

*Village of Germantown*

**VILLAGE OF GERMANTOWN  
COMMUNITY SURVEY**

Final Report

February 7, 2000

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This report presents the findings of 1,012 responses to the Village of Germantown Community Survey. These data represent a snapshot of the views concerning a variety of community issues and concerns identified by the residents of Germantown. Council may find the data useful on two levels. First, general views about the delivery and quality of the services provided by the Village can be valuable in long range planning efforts. Second, residents' views and ratings of specific municipal services provide baseline data for continued benchmarking and ongoing service delivery evaluation. We are pleased to have worked with Germantown Assistant Village Manager Chris Pozzuto. His assistance provided valuable input into the development and administration of this project.

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The Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University provides assistance to local governments (counties, municipalities, and townships) in Southwestern Ohio. The Center engages in applied research, technical assistance services, training and education, and data base development in the areas of public management and capacity building, local government economic development and planning, and public program evaluation and policy research. The Center's full-time professional staff hold advanced degrees in public administration, policy/program evaluation, and community planning. The Center is partially funded by Ohio's Rural University Program.

Respectfully,

Philip A. Russo, Jr.  
Director, Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs  
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Appendix A: Codebook - **Not included in this PDF version.**

Appendix B: Frequency Data - **Not included in this PDF version.**

Appendix C: Census Data - **Not included in this PDF version.**

Appendix D: Survey Instrument - **Not included in this PDF version.**

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This section summarizes the results of the 1999 Germantown Community survey.

- The survey reports the opinions of 1,012 residents of the Village of Germantown. The response rate was 55.6%
  - 84.2% of the respondents were homeowners.
  - 15.8% of the respondents were renters.
  
  - 42.2% of the respondents were male.
  - 57.8% of the respondents were female.
- 57.0% of the respondents have lived in Germantown for more than 20 years.
- 35.7% of the respondents believe the Village of Germantown has “become a better place to live” in the past five years.
- Overall, 71.2% of the respondents were either “satisfied” (59.7%) or “very satisfied” (11.5%) with the services provided by the Village.
- 58.2% “agreed” and 22.5% “strongly agreed” with the statement, “I am satisfied with the current level of police protection I receive.”
- “Theft” (49.1%), “juvenile crime” (47.6%), and “vandalism” (45.8%) were the most frequently identified crime problems affecting Germantown.
- 29.4% of the respondents indicated a desire for improved general community outreach by the police department. 26.5% indicated a desire for more cruiser patrol.
- “Unattended pets” (36.5%) was the most frequently identified public nuisance that has not been adequately addressed by the Village.

- 68.1% of the respondents identified *The Germantown Press* as a source of information for Village of Germantown Council meetings, activities, and meetings.
- Respondents found the Village communications of issues, policies, and operations to be average (55.2%), above average (19.4%), or excellent (4.4%).

### **III. INTRODUCTION**

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The staff at the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University conducted a mail survey for the Village of Germantown. The purpose of the survey was to gather information from residents regarding their general attitudes about the quality of life in the Village, and to assess their attitudes and opinions towards a variety of services provided by the Village. The objective of the survey was to better understand current satisfaction levels with Village services and to identify areas or issues that may require the attention of Village officials in the future. Through an objective analysis of survey responses, the Village can evaluate the findings and establish priorities and strategies to better address the needs of the community.

### **IV. SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

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The survey was drafted by the staff at the Center for Public Management and Regional affairs in consultation with Village of Germantown officials. A copy of the final instrument can be found in Appendix D. The survey used a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions to obtain responses from participants.

The first set of questions sought information regarding length of residence in the Village as well as respondents' perceptions of how the Village has changed over the past five years (become a better place, stayed the same, or become a worse place).

The second set of questions asked respondents to indicate their satisfaction with Village streets, roads, and signs. Response choices used scales ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments regarding streets, roads, and signs in Germantown.

Another series of questions asked respondents about a variety of public safety issues. These included their perceptions of police service, neighborhood safety, and crime problems that affect the Village. This set of questions also asked if respondents have been victims of crime themselves.

A related set of questions asked respondents to consider public nuisances in the Village. Respondents were asked to select three public nuisances that they believe require Village attention. Respondents were also asked to assess several specific Village services and their perception of the level of service provided over the past three years.

A final set of questions asked respondents to assess government communication with Village residents. Questions included how often respondents attended Council meetings or watched them on television. Respondents were also asked to identify their primary sources of information about Village meetings, activities, and issues (newspapers, television, world wide web, etc.).

The survey concluded with a standard set of demographic questions including home ownership, age of all members living in the household, and gender.

## **V. SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

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The survey questionnaire was mailed to every household in the Village of Germantown. The mailing list was provided to the Center by the Village and was generated from the 911 system. A total of 2,016 surveys were mailed in the initial mailing in September, 1999. A second mailing of surveys was sent in mid-October, 1999. The second mailing excluded vacant addresses (returned items from first mailing). Both survey packets were identical with only the date changed to reflect first and second mailings. Each packet included the

survey instrument and a return-addressed postage-paid envelope. A total of 1,012 usable responses were returned, for a response rate of 55.6%<sup>1</sup>. This response rate suggests that residents are both interested in and willing to provide feedback on the many services provided by the Village.

