

Upper Providence Township Comprehensive Plan Planning Process: Public Input Workshop

MARCH 19, 2019



Objectives of Today's Discussion

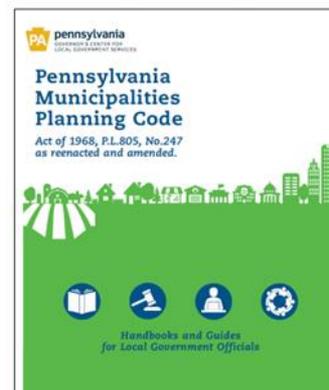
- ▶ Review Comp Planning Objectives and Process
- ▶ Review Business Interview findings and input
- ▶ Review Residential findings and input
- ▶ Conclusions
 - ▶ What's working
 - ▶ What's not working
- ▶ Next steps

Meeting Guidelines

- ▶ Meeting length: 2 hours
- ▶ Public input is invited and encouraged
 - ▶ Due to time constraints, 5 minutes of discussion will be allotted per slide
 - ▶ Please raise your hand to provide comment. We will do our best to call on as many people as possible throughout the evening.
 - ▶ Please keep comments as concise as possible so that others may share their thoughts as well.
 - ▶ If you are not called on for a particular issue, please write your thoughts down on paper and leave with SSM following the meeting
- ▶ Survey results will be posted to Township website within 2 days of this meeting.

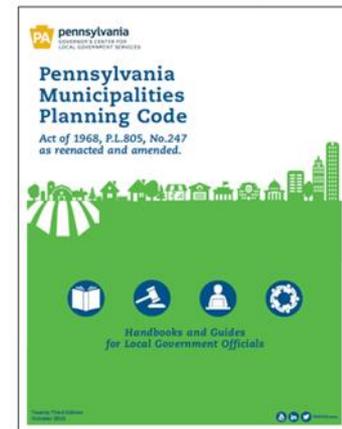
Comprehensive Planning Process

- ▶ The Comprehensive Plan is a long range planning document tool used to guide decision making by municipal officials and provide a vision for a community's future, particularly in regards to future growth and development of a municipality.
- ▶ A Comprehensive Plan sets forth strategies and recommendations to achieve that vision and provides a plan for implementation. The current Plan illustrates that as Goals and Objectives and an Action Plan in Chapters 11 and 13.
- ▶ Comprehensive Plans address land use, how the movement of people and goods should take place, how housing should be provided and maintained, how the community should provide services to its citizens, and how the community should interact with neighboring communities.
- ▶ It is important to realize that a Comprehensive Plan does not have the force of law, although it provides the foundation for ordinance and regulations that do (e.g. Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and Storm Water Management Ordinance)



Comprehensive Planning Process

- ▶ Municipal Comprehensive Plans which are adopted shall be generally consistent with the adopted county comprehensive plan – Delaware County 2035.
- ▶ As per the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247, 23rd edition, the municipal or multi-municipal plan shall be reviewed at least every ten (10) years.
 - ▶ Upper Providence Township is not in violation of this statute as it explicitly states the plan shall be reviewed, not amended or updated. However, it is accepted as good planning practice that municipalities update or amend their comprehensive plan within the ten year timeline.
- ▶ Upper Providence Township's current Comprehensive Plan dates to 2005.
- ▶ The purpose of this Strategic Update or Addendum is to allow the Township to review current policies and update Goals and Objectives and Actions for implementation.



Key UPT Accomplishments – 2005 Comp Plan to the Present

- ▶ Several new ordinances enacted (including net out and steep slopes)
- ▶ Route 252 road widening and traffic signalization improvements
- ▶ Sidewalks installed along business properties on Providence Road to facilitate pedestrian egress
- ▶ Formed task force to research and address desire for walking and biking trails throughout the Township
- ▶ Partnered with Middletown Township, Media Borough and the County to enhance Mineral Hill property
- ▶ Continue to provide high level of public safety services (police and fire equipment and training)
- ▶ Acquired environmentally sensitive properties to prevent over-development
- ▶ Undertook improvements to wastewater collection and conveyance throughout Township in accordance with Act 537.
- ▶ Supported initiatives to assist the Township in the preservation and maintenance of open space

Small Business Interviews

- ▶ Business owners intend to conduct their businesses here in UPT over the next 5 years. None expressed a desire to relocate.
- ▶ Elected officials and Township staff are approachable on a variety of topics. Township employees credited with being extremely helpful and courteous to businesses in the area. Fire and police services are considered to be excellent.
- ▶ Streetscape improvements would be an enhancement to provide an identity for UPT and distinguish it from Media Borough.
- ▶ Common theme limiting our business environment is parking.
- ▶ Greater local government involvement publicly engaging the citizenry would be seen as a favorable venture by the community.
 - ▶ A couple of suggestions for a “Community Day” of sorts, where UPT businesses could share their business offerings with UPT residents.
- ▶ Taxes in the Township are considered to be reasonable.

