



GODBE RESEARCH
Gain Insight



Redwood City

2010 City Satisfaction Survey

January 2011

The City of Redwood City commissioned Godbe Research to conduct a survey of residents with the following research objectives:

- a) Assess overall perceptions of living in Redwood City;
- b) Gauge satisfaction with the City's performance in providing services and programs;
- c) Gather resident feedback on specific issues, such as sense of community and City communications;
- d) Identify any differences in opinions due to demographic and/or geographic characteristics; and
- e) Track the results of surveys conducted in 2008, 2003, and 2001.

- Data Collection Telephone Interviewing
- Universe 55,930 adult residents of Redwood City
- Fielding Dates November 17 through 23, 2010
- Interview Length 18 minutes
- Interview Languages English and Spanish
- Sample Size 400
- Margin of Error $\pm 4.9\%$

Executive Summary

Quality of Life and Important Issues

- The survey found that residents continue to be highly satisfied with the overall quality of life in Redwood City, and share a positive outlook toward the future.
 - More than 9 out of 10 residents reported that they are “very satisfied” (60%) or “somewhat satisfied” (33%) with the quality of life.
 - Further, almost 3 out of 4 residents are optimistic about the quality of life in Redwood City looking ahead to the next 5 years.
- As in previous surveys, residents shared diverse perspectives and cited a variety of issues that are most important for the future. Residents’ concerns largely reflect current events and community issues, and these have changed significantly from previous surveys.
 - In line with an optimistic outlook and high satisfaction with quality of life, roughly 1 out of 7 residents did not identify an important issue facing the City.
 - Otherwise, residents most frequently cited education (15%); the economy (11%) and jobs (4%); reducing crime (8%) and gangs (4%); and several issues related to growth and development including creating affordable housing (7%) and developing the Saltworks property (3%).
 - The economy continues to be a more prevalent issue than in 2001 and 2003. Additionally, resident concerns with improving the quality of education increased from 2008, and returned to the levels observed in the 2001 and 2003 surveys.
 - In contrast, fewer residents identified affordable housing or traffic congestion as the most important issue facing the city.

Executive Summary

Sense of Community

- A majority of residents feel a strong sense of community living in Redwood City and interact with their neighbors.
 - Nearly 9 out of 10 residents reported feeling a sense of community. Moreover, 6 out of 10 residents reported feeling a “very strong” (26%) or “somewhat strong” (36%) sense of community, and these ratings are consistent with the 2008 survey.
 - Despite the current economic climate, the results suggest that sense of community has slightly strengthened from the 2003 survey, as there was an 8 percent increase in “very strong” responses.
 - In addition, more than 9 out of 10 residents reported that they know or interact with at least several of their neighbors. More specifically, 56 percent interact with several neighbors and 35 percent interact with half of their neighbors or more.

Executive Summary

Community Involvement and Potential Volunteer Events

- Many residents volunteer or participate with a local organization; however, there may be potential to increase involvement through more flexible scheduling and community outreach efforts.
 - Consistent with the 2008 survey, roughly half of residents had volunteered or participated with a group or organization in Redwood City or donated money or other resources.
 - By a wide margin, residents who were not involved with local groups mentioned that they do not have time (45%). In addition, a number of these residents reported that they did not know of any local organizations (9%) or that they needed more information (5%).
 - Community involvement was particularly high among women, residents ages 25 to 34 and 45 to 54, and those living in Oak Knoll/Edgewood Park East of Alameda de las Pulgas and Roosevelt North of Jefferson.
 - Residents most frequently cited involvement with children or youth organizations (19%), public or private schools (17%), and church or religious organizations (17%).
 - Between half and two-thirds of residents reported that their household would be likely to participate in a City-sponsored volunteer event in the future. More specifically, two-thirds of households would be likely to participate in Neighborhood Watch and crime prevention programs. Likelihood of helping with special events, such as Hometown Holidays and 4th of July, was also high at 57 percent.
 - Notably, residents who are currently involved with local organizations reported greater likelihood of participating in City-sponsored volunteer events, which suggests that these residents could be even further mobilized.

Executive Summary

Ratings of City Services

- Residents report a high level of satisfaction with the job Redwood City is doing to provide City services as a whole.
 - Fully 85 percent of residents are satisfied with City services, with 36 percent “very satisfied” and 49 percent “somewhat satisfied.”
 - As might be expected given the economic downturn, there was a slight decrease in “very satisfied” responses from 2008 (41%) to 2010 (36%). However, total satisfaction with City services in the current survey (85%) is consistent with the results from 2008 (86%) and 2003 (87%), and continues to represent a slight increase from 2001 (81%).
 - Satisfaction with City services was particularly high among residents of Redwood Shores. Otherwise, satisfaction was consistent across demographic groups, including gender, age, ethnicity, and household income.
- Residents also indicated high satisfaction with a wide range of City services, and satisfaction with several services has increased from previous surveys.
 - Satisfied residents significantly outnumbered dissatisfied residents in all cases. Additionally, residents were at least “somewhat satisfied” with 9 of the 15 services tested.
 - Residents currently are more satisfied with the City’s efforts to attract people to the downtown area for events and activities; trim and maintain City trees; and provide affordable housing. In contrast, there was a decrease in satisfaction with street sweeping services from the 2001 survey.

