Dakota County, Minnesota

Resident Survey

Report of Results

2016

NRC

National Research Center Inc

2955 Valmont Rd. • Suite 300 • Boulder, CO • 80301 • t: 303.444.7863 • f: 303.444.1145 • www.n-r-c.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Understanding the needs of residents is important to Dakota County government, so it has conducted a regular, periodic survey of residents' opinions. This report includes Dakota County survey results dating back to 2001. In 2016, Dakota County was joined by Washington County, St. Louis County, Olmsted County, and Scott County, working together with the National Research Center, Inc. (NRC), to develop a survey instrument with a set of shared questions, as well as questions unique to each County.

The Dakota County Resident Survey was administered by mail to 3,500 randomly selected households in February 2016, distributed among the seven County Commissioner Districts. Of the approximately 3,384 households that received a survey in the mail (the other surveys were sent to vacant households), 987 surveys were completed, providing a response rate of 29%.

Because Dakota County has administered a resident survey before, comparisons could be made between 2016 responses and those from prior years. The most recent survey was conducted in 2013. Generally, comparisons between surveys are made through the conversion of ratings to a 100-point scale. Dakota County also elected to have its results compared to those of 43 other counties around the nation, comparisons made possible through NRC's national benchmark database. This database contains resident perspectives gathered in resident surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions, including cities and counties.

Key Findings

Dakota County residents continued to enjoy a high quality of life and feel safe in the county.

- Dakota County residents continued to rate their overall quality of life very highly; the average rating was 79 on a 100-point scale, which is between "good" and "excellent." Additionally, quality of life ratings were higher than the benchmark compared to other counties in the nation and similar to ratings given in 2013.
- When asked what they liked most about living in Dakota County, the most common responses were: location, general quality of life and parks/lakes.
- Residents were given a list of 11 general characteristics of the county and asked to rate the quality of each. Most County characteristics received favorable ratings from residents and several aspects increased over time. Outdoor recreational opportunities were regarded as positive by more residents in 2016 as were "a sense of community" and "the economic health of the county". Moreover, most of the ratings for County characteristics were much higher than what was seen in the national county benchmarks.
- Residents were asked how safe they felt from different types of crimes, as well as safety in different county locations. Almost all of the items received an average rating that was equal to "somewhat" safe or better. Four of the eight safety ratings were compared to safety ratings in other counties across the country; Dakota County was rated much higher than the benchmark for each item. Where trends were available, ratings remained similar between 2013 and 2016.

Housing is a concern for Dakota County residents.

- When asked to write in comments related to the most serious issue facing the County, the second-most commonly cited concern was affordable housing, named by 11%; the first most commonly cited concerns were related to crime and safety, named by 12%.
- Availability of affordable housing was also the lowest-rated County characteristic among the list of 11 characteristics and has decreased in 2016 compared to 2013 (49 in 2016 versus 53 in 2013).

- Residents were asked to indicate whether they thought their household would be better off financially, worse off or the same a year from now. A quarter of residents thought they would be better off while a majority (55%) thought it would be the same. Roughly one-fifth indicated they thought they would be worse off financially.
- As it related to housing options if residents needed to move from their current home, a single-family home was the most acceptable option provided. The least acceptable option to residents was living with family members away from their current community.

Residents applaud Dakota County services.

- The overall quality of services provided by the county was evaluated positively with an average rating of 66 on a 100-point scale, or about the same as "good" on a scale of "excellent," "good," "fair," and "poor." This rating was much higher than the benchmark comparison and higher than ratings given in 2013.
- Nine of the 11 services rated in 2016 could be compared to 2013 and ratings were generally similar; however, three differences emerged: self-service options on the County Web site and assessment process/property tax system received higher average ratings in 2016 compared to 2013 and Sheriff deputies patrol services received a lower average rating in 2016 than in 2013.
- Of the 10 individual County services for which benchmark comparisons were available, Dakota County received ratings that were much higher than the all-county benchmarks for seven services. The services that received lower ratings than the benchmarks were services to older adults and Sheriff deputies patrol services, while financial assistance for low-income families was similar.
- The services receiving the highest ratings were County parks and recreation, libraries, and trail and bikeway systems. The assessment process/property tax system received the lowest ratings.
- When asked to rate a set of services provided by the County that had been used by the participant in the last two years, records, vital statistics, licensing and vehicle registration received the highest marks. Meanwhile, services for people experiencing mental illness received the lowest marks.

Residents think highly of County employees and continued to give positive ratings to various aspects of County government performance.

- The 34% of respondents who reported having contacted a County government office in the last 12 months were asked to give their impression of the employee with whom they most recently had contact. The average rating for each aspect of their impression of County employee(s) ranged from 73 to 76. The rating for employee(s) being courteous increased in 2016 compared to 2013. The average rating for employee(s) being courteous was similar to the county benchmark and all other aspects were rated higher or much higher than the national county average.
- When asked to rate several aspects of Dakota County government performance, ratings on the 100-point scale for the perception of the County Government were between "good" and "fair," where zero equals "poor" and 100 equals "excellent." Five of the nine aspects of Dakota County government performance could be compared to counties across the nation and each of these five aspects were rated much higher than the benchmark (i.e., the job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars; the County generally acting in the best interest of the community, etc.).

Residents voiced strong opinions about County fiscal management and planning.

- When asked to rate the importance of the County investing in open spaces, residents gave an average rating of 80 (between "very important" and "essential") to using this investment to protect lakes, streams and wetlands from pollution. A similar importance rating was given to protecting and managing high-quality natural areas (such as forests, prairies, water bodies, etc.).
- As it related to library programs and services, about 8 in 10 residents reported that it was "essential" or "very important" for the County to provide popular titles/current library materials and early literacy/reading skills promotion and resources. Among the least important rated library services were technology to create

and edit music and videos and streaming movies and music (online). When compared over time, a variety of programs and services received higher importance ratings in 2016 compared to 2013. The programs or services with higher importance ratings included: information about jobs, skills, literacy, and careers (63 in 2016 versus 50 in 2013), community activities/information (63 in 2016 versus 57 in 2013), health and wellness programs and resources (60 in 2016 versus 55 in 2013), English as a second language resources and services (55 in 2015 versus 48 in 2013), and author/performance arts programs (47 in 2016 versus 40 in 2013).

- A vast majority of residents "strongly" or "somewhat" supported the County investing in projects related to transit. The degree of strong support increased between 2013 and 2016 and the degree of strong opposition declined in the same timeframe. When asked about the barriers to using transit services in the County, about half of residents stated that they did not need it. About a quarter of residents reported that there wasn't service close enough to where they lived and no service where they wanted to go. Very few residents stated that fare pricing clarity and affordability were barriers to using Dakota County transit.

Residents provided valuable insights about recycling preferences.

- Survey participants were asked a series of questions related to their recycling habits in Dakota County. The first question asked residents to provide their top three reasons for not using the Recycling Zone facility in the last 12 months. A quarter of residents stated they were simply unfamiliar with the facility and a similar percentage stated that they hadn't used the facility because they didn't want to pay fees.
- When asked what measures would make residents more inclined to recycle, about 8 in 10 residents said they would be more likely to recycle if they were given specific information about what can be recycled. Slightly fewer said they would be more likely to recycle if the recyclables were picked up weekly. Alternatively, almost 4 in 10 residents said that saving money with the option of a smaller trash container would not make them more likely to recycle any more than they currently do.
- Dakota County also wanted to know which option residents most supported for diverting food waste from landfills. Three-quarters of residents "strongly" or "somewhat" supported the option of haulers collecting food waste curbside in a separate container for pickup while two-thirds "somewhat" or "strongly" opposed the option of residents collecting the food waste and driving it to a community drop-off-site.

SURVEY BACKGROUND

Survey Purpose

The Dakota County Resident Survey provides residents the opportunity to rate the quality of life in the county, as well as service delivery and their satisfaction with County government. The survey also permits residents to provide feedback to the government about what is working well and what is not, and to share their priorities for community planning and resource allocation.

In 2016, Dakota County collaborated with Washington, Olmsted, Scott and St. Louis Counties on this survey project. The five counties worked together with the National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) to develop a survey instrument with a set of shared questions, as well as questions unique to each County. This report presents Dakota County's results. Comparisons of any questions asked by at least one of the other four participating counties can be found in *Appendix D: Comparison with Other Participating Counties*.

Methods

The Dakota County Resident Survey was administered by mail to 3,500 randomly selected households within the county in February 2016, distributed among the seven County Commissioner Districts. Of the approximately 3,384 households that received a survey in the mail (the other surveys were sent to vacant households), 987 surveys were completed, providing a response rate of 29%. For the first time 2016 the survey was available online accessible via a web link provided on the cover letter accompanying each wave of the mailed survey. About seven percent of the completed surveys were web-based (70); average rates for web-based responses vary but typically range from 2% to 10%. The survey instrument itself appears in *Appendix H: Survey Instrument*.

Survey results were weighted so that respondent race, ethnicity, age, gender, housing tenure (rent or own), and housing unit type (attached or detached) were represented in the proportions reflective of the entire county, and then adjusted to match the appropriate proportions by County Commissioner District. (For more information see *Appendix A: Survey Methodology*.)

Responses to any open-ended questions and "other" responses appear verbatim in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*.

How the Results Are Reported

"Don't Know" Responses and Rounding

On many of the questions in the survey, respondents could give an answer of "don't know." The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies* and is discussed in the body of this report if it is 20% or greater. However, the "don't know" responses have been removed from the tables and analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs only display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

For some questions, respondents were permitted to select multiple responses. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a multiple response question, it is because some respondents are counted in multiple categories. 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 rounding percentages to the nearest whole number.

Putting Evaluations onto a 100-point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative or frequency questions were made on four- or five-point scales with "1" representing the best rating, the scales had different labels (e.g., "essential," "excellent," "very safe"). To make

comparisons easier, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported "excellent" for quality of life, then the result would be 100 on the 0-100 scale. If the average rating for quality of life was "fair," then the result would be 33. The new scale can be thought of like the thermometer used to represent total giving to United Way: the higher the thermometer reading, the closer to the goal of 100. In this case, a score of 100 would be the most positive response possible.

Precision of Estimates

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a "level of confidence" and accompanying "confidence interval" (or margin of error). The 95% confidence interval for this survey is generally no greater than plus or minus three percentage points around any given percent and no greater than plus or minus two points for any average rating on the 100-point scale for the entire sample (987 completed surveys). For any given subgroup from the survey, the margin of error rises to as much as plus or minus 10% or six points (on the 100-point scale) for a sample size of 100 to plus or minus 5% or three points (on the 100-point scale) for 400 completed surveys.

Comparing Survey Results by Respondent Subgroups

Selected survey results were compared by certain demographic characteristics of survey respondents and by the seven County Commissioner Districts in which respondents lived. Some comparisons are discussed throughout the body of the report and are presented in tabular form in *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics* (where differences between subgroups are statistically significant, the results in these tables are shaded grey).

Comparing Survey Results Over Time

Dakota County survey data were collected by telephone in 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2008. In 2011, the County switched data collection from telephone to mail and continued with mail in 2013 and 2016. As a consequence of the switch in methodology, a decline from 2008 to 2011 in virtually all ratings was both expected and observed. In the previous survey administration by telephone in 2008, a small sample of residents was surveyed by mail to explore the magnitude of the differences between telephone and mail survey responses in Dakota County. Using 2008 survey research conducted by NRC in Dakota County that compared mail and telephone responses, as well as NRC's analysis of national trends comparing telephone and mail responses, NRC adjusted the findings from 2001 to 2008 to maximize the comparability of results over time. This way the reported trendline data are not influenced by the decline that is attributable to the change in data collection mode from telephone to mail. Additional information on comparing previous survey results can be found in *Appendix A: Survey Methodology*.

Differences of four or more points on the 100-point scale among average ratings between 2016 and 2013 and differences of six percentage points or more among percentages are considered meaningfully different.

Comparing Survey Results to Other Jurisdictions

Jurisdictions use the comparative information provided by benchmarks to help interpret their own residential survey results, create or revise community plans, evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions and measure local government performance. NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in resident surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services. Conducted with typically no fewer than 400 residents in each jurisdiction, opinions are intended to represent more than 30 million Americans. Dakota County chose to have comparisons made to other counties across the nation, where comparisons could be made. Additional information regarding benchmark comparisons can be found in *Appendix F: Benchmark Comparisons*.

Comparison of Dakota County to the Benchmarking Database

Jurisdictions to which Dakota County is compared can be found in *Appendix G: List of Counties in the Benchmark Comparisons*. National county benchmark comparisons have been provided when similar questions on the Dakota County survey are included in NRC's database and there are at least five counties in which the question was asked. There are 51 other counties in the NRC benchmark database. The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of some counties included in the benchmark are similar to Dakota County and some are not, but all the benchmark counties share the same goal: being recognized for providing high-quality services to residents.

Where comparisons for quality ratings were available, Dakota County's results were generally noted as being "higher" than the benchmark, "lower" than the benchmark, or "similar" to the benchmark. In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of "much" (for example, "much lower" or "much higher"). These labels come from a statistical comparison of Dakota County's rating to the benchmark where a rating is considered "similar" if it is within the margin of error; "higher" or "lower" if the difference between Dakota County's rating and the benchmark is greater than, but no more than twice the margin of error; and "much higher" or "much lower" if the difference between Dakota County's rating and the benchmark is more than twice the margin of error.

Report of Results

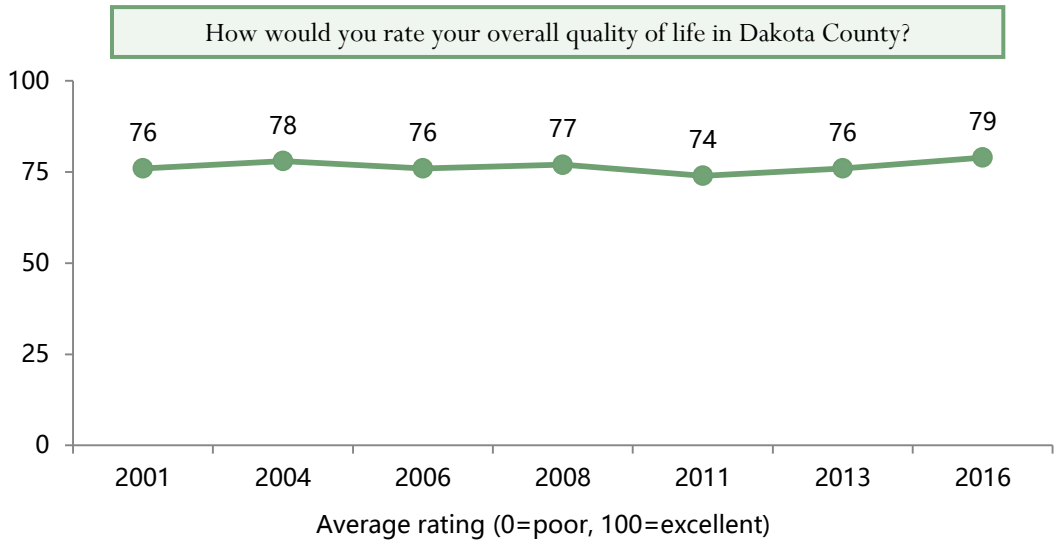
Quality of Life and Community

Survey respondents were asked to rate their overall quality of life in Dakota County. On a 100-point scale where zero equals "poor" and 100 equals "excellent," Dakota County's average rating was 79, similar to the rating given in 2013, but the highest average rating since this question was first asked in 2001.

Dakota County's overall quality of life was much higher than ratings given by other counties across the nation. (Please see *Appendix F: Benchmark Comparisons*.)

Ratings given by respondents living in the seven different County Commissioner Districts were compared. Residents in Commissioner District 3 were more likely than their counterparts in other districts to positively rate Dakota County's overall quality of life. Ratings were also compared by a selection of demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Dakota County residents who owned their home generally gave more positive ratings to overall quality of life than residents who rented. A full list of comparisons by district and respondent characteristics can be found in *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics*.

Figure 1: Quality of Life Compared by Year



The scale on the 2001 survey was "excellent," "good," "only fair," and "poor."

Residents were asked to identify one thing that they liked most about living in Dakota County. Prior to 2011, this was an open-ended question where respondents were able to answer using their own words, and the telephone interviewer reported the response in the most appropriate category. The most frequently selected categories from previous surveys comprised most of the response options on the 2011, 2013 and 2016 mailed surveys, from which respondents were instructed to choose one option from the list provided. When a respondent identified an unlisted, or "other," item, the response was captured verbatim. These responses appear in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*.

The location of the county was at the top of the list with about a third of respondents reporting it as the one thing they liked most. Other more common responses were the quality of life in general (21%) and parks/lakes (10%). Fewer than 10% of respondents selected each of the remaining seven categories listed on the survey.

When compared to previous years, location remained the most-liked characteristic of living in Dakota County and remained stable compared to 2013 ratings. Much of the variability over time in percentages and relative order likely is attributable to the change in question formatting.

Figure 2: Like Most About Living in County Compared by Year

What one thing do you like most about living in Dakota County?	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Location	36%	38%	31%	26%	28%	27%	31%
Quality of life in general	21%	16%	22%	5%	4%	3%	0%
Parks/lakes	10%	7%	9%	10%	8%	7%	4%
My neighborhood	9%	10%	11%	4%	5%	4%	7%
Small town feel	6%	6%	6%	6%	3%	5%	5%
Open space	4%	7%	4%	4%	4%	3%	0%
Schools	4%	6%	6%	6%	8%	6%	9%
Rural character	3%	4%	3%	7%	4%	5%	22%
Low taxes	2%	3%	3%	0%	3%	4%	0%
People	2%	2%	2%	5%	4%	2%	6%
Other	2%	1%	2%	9%	8%	15%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In 2016, 2013 and 2011, this question was presented as fixed response (i.e., respondents were presented a list of items from which to choose), whereas, between 2008 and 2001, this question was open-ended (i.e., no list presented). It is important to note that "location" was the first item listed (top left) on the survey; while we cannot determine that this placement influenced the results, there is potential that placement of options has an impact on the overall results.

County Characteristics

When asked to rate various characteristics as they related to the County as a whole, most characteristics received average ratings that were between "good" and "fair" on a 100-point scale, where zero is equal to "poor," 33 equals "fair," 67 represents "good," and 100 is equivalent to "excellent."

Dakota County as a place to live received the highest average rating (78 on the 100-point scale or between "good" and "excellent") and remained stable since 2013. Dakota County as a place to raise a family and outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County received the next highest average ratings (76 and 75 respectively on the 100-point scale, or hovering right around "good"). Availability of affordable housing, openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds and Dakota County as a place to retire were rated least positively (49 and 57 and 58 respectively on the 100-point scale, or between "fair" and "good").

When comparisons to 2013 were available, ratings were generally stable but a few differences emerged. Characteristics that were rated higher in 2016 compared to 2013 included outdoor recreational opportunities (75 points on the 100-point scale in 2016 versus 68 in 2013), economic health (65 in 2016 versus 60 in 2013), and sense of community (61 in 2016 versus 57 in 2013). The rating for the availability of affordable housing decreased in 2016 compared to 2013 (49 in 2016 versus 53 in 2013).

Note that at least 20% of respondents reported "don't know" when asked about the County as a place to work (26%), and only slightly fewer selected "don't know" when asked about Dakota County as a place to retire (21%). (Please see *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies* as results presented in the report body are for the survey respondents who expressed an opinion.)

When compared to counties across the nation, ratings tended to be much higher in Dakota County for all available comparisons except for one, Dakota County as a place to retire, which was rated similar to the benchmark. (Please see Figure 4 on the following page).

Where differences emerged among the geographic areas, survey respondents from County Commissioner District 3 were more likely to positively rate Dakota County as a place to live and to raise a family, the County's openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds and the economic health of Dakota County. Residents from District 1 were more likely to negatively rate these same aspects as well as the overall image or reputation of Dakota County. Ratings were also compared by a selection of demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Survey respondents who owned their homes were more likely to positively rate a number of characteristics of Dakota County than those who rented. (Please see *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics*.)

Figure 3: Average Ratings of County Characteristics Compared by Year

Please rate each of the following characteristics of Dakota County.	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Dakota County as a place to live	78	77	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	76	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	75	68	67	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dakota County as a place to work	67	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	68	66	67	NA	NA	NA	NA
Economic health of Dakota County	65	60	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options	64	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sense of community	61	57	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dakota County as a place to retire	58	60	58	NA	NA	NA	NA
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	57	58	60	NA	NA	NA	NA
Availability of affordable housing	49	53	49	47	46	50	NA

Prior to 2016, "outdoor recreational opportunities" was "recreational opportunities" and "availability of affordable housing" was "availability of quality affordable housing." New items in 2016 were "Dakota County as a place to work," "Dakota County as a place to raise a family," and "availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options." All other questions were new in 2011 except for "availability of affordable housing." These questions were not asked in 2001.

Figure 4: County Characteristics Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Dakota County as a place to live	Much higher
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	Much higher
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	Much higher
Dakota County as a place to work	Much higher
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	Much higher
Economic health of Dakota County	Much higher
Sense of community	Much higher
Dakota County as a place to retire	Similar
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	Much higher
Availability of affordable housing	Much higher

Community-wide Problems

County residents responding to the survey evaluated a list of problems as being a "major problem," a "moderate problem," a "minor problem," or "not a problem" in Dakota County. When converted to the 100-point scale where zero equals "not a problem" and 100 equals "major problem," most items in the list of problems were thought to be between a "minor" problem or "not a problem" (between 47 and 27). Taxes were viewed as most problematic, with an average rating of 47 on the 100-point scale, while homelessness was viewed as least problematic, with an average rating of 27.

Note that about one in five respondents said "don't know" when asked to rate how problematic homelessness was in the county. The complete set of responses to this question appears in *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies*.

When comparisons to 2013 were available, ratings generally remained stable.

Respondents from Commissioner District 1 were more likely to report crime and taxes as problems than their counterparts. Where differences emerged, residents who lived in Dakota County for more than 10 years generally gave higher ratings for problems than those living in the County for five or fewer years (see *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics*).

Figure 5: Average Ratings of Problems Compared by Year

Please rate, to what degree, each of the following is a problem in Dakota County.	Average rating (0=not a problem, 100=major problem)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Taxes	47	48	51	50	NA	45	NA
Traffic congestion	41	40	42	43	50	52	NA
Poverty	40	39	36	32	36	33	NA
Crime	38	39	39	35	44	38	NA
Traffic safety	36	34	36	NA	NA	NA	NA
Homelessness	27	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

The scale differed between years. In 2008, the bottom of the scale read "not at all a problem," whereas in 2004, 2006, 2011, 2013 and 2016, it read "not a problem." These questions were not asked in 2001. A new item in 2016 was "homelessness."

Most Serious Issue Facing Dakota County

When asked about the most serious issue facing Dakota County, crime and safety issues and affordable housing were considered top current issues by survey respondents.

In 2016 and in previous years, this was an open-ended question where respondents were able to provide an answer in their own words. The responses were captured verbatim and grouped into categories that best fit the response. These responses appear in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*. In 2011, this question was presented as a fixed-response where respondents were presented with a list of items from which to choose; the list was based on responses to the open-ended question from previous surveys.

Taxes and crime and safety issues topped the list in 2013, and while crime and safety topped the list in 2016, taxes were considered as a lesser issue for the County than in 2013 (10% in 2016 versus 16% in 2013). Fewer than 1 in 10 residents wrote in comments related to each of the other issues listed in Figure 6 on the following page. Comments related to growth/development issues increased in 2016 compared to 2013 (8% in 2016 versus 0% in 2013) but this percentage is still lower than percentages seen in all prior years (2001 to 2011).

Because of the methodological change (open-ended question in 2016, 2013 and in previous years versus fixed-response options in 2011), it is recommended that the reader make little of the differences between the 2013 responses compared to 2011 responses and the 2011 responses compared to responses to the open-ended question posed in 2008 and earlier. When provided a list to choose from, a respondent may bypass their first thought (say, "taxes") as the list reminds them of a more serious issue (like their jobs), while in an interview or given the opportunity to write anything, a respondent would more likely stay with their first thought. In 2016, 559 of the 987, or 57% of survey respondents opted to write in a response; this percentage is similar to the percentage that opted to write in a response in 2013 (58%; 470 of the 804 survey respondents).

Figure 6: Most Serious Issue Facing Dakota County Compared by Year

What do you feel is the most serious issue facing Dakota County at this time?	Percent of respondents						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Crime and safety issues	12%	14%	3%	5%	6%	4%	8%
Affordable housing	11%	6%	5%	4%	4%	3%	0%
Taxes	10%	16%	20%	17%	13%	10%	16%
Growth/development	8%	0%	12%	17%	24%	22%	27%
Sense of community, diversity, etc.	6%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Condition of roads	6%	2%	8%	6%	4%	5%	4%
Traffic congestion	5%	9%	6%	7%	8%	9%	7%
Schools	5%	3%	13%	7%	10%	12%	22%
Homelessness and poverty	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Economic development	4%	6%	12%	3%	2%	3%	0%
Public transportation	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Updating infrastructure	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Jobs	2%	7%	17%	3%	2%	2%	0%
Government spending	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Preserving natural areas/protecting natural resources	1%	3%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Teen drug/alcohol use	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%
Pollution/environmental concerns	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Quality of county services	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Noise pollution	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No issue	2%	2%	0%	4%	6%	5%	0%
Other	10%	7%	2%	14%	7%	14%	14%

These percentages represent the 604 respondents who chose to write in a response. In 2011, this question was presented as fixed response (i.e., respondents were presented a list of items from which to choose), whereas, between 2008 and 2001 along with 2013 and 2016, this question was open-end. In 2013, "crime and safety issues" was "crime" and "sense of community, diversity, etc." was "sense of community." New items in 2016 were "pollution/environmental concerns," "quality of county services," "homelessness and poverty," "public transportation," and "noise pollution."

Safety in Dakota County

Residents were asked how safe they felt from different types of crimes, as well as safety in different county locations. Responses to this question were converted to the 100-point scale where zero equals "very unsafe," 33 is equal to "somewhat unsafe," 67 represents "somewhat safe," and 100 is equivalent to "very safe." Almost all of the items received an average rating that was equal to "somewhat" safe or better. The lowest average rating was for feelings of safety from identity theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft) (average rating of 61 or between "somewhat safe" and "somewhat unsafe") while the highest average rating was for feelings of safety from domestic violence (average rating of 84 or between "somewhat safe" and "very safe").

Four of the eight safety ratings were compared to safety ratings in other counties across the country; Dakota County was rated much higher than the benchmark for each item. Where trends were available, ratings remained similar between 2013 and 2016.

Residents from Commissioner District 1 gave lower ratings to their feelings of safety from violent crimes, illegal drug activity, identity theft and the feeling of safety while using Dakota County parks and trails. Those living in detached housing generally gave higher ratings for safety than their counterparts in attached housing units (see *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics*).

When a respondent identified an unlisted, or "other," type of crime or location, the response was captured verbatim. These responses appear in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*.

Figure 7: Average Ratings of Perceptions of Safety in Dakota County by Year

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Dakota County.	Average rating (0=very unsafe, 100=very safe)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
From domestic violence	84	83	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
While in your neighborhood	83	80	75	83	84	86	78
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	81	80	80	80	73	79	NA
While using Dakota County parks and trails	78	78	78	76	77	78	NA
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	72	70	72	72	67	72	NA
While driving on roads within Dakota County	72	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
From illegal drug activity (e.g., manufacturing or selling drugs)	68	66	67	NA	NA	NA	NA
From identity theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft)	61	62	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other	64	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Several question parts were worded differently in earlier surveys. Prior to 2016, "from identify theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft)" was "from identify theft." Safety "while in your neighborhood" was a separate question in 2008. "In Dakota County parks" and "on trails in Dakota County parks" were combined in 2006 as follows: "on Dakota County parks and trails" and remained for 2008 and 2011 but was reworded in 2013 and 2016 to "while using Dakota County parks and trails." In 2001, a question was asked about "How safe would you feel walking alone in your neighborhood in general?" with a response scale of "very safe," "reasonably safe," "very unsafe." "Other, please specify" and "while driving on roads within Dakota County" were new items in 2016.

Figure 8: Safety Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
While in your neighborhood	Much higher
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	Much higher
While using Dakota County parks and trails	Much higher
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	Much higher

Health Concerns

As in previous years, respondents were asked to rate health concerns in Dakota County. Average ratings for almost all listed health concerns, where zero equals "not at all a concern" and 100 equals "major concern," fell between a "moderate" and "minor" concern; social isolation, tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco) and environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste) were least concerning, with ratings of 35, 36 and 36, respectively.

Note that at least one in five respondents said "don't know" when asked if social isolation, underage alcohol use, bullying, illegal use of prescribed medications, the health and support of older adults, the health and support of people with disabilities, abuse and neglect of children and older adults, and spread of infectious diseases, were of concern in the county (see *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies*).

Thirteen of the 16 health concerns in 2016 could be compared to 2013 survey results and ratings were generally stable; however, the ratings of concern for three health issues increased in 2016. These health issues were tobacco use (36 in 2016 versus 31 in 2013), the health and support of persons with disabilities (45 in 2016 versus 41 in 2013), and the health and support of older adults (46 in 2016 versus 42 in 2013).

Respondents living in Districts 4 and 6 generally gave lower ratings to the list of health concerns than residents in other districts. Ratings were also compared by a selection of demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Residents aged 55 and older were more likely than their younger counterparts to cite the following issues as major health concerns: environmental hazards, social isolation, underage alcohol use, alcohol abuse among adults, illegal drug use and use of prescribed medications, quality of parenting skills, bullying, abuse and neglect of older adults and children, the health and support of older adults and persons with disabilities, and overweight adults and children (see *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics*).

