

**Quality of Life Survey Executive Summary**

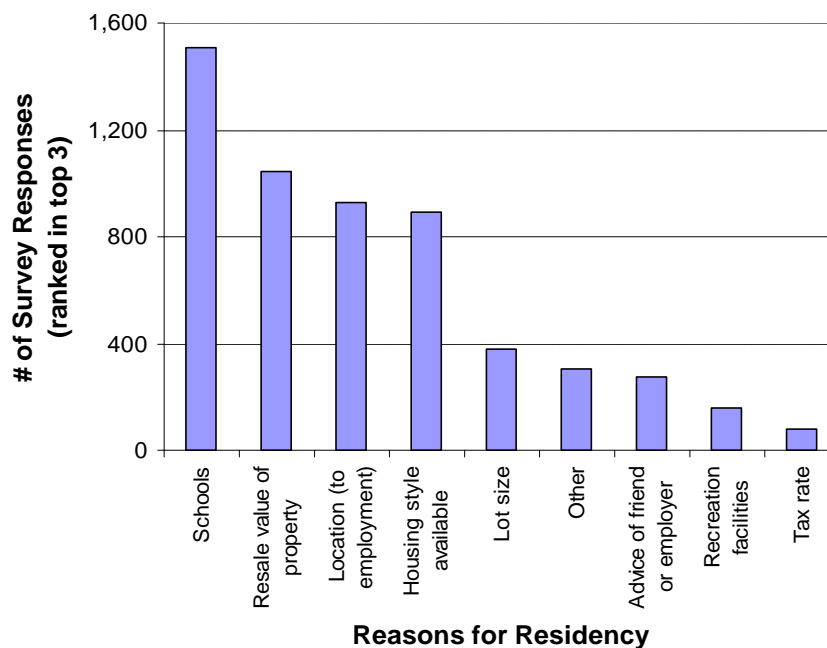
**Background**

A Quality of Life Survey, covering topics such as municipal services, transportation and cultural/recreational opportunities, was mailed to each of Upper St. Clair’s 7,500 households in October 2004. Approximately 27% of households completed and returned the survey<sup>1</sup>. This rate is double the typical return rate of 10-15% for mail-in surveys. Moreover, surveys were received from all areas of the Township (approximately equal numbers from each Ward). Survey results regarding the ages of household residents and means of transportation to work were very similar to values reported in the 2000 U.S. Census. Consequently, the survey results should be considered a representative portrayal of Upper St. Clair residents.

Upper St. Clair’s population is comprised mostly of long-time residents. More than 63% of survey households have lived in the community for 11 or more years, while only 3% have been in Upper St. Clair for less than a year. Approximately one-third of the residents in the surveyed households are less than 20 years old while about 16% are 65 years or older. In Allegheny County as a whole, 25% of the population was under 20 years old and 18% was 65 years old or more during the 2000 U.S. Census.

Survey respondents most frequently identified Upper St. Clair’s school system as their reason for moving to the Township (27% of households). Other major reasons for locating in the Township include the resale value of property (19%), location relative to employment (17%) and available housing styles (16%).

**Chart 1. Top Ranking Reasons for Residing in Upper St. Clair**



<sup>1</sup> The 1,989 surveys received as of December 8, 2004 have been tallied and reported. Surveys submitted after the deadline are generally consistent and bring the total number of surveys to 2,025.