Findings: Upper Providence Township Residential Survey

MARCH 19, 2019



Survey Administration and Logistics

- ▶ 1000 surveys mailed to a random selection of Township Residents. Reminder postcard mailed ~2 weeks after initial mailing. Online survey with option to complete hard copy as well.
 - ▶ District #1 – 211 surveys mailed
 - ▶ District #2 – 214 surveys mailed
 - ▶ District #3 – 197 Surveys mailed
 - ▶ District #4 – 153 Surveys mailed
 - ▶ District #5 – 225 Surveys mailed

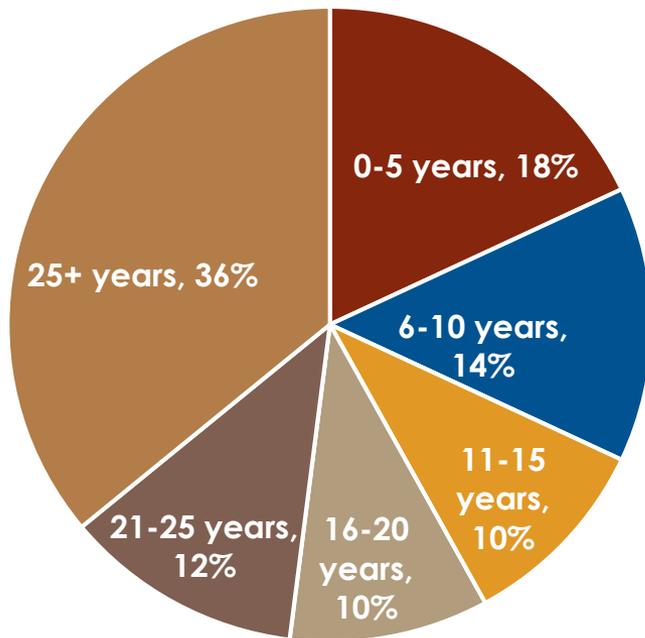
- ▶ Fielding Dates: January 31, 2019 through February 22, 2019

Completed surveys returned – 231 Total (23% overall response rate – compared to norm of ~15%)

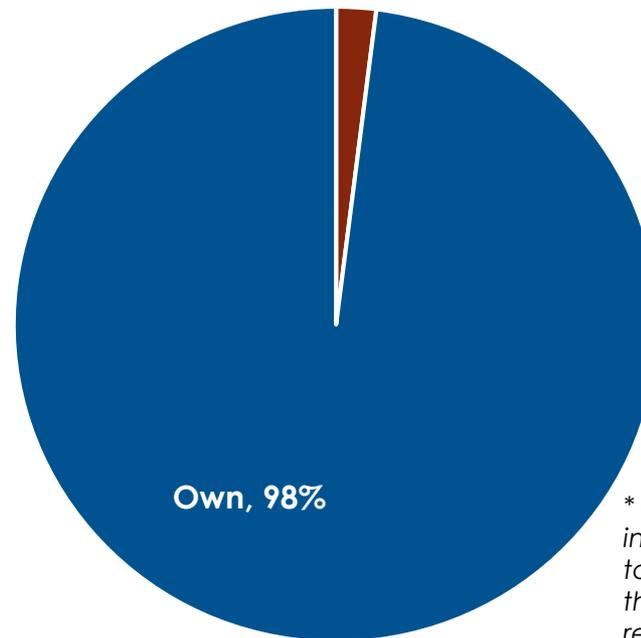
- ▶ **Returns by district**
 - ▶ District 1 – 43 or 20.4%
 - ▶ District 2 – 50 or 23.4%
 - ▶ District 3 – 43 or 21.8%
 - ▶ District 4 – 39 or 25.5%
 - ▶ District 5 – 56 or 24.9%

More than half of UPT residents surveyed have lived in the Township for more than 16 years – more than a third have resided in the Township for more than 25 years. Almost all respondents owned their home*.

Yrs. in Township



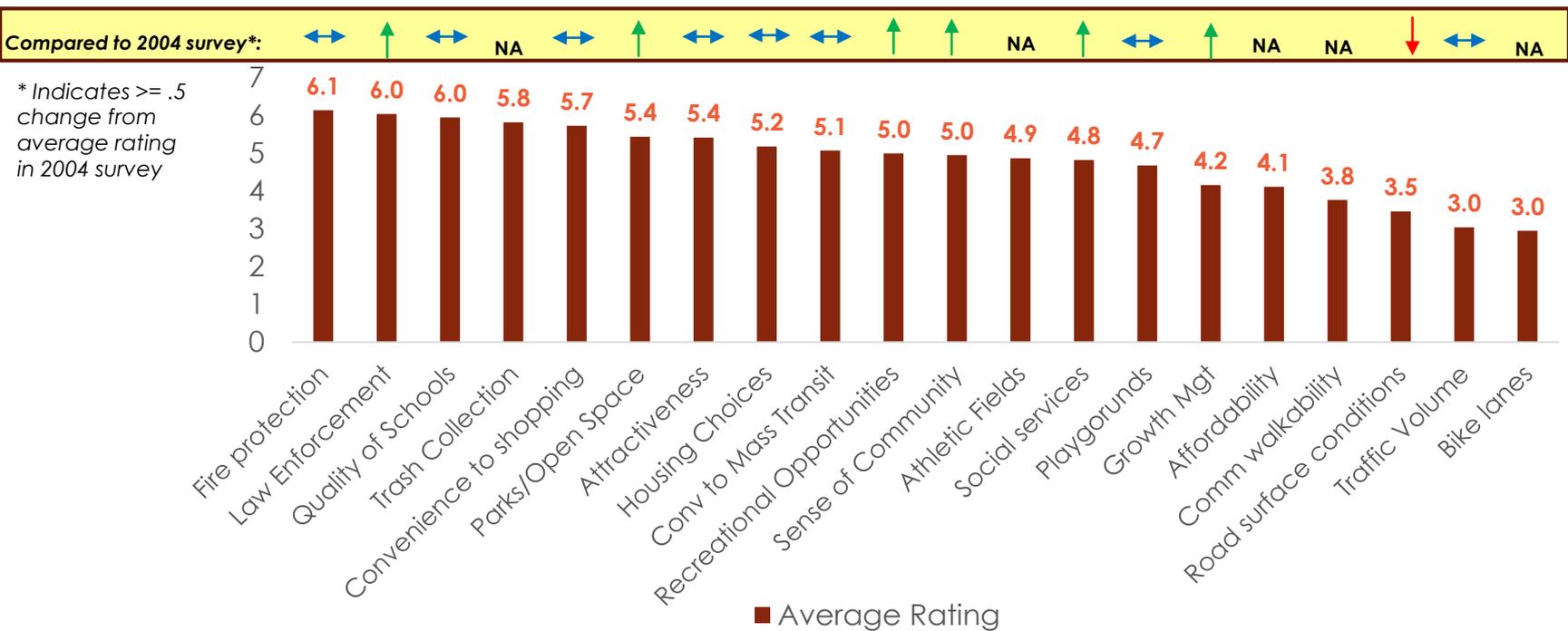
Rent, Lease, Own?