Figure 9: Average Ratings of Health Concerns Compared by Year

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in Dakota County.	Average rating (0=not at all a concern, 100=major concern)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Overweight adults and children	56	58	59	58	55	54	NA
Quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17	50	51	42	38	46	37	NA
Illegal drug use	50	49	55	57	63	NA	NA
Bullying	48	49	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Abuse and neglect of children	48	47	52	46	38	37	NA
Underage alcohol use	47	48	55	60	61	57	NA
Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses	47	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
The health and support of older adults	46	42	53	47	56	NA	NA
Abuse and neglect of older adults	45	43	49	NA	NA	NA	NA
The health and support of persons with disabilities	45	41	49	NA	NA	NA	NA
Illegal use of prescribed medications	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Alcohol abuse among adults	44	44	48	46	NA	NA	NA
Spread of infectious diseases	38	36	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste)	36	37	38	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco)	36	31	32	40	52	49	NA
Social isolation	35	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

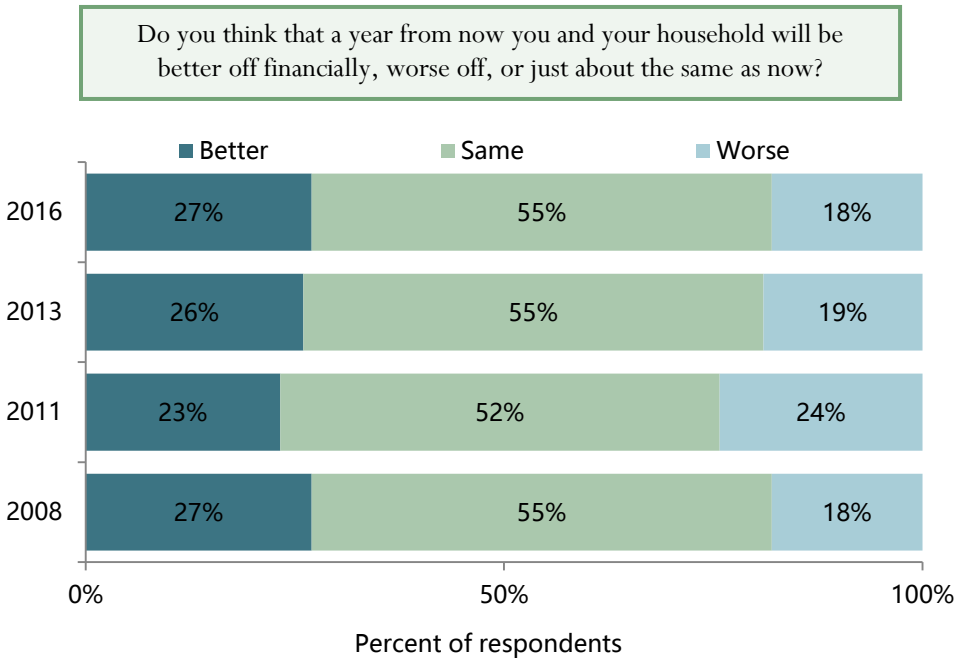
Several question parts were worded differently in earlier surveys. In 2013, "tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco)" was "tobacco use" and in 2006, "tobacco use" was "youth tobacco use;" in 2006 and 2004 "underage alcohol use" was "underage drinking;" "overweight adults and children" was "obesity." In 2013 and prior, "environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste)" was "exposure to pollution in the water." In 2004, "quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17" was "inadequate care and parenting for infants and young children" and in 2006, 2008 and 2011 was "inadequate care and parenting for infants and young children." New questions in 2016 included '"depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses," "Social isolation" and "illegal use of prescribed medications."

Household Financial Status

Survey participants were asked to indicate if they thought their household would be better off financially, worse off, or about the same a year from now. More than a quarter of respondents thought their household would be better off financially in a year, about one in five thought their household would be worse off, and about half thought their household finances would be about the same.

When compared to 2013, residents' outlook was similar in 2016.

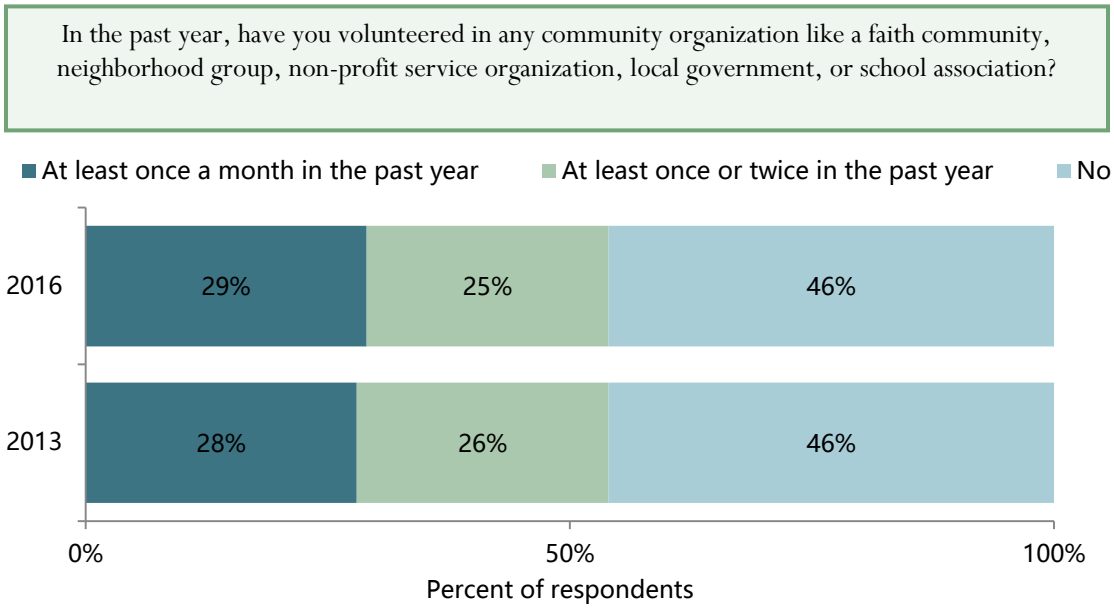
Figure 10: Financial Status Compared by Year



Volunteering in the Community

As in 2013, respondents to the 2016 survey were asked if they had volunteered in any community organization in the past year. Around half of residents reported volunteering at least once a month in the past year and a similar amount reported that they had not volunteered at all. When compared to 2013, rates of volunteering were similar.

Figure 11: Volunteering in the Community Compared by Year



This was a new question in 2013 and was worded as "In the past year, have you volunteered in any community organization like a church, neighborhood group, social service agency or school association?"

Evaluation of Government Services

Residents completing the survey were asked a series of questions related to Dakota County government, leadership, employee performance, and the quality of County services.

County Government

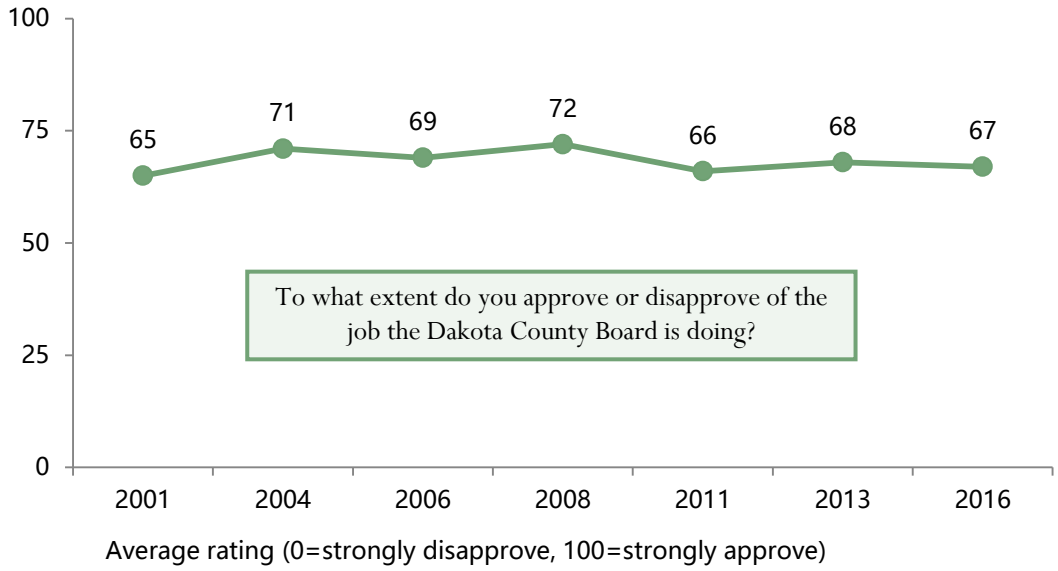
As in previous surveys, respondents indicated the extent to which they approved or disapproved of the job the Dakota County Board is doing. When converted to the 100-point scale where zero represents "strongly disapprove" and 100 equals "strongly approve," the average rating for how well the Dakota County Board is doing was 67, equivalent to "somewhat approve," on average. This rating was similar to the 2013 rating (67 in 2016 versus 68 in 2013).

Please note that 38% of respondents reported "don't know" when asked this question (see *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies*).

When compared to the other counties in the benchmark, Dakota County's Board received higher approval ratings than were seen elsewhere.

When compared to the four other counties that were partners with Dakota County in this survey project, Dakota County's approval rating was similar to Washington County, but higher than St. Louis County (Scott County and Olmsted County did not ask this question in 2016). (Please see *Appendix D: Comparison with Other Participating Counties* for more information.)

Figure 12: Average Ratings of County Board Approval Compared by Year



In 2001, this question was worded differently: "From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the job the County board is doing? And do you feel strongly that way?" and the response options were: "approve/strongly," "approve," "disapprove," "disapprove/strongly."

Survey respondents were asked to rate several aspects of Dakota County government performance. Ratings on the 100-point scale for the perception of the County Government were between "good" and "fair," where zero equals "poor" and 100 equals "excellent." Respondents rated the job the County does of providing information to residents and supporting the quality of life positively, with an average rating of 63 on the 100-point scale for each item. The County generally acting in the best interest of the community also received positive ratings from residents (61). The lowest rated aspect of government performance was the job Dakota County government does at listening to residents with an average rating of 52.

Note that for a number of items a high percent of respondents reported "don't know" when asked to rate each item: the job Dakota County government does at listening to residents (41% said "don't know"), the job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars (29%), effectively planning for the future of the county (27%), and the value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County (21%). (Please see *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies*.)

Compared to 2013, ratings in 2016 were similar.

Five of the nine aspects of Dakota County government performance could be compared to counties across the nation. Dakota County was much higher than the benchmark in each of these five aspects: the job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents; the job Dakota County government does of listening to residents; the value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County; the job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars; and generally acting in the best interest of the community.

When compared to the four other counties that were partners with Dakota County in this survey project, Dakota County's government performance ratings for each of the nine aspects were generally higher. (Please see *Appendix D: Comparison with Other Participating Counties* for more information.)

Figure 13: Average Ratings of Perception of Government Compared by Year

Please rate the following categories of Dakota County government performance:	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
The job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents	63	61	57	52	59	60	64
Supporting the quality of life in the county	63	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	61	60	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
The value of Dakota County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood	60	60	55	64	53	NA	NA
Overall confidence in Dakota County government	60	58	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Effectively planning for the future of the county	58	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
The value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County	55	54	46	46	48	54	43
The job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars	54	52	44	45	48	51	NA
The job Dakota County government does of listening to residents	52	54	48	48	44	47	NA

Several question parts were worded differently in earlier surveys. "The job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents" was "the job Dakota County government does at informing residents" in 2011; "the value of Dakota County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood" was "the importance of Dakota County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood" in 2011. Items added in 2016 included "supporting the quality of life in the county" and "effectively planning for the future of the county." Before 2011, respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with several statements. As with the response scale and question wording, the wording of the items also changed: the job Dakota County government does at listening to residents was "feel Dakota government listens to citizens," the value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County was "feel I receive good value for the Dakota taxes I pay," the job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars was "overall, I feel that Dakota County does a good job of managing tax dollars," and "the importance of Dakota County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood" was "feel that the services provided by Dakota County are important to the quality of life in my neighborhood."

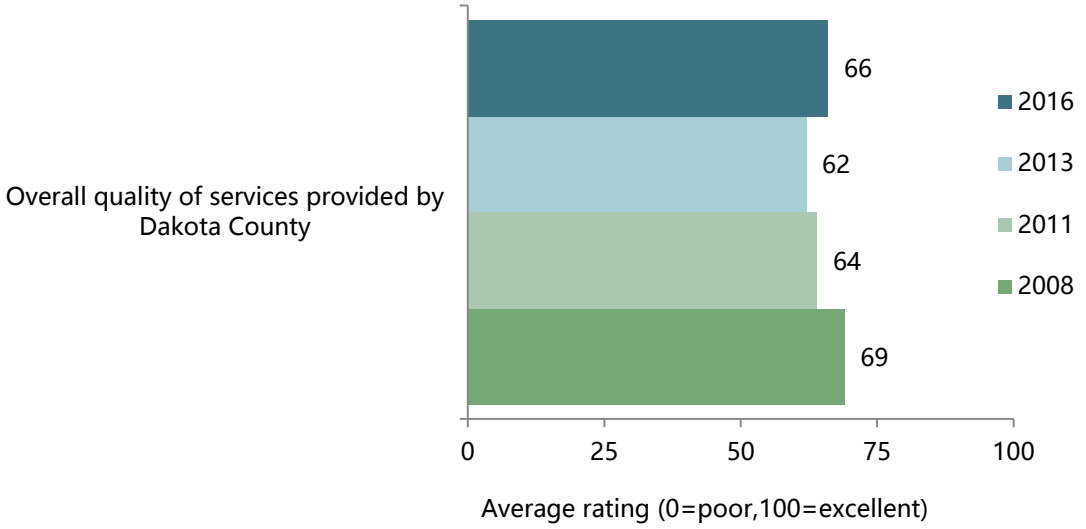
Figure 14: Perception of County Government Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
The job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents	Much higher
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	Much higher
The value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County	Much higher
The job Dakota County does at managing tax dollars	Much higher
The job Dakota County government does of listening to residents	Much higher

Overall Quality of County Services

Residents rated both specific County services and the overall quality of services provided by Dakota County. The average rating of 66 on the 100-point scale for overall quality of County services was much higher than the national benchmark and higher than ratings given in 2013.

Figure 15: Average Ratings of Overall Quality of County Services Compared by Year



County Services

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of 11 County services. When converted to a 100-point scale where zero is equal to "poor" and 100 represents "excellent," average scores for six services were above 67 (or "good"): County parks and recreation (average rating of 84), County libraries (82), trail and bikeway systems (78), services at the Recycling Zone (73), snow and ice removal on County roads (68), and Sheriff deputies patrol services (68). Average ratings for other County services rated in 2016 by residents were between "fair" and "good" on the 100-point scale.

Note that a relatively large proportion of respondents said "don't know" when asked to rate the following County services: trail and bikeway system (24%), services at the Recycling Zone (24%), self-service options on County Web site (50%), assessment process/property tax system (24%), addressing important health issues in communities (37%) and prosecuting people accused of crimes (38%). (See *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies*.)

When comparisons to the benchmarks were available, Dakota County services ratings were generally much higher; however, two services were rated much lower (Sheriff deputies patrol services and services provided to older adults), and one was similar (financial assistance for low-income families).

Nine of the11 services rated in 2016 could be compared to 2013 and ratings were generally similar; however, three differences emerged: self-service options on the County Web site and assessment process/property tax system received higher average ratings in 2016 compared to 2013 and Sheriff deputies patrol services received a lower average rating in 2016 than in 2013.Please note that differences in ratings for Sheriff deputies patrol services could be, in part, due to changes in question wording over time.

Differences in ratings among residents living in various districts included: Commissioner Districts 3 and 4 generally gave higher ratings to County services, while residents from Districts 1 and 5 gave lower ratings. With respect to differences between demographic characteristics, survey respondents who owned their homes were more likely to give positive ratings to the services of Dakota County than their counterparts (see *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics*).

Figure 16: Average Ratings of County Services Compared by Year

Please rate the following services provided by Dakota County.	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby or Miesville)	84	81	80	76	74	77	76
County libraries	82	84	80	81	78	80	82
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers Trail	78	78	75	72	70	73	70
Services at the Recycling Zone	73	70	66	NA	NA	NA	NA
Snow and ice removal on County roads	68	65	61	70	67	65	73
Sheriff deputies patrol services	68	77	70	69	70	70	72
Self-service options on the County Web site	66	60	64	60	NA	NA	NA
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	61	63	56	53	57	59	63
Prosecuting people accused of crimes	60	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Addressing important health issues in communities	57	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Assessment process/property tax system	49	43	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

New questions for 2016 included "addressing important health issues in communities" and "prosecuting people accused of crimes." In 2011 "services at the Recycling Zone" was "recycling and drop-off services at the Recycling Zone." In 2013, "County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitehall Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby, or Miesville)" was "County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Lake Byllesby)", "trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trail" was "trail and bikeway system like the Big Rivers trails" and "sheriff deputies patrol services" was "sheriff services." In 2001, a few of these question parts were separate questions: "County libraries" was "overall, how would you rate the quality of services provided by the Dakota County libraries?" "County parks and recreation" was "in general, how would you rate the quality of the county park system?" "Trail and bikeway system" was "how would you rate the quality of the County trail and bikeway system?" "Sheriff deputies patrol services" was "in general, how would you rate the services provided by the Sheriff's department?" "Snow and ice removal on County roads" was "how would you rate the snow and ice removal operations on county roads?" In 2001, the scale for all was "excellent," "good," "only fair," "poor."

Figure 17: County Services Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby	Much higher
County libraries	Much higher
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trails	Much higher
Services at the Recycling Zone	Much higher
Snow and ice removal on County roads	Much higher
Sheriff deputies patrol services	Much lower
Self-service options on the County Web site	Much higher
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	Much higher
Financial assistance for low-income families	Similar
Services provided to older adults	Much lower

County Services by Recent Users

Residents were asked to rate several services provided by Dakota County if they had experienced them within the last two years. Prior to 2016 these items were included in the larger services question but were removed in 2016 and asked in a separate question for only those residents who had experienced these services within the last two years.

The most highly rated service used within the last two years by residents was records, vital statistics, licensing and vehicle registration with an average rating of 67 on the 100-point scale where zero equals "poor" and 100 equals "excellent." The lowest rated service was services for people experiencing mental illness (40 on the 100-point scale).

Note that a relatively large proportion of respondents said "don't know" when asked to rate all of these services. "Don't know" percentages ranged from 21% for records, vital statistics, licensing and vehicle registration to 84% for financial assistance for low-income families and services for people with physical disabilities. (See *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies*.)

Residents from District 1 were less likely to give a positive rating to services such a records, vital statistics, licensing and vehicle registration, as well as services for people experiencing mental illness. In general, women gave less positive ratings to the County services than men (see *Appendix E: Comparison of Select Questions by Respondent Characteristics*).

Figure 18: Average Ratings of County Services by Recent Users Compared by Year

Please rate the following services provided by Dakota County only if you have experienced them within the last <u>two years</u>.	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Records, vital statistics, licensing, and vehicle registration	67	65	66	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment support/Workforce Center services	59	51	49	51	NA	58	NA
Services for people with physical disabilities	56	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Services provided to older adults	50	58	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Financial assistance for low-income families	49	57	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Services provided to veterans	48	59	55	NA	NA	NA	NA

Please rate the following services provided by Dakota County only if you have experienced them within the last <u>two years</u>.	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Services for people experiencing mental illness	40	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Prior to 2016 these items were included in the larger services question but were removed in 2016 and asked in a separate question for only those residents who had experienced these services within the last two years. New items for 2016 included "services for people with physical disabilities" and "services for people experiencing mental illness." In 2013, "employment support / Workforce Center services" was "employment support services." In 2001, the scale for all was "excellent," "good," "only fair," and "poor."

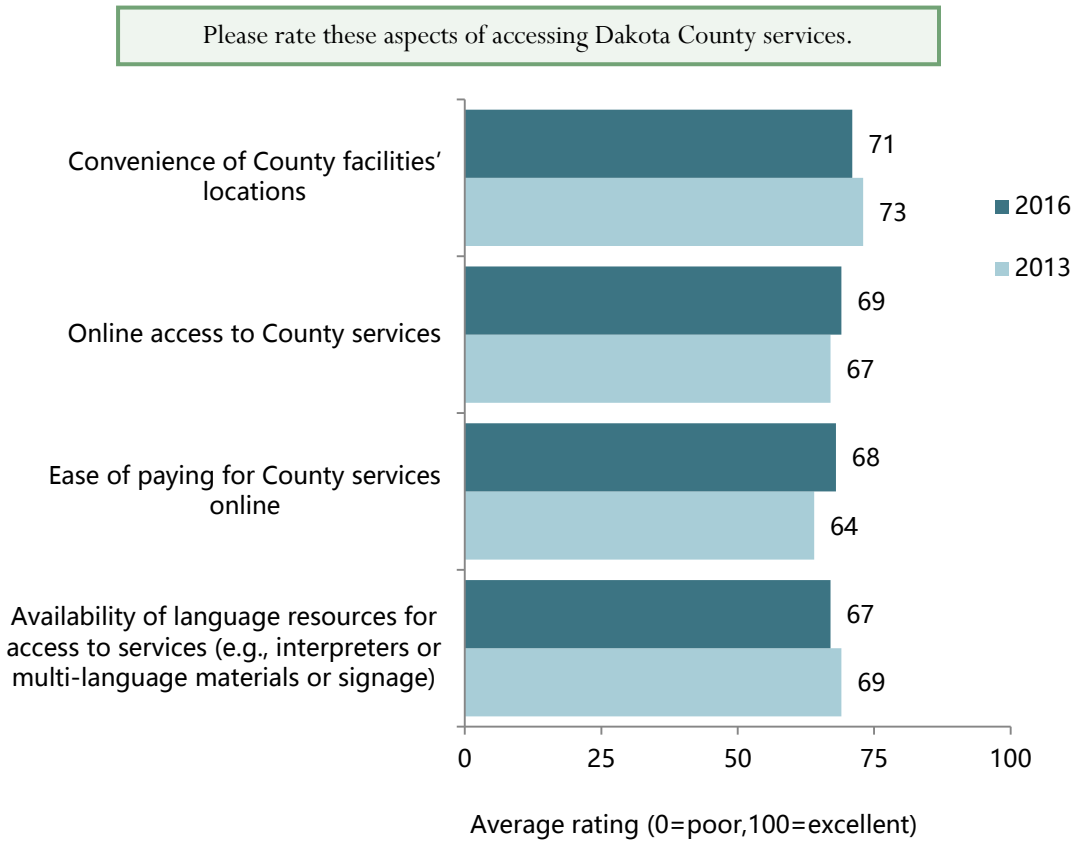
Access to County Services

As in 2013, 2016 survey respondents were asked to rate four dimensions of accessing Dakota County services and each dimension received a strong rating in 2016. The most highly rated aspect of access was the convenience of County facilities' locations with an average rating of 71 on the 100-point scale where zero equals "poor" and 100 equals "excellent." The lowest rated aspect of access was the availability of language resources for access to services with an average rating of 67.

When compared over time, ratings were generally stable; however, the rating for ease of paying for County services online increased in 2016 compared to 2013.

Note that a relatively large proportion of respondents said "don't know" when asked to rate the online access to County services (37%), ease of paying for County services online (56%) and availability of language resources for access to services (80%). (See *Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies*.)

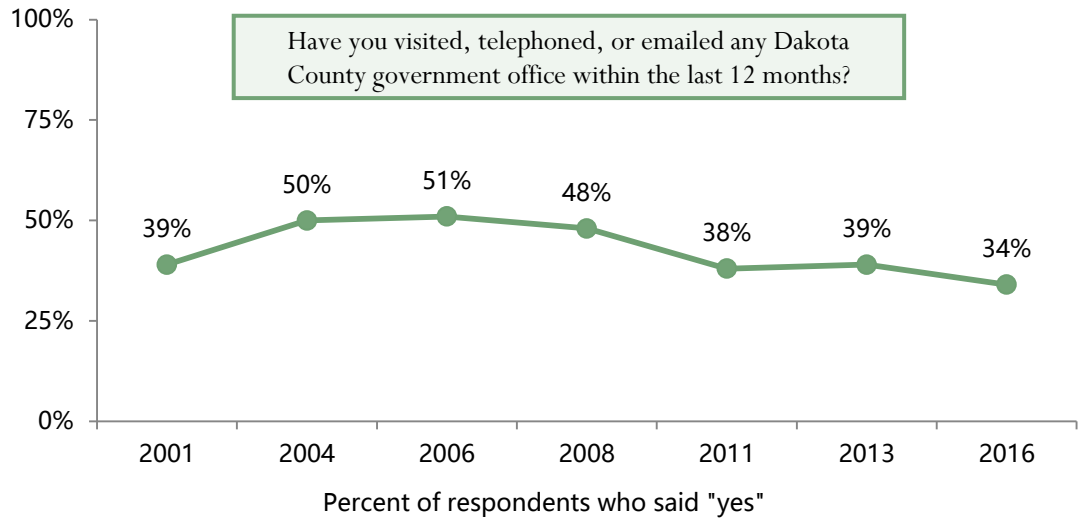
Figure 19: Average Ratings of Access to County Services Compared by Year



Contact with County Government

As in past years, respondents were asked if they had visited, telephoned, or emailed any Dakota County government office within the previous 12 months. A similar percentage of residents in 2016 compared to 2013 reported contacting a government office. The proportion of residents contacting County government also was much less than contact, on average, in counties across the nation.

Figure 20: Government Office Contact Compared by Year

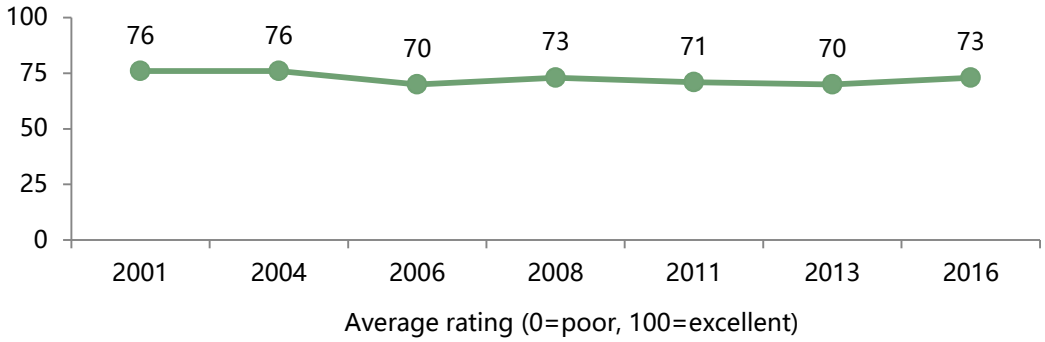


In 2001, this question was "During the past year, have you visited or telephoned one of these service centers [locations preceded the question]? Response scale was: "no;" "yes, visited;" "yes, telephoned;" "yes, both." In 2011, "email" was added as an additional method of contact. In 2013 and 2016, respondents were given the only options of "yes" and "no."

The 34% of respondents who reported having contacted a County government office were asked to give their impression of the employee with whom they had most recently had contact. Average ratings for all employee characteristics were above "good," or 67, on the 100-point scale. The average rating for employee(s) being knowledgeable was 76 points. Employee(s) being courteous and responsive received average scores of 75 and 73, respectively. Ratings for the overall impression of County employee(s) were similar in 2016 and 2013 along with ratings for employee(s) being knowledgeable and responsive; the rating for employee(s) being courteous increased in 2016 compared to 2013.

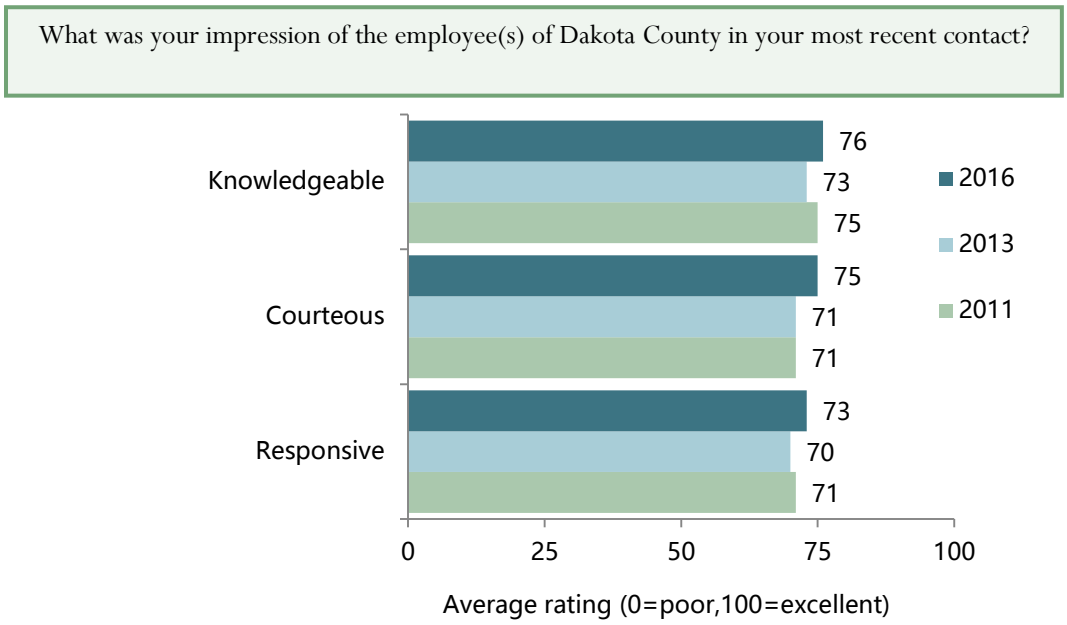
The average rating for employee(s) being courteous was similar to the county benchmark and all other aspects were rated higher or much higher than the national county average.

Figure 21: Overall Impression of Most Recent Contact with Dakota County Compared by Year



In 2001, the survey contained a question asking, "which department [in a government service center] did you contact or visit?" This question was then followed by "how would you rate the service overall?" Overall service had a response scale ranging from 1 to 5, with only values 5 (excellent) and 1 (poor) labeled.

Figure 22: Average Rating of Dakota County Employee Compared by Year



In 2013, "knowledge" was changed to "knowledgeable," "courtesy" to "courteous" and "responsiveness" to "responsive."

Figure 23: Perceptions of County Employees (Among Those Who Had Contact) Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Knowledgeable	Higher
Courteous	Similar
Responsive	Higher
Overall impression	Much higher

Fiscal Management and Planning

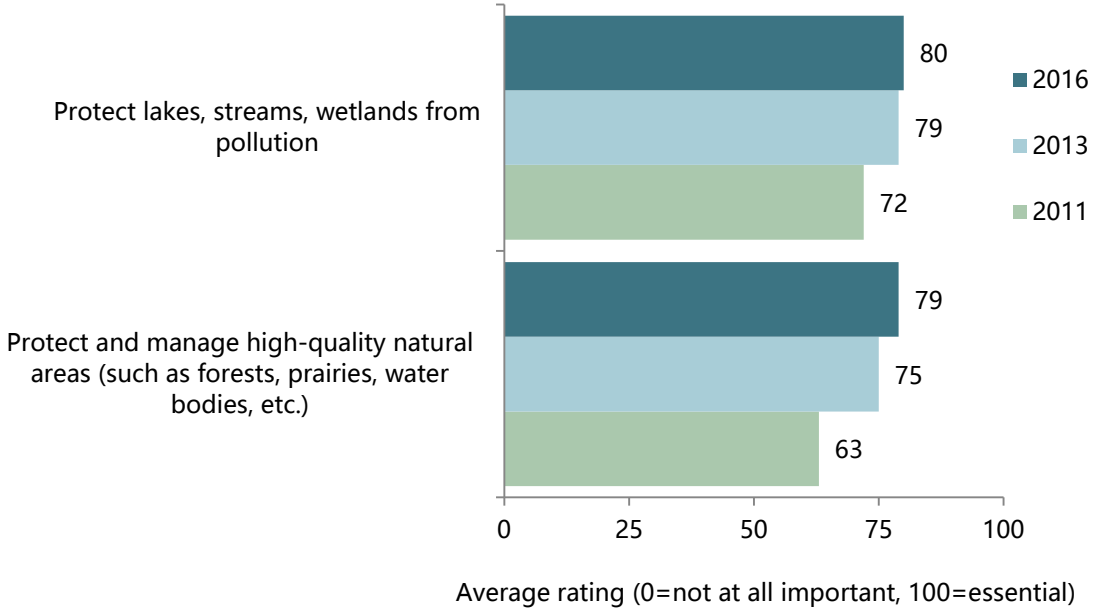
A number of questions on the 2016 survey were aimed at helping County leaders set priorities for programs and services. Knowing where residents feel officials could trim, and where resources should remain, will aid County leaders in making key decisions. Generally speaking, survey research over many years in many communities shows residents tend to evaluate core services as being the highest priority and more important to fund, while services that are less visible or serve fewer residents tend to be considered less important. Relative order over time may shift slightly and may be influenced by current budget circumstances, but broad patterns typically remain stable over time.

