



# Ferguson Township

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*2011 Community Survey*

Executive Summary

# Ferguson Township

## Community Survey Results

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### **Executive Summary**

In 2011, the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and staff collaborated with Penn State University to survey residents of the Township. The survey was intended to assist the Board improve programs and services, augment current and future planning efforts, and encourage communication between the Township's administrative bodies and residents. A random sample of 1000 households was selected, with the option to complete the survey on paper or using an online form. Of those who were contacted, 54.4% completed the survey.

The Centre Region features of greatest importance to respondents related to safety, cost of living, quality of public schools and housing, local tax rate, natural and environmental characteristics, job opportunities and affordability of housing. At the top in terms of quality are safety/crime, natural beauty, and quality of public schools, followed by environmental quality, quality of housing, ease of motor vehicle travel and recreation opportunities. For Ferguson Township specifically, nearly all respondents rated the overall quality of life in Ferguson Township as either good or excellent, particularly as a place to live and raise children. The Township was rated lower as a place to start or conduct a business. Over half of respondents were pleased with the overall performance of Ferguson Township staff, 40% were pleased with the performance of Ferguson Township supervisors, and 44% were satisfied with the overall direction of Ferguson Township government.

The top priorities for future investment are public safety services (police, fire, ambulance/EMS), farmland protection, public infrastructure (road maintenance, water systems), and environmental protection (open space preservation, protecting waterways and wetlands, environmental programs, and recycling and composting). In the assessment of township governance, about equal percentages of respondents agreed or were neutral in ranking their satisfaction with the overall direction of Ferguson Township government. Most services provided by the Township were rated as good or excellent in the areas of police services, land use planning, public works, information services, and cooperation with regional service providers such as water and sewage. Future directions indicated by respondents include managing growth to minimize negative impacts, retaining the farming industry, investment in infrastructure including roads/streets, and developing additional or new industries.

Residents rated highly the quality of the Township website and newsletter. The most preferred communication method is printed materials mailed to home, followed by local media and electronic methods (website, email). Although a majority of respondents indicated they were not interested in Township volunteer opportunities, hundreds of respondents indicated some interest in participating in local beautification projects, ad hoc committees, donating professional services, volunteering for special events, and Township authorities/boards/commissions. One area of concern for residents was the openness of Township government, with less than half indicating that the Township government

welcomes citizen participation, listens to its residents, and has a budgeting process that is open and understandable to residents.

The survey information will be used to assess current policies and operations and identify new initiatives or services. The township staff will use the survey information in the development of strategic planning, budget proposals to the Board of Supervisors, and training and development of employees. The information will help to establish performance goals and revise business practices as necessary to meet the expectations of the Township residents and businesses.

## **Introduction**

Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and staff were seeking information from residents to assist with short- and long-term decision-making and planning. The Board regarded this kind of information-seeking as a means to pro-actively identify issues of concern, receive feedback on current and prospective township services, and engage residents in the governance process. To gather the desired information, the Board of Supervisors established a contract with Penn State University to develop, conduct, and analyze a survey of residents of the Township. Specific survey objectives included:

- Supplement past, current, and future planning efforts (comprehensive plan, strategic plan) as well as other periodic evaluation efforts conducted by individual departments and programs;
- Assess current programs and services offered by both the township and regional government, to ensure that township resources are being used effectively and efficiently;
- Develop baseline data and benchmarks for subsequent surveys;
- Build communication between township officials/staff and township residents beyond individual contacts that occur in response to problems, incidents, or complaints;
- Assess support for/interest in future policy directions;
- Develop a model for citizen surveys that can be used by other municipalities in the region; and
- Identify attributes of the Township that contribute to quality of life and prioritize these attributes for consideration in future development and policy-making.

This report summarizes the survey results. Complete, enumerated results are available on the Ferguson Township website: <http://www.twp.ferguson.pa.us/>.

## **Use of Survey Results in Ferguson Township Government Planning and Decision-Making**

The survey information will be used in three areas: policy, operations, and new initiatives or services. There are three specific times during the year that the Board of Supervisors focuses on these areas, first during its Strategic Plan review and update, second during the development and approval of the Five Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget, and a third time when the Board reviews and adopts the annual operating budget. At each of these opportunities the Board of Supervisors considers how and whether to fund existing projects and services and if the township should initiate new projects and services as well as the cost. The community feedback received from the survey will help the Board in these processes.

The township staff will use the survey information in the development of strategic planning and budget proposals to the Board of Supervisors. After reviewing the survey results and written comments, the staff has identified operational areas of strengths and weaknesses. This new information will be

important for training and development of employees, helping establish performance goals and revise if necessary business practices to meet the expectations of the township residents and businesses.

This community survey will also be used as a benchmark for future surveys.

## **Survey Administration**

Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors established a contract to conduct the survey with Dr. Kathy Brasier, a faculty member and State Extension Specialist at Penn State. Dr. Brasier worked with Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and staff to write the survey and conduct the analysis described in this report. The survey was administered through the Penn State Survey Research Center.

A random sample of 1000 addresses located in Ferguson Township was purchased from Survey Sampling International. To increase response rates, selected households were contacted a total of 4 times. First, a postcard was sent to all 1000 randomly selected Ferguson Township residents on September 22, 2011, inviting them to participate in the study. A web link for the survey was printed on the postcard with a unique ID assigned to each resident. Residents who completed the on-line survey were removed from the next mailing. A packet containing a cover letter, a paper survey, and a business reply envelope was sent to 908 residents on October 4, 2011. A reminder postcard was sent to 892 households on October 18, 2011. An additional mailing of the survey was mailed to all non-respondents (618) on October 24, 2011.

Of the initial 1000 household addresses drawn randomly, 15 were deemed 'invalid' (returned as undeliverable or deceased). At the end of the data collection period (December 19, 2011), 536 completed surveys were returned. The number of paper surveys returned was 347; 189 people submitted a web survey. When removing the 15 invalid addresses from the initial 1000 addresses drawn, the valid response rate is calculated as 536/985, or 54.4%. At the end of the mailing period, 20 individuals were randomly selected from among the respondents and offered \$25 gift cards to restaurants in Ferguson Township.

The high response rate is likely due to a combination of factors, including multiple mailings and reminders as well as the option to complete the survey online. In addition, the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and township staff made a concerted effort to publicize the survey and encourage recipients to complete it. This included regular articles in the Township newsletter, posts to the website, and a regular reminder on CNET. As a result of this high response rate, the confidence that the results represent the opinions of all Ferguson Township households is increased.

## **Who Answered the Survey**

Slightly more than half (56.2%) of respondents were male (Table 1). The average age of respondents was 55 years, with a range of 24 years old to 95 years old. Fewer than 10% (8.8%) were less than 35 years old, and 16.3% were 35 to 44 years old. About half of respondents (48.9%) were between 45 and 65 years old. About one-quarter (26.1%) of respondents were 65 years or older. In comparison to figures

from the 2010 US Census, there was a slightly higher proportion of males responding to the survey than found in the township population. Among survey respondents, 56.2% were male, whereas 49.2% of the total population was male according to the 2010 Census. Similarly, a smaller proportion of people under the age of 35 (8.8%) responded to the survey than is found in the population (51.7%). Categories over the age of 35 are all over-represented among survey respondents compared to the US Census.

<b>Table 1. Respondent Characteristics from the Ferguson Township Community Survey<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<b>Ferguson Township Community Survey<sup>2</sup> (%)</b>	<b>2010 US Census (%)<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Gender (N=523)<sup>4</sup></b>		
Male	56.2	49.2
Female	43.8	50.8
<b>Age in categories (N=514)</b>		
less than 35 years old	8.8	51.7
35 - 44 years old	16.3	11.8
45 - 54 years old	23.2	13.8
55 - 64 years old	25.7	10.0
65 - 74 years old	15.8	6.4
75 or more years old	10.3	6.2
<b>Years in Township (N=525)</b>		
1 year or less	4.0	NA
2 - 5 years	18.7	NA
6 - 10 years	16.8	NA
11 - 15 years	15.6	NA
16 - 20 years	10.9	NA
21 - 25 years	8.0	NA
more than 25 years	26.1	NA

On average, respondents had lived in Ferguson Township nearly 19 years, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 91 years. Just under one-quarter (22.7%) had lived in Ferguson Township 5 years or less, and just over one-quarter (26.1%) had lived in the Township more than 25 years.

When asked about the likelihood of living in Ferguson Township in five years, the majority (69.6%) indicated they expect to be living in the Township (Table 2). Only 8.6% indicated they expected to be living outside of the Township in five years.

<sup>1</sup> Ferguson Township Community Survey will subsequently be referred to as FTCS

<sup>2</sup> Percentages may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

<sup>3</sup> Ferguson Township data acquired from the US Census Bureau's American Factfinder website (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>). The data are drawn from the 2010 Census of Population and Housing.

<sup>4</sup> The notation of 'N=' in the following tables and figures indicates the number of respondents who answered the question, and the number used as the denominator to calculate percentages.



