
WAYNE TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY SURVEY

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2007

PREPARED BY



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report represents the findings of 632 responses to the Wayne Township (Butler County) Community Survey. These data represent a snapshot of the views concerning a variety of issues in Wayne Township at this time. Township officials may find the data useful on two levels. First, general views about the delivery and quality of the services provided to residents may be valuable in long range planning efforts. Second, residents' views and ratings of specific conditions provide baseline data for continued benchmarking and ongoing evaluation of service delivery. We are pleased to have worked with Township officials. Township Trustees Robert V. Hoelle and William T. Kennel provided valuable input into the development and administration of the survey project.

Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University:

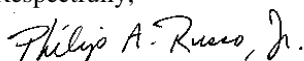
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- Jennifer A. Patterson, Project Manager
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Wayne Township Officials:

- Robert V. Hoelle, Trustee
- William T. Kennel, Trustee
- R. Timothy Taylor, Trustee
- Marie Graham, Fiscal Officer

The Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University 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 holds advanced degrees in public administration, policy/program evaluation, and community planning. The Center's activities are funded by external grants and contracts from a number of funding sources including Ohio's Rural Universities Program and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

Respectfully,



Philip A. Russo, Jr.

Director, Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs
Professor, Political Science, Miami University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Some of the key findings from the Wayne Township (Butler County) Community Survey conducted by the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University include:

- 45.0% of the respondents have lived in Wayne Township for more than 20 years.
- 98.0% of the respondents are homeowners.
- Respondent gender was 51.5% female and 48.5% male.
- 80.5% of the respondents are married.
- 29.4% of the respondents indicated that they had at least one child 17 years old or younger living in their household.
- 96.3% of the respondents are very satisfied (52.1%) or satisfied (44.2%) with living in Wayne Township.
- 71.2% of the respondents think the Township has “stayed about the same” in the past five years.
- 81.9% of the respondents indicated they were “happy here and will probably stay for the next five years.”
- 52.0% of the respondents rated Wayne Township as an “excellent” “place to live”; 50.6% of the respondents rated Wayne Township as an “excellent” “place to raise a family.”
- 49.8% and 44.8% think that fire protection and emergency medical services have “stayed about the same” over the past three years respectively.
- 51.0% think that street and road conditions and have “stayed about the same” over the past three years.
- 62.9% of the respondents strongly agree (19.2%) or agree (43.7%) that they are satisfied with the current level of emergency medical service (EMS) that they receive.
- 65.3% of the respondents strongly agree (17.6%) or agree (47.7%) that they are satisfied with the current level of fire protection that they receive.

- 47.5% of the respondents are satisfied with the status of the current zoning code; 51.2% of the respondents are satisfied with the enforcement of zoning codes in Wayne Township.
- Junked cars (27.5%), miscellaneous junk (22.6%), maintenance of vacant buildings (19.6%), litter (16.6%), and unattended pets (16.1%) were the most commonly cited public nuisances that Wayne Township has not adequately addressed.
- 48.9% of the respondents would like to see township supported public parks and recreational facilities developed within the Township with fitness trail/hiking path/walking path being the most commonly cited (35.8%).
- 73.0% of the respondents strongly agree (19.5%) or agree (53.5%) that they are satisfied with the current level of police protection provided by the Butler County Sheriff's Office.
- 85.1% of the respondents would prefer to receive information concerning Township news, meetings, and events from a Township newsletter.

INTRODUCTION

Wayne Township is located in Butler County, Ohio. According to the 2000 United States Census, Wayne Township had a total population of 4,252 living in 1,522 households. The estimated population for 2006 has increased to 5,025 persons living in Wayne Township.

The staff at the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University conducted a mail survey in October and November 2007. Township officials were interested in assessing attitudes towards a variety of issues and services that affect residents of the Township. Specifically, they were interested in general attitudes regarding the quality of life as well as growth and development in Wayne Township as well as attitudes toward the services provided to the residents of the Township including street and road conditions, fire protection, emergency medical services, and parks and recreation facilities. Identifying preferences and interests of residents can assist Township officials with long-term planning efforts for the Township.

The objectives of the survey were to better understand current satisfaction levels with Township services and to identify areas or issues that may require the attention of Township officials in the future. Through an objective analysis of survey responses, Township officials can evaluate these findings and establish priorities and strategies to better address the needs of the entire community.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A survey questionnaire was mailed to all residential households in Wayne Township. The Township Trustees provided a mailing list based on their database of residential

household addresses in Wayne Township that is maintained by the Township for the mailing of the *Wayne's Flames* Township newsletter. A total of 1,477 households were mailed surveys in October 2007. Each survey packet included a survey instrument and a return-addressed postage-paid envelope. The survey requested that one member of the household who is 18 years of age or older and a resident of the Township complete the survey. If there were multiple members of the household who were 18 years of age or older and residents of Wayne Township, the survey requested that the person with the next birthday complete the survey. A reminder card was mailed approximately twelve days after the first survey instrument had been mailed. A second survey instrument was mailed approximately three weeks after the first one. The second survey instrument packet was identical to the first one and provided households with a second opportunity to participate. A second reminder card was mailed approximately ten days after the second instrument had been mailed. A total of 632 usable responses were returned, for a response rate of 48.95%¹. The response rate is calculated using the total number of households mailed (1,477) less vacant (43), undeliverable (62), and unusable (81) addresses for a net total of 1,291 households.

Figure 1:

Net Households Mailed	1,291
Households Responding	632
Response Rate	48.95%
Confidence Interval	+/- 3.0%

¹ The response rate is calculated by subtracting the vacant (43), undeliverable (62), and unusable (81) addresses from the total number of households mailed (1,477) for a net household base of 1,291.

The standard margin of error in this survey is +/- 3.0% at the 95% confidence interval. This means that we can be 95% confident that the responses are accurate to within +/- 3.0% of respondents' views at the time of the survey.

All surveys are subject to sources of error, such as bias in the wording of questions, timing, issue salience, as well as other factors. The instrument design, format, and timing attempted to increase the response rate and to minimize bias. There is little reason to suspect that the data collection procedures introduced any significant bias, and the findings reported can be taken as an accurate reflection of respondent opinion at the time. However, these opinions are ephemeral and therefore may change over time. Thus, they reflect a snapshot of respondents' views at the time the survey was conducted.

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%.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument was drafted by the staff at the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University in consultation with Wayne Township officials. The survey questions were designed to elicit responses in several forms. While the instrument comprised forced choice, ranking, and rating intensity questions, open ended questions allowed the respondent to describe in their own words concerns about a number of issues about living in Wayne Township. Appendix A contains a copy of the survey instrument.

The first set of questions asked about residents' overall views about life in Wayne Township. Residents were asked to provide information about how long they have lived in Wayne Township, their overall satisfaction with living in the Township, and how living in the Township had changed in the past five years. Residents were then asked to list “the three qualities that you **like** the most” and “the three qualities that you **dislike** the most” about living in Wayne Township. Next, residents were asked about their intentions to remain in the Township or move away from the Township in the next five years. Residents were also asked to rate Wayne Township as a place to live, a place to raise a family, and as a place to retire. Finally, residents were asked to imagine Wayne Township five years from now and indicate how much growth the Township should pursue. Residents were also given the opportunity to identify the types of growth they would like to see in Wayne Township.

The second section of questions gathered information on a variety of services offered to Wayne Township residents. Residents were asked about how service delivery had changed in the past three years in regard to services such as fire protection, emergency medical services, street and road conditions, and zoning enforcement. Residents were then asked to rate the change over the past three years of a variety of street, road, and sign conditions, including street name signs, highway route signs, speed limit postings, pothole repair, drains and ditches, snow & ice removal, and roadside mowing & trimming.

The next set of questions focused specifically on fire protection and emergency medical service provided to Township residents. Residents were first asked to identify whether these services were provided to them by the Wayne Township Volunteer Fire

Department or by the Seven Mile Fire Department. Residents were then asked to indicate their satisfaction with the current levels of fire protection, and emergency medical service (EMS) that they receive.

A fourth set of questions asked residents about zoning code enforcement in Wayne Township. Residents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the status of the current Wayne Township zoning code. Next, residents were asked to identify which public nuisances (including fences, junked cars, litter, maintenance of vacant buildings, miscellaneous junk, storage of recreational vehicles, unattended pets, unregistered vehicles, and vegetation height (weeds and brush)) Wayne Township has not adequately addressed. Additionally, residents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the enforcement of zoning codes in Wayne Township.

A fifth section of questions was designed to obtain views on the parks and recreation opportunities in the Township. Residents were first asked whether they would like to see township supported public parks and recreational facilities developed within the Township. Next, residents were asked their opinion on what facilities they would like to see developed within the Township.

The sixth set of questions focused specifically on police protection in Wayne Township. Residents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the current level of police protection provided by the Butler County Sheriff's Office. Residents were also asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with specific police services including: on-duty patrol, response time for requests, and general community outreach.

The next set of questions asked residents about their attitudes and perceptions about Township government, while the eighth section of questions dealt with township

communication with residents. Residents were asked how many Township Trustee meetings they have attended in the past two years. Furthermore, residents were asked to identify the sources from which they would prefer to receive information concerning Township news, meetings, and events, including: a dedicated column in local newspapers, Township newsletter, and Township Internet web site.

