

Community Concerns and Desires: Analysis of Jones Park TIPS Initiative (May 2019)

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Survey

On Thursday, May 30th, 2019, Project TIPS (Trust, Information, Programs, and Services) was held in the neighborhood surrounding Jones Park in Rochester, New York. These events are designed to show support for the neighborhood, to investigate community concerns and desires for the neighborhood, and to strengthen community-police relationships. This report will summarize the findings from a community survey and includes the various aspects of the neighborhood that the Jones Park community liked, the assessment the community made of their neighborhood, and the initiatives or activities the residents would like implemented within their neighborhood.

Methodology

One component of Project TIPS is a neighborhood survey of the residents. Unlike previous years, the survey was implemented twice: door-to-door the day prior, and again during the event in Jones Park. Careful considerations were made to avoid surveying the same people twice. The day before the event, groups of two or three volunteers were sent out to administer the survey to twenty street blocks in the neighborhood. Each group was partnered with at least one uniformed law enforcement officer. Groups were instructed to read a readymade script in order to conduct the survey. Only those houses where adult residents responded and agreed to take the survey are included in the sample. The day of the event, community members who attended the event were also surveyed using the same instrument. Because of these methods, the resulting sample is not a random sample of the Jones Park community. Despite this, the resulting analysis should give valuable insight into the residents who live there.

Key Findings

The survey that was administered included a list of 16 questions which, in addition to questions on demographics, collected data regarding community perceptions of the police, satisfaction with the police, collective efficacy, and community concerns of crime. A total of 57 surveys, from 20 different sections in the neighborhood, were completed prior to the event and 24 surveys were completed the day of the event, resulting in a total of 81 completed surveys¹. It is possible that these low participation levels on both days could be explained by the fact that the surveys were administered at 2pm on a traditional workday, meaning those at work would not be represented in the sample. There were no significant differences in survey responses between the surveys administered prior to the event and surveys administered the day of the event, so the two were combined for analysis.

Demographics

Of the 81 respondents who completed the TIPS survey, African Americans represented the largest group (36.1%), while 23.6% reported Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Overall, nearly 70% of the respondents identified themselves as being a racial or ethnic minority. Most participants reported being 25-44 years of age (38.7%). This was closely followed by individuals who reported being 45-64 years of age (36%). Most survey respondents identified themselves as being female (70.8%). For a complete list of sample demographics, see Figure 1 below. The top percentages in each category are highlighted in bold.

¹ Some respondents did not answer some questions.

Figure 1: Sample Demographics of the 2019 Jones Park TIPS Respondents

Race & Ethnicity (n=72)	Percentage	Age (n=75)	Percentage
African American	36.1%	18-24	13.3%
Caucasian	30.6%	25-44	38.7%
Hispanic/Latino	23.6%	45-64	36.0%
Jamaican	1.4%	65+	12.0%
Asian	2.8%		
Puerto Rican	1.4%	Gender (n=72)	Percentage
Mixed	4.2%	Male	29.2%
		Female	70.8%

Survey Results

Community Concerns

The TIPS survey asked residents whether they believed several types of crime and quality of life problems were of major concern, minor concern, or not at all a concern within their neighborhood. These problems included drug use, theft and burglary, violence, gangs, the sale of drugs, stray animals, speeding, and property maintenance concerns.

The primary concern expressed by residents was drug use, with 64.5% of the respondents citing drug use as being a major concern in their neighborhood. The sale of drugs was also seen as a major concern by nearly half of all respondents (49.4%). For a complete list of these concerns, see Figure 2.

