

Executive Summary

- Judging from a survey of 1,404 randomly-selected households in Worcester, a majority of residents are generally satisfied with the municipal services that are provided by the City.
- Public library services and trash collection services continue to be the highest-rated services in the City. However, the proportion of those surveyed who say that these services are “excellent” or “good” fell slightly from the levels in 2002, from 83% to 79% for library services, and from 81% to 78% for trash collection services.
- Most residents say that their neighborhood is clean (83%) and that street lighting is sufficient (70%).
- Although most residents say that their neighborhood is clean, 43% of respondents say that street cleaning services are fair or poor. It is not clear why this discrepancy exists.
- There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of respondents who say that there are no abandoned buildings in their neighborhood, from 76% in 2002 to 83% in 2003. In the southern area of the City, the proportion of respondents who say that there are no abandoned buildings in their neighborhood increased 13 points, from 63% to 76%.
- Residents continue to be less satisfied with the condition of their neighborhood sidewalks and streets than with other municipal services. 31% of respondents say that their sidewalks are not in good condition (a decline from 35% in 2002), and 68% say that streets and roads in their neighborhood are very rough or somewhat rough (an increase from 63% in 2002).
- The lowest-rated municipal services in Worcester are snow removal and street cleaning. 43% of respondents say that street-cleaning services are fair or poor, and 39% of respondents say that snow-removal services are fair or poor.
- There is generally little variation in satisfaction with municipal services and neighborhood conditions among residents from the four quadrants of the City. Where variation does exist, it is not consistent. In other words, the quadrant in which the most satisfied residents live depends on the service or condition that is asked about.
- Satisfaction with the services provided by the Worcester Fire Department and Worcester Police Department, according to those who have had some contact with these departments over the last year, remains high. 85% are satisfied with Fire Department service, while 78% say that the police are fair, and 80% say that the police are courteous in their dealings with people.
- This year the survey asked respondents who have children in the public schools about their satisfaction with the schools. Respondents generally express satisfaction with the public schools; 83% of those with students in elementary school, and 75% of those with students in middle or high school say that their child’s teacher explains what he/she expects of their child well. 85% of those with students in elementary school, 78% of those with middle school students, and 79% of those with high school students say that they are satisfied with the progress their child is making.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this survey is to determine how satisfied Worcester's residents are with a variety of services provided by the City of Worcester, as well as their degree of satisfaction with conditions in their neighborhood. Prior to 2002, the City of Worcester conducted this survey. The Worcester Regional Research Bureau's Center for Community Performance Measurement (CCPM) assumed responsibility for the survey in 2002 because the City was unable to continue the survey due to budget constraints. The CCPM plans to conduct this independent survey each year, assuming the availability of requisite funding. The CCPM uses the data to evaluate the City's performance in providing municipal and neighborhood services.

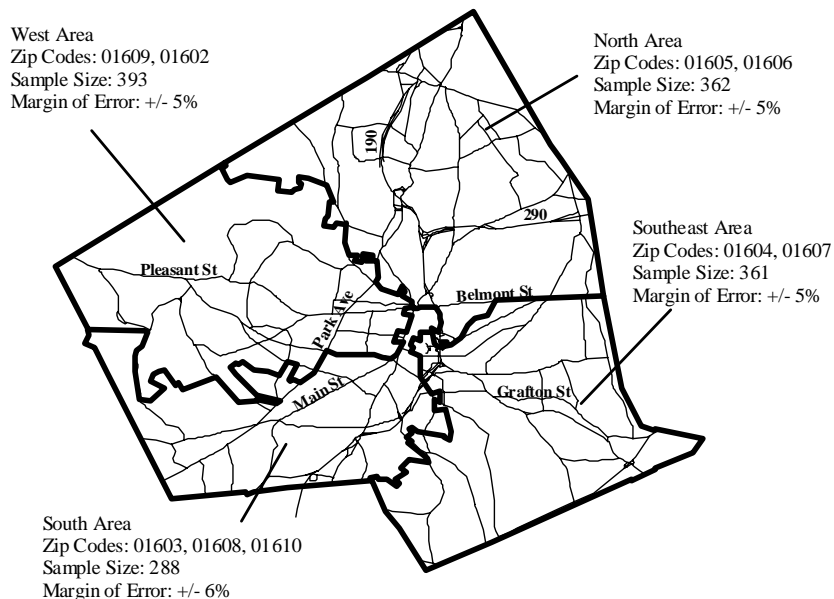
II. Methodology

The Research Bureau contracted with InterGlobal Services, a local customer relations management company, to survey a random sample of Worcester households by telephone and ask respondents a series of questions regarding various municipal services and neighborhood conditions. All questions were developed by the CCPM. (See Appendix A for the full survey instrument.) Except for new questions about the public schools that were added this year, all questions were identical to last year's survey. The survey instrument was not the same as the one that was used in prior surveys by the Office of the City Manager, although some questions were similar to those asked in prior surveys. For those questions that were similar enough to allow responses to be compared, five-year trends are presented in the results. A total of 1,404 completed telephone surveys were sampled from a database of 48,000 households that have residential phone numbers. Data collection was completed during summer, 2003.