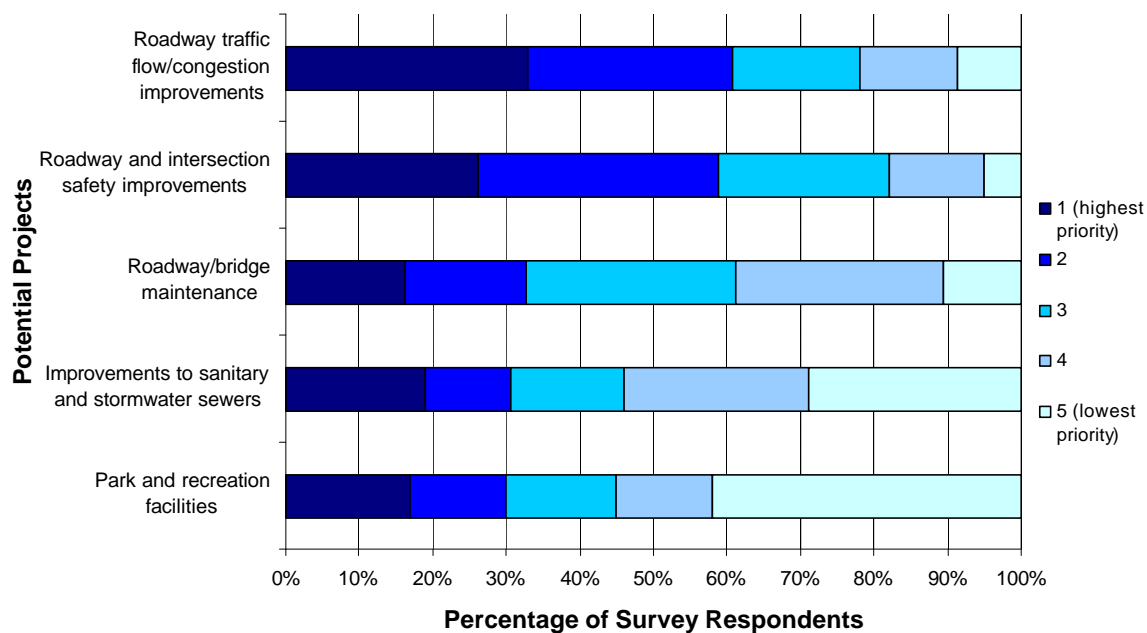
**Municipal Services Observations**

A vast majority (93%) of survey respondents reported they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with Upper St. Clair as a place to live. Of the 6% of survey respondents that indicated they are “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with living in the Township, the most common reasons are high property taxes and/or school taxes. Overall, the survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction with Upper St. Clair living as follows:

- A majority of survey respondents are satisfied with Township-provided services provided by the Township; at the top of the rankings, public safety, public works and the library each satisfied 87% or more of survey respondents.
- All public works activities achieved extremely high satisfaction ratings, particularly snow and ice control (95%).
- Police protection activities (including police officer visibility), Township crime rates and traffic enforcement satisfy at least 81% of survey respondents.
- Satisfaction is high when residents are familiar with the police department’s community outreach activities. 68% of respondents know about the vacation house checks and only 30% of respondents are aware of the nightly business checks offered by the police.

Respondents clearly favor roadway improvements over other potential capital improvement projects. Nearly one-third stated that roadway traffic flow/congestion improvements are their top ranking priority.

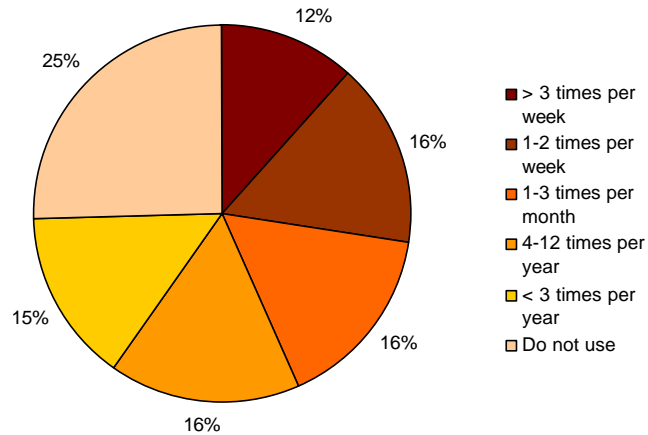
**Chart 2. Ranking of Capital Improvement/Renovation Projects**



**Cultural/Recreational Observations**

The reported use of Upper St. Clair’s parks and recreational fields is surprisingly low. Twenty-eight (28%) of households use the Township’s parks and fields at least once a week. However, one-quarter of survey respondents stated that their households do not use the Township parks and recreational fields. Nearly two-thirds of Upper St. Clair’s households reported that they never visit Boyce Mayview Park, and only 4% reported using this Park on a weekly basis. In addition, approximately one-third of survey respondents reported that they never use sidewalks/trails and less than one-quarter reported using the Township sidewalks/trails on a weekly basis.