The final set of questions collected a number of demographic characteristics including: home ownership, family size and age groupings, gender, marital status, and the years in which the respondent and their spouse, if applicable, were born. The last section of the survey provided respondents with an opportunity to write-in additional thoughts or comments if they desired.

SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

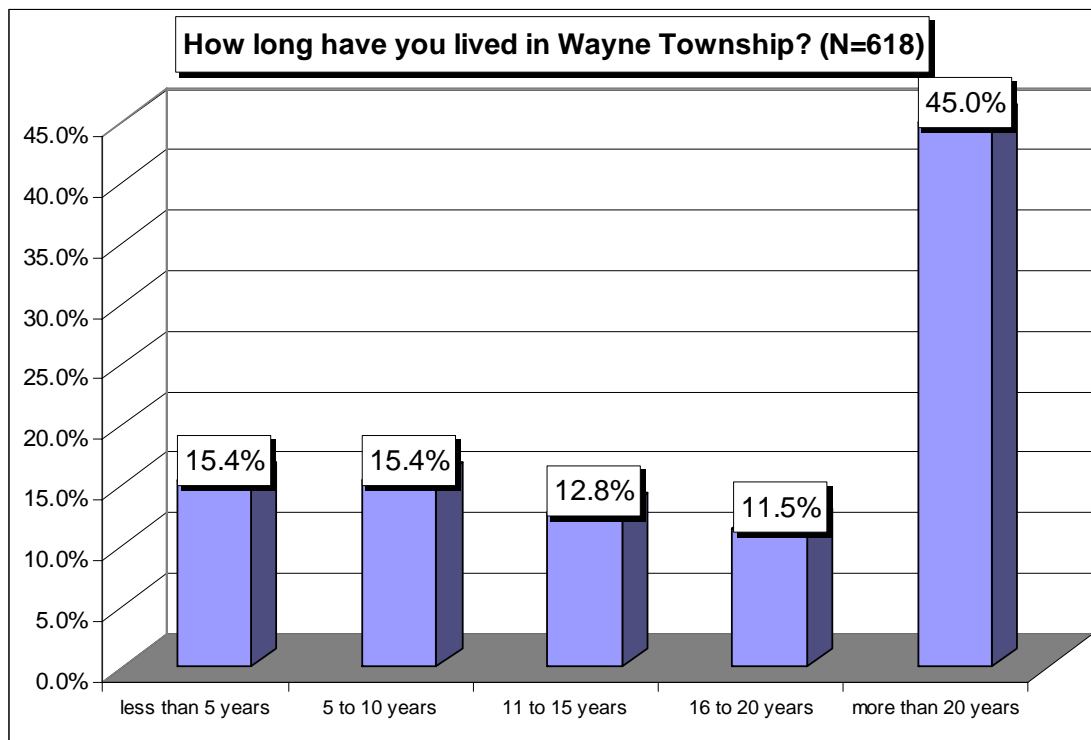
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS: The Wayne Township Community Survey collected baseline demographic data from responding households. This demographic data can be compared to the 2000 Census results to gauge the characteristics of household respondents as compared to actual Census demographics.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics

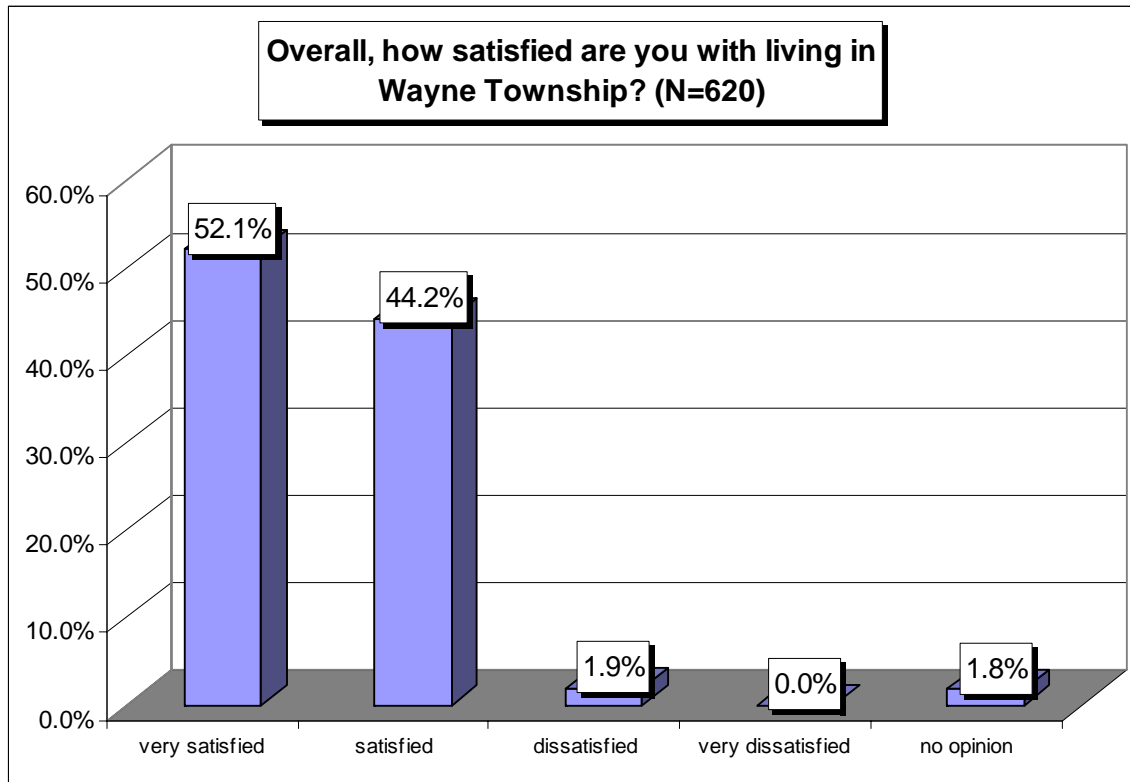
Demographic Category	2000 Census	2007 Survey
Gender:		
Male	50.9%	48.5%
Female	49.1%	51.5%
Marital Status:		
Married	68.9%	80.5%
Single (never married)	18.8%	3.3%
Single (divorced)	6.3%	7.1%
Surviving Spouse	6.0%	8.6%
Households with Minor Children	41.6%	29.4%
Home Ownership	92.4%	98.0%

As Table 3 indicates, female, married, and home owner respondents are slightly over-represented in the survey, while single (never married) respondents and households with minor children are under-represented in the household population. However, this Census comparison suggests that the respondents were proportionately representative of the overall population of Wayne Township.

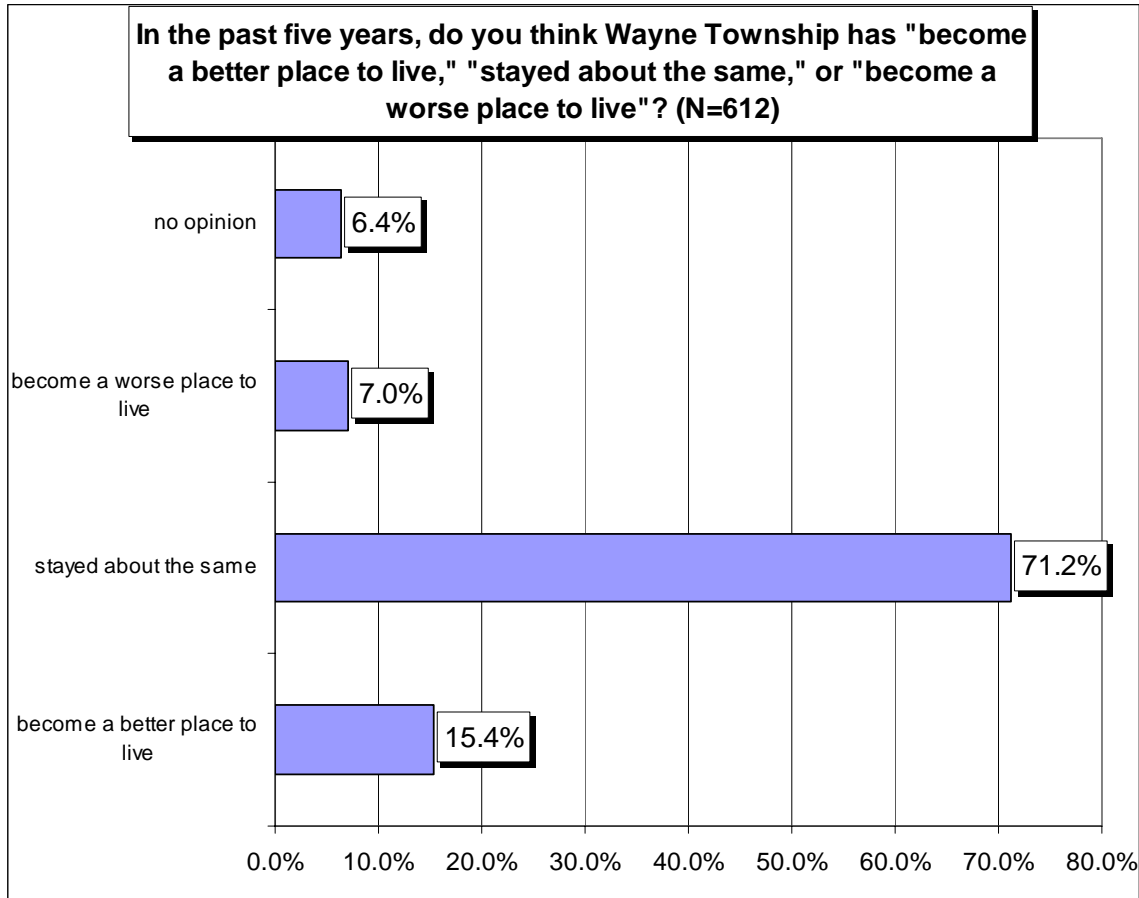
TOWNSHIP LIFE: It is not uncommon for long-term residents (more than 20 years) to account for a majority of the responses to a community survey of this nature. As the chart below indicates, survey respondents represent a distribution across all categories of length of residency. While more than four out of ten respondents were long-term residents, slightly more than fifteen percent have resided in the Township for five years or less. This is a positive indicator of wide spread interest in the Township by both longer-term residents as well as relative newcomers.



