

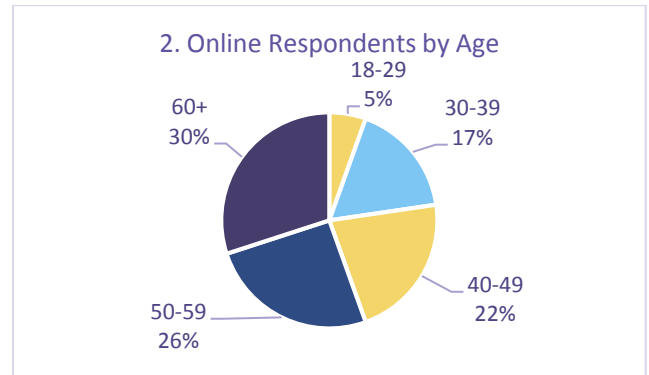
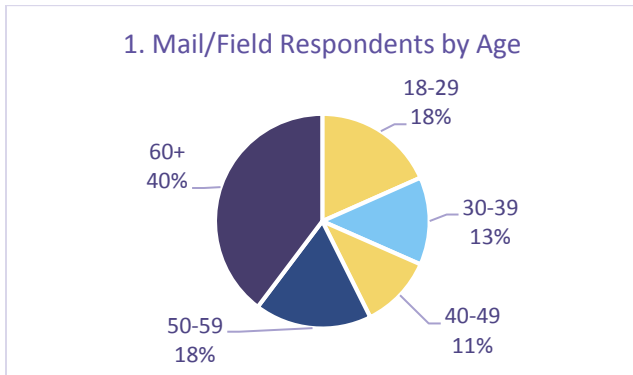
Executive Summary

For the past 10 years, the City of Oshkosh has partnered with the Department of Public Administration at the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh (UWO) to conduct the Oshkosh Citizen Survey. Since 2009, a sample of residents have been asked questions pertaining to their overall quality of life, feelings of safety, city services, and open-ended questions that relate to timely topics in the community. The purpose of this summary is to present the key results of this year’s survey, which was conducted between February and May of 2018. This report provides diverse perspectives and insights into issues of greatest importance to this sample of Oshkosh residents.

Participant Overview

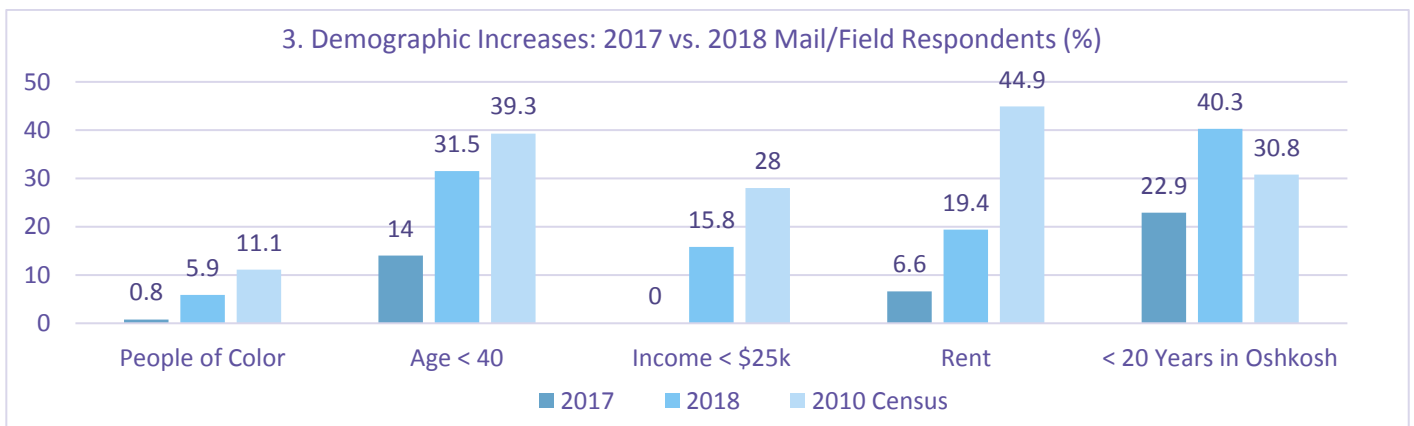
A total of 489 residents participated in the survey: 227 completed the survey that they received in the mail, 70 filled out the survey in person when asked by graduate students throughout the City, and 192 completed the survey online.

