

Questionnaire Results Summary

Brentwood Borough Implementable Comprehensive Plan
November 2022

Background

The Community Questionnaire is an important component of public engagement that will inform the selection and framing of Key Issues in the Brentwood Borough Implementable Comprehensive Plan. At the initial meeting of the plan's appointed Steering Committee, Pashek+MTR and the committee worked to select questions that could best inform the planning process, Pashek + MTR then developed a draft questionnaire in SurveyMonkey. The Steering Committee and staff reviewed the draft and provided feedback that is reflected in the final version.

The questionnaire was open from May 2022 to October 2022. The borough and consultant marketed the questionnaire in various ways including promotion on the Borough website and social media, multiple articles in the community magazine *IN Brentwood, Baldwin, and Whitehall*, and informational booths stationed at community events. The questionnaire was also available via a link on the project website, yourbrentwoodplan.com.

Response rate

The online questionnaire received a total of 630 responses. In validating the data, Pashek+MTR flagged any IP address (the address of an individual device) associated with four or more responses for further analysis, acknowledging that multiple responses from the same device could represent multiple members of the same household or different responses from a public location, such as a library computer. A detailed review of the results from such devices indicated that they were unique and unlikely to be the result of any effort to unduly influence results.

It is worth noting questionnaire was not intended to achieve statistically valid results, as its sample was not random. Pashek+MTR finds value in the qualitative information generated by the questionnaire, especially the responses to open-ended questions, and typically use this data to identify trends.

Findings

Pashek+MTR summarized key takeaways from the questionnaire. For additional tabulations and much more detail in qualitative comments, see the full questionnaire printout.

Q1 Which best describes you? (610 responses)

Age range	Respondents as %
I own my residence in Brentwood	89.5%
I rent a residence in Brentwood	7.0%
I work or own a business in Brentwood	5.2%
Other	1.3%

Other responses indicated that respondents grew up in Brentwood or recently moved away from the Borough.

Q2 What are the best features in Brentwood Borough? Please rate how much each of the following factors currently contributes to the quality of life here, with 1 being “not important” and 5 being “very important.” (609 responses to this question with almost 190 individual comments)

The highest-ranking five aspects (Very Important) were, in order:

1. Safe and healthy place for me/my family
2. Excellent public services (public works, police, etc.)
3. School district quality
4. Walkability
5. Convenience of location

The lowest ranking five aspects were (Not Important), in order:

1. Suburban feel of homes and lawns
2. Tree canopy and green space
3. Special community events
4. Recreation, facilities, parks, sports leagues
5. Brownsville Road business district

Key takeaways from the individual comments included:

- Respondents appreciated the Brentwood community overall, including the Borough's small-town feel, friendly residents, diverse population and sense of community.
- Additionally, community members enjoy the safety, walkability, sense of tradition and historic nature of the Borough.
- Positive features of Brentwood include the Borough's location and proximity to the city, cultural assets, and neighboring communities.
- Additionally, they identified the following services and amenities as community assets:
 - Public institutions such as the Brentwood Library and the School District
 - Public safety services (Police, Fire, EMS)
 - Recreation facilities including Brentwood Park and Brentwood Pool
 - Convenient and diverse shopping and services
 - Community events
 - Continued improvements to the community
 - Accessibility
 - Communications
 - Access to public transportation

Q3 As we look ahead to making Brentwood an even better place to live and work during the next 10 years, what issues will be the most important areas for focus? How important to you are the following issues in the communities as we move forward? (528 responses)

The highest-ranking five aspects were, in order:

1. Providing a greater mix of local retail, services and restaurants
2. Preserving and beautifying the tradition single-family suburban neighborhood pattern
3. Further activating the Brownsville Road business district as a vibrant destination, place to spend time
4. Addressing an undersupply of parking in residential neighborhoods
5. Incentivizing redevelopment along Route 51

The lowest-ranking five aspects were, in order:

1. New recreation options, such as a walking trail and/or park in the Hollow
2. Meeting the need for a variety of housing types (apartments, townhomes, single family homes)
3. Protecting our environmental assets
4. Addressing stormwater and reducing flooding
5. Addressing an undersupply of parking near businesses or community facilities

Q4 Are there any other issues you feel are very important for this plan to address? (202 individual comments)

Respondents identified the following issues (organized by topic):

