

Community Concerns and Desires: Analysis of Fernwood Park TIPS Initiative (July, 2019)

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Luca Ignatowski
Research Assistant
Center for Public Safety Initiatives
Rochester Institute of Technology

Gregory Drake, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate
gmdgcj@rit.edu

Irshad Altheimer, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Public Safety Initiatives
ixagcj@rit.edu

John Klofas, Ph.D.
Director Emeritus, Center for Public Safety Initiatives
Rochester Institute of Technology
jmkgcj@rit.edu

Survey

On Thursday, July 25th, 2019, Project TIPS (Trust, Information, Programs, and Services) was held in the neighborhood surrounding Fernwood Park in Rochester, New York. These events are designed to show support for the neighborhood, to investigate community members' concerns and desires for their neighborhood, and to strengthen community and police relationships. This report will summarize the findings from the analysis of the collected surveys and includes the various aspects of the neighborhood that the Fernwood Park community liked, the assessment the community made of their neighborhood, and the initiatives or activities the residents would like implemented within their neighborhood. Finally, this paper will provide multiple anecdotes that the Fernwood Park community wishes to share with law enforcement and community members in the 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 at Fernwood 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, divided into 10 street segments 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. Because of this door-to-door sampling method, the resulting sample is not a random sample of the Fernwood Park community. Despite this, the resulting analysis should provide valuable insight into the residents who live there. The day of the event, students and faculty from CPSI implemented the same survey among event attendees.

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 56 surveys were completed from 10 different sections in the neighborhood prior to the event, and 22 surveys the day of the event, resulting in a grand total of 78 completed surveys¹. It is possible that these low response rates 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. In addition, hot weather and limited shade may have deterred some from attending the event. Considerable differences in the concerns respondents expressed regarding drug use, violence, gangs, and drug selling could be seen between those surveyed the day before and those surveyed the day of the event. Those surveyed the day before had a tendency to rate these issues as not being concerns, whereas those surveyed at the event tended to rate these issues as being major concerns. For example, when comparing the level of concern for neighborhood violence between both days, 50% rated the issue as being a major concern the day of, whereas only 10.7% rated it this way the day before. It is unclear why this difference presented itself, but it is possible that members of different parts of the neighborhood attended the event then were surveyed the afternoon prior.

¹ Some respondents did not answer some questions.

Figure 1: Comparison of Surveys Taken Before and During Event

Level of Concern (Violence)	Day of Survey		
	Day Before (n=56)	At Event (n=22)	Total (n=78)
Not at all	67.9%	22.7%	55.1%
Minor concern	21.4%	27.3%	23.1%
Major concern	10.7%	50.0%	21.8%
Total	100%	100%	100.0%

Demographics

Of the 78 total respondents who took the TIPS survey, African Americans represented the largest group (39.5%), while 15.8% reported Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Overall, nearly 70% of the respondents identified themselves as being a racial or ethnic minority. Most participants reported being 45-64 years of age (31.6%). This was closely followed by individuals who reported being 65 or older (28.9%) and 25-44 (26.3%). Most of the survey respondents identified themselves as being female (67.9%). For a complete list of sample demographics, see Figure 2. The top percentages in each category are highlighted in bold.

Figure 2: Sample Demographics of the 2019 Fernwood Park TIPS Respondents

Race & Ethnicity (n=76)	Percentage
African American	39.5%
Caucasian	30.3%
Hispanic/Latino	15.8%
Puerto Rican	7.9%
Mixed	5.3%
Other	1.3%

Age (n=76)	Percentage
18-24	13.2%
25-44	26.3%
45-64	31.6%
65+	28.9%
Gender (n=78)	Percentage
Male	32.1%
Female	67.9%

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, drug selling, stray animals, speeding, and property maintenance concerns.

The most prominent concern expressed by residents was speeding and traffic issues, with 30.8% of the respondents citing speeding and traffic issues as being a major concern in their neighborhood. Drug use and drug selling were also notable concerns, as many of the respondents reported these as being major concerns as well. Gangs were most frequently rated as not at all a concern by community members (64.1%). For a complete list concerns, see Figure 3².