* Note that survey invitations were mailed to taxpayers in the Township, thus eliminating many renters, so this ratio is more reflective of survey respondents than actual incidence in the Township..

Community services (fire, police, schools, trash collection) receive high ratings from residents, whereas egress infrastructure items (bike lanes, traffic volume, road surface conditions, walkability) ratings are comparatively lower. Traffic volume was cited as the #1 unappealing issue in the Township, followed by walkability.

How would you rate each of the following aspects of UPT in terms of overall appeal? (scale of 1-7)

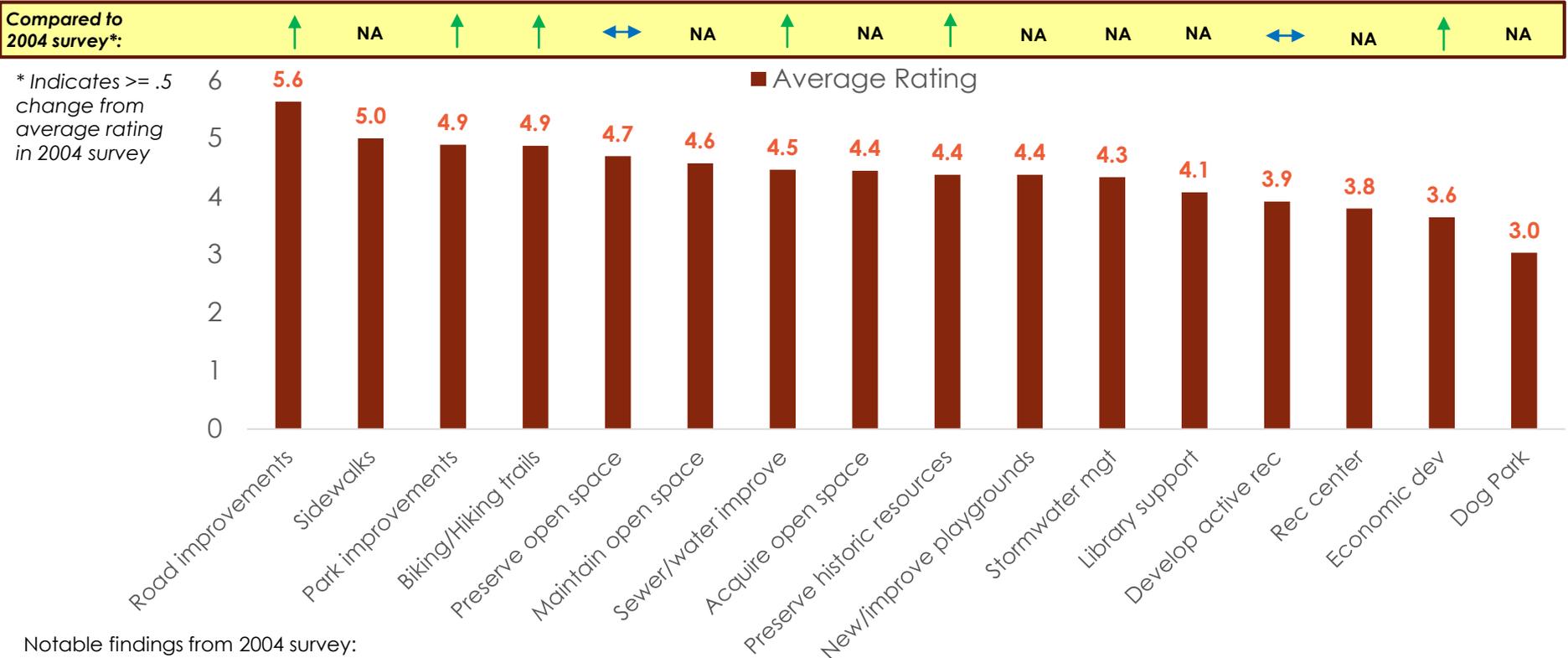


Notable findings from 2004 survey:

- Traffic volume remains the least appealing aspect of the Township (score identical to 2004) and Fire Protection remains the most appealing aspect of the Township
- Score improvements in 6 areas and reduction in 1 area with stable scores in 7 areas. Average score for road surface conditions had the greatest differential from 2004, dropping 9/10 of a point from 4.4 to 3.5.

