

City of Minneapolis Resident Survey Executive Summary

About the study

In 2014, the City of Minneapolis contracted with Wilder Research to conduct the 2016 Resident Survey. The purpose of the survey is to measure residents' opinions about their quality of life, understand residents' overall satisfaction with the City's services and amenities, and determine residents' need for new City services.

Why it's important

The City of Minneapolis' vision is a growing and vibrant world-class city with a flourishing economy and a pristine environment, where all people are safe, healthy, and have equitable opportunities for success and happiness. City departments, elected officials, and residents can use information collected from this survey to measure progress toward current City goals and determine new goals.

Gathering the data

Wilder Research and the City of Minneapolis Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) developed the survey in 2016. The survey was redesigned from previous versions to better engage residents who are typically underrepresented in survey research; we did this by ensuring that it was easy to fill out, did not take too long to complete, and that residents understood what was being asked. In July 2016, Wilder Research mailed the survey to 11,000 randomly selected households including representative samples of adults from each of the 11 residential communities across the City. Residents could complete the survey online, via a phone call to Wilder Research, or by filling out a paper copy and returning it via an enclosed postage paid return envelope. Wilder Research's Hmong, Somali, and Spanish phone numbers were also provided with all survey mailings.



Wilder Research did additional outreach to encourage and increase participation from communities that had completed the survey at a lower rate, including Near North, Phillips, and University. Our bilingual staff also contacted sampled addresses at which there was a Somali, Hmong, or Latino-sounding surname to see if anyone at that household would be interested in completing the survey and to provide language assistance as needed. The survey took about 20 minutes to complete. Completed surveys were received from 2,320 residents, which is higher than the initial target of 1,100 completed surveys.

What we learned

Overall, residents of the City of Minneapolis enjoy a high quality of life and are satisfied with the services and amenities that are available to them, which is consistent with the results of past surveys of Minneapolis and similar cities around the country. However, there are notable differences between the survey results overall and results for specific groups based on location and demographic characteristics that indicate areas that the City could improve.

Based on large differences in the results across demographic or geographic groups, areas where the City could prioritize efforts include overall quality of life for residents, the availability of amenities within neighborhoods, knowledge of and satisfaction with City

services, and experiences of discrimination while receiving City services. Because of the sensitive and nuanced nature of many of these topics, it would be best for the City to engage with communities around these topics in a more personal format, such as focus groups or community discussions.



Quality of life

Most respondents gave the City positive ratings as a good place to live with access to amenities like arts, farmers markets, parks, stores, and other services. This is consistent with trend data from the 2010 and 2012 Minneapolis surveys and comparable to ratings in similar cities.

Respondents from lower-income households, respondents of color and American Indian respondents, and respondents from the Camden, Near North, and Phillips communities were less likely to give positive ratings. Given that these three residential communities have some of the highest percentages of residents of color and the lowest median household incomes, there is likely a connection between these three groups (community, race/ethnicity, and income) and their relative access to the services and amenities available within the City.



The neighborhood experience

In general, most respondents viewed their neighborhood as a good or very good place to live: safe, nice to walk around, with neighbors who look out for one another. As with the overall Minneapolis rating, this positive neighborhood rating is similar to that of previous years, and comparable to other cities around the country that asked a similar question of their residents.

As with the overall quality of life ratings, the most notable differences in neighborhood experience come from respondents from lower-income households, respondents of color and American Indian respondents, and respondents from communities with higher concentrations of respondents of color and lower median household incomes. These differences are especially notable across residential communities,

indicating that the City could focus its outreach and improvement efforts on specific residential communities.



Housing

Across the City, less than half of respondents gave positive ratings about the availability of high quality, affordable housing choices for all residents. Since the question asked about choices “for all residents,” these low ratings may reflect perceptions of housing disparities among certain groups of residents as well as the direct experiences of respondents.

These ratings also vary somewhat by race/ethnicity and income, with American Indian, African American and African-born, and Asian and Asian American respondents sharing lower positive ratings than other groups. In addition, a higher percentage of respondents from communities of color and respondents with lower household incomes reported experiencing discrimination in housing (see the Discrimination section of the report for more information). Access to affordable housing and housing-related discrimination are important issues for the City of Minneapolis to consider and address in current and future planning efforts as well as in program management.



Getting around Minneapolis

Overall, the majority of respondents find it either easy or very easy to get where they need to go in the City. This was consistent across demographic groups, even though there were differences in how frequently respondents used particular modes of transportation to get around the City. For example, African American or African-born and American Indian respondents were more likely than other groups to ride the bus frequently and less likely to walk or bike.



Getting information about the City

Overall, respondents reported that they found it easy to both get and understand the information they received from the City. The main differences arose in how respondents received information about the City.

Given some of the differences in awareness of City services among different racial/ethnic groups (see Satisfaction with City Services section for more information), it may make sense for the City to maintain and improve connections to the methods used by different groups to share information, such as cultural and community-based organizations and neighborhood associations. It is especially important to reach those who do not have access to the Internet at home (about 1 in 10 respondents), or who have not accessed the services available via the City website (anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of respondents depending on the service).



Interaction with City departments and services

Half of survey respondents shared that they had interacted with City of Minneapolis departments and services over the past year. Overall, most respondents reported feeling that the City of Minneapolis operates transparently and ethically, and that they are treated with respect and have a voice when interacting with the City. At the same time, fewer respondents reported feeling as though they could influence how decisions are made. These areas may improve with targeted and meaningful investment in outreach to show residents that their opinions matter and can influence City decision-making.



Satisfaction with City services

The majority of respondents reported being satisfied with City services overall, which is consistent across demographic groups and with past Minneapolis surveys. There are some differences in satisfaction with specific services based on residential community and respondent demographics, which could be due to real differences in the experiences residents have with these services based on where they live or their demographic characteristics, perceived differences

among groups of respondents, different levels of awareness of these services, or other possible reasons. The City could consider ways of learning more about the reasons why there are different levels of satisfaction within residential communities and/or other respondent demographic groups to address specific areas or points of concern.



Diversity, equity, and discrimination in the City

Not surprisingly, there are notable differences by race/ethnicity and income with regard to experiences of discrimination in Minneapolis. These differences are especially large when comparing experiences of people of color and White non-Hispanic respondents. Nearly all White respondents (93%) indicated they had not experienced discrimination in any area, while respondents of color and American Indian respondents experienced discrimination in some areas that were much larger than the overall percentage. When asked follow-up questions about the circumstances of the discrimination, many respondents shared that they did not feel comfortable disclosing details. This sensitive topic may be better to explore through mechanisms other than a population-based survey, such as individual interviews, observations, and other approaches.

Conclusion

The City of Minneapolis is working to ensure all residents are safe, healthy, and have equitable opportunities for success and happiness. The 2016 resident survey provides important insight and information from a representative sample of Minneapolis residents about progress the City is making toward achieving its vision. This survey also identifies potential areas for improvement. This information can be used to inform planning and next steps, including identifying places where additional information may be needed, to meet the needs of and ensure equitable outcomes for all Minneapolis residents.