



New England States Performance Measurement Project

Measure, Share, Improve

Peterborough Citizen Satisfaction Survey: 2011 Results Summary

June 2011



The Research Bureau



INTRODUCTION

Nine cities and towns in New England participated in an online citizen satisfaction survey during the winter of 2010-11. In the fall of 2009, five towns in the New England States Performance Measurement Project participated in the first online survey. The purpose of citizen satisfaction surveys is to determine what residents think of the services provided by their municipal government and how they view the quality of life in their town or city. The leadership of these participating towns believes that obtaining residents' views is critical to their ability to provide the best level of services while utilizing tax dollars most effectively and efficiently. The areas surveyed included public works, parks and recreation, police, fire, emergency services/rescue, permitting and code enforcement, town management

and administrative leadership. The Worcester Regional Research Bureau, which designed the survey and analyzed the results, hopes that the results are used to enhance the decision-making process and to indicate where there is need to improve the delivery of services and where the town is performing well.

The findings for Peterborough, NH, below are based on this online survey. Postcards were sent to 622 residents inviting them to participate in the survey. A total of 103 people completed the survey for a response rate of about 16.6%. Among respondents, almost 60% have lived in Peterborough for 11 or more years, about 65% were employed outside the home, 52% were female, 45% were between the ages of 45-64, and about 68% had no children under the age of 18 currently living in their household.

RESULTS

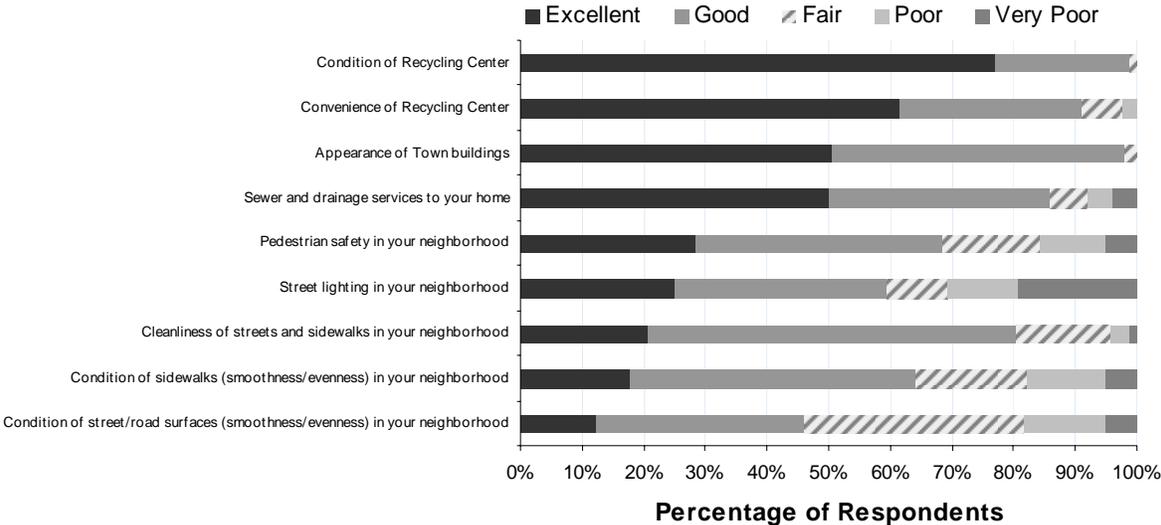
Respondents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of life in Peterborough; 61% of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” while 36% were “satisfied.” Sixty-eight percent of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” with Peterborough as a place to raise children while an additional 27% were “satisfied.”¹ However, less than half of respondents were satisfied with the town’s efforts to attract businesses and jobs to the area (44% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”).

When respondents were asked to rate a variety of municipal services based on their own observations and experiences, high ratings went to the condition of the recycling center, with 99% of respondents with an opinion rating this service as “excellent” or “good” (see **Figure 1**). Ninety-eight percent of respondents rated

the appearance of town buildings as “excellent” or “good.” Lower ratings went to the condition of streets and sidewalks. Less than half of respondents (46%) rated the condition of street/road surfaces as “excellent” or “good,” while another 36% rated it as “fair,” and about 18% said “poor” or “very poor.” Sixty-four percent rated the condition of sidewalks as “excellent” or “good.” Ninety-three percent of respondents with an opinion said they “strongly agree” or “agree” that residential streets were passable the day after a winter storm event.

More than half of respondents (57%) had utilized the Town’s parks or recreation programs in the past year. High ratings went to the appearance, cleanliness and upkeep of parks (63% “very satisfied” and an additional 32% were “satisfied”) and the qualifications and performance of recreation staff (94% “very satisfied” or “satisfied”). Lower ratings went to the

Figure 1: Respondents Ratings* of Various Town Services

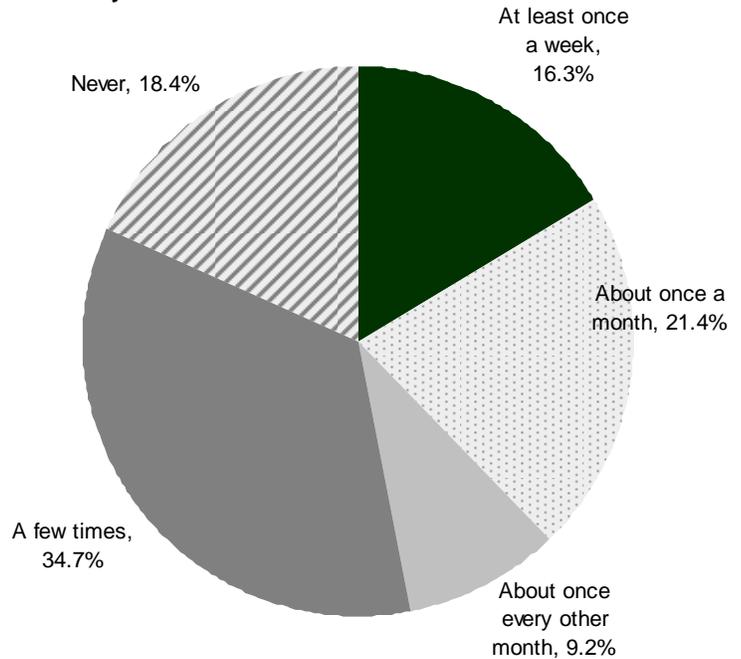


variety of teenager programs (62% satisfied) and the variety of family programs (78% satisfied).