<b>Table 2. FTCS Respondents' Expectations for Future Location (N=522)</b>	
	<b>Percentage</b>
I definitely will be living <u>outside</u> Ferguson Township five years from now	4.2
I will probably be living <u>outside</u> Ferguson Township five years from now	4.4
I am uncertain where I will be living five years from now	21.8
I will probably be living <u>within</u> Ferguson Township five years from now	39.1
I definitely will be living <u>within</u> Ferguson Township five years from now	30.5

Nearly all (95.0%) respondents owned (either outright or with a loan) their home (Table 3). This is quite different when compared to the ACS, in which 39.9% of the population rents their home. In the survey, over half of respondents (53.3%) owned or rented less than one-half acre in Ferguson Township. A relatively small percentage, 6.4%, managed more than 10 acres of land.

<b>Table 3. Home Characteristics of FTCS Respondents</b>		
	<b>Ferguson Township Community Survey (%)</b>	<b>2010 US Census (%)</b>
<b>Status of Home (N=523)</b>		
Rent	5.0	39.9
Own (either outright or with a loan)	95.0	60.1
<b>Acreage (N=520)</b>		
1/4 acre or less	22.7	NA
1/4 acre to less than 1/2 acre	30.6	NA
1/2 acre to less than 1 acre	20.2	NA
1 acre to less than 5 acres	18.8	NA
5 acres to less than 10 acres	1.3	NA
10 acres to less than 50 acres	3.7	NA
50 acres or more	2.7	NA

Most respondents (79.2%) were married or in a domestic partnership. This percentage was higher than the proportion reported in the 2010 Census of 53.8%. Single people are under-represented in the survey sample. About two-thirds (65.7%) of respondents' households contained two adults, and half (50.6%) contained at least one child. Of those households with children, the average number was 1.8 children. The average total household size was 3.0 persons. As compared to the 2010 Census, the sample has an under-representation of smaller households (1-2 people) and over-representation of larger households (5 or more) (Table 4). **Table 4. Household Characteristics of FTCS Respondents**

	Ferguson Township Community Survey (%)	2010 US Census (%)
<b>Marital status (N=520)</b>		
Single	8.3	34.7
Married or in a domestic partnership	79.2	53.8
Separated or divorced	5.8	8.4
Widowed	6.7	3.2
<b>Total Household Size</b>		
1	12.2	25.3
2	32.9	39.1
3	24.4	16.1
4	13.4	13.0
5 or more	17.0	6.5

About half of respondents (51.0%) were employed full-time, with another one-quarter (25.8%) retired. The remainder of respondents were self-employed (8.0%), employed part-time (7.6%), homemakers (4.5%), unemployed (1.6%), or disabled (1.6%).

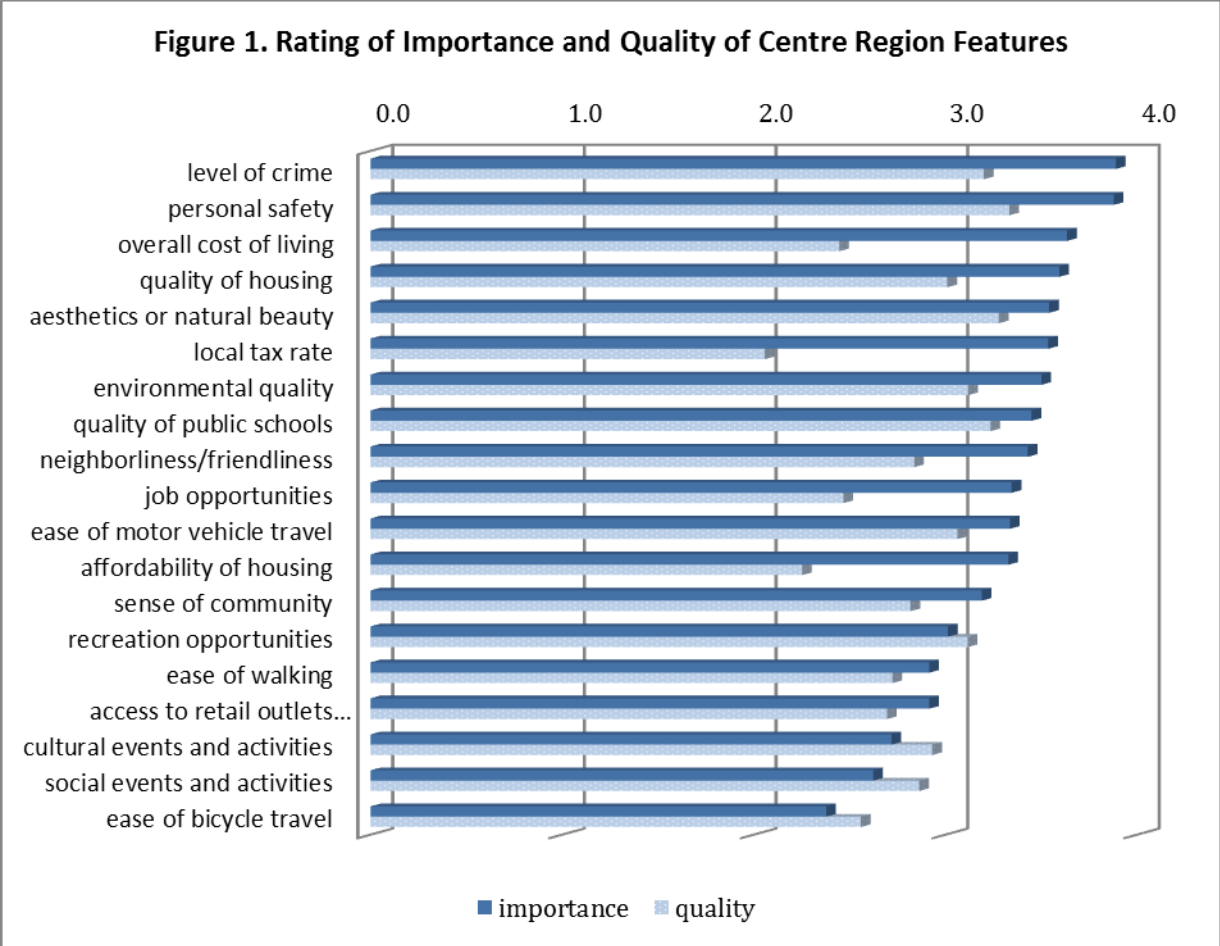
The respondents were relatively well-educated, with 30.2% holding bachelor's degrees and 41.7% holding graduate degrees. Less than one-fifth (16.8%) had post-high school education, and 10.7% held a high school diploma or GED. Less than one percent reported an education level of some high school or less (Table 5). In comparison to data from the 2010 Census, the survey sample is under-represented by those with a high school diploma or less and over-represented by those with a graduate or professional degree. Income levels are reflected in the education levels reported in the survey shown in Table 5. A relatively small percentage (6.6%) reported total household income in 2010 as less than \$25,000. Roughly equal percentages were found in the next three categories: 16.2% reported income between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 17.5% between \$50,000 and \$75,000, and 16.0% between \$75,000 and \$100,000. About one-third (33.5%) reported income between \$100,000 and \$200,000, and another 10.0% reported income above \$200,000. The sample is slightly under-represented by respondents from lower income households and over-represented by respondents from higher income households (Table 5).



<b>Table 5. Socioeconomic Characteristics of FTCS Respondents</b>		
	<b>Ferguson Township Community Survey (%)</b>	<b>2010 US Census (%)</b>
<b>Education level (N=523)</b>		
Some high school or less	.6	2.6
High school diploma or GED	10.7	18.7
Associate's degree or trade certificate	7.6	6.6
Some college	9.2	8.5
Bachelor's degree	30.2	30.2
Graduate or professional school	41.7	33.1
<b>Income category (N=462)</b>		
Less than \$10,000	.6	5.1
\$10,000 - \$14,999	.6	6.5
\$15,000 - \$24,999	5.4	7.9
\$25,000 - \$34,999	6.5	11.4
\$35,000 - \$49,999	9.7	11.7
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17.5	20.1
\$75,000 - \$99,999	16.0	13.4
\$100,000 - \$149,999	25.3	15.0
\$150,000 - \$199,999	8.2	3.4
\$200,000 or more	10.0	5.5

## **Quality of Life in the Centre Region**

Respondents were asked to rate a series of community features in terms of their importance to them personally (on a scale of 1 to 4 where one is not important at all and 4 is very important) and then assess the quality of that feature (on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is poor and 4 is excellent) in the Centre Region. The features of greatest importance to respondents related to safety, followed by cost of living, then quality of public schools and housing (Figure 1). Local tax rate is next, followed by natural and environmental characteristics. Job opportunities and affordability of housing round out the top ten. At the bottom of the list are 'things to do', including recreation, retail, cultural and social activities. Alternative transportation options, such as walking and bicycle travel, were also toward the bottom of the list of importance. When asked to rate the quality of these same features in the Centre Region, respondents identified a similarly ranked list. At the top in terms of quality are safety/crime, natural beauty, and quality of public schools, followed by environmental quality, quality of housing, ease of motor vehicle travel and recreation opportunities.



