CANA
Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations

Code Enforcement & Quality of Life Committee

CEQL Survey Overview

What prompted survey?

Many of us have made a significant commitment to living in the City of Albany. Some of us have had opportunities and choices as to whether we live in the Capital District, Albany or elsewhere. We have elected to live within the City of Albany because of its quality of life, the cultural and property values, the convenience of nearby shopping, a good public transportation infrastructure and so much more. We want living within the City of Albany to be the best there is and have grown concerned that perhaps our complaints, while not as severe as in other municipalities, were not being heard by the various city departments. We also wondered if other people around the city felt as we did.

Our intention was to come up with a device to gauge where everyone's concerns lie and to what extent they may differ from one part of the city to another. It also would establish a benchmark against which any future progress can be measured.

How was it designed?

The survey was developed through the efforts of the Code Enforcement and Quality of Life Committee (CEQL) which represents the Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations (CANA). Committee members reflected a broad cross section of the community. Members of the committee include:

Joan Byalin	Dominick Calsoloro
Pat Hancox	Andrew Harvey
Bruce Hungershafer	Colin McNight
Harold Rubin	Marggie Skinner
Elfreda Textores	Craig Waltz
	David Phaff, Chairperson

The CEQL Committee attempted to identify issues of concern that affected or influenced quality of life issues. The methodology was simple. 1) List every possible issue, 2) Merge overlapping issues, 3) Group issues according to a loosely defined set of types and keep it to one side of an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper.

While the committee reached a consensus, we realize that it was not possible to mention every single issue.

This survey would not have been so successful without the support of a number of individuals and organizations. The following are to be commended for their efforts.

- The Mayor's Office, City of Albany
  For their valued input towards the concept of the survey.
- The Albany Times Union
  For the printing and distribution of the surveys
- Stewart's Shops
  For allowing collection boxes in Albany stores
- Albany Public Library
  For allowing collection boxes in the main library and its branches
- Albany City Schools and the Citywide Albany PTO
  For cooperating on the distribution and collection of surveys to the elementary school grades.
- SUNYA – Institutional Research
  For assistance in preparing the data

What we were expecting?

Valid sampling –

> It was hoped that we would receive sufficient responses as to represent a valid statistical sampling for the community at large as well as the individual neighborhoods. While not every neighborhood was represented, most that were represented were statistically acceptable.

Tenant community

> Of all dwelling units within the City of Albany, including single family, two family or multiple family dwellings, most units are occupied by tenants and it was hoped that this community at large would be well represented in the survey. Unfortunately, the tenant community was not as well represented as we would have liked.

Barometer or report card

> If nothing else, this survey gives us a starting point to which future surveys can be compared. In reality, the results have indicated the valid concerns that appear across the city as well as some neighborhood-specific issues.

Resulting Action

> It is hoped that with the data as it exists, the City of Albany will attempt to focus on some of these issues by working with the various neighborhood associations. For those individuals or organizations qualified to further analyze the data, we look forward to their insight and guidance in identifying the myriad of issues, seeking viable solutions to the issues and coming up with a more effective survey in the next year.

Details Relating to Survey:
- There were two versions of the survey. Version I, shorter, less specific and lacking demographic questions, was distributed through several neighborhood associations. Version II, a more comprehensive survey including demographic questions, was distributed through the efforts of Albany Times Union in conjunction with Stewart's Shops, The Albany Public Library System and the Albany City School District and Citywide Parents Teachers Organization. The results of Version I were converted to Version II's format.
- Distribution
  The Albany Times Union printed 26,000 surveys that were distributed as follows:
  > 6,000 to elementary schools
  > Boxes of 80 to:
  >> 5 Albany Public Library & branches
  >> 9 Stewarts Shops
  > Balance distributed in Saturday edition of newspaper
- There was no public relations or advertising effort made in conjunction with the survey.
- The survey yielded over 1300 responses or five percent.
  > More than half were "qualified", which meant they included the required demographic detail and checked off no more than twelve "issues".
  > Most returns were mailed in. The majority came from the newspaper insert, followed by those from the Stewart's Shops and the Albany Public Library and its branches. We found that from all the elementary schools combined, we received a very small response. This poor showing was attributable to timing of the survey so late in the school year as well as inadequate promotion and participation with the teachers.

