2018 OSHKOSH CITIZEN SURVEY REPORT

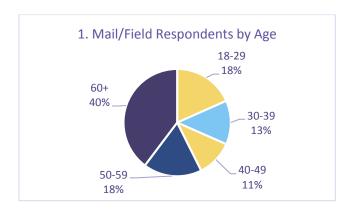
Executive Summary

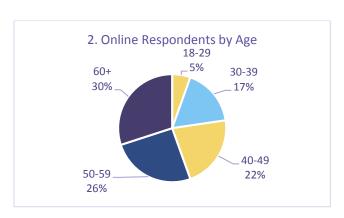
For the past 10 years, the City of Oshkosh has partnered with the Department of Public Administration at the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh (UWO) to conduct the Oshkosh Citizen Survey. Since 2009, a sample of residents have been asked questions pertaining to their overall quality of life, feelings 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.

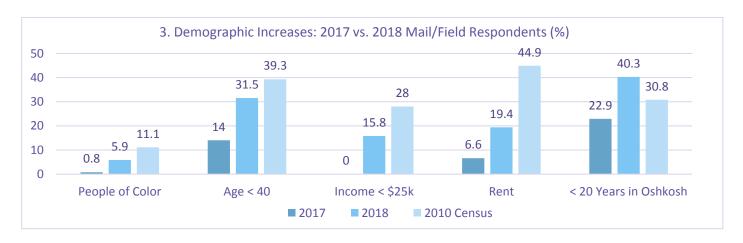
Charts 1 and 2 include the age range of respondents across the methods of data collection. In both the mail/field and online surveys, the greatest proportion of respondents were age 60 or older. However, the second highest age demographic for the mail/field surveys were 18-29 years old (18%), and the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

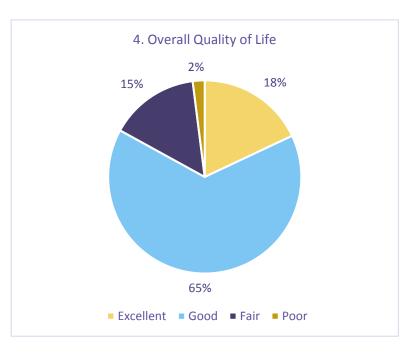
- +5.1% for residents that identify as People of Color
- +16.5% for residents under the Age of 40
- +15.8% for residents that make less than \$25,000 in annual household income
- +12.8% for residents who rent rather than own their homes
- +17.4% for residents who have lived in Oshkosh for less than 20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

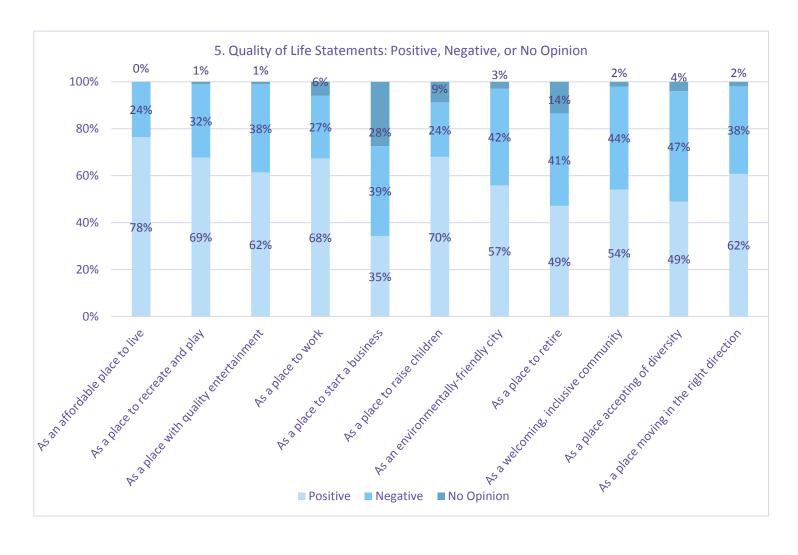


Quality of Life

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.

