

**City of Ramsey**  
**Agenda**  
**Park and Recreation Commission**  
**Thursday January 8, 2015**  
**6:30 pm**  
**Lake Itasca Room, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW**  
**(please note: meeting room change)**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Citizen Input**
3. **Approve Agenda**
4. **Approve Minutes**
  1. Approve Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes
5. **Commission Business**
  1. Nominate Chair and Vice-Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission
  2. Begin Process of Public Engagement for the Proposed Municipal Plaza
  3. Review Resident Survey Results
6. **Commission/Staff Input**
  1. Commission/Staff Input
7. **Adjournment**

**Park and Recreation Commission**

**4. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 01/08/2015

**Submitted For:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

**By:** MaryJo Warner, Engineering/Public Works

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**Information**

**Title:**

Approve Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes

**Purpose/Background:**

To approve Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes dated November 13, 2014.

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

**Funding Source:**

n/a

**Recommendation:**

To approve meeting minutes.

**Action:**

Motion to approve meeting minutes dated November 13, 2014.

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**Attachments**

Minutes

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Mark Riverblood

Mary Jo Warner (Originator)

Mark Riverblood

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: MaryJo Warner

Final Approval Date: 12/30/2014

**Reviewed By**

MaryJo Warner

MaryJo Warner

MaryJo Warner

Grant Riemer

**Date**

12/29/2014 10:58 AM

12/29/2014 01:58 PM

12/30/2014 02:32 PM

12/30/2014 02:59 PM

Started On: 12/29/2014 10:06 AM

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on November 13, 2014, at the Council Chambers, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Commission Members Present:      Vice Chair Shane Bennett  
   Commissioner Richard Chubb  
   Commissioner Andrew Fyten  
   Commissioner Thomas Mobry  
   Commissioner Jon Trappen

Commission Members Absent:      Commissioner Bridgett Barr

Also Present:                              Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood

**1.      CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Bennett called the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

Mr. Dan Franzwa, 6931 137<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, Ramsey, representing Anoka Ramsey Baseball appeared before the Park and Recreation Commission. He would like to see some improvements made to Alpine Park and Central Park for Baseball and Softball. They are putting together bids and will come to the City to ask for help in paying for some of the improvements. He has received one bid so far and waiting for two bids. They would like to add electricity to Alpine Park by the pavilion and by the batting cages. They will be doing fundraising and have received one \$5000 donation. He has met with a couple of the Council members who mentioned ARAA may request to use matching funds from the Lawful Gambling Fund.

Chair Bennett thanked Mr. Franzwa for coming to share this. He feels there is an opportunity for the City to address some of these items.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated the City of Ramsey and the athletic association have a long history of working together to serve the residents. He asked that Mr. Franzwa point out when fundraising, that this is being done by the athletic association versus the city.

**3.      APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Commissioner Chubb, seconded by Commissioner Fyten, to approve the Park and Recreation Commission meeting agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Vice Chair Bennett, Commissioners Chubb, Fyten, Mobry, and Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Barr.

#### **4. APPROVE MINUTES**

##### **4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated October 9, 2014**

Motion by Commissioner Mobry, seconded by Commissioner Trappen, to approve the following Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes:

- 1) Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes dated October 9, 2014.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Vice Chair Bennett, Commissioners Mobry, Trappen, Chubb, and Fyten. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Barr.

#### **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

##### **5.01: 2015 – 2019 Parks Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed the purpose of this case is to recommend the 2015-2019 Parks' Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to City Council on November 18, 2014. The document outlines a 5-year plan similar to the previous 2014 – 2018 plan, with the last year (2019) also functioning as a “place-holder” for park projects with uncertain time-lines, or unidentified funding such as grants and Park Dedication fees paid by developers. Projects such as the playground at Elmcrest Park that were not completed in 2014, but begun, are shown for completion and payment this coming year.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated the Parks 5-year CIP will be adopted by Council as part of the larger CIP document, usually corresponding to the General Fund budget in December. He provided an excerpt from the anticipated larger city-wide all-category CIP, and includes an explanation on the CIP document and process.

He continued that, because future years' of the CIP consist of many variables, staff recommends a discussion of the various values and details associated with each project within 2015; and a brief, summary mention of future years' projects for 2016-2019. All capital improvements require on-going maintenance costs (day-to-day labor, utilities or annual expenses); and therefore, staff and City Council will evaluate very carefully the real and total costs of each capital improvement for consideration within the context of the General Fund operations budget at the time projects are brought forward for development.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reminded the Commission this is a planning document and does not commit to the expenditure of funds. Also, that the smaller the Park Trust Fund balance gets, the lower the interest received. He would like to limit the discussion to 2015.

Riverblood proceeded to review and summarize each 2015 project. He would like to receive consensus for each individual project. He highlighted next steps for each project and reviewed the aggregate 2015-16 impact to the Park Trust Fund.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed the Cash Flow Projections for the Park Improvement Fund as detailed by the city's Finance Department.

Elmcrest Park & The Draw Entrance and Signage Monuments	\$ 80,000
Drinking Fountain and Mister for Woodland Green Park	\$ 7,000
Playground and Site Improvements – Elmcrest Park	\$100,000
Redevelopment of Central Park (Parkway, Path and Parking)	\$350,000
Trail Connections	\$400,000
Landscape Improvements for Parks	\$ 5,000
The Draw Water Quality Fountains	\$ 15,000
Storm Grates for the Draw	\$ 10,000
McKinley Street Trail Connection to Anoka	\$ 50,000

Vice Chair Bennett summarized Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood is looking for a consensus of the Commission to go forward with the CIP. He stated Central Park has been a priority project for the City for some time. Once the proposal from ARAA are received, they can be reviewed and added to the plan if approved. Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated it is important for the ARAA to look at a long-range plan for expanding Central Park for the future as well.

Motion by Commissioner Mobry, seconded by Commissioner Trappen, to recommend approval to the City Council of the 2015 – 2019 Parks Capital Improvement Plan.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Vice Chair Bennett, Commissioners Mobry, Trappen, Chubb, and Fyten. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Barr.

## **6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood reviewed the following:

December Park and Recreation Commission may not be necessary unless something comes up. Each year the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission are chosen, so this is scheduled to be on the agenda for January.

Commissioner Chubb asked when the skating rinks would be open.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated earlier than previous years and frozen ground is imperative. Flooding will start in the next couple of weeks. The opening is tentatively planned for December 19 or possibly a week before.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Chubb, seconded by Commissioner Trappen, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Vice Chair Bennett, Commissioners Chubb, Fyten, Mobry, and Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Barr.

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Debbie Wolfe  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*

**Park and Recreation Commission**

**5. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 01/08/2015

**Submitted For:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

**By:** MaryJo Warner, Engineering/Public Works

**Information**

**Title:**

Nominate Chair and Vice-Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission

**Purpose/Background:**

Each year, City Council makes appointments to their various subcommittees, with commissions and boards also expected to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for their respective entity.

The purpose of this case is to establish the Commission’s Chair and Vice-Chair for 2015. In terms of process, staff proposes nominations for first the Chair, and then after approval by the majority of voting Commissioners, the Vice-Chair also administered in the same manner. It may be pointed out that, in that there is no official protocol for this process, the Commission may perform the nominations and/or the voting by paper 'ballots' forwarded to the Ex Officio as part of this case, if desired.

While there is a vacancy on the Commission, it is unlikely that a newly appointed Commissioner (anticipated to occur later this winter or early spring) would be nominated and supported to serve as Vice-Chair without some experience serving on the Park and Recreation Commission – therefore it seems appropriate to move forward at this time with Commission selection of both Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Terms of Boards and Commission are from April 1st through March 31st of the respective year(s). So for the nominations being discussed in this case, the positions should be considered to be valid until the April regular Commission meeting, at which time the Commission may address the positions for April 2015 to March 2016 by consensus or vote.

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

**Funding Source:**

n/a

**Recommendation:**

**Action:**

Appoint \_\_\_\_\_ Chair, and \_\_\_\_\_ Vice Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission through March 31st 2015.

**Attachments**

*No file(s) attached.*

**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: MaryJo Warner

Final Approval Date: 12/30/2014

**Reviewed By**

Grant Riemer

**Date**

12/30/2014 11:17 AM

Started On: 12/29/2014 04:13 PM

**Meeting Date:** 01/08/2015

**By:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

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**Information**

**Title:**

Begin Process of Public Engagement for the Proposed Municipal Plaza

**Purpose/Background:**

As the case title introduces, the purpose of this agenda item is to invite public engagement for the proposed Municipal Plaza, and also to discuss concepts and configurations. The park has been envisioned to be on the north side of Sunwood Drive with its position being in many ways, the center of the Center of Ramsey or The COR.

As the Commission will recall, a similar invitation for ideas and public comment was issued for the lake feature in The COR, and the Commission held an open house explicitly for this purpose. Much planning and visioning for the park space called Lake Ramsey on the city's development plan remains.

There is a strong beneficial value to commercial and residential properties that abut quantity parks. For this reason, expressing what either of these two proposed parks ('Lake Ramsey' and Municipal Plaza) may look like is useful in attracting developers. Additionally, there can be cross-easements and shared uses for certain amenities and infrastructure, E.g. a park may accommodate stormwater from an adjacent residential property, or a restaurant site may have public/private paths that lead customers to the business, or an adjoining park may provide seating or programming beneficial to a particular business.

Another reason that exploring concepts for the two proposed park together is timely, is that given their close geographic relationship (and eventual connection in some manner), the public spaces should be complimentary in opportunities for residents and visitors, and should have minimum redundancies in what they offer patrons in terms of programming and experience.

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

Attached are three alternatives for the proposed Municipal Plaza. As indicated, Staff is seeking any and all feedback from the Commission, residents and the business community. This invitation shall be extended via the city's web site, and each commission, board and City Council will be asked to engage as well. In the end, the park space may look and function like one of the concepts presented, a hybrid of the three - or something quite different.

It should be pointed out that there is no timeline per se, however ideally, a buyer may be found for the land adjacent to the park(s) and a park development plan may be crafted that is synergistic with the new residential or commercial land use.

**Funding Source:**

None required at this time.

**Recommendation:**

As indicated, Staff will continue to assimilate all comments on parks and public spaces within The COR - and so Staff's recommendation is for Commissioners to have discussions with residents, friends and neighbors on these planning endeavors, and share the feedback with Staff, within or aside from the regular Commission meeting.

**Action:**

None required: Based upon discussion.

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**Attachments**

Municipal Commons concepts

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: Mark Riverblood

Final Approval Date: 12/30/2014

**Reviewed By**

Grant Riemer

**Date**

12/30/2014 03:04 PM

Started On: 12/30/2014 11:28 AM

# MUNICIPAL PARK

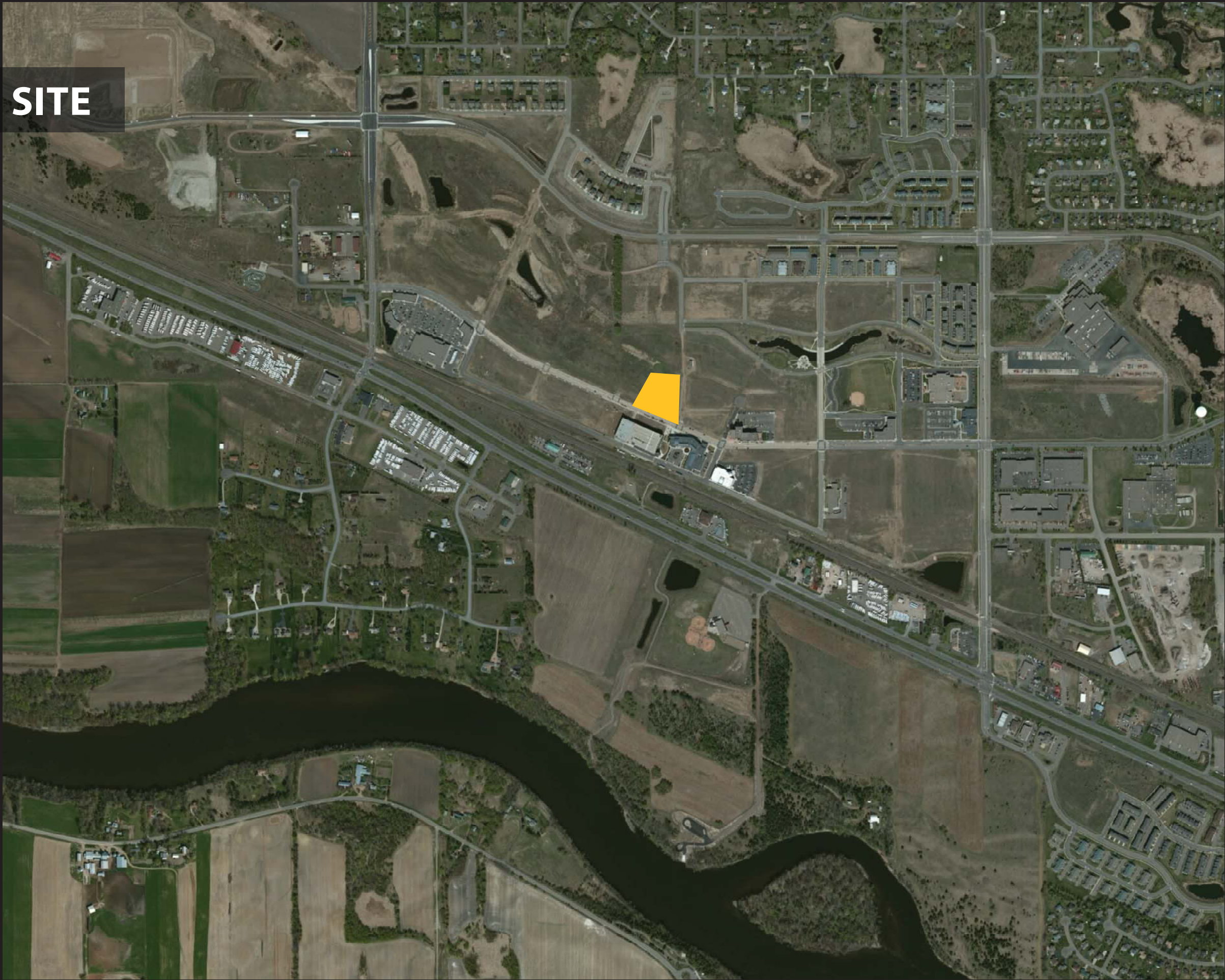
Ultimate purpose of a city in our life time is to provide a **creative environment for people to live in. ....**  
A city has a **great diversity** and thus allows for **freedom of choice;**  
one which generates the **maximum of interaction** between people and their urban surroundings”

by L. Halprin

Concepts



**SITE**



# MUNICIPAL PARK

*Concepts*

**Context**

Concept 1

Concept 2

Concept 3

# CURRENT MASTER PLAN



# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

### Context

Concept 1

Concept 2

Concept 3

# CONCEPT 1



# CONCEPT 2



# CONCEPT 3



# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

### Context

Concept 1

Concept 2

Concept 3



# MUNICIPAL PARK

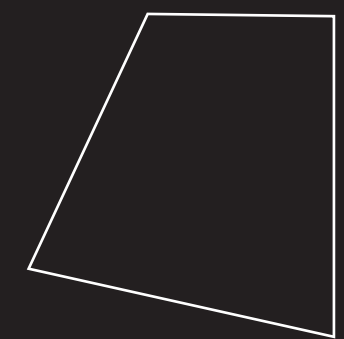
## Concepts

Context

**Concept 1**

Concept 2

Concept 3



# MUNICIPAL PARK

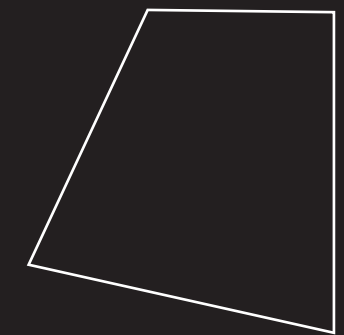
## Concepts

Context

**Concept 1**

Concept 2

Concept 3



Flexible sitting area / Temporary market



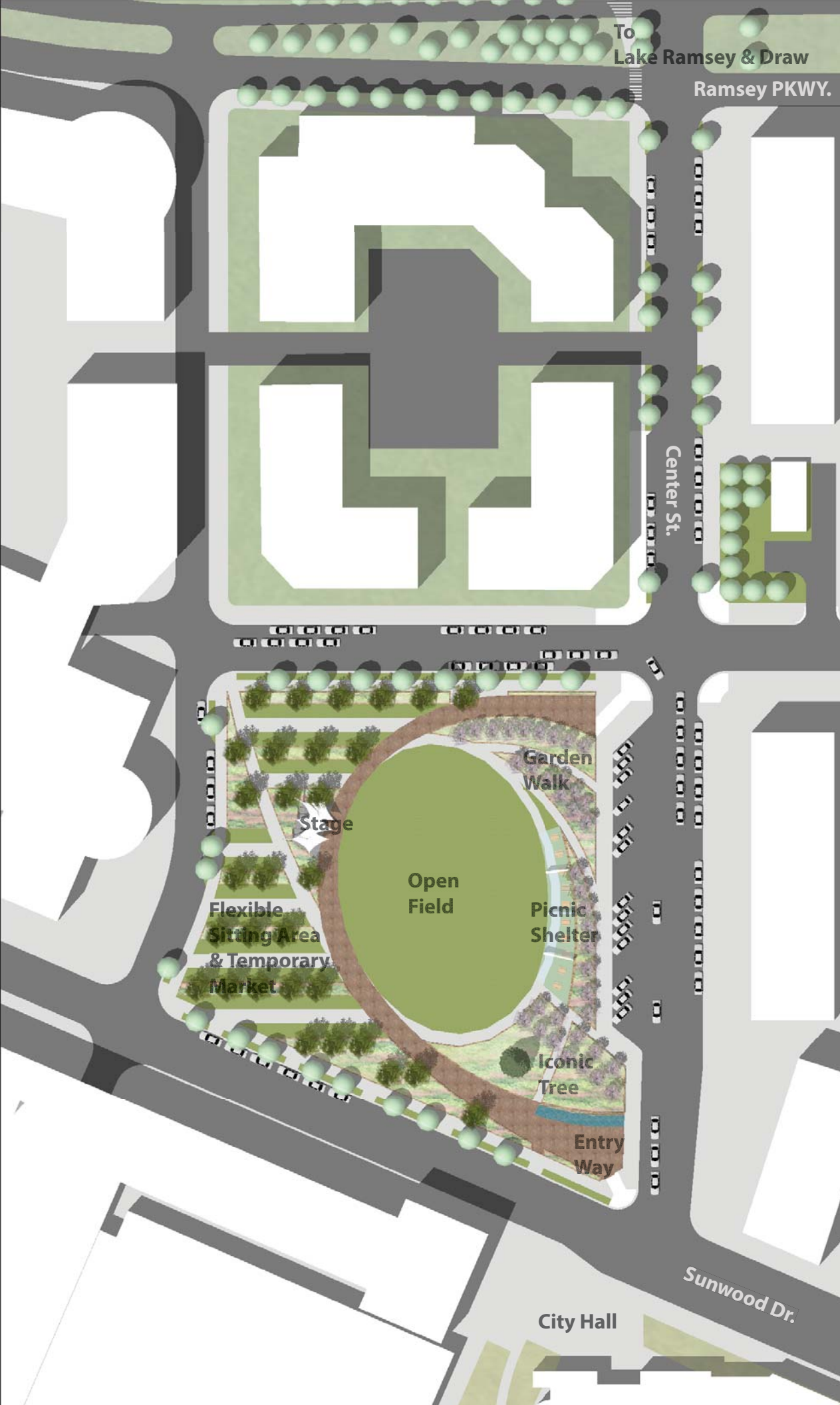
Stage

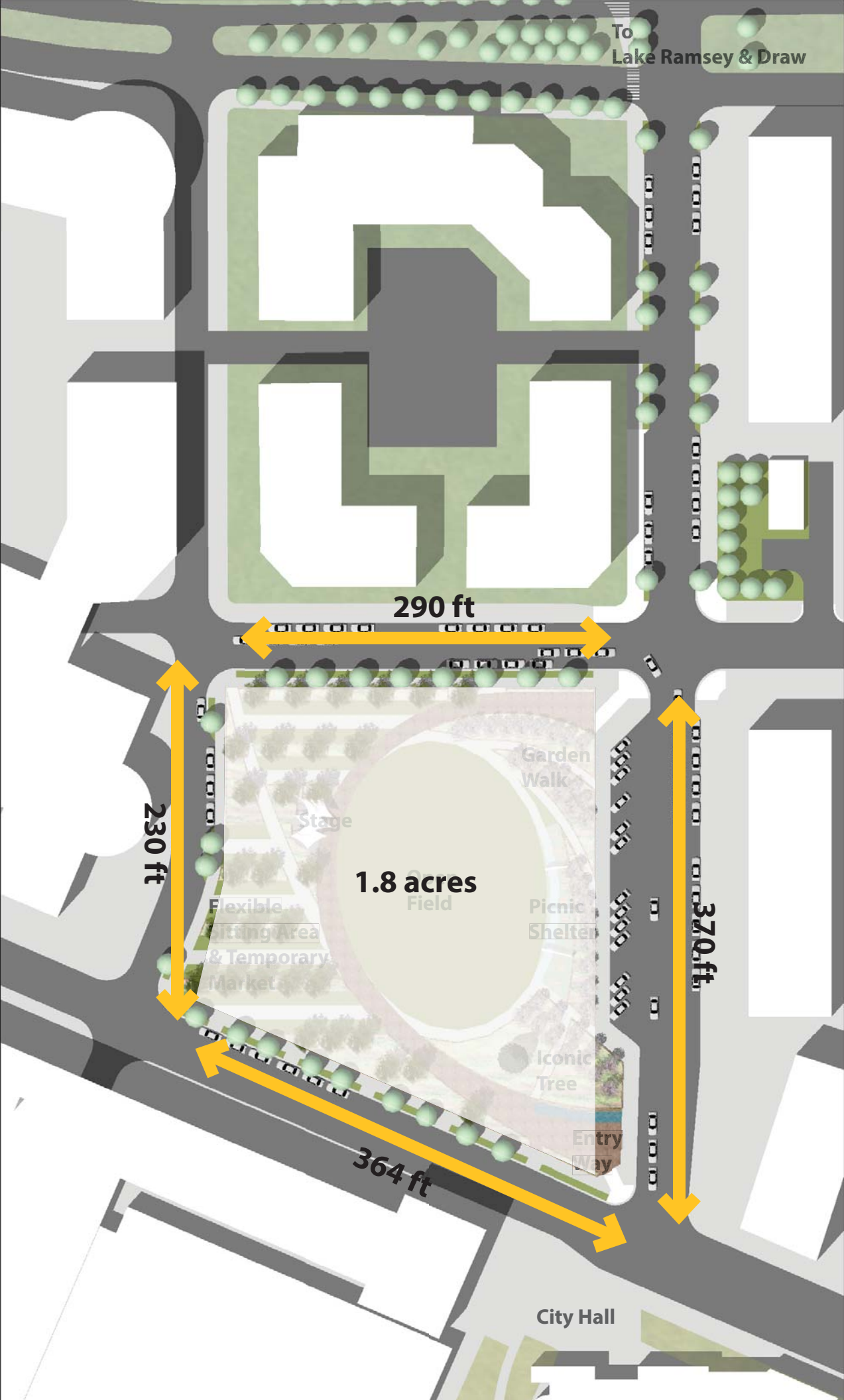


Picnic area with garden edge



Entryway





**Park area:** 79,688 sqft  
**Development:** 101,500 sqft  
**Frontage:** 1,254 ft

# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

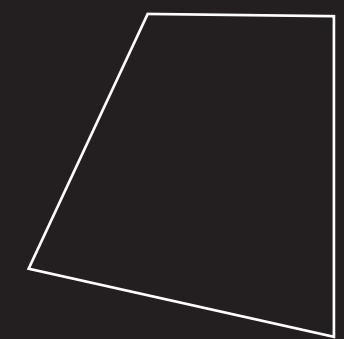


Context

**Concept 1**

Concept 2

Concept 3





# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

Context

Concept 1

**Concept 2**

Concept 3





Stage



Promenade



Forest walk



Entryway



# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

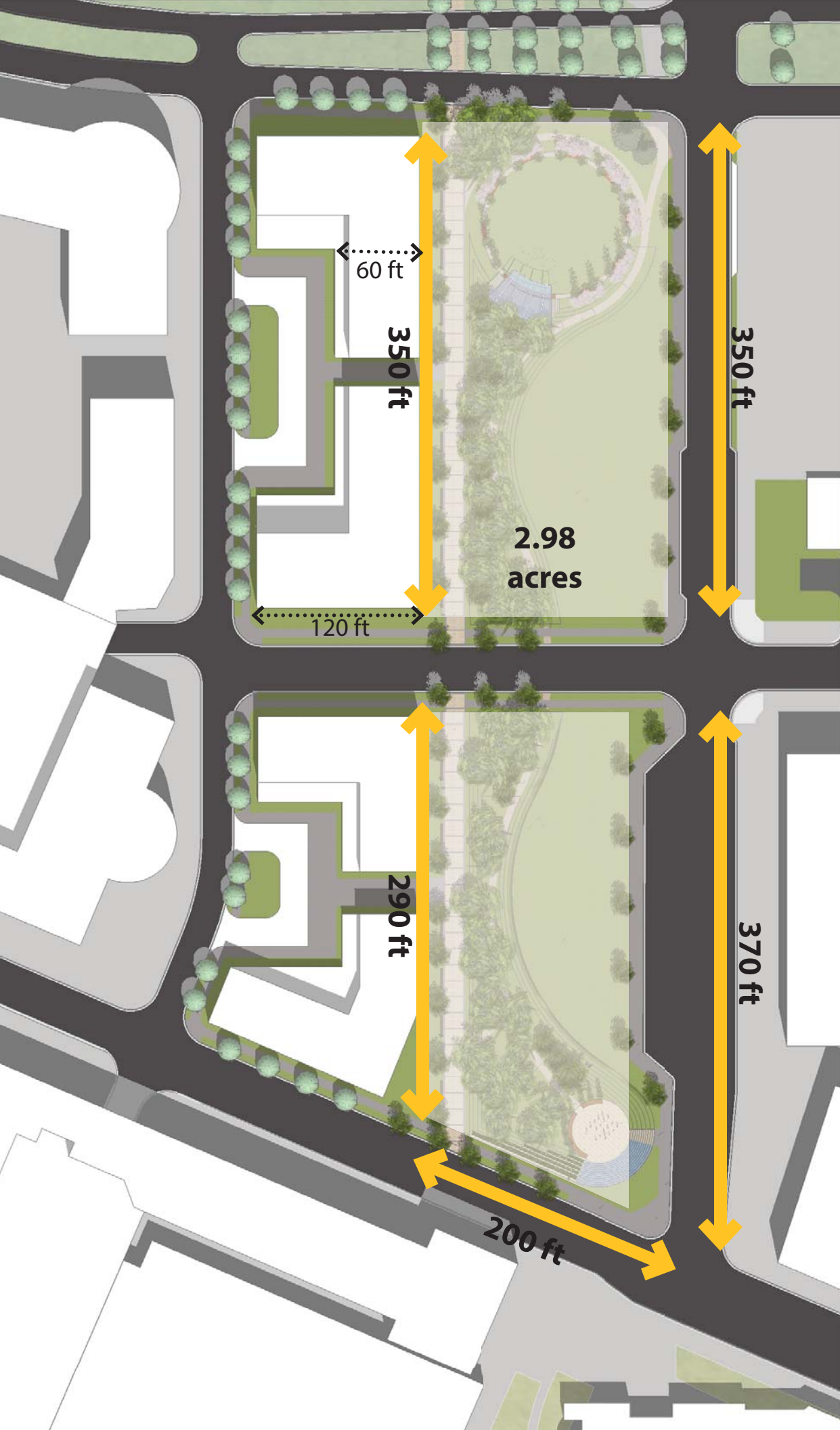
Context

Concept 1

**Concept 2**

Concept 3





Park area: 107,456 sqft  
 Development: 74,782 sqft  
 Frontage: 1,565 ft

# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts



- Context
- Concept 1
- Concept 2**
- Concept 3





# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

Context

Concept 1

Concept 2

**Concept 3**





Forest walk, connection to lake Ramsey



Woonerf, & commercial edge



Fountain, iconic tree, & Open field



Entryway



# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

Context

Concept 1

Concept 2

**Concept 3**



# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

Context

Concept 1

Concept 2

**Concept 3**



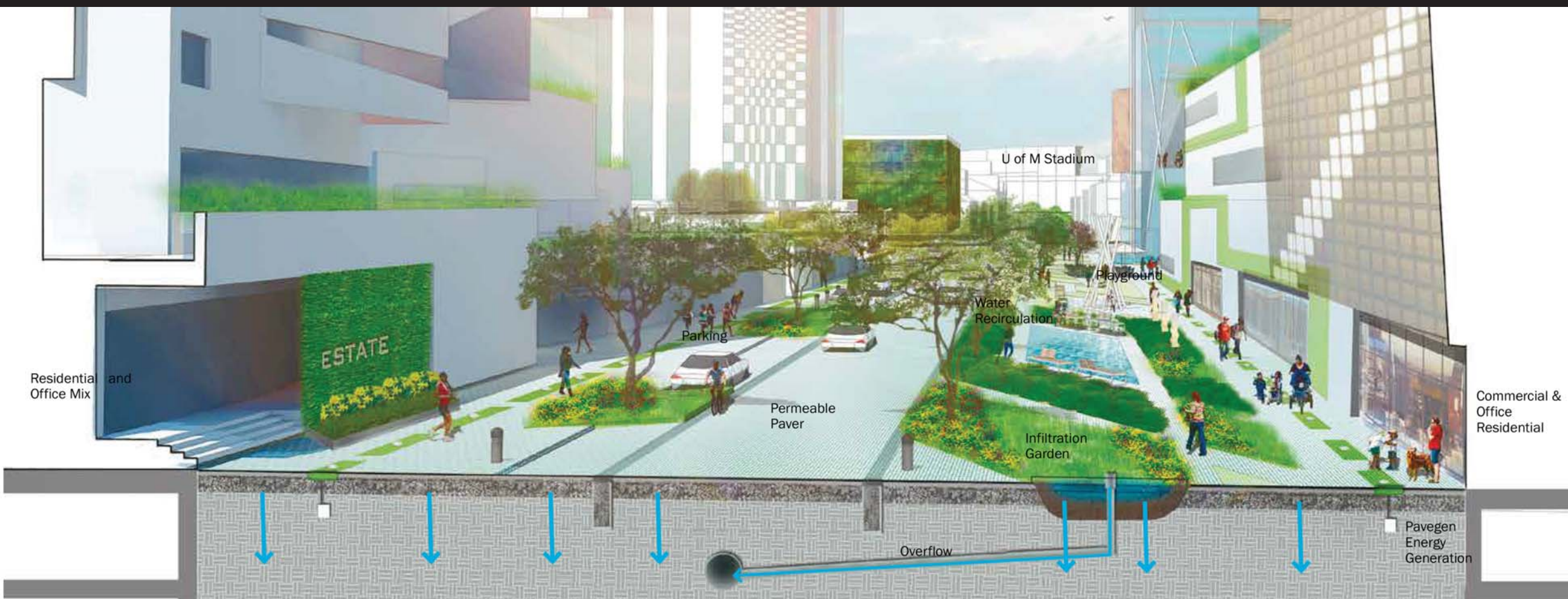
Park area: 71,550 sqft  
Shared Street: 19,122 sqft  
Development: 110,688 sqft

Frontage: 1,932 ft



# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts



Context

Concept 1

Concept 2

**Concept 3**



# MUNICIPAL PARK

## Concepts

Context

Concept 1

Concept 2

Concept 3

**Other elements**



Meeting Date: 01/08/2015

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### Information

**Title:**

Review Resident Survey Results

**Purpose/Background:**

**Purpose:**

Review results of the City of Ramsey's first ever resident survey.