Overall Survey Results
In an attempt to maintain data integrity, preliminary comparisons of the issues selected were made of the "qualified" versus "unqualified" responses to ascertain whether either group showed a significant statistical difference in their choices. It was found that the difference between each group for identical issues was within five percent. This provided us with some degree of assurance that even though one group failed to provide demographics or may have checked off too many issues, their concerns were pretty much in line with the "qualified" group.

In considering the effort to compile and analyze this data please keep the following in mind:
- Not all respondents answered each question or selected the requested "five most significant issues". One common complaint was that we were limiting participants to only five choices when some people felt they should have the option of checking off more than five issues.
- Some people invented names for neighborhood associations that did not exist. This made them difficult to attribute to a particular area.
- A few individuals attempted to submit more than 10 identical or very similar surveys, presuming that no one (sane) person would ever be apt to review each and every survey. They were wrong. One person did. Only one survey was allowed where conspicuous abuse was determined. The extras were not allowed.

CEQL Survey Overview (continued)

- The original intent was to tie each survey with its address reference to a particular neighborhood. This was only modestly successful, with about half of the respondents providing such information. We recognize that in areas such as Pine Hills, the neighborhood is so large that using it as a locator may be ineffective. Consideration was given towards using city wards as locators but there was insufficient time and resources to convert the data.
- Some results will not total 100% or may conflict depending how forms were filled out.
- Fortunately, none of the surveys were postmarked from Palm Beach County, although a few were illegible and there were three rejected ballots from the Town of Colonie.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA - in identified neighborhoods

Male	208
Female	387
Undetermined	182

Age Distribution Chart

SURVEY AGE DISTRIBUTION

- Under 17 1%
- 18 to 25 3%
- 26 to 40 20%
- 41 to 55 32%
- 56 to 70 24%
- Over 71 20%
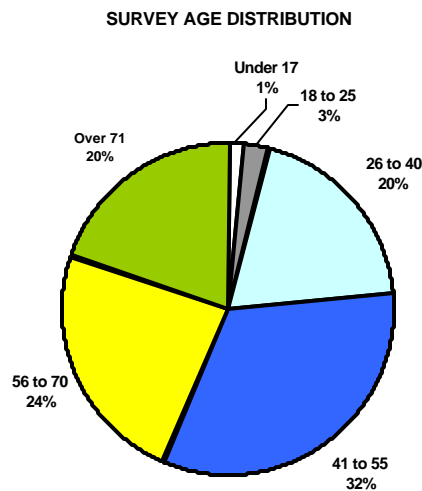
Own/Rent

Of identified surveys, most respondents indicated that they (or presumably a family member/partner) owned the dwelling that they lived in by a 5:1 ratio. We recognize that this is not indicative of the Albany population at large and it reinforces the need to reach out to the tenant community to assure adequate representation.

Some of the tallies per neighborhood were:

	Own	Rent
Pine Hills	93	25
Beverwyck	19	2
New Scotland/Whitehall	53	2
Arbor Hill	4	7
Delaware	63	13

<u>**CEQL Survey Overview**</u> (continued)

<u>Neighborhoods Represented</u>
The number of neighborhoods represented totaled twenty-nine. Of the total, twenty (in **Bold Type**) were considered statistically acceptable and six were considered marginal.

NEIGHBORHOOD	RESPONSES IDENTIFIED	STATISTICALLY ACCEPTABLE
Arbor Hill	14	Yes
Beverwyck	21	Yes
Buckingham/Crestwood	42	Yes
Campus	5	?
Center Square	32	Yes
Delaware	84	Yes
Dunes	1	No
Helderberg	51	Yes
Hudson Park	22	Yes
Krank Park	6	?
Lincoln Park	3	?
Manning Blvd.	7	Yes
Mansion	19	Yes
Melrose	27	Yes
New Albany	23	Yes
New Scotland/Whitehall	58	Yes
Normanskill	6	Yes
North Albany/Shaker Park	15	Yes
Park South	33	Yes
Pastures	1	No
Pine Hills	120	Yes
Point of Woods	8	Yes
Second Ave.	41	Yes
Sheridan Hollow	8	?
South End	5	?
Upper Washington Ave.	41	Yes
Washington Park	18	Yes
West Hill	18	Yes
Westland Hills	8	?

