



**VILLAGE OF WOODRIDGE
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: October 14, 2011

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

FROM: Peggy Halik, Assistant Village Administrator

SUBJECT: **2011 Community Needs Survey Analysis**

Contained in this report are the results of the 2011 Community Needs Survey. 2011 marks the 27th anniversary of the Community Needs Survey. 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). 374 surveys were returned this year, which translates into a 31.2% response rate. This response rate is 2.2% 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. Mean scores are 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:

1.00 - 1.75	Excellent
1.76 - 2.50	Good
2.51 - 3.20	Fair
3.21 - 4.00	Poor

The mean scores for the rated questions are shown in the section immediately following this memorandum.

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. As in past years, the Village worked with an independent statistician to insure that our analysis of the results is statistically sound. In addition, an independent online survey company was contracted to ensure the privacy of respondents. All answers to survey questions remain anonymous unless the respondent lists their address and asks for an answer to a specific question or issue.

For the 5th year, respondents to the Woodridge Community Needs Survey had the option to respond to the survey online. The Village has been promoting online responses for the purposes of eliminating paper waste and to improve the efficiency of results reporting. This year, 36 of the 374 surveys, or 9.6% were received by mail. This is slightly more than last year's 6.9%, but still much lower than 2009's 45% that were received by mail. The Village will continue to improve the ease of use of the online instrument and reduce the number of paper copies mailed to continue to reduce paper waste and the cost of postage.

2011 Changes to the Survey Instrument

Management staff discussed some significant changes to the CNS for 2011. Highlights of these changes include:

- **Police Department:** Question #8 was changed to eliminate *Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)* as this program is no longer offered.
- **Public Works Department:** Question #14 was amended to allow respondents to separately provide feedback on tree trimming and tree planting. Question #20 was changed to seek input on commuting and to eliminate skateboarding and rollerblading as options.
- **Community Involvement:** Question #38 was altered to be predicated on time availability.
- **Public Relations:** Question #46 was expanded to ask *if there is a need for the website to be provided in a different format*. Question #48 was changed to add *Don't Know* as an optional answer.
- **Quality of Life:** Question #56 was changed to include *Printed Material* as an optional answer. Question #59 was amended to add and clarify optional responses.

Community Needs Survey and Strategic Management Process

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. 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 Topic Forums 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 in years past.

2011 Community Needs Survey Findings

Each year, the results of the Community Needs Survey are analyzed for trends. These findings are then highlighted to identify the significant findings of the survey for the specific survey year. Overall themes in the significant findings are then published in a significant findings report that is posted on the Village website.

Police Department

Fewer respondents have had contact with the Police Department in nearly all categories of service and emergency contact continues to decline. Service provided by dispatchers received the highest rating in nine years, patrol service ratings improved over last year, and police attitude and behavior received the highest score in nine years. Satisfaction with response times, both emergency and non-emergency, was lower than in years past, as was the percentage for feeling safe and secure in their neighborhoods. Familiarity with police programs also declined.

- 94.9% rated dispatch services as good or excellent.
- 90.9% of respondents considered the services provided by the patrol officer to be “good” or “excellent.”
- 90.4% rated police attitude and behavior as “good” or “excellent.”
- Overall satisfaction with Police Department employees rose to 95.2%.

Finance

Perhaps the most surprising statistic in the entire survey is the dramatic increase in the percentage of respondents who feel they receive a fair level of service for the property taxes they pay. 76.1% responded favorably, a 5.4% increase over last year, 10% over 10 years ago, and 16.4% over the lowest rating in the last ten years. More residents are conducting business via the website or direct deposit, with fewer by mail. And customer service scores remain strong.

- 76.1% of respondents feel that they receive a fair level of service for the property tax dollars they pay, an upward trend for the 6th consecutive year and a vast increase over all years.
- 14.4% would prefer to pay for increased services through property taxes, a 2.7% increase over last year and the highest score in nine years.
- 23.5% conduct Village business via direct deposit, while 21.9% use the website; 5.7% and 2.9% increases respectively.

Public Works

Utilization of the bike paths has improved among adults. 67.9% report using it, a nearly 2% increase over last year and a 15% increase over the past ten years. It is predominantly used for walking by adults and biking by children.

- 82.8% of respondents indicated that street maintenance was “excellent” or “good.”
- 78.7% of respondents indicated that the Village’s street cleaning was “excellent” or “good,” the highest score to date.
- 82.2% of respondents feel that the streetscape in town is “excellent” or “good,” the highest score to date.