**Background (resident survey):**

During the 2013 City Council Strategic Planning process, discussion ensued related to initiating a resident surveying process. Generally speaking, survey results would benefit the City in a wide range of applications. However, relating to the Strategic Plan specifically, a resident survey allows the City to clearly analyze organizational performance measurements; including, the City's Strategic Plan *balanced scorecard*.

**Background (case):**

The City Council selected a *'Third Party Mail'* survey method for a regular resident survey program; and directed Staff to select a broker to complete said work (National Research Center from Colorado); and authorized a set of survey questions/survey format. On November 12, 2014, the City Council received the preliminary report and authorized the preparation of the Final Report.

**Survey Results**

Attached to this case are survey results. Below is a brief description.

***Community Livability Report***

This is intended to be an any easy to ready/follow comprehensive overview of survey results. This specific document is based on all comparisons nationally. The National Research Center designs this document to be stand alone and intuitive. Included in the report are answers to a set of standard questions (known as the *National Citizen Survey*, pages 2-8). Also included are custom questions (called special topics, pages 9-12). Lastly, the survey includes a conclusions section.

***Dashboard Summary of Findings***

This is intended to provide a 'quick and condensed' version of *National Citizen Survey* results outlined in the Community Livability Report discussed above.

***Technical Appendices***

This document includes all technical survey information (scientific data), raw survey results and all materials utilized. This document also includes local a benchmarks/comparisons section, please see pages 24-27 (comparison to Minnesota and western Wisconsin cities).

***User Guide***

Information on how to utilize and understand survey results.

**Timeframe:**

10-20 minutes

**Funding Source:**

Funding was provided for as part of the 2014 Budget.

**Responsible Party(ies):**

Economic Development Manager/Assistant City Administrator

Parks & Asst. Public Works Superintendent Riverblood will highlight a few of the survey categories germane to the Park and Recreation Commission's mission and purpose at the meeting.

**Outcome:**

Review results of the City of Ramsey's first ever resident survey.

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**Attachments**

[The NCS Livability Report](#)

[The NCS Dashboard](#)

[The NCS Technical Appendices](#)

[The NCS Play Book](#)

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**Form Review****Inbox**

Mark Riverblood

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: Kathy Schmitz

Final Approval Date: 12/31/2014

**Reviewed By**

Mark Riverblood

Grant Riemer

**Date**

12/31/2014 10:46 AM

12/31/2014 10:50 AM

Started On: 12/31/2014 10:37 AM

# **The National Citizen Survey™**

## **Ramsey, MN**

Community Livability Report

2014

# Contents

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The National Citizen Survey™  
© 2001-2014 National Research Center, Inc.

National Research Center, Inc.  
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300  
Boulder, CO 80301  
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

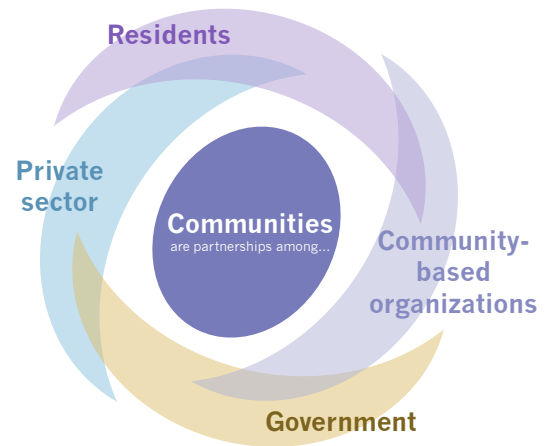
International City/County Management Association  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002  
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Ramsey. The phrase “livable community” is used here to evoke a place that is not simply habitable, but that is desirable. It is not only where people do live, but where they want to live.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement).

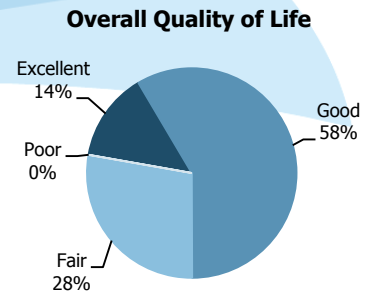
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 430 residents of the City of Ramsey. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Ramsey

Most residents rated the quality of life in Ramsey as excellent or good and this was similar to the benchmark (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).




Shown below are the eight facets of community. The color of each community facet summarizes how residents rated it across the three sections of the survey that represent the pillars of a community – Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation. When most ratings across the three pillars were higher than the benchmark, the color for that facet is the darkest shade; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest shade. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.




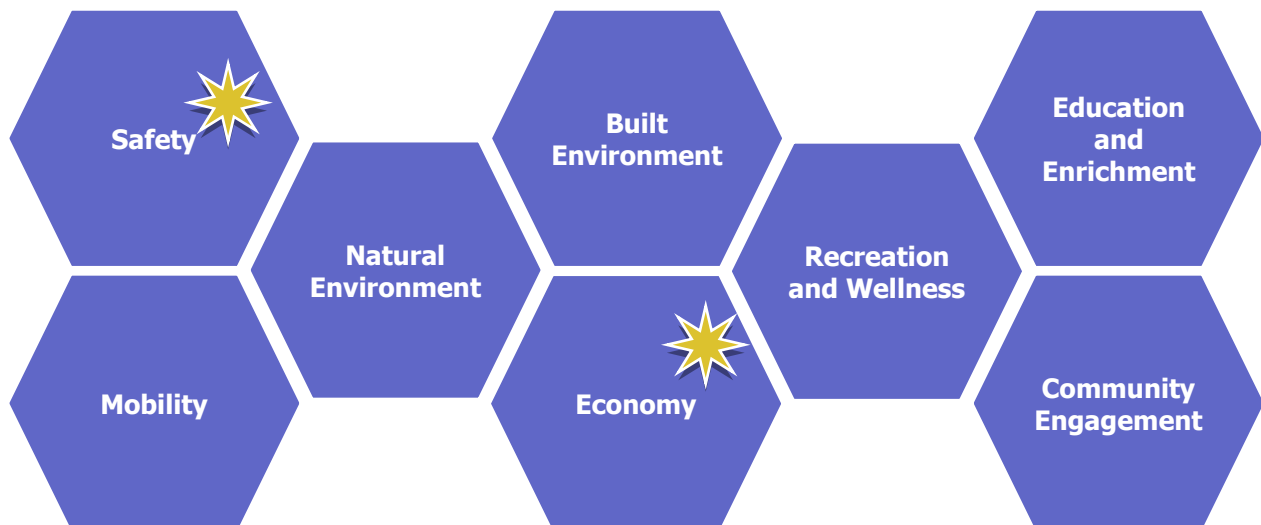
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Ramsey community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Ramsey residents gave favorable ratings to these facets of community. In fact, ratings for all facets including Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were positive and similar to other communities. This overview of the key aspects of community quality provides a quick summary of where residents see exceptionally strong performance and where performance offers the greatest opportunity for improvement. Linking quality to importance offers community members and leaders a view into the characteristics of the community that matter most and that seem to be working best.

Details that support these findings are contained in the remainder of this Livability Report, starting with the ratings for Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation and ending with results for Ramsey’s unique questions.

## Legend

-  Higher than national benchmark
-  Similar to national benchmark
-  Lower than national benchmark

 Most important



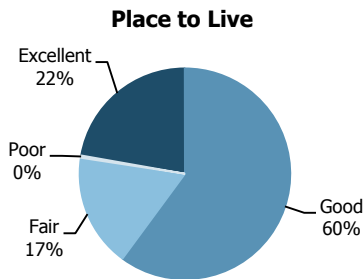
# Community Characteristics

*What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?*

Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Ramsey, 82% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Ramsey as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Ramsey as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Ramsey and its overall appearance. Most residents felt that the overall appearance of Ramsey, Ramsey as a place to raise children and their neighborhood as a place to live were excellent or good. Although a majority felt that this was true of Ramsey as a place to retire and of Ramsey's overall image, these were less than the benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 30 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Safety and Natural Environment were the facets with the highest ratings, with at least 8 in 10 residents giving positive ratings to each measure in these categories. Conversely, Economy was the facet having the lowest ratings; every item in this area received positive ratings from half or fewer of residents. Overall, most Community Characteristics rated similarly to other communities. Of the seven measures with ratings lower than the benchmark, five related to Ramsey's Economy. Two characteristics of the community rated higher than the benchmark and were in the area of Built Environment: affordable quality housing and housing options.



Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

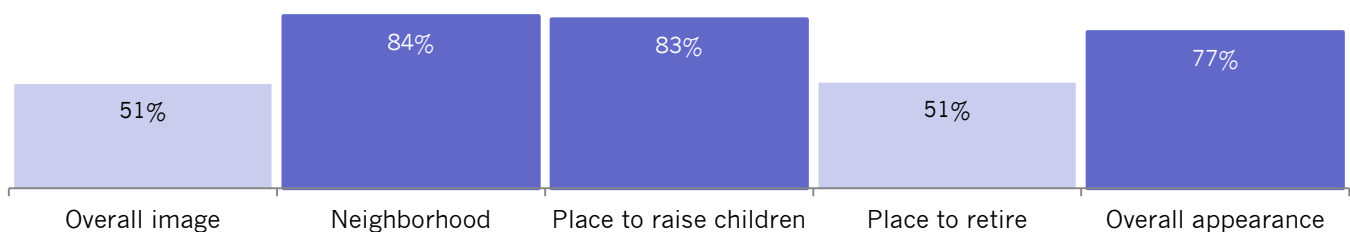
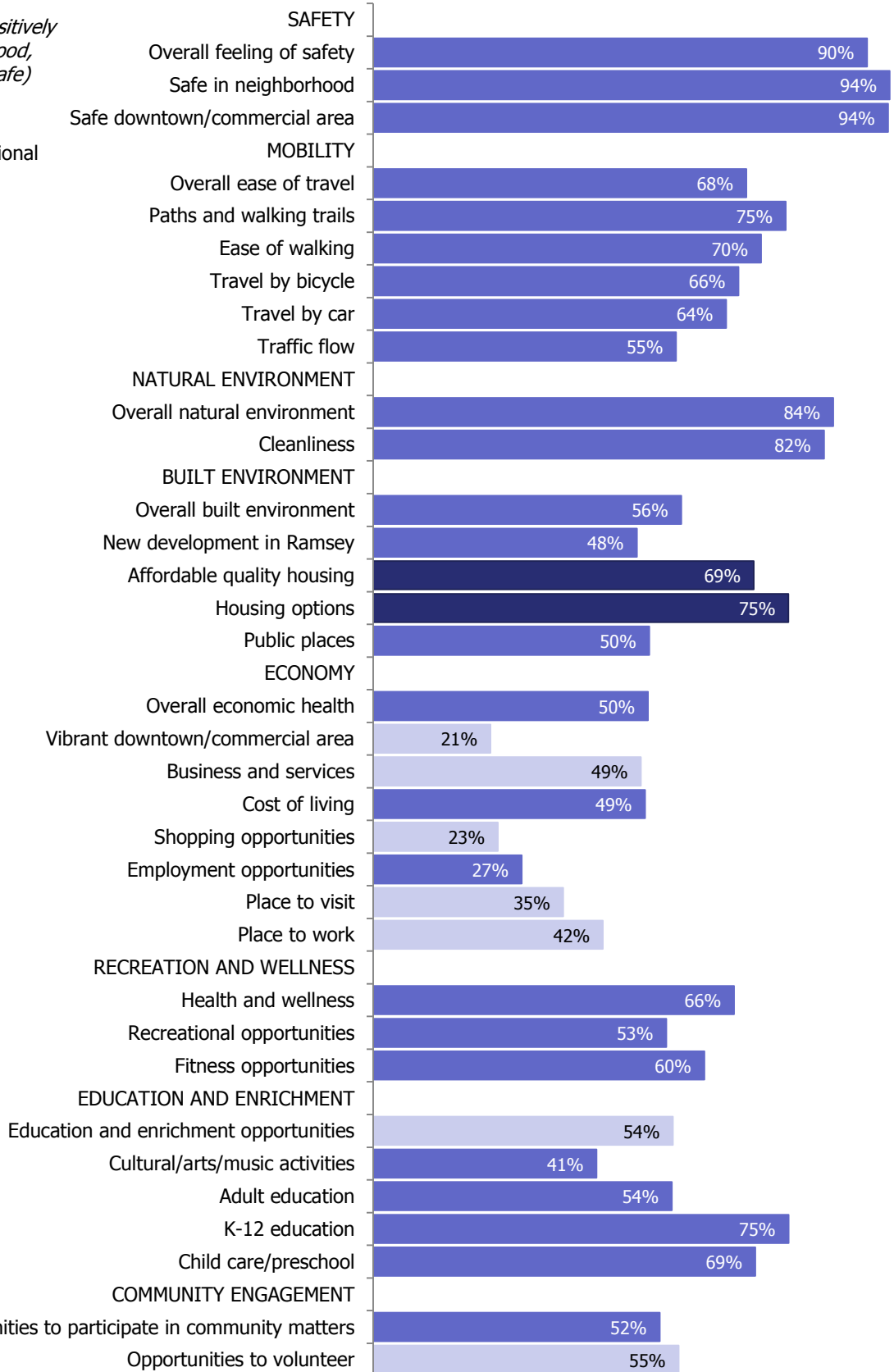


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

*Percent rating positively  
(e.g., excellent/good,  
very/somewhat safe)*

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

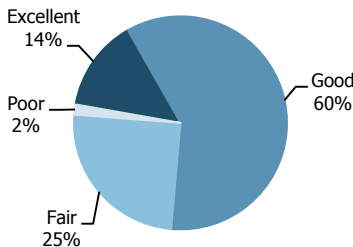
*How well does the government of Ramsey meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Ramsey as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. On par with other communities, three-quarters of Ramsey residents rated the overall quality of City services as excellent or good.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Ramsey’s leadership and governance. All measures of general government performance were similar to the benchmark, including value of services for taxes paid, the City’s overall direction, welcoming citizen involvement, acting in the best interest of the community, being honest, treating residents fairly and customer services. Each of these aspects of government performance received ratings of excellent or good from at least 4 in 10 respondents. Customer service was the most highly rated aspect in this area and received positive ratings from 8 in 10 respondents.

Respondents evaluated nearly two dozen individual services and amenities available in Ramsey. Nearly all of the ratings were similar to ratings in communities elsewhere; only recreation centers received ratings that lagged below the benchmark. Similar to Community Characteristics, the most positively rated services were related to Safety, where all but one of the services received positive ratings from 8 in 10 residents, and the least positively rated service was within Economy (43% excellent or good for economic development). Services related to Natural Environment fared well, with 7 in 10 residents rating drinking water and natural areas preservation well.

## Overall Quality of City Services



Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

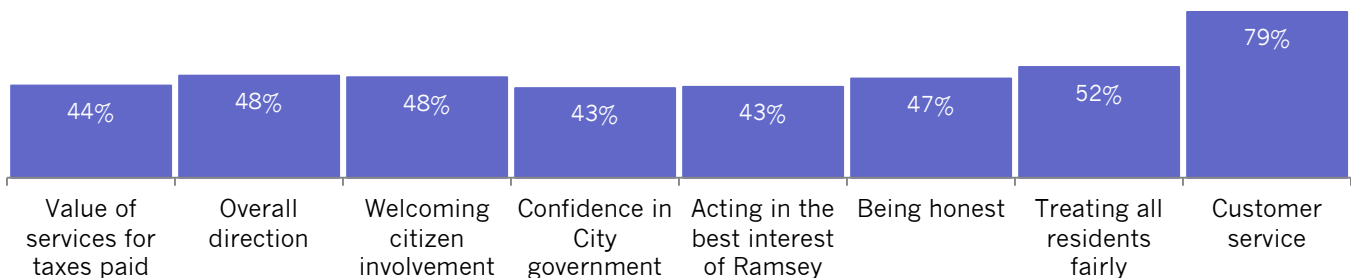
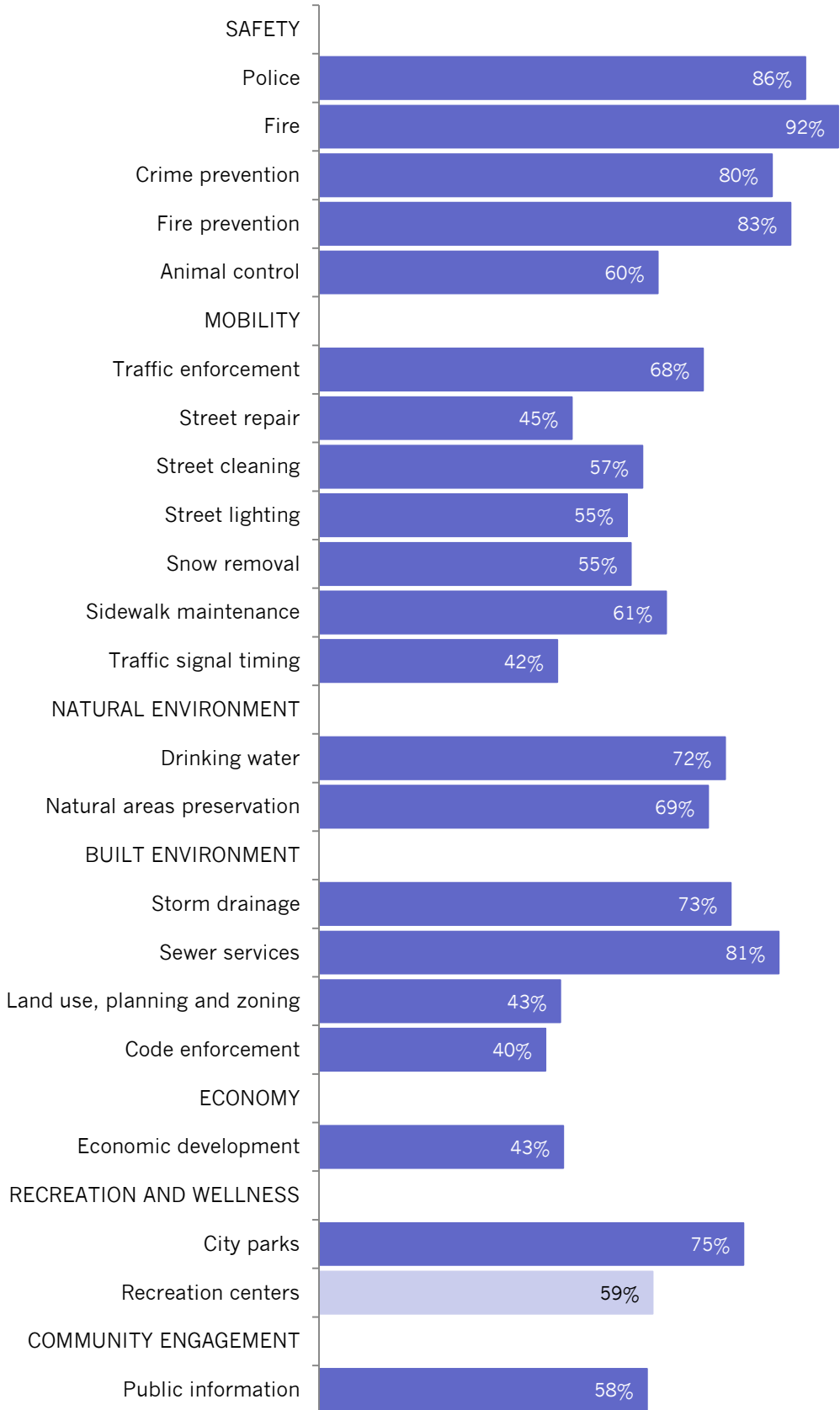


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

Percent rating positively  
(e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

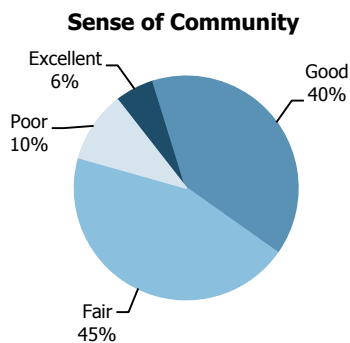


# Participation

*Are the residents of Ramsey connected to the community and each other?*

An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community; a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. Compared to other communities, fewer residents of Ramsey rated the sense of community as excellent or good (46%). Still, the vast majority of residents said that they would recommend living in Ramsey and had plans to remain living there.

The survey included almost 20 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, measures of Participation varied in relation to the benchmark. Areas where resident participation and experiences rated better than elsewhere were in Natural Environment (recycling), Safety (fewer residents had reported a crime) and Built Environment (fewer residents experienced housing cost stress). Although similar to the benchmark, the rate of purchasing goods or services, visiting City parks, being in good health and voting were high and nearly all residents reported that they had not been the victim of a crime. Most of the measures where Participation fell below the norm were under Community Engagement for campaigning, volunteering and attending public meetings. Under Economy, residents of Ramsey were less likely to work in the City where they lived than residents of other communities.



*Percent rating positively  
(e.g., very/somewhat likely,  
yes)*

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

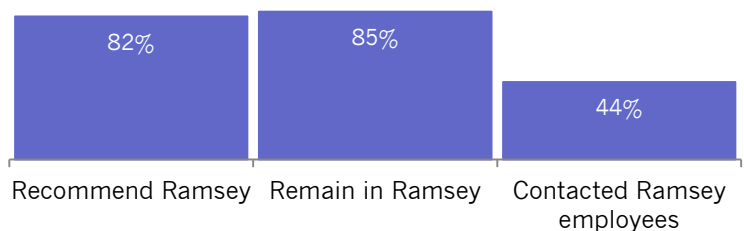
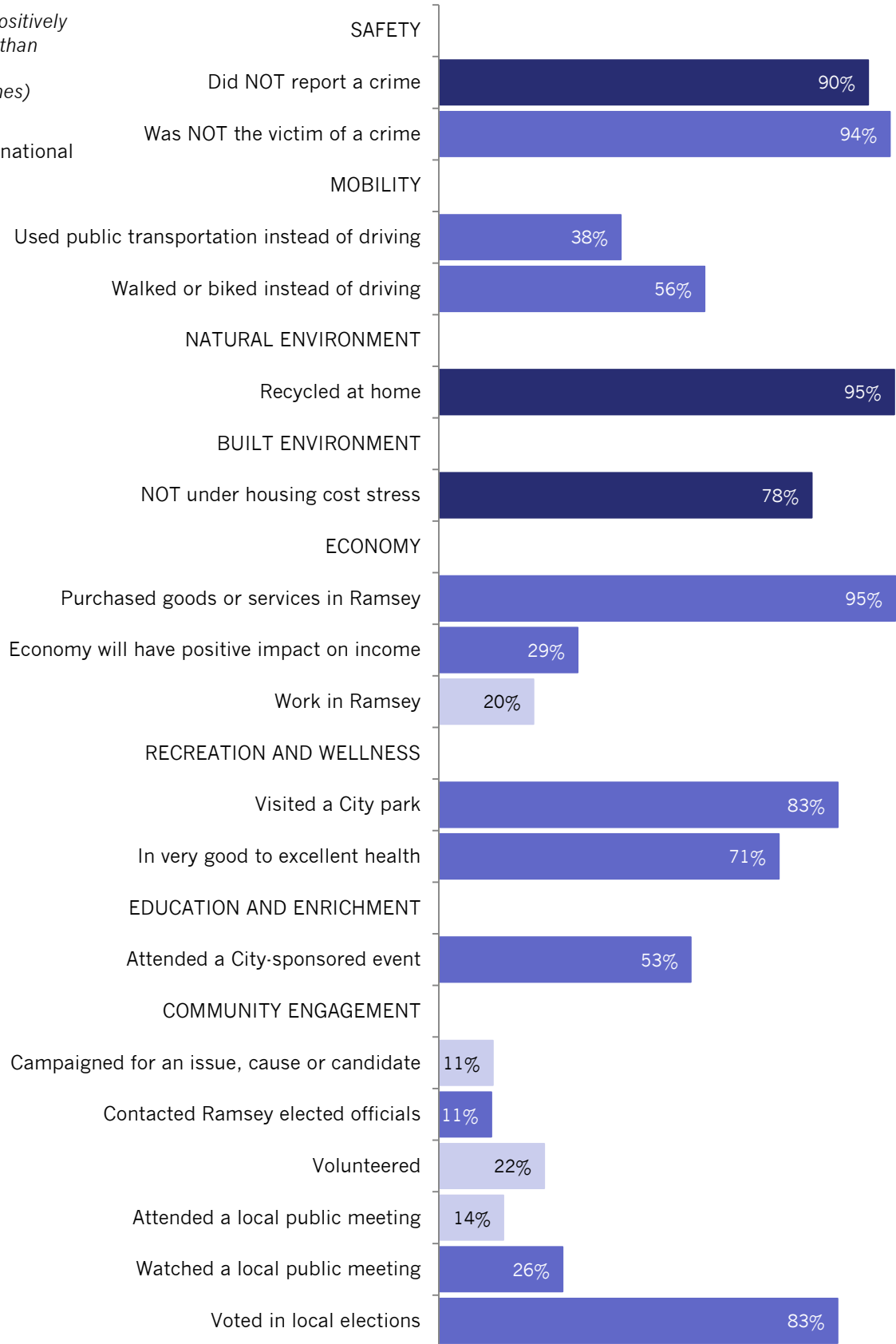


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

Percent rating positively  
(e.g., yes, more than  
once a month,  
always/sometimes)

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

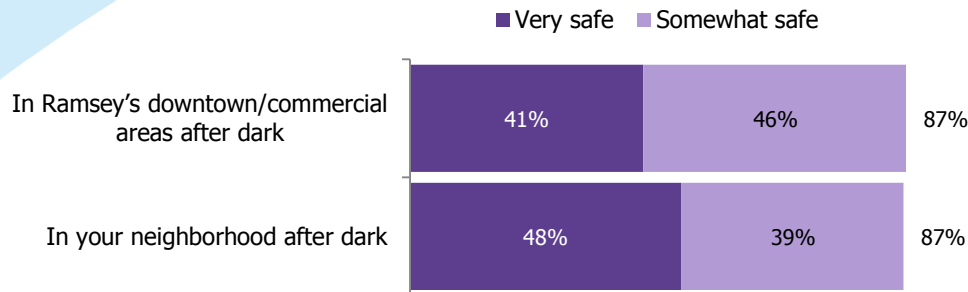


# Special Topics

The City of Ramsey included several questions of special interest on The NCS. These questions covered the topics of safety, sources of information about the City, community events, street construction and other characteristics and services in the community.

In addition to asking about safety in various parts of Ramsey during the day, the survey asked residents about feelings of safety at night. Most residents (87%) reported that they felt somewhat or very safe at night in Ramsey’s downtown/commercial areas and in their neighborhoods.

Figure 4: Safety after Dark  
*Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:*



Residents rated the quality of trail maintenance and strategic plan development. Two-thirds of residents gave favorable ratings to the quality of trail maintenance. Less than half of residents rated the City’s strategic planning as excellent or good and one-third rated it as fair.

Figure 5: Trail Maintenance  
*Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Ramsey: Trail maintenance*

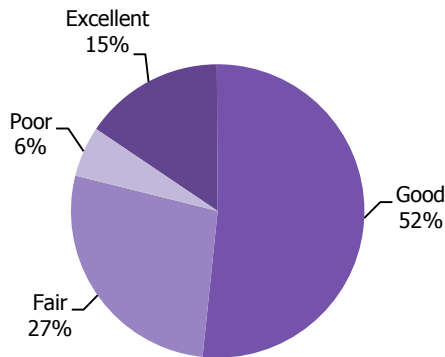
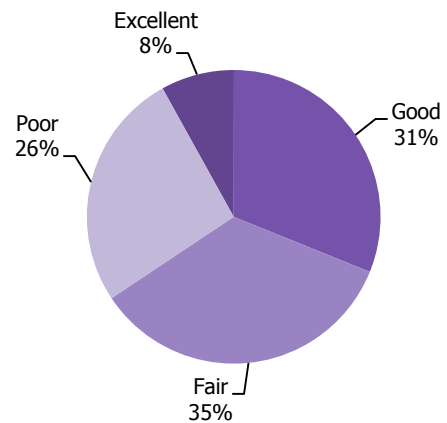


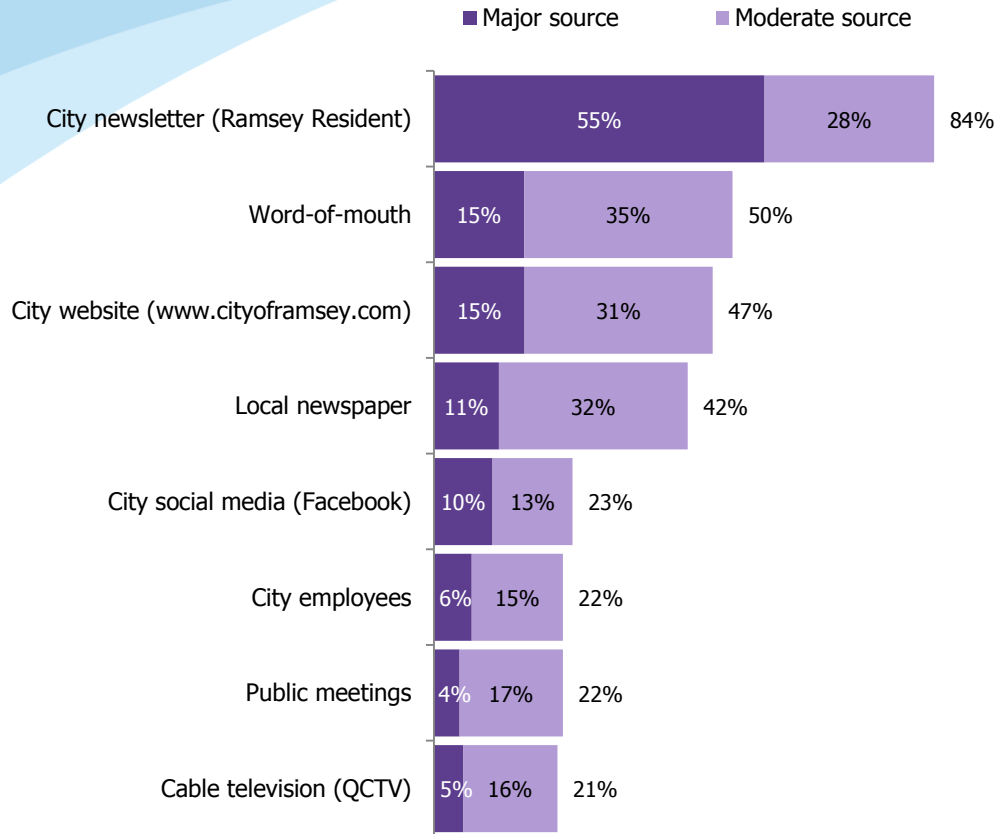
Figure 6: Strategic Planning  
*Please rate the following categories of Ramsey government performance: Development and success of a strategic action plan*



Residents reported using a variety of sources for information about the City. Most residents (84%) said that they used the City newsletter (Ramsey Resident) as a major or moderate source of information. About half relied on word-of-mouth, the City website and the local newspaper for information about the City of Ramsey. About one-quarter said that the City’s Facebook page, City employees, public meetings and QCTV were at least a moderate source of City information for them.

