



## New England States Performance Measurement Project

Measure, Share, Improve

# Scarborough Citizen Satisfaction Survey: 2010 Results Summary

February 2011



The Research Bureau



# INTRODUCTION

Nine cities and towns in New England participated in an online citizen satisfaction survey during the winter of 2010-11. In the fall of 2009, five towns in the New England States Performance Measurement Project participated in the first online survey. The purpose of citizen satisfaction surveys is to determine what residents think of the services provided by their municipal government and how they view the quality of life in their town or city. The leadership of these participating towns believes that obtaining residents' views is critical to their ability to provide the best level of services while utilizing tax dollars most effectively and efficiently. The areas surveyed included public works, parks and recreation, police, fire, emergency services/rescue, public education, permitting and code enforcement, town management and administrative leadership. The

Worcester Regional Research Bureau, which designed the survey and analyzed the results, hopes that the results are used to enhance the decision-making process and to indicate where there is need to improve the delivery of services and where the town is performing well.

The findings for Scarborough, ME, below are based on this online survey. Postcards were sent to 1,300 residents inviting them to participate in the survey. A total of 246 residents completed the survey for a response rate of about 19%. Among respondents, about 64% have lived in Scarborough for 11 or more years, about 64% were employed outside the home, 51.5% were male, 53.4% were between the ages of 45-64, 99% were Caucasian, and about 69% had no children under the age of 18 currently living in their household.

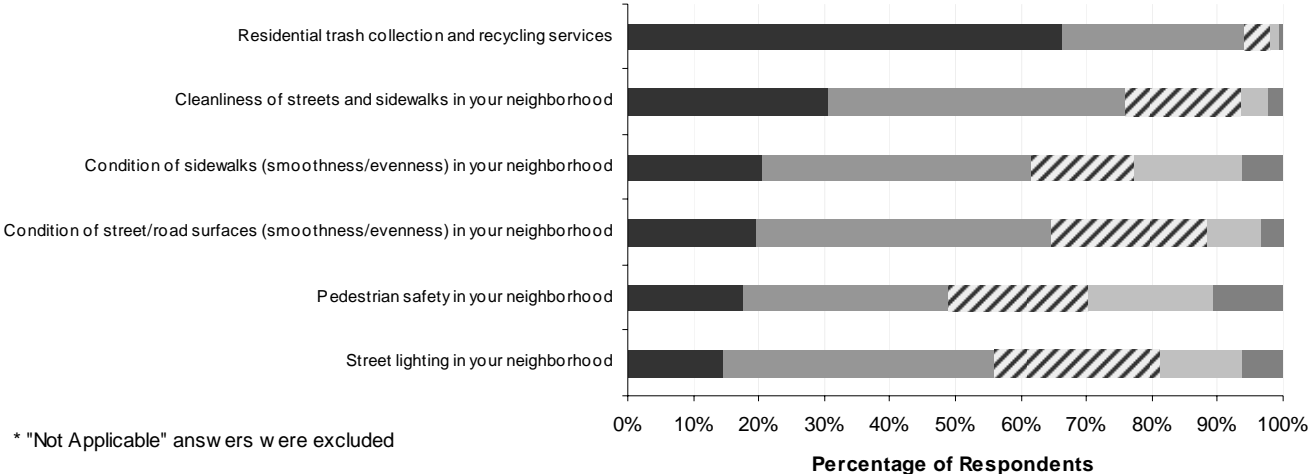
# RESULTS

Fifty-seven percent of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” with the overall quality of life in Scarborough, while another 40% were “satisfied.”<sup>1</sup> Fifty-five percent of respondents were “very satisfied” with Scarborough as a place to raise children while an additional 42% were “satisfied.” Respondents were slightly less satisfied with the town’s efforts to attract businesses and jobs to the area (66.4% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”) and with the cost of living in Scarborough (66.4% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”).

When respondents were asked to rate a variety of municipal services based on their own observations and experiences, high ratings went to the town’s residential trash collection and recycling services, with 94% of respondents with an opinion rating this service as “excellent” or “good” (see **Figure 1**).

