Minneapolis, MN

Resident Survey

Final Report of Results – Executive Summary

April 2011

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Acknowledgements

Resident Survey Team

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We would like to extended special acknowledgement to Neighborhood and Community Relations staff and other City of Minneapolis employees who assisted in the project.

The City of Minneapolis also would like to extend a special acknowledgement to the Minneapolis residents who shared their time, opinions and ideas for this study.

Summary of Results

Survey Background and Purpose

The City of Minneapolis contracted with National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) to conduct a citywide 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 to 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 is the fifth iteration of the Minneapolis Resident Survey since the baseline study conducted in 2001. This is the third iteration conducted by NRC.

Methods

The Minneapolis Resident Survey was administered by phone to a representative sample of Minneapolis residents from February 1, 2011 to March 10, 2011. A total of 1,172 surveys were completed. About a quarter of the interviews were completed with people of color, about a quarter with cell phone users and at least 95 interviews were completed with respondents in each of the 11 community planning districts. Nineteen interviews were completed in a language other than English. The overall response rate was 23%.

Survey results were weighted so that respondent age, gender, ethnicity, 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* in the full report of results.) The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points around any given percent.

For comparisons by survey year, the margin of error is plus or minus four percentage points around any given percentage point.

Summary of Findings

Quality of Life and Community

A majority of residents continue to rate Minneapolis and their neighborhoods as "good" or "very good" places to live, with ratings similar to or higher than ratings in jurisdictions across the country and when compared to a select list of cities[1].

- Respondents who reported living in the Near North community planning district were less likely to give positive ratings for Minneapolis as a place to live than were other residents. When asked to rate their neighborhood as a place to live, Camden, Near North and Phillips residents tended to give less positive ratings than those living in other areas of the city.

- Younger women respondents, residents of color, those of Latino/Hispanic origin, renters and lower income residents tended to give lower quality of life ratings than did their counterparts.

[1] Ann Arbor, MI; Austin, TX; Boulder, CO; Charlotte, NC; Denver, CO (City and County); Durham, NC; Oklahoma City, OK; Phoenix, AZ; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA.

The top three unprompted answers most frequently given by 2011 respondents about the three biggest challenges Minneapolis will face in the next five years were: education (35%); public safety (28%); and maintaining public infrastructure (23%). Other responses, mentioned by about one in five respondents, were: property and real estate taxes; job opportunities; economic development; and transportation related issues.

Survey participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with two statements about the City. Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are proud to live in the City of Minneapolis and would recommend it as a great place to live; at least two in five reported strong agreement with each of these statements. Few, if any, respondents strongly disagreed with either statement.

Neighborhood Perception & Image

A strong majority respondents agreed that their neighborhood is a safe place to live (84% "agreed" or "strongly agreed"); their neighborhood is clean and well maintained (83%); street lighting in their neighborhood is adequate (82%); people in their neighborhood look out for one another (80%); and that their neighborhood has a good selection of stores and services that meet their needs (76%). These ratings have steadily increased or remained stable over time. Perception of neighborhood safety was much below the national average.

- Camden, Central, Near North and Phillips residents tended to report less positive neighborhood perception and image ratings than did residents living in other districts.
- Younger females, residents of color, Latino/Hispanic residents, renters and low income residents were less likely to agree with each statement, while respondents who reported living in Minneapolis for more than 20 years were more likely to agree.

About 7 in 10 (72%) felt that their current residence was just the right size, 21% said it was too small or much too small and 6% said it was too big. No respondents thought their current place of residence was much too big. Responses to this question have remained stable over time.

Most respondents agreed that the location of their home is convenient for the household's needs; that the physical condition of their house was adequate; and that their housing costs were affordable and within the household's budget. About a third of respondents (35%) reported they intend to move within the next two years, down from 41% in 2005.

- Near North residents were less likely than other residents to agree that their housing costs were affordable or that the location of their home was convenient for their needs and reported a higher likelihood of moving within the next two years when compared to responses from other residents.
- Younger respondents, respondents of color, renters and lower income residents said they were more likely to move in the next two years than other residents.

Downtown Usage & Image

Downtown Use

The 76% of respondents who said they do not live or work Downtown were asked how often, if ever, they visited the Downtown area in the last year. About 9 in 10 of those respondents said they had visited the Downtown area at least once in the last year, similar to previous years' reports. Few (6%) reported never visiting the area in the last year.

Of those who rarely or never visit Downtown Minneapolis (17%), about a quarter said it was "just don't want to go Downtown." Other common answers were related to a lack of parking (17%), having nowhere to go (15%), traffic congestion (12%) and the cost of parking (11%).

