

Summary of Results

Survey Background and Purpose

- The City of Minneapolis contracted with National Research Center, Inc. to conduct a community wide resident survey. The Minneapolis resident survey provides residents the opportunity to rate the quality of life in the City, as well as service delivery and their satisfaction with local government. The survey also permits residents to provide feedback to government on what is working well and what is not, and share their priorities for community planning and resource allocation.
- Resident perspectives are key in providing context that will be used by the City of Minneapolis to assess trends in its performance.
- This the third iteration of the Minneapolis Resident survey since the baseline study conducted in 2001.

Methods

- The 2005 Minneapolis Resident Survey was administered by phone to a representative sample of Minneapolis residents from November 11, 2005 to January 25, 2006. A total of 1,277 surveys were completed. About a quarter of the interviews were completed with people of color and at least 105 interviews were completed with respondents in each of the 11 community planning districts. Forty interviews were completed in a language other than English. The overall response rate was 25%.
- Survey results were weighted so that respondent age, gender, ownership status (rent vs. own) and location of residence (community planning district) were represented as closely as possible to the proportions reflective of the entire city. (For more information see Appendix IV: Detailed Survey Methodology.) The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points around any given percentage point, and plus or minus two points around average ratings on a 100-point scale.
- For comparisons by survey year, the margin of error is plus or minus four percentage points around any given percentage point, and plus or minus three points around average ratings on a 100-point scale.

Quality of Life

- Survey respondents were asked about the quality of life in Minneapolis. At least two in five respondents rated Minneapolis and their neighborhood as places to live as “very good” and more than 80% reported each was at least “good.”
- These ratings were converted to a 100-point scale where zero represents “poor” and 100 represents “very good.” Both quality of life characteristic received an average rating of about 75, or better than “good.” When compared to ratings from previous survey years, the average rating for Minneapolis as a place to live was similar to 2003 and 2001 ratings, while the average rating for neighborhood as a place to live continues to increase.

- When compared to cities across the nation, ratings given by Minneapolis respondents were similar to the national database for “Minneapolis as a place to live” and below the national average for “Neighborhood as a place to live.” When compared to select cities, the average rating for Minneapolis as a place to live was above the average. A comparison to select cities for neighborhood as a place to live was not available.
- Minneapolis residents responding to the survey were asked if they thought the city had gotten better, worse or stayed about the same as a place to live in the past two years. About half (53%) felt that it had “stayed about the same” as a place to live, a quarter of respondents (25%) felt the City had gotten “worse” and 22% said it had gotten “better.” When compared to previous years, ratings were similar in 2005 as in 2003, while a higher percentage of respondents said the City had gotten better as a place to live in 2001 and fewer reported it had gotten worse.

Challenges Facing the City

- The biggest challenges believed to be facing Minneapolis in the next five years were public safety (50% of respondents), education (44%), transportation related issues (40%) and housing (36%). Public safety was at the top of the list in 2005 and 2003 and second in 2001.

Neighborhood Perception & Image

- A majority of residents responding to the survey reported that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with each in a series of statements about their neighborhood, with 85% agreeing that their neighborhood is clean and well-maintained. Most opinions about neighborhoods were similar in 2005 than in previous survey years.
- Some average ratings were compared with average ratings given by other jurisdictions across the nation. The rating for “my neighborhood is a safe place to live” was below the average and the rating for feeling safe in Downtown Minneapolis was above the average.
- Survey respondents were asked how they felt about the size of their current place of residence based on their household’s needs. About three quarters of respondents (73%) felt that their current residence was “just the right size,” one in five (21%) said it was “too small” and 6% said it was “too big.”
- Another question asked Minneapolis residents the extent to which they “agreed” or “disagreed” with statements regarding their current place of residence. At least four in five respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the location, physical condition and housing costs were adequate to meet their needs. Fewer than half of respondents agreed that they planned to move within the next two years.

