

Margaret Soper

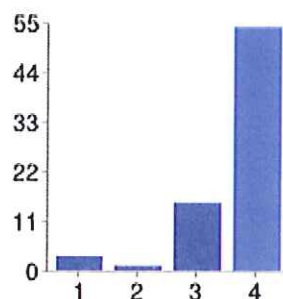
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73 responses

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Summary

1. Provide high speed internet connectivity everywhere in Carroll County without limitations.



1	3	4%
2	1	1%
3	15	21%
4	54	74%

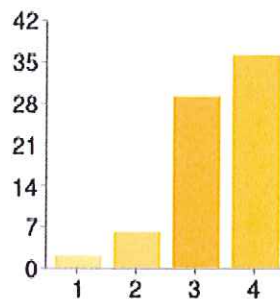
Additional comments

Key to business and attracting new business This is critical to the future of our county. Why? Most of us have Comcast Internet, phones, or hotspots. Unnecessary. The internet has become the way we communicate -- both for personal and business purposes. Slow speed is a deterrant to achieving this goal. This is critical on two levels for the Business Community. First, for the daily operations of a business (email servers, downloading, file sharing, etc). Second, without access to high-speed internet, residents will not stay in Carroll County and there won't be customers and/or employees for our businesses. Finally, on an educational level (K-12 and online universities), many assignments have links for videos, websites, interactive lessons, etc - the need for powerful internet is an absolute. In today's society being connected is now a necessity for all.

Cost is important. High Speed Internet service is available where I am now but the monthly rate is too high for my small business. This is such a critical issue in that it turns farms and outlying homes into centers of small, home based businesses without the need to improve the roads or water supply. This is such a critical issue in that it turns farms and outlying homes into centers of small, home based businesses without the need to improve the roads or water supply. While this is an important issue now, with the speed of change in technology and the increase in availability for wireless connectivity, it is difficult to say whether this is a concern for a 15 tp 20 year outlook. This is a necessary component to the economic health of our county. This is esstential. Without it, not business will relocate here or even stay here. Without business, we will continue to decline. The Carroll County Public Network has worked hard over the past several years to create an infrastructure to

interconnect all Government, Education (Public Schools and Community College), and Libraries entities. This network was built out in anticipation of allowing business to utilize the high speed fiber network. would be nice to be kept up to date on this subject matter by the Chamber. Can attract business without, and if it's not everywhere, we're isolating development opportunities outside of the main corridor. CCPN has created the infrastructure and ability to do this. Now it is up to local business to utilize and create the last mile connectivity. The best connectivity will allow businesses (especially the tech sector) in Carroll to compete. We must keep up with technology as best we can. I think it should be accessible to all of CC

2. Perform road improvements through key business corridors.



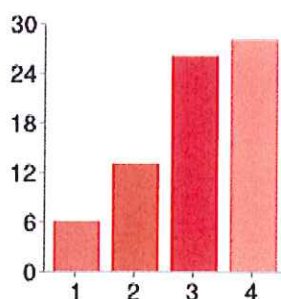
1	2	3%
2	6	8%
3	29	40%
4	36	49%

Additional comments

Route 32 from Howard County to Route 26 is critical. Need roads to move people and goods in and out of the county. Our network of 2 lane roads with few exceptions will not serve our county into the future. Road maintenance and widening where needed are critical. Our roads are fine. We don't have traffic jams and pot holes like NYC.

Infrastructure must be available and state of the art if we are to compete in the business world. It also enhances the quality of life that is so important to Carroll County residents and visitors. Carroll has been fairly well served by the state to date. Improvements to 140 in Westminster over the past few years were well designed and work well for this high volume area. Upgrades to Rt 91 were well done (though a bypass around Manchester would be welcome). However those people that commute to 795 hit regular backups daily, so this stretch could use attention. Westminster is very congested. Minimal requirement of government. always good to have roads maintained. Particularly MD 97 near airport and MD 32 near Sykesville and south into Baltimore/Howard County. With proper signage. Many times, I don't feel CC properly marks road/has flaggers when construction is underway.

