

## **7.0 SURVEY RESULTS**

The amended Public Participation Plan identified the need to conduct further outreach to the community through the administration of two surveys- a Household Survey and a Business Survey. The surveys were utilized to better understand what those who live and work in the East Side perceive as the neighborhood's strengths, problems, and opportunities, surveys. The results of each are described below.

### ***7.1.0 THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY***

A door-to-door survey of a random sample of East Side residents was conducted to ascertain their neighborhood shopping patterns, their views of the problems the neighborhood faces, and their ideas on how to improve the East Side (see Appendix 3 for complete results). A total of 385 residents completed the survey. Of the respondents, 82 percent live in houses rather than apartments and 81 percent own their homes. Almost 85 percent of respondents have lived in the East Side for more than 10 years, and just under two-thirds have lived there more than 20 years. 60 percent of respondents live in homes with one or two people; only 10 percent have four or more people in the house. Almost 61 percent of respondents have no children living in the home.

In the Household Survey questions regarding neighborhood shopping patterns were limited. Questions focused on shopping at East Side establishments and purchases at small businesses. Close to 100 percent of respondents reported that they shop in stores on the East Side. However, for many respondents, this means CVS Drugstore and Giant Market. When CVS Drugstore and Giant Market are removed from the responses, only 56 percent say that they shop in East Side stores.

In order to discern what actions are most appropriate for the East Side, it is necessary to determine what people think distinguishes their neighborhood, what they value about it, and what problems they see. The most frequent responses to the question "Is there anything that distinguishes the East Side of Binghamton from the rest of the City?" are presented in Table 7.1. Of the respondents, 116 (30 percent) did not provide a response. A number of respondents gave more than one answer. Only those responses made by more than 5 percent of respondents are presented in the table. Most of the responses were positive and focused on the sense of neighborhood or community. A few of the responses were centered on problems in the neighborhood, with comments like "used to be a nice place but going down" and "lack of services from the city." There were about 12 such responses.

**Table 7.1 Distinguishing Features of the East Side**

Distinguishing Feature	Number	Percentage*
Quiet	83	32
Friendly people/good neighbors	48	19
Safe/Less crime	48	19
Good neighborhood/nice place	42	16
Schools	18	7
Clean neighborhood/well kept	18	7

\*using 259 respondents

When asked what they cherish or have strong feelings about regarding the neighborhood, most respondents (274) did not provide specific responses. The results from those who did are shown in Table 7.2. Not surprisingly, the features are similar to those in Table 7.1, but the importance shifts slightly. The neighborhood feel and sense of community, which includes the neighborliness of the people living there, rises to the top of what respondents’ value most about the East Side. The long tenure of many of the respondents speaks illustrates the sense of place that exists on the East Side.

**Table 7.2 What Respondents Cherish**

Strong Feelings	Number	Percentage*
Sense of neighborhood	35	32
Neighbors/people	21	19
Schools	12	11
Family Atmosphere/Family	12	11
Grew up here/ long residence	11	10
Safe	9	8

\*using 111 respondents

Several survey questions centered on issues that have been seen by some as problems the East Side faces. Respondents were asked to rate these problems on a scale that ranged from “Not a Problem” to “Major Problem.” The results are shown in Table 7.3. The greatest areas of concern center on the condition of roads and sidewalks and neglected homes. Almost two-thirds (64 percent) cited the condition of roads as a moderate or major problem, with 54 percent putting the condition of sidewalks in the same categories. Two issues fall into the middle range of concern: the environment (28 percent), and vacant properties (24 percent). Concern over neglected homes ranked third among problems, with 43 percent of respondents saying they are moderate or major problems. There is less concern about traffic, neighborhood appearance (with both at 16 percent total for moderate or major problem), and noise (12 percent) than the other categories. These results help to put resident concerns into perspective, based on the issues presented to them in the survey.

**Table 7.3 Ratings of Identified Problems**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Not a Problem</b>	<b>Minor Problem</b>	<b>Moderate Problem</b>	<b>Major Problem</b>
Neglected Homes	29 percent	28 percent	35 percent	8 percent
Vacant Properties	50 percent	27 percent	17 percent	7 percent
Neighborhood Appearance	57 percent	26 percent	12 percent	4 percent
Condition of roads	26 percent	10 percent	25 percent	39 percent
Condition of sidewalks	33 percent	13 percent	29 percent	25 percent
Traffic	66 percent	18 percent	9 percent	7 percent
Noise	71 percent	17 percent	7 percent	5 percent
Environment	52 percent	14 percent	18 percent	10 percent

(Totals do not add to 100percent due to rounding and non-responses)

In an attempt to delve more deeply into resident concerns, respondents were asked to provide their views of problems and to provide suggestions of possible solutions. The responses to the urgent problems question are shown in Table 7.4. In evaluating these responses, it is important to note that, first, respondents could provide multiple responses and second, not all respondents provided responses. Thus, providing percentages would be misleading. Instead the frequency of responses illustrates the rank of each. Once again, the condition of roads and sidewalks dominates.

