



THE SQUIRREL HILL CAFE. PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN COHEN

## ●●● Features

### The Results of the Environmental Survey

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 08, 2010

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*In the first ever effort to measure Pittsburghers' perceptions, awareness and behaviors around environmental issues, Sustainable Pittsburgh commissioned Campos Inc to conduct a study.*

*The study was in two phases: before World Environment Day and after, to measure any difference the event might have had and also to provide a benchmark for future surveys.*

*We'll include some highlights and summary and to find out more, you can read the full document [here](#).*

#### Think Global, Act Local

First the good news: "Overall residents' general environmental awareness/knowledge was strong, concern for the environment both regionally and globally was high, and the majority reported that a particular political candidate's stance on environmental issues was important to them."

Still, we need work. We aren't nearly as aware, for example, that surface water runoff is the most common source of water pollution, nor do we know where the runoff destinations are.

As for motivation--such as why citizens are taking part in environmental actions such as recycling--the prime reason is concern for future generations.

Here are some specific responses to shed more light on the findings:

- More than half of respondents were positive that they knew the source of their drinking/tap water (53% pre-WED and 56% post.)

- More than half know where and how to recycle electronic items (54.2% post event)

- Two-thirds identified motor vehicles as the largest source of carbon monoxide.

- Concern for the global environment was stronger than concern for the regional environment.

- About half said they wished there were more activities or events that involved environmental education in the region.

To further illuminate the findings, we went right to the source--that would be Court Gould, executive director of Sustainable Pittsburgh and asked him the following questions.

*What was the most illuminating thing you learned through the survey?*

The survey respondents seemed to be quite knowledgeable and concerned about environmental issues both regionally and globally. While it was notable that the majority believed environmental consciousness and/or efforts in our region were only average or below average compared to other cities, it was even more interesting that the majority also identified a particular candidate's stance on environmental issues as being important to them and influencing their voting decisions. I think this reflects a growing public voice that values sustainability and carries a message to businesses and organizations of all sectors that the public cares about and will likely support sustainable development.

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#### Top 20 Feature Stories

##### Photo Slide Show: The New Market Square!

If you haven't seen it yet, check out the newly redesigned Market Square, now a piazza with widened sidewalks for outdoor dining and a pedestrian-only center with tables and chairs. The new public space is home to weekly events such as Farmer Markets every Thursday and just this past weekend, a wedding.

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How do you think Pittsburgh compares to other cities?

The Pittsburgh region has earned an international recognition as a place where sustainability is being pursued aggressively, transcending our historical economic model based on intensive natural resource exploitation and that of cheap labor. The G20 coming here and United Nations' picking us to be North America's host for World Environment Day 2010 makes the point. We still have a long way to go in being the most sustainable region on the planet but we have what it takes right here. Excellent public/private collaboration, strong corporate, civic, and philanthropic leadership and the "get 'er done" DNA of our citizenry.

If you had \$100,000 to do something in this area for Pittsburgh, what would you do?

Well, despite former Governor Ridge's lobby firm pulling down \$900k to represent the Marcellus Shale Coalition, I still think \$100,000 is a lot of money. How about we put it together with proceeds from a tax on natural gas to fund environmental remediation, community improvement and innovations that will hasten our transition to a new sustainable energy economy.

To see the full results of the survey click [here](#).

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