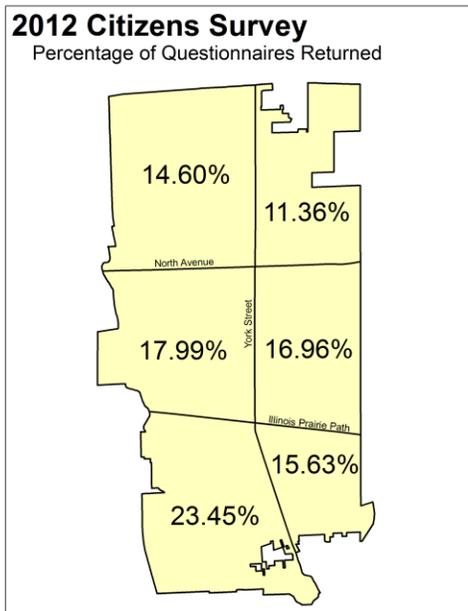


2012 City of Elmhurst Citizen Survey - Summary

Background

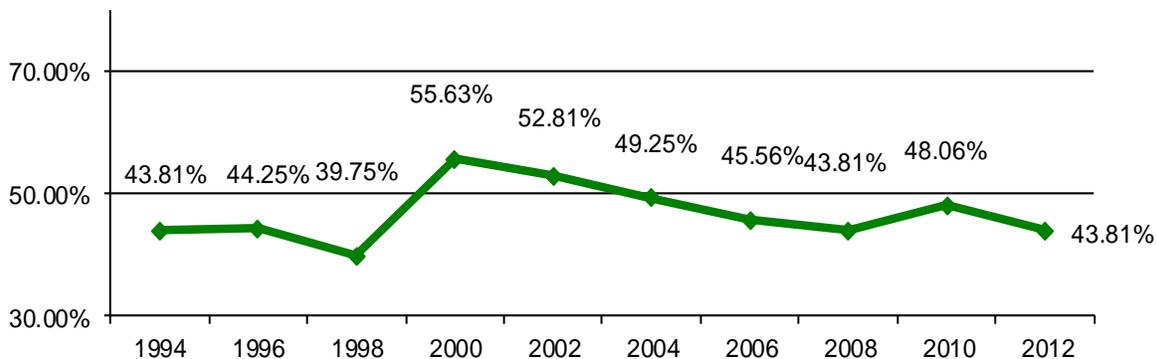
The City has conducted an in depth citizen survey every other year since 1994 to gather resident opinions and to determine satisfaction with community services. Information gathered through the surveys provides an indication of the citizens' perceptions of quality and value of services provided, as well as their observations regarding the community's strengths and weaknesses, and problems they feel the community will face in the next five years.



The original survey instrument was developed with input from the City Council, the City Manager, and management team, with technical support from the International City/County Management Association, Northern Illinois University School of Public Administration, and with benefit of research on several successful local and out-of-state survey instruments. It was designed to provide a statistically valid sample of the community's perception and, in that regard, was judged to be accurate to within plus or minus 5%. With only minor adjustments, all successive surveys have followed the same design of the original survey instrument.

The 2012 survey was mailed on June 7, 2012 to 1,600 randomly selected residents from the City's water billing database. A reminder notice was mailed on June 19, 2012. Completed surveys were accepted until July 9, 2012. As in previous years, the City experienced a very high response rate. For 2012, a total of 701 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 43.81%. While slightly below average for a response to the Elmhurst survey, a response rate above 40% is notably strong. Better response rates produce better information, giving us results more likely to reflect the opinions of the whole community.

Response Rates

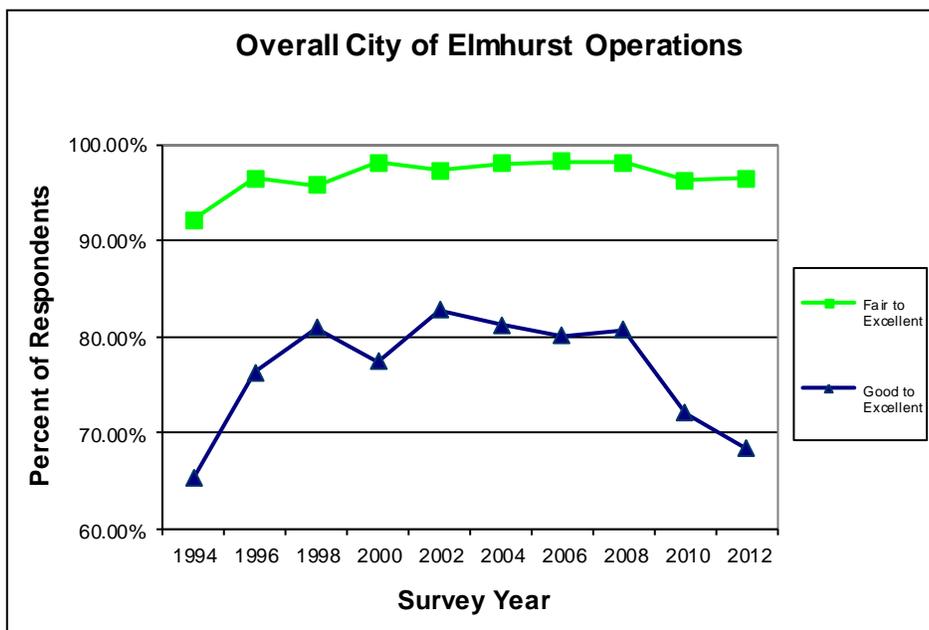


In reviewing this summary and the results, it is important to remember that the more responses a question gets, the more reliable the results are, and the closer they come to reflecting general perceptions. Questions aimed at people who had specific interactions with City government tend to have much smaller response numbers. Splits within the survey, looking at numbers for particular parts of the City or particular age groups, while having some value, are much more sensitive to the views of small numbers of people, giving them more variation and higher margins of error.