Residents are most willing to fund initiatives to improve road conditions in the Township and least willing to fund development of dog parks and business development efforts.

How likely would you be to support the use of Township funds to address each of the following initiatives? (scale of 1-7)

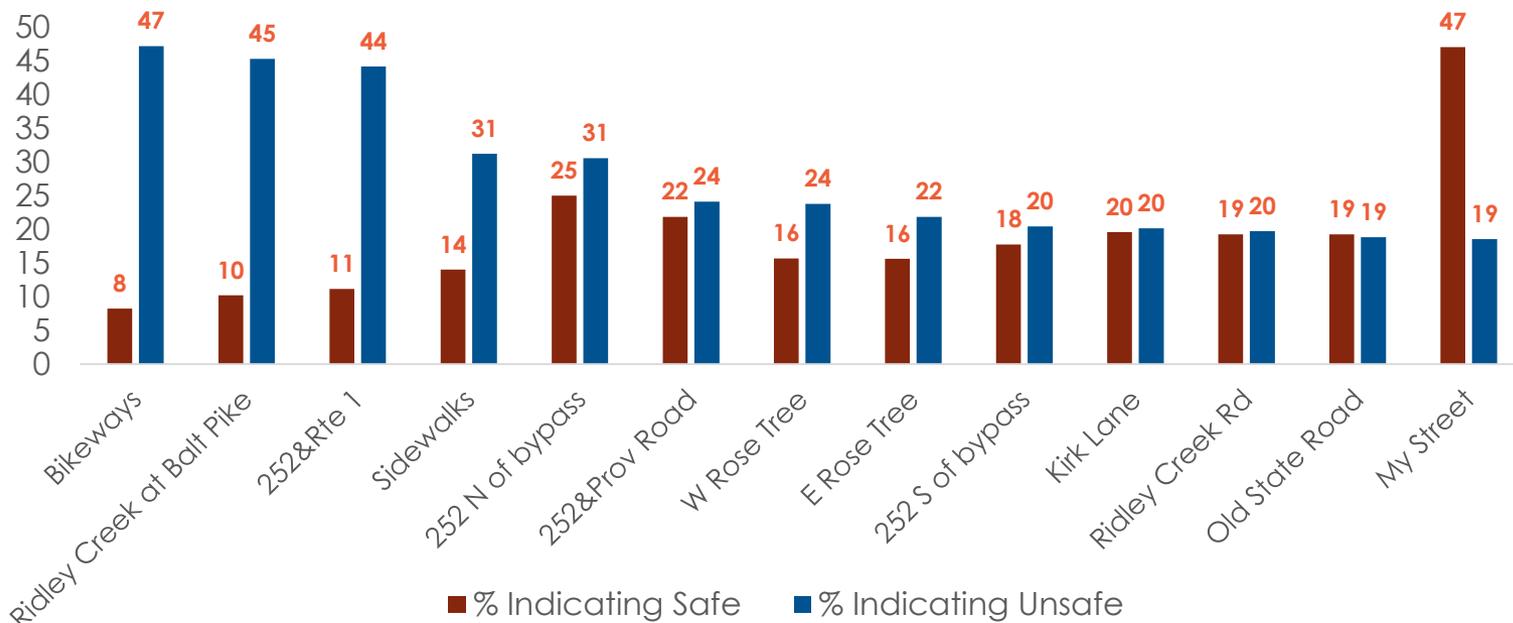


* Indicates $\geq .5$ change from average rating in 2004 survey

- Notable findings from 2004 survey:
- More willingness to pay for initiatives than what we saw in 2004. Highest score in 2004 was 4.6 for one item (preserve/ protect open space) compared to 6 items at or above that score in this year's survey.
 - In 2004, the top funding item was preserving/protecting open space – this item ranks 5th in the inventory this year. Road improvements, which were 5th in 2004 are the top item in this year's inventory. Willingness to fund road improvements jumped the highest from 2004, with an average rating 1.6 points higher.

Over 40% of Township residents consider bikeways, Ridley Creek at Baltimore Pike and the Route 252/Route 1 intersection (at the Media Bypass) to be extremely or very unsafe. Many believe that the street where they live is either extremely or very safe, with speed being the primary cause for concern.