**Table 7.4 Residents' Views of Urgent Problems**

<b>Area of "urgent" concern</b>	<b>Frequency of response</b>
Road condition	123
Sidewalk condition	104
Environment	36
Neglected homes	29
Appearance	15
Vacant Properties	12
Traffic	10
Noise	8

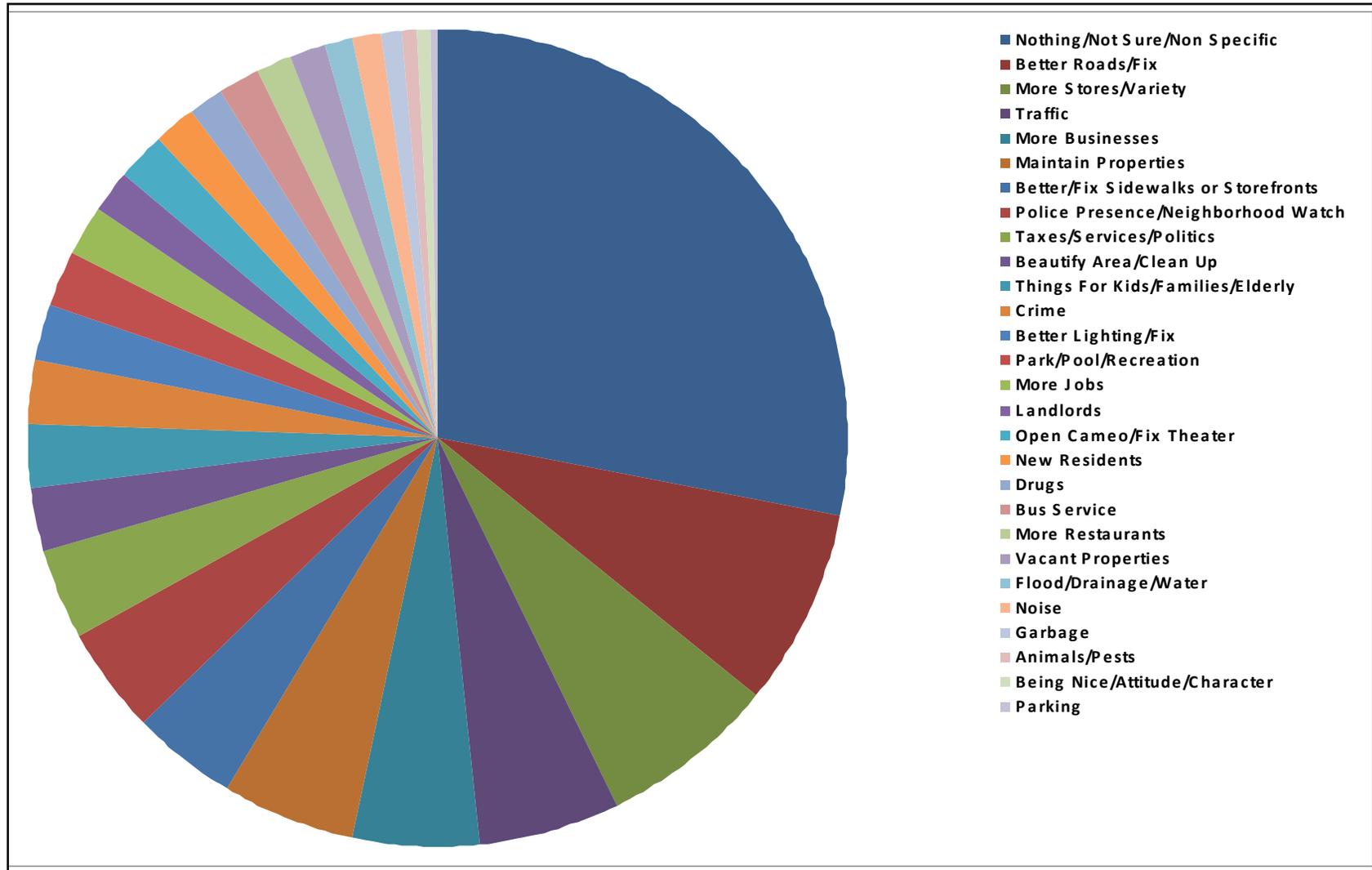
When asked what is needed to make the neighborhood better, a wide range of responses resulted (Chart 7.1), in part because respondents were encouraged to provide as many suggestions as they thought appropriate. As a result, the 385 respondents provided 487 different responses. As can be seen in Chart 7.1, responses varied widely, with the largest proportion (29 percent) offering no specific recommendations. The wide variation suggests that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed; some issues that were cited above are of importance here as well, including roads, sidewalks,

and traffic. The importance of more stores and businesses, as well as the need for an increased police presence, can be seen in these results. The list in Table 7.5 focuses on those topics that comprise 75 percent of all responses. The remaining 25 percent are divided among 20 different topics.