Importance of Investing in Open Spaces and Parkland

Those completing the survey were informed that since 2002, Dakota County has emphasized setting aside open spaces and parkland. They were asked to indicate how important it is for the County to continue investing funds in open spaces and parkland. On the 100-point scale (where zero equals "not at all important" and 100 equals "essential"), average ratings for protecting lakes, streams, and wetlands from pollution (80) and protecting and managing high-quality natural areas (79) were equal to about "very important" or higher. When compared over time, the importance rating for protecting and managing high-quality natural areas increased in 2016 compared to 2013.

Figure 24: Importance of Investing in Open Spaces and Parkland Compared by Year

Since 2002, Dakota County has emphasized setting aside open spaces and parkland by dedicating small amounts of County funds in order to receive greater matching funds from non-County sources. How important, if at all, is it to continue investing County funds for these purposes:



In 2013, the question wording was "Since 2002, Dakota County has emphasized setting aside open spaces and parkland by dedicating small amounts of County funds in order to receive greater matching funds from non-County sources. How important, if at all, is it to continue investing County funds for these purposes." In 2016, "protect and manage high-quality natural areas (such as forests, prairies, water bodies, etc.)" was "protect the highest-rated natural areas" in 2013 and was "protect remaining natural areas" in 2011.

Importance of Library Programs and Services

The survey asked residents about the importance of maintaining 14 library programs and services. Responses were converted to a 100-point scale where zero equals "not at all important" and 100 equals "essential." The highest rated items were providing popular title/current library materials and literacy/reading skills promotion and resources (both 71 on the 100-point scale). The lowest rated items were technology to create and edit music and videos (33) and streaming movies and music (online) (35). Respondents were also given the option to rate an "other" program or service and write-in a response. These responses can be found in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*.

When compared over time, a variety of programs and services received higher importance ratings in 2016 compared to 2013. The programs or services with higher importance ratings included: information about jobs, skills, literacy, and careers (63 in 2016 versus 50 in 2013), community activities/information (63 in 2016 versus 57 in 2013), health and wellness programs and resources (60 in 2016 versus 55 in 2013), English as a second language resources and services (55 in 2015 versus 48 in 2013), and author/performance arts programs (47 in 2016 versus 40 in 2013).

Figure 25: Importance of Library Programs and Services by Year

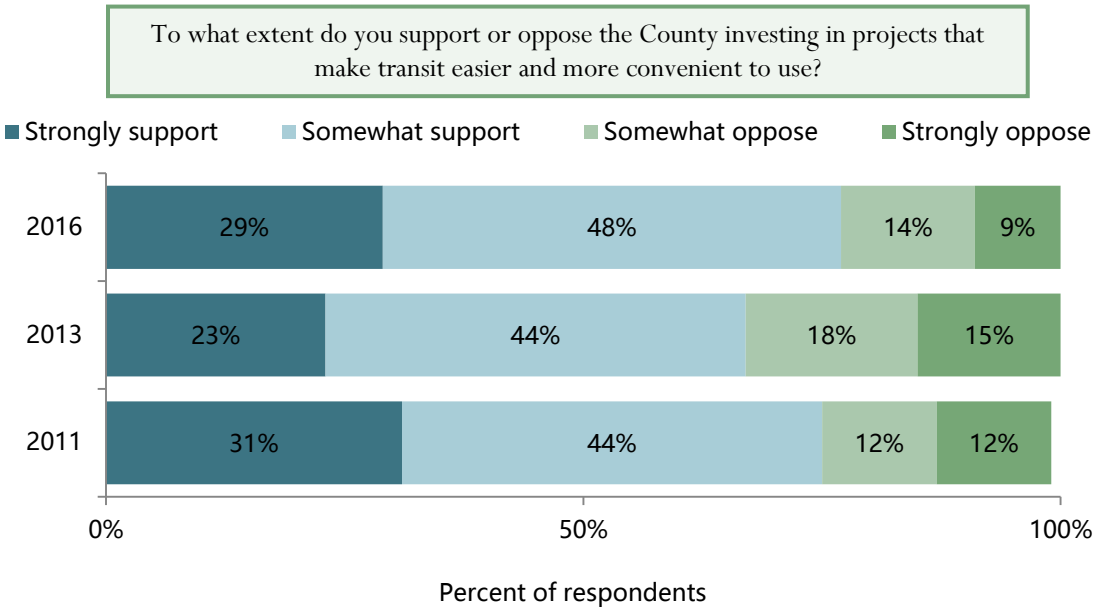
How important, if at all, is it to provide the following library programs and services?	Average rating (0=not at all important, 100=essential)	
	2016	2013
Popular titles/current library materials	71	69
Early literacy/reading skills promotion and resources	71	68
Information about jobs, skills, literacy, and careers	63	50
Community activities/information	63	57
Technology access, computer classes and training	62	65
Health and wellness programs and resources	60	55
English as a second language resources and services	55	48
Small business/economic development resources and services	55	44
Consumer/government information	55	48
Author/performance arts programs	47	40
Movies, music and entertainment	47	45
Library materials in other languages (Spanish, Somali, Russian, others	44	43
Streaming movies and music (online)	35	NA
Technology to create and edit music and videos	33	NA
Other	54	62

In 2013, "library materials in other languages (Spanish, Somali, Russian, others)" was "world language resources (Spanish, Somali, Russian, others)."

Investing in Transit Projects

Survey participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they would support or oppose Dakota County investing in projects that make transit more convenient to use. A vast majority (77%) "somewhat" or "strongly" supported this idea. More respondents offered "strong" support in 2016 compared to 2013, closer to what was seen in 2011.

Figure 26: Transit Projects Compared by Year

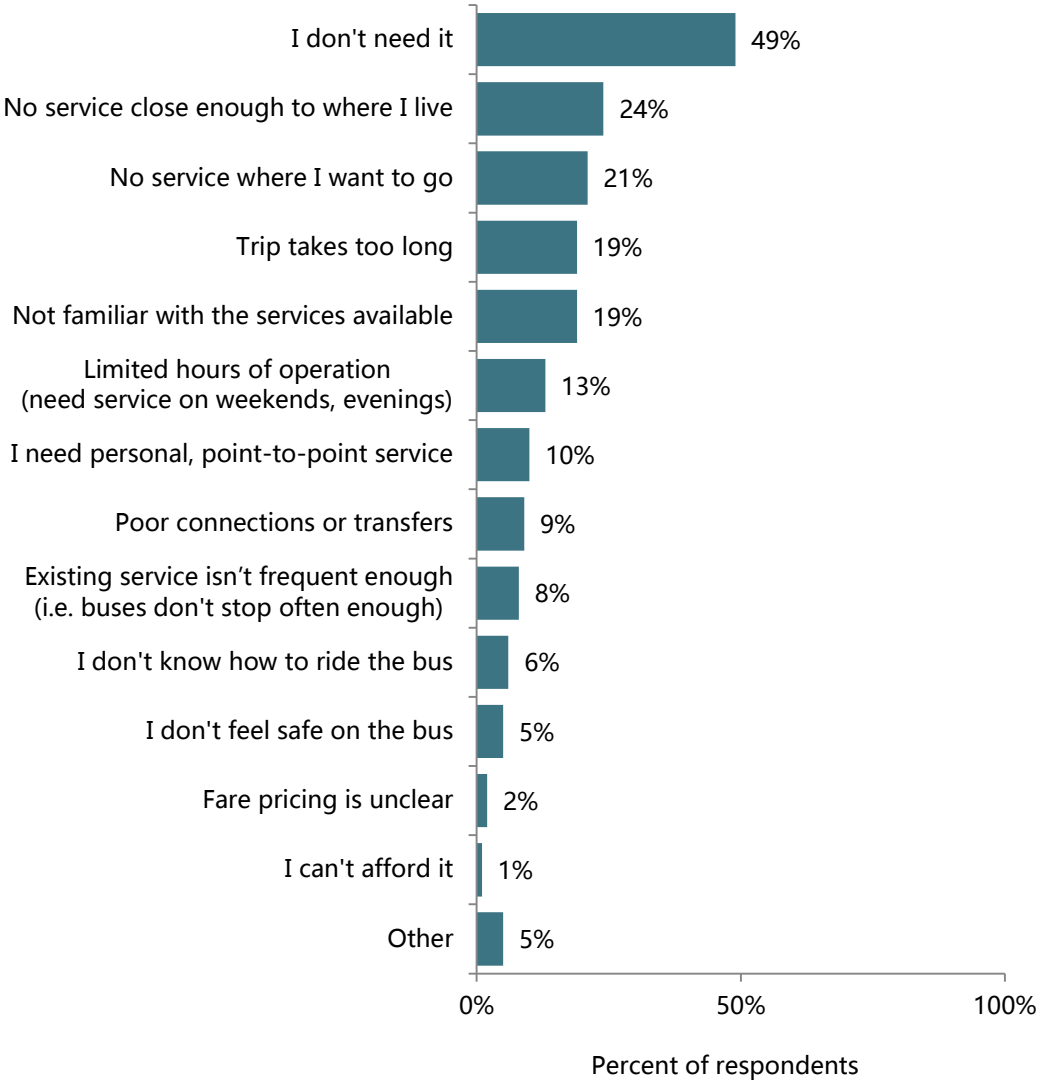


Barriers to Transit Services in Dakota County

Residents were asked a new question in 2016 about what the top three barriers were to them for regular use of Dakota County transit services. Almost half of residents reported that they did not need transit services. Two percent or fewer residents felt that fare pricing was unclear and therefore a barrier to transit use or that it was too expensive to use.

Figure 27: Barriers to Using Transit Services in Dakota County

What are the barriers to you using transit services regularly (e.g., Metro Transit/MVTA buses, *Transit Link*, the METRO Red Line?)



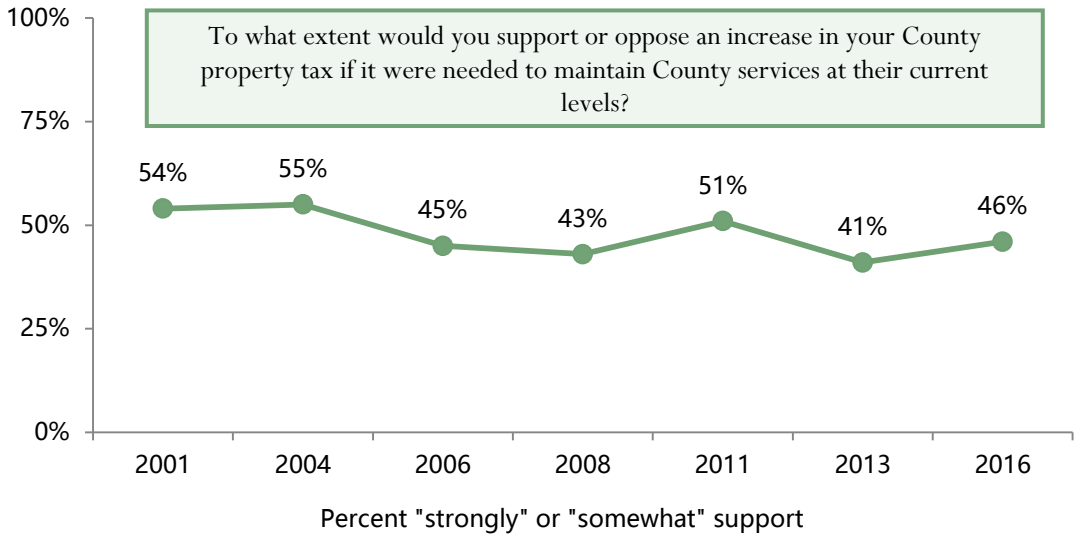
**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option. This was a new question in 2016.*

County Property Tax

When asked about support for or opposition to increasing property taxes to maintain services at current levels, more respondents opposed this idea (54%) than supported it (46%). Additionally, about four times as many respondents offered strong opposition as those who offered strong support (see Appendix C: Complete Set of Frequencies).

When compared over time, this level of support in 2016 was similar to ratings given in 2013.

Figure 28: Level of Support for County Property Tax Compared by Year

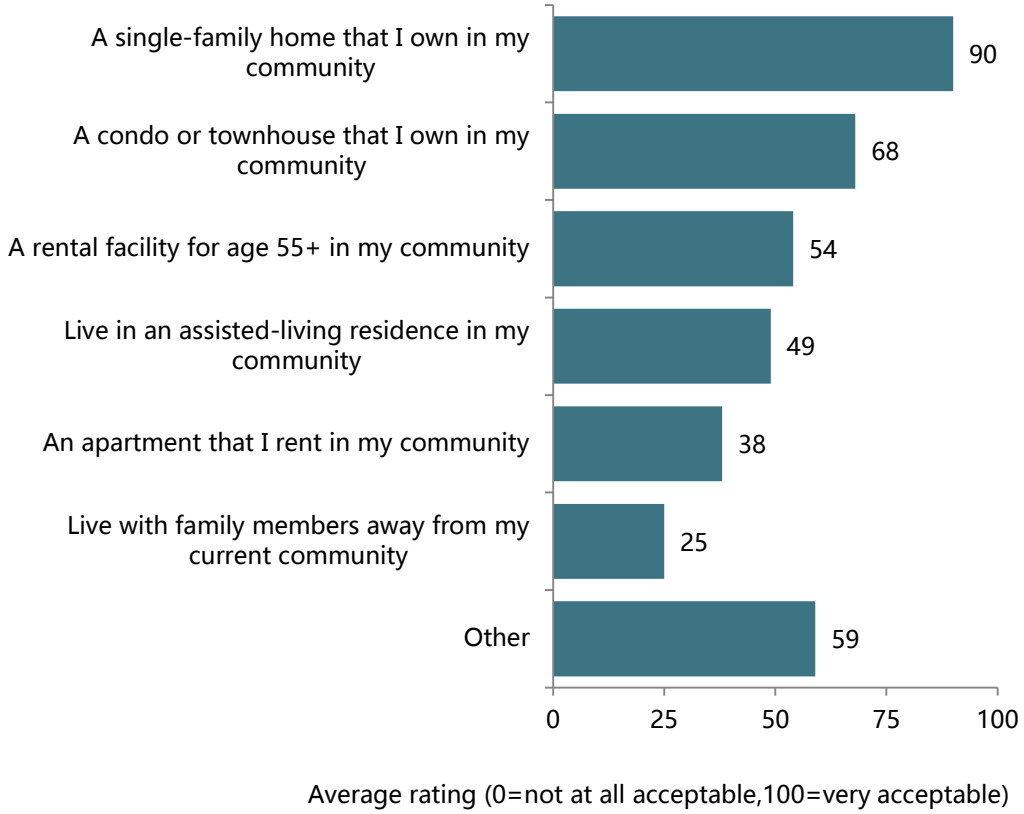


Housing Options

Residents were asked to consider how acceptable a list of housing options might be if circumstances led to them moving from their current home. The most acceptable option given by almost all residents was move to a single-family home that they own in their community. The least cited housing option was living with family members away from their current community. Respondents were also given the option to include "other" housing option and write-in a response. These responses can be found in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*.

Figure 29: Average Ratings of Acceptable Housing

If you chose to move from your current home, please indicate how acceptable, if at all, each of the following housing options would be to you:



A similar question was asked in 2013, but due to changes in how the question was asked and the response options, comparisons over time have not been made.

When average ratings of acceptable housing were compared by respondent age, respondents aged 55 or older compared to younger residents were less likely to find a single-family home that they own in their community acceptable but more likely to find the following options acceptable: a condo or townhouse that they own in their community, a rental facility for age 55+ in their community and to live in an assisted-living residence in their community.

Figure 30: Average Ratings of Acceptable Housing Compared by Age

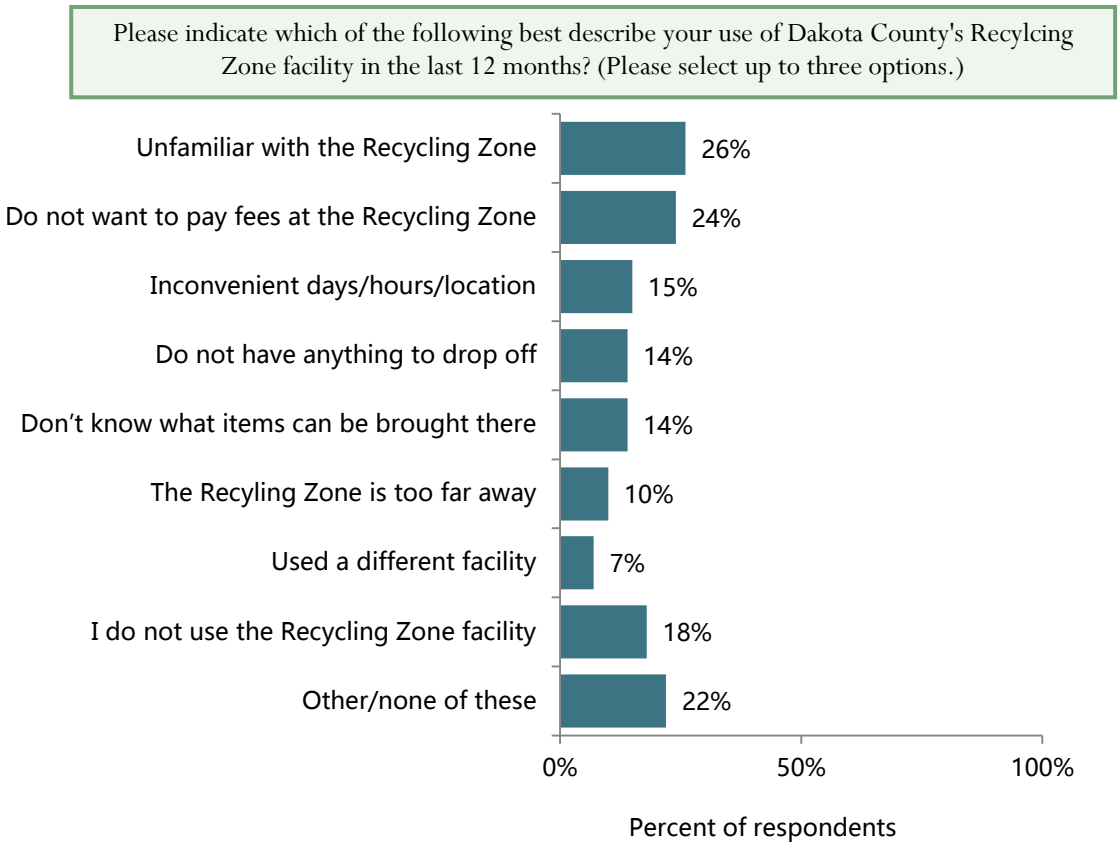
If you chose to move from your current home, please indicate how acceptable, if at all, each of the following housing options would be to you: Average rating (0=not at all acceptable, 100=very acceptable)	Age			Overall
	18-34	35-54	55+	
A single-family home that I own in my community	96	92	79	90
A condo or townhouse that I own in my community	60	71	73	68
An apartment that I rent in my community	38	38	39	38
Live with family members away from my current community	25	24	28	25
A rental facility for age 55+ in my community	31	50	63	54
Live in an assisted-living residence in my community	31	45	58	49
Other	26	61	71	59

Cells shaded grey indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups.

Recycling in Dakota County

Residents completing the survey were asked a series of questions related to recycling in the county. The first question asked residents to match their top three behaviors related to use of the Recycling Zone facility in the last 12 months. A quarter of residents reported that they were unfamiliar with the facility and a similar percentage did not want to pay fees at the Recycling Zone. Around one-fifth of those who responded to the question reported that they do not use the Recycling Zone facility at all.

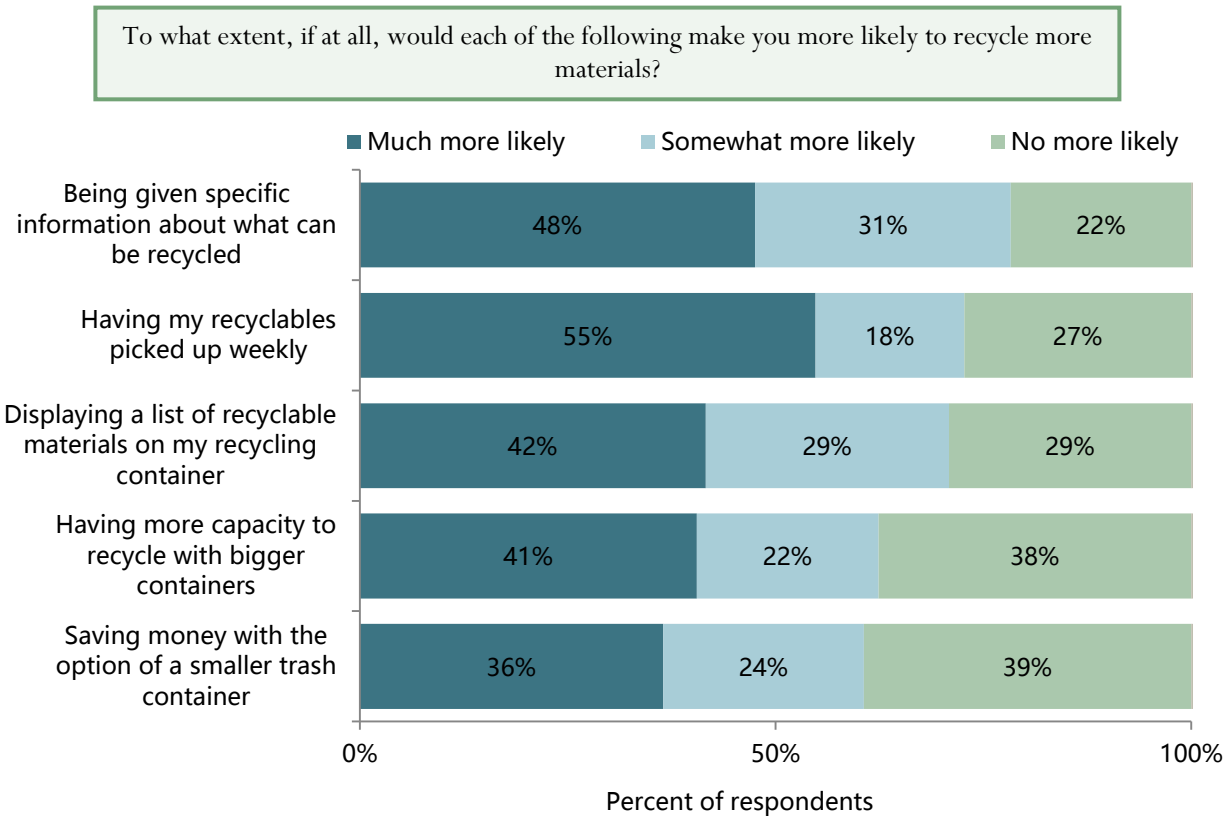
Figure 31: Use of the Recycling Zone



Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option. A similar question was asked in 2013 but due to changes in how the question was asked and the response options, over time comparisons have not been made.

Residents were also asked what would make them more likely to recycle more materials. More than half of residents said they would be "much more likely" or "somewhat more likely" (79%) to recycle if they were given specific information about what can be recycled. A majority of residents reported that all of these recycling measures would make them at least "somewhat more likely" to recycle if implemented, though 4 in 10 residents stated that saving money with the option of a smaller trash container, or having more capacity to recycle with bigger containers would make them "no more likely" to recycle.

Figure 32: Use of the Recycling Zone

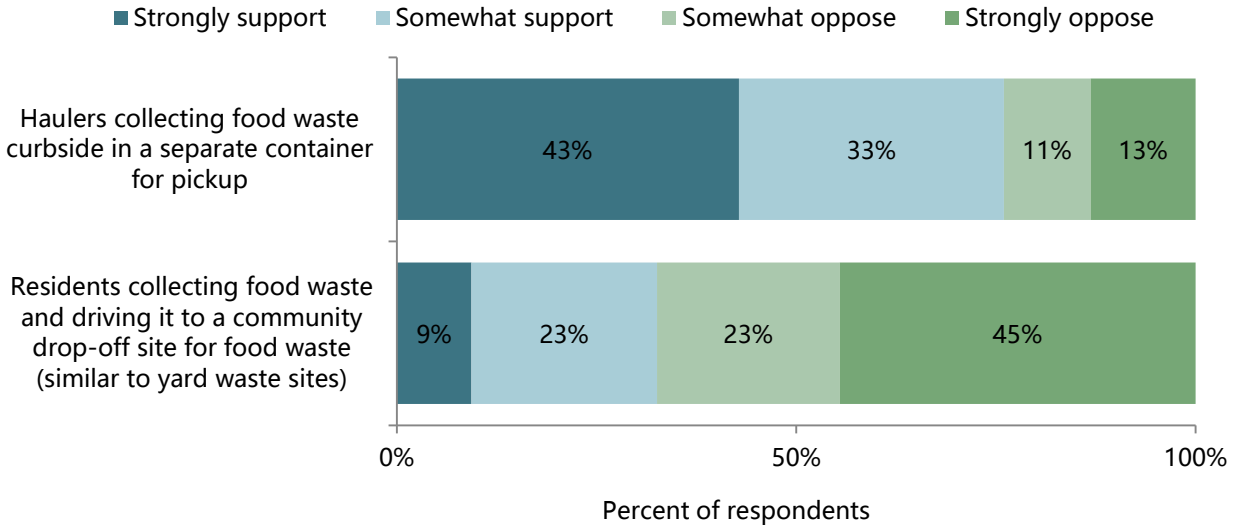


This question was first asked in 2016.

Additionally, residents were asked to consider their level of support or opposition for food waste diversion from landfills. A vast majority said they "somewhat" or "strongly" supported the diversion of food waste from landfills via haulers collecting food waste curbside in a separate container. Meanwhile, nearly 7 in 10 residents opposed residents collecting food waste and driving it to a community drop-off site as a means of diverting food waste from landfills.

Figure 33: Support to Divert Food Waste from Landfills

The State is requiring all counties to find ways to divert food waste from landfills. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following options to meet this requirement:



This question was first asked in 2016.

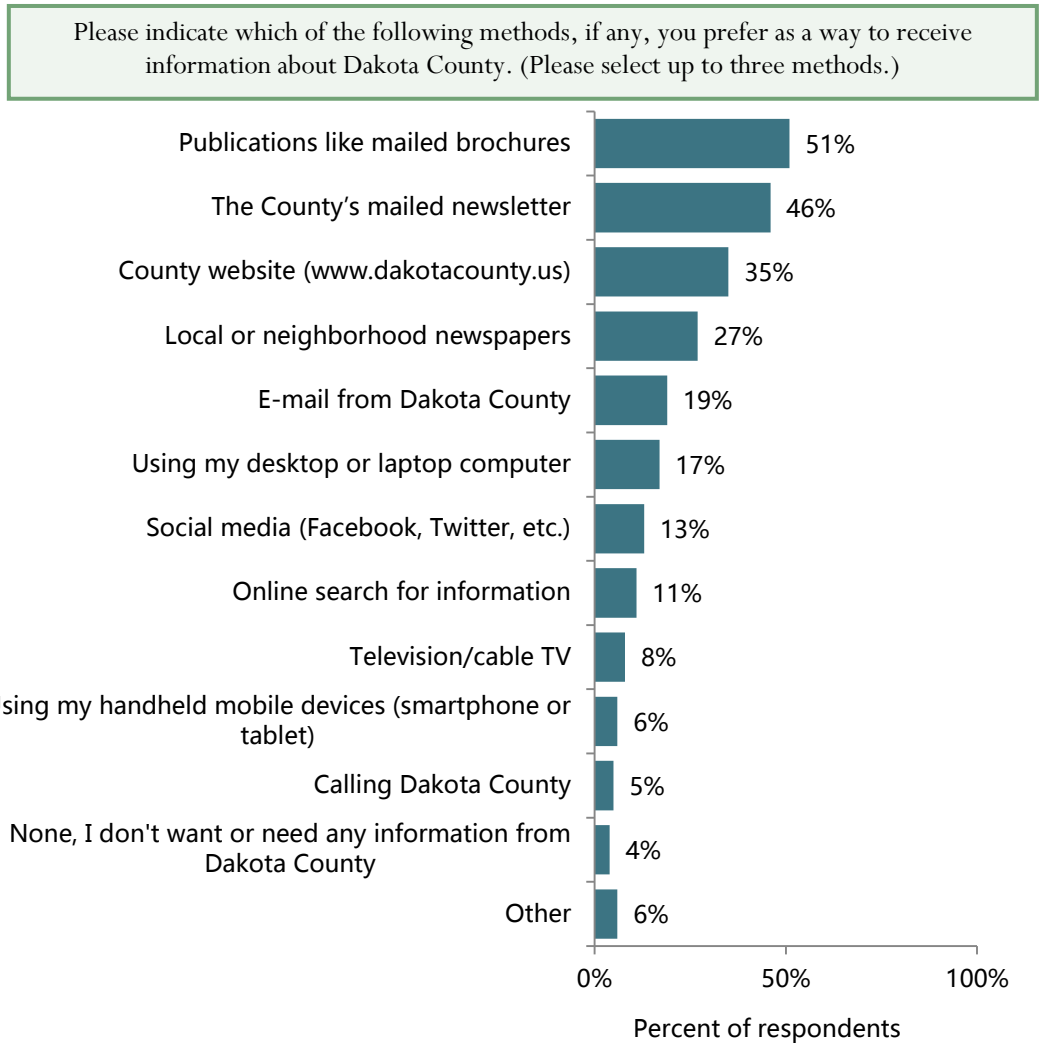
Public Information and Communication

To understand the best ways to communicate with and inform residents about Dakota County government and its services, a series of questions about public information sources and access to communication methods was asked.