Community Development

The number of foreclosures has had an impact on property maintenance efforts by the Village. Respondents remain satisfied with how well residential property is being maintained with a less than 1% slight reduction over last year's score. The number of residents having difficulty maintaining their own property nearly doubled from 4.6% to 8.8%. While single family homes remain the preferred development, 45.1% selected senior housing, the highest percentage ever for that category.

- 93.2% of respondents felt that the information provided in the permit application process was “adequate,” the highest score to date.
- 67.7% of respondents rated the enforcement of *storage of junk* as enforced “very well” or “well,” the highest score in eight years.
- 94.3% of respondents rated the *quality of new development construction materials* as “excellent” or “good,” the highest score in five years.
- 87.6% of respondents rated *circulation in new developments* as “excellent” or “good,” the highest score in ten years.

Television & Internet Services

The number of respondents identifying themselves as Comcast customers fell by nearly 6% to 74.2%. The number of respondents with access to the Internet at home continues to rise at 89.1%. And the number of high speed connections remained relatively unchanged at 84.4%.

Community Involvement

The number of volunteer hours fell approximately 4% to 67.0%. Satisfaction with community programs remained high, with all-time high scores in the *All Village Garage Sale, Town Meeting, Cultural Fest, and Neighborhood Dialogue*.

- 67.0% of respondents indicated that they do not volunteer on a regular basis.
- 98.9%, 95.7%, and 94.1% of respondents indicated that they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the *All Village Garage Sale, Town Meeting, Cultural Fest, and Neighborhood Dialogue* respectively, the highest scores in ten years.

Public Relations

More respondents rated Village staff service as “good” or “excellent” than in any other year. The number of respondents feeling well informed about what is going on in the community fell by 4% over last year, but is still nearly 10% higher than the ten year average. The frequency with which respondents are getting local news from identified sources is dropping nearly across the board. The number of respondents who always get their information from e-News dropped nearly 10%. 52.5% always or often get their information from the Waterbilling Briefs, followed closely by the FOCUS newsletter at 44.8%; e-News is less than 30% and the website is a little over 17%. Use of the website has dropped as has the ease of navigation. The quality of information remains high at 92.1%.

- 82.9% of respondents indicated that they feel informed about what is going on in Woodridge.
- 92.0% of respondents rated the service provided by Village staff as “excellent” or “good,” this is the highest score achieved in this area.

- Residents are obtaining their local news more from Village sources than ever before, *the Village Website*, the *FOCUS Newsletter*, *e-News* and *the Waterbilling Briefs* all received their highest scores for respondents “always” relying on the information provided.
- 68.3% of respondents indicated that they have visited the Village website, this is down considerably over last year, but is the second highest score to date.
- 92.1% of respondents ranked the quality of information provided on the Village website as “excellent” or “good,” the highest score to date.

Quality of Life

Respondents continue to rank the quality of life in Woodridge highly. In fact, the score for 2011 is merely 1/10 of one percent under the highest score ever achieved in 2009 and 2010. 52.8% believe that the quality of life is better or somewhat better than 10 years ago. The number of respondents finding it difficult to afford living in Woodridge rose slightly. Those preferring to get their information through Breaking e-News dropped by 18%. The assets of living in Woodridge continue to include the friendliness of residents, housing affordability, location, residential neighborhoods and schools. *Housing conditions* replaced *housing costs* as one of the top five major disadvantages to living in Woodridge. The core service priorities this year were: include attracting and retaining business, road maintenance, crime prevention, drug and gang suppression, and snow plowing.

- 98.6% of respondents ranked their satisfaction with their quality of life in Woodridge as “very satisfied” or “satisfied.”
- Since 1998, respondents have ranked the top five assets to life in Woodridge as the friendliness of residents, housing affordability, location, residential neighborhoods and schools.
- The disadvantages to living in Woodridge were listed as crime/drug abuse, distance to employer, housing conditions, lack of employment and public transportation.
- Respondents indicated their priorities related to core services. Top priorities include attracting and retaining business, crime prevention, road maintenance, drug/gang suppression and snow plowing.

Communication of Community Needs Survey Results

Copies of this report will be posted on the Village website and advertised through the Village’s public relations outlets including the highly read Waterbilling Briefs.