Statistical Citywide Overview

General Issue Groups
There were six general issue group categories:

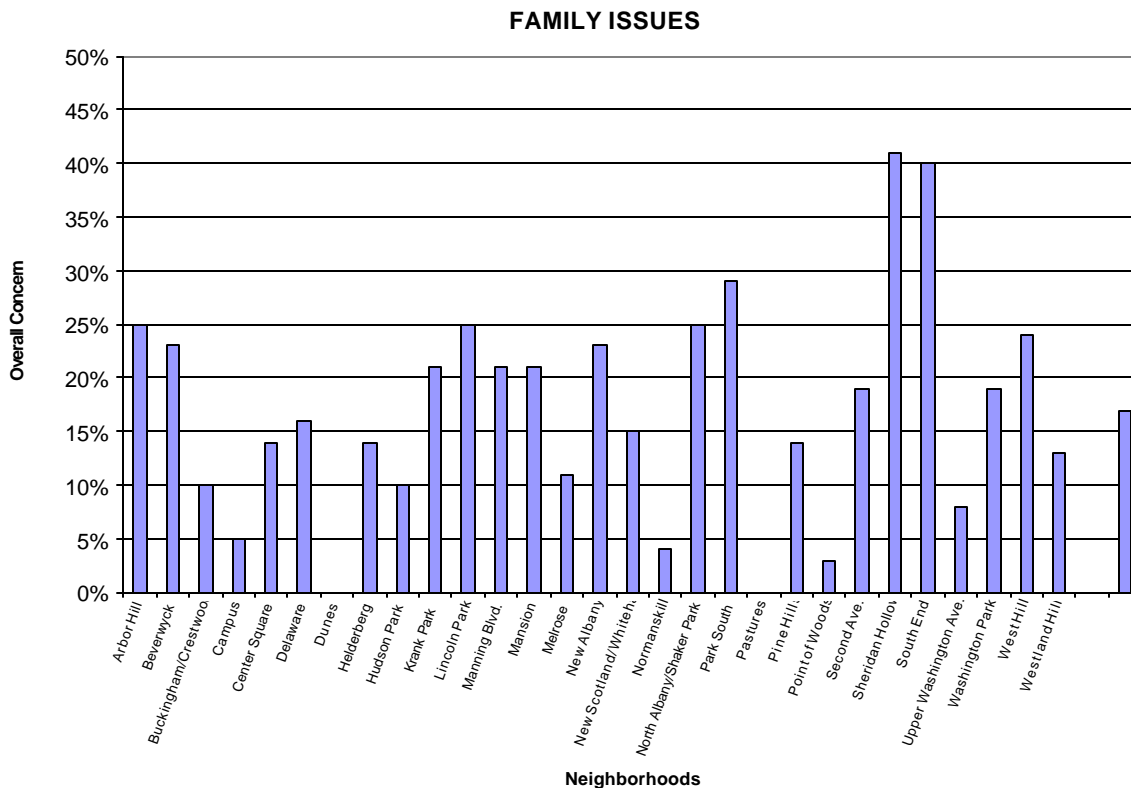|	
Family Issues	Health Issues
Social Issues	Buildings Issues
Environmental Issues	Enforcement Issues

