

2020



# Citizen Survey Report

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## Introduction

Since 2009, 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. Residents are asked questions pertaining to their overall quality of life, feelings of safety, and city services. This report offers a detailed analysis of the results of the 2020 survey, which was conducted between February and April. These results are meant to provide insight into issues that are of importance to Oshkosh residents. This report is organized into the following sections.

First, the methodology section provides an overview of how the survey data was collected. It also reviews the statistical validity of the results. Next, participant demographic characteristics is presented, including a breakdown of the proportion of participants by: sex, age, race, ethnicity, and annual household income.

Finally, responses to questions about services provided by the City of Oshkosh are presented. The section begins by presenting results concerning quality of life indicators. That is followed by an examination of how safe residents feel in their homes, neighborhoods, and business/commercial areas during the day and after dark. City service results are highlighted according to how residents rank their *quality* and how *important* they feel services are to the community overall. Twenty-eight services are grouped by department and presented under the subheadings of: public safety, public works, community services, economic development, parks, and transportation.

## Methodology

The survey was distributed through Polco, an online polling company designed to connect local governments with their communities. The City advertised the survey on their website and via social media. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic-related closures, the UWO research team also recruited participants at locations throughout the City, including: Reeve Union at UWO, State of the City at the Oshkosh Convention Center, Oshkosh Public Library, and the Oshkosh Mediterranean Food Market. Furthermore, an invitation to the survey was sent to various UWO offices and organizations, including: UWO Library, LGBTQ+ Resource Center, American Indian Student Services, Men of Color and Latino/Hispanic Initiatives, Department of Social Justice, Multicultural Education Center, Women’s Center, Student Recreation and Wellness, Department of Residence Life, The Cabinet Food Pantry, Student Organization of Latinos, College Democrats, College Republicans, Student Environmental Action Coalition, Oshkosh Student Association, Asian Student Association, Africa American Studies, Hmong Student Union, and the International Student Association.

A total of 294 residents participated in the survey. Of those, 201 (68%) were registered voters according to Polco. The other 93 (32%) were not registered voters. Based on the population of Oshkosh, the 294 responses achieved statistical validity based on a 90% confidence interval<sup>1</sup> (5% margin of error<sup>2</sup>), which is the highest level available through Polco.

<sup>1</sup> The confidence level is used to express the degree of certainty that the results of the sample are an accurate reflection of the total City. It is commonly set at either 90%, 95%, or 99%.

<sup>2</sup> The margin of error illustrates how far above or below the result could be if all residents completed the survey. For example, if 55% of residents said “yes” to a question, a 5% margin of error means that 50-60% of the population would also answer “yes” if surveyed.

## Participant Demographic Overview

Polco provide demographic data related to sex and age based on its access to voter registration records. The first two charts are calculated based on those participants that are registered to vote.

Chart 1 includes the breakdown of respondents by sex. There were 111 respondents (38%) that identified as female and a slightly lower number, 87 respondents (29%), that were identified as male. The remaining 96 respondents (33%) could not be identified by sex based on Polco records.

1. Participants by Sex

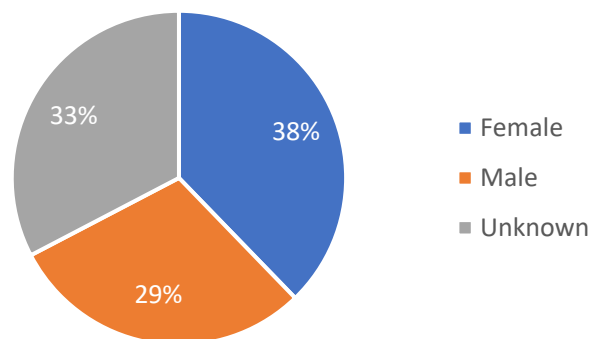
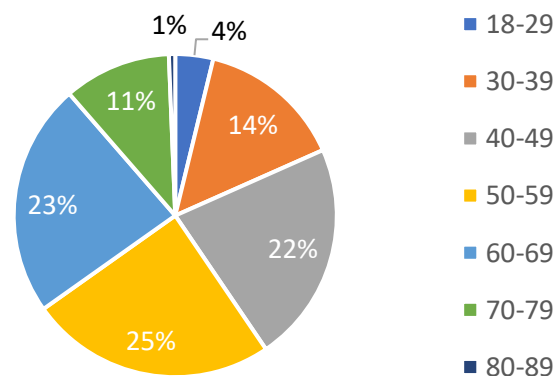


Chart 2 includes the proportion of participants by age range based on voter registration records. The greatest proportion of survey respondents (25%) were in the 50-59 age group. Approximately 35% were age 60 or older and 18% were under 40 years of age. (Note: Polco records did not provide age data for 136 (46%) of participants, and those participants are not included in this figure.)

