



CITY OF DULUTH, MN 2012



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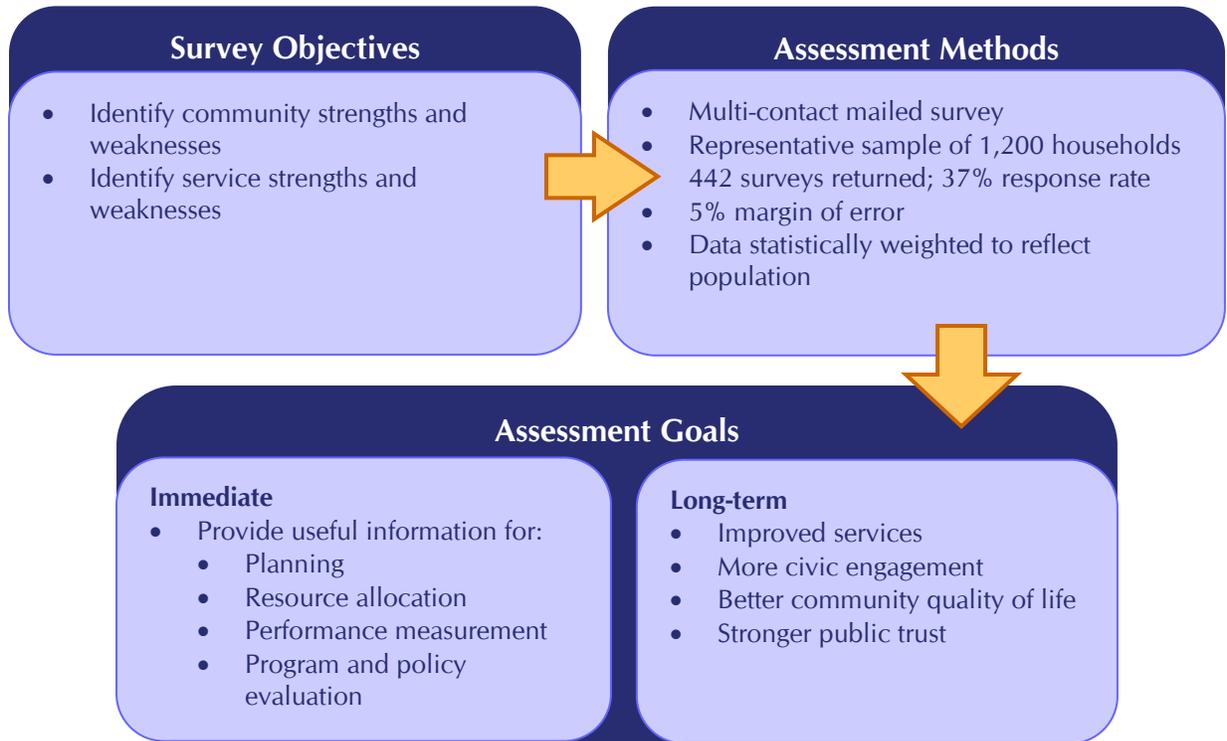
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SURVEY BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The NCS was developed by NRC to provide a statistically valid survey of resident opinions about community and services provided by local government. The survey results may be used by staff, elected officials and other stakeholders for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement and policy making.

FIGURE 1: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ METHODS AND GOALS



The NCS focuses on a series of community characteristics and local government services, as well as issues of public trust. Resident behaviors related to civic engagement in the community also were measured in the survey.

FIGURE 2: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ FOCUS AREAS



The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage-paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community. A total of 442 completed surveys were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 37%. Typically, response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for the City of Duluth was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Duluth staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community issues and provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Duluth staff also augmented The National Citizen Survey™ basic service through a variety of options including demographic crosstabulation of results and several custom questions.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

As shown in Figure 2, this report is based around respondents' opinions about eight larger categories: community quality, community design, public safety, environmental sustainability, recreation and wellness, community inclusiveness, civic engagement and public trust. Each report section begins with residents' ratings of community characteristics and is followed by residents' ratings of service quality. For all evaluative questions, the percent of residents rating the service or community feature as "excellent" or "good" is presented.

Margin of Error

The margin of error around results for the City of Duluth Survey (442 completed surveys) is plus or minus five percentage points. This is a measure of the precision of your 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 your margin of error, you may conclude that when 60% of survey respondents report that a particular service is "excellent" or "good," somewhere between 55-65% of all residents are likely to feel that way.

Interpreting Comparisons to Previous Years

This report contains comparisons with prior years' results. In this report, we are comparing this year's data with existing data in the graphs. Differences between years can be considered "statistically significant" if they are greater than six percentage points. Trend data for your jurisdiction represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines. Deviations from stable trends over time, especially represent opportunities for understanding how local policies, programs or public information may have affected residents' opinions.

"Don't Know" Responses and Rounding

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer "don't know." However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

For some questions, respondents were permitted to select more than one answer. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a multiple response question, it is because some respondents did select more than one response. When a table for a question that only permitted a single response does not total to exactly 100%, it is due to the customary practice of percentages being rounded to the nearest whole number.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report of the City of Duluth survey provides the opinions of a representative sample of residents about community quality of life, service delivery, civic participation and unique issues of local interest. A periodic sounding of resident opinion offers staff, elected officials and other stakeholders an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

Most residents experienced a good quality of life in the City of Duluth and believed the City was a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the City of Duluth was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 78% of respondents. A majority reported they plan on staying in the City of Duluth for the next five years.

A variety of characteristics of the community was evaluated by those participating in the study. The three characteristics receiving the most favorable ratings were the quality of the overall natural environment, opportunities to volunteer, and air quality. The three characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were the amount of public parking, the availability of affordable quality housing, and employment opportunities.

Residents in the City of Duluth were very civically engaged. While 32% had attended a meeting of local elected public officials or other local public meeting in the previous 12 months, 96% had provided help to a friend or neighbor. A majority had volunteered their time to some group or activity in the City of Duluth.

In general, survey respondents demonstrated mild trust in local government. A majority rated the overall direction being taken by the City of Duluth as “good” or “excellent.” Those residents who had interacted with an employee of the City of Duluth in the previous 12 months gave good marks to those employees. Most rated their overall impression of employees as “excellent” or “good.”

On average, residents gave somewhat favorable ratings to many local government services.

Respondents were asked to rate how frequently they participated in various activities in Duluth. The most popular activities included recycling and providing help to a friend or neighbor; while the least popular activities were riding a local bus in Duluth and attending a meeting of local elected officials.

When compared to the previous year’s ratings, there were changes for several services. Ratings increased for characteristics such as ease of car travel, ease of walking, street cleaning, the power (electric and/or gas) utility, and public library services. Ratings decreased for cable television and safety in Duluth’s downtown area after dark.

A Key Driver Analysis was conducted for the City of Duluth which examined the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Duluth's services overall. Those key driver services that correlated most strongly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Duluth can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality. Services found to be influential in ratings of overall service quality from the Key Driver Analysis were:

- Police services
- Preservation of natural areas
- Public schools
- Street cleaning

COMMUNITY RATINGS

OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY

Overall quality of community life may be the single best indicator of success in providing the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to quality of community life in the City of Duluth – not only direct questions about quality of life overall and in neighborhoods, but questions to measure residents’ commitment to the City of Duluth. Residents were asked whether they planned to move soon or if they would recommend the City of Duluth to others. Intentions to stay and willingness to make recommendations provide evidence that the City of Duluth offers services and amenities that work.

A majority of the City of Duluth’s residents gave favorable ratings to their neighborhoods and the community as a place to live. Further, many reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years. When compared to the previous year’s survey, ratings for Duluth as a place to live increased. The likelihood of participants remaining in Duluth for the next five years also increased compared to the 2011 survey.

