



AGENDA REPORT

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

DATE: July 23, 2013
TO: Mayor McLaughlin and City Council Members
FROM: Lashonda Wilson, Management Analyst
SUBJECT: 2013 Richmond Community Survey Results

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:

The City of Richmond recently distributed its fourth community survey through the National Research Center's (NRC) Citizen Survey program. NRC staff will present the 2013 survey results, as well as compare key findings to the City's prior survey results.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

RECEIVE a presentation and report from the National Research Center on the City of Richmond's 2013 Community Survey results, and PROVIDE direction to staff as appropriate.

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATION:

The survey costs did not exceed the approved budget of \$30,000, which was funded from the City Manager's approved FY 2012-2013 budget.

DISCUSSION:

In 2007, the City of Richmond enrolled in the National Research Center's (NRC) National Citizen Survey (NCS) program in order to conduct a resident survey to help the City Council set spending priorities and to set a benchmark of city service delivery. Since 2007, the City has conducted a survey biennially. The NCS is a collaborative effort between the NRC (a public research firm focused on public sector information needs) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

Elected officials and city staff can use the survey results as a tool to:

- Assess the quality of community life and services provided to residents;
- Track residents' perceptions of service quality, community amenities, and public safety;
- Help make informed decisions about how to allocate resources;
- Assess support for local policies;
- Gather information on residents' use of services; and
- Compare results from previous years to measure changes over time.

The results from the 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013 surveys can be found on the City's website at <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=1871>.

2013 Survey Results and Comparisons

The 2013 survey closely resembles the previous 3 surveys in format and content, which enabled NRC to compare survey results from previous years. The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. City of Richmond staff did augment the survey by developing six (6) unique policy questions. Similarly to previous years, NRC mailed out surveys to 3,000 randomly selected and geographically dispersed Richmond households. Each household received three mailings with self-addressed and postage-paid envelopes and over 700 of those households also received a follow-up phone call. These methods provided a reminder for residents and gave them more than one chance to participate. In addition, City staff publicized the survey during the recent FY 13-15 budget meetings, in the City Manager's weekly report, and on KCRT.

2013 Response Rates

A total of 408 completed surveys were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 14% with a margin error of plus or minus five percentage points. Typically, response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 20% to 40%. This is compared to a 21% response rate in 2007, a 20% response rate in 2009, and a 17% response rate in 2011, and is the lowest response rate received thus far.

With previous surveys, response rates were lower in neighborhoods with lower socio-economic status, higher rates of non- or limited English speakers, and higher rates of rentals. In an effort to address this issue and try to increase the response rate in these neighborhoods, City Manager's Office staff asked NRC to oversample households in central and south Richmond. For previous surveys, NRC selected households using random sampling without over sampling in any specific neighborhoods. While our attempt to increase response rates in some of our neighborhoods that have historically not responded well to the Community Survey was well intentioned, it was not as successful as staff had hoped. Staff believes that this over sampling attributed to the low response rate.

Margin of Error

The margin of error around results for the 2013 Survey (408 completed surveys) is plus or minus five percentage points. This is a measure of the precision of the results. A larger number of completed surveys gives a smaller (more precise) margin of error, while a smaller number of surveys yields a larger margin of error. With our margin of error, one may conclude that when 60% of survey respondents report that a particular service is or “good” or “excellent,” somewhere between 55-65% of all residents are likely to feel that way.

2013 Survey Reports

The 2013 survey results are contained in four separate reports:

- 1) A comprehensive report of local results that includes the survey background, methods, and analysis of local responses presented in tables and graphs (Attachment 1);
- 2) A report analyzing responses based on demographic questions relating to number of years living in Richmond, household income, race and age (Attachment 2);
- 3) A report analyzing survey responses based on geographic areas disaggregated by police beats (Attachment 3); and
- 4) A comparison report of local results to other jurisdictions with median annual household incomes from \$49,000 to \$59,000 (Richmond’s median income is \$54,012 per the 2006-2010 American Community Survey - Table ID: DP03, Dataset: 2010 ACS 5-year estimates), as well as to other jurisdictions in the database (Attachment 4).