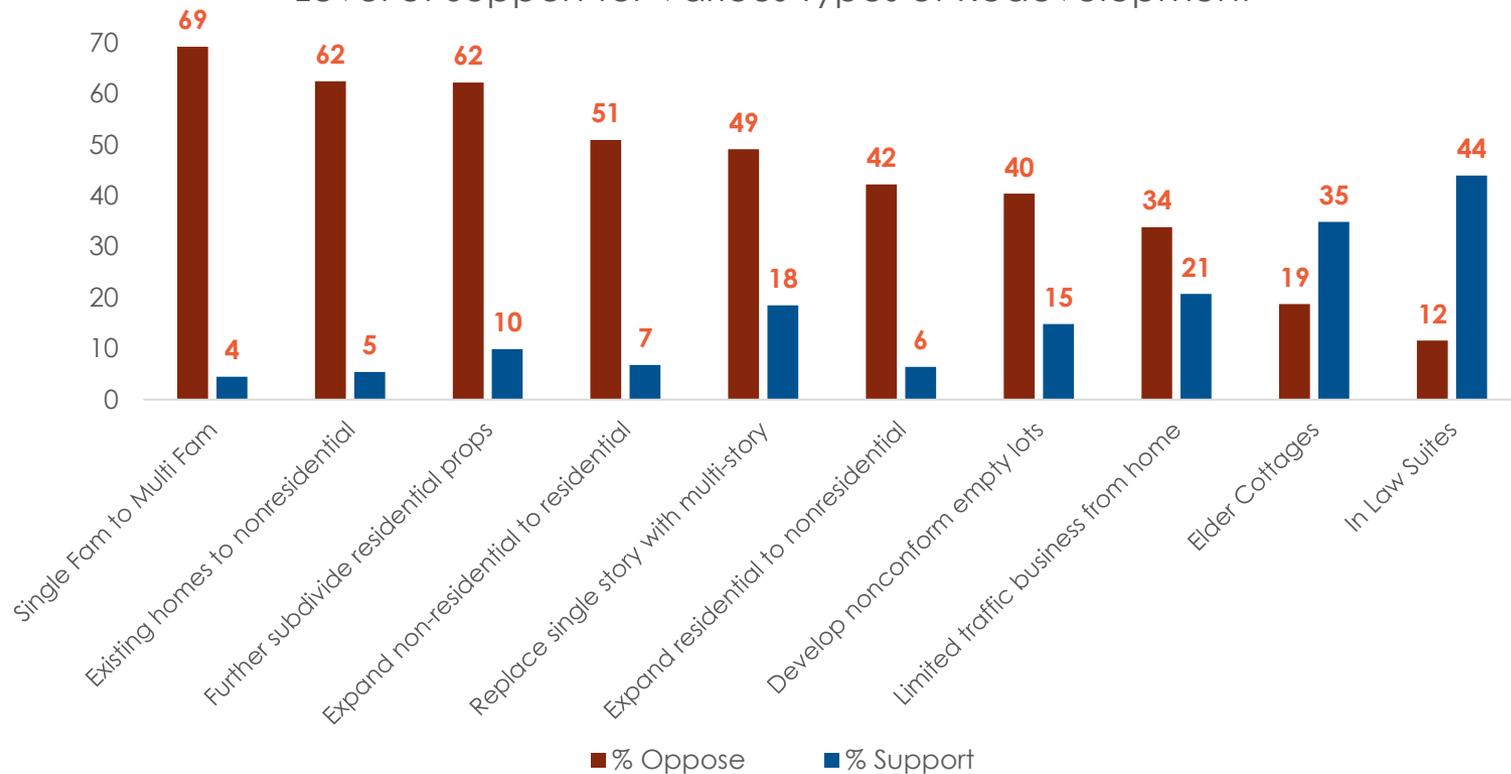
On a Scale of 1 (extremely unsafe) to 7 (extremely safe), how safe are the following routes in the Township?



In 2004 survey, Route 252 an 1 was bay far the #1 unsafe area of Township – roughly 90% of respondents considered it to be unsafe – about half the proportion who think it is unsafe today. Bikeways were #2 unsafe in 2004 and are now #1 though down to 47% today from roughly 65% in 2004. Can't compare Ridley Creek to 2004 since it was only 1 road option then and is now split into 2 sections of the road. Percent rating 'my street' as safe is roughly the same as 2004.

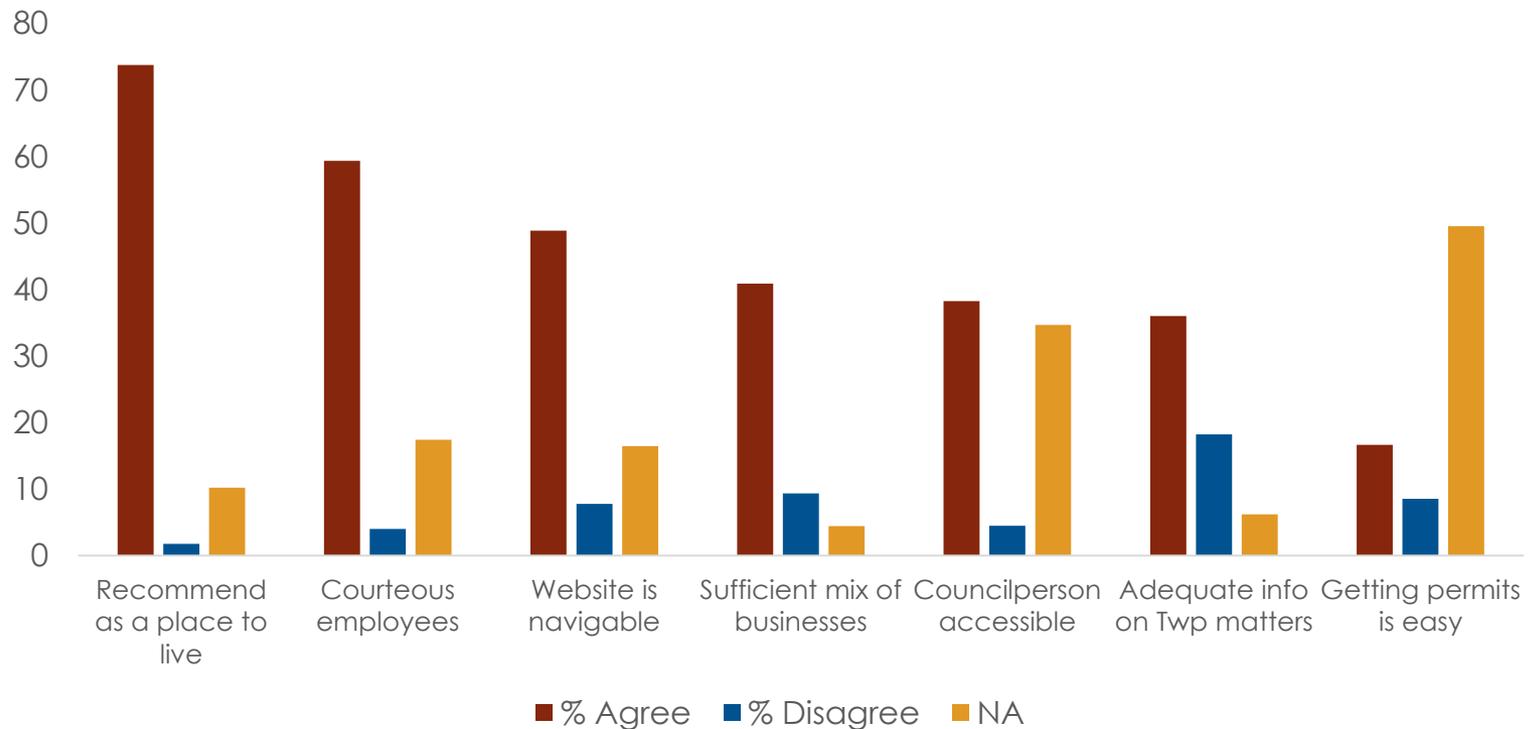
Township residents are generally opposed to most forms of redevelopment. In-law suites and elder cottages are the least opposed type of redevelopment.

