is considered a high response on this type of survey. The response rate for this survey exceeded the typical with over 26 percent of the population surveyed responding. I

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2003, Caroline County conducted a survey, via mail, to the residents of the Port Royal Community. The County boundaries to the north, east and west and Fort A.P. Hill and Route 2 to the south define the Port Royal Community. One copy of the survey was mailed to every household or property in the area, totaling approximately 800 surveys.

Of those sent out, 208 (26%) were returned.



This survey was used to aide the County in the updates of the comprehensive plan for the area. The citizen committees that were formed as a part of the update process used this public input in their discussion of new goals, objectives and action strategies for the area. The

survey provided a broader selection of public feedback for those working to develop the Port Royal Community's future growth plans.

The survey was broken down into two parts and contained 24 questions. The first section, made up of eleven questions, pertained to household information about family size, employment, education and income. Two additional questions in the survey addressed this subject as well, asking about the type of home lived in and the number of years in the area. The other eleven questions in the survey focused on life in the Port Royal Community and its future growth. Residential and commercial developments were addressed, as was public infrastructure and services.

Many questions were set up so that the respondent could 'check as many boxes as they prefer' as well as those questions that asked respondents to rank their choices. The methodology of the survey needs to be mentioned so the analysis is easily understood. Percentages are not necessarily the best representation of the data, due to the multitude of

choices each respondent represents, due to the ‘choose as many as you prefer’ option. Therefore, not all questions will be aggregated by percentages, but rather the number of times that choice was selected.

PORT ROYAL COMMUNITY INFO

Most respondents, nearly half, have lived in the area over 20 years. Similarly, most respondents are also retired from their jobs. Most respondents live in single-family homes on individual parcels (81), followed by those who live in single-family homes in a subdivision. Almost as many respondents live in single family homes in subdivisions (44), as do those respondents who live on a farm (37).

The family characteristics show that a majority of respondents live in a two adult household with children. Of those households, many contained those over 65 years of age (87). Most children in the respondent’s households are under 18, only 5 surveys showed children over 18.

Personal patterns queried include shopping habits, income, as well as type of job, homeownership and education level. Overall, the survey showed that a vast majority owns their home, shops in the Fredericksburg area, and works in the service industry. Education level was split among those with a high school education (88) and those with a college degree (60). Income level was high, with 92 respondents making over \$50,000. Interestingly, over 40 people chose not to disclose their income.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE PORT ROYAL COMMUNITY

The survey included two questions inquiring about the best and worst aspects of living in the Port Royal Community. One question posed asks: What are the five best things about living in the Port Royal Community of Caroline County that should be maintained? Of the 18 choices, the respondents were asked to rank their top 5. The top aspects to living in the Port Royal Community, in rank order, according to the respondents include:

1. Rural character and open land
2. Low tax rate
3. Scenic beauty
4. Low crime rate
5. Small town atmosphere

The next question asks: What are the five concerns facing the Port Royal Community? Of the 18 choices, respondents were asked to rank their top five. They included, in rank order:

1. Local job opportunities
2. Congestion at intersection of Rt. 17 and Rt. 301
3. Land use conflicts

4. Quality of Public Schools
5. Congestion on Rt. 17

These two questions give an idea of the advantages and disadvantages to living in the community. Obviously, the rural character and open land is a major advantage. The issues that is associated with rural living rank as both positive and negative for the respondents. With rural living comes the benefit of scenic beauty, a small town atmosphere and low tax and crime rates. But with rural living comes inherent problems, such as lack of local job opportunities, land use conflicts and public school quality. One anomaly of the area is the traffic congestion that it is faced with.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

A series of questions was also posed about the future development of the area. These questions inquired about the growth rate of the county as well as location and type of commercial and residential development in the area. The respondents, when asked what the appropriate growth rate for the county in the next ten years, replied with 83 respondents looking for the same growth rate as past ten years and 59 calling for a faster growth rate than the past ten years.

Question 5 asks, “Recognizing that the population in the County and the Port Royal Community will continue to grow, what kinds of residential development would be desirable in the Port Royal Community?” In general, respondents answered that single-family homes on parcels of 1-5 acres would be most desirable (101). This was followed by single-family homes on parcels greater than 5 acres (88), as well as mixed-use developments including assisted living facilities (69). Ranking closely were the options of single-family homes on parcels of less than one acres (51) and single-family homes clustered on smaller lots with surrounding open space (47). Least desirable proved to be the addition of mobile homes to mobile home parks with just 15 respondents choosing this option.

This question illustrates the variety of options the area residents are open to in terms of residential development. There seems to be progressive thought in the area on this matter as evident in the high ranking of the mixed used development option as well as the single family homes clustered on smaller lots option.

When asked where new residential development should take place, respondents could check as many boxes as they preferred. This question had very closely ranked answers with 76 choosing in the Port Royal Community, 66 choosing along the Rt. 17 Corridor and 64 choosing in other areas of Ladysmith, Carmel Church and Bowling Green. These answers illustrate the respondents desire of seeing more development in their community as well as seeing the current development pattern of the County continue.

Commercial development is also addressed. When asked of the possible locations for new businesses, the majority of respondents replied with the area of Rt. 301 and Rt.

17 intersection. The second choice for commercial development was in the Port Royal Community followed by in the Town of Port Royal.

When asked what kinds of new businesses would be desirable, the overwhelming answer was restaurants. Other top answers included medical/dental, small retail/wholesale and personal services (barbers, cleaners, computer repair, etc.). This seems to be a good solution for the main concern of the area, lack of local job opportunities.

Another question of the survey addressed public services and infrastructure. This question asked respondents to place priorities on twelve areas of public service and infrastructure. The results of this question show that there are five clear priorities to the respondents in regards to public services and infrastructure. Those priorities are law enforcement, fire and rescue, public schools, public sewer and public water.

Expansion of town boundaries is a topic addressed by the survey. When asked, Should the Town of Port Royal expand its boundaries through annexation of surrounding County land, the overwhelming response was no (108 vs. 65 yes). In the same vein, when asked whether the town should have its own police force if boundaries were expanded, the answer was not as clear-cut. Those who answered YES totaled 92, while 77 chose no. The final annexation question asked whether the Town of Port Royal should have its own police substation (County provided) for the Port Royal Community if the town does not expand its boundaries. This also led to an overwhelming response of yes (146 vs. 43 no).

CONCLUSION

The Port Royal Community residents used this survey to express their desires for the future of their community. Obviously growth is going to occur in the fast-growing Fredericksburg region, but the residents are now hoping to organize that growth into something sustainable which will blend in to their small town community. Residential growth in planned communities with commercial growth that maintains a neighborhood feel is the type of growth the residents anticipate will enhance their community while allowing it to grow. A top priority of the residents, which is evident in their survey answers, is their desire to protect their small town atmosphere and the rural environment. Their choices for the future are quality of new development over the quantity of development that will quickly target their community.

Caroline County extends a gracious thank you to all who participated in the survey as well as the citizen representatives who helped to develop this survey. The information is a great help in planning for the future of the community and in the writing of the Port Royal Community Plan.