Another way to view these data is to compare relative rankings. Table 6 lists each community feature, the average value, and the relative rank for both importance and quality. For many community features, there is relative consistency between the ranks for importance and quality, such as for safety, environmental quality, and community relationships. Community features that were ranked high on importance but low on quality include quality and affordability of housing and economic conditions (tax rate, job opportunities, cost of living). Features such as public schools quality, recreation opportunities, cultural and social activities, and some transportation options received lower ratings on importance but higher ratings on quality.

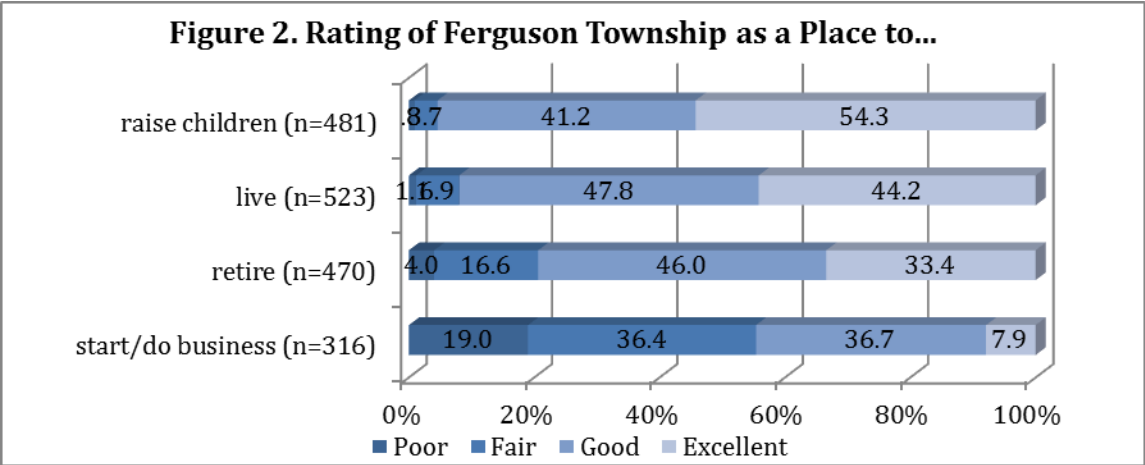
<b>Table 6. FTCS Respondent Ranking of Community Features for Importance and Quality</b>				
	<b>Average importance score</b>	<b>Average quality score</b>	<b>Rank importance</b>	<b>Rank quality</b>
level of crime	3.89	3.20	1	4
personal safety	3.88	3.33	2	1
overall cost of living	3.63	2.45	3	17
quality of housing	3.59	3.01	4	8
aesthetics or natural beauty	3.54	3.28	5	2
local tax rate	3.54	2.06	6	19
environmental quality	3.50	3.12	7	5
quality of public schools	3.45	3.24	8	3
neighborliness/friendliness	3.43	2.84	9	11
job opportunities	3.35	2.47	10	16
ease of motor vehicle travel	3.34	3.06	11	7
affordability of housing	3.33	2.25	12	18
sense of community	3.19	2.82	13	12
recreation opportunities	3.01	3.12	14	6
ease of walking	2.92	2.72	15	13
access to retail outlets	2.92	2.70	16	14
cultural events and activities	2.72	2.93	17	9
social events and activities	2.62	2.86	18	10
ease of bicycle travel	2.38	2.56	19	15

We can also look at the results in a way that highlights the quality ratings of those who most value particular features. Table 7 summarizes the quality ratings of those who rated each feature as ‘very important’ to their decision about where they live. Most features were rated as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ by more than 75% of respondents who rated the feature as ‘very important’ to them. This includes relationships within the community (sense of community, neighborliness), environmental attributes (aesthetics, environmental quality), and safety (crime, personal safety). Ratings of local resources and activities was mixed, with public schools, social and cultural events, and recreation rated highly by more than 75%, but access to retail outlets rated highly by only two-thirds of those who feel this is important to their quality of life. Transportation is similarly mixed, with motor vehicle travel rated highly by 86% but bicycle travel and walking rated highly by smaller percentages of those who believe these are important features. Housing receives mixed reviews as well, with quality rated as high (84.0%) but affordability rated lower (32.1% rating as good or excellent). Finally, for those who placed high value on economic features of the community, smaller percentages rated as good or excellent job opportunities (49.3%), local tax rate (20.5%), and overall cost of living (42.2%).

<b>Table 7. Quality Rating of Features FTCS Respondents rated as 'Very Important'</b>		
	<b>Number of respondents rating as 'very important'</b>	<b>% rating as 'good' or 'excellent'</b>
personal safety	449	93.3
quality of public schools	326	91.7
aesthetics or natural beauty	294	90.5
environmental quality	276	88.8
level of crime	451	87.1
recreation opportunities	143	86.0
ease of motor vehicle travel	221	86.0
quality of housing	318	84.0
sense of community	179	82.1
cultural events and activities	78	82.1
social events and activities	60	81.7
neighborliness/friendliness	246	80.9
ease of walking	150	64.7
access to retail outlets (shopping, restaurants)	124	64.5
ease of bicycle travel	100	56.0
job opportunities	274	49.3
overall cost of living	334	42.2
affordability of housing	262	32.1
local tax rate	307	20.5

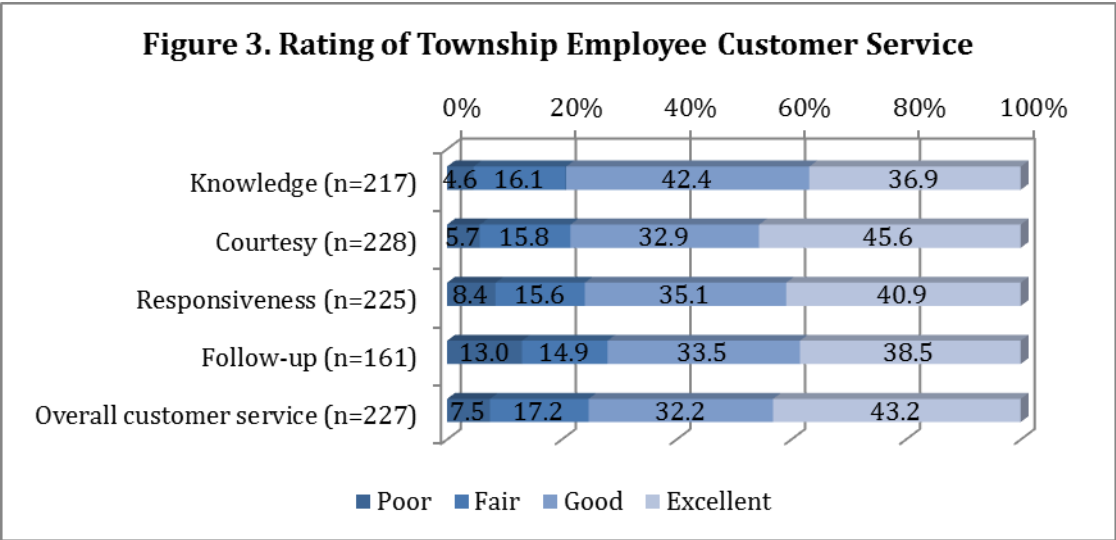
## **Ferguson Township Quality of Life**

Respondents were then asked to focus specifically on Ferguson Township (Figure 2). Nearly all respondents rated the overall quality of life in Ferguson Township as either good (60.2%) or excellent (34.2%). Similarly, most respondents rated the quality of life in their immediate area or neighborhood as good (43.3%) or excellent (50.0%). Respondents reported the highest rating for Ferguson Township as a place to live and raise children, with 92.0% and 95.4%, respectively, rating the Township as good or excellent. More than three-quarters, 79.4%, rated Ferguson Township as a good or excellent place to retire. The lowest rating was given for Ferguson Township as a place to start or conduct a business, with less than half (44.6%) rating the Township as good or excellent in this category.



