

MAPLE GROVE 2016 CITIZEN SURVEY

“EXECUTIVE SUMMARY”

SURVEY BACKGROUND

The 2016 Citizen Survey provided residents the opportunity to rate the quality of life in the City of Maple Grove, as well as the quality of service delivery and overall workings of local government. The survey also permitted residents to provide feedback to government on what is working well and what is not, and to share their priorities for community planning and resource allocation.

Surveys were mailed to 1,200 randomly selected resident households in August, 2016. A total of 449 surveys were completed, yielding a response rate of 38%.

Survey results were weighted so that respondent gender, age, race, housing unit type (attached or detached) and housing tenure (rent or own) were represented in proportions reflective of the entire city. The margin of error is plus or minus five percentage points around any given percentage point reported for the entire sample.

Because Maple Grove has administered a resident survey before, some comparisons could be made between 2016 responses and those from 2013, 2008 and 2001. Maple Grove also elected to have its results compared to those of other jurisdictions around the nation, comparisons made possible through a national benchmark database created and maintained by National Research Center, Inc. (NRC). This database contains resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from over 500 jurisdictions. Benchmark comparisons in this report are made to all other jurisdictions in the NRC database.

KEY FINDINGS

Maple Grove residents continue to enjoy an exceptionally high quality of life.

- ▶ In 2016, 98% of survey respondents rated their overall quality of life in Maple Grove as “good” or “very good” and no respondents gave “bad” or “very bad” ratings while only two percent gave “neither good nor bad” ratings.
- ▶ Similar to 2013, almost all respondents gave positive marks to Maple Grove as a place to raise children in 2016. About as many residents said they would recommend living in Maple Grove to someone.
- ▶ Resident loyalty is high: around 9 in 10 residents plan to remain in Maple Grove for the next five years, similar to ratings given in 2008 and 2013.
- ▶ Compared to other communities, all dimensions of quality of life in Maple Grove were rated much higher than the national average.

Residents appreciate Maple Grove’s community characteristics and improvements have been noted.

- ▶ At least 9 in 10 residents awarded “good” or “very good” marks to Maple Grove’s cleanliness, overall image or reputation, recreational opportunities for youth, the availability of paths and

walking trails, the overall quality of business and service establishments and the availability of quality health care.

- ▶ Perceptions of educational opportunities and the openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds improved substantially from 2013 to 2016 (12% increase in percent “very good” or “good” and 9% increase, respectively).
- ▶ Ratings for ease of pedestrian travel also increased over time from 76% “very good” or “good” in 2013 to 83% in 2016.
- ▶ When comparisons to other communities were available, all community characteristics were rated much higher than the national average.
- ▶ Even the lowest rated community characteristics (availability of affordable housing and ease of bus travel within Maple Grove) were rated as “very good” or “good” by a majority of residents (56% and 57%, respectively).

Maple Grove continues to rank highly with regard to Safety.

- ▶ Almost all residents reported feeling “very safe” or “somewhat safe” in Maple Grove during the day including, in their neighborhoods, in downtown, in other shopping areas and in Maple Grove’s parks.
- ▶ Roughly 9 in 10 residents reported feeling safe in Maple Grove’s downtown shopping areas after dark and slightly fewer reported feeling safe in the other shopping areas after dark.
- ▶ Maple Grove residents reported feeling much safer than respondents from other communities across the nation, where comparisons could be made.
- ▶ When asked to rate the quality of a variety of services and amenities in Maple Grove, the top two rated were police services and fire services which received positive ratings from nearly all residents.

Services and amenities provided by Maple Grove show a marked increase in ratings.