Information Sources

Respondents were asked to indicate which top three methods they preferred as a way to receive information about Dakota County. Publications like mailed brochures were the most preferred methods to receive information about the County (51%) followed by the County's mailed newsletter (46%). Only four percent of respondents reported that they didn't want or need any information from Dakota County. Respondents were also given the option to rate an "other" information source and write-in a response. These responses can be found in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*.

Figure 34: Preferences for Receiving Information about Dakota County



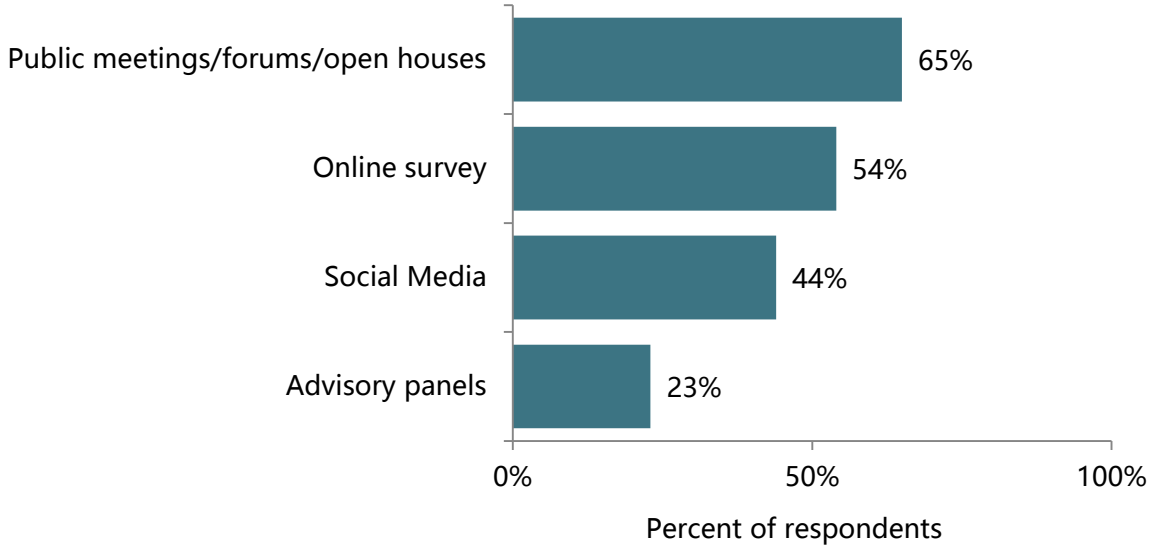
**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option. This question was first asked in 2016.*

Potential Information Sources

Respondents were also asked what methods they believed Dakota County should use to reach residents and gain their insights and learn about their preferences for County services, activities, projects, decisions and plans. About two-thirds of residents suggested that public meetings/forums/open houses were the best way to communicate with residents whereas about 23% reported that advisory panels were the best mode of communication.

Figure 35: Preferred Methods to Communicate with Residents

Please indicate what methods you believe Dakota County should use to reach residents and gain their insights and learn about their preferences for County services, activities, decisions and plans.



This question was first asked in 2016. Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Accessing Information on the Web

Residents were asked to rate the usefulness of information and functions (services that can be accessed online) on Dakota County's Website. When asked what information was most valuable to them on the County website, the most valuable items were information about parks (66%) and recycling information (65%). Where comparisons could be made over time, most of the listed types of information were deemed less valuable to residents in 2016 compared to 2013. Please note that differences in ratings over time could be, in part, due to changes in question wording over time.

When asked what functions would be useful to complete online on the Website, the most requested functions were renewing or applying for a license, permit, or other application (64%), paying fees, fines or property taxes (52%) and reserving park facilities (49%). The usefulness of most of the functions on Dakota County's Website decreased compared to 2013 ratings where comparisons could be made.

Responses to the "other" types of information and services residents would like to access via the County website can be found in *Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions*.

In 2008 and earlier, this question was an open-ended question and in 2011 was converted to a set of fixed response options. In 2013 and 2016, these items were broken into two sets of questions; one regarding valuable information, the other useful tools or services. This change does limit the direct comparability of the data over time, so caution is advised regarding the interpretation of differences.

Figure 36: Useful Information on Dakota County's Web Site Compared by Year

What information on Dakota County's website is most valuable to you?	Percent of respondents						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Information about parks	66%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Recycling information	65%	71%	68%	9%	3%	NA	NA
Information about County services	48%	64%	62%	11%	7%	10%	NA
Road/bridge construction projects	40%	62%	53%	5%	1%	NA	NA
Property sales/information	32%	53%	61%	3%	5%	5%	NA
Contacting County departments or staff	27%	48%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Volunteer opportunities	20%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Information about services for older adults	19%	40%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Information about people charged with a crime	17%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
County budget information	13%	40%	40%	3%	1%	4%	NA
Information about the County Jail or its inmates	9%	22%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
No access/don't use	5%	3%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other	2%	7%	8%	26%	39%	NA	NA

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option. In 2013, the question wording was "what information would be useful to you on Dakota County's Web site" In 2016, "information about parks" and "information about people charged with a crime" were new items.

Figure 37: Useful Functions on Dakota County's Web Site Compared by Year

What else would be useful for you to do on Dakota County's Web site?	Percent of respondents						
	2016	2013	2011	2008	2006	2004	2001
Renew or apply for a license, permit, or other application	64%	77%	67%	3%	3%	2%	NA
Pay fees, fines, or property taxes	52%	61%	56%	8%	8%	4%	NA
Reserve park facilities	49%	58%	79%	18%	30%	39%	NA
Apply for a library card and/or use other library resources	43%	62%	59%	3%	5%	6%	NA
Register for volunteer activities online	32%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Receive your annual property tax notices by email	28%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Online recording of vital records (birth, death, marriage)	27%	40%	44%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Apply for public financial assistance	13%	21%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Request copies or notarizing: property documents	22%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Live chat support service online for property information	11%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
No access/don't use	4%	2%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other	1%	4%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option. 'Register for volunteer activities," 'Receive your annual property tax notices by email,' 'Live chat support service online for property information,' and 'Request copies or notarizing: property documents' were new in 2016.In 2011 "Reserve park facilities" was "Park information (e.g., reservation at a regional park facility)." This question was not asked in 2001.

Respondent Demographics

Frequencies for demographic questions appear below and on the following pages.

Figure 38: Respondent District

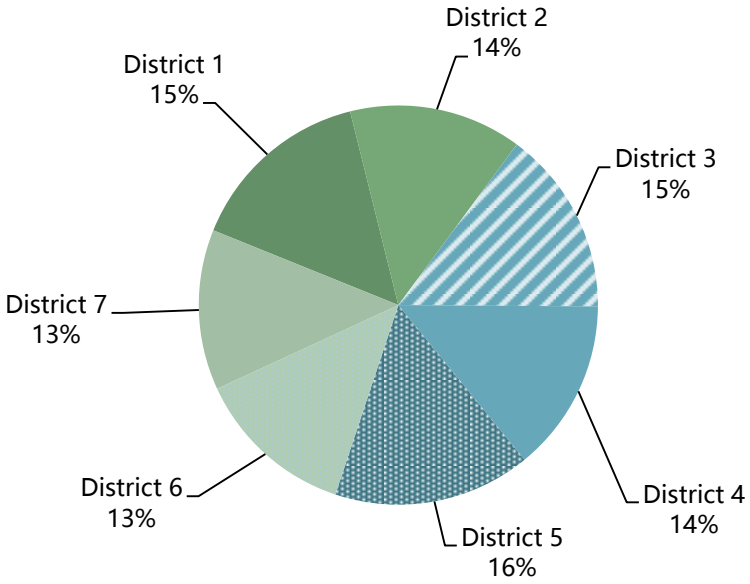


Figure 39: Respondent Length of Residency

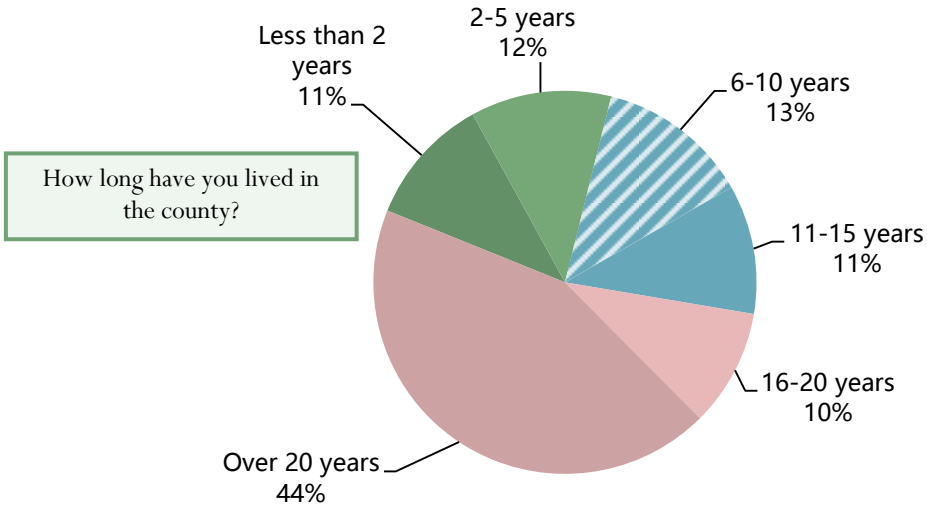


Figure 40: Respondent Employment Status

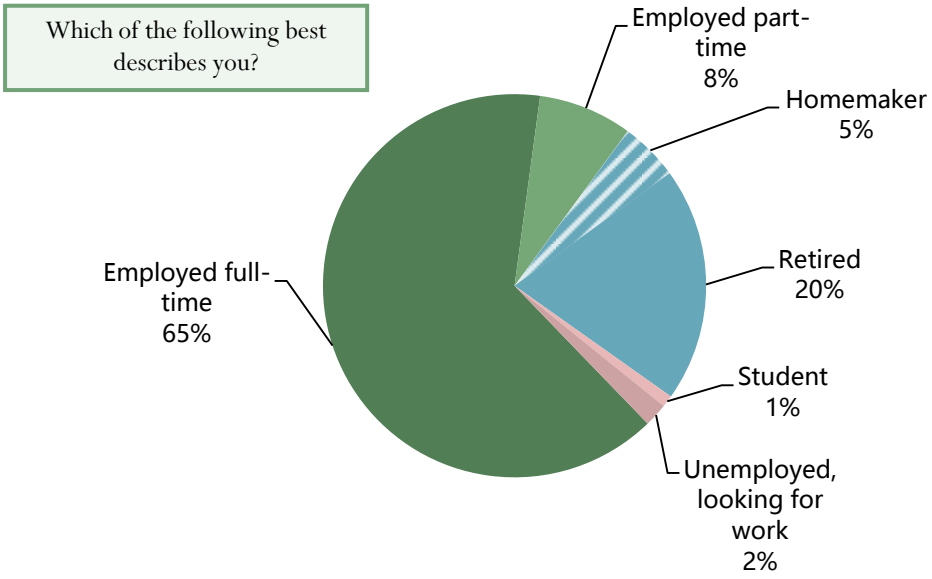


Figure 41: Respondent Housing Unit Type

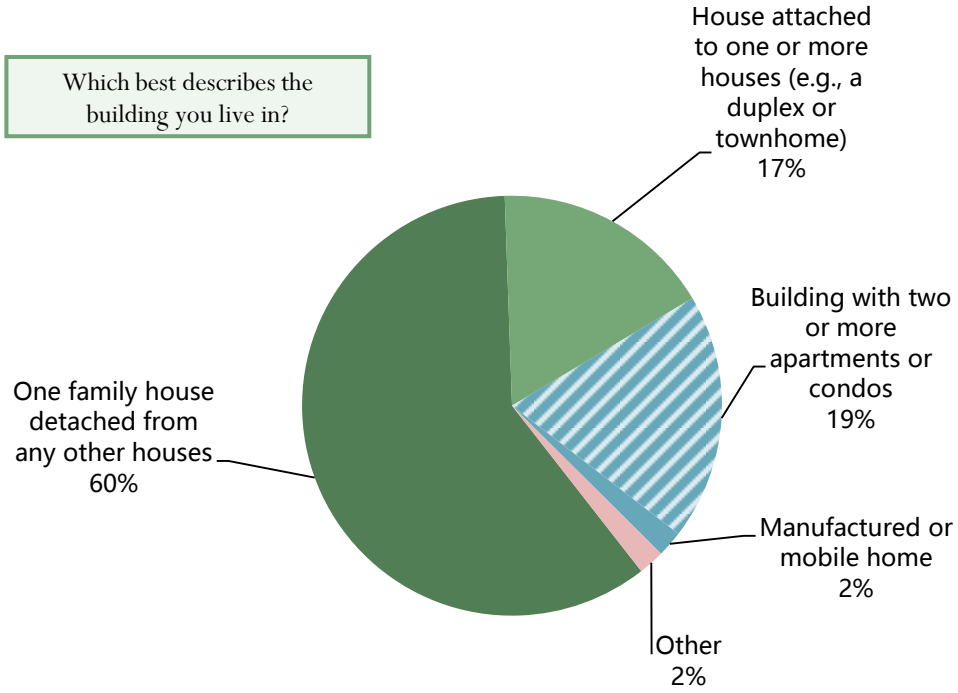


Figure 42: Respondent Housing Tenure

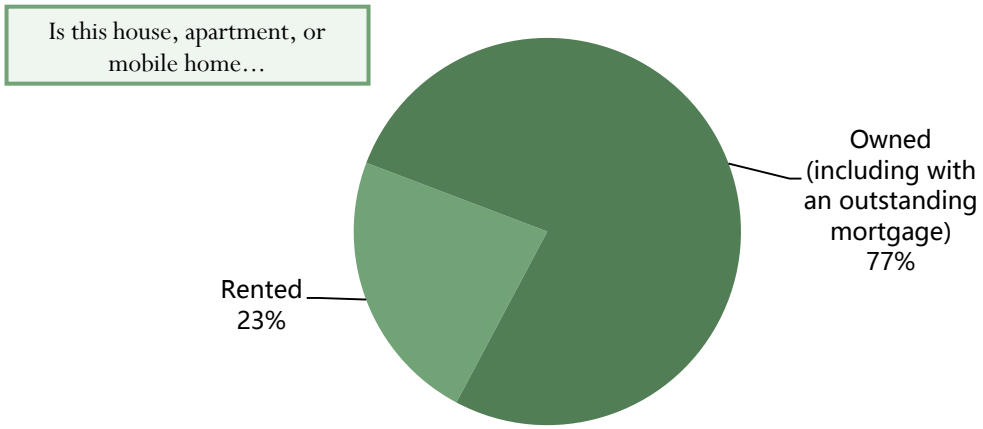


Figure 43: Respondent Ethnicity

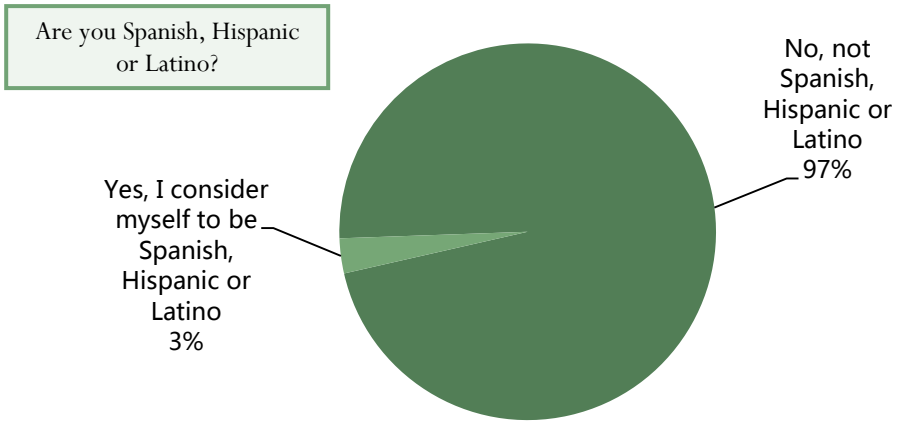


Figure 44: Respondent Race

What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents	Number
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%	N=20
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	4%	N=41
Black or African American	3%	N=28
White	91%	N=847
Other	3%	N=30

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response.

Figure 45: Respondent Age

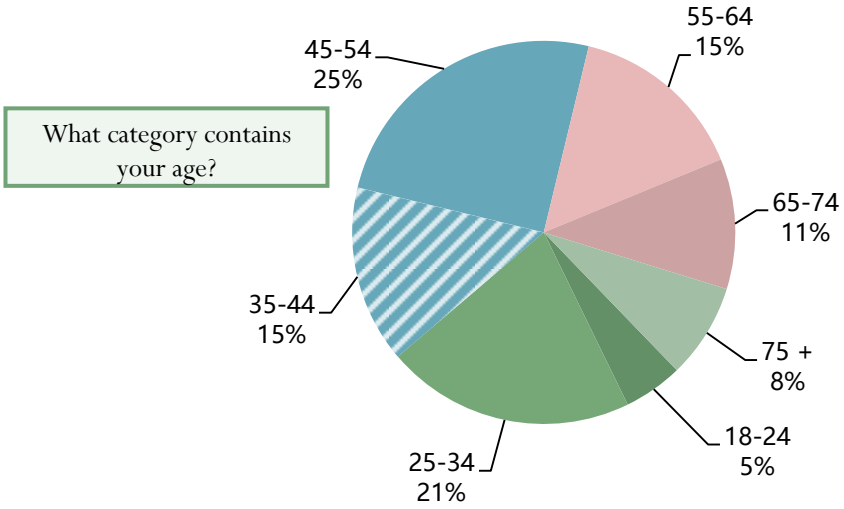


Figure 46: Respondent Gender

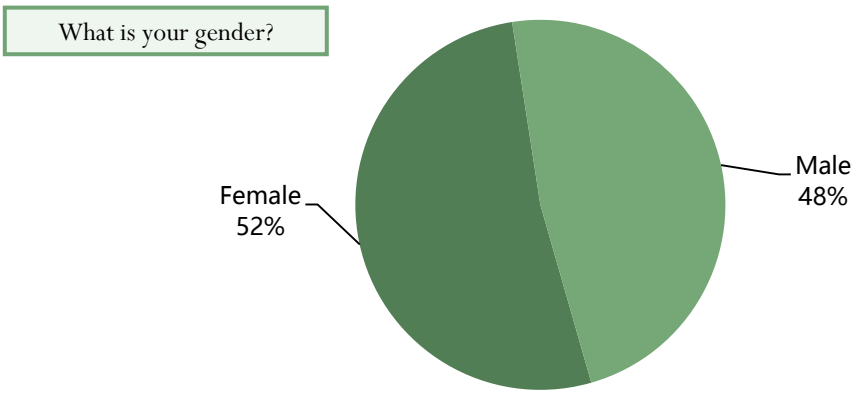


Figure 47: Presence of Children in the Household

How many children age 17 years and under live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Number
One	25%	N=142
Two	22%	N=124
Three	9%	N=49
Four	3%	N=16
Five or more	1%	N=5
None	41%	N=236
Total	100%	N=571

Figure 48: Presence of Adults under Age 65 in the Household

How many adults under age 65 years, including yourself, live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Number
One	27%	N=200
Two	52%	N=388
Three	10%	N=75
Four	3%	N=20
Five or more	1%	N=7
None	8%	N=62
Total	100%	N=752

Figure 49: Presence of Older Adults Age 65 and Over in the Household

How many persons age 65 years and over, including yourself, live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Number
One	24%	N=107
Two	20%	N=89
Three	0%	N=1
Four	0%	N=0
Five or more	0%	N=0
None	56%	N=254
Total	100%	N=451

Figure 50: Household Income

Please indicate your household's annual income:	Percent of respondents	Number
Under $15,000	5%	N=47
$15,000-$24,999	5%	N=42
$25,000-$34,999	6%	N=58
$35,000-$49,999	12%	N=113
$50,000-$74,999	19%	N=172
$75,000-$99,999	17%	N=152
$100,000-$149,999	21%	N=188
$150,000-$199,999	7%	N=68
$200,000 or more	7%	N=64
Total	100%	N=904

APPENDIX A: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey Instrument Development

Dakota County has conducted a general residential survey every two or three years for more than 20 years. The surveys ask recipients about their perspectives on the quality of life in the county, use of County amenities, opinion on policy issues facing the County and assessment of County service delivery. These surveys permit County staff and elected officials to hear from a broad range of the population. The 2016 resident survey instrument development process began with a review of the 2013 survey. A list of topics was generated for new questions; questions were developed and modified to find those that were the best fit for the 2016 questionnaire. In an iterative process between County staff and NRC staff, a final five-page questionnaire was crafted.

Selecting Survey Recipients

"Sampling" refers to the method by which survey recipients are chosen. The "sample" refers to all those who had an equal opportunity to participate in the survey. All households located in the county boundaries were eligible for the survey. Because County governments generally do not have inclusive lists of all the residences in the jurisdiction (tax assessor and utility billing databases often omit rental units, for example), lists from the United States Postal Service (USPS), updated every three months, usually provide the best representation of all households in a specific geographic location. NRC used USPS residential mailing list data to randomly select the sample of households.

A larger list than needed was sampled so that a process referred to as "geocoding" could be used to eliminate addresses from the list that were outside the study boundaries. Geocoding is a computerized process in which addresses are compared to electronically mapped boundaries and coded as inside or outside desired boundaries. All addresses determined to be outside the study boundaries were eliminated from the sample. A random selection was made of the remaining addresses to create a final list of 3,500 addresses, each identified as being within one of the seven County Commissioner Districts.

Attached household units were over-sampled because residents of this type of housing typically respond at lower rates to surveys than do those in detached housing units.

An individual within each household was randomly selected to complete the survey using the birthday method. The birthday method selects a person (age 18 or older) within the household by asking the "person whose birthday has most recently passed" to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys. This instruction was contained in the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire.

Survey Administration and Response

Each selected household was contacted three times. First, a prenotification announcement, informing the household members that they had been selected to participate in the Dakota County survey, was sent. Approximately one week after mailing the prenotification, each household was mailed a survey and a cover letter signed by the Chair of the County Board of Commissioners enlisting participation. The packet also contained a postage-paid return envelope in which the survey recipients could return the completed questionnaire to NRC. A reminder letter and survey, scheduled to arrive one week after the first survey, was the final contact. The second cover letter asked those who had not completed the survey to do so and those who had already done so to refrain from turning in another survey. Both cover letters contained a web link to the survey so respondents could opt to take the survey online (new in 2016).

The mailings were sent in February 2016 and completed surveys were collected over the following six weeks. About 3% of the 3,500 surveys mailed were returned because the housing unit was vacant or the postal service was unable

to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the remaining 3,384 households, 987 completed the survey (70 of which were web responses), providing a response rate of 29%; average response rates for a mailed resident survey range from 25% to 40%. Additionally, responses were tracked by County Commissioner District. The following table shows the response rate for each district.

Table 1: Survey Response Rates by District 2016

Commissioner District	Number mailed	Undeliverable postcards	Delivered surveys	Returned surveys	Response rate
District 1	500	16	484	139	29%
District 2	500	16	484	122	25%
District 3	500	12	488	137	28%
District 4	500	16	484	176	36%
District 5	500	26	474	128	27%
District 6	500	18	482	144	30%
District 7	500	12	488	141	29%
Overall	3,500	116	3,384	987	29%

95% Confidence Intervals

The 95% confidence interval (or "margin of error") quantifies the "sampling error" or precision of the estimates made from the survey results. A 95% confidence interval can be calculated for any sample size, and indicates that in 95 of 100 surveys conducted like this one, for a particular item, a result would be found that is within plus or minus three percentage points of the result that would be found if everyone in the population of interest was surveyed. The practical difficulties of conducting any resident survey may introduce other sources of error in addition to sampling error. Despite best efforts to boost participation and ensure potential inclusion of all households, some selected households will decline participation in the survey (potentially introducing non-response error) and some eligible households may be unintentionally excluded from the listed sources for the sample (referred to as coverage error).

While the 95% confidence interval for the survey is generally no greater than plus or minus three percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample and plus or minus two points on the 100-point scale, results for subgroups will have wider confidence intervals. Where estimates are given for subgroups, they are less precise. For each subgroup from the survey, the margin of error rises to as much as plus or minus 10% or six points (on the 100-point scale) for a sample size of 100 to plus or minus 5% or three points (on the 100-point scale) for 400 completed surveys.

Survey Processing (Data Entry)

Mailed surveys were submitted via postage-paid business reply envelopes. Once received, staff assigned a unique identification number to each questionnaire. Additionally, each survey was reviewed and "cleaned" as necessary. For example, a question may have asked a respondent to pick two items out of a list of five, but the respondent checked three; staff would choose randomly two of the three selected items to be coded in the survey responses dataset.

Once all surveys have been assigned a unique identification number, they are entered into an electronic dataset. This dataset was subject to a data entry protocol of "key and verify," in which survey data were entered twice into an electronic dataset and then compared. Discrepancies were evaluated against the original survey form and corrected. Range checks as well as other forms of quality control were also performed.

Weighting the Data

The primary objective of weighting survey data is to make the survey sample reflective of the larger population of the County. This is done by: 1) reviewing the sample demographics and comparing them to the population norms from the most recent Census or other sources and 2) comparing the responses to different questions for demographic subgroups. The demographic characteristics that are least similar to the Census and yield the most different results are the best candidates for data weighting. Several different weighting "schemes" are tested to ensure the best fit for the data. The data were weighted by housing tenure (rent or own), housing unit type (attached or detached), race, ethnicity, age, gender, and County Commissioner district. The results of the weighting scheme are presented in the table on the following page.

Table 2: Dakota County Weighting Table 2016

Characteristic	Population Norm[1]	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
Housing			
Rent home	24%	17%	23%
Own home	76%	83%	77%
Detached unit[2]	62%	64%	62%
Attached unit[2]	38%	36%	38%
Race and Ethnicity			
Hispanic	5%	2%	3%
Not Hispanic	95%	98%	97%
White	88%	91%	88%
Non-white	12%	9%	12%
White alone, not Hispanic	86%	90%	86%
Hispanic and/or other race	14%	10%	14%
Sex and Age			
18-34 years of age	29%	9%	26%
35-54 years of age	42%	30%	40%
55+ years of age	29%	61%	34%
Female	52%	56%	52%
Male	48%	44%	48%
Females 18-34	15%	6%	14%
Females 35-54	21%	16%	20%
Females 55+	16%	35%	19%
Males 18-34	14%	3%	13%
Males 35-54	21%	14%	20%
Males 55+	13%	26%	14%
District			
District 1	14%	14%	15%
District 2	14%	12%	14%
District 3	16%	14%	15%
District 4	14%	18%	14%
District 5	16%	13%	16%
District 6	12%	15%	13%
District 7	13%	14%	13%

[1] Source: 2010 Census
[2] Source: American Community Survey, 2011 5-year estimates

Data Analysis

The surveys were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Frequency distributions and averages are presented in the body of the report. Chi-square or ANOVA tests of significance were applied to breakdowns of selected survey questions by County. A "p-value" of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% probability that differences observed between groups are due to chance; or in other words, a greater than 95% probability that the differences observed in the selected categories of our sample represent "real" differences among those populations. Where differences between subgroups are statistically significant, they are marked with grey shading in the appendices.

Comparing to Previous Survey Results

Dakota County survey data were collected by telephone in 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2008. In 2011, the County switched data collection from telephone to mail and continued with mail in 2013 and 2016. Switching data collection from telephone to mail was done to save costs, allow for more precise geographic sampling, cost-efficiently include cell phone-only households, gather more candid feedback and avoid interrupting residents with unwanted telephone calls. The growing rate of county households with only a cell phone challenged the County to ensure their inclusion, which is easier, less expensive and more accurate by mail than telephone.

Research is clear that a change in the method of survey data collection, by itself, will result in a change in results if the shift is from telephone administration to self-administration or vice versa. The change occurs even without change in resident perspectives and is attributed to the different environment that a survey respondent confronts when providing answers to a person on the telephone compared to offering anonymous opinions in private. Questions by telephone elicit more positive, optimistic, socially-desirable responses than do the same questions asked on a written self-administered questionnaire. The self-administered questionnaire brings out more candid responses.

As a consequence of the switch in methodology, a decline from 2008 to 2011 in virtually all ratings was both expected and observed. In the previous survey administration by telephone in 2008, a small sample of residents was surveyed by mail in order to explore the magnitude of the differences between telephone and mail survey responses in Dakota County. Using 2008 survey research conducted by NRC in Dakota County that compared mail and telephone responses, as well as NRC's analysis of national trends comparing telephone and mail responses, NRC adjusted the findings from 2001 to 2008 in order to allow comparability of results over time. This way the reported trendline data are not influenced by the decline that is attributable to the change in data collection mode from telephone to mail.

When results are reported as an average on the 100-point scale for a question that was asked similarly in previous years, a slight adjustment was made to permit direct comparison between telephone and mail results. (Results that are reported as percentages and compared over time were not adjusted.) While the adjusted findings for data prior to 2011 reasonably control for the expected change from telephone to mail data collection, the comparability of data over time does have some limitations. Not only is there sampling error in each survey administration, but also, the change in survey methods occurred after a three-year gap in survey administrations and some question wording was inconsistent among survey years. Important historic differences are noted in the appropriate tables and figures. (NRC also was able to introduce statistical adjustments for the data prior to 2011 to account for any question and scale differences when possible. These adjustments are based on NRC's analysis of resident surveys from across the nation.)

Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions

Following are verbatim responses to the open-ended questions on the survey. When applicable, responses have been grouped by the theme to which they were coded. The verbatim responses were not edited for grammar or punctuation.

Q2. What one thing do you like most about living in Dakota County?

Other (please specify)

- All.
- Bad road's.
- But like many things.
- CDA 55 & apartments.
- Convenience to shopping.
- Dog parks.
- Gasoline prices low.
- Gotta live somewhere.
- Great police.
- I wish I lived in S.D.
- Library.
- My home born/raised.
- None.
- Quite space w/land & all (most) necessities within 5 minutes.
- Safety (near police and fire department).
- Space/parking.
- Sr living.
- Safety

Q5. What do you feel is the most serious issue facing Dakota County at this time?

Crime and safety issues

- (Hampton) drugs & theft & section 8 housing of criminals. Also dumping of sewage.
- Breakin's cars, homes, etc in good neighborhoods.
- Countless people running red lights- dangerous.
- Crime & housing for 60-80 not subsidized.
- Crime & poverty.
- Crime & poverty.
- Crime at Antlers Park, Lakeville taxes, not enough lanes from Apple Valley to Eagon, and on 35w, traffic on City rd 42.
- Crime creeping in.
- Crime from people coming out of the cities (drugs, murder, theft, rape etc).
- Crime moving in-drugs.
- Crime moving south from St Paul.
- Crime, water in Hastings.
- Crime.
- Crime.
- Crime.
- Crime.
- Crime.
- Crime.
- Crime.
- Crime/drugs.
- Crime/Drugs.
- Crimes related to poverty-domestics-drugs & mental illness.-
- Crime - however that is being a bigger issue everywhere
- Criminal / terroristic activity
- Drug activity.
- Drug problems in town.
- Drug related crime.
- Drugs & gangs.
- Drugs & speeding cars.
- Drugs & theft.
- Drugs and sales of drugs!
- Drugs- heroin, meth.
- Drugs.
- Drugs.
- Drugs.
- Drugs.
- Guns.
- I see people running on the streets & not using the sidewalks provided for that purpose!!