Because of Germantown's size, we chose to mail all households rather than sample. Had sampling been used in this survey, the response rate would have generated a margin of error of better than  $\pm 3\%$  at a 95% confidence interval. Thus the standard margin of sampling error in this survey is plus or minus 3 percentage points in 95 out of 100 cases. This means that if a survey is conducted 100 times, in 95 cases the result will not vary by more than 3 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if all Village residents responded. In addition to sampling error, all surveys are subject to other sources of error, such as bias in the wording of questions, timing, issue salience, etc. The instrument design, format, and timing were chosen to increase the response rate and to minimize bias. There is little reason to suspect that the data collection procedures introduced any significant bias; the findings reported herein can be taken confidently as an accurate reflection of respondent opinion at the time.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of surveys returned were completed in full. However, some respondents chose not to answer parts or specific questions in the survey. Incomplete surveys were included in the database, thus some questions may have more responses than others. Due to rounding, some of the reported percentages may not equal 100.0%.

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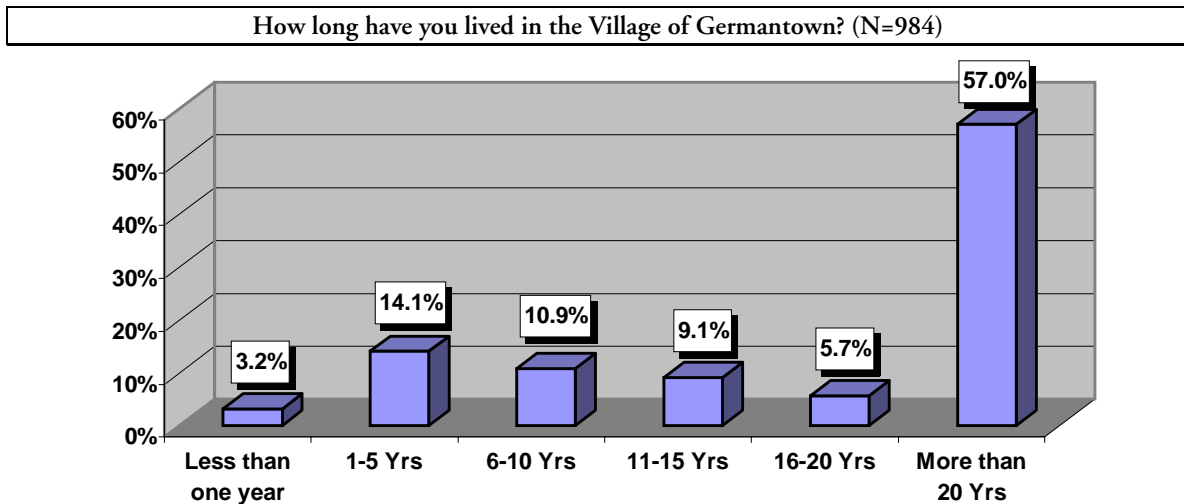
<sup>1</sup> The response rate is based on the total number of households (2,016) less vacant addresses (197).

<sup>2</sup> The findings reported can be taken confidently as an accurate reflection of respondents' opinions at the time they completed the survey. However, these opinions may and do change over time. Therefore, they reflect a snapshot of respondents' views at the time of the survey.

## VI. VILLAGE LIFE AND SERVICES

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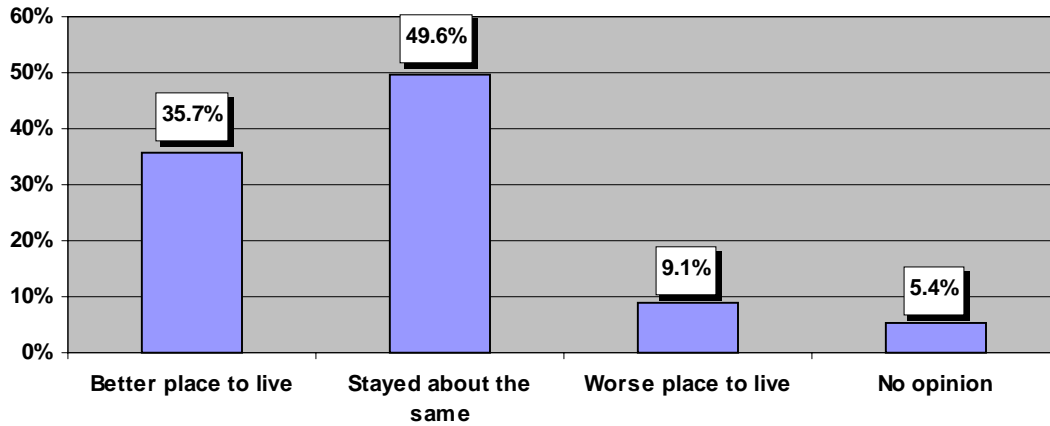
The majority of respondents to the survey were long time residents with 57.0% having lived in the Village for more than 20 years. The following chart provides response totals for each residency category.



In order to assess changes in the Village over time, respondents were asked to evaluate whether the Village had become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or stayed about the same over the past five years. Nearly four out of ten respondents (35.7%) indicated that Germantown has become a better place to live over the past five years. Another five out of ten (49.6%) indicated it has stayed about the same. Only one out of ten (9.1%) thought the Village has become a worse place to live. (Note: 5.4% had no opinion on this question.)

Respondents were asked to evaluate their overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Village. Overall, seven out of ten were either very satisfied (11.5%) or satisfied (59.7%) with the services provided by the Village. Less than one out of ten were dissatisfied (6.4%) or very dissatisfied (0.4%) with overall village services.

In the past five years, do you think the Village of Germantown has “become a better place to live, stayed about the same, or become a worse place to live?” (N=968)



Respondents were then asked to evaluate a set of specific services provided by the Village.

The following is a summary of the responses to Question # 4.

