OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

Date Issued: April 15, 2010 **IBA Report Number:** 10-34

Budget Committee and City Council of the Whole Meeting Date: April 21, 2010

Item Number: 3

Residents' Opinions on City Services

Last year, the Budget and Finance Committee held community forums to solicit public input on the City's budget, called "San Diego Speaks." A citizen survey was designed to be completed in person at "San Diego Speaks" community meetings held throughout the City. The survey was also available on the City's website. Input on the content of the survey was received by members of the public as well as members of the Budget and Finance Committee. The final survey was designed to allow respondents to prioritize City services and display preferences for specific services. It also allowed individuals to indicate which services they felt could be reduced or eliminated, and asked them to note for which services they may be willing to pay more. The Social Science Research Laboratory, a research survey organization at San Diego State University (SDSU), assisted the City of San Diego in compiling and analyzing all on-line and paper-and-pencil surveys.

While the results were informative, SDSU recommended for the future that the City work with professionals in the field to conduct a random scientific survey in order to ensure results are representative of the community as a whole.

On January 6, 2010, the IBA presented "Developing a Structural Budget Deficit Elimination Plan" (IBA Report 10-01) to the Budget and Finance Committee. This report suggested eleven guiding principles for eliminating the structural budget deficit, which were later revised and adopted by the City Council in February 2010 as the "Structural Budget Deficit Elimination Guiding Principles."

One of the eleven guiding principles includes prioritizing City service expenditures utilizing the results of a Citizen Survey as one of the informative tools. The IBA began working with Behavior Research Center, Inc. (BRC), an independent firm that provides market and public opinion research and consulting services, to develop the survey. This survey aimed to gauge citizen opinions on the priority of and satisfaction with services being provided by the city and willingness to pay more to maintain city service levels.

To carry out this survey, the IBA was able to utilize $24,000 in funding previously budgeted in the Mayor's Business Office budget since 2008 specifically for this purpose.

During the month of January 2010, the IBA solicited feedback on a draft survey instrument from the Budget and Finance Committee and the Citizen's Revenue Review and Economic Competitiveness Commission (CRRECC). CRRECC was created by the City Council in October 2009 to research strategies and provide the City Council recommendations to help address the city's fiscal situation. One of its four Council charges is to "receive findings from a city-wide survey on optimum city service levels desired by the public, and make recommendations to the Mayor and Council for their review and consideration." After compiling the comments from both meetings the IBA consulted with Behavior Research Center, Inc. (BRC) regarding suggested revisions.

After the survey was finalized, BRC began the data collection phase on February 24, 2010. This phase included contacting a scientifically random sample of 600 residents by telephone. Data collection was completed in six weeks.

Attached to this report are the survey results prepared by BRC. The IBA will present a PowerPoint prepared by BRC of various charts to illustrate the results. This report and PowerPoint will be presented to the Budget Committee and City Council of the Whole on April 21, 2010 as well as the CRRECC on April 22, 2010.

Input from our residents on service priorities and service levels can be valuable in assisting City leaders in framing policy choices and making difficult decisions. For example, when reviewing results of the question asking whether citizens approve or disapprove of various strategies to deal with the current budget deficit, respondents strongly approved of using more private contractors and implementing managed competition, while they strongly disapproved of eliminating or further reducing City services. Such feedback can be informative when making important policy decisions and when trying to develop strategies to solve the budget deficit. Furthermore, the survey and its results can serve as a baseline for the future. Comparing results over time can provide valuable information on changes in service priorities as well as satisfaction levels among various City services.

[SIGNED]

Elaine DuVal
Fiscal and Policy Analyst

[SIGNED]

APPROVED: Andrea Tevlin
Independent Budget Analyst

[SIGNED]
Brittany Coppage
Research Analyst

Attachment: City of San Diego Residents' Opinions on City Services Report

Attachment

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
RESIDENTS' OPINIONS ON CITY SERVICES

April 2010

Prepared for
City of San Diego

Prepared by
Behavior Research Center, Inc.
45 East Monterey Way
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
(602) 258-4554

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INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by the City of San Diego, California. The primary purpose of this effort was to measure how residents prioritize City services and solutions to the City's budget challenges. More specifically, this study addressed the following issues:

- Evaluation of City in selected areas
- Attitude about how essential selected City services are
- Satisfaction with City services
- City spending priority
- Reaction to select strategies to deal with budget deficit
- San Diego as a place to live
- Quality of life in San Diego
- Likelihood of recommending San Diego/remaining in San Diego
- Most serious issue facing residents
- Attitudes about safety in San Diego
- Sources of information

The information contained in this report is based on a scientific random sample of 600 San Diego heads of household. All of the interviewing on this project was conducted via telephone by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center during March 2010. For a detailed explanation of the procedures followed during this project, please refer to the Methodology section of this report.

The information generated from this study is presented in three sections in this report. The first section, OVERVIEW, presents the primary findings of the survey in a brief summary format. The second section, SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, reviews each study question in detail. The final section, APPENDIX, details the study methodology and contains a copy of the survey questionnaire.

The Behavior Research Center has presented the data germane to the basic research objectives of this project. However, if City elected officials or management staff requires additional data retrieval or interpretation, we stand ready to provide such input.

BEHAVIOR RESEARCH CENTER, INC.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

- **EVALUATION OF CITY IN SELECTED AREAS (TABLE 1)**

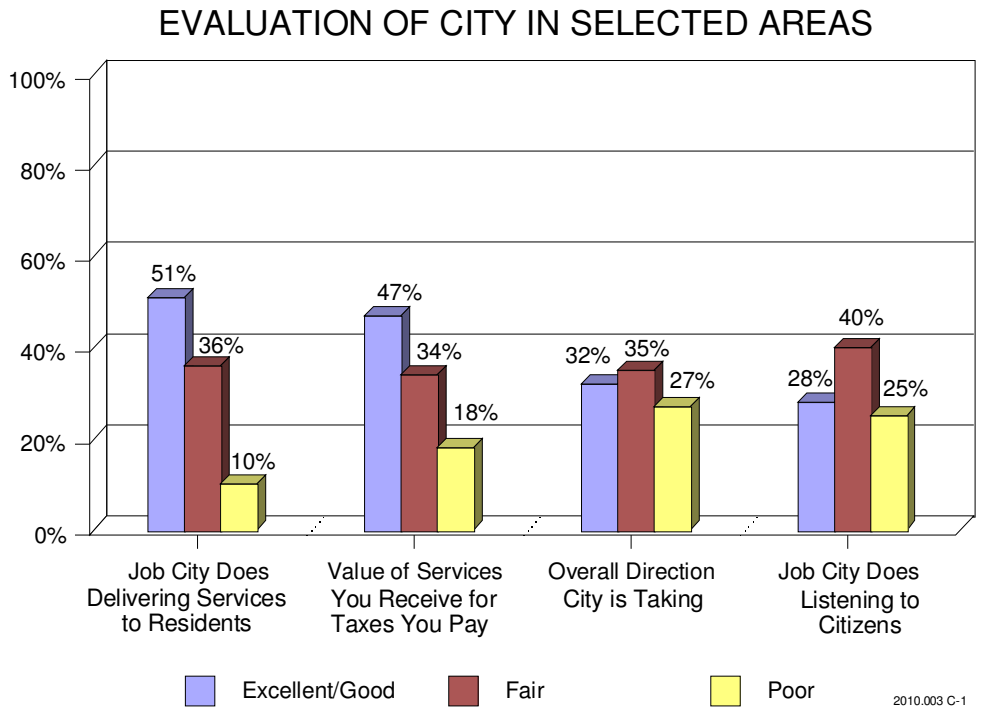
San Diego residents were asked to evaluate the City in four specific areas:

– Job City Does Delivering to Residents. A slight majority of residents (51%) offer a positive evaluation on the job the City does delivering services with six percent offering an excellent rating and 45 percent a good rating. Thirty-six percent offer a fair rating and ten percent a poor rating. These figures are relatively consistent across population subgroups.

– Value of Services You Receive for Taxes You Pay. Less than a majority of residents (47%) give the City a positive reading for the value of the services they receive for the taxes they pay (6% excellent, 41% good), while 34 percent offer a fair rating. The positive readings tend to increase with age and are higher among whites (53%) than minorities (37%).

– Overall Direction City is Taking. Nearly equal volumes of residents offer positive (32%) and negative (27%) ratings regarding the overall direction the City is taking. An additional third of residents (35%) offer only a fair rating.

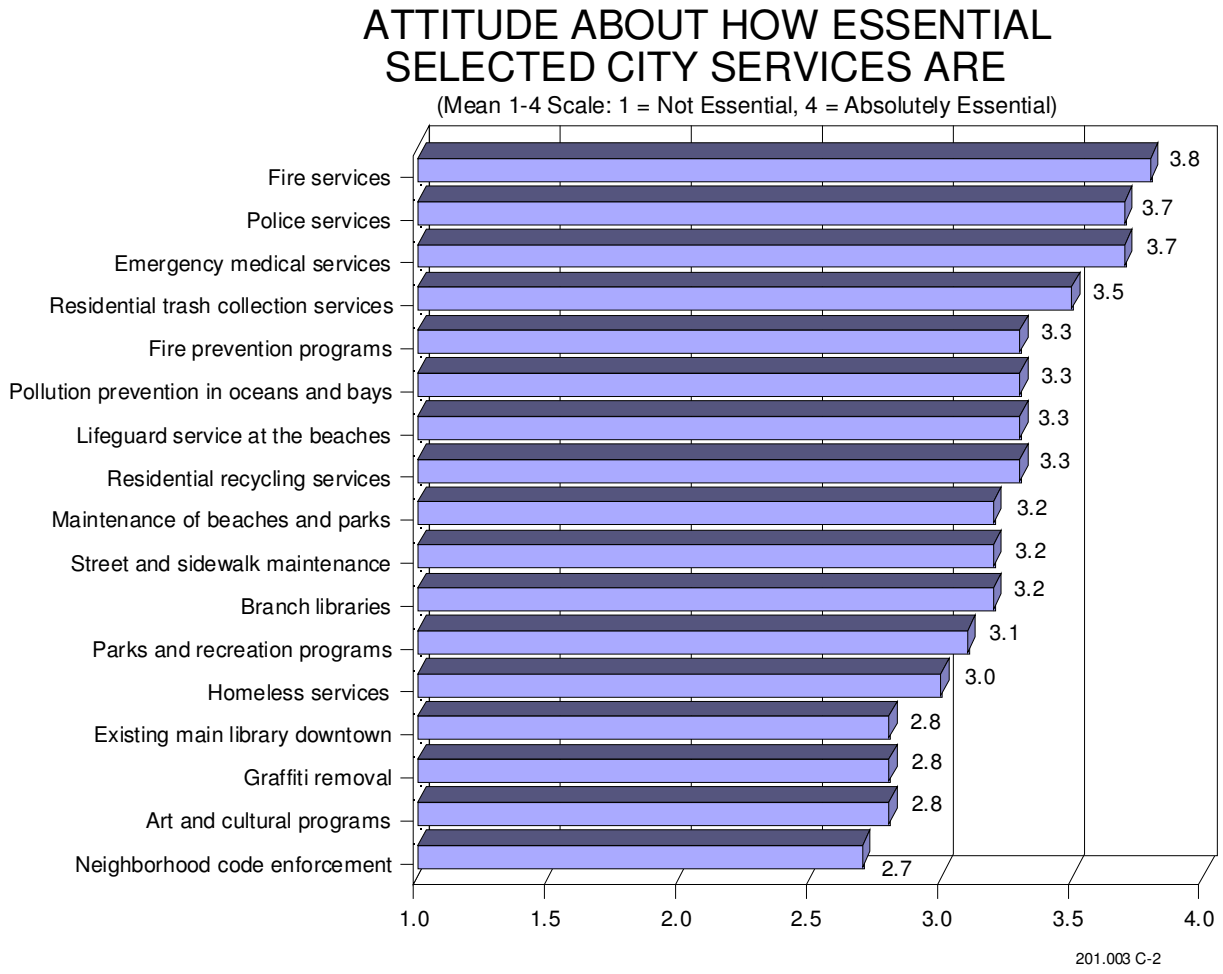
– Job City Does Listening to Citizens. Only 28 percent of residents offer a positive rating on the job the City does listening to residents, while 25 percent offer a negative rating and 40 percent a fair rating. These readings are consistent across population subgroups.