2013 Survey Focus Areas

The 2013 survey results are broken out into 8 focus areas, many of which align with the City’s General Plan elements and 5-year Strategic Business Plan areas:

- Community Quality
- Community Design
- Public Safety
- Environmental Sustainability
- Recreation and Wellness
- Community Inclusiveness
- Civic Engagement
- Public Trust

Key Findings Identified

Positive Trends

Regarding community characteristics, residents' opinions concerning a variety of services showed a marked improvement. The areas below highlight services that showed statistically significant trends upwards between 2011 and 2013 (those ratings in which people who viewed these characteristics as either "good" or "excellent" increased by at least 8%):

Community Ratings	2007	2009	2011	2013
Overall quality of life in Richmond	17%	18%	21%	30%
Richmond as a place to retire	15%	18%	17%	27%
Services to youth	16%	22%	21%	29%
Services to low-income people	18%	26%	26%	36%
Ease of car travel	41%	47%	48%	58%
Street lighting	20%	25%	25%	36%
Street cleaning	20%	29%	31%	43%
Sidewalk maintenance	14%	24%	20%	31%
Amount of public parking	43%	40%	42%	51%
Traffic signal timing	36%	40%	37%	40%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	NA	44%	56%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Richmond	18%	19%	20%	35%
Crime prevention	11%	19%	22%	27%
Opportunities to volunteer	NA	35%	43%	54%
Emergency preparedness	NA	28%	28%	37%
Sewer services	41%	45%	46%	51%
Storm drainage	31%	42%	41%	51%
Recreation centers or facilities	23%	33%	34%	42%

There was also an increase in the percentage of respondents that answered "yes" to the following questions:

- Recommend living in Richmond to someone who asks (from 41% to 49% between 2009 and 2011 and from 49% to 55% between 2011 and 2013);
- Remain in Richmond for the next five years (from 60% to 67% between 2009 and 2011 from 67% to 68% between 2011 and 2013).

Opportunities for Improvement

While it is reassuring to highlight areas that have shown increases in resident ratings, it is also important to look at those services that have shown decreases in ratings between 2011 and 2013 (rating service as either "good" or "excellent"). Looking at these ratings can help staff and elected officials begin discussions on possible reasons for decreased ratings and brainstorm ways to increase future ratings with the ultimate goal of improving services to Richmond residents.

Community Ratings (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Overall quality of new development in Richmond	25%	31%	31%	23%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	50%	50%	59%	53%
Variety of housing options	NA	27%	31%	28%
Traffic flow on major streets	NA	36%	36%	34%
Code enforcement	9%	10%	19%	15%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	22%	24%	29%	22%

Ratings for employment opportunities, Richmond as a place to work, overall quality of business and service establishments in Richmond, safety from environmental hazards, fire services, quality of overall natural environment in Richmond, garbage collection, availability of affordable child care, and opportunities to participate in social events and activities all had 1-2% drops between 2011 and 2013, but remained relatively steady between 2007 and 2013.

Public Safety & Code Enforcement

Public Safety

Residents were asked to rate how safe or unsafe they felt in the various situations. The responses below represent the percentage of residents that felt “very safe” or “somewhat safe”. Except for the ratings of safety from environmental hazards, the ratings in the other areas have all steadily improved since 2007. The Chevron fire in August 2012 could have had an impact on the environmental safety rating. With regard to the perception of safety in Richmond’s downtown, there have been concerted efforts to improve this area through the creation of a business improvement district, increased activities and retail, and investments in creating a clean and safe environment.

Community and Personal Public Safety (felt “very safe” or “somewhat safe”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Safety in your neighborhood during the day	64%	68%	70%	70%
Safety in your neighborhood after dark	34%	36%	42%	43%
Safety in Richmond’s downtown area during the day	25%	29%	34%	37%
Safety in Richmond’s downtown area after dark	3%	4%	5%	10%
Safety from violent crime (e.g. rape, assault, robbery)	13%	10%	15%	20%
Safety from property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	9%	9%	11%	14%
Safety from environmental hazards	NA	19%	17%	16%

Residents were also asked to rate seven (7) public safety related services. With the exception of fire services, which received a 2% rating decrease from 2011 to 2013, all public safety services showed increases between 2011 and 2013. Police and crime prevention have seen steady increases in ratings since 2007. Although fire received a small decrease in ratings, it is important to note that for every survey since 2007, fire services received the highest rating for any city service. Emergency preparedness’ ratings increased by 9%, which is statistically significant, from 28% in 2011 to 37% in 2013. This increase could be due to continued focus on and exercises with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) exercise, as well as the Office of Emergency Services’ participation in the Chevron Emergency Expo.

