



CITY OF BILLINGS, MONTANA 2009



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C O N T E N T S

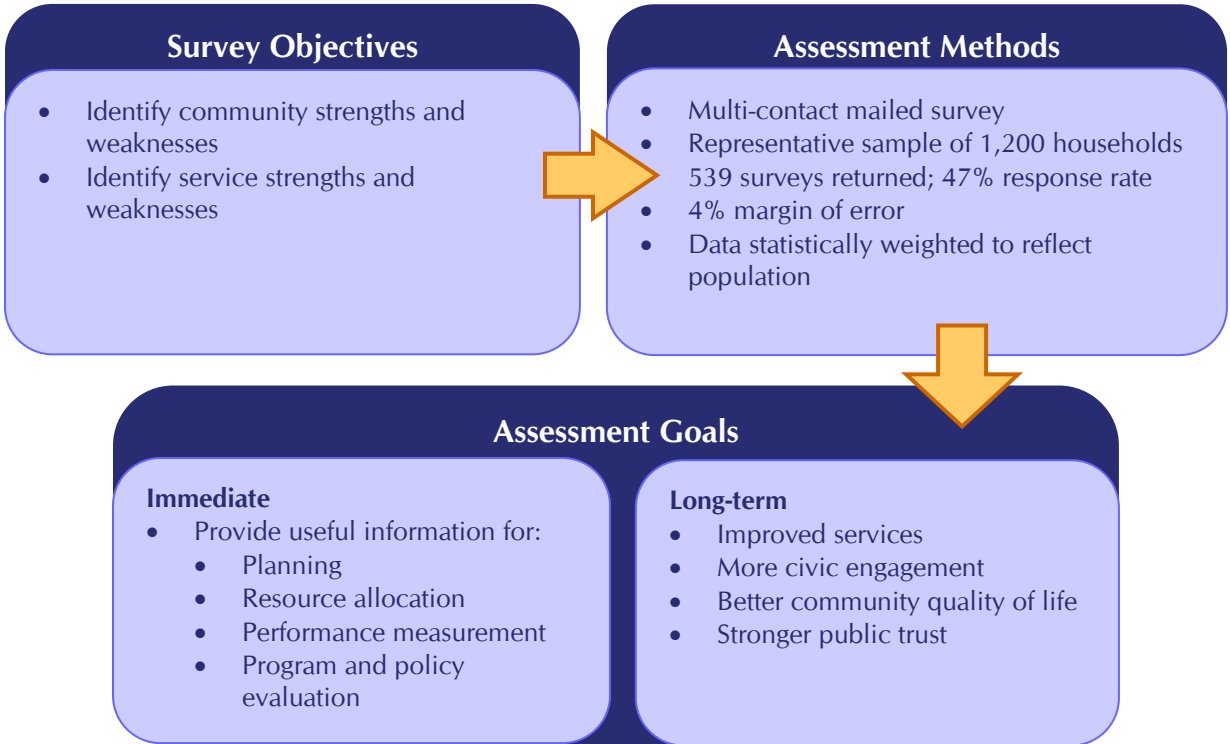
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SURVEY BACKGROUND

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 NCS was developed by NRC to provide a statistically valid survey of resident opinions about community and services provided by local government. The survey results may be used by staff, elected officials and other stakeholders for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement and policy making.

FIGURE 1: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ METHODS AND GOALS



The NCS focuses on a series of community characteristics and local government services, as well as issues of public trust. Resident behaviors related to civic engagement in the community also were measured in the survey.

FIGURE 2: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ FOCUS AREAS



The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly 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. A total of 539 completed surveys were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 47%. Typically, response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for the City of Billings was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Billings' staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems and provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Billings staff also augmented The National Citizen Survey™ basic service through a variety of options including a custom set of benchmark comparisons, crosstabulation of results, an open-ended question and several policy questions.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

As shown in Figure 2, this report is based around respondents' reports about eight larger categories: community quality, community design, public safety, environmental sustainability, recreation and wellness, community inclusiveness, civic engagement and public trust. Each section begins with residents' ratings of community characteristics and is followed by residents' ratings of service quality. For all evaluative questions, the percent of residents rating the service or community feature as "excellent" or "good" is presented. To see the full set of responses for each question on the survey, please see Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies.

Margin of Error

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). A traditional confidence level, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the estimates made from the survey results. The confidence interval for the City of Billings survey is no greater than plus or minus four percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (539 completed surveys). A 95% confidence interval indicates that for every 100 random samples of this many residents, the population response to that question would be within the stated interval 95 times. For example, if 75% of residents rate a service as "excellent" or "good," then the 5% margin of error (for the 95% confidence interval) indicates that the range of likely responses for the entire jurisdiction is between 70% and 80%.

Comparing Survey Results

Certain kinds of services tend to be thought better of by residents in many communities across the country. For example, public safety services tend to be received better than transportation services by residents of most American communities. Where possible, the better comparison is not from one service to another in the City of Billings, but from City of Billings' services to services like them provided by other jurisdictions.

Benchmark Comparisons

NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services and gave their opinion about the quality of community life. The City of Billings chose to have comparisons made to the entire database and a subset of similar jurisdictions from the database (the Western region). A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been provided when a similar question on the City of Billings Survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons were available, the City of Billings results were noted as being "above" the benchmark, "below" the benchmark or "similar to" the benchmark. This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of the City of Billings' rating to the benchmark.

"Don't Know" Responses and Rounding

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.

For some questions, respondents were permitted to select more than one answer. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a multiple response question, it is because some respondents did select more than one response. 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 of percentages being rounded to the nearest whole number.

For more information on understanding The NCS report, please see Appendix B: Survey Methodology.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report of the City of Billings survey provides the opinions of a representative sample of residents about community quality of life, service delivery, civic participation and unique issues of local interest. A periodic sounding of resident opinion offers staff, elected officials and other stakeholders an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

Most residents experience a good quality of life in the City of Billings and believe the City is a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the City of Billings was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 80% of respondents. A majority report they plan on staying in the City of Billings for the next five years.

A variety of characteristics of the community was evaluated by those participating in the study. The characteristics receiving the most favorable ratings included opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events, opportunities to volunteer and educational opportunities. The characteristics receiving the least positive ratings included amount of public parking, ease of bicycle travel in Billings and traffic flow on major streets.

Ratings of community characteristics were compared to the benchmark database. Of the 31 characteristics for which comparisons were available, none were above the benchmark comparison, 18 were similar to the benchmark comparison and 13 were below.

Residents in the City of Billings were moderately civically engaged. While only 27% had attended a meeting of local elected public officials or other local public meeting in the previous 12 months, 98% had provided help to a friend or neighbor. More than half had volunteered their time to some group or activity in the City of Billings, which was higher than the benchmark.

In general, survey respondents demonstrated mild distrust in local government. More than half rated the overall direction being taken by the City of Billings as “good” or “excellent.” This was similar to the benchmark. Those residents who had interacted with an employee of the City of Billings in the previous 12 months gave high marks to those employees. Almost three-quarters rated their overall impression of employees as “excellent” or “good.”

On average, residents gave somewhat unfavorable ratings to most of local government services. City services rated were able to be compared to the benchmark database. Of the 38 services for which comparisons were available, none were above the benchmark comparison, 16 were similar to the benchmark comparison and 22 were below.

Respondents were asked to rate how frequently they participated in various activities in Billings. The most popular activities included providing help to a friend or neighbor and visiting a neighborhood or city park; while the least popular activities were riding a local bus and attending a meeting of local elected officials. Generally, participation rates in the various activities in the community were similar to other communities.

A Key Driver Analysis was conducted for the City of Billings which examined the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Billings' services overall. Those key driver services that correlated most strongly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Billings can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality. Services found to be influential in ratings of overall service quality from the Key Driver Analysis were:

- Police services
- Fire services
- Preservation of natural areas

Of these services, those deserving the most attention may be those that were below or similar to the benchmark comparisons: police services, fire services, preservation of natural areas.

COMMUNITY RATINGS

OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY

Overall quality of community life may be the single best indicator of success in providing the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to quality of community life in the City of Billings – not only direct questions about quality of life overall and in neighborhoods, but questions to measure residents’ commitment to the City of Billings. Residents were asked whether they planned to move soon or if they would recommend the City of Billings to others. Intentions to stay and willingness to make recommendations provide evidence that the City of Billings offers services and amenities that work.

Many of the City of Billings’ residents gave high ratings to their neighborhoods and the community as a place to live. Further, most reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years.

FIGURE 3: RATINGS OF OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY

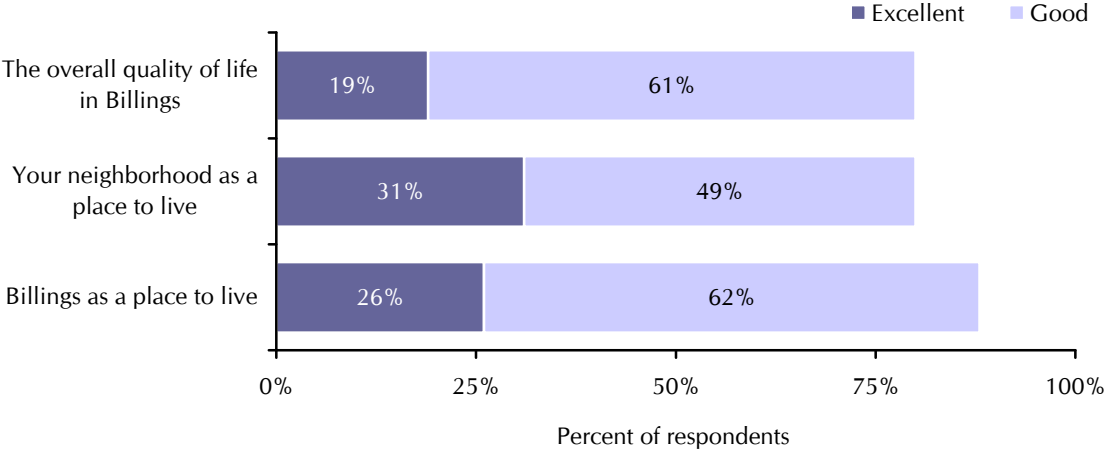
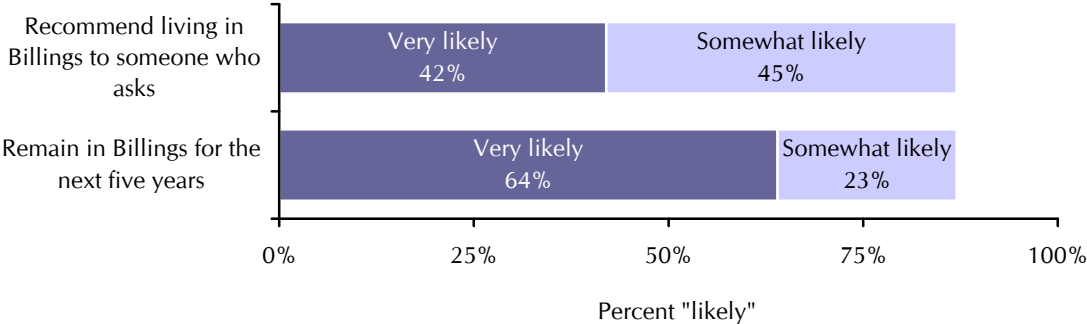


FIGURE 4: LIKELIHOOD OF REMAINING IN COMMUNITY AND RECOMMENDING COMMUNITY



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 5: OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Overall quality of life in Billings	Similar	Similar
Your neighborhood as place to live	Similar	Similar
Billings as a place to live	Similar	Similar
Remain in Billings for the next five years	Above	Above
Recommend living in Billings to someone who asks	Similar	Similar

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Transportation

The ability to move easily throughout a community can greatly affect the quality of life of residents by diminishing time wasted in traffic congestion and by providing opportunities to travel quickly and safely by modes other than the automobile. High quality options for resident mobility not only require local government to remove barriers to flow but they require government programs and policies that create quality opportunities for all modes of travel.

Residents responding to the survey were given a list of six aspects of mobility to rate on a scale of “excellent,” “good,” “fair” and “poor.” Ease of car travel was given the most positive rating, followed by ease of walking in Billings.

FIGURE 6: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION IN COMMUNITY

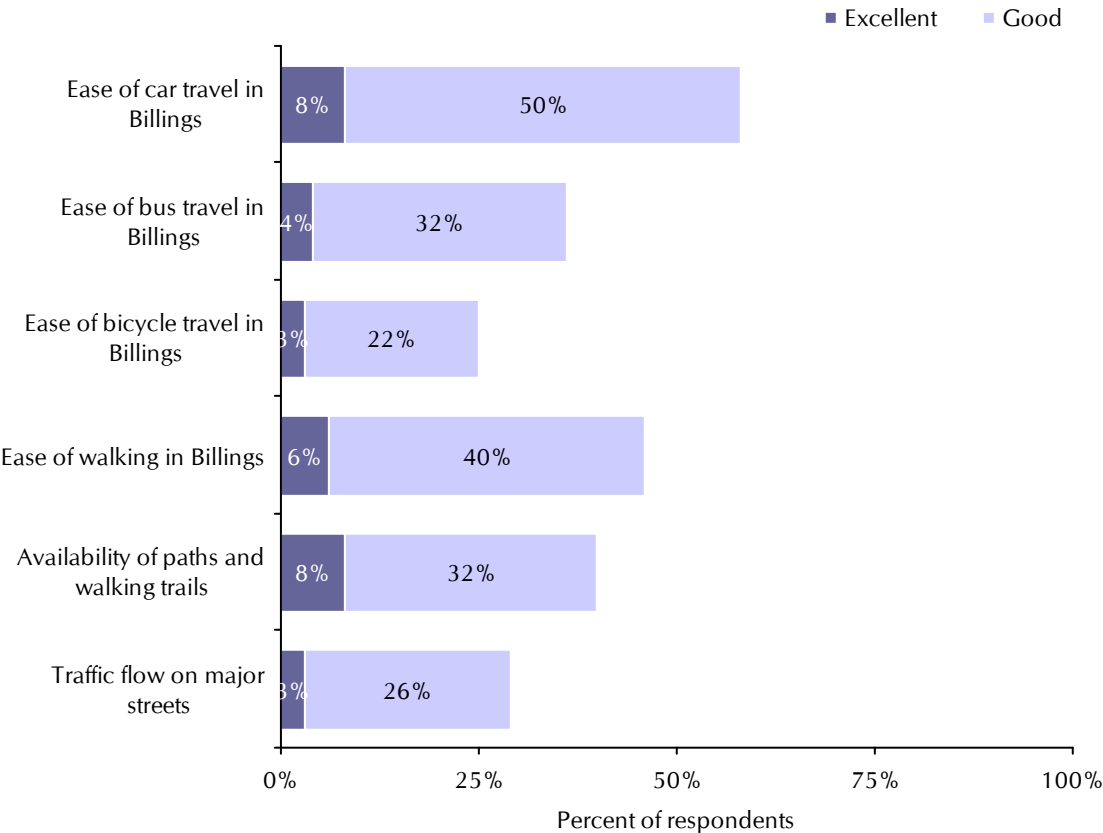


FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Ease of bus travel in Billings	Below	Below
Ease of car travel in Billings	Similar	Similar
Ease of walking in Billings	Below	Below
Ease of bicycle travel in Billings	Below	Below
Availability of paths and walking trails	Below	Below
Traffic flow on major streets	Below	Below

Eight transportation services were rated in Billings. As compared to most communities across America, ratings tended to be somewhat negative. Seven services were below the benchmarks. Light timing was rated similar to both the national and custom benchmarks.

FIGURE 8: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES

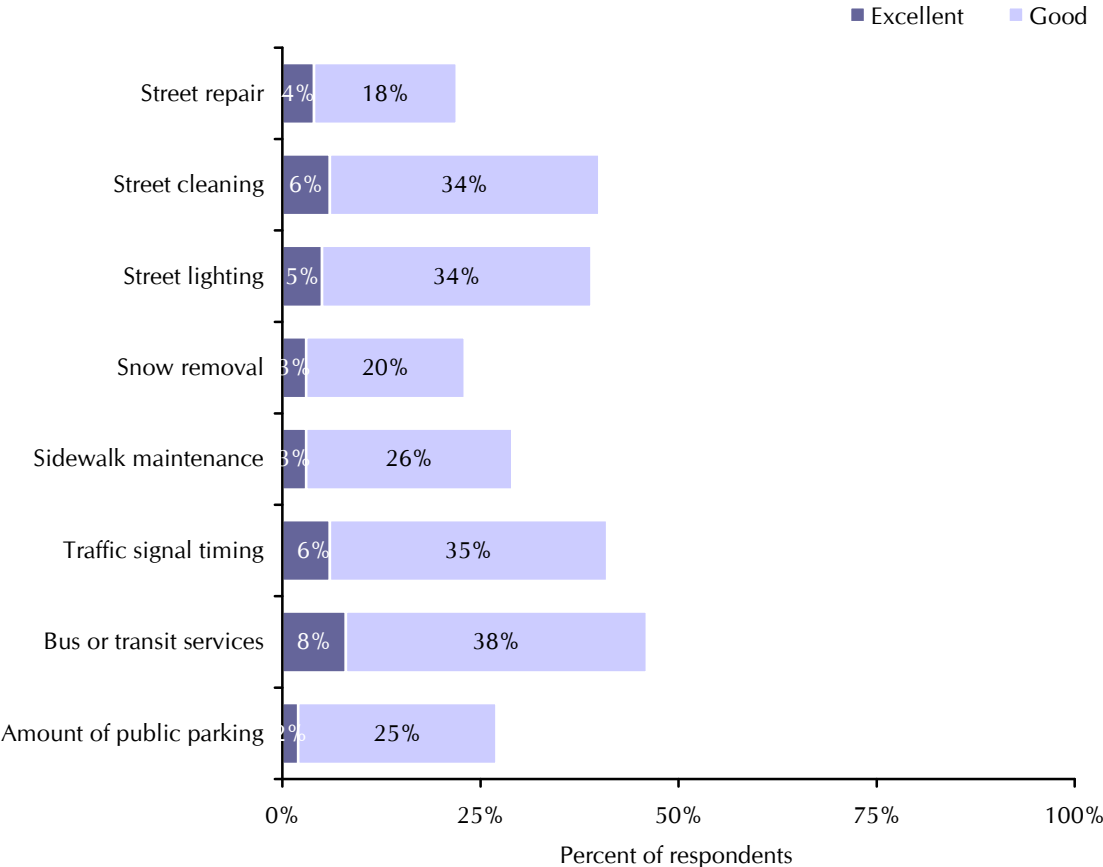


FIGURE 9: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Street repair /maintenance	Below	Below
Street cleaning	Below	Below
Street lighting	Below	Below
Snow removal	Below	Below
Sidewalk maintenance	Below	Below
Light timing	Similar	Similar
Bus or transit services	Below	Below
Amount of public parking	Below	Below

By measuring choice of travel mode over time, communities can monitor their success in providing attractive alternatives to the traditional mode of travel, the single-occupied automobile. When asked how they typically traveled to work, single-occupancy (SOV) travel was the overwhelming mode of use. However, 2% of work commute trips were made by transit and 4% were made by bicycle or by foot.