Downtown Usage & Image

- A majority of respondents (75%) reported they neither live nor work in Downtown Minneapolis, slightly down from 2003 (80%). A slightly larger percentage of respondents reported working and living Downtown in 2005 compared to previous survey years.
- If respondents reported that they did not live or work Downtown, they were asked how frequently they visited the area in the last year. Ninety-three percent had visited the downtown at least once in the last year. The percentage of respondents who reported visiting Downtown Minneapolis at least once in the past year was similar in 2005 as in previous years.

- Those respondents who reported never going Downtown or only going once or twice in the last year were asked to give major reasons that kept them from spending more time in Downtown Minneapolis. One in five respondents said that the lack of parking was an issue, 16% said the cost of parking and 14% said they just don't want to go Downtown.
- Residents responding to the survey were asked to rate generally how safe they felt in downtown Minneapolis. A majority of respondents (86%) reported that they feel "somewhat" or "very safe" in Downtown Minneapolis, while 14% reported they feel "not very safe" or "not at all safe." The average rating for safety in Downtown Minneapolis was 71 on a 100-point scale where 0 represents "not at all safe" and 100 represents "very safe." A higher percentage of residents reported feeling "very safe" or "somewhat safe" in 2005 than in 2001.

Access to Information

- Respondents were asked if they had contacted the City to get information or services in the last 12 months. A similar proportion of respondents (39%) reported contacting the City in 2005 as in previous survey years (38% and 38%, respectively).
- Of the respondents who mentioned having contacted the City in the last 12 months, about three-quarters (73%) said that they did so by telephone, one in five (22%) reported visiting the City's Web site and 16% contacted the City in person. Fewer than 10% reported contacting the City for information or services via email, mail or other methods. Fewer respondents reported using most methods to contact the City in 2005 than in previous years.
- Respondents who reported contacting the City in the last 12 months (except for those who only visited the City's Web site), were asked to rate specific characteristics about the City employee with which they had contact. About four in five respondents rated employees' respectfulness, courteousness, knowledge and willingness to accommodate the need for foreign language and/or sign language interpreting as "good" or "very good." About 7 in 10 said that the employees' willingness to help or understand and their timely response was at least "good" and about two-thirds (65%) reported that the ease of getting in touch with the employee was at least "good."
- When converted to a 100-point scale, most City employee ratings were "good" (67) or better. "Timely response" was given an average rating of 62, or just below "good," and "ease of getting in touch with the employee" received an average rating of 58, or below the "good" mark on a 100-point scale. Where comparisons to previous years were available, ratings were similar in 2005 to 2001. Average ratings for City employee characteristics were below the ratings in cities across the nation and where comparisons were available to ratings given by respondents in select cities, average ratings for City employee characteristics were below the average.
- Respondents who reported only contacting the City via the City's Web site were asked to rate specific characteristics of the Web site. About 8 in 10 respondents felt that the usefulness of information on the City's Web site as "good" or "very good" and about 7 in 10 felt that the design and graphics and the ease of use were at least "good." When converted to a 100-point scale, the average rating for "usefulness of information" was 70, or better than "good," while average ratings for "design and graphics" and "ease of use" were 61 or just below "good."

- Minneapolis residents were asked how they obtain snow emergency information. Almost half (46%) said that they obtain snow emergency information from radio or television, while 16% use a snow emergency brochure and 12% use the snow phone hotline. Fewer than 10% reported using other resources for obtaining snow emergency information. When compared to previous survey years, the percent of respondents who reported using each snow emergency information resource was significantly lower for almost every resource mentioned in 2005 than in previous years. However, the question was asked significantly differently in 2005 than previous years.
- Residents responding to the survey were asked if they had any contact with emergency services in the past two years. About two in five respondents (41%) mentioned that they had contact with the police in the last two years (similar to 2003) and about a third (32%) reported contacting 911 operators in the past two years (also similar to 2003). Fewer respondents (10%) reported having contact with the fire department in the last two years.
- Those respondents who reported having contact with emergency services in the past two years were asked to rate their satisfaction with the professionalism shown by the staff with which they had contact. More than 90% of respondents reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the professionalism shown by fire department staff and 911 operators and about 80% of respondents said that they were at least “satisfied” with police department staff with which they had contact. Average ratings for emergency services remained similar in 2005 as in previous surveys. The average rating for fire department staff was above the average when compared with ratings across the nation, while the average rating given to police department staff was below the national average. A comparison to the nation for 911 operators was not available. Also, comparisons to ratings given by select cities were not available.

