



TO: Mayor Ebert
Carrie Hoover

FROM: Chris Vineis, Marie Keister and Robin Winston

RE: Community Survey Results

DATE: February 15, 2009

Here are the findings of the Canal Winchester Community Survey. This was a substantial survey! Surveys were mailed to 2,644 Canal Winchester households around November 5, 2008; 92 were returned as undeliverable due to outdated addresses. Eight hundred sixty four surveys were returned by responses by early December, for an unprecedented 33 percent return rate. Typical survey response rates are in the 3- to 5 percent return range. What is also remarkable about this high response rate is that this was a lengthy written survey, with 64 questions. We have no doubt that this survey gives a definitive blueprint for Canal Winchester.

The survey results indicate general support for the activities in Canal Winchester, and high marks for its quality of life and small town appeal. Residents appreciated the opportunity to provide input. However, there are several excellent suggestions for improvement and insights on specific issues that deserve attention (i.e. Gender Road traffic congestion, lack of awareness of Walnut Creek and concern about encroachment of new residents into the community as well as planned growth.) We encourage Canal Winchester to embark on a community engagement effort to better inform residents of activities and plans, and to seek their ongoing involvement in Village initiatives.

Please note that survey respondents didn't answer every single question, thus response percentages were based on the number of responses for each question.

The Results

- 1. Do you generally think things are headed in the right direction in Canal Winchester?**
72% of respondents believe that things are going in the right direction for Canal Winchester. Only 14 percent of those surveyed said it was going in the wrong direction. In light of national surveys on the state of economy, this is significant and demonstrates that almost 7 out of 10 residents believe that Canal Winchester is headed in the right direction. 14 percent had no opinion.
- 2. Do you generally like living in Canal Winchester?**
95% of respondents indicated that they enjoyed living in Canal Winchester. This is extremely positive for the community. 2 percent said no; 3% had no opinion.



3. **Rate how satisfied you are with the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 – very dissatisfied, 5 is very satisfied)**

60% of respondents rated the services provided as either a (4) or a (5), with (1) being very dissatisfied and (5) being very satisfied. The following indicates the percentage of those satisfied (4) or very satisfied (5) with each service; please note those areas, underlined, with lower levels of satisfaction.

Safety of your neighborhood – 83% satisfied or very satisfied

Police protection – 74%

Amount of parks, open space and recreation – 42%

Presence of trees – 63%

Traffic in your neighborhood – 61%

Traffic in Canal Winchester- 31%

Condition/maintenance of roadways – 57%

Distance to commercial areas – 82%

Water and sanitary sewer services – 60%

Historic, arts and cultural activities – 53%

Quality of housing – 65%

Employment opportunities – 26%

4. **What do you like least about living in Canal Winchester?**

What respondents liked least about Canal Winchester (open-ended)

Too many apartments

Too much growth, traffic on Gender Road/US 33 – poor planning

Migration from Columbus

Loss of small town feel

Planning

More trees and better planning/care for existing ones

Water quality

Lack of casual restaurants

Access to major shopping center

Traffic

Property taxes

Crime

Transparency, accountability of government

Lack of support for & against school levy

Resistance to change

Lack of cultural amenities

Over-crowded schools

Bike trails/safety



Poor planning for growth and traffic
Unfair improvements to some streets over others
Improved streetscape
Lack of animal/pet code enforcement
Lack of police department
Lack of marketing awareness of Canal to areas like Short North or German Village
Blighted appearance of abandoned properties
Lack of skateboarding facilities
Distance from jobs
Need more commercial office development
Growth should be curbed; causing too many problems with schools, housing, traffic, crime
Central business core should expand hours, more options

5. Do your friends living outside the village have a sense of all Canal Winchester has to offer?

34% of respondents indicated that their friends living outside Canal Winchester have a sense of what the community has to offer. 33% do not. This presents a dilemma for local elected and appointed officials because many residents indicated elsewhere in the survey that they wanted Canal Winchester to maintain its' small-town atmosphere. 33 percent had no opinion.