FIGURE 3: RATINGS OF OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEAR

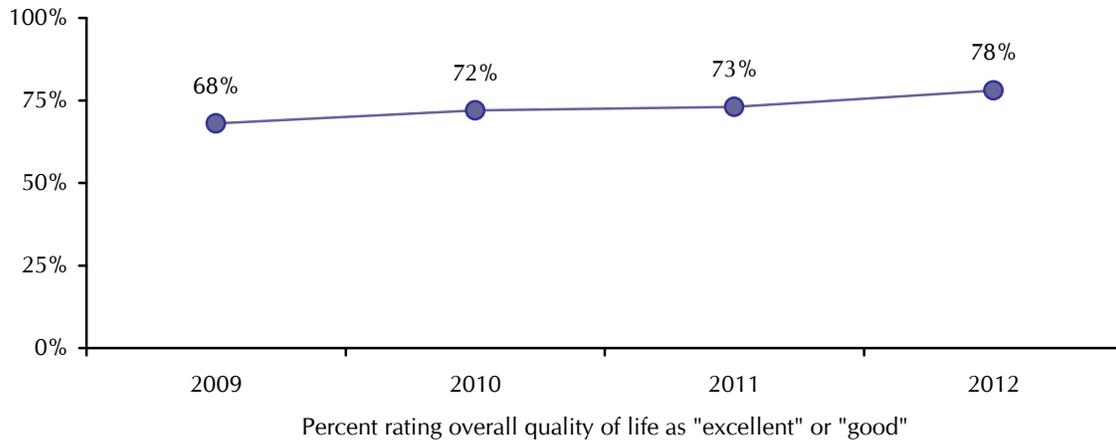


FIGURE 4: RATINGS OF OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
The overall quality of life in Duluth	78%	73%	72%	68%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	70%	72%	70%	72%
Duluth as a place to live	87%	80%	81%	78%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 5: LIKELIHOOD OF REMAINING IN COMMUNITY AND RECOMMENDING COMMUNITY BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Remain in Duluth for the next five years	84%	75%	76%	78%
Recommend living in Duluth to someone who asks	84%	81%	80%	75%
Percent "very" or "somewhat" likely				

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Transportation

The ability to move easily throughout a community can greatly affect the quality of life of residents by diminishing time wasted in traffic congestion and by providing opportunities to travel quickly and safely by modes other than the automobile. High quality options for resident mobility not only require local government to remove barriers to flow but they require government programs and policies that create quality opportunities for all modes of travel.

Residents responding to the survey were given a list of six aspects of mobility to rate on a scale of “excellent,” “good,” “fair” and “poor.” The availability of paths and walking trails was given the most positive rating, followed by the ease of walking in Duluth. The ratings for ease of car travel and ease of walking in Duluth had increased over time.

FIGURE 6: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Ease of car travel in Duluth	66%	53%	56%	53%
Ease of bus travel in Duluth	63%	58%	58%	59%
Ease of bicycle travel in Duluth	43%	44%	41%	42%
Ease of walking in Duluth	67%	60%	61%	59%
Availability of paths and walking trails	77%	75%	74%	67%
Traffic flow on major streets	54%	49%	55%	48%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Eight transportation services were rated in Duluth. The rating for street cleaning improved from 2011 to 2012.

FIGURE 7: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Street repair	17%	11%	8%	2%
Street cleaning	50%	37%	32%	22%
Street lighting	49%	48%	42%	41%
Snow removal	63%	64%	53%	48%
Sidewalk maintenance	31%	29%	23%	19%
Traffic signal timing	54%	53%	52%	54%
Bus or transit services	69%	70%	75%	73%
Amount of public parking	33%	35%	33%	28%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

By measuring choice of travel mode over time, communities can monitor their success in providing attractive alternatives to the traditional mode of travel, the single-occupied automobile. When asked how they typically traveled to work, single-occupancy (SOV) travel was the overwhelming mode of use. However, 3% of work commute trips were made by transit, 3% by bicycle and 9% by foot.

FIGURE 8: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE IN LAST 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

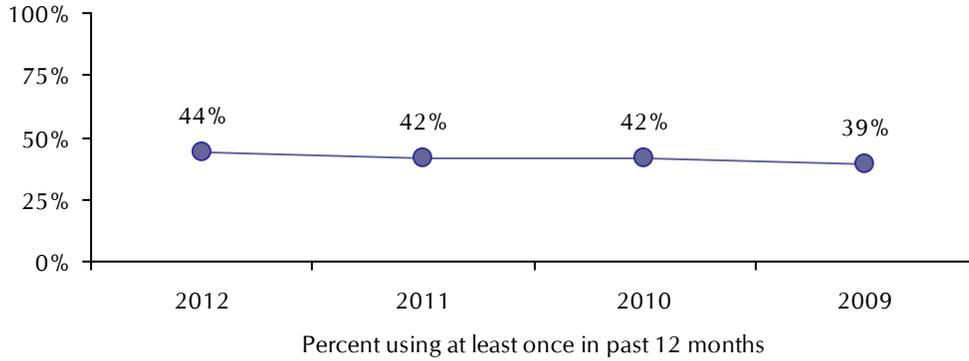
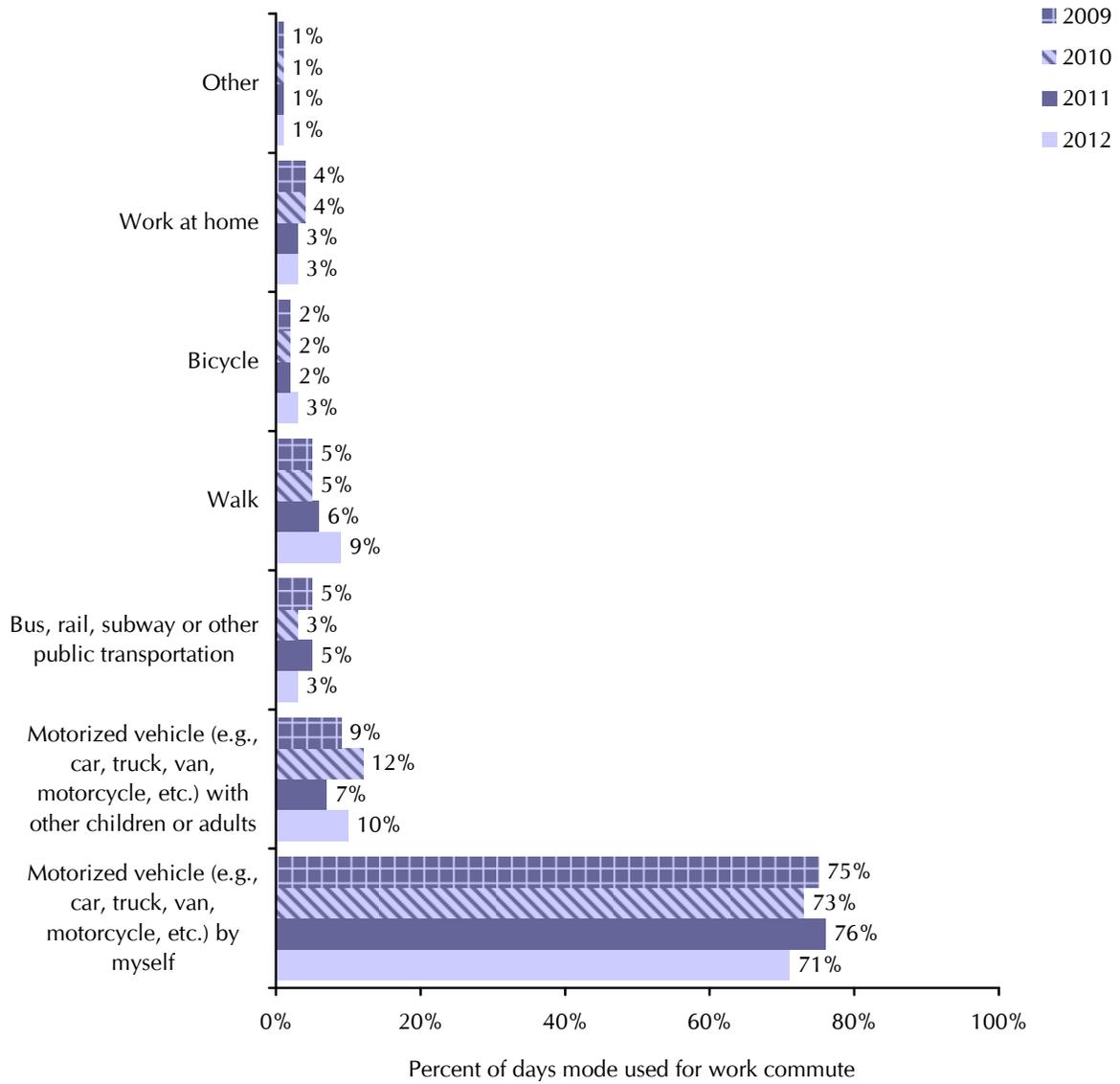


FIGURE 9: MODE OF TRAVEL USED FOR WORK COMMUTE BY YEAR



Housing

Housing variety and affordability are not luxuries for any community. When there are too few options for housing style and affordability, the characteristics of a community tilt toward a single group, often of well-off residents. While this may seem attractive to a community, the absence of affordable townhomes, condominiums, mobile homes, single family detached homes and apartments means that in addition to losing the vibrancy of diverse thoughts and lifestyles, the community loses the service workers that sustain all communities – police officers, school teachers, house painters and electricians. These workers must live elsewhere and commute in at great personal cost and to the detriment of traffic flow and air quality. Furthermore lower income residents pay so much of their income to rent or mortgage that little remains to bolster their own quality of life or local business.