Satisfaction with City Services

- At least half of all respondents said that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with each city service presented, with about 9 in 10 respondents reporting satisfaction with fire protection and emergency medical response, sewer services, garbage collection and recycling programs, animal control services, park and recreation services and keeping streets clean.
- Providing quality drinking water (69 in 2005 versus 66 in 2003), keeping streets clean (69 versus 65) and affordable housing (51 versus 48) received higher average satisfaction ratings in 2005 than in previous survey years, while repairing streets and alleys was given a lower average rating in the current survey year than in the past (58 in 2005 versus 63 in 2003). Other services received similar ratings between survey years.
- Services rated above the national comparison were repairing streets and alleys, keeping streets clean, park and recreation services, animal control and quality drinking water. Fire protection and emergency medical response, sewer service and affordable housing development were given average ratings similar to the national average. Ratings for police and library services were below the national average.
- Repairing streets and alleys, quality drinking water, sewer services and animal control were all above the average for select cities. Police services were rated similar to the average. Services rated below the average for select cities were library services and affordable housing.

Prioritization of City Services

- After rating their satisfaction with City services, respondents were asked to rate the importance of Minneapolis providing each service. At least half of respondents felt that fire protection and emergency medical response, providing quality drinking water, police services, protecting health and well-being of residents, protecting the environment, including air, water and land, providing sewer services, garbage collection and recycling programs and affordable housing development were “extremely important.” About two in five respondents reported that providing library services, preparing for disasters, providing park and recreation services and revitalizing neighborhoods were “extremely important” services and about 3 in 10 said that repairing streets and alleys, keeping streets clean, dealing with problem businesses and unkempt properties, revitalizing Downtown and cleaning up graffiti were “extremely important.” About one in five respondents rated animal control services as “extremely important.”
- The relative importance of services generally was similar between 2003 and 2005. Though differences may be seen in the ratings for several services, these differences may be attributable, at least in part, to a revised set of response options in 2005 (five options instead of 10).

Balancing Satisfaction and Priorities

- To identify the services perceived by residents to have relatively lower satisfaction at the same time as relatively higher importance, all services were ranked from highest perceived satisfaction to lowest perceived satisfaction and from highest perceived importance to lowest perceived importance. Some services were in the top half of both lists (higher satisfaction and higher importance); some were in the top half of one list but the bottom half of the other (higher satisfaction and lower importance or lower satisfaction and higher importance) and some services were in the bottom half of both lists.
- Services that were rated higher in importance and lower in satisfaction were: police services, protecting health and well-being of residents and protecting the environment (including air, land and water).
- Services which were categorized as higher in importance and higher in satisfaction were: fire protection and emergency medical response, providing quality drinking water, providing sewer services, garbage collection and recycling programs, providing park and recreation services and providing library services.
- Services that were rated lower in importance and higher in satisfaction were: keeping streets clean, revitalizing Downtown and animal control services.
- Services that were rated lower in importance and lower in satisfaction were: affordable housing development, revitalizing neighborhoods, preparing for disasters, repairing streets and alleys, dealing with problem businesses and unkempt properties and cleaning up graffiti.

Property Taxes

- When asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that property taxes or fees should be increased to maintain or improve City services, 11% of respondents “strongly agreed” and 45% “agreed,” with just over half (56%) in agreement of this statement. About 3 in 10 respondents (28%) “disagreed” and 11% “strongly disagreed” that property taxes or fees should be increased to maintain or improve City services.

