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**The MPO Wants to Know: National Community Planning Month**

In an effort to better understand public views, the MPO has launched a series of online surveys about various transportation-related topics. The survey results will help the MPO develop plans and projects for the future. The responses also will be shared with appropriate roundtables and policymakers. For a list of available surveys, please visit the MPO website at <http://www.dmampo.org/user/survey.html>. Below are the results of a survey related to National Community Planning Month, which annually occurs in October.

*Question 1. How do you feel that community planning most greatly impacts your community?*

Yes .....82.1%  
 No.....17.9%

*Question 2. Planners utilize numerous tools to bring communities' plans to fruition. From the list below, please check all that you are familiar with.*

Comprehensive plan.....100.0%  
 Design guidelines.....72.7%  
 Geographic information systems .....81.8%  
 Zoning.....81.8%

*Question 3. Planning considers: (Please check all that apply)*

The past.....90.9%  
 The present.....90.9%  
 The future.....90.9%

*Question 4. Have you attended planning commission meetings in your community?*

Yes .....81.8%  
 No.....18.2%

*Question 5. Have you participated in any forums, visioning sessions, or growth discussions for your community?*

Yes .....81.8%  
No.....18.2%

*Question 6. If you answered yes to question 4 or question 5, did you feel that your involvement impacted the choices made in determining the future of your community?*

Yes .....80.0%  
No.....20.0%

*Question 7. If you answered no to question 6, please explain.*

Respondents noted that “developers and politicians had already decided what they were going to do, and, when academics were involved, they failed to look at the whole community.” Additionally, much depends on land ownership; planning commissions generally are reactionary.

One individual noted that “our community is working on a comprehensive plan update. Citizen input is critical to the process. If the planners and Planning and Zoning Commission do not listen to the issues generated by the citizens, they are missing out on a critical and valuable component to the planning process.”

*Question 8. What do you feel is the largest planning concern facing your community and/or the greater Des Moines metropolitan area?*

Respondents noted several areas of concern for the greater Des Moines metropolitan area. These include transportation demands; urban sprawl; floodplain development; lack of population to sustain any density; “general unfounded mistrust of government”; parochial interests that drive competition within the metropolitan area; and quality, affordable housing. Other respondents feel that it is necessary to continue regional planning and collaborative efforts and that planners must envision a metropolitan area that is larger than it presently is.