Level of Support for Various Types of Redevelopment



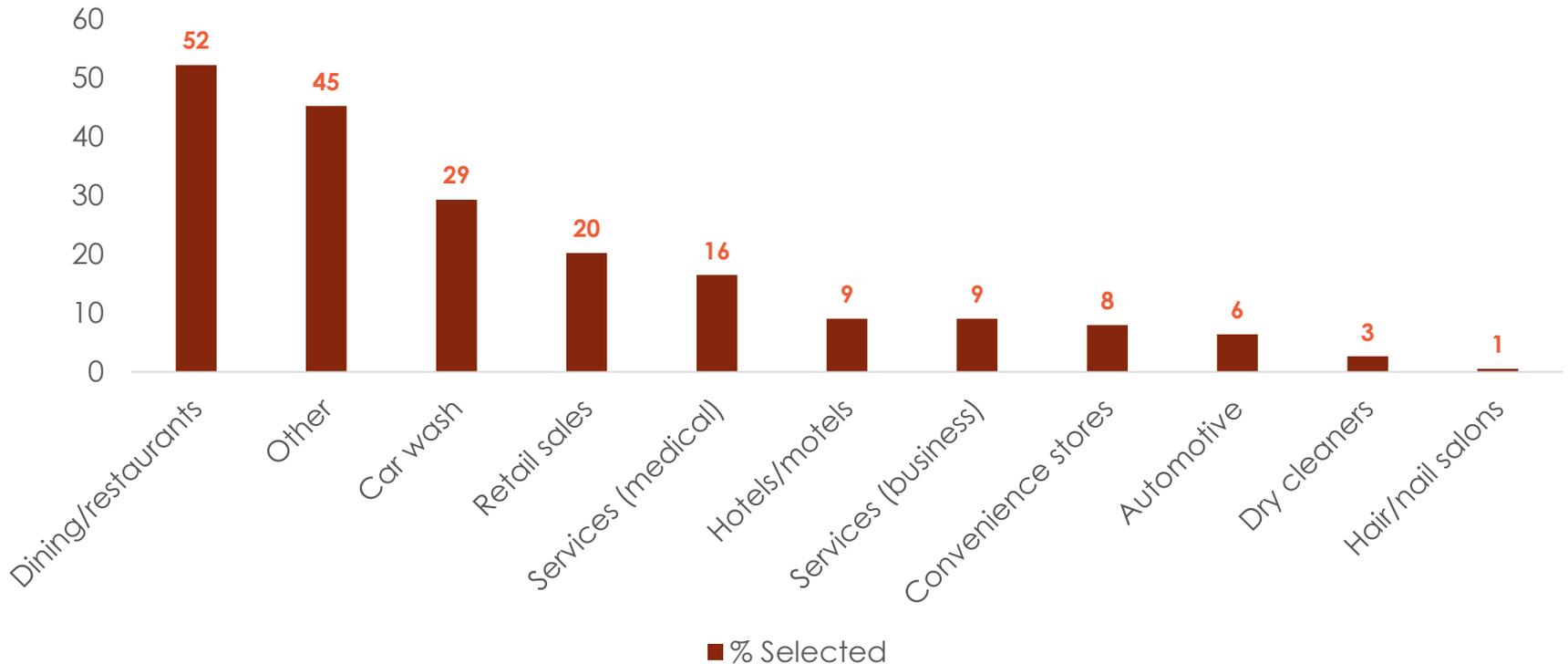
The large majority of UPT residents recommend UPT as a place to live. Township employees are overwhelmingly considered to be courteous by residents who have engaged with them. Nearly 20% of Township residents feel that they do not get adequate information on Township matters of interest to them, though most feel the website is navigable.