6. How do you explain our quality of life in Canal Winchester?

Respondents selected the following options, in the order of highest percentages received:

Small town atmosphere-69%
Safe neighborhoods to raise children-65%
Historic, charming downtown-65%
Close to a big city without the hassles-63%
Family-friendly environment-65%
Beautiful suburban setting – 45%
Well-run government – 43%
Quality schools – 40%
Reasonable growth and development – 28%
Other – 8% (affordable housing)

7. Rank in order the locations where you most frequently do your retail shopping.

78% of respondents selected Canal Winchester as their first or second most frequent shopping location. This bodes well for local businesses and should be used in future marketing efforts. 38% of respondents indicated Pickerington was



their most or second most frequent shopping destination, followed by Lancaster, which is the first or second most frequented shopping areas among 27 percent of the respondents.

8. **Rank in order the areas where you must frequently dine away from home.**
78% of respondents indicated that their first or second choice of dining location was Canal Winchester. This also demonstrates support for local businesses. 45% cited Pickerington as their first or second choice, followed by Downtown Columbus (18%), Lancaster (15%) and Reynoldsburg (13%). OSU was cited as an "other" option.
9. **Industrial areas and businesses help generate revenues that pay for improved public services, and provide residents access to local jobs. Do you agree with the Village's efforts to attract business and develop areas in order to keep residential taxes lower?**
80% of respondents support the Village's efforts to attract businesses and keep residential taxes low; 9% said no and 11% had no opinion. Many answered may have in the affirmative believing that the primary goal is to keep taxes low. Responses to other questions indicate residents are concerned about "reasonable growth and development."
10. **What types of businesses would you like to see locate in Canal Winchester?**
53% of respondents want more retail located in Canal Winchester, followed by more healthcare (47%), more professional services (45%) and more light industrial firms (42%). This is not a mandate for major retail expansion; however, the open-ended section of the survey indicated substantial support for non-fast food dining options. The open-ended responses included:
 - College
 - More upscale/casual dining restaurants
 - Theater
 - Bowling alley
 - Discount and full service department stores
11. **If the Village were to acquire additional parkland, what amenities would you most like to see at a new park?**
Of the amenities listed, respondents indicated the following were their first or second choices:
 - a. Walking/bike path – 51%
 - b. Picnic area – 29%
 - c. Shelter house- 26%
 - d. Open green space – 20%



- e. Jungle Gym/swing set – 17%
- f. Dog park – 16%
- g. Skate park – 11%

No other category indicated substantial support. Under “other,” respondents offered:

- Indoor recreation center
- Fishing ponds
- Develop walk & bike paths

- 12. Do you think Walnut Creek is an important resource for our community?**
52% of respondents believe that Walnut Creek is an important asset in the community. However, 42% had no opinion and 6% answered no. This might indicate the need for a public outreach effort to highlight Walnut Creek.
- 13. Do you use Walnut Creek for recreations?**
66% of respondents do not use Walnut Creek for recreation; 20% of respondents use Walnut Creek. If Walnut Creek is a local priority, thought-leaders might need to support a public outreach campaign to highlight the site.
- 14. If yes, how many times have you visited Walnut Creek in the past year?**
71% of those surveyed did not answer this question. Of the 250 who responded, 60% have used Walnut Creek 1 to 5 times in the past year, 19% have used it 5-10 times and 19% have used it more than 10 times.
- 15. If yes, how do you make use of Walnut Creek?**
78% did not respond to this question. Of those who did, they use Walnut Creek for fishing (44%), wading (28%), Canoeing/kayaking (18%) or swimming (15%). Under other, respondents cited “hiking/walking.”
- 16. What statement do you most agree with?**
42% of respondents indicated Walnut Creek needs more public access. 51% had no opinion. Of those who responded, only 7% indicated the current access to Walnut Creek is satisfactory.
- 17. Do you and/or your family patronize the Canal Winchester swimming pool?**
62% of those surveyed do not use the Canal Winchester pool; 38% do.
- 18. If yes, how many times have you visited the swimming pool in the past year?**
Of those who use the pool, 36% visit 1 to 5 times per year or more than 10 times per year. 28% visit 5 to 10 times per year.