- **ATTITUDE ABOUT HOW ESSENTIAL SELECTED CITY SERVICES ARE (TABLE 2)**

  When San Diego residents are asked to indicate how essential they feel each of 17 City services are on a scale of one (not essential) to four (absolutely essential), five of the services receive "absolutely essential" readings from a majority of residents with mean readings of 3.3 or more: 1) fire services (83%, 3.8); 2) police services (78%, 3.7); 3) emergency medial services (76%, 3.7); 4) residential trash collection services (62%, 3.5); 5) fire prevention programs (52%, 3.3).

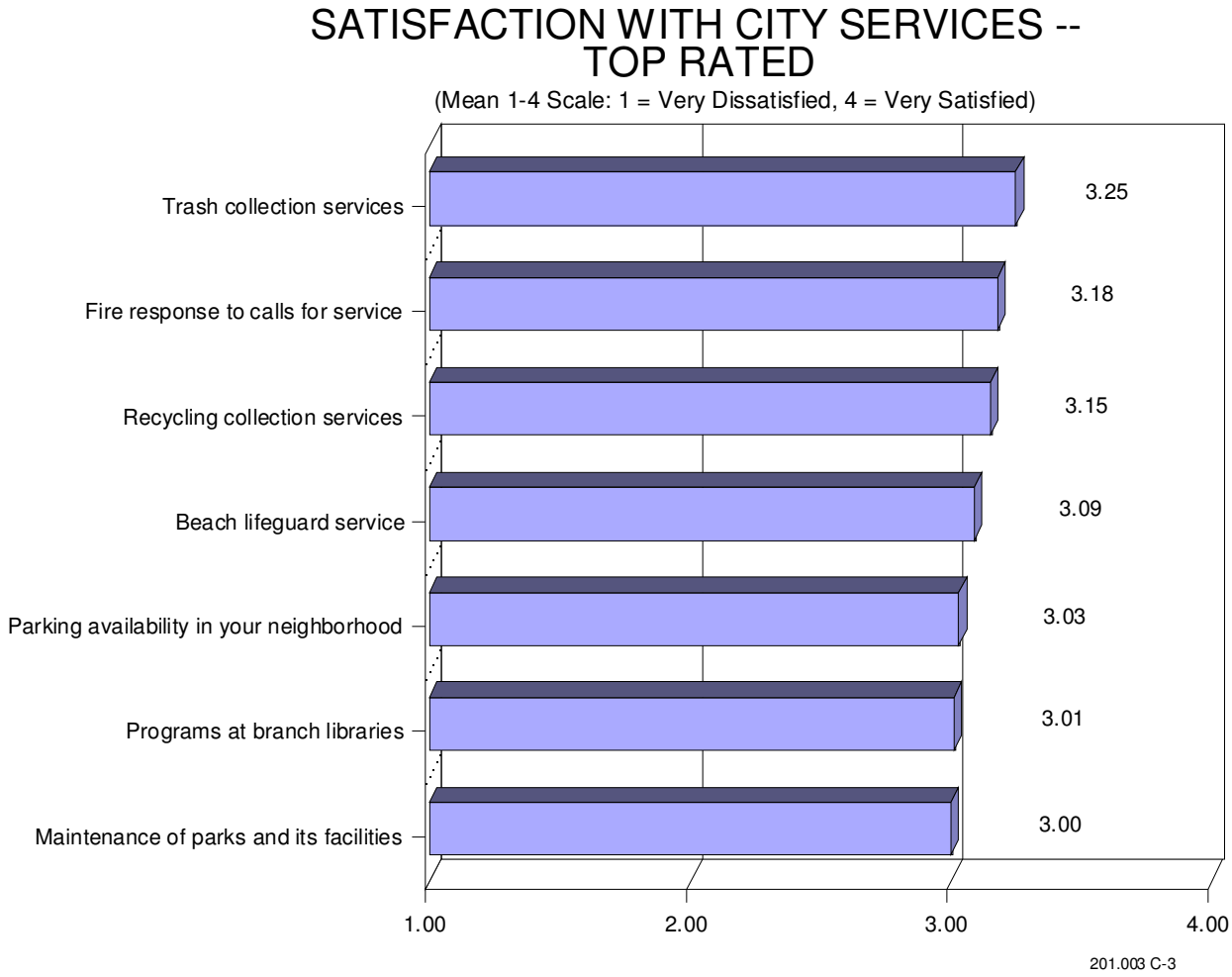
  Those services which receive the lowest readings are: 1) neighborhood code enforcement (23%, 2.7); 2) art and cultural programs (23%, 2.8) and; 3) graffiti removal (24%, 2.8).



- **SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES (TABLE 3)**

  San Diego residents were asked to reveal their level of satisfaction with each of 25 services provided by the City using a four-point scale (very dissatisfied -- very satisfied). Receiving the highest satisfaction readings from residents are seven categories with ratings of 3.00 or higher:

  - Trash collection services (3.25)
  - Fire response to calls for service (3.18)
  - Recycling collection services (3.15)
  - Beach lifeguard service (3.09)
  - Parking availability in your neighborhood (3.03)
  - Programs at branch libraries (3.01)
  - Maintenance of parks and its facilities (3.00)

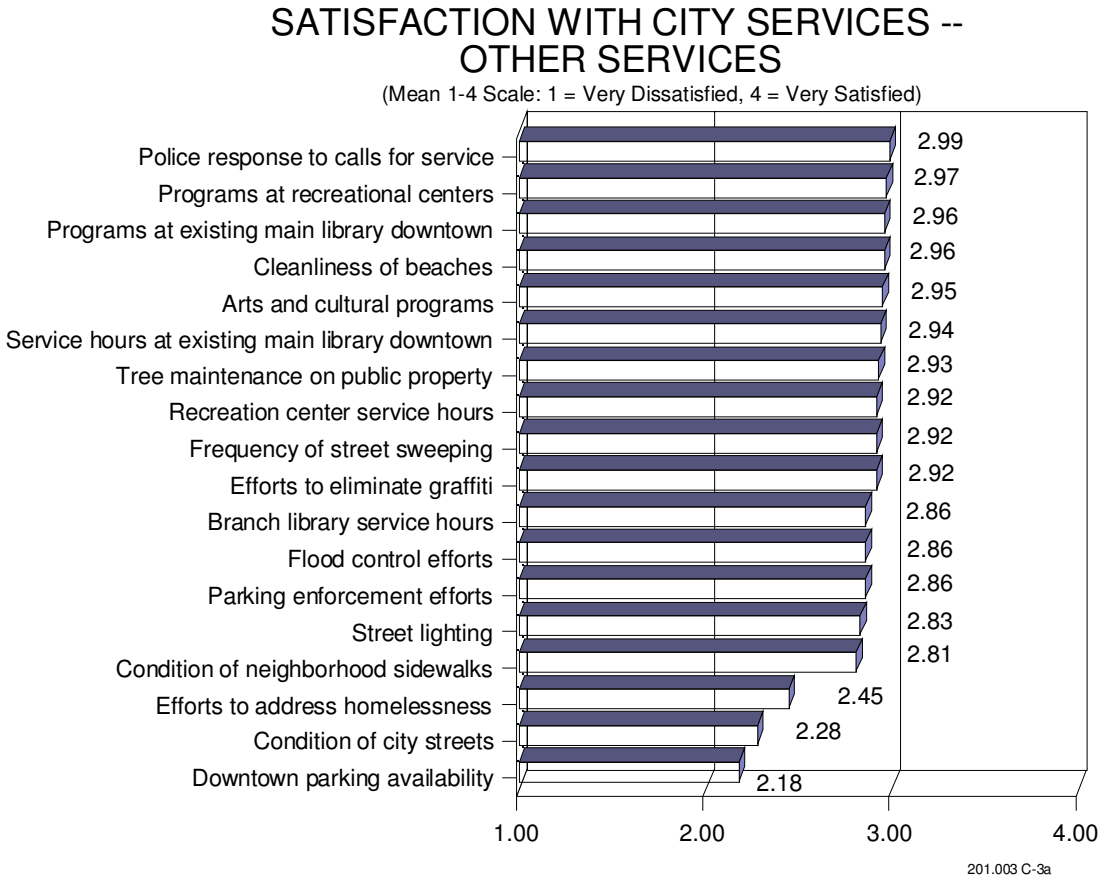


Also receiving positive ratings between 2.81 and 2.99 are 15 additional City services:

- Police response to calls for service (2.99)
- Programs at recreational centers (2.97)
- Programs at existing main library downtown (2.96)
- Cleanliness of beaches (2.96)
- Arts and cultural programs (2.95)
- Service hours at existing main library downtown (2.94)
- Tree maintenance on public property (2.93)
- Recreation center service hours (2.92)
- Frequency of street sweeping (2.92)
- Efforts to eliminate graffiti (2.92)
- Branch library service hours (2.86)
- Flood control efforts (2.86)
- Parking enforcement efforts (2.86)
- Street lighting (2.83)
- Conditions of neighborhood sidewalks (2.81)

The final three City services studied receive low ratings under 2.50:

- Efforts to address homelessness (2.45)
- Condition of City streets (2.28)
- Downtown parking availability (2.18)

