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**EMCresearch.com**

## Proposal

### RFP #951-14, Community Survey

**ORIGINAL**

Prepared for



The City of Manhattan Beach  
October 4, 2013

Submitted by:

EMC Research, Inc.

Contacts:

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**EMCresearch.com**

## A. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

October 5, 2013

City of Manhattan Beach  
Attn: Bruce Moe  
1400 Highland Avenue  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Mr. Moe:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit our proposal to conduct public opinion research for the City of Manhattan Beach. Founded in 1989, EMC Research, Inc., (EMC) is a full service opinion research and strategic consulting firm serving a broad range of public, private, non-profit, and institutional clients. With offices in Oakland, Seattle, Portland, and Columbus, EMC is a national firm with experience with thousands of public opinion studies, ranging from public policy strategy polls to extensive market share and customer/resident satisfaction surveys.

EMC is highly qualified to conduct a community survey for the City of Manhattan Beach. We have assisted numerous cities, towns, public agencies, and other public clients with research to determine community satisfaction and opinions on local and regional issues. We have designed and administered hundreds of successful research projects on a variety of public policy topics, including general city services, transportation, education, healthcare, public safety, and parks. Our research has helped cities, towns, and public agencies improve relationships with their customers or citizens, informed community leaders during important policy decisions, and gathered information on desired service enhancements and funding options.

Most recently, EMC conducted a similar project for the City of Walnut Creek, California. Walnut Creek is facing some challenging budget decisions, as the city's revenues are not able to continue to cover currently provided service levels. In September of this year, EMC conducted a survey to help the city measure awareness of their financial situation, as well as explore community spending priorities to use in their budgeting decisions. The survey results were presented to the City Council just this week, and we are continuing to work with the city on how to best apply the data to their strategic decisions.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with you on this important project. Should you have any questions about our proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me directly (510-550-8920; alex@emcresearch.com).

Sincerely,

Alex Evans  
President, EMC Research

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## C. QUALIFICATIONS

### 1. Description of Firm

As an opinion research and strategic consulting firm, our mission is to provide clients with strategic actionable recommendations using a thorough understanding of public opinion. With 22 professionals operating from offices in Seattle, Oakland, Portland, and Columbus, EMC has been involved in more than 3,300 opinion surveys and over 450 focus groups at all levels, ranging from political and public policy strategy polls to extensive market share and customer satisfaction surveys.

EMC has built its reputation as an innovative firm, and is one of the premier firms in California on public policy issues. Our expertise in research is based on academic training and real-life application. We tailor methodologies to achieve your objectives, making data applicable to your strategic goals and providing ongoing consulting to apply actionable recommendations.

EMC provides a powerful synthesis of talent and methodology that consistently exceeds our clients' research requirements. Our research professionals combine an in-depth academic understanding of research with extensive real world experience to design a research program that best helps clients achieve their goals and get the most out of their research budgets. Our research capabilities include:

- Telephone Interviewing
- Focus groups
- Web-based Interviewing
- Door-to-Door Interviewing
- Intercept Research
- Mail studies
- Interactive Voice Response Interviewing
- Multi-lingual research
- Advertising effectiveness tracking
- Market segmentation
- New product evaluation
- Positioning studies
- Membership studies
- Data processing and tabulation
- Multivariate analysis

When you hire EMC Research, you bring to the table a committed team of research and consulting professionals who will listen to your needs, design the best combination of research methods, collect reliable and accurate data, and synthesize research results into a product that is easy to understand and apply to further your strategic goals and initiatives. EMC Research stands out from other market and opinion research firms in several key ways:

- **We make complex research understandable.** We provide research as a service, not a product. Our goal is to provide you with actionable research-based recommendations that help you achieve your goals.
- **We know what works.** We combine years of practical experience with an in-depth academic understanding of the science of research. We've conducted thousands of research projects using every imaginable research methodology. This ensures that the methodology and analysis employed on each and every project is scientifically sound and practical.
- **We start at the beginning.** Every step of the research process is important because each step builds on the last. But the first step, framing and focus, is critical to designing a research program that meets your needs. We start each project by working with you to clearly and



completely define your overall goals and how (and if) those goals can best be served by research. We will tell you if research is the wrong answer.