- **Property maintenance and neighborhood preservation – 22% of comments**
 - Encourage upkeep of home exteriors
 - Increase code enforcement
 - Preserve neighborhoods
 - Prevent businesses from operating in residential areas
 - Create noise and time ordinances for businesses near residential areas
 - Improve the parking supply in residential areas
 - Address abandoned properties and absentee landlords
 - Increase maintenance and regulation of rental units
- **Fiscal responsibility – 17% of comments**
 - Reduce taxes
 - Increase business growth to offset property taxes
 - Consider tax breaks for elderly residents
 - Improve the cost of utilities
- **Public safety and services – 16% of comments**
 - Increase police presence in problem areas
 - Encourage police engagement with residents
 - Implement speed bumps to reduce speeding on through roads
 - Find space to keep Brentwood EMS in Brentwood
 - Reduce crime (theft, drug activity)
 - Add lighting throughout the borough
 - Improve stormwater management/flooding/water drainage/water lines
- **Brentwood Town Square, Brownsville Road, and Route 51 – 12% of comments**
 - Create more vibrant commercial corridors
 - Address deterioration, blighted buildings, and vacant storefronts
 - Attract more retail and restaurants (breweries, coffee shops, and other unique businesses)
 - Beautify facades and clean up litter
 - Create uniqueness and variety on Brownsville Road
 - Make rents affordable or create a business incubator
 - Attract businesses to Brentwood Towne Center
- **Recreation and green space– 12% of comments**
 - Provide more youth sports and youth programs

- Allow for use of the fields without renting
- Allow dogs and bikes in parks
- Create a bike or hiking route in the Hollow
- Install dog waste cans and bags
- Provide more activities for underserved populations including teens and seniors
- Maintain green spaces
- Increase shade trees
- **School District – 8% of comments**
 - Increase resources and programs for students
 - Consider bussing for students who live far away
 - Improve playgrounds
 - Reduce school taxes
- **Road maintenance and pedestrian safety – 8% of comments**
 - Maintain sidewalks
 - Provide more accessible sidewalks and pedestrian crossings
 - Improve roads
- **Communications – 4% of comments**
 - Create a more user-friendly Borough website
 - Improve communications between residents and the borough
 - Identify a unique identity for Brentwood to promote the community
 - Create a welcoming community

Q5 A key decision-point for the community revolves around its identity, which should drive decisions for land use and spending priorities. The Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to find consensus on what type of place the Borough is and should continue to become. Currently, Brentwood positions itself as a stable, attractive and dense inner-ring suburb that combines walkability and excellent transit service with adequate green space and parking, as well as easy access to both the cosmopolitan attractions of the city and the retail destinations of the suburbs. Does this vision capture your ideal future Brentwood? What else would you suggest is important? (283 individual comments)

Most respondents agreed with the vision but also added the following comments (organized by topic):

- **Brentwood Towne Square, Brownsville Road, and Route 51 – 19% of comments**
 - Attract businesses such as restaurants, breweries and retail
 - Address vacant properties
 - Increase the parking supply for businesses
 - Provide more affordable rental spaces for businesses or incubator space

- Add amenities such as outdoor seating and shade trees
- **Municipal services and the community – 18% of comments**
 - Increase walkability and provide walkable destinations
 - Improve streetscapes and aesthetics throughout the community
 - Establish Brentwood as a destination
 - Consider service consolidation with Whitehall or Baldwin
 - Increase community outreach and communications including updates to the borough's website
 - Be more welcoming and inclusive
 - Create opportunities for community members to get to know each other
 - Increase accessibility for elderly and persons with disabilities
 - Offset property taxes
 - Invest in infrastructure
 - Repair streets
 - Pursue sustainable energy and renewable resources
 - More transportation options such as a community shuttle service or more transit stops
 - Advocate for a bus line to the nearest T stop
- **Housing and Neighborhood Preservation – 10% of comments**
 - Provide affordable/senior housing options
 - Address abandoned properties
 - Improve parking enforcement and increase parking supply
 - Increase code enforcement including property maintenance, absentee landlords and open fires
 - Regulation of political signs and flags (for example: do not allow them a certain amount of time after an election)
 - Encourage homeownership
 - Increase parking supply
 - Consider parking permits
 - Encourage residents to park in their driveways, garages, and allotted parking spaces
 - Remove cars that are uninspected or unusable
 - Enforce parking rules and no parking signs
 - Prevent cars from parking on sidewalks and lawns
- **Public Safety – 7% of comments**
 - Increase police presence
 - Address uptick in crime (specifically theft) and drug activity
 - Keep Brentwood EMS services in Brentwood
 - Create a neighborhood watch

- Address speeding with speed bumps
- **Recreation and Green Space – 7% of comments**
 - Increase the amount of dog-friendly parks/trails
 - Create more walking trails
 - Increase the amount of bike-friendly parks/trails
 - Develop the Hollow into a park and walking trails
 - Preserve and increase green space
- **School District – 5% of comments**
 - Needs additional programming and opportunities for students
 - Needs daycares, preschools, etc. for young families

Q6 Given that density/walkability and ample parking supply can sometimes be at odds, which do you feel the Borough should generally prioritize? (465 responses with more than 90 individual comments)

