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# Citizen Views of the Quality of Life in Valparaiso

January 30, 2002

Prepared by the Community Research and Service Center

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Educating a New Generation of Civic  
Leaders and Making a Difference in  
Northwest Indiana

## Preface

Central components of Valparaiso University's mission are to foster the development of engaged, socially responsible citizens and to be an institution that actively participates in the public life of Northwest Indiana. One of the many ways in which the University fulfills this mission is through the Community Research and Service Center (CRSC).

Founded in 1995, the CRSC provides a community-based learning experience for undergraduate students in which they learn applied research skills, become involved in community activities, and develop a sense of civic responsibility. This is accomplished by creating partnerships with non-profit organizations and local governments in Northwest Indiana and doing professional and timely research as well as providing other services for these groups.

While many universities operate research centers that provide service to their communities, the Community Research and Service Center at Valparaiso University is distinguished by its exclusive reliance on undergraduate students. Students become involved as interns, paid research associates, or as members of a class that takes on a project. As integral participants, students are involved in the design, implementation and presentation of the results of the projects. Over two hundred students have been involved in more than 50 projects in the past six years.

This particular project is a continuation of a lengthy partnership with the City of Valparaiso and in particular, Nancy Pekarek, the City Planner. The study was designed in close cooperation with the City. As is often the case with CRSC projects, the study was integrated into a class and the students in the class assumed much of the responsibility for the study. A total of 19 students worked on various aspects of this project. The 12 students who worked on this project from Political Science 260: Applied Research Methods, are listed on the title page. These persons did a substantial amount of work and put in a great deal of time, most of them going way beyond what was expected of them for the class. Another 7 students, also listed on the title page, who are research associates and on the staff of the CRSC, also did a good deal of work on this project. All of these persons were supervised and assisted on the project by Kaytie Frey, the Associate Director. Together, they deserve much credit for all their work on this project as well as their patience and willingness to adapt to the demands of an ongoing and sometimes difficult project.

Larry Baas  
Valparaiso University  
January, 2002

## Introduction

The purpose of this study is to assess the opinions of residents of the City of Valparaiso on a series of issues concerning the quality of life in the City, an evaluation of services, purposes for which additional taxes would be supported, what residents like the most about the community, what they identify as the unmet needs and problems and the areas where there are the most serious traffic problems. To accomplish this, staff members of the Community Research and Service Center and representatives from the City of Valparaiso developed the questionnaire included in the Appendix. It consists of 16 statements and asks whether persons agree or disagree with each statement and a series of 22 services or conditions in the City and asks persons to evaluate them. It also includes a list of 16 projects or issues and asks if residents would be willing to support an increase in taxes for them. In addition it includes 3 open-ended questions and asks persons to list their major likes about the City, what they consider the problems and unmet needs, and what they consider the worst traffic areas in the City. Also included are several other questions as well as a request for information about their demographic characteristics.

A systematic random sample was drawn of all households in the City of Valparaiso. This amounted to taking approximately every 5<sup>th</sup> household, starting at a randomly determined place, listed in the Haines Criss-Cross Directory. The CD Rom version was used to do this. This resulted in a sample of 2160 households in the City that were sent a copy of the questionnaire, a cover letter and a stamped self-addressed return envelope. All persons were guaranteed anonymity and there was no record kept of who did or did not respond and there was no follow up mailing done. The mailing took place in the last week of October and the first few days of November. As indicated in the table below, a response rate of 33.2% was obtained from the questionnaires actually delivered. 5.6% of the questionnaires were not delivered because the houses were either vacant or the addresses were inaccurate.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

<b>Total Mailed</b>	<b>2160</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Vacant</b>	73	3.38
<b>Bad Address</b>	11	0.51
<b>No Such Address</b>	26	1.20
<b>Undeliverable</b>	5	0.23
<b>Total Not Delivered</b>	121	5.60
<b>Total Delivered</b>	2039	94.40
<b>Total Responses</b>	677	31.34
<b>Responses/Delivered</b>	677	33.20

An overview of the general characteristics of the sample, as well as complete listing of the responses is available in the Appendix. Table 2 presents a comparison of the sample and some data from the 2000 census. Unfortunately income data will not be available for the City level and below until the spring of 2002. But data is available on age, gender and race. Looking at the age variable, in most categories the sample data matches the population with the exception of the under representation of the 20-24 year age group in our sample. When it comes to gender, our sample tends to over represent women. As to race, the sample is a fairly close approximation to the population. It should be noted, however, that given the way the 2000 census reports race and ethnicity compared to the way we phrased the question, it is not possible to make exact comparisons. Suffice it to say, however, that sample and the population are quite similar on this issue.

As noted, the 2000 data on income is not yet available. However, given a variety of different estimates, it appears that the median household income of \$55,000 of our sample comes quite close to what one would anticipate given a variety of estimates that are available.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the close approximate to the population in many areas, there is some apparent skewing of the data. There are several ways to handle this and after considering several options, it was decided to report the data as it is and then provide controls for age, income and gender. This method allows interested parties to investigate the impact of each one of these particular variables on the results. Controls for length of residence in the community were also included for comparative purposes. This analysis is commented upon in the text of this report and the tabular analysis is presented in the Appendix. Persons interested in how these variables affected the outcomes are encouraged to examine this data closely.