Public Safety Services (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Police services	38%	54%	51%	57%
Fire services	70%	79%	71%	69%
Crime prevention	11%	19%	22%	27%
Fire prevention and education	41%	45%	39%	46%
Traffic enforcement	34%	36%	34%	38%
Emergency preparedness	NA	28%	28%	37%

Another important rating to highlight is that there was a 6% decrease from 27% in 2011 to 22% in 2013 in the number of residents that reported that they or someone in their household was a victim of any crime in the past 12 months. This is down from 30% in 2007.

Code Enforcement

The percentage of residents that rated code enforcement as “excellent” or “good” increased by 9% from 2009 to 2011, which is a statistically significant increase, but represents a decrease of 4% from 19% in 2011 to 15% in 2013.

Code Enforcement (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	9%	10%	19%	15%

However, the percentage of residents that rated run-down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles as a “major” problem has steadily decreased from 2007 to 2013. Although this rating is high for Richmond and much higher when compared to those from other jurisdictions, the good news is that the number is going down. This decrease could be due to the city’s continued investment in code enforcement.

Code Enforcement	2007	2009	2011	2013
Percent rating run-down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles as a “major” problem	58%	52%	48%	38%

Recreation and Parks

The survey contained questions seeking residents’ perspectives about opportunities and services related to the community’s parks and recreation services. Residents’ responses to being asked if they had utilized recreation centers, participated in recreation programs or visited a park at least once within the last 12 months are below:

Percent using at least once in last 12 months	2007	2009	2011	2013
Used Richmond recreation centers	37%	44%	40%	40%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	28%	34%	32%	27%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	76%	78%	73%	71%

The table below reveals the percentage of residents that stated the service listed below as either “good” or “excellent”. The ratings for recreational opportunities, city parks, recreation programs or classes, and recreation centers or facilities have all steadily improved since 2007.

Park and Recreation Opportunities (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Recreational opportunities	20%	23%	25%	28%
City parks	30%	39%	43%	46%
Recreation programs or classes	24%	30%	37%	44%
Recreation centers or facilities	23%	33%	34%	42%

Library & Cultural Activities

Fifty-two percent (52%) of residents stated that they used the Richmond public libraries or their services at least once in the last 12 months. This is down from 59% in 2011. The percentage of residents rating public library services as either “good” or “excellent” increased from 48% in 2011 to 52% in 2013. This represents a 17% increase from 2007 to 2013.

Library and Cultural Services (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Public library services	35%	51%	48%	52%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	22%	24%	29%	22%

Health

In 2011, the City decided to include 2 general health-related questions to the survey. This was in response to the development and implementation of the Health & Wellness Element in the General Plan and the City’s focus on Health in All Policies which allows the City to view its services and policies through a prism of health. Although the City of Richmond is not directly responsible for the provision of health services, the City does have a relationship with Contra Costa Health Services and other health care providers and it is important to have an understanding of resident perception of the services provided. Responses to these questions will allow the city to track changes in self-reported health trends over time.

Self-Reported Health Questions	2011	2013
When asked “How would you rate your health?”, residents responded as follows:		
Excellent	12%	25%
Very good	32%	23%
Good	39%	38%
Fair	13%	12%
Poor	3%	2%
When asked to compare their health in general now to a year ago, residents responded as follows:		

Much better now than a year ago	8%	15%
Somewhat better now than one year ago	13%	15%
About the same	62%	59%
Somewhat worse now than one year ago	15%	9%
Much worse now than one year ago	3%	2%

For the 2013 survey, the City worked with Jason Corburn, a professor of public health at the University of California, Berkeley, to create a new question to look at the connection between the provision of city services and resident health and well-being. The survey asked residents to rate the impact of ten (10) City services on their health and well-being on a scale from “very positive impact” to “very negative impact.” The results are in the table below:

	Very and moderate positive impact	No impact	Moderate and very negative impact
Parks	51%	41%	8%
Police	50%	42%	7%
Library services	41%	48%	12%
Fire	49%	44%	6%
Street lighting	37%	35%	28%
Affordable and quality housing	37%	41%	22%
Traffic safety	44%	39%	18%
Street quality	42%	33%	26%
Recreation programs	31%	62%	7%
Blight abatement	32%	43%	26%

Residents 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 was rated more positively, while the availability of affordable quality health care was rated less favorably by residents.

Health and Wellness Access (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Availability of preventative health services	NA	25%	27%	34%
Availability of affordable quality food	32%	32%	29%	36%
Availability of affordable quality health care	25%	24%	27%	27%

Housing and Development

The survey 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 “good” or “excellent” by 34% of respondents, while the variety of housing options was rated as “good” or “excellent” by 28% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was worse in the City of Richmond than the ratings, on average, in comparison jurisdictions.

