

MCOFuture.com

what does it mean to you?

Group Responses

Question 1 Do we need a full range of public services to have a strong community and economy?

- Important to have different people doing different things
- Depends on jurisdiction and individual needs
- Who is going to pay for them?
- Need to consolidate
- Question is broad
- Complex economic development comes first
- Quality of life is important
- Do what citizens need done, but how do you define that
- Based on current economic environment, provide basic services (water, roads, etc.)
- We need competitive advantage
- There are things that can be done by the private sector (education, etc.)
- Core list of things that need to get done; other things are nice but not as important
- Yes, quality of life in community
- Enhance community/draw new talent to the area
- All services go hand in hand with goals of local government – improve life, better economic condition for citizens, services
- Yes, add services
 - We need cross county public transit i.e. RTA/Greene County Line is a problem
 - We need connectivity – marketing and moving people to tourism sites
- Others cut parks and human services (we don't want to do that to our community)
- Keep services but for efficiencies we need to consolidate
- More services equals easier to justify taxes and quality of life
- Not all services should be publicly run and/or publicly funded
- How services are structured is the key
- Must determine what services are priorities in the community
- Must look at cost, regionalization, private/public partnerships and efficiencies
- Preparedness is important
- High quality services attract consumers will to pay for them and live here
- Prevent “brain drain”
- We need additional marketing for the arts
- We need more centralized administration for arts organizations
- Develop an oversight group for administrative functions

- Collaboration, not competition
- More mental health care (13 to 26 years old)
 - Twin Valley closed and created big issues for homeless, alcohol & drug dependency
- Disconnect between what you want versus cost
- Need to understand for the quality of community, what's needed is a healthy community
- Public health is the job of the private sector, not the government
- Why are there so many hospitals?

Question 2 How effective and efficient are our public services? How should the services be delivered? How should the services be paid for -- by local taxes, a broader tax base or some of each?

- Pay for by taxes
- What is the unit of measure?
- Enterprise funds
- Use taxes for services
- Property tax is not sustainable
- Question very broad
- Water and sewer consolidation
- Education – need to look at efficiency, too many school districts, consolidation
- Zoning – more regional base
- Public service evolving
- What ideas are out there; what are the options?
- What happens the city bleeds out. Value in what happens in the core
- Eliminate waste, redundancy, overlap
- Recyclables – rebates
- For the most part, services are delivered effectively, but many not effectively (For example: economic development entities)
- Taxes should be a shared aspect but should also be a use-based cost structure
- Some of the smaller communities seem to do better job than larger ones
- Broaden the tax base
- Look at the opportunity for more cooperation/partnerships to me more efficient
- We have city vs. city
- Lack of a “lean budget” mentality
- Regulations are a negative for businesses
- Some populations overlooked (seniors) in safety net – aging population in Montgomery County
- Consolidation could backfire if not addressed appropriately
- Income tax to pay – fairest type
- Fee based services

Answer A)

- Overall good – some areas better than others due to economics there are winners and losers i.e. Harrison Township vs. Washington Township

Answer B)

- For all efficiency and effectiveness
 - Partner and collaborate where each party brings something of value to the table
 - Need to review relationships and new realities as time passes

Answer C)

- Combination of taxes and fees
- Broad county tax makes sense for service if fear of loss of local control is overcome
- Quality being consistent also must happen
- School district combination
- Private sector is generally more efficient
- It all depends on what service is being provided as to its efficiency
- More than just a “dollars and cents” type of decision
- Some services that are public should remain in the public sector
- Customization based on community make-up
- Making sure performance management tools we are using are accurate and measure the outcomes we desire
- Prioritization is vital and jurisdictions that duplicate should be reviewed
- Great arts, but a negative perception of downtown affects their operation
- We need to fund individual/small groups to keep the creativity (emerging groups)
- Arts levy would generate dollars
- Arts as a tool for civic engagement
- Arts as tool for economic development
- Need a guiding vision/plan for arts/culture
- Consensus that level of taxes is fair to the level of services
- How do we know that the level of service we are receiving is good? Don’t know all of the services we receive
- So many units of government that need to work together
- 28 communities doing the same thing
- Why can’t we compete outward instead of looking inward at our own business?

Question 3 Which is more important: Keeping local control of services in your community and working for efficiency, or seeking to control the costs of administration and delivery via shared services and economies of scale?