The survey of the City of Duluth residents 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 “excellent” or “good” by 31% of respondents, while the variety of housing options was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 39% of respondents.

FIGURE 10: RATINGS OF HOUSING IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Availability of affordable quality housing	31%	33%	39%	30%
Variety of housing options	39%	43%	48%	43%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

To augment the perceptions of affordable housing in Duluth, the cost of housing as reported in the survey was compared to residents’ reported monthly income to create a rough estimate of the proportion of residents of the City of Duluth experiencing housing cost stress. About one-third of survey participants were found to pay housing costs of more than 30% of their monthly household income.

FIGURE 11: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS EXPERIENCING HOUSING COST STRESS BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Housing costs 30% or more of income	32%	31%	33%	34%
Percent of respondents				

Land Use and Zoning

Community development contributes to a feeling among residents and even visitors of the attention given to the speed of growth, the location of residences and businesses, the kind of housing that is appropriate for the community and the ease of access to commerce, green space and residences. Even the community’s overall appearance often is attributed to the planning and enforcement functions of the local jurisdiction. Residents will appreciate an attractive, well-planned community. The NCS questionnaire asked residents to evaluate the quality of new development, the appearance of the City of Duluth and the speed of population growth. Problems with the appearance of property were rated, and the quality of land use planning, zoning and code enforcement services were evaluated.

The overall quality of new development in the City of Duluth was rated as “excellent” by 8% of respondents and as “good” by an additional 33%. The overall appearance of Duluth was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 60% of respondents. When rating to what extent run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles were a problem in the City of Duluth, 23% thought they were a “major” problem. Ratings generally remained stable over time.

FIGURE 12: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S "BUILT ENVIRONMENT" BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Overall quality of new development in Duluth	41%	44%	39%	31%
Overall appearance of Duluth	60%	58%	55%	47%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 13: RATINGS OF POPULATION GROWTH BY YEAR

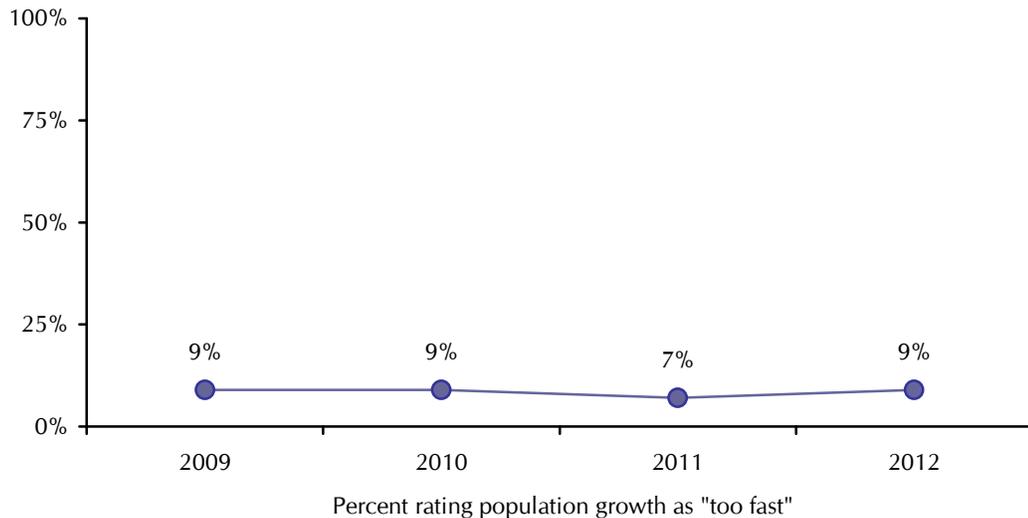


FIGURE 14: RATINGS OF NUISANCE PROBLEMS BY YEAR

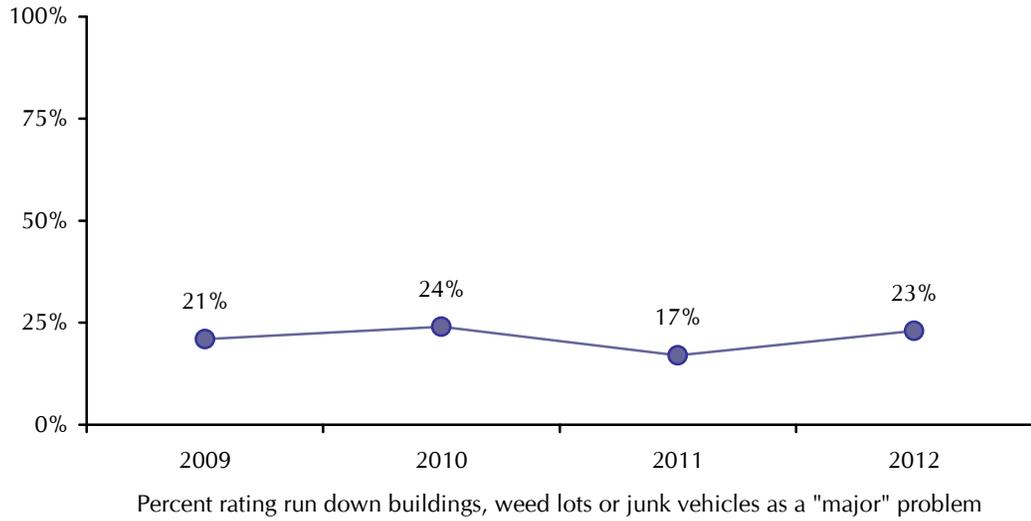


FIGURE 15: RATINGS OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Land use, planning and zoning	37%	39%	29%	26%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	24%	25%	20%	18%
Animal control	56%	54%	54%	53%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The United States has been in recession since late 2007 with an accelerated downturn occurring in the fourth quarter of 2008. Officially we emerged from recession in the third quarter of 2009, but high unemployment lingers, keeping a lid on a strong recovery. Many readers worry that the ill health of the economy will color how residents perceive their environment and the services that local government delivers. NRC researchers have found that the economic downturn has chastened Americans' view of their own economic futures but has not colored their perspectives about community services or quality of life.

Survey respondents were asked to rate a number of community features related to economic opportunity and growth. The most positively rated features were shopping opportunities and the overall quality of business and service establishments in Duluth. Receiving the lowest rating was employment opportunities.

