

CITY OF MONTGOMERY SURVEY OF RESIDENTS
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Prepared by:

Eric W. Rademacher, PhD

Institute for Policy Research
University of Cincinnati

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The University of Cincinnati Institute for Policy Research (IPR) surveyed City of Montgomery, Ohio households on behalf of Management Partners Inc. The survey was designed to assist the City of Montgomery in the development of a five-year strategic plan. Specifically, City households were surveyed about the quality of life in the City and attitudes and opinions about City services. The survey also included questions about communication with the City, and about several policy questions related to sidewalks, streetlights and smoking in public places.

In May and June 2005, all households in the City of Montgomery were invited to participate in the survey via a mailed questionnaire. A total of 1,646 Montgomery households participated in the survey. The response rate for the survey was 45%.

This report summarizes the major findings of the survey. In addition to presenting survey results, selected demographic differences are also noted in the text. Appendix A contains charts and figures referenced in the descriptive text. Complete detailed tabular results to the survey questions can be found in Appendix B. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix C.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the City of Montgomery Survey of Residents:

- Most households report satisfaction with the quality of life in Montgomery. A majority (52%) of households report they are “very satisfied” with the quality of life in Montgomery, while an additional 45 percent are “satisfied” with life in the City (Chart 1).
 - The percentage of households reporting they are “very satisfied” with the quality of life in the City of Montgomery declined from 56 percent in 2001 to 52 in the 2005 survey. Overall, however, satisfaction (percentage “very satisfied” and “satisfied”) with the quality of life in Montgomery was nearly identical in 2001 (98%) and 2005 (97%).
 - The survey found that majorities in each section of the City (see Figure 1 for a graphic display of these sections) are “very satisfied” with the quality of life in Montgomery (Chart 2).

- City of Montgomery households were asked to evaluate the importance of 12 services offered by the City. Survey respondents identify fire and emergency medical services (EMS) (83%) and police protection (77%) as “extremely important” more frequently than other services presented in the survey (Chart 3).
 - Recreation programs (25%) is the only service presented in the survey that is rated as “not very important” or “not at all important” by a total of more than 20 percent of households. However, this result is dependent on whether or not children live in a particular household. Households with no children living in their household (31%) report recreation programs are “not very important” or “not at all important” more frequently than households with children living in their household (17%); 47 percent of those with children living in their household view recreation programs as either “extremely” or “very important.”

- A majority of respondents report satisfaction (either “very satisfied” or “satisfied”) with each of the 12 City of Montgomery services presented in the survey. Households most frequently report being “very satisfied” with fire and emergency medical services (63%) and police protection (60%) (Chart 4).
 - Households report being “very satisfied” with City beautification efforts and yard waste collection more frequently in 2005 than was the case in 2001.
 - A large majority (81%) of households are either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with snow and ice removal. However, the percentage of households reporting being “very satisfied” with snow and ice removal decreased between 2001 and 2005. Overall, approximately eight percent of respondents reported dissatisfaction (“very dissatisfied” and “dissatisfied”) with snow and ice removal.
 - Households in Section 2 and Section 4 reported dissatisfaction with snow and ice removal 1) more frequently than was the case in 2001 and 2) more frequently than other areas of the City (Chart 5).

