2011 Pittsburgh Regional Quality of Life Survey: Overview of Methods & Quality of Life Indicators

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Survey Methods

• Conducted jointly by UCSUR and the Pittsburgh Regional Indicators Project

• Goal was approximately 500 surveys in each of three regions:
  – Allegheny County
  – 6-county remainder of Pittsburgh MSA (Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, Westmoreland)
  – Remaining 25 counties of the “Power of 32” (includes PA, OH, WV, MD)

• Plus over-sample of African-Americans – goal 350-400 total AA completed surveys

• The target population was English-speaking adults (18 and older) living in private residences in the 32-county “Power of 32” region

• A disproportionate stratified sample design was used
Description: Comparing our region to other areas of the country lets us see how we measure up, and what our strengths and weaknesses are. It also gives us a way to measure progress as we move forward as a region.
Survey Methods

• Conducted July – November, 2011 by UCSUR Survey Research Program using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)

• Interview length: approximately 30 minutes!!

• Of households successfully contacted, 24% agreed to do survey (26% landline; 19% cell)

• Called 17,698 total landline and 8,400 cell numbers

• Completed 1,377 (76%) on landline; 428 (24%) on cell

• Total final sample size = 1,805
  – n = 799 Allegheny County
  – n = 502 6-county remainder MSA
  – n = 504 25-county remainder “Power of 32”
  – n = 367 African-Americans (337 in Allegheny County; 14 in rest of Pittsburgh MSA; 16 in 25-county remainder)
Survey Topic Areas

• Overall regional / neighborhood QOL
• Neighborhood
• Environment
• Government
• Arts
• Transportation
• Education
• Public safety
• Housing
• Economy
• Health
• Overall life satisfaction & happiness
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Allegheny County</th>
<th>7-County MSA</th>
<th>Power of 32</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>44.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>55.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White only</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>89.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>AA only</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HS or less</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters+</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>(6.5 – 7.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit to work alone (private car)</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No health Insurance (age 18-64)</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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Broad QOL Indicators: Survey Items and Descriptive Statistics

- **Overall Regional QOL Rating**
  Thinking about the overall quality of life in [Southwestern Pennsylvania / the region], how would you rate the region as a place to live? Would you say it is...
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Overall Life Satisfaction**
  All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with life these days? Please tell me on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 means “Very Dissatisfied,” and 10 means ‘Very satisfied.” (Mean rating = 7.7)

- **General Happiness**
  Taking all things together on a scale of 1 to 10, how happy would you say you are? Here, one means “Very Unhappy” and 10 means “Very Happy.” (Mean rating = 7.8)

- **Intentions to Move From Region**
  Do you expect to be living in the [Southwestern Pennsylvania] region five years from now? (84% Yes, 16% No)
SUMMARY – OVERALL QOL INDICATORS

- Residents of the Pittsburgh MSA rated regional quality of life higher than residents from the surrounding 25 counties.
- In terms of perceived change in regional QOL over the past few years, City of Pittsburgh residents perceived most improvement, and this is the only geographic group in which more residents see improvement (32%) than decline (21%).
- In terms of neighborhood ratings, residents of the 6 counties surrounding Allegheny County in the Pittsburgh MSA were the most positive, while City of Pittsburgh residents were least positive.
- Non-African Americans (primarily non-Hispanic Whites) rated regional QOL higher than African Americans.
- Younger residents (18-44) were more likely to perceive improvements than declines in regional QOL, while those 45 and older were more likely to see declining QOL.
- **Looking forward:** What are the physical and economic conditions related to respondents’ views of Quality of Life?
SUMMARY – HEALTH INDICATORS

• While Allegheny County as a whole looks about the same or even a little better than the U.S. & PA by health indicators, and has slightly improved since 2002, this is not true of all groups.

• Disparities in health and health risk exist and vary by demographic group:
  • African Americans
  • Lower education
  • Lower Income

• 15.7% of African Americans reported not having health care coverage, compared to 9.5% of non African Americans. 19.3% of African Americans reported needing to see a doctor in the previous 12 months, but could not because of cost, compared to 13.6% of non-African Americans.

• Looking forward: What are the neighborhood and community correlates of health disadvantage?
SUMMARY – HOUSING INDICATORS

• The 2003 survey results show slightly lower homeownership rates in Allegheny County than the 2011 QOL survey, 68.7 percent to 72.1 percent respectively. African Americans and City of Pittsburgh residents both had lower homeownership rates, on average.

• Residents in six counties outside Allegheny County in the MSA rated their home/apartment and the physical conditions of housing in their neighborhood highest among all geographies. City of Pittsburgh residents rated their own residence and physical conditions of buildings/housing in their neighborhood the lowest.

• African Americans in Allegheny County rated their residence “excellent” or “very good” at lower levels than African Americans in the city of Pittsburgh, 41.3% and 50.0%, respectively.

• Older residents rated physical and structural conditions of their dwelling higher, on average, than younger respondents. 82.7 percent of City of Pittsburgh residents age 65 and older rated their residence “very good” or “excellent,” higher than any other place or cohort.

• Looking forward: What are the neighborhood and community conditions of how respondents rated their housing?
SUMMARY – NEIGHBORHOOD INDICATORS

- City of Pittsburgh residents were less likely to agree that “people in my neighborhood are willing to help their neighbors” (38% “strongly agree”) than residents in the rest of Allegheny County (55%), the 6-county MSA (57%) and the 25 surrounding counties (57%)
- Older residents were more likely to report visiting and talking with neighbors, and that their neighbors were willing to help each other, than younger residents.
- The following demographic groups were most likely to report that it was “very likely” they would move in the next year and unlikely to be living in the region in five years:
  - Younger residents (especially 18-29)
  - Lower income residents
  - African Americans
- **Looking forward:** What are the physical and economic conditions related to respondents’ views of their neighborhood?
SUMMARY – ECONOMY

- Respondents in the city of Pittsburgh (33%) were more likely to report that their household’s financial situation has improved in the last three years than residents in the rest of Allegheny County and the survey area.

- Over one-fifth of respondents reported having trouble paying their monthly living costs, ranging from 20.3% in Allegheny County outside the city of Pittsburgh to 29.7% in the outer ring counties.

- Residents outside of Allegheny County were more likely to report that their financial position has gotten worse or significantly worse (30%). Half of these respondents reported that the nation’s economy will get worse in the coming year, compared to one-third of Pittsburgh city respondents expressing the same performance.

- City of Pittsburgh respondents were the most optimistic about the regional economy, with 45.3% expecting the region’s economy to get better in the coming year, compared to just one-fifth of the respondents outside Allegheny County. Only 15% of City of Pittsburgh respondents felt that the regional economy would get worse over the coming year, compared to 30.8% in the rest of Allegheny County and 38.5% of respondents in the outer ring counties.

- **Looking forward:** How do respondents’ economic views relate to their views of the neighborhoods and Quality of Life?