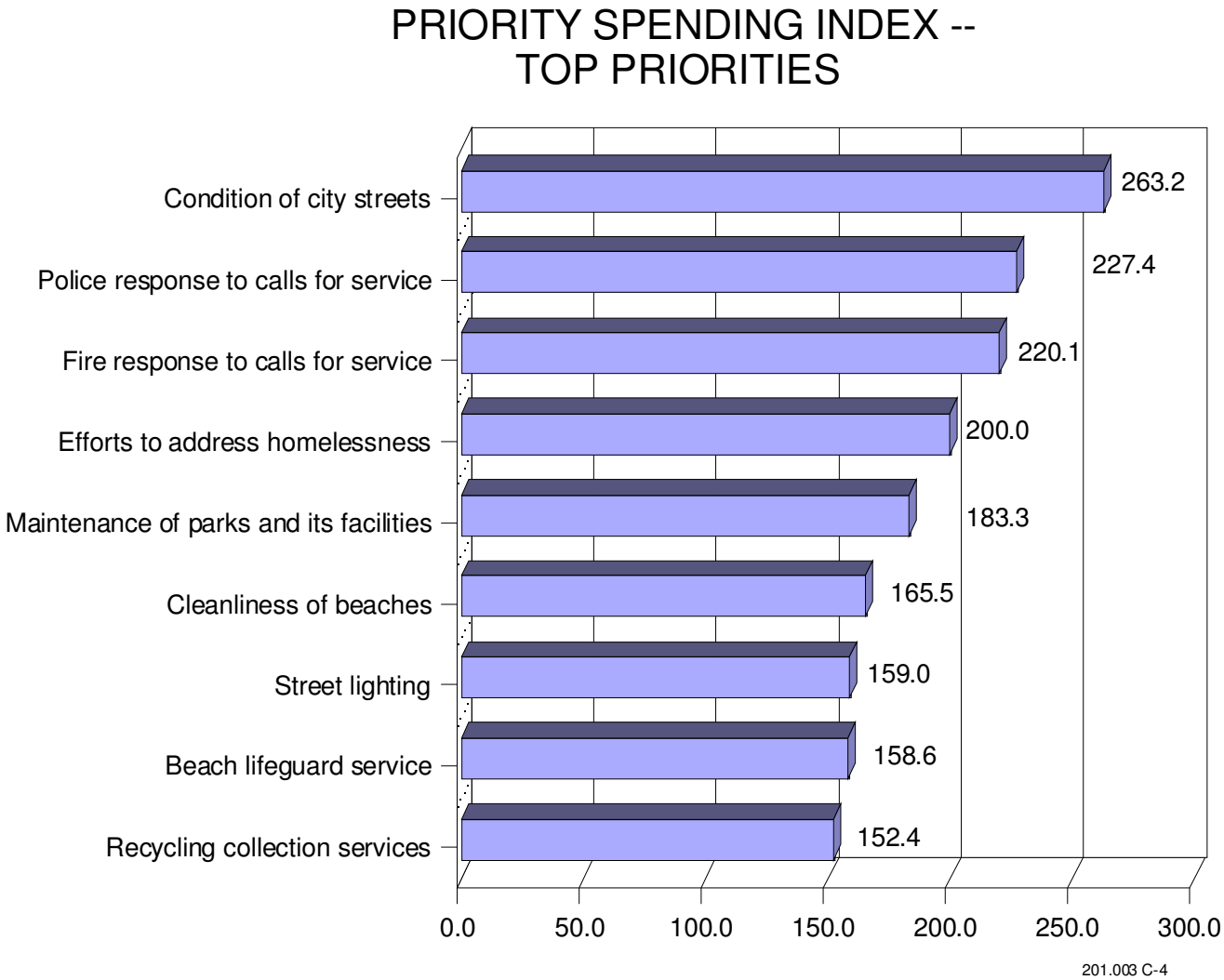


- **CITY SPENDING PRIORITIES (TABLES 4-5)**

  After residents had evaluated each of the 25 service areas under consideration, they were asked to indicate whether they would or would not be willing to pay more for them through taxes or fees in order to maintain them or avoid further cuts. This information was then correlated with the service satisfaction ratings to create a Priority Spending Index which affords higher spending priority to those services that receive lower satisfaction ratings. This line of inquiry reveals nine service areas which receive Priority Spending Index readings of 150.0 or more:

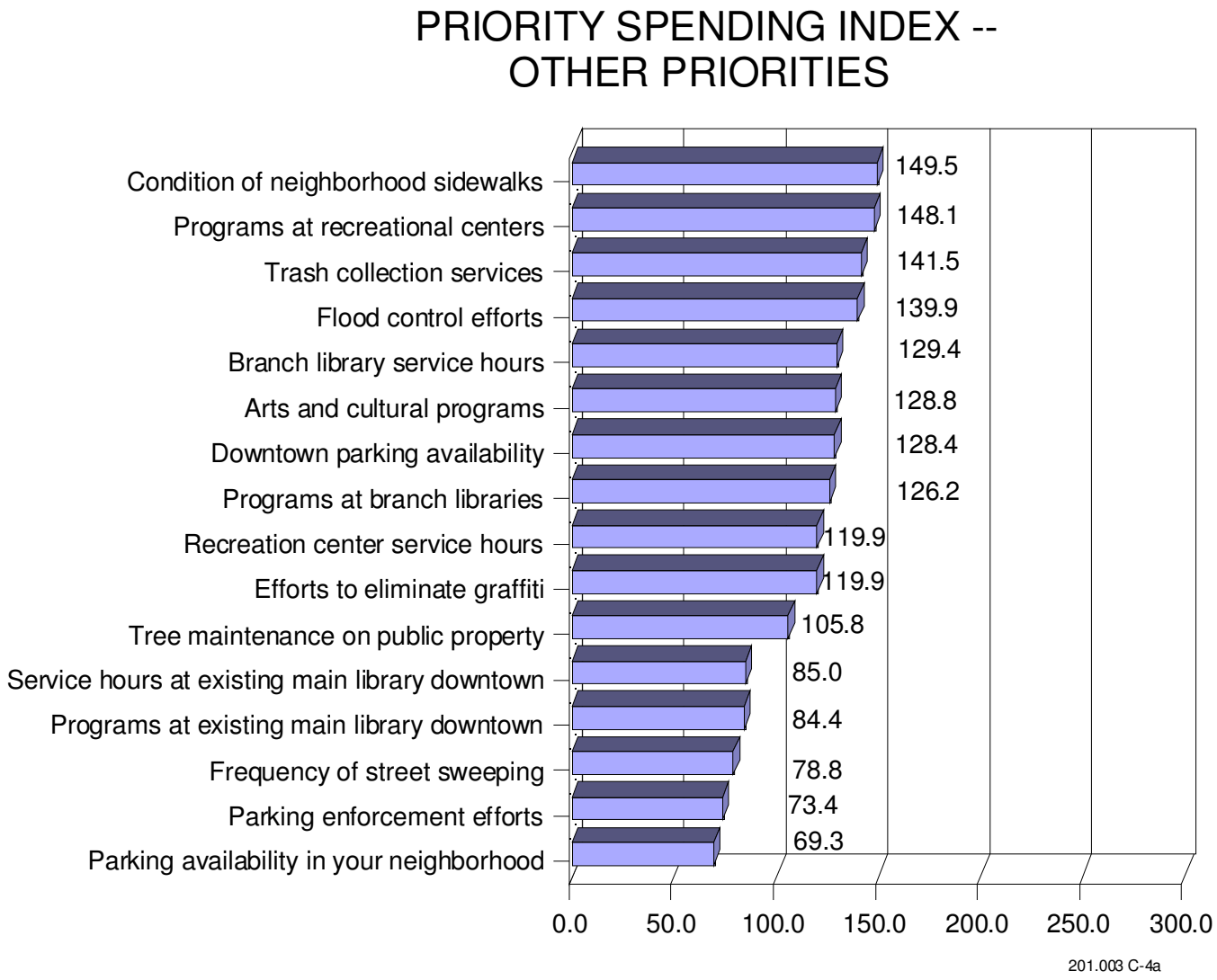
  - Condition of City streets (263.2)
  - Police response to calls for service (227.4)
  - Fire response to calls for service (220.1)
  - Efforts to address homelessness (200.0)
  - Maintenance of parks and its facilities (183.3)
  - Cleanliness of beaches (165.5)
  - Street lighting (159.0)
  - Beach lifeguard service (158.6)
  - Recycling collection services (152.4)

  Note: Index calculated by dividing willingness to pay more for a service by mean rating of service



Each of the remaining services receives an Index reading below 150.0 with five services receiving readings under 100.0:

- Service hours at existing main library downtown (85.0)
- Programs at existing main library downtown (84.4)
- Frequency of street sweeping (78.8)
- Parking enforcement efforts (73.4)
- Parking availability in your neighborhood (69.3)



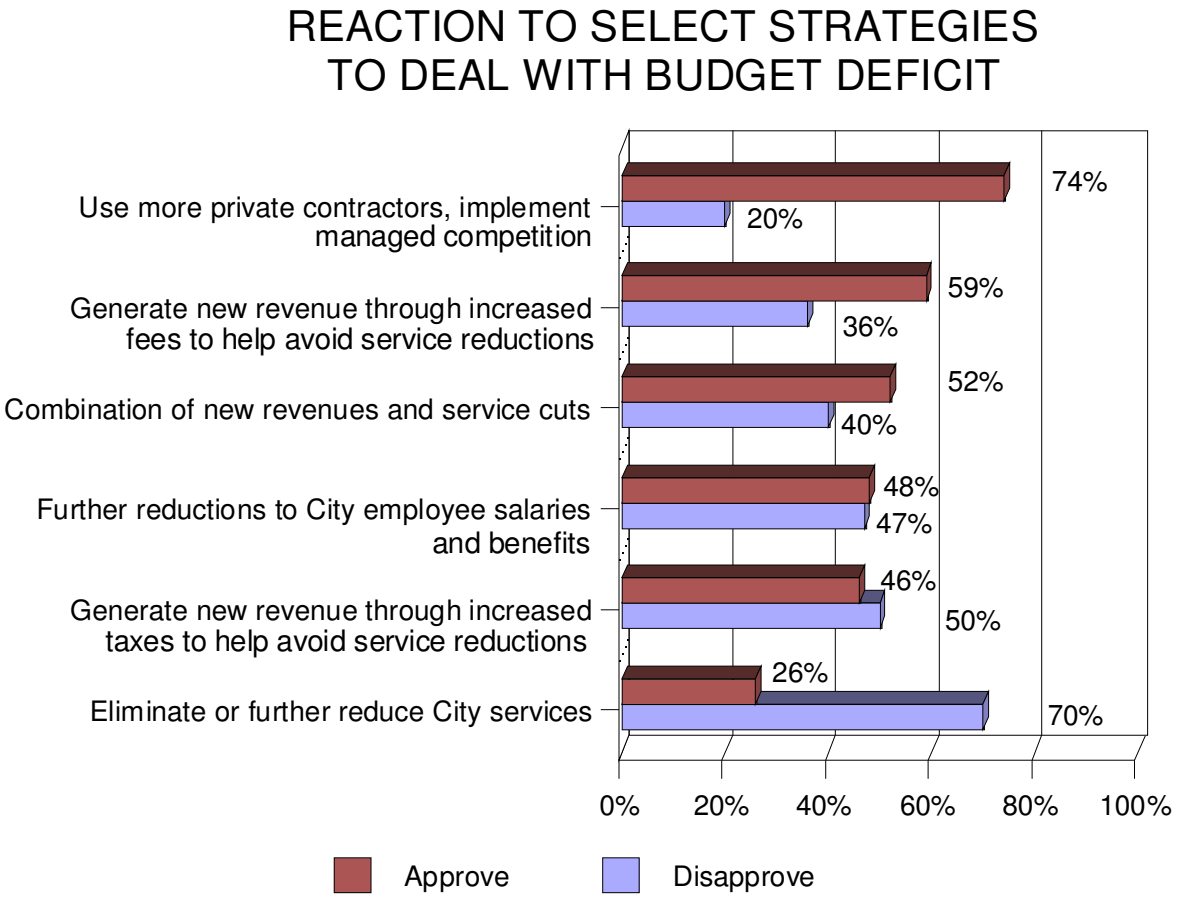
- **REACTION TO SELECT STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH BUDGET DEFICIT (TABLES 6-7)**

When residents are asked if they approve or disapprove of each of six strategies to deal with the City's budget deficit, one strategy, "use more private contractors, implement managed competition," receives approval from 74 percent of residents (20% strongly approve/54% approve) with disapproval of only 20 percent. Two additional strategies also receive approval from a majority of residents, but generate significant disapproval readings: 1) generate new revenue through increased fees to help avoid service reductions (59% approve [5% strongly approve/54% approve]/36% disapprove); 2) combination of new revenues and service cuts (52% approve [6% strongly approve/46% approve]/40% disapprove). Each of the three remaining strategies receive disapproval readings which are nearly equal to or exceed their approval readings:

- Further reductions to City employee salaries and benefits (48% approve/47% disapprove)

- Generate new revenue through increased taxes to help avoid service reductions (46% approve/50% disapprove)

- Eliminate or further reduce City services (26% approve/70% disapprove)