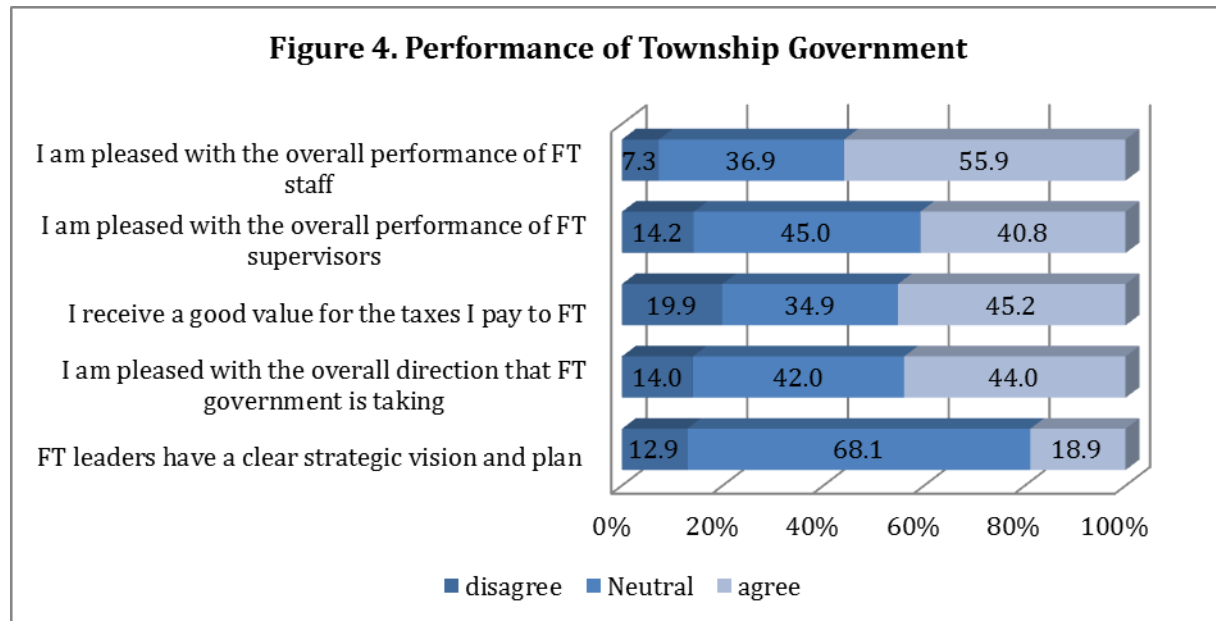
**Ferguson Township Government**

About half (49.9%) of respondents indicated that they had had contact with Ferguson Township staff in the past year. The 233 people who indicated they had had contact were then asked to rate the staff members in terms of their knowledge, responsiveness, courtesy, and follow up actions (Figure 3). In general, these contacts were positive, with 70% to 80% of respondents rating all qualities of customer service as good or excellent.



Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements related to the performance of Ferguson Township government (Figure 4). In general, a majority of respondents (55.9%) indicated they were pleased with the overall performance of Ferguson Township staff, 36.9% were neutral, and 7.3% were not pleased. About 40% indicated they were pleased with the performance of Ferguson Township supervisors, while 45% were neutral and 14.2% disagreed with this

statement. Of these statements, respondents were most split about the value they received for their taxes. Just under half (45.2%) agreed that they receive a good value for their taxes, and about one-fifth (19.9%) disagreed (34.9% were neutral). About equal percentages agreed (44.0%) and were neutral (42.0%) when asked about their satisfaction with the overall direction of Ferguson Township government (14.0% disagreed). About two-thirds (68.1%) were neutral as to whether Ferguson Township leaders have a clear strategic vision and plan (18.9% agreed and 12.9% disagreed).

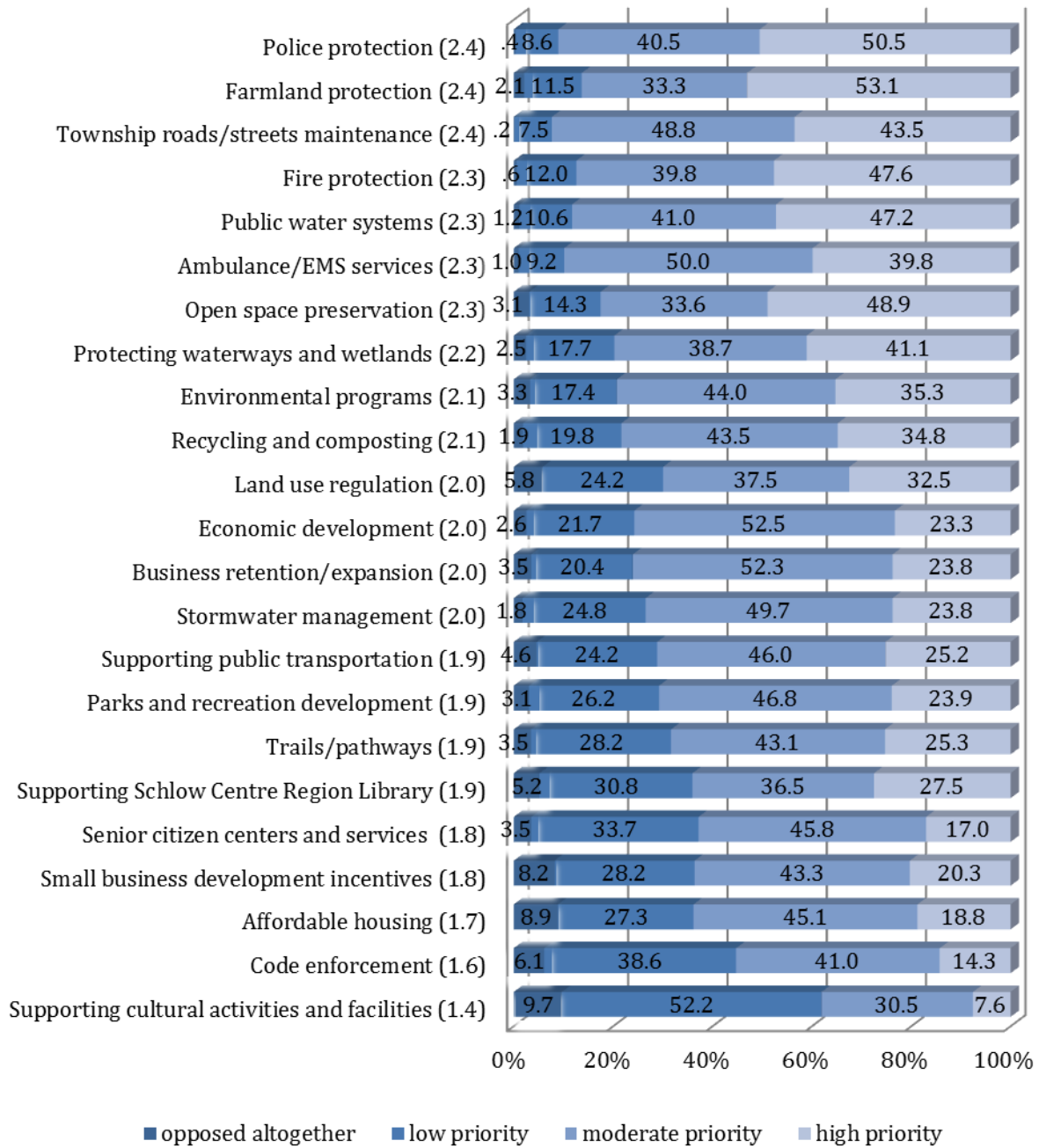


### Priorities for Ferguson Township

Ferguson Township Supervisors and staff were particularly interested in knowing how residents would prioritize programs and services offered either by the Township or through regional government cooperation. Respondents were asked to assign a priority level to each service/program listed, with response options including ‘opposed altogether,’ ‘low priority,’ ‘medium priority,’ or ‘high priority.’ Respondents could also indicate ‘don’t know’ if they felt they could not assign a priority. Figure 5 lists the services/programs in order of their average rating, provided in parentheses. To calculate the rating, responses were assigned values of 0 for ‘opposed altogether,’ 1 for ‘low priority,’ 2 for ‘medium priority,’ and 3 for ‘high priority.’



**Figure 5. Ferguson Township Priorities**

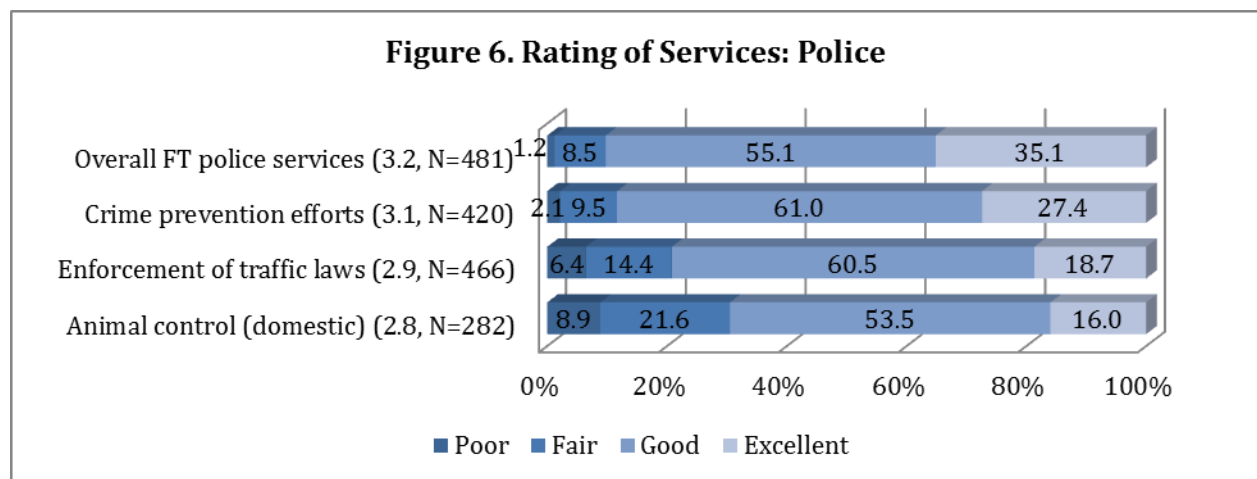


The top priorities reflect the features of the Centre Region most valued listed earlier. Among the top 10 priorities are public safety services (police, fire, ambulance/EMS), farmland protection, public infrastructure (road maintenance, water systems), and environmental protection (open space preservation, protecting waterways and wetlands, environmental programs, and recycling and composting). In the middle of the priority listing include planning (land use regulation and stormwater management) as well as economic development (in general and business retention/expansion). Next in

