

City of Urbandale

2004 Citizen Survey Results



February 1, 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Urbandale conducts a survey of citizen satisfaction biannually. The most recent survey was delivered to 642 Urbandale households in June, 2004. The households were selected randomly from all households on the tax rolls in 2004. A total of 248 households (39%) returned a completed survey.

The survey respondents fairly represented the Urbandale population as a whole in many respects. The age and income ranges of the respondents were well distributed. Respondents hailed from all geographic sectors of the City, with a greater percentage from the more populated neighborhoods. On the other hand, women were represented in the sample at a greater proportion than in the population, and the respondents tended to have higher household incomes than average. As in 2002, residents living in rental housing were not well-represented.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with 22 City activities, ranging from Police services to Mosquito Control. For the first time, the survey used a five-point scale, instead of the previous four-point scale. The new scale allowed a respondent to indicate a “neutral” satisfaction rating. That is, the respondent could indicate that he or she was neither satisfied or dissatisfied with a service.¹ The neutral rating is different from the “no opinion” option.

Overall, there was a 94% satisfaction level, which is a statistically insignificant increase of 1 percentage point over 2002. As in 2002, the Senior Center earned a 100% satisfaction rating. The Police Department and the Water Department each have satisfaction levels of 99%; Fire and EMS and Snow and Ice Removal each have ratings of 98%. Mosquito Control (68%), Animal Control (80%) are the only services with a satisfaction level below 85%, which is considered the lowest acceptable satisfaction level.

Snow and Ice Removal showed a satisfaction rating increase of 10 percentage points from 2002 to 2004 (from 88% to 98%). The Swimming Pool showed an increase of

9 percentage points, from 82% to 91%. Mosquito Control dropped by 20 percentage points compared to 2002.

Support for potential future bond referenda is consistent with previous survey results. Following is the percentage of respondents who said they “would support” or “might support” each individual project: fire department training facility (92%), new or additional playground equipment (86%), outdoor aquatics center (77%), community center with indoor aquatics center (75%), and outdoor performing arts amphitheater (68%).

Lastly, the *Urbandale Press-Citizen* remains the main source of City information for most respondents (32%). However, respondents indicated that two City products are also valuable sources of information: the Citizen’s Brief newsletter and the City web site are the main sources of City information for 27% and 13% of respondents, respectively. In fact, the percentage of respondents who get their information from the web site is statistically equivalent to the percentage who get their information from the *Des Moines Register*.

¹ For a complete discussion of the rating scales used in 2002 and 2004 and how to compare satisfaction ratings between the two years, please see sections 1.2 and 1.3.

SECTION 1. METHODOLOGY

The 2004 Citizen Survey is the fifth survey of Urbandale residents conducted since 1992. Prior surveys were conducted in 1992, 1996, and 1999, in conjunction with the Urbandale Community School District. In 2002, the City conducted its survey independently.

The Citizen Survey is used to complement the City's performance measurement program. Results from the surveys are used by the City Council to realign the City's priorities if necessary. Department and program managers use the results to allocate resources, to direct staff toward problem areas, and to improve the services of existing programs.

Over the years, the surveys have provided valuable information about citizens' satisfaction with City services, ideas for new programs, and opinions regarding City bond issues. One advantage of conducting multiple surveys over a period of time is that trends in the data are revealed. As well, the data from any one survey provides a snapshot of how well the City is providing the services that citizens expect.

1.1. Sample

The 2004 survey was distributed in June 2004 to 642 Urbandale households. The sample of households was generated using address information provided by Polk and Dallas Counties. The City's geographic information system was used to pull a random sample from all of the valid residential addresses in Urbandale.

After generating the sample, the surveys were distributed by regular mail to the addressees. The surveys included a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope. Survey recipients were asked to return the completed survey by July 21st. Prior to distributing the survey, staff attempted to generate awareness of it via a story in the Citizen's Brief newsletter, several stories on the City's web site, and traditional press releases to the Des Moines Register and the Urbandale Press-Citizen.

A total of 248 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 39 percent. The number of surveys in the sample is the highest in the history of the survey (see Table 1). The response rate is the best since 1992.

Response Rates	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Distributed	375	800	500	300	642
Returned	168	226	116	75	248
Response Rate	45%	28%	23%	25%	39%

Table 1: Response Rates, by Survey Year

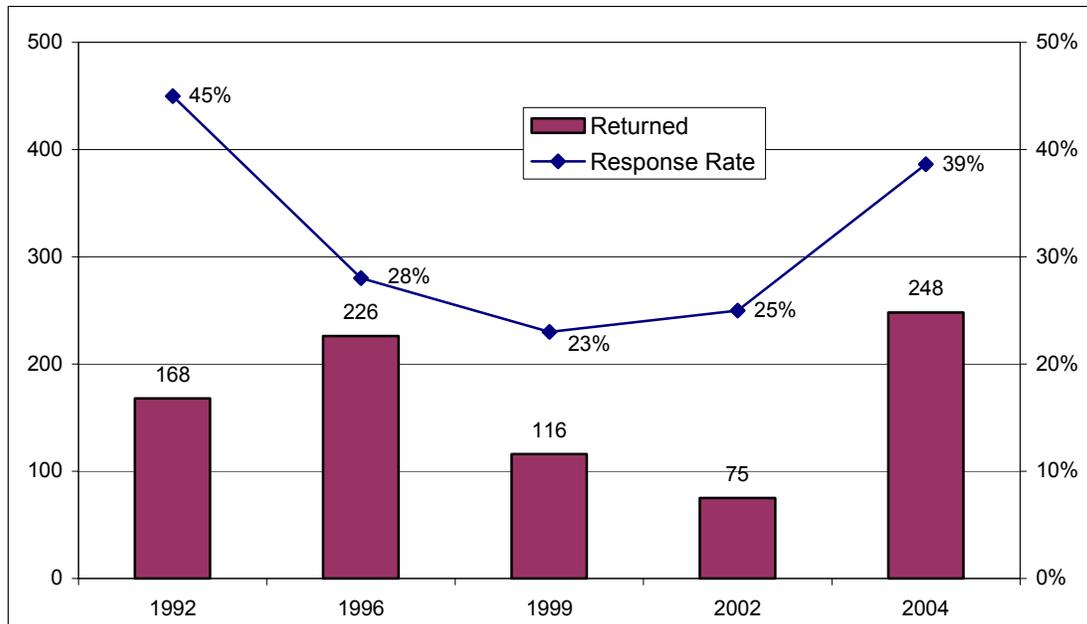


Figure 1: Response Rates, by Survey Year

1.2. Survey Instrument

The 2004 survey was similar to the 2002, with several exceptions. The exceptions consist of questions that were deleted from 2002, as well as new questions that were added in 2004. The exceptions are discussed below.

- In both surveys, the initial question was designed to assess the respondents' overall satisfaction with the City's 22 service areas. However, the 2004 survey deleted the question that was designed to assess the level of staff courtesy and responsiveness for each service area based on a customer's direct interaction in the prior 12 months. It was found that there were insufficient responses to this question in prior surveys to draw meaningful conclusions from the responses.
- The 2004 survey deleted questions that were designed to determine how often, and for what purposes, respondents use the park system and the Urbandale swimming pool. It was found that there were insufficient responses to these questions in prior surveys to draw meaningful conclusions from the responses.
- The 2004 survey deleted the question designed to assess overall awareness of the former wellness center located at the Urbandale High School. The wellness center is no longer in operation.
- The 2004 survey deleted the question designed to assess overall awareness of the volunteer nature of the Urbandale Fire Department. This question was originally intended to serve as a recruitment tool, however, it was having negligible effects.

- The 2004 survey deleted the question designed to assess whether certain specialized equipment should be made available at the Library for patron use.
- The 2004 survey deleted the questions designed to assess overall awareness of the City's log & limb and appliance collections. It was felt that these programs are now well-established.
- The 2004 survey deleted the question about the desire for various on-line services on the City's web site. Many of the services are now, or will be, available.
- The 2004 survey deleted the question that was designed to assess respondents' preferences for the features in a potential community center. This information was used in 2002 to support the community center feasibility study.
- The 2004 survey deleted the question that was designed to assess the level of cable and satellite TV penetration in the City.
- The 2004 survey added a series of four questions intended to determine respondents' satisfaction with the various aspects of the recreation registration process, such as registration methods, and payment methods.
- The 2004 survey added a question designed to determine what percentage of respondents were the victim of a crime, and if they were, whether they reported it to the police.
- The 2004 survey added a question designed to assess whether respondents are satisfied with the City's efforts to keep them informed of detours and delays due to road construction.