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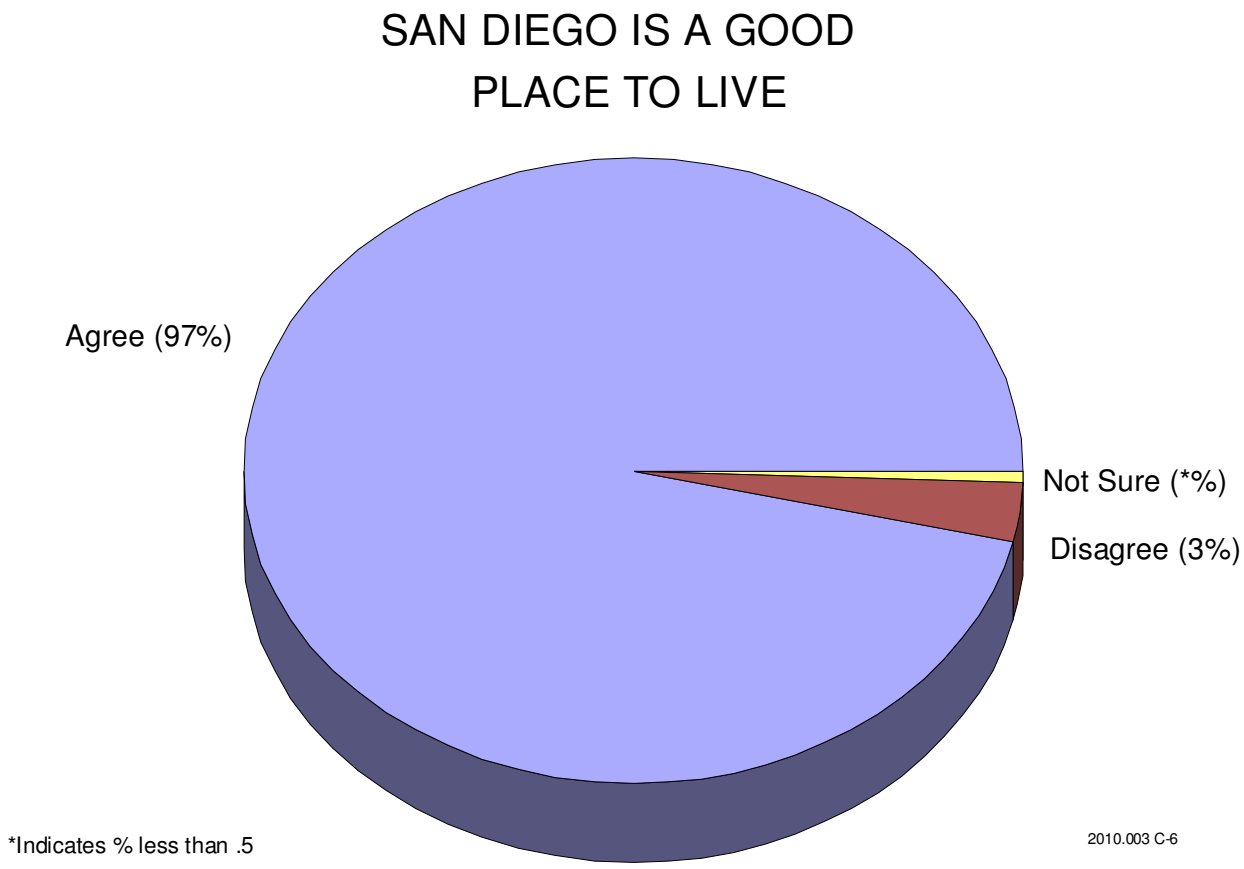
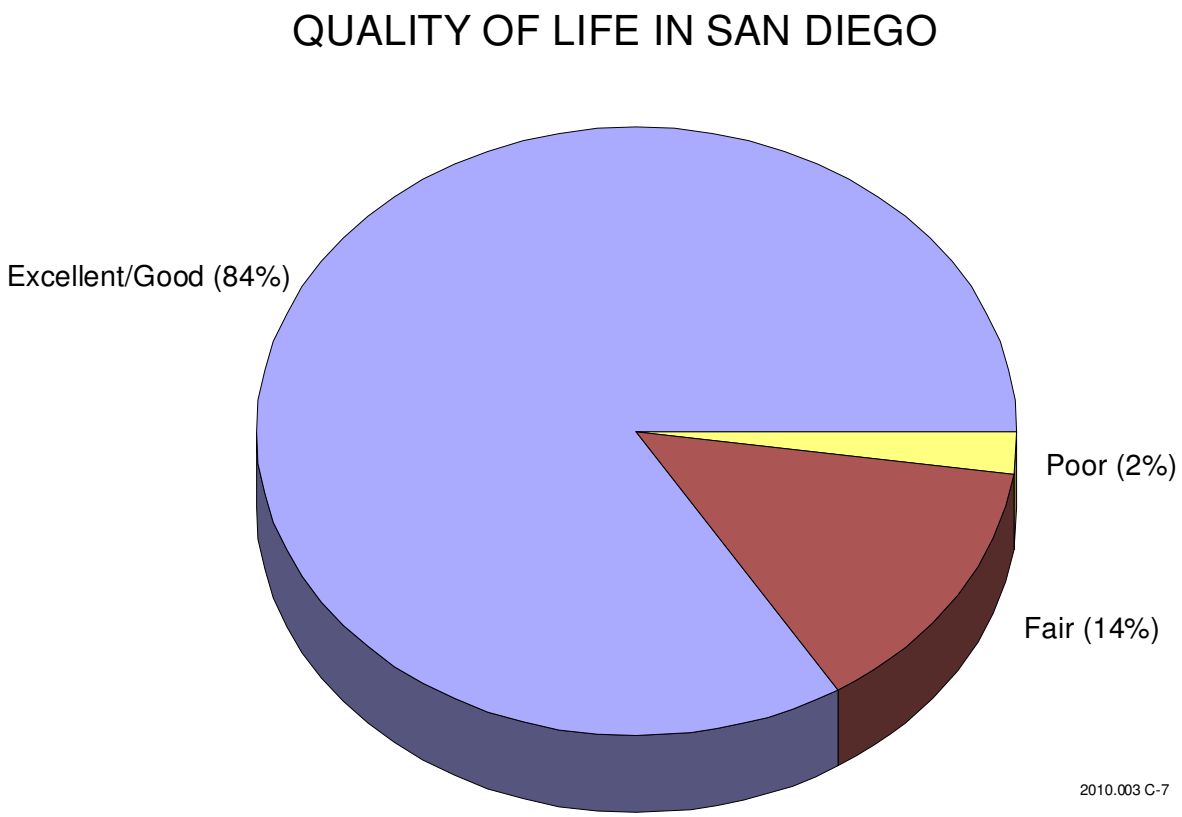
- **SAN DIEGO AS A PLACE TO LIVE (TABLE 9)**

  Better than nine out of ten San Diego residents (97%) either strongly agree (47%) or agree (50%) that "overall San Diego is a good place to live."



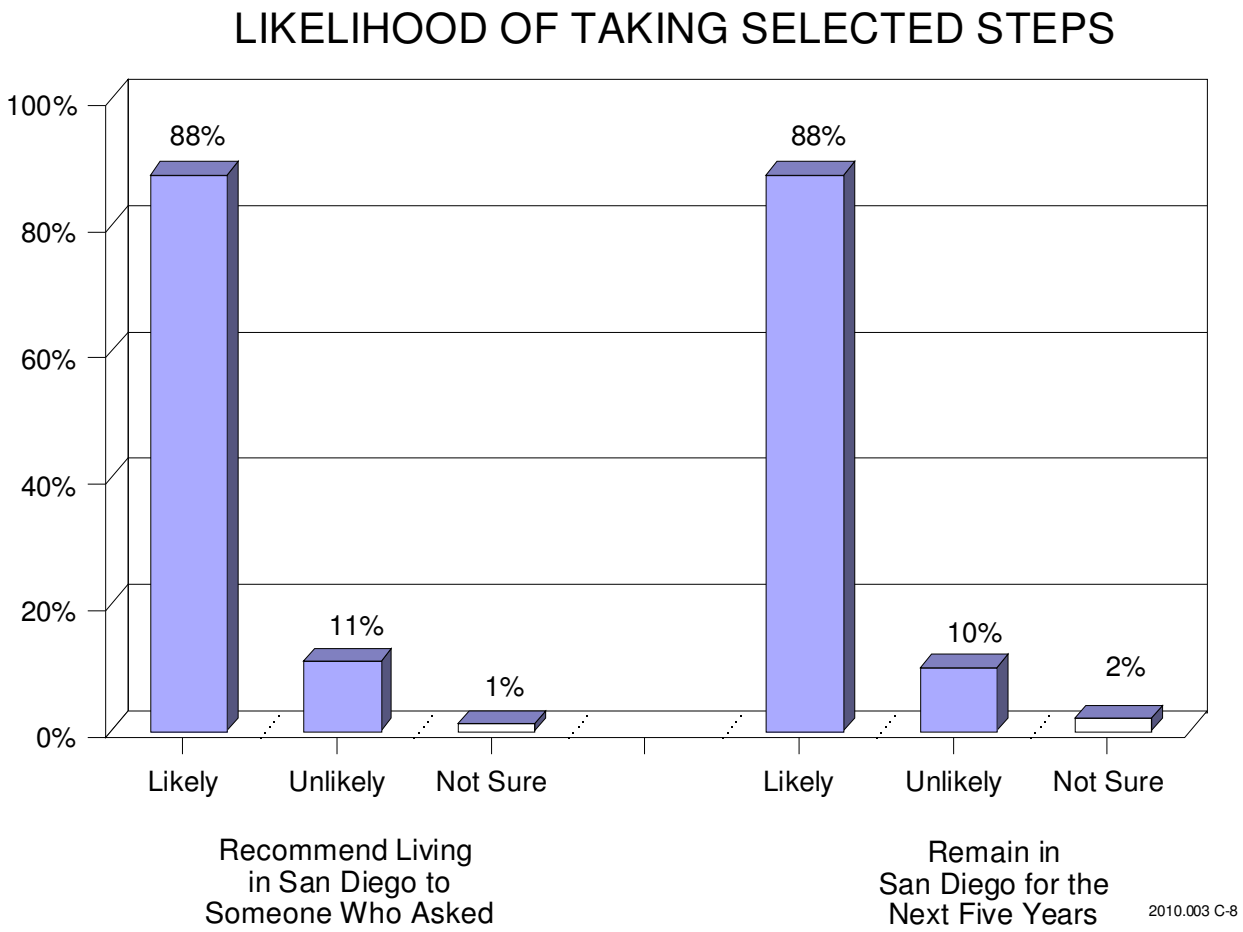
- **QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN DIEGO (TABLE 10)**

  Residents rate the quality of life in San Diego very highly, with over eight out of ten residents (84%) indicating it is either excellent (31%) or good (53%). In comparison, 14 percent of residents rate the quality of life as fair, while only two percent rate it as poor.



