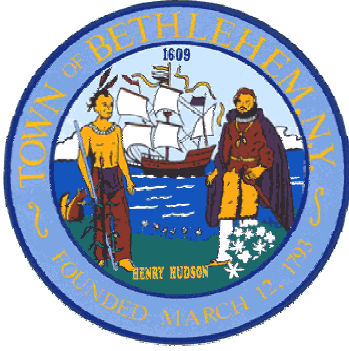


TOWN OF BETHLEHEM - COMMUNITY SURVEY 2004

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Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. After completion, please return the survey in the envelope provided. Thank you for your participation.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Please read each question carefully. Some questions require you to choose only one answer but others allow for two or more answers. **IMPORTANT!** If you mark more answers than allowed, none of your answers to that question will be counted.

Please use a #2 pencil or a BLUE or BLACK pen. We are having answers tallied using computer software.

Please completely fill in marks like this: ● NOT like this: ∅ or ⊗

**A. OVERALL IMPRESSIONS**

1. How important are the following factors in your decision to live in the Town of Bethlehem?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not At All Important
a. Born or raised in Bethlehem	11.2%	8.8%	11.8%	68.3%
b. Quality Schools	71.4%	19.1%	4.2%	5.3%
c. Housing selection / quality	61.2%	32.8%	4.3%	1.6%
d. Affordable housing	46.1%	35.5%	13.3%	5.1%
e. Feeling of community / know neighbors	42.4%	40.5%	14.4%	2.7%
f. Desire to live near region's cities (Albany, Schenectady, Troy)	41.7%	37.9%	14.0%	6.3%
g. Good job opportunities in Town	10.5%	19.5%	30.3%	39.7%
h. Access to parks and recreation opportunities	32.2%	47.4%	15.7%	4.7%
i. Hudson River / Catskills/ Adirondacks / other natural features in the area	27.9%	45.7%	19.8%	6.6%
j. Local shops and services	27.8%	50.2%	17.0%	5.0%
k. Reasonable taxes	59.3%	28.3%	8.4%	4.0%
l. Family / Friends	39.6%	30.3%	17.0%	13.0%
m. Safe community (in terms of crime)	79.9%	16.9%	1.7%	1.8%
n. Proximity to job	42.3%	38.1%	10.4%	9.2%
o. Unable to move or relocate	7.7%	12.8%	19.5%	59.9%
p. Other important factor: _____				

2. Taking all things into consideration, how do you rate the overall quality of life in the Town of Bethlehem?

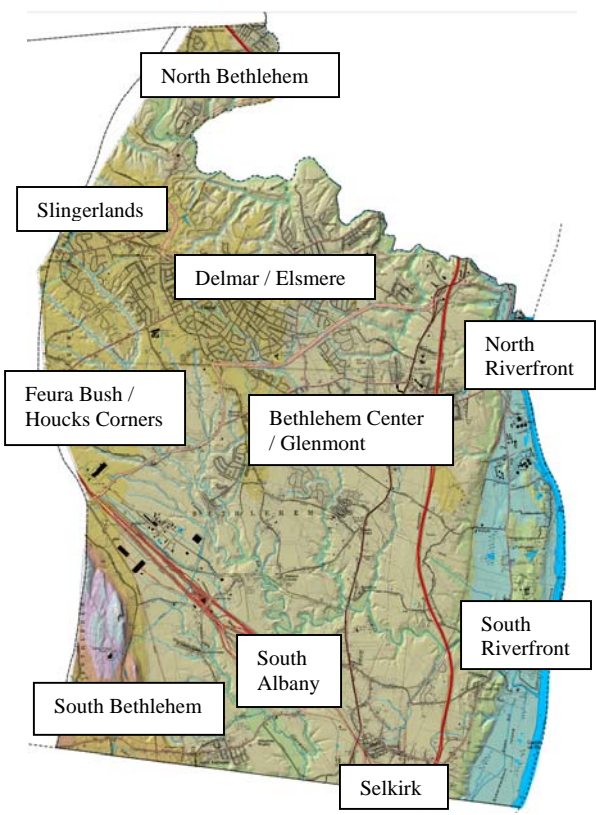
- a. **70.0%** Better in Bethlehem than in other places
- b. **27.1%** About the same in Bethlehem as in other places
- c. **1.1%** Worse in Bethlehem than in other places
- d. **1.9%** no opinion

