



Agenda Item Summary

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Agenda Item Title

Presentation and Discussion of the 2017 Village of Oak Park National Citizen Survey Results.

Overview

The National Research Center of Boulder, Colorado, completed analysis of the 2017 National Citizen Survey results and staff will present the final reports for discussion. The Village has previously conducted five other community surveys in 2000, 2004, 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2015. The Village of Oak Park community survey provides the opinions of a representative sample of residents about community quality of life, service delivery, civic participation and unique issues of local interest. A periodic sounding of resident opinion offers staff, elected officials and other stakeholders an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

Staff Recommendation

Presentation Only.

Fiscal Impact

N/A.

Background

The National Citizen Survey (NCS) report is about the *livability* of Oak Park. The phrase “livable community” is used to distinguish between cities are not only where people do live, but where they want to live. The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 476 residents of the Village of Oak Park. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample.

The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement).

Overall, trend data showed that ratings in Oak Park for 2017 generally remained stable. Of the 131 items for which comparisons were available, 98 items were rated similar in 2015 and 2017, 27 items showed a decrease in ratings and six showed an increase in ratings. Of the items that showed decline in 2017 as compared to 2015, most remained similar to the national benchmark.

Attached are full details of the survey including a Dashboard, a Community Livability Report, Comparisons Report by demographic and geographic subgroups, a Trends Overtime Report and Technical Appendices for 2017.

Overall, the survey concludes that:

- **Oak Park residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life and feel safe.**

Most Oak Park residents feel their overall quality of life was excellent or good and would be likely to remain in Oak Park for the next five years. Additionally, about 9 in 10 residents would be likely to recommend the community to others. About 9 in 10 residents rated Oak Park as an excellent or good place to live and at least three-quarters of respondents rated Oak Park as a place to raise children, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Oak Park and its overall appearance positively; all ratings that were similar to or higher than the national benchmarks.

Survey participants not only prioritized the facet of Safety for Oak Park to focus on in the coming years, but also rated aspects of this facet positively and similar to the national averages. Residents feel safe in general, as well as in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area. Safety service ratings were strong and similar to the national averages and about 7 in 10 residents indicated they had not reported a crime and 9 in 10 had not been the victim of a crime.

- **Oak Park residents appreciate opportunities to participate in community matters but ratings for local leadership and governance declined from 2017 as compared to Oak Park's 2015 survey with ratings generally similar to national averages.**

Oak Park residents continued to be active and engaged in their community. About 9 in 10 residents reported that they had talked to or visited with neighbors, read or watched local news and voted in local elections and more residents in 2017 compared to 2015 reported that they had campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate. At least three-quarters of residents offered positive evaluations of opportunities to participate in social events and activities, opportunities to participate in community matters and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds; each of these aspects was rated higher than the national averages. Ratings were generally similar to the national averages for Oak Park's overall direction, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in Village government, acting in the best interest of Oak Park, being honest. While these ratings were lower in 2017 when compared to ratings given in 2015 by residents, Oak Park remained similar to the national benchmarks.

- **Oak Park's Economy continues to be a top priority.**

As in 2015, Economy was rated as a top priority for the Oak Park community to focus on in the next two years. Ratings within the facet of Economy tended to be positive and similar to ratings in comparison communities. The highest rated aspects of Economy were Oak Park as a place to visit (83%) and Oak Park's vibrant downtown/commercial area (71%); these ratings were higher than the national benchmarks. Ratings for cost of living in Oak Park (16%) were lower than the national benchmark, meaning that costs were perceived to be high. Most Economy ratings remained stable from 2015 to 2017; however, ratings decreased for employment opportunities, cost of living, Oak Park as a place to work from 2015 to 2017.

Alternatives

N/A.

Previous Board Action

In January 2016, the Village Board reviewed the 2015 survey results.

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

N/A.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

Survey results may be used by staff, elected officials and other stakeholders for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement and policy-making. Staff will endeavor to link recommendations for resource commitments to desired levels of service, including incorporating findings and recommendations into discussions supporting the next budget cycle.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

N/A.

Performance Management (MAP) Alignment

N/A.