Charts 1 and 2 include the age range of respondents across the methods of data collection. In both the mail/field and online surveys, the greatest proportion of respondents were age 60 or older. However, the second highest age demographic for the mail/field surveys were 18-29 years old (18%), and the second highest age demographic that filled out the online survey were 50-59 years of age (26%).



The mail and field survey respondents were more diverse than 2017 and more representative of Oshkosh as a whole (based on 2010 Census data). Chart 3 illustrates the differences. Compared to 2017, the percentage of mail and field survey respondents increased by:

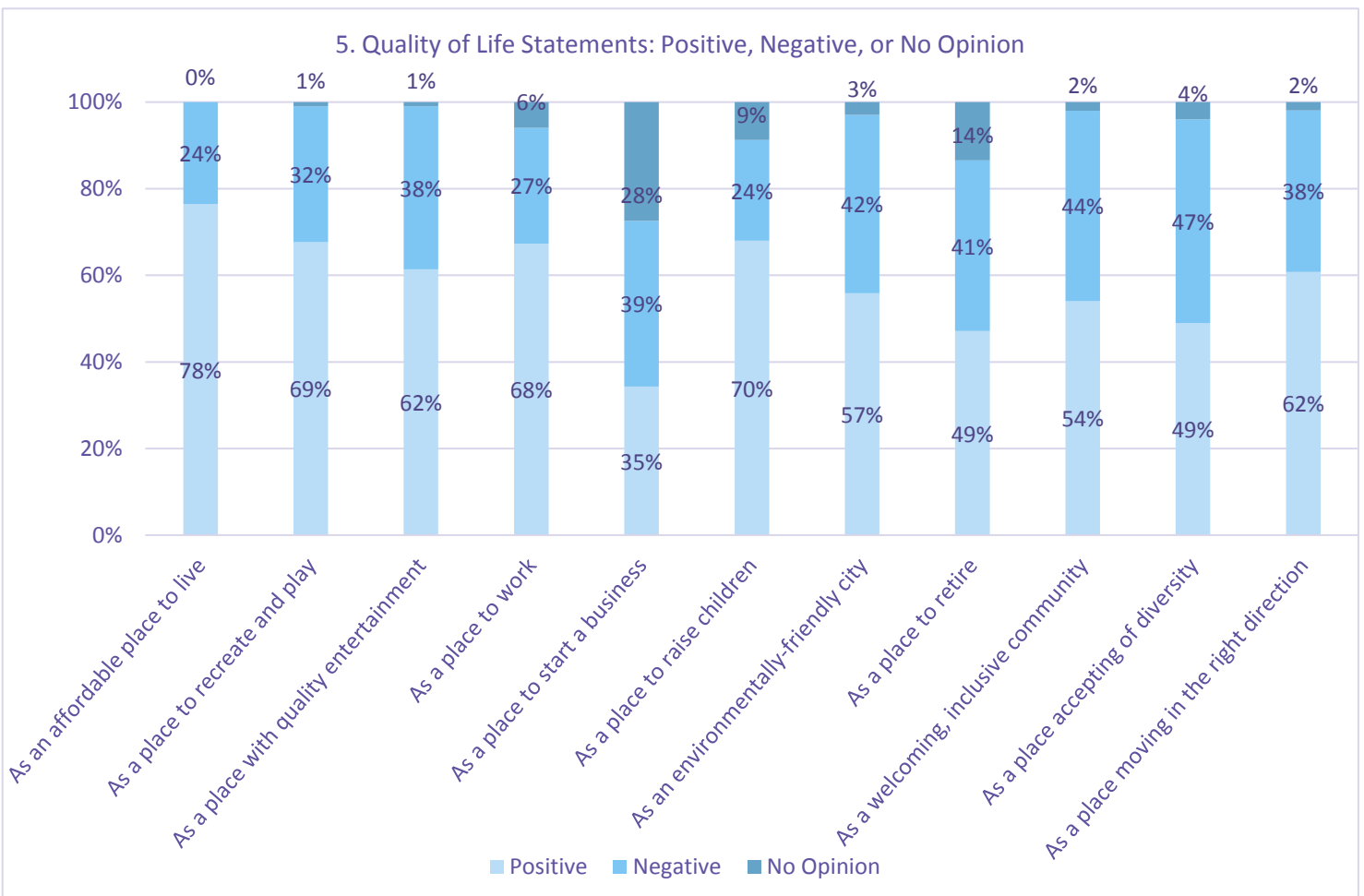
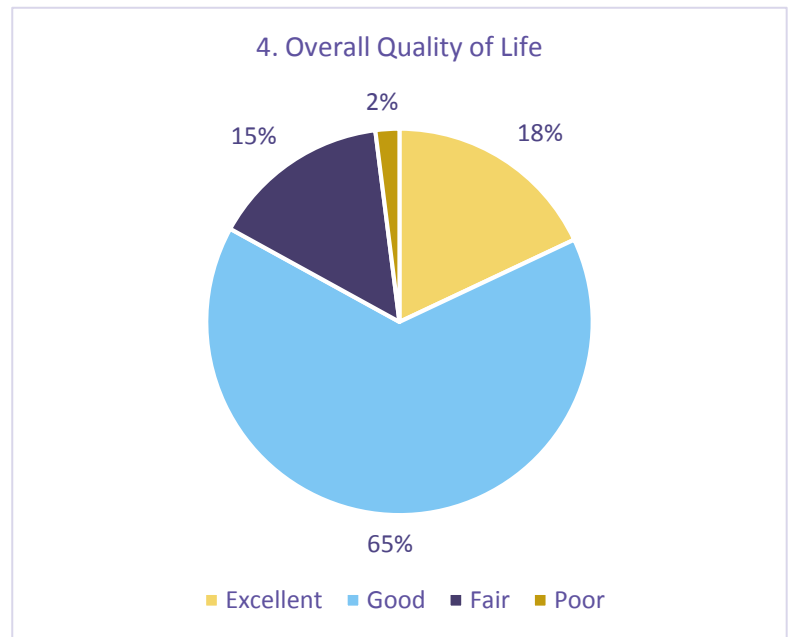
- +5.1% for residents that identify as People of Color
- +16.5% for residents under the Age of 40
- +15.8% for residents that make less than \$25,000 in annual household income
- +12.8% for residents who rent rather than own their homes
- +17.4% for residents who have lived in Oshkosh for less than 20 years