All analyses of the data were conducted by the CCPM. Results were compiled for the city as a whole as well as for quadrants of the city as defined by zip codes. Figure 1 shows a map of the boundaries of the four quadrants, along with the number of respondents from each area. The margin of error for citywide results is +/- 4%. The quadrant results have higher margins of error due to smaller sample sizes; the margins of error for each quadrant are presented in Figure 1. Results for questions related to the Police and Fire Departments and the Worcester Public Schools have higher and more variable margins of error due to smaller sample sizes of respondents who had first-hand knowledge of those departments. Margins of error for those questions are presented in the relevant section of this report. Demographic information for those responding to the survey is presented in Appendix B.

Although respondents were generally not asked to provide comments on each question, if they did so surveyors were instructed to record this information. Appendix C provides the full list of comments for each question.

Figure 1: Worcester Areas and Sample Sizes



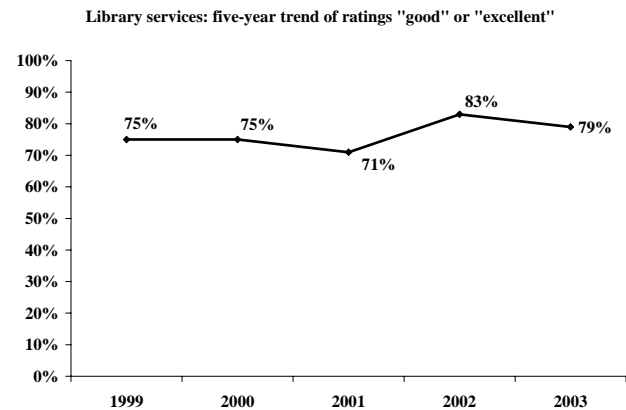
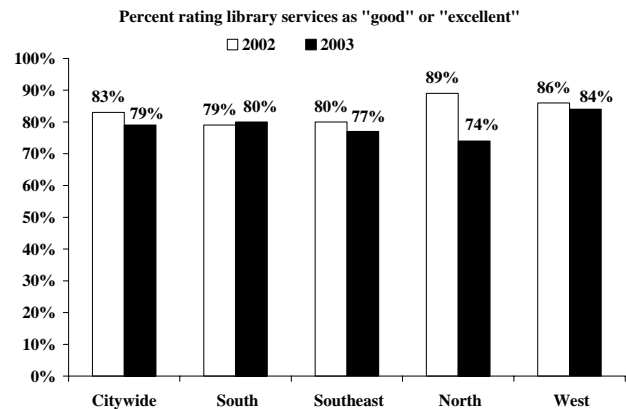
III. Satisfaction with selected City services

Table 1: Public library services

	Citywide		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Excellent	31%	30%	33%	32%	29%	27%	29%	29%	33%	32%
Good	48%	53%	47%	47%	48%	53%	45%	60%	51%	54%
Fair	7%	9%	8%	10%	8%	11%	7%	9%	6%	5%
Poor	2%	3%	1%	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Don't know	12%	6%	11%	7%	13%	6%	17%	0%	8%	8%

Library services continue to be highly rated in the City, with 79% of respondents saying that they are “excellent” or “good.” Last year, the north area had the highest proportion of respondents saying that library services were excellent or good (89%), but this year the west area had the highest proportion responding in this way (84%). There was an increase in the number who respond that they don’t know enough about the library services to rate them (12% citywide).

There was a statistically significant¹ decline in the proportion of respondents in the north area offering a positive assessment of library services from 2002 to 2003. While the proportion citywide who offered a positive rating of library services declined from 2002 to 2003, it remains higher than positive ratings between 1999 and 2001. Library officials attribute the drop in satisfaction in the North quadrant to the reduced hours at the Frances Perkins Branch Library at Greendale. Patrons of the branch expressed disapproval when the branch schedule was reduced to three days from five due to budget constraints.



¹ This report frequently refers to “statistical significance.” If a change in the proportion of respondents offering a particular assessment from 2002 to 2003 is statistically significant, this means that we can be 95% confident that the change is an actual change in the percentage of respondents who are satisfied or unsatisfied and is not due to sampling error. If a change in the proportion of respondents offering a particular assessment from 2002 to 2003 is not statistically significant (or statistically insignificant, as it is sometimes referred to), this means that we can be 95% confident that the percentage of respondents offering that assessment in 2003 is statistically the same as the proportion of respondents offering that assessment in 2002. Statistical significance is a purely statistical concept, and a finding that is “statistically significant” is not necessarily important. Rather, it indicates the probability that the finding is due to chance. For more information on statistical significance, see <http://www.surveysystem.com/signif.htm>.

Table 2: Trash collection services

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Excellent	23%	23%	18%	21%	24%	23%	24%	19%	24%	27%
Good	55%	58%	56%	54%	51%	57%	58%	65%	56%	56%
Fair	14%	14%	18%	16%	16%	14%	12%	12%	12%	13%
Poor	7%	5%	7%	9%	8%	5%	4%	4%	8%	4%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%

The percentage of respondents offering a positive assessment of trash collection services in Worcester declined slightly from 81% in 2002 to 78% in 2003 (not a statistically significant decline). Since 1999, the proportion of respondents offering a positive assessment has declined from a high of 90%.