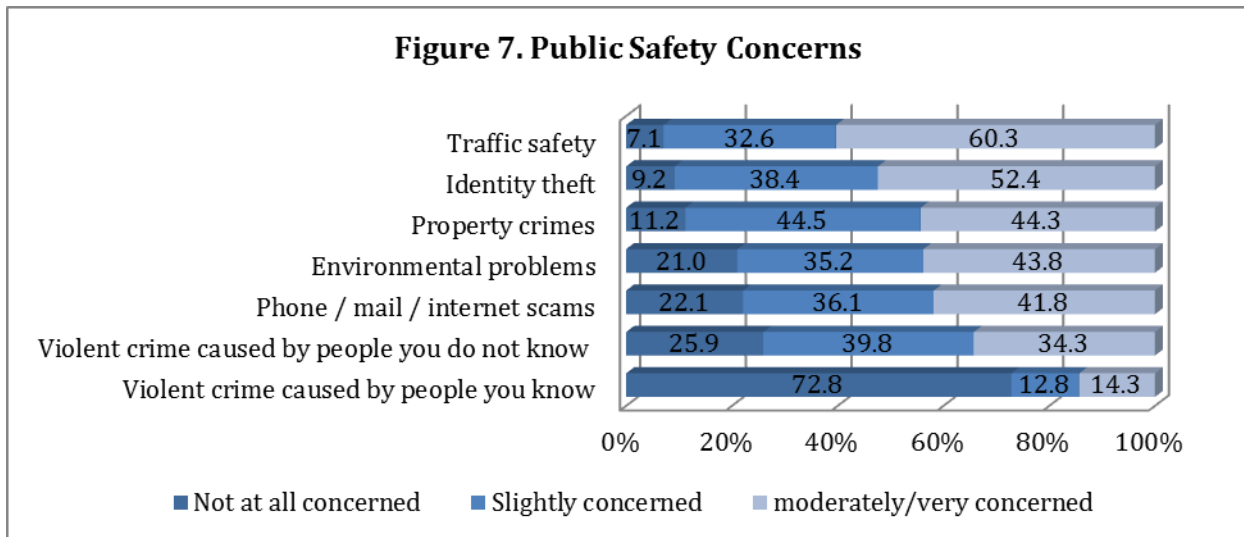
the priority ranking are several services that the Township provides in cooperation with other governments in the Centre Region (public transportation, parks and recreation, trails/pathways, regional public library, and senior activities). The lowest priority items include small business development incentives, affordable housing initiatives, and building code enforcement. Finally, the lowest priority is supporting cultural activities and facilities.

## Police Services and Public Safety

As noted in multiple questions, public safety is one of the most valued features of the Centre Region. Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate the quality of services provided by the Ferguson Township Police Department. Respondents could rank each service as poor, fair, good, or excellent, or they could select don't know if they felt unable to assess the service. To calculate the ratings listed below, values were assigned as follows: 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good and 4 = excellent. The rating is the average value for a service. All police services were rated highly, with 90.2% of respondents rating overall police services good or excellent, 88.4% rated crime prevention efforts good or excellent, and 79.2% rated enforcement of traffic laws good or excellent (Figure 6). Control of domestic animals seemed to be the least familiar, as it was rated by only 282 respondents; of these, 69.5% rated control of domestic animals good or excellent.

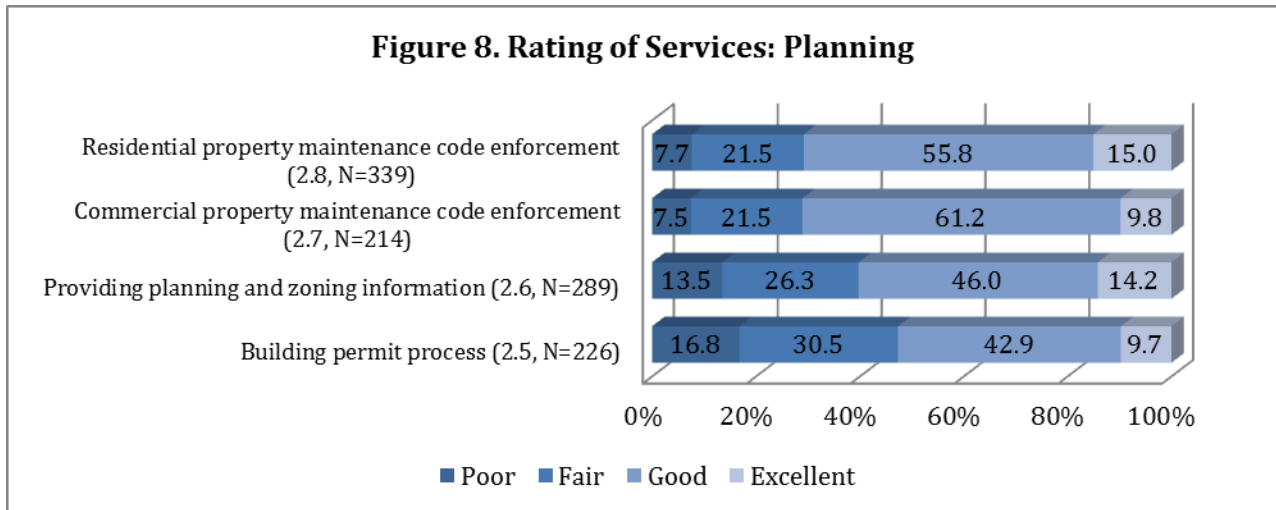


To provide guidance for future police efforts, the survey asked respondents to rate their level of concern about a series of potential criminal issues. The top issues of concern, with a majority of respondents indicating they were moderately or very concerned, were traffic safety (60.3%) and identity theft (52.4%). As can be seen in Figure 7, similar percentages of respondents were concerned about property crimes (44.3%), environmental problems (43.8%), and phone/mail/internet scams (41.8%). Approximately one-third of respondents (34.3%) expressed concern about violent crime caused by people they do not know. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (72.8%) were not concerned about violent crime caused by family, friends, or acquaintances.

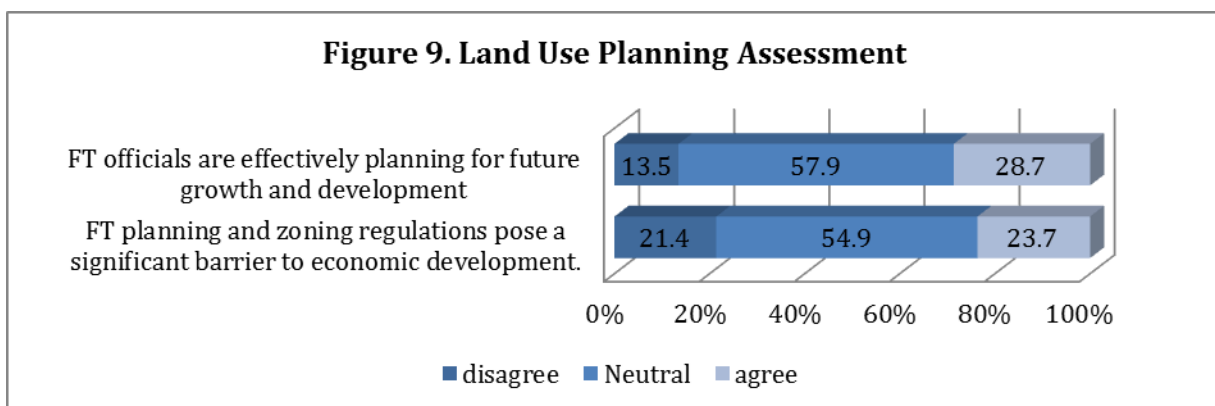


## Land Use Planning

Land use planning services were rated by respondents on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent). As reported in Figure 8, a majority of respondents who rated planning services rated them as good or excellent, including residential and commercial property maintenance code enforcement (70.8% and 71.0%, respectively), provision of planning information (60.2%), and building permit process (52.6%).