While not indicative of specific concerns or the intensity of such concerns, the following charts indicate the *average* response rate towards each of these six categories on a neighborhood basis.
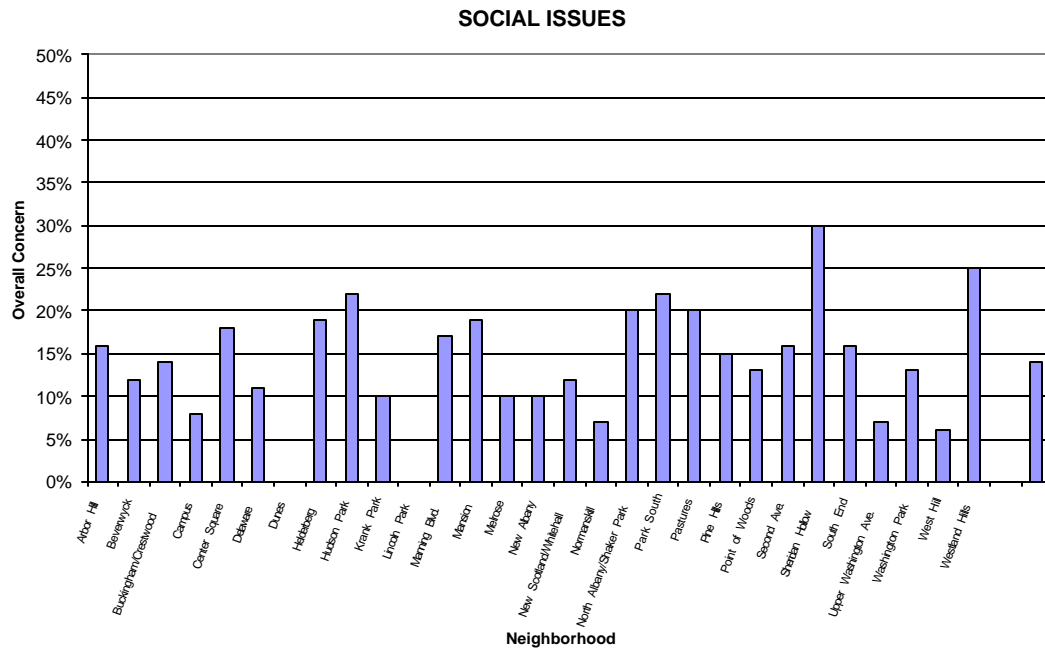
Top GENERAL issues by category across city

FAMILY ISSUES

Family - Overview
- Drugs, unattended children were most significant issues
- Issues were predominant concern in neighborhoods considered lower income
- 39% across city disparity between all neighborhoods

CEQL Survey Overview (continued)

