

2004 NS-CPOP SURVEY OF FERGUS STREET RESIDENTS

Summary

Northside's CPOP team conducted a door-to-door quality of life survey of residents living in the 4200 block of Fergus Street in Northside. Residents were asked to rate the following 16 different residential concerns on a 5-point scale: drug activity, violent crime, loitering, disorderly/unsupervised youth, vacant buildings, poorly maintained buildings, noise, litter, speeding, parking, vicious dogs, rats/cockroaches, irresponsible landlords, irresponsible residents, irresponsible businesses, and non-residents causing problems. Nearly all of the surveyed conditions caused some residents great concern. However; drug activity, loitering, littering and disorderly/unsupervised youth were the four top concerns identified by residents. Drug activity led all, being called out by 71% of respondents as among their top 3 concerns. Due mostly to the poor quality of current living conditions, nearly 60% of respondents stated they were (or were considering) moving and more than 80% said they would not purchase property on Fergus Street.

Background

The Northside CPOP team applied the scanning step of the SARA process (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment) to a set of "quality-of-life" issues in Northside. We identified the deplorable conditions on the 4200 block of Fergus Street as one of our neighborhood's most serious chronic problems. The housing stock is blighted and criminal activity, mostly drug-related, is prevalent along the street. Crime statistics (courtesy of P.O. Terri Windeler) and housing data (Stefanie Sunderland) were gathered and integrated into a master spreadsheet (Dave Henry). This survey is our latest step in the process of gathering information for analysis. Its objective was to learn how residents viewed their street and what problems were most important to them. Results will be added to the existing data set to identify appropriate, achievable and valued responses to key problems in this area.

Methodology

With input from the entire team, Dave Henry designed a questionnaire that would enable residents to prioritize the quality-of-life issues they routinely experience. Team members took it door-to-door for completion either as a structured one-on-one interview or as a self-administered questionnaire. Participation was much better than expected with 25 usable questionnaires collected. Not all respondents answered all questions, so the numeric base varies from question to question. Most (72%) provided additional comments and clarification for at least some questions.

Results

Respondent profile: In general, residents of the 4200 block of Fergus are dissatisfied and frustrated with the current quality of life on their street. When asked if they are considering moving, more than half of those who answered the question (10 of 17, 59%) said that they are. A significant majority (9 of 11, 82%) would NOT buy property on Fergus. Importantly, these are people who know the street dynamics well. They are black and white, old and young, tenants and owner-occupants. They have spent an average of 11.8 years on Fergus (range = 4 months to >50 years).

The big picture: When asked to list their top three concerns, drug activity was mentioned by 71% of those who answered the question; loitering was second (41%), followed by litter (29%) and unsupervised youth (24%). See Table 1, below, for details. When asked to rate 16 different factors on a 5-point scale (1=better, 5=worse), total scores ranged from 53 to 95 (see Attachment). Ten of them received 75 or more total points and averaged 3.5 or higher. Drug activity, unsupervised youth and loitering each received 90 or more points. Loitering, litter, unsupervised youth and speeding each averaged 4.0 or higher on the 5-point scale. Loitering, litter and poorly maintained buildings received the most consistent

responses (standard deviation ≤ 1.2). Unsupervised youth, loitering and non-residents each had an average response greater than 3 from at least 60% of respondents. Clearly, residents are disturbed by the environment in which they live. As one of them stated, “This is not a place where I want my children raised.”

Table 1

<u>Issue*</u>	Top 3 Problems (%)	Total Score	Average Score	Variation (s)	Response ≥ 3 (%)
Drug activity	71	95	3.9	1.4	56
Loitering	41	92	4.1	1.2	60
Litter/trash	29	90	4.1	1.0	52
Disorderly/unsupervised youth	24	95	4.0	1.3	64
Violent crime	18	84	3.7	1.3	48
Rats/roaches	18	80	3.7	1.6	48
Vacant buildings	18	76	3.5	1.6	48
Speeding	12	86	4.0	1.3	52
Non-residents causing problems	6	88	3.8	1.4	60
Noise	6	82	3.8	1.3	48
Parking	6	69	3.4	1.5	36
Irresponsible businesses	6	68	3.0	1.6	32

* Issues are sorted in order of decreasing percentage of respondents listing them as one of their top 3 concerns. Top two responses are noted in red.

The Details:

- Drug activity: This is the top priority for most residents. They report seeing it along the length of the street, on the corners, at the Children’s Park, from cars circling the block, in empty houses/yards and on their own doorsteps. It goes on 24/7. They say that most dealers come from outside the immediate area but that there are drug users living right on Fergus.
- Loitering: This seems to be most serious at the corners, especially Chase & Fergus, but it also occurs on private property. Loitering was a priority concern for residents no matter how the data was analyzed.
- Litter/trash: “All over” and “up and down the street” were typical responses. Everyone who answered the question rated it as a 3 or higher in terms of seriousness. It also had the lowest standard deviation (1.0). Residents link litter to both loitering and unsupervised youth, as in the comment “. . . some young adults using profanity and dumping litter on the sidewalks.”
- Disorderly/unsupervised youth: Respondents attributed a lot of their problems to unsupervised youth: fighting, litter, noise, disrespect. Many of the kids aren’t from Fergus or nearby streets. They are around day and night, on the corners, at the park and along the length of the street. “My children can’t enjoy the park because of the non-supervised youth and drug use/selling . . .” was one comment. Truancy and curfew violations are common
- Violent crime: Twelve of thirteen respondents (92%) cited fighting and/or guns as a problem. Robbery of old people was also mentioned.
- Rats/roaches: This was a polarizing issue (standard deviation =1.6). For those who experienced it, it was very serious; for others, it seemed unimportant.
- Vacant buildings: The presence of vacant buildings was clearly seen as a negative, but respondents made few specific complaints. Four addresses were mentioned and one person was worried about the possibility of arson.

