

A Comparison of Local Concerns in West Virginia Communities: 1996 and 2000

By

Jennifer Teagarden
West Virginia University

Abstract: Having knowledge about the local needs of West Virginia communities and understanding those localities' specific needs change over time enables local and state government leaders as well as other agencies to focus on pressing issues throughout the state to foster growth and promote development. A survey consisting of eight different parts designed to gain knowledge about localities technological advancement, training needs, and specific local concerns ranging from governmental administration to education was distributed to 694 local government leaders in 2000. Responses to the surveys were compared to responses received from a similar survey distributed in 1996 to help assess the change in local concerns over a four-year time span.

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Introduction

West Virginia communities encompass a diverse range of places, from urbanized cities to mountainous, rural towns. Each community determines its own local needs, depending on its location and the resources available. Additionally these needs can change over time. Local governments have knowledge about what services their communities demand. They attempt to stimulate growth, foster development, and meet the needs of their citizens. Local leaders must continually reassess their localities' needs to evaluate the effectiveness of or need for improvements. Understanding that a community's specific needs differ over time, and knowing which needs change, enables local government officials to achieve goals and promote growth in their communities. Recording and comparing changes in these communities will help address these needs and ensure improvements.

Local communities throughout the state seek economic development. However, many local needs differ from county to county and region to region, ranging from problems of dilapidated housing to education needs. Understanding the needs of local governments allows for improvements within communities. Determining these local needs provides a complete overview for local officials. By reviewing local government needs and comparing them with previously stated needs, state and local governments can ensure that communities in West Virginia grow and prosper.

Background Literature

An examination of needs paints a clear picture of the direction a community takes. Local government plays a vital role in a community's growth. Many problems affecting community improvements exist at local levels. Obtaining funds for a community's

various needs remains difficult. For example, state government imposes severe fiscal restraints on counties, making creativity difficult in solving the needs of local communities (Brisbin et al., 1996). Local governments rely heavily on state funding assistance. They work with limited resources and must make best use of each one. They must maintain existing programs and continue searching for ways to promote improvements within the community. Counties and municipalities must have balanced working budgets, with little to no room for disasters. They may not assess local income tax or sales tax but may collect business and occupation taxes. These taxes accounted for 40 percent of revenue throughout West Virginia cities in 1996 (Brisbin et. al, 1996).

Brisbin et al. (1996) also reported that nearly all expenses in counties having fewer than 10,000 residents went toward salaries, supplies, and office expenses for elected officials and the maintenance of the courthouse and jail. In counties with 10,000 to 50,000 residents, 75 percent of expenses went toward elected officials. However, in counties exceeding 50,000 residents, expenditures fell across a much broader range. Local officials must maintain an awareness of such expenses when attempting to meet the needs of their citizens.

Local government officials must develop efficient, economic, and cost-effective programs. By evaluating program effectiveness through changing needs, officials can ensure proper use of funds. Assessing local level needs is important because of community and regional differences throughout the state. One locality's needs may differ from that of a community in another part of the state.

A comparison of local needs in the past and present is essential in maintenance of quality of living. Local governments must ensure that their community will continue to

grow, prosper, and offer the best resources available to their residents. A locality's economic conditions, infrastructure, and social conditions impact quality of life. By evaluating localities' needs, and the changes that occur in them, we can better understand the direction each community must take to reach or maintain a high quality of living.

The diversity of concerns and needs of West Virginia's communities remains as diverse as the state's landscape. For example, communities in Jefferson County recently became concerned with property taxes on undeveloped land. Across the state in Kanawha County, local communities continue to push for better emergency systems such as 911 (*Charleston Gazette*, 1999). Local and state government officials must understand the changing needs of their communities. They face a wide range of challenges in their effort to adequately provide services, promote development, and meet the needs of their citizens.

Little published, up-to-date information exists about the needs of local West Virginia communities. Prior to a 1997 study, the most recent information about local community needs in West Virginia dated back to the 1970s. Relying on information from a quarter century ago will not help a community improve today. Local government officials must have current data to allow for development throughout the state.

Dougherty and Plein (1997) conducted a survey of 1,803 local officials in 1996. They asked officials to rank 164 items independently based on importance of each item within their community. The study reported that economic development issues topped the list of local government concerns in 1996. Recruitment and retention of manufacturing industry and retail business ranked as the most important objectives for many public officials. They desired bringing in high paying, stable jobs to increase

quality of life. These jobs also promote growth within the community. Mere survival of a locality often requires the recruitment of new manufacturing and retail businesses.