2. Participants by Age



All participants were asked to identify the race that they identify with. As shown in Table 1, 272 (92.5%) of participants were White/Caucasian, .7% were Black or African American, .3% were American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, 3.4% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% were Two or More Races, and 2% identified as Other. Therefore, a total of 7.4% participants were persons of color. Furthermore, Table 2 illustrates that 1.4% of participants were of Hispanic or Latino Origin.

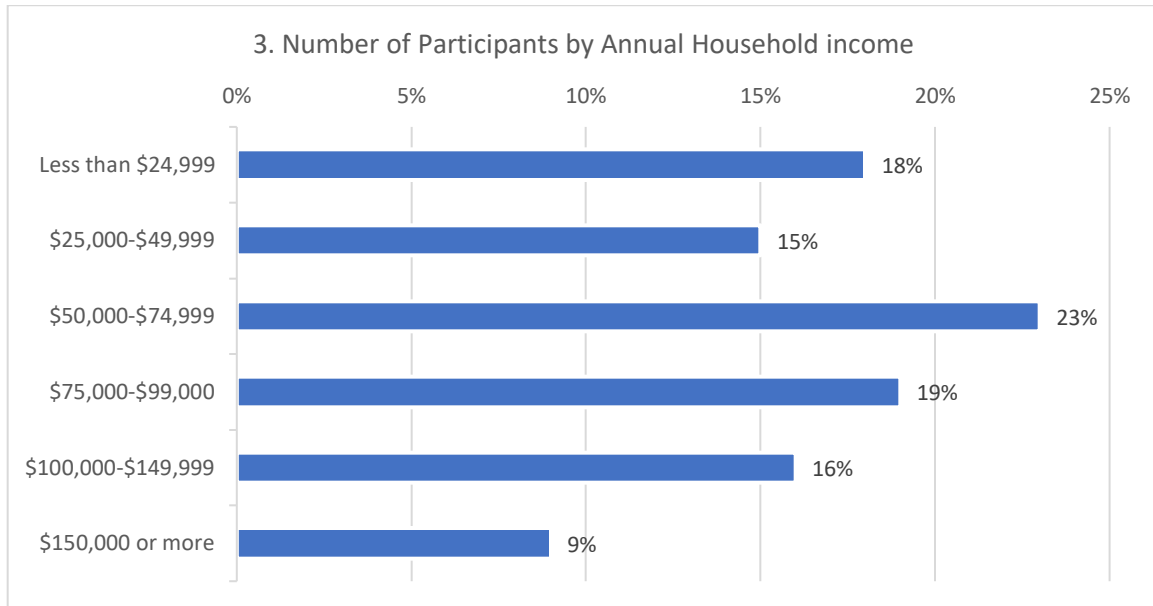
Table 1. Participants by Race

Race	Total Participants	%
White/Caucasian	272	92.5%
Black or African American	2	0.7%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	1	0.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	10	3.4%
Two or More Races	3	1%
Other	6	2%
TOTAL	294	100%

Table 2. Participants by Hispanic or Latino Origin

Hispanic or Latino Origin	Total Participants	%
Yes	4	1.4%
No	288	98.6%
TOTAL	292	100%

Participants were also asked to identify their annual household income. According to the 2010 Census, 28% of Oshkosh households earned less than \$25,000 annually. The median household income in Oshkosh (in 2018 dollars) between 2014-2018 was \$43,346. Responses from all 294 participants are included, and the total number of participants is reported for each income category in Chart 3. Those in households that made \$24,999 or less made up 53 (18%) of the participants, 44 participants (15%) earned \$25,000-\$49,999, the largest group of 67 participants (23%) made between \$50,000-\$74,999 annually. Furthermore, 56 participants (19%) made between \$75,000-\$99,000, 47 participants (16%) made \$100,000-\$149,999, and the smallest group of 27 participants (9%) made \$150,000 or more.



Finally, Chart 4 illustrates the percentage of participants that identify as People of Color, Hispanic or Latino, that are less than 40 years of age, and those that live in households that earn less than \$25,000 annually. Actual proportions are provided for the participants from the 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 surveys. Efforts have been made to expand diversity of participants with some success. The difference from 2017 to 2020 illustrates an increase in participation from all demographic groups. These can also be compared against the last available 2010 Census demographic information to determine how much more participation is needed to achieve representativeness.