- **Speeding:** This is a special concern for those with children. It’s a problem throughout the day and night along the length of Fergus. One resident suggested speed bumps as a possible solution.
- **Non-residents causing problems:** Respondents stated that outsiders were the source of litter, loitering and noise. This group includes both unsupervised youth and drug dealers.
- **Noise:** Specific concerns were car radios (especially from parked cars), the bar and young people (“Kids come from different areas, are very loud and yelling.”) Noise is a perpetual problem but is worse on weekends.
- **Parking:** Like rats/roaches, parking is a polarizing issue. For the residents who walk or rely on public transportation, it is of no concern. Most other residents park on the street. They noted that parking problems are worse on weekend nights due to increased business at Apjones Cafe and heavy street corner activity. Few residents have driveways, but those who do complain that they are of little value because access is often blocked by improperly parked vehicles on the street.
- **Irresponsible Businesses:** Of the eight questionnaires that listed problems of this type, seven of them (88%) mentioned McPerry’s. The Apjones Café received three mentions. Note: These are the only two continuously operating businesses within the survey area.
- **Other concerns:** Overall, the remaining four issues (see Table 2, below) were less important to Fergus residents. They were not ranked among anyone’s top three problems. They cannot be ignored, however, because each was rated a 5 by at least three respondents.

Table 2

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Top 3 Problems (%)</u>	<u>Total Score</u>	<u>Average Score</u>	<u>Variation (s)</u>	<u>Response >3 (%)</u>
Poorly maintained buildings	0	78	3.8	1.2	52
Irresponsible residents	0	60	3.1	1.4	32
Irresponsible landlords	0	57	3.1	1.6	28
Vicious dogs	0	53	2.7	1.3	12

Conclusion

Residents of Fergus Street are clearly bothered by conditions in their part of the neighborhood. Of the 16 quality-of-life issues surveyed, each issue was judged by more than one resident as being so bad it made them want to move. Of even greater relevance, most residents stated they intended to move because of current conditions of the street and over 80% would not buy property in the block. Of the issues surveyed, drugs rated highest (71% of respondents) among residents’ top 3 concerns followed by loitering (41%), littering (29%) and unsupervised youth (24%). All are highly visible and behavior-related. Resident responses suggest these issues are closely linked to the non-residents who hang out in the area. Giving these issues prompt priority attention is necessary to prevent an exodus of current residents and a corresponding increase in vacant housing. With the interest and cooperation we received on this initial survey, there appears to be a core group of people whose help we can enlist once we decide on a final action plan.

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11/29/04

ATTACHMENT

October 2004 Survey of Fergus Street Residents

Raw Data

Survey # / Condition	D Youth	A Drugs	C Loitering	H Litter	P Non-Residents	I Speeding	B Violence	G Noise	L Rats/Cockroaches	F Maintenance	E Vacant Buildings	J Parking	O Businesses	N Residents	M Landlords	K Dogs
1	1	5	4	3	3	1	3	3	2	1	1	3	4	2	1	1
2	4	4	5	5	5	1	2	5	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	1	1	5	3	1
4	4	3	5	3	4	5	2	5	1	4	2	5	3	1	1	2
5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	5	1	2	2	1	1	3	2	1
6	5	3		5	5	5	3		3			4	5			3
7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
8	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
9	5	5		5	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	1	1			3
10	5	5	3	5	4	5	5		2	4	4	2	1	4	4	3
11	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	3	3	4	4	5
12	2	3	3	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	3	3	5	3
13	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	3	5	4	5	5				5
14	5	5	5	5	3	4	3	3	5	3	5	3	5	3	3	3
15	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
16	2	1	1	3	1	4	2	1	5	2	2	4	1	1	1	1
17																
18	3	2	5	5	1	2	1	2	5	5	1	3	2	2	2	2
19	2	2	2	5	1	5	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
20	3	5	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	4	1	5	1	2	1	2
21	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
22	5	5	5					5					5			
23	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2
24	4	3	5	3	4	3	4	5		3	2		3			
25	5	3	5		4	3	3		2		4		4	4	5	2
Total	95	95	92	90	88	86	84	82	80	78	76	69	68	60	57	53
Average Response	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.4	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.7
Variation (s)	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.2	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.3
% of Responses >3	64%	56%	60%	52%	60%	52%	48%	48%	48%	52%	48%	36%	32%	32%	28%	12%