



City of Blaine, MN

2012 Citizen Survey

Report of Results
August 2012



Executive Summary

Survey Background and Methods

The Blaine Citizen Survey gives residents the opportunity to rate their satisfaction with the quality of life in the city, the community's amenities and satisfaction with local government. The survey gathers community-wide feedback on what is working well and what is not and helps map out residents' priorities for community planning and resource allocation. It serves as a consumer report card for Blaine; providing a check-in with residents to make sure the City policies and services are on course. This is the first time National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) conducted the Blaine Citizen Survey.

The Blaine Citizen Survey was administered by mail to 1,200 randomly selected households within the city, equally distributed among the three wards. Of those households receiving the survey, 436 residents responded to the mailed and Web questionnaires, giving a response rate of 37%. The margin of error is plus or minus five percentage points around any given percentage for the entire sample. Survey results were weighted so that the characteristics of gender, age, tenure (rent versus own) and housing unit type (attached versus detached) are represented in proportions reflective of the entire city.

Blaine's results are compared in this report to those of other jurisdictions around the nation as well as to those of other jurisdictions in Minnesota. These comparisons were made possible through NRC's national benchmark database. This database contains resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions.

Summary of Survey Findings

The 2012 Blaine Citizen Survey results reveal positive resident opinions overall of life in Blaine. Quality of life, government performance, characteristics of the community, City services and City employees all received high marks when compared to other jurisdictions across the nation and in Minnesota. Residents also were highly involved in many community events and activities. Among features of the community, new development, housing options, shopping and business and service establishments were particularly highly rated.

- ❖ Blaine received ratings above or much above other U.S. communities in 53 of 83 comparisons and above or much above other Minnesota communities in 41 of 81 comparisons.

Traffic and volunteer opportunities were two themes for potential improvement in Blaine.

- ❖ Traffic flow and traffic signal timing were among the lowest rated aspects of Blaine. Traffic signal timing also was the most commonly mentioned service that residents would like to see increased by the City.
 - Traffic flow on major streets was rated "excellent" or "good" by 39% of residents and traffic at intersections by 33% of residents.
 - Traffic signal timing was the lowest rated City service (43% "excellent" or "good") and was rated much below the national and state benchmarks.
- ❖ Volunteer opportunities were perceived as being in short supply in Blaine and residents indicated that they volunteered much less often than residents in other jurisdictions.

- Ratings of opportunities to volunteer in Blaine were rated below national benchmarks and much below state benchmarks.
- About one-third (35%) of residents had volunteered in Blaine at least once in the last year.

Residents were of multiple minds about athletic field maintenance, seeing it both as a source of pride in the community and also a possible place to reduce service.

- ❖ Eight in ten residents thought that athletic field maintenance in Blaine was either “excellent” or “good.”
- ❖ About half thought that this City service was “essential” or “very important.”
- ❖ Athletic field maintenance quality ratings and the City’s overall service quality ratings were closely linked.
- ❖ Though a small proportion of respondents, more residents proposed reducing the effort made toward athletic field maintenance than any other service (25 individual respondents).

The sources of information that residents reported using today often were the same sources they said they would prefer to use in the future, led by the City’s newsletter.

- ❖ Nine in 10 residents reported going to the City’s newsletter for information and said they would like to continue doing so in the future.
- ❖ Residents reported being open to receiving regular mail and email from the City.

Community interest in a community center with sports facilities was present, but not strong.

- ❖ Indoor and outdoor sports facilities were seen as at least “very” important by a quarter of respondents.
- ❖ While just over half of respondents generally supported the idea of building a community center, when respondents were asked about their support or opposition to a property tax increase to fund the effort, opposition outpaced support.