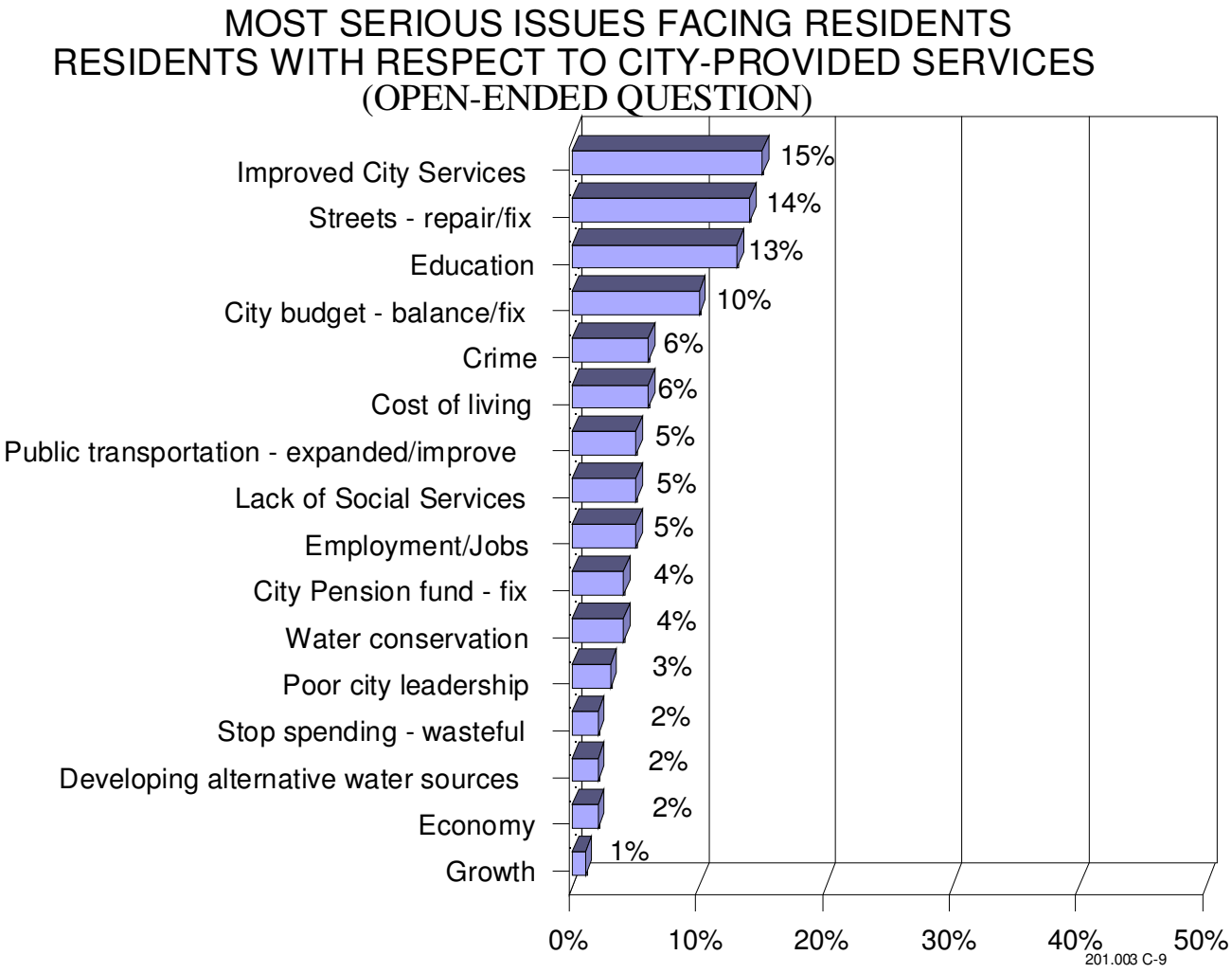
- **LIKELIHOOD OF RECOMMENDING SAN DIEGO/REMAINING IN SAN DIEGO (TABLE 11)**

  Nearly nine out of ten residents (88%) indicate that they are likely to either recommend San Diego as a place to live (49% very likely/39% somewhat likely) or to remain in San Diego for the next five years (66% very likely/22% somewhat likely).



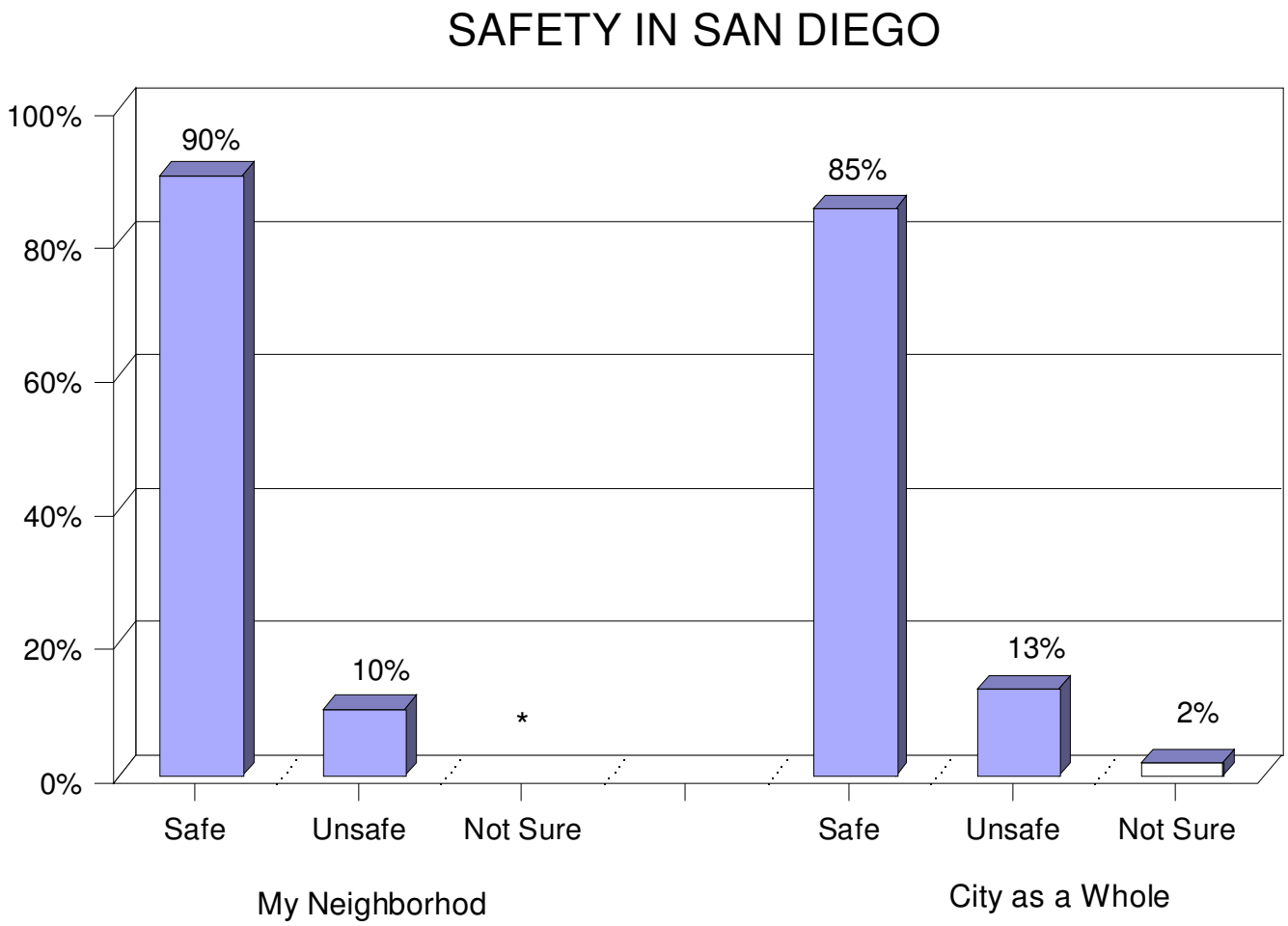
- **MOST SERIOUS ISSUE FACING RESIDENTS (TABLE 12)**

When San Diego residents are asked to indicate the most serious issue facing residents with respect to services provided by the City, improved city services, street repairs, education and fixing the budget lead the list.



- **ATTITUDES ABOUT SAFETY IN SAN DIEGO (TABLE 13)**

Ninety percent of residents rate the safety in their neighborhood in positive terms (39% very safe/51% somewhat safe), while 85 percent rate the safety in the City as a whole in positive terms (12% very safe/73% somewhat safe). These readings are slightly improved from a similar resident survey conducted for the City of San Diego in 2004 (86% positive neighborhood, 77% positive City as a whole).



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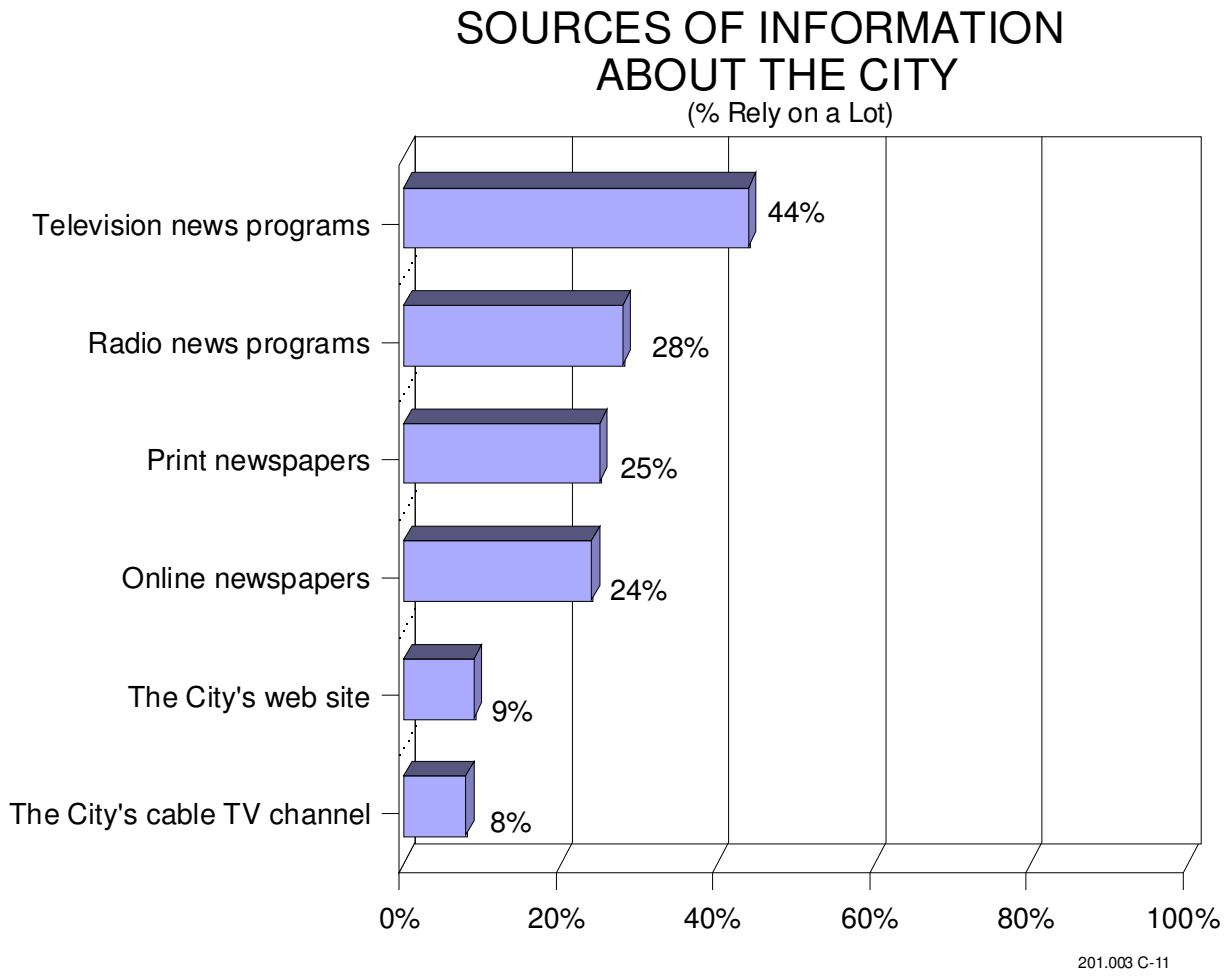
*Indicates % less than .5

- **SOURCES OF INFORMATION (TABLE 14)**

The most commonly relied on source of information about what is happening in the City of San Diego is local television programs with 44 percent of residents indicating they rely on such programs a lot. In comparison, 28 percent rely on radio news programs a lot, while 25 percent rely on print newspapers a lot and 24 percent rely on online newspapers a lot. The data also reveals that few residents rely on either the City's website or cable TV channel a lot (9% and 8%, respectively).



