

2019



Citizen Survey Report

Prepared By:
Samantha June Larson, PhD
Lisa Nahmens, MPA

University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh
Department of Public Administration

Introduction

Since 2009, the City of Oshkosh has partnered with the Department of Public Administration at the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh (UWO) to conduct the Oshkosh Citizen Survey. Residents are asked questions pertaining to their overall quality of life, feelings of safety, and city services. This report offers a detailed analysis of the results of the 2019 survey, which was conducted between February and May. These results are meant to provide insight into issues that are of importance to Oshkosh residents. This report is organized into the following sections.

First, the methodology section provides an overview of how the survey data was collected. It describes revisions to data collection efforts that were made in 2019 to simplify the overall process. It also reviews the statistical validity of the results.

Next, information about participant demographic characteristics is presented, including a breakdown of the proportion of participants by: sex, age, race, ethnicity, and annual household income.

Finally, responses to questions about the City of Oshkosh are presented. The section begins by presenting results concerning the quality of life. That is followed by an examination of how safe residents feel in their homes, neighborhoods, and business/commercial areas during the day and night. City service results are highlighted according to how residents rank their quality and how important they feel services are to the community overall. Twenty-eight services are grouped by department and presented under the subheadings of: public safety, public works, community services, economic development, parks, and transportation. Finally, an analysis of one special topic question on youth mental health is presented.

Methodology

The City distributed the citizen survey by utilizing the services contracted with Polco, an online polling company designed to connect local governments with their communities. The UWO research team collaborated with the City to distribute the survey using the online platform. The City advertised the survey on their website and via social media. The UWO research team also recruited participants at various locations throughout the City, including: Oshkosh State of the City 2019, Unity in Community Day at the Oshkosh Convention Center, Oshkosh Public Library, Oshkosh YMCA, and the Downtown Transit Center. Furthermore, a link to the survey was distributed through the UWO Announcements.

A total of 278 residents participated in the online survey. Of those, 183 (66%) were registered voters. The other 95 (34%) were not registered voters. Based on the total population of Oshkosh, the 278 responses achieved statistical validity based on a 90% confidence interval¹ (with a 5% margin of error²).

¹ The confidence level is used to express the degree of certainty that the results of the sample are an accurate reflection of the total City. It is commonly set at either 90%, 95%, or 99%.

² The margin of error illustrates how far above or below the result would be if everyone in the City completed the survey. For example, if 55% of residents said “yes” to a question, a 5% margin of error means that 50-60% of the total population would also answer “yes” if surveyed.

Participant Demographic Overview

Polco is able to provide demographic data related to sex and age based on its access to voter registration records. The following two charts are calculated based on those participants that are registered to vote. Chart 1 includes the breakdown of respondents by male and female. As previously noted, 34% of the respondents were not registered voters, so sex data was not available. There were 105 respondents (38%) identified as female and a slightly lower number, 78 respondents (28%), that were identified as male. The remaining 34% were not identified.

1. Participants by Sex

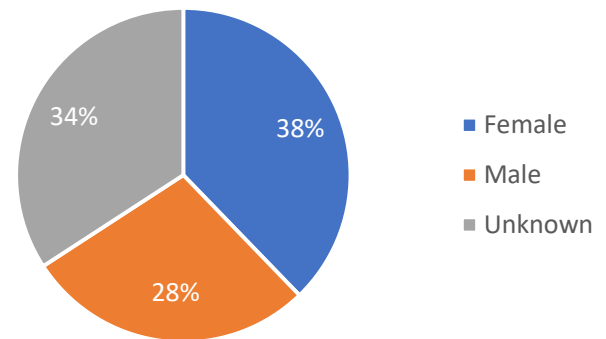
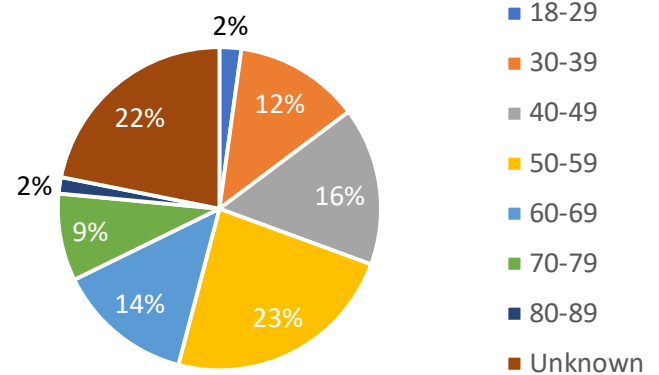


Chart 2 includes the proportion of participants by age range based on voter registration records. Approximately 25% were age 60 or older. The greatest proportion of survey respondents (23%) were in the 50-59 age group. The second highest age group was 40-49 (16%). Finally, approximately 14% were under 40 years of age. Age data was not available for 22% of participants.

2. Participants by Age



All participants were asked to identify the race that they identify with. As shown in Table 1, 263 (94.6%) of participants were White/Caucasian, .7% were Black or African American, 0% were American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, 1.1% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.4% were Two or More Races, and 2.2% identified as Other. Therefore, a total of 5.4% of participants were persons of color. Furthermore, Table 2 illustrates that 2.9% of participants were of Hispanic Origin.

