

City of Ankeny 2005 Citizen Survey Executive Summary

Survey Background and Purpose

- The Ankeny Citizen Survey functions as a consumer report card for Ankeny by providing residents the opportunity to rate their satisfaction with the quality of life in the City, the community's amenities, and satisfaction with local government. The survey also gives residents an opportunity to provide feedback to government on what is working well and what is not, and their priorities for community planning and resource allocation.
- The Ankeny Citizen Survey has been conducted in 2003 and 2005.

Methods

- The 2005 Ankeny Citizen Survey was mailed to a random sample of 1,200 households in the City of Ankeny during November 2005. Of the 1,200 households receiving the survey, 549 returned the survey; 63 were returned undeliverable; for a response rate of 48%. A typical response rate for like surveys ranges from 25% to 40%. The margin of error is plus or minus 5 percentage points around any percentage reported for the entire sample.
- The vast majority of respondents to this survey (76%) had not attended a City Council meeting or any other public meeting about community matters in the last year, demonstrating that these survey results represent a different group of people than those typically participating in City decision-making.

Demographics

- As assessed by the survey, the profile of Ankeny looks like this:
 - 22% of residents have lived in the city over 20 years
 - 62% are over the age 34; 14% are over the age 64
 - 84% are employed
 - 72% are homeowners; 62% live in detached single family homes
 - 98% are white/Caucasian
 - 63% have household incomes over \$50,000

Quality of Life and Community

Ankeny residents responding to the survey rated their overall quality of life in Ankeny. Roughly nine in ten respondents reported that Ankeny was either an “excellent” or “good” place to live. The percent of respondents rating the quality of life as “good” or “excellent” was 91%. A variety of community characteristics were rated in the survey as in 2003. Residents were asked to rate the quality of Ankeny community characteristics.

- Ankeny residents rated their overall quality of life higher than residents of other communities across the nation with 91% [96% - 2003] responding that quality of life was “good” or “excellent.”
- Sense of community was rated good to excellent by 78% [72% - 2003] of respondents.
- More than 93% [96% - 2003] of survey respondents reported that Ankeny was either an “excellent” or “good” place to live, giving an average rating that was higher than other parts of the country.
- Eighty-eight percent [87% - 2003] rated the quality of their neighborhood positively, giving an average rating that was higher than other cities around the country.

- Ninety-three percent [92% - 2003] reported that Ankeny was either an “excellent” or “good” place to raise children.
- Access to neighborhood parks, affordable housing, opportunities to attend cultural and leisure time activities, safety, and fire services were rated higher by Ankeny residents than residents of other communities across the country. Characteristics of Ankeny that were rated lower by residents of Ankeny than residents elsewhere included bus/transit services and recreational opportunities.

Public Safety Ratings

Respondents were asked to rate how safe or unsafe they felt in and outside their neighborhoods in Ankeny.

- Ninety percent of respondents felt “very safe” or somewhat safe from violent crimes in Ankeny in 2005 as well as in 2003.
- In their neighborhood after dark, 92% of survey participants felt “very safe” or “somewhat safe” compared to 91% in 2003.

When asked to rate the quality of public safety services, roughly nine in ten respondents rated the services “excellent” or “good.”

- Police services (88%)
- Fire services (96%)
- Ambulance/emergency medical services (95%)
- Fire prevention and education (92%)

Issues Affecting Ankeny - Problem Ratings

A list of 12 potential problems which may impact Ankeny were presented to residents. Respondents were asked to indicate to what degree, if at all, each issue was a problem in Ankeny. The percent of respondents rating each problem as at least “important” appears below:

- Respondents felt that taxes (23%) [23% - 2003] were a potential problem in Ankeny, although newer and younger respondents saw this as less problematic than older and longer term residents. Sixty percent [66% - 2003] of all those surveyed agreed that they received good value for their taxes.
- Too much growth 18% [15% - 2003]. The concern over “too much growth” appears to be population growth, as slightly over 50% of respondents felt that retail growth was “about right” and 33% of respondents felt that jobs growth was “too slow.”
- Traffic congestion 14% [7% - 2003]
- Drugs 14% [14% - 2003].

The issues felt to be the least problematic were crime, environmental hazards, run down buildings, junk vehicles and homelessness.

Growth and Land Use Planning

Residents were asked about a number of aspects related to growth over the past years. Residents were also asked to rate the quality and variety of residential and business/retail development.

- Sixty-six percent [62% - 2003] of respondents felt that the rate of population growth in the City was “too fast”; while 0% [1% - 2003] felt it was “too slow.” Twenty-nine percent [26% - 2003] rated retail growth as “too fast”, while 15% [13% - 2003] rated it as “too slow.”
- Thirty-three percent [43% - 2003] felt that jobs growth was “too slow” while 2% [3% - 2003] felt the rate was “too fast.”

- When asked to rate the quality of land use, planning, and zoning, 58% [63% - 2003] rated it “good to excellent”, while 42% felt it was “fair to poor.” Seventy-four percent [73% - 2003] felt that code enforcement was “good” or “excellent.” Seventy-seven percent [80% - 2003] felt that economic development efforts were “good” or “excellent.”

City Government – Satisfaction with City Government

A primary purpose of this Survey is to gauge resident satisfaction with local government services. When asked to rate the quality of services provided by the City of Ankeny, 85% rated them excellent or good. Residents gave similar ratings of overall satisfaction with government services in 2003.

- A majority of respondent 68% [72% - 2003] were pleased with the overall direction the City is taking
- Sixty-one percent [65% - 2003] felt that Ankeny welcomes citizen involvement.

Ratings of City Services

- Eighty-five percent [88% - 2003] of respondents rated the overall quality of City services as “excellent” or “good.” City services rated the most positively were fire and ambulance/EMS, police protection, fire prevention and education, City parks, park maintenance, recycling and library services. All of these services received an average rating of 70% or higher on a 100 pt. scale.
- Services rated least positively were bus/transit services, street repair, traffic signal timing, and land use, planning and zoning.
- Overall, Ankeny residents rated most of their services similar to or above the norm by residents in other cities across the nation.
- Ratings of City employees’ knowledge, professional attitude, and willingness to help or understand averaged around 72 [75 – 2003] on a 100-point scale (at the “good” level), which was higher than ratings of employees in other communities across the country. The overall impression rated “good” or “excellent” was 82% [84% - 2003].

Policy Issues

- On-line services most desired by respondents were electronic city payments, nuisance reporting, and job applications. Those least desired were city licenses and access to city documents.
- Asked if they would pay \$40 per year on a \$150,000 home in additional taxes to have the City respond to 100% of emergency calls within 8 minutes or less, 75% of respondents said they would support such an increase.
- Asked if they would support a referendum for a fire station and a police station, 63% and 62% respectively, of respondents said they would.
- The information source considered most important by respondents to get information about the City of Ankeny was local television news (68%), followed by the *Ankeny Press Citizen* (66%), *Ankeny Register* (60%) and *Des Moines Register* (57%).