19. If offered once per month during the summer, would you attend a family night at the municipal pool?

Of those who responded, 71% indicated they would not attend a family night at the municipal pool; 29% said they would.

20. Which features/amenities would you most like to see added to the swimming pool?

49% did not answer this question. Of those who did, the following amenities were selected as the first or second most desired:

- a. Additional large shade umbrella (39% "1" and "2" rankings)
- b. Additional picnic area (19%)
- c. Infant/toddler swim lessons (18%)
- d. Lap swim hours (17%)
- e. Waterslide (17%)
- f. More chairs (14%)
- g. Expanded baby pool area (9%)
- h. Water aerobics (9%)

Amenities listed under "other" included:

More fountains

More flexible hours for swim lessons

21. Are you aware that the Frances Steube Community Center facilities (kitchen, multi-purpose room and lounge) are available for public use?

52% were aware of the Frances Steube Community Center. This provides opportunities for local leaders to highlight the availability of the center.

22. Do you read the Water Department's "Consumer Confidence Report" that is mailed to you each year?

62% of respondents read the Water Department's publication; 38% have not. There is room for growth in this audience.

23. If yes, do you feel that the "Consumer Confidence Report" clearly explains the high quality of Canal Winchester's water supply?

27% did not respond to this question. Of those who did, 64% indicated that the Water Department's "Consumer Confidence Report" highlights the quality of the community's water supply. Still an area for growth and expansion of a knowledge base.

24. In order to be environmentally friendly, save money and extend the life of the water infrastructure, the Village's water conservation policy limits when residents can water their lawns. Do you support this approach?



78% of respondents indicated that they support the Village's water conservation policy, 12% said no and 11% had no opinion.

25. If not, why not? (open-ended)

- Water needed for lawn care
- Water quality is poor
- Encourage voluntary water conservation
- Poor planning & growth is cause of water problems
- Conservation policy is unclear, confusing
- Conservation policy should apply to businesses as well

26. The Village has taken a number of steps to reduce water pollution in our community, including reducing combined sewer overflows and the amount of grease and fatty solids deposited in our sewer lines. You also play an important role. Would you be interested in learning more about how you can prevent water pollution in our community?

64% of respondents indicated an interest in learning about reducing water pollution in the community; 14% said no and 22% had no opinion.

27. If you perceive fallen autumn leaves as a problem, would you support the use of conifers (evergreens) as street trees in some situations?

44% of respondents said yes and 36% said no; 19% had no opinion.

28. Science has indicated woodlands and natural areas help maintain stream health. Do you think protecting and enhancing woodlands and natural areas near streams should be a Village priority?

76% of respondents support protecting and enhancing woodlands and natural areas near streams; 10% said no and 15% had no opinion.

29. Do you feel you are being kept informed about what is happening in Canal Winchester?

78% of respondents said they feel informed about Canal Winchester activities; 12% said no and 9% had no opinion.

30. How do you currently keep informed about the Village of Canal Winchester?

- a. Suburban News (*The Times*) -80%
- b. *This Week* – 76%
- c. *Community Connection* – Village newsletter – 71%
- d. *Southeast Messenger* – 69%



- e. Word of mouth – 51%
- f. Village Web site or attendance at Village Council/public meetings – 9%
- g. Other

31. How would you prefer to receive information about the Village of Canal Winchester? Rank from the most important to least important.

Combining the first and second choices among the list provided, respondents indicated these were the most preferred methods of receiving information:

- a. Weekly newspapers – 73%
- b. *Community Connections* Village newsletter mailed to residence – 55%
- c. *Community Connections* Village newsletter e-mailed to residence – 21%
- d. Columbus Dispatch – 13%
- e. Canal Winchester Web site – 10%

32. Do you have regular access to the Internet?

84% of those surveyed stated that they had regular access to the Internet. This provides a low-cost option for communication with residents.

33. If yes, where do you primarily access the internet?

19% did not respond. Of those who did, 84% indicated that their primary access to the Internet was via their home computers; 15% was at work. Once again, this offers an opportunity for communication with residents.