Table 3. Participant Demographics Over Time

Demographic Group	2017	2018	2019	2020	2010 Census	% Change 2017-2020	% Needed for Representativeness
People of Color	.8%	5.9%	5.4%	7.4%	<b>8.9%</b>	+6.6%	1.5%
Hispanic or Latino	0%	3.6%	2.9%	1.4%	<b>2.7%</b>	+1.4%	1.3%
Age < 40	14%	31.5%	14.8%	18%	<b>39.3%</b>	+4.0%	21.3%
Income < \$25k	0%	15.8%	16.0%	18.0%	<b>28.0%</b>	+18%	10.0%

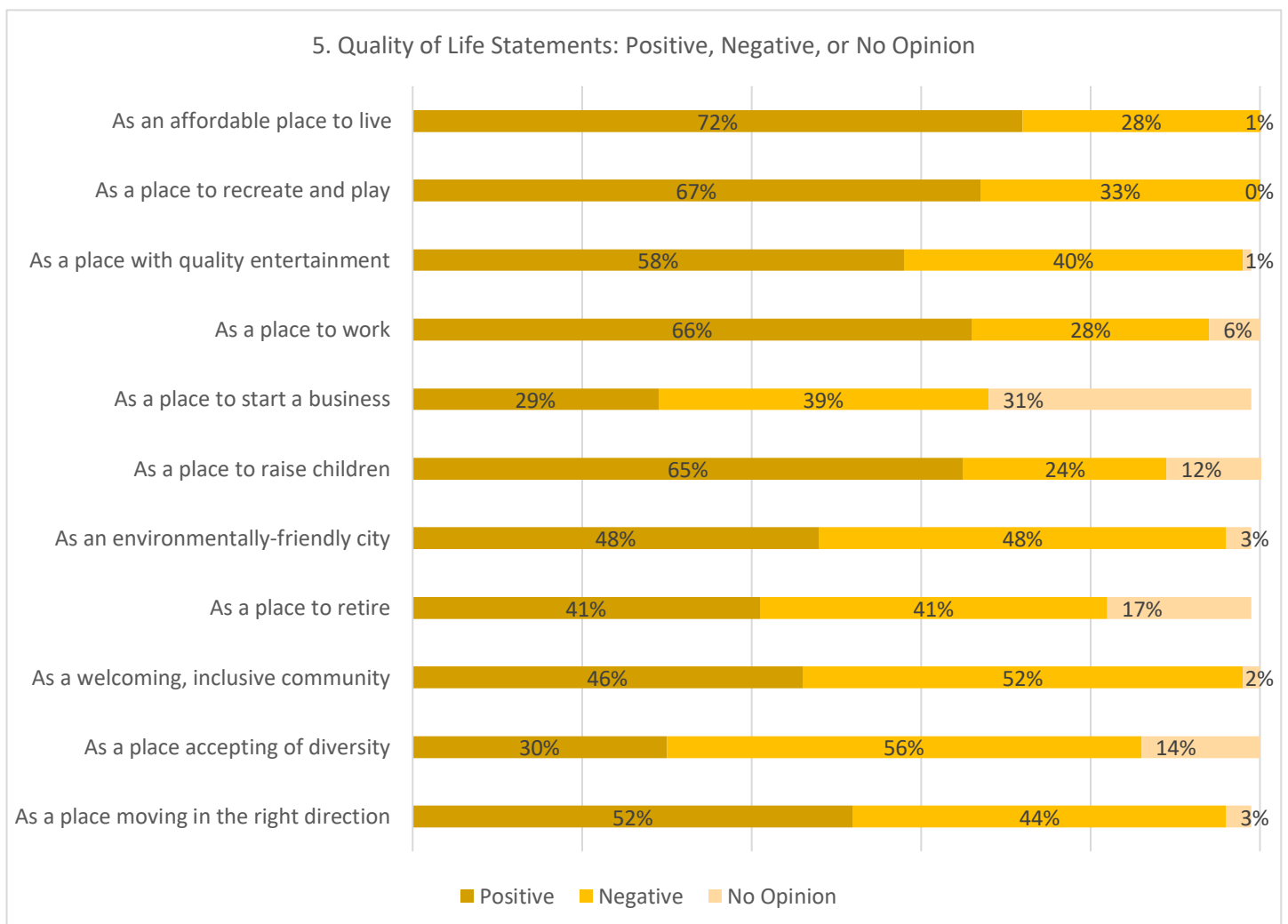
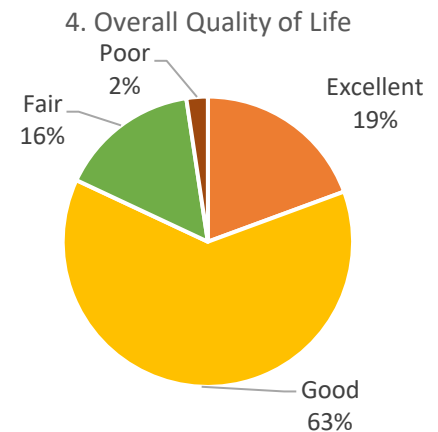
## Quality of Life

Overall, residents responded positively to the Overall Quality of Life question as shown in Chart 5. When asked to rate their overall quality of life, approximately 82% reported a positive quality of life, with 19% answering *Excellent* and 63% answering *Good*. Comparatively, 16% reported their quality of life as fair, and just 2% reported it as poor.