Well over nine out of ten respondents indicated their overall satisfaction with living in Wayne Township. More than five in ten respondents indicated that they were very satisfied (52.1%) with living in the Township; another 44.2% were satisfied with living in the Township. Only 1.9% of the respondents indicated they were either dissatisfied (1.9%) or very dissatisfied (0.0%) with living in Wayne Township.



As a second measure of satisfaction, the survey asked residents to consider how living in the Township has changed in the past five years. While 71.2% indicated that Wayne Township has “stayed about the same,” 15.4% indicated that Wayne Township has “become a better place to live.” 7.0% thought the Township has “become a worse place to live” in the past five years.



Residents were asked to identify “the three qualities that you **like** the most” and “the three qualities that you **dislike** the most” about living in Wayne Township. Over 2,100 discrete comments were provided in response to these two questions (approximately 1,300 positive (“likes”) aspects and more than 800 negative (“dislikes”) aspects). A content analysis was conducted on both sets of comments allowing similar responses to be aggregated into general categories. Approximately seven out of ten positive aspects identified as qualities that people like about living in Wayne Township were aggregated into “quality of life” issues. These positive quality of life aspects included such things as small town atmosphere, country living, rural setting, peace and quiet, privacy, and good people/neighbors. Slightly more than 15% of respondents mentioned the quality of public services provided to residents, particularly fire and emergency medical services, road

maintenance, and the responsiveness of Township officials towards addressing residents’ issues and problems. Another positive aspect identified included the proximity of the Township to other locations such as the City of Middletown and the City of Hamilton, as well as proximity to work, school, and family.

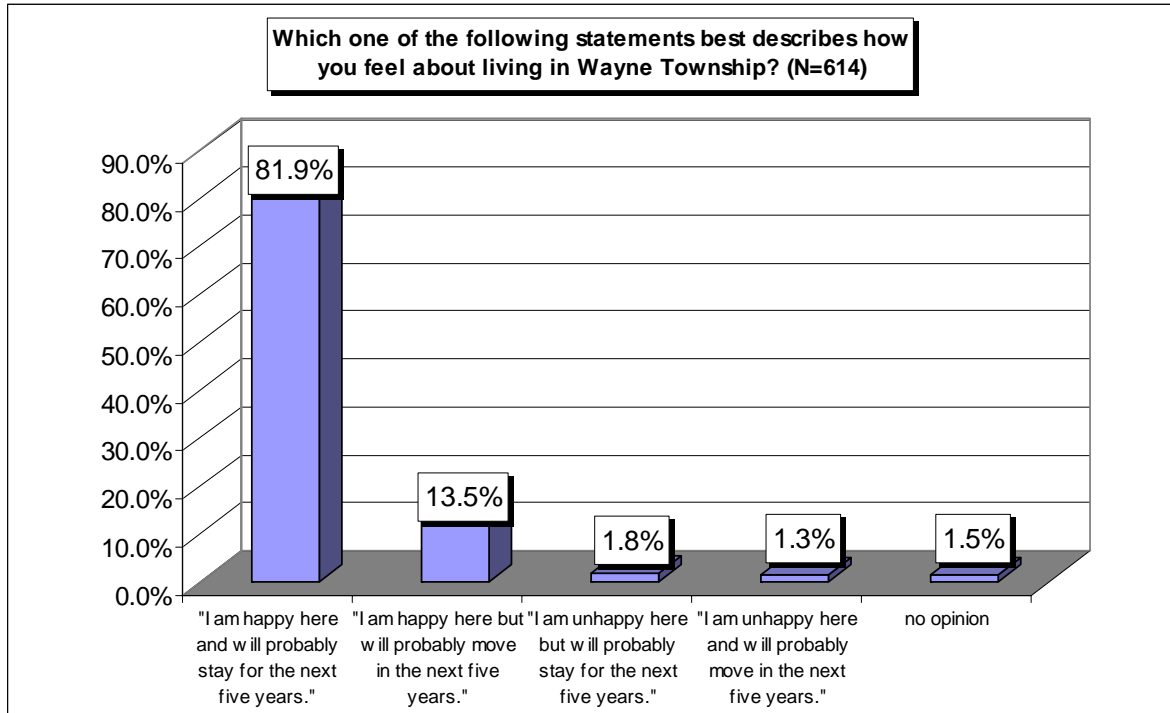
The negative aspects to living in the Township were more broadly dispersed across a variety of categories. Traffic issues (including speeding, congestion, road maintenance, and snow/ice removal) were the most frequently cited qualities that respondents dislike about living in Wayne Township. Government related issues (including tax rates, Township services, and schools) and issues related to zoning including the current zoning code, zoning enforcement, property maintenance, and nuisances were also cited as qualities that respondents dislike about living in Wayne Township. Finally, a number of respondents expressed a dislike for issues related to growth and development (increased development and construction and loss of farmland) in Wayne Township.

Table 1: Qualities That You Like/Dislike the Most About Living in Wayne Township

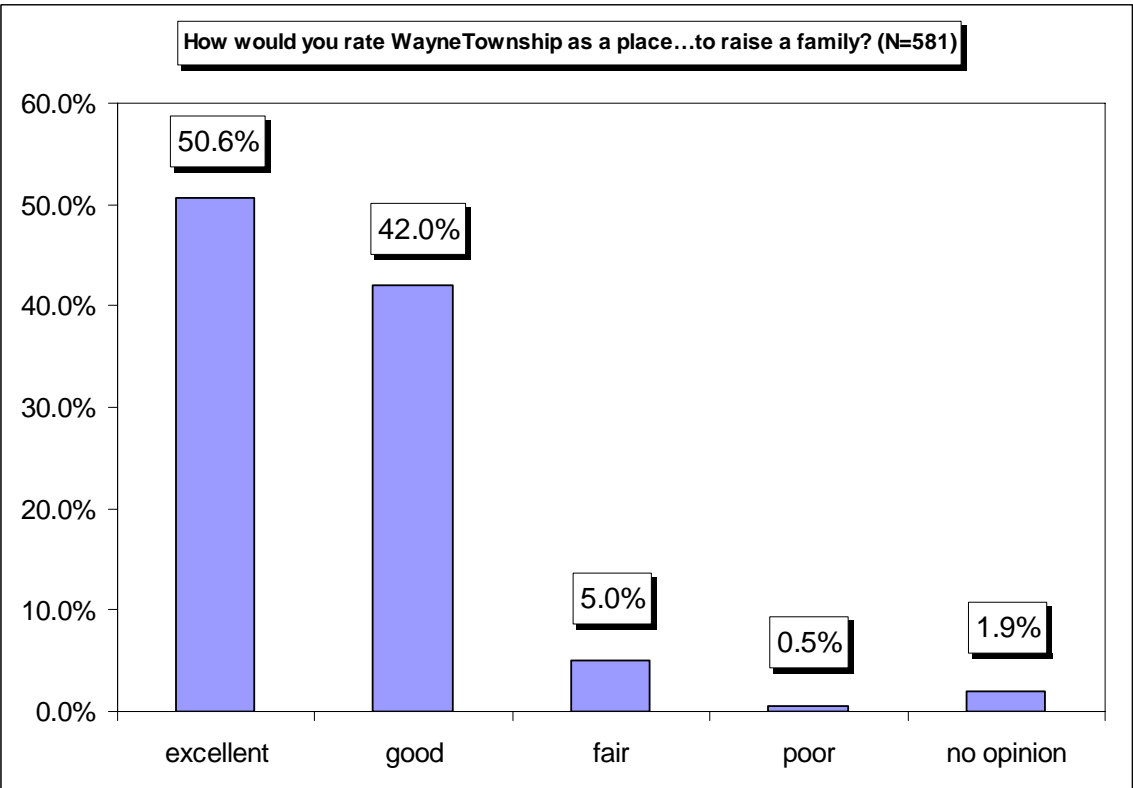
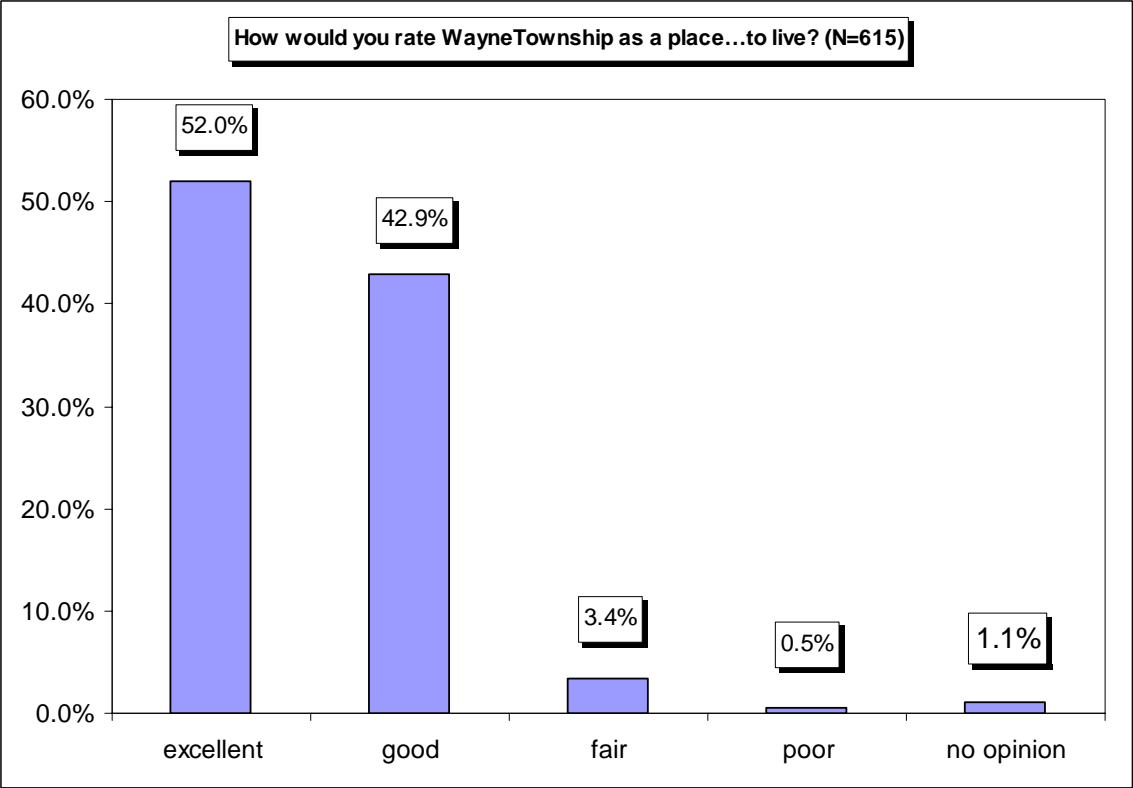
Like (N=Varies)	Dislike (N=Varies)
Quality of Life (70.2%)	Traffic (22.6%)
Quality of Public Services (17.8%)	Government related issues (20.9%)
Proximity of Township (6.1%)	Zoning (17.5%)
Schools (4.5%)	Growth and Development (12.7%)