FIGURE 10: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE IN LAST 12 MONTHS

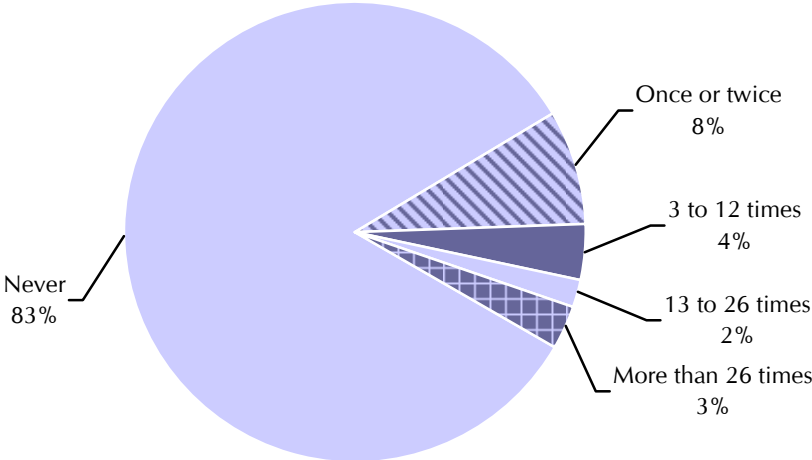
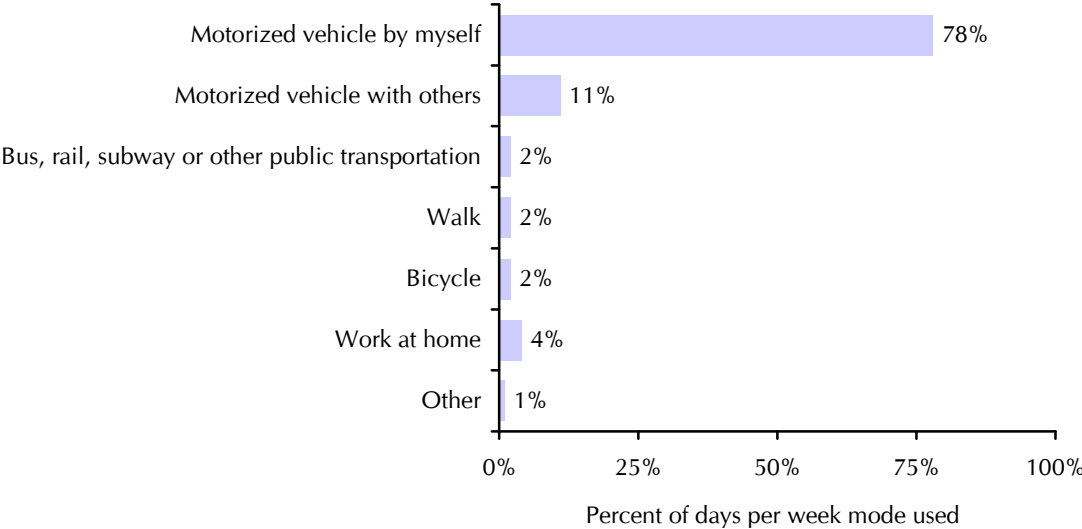


FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Ridden a local bus within Billings	Below	Below

FIGURE 12: MODE OF TRAVEL USED FOR WORK COMMUTE



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Housing

Housing variety and affordability are not luxuries for any community. When there are too few options for housing style and affordability, the characteristics of a community tilt heavily to a homogeneous palette, often of well-off residents. While this may seem attractive to a community, the absence of affordable townhomes, condominiums, mobile homes, single family detached homes and apartments means that in addition to losing the vibrancy of diverse thoughts and lifestyles, the community loses the service workers that sustain all communities – police officers, school teachers, house painters and electricians. These workers must live elsewhere and commute in at great personal cost and to the detriment of traffic flow and air quality. Furthermore lower income residents who can sustain in a community with mostly high cost housing pay so much of their income to rent or mortgage that little remains to bolster their own quality of life or local business.

The survey of the City of Billings residents asked respondents to reflect on the availability of affordable housing as well as the variety of housing options. The availability of affordable housing was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 31% of respondents, while the variety of housing options was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 54% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was similar in the City of Billings than the ratings, on average, in comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 13: RATINGS OF HOUSING IN COMMUNITY

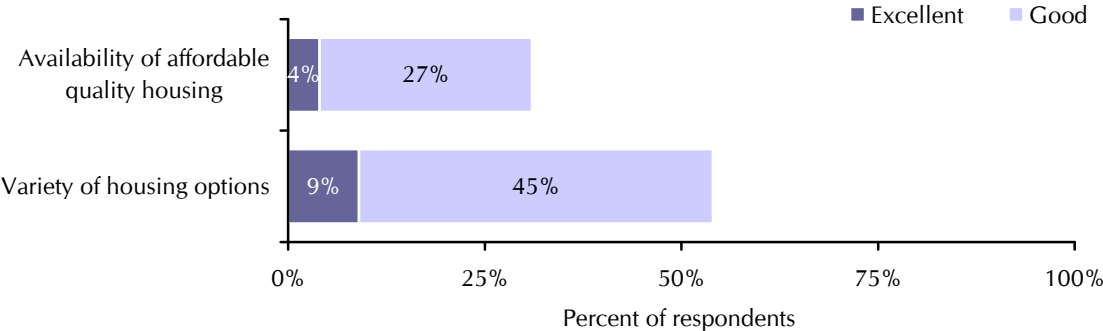


FIGURE 14: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Availability of affordable quality housing	Similar	Similar
Variety of housing options	Similar	Similar

To augment the perceptions of affordable housing in Billings, the cost of housing as reported in the survey was compared to residents' reported monthly income to create a rough estimate of the proportion of residents of the City of Billings experiencing housing cost stress. About 28% of survey participants were found to pay housing costs of more than 30% of their monthly household income.

FIGURE 15: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHOSE HOUSING COSTS ARE "AFFORDABLE"

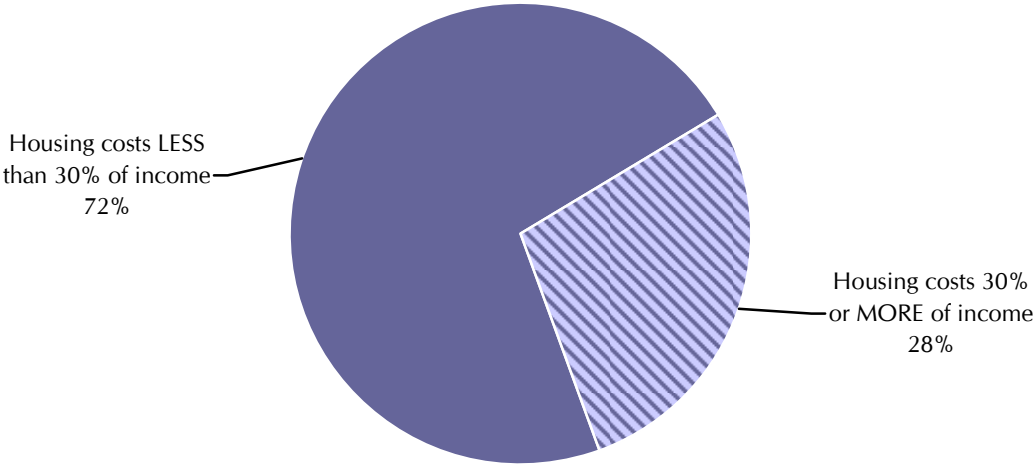


FIGURE 16: HOUSING COSTS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Experiencing housing costs stress (housing costs 30% or more of income)	Below	Below

Land Use and Zoning

Community development contributes to a feeling among residents and even visitors of the attention given to the speed of growth, the location of residences and businesses, the kind of housing that is appropriate for the community and the ease of access to commerce, green space and residences. Even the community’s overall appearance often is attributed to the planning and enforcement functions of the local jurisdiction. Residents will appreciate an attractive, well-planned community. The NCS questionnaire asked residents to evaluate the quality of new development, the appearance of the City of Billings and the speed of population growth. Problems with the appearance of property were rated, and the quality of land use planning, zoning and code enforcement services were evaluated.

The overall quality of new development in the City of Billings was rated as “excellent” by 13% of respondents and as “good” by an additional 55%. The overall appearance of Billings was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 55% of respondents and was lower than the benchmarks. When rating to what extent run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles were a problem in the City of Billings, 62% thought they were a “major” or “moderate” problem. The service of code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc) was rated below both benchmarks. Land use, planning and zoning and animal control were rated below the national comparison but were similar to the Western region benchmark.

FIGURE 17: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S "BUILT ENVIRONMENT"

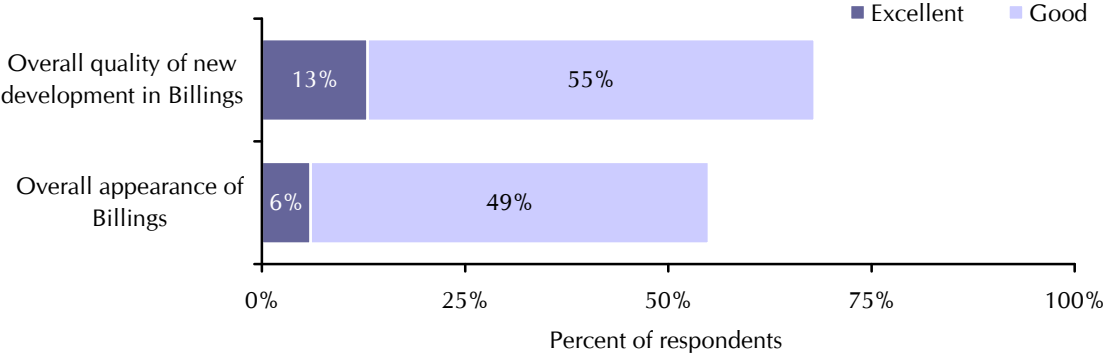


FIGURE 18: BUILT ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Quality of new development in city	Above	Above
Overall appearance of Billings	Below	Below

FIGURE 19: RATINGS OF POPULATION GROWTH

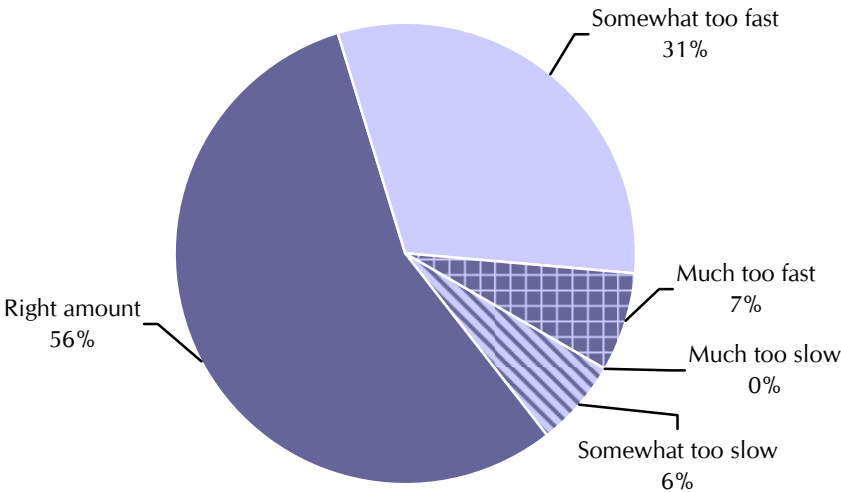


FIGURE 20: POPULATION GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Population growth seen as too fast	Below	Below

FIGURE 21: RATINGS OF NUISANCE PROBLEMS

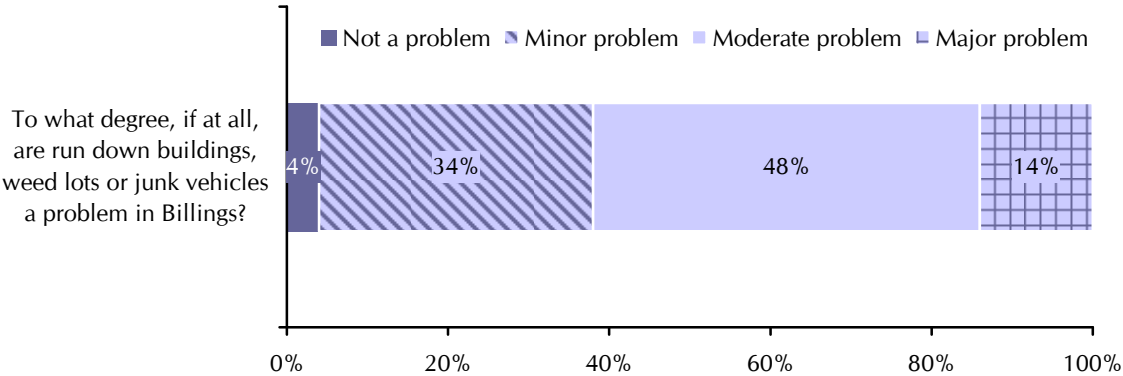


FIGURE 22: NUISANCE PROBLEMS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Run down buildings, weed lots and junk vehicles are a "major" problem	Similar	Similar

FIGURE 23: RATINGS OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

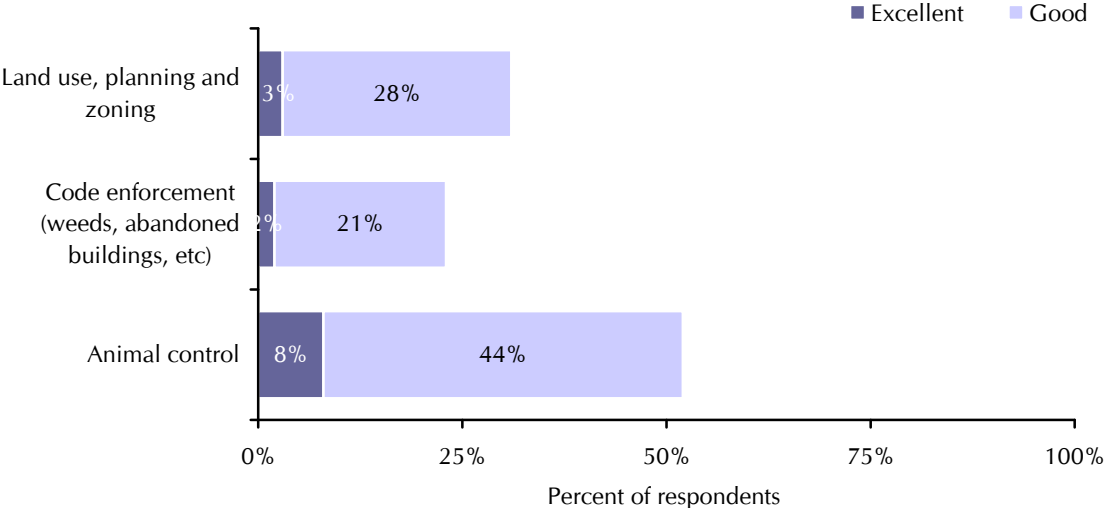


FIGURE 24: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Land use, planning and zoning	Below	Similar
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	Below	Below
Animal control	Below	Similar

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The health of the economy may color how residents perceive their environment and all the services that local government delivers. In particular, a strong or weak local economy will shape what residents think about job and shopping opportunities. Just as residents have an idea about the speed of local population growth, they have a sense of how fast job and shopping opportunities are growing.

Survey respondents were asked to rate a number of community features related to economic opportunity and growth. The most positively rated features were shopping opportunities and overall quality of business and service establishments. Receiving the lowest rating was employment opportunities.

FIGURE 25: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES

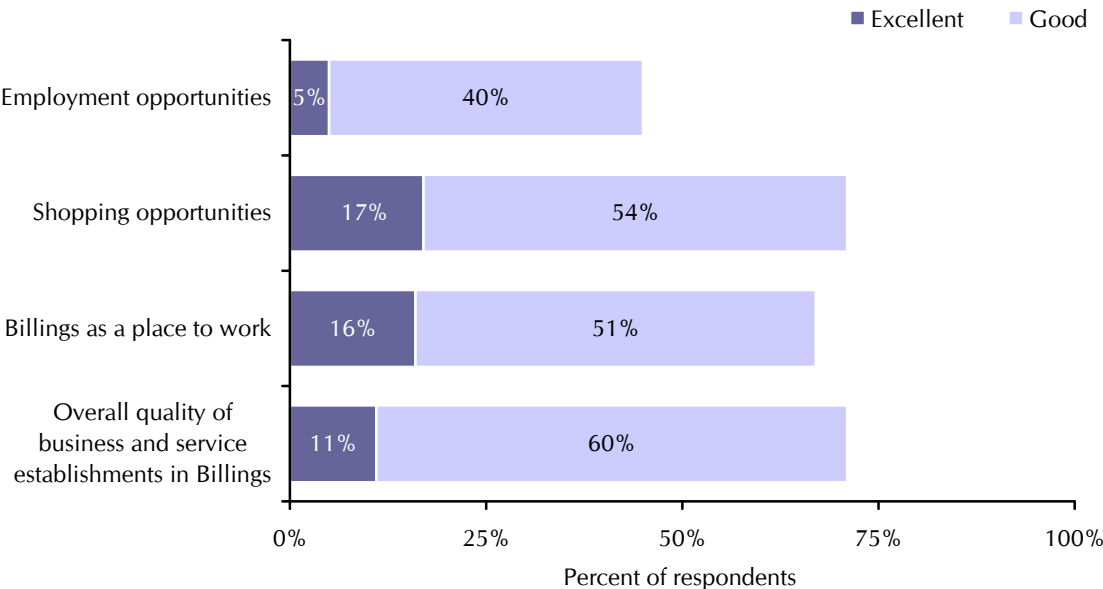


FIGURE 26: ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Employment opportunities	Above	Above
Shopping opportunities	Above	Above
Place to work	Above	Above
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Billings	Above	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Residents were asked to evaluate the speed of jobs growth and retail growth on scale from “much too slow” to “much too fast.” When asked about the rate of job growth in Billings, 63% responded that it was “too slow,” while 22% reported retail growth as “too slow.” Fewer residents in Billings compared to other jurisdictions believed that retail growth was too slow. Fewer residents believed that job growth was too slow when compared to the nation, but this rating was similar when compared to the custom benchmark.

FIGURE 27: RATINGS OF RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH

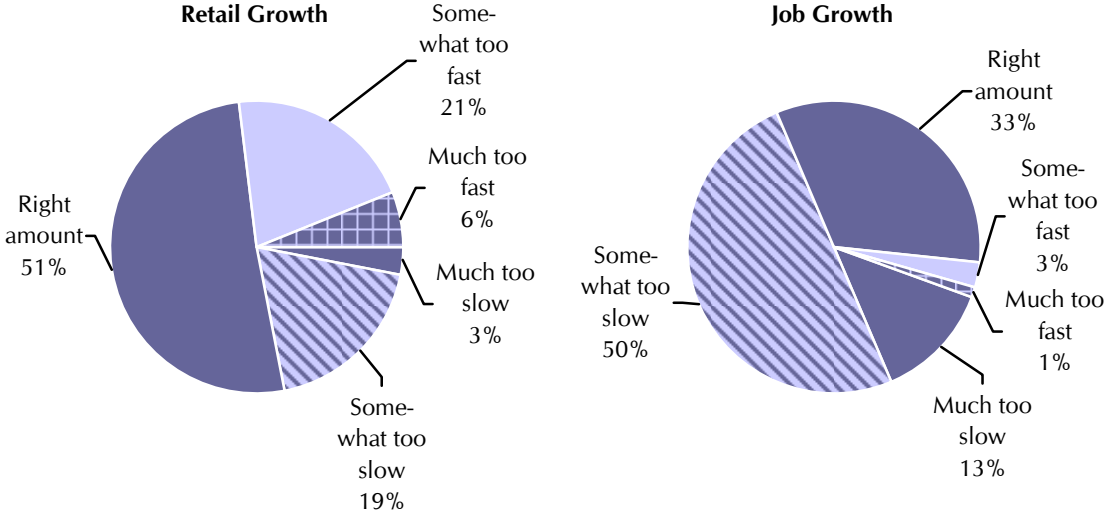


FIGURE 28: RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Retail growth seen as too slow	Below	Below
Jobs growth seen as too slow	Below	Similar

FIGURE 29: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

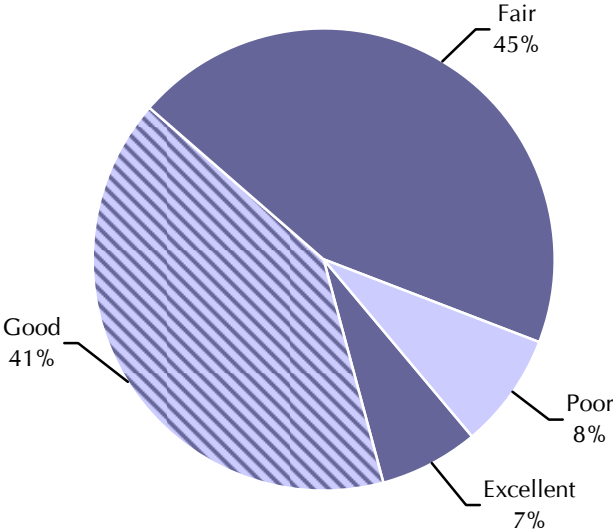


FIGURE 30: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Economic development	Similar	Above

Residents were asked to reflect on their economic prospects in the near term. Ten percent of the City of Billings residents expected that the coming six months would have a “somewhat” or “very” positive impact on their family, while 55% felt that the economic future would be “somewhat” or “very” negative. The percent of residents with an optimistic outlook on their household income was less than comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 31: RATINGS OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE

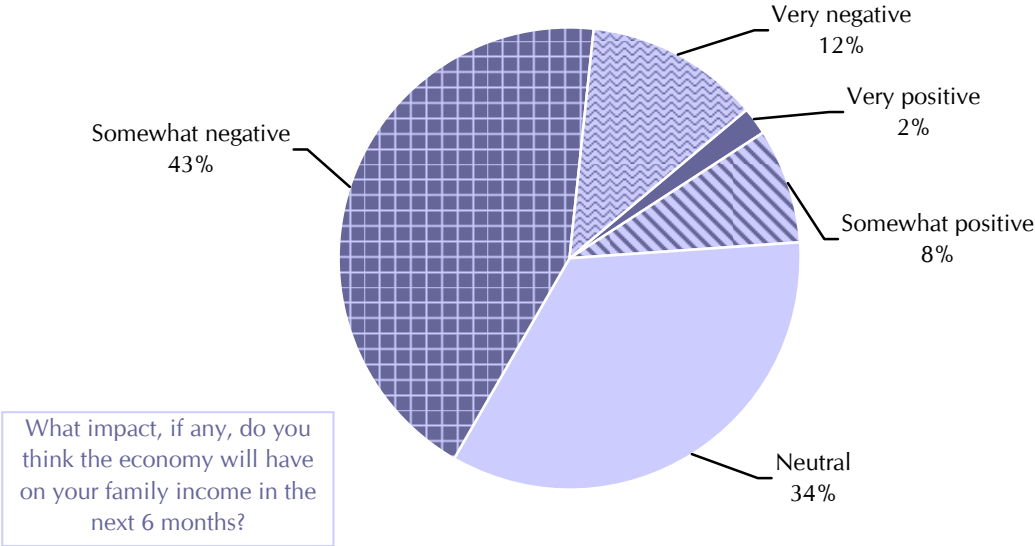


FIGURE 32: PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BENCHMARKS

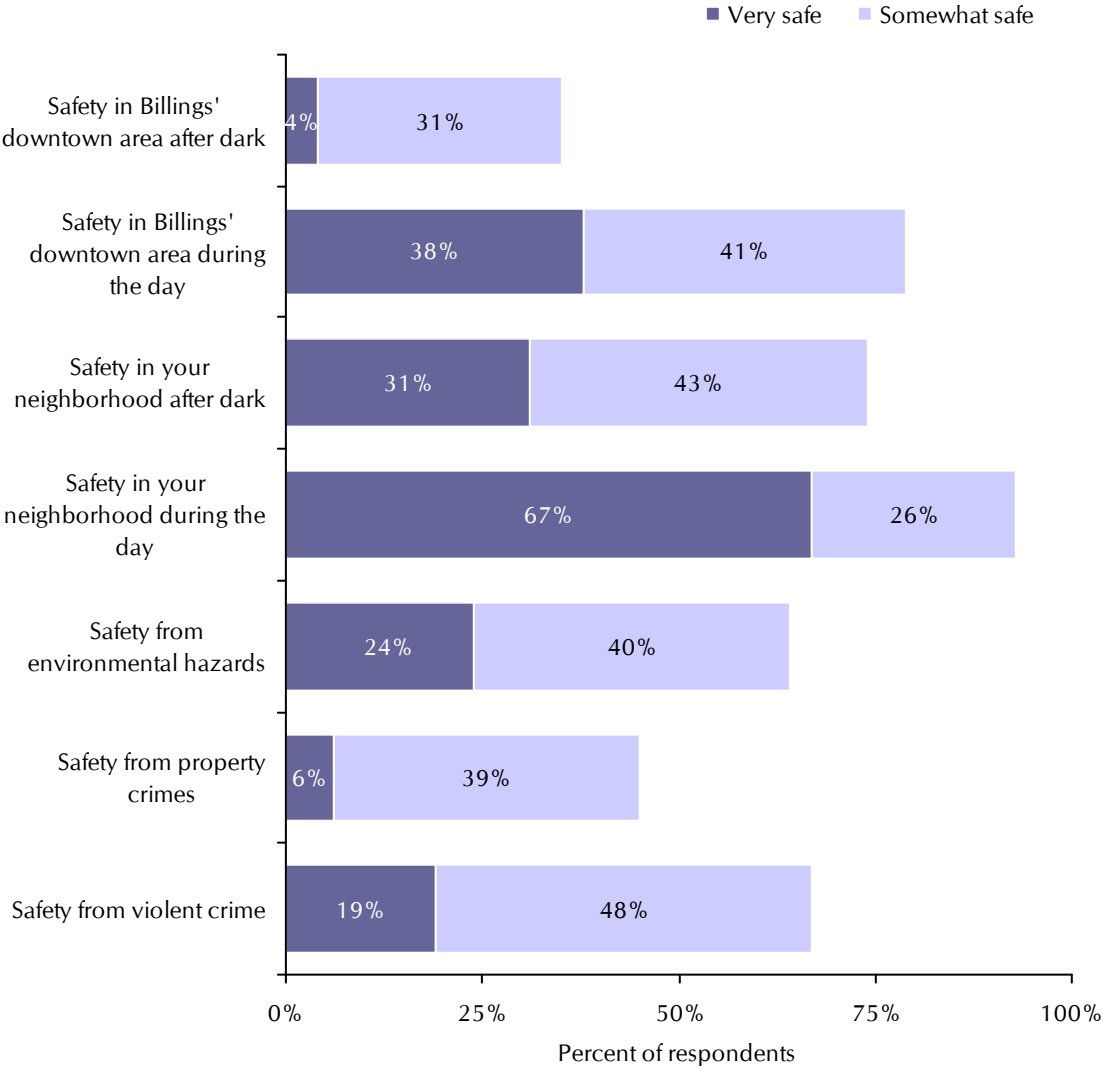
	National comparison	Western region comparison
Positive impact of economy on household income	Below	Below

PUBLIC SAFETY

Safety from violent or property crimes creates the cornerstone of an attractive community. No one wants to live in fear of crime, fire or natural hazards, and communities in which residents feel protected or unthreatened are communities that are more likely to show growth in population, commerce and property value.

Residents were asked to rate their feelings of safety from violent crimes, property crimes, fire and environmental dangers and to evaluate the local agencies whose main charge is to provide protection from these dangers. Many gave positive ratings of safety in the City Billings. About 67% of those completing the questionnaire said they felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from violent crimes and 64% felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from environmental hazards. Daytime sense of safety was better than nighttime safety and neighborhoods felt safer than downtown.

FIGURE 33: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 34: COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Safety in your neighborhood during the day	Above	Above
Safety in your neighborhood after dark	Similar	Similar
Safety in Billings' downtown area during the day	Below	Similar
Safety in Billings' downtown area after dark	Below	Below
Safety from violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	Similar	Similar
Safety from property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	Below	Below
Toxic waste or other environmental hazard(s)	Below	Below

As assessed by the survey, 18% of respondents reported that someone in the household had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 78% had reported it to police. Compared to other jurisdictions about the same percent of Billings residents had been victims of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey and about the same percent of Billings' residents had reported their most recent crime victimization to the police.

FIGURE 35: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING

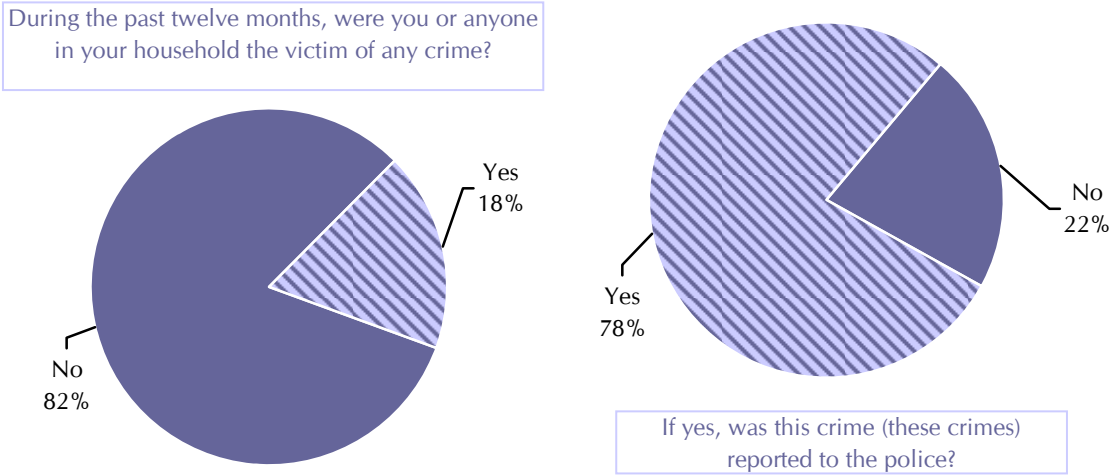
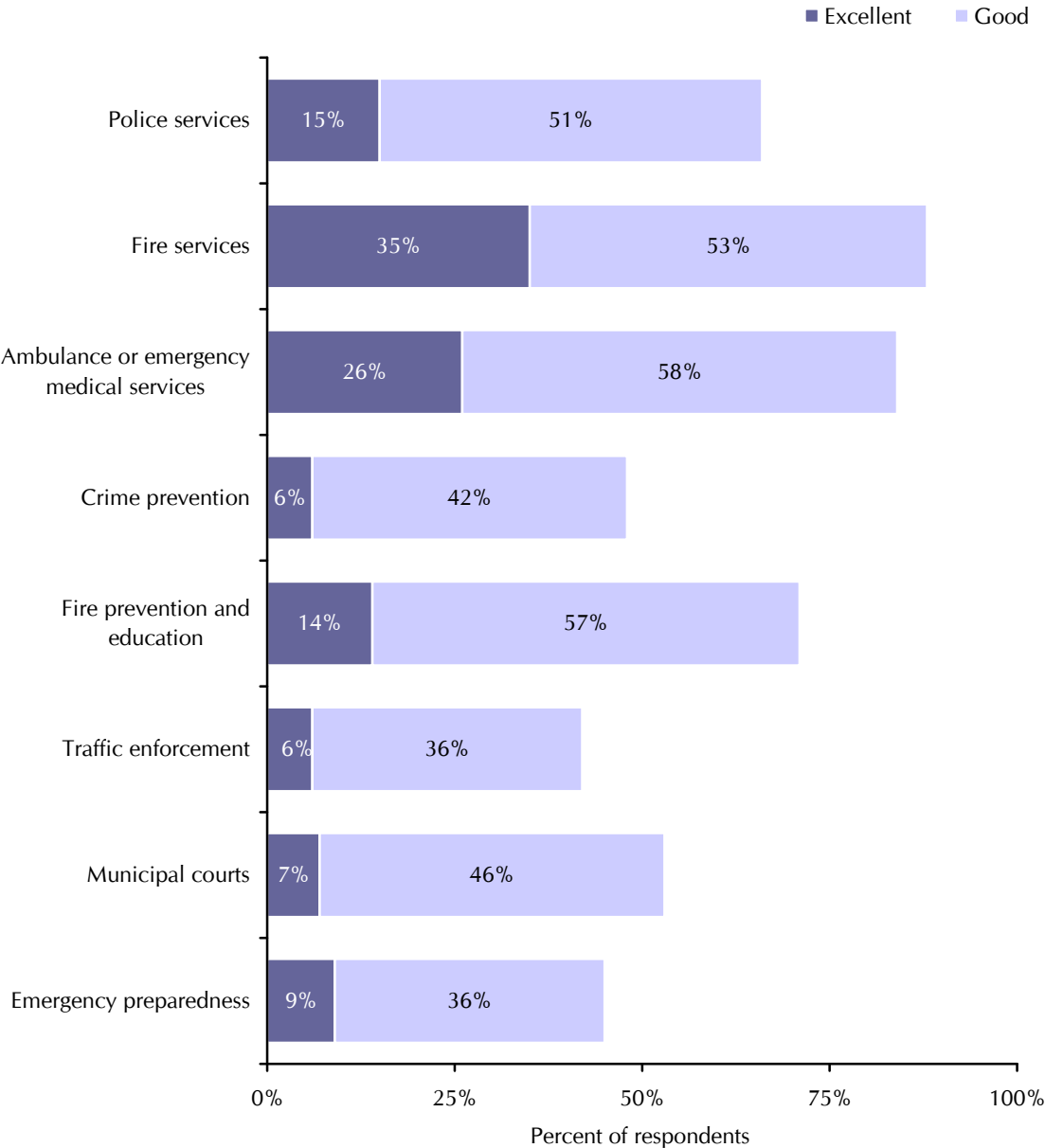


FIGURE 36: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Victim of crime	Similar	Similar
Reported crimes	Similar	Similar

Residents rated eight City public safety services; of these, none were rated above the benchmarks comparison, three were rated similar to the benchmark comparisons and four were rated below the benchmark comparison. Emergency preparedness was rated below the nation and similar to the custom benchmark. Fire services and ambulance or emergency medical services received the highest ratings, while emergency preparedness and traffic enforcement received the lowest ratings.

FIGURE 37: RATINGS OF PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 38: PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Police services	Below	Below
Fire services	Similar	Similar
EMS/ambulance	Similar	Similar
Crime prevention	Below	Below
Fire prevention and education	Similar	Similar
Traffic enforcement	Below	Below
Courts	Below	Below
Emergency preparedness	Below	Similar

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Residents value the aesthetic qualities of their hometowns and appreciate features such as overall cleanliness and landscaping. In addition, the appearance and smell or taste of the air and water do not go unnoticed. These days, increasing attention is paid to proper treatment of the environment. At the same time that they are attending to community appearance and cleanliness, cities, counties, states and the nation are going “Green”. These strengthening environmental concerns extend to trash haul, recycling, sewer services, the delivery of power and water and preservation of open spaces. Treatment of the environment affects air and water quality and, generally, how habitable and inviting a place appears

Residents of the City of Billings were asked to evaluate their local environment and the services provided to ensure its quality. The overall quality of the natural environment was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 60% of survey respondents. Overall quality of natural environment received the highest rating, and it was below the benchmark.

FIGURE 39: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

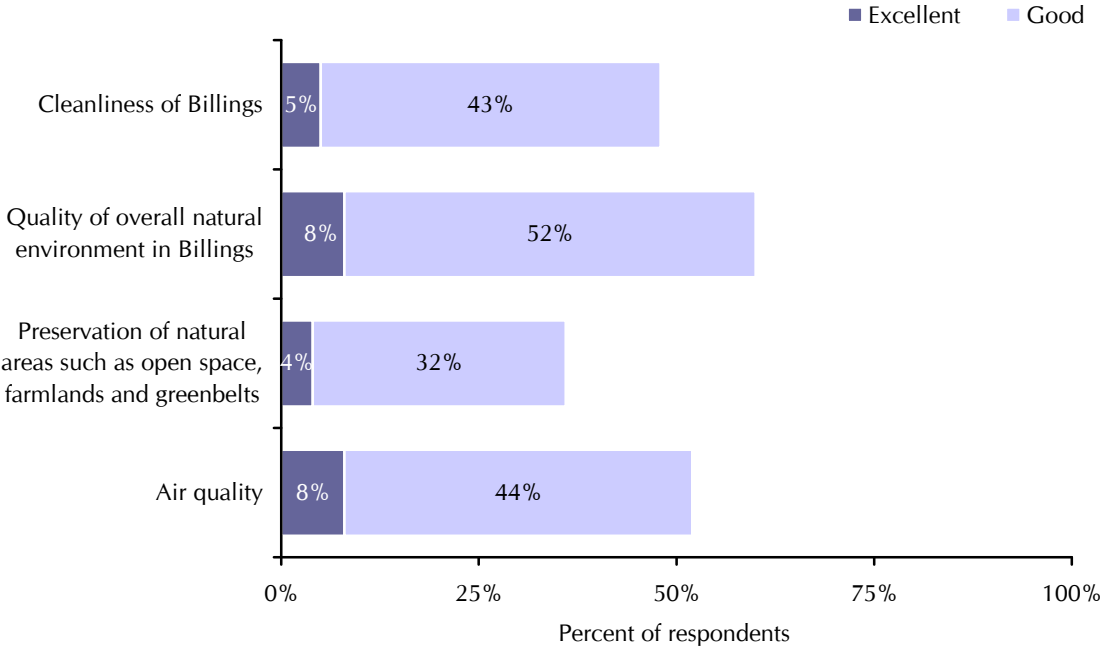


FIGURE 40: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Cleanliness of Billings	Below	Below
Quality of overall natural environment in Billings	Below	Below
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	Below	Below
Air quality	Below	Below

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Resident recycling was about the same as recycling reported across the nation, and lower than reported in the custom comparison communities.

FIGURE 41: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS

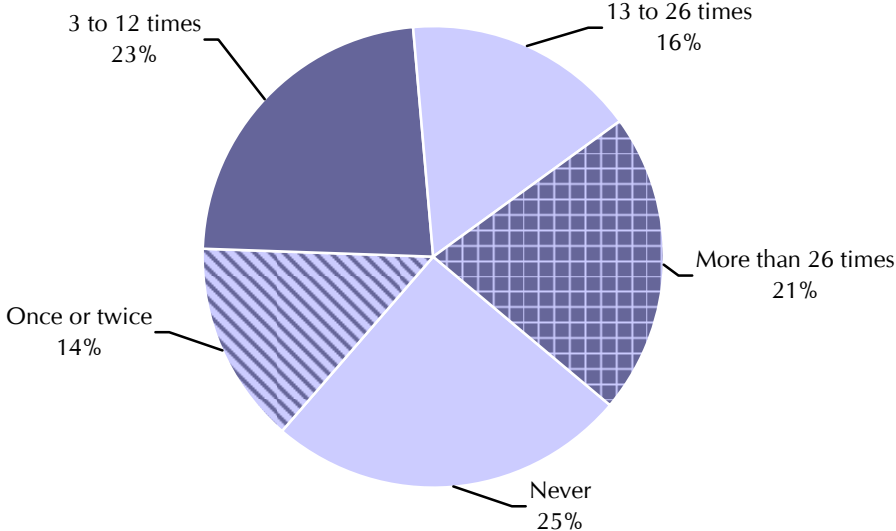


FIGURE 42: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	Similar	Below

Of the seven utility services rated by those completing the questionnaire, five were similar and two were below the benchmark comparisons.

FIGURE 43: RATINGS OF UTILITY SERVICES

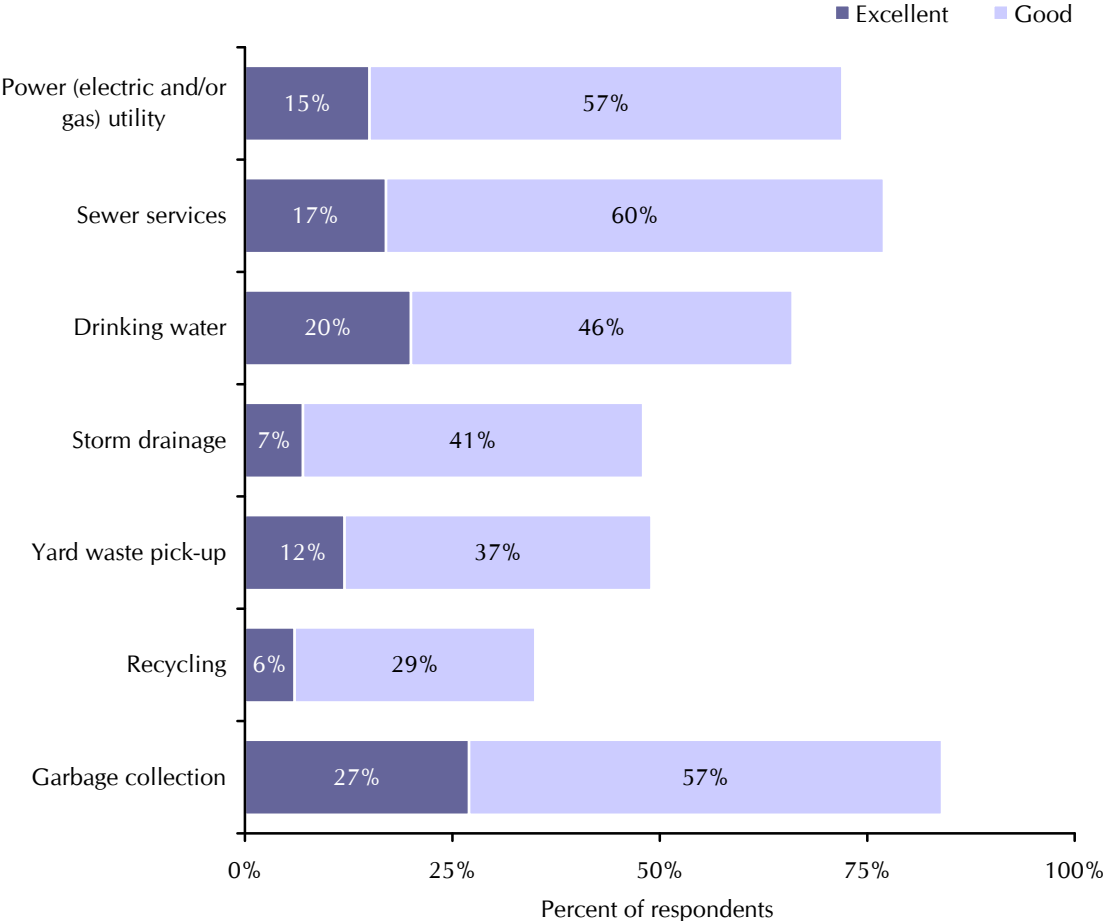


FIGURE 44: UTILITY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	Similar	Similar
Sewer services	Similar	Similar
Drinking water	Similar	Similar
Storm drainage	Similar	Similar
Yard waste pick-up	Below	Below
Recycling	Below	Below
Garbage collection	Similar	Similar

RECREATION AND WELLNESS

Parks and Recreation

Quality parks and recreation opportunities help to define a community as more than the grind of its business, traffic and hard work. Leisure activities vastly can improve the quality of life of residents, serving both to entertain and mobilize good health. The survey contained questions seeking residents’ perspectives about opportunities and services related to the community’s parks and recreation services.

Recreation opportunities in the City of Billings received moderate ratings. City parks were rated similar to the benchmark. Recreation centers or facilities received the lowest rating and was lower than the national benchmark.