- I think drug use & gang activity.
- Increasing crime.
- Influence of crime from other cities making its way into Eagan (Dakota City).
- Increasing crime rate
- Keeping crime in check.
- Larger and larger number issues requiring police intervention.
- Meth.
- Minor crimes.
- Multi-unit, low -income housing & resulting crime.-
- Night time car thieves!
- Our safety-due to ISIS & unfriendly Muslims & Somalians.
- Police forces do not have trained teams to deal with mental health calls.
- Population growth= crime increase.
- Probably crime, but crime in Dakota is less than most counties.
- Racial division, crime, drugs, illegal immigrants.
- Random home breaking/drugs.
- Roads safety for pedestrians.
- Safety near transit station.
- The police that patrol the streets.
- The production of drugs like heroin & meth.
- To much crime.
- Traffic rules not being followed- i.e red light.
- Urban crime encroaching.

Affordable housing

- Accessible apartments.
- Accommodations for seniors & poor.
- Adding senior developments.
- Affordable housing & employment opportunities.
- Affordable housing but keeping crime out with that.
- Affordable housing for families & retirees.
- Affordable housing for middle to lower income levels.
- Affordable housing- influx of under employed & single moms on assistance.
- Affordable housing taxes.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable housing.
- affordable housing
- Affordable housing for single parents/young families that are not in poverty.
- Affordable rental apartments.
- Availability of affordable housing.
- Cost of housing.
- cost of housing for low income families
- Housing & expensive electricity.
- Housing affordability.
- Housing costs-out of hand-too high!
- Housing prices.
- Housing.
- I think maybe affordable housing.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Low income housing.
- Low income housing.
- Mid level housing prices.
- Need for "affordable", low-middle income housing.
- Need more affordable housing.
- Need more affordable housing.
- Nice, affordable housing for retired & first-time buyers.
- No low income housing.
- Not enough affordable rentals for families.
- Quality and Affordable housing for elderly and young families.
- Reduction of affordable housing due to development.
- Senior housing.
- Senior housing/low income housing/use of tax quotes.
- Senior living quality accommodations/community environment.

Taxes

- Allocation of taxes, high tax.
- Elderly paying property taxes-give a declining scale by income over 60 & yrs of ownership of home.
- Escalation taxes.
- High property tax.
- High tax.
- High taxes and not enough roads for the many housing projects going up.
- High taxes!!
- High taxes.
- High taxes.
- High taxes.
- High taxes.
- High taxes.
- High taxes.
- Higher taxes compared to other nearby counties.
- Keeping property taxes low!
- Keeping taxes at a moderate level.
- Keeping taxes low.
- Keeping taxes low.
- Lack of tax base in southern cities.
- Lower TX tax.
- Paying high taxes for services I don't use. Bus transit entitlement programs that only benefit urban areas.
- Property taxes to high.
- Property taxes too high.
- Property taxes.
- Property taxes.
- Property taxes
- Property taxes going to school district
- Real estate tax.
- Real estate taxes too high.
- Right taxes and government excess.
- Senior citizens selling their homes as taxes keep increasing. Pensions & 55 don't.
- State taxes too high, government intrusion.
- Tax.
- tax
- Taxes
- Taxes
- Taxes are high.
- Taxes are to high.
- Taxes are too high for retirees.
- Taxes are too high.
- Taxes for elderly.
- Taxes getting higher.
- Taxes it's expensive to live here.
- Taxes on homes and small commercial buildings.
- Taxes- would like to see more "industry" come in to relieve the taxes on home owners.
- Taxes!!! (Too high!!!)
- Taxes, crime.
- Taxes, force placed rapid transit, met council.
- Taxes, roads.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes.
- Taxes
- Taxes/democrat run/wasteful spending.
- Taxes/fiscal health.
- Taxes/spending.
- The challenge of keeping taxes at a reasonable level.
- Too high of taxes!!!!

Growth/development

- city planning for population growth.
- Expansion.
- Growth- are we prepared?
- Growth- open spaces are being built on.
- Growth over the next 10-20 years.
- Growth, traffic congestion, speeding, unsafe drivers.
- Growth.
- Growth.
- Growth.
- Growth.
- Growth-congestion.
- How many more business can grow in Dakota County and not lose the small town feel of the communities
- Increased growth & ability to keep up with jobs, crime & transportation.
- Increasing population density. Apartments/condos are changing entire environment.
- Keeping up with the growth.
- Keeping its uniqueness with open spaces/parks/recreation while more and more housing is being developed.
- Losing too much countryside, too fast.
- Manage growth.
- Managing growth & services needed.
- Managing growth, diversity, opportunity.
- Managing the growth & infrastructure maintenance.
- Over building- town homes, cheap looking commercial areas.
- Over development and over saturation of every expensive housing.
- Over development.
- Over development.
- Over population.
- Overcrowding with many new multi-unit homes.
- Population growth (roads etc) and adjusting to demographic changes.
- Population growth.
- Rapid expansion and possible lack of local business to support if (grocery, gas, etc).
- Rapid growth
- Running out of locations for new housing.
- Sprawl- destruction of rural property and native habitats; pesticides & pollution (water & land).
- Staying a "small town" while going forward.
- The growth of all the different cities facilities infrastructure as they grow.
- The raising population.
- To many town house's!!!
- To much new construction.
- Too many buildings going up.
- Too many houses.
- Too much growth.
- Too much growth.
- Too much high density construction.
- Too much home building.
- Too much new housing developments. Losing open spaces.
- Too much open space taken up with homes.
- Urban sprawl, loss of outdoors and farms.
- Urban sprawl.
- Urban Sprawl.
- Urban sprawl/airport noise.

Sense of community, diversity, etc.

- (1)Cultural change that are changing the safety, economics, education system of the previous stable community.
- Acceptance of people with diverse background.
- All inclusive sense of community- no matters color, ability, income- you all welcome here.
- Assimilation of other cultures to adhere to our norm.
- Changing demographics.
- Discrimination
- Diversity
- Diversity, greater acceptance.
- Diversity.
- I live in Inver Grove Heights & feel one sense of community is lacking.
- Immigrants are taking over. Most good communities are turning into slums.
- Immigrants.
- Increasing diversity and need for services and lack of basic outreach to people who need it
- Influx of uneducated immigrants who don't want to assimilate.

- Lack of diversity.
- Lack of diversity
- Language difference difficulties to understand.
- Major class & cultural disparities & mild sense of community to unit.
- Not much feeling of community outside schools.
- Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds.
- Overrun by diverse background people.
- To many diverse background here -get rid of the angry Islamists.
- Too many immigrants/not working/ housing "free" food for them! Ridiculous.
- Too many refugee's leading to terroristic recruiting.
- Way to many angry Muslims live here-to much housing given to them!!!
- We cannot afford influx of people who don't work and have no training.

Condition of roads

- An overall lack of street lights!
- Completion of Robert Street.
- Condition of main roadways.
- Crossing Highway 3 and County Rd 42 (by the train tracks) safely.
- Don't plow the small roads that go to houses.
- Green arrow on stop lights don't last long enough or you have to wait along time for change.
- Maintaining roads, bridges, affordable housing.
- New roadway designs to make commuting easier.
- Poor roads. Especially 170th West of Co Rd 3 at RR Tracks.
- Road & bridge maintenance.
- Road conditions.
- Road conditions.
- Road construction (Robert Street).
- Road construction but needed.
- Road expansion w/o looking at all options.
- Road maintenance.
- Road repair.
- Road repairs, crime.
- Roads need repair, income inequality!!
- Roads.
- Roads.
- Roads.
- Robert St. road construction, Oakdale Ave traffic increase.
- Robert St.!!! Right now it is horrible - access to making left turns rotten!
- Roundabouts.
- Roundabouts-expensive, too many, not used well.
- Snow on sidewalks not plowed & people on cellphone drivings.
- Street repair.
- The damn stop lights take forever. More sensor less timers.
- Roads are in desperate need of repair.

Traffic congestion

- 35W Rush Hour.
- Auto traffic on 42 & drug traffic.
- Growing traffic issues, roads, crime, drugs.
- Increased road traffic since the country's cities are maturing.
- Increasing congestion- traffic.
- Too much traffic w/malls.
- Traffic & poverty.
- Traffic and small town feel!!
- Traffic congestion on Hwy-3 & 42.
- Traffic congestion to the most serious issue.
- Traffic congestion.
- Traffic congestion.
- Traffic flow.
- Traffic Hwy 55 Hastings- Pine Bend.
- Traffic on #5.
- Traffic!
- Traffic, drugs.
- Traffic.
- Traffic.
- Traffic.
- Traffic.
- Traffic.
- Traffic.
- Traffic.
- Traffic.

- Traffic.
- Traffic/transportation.
- Transportation alot of traffic.
- traffic
- traffic growth
- Traffic. People run stop signs & lights - even when there is no snow.

Schools

- (1)Public education- Quality & achievement gap and upper income families use public schools for K-8 then transfer to private. (2)Big disparity of income in various cities in Dakota County.
- Better schools.
- Budget cuts for schools.
- Cuts to schools/education & drugs among school kids.
- Educating our youth to be healthy physically & mentally citizens, with good values.
- Education. Too much money spent on education gap!
- Expense of sports at school.
- High school.
- Integrating minorities into education/school systems.
- Maintaining adequate school funding.
- More jobs training program with not High school diploma pay increase.
- Overpopulated schools- teacher/student ratio.
- Quality of schools.
- Rising school costs.
- School dist. mismanaging their money.
- School funding & safety.
- School population at high school-dropping arts.
- School system changes in Lakeville.
- Schools (enough capacity), high taxes, youth activity space.
- Schools need more funding for kids w/IEP's.
- Schools.
- Schools.
- Schools
- Schools-crowding.
- The schools.

Homelessness and poverty

- Am severely concerned w/homeless youth.
- Any homeless people!!
- Don't know about County- I only know about my city- poverty.
- Growing number of poor.
- Homelessness or need for bus service.
- Homelessness.
- Homelessness.
- I think poverty is the main issue for all of Minnesota & US.
- Increase in homelessness- The link & the core are addressing it.
- Increased low income families.
- Little kids going hungry to bed.
- Low income families moving in.
- Poverty & homelessness.
- Poverty and homelessness to any degree.
- Poverty of people moving to Dakota County.
- Poverty, more racially diverse community with more needs.
- Poverty.
- Poverty.
- Poverty/crime rate.
- Poverty/homelessness.
- People who are in need - as in most areas of the country.
- Providing for Children in need (of food, shelter, medical services)
- Problems that arise from income disparity- homelessness, crime, poverty.
- That 50% of the children in the public schools are on free/reduced lunches/half the families can't afford to fear the families they choose to have?
- The influx of families that are on gov't assistance.
- Too much welfare/low income.

Economic development

- Attracting business to lower property taxes.
- Attracting new business!
- Attracting upscale retail.
- Balance- Rural/economic/housing.
- Bringing/keeping business here.
- Business growth.
- Continued economic development.
- Economic development.
- Economic growth, jobs, diversity in employment.
- economic development
- economic future
- Getting good retail clothing stores.
- Growth with small business.
- Lack of business development in Lakeville.
- lack of good restaurant, bars, needs an entertainment district with housing.
- Lack of industry- taxes too high.
- Lack of places to shop & eat. Having more public things available.
- Lack of restaurants & entertainment.
- Loss of major employers -Lockheed Northwest/Delta headquarters location change.
- Need major shopping center.
- Night life, theaters- lack of.
- No stores, empty centers, rainbow left vacant, big joke!
- Overall economy.
- Places to shop in Northern Dakota County.
- Reasonable growth, influx of immigrants on welfare.

Public transportation

- As senior's get older - transportation in neighborhoods.
- Darts transport… cutbacks due to metro-affordable housing.
- Dependence on cars.
- Door to door transport for disabled!! Economic health.
- For me- transportation assist & housing affordable & care assist.
- Lack of public transportation in Hastings.
- Lack of public transportation.
- Lack of sidewalks & bike lanes, limited hours mass transit.
- Mass transit.
- Poor transportation out for people that don't drive.
- Public transportation for aging population.
- Public transportation into the twin cities.
- Public transportation through the cities 494 East to West Xpress Line.
- Public transportation to Mpls & St Paul - Local pub trans poverty toxic waste & pollution in Rosemount - u-more & Pine Bend refinery, mines.
- Public transportation.
- Public transportation/drugs.
- Rail transportation.
- Transportation between here and the twin cities.
- Transportation- city buses.
- transportation for elderly & volunteer drivers for disabled.
- Transportation issues.
- Transportation- mass transit.
- Transportation- public.
- Transportation.
- Transportation.
- Transportation
- Transportation (East West corridors) and Redevelopment in Inver Grove Heights/SSP/WSP areas

Updating infrastructure

- An aging infrastructure & many aging homes!
- As another "suburb", it's important to maintain it properly.
- Cost of repairing infrastructure.
- Infrastructure- a lot of older homes & pipe, electric (maintenance needed).
- Infrastructure keeping up with growing population.
- Infrastructure O & M.

- Infrastructure repair/replacement.
- Infrastructure.
- Infrastructure.
- It's old.
- Keeping up with road, school, and violations.
- Park renovation/maintenance.
- Roadway Infrastructure
- There's a need for a large convention center, veteran clubs, building funds.
- Upgrades & Maintenance
- Updating area.

Jobs

- Cost of living goes up, wages don't.
- Employment opportunities.
- Employment.
- Good paying jobs.
- Job availability.
- Jobs & affordable housing.
- Jobs.
- Jobs.
- Keeping employment a viable option.
- Keeping good middle class jobs.
- Wages for the middle class.

Government spending

- Balancing economic/budget with citizen needs.
- Control of county and schools budget growth.
- Entitlement burden
- Government overspending & growth of government control.
- Money being spent on things that don't need to be done.
- Money-losing programs/projects.
- Over spending on unnecessary things.
- Regional regulations, mandates, & spending via Met Counsel etc.
- The cost of government assistance programs.

Preserving natural areas/protecting natural resources

- Losing green space. Too fast population/development growth without infrastructure support.
- Loss nature, too many paved roads and bike ways.
- Over-developing county parks.
- Paving trails at Lebanon Hills -against.
- The possible loss of some green spaces.
- Wildlife conservation.
- Upcoming loss of perfect green space in Lebanon Hills. It's wrong to pave the park. The county is turning its back on what the residents want. The question is will that continue?

Teen drug/alcohol use

- Drug use among teens or human trafficking.
- Drugs in the schools
- Helping youth & young adults with drug problems.
- Keeping our children free from drugs & alcohol.
- Teen drug use.

Pollution/environmental concerns

- Environment -I'd like to see more focus on green technology, recycling and composting.
- Environmental concerns, pollution.
- Environmental health & education.
- Ground water pollution.
- Pollution from Gopher resource or whatever biz that is at Hwy 149 & Yankee Doodle. Everything around that place has a colored film on it & often times dark colored pollution is coming out of their stacks.
- poor air quality from gravel pit particulates and outdoor firepits
- Quality of drinking water. Secondary well has better water.
- Same as the earth- Impact of global warming.
- Water quality of streams & lakes.
- Water quality.
- Water quality.
- Water.

Quality of County services

- Accessibility for low income families/individual.
- Disability services.
- Lack of options for young (youth) people to do things.
- Lack of recreational activities.
- Mental health resources.
- Services for aging population.
- Social services for chronically unemployed & poor.
- Supervised non school youth outdoor activities, need more police, road maintenance.

Noise pollution

- Air plane noise.
- Airplane interference w/ TV.
- Airplane noise.
- Airport noise.
- Airport noise.
- Airport noise. Green space reduction (2-3 golf courses, riding ranch).
- Noise pollution.

No issue

- Can't think of anything bad- yeah- the climate, I like sunny & 85 degrees.
- Everything is good usually.
- Have no issues.
- No serious problems.
- None
- None.
- None.
- None.
- None.
- None.
- None.
- Nothing.
- When I think about it, I don't find any

Other

- 2016 Legislative Session - Are elected officials are not doing the job we elected them to do
- A place to retire- there is no real main duty meeting area.
- A very large areas with different issues.
- Adapting to living in a CDA, independent senior complex.
- Aging of baby boomers.
- Antiquated beliefs preventing progress.
- Can't handle any more Section 8.
- City council & Mayor!!!
- Cold weather (I hate it) & snow.
- Cost of living keeps going up yet some may struggle.
- Cost of living.
- Cost of living.
- Courts let the crooks go.
- Dakota county commissioners do not listen to residents.
- Dishonest County info. you hold the legacy & raise or implement a fee.
- Dissolution of the core family and impact on neighborhoods & communities.
- Don't know if I could name a serious issue particular to Dakota Co., if in general; disperity between urban and subburban settings
- Fiber broadband internet access
- Filling out surveys.
- For closure & association high fees.
- I am afraid I will be stuck in system it started when I moved back here wsp.
- Keeping the value of its homes up.
- Lack of broadband, internet to rural communities.
- Lack to help a facilities for seniors, like warm water pool.
- Late night- people hanging around.
- Liberalism.
- Mandatory every household recycle.
- Mayor in office too long.
- Mayor of Burnsville.
- Mix of rural US city issue.
- Multiple.
- Need more one level town homes -not senior citizen apartment dwellings.
- No more low income housing.
- Overnight parking policy.
- Phone wait time for MA- 30 mins.Foreign investors acquiring real estate.
- Planning for future.
- Political corrections.
- Political correctness BS.
- Politicians not listening to the people.
- Poor curb appeal. Don't follow through junk yards. Items stored woods-grass areas on curb side. Boat front of house. Trash bins left front garage store inside- garages full of junk so can't use for cars at business use.
- Racial.
- Railroad stopping with explosive material aboard.
- Retire James Backstrom as Dakota Cty D.A. (Backstrom is an embarrassment to Dakota Cty). He is guilty of witness tampering in 2 murder cases. Backstrom thinks he is above the law.
- Retirement friendly community needs as population ages.
- Slumlords, and dump to be filled in.
- The ability of the met council to push low income housing on the county.
- The direction of the state overall.
- The met council is a serious problem-no surrounding.
- The residents knowing Dakota Co. leaders & programs.
- The trail storage in neighborhoods!

- Too much involvement from the Metropolitan Council.
- Too powerful unelected Met Council
- Uninvolved disinterested residents.

Q7. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in Dakota County.

Other (please specify)

- ?..in a home.
- Areas around muslims bad.
- At work.
- Bike riding city.
- Crime based on race of religion.
- Cross walks for pedestrians.
- I feel safe, but know not all parts of county are safe.
- I feel that the apt. I rent is so disgusting. I have had so many health issues since moving here.
- Inver Grove Hts has problems taking care of troubled homes, boats & junk stored on premises.
- Judgement/prejudice.
- N/A.
- No gangs.
- None.
- Not enough police presence.
- Repeat offenders- those with pages of crime keep getting small or no punishment to go out and repeat they next week?
- Section 8 housing in Hampton.
- South side of Robert St.
- To many religions with violent intentions.

Q20. Please indicate which of the following methods, if any, you prefer as a way to receive information about Dakota County.

Other (please specify)

- All.
- Can't afford a computer.
- Depends on what the information is. Emergency cell phone alert.
- I wrote a detailed letter to County Board about Lebanon Hills Park. My letter received no response. The commissioners ignored the input of many citizens who had & expressed similar concerns. This was unacceptable, in my view.
- Mail.
- Mailed brochures are a waste of money citizens can access info online.
- No social media.
- Oppose development of Akron-benefits only developers of other cities.
- Texting.
- Up-to date resource guides(well organized).

Q22. What information on Dakota County's website is most valuable to you?

Other (please specify)

- All.
- All the above.
- Don't understand English.
- Barber for N-W 494 & 55.
- [?].
- Board mtg minutes.
- New building projects.
- Job openings
- Resource guides.

Q23. What else would be useful for you to do on Dakota County's Web site?

Other (please specify)

- Job announcements.
- All.
- Ditto.
- Search for veteran's services.
- Info about all services should be avail online.
- Public transportation info.
- Veterans services.
- Retired age 84.
- More help for the disabled.

Q24. How important, if at all, is it to provide the following library programs and services?

Other (please specify)

- Don't use.
- Drivers in- Testing facilities open on Saturdays.
- Classic titles/reference.
- Make Dakota Co. English only.
- Longer summer hours.
- More large print books.
- Historical.
- E-books.
- Tax info.
- Not a library user.
- Classes/programs on how to effectively use library resources.
- N/A.
- Tutor help.
- None.
- Audio books.
- Don't go to library.
- Just books.
- Adapt to mobile devices.
- The library is important in the community.
- No children & don't use.
- Community meeting place.
- Story tapes for hearing.
- Don't use town library.
- Library and music most keep.
- Does not apply.
- Online access via library card for epub or kindle type devices.
- Longer hours.
- Normal library service.
- Coffee.
- Audio book.
- I love the silver tea series.
- Home criminal programs.
- In-person reference services.
- Wider selection of Digital and Audio Books
- We love the library

Q26. If you chose to move from your current home, please indicate how acceptable, if at all, each of the following housing options would be to you:

Other (please specify)

- Rent house.
- Mobile home rent/own.
- Not moving.
- More housing for low income.
- Affordable.
- A place with fewer taxes.
- N/A.
- Rental house.
- None.
- Not moving ever.
- Move South.
- Back to Mpls.
- Get the muslims out.
- Move to Florida.
- Move to lower real estate tax location.
- Go of living.
- Rambler.
- Meyers.
- Move to area away from community which is less "car-dependent".
- Condo in Bloomington Edina. I want to be closer to the cities.

D8. Which gender do you identify with most closely?

Something else

- Really
- Dumb!
- Seriously??
- Married
- What? Pc bs!
- Really?
- Really? What a silly question
- ?

APPENDIX C: COMPLETE SET OF FREQUENCIES

The following pages contain two sets of responses to each question on Dakota County's survey. The first set excludes "don't know" responses and the second includes them.

Frequencies Excluding "Don't Know" Responses

Table 3: Question 1

How would you rate your overall quality of life in Dakota County?	Percent	Number
Excellent	43%	411
Good	52%	496
Fair	4%	40
Poor	1%	6
Total	100%	953

Table 4: Question 2

What one thing do you like most about living in Dakota County?	Percent	Number
Location	36%	346
Open space	4%	43
Parks/lakes	10%	98
Rural character	3%	27
Quality of life in general	21%	205
My neighborhood	9%	91
Schools	4%	37
Small town feel	6%	62
Low taxes	2%	23
People	2%	18
Other	2%	17
Total	100%	966

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 5: Question 3

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a problem in Dakota County.	Not a problem		Minor problem		Moderate problem		Major problem		Total	
Crime	19%	N=172	50%	N=448	28%	N=248	3%	N=31	100%	N=899
Taxes	21%	N=179	31%	N=272	34%	N=295	14%	N=120	100%	N=866
Traffic safety	27%	N=250	43%	N=398	24%	N=227	6%	N=54	100%	N=930
Traffic congestion	24%	N=224	39%	N=364	28%	N=259	9%	N=83	100%	N=931
Poverty	22%	N=173	45%	N=351	25%	N=198	8%	N=64	100%	N=786
Homelessness	40%	N=298	43%	N=326	13%	N=96	4%	N=32	100%	N=752

Table 6: Question 4

Please rate each of the following characteristics of Dakota County.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total

Please rate each of the following characteristics of Dakota County.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Dakota County as a place to live	41%	N=399	52%	N=511	6%	N=57	1%	N=7	100%	N=975
Dakota County as a place to work	24%	N=170	56%	N=399	16%	N=118	4%	N=27	100%	N=714
Dakota County as a place to retire	21%	N=160	41%	N=315	29%	N=219	9%	N=69	100%	N=764
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	41%	N=364	49%	N=435	9%	N=79	1%	N=13	100%	N=891
Sense of community	19%	N=177	50%	N=472	27%	N=256	4%	N=41	100%	N=946
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	14%	N=118	51%	N=444	29%	N=253	7%	N=60	100%	N=874
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	40%	N=370	48%	N=449	10%	N=96	2%	N=16	100%	N=931
Availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options	25%	N=228	47%	N=422	21%	N=184	7%	N=62	100%	N=896
Economic health of Dakota County	17%	N=142	62%	N=506	19%	N=151	2%	N=17	100%	N=815
Availability of affordable housing	8%	N=64	43%	N=332	37%	N=288	12%	N=93	100%	N=778
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	20%	N=194	65%	N=618	13%	N=121	2%	N=18	100%	N=951

Table 7: Question 5

What do you feel is the most serious issue facing Dakota County at this time?	Percent	Number
Affordable housing	11%	59
Condition of roads	6%	35
Crime and safety issues	12%	65
Economic development	4%	22
Growth/development	8%	44
Jobs	2%	11
Pollution/environmental concerns	1%	8
Preserving natural areas/protecting natural resources	1%	6
Quality of county services	1%	6
Schools	5%	27
Taxes	10%	58
Teen drug/alcohol use	1%	6
Traffic congestion	5%	30
No issue	2%	11
Sense of community, diversity, etc.	6%	36
Government spending	2%	9
Homelessness and poverty	5%	26
Public Transportation	4%	22
Noise pollution	1%	5
Updating infrastructure	3%	18
Other	10%	57
Total	100%	559

Table 8: Question 6

In the past year, have you volunteered in any community organization like a faith community, neighborhood group, non-profit service organization, local government, or school association?	Percent	Number
Yes, once or twice in the year	18%	175
Yes, once every other month	7%	69
Yes, about once a month	10%	92
Yes, more than once a month	19%	182
No, I haven't volunteered	46%	441
Total	100%	959

Table 9: Question 7

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in Dakota County.	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Total	
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	30%	N=283	57%	N=543	12%	N=118	1%	N=10	100%	N=955
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	50%	N=471	43%	N=408	5%	N=49	1%	N=11	100%	N=939
From illegal drug activity (e.g., manufacturing or selling drugs)	30%	N=273	49%	N=439	16%	N=143	5%	N=46	100%	N=900
From identity theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft)	20%	N=183	47%	N=417	27%	N=246	6%	N=50	100%	N=896
From domestic violence	60%	N=533	33%	N=295	5%	N=43	2%	N=14	100%	N=885
While driving on roads within Dakota County	31%	N=303	53%	N=512	14%	N=136	1%	N=11	100%	N=962
While in your neighborhood	56%	N=538	39%	N=378	4%	N=43	1%	N=9	100%	N=967
While using Dakota County parks and trails	42%	N=380	51%	N=461	6%	N=57	0%	N=2	100%	N=901
Other	47%	N=30	36%	N=23	8%	N=5	9%	N=6	100%	N=64

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 10: Question 8

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in Dakota County.	Not at all a concern		Minor concern		Moderate concern		Major concern		Total	
Environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste)	30%	N=256	42%	N=357	17%	N=146	10%	N=87	100%	N=846
Tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco)	32%	N=270	36%	N=306	23%	N=190	9%	N=76	100%	N=843
Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses	19%	N=149	34%	N=262	35%	N=269	12%	N=95	100%	N=774
Social isolation	32%	N=247	39%	N=301	22%	N=166	7%	N=55	100%	N=768
Underage alcohol use	18%	N=141	36%	N=277	30%	N=233	15%	N=117	100%	N=768
Alcohol abuse among adults	20%	N=157	39%	N=302	30%	N=231	11%	N=83	100%	N=773
Illegal drug use	18%	N=138	35%	N=269	28%	N=218	20%	N=154	100%	N=779
Bullying	18%	N=129	35%	N=251	31%	N=220	16%	N=116	100%	N=716

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in Dakota County.	Not at all a concern		Minor concern		Moderate concern		Major concern		Total	
Illegal use of prescribed medications	23%	N=157	37%	N=257	25%	N=173	14%	N=98	100%	N=685
The health and support of older adults	19%	N=143	37%	N=282	31%	N=237	14%	N=105	100%	N=767
The health and support of persons with disabilities	20%	N=152	37%	N=279	32%	N=239	11%	N=84	100%	N=754
Quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17	17%	N=135	35%	N=269	28%	N=219	20%	N=151	100%	N=774
Overweight adults and children	12%	N=95	30%	N=245	36%	N=288	23%	N=184	100%	N=812
Abuse and neglect of children	18%	N=132	36%	N=264	29%	N=212	17%	N=123	100%	N=732
Abuse and neglect of older adults	19%	N=134	41%	N=292	26%	N=181	14%	N=99	100%	N=705
Spread of infectious diseases	27%	N=196	44%	N=327	19%	N=141	10%	N=74	100%	N=739

Table 11: Question 9

Do you think that a year from now you and your household will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same as now?	Percent	Number
Much better	3%	26
Somewhat better	24%	225
About the same	60%	555
Somewhat worse	10%	93
Much worse	3%	30
Total	100%	929

Table 12: Question 10

Please rate each of the following services provided by Dakota County.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
County libraries	53%	N=460	41%	N=355	5%	N=44	0%	N=3	100%	N=863
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby, or Miesville)	56%	N=485	40%	N=344	4%	N=35	0%	N=2	100%	N=867
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trails	45%	N=322	45%	N=323	9%	N=61	1%	N=5	100%	N=710
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	19%	N=174	50%	N=460	27%	N=246	4%	N=37	100%	N=917
Snow and ice removal on County roads	27%	N=257	52%	N=486	17%	N=159	4%	N=37	100%	N=939
Sheriff deputies patrol services	25%	N=195	58%	N=451	14%	N=108	3%	N=27	100%	N=781
Services at the Recycling Zone	38%	N=279	46%	N=335	13%	N=95	3%	N=21	100%	N=730
Self-service options on the County Web site	24%	N=113	53%	N=252	22%	N=106	2%	N=9	100%	N=480
Assessment process/property tax system	11%	N=80	37%	N=270	41%	N=299	11%	N=79	100%	N=728
Addressing important health issues in communities	13%	N=80	49%	N=297	31%	N=188	6%	N=36	100%	N=601
Prosecuting people accused of crimes	17%	N=101	52%	N=305	24%	N=144	7%	N=40	100%	N=590
Overall quality of services provided by Dakota County	18%	N=163	63%	N=576	19%	N=170	1%	N=8	100%	N=917

Table 13: Question 11

Please rate the following services provided by Dakota County only if you have experienced them within the last two years.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Employment support/Workforce Center services	19%	N=27	48%	N=69	28%	N=40	6%	N=9	100%	N=145
Financial assistance for low-income families	15%	N=18	39%	N=49	25%	N=31	22%	N=27	100%	N=126
Records, vital statistics, licensing, and vehicle registration	25%	N=171	55%	N=382	18%	N=124	3%	N=20	100%	N=697
Services for people with physical disabilities	16%	N=25	47%	N=72	27%	N=41	10%	N=15	100%	N=153
Services for people experiencing mental illness	7%	N=9	34%	N=46	30%	N=40	28%	N=38	100%	N=134
Services provided to veterans	13%	N=20	37%	N=60	33%	N=54	17%	N=28	100%	N=162
Services provided to older adults	9%	N=17	45%	N=87	33%	N=65	13%	N=26	100%	N=195

Table 14: Question 12

To what extent would you support or oppose an increase in your County property tax if it were needed to maintain County services at their current levels?	Percent	Number
Strongly support	6%	53
Somewhat support	40%	340
Somewhat oppose	29%	248
Strongly oppose	26%	220
Total	100%	861

Table 15: Question 13

What are the barriers to you using transit services regularly (e.g., Metro Transit/MVTA buses, Transit Link, the METRO Red Line)?	Percent*	Number*
No service close enough to where I live	24%	224
No service where I want to go	21%	190
Not familiar with the services available	19%	172
Limited hours of operation (need service on weekends, evenings)	13%	120
Existing service isn't frequent enough (i.e. buses don't stop often enough)	8%	72
Poor connections or transfers	9%	85
I need personal, point-to-point service	10%	96
Trip takes too long	19%	175
Fare pricing is unclear	2%	21
I don't know how to ride the bus	6%	55
I don't feel safe on the bus	5%	45
I can't afford it	1%	6
I don't need it	49%	446
Other	5%	46

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response.*

Table 16: Question 14

To what extent do you support or oppose the County investing in projects that make transit easier and more convenient to use?	Percent	Number
Strongly support	29%	256
Somewhat support	48%	423
Somewhat oppose	14%	128
Strongly oppose	9%	80
Total	100%	888

Table 17: Question 15

Have you visited, telephoned, or emailed any Dakota County government office within the last 12 months?	Percent	Number
Yes	34%	322
No	66%	627
Total	100%	948

Table 18: Question 16

What was your impression of the employee(s) of Dakota County in your most recent contact? (Rate each characteristic below.)	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Knowledgeable	45%	N=141	42%	N=130	10%	N=32	3%	N=10	100%	N=312
Responsive	44%	N=141	38%	N=121	11%	N=36	6%	N=20	100%	N=318
Courteous	49%	N=155	34%	N=109	10%	N=32	7%	N=21	100%	N=317
Overall impression	44%	N=137	40%	N=124	10%	N=31	7%	N=21	100%	N=314

This question was only asked of those who reported having contact with a Dakota County government office.