Community Engagement

- When asked how likely or unlikely they would be to use various approaches to try to influence a City decision on an issue they cared about, about 7 in 10 respondents reported that they would be “somewhat” or “very likely” to attend a community meeting, contact their elected official, contact City staff or contact their neighborhood group. While fewer respondents reported that they would be at least “somewhat” likely to working with a group not affiliated with the City (54%) or join a City advisory group (38%), more than a third of respondents reported a likelihood of participating in these activities to influence decisions on an issue of their concern.
- The 583 respondents who answered “somewhat” or “very” unlikely to three or more of the scenarios in the previous question were asked to give unprompted reasons they would be less likely to participate in City government decision-making. Forty-two respondents were unable to highlight their reasons. About two in five of the remaining respondents (43%) reported having “no time” to participate, while fewer respondents mentioned “no interest” (13%), that their participation “would not change the results” (12%) and that they were “not aware of options” or “did not know how” to participate (11%).
- Minneapolis residents responding to the survey were asked to give their opinions on how they felt the City governs by rating various statements about City government on a “very good” to “poor” scale. Six in ten respondents felt that the overall direction the City was taking was at least “good” and 49% rated the government as “good” or “very good” at representing and providing for the needs of all its citizens. About half of respondents rated City government as “good” or “very good” at providing meaningful opportunities for citizens to give input on important issues, informing residents on major issues in the City of Minneapolis, providing value for your tax dollars and effectively planning for the future.
- When converted to a 100-point scale, City government average ratings were between 48 and 54, or between “good” and “only fair.” Providing meaningful opportunities for citizens to give input on important issues, informing residents on major issues in the City of Minneapolis and effectively planning for the future received higher average ratings in 2005 than in 2003.
- When compared to the nation, average ratings for “the overall direction that the City is taking,” “providing meaningful opportunities for citizens to give input on important issues” and “providing value for your tax dollars” were below the average. Comparisons to the nation for “effectively planning for the future,” “representing and providing for the needs of all its citizens” and “informing residents on major issues in the City of Minneapolis” were not available. Also, comparisons to select cities were not available.

Discrimination

- About one in five respondents reported that they had experienced some type of discrimination in Minneapolis during the past 12 months, similar to previous survey years.
- Of the 19% who reported experiencing discrimination, about one in five reported it was in “getting a job or at work,” 16% reported that the situation arose in their “neighborhood,” 12% said it was “in dealing with the City” and “in getting service in a restaurant or store”. About 1 in 10 respondents who reported experiencing discrimination said it was from “general public statements” and fewer (3%) reported experiencing discrimination “on public transportation” and in “getting housing.” The proportion of respondents reporting discrimination in “getting a job or at work” (19% in 2005 versus 35% in 2003) and “in dealing with the City” (12% versus 35%) was significantly lower in 2005 than in 2003.
- Respondents who said they experienced discrimination “in dealing with the City” and those who said they didn’t know or refused to report in which type of situation they experienced discrimination were asked to report for what reason or reasons they felt discriminated against. Of those 31 respondents, 27% reported it was due to “economic status,” about a quarter of respondents reported “race or color” and approximately one in five said “gender” and “ethnic background or country of origin.” About 10% of respondents or fewer reported “social status,” “language or accent,” “age” and “disability” as a reason they felt discriminated against. About 28% of respondents mentioned other reasons that could not be categorized. Most of the reasons mentioned were reported by a higher proportion of respondents in 2005 than in 2003. “Race or color” and “age discrimination” was reported by fewer respondents in 2005 who said they had experienced discrimination in the past 12 months.
- The 21 respondents who reported experiencing discrimination “in dealing with the City” were asked which department was involved. About 6 in 10 respondents (61%) said that police were involved, about 3 in 10 (28%) mentioned Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) and about a quarter (25%) mentioned Human Resources. Fewer than 10% mentioned Public Works (5%) and Inspections/licensing (3%). A higher proportion reported experiencing discrimination when dealing with Police, CPED and Human Resources in 2005 than in 2003, while fewer reported experiencing it with the Public Works Department in the current survey year than in the 2003 survey year.