3. In your opinion, how is the overall quality of life in the Town of Bethlehem changing?

- a. **22.0%** it is improving
- b. **30.3%** it is staying about the same
- c. **43.3%** it is getting worse
- d. **4.4%** no opinion

3a. **Why?** \_\_\_\_\_

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4. For the purposes of this survey, in which “neighborhood” within the Town of Bethlehem do you live? (see map at left)
  - a. 3.5% North Bethlehem
  - b. 16.7% Slingerlands
  - c. 37.8% Delmar / Elsmere
  - d. 28.3% Bethlehem Center / Glenmont
  - e. 1.8% Feura Bush / Houcks Corners
  - f. 0.7% North Riverfront
  - g. 1.8% South Riverfront
  - h. 0.5% South Albany
  - i. 8.1% Selkirk
  - j. 0.8% South Bethlehem
  
5. Which of the following best describes the type of environment where you live?
  - a. 39.6% Traditional / older neighborhood
  - b. 45.7% Residential subdivision
  - c. 8.2% Small / rural hamlet
  - d. 6.5% Rural area
  
6. Overall, how would you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?
 

A. 60.6% Excellent B. 35.3% Good C. 3.7% Fair D. 0.4% Poor

7. Neighborhoods can have many qualities that make them attractive and enjoyable places to live. The following is a list of common neighborhood qualities. Please rate your neighborhood on each of the following categories. **Please mark (●) one response for each statement.**

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Important
Where I live feels like a neighborhood	49.2%	42.0%	5.2%	3.6%
Housing costs are reasonable	12.5%	68.8%	17.0%	1.8%
Convenience of neighborhood businesses	30.2%	53.7%	10.2%	5.9%
Roads are clean and in good condition	55.2%	42.2%	2.7%	0.0%
Roads are safe and used appropriately	32.6%	50.0%	17.4%	0.0%
Conveniently located to schools	43.3%	41.3%	3.4%	12.0%
Sidewalk system is safe and useful	12.3%	27.4%	44.1%	16.2%
Trails are safe and useful	10.9%	38.3%	18.0%	32.8%
Parks are easily accessible	32.9%	53.9%	5.3%	7.9%
Key intersection lighting is good	20.0%	57.2%	20.3%	2.4%
Protected from adjoining commercial area	26.3%	56.3%	12.6%	4.8%
Other: _____				

8. Where applicable, how would you rate the community’s performance in providing the following facilities and services?

Facility/Service	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Do Not Know	N/A
a. Road Maintenance	57.2%	38.6%	3.6%	0.4%	0.1%
b. Parks and Recreation	56.4%	36.5%	1.5%	4.4%	1.2%
c. Police Services	50.3%	40.4%	4.2%	5.0%	0.1%
d. Fire Services	56.7%	31.5%	1.1%	10.5%	0.3%

Facility/Service	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Do Not Know	N/A
e. Emergency Services	52.0%	29.5%	0.4%	17.4%	0.8%
f. Water Service	38.9%	49.5%	6.2%	1.3%	4.0%
g. Sewer Service	39.3%	45.9%	3.5%	3.7%	7.6%
h. Code Enforcement	17.1%	43.3%	8.0%	28.3%	3.3%
i. Development Approval Process	6.6%	26.7%	29.7%	33.6%	3.4%
j. Controlling spending and taxes	4.2%	50.0%	33.7%	11.4%	0.7%
k. Community relations/ public information	15.2%	67.2%	10.5%	5.9%	1.2%
l. Transfer station / recycling	21.3%	54.4%	6.1%	15.9%	2.3%
m. Senior Services	22.7%	25.4%	1.2%	39.5%	11.2%
n. Youth Services	14.3%	32.2%	8.6%	35.9%	9.1%
o. Other: _____					

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**B. ISSUES, PRIORITIES, AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

9. Based on current trends (without making changes), what will be the most important problems facing the Town of Bethlehem over the next 10 years? **Mark (●) only five**

