



CITY OF SARASOTA, FLORIDA 2008

Report of Geographic Subgroup Comparisons

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SURVEY BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The City of Sarasota staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries NRC used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Sarasota staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

“DON’T KNOW” RESPONSES

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix A. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

UNDERSTANDING THE TABLES

In this report, comparisons between demographic subgroups are shown. For most of the questions, we have shown only one number for each question. We have summarized responses to show only the proportion of respondents giving a certain answer; for example, the percent of respondents who rated the quality of life as “excellent” or “good”, or the percent of respondents who felt the rate of growth was “about right.”

ANOVA and chi-square tests of significance were applied to these comparisons of survey questions by demographic subgroups. A “p-value” of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% probability that differences observed between subgroups are due to chance; or in other words, a greater than 95% probability that the differences observed are “real.” Where differences were statistically significant, they are marked in gray.

The 95 percent confidence level for this survey is generally no greater than plus or minus four percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (734 completed surveys). For each District (1, 2 or 3), the margin of error rises to approximately + or - 7% since sample sizes were approximately 272 for District 1, 222 for District 2, and 235 for District 3.

COMPARISONS

Cells shaded grey indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups.

Question 1: Quality of Life (Percent "excellent" or "good")			
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Sarasota:	District		
	1	2	3
Sarasota as a place to live	82%	90%	82%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	46%	87%	70%
Sarasota as a place to raise children	58%	63%	63%
Sarasota as a place to work	41%	45%	40%
Sarasota as a place to retire	76%	87%	76%
The overall quality of life in Sarasota	69%	84%	77%

Question 2: Community Characteristics (Percent "excellent" or "good")

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Sarasota as a whole:	District		
	1	2	3
Sense of community	52%	63%	53%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	49%	52%	46%
Overall appearance of Sarasota	73%	83%	79%
Overall quality of new development in Sarasota	65%	52%	55%
Shopping opportunities	72%	69%	75%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	71%	84%	75%
Recreational opportunities	67%	80%	67%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	63%	66%	62%
Ease of car travel in Sarasota	63%	57%	50%
Ease of bus travel in Sarasota	52%	49%	40%
Ease of bicycle travel in Sarasota	46%	40%	33%
Ease of walking in Sarasota	54%	57%	51%
Availability of affordable quality housing	19%	18%	17%
Air quality	66%	76%	73%
Overall image or reputation of Sarasota	71%	85%	78%

Question 3: Growth (Percent "too fast")

Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Sarasota over the past 2 years:	District		
	1	2	3
Population growth	56%	47%	59%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	27%	29%	38%
Jobs growth	3%	3%	2%

Question 4: Code Enforcement (Percent at least a "minor" problem)

To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Sarasota?	District		
	1	2	3
	93%	87%	86%

Question 5: Community Safety (Percent "very" or "somewhat" safe)			
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Sarasota:	District		
	1	2	3
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	51%	70%	62%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	42%	59%	48%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	60%	67%	70%

Question 6: Personal Safety (Percent "very" or "somewhat" safe)			
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	District		
	1	2	3
In your neighborhood during the day	82%	90%	90%
In your neighborhood after dark	43%	69%	67%
In Sarasota's downtown area during the day	87%	90%	84%
In Sarasota's downtown area after dark	54%	65%	48%

Questions 7 and 8: Crime Victimization and Reporting (Percent "yes")			
	District		
	1	2	3
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	18%	16%	17%
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	65%	81%	80%

Question 9: Resident Behaviors (Percent at least once in past 12 months)			
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Sarasota?	District		
	1	2	3
Used Sarasota public libraries or their services	81%	80%	76%
Used Sarasota recreation centers	62%	57%	65%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	45%	44%	49%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	84%	89%	84%
Ridden a local bus within Sarasota	47%	24%	27%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	36%	46%	32%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	61%	68%	63%
Visited the City of Sarasota Web site (at www.sarasotagov.com)	45%	55%	62%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	83%	96%	92%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Sarasota	44%	61%	56%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Sarasota	50%	57%	59%
Participated in a club or civic group in Sarasota	38%	52%	39%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	91%	94%	98%