- Police protection – 84.6% are very satisfied or satisfied,
- Fire protection – 89.3% are very satisfied or satisfied,
- Street and road conditions – 49.1% are very satisfied or satisfied, 23.8% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this service,
- Germantown parks – 84.3% are very satisfied or satisfied,
- Water and sanitary sewer – 66.7% are very satisfied or satisfied,
- Zoning enforcement – 42.2% are very satisfied or satisfied, while 17.1% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this service.

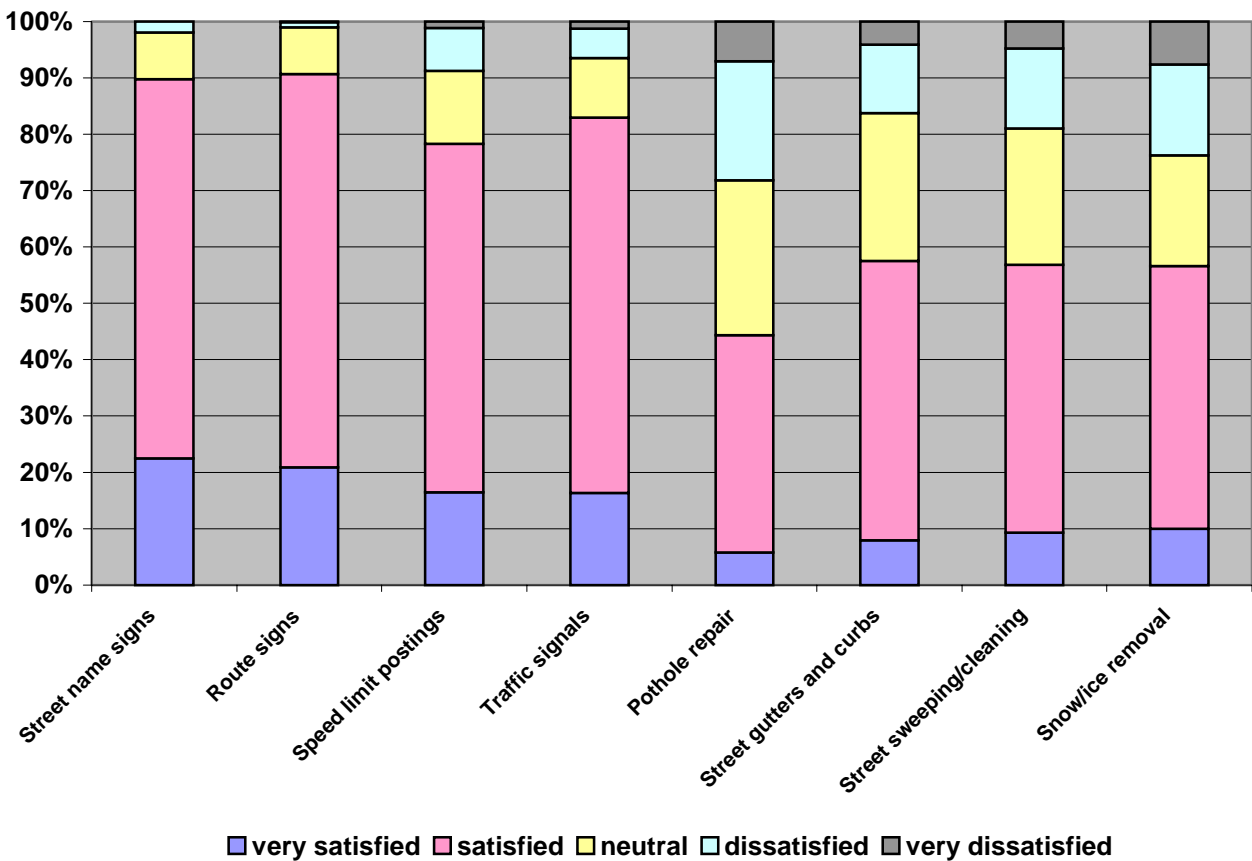
## VII. VILLAGE STREETS, ROADS, AND SIGNS

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While the overall service evaluations above are useful in a broad sense, the next sections of the survey looked more specifically at a number services provided by the Village. We begin with respondents’ current assessment of Village streets, roads, and signs. Respondents were asked to assess eight specific services related to streets, roads, and signs in Germantown: street name signs, route signs, speed limit postings, traffic signals, pothole repair, street gutters and curbs, street sweeping/cleaning, and snow/ice removal.

Respondents were also given an opportunity to specify other street related services not included in the list. Respondents indicated satisfaction with street name signs (89.7%), route signs (90.6%), speed limit postings (78.3%), and traffic signals (83.0%). Respondents were most dissatisfied with snow/ice removal (23.7%), pothole repair (28.2%), street gutters and curbs, (16.1%), and street sweeping/cleaning (19.0%).

In general, how satisfied are you with each of the following services? (N=924 to 972)



While the question above assesses current satisfaction levels, we also wanted to assess the changing levels of service over time. Using the same set of street, road, and sign services, respondents were asked whether these services had become better, stayed about the same,

or become worse over the past three years. By substantial margins, respondents indicated these services had become better or stayed the same over the past three years.

- Street signs – 94.3% had become better or stayed about the same,
- Route signs – 95.1% had become better or stayed about the same,
- Speed limit postings – 90.7% had become better or stayed about the same,
- Traffic signals – 91.3% had become better or stayed about the same,
- Potholes – 78.7% had become better or stayed about the same,
- Street gutters and curbs – 84.1% had become better or stayed about the same,
- Street sweeping/cleaning – 82.1% had become better or stayed about the same,
- Snow/ice removal – 81.3% had become better or stayed about the same.