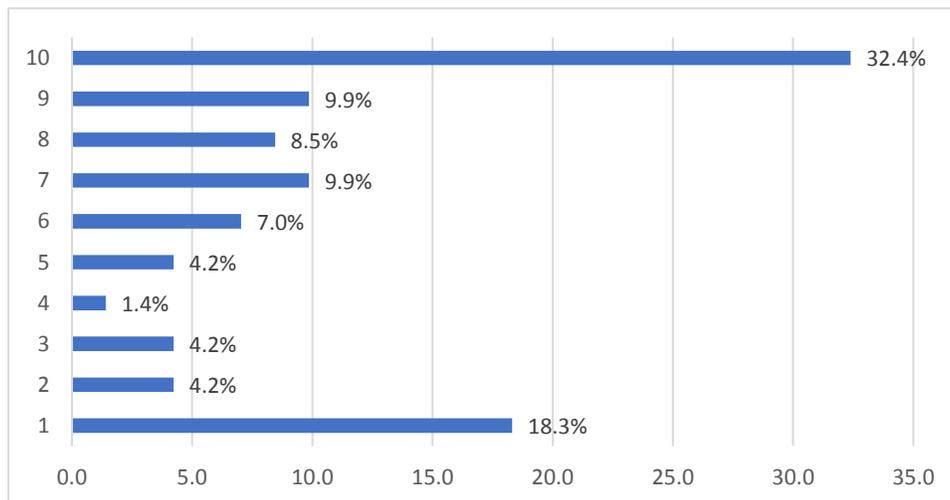
Figure 2: Neighborhood Concerns of the 2019 Jones Park TIPS Respondents

<i>Concerns</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>Minor Concern</i>	<i>Major Concern</i>
<i>Drug use (n=76)</i>	27.6%	7.9%	64.5%
<i>Theft/Burglary (n=77)</i>	35.1%	32.5%	32.5%
<i>Violence (n=77)</i>	33.8%	28.6%	37.7%
<i>Gangs (n=76)</i>	50.0%	21.1%	28.9%
<i>Drug Selling (n=77)</i>	32.5%	18.2%	49.4%
<i>Stray Animals (n=75)</i>	41.3%	29.3%	29.3%
<i>Speeding (n=75)</i>	33.3%	29.3%	37.3%
<i>Property Maintenance (n=73)</i>	45.2%	24.7%	30.1%

Heroin and Opioids

To further explore questions about drug use and drug sales, residents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10 in increasing severity, how much of a problem the sale and use of heroin was for them in their neighborhood. The largest group of respondents (32.4%) rated the problem as being a 10. Interestingly, the next largest group of respondents (18.3%) rated the problem as being a 1. While 26.8% of respondents viewed the problem of heroin use in their neighborhood as being a 3 or lower, 60.7% viewed the problem as being a 7 or above. See Figure 3 for the complete findings. Respondents were asked why they chose the number they selected. Popular responses included visual signs of such activity, such as needles and witnessing others using heroin. Conversely, another popular response included residents stating they were unaware that such activity happened within their neighborhood. This is consistent with the 88.2% of respondents that stated that they did not know anyone who had problems with heroin or other opioids.

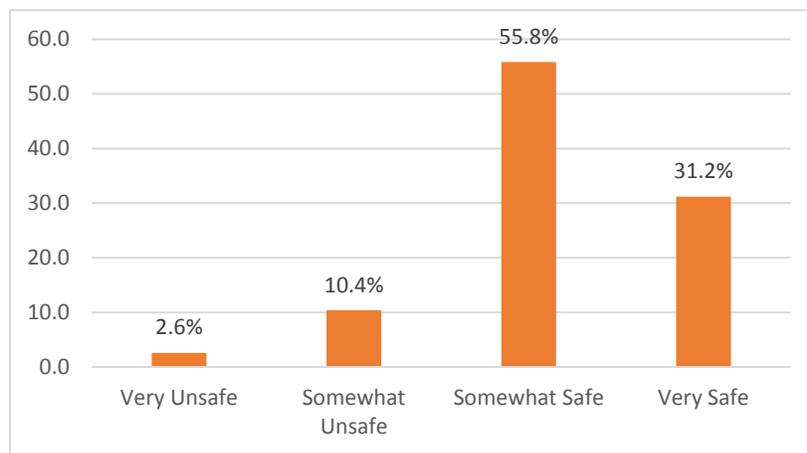
Figure 3: Rating of Heroin Problem for 2019 Jones Park Respondents (n=71)



Safety

When asked how safe they felt in their neighborhood, 87% of the respondents stated that they either felt somewhat or very safe. Only 13% of the respondents reported feeling somewhat or very unsafe in their neighborhood (see Figure 4). A follow-up question asked for specific places or circumstances wherein they felt the least safe. The most common response was: “at night.”