- The mean (average) respondent satisfaction ratings for each of the 12 City services presented in the survey are displayed in Charts 6 and 7. Chart 6 displays those services households rate, on average, as being of higher importance; Chart 7 displays those services households rate, on average, as being of lower importance.¹ Chart 6 displays the average level of satisfaction with those services rated, on average, as being of higher importance (between “very important” and “extremely important”) by survey respondents. Overall, average respondent ratings of City services range between “satisfied” and “very satisfied” with the services they rate of higher importance. These services include fire and emergency medical services (mean satisfaction = 4.57), police protection (4.51), maintenance of City parks (4.17), snow and ice removal (4.05). Street maintenance (3.93), which is also rated high in importance among households, falls just below the “satisfied” mean score value of 4.0.
- Chart 7 displays the mean level of satisfaction with services rated by Montgomery households as being of lower importance (mean score lower than “very important”). Chart 7 shows respondents to the survey, on average, to be “satisfied” with beautification efforts (mean satisfaction = 4.26), maintenance of City parks (4.26) and recyclable materials collection (4.12). Household satisfaction with each of the following is between “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” and “satisfied”: yard waste collection (3.95), community events (3.88), brush collection (3.76), and recreation programs (3.66).
- The 2005 City of Montgomery Survey of Residents asked: “Approximately 16 cents out of every \$1.00 homeowners pay in property taxes are used to help fund City of Montgomery municipal services (the remaining property tax dollars go to the schools, Hamilton County, and other service providers such as the Zoo and Drake Hospital). Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The municipal services provided to my household are a good value for the property tax dollars I/we pay.” Eighty percent of households agree (either “strongly” or “somewhat”) with this statement (Chart 8).
 - Households report agreement with this statement more frequently in 2005 (80%) than was the case in 2001 (75%).
- Chart 9 displays the results of this question for each section of the City. Large majorities in each section of the City of Montgomery agree that “(t)he municipal services provided to my household are a good value for the property tax dollars I/we pay.” While all sections of the city report agreement with the statement more frequently than was the case in 2001, Section 3 had the largest increase in agreement since that time.

¹ For the purpose of analysis in Chart 6 and Chart 7, the importance (Question 4a-4l) and satisfaction (Question 5a-5l) scales were reversed so that the importance scale reflected values ranging from 1 “Not at all important” to a value of 5 “Extremely important” and the satisfaction scale reflected value ranging from 1 “Very dissatisfied” to a value of 5 “Very satisfied.”

- City of Montgomery households were asked their opinion of a series of potential policy options related to smoking in public places. Approximately seven of ten households favor (either “strongly” or “somewhat”) a ban on smoking in the City that would “make it illegal to smoke in all restaurants” (72%) or that would “make it illegal to smoke in all workplaces” (69%) (Chart 10). About half of households (50%) favor a ban on smoking that would “make it illegal to smoke in all bars.”
 - While large majorities favor two of the three smoking bans described in the survey, it is important to note that the percentage of those more strongly committed (“strongly favor”) to each ban is far lower; 52 percent of households “strongly favor” a ban on smoking in restaurants, while 49 percent “strongly favor” a ban on smoking in all workplaces. Thirty-four percent of households “strongly favor” a ban on smoking in bars.
 - Should the City of Montgomery pursue policies related to a ban on smoking, it is important that the City create additional opportunities to engage in dialogue with Montgomery residents about this issue.

- Households were also asked their opinions of two potential policy options related to taxation: 1) sidewalk installation and 2) streetlight installation (Chart 11). Households were first asked if they would “favor or oppose expanding the City of Montgomery sidewalk installation program so that more sidewalks can be installed, even if it means raising your property taxes?” Thirty-four percent of households favor expanding the sidewalk program under these circumstances. Households were also asked if they would “favor or oppose expanding the City of Montgomery streetlight program so that more streetlights can be installed, even if it means raising your property taxes?” Thirty-three percent of households favor expanding the streetlight program under these circumstances.
 - At this time, few households favor expanding either the sidewalk and/or streetlight programs if they are related to taxation. It is very important that the City engage in extensive dialogue with residents if it decides to expand these programs under the parameters presented in the survey.