Question 10: Neighborliness (Percent at least once per month)			
About how often, if at all, do you talk to or visit with your immediate neighbors (people who live in the 10 or 20 households that are closest to you)?	District		
	1	2	3
	85%	90%	82%

Question 11: Service Quality (Percent "excellent" or "good")			
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Sarasota:	District		
	1	2	3
Police services	64%	84%	72%
Fire services	93%	95%	93%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	90%	94%	96%
Crime prevention	46%	62%	59%
Traffic enforcement	53%	61%	49%
Street repair	38%	44%	33%
Street cleaning	65%	68%	57%
Street lighting	52%	66%	53%
Sidewalk maintenance	48%	51%	39%
Traffic signal timing	39%	41%	31%
Bus or transit services	61%	58%	53%
Garbage collection	81%	87%	80%
Recycling	75%	86%	81%
Yard waste pick-up	66%	74%	70%
Storm drainage	40%	42%	39%
Drinking water	47%	55%	38%
Sewer services	61%	67%	54%
City parks	77%	81%	80%
Recreation programs or classes	67%	77%	73%
Recreation centers or facilities	60%	71%	66%
Land use, planning and zoning	29%	24%	32%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	34%	34%	41%
Economic development	35%	23%	25%
Services to low-income people	31%	27%	27%
Public library services	83%	87%	84%
Public information services	69%	70%	61%
Cable television	61%	68%	62%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	75%	74%	76%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	47%	50%	49%

Question 12: Government Services Overall (Percent "excellent" or "good")			
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	District		
	1	2	3
The City of Sarasota	69%	68%	61%
The Federal Government	40%	32%	41%
The State Government	46%	40%	48%
Sarasota County Government	53%	61%	53%

Question 13: Contact with City Employees (Percent "yes")			
	District		
	1	2	3
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Sarasota within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	51%	64%	63%

Question 14: City Employees (Percent "excellent" or "good")			
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Sarasota in your most recent contact?	District		
	1	2	3
Knowledge	74%	79%	77%
Responsiveness	71%	78%	71%
Courtesy	70%	79%	76%
Overall impression	71%	77%	70%

Question 15: Government Performance (Percent "excellent" or "good")			
Please rate the following categories of Sarasota government performance:	District		
	1	2	3
The value of services for the taxes paid to Sarasota	38%	45%	43%
The overall direction that Sarasota is taking	39%	38%	36%
The job Sarasota government does at welcoming citizen involvement	41%	47%	40%
The job Sarasota government does at listening to citizens	30%	30%	30%

Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity (Percent "somewhat" or "very" likely)			
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	District		
	1	2	3
Recommend living in Sarasota to someone who asks	80%	86%	75%
Remain in Sarasota for the next five years	77%	84%	80%

Question 17: Impact of the Economy (Percent "somewhat" or "very" positive)			
	District		
	1	2	3
What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:	17%	11%	11%

Question 18a: Policy Question 1(Percent "Improved")			
	District		
	1	2	3
Would you say that, in the last 12 months, the value of City services for taxes paid improved, stayed the same or declined compared to the past?	9%	4%	6%

Question 18b: Policy Question 2			
Please indicate to what extent you support or oppose the City encouraging public transportation with either of the following options:(Percent "somewhat" or "strongly support")	District		
	1	2	3
Utilizing City tax revenues	84%	75%	78%
Encouraging Sarasota County (SCAT) to expand bus and trolley services	92%	92%	90%

Question 18c: Policy Question 3 (Percent "very important" or "essential")			
	District		
	1	2	3
How important, if at all, is it to you for the City to expend tax dollars to continue to provide parking downtown?	44%	58%	50%