**Table 2: Sample and Population Compared<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Ages</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>20-24</b>	29	4.41	3334	16.56
<b>25-34</b>	102	15.53	3937	19.55
<b>35-44</b>	137	20.85	3738	18.57
<b>45-54</b>	159	24.20	3570	17.73
<b>55-59</b>	48	7.31	1090	5.41
<b>60-64</b>	42	6.39	885	4.40
<b>65-74</b>	70	10.65	1589	7.89
<b>75-84</b>	56	8.52	1342	6.67
<b>85+</b>	14	2.13	649	3.22
<b>Totals</b>	657	100.00	20134	100.00

<b>Race</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	604	91.38	25879	94.35
<b>Other</b>	57	8.62	1549	5.65
<b>Totals</b>	661	100.00	27428	100

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	254	39.7	10147	46.9
<b>Female</b>	386	60.3	11467	53.1
<b>Totals</b>	640	100	21614	100

### **An Analysis of Opinions in the City of Valparaiso**

As previously noted, the questionnaire included a list of 16 comments to which respondents were asked to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, were not sure about,

<sup>1</sup> For example, the 1998 census estimates for Porter County put the median household income at somewhere between \$49,860-55,862 and the 2000 CACI marketing estimates of the same figure for zip code 46383 is \$54,355 and for 46385 it is \$60,067.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages for age are based on the number of persons 20 years of age and over. For gender the figures are based on the population 18 and over. The numbers in the sample do not always add up to 677 because some persons did not answer that specific question.

disagree, or strongly disagree. The statements and the results of the analysis of the 16 questions concerning a wide variety of issues in the City are presented in Table 3. The first column in that table presents the statement and is followed in the next 5 columns by the percentage of respondents giving that particular response. The next two columns in the table present the total percent who agree (strongly agree + agree) while the disagree column includes all those who disagree (strongly disagree + disagree).

In addition to the data in that table, the following textual analysis includes the results of an assessment of several variables on the opinions expressed in this table. In particular, the impact of gender, age, length of residence in the community and income on these opinions are examined. The analysis of this data resulted in 64 separate tables, and to make this presentation a bit simpler, these tables have been moved to the Appendix. Readers are encouraged to examine these tables to see more closely how each variable affects opinions on various issues.

Each heading in the following paragraphs is the actual statement to which individuals were asked to respond.

***There is enough affordable housing in this community.*** The community is somewhat divided on this issue. 12.6% strongly agree and 28.4% agree. On the other hand, 9.4% strongly disagree and 31% disagree that there is enough affordable housing. In other words, about 40% (41%) agree there is enough affordable housing and 40% (40.4%) disagree and another 20% (18.6%) are not sure. Despite this division, it seems important to emphasize that over 40% of the respondents do not think there is enough affordable housing. There are some significant differences among groups on these issues. Women are more likely to see affordable housing as a problem. Age does not make a difference, nor does length of residence in the community, but income does and not surprisingly, the greater the income, the less likely one is to see affordable housing as a problem.

***The downtown Business district is a key indicator of the economic health of the City.*** More than one-half (54.8%) agree with this, but only 11.4% agree strongly. At the same time, 24.5% disagree and another 20.7% are not sure. There are no differences among various socio-economic groups on this issue

***There is a need for public transportation in the City & the County.*** Almost 2/3 of the respondents (61.8%) agree and 25.5% of those agree strongly that there is a need for public transportation. Only 23.5% disagree (5.1% strongly) and 14.8% are not sure. There are significant differences among groups on this issue. Women, older persons, persons who have lived in the community longer and the less wealthy all are more likely to see a need for public transportation.

***I would support the implementation of year round schools.*** Only 35.3% support this (12.2% strongly) while 41.8% do not and 18.8% of these strongly disagree. However, almost 1/4 of the respondents (23%) are not sure. There are some differences on these issues along socio-economic lines. Women are more supportive and younger persons tend to be less supportive, although the latter relationship is somewhat complex. Level of income and length of residence in the community do not have any impact

***I support casino gambling in Northwest Indiana.*** 31.7% support casino gambling (7.3% strongly), but 55.6% do not support casino gambling and 35.5% disagree strongly -- the largest % of strongly agree or disagree for any question. Only 12.8% are not sure about this issue, one of the smaller numbers of "not sure" for any of the questions. Gender and income do not impact

opinion on this issue, but younger persons are more supportive of casino gambling, and there is a tendency for support to decline with length of residence in the community.

***I feel safe walking in my neighborhood alone at night.*** Most respondents (71.8%) feel safe walking through their neighborhoods and only a small number (16.4%) do not feel safe. Length of residence in the community does not affect opinion on this issue, but both older persons, persons with less income and women feel less safe in their neighborhoods alone at night.

***Compared to last year, I am much better off financially.*** Most respondents (54.2%) are not much better off financially than they were last year while 30.7% indicate that they are much better off. Neither gender nor length of residence in the community affect opinions on this, but persons who are younger and persons who are more wealthy are more likely to say they are better off financially than last year

***If proposed again, I would support the creation of a smaller aquatic park.*** The responses to this statement make clear why this was such a contested issue in the past year. Virtually identical percentages of respondents (43%) support such a proposal as oppose it, with another 14.1% being not sure. The intensity of the debate is enhanced by the sizable number (26.3%) who disagree strongly and the almost as large group (19.4%) who agree strongly. Looking at all of the other issues, this is certainly the issue that generates the greatest amount of polar positions. Length of residence in the community does not affect opinions on this issue, but women, younger persons and persons with greater income are more likely to be supportive of the creation of an aquatic park.

***As a result of terrorist attacks on America, I feel less secure and safe.*** While Valpo residents generally feel safe in their neighborhoods (question 6) there is a substantial number (53.9%) who feel less safe as a result of the terrorist attacks. At the same time, almost 1/3 of the residents do not feel less secure and safe as a result of the terrorist attacks. Length of residency in the community, income and age do not affect opinions on this issue, but women are more likely to feel less secure and safe after September 11.

***I am satisfied with the quality of healthcare this community.*** There is wide spread satisfaction among Valpo residents with the quality of health care in the community. 62.4% (9.7% strongly) support this statement and a total of 23.8% do not, while another 13.8% are not sure. Gender, length of residence in the community and income do not affect opinions on this issue. Evaluations of the quality of health care in the community, however, do rise with age.