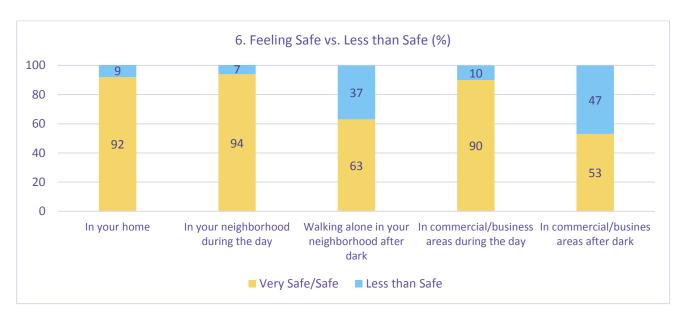
Chart 5 shows responses when participants were asked to rate Oshkosh on 11 statements. The chart represents the data grouped into one of three categories: Positive (responses of *Excellent* or *Good*), Negative (responses of *Fair* or *Poor*), and *No Opinion*. It shows that respondents expressed an 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%).



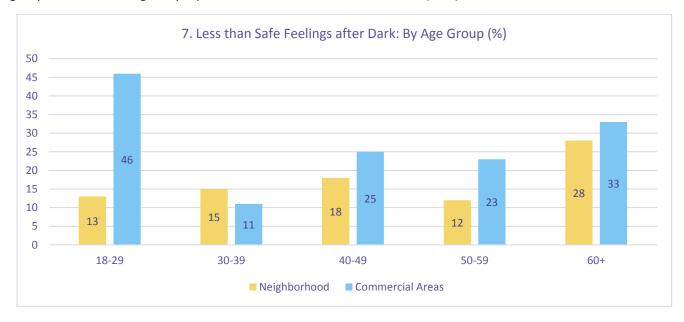


Feelings of Safety

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%.



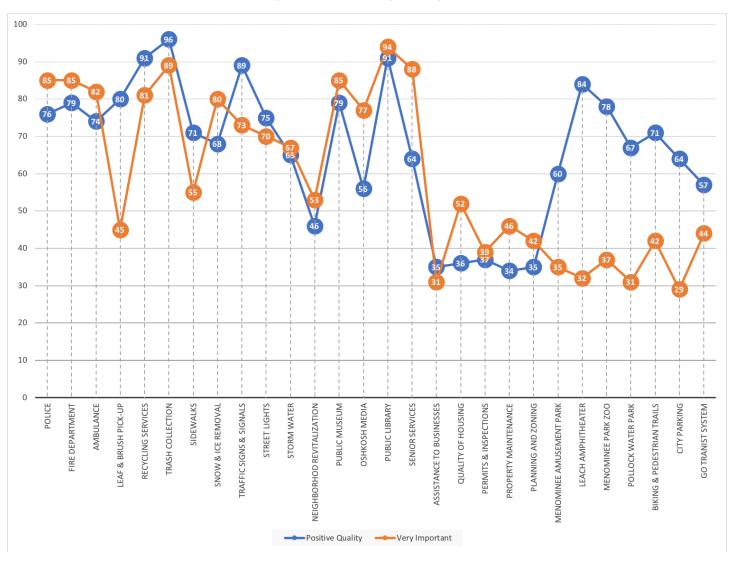
Chart 9 presents the ten services with the lowest quality ratings, which were reported as follows:



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:

Service **Positive Quality Very Important** 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%

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

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

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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%

2. What general area(s) of Oshkosh do you feel need the most attention in terms of investment, rehabilitation, or redevelopment? Please provide suggestions below using neighborhood or street names. What do you think needs to be done?



A total of 197 participants responded to this question. Several common words appeared most frequently, which is to be expected (e.g. street, side, area). In addition, the following key words were more often mentioned by respondents: river, north, east, roads, arena, and campus. The street names mentioned most often included: Main, Jackson, Bowen, Oregon, Ceape, and Murdock. Several respondents also mentioned the Pioneer Inn.

Table 4 presents the themes that emerged from the responses. The percentage of "Coded Responses" that support each theme are provided.