Quality of Life

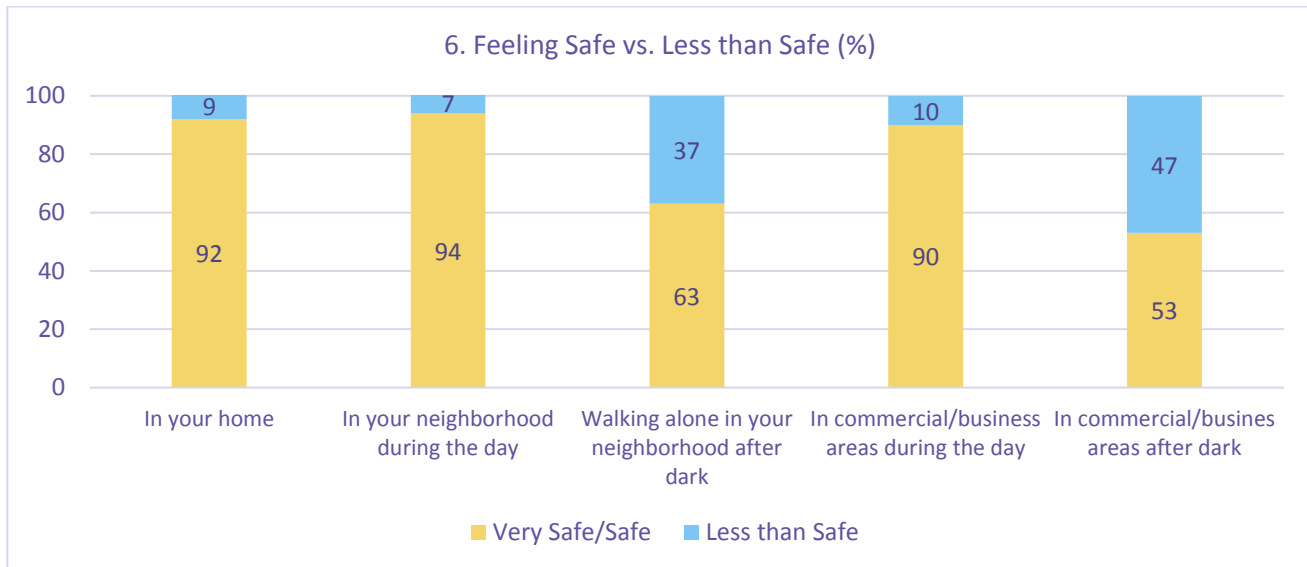
Overall, residents responded positively to the Overall Quality of Life question: 83% reported a positive quality of life, with 18% answering *Excellent* and 65% answering *Good*. Results are shown in Chart 4. This is an increase from 2017, in which just 59% of participants reported positive results.

Chart 5 shows responses when participants were asked to rate Oshkosh on 11 statements. The chart represents the data grouped into one of three categories: Positive (responses of *Excellent* or *Good*), Negative (responses of *Fair* or *Poor*), and *No Opinion*. It shows that respondents expressed an overall level of satisfaction. Of the 11 questions, 8 received a majority positive response rate (> 50%). The following received the least positive responses: Oshkosh as a place to start a business (39%), as a place to retire (41%), and as a place accepting of diversity (47%).