Major Findings

The following are some key results from the 2012 Citizen Survey.

- Most “quality of life” type ratings remain strong. Ratings for the overall quality of the community and attractiveness of private property both went up about two percentage points. However, ratings for Elmhurst as a place to retire reached their lowest level.
- Ratings for overall City operations are down from the 2010 survey, from 72.07% good to excellent to 68.44% good to excellent, the lowest rating for that since 1994.



- Ratings for City services are somewhat interconnected. Residents who rated one service better, tended to rate other services better, and have a more positive view of the value of service they are getting and of City operations in general. There is also a connection between ratings for quality of life and service quality; positive (and negative) ratings in these areas are at least somewhat linked.

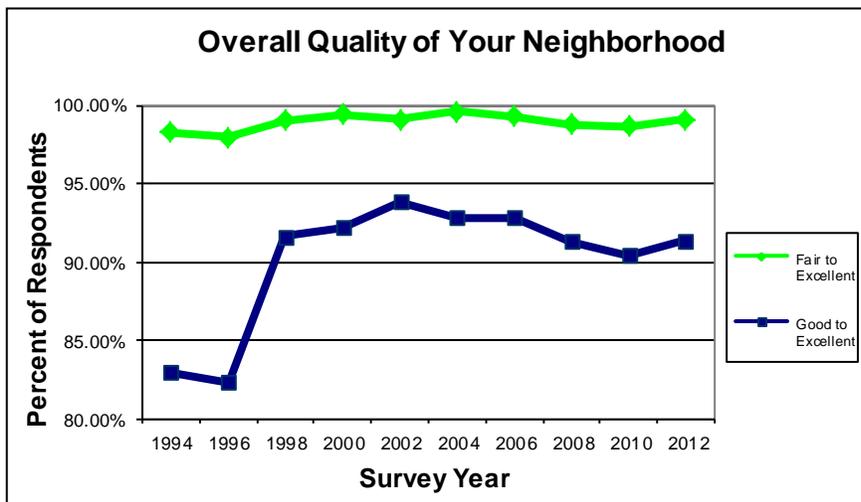
- Stormwater management has grown significantly as a point of concern. Ratings for “not enough” stormwater management service increased from 24.21% to 42.32%, ratings for “not enough” related private property stormwater assistance and sanitary sewer assistance also had pronounced increases. The percentage of residents identifying stormwater management as a top three most disliked thing about living in Elmhurst increased by 6.01%, the largest gain in responses in that question since airport noise increased as a concern in 2000.
- Ratings for Fire, Ambulance, and Police services are down for response time, quality of service, and professionalism. Ratings for safety remain largely consistent, though the rating for safety on City streets at night is down. Residents are rating City Centre as safer, however.

- Ratings for street maintenance and parking are both up significantly.
- Customer service ratings are mixed. Down in some departments, up in others.
- The City’s website has grown as a tool for residents to make payments and shows increased potential as a communication tool.

Section Highlights

Section One – Quality of Life

- The purpose of the Quality of Life questions is to get a sense of how residents perceive various aspects of the quality of life in Elmhurst.
- Ratings for the overall quality of the Elmhurst community remain very high, with 99.71% reporting ratings in the fair to excellent range. Ratings in the good to excellent range increased to 95.26%, consistent with prior years, after dipping to 93.28% in 2010. Ratings improved in 5 of 6 areas of the City, notably the northeast, but declined in the northwest.
- Ratings for Elmhurst as a place to live also remain high, as do ratings for the community as a place to raise children.
- Ratings for neighborhood quality are up slightly, and remain consistent with ratings since 1998. The growth in neighborhood quality ratings for the area south of the Prairie Path and west of York were particularly strong. Neighborhood ratings for respondents west of York



between the Prairie Path and North decreased from 95.17% to 90.16%.

- Respondents in the 18-35 age range, while relatively small in number had the most positive ratings for quality of life in Elmhurst.
- Private property appearance ratings are up 2.01% points from 2010 in the good-to-

excellent range. This is a reversal of a decline seen in the 2010 survey. Improvement was particularly strong in the southwest and northeast areas.

- Ratings for the appearance of public property declined somewhat overall, from 92.25% to 90.59% good to excellent, the lowest since 1996. The decline in ratings was most pronounced in the southeast section of town, south of the Prairie Path and east of York.
- Ratings for Elmhurst as a place to retire continue to trend downward, with good to excellent ratings declining from 55.23% to 51.71%. The pattern has been for the good to excellent level ratings to shift to more ratings of “fair.” The fair to excellent number of 84.73% is consistent with prior history.
- The question of overall quality of life versus five years ago continues in its trend of seeing a shift from ratings of “better” to ratings of “about the same.” Better ratings declined from 20.28% to 17.37%, while ratings of worse held steady.