Resident use of Billings' parks and recreation facilities tells its own story about the attractiveness and accessibility of those services. The percent of residents that used Billings' recreation centers was greater than the percent of users in comparison jurisdictions. Similarly, recreation program use in Billings was about the same as use in comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 45: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

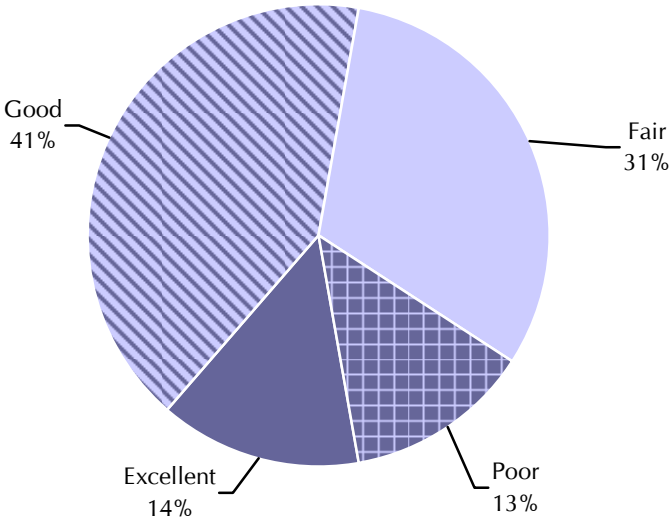


FIGURE 46: COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Recreation opportunities	Below	Below

FIGURE 47: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

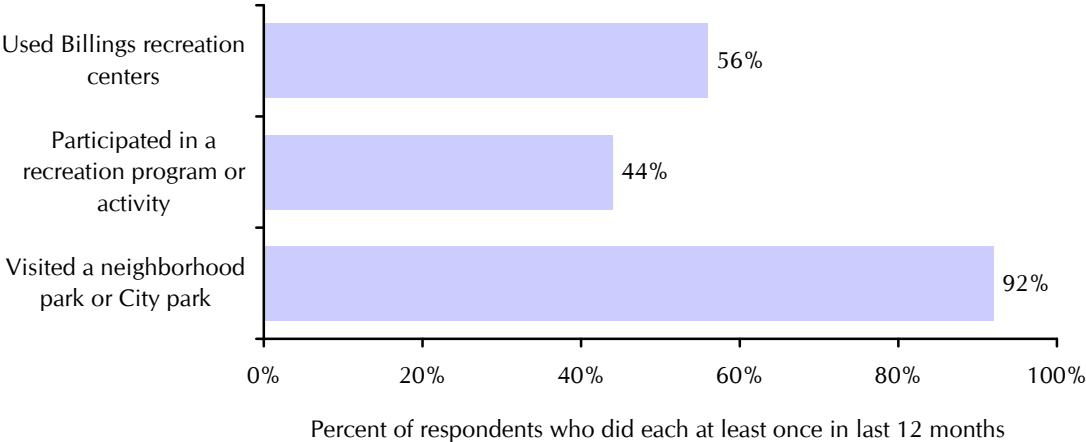


FIGURE 48: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Used Billings recreation centers	Similar	Similar
Participated in a recreation program or activity	Similar	Below
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	Above	Above

FIGURE 49: RATINGS OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

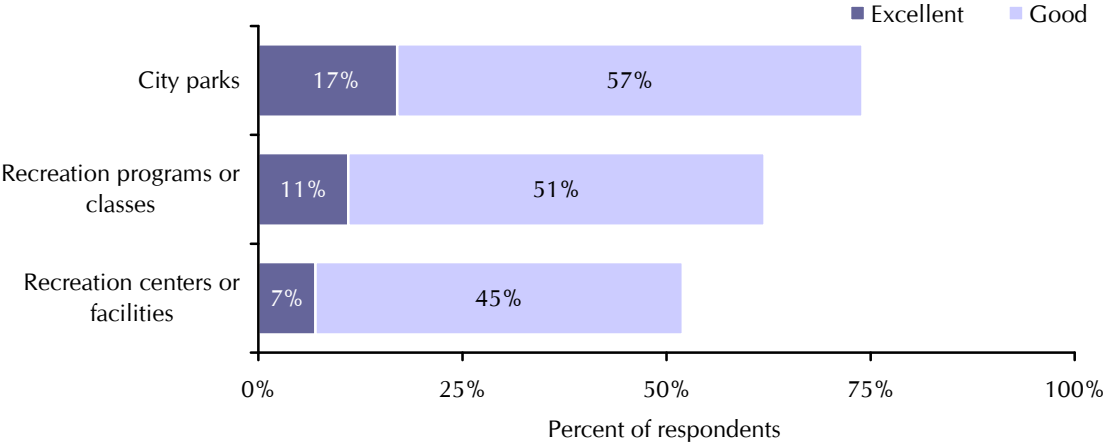


FIGURE 50: PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
City parks	Similar	Similar
Recreation programs or classes	Below	Below
Recreation centers or facilities	Below	Below

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Culture, Arts and Education

A full service community does not address only the life and safety of its residents. Like an individual who drudges to the office and returns home, a community that pays attention only to the life sustaining basics becomes insular, dreary and uninspiring to business and individuals. In the case of communities without thriving culture, arts and education opportunities, the magnet that attracts those who might consider relocating there is vastly weakened. Cultural, artistic, social and educational services elevate the opportunities for personal growth among residents. In the survey, residents were asked about the quality of opportunities to participate in cultural and educational activities.

Opportunities to attend cultural activities was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 55% of respondents. Educational opportunities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 69% of respondents. Compared to the benchmark data, educational opportunities were similar to the average of comparison jurisdictions across the nation and higher than regional comparisons, while cultural activity opportunities were rated similar to the benchmark comparisons.

About 65% of Billings' residents used a City library at least once in the twelve months preceding the survey. This participation rate for library use was below that reported in comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 51: RATINGS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

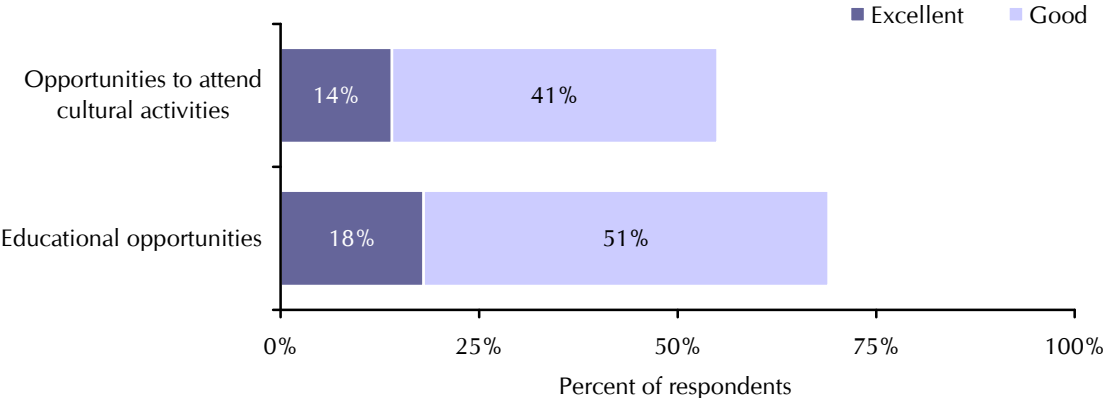


FIGURE 52: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	Similar	Similar
Educational opportunities	Similar	Above

FIGURE 53: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

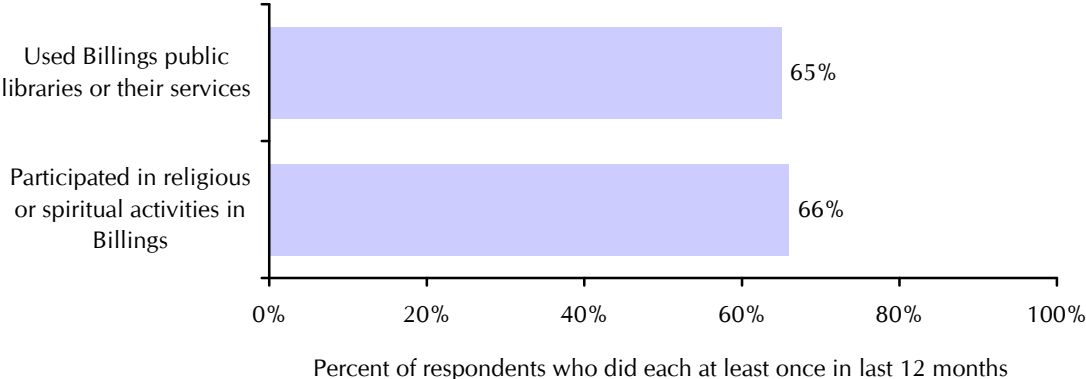


FIGURE 54: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Used Billings public libraries or their services	Below	Below
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Billings	Above	Above

FIGURE 55: PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

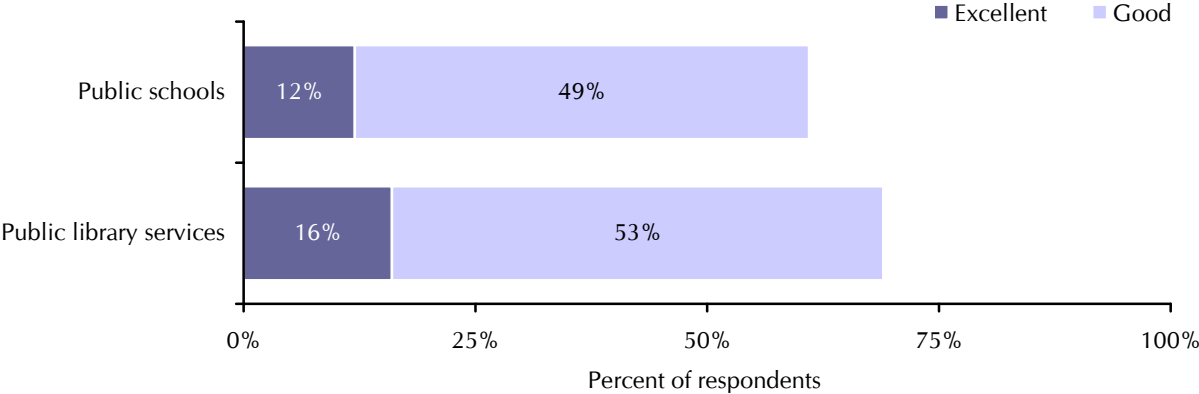


FIGURE 56: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Public schools	Similar	Similar
Public library services	Below	Below

Health and Wellness

Healthy residents have the wherewithal to contribute to the economy as volunteers or employees and they do not present a burden in cost and time to others. Although residents bear the primary responsibility for their good health, local government provides services that can foster that well being and that provide care when residents are ill.

Residents of the City of Billings were asked to rate the community’s health services as well as the availability of health care, high quality affordable food and preventive health care services. The availability of affordable quality food and preventative health services were rated most positively for the City of Billings, while the availability of affordable quality health care were rated slightly less favorably by residents.

Among Billings' residents, 16% rated affordable quality health care as “excellent” while 39% rated it as “good.” Those ratings were above the ratings of comparison communities.

FIGURE 57: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

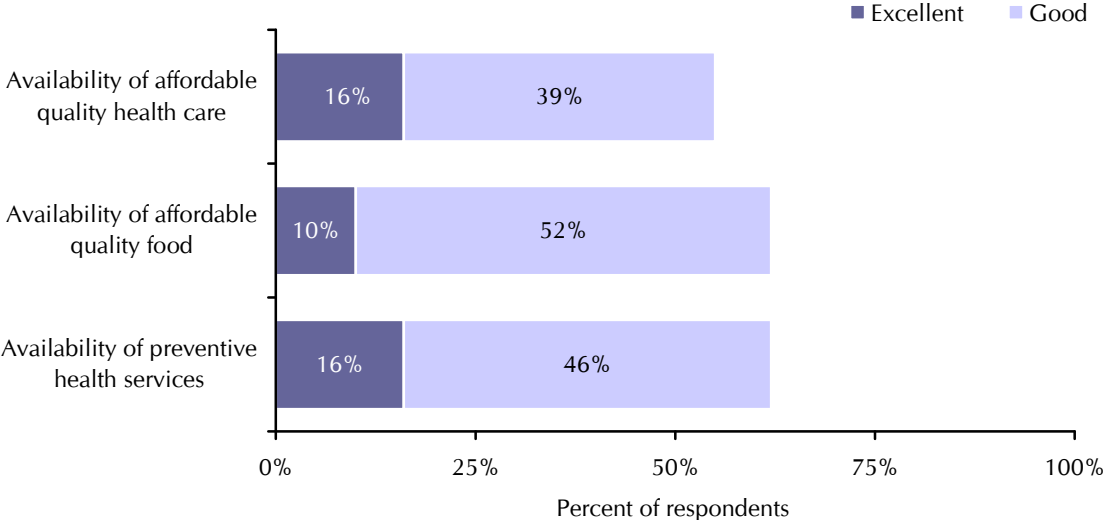


FIGURE 58: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Availability of affordable quality health care	Above	Above
Availability of affordable quality food	Similar	Similar
Availability of preventive health services	Above	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Health related services offered in the City of Billings were rated above the benchmarks.

FIGURE 59: RATINGS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

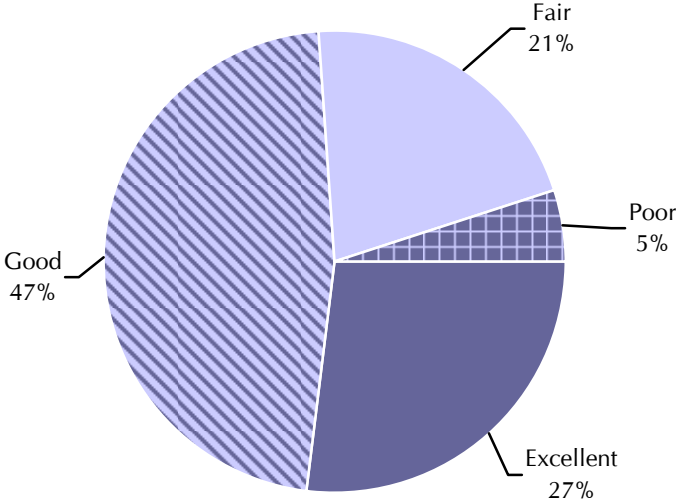


FIGURE 60: HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES BENCHMARKS

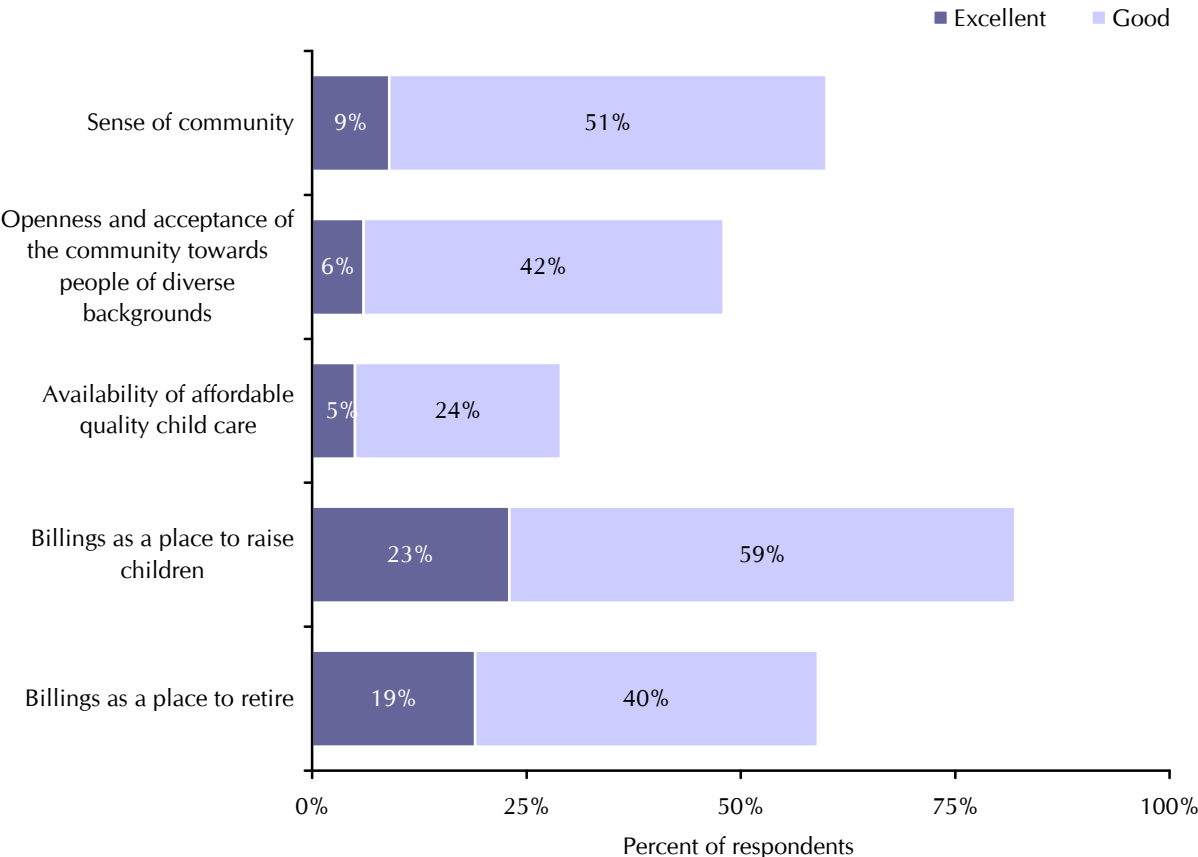
	National comparison	Western region comparison
Health services	Above	Above

COMMUNITY INCLUSIVENESS

Diverse communities that include among their residents a mix of races, ages, wealth, ideas and beliefs have the raw material for the most vibrant and creative society. However, the presence of these features alone does not ensure a high quality or desirable space. Surveyed residents were asked about the success of the mix: the sense of community, the openness of residents to people of diverse backgrounds and the attractiveness of the City of Billings as a place to raise children or to retire. They were also questioned about the quality of services delivered to various population subgroups, including older adults, youth and residents with few resources. A community that succeeds in creating an inclusive environment for a variety of residents is a community that offers more to many.

A high percentage of residents rated the City of Billings as an “excellent” or “good” place to raise kids and a moderate percentage rated it as an excellent or good place to retire. Some residents felt that the local sense of community was “excellent” or “good.” Fewer survey respondents felt the City of Billings was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. Availability of affordable quality child care was rated the lowest by residents.

FIGURE 61: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 62: COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Sense of community	Similar	Similar
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	Below	Below
Availability of affordable quality child care	Below	Similar
Billings as a place to raise kids	Similar	Similar
Billings as a place to retire	Similar	Similar

Services to more vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, youth or low-income residents) ranged from 40% to 65% with ratings of “excellent” or “good.” Services to seniors and to low income residents were the same as the benchmarks. Services to youth was rated below the national benchmark and similar to the custom benchmark.

FIGURE 63: RATINGS OF QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS

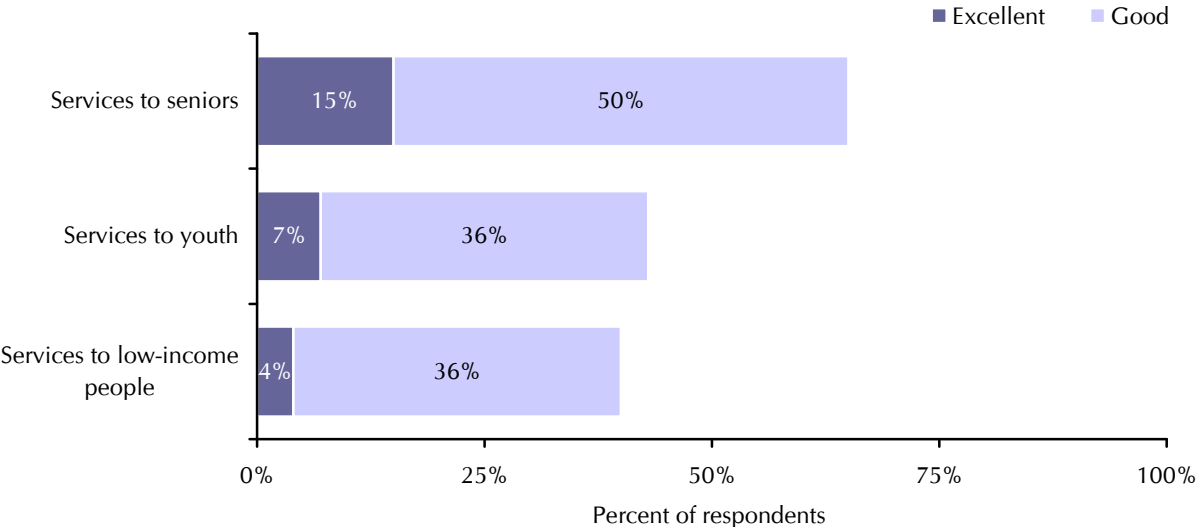


FIGURE 64: SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Services to seniors	Similar	Similar
Services to youth	Below	Similar
Services to low income residents	Similar	Similar

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Government leaders, elected or hired, cannot run a jurisdiction alone and a jurisdiction cannot run effectively if residents remain strangers with little to connect them. Staff and elected officials require the assistance of local residents whether that assistance comes in tacit approval or eager help; and commonality of purpose among the electorate facilitates policies and programs that appeal to most and causes discord among few. Furthermore, when neighbors help neighbors, the cost to the community to provide services to residents in need declines. When residents are civically engaged, they have taken the opportunity to participate in making the community more livable for all. The extent to which local government provides opportunities to become informed and engaged and the extent to which residents take those opportunities is an indicator of the connection between government and populace. By understanding your residents' level of connection to, knowledge of and participation in local government, the City can find better opportunities to communicate and educate citizens about its mission, services, accomplishments and plans. Communities with strong civic engagement may be more likely to see the benefits of programs intended to improve the quality of life of all residents and therefore would be more likely to support those new policies or programs.