- **We take a multidisciplinary approach.** Our principals and staff come from a wide variety of academic and professional backgrounds, and we conduct research on a broad range of issues and topics. We often find creative solutions by applying the lessons learned in a different type of research.
- **We know what it's like.** We're a small business so we know and appreciate the real life constraints that all of our clients face, such as limited budgets and tight timelines. Our experience allows us to recommend the best research program to meet your budget and timeline while getting you the information you need.
- **We're there when you need us.** We are committed to your success, and that's why we provide substantial and ongoing consulting for as long as you use our research. And we do it at no extra cost.
- **We're a good company.** You'd be hard pressed to find a company that treats its employees better. Why does this matter to you? Because employees who are treated well care more about what they do and it shows in every aspect of their work. And they stay around longer, which means they bring added experience to every project.

## **2. Similar Work**

For nearly two decades, EMC has assisted public entities with gathering feedback from residents to guide strategic decisions, acknowledge citizen priorities, enhance communication with the community, determine the feasibility of potential ballot measures, and gauge residents' satisfaction with quality of life issues, governance, and city services. In many cases, we were able to use the results of our research to help design winning revenue measures. In other cases, we have delivered the difficult message that the time is not right to move forward with a measure, as well as advise on how to proceed with difficult budget decisions while respecting the will of the community. Our work is designed to provide you with the data needed to develop long-term communications with voters in addition to providing the basis for designing immediate strategies for revenue measures and budget decisions.

Our experience also includes navigating public contracting processes, presenting politically sensitive opinion research in a public setting, dealing with media inquiries, and meeting open records requirements. Our work often involves working with government staff and elected officials, with much of our work done in the public eye, and we are accustomed to that climate. Many of our local and state government clients continue to return to EMC Research year after year to help them keep in touch with the needs and priorities of residents or customers.

### 3. Team Resumes

The team assigned to this project has many years of experience conducting similar research projects for cities and counties all over California. The project manager will be firm founder and President **Alex Evans**, who will be assisted by Vice President and Senior Analyst **Sara LaBatt**. A summary of their background and experience is below.



**Alex Evans** is President and founding partner of EMC Research. He has extensive experience in the design and execution of stratified proportional sampling plans, questionnaire development, all forms of opinion research, focus groups, voter polls, strategic design and development and public policy analysis.

Mr. Evans has conducted over two thousand public opinion studies. He has polled in every state and throughout the western United States. He has completed survey research at every level of politics and government and for large and small corporations, government institutions, and universities. Mr. Evans is considered one of the finest analysts of public opinion in the nation and is frequently asked to speak on the subject at some of the country's top universities. He has directed accounts for some of the nation's largest corporations, Presidential campaigns in this country and abroad, statewide elections, and hundreds of projects on regional and local issues.

Mr. Evans manages projects for a number of public clients. For many of these clients, his work has resulted in successful revenue-generating ballot measures, a better understanding of citizen satisfaction, improved outreach and communication between public agencies and their constituents, and other positive outcomes. Mr. Evans' current and past clients include the cities of Walnut Creek, Novato, and Antioch. Clients who work with Mr. Evans appreciate his ability to distill research findings down to actionable recommendations and clear interpretation.

Prior to forming EMC Research, Mr. Evans was Executive Vice President at Cambridge Survey Research, where he worked with world-renowned pollster Patrick H. Caddell. Mr. Evans has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley and a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Michigan. He served on the Richmond City Council for six years.



**Sara LaBatt** is a Vice President and Senior Analyst with EMC Research. As an analyst and former field director, she has been involved in every aspect of survey research including instrument and sample design, testing, fielding, analysis, and presentation design. She is particularly adept at constructing complex sample plans and questionnaire structures that give her clients maximum flexibility to evaluate various scenarios with a high degree of statistical accuracy. She is also an experienced, and RIVA-trained, focus group moderator.