Section Two – Public Safety

To ensure the highest level of safety for Elmhurst residents, as well as those who work in and visit the City, the survey asked respondents to rate service levels for emergency medical, fire protection, and police services. In looking at results in this section of the survey it is important to have in mind that most of the questions were seeking the opinions of a relatively small number of respondents. Where there are fewer responses, the results are much more sensitive to the opinions of even a handful of respondents. The one set of questions that reaches a large number of responses is the set about resident perceptions of safety.

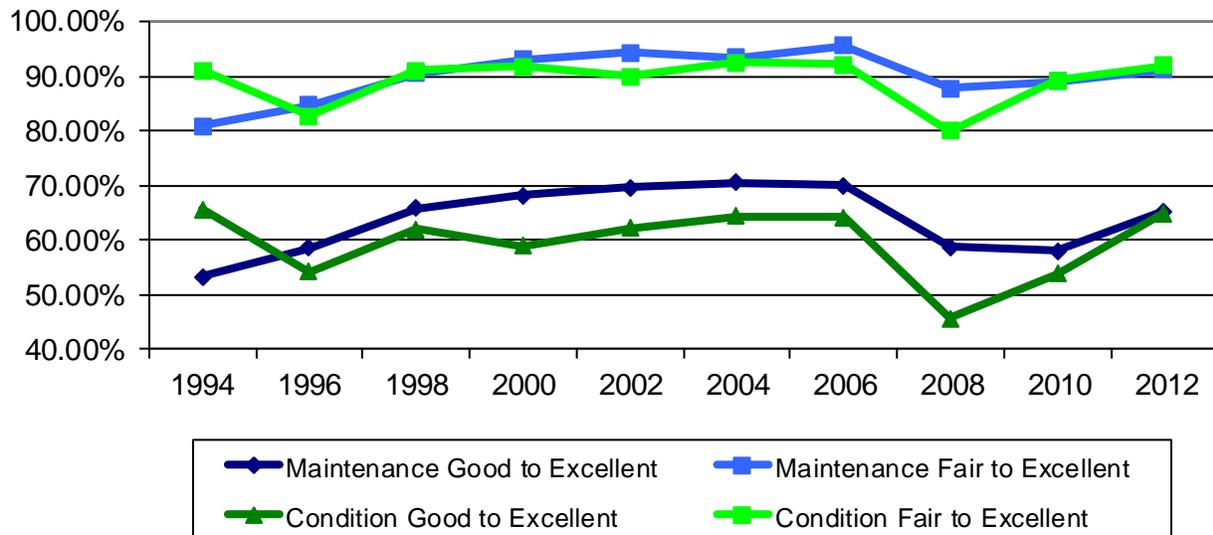
- Overall, residents continue to feel as safe as they ever have in Elmhurst. Ratings for how safe people feel in their neighborhood and in parks are consistent with 2010 results, and appear to fit the pattern of what could be considered typical for Elmhurst. This survey did get fewer responses of safe or very safe for how people feel on City streets at night, declining from 83.33% to 81.29%, and while there is a slight downward trend, the ratings remain consistent with results over the last 10 years.
- Ratings for Fire Department response time, quality of service, and professionalism and courtesy are all down. Overall, these ratings are comparable to those achieved by the Finance Department for service. While these questions got a small number of responses, making the ratings more volatile in general, this is the lowest these ratings have been since the 1990s.
- Response time, quality of service, and professionalism and courtesy ratings for ambulance service are also down somewhat, though less dramatically than those for the Fire Department generally, and they remain among the highest for any City service.
- Among residents who identify as having used the Police Department in an emergency situation, perceptions of response time, quality of service, and professionalism and courtesy also all declined from 2010. Particularly pronounced was the decline in the professionalism and courtesy rating which fell from 89.47% good to excellent to 79.49%, with the shift going more to negative ratings than to ratings of “fair” among the 78 responses to that question. These “customer service” type ratings for the police department are comparable to those of Public Works and Community Development. Ratings of professionalism in traffic stops remained consistent with 2010 results.
- Resident ratings of police visibility in their neighborhoods and the city as a whole are also down.
- Ratings for police visibility and safety had a notable increase in the northeast section of the City.
- Crime received 4.83% of responses (up from 3.74%) to the question of top three issues facing Elmhurst in the next five years, ranking it seventh on the list of concerns. That is the highest share of responses and ranking since 2002.

Overall, people continue to feel safe in Elmhurst. Ratings for safety tend to correlate with some strength to one another, people who feel safe in their neighborhood tend to feel safe in City Centre and parks, and vice versa. Safety ratings also have some weaker correlations to ratings for police visibility and other city services. People who feel better about City services appear to feel safer, and people who feel safer appear to feel better about City services.

Section Three – Public Works Department

The most significant result of the survey for Public Works was the improvement in ratings for street maintenance and street condition, which both increased significantly. Ratings for street maintenance increased from 58.01% to 65.19% good to excellent, while street condition ratings increased from 53.77% to 64.79% good to excellent.

Street Maintenance and Condition



Ratings for other Public Works services were consistent with prior results. Street sweeping ratings improved modestly, as did ratings for refuse collection. Ratings for the quality of recycling services provided through the City’s agreement with Allied Waste are particularly highly rated among seniors and residents in the 18-35 age range.

Ratings for the quantity of parkway trees and parkway tree maintenance shifted somewhat in this survey. Residents did not rate the quantity of parkway trees as highly as they have in recent years, while ratings for parkway tree maintenance increased on both the positive (good to excellent) and negative (poor to very poor) ends of the range.