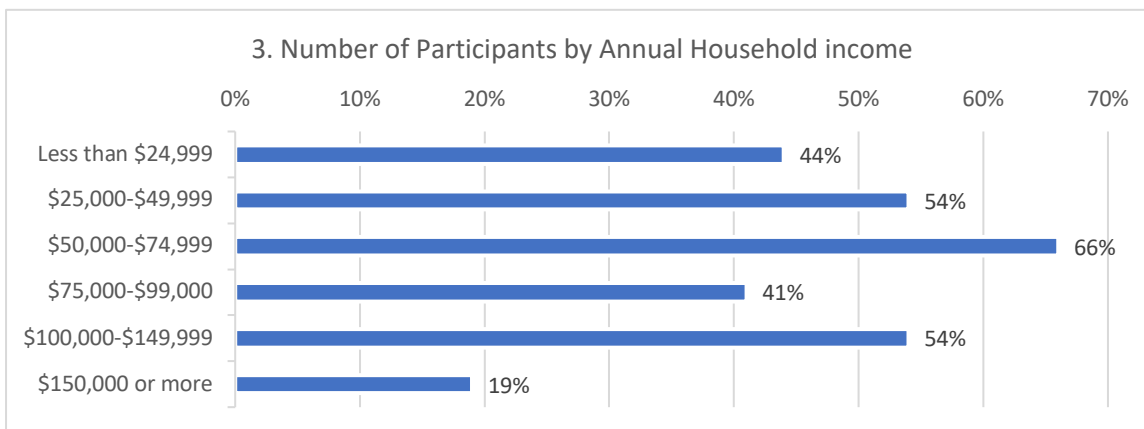
Table 1. Participants by Race

Race	Total Participants	%
White/Caucasian	263	94.6%
Black or African American	2	.7%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	0	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	1.1%
Two or More Races	4	1.4%
Other	6	2.2%
TOTAL	278	100%

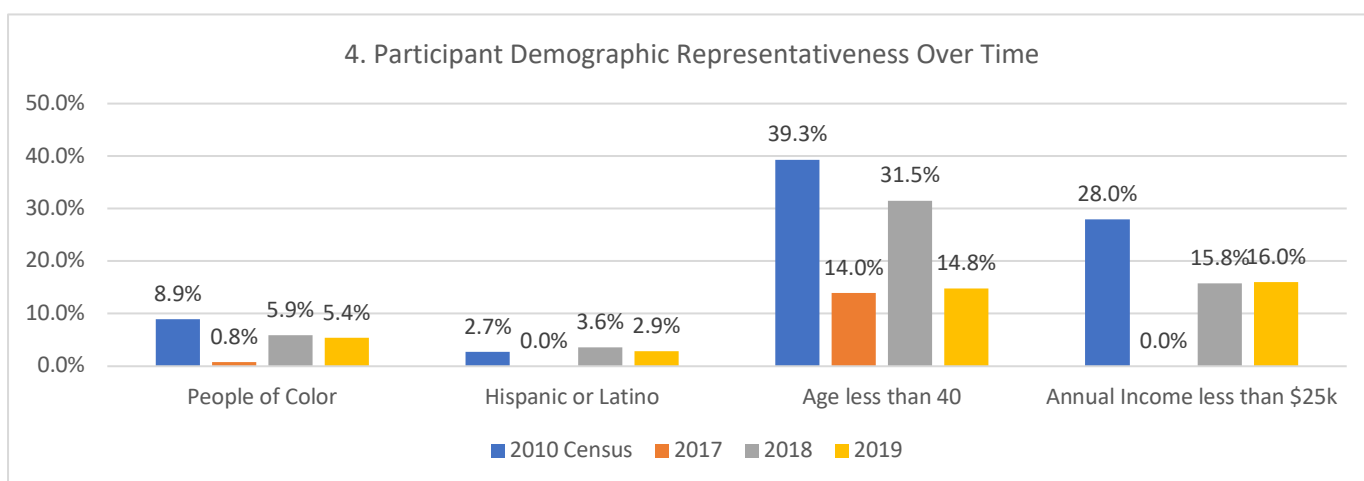
Table 2. Participants by Hispanic or Latino Origin

Hispanic or Latino Origin	Total Participants	%
Yes	8	2.9%
No	270	97.1%
TOTAL	278	100%

Participants were also asked to identify their annual household income. Responses from all 278 participants are included, and the total number of participants is reported for each income category in Chart 3. Those in households that made \$24,999 or less made up 44 (16%) of the participants, 54 participants (19%) earned \$25,000-\$49,999, the largest group of 66 participants (24%) made between \$50,000-\$74,999 annually, 41 (15%) made between \$75,000-\$99,000, 54 (19%) made \$100,000-\$149,999, and the smallest group of 19 participants (7%) made \$150,000 or more.



Finally, Chart 4 illustrates the percentage of participants that identify as People of Color, Hispanic or Latino, that are less than 40 years of age, and those that live in households that earn less than \$25,000 annually. Proportions are provided for the participants from the 2017, 2018, and 2019 surveys.



Notes: The age data is calculated using data from participants who are registered voters (n=183). Of those, 22% of participants are not accounted for when calculating the "Age less than 40" column.