***The decline in the steel industry will have a significant impact on this City.*** This survey was sent out prior to Bethlehem Steel announcing that it would not make its tax payments and before LTV Steel announced it was shutting down its furnaces. Nevertheless, residents were well aware of the impending decline of the steel industry and almost all indicated (80.2%, with 38% agreeing strongly) that the decline in the steel industry would have significant impact on the City. Only 4.3% did not think this would be the case. Age and income do not affect opinion on this issue, but women and persons who have lived in the community longer tend to see the steel impact as being more significant on the City.

***It takes much longer to drive places in the City than it did a few years ago.*** Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  (71.7%, with 33.3% agreeing strongly) agree that it takes longer to drive places than a few years ago and only 14.6% (.9% strongly) disagree. Gender and income do not affect opinions on this issue, but belief that it takes longer to get places in the City increases with age and length of residence in the community.

***There has been too much uncontrolled development in this community.*** Most respondents (54.8%) agree that there has been too much uncontrolled development in this community and only 18.8% disagree. However, over ¼ (26.4%) are not sure about this. Gender does not affect opinions on this issue, but belief that development has been uncontrolled increases with both age and length of residence in the community. The reverse is true for income as those with more income tend to disagree and those with less income express more concern about the pace of development in the community.

***Most people don't have much input about what goes on in this community.*** Almost 60% (58.3%) agree that most people don't have much input in this community and less than 20% disagree (19.9%), while 21.8% are not sure. Gender does not have an impact on this issue but the belief that people do not have much input increases with age and length of residence in the community. On the other hand, the belief that persons do not have much impact declines with income.

***I am concerned about the continued existence of good jobs in this community.*** Almost all of the respondents (80.2%) are concerned about the continued existence of good jobs in this community. Only 8.9% are not concerned about this, and another 11% are not sure. Income and length of residence in the community do not affect opinions on this issue, but women and younger persons do express greater concern about the continued existence of good jobs in this community.

***Racial discrimination is a problem in this community.*** Almost 1/3 of the respondents (30.8%) believe racial discrimination is a problem in this community while more (40.9%) do not believe it is a problem. Interestingly, more than any other question, 28.3% are not sure whether it is a problem or not. There are no differences of opinion on this issue because of length of residence in the community, age or level of income. Women, however, see race discrimination as a problem to a much greater extent than men.

### ***Ranking of Issue Concerns***

While respondents were not asked to rank these statements from the ones that were most important to least important or in any way to compare one to the other, there are some reasonable conclusions that can be drawn from a comparison of the aggregate level of agreement or disagreement with each one of these statements. Figure 1 presents a comparative ranking of these 16 statements in terms of the total agreement with each statement.

**Economic concerns.** What is clearly evident is the central concern of respondents with economic issues. At both extremes we see these concerns. Over 80% are concerned about future jobs and the decline of the steel industry and at the same time, only 30.7% feel they are better off financially today than they were last year. Clearly, the economy seems to be an issue of central concern to these persons.

**Safety.** The statement that receives the next most amount of support relates to feelings of safety. Despite the fact that respondents do feel less safe and secure after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, most Valparaiso residents still feel safe walking in their neighborhood alone at night

**Traffic, Development and the Quality of Health Care.** Next in terms of strongest support are problems related to traffic and congestion. Most residents are satisfied with the quality of

healthcare in the community, but they express some concern about how long it takes to drive around the city and this is coupled with a majority who believe there is too much uncontrolled development. This poses a serious dilemma for the City; as you try to solve the economic problems with increased development, you also may contribute to other problems related to over development, traffic and infrastructure.

**Public Transportation, Public Input and the Downtown.** Falling in somewhat of the middle range with support from between 55% to 63% is the need for public transportation, a sense that most do not have much input in the community and a belief that the downtown is the key indicator of the City's economy.

**Aquatic Park, Affordable Housing, Year Round Schooling.** While still supported by around 40% of the respondents, these issues fall towards the lower end of concern for respondents.

**Casino Gambling and Racial Discrimination.** While both of these issues have received much attention in the past year, they fall at the bottom of support and concern among respondents. Only 31.7% support casino gambling and only 30.8% believe that racial discrimination is a problem in this community.

### **Evaluation of City Services and Conditions**

Respondents were presented with a list of services or conditions in the City and asked to indicate whether they would rate them excellent, good, fair, poor or not sure. The results are presented in Table 4 and represented graphically in Figure 2. There are a number of different ways to look at and organize these results. In the following presentation the excellent and good categories were combined as were the fair and poor categories for each service or condition. The various services or issues were then ranked from highest to lowest based on their combined excellent/good scores. This allows for some conclusions about what services and conditions are evaluated the highest and the lowest. Keep in mind, however, that looking at all the responses is important, particularly those at the extremes i.e., excellent and poor. Similarly, the not sure category also will take on significance on some of these issues.

As in the previous section, each one of these services or conditions was examined to see if gender, income, age or length of residence affected the opinion of persons on these issues. This analysis generated 88 separate tables and for ease of presentation, these are all included in the Appendix. Readers are encouraged to examine these tables to gain a greater appreciation of the results reported here.

**City Fire Protection.** Virtually everybody in the community (91.3%) rated the fire protection as either good or excellent. A total of 39.3% rated it as excellent, 52% good and only 2.4% fair and .3% poor. There are differences in evaluation related to socio-economic position. Males, older persons, and persons who have resided in the community longer are more likely to give positive evaluations. Income does not affect opinions on this issue.

**Valparaiso as a Place to Live.** 89.4% of respondents give Valpo either excellent or good marks as a place to live, with 36.3% rating it excellent, 53.1% good and only 9.7% fair and .8% poor. There are no differences along income, age or length of residence in the community on how they evaluate Valparaiso. However, males do tend to give it higher marks than females.