Continuing a practice that was begun in 2002, some questions that previously used a four-point scale² were changed to use a five-point scale, with a No Opinion option³. The five-point scale allows for greater differentiation between opinions. Also, the no opinion option provides an added level of precision in the analysis of the data by distinguishing between someone who may have overlooked or refused to answer a question, versus someone who simply had no experience on which to base an opinion.

1.3. Comparing 2004 Scores to Prior Years

It is important to understand how the preference scale questions were analyzed, particularly when compared to previous surveys. In prior years, the "satisfaction" rating for a service area was comprised of the total percentage of respondents who were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied". In 2004, with the introduction of the "neutral" position on the five-point scale, it was necessary to take an additional step to allow for an apples-to-apples comparison from 2002 to 2004. This step consisted of estimating the percentage of the "neutral" respondents that would

² For example: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor.

³ For example: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, No Opinion.

have responded "satisfied" if the "neutral" choice was not available. This estimation was made by assuming that the "neutral" respondents would have been distributed in the same way that the non-neutral responses were distributed.

For example, assume that for service area ABC, the responses were distributed as follows: Very Satisfied: 20%; Satisfied: 40%; Neutral: 20%; Dissatisfied: 20%; and Very Dissatisfied: 0%. To calculate a satisfaction rating that is comparable to 2002, the neutral responses were distributed in proportion to the other scores. Specifically, the ratio of satisfied responses to dissatisfied responses was three to one (i.e., 60% to 20%), so the neutral scores were distributed in the same ratio. Table 2 illustrates this example.

Scores	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Raw Scores	20%	40%	20%	20%	0%
Grouped Scores	60%		20%	20%	
Adjusted Scores	75%			25%	

Table 2: Converting 5-point scores to a single "satisfaction rating"

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

2.1. Demographics

This subsection describes the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the respondents by gender and age for the 2004 survey. The respondent pool consisted of 58% women and 42% men. This distribution was skewed slightly toward females in comparison to the city's 2000 Census data, just as it was in all previous surveys. Table 3 shows the gender distribution for the recent surveys and for the 2000 Census.

Gender	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2000 Census	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Female	58 %	65 %	58 %	51.7 %	61 %	58 %
Male	42 %	35 %	42 %	48.3 %	39 %	42 %

Table 3: Gender Distribution, By Survey Year

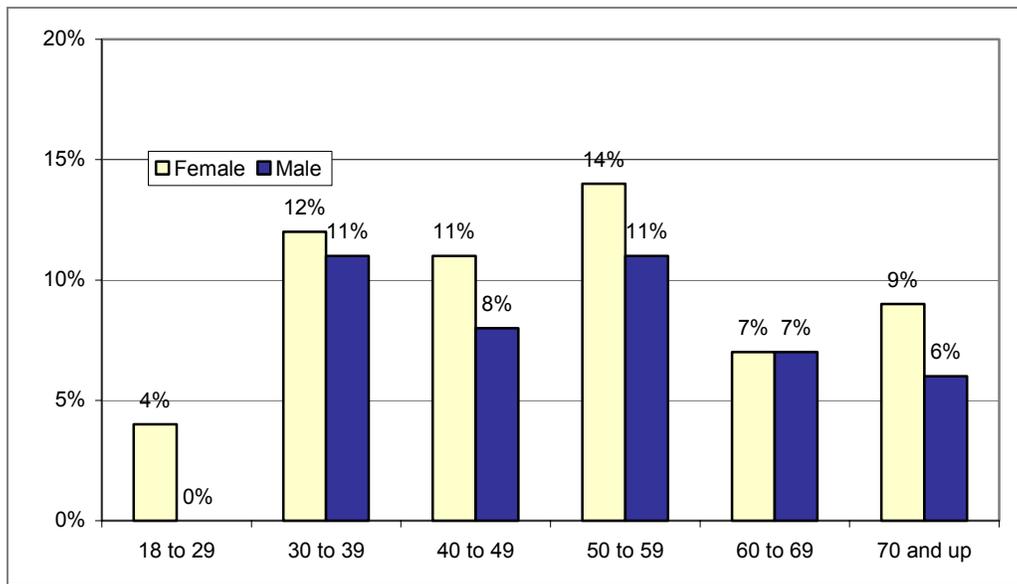


Figure 2: Respondent Distribution, by Gender and Age Group

Figure 2 also shows the age distribution of the respondents. Because the 2000 Census uses different age groupings than shown here, it is impossible to say with certainty that the respondent pool mirrors the population. However, the breakdown does appear to be similar to the population.

Table 4 shows the age breakdown of respondents for each of the surveys. Note that the current survey and the 2002 survey appear to be most evenly distributed among the age groups. This likely is the result of the random sampling methodology used in those years, as opposed to prior sampling methodologies. In the first three surveys, the survey was distributed only to households with school-aged children.

Age Range	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
18 to 29	4%	2%	2%	9%	4%
30 to 39	34%	37%	35%	17%	23%
40 to 49	30%	29%	31%	21%	19%
50 to 59	14%	18%	17%	17%	25%
60 to 69	18%	23%	25%	27%	14%
70 and up				9%	14%

Table 4: Age Distribution, By Survey Year

An analysis of the housing-related demographics, as seen in Table 5, reveals that the majority (89%) of respondents live in single-family detached homes. The remainder lives in a townhome (9%) or apartment or condominium (3%). Likewise, most respondents (99%) own the dwelling in which they live, while only 1% are renters. Similar breakdowns were seen in previous surveys.

It should be noted that 22.4% of households in Urbandale are renter-occupied, according to 2000 Census data. In future surveys, additional effort will be made to obtain a higher response rate from apartment dwellers and other renters.

Dwelling Type	Homeowners	Renters	Total
Single Family Detached	87%	1%	88%
Townhome	9%	-	9%
Duplex, 3plex, 4plex	<1%	-	<1%
Condominium or Apartment	3%	-	3%
Total	99%	1%	100%

Table 5: Dwelling Type and Homeownership, 2004 Survey

In Table 6, one can see the geographic breakdown of the respondents. As would be expected, most of the responses came from the area between Merle Hay Road and 86th Street and north of Douglas Avenue. In the 2002 survey, the distribution was similar except that the responses were even more skewed toward the North of Douglas region. This distribution is more evenly divided between the north and south regions.

Geographic Distribution	"West" 142 nd Street to 184 th Street	"Central" 86 th Street to 142 nd Street	"East" Merle Hay Rd. to 86 th Street	Total
North of Douglas	3%	20%	41%	64%
South of Douglas	5%	11%	21%	36%
Total	7%	30%	62%	100%

Table 6: Geographic Distribution, 2004 Survey

Compared to previous years, the percentage of respondents in the highest income category (\$80,000 and up, in 2004) is very high; in fact, more than half of respondents are in this category (see Table 7). It should be noted that 10% of respondents did not answer this question on the 2004 survey.

Income Range	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
\$0 to \$19,999	5%	6%	5%	3%	2%
\$20,000 to \$39,999	25%	17%	12%	22%	13%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	31%	27%	25%	17%	14%
\$60,000 to \$79,000	40%	50%	58%	31%	19%
\$80,000 and up				27%	52%

Table 7: Income Distribution, By Survey Year

Figure 3 compares the income distribution for 2002 and 2004. Note the apparent shift in categories. It appears that from 2002 to 2004, a significant number of respondents in each category moved into the next higher category. In 2006, additional effort will be made to verify this shift. Also, the top end category (\$80,000 +) will be further divided into two categories (\$80,000 - \$99,000, and \$100,000+) to provide additional precision.