3. Increase water & sewer infrastructure capacity to all areas.

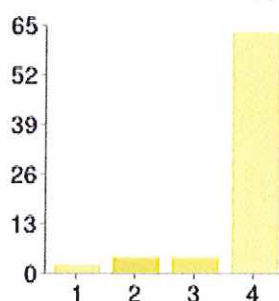


1	6	8%
2	13	18%
3	26	36%
4	28	38%

Additional comments

I don't see any problems from my line of sight. You are addressing issues that are the mainstay of our lives. There is not enough sewer-water support for continuing business development between Westminster and Finksburg. This natural expansion corridor is choked off by lack of utilities. They stop at the Wawa store and go no further. this should only be done if the tax base is supported by new incoming businesses. All areas zoned for commerical/industrial should be the main focus. Residential is important, but many homes are still supported by wells and septic. New home construction would follow, but take care of the business areas first.

4. Maintain strong traditional K-12 Public Educational System.



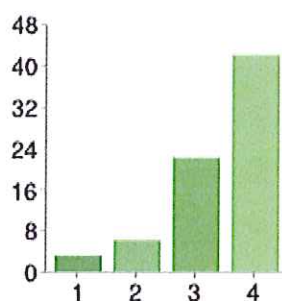
1	2	3%
2	4	5%
3	4	5%
4	63	86%

Additional comments

Schools are the most important thing for a successful community. Children are our most valuable resource - workforce and leaders of tomorrow. We need to stay competitive with the rest of the world. Education is top priority. Education is the backbone of our county. Education is top priority. I am horrified by the current commissioners hatred of our school system. Hope it can survive their term, and God forbid, their future terms. As our schools go, so goes the county. This is something the chamber MUST care about. Key deliverable! This is why young, educated taxpayers move here to raise families and start businesses. If you degrade ours educational system, the following will happen: 1. Students will not be adequately prepared for the future. 2. Higher tax bracket families will then move to Howard County 3. Younger families will continue seeking houses in the best school districts and select other counties. 4. A surplus of homes will be on the market, causing the

property values to fall. 5. Tax revenues will decrease due to wealthier families relocating to Howard County. And lower property assessed values will result in lower tax revenue. You must invest in our future -- our children. Education is the foundation for everything! Again, strong schools attract residents which equals customers and employees for our businesses. This is BY FAR the most important area to place the counties investment. People will FLOCK to a place that puts education first. Its a no brainer. The school budget process this year was an embarrassment. The commissioners need to recognize our K-12 education as a top priority and give due respect to a sound budget presentation, which I believe the school board made this year. Budget season is a high pressure time. So better communication between the school board and commissioner board in the off-season, between budget times, would benefit both. Basu says it best that strong public schools attract and retain businesses and residents. The importance of a strong education system cannot be understated. This has to be the primary focus for funding. We have already lost more ground than we can afford. Basu says it best that strong public schools attract and retain businesses and residents. We need to build on the great things that are already happening in the school system and ensure that students are graduating with college- and career-ready skills. Teachers need to be compensated at a rate that is commensurate/competitive with other local jurisdictions. Businesses must demand funding and support for high-quality public education in order to help maintain and grow a strong local workforce. Essential. I am concerned that such an obvious commitment to our students is not supported by all Commissioners. The minimum funding argument is a red herring for an obvious disdain for public education. Providing a skilled work force is key to attracting and retaining businesses. In my opinion one of the most crucial points to consider - a factor heavily weighed by new businesses, in consideration of their employees who will be living in the area, but also in consideration of their labor pool. Dr. Basu said in his presentation last year that our schools are a top selling point for CC - MD schools are top in the country and CC is #2 in the state is what he said - so funding our schools, attracting talented educators, supplying the technology needed to compete in a global market is CRUCIAL in sustaining growth in our community. Strong Public Education is the key to long-term economic success and is the centerpiece of a strong community. We need to pay professionals appropriately (competitively) to maintain excellence. The current Commissioners must realize that we do not live in our own little isolated world of the 19th century. I am unfamiliar with this Highest Priority