Section Four – Traffic and Transportation

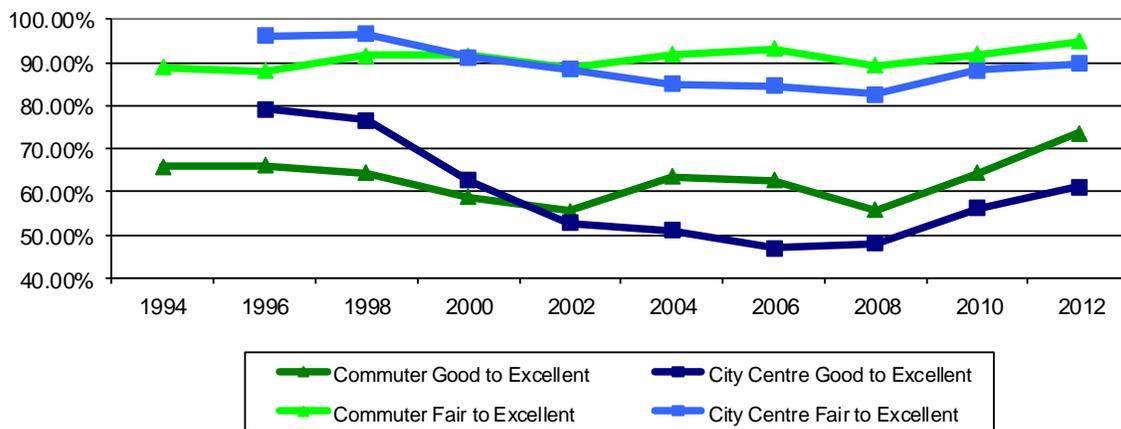
Ratings in the Traffic and Transportation section of the survey saw notable improvement in a number of areas, as well as decreases in awareness of the 25 mile per hour speed limit and ratings for neighborhood speed enforcement.

The most notable step forward is in ratings for both commuter and City Centre parking. Commuter parking was rated an all-time high of 73.58% good to excellent, and shopper parking ratings of 56.26% good to excellent are the best since 1996. Ratings for ease of travel by car also increased from 65.36% good to excellent to 68.20%, the highest ratings for that since 1994. Ratings for ease

of travel by bike are consistent with 2010 results, while ratings for bike parking are up to 56.13% good to excellent from 53.38%. Ratings for parking, ease of travel by car, street condition, ease of travel by bike and bike parking all appear to have at least some interconnection. Residents who rated one aspect of transportation in Elmhurst better tend to rate other aspects better; they also tended to give better ratings for City Centre.

Residents continue to rate traffic enforcement in the City in general as better than enforcement in their own neighborhood. In this survey, the gap between those two ratings actually grew somewhat with neighborhood traffic enforcement ratings declining while City-wide traffic enforcement ratings held steady. That disconnect is most pronounced in the northeast and west central parts of the City.

Commuter and City Centre Parking



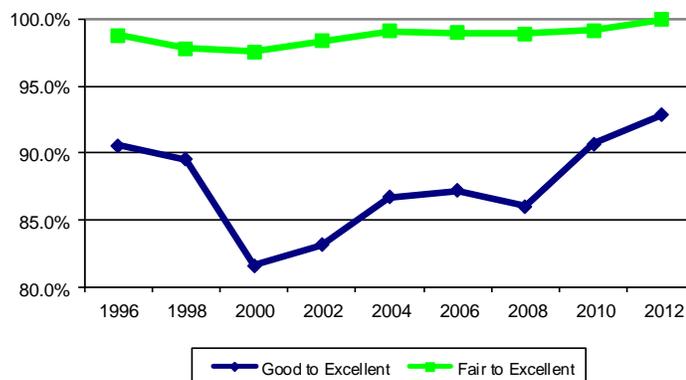
In general, resident commuting patterns are consistent with prior years, though the portion of respondents who report having commutes less than 10 miles has declined somewhat.

Lastly, as part of efforts to understand and enhance bicycle use in the City, a new question was added, asking residents their primary purpose for riding. Respondents were given the option to identify multiple reasons, and 411 residents responded. The most commonly cited reasons were recreation and exercise, however 16.30% of respondents cited transportation/commuting (3.89%) and errands around town (12.41%) as reasons they ride.

Section Five – Downtown (City Centre)

This section is historically focused on the City Centre area, but has, over time, come to be a section that also addresses questions of general shopping behavior and interest.