The blue bars provide the actual percentage of each population in Oshkosh based on the 2010 Census. This shows how representative the participants have been over time. Efforts have been made to expand diversity of participants with some success. For instance, from 2017 to 2019, participants increased by:

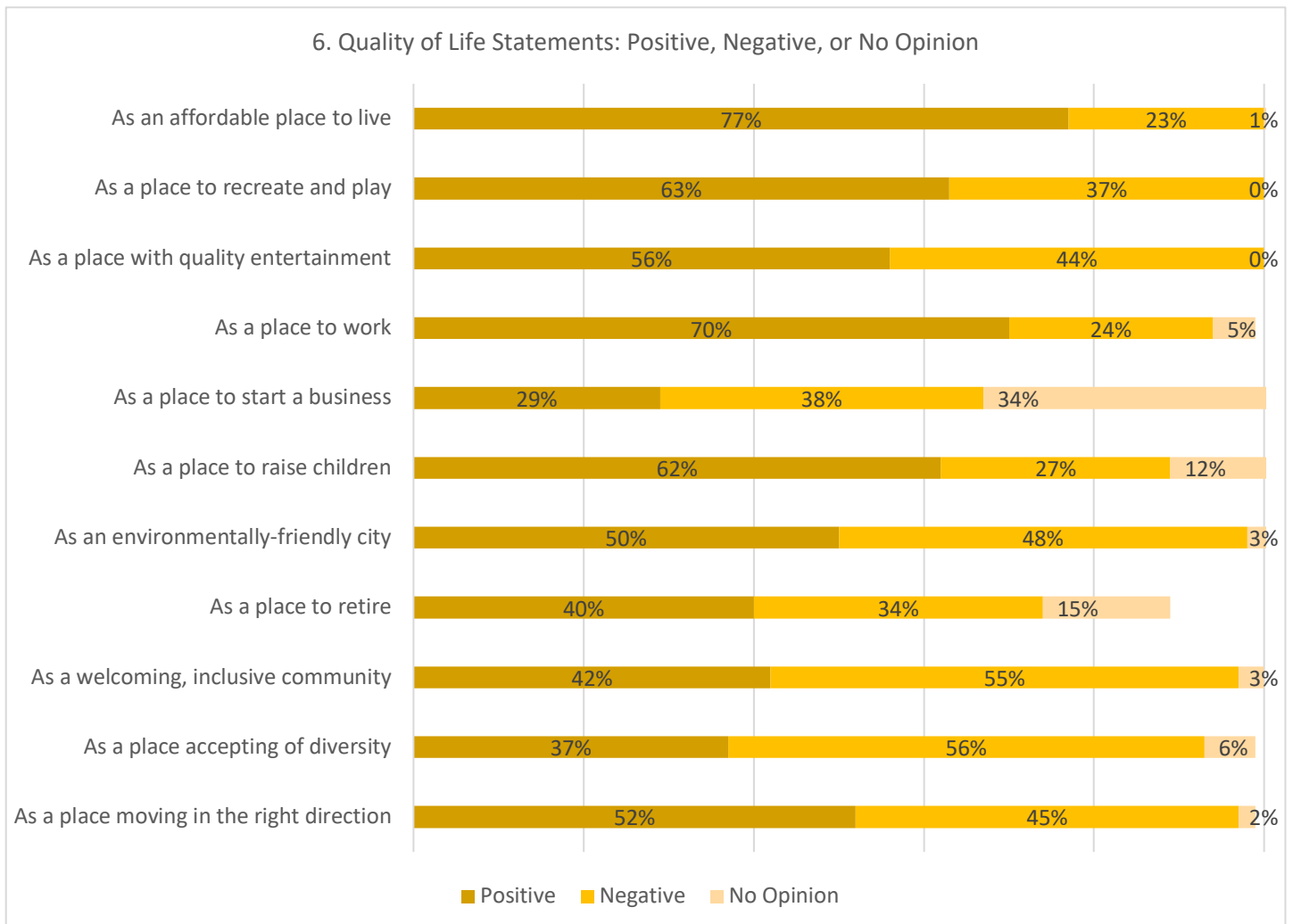
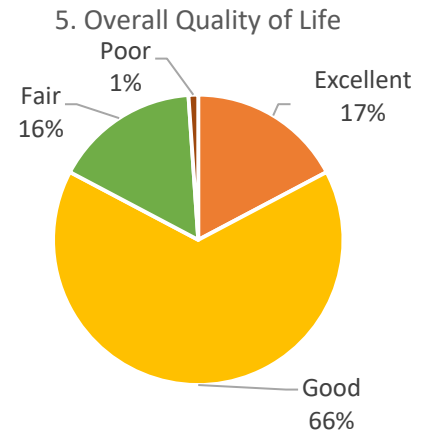
- 4.6% more that identify as People of Color (To achieve representativeness, 3.5% more participants are needed)
- 2.9% more Hispanic and Latino participants (Representativeness is achieved based on 2010 Census)
- .8% more participants under 40 (Compared to 31.5% of participants in 2018; 24.5% more participants needed to achieve representativeness)
- 16% more participants in households that make less than \$25,000 annually (To achieve representativeness, 12% more participants are needed)

Quality of Life

Overall, residents responded positively to the Overall Quality of Life question as shown in Chart 5. When asked to rate their overall quality of life, approximately 83% reported a positive quality of life, with 17% answering *Excellent* and 66% answering *Good*. Comparatively, 16% reported their quality of life as fair, and just 1% reported it as poor.

Chart 6 shows responses when participants were asked to rate Oshkosh on 11 different quality of life statements. The chart represents the data grouped into one of three categories: Positive (if participants responded *Excellent* or *Good*), Negative (if they responded *Fair* or *Poor*), and No Opinion. Results shows that respondents expressed a positive feeling for 7 out of 11 questions, which received a majority positive response rate (50% or greater). The top three positive statements related to Oshkosh as an affordable place to live (77%), as a place to work (70%), and to raise children (62%).