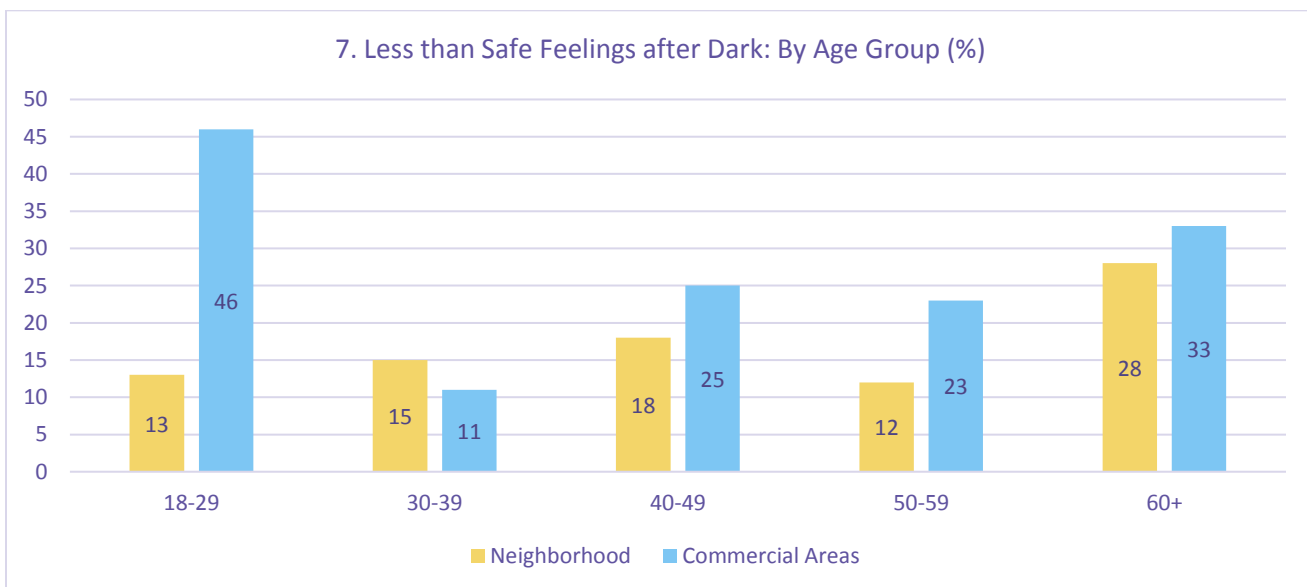


Feelings of Safety

Residents were asked: “Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel” in five categories listed in Chart 6. Overall, residents responded that they felt safe in Oshkosh. This was especially true when residents were responding to how they felt in their homes and outside during the day. Residents felt the least safe after dark in commercial areas and to a lesser extent walking in their neighborhoods after dark. Any response other than *Very Safe* or *Safe* was included as a *Less than Safe* response.



To better understand who feels *Less than Safe* in commercial areas after dark, age was considered. As shown in the graph below, 46% of residents in the 18-29 age group were shown to feel unsafe in commercial areas, the highest of all age groups. The second highest proportion included residents 60 or older (33%).



Use of City Services

Participants were asked questions about their frequency of use, perceptions of quality, and overall importance concerning 28 services. Those services were grouped into the following six areas:

1. **Public Safety:** Police, Fire Department, Ambulance (3)
2. **Public Works:** Leaf & Brush Pickup, Recycling Services, Trash Services, Sidewalk System, Ice & Snow Removal, Traffic Signs & Signals, Streetlight Maintenance, and Storm Water Management (8)
3. **Community Services:** Neighborhood Revitalization, Oshkosh Public Museum, Oshkosh Media, Oshkosh Public Library, and Senior Services (5)
4. **Economic Development:** Assistance to Businesses, Quality of Housing, Permits & Inspections, Property Maintenance, and Planning & Zoning (5)
5. **Parks:** Children’s Amusement Area, Leach Amphitheater, Menominee Park Zoo, Pollock Water Park (4)
6. **Transportation:** Biking & Pedestrian Trails, City Parking Facilities, and GO Transit System (3)

The first set of questions specifically addressed frequency of use. Residents were asked to answer if they use each service *Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Seasonally, Annually, and Never*. Results are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency of Use: All City Services

Service	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually	Never
Police	5%	0%	3%	5%	25%	63%
Fire Department	2%	0%	0%	1%	10%	86%
Ambulance	1%	0%	0%	1%	9%	88%
Leaf and Brush Pick-up	1%	4%	8%	58%	7%	22%
Recycling Services	5%	63%	25%	1%	1%	5%
Trash Collection Services	5%	86%	5%	0%	0%	4%
Sidewalk System	53%	19%	9%	7%	3%	10%
Ice and Snow Removal	11%	5%	1%	69%	1%	14%
Traffic Signs and Signals	91%	5%	1%	1%	0%	3%
Streetlight Maintenance	81%	5%	2%	2%	2%	8%
Storm Water Maintenance	42%	7%	4%	31%	3%	13%
Neighborhood Revitalization	5%	2%	6%	4%	13%	71%
Oshkosh Public Museum	1%	2%	10%	15%	40%	33%
Oshkosh Media	12%	19%	13%	5%	10%	41%
Oshkosh Public Library	3%	21%	29%	6%	19%	22%
Senior Services	3%	3%	5%	4%	8%	76%
Assistance to Businesses	1%	4%	3%	1%	4%	88%
Quality of Housing	11%	2%	4%	3%	10%	70%
Permits and Inspections	2%	1%	3%	6%	30%	59%
Property Maintenance	6%	3%	5%	7%	12%	67%
Planning and Zoning	2%	2%	3%	3%	15%	75%
Children’s Amusement Area	1%	1%	5%	28%	14%	52%
Leach Amphitheater	0%	2%	3%	44%	17%	35%
Menominee Park Zoo	0%	3%	6%	44%	21%	27%
Pollock Water Park	0%	2%	0%	23%	8%	68%
Biking & Pedestrian Trails	7%	15%	7%	37%	6%	27%
City Parking Facilities	7%	20%	24%	15%	10%	23%
Go Transit System	4%	5%	3%	4%	10%	76%