Chart 6 shows responses when participants were asked to rate Oshkosh on 11 different quality of life statements. The chart represents the data grouped into one of three categories: Positive (if participants responded *Excellent* or *Good*), Negative (if they responded *Fair* or *Poor*), and No Opinion.

Results shows that respondents expressed a positive feeling for 6 out of 11 questions, which received a majority positive response rate (50% or greater). The top three positive statements related to Oshkosh as an affordable place to live (72%), as a place to recreate and play (67%), and as a place to work (66%).

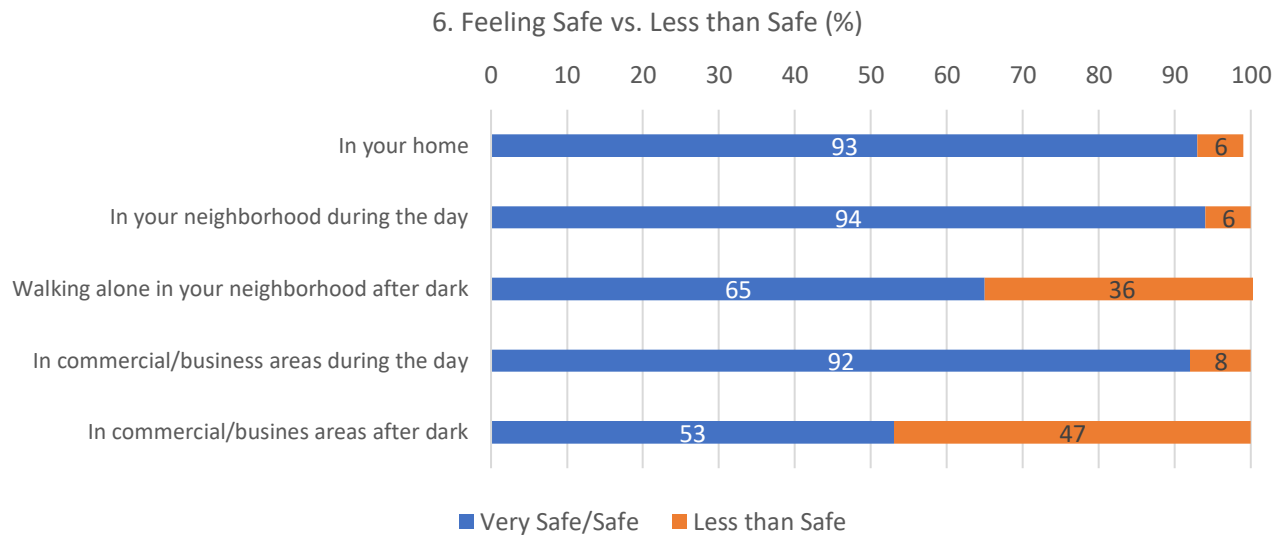
Conversely, a majority of respondents expressed a *negative* feeling for two statements: 56% responded negatively to Oshkosh as a place accepting of diversity, and 52% responded negatively to Oshkosh as a welcoming, inclusive community.



## Feelings of Safety

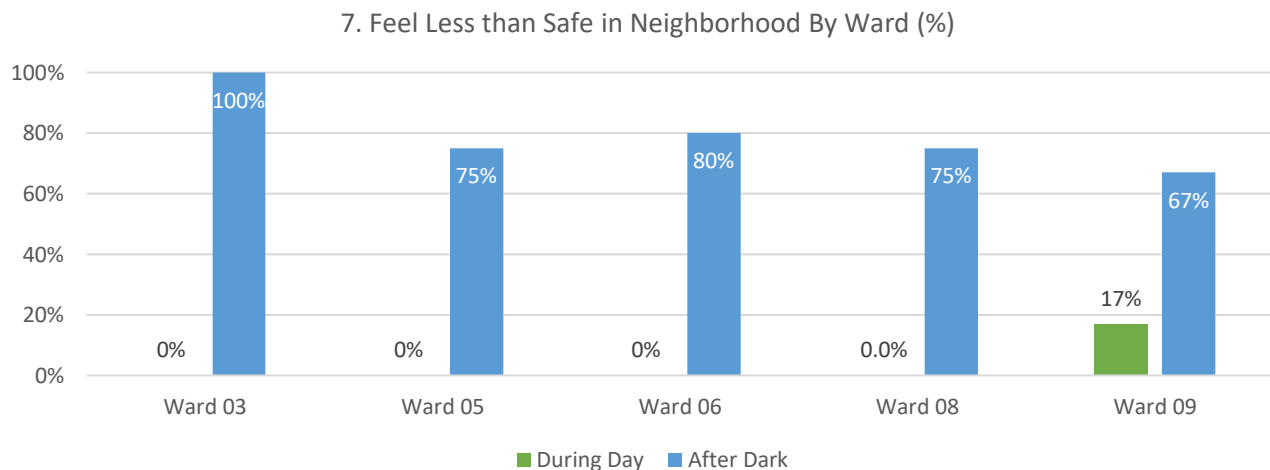
Next, participants were asked: “Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel” in five categories listed in Chart 7. If they responded *Very Safe* or *Safe*, answers are documented in Chart 7 in blue. Any response other than *Very Safe* or *Safe* was included as a *Less than Safe* response, represented by orange.