Seventy-six percent of respondents rated the cleanliness of streets and sidewalks in their neighborhood as “excellent” or “good.” Lower ratings went to pedestrian safety in respondents’ neighborhoods; less than half (49%) rated this as “excellent” or “good,” another 21% rated it as “fair,” and about 30% said “poor” or “very poor.” (Forty-six percent of respondents said the condition of neighborhood sidewalks was “Not Applicable” which may contribute to this low rating.) Street lighting in respondents’ neighborhoods also was given lower ratings (56% gave an “excellent” or “good” rating), and is also possibly related to the low ratings given to pedestrian safety. Ninety-two percent of respondents said they “strongly agree” or “agree” that major roads/arteries are passable during or after a winter storm event, while 95% agreed that residential streets were passable the day after a winter storm event.

**Figure 1: Respondents' Ratings\* of Various Municipal Services** ■ Excellent ■ Good ▨ Fair ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



Three-quarters of respondents have utilized the public library during the past year as seen in **Figure 2**, and gave high satisfaction ratings to a number of services or features of the public library. About ninety-eight percent of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the computer/online resources at the library. Also, 98% of respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness and maintenance of library facilities, and almost 99% were satisfied with the accessibility to services and facilities. There was a bit less satisfaction with the quality of young adult programs and services (91% of respondents with an opinion or had used these were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”) and with the overall variety of programs offered by the library (92% of respondents with

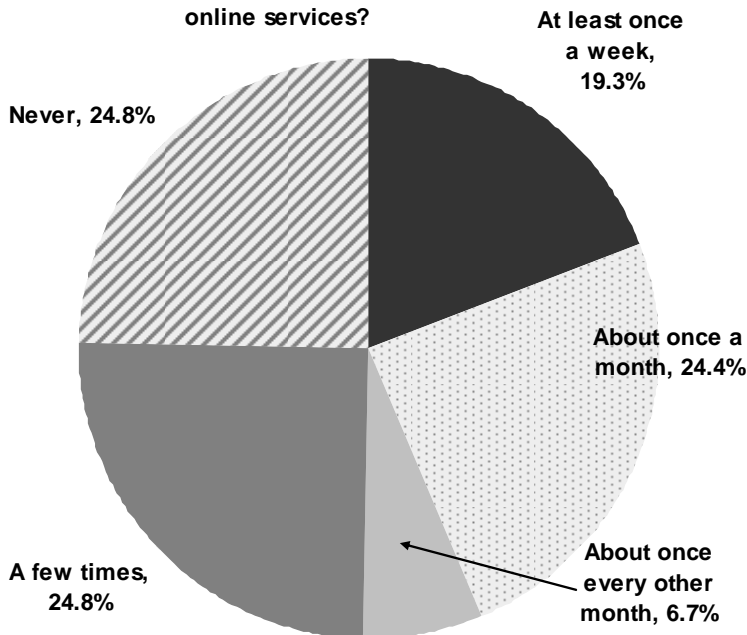
an opinion were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”).

Thirty percent of respondents indicated that they or someone in their household had received assistance from the Police Department over the past year, and of these respondents, 95% were satisfied with the Police Department’s response time, 98.5% were satisfied with the professionalism of staff, and 90% were satisfied with the quality of service provided.

About 21% of respondents or someone in their household had received assistance from the Fire Department over the past year, of which 23% received fire suppression services (60.4% received emergency medical services, while the remaining 29% answered “other”).<sup>2</sup> Of respondents who had contact with the Fire Department in the past year, 100% were

satisfied (either “very satisfied” or “satisfied”) with the department’s response time, 96% were satisfied with the professionalism of staff and 98% were satisfied with the quality of service provided. Eleven percent of respondents indicated that they or a member of their household had received ambulance/advanced life support services, and of these respondents, 100% were satisfied with the ambulance

**Figure 2: During the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or other members of your household used the Public Library facilities and/or online services?**



service/paramedic’s response time, and 96% were satisfied with the professionalism of staff and the quality of service provided. Of the 19% of respondents who called 911 in the past year for emergency services, 100% were satisfied with the assistance received from the person who took their 911 call.