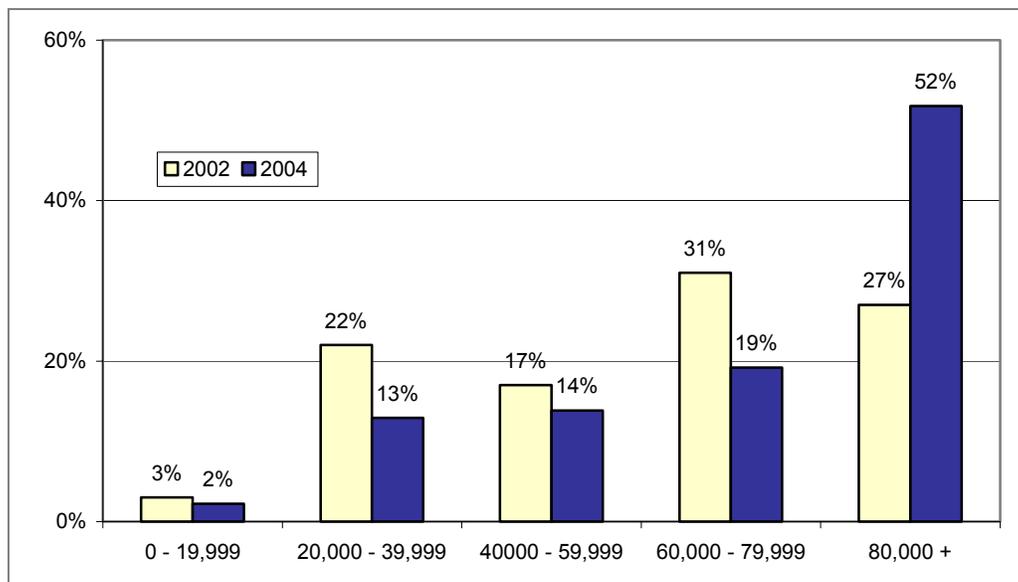


Figure 3: Household Income Distribution, 2002 vs. 2004

In 2002 a question was added to gauge the number of Urbandale households with minor children. This question was revised slightly in 2004, however the revision was found to be flawed because it made it impossible to determine if a respondent had zero children or simply refused or forgot to answer the question. Therefore, no further analysis was done on this measure. This question will be re-worded for the 2006 survey.

Lastly, as in 2002, in order to gain an estimate of internet penetration in the City, respondents were asked to report how many computers with internet access they have in their home. This

information is shown in Table 8. It is shown that the percentage of respondents with internet connectivity at home has increased from 83% in 2002 to 94% in 2004.

Internet Access	2002 Survey	2004 Survey Summary	2004 Survey Detail
None	17%	6%	6%
Dial-up			50%
Broadband	83%	94%	42%
Wireless			< 1%
Don't know what kind			2%

Table 8: Internet Access, By Survey Year

2.2. General Satisfaction

Figure 4 is perhaps the important figure in the entire analysis of the 2004 Citizen Survey. This figure illustrates the survey respondents' level of satisfaction with the major activities of the City. In the figure, the activities are sorted from the activity with the highest satisfaction rating to the activity with the lowest satisfaction rating.

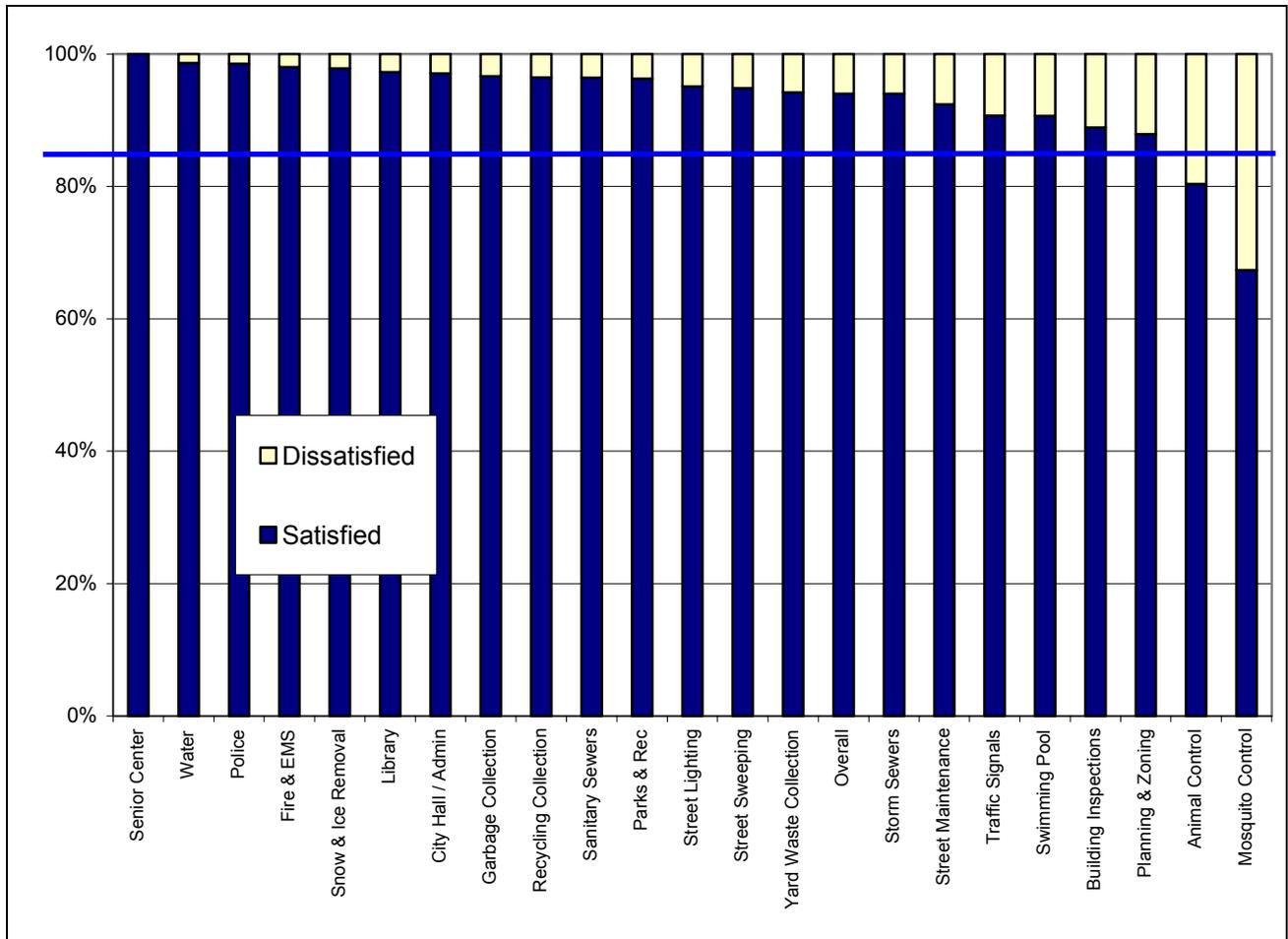


Figure 4: Satisfaction Level, All Activities, 2004 Survey

In viewing Figure 4, one will note the very high level of satisfaction for the vast majority of City services. Especially noteworthy is that 100% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Senior Center. This is the second survey in a row where this service area has earned a "perfect score".

The horizontal line (at 85%) indicates the score below which the service is judged to be unacceptable. In 2002, the Planning & Zoning, Animal Control and Swimming Pool activities all fell below this line. However, in 2004, Planning & Zoning (88%) and the Swimming Pool (91%) have both improved significantly. Animal Control remains below the threshold line, and is joined by Mosquito Control. These will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

2.3. Potential Bond Referenda

As in past years, the 2004 Citizen Survey asked respondents whether they would or would not support a bond referendum for a number of potential projects that may be considered in the next

5-10 years. The five projects included in the survey were: a Fire Department Training Facility, a Community Center with an indoor aquatic center, an Outdoor Aquatics Center, an Outdoor Performing Arts Amphitheater, and new or upgraded playground equipment.

The City is currently negotiating with the YMCA of Greater Des Moines and the Urbandale Community School District for the joint development of a Community Center. As a result, some respondents may have based their responses on prior public information about the project. The question, however, was intended to judge respondents' support for a project based solely on its merits as a potential project. The question did not indicate whether a project was under active consideration by the City. Furthermore, there was no indication in the way the question was worded as to the potential cost, location, or construction timetable of any project.

The City Council and the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee can use the information gained through this question to assist in the prioritization of these five projects and other City initiatives. It is anticipated that the City will reevaluate these and future projects on a continual basis to meet the needs of the growing and changing community.

In order for a bond referendum to pass, 60% or more of those voting in the referendum must approve it. While the 2004 survey results suggest that none of the five projects would meet this threshold, it is noted that previous surveys were not necessarily a good predictor of referenda outcomes. For example, in the 1996 survey, only 46% of respondents expressed support for a bond issuance for a new Library. Another 17% of respondents indicated that they might support the project. When it was put to a public vote, the 1998 Library bond was approved by 76% of the voters. Similarly in 1996, only 22% of respondents favored a bond sale for the acquisition of land for a regional park, and 32% did not know how they would vote. When it was put to a public vote, the 1998 Park bond was approved by 73% of the voters. Lastly, in 1992, 40% of survey respondents said they would support a Fire Station bond referendum, and 46% said they did not know how they would vote. When it was put to a public vote, the 1995 Fire Station bond was approved by 89% of the voters.