Downtown Safety

Almost all (93%) reported that that they felt "somewhat" or "very" safe in Downtown Minneapolis; these positive ratings have improved over time and were much higher than the national average for perception of Downtown safety.

Access to Information

About two-thirds of 2011 respondents reported at least some familiarity with Minneapolis 311 services, up from 59% in 2008.

- Younger residents (ages 18-34), residents of color, those of reporting a shorter length of residency (less than 5 years), renters and low income residents tended to be less familiar with Minneapolis 311.

A slightly higher proportion of respondents in 2011 than in 2008 reported contacting the City. Those who mentioned having contacted the City in the last 12 months were asked to indicate, in an open-ended question format, how they contacted the City. About 8 in 10 respondents reported using telephone to contact the City (40% of whom contacted the City using 311 services). Approximately 3 in 10 reported visiting the City's Web site.

City Employees

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 various characteristics about the City employee with which they most recently had contact. Most respondents rated each employee characteristic as "good" or "very good," similar to 2008 reports. Ratings of employee knowledge and respectfulness have improved since 2005. When compared to the national benchmarks, ratings of City employees' courteousness and the ease of getting in touch with the employee were below average; ratings of employees' knowledge and timeliness were similar to national averages; and employees' willingness to help or understand was rated higher than the national benchmark. When compared to jurisdictions in select cities[2] in the database, employees' knowledge was rated much above average.

- Respondents residing in the Central planning district, renters, lower income residents and residents of color were least likely to give positive employee ratings than were their counterparts.

City Web Site

Respondents who reported only contacting the City via the City's Web site were asked to rate specific characteristics of the Web site. A majority of respondents reported that the usefulness of information, the design and graphics used and the convenience of the City's Web site were good or very good (76%, 73% and 73%, respectively). Ratings for the design and graphics used on the City's Web site and the usefulness of information on the site declined slightly over time, while ratings of the convenience of the Web site showed an upward trend across survey years.

Snow Emergency Information

Nearly half of residents reported relying on the automated phone call from the city when a snow emergency is declared and about a quarter refer to radio or television for this information. A mixed bag of information

[2] Ann Arbor, MI; Austin, TX; Boulder, CO; Charlotte, NC; Denver, CO (City and County); Durham, NC; Oklahoma City, OK; Phoenix, AZ; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA.

sources was used by Minneapolis residents for understanding snow emergency rules: City of Minneapolis Web site (17%), radio or television (13%), the 348-snow phone hotline (13%) were sources most commonly mentioned.

Emergency Services

Residents responding to the survey were asked if they had any contact with emergency services in the past two years. At least a third of respondents reported that they had contacted the police (38%), 911 operators (32%) and 311 agents (36%), while 13% reported having contacted the fire department in the last two years.

Those who reported having contacted an emergency service in the past two years were asked to rate their satisfaction with the professionalism shown by the staff with which they had contact. Most respondents reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism shown by Fire Department staff (96%), 911 operators (94%), 311 agents (96%) and Police Department staff (83%), similar to or higher than in 2008. Satisfaction ratings for Fire Department staff and Police Department staff were much below the national average.

Satisfaction with Public Education in Minneapolis

While 54% of respondents reported satisfaction with public education in Minneapolis, 46% thought it had declined in the two years prior to the 2011 survey administration. Almost equal proportions were very satisfied and very dissatisfied. About a third thought public education had remained the same over the last two years, while a quarter thought it had improved and two in five thought it had declined. About three times as many respondents thought it had declined a lot as opposed to those who felt it had improved a lot (13% versus 4%).

- Residents living in the Central community planning district were less satisfied with public education in Minneapolis than were those living in other areas of the city.

- Home-owners were less satisfied with public education in the city than were renters.

City Services

Satisfaction with City Services

Survey participants were read a list of services provided by the City of Minneapolis government and asked to rate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each. At least half of all respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with each service from the list of services provided by the City of Minneapolis, except for street repair (40% gave positive ratings).

- When comparing results by community planning district, Near North residents tended to give lower satisfaction ratings than did respondents living in other districts, except for ratings of drinking water.

- People of color and renters were less likely to give high marks to City services when asked to rate their satisfaction with each service than were other residents.

In general, quality ratings of Minneapolis City services remained stable or showed improvement from 2008 to 2011.