Figure 3: Neighborhood Concerns of the 2019 Fernwood 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>	48.7%	27.6%	23.7%
<i>Theft/Burglary (n=78)</i>	38.5%	41.0%	20.5%
<i>Violence (n=78)</i>	55.1%	23.1%	21.8%
<i>Gangs (n=78)</i>	64.1%	19.2%	16.7%
<i>Drug Selling (n=78)</i>	55.1%	17.9%	26.9%
<i>Stray Animals (n=77)</i>	62.3%	27.3%	10.4%
<i>Speeding (n=78)</i>	42.3%	26.9%	30.8%
<i>Property Maintenance (n=78)</i>	71.8%	17.9%	10.3%

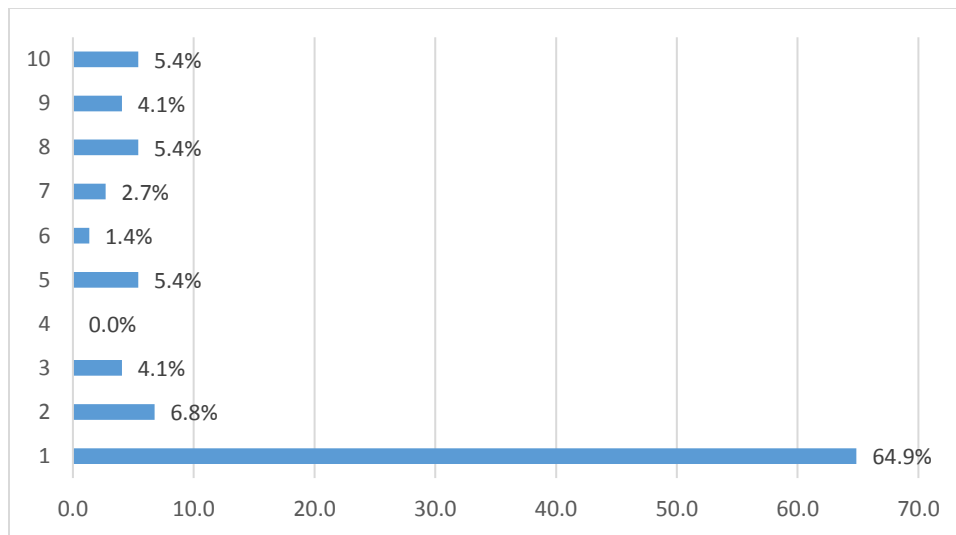
Heroin and Opioids

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

² Note that this data is from all respondents, and that, as noted earlier, those that completed the survey the day of the event more frequently rated these issues as major concerns.

was for them in their neighborhood. The vast majority of respondents (64.9%) rated the problem as being a 1. Additionally, a small minority of residents (19%) rated the problem as being greater than 5. See Figure 4 for the complete data set. A follow-up question asked respondents why they chose the number they selected. Popular responses included a lack of personal observations of heroin use and simply not knowing if such activity was taking place in the neighborhood. Some residents alluded to the use of other drugs that are not opioids. Perhaps related to this assessment, an additional question asked residents if they knew anyone who had problems with heroin or other opioids. Of the 74 who responded, 13.5% of the respondents said yes, whereas 86.5% said no.

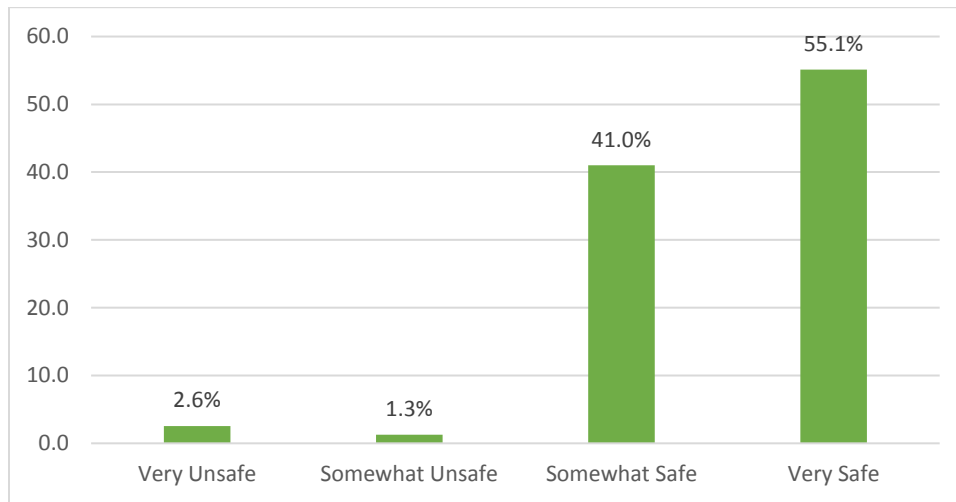
Figure 4: Rating of Heroin Problem for 2019 Fernwood Park Respondents (n=74)