City Centre Attractiveness and Appearance

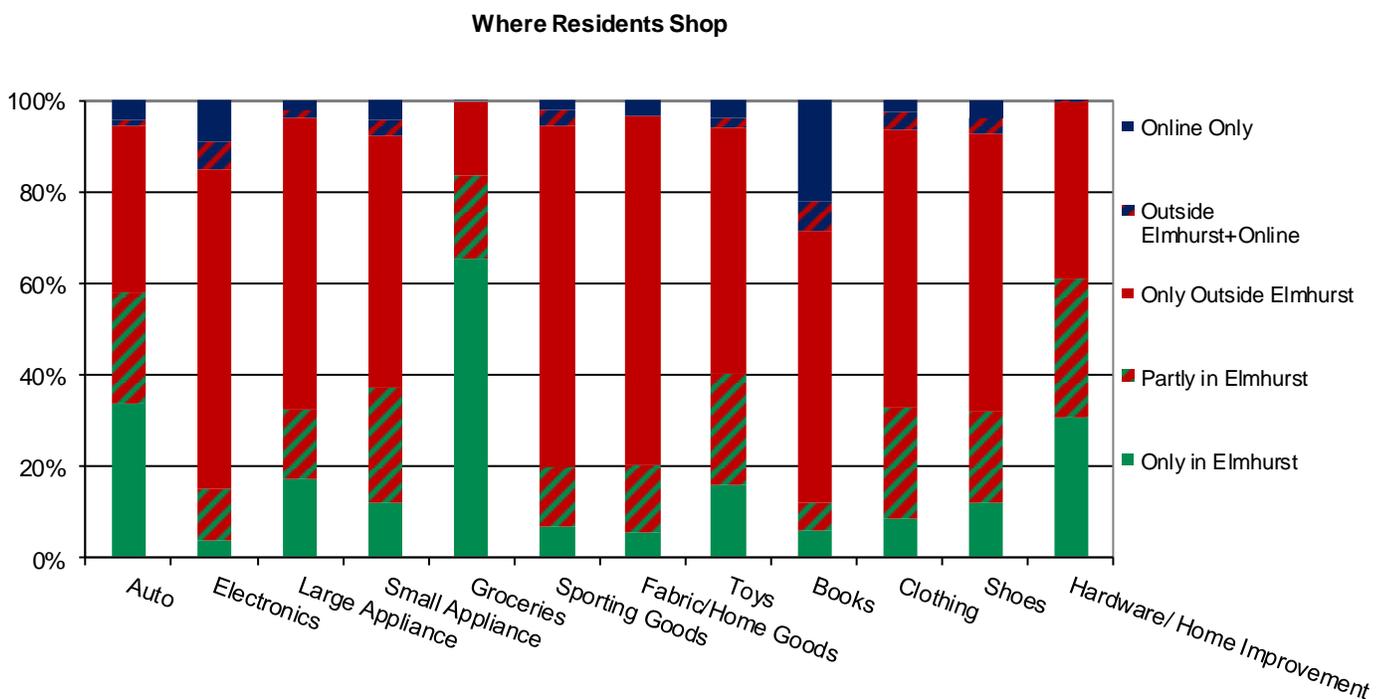


The highlights of this section from a City Centre standpoint are the continued upward trend in ratings for the attractiveness of City Centre, and the continued decline in ratings for City Centre events and promotions.

Overall, respondents who gave higher ratings for the cleanliness of City Centre and the pedestrian accessibility, at least to a degree, are people who identified as visiting City Centre more often. Residents who rated the quality of life in the community more highly also tended to be people who rated City Centre better.

In terms of where residents shop outside of City Centre, the Elmhurst Crossing area at Rt. 83 and St. Charles continues to be very popular, identified by 82.41% of residents as a place they shop (previously 79.45%), followed by Butterfield and York (47.84%, previously 53.26%), York and Vallette (38.00%, previously 37.63%), and Spring Road (35.47%, previously 45.15%).

This year’s survey also introduced a question seeking to understand where residents shop for certain kinds of goods, be it in Elmhurst, outside Elmhurst, online, or any combination of the three. Understandably, residents tend to do some or all of their grocery shopping close to home (83.38%



do at least some of their grocery shopping in Elmhurst). Hardware and home improvement products (60.74% at least partly in Elmhurst) and autos (57.99%) are also typically looked for in Elmhurst. Shopping behaviors seem to be fairly consistent. People who shop for goods in Elmhurst tend to be less likely to look for those items outside Elmhurst. With the exception of cars and groceries, people who look outside Elmhurst for one type of product have at least some tendency to look for other products outside Elmhurst. This appears especially true of shoes and clothing. Responses to question 5.13, whether residents shop in Elmhurst more, about the same, or less, in

the last two surveys also support the idea that people's shopping behavior is relatively stable, with 92-93% of responses saying they shop about as much or more in Elmhurst over the course of the preceding year.

Section Six – Building and Code Enforcement

This section was added in 2008. After declining sharply from 2008 to 2010 (from 44.13% to 15.37%) the number of residents reporting they have dealt with Community Development increased to 17.20%. The customer service ratings for Community Development were mixed. Ratings for the quality of service increased, while ratings for response time, accuracy, and professionalism and courtesy all declined. Overall the ratings for 2012 seem consistent with the limited history available, and are comparable to the ratings for the Police Department.

Section Seven – Cultural Attractions

Section seven highlighted the myriad cultural opportunities in Elmhurst, with special emphasis on the Library and Historical Museum. Overall, residents continue to have a generally positive outlook on the cultural opportunities available in Elmhurst, with 82.58% rating cultural opportunities good to excellent and 97.99% fair to excellent. However, these ratings have declined since the question was introduced in 2008. Residents who rated the cultural offerings available in the community also have some tendency to also rate the quality of life in the community more highly as well as overall City services.

Ratings for services at the Library remain among the highest of any provided through the City. However, how often people use the Library has shifted. The number of people who report not going to the library is up to 11.08% from 6.95%. At the same time, the number of people who report going weekly is up to 31.51% from 27.93%. Among residents older than 65, 16.00% say they never visit the Library.

For the Historical Museum, the percentage of respondents who report visiting in the last year is down to 20.20% from 22.62%. However, ratings for professionalism of EHM staff, satisfaction with the visit, and the quality of the service at the museum are all up. Customer service ratings for the museum compare favorably with ratings for the Library. The results also continue suggest that visitors to the Historical Museum are also supporters of other local museums.

