



**VILLAGE OF WOODRIDGE
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: September 25, 2009

TO: Honorable Mayor and Village Board Trustees
Eileene Nystrom, Village Clerk
Kathleen Rush, Village Administrator

FROM: Melissa Bohse, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: **2009 Community Needs Survey Analysis**

Attached are the results of the 2009 Community Needs Survey. 2009 marks the 25th anniversary of the Community Needs Survey. This survey is recognized nationally as a model time-series analysis. The purpose of the survey is to identify resident opinions and perceptions regarding the services provided by the Village of Woodridge. 1,200 surveys were randomly distributed to Woodridge residents (1,000 single-family, 200 multi-family). 424 surveys were returned this year, which translates into a 35.3% response rate. This response rate is over four (4) percentage points higher than last year.

Included in this report is a summary of the significant findings from this year's survey. Survey results are presented according to the department being evaluated. For the eighth year in a row, mean scores were assigned to a variety of rated questions (questions where the respondent could mark either "excellent," "good," "fair," or "poor"). The rated items are on a four-point scale and can be interpreted as: 1-1.75=excellent, 1.76-2.5=good, 2.51-3.25=fair and 3.26-4.00=poor. The mean scores for the rated questions are shown in the section immediately following this report.

A valid percentage (which excludes blank or "no opinion" responses) was used on several survey questions in lieu of a percentage based on frequency. When computed correctly, a valid percentage provides a more accurate reflection of respondent's thoughts and concerns than that of an all-inclusive percentage. Questions that used a valid percentage are marked with an "*" on the section titled Respondent Answers by Percentage.

Changes to the Survey for 2009

Management staff reviewed the survey instrument in June for possible additions and deletions. The following questions have been changed for 2009:

- Question #11 *How do you conduct your routine Village business*: "Website" was added as one of the response options.
- Question #32 *Do you currently have cable television service*: This question was amended asking respondents to specify their cable provider rather than indicate whether or not they have cable.

- Questions #36, #37 and #38: Due to the expansion of WCTV to AT&T customers, these questions were amended in order to make the wording universally apply to WCTV on Comcast and AT&T rather than specifying the Comcast channel number.
- Question #41 *Do you pay your water bills online*: Because online payment became an option within the last year, the wording of this question was amended to ask if respondents are using the option rather than whether or not they would pay online.
- Question #52 *Do you take part in any of the following energy saving activities* (2008 instrument): This question was added to the 2008 instrument in order to seek specific information on green efforts, it was removed for the 2009 instrument.
- Question #56 *Where and how often are you obtaining local news and information from the following*: This question was amended to list the *Woodridge Weekly* in the Bugle and not the Reporter.
- Question #59 *For each of the following programs that you participated in, please rank your level of satisfaction*: “Gorilla Daze” was removed as one of the response options.
- Questions #68, #69 and #70 (2008 instrument): Were removed. Like Question #52 (2008 instrument), these questions focused on energy saving activities.
- Questions #68, #69 and #70 (2009 instrument): This year’s survey was amended to include data gathering on the Fire Districts.

For the third year in a row, respondents to the Woodridge Community Needs Survey had the option to respond to the survey online. The online survey was the initial option for response, followed up two weeks later with a survey reminder and the option to respond by traditional mail format. In total, the survey received 192 responses online and 232 responses by mail.

Survey Utility

The purpose of the survey is to assess public perception of Village services and to give residents the opportunity to make suggestions for improvement. The Village utilizes the findings to determine if changes in services are necessary or if additional information needs to be shared with its residents.

Commonly asked questions raised by respondents are answered and aggregated into a Frequently Asked Questions document. The FAQ is posted on the Village's website and is distributed at the Town Meeting. Specific questions and concerns raised on the survey are addressed by each relevant department manager and are followed up with a personal letter to the survey respondent making the commentary.

The annual Community Needs Survey is a major component of the Strategic Management Process. Input gathered from the survey and from other citizen engagement efforts such as the Neighborhood Dialogues and the annual Town Meeting is used during the budget process. It is through these efforts that the Village is able to respond to public expectations while it fulfills its mission, meets its mandates, and copes with challenges in the years ahead.

As a result of the collaborative effort, the rapport between citizens and its local government grows stronger and the quality of community improves. The Village has much to be proud of, as the survey illustrates that respondents are more satisfied with life in Woodridge than ever before.