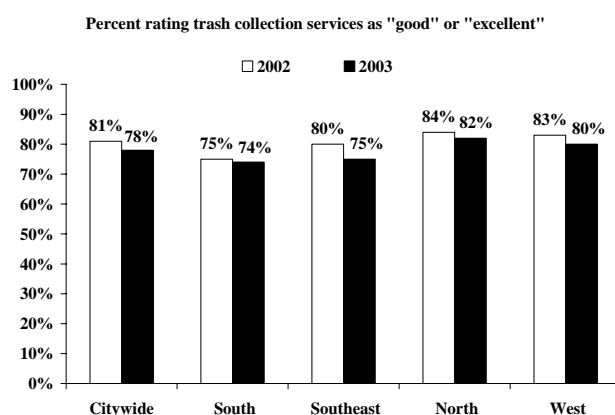
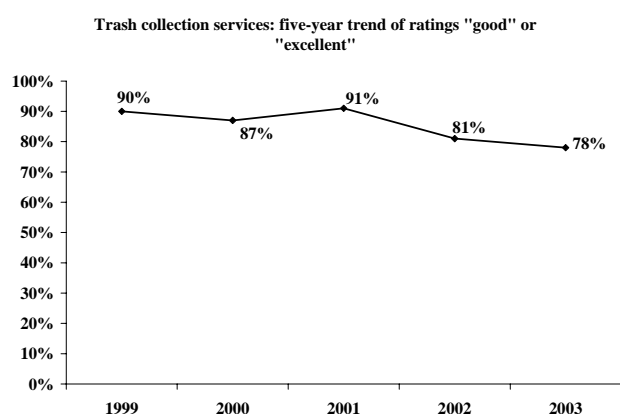
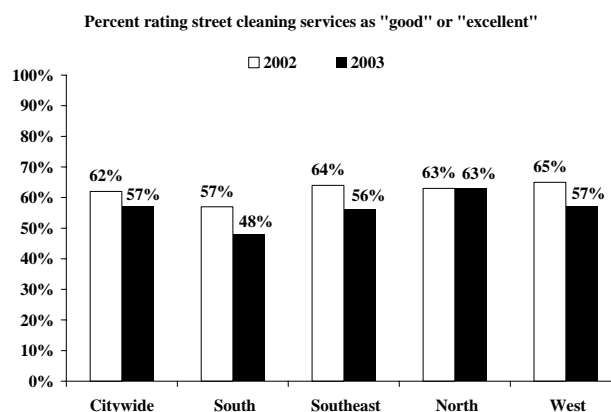


Table 3: Street cleaning services

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Excellent	10%	9%	7%	7%	9%	12%	12%	8%	10%	9%
Good	47%	53%	41%	50%	47%	52%	51%	55%	47%	56%
Fair	26%	27%	26%	29%	26%	25%	24%	29%	26%	27%
Poor	17%	11%	25%	14%	18%	12%	13%	9%	12%	8%
Don't know	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%

The proportion of respondents offering a positive rating of street cleaning services fell from 62% in 2002 to 57% in 2003, a statistically significant decline. The proportion of respondents offering an assessment of "poor" increased from 11% to 17%, a statistically significant increase. While there was an increase in "poor" ratings of street cleaning in all quadrants of the city, a quarter of residents in the south area now offered this assessment. There was an increase in the percentage of respondents offering an "excellent" rating in both the north and the west areas of the city.



Positive ratings of street cleaning services have been falling since 1999, when the proportion of respondents offering an assessment of “good” or “excellent” was 68%.

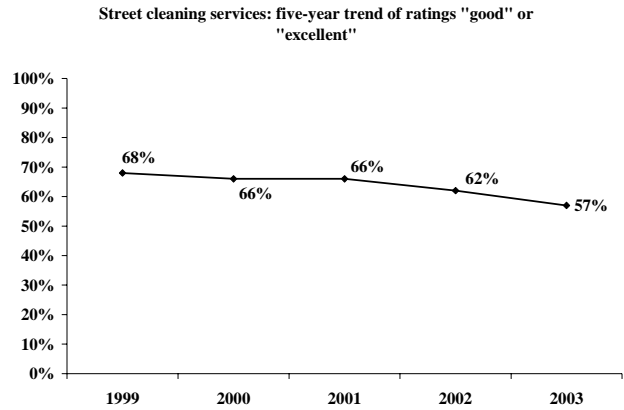
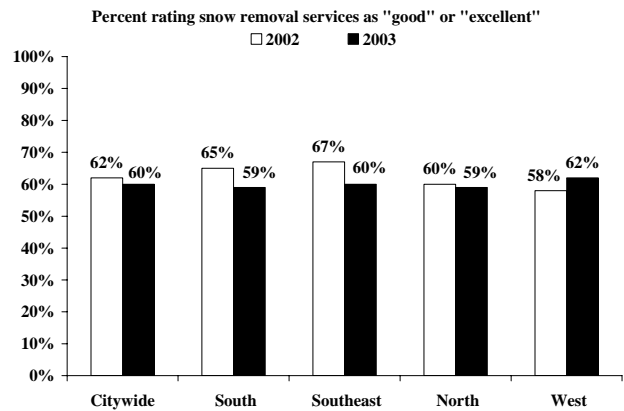


Table 4: Snow removal services

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Excellent	13%	13%	13%	12%	15%	15%	13%	11%	12%	14%
Good	47%	49%	46%	53%	45%	52%	46%	49%	50%	44%
Fair	25%	25%	24%	21%	24%	23%	25%	27%	26%	27%
Poor	14%	13%	17%	15%	15%	10%	15%	13%	11%	15%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%

The proportion of respondents offering a positive assessment of snow removal services fell from 62% in 2002 to 60% in 2003, a statistically insignificant change. The percentage of respondents in the west area of the City who offered a positive assessment of snow removal services increased from 58% in 2002 to 62% in 2003, also a statistically insignificant change.