FIGURE 16: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

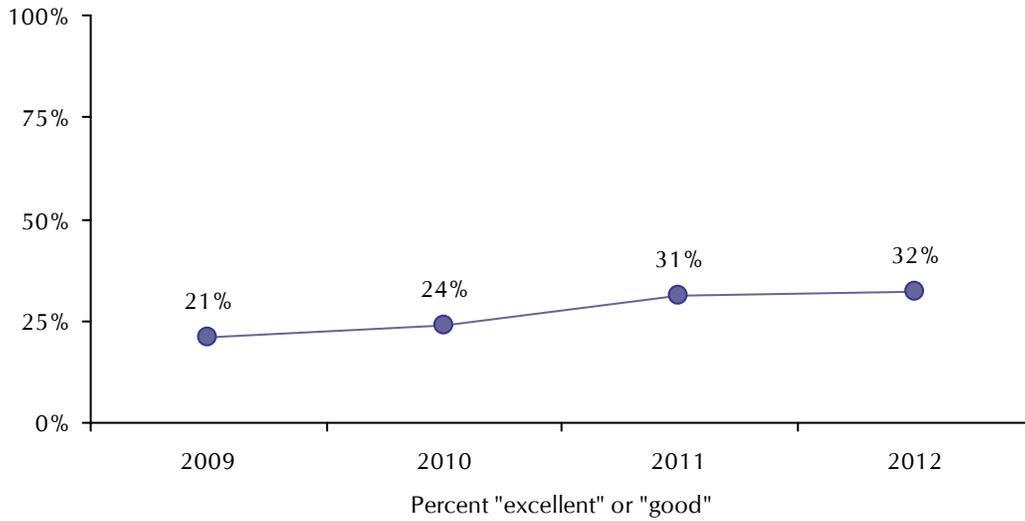
	2012	2011	2010	2009
Employment opportunities	23%	20%	13%	14%
Shopping opportunities	62%	64%	58%	54%
Duluth as a place to work	51%	49%	39%	37%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Duluth	59%	59%	58%	51%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Residents were asked to evaluate the speed of jobs growth and retail growth on a scale from "much too slow" to "much too fast." When asked about the rate of jobs growth in Duluth, 89% responded that it was "too slow," while 42% reported retail growth as "too slow."

FIGURE 17: RATINGS OF RETAIL AND JOBS GROWTH BY YEAR

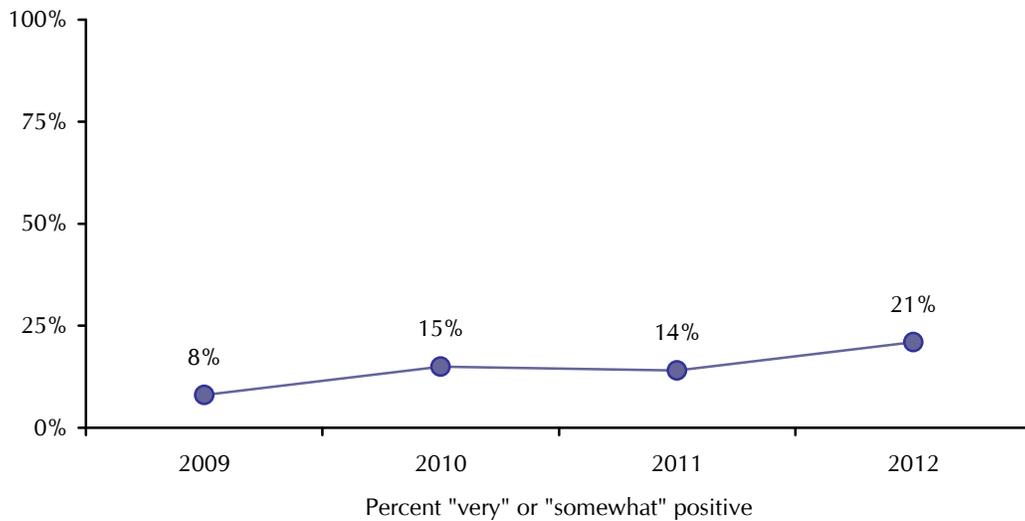
	2012	2011	2010	2009
Retail growth seen as too slow	42%	38%	42%	56%
Jobs growth seen as too slow	89%	91%	96%	93%
Percent of respondents				

FIGURE 18: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BY YEAR



Residents were asked to reflect on their economic prospects in the near term. Twenty-one percent of the City of Duluth residents expected that the coming six months would have a “somewhat” or “very” positive impact on their family. The percent of residents with an optimistic outlook on their household income had increased over time.

FIGURE 19: RATINGS OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BY YEAR



PUBLIC SAFETY

Safety from violent or property crimes creates the cornerstone of an attractive community. No one wants to live in fear of crime, fire or natural hazards, and communities in which residents feel protected or unthreatened are communities that are more likely to show growth in population, commerce and property value.

Residents were asked to rate their feelings of safety from violent crimes, property crimes, fire and environmental dangers and to evaluate the local agencies whose main charge is to provide protection from these dangers. Most gave positive ratings of safety in the City of Duluth. More than 70% of those completing the questionnaire said they felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from violent crimes and 74% felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from environmental hazards. Daytime sense of safety was better than nighttime safety and neighborhoods felt safer than downtown. Most ratings remained stable when compared to the previous year’s survey; however the ratings for safety in Duluth’s downtown area after dark decreased.

FIGURE 20: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Safety in your neighborhood during the day	93%	94%	92%	92%
Safety in your neighborhood after dark	71%	69%	67%	71%
Safety in Duluth's downtown area during the day	75%	75%	72%	73%
Safety in Duluth's downtown area after dark	24%	33%	21%	20%
Safety from violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	72%	70%	58%	61%
Safety from property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	52%	52%	47%	52%
Safety from environmental hazards	74%	75%	70%	72%
Percent "very" or "somewhat" safe				

As assessed by the survey, 18% of respondents reported that someone in the household had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 76% had reported it to police.

FIGURE 21: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
During the past 12 months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	18%	18%	16%	17%
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	76%	79%	80%	75%
Percent "yes"				

Residents rated eight City public safety services. Fire services received the highest ratings, while traffic enforcement and crime prevention received the lowest ratings. All were rated similar compared to previous years.

FIGURE 22: RATINGS OF PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Police services	78%	78%	74%	79%
Fire services	93%	90%	89%	92%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	89%	85%	88%	90%
Crime prevention	56%	60%	54%	56%
Fire prevention and education	75%	75%	73%	76%
Municipal courts	65%	63%	59%	66%
Traffic enforcement	55%	61%	56%	60%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency services)	66%	60%	61%	57%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 23: CONTACT WITH POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS BY YEAR

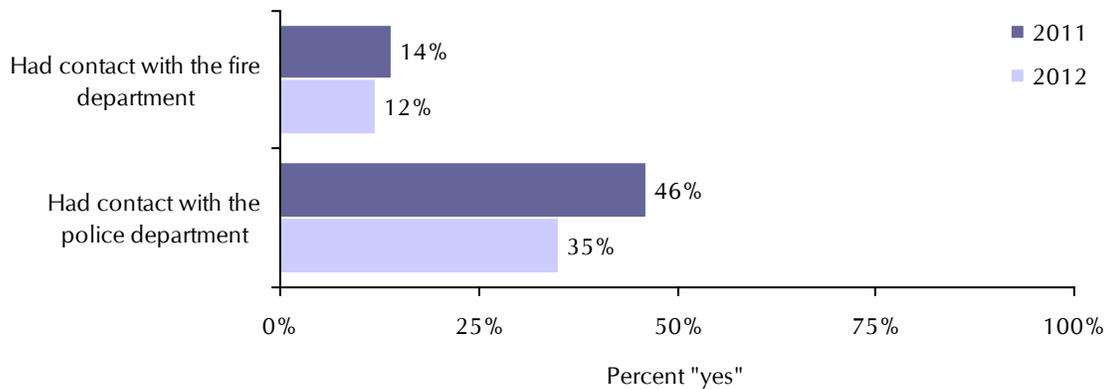
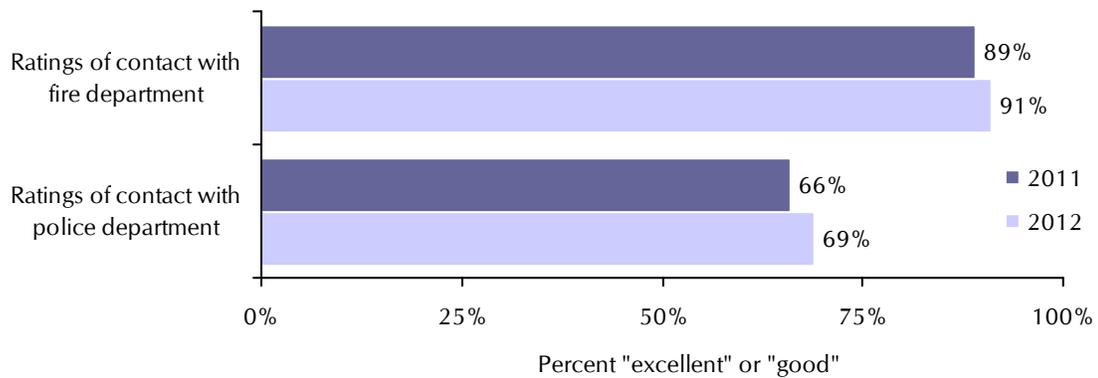


FIGURE 24: RATINGS OF POLICE AND FIRE EMPLOYEES BY YEAR



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Residents value the aesthetic qualities of their hometowns and appreciate features such as overall cleanliness and landscaping. In addition, the appearance and smell or taste of the air and water do not go unnoticed. These days, increasing attention is paid to proper treatment of the environment. At the same time that they are attending to community appearance and cleanliness, cities, counties, states and the nation are going “Green”. These strengthening environmental concerns extend to trash haul, recycling, sewer services, the delivery of power and water and preservation of open spaces. Treatment of the environment affects air and water quality and, generally, how habitable and inviting a place appears.