Reassessing the needs of these communities will show if local governments have taken steps to meet these needs.

Other important issues reported in the study included social conditions, environment and infrastructure, and governance issues (Dougherty and Plein, 1997). These issues varied regionally. Notable variations occurred within Planning and Development Council Regions. While most regions' local government officials emphasized economic development needs such as recruitment of new retail business and manufacturing industries, one region's local officials were mainly concerned with abandoned and dilapidated housing while the highest concern of local officials in another region was juvenile delinquency, illustrating the diversity of regional concerns.

Surveying local government officials is essential to assessing the current needs of local communities. Comparing previously stated locality needs with current ones will show if improvements occurred. If West Virginia communities wish to continue developing, they must reexamine local needs to push local and state governments toward improvements in their localities.

Methodology

Understanding and evaluating needs of local communities requires each locality's cooperation. This research examines needs on a regional as well as community level in West Virginia. It strives to reassess local needs in West Virginia communities, compare these current needs with previously measured needs, and compare the measured needs at the regional level.

Information on local needs was obtained through a modified version of the survey distributed to local government officials by Dougherty and Plein (1997). Local government officials know the needs of their communities, and will best evaluate these local needs. By surveying various officials, researchers will draw a more complete picture of local needs.

A total of 694 surveys were distributed. Every mayor of a city or a town in West Virginia received a survey. City and town managers and administrators, county commissioners, county administrators, county executive directors, and a sampling of city council members also received a survey. City council members for Class I, II, and III cities (municipalities with populations greater than 2,000) were selected at random from the 1999-2000 West Virginia Municipal League Directory. The number of city council members that represented each locality varied between 50 and 60 percent, dependant on the number of city council members in each locality. In municipalities with less than 2,000 people, designated as towns, no council member received a survey. This sampling frame is a modification of the 1996 sampling frame which included all members of city council, the mayor, town manager, sheriff, county commissioners and directors of the 11 Regional Planning and Development Councils (PDC).

The survey consisted of eight parts designed to gain information about and measure local needs of a community. Part One consisted of 11 general questions about the official and his/her locality. Part Two asked about information technology use for operational purposes in the locality's government offices through five multi-step questions. These sections are designed to gain information about a locality and it's technological advancement.

Part Three had 11 multi-step questions pertaining to training preferences of the individual government official, including different types of training styles (i.e., classroom interaction or internet learning) and times of the year that work best or should be avoided for training sessions. Part Four discussed specific training needs. Seven main topics were addressed in which local government officials were asked to rate the need of each training need on a three-point Likert scale ranging from great need (1) to no need (3). Officials were also asked if they or other officials from their locality would be willing to participate in each specific training session. These sections are designed to gain information about training needs around the state. The responses to these sections will enable professionals to provide specific training needs that will allow the community's government to run more smoothly.

Part Five addressed the local needs of the community. The survey questions address 11 main topics:

- 1) Governmental Administration
- 2) Financial Management
- 3) Public Finance
- 4) Economic Development
- 5) Planning and Land Use
- 6) Infrastructure and Environmental Management
- 7) Transportation
- 8) Housing
- 9) Public Health and Social Services
- 10) Public Safety
- 11) Education

Each main topic broke down into a total of 145 sub-topics, ranging from five to 24 items per section. Public officials ranked each item on a Likert scale of 0 to 4.

Ranking an issue "0" indicates a non-pressing issue for the community, while a rank of

“4” indicates a highly pressing issue. Much of this section is based upon the 1996 survey conducted by Dougherty and Plein.

Part Six asked officials if their community had accomplished any community strategic visioning about where the community wanted to be in the next three to five years. Part Seven was an open-ended question asking officials to share any success stories involving resolving any of the issues discussed in the survey. Part Eight asked for any other remarks, issues, or concerns not covered in the survey. This survey wanted to understand all local needs, not just the ones raised in the survey. By asking for strategic visioning, success stories, and other comments, researchers can be sure that each local official’s opinion on all issues pertaining to their locality are addressed. Surveys were mailed on March 31, 2000. Data coding and tabulation began upon receipt of the surveys and a second mailing occurred on April 28, 2000. The data received from the surveys was entered into a database designed by researchers according to individual local officials’ responses. Data was examined two ways: overall statewide individual responses and by the PDC region of the respondent.