- Households contacting the City of Montgomery with a request for service or assistance are far more positive than negative about the experience. Sixty-five percent of survey respondents say the City was responsive to their request for service or assistance and 11 percent say the City was not responsive (Chart 12). Seventy-two percent of Montgomery households say their household was treated with courtesy when a request for service or assistance was made and just four percent say the City representative they spoke with was not courteous (Chart 13). Overall, about 24 percent of City households responding to the survey report they have not contacted the City of Montgomery with a request for service or assistance.
 - The percentage of City households that have not contacted the City of Montgomery with a request for service can be excluded from the analysis to provide a picture of the sentiments of only those who have contacted the City. Approximately 85 percent of households contacting the City say the City was responsive to their request for service or assistance and 95 percent of households contacting the City say they were treated with courtesy when a request for service or assistance was made.

- The City of Montgomery Survey of Residents asked how often household members needed to contact a City official or make a request for service outside of normal City business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm). One percent of households say they have needed to contact the City outside of normal business hours “frequently,” 12 percent say “occasionally,” 32 percent say “seldom,” 38 percent say “never,” and an additional 18 percent report their household has not contacted the City (Chart 14).
 - At this time, it is unlikely that extending City business hours will result in substantially increased contact with residents or in increased requests for service.

- Survey respondents were also asked to rate the usefulness of City communication efforts. Most respondents are aware of the Montgomery Bulletin and most also find the newsletter to be useful. Seventy-six percent of respondents to the survey find the Montgomery Bulletin to be “very useful” and 22 percent find it “somewhat useful” (Chart 15). Just two percent of respondents report the newsletter is “not useful” and less than one percent of households report never seeing or reading the City of Montgomery newsletter.
 - Households report the Montgomery Bulletin to be “very useful” more frequently in 2005 (76%) than was the case in 2001 (66%) (Chart 16).

- As can be seen in Chart 15, about 45 percent of Montgomery households have not visited the City’s Web site. However, this is a marked improvement from 2001, where approximately 72 percent had not seen the Web site.
 - Chart 16 shows that more households rate the City’s Web site to be “very useful” than was the case in 2001 (Chart 16).
 - Those living in households with children 18 and under living in their household report having viewed the Web site more frequently than those with no children in their household. Approximately 19 percent of respondents with children living in their household report the Web site is “very useful.”
 - Households that have used the Web site (or e-mail) to submit a request for service or assistance report they felt the City was responsive to their request (17%) far more frequently than the City was not responsive to their request (3%). When the percentage of households not contacting the City via the Web site or e-mail is excluded from the analysis, more than 85% of those using the Web site or e-mail to submit a request for service report the City has been responsive.

- Montgomery households were presented with a series of service offerings available via the City of Montgomery web site. Seven percent of households report using the Web site to “request a City service,” six percent report using the Web site to “register and pay for pool memberships,” five percent report using the Web site to “reserve and pay for park lodge reservations” and five percent have used the Web site to “report a complaint.”
 - Households with children 18 and under report using the Web site to “request a City service,” “register and pay for pool memberships” and “reserve and pay for park lodge reservations” more frequently than households that do not have children.

- More than nine of ten Montgomery households identify the Montgomery Bulletin as a source that provides most of their information about City of Montgomery services, projects or events (not displayed). When asked to identify the source for most of their information about Montgomery, some residents identified multiple sources. A listing of the most frequently cited sources of information, and combination of sources, is displayed in Chart 19.

- When asked the best way to provide information directly to their household, respondents most frequently suggest the U.S. mail (85%) (Chart 20). About 10 percent of households suggest the best way to reach them is through e-mail.

- Demographic characteristics of respondents to the City of Montgomery Survey of Residents are included in Charts 21-23. A large majority of respondents to the survey have lived in the City for more than five years (79%) (Chart 21). A majority of respondents (54%) to the survey do not have children under the age of 18 living in their household at the present time (Chart 22). Finally, respondents to the survey most frequently reside in Section 1 of the City (27%) and Section 4 (27%), but similar percentages reside in Section 2 (20%) and Section 3 (25%) (Chart 23).

APPENDIX A

Referenced Charts and Figure

APPENDIX B

Detailed Tabular Results

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire

This appendix contains the questionnaire used in the
2005 City of Montgomery Survey of Residents.