Residents of the City of Duluth were asked to evaluate their local environment and the services provided to ensure its quality. The overall quality of the natural environment was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 86% of survey respondents. The overall quality of the natural environment received the highest rating.

FIGURE 25: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Cleanliness of Duluth	58%	55%	50%	43%
Quality of overall natural environment in Duluth	86%	84%	82%	82%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	66%	63%	59%	57%
Air quality	83%	83%	81%	79%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Resident recycling remained stable over time.

FIGURE 26: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

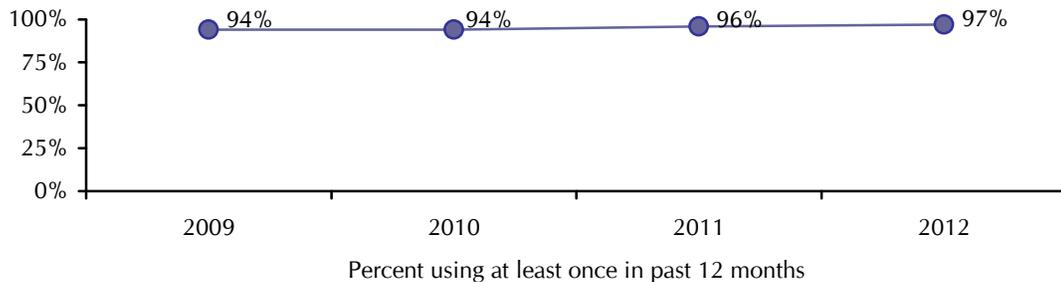


FIGURE 27: RATINGS OF UTILITY SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	83%	76%	72%	73%
Sewer services	73%	69%	67%	63%
Drinking water	89%	87%	89%	87%
Storm drainage	57%	53%	46%	33%
Yard waste pick-up	55%	51%	59%	57%
Recycling	84%	83%	84%	82%
Garbage collection	87%	84%	87%	85%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

RECREATION AND WELLNESS

Parks and Recreation

Quality parks and recreation opportunities help to define a community as more than the grind of its business, traffic and hard work. Leisure activities vastly can improve the quality of life of residents, serving both to entertain and mobilize good health. The survey contained questions seeking residents' perspectives about opportunities and services related to the community's parks and recreation services.

Recreation opportunities in the City of Duluth were rated positively as were services related to parks and recreation. Recreation centers received the lowest rating.

Resident use of Duluth parks and recreation facilities tells its own story about the attractiveness and accessibility of those services. Participation in recreation programs increased when compared to the 2011 survey.

FIGURE 28: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

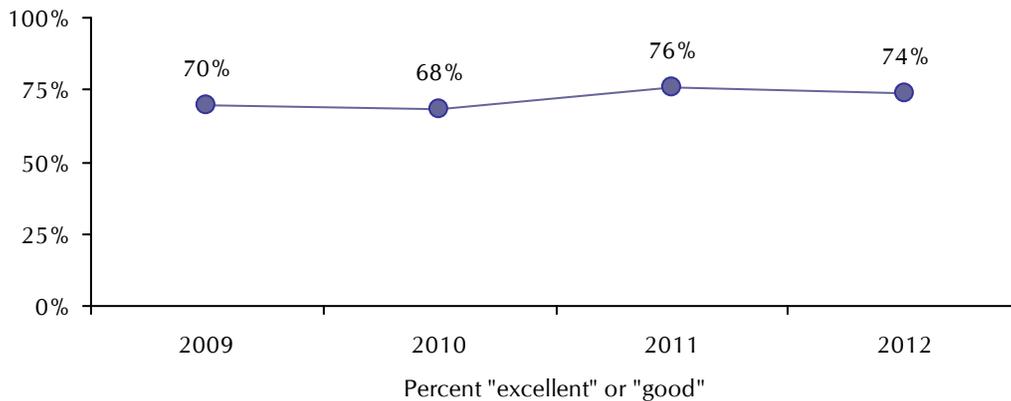


FIGURE 29: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Used Duluth recreation centers	64%	61%	59%	61%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	57%	50%	51%	50%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	93%	90%	92%	92%
Percent using at least once in last 12 months				

FIGURE 30: RATINGS OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
City parks	81%	80%	78%	70%
Recreation programs or classes	65%	65%	64%	57%
Recreation centers or facilities	58%	61%	59%	50%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Culture, Arts and Education

A full service community does not address only the life and safety of its residents. Like individuals who simply go to the office and return home, a community that pays attention only to the life sustaining basics becomes insular, dreary and uninspiring. In the case of communities without thriving culture, arts and education opportunities, the magnet that attracts those who might consider relocating there is vastly weakened. Cultural, artistic, social and educational services elevate the opportunities for personal growth among residents. In the survey, residents were asked about the quality of opportunities to participate in cultural and educational activities.

Opportunities to attend cultural activities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 63% of respondents. Educational opportunities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 76% of respondents.

About 72% of Duluth residents used a City library at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. This rate of use had remained stable over time.

FIGURE 31: RATINGS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	63%	64%	NA	NA
Educational opportunities	76%	75%	74%	74%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

FIGURE 32: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Used Duluth public libraries or their services	72%	69%	70%	71%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Duluth	59%	59%	64%	63%
Percent using at least once in last 12 months				

FIGURE 33: PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Public schools	54%	56%	49%	49%
Public library services	82%	66%	61%	60%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Health and Wellness

Healthy residents have the wherewithal to contribute to the economy as volunteers or employees and they do not present a burden in cost and time to others. Although residents bear the primary responsibility for their good health, local government provides services that can foster that well being and that provide care when residents are ill.

Residents of the City of Duluth 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 quality food and the availability of preventive health services were rated most positively for the City of Duluth, while the availability for affordable quality health care was rated less favorably by residents.

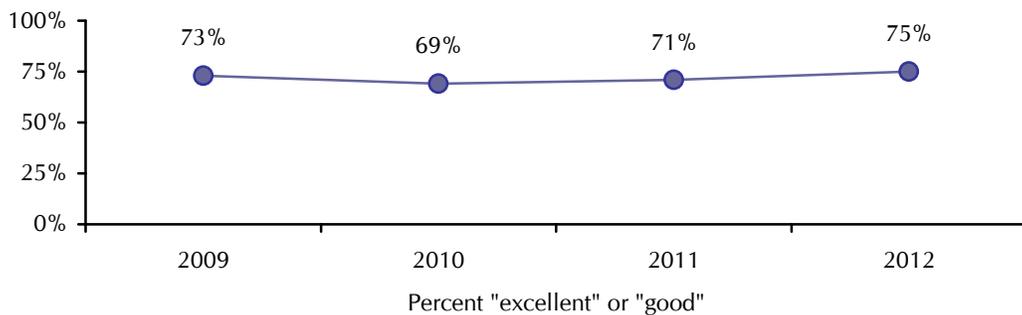
Among Duluth residents, 61% rated affordable quality health care as “excellent” or “good.” This rating trended up over time.

FIGURE 34: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Availability of affordable quality health care	61%	59%	57%	54%
Availability of affordable quality food	68%	68%	67%	68%
Availability of preventive health services	68%	69%	65%	65%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Trends remained stable over time for the health related services offered in the City of Duluth.