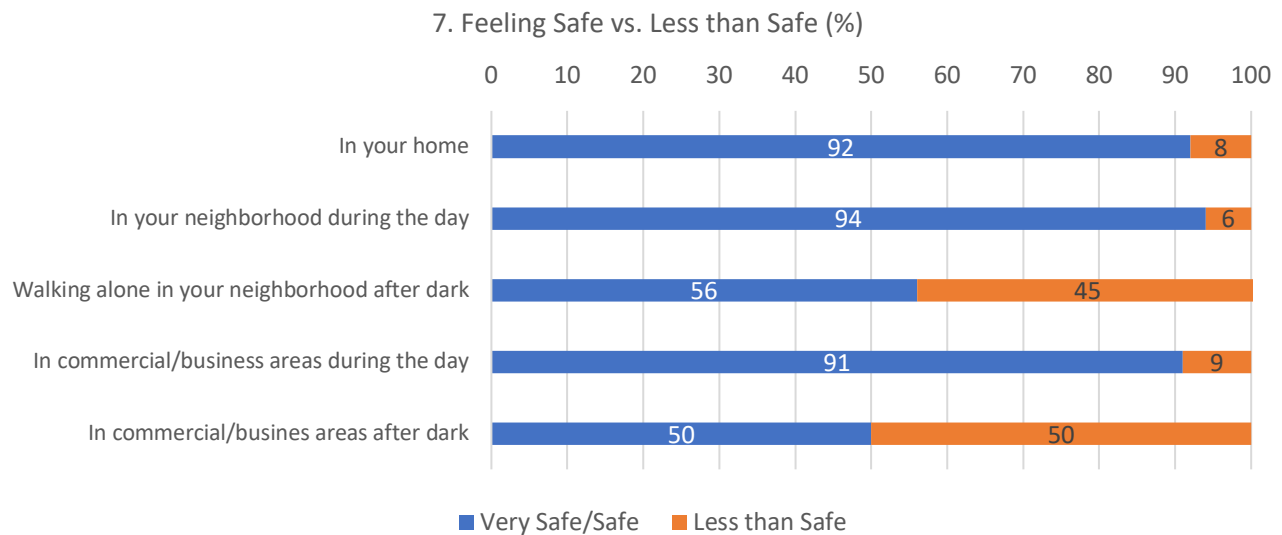
The four remaining categories received a majority of negative responses. Two received the highest *No Opinion* responses as well, rating Oshkosh as a place to start a business (38% *Negative*) and as a place to retire (34% *Negative*). However, the two most *Negative* statements regarded Oshkosh as: a place accepting of diversity (56%) and as a welcoming, inclusive community (55%). Notably, 48% also responded negatively to Oshkosh as an environmentally-friendly city.



Feelings of Safety

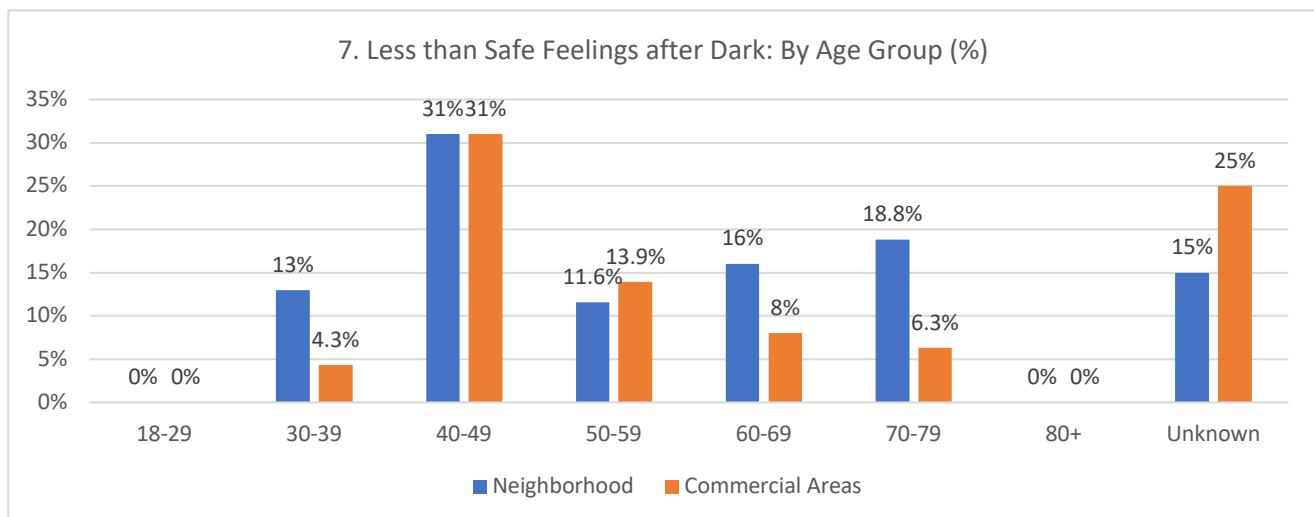
Next, participants were asked: “Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel” in five categories listed in Chart 7. If they responded *Very Safe* or *Safe*, answers are documented in Chart 7 in blue. Any response other than *Very Safe* or *Safe* was included as a *Less than Safe* response, represented by orange.