The proportion of respondents offering a positive assessment of snow removal services in the city was highest in 2000 at 67%. Since that time, it has steadily fallen to 60% in 2003 (as shown on the next page). While it is unclear why satisfaction has declined in recent years, it is possible that snow satisfaction ratings are correlated with the amount of snowfall during a particular year.

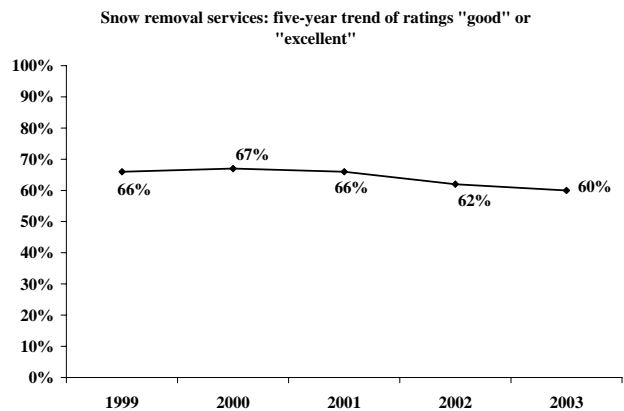
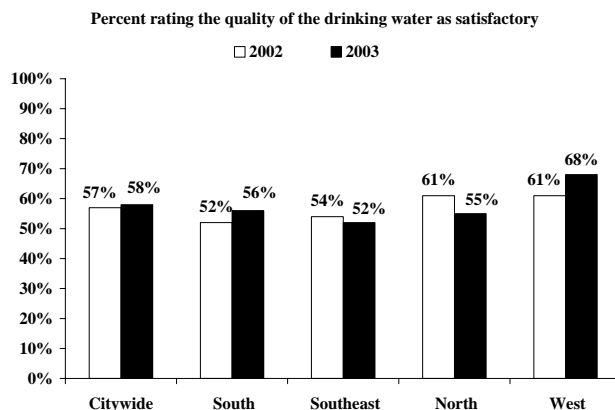


Table 5: City drinking water

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Satisfactory	58%	57%	56%	52%	52%	54%	55%	61%	68%	61%
Unsatisfactory	36%	38%	39%	43%	43%	40%	37%	35%	28%	35%
Don't know	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	7%	8%	5%	5%	5%

The proportion of residents who say that the taste, odor, temperature, and appearance of their drinking water is satisfactory increased very slightly from 57% in 2002 to 58% in 2003, a statistically insignificant increase. The percentage of respondents in the north area responding positively declined from 61% to 55% in the last year, a statistically significant decline. The proportion of respondents in the west area offering a satisfactory rating increased from 61% to 68%, a statistically significant increase. It should be noted that, according to water quality reports from the Department of Public Works, Worcester’s water meets or exceeds all standards for water quality and water contaminants in tests conducted both before the water enters the distribution system and at taps throughout the city.² Therefore, low assessments of water quality may be due to differences in perceptions or the quality of pipes and fixtures in individual homes rather than the quality of the water being supplied to the home.



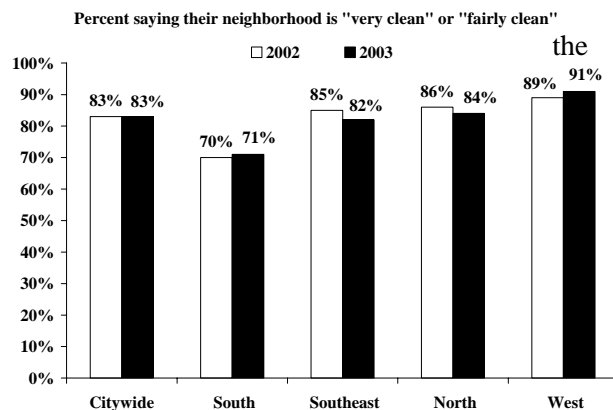
Prior to 2002, different questions about the drinking water were asked, limiting the ability to compare satisfaction over time.

IV. Satisfaction with selected neighborhood conditions

Table 6: Amount of litter in the neighborhood

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Very clean	36%	33%	22%	21%	33%	30%	41%	36%	43%	42%
Fairly clean	47%	50%	49%	49%	49%	55%	43%	50%	48%	47%
Fairly dirty	13%	12%	23%	23%	13%	12%	12%	10%	6%	7%
Very dirty	5%	4%	6%	7%	6%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	1%	0%	<1%

Overall, respondents continue to be very satisfied with cleanliness of their neighborhood (an area defined as the six blocks around their home). Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents say that their neighborhood is “very clean” or “fairly clean”, the same proportion as in 2002. There was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of respondents in the north area who say that their neighborhood is “very clean,” from 36% to 41%. A higher percentage of respondents in the west and north areas rate the cleanliness of their neighborhood as “very clean” (43% and 41%, respectively), than respondents in the



² For more information, see “City of Worcester 2002 Water Quality Report” available at www.ci.worcester.ma.us/reports.htm.

southeast and south areas (33% and 23%, respectively).

Prior to 2002, different questions about litter were asked, limiting the ability to compare satisfaction over time.