Civic Activity

Respondents were asked about the perceived community volunteering opportunities and their participation as citizens of the City of Billings. Survey participants rated the volunteer opportunities in the City of Billings favorably. Opportunities to attend or participate in community matters were rated less favorably.

The rating for opportunities to participate in community matters was similar to the benchmarks while the rating for opportunities to volunteer was above.

FIGURE 65: RATINGS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

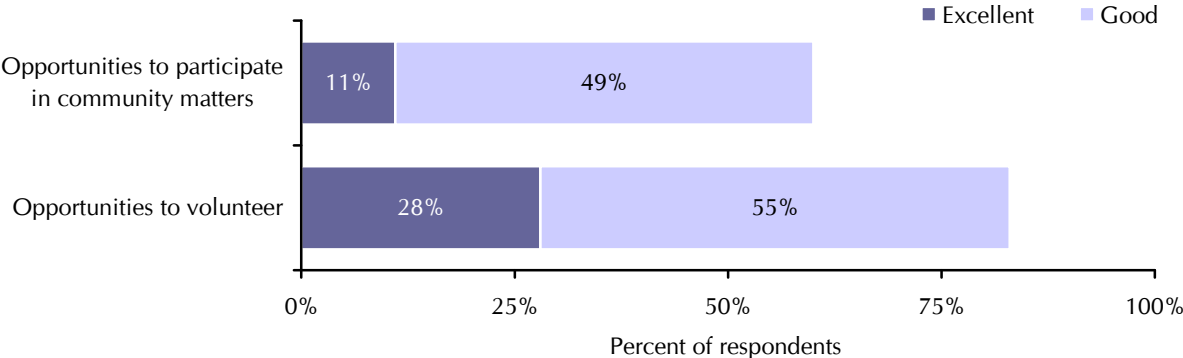


FIGURE 66: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Opportunities to participate in community matters	Similar	Similar
Opportunities to volunteer	Above	Above

Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting, some had volunteered time to a group or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend. The participation rates of these civic behaviors were compared to the rates in other jurisdictions. Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television, volunteered your time to some group or activity in Billings, participated in a club or civic group in Billings showed higher rates of involvement; while provided help to a friend or neighbor and attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting showed similar rates.

FIGURE 67: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

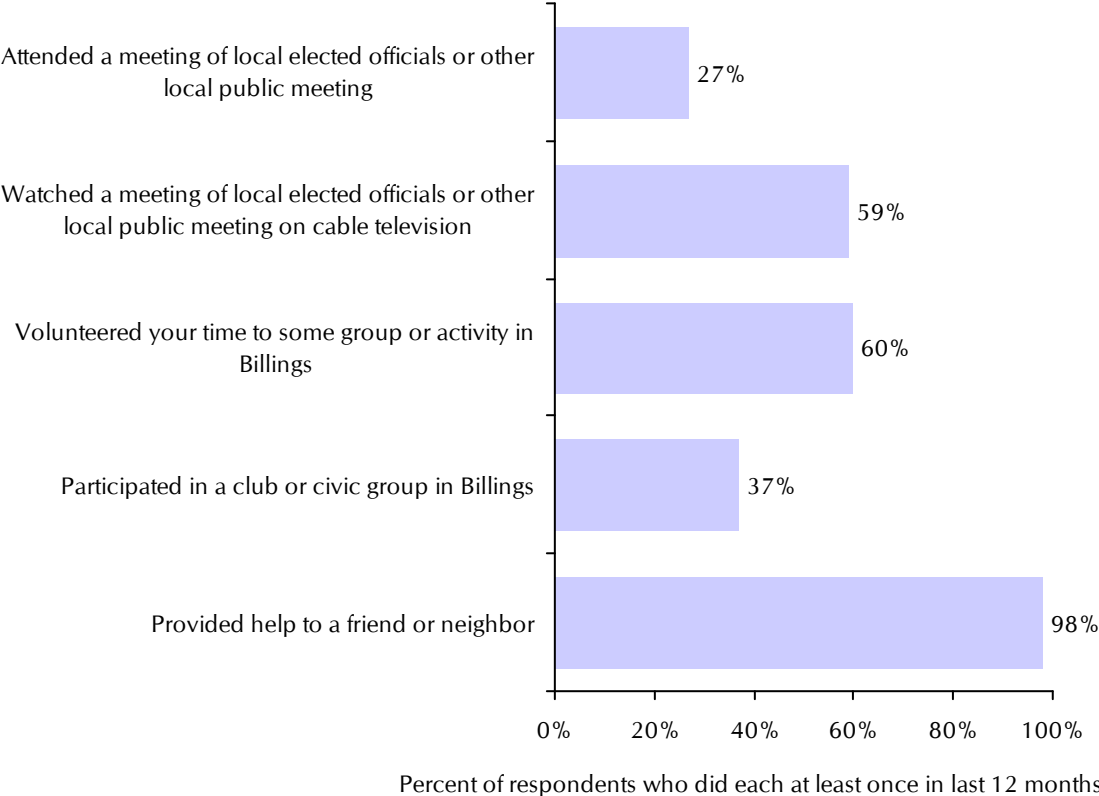


FIGURE 68: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	Similar	Similar
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	Above	Above
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Billings	Above	Above
Participated in a club or civic group in Billings	Above	Above
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	Similar	Similar

City of Billings residents showed the largest amount of civic engagement in the area of electoral participation. Ninety-two percent reported they were registered to vote and 88% indicated they had voted in the last general election. This rate of self-reported voting was higher than comparison communities.

FIGURE 69: REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOR

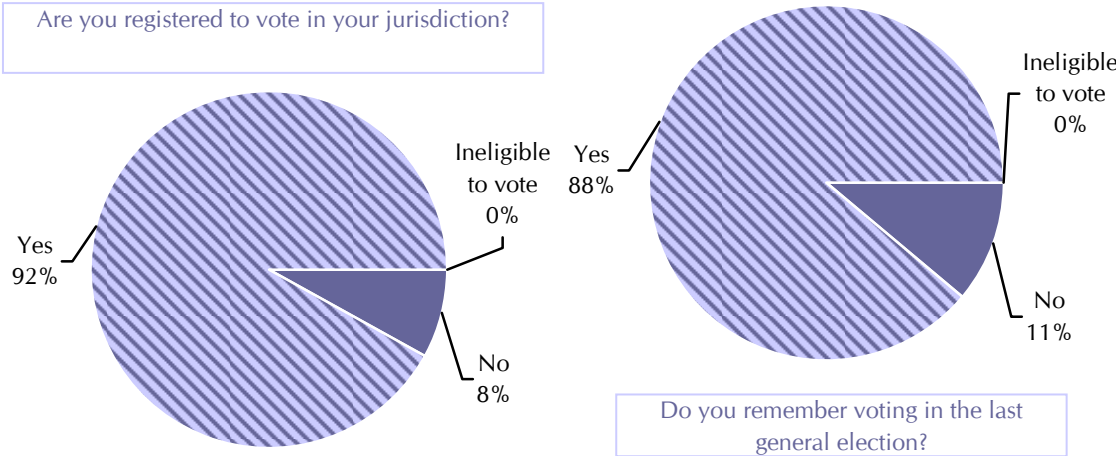


FIGURE 70: VOTING BEHAVIOR BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Registered to vote	Above	Above
Voted in last general election	Above	Above

Information and Awareness

Those completing the survey were asked about their use and perceptions of various information sources and local government media services. When asked whether they had visited the City of Billings Web site in the previous 12 months, 50% reported they had done so at least once. Public information services were rated unfavorably compared to benchmark data.

FIGURE 71: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES

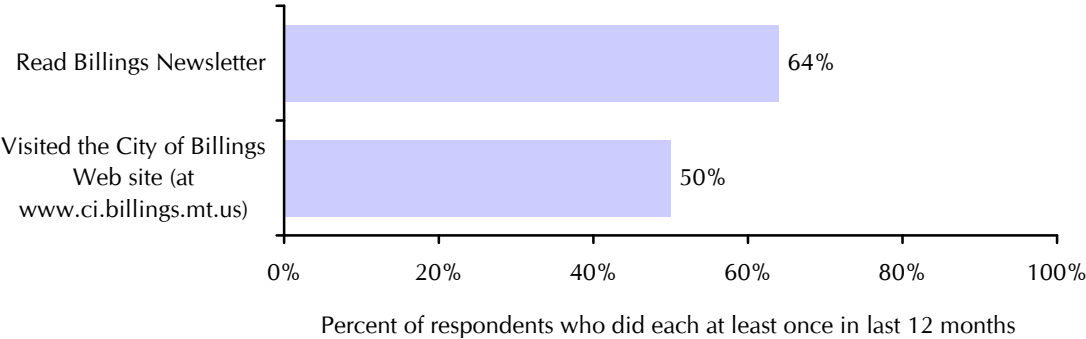


FIGURE 72: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Read Billings Newsletter	Below	Below
Visited the City of Billings Web site	Below	Below

FIGURE 73: RATINGS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

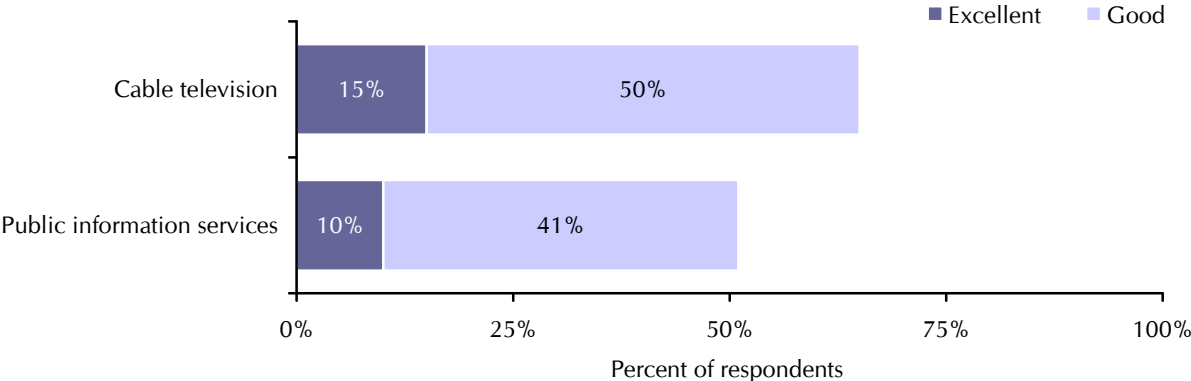


FIGURE 74: LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Cable television	Above	Above
Public information services	Below	Below

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Social Engagement

Opportunities to participate in social events and activities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 61% of respondents, while even more rated opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities as “excellent” or “good.”

FIGURE 75: RATINGS OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

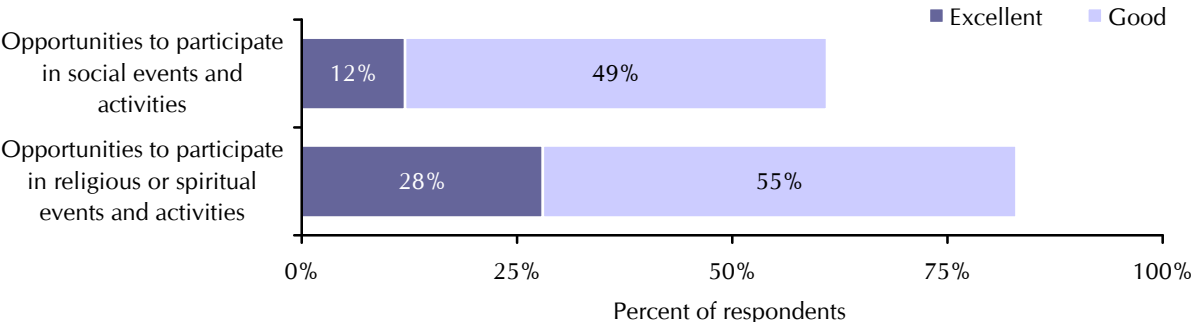


FIGURE 76: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	Similar	Similar
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events	Above	Above

Residents in Billings reported a strong amount of neighborliness. More than 83% indicated talking or visiting with their neighbors at least once a month. This amount of contact with neighbors was about the same as the amount of contact reported in other communities.

FIGURE 77: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS

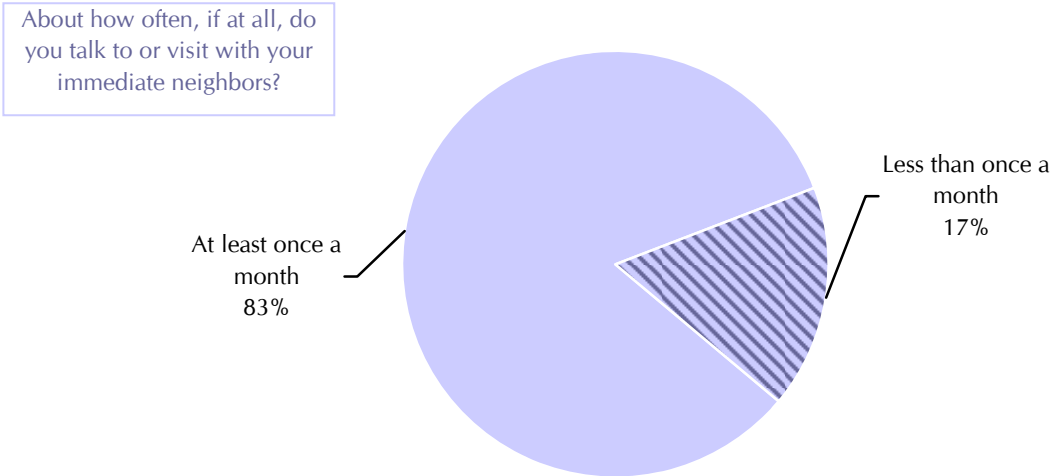


FIGURE 78: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Has contact with neighbors at least once per month	Similar	Similar

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

PUBLIC TRUST

When local government leaders are trusted, an environment of cooperation is more likely to surround all decisions they make. Cooperation leads to easier communication between leaders and residents and increases the likelihood that high value policies and programs will be implemented to improve the quality of life of the entire community. Trust can be measured in residents’ opinions about the overall direction the City of Billings is taking, their perspectives about the service value their taxes purchase and the openness of government to citizen participation. In addition, resident opinion about services provided by the City of Billings could be compared to their opinion about services provided by the state and federal governments. If residents find nothing to admire in the services delivered by any level of government, their opinions about the City of Billings may be colored by their dislike of what all levels of government provide.

Less than half of respondents felt that the value of services for taxes paid was “excellent” or “good.” When asked to rate the job the City of Billings does at listening to citizens, 24% rated it as “excellent” or “good.” Of these five ratings, none were above the benchmark, one was similar to the benchmark and three were below the benchmark.

FIGURE 79: PUBLIC TRUST RATINGS

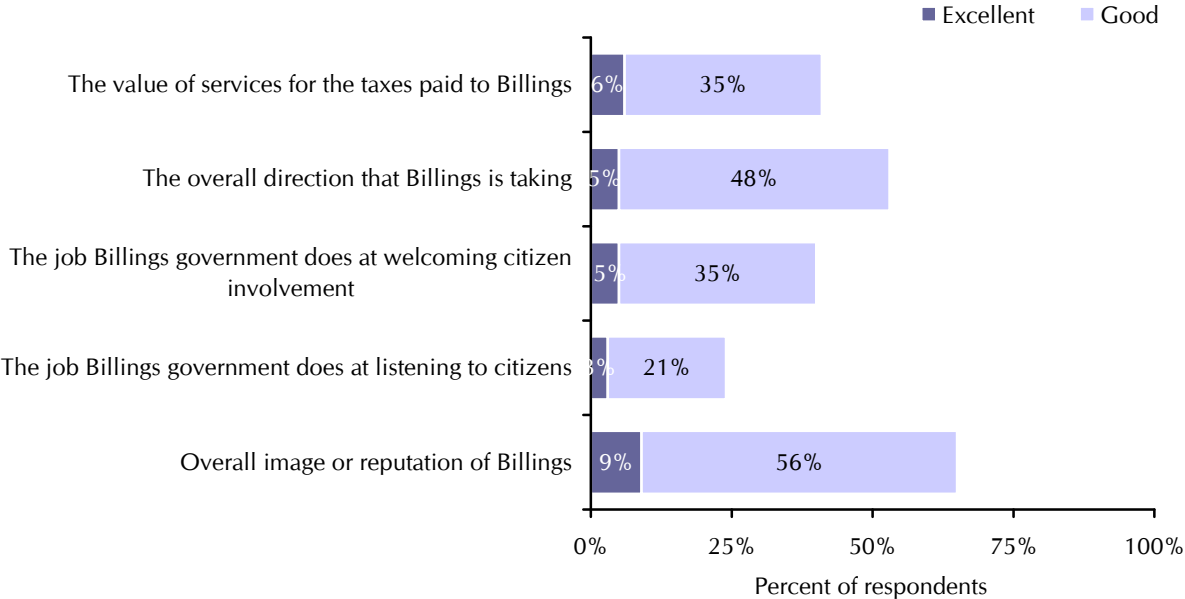


FIGURE 80: PUBLIC TRUST BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Value of services for the taxes paid to Billings	Below	Below
The overall direction that Billings is taking	Similar	Similar
Job Billings government does at welcoming citizen involvement	Below	Below
Job Billings government does at listening to citizens	Below	Below
Overall image or reputation of Billings	Similar	Similar

On average, residents of the City of Billings gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to federal government. The overall quality of services delivered by the City of Billings was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 58% of survey participants. The City of Billings’ rating was below the benchmarks when compared to other communities.

FIGURE 81: RATINGS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS

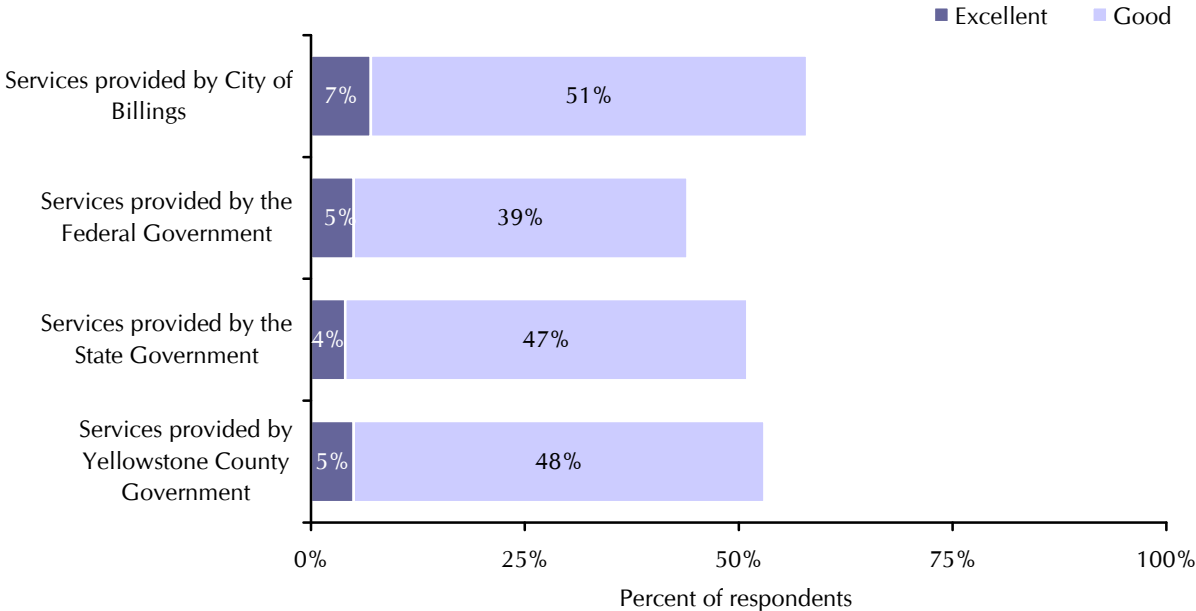


FIGURE 82: SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Services provided by the City of Billings	Below	Below
Services provided by the Federal Government	Similar	Above
Services provided by the State Government	Above	Above
Services provided by Yellowstone County Government	Similar	Similar

City of Billings Employees

The employees of the City of Billings who interact with the public create the first impression that most residents have of the City of Billings. Front line staff who provide information, assist with bill paying, collect trash, create service schedules, fight fires and crime and even give traffic tickets are the collective face of the City of Billings. As such, it is important to know about residents' experience talking with that "face." When employees appear to be knowledgeable, responsive and courteous, residents are more likely to feel that any needs or problems may be solved through positive and productive interactions with the City of Billings staff.