Overall, the majority responded that they felt safe in Oshkosh. Approximately 92% felt safe in their home, 94% felt safe in their neighborhood during the day, and 91% felt safe in commercial/business areas during the day. On the other hand, only 56% felt safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark, and the lowest proportion of 50% felt safe in commercial/business areas after dark.



To better understand who feels *Unsafe* or *Very Unsafe* in Oshkosh after dark, other demographic factors were considered. Of those that feel less than safe in their neighborhoods after dark, 76.7% identify as female and 23.3% as male. Of those that unsafe in commercial areas after dark, 65.5% are female and 34.5% are male.

As shown in Chart 8, 31% of 40-49-year-old Oshkosh residents felt the least safe in both their neighborhoods and commercial areas after dark, the highest of all age groups. The second highest proportion included residents 70-79, with 18.8% feeling unsafe walking in their neighborhood after dark.



Quality of City Services

The next set of survey questions focused resident perceptions of the quality of 28 city services. Questions relating to quality asks respondents to identify whether the service is *Excellent*, *Good*, *Fair*, *Poor*, or *No Opinion*. Results are presented in Table 3. The percentage of participants is provided, and the total number is also presented in parentheses (...).

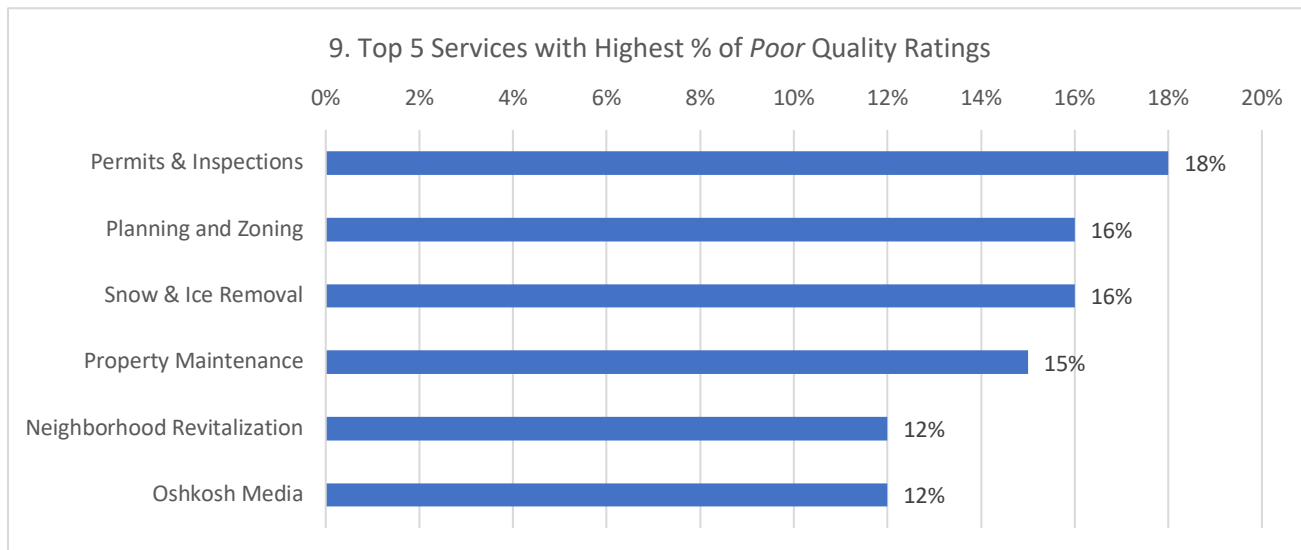
Table 3. Quality of City Services

Area	Service	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Public Safety	Police	36% (99)	38% (105)	12% (33)	5% (14)	9% (25)
	Fire Department	39% (109)	35% (96)	2% (6)	1% (3)	22% (62)
	Ambulance	31% (87)	30% (83)	5% (14)	1% (2)	32% (90)
Public Works	Leaf and Brush Pick-up	22% (61)	42% (117)	16% (45)	6% (18)	13% (35)
	Recycling Services	34% (93)	44% (123)	15% (41)	2% (5)	5% (14)
	Trash Collection Services	40% (110)	45% (126)	8% (22)	2% (5)	5% (13)
	Sidewalk System	13% (37)	47% (130)	25% (70)	9% (24)	5% (14)
	Ice and Snow Removal	13% (35)	39% (108)	29% (80)	16% (45)	3% (7)
	Traffic Signs and Signals	21% (57)	55% (151)	19% (53)	4% (11)	1% (4)
	Street Lights/Maintenance	16% (45)	55% (152)	17% (46)	10% (27)	2% (6)
	Storm Water Management	14% (40)	43% (119)	26% (72)	10% (27)	6% (18)
Community Services	Neighborhood Revitalization	6% (17)	29% (79)	32% (90)	12% (32)	21% (58)
	Oshkosh Public Museum	28% (77)	42% (115)	10% (28)	3% (8)	17% (47)
	Oshkosh Media	17% (47)	30% (83)	20% (56)	12% (32)	21% (58)
	Oshkosh Public Library	45% (125)	38% (105)	5% (14)	1% (4)	10% (28)
	Senior Services	16% (45)	29% (79)	9% (26)	1% (4)	43% (120)
Economic Development	Assistance to Businesses	7% (20)	14% (40)	16% (43)	7% (20)	55% (152)
	Quality of Housing	6% (17)	38% (105)	38% (106)	10% (28)	7% (19)
	Permits and Inspections	4% (10)	23% (64)	19% (54)	18% (50)	35% (97)
	Property Maintenance	4% (10)	29% (81)	33% (92)	15% (42)	18% (50)
	Planning and Zoning	6% (17)	23% (65)	22% (60)	16% (43)	32% (90)
Parks	Children's Amusement Area	13% (36)	29% (81)	23% (65)	10% (28)	24% (66)
	Leach Amphitheater	26% (73)	44% (121)	9% (26)	1% (4)	19% (52)
	Menominee Park Zoo	21% (59)	50% (139)	14% (40)	5% (13)	9% (25)
	Pollock Water Park	22% (62)	32% (89)	8% (22)	4% (11)	33% (92)
Transportation	Biking & Pedestrian Trails	17% (31)	44% (80)	21% (39)	9% (16)	9% (16)
	City Parking Facilities	10% (18)	37% (68)	35% (63)	9% (16)	9% (17)
	Go Transit System	9% (16)	30% (54)	17% (31)	7% (12)	37% (68)