Table 7: Number of abandoned buildings in the neighborhood

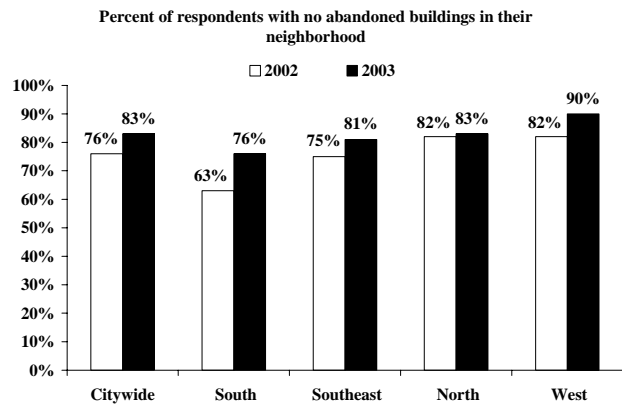
	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Many	2%	3%	2%	7%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Few	15%	20%	22%	30%	18%	22%	15%	16%	8%	15%
None	83%	76%	76%	63%	81%	75%	83%	82%	90%	82%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%

There was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of respondents who say that there are no abandoned buildings within six blocks of their home, from 76% in 2002 to 83% in 2003. The south area had the largest increase in the percentage of respondents who say that there are no abandoned buildings in their neighborhood, from 63% in 2002 to 76% in 2003.

It is interesting to note that a recent report from the CCPM found that the number of abandoned buildings in the city increased slightly over the last year.³ It is unclear why residents perceive that the number of abandoned buildings has decreased over the last year.

One possibility is that the City of Worcester defines a building as “abandoned” only if it is vacant and the owner is no longer actively paying taxes. The CCPM used this definition in its report. In contrast, residents typically do not know whether an owner is actively paying taxes; a resident therefore sees the visible signs of boarded windows and no tenants and assumes the building is “abandoned.”

Prior years’ ratings of abandoned buildings are not available.



³ Report No. CCPM-03-06, “Benchmarking Economic Development in Worcester: 2003.” Available at <http://www.wrrb.org/Reports/CCPM-03-06.pdf>

Table 8: Amount of neighborhood street lighting

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Too bright	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%
About right	70%	72%	67%	70%	72%	70%	70%	77%	71%	73%
Not bright enough	26%	25%	27%	25%	24%	28%	26%	20%	26%	25%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%

The proportion of respondents saying that the amount of street lighting in their neighborhood is “about right” fell from 72% in 2002 to 70% in 2003, a statistically insignificant decline. However, there was a statistically significant decline in the percentage in the north area responding in this way, from 77% to 70%.

Prior years’ ratings of neighborhood street lighting are not available.

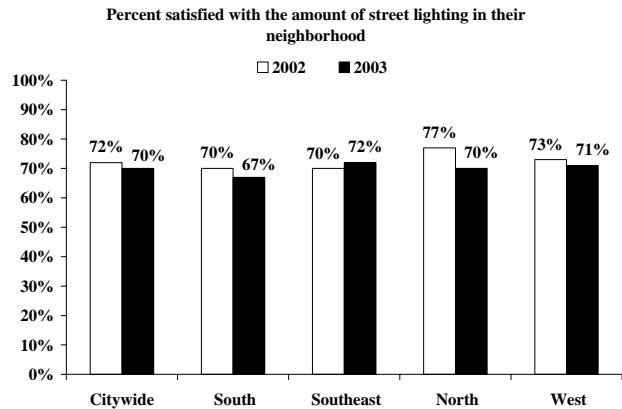


Table 9: Condition of neighborhood sidewalks

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Good condition	57%	55%	59%	57%	59%	59%	55%	52%	57%	51%
Not in good condition	31%	35%	32%	36%	29%	31%	29%	33%	33%	40%
Don't know	12%	10%	9%	7%	13%	10%	16%	15%	10%	9%

Over the last year there was an increase from 55% to 57% in the proportion of respondents who say that their neighborhood sidewalks are in good condition, a statistically insignificant increase. There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of respondents in the west area of the city who say that their sidewalks are in good condition (from 51% to 57%). Each area of the city maintained or saw an increase in the percentage of respondents who say that their neighborhood sidewalks are in good condition.

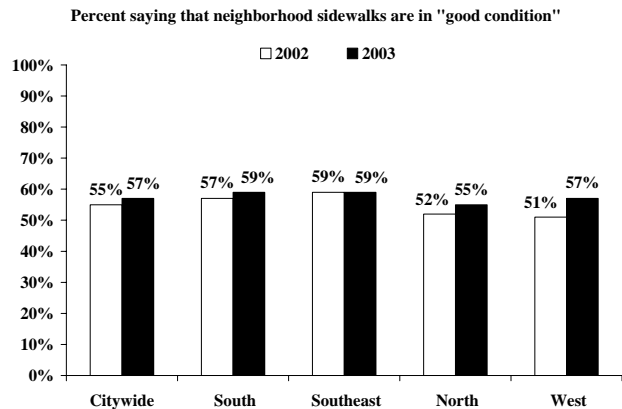
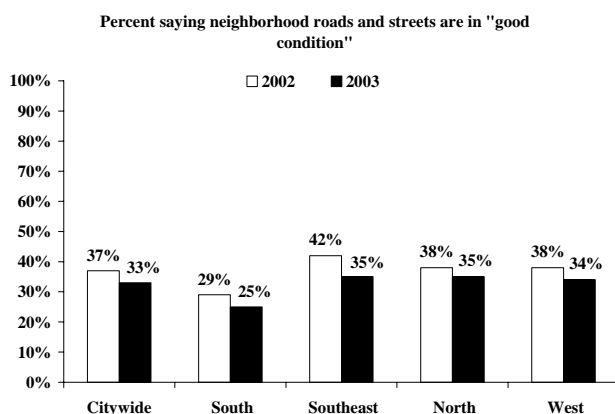