While a previous question asked residents to take a retrospective look and assess change over the past five years, the next two questions asked them to look into the future. Again using a five-year time horizon, respondents were asked to indicate both their level of happiness and whether or not they anticipated staying in the Township. As the following chart shows, more than eight out of ten respondents are both happy in Wayne

Township and intend to stay for the next five years. This information may be useful to the Township as it looks to develop long-term plans and strategies for what appears to be a very stable population base.



Furthermore, residents were asked to rate Wayne Township as a place to live, a place to raise a family, and a place to retire. An overwhelming majority of respondents (94.9%) rated Wayne Township as either an “excellent” (52.0%) or a “good” (42.9%) place to live. Similar numbers of respondents rated Wayne Township as either an “excellent” (50.6%) or a “good” (42.0%) place to raise a family. However, fewer respondents rated Wayne Township as either an “excellent” (37.1%) or “good” (39.5%) place to retire.



Finally, the survey asked respondents to imagine the Township five years from now and indicate how much growth the Township should pursue. A majority of respondents (59.0%) think the Township should “remain the same,” while 33.7% of respondents think the Township should “pursue moderate growth.” Only 4.1% think the Township should “pursue significant growth” in the next five years. It should be noted that individual respondents may have differing views of what constitutes significant or moderate growth.

In order to understand what respondents may have meant by significant or moderate growth, a follow-up question asked them to specify what types of growth they would like to see in Wayne Township. A content analysis of the 433 responses to this question allowed similar responses to be aggregated into general categories. Slightly more than 30% of respondents would like to see Wayne Township pursue no additional growth and development. Nearly 20% of respondents indicated that they would like to see Wayne Township pursue retail growth; many of these respondents identified a grocery store, convenience store, or a gas station as retail options that they would like to see in the Township. 13.8% of respondents indicated that they would prefer controlled or restricted growth in terms of improved land use planning, increased zoning code enforcement, and restrictions on the lot size and quantity of new residential homes being built in the Township. Finally, slightly less than 12% of respondents indicated that they would like to see the township maintain open space through farmland preservation efforts and an increase in land set aside for parks and recreational activities and facilities.

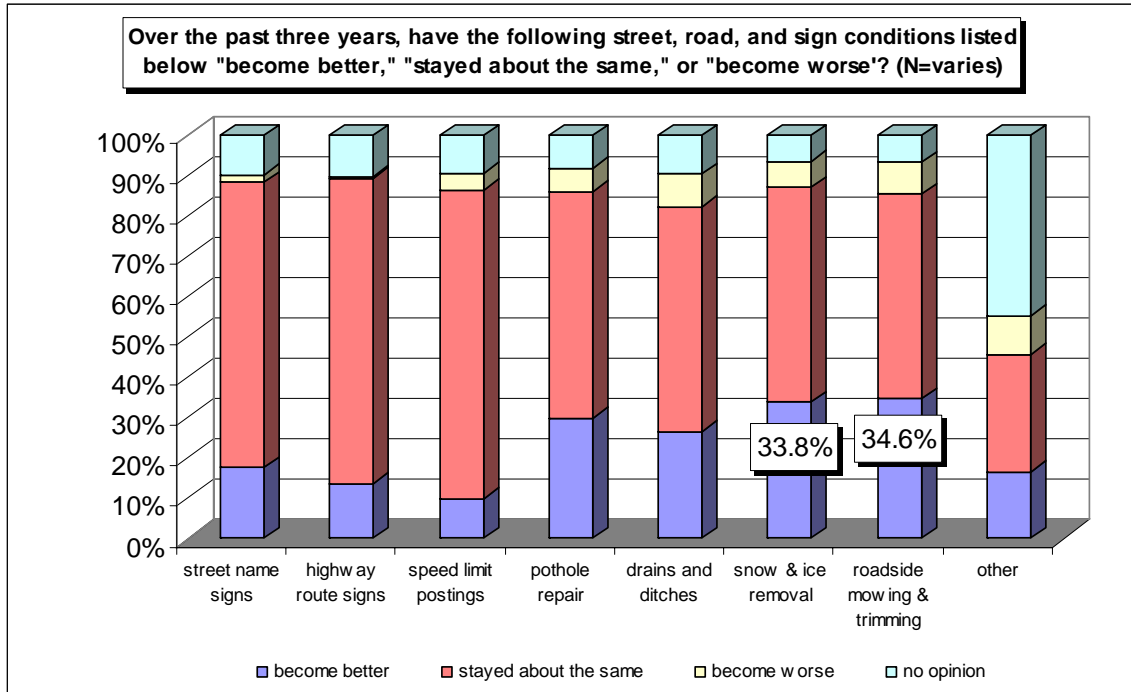
TOWNSHIP SERVICES: Wayne Township provides a number of services to its residents. Residents were asked to indicate whether these township services had “become better,” “stayed about the same,” or “become worse” over the past three years. Over 50%

of respondents indicated that all four services had either “become better” or “stayed about the same” over the past three years. Street and road conditions were rated the most favorably of the four services as over 80% of respondents indicated that this service had either “become better” or “stayed about the same” over the past three years. Details are shown in the table below.