Figure 4: Perceived Safety of the 2019 Jones Park TIPS Respondents (n=77)



Relationships with the Police

Among other questions, the survey included a section related to residents and their feelings towards and relationship with the Rochester Police Department. Residents were asked to respond on how much they agreed or disagreed with statements related to this theme. Residents were asked to respond with either strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Statements included, “I trust the police to do what is best for the community,” and, “The police here generally treat people with dignity and respect.” When asked if they trust the police to do what’s best for the community, over 80% of respondents answered with either agree (56.9%) or

strongly agree (26.4%) while only 16.7% disagreed. For a complete list of responses from this section, see Figure 5.

Figure 5: How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
RPD works hard to address issues of crime	13.3%	16.0%	52.0%	18.7%
RPD officers listen to what I have to say	6.7%	9.3%	66.7%	14.7%
I trust the police to do what's best for my community	6.9%	9.7%	56.9%	26.4%
Police are generally fair in the way they enforce the law	9.5%	16.2%	59.5%	14.9%
Police generally treat people with dignity and respect	12.2%	13.5%	55.4%	18.9%
Police work with community to solve problems that matter	9.4%	17.2%	53.2%	20.3%

In addition to this section, two questions were asked to gauge how comfortable residents felt with the police. When asked if they felt comfortable reporting issues or suspicious behavior to police, 91.1% of respondents answered yes or sometimes, whereas 8.9% responded no. Residents were also asked if they knew any officers who worked in their neighborhood. The majority of respondents (70.5%) answered that they did not.

Collective Efficacy

Collective efficacy is defined as social cohesion between neighbors and a willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good. This has been linked to increased levels of informal social control and reductions in neighborhood violence. Residential stability, indicated by high rates of homeownership, has also been shown to help maintain social networks and informal social control as people's investment in their homes carries over towards investment into the community at large.

The survey asked the following two questions in order to measure residential stability and homeownership. The questions were, "How many years have you lived in this neighborhood?"

and, “Do you own or rent your home?” The average tenure in the neighborhood was 5 years, with 43% of respondents reporting having lived in the neighborhood for 6 or more years. The vast majority of respondents (83.8%) answered that they rent their home while only 13.8% stated that they own their property. An additional 2.5% reported that they were staying with a friend or family member.

Figure 6: 2019 Jones Park Respondents’ Years in the Neighborhood (n=79)

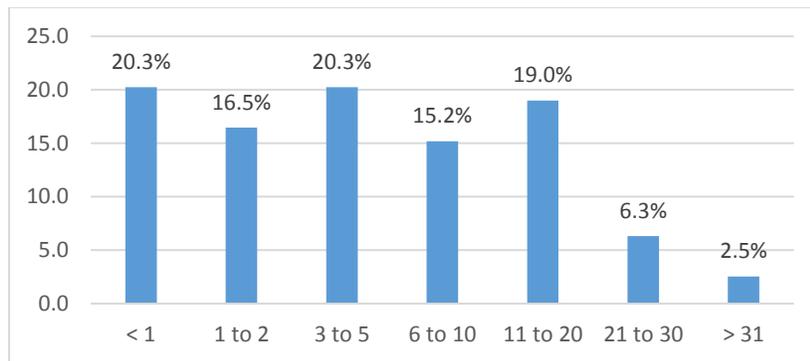
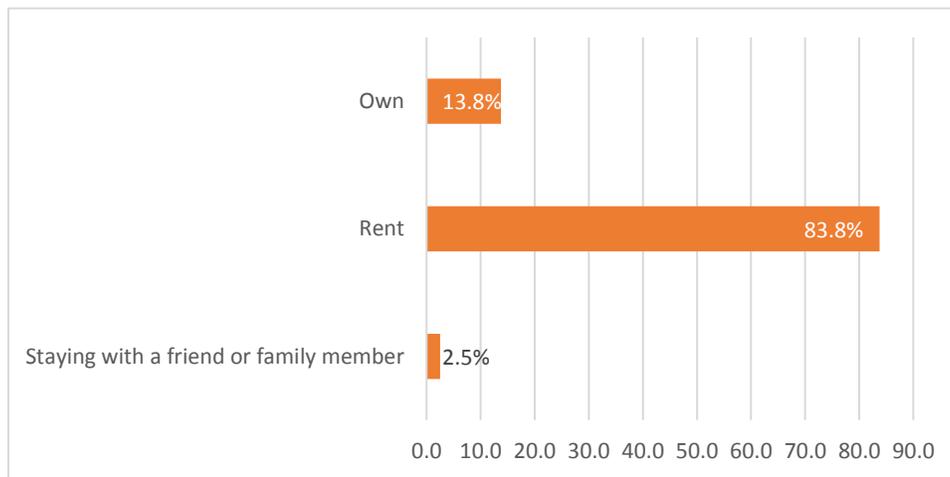