Township Staff and Services



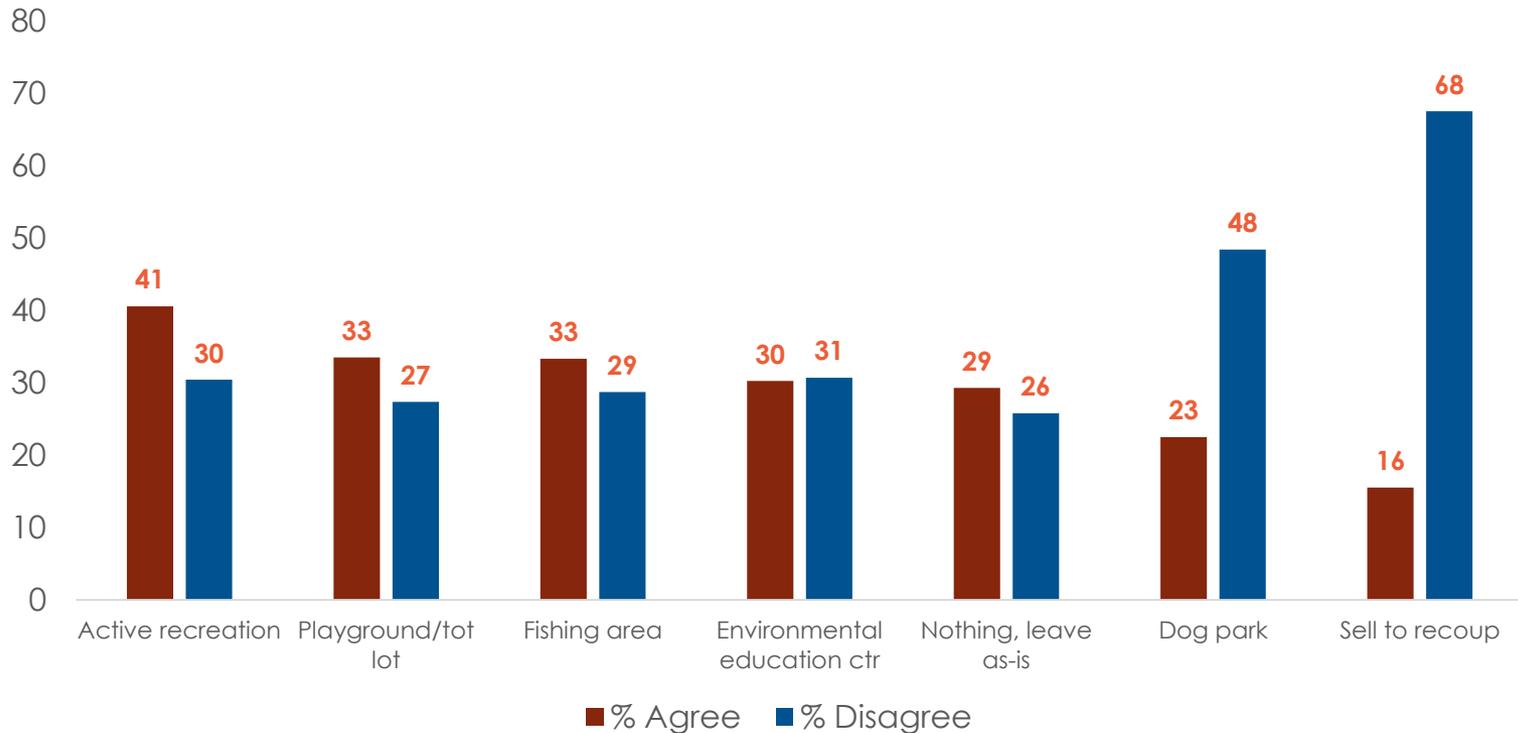
More than 50 percent of residents would like to see more restaurants and dining establishments in the Township. Other tested ideas received much less support. Several respondents provided 'other' comments as to what they would like to see and the overwhelming top response was "nothing" – no additional businesses in the Township.

What additional businesses are needed in the Township?



There is mixed support for potential uses of Scott Park. Roughly 25% of residents want nothing done at the park while another ~25% want something done at the park. Active recreation, playgrounds and fishing areas were the top uses cited by residents. An overwhelming number of residents are opposed to the Park being sold to recoup costs

Potential Uses for Scott Park



Resident Comments on Scott Park Question varied significantly. Key theme were comments about not selling to developers and to add walking trails. Several desired types of active recreation were mentioned and many asked why the land could not accommodate all of the potential uses. There were also several comments about the purchase being a bad investment and to find a way to recoup costs.

- ▶ Do not sell or build
 - ▶ *"This land should not be developed for retail or residential. It should be used to enrich the community of the people that are already here."*
 - ▶ *"That last item, "Sell all or a portion to a developer to recoup the Township investment", is extremely frightening, and would be a reason to move from the area."*
- ▶ Create walking trails
 - ▶ *"Develop trails and encourage people watching TV to get outside and walk! Be in nature"*
 - ▶ *"Would love to have a park, walking trail, or place to fish"*
- ▶ Create various forms of active recreation
 - ▶ *"Disc Golf, hiking and biking trails but mainly disc golf"*
 - ▶ *"Active recreation, the tennis courts would be problematic from a run-off standpoint in low lying area, so soccer / lacrosse/football /rugby fields might be better. Less paving and hard surfaces."*
- ▶ Sell it/recoup the costs
 - ▶ *"If the price to the Township " has been paying and continues to pay about \$370K/year to cover financing costs associated with this purchase" that seems too expensive and not a viable financing cost given alternative open spaces exist. This is a high cost project - sell it."*
 - ▶ *"Let's not spend any more of my money on wasted land. Sell it and spend the money on fixing our roads "*
- ▶ Accommodate all uses
 - ▶ *"How about a combination? 37 acres is a lot.... some residential, some commercial/retail, plus a park."*
 - ▶ *"This land should support both active recreation and environmental enjoyment. It is big enough for both."*

Top 3 Critical Items in Township

(Items ranked as 1st, 2nd, or 3rd most critical for Township to address)

What are the three most critical opportunities that should be addressed by the Upper Providence Township Council?