Section Eight – Finance

The Finance Department continues to receive customer service ratings consistent with past results. This year does mark a significant increase in ratings for professionalism and courtesy, increasing to 88.71% good to excellent from 83.63%. Awareness of EZ Pay direct debit for utility bills has increased significantly to 67.80% from 60.92%, while awareness of online payment options for utility bills, parking tickets, and now vehicle stickers, continues to increase, up to 77.51% from 62.60% in 2010. Overall, satisfaction with the array of payment options is high, with 89.31% rating payment options as good to excellent and 98.41% fair to excellent.

Section Nine- Communications

Section nine provided residents the opportunity to provide feedback on communication. As in previous years, residents' primary sources for information continue to be local news publications

and the City's "Front Porch" newsletter. The number of respondents reporting Internet use has leveled off after a period of growth, part of this leveling can be attributed to the high number of older respondents. After being included as a response to the question about where residents are connecting to the Internet for the first time in 2010, the number of residents reporting using their phones to connect has taken off, and is now nearly as common as connecting at work. Home and work remain the most common places to use the Internet. Overall, more than 89% of Elmhurst residents continue to have landline phones in their homes, down only slightly since 2010. Predictably the younger residents are much less likely to have landlines.

The modest trend of increased use of the City website continues as well, with the number of people who report never using the website down to 36.87% from 43.83%. There has also been notable growth in the number of residents who report using the website for payments and to get forms. Ratings for the usability of the website have gone up as well, to 74.00% good to excellent from 69.40%. Residents who rate the website more favorably tend to also be people who rate the payment options and the City's communication efforts more favorably as well.

Overall, residents rate City efforts to keep them informed at 72.81% good to excellent and 95.87% fair to excellent. In keeping with the increased use of the website, as an option to inform people about community-wide issues there was a modest increase in the share of residents favoring online question and answer and City website updates as communication methods, while using the Front Porch newsletter remains widely favored.

Section Ten – Budget

This section was added for the 2010 survey to generate information on resident perceptions of the value of service delivered, perceptions of service levels, public awareness of the budget and the effectiveness of City communication on the subject.

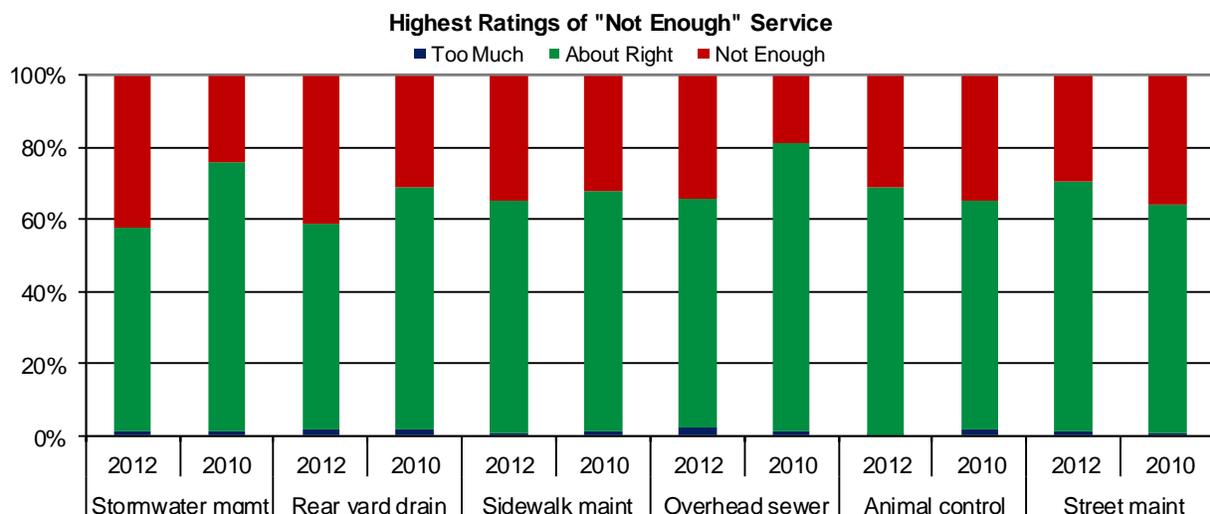
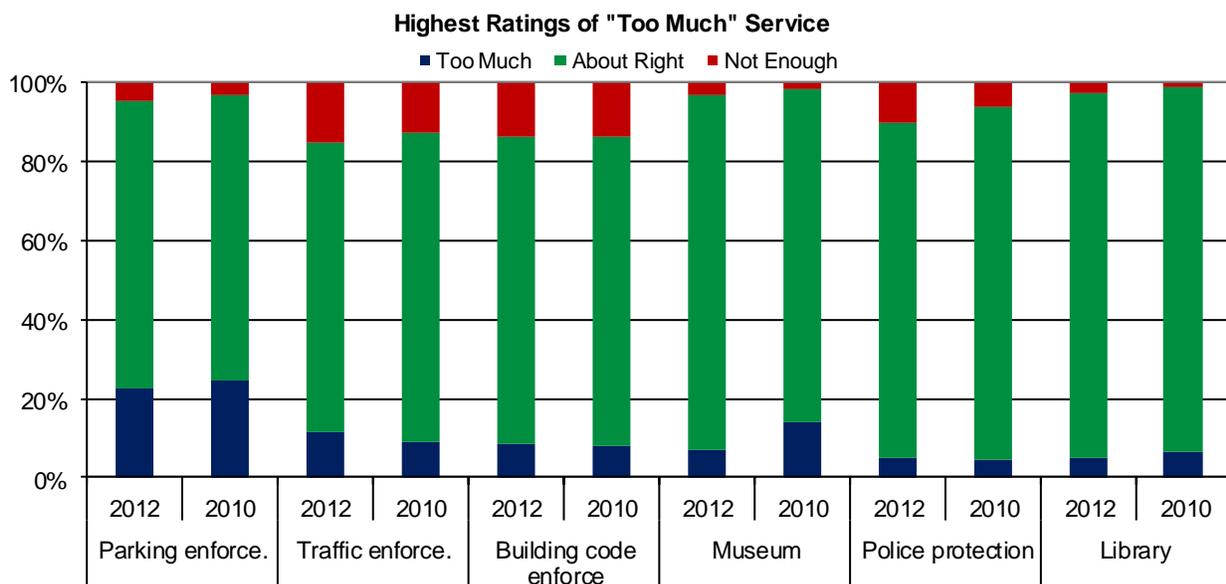
Overall, 55.27% rate the value of City services for the taxes and fees paid as good to excellent, 88.58% fair to excellent (down slightly from 56.00% / 90.57%). The City's financial management rating from residents increased significantly from 34.64% good to excellent and 83.62% fair to excellent to 39.39% and 88.91%. And while the portion of people who report viewing the budget held steady, the ratings for the quality of information in it increased from 51.69% to 61.86% good to excellent