- a. 33.1% Availability of affordable housing options
- b. 15.5% Availability of a variety of housing options
- c. 29.6% Loss of farmland and agriculture
- d. 51.7% Loss of open land / undeveloped land (not farmland)
- e. 7.9% Adequacy of parks and recreation facilities
- f. 39.0% Adequacy of infrastructure (water and sewer)
- g. 38.2% Maintaining highest quality schools
- h. 11.5% Loss of freedoms and property rights
- i. 28.9% Crime and public safety
- j. 15.4% Damage to natural resources
- k. 80.6% Level of traffic and congestion
- l. 64.9% Rate of residential growth
- m. 28.4% Rate of commercial growth
- n. 18.6% Appearance of commercial development
- o. 21.0% Availability of places to walk and bike safely
- p. 6.4% Other

10. Parks: What is the one thing that would make the biggest improvement in Bethlehem's Town Parks (Elm Avenue Park, Henry Hudson Park, North Bethlehem Park, South Bethlehem Park, Selkirk Park, and Bethlehem Memorial Firefighters Park)? **Mark (●) the one response that best describes your opinion**

- a. 9.6% The Town's parks need to be closer to neighborhoods or easier to get to from neighborhoods
- b. 10.3% The equipment and design of parks needs to be changed to meet changing recreational needs
- c. 5.8% The Town has too few parks
- d. 3.4% The existing parks need to be better maintained
- e. 1.2% The Town has too many parks
- f. 62.6% Parks are fine
- g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of the following improvements or attractions are needed in any of the Town's parks? **Mark (●) your top five**

- a. 13.2% new playground equipment
- b. 7.1% fields for soccer, football, or lacrosse
- c. 6.2% baseball/softball fields
- d. 40.6% restrooms
- e. 20.3% benches
- f. 23.5% lights
- g. 34.5% bike trails
- h. 42.5% walking trails
- i. 36.9% equestrian trails
- j. 15.7% skateboard park
- k. 0% indoor facilities
- l. 0% volleyball courts
- m. 17.1% basketball court
- n. 16.5% tennis courts
- o. 20.5% fishing platform
- p. 13.8% picnicking
- q. 0% cross country skiing
- r. 0% skating
- s. 21.0% no improvements are needed
- t. 19% other

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12. Your Neighborhood: The **one** thing that would make the biggest improvement in the area where I reside is:
- a. **4.3%** Get property owners to take better care of their houses/property
  - b. **17.5%** Develop sidewalks
  - c. **23.1%** Prevent loss of open land / undeveloped land and rural character
  - d. **5.2%** Buffer residential areas from commercial/industrial development
  - e. **2.9%** Allow small, neighborhood retail and service establishments
  - f. **1.7%** Provide public sewer
  - g. **1.5%** Provide public water
  - h. **17.1%** Limit traffic and/or slow traffic
  - i. **21.1%** My neighborhood is fine
  - j. **5.5%** Other: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Bethlehem's Overall Image: The **one** best way to improve the Town of Bethlehem's image would be to:
- a. **6.0%** Relax development standards so that each property owner can express his/her individual preferences
  - b. **28.1%** Set design standards to encourage a more consistent, inviting look for new development (including signs)
  - c. **21.4%** Beautify public spaces
  - d. **32.6%** The overall image of the Town of Bethlehem is fine
  - e. **11.8%** Other: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. **Please mark (●) one response for each statement.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Better landscaping in commercial areas is needed to improve the appearance of the Town.	21.3%	46.5%	17.7%	1.4%	13.2%
b. Standards for commercial signs are needed to improve the appearance of the Town's commercial areas.	21.3%	47.8%	16.3%	1.6%	12.9%
c. There is a good mix of commercial, institutional, government and office development in the Town.	4.0%	53.7%	25.1%	6.3%	10.9%
d. Sidewalks and/or trails for bicycle and pedestrian travel are needed to connect the area where I live to commercial areas.	28.6%	30.8%	22.2%	6.5%	11.9%
e. Buffers between residential areas and Commercial Zones are needed.	22.8%	45.2%	14.9%	1.5%	15.5%
f. The Town needs to regulate development so that it results in a Town with a distinctive sense of place / identity.	52.2%	34.6%	5.9%	1.9%	5.4%
g. Reduction in noise from areas adjacent to residential areas is needed.	21.3%	36.3%	14.6%	1.2%	26.6%
h. Reduction in light from areas adjacent to residential areas is needed.	14.6%	29.2%	21.6%	2.7%	31.8%