**Table 7.5 Respondents' Views on Needed Improvements**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Nothing/Not sure/Not specific	143	29.4
Better Roads/Fix Roads	40	8.2
More Stores/Variety	35	7.2
Traffic	28	5.7
More Businesses	26	5.3
Maintain Properties/Vacant	26	5.3 t
Better/Fix Sidewalks/Storefronts	22	4.5
Police Presence/Neighborhood Watch	21	4.3
Taxes/Services/Politics	18	3.7

Chart 7.1 Resident Suggested Changes for East Side



### 7.2.0 BUSINESS SURVEY

Before any recommendations can be made regarding the business environment on Robinson Street, it is important to know how current business owners view their locations and what changes they would recommend. To that end, all businesses on Robinson Street were given the opportunity to participate in the survey; fifteen agreed (see complete results in Appendix 4). The tenure of these businesses varies widely, from one that has been there for less than one year to four that report having been located on Robinson Street for more than fifty years. Ownership of the businesses has shifted somewhat, with two having been under current ownership for one year or less. One of the businesses that has been on Robinson Street for fifty years has been under current ownership for the last seven years.

The size of the businesses varies widely as well. This is indicated by the number of customers that frequent them, both on weekdays and on weekends (Table 7.6). These data suggest that Robinson Street is characterized by establishments that average fewer than 50 customers on a typical day each week. Only 23 percent of businesses responding report that the number of customers has decreased in the past year, while 46 percent say that it has stayed the same and 31 percent report an increase.

**Table 7.6 Average Number of Customers, by Business Respondents**

Average number	Weekdays	Weekends
Under 20	3 (21 percent)	5 (36 percent)
20-50	6 (43 percent)	5 (36 percent)
51-100	2 (14 percent)	2 (14 percent)
>100	3 (21 percent)	2 (14 percent)

Several open-ended questions were asked of the business proprietors. One questions asked what they believe is beneficial about being a business on Robinson Street and another asked what is not beneficial. The range of responses is presented in Table 7.7. A majority of businesses believe the volume of traffic on Robinson Street is important. Other reported benefits are divided among a number of categories. The detriments mentioned are much broader in nature than the benefits, and four were reported by two businesses. Of these, two relate to accessibility and the need for competition while the other two relate to perceived social characteristics of the neighborhood. It is also interesting to note that, while most businesses value the volume of traffic, one noted that it is too fast.

**Table 7.7 Benefits and Detriments of a Robinson Street Business Location**

Location Benefits (# responses)	Location Detriments (# responses)
High traffic (7)	Not enough businesses (2)
Low rent (1)	Parking (2)
Convenience for clientele (1)	Drug dealers (2)
Low rent (1)	Type of people (2)
Local people (1)	Fast traffic (1)
Hope for growth (1)	Not good looking (1)
Close to home (1)	Every building has sold (1)
More buildings now (1)	Sidewalks (1)
Hospital/Nursing Home (1)	

Each proprietor was asked what they would like to see in the future, focusing on preferred other businesses, desired changes on Robinson Street, and actions the City of Binghamton can or should take to foster the commercial sector in this neighborhood. The respondents reported a range of preferred other business, ranging from “something” to “a variety.” Retail, restaurants and coffee shops, and manufacturing/industries were all mentioned. These results suggest that the prevailing attitude is that more businesses are better. This is in concert with the results from the Household Survey, in which “more stores/variety” and “more businesses” were among the most frequently mentioned (Chart 7.1). The results regarding the other two questions are provided in Table 6.8. In all cases except “appearance of street” (2 responses) and “lower taxes” (4 responses), only one respondent mentioned a given issue. Nonetheless, these lists provide an overview of the perceived needs that business owners have to improve Robinson Street.

**Table 7.8 Respondents Suggestions of Areas to Change**

What to Change	What the City Can Do
Appearance of street	Lower taxes
Content with it	Better jobs in the area
Department/specialty stores	Encourage people to fill empty stores
Get rid of rundown buildings	Fix up buildings
Low taxes	Make street more appealing
More bus stops	More people moving in
Streets, sidewalks	More police patrols
Remove old bridge over Robinson St	Parking
Content with it	Nothing

### 7.3.0 SUMMARY

The results of Household Survey and Business Survey suggest that the East Side is valued highly by those who live and work there. There is agreement that changes are needed relating to the condition of the infrastructure, aesthetics, and the need for additional businesses. Although the demographic analysis illustrates the changes that have occurred in the East Side, there is a strong sense of community among residents and business proprietors that all want to maintain and strengthen.