As clearly illustrated by these examples, a critical factor to consider in a bond referendum is the undecided voter. Efforts by interested civic groups to increase awareness regarding a bond referendum can reduce the uncertainty either way. It is noted that Iowa law prohibits the City from expending public funds to campaign on behalf of a bond referendum.

A discussion of the survey results for each of the potential facilities can be found in the subsection of the related service area. For more information related to the individual projects, please refer to:

- Fire Department Training Facility Subsection 2.5.2, Page 20
- Outdoor Performing Arts Amphitheater Subsection 2.10.2, Page 31
- Community Center w/ indoor aqua. center Subsection 2.10.3, Page 31
- New or upgraded playground equipment Subsection 2.10.4, Page 32
- Outdoor Aquatics Center Subsection 2.11.2, Page 34

2.4. Police

The Police Department operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The department is responsible for enforcing all applicable laws and ordinances. Officers interact with or are observed by the public on a daily basis. The department also participates in a drug education program with the Urbandale schools, sponsors a Reserve Police Officers program, and provides animal control services.

2.4.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 9 shows the percentage of respondents in the four surveys who expressed satisfaction with the police services. The core services of the Police Department—crime prevention and investigation—were very highly rated, with a 2004 satisfaction level of 99%.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Police	96%	86%	90%	95%	99%
Animal Control	71%	70%	62%	83%	80%

Table 9: Satisfaction Level, Police Services, by Survey Year

As in 2002, the 2004 survey included a general question that was designed to assess respondents' sense of safety in their community. Essentially, the question asked respondents to evaluate "how safe they feel living in Urbandale". The results of this question, shown in Table 10, show that 99% of respondents feel Very Safe or Somewhat Safe living in the city.

Sense of Safety	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Very Safe	66%	83%
Somewhat Safe	30%	16%
Neutral	3%	1%
Somewhat Unsafe	1%	-
Very Unsafe	-	-

Table 10: Overall Sense of Safety, By Survey Year

It is noted that the Animal Control activity has been underperforming for some time now. In an attempt to improve this service area, the Police Chief recently completed a review of the service and options for improvement.

Currently, the City's animal control service is provided by a civilian contractor who reports to the Chief. The contractor is trained and equipped to deal with domestic animals, and wild animals that are sick, injured or dangerous. A resident must use a private contractor to deal with healthy wild animals. Dead animals along City streets are picked up by Public Works crews or the Animal Rescue League. The FY2004-05 budget for Animal Control is \$22,500.

The Police Chief identified three potential options for improving service. They are:

- Seek bids on the current or amended contract. This option presents the risk of resulting in higher costs than under the current structure. It would also alienate current staff, who would then have to be retained if the bids were too high.
- Contract with another community. This option potentially would increase costs significantly if the other community needed to add a full-time animal control officer to provide service in Urbandale. The total cost of this could be approximately \$45,000 per year. If the City were able to pay for a full-time position, though, hiring an Urbandale employee to work only in Urbandale would be preferable to paying the salary of an employee from another community who would serve other cities, in addition to serving Urbandale.
- Establish a cooperative program with another community. This option was explored but the two communities that were approached were interested primarily in ways to reduce their overall costs. Such a joint venture likely would not reduce costs for those cities.

As a result of his analysis, the Police Chief recommended that the current contract be continued. However, it was also recommended that the City look for future opportunities for a joint venture or other opportunity for cooperation.

Lastly, in a new question in 2004, respondents were asked if they or a family member were a victim of a crime in Urbandale in the previous 12 months. As seen in Figure 4, more than 9 out of 10 respondents reported that they were not the victim of a crime. Of those who felt that they were the victim of a crime, one-third did not report it to the police. It should be noted, that a question like this, which relies on the respondent's "self-report", is subject to some interpretation because it is subject to the respondent's perception of events. The respondent may report that they were a victim, when, in fact, they were not.

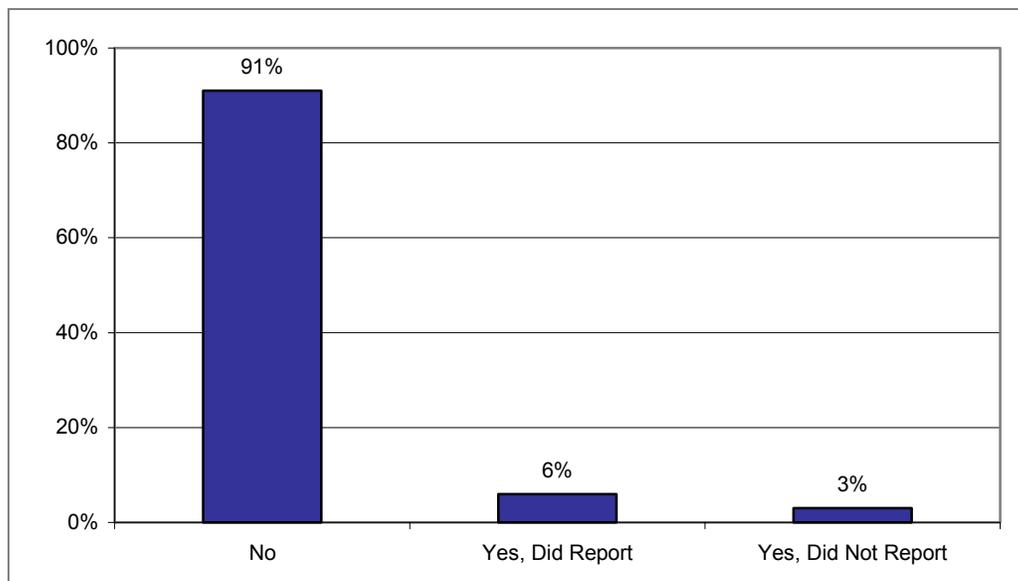


Figure 5: Percentage of Respondents Who Were Crime Victims, 2004 Survey

Table 9 captures the overall general opinion of respondents, regardless of whether or not the respondents had any direct contact or experience with the services provided by the Police. The data in this table potentially could be skewed (positively or negatively) by such things as publicity, hearsay, or the Department's reputation.

In order to rule out the effects of extraneous variables, respondents were asked if they had actually requested service from the Police in the prior 12 months. If they had, then these respondents were asked to rate the Police Department on a number of specific service elements. Fifty-eight survey respondents in the 2004 survey had requested service in the prior 12 months.

As seen in Table 11, 98% of these 58 individuals were satisfied with the overall service they had received. Additionally, several of the individual service elements received a 100% satisfaction rating from the 58 residents who had used the service.

Police Response Elements	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Response Time	92%	96%	90%	89%	100%
Professionalism	94%	96%	97%	89%	100%
Resolution of Problem	87%	94%	87%	89%	96%
Follow-up Information	n/a	n/a	n/a	86%	100%
Overall Service	n/a	n/a	n/a	94%	98%

Table 11: Satisfaction Level, Police Response Elements, by Survey Year

2.5. Fire and EMS

The Urbandale Fire Department provides fire prevention and suppression and emergency medical services on a 24x7 basis. The Department is represented by 6 full-time staff members, complemented by 43 paid-on-call volunteers.

2.5.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 12 shows the satisfaction levels for Fire and EMS services for each of the five survey years. It is noted that this department scores consistently high on the satisfaction survey, as well as on the customer survey cards that are distributed by the department.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Fire & EMS	91%	95%	93%	98%	98%

Table 12: Satisfaction Level, Fire & EMS, By Survey year

As with the Police Department, respondents who had requested Fire & EMS services in the past 12 months were asked to express their satisfaction levels on the specific service elements. However, because the response pool included only 18 individuals who had requested service, the results of this question are not meaningful. It is anticipated that this question will be re-configured or deleted in future surveys.

2.5.2. Future Bond Issue

As in 2002, the 2004 survey asked respondents to indicate their level of support for a potential bond referendum to build a Fire Department Training Facility. An on-site facility could possibly reduce firefighter certification times from 18-24 months to 6 months. The City has not prepared any plans for a training facility, although the facility could include a burn room, tower, training props, and confined spaces. The results of this question are show in Table 13. It should be

noted that the percentage of respondents who said they would not support the project is the lowest of any of the three survey years.

