

Chapter Eleven - Latonia Survey

Background and Methodology

Throughout February and March 2010 a survey was presented to residents and people interested in the future of Latonia to collect respondent's thoughts and opinions on the study area. The survey consisted of three parts; an open-ended response section designed to gather people's opinions on the neighborhood, a multiple choice section specifically geared toward gathering information about Latonia, and a demographic section. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix G - Latonia Questionnaire.

The survey was provided electronically on the NKAPC website and paper copies were also made available by request to people without computers or Internet access. Advertisement of the survey was provided through multiple avenues including; the City of Covington and NKAPC e-newsletters, neighborhood associations, the Kenton County Recorder, an online Enquirer announcement, and through announcements on social networking pages dedicated to Latonia. In total, over 100 surveys were received from people interested in giving their thoughts on the area.

It should be noted this survey was conducted to gather basic information useful for helping this study and those who may implement the study in the future. Results cannot be considered a sample of the opinion of the entire Latonia study area because the survey was not designed for that purpose. It can, however, be part of the information used to begin discussion and planning with the intent that any recommendations generated would be presented before the public as part of the planning process for this study.

After the response window closed, staff began processing information received from respondents. Open-ended responses were read and categorized into specific keywords to allow for categorization and processing of answers. For instance, a response in the survey that read "centrally located, 3 access points to interstates" was simplified to "Location" for purposes of data assessment. Responses to question 30 "Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Latonia?"

were also categorized and added into data from the other open-ended questions. A detailed list of general categorized responses and the specific responses that make up these categories can be found in Appendix H - Response Categories. Sections two and three consisted of multiple choice answers, which did not require additional categorization methods.

Results of Note to Open Ended Questions

This subsection provides summarizations of the data found in the survey. Detailed information found in Appendix I - Questionnaire Responses provides a breakdown of categorized responses, multiple choice answers, and the number of times that response was received. Varying answers were noticed throughout categorization of the data; however, some trends did begin to appear. While the information found through the survey was not scientific in nature several conclusions can be inferred, which are outlined below.

Assets in Latonia

One of the most frequently recurring assets identified in the study was the area's small town feel and character of the neighborhood with 61 responses. Small town feel was followed by location with 31 responses and convenient amenities with 30 responses.

Challenges Facing Latonia

Based on the responses it appears the most significant challenges facing the area are those relating to the loss of business and empty retail space with 52 responses. Rental properties and absentee landlords were the next most frequent response with 37 responses. Deteriorating properties and the lack of maintenance received 29 responses and litter followed closely with 27 responses. The final challenge of note was the presence of crime and drugs with 24 responses.

Requested Amenities

When asked what businesses and activities they would like to have in the area fifty responses were received

indicating the desire for a sit-down style family restaurant. The next highest request was for recreational activities and received 27 responses. Requests for specialty retail, parks and greenspace, and general retail all received approximately 20 responses.

Why People Moved To/From Latonia

Responses to why people moved into or left Latonia were not as clearly defined as the previous questions. Good housing stock was the most frequent reason given to why people moved to the area with 6 responses. Public schools, crime and drugs, deteriorating properties and housing issues were the most frequent reasons given as to why neighbors had left the area, each receiving approximately 10 responses. Another frequently received response was that none of their neighbors had moved recently, again with 10 responses.

Cities Respondents Like

The fourth question, which asked which cities people liked that they had visited or previously lived received several specific answers. Unfortunately, no city was mentioned with enough frequency for staff to use as a preferred city. Cities were broken down by size into small towns, big cities, or international cities for classification purposes. After classification of the data the most frequent response given to small towns was for preference of clean and highly maintained cities with 18 responses. The presence of festivals and events followed closely with 15 responses. Responses for big city preferences were less clearly defined. For instance people again preferred clean and well maintained cities but this answer only received 6 responses. The next closest result was the presence of parks and greenspace with 4 responses. International cities were mentioned infrequently, however cleanliness and maintenance was the most frequent answer with 2 responses.

Results of Note to Latonia Specific Questions

The multiple choice section dedicated specifically to Latonia yielded interesting findings as well. Most of the respondents either lived (70) or shopped (64) in Latonia. Of the 110 respondents, 41 had lived in Latonia for longer than 20 years. Thirty-nine respondents indicated they were involved with their local neighborhood or other associations; however,

only 65 indicated they were involved with community projects. Most respondents indicated they attended events in Latonia (80). Respondents also indicated they knew their neighbors on a first-name basis (63) and that they helped their neighbors with chores sometimes (28) or all the time (20). These responses seem to indicate that residential involvement is part of the reason why people view the area's small town character as the neighborhood's greatest asset.

While respondents indicated they were involved in the area they did feel there were problems in Latonia. Respondents generally felt the area was getting worse (62). When examined with the previously mentioned challenges responses of losing businesses and the increase of rental properties in the area it could be inferred that these challenges should be addressed by the plan.

Respondents indicated they primarily used the car (105) to get from place to place in Latonia. It should also be noted that 64 respondents indicated they walked to amenities in the area and that most people felt there were adequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities (55). Chapter 8 – Streetscape and Wayfinding provides more information on these facilities.

Results of Note to Demographic Questions

Approximately 50 respondents were born between 1946 and 1964, more commonly known as the “baby boom” generation. This age range presented the generation that most frequently took the survey. Members of “generation X,” or those born between 1965 and 1981, were the second most frequent group to answer with 35 respondents. Approximately 70 respondents respectively indicated they were married, employed for wages, lived in a house with a mortgage, and had obtained some level of degree after high school. These results seem to correlate with respondents identifying small town character as Latonia's greatest asset. Nearly every response to race (108) indicated respondents were white or Caucasian, which would imply the area is not extensively diverse. More information on demographics can be found in Chapter 3 – Market Study Summary.

Considerations

- Work to maintain and strengthen assets including small town character, marketing Latonia's location and providing convenient amenities
- Aggressively examine programs to avert the loss of additional businesses, promote efforts to strengthen the business environment and encourage filling existing retail space
- Pursue efforts to increase homeownership
- Examine efforts to make property owners accountable for the upkeep of their properties
- Consider programs that address deteriorating properties, which could include homeowner assistance efforts
- Create efforts that address litter in the area
- Work towards reducing crime in Latonia
- Coordinate with findings in the market study to determine the feasibility of adding family restaurants, recreational activities and specialty retail in the Latonia area
- Work to increase parks, greenspace and connections to the Licking River Greenway
- Work towards increasing demographic diversity in the Latonia area

