

# Agenda Report

April 10, 2000

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** CYNTHIA J. KURTZ, CITY MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** FY1999 CITIZENS SURVEY RESULTS

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This report is for information only.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The results of the FY1999 Citizens Survey are similar to the results of the previous year's survey, showing a high level of satisfaction with city programs, customer service and quality of life in Pasadena. Areas receiving very high scores include police and fire services, libraries, ARTS buses, utility services, and the *Pasadena In Focus* newsletter.

Although satisfaction ratings were high overall, survey results also revealed areas of citizen concern. Among the priority concerns are traffic, parking, public safety, code enforcement and child care. In addition, the survey results showed a low level of familiarity with some city services and programs, indicating a need for improved communication and outreach. Although many of these issues are already being addressed in current department workplans, the survey information will be used to further define problems, help identify solutions and develop future workplans and budgets.

**BACKGROUND:**

Since 1993, the city has conducted an annual survey of Pasadena citizens to gauge the level of satisfaction with city services and programs. Five thousand surveys are mailed throughout the city with a typical response rate of just over 900 surveys, or 19%. Survey results are used by staff to improve services, prioritize budgets, and develop new programs and services.

A summary of survey results is attached and an analysis of survey results is presented below. Services are grouped by categories, as they were presented in the survey document. Individual services in each in category were evaluated for several factors including the level of citizen satisfaction, changes in satisfaction ratings, and awareness/familiarity with services and facilities.

## **Satisfaction**

With results similar to those of last year's survey, citizens expressed a high level of satisfaction with city services and programs. Of the 54 questions asking respondents to rate a specific service or program, 43 received a 75% satisfaction rating or higher. Satisfaction ratings for specific services are discussed further below.

The survey also provided an open-ended comments section at the end of the survey. Roughly 398 respondents used this opportunity to describe positive and negative issues in their neighborhood or in the city in general. The most frequently mentioned issues were traffic, planning and development, parking, and public schools.

Although the survey did not raise the issue of public education or schools in Pasadena, residents wrote in 27 comments stating concern with the quality of the Pasadena Unified School District. A summary of these comments is attached.

## **Awareness and Familiarity**

Several questions in the survey asked if the respondent was familiar with a specific city service, rather than if they were satisfied with the service level. In some cases, survey results revealed that a significant number of residents are not aware of some city services. As a result, departments will increase communication efforts to improve awareness.

Although a total of 910 surveys were returned, each respondent did not answer every question on the survey. The highest response to any one question was 901 and the lowest 170. A low number of responses indicates that a large number of respondents were not familiar with the service and as a result left it blank or checked "no opinion/not sure." In general, the lowest number of responses were to questions regarding family and health services. This is to be expected in this area, as these are programs that may not be utilized by a large percentage of the population.

Survey respondents also indicated how frequently they visited several city facilities. The least visited city facilities are the Permit Center and the Health Center with only 2% visiting these sites once a month or more, followed by community and/or recreation centers with 5% of respondents visiting these sites at least once per month or more. The most frequently used sites are city parks, with 34% using them once a month or more, and the Central Library with 24%.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Safety and Emergency Services**

Police Department emergency response times received a satisfaction rating of 94%. In a series of questions regarding feeling safe in various areas of the city (parks, libraries, Old Pasadena, etc.), satisfaction scores improved in all areas since last year. The largest improvement was in feeling safe around the Rose Bowl, increasing from 68% satisfaction last year to 84% satisfaction this year.

Citizens showed some concern over feeling safe walking alone at night in their neighborhood (62%) and feeling safe in Pasadena parks (64%). These issues are being addressed through the Public Safety Strategic Plan, including police patrol, park lighting and other safety measures.

In a series of questions regarding awareness of programs, survey results showed that citizens are not aware of several important police programs. For example, only 16% reported awareness of the Service Area Advisory Boards and 27% reported awareness of the Community Service Policing Plan. The Police Department is improving communications to increase awareness of these programs.

### **Fire**

The Fire Department received high satisfaction ratings for emergency response time (99%), emergency medical services (98%) and for fire safety education (92%).

A question regarding neighborhood training for large emergencies received a mixed response. The 51% satisfaction score revealed in the survey is inconsistent with the experience of the department. To date, more than 1200 residents have participated in the PERT neighborhood training program and almost all have provided positive feedback at the conclusion of the course. Staff believes the question may have been worded poorly, resulting in a low response rate (only 288 people answered the question) and contradictory results. In the future, the question will be revised to ask if citizens are aware that the program is offered and if they are interested in participating, thus yielding more valuable information for planning and outreach.

### **Neighborhood and Housing Services**

With 66% of respondents reporting that they owned their residence, 42% were familiar with their neighborhood association and 32% were members. Based on these numbers, it is surprising that only 13% stated that they were familiar with Neighborhood Connections programs. With 34% membership in neighborhood associations, it is likely that a much higher percentage is familiar with the facilities at the Neighborhood Connections office and with the bi-weekly mailings.

Respondents were satisfied with graffiti removal (81%) and with the professionalism and courteousness of code enforcement officers (85%). The enforcement of property maintenance codes in neighborhoods, however, received only 70% satisfaction. Within the last year, a number of changes have been instituted to improve enforcement, including new citation authority, the vacant lot and building ordinance, streamlined administrative procedures and an increased case load to the Code Enforcement Commission. Staff also expects to implement additional improvements in the near future including a public information campaign and further administrative improvements. As a result, it is anticipated that citizen satisfaction will show improvements in future surveys. In addition, the survey questions may be refined in future surveys to more specifically identify areas of concern.

### **Family and Health Services**

Satisfaction levels were good for programs that meet the needs of seniors (88%) and for summer job training for youth (80%).