Potential Project: Fire Training Facility	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Would Support	47%	41%	48%
Might Support	34%	44%	44%
Would Not Support	19%	15%	8%

Table 13: Potential Bond Referendum, Fire Training Facility

2.6. Solid Waste Collection

Solid Waste collection is the responsibility of the Solid Waste Division of the Department of Engineering and Public Works. This Division provides residential solid waste collection four days a week, Monday through Thursday, ten hours a day. The City collects residential garbage and yard waste. Recycling collection is provided through a contractor, Artistic Waste Services. Yard waste and recycling are collected using the guidelines provided by the Compost It! and Curb It! programs, respectively, of the Metropolitan Waste Authority.

The Division collects household garbage once per week from approximately 11,000 residences. Beginning in October, 2003, residents began paying a separate user fee of \$6.00 per month per household for the collection of household waste. Prior to that time, the City provided this service as part of the property taxes collected through the General Fund. In August 2000, the City converted from a fully manual collection process to a fully automated collection process. The automated process uses specially-equipped collection vehicles and requires that residents discard their garbage in standardized garbage containers.

Yard waste is collected once per week from April through November, weather permitting. In May, 1999, the current “pay as you throw” system was implemented for the yard waste program to recover some of the cost of the program. The 1999 Citizen Survey occurred prior to the changes in the yard waste program.

The Curb It! recycling program started in FY1995-96. It is operated by the Metro Waste Authority and is not a City program. Residents, however, participate in the Curb It! recycling program at no direct cost to the user. The program is operated by the Metro Waste Authority, which contracts with a private hauler to collect the recyclable items. Residents place their recyclable items in a bin provided by the contractor; the private hauler collects the recyclables on the same day the City collects the household garbage. Recyclable items include paper items, such as newspapers, magazines, catalogs, cereal and tissue boxes; clear glass; yogurt and margarine containers; tin and aluminum cans; and flattened cardboard. In October 2004,

the list of items that are accepted in the Curb It! program was expanded to include empty aerosol cans, all plastic bottles, and wire clothes hangers.

The Solid Waste Division also provides a number of special services. For example, it conducts the annual Spring Cleanup program for bulk items, at no additional cost to the resident. Residents may also request a bulk item collection or a log and limb collection at any time during the year. There is a fee for these by-request services. At holiday time, Christmas trees are collected at the curbside at no cost, and there is a free leaf drop-off in for several Saturdays in the fall.

2.6.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 14 shows the level of satisfaction with the City's solid waste collection services for each of the survey years.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Garbage Collection	76%	87%	84%	97%	97%
Recycling Collection	n/a	95%	80%	99%	96%
Yard Waste Collect.	76%	83%	77%	94%	94%

Table 14: Satisfaction Level, Solid Waste Collection, By Survey Year

As in 2002, the 2004 survey included a series of questions to assess the convenience and ease of use of the three main solid waste collection services--garbage, recycling and yard waste. Specifically, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each program is "convenient to use", and whether or not the regulations for the program are "easy to understand and remember". Respondents were also asked to assess the overall timeliness and reliability of the program, as well as the extent to which they are kept informed of changes in the collection schedules. The results of these questions are detailed in Table 15 and shown graphically in Figure 6 and Figure 7, on the following pages.

Solid Waste Collection Service	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall					
Solid waste collection is timely and reliable .	-	-	2%	45%	53%
Residents are kept informed about schedule changes.	-	6%	8%	49%	38%
Garbage Collection					
Blue can system is convenient .	-	-	1%	32%	67%
Blue can regulations are easy to understand and remember.	-	1%	5%	36%	58%
Recycling Collection					
Green bin system is convenient .	1%	2%	6%	34%	56%
Green bin regulations are easy to understand and remember.	1%	7%	7%	37%	47%
Yard Waste Collection					
Bag and sticker system is convenient .	4%	17%	16%	34%	29%
Bag and sticker system is easy to understand and remember.	4%	9%	16%	38%	33%

Table 15: Convenience and Ease of Use, Solid Waste Collection Programs, 2004 Survey

In Figure 6 and Figure 7, it is noteworthy that respondents' opinions have improved on both the convenience and ease of use measures of the yard waste program. Specifically, the percentage of respondents who feel the yard waste program is convenient has increased to 75%, and the percentage who feel the program is easy to understand and remember has increased to 85%

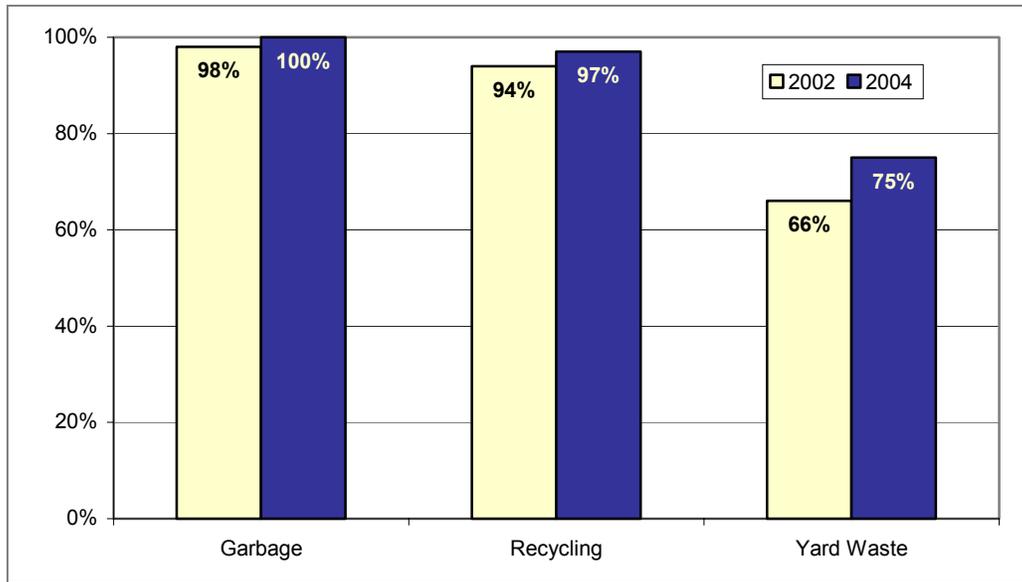


Figure 6: Convenience, Solid Waste Collection Programs, 2002 vs. 2004

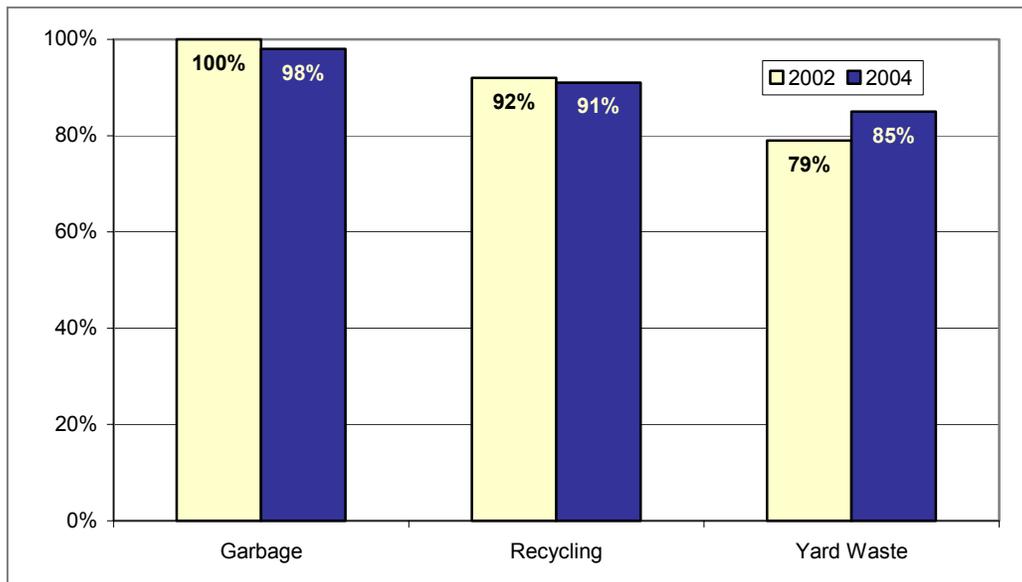


Figure 7: Ease of Use, Solid Waste Collection Programs, 2002 vs. 2004

2.7. Street Maintenance

The Street Maintenance Division maintains the street infrastructure so as to provide a safe and effective transportation system. This includes traditional street repair and maintenance

activities, snow and ice removal operations, pavement marking, maintenance of traffic signals and signs, and street sweeping.

