Task Force Members

Township Residents:
- Jennifer Aaron - co chair
- Faris Jebara
- Monique Loh - co chair
- Madhavi Puppala
- Suzanne Tufariello- secretary

Township Committee and Staff:
- Mayor Carol Bianchi
- Committee woman Joan Harris
- Town Administrator Pat Monaco
- Municipal Clerk Rhonda Pisano
- IT Director Christopher Kyriacou
- Parks & Rec. Director Jennifer Gander
Research Timeline

- **Weekly Meetings** began February 4
- Public Input/Brainstorming sessions held on March 21, March 24
- Senior Citizen Sessions at Ridge Oak (April 3) and Fellowship Village (April 4)
- Survey design and development April/May
- Survey went live on May 15
- Official Roll Out of survey on Charter Day, May 18
- Robust Public Relations effort — see report
Survey Design

To ensure that only Bernards Township Residents completed the survey and to confirm eligibility, respondents were asked to provide a physical home address.

Two surveys per household were allowed.

Questionnaire designed that would take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete.

Eighteen questions solicited input for critical areas.

Each question featured several response options, depending on the type of question.

Response options ranged from 5 point scales of agreement and satisfaction, to a variety of ranking and identifiers that allowed respondents to provide their answers (See Appendix for the Survey addendum).
Respondent Demographics

Of the nearly 27,000 Bernards Township residents:

745 completed the entire survey

139 partially completed the survey

**The following analysis should be considered DIRECTIONAL in nature. The survey sample is not large enough to be statistically significant.**
Respondent Demographics

**Age distribution**
- Under 22 years old: 1%
- 23-30 years old: 2%
- Older than 65 years: 18%
- 31-45 years old: 22%
- 46-65 years old: 57%

**Length of Residency**
- Less than 2 years: 8%
- 2-5 years: 15%
- 5-10 years: 9%
- 11-24 years: 42%
- More than 25 years: 25%
Respondent Demographics

Ages of children living in Household

- 76 (5 Years Old or Younger)
- 178 (6-12 Years Old)
- 214 (13-18 Years Old)
- 399 (No children under the age of 19, 54%)
Bernards Strong

A profound sense of community & belonging abounds in Basking Ridge

- 78% feel a sense of community
- 64% are extremely/somewhat involved in local goings on

Safety & well-being are shared sentiments among most residents

- 96% feel safe in town
- 98% feel safe in their neighborhood
- 98% feel safe in their home
Bernards Strong

Top three reasons you chose to move to Bernards Township

- School System: 63%
- Quality of Life: 58%
- Safe Environment: 46%
- Close to Family members: 24%
- Community Aesthetics & Character: 22%
- Open Space and resources: 20%
- Commutability to New York City: 16%
- Downtown Basking Ridge's Charm: 13%
- A sense of community: 11%
- Parks and recreation: 10%
- Activities and programs available for youth: 6%
- Activities and programs available for seniors: 1%
- Retail and restaurant offerings: 1%
Spoiler Alert: Taxes

If You Plan to Leave the Township, What is your Primary Reason?

- Property Taxes: 38%
- None of the Above: 23%
- Children Growing Up and Moving Out of the House: 21%
- State Taxes: 10%
- Employment Opportunities: 5%
- NJ Weather: 3%
Spoiler Alert: Taxes

75% agree!!

Taxes in Bernards Township make it difficult to afford living here
Priorities - Top 5

Five Top Priorities for Bernards Township

- Keeping taxes stable
- Maintaining road conditions throughout the township
- Maintaining Bernards Township's aesthetics & historic charm
- Maintaining Bernards Township's Parks & Rec. facilities
- Creating a more vibrant downtown with more retail options
2019 Tax allocation

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP TAX LEVY BY CATEGORY 2019**

- **School**, 65.7%
- **County**, 17.9%
- **Township**, 14.5%
- **Municipal Library**, 1.7%
Nuts & Bolts: Infrastructure and Facilities

Clearly, less is more

- 85% say we should preserve more currently undeveloped land
- 79% feel we need to preserve historic buildings and properties
Nuts & Bolts: Infrastructure and Facilities

- Retain businesses in retail centers (83%)
- Purchase more land for open space (75%)
- Provide more housing options for seniors (54%)
- Expand retail offerings (47%)
- Provide more housing options for young professionals (47%)
- Provide more housing options for individuals with special needs (46%)
Nuts & Bolts: Infrastructure and Facilities

Just the Right Amount

- Golf Courses
- Tennis Courts
- Playgrounds
- Grass Athletic Fields
- Turf Athletic fields
- Dog Parks
- Places to Skate & skateboard
- Access to large indoor...
Nuts & Bolts: Infrastructure and Facilities

Give ‘em more, perhaps?

There are too few:

- Sidewalks (54%)
- Modes of public transportation (54%)
- Biking trails (52%)
- Hiking trails (51%)
Nuts & Bolts: Infrastructure and Facilities

Congestion all around town

- Traffic congestion around schools (66%)
- Speeding is a concern in my neighborhood (58%)
- Traffic congestion is a concern throughout Bernards Township (41%)
- Bernards Township needs more public transportation to get around town (36%)
On the Service Side

- POLICE DEPT - 81% satisfaction
- PUBLIC LIBRARY - 76% satisfaction
- FIRE DEPT - 75% satisfaction
- EMS - 67% satisfaction

- In favor of enacting term limits for locally-elected officials (76%)
- Would like to see Bernards Township become more ‘green’ and environmentally-friendly (62%)
- There’s a need for an active welcome program for new residents (48%)
## On the Service Side

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<th>Level of satisfaction with:</th>
<th>Total Pop.</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of handicapped parking spots</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town recreation senior programs</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction with:</th>
<th>Total Pop.</th>
<th>HH w/Kids &lt;18</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town recreation youth programs</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education about drug &amp; alcohol abuse</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>After-school programs</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education about vaping</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Down to Business

Retail offerings

- A clear majority -- 81% -- try to shop and eat locally
- When asked to share their thoughts on the availability of a wide variety of Bernards offerings, residents claim there are too few of the following:
  - Local farm markets (58%)
  - Restaurants (52%)
  - Shops (50%)
Down to Business

Parking availability

Parking is easy in and around:

- Dewy Meadows – 79%
- Lyons Mall – 79%
- The Hills Highland Village – 61%
- Basking Ridge town center – 55% (only 39% of those age 65+)
- Marketplace – 37%
- Liberty Corner – 34%
- Riverwalk – 29%
In Closing

Although the Vision 2020 survey is directional in nature:

- There are no surprises, herein -- and that's good news!
- The majority of residents are content with and feel safe in Bernards Township
- Stabilizing taxes should clearly be a goal
- Continuing to drive resident involvement in schools, community and political affairs should continue to be a goal as well

THANK YOU !!