Overall, the majority responded that they felt safe in Oshkosh. Approximately 93% felt safe in their home, 94% felt safe in their neighborhood during the day, and 92% felt safe in commercial/business areas during the day. On the other hand, only 65% felt safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark, and the lowest proportion of 53% felt safe in commercial/business areas after dark.



To better understand who feels *Unsafe* or *Very Unsafe* in Oshkosh after dark, the demographic data on sex (male/female) was examined. Approximately 42% of females and 19% of males felt less than safe in their neighborhoods after dark. Of those that feel less than safe in commercial areas after dark, 49% were female and 36% identified as male.

As shown in Chart 8, the geographic location of residents that feel less than safe is worth noting. The wards in which a majority of respondents reported feeling less than safe in their neighborhoods after dark are shown below in blue. For comparison, the same respondents felt safe during the day in their neighborhoods in four out of five wards listed. However, 17% of Ward 09 respondents also felt less than safe in their neighborhood during the day.



## Quality of City Services

The next set of questions focused on resident perceptions of the quality of city services. Questions relating to quality asks respondents to identify whether the service is *Excellent*, *Good*, *Fair*, *Poor*, or *No Opinion*. Results are presented in Table 3. The percentage of participants is provided, and the total number is also presented in parentheses (#).

Table 4. Quality of City Services

Area	Service	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
<b>Public Safety</b>	Police	38% (113)	36% (105)	10% (28)	8% (23)	9% (25)
	Fire Department	49% (143)	31% (90)	2% (5)	0% (0)	19% (56)
	Ambulance	35% (104)	30% (87)	3% (9)	0% (0)	32% (94)
<b>Public Works</b>	Leaf and Brush Pick-up	26% (77)	40% (119)	18% (52)	2% (7)	13% (39)
	Recycling Services	34% (99)	50% (147)	12% (34)	1% (2)	4% (12)
	Trash Collection Services	39% (116)	50% (148)	6% (18)	0% (0)	4% (12)
	Sidewalk System	15% (44)	47% (137)	27% (80)	7% (21)	4% (12)
	Ice and Snow Removal	16% (47)	40% (117)	27% (79)	15% (45)	2% (6)
	Traffic Signs and Signals	21% (63)	59% (172)	17% (50)	2% (7)	1% (2)
	Street Lights/Maintenance	18% (54)	56% (164)	18% (53)	5% (16)	2% (7)
	Storm Water Management	14% (42)	47% (138)	24% (70)	8% (24)	7% (20)
<b>Community Services</b>	Neighborhood Revitalization	7% (22)	38% (112)	26% (76)	12% (36)	16% (48)
	Oshkosh Public Museum	32% (93)	42% (124)	8% (23)	2% (6)	16% (48)
	Oshkosh Media	17% (49)	37% (110)	21% (62)	8% (24)	27% (49)
	Oshkosh Public Library	51% (151)	36% (105)	4% (13)	1% (2)	8% (23)
	Senior Services	18% (54)	32% (95)	8% (24)	2% (6)	39% (115)
<b>Economic Development</b>	Assistance to Businesses	7% (20)	21% (63)	13% (37)	7% (20)	52% (154)
	Quality of Housing	7% (20)	38% (113)	33% (97)	13% (39)	9% (25)
	Permits and Inspections	5% (14)	23% (69)	23% (68)	14% (42)	34% (101)
	Property Maintenance	4% (13)	35% (102)	32% (93)	14% (40)	16% (46)
	Planning and Zoning	7% (21)	26% (75)	23% (67)	16% (47)	29% (84)
<b>Parks</b>	Children's Amusement Area	18% (52)	36% (106)	18% (52)	6% (18)	22% (66)
	Leach Amphitheater	30% (87)	41% (121)	10% (28)	2% (5)	18% (53)
	Menominee Park Zoo	24% (71)	45% (131)	19% (55)	5% (14)	8% (23)
	Pollock Water Park	27% (79)	31% (90)	10% (28)	2% (7)	31% (90)
<b>Transportation</b>	Biking & Pedestrian Trails	18% (54)	41% (122)	22% (65)	7% (22)	11% (31)
	City Parking Facilities	11% (32)	41% (122)	28% (83)	11% (32)	9% (25)
	Go Transit System	11% (32)	32% (93)	18% (52)	7% (22)	32% (95)

Based on the results in Table 3, the top five highest quality ratings of *Excellent* are presented in Chart 8.