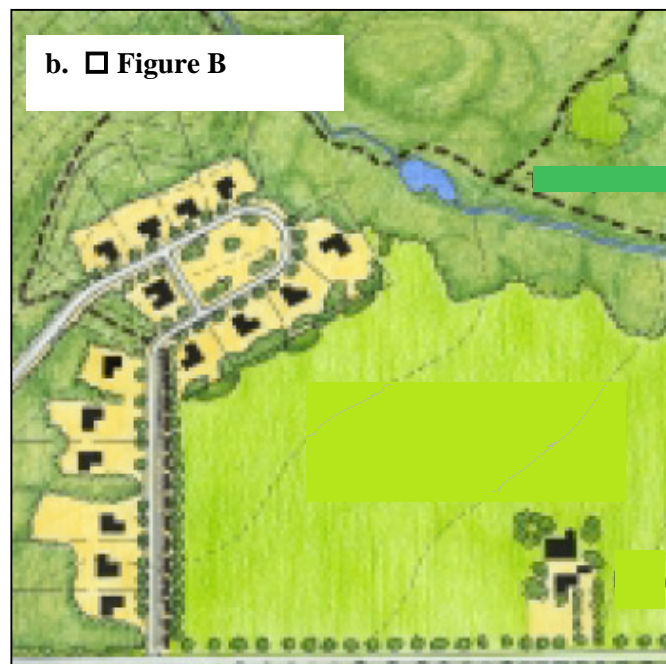
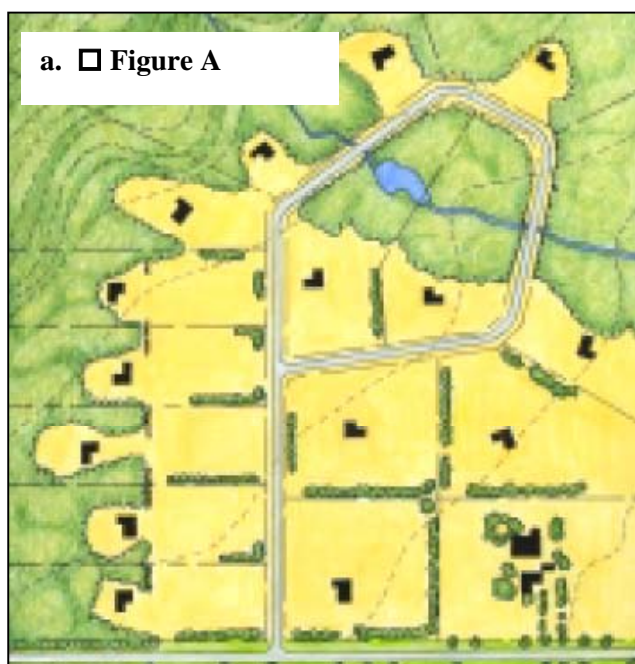
15. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following policy options. **Please mark (●) one response for each statement.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
The Town of Bethlehem needs to change zoning regulations to protect open land within new developments	46.4%	35.9%	9.3%	1.2%	7.2%
The Town should buy land or purchase conservation easements to preserve open land / undeveloped land	40.5%	32.4%	16.3%	3.8%	6.9%
The Town should do nothing; the market and/or property owners will determine the best use of land.	4.1%	10.7%	37.3%	42.1%	5.6%

16. What means should the Town of Bethlehem pursue when considering financing the conservation of open land / undeveloped land? **Mark (●) all that apply**
- 17.0%** Public funds should not be expended for this purpose
  - 35.2%** Utilize general Town budget (with Town Board approval) or borrow money (with Voter approval) to fund the purchase of land or easements
  - 67.5%** Apply for state and federal grants which are competitively awarded
  - 49.7%** Lower tax assessments on open land so property owners can afford to keep private undeveloped property
17. Implementing some aspects of the comprehensive plan will likely cost the Town additional money. For which of the following items might you be willing to pay an increase in town taxes of say \$25 to \$50 per \$100,000 of assessed value? **Mark (●) all that apply**
- 51.2%** Conservation of open land / undeveloped land or environmentally sensitive land
  - 47.4%** Construction of new sidewalks to improve residents' ability to walk comfortably and safely to nearby destinations (i.e., parks, schools, stores)
  - 40.9%** Construction of trails for recreation and to improve residents' ability to walk or bike comfortably and safely to nearby destinations (i.e., parks, schools, stores)
  - 22.6%** Parkland acquisition
  - 22.6%** Park improvements
  - 22.0%** Public funds should not be expended for any of these purposes
18. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. **Please mark (●) one response for each statement.**