**Valparaiso Public Schools.** 87% of the respondents give the public schools either good or excellent evaluations with 45.3% giving the public schools an evaluation of excellent – the highest of all the institutions or conditions evaluated. Another 41.7% rate the schools good and only 4.8% give the schools a fair and 1.5% a poor rating. Males are more likely to give the schools high marks, as are persons who have lived longer in the community. There is a tendency for “older” persons to give the schools higher marks, but the relationship is somewhat curvilinear. Income does not affect opinions on this issue.

**Quality of Parks.** 86.4% evaluate the parks in the city either excellent or good, with 35.3% rating the parks excellent and 51.1% good. 11.6% rate the parks fair and .9% rate them poor. There are no differences in these evaluations because of age, gender, income, or length of residence in the community.

**City Police Protection.** 85.9% give the police either excellent or good marks. 32.1% give them excellent marks and 53.8% rate them as good. Only 10.1% grade them fair and 1.8% grade them as poor. There are no differences in evaluations based on one’s income, length of residence in the community or age, but males tend to evaluate the police more highly than do females.

**The Condition of Your Personal Health.** 79.3% rate their personal health either excellent or good. 20.9% rate their health excellent, 58.4% say good, 17.1% say fair and 3.2% rate their health as poor. Not surprisingly the evaluation of personal health declines with age as well as a related factor, length of residence in the community. Evaluations of personal health decline as income declines. There are no differences here between male and female in how they evaluate their personal health.

**Overall Quality of the Environment.** 70.1% of respondents evaluate the environment as either excellent or good, with 61.5% rating it good and 8.6% rating it excellent. Almost ¼ (24.7%) rate it as fair and 1.8% poor. There are no differences in these evaluations because of gender, or length of residence, but positive evaluations increase with age and income.

**Availability of Recreational Activities.** 67.9% rated the availability of recreational activities as either excellent or good. 16.1% of those were excellent and 51.8% were good. 23% rated this as fair and another 7.7% rated this as poor. There were no differences by gender or length of residence in the community, but evaluations went up with both age and income.

**Availability of Health Care Services.** 65% rated the availability of health care services as either excellent or good, with 53.7% being good and 11.3% excellent 24% rated this as fair and 8% poor. There are no differences in health care evaluations by income or length of residence in the community. There is a tendency for males to evaluate health care services more favorably and for older persons to give poorer evaluations, but the relationship with age was a bit varied.

**General Quality of Air.** 60.8% evaluated the air quality as excellent or good with 9% rating it excellent and 51.8% rating it good. 27% said it was fair and 10.2% rated it as poor. There are no differences in these evaluations because of age, gender, income, or length of residence in the community.

**Availability of Cultural Activities.** 50.7% evaluated the availability of cultural activities as either good or excellent. 11.7% rated this as excellent and 39% rated this as good. 33.1% rated the availability of cultural activities as fair and another 11.4% said poor. There were no differences by gender income or length of residence in the community. Evaluations tended to get higher, however, as a person’s age increased.

**The Local Economy.** 47.5% rated the local economy as either good or excellent. Only 1.7% thought it was excellent and 45.8% rated it as good. For the first time on our list, the % of fair and poor ratings (48.5%) exceeded the number of excellent and good ratings. Most of these were fair ratings (43.3%) and 5.2% rated the economy as poor. Age and length of residence had no impact on these evaluations, but gender and income did. Males were more likely to evaluate the economy positively as were persons with higher incomes.

**The General Quality of Water.** 46.9% rated the general quality of water as either excellent or good. 5.6% rated it excellent and 41.3% rated it good. 51.3% rated it either as fair or poor with 31.2% calling it fair and 20.1% rating it poor. There were no differences in evaluation by gender, income or length of residence in the community. As age increased, evaluations of the water also increased.

**The Maintenance of Roads and Streets.** 41.3% rated the maintenance of roads and streets as either excellent or good. 5.9% rated this as excellent and 35.4% said it was good. 58.4%, however, rated maintenance of roads and streets as either fair or poor with 38.9% rating it as fair and 19.5% giving it a grade of poor. There are no differences in these evaluations because of age, gender, income, or length of residence in the community.

**Quality of Traffic Control.** 38.6% rated traffic control as either excellent or good while 60.8% rated it as fair or poor. 2.7% rated it excellent, 35.9% good, 40.6% fair and 20.2% poor. There are no differences in these evaluations by gender, or income, but positive evaluations decrease with age and also with length of residence in the community, although the latter relationship is somewhat complex.

**Support for Physically Challenged Persons.** 38.1% rate support for the physically challenged as either excellent or good, while 35.1% rate it as fair or poor. 4.7% rate it as excellent, 33.4% say good, 26% say fair and 9.1% say poor. 26.8% -- by far the highest number in any of the evaluations -- indicate they are not sure. There are no differences in these evaluations by either gender or income, but evaluations decline with both age and length of residence in the community.

**Downtown Shopping.** 35.4% rate downtown shopping as either excellent or good while 63.3% rate it as fair or poor. 3.8% rate it excellent, 31.6% good, 38.9% fair, and 24.4% poor. Evaluations of downtown shopping do not vary by gender or income but do vary by age and length of residence in the community. Evaluations tend to decrease with both age and length of residence in the community.

**Availability of Affordable Housing.** 33.6% rate the availability of affordable housing as excellent or good, while 55.8% rate it as fair or poor. 4.5% rate it as excellent, 29.1% good, 24.3% fair and 31.5% poor. There are no differences in evaluations by age, but males, people with greater income and more recent residents in the community tend to evaluate the availability of affordable housing more favorably.