Based on the results in Table 3, the top five highest quality rating of *Excellent* are presented in Chart 8.



Chart 9 presents the comparable services with the lowest quality rating as *Poor*. However, six services are included here because Neighborhood Revitalization and Oshkosh Media received the same proportion of participants (12%) that rated them as *Poor*.



City officials and administrators can use this information to determine whether and to what extent benefits of the services are being effectively delivered to the public and decide whether program design changes will improve the quality of services being provided. The information can also serve as the basis for reprioritization of services and commitment of public funding to strengthen programming having greater public impacts.

Importance of City Services

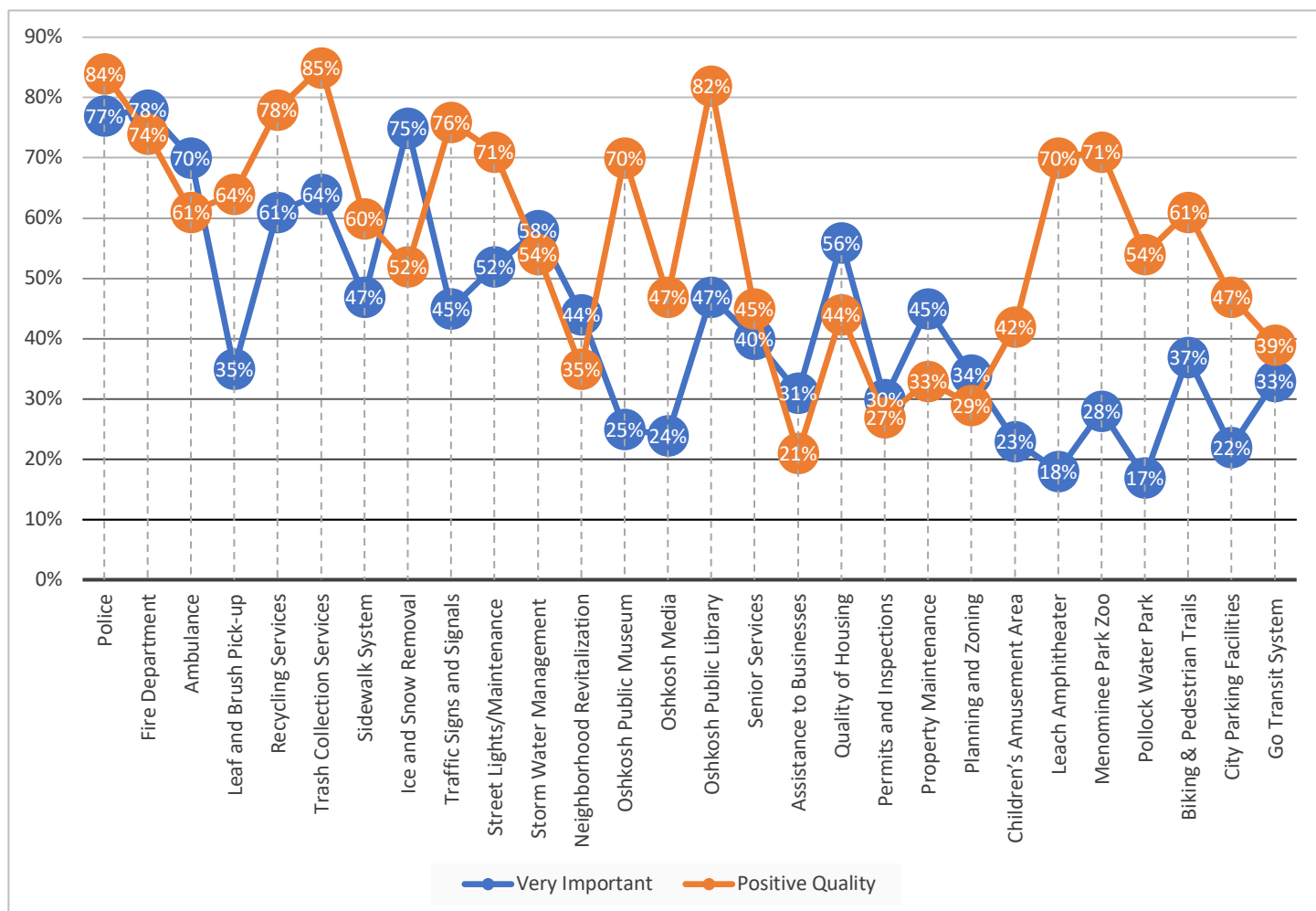
Finally, respondents were asked to rank how important city services are to them. The survey question asks respondents to identify whether the service is *Very Important*, *Somewhat Important*, *Somewhat Unimportant*, *Not Important*, or *No Opinion*. Results are presented in Table 4. The percentage of participants is provided, and the total number is also presented in parentheses (...).