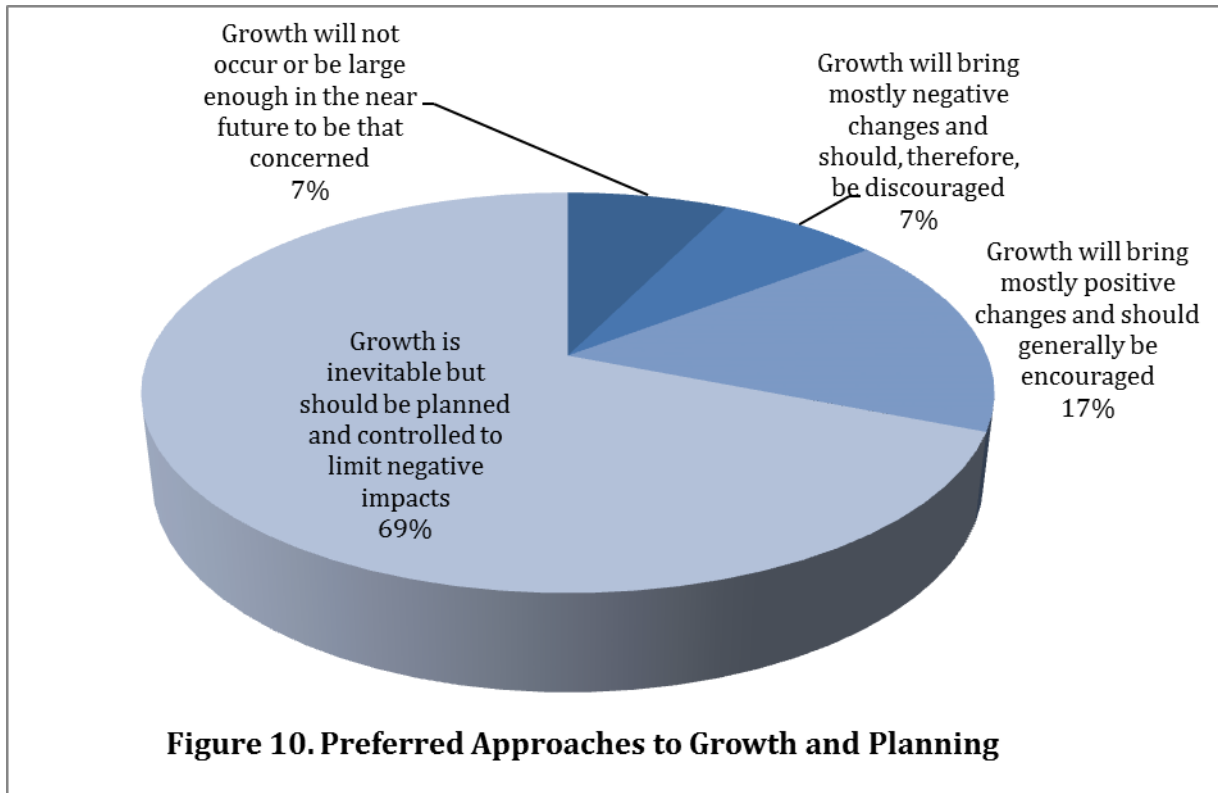


Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the performance of township government related to planning. The majority of respondents (57.9%) were neutral about the statement “Ferguson Township officials are effectively planning for future growth and development” (Figure 9). About one-quarter (28.7%) agreed with this statement, and 13.5% disagreed. When asked about the relationship between planning and economic development, 23.7% felt planning regulations pose a barrier to economic development, 54.9% were neutral, and 21.4% did not feel planning poses a barrier to economic development.



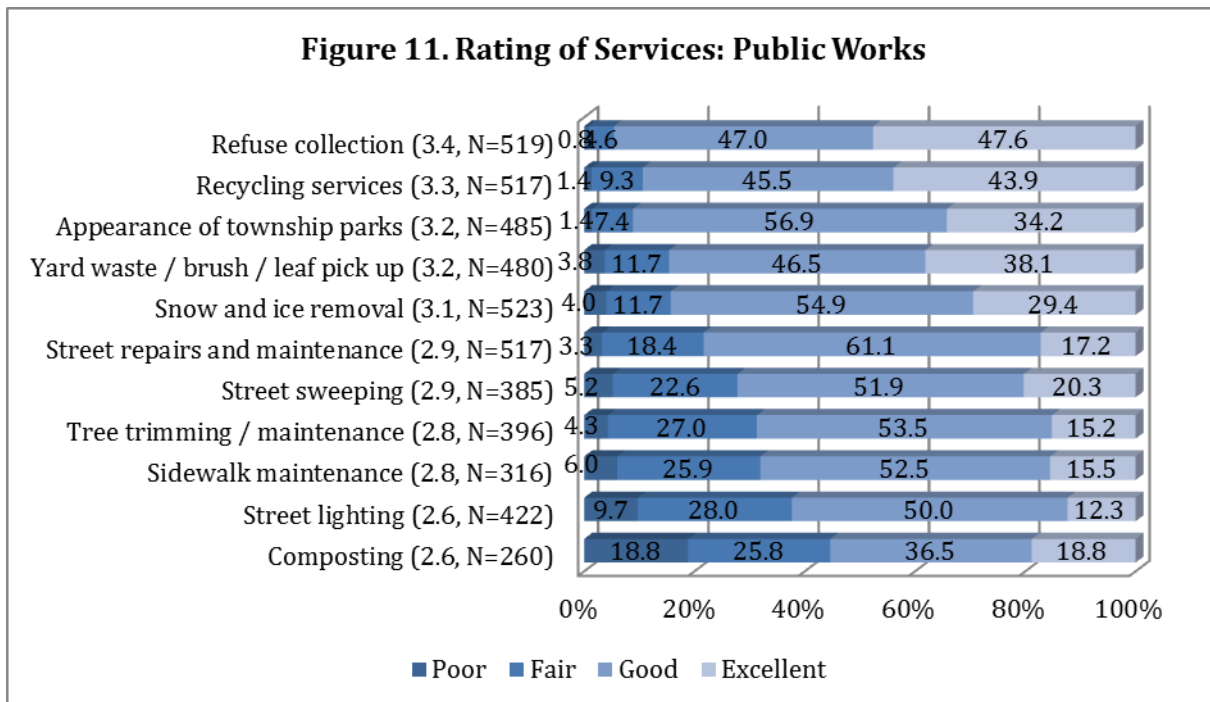
Respondents were also asked to select among a series of statements that describe approaches to planning for growth. More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) selected the statement, “Growth is inevitable but should be planned and controlled to limit negative impact” (Figure 10). The next most popular statement, with 17% of respondents selecting it, was “Growth will bring mostly positive changes

and should generally be encouraged.” The remaining two options were each selected by 7% of respondents.



## Public Works

Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate the quality of services provided by the Ferguson Township Public Works Department. Respondents could rank each service as poor, fair, good, or excellent, or they could select don't know if they felt unable to assess the service. To calculate the ratings listed below, values were assigned as follows: 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good and 4 = excellent. The rating is the average value for a service. Most services were rated highly by significant majorities of respondents (Figure 11). Percentages rating services as good or excellent include 94.6% for refuse collection, 89.4% for recycling, 91.1% for maintenance of township parks, 84.6% for yard waste/leaf pickup, and 84.3% for snow and ice removal. About three-quarters rated street repairs and maintenance (78.3%) and street sweeping (72.2%) as good or excellent. About two-thirds of respondents rated tree trimming/maintenance (68.7%), sidewalk maintenance (68.0%), and street lighting (62.3%). A majority (55.3%) rated composting services as good or excellent.



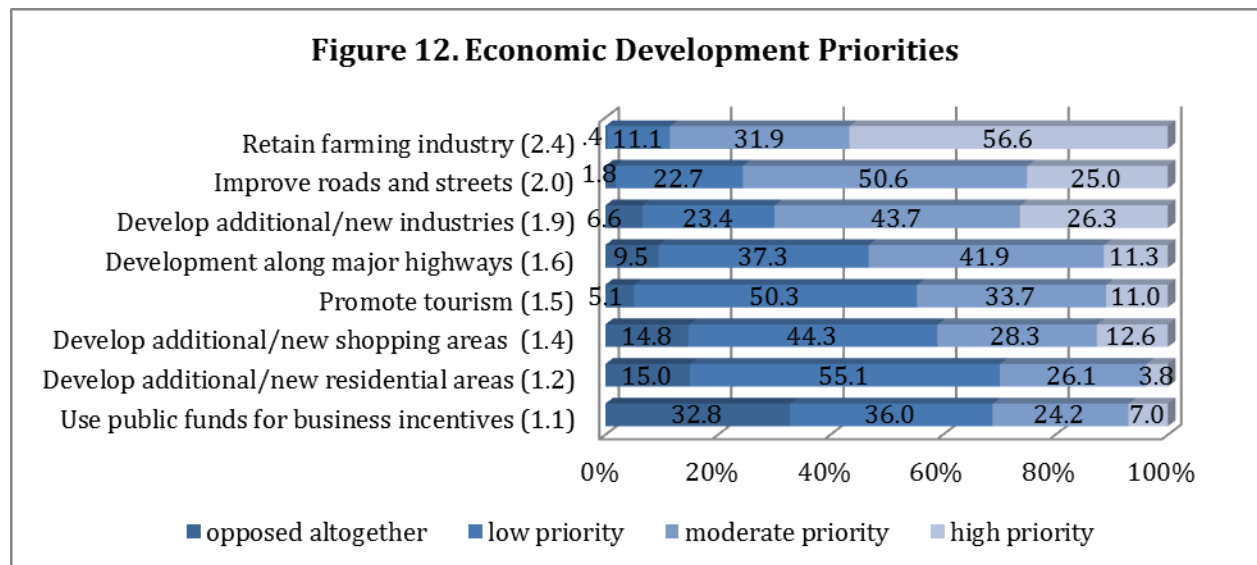
## Finance and Tax Issues

Respondents were asked in different ways to provide guidance about economic development options. In one section, respondents were almost equally split in response to the statement “Ferguson Township should provide tax incentives for commercial/industrial development.” Of the responses, 34.4% agreed, 38.6% were neutral, and 27.1% disagreed.