Table 10: Condition of neighborhood street and road surfaces

	City		South		Southeast		North		West	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002
Good condition	33%	37%	25%	29%	35%	42%	35%	38%	34%	38%
Somewhat rough	35%	42%	37%	45%	33%	38%	32%	40%	37%	45%
Very rough	33%	21%	38%	26%	32%	20%	33%	22%	29%	18%
Don't know	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	0%	0%

Respondents continue to be dissatisfied with the quality of the roads and streets in their neighborhood. There was a decline in the proportion who say that their roads and streets are in good condition from 37% to 33%, a statistically insignificant decline. The proportion in the southeast area of the city who offered a positive assessment fell from 42% to 35% in 2003, a statistically significant decline. There were high and statistically significant increases in each area in the percentage of respondents who say that their streets are “very rough.”

Prior years’ ratings of streets and roads are not available.



V. Satisfaction with the Worcester Police and Fire Departments

Of the 1,404 survey respondents, 324 (23%) had some contact with the Worcester Police Department in the last year, while 158 (11%) had some contact with the Worcester Fire Department. Only those respondents who had some contact with these departments in the last year were asked questions about their satisfaction with the service provided. The margin of error for questions related to the police department is +/- 5%, and the margin of error for questions related to the fire department is +/- 8%. Additional information related to the effectiveness of the Police and Fire Departments is included in the CCPM report “*Benchmarking Public Safety in Worcester: 2003*” (Report #CCPM-03-01).

Table 11: Percent and number of respondents having some contact with the Police and/or Fire Departments in the last year

	Contact	No Contact	Don't Know
Police Department	23% (324)	77% (1,076)	0% (0)
Fire Department	11% (158)	88% (1,238)	0% (0)

Of those who had contact with the Police Department in the last year, 78% say that the police were fair in dealing with their situation. This was a statistically insignificant decline from 79% in 2002. Eighty percent (80%) say that the police were courteous in their dealings with people, the same proportion that answered in this way in 2002. These results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Respondents' assessments of the fairness and courteousness of the Police Department

	Were the police fair?		Were the police courteous?	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
Yes	78%	79%	80%	80%
No	16%	18%	14%	17%
Don't know/no answer	6%	3%	6%	3%

As shown in Table 13, the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with their interaction with the Police Department was 64% in 2003, a statistically insignificant decline from 66% in 2002.

Table 13: Overall satisfaction with Police Department interaction

	2003	2002
Satisfied	64%	66%
Neutral	15%	18%
Not satisfied	17%	16%
Don't know/no answer	1%	<1%

Of those respondents who had some contact with the Fire Department in the last year, 85% say that the Fire Department responded in a reasonable amount of time. This is a statistically significant decline from 98% in 2002. This decline occurred because many more individuals said that they didn't know whether the Fire Department responded in a reasonable amount of time. The same proportion this year (1%) say that the department did not respond in a reasonable amount of time. These results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Did the Fire Department respond in a reasonable amount of time?

	2003	2002
Yes	85%	98%
No	1%	1%
Don't know/no answer	13%	1%

As shown in Table 15, the proportion of respondents who say that their overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Fire Department is "excellent" or "good" was 85%, a statistically significant decline from 95% in 2002. Again, as with the results on response times presented in Table 14, the reason for this decline is an increase in those who say that they "don't know" or preferred not to answer the question. There was a statistically insignificant decline in the percentage who say that their overall satisfaction is "fair" or "poor."

Table 15: Overall satisfaction with the service provided by the Fire Department

	2003	2002
Excellent	72%	79%
Good	13%	16%
Fair	1%	4%
Poor	<1%	2%
Don't know/no answer	13%	0%

VI. Satisfaction with the public schools

Of all households responding, 400 have at least one student in the public schools.⁴ Because some households have multiple students in the public schools, there were a total of 678 students represented by the survey (2.5% of all students in public schools in Worcester).⁵ The distribution of these 678 students by grade level is shown in Table 16. Each of the following questions related to the public schools were asked of all students. In other words, a respondent with two children in the public schools was asked each of the questions twice, once for each child. Therefore, the percentages in the results tables below are based on the number of students. The margin of

⁴ This includes students in the Worcester Public Schools as well as students at either of the two charter schools in the city.

⁵ Total number of public school students includes students at the two charter schools in the city. Data on number of students is from the Massachusetts Department of Education: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu>.

error for questions related to the public schools is +/- 5%.⁶ This was the first year that questions about the public schools were added to the survey, and these results will therefore serve as the baseline against which future results will be measured.

Table 16: Total number of public school students in households surveyed compared to total number of students in public schools in Worcester

	Number of Students in Households Surveyed	Total Number of Students in Public Schools 02-03 School Year
Elementary (K-6)	389 (2.4%)	16,397
Middle (7-8)	112 (2.7%)	4,177
High (9-12)	177 (2.7%)	6,627
Total	678 (2.5%)	27,201

A strong majority of parents say that they think their child’s teacher and principal are accessible when they need to talk to them. Over 90% of parents with children in any grade level respond positively, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Do you think your child's teacher and principal are accessible to you when you need to talk to them?