Table 19: Question 17

Please rate these aspects of accessing Dakota County services.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
Convenience of County facilities' locations	30%	N=231	57%	N=448	11%	N=84	2%	N=18	100%	N=781
Online access to County services	24%	N=144	60%	N=353	15%	N=87	1%	N=5	100%	N=589
Ease of paying for County services online	25%	N=104	56%	N=230	16%	N=66	3%	N=12	100%	N=411
Availability of language resources for access to services (e.g., interpreters or multi-language materials or signage)	24%	N=43	55%	N=99	20%	N=37	1%	N=1	100%	N=180

Table 20: Question 18

Please rate the following categories of Dakota County government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Total	
The job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents	17%	N=139	59%	N=482	22%	N=185	2%	N=17	100%	N=823
The job Dakota County government does of listening to residents	11%	N=63	43%	N=241	37%	N=205	9%	N=49	100%	N=558
The value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County	10%	N=78	49%	N=366	34%	N=255	6%	N=46	100%	N=746
The job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars	11%	N=71	49%	N=330	31%	N=212	9%	N=60	100%	N=673
The value of Dakota County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood	14%	N=114	56%	N=445	25%	N=196	4%	N=35	100%	N=791
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	15%	N=116	58%	N=445	21%	N=162	6%	N=44	100%	N=767
Supporting the quality of life in the county	17%	N=130	58%	N=452	23%	N=179	3%	N=23	100%	N=784
Effectively planning for the future of the county	14%	N=99	51%	N=349	28%	N=194	7%	N=47	100%	N=690
Overall confidence in Dakota County government	14%	N=117	55%	N=463	27%	N=224	4%	N=33	100%	N=837

Table 21: Question 19

To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the job the Dakota County Board is doing?	Percent	Number
Strongly support	19%	109
Somewhat support	67%	392
Somewhat oppose	10%	59
Strongly oppose	4%	25
Total	100%	585

Table 22: Question 20

Please indicate which of the following methods, if any, you prefer as a way to receive information about Dakota County.	Percent*	Number*
Publications like mailed brochures	51%	487
The County's mailed newsletter	46%	441
Calling Dakota County	5%	43
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	13%	122
Using my desktop or laptop computer	17%	162

Please indicate which of the following methods, if any, you prefer as a way to receive information about Dakota County.	Percent*	Number*
Television/cable TV	8%	78
Other	6%	58
County website (www.dakotacounty.us)	35%	336
Local or neighborhood newspapers	27%	262
E-mail from Dakota County	19%	186
Online search for information	11%	107
Using my handheld mobile devices (smartphone or tablet)	6%	59
None, I don't want or need any information from Dakota County	4%	37

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select up to three responses. Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Questions to review the verbatim responses.*

Table 23: Question 21

Please indicate what methods you believe Dakota County should use to reach residents and gain their insights and learn about their preferences for County services, activities, projects, decisions and plans.	Percent*	Number*
Public meetings/forums/open houses	65%	603
Advisory panels	23%	216
Social Media	44%	410
Online survey	54%	502

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response.*

Table 24: Question 22

What information on Dakota County's website is most valuable to you?	Percent*	Number*
Volunteer opportunities	20%	174
Recycling information	65%	577
Information about parks	66%	586
Information about County services	48%	430
Property sales/information	32%	284
Road/bridge construction projects	40%	359
Contacting County departments or staff	27%	240
County budget information	13%	118
Information about services for older adults	19%	169
Information about the County Jail or its inmates	9%	83
Information about people charged with a crime	17%	151
Other	2%	19
No access/don't use	5%	42

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response. Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.*

Table 25: Question 23

What else would be useful for you to do on Dakota County's Web site?	Percent*	Number*
Pay fees, fines, or property taxes	52%	423
Reserve park facilities	49%	399
Register for volunteer activities online	32%	257
Online recording of vital records (birth, death, marriage)	27%	222
Renew or apply for a license, permit, or other application	64%	517

What else would be useful for you to do on Dakota County's Web site?	Percent*	Number*
Receive your annual property tax notices by email	28%	226
Live chat support service online for property information	11%	92
Request copies or notarizing: property documents	22%	176
Apply for a library card or use other library resources	43%	347
Apply for public financial assistance	13%	108
Other	1%	9
No access/don't use	4%	35

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response. Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.*

Table 26: Question 24

How important, if at all, is it to provide the following library programs and services?	Essential		Very important		Somewhat important		Not at all important		Total	
Popular titles/current library materials	38%	N=318	39%	N=326	18%	N=148	4%	N=37	100%	N=828
Early literacy/reading skills promotion and resources	40%	N=327	39%	N=316	15%	N=124	6%	N=47	100%	N=814
Information about jobs, skills, literacy, and careers	28%	N=232	41%	N=340	23%	N=187	8%	N=62	100%	N=821
Small business/economic development resources and services	18%	N=142	39%	N=310	34%	N=270	10%	N=76	100%	N=798
Consumer/government information	17%	N=139	38%	N=310	37%	N=300	8%	N=62	100%	N=810
Movies, music and entertainment	13%	N=109	30%	N=250	40%	N=328	16%	N=135	100%	N=822
Streaming movies and music (online)	10%	N=27	21%	N=59	35%	N=100	34%	N=96	100%	N=283
Technology access, computer classes and training	27%	N=228	39%	N=326	26%	N=216	8%	N=63	100%	N=833
Technology to create and edit music and videos	9%	N=68	18%	N=144	38%	N=300	35%	N=277	100%	N=788
Community activities/information	24%	N=200	46%	N=382	26%	N=221	4%	N=36	100%	N=839
Health and wellness programs and resources	23%	N=194	40%	N=340	30%	N=255	6%	N=54	100%	N=842
Author/performance arts programs	13%	N=101	33%	N=265	39%	N=310	16%	N=128	100%	N=805
English as a second language resources and services	25%	N=195	32%	N=253	26%	N=206	17%	N=132	100%	N=786
Library materials in other languages (Spanish, Somali, Russian, others	15%	N=119	26%	N=199	35%	N=273	24%	N=184	100%	N=775
Other	21%	N=22	31%	N=32	25%	N=26	23%	N=24	100%	N=104

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 27: Question 25

Since 2002, Dakota County has emphasized preserving unprotected natural areas and shoreland buffers by dedicating small amounts of County funds in order to receive greater matching funds from non-County sources. How important, if at all, is it to continue investing County funds for these purposes:	Essential		Very important		Somewhat important		Not at all important		Total	
Protect lakes, streams, wetlands from pollution	53%	N=490	35%	N=324	11%	N=101	1%	N=13	100%	N=927
Protect and manage high-quality natural areas (such as forests, prairies, water bodies, etc.)	52%	N=479	34%	N=309	12%	N=109	2%	N=18	100%	N=915

Table 28: Question 26

If you chose to move from your current home, please indicate how acceptable, if at all, each of the following housing options would be to you:	Very acceptable		Somewhat acceptable		Not at all acceptable		Not applicable		Total	
A single-family home that I own in my community	77%	N=663	13%	N=115	3%	N=26	7%	N=58	100%	N=862
A condo or townhouse that I own in my community	44%	N=370	39%	N=328	10%	N=83	8%	N=69	100%	N=850
An apartment that I rent in my community	15%	N=122	33%	N=274	34%	N=279	18%	N=147	100%	N=822
Live with family members away from my current community	6%	N=48	23%	N=181	41%	N=317	30%	N=234	100%	N=780
A rental facility for age 55+ in my community	20%	N=158	27%	N=219	15%	N=121	38%	N=300	100%	N=797
Live in an assisted-living residence in my community	16%	N=123	22%	N=166	17%	N=131	45%	N=348	100%	N=768
Other	19%	N=17	13%	N=11	11%	N=10	56%	N=49	100%	N=87

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 29: Question 27

Please indicate which of the following best describe your use of Dakota County's Recycling Zone facility in the last 12 months?	Percent*	Number*
Unfamiliar with the Recycling Zone	26%	238
Inconvenient days/hours/location	15%	134
Don't know what items can be brought there	14%	123
Do not want to pay fees at the Recycling Zone	24%	222
The Recycling Zone is too far away	10%	94
Do not have anything to drop off	14%	125
Used a different facility	7%	65
Other/none of these	22%	202
I do not use the Recycling Zone facility	18%	162

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select up to three responses.*

Table 30: Question 28

To what extent, if at all, would each of the following make you more likely to recycle more materials?	Much more likely		Somewhat more likely		No more likely		Total	
Having my recyclables picked up weekly	55%	N=450	18%	N=147	27%	N=224	100%	N=821
Having more capacity to recycle with bigger containers	41%	N=313	22%	N=169	38%	N=291	100%	N=773
Displaying a list of recyclable materials on my recycling container	42%	N=331	29%	N=233	29%	N=232	100%	N=795
Being given specific information about what can be recycled	48%	N=383	31%	N=248	22%	N=175	100%	N=806
Saving money with the option of a smaller trash container	36%	N=271	24%	N=179	39%	N=292	100%	N=742

Table 31: Question 29

The State is requiring all counties to find ways to divert food waste from landfills. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following options to meet this requirement:	Strongly support		Somewhat support		Somewhat oppose		Strongly oppose		Total	
Haulers collecting food waste curbside in a separate container for pickup	43%	N=375	33%	N=291	11%	N=95	13%	N=115	100%	N=876
Residents collecting food waste and driving it to a community drop-off site for food waste (similar to yard waste sites)	9%	N=80	23%	N=198	23%	N=195	45%	N=380	100%	N=852

Table 32: Question D1

How long have you lived in Dakota County?	Percent	Number
Less than 2 year	11%	107
2-5 years	12%	111
6-10 years	13%	122
11-15 years	11%	104
16-20 years	10%	95
Over 20 years	44%	428
Total	100%	968

Table 33: Question D2

Which of the following best describes you?	Percent	Number
Employed full-time	65%	626
Employed part-time	8%	73
Unemployed, looking for work	2%	21
Homemaker	5%	43
Retired	20%	188
Student	1%	10
Total	100%	962

Table 34: Question D3

Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent	Number
One family house detached from any other houses	60%	581
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	17%	167
Building with two or more apartments or condos	19%	179
Manufactured or mobile home	2%	20
Other	2%	18
Total	100%	965

Table 35: Question D4

Is this house, apartment, or mobile home...	Percent	Number
Rented	23%	219
Owned (including with an outstanding mortgage)	77%	718
Total	100%	937

Table 36: Question D5

Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent	Number
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	97%	894
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	3%	27
Total	100%	922

Table 37: Question D6

What is your race?	Percent*	Number*
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%	20
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	4%	41
Black or African American	3%	28
White	91%	847
Other	3%	30

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response.*

Table 38: Question D7

Which category contains your age?	Percent	Number
18-24	5%	48
25-34	21%	205
35-44	15%	145
45-54	25%	239
55-64	15%	143
65-74	11%	105
75 +	8%	80
Total	100%	964

Table 39: Question D8

Which gender do you identify with most closely?	Percent	Number
Female	52%	494
Male	48%	449
Something else	0%	0
Total	100%	943

Table 40: Question D9

How many of each of the following, including yourself, live in your household?	One		Two		Three		Four		Five or more		None		Total	
Children age 17 years and under	25%	N=142	22%	N=124	9%	N=49	3%	N=16	1%	N=5	41%	N=236	100%	N=571
Adults under age 65 years	27%	N=200	52%	N=388	10%	N=75	3%	N=20	1%	N=7	8%	N=62	100%	N=752
Adults age 65 years and over	24%	N=107	20%	N=89	0%	N=1	0%	N=0	0%	N=0	56%	N=254	100%	N=451

Table 41: Question D10

Please indicate your household's annual income:	Percent	Number
Under $15,000	5%	47
$15,000-$24,999	5%	42
$25,000-$34,999	6%	58
$35,000-$49,999	12%	113
$50,000-$74,999	19%	172
$75,000-$99,999	17%	152
$100,000-$149,999	21%	188
$150,000-$199,999	7%	68
$200,000 or more	7%	64
Total	100%	904

Frequencies Including "Don't Know" Responses

Table 42: Question 1

How would you rate your overall quality of life in Dakota County?	Percent	Number
Excellent	43%	411
Good	52%	496
Fair	4%	40
Poor	1%	6
Total	100%	953

Table 43: Question 2

What one thing do you like most about living in Dakota County?	Percent	Number
Location	36%	346
Open space	4%	43
Parks/lakes	10%	98
Rural character	3%	27
Quality of life in general	21%	205
My neighborhood	9%	91
Schools	4%	37
Small town feel	6%	62
Low taxes	2%	23
People	2%	18
Other	2%	17
Total	100%	966

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 44: Question 3

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a problem in Dakota County.	Not a problem		Minor problem		Moderate problem		Major problem		Don't know		Total	
Crime	18%	N=172	46%	N=448	26%	N=248	3%	N=31	7%	N=66	100%	N=965
Taxes	19%	N=179	28%	N=272	31%	N=295	12%	N=120	10%	N=95	100%	N=961
Traffic safety	26%	N=250	42%	N=398	24%	N=227	6%	N=54	2%	N=24	100%	N=953
Traffic congestion	24%	N=224	39%	N=364	27%	N=259	9%	N=83	2%	N=15	100%	N=946
Poverty	18%	N=173	37%	N=351	21%	N=198	7%	N=64	17%	N=166	100%	N=952
Homelessness	31%	N=298	34%	N=326	10%	N=96	3%	N=32	22%	N=210	100%	N=962

Table 45: Question 4

Please rate each of the following characteristics of Dakota County.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Dakota County as a place to live	41%	N=399	52%	N=511	6%	N=57	1%	N=7	0%	N=0	100%	N=975
Dakota County as a place to work	18%	N=170	41%	N=399	12%	N=118	3%	N=27	26%	N=257	100%	N=971
Dakota County as a place to retire	16%	N=160	32%	N=315	23%	N=219	7%	N=69	21%	N=209	100%	N=973
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	38%	N=364	45%	N=435	8%	N=79	1%	N=13	8%	N=77	100%	N=968
Sense of community	18%	N=177	49%	N=472	26%	N=256	4%	N=41	2%	N=24	100%	N=970
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	12%	N=118	46%	N=444	26%	N=253	6%	N=60	10%	N=98	100%	N=972
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	38%	N=370	46%	N=449	10%	N=96	2%	N=16	4%	N=40	100%	N=971
Availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options	24%	N=228	44%	N=422	19%	N=184	6%	N=62	8%	N=74	100%	N=970
Economic health of Dakota County	15%	N=142	53%	N=506	16%	N=151	2%	N=17	15%	N=148	100%	N=963
Availability of affordable housing	7%	N=64	35%	N=332	30%	N=288	10%	N=93	19%	N=182	100%	N=959
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	20%	N=194	64%	N=618	13%	N=121	2%	N=18	1%	N=10	100%	N=961

Table 46: Question 5

What do you feel is the most serious issue facing Dakota County at this time?	Percent	Number
Affordable housing	10%	59
Condition of roads	6%	35
Crime and safety issues	11%	65
Economic development	4%	22
Growth/development	7%	44
Jobs	2%	11
Pollution/environmental concerns	1%	8
Preserving natural areas/protecting natural resources	1%	6
Quality of county services	1%	6
Schools	4%	27
Taxes	10%	58
Teen drug/alcohol use	1%	6
Traffic congestion	5%	30
No issue	2%	11
Sense of community, diversity, etc.	6%	36
Government spending	2%	9
Homelessness and poverty	4%	26
Public Transportation	4%	22
Noise pollution	1%	5
Updating infrastructure	3%	18
Other	9%	57
Don't know/refused	8%	48
Total	100%	607

Table 47: Question 6

In the past year, have you volunteered in any community organization like a faith community, neighborhood group, non-profit service organization, local government, or school association?	Percent	Number
Yes, once or twice in the year	18%	175
Yes, once every other month	7%	69
Yes, about once a month	9%	92
Yes, more than once a month	19%	182
No, I haven't volunteered	45%	441
Don't know	1%	13
Total	100%	972

Table 48: Question 7

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in Dakota County.	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	29%	N=283	56%	N=543	12%	N=118	1%	N=10	2%	N=19	100%	N=974
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	48%	N=471	42%	N=408	5%	N=49	1%	N=11	3%	N=33	100%	N=972
From illegal drug activity (e.g., manufacturing or selling drugs)	28%	N=273	45%	N=439	15%	N=143	5%	N=46	8%	N=74	100%	N=974
From identity theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft)	19%	N=183	43%	N=417	25%	N=246	5%	N=50	8%	N=78	100%	N=974
From domestic violence	55%	N=533	30%	N=295	4%	N=43	1%	N=14	9%	N=85	100%	N=971
While driving on roads within Dakota County	31%	N=303	53%	N=512	14%	N=136	1%	N=11	1%	N=10	100%	N=973
While in your neighborhood	55%	N=538	39%	N=378	4%	N=43	1%	N=9	1%	N=6	100%	N=974
While using Dakota County parks and trails	39%	N=380	48%	N=461	6%	N=57	0%	N=2	7%	N=70	100%	N=970
Other	25%	N=30	19%	N=23	4%	N=5	5%	N=6	46%	N=56	100%	N=120

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 49: Question 8

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in Dakota County.	Not at all a concern		Minor concern		Moderate concern		Major concern		Don't know		Total	
Environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste)	27%	N=256	37%	N=357	15%	N=146	9%	N=87	11%	N=110	100%	N=956
Tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco)	28%	N=270	32%	N=306	20%	N=190	8%	N=76	12%	N=113	100%	N=956
Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses	16%	N=149	27%	N=262	28%	N=269	10%	N=95	19%	N=180	100%	N=955
Social isolation	26%	N=247	31%	N=301	17%	N=166	6%	N=55	20%	N=186	100%	N=955
Underage alcohol use	15%	N=141	29%	N=277	24%	N=233	12%	N=117	20%	N=190	100%	N=958
Alcohol abuse among adults	16%	N=157	32%	N=302	24%	N=231	9%	N=83	19%	N=183	100%	N=955
Illegal drug use	14%	N=138	28%	N=269	23%	N=218	16%	N=154	19%	N=177	100%	N=956
Bullying	13%	N=129	26%	N=251	23%	N=220	12%	N=116	25%	N=242	100%	N=958
Illegal use of prescribed medications	16%	N=157	27%	N=257	18%	N=173	10%	N=98	28%	N=270	100%	N=955
The health and support of older adults	15%	N=143	29%	N=282	25%	N=237	11%	N=105	20%	N=191	100%	N=958
The health and support of persons with disabilities	16%	N=152	29%	N=279	25%	N=239	9%	N=84	21%	N=196	100%	N=950
Quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17	14%	N=135	28%	N=269	23%	N=219	16%	N=151	19%	N=184	100%	N=958
Overweight adults and children	10%	N=95	26%	N=245	30%	N=288	19%	N=184	15%	N=142	100%	N=954
Abuse and neglect of children	14%	N=132	28%	N=264	22%	N=212	13%	N=123	23%	N=219	100%	N=951
Abuse and neglect of older adults	14%	N=134	30%	N=292	19%	N=181	10%	N=99	26%	N=252	100%	N=957
Spread of infectious diseases	20%	N=196	34%	N=327	15%	N=141	8%	N=74	23%	N=218	100%	N=957

Table 50: Question 9

Do you think that a year from now you and your household will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same as now?	Percent	Number
Much better	3%	26
Somewhat better	23%	225
About the same	58%	555
Somewhat worse	10%	93
Much worse	3%	30
Don't know	3%	29
Total	100%	959

Table 51: Question 10

Please rate each of the following services provided by Dakota County.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
County libraries	48%	N=460	37%	N=355	5%	N=44	0%	N=3	11%	N=102	100%	N=964
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby, or Miesville)	50%	N=485	36%	N=344	4%	N=35	0%	N=2	10%	N=97	100%	N=964
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trails	35%	N=322	35%	N=323	7%	N=61	1%	N=5	24%	N=221	100%	N=932
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	18%	N=174	48%	N=460	26%	N=246	4%	N=37	4%	N=41	100%	N=958
Snow and ice removal on County roads	27%	N=257	50%	N=486	16%	N=159	4%	N=37	3%	N=30	100%	N=969
Sheriff deputies patrol services	20%	N=195	47%	N=451	11%	N=108	3%	N=27	18%	N=171	100%	N=953
Services at the Recycling Zone	29%	N=279	35%	N=335	10%	N=95	2%	N=21	24%	N=229	100%	N=959
Self-service options on the County Web site	12%	N=113	26%	N=252	11%	N=106	1%	N=9	50%	N=476	100%	N=956
Assessment process/property tax system	8%	N=80	28%	N=270	31%	N=299	8%	N=79	24%	N=230	100%	N=958
Addressing important health issues in communities	8%	N=80	31%	N=297	20%	N=188	4%	N=36	37%	N=359	100%	N=961
Prosecuting people accused of crimes	11%	N=101	32%	N=305	15%	N=144	4%	N=40	38%	N=358	100%	N=948
Overall quality of services provided by Dakota County	17%	N=163	60%	N=576	18%	N=170	1%	N=8	4%	N=36	100%	N=953

Table 52: Question 11

Please rate the following services provided by Dakota County only if you have experienced them within the last two years.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know/not applicable		Total	
Employment support/Workforce Center services	3%	N=27	8%	N=69	5%	N=40	1%	N=9	82%	N=672	100%	N=817
Financial assistance for low-income families	2%	N=18	6%	N=49	4%	N=31	3%	N=27	84%	N=686	100%	N=812
Records, vital statistics, licensing, and vehicle registration	19%	N=171	43%	N=382	14%	N=124	2%	N=20	21%	N=187	100%	N=884
Services for people with physical disabilities	3%	N=25	9%	N=72	5%	N=41	2%	N=15	82%	N=675	100%	N=828
Services for people experiencing mental illness	1%	N=9	6%	N=46	5%	N=40	5%	N=38	84%	N=689	100%	N=823
Services provided to veterans	2%	N=20	7%	N=60	7%	N=54	3%	N=28	80%	N=665	100%	N=827
Services provided to older adults	2%	N=17	10%	N=87	8%	N=65	3%	N=26	77%	N=640	100%	N=834

Table 53: Question 12

To what extent would you support or oppose an increase in your County property tax if it were needed to maintain County services at their current levels?	Percent	Number
Strongly support	6%	53

To what extent would you support or oppose an increase in your County property tax if it were needed to maintain County services at their current levels?	Percent	Number
Somewhat support	35%	340
Somewhat oppose	26%	248
Strongly oppose	23%	220
Don't know	10%	98
Total	100%	959

Table 54: Question 13

What are the barriers to you using transit services regularly (e.g., Metro Transit/MVTA buses, Transit Link, the METRO Red Line)?	Percent*	Number*
No service close enough to where I live	24%	224
No service where I want to go	21%	190
Not familiar with the services available	19%	172
Limited hours of operation (need service on weekends, evenings)	13%	120
Existing service isn't frequent enough (i.e. buses don't stop often enough)	8%	72
Poor connections or transfers	9%	85
I need personal, point-to-point service	10%	96
Trip takes too long	19%	175
Fare pricing is unclear	2%	21
I don't know how to ride the bus	6%	55
I don't feel safe on the bus	5%	45
I can't afford it	1%	6
I don't need it	49%	446
Other	5%	46

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response.*

Table 55: Question 14

To what extent do you support or oppose the County investing in projects that make transit easier and more convenient to use?	Percent	Number
Strongly support	27%	256
Somewhat support	44%	423
Somewhat oppose	13%	128
Strongly oppose	8%	80
Don't know	7%	66
Total	100%	954

Table 56: Question 15

Have you visited, telephoned, or emailed any Dakota County government office within the last 12 months?	Percent	Number
Yes	34%	322
No	66%	627
Total	100%	948

Table 57: Question 16

What was your impression of the employee(s) of Dakota County in your most recent contact?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Knowledgeable	44%	N=141	41%	N=130	10%	N=32	3%	N=10	2%	N=7	100%	N=319
Responsive	44%	N=141	38%	N=121	11%	N=36	6%	N=20	1%	N=3	100%	N=321
Courteous	49%	N=155	34%	N=109	10%	N=32	7%	N=21	1%	N=2	100%	N=320
Overall impression	43%	N=137	39%	N=124	10%	N=31	7%	N=21	1%	N=2	100%	N=316

This question was only asked of those who reported having contact with a Dakota County government office.

Table 58: Question 17

Please rate these aspects of accessing Dakota County services.	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Convenience of County facilities' locations	25%	N=231	48%	N=448	9%	N=84	2%	N=18	17%	N=161	100%	N=942
Online access to County services	15%	N=144	38%	N=353	9%	N=87	0%	N=5	37%	N=343	100%	N=932
Ease of paying for County services online	11%	N=104	25%	N=230	7%	N=66	1%	N=12	56%	N=516	100%	N=926
Availability of language resources for access to services (e.g., interpreters or multi-language materials or signage)	5%	N=43	11%	N=99	4%	N=37	0%	N=1	80%	N=737	100%	N=918

Table 59: Question 18

Please rate the following categories of Dakota County government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
The job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents	15%	N=139	51%	N=482	19%	N=185	2%	N=17	14%	N=129	100%	N=952
The job Dakota County government does of listening to residents	7%	N=63	26%	N=241	22%	N=205	5%	N=49	41%	N=385	100%	N=943
The value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County	8%	N=78	39%	N=366	27%	N=255	5%	N=46	21%	N=196	100%	N=942
The job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars	8%	N=71	35%	N=330	22%	N=212	6%	N=60	29%	N=270	100%	N=943
The value of Dakota County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood	12%	N=114	47%	N=445	21%	N=196	4%	N=35	17%	N=156	100%	N=947
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	12%	N=116	47%	N=445	17%	N=162	5%	N=44	19%	N=178	100%	N=945
Supporting the quality of life in the county	14%	N=130	48%	N=452	19%	N=179	2%	N=23	17%	N=158	100%	N=942
Effectively planning for the future of the county	11%	N=99	37%	N=349	21%	N=194	5%	N=47	27%	N=251	100%	N=941
Overall confidence in Dakota County government	12%	N=117	49%	N=463	24%	N=224	3%	N=33	11%	N=101	100%	N=937

Table 60: Question 19

To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the job the Dakota County Board is doing?	Percent	Number
Strongly support	12%	109
Somewhat support	42%	392
Somewhat oppose	6%	59
Strongly oppose	3%	25
Don't know	38%	358
Total	100%	942

Table 61: Question 20

Please indicate which of the following methods, if any, you prefer as a way to receive information about Dakota County.	Percent*	Number*
Publications like mailed brochures	51%	487

Please indicate which of the following methods, if any, you prefer as a way to receive information about Dakota County.	Percent*	Number*
The County's mailed newsletter	46%	441
Calling Dakota County	5%	43
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	13%	122
Using my desktop or laptop computer	17%	162
Television/cable TV	8%	78
Other	6%	58
County website (www.dakotacounty.us)	35%	336
Local or neighborhood newspapers	27%	262
E-mail from Dakota County	19%	186
Online search for information	11%	107
Using my handheld mobile devices (smartphone or tablet)	6%	59
None, I don't want or need any information from Dakota County	4%	37

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select up to three responses. Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.*

Table 62: Question 21

Please indicate what methods you believe Dakota County should use to reach residents and gain their insights and learn about their preferences for County services, activities, projects, decisions and plans.	Percent*	Number*
Public meetings/forums/open houses	65%	603
Advisory panels	23%	216
Social Media	44%	410
Online survey	54%	502

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response.*

Table 63: Question 22

What information on Dakota County's website is most valuable to you?	Percent*	Number*
Volunteer opportunities	20%	174
Recycling information	65%	577
Information about parks	66%	586
Information about County services	48%	430
Property sales/information	32%	284
Road/bridge construction projects	40%	359
Contacting County departments or staff	27%	240
County budget information	13%	118
Information about services for older adults	19%	169
Information about the County Jail or its inmates	9%	83
Information about people charged with a crime	17%	151
Other	2%	19
No access/don't use	5%	42

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response. Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.*

Table 64: Question 23

What else would be useful for you to do on Dakota County's Web site?	Percent*	Number*
Pay fees, fines, or property taxes	52%	423
Reserve park facilities	49%	399
Register for volunteer activities online	32%	257
Online recording of vital records (birth, death, marriage)	27%	222
Renew or apply for a license, permit, or other application	64%	517
Receive your annual property tax notices by email	28%	226
Live chat support service online for property information	11%	92
Request copies or notarizing: property documents	22%	176
Apply for a library card or use other library resources	43%	347
Apply for public financial assistance	13%	108
Other	1%	9
No access/don't use	4%	35

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response. Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.*

Table 65: Question 24

How important, if at all, is it to provide the following library programs and services?	Essential		Very important		Somewhat important		Not at all important		Don't know		Total	
Popular titles/current library materials	34%	N=318	35%	N=326	16%	N=148	4%	N=37	11%	N=102	100%	N=930
Early literacy/reading skills promotion and resources	35%	N=327	34%	N=316	13%	N=124	5%	N=47	12%	N=109	100%	N=923
Information about jobs, skills, literacy, and careers	25%	N=232	37%	N=340	20%	N=187	7%	N=62	11%	N=105	100%	N=926
Small business/economic development resources and services	15%	N=142	34%	N=310	29%	N=270	8%	N=76	14%	N=127	100%	N=925
Consumer/government information	15%	N=139	34%	N=310	33%	N=300	7%	N=62	12%	N=110	100%	N=920
Movies, music and entertainment	12%	N=109	27%	N=250	35%	N=328	15%	N=135	11%	N=103	100%	N=925
Streaming movies and music (online)	8%	N=27	17%	N=59	29%	N=100	28%	N=96	17%	N=58	100%	N=341
Technology access, computer classes and training	25%	N=228	35%	N=326	23%	N=216	7%	N=63	10%	N=95	100%	N=927
Technology to create and edit music and videos	7%	N=68	16%	N=144	33%	N=300	30%	N=277	14%	N=128	100%	N=917
Community activities/information	21%	N=200	41%	N=382	24%	N=221	4%	N=36	10%	N=91	100%	N=930
Health and wellness programs and resources	21%	N=194	36%	N=340	27%	N=255	6%	N=54	10%	N=92	100%	N=935
Author/performance arts programs	11%	N=101	29%	N=265	34%	N=310	14%	N=128	12%	N=111	100%	N=916
English as a second language resources and services	21%	N=195	28%	N=253	22%	N=206	14%	N=132	14%	N=130	100%	N=916
Library materials in other languages (Spanish, Somali, Russian, others	13%	N=119	22%	N=199	30%	N=273	20%	N=184	15%	N=141	100%	N=916
Other	11%	N=22	16%	N=32	13%	N=26	12%	N=24	49%	N=101	100%	N=205

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 66: Question 25

Since 2002, Dakota County has emphasized preserving unprotected natural areas and shoreland buffers by dedicating small amounts of County funds in order to receive greater matching funds from non-County sources. How important, if at all, is it to continue investing County funds for these purposes:	Essential		Very important		Somewhat important		Not at all important		Don't know		Total	
Protect lakes, streams, wetlands from pollution	51%	N=490	33%	N=324	10%	N=101	1%	N=13	4%	N=41	100%	N=968
Protect and manage high-quality natural areas (such as forests, prairies, water bodies, etc.)	50%	N=479	32%	N=309	11%	N=109	2%	N=18	4%	N=39	100%	N=954

Table 67: Question 26

If you chose to move from your current home, please indicate how acceptable, if at all, each of the following housing options would be to you:	Very acceptable		Somewhat acceptable		Not at all acceptable		Not applicable		Don't know		Total	
A single-family home that I own in my community	73%	N=663	13%	N=115	3%	N=26	6%	N=58	5%	N=47	100%	N=909
A condo or townhouse that I own in my community	41%	N=370	36%	N=328	9%	N=83	8%	N=69	6%	N=54	100%	N=904
An apartment that I rent in my community	14%	N=122	31%	N=274	31%	N=279	17%	N=147	7%	N=64	100%	N=886
Live with family members away from my current community	6%	N=48	21%	N=181	36%	N=317	27%	N=234	10%	N=90	100%	N=870
A rental facility for age 55+ in my community	17%	N=158	24%	N=219	13%	N=121	33%	N=300	12%	N=111	100%	N=908
Live in an assisted-living residence in my community	14%	N=123	19%	N=166	15%	N=131	39%	N=348	13%	N=120	100%	N=887
Other	11%	N=17	7%	N=11	6%	N=10	30%	N=49	46%	N=72	100%	N=159

Survey respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for other. Please see Appendix B: Verbatim Responses to Open-ended Questions to review the verbatim responses.