34. How often do you visit the Village Web site?

46% of those who responded indicated that they have never visited the Village's Web site; 31% indicated they visit the site every few months. This is notable because 84% state they have regular access to the Internet. More could be done to raise awareness of this site.

35. Have you visited the Village's redesigned Web site, www.canalwinchesterohio.gov, since it was launched in May?

Of those who responded, 72% have not visited the redesigned Web site.

36. If yes, is it easy to use?

Of those who responded, 52% of survey respondents said the Web site is easy to use. 45% have no opinion; 3% said no.

37. Do you have any suggestions for the Village's Web site?

90% offered no opinion on how to improve the site. Of the 10% who had suggestions, the following ideas were included:



More photos of people
Slow server
Zoning issues not accessible
More links to community sites like schools
More frequently updated community calendar
Contact directory/information for city services
Font is too small
Better advertisement of website, unaware of its existence
Poor navigation
Accurate and updated information

38. In the future, would you log onto a Web site to take a community survey if you were mailed a postcard with instructions rather than a printed copy of the survey?

Of those who responded, 67% stated they would log onto a Web site to participate in future community surveys; 33% said they would not. This might offer Canal Winchester officials an opportunity to drive residents to the site.

39. Would you sign up online to receive email updates from the Village? These updates may include press releases shared with the media and emergency notifications.

70% of respondents indicated that they would sign up for online updates from the Village; 30% would not.

40. Canal Winchester hosts several events each year. Circle each of the following events you have attended in Canal Winchester in the past year.

- a. Labor Day Festival – 86%
- b. Farmer's Market – 84%
- c. Christmas in the Village – 57%
- d. Music & Art in the Park – 38%
- e. Taste of Canal Winchester – 17%
- f. Didn't attend events – 6%

41. Are there any suggestions you have for the above events?

More activities for kids
Higher quality/better variety of food vendors
Beer garden is nice
New/better rides at festival
New location for Taste of Canal
Taste of Canal is too expensive



Farmers Market is great, should be expanded, indoor location during fall/winter
Fourth of July event/activities should be added
Town Picnic
More activities for kids/families, outdoor movie nights
Kids activities with fire & police departments
Family members should not be able to judge Labor Day competitions
Move Labor Day festival to high school/education center
Expand Labor Day festival to include local bands, artists
Labor Day vendors/activities should have theme
Shorten Labor Day Parade, more high school bands
Eliminate Labor Day Festival
Beer should not be served at family-friendly events
More focus on art, theater, music events; outreach to artists needed
Health fairs
Antique shows/auctions
Talent/music/theater productions with involvement from area schools
Better traffic routing during events
Better coordination and collaboration with other area community events

42. Are there any other events you would like to see in Canal Winchester that are not currently offered?

Hobby, craft activities
Block parties
Park with playground needed on Dietz Road
Monthly newcomer events, club
More events/activities for young grade and middle school-aged children
Alumni vs. CWHS baseball game
More run/walk charity events
Community/Business expo
Indoor pool/recreation/athletic facility
Adult education classes

43. Over the last year, have you contacted the Village staff to address a concern?

66% of those who responded have not contacted the Village staff to resolve a problem.

44. If yes, please describe the issue.

32% of the respondents with issues responded with the following descriptions:



Several
City and school taxes
Abandoned vehicles near Groveport Park
Brick signs at Waterloo and Chesterville Streets; lack of street signage
Sewers
Waterline issues
Dead trees
Busing on Dietz Road
Leaking fire hydrant
Staff does great job
Street light outages
Traffic issues
Street maintenance issues
Code enforcement

45. Did the staff address your concern quickly?

53% did not respond to this question. Of those who did, 54% indicated staff addressed their concern quickly, 14% said no and 32% had no opinion.

46. Were you satisfied with how your concern was resolved?

53% did not respond to whether they were satisfied with staff response, which is consistent with above. 49% of respondents indicated satisfaction with staff response; 35% had no opinion and 17% indicated they were not satisfied.

47. If not satisfied, how could the staff have improved?

Staff approach
Staff does great job
Staff inattentive/unhelpful; no follow-up
Water pressure/quality is constant problem

48. Are you satisfied with the law enforcement services provided by the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office for the Village of Canal Winchester?