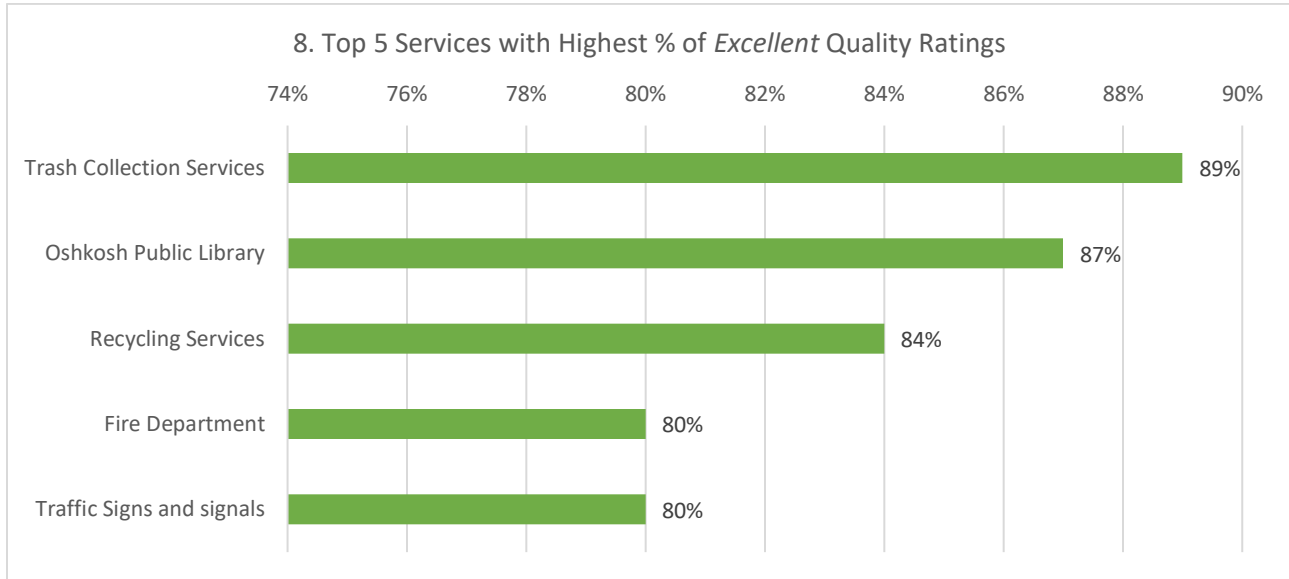
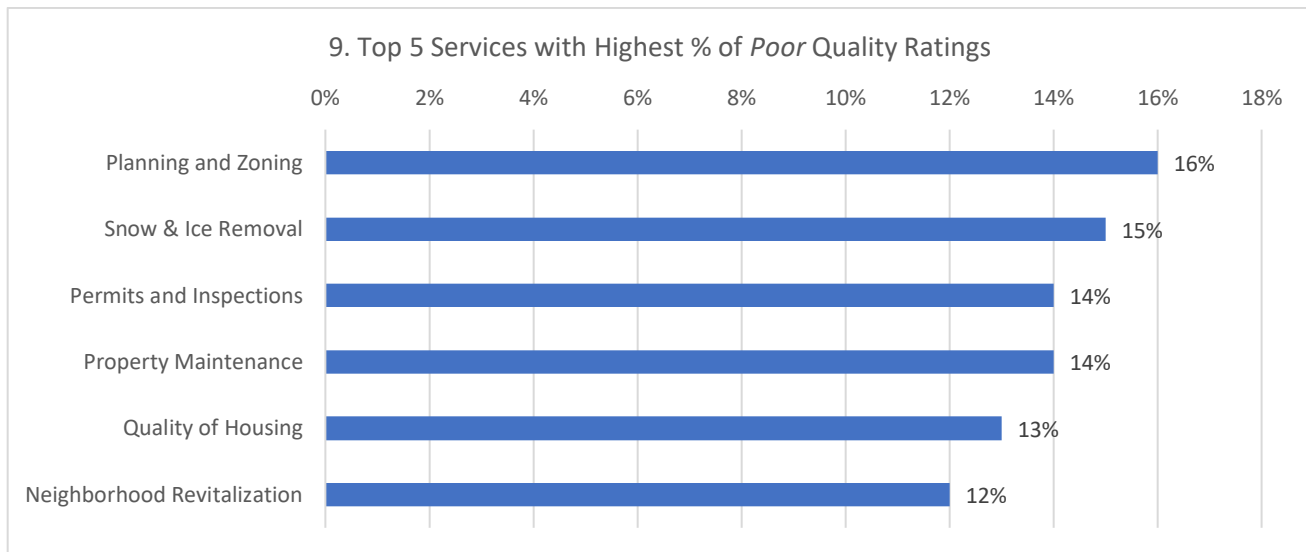