About four out of five (82%) respondents have utilized the public library during the past year as seen in **Figure 2**, and gave high satisfaction ratings to a number of services or features of the public library. Ninety-eight percent of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the quality of art exhibits and showcase displays, while 96% were satisfied with the accessibility to services and facilities. Also, 95% of respondents were satisfied with the library hours of operation. There was a bit less satisfaction with the variety of programs offered (81% of respondents with an opinion were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”) and with the quality of adult programs and services offered by the library (86% of respondents with an opinion were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”).

About thirty-two percent of respondents indicated that they or someone in their household had received assistance from the Police Department over the past year, and of these respondents, 96.3% were satisfied with the Police Department’s response time, 93.3% were satisfied with the professionalism of staff, and 100% were satisfied with the quality of service provided.

Figure 2: Frequency of use of Peterborough public library facilities and/or online services



Twelve percent of respondents or someone in their household had received assistance from the Fire Department over the past year, of which a quarter received fire suppression services (a third received emergency medical services, while 50% answered “other”).² Of respondents who had contact with the Fire Department in the past year, 90% were satisfied with the department’s response time, 91.6% with the professionalism of staff and 83.3% with the quality of service provided. About ten percent of respondents indicated that they or a member of their household had received ambulance/advanced life support services, and of these respondents, 90% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the ambulance service/ paramedic’s response time, the professionalism of staff and the quality of service provided. Of the 10% of respondents who called 911 in the

past year for emergency services, 90% were satisfied with the assistance received from the person who took their 911 call.³

About 12% of respondents had applied for a building permit or had been a part of the permit process in the town during the past year. Of these respondents, 91% were satisfied with the ease of obtaining information and materials during the process, 100% agreed that town staff was knowledgeable about the overall process, and 90% were satisfied with the inspection process.⁴

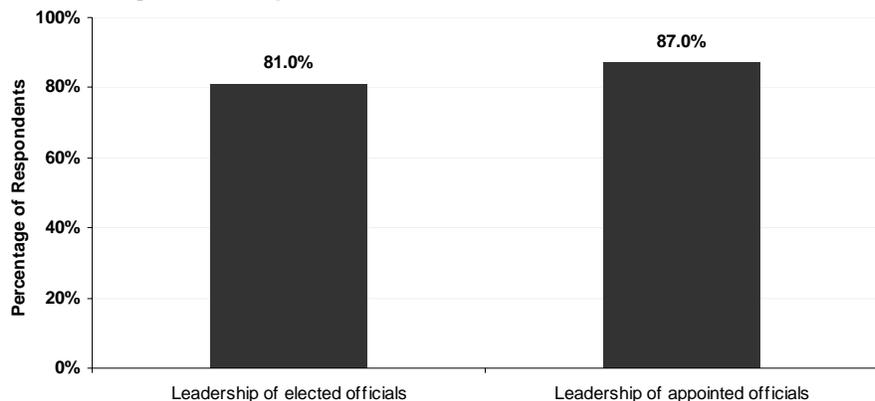
About 81% of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the leadership of elected officials in the town, while about 87% of respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the leadership of appointed officials (see **Figure 3**). Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with various town offices and departments that they have been in contact with over the past year. High ratings of users were given to Emergency Medical Services (97% satisfied), Police Department (96% satisfied) and Information Technology/ Services (95.5% satisfied).

Lower ratings were given to Planning and Zoning (68% satisfied), the Assessor (75% satisfied), and the Select Board (71% satisfied). It is important to note, however, that for most of these departments or

town offices, the majority of respondents had not used them or had no contact with them, so the results of this particular question are based on a small number of individuals. Also, when asked specifically about their experience with the Finance Department or Tax Collector (64% of respondents had interacted with them over the past year), more than 91% of respondents were satisfied with its customer service and the assistance, knowledge, and professionalism of the staff. Ninety-six percent of respondents had some interaction with the Town Clerk over the past year, and more than 93% of these respondents were satisfied with its customer service and the assistance, knowledge, and professionalism of the staff, and also with their voting experience.

The results indicate that in several areas, the majority of respondents are very satisfied with Peterborough as a place to live, its quality of life and with the services provided by the town. High satisfaction ratings went to the emergency services department, the library, certain town services, and the leadership of the

Figure 3: Respondents' Satisfaction with Town Officials



town. However, lower ratings were given to the town's efforts in economic development and certain town services

such as the condition of streets and sidewalks.

¹ In this analysis, "respondents with an opinion" excludes respondents who answered with "No Opinion," "Did Not Use," etc., so that the results reflect participants who had an opinion or related experience to the particular question.

² Respondents could check more than one option, so values may add up to more than 100%.

³ It is important to note that a small number of respondents utilized these emergency services, so the results of this section are based on a small number of individuals.

⁴ It is important to note that a small number of respondents had gone through the permit process, so the results of this section are based on a small number of individuals.