Those completing the survey were asked if they had been in contact with a City employee either in-person or over the phone in the last 12 months; the 55% who reported that they had been in contact (a percent that is similar to the benchmark comparison) were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. City employees were rated highly; 73% of respondents rated their overall impression as "excellent" or "good."

FIGURE 83: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

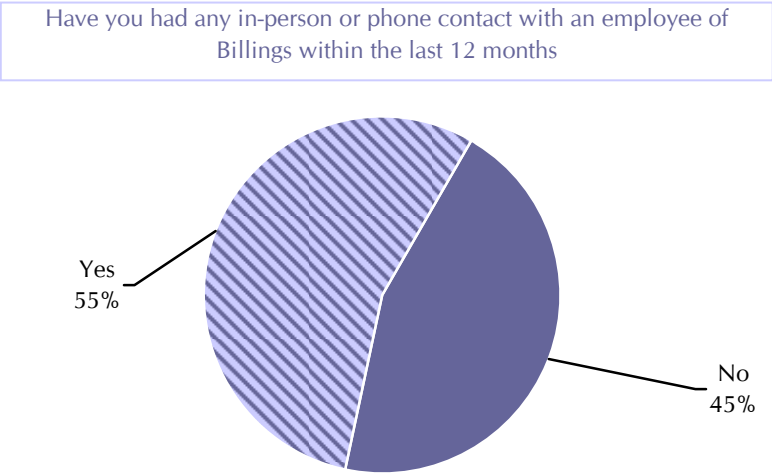


FIGURE 84: CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
Had contact with city employee(s) in last 12 months	Similar	Similar

FIGURE 85: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT)

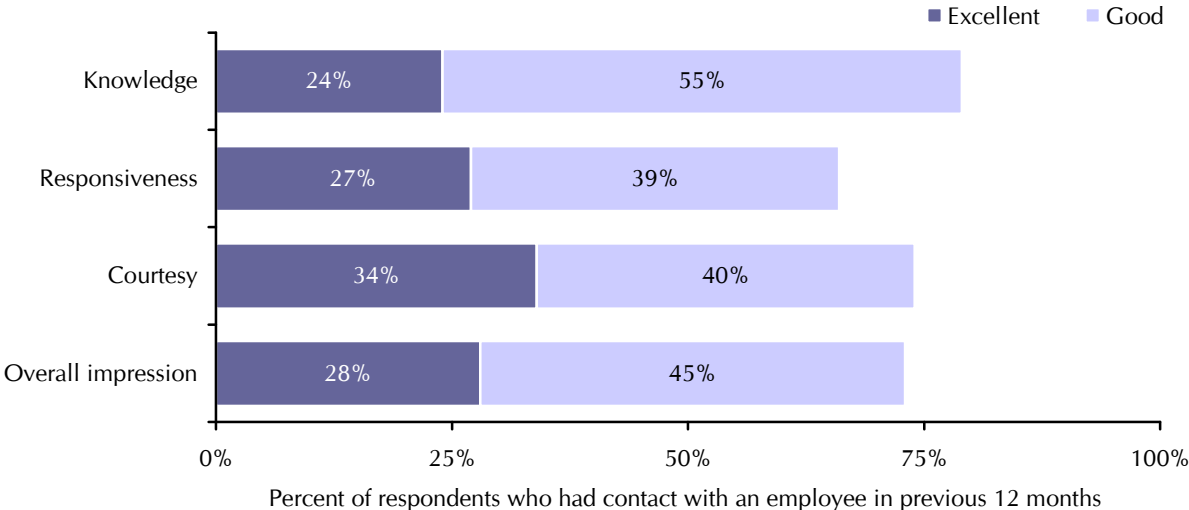


FIGURE 86: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BENCHMARKS

	National comparison	Western region comparison
City employee knowledge	Similar	Similar
City employee responsiveness	Below	Similar
City employee courteousness	Similar	Similar
Overall impression	Similar	Similar

FROM DATA TO ACTION

RESIDENT PRIORITIES

Knowing where to focus limited resources to improve residents' opinions of local government requires information that targets the services that are most important to residents. However, when residents are asked what services are most important, they rarely stray beyond core services – those directed to save lives and improve safety.

In market research, identifying the most important characteristics of a transaction or product is called Key Driver Analysis. The key drivers that are identified from that analysis do not come from asking customers to self-report which service or product characteristic most influenced their decision to buy or return, but rather from statistical analyses of the predictors of their behavior. When customers are asked to name the most important characteristics of a good or service, responses often are expected or misleading – just as they can be in the context of a citizen survey. For example, air travelers often claim that safety is the primary consideration in their choice of an airline, yet key driver analysis reveals that frequent flier perks or in-flight entertainment predicts their buying decisions.

In local government core services – like fire protection – invariably land at the top of the list created when residents are asked about the most important local government services. And core services are important. But by using Key Driver Analysis, our approach digs deeper to identify the less obvious, but more influential services that are most related to residents' ratings of overall quality of local government services. Because services focused directly on life and safety remain essential to quality government, it is suggested that core services should remain the focus of continuous monitoring and improvement where necessary – but monitoring core services or asking residents to identify important services is not enough.

A Key Driver Analysis (KDA) was conducted for the City of Billings by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Billings' overall services. Those key driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Billings can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality.

Services found to be most strongly correlated with ratings of overall service quality from the Billings Key Driver Analysis were:

- Police services
- Fire services
- Preservation of natural areas

CITY OF BILLINGS ACTION CHART™

The 2009 City of Billings Action Chart™ on the following page combines two dimensions of performance:

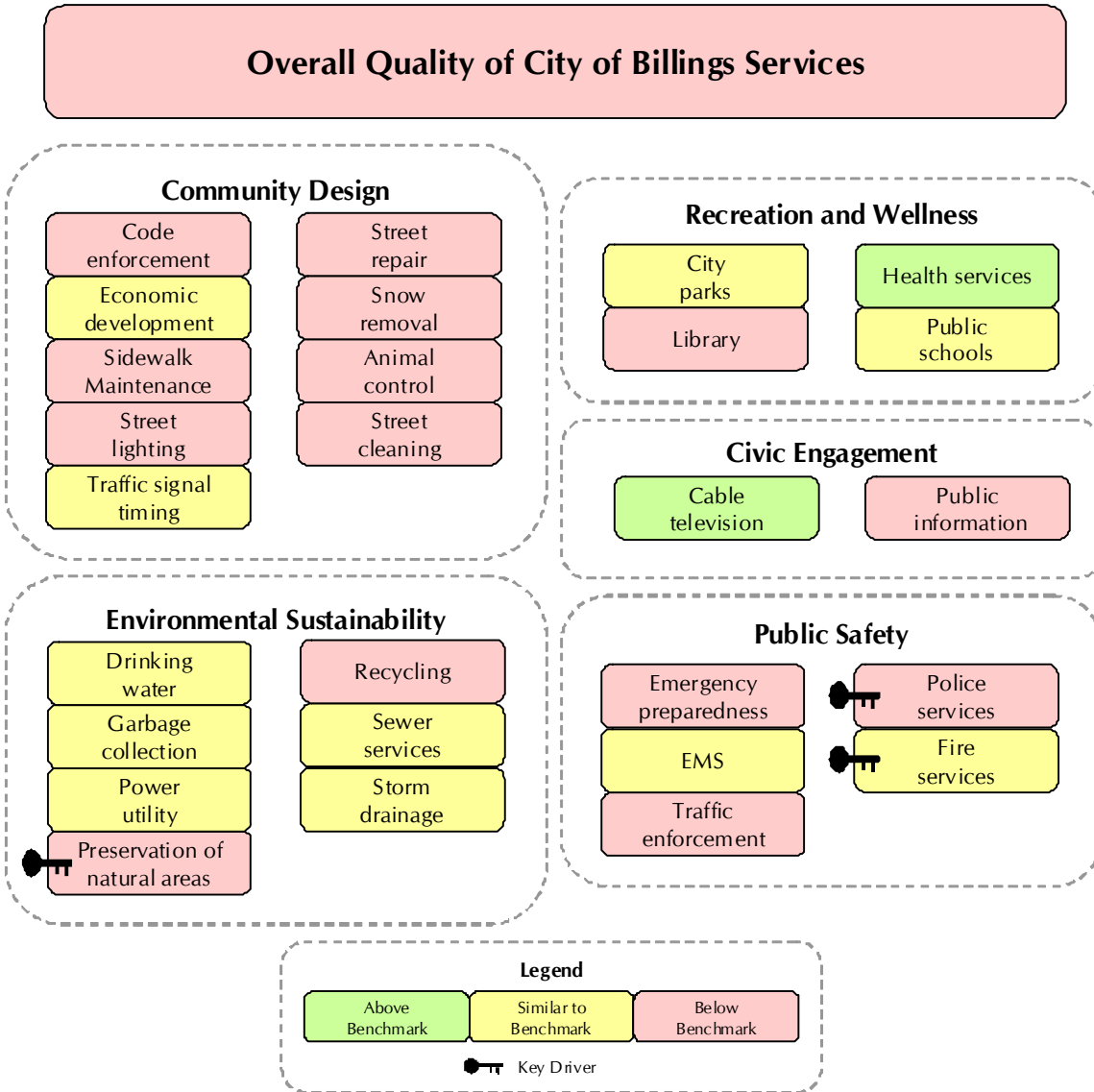
- Comparison to resident evaluations from other communities. When a comparison is available, the background color of each service box indicates whether the service is above the benchmark (green), similar to the benchmark (yellow) or below the benchmark (red).
- Identification of key services. A black key icon next to a service box indicates that service is key (either core or key driver)

Twenty seven services were included in the KDA for the City of Billings. Of these, two were above the benchmark, fourteen were below the benchmark and eleven were similar to the benchmark. A key icon (🗝️) indicates the three key drivers.

Considering all performance data included in the Action Chart, a jurisdiction typically will want to consider improvements to any key driver services that are not at least similar to the benchmark. In Billings, police services and preservation of natural areas were below the benchmark and fire services was similar to the benchmark. More detail about interpreting results can be found in the next section.

Services with a high percent of respondents answering “don’t know” were excluded from the analysis and were considered services that would be less influential. See Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies, Frequencies Including “Don’t Know” Responses for the percent “don’t know” for each service.

FIGURE 87: CITY OF BILLINGS ACTION CHART



Using Your Action Chart™

The key drivers derived for the City of Billings provide a list of those services that are uniquely related to overall service quality. Those key drivers are marked with the symbol of a key in the action chart. Because key driver results are based on a relatively small number of responses, the relationships or correlations that define the key drivers are subject to more variability than is seen when key drivers are derived from a large national dataset of resident responses. To benefit the City of Billings, NRC lists the key drivers derived from tens of thousands of resident responses from across the country. This national list is updated periodically so that you can compare your key drivers to the key drivers from the entire NRC data set. Where your locally derived key drivers overlap national key drivers, it makes sense to focus even more strongly on your keys. Similarly, when your local key drivers overlap your core services, there is stronger argument to make for attending to your key drivers that overlap with core services. In the following table, we have listed your key drivers, core services and the national key drivers and we have indicated, with shaded rows, the City of Billings key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys.

FIGURE 88: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	City of Billings Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
Code enforcement			✓
Economic development		✓	
EMS			✓
Fire	✓		✓
Garbage collection			✓
Land use planning and zoning		✓	
Police services	✓	✓	✓
Preservation of natural areas	✓		
Public information services		✓	
Public schools		✓	
Sewer			✓
Storm drainage			✓
Street repair			✓
Water			✓

POLICY QUESTIONS

“Don’t know” responses have been removed from the following questions, when applicable.

Policy Question 1					
To what extent would you support or oppose the following potential efforts to delay, reduce or eliminate property tax increases?	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total
Reduce City Hall operating hours	11%	46%	30%	12%	100%
Reduce Library operating hours	8%	33%	32%	26%	100%
Close one of seven fire stations	4%	7%	28%	61%	100%
Reduce park maintenance	3%	17%	42%	38%	100%
Eliminate recreation programs	4%	23%	39%	35%	100%
Reduce MET Transit operations	6%	18%	35%	41%	100%
Close one or more public swimming or wading pools	5%	19%	30%	46%	100%

Policy Question 2	
To what extent would you support or oppose creating a citywide Park Maintenance District to increase park construction and improve grounds maintenance?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	25%
Somewhat support	50%
Somewhat oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	10%
Total	100%

Policy Question 3	
The City’s charter limits the amount of property taxes the city can collect (currently \$2,421 on a house valued at \$200,000). If the city were to remove this limit, it would, along with all other cities and counties, be held to the State of Montana’s statute that allows additional property tax to be collected in order to produce taxes equal to the prior year, plus growth and inflation. To what extent do you support or oppose removing the City’s current limit and adopting the State’s limit?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	4%
Somewhat support	18%
Somewhat oppose	17%
Strongly oppose	46%
Don’t know	15%
Total	100%

APPENDIX A: COMPLETE SURVEY FREQUENCIES

FREQUENCIES EXCLUDING "DON'T KNOW" RESPONSES

Question 1: Quality of Life					
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Billings:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Billings as a place to live	26%	62%	12%	1%	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	31%	49%	18%	3%	100%
Billings as a place to raise children	23%	59%	17%	1%	100%
Billings as a place to work	16%	51%	27%	6%	100%
Billings as a place to retire	19%	40%	33%	8%	100%
The overall quality of life in Billings	19%	61%	19%	1%	100%

Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Billings as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Sense of community	9%	51%	34%	7%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	6%	42%	38%	13%	100%
Overall appearance of Billings	6%	49%	38%	6%	100%
Cleanliness of Billings	5%	43%	42%	9%	100%
Overall quality of new development in Billings	13%	55%	28%	4%	100%
Variety of housing options	9%	45%	33%	12%	100%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Billings	11%	60%	26%	3%	100%
Shopping opportunities	17%	54%	23%	7%	100%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	14%	41%	36%	10%	100%
Recreational opportunities	14%	41%	31%	13%	100%
Employment opportunities	5%	40%	40%	15%	100%
Educational opportunities	18%	51%	26%	5%	100%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	12%	49%	32%	6%	100%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	28%	55%	16%	2%	100%
Opportunities to volunteer	28%	55%	15%	2%	100%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	11%	49%	33%	7%	100%
Ease of car travel in Billings	8%	50%	32%	9%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Billings	4%	32%	38%	26%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Billings	3%	22%	47%	27%	100%
Ease of walking in Billings	6%	40%	36%	18%	100%
Availability of paths and walking trails	8%	32%	38%	22%	100%
Traffic flow on major streets	3%	26%	43%	28%	100%

Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Billings as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Amount of public parking	2%	25%	43%	30%	100%
Availability of affordable quality housing	4%	27%	44%	25%	100%
Availability of affordable quality child care	5%	24%	43%	28%	100%
Availability of affordable quality health care	16%	39%	29%	15%	100%
Availability of affordable quality food	10%	52%	30%	7%	100%
Availability of preventive health services	16%	46%	29%	9%	100%
Air quality	8%	44%	38%	10%	100%
Quality of overall natural environment in Billings	8%	52%	37%	3%	100%
Overall image or reputation of Billings	9%	56%	31%	4%	100%

Question 3: Growth						
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Billings over the past 2 years:	Much too slow	Somewhat too slow	Right amount	Somewhat too fast	Much too fast	Total
Population growth	0%	6%	56%	31%	7%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	3%	19%	51%	21%	6%	100%
Jobs growth	13%	50%	33%	3%	1%	100%

Question 4: Code Enforcement	
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Billings?	Percent of respondents
Not a problem	4%
Minor problem	34%
Moderate problem	48%
Major problem	14%
Total	100%

Question 5: Community Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Billings:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	19%	48%	15%	16%	2%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	6%	39%	21%	26%	8%	100%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	24%	40%	19%	14%	4%	100%

Question 6: Personal Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
In your neighborhood during the day	67%	26%	4%	2%	1%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	31%	43%	10%	13%	3%	100%
In Billings' downtown area during the day	38%	41%	12%	7%	2%	100%
In Billings' downtown area after dark	4%	31%	17%	32%	15%	100%

Question 7: Crime Victim	
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents
No	82%
Yes	18%
Total	100%

Question 8: Crime Reporting	
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents
No	22%
Yes	78%
Total	100%

Question 9: Resident Behaviors						
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Billings?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Used Billings public libraries or their services	35%	33%	21%	7%	4%	100%
Used Billings recreation centers	44%	26%	19%	6%	5%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	56%	21%	16%	4%	3%	100%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	8%	24%	36%	17%	15%	100%
Ridden a local bus within Billings	83%	8%	4%	2%	3%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	73%	20%	6%	1%	0%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	41%	31%	22%	4%	3%	100%
Read Billings Newsletter	36%	28%	18%	5%	13%	100%
Visited the City of Billings Web site (at www.ci.billings.mt.us)	50%	23%	18%	6%	3%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	25%	14%	23%	16%	21%	100%

Question 9: Resident Behaviors						
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Billings?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Billings	40%	22%	18%	9%	12%	100%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Billings	34%	14%	16%	10%	26%	100%
Participated in a club or civic group in Billings	63%	14%	10%	7%	7%	100%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	2%	16%	43%	20%	19%	100%

Question 10: Neighborliness	
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)?	Percent of respondents
Just about everyday	15%
Several times a week	23%
Several times a month	33%
Once a month	11%
Several times a year	9%
Once a year or less	5%
Never	3%
Total	100%

Question 11: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Billings:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Police services	15%	51%	25%	9%	100%
Fire services	35%	53%	11%	1%	100%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	26%	58%	13%	2%	100%
Crime prevention	6%	42%	38%	14%	100%
Fire prevention and education	14%	57%	25%	4%	100%
Municipal courts	7%	46%	34%	13%	100%
Traffic enforcement	6%	36%	38%	20%	100%
Street repair	4%	18%	45%	33%	100%
Street cleaning	6%	34%	42%	18%	100%
Street lighting	5%	34%	39%	23%	100%
Snow removal	3%	20%	34%	43%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	3%	26%	46%	25%	100%
Traffic signal timing	6%	35%	38%	22%	100%
Bus or transit services	8%	38%	35%	19%	100%
Garbage collection	27%	57%	13%	3%	100%
Recycling	6%	29%	30%	36%	100%

Question 11: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Billings:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Yard waste pick-up	12%	37%	34%	17%	100%
Storm drainage	7%	41%	41%	10%	100%
Drinking water	20%	46%	25%	9%	100%
Sewer services	17%	60%	22%	1%	100%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	15%	57%	23%	4%	100%
City parks	17%	57%	21%	5%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	11%	51%	31%	8%	100%
Recreation centers or facilities	7%	45%	37%	11%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	3%	28%	47%	22%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	2%	21%	44%	33%	100%
Animal control	8%	44%	35%	14%	100%
Economic development	7%	41%	45%	8%	100%
Health services	27%	47%	21%	5%	100%
Services to seniors	15%	50%	28%	8%	100%
Services to youth	7%	36%	39%	18%	100%
Services to low-income people	4%	36%	42%	17%	100%
Public library services	16%	53%	27%	5%	100%
Public information services	10%	41%	42%	7%	100%
Public schools	12%	49%	29%	9%	100%
Cable television	15%	50%	26%	9%	100%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	9%	36%	42%	13%	100%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	4%	32%	42%	22%	100%

Question 12: Government Services Overall					
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The City of Billings	7%	51%	35%	7%	100%
The Federal Government	5%	39%	43%	13%	100%
The State Government	4%	47%	41%	7%	100%
Yellowstone County Government	5%	48%	40%	7%	100%

Question 13: Contact with City Employees	
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Billings within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents
No	45%
Yes	55%
Total	100%

Question 14: City Employees					
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Billings in your most recent contact?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Knowledge	24%	55%	15%	6%	100%
Responsiveness	27%	39%	22%	12%	100%
Courtesy	34%	40%	16%	10%	100%
Overall impression	28%	45%	16%	11%	100%

Question 15: Government Performance					
Please rate the following categories of Billings government performance:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The value of services for the taxes paid to Billings	6%	35%	46%	13%	100%
The overall direction that Billings is taking	5%	48%	39%	8%	100%
The job Billings government does at welcoming citizen involvement	5%	35%	41%	19%	100%
The job Billings government does at listening to citizens	3%	21%	48%	28%	100%

Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity					
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	Total
Recommend living in Billings to someone who asks	42%	45%	9%	4%	100%
Remain in Billings for the next five years	64%	23%	9%	4%	100%