**Responsiveness of City Government.** 31.4% rate the responsiveness of City Government as either excellent or good while 52% rate it as fair or poor. 3% view responsiveness as excellent, 28.4% rate it as good, 37.6% fair, and 14.4% as poor. Another 16.5% are not sure. Evaluations of responsiveness do not vary by income, but women and persons who have lived longer in the community tend to view City Government as less responsive. Age has an impact here, too, but it seems largely because many younger persons are not sure.

**Overall Quality of Planning for the City.** 25.7% rate the quality of planning as either excellent or good while 61.2% rate it as fair or poor. 2% rate planning as excellent, 23.7% as good, 37.9% as fair and 24% as poor. Another 12.4% are not sure. Evaluations are not affected by gender or income, but evaluations decline with age – with many younger persons being unsure – and with length of residence in the community.

**Handling of Drainage and Flooding.** 17.4% see the handling of drainage and flooding as either excellent or good, while 72.3% evaluate it as fair or poor. 1.1% rate this as excellent, 16.3% indicate good, 34% rate it as fair and 38.3% rate it poor. Evaluations do not vary by gender, age or income but the longer a person lives in the community, the lower the evaluations.

**Health of the Local Steel Industry.** 3.4% rate the health of the local steel industry as either excellent or good, while 86.8% rate it as fair or poor. .2 % rate it as excellent, 3.2% as good, 17.5% as fair, 69.3% poor and 9.8% are not sure. Evaluations decline with age, length of residence, and as income increases. Women tend to see it as a bit better off, but also are more likely to be unsure.

### **On What Issues are Residents Most Likely to Support a Tax Increase**

Respondents were presented with a list of issues and projects and asked if they would support an increase in taxes for any of them. They were asked to indicate yes, no or not sure. The responses are listed in Table 5. The issues in the Table have been rank ordered in Figure 3. This time the rankings were done from those more likely to receive support for a tax increase. As indicated, not one of the issues receives an endorsement for a tax increase by a majority of the respondents. The two that come the closest involve basic infrastructure needs: improve streets and roads (49.5%) and solve the drainage and flooding problems (45.3%).

In addition to the data in Table 5, the following analysis includes the results of an assessment of several variables on the opinions expressed in this table. In particular, the impact of gender, age, length of residence in the community and income on these opinions were examined. Because the analysis of this data resulted in 64 separate tables, to make this presentation a bit simpler, these have been moved to the Appendix. Readers are encouraged to examine these tables to see more closely how these variables affected opinions on these various issues.

**Improve Streets and Roads.** 49.5% would support more taxes, 37.9% said no and 12.6% were not sure. Level of income and length of residence in the community did not have an impact on tax support, but support was stronger among younger persons. Gender has an impact but it was largely because women were more likely to be not sure.

**Solve the Drainage and Flooding Problems.** 45.3% supported increases in taxes, 37.2% said no and 17.5% were not sure. Women were more likely to support taxes for this, income and length of residence in the community were not related. Age had an impact, but it was quite complex.

**Create Public Transportation.** 39% supported a tax increase, 48 % did not and 13% were not sure. Women, older persons and persons with less income were more likely to support taxes for this. Length of residence in the community did not have an impact.

**Improve Public Schools.** 37.8% supported a tax increase, 48.1% did not and 14.1% were not sure. Women, younger persons and persons who have lived in the community for lesser amounts of time are more supportive of taxes while level of income does not seem to matter.

**Increase Security Against Terrorist Attacks.** 35.6% supported a tax increase, 46.2% did not and 18.3% were not sure. Women were more supportive of taxes for this but there were no differences on age, income or length of residence in the community.

**Improve Traffic control.** 32.4% supported a tax increase, 49.4% did not and 18.3% were not sure. There were no differences for gender, age, income or length of residence in the community.

**Improve General Quality of Life.** 30.9% supported a tax increase, 48.2% did not and 20.9% were not sure. Women were more supportive of taxes for this but there were no differences for age, income or length of residence in the community.

**Support More Economic Development.** 30.7% supported a tax increase, 52% did not and 17.3% were not sure. Women were more supportive of taxes for this as were younger persons and persons who had resided in the community for shorter amounts of time. Income did not have any affect on this issue.

**Improve North Calumet Area Between Vale Park and Bulls Eye Lake Road.** 30.1% supported a tax increase, 49.1% did not and 20.8% were not sure. Women were more supportive of a tax increase and, to some degree, were persons who had resided in the community longer, but the relationship was complex. Neither income nor age affected support for taxes on this issue.

**More Police Officers.** 30% supported a tax increase, 45.9% did not and 24.2% were not sure. Women were more likely to support taxes on this issue and persons who resided in the community longer offered less opposition to increased taxes. Age and income did not affect support for taxes on this issue.

**Build an Aquatic Park.** 29.5% supported a tax increase, 60.9% did not and 9.6% were not sure. Women were more likely to support taxes on this as were younger persons and persons with greater incomes. Length of residence in the community did not affect support for taxes on this issue.

**Increase Wages for City Workers.** 27.7% supported a tax increase, 49.3% did not and 23% were not sure. Women were more likely to support taxes on this issue as were to some extent older persons but the relationship was partially curvilinear. Persons who had resided in the community longer were more likely to support taxes. Income did not have an affect on support for taxes on this issue.

**In General, Improve Parks and Recreation.** 26.9% supported a tax increase, 57% did not and 16.1% were not sure. Women and younger persons were more likely to support more taxes on this issue. There was no relationship between income and length of residence in the community and support for taxes for parks and recreation.

**Improve "Eastgate" area between Roosevelt and LaPorte on Lincolnway.** 25.7% supported a tax increase, 50.9% did not and 23.4% were not sure. Women were more likely to support taxes on this issue as were younger persons and persons who had resided in the community the shortest amount of time. Income did not have an affect on support for taxes on this issue.