Table 4. Importance of City Services

Area	Service	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	No Opinion
Public Safety	Police	77% (213)	14% (39)	3% (8)	3% (9)	3% (9)
	Fire Department	78% (216)	16% (44)	1% (3)	1% (3)	4% (12)
	Ambulance	70% (194)	21% (58)	2% (5)	1% (2)	7% (19)
Public Works	Leaf and Brush Pick-up	35% (98)	45% (124)	9% (26)	6% (18)	4% (12)
	Recycling Services	61% (170)	29% (82)	5% (15)	3% (9)	1% (2)
	Trash Collection Services	64% (178)	31% (86)	2% (6)	2% (5)	1% (3)
	Sidewalk System	47% (130)	41% (115)	7% (20)	3% (7)	2% (6)
	Ice and Snow Removal	75% (208)	22% (61)	2% (5)	1% (2)	1% (2)
	Traffic Signs and Signals	45% (125)	44% (121)	6% (18)	3% (8)	2% (6)
	Street Lights/Maintenance	52% (144)	40% (110)	5% (15)	2% (5)	1% (4)
	Storm Water Management	58% (160)	35% (97)	5% (14)	1% (2)	2% (5)
Community Services	Neighborhood Revitalization	44% (123)	34% (95)	10% (29)	4% (11)	7% (20)
	Oshkosh Public Museum	25% (70)	38% (107)	21% (58)	8% (21)	8% (22)
	Oshkosh Media	24% (68)	35% (98)	18% (50)	8% (23)	14% (39)
	Oshkosh Public Library	47% (130)	35% (98)	12% (32)	3% (8)	4% (10)
	Senior Services	40% (111)	35% (97)	6% (18)	6% (16)	13% (36)
Economic Development	Assistance to Businesses	31% (86)	27% (74)	11% (30)	10% (29)	21% (59)
	Quality of Housing	56% (155)	29% (82)	7% (20)	2% (5)	6% (16)
	Permits and Inspections	30% (84)	37% (103)	13% (37)	6% (17)	13% (37)
	Property Maintenance	45% (124)	38% (107)	9% (25)	2% (6)	6% (16)
	Planning and Zoning	34% (95)	35% (97)	12% (34)	4% (12)	14% (40)
Parks	Children's Amusement Area	23% (64)	39% (108)	19% (52)	10% (27)	10% (27)
	Leach Amphitheater	18% (50)	41% (113)	22% (61)	10% (29)	9% (25)
	Menominee Park Zoo	28% (77)	40% (111)	21% (59)	5% (15)	6% (16)
	Pollock Water Park	17% (46)	41% (114)	19% (53)	10% (27)	14% (38)
Transportation	Biking & Pedestrian Trails	37% (102)	39% (109)	13% (35)	8% (22)	4% (10)
	City Parking Facilities	22% (60)	48% (134)	18% (50)	6% (17)	6% (17)
	Go Transit System	33% (92)	35% (96)	12% (32)	9% (26)	12% (32)

Chart 10 shows how services were ranked by quality and importance. The graph illustrates if services had Positive Quality (rated *Excellent* or *Good*) compared to the percentage rated *Very Important*. By graphing these ratings, this chart shows the gap between what Oshkosh residents expects to have (i.e. *Importance*) versus what they believe exists (i.e. *Quality*).

10. Importance vs. Quality: All City Services



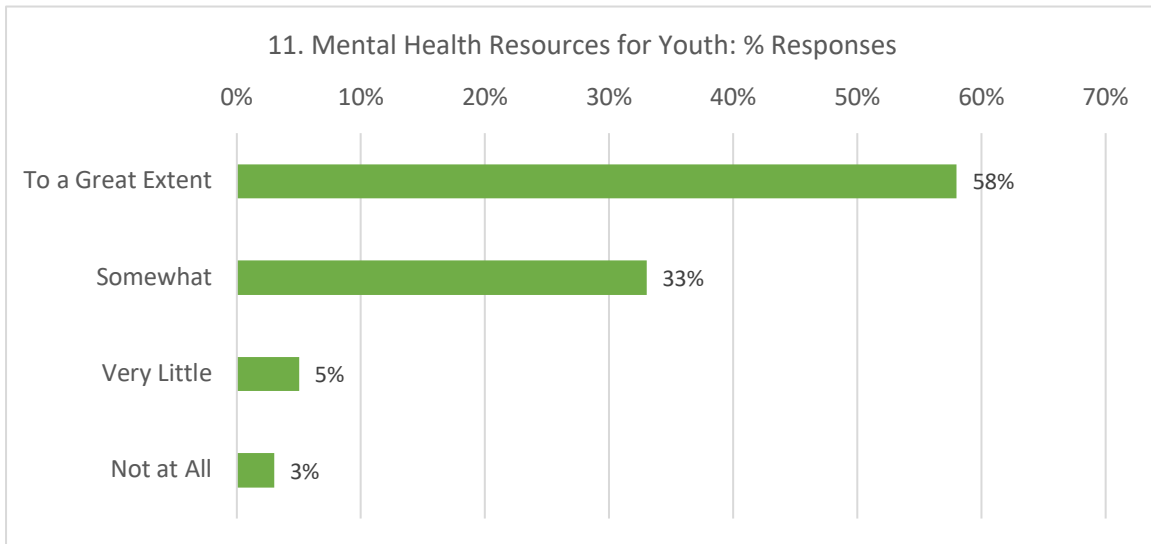
Based on this analysis, 10 of the city services illustrated lower quality than their importance. Those services are included in Table 5 in order from the largest gap to the smallest gap.