In response to question 10.3 asking residents to rate their City budget awareness, 21.65% rate their awareness at good to excellent, 68.38% fair to excellent, results that virtually mirror 2010. The leading sources for budget information continue to be local newspapers (65.52%), the Front Porch newsletter (37.46%), and word of mouth (20.60%). The sharp decline in word of mouth and increase in "don't know" responses to the source of information does point to the budget being less of a topic around town. The other notable shift in sources of information is modest growth in people getting their information from the City website. As in 2010 those who rate themselves as more informed also tend to rate the City's financial management more highly. Also continuing from 2010, those who rate their awareness lower tend to also rate City efforts to keep them informed about the budget lower.

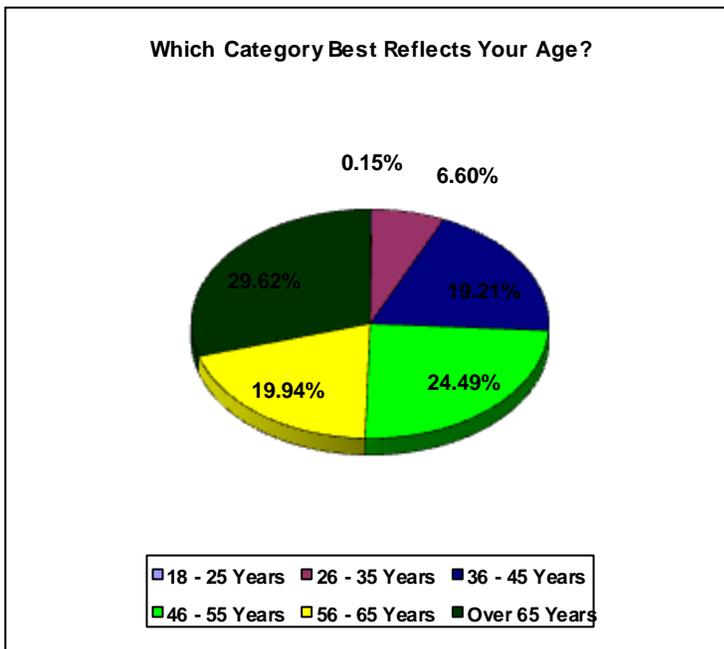
In terms of service levels, across all of the services surveyed, at least 63% of residents identified the service level as being “about right.” The list of services with the highest “not enough” ratings starts with stormwater and services people link with that issue, followed by animal control and street maintenance. The services with the highest ratings of “too much” service are primarily services related to enforcement activities, with the Historical Museum on the list as well.

5 highest “too much” service ratings	
Parking enforcement	22.60%
Traffic enforcement	11.64%
Building code enforcement	8.64%
Historical Museum programs/services	6.88%
Police protection	5.23%

5 highest “not enough” service ratings	
Stormwater management	42.32%
Private property stormwater assistance	41.21%
Private property sanitary sewer assistance	34.38%
Sidewalk maintenance	33.50%
Animal control	30.97%



In general, residents' ratings of service levels tended to shift toward "not enough." Besides the stormwater-related services, this was particularly true of traffic enforcement, police protection, tree maintenance, and mosquito control. In keeping with the general improvement in ratings for street maintenance, the "not enough" ratings declined from 36.19% to 29.64%. The "not enough" ratings for animal control also saw a notable decline. Significantly fewer people tend to rate there being too much of any service, and in general, ratings for "too much" service declined from 2010. This is particularly true of the Historical Museum, where ratings of "too much" service dropped from 14.13% to 6.88%. Ratings for too much parking enforcement also dropped somewhat.



Section Eleven – Demographics

The first survey after the 2010 Census offers a chance to see how the demographics of survey responses compare to the overall picture of the community.