83% of those surveyed expressed support for law enforcement service delivery; 9% said no and 8% had no opinion.

49. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- a. 43% Strongly Agree and 43% Agree, for a total of 86% overall agreement that Fairfield County deputies are polite and professional.



- b. 32% Strongly Agree and 47% Agree, for a total of 79% agreement that respondents are satisfied with how often they see police cruisers in the Village.
- c. 36% Neither Agree nor Disagree, while 29% Agree and 19% Strongly Agree – combined total of 45% agreement -- that respondents would like to see more traffic enforcement.

50. Is there any other important issue you would like to see your Canal Winchester government address?

More neighborhood patrols
Excessive speeding
Street, landscape maintenance
Increase property, animal code enforcement
No apartments, multi-family housing
Increased traffic patrols at high school arrival/dismissal
Roadway improvements to accommodate increased traffic
More police officers; establish CW police department
Improve 911 system
Invest in fogging machine
First responder magnets
Informational meetings/classes for parents on drugs, issues facing teens
Repainting of and landscaping around railroad overpass on Waterloo
Curb apartment developments
More places/activities for youth
Indoor recreation center like Groveport's
Recycling
Prohibit door-to-door solicitors
Impact of school levies
Improve response time in emergencies, such as flooding

Unprompted additional compliments:

City and Mayor are doing great job
Appreciation for seeking input,
Feedback should be sought more

Demographics of Respondents

51. Age:

- a. Ages 41-50 (27%);
- b. 51-65 (27%)
- c. Over 65 (22%)



- d. 31-40 (19%)
- e. 25-20 (4%)
- f. 18-24 (1%)

52. Gender:

43% of those responding are male and 57% are female. 3% did not provide information on gender or families.

53. Marital status:

79% of those responding are married, with 7% single, 6% divorced and 8% widowed.

54. How many years have you lived in Canal Winchester?

The average number of years lived in Canal Winchester, among respondents, is 17.5 years.

55. Do you rent or own your home?

96% own their residences.

56. How many children under 18 live at your residence?

The average was less than 1 child (.6) per household.

57. How many adults 18 or older live at your residence?

The average number of adults living in each household among respondents was 1.6 people (or 2). This indicates a very stable community based upon national household averages.

58. Highest level of education:

- a. Graduate/professional (27%)
- b. Bachelor's (20%);
- c. Some college (19%)
- d. Education: High school (18%)
- e. Some graduate school (9%)
- f. Associate's degree (5%)
- g. Other (1%)

59. Are you retired?

63% of those surveyed are not retired.

60. Annual household income:

- a. \$25,000 or less (7%)



- b. \$25,001 - \$50,000 (18%)
- c. \$50,001 - \$100,000 (41%)
- d. \$100,001 - \$150,000 (27%)
- e. \$150,001 or more (8%)

61. Are you employed?

66% are employed.

62. If not, are you actively seeking work?

57% did not respond. Of those did, just 4% were seeking a job when the survey was administered.

63. In which community does the primary wage earner in your household work?

29% of those surveyed said the primary wage earner works in downtown Columbus, 20% in Canal Winchester and 35% indicated "other". Responses receiving 1% to 4% of responses included: Groveport, Pickerington, Lancaster, Dublin, Hilliard, Westerville and Polaris. Under "other," it was indicated that primary wage earners also work at:

- Columbus
- Rickenbacker
- Worthington
- Whitehall
- Delaware
- Reynoldsburg
- Bexley
- Grove City
- Upper Arlington

64. If there is a second wage earner in your household, in which community does he/she work?

37% of those who responded said the secondary wage earner works in Canal Winchester, 31% indicated "other" and 17% work in downtown Columbus. Receiving 1% to 3% of responses and/or listed under "other" were the following:

- Groveport
- Pickerington
- Lancaster
- Dublin
- Westerville
- Polaris Area
- Easton Area



Circleville
Columbus
East Columbus
Whitehall
Reynoldsburg
East Broad/Columbus
Obetz