Figure 7: Sources of Information about the City

*To what extent are each of the following a source of information for you about Ramsey city government and its activities?*



A majority of residents rated each of the listed community events favorably. The most positively rated events were Kids Safety Camp (93% excellent or good) and at least 8 in 10 residents rated The Draw music in the park series, Happy Days Festival, Spring/Fall recycling events and pet clinics as excellent or good and two-thirds felt as positively about the Spring Business Expo and Annual Nite to Unite event. Three-quarters of residents said that they liked the current name of the hometown festival, Happy Days; about one-third at least somewhat agreed that it should be changed.

Figure 8: Community Events

*Please rate the quality of each event listed below:*

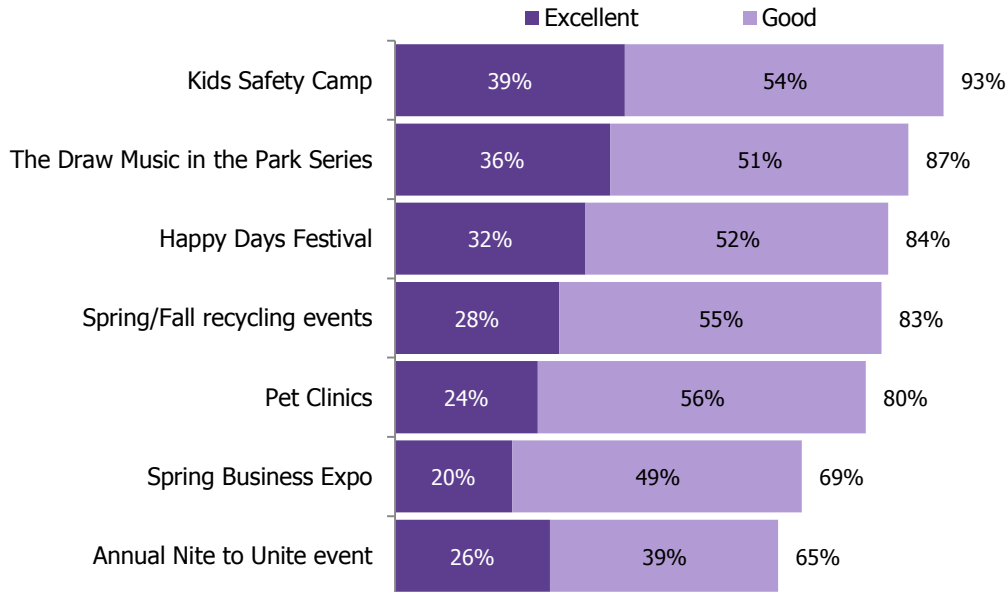
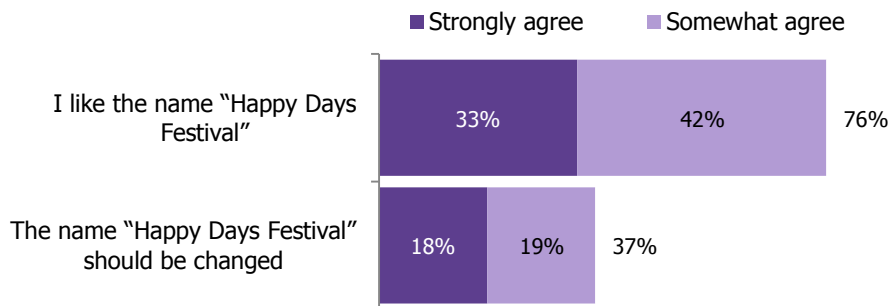


Figure 9: Happy Days Festival

*Ramsey's hometown festival, Happy Days, is organized by the volunteer Happy Days Committee. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the event?*



A majority of residents rated the overall condition of City streets as excellent or good and one-third rated it as fair. When asked about potential approaches to funding a long-term street reconstruction program, 40% of residents at least somewhat supported special assessments of benefitting properties, versus 33% for electric and/or gas utility fees and 29% for property tax increases.

Figure 10: Overall Condition of Streets

*Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole: Overall condition of City maintained streets*

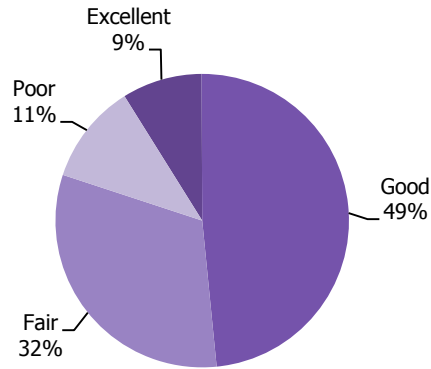
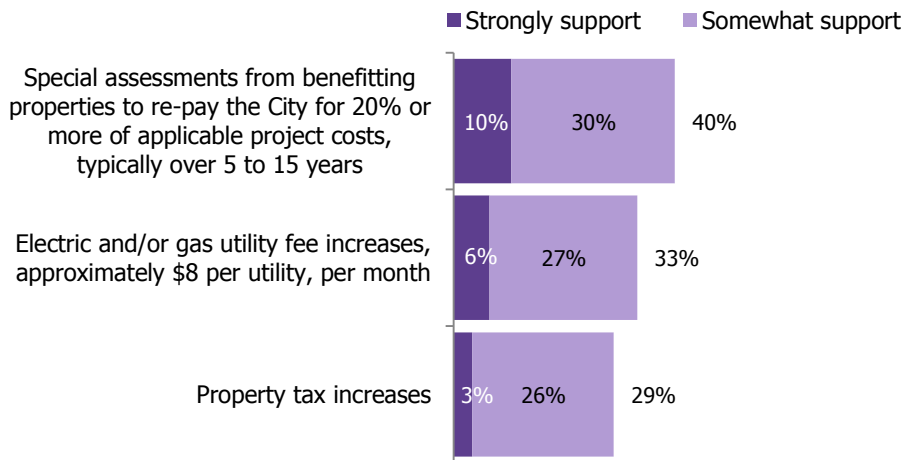


Figure 11: Street Reconstruction

*The City is developing a long-term street reconstruction program for maintaining over 174 miles of public streets throughout Ramsey which will require a reliable funding source. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following funding options for this purpose:*



# Conclusions

## **Ramsey residents enjoy a high quality of life.**

Most residents felt positively about the overall quality of life in Ramsey and the city as a place to live. Ramsey residents also valued the quality of life in their neighborhoods, the city as a place to raise children and its overall appearance; ratings in each of these areas were similar to other communities in the U.S. Ramsey as a place to retire was not perceived as positively as other aspects of the community. While residents of the community appreciated the city, they felt that outside opinion lagged; they rated the overall image or reputation of the city lower than the benchmark. The vast majority of residents would recommend living in the community and planned on staying.

## **Ramsey's Economy is an important focus area for the community.**

Residents identified Ramsey's Economy as a priority for the community. Residents rated Ramsey favorably for its overall economic health, employment opportunities, cost of living and economic development services. The quality of its businesses and services, Ramsey as a place to work, the vibrancy of its downtown/commercial area, Ramsey as a place to visit and the availability of shopping opportunities were rated somewhat less favorably. Still, the number of residents who felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the future was comparable to other communities.

## **Residents feel safe in Ramsey.**

Residents felt that Safety was a positive feature of the community and identified it as another important area to focus on. Residents had a solid feeling of safety in Ramsey overall, in their neighborhoods and in downtown/commercial areas. Similar to residents of other communities, most had not been the victim of a crime, and a lower proportion of Ramsey residents had not reported a crime compared to elsewhere. Residents gave positive ratings to Safety services, including police, fire, crime prevention and fire prevention.

# The National Citizen Survey™

## Ramsey, MN

Dashboard Summary of  
Findings

2014

# Summary

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results across The NCS communities. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement). This report summarizes Ramsey’s performance in the eight facets of community livability with the “General” rating as a summary of results from the overarching questions not shown within any of the eight facets. The “Overall” represents the community pillar in its entirety (the eight facets and general).

By summarizing resident ratings across the eight facets and three pillars of a livable community, a picture of Ramsey’s community livability emerges. Below, the color of each community facet summarizes how residents rated each of the pillars that support it – Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation. When most ratings were higher than the benchmark, the color is the darkest shade; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest shade. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

Overall, ratings in each pillar and facet in Ramsey were on par with other communities. Residents identified Safety, Natural Environment and Built Environment as community facets that had the strongest Participation compared to other places. Participation within Community Engagement and Community Characteristics related to Ramsey’s Economy were not as strong. This information can be helpful in identifying the areas that merit more attention.

Figure 1: Dashboard Summary

	Community Characteristics			Governance			Participation		
	Higher	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Lower
Overall	2	30	9	0	30	1	3	14	5
General	0	5	2	0	2	0	0	3	0
Safety	0	3	0	0	5	0	1	1	0
Mobility	0	6	0	0	7	0	0	2	0
Natural Environment	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Built Environment	2	3	0	0	4	0	1	0	0
Economy	0	3	5	0	1	0	0	2	1
Recreation and Wellness	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	2	0
Education and Enrichment	0	4	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	1	0
Community Engagement	0	1	1	0	8	0	0	3	4

Legend	
	Higher
	Similar
	Lower

The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Detailed Dashboard

	Community Characteristics	Benchmark	Percent positive	Governance	Benchmark	Percent positive	Participation	Benchmark	Percent positive
General	Overall appearance	↔	77%	Customer service	↔	79%	Recommend Ramsey	↔	82%
	Overall quality of life	↔	72%	Services provided by Ramsey	↔	74%	Remain in Ramsey	↔	85%
	Place to retire	↓	51%				Contacted Ramsey employees	↔	44%
	Place to raise children	↔	83%						
	Place to live	↔	82%						
	Neighborhood	↔	84%						
Safety	Overall image	↓	51%						
	Overall feeling of safety	↔	90%	Police	↔	86%	Was NOT the victim of a crime	↔	94%
	Safe in neighborhood	↔	94%	Crime prevention	↔	80%	Did NOT report a crime	↑	90%
	Safe downtown/commercial area	↔	94%	Fire	↔	92%			
				Fire prevention	↔	83%			
Mobility				Animal control	↔	60%			
	Traffic flow	↔	55%	Traffic enforcement	↔	68%	Walked or biked instead of driving	↔	56%
	Travel by car	↔	64%	Street repair	↔	45%	Used public transportation instead of driving	↔	38%
	Travel by bicycle	↔	66%	Street cleaning	↔	57%			
	Ease of walking	↔	70%	Street lighting	↔	55%			
	Overall ease of travel	↔	68%	Snow removal	↔	55%			
	Paths and walking trails	↔	75%	Sidewalk maintenance	↔	61%			
Natural Environment				Traffic signal timing	↔	42%			
	Overall natural environment	↔	84%	Drinking water	↔	72%	Recycled at home	↑	95%
	Cleanliness	↔	82%	Natural areas preservation	↔	69%			
Built Environment									
	New development in Ramsey	↔	48%	Sewer services	↔	81%	NOT experiencing housing cost stress	↑	78%
	Affordable quality housing	↑	69%	Storm drainage	↔	73%			
	Housing options	↑	75%	Land use, planning and zoning	↔	43%			
	Overall built environment	↔	56%	Code enforcement	↔	40%			
	Public places	↔	50%						

Legend

↑↑ Much higher      ↑ Higher      ↔ Similar      ↓ Lower      ↓↓ Much lower

# The National Citizen Survey™

	Community Characteristics	Benchmark	Percent positive	Governance	Benchmark	Percent positive	Participation	Benchmark	Percent positive
Economy	Overall economic health	↔	50%	Economic development	↔	43%	Economy will have positive impact on income	↔	29%
	Shopping opportunities	↓↓	23%				Purchased goods or services in Ramsey	↔	95%
	Employment opportunities	↔	27%				Work in Ramsey	↓↓	20%
	Place to visit	↓	35%						
	Cost of living	↔	49%						
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	↓	21%						
	Place to work	↓	42%						
Recreation & Wellness	Business and services	↓	49%						
	Fitness opportunities	↔	60%	City parks	↔	75%	In very good to excellent health	↔	71%
	Recreational opportunities	↔	53%	Recreation centers	↓	59%	Visited a City park	↔	83%
Education & Enrichment	Health and wellness	↔	66%						
	K-12 education	↔	75%				Attended a City-sponsored event	↔	53%
	Cultural/arts/music activities	↔	41%						
	Child care/preschool	↔	69%						
	Adult education	↔	54%						
Community Engagement	Overall education and enrichment	↓	54%						
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	↔	52%	Public information	↔	58%	Sense of community	↓	45%
	Opportunities to volunteer	↓	55%	Overall direction	↔	48%	Voted in local elections	↔	83%
				Value of services for taxes paid	↔	44%	Attended a local public meeting	↓	14%
				Welcoming citizen involvement	↔	48%	Watched a local public meeting	↔	26%
				Confidence in City government	↔	43%	Volunteered	↓↓	22%
				Acting in the best interest of Ramsey	↔	43%	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	↓	11%
				Being honest	↔	47%	Contacted Ramsey elected officials	↔	11%
			Treating all residents fairly	↔	52%				

**Legend**

↑↑ Much higher      ↑ Higher      ↔ Similar      ↓ Lower      ↓↓ Much lower

# **The National Citizen Survey™**

## **Ramsey, MN**

Technical Appendices

2014

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# Appendix A: Complete Survey Responses

## Responses excluding “don’t know”

The following pages contain a complete set of responses to each question on the survey, excluding the “don’t know” responses. The percent of respondents giving a particular response is shown followed by the number of respondents (denoted with “N=”).

Table 1: Question 1

Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Ramsey:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Ramsey as a place to live	22%	N=95	60%	N=257	17%	N=74	0%	N=2	100%	N=427
Your neighborhood as a place to live	28%	N=117	57%	N=243	13%	N=57	2%	N=9	100%	N=427
Ramsey as a place to raise children	26%	N=101	57%	N=224	16%	N=64	1%	N=3	100%	N=392
Ramsey as a place to work	7%	N=18	35%	N=87	36%	N=91	22%	N=56	100%	N=251
Ramsey as a place to visit	7%	N=26	28%	N=109	45%	N=176	21%	N=82	100%	N=393
Ramsey as a place to retire	11%	N=38	40%	N=137	34%	N=115	15%	N=50	100%	N=341
The overall quality of life in Ramsey	14%	N=58	58%	N=248	28%	N=118	0%	N=0	100%	N=425

Table 2: Question 2

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey	28%	N=120	62%	N=264	10%	N=41	1%	N=3	100%	N=428
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	17%	N=74	50%	N=215	21%	N=91	11%	N=46	100%	N=427
Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey	26%	N=111	57%	N=244	15%	N=65	1%	N=4	100%	N=425
Overall "built environment" of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	8%	N=34	48%	N=201	33%	N=139	11%	N=46	100%	N=421
Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey	15%	N=56	51%	N=195	28%	N=109	6%	N=23	100%	N=383
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	9%	N=34	45%	N=162	36%	N=128	10%	N=36	100%	N=361
Overall economic health of Ramsey	5%	N=20	44%	N=161	42%	N=151	9%	N=31	100%	N=363
Sense of community	6%	N=24	40%	N=161	45%	N=182	10%	N=41	100%	N=407
Overall image or reputation of Ramsey	5%	N=21	46%	N=192	37%	N=155	12%	N=51	100%	N=419

Table 3: Question 3

Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Very unlikely		Total	
Recommend living in Ramsey to someone who asks	38%	N=160	44%	N=187	12%	N=52	6%	N=25	100%	N=424
Remain in Ramsey for the next five years	54%	N=225	31%	N=127	9%	N=36	7%	N=28	100%	N=416

Table 4: Question 4

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Total	
In your neighborhood during the day	81%	N=348	13%	N=56	4%	N=18	2%	N=7	0%	N=2	100%	N=430
In your neighborhood after dark	47%	N=203	39%	N=168	9%	N=38	4%	N=18	0%	N=2	100%	N=429
In Ramsey's downtown/commercial area during the day	76%	N=287	18%	N=68	6%	N=22	0%	N=1	0%	N=1	100%	N=380
In Ramsey's downtown/commercial areas after dark	41%	N=142	46%	N=161	10%	N=36	2%	N=8	0%	N=1	100%	N=348

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Table 5: Question 5

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Traffic flow on major streets	8%	N=34	47%	N=201	30%	N=128	15%	N=64	100%	N=428
Ease of travel by car in Ramsey	16%	N=69	48%	N=206	26%	N=112	10%	N=42	100%	N=429
Ease of travel by bicycle in Ramsey	20%	N=69	46%	N=157	27%	N=91	7%	N=23	100%	N=339
Ease of walking in Ramsey	21%	N=82	50%	N=195	23%	N=92	6%	N=24	100%	N=394
Availability of paths and walking trails	26%	N=105	49%	N=200	19%	N=79	6%	N=23	100%	N=407
Cleanliness of Ramsey	25%	N=106	57%	N=243	16%	N=69	2%	N=8	100%	N=426
Overall appearance of Ramsey	17%	N=74	59%	N=253	20%	N=87	3%	N=13	100%	N=427
Public places where people want to spend time	13%	N=54	37%	N=150	41%	N=167	9%	N=35	100%	N=406
Variety of housing options	20%	N=79	55%	N=215	22%	N=85	3%	N=11	100%	N=391
Availability of affordable quality housing	18%	N=60	51%	N=173	27%	N=90	4%	N=14	100%	N=337
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	15%	N=60	45%	N=173	33%	N=128	7%	N=26	100%	N=387
Recreational opportunities	14%	N=55	39%	N=147	36%	N=138	10%	N=40	100%	N=380
Overall condition of City maintained streets	9%	N=37	49%	N=206	32%	N=134	11%	N=47	100%	N=425

Table 6: Question 6

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	8%	N=14	61%	N=104	23%	N=39	8%	N=13	100%	N=170
K-12 education	15%	N=43	60%	N=171	21%	N=59	4%	N=10	100%	N=283
Adult educational opportunities	9%	N=23	46%	N=120	36%	N=94	10%	N=26	100%	N=263
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	8%	N=26	33%	N=106	42%	N=137	17%	N=56	100%	N=325
Employment opportunities	2%	N=5	25%	N=68	48%	N=129	25%	N=68	100%	N=271
Shopping opportunities	2%	N=9	20%	N=84	33%	N=136	44%	N=184	100%	N=414
Cost of living in Ramsey	6%	N=24	44%	N=179	43%	N=178	7%	N=30	100%	N=412
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Ramsey	4%	N=16	45%	N=180	32%	N=128	20%	N=80	100%	N=405
Vibrant downtown/commercial area	3%	N=12	18%	N=73	42%	N=167	37%	N=145	100%	N=396
Overall quality of new development in Ramsey	6%	N=23	42%	N=161	36%	N=139	16%	N=61	100%	N=383
Opportunities to volunteer	7%	N=14	49%	N=102	35%	N=74	9%	N=19	100%	N=210
Opportunities to participate in community matters	8%	N=20	44%	N=112	39%	N=100	9%	N=22	100%	N=255

Table 7: Question 7

Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.	No		Yes		Total	
Household member was a victim of a crime in Ramsey	94%	N=400	6%	N=24	100%	N=424
Reported a crime to the police in Ramsey	90%	N=379	10%	N=43	100%	N=423
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	89%	N=373	11%	N=48	100%	N=421
Contacted the City of Ramsey (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	56%	N=235	44%	N=187	100%	N=421
Contacted Ramsey elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	89%	N=375	11%	N=46	100%	N=422

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Table 8: Question 8

In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following in Ramsey?	2 times a week or more		2-4 times a month		Once a month or less		Not at all		Total	
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	20%	N=87	32%	N=137	31%	N=130	17%	N=70	100%	N=424
Attended a City-sponsored event	2%	N=7	6%	N=25	45%	N=192	47%	N=200	100%	N=423
Used rail or other public transportation instead of driving	7%	N=30	4%	N=16	27%	N=116	62%	N=263	100%	N=424
Walked or biked instead of driving	12%	N=50	18%	N=77	26%	N=109	44%	N=188	100%	N=424
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Ramsey	1%	N=5	4%	N=19	16%	N=70	78%	N=330	100%	N=424

Table 9: Question 9

Thinking about local public meetings (of local elected officials like City Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards, town halls, HOA, neighborhood watch, etc.), in the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members attended or watched a local public meeting?	2 times a week or more		2-4 times a month		Once a month or less		Not at all		Total	
Attended a local public meeting	0%	N=1	2%	N=7	12%	N=49	86%	N=366	100%	N=423
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	1%	N=5	4%	N=19	20%	N=86	74%	N=315	100%	N=425

Table 10: Question 10

Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Ramsey:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Police services	36%	N=133	50%	N=183	12%	N=45	2%	N=6	100%	N=368
Fire services	39%	N=115	53%	N=154	8%	N=22	1%	N=2	100%	N=293
Crime prevention	25%	N=72	55%	N=156	17%	N=50	2%	N=7	100%	N=285
Fire prevention and education	23%	N=57	60%	N=148	14%	N=35	2%	N=6	100%	N=246
Traffic enforcement	18%	N=66	50%	N=179	26%	N=92	6%	N=23	100%	N=360
Street repair	5%	N=21	40%	N=164	35%	N=143	21%	N=85	100%	N=414
Street cleaning	10%	N=39	48%	N=192	34%	N=138	9%	N=35	100%	N=403
Street lighting	9%	N=37	45%	N=186	31%	N=125	15%	N=60	100%	N=409
Snow removal	10%	N=43	45%	N=181	31%	N=124	14%	N=58	100%	N=406
Sidewalk maintenance	9%	N=25	53%	N=157	33%	N=98	6%	N=17	100%	N=296
Traffic signal timing	6%	N=24	36%	N=145	33%	N=133	25%	N=99	100%	N=402
Storm drainage	11%	N=37	62%	N=208	24%	N=79	4%	N=12	100%	N=336
Drinking water	20%	N=60	52%	N=155	24%	N=73	4%	N=11	100%	N=300
Sewer services	15%	N=40	66%	N=176	19%	N=49	0%	N=0	100%	N=265
City parks	21%	N=81	55%	N=216	22%	N=87	3%	N=11	100%	N=396
Recreation centers or facilities	13%	N=38	46%	N=139	26%	N=79	15%	N=44	100%	N=300
Land use, planning and zoning	7%	N=22	36%	N=113	35%	N=112	22%	N=70	100%	N=317
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	8%	N=24	32%	N=97	31%	N=94	29%	N=86	100%	N=301
Animal control	11%	N=31	49%	N=140	30%	N=84	10%	N=30	100%	N=286
Economic development	6%	N=20	37%	N=126	41%	N=138	16%	N=53	100%	N=336
Public information services	10%	N=31	48%	N=156	36%	N=116	6%	N=20	100%	N=323
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	15%	N=50	54%	N=179	25%	N=82	6%	N=21	100%	N=333
Overall customer service by Ramsey employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	25%	N=87	54%	N=192	18%	N=64	3%	N=12	100%	N=356
Trail maintenance	15%	N=53	52%	N=176	27%	N=93	6%	N=19	100%	N=341

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Table 11: Question 11

Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the following?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
The City of Ramsey	14%	N=53	60%	N=227	25%	N=95	2%	N=6	100%	N=381

Table 12: Question 12

Please rate the following categories of Ramsey government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
The value of services for the taxes paid to Ramsey	6%	N=23	37%	N=139	43%	N=159	13%	N=49	100%	N=370
The overall direction that Ramsey is taking	7%	N=26	41%	N=153	36%	N=134	15%	N=57	100%	N=369
The job Ramsey government does at welcoming citizen involvement	8%	N=22	40%	N=117	36%	N=106	16%	N=46	100%	N=292
Overall confidence in Ramsey government	6%	N=20	37%	N=127	37%	N=126	21%	N=71	100%	N=344
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	7%	N=23	36%	N=126	37%	N=127	20%	N=70	100%	N=346
Being honest	9%	N=26	38%	N=114	36%	N=106	17%	N=51	100%	N=297
Treating all residents fairly	9%	N=25	44%	N=126	33%	N=96	14%	N=41	100%	N=289
Development and success of a strategic action plan	8%	N=23	31%	N=87	35%	N=97	26%	N=74	100%	N=281

Table 13: Question 13

Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the Ramsey community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:	Essential		Very important		Somewhat important		Not at all important		Total	
Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey	51%	N=216	35%	N=150	13%	N=53	1%	N=4	100%	N=423
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	33%	N=141	48%	N=204	17%	N=72	1%	N=6	100%	N=423
Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey	29%	N=122	44%	N=188	24%	N=100	3%	N=14	100%	N=423
Overall "built environment" of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	28%	N=118	45%	N=189	23%	N=97	4%	N=17	100%	N=422
Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey	19%	N=81	42%	N=177	33%	N=139	6%	N=24	100%	N=421
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	21%	N=90	43%	N=180	30%	N=125	6%	N=25	100%	N=419
Overall economic health of Ramsey	35%	N=147	53%	N=224	11%	N=45	1%	N=5	100%	N=422
Sense of community	21%	N=90	48%	N=204	27%	N=113	3%	N=14	100%	N=421

Table 14: Question 14

To what extent are each of the following a source of information for you about Ramsey city government and its activities?	Major source		Moderate source		Minor source		Not a source		Total	
City newsletter (Ramsey Resident)	55%	N=236	28%	N=122	10%	N=44	6%	N=27	100%	N=428
Local newspaper	11%	N=46	32%	N=135	24%	N=101	34%	N=146	100%	N=428
City website (www.cityoframsey.com)	15%	N=64	31%	N=133	29%	N=122	25%	N=104	100%	N=423
Word-of-mouth	15%	N=64	35%	N=147	31%	N=132	19%	N=80	100%	N=424
Cable television (QCTV)	5%	N=20	16%	N=66	22%	N=94	57%	N=238	100%	N=418
City employees	6%	N=27	15%	N=64	29%	N=121	50%	N=209	100%	N=421
Public meetings	4%	N=18	17%	N=73	27%	N=116	51%	N=216	100%	N=423
City social media (Facebook)	10%	N=41	13%	N=56	20%	N=84	57%	N=240	100%	N=422

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Table 15: Question 15

Please rate the quality of each event listed below:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Happy Days Festival	32%	N=81	52%	N=129	13%	N=34	3%	N=7	100%	N=251
Pet Clinics	24%	N=39	56%	N=90	19%	N=30	2%	N=3	100%	N=161
Kids Safety Camp	39%	N=43	54%	N=60	7%	N=8	0%	N=0	100%	N=110
The Draw Music in the Park Series	36%	N=76	51%	N=107	10%	N=21	3%	N=6	100%	N=210
Spring/Fall recycling events	28%	N=72	55%	N=143	13%	N=35	4%	N=10	100%	N=261
Spring Business Expo	20%	N=27	49%	N=67	24%	N=33	6%	N=9	100%	N=136
Annual Nite to Unite event	26%	N=55	39%	N=82	23%	N=49	12%	N=25	100%	N=211

Table 16: Question 16

Ramsey's hometown festival, Happy Days, is organized by the volunteer Happy Days Committee. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the event?	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
I like the name "Happy Days Festival"	33%	N=132	42%	N=167	14%	N=55	10%	N=39	100%	N=393
The name "Happy Days Festival" should be changed	18%	N=69	19%	N=70	30%	N=114	33%	N=126	100%	N=380

Table 17: Question 17

The City is developing a long-term street reconstruction program for maintaining over 174 miles of public streets throughout Ramsey which will require a reliable funding source. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following funding options for this purpose:	Strongly support		Somewhat support		Somewhat oppose		Strongly oppose		Total	
Property tax increases	3%	N=13	26%	N=102	20%	N=79	51%	N=200	100%	N=393
Special assessments from benefitting properties to re-pay the City for 20% or more of applicable project costs, typically over 5 to 15 years	10%	N=38	30%	N=111	23%	N=86	37%	N=137	100%	N=373
Electric and/or gas utility fee increases, approximately \$8 per utility, per month	6%	N=26	27%	N=109	16%	N=66	50%	N=204	100%	N=405

Table 18: Question D1

How often, if at all, do you do each of the following, considering all of the times you could?	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Usually		Always		Total	
Recycle at home	2%	N=8	3%	N=12	3%	N=11	14%	N=57	79%	N=333	100%	N=422
Purchase goods or services from a business located in Ramsey	0%	N=1	4%	N=18	47%	N=196	36%	N=151	13%	N=55	100%	N=421
Vote in local elections	8%	N=36	8%	N=34	13%	N=53	32%	N=133	39%	N=165	100%	N=420

Table 19: Question D2

Would you say that in general your health is:	Percent		Number	
Excellent	23%		N=95	
Very good	49%		N=205	
Good	25%		N=106	
Fair	3%		N=14	
Poor	0%		N=2	
Total	100%		N=422	

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Table 20: Question D3

What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be	Percent	Number
Very positive	3%	N=11
Somewhat positive	26%	N=111
Neutral	54%	N=227
Somewhat negative	14%	N=61
Very negative	2%	N=10
Total	100%	N=420

Table 21: Question D4

What is your employment status?	Percent	Number
Working full time for pay	71%	N=298
Working part time for pay	9%	N=38
Unemployed, looking for paid work	2%	N=8
Unemployed, not looking for paid work	3%	N=14
Fully retired	15%	N=61
Total	100%	N=419

Table 22: Question D5

Do you work inside the boundaries of Ramsey?	Percent	Number
Yes, outside the home	14%	N=59
Yes, from home	6%	N=23
No	80%	N=332
Total	100%	N=414

Table 23: Question D6

How many years have you lived in Ramsey?	Percent	Number
Less than 2 years	13%	N=55
2 to 5 years	16%	N=68
6 to 10 years	17%	N=74
11 to 20 years	22%	N=94
More than 20 years	31%	N=132
Total	100%	N=423

Table 24: Question D7

Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent	Number
One family house detached from any other houses	82%	N=346
Building with two or more homes (duplex, townhome, apartment or condominium)	18%	N=75
Mobile home	0%	N=0
Other	0%	N=1
Total	100%	N=422

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Table 25: Question D8

Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent	Number
Rented	9%	N=37
Owned	91%	N=384
Total	100%	N=421

Table 26: Question D9

About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?	Percent	Number
Less than \$300 per month	3%	N=11
\$300 to \$599 per month	6%	N=25
\$600 to \$999 per month	15%	N=60
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	38%	N=155
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	32%	N=129
\$2,500 or more per month	7%	N=28
Total	100%	N=408

Table 27: Question D10

Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent	Number
No	56%	N=236
Yes	44%	N=187
Total	100%	N=422

Table 28: Question D11

Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent	Number
No	84%	N=355
Yes	16%	N=69
Total	100%	N=424

Table 29: Question D12

How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent	Number
Less than \$25,000	2%	N=9
\$25,000 to \$49,999	16%	N=63
\$50,000 to \$99,999	44%	N=177
\$100,000 to \$149,999	27%	N=106
\$150,000 or more	11%	N=44
Total	100%	N=398

Table 30: Question D13

Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent	Number
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	99%	N=416
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	1%	N=2
Total	100%	N=418

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Table 31: Question D14

What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent	Number
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%	N=0
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	1%	N=3
Black or African American	3%	N=11
White	95%	N=400
Other	3%	N=14

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Table 32: Question D15

In which category is your age?	Percent	Number
18 to 24 years	2%	N=10
25 to 34 years	27%	N=114
35 to 44 years	18%	N=76
45 to 54 years	26%	N=110
55 to 64 years	12%	N=52
65 to 74 years	9%	N=39
75 years or older	5%	N=21
Total	100%	N=422

Table 33: Question D16

What is your sex?	Percent	Number
Female	50%	N=208
Male	50%	N=210
Total	100%	N=418

Table 34: Question D17

Do you consider a cell phone or landline your primary telephone number?	Percent	Number
Cell	57%	N=239
Land line	26%	N=111
Both	17%	N=71
Total	100%	N=421

## Responses including “don’t know”

The following pages contain a complete set of responses to each question on the survey, including the “don’t know” responses. The percent of respondents giving a particular response is shown followed by the number of respondents (denoted with “N=”).