2.7.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 16 illustrates respondents' level of satisfaction for the major street maintenance activities in the five survey years. The questions that were the basis for this table were designed to assess overall opinions, not opinions regarding a specific street type or neighborhood.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Snow & Ice Removal	n/a	81%	86%	88%	98%
Street Maintenance	65%	65%	69%	86%	92%
Street Sweeping	n/a	n/a	69%	90%	95%
Traffic Signals/Signs	n/a	n/a	n/a	90%	91%
Street Lighting	n/a	n/a	n/a	94%	95%

Table 16: Satisfaction Level, Street Maintenance, By Survey Year

As in 2002, the 2004 survey included a question to assess if there was a difference in the opinion of one's neighborhood streets, versus arterial streets or cul-de-sacs. As seen in Figure 8, generally, respondents have a positive opinion of street maintenance. However, it is noted that arterial streets have a slightly less positive rating than cul-de-sacs or neighborhood streets.

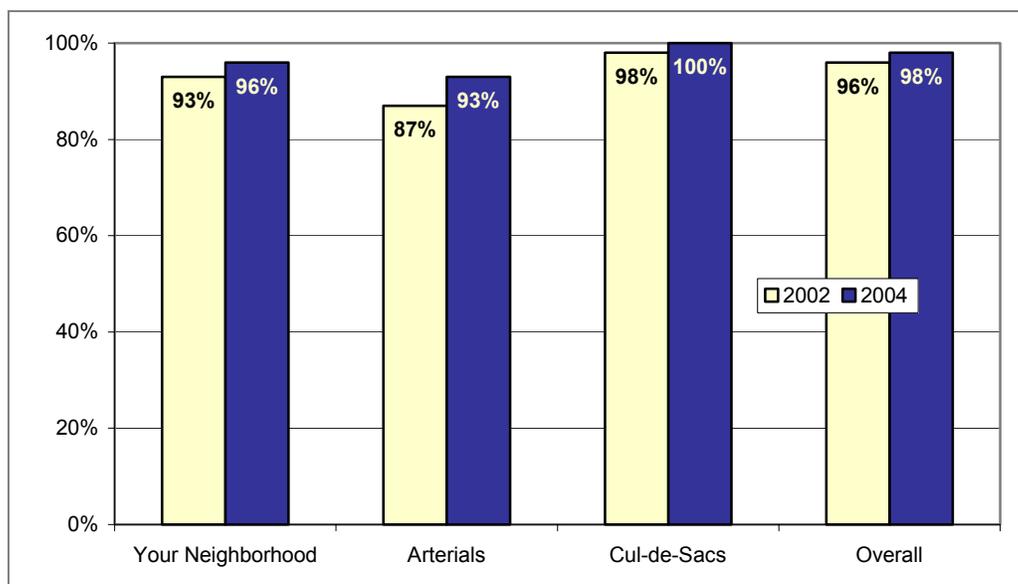


Figure 8: Satisfaction Ratings for Various Streets, Normal Weather Conditions, 2002 vs. 2004

During the winter months, the removal of snow and ice is an important concern to the City and to the residents and businesses of Urbandale. The City’s Snow and Ice Control Policy sets the priorities for the removal of snow and ice during and after a winter weather event. The City does not have designated snow routes; all streets and cul-de-sacs are cleared curb to curb. Emergencies, isolated problem areas, equipment breakdowns, staff availability, and other conditions may affect the allocation of materials and staff to clear the streets of snow and ice.

Since 1996, the survey has assessed respondents' satisfaction with the City's snow and ice removal efforts. In 2002, the question was refined to determine if there are differing levels of satisfaction based on the type of street—neighborhood streets, arterials, and cul-de-sacs. Figure 9 shows the results of this question. Generally, the level of satisfaction is positive, and there is a substantial improvement in the satisfaction rating for neighborhood streets. However, the satisfaction level of cul-de-sacs has decreased and now falls below the 85% threshold. The Department of Engineering and Public Works continues to take action to improve this satisfaction rating. For example, recently, the number of cul-de-sac routes was increased. This means that more plows are now dedicated to the maintenance of cul-de-sacs, which reduces the time it takes to clear all of these streets.

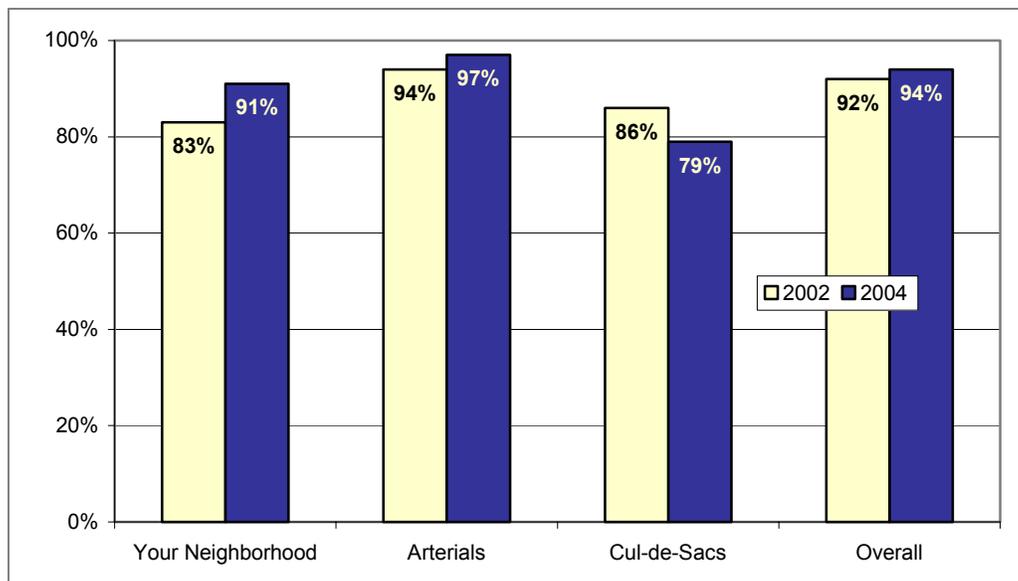


Figure 9: Satisfaction Ratings for Various Streets, Winter Weather Conditions, 2002 vs. 2004

Survey respondents have been asked to rate the condition of the streets in their neighborhood in all five surveys. The results of this question for all survey years are shown in Table 17.

Neighborhood Streets	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Satisfaction Rating	82%	74%	74%	93%	91%

Table 17: Satisfaction Level, Street Maintenance of Neighborhood Streets, by Survey Year

Digging deeper into the question of satisfaction with neighborhood streets, it is interesting to note that there is a significant difference in the satisfaction of respondents in the western one-third of the City, compared to others. As seen in Table 18, residents in the western neighborhoods are much less satisfied than those in the central or eastern portions of the City.

Neighborhood Streets	"West" 184 th Street to 142 nd Street	"Central" 142 nd Street to 86 th Street	"East" 86 th Street to MH Road	Total
North of Douglas	Insuff. Data	96%	97%	95%
South of Douglas	Insuff. Data	100%	98%	97%
Total	79%	97%	97%	96%

Table 18: Satisfaction Level, Street Maintenance of Neighborhood Streets, By Neighborhood, 2004

The streets in the west are a mix of older rural roadways that have not been reconstructed and newer residential streets within the developing subdivisions. One can guess that the dissatisfaction results either from the condition of the older streets as a result of their age, or the condition of the newer streets as a result of the near-constant construction activity, or both. Trucks and other heavy equipment moving on these roadways can very quickly leave substantial accumulations of mud and other debris on the roadway. This debris often becomes hard packed and is present until it is removed by a significant rain or by street sweeping activities. Similarly, the heavy equipment clearly takes a toll on the older roadways that were never intended to accommodate the significant traffic now present in the west.

Staff is considering several strategies to improve the satisfaction levels in the west. First, more aggressive enforcement of the regulations that require contractors to keep streets relatively clear of mud and debris may improve the situation. Likewise, the City may increase the frequency of street sweeping activities. Lastly, greater enforcement of vehicle weight limits on older roads may help to prolong their life spans until full reconstruction can occur. The Department of Engineering and Public Works will take the lead on implementing any improvements.

