

**CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: May 10, 2012
TO: John Pietig, City Manager
FROM: Christa Johnson, Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: The National Citizen Survey 2012 Results

In January 2012, the City Council approved the distribution of a citizen survey of resident opinions about the community and services provided by local government. The survey has been completed and was conducted by the National Research Center, Inc. The overall response rate was 36% which is within the expected response rate of 25% to 40%. The survey reflects the opinions expressed by 405 respondents, many of whom indicate positive perceptions of most city services.

Almost all respondents (97%) rated the overall quality of life in Laguna Beach as “excellent” or “good”, ranking 8th out of 428 nationwide jurisdictions. Citizens also view Laguna Beach as a great place to live. Only two other jurisdictions out of 360 nationwide had a better rating. Almost all reported that they plan on staying in the community for the next five years.

A variety of community characteristics were evaluated by those participating in the study. The four characteristics receiving the most favorable ratings were the overall image or reputation of Laguna Beach, quality of overall natural environment, overall appearance, and the cleanliness of Laguna Beach. The four characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were the amount of public parking, ease of car travel, traffic flow on major streets, and the availability of affordable quality housing. All City Services were rated favorably. Of the 35 City services for which comparisons were available, 29 were above the benchmark comparison, six were similar to the benchmark comparison and none were below. A sampling of some of the results by category are noted below. A summary is included as Attachment 1.

Public Trust

- Respondents demonstrated a strong trust in local government. The overall direction that the City is taking and the job that the City does at welcoming citizen involvement was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 65% of all respondents and above the benchmark.
- The overall quality of services delivered by the City was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 89% of the respondents, a significant improvement when compared to the same rating given in the 2007 survey results by 72% of the respondents. The rating is also above the benchmark when compared to other communities.
- Most of the respondents (74%), felt that the value of services for taxes paid was “excellent” or “good” and above the benchmark.
- The overall image or reputation of Laguna Beach was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 95% of the respondents and above the benchmark.

ATTACHMENT H

Public Safety

- Almost all of the respondents (99%) feel “very” or “somewhat” safe in their neighborhoods and the downtown area during the day.

Community Inclusiveness

- Most respondents (84%) rated the City as an “excellent” or “good” place to raise kids and to retire.
- Most respondents (90%) rated the services available to seniors as “excellent” or “good”.
- Most respondents (81%) rated the services available to youth as “excellent” or “good”.

Community Design

- Ease of walking, availability of paths and walking trails were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 78% of the respondents and ranked above the benchmark.
- Ease of car travel, bicycle travel, and traffic flow on major streets were below the benchmarks. However, ease of car travel was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 22% of the respondents; a much higher rating than the 2007 survey results of 14% of the respondents. Ease of bicycle travel was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 32% of the respondents; a higher rating than the 2007 survey results of 23% of the respondents.
- Ease of bus travel was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 53% of the respondents and much above the benchmark.

Economic Sustainability

- Community features related to economic opportunity and growth most positively rated were the overall quality of business and service establishments and the City as a place to work.
- Shopping opportunities received the lowest rating with 49% of the respondents ratings as “excellent” or “good”. However, it ranked similar to the national benchmark comparison.

Custom Questions

- Four additional questions focused on the provision of electronic services. Fifty-seven (57%) of respondents had accessed the City website, a significant increase from the 39% of respondents reported in the 2007 survey. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the respondents that had accessed the website rated it as “good” or “excellent” in meeting their needs compared to the 57% of respondents in the 2007 survey. Sixty-two percent (62%) of all respondents felt that it is “essential” or “very important” to be able to do business with the City over the internet, such as renewing licenses and permits. The methods of communications from the City regarding significant projects or community events that are preferred by the respondents were email (53%), mail (52%), and the City website (44%).

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the City Council receive the National Citizen Survey 2012 report.

Summary of 2012 and 2007 Survey Results

A summary of most of the results by category are noted below. The ratings reflect the percent of respondents that rated the item "excellent" or "good".

Category	Community Characteristics and City Services	2007 Ratings	2012 Ratings	% change
Overall Community Quality	Overall quality of community life in Laguna Beach is excellent or good	94%	97%	3%
	Laguna Beach as a great place to live	97%	97%	0%
Community Design	Ease of car travel	14%	22%	8%
	Ease of bus travel	48%	53%	5%
	Ease of bicycle travel	23%	32%	9%
	Traffic flow on major streets	--	21%	New
Transportation Services	Street cleaning	65%	85%	20%
	Street repair	42%	71%	29%
	Bus or transit Services	68%	76%	8%
	Summer trolley service	--	95%	New
	Amount of public parking	17%	28%	11%
Economic Sustainability	Shopping opportunities	51%	49%	-2%
	Overall quality of business and service establishments	-	66%	New
	Economic development	47%	49%	2%
Public Safety	Safety in your neighborhood during the day	98%	99%	1%
	Police Services	79%	81%	2%
	Fire Services	93%	97%	4%
Environmental Sustainability	Cleanliness of Laguna Beach	-	91%	New
	Preservation of natural areas	-	89%	New
Public Trust	Overall image of Laguna Beach	87%	95%	8%
	Overall direction that the City is taking	44%	65%	21%
	Services provided by Laguna Beach	72%	89%	17%
	Value of services for the taxes paid to Laguna Beach	52%	74%	22%
City Employees	Had contact with an employee of the City in the past 12 months	69%	61%	-8%
	Overall impression as excellent or good	64%	80%	16%
Policy Questions	Accessed the City's Web site in the last 12 months	39%	57%	18%
	Quality of Website in meeting the participant's needs	57%	77%	20%
	How important is it to be able to do business with the City over the internet (essential or very important)	57%	62%	5%