Chart 9 presents the services with the lowest quality rating of *Poor*. However, six services are included because Permits and Inspections and Property Maintenance received the same proportion of participants (14%) that rated them as *Poor*.





## Importance of City Services

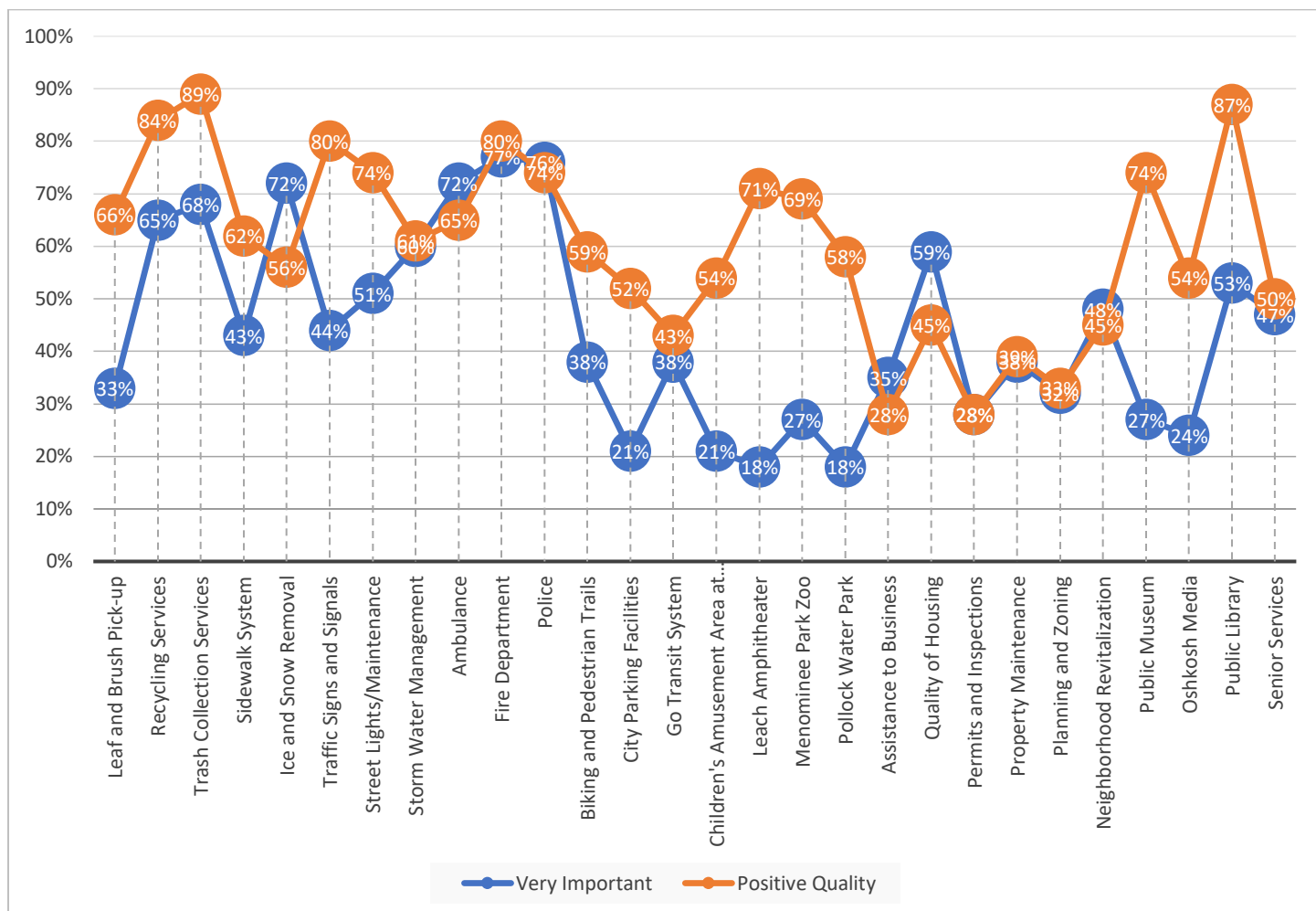
Finally, respondents were asked to rank how important city services are to them. The survey question asks respondents to identify whether the service is *Very Important*, *Somewhat Important*, *Somewhat Unimportant*, *Not Important*, or *No Opinion*. Results are presented in Table 5. The percentage of participants is provided, and the total number is also presented in parentheses (#).