- Both
 - Ex. Zoning, parks & rec – local
 - Sewer, water – shared

- More development – 28 entities competing for same group of people. No one wants to give up what they have.
- Infrastructure in poor condition
- Competing for limited dollars
- Bigger is not better
- Look at each individually
- Protective services (Safety) need to be consolidated
- Break down silos
- Communication about all issues, what is doing well and what isn't?
- Separate the school situation from the other government units
- Try and combine services across governmental platforms
- Depends on the service
- With schools and other aspects, you might want to have local control
- Competition and choices; private can work; regionalism can work so long as you have competition and choices
- Trust – if you have had past experiences that compromise the trust, it's tough to proceed
- Businesses moving; how do you show the integrity that supports doing this?
- Driver is going to be communities that do not have the money; makes sense to combine (For example: Human Services Levy)
- Maybe case by case; go to the smaller ones that can't sustain and look at mergers
- Larger doesn't always mean more efficient
- Some decisions are hard to reverse
- Too many community lines/divisions
- Police, fire for smaller neighboring communities regionally shared might be possible
- Planning/zoning should be more regional and county i.e. RTA coverage
- Younger group feels that services should be maintained if more taxes are required to maintain quality (school levy, services)
- Economics will determine in small communities at some point i.e. shared/regional services
- Tax abatement illegal everywhere – equal footing
- Community drives what they regionalize/consolidate by voting – county should provide support role
- Give MVRPC power to regionalize planning and development in the area
- It depends -> both/all parties must bring value to the table to have shared services. Sometimes local control makes more sense.
- Tools to measure cost effectiveness are needed
- Shared systems are likely better
- Streamlining service delivery generally leads to more efficiency
- Some services need to stay localized, but also, a hybrid approach may also be effective
- Start with “the end” in mind

- Define the quality of life we want for our citizens and then we can define/design service delivery systems to suit their needs
- “Quality life” = safety, public health, fire protection, education, etc.
- The government cannot always meet the expectations of everyone’s quality of life
- U.D. and Sinclair are “spot on” in terms of quality of life (especially for seniors)
- Hard to measure the outcomes when spent on operating cost funding
- County funding is not dependable and reliable due to budget cuts
- Levy for arts
- Depends on the service
- Analysis of the value and benefits by the community
- Up to each individual community to make the decision
- Population shifts can drive decisions

Question 4 Which is more important: Sustaining public services even if it requires paying more taxes, or holding down taxes even if it means reducing public services? Or is there another solution?

- Maintain public services to maintain quality of life – one model does not fit all
- Assess need of community to assure needs are met
- Keeping services important – what does the community want vs. elected officials?
- Looking at tax exemptions and how applied
- Fear of losing local control
- People want quick and responsive services
- More efficient transportation around town (RTA)
- Cannot cut more services – need to consolidate
- Depends on the service; if a bridge is going to fail, you need to fix it, but garbage collection might lend itself to other options
- Hold taxes or lower them to attract people; need inviting and friendly environment
- Got to remove fat
- Those areas, though, that have been more efficient have been punished
- You have to take a little bit of both
- Never a good idea to overlook efficiencies
- Magic word is compromise
- Consolidation can cause a negative ripple effect (job loss)
- Institute 922 (only necessary personnel)
- Lowest common denominator in the community you are willing to tolerate
- Sustain service -> pay more
- To accomplish this you must:
 - Tell the story – i.e. snow plowing, social services – people that are turned away – face
 - Become more aware of need to look for partnering, efficiencies, etc.
 - Not always in local control – state mandates
- Holding down taxes is more important than paying for all public services

- Competitive in a global market place
- Some services do not have a price tag, they are basic and necessary
- Cost-benefit analysis tools need to be developed to garner real data
- Public sector may never be more cost-effective than private sector
- Targeting your customer base is key and critical
- No responses – ran out of time
- Loss of services will negatively affect the region
- Accountability will help reduce the cost of services without the need to raise taxes

Question 5 What changes, if any, should be considered to sustain services and/or control taxes?

- Consolidation
- No tax increases
- Local land use
- Zoning not consistent in jurisdictions
- Economic development – attracting additional employers
- Listening to what citizens want
- Take cross section of citizens and elected officials to see what other communities are doing – tweak to fit our needs
- Consolidation
- Need to measure effectiveness of services
- Look at the service and efficiency
- Look at what is working
- Look at what other jurisdictions are doing to be more competitive
- Our churches can do more of service delivery
- Look at benefit packages; tremendously high cost
- We had the opportunity with Senate Bill 5
- Public employees are being provided with a broad brush
- Not everyone gets the sweetheart deals
- Continue to try to attract more people, businesses, improve infrastructure and in turn economics/tax base will improve
- Volunteer or barter services – pay the price if you don't pay the taxes
- Collaboration, partnership, etc.
- Who does the best job? – those with best practices should lead the region
- No responses – ran out of time
- Single payer healthcare plan would substantially save money by eliminating middleman and insurance costs