Sara has been in survey research for thirteen years, most of which have been with EMC. Sara is currently working with the City of Walnut Creek on a community priorities survey very similar to the work being proposed here. Many of her projects have involved testing revenue measures and expenditure plans, and she is excellent at helping clients see how they can use survey data to create public information campaigns and generate internal and public consensus around an issue.

Sara rejoined the EMC team in 2003 after a three-year hiatus. During that time she worked as an analyst for Knowledge Networks where she helped the company develop a statistically valid method of applying probability sampling to web-based survey research. She was a key player in the first-ever web-based 'instapoll,' where results from a survey were revealed on national network news moments after survey completion. Sara's other experience includes work as a research assistant for Bruce E. Cain, a leading Professor of California Politics and Director of U.C. Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies.

Sara has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley.

## **D. SURVEY APPROACH**

### **1. Description of Methodology**

The purpose of this public opinion research project is to provide statistically valid quantitative data regarding public attitudes and opinions on the City of Manhattan Beach. For work of this type, we recommend a telephone survey with a representative sample of registered voters in the city. This type of survey, which includes both land line and mobile phone interviewing, will allow the city to collect statistically reliable data from a random sample of voters, and project that data over the entire voter population, while minimizing self-selection bias and controlling project costs.

Following is a discussion of our approach for each of the tasks identified in the scope of work:

#### **Phase I: Research Design**

The first phase of the project will be focused on designing the research that best fits your needs. The essential elements in this phase are consultation on project design, timeline refinement, questionnaire design, and sample design.

##### **Consultation on project design and timeline**

Prior to finalizing the design of the project, the EMC team will meet with the City's project team to discuss your research needs, management approach to the project, and a timeline for the research and delivery of results. This meeting is a critical part of the creation of a quality research project, as it sets the expectations and goals, and enables us to hear what you are really hoping to find out from the research.

##### **Questionnaire Design**

EMC Research will work closely with City staff and designates to formulate survey questions suited to the needs of the project. After an initial meeting with the client team, EMC Research will review relevant background information and develop a draft questionnaire for review. We typically proceed through multiple rounds of feedback and revisions to arrive at a final questionnaire that will meet the needs of the client. Interviewing will not begin until all sides are satisfied with the questionnaire and only after a final questionnaire has been approved by the City.

EMC will design a survey questionnaire that will yield scientifically valid results. The specific content and format of the survey will be heavily influenced by discussions with the City, our review of background materials, and our experience with designing similar surveys for other public agencies.

##### **Sample Design**

Our approach to sample design is to first understand what level of specificity you need in the data collected, what specific subgroups may be of interest, and what data is available on the distribution of those subgroups. This information allows us to make a sample design recommendation that most closely meets your needs and budget while allowing for reliable projection over the population. Once the sample design is approved, EMC will draw a random sample of City of Manhattan Beach voters with telephone numbers, as per the sample design. This sample would incorporate both landline and cell phone numbers.

While EMC has been conducting quantitative opinion research for nearly 25 years, we stay up-to-date on trends and research in quantitative interviewing, and we make sure to employ the most accurate sampling and interviewing techniques on all projects. In order to ensure a survey yields results that are projectable over the population, it is crucial to have a sample that is representative of the universe of eligible respondents, and that appropriate controls for sample and interview bias are implemented throughout the research process. We understand the increasing challenges in this area, and we are familiar with current research on cell phone only households, telephone and internet penetration, and response rates. Should it be needed, we are happy to discuss current practices and the science of polling and representative sampling with City staff, City Council members, or other stakeholders.

**Phase I Products:**

- Draft and final project timeline
- Draft and final survey questionnaire
- Draft and final sample design
- Survey sample delivered to the survey call center

**Phase II: Survey Administration**

The second phase of the project will consist of the actual administration of the survey, including close monitoring of data collection, data cleaning and coding, and application of weights as needed.