Table 35: Question 1

Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Ramsey:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Ramsey as a place to live	22%	N=95	60%	N=257	17%	N=74	0%	N=2	0%	N=0	100%	N=427
Your neighborhood as a place to live	27%	N=117	57%	N=243	13%	N=57	2%	N=9	0%	N=1	100%	N=427
Ramsey as a place to raise children	24%	N=101	53%	N=224	15%	N=64	1%	N=3	8%	N=33	100%	N=425
Ramsey as a place to work	4%	N=18	21%	N=87	22%	N=91	13%	N=56	40%	N=170	100%	N=421
Ramsey as a place to visit	6%	N=26	26%	N=109	42%	N=176	19%	N=82	7%	N=29	100%	N=422
Ramsey as a place to retire	9%	N=38	33%	N=137	27%	N=115	12%	N=50	19%	N=81	100%	N=421
The overall quality of life in Ramsey	14%	N=58	58%	N=248	28%	N=118	0%	N=0	0%	N=0	100%	N=425

Table 36: Question 2

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey	28%	N=120	61%	N=264	9%	N=41	1%	N=3	0%	N=1	100%	N=429
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	17%	N=74	50%	N=215	21%	N=91	11%	N=46	0%	N=1	100%	N=428
Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey	26%	N=111	57%	N=244	15%	N=65	1%	N=4	0%	N=2	100%	N=427
Overall "built environment" of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	8%	N=34	47%	N=201	33%	N=139	11%	N=46	1%	N=4	100%	N=424
Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey	13%	N=56	46%	N=195	26%	N=109	5%	N=23	10%	N=42	100%	N=424
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	8%	N=34	38%	N=162	30%	N=128	8%	N=36	15%	N=65	100%	N=426
Overall economic health of Ramsey	5%	N=20	38%	N=161	35%	N=151	7%	N=31	15%	N=62	100%	N=425
Sense of community	6%	N=24	38%	N=161	43%	N=182	10%	N=41	4%	N=19	100%	N=426
Overall image or reputation of Ramsey	5%	N=21	45%	N=192	37%	N=155	12%	N=51	1%	N=6	100%	N=425

Table 37: Question 3

Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Very unlikely		Don't know		Total	
Recommend living in Ramsey to someone who asks	37%	N=160	44%	N=187	12%	N=52	6%	N=25	1%	N=5	100%	N=429
Remain in Ramsey for the next five years	52%	N=225	30%	N=127	8%	N=36	7%	N=28	3%	N=12	100%	N=428

Table 38: Question 4

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
In your neighborhood during the day	81%	N=348	13%	N=56	4%	N=18	2%	N=7	0%	N=2	0%	N=0	100%	N=430
In your neighborhood after dark	47%	N=203	39%	N=168	9%	N=38	4%	N=18	0%	N=2	0%	N=0	100%	N=429
In Ramsey's downtown/commercial area during the day	68%	N=287	16%	N=68	5%	N=22	0%	N=1	0%	N=1	11%	N=45	100%	N=425
In Ramsey's downtown/commercial areas after dark	33%	N=142	38%	N=161	8%	N=36	2%	N=8	0%	N=1	19%	N=81	100%	N=429

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Table 39: Question 5

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Traffic flow on major streets	8%	N=34	47%	N=201	30%	N=128	15%	N=64	0%	N=1	100%	N=428
Ease of travel by car in Ramsey	16%	N=69	48%	N=206	26%	N=112	10%	N=42	0%	N=0	100%	N=429
Ease of travel by bicycle in Ramsey	16%	N=69	37%	N=157	21%	N=91	5%	N=23	20%	N=87	100%	N=426
Ease of walking in Ramsey	19%	N=82	46%	N=195	22%	N=92	6%	N=24	8%	N=33	100%	N=427
Availability of paths and walking trails	25%	N=105	47%	N=200	18%	N=79	5%	N=23	5%	N=21	100%	N=428
Cleanliness of Ramsey	25%	N=106	57%	N=243	16%	N=69	2%	N=8	0%	N=1	100%	N=427
Overall appearance of Ramsey	17%	N=74	59%	N=253	20%	N=87	3%	N=13	0%	N=1	100%	N=428
Public places where people want to spend time	13%	N=54	35%	N=150	39%	N=167	8%	N=35	5%	N=22	100%	N=428
Variety of housing options	19%	N=79	50%	N=215	20%	N=85	3%	N=11	9%	N=37	100%	N=428
Availability of affordable quality housing	14%	N=60	40%	N=173	21%	N=90	3%	N=14	21%	N=90	100%	N=427
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	14%	N=60	40%	N=173	30%	N=128	6%	N=26	10%	N=41	100%	N=428
Recreational opportunities	13%	N=55	35%	N=147	32%	N=138	9%	N=40	11%	N=45	100%	N=425
Overall condition of City maintained streets	9%	N=37	48%	N=206	32%	N=134	11%	N=47	0%	N=1	100%	N=426

Table 40: Question 6

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	3%	N=14	25%	N=104	9%	N=39	3%	N=13	59%	N=249	100%	N=419
K-12 education	10%	N=43	41%	N=171	14%	N=59	2%	N=10	32%	N=135	100%	N=418
Adult educational opportunities	5%	N=23	29%	N=120	23%	N=94	6%	N=26	37%	N=152	100%	N=415
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	6%	N=26	25%	N=106	33%	N=137	13%	N=56	22%	N=93	100%	N=418
Employment opportunities	1%	N=5	16%	N=68	31%	N=129	16%	N=68	35%	N=144	100%	N=415
Shopping opportunities	2%	N=9	20%	N=84	33%	N=136	44%	N=184	1%	N=3	100%	N=418
Cost of living in Ramsey	6%	N=24	43%	N=179	43%	N=178	7%	N=30	2%	N=7	100%	N=418
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Ramsey	4%	N=16	43%	N=180	31%	N=128	19%	N=80	4%	N=15	100%	N=420
Vibrant downtown/commercial area	3%	N=12	17%	N=73	40%	N=167	35%	N=145	5%	N=22	100%	N=418
Overall quality of new development in Ramsey	5%	N=23	39%	N=161	33%	N=139	15%	N=61	8%	N=34	100%	N=417
Opportunities to volunteer	3%	N=14	25%	N=102	18%	N=74	5%	N=19	50%	N=207	100%	N=417
Opportunities to participate in community matters	5%	N=20	27%	N=112	24%	N=100	5%	N=22	39%	N=163	100%	N=418

Table 41: Question 7

Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.	No		Yes		Total	
Household member was a victim of a crime in Ramsey	94%	N=400	6%	N=24	100%	N=424
Reported a crime to the police in Ramsey	90%	N=379	10%	N=43	100%	N=423
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	89%	N=373	11%	N=48	100%	N=421
Contacted the City of Ramsey (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	56%	N=235	44%	N=187	100%	N=421
Contacted Ramsey elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	89%	N=375	11%	N=46	100%	N=422

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Table 42: Question 8

In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following in Ramsey?	2 times a week or more		2-4 times a month		Once a month or less		Not at all		Total	
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	20%	N=87	32%	N=137	31%	N=130	17%	N=70	100%	N=424
Attended a City-sponsored event	2%	N=7	6%	N=25	45%	N=192	47%	N=200	100%	N=423
Used rail or other public transportation instead of driving	7%	N=30	4%	N=16	27%	N=116	62%	N=263	100%	N=424
Walked or biked instead of driving	12%	N=50	18%	N=77	26%	N=109	44%	N=188	100%	N=424
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Ramsey	1%	N=5	4%	N=19	16%	N=70	78%	N=330	100%	N=424

Table 43: Question 9

Thinking about local public meetings (of local elected officials like City Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards, town halls, HOA, neighborhood watch, etc.), in the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members attended or watched a local public meeting?	2 times a week or more		2-4 times a month		Once a month or less		Not at all		Total	
Attended a local public meeting	0%	N=1	2%	N=7	12%	N=49	86%	N=366	100%	N=423
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	1%	N=5	4%	N=19	20%	N=86	74%	N=315	100%	N=425

Table 44: Question 10

Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Ramsey:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Police services	32%	N=133	44%	N=183	11%	N=45	1%	N=6	12%	N=51	100%	N=418
Fire services	28%	N=115	37%	N=154	5%	N=22	0%	N=2	30%	N=124	100%	N=417
Crime prevention	17%	N=72	38%	N=156	12%	N=50	2%	N=7	31%	N=130	100%	N=415
Fire prevention and education	14%	N=57	36%	N=148	8%	N=35	1%	N=6	41%	N=168	100%	N=414
Traffic enforcement	16%	N=66	43%	N=179	22%	N=92	6%	N=23	13%	N=55	100%	N=416
Street repair	5%	N=21	39%	N=164	34%	N=143	20%	N=85	2%	N=7	100%	N=421
Street cleaning	9%	N=39	46%	N=192	33%	N=138	8%	N=35	4%	N=16	100%	N=419
Street lighting	9%	N=37	45%	N=186	30%	N=125	15%	N=60	2%	N=8	100%	N=417
Snow removal	10%	N=43	43%	N=181	30%	N=124	14%	N=58	3%	N=13	100%	N=419
Sidewalk maintenance	6%	N=25	38%	N=157	24%	N=98	4%	N=17	29%	N=120	100%	N=416
Traffic signal timing	6%	N=24	35%	N=145	32%	N=133	24%	N=99	4%	N=16	100%	N=418
Storm drainage	9%	N=37	50%	N=208	19%	N=79	3%	N=12	19%	N=81	100%	N=417
Drinking water	14%	N=60	37%	N=155	17%	N=73	3%	N=11	28%	N=119	100%	N=419
Sewer services	10%	N=40	42%	N=176	12%	N=49	0%	N=0	36%	N=150	100%	N=416
City parks	19%	N=81	51%	N=216	21%	N=87	3%	N=11	6%	N=26	100%	N=421
Recreation centers or facilities	9%	N=38	33%	N=139	19%	N=79	11%	N=44	28%	N=117	100%	N=417
Land use, planning and zoning	5%	N=22	27%	N=113	27%	N=112	17%	N=70	24%	N=98	100%	N=415
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	6%	N=24	23%	N=97	23%	N=94	21%	N=86	27%	N=114	100%	N=415
Animal control	8%	N=31	34%	N=140	20%	N=84	7%	N=30	31%	N=130	100%	N=415
Economic development	5%	N=20	30%	N=126	33%	N=138	13%	N=53	19%	N=79	100%	N=415
Public information services	7%	N=31	38%	N=156	28%	N=116	5%	N=20	22%	N=93	100%	N=415
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	12%	N=50	43%	N=179	20%	N=82	5%	N=21	20%	N=83	100%	N=415
Overall customer service by Ramsey employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	21%	N=87	46%	N=192	15%	N=64	3%	N=12	15%	N=62	100%	N=417
Trail maintenance	13%	N=53	42%	N=176	22%	N=93	5%	N=19	18%	N=75	100%	N=416

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Table 45: Question 11

Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the following?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
The City of Ramsey	13%	N=53	56%	N=227	23%	N=95	1%	N=6	6%	N=25	100%	N=406

Table 46: Question 12

Please rate the following categories of Ramsey government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
The value of services for the taxes paid to Ramsey	6%	N=23	33%	N=139	38%	N=159	12%	N=49	12%	N=49	100%	N=418
The overall direction that Ramsey is taking	6%	N=26	37%	N=153	32%	N=134	14%	N=57	12%	N=50	100%	N=418
The job Ramsey government does at welcoming citizen involvement	5%	N=22	28%	N=117	25%	N=106	11%	N=46	30%	N=126	100%	N=417
Overall confidence in Ramsey government	5%	N=20	30%	N=127	30%	N=126	17%	N=71	18%	N=73	100%	N=417
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	6%	N=23	30%	N=126	31%	N=127	17%	N=70	17%	N=70	100%	N=417
Being honest	6%	N=26	27%	N=114	26%	N=106	12%	N=51	29%	N=119	100%	N=416
Treating all residents fairly	6%	N=25	30%	N=126	23%	N=96	10%	N=41	31%	N=129	100%	N=417
Development and success of a strategic action plan	5%	N=23	21%	N=87	23%	N=97	18%	N=74	32%	N=135	100%	N=416

Table 47: Question 13

Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the Ramsey community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:	Essential		Very important		Somewhat important		Not at all important		Total	
Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey	51%	N=216	35%	N=150	13%	N=53	1%	N=4	100%	N=423
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	33%	N=141	48%	N=204	17%	N=72	1%	N=6	100%	N=423
Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey	29%	N=122	44%	N=188	24%	N=100	3%	N=14	100%	N=423
Overall "built environment" of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	28%	N=118	45%	N=189	23%	N=97	4%	N=17	100%	N=422
Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey	19%	N=81	42%	N=177	33%	N=139	6%	N=24	100%	N=421
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	21%	N=90	43%	N=180	30%	N=125	6%	N=25	100%	N=419
Overall economic health of Ramsey	35%	N=147	53%	N=224	11%	N=45	1%	N=5	100%	N=422
Sense of community	21%	N=90	48%	N=204	27%	N=113	3%	N=14	100%	N=421

Table 48: Question 14

To what extent are each of the following a source of information for you about Ramsey city government and its activities?	Major source		Moderate source		Minor source		Not a source		Total	
City newsletter (Ramsey Resident)	55%	N=236	28%	N=122	10%	N=44	6%	N=27	100%	N=428
Local newspaper	11%	N=46	32%	N=135	24%	N=101	34%	N=146	100%	N=428
City website (www.cityoframsey.com)	15%	N=64	31%	N=133	29%	N=122	25%	N=104	100%	N=423
Word-of-mouth	15%	N=64	35%	N=147	31%	N=132	19%	N=80	100%	N=424
Cable television (QCTV)	5%	N=20	16%	N=66	22%	N=94	57%	N=238	100%	N=418
City employees	6%	N=27	15%	N=64	29%	N=121	50%	N=209	100%	N=421
Public meetings	4%	N=18	17%	N=73	27%	N=116	51%	N=216	100%	N=423
City social media (Facebook)	10%	N=41	13%	N=56	20%	N=84	57%	N=240	100%	N=422

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Table 49: Question 15

Please rate the quality of each event listed below:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know/don't attend		Total	
Happy Days Festival	19%	N=81	30%	N=129	8%	N=34	2%	N=7	41%	N=176	100%	N=426
Pet Clinics	9%	N=39	21%	N=90	7%	N=30	1%	N=3	62%	N=265	100%	N=426
Kids Safety Camp	10%	N=43	14%	N=60	2%	N=8	0%	N=0	74%	N=313	100%	N=423
The Draw Music in the Park Series	18%	N=76	25%	N=107	5%	N=21	1%	N=6	50%	N=213	100%	N=424
Spring/Fall recycling events	17%	N=72	34%	N=143	8%	N=35	2%	N=10	39%	N=166	100%	N=426
Spring Business Expo	6%	N=27	16%	N=67	8%	N=33	2%	N=9	68%	N=286	100%	N=422
Annual Nite to Unite event	13%	N=55	19%	N=82	12%	N=49	6%	N=25	50%	N=214	100%	N=425

Table 50: Question 16

Ramsey's hometown festival, Happy Days, is organized by the volunteer Happy Days Committee. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the event?	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
I like the name "Happy Days Festival"	33%	N=132	42%	N=167	14%	N=55	10%	N=39	100%	N=393
The name "Happy Days Festival" should be changed	18%	N=69	19%	N=70	30%	N=114	33%	N=126	100%	N=380

Table 51: Question 17

The City is developing a long-term street reconstruction program for maintaining over 174 miles of public streets throughout Ramsey which will require a reliable funding source. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following funding options for this purpose:	Strongly support		Somewhat support		Somewhat oppose		Strongly oppose		Don't know		Total	
Property tax increases	3%	N=13	24%	N=102	19%	N=79	48%	N=200	6%	N=27	100%	N=420
Special assessments from benefitting properties to re-pay the City for 20% or more of applicable project costs, typically over 5 to 15 years	9%	N=38	27%	N=111	20%	N=86	33%	N=137	11%	N=46	100%	N=419
Electric and/or gas utility fee increases, approximately \$8 per utility, per month	6%	N=26	26%	N=109	16%	N=66	49%	N=204	4%	N=16	100%	N=421

Table 52: Question D1

How often, if at all, do you do each of the following, considering all of the times you could?	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Usually		Always		Total	
Recycle at home	2%	N=8	3%	N=12	3%	N=11	14%	N=57	79%	N=333	100%	N=422
Purchase goods or services from a business located in Ramsey	0%	N=1	4%	N=18	47%	N=196	36%	N=151	13%	N=55	100%	N=421
Vote in local elections	8%	N=36	8%	N=34	13%	N=53	32%	N=133	39%	N=165	100%	N=420

Table 53: Question D2

Would you say that in general your health is:	Percent		Number	
Excellent	23%		N=95	
Very good	49%		N=205	
Good	25%		N=106	
Fair	3%		N=14	
Poor	0%		N=2	
Total	100%		N=422	

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Table 54: Question D3

What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be	Percent	Number
Very positive	3%	N=11
Somewhat positive	26%	N=111
Neutral	54%	N=227
Somewhat negative	14%	N=61
Very negative	2%	N=10
Total	100%	N=420

Table 55: Question D4

What is your employment status?	Percent	Number
Working full time for pay	71%	N=298
Working part time for pay	9%	N=38
Unemployed, looking for paid work	2%	N=8
Unemployed, not looking for paid work	3%	N=14
Fully retired	15%	N=61
Total	100%	N=419

Table 56: Question D5

Do you work inside the boundaries of Ramsey?	Percent	Number
Yes, outside the home	14%	N=59
Yes, from home	6%	N=23
No	80%	N=332
Total	100%	N=414

Table 57: Question D6

How many years have you lived in Ramsey?	Percent	Number
Less than 2 years	13%	N=55
2 to 5 years	16%	N=68
6 to 10 years	17%	N=74
11 to 20 years	22%	N=94
More than 20 years	31%	N=132
Total	100%	N=423

Table 58: Question D7

Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent	Number
One family house detached from any other houses	82%	N=346
Building with two or more homes (duplex, townhome, apartment or condominium)	18%	N=75
Mobile home	0%	N=0
Other	0%	N=1
Total	100%	N=422

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Table 59: Question D8

Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent	Number
Rented	9%	N=37
Owned	91%	N=384
Total	100%	N=421

Table 60: Question D9

About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?	Percent	Number
Less than \$300 per month	3%	N=11
\$300 to \$599 per month	6%	N=25
\$600 to \$999 per month	15%	N=60
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	38%	N=155
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	32%	N=129
\$2,500 or more per month	7%	N=28
Total	100%	N=408

Table 61: Question D10

Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent	Number
No	56%	N=236
Yes	44%	N=187
Total	100%	N=422

Table 62: Question D11

Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent	Number
No	84%	N=355
Yes	16%	N=69
Total	100%	N=424

Table 63: Question D12

How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent	Number
Less than \$25,000	2%	N=9
\$25,000 to \$49,999	16%	N=63
\$50,000 to \$99,999	44%	N=177
\$100,000 to \$149,999	27%	N=106
\$150,000 or more	11%	N=44
Total	100%	N=398

Table 64: Question D13

Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent	Number
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	99%	N=416
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	1%	N=2
Total	100%	N=418

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Table 65: Question D14

What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent	Number
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%	N=0
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	1%	N=3
Black or African American	3%	N=11
White	95%	N=400
Other	3%	N=14

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Table 66: Question D15

In which category is your age?	Percent	Number
18 to 24 years	2%	N=10
25 to 34 years	27%	N=114
35 to 44 years	18%	N=76
45 to 54 years	26%	N=110
55 to 64 years	12%	N=52
65 to 74 years	9%	N=39
75 years or older	5%	N=21
Total	100%	N=422

Table 67: Question D16

What is your sex?	Percent	Number
Female	50%	N=208
Male	50%	N=210
Total	100%	N=418

Table 68: Question D17

Do you consider a cell phone or landline your primary telephone number?	Percent	Number
Cell	57%	N=239
Land line	26%	N=111
Both	17%	N=71
Total	100%	N=421

## Appendix B: Benchmark Comparisons

### Comparison Data

NRC’s database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in surveys from over 500 communities whose residents evaluated the same kinds of topics on The National Citizen Survey™. The comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each community; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. NRC adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant. The communities in the database represent a wide geographic and population range. The City of Ramsey chose to have comparisons made to the entire database and a subset of similar jurisdictions from the database of communities in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin of population 10,000 to 74,999.

### Interpreting the Results

Ratings are compared when there are at least five communities in which a similar question was asked. Where comparisons are available, four columns are provided in the table. The first column is Ramsey’s “percent positive.” The percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., “excellent” and “good,” “very safe” and “somewhat safe,” “essential” and “very important,” etc.), or, in the case of resident behaviors/participation, the percent positive represents the proportion of respondents indicating “yes” or participating in an activity at least once a month. The second column is the rank assigned to Ramsey’s rating among communities where a similar question was asked. The third column is the number of communities that asked a similar question. The final column shows the comparison of Ramsey’s rating to the benchmark.

In that final column, Ramsey’s results are noted as being “higher” than the benchmark, “lower” than the benchmark or “similar” to the benchmark, meaning that the average rating given by Ramsey residents is statistically similar to or different (greater or lesser) than the benchmark. More extreme differences are noted as “much higher” or “much lower.”

Benchmark Database Characteristics	
Region	Percent
New England	3%
Middle Atlantic	5%
East North Central	15%
West North Central	13%
South Atlantic	22%
East South Central	3%
West South Central	7%
Mountain	16%
Pacific	16%
Population	Percent
Less than 10,000	10%
10,000 to 24,999	22%
25,000 to 49,999	23%
50,000 to 99,999	22%
100,000 or more	23%

## National Benchmark Comparisons

Table 69: Community Characteristics General

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
The overall quality of life in Ramsey	72%	288	385	Similar
Overall image or reputation of Ramsey	51%	239	289	Lower
Ramsey as a place to live	82%	220	319	Similar
Your neighborhood as a place to live	84%	145	252	Similar
Ramsey as a place to raise children	83%	171	315	Similar
Ramsey as a place to retire	51%	255	299	Lower
Overall appearance of Ramsey	77%	148	296	Similar

Table 70: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Safety	Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey	90%	71	156	Similar
	In your neighborhood during the day	94%	80	295	Similar
	In Ramsey's downtown/commercial area during the day	94%	60	252	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	68%	56	67	Similar
	Availability of paths and walking trails	75%	74	238	Similar
	Ease of walking in Ramsey	70%	101	244	Similar
	Ease of travel by bicycle in Ramsey	66%	67	251	Similar
	Ease of travel by car in Ramsey	64%	137	247	Similar
	Traffic flow on major streets	55%	131	289	Similar
Natural Environment	Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey	84%	74	231	Similar
	Cleanliness of Ramsey	82%	91	228	Similar
Built Environment	Overall "built environment" of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	56%	40	63	Similar
	Overall quality of new development in Ramsey	48%	194	236	Similar
	Availability of affordable quality housing	69%	13	256	Higher
	Variety of housing options	75%	31	222	Higher
	Public places where people want to spend time	50%	44	61	Similar
	Overall economic health of Ramsey	50%	42	67	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	21%	53	60	Lower
	Overall quality of business and service establishments in Ramsey	49%	194	218	Lower
Economy	Cost of living in Ramsey	49%	24	65	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	23%	229	243	Much lower
	Employment opportunities	27%	163	259	Similar
	Ramsey as a place to visit	35%	66	75	Lower
	Ramsey as a place to work	42%	248	290	Lower
	Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey	66%	43	63	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	53%	185	255	Similar
	Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	60%	45	63	Similar
	Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	54%	49	63	Lower
	Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	41%	191	249	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Adult educational opportunities	54%	41	59	Similar
	K-12 education	75%	113	215	Similar
	Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	69%	44	216	Similar
Community Engagement	Opportunities to participate in community matters	52%	174	222	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	55%	207	221	Lower

Table 71: Governance General

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Services provided by the City of Ramsey	74%	203	362	Similar
Overall customer service by Ramsey employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	79%	174	308	Similar
Value of services for the taxes paid to Ramsey	44%	245	344	Similar
Overall direction that Ramsey is taking	48%	201	273	Similar
Job Ramsey government does at welcoming citizen involvement	48%	159	256	Similar
Overall confidence in Ramsey government	43%	48	67	Similar
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	43%	47	63	Similar
Being honest	47%	42	63	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	52%	35	63	Similar

Table 72: Governance by Facet

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark	
Safety	Police services	86%	97	365	Similar
	Fire services	92%	177	304	Similar
	Crime prevention	80%	70	293	Similar
	Fire prevention and education	83%	113	243	Similar
	Animal control	60%	173	277	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	68%	126	315	Similar
	Street repair	45%	243	367	Similar
	Street cleaning	57%	170	247	Similar
	Street lighting	55%	197	271	Similar
	Snow removal	55%	180	249	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	61%	102	257	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	42%	179	211	Similar
	Drinking water	72%	140	279	Similar
Natural Environment	Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	69%	75	218	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	73%	117	303	Similar
	Sewer services	81%	125	263	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	43%	181	244	Similar
	Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	40%	224	301	Similar
Economy	Economic development	43%	143	235	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	75%	208	276	Similar
	Recreation centers or facilities	59%	197	234	Lower
Community Engagement	Public information services	58%	174	229	Similar

Table 73: Participation General

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Sense of community	45%	224	256	Lower
Recommend living in Ramsey to someone who asks	82%	159	228	Similar
Remain in Ramsey for the next five years	85%	117	225	Similar
Contacted Ramsey (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	44%	163	260	Similar

Table 74: Participation by Facet

		Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Safety	Did NOT report a crime to the police	90%	3	65	Higher
	Household member was NOT a victim of a crime	94%	17	227	Similar
Mobility	Used rail or other public transportation instead of driving	38%	18	54	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	56%	32	62	Similar
Natural Environment	Recycle at home	95%	39	214	Higher
Built Environment	NOT experiencing housing costs stress	78%	28	210	Higher
Economy	Purchase goods or services from a business located in Ramsey	95%	42	61	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	29%	41	212	Similar
	Work inside boundaries of Ramsey	20%	60	61	Much lower
Recreation and Wellness	Visited a neighborhood park or City park	83%	137	222	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	71%	23	61	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Attended City-sponsored event	53%	24	60	Similar
Community Engagement	Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	11%	59	60	Lower
	Contacted Ramsey elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	11%	58	61	Similar
	Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Ramsey	22%	209	219	Much lower
	Attended a local public meeting	14%	210	220	Lower
	Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	26%	129	183	Similar
	Vote in local elections	83%	60	212	Similar

Communities included in national comparisons

The communities included in Ramsey’s comparisons are listed on the following pages along with their population according to the 2010 Census.