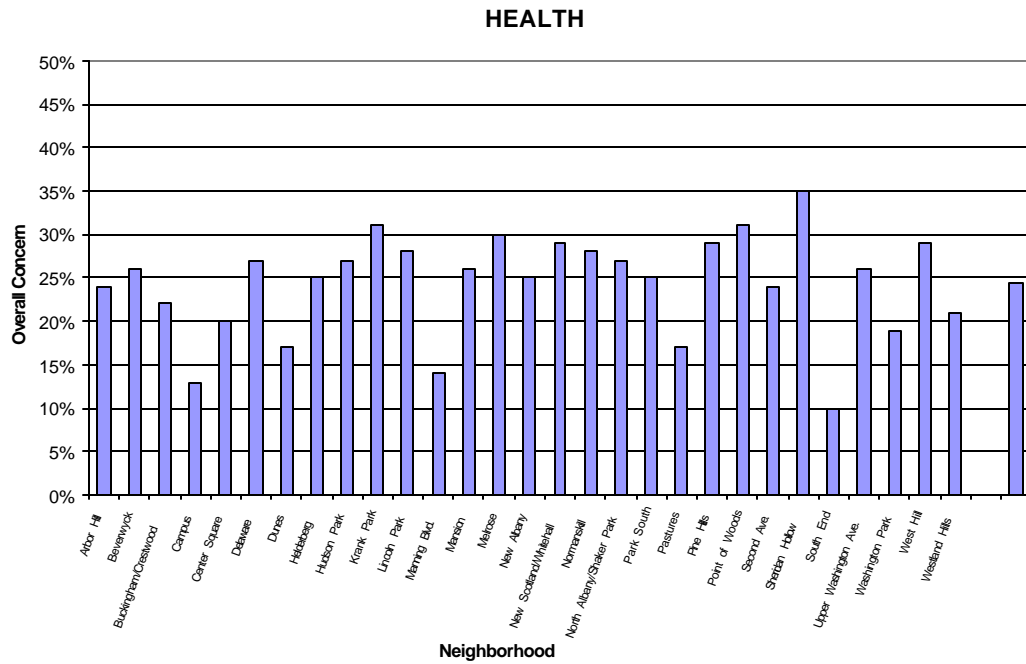**SOCIAL ISSUES**

Social –

- Public Schools, Walking police patrols, loitering
- More even distribution across city and neighborhoods
- 24% disparity – highest to lowest
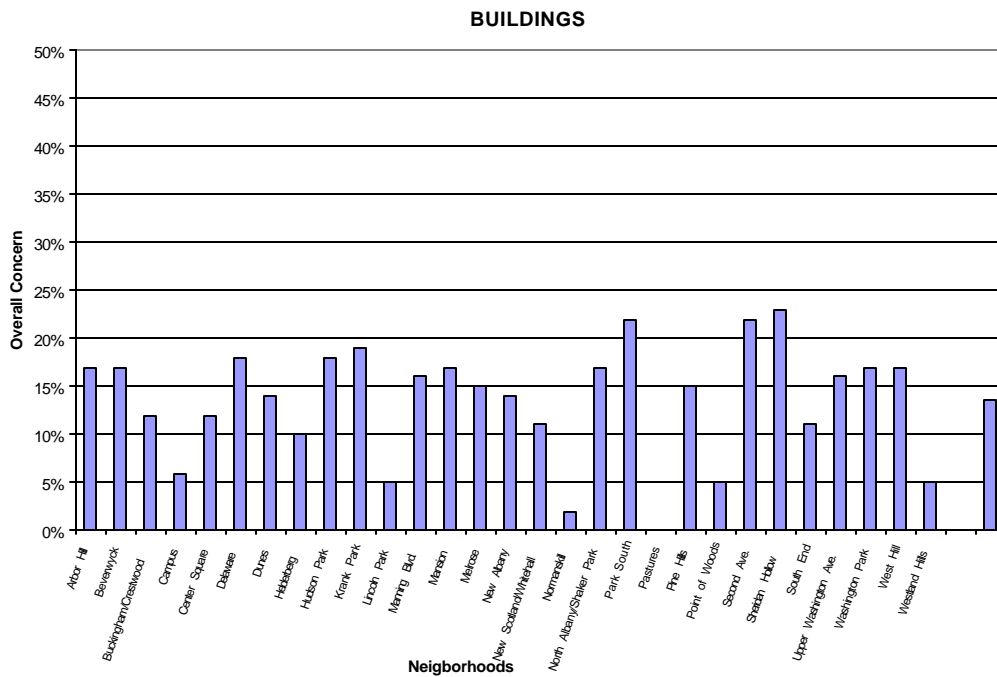
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
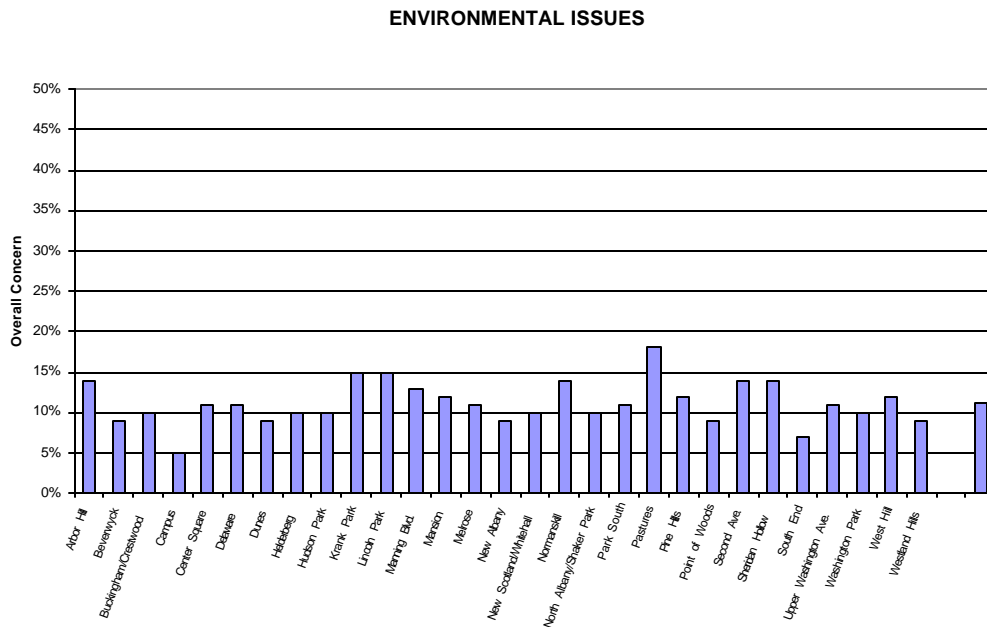
Environmental