5. Provide a broader array of options for vocational & technical training.

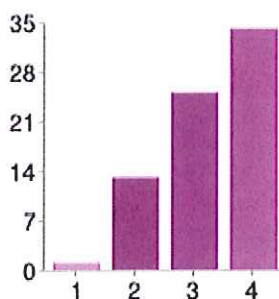


1	3	4%
2	6	8%
3	22	30%
4	42	58%

Additional comments

Workforce skills need to be varied not all work can be done behind a desk & computer. College is not for everyone however every student should graduate either bound for college or a technical field. Improvements are needed to our career-tech program, either in the form of a new building, or why not convert N. Carroll HS to new career-tech facility. A deep analysis needs to be performed to understand the labor market demands so we can ensure we are meeting those needs. Not everyone is "cut out" for traditional college. When we need a plumber or an electrician, we are not concerned with whether they attended college -- just whether they are trained in their profession. The community college has proven very adept at providing a broad array of vocational training. They move quickly to meet new needs and make the training affordable. Bravo. At the high school level there is steady improvement but it could be more aggressive. I think the county already does a great job with training between CCC and the Votech Center. Outstanding! This is extremely important - a shortage of skilled trade workers plagues business! It is great to see employers involved with training programs at both the Career and Tech Center and the community college. I hope more employers will invest their time and energy into supporting these programs that help develop the local workforce for jobs in our communities. bringing new businesses into the county with technology requiring advanced training should be tied to our education curriculum. This is important, but I also think it will happen naturally over time and evolution if we fund our schools properly, and if we have partnerships between our business and education arenas. I don't think it has to fall solely on the school system to provide this - the business "field" has the expertise to provide the technical training required for the local job market. It's a win-win on both sides. The need for specific skilled workers within the county and country continues to grow. Vocational and technical training, in partnership with local governments and unions, will be key to the employment future.

6. Encourage and support vibrant Main Streets throughout Carroll County.

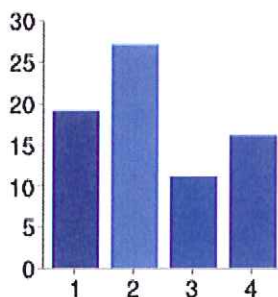


1	1	1%
2	13	18%
3	25	34%
4	34	47%

Additional comments

You are speaking to the issues of economic development and the revitalization of our community. Carroll towns are doing a good job of this. Keep up the good work. I would like to see much more support for businesses downtown (especially in Westminster) in terms of cleaning up the dilapidated structures that are not well kept and rented to people who aimlessly loiter and whose behavior can be off-putting to customers and business owners alike. There are so many home and business owners along Main Street in Westminster (both ends) that make significant investments in their properties and businesses to better serve their customers and to ensure they keep with the historical, quaint feel of downtown. I find it very frustrating that not every home owner is held to the same standards. We also need to evaluate how new and existing businesses are treated by the city when they propose changes and/or improvements are requested. We have something special going on here - supporting and developing this will make our communities even stronger. safety and facelifts in this area. Particularly outside of Westminster - make the other Main St. communities in the county strong. Not only does it add to "charm" which is attractive to people who consider moving to the area, but these are mostly small, locally owned businesses. In order for them to survive, there needs to be ample parking and easy access, strong marketing campaigns, and a variety of sizes, shapes and specialties. It can't all be small retail and restaurant space - bring in offices and businesses too and provide the infrastructure to support them, offer incentives to build or rehab on a Main St. The free market will take care of this. This is our livelihood and future of our children. This could bring revenue to CC! Look at Main St. Ellicott City! I am not sure what you mean by encourage and support vibrant Main Streets. Do you mean support businesses on these streets? If so, they have to have better choices for families to be attracted to them.