Abilene city, KS.....	6,844	Battle Creek city, MI.....	52,347
Adams County, CO.....	441,603	Bay City city, MI.....	34,932
Airway Heights city, WA.....	6,114	Baytown city, TX.....	71,802
Albany city, OR.....	50,158	Bedford city, TX.....	46,979
Albemarle County, VA.....	98,970	Bedford town, MA.....	13,320
Albert Lea city, MN.....	18,016	Bellevue city, WA.....	122,363
Altoona city, IA.....	14,541	Bellingham city, WA.....	80,885
Ames city, IA.....	58,965	Beltrami County, MN.....	44,442
Andover CDP, MA.....	8,762	Benbrook city, TX.....	21,234
Ankeny city, IA.....	45,582	Bend city, OR.....	76,639
Ann Arbor city, MI.....	113,934	Benicia city, CA.....	26,997
Annapolis city, MD.....	38,394	Bettendorf city, IA.....	33,217
Apple Valley town, CA.....	69,135	Billings city, MT.....	104,170
Arlington city, TX.....	365,438	Blaine city, MN.....	57,186
Arlington County, VA.....	207,627	Bloomfield Hills city, MI.....	3,869
Arvada city, CO.....	106,433	Bloomington city, IL.....	76,610
Ashland city, OR.....	20,078	Bloomington city, MN.....	82,893
Ashland town, VA.....	7,225	Blue Springs city, MO.....	52,575
Aspen city, CO.....	6,658	Boise City city, ID.....	205,671
Auburn city, AL.....	53,380	Boonville city, MO.....	8,319
Auburn city, WA.....	70,180	Boulder city, CO.....	97,385
Aurora city, CO.....	325,078	Boulder County, CO.....	294,567
Austin city, TX.....	790,390	Bowling Green city, KY.....	58,067
Bainbridge Island city, WA.....	23,025	Brentwood city, TN.....	37,060
Baltimore city, MD.....	620,961	Bristol city, TN.....	26,702
Baltimore County, MD.....	805,029	Broken Arrow city, OK.....	98,850

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Brookfield city, WI .....	37,920	Des Moines city, IA .....	203,433
Brookline CDP, MA .....	58,732	Destin city, FL .....	12,305
Brookline town, NH .....	4,991	Dewey-Humboldt town, AZ .....	3,894
Broomfield city, CO .....	55,889	Dorchester County, MD .....	32,618
Brownsburg town, IN .....	21,285	Dothan city, AL .....	65,496
Bryan city, TX .....	76,201	Douglas County, CO .....	285,465
Burien city, WA .....	33,313	Dover city, NH .....	29,987
Burleson city, TX .....	36,690	Dublin city, OH .....	41,751
Cabarrus County, NC .....	178,011	Duluth city, MN .....	86,265
Cambridge city, MA .....	105,162	Duncanville city, TX .....	38,524
Canton city, SD .....	3,057	Durham city, NC .....	228,330
Cape Coral city, FL .....	154,305	East Baton Rouge Parish, LA .....	440,171
Cape Girardeau city, MO .....	37,941	East Grand Forks city, MN .....	8,601
Carlisle borough, PA .....	18,682	East Lansing city, MI .....	48,579
Carlsbad city, CA .....	105,328	Eau Claire city, WI .....	65,883
Cartersville city, GA .....	19,731	Eden Prairie city, MN .....	60,797
Cary town, NC .....	135,234	Edgerton city, KS .....	1,671
Casa Grande city, AZ .....	48,571	Edina city, MN .....	47,941
Casper city, WY .....	55,316	Edmonds city, WA .....	39,709
Castine town, ME .....	1,366	El Cerrito city, CA .....	23,549
Castle Pines North city, CO .....	10,360	El Paso city, TX .....	649,121
Castle Rock town, CO .....	48,231	Elk Grove city, CA .....	153,015
Cedar Falls city, IA .....	39,260	Elk River city, MN .....	22,974
Cedar Rapids city, IA .....	126,326	Elko New Market city, MN .....	4,110
Centennial city, CO .....	100,377	Elmhurst city, IL .....	44,121
Centralia city, IL .....	13,032	Encinitas city, CA .....	59,518
Chambersburg borough, PA .....	20,268	Englewood city, CO .....	30,255
Chandler city, AZ .....	236,123	Erie town, CO .....	18,135
Chanhassen city, MN .....	22,952	Escambia County, FL .....	297,619
Chapel Hill town, NC .....	57,233	Estes Park town, CO .....	5,858
Charlotte city, NC .....	731,424	Fairview town, TX .....	7,248
Charlotte County, FL .....	159,978	Farmington Hills city, MI .....	79,740
Charlottesville city, VA .....	43,475	Fayetteville city, NC .....	200,564
Chesterfield County, VA .....	316,236	Fishers town, IN .....	76,794
Chippewa Falls city, WI .....	13,661	Flagstaff city, AZ .....	65,870
Citrus Heights city, CA .....	83,301	Flower Mound town, TX .....	64,669
Clackamas County, OR .....	375,992	Flushing city, MI .....	8,389
Clayton city, MO .....	15,939	Forest Grove city, OR .....	21,083
Clearwater city, FL .....	107,685	Fort Collins city, CO .....	143,986
Clive city, IA .....	15,447	Fort Smith city, AR .....	86,209
Clovis city, CA .....	95,631	Fort Worth city, TX .....	741,206
College Park city, MD .....	30,413	Fountain Hills town, AZ .....	22,489
College Station city, TX .....	93,857	Franklin city, TN .....	62,487
Colleyville city, TX .....	22,807	Fredericksburg city, VA .....	24,286
Collinsville city, IL .....	25,579	Freeport CDP, ME .....	1,485
Columbia city, MO .....	108,500	Freeport city, IL .....	25,638
Columbus city, WI .....	4,991	Fremont city, CA .....	214,089
Commerce City city, CO .....	45,913	Friendswood city, TX .....	35,805
Concord city, CA .....	122,067	Fruita city, CO .....	12,646
Concord town, MA .....	17,668	Gahanna city, OH .....	33,248
Conyers city, GA .....	15,195	Gainesville city, FL .....	124,354
Cookeville city, TN .....	30,435	Gaithersburg city, MD .....	59,933
Coon Rapids city, MN .....	61,476	Galveston city, TX .....	47,743
Cooper City city, FL .....	28,547	Garden City city, KS .....	26,658
Coronado city, CA .....	18,912	Gardner city, KS .....	19,123
Corvallis city, OR .....	54,462	Geneva city, NY .....	13,261
Cross Roads town, TX .....	1,563	Georgetown city, TX .....	47,400
Crystal Lake city, IL .....	40,743	Gilbert town, AZ .....	208,453
Dade City city, FL .....	6,437	Gillette city, WY .....	29,087
Dakota County, MN .....	398,552	Globe city, AZ .....	7,532
Dallas city, OR .....	14,583	Golden Valley city, MN .....	20,371
Dallas city, TX .....	1,197,816	Goodyear city, AZ .....	65,275
Dardenne Prairie city, MO .....	11,494	Grafton village, WI .....	11,459
Davenport city, IA .....	99,685	Grand Blanc city, MI .....	8,276
Davidson town, NC .....	10,944	Grand Island city, NE .....	48,520
Decatur city, GA .....	19,335	Grass Valley city, CA .....	12,860
Delray Beach city, FL .....	60,522	Greeley city, CO .....	92,889
Denison city, TX .....	22,682	Green Valley CDP, AZ .....	21,391
Denver city, CO .....	600,158	Greenwood Village city, CO .....	13,925
Derby city, KS .....	22,158	Greer city, SC .....	25,515

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Guilford County, NC .....	488,406	League City city, TX .....	83,560
Gunnison County, CO .....	15,324	Lee County, FL.....	618,754
Hailey city, ID .....	7,960	Lee's Summit city, MO.....	91,364
Haines Borough, AK .....	2,508	Lewis County, NY .....	27,087
Hallandale Beach city, FL.....	37,113	Lewiston city, ME .....	36,592
Hamilton city, OH.....	62,477	Lincoln city, NE .....	258,379
Hampton city, VA.....	137,436	Lindsborg city, KS .....	3,458
Hanover County, VA.....	99,863	Littleton city, CO .....	41,737
Harrisonburg city, VA .....	48,914	Livermore city, CA.....	80,968
Harrisonville city, MO .....	10,019	Lone Tree city, CO .....	10,218
Hayward city, CA .....	144,186	Longmont city, CO .....	86,270
Henderson city, NV .....	257,729	Longview city, TX.....	80,455
Hermiston city, OR.....	16,745	Los Alamos County, NM.....	17,950
High Point city, NC.....	104,371	Louisville city, CO.....	18,376
Highland Park city, IL .....	29,763	Lynchburg city, VA .....	75,568
Highlands Ranch CDP, CO .....	96,713	Lynnwood city, WA .....	35,836
Hillsborough town, NC.....	6,087	Madison city, WI .....	233,209
Holden town, MA .....	17,346	Mankato city, MN .....	39,309
Holland city, MI.....	33,051	Maple Grove city, MN .....	61,567
Honolulu County, HI.....	953,207	Maple Valley city, WA .....	22,684
Hooksett town, NH.....	13,451	Maricopa County, AZ .....	3,817,117
Hopkins city, MN.....	17,591	Marin County, CA .....	252,409
Hopkinton town, MA.....	14,925	Maryland Heights city, MO.....	27,472
Hoquiam city, WA .....	8,726	McAllen city, TX .....	129,877
Houston city, TX .....	2,099,451	McDonough city, GA.....	22,084
Hudson city, OH.....	22,262	McKinney city, TX.....	131,117
Hudson town, CO.....	2,356	McMinnville city, OR .....	32,187
Hudsonville city, MI.....	7,116	Mecklenburg County, NC .....	919,628
Huntersville town, NC.....	46,773	Medford city, OR.....	74,907
Hurst city, TX.....	37,337	Menlo Park city, CA .....	32,026
Hutchinson city, MN .....	14,178	Mercer Island city, WA .....	22,699
Hutto city, TX .....	14,698	Meridian charter township, MI .....	39,688
Hyattsville city, MD .....	17,557	Meridian city, ID .....	75,092
Indian Trail town, NC .....	33,518	Merriam city, KS.....	11,003
Indianola city, IA .....	14,782	Merrill city, WI .....	9,661
Iowa City city, IA .....	67,862	Mesa city, AZ.....	439,041
Jackson County, MI.....	160,248	Mesa County, CO .....	146,723
James City County, VA .....	67,009	Miami Beach city, FL .....	87,779
Jefferson City city, MO .....	43,079	Miami city, FL .....	399,457
Jefferson County, CO .....	534,543	Midland city, MI .....	41,863
Jefferson County, NY.....	116,229	Milford city, DE .....	9,559
Jerome city, ID .....	10,890	Milton city, GA .....	32,661
Johnson City city, TN.....	63,152	Minneapolis city, MN .....	382,578
Johnson County, KS .....	544,179	Mission Viejo city, CA .....	93,305
Johnston city, IA.....	17,278	Modesto city, CA .....	201,165
Jupiter town, FL.....	55,156	Monterey city, CA.....	27,810
Kalamazoo city, MI.....	74,262	Montgomery County, MD.....	971,777
Kansas City city, MO.....	459,787	Montgomery County, VA.....	94,392
Keizer city, OR.....	36,478	Montpelier city, VT .....	7,855
Kenmore city, WA .....	20,460	Monument town, CO .....	5,530
Kennedale city, TX .....	6,763	Mooreville town, NC.....	32,711
Kennett Square borough, PA.....	6,072	Morristown city, TN.....	29,137
Kirkland city, WA.....	48,787	Moscow city, ID .....	23,800
La Mesa city, CA .....	57,065	Mountain Village town, CO.....	1,320
La Plata town, MD.....	8,753	Mountlake Terrace city, WA .....	19,909
La Porte city, TX .....	33,800	Munster town, IN .....	23,603
La Vista city, NE.....	15,758	Muscataine city, IA .....	22,886
Lafayette city, CO .....	24,453	Naperville city, IL .....	141,853
Laguna Beach city, CA.....	22,723	Needham CDP, MA.....	28,886
Laguna Hills city, CA.....	30,344	New Braunfels city, TX .....	57,740
Laguna Niguel city, CA .....	62,979	New Brighton city, MN.....	21,456
Lake Oswego city, OR .....	36,619	New Hanover County, NC .....	202,667
Lake Zurich village, IL .....	19,631	New Orleans city, LA .....	343,829
Lakeville city, MN .....	55,954	Newport Beach city, CA .....	85,186
Lakewood city, CO .....	142,980	Newport city, RI.....	24,672
Lane County, OR.....	351,715	Newport News city, VA.....	180,719
Larimer County, CO.....	299,630	Newton city, IA .....	15,254
Las Cruces city, NM.....	97,618	Noblesville city, IN .....	51,969
Las Vegas city, NV .....	583,756	Nogales city, AZ.....	20,837
Lawrence city, KS.....	87,643	Norfolk city, VA.....	242,803

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Norman city, OK .....	110,925	Riverdale city, UT.....	8,426
North Las Vegas city, NV .....	216,961	Riverside city, CA .....	303,871
Northglenn city, CO.....	35,789	Riverside city, MO .....	2,937
Novato city, CA .....	51,904	Rochester city, MI.....	12,711
Novi city, MI .....	55,224	Rochester Hills city, MI.....	70,995
O'Fallon city, IL.....	28,281	Rock Hill city, SC.....	66,154
O'Fallon city, MO.....	79,329	Rockford city, IL .....	152,871
Oak Park village, IL.....	51,878	Rockville city, MD.....	61,209
Oakland Park city, FL .....	41,363	Rolla city, MO .....	19,559
Oakley city, CA .....	35,432	Roswell city, GA .....	88,346
Ogdensburg city, NY .....	11,128	Round Rock city, TX.....	99,887
Oklahoma City city, OK.....	579,999	Royal Oak city, MI.....	57,236
Olathe city, KS .....	125,872	Saco city, ME.....	18,482
Old Town city, ME.....	7,840	Sahuarita town, AZ .....	25,259
Olmsted County, MN .....	144,248	Salida city, CO .....	5,236
Orland Park village, IL.....	56,767	Salt Lake City city, UT .....	186,440
Oshkosh city, WI.....	66,083	Sammamish city, WA .....	45,780
Otsego County, MI.....	24,164	San Antonio city, TX.....	1,327,407
Oviedo city, FL.....	33,342	San Carlos city, CA.....	28,406
Paducah city, KY .....	25,024	San Diego city, CA .....	1,307,402
Palm Coast city, FL.....	75,180	San Francisco city, CA .....	805,235
Palm Springs city, CA .....	44,552	San Jose city, CA .....	945,942
Palo Alto city, CA .....	64,403	San Juan County, NM.....	130,044
Panama City city, FL.....	36,484	San Marcos city, TX.....	44,894
Papillion city, NE .....	18,894	San Rafael city, CA.....	57,713
Park City city, UT .....	7,558	Sandy Springs city, GA .....	93,853
Parker town, CO .....	45,297	Sanford city, FL.....	53,570
Parkland city, FL.....	23,962	Sangamon County, IL.....	197,465
Pasadena city, CA .....	137,122	Santa Clarita city, CA.....	176,320
Pasco city, WA .....	59,781	Santa Fe County, NM .....	144,170
Pasco County, FL .....	464,697	Santa Monica city, CA.....	89,736
Peachtree City city, GA.....	34,364	Sarasota County, FL.....	379,448
Pearland city, TX.....	91,252	Savage city, MN.....	26,911
Peoria city, AZ .....	154,065	Savannah city, GA.....	136,286
Peoria city, IL .....	115,007	Scarborough CDP, ME .....	4,403
Peoria County, IL .....	186,494	Scott County, MN.....	129,928
Peters township, PA .....	21,213	Scottsdale city, AZ .....	217,385
Petoskey city, MI .....	5,670	Seaside city, CA .....	33,025
Pflugerville city, TX .....	46,936	SeaTac city, WA.....	26,909
Phoenix city, AZ.....	1,445,632	Sevierville city, TN .....	14,807
Pinal County, AZ .....	375,770	Shawnee city, KS .....	62,209
Pinehurst village, NC .....	13,124	Sheboygan city, WI.....	49,288
Piqua city, OH.....	20,522	Shorewood city, MN .....	7,307
Platte City city, MO.....	4,691	Sioux Falls city, SD.....	153,888
Plymouth city, MN.....	70,576	Skokie village, IL.....	64,784
Pocatello city, ID.....	54,255	Snellville city, GA .....	18,242
Polk County, IA.....	430,640	South Lake Tahoe city, CA.....	21,403
Port Huron city, MI.....	30,184	South Portland city, ME .....	25,002
Port Orange city, FL .....	56,048	Southborough town, MA.....	9,767
Port St. Lucie city, FL .....	164,603	Southlake city, TX.....	26,575
Portland city, OR.....	583,776	Sparks city, NV .....	90,264
Post Falls city, ID .....	27,574	Spokane Valley city, WA .....	89,755
Prince William County, VA.....	402,002	Spring Hill city, KS.....	5,437
Provo city, UT .....	112,488	Springboro city, OH.....	17,409
Pueblo city, CO .....	106,595	Springfield city, OR .....	59,403
Purcellville town, VA .....	7,727	Springville city, UT .....	29,466
Queen Creek town, AZ .....	26,361	St. Charles city, IL.....	32,974
Radford city, VA.....	16,408	St. Cloud city, MN .....	65,842
Radnor township, PA.....	31,531	St. Joseph city, MO .....	76,780
Ramsey city, MN.....	23,668	St. Louis County, MN.....	200,226
Rapid City city, SD .....	67,956	St. Louis Park city, MN .....	45,250
Raymore city, MO .....	19,206	Stallings town, NC.....	13,831
Redmond city, WA .....	54,144	State College borough, PA .....	42,034
Rehoboth Beach city, DE .....	1,327	Sterling Heights city, MI .....	129,699
Reno city, NV.....	225,221	Sugar Grove village, IL .....	8,997
Reston CDP, VA .....	58,404	Sugar Land city, TX.....	78,817
Richmond city, CA.....	103,701	Summit city, NJ.....	21,457
Richmond Heights city, MO.....	8,603	Sunnyvale city, CA .....	140,081
Rifle city, CO.....	9,172	Surprise city, AZ.....	117,517
River Falls city, WI .....	15,000	Suwanee city, GA.....	15,355

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Tacoma city, WA.....	198,397	Weddington town, NC.....	9,459
Takoma Park city, MD.....	16,715	Wentzville city, MO.....	29,070
Tamarac city, FL.....	60,427	West Carrollton city, OH.....	13,143
Temecula city, CA.....	100,097	West Chester borough, PA.....	18,461
Tempe city, AZ.....	161,719	West Des Moines city, IA.....	56,609
Temple city, TX.....	66,102	West Richland city, WA.....	11,811
The Woodlands CDP, TX.....	93,847	Westerville city, OH.....	36,120
Thornton city, CO.....	118,772	Westlake town, TX.....	992
Thousand Oaks city, CA.....	126,683	Westminster city, CO.....	106,114
Tualatin city, OR.....	26,054	Weston town, MA.....	11,261
Tulsa city, OK.....	391,906	Wheat Ridge city, CO.....	30,166
Twin Falls city, ID.....	44,125	White House city, TN.....	10,255
Tyler city, TX.....	96,900	Whitewater township, MI.....	2,597
Umatilla city, OR.....	6,906	Wichita city, KS.....	382,368
Upper Arlington city, OH.....	33,771	Williamsburg city, VA.....	14,068
Urbandale city, IA.....	39,463	Wilmington city, NC.....	106,476
Vail town, CO.....	5,305	Wilsonville city, OR.....	19,509
Vancouver city, WA.....	161,791	Winchester city, VA.....	26,203
Ventura CCD, CA.....	111,889	Windsor town, CO.....	18,644
Vestavia Hills city, AL.....	34,033	Windsor town, CT.....	29,044
Virginia Beach city, VA.....	437,994	Winston-Salem city, NC.....	229,617
Wake Forest town, NC.....	30,117	Winter Garden city, FL.....	34,568
Walnut Creek city, CA.....	64,173	Woodland city, CA.....	55,468
Washington County, MN.....	238,136	Woodland city, WA.....	5,509
Washoe County, NV.....	421,407	Wrentham town, MA.....	10,955
Watauga city, TX.....	23,497	Yakima city, WA.....	91,067
Wauwatosa city, WI.....	46,396	York County, VA.....	65,464
Waverly city, IA.....	9,874	Yuma city, AZ.....	93,064

## Population 10,000 to 74,999 in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin Benchmark Comparisons

Table 75: Community Characteristics General

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
The overall quality of life in Ramsey	72%	15	18	Similar
Overall image or reputation of Ramsey	51%	9	10	Lower
Ramsey as a place to live	82%	9	11	Similar
Your neighborhood as a place to live	84%	9	11	Similar
Ramsey as a place to raise children	83%	9	13	Similar
Ramsey as a place to retire	51%	12	12	Lower
Overall appearance of Ramsey	77%	7	12	Similar

Table 76: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Safety	Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey	90%	4	5	Similar
	In your neighborhood during the day	94%	6	11	Similar
	In Ramsey's downtown/commercial area during the day	94%	6	10	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	68%	NA	NA	NA
	Availability of paths and walking trails	75%	7	9	Similar
	Ease of walking in Ramsey	70%	9	10	Similar
	Ease of travel by bicycle in Ramsey	66%	7	10	Similar
	Ease of travel by car in Ramsey	64%	9	10	Similar
	Traffic flow on major streets	55%	6	8	Similar
Natural Environment	Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey	84%	4	8	Similar
	Cleanliness of Ramsey	82%	6	9	Similar
Built Environment	Overall "built environment" of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	56%	NA	NA	NA
	Overall quality of new development in Ramsey	48%	8	9	Lower

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		Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark	
	Availability of affordable quality housing	69%	1	10	Similar	
	Variety of housing options	75%	4	9	Similar	
	Public places where people want to spend time	50%	NA	NA	NA	
Economy	Overall economic health of Ramsey	50%	NA	NA	NA	
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	21%	NA	NA	NA	
	Overall quality of business and service establishments in Ramsey	49%	8	9	Lower	
	Cost of living in Ramsey	49%	NA	NA	NA	
	Shopping opportunities	23%	9	10	Lower	
	Employment opportunities	27%	9	12	Similar	
	Ramsey as a place to visit	35%	NA	NA	NA	
	Ramsey as a place to work	42%	10	11	Lower	
	Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey	66%	NA	NA	NA
		Recreational opportunities	53%	11	12	Lower
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)		60%	NA	NA	NA	
Education and Enrichment	Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	54%	NA	NA	NA	
	Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	41%	8	9	Similar	
	Adult educational opportunities	54%	NA	NA	NA	
	K-12 education	75%	5	7	Similar	
	Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	69%	3	8	Similar	
Community Engagement	Opportunities to participate in community matters	52%	5	6	Similar	
	Opportunities to volunteer	55%	8	8	Lower	

Table 77: Governance General

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Services provided by the City of Ramsey	74%	9	13	Similar
Overall customer service by Ramsey employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	79%	11	13	Similar
Value of services for the taxes paid to Ramsey	44%	14	17	Similar
Overall direction that Ramsey is taking	48%	8	11	Similar
Job Ramsey government does at welcoming citizen involvement	48%	9	12	Similar
Overall confidence in Ramsey government	43%	NA	NA	NA
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	43%	NA	NA	NA
Being honest	47%	NA	NA	NA
Treating all residents fairly	52%	NA	NA	NA

Table 78: Governance by Facet

		Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Safety	Police services	86%	9	14	Similar
	Fire services	92%	12	13	Similar
	Crime prevention	80%	5	10	Similar
	Fire prevention and education	83%	10	10	Similar
	Animal control	60%	14	16	Similar
	Traffic enforcement	68%	9	11	Similar
	Street repair	45%	12	16	Similar
	Street cleaning	57%	10	11	Similar
	Street lighting	55%	16	16	Lower
	Snow removal	55%	19	21	Similar
Mobility	Sidewalk maintenance	61%	7	10	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	42%	9	10	Lower

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		Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Natural Environment	Drinking water	72%	12	17	Similar
	Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	69%	7	11	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	73%	10	12	Similar
	Sewer services	81%	12	16	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	43%	10	11	Lower
	Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	40%	9	10	Lower
	Economy	Economic development	43%	10	11
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	75%	10	10	Lower
	Recreation centers or facilities	59%	11	11	Lower
Community Engagement	Public information services	58%	8	8	Lower

Table 79: Participation General

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Sense of community	45%	10	10	Lower
Recommend living in Ramsey to someone who asks	82%	7	8	Similar
Remain in Ramsey for the next five years	85%	4	8	Similar
Contacted Ramsey (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	44%	5	11	Similar

Table 80: Participation by Facet

		Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Safety	Did NOT report a crime to the police	90%	NA	NA	NA
	Household member was NOT a victim of a crime	94%	1	10	Similar
Mobility	Used rail or other public transportation instead of driving	38%	NA	NA	NA
	Walked or biked instead of driving	56%	NA	NA	NA
Natural Environment	Recycle at home	95%	5	9	Similar
Built Environment	NOT experiencing housing costs stress	78%	1	7	Similar
Economy	Purchase goods or services from a business located in Ramsey	95%	NA	NA	NA
	Economy will have positive impact on income	29%	1	7	Similar
	Work inside boundaries of Ramsey	20%	NA	NA	NA
Recreation and Wellness	Visited a neighborhood park or City park	83%	10	10	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	71%	NA	NA	NA
Education and Enrichment	Attended City-sponsored event	53%	NA	NA	NA
Community Engagement	Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	11%	NA	NA	NA
	Contacted Ramsey elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	11%	NA	NA	NA
	Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Ramsey	22%	10	10	Much lower
	Attended a local public meeting	14%	10	10	Similar
	Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	26%	7	9	Similar
	Vote in local elections	83%	5	9	Similar

Communities included in population 10,000 to 74,999 in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin comparisons

The communities included in Ramsey’s Population 10,000 to 74,999 in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin comparisons are listed below along with their population according to the 2010 Census.

Albert Lea city, MN.....	18,016	Hutchinson city, MN .....	14,178
Beltrami County, MN .....	44,442	Lakeville city, MN .....	55,954
Blaine city, MN.....	57,186	Mankato city, MN .....	39,309
Brookfield city, WI .....	37,920	Maple Grove city, MN .....	61,567
Chanhassen city, MN .....	22,952	New Brighton city, MN.....	21,456
Chippewa Falls city, WI .....	13,661	Plymouth city, MN.....	70,576
Coon Rapids city, MN .....	61,476	Ramsey city, MN .....	23,668
Eau Claire city, WI .....	65,883	River Falls city, WI .....	15,000
Eden Prairie city, MN.....	60,797	Savage city, MN.....	26,911
Elk River city, MN.....	22,974	St. Cloud city, MN .....	65,842
Golden Valley city, MN.....	20,371	St. Louis Park city, MN .....	45,250
Hopkins city, MN.....	17,591	Westminster city, CO.....	106,114

## Appendix C: Detailed Survey Methods

The National Citizen Survey (The NCS™) was developed to provide communities an accurate, affordable and easy way to assess and interpret resident opinion about important local topics. Standardization of common questions and survey methods provide the rigor to assure valid results, and each community has enough flexibility to construct a customized version of The NCS.

Results offer insight into residents' perspectives about the community as a whole, including local amenities, services, public trust, resident participation and other aspects of the community in order to support budgeting, land use and strategic planning and communication with residents. Resident demographic characteristics permit comparison to the Census as well as comparison of results for different subgroups of residents.

### Survey Validity

The question of survey validity has two parts: 1) how can a community be confident that the results from those who completed the questionnaire are representative of the results that would have been obtained had the survey been administered to the entire population? and 2) how closely do the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do?

To answer the first question, the best survey research practices were used for the resources spent to ensure that the results from the survey respondents reflect the opinions of residents in the entire community. These practices include:

- Using a mail-out/mail-back methodology, which typically gets a higher response rate than phone for the same dollars spent. A higher response rate lessens the worry that those who did not respond are different than those who did respond.
- Selecting households at random within the community to receive the survey to ensure that the households selected to receive the survey are representative of the larger community.
- Over-sampling multi-family housing units to improve response from hard-to-reach, lower income or younger apartment dwellers.
- Selecting the respondent within the household using an unbiased sampling procedure; in this case, the "birthday method." The cover letter included an instruction requesting that the respondent in the household be the adult (18 years old or older) who most recently had a birthday, irrespective of year of birth.
- Contacting potential respondents three times to encourage response from people who may have different opinions or habits than those who would respond with only a single prompt.
- Inviting response in a compelling manner (using appropriate letterhead/logos and a signature of a visible leader) to appeal to recipients' sense of civic responsibility.
- Providing a pre-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
- Offering the survey in Spanish or other language when requested by a given community.
- Weighting the results to reflect the demographics of the population.

The answer to the second question about how closely the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do is more complex. Resident responses to surveys are influenced by a variety of factors. For questions about service quality, residents' expectations for service quality play a role as well as the "objective" quality of the service provided, the way the resident perceives the entire community (that is, the context in which the service is provided), the scale on which the resident is asked to record his or her opinion and, of course, the opinion, itself, that a resident holds about the service. Similarly a resident's report of certain behaviors is colored by what he or she believes is the socially desirable response (e.g., reporting tolerant behaviors toward "oppressed groups," likelihood of voting for a tax increase for services to poor people, use of alternative modes of travel to work besides the single occupancy vehicle), his or her memory of the actual behavior (if it is not a question speculating about future actions, like a vote), his or her confidence that he or she can be honest without suffering any negative consequences (thus the need for anonymity) as well as the actual behavior itself.

How closely survey results come to recording the way a person really feels or behaves often is measured by the coincidence of reported behavior with observed current behavior (e.g., driving habits), reported intentions to behave with observed future behavior (e.g., voting choices) or reported opinions about current community quality with objective characteristics of the community (e.g., feelings of safety correlated with rates of crime). There is a

body of scientific literature that has investigated the relationship between reported behaviors and actual behaviors. Well-conducted surveys, by and large, do capture true respondent behaviors or intentions to act with great accuracy. Predictions of voting outcomes tend to be quite accurate using survey research, as do reported behaviors that are not about highly sensitive issues (e.g., family abuse or other illegal or morally sanctioned activities). For self-reports about highly sensitive issues, statistical adjustments can be made to correct for the respondents' tendency to report what they think the "correct" response should be.

Research on the correlation of resident opinion about service quality and "objective" ratings of service quality vary, with some showing stronger relationships than others. NRC's own research has demonstrated that residents who report the lowest ratings of street repair live in communities with objectively worse street conditions than those who report high ratings of street repair (based on road quality, delay in street repair, number of road repair employees). Similarly, the lowest rated fire services appear to be "objectively" worse than the highest rated fire services (expenditures per capita, response time, "professional" status of firefighters, breadth of services and training provided). Resident opinion commonly reflects objective performance data but is an important measure on its own. NRC principals have written, "If you collect trash three times a day but residents think that your trash haul is lousy, you still have a problem."