- Noise, lighting, illegal businesses, city cleanliness
- 13% disparity, but do not be misled –
- some of the top issues came from this group
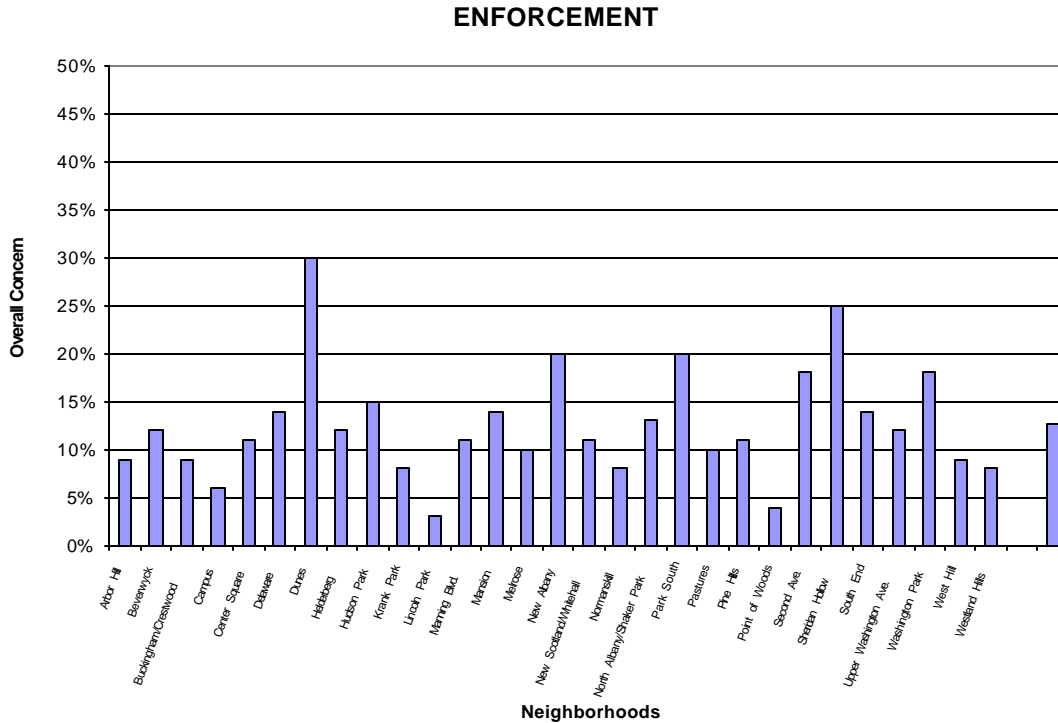
CEQL Survey Overview (continued)

HEALTH

Health
- Garbage issues, sidewalk shoveling, street repair, dogs
- 25% disparity – Lower response level is the exception

BUILDINGS

Buildings
- Boarded up or abandoned buildings, Rental property maint., illegal parking lots
- 20% disparity

CEQL Survey Overview (continued)

ENFORCEMENT


Enforcement & penalty issues

- Building code, incentives for compliance, complaint resolution process, parking rules
- Remove nbhd w/ unacceptable sampling,
- Results all over the place.

Top issues throughout city

Of aprox 40 issues, 13 drew at least 20% response rate.

1. Residential Property maint - 40%
2. Drug dealers/Drug houses
3. Winter sidewalk shoveling
4. Noise from loud car radios, parties
5. Garbage in streets & yards
6. Sidewalk & street repair
7. Overall city cleanliness
8. Animal droppings not being picked up by owners
9. Public schools & education
10. Abandoned buildings
11. Boarded up buildings
12. Garbage rules not followed
13. Parking rules & enforcement

CEQL Survey Overview (continued)