7. Develop Countywide Public Transportation System to connect workplace locations and shopping.

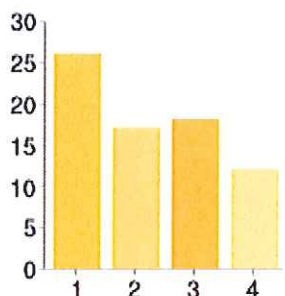


1	19	26%
2	27	37%
3	11	15%
4	16	22%

Additional comments

Without the proper public transportation, you are going to force people to rely on automobiles, and if they don't or can't drive, or have no other options, you severely limit their quality of life. As long as it is only within the county and there are limitations on the access from other areas that could bring in a criminal element. Public transportation is the beginning of the end for any community with a culture of self-reliance. See Woodlawn and Owings Mills if you'd like some case studies!! Carroll is so spread out with such opportunity for parking that public transit is not essential, and would only encourage the kind of people that depend on it. These are not the kind of people who help communities like ours grow. not necessary. This is critical. There are people in our community who could fill jobs but cannot get to them. Access to jobs helps break the cycle of poverty that exists in pockets in this county. Most people in Carroll County have cars and drive - don't see where this is that important. Do not want Carroll County to turn into Owings Mills. I think transportation for the college students in the area is important, as well as for lower income people who have difficulty getting to appointments. This is a hot topic bc people fear that public transportation will bring crime, lower the socio-economic status of the county, etc. But public transportation will certainly help address the traffic and road concerns, environmental concerns and connect different generations that don't drive to our larger areas. Honestly, just put some sidewalks and bike lanes throughout the county and that would be HUGE improvement. There are people who would consider using these options, but it's deadly without some protection. You can't walk anywhere on a sidewalk, even in Westminster, unless you are along Main St./downtown.

Extend Carroll County Regional Airport runway.

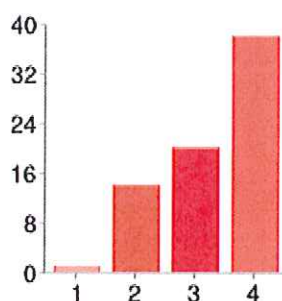


1	26	36%
2	17	23%
3	18	25%
4	12	16%

Additional comments

Do not want airport expanded. It was a mistake for the Commissioners to vote against the runway extension. Now the County will have to pay the full cost of repaving instead of the FAA. Not too bright a decision. It seems logical that without the enhanced infrastructure, you limit the airport's ability to attract more business. However, i am not well versed in this issue, and therefore cannot offer any additional comments. I honestly do not know anything about this factor, I picked 1 because there is no option to show I am unfamiliar with this area. The airport and business park are gems. I applaud sensible expansion of both. They provide jobs. They provide corporate taxes, which are a net gain as compared to residential taxes. Full steam ahead. This is to attract Larger Companies to the area. Strongly support. don't know enough about how this would impact or enable growth Extending the runway would make Carroll County too commercial and too busy. Carroll County should stay rural.

9. Assure consistent and predictable permitting process for startup or expanding businesses.



1	1	1%
2	14	19%
3	20	27%
4	38	52%

Additional comments

If you want to attract new business make to process clear and easy to understand so that things progress smoothly. Need an arbitrator to respond to building issues that do not seem reasonable and reflect the inspector's interpretation of the codes. If you want businesses to come and stay in Carroll County, you must have a user-friendly system. Efficient, understandable processes are always a positive step! Objection: In my view the wording here is a bit like asking kids if they like candy. Not the best of the otherwise good questions in this survey. This is crucial. This process is almost always cumbersome, lengthy and imposes unnecessary requirements on business owners who are investing in buildings and employing people. It also feels as if the city/county (its staff) does not support or really see the relevance of small business in the financial viability of Carroll. What's most unfortunate here is that they often seem more like adversaries charged with running interference than seeing business owners as partners in improving county living. Very critical and this can be achieved much sooner than 2030. G Very critical and this can be achieved much sooner than 2030. Maryland has been a more difficult state to get approvals in than in Pennsylvania. If you want to promote businesses in the state, it would

be to your benefit to make the process of starting one easier. county inspectors should be working with small businesses instead of leaving an adversarial feeling. Maybe an annual invitation to come tour the county building and meet people etc. This is an ongoing problem and should have been taken care of long ago. I hear it is very difficult and a discouraging process, but I don't know much about it. Consistent and predictable are fair - so it can still be stringent and meet high standards, as long as it is consistent and predictable. Startup businesses should be encouraged! Too many big buildings standing empty as it is.

10. Please comment on any other areas critical to the Business Community in Carroll County that might not be listed above.

There should be no fees assessed to dump trash at the Northern Landfill. This would encourage people to dump in the landfill, instead of at the side of the road. It should be made cost effective to recycle trash, especially corrugated cartons. Now, tons of corrugated end up in the dumpsters and landfill. Maintain an effective law enforcement to keep crime at a minimum that protects both the residential and business communities. All aspects listed above are extremely important, particularly education, technology and vocational training. A Business will always look to see if the public school system is of high quality before opening their business here. The development of Carroll County is being left up to the County Government and there does not appear to be any opportunity for community input DURING the process, only after a plan has been FULLY developed. These commissioners are destroying our county. No business will come here other than Walmart and Taco Bell until we get some moderate leadership. The word is out that we are crazy! We need better candidates to run, and the voters need to take their responsibility seriously. I believe i've covered everything in my additional comments within questions 1 to 9. The only other thing that i would like to advocate for is a better understanding of the funding sources that we have been doing more with less for so long that it has become impossible to continue at the current pace. We can hardly keep up with the current structure, no less contemplate on how we can improve and expand. Please put yourselves in our shoes and make an investment with the surplus funds. Stop squeezing the little guy. Thank you. Peggy, Please add the "8" in the eight question. The survey probably takes a lot less than 10 minutes to complete, Maybe change 10 minutes to a few minutes in the first paragraph. It looks good. Regards, Lou Toth Invest in the schools and people will WANT to bring their businesses here so that their children and their employees children can get a phenomenal education. It happened in Howard. It happend in Northern Va. and it is why people have moved OUT of Baltimore City. We need to learn from municipalities where businesses growth has happened. If we build the education system. They will come. Guaranteed. Flexibility of zoning for business use needs to be addressed. The high cost of business property is due to a false scarcity, based on limited zoning for business use. This means that large well-heeled outsiders (box stores and chains) have the edge over local businesses who may otherwise build business here. You guys are brilliant:) You

guys are brilliant:) Allowing business to utilize adequate signage. Not impeding the entrances, exits and visibility of businesses from roadways. Reduction of speeds to 40 mph or below on roadways where the occurrence of heavy entering and exiting of the travel lanes. Particularly, route 140 in Finksburg between route 91 and the Baltimore County line

Use existing business spaces before building new buildings. Who are the up and coming future leaders in our community and how have they been involved with this project? Will there be opportunities for other stakeholders to be involved in shaping this vision? Stop paying unemployment compensation. To many are working the system collecting benefits and working for under table cash. This deprives the government of tax revenues while costing them money. County should be more open to doing business with local small business - particularly if it makes financial, safe and streamlines business process.

Partnerships with higher education is also critical - I am consistently impressed with Carroll Comm. College and their involvement in the business community - and would love to see more of that with McDaniel too. With our proximity to DC and Baltimore - what other types of businesses can be attracted besides manufacturing? Research and Development, particularly in Healthcare? Many of the big medical, science and pharma companies are in Montgomery County - not a huge jump to Carroll County/Mt. Airy area. Need decent jobs that pay a decent/liveable wage...NOT more service-industry jobs... Don't make Carroll County too much business. Yes there is a need for employment; however, leave it pretty much the way it is. I grew up in Manchester on a dairy farm that, unfortunately, got developed - it takes away from what this county is supposed to be - agricultural. I'm sure plenty of folks will say we need more business and more building but that will just take away from the beauty of what we have! We need more chain stores (Target, Lowes, Kohl's, etc.), chain restaurants for families (TGIFriday's, Panara, Chick Fil'A, Olive Garden, etc.), nice grocery stores and warehouses (Giant, Wegmans, BJ's Warehouse, Costco, etc.) and family activities (Sports Complex with batting cages, and Indoor Sports, Miniature Golf, Movies, etc.) so we can keep our business in Mt. Airy and not have to drive to Frederick, Westminster, Columbia, etc. Those empty stores on Main Street and where SuperFresh and Blockbusters were look horrible staying vacant as long as they have. If you have to knock the whole shopping center down to get what you want and let Hair Cattery, the one of many nail places and Chinese Food and Liquor stores relocate so be it. It looks very "ghetto" and gross looking and that is what people see when they get off the exit to come to Mount Airy. Also, 84 lumber can go. I don't know anyone who goes there. We need a Lowe's or Home Depot where families can go and purchase fix-it and remodeling stuff themselves. Construction has either stopped or definitely lowered in the past 10 years and lumber is not needed. Besides Lowe's and Home Depot can supply those items too.

Number of daily responses