DETAIL OF THE FINDINGS

EVALUATION OF CITY IN SELECTED AREAS

San Diego residents were asked to evaluate the City in four specific areas:

Job City Does Delivering to Residents

A slight majority of residents (51%) offer a positive evaluation on the job the City does delivering services with six percent offering an excellent rating and 45 percent a good rating. Thirty-six percent offer a fair rating and ten percent a poor rating. These figures are relatively consistent across population subgroups.

Value of Services You Receive for Taxes You Pay

Less than a majority of residents (47%) give the City a positive reading for the value of the services they receive for the taxes they pay (6% excellent, 41% good), while 34 percent offer a fair rating. The positive readings tend to increase with age and are higher among whites (53%) than minorities (37%).

Overall Direction City is Taking

Nearly equal volumes of residents offer positive (32%) and negative (27%) ratings regarding the overall direction the City is taking. An additional third of residents (35%) offer only a fair rating.

Job City Does Listening to Citizens

Only 28 percent of residents offer a positive rating on the job the City does listening to residents, while 25 percent offer a negative rating and 40 percent a fair rating. These readings are consistent across population subgroups.

TABLE 1: EVALUATION OF CITY IN SELECTED AREAS

"Next, would you rate each of the following as excellent, good, fair or poor?"

	Job City Does Delivering Services to Residents	Value of Services You Receive for Taxes You Pay	Overall Direction City is Taking	Job City Does Listening to Citizens
Excellent	6%	6%	4%	2%
Good	45	41	28	26
Fair	36	34	35	40
Poor	10	18	27	25
Not sure	3	1	6	7
	100%	100%	100%	100%

TOTAL EXCELLENT/GOOD

	Job City Does Delivering Services to Residents	Value of Services You Receive for Taxes You Pay	Overall Direction City is Taking	Job City Does Listening to Citizens
TOTAL	51%	47%	32%	28%
GENDER				
Male	49	49	33	28
Female	53	45	31	27
AGE				
Under 35	49	44	38	30
35 to 49	54	43	28	28
50 to 64	46	49	25	25
65 or over	58	61	42	30
ETHNICITY				
White	55	53	31	29
Minority	45	37	33	27
INCOME				
Under $30,000	54	46	35	28
$30,000 to $59,999	47	37	32	26
$60,000 to $89,999	49	51	30	33
$90,000 or over	52	47	29	25

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ATTITUDE ABOUT HOW ESSENTIAL SELECTED CITY SERVICES ARE

San Diego residents were asked to indicate how essential they felt each of 17 City services are on a scale of one (not essential) to four (absolutely essential). As may be seen on the following table, five of the services receive "absolutely essential" reading from a majority of residents with mean readings of 3.3 or more:

- Fire services (83%, 3.8)
- Police services (78%, 3.7)
- Emergency medical services (76%, 3.7)
- Residential trash collection services (62%, 3.5)
- Fire prevention programs (52%, 3.3)

Those services which receive the lowest readings are: 1) neighborhood code enforcement (23%, 2.7); 2) art and cultural programs (23%, 2.8) and; 3) graffiti removal (24%, 2.8).

TABLE 2: ATTITUDE ABOUT HOW ESSENTIAL SELECTED CITY SERVICES ARE

"As you know, the City of San Diego provides various services to the community. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means you think a service is not essential and 4 means you think a service is absolutely essential, how essential do you feel each of the following City services are?"

	Not Essential 1	2	3	Absolutely Essential 4	Not Sure	MEAN RATING[1]
Fire services	1%	3%	12%	83%	1%	3.8
Police services	2	3	16	78	1	3.7
Emergency medical services	2	4	17	76	1	3.7
Residential trash collection services	3	6	28	62	1	3.5
Fire prevention programs	3	14	28	52	3	3.3
Pollution prevention in oceans and bays	4	12	34	48	2	3.3
Lifeguard service at the beaches	2	14	34	47	3	3.3
Residential recycling services	4	14	33	48	1	3.3
Maintenance of beaches and parks	1	15	42	41	1	3.2
Street and sidewalk maintenance	4	13	41	42	*	3.2
Branch libraries	4	16	38	41	1	3.2
Parks and recreation programs	2	19	42	36	1	3.1
Homeless services	6	22	37	32	3	3.0
Existing main library downtown	12	22	31	29	6	2.8
Graffiti removal	7	32	35	24	2	2.8
Art and cultural programs	10	26	40	23	1	2.8
Neighborhood code enforcement	12	25	35	23	5	2.7

[1] The higher the mean, the more essential the service

* Indicates % less than .5

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SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

San Diego residents were next asked to reveal their level of satisfaction with each of 25 services provided by the City using a four-point scale (very dissatisfied -- very satisfied). Receiving the highest satisfaction readings from residents are seven categories with ratings of 3.00 or higher:

- Trash collection services (3.25)
- Fire response to calls for service (3.18)
- Recycling collection services (3.15)
- Beach lifeguard service (3.09)
- Parking availability in your neighborhood (3.03)
- Programs at branch libraries (3.01)
- Maintenance of parks and its facilities (3.00)

Also receiving positive ratings between 2.81 and 2.99 are 15 additional City services:

- Police response to calls for service (2.99)
- Programs at recreational centers (2.97)
- Programs at existing main library downtown (2.96)
- Cleanliness of beaches (2.96)
- Arts and cultural programs (2.95)
- Service hours at existing main library downtown (2.94)
- Tree maintenance on public property (2.93)
- Recreation center service hours (2.92)
- Frequency of street sweeping (2.92)
- Efforts to eliminate graffiti (2.92)
- Branch library service hours (2.86)
- Flood control efforts (2.86)
- Parking enforcement efforts (2.86)
- Street lighting (2.83)
- Conditions of neighborhood sidewalks (2.81)

The final three City services studied receive low ratings under 2.50:

- Efforts to address homelessness (2.45)
- Condition of City streets (2.28)
- Downtown parking availability (2.18)

TABLE 3: SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES

"Next, would you say you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with each of the following in San Diego?"

	Very Satisfied (4)	Satisfied (3)	Dis-satisfied (2)	Very Dis-satisfied (1)	Not Sure	MEAN RATING[1]
Trash collection services	29%	66%	3%	1%	1%	3.25
Fire response to calls for service	21	53	4	2	20	3.18
Recycling collection services	24	65	7	1	3	3.15
Beach lifeguard service	16	66	6	1	11	3.09
Parking availability in your neighborhood	26	55	13	5	1	3.03
Programs at branch libraries	10	57	8	1	24	3.01
Maintenance of parks and its facilities	14	71	11	1	3	3.00
Police response to calls for service	16	54	10	4	16	2.99
Programs at recreational centers	8	59	8	1	24	2.97
Programs at existing main library downtown	5	46	5	1	43	2.96
Cleanliness of beaches	14	64	14	2	6	2.96
Arts and cultural programs	8	68	11	1	12	2.95
Service hours at existing main library downtown	6	46	7	1	40	2.94
Tree maintenance on public property	10	66	13	2	9	2.93
Recreation center service hours	5	59	8	2	26	2.92
Frequency of street sweeping	11	68	12	3	6	2.92
Efforts to eliminate graffiti	9	66	13	2	10	2.92
Branch library service hours	9	57	16	3	15	2.86
Flood control efforts	8	56	13	3	20	2.86
Parking enforcement efforts	9	64	13	5	9	2.86
Street lighting	11	63	21	3	2	2.83
Condition of neighborhood sidewalks	11	63	20	4	2	2.81
Efforts to address home-lessness	3	41	36	7	13	2.45
Condition of city streets	4	37	41	17	1	2.28
Downtown parking availability	3	31	38	20	8	2.18

The higher the mean, the greater the satisfaction (among those with opinion)

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CITY SPENDING PRIORITIES

After residents had evaluated each of the 25 service areas under consideration, they were asked to indicate whether they would or would not be willing to pay more for them through taxes or fees in order to maintain them or avoid further cuts. Four services are mentioned by at least a majority of residents as areas where they would be willing to pay more:

- Fire response to calls for service (70%)
- Police response to calls for service (68%)
- Condition of City streets (60%)
- Maintenance of parks and its facilities (55%)

Of particular interest among the four service spending priorities noted above, is the fact that they include two of the three public safety categories tested. This pattern clearly reveals the high priority which residents give these service areas.

On the other end of the spectrum, the following services receive the lowest spending priority readings with at least 70 percent or more of residents indicating they would not be willing to pay more for each.

- Downtown parking availability (70%)
- Programs at existing main library downtown (70%)
- Frequency of street sweeping (75%)
- Parking enforcement efforts (77%)
- Parking availability in your neighborhood (78%)

TABLE 4: WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE
TO MAINTAIN CITY SERVICES

"Now I'd like to quickly read the list again, but this time please tell me if each is one you would or would not be willing to pay more for through increased taxes or fees in order to maintain or avoid further cuts."

	Would	Would Not	Not Sure
Fire response to calls for service	70%	28%	2%
Police response to calls for service	68	29	3
Condition of City streets	60	38	2
Maintenance of parks and its facilities	55	44	1
Beach lifeguard service	49	49	2
Cleanliness of beaches	49	49	2
Efforts to address homelessness	49	47	4
Recycling collection services	48	50	4
Trash collection services	46	52	2
Street lighting	45	53	2
Programs at recreational centers	44	54	2

(CONTINUED)

(CONT.) TABLE 4: WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE TO MAINTAIN CITY SERVICES

	Would	Would Not	Not Sure
Condition of neighborhood sidewalks	42%	56%	2%
Flood control efforts	40	56	4
Programs at branch libraries	38	57	5
Arts and cultural programs	38	60	2
Branch library service hours	37	60	3
Recreation center service hours	35	61	4
Efforts to eliminate graffiti	35	62	3
Tree maintenance on public property	31	67	2
Downtown parking availability	28	70	2
Service hours at existing main library downtown	25	69	6
Programs at existing main library downtown	25	70	5
Frequency of street sweeping	23	75	2
Parking availability in your neighborhood	21	78	1
Parking enforcement efforts	21	77	2

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Next in this section, we present a Priority Spending Index. This Index correlates the earlier discussed service satisfaction ratings with residents' willingness to pay more to maintain or avoid further service cuts. The effect of this Index is that it affords higher spending priority to those services that receive lower satisfaction readings.

As may be seen in the following table, the result of this exercise is a slight reordering of the top spending priorities with the condition of City streets receiving the highest Index reading of 263.2, followed by police response to calls for service (227.4), fire response to calls for service (220.1) and efforts to address homelessness (200.0). On the other end of the spectrum, parking availability in your neighborhood receives the lowest reading of 69.3.

TABLE 5: PRIORITY SPENDING INDEX

	Mean Rating	Willing to Pay More	Priority Spending Index
Condition of city streets	2.28	60%	263.2
Police response to calls for service	2.99	68	227.4
Fire response to calls for service	3.18	70	220.1
Efforts to address homelessness	2.45	49	200.0
Maintenance of parks and its facilities	3.00	55	183.3
Cleanliness of beaches	2.96	49	165.5
Street lighting	2.83	45	159.0
Beach lifeguard service	3.09	49	158.6
Recycling collection services	3.15	48	152.4
Condition of neighborhood sidewalks	2.81	42	149.5
Programs at recreational centers	2.97	44	148.1
Trash collection services	3.25	46	141.5
Flood control efforts	2.86	40	139.9
Branch library service hours	2.86	37	129.4
Arts and cultural programs	2.95	38	128.8
Downtown parking availability	2.18	28	128.4
Programs at branch libraries	3.01	38	126.2
Recreation center service hours	2.92	35	119.9
Efforts to eliminate graffiti	2.92	35	119.9
Tree maintenance on public property	2.93	31	105.8
Service hours at existing main library downtown	2.94	25	85.0
Programs at existing main library downtown	2.96	25	84.4
Frequency of street sweeping	2.92	23	78.8
Parking enforcement efforts	2.86	21	73.4
Parking availability in your neighborhood	3.03	21	69.3

Calculation: willing to pay more divided by mean rating

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REACTION TO SELECT STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH BUDGET DEFICIT

When residents are asked if they approve or disapprove of each of six strategies to deal with the City's budget deficit, one strategy, "use more private contractors, implement managed competition," receives approval from 74 percent of residents (20% strongly approve/54% approve) with disapproval of only 20 percent. Two additional strategies also receive approval from a majority of residents, but generate significant disapproval readings: 1) generate new revenue through increased fees to help avoid service reductions (59% approve/36% disapprove); 2) combination of new revenues and service cuts (52% approve/40% disapprove). Each of the three remaining strategies receive disapproval readings which are nearly equal to or exceed their approval readings:

- Further reductions to City employee salaries and benefits (48% approve/47% disapprove)
- Generate new revenue through increased taxes to help avoid service reductions (46% approve/50% disapprove)
- Eliminate or further reduce City services (26% approve/70% disapprove)

TABLE 6: REACTION TO SELECT STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH BUDGET DEFICIT

"Next, as you are probably aware, the City of San Diego is currently dealing with a significant budget deficit. To solve this problem, other cities have implemented a variety of strategies. I'd like to describe several of them to you and then have you tell me if you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of each."

	Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Not Sure	TOTAL APPROVE[1]
Use more private contractors, implement managed competition	20%	54%	15%	5%	6%	74%
Generate new revenue through increased fees to help avoid service reductions	5	54	26	10	5	59
Combination of new revenues and service cuts	6	46	34	6	8	52
Further reductions to City employee salaries and benefits	11	37	36	11	6	48
Generate new revenue through increased taxes to help avoid service reductions	6	40	35	15	4	46
Eliminate or further reduce City services	3	23	56	14	4	26

[1]Strongly approve + approve

Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

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On the following table, it may be seen that males tend to offer higher approval ratings than do females.

TABLE 7: REACTION TO SELECTED STRATEGIES
TO DEAL WITH BUDGET DEFICIT – DETAIL

TOTAL APPROVE

	Private Contractors	Increased Fees	Combo Revenue/ Cuts	Employees Salary Reductions	Increased Taxes	Reduced Services
TOTAL	74%	59%	52%	48%	46%	26%
GENDER						
Male	80	62	53	55	49	34
Female	69	56	50	40	43	17
AGE						
Under 35	78	66	57	38	54	27
35 to 49	73	57	52	51	41	27
50 to 64	75	57	51	58	42	29
65 or over	67	56	42	44	45	25
ETHNICITY						
White	76	59	51	50	46	26
Minority	71	59	52	44	46	26
INCOME						
Under $30,000	64	51	36	46	45	18
$30,000 to $59,999	77	61	56	46	47	20
$60,000 to $89,999	74	59	54	47	46	30
$90,000 or over	80	63	57	53	48	29

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In a follow-up question which asked residents for their suggestions on other ways to reduce the budget deficit, 74 percent said they did not have any. The most frequently mentioned suggestion was to reduce wasteful spending with a reading of 13 percent.

TABLE 8: OTHER SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE DEFICIT

"Do you have any other suggestions on how the City could reduce its budget deficit?"

None	74%
Cut wasteful spending, better money management	13
Reduce number of employees, cross-train, more efficient	7
Stimulate economy – attract new businesses, increase tourism	3
Sell public land/real estate	2
Enforce laws – collect fines	1
Stop using outside contractors	1
Miscellaneous others	1

SAN DIEGO AS A PLACE TO LIVE

Better than nine out of ten San Diego residents (97%) either strongly agree (47%) or agree (50%) that "overall San Diego is a good place to live." This reading is universal across all population subgroups.

TABLE 9: SAN DIEGO AS A PLACE TO LIVE

"To begin, would you say you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement, 'Overall, San Diego is a good place to live'."

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	TOTAL AGREE[1]
TOTAL	47%	50%	2%	1%	*%	97%
GENDER						
Male	50	47	2	1	0	97
Female	43	53	2	1	1	96
AGE						
Under 35	50	48	1	0	1	98
35 to 49	43	51	4	1	1	94
50 to 64	49	47	2	2	0	96
65 or over	42	54	3	1	0	96
ETHNICITY						
White	50	47	2	1	*	97
Minority	43	54	3	*	*	97
INCOME						
Under $30,000	32	61	6	1	0	93
$30,000 to $59,999	47	48	3	1	1	95
$60,000 to $89,999	46	51	1	1	1	97
$90,000 or over	55	44	1	0	0	91

[1]Strongly agree + agree

*Indicates % less than .5

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QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN DIEGO

Residents rate the quality of life in San Diego very highly, with over eight out of ten residents (84%) indicating it is either excellent (31%) or good (53%). In comparison, 14 percent of residents rate the quality of life as fair, while only two percent rate it as poor.

When residents' attitudes about the quality of life in San Diego are analyzed based on population subgroup, we find that positive impressions tend to increase in correlation to increases in yearly income and that white residents reveal a more positive impression about the quality of life in the City than do minority residents.

TABLE 10: QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN DIEGO

"On the whole, would you say that the quality of life in the City of San Diego is excellent, good, fair or poor?"

	Excel-lent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure	TOTAL POSITIVE
TOTAL	31%	53%	14%	2%	*%	84%
GENDER						
Male	34	48	16	2	0	82
Female	28	57	13	2	*	85
AGE						
Under 35	33	54	12	1	0	87
35 to 49	27	54	17	1	1	81
50 to 64	32	51	15	2	0	83
65 or over	34	49	14	3	0	83
ETHNICITY						
White	35	51	13	1	0	86
Minority	24	54	18	3	1	78
INCOME						
Under $30,000	22	56	16	6	0	78
$30,000 to $59,999	22	56	18	3	1	78
$60,000 to $89,999	30	49	20	1	0	79
$90,000 or over	40	52	8	0	0	92

*Indicates % less than .5

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LIKELIHOOD OF RECOMMENDING SAN DIEGO/REMAINING IN SAN DIEGO

Nearly nine out of ten residents (88%) indicate that they are likely to either recommend San Diego as a place to live or to remain in San Diego for the next five years. These patterns are universal across population subgroups.

TABLE 11: LIKELIHOOD OF TAKING SELECTED STEPS

"How likely are you to do each of the following – very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely?"

	Recommend Living in San Diego to Someone Who Asked	Remain in San Diego for the Next Five Years
Very likely	49%	66%
Somewhat likely	39	22
Somewhat unlikely	7	5
Very unlikely	4	5
Not sure	1	2
	100%	100%
	TOTAL LIKELY	
TOTAL	88%	88%
GENDER		
Male	88	86
Female	88	90
AGE		
Under 35	95	86
35 to 49	83	85
50 to 64	85	89
65 or over	89	97
ETHNICITY		
White	86	87
Minority	94	92
INCOME		
Under $30,000	87	89
$30,000 to $59,999	87	92
$60,000 to $89,999	88	89
$90,000 or over	92	87

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MOST SERIOUS ISSUE FACING RESIDENTS

When San Diego residents are asked to indicate the most serious issue facing residents with respect to services provided by the City, improved city services, street repairs, education and fixing the budget lead the list.

TABLE 12: MOST SERIOUS ISSUE FACING RESIDENTS

"Next, what do you think is the most serious issue facing the residents of San Diego, with respect to services provided by the City, that you would like to see City government do something about?" (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)

		GENDER	
	TOTAL	Male	Female
TRANSPORTATION (NET)	20%	19%	21%
Streets-repair/fix	14	13	15
Public transportation-expanded/ improve	5	5	5
Other	3	3	3
CITY GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT (NET)	17	20	14
Budget-balance/fix	10	12	7
Pension fund-fix	4	4	4
Poor leadership	3	4	3
Stop spending-wasteful	2	2	2
Improved City Services	15	14	16
Education	13	9	16
ENVIRONMENTAL (NET)	9	8	9
Conserving water	4	3	4
Developing alternative water sources	2	3	2
Other	3	2	3
Crime	6	6	6
Cost of living	6	6	6
Lack of Social Services	5	6	4
Employment/Jobs	5	4	7
Economy	2	1	2
Growth	1	1	1
Miscellaneous	3	4	3
None/not sure	14	15	13

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ATTITUDES ABOUT SAFETY IN SAN DIEGO

Residents were asked about safety in their neighborhood and the City as a whole. Here we find that 90 percent of residents rate the safety in their neighborhood in positive terms (39% very safe/51% somewhat safe), while 85 percent rate the safety in the City as a whole in positive terms (12% very safe/73% somewhat safe). These readings are slightly improved from a similar resident survey conducted for the City of San Diego in 2004 (86% positive neighborhood, 77% positive City as a whole). Lower income residents tend to offer slightly lower safety readings than higher income residents.

TABLE 13: ATTITUDES ABOUT SAFETY IN SAN DIEGO

"Next, how would you rate the safety of your neighborhood?"

"How about the safety of the City of San Diego as a whole? Would you say it is..."

	Neighbor-hood	City as a Whole
Very safe	39%	12%
Somewhat safe	51	73
Somewhat unsafe	8	11
Very unsafe	2	2
Not sure	*	2
	100%	100%
	TOTAL SAFE	
TOTAL	90%	85%
GENDER		
Male	89	86
Female	90	84
AGE		
Under 35	87	85
35 to 49	90	87
50 to 64	92	84
65 or over	92	83
ETHNICITY		
White	92	86
Minority	85	83
INCOME		
Under $30,000	83	80
$30,000 to $59,999	86	83
$60,000 to $89,999	92	83
$90,000 or over	90	91

*Indicates % less than .5

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The most commonly relied on source of information about what is happening in the City of San Diego is local television programs with 44 percent of residents indicating they rely on such programs a lot. In comparison, 28 percent rely on radio news programs a lot, while 25 percent rely on print newspapers a lot and 24 percent rely on online newspapers a lot. The data also reveals that few residents rely on either the City's website or cable TV channel a lot (9% and 8%, respectively) and that sources vary greatly depending on population subgroups.

TABLE 14: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

"Next, do you rely a lot, some, only a little or not at all on each of the following for information about the City of San Diego?"

	A Lot	Some	Only a Little	Not at All	Not Sure
Television news programs	44%	28%	15%	12%	1%
Radio news programs	28	25	18	28	1
Print newspapers	25	19	17	39	*
Online newspapers	24	27	16	32	1
The City's web site	9	14	19	57	1
The City's cable TV channel	8	12	14	64	2

% A LOT

	Television News Programs	Radio News Programs	Print News-papers	Online News-papers	The City's Web Site	The City's Cable TV Channel
TOTAL	44%	28%	25%	24%	9%	8%
GENDER						
Male	39	30	25	25	9	6
Female	49	27	26	23	9	10
AGE						
Under 35	44	25	16	35	12	9
35 to 49	44	30	21	23	9	8
50 to 64	45	30	32	20	9	8
65 or over	44	28	46	9	3	7
ETHNICITY						
White	38	26	31	19	6	5
Minority	57	29	15	32	14	15
INCOME						
Under $30,000	61	33	27	17	19	19
$30,000 to $59,999	44	26	27	28	9	11
$60,000 to $89,999	41	27	21	21	9	5
$90,000 or over	40	27	28	27	6	3

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APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this report is based on 600 in-depth telephone interviews conducted with San Diego heads of household. Respondent selection on this project was accomplished via a computer-generated, random digit dial telephone sample which selects households based on residential telephone prefixes and includes all unlisted and newly listed households. This methodology was selected because it ensures a randomly selected sample of households proportionately allocated throughout the sample universe.

The questionnaire used in this study was designed by BRC in conjunction with the City of San Diego's Office of the Independent Budget Analyst. Both English and Spanish versions of the questionnaire were used in the study.