Table 68: Question 27

Please indicate which of the following best describe your use of Dakota County's Recycling Zone facility in the last 12 months?	Percent*	Number*
Unfamiliar with the Recycling Zone	26%	238
Inconvenient days/hours/location	15%	134
Don't know what items can be brought there	14%	123
Do not want to pay fees at the Recycling Zone	24%	222
The Recycling Zone is too far away	10%	94
Do not have anything to drop off	14%	125
Used a different facility	7%	65
Other/none of these	22%	202
I do not use the Recycling Zone facility	18%	162

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select up to three responses.*

Table 69: Question 28

To what extent, if at all, would each of the following make you more likely to recycle more materials?	Much more likely		Somewhat more likely		No more likely		Don't know		Total	
Having my recyclables picked up weekly	50%	N=450	16%	N=147	25%	N=224	8%	N=76	100%	N=898
Having more capacity to recycle with bigger containers	36%	N=313	19%	N=169	33%	N=291	11%	N=96	100%	N=870
Displaying a list of recyclable materials on my recycling container	38%	N=331	26%	N=233	26%	N=232	10%	N=85	100%	N=880
Being given specific information about what can be recycled	43%	N=383	28%	N=248	20%	N=175	9%	N=79	100%	N=885
Saving money with the option of a smaller trash container	31%	N=271	21%	N=179	34%	N=292	15%	N=128	100%	N=871

Table 70: Question 29

The State is requiring all counties to find ways to divert food waste from landfills. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following options to meet this requirement:	Strongly support		Somewhat support		Somewhat oppose		Strongly oppose		Don't know		Total	
Haulers collecting food waste curbside in a separate container for pickup	39%	N=375	31%	N=291	10%	N=95	12%	N=115	8%	N=77	100%	N=953
Residents collecting food waste and driving it to a community drop-off site for food waste (similar to yard waste sites)	9%	N=80	21%	N=198	21%	N=195	41%	N=380	8%	N=76	100%	N=928

Table 71: Question D1

How long have you lived in Dakota County?	Percent	Number
Less than 2 year	11%	107
2-5 years	12%	111
6-10 years	13%	122
11-15 years	11%	104
16-20 years	10%	95
Over 20 years	44%	428
Total	100%	968

Table 72: Question D2

Which of the following best describes you?	Percent	Number
Employed full-time	65%	626
Employed part-time	8%	73
Unemployed, looking for work	2%	21
Homemaker	5%	43
Retired	20%	188
Student	1%	10
Total	100%	962

Table 73: Question D3

Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent	Number
One family house detached from any other houses	60%	581
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	17%	167
Building with two or more apartments or condos	19%	179
Manufactured or mobile home	2%	20
Other	2%	18
Total	100%	965

Table 74: Question D4

Is this house, apartment, or mobile home...	Percent	Number
Rented	23%	219
Owned (including with an outstanding mortgage)	77%	718
Total	100%	937

Table 75: Question D5

Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent	Number
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	97%	894
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	3%	27
Total	100%	922

Table 76: Question D6

What is your race?	Percent*	Number*
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%	20
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	4%	41
Black or African American	3%	28
White	91%	847
Other	3%	30

**Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one response.*

Table 77: Question D7

Which category contains your age?	Percent	Number
18-24	5%	48
25-34	21%	205
35-44	15%	145
45-54	25%	239
55-64	15%	143
65-74	11%	105
75 +	8%	80
Total	100%	964

Table 78: Question D8

Which gender do you identify with most closely?	Percent	Number
Female	52%	494
Male	48%	449
Something else	0%	0
Total	100%	943

Table 79: Question D9

How many of each of the following, including yourself, live in your household?	One		Two		Three		Four		Five or more		None		Total	
Children age 17 years and under	25%	N=142	22%	N=124	9%	N=49	3%	N=16	1%	N=5	41%	N=236	100%	N=571
Adults under age 65 years	27%	N=200	52%	N=388	10%	N=75	3%	N=20	1%	N=7	8%	N=62	100%	N=752
Adults age 65 years and over	24%	N=107	20%	N=89	0%	N=1	0%	N=0	0%	N=0	56%	N=254	100%	N=451

Table 80: Question D10

Please indicate your household's annual income:	Percent	Number
Under $15,000	5%	47
$15,000-$24,999	5%	42
$25,000-$34,999	6%	58
$35,000-$49,999	12%	113
$50,000-$74,999	19%	172
$75,000-$99,999	17%	152
$100,000-$149,999	21%	188
$150,000-$199,999	7%	68
$200,000 or more	7%	64
Total	100%	904

Appendix D: Comparison with Other Participating Counties

Questions asked by more than one Minnesota County in 2016 are included below for comparison. Cells with grey shading indicate statistically significant differences.

Table 81: Aspects of Quality of Life

Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in the county. Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
How would you rate your overall quality of life in the County?	79	70	79	73	69
The County as a place to live	78	76	NA	72	68
The County as a place to raise a family/children	76	76	NA	73	67
The County as a place to work	67	58	NA	71	51
The County as a place to retire	58	56	60	53	56
Outdoor recreational opportunities	75	69	72	NA	70
Openness and acceptance toward people of diverse backgrounds	57	59	55	58	45
Availability of affordable housing	49	51	47	41	44
Employment opportunities	NA	45	50	62	36
Sense of community	61	NA	59	NA	NA
Educational opportunities	NA	NA	NA	62	60
Availability of affordable quality child care	NA	52	NA	41	NA
Availability of affordable health care	NA	58	NA	54	NA
Availability of public transportation options	NA	NA	34	50	NA
Availability of fresh fruits and vegetables	NA	59	NA	NA	NA
Availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options	64	57	60	NA	NA
Economic health of the County	65	NA	NA	NA	NA
Overall image or reputation of the County	68	NA	71	NA	57
Social and cultural opportunities	NA	47	NA	NA	NA
Rural character and natural environment	NA	NA	66	NA	NA
Ease of travel by car	NA	NA	71	NA	NA
Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	71	NA	NA
Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	NA	43

Table 82: Like Most about Living in County

What one thing do you like most about living in the county?	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Location	36%	27%	29%	15%	NA
Open space	4%	NA	NA	4%	NA
Parks/lakes	10%	9%	6%	8%	NA
Rural character	3%	NA	NA	NA	NA
People	2%	NA	1%	6%	NA
Quality of Life in General	21%	NA	24%	38%	NA
Schools	4%	7%	4%	3%	NA
My neighborhood	9%	5%	12%	10%	NA
Convenience	NA	10%	NA	NA	NA
Low taxes	2%	NA	3%	0%	NA
Services	NA	0%	NA	NA	NA
Small town feel	6%	23%	8%	NA	NA
Other	2%	3%	1%	3%	NA
Rural/small town feel	NA	NA	NA	10%	NA
Open space/rural	NA	15%	12%	NA	NA
Employment	NA	NA	NA	2%	NA
Healthcare	NA	NA	NA	1%	NA
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	NA

Note: Statistical significance not tested.

Table 83: Potential Problems

Please rate, to what degree, each of the following is a problem in Dakota County. (0=not a problem, 100=major problem).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Crime	38	38	34	55	60
Taxes	47	59	48	52	57
Highway safety	NA	36	NA	NA	NA
Traffic safety	36	NA	33	43	NA
Traffic congestion	41	43	36	37	NA
Poverty	40	34	30	50	70
Homelessness	27	26	20	48	61
Availability of livable wage jobs	NA	48	47	49	75
Bike and pedestrian safety	NA	27	NA	NA	NA
Foreclosed properties	NA	NA	31	NA	58
Ease of travel by public transit in the County	NA	NA	52	NA	NA
Condition of county roads and bridges	NA	NA	NA	NA	71
Opportunities for young people	NA	NA	NA	NA	74

Table 84: Perceptions of Community Safety

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in the County. Average rating (0=very unsafe, 100=very safe).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
While in County Government buildings	NA	NA	NA	86	NA
While in your neighborhood	83	84	82	79	NA
While using County parks and/or trails	78	76	NA	67	NA
From property crimes	72	74	75	61	64
From violent crimes	81	81	83	65	68
From illegal drug activity	68	68	70	57	43
From identity theft	61	NA	62	55	NA
From drunk or impaired drivers on County roads	NA	59	64	54	46
From distracted drivers on County roads	NA	44	54	38	37
From domestic violence	84	NA	NA	NA	NA
While driving on roads within the County	72	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other	64	NA	NA	NA	NA
In your home	NA	88	NA	NA	NA
In public areas (e.g., roads/highways, malls, restaurants, schools)	NA	77	NA	NA	NA
From being injured while biking or walking along county roads	NA	NA	66	NA	NA

Table 85: Health Concerns

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in the county. Average rating (0=not at all a concern, 100=major concern).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Bullying	48	59	44	50	67
Depression	47	NA	NA	58	64
Mental illness/mental health issues	NA	56	NA	NA	NA
Suicide/attempted suicide	NA	39	39	48	59
Environmental hazards (polluted water, toxic waste)	36	NA	NA	37	NA
Pollution	NA	35	NA	NA	NA
Tobacco use	36	35	44	48	58
Underage alcohol use	47	56	53	55	68
Alcohol abuse among adults	44	51	48	55	68
Illegal drug use	50	63	54	67	80
Illegal use/abuse of prescribed medications	44	51	48	59	73
Health and support of older adults	46	49	42	50	67
Health and support of people with disabilities	45	49	42	48	63
The support of persons with mental health challenges	NA	NA	NA	55	NA
Quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17	50	NA	47	58	66
The adequacy of school readiness for children	NA	NA	NA	45	NA
Spread of infectious diseases	38	NA	30	41	NA

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in the county. Average rating (0=not at all a concern, 100=major concern).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Sexually transmitted diseases	NA	36	NA	NA	50
Overweight adults	NA	NA	55	63	69
Overweight children	NA	NA	52	63	65
Overweight adults and children	56	56	NA	NA	NA
Abuse and neglect of older adults	45	NA	36	46	63
Abuse and neglect of children	48	53	38	55	70
Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults	NA	51	NA	NA	NA
Domestic violence	NA	54	44	59	70
Social isolation	35	45	NA	NA	NA
Unplanned pregnancy	NA	NA	NA	NA	55
Teen pregnancy	NA	47	NA	NA	NA
Lack of physical activity/exercise	NA	50	NA	NA	NA
Availability of mental health services	NA	NA	NA	NA	64
Pedestrian and bicyclist safety	NA	NA	NA	NA	50

Table 86: Environmental Concerns

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is an environmental concern in the county. Average rating (0=not at all a concern, 100=major concern).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Exposure to radon	NA	NA	30	48	NA
Quality of outdoor air	NA	NA	28	46	NA
Safety of food in public establishments	NA	NA	28	55	NA
Mold contamination at home or at work	NA	NA	29	48	NA
Proper disposal of garbage	NA	NA	23	49	NA
Quality of drinking water	NA	NA	41	55	NA
Quality of water in lakes and streams	NA	NA	48	62	NA
Quantity of useable water supply	NA	NA	40	53	NA

Table 87: Most Serious Issue Facing the County

What do you feel is the most serious issue facing the County at this time?	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Affordable housing	11%	11%	10%	8%	5%
Crime and safety	12%	5%	1%	26%	10%
Taxes	10%	37%	18%	10%	6%
Schools and education	5%	5%	9%	1%	1%
Condition of roads	6%	9%	11%	NA	NA
Infrastructure	3%	NA	NA	6%	11%
Traffic congestion	5%	14%	6%	1%	NA
Economic development	4%	NA	8%	3%	9%
Jobs	2%	14%	5%	3%	25%
Quality of County services	1%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Public County services	NA	NA	NA	6%	NA
Preserving natural areas	1%	NA	NA	1%	NA
Pollution and environmental issues	1%	NA	NA	NA	3%
Growth and development	8%	NA	NA	20%	NA
Too much growth/development	NA	NA	20%	NA	NA
Not enough growth/development	NA	NA	3%	NA	NA
Health	NA	NA	NA	1%	4%
Government spending	2%	NA	NA	2%	8%
Sense of community	6%	NA	NA	6%	NA
Homelessness and poverty	5%	NA	NA	NA	2%
Water quality	NA	NA	5%	NA	NA
Aging population	NA	5%	NA	NA	NA
Lack of recreational opportunities	NA	NA	NA	2%	NA
Mining	NA	NA	NA	NA	6%
Teen drug/alcohol use	1%	NA	NA	NA	NA
No issue	2%	NA	NA	2%	NA
Public transportation	4%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Noise pollution	1%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other	10%	NA	5%	3%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Statistical significance not tested.

Table 88: Financial Status

	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Do you think that a year from now you and your household will be better off financially, worse off, or just about the same as now? Average rating (0=much worse, 100=much better).	53	51	NA	NA	52

Table 89: County Services

Please rate each of the following services provided by the county. Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
County libraries	82	74	80	NA	NA
Maintenance of County roads	NA	NA	NA	52	42
Condition of County roads	61	50	63	NA	NA
Snow and ice removal on County roads	68	65	67	58	56
Recycling and drop-off services	73	62	73	69	59
Protection of recreational waters and drinking waters	NA	NA	NA	65	NA
County parks and recreation	84	NA	83	70	NA
Land use, planning and zoning, including permitting	NA	52	NA	50	43
Sheriff services	68	67	76	67	66
911 dispatch services	NA	76	77	NA	72
Probation monitoring	NA	NA	NA	49	NA
Records, vital statistics, licensing, and vehicle registration	67	66	72	67	NA
Records and vital statistics	NA	NA	NA	NA	50
Licensing and vehicle registration	NA	NA	NA	NA	56
Elections (absentee voting, voter registration)	NA	NA	NA	68	NA
Passports (applications, renewals)	NA	NA	NA	68	NA
Land records and other property information	NA	64	NA	69	NA
Assessment process/property tax system	49	45	NA	54	39
Disaster preparedness	NA	60	66	63	52
Services to older adults	50	53	61	57	48
Services to children and families	NA	NA	NA	58	NA
Services to veterans	48	51	63	52	43
Mental health services	40	46	56	49	NA
Public health services	NA	NA	NA	59	52
Protecting children and vulnerable adults	NA	NA	61	NA	NA
Protecting vulnerable adults	NA	52	NA	53	NA
Protecting children	NA	60	NA	55	46
Accessibility and functionality of County website	NA	NA	NA	60	52
Self-service options on the County website	66	60	NA	NA	NA
Trail and bikeway connectivity	78	61	78	NA	NA
Addressing important health issues in communities	57	NA	NA	NA	NA

Please rate each of the following services provided by the county. Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Disease prevention and control	NA	61	NA	NA	NA
Prosecuting people accused of crimes	60	NA	NA	NA	NA
Prevention of repeat crimes	NA	48	NA	NA	NA
Employment support	59	51	66	NA	43
Services for low income residents	49	49	NA	NA	47
Services for people with disabilities	56	53	NA	NA	NA
Information about the work of the County Board	NA	NA	NA	NA	40
On-site wastewater and septic permitting	NA	NA	NA	NA	42
Management of County-owned land	NA	NA	NA	NA	50
Services to youth	NA	NA	NA	NA	41
Overall quality of services provided by the County	66	59	66	60	47

Table 90: Contact with the County

	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Have you visited, telephoned, or emailed any County government office within the last 12 months? Percent who said "yes."	34%	39%	49%	51%	49%

Table 91: Department Contacted

Please select the office contacted, choosing the most recent if more than one contacted in the last 12 months.	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Adult & Family Services	NA	NA	NA	11%	2%
County Board/Administration	NA	NA	NA	3%	3%
Family Support & Assistance	NA	NA	NA	7%	6%
Planning	NA	NA	NA	5%	2%
Recording & Abstracting	NA	NA	NA	4%	5%
Vital Records	NA	NA	NA	9%	NA
Child & Family Services	NA	NA	NA	1%	5%
Election & Voter Registration	NA	NA	NA	4%	NA
Finance	NA	NA	NA	0%	12%
Property Assessment	NA	NA	NA	3%	13%
Real Estate Tax Collection	NA	NA	NA	5%	NA
Community Corrections	NA	NA	NA	1%	1%
Environmental Resources	NA	NA	NA	1%	3%
Human Resources	NA	NA	NA	2%	5%
Public Health	NA	NA	NA	1%	8%
911 Dispatch	NA	NA	NA	NA	17%
Sheriff's Office	NA	NA	NA	10%	2%
County Attorney	NA	NA	NA	0%	3%
Facilities & Building Operations	NA	NA	NA	0%	NA
Information Technology Solutions (ITS)	NA	NA	NA	0%	NA
Public Works & County Engineer	NA	NA	NA	4%	4%
Veterans' Services	NA	NA	NA	0%	1%
Driver's Licenses	NA	NA	NA	23%	NA
Passports	NA	NA	NA	5%	NA
Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA)	NA	NA	NA	0%	NA
Data practices	NA	NA	NA	0%	NA
Land and Minerals	NA	NA	NA	NA	3%
Other	NA	NA	NA	NA	4%
Total	NA	NA	NA	100%	100%

Note: Statistical significance not tested.

Table 92: Employee Characteristics

What was your impression of the employee(s) of the County in your most recent contact? Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Knowledgeable	76	75	75	74	72
Responsive	73	73	72	71	69
Courteous	75	74	74	71	73
Overall impression	73	72	72	71	70

Table 93: Perceptions of Government

Please rate the following categories of the County government performance. Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent).	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
The job the County government does at informing residents	63	56	60	56	43
The job the County government does at listening to residents	52	48	51	48	38
The job the County government does at managing tax dollars	54	41	45	42	37
The value of services for the taxes paid to the County	55	42	48	45	38
My knowledge of the work of the County Board	NA	NA	37	46	NA
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	61	NA	NA	52	NA
Effectively planning for the future	58	NA	NA	50	36
Working through priority issues facing the County	NA	NA	NA	51	NA
The value of County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood	60	58	56	54	NA
Supporting the quality of life in the county	63	NA	59	NA	43
Overall confidence in County government	60	NA	NA	NA	44
The job the County does at making information available when residents need it	NA	56	NA	NA	NA

Table 94: Approval of County Board

	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the job the County Board is doing? Average rating (0=strongly disapprove, 100=strongly approve)	67	NA	67	NA	61

Table 95: Potential Information Sources

Please rate the extent to which you use each of the following as sources of information about County government, if at all. Percent using as a minor or major source.	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
County Board meetings shown on cable access	NA	25%	NA	NA	23%
Cable access programming	NA	NA	33%	NA	NA
Daily newspapers	NA	61%	63%	69%	82%
Other county residents (such as neighbors or friends)	NA	NA	NA	86%	81%
County employees	NA	43%	NA	51%	46%
County website	NA	75%	74%	63%	54%
Other online news sources	NA	55%	55%	65%	NA
Community meetings	NA	38%	35%	42%	37%
The radio	NA	45%	NA	74%	68%
Phone calls to County	NA	NA	37%	39%	37%
Reports, flyers or brochures	NA	NA	NA	58%	56%
Television news	NA	75%	64%	82%	82%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)	NA	52%	44%	50%	NA
Weekly community newspapers	NA	79%	65%	NA	65%
County Newsletter	NA	78%	77%	NA	NA
County listservs and other County electronic newsletters	NA	NA	25%	NA	NA

Table 96: Top Preference for Contact

Which one of the following methods would you prefer using if you wanted to contact the County government for a suggestion or concern?	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
Call a commissioner	NA	9%	NA	11%	17%
Call a staff person	NA	23%	NA	28%	31%
Go to a public meeting	NA	5%	NA	6%	7%
Send an email	NA	36%	NA	18%	38%
Social media	NA	4%	NA	NA	5%
Access the County Web site	NA	NA	NA	34%	NA
Fill out an online survey	NA	3%	NA	NA	NA
Provide feedback online	NA	6%	NA	NA	NA
In-person visit to a government office	NA	15%	NA	NA	NA
Other	NA	1%	NA	3%	2%
Total	NA	100%	NA	100%	100%

Note: Statistical significance not tested.

Table 97: Desired Internet Service Information

What kind of County service or information would you like to access via the Internet? What information is useful/valuable to you on the County's website?	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
General county project information	NA	NA	24%	NA	NA
Volunteer opportunities	20%	NA	NA	16%	NA
Property sales/information	32%	NA	28%	20%	NA

What kind of County service or information would you like to access via the Internet? What information is useful/valuable to you on the County's website?	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
County budget information	13%	NA	6%	12%	NA
Information about County services	48%	NA	29%	38%	NA
Garbage and recycling	65%	NA	42%	45%	NA
Road/bridge construction projects	40%	NA	24%	24%	NA
Information about services for older adults	19%	NA	7%	13%	NA
Information about people charged with a crime	17%	NA	NA	22%	NA
Information about parks	66%	NA	59%	48%	NA
Contacting County departments or staff	27%	NA	NA	34%	NA
Information about the County Jail or its inmates	9%	NA	NA	11%	NA
Other information	2%	NA	NA	9%	NA
Pay fees, fines, or property taxes	52%	NA	30%	NA	NA
Reserve park facilities	49%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Register for volunteer activities online	32%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Online recording of vital records (birth, death, marriage)	27%	NA	8%	NA	NA
Renew or apply for a license, permit, or other application	64%	NA	38%	NA	NA
Receive your annual property tax notices by email	28%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Live chat support service online for property information	11%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Request copies or notarizing: property documents	22%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Access library resources	43%	NA	47%	NA	NA
Apply for public financial assistance	13%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other service	1%	NA	2%	NA	NA
General information about the county	NA	NA	38%	NA	NA
Meeting calendar, agenda, and/or minutes	NA	NA	7%	NA	NA
Access public County records	NA	NA	14%	NA	NA

Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Note: Statistical significance not tested.

Table 98: Support for Property Tax to Maintain Services

	Dakota County	Scott County	Washington County	Olmsted County	St. Louis County
To what extent would you support or oppose an increase in your County property tax if it were needed to maintain County services at their current levels? (Percent strongly or somewhat support)	46%	44%	NA	NA	NA

APPENDIX E: COMPARISON OF SELECT QUESTIONS BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Geographic Cross-tabulations

Cells shaded grey indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups.

Table 99: Ratings of Overall Quality of Life by Commissioner District

	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)							
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	Overall
How would you rate your overall quality of life in Dakota County?	74	76	84	81	80	78	82	79

Table 100: Ratings of Problems by Commissioner District

Please rate, to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a problem in Dakota County.	Average rating (0=not a problem, 100=major problem)							
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	Overall
Crime	47	41	36	35	41	32	36	38
Taxes	56	49	46	44	39	50	45	47
Traffic safety	38	39	32	32	35	42	39	36
Traffic congestion	41	36	37	34	45	40	51	41
Poverty	43	41	40	37	48	31	37	40
Homelessness	30	30	26	27	29	19	29	27

Table 101: Ratings of Community Characteristics by Commissioner District

Please rate each of the following characteristics of Dakota County.	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)							Overall
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	
Dakota County as a place to live	71	74	84	82	73	81	81	78
Dakota County as a place to work	62	68	68	70	66	67	67	67
Dakota County as a place to retire	52	65	64	59	53	56	59	58
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	70	73	82	81	69	81	80	76
Sense of community	61	63	64	62	54	58	65	61
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	53	59	63	55	54	54	60	57
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	69	73	79	80	75	78	74	75
Availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options	58	60	68	69	58	71	62	64
Economic health of Dakota County	54	66	73	70	60	66	66	65
Availability of affordable housing	46	53	52	50	46	45	53	49
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	63	66	72	74	65	69	66	68

Table 102: Ratings of Safety by Commissioner District

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in Dakota County.	Average rating (0=very unsafe, 100=very safe)							Overall
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	69	71	76	73	69	74	71	72
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	79	78	83	85	76	84	81	81
From illegal drug activity (e.g., manufacturing or selling drugs)	54	71	74	71	69	70	68	68
From identity theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft)	54	66	66	61	60	58	59	61
From domestic violence	82	84	87	86	83	83	83	84
While driving on roads within Dakota County	72	71	72	75	71	67	73	72
While in your neighborhood	82	79	88	87	80	86	80	83
While using Dakota County parks and trails	75	77	80	83	77	79	80	78
Other	61	76	69	65	55	64	68	64

Table 103: Ratings of Health Concerns by Commissioner District

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in Dakota County.	Average rating (0=not at all a concern, 100=major concern)							Overall
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	
Environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste)	45	32	35	39	37	29	33	36
Tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco)	37	34	40	33	37	33	38	36
Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses	49	44	51	45	46	42	49	47
Social isolation	37	35	37	30	34	31	38	35
Underage alcohol use	51	43	53	47	47	44	46	47
Alcohol abuse among adults	50	41	45	40	42	42	45	44
Illegal drug use	60	47	50	44	47	47	52	50
Bullying	54	46	49	51	49	43	46	48
Illegal use of prescribed medications	49	39	45	42	40	42	49	44
The health and support of older adults	47	47	47	44	47	42	53	46
The health and support of persons with disabilities	49	43	45	42	44	42	47	45
Quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17	58	47	48	47	51	41	57	50
Overweight adults and children	61	53	55	53	58	51	63	56
Abuse and neglect of children	51	53	47	43	49	40	55	48
Abuse and neglect of older adults	44	46	45	41	47	39	53	45
Spread of infectious diseases	39	38	44	35	35	31	39	38

Table 104: Ratings of County Services by Commissioner District

Please rate each of the following services provided by Dakota County.	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)							Overall
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	
County libraries	82	79	82	87	77	86	83	82
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby, or Miesville)	81	79	87	89	81	86	83	84
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trails	78	75	85	80	73	79	79	78
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	54	57	71	67	58	62	61	61
Snow and ice removal on County roads	58	74	73	71	62	66	70	68
Sheriff deputies patrol services	63	73	70	74	58	70	71	68
Services at the Recycling Zone	71	72	79	80	66	67	75	73
Self-service options on the County Web site	62	66	72	70	60	68	63	66
Assessment process/property tax system	42	46	63	52	46	43	52	49
Addressing important health issues in communities	50	57	66	63	53	57	53	57
Prosecuting people accused of crimes	56	60	66	65	48	63	60	60
Overall quality of services provided by Dakota County	59	67	71	72	62	66	66	66

Table 105: Ratings of County Services by Users by Commissioner District

Please rate each of the following services provided by Dakota County only if you have experienced them within the last two years.	Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)							Overall
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	
Employment support/Workforce Center services	59	64	55	57	57	67	58	59
Financial assistance for low-income families	36	57	44	60	45	51	53	49
Records, vital statistics, licensing, and vehicle registration	60	73	72	69	67	66	63	67
Services for people with physical disabilities	48	58	82	59	52	51	44	56
Services for people experiencing mental illness	27	58	32	43	37	41	35	40
Services provided to veterans	46	54	53	55	50	37	42	48
Services provided to older adults	50	54	48	54	48	41	50	50

Demographic Crosstabulations

Cells shaded grey indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups.