Housing Options (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Availability of affordable housing	19%	29%	31%	34%
Variety of housing options	N/A	27%	31%	28%

The survey asked residents to evaluate the quality of new development. The overall quality of new development in the City of Richmond was rated as “excellent” by 2% of respondents and as “good” by an additional 21%. The rating of 23% in 2013 is 8% lower than the rating in 2011 which represents a statistically significant decrease. This decrease could be due in part to the impact of the economic recession that limited the amount of new development during the past several years, or to the dissolution of the Richmond Redevelopment Agency which has had a negative impact on redevelopment in Richmond.

Development (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Overall quality of new development in Richmond	25%	31%	31%	23%

Engagement and Information

The City of Richmond desires to keep residents informed of activities and opportunities that are taking place within the City. A lot of information is placed on the City’s web site and disseminated through other media. Although the percentage of residents that rated the City’s public information services as “excellent” or “good” increased by 21% from 2007 to 2013 (there was a 3% increase from 38% in 2011 to 41% in 2013), the survey showed that 50% of respondents have never visited the City’s web site (that is up from 44% in 2011).

While the percentage of residents that rated the opportunities to volunteer as either “good” or “excellent” increased from 43% in 2011 to 54% in 2013 (a statistically significant increase), it is important to note that 71% of residents stated that they had not volunteered their time to a group or activity in Richmond and 76% stated that they had not participated in a club or civic group in Richmond. This information shows that while there is an increase in opportunities to volunteer, which could be attributable to Richmond’s new volunteer program, Richmond - Excellence Serving Our Community, which launched in 2012, there are still many opportunities to involve residents in programs and/or projects within the City.

Contact with and Impressions of City of Richmond Employees

Thirty-five percent of residents stated that they had been in contact with a City employee either in person, over the phone or via email in the last 12 months. The 35% of respondents who reported that they had been in contact with an employee were then asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. The table below shows the percentage of respondents that rated their interaction with City employees as either “good” or “excellent”. The ratings below are lower than in 2011 in every category, with the exception of overall impression, which remained the same. Despite the decrease from 2011 to 2013, there is an increase in every category from 2007 to 2013.

Impression of City Employees (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Knowledge	60%	55%	72%	65%
Responsiveness	49%	51%	61%	59%
Courtesy	58%	56%	68%	63%
Overall impression	52%	52%	61%	61%

Respondents were also asked to rate their experience with the City of Richmond’s government. It is important to highlight that 35% of respondents stated that the value of services for taxes paid to Richmond was either “good” or “excellent” which is a statistically significant increase of 15% from 20% in 2011 to 35% in 2013.

Government (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	2007	2009	2011	2013
Job Richmond government does at welcoming citizen involvement	41%	23%	31%	31%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Richmond	18%	19%	20%	35%
The overall direction that Richmond is taking	27%	28%	30%	36%
Overall image or reputation of Richmond	4%	6%	6%	6%
Services provided by City of Richmond	17%	26%	29%	34%

Focus Areas for the Next 2 Years

In a policy question created by City staff, residents were asked how important specific issues are for the city to address within the next two (2) years. The list below lists the shows the top six (6) areas that residents stated was either essential or very important for the city to address:

Also top 4 issues in 2011:

- Developing job training opportunities – 88%
- Improving street paving conditions – 86%
- Improving environmental quality – 84%
- Increasing street and pedestrian lighting – 80%

New issues added in 2013:

- Reducing crime – 96%
- Addressing blighted properties – 87%

In another standard survey question, residents were asked to rate services on a scale of “poor”, “fair”, “good” and “excellent.” The table below shows services that 30% or more of respondents rated as “poor.” In addition, the percentage of respondents that rated the quality of services as poor was higher than the percentage that rated the service as “excellent” or “good.” The remaining percentage rated the service as fair or responded “Don’t know.” This can provide information to elected officials and staff to help them understand resident perception of services and decide on possible future allocation of resources.