**Improve Downtown Business District.** 18.2% supported a tax increase, 65.2% did not and 16.5% were not sure. Gender, income and length of residence in the community did not have an impact on support for taxes on this issue. Support for taxes was greater among younger persons on this issue.

**Support More Cultural Activities.** 16.8% supported a tax increase, 66.5% did not and 16.7% were not sure. Women, younger persons, persons with less income and those who had resided in the community the least amount of time were more likely to support taxes on this issue.

### Other Issues and Questions

Residents also were asked a series of separate questions to determine whether they had health insurance, a computer, Internet access, and if they had been victim of a crime or discrimination. The responses to these questions are listed in Table 6 In addition each one of these issues was controlled for gender, income, age and length of residence in the community. The analysis of these latter relationships is in the Appendix for those who would like to examine these issues more closely.

**Table 6**  
**Responses on Health Insurance, Computers, Internet, Crime and Discrimination**

Issue	Yes	No	Number
<b>Health Insurance</b>	92.8%	7.2%	664
<b>Computer</b>	76.4	23.6	657
<b>Internet Access</b>	87.4	12.6	523
<b>Victim of Crime</b>	9.8	90.2	653
<b>Victim of Discrimination</b>	8.6	91.4	653

**Health Insurance.** As indicated, 92.8% report they have health insurance. There are no differences between men and women on this issue, but not surprisingly, the proportion of persons who did have health insurance increased with income, age and, to some extent, length of residence in the community.

**Computer and Internet Access.** 76.4% have access to a computer and of those, 87.4% have Internet access. There are no differences between men and women on these issues, but both access to a computer and Internet access are affected by age and income. Again not surprisingly, younger persons are likely to have access to computers and the Internet, as are persons with greater income. There is a slight tendency for persons who have resided in the community longer to have less access to a computer, but there is no strong relationship between length of residence and access to the Internet.

**Crime.** When it comes to crime, 9.8% say they have been a victim of a crime in the past year. There are no differences on this issue between men and women, the length of residence in the community or between persons of various income levels, but younger persons are more likely to report being a victim of a crime.

**Discrimination.** This question asked specifically if they or a member of their family had been a victim of discrimination in the past year. 91.4% said they had not been and 8.6% said yes. There

are no differences between men and women on this issue, nor by income, or length of residence in the community, but reporting that you or a member of your family were a victim of discrimination is more frequent among younger persons. Because of the importance of discrimination and how one's status as a minority might affect the level of discrimination, the sample was divided into those who labeled themselves as white or Caucasian and those who were "minorities," including African American, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, or some other minority. The results are presented in the table 7 below. Clearly (chi square probability < .0000), minorities report being a victim of discrimination at a substantially greater rate than do non-minorities. 43.6% of those with some type of minority status say they have been discriminated against in the past year whereas only 6.1% of the persons who are white or Caucasian report being a victim of discrimination.

**Table 7**  
**Reports of Discrimination and Minority Status**

<b>Discrimination</b>	<b>White Caucasian</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Yes</b>	6.1%	43.6%	53
<b>No</b>	93.9	56.4	576
<b>Total</b>	590	39	629

**The Basis of Discrimination.** The question was then asked on what basis did the discrimination take place. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 8. There are numerous different basis of discrimination in the community but the most frequent references are to race, gender, age, economic status and religion. Note should be made that some persons reported being discriminated on the basis of more than one category.

**Table 8**  
**Basis of Reported Discrimination**

<b>Basis of Discrimination</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Race</b>	19.4	14
<b>Gender</b>	16.7	12
<b>Age</b>	13.9	10
<b>Economic</b>	12.5	9
<b>Other</b>	12.5	9
<b>Religion</b>	9.7	7
<b>Ethnicity</b>	8.3	6
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	4.2	3
<b>Disability</b>	2.8	2

**The Frequency of Discrimination.** Residents were asked how often they thought discrimination took place in the City. The results are reported in Table 9. 3.1% see discrimination taking place very frequently, 12.2% frequently, 35.1% see it as happening occasionally, 31% infrequently, 3.9% never and 14.7% are not sure. Females are more likely to see discrimination occurring, as are younger persons, and persons with less income, although the relationship in the case of income is a bit curvilinear.

**Table 9**  
**Frequency of Discrimination**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	3.1	20
<b>Frequently</b>	12.2	78
<b>Occasionally</b>	35.1	223
<b>Infrequently</b>	31	198
<b>Never</b>	3.9	25
<b>Not Sure</b>	14.7	94
<b>Total</b>	100	638

Once again because of the nature of the issue, the opinions were examined by race and ethnicity. As indicated in Table 10, there is a substantial difference (chi square probability .014) in the way minorities evaluate the frequency of discrimination and those who are not minorities. Clearly those with minority status in the community see discrimination occurring much more frequently than those who are not minorities. For example, 35% (7.5% very frequently and 27.5% frequently) of those who were minority see discrimination as happening at least frequently in this community, where as the same figure for Caucasians is 13.8%.

**Table 10**  
**Frequency of Discrimination by Minority Status**

<b>How Often</b>	<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	2.80%	7.5%	19
<b>Frequently</b>	11	27.5	74
<b>Occasional</b>	36.3	32.5	221
<b>Infrequently</b>	31.4	17.5	187
<b>Never</b>	4	5	25
<b>Not Sure</b>	14.5	10	87
<b>Total</b>	573	40	613

### **What do Residents Like about the City of Valparaiso**

Residents of the City were asked the following questions: “We are interested in what you like best about the City of Valparaiso. Please list at least three of the things that you like best about the City or why you think this is a good place to live.” There were 1,722 separate responses to this question. Initially responses were grouped into 36 different categories. After review, these 36 categories were refined and reduced to the 22 categories as listed in Table 11 and Figure 4.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This included placing responses related to “hometown,” a quiet place, family oriented, nice atmosphere, and low traffic into the small town category. References to “good neighbors” were combined in the “people” category. References to location were combined with references to being close to Chicago. Youth activities were placed in the parks and recreation activities categories. References to clean were combined with references to appearance. And because some had such infrequent references, low diversity, nothing, and jobs were placed into the “other” category.