Executive Summary

Public Safety Services

- Ratings of public safety continue to remain positive, and the results indicate that residents feel significantly safer in the downtown area after dark than they did prior to downtown revitalization efforts.
 - Overall, three-quarters of residents said the police department does an “excellent” (28%) or “good” (45%) job of addressing neighborhood concerns, and these results are consistent with previous surveys.
 - Further, residents were between “somewhat” and “very satisfied” with traffic law enforcement, neighborhood police patrols, and the City’s efforts to prevent crime.
 - Similar to the 2003 and 2008 surveys, 4 out of 5 residents feel “very safe” (43%) or “reasonably safe” (39%) walking alone in their neighborhood after dark.
 - Currently 3 out of 4 residents feel “very safe” (34%) or “reasonably safe” (39%) walking alone in business downtown areas after dark. These results are consistent with the 2008 survey, and continue to be significantly more positive than levels observed in 2003. More specifically, nearly twice as many residents feel “very safe” walking alone downtown after dark than in 2003 (34% vs. 18%).
 - Among the residents who reported that they do not feel safe walking alone after dark, they most frequently mentioned “gangs or other crime” as the reason.

Executive Summary

Park and Recreation Services

- Use of City parks and recreation has slightly declined from 2001. However, a majority of residents are satisfied with the quality of facilities and programs.
 - 58 percent of households had used a City park, recreation facility, or recreation program within the past year – equal to the level in 2008 (58%), but lower than that observed in 2003 (65%) and 2001 (70%).
 - Three-quarters of residents rated local parks, recreation facilities, and recreation programs as “excellent” (29%) or “good” (46%). Ratings have declined slightly from the peak observed in 2008, but are consistent with 2001 ratings.
 - Notably, ratings of parks and recreation were more positive among the households that had used the facilities in the past 12 months. These results suggest that some residents may not be aware of the current level of service, and are basing their ratings on use several years ago.
 - Residents were between “somewhat” and “very satisfied” with 8 of the 9 park and recreation services and features tested in the survey. In addition, satisfaction with these specific services and features increased from the 2003 survey. However, a higher proportion of residents were unaware of the quality of these facilities and programs, which could reflect the slight decline in use.
 - Fully 7 in 10 households had attended a Redwood City downtown event in the past year, and 82 percent of residents were “very” (66%) or “somewhat satisfied” (16%) with these events. Downtown events are highly effective in bringing the community together, and these events positively contribute to residents’ sense of community. Notably, nearly three times as many attendees reported feeling a “very strong” sense of community.

Executive Summary

Public Library Services

- A majority of residents had used Redwood City public library services in the past year. In addition, residents indicated high satisfaction with specific library services and features.
 - Currently, 7 out of 10 residents reported that their household had used a Redwood City public library or library services, which is generally consistent with past surveys.
 - A higher percentage of Hispanic residents, residents ages 18 to 24, and Redwood Shores residents reported library use. Further, approximately 85 percent of library patron households had visited the Main Downtown Library in the past 12 months.
 - Overall, 84 percent of residents rated public library services as “excellent” (52%) or “good” (32%). These results are similar to the 2008 survey, and represent a 10 percent increase in ratings of “excellent” from the 2001 and 2003 surveys.
 - For each of the five library services and features tested in the survey, less than 10 percent of residents reported dissatisfaction. Although satisfaction ratings were highly positive, approximately one-third of residents did not have an opinion of the availability of multimedia materials or computers at the library. As such, many residents may benefit from additional information on local library features.
 - Finally, residents’ reasons for not visiting the library largely reflect personal preferences, rather than some defect or problem with the library: “Too busy, don’t have time to use”; “Use the Internet instead”; and “Don’t read books/No need to use.”

Executive Summary

Interaction and Communication with the City

- As in the 2008 survey, residents who were satisfied with their interaction with the City regarding an issue or problem significantly outnumbered those who were dissatisfied.
 - Just 1 out of 5 residents had called, written, or gone to see a City employee or Council member about an issue or problem in the past 12 months.
 - Of these residents, 62 percent were satisfied with the quality of information and level of courtesy, whereas 38 percent were dissatisfied. By a wide margin, dissatisfied residents most frequently reported that their problem was not resolved (50%).
- The results recommend that the City continue to use a variety of communication methods to inform the community.
 - Residents mentioned a wide variety of sources for information on City activities and events. At the same time, there was a significant increase from 2008 in residents who prefer official online City sources, including the City website (16%) and City email notices (12%).
 - When asked how they would prefer to receive information from the City on local services and events, residents were roughly split in their preference for printed information versus online information. More specifically, 45 percent would prefer to receive a City newsletter, whereas 54 percent would prefer to receive information through City email (30%) or the City website (17%).
 - Just a handful of residents indicated a preference for receiving information from the City through Facebook (6%) or Twitter (1%), which indicates that the City has time to further consider these resources before implementing.
 - An overwhelming majority of residents (90%) reported that they access the Internet, with 80 percent indicating that they use it at least once a day or more. Further, Internet access has increased significantly from 2008.