	Elementary	Middle	High
Yes	95%	96%	93%
No	4%	3%	2%
Don't know	<1%	1%	5%
<i>Number of students</i>	384	112	177

Table 18 shows the number of times that parents say that they have met with their child’s teacher during the past school year. A higher proportion of parents who have high school students say that they “never” met with their child’s teacher during the past school year (22%) than in middle school (10%) or elementary school (7%). A higher proportion of parents with children in elementary school say that they met with that child’s teacher more than 10 times (17%) than those with children in middle school (10%) or high school (9%).

Table 18: Number of times parent spoke to or met with teacher by grade level

	Elementary	Middle	High
Never	7%	10%	22%
1 to 3 times	45%	49%	43%
4 to 6 times	26%	30%	21%
7 to 9 times	5%	2%	6%
10 to 12 times	12%	8%	7%
More than 12 times	5%	2%	2%
<i>Number of students</i>	236	63	106

In general, parents say that their child’s teacher explains well to them what he/she expects from their child. 83% of parents with a child in elementary school say that their child’s teacher explains “well” what is expected of that child, while 75% of parents with a child in middle or high school respond in this way, as shown in Table 19.

⁶ Comparisons across quadrants are not possible due to small sample sizes and the resultant high margins of error.

Table 19: How well does your child's teacher explain to you what he/she expects from your child?

	Elementary	Middle	High
Well	83%	75%	75%
Neutral	10%	17%	16%
Not well	7%	8%	8%
<i>Number of students</i>	385	111	178

Parents are generally satisfied with their child's progress in school. More parents with children in elementary school respond positively (85%), as compared to middle or high school (78% and 79%, respectively), as shown in Table 20.

Table 20: How satisfied are you with your child's progress in school?

	Elementary	Middle	High
Satisfied	85%	78%	79%
Neutral	9%	13%	14%
Not satisfied	6%	9%	7%
<i>Number of students</i>	386	112	178

Appendix A Survey Instrument

First, I would like to ask you about a variety of services that the government provides to the entire city. Please use a scale of Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor.

- 1) How would you rate the public library services in Worcester?
- 2) How would you rate the street cleaning services in Worcester?
- 3) How would you rate the trash collection services in Worcester?
- 4) How would you rate the snow removal services in Worcester?

- 5) Thinking about the City's drinking water, considering taste, odor, appearance & temperature, do you consider it to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

My next questions are about your neighborhood. Please consider your neighborhood to be within SIX blocks of your home.

- 6) How would you rate the condition of street and road surfaces in your neighborhood?
Good condition
Somewhat rough
Very rough
- 7) Would you say the amount of street lighting in your neighborhood is:
Too bright
Not bright enough
About right
- 8) Are the sidewalks in your neighborhood generally in good condition?
Yes
No
Don't know
- 9) Again, considering your neighborhood to be within 6 blocks of your home, are there:
Many abandoned buildings
Few abandoned buildings
No abandoned buildings
- 10) Thinking about litter in your neighborhood, would you say your neighborhood is:
Very clean
Fairly clean
Fairly dirty
Very dirty

My next questions are about the Worcester Police Department.

- 11) In the last year, have you contacted the Worcester police for assistance, to report a crime, or for any other reason?
Yes
No → Go to question 15
Don't know → Go to question 15
- 12) In your personal experience, do you think that the Worcester police were fair in dealing with your situation?
Yes
No
Don't know

- 13) Again, based on your experience, were the Worcester police courteous in their dealings with people?
 Yes
 No
 Don't know
- 14) For this question, please use a scale of 1 to 5, where one is very dissatisfied and five is very satisfied:
 How satisfied were you with the way in which the Worcester police handled your situation?

Next I would like to ask you some questions about the Worcester Fire Department.

- 15) Have you or anyone in your household called the Fire Department for assistance of any kind, or have you had any first hand contact with the Fire Department within the last year?
 Yes
 No → go to question 18
 Don't know → go to question 18
- 16) In your experience, did the Fire Department respond within a reasonable amount of time?
 Yes
 No
 Don't know
- 17) How would you rate the overall service provided by the Fire Department?
 Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor

Next I would like to ask you some questions about the Worcester Public Schools.

- 18) How many children do you have in public school in Worcester?
 none → go to question 25
 1
 2
 3 ...
- 19) What grades are your children in?
- 20) Thinking about your child in the <GRADE> grade, what school does that child attend?
- 21) During the past school year, how many times have you met with or spoken to that child's teacher?
- 22) On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not well and 5 is very well, how well does that child's teacher explain to you what he or she expects from your child academically?
- 23) On a scale of 1 to 5, where one is very dissatisfied and five is very satisfied, how satisfied are you with your <GRADE> grade child's progress in school?
- 24) Do you think that your <GRADE> grade child's teacher and principal are accessible to you when you need to talk with them?
 Yes
 No
 Don't know

(REPEAT QUESTIONS 20 to 24 FOR ALL CHILDREN)

My final questions are for statistical purposes only:

- 25) Are you between the ages of:
 18-24
 25-34
 35-44
 45-54
 55-64

65 and over

Refused

26) Which race or ethnic group do you identify with?