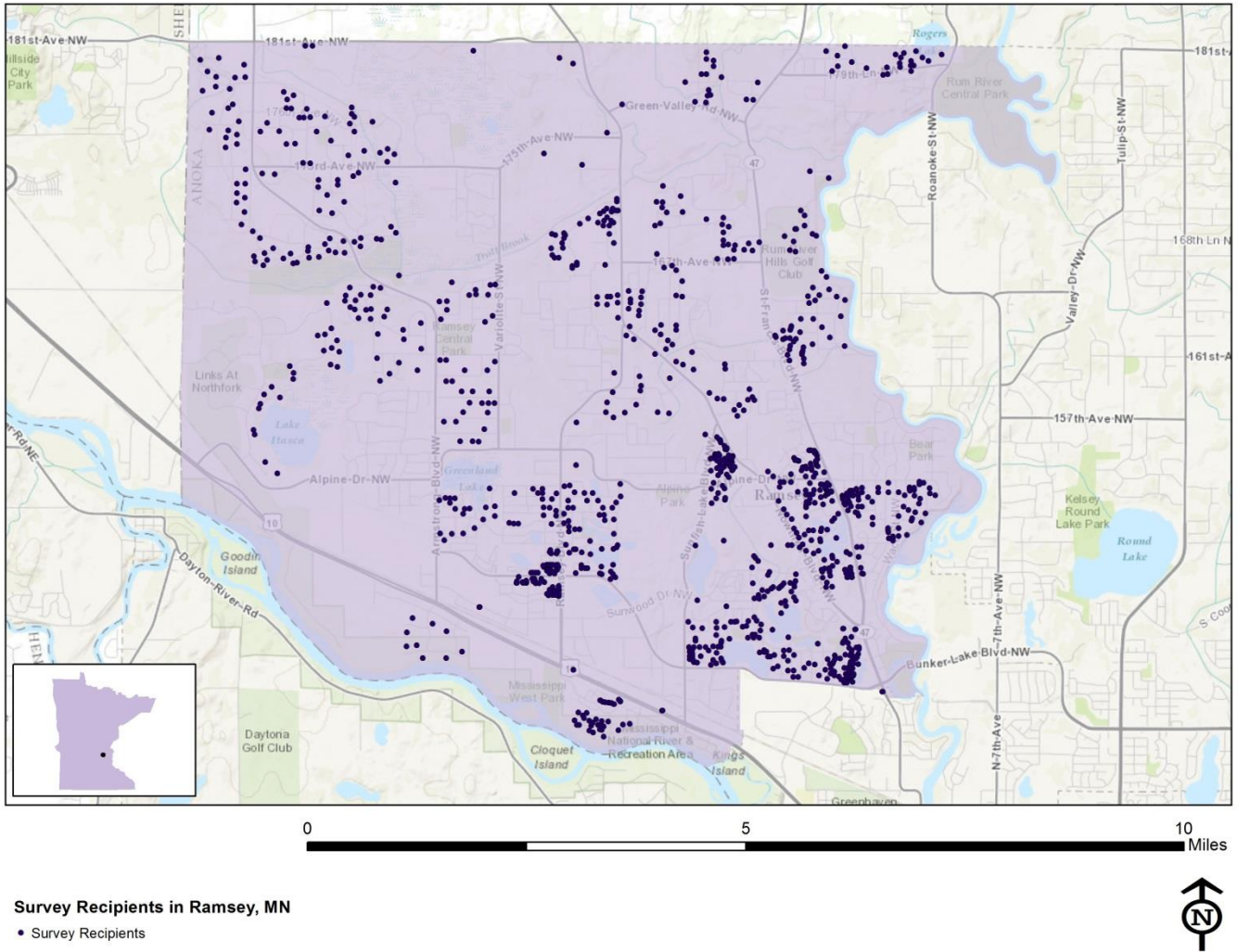
## Survey Sampling

"Sampling" refers to the method by which households were chosen to receive the survey. All households within the City of Ramsey were eligible to participate in the survey. A list of all households was represented by a United States Postal Service listing of housing units within the zip codes serving Ramsey. Since some of the zip codes that serve the City of Ramsey households may also serve addresses that lie outside of the community, the exact geographic location of each housing unit was compared to community boundaries using the most current municipal boundary file (updated on a quarterly basis) and addresses located outside of the City of Ramsey boundaries were removed from consideration.

To choose the 1,200 survey recipients, a systematic sampling method was applied to the list of households previously screened for geographic location. Systematic sampling is a procedure whereby a complete list of all possible items is culled, selecting every *Nth* one until the appropriate amount of items is selected. Multi-family housing units were over sampled as residents of this type of housing typically respond at lower rates to surveys than do those in single-family housing units. Figure 1 displays a map of the households selected to receive the survey. In general, because of the random sampling techniques used, the displayed sampling density will closely mirror the overall housing unit density (which may be different from the population density). While the theory of probability assumes no bias in selection, there may be some minor variations in practice (meaning, an area with only 15% of the housing units might be sampled at an actual rate that is slightly above or below that).

An individual within each household was selected using the birthday method. The birthday method selects a person within the household by asking the "person whose birthday has most recently passed" to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys. This instruction was contained in the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire.

Figure 1: Location of Survey Recipients



## Survey Administration and Response

Selected households received three mailings, one week apart, beginning in August 2014. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey. The next mailing contained a letter from the Mayor inviting the household to participate, a questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. The final mailing contained a reminder letter, another survey and a postage-paid return envelope. The second cover letter asked those who had not completed the survey to do so and those who had already done so to refrain from turning in another survey. Completed surveys were collected over the following six weeks.

About 2% of the 1,200 surveys mailed were returned because the housing unit was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the remaining 1,174 households that received the survey, 430 completed the survey, providing an overall response rate of 37%; average response rates for a mailed resident survey range from 25% to 40%.

## Confidence Intervals

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” and accompanying “confidence interval” (or margin of error). A traditional level of confidence, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the survey results because some residents’ opinions are relied on to estimate all residents’ opinions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A 95% confidence interval indicates that for every 100 random samples of this many residents, 95 of the confidence intervals created will include the “true” population response. This theory is applied in practice to mean that the “true” perspective of the target population lies

The margin of error for the City of Ramsey survey is no greater than plus or minus five percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (430 completed surveys).

For subgroups of responses, the margin of error increases because the sample size for the subgroup is smaller. For subgroups of approximately 100 respondents, the margin of error is plus or minus 10 percentage points.

### Survey Processing (Data Entry)

Upon receipt, completed surveys were assigned a unique identification number. Additionally, each survey was reviewed and “cleaned” as necessary. For example, a question may have asked a respondent to pick two items out of a list of five, but the respondent checked three; in this case, NRC would use protocols to randomly choose two of the three selected items for inclusion in the dataset.

All surveys then were entered twice into an electronic dataset; any discrepancies were resolved in comparison to the original survey form. Range checks as well as other forms of quality control were also performed.

### Survey Data Weighting

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample were compared to those found in the 2010 Census and American Community Survey estimates for adults in the City of Ramsey. The primary objective of weighting survey data is to make the survey sample reflective of the larger population of the community. The characteristics used for weighting were housing tenure, housing unit type, sex and age. The results of the weighting scheme are presented in the following table.

Table 81: Ramsey, MN 2014 Weighting Table

Characteristic	Population Norm	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
<b>Housing</b>			
Rent home	9%	8%	9%
Own home	91%	92%	91%
Detached unit	82%	75%	82%
Attached unit	18%	25%	18%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
White	94%	94%	94%
Not white	6%	6%	6%
Not Hispanic	98%	100%	99%
Hispanic	2%	0%	1%
<b>Sex and Age</b>			
Female	50%	57%	50%
Male	50%	43%	50%
18-34 years of age	30%	14%	29%
35-54 years of age	44%	38%	44%
55+ years of age	26%	48%	27%
Females 18-34	15%	9%	15%
Females 35-54	22%	21%	22%
Females 55+	13%	27%	13%
Males 18-34	15%	6%	15%
Males 35-54	22%	17%	22%
Males 55+	13%	21%	13%

within the confidence interval created for a single survey. For example, if 75% of residents rate a service as “excellent” or “good,” then the 4% margin of error (for the 95% confidence interval) indicates that the range of likely responses for the entire community is between 71% and 79%. This source of uncertainty is called sampling error. In addition to sampling error, other sources of error may affect any survey, including the non-response of residents with opinions different from survey responders. Though standardized on The NCS, on other surveys, differences in question wording, order, translation and data entry, as examples, can lead to somewhat varying results.

## Survey Data Analysis and Reporting

The survey dataset was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). For the most part, the percentages presented in the reports represent the “percent positive.” The percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., “excellent” and “good,” “very safe” and “somewhat safe,” “essential” and “very important,” etc.), or, in the case of resident behaviors/participation, the percent positive represents the proportion of respondents indicating “yes” or participating in an activity at least once a month.

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix A. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the reports. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

## **Appendix D: Survey Materials**

Dear Ramsey Resident,

It won't take much of your time to make a big difference!

Your household has been randomly selected to participate in a survey about your community. Your survey will arrive in a few days.

Thank you for helping create a better City!

Sincerely,



Sarah Strommen  
Mayor

Dear Ramsey Resident,

It won't take much of your time to make a big difference!

Your household has been randomly selected to participate in a survey about your community. Your survey will arrive in a few days.

Thank you for helping create a better City!

Sincerely,



Sarah Strommen  
Mayor

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Your household has been randomly selected to participate in a survey about your community. Your survey will arrive in a few days.

Thank you for helping create a better City!

Sincerely,



Sarah Strommen  
Mayor


Dear Ramsey Resident,

It won't take much of your time to make a big difference!

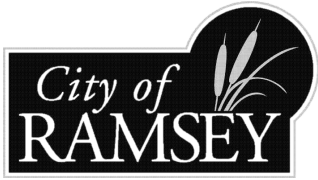
Your household has been randomly selected to participate in a survey about your community. Your survey will arrive in a few days.

Thank you for helping create a better City!

Sincerely,

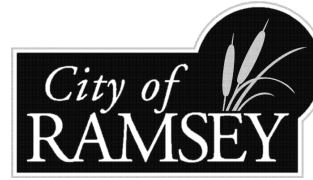


Sarah Strommen  
Mayor



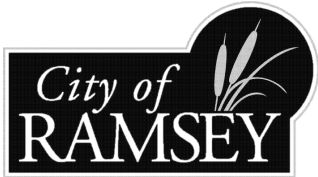
City of Ramsey  
7550 Sunwood Drive NW  
Ramsey, MN 55303

Presorted  
First Class Mail  
US Postage  
PAID  
Boulder, CO  
Permit NO. 94



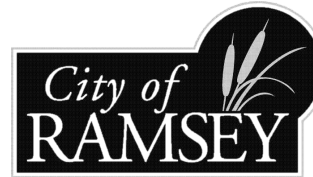
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Permit NO. 94



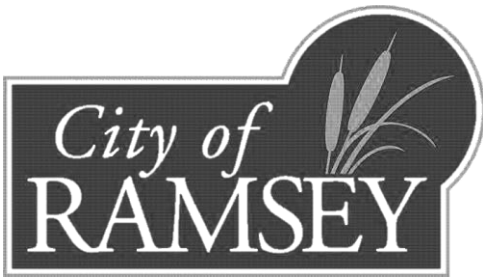
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7550 Sunwood Drive NW • Ramsey, MN 55303  
City Hall: 763-427-1410 • Fax: 763-427-5543  
[www.cityoframsey.com](http://www.cityoframsey.com)

August 2014

Dear Ramsey Resident:

Please help us shape the future of Ramsey! You have been selected at random to participate in the 2014 Ramsey Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey. Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. Your feedback will help Ramsey make decisions that affect our city.

**A few things to remember:**

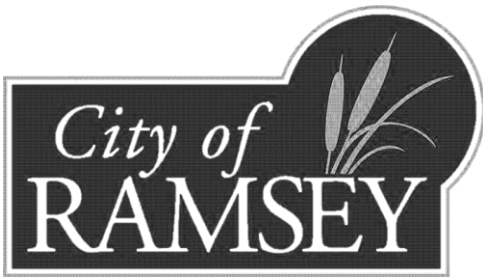
- **Your responses are completely anonymous.**
- In order to hear from a diverse group of residents, the adult 18 years or older in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey.
- **You may return the survey by mail in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.**

If you have any questions about the survey please call 763-433-9868.

Thank you for your time and participation!

Sincerely,

Sarah Strommen  
Mayor



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7550 Sunwood Drive NW • Ramsey, MN 55303  
City Hall: 763-427-1410 • Fax: 763-427-5543  
[www.cityoframsey.com](http://www.cityoframsey.com)

August 2014

Dear Ramsey Resident:

Here's a second chance if you haven't already responded to the 2014 Ramsey Citizen Survey! **(If you completed it and sent it back, we thank you for your time and ask you to recycle this survey. Please do not respond twice.)**

Please help us shape the future of Ramsey! You have been selected at random to participate in the 2014 Ramsey Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey. Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. Your feedback will help Ramsey make decisions that affect our city.

**A few things to remember:**

- **Your responses are completely anonymous.**
- In order to hear from a diverse group of residents, the adult 18 years or older in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey.
- **You may return the survey by mail in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.**

If you have any questions about the survey please call 763-433-9868.

Thank you for your time and participation!

Sincerely,

Sarah Strommen  
Mayor

# The City of Ramsey 2014 Citizen Survey

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult's year of birth does not matter. Please select the response (by circling the number or checking the box) that most closely represents your opinion for each question. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

**1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Ramsey:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Ramsey as a place to live .....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ramsey as a place to raise children .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ramsey as a place to work.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ramsey as a place to visit.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ramsey as a place to retire .....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5

**2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit.....	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall "built environment" of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall economic health of Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4	5

**3. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:**

	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Somewhat likely</i>	<i>Somewhat unlikely</i>	<i>Very unlikely</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recommend living in Ramsey to someone who asks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Ramsey for the next five years .....	1	2	3	4	5

**4. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:**

	<i>Very safe</i>	<i>Somewhat safe</i>	<i>Neither safe nor unsafe</i>	<i>Somewhat unsafe</i>	<i>Very unsafe</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
In your neighborhood during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In your neighborhood after dark .....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Ramsey's downtown/commercial areas during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Ramsey's downtown/commercial areas after dark .....	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Traffic flow on major streets .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by car in Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by bicycle in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails .....	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4	5
Public places where people want to spend time .....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing .....	1	2	3	4	5
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall condition of City maintained streets .....	1	2	3	4	5

**6. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Ramsey as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool .....	1	2	3	4	5
K-12 education .....	1	2	3	4	5
Adult educational opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cost of living in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Vibrant downtown/commercial area .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Ramsey .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters .....	1	2	3	4	5

**7. Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.**

	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Household member was a victim of a crime in Ramsey .....	1	2
Reported a crime to the police in Ramsey.....	1	2
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate .....	1	2
Contacted the City of Ramsey (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information.....	1	2
Contacted Ramsey elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion .....	1	2

**8. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following in Ramsey?**

	<i>2 times a week or more</i>	<i>2-4 times a month</i>	<i>Once a month or less</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
Visited a neighborhood park or City park .....	1	2	3	4
Attended a City-sponsored event.....	1	2	3	4
Used rail or other public transportation instead of driving.....	1	2	3	4
Walked or biked instead of driving .....	1	2	3	4
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4

**9. Thinking about local public meetings (of local elected officials like City Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards, town halls, HOA, neighborhood watch, etc.), in the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members attended or watched a local public meeting?**

	<i>2 times a week or more</i>	<i>2-4 times a month</i>	<i>Once a month or less</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
<u>Attended</u> a local public meeting .....	1	2	3	4
<u>Watched</u> (online or on television) a local public meeting.....	1	2	3	4

# The City of Ramsey 2014 Citizen Survey

## 10. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Ramsey:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Police services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal .....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage .....	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services .....	1	2	3	4	5
City parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning and zoning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control .....	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall customer service by Ramsey employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5
Trail maintenance.....	1	2	3	4	5

## 11. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the following?

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The City of Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4	5

## 12. Please rate the following categories of Ramsey government performance:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The value of services for the taxes paid to Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Ramsey is taking .....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Ramsey government does at welcoming citizen involvement .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall confidence in Ramsey government.....	1	2	3	4	5
Generally acting in the best interest of the community .....	1	2	3	4	5
Being honest.....	1	2	3	4	5
Treating all residents fairly .....	1	2	3	4	5
Development and success of a strategic action plan.....	1	2	3	4	5

**13. Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the Ramsey community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:**

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Not at all important</i>
Overall feeling of safety in Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit.....	1	2	3	4
Quality of overall natural environment in Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4
Overall “built environment” of Ramsey (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems).....	1	2	3	4
Health and wellness opportunities in Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment.....	1	2	3	4
Overall economic health of Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4

**14. To what extent are each of the following a source of information for you about Ramsey city government and its activities?**

	<i>Major source</i>	<i>Moderate source</i>	<i>Minor source</i>	<i>Not a source</i>
City newsletter (Ramsey Resident).....	1	2	3	4
Local newspaper.....	1	2	3	4
City website (www.cityoframsey.com).....	1	2	3	4
Word-of-mouth.....	1	2	3	4
Cable television (QCTV).....	1	2	3	4
City employees.....	1	2	3	4
Public meetings.....	1	2	3	4
City social media (Facebook).....	1	2	3	4

**15. Please rate the quality of each event listed below:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know/ don't attend</i>
Happy Days Festival.....	1	2	3	4	5
Pet Clinics.....	1	2	3	4	5
Kids Safety Camp.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Draw Music in the Park Series.....	1	2	3	4	5
Spring/Fall recycling events.....	1	2	3	4	5
Spring Business Expo.....	1	2	3	4	5
Annual Nite to Unite event.....	1	2	3	4	5

**16. Ramsey’s hometown festival, Happy Days, is organized by the volunteer Happy Days Committee. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the event?**

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I like the name “Happy Days Festival”.....	1	2	3	4
The name “Happy Days Festival” should be changed.....	1	2	3	4

**17. The City is developing a long-term street reconstruction program for maintaining over 174 miles of public streets throughout Ramsey which will require a reliable funding source. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following funding options for this purpose:**

	<i>Strongly support</i>	<i>Somewhat support</i>	<i>Somewhat oppose</i>	<i>Strongly oppose</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Property tax increases.....	1	2	3	4	5
Special assessments from benefitting properties to re-pay the City for 20% or more of applicable project costs, typically over 5 to 15 years.....	1	2	3	4	5
Electric and/or gas utility fee increases, approximately \$8 per utility, per month.....	1	2	3	4	5

**18. If you wish, you may note any additional comments or suggestions that you would like to make here:**

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# The City of Ramsey 2014 Citizen Survey

**Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.**

**D1. How often, if at all, do you do each of the following, considering all of the times you could?**

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Recycle at home .....	1	2	3	4	5
Purchase goods or services from a business located in Ramsey.....	1	2	3	4	5
Vote in local elections.....	1	2	3	4	5

**D2. Would you say that in general your health is:**

- Excellent     
  Very good     
  Good     
  Fair     
  Poor

**D3. What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:**

- Very positive     
  Somewhat positive     
  Neutral     
  Somewhat negative     
  Very negative

**D4. What is your employment status?**

- Working full time for pay  
 Working part time for pay  
 Unemployed, looking for paid work  
 Unemployed, not looking for paid work  
 Fully retired

**D5. Do you work inside the boundaries of Ramsey?**

- Yes, outside the home  
 Yes, from home  
 No

**D6. How many years have you lived in Ramsey?**

- Less than 2 years     
  11-20 years  
 2-5 years     
  More than 20 years  
 6-10 years

**D7. Which best describes the building you live in?**

- One family house detached from any other houses  
 Building with two or more homes (duplex, townhome, apartment or condominium)  
 Mobile home  
 Other

**D8. Is this house, apartment or mobile home...**

- Rented  
 Owned

**D9. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?**

- Less than \$300 per month  
 \$300 to \$599 per month  
 \$600 to \$999 per month  
 \$1,000 to \$1,499 per month  
 \$1,500 to \$2,499 per month  
 \$2,500 or more per month

**D10. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?**

- No     
  Yes

**D11. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?**

- No     
  Yes

**D12. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)**

- Less than \$25,000  
 \$25,000 to \$49,999  
 \$50,000 to \$99,999  
 \$100,000 to \$149,999  
 \$150,000 or more

**Please respond to both questions D13 and D14:**

**D13. Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?**

- No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino  
 Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino

**D14. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.)**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander  
 Black or African American  
 White  
 Other

**D15. In which category is your age?**

- 18-24 years     
  55-64 years  
 25-34 years     
  65-74 years  
 35-44 years     
  75 years or older  
 45-54 years

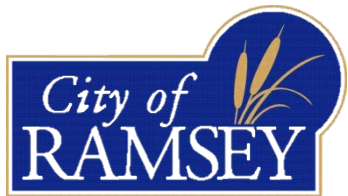
**D16. What is your sex?**

- Female     
  Male

**D17. Do you consider a cell phone or land line your primary telephone number?**

- Cell     
  Land line     
  Both

**Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the postage-paid envelope to: National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 549, Belle Mead, NJ 08502**



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Ramsey, MN 55303

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# **The National Citizen Survey™**

## **Local Government Playbook of Strategies to Improve Communities**

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The National Citizen Survey™  
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## Introduction

Think of this guide as a helium balloon that will help lighten the burden of determining how to put your survey results to work for your community. Most community leaders are buried in information, because running local government requires knowing a lot about your own organization, the organizations of other entities that can inhibit or facilitate your success and your residents' perspectives about what is and ought to be happening. The National Citizen Survey you recently conducted has provided you with reliable reconnaissance about your residents' opinions and activities that you can get from no administrative records or discussions with managers or elected officials. Although the information in your survey is uniquely valuable, knowing what to make of it – as in, what to do with it – benefits from some assistance.

### First, Take a Deep Breath

Pressure mounts to use data wisely. People are saying that data are money. Everyone is talking about how data help managers make the right decisions – to reduce crime, improve the housing stock, expand the tax base, sell bonds. It is true that being data driven does increase the likelihood that your decisions will be better for the community, but we recommend that as managers or elected officials are exposed to valid information about resident perspectives about the local quality of life, governance and reports of residents' engagement in the community, it is best to take off your leader hat and just listen to what the report says. Forget how data driven you must be and appreciate the survey results like you might your favorite music. Take the time to feel your own reaction to what you hear. Rather than pretend that management decisions are made strictly by the numbers and that emotion plays no part in the power of data, the first question a leader should ask of his survey data is not “do they make sense?” but “do they feel right?”

Once you've noticed which survey results resonate most with you, then examine them. Do they square with other data you have? Do they confirm what you and others have observed? Finally, as you think about what the survey results mean to you, remember that you are not alone. There are some, probably many, staff who have more direct experience with the areas reported on in the survey. Convene them to participate in the debrief, which may include the one you have with the researchers at National Research Center, Inc. if you have conducted The National Citizen Survey. In that debrief, you will

get a sense of how NRC recommends you move forward to put your results to use.

### Where the Action Is

Putting your results to work is precisely why you conducted the survey, so taking the time to absorb the results is the beginning, not the end of the survey process. This Playbook of Strategies provides you with recommendations about how to move forward with your survey results. It includes vignettes of how other jurisdictions used their survey results to improve their communities to help you get started with navigating toward building successful outcomes in your community. The local governments highlighted in this playbook include:

- Cartersville, Georgia
- Winter Garden, Florida
- Paducah, Kentucky
- Noblesville, Indiana
- Park City, Utah
- Boulder, Colorado
- Hamilton, Ohio
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties, Washington)
- Ankeny, Iowa
- Fort Collins, Colorado
- Greeley, Colorado
- Pocatello, Idaho
- Livermore, California
- Peoria, Arizona
- Longmont, Colorado
- Westminster, Colorado
- Littleton, Colorado

# Creating Livable Communities

## The Many Faces of “Livability”

Most leaders charged with running local governments seek to create “livable communities.” However, the phrase has been used to cover so much territory that it no longer is clear what anyone really means by it. For the literal minded, a livable place is, redundantly, where people reside and, if a place were not livable, it would be empty, save for passers-by – including those who arrive temporarily for commerce. However, by livable, most people mean something symbolic. The phrase “livable community” evokes a place that is not simply habitable but that is desirable. It is not only where people do live, but where they want to live.

Awards are given for the most livable places in America and the winners are chosen, often by magazines, based on many quality of life criteria like safety, affordability and beauty. Because livability means so many things to different people, researchers and community organizations have explored just about every window into the meaning of the term. For some, livability has to do with the built environment – a place that hews to land conservation, avoids sprawl and funnels activity into pedestrian-friendly space with low rise buildings and attractive greenery (Kunstler, 1993). Proper land use in a livable place results in the “spirit of community,” (Fischer, 2000) where neighbors trust and rely on each other and turn to each other for help. One organization reminds us that livability should not be the aspiration of only well off communities: “livability extends to economic dynamism and career opportunities as well as recreational, aesthetic, cross-generational and cultural activities.” (Community Research Connections in <http://crcresearch.org/case-studies/case-studies-sustainable-infrastructure/land-use-planning/what-makes-a-city-liveable>).

A livable community not only attracts people because its infrastructure represents good planning principles, it may also provide expansive opportunities like those of great cities. One simple characteristic of a great city that intersects with livable communities is the creation of a place where people want to spend time outside (<http://ecolocalizer.com/2009/07/08/what-is-a-good-city/>).

A more elaborate set of amenities comes from the mid-twentieth century, when Lewis Mumford described this way what exceptional cities provide: “The chief function of the city is to convert power into form, energy into culture, dead matter into the living symbols of art, biological reproduction into social creativity.” This is a tall order but one that some believe would contribute to a city becoming “livable.”

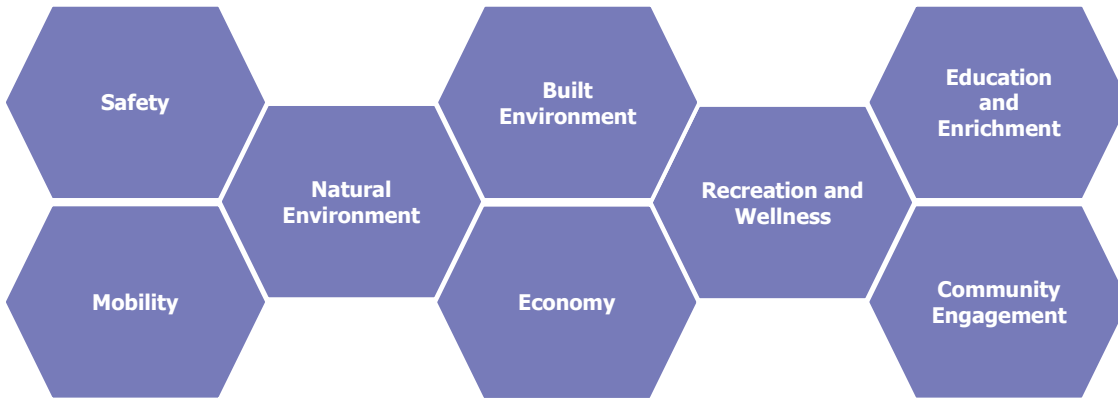
Below is a word cloud of definitions of livability that came from 18 articles reviewed by the National Association of Regional Networks (NARC).<sup>1</sup> It demonstrates the salience of Transportation and Community Quality as well as the diversity of other terms used to describe “livability.”

Figure 1: Livability Word Cloud



<sup>1</sup> Livability Word Cloud Including Scholarly and Practitioner Definitions (www.wordle.net) in LIVABILITY LITERATURE REVIEW: A SYNTHESIS OF CURRENT PRACTICE. National Association of Regional Councils and U.S. Department of Transportation 2012, Washington, D.C.

Figure 2: The Eight Facets of Livable Communities



### Cross-cutting Management for Livability

While more and more local governments seek to create livable communities, the management tool they most often rely on is an engine comprising individual departments, each charged with providing targeted services, like police, library, parks, economic development, streets and many more. As much as the directors of these departments sit together at the executive table, they also confront unique service delivery issues that force a focused rather than peripheral view of their territory, so interconnection of work effort is hard to achieve. The difficulty of integrating the plans and actions of individual departments is the reason that local government (in fact any level of government and any large business) struggles to become a finely tuned, efficient and high powered machine. Nevertheless, the delivery of a livable community requires a honed engine with strong connection among all departments because the characteristics that make communities livable are not the territory of individual units (or even the government alone, as noted above).

Solutions to local challenges will come most easily from an integrated drive to improve. For example, a high crime rate in a jurisdiction is unlikely to be solved only by police or court action. Crime may be the result of conditions related to jobs, schools, street lighting, community connectedness, public trust, location of parks and more. Likewise, pedestrian friendly streets can be developed best with a partnership of planning, parks, utilities, police, fire, efforts to encourage community

engagement and participation of the private sector and faith-based organizations.

### The NCS Helps Manage “Livability”

The National Citizen Survey™ has been designed to gather resident perspectives about community livability and to report to elected officials, local managers and community stakeholders those areas of livability that are doing well and those that merit improvement. The results of The NCS are reported in eight facets of community livability – natural environment, economy, built environment, recreation and wellness, safety, education and enrichment, mobility and community engagement. For each facet, residents report their perspectives about three aspects of livability – what we call the pillars of community life – the quality of community, quality of services and related resident activities.

With The NCS, the vague definitions of livability disappear because the report offers quantified metrics that indicate how livable the community is overall and within each domain. These measures will help leaders identify areas of strength and need and evaluate progress toward improvement. The emphasis on livability makes for a strategic approach to community quality and arms local leaders with critical information they need to help move the community where residents want it to be.

## The Es of Action

NRC researchers have identified six kinds of action that can be considered as response to your citizen survey results. These categories of action have been gleaned from studying how jurisdictions have used their resident opinions to improve their communities and they are shown in the graphic, below. Don't feel obliged to identify interventions in each of the six categories, but appreciate them as suggested areas where important movement in community quality can be, and has been, made.



**Envision:** Results of The National Citizen Survey often are used by communities as part of goal setting and strategic or comprehensive planning. By understanding what residents think are the characteristics of the community that are most important to protect or improve, by knowing what is working and what remain challenges, local leaders can be guided toward planning for a community that builds on its strengths and improves in the areas that matter the most.