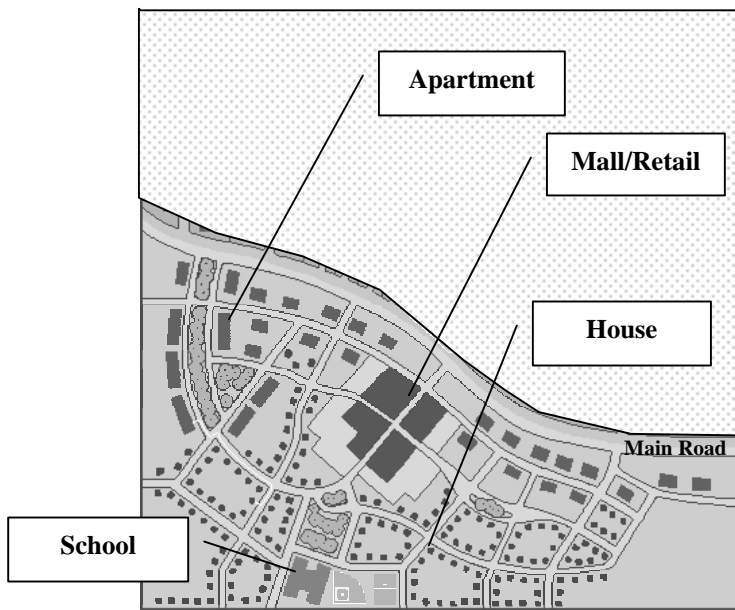
<b><u>THE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM SHOULD:</u></b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
a. Build additional roads to provide quick and easy movement of automobiles through the town	14.6%	20.1%	42.1%	17.1%	6.1%
b. Improve existing roads to ease movement of automobiles throughout the town	24.5%	58.3%	9.6%	3.1%	4.5%
c. Pursue expansion of clean, affordable, and efficient public transportation	18.3%	40.4%	20.4%	6.3%	14.6%
d. Create better public access to the Hudson River	14.8%	34.6%	19.6%	5.0%	26.0%
e. Create programs and incentives for the reuse of old commercial buildings and sites	34.1%	52.4%	5.3%	1.6%	6.5%
f. Pursue strategies for creating quality ("living wage") jobs in the town	18.1%	49.3%	11.0%	4.6%	17.0%
g. Utilize town funds / local incentives to promote economic development	9.1%	40.8%	29.7%	9.4%	11.0%
h. Establish initiatives to assist the development and growth of local businesses	13.8%	55.9%	17.1%	5.6%	7.7%
i. Take a lead in encouraging regional cooperation to manage growth and development	23.9%	57.4%	7.6%	2.3%	8.8%
j. Create programs and incentives for rehabilitating historic homes and buildings	22.3%	47.2%	16.1%	2.7%	11.7%
k. Encourage the reuse of vacant buildings and redevelopment of underutilized sites	32.9%	57.3%	3.4%	1.5%	4.9%
l. Expand programs that promote affordable home-ownership opportunities	14.7%	43.1%	20.7%	7.5%	14.0%
m. Encourage more single family residential development	6.5%	23.2%	34.2%	26.9%	9.2%