The focus of this research report is the responses to Part Five of the survey. The following data analysis methods are applied to this section of the survey. To determine importance of each issue statewide, the average of all responses was calculated. Items that did not receive a ranking were not counted in the overall average of responses. Individual items were then ranked according to the mean response. Means were calculated. Where multiple items are found with the same response mean, the items are listed according to their placement in the survey. The overall mean of each item was

compared to the mean of the corresponding item found in 1996 to assess any significant changes.

The data was divided into the 11 subject categories within the survey to assess the statewide response to each category. Understanding which types are receiving the highest level of concern will help local officials and other professionals focus on specific categories and the items within those categories. The average of each section was found in the same manner as the statewide data.

Additionally the compiled data was grouped by PDC region, combining the two smallest, into 10 regions for analysis:

- 1) New River Valley (PDC 1)
- 2) Western Valley (PDC 2)
- 3) Capital Valley (PDC 3)
- 4) Greenbrier Region (PDC 4)
- 5) Ohio Valley (PDC 5)
- 6) North Central (PDC 6)
- 7) Central Highlands (PDC 7)
- 8) Potomac Highlands (PDC 8)
- 9) Eastern Panhandle (PDC 9)
- 10) Northern Panhandle (PDCs 10 and 11)

The average for each region was calculated in the same manner as the statewide data.

The top 10 issues in each region found through these means were compared to those found in 1996 to assess any large-scale changes within each region.

Expectations

West Virginia is one of the last states to diversify economically. Its years of dependency on extractive industries such as coal mining and logging as well as heavy manufacturing of metals and chemicals have denied the state the chance to achieve economic development to the standards of most of the United States. With current trends in economic development across the nation, it is predicted that economic development

concerns will continue to comprise the highest percentage of the top 10 concerns of local government officials. Because most of West Virginia is comprised of towns and unincorporated places, annexation and planning and land use are also predicted to have high mean scores. West Virginia has an adequate social services department and those issues are not predicted to rank above moderately pressing, nor are transportation issues. West Virginia, although relatively poor and economically underdeveloped, is thought to have a sufficient infrastructure. Finally, with the current rise in school violence and the push for all American children to be safe in and out of school, education and public safety concerns are predicted to rank higher in 2000 than they were in 1996.

Results

The overall mailing had a 35.4 percent response rate (246 responses), as of September 1, 2000. The results of this study found that recruitment of new manufacturing industry continues to be the top concern among West Virginia local officials, having an average response of 3.07. This differed slightly from the average response in 1996 of 3.15. Overall, economic development concerns continued to hold the highest concern among local officials. Education and housing issues remained important overall issues, but public health and social services issues and planning and land use issues became more important. Meanwhile, public finance and infrastructure and environmental management matters became less of a concern (see Appendix A for overall statewide responses by category).

The top four concerns—recruitment of new manufacturing industry (3.07), funding sources for development (3.04), recruitment of new retail business (3.02), and retaining and expanding existing businesses (3.01)—remained the same as the results in

1996. Funding sources for development became a slightly higher concern than recruitment of new retail business as found in 1996, and only recruitment of new manufacturing industry and recruitment of new retail businesses received slightly lower scores than in the previous study. Abandoned and dilapidated housing (2.79) moved up in the ranking to fifth, and received a slightly higher average response than in 1996 (2.74).

The five issues completing the top 10 in 2000 differed from the results found by Dougherty and Plein (1997) though:

- recreational opportunities (2.66),
- local government's role in economic development (2.66),
- industrial park development (2.62),
- funds for extracurricular activities (2.69), and
- dealing with lack of growth (2.57).

Meanwhile, three issues fell from the top 10 in 1996, but still remained among the top 20 concerns in 2000:

- workforce preparation (15th),
- adequate sewer systems (16th), and
- lack of parental involvement in education (19th).

Domestic violence became a more important issue, the average score increasing to 2.53 from 2.47 in 1996. This may be due to the increase awareness of domestic violence by law enforcement agencies and policy makers statewide as well as a decrease in the emphasis placed on other issues by decision-makers. Among 14 of the top 20 issues represented on both the 1996 survey and the current survey, seven issues increased in importance (ranging between 0.05 and 0.46 increase) and seven issues decreased in importance (ranging between 0.01 and 0.32 decrease).

Issues becoming more important to West Virginia officials included:

- investment in upgrading property,
- technological resources for students,
- absentee landlords,
- lack of provided insurance coverage,
- neighborhood community centers, and
- annexation related issues.