**Chart 3. Household Use of Parks/Recreation Fields**



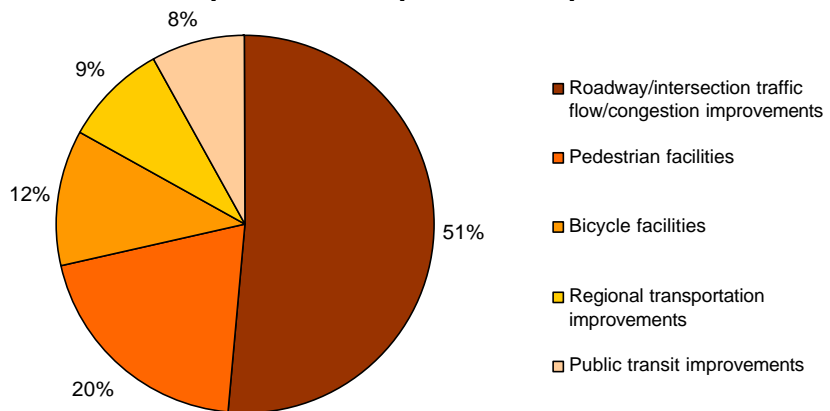
When asked to rank potential cultural/recreational projects, the survey respondents clearly favored the construction of a recreation/wellness center (included in 79% of respondents’ top three rankings) and an outdoor water park/swimming pool (included in 68% of respondents’ top three rankings). Survey respondents favor the use of private fundraising (37%) or Township bonds (30%) for the construction of recreational facilities while user fees are most frequently recommended (54%) for facility operation.

Over 60% of survey respondents report that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with recreational programming for children and field space for organized/casual sporting events.

**Transportation Observations**

Given that 90% of the workers sampled in this survey drive (alone) to work, it is not surprising that the transportation improvement indicated as most important by over half of survey respondents is an improvement to roadway and intersection traffic flow/congestion.

**Chart 4. Most Important Transportation Improvement**



Additional feedback regarding transportation includes:

- Survey respondents most frequently noted “excessive back-ups at signals and/or high speeds along Route 19” as a major traffic problem.
- The intersections of Route 19/Fort Couch Road, Painters Run/McMillan Road and Route 19/Orr Road are each noted by at least 50% of all survey respondents as one of the top rated (top 4) intersections in need of analysis as part of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Land Use Observations**

Upper St. Clair residents overwhelmingly use businesses and services located outside of the Township. Most notably, over 70% of survey respondents report primarily using up-scale sit-down restaurants and grocery/convenience stores outside of Upper St. Clair. About 20% of respondents indicated that they would like to see more up-scale sit-down restaurants in the Township and over 39% would like to have more grocery/convenience stores in Upper St. Clair.

Currently 40% of survey respondents do not believe there is adequate variety and affordability of housing to meet their needs at retirement. Notably, nearly 20% stated they did not have an opinion or were not familiar with the Township’s current housing market.

### **Other Observations**

In addition to the 26 questions on the Quality of Life Survey, respondents were asked to write-in any additional comments related to their perception of the quality of life in Upper St. Clair. Nearly 400 comments, including a mixture of positive and negative statements, were received. Comments were primarily related to the following general topics:

- Roadway and Stormwater Sewer Maintenance
- Parks and Recreation
- Police and Law Enforcement
- Schools
- Shopping and Restaurants
- Taxes
- Traffic and Transportation
- General