- ▶ As in 2008 and 2013, about 9 in 10 residents awarded positive ratings to the overall quality of services in 2016, setting Maple Grove much higher than the national average in another category.
- ▶ Five services saw an increase in ratings between 2013 and 2016 including services to youth, animal control, land use planning and zoning, sidewalk maintenance and street repair and maintenance. Improvements ranged from 7% increase in “very good” or “good” to 15% with the largest difference awarded to street repair and maintenance.
- ▶ Almost all services that could be compared to other communities were rated much higher than the national average; only two—fire services and drinking water—were similar to the average.
- ▶ Residents were asked separately about the quality and availability of recreational amenities in Maple Grove. Among the top rated recreational amenities were ice arenas/indoor ice sheets, the Sports Dome at Maple Grove High School and basketball gyms, which received “very good” or “good” ratings from 81% of survey respondents or more. Though the vast majority of residents reported not using each of the recreational amenities listed on the survey, very few, if any, residents reported that any of the recreational amenities were ever not available (less than five percent).

Residents are increasingly happy with their local government's performance and overall City planning.

- ▶ Three-quarters of those surveyed gave "good" or "very good" marks to the overall direction Maple Grove is taking, the City government welcoming citizen involvement, the value of services for taxes paid and the City Council representing its citizens.
- ▶ All local government performance ratings increased between 2013 and 2016, with the largest increase seen for Maple Grove City government listening to citizens (up 18% "very good" or "good" in 2016 compared to 2013). Where government performance benchmark comparisons were available, Maple Grove received ratings that were much higher than other communities in the nation.
- ▶ Those who had contact with City employees were asked to rate aspects of their impression, and ratings were positive. Nine in 10 residents reported that their impression of the City employee's courtesy, responsiveness and knowledge was "good" or better and their overall impression of the contact was rated similarly as well. Impressions of City employees were rated higher than the national benchmark and overall impression of City employees was rated much higher than in comparison communities.
- ▶ When asked to rate the quality of planning strategies in a variety of areas, ratings were high including the rating for overall City planning which increased by 11% between 2013 and 2016 (77% "very good" or "good" in 2013 compared to 88% in 2016). This rating was much higher than the national benchmark.

Traffic and transportation may be an area of improvement.

- ▶ When asked to evaluate a list of potential problems, driving related issues were at the top of the list. Distracted driving, traffic congestion and speeding and/or aggressive driving were rated as "moderate" or "major" problems by between 35% and 60% of respondents.
- ▶ In 2016, survey respondents were given the opportunity to express what they believed to be the single biggest challenge facing Maple Grove. Of those who responded, one-quarter cited issues related to traffic and transportation.
- ▶ When rating various services and amenities in Maple Grove, traffic signal timing was the lowest rated service with just over half of respondents giving it favorable ratings.
- ▶ Even though ease of travel by bus in Maple Grove was rated much higher than the benchmark comparison, this aspect was the second-lowest rated community characteristic, with around 6 in 10 rating it "good" or better.

Economic health and a focus on jobs and attracting primary employers are priorities for residents.

- ▶ A new question on the 2016 survey asked residents to rate the importance of the City addressing several focus areas. All residents reported that the overall economic health of Maple Grove was at least "somewhat important." This was followed closely by attracting and retaining career level employers and retaining and expanding existing industry which were deemed at least "somewhat important" by 98% and 97% of residents, respectively.
- ▶ Survey respondents were then asked residents to rate the importance of Maple Grove attracting primary employers from certain industries. Healthcare, technology, and

professional and managerial industries topped the list with nearly all residents rating them at least “somewhat important.”

SURVEY BACKGROUND

The City of Maple Grove contracted with National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) to conduct a community wide citizen survey. The primary goal of the survey was to assess the attitudes and opinions of residents by:

- ▶ Evaluating City programs and services.
- ▶ Determining general perceptions of the quality of life in the city.
- ▶ Identifying issues facing the city.
- ▶ Identifying demographic changes in the city.
- ▶ Setting benchmarks for future surveys.

The Maple Grove Citizen Survey serves as a consumer report card for Maple Grove by providing residents the opportunity to rate the quality of life in the city, as well as the community’s amenities, service delivery and their satisfaction with local government. Residents also provide feedback on what is working well and what is not, and communicate their priorities for community planning and resource allocation.