Figure 7: 2019 Jones Park Respondents’ Homeownership (n=80)



Research has shown that homeowners are less likely to move from a community, which can lead to greater neighborhood stability. A crosstab analysis of these two questions was run to determine if this was true in this neighborhood. The analysis found that 20.3% of respondents reported that the length of time they rented their home was less than a year. Additionally, of the

small population which reported that they owned their home, half of them had lived in the community for at least 11 years (see Figure 8 for complete chart). This suggests that, while most residents rent their property, those who do own their homes are more likely to stay in the neighborhood for longer periods of time, thus contributing to the stability of the neighborhood.

Figure 8: 2019 Jones Park TIPS Crosstabs: Housing Status and Neighborhood Tenure

Years in Neighborhood	Housing Status			Total (n=79)
	Rent (n=67)	Own (n=10)	Other (n=2)	
< 1	23.9%	0.0%	0.0%	20.3%
1 to 2	16.4%	20.0%	0.0%	16.5%
3 to 5	22.4%	10.0%	0.0%	20.3%
6 to 10	17.9%	0.0%	0.0%	15.2%
> 10	19.4%	70.0%	100.0%	27.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

While the survey data suggest that the presence of homeowners can provide greater stability to the neighborhood, it is important to note that more than a third (37.3%) of renters in the Jones Park community have lived in the area for 6 or more years. These renters may also provide some means of stability as they have invested considerable time in their community. This serves as a limitation to previous research and suggests that there might be such things as stable renters.

Social cohesion is an important part of neighborhood life as it can influence the community's willingness to intervene and assist neighbors. The TIPS survey measured social cohesion in the Jones Park community by asking residents a series of three questions related to this concept (see Figure 9 for complete list). Overall, most residents agreed or strongly agreed that people in their community are willing to help their neighbors (72.7%) and that people in the

neighborhood share the same values (59.2%). However, when asked if they could count on their neighbors in the event of a fight, less than half of the residents (46%) felt this way, suggesting that there are limits to the power of collective efficacy in the neighborhood.

Figure 9: 2019 Social Cohesion in the Jones Park Neighborhood

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
People are willing to help their neighbors	3.9%	23.4%	57.1%	15.6%
People in this neighborhood share the same values	11.8%	28.9%	50.0%	9.2%
I could count on my neighbors if a fight broke out	22.4%	31.6%	31.5%	14.5%

Conclusion

The Jones Park residents listed drug use and drug selling as their primary concerns for the neighborhood. Many residents also linked these concerns with that of prostitution, some stating that those engaging in prostitution represent the majority of drug users in the community. In contrast, most respondents stated that they either liked how quiet or peaceful the neighborhood was (25%) or that they liked the people and the community (21.4%). These qualities could help explain why most residents stated that they spoke with their neighbors either every day (31.6%) or every week (17.1%). A peaceful neighborhood with a nice community can contribute to feelings of comfort within the community among the residents, leading to interaction among residents. Additionally, these results suggest that the drug problem may be an external threat to the community, rather than an internal one, as the individuals involved in prostitution are not identified as residents by many of the survey respondents.