Highlights of Significant Findings

Quality of Life

- Residents continue to give exceptional marks for the *Overall Quality of Life* in Woodridge. 98.7% of respondents marked “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied,” continuing the 90%+ rating since the survey’s inception!

Safety

- 95.2% of respondents indicated that they felt *Safe and Secure in Their Neighborhoods*. This year is the 10th consecutive year that safety was given a 90+ rating.
- Respondents continue to be pleased with the *Overall Agency Performance* of the Woodridge Police Department. 96.9% of respondents marked “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied,” continuing the 90+ trend for the 3rd consecutive year.
- 95.4% of respondents approve of the *Service Provided by Patrol Officers* and 96.9% of respondents approve of the *Overall Agency Performance*. Each of these scores is the highest marks in the history of the Community Needs Survey.
- The Police Department continues its high ranking in *Emergency Response Time* with a combined “Excellent” and “Good” score of 96.3%. This is the 12th consecutive year of a 90+ percentile ranking.
- The Mean Rated Scores for Dispatcher Service, Overall Agency Performance, Patrol Officer Service, Response Time and Police Attitude and Behavior all ranked between 1.32 and 1.58, categorizing these services as “Excellent” on the Mean Rated Scores Scale.

Quality Community, Quality Services

- In an economy where every dollar counts, respondents feel that the dollars that they pay in municipal taxes are being put to good use. 70.9% of survey participants indicated that they receive a *Fair Level of Service for the Property Tax Dollars They Pay*. This is an all time high ranking in this category.
- *Village Hall Services* continue to receive high rankings. 42.4% of respondents rate the service as “Excellent,” an all time high in this category. 91.3% of respondents report “Excellent” or “Good” service, making 2009 the third consecutive year at the 90+ percentile.
- *Contact with Village Staff* received record setting positive feedback. 37.5% of respondents indicated that the contact was “Excellent,” the highest score in survey history. Overall 90.3% of respondents felt that the service was either “Excellent” or “Good.”
- Respondents continue to be satisfied with the *Village’s Street Maintenance Efforts*. 91.3% reported that they are “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” with services. 30.4% reported that they are “Very Satisfied” an all time record for the Community Needs Survey. This is the eighth year that Street Maintenance has received an 85+ percentile rating.
- *Garbage Collection Services* continue to rank high among respondents. 31.8% ranked their level of satisfaction as “Very Satisfied,” this is the highest score in this category in survey history. 2009 marks the third consecutive year that this category has achieved a 90+ percentile ranking in the combined score of “Very Satisfied” and “Satisfied.”

- Respondents continue to be satisfied with the *Village's Water Service*. 97.5% reported that they are "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." 36.6% indicated that they are "Very Satisfied" for a record setting mark in this category.
- Utilization and satisfaction with the *Woodridge Bikeway System* remains high. 68.1% of respondents indicated that adults in their family "Frequently" or "Sometimes" use the system, while 56.1% of respondents indicate that children in their family "Frequently" or "Sometimes" use the system. Both of these scores are the highest in survey history in this category.
- While most communities are seeing slumping reinvestment numbers, respondents to the Woodridge Community Needs Survey indicated all time high numbers in *Permit Applications* for Home Improvement (14.6%) and Driveways (13%).
- Respondents are happy with the *Overall Appearance in Existing Commercial Developments*. When asked to identify where improvements are needed, the lowest number of respondents in survey history indicated the need for improvement in Exterior Building Appearance, Security and Environmental Appearance.
- Respondents are happy with the *Quality of New Developments in Woodridge*. Both Parking (93.4%) and Access (93.5%) received the highest combined "Excellent" and "Good" scores in survey history.
- Respondents continue to see *Value in the Content Provided on the Village's Website*. 60.1% of survey participants indicated that they have visited the site, an all time high. 92.4% of participants rated the quality of the information on the site as "Excellent" or "Good."
- The *Quality of Life in Woodridge* continues to improve over time. 58.1% of respondents indicated that quality of life is "Much Better" or "Somewhat Better" as compared to ten years ago. This is an all time high score in this category.
- Respondents continue to feel that Woodridge does a good job of *Promoting the Positive Aspects of the Community*. 85% of respondents felt positively of this category.
- Respondent continue to *Seek Local Information from Village Publications*. The Focus (18.9%), E-News (23.0%) and Waterbilling Briefs (26.8%) all received the highest scores in survey history in the ranking of "Always" utilizing the publication for local news.