The rise of these concerns emphasizes the turning focus of local government officials to more economic development, education, and social services (see Appendix B for a complete list of overall ranking of all issues examined).

Nine issues fell from the top 20 concerns of local officials in 2000:

- need for greater flexibility from the state (down to 43rd – previously ranked 10th),
- revenues adequate for expenditure levels needed (down to 42nd – previously ranked 8th),
- federal government intergovernmental grant revenues,
- street maintenance,
- student drug use,
- juvenile delinquency,
- sidewalk maintenance,
- repeat criminal offenders, and
- treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.

These issues may have become less important due to the focusing of localities on infrastructure and public safety concerns identified in the 1996 survey.

The most notable differences in local concerns occurred at the regional level. In every region, new issues became the most important to local officials in that region (see Appendix C for a complete list of the top 10 issues by region). Recruitment of new retail businesses, recruitment of new manufacturing industry, funding sources for development, and juvenile delinquency gave way in some places to greater flexibility from the state, abandoned and dilapidated housing, retaining and expanding existing businesses, and dealing with lack of growth. In southern West Virginia, social service issues such as day

care facilities and extracurricular activities were ranked among local officials' top 10 concerns. Conversely, northern West Virginia local government officials ranked obtaining grant revenues (both federal and state) among their top concerns and local government leaders in the eastern part of the state ranked education issues among their top 10 concerns. However, economic development issues remained high, comprising up to eight of the top 10 concerns at the PDC region level.

Discussion

The most important issues to local public officials are those dealing with economic development. Local government officials desire bringing in high-paying, stable manufacturing and retail jobs to their communities. The recruitment of industry and retail allows for jobs for the citizens and potential for other businesses to be created to service these industries, thus creating even more jobs. By bringing in these businesses, local governments can increase services provided to the community through the increase revenue base.

One of the most important needs to help recruit new manufacturing industry and retail businesses is money to help pay for the effort. The need for funding sources for development is great throughout West Virginia. It is important for state officials to recognize the need for funding to allow improvements throughout the state. Local governments also need to search for ways to obtain these monies (i.e., through private companies, federal agencies, and grants and loans).

Local communities need to look beyond recruitment for a rise in economic development. Retaining and expanding existing businesses is an important way to continue economic growth. Keeping existing businesses is less costly than attracting new

businesses. Communities should focus on keeping businesses in their communities and allowing these businesses to grow to create more jobs and a larger revenue base.

Overall, six of the top 10 issues facing West Virginia local government leaders involved economic development. It is the most important concern for the survival of the state. Yet the issues that were top concerns in 1996 remained top concerns in 2000. The growth and development of West Virginia depends on economic development. Local government leaders need to focus their attention and funds on bringing in new industry and retail businesses and expanding existing businesses if West Virginia wishes to reach development levels comparable to the rest of the United States.

Not only does West Virginia need to continue to focus on economic development, but local government officials rank education issues as important concerns for the state as well. Local officials recognize that graduates from high school and college are leaving the state at high rates. Children are not being adequately prepared for college and/or the workforce. Parents are not getting involved in their children's education. Resources are not available to kids in school or after school. These individual issues have become more of a concern in the last four years. Local communities need to focus some of their attention on the future of the state –students. By recognizing that education is an issue in the communities, local government officials have taken the first important step toward increasing educational involvement and preparation. However, education has remained the second highest priority in the state over four years. The local leaders need to look within their own community to help provide for the students.

Local communities have also made improvements over four years. Infrastructure and environmental management issues are not as pressing as previously indicated in

1996. This indicates some growth and/or renewal within communities. By beginning at the base level of the community and focusing on issues such as street maintenance, recycling issues, water and air pollution, and space needs, communities have begun the process of growth and development. Accomplishing these local level needs allows local government officials to focus on the greater perspective – economic development. It also attracts businesses and industry to the community.

Although statewide economic concerns continued to be the top concerns for local officials, different areas of the state have already begun to address these needs. This can be seen in the drop of the amount of economic development concerns in some of the PDC Regions. In the New River Valley Region (PDC 1), while economic development remain top concerns, the lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage and the lack of provided insurance coverage became top 10 concerns for local officials in this region. These issues were not among the top 10 concerns in this region in 1996. In the Western Valley Region (PDC 2), local officials ranked economic development concerns highest in 2000. These issues, such as retaining and expanding existing businesses and mainstreet, downtown, and neighborhood revitalization surpass educational concerns ranked high in 1996. Local officials in this region do not rank any educational concern among their top 10 concerns in 2000.