Table 19 illustrates respondents' satisfaction with the development of the City's street network and its ability to keep up with the increasing demands that result from growth. More than 9 of 10 respondents are satisfied with the growth of the street network in 2004

Street Network	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Yes	88%	89%	95%
No	12%	11%	5%

Table 19: Satisfaction Level, Growth of the Street Network, By Survey Year

Lastly, residents want to be kept informed when street maintenance will result in detours or delays. For the first time, the 2004 survey asked respondents if they are satisfied with the City's efforts to keep them informed. The results can be seen in Table 20.

Detours & Delays	2004 Survey
Satisfied	94%
Dissatisfied	6%

Table 20: Satisfaction with Information on Detours and Delays, 2004

2.8. Sewers

Maintenance of effective sanitary and storm sewer systems are critical to the health of City residents and the protection of the environment. Public Works crews maintain Urbandale's sewer systems. The staff conducts routine cleaning and inspections of the systems and responds to any blockages or breakdowns in the systems.

2.8.1. Satisfaction Level

The 2004 survey included a question to assess respondents' satisfaction with the City's sanitary and storm sewer systems. In prior surveys, the two sewer types were lumped in one question. The results are seen in Table 21.

Activity	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Sanitary & Storm Sewers	93%	
Sanitary Sewers		96%
Storm Sewers		94%

Table 21: Satisfaction Level, Sewers, By Survey Year

2.9. Library

The Library Board of Trustees manages the Urbandale Public Library. The current facility was opened in August 2000. The 2004 citizen survey is the second survey since it was opened.

2.9.1. Satisfaction Level

As indicated in Table 22, the Library's satisfaction score in 2004 fell slightly from 2002, when it obtained a perfect satisfaction rating. Even with the small decrease, the rating is exceptionally

high. This high level of satisfaction likely reflects a combination of satisfaction with the services provided by the Library staff, and the enduring satisfaction with the "like new" facility.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Library	90%	95%	85%	100%	97%

Table 22: Satisfaction Level, Library, By Survey Year

For the first time, the 2004 survey asked respondents if the Library's operating hours were "convenient" for them. The results in Figure 10 show that 92% of respondents felt the hours were convenient.

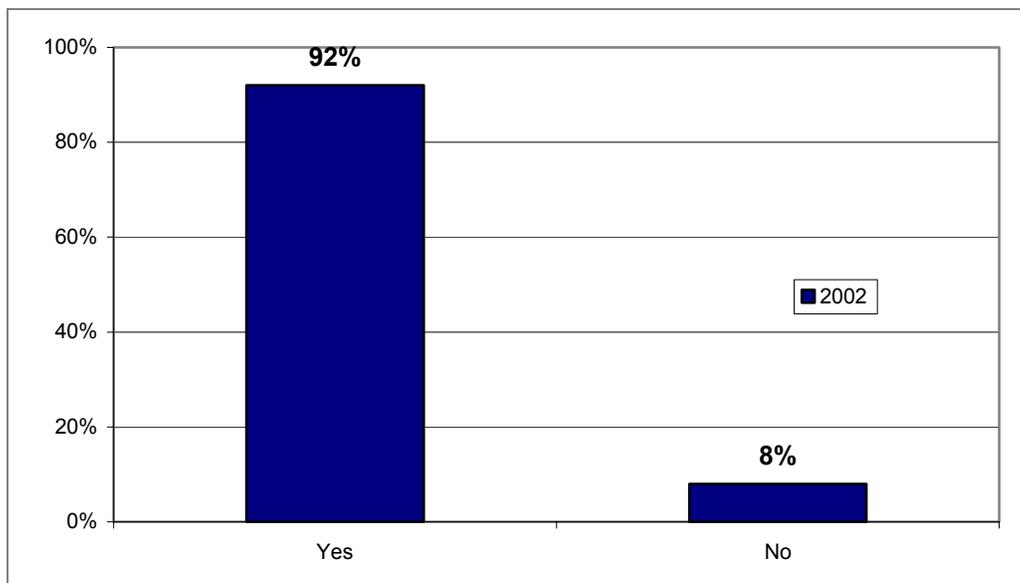


Figure 10: Percentage of Respondents Who Said Library Hours were Convenient, 2004

As in 2002, the 2004 survey asked respondents how many times they had attended an event in one of the Library meeting rooms. These results are seen in Table 23, which shows that 1 in 4 respondents had attended at least one event at the Library in the previous 12 months.

Number of Events Attended	2004 Survey
0	74%
1	10%
2	4%
3	4%
4 or more	8%

Table 23: Attendance at Library Meeting Rooms, 2004 Survey Year

2.10. Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department provides a wide array of leisure time services to the public on a daily basis. Some of the programs offered by the department include the Swimming Pool, Senior Center, Mosquito Control, and Grounds Maintenance services. The general public interacts with the department every day through its year round Recreation and continuing education programs, the Senior Center programs, and the City's expanding network of neighborhood and community parks and trails. In 2003, the City began using contractors to maintain the turf throughout the park system, in the rights-of-way, and at City facilities.

2.10.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 24 shows the percentage of respondents who were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department as well as the Mosquito Control program. It should be noted that the Mosquito Control program saw a significant increase in satisfaction levels from 1999 to 2002, but a decrease from 2002 to 2004.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Parks & Recreation	86%	93%	87%	95%	96%
Mosquito Control	41%	56%	35%	87%	67%

Table 24: Satisfaction Level, Parks & Recreation, By Survey Year

The satisfaction decrease in 2004 likely is the result of two factors. First, the level of public awareness of the mosquito-borne West Nile Virus has increased dramatically over the past few years. As the disease has spread westward, from the east coast, through the Midwest, the general population has shown an increased concern over the disease. Coupled with that is the fact that climatic conditions resulted in a very large mosquito population in early 2004. Combined, these factors really amplified the inherent shortcomings in the mosquito control program. These shortcomings include: the challenge of controlling mosquito populations when weather conditions or resident preferences restrict spraying activities at certain times, and in certain neighborhoods; the potential increase in artificial breeding locations (such as stormwater detention facilities) due to increased development; and the increased population density in the more rural western half of the City.

In light of these challenges, staff has developed three strategies for increasing the effectiveness of the program. These include: working with neighboring communities to coordinate spraying activities in order to maximize coverage and effectiveness; reducing costs by purchasing spray chemicals in bulk with other communities; and using aerial photography to identify breeding grounds throughout the City.

2.10.2. Future Bond Issue

In September 2001, the City Council approved a Master Plan for the City Center development at 142nd Street and Douglas Parkway. The Master Plan included a potential outdoor performing arts amphitheater. The 4,500-seat facility would include 2,000 fixed seats and 2,500 lawn seats. A consultant hired by the City concluded that the central Iowa market could support such a facility. Table 25 shows the level of support that respondents would have if asked to vote on a bond referendum for the amphitheater project.

Potential Project: Outdoor Amphitheater	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Would Support	26%	26%
Might Support	36%	43%
Would Not Support	38%	31%

Table 25: Potential Bond Referendum, Outdoor Performing Arts Amphitheater

2.10.3. Future Bond Issue

The construction of a community center was identified as a community goal during the Imagine Urbandale community visioning process. The vision plan was a collaborative effort between the City, the Urbandale Community School District, the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce, and interested citizens. The City Council, at its meeting of February 9, 1999, endorsed the final report prepared for the vision plan.

Currently, staff from the Cities of Urbandale, Johnston and Grimes, the YMCA of Greater Des Moines, and the District are exploring the potential for one or more shared facilities.

Table 26 shows the potential level of support for a bond referendum for a community center.

Potential Project: Community Center	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Would Support	29%	62%	47%	36%	31%
Might Support	48%	15%	29%	42%	45%
Would Not Support	24%	23%	24%	22%	25%

Table 26: Potential Bond Referendum, Community Center

2.10.4. Future Bond Issue

For the first time, the 2004 survey asked respondents if they would support a bond issuance to fund the purchase and installation of playground equipment. The results are seen in Table 27.

Potential Project: Playground Equipment	2004 Survey
Would Support	39%
Might Support	47%
Would Not Support	14%

Table 27: Potential Bond Referendum, Playground Equipment

2.10.5. Recreation Program Marketing

The Recreation staff actively promotes its activities and programs. In 1998, the City and the Urbandale Community School District entered into a joint agreement to hire a full-time employee in the Department of Parks and Recreation to coordinate the community education program for the City and the District. This arrangement has resulted in better program coordination, increased course offerings and revenue, and improved public relations and program awareness.