Twelve of 20 services were compared to National Research Center's national database. One service (affordable housing development) received ratings that were much higher than the national average; two services (providing park and recreation services and animal control services) received ratings similar to the national benchmark; ratings for keeping streets clean were lower than the national average; and eight services were rated much below the national benchmark. Six of the 20 services were compared to select cities[3] from NRC's database. Keeping streets clean and animal control services were rated similarly to ratings given in select cities and four services received ratings much below the select cities average.

Prioritization of City Services

After rating their satisfaction with City services, residents were asked to rate the importance of each service using a 5-point scale with 5 representing "extremely important" and 1 equaling "not at all important." At the top of the list were: fire protection and emergency medical response (78% rating as extremely important), providing quality drinking water (69%) and police services (66%). Despite the change in some importance ratings, the rank order of service importance was largely the same in 2011 and 2008.

Balancing Satisfaction and Priorities

Most government services are considered to be important, but when competition for limited resources demands that efficiencies or cutbacks be instituted, it is wise not only to know what services are deemed most important to residents' satisfaction, but which services among the most important are perceived to be delivered with the lowest quality.

As is found in many jurisdictions, the services identified by Minneapolis residents as the most important were the core health and safety services such as police, fire, trash collection and drinking water. Because these services tend to be considered the most important everywhere in the U.S., it can be especially illuminating to dig deeper, to identify services that are the best predictors of whether residents would support a tax increase to maintain or improve services. NRC performed a Key Driver Analysis (KDA) which measures the strength of the relationship between service ratings and willingness to support a tax increase. The services most closely related to that willingness to pay are considered key drivers. The residents who gave higher ratings to the key drivers were more likely to support a tax increase to maintain or improve services, but those who gave lower ratings to the key drivers were less likely to support a tax increase to maintain or improve services. The key drivers for Minneapolis were: snow removal, street repair and providing parks and recreation services.

Not only are some "important" services more essential targets for study or improvement – the key drivers – but the ratings of some important services tend always to be better than the ratings of others – irrespective of community. For example, fire and police ratings always receive better ratings than street repair or snow removal. To help identify where ratings are better or worse than should be expected, a comparison is made to resident ratings of those services in other locales. The higher importance services that rated lower compared to other places included: fire protection and emergency medical response, providing quality drinking water, police services, garbage collection and recycling services, snow removal and street repair.

Because snow removal and street repair were both below the benchmark and were key drivers (while the other key driver, providing parks and recreation services was similar to the benchmark) their improvement is likely the best place to focus resources to have the biggest payoff in resident willingness to pay for better or sustained service.

Community Engagement

Community Participation

As in 2008, about 9 in 10 respondents reported that they are likely to vote in the next election for mayor and city council in November 2013, with 72% in 2011 stating that they are very likely to vote.

[3] Ann Arbor, MI; Austin, TX; Boulder, CO; Charlotte, NC; Denver (City and County), CO; Durham, NC; Oklahoma City, OK; Phoenix, AZ; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA

Those who reported they were unlikely to vote in the next election for Mayor and City Council gave reasons such as: not having any interest, a lack of awareness on how to vote, having a belief that voting would not make a difference, or that they were too busy to vote.

The proportion of respondents reporting that they would be likely to contact an elected official was higher in 2011 than in 2008, while fewer 2011 respondents than 2008 respondents reported that they would work with a group not affiliated with the City to try to influence a City decision.

City Government Performance

At least 6 in 10 respondents gave good or very good ratings when asked to rate various aspects of Minneapolis City government and, in general, government performance ratings mostly trended upward over time.

When compared to the nation, quality ratings for providing meaningful opportunities for citizens to give input on important issues received ratings above average, while ratings for providing value for tax dollars were below the national benchmark. The overall direction that the City is taking was rated similarly to other jurisdictions across the country. The City received below average ratings when compared to select cities[4] from the database for the overall direction the City is taking and similar ratings for the value for tax dollars paid.

- Southeast residents tended to give lower ratings when asked to rate Minneapolis City government performance than did other residents.

- Younger residents, residents of color, those reporting their ethnicity to be Latino/Hispanic and residents who own their homes were more likely to give positive ratings to Minneapolis government performance than were their counterparts.

Discrimination

Seventeen percent of respondents reported that they had experienced some type of discrimination in Minneapolis during the past 12 months, similar to previous survey years. Of those who reported experiencing discrimination, 21% reported it was in getting a job or at work, or that the situation arose in their neighborhood. Responses were generally similar to 2005 reports of discrimination. Few respondents reported that the discrimination occurred when dealing with the City.

[4] Ann Arbor, MI; Austin, TX; Boulder, CO; Charlotte, NC; Denver, CO (City and County); Durham, NC; Oklahoma City, OK; Phoenix, AZ; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA.