



The Research Bureau

Citizen Satisfaction with Municipal Services and Quality of Life in Worcester: 2005 Survey

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Center for Community Performance Measurement

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2005, the Center for Community Performance Measurement at the Worcester Regional Research Bureau administered a comprehensive survey of Worcester residents. In a mail survey sent to 10,000 randomly selected households, respondents were asked to rate the quality of life in the City, the community's amenities, and local government service delivery. This report discusses and analyzes the survey's principal findings. Following the summary of findings, the report is divided into nine parts:

- ❖ Introduction and Purpose
- ❖ Satisfaction with Quality of Life and City Services
- ❖ Worcester Public Library
- ❖ Public Safety
- ❖ Worcester Public Schools
- ❖ Contact with City Departments and Communications
- ❖ Appendix A: Survey Methodology
- ❖ Appendix B: Respondent Characteristics
- ❖ Appendix C: 2005 Survey Instrument

Summary of Findings

A total of 2,128 surveys were completed and returned for a response rate of 21%. The 2005 City of Worcester Citizen Satisfaction Survey shows that the majority of respondents are satisfied with Worcester as a place to live, the services the City provides, and the quality of life in their immediate neighborhoods. Highlights include the following:

- ❖ Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) stated they were "satisfied" with the overall quality of life in the City, while 7% were "very satisfied."
- ❖ Residential trash collection received the highest rating of any City service, with 82% rating the service "excellent" or "good."
- ❖ More than two-thirds of respondents (67.6%) expressed satisfaction with Worcester as a place to raise children.
- ❖ 318 households reported having one or more children enrolled in the Worcester Public Schools during the 2004-05 school year. Parents/guardians of 80% of these students indicated that they were pleased with their children's academic progress.
- ❖ About 55% of respondents had used the Worcester Public Library during the previous 12-month period. Overwhelmingly, respondents were satisfied with the assistance provided by the library staff (97.4% satisfaction), children's programs (94.2%), the

selection of library materials (94.2%), and the WPL's computer resources/online services (92.8%).

- ❖ Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that the level of crime in their neighborhood had stayed about the same during the past year, 31% reported an increase, and 6% stated that crime had decreased.
- ❖ More than one-third of respondents (38%) stated that they had contacted the City with a question, service request, or a complaint during the previous 12-month period. For the most part, the proportion of respondents satisfied with the service they received when contacting the City considerably exceeded the proportion who were dissatisfied.
- ❖ While a minority of respondents sought emergency assistance from 911 or had contact with police, fire, or ambulance services, they were overwhelmingly satisfied with the response time, professionalism of staff, and quality of services provided.
- ❖ Citywide, only about one in five respondents (21%) rated the condition of neighborhood sidewalks (smoothness/evenness) as "excellent" or "good" (and the vast majority were "good" ratings), while 33% stated "fair."
- ❖ About half of respondents expressed satisfaction with housing availability and affordability in Worcester.
- ❖ Less than half (48.1%) of all respondents said that they were satisfied with the value of services received for their tax dollars.
- ❖ When asked whether they would like to see City services expanded, nearly two-thirds of respondents answered "no." Thus complaints about the "value of services received" apparently reflect a concern about taxation levels more than dissatisfaction with services provided.
- ❖ Slightly more than one-third (35.6%) of those surveyed were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the image and appearance of the City.
- ❖ More than half (51.1%) of all respondents stated that they felt "very unsafe" in Downtown Worcester at nighttime.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Worcester Regional Research Bureau's Center for Community Performance Measurement (CCPM) is pleased to present the results of its *City of Worcester 2005 Citizen Survey*.¹ The survey provided residents the opportunity to rate their satisfaction with the quality of life in the City and evaluate the performance of the City's major public services such as street maintenance, refuse collection, public library services, and police and fire protection. Citizens were asked follow-up questions to identify specific areas where the City can improve its services. Financial and staffing data for a number of City departments are provided in **Table 1**.²

Table 1: Departmental Expenditures and Staffing Levels, FY02-FY05
(Dollar amounts expressed in thousands)

| | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 | FY05 | % Change FY02-FY05 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Worcester Public Schools | | | | | |
| Operating Expenditures* | \$179,401 | \$181,006 | \$189,472 | \$190,911 | 6.4% |
| Staffing (Total) | 3,332 | 3,031 | 2,816 | 2,745 | -17.6% |
| Student Enrollment | 25,817 | 25,721 | 25,055 | 24,538 | -5.0% |
| Department of Public Works | | | | | |
| Operating Expenditures (Total)* | \$15,122 | \$17,599 | \$15,086 | \$19,000 | 25.6% |
| <i>Snow and Ice Removal</i> | \$1,389 | \$4,275 | \$2,442 | \$5,379 | 287.3% |
| <i>Street Lighting</i> | \$2,509 | \$2,374 | \$2,541 | \$2,497 | -0.5% |
| Staffing (Budgeted Positions) | 239 | 229 | 200 | 214 | -10.5% |
| Worcester Public Library | | | | | |
| Operating Expenditures* | \$4,054 | \$3,944 | \$3,600 | \$3,665 | -9.6% |
| Staffing (Budgeted Positions) | 116 | 97 | 84 | 83 | -28.4% |
| Worcester Police Department | | | | | |
| Operating Expenditures* | \$31,803 | \$31,272 | \$30,731 | \$31,884 | 0.3% |
| Staffing (Budgeted Positions) | 540 | 467 | 491 | 523 | -3.1% |
| Worcester Fire Department | | | | | |
| Operating Expenditures* | \$30,491 | \$29,373 | \$28,961 | \$29,082 | -4.6% |
| Staffing (Budgeted Positions) | 462 | 437 | 411 | 446 | -3.5% |
| Code Inspection | | | | | |
| Operating Expenditures* | na | 1,176 | 1,553 | 1,698 | FY03-FY05 44.4% |
| Staffing (Budgeted Positions) | na | 63 | 58 | 42 | -33.3% |

* Expenditure data do not include fringe benefits.

Data Sources: 1) Expenditures: Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Office of the City Auditor

2) Budgeted Positions: City of Worcester Annual Budgets, Office of the City Manager and

Massachusetts Department of Education School District Profiles (WPS Staffing and Enrollment)

¹From 2002 to 2004, the CCPM conducted annual telephone surveys where 20,000 calls yielded about 1,400 responses. In 2005 we conducted a mail survey to broaden the scope of the survey. Of 10,000 mailed surveys, 2,128 were returned for a response rate of 21%.

²Increases or decreases in funding and/or staffing can affect service delivery, which in turn may affect citizen satisfaction.

We emphasize that while the findings from this survey describe *how* residents feel about services provided by municipal government, they do not tell us *why* respondents feel that way. The results of this survey, in conjunction with other performance measurement data, can be used as a management tool to help City leaders determine where to focus their efforts and to identify initiatives to better serve the public.³ However, this report does not describe specific changes or identify actions that may be needed.

Methodology

The findings described in this report are based on a mail survey sent to 10,000 Worcester households in July of 2005. The sample was selected from a list of 65,387 residential mailing addresses purchased from Globe Specialty Products.⁴ A systematic sampling method was used which closely approximates random sampling by selecting approximately every sixth address until the desired number of households was obtained. (See **Appendix A** for further methodological discussion.)

Completed surveys were received from 2,128 residents, for a response rate of 21%.⁵ (Respondent characteristics are detailed in **Appendix B**.) As a general rule in survey research, a minimum of 400 representative responses are needed to make generalizations about the population as a whole from information obtained from a sample. The analyses contained in this report are based on more than five times the number of responses required for statistically valid analysis and reporting. The analyses presented in this report typically are based only on responses that stated an opinion, and exclude “don’t know” and “no opinion” responses. The survey instrument is included in **Appendix C**.

This report is intended to present a baseline against which we will measure future progress. The survey will be repeated in 2006, and future reports will examine changes from year-to-year and ultimately, trends over a longer period of time.

³ The CCPM regularly issues reports Benchmarking the City’s performance in the areas of economic development, public safety, public education, municipal and neighborhood services, and youth services. All reports are available at www.wrrb.org

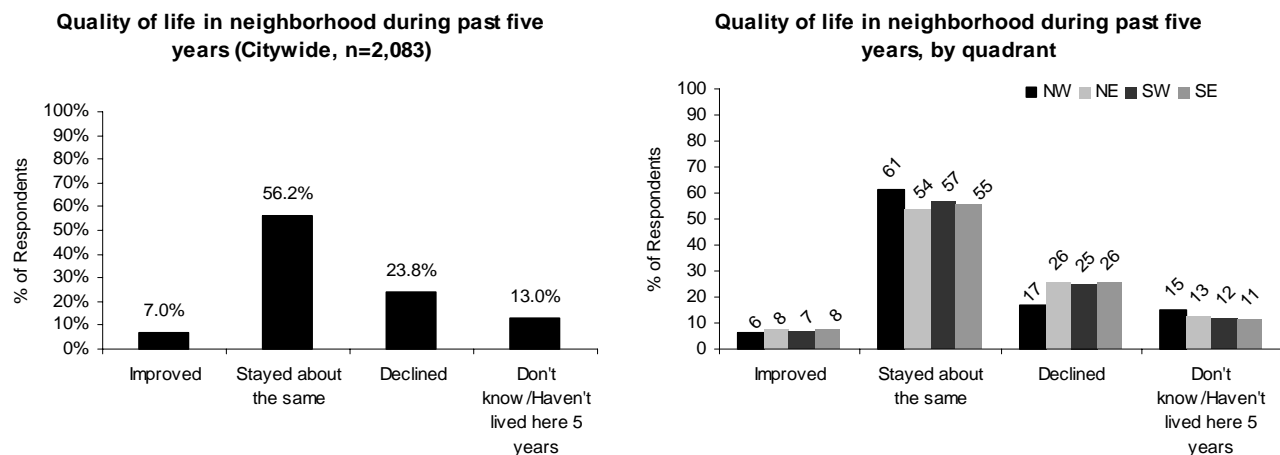
⁴ According to the 2000 Census, there are 67,028 households in Worcester. The purchased list contained all residential mailing addresses for zip codes 01602 through 01609.

⁵ Completed surveys were entered by CCPM staff into a database. The validity of the entered data was verified by running frequency distributions for each survey question to identify responses that did not fall within the valid response range, with any identified errors then corrected.

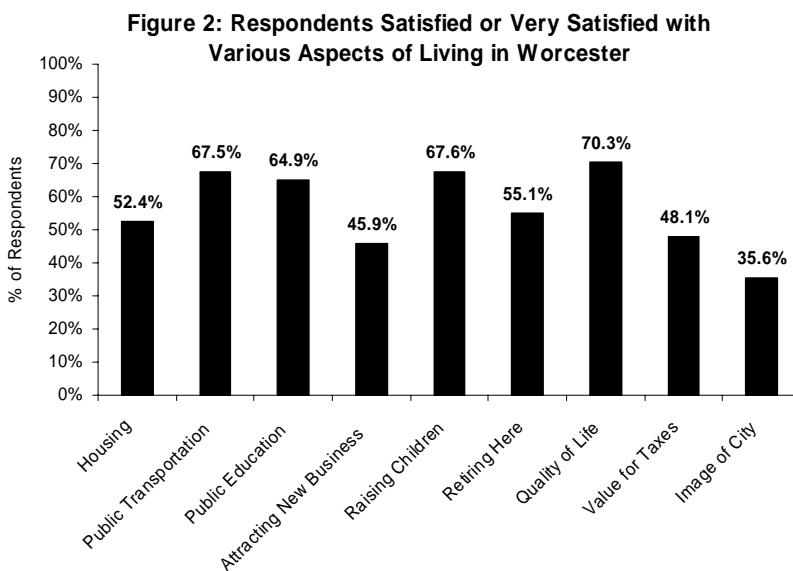
SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF LIFE AND CITY SERVICES

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) stated they were “satisfied” with the overall quality of life in the City and 7% were “very satisfied.” When asked about the quality of life in their neighborhood over the past five years, more than half (56%) of respondents indicated that it had stayed about the same, almost one-quarter (24%) reported that it had declined, and 7% stated that it had improved. The remaining 13% of respondents reported that they did not know or had not lived in the neighborhood for five years.

Figure 1: Quality of Life



As shown in **Figure 2**, more than two-thirds of respondents (67.6%) expressed satisfaction with Worcester as a place to raise children, and a similar percentage (67.5%) were satisfied with “the availability and convenience of public transportation.” 64.9% of all respondents were satisfied



with the quality of public education in Worcester. A smaller percentage, 55.1%, expressed satisfaction with Worcester as a place to retire.

About one in two respondents expressed satisfaction with housing availability and affordability in Worcester.

Respondents reported the lowest levels of satisfaction

with the following aspects of life in Worcester: Less than half (45.9%) of the survey respondents were satisfied with the City’s efforts to attract new businesses and jobs to the area during the previous 12-month period, and less than half (48.1%) were satisfied with the value of services received for their tax dollars (see **Table 2**). Only 35.6% of those surveyed were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the image and appearance of the City, while 46.9% were “dissatisfied” and 17.5% were “very dissatisfied.”

Table 2: Satisfaction with Quality of Life Issues

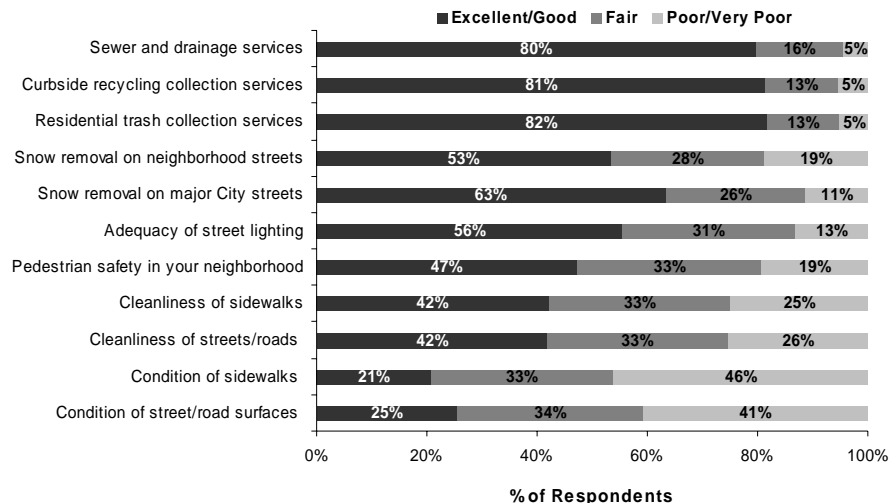
| Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following based on your experience or observations during the past 12 months. | n | Percent of Respondents | | | |
|---|-------|------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|
| | | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
| Housing availability and affordability in Worcester | 1,637 | 5.7% | 46.7% | 32.4% | 15.2% |
| The availability and convenience of public transportation | 1,458 | 8.9% | 58.6% | 22.2% | 10.4% |
| The quality of public education in Worcester | 1,465 | 9.7% | 55.2% | 25.6% | 9.6% |
| The City's efforts to attract new businesses and jobs to the area | 1,716 | 5.2% | 40.7% | 38.8% | 15.3% |
| Worcester as a place to raise children | 1,757 | 10.2% | 57.4% | 23.1% | 9.3% |
| Worcester as a place to retire | 1,761 | 8.2% | 46.9% | 26.9% | 18.0% |
| The overall quality of life in Worcester | 1,950 | 7.1% | 63.2% | 23.3% | 6.4% |
| Value of services received for your City tax dollars | 1,882 | 4.5% | 43.6% | 35.2% | 16.7% |
| Image and appearance of the City | 1,982 | 2.7% | 32.9% | 46.9% | 17.5% |

As shown in **Figure 3**, respondents were asked to rate a number of neighborhood conditions and services using a scale of “excellent,” “good,” “fair,” “poor,” and “very poor.” Residential trash-collection services received the highest rating from respondents citywide, with 82% rating the service “excellent” or “good.” Curbside recycling services were similarly rated (81% “excellent” or “good”), and four out of five respondents provided the highest ratings for sewer and drainage services.

Almost two-thirds of respondents citywide (63%) rated snow removal on major City streets as “excellent” or “good” (with 26% indicating “fair” and the remaining 11% “poor” or “very poor”).

The condition of neighborhood sidewalks

Figure 3: Respondents' Ratings of Various Aspects of Worcester



(smoothness/evenness) received the lowest rating. **Table 3** shows that Citywide, only about one in five respondents (21%) rating this “excellent” or “good” (with the vast majority of those being “good” ratings), while 33% stated “fair.” By far, sidewalk conditions received the greatest proportion of “poor” or “very poor” ratings, at 46%. While sidewalk cleanliness received somewhat better ratings than sidewalk condition, a substantial proportion of respondents, about one in four, rated this “poor” or “very poor”.

The condition of streets/road surfaces also received relatively poor ratings. One in four respondents offered a positive (“excellent” or “good”) rating, with a substantially larger proportion of respondents (41%) offering a “poor” or “very poor” assessment.

Nearly one in five (19%) respondents rated pedestrian safety in their neighborhood as “poor” or “very poor.” Respondents in the Southeast quadrant were most likely to offer low ratings (22.6%) compared to 20.6% in the Northeast, 19.0% in the Southwest, and 15.3% in the Northwest. The Northwest quadrant was the only quadrant in which more than half (54.5%) of respondents rated pedestrian safety “excellent” or “good.” Respondents offered further comments on traffic-related and pedestrian safety concerns when asked to identify the most important issue in their neighborhood, which is discussed in more detail below.

Table 3: Municipal Services Ratings

| Please rate each of the following based on your experiences or observations during the past 12 months. | n | Percent of Respondents | | | | |
|--|-------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| | | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Very Poor |
| Condition of street/road surfaces (smoothness/evenness) in your neighborhood | 2,099 | 3.1% | 22.2% | 33.9% | 23.2% | 17.5% |
| Condition of sidewalks (smoothness/evenness) in your neighborhood | 1,971 | 2.6% | 18.0% | 33.3% | 28.5% | 17.6% |
| Cleanliness (amount of litter/debris) of street/road surfaces in your neighborhood | 2,070 | 5.5% | 36.4% | 32.7% | 15.7% | 9.8% |
| Cleanliness (amount of litter/debris) of sidewalks in your neighborhood | 2,000 | 5.9% | 36.2% | 33.1% | 16.1% | 8.8% |
| Pedestrian safety in your neighborhood | 2,020 | 6.6% | 40.7% | 33.4% | 12.4% | 6.8% |
| Adequacy of street lighting in your neighborhood | 2,056 | 8.7% | 46.9% | 31.2% | 8.9% | 4.3% |
| Snow removal on major City streets | 2,017 | 12.8% | 50.5% | 25.5% | 7.3% | 3.9% |
| Snow removal on streets in your neighborhood | 2,036 | 11.9% | 41.5% | 27.7% | 11.4% | 7.5% |
| Residential trash collection services | 1,931 | 30.5% | 51.1% | 13.2% | 3.1% | 2.1% |
| Curbside recycling collection services | 1,876 | 29.7% | 51.6% | 13.3% | 3.0% | 2.4% |
| Sewer and drainage services to your home | 1,857 | 21.4% | 58.4% | 15.6% | 2.6% | 1.9% |
| Upkeep and appearance of City parks/playgrounds | 1,795 | 6.9% | 46.9% | 35.5% | 8.4% | 2.3% |
| Upkeep and appearance of City walking and biking trails | 1,248 | 6.2% | 42.6% | 37.6% | 9.4% | 4.2% |
| Upkeep and appearance of City athletic fields/facilities | 1,422 | 7.0% | 49.7% | 33.6% | 7.1% | 2.6% |

In addition to rating a number of factors that affect quality of life, respondents were asked to describe, in their own words, the most important issue in their neighborhood today. Slightly more than two-thirds of the total respondents (1,473) identified more than 2,400 issues, and highlights are provided in **Table 4** below.

Table 4: Most Important Neighborhood Issues

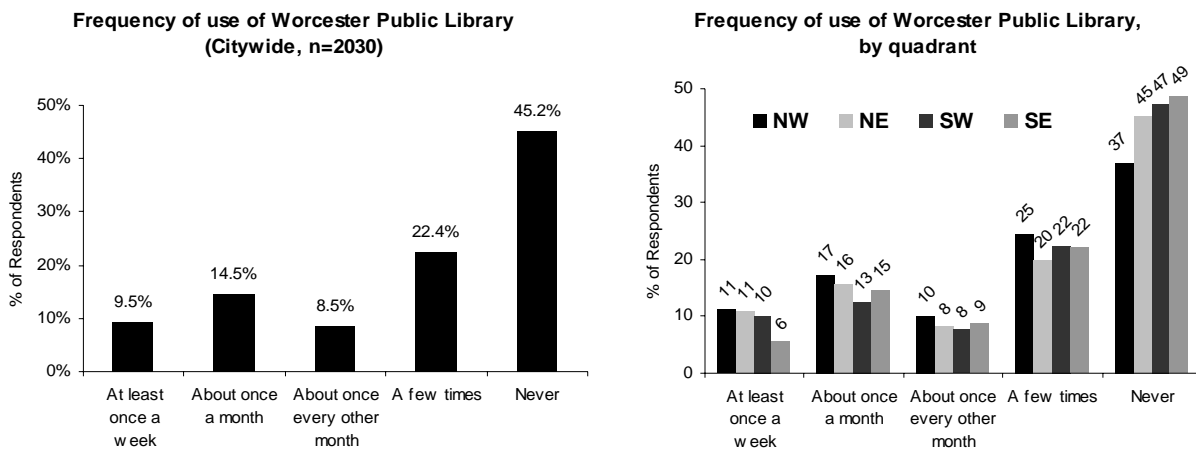
| What do you think is the most important issue in your neighborhood today? | Percent of Total Respondents (n=1473) Identifying Issue |
|--|--|
| Crime and fear of crime | 20.3% |
| Traffic (speed and volume) and pedestrian safety | 18.1% |
| Poor condition of streets | 17.7% |
| General cleanliness of property, streets and sidewalks | 11.5% |
| Poor condition of sidewalks | 7.6% |
| Other crime (gangs, loitering, prostitution, murder/violent crime, break-ins, theft) | 6.2% |
| Drugs and drug dealers | 5.6% |
| High taxes | 5.4% |
| Noise | 5.2% |
| Snow removal and sanding | 4.9% |
| Public schools (performance, communication and upkeep of buildings) | 4.6% |
| Parking problems | 3.9% |
| Lack of police presence | 3.4% |
| High housing costs and high cost of living | 3.1% |
| Location of social service providers | 2.8% |
| Vandalism | 1.9% |

WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Survey respondents were asked approximately how often they or other members of their household used the Worcester Public Library during the previous 12-month period. Nearly one in ten respondents reported that they or someone in their household used the WPL at least once per week, while 14.5% had used it about once a month, and about 31% had used it less frequently, but at least a few times during the prior year. 45.2% of respondents indicated they or other household members had never used the WPL during the past 12 months.

Further analysis of these data by the age of respondents reveals that those between the ages of 55 and 64 used the library with the greatest frequency; 31.9% of these individuals reported that they (or someone in their household) used the WPL “at least once a week” or “about once a month.” When looking at WPL use by quadrant, the “never” responses ranged from 37% in the Northwest to 49% in the Southeast.

Figure 4: Worcester Public Library Patronage



Overwhelmingly, respondents were satisfied with the assistance provided by the library staff (97.4% satisfaction), children’s programs (94.2%), the selection of library materials (94.2%), and the WPL’s computer resources/online services (92.8%). Users of the WPL expressed the greatest level of dissatisfaction with the branch libraries’ hours (about one in four were either “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with this aspect of the WPL).⁶ In comparison, 17.7% of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the Main Library’s hours of operation.

⁶ Currently, the WPL operates two branch libraries, the Francis Perkins branch in Greendale (open a total of 45 hours Monday through Friday), and the Great Brook Valley branch, which is open 2pm – 5pm Monday through Friday.

Table 5: Satisfaction with WPL Services

| In general, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of the Worcester Public Library? | n | Percent of Respondents | | | |
|--|-------|------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|
| | | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
| Library hours of operation (Main Library) | 1,007 | 22.7% | 59.6% | 14.9% | 2.8% |
| Library hours of operation (Branch libraries) | 740 | 18.2% | 56.5% | 20.3% | 5.0% |
| Selection of library material | 995 | 30.6% | 63.6% | 5.3% | 0.5% |
| Assistance provided by library staff | 1,011 | 46.9% | 50.5% | 2.3% | 0.3% |
| Children's programs | 551 | 33.8% | 60.4% | 5.1% | 0.7% |
| Computer resources/online services | 669 | 29.7% | 63.1% | 5.7% | 1.5% |

PUBLIC SAFETY

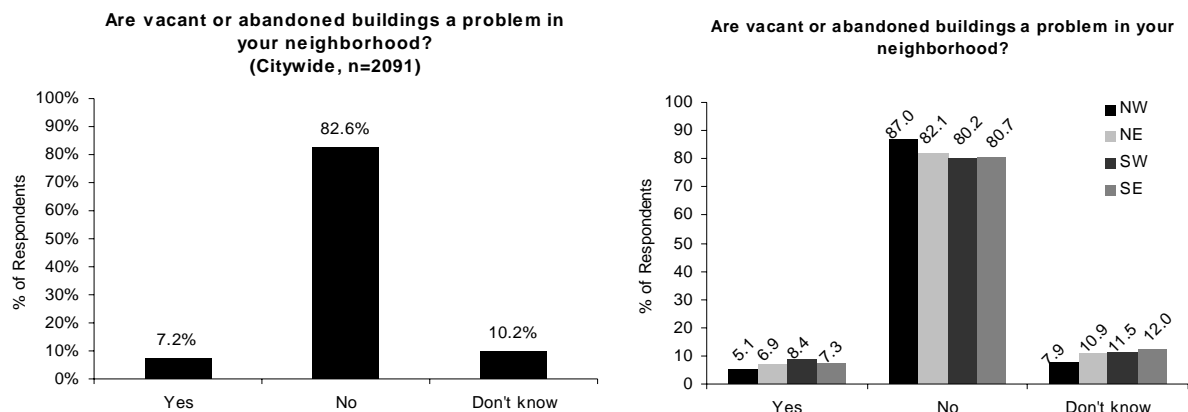
One in eight (12.5%) respondents reported that they or a member of their household had been a victim of crime during the previous 12-month period. Citywide, slightly more than three-quarters (77.2%) of these victims said they reported the crime to police, while 22.8% did not do so.⁷

Table 6: Crime Victims

| In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household been the victim of a crime? | Percent of Respondents | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | All Respondents (n=2,073) | Northwest (n=427) | Northeast (n=403) | Southwest (n=477) | Southeast (n=517) |
| Yes | 12.5% | 11.0% | 8.2% | 12.4% | 16.6% |
| No | 87.5% | 89.0% | 91.8% | 87.6% | 83.4% |
| If yes, did you report the crime to the police? | (n=254) | (n=44) | (n=33) | (n=58) | (n=84) |
| Yes | 77.2% | 90.9% | 75.8% | 75.9% | 77.4% |
| No | 22.8% | 9.1% | 24.2% | 24.1% | 22.6% |

As shown in **Figure 5**, the vast majority (82.6%) of respondents citywide did not think that vacant or abandoned buildings were a problem in their neighborhood.

Figure 5: Vacant and Abandoned Buildings

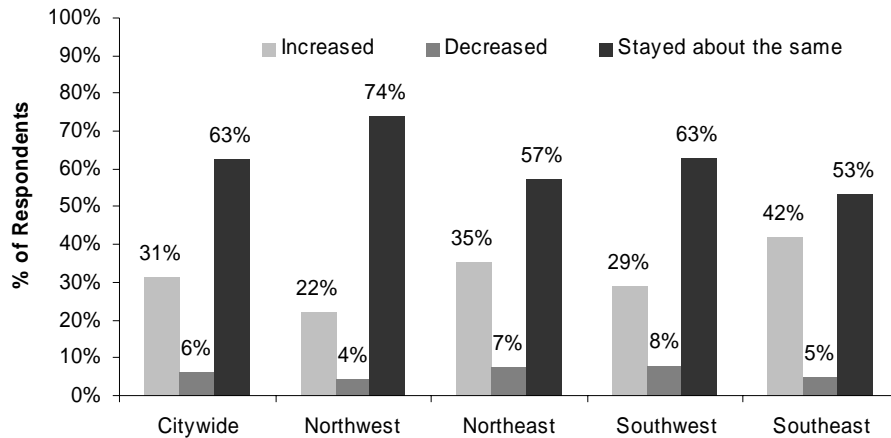


As shown in **Figure 6**, citywide, nearly two-thirds of respondents judged that the level of crime in their neighborhood had stayed about the same during the past year, 31% reported an increase, and 6% stated that crime had decreased. One-half of respondents reporting increased crime in their neighborhood also indicated a decline in the overall quality of life in their neighborhood during the past five years. Respondents in the Southeast quadrant were most likely to perceive

⁷ Caution is urged in making any comparisons of these findings across quadrants due to the small sample size which produces a high margin of error.

that crime in their neighborhood had increased (42%) compared to 35% in the Northeast, 29% in the Southwest, and 22% in the Northwest.

Figure 6: Prevalence of Crime in Respondents' Neighborhoods



Respondents felt safest walking alone in their neighborhood during the daytime (see **Table 7**): 59.4% stated they felt “very safe,” 34.5% felt “somewhat safe,” 4.5% felt “somewhat unsafe,” and 1.6% felt “very unsafe.” During the nighttime, the proportion feeling “very safe” walking alone in their neighborhood was somewhat less (21.9%), although almost two out of three respondents (63.4%) stated that they feel “very safe” or “safe”. In contrast, more than half (51.1%) of all respondents stated that they felt “very unsafe” in Downtown Worcester at nighttime. Another third felt “somewhat unsafe,” and only 15.8% felt “somewhat safe” or “very safe.” Further analysis of these data reveal that 68.7% of respondents who stated they feel “very unsafe” downtown at nighttime are women.

Table 7a: Perceived Safety (Citywide)

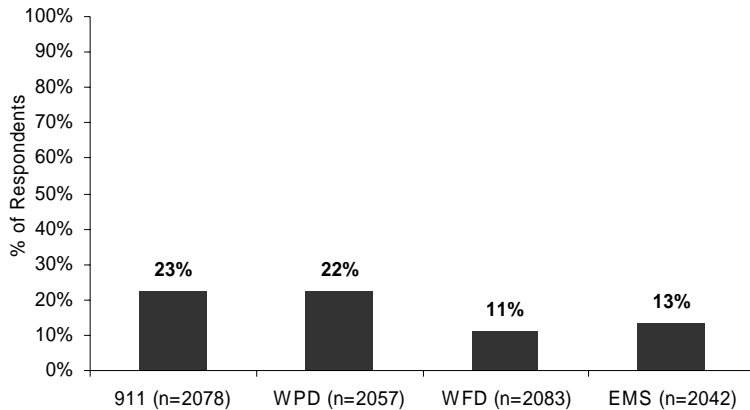
| How safe do you feel: | Percent of Respondents | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | n | Very Safe | Somewhat Safe | Somewhat Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
| Walking alone <i>in your neighborhood</i> during the daytime | 2,027 | 59.4% | 34.5% | 4.5% | 1.6% |
| Walking alone <i>in your neighborhood</i> at nighttime | 1,913 | 21.9% | 41.5% | 24.3% | 12.4% |
| In Downtown Worcester during the daytime | 1,868 | 23.5% | 46.1% | 22.2% | 8.1% |
| In Downtown Worcester at nighttime | 1,747 | 2.1% | 13.7% | 33.1% | 51.1% |

Table 7b: Perceived Safety (Quadrant)

| How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood during the daytime | Percent of Respondents | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | All Respondents (n=2,027) | Northwest (n=419) | Northeast (n=396) | Southwest (n=458) | Southeast (n=513) |
| Very safe | 29.4% | 69.2% | 59.3% | 59.4% | 52.4% |
| Somewhat safe | 34.5% | 26.3% | 35.9% | 34.7% | 41.3% |
| Somewhat unsafe | 4.5% | 3.6% | 4.3% | 3.7% | 4.3% |
| Very unsafe | 1.6% | 1.0% | 0.5% | 2.2% | 1.9% |
| How safe do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood at nighttime | Percent of Respondents | | | | |
| | All Respondents (n=1,913) | Northwest (n=399) | Northeast (n=369) | Southwest (n=434) | Southeast (n=480) |
| Very safe | 21.9% | 31.1% | 17.1% | 21.7% | 17.1% |
| Somewhat safe | 41.5% | 41.4% | 42.0% | 40.6% | 44.4% |
| Somewhat unsafe | 24.3% | 18.3% | 29.5% | 24.4% | 25.6% |
| Very unsafe | 12.4% | 9.3% | 11.4% | 13.4% | 12.9% |
| How safe do you feel in Downtown Worcester during the daytime | Percent of Respondents | | | | |
| | All Respondents (n=1,868) | Northwest (n=394) | Northeast (n=361) | Southwest (n=431) | Southeast (n=462) |
| Very safe | 23.5% | 28.2% | 23.3% | 23.7% | 18.2% |
| Somewhat safe | 46.1% | 43.4% | 49.0% | 46.9% | 44.8% |
| Somewhat unsafe | 22.2% | 21.1% | 19.9% | 22.5% | 26.8% |
| Very unsafe | 8.1% | 7.4% | 7.8% | 7.0% | 10.2% |
| How safe do you feel in Downtown Worcester at nighttime | Percent of Respondents | | | | |
| | All Respondents (n=1,747) | Northwest (n=360) | Northeast (n=334) | Southwest (n=397) | Southeast (n=445) |
| Very safe | 2.1% | 2.5% | 2.4% | 1.8% | 2.0% |
| Somewhat safe | 13.7% | 17.2% | 13.8% | 11.8% | 12.1% |
| Somewhat unsafe | 33.1% | 33.1% | 31.4% | 35.3% | 33.5% |
| Very unsafe | 51.1% | 47.2% | 52.4% | 51.1% | 52.4% |

In addition to their perceptions of crime, respondents who had direct contact with 911, police, fire, and ambulance services in the City were asked to rate their satisfaction with the assistance they received from the providers of each of these services. These findings are described below and detailed in **Table 8**. Almost twenty-three percent of respondents indicated that during the previous 12-month period they or someone in their household had called 911 to request police, fire, or emergency medical (ambulance) services. Among those calling 911, 87% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the assistance received from the person who took the call.

Figure 7: Respondents Having Had Contact with Emergency Services Providers During the Previous 12 Months



Less than one-quarter of respondents indicated that they or a member of their household had received assistance from the Worcester Police Department (about 22%), but a large percentage of those who did receive assistance expressed satisfaction with WPD’s response time, or how quickly help arrived (78.6% “very satisfied” or

“satisfied”), level of professionalism shown by WPD officers or staff (about 84% “very satisfied” or “satisfied”), and the quality of service provided (nearly eight out of ten “very satisfied” or “satisfied”).

A large percentage of the citizens surveyed (88.7%) had *not* received assistance from the Worcester Fire Department during the previous 12-month period. Nonetheless, those who had received emergency medical, fire suppression, or other services from the WFD were overwhelmingly “very satisfied” with the WFD’s response time (84.5%), the professionalism of WFD’s staff (85.1%), and the quality of service provided (86.2%). Fewer than 3% of respondents expressed any degree of dissatisfaction with any of these aspects of service.

Finally, among the relatively small group of respondents (13.4%) stating that they or a member of their household had received assistance from UMass Memorial EMS (ambulance/paramedic services), 97% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with response time (how quickly help arrived), and virtually all respondents (98%) expressed satisfaction with the professionalism of staff and quality of service provided.

Table 8: Contact with Emergency Services Providers

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--|
| In the past 12 months have you or any member of your household called 911 to request police, fire, or emergency medical/ambulance services? | All Respondents (n=2,078) | | | | |
| Yes | 22.7% | | | | |
| No | 77.3% | | | | |
| <i>If yes, How satisfied were you with:</i> The assistance you received from the person who took your 911 call? (n=457) | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | |
| | 51.6% | 35.4% | 9.2% | 3.7% | |
| In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your household received assistance from the Worcester Police Department? | All Respondents (n=2,057) | | | | |
| Yes | 22.4% | | | | |
| No | 77.6% | | | | |
| <i>If yes, How satisfied were you with:</i> WPD's response time? (n=435) | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | |
| | 43.4% | 35.2% | 12.9% | 8.5% | |
| Professionalism of staff? (n=440) | 49.8% | 34.1% | 10.2% | 5.9% | |
| Quality of service provided? (n=440) | 45.2% | 34.5% | 12.0% | 8.2% | |
| In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your household received assistance from the Worcester Fire Department? | All Respondents (n=2,083) | | | | |
| Yes | 11.3% | | | | |
| No | 88.7% | | | | |
| <i>If yes, How satisfied were you with:</i> WFD's response time? (n=226) | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | |
| | 84.5% | 13.3% | 1.3% | 0.9% | |
| Professionalism of staff? (n=222) | 85.1% | 13.1% | 0.5% | 1.4% | |
| Quality of service provided? (n=225) | 86.2% | 11.6% | 0.4% | 1.8% | |
| In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your household received assistance from UMass Memorial EMS (Ambulance/Advanced Life Support Services)? | All Respondents (n=2,042) | | | | |
| Yes | 13.4% | | | | |
| No | 86.6% | | | | |
| <i>If yes, How satisfied were you with:</i> Ambulance/paramedic response time? (n=269) | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | |
| | 74.7% | 22.3% | 1.5% | 1.5% | |
| Professionalism of staff? (n=264) | 78.8% | 19.3% | 1.1% | 0.8% | |
| Quality of service provided? (n=267) | 78.3% | 19.5% | 1.9% | 0.4% | |

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Slightly more than a quarter (28.4%) of respondents indicated that at least one child under the age of 20 lived in their household. The total number of children among these 529 respondents' households was 812 (44% of these respondents stated that one child under 20 lived in the household, 40% indicated that 2 children under 20 lived in the household, and 16% had three or more children under 20 in the household).

Six out of ten (318) respondents with children answered “yes” when asked whether any children under the age of 20 who lived in their household had attended the Worcester Public Schools during the 2004-05 school year.⁸ These respondents were asked to rate the WPS on a number of factors. Respondents with more than one child in the WPS were asked to provide separate ratings for each child enrolled. Therefore, because a number of the 318 respondents had more than one child in the WPS, the data contained in **Table 9** below describe the proportion of students represented in our sample (ranging from 479 to 483). The margin of error for questions related to the WPS is +/- 4.4%.⁹

Table 9: Worcester Public Schools

| Please answer the following questions for each child attending the Worcester Public Schools. | n | Percent of Respondents | | | |
|--|-----|------------------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about what my child is learning in school | 483 | 36.0% | 42.4% | 16.8% | 4.8% |
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about how my child is doing in school | 483 | 35.6% | 45.5% | 14.5% | 4.3% |
| My child's teacher gives me ideas about how I can help my child do his or her best | 484 | 31.8% | 41.5% | 20.7% | 6.0% |
| My child's teacher is available and willing to meet with me | 480 | 44.8% | 44.4% | 8.8% | 2.1% |
| I am pleased with the academic progress of my child | 481 | 39.7% | 40.3% | 14.8% | 5.2% |
| I believe that my child's school is preparing my child for post-secondary education | 479 | 34.4% | 46.8% | 12.1% | 6.7% |

⁸ This includes students in the Worcester Public Schools as well as students in either of the two public charter schools in the City. The data do not include students attending private or parochial schools (within or outside the City), nor do they include students who exercise the “school choice” option and attend public school outside of Worcester.

⁹ Comparisons by quadrant sub-grouping are not provided due to small sample sizes which produce much higher margins of error.

Overall, respondents generally offered positive ratings of their children's educational experience, with parents/guardians of 80% of the students agreeing with the statement "I am pleased with the academic progress of my child." The parents/guardians of more than three-quarters (78.2%) of the students in the sample "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the child's teacher kept them informed about what the child was learning at school. Parents/guardians of 81.1% of the children "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the child's teacher kept them informed about how the child was doing in school.

Nearly nine out of ten parents/guardians of students "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the child's teacher was available and willing to meet with them.

For about one in four students (26.7%), parents/guardians did not agree with the statement "My child's teacher gives me ideas about how I can help my child do his or her best." About 18% of students' parents/guardians were in disagreement with the statement "I believe that my child's school is preparing my child for post-secondary education," while almost 47% agreed, and about one-third were in strong agreement.

CONTACT WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

More than one-third of respondents (38%) stated that they had contacted a City department with a question, service request, or a complaint during the previous 12-month period. Respondents were asked to identify the specific offices or departments they had contacted, and to rate their level satisfaction with the service provided. The question did not ask about the nature of the contact or the number of times an individual may have contacted a particular office. The most frequently noted contact was with the Department of Public Works and Parks (58.1%). Almost one-third of respondents (242) contacted the Worcester Police Department, followed by the City Clerk (about 20% or 155 respondents), and Code Enforcement (18.5% or 143 respondents). Overall, respondents reported more than 1,600 contacts with various offices.¹⁰

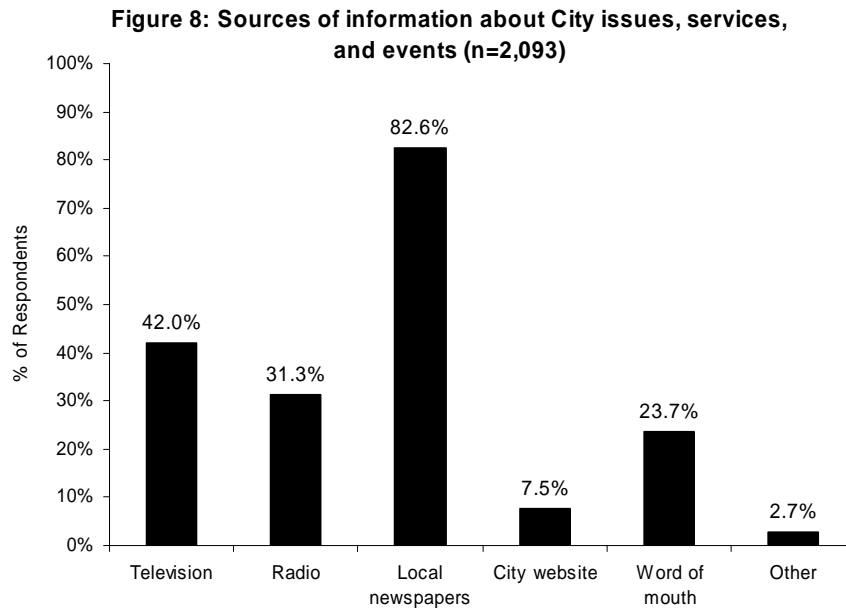
As shown in **Table 10** below, for the most part, the proportion of respondents satisfied with the service they received when contacting the City considerably exceeded the proportion who were dissatisfied. Among the 771 respondents contacting the City, only 11% (86) contacted the WPD, but of these individuals, an overwhelming majority (93%) were satisfied with the service they received. 82.6% of respondents who contacted the City Clerk were satisfied with their experience, and 81.6% of respondents who contacted the City Treasurer were satisfied. Only among respondents reporting contact with the City Council did more than half (51.4%) report being dissatisfied with the service they received.

Table 10: Contact with City Departments

| Have you contacted the City with a question, service request, or a complaint during the past 12 months? | Number | Percent | | |
|---|--------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Yes | 771 | 38% | | |
| No | 1,256 | 62% | | |
| If yes: Offices/Departments Respondents Contacted | Number | Percent | Percent Satisfied | Percent Dissatisfied |
| Public Works and Parks | 448 | 58.1% | 58.5% | 41.5% |
| Police Department | 242 | 31.4% | 65.3% | 34.7% |
| City Clerk | 155 | 20.1% | 82.6% | 17.4% |
| Code Enforcement | 143 | 18.5% | 59.5% | 40.6% |
| City Manager's Office | 129 | 16.7% | 52.0% | 48.1% |
| City Treasurer | 109 | 14.1% | 81.6% | 18.3% |
| City Council | 101 | 13.1% | 48.5% | 51.4% |
| Health Department | 98 | 12.7% | 59.2% | 40.8% |
| Mayor's Office | 97 | 12.6% | 57.8% | 42.2% |
| Fire Department | 86 | 11.2% | 93.1% | 7.0% |

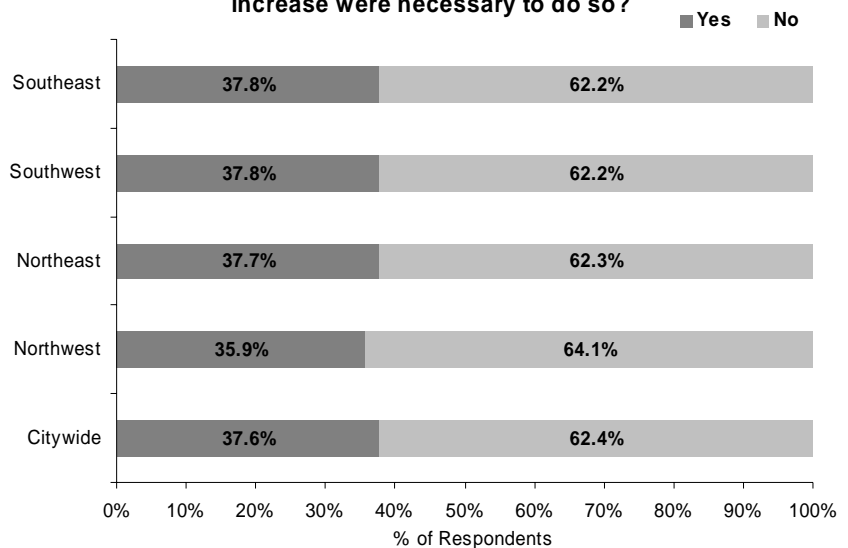
¹⁰ Respondents who had contact with more than one office were asked to identify and rate their level of satisfaction with services received at *each* office. Therefore the total number of office contacts reported are greater than the total number of respondents indicating they had contacted the City with a question, service request, or complaint.

Local newspapers are by far the most frequently identified sources of information about City issues, services, and events (82.6% of respondents), though a substantial proportion (42.0%) cited television as a source of information, and nearly one third indicated “radio” as a source. The percentages shown in **Figure 8** do not sum to 100% across source types because respondents were asked to “check all that apply.”



As shown in **Figure 9**, when asked whether they’d like to see City services expanded, *even if a tax increase were necessary to fund the expansion*, nearly two-thirds of respondents answered “no.” Findings were similar across the four quadrants of the City.

Figure 9: Do you wish to see services expanded, even if a tax increase were necessary to do so?



OBSERVATIONS

The survey responses indicate that Worcester residents are generally satisfied with municipal services. The major exception is the condition of streets and sidewalks throughout the City. While generally satisfied with the provision of services, less than half (48.1%) of all respondents expressed satisfaction with the *value of services* received for their tax dollars, and residents overwhelmingly opposed service expansion if it meant raising taxes to pay for the expansion. Do these views suggest that while citizens believe the *quality* of services to be high, they are perhaps dissatisfied with the *cost* or the *quantity* of services currently provided? To further explore and better understand residents' views about spending priorities and the distribution of resources, several questions will be added to the 2006 citizen satisfaction survey (e.g., residents will be asked to identify the top budget priority facing the City as well as to comment on spending levels for specific services).

APPENDIX A: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey Distribution

A cover letter from the City Manager and Mayor accompanied the five-page 27-question survey to explain its purpose and importance.¹¹ The letter assured respondents that their responses would be anonymous and requested that a member of the household who was at least 18 years of age complete and return the survey (at no cost using Business Reply Mail) to The Research Bureau. The cover letter was printed in both English and Spanish, and households in need of Spanish- language translation assistance to complete the survey were provided with a phone number to call. One week later, a postcard was mailed to all addresses receiving the initial survey, asking those who had not yet participated to do so, while thanking those who had already completed and returned the survey. A copy of the survey instrument is included as **Appendix C**.

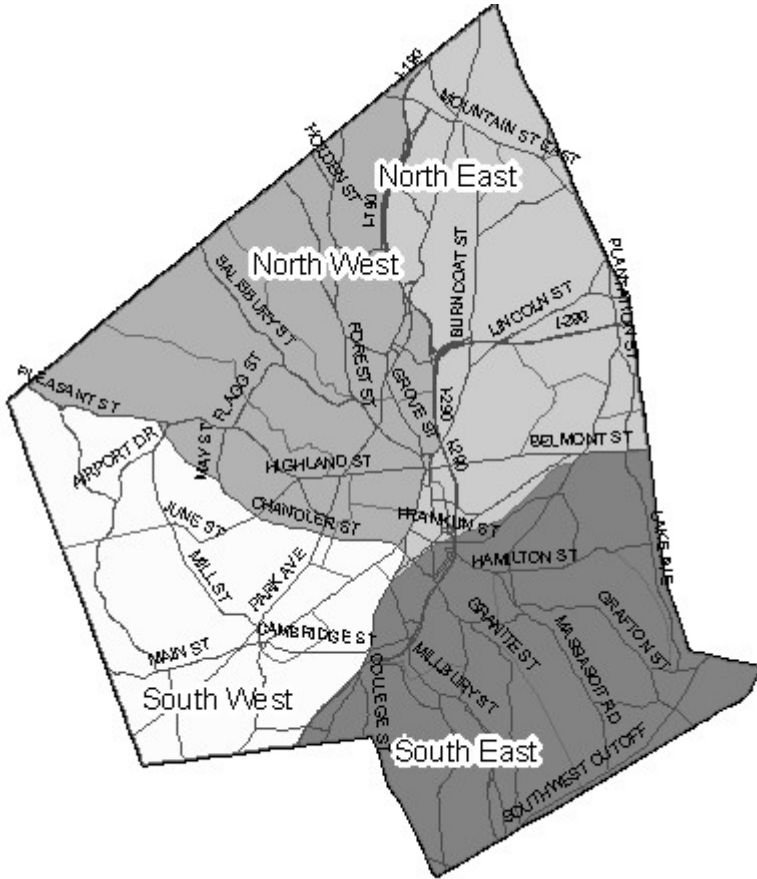
Geographic Analysis of Data

Respondents were asked to identify the neighborhood in which they live and to provide their zip code. This information was used to determine in which of the four quadrants of the City the respondent lived (see **Figure A-1** below), and most survey questions were analyzed at both the citywide and quadrant levels. A total of 1,865 respondents (87.6%) provided sufficient information to be assigned to a quadrant. Many of the charts and tables contained in this report show data at both the citywide and quadrant levels. However, for the most part, our discussion focuses on the findings for the larger sample of *all* respondents, as we typically observed relatively small differences when comparing responses across quadrants.¹²

¹¹The survey instrument was developed by staff at The Research Bureau and refined following review by City officials.

¹² Our analysis did not include tests of statistical significance. A statistically significant difference does not necessarily imply that the difference is a meaningful one. Small, but statistically significant differences may have no practical policy implications.

Figure A-1: City of Worcester Quadrants



Quadrant Information

**Total Responses = 2,128 with
+/- 2.1% Margin of Error**

Northwest: (433 Responses, +/- 4.7% Margin of Error)
Includes Crown Hill/Piedmont, Elm Park, Indian Hill, Indian Lake East, Newton Square, Salisbury/Forest Grove, West Tatnuck/Salisbury

Northeast: (410 Responses, +/- 4.8% Margin of Error)
Includes Bell Hill, Brittan Square, Burncoat, Great Brook Valley, Greendale, N. Lincoln Street, Shrewsbury Street

Southwest: (488 Responses, +/- 4.4% Margin of Error)
Includes Beacon Brightly, Beaver Brook, Columbus Park, Cider Mill, Hadwen Park, Main Middle, South Worcester, Tatnuck, University Park and Webster Square

Southeast: (534 Responses, +/- 4.2% Margin of Error)
Includes Broadmeadow Brook, College Hill, Franklin/Plantation, Grafton Hill, Green Island, Hamilton, Lake Park, Quinsigamond Village, Union Hill, Vernon Hill

Margin of Error

The margin of error measures the precision with which the results from a sample reflect the true feelings of the entire population. Using a 95% level of confidence, the margin of error for the survey sample as a whole (n = 2,128) is plus or minus 2.1%. This means that if 56.2% of respondents in our sample reported that the quality of life in their neighborhood had improved during the past five years, one may be confident that between 54.1% and 58.3% of the population would also report that the quality of life in their neighborhood had improved during that period.¹³

The map above shows the margin of error for various subgroups discussed in the analysis section of this report. The quadrants and other subgroup results (e.g., users of the Worcester Public Library, and users of 911, police, fire, and ambulance services) will have higher margins of error due to smaller sample sizes (i.e., estimates become less precise as the sample size decreases) and will be presented in the relevant section of the report.

¹³ With a confidence level of 95%, there is a 5% chance that an estimate derived from a sample will fall outside the confidence interval of 54.1% to 58.3%.

APPENDIX B: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The tables below show detailed responses to questions about age, sex, race, ethnicity, income, and neighborhood of residence. The data reveal some differences between our sample and the general population of Worcester (according to the 2000 US Census), so while the results may not perfectly represent the attitudes of the general adult population in the City, we believe the results reasonably approximate the view of the larger adult population.

- ❖ More than three-quarters of respondents (76.6%) have lived in Worcester 11 or more years.
- ❖ A substantially higher proportion of respondents owned their own home (71.5%) compared to renting their home (28.5%). According to the 2000 Census, 43.3% of Worcester's occupied housing units were owner-occupied and 56.7% were renter-occupied.
- ❖ Forty percent of respondents were male and 60% were female. According to the 2000 Census, 47% of Worcester's adult (18 years and over) residents were male and 53% were female.
- ❖ The age distribution of respondents closely approximates the age distribution of Worcester's residents. About 26% were between the ages of 25 and 44, one in five respondents were between 45 and 54 years, one in three were in the 55 to 74 range, and nearly one in five were 75 or older.
- ❖ Separate questions asked respondents to indicate their racial and ethnic background. The vast majority (92%) stated that they were White/Caucasian, and three percent were Black/African American. Six percent of respondents indicated that they were Hispanic or Latino.
- ❖ More than half (about 57%) of respondents reported household incomes under \$50,000 in 2004, 31% reported incomes between \$50,000 and \$99,999, and 13% indicated that their household income was \$100,000 or more. According to the US Census Bureau, the median household income in Worcester in 1999 was \$35,623.

Quadrant/Neighborhood

| In which neighborhood do you live? | Percent of Respondents (n=1,993) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Northwest Quadrant | |
| Crown Hill/Piedmont | 1% |
| Elm Park | 3% |
| Indian Hill | 2% |
| Indian Lake East | 2% |
| Newton Square | 5% |
| Salisbury/Forest Grove | 5% |
| West Tatnuck/Salisbury | 4% |
| Northeast Quadrant | |
| Bell Hill | 2% |
| Brittan Square | 1% |
| Burncoat | 8% |
| Greendale | 5% |
| North Lincoln Street | 2% |
| Shrewsbury Street | 2% |
| Southwest Quadrant | |
| Beaver Brook | 1% |
| Columbus Park | 1% |
| Hadwen Park | 1% |
| South Worcester | 2% |
| Tatnuck | 10% |
| University Park | 1% |
| Webster Square | 7% |
| Southeast Quadrant | |
| Broadmeadow Brook | 1% |
| Franklin/Plantation | 2% |
| Grafton Hill | 8% |
| Hamilton | 3% |
| Lake Park | 3% |
| Quinsigamond Village | 3% |
| Union Hill | 1% |
| Vernon Hill | 2% |
| Other | 13% |

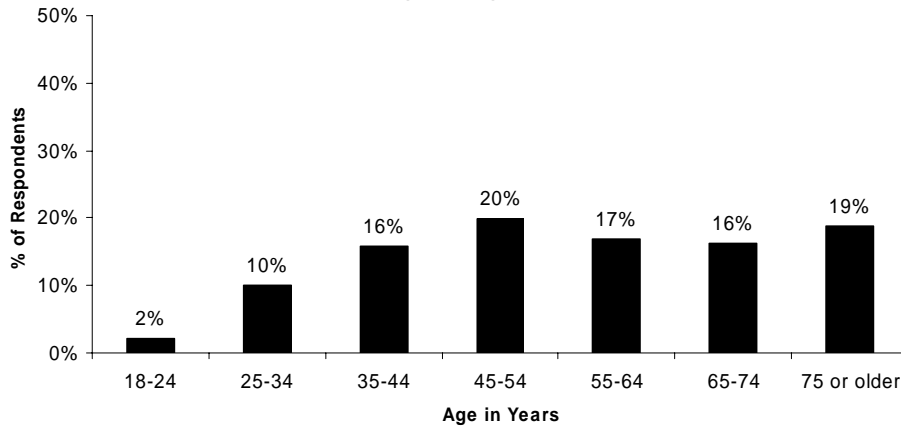
Length of Residence in Worcester

| How long have you lived in Worcester? | All Respondents (n=2309) | Northwest (n=431) | Northeast (n= 410) | Southwest (n=485) | Southeast (n=533) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Less than one year | 2% | 3% | 3% | 1% | 2% |
| 1-5 years | 12% | 12% | 12% | 10% | 13% |
| 6-10 years | 9% | 8% | 7% | 9% | 10% |
| 11 or more years | 77% | 77% | 78% | 80% | 76% |

Age

| What is your age? | All Respondents (n=2,027) | Northwest (n=430) | Northeast (n=408) | Southwest (n=484) | Southeast (n=528) |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 18-24 | 2% | 1% | 2% | 3% | 2% |
| 25-34 | 10% | 9% | 12% | 8% | 11% |
| 35-44 | 16% | 15% | 14% | 17% | 18% |
| 45-54 | 20% | 23% | 20% | 19% | 17% |
| 55-64 | 17% | 17% | 16% | 16% | 17% |
| 65-74 | 16% | 16% | 16% | 18% | 17% |
| 75 or older | 19% | 19% | 20% | 19% | 18% |

Age of Respondents (n=2027)



Sex

| What is your sex? | All Respondents (n=2,015) | Northwest (n=428) | Northeast (n=402) | Southwest (n=482) | Southeast (n=526) |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 40% | 48% | 37% | 39% | 37% |
| Female | 60% | 52% | 63% | 61% | 63% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Race

| Which of the following best describes your racial background? | All Respondents (n=1,942) | Northwest (n=412) | Northeast (n=390) | Southwest (n=467) | Southeast (n=508) |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| American Indian of Alaska Native | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Asian | 2% | 1% | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| Black/African American | 3% | 1% | 4% | 4% | 4% |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| White/Caucasian | 92% | 96% | 91% | 90% | 91% |
| More than one race | 1% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Ethnicity

| Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? | All Respondents (n=1,916) | Northwest (n=409) | Northeast (n=382) | Southwest (n=457) | Southeast (n=493) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Yes | 6% | 4% | 7% | 6% | 5% |
| No | 94% | 96% | 93% | 94% | 95% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Homeowners vs. Renters

| Do you rent or own your home? | All Respondents (n=2,030) | Northwest (n=433) | Northeast (n=407) | Southwest (n=485) | Southeast (n=528) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Rent | 29% | 19% | 32% | 28% | 31% |
| Own | 72% | 81% | 68% | 72% | 69% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Household Income

| What was your total household income in 2004? | All Respondents (n=1,859) | Northwest (n=393) | Northeast (n=374) | Southwest (n=438) | Southeast (n=489) |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Less than \$25,000 | 27% | 19% | 31% | 27% | 29% |
| \$25,000-\$49,999 | 30% | 24% | 31% | 32% | 33% |
| \$50,000-\$99,999 | 31% | 34% | 29% | 30% | 32% |
| \$100,000-\$199,999 | 11% | 18% | 8% | 10% | 6% |
| \$200,000 or more | 2% | 5% | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

APPENDIX C: 2005 SURVEY INSTRUMENT

MICHAEL V. O'BRIEN
CITY MANAGER



CITY OF WORCESTER

Dear Worcester Citizen:

The City of Worcester, in partnership with the Worcester Regional Research Bureau, is conducting a survey of Worcester residents to determine what you think of the services provided by your municipal government and how you view the quality of life in the City. We believe that obtaining citizens' views is critical to our ability to provide the best level of services while utilizing your tax dollars most effectively and efficiently. The results of this survey will be analyzed and used to enhance the decision-making process and as an indicator for the need for improved municipal services.

We are asking you, or a member of your household who is at least 18 years of age, to please take a few moments to **complete and return the attached survey within the next week** (return postage has been paid). Your answers will be anonymous.

We have chosen to work with the Research Bureau on this project because it has a successful record of providing objective, non-partisan analyses of public policy issues for twenty years. The Research Bureau will tabulate and analyze the data, and produce a report that will be available to the public in the Fall of 2005 in both hard copy and online at www.wrrb.org and www.ci.worcester.ma.us

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please call Kimberly Hood at the Research Bureau at 508-799-7169.

Thank you for helping us in our efforts to make our community a better place to live and work. Your input is invaluable to our continuous efforts to improve the delivery of services to Worcester residents and property owners.

Sincerely,

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager

Timothy Murray
Mayor

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER, CITY HALL, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01608
TELEPHONE (508) 799-1175 FAX (508) 799-1208
EMAIL: citymanager@ci.worcester.ma.us



2005 Survey of Worcester Residents

This survey should be completed by a member of your household who is at least 18 years of age. The City of Worcester will use your responses to improve services for residents. Your responses will remain anonymous. Completed surveys should be refolded with the Research Bureau return address appearing on the outside of the questionnaire, and sealed using tape. Return postage has been paid. Thank you!

1 Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following based on your experiences or observations during the past 12 months. Please circle the number corresponding to your opinion.

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Housing availability and affordability in Worcester | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The availability and convenience of public transportation | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The quality of public education in Worcester | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The City's efforts to attract new businesses and jobs to the area | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Worcester as a place to raise children | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Worcester as a place to retire | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The overall quality of life in Worcester | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Value of services received for your City tax dollars | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Image and appearance of the City | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

2 During the past five years, has the overall quality of life *in your neighborhood*:

- ₁ Improved ₂ Stayed about the same ₃ Declined ₄ Don't know/Haven't lived here 5 years

3 Please rate each of the following based on your experiences or observations during the past 12 months. Please circle the number corresponding to your opinion.

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor | Very Poor | Don't Know |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|------------|
| Condition of street/road surfaces (smoothness/evenness) in your neighborhood | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Condition of sidewalks (smoothness/evenness) in your neighborhood | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Cleanliness (amount of litter/debris) of street/road surfaces in your neighborhood | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Cleanliness (amount of litter/debris) of sidewalks in your neighborhood | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Pedestrian safety in your neighborhood | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Adequacy of street lighting in your neighborhood | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Snow removal on major City streets | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Snow removal on streets in your neighborhood | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Residential trash collection services | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Curbside recycling collection services | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Sewer and drainage services to your home | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Upkeep and appearance of City parks/playgrounds | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Upkeep and appearance of City walking and biking trails | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Upkeep and appearance of City athletic fields/facilities | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

4a Are vacant or abandoned buildings a problem *in your neighborhood*?

- ₁ Yes ₂ No ₃ Don't know

4b During the past 12 months, do you think the number of vacant or abandoned buildings *in your neighborhood* has: ₁ Increased ₂ Decreased ₃ Stayed about the same ₄ Don't know

5a During the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or other members of your household used the Worcester Public Library? ₁ At least once a week ₂ About once a month ₃ About once every other month
₄ A few times ₅ Never → Skip to Question 6

5b In general, how satisfied are you with the following aspects of the Worcester Public Library:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | No Opinion |
|---|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Library Hours of Operation (Main Library) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Library Hours of Operation (Branch Libraries) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Selection of Library Material | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Assistance Provided by Library Staff | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Children's Programs | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Computer Resources/Online Services | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

PUBLIC SAFETY

6 In the past 12 months, do you think crime *in your neighborhood* has:

- ₁ Increased ₂ Decreased ₃ Stayed about the same ₄ Don't know

7a In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household been a victim of a crime?

- ₁ Yes ₂ No → skip to question 8

7b Did you report the crime to the police? ₁ Yes ₂ No

8 How safe do you feel:

| | Very Safe | Somewhat Safe | Somewhat Unsafe | Very Unsafe | No Opinion |
|--|-----------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|
| Walking alone <i>in your neighborhood</i> during the daytime | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Walking alone <i>in your neighborhood</i> at nighttime | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| In Downtown Worcester during the daytime | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| In Downtown Worcester at nighttime | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

9a In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household called 911 to request police, fire, or emergency medical/ambulance services? ₁ Yes ₂ No → skip to question 10a

9b How satisfied were you with the assistance you received from the person who took your 911 call?

(if you have called 911 more than once in past 12 months, please base your response on the last time you called)

- ₁ Very Satisfied ₂ Satisfied ₃ Dissatisfied ₄ Very Dissatisfied ₅ Don't Know

10a In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your household received assistance from the Worcester Police Department? ₁ Yes ₂ No → skip to question 11a

10b How satisfied were you with the Worcester Police Department's:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | No Opinion |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Response time (how quickly help arrived) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Professionalism of staff | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Quality of service provided | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

11a In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your household received assistance from the Worcester Fire Department? ₁ Yes ₂ No ➔ skip to question 12a

11b What services did the Worcester Fire Department provide? Check (✓) all that apply
₁ Emergency Medical Services ₂ Fire Suppression ₃ Other (please describe _____)

11c How satisfied were you with the Worcester Fire Department's:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | No Opinion |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Response time (how quickly help arrived) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Professionalism of staff | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Quality of service provided | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

12a In the past 12 months, have you or a member of your household received assistance from UMass Memorial EMS (Ambulance/Advanced Life Support Services) ₁ Yes ₂ No ➔ skip to question 13

12b How satisfied were you with the ambulance service/paramedic:

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | No Opinion |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Response time (how quickly help arrived) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Professionalism of staff | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Quality of service provided | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

13a How many children under the age of 20 live in your household? _____ if 0 ➔ skip to question 15 on page 4

13b Did any children under the age of 20 who live in your household attend the Worcester Public Schools during the 2004-05 school year? ₁ Yes ₂ No ➔ skip to question 15 on page 4

14a-c Please answer the following questions for each child attending the Worcester Public Schools (WPS). (Space is provided for responses for up to three children. If you have more than three children attending WPS and wish to respond for each child, please attach an additional sheet with your responses.)

a Child #1
 Child's Age: _____
 School Child Attended in 2004-05: _____

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about what my child is learning in school | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about how my child is doing in school | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher gives me ideas about how I can help my child do his or her best | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher is available and willing to meet with me | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I am pleased with the academic progress of my child | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I believe that my child's school is preparing my child for post-secondary education | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

b Child #2
 Child's Age: _____
 School Child Attended in 2004-05: _____

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about what my child is learning in school | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about how my child is doing in school | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher gives me ideas about how I can help my child do his or her best | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher is available and willing to meet with me | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I am pleased with the academic progress of my child | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I believe that my child's school is preparing my child for post-secondary education | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

c Child #3

Child's Age: _____

School Child Attended in 2004-05: _____

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about what my child is learning in school | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher keeps me informed about how my child is doing in school | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher gives me ideas about how I can help my child do his or her best | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My child's teacher is available and willing to meet with me | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I am pleased with the academic progress of my child | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I believe that my child's school is preparing my child for post-secondary education | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

OTHER

15 What do you think is the most important issue in your neighborhood today?

16a Have you contacted the City with a question, service request, or a complaint during the past 12 months?

- ₁ Yes ₂ No ➔ skip to question 17

16b From the list below, please indicate with a check (✓) the office(s) you have contacted. Then please rate your satisfaction with the service you received by circling the number corresponding to your opinion.

| (✓) each office you have contacted | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | Did Not Contact |
|---|----------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ City Manager's Office | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Mayor's Office | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ City Council | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Code Enforcement | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Public Works | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ City Clerk's Office | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ City Treasurer's Office | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₈ Health Department | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₉ Fire Department | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀ Police Department | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₁ Other: _____ | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₂ Other: _____ | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

17 Which of the following are currently your primary sources of information about City issues, services, and events?

- ₁ Television ₂ Radio ₃ Local newspapers ₄ City Website ₅ Word of Mouth ₆ Other

18 Do you wish to see City services expanded, even if a tax increase were necessary to fund the service expansion? ₁ Yes ₂ No

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD

The following questions are about you and your household and are included only to allow us to determine how well our results represent the opinions of a variety of citizens. Your survey is anonymous, and this information will not be used to identify you in any way.

19 In which neighborhood do you live?

- 1 Beacon Brightly
- 2 Beaver Brook
- 3 Bell Hill
- 4 Brittan Square
- 5 Broadmeadow Brook
- 6 Burncoat
- 7 Cider Mill
- 8 College Hill
- 9 Columbus Park
- 10 Crown Hill/Piedmont
- 11 Elm Park
- 12 Franklin/Plantation
- 13 Grafton Hill
- 14 Great Brook Valley
- 15 Green Island
- 16 Greendale
- 17 Hadwen Park
- 18 Hamilton
- 19 Indian Hill
- 20 Indian Lake East
- 21 Lake Park
- 22 Main Middle
- 23 Newton Square
- 24 North Lincoln St.
- 25 Quinsigamond Village
- 26 Salisbury/Forest Grove
- 27 Shrewsbury Street
- 28 South Worcester
- 29 Tatnuck
- 30 Union Hill
- 31 University Park
- 32 Vernon Hill
- 33 West Tatnuck/Salisbury
- 34 Webster Square
- 35 Other: _____

20 What is your zip code? _____

21 How long have you lived in Worcester?

- 1 Less than one year

- 2 1-5 years
- 3 6-10 years
- 4 11 or more years

22 Do you rent or own your home?

- 1 Rent
- 2 Own

23a Do you work outside of your home (full- or part-time)?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No → skip to question 24

23b What is the zip code of the city or town in which you work? _____

23c On average, how long is your commute to work (one-way)? _____ minutes

24 What is your sex?

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

25 What is your age?

- 1 18-24
- 2 25-34
- 3 35-44
- 4 45-54
- 5 55-64
- 6 65-74
- 7 75 or older

Note: Please answer both questions 26a and 26b

26a Which of the following best describes your racial background? Check (✓) all that apply.

- 1 American Indian or Alaska Native
- 2 Asian
- 3 Black/African American
- 4 Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- 5 White/Caucasian

26b Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

27 What was your total household income in 2004?

- 1 Less than \$25,000
- 2 \$25,000-\$49,999
- 3 \$50,000-\$99,999
- 4 \$100,000-\$199,999
- 5 \$200,000 or more

Mission Statement:

The Research Bureau serves the public interest of the Greater Worcester region by conducting independent, non-partisan research and analysis of public policy issues to promote informed public debate and decision-making.



The Research Bureau

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