In the Capital Valley Region (PDC 3), annexation and housing issues take top priority for government officials, as compared to public safety issues in 1996. Communities in this region seem to have addressed public safety issues so that none appear among the top 10 concerns. Local officials in the Greenbrier Region (PDC 4) continues to focus on economic development, but also emphasize concerns for abandoned

and dilapidated housing, recreational opportunities, and community centers. Tourism and development issues ranked high in 1996 have given way to revitalization efforts to help promote tourism also.

The Ohio Valley Region (PDC 5) local officials focus on housing and economic development issues. These issues have taken a higher priority than infrastructure issues. Communities in the Ohio Valley Region have addressed such issues as adequate sewer and wastewater treatment facilities, ranked among the top 10 concerns in 1996, so that no infrastructure issues are top concerns for local officials in 2000. This region places its top concern in dealing with the lack of growth, emphasizing the need for new jobs and industry throughout the region.

North Central West Virginia (PDC 6) is most concerned with economic development. These issues comprised eight of the top 10 issues for local government officials. Housing issues that concerned local officials in 1996 do not appear in the top 10 concerns of local officials in 2000. Domestic violence also ranks among the top 10 concerns for government officials in this region. Only in this region and the Eastern Panhandle is domestic violence seen as such an important issue. In the Central Highlands Region (PDC 7), local officials still rank economic development matters as their top concerns. However, concerns over education issues remain high with local officials. These officials recognize a great need for more involvement in education to better prepare students for higher education. However, these issues were also top concerns in 1996, indicating that more attention needs to be given to these areas.

Government officials in the Potomac Highlands Region (PDC 8) continue to express concerns in education, with school consolidation issues ranking second and

college and workforce preparation ranking fourth and 10th respectively. The Eastern Panhandle (PDC 9) local officials focus most on greater flexibility from the state. The officials also rank public safety issues such as domestic violence and education issues such as student dropouts as among their top 10 concerns, also seen in 1996. In the Northern Panhandle (PDCs 10 and 11) economic development concerns continue to rank as the top concerns among local officials. However, federal and state intergovernmental grant revenues and the lack of flexibility and options for raising revenue are also top concerns of the local officials in this region.

Overall, the state of West Virginia needs to focus on economic development for any hope of growth and development. Individual regions and communities have distinct concerns that need to be addressed for the advancement of the communities. West Virginia officials must recognize the needs of each local community, separate regions, and overall statewide needs to understand what the state needs to develop.