FIGURE 35: RATINGS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES BY YEAR



COMMUNITY INCLUSIVENESS

Diverse communities that include among their residents a mix of races, ages, wealth, ideas and beliefs have the raw material for the most vibrant and creative society. However, the presence of these features alone does not ensure a high quality or desirable space. Surveyed residents were asked about the success of the mix: the sense of community, the openness of residents to people of diverse backgrounds and the attractiveness of the City of Duluth as a place to raise children or to retire. They were also questioned about the quality of services delivered to various population subgroups, including older adults, youth and residents with few resources. A community that succeeds in creating an inclusive environment for a variety of residents is a community that offers more to many.

A high percentage of residents rated the City of Duluth as an “excellent” or “good” place to raise kids and a majority rated it as an excellent or good place to retire. Most residents felt that the local sense of community was “excellent” or “good.” Fewer survey respondents felt the City of Duluth was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. The availability of affordable quality child care was rated the lowest by residents. When compared to the previous survey year, ratings for Duluth as a place to retire increased.

FIGURE 36: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Sense of community	63%	61%	56%	53%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	44%	46%	37%	45%
Availability of affordable quality child care	43%	37%	42%	32%
Duluth as a place to raise children	80%	74%	74%	73%
Duluth as a place to retire	64%	53%	55%	55%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Services to more vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, youth or low-income residents) ranged from 51% to 71% with ratings of “excellent” or “good.” These ratings increased over time.

FIGURE 37: RATINGS OF QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Services to seniors	71%	66%	66%	60%
Services to youth	51%	51%	51%	41%
Services to low-income people	54%	52%	50%	47%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

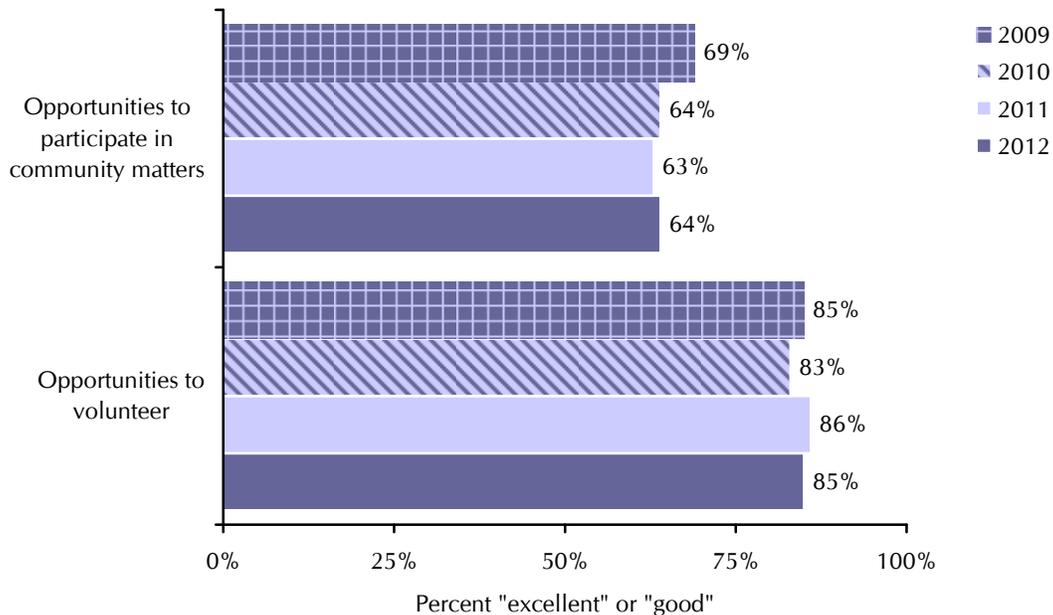
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Community leaders cannot run a jurisdiction alone and a jurisdiction cannot run effectively if residents remain strangers with little to connect them. Elected officials and staff require the assistance of local residents whether that assistance comes in tacit approval or eager help; and commonality of purpose among the electorate facilitates policies and programs that appeal to most and causes discord among few. Furthermore, when neighbors help neighbors, the cost to the community to provide services to residents in need declines. When residents are civically engaged, they have taken the opportunity to participate in making the community more livable for all. The extent to which local government provides opportunities to become informed and engaged and the extent to which residents take those opportunities is an indicator of the connection between government and populace. By understanding your residents' level of connection to, knowledge of and participation in local government, the City can find better opportunities to communicate and educate citizens about its mission, services, accomplishments and plans. This survey information is essential for public communication and for helping local government staff to conceive strategies for reaching reluctant voters whose confidence in government may need boosting prior to important referenda.

Civic Activity

Respondents were asked about the perceived community volunteering opportunities and their participation as citizens of the City of Duluth. Survey participants rated the volunteer opportunities in the City of Duluth favorably. Opportunities to attend or participate in community matters were rated less favorably.

FIGURE 38: RATINGS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend. These rates of participation remained stable over time.

FIGURE 39: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR¹

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	32%	30%	33%	34%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media	50%	48%	52%	54%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Duluth	65%	66%	65%	61%
Participated in a club or civic group in Duluth	45%	43%	48%	45%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	96%	98%	NA	NA
Percent participating at least once in the last 12 months				

City of Duluth residents showed the largest amount of civic engagement in the area of electoral participation. Eight-nine percent reported they were registered to vote and 80% indicated they had voted in the last general election.

FIGURE 40: REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOR BY YEAR²

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Registered to vote	89%	89%	89%	93%
Voted in the last general election	80%	78%	82%	90%
Percent "yes"				

¹ Over the past few years, local governments have adopted communication strategies that embrace the Internet and new media. In 2010, the question, "Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television" was revised to include "the Internet or other media" to better reflect this trend.

² Note: In addition to the removal of "don't know" responses, those who said "ineligible to vote" also have been omitted from this calculation.

Information and Awareness

Those completing the survey were asked about their use and perceptions of various information sources and local government media services. When asked whether they had visited the City of Duluth Web site in the previous 12 months, 55% reported they had done so at least once. Ratings decreased for cable television compared to the 2011 survey.

FIGURE 41: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Read Duluth Newsletter	68%	69%	NA	NA
Visited the City of Duluth Web site (at www.duluthmn.gov)	55%	50%	49%	47%
Percent using at least once in last 12 months				

FIGURE 42: RATINGS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Cable television	45%	57%	50%	53%
Public information services	63%	62%	57%	51%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Social Engagement

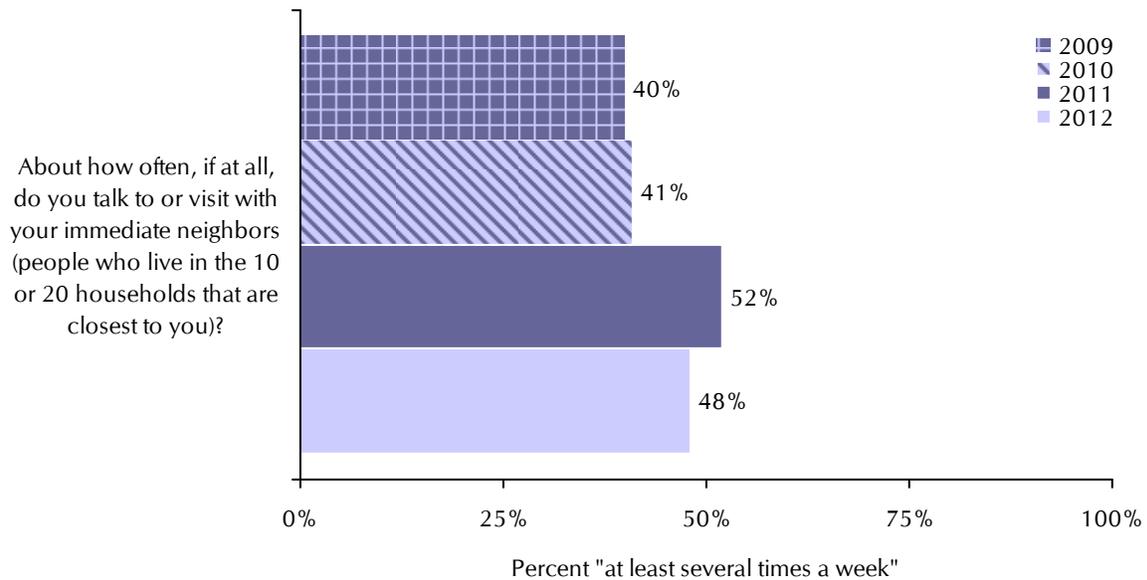
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 72% of respondents, while a similar proportion rated opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities as “excellent” or “good.”