**Earmark:** Jurisdictions use The National Citizen Survey results most often to allocate or redistribute resources based on the aspects of community that residents find wanting. When mobility is important but not easily available or delivered with obstacles to accessibility, it may be wise to invest more in transit, roads, bicycling or walking paths. If ratings of the community's recreation and wellness are not strong or resident participation in civic volunteer opportunities are weak, wise reallocation of limited resources to enhance those facets of community will help move you forward.

**Educate:** Getting the word out about community amenities, services and opportunities to let residents and leaders of other organizations understand what you do well and what they may not understand about your community is one of the most common uses of survey findings. Whether marketing existing

programs or communicating a new community brand, education about what seems to be misunderstood or what may remain little known is a great way to use The NCS results.

**Engage:** Engagement can come in two essential forms – engagement with individuals or partnership with groups. In both cases, the results of your survey are relevant to the community overall and are not simply a comment on local government. Livable communities grow from the connection of businesses, non-profits, the government and residents working together. Engagement with individuals may mean little more than inviting residents to comment and work on The NCS findings; partnership with organizations can even start with your own employees and then spread to work with other levels of government, hospitals, schools and the Chamber of Commerce. When civic life is understood to be everyone's purview, the questions that arise from The NCS aren't only, "how can government improve?" They include, "how can we all contribute to making things better?"

**Enact:** Across the country, hundreds of millions of dollars have been raised or saved based on findings of The National Citizen Survey. These successes are created by findings that indicate support for possible bond raising ballot questions or that identify a need for new services, like recycling or transit, that could save time and money or simply improve the quality of life. Enacting new policies or establishing new programs often are the actions that follow attention to what residents report on their citizen survey.

**Evaluate:** The act of using The NCS is itself an evaluation of community, but beyond that single use of the survey, repeated use permits leaders to determine if the programs, policies or personnel changes they enact have had their intended effects. Other kinds of evaluation can come from The NCS. Often clients want to understand more about a finding of a survey, so they seek information from a more in-depth survey on fewer topics or by listening to groups of stakeholders through guided discussions. Performance measurement – comparing this administration's results to earlier administrations of the survey in your own jurisdiction or to benchmark jurisdictions - is a kind of evaluation that is linked to survey results when resident responses are tracked along with other performance data about service activities and costs.

Not every action must reflect each of the Es listed above. Your use of the Es of Action can be effective relying only on one theme. Nevertheless, this

example from Cartersville, GA embodies parts of each of the action themes.

#### A Case Study in Resident-friendly Recycling

## Cartersville, Georgia

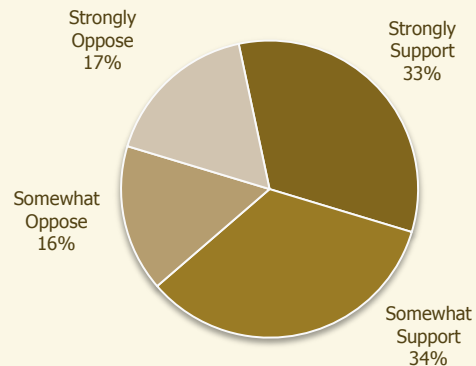
The City of Cartersville, GA had a robust program in place for garbage collection and disposal. Since the mid-1970s, standard services such as curbside pick-up, large item pick-up, and dumpster services had been augmented by extras like bulk leaf vacuuming and grass clipping removal. The City had conducted a pilot recycling program in the late 1990s, but low participation and high costs made further implementation prohibitive. Although there was a rising sense that the city should provide recycling services, staff were concerned that recycling would require a rate increase that could upset customers and cause further difficulty. In 2009, Cartersville added a question about recycling to its fourth administration of The National Citizen Survey. The survey revealed that 67% of residents were supportive of including recycling in the city's waste disposal program, even if that change required an additional cost. Based on results from The National Citizen Survey, Cartersville decided the time was right to implement a recycling program, and set a goal to have the program in place by the beginning of 2012. Before implementing the new recycling program, Cartersville went through a multi-step planning and implementation process to ensure its success.

**Envision:** The City first identified seven major questions that would need to be resolved: How will recyclable materials be received? What type of containers do you want to use? What type of vehicle will it take? Can our regular collection routes be utilized? How much manpower will it take? How much will this program cost, and how will we pay for it?

The Public Works department met with its processing partner, Bartow County Solid Waste, to answer the first question. It was determined that a dual stream collection system – with one stream for paper and a separate stream for containers – could be easily integrated into the current structure and would also be sustainable for the foreseeable future.

The City also looked at its current five-day pick-up schedule and determined that a biweekly pick-up schedule would enable the City to implement recycling pick-up with minimal additional staff.

The 2009 National Citizen Survey asked residents of Cartersville, "To what degree do you support or oppose adding a curbside recycling program, even if it meant an additional collection fee?"



**Earmark:** Next, the City needed to determine what type of collection containers should be used. Instead of choosing the standard 18-gallon open tubs, Cartersville opted for a container that would be easier for residents and collection staff to handle. The City decided on a smaller version of their garbage collection containers in two colors – dark blue for containers and light gray for paper. Because recycling was scheduled for collection every other week, the bins selected were large enough to hold two weeks' worth of recycling for the average household. A complementary recycling vehicle was selected for its ability to dump these units into a divided body for paper and containers.

**Educate:** The public was informed that recycling would be available to all residents on an opt-in basis, and they were encouraged to sign up to receive the collection bins. Information about the new program was distributed in the City's newsletter and sent to residents along with their garbage bills.

To facilitate ease of use, a sticker displaying the full year's collection schedule was displayed on the top of each container. This way, residents would only have to glance at the top of their trash bins to determine their next date for pick-up.

**Engage:** Cartersville's Solid Waste Fund operates as an enterprise fund, and is therefore solely dependent on funds collected within that department to operate. Public Works increased fees by a reasonable \$2 per month to generate the funds needed to implement the program.

To add value for this increase, the City also developed and publicized a program called "Reside with Pride." The program includes specific times each year in which solid waste customers can leave

items from their home or yard curbside for pick-up free of charge – eliminating waste that might have accumulated over several weeks or months.

**Evaluate:** In February 2012, Cartersville successfully launched its first recycling program. Residents signing up to receive the service exceeded the City’s original estimate of 2,000 households.

	2013	2011
Approval rating	83%	50%
Comparison to Benchmark	Above	Much below

As a follow-up, the City included additional questions about the program in its 2013 administration of The National Citizen Survey. Quality of recycling services went from “much below” both the national and southeast United States benchmarks to “above” the benchmark in each area. Sixty-three percent of Cartersville residents indicated that they had recycled at least once in the past twelve months.

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In the following chapters, each of the six Es is further defined and is accompanied by case studies of local governments that have used survey results from their residents to help strengthen their communities. These studies are intended to inform and inspire other local governments not only to understand but to act on survey data.



## Envision

Every organization plans. Some plans happen on the fly when meetings seem to be veering off track but in most local governments, managers are trained to plan. Most plan to plan, by scheduling and distributing relevant materials in advance of meetings to create plans. Strategic, master, comprehensive or long range plans most often are created out of discussions with elected boards, councils or commissions. In an analysis of strategic plan success, it was found that more than 70% of plans fail. The research also found that a critical key to success in strategic planning was understanding stakeholder opinions:

*Without an objective and unbiased understanding of “what’s going on here,” you’re not likely to come up with strategies that will be very effective. Take a hard look at what’s happening externally and internally and pay special attention to the needs of your stakeholders. As John Dewey once said, “A problem well defined is a problem half solved.”<sup>2</sup>*

These plans always benefit from starting with credible information about the status of the community and issues that resonate with residents. We often liken the use of citizen survey results in the planning context as building a platform on which all stakeholders can stand and look at the same horizon. This way, there will be much less opportunity for individuals to claim they speak for the entire community when they offer the perspectives of a vocal minority or merely claim to know what all taxpayers are thinking.

Although strategic planning can vary significantly in terms of time and resources, there are a number of characteristics that help create more successful strategic plans in local governments.

### Characteristics of Successful Strategic Plans

- Set an appropriate scope, timeframe and resource allotment
- Play to organizational strengths
- Align with your organizational culture
- Has actionable, tangible steps
- List expected outputs and outcomes
- Assign responsibility

<sup>2</sup> Leo Bottary. Top 10 Attributes Of Successful Strategic Plans <https://www.openforum.com/articles/top-10-attributes-of-successful-strategic-plans/>

- Are revisited (progress against goals are regularly monitored and considered).<sup>34</sup>

Two case studies highlight the use of survey data in strategic planning. Winter Garden, Florida used The NCS data, first to help develop its strategic plan, and now continues to use survey data as performance measures when revisiting the strategic plan.

### Case Studies in Strategic Planning

## Winter Garden, FL

In Winter Garden, Florida, elected commission and senior staff identified the need to create a budget that reflects the values of the community. Winter Garden, with a previous tagline, “a charming little city with a juicy past” (referring to its history in the orange industry), has a historic downtown with bike and pedestrian connections to surrounding towns via its 22 mile West Orange Trail. A city west of Orlando, this gem of a small community relies on resident perspectives to assure that the community is steering in the right direction.

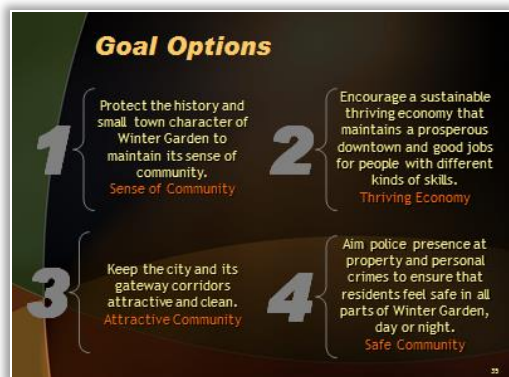
The experiences and preferences of stakeholder groups were collected through a survey of residents, focus groups, a town hall meeting and interviews. With a mission of becoming the best small city in Florida, staff then augmented findings with other sources of data and observations.



Results were synthesized to describe the community’s vision, values and goals. Research results and the strategic plan help guide the City in decision-making, budget allocation performance measurement.

<sup>3</sup> Colorado Trust OCA

<sup>4</sup> Leo Bottary. Top 10 Attributes Of Successful Strategic Plans. August 2011. <https://www.openforum.com/articles/top-10-attributes-of-successful-strategic-plans/>



Winter Garden monitors its strategic plan using performance data from The NCS. Throughout its annual budget document, Winter Garden publishes, along with operational indicators, customer service indicators from The NCS and other sources. Since the city conducts The NCS every other year, targets are set for years when the survey is to be repeated.

Key Performance Indicators: Customer Service Indicators	FY 09/10 Actual	FY 10/11 Actual
Safety from Property Crime Survey Index	51%	71%
Crime Prevention Survey Index	60%	83%
Average Safety in Your Neighborhood Survey Index	80%	89%
Safety in Downtown Winter Garden After Dark Survey Index	68%	82%

## Paducah, Kentucky

Paducah is in far western Kentucky, bordering Illinois. I-24 swoops through the city of 25,000. Paducah is a river city located at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. Besides housing West Kentucky Community and Technical College and Murray State University's Paducah Campus, Paducah is home to two hospitals, a bustling shopping area, and numerous art galleries and cultural venues including the Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Performing Arts Center and the National Quilt Museum of the United States.

Paducah also is an employment hub for the region with jobs in health care and the river industry. West of the city is the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, a facility that began enriching uranium in 1952 and one of the area's largest employers. Just before our planning session with Paducah leaders, USEC, which leases the plant from the Department of Energy, announced plans to cut jobs. The plant currently is in a transition phase with the DOE negotiating with

Global Laser Enrichment for the enrichment and sale of depleted uranium tails at the plant.

NRC conducted a full day workshop with Paducah's top staff and City commission to identify key survey findings. Notably, the local press attended this meeting and the journalist on assignment was invited to participate in the discussions. In the community visioning, participants were asked to



specify what was unique about Paducah as well as what they wanted for Paducah in the coming years. Survey results clearly showed that residents were not enthusiastic about the economic condition of the City. The imminent cut back in jobs at USEC did not help matters. In the discussion about the future, leaders identified this vision: A downtown hotel, high-paying quality jobs, economic development, population growth, sustained economy, more businesses/employer infill and more shopping. In small groups, jobs and economic development were seen to be top priorities.

But The NCS also identified public trust as an area that concerned residents, and that concern resonated with leaders. Therefore, from their small group discussions, leaders identified public image and community pride as areas for attention in addition to the local economy. These conclusions led to a set of action plans. To bolster community pride and reputation, the city would develop a marketing and community engagement strategy and increase its focus on neighborhood revitalization.

Economic development was to include developing a matrix to identify the types of businesses to incent depending on anticipated return on investment, creating a more development-ready infrastructure, and educating the public on building inspection policies to help encourage new development and the expansion of existing industries.

Paducah leaders will track the action plans and readjust as needed before The NCS is conducted again in two years.

## Engage

Modern government might be better viewed as a social network rather than “the cockpit from which society is governed.” The more modes of opportunity that allow direct citizen engagement, the more accurately government represents public consensus about decisions and priorities.<sup>5</sup>

Dynamic partnerships can dramatically increase the effectiveness and buy-in for government programs. Your largest partner in governing is your residents. Partnerships also involve the private sector, community-based organizations and other government organizations. Partnerships allow actors to learn from each other’s experiences with the effect of increasing efficiency and ultimately improving the breadth and quality of a community. By collaborating with others, government can garner a broader range of resources.

### Partnering with Your Residents

Residents are the heart of any community. By contributing their time, energy and talents, resident volunteers pump the life blood of thriving towns and cities. Residents who donate their time serve in many roles – neighborhood organizers, park volunteers, senior center ride providers, and more. However, although all communities have a wide range of sources for volunteers, volunteers often are an untapped resource, in many instances simply because residents are not asked to contribute. Volunteers can benefit government outside of direct service also. Volunteers create community ownership and generate public support for government by sharing their positive experiences with others in their community. Studies have found that levels of public trust are higher in communities with higher levels of civic engagement.<sup>6</sup>

Maximizing the benefits of volunteers takes commitment, planning, time, and organization. Governments should spend time considering whether and why they want to work with volunteers and develop a philosophy for the overall engagement of volunteers. Volunteers should never be considered “free help” but rather extensions of paid staff engaged in the fulfillment of a government’s mission. Although there are no guarantees that all volunteers will be beneficial for an organization,

these best practices should increase the likelihood of success. Particularly important are initial and periodic assessments of whether and how volunteers should be used.

More intensive collaboration may involve using a “Train-the-Trainer” model whereby local government staff train residents to go out into the community and share information and skills with other residents. Resident behaviors are strongly correlated with sustainability, community safety and emergency preparedness, health and wellness, community inclusivity and more. Pro-social attitudes and behaviors can be significantly strengthened through community outreach, training and organizing.

The development of local non-government leadership also has been a strategy used in many community health initiatives. Identifying and promoting a local “champion” lends a strong hand in helping residents adopt behaviors to strengthen communities.

### Strategies for Successful Use of Volunteer Resources

- Conduct a periodic organizational assessment to determine whether and in what ways volunteers should be used and the organizational capacity for effective use of volunteers
- Develop plans around the appropriate skills, expertise, uses and roles of volunteers
- Identify effective recruiting strategies to attract capable people
- Have policies and procedures for volunteers, including risk management procedures, rules and regulations, and expected time commitment
- Screen and interview applicants for volunteer positions
- Place volunteers where they will be most effective in terms of the organization’s needs and the volunteer’s skills and available time
- Orient and train volunteers, not only on specific tasks, but on the organization’s mission, vision and goals.
- Provide meaningful volunteer jobs and roles in the organization
- Have a designated manager to supervise volunteers
- Empower volunteers by encouraging them to take initiative and ask questions
- Periodically assess volunteer performance and staff support for volunteers
- Track volunteer hours
- Regularly show appreciation and recognition of volunteers

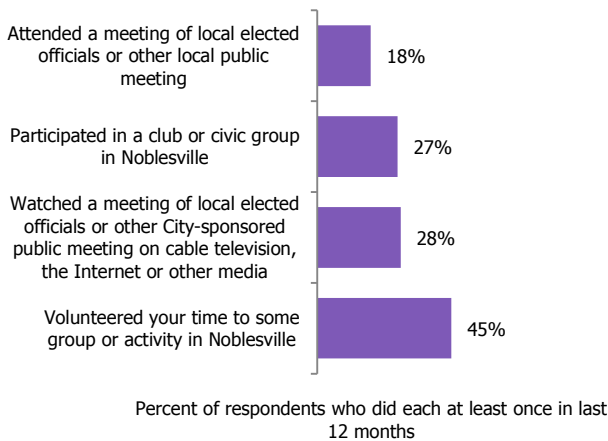
<sup>5</sup> What I Learned: An Insider’s Guide to Improving Local Government Modest proposals for fixing local government in America by James G. Kostaras AIA, AICP / Summer 2011: Government (Volume 14 n2)  
<sup>6</sup> ASPA Task Force on Civic Education in the 21st Century and Putnam, R.B. Bowling Alone, America’s Declining Social Capital. Journal of Democracy.

A Case Study in Civic Engagement

## Noblesville, Indiana

Civic engagement has been a passion of the mayor of this fast growing Indiana city since he took office on January 1, 2004. Mayor John Ditslear wasn't yet mayor when the Community Vision for Excellence initiative started in 1993. Its mission was to measure progress on a variety of indicators so that Noblesville would continue to be a great community for residents and visitors. The goals of Vision Noblesville (as it is now called) include helping all residents find meaningful employment, a healthy lifestyle, life-long learning opportunities, social services assistance when needed and available volunteer options.

Noblesville's 2010 National Citizen Survey was instrumental in alerting Mayor Ditslear of the need to enhance community volunteerism. According to the survey findings that year, participation in clubs or civic groups was not as strong as it was in other communities. The same was true for attending or watching public meetings and the number of Noblesville residents that volunteered was not remarkably high.



Being able to analyze the Citizen Survey data about this issue helped the mayor plan solutions. "We learned from the 2010 citizen survey that residents wanted more volunteer opportunities," said Mayor Ditslear.

To create a solution, he began a one year part-time pilot program that focused on increasing opportunities for and participation in volunteerism. This resulted in the creation of a volunteer program

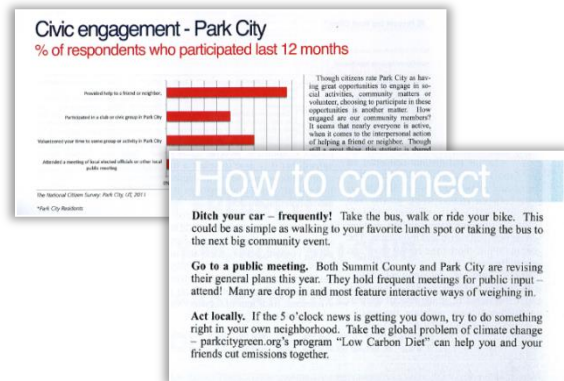
for community special events which has been very successful and continues to grow. This was followed by hiring a full-time manager of Vision Noblesville. Vision Noblesville has brought together a wide variety of community members to review long-term issues for the city and determine the best way to address these issues. Data are intentionally combined with community stories to help craft solutions which engage all sectors – government, business, education, and nonprofits. Currently, Vision Noblesville has 16 teams whose participants represent 72 different community organizations and businesses. These teams are working on issues ranging from enhancing the arts and creating more environmentally sustainable practices to improving the local workforce and services provided to families in need. All Vision Noblesville team members volunteer their time and expertise.

In the coming years, new Citizen Survey results along with other data will help the committees measure their success in achieving each of their established goals, including the goal of increasing volunteerism and civic engagement.

Case Studies in linking Civic Engagement for Fund Raising with Measurement

## Park City, Utah and Boulder, Colorado

Foundations can't just snap their fingers and expect money to rain from the sky. Often, potential donors want information to help them understand where limited funds ought to be contributed. Kind of like a stock prospectus, only prettier, the Boulder County Trends Report, a publication of The Community Foundation for Boulder County, and the Park City Mile Post – modeled after the Boulder report –



published by The Park Record in cooperation with The Park City Foundation, offer an array of indicators about community from administrative sources and survey research. The Boulder County Trend Report touts “150 ways to gauge the state of our community and be inspired.” Each publication focuses on annual highlights. The Park City Mile Post is focused on three areas: growth and development, connectivity and the economy. In the Connectivity section of the report, social connections and civic engagement are covered.

The Boulder County Trends report highlighted the economy, education, the environment and the Latino community at the same time that it also offered up to date indicators of community engagement<sup>7</sup>.

Percent of Boulder County Residents Who Say We're Very Open or Open to the Following Groups	
Families with young children	81%
Young adults without children	68%
Gay and Lesbian people	51%
Senior citizens	58%
Recent college grads	51%
Racial and ethnic minorities	45%
Immigrants from other countries	43%

Source: TCF Survey 2014

In their data reports, both Park City and The Community Foundation of Boulder County offer examples of how residents and businesses can support the community not only through monetary donations but through donations of time like reading to children in school, becoming a tutor, volunteering for an after school program, making sure your business supports parents with children in school, using alternative modes of travel, becoming more active and more.

## Partnering with Other Organizations

Your creativity in finding strong and even uncommon partners that are outside the sector in which you operate can be an enormous asset for local government. An unlikely nonprofit partner may hold the solution to a problem you have faced for a long time. Partners from the private sector may be especially powerful allies. You cannot succeed doing everything on your own, hidden from the goodwill of potential partners.

Engaging in meaningful partnerships takes motivation and a plan, and not all partnerships and

<sup>7</sup> In, “Our civic participation and giving” (p. 85, Boulder County Trends 2013, Community Foundation of Boulder County)

collaborations are successful. Research has found that successful partnerships have certain practices in common. Consider how you can implement some of these strategies, or add to the ones you already are using, as you strengthen your network of partner organizations and volunteers.

## Strategies to Promote Successful Partnerships

- Identify service needs and organizational gaps that could be filled by partners
- Strategically identify partnerships that will be most beneficial to your organization
- Create a partnership plan that describes the purposes and activities that will link the partners over the coming 12 to 24 months
- Partner with diverse types of organizations, both for-profit businesses and nonprofits, private and public
- Provide meaningful roles and engaging activities for partners
- Work with partners to leverage community resources in order to achieve goals
- Communicate regularly with partners – sharing information on each others’ activities, successes, and challenges, as well as community needs and resources
- Co-sponsor activities with partners
- Participate in grant writing activities together
- Periodically publish evaluation findings in communications aimed at a wide variety of stakeholders, including partners
- Create community events with partners not only to familiarize the public with each program but also to show the links between program partners

Hamilton, Ohio is featured to demonstrate the importance of public-private partnerships.

### A Public-Private Partnership to Energize the Urban Core

## Hamilton, Ohio

Even as the great recession was receding, Hamilton, Ohio, like many cities and towns across the U.S. continued to suffer economically. Ratings from The National Citizen Survey described a community that felt job growth was too slow, shopping opportunities were not good and Hamilton was not a great place to work. On top of that, ratings for economic development were subpar.

The specific and weak ratings of these economy-related community characteristics and services were enlightening even as the general sentiments were not news to city leaders. Knowing the economic challenges they faced, Hamilton leaders had put in place a rigorous public-private partnership program to grow the economic base of the community – even before the national economic meltdown in 2008.

The Hamilton Community Foundation, with cooperation of the city, sold the Hamiltonian Hotel to Concord Hospitality Enterprises, developer of Marriott Hotels. With favorable financial arrangements, the redevelopment of the old hotel into a Courtyard by Marriott created great opportunities for riverfront redevelopment – a boon to community quality as well as to the Hamilton budget. There is now an ambitious strategic plan for “Energizing Hamilton’s Urban Core”

(<https://www.hamilton-city.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=4707>) that includes housing for workers, commercial and industrial development, upgraded infrastructure and enhanced entertainment opportunities. This extensive redevelopment effort should affect resident perceptions about the economic vitality of Hamilton and the next iteration of the citizen survey will demonstrate if this aspiration is being met.

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## Partnerships for Sustainability

Partnerships found to be most effective often involve multiple partners from multiple sectors. Areas commonly addressed through collaboration of private, public and non-profit groups focus on sustainability and food security. Advocates working on community food security have been one of the most innovative groups in terms of forming partnerships to address community needs. For more information on these partnerships, please see the following web pages.

- American Planning Association: Helping local, regional, and state governments address food system challenges  
<http://www.planning.org/nationalcenters/health/briefingpapers/foodcouncils.htm>
- Nuener Kailee, Kelly Sylvia and Samina Raja. Planning to Eat? Innovative Government Plans and Policies to Build Healthy Food Systems in the United States. September 2011.  
[http://cccfoodpolicy.org/sites/default/files/resources/planning\\_to\\_eat\\_sunybuffalo.pdf](http://cccfoodpolicy.org/sites/default/files/resources/planning_to_eat_sunybuffalo.pdf)

Partnerships with other government organizations also are becoming a necessity of modern government. Issues related to sustainability, mobility and economic development often are addressed best through a regional model.

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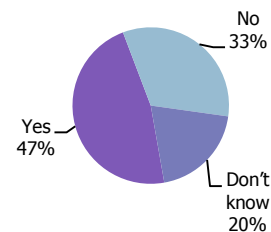
### A Case Study in Intergovernmental Cooperation

## Puget Sound Clean Air Agency

Wood burning devices (fireplaces and wood stoves) rank as one of the top air pollution offenders in the Puget Sound area of Washington. Although these devices create light, warmth and atmosphere, they are harmful to the environment and the health of area residents. Pollution levels from these sources were higher than the goals established by the Clean Air Agency’s Board of Directors.

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency’s mission is to protect the health of residents who reside in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties and to improve air quality by adopting and enforcing air quality regulations, sponsoring voluntary initiatives to improve air quality, and educating people and businesses about clean-air choices. The four-county Puget Sound region spans an area of 6,300 square miles and is home to approximately 3.4 million people. The Board understood that collaboration with educational, governmental, non-profit and corporate entities was key to facilitating awareness and behavior change among residents.

Do you think a gas or propane stove, fireplace insert, or fireplace could meet your needs as well as your wood stove, wood-burning insert, or wood-burning fireplace?



To understand if there would be resistance to modifying wood burning sources, the Board commissioned a survey to gather information about the use of wood-burning devices in households in the Puget Sound region. Information from this survey was combined with scientific data to create an emissions inventory and determine policies for the region.

## Educate

Education and outreach are essential elements for strengthening and extending the work of local governments. They can take many forms, including marketing and public relations; community education and advocacy; collaborations, alliances, and partnerships; networking and more. Outreach is the mechanism for building a base of support. Increased networking and greater outreach mean access to more people. Without effective outreach efforts, organizations may limit their access to resources and fail to establish a positive image or reputation within the community.<sup>8</sup> Public outreach is more than just broadcasting to residents. Good outreach should target diverse audiences:

- Community-based organizations such as schools, faith communities and community associations
- Business associations for possible partnerships, volunteers, donations and media access
- Volunteer groups
- Local media

### Public Outreach and Education

Public outreach can be more than getting the word out. It can educate your audiences about broader issues like the need for water conservation or decreased use of motorized vehicles in your community.

The advances of technology have increased government's ability significantly to communicate with residents in cost-efficient, time sensitive manners. Most local governments now have web pages useful for educating residents and visitors. Some web pages also allow interaction such as ability to pay bills, ask questions, and communicate with other public officials and residents about community issues. Many cities provide 311 platforms where residents can report problems in their neighborhoods. Some local governments have established their own Facebook pages and communicate with citizens regularly using Twitter and YouTube (see Ankeny case study). Online Town Meetings also are becoming more commonplace (see Fort Collins case study).

For more information on social media use in local governing, see ICMA's Social Media Playbook

[http://icma.org/en/Page/100423/Social\\_Media\\_Local\\_Government\\_Playbook](http://icma.org/en/Page/100423/Social_Media_Local_Government_Playbook).

For examples of using technology for civic engagement, see:

<http://knightfoundation.org/features/civictech/>

### Key Strategies in Public Outreach<sup>9</sup>

- Have a strategic communication plan in place
- Develop one or more core messages
- Identify appropriate audiences
- Identify and train staff members to talk with media and the general public
- Target key media for regular outreach
- Have some combination of web, printed, and video materials to inform the media and the public
- Develop events that will showcase your community and its goals to the media and the public
- Work with stakeholders and partners on joint education and outreach efforts

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A Case Study in the use of Social Media

## Ankeny, Iowa

The City of Ankeny, Iowa is one of the fastest-growing communities in the state of Iowa. Results from all administrations of The National Citizen Survey going back ten years describe a community that is consistently revered by its fifty some thousand residents. Residents give the city ratings that exceed those of other communities for quality of life, quality of service delivery, housing costs, land use planning, safety and just about every other important community characteristic. In Ankeny, more residents are visiting the city website and more here than elsewhere across the U.S. believe that public information services are top notch. One of the few characteristics of the community that was not considered exemplary compared to ratings from residents in other places was "value of services for the taxes paid to Ankeny." As much as it was a strong rating, unlike other ratings, this one was not above those given in comparison communities. Furthermore, the rating for opportunities to attend cultural activities was lower than elsewhere. Finally, the number of residents having interaction with the city continued a decade long slide.

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<sup>8</sup> Building Capacity in Nonprofit Organizations. Edited by Carol J. De Vita and Cory Fleming. Copyright © April 2001. The Urban Institute. [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/building\\_capacity.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/building_capacity.pdf).

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<sup>9</sup> [www.coloradotruster.org/attachments/0000/3848/OrganizationalCapacityAssessmentTool.pdf](http://www.coloradotruster.org/attachments/0000/3848/OrganizationalCapacityAssessmentTool.pdf)

Because The NCS indicated that 3 in 4 residents had access to social media such as Twitter and Facebook, City staff proactively launched a social media campaign called ‘Wednesday Walkabout’ – a video series promoted through the City’s social media channels to help inform residents both old and new alike about the history and different amenities in their community.

In addition to this social media outreach campaign, Ankeny publishes an interactive site to let residents learn about the results of The National Citizen Survey on the City website ([www.ankenyiowa.gov](http://www.ankenyiowa.gov)).

The image shows two overlapping screenshots from the City of Ankeny website. The top screenshot is a press release dated August 7, 2013, titled "Ankeny showcases slice of life with social media campaign". It includes contact information for Deb Dyar and a quote from the National Citizen Survey (NCS) stating that residents value quality schools, business opportunities, and amenities. The bottom screenshot is a webpage titled "National Citizen Survey" with a red header. It features a list of four key benefits of conducting a survey every two years, a quote from the 2013 survey that 95% of respondents rated Ankeny as a great place to live, and download links for Acrobat Reader, Winzip, and other file formats.