Conclusion

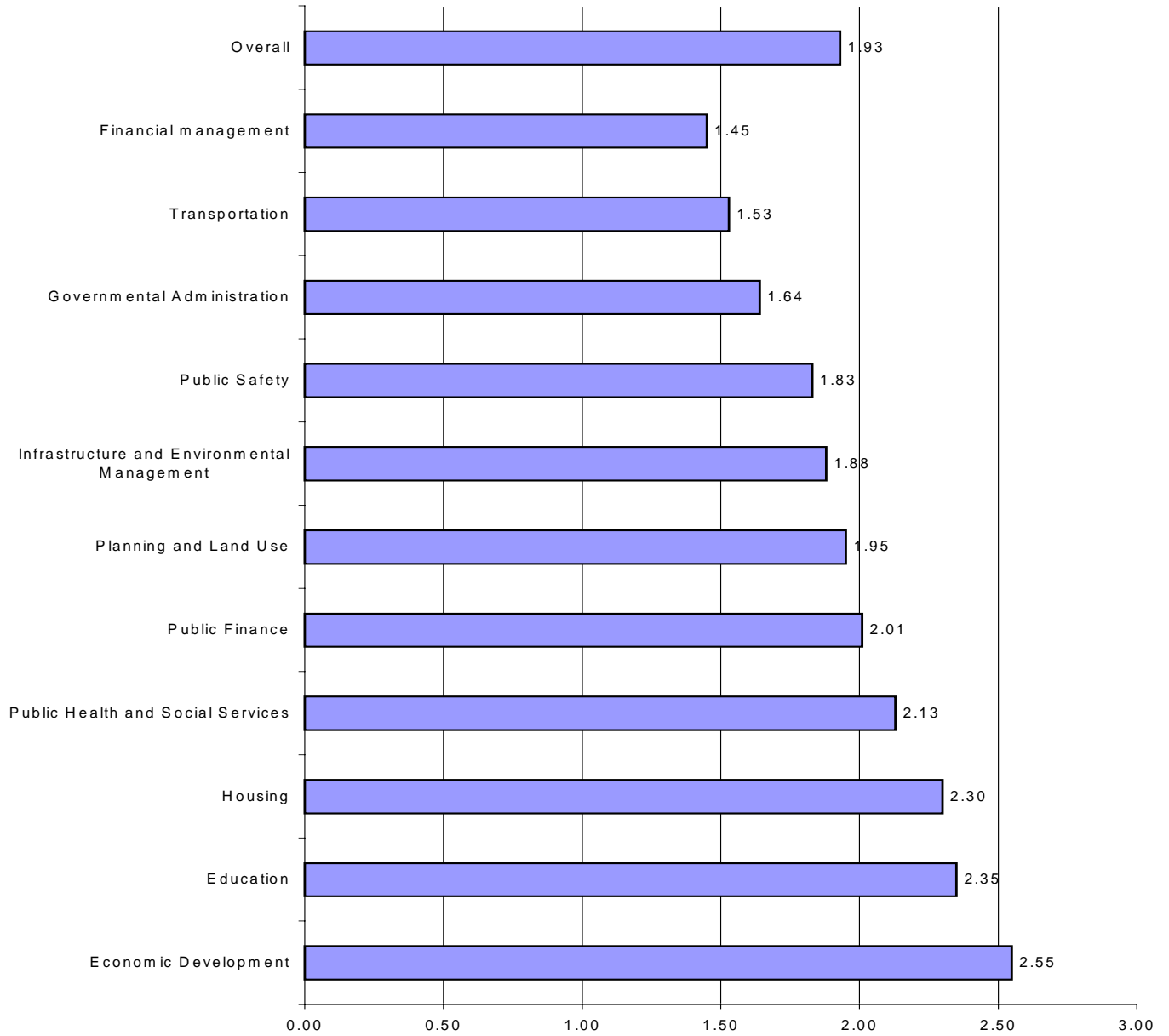
Improving a community requires understanding its needs. Due to lack of current information on the needs of West Virginia communities, localities may find it hard to improve. Often large scale needs (such as state level needs) overshadow local needs or local officials discuss needs internally. Local government officials need to constantly review their locality's needs and make other communities, the state government, and other agencies aware of these needs in order to promote growth. Through this research, local officials reexamine their needs.

This research finds that economic development continues to top the list of concerns of local government leaders. The need for recruitment of new manufacturing

industry is the most important concern in West Virginia. Understanding that this is the most important issue will help local government leaders, as well as state officials and outside agencies, focus their attention toward a solution to the problem. If West Virginia wants to continue to grow and develop, economic development needs must be met to ensure success.

This research sets a baseline for constant reassessment to occur where evaluation of local needs can continue and comparison to previous needs can follow. Further research results can be compiled and placed with the results of this study and the previous study (Dougherty and Plein, 1997) as a reference manual for local officials to measure the growth and development of their communities.

Statewide Responses by Category



Overall Rankings of All Issues Examined

Rank	Issue (ranked on a 0-to-4 scale)	Mean
1	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry	3.07
2	Funding sources for development	3.04
3	Recruitment of new retail business	3.02
4	Retaining and expanding existing businesses	3.01
5	Abandoned/dilapidated housing	2.79
6	Recreational opportunities	2.66
7	Local government's role in economic development	2.66
8	Industrial park development	2.62
9	Funds for extracurricular activities	2.60
10	Dealing with lack of growth	2.57
11	Main street or downtown revitalization	2.54
12	Lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage	2.53
13	Domestic violence	2.53
14	Neighborhood community centers	2.52
15	Workforce preparation in education	2.49
16	Adequate sewer system	2.47
17	Technological resources for students	2.44
18	Annexation-related issues	2.43
19	Lack of parental involvement in education	2.43
20	College preparation in education	2.42
21	Student drug use	2.42
22	Investment in upgrading property	2.41
23	Neighborhood revitalization	2.38
24	Lack of provided insurance coverage	2.38
25	Need for changes in state law for impact fees to help pay costs the of development	2.37
26	Tourism development	2.34
27	Teen programs (e.g. advocacy programs, after school programs)	2.33
28	Student drop-outs	2.33
29	Planning (land use)	2.32
30	Illegal dumping	2.32
31	Parks and recreation facilities	2.32
32	Renovation of existing housing	2.32
33	Board of education and community relations	2.32
34	School consolidation	2.31
35	Animal control	2.30
36	Federal intergovernmental grant revenues	2.29
37	State intergovernmental grant revenues	2.29
38	Health insurance	2.27
39	Adequacy of the tax base	2.27
40	Lack of flexibility and option in raising revenues for local services	2.27
41	Sidewalk maintenance	2.26
42	Revenues adequate for expenditure levels needed	2.25
43	Greater flexibility from the state	2.24
44	Utilities for industry	2.24
45	Absentee landlords	2.24
46	Repeat offenders	2.24