FIGURE 43: RATINGS OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	72%	66%	65%	61%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	79%	81%	81%	82%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

Residents in Duluth reported a fair amount of neighborliness. Close to half indicated talking or visiting with their neighbors at least several times a week. This amount of contact with neighbors trended up over time.

FIGURE 44: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BY YEAR



PUBLIC TRUST

When local government leaders are trusted, an environment of cooperation is more likely to surround all decisions they make. Cooperation leads to easier communication between leaders and residents and increases the likelihood that high value policies and programs will be implemented to improve the quality of life of the entire community. Trust can be measured in residents' opinions about the overall direction the City of Duluth is taking, their perspectives about the service value their taxes purchase and the openness of government to citizen participation. In addition, resident opinion about services provided by the City of Duluth could be compared to their opinion about services provided by the state and federal governments. If residents find nothing to admire in the services delivered by any level of government, their opinions about the City of Duluth may be colored by their dislike of what all levels of government provide.

Less than half of respondents felt that the value of services for taxes paid was "excellent" or "good." When asked to rate the job the City of Duluth does at welcoming citizen involvement, 56% rated it as "excellent" or "good." All of these ratings had increased since 2009.

FIGURE 45: PUBLIC TRUST RATINGS BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
The value of services for the taxes paid to Duluth	40%	45%	34%	28%
The overall direction that Duluth is taking	56%	51%	43%	33%
The job Duluth government does at welcoming citizen involvement	56%	52%	50%	42%
Overall image or reputation of Duluth	72%	68%	65%	58%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

On average, residents of the City of Duluth gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to the Federal Government. The overall quality of services delivered by the City of Duluth was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 67% of survey participants. Ratings of overall City services increased since 2009.

FIGURE 46: RATING OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF DULUTH BY YEAR

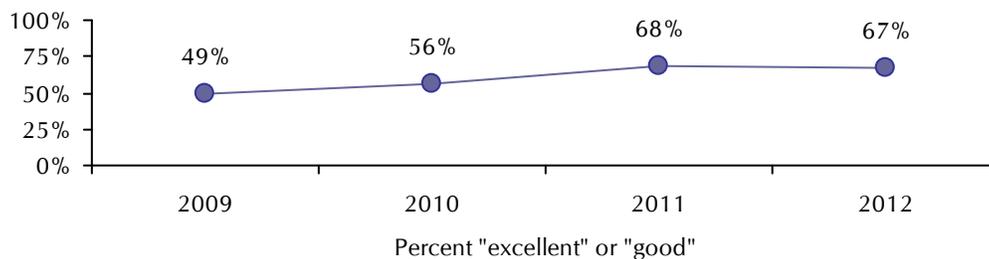


FIGURE 47: RATINGS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Services provided by City of Duluth	67%	68%	56%	49%
Services provided by the Federal Government	42%	46%	40%	37%
Services provided by the State Government	46%	47%	37%	39%
Services provided by St. Louis County Government	52%	57%	45%	43%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

City of Duluth Employees

The employees of the City of Duluth who interact with the public create the first impression that most residents have of the City of Duluth. Front line staff who provide information, assist with bill paying, collect trash, create service schedules, fight fires and crime and even give traffic tickets are the collective face of the City of Duluth. As such, it is important to know about residents' experience talking with that "face." When employees appear to be knowledgeable, responsive and courteous, residents are more likely to feel that any needs or problems may be solved through positive and productive interactions with the City of Duluth staff.

Those completing the survey were asked if they had been in contact with a City employee either in-person, over the phone or via email in the last 12 months; the 43% who reported that they had been in contact were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. City employees were rated highly; 69% of respondents rated their overall impression as "excellent" or "good." Employees' ratings were similar to past survey years.

FIGURE 48: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

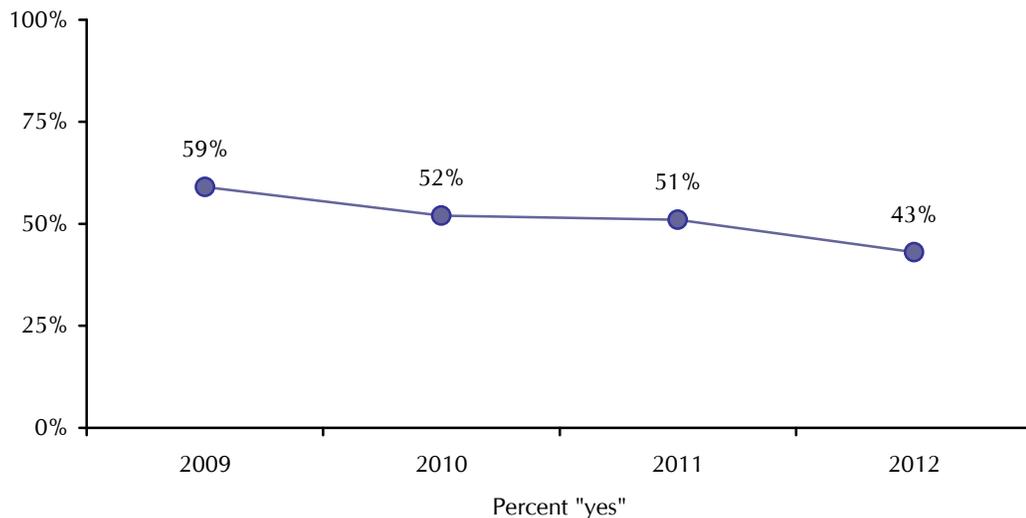


FIGURE 49: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BY YEAR

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Knowledge	77%	72%	71%	75%
Responsiveness	69%	65%	65%	67%
Courtesy	74%	75%	70%	71%
Overall impression	69%	67%	64%	68%
Percent "excellent" or "good"				

CUSTOM QUESTIONS

Custom Question 1					
Please indicate how important, if at all, each of the following is to you in your decision to live in Duluth					Total
	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	
Natural scenic beauty	51%	35%	12%	2%	100%
Access to quality healthcare	50%	37%	11%	2%	100%
Job creation	49%	35%	12%	4%	100%
Quality public schools	44%	32%	15%	10%	100%
Quality public education	44%	33%	15%	7%	100%
Family friendly neighborhoods	41%	43%	15%	2%	100%
Outdoor recreation opportunities	38%	43%	16%	3%	100%
Quality housing options	37%	45%	14%	3%	100%
Public parks and trails	36%	42%	19%	2%	100%
Strong neighborhoods	33%	48%	18%	1%	100%
Condition of City streets	26%	44%	26%	4%	100%
Selection of unique locally owned restaurants and brew pubs	23%	39%	27%	11%	100%
Vibrant arts & culture scene	20%	32%	35%	13%	100%

Custom Question 2	
Thinking about the City of Duluth in general over the next 10 years, should the total population increase, stay the same or decrease?	Percent of respondents
Increase population	61%
Stay the same	33%
Decrease population	6%
Total	100%

Custom Question 3					
Please indicate your level of approval or disapproval with each of the following:					Total
	Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	
The Mayor of Duluth	52%	37%	7%	4%	100%
The Duluth City Council	11%	58%	24%	8%	100%

FROM DATA TO ACTION

RESIDENT PRIORITIES

Knowing where to focus limited resources to improve residents' opinions of local government requires information that targets the services that are most important to residents. However, when residents are asked what services are most important, they rarely stray beyond core services – those directed to save lives and improve safety.

In market research, identifying the most important characteristics of a transaction or product is called Key Driver Analysis (KDA). The key drivers that are identified from that analysis do not come from asking customers to self-report which service or product characteristic most influenced their decision to buy or return, but rather from statistical analyses of the predictors of their behavior. When customers are asked to name the most important characteristics of a good or service, responses often are expected or misleading – just as they can be in the context of a citizen survey. For example, air travelers often claim that safety is the primary consideration in their choice of an airline, yet key driver analysis reveals that frequent flier perks or in-flight entertainment predicts their buying decisions.

In local government core services – like fire protection – invariably land at the top of the list created when residents are asked about the most important local government services. And core services are important. But by using KDA, our approach digs deeper to identify the less obvious, but more influential services that are most related to residents' ratings of overall quality of local government services. Because services focused directly on life and safety remain essential to quality government, it is suggested that core services should remain the focus of continuous monitoring and improvement where necessary – but monitoring core services or asking residents to identify important services is not enough.