Question 17: Impact of the Economy	
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:	Percent of respondents
Very positive	2%
Somewhat positive	8%
Neutral	34%
Somewhat negative	43%
Very negative	12%
Total	100%

Question 18a: Policy Question 1					
To what extent would you support or oppose the following potential efforts to delay, reduce or eliminate property tax increases?	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total
Reduce City Hall operating hours	11%	46%	30%	12%	100%
Reduce Library operating hours	8%	33%	32%	26%	100%
Close one of seven fire stations	4%	7%	28%	61%	100%
Reduce park maintenance	3%	17%	42%	38%	100%
Eliminate recreation programs	4%	23%	39%	35%	100%
Reduce MET Transit operations	6%	18%	35%	41%	100%
Close one or more public swimming or wading pools	5%	19%	30%	46%	100%

Question 18b: Policy Question 2	
To what extent would you support or oppose creating a citywide Park Maintenance District to increase park construction and improve grounds maintenance?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	25%
Somewhat support	50%
Somewhat oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	10%
Total	100%

Question 18c: Policy Question 3	
The City’s charter limits the amount of property taxes the city can collect (currently \$2,421 on a house valued at \$200,000). If the city were to remove this limit, it would, along with all other cities and counties, be held to the State of Montana’s statute that allows additional property tax to be collected in order to produce taxes equal to the prior year, plus growth and inflation. To what extent do you support or oppose removing the City’s current limit and adopting the State’s limit?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	5%
Somewhat support	21%
Somewhat oppose	20%
Strongly oppose	54%
Total	100%

Question D1: Employment Status	
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents
No	26%
Yes, full-time	61%
Yes, part-time	14%
Total	100%

Question D2: Mode of Transportation Used for Commute	
During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below?	Percent of days mode used
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself	78%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	11%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	2%
Walk	2%
Bicycle	2%
Work at home	4%
Other	1%

Question D3: Length of Residency	
How many years have you lived in Billings?	Percent of respondents
Less than 2 years	8%
2 to 5 years	14%
6 to 10 years	11%
11 to 20 years	19%
More than 20 years	48%
Total	100%

Question D4: Housing Unit Type	
Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent of respondents
One family house detached from any other houses	62%
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	11%
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	23%
Mobile home	4%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)	
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	32%
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	68%
Total	100%

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost	
About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents
Less than \$300 per month	7%
\$300 to \$599 per month	26%
\$600 to \$999 per month	34%
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	20%
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	9%
\$2,500 or more per month	3%
Total	100%

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household	
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents
No	66%
Yes	34%
Total	100%

Question D8: Presence of Older Adults in Household	
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent of respondents
No	78%
Yes	22%
Total	100%

Question D9: Household Income	
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents
Less than \$24,999	20%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	29%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	34%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	11%
\$150,000 or more	5%
Total	100%

Question D10: Ethnicity	
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	98%
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	2%
Total	100%

Question D11: Race	
What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5%
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	0%
Black or African American	1%
White	95%
Other	2%
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option	

Question D12: Age	
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents
18 to 24 years	8%
25 to 34 years	23%
35 to 44 years	14%
45 to 54 years	22%
55 to 64 years	13%
65 to 74 years	10%
75 years or older	10%
Total	100%

Question D13: Gender	
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents
Female	54%
Male	46%
Total	100%

Question D14: Registered to Vote	
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents
No	8%
Yes	92%
Ineligible to vote	0%
Total	100%

Question D15: Voted in Last General Election	
Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?	Percent of respondents
No	11%
Yes	88%
Ineligible to vote	0%
Total	100%

FREQUENCIES INCLUDING “DON’T KNOW” RESPONSES

These tables contain the percentage of respondents for each response category as well as the “n” or total number of respondents for each category, next to the percentage.

Question 1: Quality of Life												
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Billings:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Billings as a place to live	26%	139	62%	333	12%	64	1%	3	0%	0	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	31%	164	49%	260	18%	95	3%	14	0%	2	100%	535
Billings as a place to raise children	21%	112	53%	284	15%	80	1%	7	9%	50	100%	533
Billings as a place to work	16%	84	50%	266	26%	138	6%	31	3%	14	100%	533
Billings as a place to retire	17%	90	35%	188	29%	154	7%	39	12%	62	100%	533
The overall quality of life in Billings	19%	103	61%	324	19%	99	1%	7	0%	0	100%	534

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Billings as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Sense of community	8%	44	50%	262	33%	175	7%	36	2%	12	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	6%	30	41%	215	37%	196	13%	68	4%	21	100%	530
Overall appearance of Billings	6%	32	49%	263	38%	204	6%	34	0%	1	100%	533
Cleanliness of Billings	5%	28	43%	232	42%	226	9%	47	0%	1	100%	534
Overall quality of new development in Billings	12%	66	53%	283	27%	146	4%	20	4%	19	100%	535
Variety of housing options	9%	47	43%	229	31%	167	12%	62	6%	29	100%	536
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Billings	11%	60	60%	319	26%	137	3%	14	1%	4	100%	534
Shopping opportunities	17%	90	54%	287	23%	121	7%	36	0%	0	100%	535
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	13%	69	39%	208	34%	181	10%	52	5%	25	100%	534
Recreational opportunities	14%	73	40%	214	31%	163	13%	69	2%	12	100%	531
Employment opportunities	5%	24	38%	202	37%	198	14%	76	6%	32	100%	533
Educational opportunities	18%	94	50%	265	25%	135	5%	26	2%	12	100%	533

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Billings as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	12%	63	48%	253	31%	162	6%	33	4%	19	100%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	25%	134	49%	263	14%	76	2%	10	9%	51	100%	534
Opportunities to volunteer	26%	139	51%	272	14%	75	2%	8	7%	38	100%	532
Opportunities to participate in community matters	10%	52	45%	237	30%	160	6%	33	8%	45	100%	526
Ease of car travel in Billings	8%	44	49%	261	31%	166	9%	49	2%	11	100%	531
Ease of bus travel in Billings	3%	14	21%	109	25%	131	17%	89	35%	186	100%	529
Ease of bicycle travel in Billings	3%	14	17%	91	37%	195	21%	111	22%	118	100%	529
Ease of walking in Billings	6%	31	39%	204	34%	180	17%	91	4%	22	100%	527
Availability of paths and walking trails	7%	38	30%	158	35%	185	20%	109	7%	39	100%	530
Traffic flow on major streets	3%	14	26%	138	43%	230	28%	149	0%	1	100%	532
Amount of public parking	2%	11	25%	131	41%	220	29%	154	3%	16	100%	532
Availability of affordable quality housing	3%	18	24%	127	38%	204	22%	116	13%	68	100%	534
Availability of affordable quality child care	2%	13	13%	68	23%	122	15%	78	46%	242	100%	522
Availability of affordable quality health care	16%	83	37%	195	28%	148	14%	77	6%	30	100%	532
Availability of affordable quality food	10%	54	52%	276	30%	159	7%	39	1%	6	100%	534
Availability of preventive health services	14%	77	42%	222	26%	137	8%	43	10%	54	100%	533
Air quality	8%	44	44%	233	37%	199	9%	50	1%	7	100%	533
Quality of overall natural environment in Billings	8%	42	52%	274	37%	197	3%	15	1%	4	100%	533
Overall image or reputation of Billings	9%	48	55%	294	30%	163	4%	23	1%	7	100%	535

Question 3: Growth														
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Billings over the past 2 years:	Much too slow		Somewhat too slow		Right amount		Somewhat too fast		Much too fast		Don't know		Total	
	Population growth	0%	1	5%	27	50%	271	28%	149	7%	36	10%	53	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	3%	15	18%	99	48%	257	20%	108	5%	28	5%	29	100%	536
Jobs growth	11%	60	42%	227	28%	149	3%	15	0%	2	15%	80	100%	534

Question 4: Code Enforcement		
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Billings?	Percent of respondents	Count
Not a problem	4%	19
Minor problem	32%	168
Moderate problem	45%	238
Major problem	13%	68
Don't know	6%	34
Total	100%	527

Question 5: Community Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Billings:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
	Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	18%	99	48%	255	15%	80	16%	84	2%	10	1%	5	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	6%	31	38%	204	21%	112	26%	137	8%	43	1%	7	100%	534
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	22%	117	37%	197	17%	93	13%	67	4%	20	7%	38	100%	532

Question 6: Personal Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
	In your neighborhood during the day	67%	357	26%	139	4%	22	2%	9	1%	6	0%	1	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	31%	163	43%	231	10%	52	13%	71	3%	14	0%	2	100%	534
In Billings' downtown area during the day	37%	198	41%	216	12%	62	7%	39	2%	9	2%	9	100%	533
In Billings' downtown area after dark	4%	20	30%	162	16%	87	31%	167	15%	79	3%	18	100%	532

Question 7: Crime Victim		
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	81%	430
Yes	18%	94
Don't know	1%	4
Total	100%	529

Question 8: Crime Reporting		
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	22%	20
Yes	78%	74
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100%	94

Question 9: Resident Behaviors												
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Billings?	Never		Once or twice		3 to 12 times		13 to 26 times		More than 26 times		Total	
	Used Billings public libraries or their services	35%	184	33%	175	21%	110	7%	37	4%	23	100%
Used Billings recreation centers	44%	232	26%	139	19%	102	6%	30	5%	25	100%	529
Participated in a recreation program or activity	56%	292	21%	107	16%	85	4%	21	3%	17	100%	523
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	8%	40	24%	127	36%	190	17%	91	15%	78	100%	525
Ridden a local bus within Billings	83%	435	8%	43	4%	21	2%	13	3%	16	100%	528
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	73%	386	20%	107	6%	30	1%	3	0%	1	100%	528
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	41%	215	31%	164	22%	114	4%	22	3%	15	100%	531
Read Billings Newsletter	36%	189	28%	143	18%	93	5%	28	13%	67	100%	520
Visited the City of Billings Web site (at www.ci.billings.mt.us)	50%	262	23%	121	18%	97	6%	29	3%	14	100%	523

Question 9: Resident Behaviors												
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Billings?	Never		Once or twice		3 to 12 times		13 to 26 times		More than 26 times		Total	
	Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	25%	131	14%	73	23%	122	16%	87	21%	113	100%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Billings	40%	209	22%	115	18%	93	9%	46	12%	63	100%	526
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Billings	34%	179	14%	75	16%	86	10%	51	26%	135	100%	526
Participated in a club or civic group in Billings	63%	332	14%	74	10%	52	7%	36	7%	36	100%	531
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	2%	12	16%	84	43%	228	20%	106	19%	100	100%	531

Question 10: Neighborliness		
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)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Just about everyday	15%	82
Several times a week	23%	124
Several times a month	33%	179
Once a month	11%	59
Several times a year	9%	51
Once a year or less	5%	25
Never	3%	15
Total	100%	535

Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Billings:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Police services	14%	76	47%	249	24%	125	8%	42	7%	35	100%	527
Fire services	30%	158	45%	239	9%	47	1%	4	15%	81	100%	529
Ambulance or emergency medical services	22%	116	49%	259	11%	59	2%	10	16%	84	100%	527
Crime prevention	5%	26	35%	185	32%	169	12%	63	16%	85	100%	528
Fire prevention and education	11%	59	45%	234	20%	103	3%	15	22%	114	100%	525
Municipal courts	4%	23	30%	156	22%	116	8%	45	36%	188	100%	527
Traffic enforcement	6%	31	32%	170	34%	180	18%	95	10%	53	100%	528
Street repair	3%	18	18%	94	45%	237	33%	172	2%	9	100%	530
Street cleaning	6%	29	33%	176	41%	218	18%	96	2%	10	100%	528
Street lighting	5%	25	33%	174	39%	204	22%	117	2%	8	100%	528
Snow removal	3%	15	20%	104	34%	179	42%	223	1%	7	100%	527
Sidewalk maintenance	3%	16	23%	123	42%	222	23%	121	8%	42	100%	525
Traffic signal timing	5%	29	34%	182	37%	197	22%	115	1%	6	100%	529
Bus or transit services	4%	22	21%	107	19%	101	11%	55	45%	236	100%	523
Garbage collection	27%	142	55%	294	13%	68	3%	15	2%	11	100%	529
Recycling	5%	27	25%	130	26%	134	31%	161	14%	72	100%	524
Yard waste pick-up	10%	53	30%	158	27%	144	14%	73	19%	99	100%	526
Storm drainage	6%	30	35%	187	35%	187	9%	47	15%	77	100%	527
Drinking water	20%	105	44%	234	24%	128	9%	46	3%	15	100%	528
Sewer services	15%	78	52%	276	19%	103	1%	5	13%	69	100%	530
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	15%	79	56%	296	22%	118	4%	23	2%	12	100%	528
City parks	17%	88	55%	292	20%	105	4%	23	3%	18	100%	527
Recreation programs or classes	6%	34	31%	163	19%	97	5%	24	39%	205	100%	524
Recreation centers or facilities	5%	26	30%	155	24%	126	7%	36	34%	177	100%	520
Land use, planning and zoning	2%	11	19%	101	32%	168	15%	78	31%	164	100%	523
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	2%	9	17%	87	34%	178	26%	134	22%	115	100%	523

Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Billings:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Animal control	7%	37	38%	198	30%	158	12%	61	14%	72	100%
Economic development	6%	29	34%	175	37%	194	7%	34	17%	87	100%	519
Health services	25%	132	44%	229	19%	101	5%	25	7%	36	100%	523
Services to seniors	9%	47	31%	162	17%	90	5%	25	38%	199	100%	522
Services to youth	5%	25	24%	124	25%	133	11%	60	35%	182	100%	524
Services to low-income people	3%	14	23%	119	26%	138	11%	55	38%	196	100%	522
Public library services	12%	65	42%	222	21%	112	4%	20	20%	106	100%	526
Public information services	7%	38	31%	159	31%	161	5%	26	26%	132	100%	516
Public schools	10%	52	41%	214	24%	128	8%	41	17%	91	100%	525
Cable television	13%	66	43%	223	22%	116	7%	38	15%	79	100%	521
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	6%	33	26%	135	30%	156	9%	47	28%	147	100%	518
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	3%	17	25%	128	32%	169	17%	88	23%	119	100%	521

Question 12: Government Services Overall												
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	The City of Billings	7%	37	49%	257	34%	178	6%	34	4%	24	100%
The Federal Government	5%	24	34%	178	38%	200	11%	58	13%	67	100%	529
The State Government	3%	17	43%	224	37%	196	7%	35	10%	55	100%	527
Yellowstone County Government	4%	22	43%	226	36%	188	6%	34	11%	58	100%	529

Question 13: Contact with City Employees		
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Billings within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	45%	234
Yes	55%	291
Total	100%	525

Question 14: City Employees												
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Billings in your most recent contact?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Knowledge	24%	70	55%	163	15%	43	6%	18	1%	3	100%
Responsiveness	27%	79	38%	114	22%	66	12%	35	1%	3	100%	297
Courtesy	34%	102	40%	118	16%	47	10%	29	0%	1	100%	297
Overall impression	28%	82	45%	132	16%	48	11%	33	1%	2	100%	296

Question 15: Government Performance												
Please rate the following categories of Billings government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	The value of services for the taxes paid to Billings	6%	31	31%	166	42%	219	12%	63	9%	49	100%
The overall direction that Billings is taking	4%	23	45%	240	36%	193	8%	41	6%	35	100%	532
The job Billings government does at welcoming citizen involvement	4%	20	28%	147	32%	171	15%	78	21%	114	100%	530
The job Billings government does at listening to citizens	3%	14	17%	92	39%	207	23%	121	18%	96	100%	530

Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity												
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Very unlikely		Don't know		Total	
	Recommend living in Billings to someone who asks	41%	222	44%	237	9%	47	4%	24	1%	7	100%
Remain in Billings for the next five years	64%	341	23%	121	9%	48	4%	21	1%	5	100%	536

Question 17: Impact of the Economy		
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:	Percent of respondents	Count
Very positive	2%	13
Somewhat positive	8%	45
Neutral	34%	182
Somewhat negative	43%	230
Very negative	12%	64
Total	100%	534

Question 18a: Policy Question 1										
To what extent would you support or oppose the following potential efforts to delay, reduce or eliminate property tax increases?	Strongly support		Somewhat support		Somewhat oppose		Strongly oppose		Total	
	Reduce City Hall operating hours	11%	60	46%	242	30%	157	12%	65	100%
Reduce Library operating hours	8%	44	33%	174	32%	170	26%	137	100%	526
Close one of seven fire stations	4%	22	7%	38	28%	147	61%	321	100%	528
Reduce park maintenance	3%	16	17%	91	42%	220	38%	199	100%	525
Eliminate recreation programs	4%	19	23%	118	39%	201	35%	183	100%	522
Reduce MET Transit operations	6%	31	18%	92	35%	185	41%	217	100%	525
Close one or more public swimming or wading pools	5%	28	19%	98	30%	160	46%	241	100%	527

Question 18b: Policy Question 2		
To what extent would you support or oppose creating a citywide Park Maintenance District to increase park construction and improve grounds maintenance?	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	23%	120
Somewhat support	45%	238
Somewhat oppose	13%	69
Strongly oppose	9%	49
Don't know	10%	50
Total	100%	527

Question 18c: Policy Question 3		
The City's charter limits the amount of property taxes the city can collect (currently \$2,421 on a house valued at \$200,000). If the city were to remove this limit, it would, along with all other cities and counties, be held to the State of Montana's statute that allows additional property taxes to be collected in order to produce taxes equal to the prior year, plus growth and inflation. To what extent do you support or oppose removing the City's current limit and adopting the State's limit?	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	4%	21
Somewhat support	18%	92
Somewhat oppose	17%	88
Strongly oppose	46%	239
Don't know	15%	80
Total	100%	520

Question D1: Employment Status		
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	26%	135
Yes, full-time	61%	322
Yes, part-time	14%	72
Total	100%	529

Question D2: Mode of Transportation Used for Commute	
During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below?	Percent of days mode used
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself	78%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	11%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	2%
Walk	2%
Bicycle	2%
Work at home	4%
Other	1%

Question D3: Length of Residency		
How many years have you lived in Billings?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than 2 years	8%	41
2 to 5 years	14%	76
6 to 10 years	11%	60
11 to 20 years	19%	100
More than 20 years	48%	259
Total	100%	535

Question D4: Housing Unit Type		
Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent of respondents	Count
One family house detached from any other houses	62%	329
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	11%	61
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	23%	121
Mobile home	4%	20
Other	1%	3
Total	100%	534

Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)		
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents	Count
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	32%	168
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	68%	357
Total	100%	525

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost		
About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners" association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than \$300 per month	7%	39
\$300 to \$599 per month	26%	134
\$600 to \$999 per month	34%	176
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	20%	106
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	9%	49
\$2,500 or more per month	3%	18
Total	100%	522

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household		
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	66%	354
Yes	34%	180
Total	100%	534

Question D8: Presence of Older Adults in Household		
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	78%	413
Yes	22%	119
Total	100%	533

Question D9: Household Income		
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than \$24,999	20%	103
\$25,000 to \$49,999	29%	150
\$50,000 to \$99,999	34%	175
\$100,000 to \$149,000	11%	56
\$150,000 or more	5%	27
Total	100%	512

Question D10: Ethnicity		
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents	Count
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	98%	511
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	2%	13
Total	100%	524

Question D11: Race		
What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents	Count
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5%	26
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	0%	2
Black or African American	1%	3
White	95%	500
Other	2%	8
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option		

Question D12: Age		
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents	Count
18 to 24 years	8%	42
25 to 34 years	23%	121
35 to 44 years	14%	76
45 to 54 years	22%	118
55 to 64 years	13%	70
65 to 74 years	10%	55
75 years or older	10%	52
Total	100%	533

Question D13: Gender		
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents	Count
Female	54%	289
Male	46%	242
Total	100%	532

Question D14: Registered to Vote		
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	8%	44
Yes	91%	483
Ineligible to vote	0%	1
Don't know	1%	6
Total	100%	533

Question D15: Voted in Last General Election		
Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	11%	60
Yes	88%	470
Ineligible to vote	0%	2
Don't know	0%	1
Total	100%	533

APPENDIX B: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The National Citizen Survey™ was developed to provide local jurisdictions an accurate, affordable and easy way to assess and interpret resident opinion about important community issues. While standardization of question wording and survey methods provide the rigor to assure valid results, each jurisdiction has enough flexibility to construct a customized version of The National Citizen Survey™ that asks residents about key local services and important local issues.

Results offer insight into residents' perspectives about local government performance and as such provide important benchmarks for jurisdictions working on performance measurement. The National Citizen Survey™ is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The National Citizen Survey™ permits questions to test support for local policies and answers to its questions also speak to community trust and involvement in community-building activities as well as to resident demographic characteristics.

SURVEY VALIDITY

The question of survey validity has two parts: 1) how can a jurisdiction be confident that the results from those who completed the questionnaire are representative of the results that would have been obtained had the survey been administered to the entire population? and 2) how closely do the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do?