As indicated, what residents like most about Valparaiso is its small town character. There are 276 references to this characteristic, which accounts for 15.58% of the responses. This is followed closely by the public schools with 261 references, 14.73% of the total. Together these two factors stand in a class by themselves as characteristics persons like about the City. Together they account for almost 30% of the total number of responses to this question.

**Table 11**  
**Likes about the City of Valparaiso**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Small Town Character</b>	276	15.58
<b>Schools</b>	261	14.73
<b>Friendly good people</b>	163	9.20
<b>Location &amp; Near Chicago</b>	163	9.20
<b>Low Crime Safe</b>	128	7.22
<b>City Services</b>	114	6.43
<b>Parks and Recreational</b>	84	4.74
<b>Valparaiso University</b>	72	4.06
<b>Appearance</b>	68	3.84
<b>Community Spirit</b>	67	3.78
<b>Quality of Life</b>	61	3.44
<b>The Downtown Area</b>	38	2.14
<b>Shopping</b>	34	1.92
<b>Healthcare Services</b>	33	1.86
<b>Other</b>	29	1.64
<b>Diverse Community</b>	26	1.47
<b>Religious Institutions</b>	21	1.19
<b>Restaurants</b>	20	1.13
<b>Quality Environment</b>	17	0.96
<b>Cultural Activities</b>	16	0.90
<b>Taxes</b>	16	0.90
<b>Afford Housing</b>	15	0.85
<b>Totals</b>	1722	97.18

Next on the list of likes about the City were references to the friendly, good people (163). The comments generally referred to all of the active persons and how many persons were friendly and simply, good neighbors. Also with 163 references were comments about location. More than half of these spoke about our proximity to Chicago. The other group made references to our rural character or to the accessibility of the Dunes/National Lakeshore. So while the emphasis was a bit different, the over arching connecting theme was the same, location.

The next most frequently mentioned like was the low crime rate and references to the safe nature of the community (128). After that came references to the quality of City services police and fire protection but also to the work of persons in the City (114).

The next category of likes receiving between 61 and 84 references is the variety of parks and recreational activities available in the community (84), Valparaiso University (72), the general appearance of the community, including how clean and well kept up is (68), and the generally high quality of life in this community (61).

After that in descending order, the greatest number of references were to the Downtown area (38), shopping (34), healthcare services (33), a generic category called other which included all things too infrequent to stand alone (29), the diversity of the community (26), churches and religious institutions (21), restaurants (20), the quality of the environment (17), the availability of cultural activities (16), low taxes (16) and affordable housing (15).

### **Problems and Unmet Needs in Valparaiso**

Residents were asked the following question about problems and unmet needs in the City: “We also are interested in what you consider to be the biggest problems or unmet needs the City should address. Please list the three that you think are the most important.” There were 1550 separate responses to this question that were grouped in the 29 categories listed in Table 12 and represented graphically in Figure 5. As indicated, the number one problem or unmet need relates to the condition of streets and roads in the Community. There were 178 references to problems related to the overall quality and problems with streets and roads. This amounted to 11.47% of the total references. The second most frequently mentioned problem area is development, or more accurately “over development,” unplanned development,” or too “rapid development.” There were 160 references to this problem that amounted to 10.3% of the total references. Rounding out the top 3 problems is traffic. There were 156 references to various problems with traffic including, “too much traffic,” “driving time between places,” and specific problem areas in the City.

The fourth most frequently mentioned issue relates to problems with sewers and drainage. There were 136 references to this which amounted to 8.76% of the total references. Issues mentioned here were about both general problems in the City and problems specific to particular areas. This concern was followed by the generic category “other” which included 126 references, 8.12% of the total. Included here were references to relatively idiosyncratic concerns expressed only by a 1-2 persons, most of which were quite specific to individual neighborhoods or personal concerns.

Next on the list of problems or unmet needs were references to the absence of public transportation with 84 references that accounted for 5.41% of the responses. Next, there are 83 references to parks and recreation accounting for 5.35% of the total responses. It may appear quite paradoxical that parks and recreation are one of the important “likes” in the community and at the same time receive a good deal of attention as one of the unmet needs. The reason for this apparent inconsistency is that many of the critical comments are about the absence of bike paths and a pool or an aquatic park. Thus while parks and recreation are a strong point of the community, some have some very specific things that they would like to see added to the existing park system. The absence of affordable housing with 82 references accounting for 5.28% of the total number of responses was next in line followed by references to the poor quality of the environment with 77 references, 4.96% of the references.

**Table 12**  
**Problems and Unmet Needs in Valparaiso**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Streets/Roads</b>	178	11.47
<b>Development</b>	160	10.31
<b>Traffic</b>	156	10.05
<b>Sewers/Drainage</b>	136	8.76
<b>Other</b>	126	8.12
<b>Public Transportation</b>	84	5.41
<b>Parks/Recreations</b>	83	5.28
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	82	4.96
<b>Environment</b>	77	5.35
<b>Economy</b>	58	3.74
<b>Government Services</b>	55	3.54
<b>Downtown</b>	48	3.09
<b>Teen Activities</b>	45	2.90
<b>Crime/safety</b>	34	2.19
<b>Discrimination</b>	20	1.29
<b>Healthcare</b>	20	1.29
<b>Public Input</b>	20	1.29
<b>Appearance</b>	20	1.29
<b>Police Attitudes</b>	19	1.22
<b>Shopping</b>	19	1.22
<b>Diversity/good</b>	18	1.16
<b>Cultural Activities</b>	16	1.03
<b>Schools</b>	16	1.03
<b>Taxes</b>	16	1.03
<b>Aid to Poor</b>	15	0.97
<b>Restaurants</b>	15	0.97
<b>Not Friendly</b>	14	0.90
<b>Totals</b>	1550	99.87

The next group of issues included references to the economy (58 references), including problems with employment and concerns about the future of the steel industry, concerns about the quality of government services (55), the downtown area (48), activities for teens (45) and issues related to crime and safety (34).