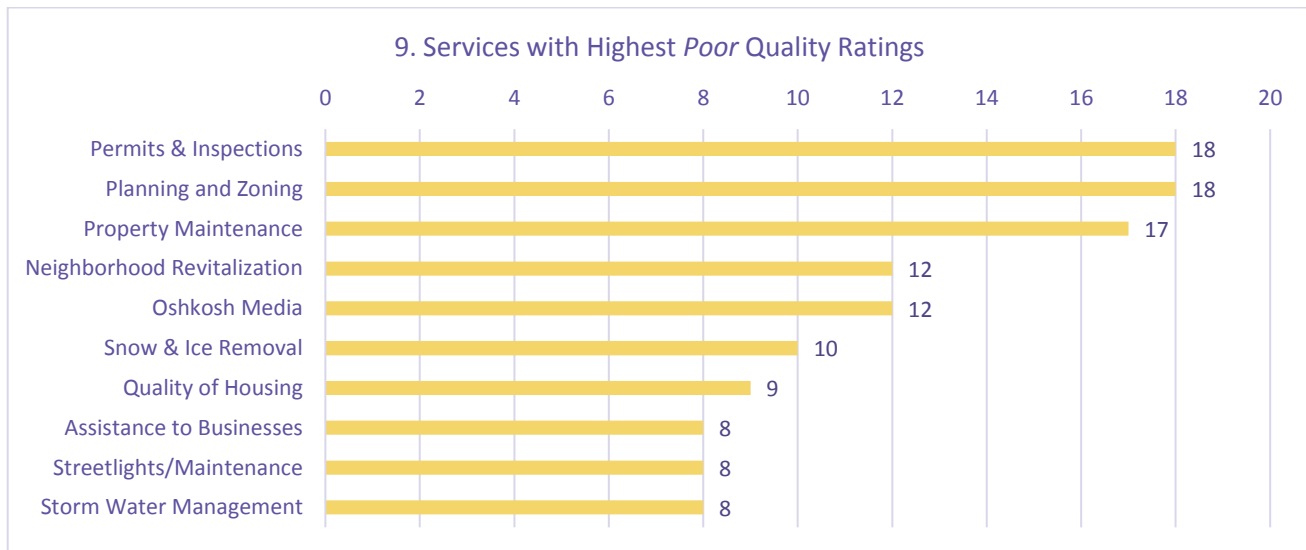
Quality of City Services

The second set of questions focused on the quality of city services. Citizen sentiment as it relates to the quality and importance of various city services is next described. Questions relating to quality asks respondents to identify whether the service is *Excellent*, *Good*, *Fair*, *Poor*, or *No Opinion*. Results from this question provide city officials with insight into areas that citizens feel are high or low in quality.

The top ten highest quality ratings are presented in Chart 8. Note that Menominee Park Zoo and Leaf & Brush Pick-Up tied for the 10th spot at 29%.



Chart 9 presents the ten services with the lowest quality ratings, which were reported as follows:

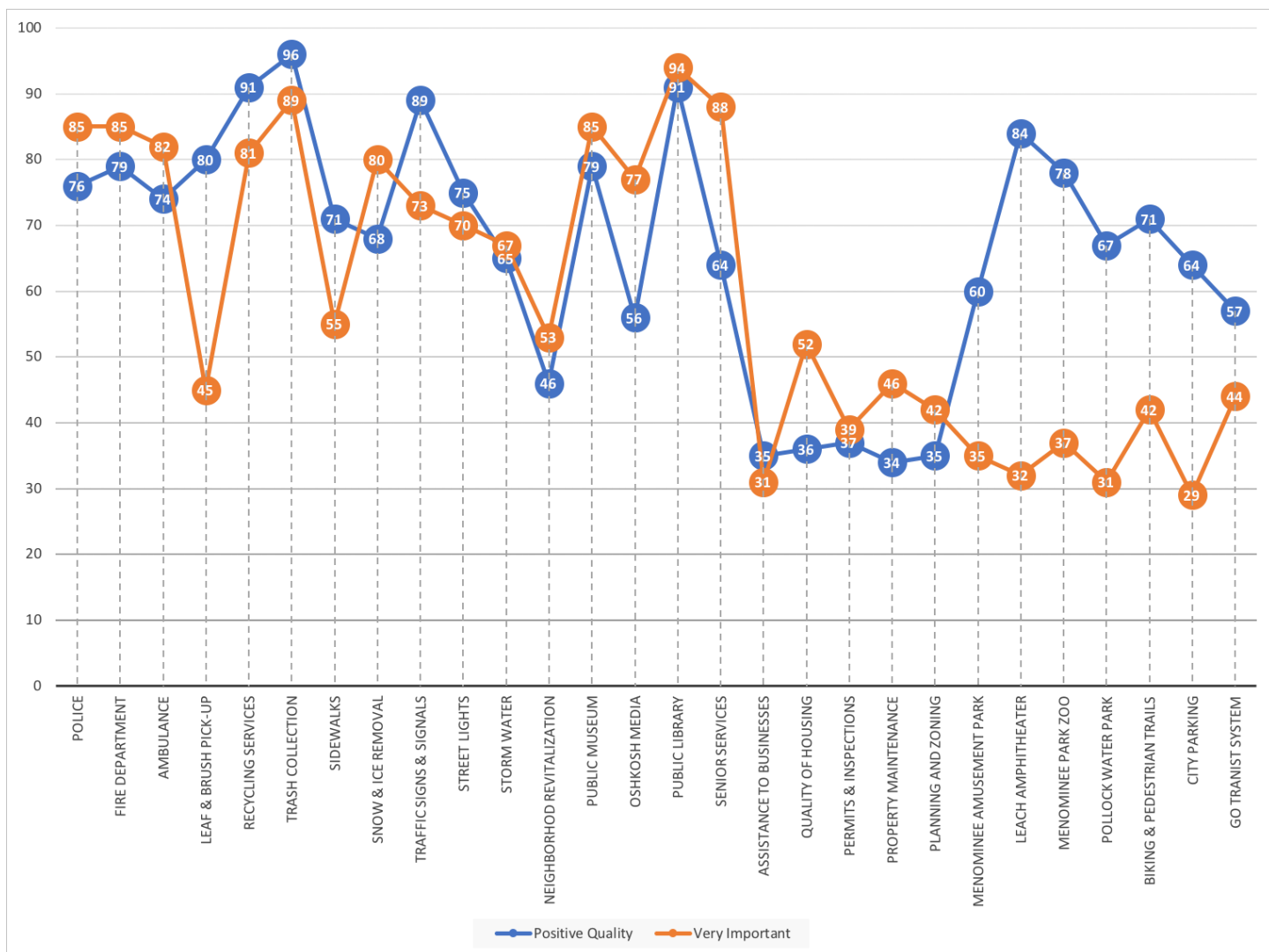


City officials and members of management can use this information to determine whether and to what extent benefits of the services are being effectively delivered to the public and decide whether program design changes will improve the quality of services being provided. The information can also serve as the basis for reprioritization of services and commitment of public funding to strengthen programming having greater public impacts.

Importance of City Services

Finally, respondents were asked to rank how important city services are to them. The survey question asks respondents to identify whether the service is *Very Important*, *Somewhat Important*, *Somewhat Unimportant*, *Not Important*, or *No Opinion*. Chart 10 shows how services were ranked by quality and importance. The graph illustrates the service as *Positive Quality* (rated *Excellent* or *Good*) compared to the percentage regarded as *Very Important*. By graphing both quality and importance, this chart shows the gap between what the public expects to have (i.e. *Importance*) versus what they believe exists (i.e. *Quality*).