To answer the first question, the best survey research practices were used for the resources spent to ensure that the results from the survey respondents reflect the opinions of residents in the entire jurisdiction. These practices include:

- Using a mail-out/mail-back methodology, which typically gets a higher response rate than phone for the same dollars spent. A higher response rate lessens the worry that those who did not respond are different than those who did respond.
- Selecting households at random within the jurisdiction to receive the survey. A random selection ensures that the households selected to receive the survey are similar to the entire population. A non-random sample may only include households from one geographic area, or from households of only one type.
- Over-sampling multi-family housing units to improve response from hard-to-reach, lower income, or younger apartment dwellers.
- Selecting the respondent within the household using an unbiased sampling procedure; in this case, the "birthday method." The cover letter included an instruction requesting that the respondent in the household be the adult (18 years old or older) who most recently had a birthday, irrespective of year of birth.
- Contacting potential respondents three times to encourage response from people who may have different opinions or habits than those who would respond with only a single prompt.
- Soliciting response on jurisdiction letterhead signed by the highest ranking elected official or staff member, thus appealing to the recipients' sense of civic responsibility.
- Providing a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
- Offering the survey in Spanish when appropriate and requested by City officials.
- Using the most recent available information about the characteristics of jurisdiction residents to weight the data to reflect the demographics of the population.

The answer to the second question about how closely the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do is more complex. Resident responses to surveys are influenced by a variety of factors. For questions about service quality, residents' expectations for

service quality play a role as well as the “objective” quality of the service provided, the way the resident perceives the entire community (that is, the context in which the service is provided), the scale on which the resident is asked to record his or her opinion and, of course, the opinion, itself, that a resident holds about the service. Similarly a resident’s report of certain behaviors is colored by what he or she believes is the socially desirable response (e.g., reporting tolerant behaviors toward “oppressed groups,” likelihood of voting a tax increase for services to poor people, use of alternative modes of travel to work besides the single occupancy vehicle), his or her memory of the actual behavior (if it is not a question speculating about future actions, like a vote), his or her confidence that he or she can be honest without suffering any negative consequences (thus the need for anonymity) as well as the actual behavior itself.

How closely survey results come to recording the way a person really feels or behaves often is measured by the coincidence of reported behavior with observed current behavior (e.g., driving habits), reported intentions to behave with observed future behavior (e.g., voting choices) or reported opinions about current community quality with objective characteristics of the community (e.g., feelings of safety correlated with rates of crime). There is a body of scientific literature that has investigated the relationship between reported behaviors and actual behaviors. Well-conducted surveys, by and large, do capture true respondent behaviors or intentions to act with great accuracy. Predictions of voting outcomes tend to be quite accurate using survey research, as do reported behaviors that are not about highly sensitive issues (e.g., family abuse or other illegal or morally sanctioned activities). For self-reports about highly sensitive issues, statistical adjustments can be made to correct for the respondents’ tendency to report what they think the “correct” response should be.

Research on the correlation of resident opinion about service quality and “objective” ratings of service quality tend to be ambiguous, some showing stronger relationships than others. NRC’s own research has demonstrated that residents who report the lowest ratings of street repair live in communities with objectively worse street conditions than those who report high ratings of street repair (based on road quality, delay in street repair, number of road repair employees). Similarly, the lowest rated fire services appear to be “objectively” worse than the highest rated fire services (expenditures per capita, response time, “professional” status of firefighters, breadth of services and training provided). Whether or not some research confirms the relationship between what residents think about a community and what can be seen “objectively” in a community, NRC has argued that resident opinion is a perspective that cannot be ignored by government administrators. NRC principals have written, “If you collect trash three times a day but residents think that your trash haul is lousy, you still have a problem.”

SURVEY SAMPLING

“Sampling” refers to the method by which survey recipients were chosen. All households within the City of Billings were eligible to participate in the survey; 1,200 were selected to receive the survey. These 1,200 households were randomly selected from a comprehensive list of all housing units within the City of Billings boundaries. The basis of the list of all housing units was a United States Postal Service listing of housing units within zip codes. Since some of the zip codes that serve the City of Billings households may also serve addresses that lie outside of the jurisdiction, the exact geographic location of each housing unit was compared to jurisdiction boundaries, using the most current municipal boundary file (updated on a quarterly basis), and addresses located outside of the City of Billings boundaries were removed from consideration.

To choose the 1,200 survey recipients, a systematic sampling method was applied to the list of households known to be within the City of Billings. Systematic sampling is a procedure whereby a complete list of all possible items is culled, selecting every Nth one until the appropriate amount of items is selected. Multi-family housing units were over sampled as residents of this type of housing typically respond at lower rates to surveys than do those in single-family housing units.

An individual within each household was selected using the birthday method. The birthday method selects a person within the household by asking the “person whose birthday has most recently passed” to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys. This instruction was contained in the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Selected households received three mailings, one week apart, beginning January 16, 2009. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey. The next mailing contained a letter from the city administrator inviting the household to participate, a questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. The final mailing contained a reminder letter, another survey and a postage-paid return envelope. The second cover letter asked those who had not completed the survey to do so and those who have already done so to refrain from turning in another survey. Completed surveys were collected over the following five weeks.

SURVEY RESPONSE RATE AND CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

Of the 1,200 surveys mailed, 40 were returned because the housing unit was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the 1,160 households receiving the survey mailings, 539 completed the survey, providing a response rate of 47%. In general, response rates obtained on local government resident surveys range from 25% to 40%.

In theory, in 95 cases out of 100, the results based on the number of responses obtained will differ by no more than four percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained had responses been collected from all City of Billings adults. This difference from the presumed population finding is referred to as the sampling error (or the “margin of error” or 95% confidence interval”). For subgroups of responses, the margin of sampling error is larger. In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of the public may introduce other sources of error. For example, the failure of some of the selected adults to participate in the sample or the difficulty of including all sectors of the population, such as residents of some institutions or group residences, may lead to somewhat different results.

In addition to sampling error, other sources of error may affect any survey, including the non-response of residents with opinions different from survey responders that may affect sample findings. Though standardized on The NCS, on other surveys, differences in question wording, order, translation and data entry, as examples, can lead to somewhat varying results.

SURVEY PROCESSING (DATA ENTRY)

Completed surveys received by NRC were assigned a unique identification number. Additionally, each survey was reviewed and “cleaned” as necessary. For example, a question may have asked a respondent to pick two items out of a list of five, but the respondent checked three; NRC staff would choose randomly two of the three selected items to be coded in the dataset.

Once all surveys were assigned a unique identification number, they were entered into an electronic dataset. This dataset was subject to a data entry protocol of “key and verify,” in which survey data were entered twice into an electronic dataset and then compared. Discrepancies were evaluated against the original survey form and corrected. Range checks as well as other forms of quality control were also performed.

SURVEY DATA WEIGHTING

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample were compared to those found in the 2000 Census estimates and other population norms for adults in the City of Billings. Sample results were weighted using the population norms to reflect the appropriate percent of those residents. Other discrepancies between the whole population and the sample were also aided by the weighting due to the intercorrelation of many socioeconomic characteristics.

The variables used for weighting were housing tenure and gender/age. This decision was based on:

- The disparity between the survey respondent characteristics and the population norms for these variables
- The saliency of these variables in detecting differences of opinion among subgroups

The primary objective of weighting survey data is to make the survey sample reflective of the larger population of the community. This is done by: 1) reviewing the sample demographics and comparing them to the population norms from the most recent Census or other sources and 2) comparing the responses to different questions for demographic subgroups. The demographic characteristics that are least similar to the Census and yield the most different results are the best candidates for data weighting. A third criterion sometimes used is the importance that the community places on a specific variable. For example, if a jurisdiction feels that accurate race representation is key to staff and public acceptance of the study results, additional consideration will be given in the weighting process to adjusting the race variable.

A special software program using mathematical algorithms is used to calculate the appropriate weights. A limitation of data weighting is that only 2-3 demographic variables can be adjusted in a single study. Several different weighting “schemes” are tested to ensure the best fit for the data.

The process actually begins at the point of sampling. Knowing that residents in single family dwellings are more likely to respond to a mail survey, NRC oversamples residents of multi-family dwellings to ensure their proper representation in the sample data. Rather than giving all residents an equal chance of receiving the survey, this is systematic, stratified sampling, which gives each resident of the jurisdiction a known chance of receiving the survey (and apartment dwellers, for example, a greater chance than single family home dwellers). As a consequence, results must be weighted to recapture the proper representation of apartment dwellers.

The results of the weighting scheme are presented in the table on the following page.

Billings Citizen Survey Weighting Table			
Characteristic	Population Norm1	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
Housing			
Rent home	32%	30%	32%
Own home	68%	70%	68%
Detached unit	70%	67%	65%
Attached unit	30%	33%	35%
Race and Ethnicity			
White alone, not Hispanic	91%	93%	92%
Hispanic and/or other race	9%	7%	8%
Sex and Age			
Female	53%	57%	54%
Male	47%	43%	46%
18-34 years of age	32%	16%	31%
35-54 years of age	35%	31%	36%
55+ years of age	33%	53%	33%
Females 18-34	16%	10%	16%
Females 35-54	19%	16%	19%
Females 55+	19%	31%	19%
Males 18-34	16%	6%	15%
Males 35-54	17%	15%	17%
Males 55+	14%	23%	14%

1 Source: 2006 ACS

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The survey dataset was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency distributions were presented in the body of the report.

Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity was one that NRC did not want to dismiss when crafting The National Citizen Survey™ questionnaire, because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, NRC has found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

“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.

Benchmark Comparisons

NRC has been leading the strategic use of surveys for local governments since 1991, when the principals of the company wrote the first edition of what became the classic text on citizen surveying. In *Citizen Surveys: how to do them, how to use them, what they mean*, published by ICMA, not only were the principles for quality survey methods articulated, but both the idea of benchmark data for citizen opinion and the method for gathering benchmark data were pioneered. The argument for benchmarks was called “In Search of Standards.” “What has been missing from a local government’s analysis of its survey results is the context that school administrators can supply when they tell parents how an 80 percent score on the social studies test compares to test results from other school systems...”

NRC’s database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services. Conducted with typically no fewer than 400 residents in each jurisdiction, opinions are intended to represent over 30 million Americans. NRC has innovated a method for quantitatively integrating the results of surveys that conducted by NRC with those that others have conducted. The integration methods have been thoroughly described not only in the Citizen Surveys book, but also in *Public Administration Review, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Scholars who specialize in the analysis of citizen surveys regularly have relied on this work (e.g., Kelly, J. &

Swindell, D. (2002). Service quality variation across urban space: First steps towards a model of citizen satisfaction. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24, 271-288.; Van Ryzin, G., Muzzio, D., Immerwahr, S., Gulick, L. & Martinez, E. (2004). Drivers and consequences of citizen satisfaction: An application of the American Customer Satisfaction Index Model to New York City, *Public Administration Review*, 64, 331- 341). The method described in those publications is refined regularly and statistically tested on a growing number of citizen surveys in NRC's proprietary databases. NRC's work on calculating national benchmarks for resident opinions about service delivery and quality of life won the Samuel C. May award for research excellence from the Western Governmental Research Association.

The Role of Comparisons

Benchmark comparisons are used for performance measurement. Jurisdictions use the comparative information to help interpret their own citizen survey results, to create or revise community plans, to evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions, to measure local government performance. Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. When surveys of service satisfaction turn up "good" citizen evaluations, jurisdictions need to know how others rate their services to understand if "good" is good enough. Furthermore, in the absence of national or peer community comparisons, a jurisdiction is left with comparing its fire protection rating to its street maintenance rating. That comparison is unfair. Streets always lose to fire. More important and harder questions need to be asked; for example, how do residents' ratings of fire service compare to opinions about fire service in other communities?

A police department that provides the fastest and most efficient service—one that closes most of its cases, solves most of its crimes and keeps the crime rate low—still has a problem to fix if the residents in the community it intends to protect believe services are not very good compared to ratings given by residents to their own objectively "worse" departments. The benchmark data can help that police department – or any department – to understand how well citizens think it is doing. Without the comparative data, it would be like bowling in a tournament without knowing what the other teams are scoring. NRC recommends that citizen opinion be used in conjunction with other sources of data about budget, personnel and politics to help managers know how to respond to comparative results.

Jurisdictions in the benchmark database are distributed geographically across the country and range from small to large in population size. Most commonly, comparisons are made to the entire database. Comparisons may also be made to subsets of jurisdictions (for example, within a given region or population category). Despite the differences in jurisdiction characteristics, all are in the business of providing local government services to residents. Though individual jurisdiction circumstances, resources and practices vary, the objective in every community is to provide services that are so timely, tailored and effective that residents conclude the services are of the highest quality. High ratings in any jurisdiction, like SAT scores in any teen household, bring pride and a sense of accomplishment.

Comparison of Billings to the Benchmark Database

The City of Billings chose to have comparisons made to the entire database and a subset of similar jurisdictions from the database (Western region). A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been provided when a similar question on the City of Billings Survey was included in NRC's database and there were at

least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons are available, Billings' results are noted as being "above" the benchmark, "below" the benchmark or "similar to" the benchmark. This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of Billings' rating to the benchmark (the rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked).

APPENDIX C: SURVEY MATERIALS

The following pages contain copies of the survey materials sent to randomly selected households within the City of Billings.



City of Billings
210 North 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101

Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit NO. 94



City of Billings
210 North 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101

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Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit NO. 94

Dear Billings Resident,

Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the City of Billings. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,



Christina F. Volek
City Administrator

Dear Billings Resident,

Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the City of Billings. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

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Sincerely,



Christina F. Volek
City Administrator



CITY OF BILLINGS

OFFICE OF CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. BOX 1178
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59103
(406) 657-8433
FAX (406) 657-8390



January 2009

Dear Billings Resident:

The City of Billings wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in Billings' 2009 Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your feedback will help the City set benchmarks for tracking the quality of services provided to residents. Your answers will help the City Council make decisions that affect our community. You should find the questions interesting and we will definitely find your answers useful. Please participate!

To get a representative sample of Billings residents, the adult (anyone 18 years or older) in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey. Year of birth of the adult does not matter.

Please have the appropriate member of the household spend a few minutes to answer all the questions and return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Your responses will remain completely anonymous.**

Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey please call (406) 657-8222.

Please help us shape the future of Billings. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Christina F. Volek
City Administrator

*Billings Pride:
City-wide*



CITY OF BILLINGS

OFFICE OF CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. BOX 1178
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59103
(406) 657-8433
FAX (406) 657-8390



January 2009

Dear Billings Resident:

About one week ago, you should have received a copy of the enclosed survey. **If you completed it and sent it back, we thank you for your time and ask you to discard this survey. Please do not respond twice.** If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, we would appreciate your response. The City of Billings wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in the City of Billings' Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your feedback will help the City set benchmarks for tracking the quality of services provided to residents. Your answers will help the City Council make decisions that affect our community. You should find the questions interesting and we will definitely find your answers useful. Please participate!

To get a representative sample of Billings residents, the adult (anyone 18 years or older) in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey. Year of birth of the adult does not matter.

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Please help us shape the future of Billings. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Christina F. Volek
City Administrator

Billings Pride:
City-wide

The City of Billings 2009 Citizen Survey

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult's year of birth does not matter. Please select the response (by circling the number or checking the box) that most closely represents your opinion for each question. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Billings:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Billings as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
Billings as a place to raise children	1	2	3	4	5
Billings as a place to work.....	1	2	3	4	5
Billings as a place to retire	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5

2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Billings as a whole:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Billings	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Educational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of car travel in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bus travel in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bicycle travel in Billings	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic flow on major streets.....	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of public parking	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality child care	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventative health services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality.....	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Billings over the past 2 years:

	<i>Much too slow</i>	<i>Somewhat too slow</i>	<i>Right amount</i>	<i>Somewhat too fast</i>	<i>Much too fast</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Population growth	1	2	3	4	5	6
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Jobs growth.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Billings?
 Not a problem Minor problem Moderate problem Major problem Don't know

5. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Billings:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft).....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
In your neighborhood during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In your neighborhood after dark.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Billings' downtown area during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Billings' downtown area after dark.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?
 No → Go to Question 9 Yes → Go to Question 8 Don't know → Go to Question 9

8. If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?
 No Yes Don't know

9. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Billings?

	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times
Used Billings public libraries or their services	1	2	3	4	5
Used Billings recreation centers	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a recreation program or activity	1	2	3	4	5
Visited a neighborhood park or city park	1	2	3	4	5
Ridden a local bus within Billings	1	2	3	4	5
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	1	2	3	4	5
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	1	2	3	4	5
Read Billings Newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the City of Billings Web site (at www.ci.billings.mt.us)	1	2	3	4	5
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home.....	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Billings	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Billings	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a club or civic group in Billings	1	2	3	4	5
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	1	2	3	4	5

10. 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)?

- Just about every day
 Several times a week
 Several times a month
 Once a month
 Several times a year
 Once a year or less
 Never

The City of Billings 2009 Citizen Survey

11. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Billings:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Police services	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance or emergency medical services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education	1	2	3	4	5
Municipal courts	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling.....	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage.....	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services	1	2	3	4	5
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	1	2	3	4	5
City parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning and zoning	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development	1	2	3	4	5
Health services	1	2	3	4	5
Services to seniors.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to youth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to low-income people	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services	1	2	3	4	5
Public schools.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cable television	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts.....	1	2	3	4	5

12. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The City of Billings	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government	1	2	3	4	5
The State Government	1	2	3	4	5
Yellowstone County Government	1	2	3	4	5

13. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Billings within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?

- No → Go to Question 15 Yes → Go to Question 14

14. What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Billings in your most recent contact? (Rate each characteristic below.)

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Knowledge.....	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness.....	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression.....	1	2	3	4	5

15. Please rate the following categories of Billings government performance:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The value of services for the taxes paid to Billings.....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Billings is taking.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Billings government does at welcoming citizen involvement.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Billings government does at listening to citizens.....	1	2	3	4	5

16. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:

	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Somewhat likely</i>	<i>Somewhat unlikely</i>	<i>Very unlikely</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recommend living in Billings to someone who asks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Billings for the next five years.....	1	2	3	4	5

17. 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:

- Very positive Somewhat positive Neutral Somewhat negative Very negative

18. Please check the response that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:

a. To what extent would you support or oppose the following potential efforts to delay, reduce or eliminate property tax increases?

	<i>Strongly support</i>	<i>Somewhat support</i>	<i>Somewhat oppose</i>	<i>Strongly oppose</i>
Reduce City Hall operating hours.....	1	2	3	4
Reduce Library operating hours.....	1	2	3	4
Close one of seven fire stations.....	1	2	3	4
Reduce park maintenance.....	1	2	3	4
Eliminate recreation programs.....	1	2	3	4
Reduce MET Transit operations.....	1	2	3	4
Close one or more public swimming or wading pools.....	1	2	3	4

b. To what extent would you support or oppose creating a citywide Park Maintenance District to increase park construction and improve grounds maintenance?

- Strongly support Somewhat support Somewhat oppose Strongly oppose Don't know

c. The City's charter limits the amount of property taxes the city can collect (currently \$2,421 on a house valued at \$200,000). If the city were to remove this limit, it would, along with all other cities and counties, be held to the State of Montana's statute that allows additional property tax to be collected in order to produce taxes equal to the prior year, plus growth and inflation. To what extent do you support or oppose removing the City's current limit and adopting the State's limit?

- Strongly support Somewhat support Somewhat oppose Strongly oppose Don't know

d. What is the most pressing issue for our city government to address at this time?

The City of Billings 2009 Citizen Survey

Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

D1. Are you currently employed for pay?

- No → Go to Question D3
- Yes, full time → Go to Question D2
- Yes, part time → Go to Question D2

D2. During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below? (Enter the total number of days, using whole numbers.)

- Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself days
- Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults days
- Bus, Rail, Subway or other public transportation days
- Walk days
- Bicycle days
- Work at home days
- Other days

D3. How many years have you lived in Billings?

- Less than 2 years 11-20 years
- 2-5 years More than 20 years
- 6-10 years

D4. Which best describes the building you live in?

- One family house detached from any other houses
- House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)
- Building with two or more apartments or condominiums
- Mobile home
- Other

D5. Is this house, apartment or mobile home...

- Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment?
- Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear?

D6. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?

- Less than \$300 per month
- \$300 to \$599 per month
- \$600 to \$999 per month
- \$1,000 to \$1,499 per month
- \$1,500 to \$2,499 per month
- \$2,500 or more per month

D7. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?

- No Yes

D8. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?

- No Yes

D9. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)

- Less than \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

Please respond to both question D10 and D11:

D10. Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?

- No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino
- Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino

D11. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- White
- Other

D12. In which category is your age?

- 18-24 years 55-64 years
- 25-34 years 65-74 years
- 35-44 years 75 years or older
- 45-54 years

D13. What is your sex?

- Female
- Male

D14. Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?

- No
- Yes
- Ineligible to vote
- Don't know

D15. Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?

- No
- Yes
- Ineligible to vote
- Don't know

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the postage paid envelope to:
National Research Center, Inc., 3005 30th St., Boulder, CO 80301



City of Billings
210 North 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101

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