Service	% of respondents that rated the following services as poor			% that rated the service as excellent or good		
	2009	2011	2013	2009	2011	2013
Street repair	61%	54%	60%	14%	16%	14%
Public schools	54%	47%	40%	18%	20%	14%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	58%	44%	38%	11%	18%	12%
Sidewalk maintenance	33%	37%	30%	24%	18%	29%

Support for Tax Increase

When asked to what extent residents would support or oppose a tax increase for the specific items, residents responded as “strongly supporting” or “somewhat supporting” the following items:

- Street and road repairs and construction – 76%
- Recreation and park development – 74%
- Library services – 70%
- Paramedics – 69%
- Enhanced street lighting and landscaping - 69%
- Storm water facilities to restore creeks and prevent flooding – 54%

Geographic Subgroup Comparisons

NRC was able to collect and disaggregate survey responses based on the nine (9) police beats. In order to create the geographic sub-group report, City staff divided survey respondents into four (4) distinct areas. The margin of error for this report is approximately plus or minus 15%. The grouping and sample sizes for each geographic sub-group is as follows:

- Police beats 1, 2 and 3 (Southern district) – 99
- Police beats 4, 5 and 6 (Central district) – 43
- Police Beat 7 (Belding Woods and Richmond Heights) - 103
- Northern (beats 8 and 9) – 144

Residents were asked to rate quality of life aspects in Richmond, characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole, or City services. The responses below represent the percentage of people responding as either “good” or “excellent.” All responses presented in the table indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups.

Community Characteristics or City Services (rating service as either “good” or “excellent”)	Police Beats 1, 2 & 3	Police Beats 4, 5 & 6	Police Beat 7	Police Beats 8 & 9
Richmond as a place to live	43%	27%	45%	26%
Overall appearance of Richmond	9%	28%	22%	18%
Air quality	32%	10%	21%	26%
Crime prevention	39%	21%	25%	17%

City parks	39%	36%	65%	35%
Code enforcement	24%	2%	12%	10%
Public library	44%	64%	65%	41%
Recreation centers or facilities	39%	22%	53%	42%
City-sponsored job training programs	21%	9%	45%	7%
Overall direction that Richmond is taking	43%	24%	45%	21%

Demographic Subgroup Comparisons

A report of survey results disaggregated by four (4) demographic characteristics is also provided for analysis. The margin of error for this report is plus or minus 5%. The demographic comparisons utilized for this report are:

- Number of years lived in Richmond
- Annual household income
- Race of respondent
- Age of respondent

An example of findings from the demographic sub-group report shows that the higher the annual household income the safer the respondent felt in their neighborhood during the day and after dark and the higher the percentage of respondents that rated their neighborhood as either “excellent” or “good.” The difference between each income range below was statistically significant (except for perception of safety during the day).

	Annual Household Income		
	\$49,999 or less	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or more
Your neighborhood as a place to live (rated as “excellent” or “good”)	52%	51%	71%
Very or somewhat safe in neighborhood during the day	66%	73%	74%
Very or somewhat safe in neighborhood after dark	41%	36%	57%
Overall image or reputation of Richmond (rated as “excellent” or “good”)	9%	4%	0%

2011 Key Driver Analysis

NRC conducted what is called a Key Driver Analysis. This analysis examines the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City’s services overall. The services that correlate most strongly with the residents’ perceptions about overall City service quality were identified as:

- Code enforcement
- Police services
- Sewer services
- Street repair

In 2011, public schools, police services, fire services and code enforcement were listed as key drivers. NRC believes that “by targeting improvements in key services, the City of Richmond can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents’ opinions about overall service quality.”

Concluding Thoughts

The 2013 survey results showed that residents were concerned about issues such as crime, lack of opportunities for youth, the overall appearance and reputation of the City including the need for street paving and code enforcement, economic development, and the quality of public school education. Resources have been focused on many of these issues in the past few years. For example, the City continues to fund crime prevention and community policing, expanded library and recreational opportunities, and enforcement for city code violations.

The survey results allow the City of Richmond to establish city service benchmarks and help identify resident priorities and concerns with the goal of increasing the overall reputation of Richmond and overall quality of life for Richmond residents.

There is a wealth of information in both the demographic and geographic subgroup reports. Additional analysis can and should be done with the results presented in these reports. The results in all four (4) reports can help staff and elected officials make more informed decisions about where to place limited resources and about the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs that impact the quality of life for Richmond residents.

2013 Community Survey Available to All

Now that data collection has ended for the scientific portion of the survey, the 2013 Richmond Community Survey is now available for all Richmond residents to complete at the following links:

- English: <http://www.n-r-c.com/survey/richmond2013survey.htm>
- Spanish: <http://www.n-r-c.com/survey/richmond2013encuesta.htm>

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Report of Results Richmond 2013

Attachment 2 – Report of Demographic Subgroups Comparisons Richmond 2013

Attachment 3 – Report of Geographic Subgroups Comparisons Richmond 2013

Attachment 4 – Benchmark Report Richmond 2013