Rank	Issue (ranked on a 0-to-4 scale)	Mean
47	Juvenile delinquency	2.23
48	Adequate waste water treatment facilities	2.21
49	Development guidelines (planning and land use)	2.17
50	Recycling issues	2.17
51	Services to the elderly (e.g. senior centers, housing, programs)	2.15
52	Sex education	2.15
53	Revenue diversity	2.14
54	Adequate water treatment facilities	2.09
55	Street maintenance	2.08
56	Funds for operating low income housing	2.06
57	Local library needs	2.05
58	Wage and benefit levels	2.04
59	Need for land use control mechanisms (non-zoning)	2.04
60	Decline of public infrastructure in general	2.04
61	Teen pregnancy/sexuality	2.02
62	Prevention of crimes	2.02
63	Personnel policies (government administration)	2.01
64	Traffic congestion	2.00
65	Sewer rates	2.00
66	Space needs	2.00
67	Property taxes	1.99
68	Preservation of open space/natural beauty/historic landmarks	1.99
69	Reform in the administration of property taxation and assessment	1.98
70	Use of land use control mechanisms (non-zoning)	1.97
71	Availability of low-income housing	1.97
72	Building inspections	1.96
73	Drug and alcohol treatment centers	1.96
74	User charges and fees	1.93
75	Violence in schools	1.92
76	Worker training or retraining	1.91
77	Adequate solid waste facilities	1.91
78	Apprehension of offenders	1.90
79	Day care facilities	1.87
80	Service fees	1.84
81	Water rates	1.84
82	Relations between the locality and other levels of government (state, federal)	1.80
83	Absence of zoning regulations	1.79
84	Intergovernmental grants-in-aid acquisition (for transportation)	1.78
85	Adequacy of existing policing services	1.76
86	Coping with plant closures and layoffs	1.75
87	Relations between local government officials	1.74
88	Welfare (TANF)	1.74
89	Property crimes	1.73
90	Water pollution	1.71
91	Pay classification systems	1.70
92	Developing capital improvement budgets	1.70
93	Regionalization of Public Service Districts	1.69
94	Bridge maintenance	1.66
95	Relative cost of govt. administration and services compared to similar locations	1.65
96	Responsiveness of emergency personnel	1.65

Rank	Issue (ranked on a 0-to-4 scale)	Mean
97	EMS/ambulance service	1.65
98	Business taxes (B&O taxes)	1.64
99	Evaluating financial condition	1.63
100	Financial management of water or sewer board	1.63
101	Areas of shared emergency response	1.63
102	Workers' compensation insurance	1.61
103	Conflict with other local govts. over development and public service coordination	1.61
104	Garbage fees	1.60
105	Impacts of new development on public service costs	1.60
106	Auditing and performance evaluation	1.58
107	Traffic safety	1.58
108	Risk management	1.56
109	Public transit	1.56
110	Judging the effectiveness of public services	1.55
111	Air pollution	1.55
112	Congestion control	1.55
113	Existence of zoning regulations	1.54
114	Cost accounting for programs and services	1.53
115	Fire service	1.52
116	Relations between your locality and officials from other localities	1.51
117	Use/development of 911 centers	1.50
118	Developing annual operating budgets	1.49
119	Dealing with the location of development and sprawl issues	1.49
120	Adequate garbage/trash collection service	1.49
121	Termination of workers	1.47
122	Cooperation in service delivery among local governments in the area	1.47
123	Purchasing	1.45
124	Dealing with rapid growth	1.45
125	Noise pollution	1.45
126	Management practices	1.44
127	Financial reporting practices/developing Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports	1.44
128	Utility billing	1.41
129	Snow removal	1.41
130	Financial accounting according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	1.37
131	Investment of funds	1.36
132	Homelessness	1.36
133	Cash management	1.35
134	Safety administration	1.35
135	Contracting	1.34
136	Contract administration	1.29
137	Cutback management	1.27
138	Payment in lieu of taxes for federal land holdings	1.27
139	Hiring practices	1.25
140	Government enterprises and pricing	1.25
141	Debt administration	1.24
142	Freedom of information act requirements	1.22
143	Hate crimes	1.22
144	Labor relations	1.19
145	Loss of farmland to development	1.16