Focus on the quality of service delivery of services helps council, staff and the public to set priorities for budget decisions and lays the groundwork for tracking community opinions about the core responsibilities of Maple Grove City government, helping to assure maximum service quality over time.

This type of survey gets at the key services that local government controls to create a quality community. It is akin to private sector customer surveys that are used regularly by many corporations to monitor where there are weaknesses in product or service delivery before customers defect to competition or before other problems from dissatisfied customers arise.

This is the fourth iteration of the Maple Grove Citizen Survey since the baseline study conducted in 2001. The 2008 survey was conducted by phone.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

A postcard was mailed to 1,200 Maple Grove households, selected at random, notifying residents that they had been chosen to participate in the survey. A survey followed in the mail after one week and another one week later. There were 449 respondents to the mailed questionnaire (with 13 undeliverable addresses), yielding a response rate of 38%. For the first time in 2016, the survey was available online through a web link provided with each survey packet. Of the 449 responses to the survey, 30 were completed online. The margin of error is plus or minus five percentage points around any given percentage for all respondents.

Survey results were weighted so that respondent gender, age, race, housing unit type (attached or detached) and housing tenure (rent or own) were represented in the proportions reflective of the entire city. More information about the survey methodology can be found in.

How The Results Are Report

For the most part, the full set of frequencies or the “percent positive” are presented in the body and narrative of the report. The percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., “very good” and “good,” “very safe” and “somewhat safe,” “essential” and “very important,” etc.).

On many of the questions in the survey, respondents could give an answer of “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in and is discussed in the body of this report if it is 30% or greater. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report, unless otherwise indicated. In other words, the majority of the tables and graphs in the body of the report display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

For some questions, respondents were permitted to select multiple responses. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a multiple response question, it is because some respondents are counted in multiple categories. When a table for a question that only permitted a single response does not total to exactly 100%, it is due to the customary practice rounding values to the nearest whole number.

Precision of Estimates

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” and accompanying “confidence interval” (or margin of error). The margin of error for this survey is generally no greater than plus or minus five percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (N=449).

Comparisons of Results

Because this survey was the fourth iteration of the citizen survey, the 2001, 2008 and 2013 results are presented along with past ratings when available. Changes over time are regarded as significant if the difference in ratings between 2013 and 2016 is at least seven percentage points.

Selected survey results were compared by geographic residency of respondents as well as respondent housing unit type, income and age and are discussed throughout the body of the report. These cross tabulations are presented in tabular form in. Where differences between subgroups are statistically significant, the results in these tables are shaded grey.

Comparing Results to Other Cities

NRC’s database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 communities whose residents evaluated their services. Conducted with typically no fewer than 400 residents in each community, opinions are intended to represent over 30 million Americans.

Communities to which Maple Grove is compared can be found in. National benchmark comparisons have been provided when similar questions on the Maple Grove survey are included in NRC’s database and there are at least five communities in which the question was asked, though most questions are compared to more than five other communities. Additional information on NRC’s benchmarking database can be found in.

Where comparisons for quality ratings were available, Maple Grove’s results were generally noted as being “higher” than the benchmark, “lower” than the benchmark or “similar” to the benchmark. In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of “much,” (for example, “much lower” or “much higher”). These labels come from a statistical comparison of Maple Grove’s rating to the benchmark where a rating is considered “similar” if it is within the margin of error (2.8 points or less on the 100-point scale); “higher”

or “lower” if the difference between Maple Grove’s rating and the benchmark is greater than but less than twice the margin of error (greater than 2.8 points but 5.6 points or less); and “much higher” or “much lower” if the difference between Maple Grove’s rating and the benchmark is more than twice the margin of error (greater than 5.6 points). Comparisons for a number of items on the survey are not available in the benchmark database (e.g., some of the services or aspects of the community or quality of life). These items are excluded from the benchmark tables.