Table 106: Ratings of Overall Quality of Life by Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)	Length of residency			Respondent housing unit type		Rent or own		Age			Gender		Overall
	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Detached	Attached	Rent	Own	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male	
How would you rate your overall quality of life in Dakota County?	79	82	79	80	78	76	80	81	79	79	80	78	79

Table 107: Ratings of Problems by Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Please rate, to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a problem in Dakota County. Average rating (0=not a problem, 100=major problem)	Length of residency			Respondent housing unit type		Rent or own		Age			Gender		Overall
	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Detached	Attached	Rent	Own	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male	
Crime	25	36	43	39	37	34	40	30	39	44	41	35	38
Taxes	33	45	51	50	42	37	49	37	48	52	45	48	47
Traffic safety	33	38	37	37	36	35	37	33	37	38	38	35	36
Traffic congestion	37	41	42	42	38	41	40	37	43	40	43	37	41
Poverty	31	40	43	38	43	40	40	35	41	42	46	34	40
Homelessness	20	20	31	26	30	25	28	21	27	33	33	23	27

Table 108: Ratings of Community Characteristics by Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Please rate each of the following characteristics of Dakota County. Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)	Length of residency			Respondent housing unit type		Rent or own		Age			Gender		Overall
	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Detached	Attached	Rent	Own	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male	
Dakota County as a place to live	76	77	79	79	76	73	80	78	77	79	79	77	78
Dakota County as a place to work	71	61	66	67	66	65	67	68	65	68	68	66	67
Dakota County as a place to retire	55	50	60	57	60	54	59	51	54	65	60	56	58
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	73	79	77	79	72	69	79	76	77	76	77	77	76
Sense of community	62	57	61	61	60	61	61	60	61	62	62	60	61
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	58	54	57	58	56	58	57	60	56	56	57	57	57
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	74	73	76	76	75	72	76	73	78	75	76	75	75
Availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options	59	62	66	64	63	59	65	60	64	67	62	66	64
Economic health of Dakota County	65	64	65	65	64	64	65	67	64	66	64	66	65
Availability of affordable housing	48	48	50	52	46	41	52	46	49	52	47	52	49
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	66	68	69	70	65	63	70	65	69	70	69	68	68

Table 109: Ratings of Safety by Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in Dakota County. Average rating (0=very unsafe, 100=very safe)	Length of residency			Respondent housing unit type		Rent or own		Age			Gender		Overall
	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Detached	Attached	Rent	Own	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male	
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	74	73	70	71	72	72	71	72	72	71	72	72	72
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	83	82	80	83	78	78	82	83	83	78	78	84	81
From illegal drug activity (e.g., manufacturing or selling drugs)	77	70	65	68	67	66	69	70	67	67	68	69	68
From identity theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft)	68	64	57	57	66	68	59	69	59	55	60	62	61
From domestic violence	83	85	84	85	82	79	86	84	86	82	86	82	84
While driving on roads within Dakota County	71	71	72	72	71	71	72	71	73	71	71	72	72
While in your neighborhood	85	83	82	85	81	80	84	83	84	82	82	84	83
While using Dakota County parks and trails	79	79	78	79	77	76	79	80	80	76	76	82	78
Other	65	79	60	64	66	69	60	83	53	61	54	73	64

Table 110: Ratings of Health Concerns by Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in Dakota County. Average rating (0=not at all a concern, 100=major concern)	Length of residency			Respondent housing unit type		Rent or own		Age			Gender		Overall
	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Detached	Attached	Rent	Own	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male	
Environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste)	29	34	38	37	34	34	36	28	36	42	38	34	36
Tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco)	33	34	38	34	41	39	35	33	36	40	40	33	36
Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses	42	47	48	46	48	48	46	44	48	47	52	42	47
Social isolation	30	38	36	33	38	40	33	32	32	40	39	31	35
Underage alcohol use	37	42	51	47	48	45	48	41	49	51	51	43	47
Alcohol abuse among adults	35	40	47	43	45	45	43	37	43	50	50	38	44
Illegal drug use	35	44	56	50	51	46	51	37	52	59	55	45	50
Bullying	38	48	51	48	50	50	48	42	50	50	55	42	48
Illegal use of prescribed medications	38	41	46	43	45	42	44	38	44	48	48	40	44
The health and support of older adults	40	43	50	47	46	44	47	40	45	54	49	44	46
The health and support of persons with disabilities	38	44	47	45	45	44	45	40	42	52	48	42	45
Quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17	38	50	54	51	48	44	52	41	52	56	51	48	50
Overweight adults and children	54	53	58	54	61	60	56	58	53	60	59	54	56
Abuse and neglect of children	43	45	50	46	52	51	47	42	47	55	51	45	48
Abuse and neglect of older adults	42	41	47	43	48	45	45	41	41	53	48	41	45
Spread of infectious diseases	32	35	40	37	39	39	37	32	36	44	39	35	38

Table 111: Ratings of County Services by Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Please rate each of the following services provided by Dakota County. Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)	Length of residency			Respondent housing unit type		Rent or own		Age			Gender		Overall
	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Detached	Attached	Rent	Own	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male	
County libraries	80	81	84	83	83	81	83	78	83	85	83	83	82
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby, or Miesville)	84	84	84	84	84	79	85	83	85	83	84	84	84
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trails	80	78	78	78	80	74	80	79	79	78	79	79	78
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	62	65	61	62	61	59	62	61	60	64	62	61	61
Snow and ice removal on County roads	64	72	68	69	65	63	69	65	67	71	67	68	68
Sheriff deputies patrol services	66	66	69	69	66	63	69	66	68	70	68	69	68
Services at the Recycling Zone	69	78	73	76	67	61	76	69	76	73	74	73	73
Self-service options on the County Web site	63	69	66	69	61	58	68	66	67	64	66	67	66
Assessment process/property tax system	55	52	48	48	54	59	48	56	49	47	52	48	49
Addressing important health issues in communities	58	58	56	57	56	55	57	58	56	57	54	59	57
Prosecuting people accused of crimes	61	65	59	61	57	58	60	60	60	59	59	61	60
Overall quality of services provided by Dakota County	66	64	66	66	65	62	66	63	66	67	64	68	66

Table 112: Ratings of County Services by Users by Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Please rate each of the following services provided by Dakota County only if you have experienced them within the last two years. Average rating (0=poor, 100=excellent)	Length of residency			Respondent housing unit type		Rent or own		Age			Gender		Overall
	5 years or less	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Detached	Attached	Rent	Own	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male	
Employment support/Workforce Center services	56	58	61	59	59	58	59	44	66	60	61	57	59
Financial assistance for low-income families	48	41	50	44	52	53	43	41	50	52	47	50	49
Records, vital statistics, licensing, and vehicle registration	66	67	67	66	69	68	66	66	65	71	66	68	67
Services for people with physical disabilities	63	66	54	54	59	60	53	64	57	51	52	61	56
Services for people experiencing mental illness	48	37	38	40	37	39	39	38	42	37	34	47	40
Services provided to veterans	53	55	46	50	45	43	49	38	50	52	41	55	48
Services provided to older adults	46	47	50	52	46	43	52	37	48	53	51	47	50

APPENDIX F: BENCHMARK COMPARISONS

Understanding the Benchmark Comparisons

Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. When surveys of service satisfaction turn up "good" resident evaluations, it is necessary to know how others rate their services to understand if "good" is good enough or if most other communities are "excellent." Furthermore, in the absence of national or peer community comparisons, a jurisdiction is left with comparing its sheriff services rating to its street maintenance rating. That comparison is unfair, because street maintenance always gets lower ratings than do sheriff services. More illuminating is how residents' ratings of sheriff services compare to opinions about sheriff services in other communities and to resident ratings over time.

A sheriff department that provides the fastest and most efficient service – one that closes most of its cases, solves most of its crimes, and keeps the crime rate low – still has a problem to fix if the residents in the county rate sheriff services lower than ratings given by residents in other cities with objectively "worse" departments.

Benchmark data can help that sheriff department – or any County department – to understand how well residents think it is doing. Without the comparative data, it would be like bowling in a tournament without knowing what the other teams are scoring. Residents' opinions should be used in conjunction with other sources of data about budget, population demographics, personnel, and politics to help managers know how to respond to comparative results.

Comparison Data

NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in resident surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services and gave their opinion about the quality of community life. The comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each jurisdiction; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. NRC adds the latest results quickly when surveys are completed, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant.

NRC has designed a method for quantitatively integrating the results of surveys that we have conducted with those that others have conducted. These integration methods have been described thoroughly in ***Public Administration Review***, ***Journal of Policy Analysis and Management***, and in NRC's first book on conducting and using citizen surveys, ***Citizen Surveys: how to do them, how to use them, what they mean***, published by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Scholars who specialize in the analysis of resident surveys regularly have relied on NRC's work.[3] [4] The method described in those publications is refined regularly and statistically tested on a growing number of resident surveys in NRC's proprietary databases.

Jurisdictions in NRC's benchmark database are distributed geographically across the country and range from small to large in population size. Comparisons may be made to all jurisdictions in the database or to a subset of jurisdictions (such as only other counties), as in this report. Despite the differences in jurisdiction characteristics, all are in the business of providing local government services to residents. Though individual jurisdiction circumstances, resources, and practices vary, the objective in every community is to provide services that are so timely, tailored, and effective that residents conclude the services are of the highest quality. High ratings in any jurisdiction, like SAT scores in any teen household, bring pride, and a sense of accomplishment.

[3] Kelly, J. & Swindell, D. (2002). Service quality variation across urban space: First steps towards a model of citizen satisfaction, Journal of Urban Affairs, 24, 271-288.

[4] Van Ryzin, G., Muzzio, D., Immerwahr, S., Gulick, L. & Martinez, E. (2004). Drivers and consequences of citizen satisfaction: An application of the American Customer Satisfaction Index Model to New York City, Public Administration Review, 64, 331-341.

Dakota County chose to have comparisons made to all counties in the NRC database. A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions) has been provided when a similar question on the Dakota County survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions for which the same question was asked.

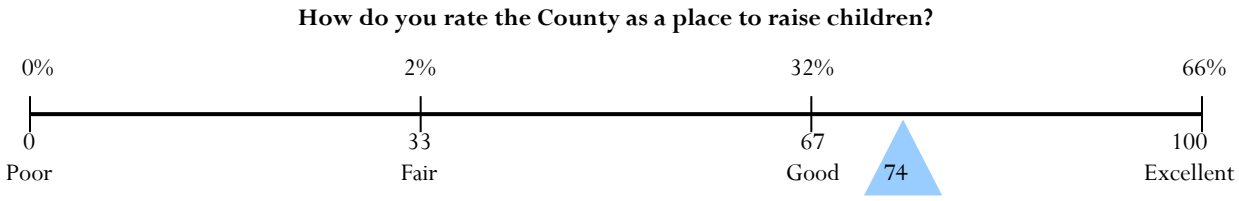
Putting Evaluations onto the 100-point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a four-point scale with 1 representing the best rating and 4 the worst, the benchmarks are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus two points based on all respondents.

The 100-point scale is not a percent. It is a conversion of responses to an average rating. Each response option is assigned a value that is used in calculating the average score. For example, "excellent"=100, "good"=67, "fair"=33 and "poor"=0. If everyone reported "excellent," then the average rating would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a "poor," the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If half the respondents gave a score of "excellent" and half gave a score of "poor," the average would be in the middle of the scale (like the center post of a teeter totter) between "fair" and "good." An example of how to convert survey frequencies into an average rating appears below.

Example of Converting Responses to the 100-point Scale

How do you rate the County as a place to raise children?						
Response option	**Total with "don't know"**	**Step1: Remove the percent of "don't know" responses**	**Total without "don't know"**	**Step 2: Assign scale values**	**Step 3: Multiply the percent by the scale value**	**Step 4: Sum to calculate the average rating**
Excellent	32%	=32÷(100-11)=	36%	100	=36% x 100 =	36
Good	46%	=46÷(100-11)=	52%	67	=52% x 67 =	35
Fair	9%	=9÷(100-11)=	10%	33	=10% x 33 =	3
Poor	2%	=2÷(100-11)=	2%	0	=2% x 0 =	0
Don't know	11%		--			
Total	100%		100%			74



Interpreting the Results

Average ratings are compared when similar questions are included in NRC's database, and there are at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. Where comparisons are available, three numbers are provided in the table. The first column is Dakota County's rating on the 100-point scale. The second column is the rank assigned to the County's rating among jurisdictions where a similar question was asked. The third column is the number of jurisdictions that asked a similar question. The fourth column shows the benchmark, followed by a comparison of Dakota County's average rating (column one) to this benchmark.

Where comparisons for quality ratings were available, the Dakota County's results were generally noted as being "higher" than the benchmark, "lower" than the benchmark or "similar" to the benchmark. In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of "much," (for example, "much higher" or "much lower"). These labels come from a statistical comparison of Dakota County's rating to the benchmark where a rating is considered "similar" if it is within the margin of error; "higher" or "lower" if the difference between the County's rating and the benchmark is greater than, but no more than twice the margin of error; and "much higher" or "much lower" if the difference between Dakota County's rating and the benchmark is more than twice the margin of error.

Benchmarks for county jurisdictions are shown in this report; municipalities or "other" types of jurisdictions (e.g. districts) were not included.

National County Benchmark Comparisons

Table 113: Overall Community Quality Benchmark

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
How would you rate your overall quality of life in Dakota County?	79	7	43	Much higher

Table 114: Community Characteristics Benchmarks

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Dakota County as a place to live	78	8	37	Much higher
Dakota County as a place to work	67	6	36	Much higher
Dakota County as a place to retire	58	18	38	Similar
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	76	6	34	Much higher
Sense of community	61	5	25	Much higher
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	57	8	32	Much higher
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	75	2	30	Much higher
Economic health of Dakota County	65	1	23	Much higher
Availability of affordable housing	49	9	33	Much higher
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	68	9	31	Much higher

Table 115: Community Safety Benchmarks

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	72	4	16	Much higher
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	81	4	16	Much higher
While in your neighborhood	83	2	9	Much higher
While using Dakota County parks and trails	79	1	7	Much higher

Table 116: County Services Benchmarks

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
County libraries	82	3	28	Much higher
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby	84	2	29	Much higher
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trails	78	1	7	Much higher
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	61	3	8	Much higher
Snow and ice removal on County roads	68	3	25	Much higher
Sheriff deputies patrol services	56	31	36	Much lower
Services at the Recycling Zone	73	4	29	Much higher
Self-service options on the County Web site	66	1	9	Much higher
Financial assistance for low-income families	49	5	11	Similar
Services provided to older adults	50	14	19	Much lower

Table 117: Overall Quality of County Services Benchmark

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall quality of services provided by Dakota County	66	6	44	Much higher

Table 118: Contact with County Office Benchmark

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Have you visited, telephoned, or emailed any Dakota County government office within the last 12 months?	34	28	31	Much lower

Table 119: Perceptions of County Employees (Among Those Who Had Contact) Benchmarks

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Knowledgeable	76	2	16	Higher
Responsive	73	5	16	Higher
Courteous	75	3	12	Similar
Overall impression	73	3	34	Much higher

Table 120: Public Trust Benchmarks

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
The job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents	63	2	10	Much higher
The job Dakota County government does of listening to residents	52	4	12	Much higher
The value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County	55	7	39	Much higher
The job Dakota County does at managing tax dollars	54	1	11	Much higher
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	61	1	18	Much higher

Table 121: Perceptions of County Employees (Among Those Who Had Contact) Benchmarks

	Dakota County average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the job the Dakota County Board is doing?	67	4	7	Higher

Appendix G: List of Counties in the Benchmark Comparisons

Listed below are the jurisdictions included in the national county benchmark comparisons provided for Dakota County followed by its 2010 population according to the U.S. Census.

Albemarle County, VA 98,970
Arapahoe County, CO 572,003
Arlington County, VA 207,627
Athens-Clarke County, GA 115,452
Beltrami County, MN 44,442
Boone County, KY 118,811
Broomfield, CO 55,889
Cabarrus County, NC 178,011
Charlotte County, FL 159,978
Chesterfield County, VA 316,236
Clackamas County, OR 375,992
Dakota County, MN 398,552
Denver, CO 600,158
Douglas County, CO 285,465
El Dorado County, CA 181,058
Escambia County, FL 297,619
Guilford County, NC 488,406
Gunnison County, CO 15,324
Hanover County, VA 99,863
Honolulu, HI 953,207
Horry County, SC 269,291
Jackson County, MI 160,248
James City County, VA 67,009
Jefferson County, NY 116,229
Kansas City, KS 145,786
King County, WA 1,931,249
Lane County, OR 351,715
Larimer County, CO 299,630
Lewis County, NY 27,087
Macomb County, MI 840,978
Mesa County, CO 146,723
Montgomery County, VA 94,392
New Hanover County, NC 202,667
Olmsted County, MN 144,248
Otsego County, MI 24,164
Pasco County, FL 464,697
Peoria County, IL 186,494
Pitkin County, CO 17,148
Polk County, IA 430,640
Prince William County, VA 402,002
San Francisco, CA 805,235
San Juan County, NM 130,044
Sangamon County, IL 197,465
Santa Fe County, NM 144,170
Sarasota County, FL 379,448
Scott County, MN 129,928
St. Louis County, MN 200,226
Summit County, UT 36,324
Washington County, MN 238,136
York County, VA 65,464

Appendix H: Survey Instrument

The following pages contain the 2016 survey instrument.

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult's year of birth does not matter. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only. Thank you!

1. **How would you rate your overall quality of life in Dakota County?** ..... ❑ Excellent ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor

2. **What one thing do you like most about living in Dakota County?**

❑ Location ❑ Quality of life in general ❑ Low taxes
❑ Open space ❑ My neighborhood ❑ People
❑ Parks/lakes ❑ Schools ❑ Other (please specify) _____
❑ Rural character ❑ Small town feel

3. **Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a problem in Dakota County.**

	Not a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Major problem	Don't know
Crime	1	2	3	4	5
Taxes	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic safety	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic congestion	1	2	3	4	5
Poverty	1	2	3	4	5
Homelessness	1	2	3	4	5

4. **Please rate each of the following characteristics of Dakota County.**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
Dakota County as a place to live	1	2	3	4	5
Dakota County as a place to work	1	2	3	4	5
Dakota County as a place to retire	1	2	3	4	5
Dakota County as a place to raise a family	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of community	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor recreational opportunities in Dakota County	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of bike and pedestrian transportation options	1	2	3	4	5
Economic health of Dakota County	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable housing	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Dakota County	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

5. **What do you feel is the most serious issue facing Dakota County at this time?**

_____

6. **In the past year, have you volunteered in any community organization like a faith community, neighborhood group, non-profit service organization, local government, or school association?**

❑ Yes, once or twice in the year ❑ Yes, about once a month ❑ No, I haven't volunteered
❑ Yes, once every other month ❑ Yes, more than once a month ❑ Don't know

7. **Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in Dakota County.**

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
From property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	1	2	3	4	5
From violent crimes (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	1	2	3	4	5
From illegal drug activity (e.g., manufacturing or selling drugs)	1	2	3	4	5
From identity theft (e.g., fraud, scams, credit card theft)	1	2	3	4	5
From domestic violence	1	2	3	4	5
While driving on roads within Dakota County	1	2	3	4	5
While in your neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
While using Dakota County parks and trails	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify: _____)	1	2	3	4	5

8. Please rate to what degree, if at all, each of the following is a health concern in Dakota County.

	Not at all a concern	Minor concern	Moderate concern	Major concern	Don't know
Environmental hazards (e.g., polluted water or toxic waste)	1	2	3	4	5
Tobacco use (including E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco)	1	2	3	4	5
Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses	1	2	3	4	5
Social isolation	1	2	3	4	5
Underage alcohol use	1	2	3	4	5
Alcohol abuse among adults	1	2	3	4	5
Illegal drug use	1	2	3	4	5
Bullying	1	2	3	4	5
Illegal use of prescribed medications	1	2	3	4	5
The health and support of older adults	1	2	3	4	5
The health and support of persons with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of parenting skills of parents of children ages 0-17	1	2	3	4	5
Overweight adults and children	1	2	3	4	5
Abuse and neglect of children	1	2	3	4	5
Abuse and neglect of older adults	1	2	3	4	5
Spread of infectious diseases	1	2	3	4	5

9. Do you think that a year from now you and your household will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same as now?

❑ Much better ❑ Somewhat better ❑ About the same ❑ Somewhat worse ❑ Much worse ❑ Don't know

10. Please rate each of the following services provided by Dakota County.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
County libraries	1	2	3	4	5
County parks and recreation (e.g., Lebanon Hills, Thompson County Park, Whitetail Woods, Spring Lake Park, Lake Byllesby, or Miesville)	1	2	3	4	5
Trail and bikeway system like the Mississippi River or Big Rivers trails	1	2	3	4	5
Condition of County roads (e.g., Cliff or Pilot Knob Roads, Kenwood Trail, Wentworth Ave., or County Road 42)	1	2	3	4	5
Snow and ice removal on County roads	1	2	3	4	5
Sheriff deputies patrol services	1	2	3	4	5
Services at the Recycling Zone	1	2	3	4	5
Self-service options on the County Web site	1	2	3	4	5
Assessment process/property tax system	1	2	3	4	5
Addressing important health issues in communities	1	2	3	4	5
Prosecuting people accused of crimes	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of services provided by Dakota County	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

11. Please rate the following services provided by Dakota County *only if* you have experienced them within the last <u>two years</u>.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know/ not applicable
Employment support/Workforce Center services	1	2	3	4	5
Financial assistance for low-income families	1	2	3	4	5
Records, vital statistics, licensing, and vehicle registration	1	2	3	4	5
Services for people with physical disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
Services for people experiencing mental illness	1	2	3	4	5
Services provided to veterans	1	2	3	4	5
Services provided to older adults	1	2	3	4	5

12. To what extent would you support or oppose an increase in your County property tax if it were needed to maintain County services at their current levels?

❑ Strongly support ❑ Somewhat support ❑ Somewhat oppose ❑ Strongly oppose ❑ Don't know

13. What are the barriers to you using transit services regularly (e.g., Metro Transit/MVTA buses, *Transit Link*, the *METRO Red Line*)? (Please check all that apply.)

- ❑ No service close enough to where I live
- ❑ No service where I want to go
- ❑ Not familiar with the services available
- ❑ Limited hours of operation (need service on weekends, evenings)
- ❑ Existing service isn't frequent enough (i.e. buses don't stop often enough)
- ❑ Poor connections or transfers
- ❑ I need personal, point-to-point service
- ❑ Trip takes too long
- ❑ Fare pricing is unclear
- ❑ I don't know how to ride the bus
- ❑ I don't feel safe on the bus
- ❑ I can't afford it
- ❑ I don't need it
- ❑ Other

14. To what extent do you support or oppose the County investing in projects that make transit easier and more convenient to use?

❑ Strongly support ❑ Somewhat support ❑ Somewhat oppose ❑ Strongly oppose ❑ Don't know

15. Have you visited, telephoned, or emailed any Dakota County government office within the last 12 months?

❑ Yes → Go to question 16 ❑ No → Skip to question 17

16. What was your impression of the employee(s) of Dakota County in your most recent contact? (Rate each characteristic below.)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5
Responsive	1	2	3	4	5
Courteous	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

17. Please rate these aspects of accessing Dakota County services.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
Convenience of County facilities' locations	1	2	3	4	5
Online access to County services	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of paying for County services online	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of language resources for access to services (e.g., interpreters or multi-language materials or signage)	1	2	3	4	5

18. Please rate the following categories of Dakota County government performance.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
The job Dakota County government does of providing information to residents	1	2	3	4	5
The job Dakota County government does of listening to residents	1	2	3	4	5
The value of services for the taxes paid to Dakota County	1	2	3	4	5
The job Dakota County government does at managing tax dollars	1	2	3	4	5
The value of Dakota County services to the quality of life in my neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	1	2	3	4	5
Supporting the quality of life in the county	1	2	3	4	5
Effectively planning for the future of the county	1	2	3	4	5
Overall confidence in Dakota County government	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

19. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the job the Dakota County Board is doing?

❑ Strongly approve ❑ Somewhat approve ❑ Somewhat disapprove ❑ Strongly disapprove ❑ Don't know

20. Please indicate which of the following methods, if any, you prefer as a way to receive information about Dakota County. (Please select up to <u>three methods</u>.)

- ❍ Publications like mailed brochures
- ❍ The County's mailed newsletter
- ❍ Calling Dakota County
- ❍ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- ❍ Using my desktop or laptop computer
- ❍ Television/cable TV
- ❍ Other: _____
- ❍ County website (www.dakotacounty.us)
- ❍ Local or neighborhood newspapers
- ❍ E-mail from Dakota County
- ❍ Online search for information
- ❍ Using my handheld mobile devices (smartphone or tablet)
- ❍ <u>None</u>, I don't want or need any information from Dakota County

21. Please indicate what methods you believe Dakota County should use to reach residents and gain their insights and learn about their preferences for County services, activities, projects, decisions and plans. (Please select all that apply.)

- ❑ Public meetings/forums/open houses
- ❑ Advisory panels
- ❑ Social Media
- ❑ Online survey

22. What information on Dakota County's website is most valuable to you? (Please select all that apply.)

- ❑ Volunteer opportunities
- ❑ Recycling information
- ❑ Information about parks
- ❑ Information about County services
- ❑ Property sales/information
- ❑ Road/bridge construction projects
- ❑ Contacting County departments or staff
- ❑ County budget information
- ❑ Information about services for older adults
- ❑ Information about the County Jail or its inmates
- ❑ Information about people charged with a crime
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

23. What else would be useful for you to do on Dakota County's Web site? (Please select all that apply.)

- ❑ Pay fees, fines, or property taxes
- ❑ Reserve park facilities
- ❑ Register for volunteer activities online
- ❑ Online recording of vital records (birth, death, marriage)
- ❑ Renew or apply for a license, permit, or other application
- ❑ Receive your annual property tax notices by email
- ❑ Live chat support service online for property information
- ❑ Request copies or notarizing: property documents
- ❑ Apply for a library card or use other library resources
- ❑ Apply for public financial assistance
- ❑ Other (please specify) _____

24. How important, if at all, is it to provide the following library programs and services?

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	Don't know
Popular titles/current library materials	1	2	3	4	5
Early literacy/reading skills promotion and resources	1	2	3	4	5
Information about jobs, skills, literacy, and careers	1	2	3	4	5
Small business/economic development resources and services	1	2	3	4	5
Consumer/government information	1	2	3	4	5
Movies, music and entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Streaming movies and music (online)					
Technology access, computer classes and training	1	2	3	4	5
Technology to create and edit music and videos	1	2	3	4	5
Community activities/information	1	2	3	4	5
Health and wellness programs and resources	1	2	3	4	5
Author/performance arts programs	1	2	3	4	5
English as a second language resources and services	1	2	3	4	5
Library materials in other languages (Spanish, Somali, Russian, others)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify:_____)	1	2	3	4	5

25. Since 2002, Dakota County has emphasized preserving unprotected natural areas and shoreland buffers by dedicating small amounts of County funds in order to receive greater matching funds from non-County sources. How important, if at all, is it to continue investing County funds for these purposes:

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	Don't know
Protect lakes, streams, wetlands from pollution	1	2	3	4	5
Protect and manage high-quality natural areas (such as forests, prairies, water bodies, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

26. If you chose to move from your current home, please indicate how acceptable, if at all, each of the following housing options would be to you:

	Very acceptable	Somewhat acceptable	Not at all acceptable	Not applicable	Don't know
A single-family home that I own in my community	1	2	3	4	5
A condo or townhouse that I own in my community	1	2	3	4	5
An apartment that I rent in my community	1	2	3	4	5
Live with family members away from my current community	1	2	3	4	5
A rental facility for age 55+ in my community	1	2	3	4	5
Live in an assisted-living residence in my community	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify: _____)	1	2	3	4	5

27. Please indicate which of the following best describe your use of Dakota County's Recycling Zone facility in the last 12 months? (Please select up to three options.)

- ❑ Unfamiliar with the Recycling Zone
- ❑ Inconvenient days/hours/location
- ❑ Don't know what items can be brought there
- ❑ Do not want to pay fees at the Recycling Zone
- ❑ The Recycling Zone is too far away
- ❑ Do not have anything to drop off
- ❑ Used a different facility
- ❑ Other/none of these
- ❑ I do not use the Recycling Zone facility

28. To what extent, if at all, would each of the following make you more likely to recycle more materials?

	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	No more likely	Don't know
Having my recyclables picked up weekly	1	2	3	4
Having more capacity to recycle with bigger containers	1	2	3	4
Displaying a list of recyclable materials on my recycling container	1	2	3	4
Being given specific information about what can be recycled	1	2	3	4
Saving money with the option of a smaller trash container	1	2	3	4

29. The State is requiring all counties to find ways to divert food waste from landfills. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose each of the following options to meet this requirement:

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know
Haulers collecting food waste curbside in a separate container for pickup	1	2	3	4	5
Residents collecting food waste and driving it to a community drop-off site for food waste (similar to yard waste sites)	1	2	3	4	5

Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

D1. How long have you lived in Dakota County?

- ❑ Less than 2 years
- ❑ 2 to 5 years
- ❑ 11 to 15 years
- ❑ 16 to 20 years

D2. Which of the following best describes you?

- ❑ Employed full-time
- ❑ Employed part-time
- ❑ Unemployed, looking for work
- ❑ Homemaker
- ❑ Retired
- ❑ Student

D3. Which best describes the building you live in?

- ❑ One family house detached from any other houses
- ❑ House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)
- ❑ Building with two or more apartments or condos
- ❑ Manufactured or mobile home
- ❑ Other

D4. Is this house, apartment or mobile home...

- ❑ Rented
- ❑ Owned (including with an outstanding mortgage)

Please respond to both questions D5 and D6:

D5. Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?

- ❑ No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino
- ❑ Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino

D6. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.)

- ❑ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ❑ Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
- ❑ Black or African American
- ❑ White
- ❑ Other

55-

D7. Which category contains your age?

- ❑ 18-24
- ❑ 25 44
- ❑ 35-44
- ❑ 45-54
- ❑ 55-64
- ❑ 65-74
- ❑ 75+

D8. Which gender do you identify with most closely?

❑ Female ❑ Male ❑ Something else _____

D9. How many of each of the following, including yourself, live in your household?

Children age 17 years and under……_____
Adults under age 65 years …… _____
Adults age 65 years and over …… _____

D10. Please indicate your household's annual income:

- ❑ Under $15,000
- ❑ $15,000 - $24,999
- ❑ $25,000 - $34,999
- ❑ $35,000 - $49,999
- ❑ $50,000 - $74,999
- ❑ $75,000 - $99,999
- ❑ $100,000 - $149,999
- ❑ $150,000 - $199,999
- ❑ $200,000 or more

Thank you very much! Please return the completed survey in the postage-paid envelope to:
National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 549,
Belle Mead, NJ 08502