Age range	Respondents as %
Density/Walkability	58.5%
Providing more parking	41.5%

Individual comments provided the following suggestions:

- Increase walkability by improving sidewalks and creating walkable destinations
- More strictly enforce parking ordinances and rules
- Consider implementing parking permits or other programs to increase the supply of parking
- Increase parking supply in the business districts

Q7 Benchmarking: If you've seen a community feature, neighborhood or entire community elsewhere that you would like Brentwood to emulate, please name and describe it here. (194 individual comments)

Residents identified the following communities most frequently:

- Mt. Lebanon (most mentioned)
- Whitehall
- Dormont
- Squirrel Hill
- Lawrenceville
- Oakmont
- Sewickley
- Baldwin

Residents identified the following community amenities as features they would like to see in their community (organized by topic):

- **Brentwood Towne Square, Brownsville Road, and Route 51 – 36% of comments**
 - A variety of businesses (restaurants, retail, and entertainment)
 - Walkability
 - Adequate parking
 - Appealing street signs and lighting
 - Revitalized storefronts
 - Outdoor seating and trash cans
 - Street art and other placemaking projects that invite residents to hang out (for example: an open brewery with green lawn and benches with music)
 - Farmers market or night market
- **Municipal services and the community – 12% of comments**
 - Walkability/Walkable destinations
 - Lower taxes and lower utility costs
 - Foster diversity, civic pride and engagement
 - Balance of green space and commercial business
 - Community, emergency services, and police work together
 - Accessibility improvements throughout the Borough
 - More community activities that involve children and families
 - School district with more resources and programming
 - Availability of green space and trees
 - Availability of public transportation
- **Housing and Neighborhood Preservation – 7% of comments**
 - Penalize rental properties that are not maintained
 - Beautification of houses and properties
 - Resident permits, visitor permits, and parking passes for vehicles
 - Affordable housing options
 - Implement speed humps on side streets
- **Recreation and Green Space – 7% of comments**
 - Dog parks
 - Bike lanes
 - Splash pad at the pool
 - YMCA facility or community center that serves as a community anchor
 - Youth sports teams
 - Walking trails
 - Recreation programs for teens

Q8 Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns about Brentwood Borough not addressed in this questionnaire? (176 individual comments)

Respondents provided the following additional comments (organized by topic):

- **Municipal Services – 25% of comments**
 - Consider combining services with Brentwood, Baldwin, and Whitehall
 - Increase communications between the borough and the community
 - Create a community composting plan
 - Lower utility costs (sewer and water)
 - School district growth/improvements
 - Lower taxes
 - Increase sense of community
- **Neighborhood Stability – 10% of comments**
 - Address residential concerns about nearby commercial properties such as noise and safety complaints
 - Enforce parking laws and address parking on sidewalks
 - Penalize absentee property owners and abandoned properties
 - Enforce property maintenance
- **Public Safety – 9% of comments**
 - Increase police presence
 - Reduce crime and drug activity
 - Keep and support services in Brentwood (Police, EMS, and Fire)
 - Increase safety for children walking to school
- **Recreation – 6% of comments**
 - Increase indoor recreation activities
 - Increase recreation opportunities for residents with dogs
 - Create a center that provides services for seniors, families, and teens
 - Increased accessibility of park and field facilities
 - Create more recreation opportunities for teens and children
- **Brentwood Towne Square, Brownsville Road, and Route 51 – 4% of comments**
 - Attract restaurants and businesses to Brownsville Road and Route 51
 - Address blight and deterioration of Route 51
 - Increase restaurant options
 - Increase parking supply for businesses

Q9 Why did you move to Brentwood? Check all that apply. (486 with more than 120 individual comments)

Answer Choices	Respondents as %
Convenient location	59.8%
Cost of ownership or rent	38.9%
Traditional suburban character and appearance	31.8%
Other	25.4%
My family and friends live here	23.5%
School quality	20.4%
It seems like a place on the rise	11.3%

Common reasons for moving to Brentwood included:

- Small-town feel/Sense of community
- Walkability
- Convenient location
- Low crime rate
- Born and raised in Brentwood
- Historic and traditional character
- Access to public transportation
- Affordability
- School district

Q10 In what age range do you fall? (480 responses)

	Respondents as %
Younger than 18	0.0%
19 to 30	9.2%
31 to 50	44.4%
51 to 64	27.5%
65 or older	19.0%

Q11 How long have you lived in Brentwood Borough or owned a business here? (483 responses)

	Respondents as %
Less than 5 years	17.8%
5-20 years	40.0%
More than 20 years	41.9%
I do not reside or own a business in Brentwood	0.2%

Finally, 351 of 629 respondents provided email addresses to receive updates regarding the project.