A Case Study in Online Resident Outreach and Communication

## Fort Collins, Colorado

Fort Collins has been conducting biennial citizen surveys for more than a decade. Clearly the voice of residents is intended to help steer the direction of the city. Biennial budget documents are salted with scores of references to the citizen surveys among many measures that managers use to set targets for improving community quality. By putting residents central in the strategic direction of the city, Fort Collins takes the risk that unscripted “reviews” and resident perspectives may not match the preferences of staff or elected officials. Such is the nature of democracy at its best.

Besides its rich history with citizen surveys, the City of Fort Collins has partnered with Mindmixer™ to create a website to promote civic engagement online called Idea Lab (<http://ideallab.fcgov.com/>). They operate the website as a “town meeting” allowing residents to respond at a time and place convenient. After creating an account, residents can share ideas, join discussions and help local government and other community organizations take action around an issue through shaping decisions, impacting policy and spreading awareness.

This virtual town hall has posts about sustainability, transportation, community engagement, diversity, and quality of life to name a few. Conversations occur between residents, city staff and community organizations.

The image shows a screenshot of the Idea Lab website. A post titled "Widen our sidewalks and incorporate them into the trail system." is displayed, dated APR 23, 2013, by Marge E. The post text suggests widening sidewalks on busier streets like Timberline and Lemay to encourage biking. Below the post, there are two comments: one from Dave G14 suggesting an annual block party, and another from jimmy sawyer, an administrator, praising the idea and mentioning grant money from Neighborhood Services.

## Marketing and Advocacy

Public outreach can also be about branding. With traditional marketing outlets and the advent of social media, local governments are now choosing to

promote their communities and the work they do to visitors and residents alike. Reimagining or branding is an increasingly popular approach for cities and counties to highlight their unique attributes in a strategic voice.

A Case Study in Community Branding

## Greeley, Colorado

Greeley, Colorado has a rich agricultural history of sugar beets, produce, corn and cattle as well as a highly-regarded university. However, as the longtime home of a meat processing facility, Greeley grew to have a reputation inside and outside the city as a place that featured some of the less attractive attributes of agriculture. A simplistic summary of a complex community, this stereotype, born out of the city's agrarian heritage, seemed to have a tail wind that blew into all parts of Colorado until City leaders had had enough. It was time for this city, with a population just shy of 100,000, to allocate resources to define the problem more clearly, gather and analyze data, set baselines for future comparisons and, most importantly, to take action.

The citizen survey results confirmed what everyone knew, but the survey put a number to it: two-thirds of Greeley residents thought that the community's image was not good.


with the old misperceptions. A partnership was formed by Greeley City government with the Greeley Chamber of Commerce, University of Northern Colorado, Aims Community College and others to improve the city's image.

With financial and civic support, Greeley embarked on an aggressive marketing and image initiative to show the state – and even local residents – that Greeley was far more than its distant history. The advertising campaign within the initiative, named “Greeley Unexpected,” includes photos, conversations, traditional advertising, social and traditional media engagement and multi-media placements that highlight the great things about Greeley that too many people did not know or ignored.

These images, from the Greeley Unexpected campaign, help tell the story of a diverse and creative community and generate enthusiasm for the little known facts that Greeley is home to a variety of interesting individuals and businesses, from internationally known musicians to a special effects house that creates animatronic horrors for Hollywood.

For more information about the Greeley Unexpected campaign, a Flickr gallery of Greeley scenes, and more, visit: <http://www.greeleyunexpected.com>.

For more information on local government branding, see ICMA's Knowledge Network Community Branding Resources: [http://icma.org/en/BlogPost/529/Knowledge\\_Network\\_Community\\_Branding\\_Resources](http://icma.org/en/BlogPost/529/Knowledge_Network_Community_Branding_Resources)

 **The cultural scene is weak.**

No, not by any means!

The Greeley Philharmonic just celebrated its 103rd season making it one of the oldest symphony orchestras in the nation

The new Creative District highlights the people, galleries and activities that make Greeley's creative class glad they're here [www.greeleycreativedistrict.org](http://www.greeleycreativedistrict.org);

However, about the same percent felt that more effort should be put into improving the community image through “communication, marketing and image building with residents and external audiences, community appearance, etc.”

This and other data gave Greeley's leaders the information they needed to move forward. It clearly showed that the city had grown and evolved from its early agricultural roots and that people were fed up



## Earmark

By “earmark,” we simply mean “use resources.” Those resources could be finance, personnel or facilities but reallocation of resources is one common use of The NCS results and those decisions often are linked to the budget. Sometimes direct questions of residents tell you whether there is support for a bond issue or tax increase and sometimes the ratings you receive about the characteristics of your community suggest that new resources are needed to boost flagging opinion.

### A Case Study in Earmarking

## Pocatello, Idaho

In Pocatello, Idaho some residents brought to council’s attention the sore state of the existing animal shelter and the need for a new place. Because city council members were careful stewards of the public treasury, they were reluctant to forge ahead with a new expenditure, even if it was for wayward pets. Pocatello, Idaho used survey results to determine if there was enough resident support to include a ballot initiative in a local election. Clearly, as you see in the table of results, below, there was!

Now, the question did not include a price or a payment structure, but the overwhelming sentiment in favor showed that there was an opportunity to move forward (even with the expected decline in support once costs were identified) and that clear opportunity helped council make a decision to put the shelter’s construction on the ballot.

To what extent would you support or oppose the construction of a new Animal Shelter to improve and expand the facility?	Percent
Strongly support	47%
Somewhat support	40%
Somewhat oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	6%
Total	100%

In the words of one city administrator, “... on the last survey, we had one question asking about support for replacing the city’s animal shelter. The response on that particular question was so strong that a very conservative council was nonetheless motivated to put the question on the ballot for a \$2.8M bond (in Idaho, cities cannot go into long-term debt without a vote of the citizens and it has to be 2/3 YES (66%) in order for a general obligation bond to pass). The bond passed with 72%. I’ve pointed to this result as

an example of why surveys are useful. You think there is no support and has no chance in a bond election? The survey suggested otherwise and in fact it was otherwise. I’m fairly certain that without the survey, the question never would have made it to the ballot, let alone pass. So there you are.”

You can see a great video about the Pocatello Animal Shelter and how the bond measure helped them achieve their goals on their website: <http://www.pocatello.us/animal/>.

A more recent trend in governing relates to the use of performance-based budgeting (see Fort Collins’ “Budgeting for Outcomes” <http://www.fcgov.com/citymanager/budget.php>) or priority-based budgeting (see Boulder’s “Priority Based Budget” <https://bouldercolorado.gov/budget/priority-based-budgeting> ). Performance budgeting is based on an organization’s mission, goals and objectives. It is a way to allocate resources and link the distribution of fund to measured results.<sup>10</sup> Because the key outcome or “result” of local governing is resident satisfaction, surveys are often used to include residents in the budgeting process. Many local governments are now using resident opinion to help evaluate resource allocations made based on performance-based budgeting. Organizations that are using Priority Based Budgeting, first seek clarification about what community goals should drive resource allocation. Not only are elected officials asked what community goals should be, but The National Citizen Survey includes questions to assess community values that provide empirical evidence of what residents feel is most important for funding. (See <http://www.pbbcenter.org/> for more on Priority Based Budgeting.)

Following is a verbatim description from one of the Livermore, California managers showing how Livermore uses The NCS results in a comprehensive budgeting process.

<sup>10</sup> K. Carter, The Performance Budget Revisited: A Report on State Budget Reform - Legislative Finance, Paper #91, Denver, National Conference of State Legislatures, pp. 2-3

A Case Study in Strategic Budgeting

## Livermore, California

Quickly, let me outline the budget process as we developed it in Livermore. I see the various parts of it as a "mosaic", which when put altogether create an overall, coherent picture.

"First, we conduct The NCS every other year to use as a basic "report card" to gauge how residents feel about city services."

"Next staff prepares proposed work plans around services which take into consideration the results of The NCS. These two elements, the results of The NCS and the proposed work plans, are then sent to the City Council as background input for the annual City Council Goal Setting session as they develop priorities for the two-year budget. The Council then lists the proposed priorities (their own, ones from the proposed work plan which could be modified by the Council) on big newspaper sheets. Each Council member is given five colored dots to stick on their favorite items. The 5 items getting the most "votes" become the City Council priorities for the next two years. Obviously, this does not mean that other matters would not come up or be addressed during the two years, but does give clear FOCUS on what the staff and Council want to accomplish over the next two years. It is also helpful in avoiding leaping onto some big, new idea during the two years, because staff outline for the Council how assigning resources to the work on the "new idea" would delay or eliminate work on the Council's major Two Year Goals."

"Next, The NCS results, the newly minted Council goals, and the subsequently revised work plan are then used by the CM and Department Heads, along with their own professional views, to prepare a Preliminary Budget. The City Manager and Assistant City Manager meet in a Department Head Team meeting to hammer out a budget - this is a true team meeting where every Department Head hears, presents, and considers their budget request to every other Department (this is quite different than the traditional approach where the CM and ACM would meet with each Department Head separately). The Team approach means that the Police Chief has to "defend" the PD requests to the likes of the Library Director and Human Services Director! Although the CM has ultimate veto power (which we have never once had to actually use), the Team works until it develops a plan that everyone

can support (in fact the Budget Transmittal letter sent to the Council is always signed not only by the CM but every Department Head!)."

"Next the Preliminary Budget is sent to the Council for presentation, review, public comment, and eventual Council adoption. So the "mosaic" is created from the following pieces: The NCS results, the staff proposed work plan, the Council Goal Setting Session, the Council approved revised work plan, the staff proposed Preliminary Budget, public hearings, and finally Council adoption."

A Case Study in Strategic Budgeting

## Peoria, Arizona

Another example of local government altering services based on resident preferences as stated in The National Citizen Survey is Peoria, Arizona. As the recession was biting into Peoria's dwindling budget, the idea to close city operations one day a week and to consolidate 40 hours into 4 days was tested among staff and council. Before moving forward on the idea, leaders wanted to assess the interest of residents in four 10 hour days instead of five 8 hour days. The 2009 citizen survey for Peoria had this question:

To save money, the City of Peoria is considering closing City Hall on Fridays, but extending the hours of service counters (for utility payments, building permits, etc.) from 7a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Other city services, such as libraries, Rio Vista Recreation Center, fire and police would not be impacted by this change. To what extent would you support or oppose this change?	Percent
Strongly support	54%
Somewhat support	37%
Somewhat oppose	3%
Strongly oppose	5%
Total	100%

Support for the shift was extensive, so in 2010, the government shifted its hours of operation to help offset revenue shortfalls.

# Enact

One of the greatest strengths of local government is its ability to shape communities using policies and laws. Systems-level change is often easiest achieved through changes in local policy. The principal activities of local government legislation are to develop, introduce, reform, and implement policies, and ensure that policies that are implemented do strengthen communities and address areas of weakness or need. Policies enacted by local governments can:

- Tax
- Subsidize/grant/loan
- Alter economic conditions
- Regulate
- Structure rights
- Generate information, keep records, disseminate information
- Fund government service
- Provide jobs
- Build and maintain infrastructure
- Reform the government itself <sup>11</sup>

Whether it is adoptions to design codes, the limitation of parking spaces, utility rebates provided to older adults, or business relocation incentives, local officials have significant power to address the deepest community needs. Fort Collins, Colorado is featured in the case study below for its work in sustainability and climate change.

## A Case Study in Surveys for Policy

# Fort Collins, Colorado

Policies built on broad-based resident perspectives will receive stronger community support than policies created with only special interest input and the perspectives of residents with easiest access to council. Knowing that community values supported air quality programming, in 2011, the City contracted with National Research Center, Inc. to conduct a survey of its residents about climate attitudes and policies. The survey was designed to help local leaders create policies that best reflected resident preferences and the survey helped policy-makers create plans to address the concerns of different

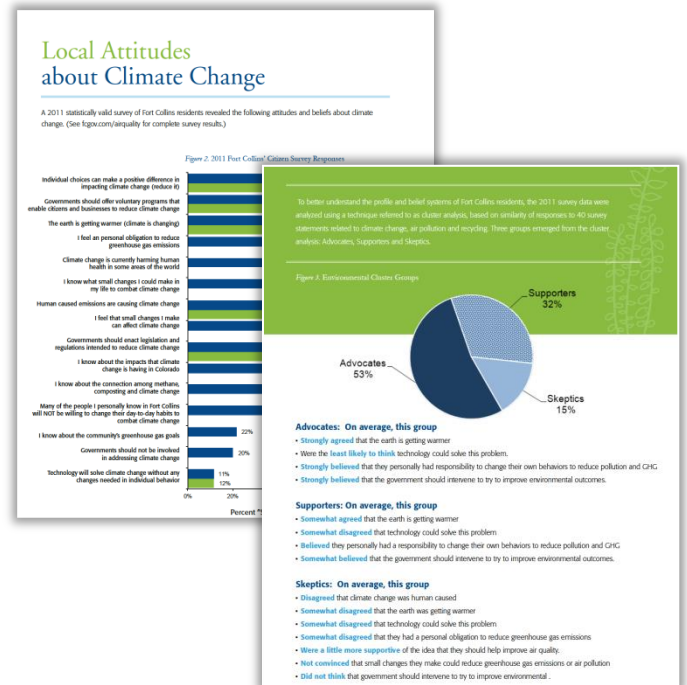
<sup>11</sup> People’s Policy Institute: Participatory Policy Analysis: Achieving Systems Level Change Through CBPR  
[http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf\\_files/CCPH\\_call\\_slides\\_10-21-09\\_bXw.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/CCPH_call_slides_10-21-09_bXw.pdf)

resident groups using a population segmentation approach with survey results.

From the Fort Collins Climate Status Report, 2012: “Fort Collins has long been committed to reducing the community’s carbon footprint.” City staff identified the number one reason to have a community-wide air quality action plan as this: “First, city residents have high expectations for a clean environment. Residents have identified the Air Quality Program as being the single most important program for protecting their future quality of life, according to the City of Fort Collins 2003 Citizen Survey.” (in Fort Collins Air Quality Plan, May 2011. p.1 <http://www.fcgov.com/airquality/pdf/2011-AirQualityPlan-Final-LowRes.pdf> ).

The 2011 survey demonstrated that residents were broadly committed to government’s role in reducing greenhouse gases and, with the cluster analysis of survey results, the survey showed what drove supporters, skeptics and advocates. The survey also showed that skeptics amounted to only 1 in 6 Fort Collins adults while supporters and advocates comprised over 80% of the population.

For other examples of policies enacted by local governments in terms of climate change, see <http://www.epa.gov/statelocalclimate/local/local-examples/case-studies.html>



## Evaluate

*“We must, in other words, become adept at learning. We must become able not only to transform our institutions, in response to changing situations and requirements; we must invent and develop institutions which are ‘learning systems’, that is to say, systems capable of bringing about their own continuing transformation.” (Donald Schon 1973: 28)<sup>12</sup>*

The concepts of “learning organizations” and, more recently, “data driven communities” have been influencing governments to improve by tracking performance. If you have recently completed The NCS or any type of citizen survey, you have begun the process of becoming a learning organization. A key is learning how to use data to assess needs and then evaluate the results of actions taken to address the needs.

### What is evaluation?

Evaluation can be defined in a variety of ways, but the following is a definition that may be most relevant to local governments:

Evaluation is the systematic way that data are assembled into a picture of (1) how well an organization is delivering its services and (2) the impact of those services on the target population.<sup>13</sup>

There are three major categories of evaluation best used in local government, and all three can provide meaningful evidence of service quality and impacts.

Needs assessments provide a picture of a community’s or a community group’s (like older adults or government employees) strengths and needs.

Outcome evaluations measure the results of government service or activity and generally include questions about the process by which outcomes are achieved (like police quality as one service delivery process attempting to achieve the outcome of a sense of public safety).

Performance measurement tracks service delivery efficiencies and resident opinion about the success of service delivery. (Such performance tracking can be

done in the service of an outcome evaluation for specific community values or goals.) Local governments benefit from all three types of evaluation to become learning organizations.

### Including the Voice of the Resident

Most government staff and elected officials believe they are in touch with residents’ points of view. But understanding what residents want and what works can’t come only from anecdotes or chance conversations with a few residents or staff. Valid and convincing assessment requires a grasp of evaluation principles and use of evaluation methods that bring in the voices of a representative sample of residents and offers robust empirical evidence about governing effectiveness. Although some needs assessments and evaluation are done without including the voice of the resident, it is best to include your greatest stakeholder.

### Needs Assessments

The first step in improving community livability is to understand the strengths and needs of the community. The NCS or any citizen survey serves as a valuable needs assessment tool because it lets community leaders understand what residents themselves find working and what opportunities lie ahead. Needs assessments also can be conducted on specific issues such as older adult community livability, transportation or parks and recreation. Surveys or focus groups for particular topics are important and efficient ways to collect additional information before spending extensive resources on new activities or strategies.

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#### A Case Study on Use of Deeper Investigation

## Longmont, Colorado

Longmont did annual citizen surveys for years and then its managers realized they wanted to understand more about some of those survey findings. To do that, staff decided to alternate the general citizen survey one year with a policy exploration survey the next. This way there would be more information about the “Why’s” of results.

For example, in one general citizen survey, Longmont recognized that resident ratings of snow removal were middling and stagnant. Over many years, residents gave average ratings just short of “good” on a scale of “excellent, good, fair poor.”

<sup>12</sup> Smith, M. K. (2001, 2007) ‘The learning organization’, the encyclopedia of informal education, <http://www.infed.org/biblio/learning-organization.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> P. H. Rossi and H. E. Freeman (1993). Evaluation: A Systematic Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. To order this textbook on evaluation, visit: [www.sagepub.com](http://www.sagepub.com).

Ratings of Snow Removal Service Compared by Year								
years prior to current	Average rating (0=poor, 33=fair, 66=good, 100=excellent)							
	Current	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-8	-10
Snow removal on major streets	64	69	67	62	65	65	63	61

Although ratings for snow removal in other places were, on average, not as good as Longmont’s ratings, Longmont managers wondered if residents’ perspectives about snow removal were influenced by widespread disagreement with snow removal policy.

In the policy exploration survey following the “current” year of the general survey, National Research Center asked residents about the policy that might have the biggest impact on overall ratings of snow removal. Given that big storms tend to most influence ratings of snow removal, the question asked if residents supported or opposed the policy of forbidding parking on plow routes during a snow emergency.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that during a declared snow emergency, the City of Longmont should implement and enforce a no parking policy along the approved snow plow routes in order to more efficiently plow the streets?	Percent
Strongly agree	65%
Somewhat agree	28%
Somewhat disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	2%
Total	100%

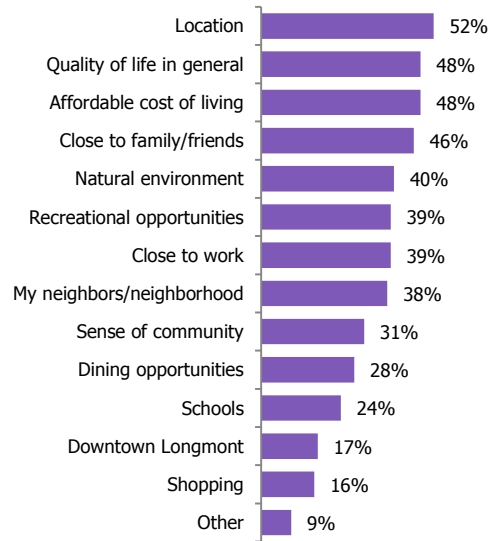
The vast majority of residents supported the policy, so no change has been planned. Although discovery that residents support the no-parking policy is unlikely to raise ratings, had policy makers unilaterally rescinded the policy and permitted parking on plow routes during big snow storms, those above average ratings likely would not have sustained.

For years, residents had been giving strong ratings to the overall quality of life in Longmont. City management and elected officials were interested in understanding what components of the community influenced those ratings. So following the biennial general citizen survey, the exploration survey sought deeper insight into community quality of life.

How would you rate your overall quality of life in Longmont?	Percent
Excellent	21%
Good	59%
Fair	18%
Poor	2%
Total	100%

In a question without response options, residents, in their own words, offered what they found to be most

appealing about life in Longmont. Results were as follows:



By learning what mattered most to residents of the community, local leaders are able to protect what seems to keep Longmont attractive – e.g. affordability and the environment – and to build on those aspects of community that may not yet be reasons to love life there (e.g. shopping and the downtown).

## Performance Measurement

Most government performance measurement systems collect and report data that already reside in administrative filing cabinets and on file servers. Beyond the use of these “hard” measures, the assessment of relative performance success should also include residents’ attitudes about the delivery of services and the qualities of the community that are meant to improve (in part) because of great services. Along with crime rates or road repair, assessments should include residents’ evaluations of the effectiveness of local policing and the quality of community mobility. Going beyond administrative records to track performance tells local leaders how well a city or county is meeting its vision of success.

The same survey that assessed community strengths and needs can be used to reevaluate a community at a later date. The NCS and other broad citizen surveys are intended not only to serve as a community needs assessment but also as a systematic performance monitoring tool. Many communities now use survey results in their performance measurement systems. The City of Westminster, Colorado and the City of Littleton, Colorado are great examples of

incorporating resident opinions into performance systems.

Survey Results Fit Well into Performance Measures

# Westminster, Colorado

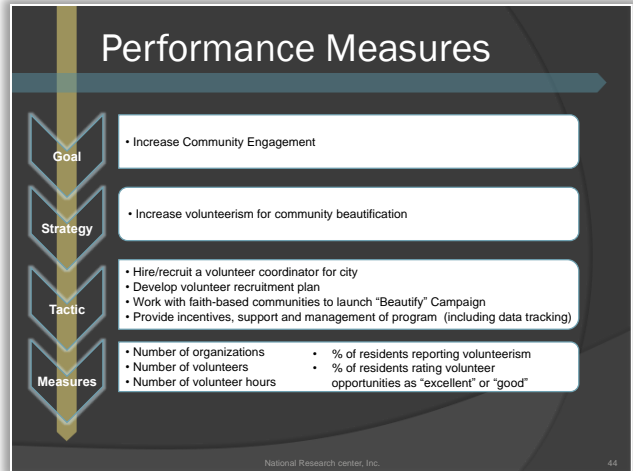
Westminster, Colorado has been on the front line of measuring and reporting performance for many years. City leaders view transparency about the efficiency and effectiveness of their work as a basic condition of local government. In its most recent report about its performance, "Take a Closer Look," staff wrote this:

"Performance measurement in the City of Westminster is continuously refined to ensure that the City is "measuring what matters." Through constant reinforcement, the City's performance measurement program works to improve the delivery of City services and the management of resources. Ultimately, performance measurement helps determine the progress made towards achieving the City's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives."

You can see on page 1 of that report (<http://www.ci.westminster.co.us/Portals/0/Repository/Documents/CityGovernment/CMO%20-%20Take%20A%20Closer%20Look%20Report%20-%202013.pdf>) that staff are keenly aware that measuring outputs and efficiencies are important only as they serve creation of a high quality of community. Therefore the report starts with resident perspectives about the quality of life in Westminster as reported in the most recent Citizen Survey,

conducted by National Research Center, Inc.

Beyond resident perspectives on overall quality of life, Westminster as a place to live, raise children and retire, the performance report includes resident



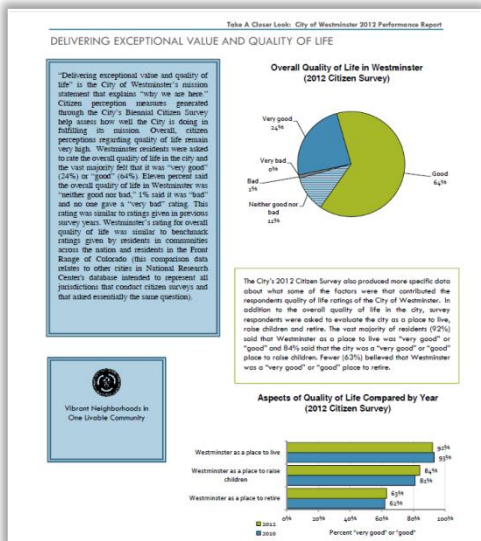
opinions about the quality of public works services. In place of cubic yards of snow plowed or linear miles of streets repaired or gallons of water treated, are resident sentiments about the quality of snow removal, street repair and water as you can see below:

**MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY**

A major component of the Public Works and Utilities Department's operations is customer service. Reviewing the 2012 Citizen Survey, citizens continued to rank the importance of Public Works and Utilities key service areas as "essential" or "very important." Four of the top ten City services are within the Public Works and Utilities arena (drinking water quality, sewer services, snow removal, and street repair).

1. Drinking water quality: Citizens continued to rank the quality of drinking water highly in the 2012 Citizen Survey (81% in 2012 compared to 83% in 2010). Citizens also continue to value the importance of drinking water quality, with a slight reduction (94% in 2012 compared to 96% in 2010). Citizens continued to rate drinking water quality as "good" or "very good", maintaining an eight year trend.
2. Sewer services: This service has only been included on the survey since 2008 and citizens ranked it slightly higher in quality in 2012 over 2010 (up to 71% in 2012 from 70% in 2010). Citizens have ranked the importance of this service as increasingly "essential" or "very important" since its inclusion in the survey in 2008 (from 85% in 2008, 86% in 2010, to 87% in 2012). Staff strives to maintain the high quality of wastewater service to City residents while meeting all State and Federal regulations.
3. Snow removal: Citizens reduced their perception of this service's level of quality in 2012 (to 63% in 2012 from 69% in 2010), but have continued to rank snow removal as increasingly important in the 2012 survey (to 86% in 2012, up from 83% in 2010). Staff will analyze the changes from previous years and continue work to improve the quality of this service where possible.
4. Street repair: Quality rankings for street repair have continued to improve (53% in 2012 over 49% in 2010), with a slight reduction in the perceived importance of this service (84% in 2012, 86% in 2010).

In "Take a Closer Look," Westminster, CO. 2012 p.9



A Mix of Survey and Administrative Data in a Community Scorecard

## Littleton, Colorado

The City of Littleton, Colorado produces an annual community scorecard (<http://www.littletongov.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=3278>) that presents data related to its City Council's goals. In the 2013-2014 report, performance data were presented in the following strategic areas:

- Assure a financially-sound city government
- Provide a safe community to live, work and play
- Develop and maintain the public infrastructure
- Preserve and cultivate a quality community
- Pursue a balanced and sustainable local economy
- Support environmental sustainability
- Foster community involvement, communication and trust

The report not only has hard data about sprinkler system installs, budget allocations, number of exhibits, visitors and miles traveled, but it also has resident perspectives about service quality and strategic direction directly from its citizen survey. Not only does the report include results of the survey but it shows how those results compare to results asked of residents in comparison communities.



## Program Evaluation

Once you have decided to take action to improve your community, it is important to evaluate the results of your efforts. Strong governing requires both experimentation and use of evaluation data.

### Strategies to Promote Successful Use of Evaluation

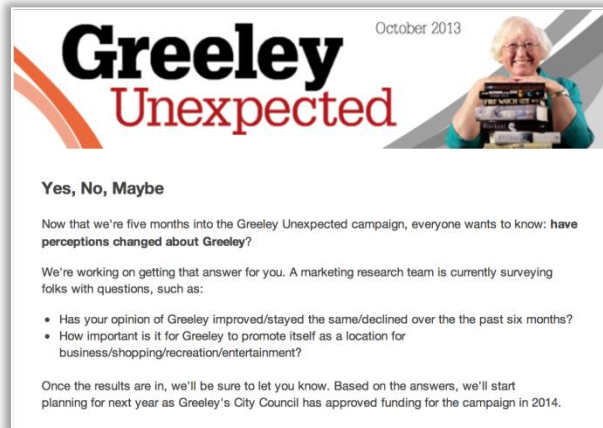
- Identify program goals, objectives, and performance measures well in advance of implementing their evaluation
- Regularly track service activities and outcomes
- Systematically measure service outputs (how many residents attended council meetings last year?) and outcomes (how much did their knowledge of community issues increase?)
- Regularly communicate evaluation results to staff, residents, and other stakeholders
- Use evaluation data to improve services
- Encourage organizational learning

Evaluations can be small or large, often based on the price tag of the new initiative. In the Educate section of this playbook, the reimagining campaign undertaken by Greeley, Colorado was presented. Although Greeley has only been working on this new branding initiative a short time, government staff wanted to assess its “penetration” at an early stage, so they launched a short, web-based survey to community stakeholders followed by a survey of residents of Greeley and residents in three of the state’s largest cities – Denver, Fort Collins and Colorado Springs.

A Case Study in New Program Evaluation

## Greeley, Colorado

Greeley, Colorado has created a new image initiative and campaign called “Greeley Unexpected.” (See the Educate section for more information on the initiative.) The initiative did not come cheap. The intent was to go big – to change the perceptions that (at least) Coloradans had about Greeley. After the initiative had been running for several months, stakeholders were getting antsy to know if their investment was paying off and City staff needed data to help determine the direction for the 2014 campaign. So City staff, working with NRC, designed and put in the field a survey for residents and non-residents to determine the reach and effectiveness of the first year’s campaign. This research was at least as much to keep stakeholders (including funding decision makers such as the City Council) in the loop about the City’s attention to the big evaluative question (“Have perceptions of Greeley improved?”) as it was to determine the answer to the question.



The answer to the question has come with extensive and robust inquiry that has relied on surveys of residents and those from out of town.

With the results hot off the research report, this is how Greeley released the findings – a fitting way to reinforce the new brand!



## Next Steps

As you consider how to strengthen your community, remember that you don't always have to blaze a new trail to get the job done. This Playbook has many examples in broad categories that reflect common and effective action areas for local governments. Build on the examples you find here that resonate with your community and dive in or give a call to National Research Center staff or the organizations we have highlighted. NRC can help you get in contact with those best equipped to help you solve the toughest problems whether related to budget, communication, ballot questions, strategic planning or citizen engagement. Quality communities are what every local government strives to encourage, but the burden cannot rest only on the shoulders of local government staff and elected officials. National Research Center can facilitate your success.

**Park and Recreation Commission**

**6. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 01/08/2015

**By:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

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**Information**

**Title:**

Commission/Staff Input

**Purpose/Background:**

- Mississippi Skyway - Preliminary Engineering
- Winter Recreation in Ramsey

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

**Funding Source:**

**Recommendation:**

**Action:**

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**Attachments**

*No file(s) attached.*

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: Mark Riverblood

Final Approval Date: 12/30/2014

**Reviewed By**

Grant Riemer

**Date**

12/30/2014 02:59 PM

Started On: 12/30/2014 01:48 PM