All of the interviewing on this project was conducted during March 2010 at the Center's central location Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility where each interviewer worked under the direct supervision of BRC supervisory personnel. All of the interviewers who worked on this project were professional interviewers of the Center. Each had prior experience with BRC and received a thorough briefing on the particulars of this study. During the briefing, the interviewers were trained on: (a) the purpose of the study; (b) sampling procedures; (c) administration of the questions; and (d) other project-related factors. In addition, each interviewer completed a set of practice interviews to ensure that all procedures were understood and followed.

Interviewing on this study was conducted during an approximately equal cross-section of evening and weekend hours. This procedure was followed to ensure that all households were equally represented, regardless of work schedules. Further, during the interviewing segment of this study, up to eight separate attempts, on different days and during different times of day, were made to contact each selected resident. Only after eight unsuccessful attempts was a selected household substituted in the sample. Using this methodology, the full sample was completed and partially completed interviews were not accepted nor counted toward fulfillment of the total sample quotas.

One hundred percent of the completed interviews were edited and any containing errors of administration (missed skip patterns) were pulled, the respondent re-called, and the errors corrected. In addition, 15 percent of each interviewer's work was randomly selected for validation to ensure its authenticity and correctness. No problems were encountered during this phase of interviewing quality control.

As the data collection segment of this study was being undertaken, completed interviews were turned over to BRC's in-house Coding Department. The Coding Department edited, validated and coded the interviews. Upon completion of coding, a series of validity and logic checks were run on the data to insure it was "clean" (did not contain any errors). Following this procedure, the survey sample was weighted by age and gender to bring it more closely into line with the actual estimated distribution of heads of household in San Diego.

	Unweighted Sample	Weighted Sample
Under 35	30.2%	30.2%
35 to 49	21.8	31.8
50 to 64	33.3	23.3
65 or over	13.8	13.8
Refused	.9	.9
	100.0%	100.0%

When analyzing the results of this survey, it should be kept in mind that all surveys are subject to sampling error. Sampling error, stated simply, is the difference between the results obtained from a sample and those which would be obtained by surveying the entire population under consideration. The size of sampling error varies, to some extent, with the number of interviews completed and with the division of opinion on a particular question.

An estimate of the sampling error range for this study is provided in the following table. The sampling error presented in the table has been calculated at the confidence level most frequently used by social scientists, the 95 percent level. The sampling error figures shown in the table are average figures that represent the maximum error for the sample bases shown (i.e., for the survey findings where the division of opinion is approximately 50%/50%). Survey findings that show a one-sided distribution of opinion, such as 70%/30% or 90%/10%, are usually subject to slightly lower sampling tolerances than those shown in the table.

As may be seen in the table, the overall sampling error for this study is approximately +/- 4.1 percent when the sample is studied in total (i.e., all 600 cases). However, when subsets of the total sample are studied, the amount of sampling error increases based on the sample size within the subset.

Sample Size	Approximate Sampling Error At A 95% Confidence Level (Plus/Minus Percentage Of Sampling Tolerance)
600	4.1%
500	4.5
400	5.0
300	5.8
200	7.1
100	10.1

SAMPLE PROFILE[1]

GENDER	
Male	50%
Female	50
	100%
AGE	
Under 35	30%
35 to 49	32
50 to 64	24
65 or over	14
	100%
MEDIAN (years)	44.1
INCOME	
Under $30,000	14%
$30,000 to $59,999	19
$60,000 to $89,999	24
$90,000 or over	43
	100%
MEDIAN (000)	$80.9
ETHNICITY	
White	65%
Hispanic	16
Asian American	14
Black	4
American Indian	1
	100%

[1]Weighted

BEHAVIOR RESEARCH CENTER, INC.
45 East Monterey Way
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 258-4554

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY
RESIDENTS' OPINIONS ON CITY SERVICES
Spring 2010

JOB ID 2010003

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm with the Behavior Research Center. We're conducting a survey among San Diego residents on City services and I'd like to speak with you for a few minutes.

A. Is your residence located within the San Diego city limits?

IF YES: CONTINUE IF NO: THANK AND TERMINATE

B. And are you the (male/female) head of your household?

IF YES: CONTINUE IF NO: ASK TO SPEAK WITH MALE/FEMALE HEAD, RE INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND CONTINUE. IF NONE AVAILABLE, ARRANGE CALLBACK.

Male...1
Female...2

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1. To begin, would you say you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement, "Overall, San Diego is a good place to live."

Strongly agree...1
Agree...2
Disagree...3
Strongly disagree...4
Not sure...5

2. On the whole, would you say that the quality of life in the City of San Diego is excellent, good, fair or poor?

Excellent...1
Good...2
Fair...3
Poor...4
Not sure...5

3. How likely are you to do each of the following – very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely?

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Not Sure
A. Recommend living in San Diego to someone who asked	1	2	3	4	5
B. Remain in San Diego for the next five years	1	2	3	4	5

4. Next, what do you think is the most serious issue facing the residents of San Diego, with respect to services provided by the City, that you would like to see City government do something about? (PROBE)

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

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5. As you know, the City of San Diego provides various services to the community. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means you think a service is not essential, and 4 means you think a service is absolutely essential, how essential do you feel each of the following City services are? (ROTATE)

		Rating
A.	Police services	
B.	Fire services	
C.	Emergency medical services	
D.	Lifeguard services at the beaches	
E.	Fire prevention programs	
F.	Branch libraries	
G.	Existing main library downtown	
H.	Homeless services	
I.	Art and cultural programs	
J.	Parks and recreation programs	
K.	Maintenance of beaches and parks	
L.	Graffiti removal	
M.	Neighborhood code enforcement	
N.	Street and sidewalk maintenance	
O.	Pollution prevention in oceans and bays	
P.	Residential trash collection services	
Q.	Residential recycling services	

6. Next, would you say you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with each of the following in San Diego? (ROTATE)

		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dis-Satisfied	Very Dis-Satisfied	Not Sure
A.	Branch library service hours	1	2	3	4	5
B.	Programs at branch libraries	1	2	3	4	5
C.	Recreation center service hours	1	2	3	4	5
D.	Programs at recreational centers	1	2	3	4	5
E.	Service hours at existing main library downtown	1	2	3	4	5
F.	Programs at existing main library downtown	1	2	3	4	5
G.	Arts and cultural programs	1	2	3	4	5
H.	Beach lifeguard services	1	2	3	4	5
I.	Cleanliness of beaches	1	2	3	4	5
J.	Maintenance of parks and its facilities	1	2	3	4	5
K.	Condition of neighborhood sidewalks	1	2	3	4	5
L.	Condition of city streets	1	2	3	4	5
M.	Frequency of street sweeping	1	2	3	4	5
N.	Police response to calls for service	1	2	3	4	5
O.	Fire response to calls for service	1	2	3	4	5
P.	Tree maintenance on public property	1	2	3	4	5
Q.	Efforts to eliminate graffiti	1	2	3	4	5
R.	Efforts to address homelessness	1	2	3	4	5
S.	Trash collection services	1	2	3	4	5
T.	Recycling collection services	1	2	3	4	5
U.	Flood control efforts	1	2	3	4	5
V.	Downtown parking availability	1	2	3	4	5
W.	Parking availability in your neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5
X.	Parking enforcement efforts	1	2	3	4	5
Y.	Street lighting	1	2	3	4	5

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6a. Now I'd like to quickly read the list again, but this time please tell me if each is one you would or would not be willing to pay more for through increased taxes or fees in order to maintain or avoid further cuts. (ROTATE)

	Would	Would Not	Not Sure
A. Branch library service hours	1	2	3
B. Programs at branch libraries	1	2	3
C. Recreation center service hours	1	2	3
D. Programs at recreational centers	1	2	3
E. Service hours at existing main library downtown	1	2	3
F. Programs at existing main library downtown	1	2	3
G. Arts and cultural programs	1	2	3
H. Beach lifeguard services	1	2	3
I. Cleanliness of beaches	1	2	3
J. Maintenance of parks and its facilities	1	2	3
K. Condition of neighborhood sidewalks	1	2	3
L. Condition of city streets	1	2	3
M. Frequency of street sweeping	1	2	3
N. Police response to calls for service	1	2	3
O. Fire response to calls for service	1	2	3
P. Tree maintenance on public property	1	2	3
Q. Efforts to eliminate graffiti	1	2	3
R. Efforts to address homelessness	1	2	3
S. Trash collection services	1	2	3
T. Recycling collection services	1	2	3
U. Flood control efforts	1	2	3
V. Downtown parking availability	1	2	3
W. Parking availability in your neighborhood	1	2	3
X. Parking enforcement efforts	1	2	3
Y. Street lighting	1	2	3

7. Next, would you rate each of the following as excellent, good, fair or poor? (ROTATE)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
A. The value of services you receive for the taxes you pay	1	2	3	4	5
B. The overall direction the City is taking	1	2	3	4	5
C. The job the City does listening to citizens	1	2	3	4	5
D. The job the City does delivering services to residents	1	2	3	4	5

8. Next, how would you rate the safety of your neighborhood? Would you say your neighborhood is... (READ EACH EXCEPT "NOT SURE")

Very safe...1
Somewhat safe...2
Somewhat unsafe...3
Very unsafe...4
Not sure...5

9. How about the safety of the City of San Diego as a whole? Would you say it is...(READ EACH EXCEPT "NOT SURE")

Very safe...1
Somewhat safe...2
Somewhat unsafe...3
Very unsafe...4
Not sure...5

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10. Next, as you are probably aware, the City of San Diego is currently dealing with a significant budget deficit. To solve this problem other cities have implemented a variety of strategies. I'd like to describe several of them to you and then have you tell me if you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of each. (ROTATE A-E)

	Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Not Sure
A. Generate new revenue through increased fees to help avoid service reductions	1	2	3	4	5
B. Generate new revenue through increased taxes to help avoid service reductions	1	2	3	4	5
C. Eliminate or further reduce City services	1	2	3	4	5
D Further reductions to City employee salaries and benefits	1	2	3	4	5
E. Use more private contractors, implement managed competition	1	2	3	4	5
F. Combination of new revenues and service cuts	1	2	3	4	5

10a. Do you have any other suggestions on how the City could reduce its budget deficit?

_____

_____

11. Next, do you rely a lot, some, only a little, or not at all on each of the following for information about the City of San Diego?

	A Lot	Some	Only a Little	Not At All	Not Sure
A. Print newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
B. Online newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
C. Television news programs	1	2	3	4	5
D. Radio news programs	1	2	3	4	5
E. The City's web site	1	2	3	4	5
F. The City's cable tv channel	1	2	3	4	5

A. Now before I finish, I need a few pieces of information about yourself for classification purposes only. First, which of the following categories comes closest to your age? (READ EACH EXCEPT REFUSED)

Under 25...1
25 to 34...2
35 to 49...3
50 to 64...4
65 or over...5
(DO NOT READ) Refused...6

B. How many years have you lived in the City of San Diego? YEARS_____

C. Which of the following categories best describes your ethnic origin? (READ EACH EXCEPT REFUSED)

Hispanic or Latino...1
White, non-Hispanic...2
African American or Black, non-Hispanic...3
Asian or Pacific Islander...4
American Indian or Native American..5
or another Ethnic Group(SPECIFY)_____...6
(DO NOT READ) Refused...7

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D. And finally, was your total family income for last year, I mean before taxes and including everyone in your household, under or over $60,000?

UNDER $60,000
Was it under $30,000...1
or over $30,000...2
Refused...3

OVER $60,000
Was it under $90,000...4
or $90,000 or over...5
Refused...6
REFUSED OVERALL.....7

Thank you very much, that completes this interview. My supervisor may want to call you to verify that I conducted this interview so may I have your first name in order that he/she may do so? (VERIFY PHONE NUMBER)

NAME: _____ PHONE #: _____ _____

FROM SAMPLE: ZIP CODE:

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