A KDA was conducted for the City of Duluth by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Duluth's overall services. Those Key Driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Duluth can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality. Because a strong correlation is not the same as a cause, there is no guarantee that improving ratings on key drivers necessarily will improve ratings. What is certain from these analyses is that key drivers are good predictors of overall resident opinion and that the key drivers presented may be useful focus areas to consider for enhancement of overall service ratings.

Services found to be most strongly correlated with ratings of overall service quality from the Duluth Key Driver Analysis were:

- Police services
- Preservation of natural areas
- Public schools
- Street cleaning

City of Duluth Action Chart™

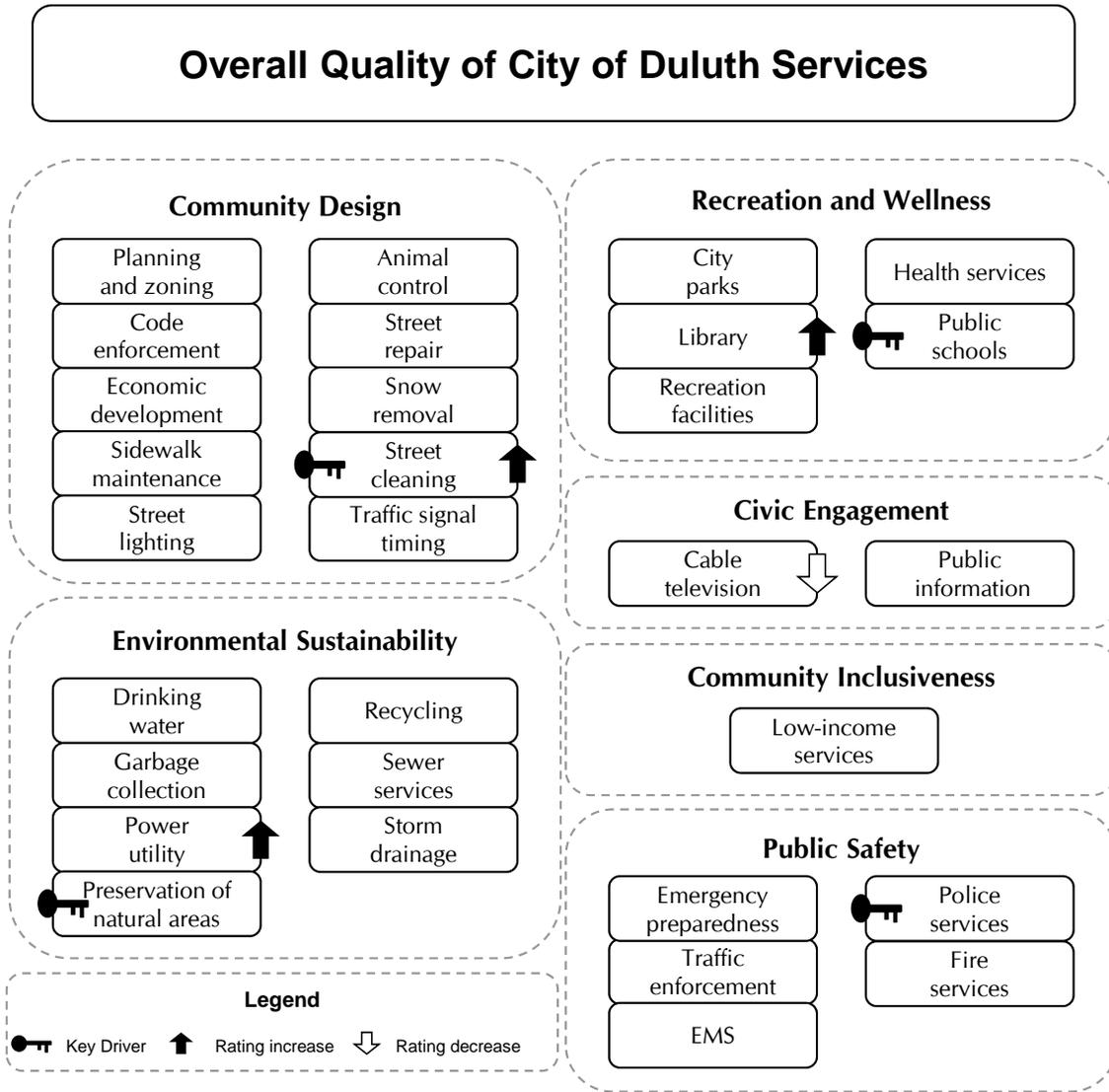
The 2012 City of Duluth Action Chart™ on the following page combines two dimensions of performance:

- Identification of key services. A black key icon (🔑) next to a service box indicates it as a key driver for the City.
- Trendline icons (up and down arrows), indicating whether the current ratings are higher or lower than the previous survey.

Thirty services were included in the KDA for the City of Duluth. Four were key drivers, three increased in ratings when compared to the previous survey and one decreased in ratings. Considering all performance data included in the Action Chart, a jurisdiction typically will want to consider improvements to any key driver services that are trending. More detail about interpreting results can be found in the next section.

Services with a high percent of respondents answering “don’t know” were excluded from the analysis and were considered services that would be less influential.

FIGURE 50: CITY OF DULUTH ACTION CHART™



Using Your Action Chart™

The key drivers derived for the City of Duluth provide a list of those services that are uniquely related to overall service quality. Those key drivers are marked with the symbol of a key in the action chart. Because key driver results are based on a relatively small number of responses, the relationships or correlations that define the key drivers are subject to more variability than is seen when key drivers are derived from a large national dataset of resident responses. To benefit the City of Duluth, NRC lists the key drivers derived from tens of thousands of resident responses from across the country. This national list is updated periodically so that you can compare your key drivers to the key drivers from the entire NRC dataset. Where your locally derived key drivers overlap national key drivers, it makes sense to focus even more strongly on your keys. Similarly, when your local key drivers overlap your core services, there is stronger argument to make for attending to your key drivers that overlap with core services.

As staff review key drivers, not all drivers may resonate as likely links to residents' perspectives about overall service quality. For example, in Duluth, planning and zoning and police services may be obvious links to overall service delivery (and each is a key driver from our national database), since it could be easy for staff to see how residents' view of overall service delivery could be colored by how well they perceive police and land use planning to be delivered. But animal control could be a surprise. Before rejecting a key driver that does not pass the first test of conventional wisdom, consider whether residents' opinions about overall service quality could reasonably be influenced by this unexpected driver. For example, in the case of animal control, was there a visible case of violation prior to the survey data collection? Do Duluth residents have different expectations for animal control than what current policy provides? Are the rare instances of violation serious enough to cause a word of mouth campaign about service delivery?

If, after deeper review, the "suspect" driver still does not square with your understanding of the services that could influence residents' perspectives about overall service quality (and if that driver is not a core service or a key driver from NRC's national research), put action in that area on hold and wait to see if it appears as a key driver the next time the survey is conducted.

In the following table, we have listed your key drivers, core services and the national key drivers and we have indicated (in **bold** typeface and with the symbol "•"), the City of Duluth key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys. Additionally, we have indicated (with the symbol "°") those services that neither are local nor national key drivers nor are they core services. It is these services that could be considered first for resource reductions.

FIGURE 51: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	City of Duluth Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
• Police services	✓	✓	✓
Fire services			✓
Ambulance and emergency medical services			✓
◦ Traffic enforcement			
Street repair			✓
Street cleaning	✓		
◦ Street lighting			
◦ Snow removal			
◦ Sidewalk maintenance			
◦ Traffic signal timing			
Garbage collection			✓
◦ Recycling			
Storm drainage			✓
Drinking water			✓
Sewer services			✓
Power (electric and/or gas) utility			✓
◦ City parks			
◦ Recreation centers or facilities			
Land use planning and zoning		✓	
Code enforcement			✓
◦ Animal control			
Economic development		✓	
Health services			✓
◦ Services to low income residents			
◦ Public library			
Public information services		✓	
• Public schools	✓	✓	
◦ Cable television			
◦ Emergency preparedness			
Preservation of natural areas	✓		

- Key driver overlaps with national and or core services
- Service may be targeted for reductions it is not a key driver or core service