Also, in 1998, the department published its first triennial seasonal Program Guide of course offerings. The 40-page catalog was produced in-house, and then delivered to the *Urbandale Press-Citizen* for printing and distribution. In 2001, printing and distribution were shifted from the *Press-Citizen* to the *Des Moines Register*, and the *Register* staff also assumed responsibility for the layout of the document. The Program Guide is also available on the City's web site, on the *Des Moines Register's* web site, and in hard copy at various locations throughout the City. In 2003, the City's web site was redesigned to allow on-line program registrations using a credit card.

Publicity for recreation programs is also achieved through the publication of stories in local newspapers, and via flyers and brochures that are distributed to various user groups. To determine the effectiveness of the department's promotional efforts, respondents were asked to identify their "main source" of information about recreation services. The results are shown in Table 28.

Information Sources	2004 Survey
Recreation Program Guide	43%
<i>Urbandale Press-Citizen</i>	25%
<i>DM Register</i>	13%
City Web Site	7%
Word of Mouth	6%
Other	2%
School Flyers	2%
Signs/Posters	1%

Table 28: Information Sources, Recreation Programs, 2004 Survey

It is noted that a relatively small number of respondents (7%) said that the City's web site is their main source of information on Recreation programs from the City's web site. This statistic belies the fact that the on-line recreation registration system is very popular. In fact, for the 5-day period at the beginning of the Winter/Spring 2005 registration period (December 15-20, 2004), more than half of all recreation revenues (51%) were received via the web site.⁴ What appears to be happening is that customers are using the Program Guide, which is delivered to their front door, as their main source of information, but they are using the web site when they finally decide to execute a registration.

Because of a change in the way this question was worded in 2004, it is not possible to accurately compare the 2002 results with the 2004 results on this question. However, it is noted that the *Urbandale Press-Citizen* and the Recreation Program Guide were the first and second most popular information sources in 2002, respectively.

In 2004, 22% of respondents indicated that they or a family member had participated in a City recreation program in the previous 12 months. Additionally, respondents said they most preferred to register for a class either by phone (36%) or online (35%). On the other hand, a majority of respondents (55%) would prefer to use a check to register for a recreation program, which would be impossible using phone in or on-line registration; 42% of respondents would prefer to register using a credit card.

⁴ It is also noted that, during the same 5-day period, more than 88% of total recreation revenues were received via credit card (Visa or MasterCard). This includes internet registrations as well as walk-in registrations. The 88% figure is quite remarkable given that the City did not even accept credit cards prior to 2003.

2.11. Swimming Pool

The City's indoor Swimming Pool is open year round for public use. The pool is also used occasionally by the Urbandale Community School District for its events, and is open to the public regularly for fitness and leisure swim activities.

2.11.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 29 shows the respondents' overall level of satisfaction with the Swimming Pool in 2002 and 2004. It is noted that the satisfaction level increased significantly from one survey to the next. As a result the satisfaction rating at the pool is now above the 85% threshold level.

Activity	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Swimming Pool	82%	95%

Table 29: Satisfaction Level, Swimming Pool, By Survey Year

2.11.2. Future Bond Issue

In response to the question regarding support of a bond issue to finance an outdoor aquatics center, there was "ambiguous" support. Table 30 illustrates the results of this question. It can be seen that the percentage of respondents who said they would support this potential project has dropped to its lowest level (35%) since 1992. On the other hand, the percentage that would not support the project has dropped to its lowest level ever (23%). The responses to this question likely are affected by the discussions about a community center, with an indoor aquatics center, and the presence of two new outdoor aquatics centers in West Des Moines and Clive.

The City has not prepared any plans for an outdoor swimming pool; the Capital Improvements Program for 2001-2006 anticipates a full-scale outdoor water park in the 2006+ timeframe. The facility could include a swimming pool, play equipment, and other water features, and could be located in the Walnut Creek Regional Park.

Potential Project: Outdoor Aqua. Center	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Would Support	30%	48%	54%	49%	35%
Might Support	39%	17%	23%	18%	42%
Would Not Support	31%	35%	33%	32%	23%

Table 30: Potential Bond Referendum, Outdoor Aquatics Center

2.12. Senior Center

In 2001, the Senior Center moved from its previous location at the Ralph Whitten Shelter House at Lions Park into its new location in the former library at 7305 Aurora Avenue. The center offers a variety of programs, including arts and crafts, personal growth activities, exercise classes, recreational activities, cultural and athletic events, monthly mini-trips, and several charter bus trips each year. The center is open Monday through Thursday, and serves congregate meals several times per week. Additionally, the Center organizes a wide variety of field trips for Center patrons.

2.12.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 31 shows a consistently high percentage of respondents who are satisfied with the Senior Center. As with the Library, this likely reflects a combination of high quality service and the satisfaction of having a new facility.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Senior Center	68%	82%	80%	100%	100%

Table 31: Satisfaction Levels, Senior Center, By Survey Year

2.13. Community Development

The Community Development Department consists of two divisions—Building Inspections and Planning & Zoning. Both divisions interact with the public on a daily basis to ensure that construction and development are consistent with City ordinances.

2.13.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 32 shows the satisfaction levels for the two services since 1992. As one can see, both service areas have maintained the increased satisfaction levels that were first identified in 2002.

Some portion of the improved service levels can be attributed to the addition of a staff person in FY2003-04. This position has property maintenance and code enforcement as its primary duties. Prior to the addition, property maintenance issues would be handled as time permitted between the “hard” deadlines for other work. The new position has improved the timeliness of property maintenance enforcement, which impacts citizen satisfaction. An additional staff person was also added in October, 2004, and is dedicated full-time to building inspections. This staff person should alleviate some of the pressure on that activity as the number of permits has

increased significantly over the past several years. The 2005 implementation of the Community Development Partner software system should further improve customer service.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Building Inspections	70%	70%	72%	88%	89%
Planning & Zoning	52%	54%	46%	84%	88%

Table 32: Satisfaction Level, Community Development, By Survey Year

2.14. Water

The Urbandale Water Department and the Urbandale Water Board of Trustees manage the City's water system. This includes the installation of new water lines, and the distribution of water to customers throughout the City. Water customers are billed on a monthly basis.

2.14.1. Satisfaction Level

As in 2002, the 2004 survey asked respondents to indicate how satisfied they are with the customer services received from the Water Department, as well as the quality of the water product. In 2004, the customer service question was further refined to distinguish between office staff and field staff. The results show in Table 33.

Water	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Customer Service	93%	100%	
Customer Service-Office Staff			97%
Customer Service-Field Staff			99%
Water Quality	82%	95%	100%

Table 33: Satisfaction Level, Water Services, by Survey Year

Also as in 2002, the 2004 survey showed that the most respondents are satisfied with their water pressure. Of those who were not satisfied, the majority felt that the pressure was too low. The results are in Table 34.

Water Pressure	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	
Too High	1%	1%	1%
Satisfactory	88%	95%	94%
Too Low	11%	4%	5%

Table 34: Satisfaction Level, Water Pressure, by Survey Year

Water customers are billed on a monthly basis. All five surveys have included a question to determine if the water bill was easy to understand. The 2004 survey results, shown in Table 35, indicate that the vast majority of customers think that the water bill is easy to understand, which is comparable to the previous surveys.

Water Bill Easy to Understand	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Yes	96%	94%	96%	95%	99%

Table 35: Satisfaction Level, Water Bill, by Survey Year

2.15. City Hall

The City Hall administrative staff are charged with implementing the policies of the City Council, managing the City's financial and human resources effectively, and providing strategic leadership to departmental staff throughout the City. City Hall staff members have extensive contact with citizens, and must be knowledgeable about a very diverse range of City services.

2.15.1. Satisfaction Level

Table 36 illustrates the percentage of respondents who were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with City Hall services in each of the five survey years.

Activity	1992 Survey	1996 Survey	1999 Survey	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
City Hall	86%	78%	85%	95%	97%

Table 36: Satisfaction Level, City Hall, By Survey Year

2.15.2. Information Sources

Ensuring that residents are aware of City services and upcoming events is a high priority of the City Council and the City Manager's Office. The 2004 survey included a question to determine what news and information sources are most often relied upon by respondents for information about the City in general. As seen in Table 37, 32% of respondents said that *Urbandale Press-Citizen* was their top source of information. It was followed by the quarterly Citizen's Brief newsletter and the *Des Moines Register*.

Information Sources	2004 Survey
<i>Press-Citizen</i>	32%
Citizen's Brief Newsletter	27%
<i>DM Register</i>	16%
City Web Site	13%
Recreation Program Guide	8%
Word of Mouth	4%

Table 37: Information Sources, City Information, 2004 Survey