<b>THE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM SHOULD:</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
n. Encourage a diversity of housing types (for singles, families, "empty nesters", seniors, etc.)	26.1% <b>O</b>	52.3%	11.7%	4.1%	5.8%
o. Promote development of compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods	15.2%	43.7%	20.8%	6.3%	13.9%
p. Work to lower overall (town, county, and school combined) property taxes	51.8%	38.2%	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%
q. Promote local agriculture and farm viability	22.1%	54.5%	8.9%	1.8%	12.8%
r. Develop design standards or guidelines to improve the appearance and function of commercial areas	28.9%	55.3%	7.5%	1.5%	6.8%
s. Allow individual property owners to have more rights in determining appropriate use of their land (reduce land use restrictions)	9.9%	25.4%	39.9%	14.4%	10.4%
t. Protect environmental resources (steep slopes, wetlands, streams, mature forests, etc....)	41.2%	51.2%	3.4%	0.5%	3.7%
u. Encourage the expansion of activities for youth	24.0%	52.3%	8.9%	1.0%	13.9%
v. Establish a public service council to mobilize the efforts of the many community service organizations	12.7%	44.1%	14.8%	3.3%	25.1%
Other:					

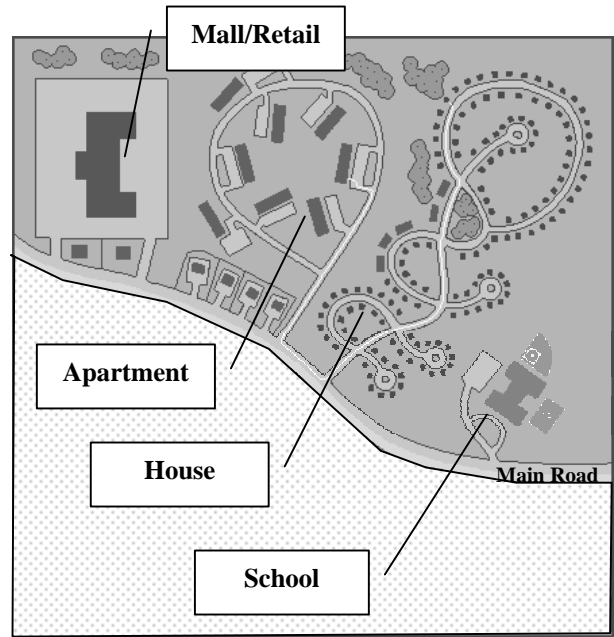


19. **Please review the two images above.** Given that both subdivisions will result in the same number of homes (16), and no further subdivision of these lands will be possible in the future, which subdivision layout seems more appropriate for rural areas of the Town of Bethlehem?

- a. **30.9%** Figure A
- b. **60.1%** Figure B
- c. **9.1%** No opinion



**Neighborhood Layout A**



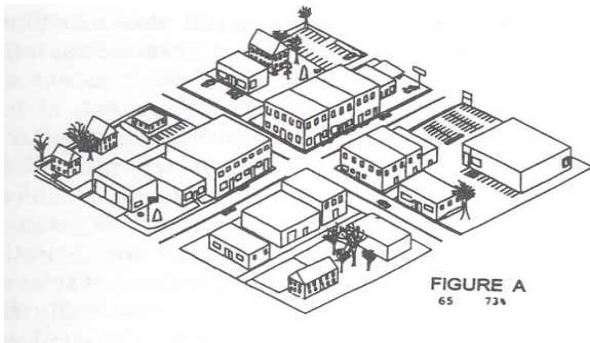
**Neighborhood Layout B**

20. Please review the image above. The image on the left (A) mixes land uses and utilizes an interconnected network of streets. The image on the right (B) separates land uses and features a hierarchical street system with limited connections between different areas. Which neighborhood layout seems more appropriate for developed areas of the Town of Bethlehem?

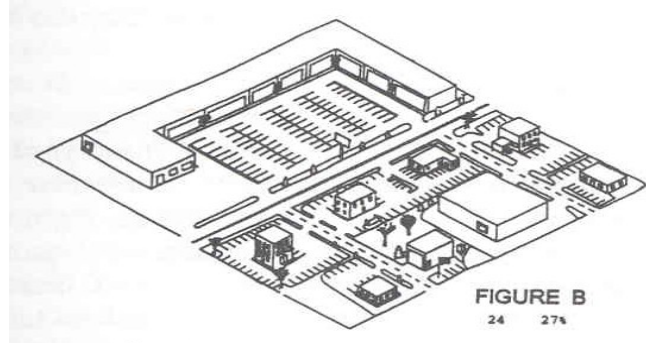
- a. **40.9%** Neighborhood Layout A
- b. **46.1%** Neighborhood Layout B
- c. **13.0%** Not sure

21. In thinking about the future of commercial districts in the Town of Bethlehem, strategies for development or redevelopment could take two general design forms. Which sketch (below) seems more appropriate to you?

a. **59.7%** Figure A



b. **40.3%** Figure B



Illustrations from a visual preference survey conducted by the Livingston County (Michigan) Planning Department. From Randall Arendt's, *Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character*. APA Planners Press. 1994.