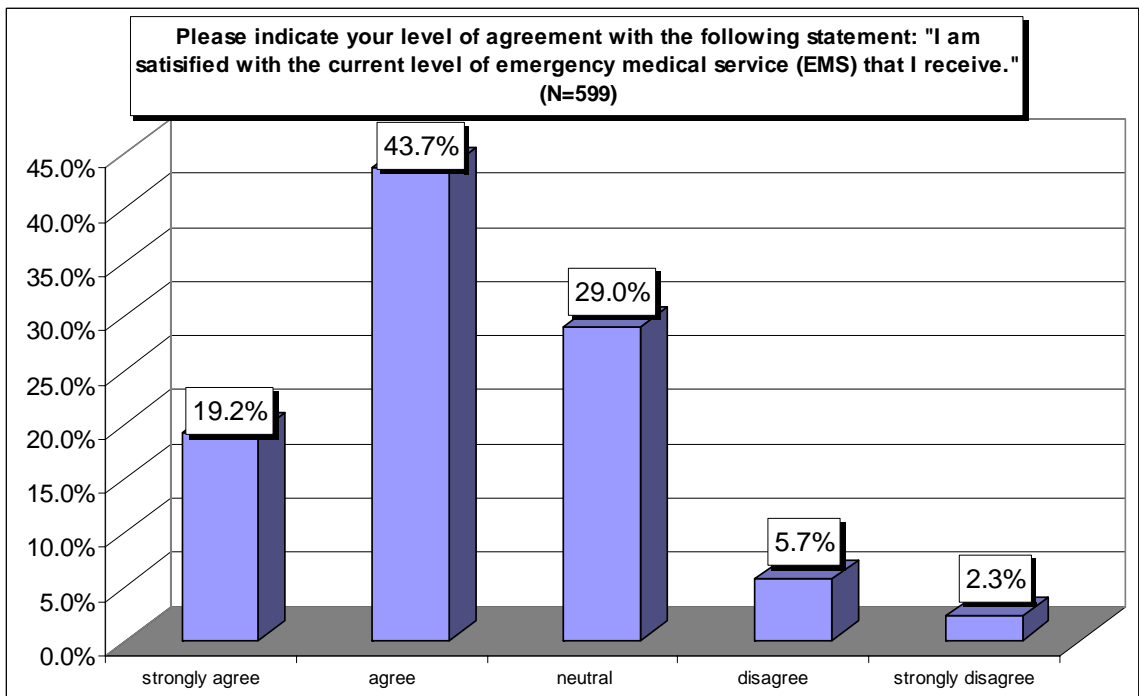
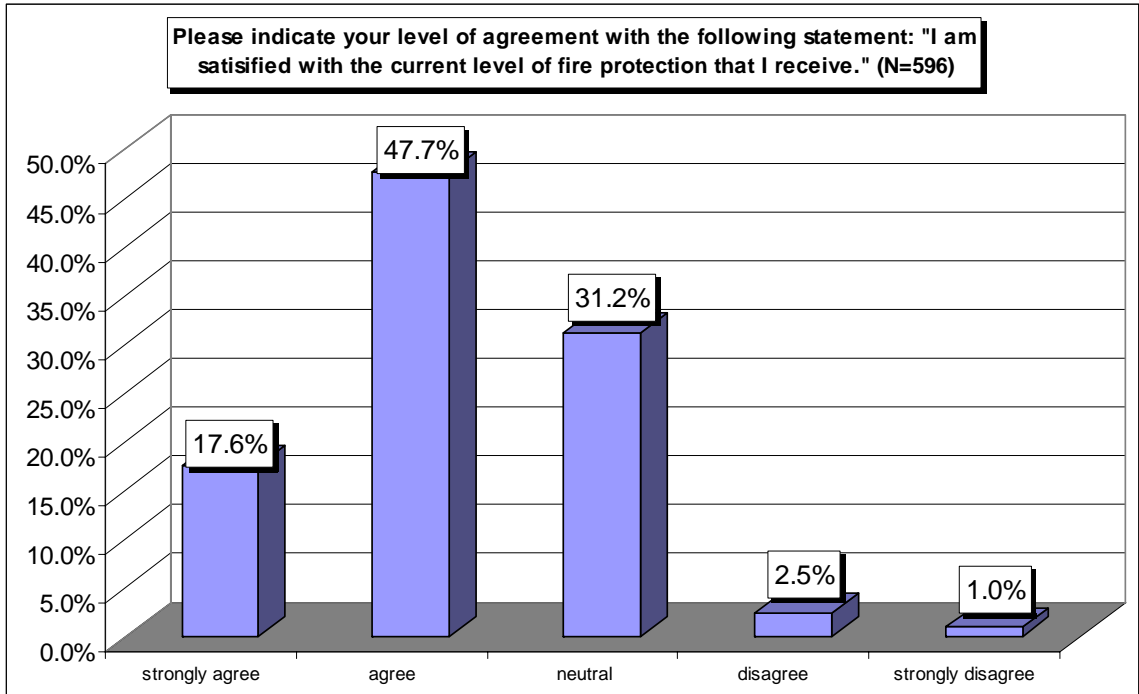
Table 2: Township Services Over the Past Three Years (N=varies)

	become better	stayed about the same	become worse	no opinion
fire protection	23.9%	49.8%	1.7%	24.6%
emergency medical services	24.2%	44.8%	6.0%	25.0%
street and road conditions	33.1%	51.0%	7.8%	8.1%
zoning enforcement	11.5%	45.8%	9.7%	32.9%

Residents were then asked to assess the condition and maintenance of streets, roads, and signs in Wayne Township over the same period of time. As the chart below indicates, most respondents indicated that the condition and maintenance of streets, roads, and signs in the Township have “stayed about the same” (pink bars) over the past three years. Two particular services that stood out positively in the responses to this question were that of snow & ice removal and roadside mowing & trimming. 33.8% and 34.6% of respondents respectively indicated that these particular services had “become better” over the past three years.

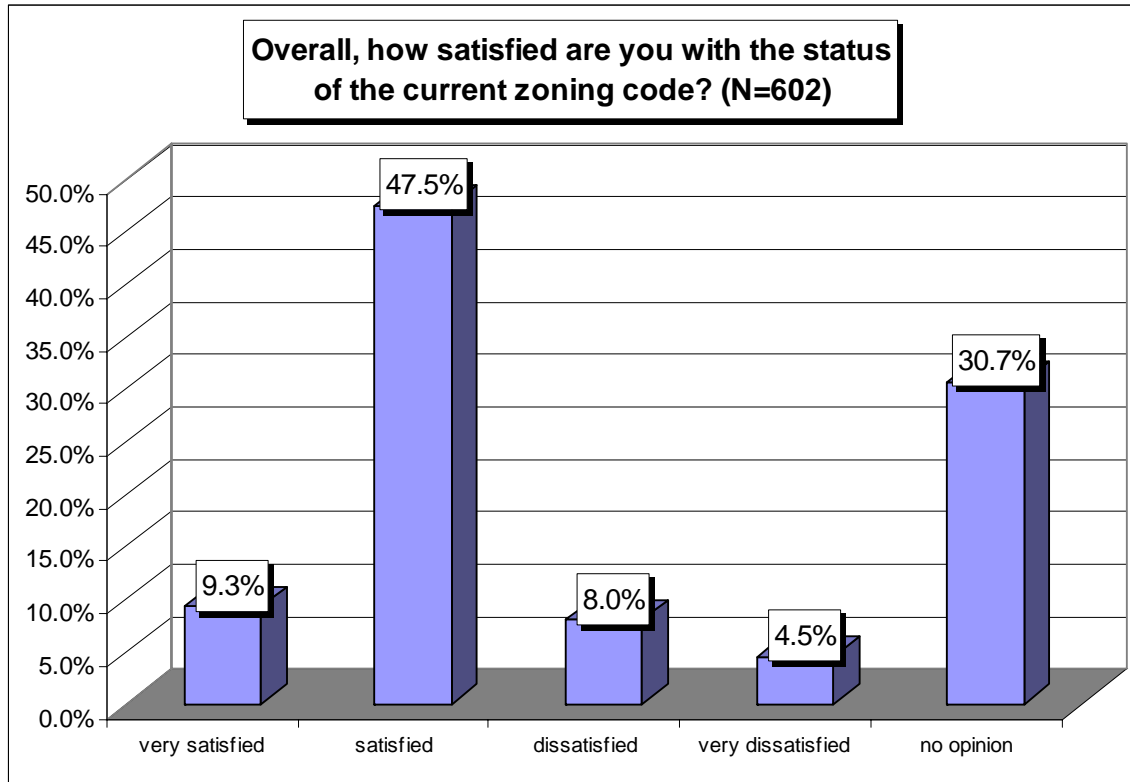


FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE: Previously, residents were asked to assess the change over time with regard to fire protection and emergency medical service in the Township. The next set of questions asked them to identify who provides these services to their household and to consider their levels of satisfaction with the services provided. 65.7% of respondents indicated that the Wayne Township Volunteer Fire Department provided their fire protection and emergency medical service. 14.1% of respondents indicated that the Seven Mile Fire Department provided these services to their household; while 17.7% indicated that they were “not sure” which department provided these services to their household. Additionally, respondents indicated generally high satisfaction rates with the level of fire protection and emergency medical service (EMS) provided to residents.