Safety

When asked how safe they felt in their neighborhood, 96.1% of the respondents stated that they either felt somewhat safe or very safe. Only about 4% of the respondents reported feeling somewhat unsafe or very unsafe in their neighborhood (see Figure 5). A follow-up question asked for specific places or circumstances wherein they felt the least safe. The most common response was, “at night.”

Figure 5: Perceived Safety of the 2019 Fernwood Park TIPS Respondents (n=78)



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 strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with several statements related to this theme. 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 90% of respondents answered with either agree (64.9%) or strongly agree (26%), while only 9.1% disagreed. For a complete list of responses from this section, see Figure 6.

Figure 6: How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
RPD works hard to address issues of crime*	2.8%	9.9%	69.0%	16.9%
RPD officers listen to what I have to say	4.1%	2.7%	76.7%	16.4%
I trust the police to do what's best for my community	2.6%	6.5%	64.9%	26.0%
Police are generally fair in the way they enforce the law	0.0%	14.1%	63.4%	22.5%
Police generally treat people with dignity and respect	0.0%	10.8%	64.9%	24.3%
Police work with community to solve problems that matter	2.8%	15.5%	60.6%	21.1%

*One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed

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, 89.7% of the respondents answered yes or sometimes, whereas only 10.3% responded no. Residents were also asked if they knew any officers who worked in their neighborhood either by sight or by name. The majority of residents (84.6%) 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 greater good. This has been linked to increased levels of informal social control and reductions in neighborhood violence (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). 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 the neighborhood?"

and, “Do you own or rent your home?” The average tenure in the neighborhood was 13 years, with over half of respondents (55.9%) reporting having lived in the neighborhood for 6 or more years. Over half of the respondents (52.6%) also answered that they own their own home, while 39.7% stated that they rent their property. An additional 7.7% reported that they were staying with a friend or family member.

Figure 7: 2019 Fernwood Park Respondents’ Years in the Neighborhood (n=77)

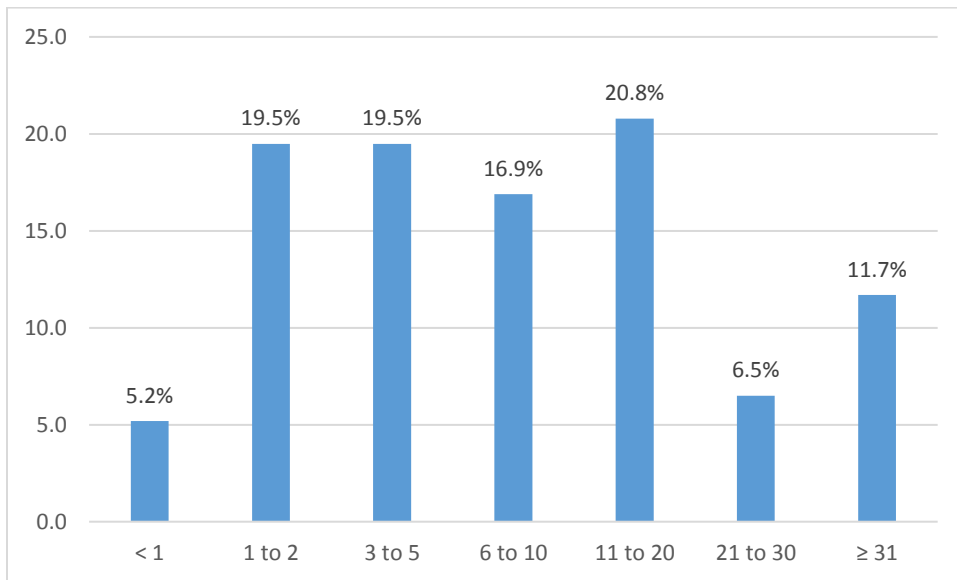
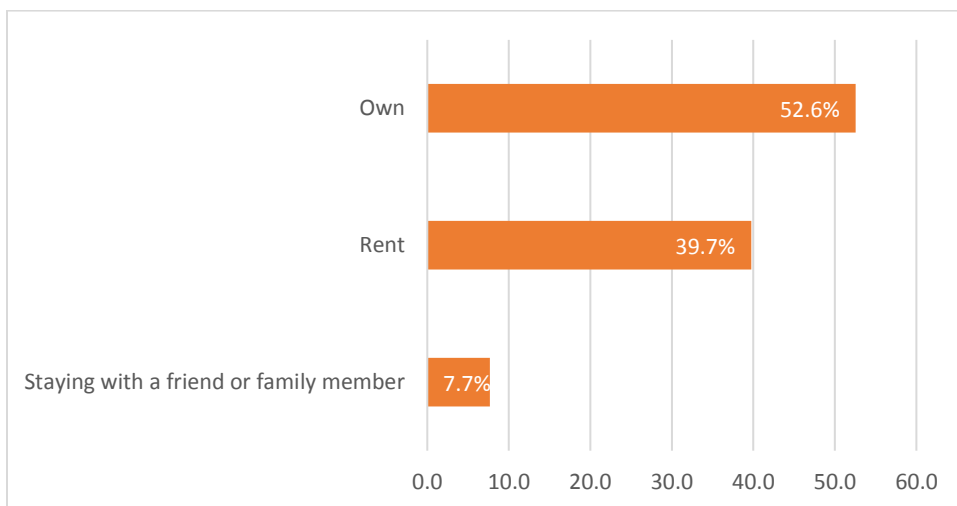