10. Importance vs. Quality: All City Services



Based on this chart, it is recommended that services with the largest gaps between quality and importance are addressed first. These are reviewed in the following order in Table 2, with the highest to lowest gap:

Table 2. Top 5 Gaps in Quality versus Importance of Services

Service	Very Important	Positive Quality	Gap
Senior Services	88%	64%	24%
Oshkosh Media	77%	56%	21%
Quality of Housing	52%	36%	16%
Snow & Ice Removal	80%	68%	12%
Property Maintenance	46%	34%	12%

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions focused on recruitment and retention of young professionals, neighborhood redevelopment, redesign of the Oshkosh Avenue Corridor, and budgeting priorities. This section presents an analysis of written responses to each question. It offers and a summary in two ways: 1) Word Clouds: All responses were analyzed using Wordle, which provides a visual “word cloud” image of the most frequently written words. The most frequently used words are the largest, and the size of words gets smaller as their frequency of use decreases; and 2) Coded Themes: all responses were reviewed and coded into overarching themes. The overall percentage of each theme is provided in tables below. In addition, the top three themes are briefly described in this section as potential recommendations. The themes were ranked by total number of responses and overall feasibility. Decision-makers can consider these ranked themes when discussing actions to address each question.

1. What could the City do to keep and attract young professionals, such as having a vibrant downtown, quality neighborhoods, creative gathering spaces, mentoring and networking opportunities, etc.?



A total of 158 participants responded to this question. Of those comments, the word cloud shows some of the most frequently mentioned words are *young*, *people*, *city*, *quality*, *new*, *professionals*, and *Oshkosh*. These common words are to be expected. Additional words that can provide insight into what areas the City can focus on to keep and attract young professionals emphasize: *downtown*, *housing*, *events*, *businesses*, *parks*, *music*, *family*, *activities*, and *community*.

Table 3 presents the themes that emerged from the responses. The percentage of “Coded Responses” that support each theme are provided.

Table 3. Young Professional Question Themes

Theme	Responses
Housing and Culture: To recruit and retain young adults in small towns, the City needs to fight "brain drain" by focusing on creating a desirable place to live. This not only means housing that is modern and affordable but also creating a community that mimics the desirable features of big cities by creating density. Related suggestions include increasing nightlife, opening more family-friendly restaurants, lowering fees for the farmers market, revamping college housing, and continuing redevelopment of the waterway.	37%
Branding: In the attempt to appeal to young professionals, the City of Oshkosh can work on branding itself in a manner that is desirable to the target crowd. Rejuvenation of the downtown area is the start. Many respondents listed this as something they felt is needed. More importantly is the image that comes from within, the city’s image of social consciousness and responsibility. Many respondents wanted to see more of the various arts incorporated throughout the city, more culture and diversity, as well as more pet and bike friendly spaces.	24%
Events as Assets: Respondents had common interests in wanting more events to take place in Oshkosh. Generally, they want more activities, more night life, more recreation, more culture, and more events to take place year-round. Oshkosh can use its “Wisconsin’s Event City” niche as an asset that creates the profile it needs to attract and retain young people. Oshkosh currently hosts over 1000 events annually, but these connections to area events are not being made by young people to show that Oshkosh is Wisconsin’s Event City; the city where you want to stay and be a part of the excitement.	18%

Notes

The information included in this executive summary was extracted from the extended Oshkosh Citizen Survey Report. The analysis was prepared by Master of Public Administration (MPA) students at the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh. Students in two of the MPA 721 Public Policy Analysis courses led the analyses. The coordination of survey data and reporting was led by Dr. Samantha June Larson, supported by graduate research assistants Menna Garedeh and Geoffrey Kumah, and made possible by the assistance of undergraduate students Monica Miller and Jessica Rosga.

Any additional questions can be directed to Dr. Larson at larsonsj@uwosh.edu.