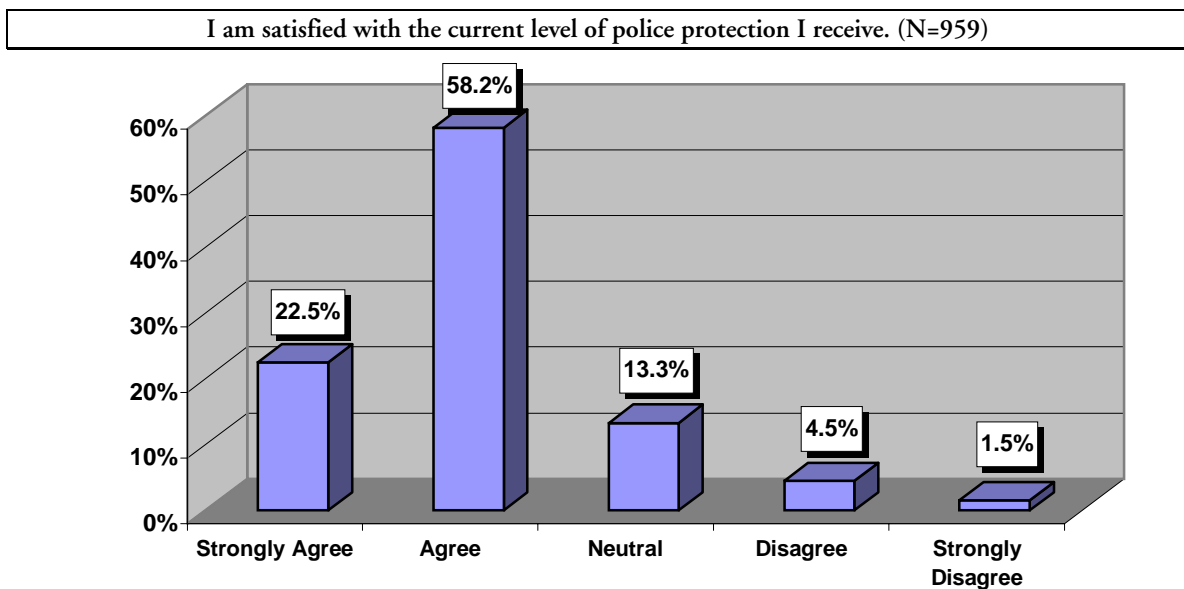
An open-ended question was provided at the end of each major section of the survey to provide respondents with an opportunity to express their comments or concerns with respect to that topical section. Over three hundred comments were written for streets, road, and signs (see Appendix B: Frequency Tables for all comments). Of note, the Triangle Station/Route 4 and Butter Street area received more comments than any other location in Germantown. Most comments about Triangle Station indicated a desire for the installation of a stoplight/improved traffic control. For example, “Triangle Station entrance is very dangerous, needs light.” Or, “Traffic light needed at Route 4 and Butter.”

Snow removal, street repair, and maintenance of alleys also generated multiple comments including: “Snow removal sometimes seems slow,” and “snow removal blocks driveways.”

## VIII. PUBLIC SAFETY

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The second major section of the survey asked respondents to assess public safety in the Village. The first question asked respondents to indicate their agreement with the statement, “I am satisfied with the current level of police protection I receive.” Eight of ten either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Less than one respondent in ten disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement.

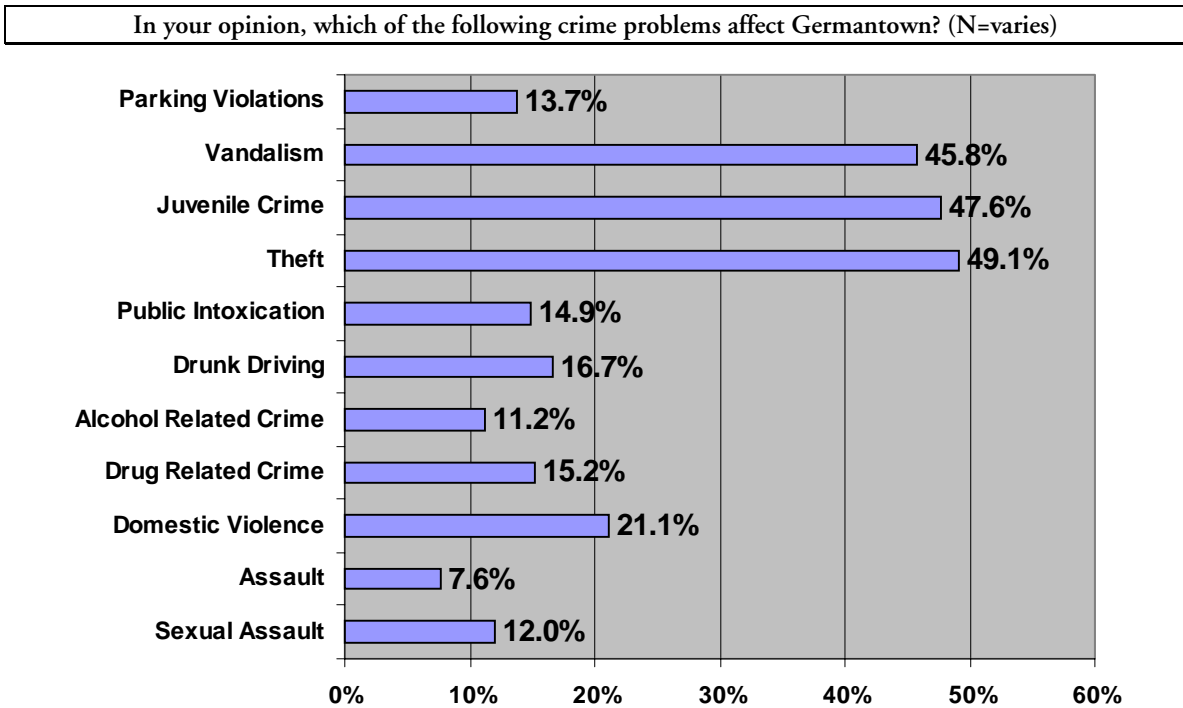


Respondents were asked to indicate how safe they felt in their neighborhood. Nine out of ten indicated they felt safe (62.1%) or very safe (29.8%) in their neighborhood. Less than one in ten respondents indicated they felt unsafe (3.4%) or very unsafe (0.1%).