Top Responses Ranked in Order of #1 Township Items

1. Traffic Volume, traffic, or congestion
 - ▶ 120 responses (52%) ;
2. Road Surface Conditions
 - ▶ 103 responses (45%)
3. Community Walkability
 - ▶ 52 responses (23%)
4. Parks /Open Space
 - ▶ 14 responses (6%)
5. Growth/Development Management
 - ▶ 38 responses (16%)
6. Bike Lanes
 - ▶ 32 responses (14%)

Township Treasures

- ▶ Neighbors overwhelmingly cited **Rose Tree Park** as a top “treasure” in the Township
 - ▶ Ridley Creek State Park, the Arboretum and downtown Media were also frequently cited, but are not within the Township boundary.
- ▶ Additional treasures that were cited by 5 or more respondents include:
 - ▶ Rose Tree Tavern
 - ▶ Historical buildings and homes
 - ▶ Springton Reservoir
 - ▶ Cherry Street field
 - ▶ Scott Park



Additional Survey Comments

- ▶ Leading comment themes: Traffic volume and congestion, protect environment, more open space, need more sidewalks/walking paths, better municipal communication with citizenry, and allow sewer bills to be paid on-line.
- ▶ Every voting district comments included how much they enjoyed and/or love living in UPT.
- ▶ As like the previous survey, some residents thanked the UPT for the opportunity to participate in the survey.
- ▶ Voting Districts #1 and #5 respondents encourage more collaboration and cooperation with municipal neighbors in providing services.

The top commentary from 2004 revolved around high taxes. This was barely mentioned this year. The second most mentioned comment in 2004 was around needing public sewers – this was not raised in 2019. The third highest in 2004 was complaints about trash collection – again barely mentioned in 2019 and more in the context of makeup days than complaints with the service.

Selected Suggestions

Respondents made a some suggestions for improvement – examples are provided below.

- ▶ Better municipal communication through social media, more regular newsletter and website enhancements.
- ▶ We need more sidewalks, pathways, bike lanes to enhance multi-modal opportunities to include paved sidewalk/path in Rose Tree Park.
- ▶ Need to protect environment and preserve open space to provide more community gathering places.
- ▶ Intersection improvements to Ridley Creek Road and Baltimore Pike and Providence Road and Baltimore Pike – more coordination with Penn DOT.
- ▶ Consider placing more lighting along secondary roads making driving safer and easier at night, as well as improving sight distances by removing tree limbs, brush and vegetation along roadways.

Conclusions: What's Working

- ▶ **Residents like UPT:** Once again the residents overwhelmingly indicated how much they like and enjoy living in the Township.
- ▶ **Township Services:** Township 1st responders, fire protection and law enforcement were rated very highly by the residents.
- ▶ **UPT attractiveness:** Residents find this a very attractive place to live and finds the quality of schools to be appealing.
- ▶ **Existing parks/open space are appreciated:** Rose Tree Park is recognized as an UPT “Treasure” and a majority of respondents would like Scott Park utilized for recreational purposes.
- ▶ **Convenience/Proximity to Shopping:** Overall, the community is satisfied with the location and number of retailers in both the Township and nearby communities.

Conclusions: What's Not Working

- ▶ **Biggest Township Issues – traffic volume and road surface conditions:** As indicated in the previous residents survey, traffic along Route 252 is of particular concern. The Providence Road and the Baltimore Pike intersection and the Ridley Creek Road and Baltimore Pike intersection were noted specifically in this survey. A significant amount of residents want the road surface conditions to improve.
- ▶ **Community Walkability/Bikeability:** Residents want more sidewalks/walking paths/bike lanes or pathways to enhance multi-modal opportunities in the Township.
- ▶ **Growth Management:** UPT it a desirable place to live, work, and play, so the Township needs to more effectively coordinate land use with its municipal neighbors as the region continues to grow.
- ▶ **Recreational facilities need to be added and/or enhanced within the Township:** Many Township residents believe the Township lacks sufficient playgrounds, biking and walking paths. Rose Tree Park is seen as a Township “Treasure”; however, some residents would like to see, at minimum, walking path enhancements within the park.

Upper Providence Township – Next Steps

- ▶ Tonight's Public Presentation – Survey Results, Task Force and Public input
- ▶ April 2, 2019 – CP Task Force Workshop #1- 6:00 p.m.
- ▶ April 16, 2019 – CP Task Force Workshop #2 – 6:00 p.m.
- ▶ May 14, 2019 – CP Task Force Final Workshop – 6:00 p.m.
- ▶ Public Meeting – June 2019 – 6:00 p.m.
- ▶ Public Hearing – July 2019 – 6:00 p.m.

Please email additional Public Input to Randall Heilman, Senior Community Planner, SSM Group at randall.heilman@ssmgroup.com