Findings

Police Department

A high percentage (95.2%) of individuals responded that they feel safe and secure in their neighborhoods. This is the tenth year in a row that this response rate is over 93%. More than half of respondents (60.3%) have had contact with the Police Department. This frequency jumped over 5% since last year. Respondents are most likely to have contact with a police officer (42.5%). However, contact with dispatch, records and community service officers are all increasing. The overall satisfaction with the department and the service provided continues to increase.

- *Adequacy of Service Provided by Patrol Officer* achieved a combined "Excellent" and "Good" score of 95.4%, for the highest score ever and the 3rd consecutive year above the 90+ percentile.
- *Overall Agency Performance* achieved a combined "Excellent" and "Good" score of 96.9%, for the highest score ever and the 3rd consecutive year above the 90+ percentile.

- *Overall Satisfaction with the Woodridge Police Department Employees* achieved a combined “Excellent” and “Satisfied” score of 97.4%, for the highest score ever and the 9th consecutive year above the 90+ percentile.

Finance

With the difficult economic times residents are facing, it was our assumption that concern with taxes and service fees would be a trend in the 2009 Community Needs Survey. However, contrary to that assumption, 70.9% of respondents *feel that they receive a fair level of service for the property tax dollars that they pay*. This is the highest score in the history of the survey on this specific question.

- Survey results illustrate that, if the Village were to require an increase in services, most residents (53.8%) continue to prefer to pay through User Fees. This trend is consistent with year’s past. Sales Tax and Property Tax received the second highest scores. Preference for Sales Tax rose nearly 3%.
- For the first year in CNS history, less than half of respondents (47.9%) conduct their business through the mail. In 2008, the Village began to offer water bill payment on the website and therefore the 2009 CNS incorporated “Website” as an option in *how respondents conduct routine Village business*. With 15.6% of respondents utilizing the website for routine business, this option has become the third most popular within its first year.
- 2009 achieved a very strong “Excellent” rating in *Customer Service at Village Hall* with a score of 42.4%.

Public Works

The Public Works Department continues to score highly on the services they provide. This year’s survey showed an increased emphasis on the bikeway system in Woodridge. Both adult and child utilization of the system is increasing and *overall satisfaction with the Woodridge Bikeway System* increased.

- With an “Excellent” rating of 30.4%, *Street Maintenance* received the highest score in CNS history.
- The Village provides parkway tree trimming services on a five-year rotational basis, only 1.2% of respondents found this amount to be “Excessive” for the lowest rating in survey history. The vast majority (83%) feel that this amount is adequate.
- The *Level of Satisfaction with the Garbage Collection Company* achieved a high score with 31.8% of respondents indicating that they are “Very Satisfied.” This is the highest score in the history of the survey.
- The *Level of Satisfaction with the Water Services* is high with 36.6% of respondents indicating that they are “Very Satisfied.” The combined rating of “Very Satisfied” and “Satisfied” remains high with the last four (4) years being in the 95+ percentile.
- Utilization of the Woodridge Bikeway System continues to increase. Both *Adult Utilization* and *Child Utilization* achieved the highest score in survey history when combining “Frequent” and “Sometimes” use of the system with 68.1% and 56.1% respectively.

Building and Zoning

With the economic downturn, many towns are experiencing fewer permit applications for home improvement projects. However, the 2009 CNS shows that there are increases in permit applications for home improvement (14.6%, an increase of 2%) and driveways (13%, an increase of 2.3%). Each of these scores is the highest in the history of the CNS. Additionally, deck and swimming pool permit application are up from previous years.

- Respondents are more concerned with *Accessibility* (4.2%) than they have been in recent years, while concern with *Exterior Building Appearance*, *Security* and *Environmental Appearance* all decreased.
- Respondents reported a 78.9% approval rating of “Very Well” or “Well” for *residential property maintenance in the Village*.
- For the enforcement of regulatory ordinances, both *Fences* (78.9%) and *Storage of Junk* (63.5%) have improved their scores since 2008.

Planning and Development

Respondents continue to indicate a high level of satisfaction with the *Quality of New Development* in Woodridge, with the highest number satisfied with the *Appearance*, followed closely by *Parking*, *Access* and *Building Design*.