Job training and placement for adults scored lower at 61%. Because of the low number of responses to this question (170), staff believes a point-of-service survey would be a more appropriate measure of effectiveness in this area. This question will be eliminated in future surveys.

The availability of quality and affordable child care received a satisfaction rating of only 55%. The number clearly indicates an area of concern within the community, however, the data has limited usefulness since it does not separate out the issues of affordability and quality. Future surveys will present these issues in separate questions. In addition, future surveys will include a demographic question regarding the number of children in the household under the age of 12 to provide more context to responses.

Under health services, the city received good satisfaction ratings for cleanliness in Pasadena restaurants (93%) and for partnerships with the community to improve community health (83%). Although only 13% of respondents have received services from the Pasadena Health Center, awareness of services provided was generally twice as high. A priority of the Health Department is to increase awareness of public health activities and the important role public health plays in creating quality of life in the city.

**Libraries, Recreation and Parks**

In a series of five questions, all library programs received satisfaction scores above 90%. Programs for children received the highest score, at 97%, with overall service receiving a score of 96%. Parks and recreation also received good satisfaction ratings, with results above 80% on programs and facilities. In future surveys, these two categories will be separated to provide a better format for additional questions regarding parks and recreation.

**Quality of Health**

Satisfaction with the general quality of life in Pasadena rose slightly after showing significant increases last year:

	<i>1999</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>96/97</i>	<i>94/95</i>
Pasadena as a place to live	95%	96%	72%	73%
Pasadena as a place to raise children	79%	75%	35%	35%
Pasadena as a place to work	95%	94%	53%	58%
Pasadena as a place to shop	85%	84%	49%	61%
Overall quality of your neighborhood	92%	91%	56%	55%

The low score in the series, 79% for Pasadena as a place to raise children, may be linked to other issues highlighted in the survey, such as child care and schools. In future surveys, a new section on children and youth may be included to provide more detailed information in this area of concern.

### **Street, Sidewalk and Tree Maintenance**

Satisfaction scores in this category were good, ranging from 77% to 87%, showing an average increase of two points over last year. Trash collection and recycling received the highest score at 87%. Lighting on city streets and trimming of city trees both received 77% satisfaction.

### **Transportation and Parking**

The high scores in this category were for ARTS buses with a 94% satisfaction rating and Dial-A-Ride programs for seniors and the disabled with an 84% satisfaction rating. Consistent with last year's results, the low scores were the process for obtaining overnight parking permits (59%) and parking in Old Pasadena (38%). Satisfaction with traffic flow through the city also dropped to 70% from 73% last year.

After studying complaint trends for overnight parking permits, staff is implementing internal processing improvements and better coordination between departments to eliminate customer frustrations and provide faster service.

Despite the implementation of "90 minutes free" and an extensive advertising program during the last year, satisfaction with parking in Old Pasadena improved only 6%, up from 32% last year. Measuring satisfaction with parking in Old Pasadena is difficult since the city provides and controls only a small percentage of the supply. Future surveys will attempt to measure satisfaction with parking in specific locations and to clarify specific complaints (i.e. rates, lighting, cleanliness, etc.)

### **Utilities**

In the two questions asked, Pasadena Water and Power received a 93% satisfaction rating for overall services and a 97% satisfaction rating for reliability of electricity and water.

### **Communication and Customer Service**

The *Pasadena In Focus* newsletter received a large number of responses and a 96% satisfaction rating. Other communication tools, including channel 55, the internet, the customer service hotline and the information kiosk, all received a low number of responses (between 180 and 297) but received good satisfaction ratings (83-92%) from those who had used them. Approximately one-third of the households in Pasadena are cable subscribers, correlating with only one-third of respondents answering the question. The internet, kiosk and hotline are relatively new communication tools. The Public Affairs Office continues to promote these services and expect the response rates to increase as more citizens become aware of these services.

Satisfaction with customer service rose slightly this year, after significant increases last year. Satisfaction with the overall effectiveness of Pasadena government rose noticeably from 75% to 82%.

	<u>1999</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>96/97</u>	<u>94/95</u>
Courteousness of employees	87%	85%	41%	41%
Knowledge and capability of employees	85%	82%	36%	38%
Timeliness of service provided	84%	80%	37%	n/a
Overall effectiveness of Pasadena city government	82%	75%	n/a	n/a

**DEMOGRAPHICS:**

Similar to previous years, 42% of respondents have lived in Pasadena for more than 20 years; 9% 16-20 years, 10% for 11-15 years, 14% for 6-10 years, and 25% for 0-5 years. A majority of respondents live in a house (61%) and own their residence (66%).

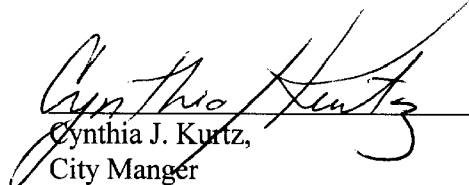
Incomes were relatively evenly distributed, with the largest concentration (20%) falling in the \$50,000 - \$74,999 range.

Respondents were 56% male and 44% female, and evenly distributed between age groups. Anglo/caucasian was the largest ethnic group at 63% (down from 65% last year), followed by Latino at 11% (up from 7% last year), African American at 9% (up from 7%), Asian/Pacific Islander at 8% (down from 10%), and Native American (3%).

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

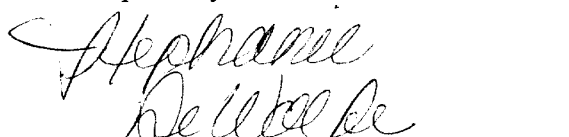
This report is for information only and has no associated fiscal impacts.

Respectfully submitted,



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