Respondents also were given the opportunity to indicate their priorities for economic development options. Respondents were asked to assign a priority level to each option listed, with response options including ‘opposed altogether,’ ‘low priority,’ ‘medium priority,’ or ‘high priority.’ Respondents could



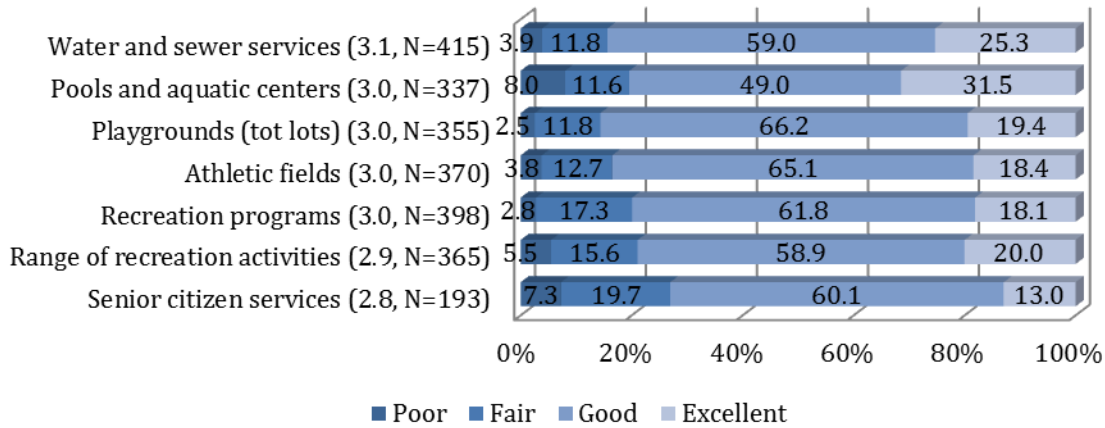
also indicate ‘don’t know’ if they felt they could not assign a priority. Figure 12 lists the services/programs in order of their average rating, provided in parentheses. To calculate the rating, responses were assigned values of 0 for ‘opposed altogether,’ 1 for ‘low priority,’ 2 for ‘medium priority,’ and 3 for ‘high priority.’ At the top of the priority list was retain the farming industry in the Township, with a majority (56.6%) of respondents rating this as a high priority. About one-quarter rated as high priorities improving roads and streets (25.0%) and develop additional or new industries (26.3%). Development along highways and promoting tourism were next in the priority list, with 11.3% and 11.0% ratings high priority, respectively. Development of shopping and residential areas were next in the priority list, followed by using public funds for business incentives, with nearly one-third (32.8%) opposed to this activity.



## Regional Services and Cooperation

Respondents were given the opportunity to indicate the quality of services provided through the cooperation of Centre Region governments. Respondents could rank each service as poor, fair, good, or excellent, or they could select don’t know if they felt unable to assess the service. To calculate the ratings listed below, values were assigned as follows: 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good and 4 = excellent. The rating is the average value for a service. A majority of respondents rated these services as good or excellent. One quarter of respondents rated water and sewer services as excellent (Figure 13). Over thirty percent rated pools and aquatic centers as excellent. Approximately one-fifth of respondents rated other recreation services as excellent, including playgrounds (19.4%), athletic fields (18.4%), recreation programs (18.1%), and the range of recreation activities (20.0%). Senior citizen services were rated good or excellent by nearly three-quarters (73.1%) of respondents. When asked to indicate their opinions about cooperation with other local governments, 40.3% agreed that Ferguson Township should cooperate more, 49.2% were neutral, and 10.4% disagreed.

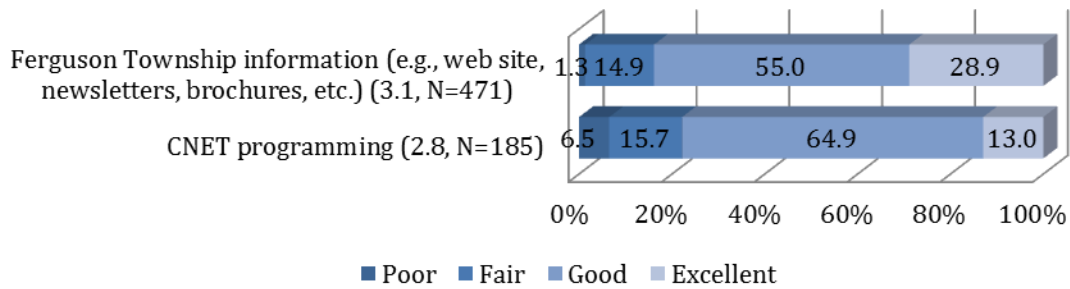
**Figure 13. Rating of Services: Regional Services**



### Information Resources

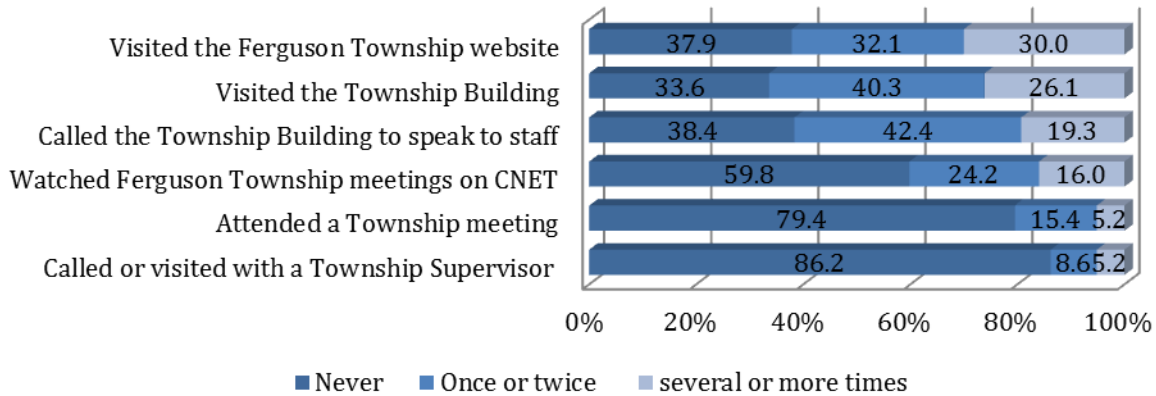
Respondents were asked to rate Ferguson Township government’s provision of information. A majority of respondents (83.9%) described Ferguson Township’s information sources as good or excellent. Only 185 respondents rated the quality of CNET programming; of these, 77.9% rated CNET programming as good or excellent (Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Rating of Services: Information**



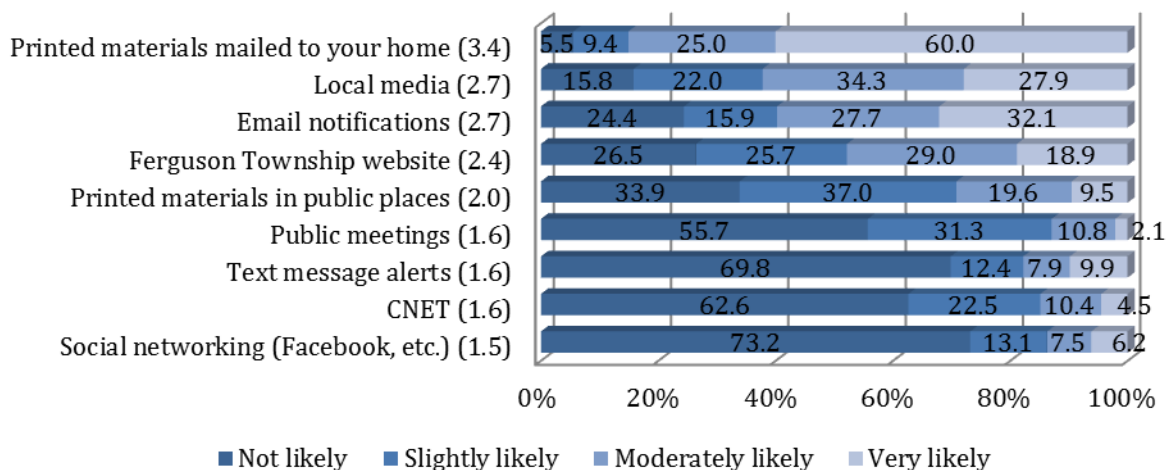
Ferguson Township officials assessed the use of current information sources and preferences for the future. Respondents were first asked to indicate how many times they had used information sources in the past year. The most used source was the Ferguson Township website, with 30.0% using the website at least several times in the past year. About one-quarter (26.1%) had visited the Township Building and 19.3% had called the Township Building at least several times in the past year (Figure 15). Approximately one-third had never visited the website, visited the Township building, or called to talk with staff. Less used information sources include watching Ferguson Township meetings on CNET (40.2% using at least once, 59.8% not using in the past year), attending a Township meeting (79.4% not using in the past year), and calling or visiting with a Township Supervisor (86.2% not doing in the past year).