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they saw on-duty police officers patrolling in their neighborhood. Three out of ten (29.1%) indicated they saw patrols once a day. Nearly four out of ten (36.2%) said they saw patrols once a week. Another three out of

ten (26.6%) saw patrols once a month, and one out of ten respondents (8.1%) never saw on-duty police patrolling their neighborhood.

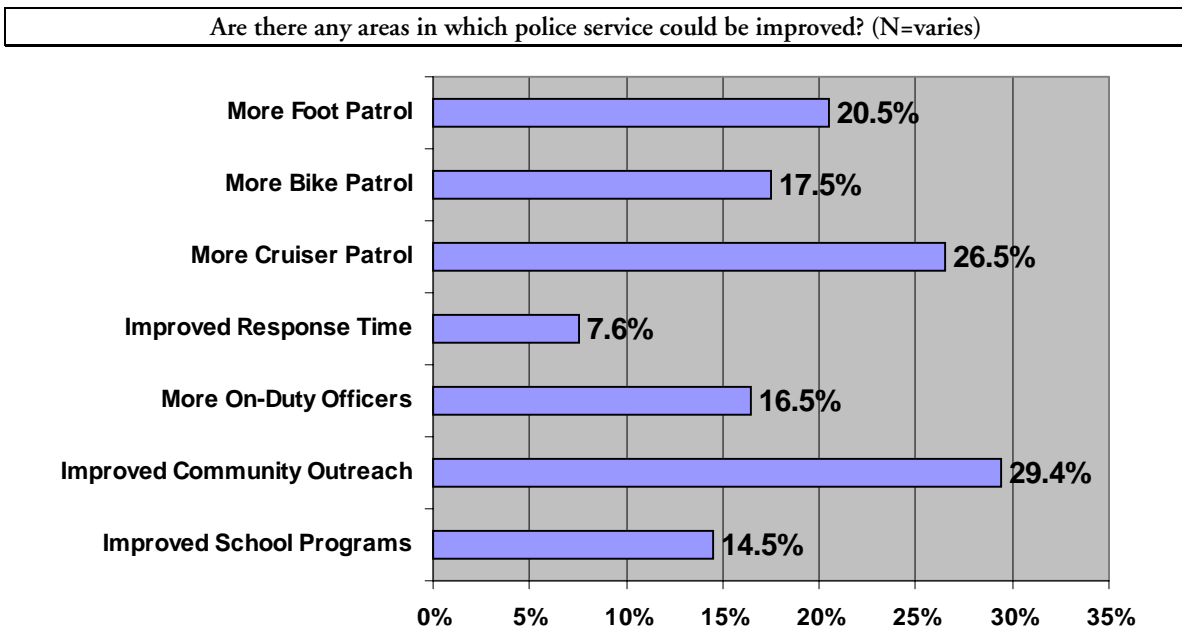
In order to assess respondent's perceptions about crime in the Village, the next question provided a list of types of crimes and asked respondents to check all that they thought affected Germantown. The following chart indicates the number of respondents who selected each type of crime problem.



Respondents were asked to indicate whether they personally had been a victim of crime in the past two years. Nearly two out of ten (16.1%) indicated they had been a victim of crime in the past two years. If they had been a victim of crime, they were then asked if they had reported the crime to the police. Over eight out of ten respondents (82.7%) indicated they had reported the crime to the police. Respondents who were victims of crime but had not reported the crime to the police were asked to indicate why they had not reported the crime. Of the respondents who fell into this category (25), 14 indicated

they did not report the crime because they felt it would not do any good. Fourteen also indicated they did not think it was important enough to report the crime. (Note: due to the small number of responses to this question, we hesitate to draw any significant conclusions from these responses.)

From a list of choices, respondents were asked to indicate any areas in which police service could be improved. Respondents could check all that apply.