List of Top 10 Concerns by PDC Region

RANK	PDC Region 1	PDC Region 2	PDC Region 3	PDC Region 4	PDC Region 5
1	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry 3.25	Retaining and expanding existing businesses 3.29	Annexation related Issues 3.36	Abandoned/dilapidated housing 3.33	Dealing with lack of growth 3.36
2	Recruitment of new retail businesses 3.25	Main street or downtown revitalization 3.28	Abandoned/Dilapidated housing 3.16	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry 3.13	Abandoned/dilapidated housing 3.36
3	Funding sources for development 3.25	Neighborhood revitalization 3.22	Funding sources For development 2.63	Main street or downtown revitalization 3.09	Retaining and expanding existing businesses 3.13
4	Retaining and expanding existing businesses 3.21	Recruitment of new retail businesses 3.20	Absentee Landlords 2.63	Recruitment of new retail businesses 3.08	Funding sources for development 3.13
5	Lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage 3.17	Tourism development 3.18	Recreational Opportunities 2.61	Retaining and expanding existing businesses 3.04	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry 3.09
6	Lack of provided insurance coverage 3.13	Industrial park development 3.06	Recruitment of new Retail businesses 2.59	Funding sources for development 2.96	Recruitment of new retail businesses 3.05
7	Industrial park development 3.08	Day care facilities 3.00	Retaining and Expanding existing Businesses 2.56	Recreational opportunities 2.82	Funds for extracurricular activities 2.95
8	Funds for extracurricular activities 3.04	Dealing with rapid growth 2.88	Health Insurance 2.45	Sidewalk maintenance 2.78	Recreational opportunities 2.88
9	Abandoned/dilapidated housing 2.92	Availability of low income housing 2.88	Investment in Upgrading property 2.44	Neighborhood community centers 2.71	Investment in upgrading property 2.84
10	Local government's role in economic development 2.87	Teen pregnancy/sexuality 2.82	Local library Needs 2.44	Lack of ability to pay for insurance coverage 2.70	Absentee landlords 2.80

List of Top 10 Concerns by PDC Region

RANK	PDC Region 6	PDC Region 7	PDC Region 8	PDC Region 9	PDC Region 10/11
1	Funding sources for development 3.19	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry 3.14	Recruitment of new Manufacturing Industry 3.50	Greater flexibility from the state 3.55	Recruitment of new retail businesses 3.17
2	Recruitment of new retail businesses 3.16	Retaining and expanding existing businesses 3.05	School Consolidation 3.33	Traffic congestion 3.11	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry 3.14
3	Recruitment of new manufacturing industry 3.11	Abandoned/dilapidated housing 3.00	Funding sources for Development 3.30	Dealing with rapid growth 3.09	Federal inter-governmental grant revenues 3.00
4	Retaining and expanding existing businesses 3.09	Funding sources for development 2.95	College preparation In education 3.27	Student drop-outs 3.00	Retaining and expanding existing businesses 2.95
5	Main street or downtown revitalization 2.99	Annexation-related issues 2.95	Recruitment of new Retail businesses 3.10	Wage and benefit levels 2.83	State inter-governmental grant revenues 2.91
6	Neighborhood revitalization 2.98	Recruitment of new retail businesses 2.90	Dealing with lack Of growth 3.09	Relations between locality and other govt. levels 2.82	Funding sources for development 2.87
7	Local government's role in economic development 2.95	Funds for extracurricular activities 2.90	Retaining and Expanding existing Businesses 3.00	Domestic violence 2.77	Industrial park development 2.86
8	Domestic violence 2.91	College preparation in education 2.90	Need for land use Control mechanisms Non-zoning 3.00	Dealing with location of development/ sprawl 2.73	Lack of flexibility/ options in raising revenue 2.74
9	Annexation-related issues 2.74	Lack of parental involvement in education 2.86	Board of education And community Relations 2.92	Building inspections 2.73	Local government's role in economic development 2.73
10	Industrial park development 2.71	Technological resources for students 2.86	Workforce Preparation in Education 2.91	manufacturing industry 2.70 Illegal dumping 2.70	Adequate sewer system 2.58

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