Figure 8: 2019 Fernwood Park Respondents’ Homeownership (n=78)



Research has shown that homeowners are much 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 10% of respondents reported that the length of time they rented their home was less than a year. Additionally, of the population which reported that they owned their home, over half (58.5%) had lived in the community for at least 11 years. Conversely, four fifths (80%) of the population which reported renting their home had done so for fewer than 10 years (see Figure 9 for complete chart).

Figure 9: 2019 Fernwood Park TIPS Crosstabs: Housing Status and Neighborhood Tenure

Years in Neighborhood	Housing Status			Total (n=77)
	Rent (n=30)	Own (n=41)	Other (n=6)	
< 1	10.0%	2.4%	0.0%	5.2%
1 to 2	26.7%	9.8%	50.0%	19.5%
3 to 5	30.0%	7.3%	50.0%	19.5%
6 to 10	13.3%	22.0%	0.0%	16.9%
11 to 20	16.7%	26.8%	0.0%	20.8%
21 to 30	0.0%	12.2%	0.0%	6.5%
≥ 31	3.3%	19.5%	0.0%	11.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

While there is evidence to suggest that the presence of homeowners can provide greater stability to the neighborhood, it is important to note that approximately a third (33.3%) of renters in the Fernwood 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 Fernwood Park community by asking residents a series of three questions related to this concept (see Figure 10 for complete list). Overall, the vast majority of residents agreed or strongly agreed that people in their community are willing to help their neighbors (96%) and over three quarters agreed that people in the neighborhood share the same values (78.3%). Additionally, nearly three quarters of the residents responded that they could count on their neighbors in the event of a fight (74.6%).

Figure 10: 2019 Fernwood Park Respondents’ Social Cohesion

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
People are willing to help their neighbors	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	61.8%	34.2%
People in this neighborhood share the same values	2.9%	15.9%	2.9%	58.0%	20.3%
I could count on my neighbors if a fight broke out	8.0%	14.7%	2.7%	49.3%	25.3%

Conclusion

The Fernwood Park residents listed speeding and traffic issues as their primary concerns for the neighborhood. Many residents described vehicles driving the wrong direction on one-way streets and a lack of stop signs as being central to these concerns. The majority of residents had positive attitudes of the police. Most respondents stated that they liked how quiet or peaceful the neighborhood was, with almost two thirds (62.3%) describing this as being what they liked most about their neighborhood. An additional 16.9% said they liked their neighbors or the people in the community. These qualities could help explain why most residents stated that they spoke with their neighbors either every day (33.3%) or every week (33.3%). A peaceful neighborhood with a nice community can contribute to feelings of comfort within the community among

residents, leading to more instances of inter-resident interaction. Future interventions aimed at addressing the concerns expressed by the residents in the Fernwood Park community should pay close attention to the addition of traffic safety measures, such as the installation of additional one-way street and stop signs.