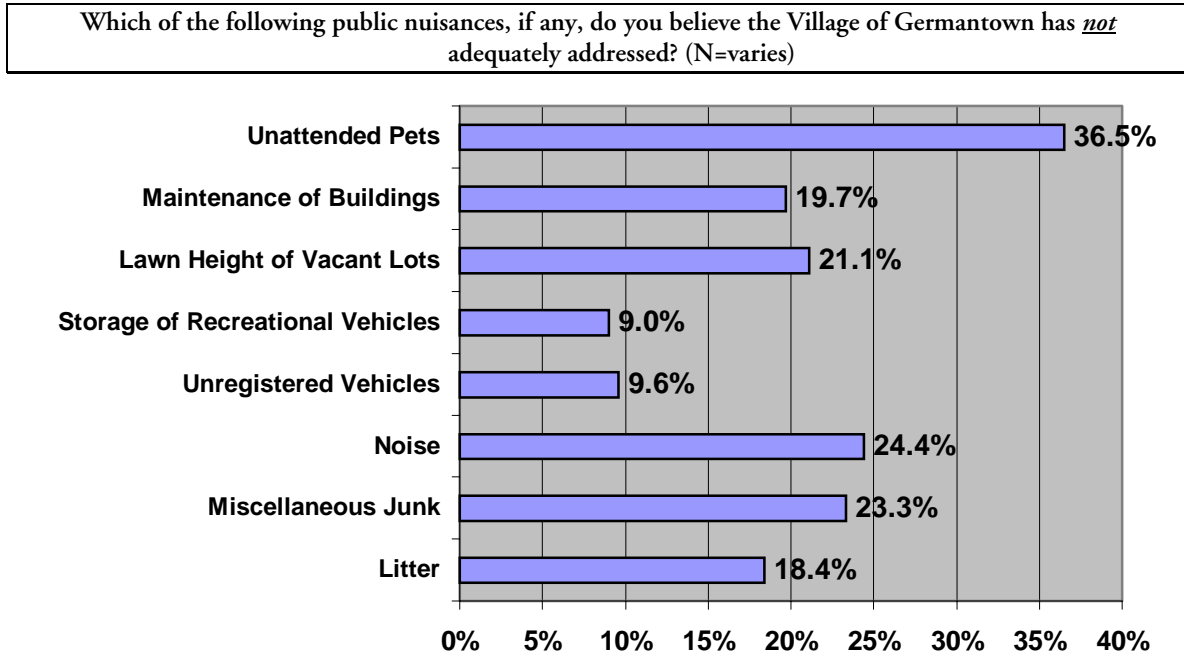


Finally, respondents were asked to provide any additional comments regarding police services in the Village. Just over two in ten respondents (244) had comments to offer regarding police services (see Appendix B: Frequency Tables for all police services comments). Comments covered a wide variety of issues both complementary and critical of police services in the Village. Respondents also offered a number of suggestions regarding staffing levels, patrol coverage, law enforcement, and interaction with citizens to name just a few.

## IX. OTHER VILLAGE SERVICES

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Respondents were next asked to evaluate some of the other services provided by the Village, in particular the management of public nuisances. The following chart summarizes the responses to this question.



Respondents were also asked to identify the three nuisances that they believed needed the most attention by the Village. Note, respondents were not asked to rank order these items, therefore results reflect frequencies not necessarily priorities.

- Unattended pets – 22.9%,
- Maintenance of buildings – 16.9%,
- Noise – 16.6%
- Miscellaneous junk – 15.2%
- Litter – 12.1%
- Lawn height – 10.1%
- Unregistered vehicles – 4.5%
- Storage of recreational vehicles – 3.5%

An additional 11.7% indicated “other” nuisances that they believed needed attention by the Village. The “other” nuisances were typically specification of issues covered by the list of choices such as barking dogs, boom boxes, and car stereos (noise); run-down/deteriorating apartments, graffiti, neighbor’s property (maintenance of buildings); or junk cars (unregistered vehicles). Please see the Appendix B: Frequency Tables for a complete list of the other nuisances identified (Question 17-Other).

One final question in this section asked respondents to consider the provision of several Village services over the past three years. Using “become better,” “stayed the same,” or “become worse,” respondents were asked to evaluate leaf pick-up, storm water flooding, and street lighting in the Village. Eight out of ten respondents indicated that leaf pick-up had become better (31.7%) or stayed the same (51.4%) over the past three years. Seven out of ten thought storm water flooding had become better (16.0%) or stayed the same (58.5%) over the past three years. Eight of ten respondents also indicated that street lighting had become better (20.1%) or stayed the same (62.9%) over the past three years.

## **X. GENERAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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The final section of the survey asked respondents about attending or watching televised Village meetings, and their sources of information regarding Village Council meetings activities, and issues. Respondents were first asked to indicate how many Village Council meetings they had attended in the past year. A second question asked them how often had they watched Village Council meetings on television. The following table summarizes responses to both of these questions. The pink cell is the total number of respondents that neither attended nor watched Council meetings on cable television in

the past year. The blue cells are respondents who attended and watched Council meetings on cable television in the past year (N=114). The white cells are respondents who either only attended Council meetings or only watched them on cable television (attended-only N=48; watched on television-only N=458).

In the past year, how many Village Council meetings have you attended? (N=998)

In the past year, how many Village Council meetings did you watch on cable television? (N=996)

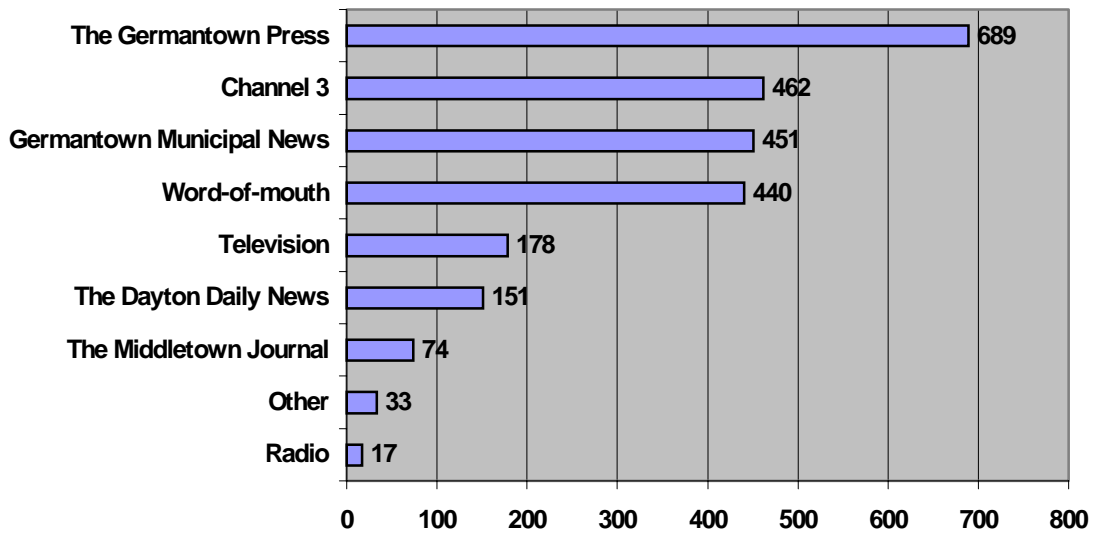
		Watched on Television				
		None	1-4	5-8	9-12	> 12
Attended Meeting	None	375	264	98	51	45
	1-4	45	40	31	20	11
	5-8	1	0	3	1	3
	9-12	0	0	0	1	0
	> 12	2	1	0	0	3