- For the eleventh consecutive year, most respondents indicated that they would like to see the development of *Restaurants* (40.8%), and *Retail* (35.4%).
- The stores most regularly shopped at that are out of town continue to be: Wal-Mart (12.5% of responses), Meijer’s (14.2%). Reasons listed for shopping at these stores: *price*, *selection*, *convenience* and *close to home*.
- Focusing on residential development, most respondents, 45.3%, indicated that they would prefer the construction of *Single Family Homes*. This is a 12.4% increase in the score over 2008 and moved *Single Family Homes* back to the most desired type of residential development from the 2008 preference of *Senior Housing*.

Cable Services/Satellite and Computer

According to the 2009 survey, Woodridge residents continue to become more reliant on computers and technology. 84% of respondents have Internet access in the home and 78.5% have a high speed connection. Last year, the Village made online water payments an option and 11.6% of respondents are taking advantage of that option. Overall, the Village’s website received a high approval rating and positive feedback on the site’s navigation.

- 76.5% of respondents receive Internet service from Comcast. In the past year, 4.5% have moved to AT&T for cable service. 19.1% of respondents do not have a provider.
- Respondents continue to feel that cable rates are inappropriate (76.1%). This is the tenth consecutive year that the negative rating has fallen in the 70+ percentile.
- When respondents were asked if they have visited the Village’s Website, 60.1% indicated that they have and 92.4% rated the site as “Excellent” or “Good.”

Quality of Life

- The *Overall Quality of Life* of Woodridge received a record-breaking combined rating of “*Very Satisfied*” and “*Satisfied*” at 98.7%. Not only is this the highest score ever achieved, it represents a 5.7% improvement over last year!
- The *Quality of Life Compared to Ten Years Ago* received a strong combined rating of “*Much Better*” and “*Somewhat Better*” at 58.1%. This score is a 10.2% improvement over 2008 and the highest score to date.
- 85% of respondents believe Woodridge does a good job of promoting the positive aspects of the community. This score is nearly two percentage points higher than 2008 and the highest score to date.
- The ranking of the major assets and advantages of living in Woodridge are similar to years’ past. The top five are: #1 *Location* (82.1% also ranked #1 since 1998), #2 *Residential Neighborhoods* (51.7%, also ranked #2 in 2008-2003), #3 *Friendliness of Residents* (45.8%, second consecutive year), #4 *Housing Affordability* (43.9%, second consecutive year), and #5 *Schools* (37.5%, also ranked #5 in 2008-2004).
- The top three reported disadvantages of living in Woodridge are as follows: #1 *Lack of Public Transportation* (21.5%, also ranked #1 in 2008-2000), #2 *Lack of Employment* (17.7%, up from #3 in 2008), and #3 *Crime/Drug Use* (14.6%, down from #3 in 2008).
- 37.5% of respondents indicated that their contact with Village staff during the last year was “*Excellent*” resulting in the highest “*Excellent*” rating in survey history.
- 18.9% of respondents indicated that they “*Always*” check the FOCUS Newsletter. In addition 23% indicated that they “*Always*” check E-News and 26.8% indicated that they “*Always*” check the Waterbilling Brief. Each of these scores was the highest in CNS history.
- Respondents are satisfied with Village events with Woodridge Idol, the All Village Garage Sale and Cultural Fest all receiving record setting scores.

Utilities

- Electric service interruption appears to be increasing among respondents. The number of individuals indicating no service interruptions fell to 7.8% which is nearly 6% lower than 2008. Respondents indicating outages 1-4 times per year was reported at 76.9% which is nearly 5% higher and respondents indicating more than 8 outages rose to 5% which is 1.2% higher than 2008.
- Additionally, respondents are reporting outages of longer duration. Those who experience 0-1 outages lasting longer than an hour fell to 39.3%, a 20.2% reduction over 2008. Those who experience 2-3 time outages lasting longer than an hour rose to 54.2%, a 17.9% increase and those who experience 4 or more outages lasting longer than an hour rose to 8.3%, a 2.3% increase.

Survey Data Sections

- Mean Scores for Rated 2008 Community Needs Survey Questions.
- Respondent Answers to the 2008 Community Needs Survey (by percentage).
- Community Needs Survey Trends from 1992 to 2008.
- Open Ended Responses from the 2008 Community Needs Survey.