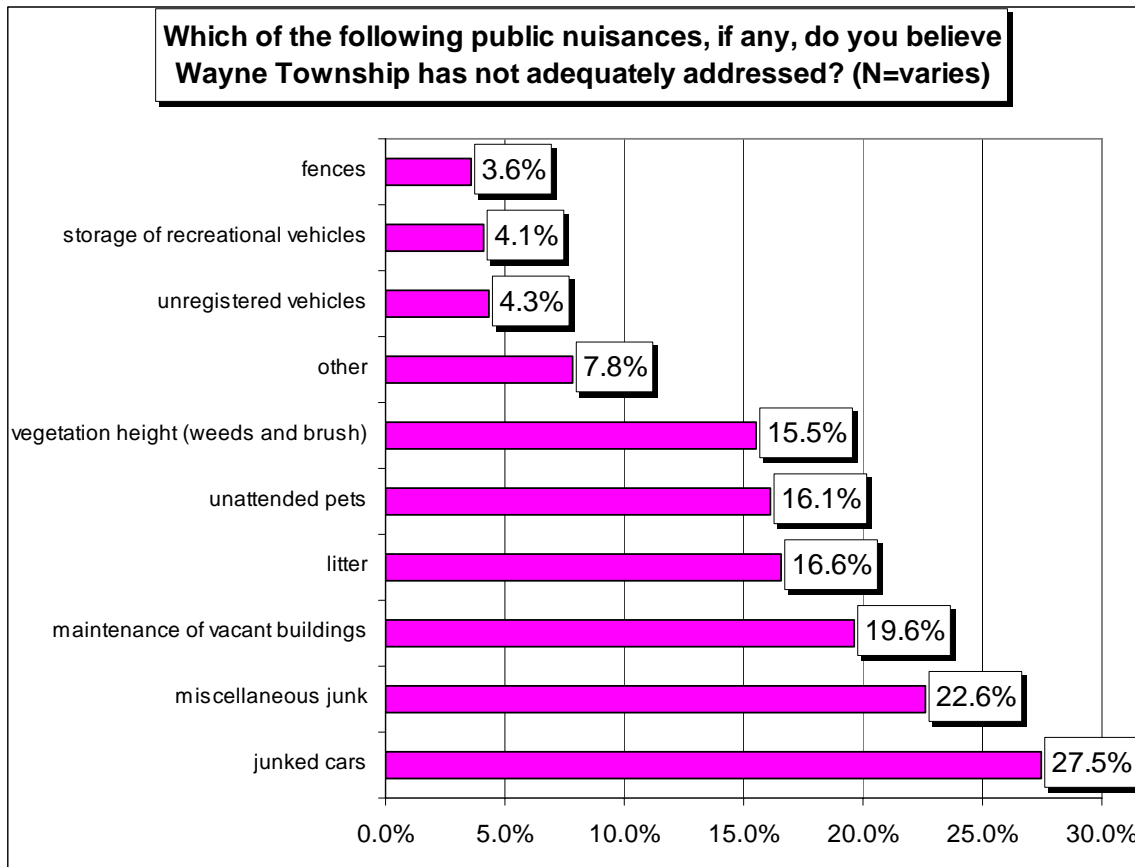
ZONING CODE ENFORCEMENT: The next set of questions was designed to capture opinions regarding zoning regulations and code enforcement. The first question asked residents to indicate their overall satisfaction with the status of the current zoning

code. 47.5% of respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” with the status of the current zoning code.

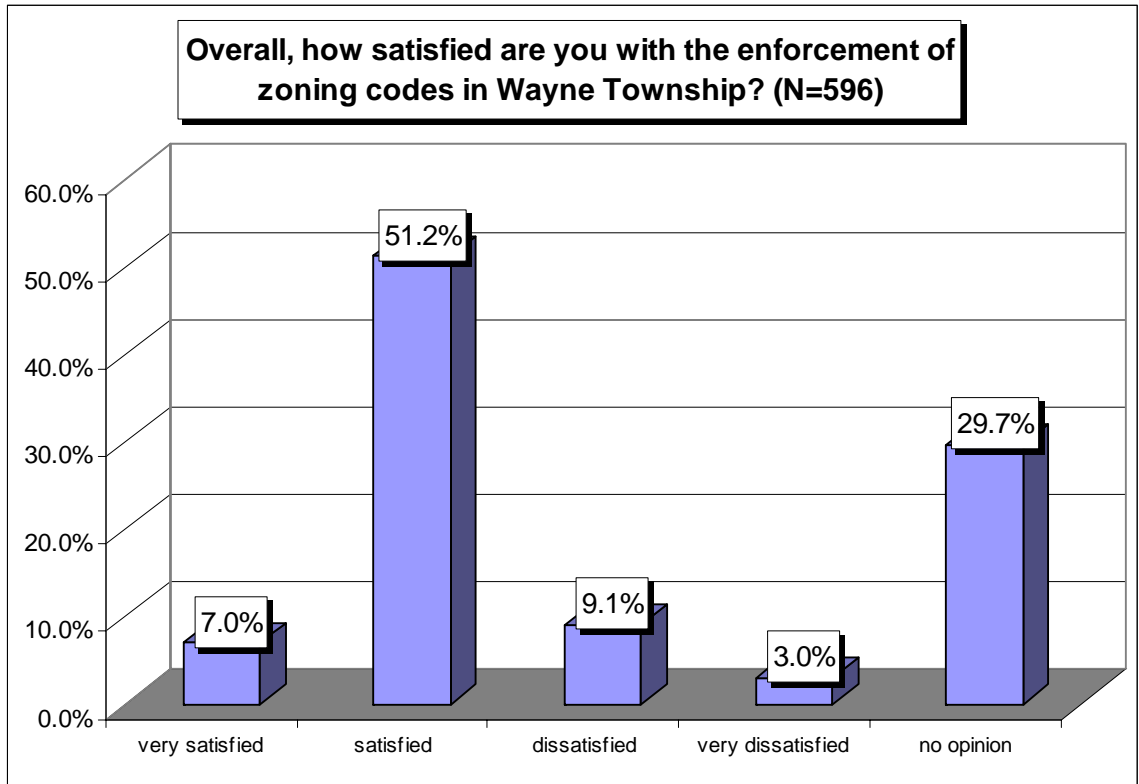


Respondents were then given the opportunity to list any aspects of the Wayne Township zoning code that they felt needed to be updated or modified. Over 163 discrete comments regarding zoning were received in response to this question. Many of the comments related to the desire to see increased enforcement of the current zoning code particularly in regards to issues such as junk cars and property maintenance and appearance. Respondents were then asked to identify which public nuisances they believe Wayne Township has not adequately addressed. Respondents identified junked cars (27.5%), miscellaneous junk (22.6%), maintenance of vacant buildings (19.6%),

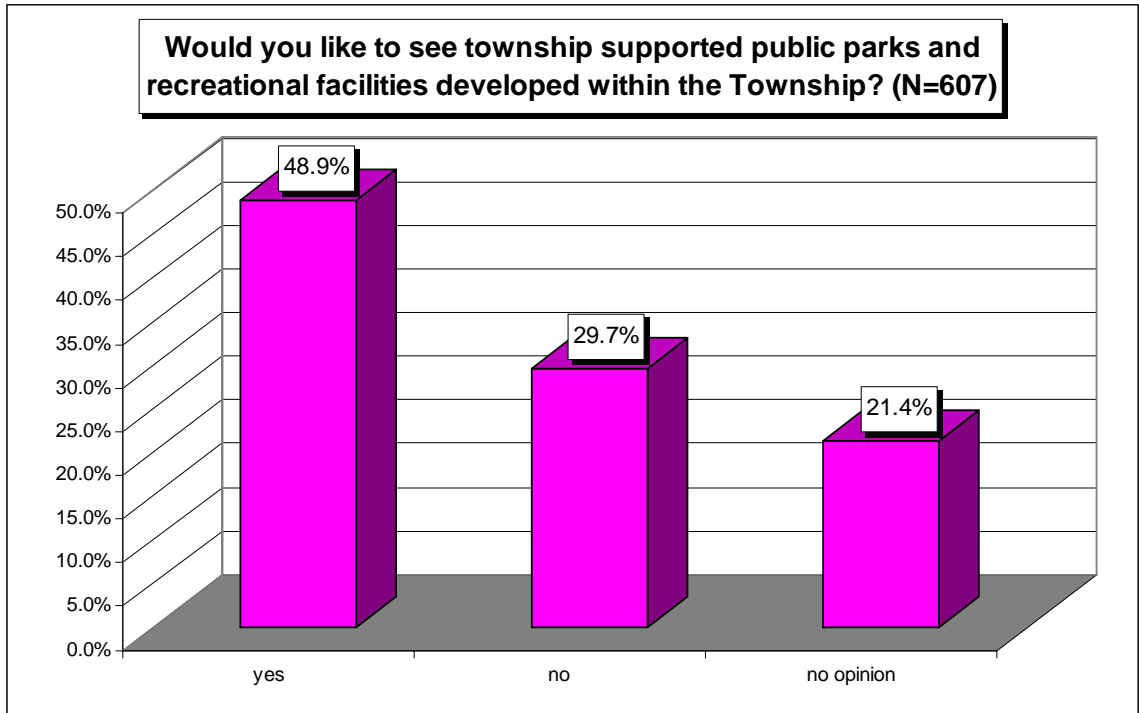
litter (16.6%), and unattended pets (16.1%) as the top five nuisances not adequately addressed by the township.