**Figure 15. Use of Ferguson Township Information Sources**



Respondents were asked to indicate the likelihood of using a series of information sources in the future. The most preferred method is printed materials mailed directly to the home, with 85.0% of respondents indicating they would be moderately or very likely to use materials mailed to the home (Figure 16). The second preferred source is local media, with 62.2% indicating they would be moderately or very likely to use the source. Two online sources – email notifications and the Ferguson Township website – were next in the preferred list. Email notifications would moderately or very likely be used by 58.9% of respondents. The Ferguson Township website is likely to be used by nearly half (47.9%) of respondents. However, one-quarter of respondents (24.4% and 26.5%, respectively) indicated they would not be likely to use either electronic information source. The traditional methods of making printed materials available in public places and holding public meetings, fell in the middle of the preference list, with smaller percentages (29.1% and 12.9%, respectively) indicating they would be moderately or very likely to use these information sources. Other electronic methods, including text message alerts, CNET, and social networking media, fell at the bottom of the preference list.

**Figure 16. Preference for Receiving Township Information**



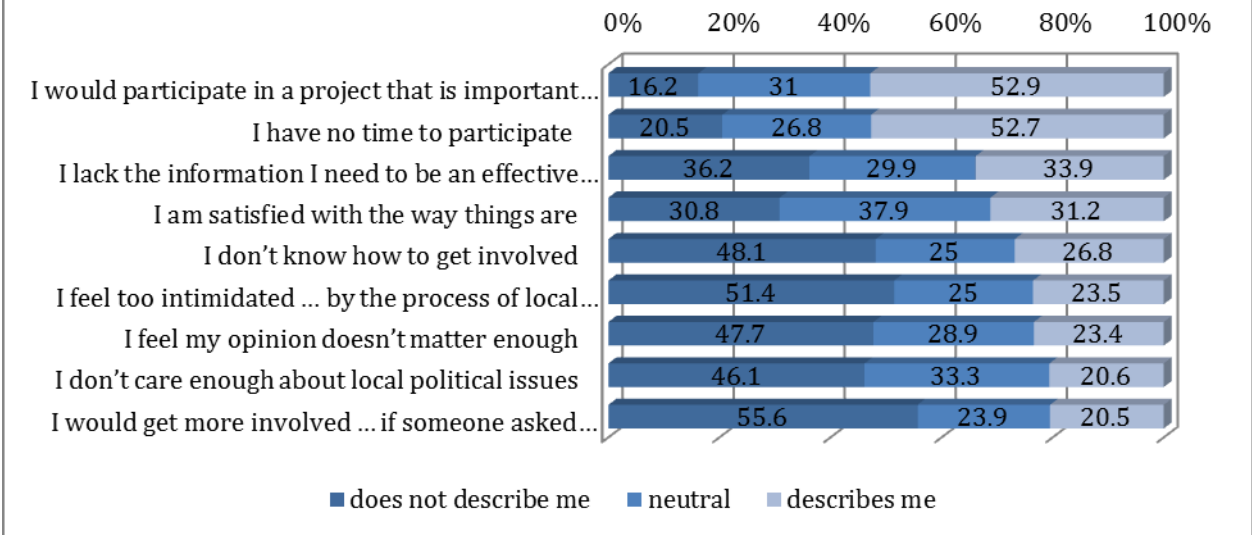
## Citizen Participation and Engagement

Township Supervisors and staff were particularly interested in assessing the openness of Township government and interest in engaging in Township activities. Very small numbers of respondents reported current participation in Ferguson Township activities, such as volunteer fire/ambulance services (10), local beautification projects (18), ad hoc committees (5), short-term projects (8), special events (31), Ferguson Township authorities/boards/commissions (5), or other elected official (3). Table 8 the percentages of respondents not currently involved who expressed interest in these positions. The majority of respondents indicated they were not interested in the volunteer opportunities. The numbers of individuals may be just as important as the percentages, however. The number of potential participants ranged from 34 interested in volunteering for fire/ambulance, 170 in working on local beautification projects, 206 in serving on ad hoc committees, 156 in donating professional services for short term projects, 369 in volunteering for special events, 115 in serving on Township authorities/boards/commissions, and 46 in running for elected office. **Table 8. Level of interest in volunteering**

	<b>Not interested</b>	<b>Somewhat interested</b>	<b>Very interested</b>
<b>Serve in the volunteer fire or ambulance services N=507</b>	473 93.3%	32 6.3%	2 0.4%
<b>Work on local beautification projects (gardens, trimming) N=497</b>	327 65.8%	156 31.4%	14 2.8%
<b>Serve on ad hoc committees related to specific topics N=504</b>	298 59.1%	185 36.7%	21 4.2%
<b>Donate professional services for short-term projects N=504</b>	348 69.0%	135 26.8%	21 4.2%
<b>Volunteer time for special events or activities N=483</b>	214 44.3%	252 52.2%	17 3.5%
<b>Serve on Ferguson Township authorities, boards, or commissions (such as zoning hearing board, planning commission, etc.) N=510</b>	397 77.8%	96 18.8%	17 3.3%
<b>Serve as an elected official (e.g., township supervisor) N=511</b>	465 91.0%	39 7.6%	7 1.4%

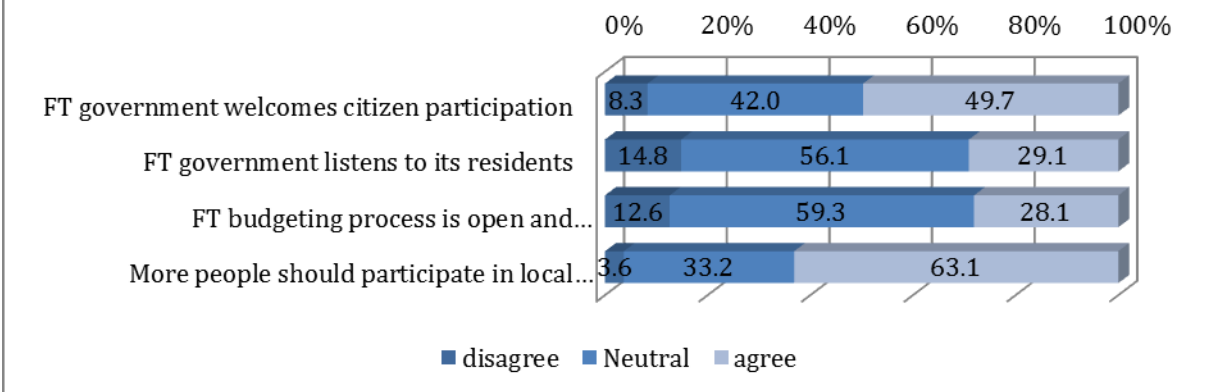
One for matching potential volunteers with opportunities is to create and maintain a ‘talent bank.’ This is a database that contains contact information and interests of potential volunteers so that individuals can be identified when an opportunity arises. Talent banks are used by many municipal governments in the Commonwealth, some in this region. Respondents to the survey showed relatively little enthusiasm for a talent bank in Ferguson Township. More than one-third (37.2%) were not interested in participating in a talent bank, 40.5% were somewhat interested, and less than one-quarter (22.3%) were moderately or very interested.

**Figure 17. Participation Barriers**



One section asked about barriers to participating in local government activities. Respondents were asked to rank a series of potential barriers to participation (Figure 17). The top barriers are a personal connection to the issue and time commitment. Approximately one-third (33.9%) listed a lack of information to be an effective participant as being a barrier. Another one-third (31.2%) said they were satisfied with the way things are so felt no need to participate in Ferguson Township activities. Knowledge of how to get involved, intimidation by the process of local government, and feeling as if their opinion does not matter were each cited by about one-quarter of respondents. At the bottom of the list are not caring enough about local issues and the desire for a personal request for involvement, each with about one-fifth of respondents citing these as barriers to participation.

**Figure 18. Openness of Township Government**



Another section specifically asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about citizen participation in Ferguson Township government. A figure 18 shows that half of

respondents (49.7%) agreed that Ferguson Township government welcomes citizen participation; while 8.3% disagreed (42.0% were neutral). The majority of respondents were neutral as to whether Ferguson Township government listens to residents and the budget process is open to residents. Less than one-third (29.1% and 28.1%, respectively) agreed with these statements. However, nearly two-thirds (63.1%) agreed that more people should participate in local government.

### *Acknowledgements*

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