



City of Yakima

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: Yakima Citizen Survey Results

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Survey Results Show There's Room for Improvement

Results from the 2012 Yakima Citizen Survey, which was designed to gauge public opinion about City services and priorities as well as quality of life issues, indicate that people who took the survey believe several aspects of the community should be improved, ranging from street repair and employment opportunities to crime prevention and the overall reputation of Yakima.

“The City Council made a commitment to listen to and learn from the community and expected to get honest and unvarnished feedback, and that's exactly what it got,” said City Manager Tony O'Rourke. “The survey results are, by in large, critical and definitely show there's room for improvement. However, the up side is that the survey has provided us with benchmarks the City will use to track progress as it refines its priorities and operations to best meet the needs of the community,” said O'Rourke.

O'Rourke said key findings from the survey, such as only 21% of the respondents rating street repairs as “good” or “excellent”, 15% rating code enforcement as “good” or “excellent”, and just 28% rating the overall direction that Yakima is taking as “good” or “excellent”, provide the City with a clear indication of areas it needs to focus on and enhance.

Among the more positive results from the survey, 84% of the respondents rated fire services as “good” or “excellent”, 80% gave the same rating to garbage collection, and 88% “strongly support” or “somewhat support” implementation of a curbside recycling program.

The results of the survey, which was mailed to 3000 randomly-selected Yakima households earlier this summer, will play a central role in the development of a strategic plan for the City, a process that will begin in earnest at the August 28th City Council retreat.

National Research Center, Inc. (“NRC”) conducted the survey for the City and produced three reports from the mail-in results. The reports include overall results, results by City Council district, and a comparison of the Yakima results to those of similar surveys conducted by NRC in about 400 other cities across the country. All three reports can be found in the Notable section on the front page of the City website (www.yakimawa.gov).

The mail-in survey was completed by 837 people for a 29% response rate. Typical response rates for other citizen surveys conducted by NRC nationwide range from 25% to 40%.

Earlier this month, a second phase of the survey process was launched when the questionnaire was made available on line. Results from that phase of the survey are expected to be compiled by mid September.

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2012 Yakima Citizen Survey Key Findings

Policy Questions

("Strongly Support" or "Somewhat Support" responses)

Implementation of a curbside recycling program	88%
Implementation of an annual \$20 car tab fee to pay for street repairs	50%
Implementation of a sales tax increase to pay for street repairs	24%
Implementation of a property tax increase to pay for street repairs	19%
Funding an Aquatic Center with a new property tax or sales tax	39%

Quality of Life and Government Performance Questions

("Excellent" or "Good" responses)

Ease of car travel	64%
Neighborhood as a place to live	61%
Yakima as a place to live	50%
Services provided by the City of Yakima	45%
Services provided by Yakima County	36%
Services provided by the State	30%
The overall direction that Yakima is taking	28%
Value of services for taxes paid	27%

Rating of Government Services

("Excellent" or "Good" responses)

Fire Services	84%
Ambulance Services	83%
Garbage Collection	80%
Drinking Water	64%
City Parks	56%
Police Services	54%
Public Information Services	48%
Storm Drainage	46%
Services to Seniors	46%
Recreation Programs	43%
Public Parking	37%
Services to Youth	32%
Street Repairs	21%
Code Enforcement	15%