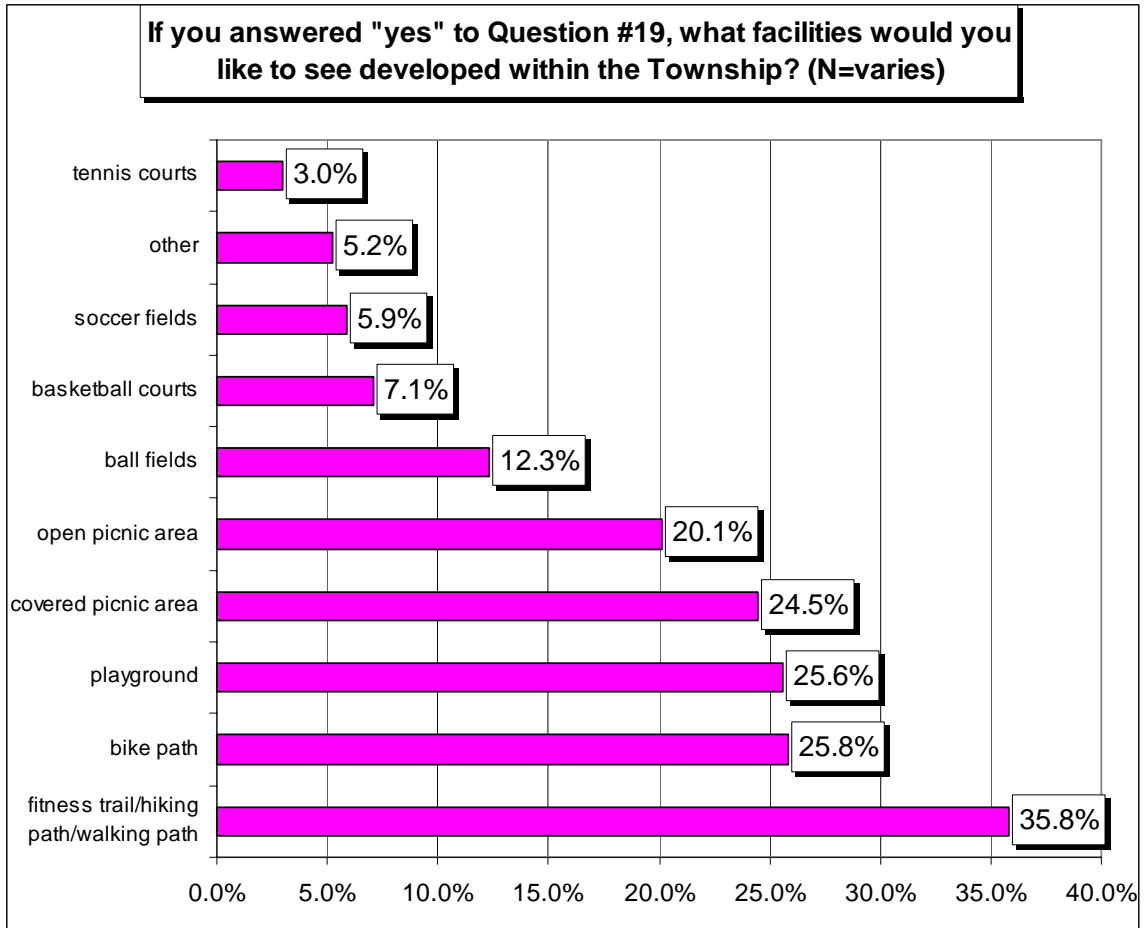
The final question in this section asked residents about their satisfaction levels with the enforcement of zoning codes in Wayne Township. Over 50% of respondents indicated that they were either very satisfied (7.0%) or satisfied (51.2%) with zoning code enforcement in the Township. Nearly 30% of respondents expressed no opinion on the issue (29.7%).



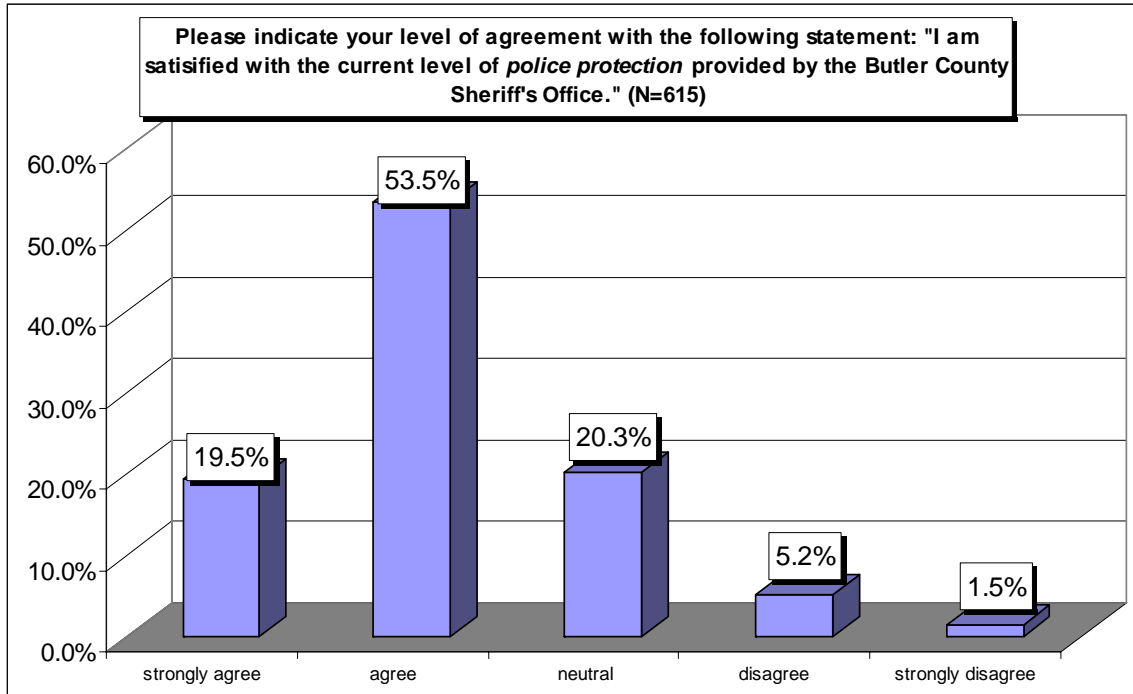
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES: Township residents were asked to indicate their preferences towards the development of township supported public parks and recreational facilities and the types of facilities they would prefer if facilities were to be developed within the Township. Nearly half of all respondents (48.9%) indicated an interest in developing township supported public parks and recreational facilities within Wayne Township.



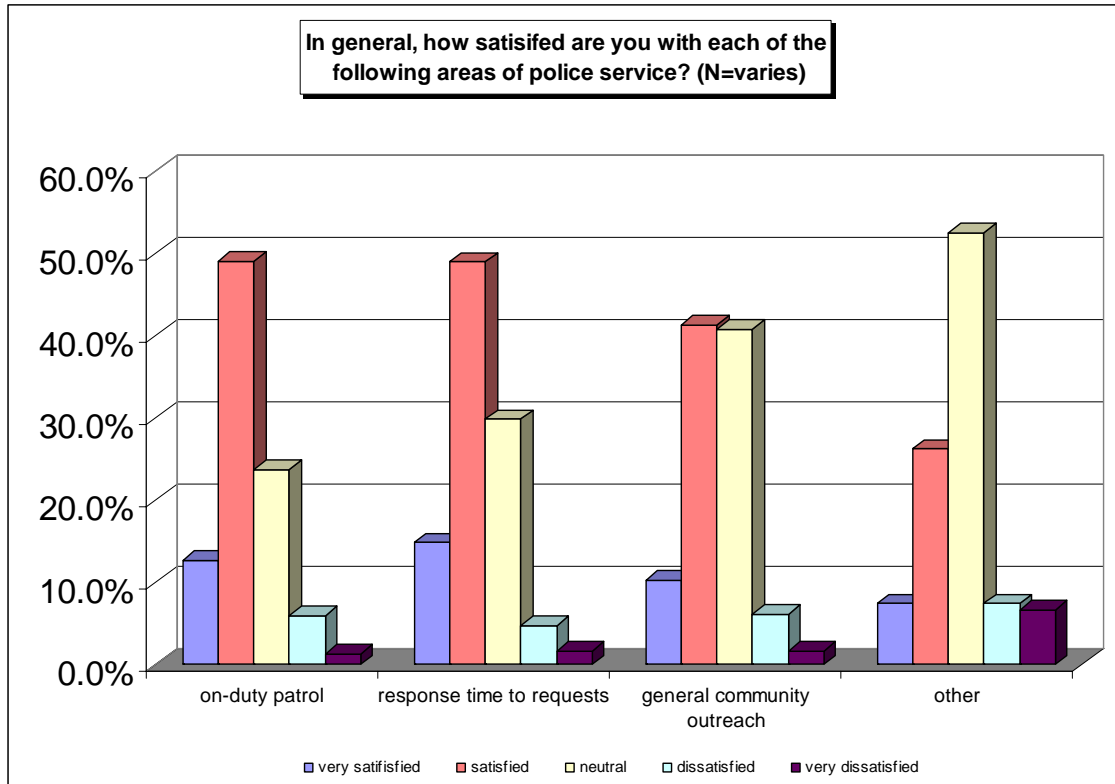
Fitness trail/hiking path/walking path, bike path, playground, covered picnic area, and open picnic area were the five most frequent selections by respondents who favored the development of township supported public parks and recreational facilities within the Township. Each of these four selections was selected by more than 20% of respondents.



POLICE PROTECTION: The next section of the survey asked residents to consider police protection in Wayne Township. The first question asked residents about their satisfaction with the current level of police protection provided by the Butler County Sheriff’s Office. Respondents indicated a generally high satisfaction rate with the level of police protection provided by the Butler County Sheriff’s Office.