Table 4. Neighborhood Redevelopment Question Themes

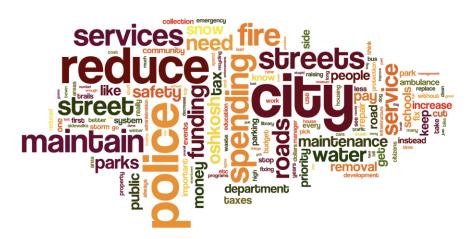
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Theme	Responses
Prioritizing Needs: This theme relies on citizen engagement to address the rehabilitation of public parks, aging homes, and revitalization of business areas that are in need. Respondents have prioritized neighborhood rehabilitation and are largely concerned with following locations: the Northeast side of the city, the East side of the city, the campus area, the downtown area, and public parks throughout the city.	57%
Neighborhood Revitalization Capital Improvement Program: Developing such a program is recommended based upon the geographic nature of responses in the citizen survey and the beneficial outcomes of targeted investments. The program should include prioritization of neighborhoods based upon a participative process including neighborhood charrettes, preliminarily focused on neighborhoods identified in the survey. The structure of the program would be prioritized neighborhoods, each with project lists and projected costs based upon specific needs such as road reconstruction, business development, home rehabilitation, neighborhood parks, value added programming, as well as potential funding sources such as tax increment financing, community development block grants, private investment, and tax levy.	57%
Road Maintenance: Oshkosh is creating a transportation development plan in the next year. Based on comments about road repair, it may be beneficial to host a public forum to discuss roads early in the process of developing the transportation plan, so that feedback can inform the plans development. The purpose of this conversation would be to help residents understand the city's method of prioritizing road repair and to allow residents to voice concerns about roads that they perceive to be in great need.	31%

3. The City is looking at redoing the Oshkosh Avenue Corridor from I-41 to Fox River (e.g. streets, sidewalks, medians, trails, intersections, bike lanes, landscaping, etc.) What would you like to see designed in this area?



A total of 181 participants responded. The words most often mentioned included: bike, lanes, traffic, bridge, trails, landscaping, roundabouts, trees, walking, and park. In terms of street names, the intersection of Sawyer Avenue was often mentioned, such as the following comment: "The intersection of Sawyer Ave. should be improved to a traditional 4 leg intersection. A boulevard would help calm traffic and improve the safety of this corridor." No table of themes is provided for this question as analysis was not conducted to the same degree for this question in 2018.

4. The City is interested in any suggestions that you have regarding budget priorities. If you were the person deciding where to allocate tax dollars, what ONE service would you maintain funding for above all others? On the other hand, what is the FIRST service you would reduce spending on?



A total of 234 participants responded to this question. As shown in the word cloud, the key words that were most often mentioned included: reduce, spending, services, fire, police, roads, streets, water, maintain, parks, need, tax, service, snow, and safety.

When reviewing the results, responses that corresponded to increasing or decreasing funding for specific areas were coded accordingly. However, most responses were confusing and did not address the question. Those responses were coded to the three themes shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Budgeting Question Themes

Theme	Responses
Revise Survey: Questions on citizen surveys can affect the results received and should be revised for better clarity. To obtain better results, it is advised Oshkosh eliminate or reduce open ended questions. Instead, include questions where the citizen has to choose between multiple choice answers with the last option being "other". Having better clarity in the survey questions or specific options for citizens to choose from would narrow the results to more relevant information.	76%
Town Halls: The public needs to be involved in multiple ways at the beginning stage of the budget process. It is advised that the City of Oshkosh employ town hall style meetings pertaining to the budget in conjunction with the Citizen Survey. Simply stated, town hall meetings are an informal means for a city to engage and discuss topics or issues with its citizens. This suggestion is reinforced based upon the results of the 2018 Citizen Survey. With 71% of the information, at best, partially informing the budgetary process, an alternative is needed. To reach the full breadth of the community, the city should identify underserved populations of the community and specifically reach out to them. The best way to encourage citizen participation in the budgetary process is by providing a variety of venues of participation.	71%
Participatory Budgeting: To increase citizen participation in the budgetary process, the City of Oshkosh can utilize some of the results they obtain from the survey to allocate the budget. Similar to participatory budgets, where a city allocates a certain amount of funds for citizens to propose and vote for projects they want their city to accomplish, the City of Oshkosh can use the survey results to accomplish some of the projects that the citizens of Oshkosh want. Respondents reported that if they could reduce any city programs/services they would reduce Administration and Parks. The number one item mentioned in the survey was to maintain service is Streets or Public Works. This would include repairing the roads, sidewalks, and potholes. Another priority was to maintain funding for Public Safety such as Police or Fire.	60%

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 Garedew and Geoffrey Kumah, and made possible by the assistance of undergraduate students Monica Miller and Jessica Rosga.



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