As a representation of the total population of Elmhurst, survey respondents are not perfect. Among survey respondents, 97.34% identify as owning their homes, a number consistent with past results. According to U.S. Census data, 81.37% of Elmhurst housing is owner-occupied. Over the history of the survey the number of responses from residents over age 65 has grown consistently to 29.62% in this year's

survey. Over time the share of responses coming from residents younger than 45 have steadily declined, and responses from residents ages 18-25 continue to be negligible. This is also not consistent with the actual demographics of Elmhurst. Based on census data, roughly 20% of the adult population of Elmhurst is over 65, and 12.50% are in the 18-24 age range. The owner/renter and age dynamics of the survey is at least partly attributable to using the utility billing database to pull addresses from; that pool heavily favors single family homes.

The geographic distribution of responses remains fairly consistent. There was a slightly higher share of responses from the northeast and southwest and slightly lower share from the central areas of the City.

Section Twelve – General Comments

The final section of the survey gave residents an opportunity to express general comments and concerns about the City of Elmhurst.

- Responses for the three things residents like most about living in Elmhurst stayed consistent to previous years, with central location/convenience, quality of life, and quality of schools comprising the top three. Central location is particularly well liked by respondents in the west central and southwest parts of the City. The top three most liked

things about Elmhurst are consistent across all age groups, with the quality of schools decline in importance as residents age, and property value increasing to being a top 3 like feature for residents older than 56.

- Residents 18-35 are slightly more likely to rate central location in their top 3. Sense of community is particularly valued among respondents ages 36-45.
- The most commonly disliked things about living in Elmhurst also continue to be consistent, with taxes, airplane noise, traffic congestion, and cost of living continuing as concerns. The significant change in this survey is that stormwater management has jumped from being identified in 4.39% of responses to 10.40%. Stormwater management is a particularly significant concern in the southwest area, identified by 29.09% of respondents there as a top 3 concern. Taxes and cost of living are also of particular concern in that area. Airplane noise is a greater concern in the northern areas of the City.
- 3.69% of respondents marked “other” in their top 3 most disliked things about Elmhurst. Common “other” responses include comments about train traffic and noise, power outages, and lack of diversity in the community.
- For the most commonly identified “biggest problems” facing Elmhurst for the next 5 years, economic concerns continue to be at the forefront, with taxes, cost of living, and property value decline being the top 3 concerns. There was also a significant increase in the share of residents who identify stormwater management as an issue. There has also been a modest increase in people rating crime as a concern. Quality of city services and maintaining infrastructure declined slightly as concerns.
- Responses from the northern areas of the City were less likely to identify airplane noise/airport expansion as a concern for the next five years than residents in other areas. Taxes, property value decline, and cost of government services are particularly strong concerns for respondents from the southwest part of the City.

Top Five (5) Gains

- Awareness of online payment options is up 14.91%, EZ Pay awareness is up 6.88%.
- Street condition, up 11.02% good to excellent. Street maintenance also up 7.18% good to excellent, and street maintenance rated “about right” by 6.18% more residents.
- Quality of information in the budget: up 10.17% good to excellent.
- Commuter parking: up 9.17% good to excellent
- The number of people who identify as having visited the City website at some point in the last six months is up 6.96%.

Top Five (5) Declines

- 18.11% more responses of “not enough” stormwater management service. Also more responses of “not enough” private property stormwater assistance and private property sanitary sewer assistance.
- Visibility of the Police Department’s SMART speed monitoring trailer down 12.86%, effectiveness ratings for the trailer down 8.77%.
- Among residents who identify as using the Police Department in an emergency situation, ratings of professionalism and courtesy are down 9.98% good to excellent and 6.21% fair to excellent.

- Quality of City Centre versus five years ago, “better” ratings are down 7.17%. Ratings of “about the same” or “better” are steady.
- Police Department visibility in the City as a whole down 6.77% good to excellent.

The citizen survey results have been organized as follows:

- Section I is a summary of survey results. Some information in the summary is not included in the following breakdown section. Specifically, information looking at responses based on respondents’ area of town, age, or responses to other questions, was compiled internally from raw response information.
- Section II shows a breakdown of actual responses given. Under each question, the first line indicates the number of responses given in each category. The second line represents the corresponding percentage of responses for that category based upon responses with an opinion. The third line represents combined percentages. For example, if you look at the first question (1-1 – Overall quality of your neighborhood), the 91.37% listed is the number of respondents who answered either "excellent" or "good" and the 0.86% is the number of respondents who answered either "poor" or "very poor."
- Section III lists all the "General Comments" given by respondents. The responses are not listed in any particular order. Comments following the number from a specific question generally reflect the “other” choice for that specific question.
- Section IV shows the response history of the citizen survey from the 1996 survey to the current 2012 survey. The report provides the percentage of responses for the “good to excellent” and “fair to excellent.” Questions with an incomplete history are either new or have been significantly modified over the years, so a comparison cannot be made. Also, percentages have been omitted for most questions that allowed respondents to select more than one answer. For example, question 9-1 where residents were asked to select the source or sources that they get information about the City. In these cases, the report displays the number of times each option was chosen.
- Section V is a copy of the actual survey instrument utilized in 2012.

Recommendations

The citizen survey results should be:

- used as a tool in developing the future budgets, including framing goals and objectives for City of Elmhurst departments;
- shared with the School District, Park District, Public Library and City Centre in that various services under their jurisdiction are mentioned;
- highlighted in future Front Porch newsletters;
- posted on the City’s website and available at City Hall and at the Elmhurst Public Library for review;
- continued as a method to track citizen use of and satisfaction with City services, while reviewing format and exploring ways of improving online response;
- considered by the Mayor and City Council as they prepare the annual budget goals message to the City Manager.