**Data Collection**

The quality of the data collected in any research project is entirely dependent on the correct administration of the questionnaire and sample plan. We understand the science behind random sampling, and we work very hard with our trusted partners to ensure all of our data is collected as intended, with high quality interviewers, strict sample management, and thorough quality control procedures.

All telephone interviewing will be conducted by trained professional interviewers. An overview of the study's objectives, a review of the sample, and question-by-question specifications will be supplied to the interviewers. The questionnaire will be reviewed in its entirety with the interviewers, emphasizing instructions regarding call back procedures, respondent selection, termination points, skip patterns, and acceptable probes and clarifications for open-ended questions. Pronunciations for all unfamiliar or difficult place and person names are provided in each telephone interviewing script and discussed in training.

Interviewer calls are monitored nightly by an on-site supervisor, and remotely by EMC Research staff to ensure that all procedures are properly followed. Monitoring ensures that:

- Questions are read exactly as written, in correct order;
- Responses are recorded verbatim;
- Skip patterns are followed correctly;
- Natural pace is maintained;
- Non-directive feedback/reinforcement is used; and,
- Questions are not over-probed or under-probed and non-leading probes are used.

In order to ensure the survey sample is representative of the population under study, EMC enforces a thorough callback method. We typically set a minimum of at least three callbacks on

a single number before we take it out of the dialer. We vary interviewing hours and days to allow for representation from all groups: For example, someone who works a swing shift may not be able to take the survey during weeknight calling. Including some interviewing hours on weekends can help address this issue. We also use a callback strategy that varies the calling window nightly to address this issue. If a respondent is initially dialed at 7:00 PM on a Tuesday, we might dial them the next day at 5:30, then on Friday at 8:00, and again Saturday at 2:00. This gives that individual a number of chances to participate at varied times and days, increasing our chances of reaching them at home or on their cell phone.

Both landline and cellular phone numbers will be included in the voter sample for this project. Cellular phone numbers will be identified and dialed separately than landline phone numbers. This is done both to satisfy legal requirements to hand-dial known cell phone numbers, as well as enable us to delay cell phone list calls until after 7:00 PM, when many plans start their “unlimited nights and weekends” window, reducing respondent concern about the length of the call and the associated cost.

Upon interview completion, each interview will be edited twice. The initial editing will be conducted by the interviewer. An experienced supervisor and editor will follow up with a second editing. Missing answers and failed instructions will be noted. If necessary, respondents will be called back to complete or clarify questions. In addition, answers to open-ended questions will be checked for legibility, completeness, and clarity.

After each night of interviewing, demographic and geographic variables (such as age, party registration, race, and school district) will be tracked to ensure that they are falling within the appropriate proportions as compared with the overall population.

#### **Data Cleaning and Coding**

Following the completion of interviewing, the survey data is carefully checked and cleaned, and open-ended questions are collapsed into a set of codes that categorizes their meaning and makes analysis possible.

#### **Application of Weights**

While we will take many steps to ensure the final population surveyed matches the known demographics and geographic distribution of Manhattan Beach voters, it is sometimes necessary to apply weights to the data to ensure it is projectable across the population. In this step we compare our final surveyed population distribution to known population distributions, factor in potential effects of survey screening questions, and apply weight as needed to ensure the data is representative.

#### **Phase II Products:**

- Periodic reports on the status of survey interviewing

#### **Phase III: Analysis**

The third phase of the project involves using a range of analytical tools to understand what the data is telling us, as well as preparation of a topline document and a book of crosstabulations.

## **Data Analysis**

Upon completion of interviewing, EMC Research staff will conduct an extensive statistical analysis of the data gathered from the surveys. The key steps in the analysis phase include the following:

*Analysis of Single Variable Statistics:* The process begins by analyzing the percentage distribution of responses on each question. This is sometimes known as “topline” results. It is the widest view and interpretation of the survey results, and shows where community perceptions are, and the extent to which those opinions have crystallized. In some cases, the issue at hand requires little more than an analysis of these “topline” results. But even in those cases, we employ other methods of analysis to dig deeper into the issues.