Table 5. Top Gaps in Importance versus Quality of Services

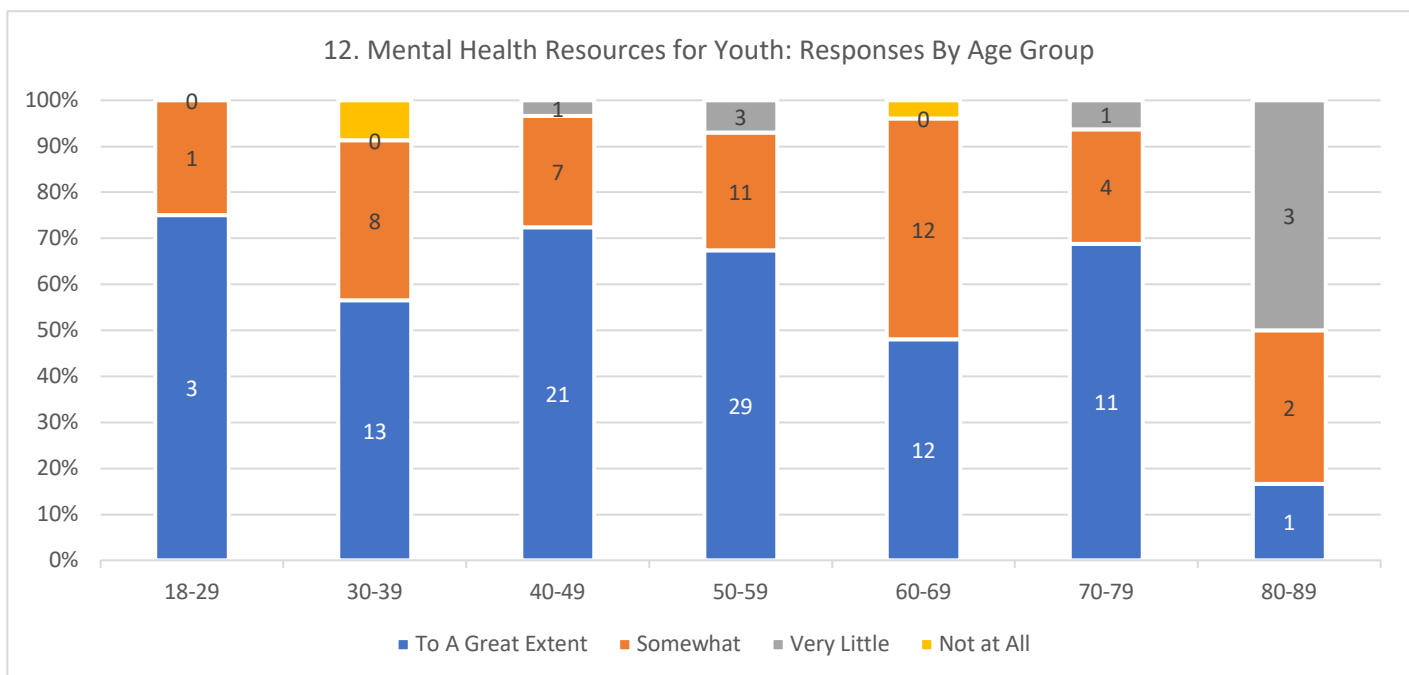
Service	Very Important	Positive Quality	Difference
Ice and Snow Removal	75%	52%	23%
Quality of Housing	56%	44%	12%
Property Maintenance	45%	33%	12%
Assistance to Businesses	31%	21%	10%
Neighborhood Revitalization	78%	39%	9%
Ambulance	70%	61%	9%
Planning and Zoning	34%	29%	5%
Fire Department	78%	74%	4%
Storm Water Management	58%	54%	4%
Permits and Inspections	30%	27%	3%

Special Topic Question

Each year, we include one question that focuses on a timely topic. Participants were asked for input on the following: “To what extent do you believe additional mental health resources for youth (ages 0-18) are needed in Oshkosh?” Results are pictured in Chart 11. Approximately 58% of all participants responded that additional sources were needed *To a Great Extent*, 33% felt they are *Somewhat* needed, 5% felt they were needed *Very Little*, and only 3% responded *Not at All*.



Finally, Chart 12 illustrates the proportion of responses by participant age group. The age groups with the highest proportion of participants responding *To A Great Extent* were those ages 18-29 (75%), 40-49 (72%), and 70-79 (69%).



Notes

The information included in this report was extracted from the Oshkosh Citizen Survey Results collected by Polco. The coordination of survey data and reporting was led by Dr. Samantha June Larson, supported by graduate research assistants Lisa Nahmens and Crystal Soderman. Any additional questions can be directed to Dr. Larson at: larsonsj@uwosh.edu