Hispanic or Latino

African American

White / Caucasian

Asian

Other

Refused

27) Please tell me which of the following best describes your household income for 2002:

Under \$15,000

\$15,000 - \$24,000

\$25,000 - \$34,000

\$35,000 - \$44,000

\$45,000 - \$54,000

\$55,000 - and above

Don't know / Refused

28) And finally, are you the:

Female head of household

Other female in household

Male head of household

Other male in household

Appendix B

Demographic Information of Respondents

Age of respondents

18-24	7.4%
25-34	14.9%
35-44	23.0%
45-54	19.3%
55-64	11.7%
65 and over	20.2%
Refused	3.2%

Race/ethnicity of respondents

White/Caucasian	73.1%
African American	5.9%
Hispanic/Latino	8.7%
Asian	2.5%
Other	3.8%
Refused	6.0%

Household income

Under \$15,000	13.6%
\$15,000-\$24,000	7.8%
\$25,000-\$34,000	12.6%
\$35,000-\$44,000	9.9%
\$45,000-\$54,000	6.5%
\$55,000-up	17.7%
Don't know	9.6%
Refused	22.2%

Gender

Male	36.3%
Female	63.5%

Appendix C Comments

Library services

- Never been to library/don't go to library (53)
- Hours cut/not open enough (10)
- No branches/need more branches (3)
- Use one in another town (2)
- Could use more funding
- I like it because of computers

Street cleaning

- Very messy streets/not cleaned well (13)
- Should do it more often (10)
- Privately contracted (4)
- They post signs but don't clean (3)
- Street never cleaned (2)
- Towing cars/confused
- Excellent job/towed cars
- Does nothing for people in condos
- Got a ticket for a street that wasn't posted

Trash collection

- They don't pick up trash that they leave behind/trash pick-up is very messy (14)
- Private pick-up/condo (9)
- Bags too expensive (5)
- Need bulk pickup/no appointment times available (5)
- Need stronger bags (3)
- Recycling is bad (2)

Snow removal

- They block my driveway (12)
- Don't come close enough to curb (5)
- Not here in the winter (4)
- I have private snow removal (3)
- Corners could be better/ blocks view (3)
- Small trucks (2)
- Depends on the person (2)
- Don't do my street (2)
- Do a good job on main streets, but not side streets
- They do a bad job

Drinking water

- Use a filter (14)
- Buy bottled water (6)
- Smells bad (3)
- Too much chlorine (2)
- Awful
- Only if they don't put fluoride in it
- West side is unsatisfactory
- Love the city's water

Streets/road surfaces

- Lot of potholes (14)
- Live on dirt road (3)
- Haven't been resurfaced in 40 years
- Have not finished the final coat
- They just redid it
- With high taxes, roads are horrible
- Worked on sewer, didn't come back to fix the streets

Street lighting

- There aren't any (5)
- Trees in the way (5)
- Half of the lights don't work (2)
- Could use another pole on street
- Don't like orange bulbs – not bright enough
- More lights downtown
- Bulbs are burned out

Sidewalks

- No sidewalks in neighborhood (32)
- Very bad sidewalks (8)
- Tree roots pulling sidewalks apart (5)
- Fell very seriously/still recovering
- Bushes are blocking the sidewalks
- Private street
- I don't walk on them
- In process of putting them in now
- Just put them in and they're all slanted
- Some parts good some parts bad
- Washed away and never replaced

Abandoned buildings

- Abandoned house sitting there for 2 years
- A lot of homeless people
- Construction going on/has been happening for 4 years/a disgrace
- Think about abandoned cars in neighborhoods
- Abandoned cars/trucks

Cleanliness of neighborhood/presence of litter

- Lots of trash/dumping (6)
- Cars throwing trash out windows (3)
- Depends on time of year (3)
- Because of neighbors (2)
- Cut down tree and never picked it up
- Near college – beer bottles
- Allow someplace to dump leaves rather than in street

Worcester Police Department

- They didn't respond (3)
- Traffic is bad (2)
- Took 45 minutes to get here (2)

- They patrol neighborhood well
- More information based
- Unprofessional
- They are racist
- Waited several hours
- Could be nicer

Worcester Fire Department

- Medical emergency

Accessibility of Teacher/Principal⁷

- Principal not accessible (5)
- Too busy (2)
- Teacher not accessible (2)
- Don't care for the principal
- Because there are too many teachers
- Can't get in touch
- Have equal custody of child but school system won't acknowledge
- Haven't really dealt with principals
- Teacher did not have command of class
- Teacher is reachable
- They don't listen
- Teacher/principal can't relate to urban community
- North High rated F – do not care, disgusting
- Principal is very disrespectful
- Children with behavior problems need to be removed

⁷ Only comments regarding accessibility of principals and teachers were recorded. Comments on additional questions related to the schools will be added in future surveys.

UPCOMING RESEARCH BUREAU EVENTS;

Forum: Making Central Massachusetts More Competitive: A Report of the Governor's Regional Competitiveness Council

Featured Speaker: Barbara Berke, Secretary of Business & Technology
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Wednesday, February 4, 2004
Noon - Luncheon
Holy Cross College
Hogan Campus Center Ballroom
\$20 person, \$200 table of 10

Forum: The State of the City's Finances: How will Worcester balance its budget in FY05?

Speakers: Eric Kriss, Secretary of Administration and Finance
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

James A. DelSignore, Auditor
City of Worcester

John P. Prankevicius, Budget Director
City of Worcester

Moderator: Eric Schultz, President
Fallon Community Health Plan
Vice President, WRRB Board of Directors

Friday, February 27, 2004
7:45 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.
Clark University
Higgins University Center
950 Main Street, Worcester
(Parking available on Maywood Street)

To RSVP, please call 508-799-7169 or info@wrrb.org. To learn more about upcoming events, or to read Research Bureau reports, log onto our website www.wrrb.org.