*Variable Modification:* In this step, EMC analysts “compact” survey questions to investigate opinions. Most of the questions we ask provide an intensity of response. But sometimes these intensities don’t tell the whole story: where does the majority of opinion lie? How do, for example, people of different generations, ethnic groups, or zip codes view the key issues? Many of these questions can be answered in this step.

*Analysis of Bivariate Frequency Distributions:* Extensive tables of these statistics, also known as cross-tabulation output or cross-tabs are generated for the entire survey by significant demographic and attitudinal variables. These tables are systematically analyzed to determine the relationship between variables, for example: opinion differences between men and women or between different age groups. We identify differences between these variables to better understand the significant differences in populations. This analysis provides the basis to begin constructing segments of the population and to identify variables for further analysis using multiple regression techniques.

*Segmentation Profile Construction:* Using the answers to survey questions, we can construct and then analyze mutually exclusive groups that share a set of opinions. Through a combination of behaviors and attitudes about key local issues, if desired, the City could have an understanding of which demographic groups may warrant special outreach, and know what messages or information would be compelling to those groups. This analysis is the culmination of our research, and is often the main tool our clients use.

## **Toplines Document**

As part of our initial analysis, we prepare a survey topline document that shows all questions asked in the survey, along with frequency responses for each question and answer code. This document serves as a record of exactly what question wording and order was used in the survey, as well as any relevant interviewer or programmer instructions.

## **Book of Crosstabulations**

The crosstabulations generated in analysis are output into a single file for easy delivery to the City. The file can be provided electronically and/or as a printed book, at the City’s preference.



#### **Phase III Products:**

- Periodic reports on the status of data analysis
- Toplines document (questionnaire text with frequency responses)
- Book of crosstabulations (physical and electronic versions available)

#### **Phase IV: Reporting and Presentation**

The fourth phase of the project is the creation of draft and final reports on the research, including key findings, a visual presentation of results, executive summary, a written report, and strategic analysis, as well as verbal presentations of survey results to city staff and elected officials.

##### **Reporting of Results**

In analyzing and reporting the results of the survey, we provide you with clear, concise analysis and strategic recommendations to meet your goals. Our emphasis is on making the data understandable and usable. We will work with you to make sure you get the most out of our research, both internally and externally.

EMC will compile and analyze the data to produce a draft report outlining the survey methods, key findings, conclusions, recommendations, and cross tabulations. This report will include a PowerPoint presentation of the complete results with charts and graphs, analysis, key findings, recommendations, the survey topline with question text, and data crosstabulations.

##### **Presentations of Results**

Once all presentation materials have been approved by the project team, EMC will present materials in-person as needed to ensure the results are meaningful, usable, and actionable. In this phase, our years of experience will help contextualize the results for you and understand the implications for Manhattan Beach.

#### **Phase IV Products:**

- Draft and final visual presentation of results (including key findings, strategic analysis, and recommendations)
- Draft and final survey report, including the visual presentation, survey topline with question text, and data crosstabulations
- In-person presentation of final visual report to City Staff, Elected Officials, and other groups as needed

#### **Phase V: Ongoing Consulting**

Following the conclusion of the research execution and delivery, the final phase of the project will focus on helping the City with key decisions and strategies as you make decisions about the future of the City. At EMC, we believe the best research is research used. **One of the most important parts of any project is helping clients apply what they have learned, and helping them understand the voice of the public as they consider various strategies.** Applying what you learn in the research effectively can make all the difference to your residents and customers with regard to the projects and priorities you choose to pursue. We will remain involved with the City as you plan your information strategies, expenditure plans, and future goals.