**D. RESPONDENT PROFILE**

22. What is your age?

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. <b>1.8%</b> 18-24  | d. <b>19.8%</b> 55-64 |
| b. <b>23.6%</b> 25-44 | e. <b>13.5%</b> 65-74 |
| c. <b>30.1%</b> 45-54 | f. <b>11.2%</b> 75 +  |

23. What is your gender?

- a. **53.6%** Male    b. **46.4%** Female

24. How many people are in your household?

- |                  |                  |                 |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 0: <b>0.30%</b>  | 3: <b>16.79%</b> | 6: <b>1.95%</b> |
| 1: <b>13.94%</b> | 4: <b>18.89%</b> | 7: <b>0%</b>    |
| 2: <b>38.68%</b> | 5: <b>7.65%</b>  | 8: <b>0.60%</b> |

25. How many of the people in your household are in each of the following age categories?

(Percent of survey respondents who have one or more individuals in their household within this age range)

- |                           |                            |                            |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Age 0-5: <b>11.3%</b>  | c. Age 18-24: <b>14.6%</b> | e. Age 45-54: <b>33.6%</b> | g. Age 65-74: <b>13.6%</b> |
| b. Age 6-17: <b>28.2%</b> | d. Age 25-44: <b>27.8%</b> | f. Age 55-64: <b>22.1%</b> | h. Age 75 + : <b>11.1%</b> |

26. How long have you lived in the Town of Bethlehem? (Years)

- |                     |                     |                    |                    |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 0-10: <b>30.3%</b>  | 20-30: <b>16.5%</b> | 40-50: <b>7.2%</b> | 60-70: <b>2.1%</b> | 80-90: <b>0.5%</b>  |
| 10-20: <b>23.1%</b> | 30-40: <b>12.0%</b> | 50-60: <b>6.4%</b> | 70-80: <b>1.4%</b> | 90-100: <b>0.3%</b> |

27. Your current work status is:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| a. <b>12.0%</b> Work in the Town of Bethlehem (not at home) | g. <b>4.5%</b> Work at home         |
| b. <b>29.5%</b> Work in the City of Albany                  | h. <b>0.8%</b> Currently unemployed |
| c. <b>12.4%</b> Work elsewhere in Albany County             | i. <b>1.1%</b> Student              |
| d. <b>4.3%</b> Work in Rensselaer County                    | j. <b>26.5%</b> Retired             |
| e. <b>2.7%</b> Work in Schenectady County                   | k. <b>1.1%</b> Disabled             |
| f. <b>0.3%</b> Work in Saratoga County                      | l. <b>4.7%</b> Other                |

28. Do you...

- a. **96.5%** Own your residence?    b. **1.4%** Rent your residence?    c. **2.2%** Live with parents or relatives?

29. How many vehicles are associated with your household?

- |                  |                  |                 |                 |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 0: <b>0.30%</b>  | 2: <b>56.89%</b> | 4: <b>4.00%</b> | 6: <b>0.44%</b> |
| 1: <b>17.63%</b> | 3: <b>18.07%</b> | 5: <b>1.93%</b> |                 |

30. What is your approximate Household Income?

- |                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. <b>1.73%</b> less than \$19,999 | e. <b>18.27%</b> 50,000-59,000 |
| b. <b>3.45%</b> 20,000-29,999      | f. <b>15.83%</b> 60,000-79,999 |
| c. <b>5.04%</b> 30,000-39,999      | g. <b>40.29%</b> 80,000-99,999 |
| d. <b>15.40%</b> 40,000-49,999     | h. <b>0%</b> 100,000 or more   |

Do you have any additional thoughts, comments or suggestions to share with the Bethlehem Planning Advisory Committee (BPAC)?

**THANK YOU.**

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IN THE ATTACHED POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE.**