Respondents who indicated they had watched Village Council meetings on cable television were then asked which statement best describes their reason(s) for watching. More than one statement could be selected.

- Specific issue of interest being discussed (28.6%),
- Could not attend the meeting in person (9.7%),
- Someone you knew was appearing at the meeting (4.2%),
- Just happened upon the television broadcast (24.2%).

The next question asked respondents to identify all of the sources where they got their information regarding Village Council meetings, activities, and issues. Respondents could select all sources that apply.

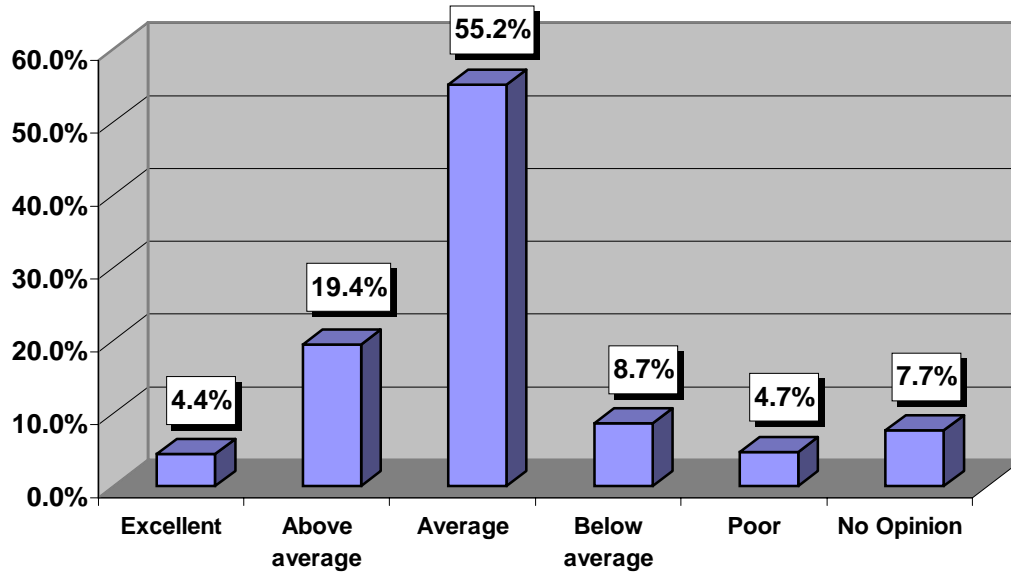
In general, where do you get your information regarding Village Council meetings, activities, and issues?  
Please check all that apply. (N=varies)



Respondents were asked of their awareness of the Village of Germantown’s website (<http://www.ci.germantown.oh.us>). Four out of ten (43.6%) indicated an awareness of the website. Respondents who were aware of the website were asked to specify how many times they had visited the Village website. Of the 177 respondents to this question, 11.8% had visited the website once in the last week, 32.2% had visited the website once in the last month, and 55.9% had visited once in the last six months.

Respondents were then asked to rate how well the Village government communicates its issues, policies, and operations to the citizens of Germantown.

Overall, please rate how well the Village government communicates its issues, policies, and operations to the citizens of Germantown. (N=979)



