

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Newark Resident Survey provides a statistically valid and representative sample of opinions and comments by Newark residents about City services, quality of life, civic participation, and local issues and concerns. The results from the survey offer staff, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders, a detailed evaluation of City services and quality of life issues for planning, policy making, program improvement purposes, as well as sustaining current successes.

The survey report is based around five (5) general parts:

**Part One** shows the 2016 Newark Resident Survey that was mailed to approximately 4,300 Newark residents. Survey recipients were selected randomly from the utility billing mailing list and sent to approximately 50% of all residential customers.

**Part Two** is the City-wide Results of the Survey, which is divided into three sections. Section A is the evaluation of City services, including Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Utilities, Police, and other City services. Section B focuses on quality of life, including community, housing, transportation, environment, and economic characteristics. Section C includes demographic characteristics of survey participants. One important caveat regarding the demographic results, the data shown is valid only for those who responded. In other words, for example, Newark's actual residents' age distribution is not as shown in this report since these results are a valid and very accurate representation of the ages of those who responded. To demonstrate this point, City-wide information from the 2010 U.S. Census is also included for each demographic question.

**Part Three** is the District-by-District Comparisons for each survey question to clearly illustrate the variations of the results between each District. While the variations are usually small, it is important to look at these results on a district-by-district basis to evaluate improving program delivery within the district or to improve advertising and notification regarding some of the City's programs.

**Part Four** shows the variety of responses and ideas for adding additional facilities and amenities to our City's park system that could not be easily tabulated to put in the main report.

**Part Five** includes a transcript of all Resident Survey comments. We believe this portion of the report will help give the reader a better understanding of the variety of opinions and attitudes of our residents.

Several changes were made in the 2016 Survey from the last survey conducted in 2009. The most significant being the change of response options for most City service and quality of life questions from “Very Satisfied,” “Satisfied,” “Dissatisfied” and “Very Dissatisfied” to “Excellent,” “Good,” “Fair,” and “Poor.” The change has the benefit of being consistent with questionnaires of community surveys from other municipalities, as well as being consistent with the ICMA’s National Citizen Survey, which allows for comparisons nationwide. In addition, the changed format allows the resident participants of the survey to better indicate their degree of satisfaction with the City service or community characteristic. For example, if a resident believed a City service was only mediocre or average, the previous survey forced them to either indicate that they were “Satisfied” or “Dissatisfied.” Such a classification would not help City staff distinguish between residents with a *so-so* opinion of a City service from those who were generally happy or generally unhappy with a City service. Under the revised format, a resident participant could indicate that the service was “Fair,” thus indicating the service was neither “Good” nor “Poor,” providing a better indication of satisfaction. Unfortunately, since the evaluation criteria was changed, it is difficult to compare the 2016 survey results with the results from previous years. However, going forward, we believe the revised survey will serve as a better tool for evaluating City services and quality of life characteristics for future comparisons. One note of consistency can be found with the first three questions on the 2016 Survey, which are identical to the 2009 Newark Resident Survey. Those results are shown in this report for comparison.

The Satisfaction Ratings, shown on the right-hand column of the City-wide report, and at the bottom on the District-by-District Comparison report, reflect the results for those who acknowledged they were familiar with the service or community characteristic. Respondents who selected “Don’t Know/No answer” were not calculated into the results, and therefore, the percentage for each category appears different between the two sets of data. The Satisfaction Rating charts provide more accurate information regarding the service, while the “Don’t know/No answer” responses may be used to determine the need to increase awareness of certain services or for the City to evaluate the need for the service.

The Survey and its implementation was developed with the goal of providing a standardized and high quality research method. Household members participating in the survey were also selected without bias by requesting that the household resident (Over 18 years old) with the most recent birthday passed complete the survey.

Surveys were mailed from March 1 to March 11, 2016. Recipients were asked to return the survey in an enclosed postage-paid envelope by April 15, 2016. Of the 4,300 surveys mailed, 655 were returned – a 15% response rate, which is statistically reliable, but a lower response rate than the 2009 Newark Resident Survey when approximately 25% of the surveys were returned. **Table 1** (below) indicates the number of surveys returned from each Council District.

**Table 1: Number of Survey Responses per Council District**

District 1	161
District 2	72
District 3	161
District 4	67
District 5	102
District 6	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>655</b>

This sample is large enough to permit inferences based upon survey results at the 95% confidence level with a margin of error no greater than plus or minus five percentage points. This confidence level indicates that if the same survey were administered repeatedly, nine times out of ten we would get the same results, give or take 5 percentage points for each response category.

Returned questionnaires were separated into Council Districts. Every survey was tabulated from each Council District, and the tabulation for each Council District was based on all surveys received. For the City-wide tabulation, the percentages from each survey response were tabulated and averaged so each Council District was weighted equally in the City-wide total.

**Comparable Results**

Overall, Newark residents rate the quality of life and the quality of City services in Newark very highly. When survey respondents were asked how “satisfied” they were with the “overall quality of life in the City of Newark,” 88% stated they were “Satisfied”(52%) or “Very Satisfied” (36%), receiving an overall *Satisfaction Rating* of 92% when respondents indicating they “Didn’t Know” or gave no response were subtracted from the total percentage. This is down slightly from the 2009 Newark Resident Survey when 97% of respondents indicated that they were “Satisfied” (51%) or “Very Satisfied” (42%) with the overall quality of life in the City of Newark – an overall *Satisfaction Rating* of 98%.

When asked about the “overall quality of (their) residential area,” 88% of respondents stated they were “Satisfied” (47%) or “Very Satisfied” (41%), with a *Satisfaction Rating* of 91%. When this question was asked in the 2009 Newark Resident Survey, 92% of respondents indicated that they were “Satisfied” (46%) or “Very Satisfied” (46%), a *Satisfaction Rating* of 94%

Quality of life characteristics with the highest *Satisfaction Ratings* included “Availability and convenience of recycling” (90%), “Closeness of parks to your home” (90%), “Cleanliness of downtown” (87%), “Helpfulness of business owners” (86%), “Availability of paths and walking trails” (84%), “Attractiveness of parks” (84%) and “City’s special events and festivals” (84%). Approximately 86% of respondents rated Newark as an “Excellent” (43%) or “Good” (43%) as a place to live.

When survey respondents were asked how “satisfied” they were “overall with City of Newark services”, again, 88% stated that they were “Satisfied”(50%) or “Very Satisfied” (38%), with an overall *Satisfaction Rating* of 94% when “Didn’t Knows” or no responses were subtracted from the total percentage. This is also down slightly from the 2009 Newark Resident Survey when 95% of respondents indicated they were “Satisfied” (48%) or “Very Satisfied” (47%) with the overall City services– an overall *Satisfaction Rating* of 97%.

The highest rated City services according to their *satisfaction rating* includes “Recycling Collection” (94%), “Trash/Garbage Collection” (92%), “Hiking and Bicycle Trails” (92%) “Yard Waste Collection” (91%), “Electric Service” (90%), “Parks in the City” (90%), “Police Protection” (89%), “Spring/Fall Leaf Collection” (89%) and “Parks Maintenance” (88%).