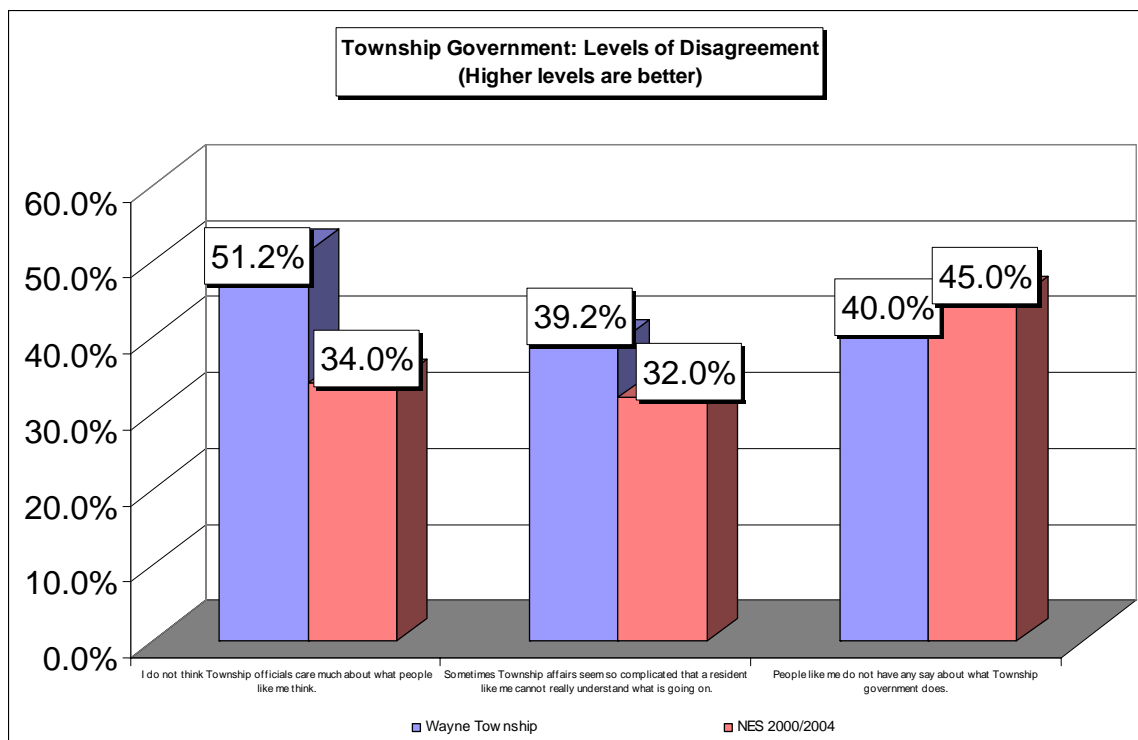
Looking more specifically at police services, residents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with several specific areas of police service. While there were a fair number of neutral responses (25.6%, 29.8%, and 40.8% respectively) to this question, respondents expressed their overall satisfaction with on-duty patrol, response time to requests, and general community outreach.



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT: In addition to collecting attitudes and opinions regarding public services provided by the Township, the survey also sought to collect information regarding residents' views toward Township government. Using a set of questions that have been used in other surveys in other communities, we can compare the attitudes of Wayne Township residents with individuals nationally. Based upon the 2004 results of The American National Election Studies², we can compare Wayne Township survey results with the national results. Higher levels of disagreement with this set of questions indicate that residents have positive feelings towards their ability to understand and influence the political process.

² The American National Election Studies (www.electionstudies.org). *The ANES Guide To Public Opinion And Electoral Behavior*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies [producer and distributor], 2004. These materials are based on work supported by the National Science Foundation and a number of other sponsors. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in these materials are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding organizations.

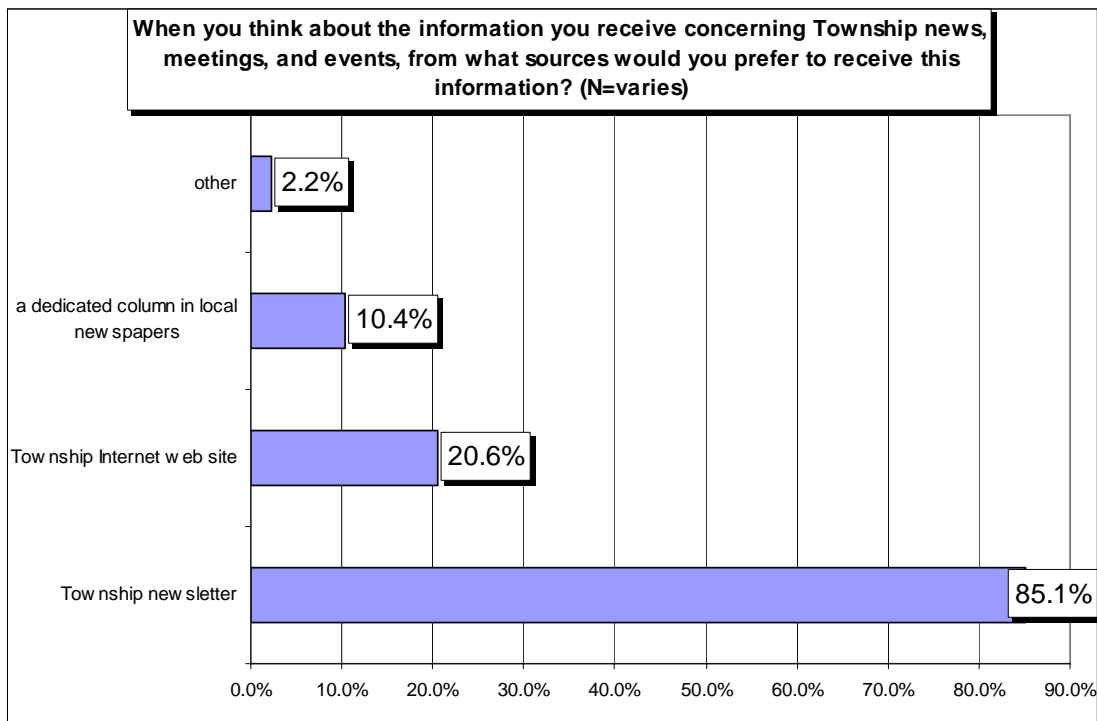
Wayne Township survey respondents are above the national average on two out of the three comparative measures. We do urge caution in the interpretation and use of these results as many factors can and do influence individual responses to questions of this nature. With only four out of ten respondents disagreeing with the statement, “People like me do not have any say in what Township government does,” this may provide the Township with an opportunity to reach out and improve communications to change this negative perception. Also, 39.2% of respondents disagreed with the statement that “Sometimes Township affairs seem so complicated that a resident like me cannot really understand what is going on.” This level of disagreement would seem to indicate that there are some residents that find Township affairs complicated.



TOWNSHIP COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS: Another set of questions was designed so that residents could consider issues pertaining to Wayne Township Trustee meetings and the Township’s communication efforts with residents. The first

question asked residents to indicate how many Township Trustee meetings they have attended in the past two years. More than eight out of ten respondents (81.2%) have not attended a meeting in that timeframe. Just over fifteen percent (15.1%) of respondents have attended 1-3 meetings in the past two years, while the remaining 3.7% of respondents have attended 4 or more meetings in that timeframe.

The final question in this section asked from what sources respondents would prefer to receive information concerning Township news, meetings, and events. The most frequently cited choice (85.1%) for a source of information was a Township newsletter. This may be taken as a signal that residents look to the *Wayne's Flames* newsletter as a valuable source of Township information. 20.6% of respondents would prefer to receive information about the Township from a Township Internet web site. Only 10.4% would like to see a dedicated column in local newspapers as a source of information concerning Township news, meeting, and events.



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were provided with the opportunity at the end of the survey to make additional comments. Nearly 30% of all respondents took the opportunity to make an additional comment about Wayne Township. A content analysis of the Additional Comments identifies several recurring themes that some respondents took the time to write about. These themes include the desire to maintain the quiet, country living atmosphere of Wayne Township. Controlling growth and development was important to some respondents so that Wayne Township does not become similar to other fast growing townships within Butler County. However, some respondents did indicate their desire to see Wayne Township attract some new businesses such as a small market or restaurant. Other respondents took the time to praise the Wayne Township elected officials, employees, and volunteers for their work and efforts. Another recurring theme revolved around Wayne Township being a good place to raise a family. Finally, some respondents expressed appreciation for the survey and the opportunity to provide their opinions; and hoped that the results of the survey would be eventually publicized.

CONCLUSION

Nearly half of those households who received a Wayne Township Community Survey chose to participate and returned a completed survey. This is a positive indication of the high degree of public interest within the Township. In general, respondents indicated a fairly high degree of satisfaction with the public services provided to residents of Wayne Township. This overall satisfaction is reflected in the large number of respondents who indicated their expectation to remain in the Township for the next five years.

Respondents indicated an interest in additional public services such as developing township supported public parks and recreational facilities.

This community survey provides a baseline set of data that may be useful in addressing both the current and future needs of Wayne Township. The Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at Miami University recommends the Township conduct a similar community survey in three to five years to better assess both change and progress in the Township over time.