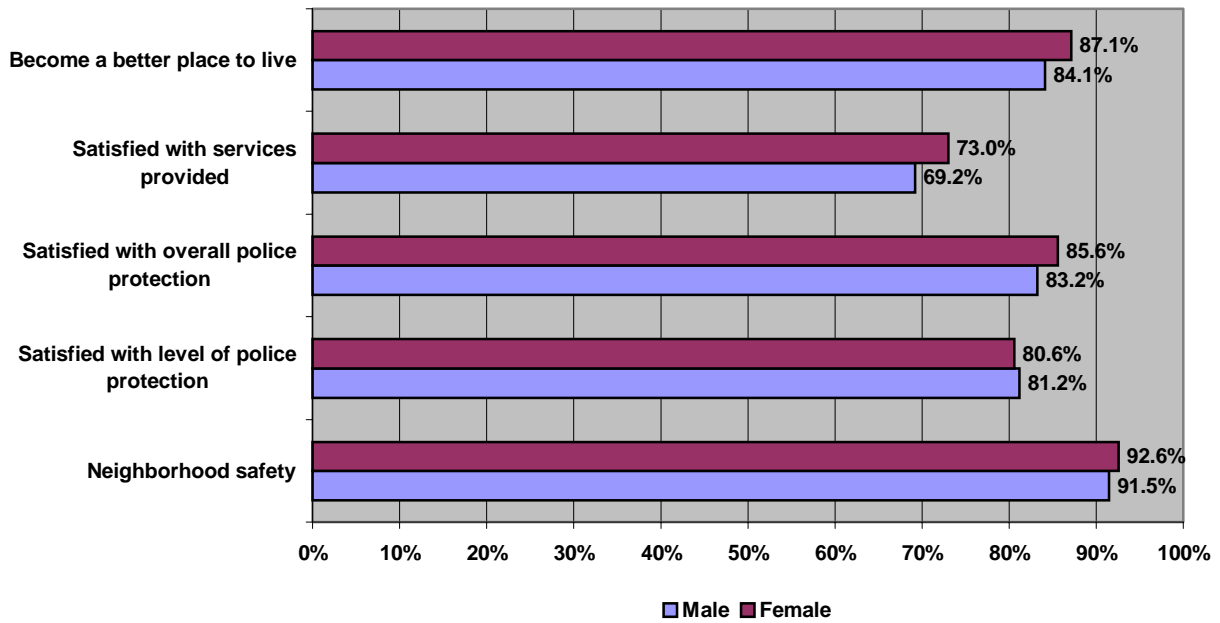
## XI. OTHER DATA ANALYSIS

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The collection of demographic data allows for analysis beyond the frequency information provided above. This type of cross-tabulation analysis may identify patterns or attitudes that are unique to specific demographic characteristics of respondents.

The first cross-tabulation analysis assesses the impact of gender on responses to several questions. Gender was cross-tabulated with Question 2 (do you think the Village has become a better place...), Question 3 (rate overall village services), Question 4 (satisfaction with police protection), Question 8 (satisfaction with the current level of police protection), and Question 9 (feel safe in neighborhood). As the chart below reflects, responses do not differ greatly according to the gender of the respondent.

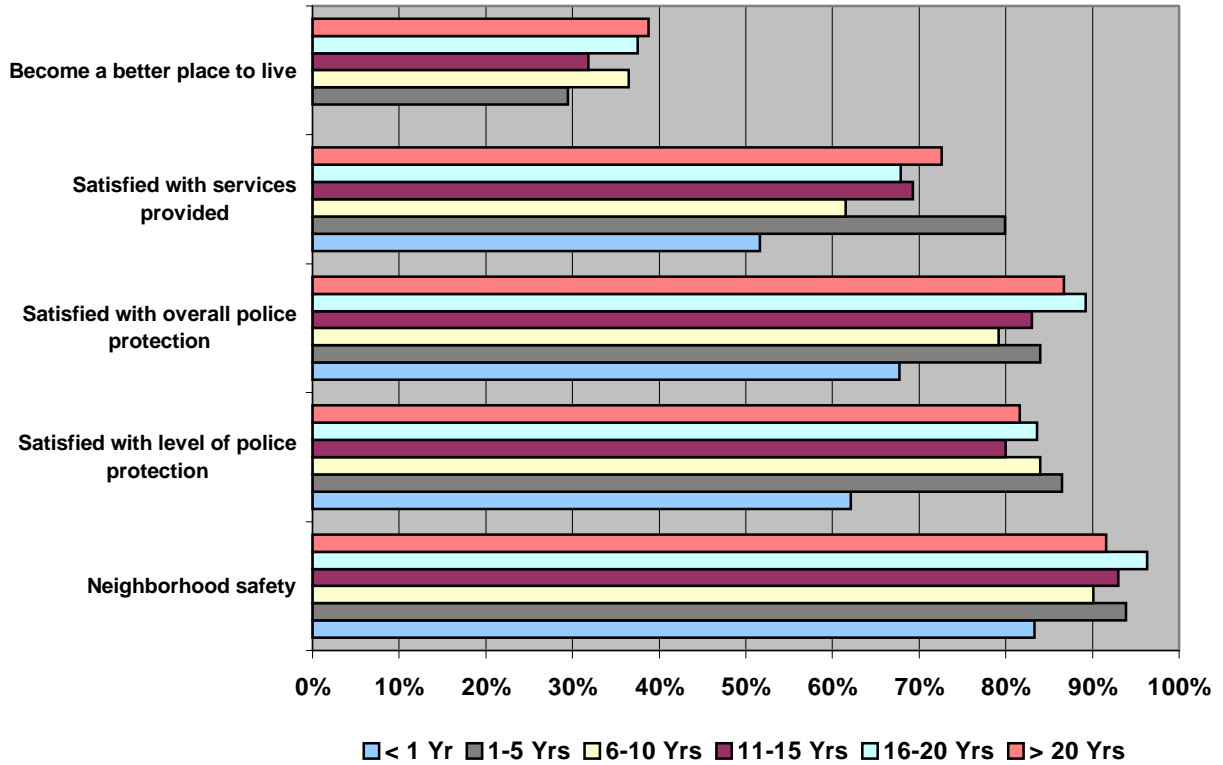
Cross-Tabulation of Gender and Q2, Q3, Q4, Q8, and Q9



A second cross-tabulation between these same questions and length of residency was completed. The following chart provides the results of this analysis. Clearly, length of residence does cause some variation in the responses to this set of questions. For example, new residents (less than one year) tend to be less satisfied with all of these general areas than do longer-term residents. This may be a function of unmet expectations of these new residents, an unfamiliarity or lack of experience with the services provided, or perhaps some combination of these factors and others.

Other variations of note include: more 6-10 year residents believe the Village has become a better place than either the 1-5 year or 11-15 year residents; and 1-5 year residents are more satisfied with overall Village services than any other residency category. The following chart summarizes this cross-tabulated data.

Cross-Tabulation of Length of Residency and Q2, Q3, Q4, Q8, and Q9



\* Residents of less than one year are excluded from the results in Question 2 (better place to live) above since it asks for an evaluation of a five year period.