The last group consists of those receiving 20 or fewer references including problems with discrimination (20), healthcare (20), public input or the responsiveness of the City (20), the general appearance of the community or references to specific unsightly areas (20), the “bad” attitudes of local police (19), the lack of good shopping (19), the absence of diversity (18), the absence of cultural activities (16), the quality of the schools (16), high taxes (16), lack of assistance for the economically disadvantaged (15), the poor quality of restaurants (15) and that the people in the City and the City as a whole is not very friendly (14).

## Traffic Problems

Residents also were asked to list the three places in the City they considered to have the most serious traffic problems. We received 1525 responses as listed in Table 13 and represented graphically in figures 6 and 7. As will be explained, the data were organized in two different ways. One in an uncollapsed version and the second, a version where all references to various parts of Calumet were combined. As indicated, there are two traffic problem areas that stand out.

First, there is the intersection referred to as the “Triangle,” the area where Lincolnway, Sturdy and LaPorte meet. There were 223 references to this area that accounts for 14.62% of the total references.

**Table 13  
Traffic Problems**

### Uncollapsed

Traffic Area	Number	%
Triangle	223	14.62
“The Five-Way”	218	14.3
Cal & Glendale	125	8.2
Sturdy & 30	109	7.15
N Calumet	108	7.08
Glendale & Valpo	86	5.64
Other	82	5.38
High School	66	4.33
Vale & Valpo	54	3.54
Calumet	49	3.21
30 & Hwy 2	48	3.15
Lincoln & Morgan	47	3.08
Hwy 2 Silhavy	38	2.49
Downtown	38	2.49
Lincolnway	35	2.3
Walmart & 30	27	1.77
Bull & Campbell	23	1.51
Cal & Cty Seat	22	1.44
Highway 30	21	1.38
Glen & Roosevelt	17	1.11
RR Crossings	16	1.05
Calumet & Evans	14	0.92
Cal Glen-Vale	12	0.79
No Problems	10	0.66
Camp & Lincolnway	9	0.59
Camp & Glendale	8	0.52
Roosevelt & Lincoln	8	0.52
VU	6	0.39
Bull & Calumet	3	0.2
Morgan & Jefferson	3	0.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1525</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Collapsed

Traffic Area	Number	%
Calumet	551	36.1
Triangle	223	14.62
Sturdy & 30	109	7.15
Glendale & Valpo	86	5.64
Other	82	5.38
High School	66	4.33
Vale & Valpo	54	3.54
30 & Hwy 2	48	3.15
Lincoln & Morgan	47	3.08
Hwy 2 Silhavy	38	2.49
Downtown	38	2.49
Lincolnway	35	2.3
Walmart & 30	27	1.77
Bull & Campbell	23	1.51
Highway 30	21	1.38
Glen & Roosevelt	17	1.11
RR Crossings	16	1.05
No Problems	10	0.66
Camp & Lincolnway	9	0.59
Camp & Glendale	8	0.52
Roosevelt & Lincoln	8	0.52
VU	6	0.39
Morgan & Jefferson	3	0.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1525</b>	<b>100</b>

The other area is referred to as the “fiveway.” This is the intersection of Roosevelt, Glendale and Calumet by Wiseway and K-Mart. There are 218 specific references to this intersection that account for 14.30% of the total references. If you look at the Table that presents the traffic data, you see there are numerous other references to problems on Calumet. Some of these are more than likely direct references to the area around the “Fiveway” and other references are for areas either north or south of that intersection. Given that all of these do refer in general terms to the North Calumet area, it is useful to put those into a single category. For example, there are 22 references to “Calumet by County Seat” and another 108 references to North Calumet. We think it reasonable to assume that all of these persons were thinking about the same several block area and could be combined with the references to “the fiveway.” If this is done, that area receives a total of 348 of the references, which amounts to 22.8% of the total. If we then add the 3 references to Calumet and Bulls Eye Lake Road, the 49 references to just “Calumet” and the 125 references to Calumet and Glendale, there are a total of 525 references to the area from Glendale to Bullseye Lake Road on Calumet. This amounts to 34.43% of all of the references. In addition, if you add the 14 references to Calumet and Evans the total reaches 539 and 35.4% of the total. Finally, if you put in the 12 references to the area on Calumet between Glendale and Vale Park, the total reaches 551 references and 36.10% of the total references. This data is presented in the Collapsed version of the Traffic Table and the Figure presenting the collapsed references.

After concerns about North Calumet and the Triangle, the next most frequently mentioned problem area is “Sturdy and 30”. A total of 109 references were made to this area, 7.15% of the total responses. This area is, of course, quite near to the Triangle area and indicates there might be some connections here. This is followed by references to Glendale and Valparaiso (86) and “Other” (82) which included references to areas mentioned by only a few persons. This was followed by references to the High School (66), Vale Park and Valparaiso or the Post Office (54), 30 and Highway 2 (48), Lincolnway and Morgan (47), Highway 2 and Silhavy (38), “Downtown” (38), Lincolnway (35), Walmart and 30 (27). Bulls Eye Lake Road and Campbell (23), Highway 30 (21), Glendale and Roosevelt (17), “rail road crossings” (16), no problems (10), Campbell and Lincolnway (9), Campbell and Glendale (8), Roosevelt and Lincolnway (8), around Valparaiso University (6), and Morgan and Jefferson (3).