Table 5. Importance of City Services

Area	Service	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	No Opinion
<b>Public Safety</b>	Police	77% (213)	14% (39)	3% (8)	3% (9)	3% (9)
	Fire Department	78% (216)	16% (44)	1% (3)	1% (3)	4% (12)
	Ambulance	70% (194)	21% (58)	2% (5)	1% (2)	7% (19)
<b>Public Works</b>	Leaf and Brush Pick-up	35% (98)	45% (124)	9% (26)	6% (18)	4% (12)
	Recycling Services	61% (170)	29% (82)	5% (15)	3% (9)	1% (2)
	Trash Collection Services	64% (178)	31% (86)	2% (6)	2% (5)	1% (3)
	Sidewalk System	47% (130)	41% (115)	7% (20)	3% (7)	2% (6)
	Ice and Snow Removal	75% (208)	22% (61)	2% (5)	1% (2)	1% (2)
	Traffic Signs and Signals	45% (125)	44% (121)	6% (18)	3% (8)	2% (6)
	Street Lights/Maintenance	52% (144)	40% (110)	5% (15)	2% (5)	1% (4)
	Storm Water Management	58% (160)	35% (97)	5% (14)	1% (2)	2% (5)
<b>Community Services</b>	Neighborhood Revitalization	44% (123)	34% (95)	10% (29)	4% (11)	7% (20)
	Oshkosh Public Museum	25% (70)	38% (107)	21% (58)	8% (21)	8% (22)
	Oshkosh Media	24% (68)	35% (98)	18% (50)	8% (23)	14% (39)
	Oshkosh Public Library	47% (130)	35% (98)	12% (32)	3% (8)	4% (10)
	Senior Services	40% (111)	35% (97)	6% (18)	6% (16)	13% (36)
<b>Economic Development</b>	Assistance to Businesses	31% (86)	27% (74)	11% (30)	10% (29)	21% (59)
	Quality of Housing	56% (155)	29% (82)	7% (20)	2% (5)	6% (16)
	Permits and Inspections	30% (84)	37% (103)	13% (37)	6% (17)	13% (37)
	Property Maintenance	45% (124)	38% (107)	9% (25)	2% (6)	6% (16)
	Planning and Zoning	34% (95)	35% (97)	12% (34)	4% (12)	14% (40)
<b>Parks</b>	Children's Amusement Area	23% (64)	39% (108)	19% (52)	10% (27)	10% (27)
	Leach Amphitheater	18% (50)	41% (113)	22% (61)	10% (29)	9% (25)
	Menominee Park Zoo	28% (77)	40% (111)	21% (59)	5% (15)	6% (16)
	Pollock Water Park	17% (46)	41% (114)	19% (53)	10% (27)	14% (38)
<b>Transportation</b>	Biking & Pedestrian Trails	37% (102)	39% (109)	13% (35)	8% (22)	4% (10)
	City Parking Facilities	22% (60)	48% (134)	18% (50)	6% (17)	6% (17)
	Go Transit System	33% (92)	35% (96)	12% (32)	9% (26)	12% (32)

Chart 10 shows how services were ranked by quality and importance. The graph illustrates if services had “Positive Quality” (rated *Excellent* or *Good*) compared to the percentage rated *Very Important*. By graphing these ratings, this chart shows the gap between what Oshkosh residents expects to have (i.e. *Importance*) versus what they believe exists (i.e. *Quality*).

10. Importance vs. Quality: All City Services



Based on this gap analysis, six out of the 28 city services illustrated lower quality than their importance. Those services are included in Table 6 in order from the largest to smallest gap. City administrators 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 provided. The information can also serve as the basis for reprioritization of services and commitment of public funding to strengthen programming, creating greater public impact.

Table 5. Gaps in *Importance* versus *Quality* of Services

Service	Very Important	Positive Quality	Difference
Ice and Snow Removal	72%	56%	16%
Quality of Housing	59%	45%	14%
Assistance to Businesses	35%	28%	7%
Ambulance	72%	65%	7%
Neighborhood Revitalization	48%	45%	3%
Police	76%	74%	2%

## Notes

The information included in this report was extracted from the Oshkosh Citizen Survey Results collected by Polco. The coordination of survey data and reporting was led by Dr. Samantha June Larson and supported by graduate research assistants Rattana Akey and Raabia Waheed. Any additional questions can be directed to Dr. Larson at:

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