

## Survey says Queens boro is, by far, the most satisfied in N.Y.C.

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Queens residents might get ribbed about living in an "outer borough," but many are smiling all the way home.

A new survey shows people who live in Queens are happier with their neighborhoods than New Yorkers living in any other borough.

In fact, 51% of Queens residents who answered the annual "Speak Out, New York" questionnaire said they were "very satisfied" with their neighborhoods, compared with 38% of those who live in Manhattan, 27% in Brooklyn and 24% in the Bronx.

Only Staten Island comes close, with a 41% response.

"It's a great place to live," said Debra Sapp, 53, a photographer and videographer who lives in Flushing. "If I have the chance to move to Hawaii, I'll be leaving Queens. Otherwise, I'm staying here."

More than half of Queens residents also said they were very interested in community affairs and wanted to become more active in civic groups.

The citywide survey of 4,400 people is conducted every year by the Citizens Committee for New York City, which asks local groups to fan out at subway stops, farmers' markets and other locations with the questionnaires. The survey is part of an effort to get New Yorkers more involved in their neighborhoods.

"More people in Queens also regard their neighbors as friends," said organization President Peter Kostmayer.

"In arguably the most diverse county in the city, people seem to be getting along well," he said. "That really says something about the involvement of people in their neighborhood and importance of community based organizations."

Sharon Bomzer, who has lived in Kew Gardens for 10 years, agreed, saying people in Queens are "great."

"There are a lot of trees, space and nice skies," said Bomzer, 37, a social worker. "The transportation is very convenient for the daily life. It would be even better if we had more parking spaces and smoother traffic."

Queens residents also seemed less fearful of being priced out of the area. Only 29% thought their neighborhood might become too expensive for them to live in. That's lower than residents in all the other boroughs.

"I feel less stressed when I'm here, compared to other areas in the city," said Eddie Markovich, a 47-year-old doorman who lives in Middle Village. "We have beautiful parks, lots of open spaces, and there's not much noise."

Husband and wife Joel and Shirley Sacks said they moved to Forest Hills for a change of pace from their retired life in suburbia.

"We came to Queens four years ago after feeling isolated while living in Long Island," said Shirley Sacks, 79. "But here you can jump into the subway just about anywhere and the neighborhood is full of express buses. The transportation is very convenient."

But her beloved borough does have its downsides, Sacks admitted. One is Queens Blvd., the treacherous roadway that has been dubbed the "Boulevard of Death."

"On Queens Blvd., cars don't slow down," she noted.

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