About half (50.6%) of respondents currently, or at some point, have or had children attend the public schools. High ratings were given to class size or the student-teacher ratio (92% of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” or “satisfied), athletics (93.7% of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” or “satisfied) and other extracurricular activities (91.5% of respondents with an opinion were “very satisfied” or “satisfied). Slightly lower ratings were given to the administration at the district level (71.3% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied”) and to the quality of communication between the schools and home (72.6% were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” or “satisfied”).

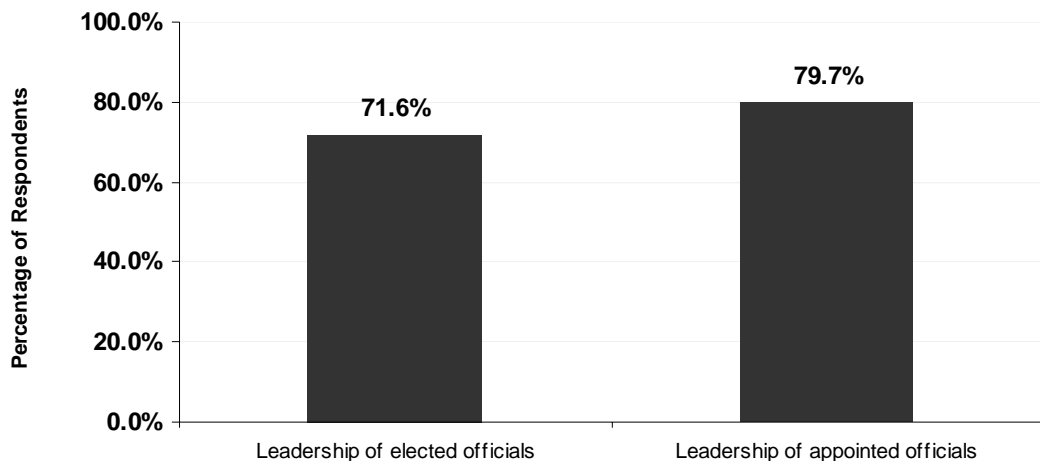
Additionally, eighty-four percent were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the quality of the curriculum and 82.5% were

satisfied with the qualifications and performance of teachers.

About 13% of respondents had applied for a building permit or had been a part of the permit process in the town during the past year. Of these respondents, about 76% were satisfied with the ease of obtaining information and materials during the process; 90% agreed that town staff was knowledgeable about the overall process; and 81.5% of respondents with an opinion were satisfied with the inspection process.

About 72% of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the leadership of elected officials in the town, while about 80% of respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the leadership of appointed officials (as seen in **Figure 3**). Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with various town offices and departments that they have been in contact with over the past year. High ratings of users were

**Figure 3: Respondents' Satisfaction with Town Officials**



given to the Fire Department/Rescue (97.7% satisfied), Town Clerk (95% satisfied) and Library Services (96% satisfied). Lower ratings were given to Economic Development - SEDCO (58.5% satisfied), Planning & Engineering (63.6% satisfied), and Code Enforcement/Building Inspection (69.3% satisfied). It is important to note, however, that for most of these departments or town offices, the majority of respondents had not used them or had no contact with them, so the results of this particular question are based on a small number of individuals.

The results indicate that in several areas, the majority of respondents are satisfied with Scarborough as a place to live and its quality of life and with the services provided by the town. High satisfaction ratings went to the emergency services department, the library, the public schools, and certain town services. However, lower ratings were given to pedestrian safety and street lighting, as well as the cost of living and the town's efforts in economic development.

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<sup>1</sup> In this analysis, "respondents with an opinion" excludes respondents who answered with "No Opinion," "Did Not Use," etc., so that the results reflect participants who had an opinion or related experience to the particular question.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one option, so values may add up to more than 100%.