ISSUES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE - CITYWIDE
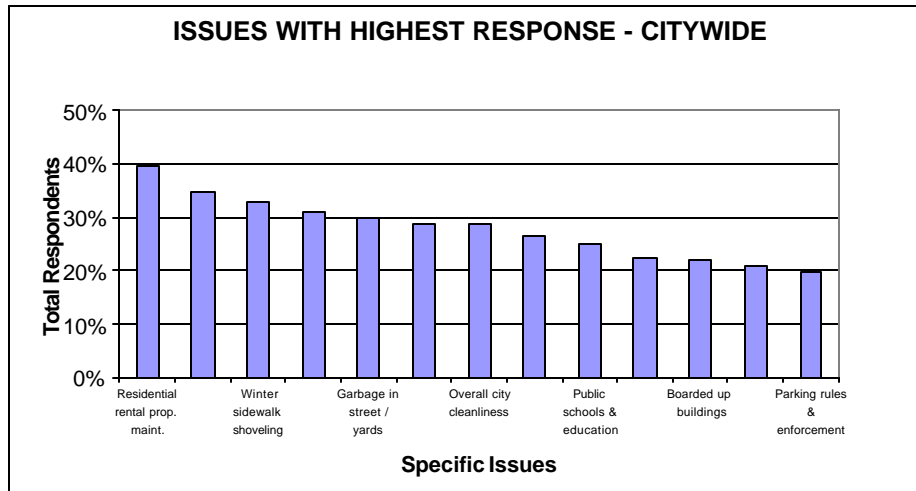
Top 3 Issues by Neighborhood – See APPENDIX I for charts, APPENDIX II for data

- Arbor Hill   Drugs, City Cleanliness, Public schools
- Beverwick   Residential prop maintenance, Public schools, Noise
- Buckingham/Crestwood Schools, Sidewalk & street repair, Winter sidewalk shoveling
- Campus   Public schools, 13 others each got 20%
- Center Square   Walking police patrols, Resid. prop maintenance, Noise
- Delaware   Resid. prop maintenance, Noise, City cleanliness
- Helderberg   Schools, Sidewalk shoveling, Dog droppings
- Hudson Park   Abandoned/boarded up bldgs, City cleanliness, Panhandlers
- Krank Park   Drugs, Abandoned/boarded up bldgs, Garbage & Noise
- Lincoln Park   Noise, Drugs, City cleanliness
- Manning   Noise, Sidewalk/street repair, Drugs
- Mansion   Drugs, garbage, noise
- Melrose   Resid. prop. Maint., Winter sidewalk shoveling, Dog droppings
- New Albany   Resid. prop. maintenance, Garbage, Building related issues, Noise
- New Scotland/Whitehall Sidewalk & street repair, Drugs, Dog droppings, Winter shoveling
- Normanskill   Dogs, Winter walks, City cleanliness, Lack of trees
- North Albany/Shaker   Drugs, Dogs not under owner control, Resid. rental property maint.
- Park South   Drugs, Buildings, Garbage
- Pine Hills   Resid. rental prop. maint., Noise, City cleanliness
- Point of Woods   Animal droppings, Sidewalk shoveling, Noise
- Second Ave   Noise, Residential rental prop. maint., Garbage
- Sheridan Hollow   28 isses of 20% or higher!! Drugs, Unattended children, Buldings
- South End   Drugs, Lack of incentives, Noise
- Upper Washington   Sidewalk shoveling, Noise, Residential rental prop. maintenance
- Wash Park   Drugs, Resid. rental prop maintenance, Buildings, Master plan
- West hill   Drugs, Buildings, Sidewalk & street repair
- Westland Hills   Sidewalk/Street repair, Drugs, Walking police ptrls, Dog droppings

Most Popular Write-in Complaints
- Speeding police cars without emergency signals turned on
- Vehicles ignoring traffic signals & posted speeds

After reviewing this data and the basic conclusions we have arrived at, the questions remain:

- What of all this?
- What are the reasons benind these issues?
- What can be done to remedy some if not all of these?
- Who is supposed to do it?
- What is next?

__This Is Not The Conclusion__….

We have collected the data. It is statistically correct. It does require a more thorough analysis by qualified professionals. Some of the data can be used by individual neighborhoods to better focus their efforts if they were not already aware of their residents' perceptions.

What is necessary at this time is action on the part of the city to digest the information and work with each neighborhood in coming up with a plan to resolve many of their issues. This is not all going to happen at once. It will be one or two issues at a time. It is a joint effort that requires rethinking some of our priorities and an increased level of cooperation among all parties.

We are certain that the city has the expertise and capability to improve upon this rating by its citizens such that next year, when we perform the sequel to this survey, we will all be proud of our accomplishments.

APPENDICIES

I   NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES – CHARTS

II   NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES – DATA

III   CITY WIDE CHART & DATA

IV   DATA MATRIX