## **2. Survey Specification Recommendations**

In order to achieve the City's goals for this research project, our initial recommendation is to conduct the survey with a random sample of 400 registered City of Manhattan Beach voters. This sample size is typical for surveys in a city of this size, and has an overall margin of error of plus or minus 4.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval. Please note that this is our initial recommendation; if in the course of the survey planning process we see a reason to alter this recommendation, we would discuss it with the City at that time, along with the cost and timing implications of such a change.

Based on our current understanding of the project goals, and the above-mentioned factors, we expect that the survey questionnaire will include:

- General direction of the City
- Open-ended measurement on opinions about living in Manhattan Beach
- Ratings of City government, City services, and management of money
- Issue environment
- Attitudes towards City projects and priorities
- Importance of City projects and priorities
- Demographics

### 3. Project Schedule

The following is a proposed project schedule. We are available to begin working on the project immediately upon award of the contract, and we remain flexible to adjust the recommended dates below to meet the scheduling needs of the City.

Proposed Timeline	
Dates	Deliverables & Project Milestones
November 5	City Council approves agreement
Week of Nov. 11	Project kick-off meeting, to include background information from City, discuss and finalize goals for the research, project management, & timeline
Week of Nov. 18	<b>EMC provides draft questionnaire and timeline.</b> Review draft questionnaire and timeline with City staff and designates as appropriate. Incorporate edits as appropriate.
Week of Nov. 25	<b>EMC provides final questionnaire and timeline for City approval.</b>
Week of Dec. 2	Conduct telephone interviewing. <b>EMC provides regular survey status updates.</b>
Week of Dec. 9	<b>EMC delivers topline results to City. EMC delivers draft reports to city. EMC delivers book of crosstabulations.</b> Preliminary discussion to review results. Refine analysis and incorporate edits as appropriate.
Week of Dec. 16	<b>EMC presents survey results to City Council and Staff as needed.</b>
Ongoing	Consultation on application of the findings as needed.

## **E. REFERENCES**

### **City of Walnut Creek**

EMC was hired by the city of Walnut Creek in 2013 to understand community sentiment about living in Walnut Creek, measure community awareness of the city's fiscal problem, capture community priorities and values around city services, and gauge attitudes about revenue measures and other potential solutions to the city's fiscal challenges. One of the challenges of this work was that the city is faced with very difficult budgeting decisions, and they wanted very granular data on how the public would approach the tough choices they are being faced with. The type of analysis they were interested in would have been simple in an online survey, but because they wanted the reliability of a telephone survey we had to adapt it for administration over the telephone. We developed a method where we asked a number of short forced choice priority questions, which we could combine to enable a full pairwise comparison of the ten budget items without undue respondent burden or confusion. The results of this survey, which were presented to the City Council on October 1, showed that people are very positive about the city and place a lot of trust in the council, awareness of the city's fiscal situation is low, voters are divided about cutting spending versus increasing city revenues, and police services, road maintenance, and parks/open space top the funding priority list.

*EMC's City Council report for the City of Walnut Creek is included in this proposal packet.*

### **Ken Nordhoff**

City of Walnut Creek  
(925) 943-5812  
Nordhoff@walnut-creek.org

### **City of Riverside**

EMC Research worked with the City of Riverside, CA on a telephone survey of local voters in 2010 and 2011. The survey was designed to measure overall attitudes and opinions of the city, city services, what issues should be a priority for the city, and to gauge support for public funding for the local library system. The data showed that local voters had a generally favorable view of the city overall, a very favorable view of the public library, and placed high value on the services and programs provided by the library.

The survey data and analysis were used to help craft a successful outreach and communication strategy to educate local voters on the value of the local library system, and the importance of public funding in maintaining the quality of that system. EMC worked closely with the city and their project team to help craft a ballot measure and overall approach to secure continued public funding. The coordinated efforts of EMC Research and the client team led to success on Election Day as voters overwhelmingly approved the library funding measure.

### **Tina English**

City of Riverside  
(951) 826-5664  
tenglish@riversideca.gov

**City of Rancho Cucamonga**

In March 2013, EMC Research conducted a telephone survey of residential property owners on behalf of the City of Rancho Cucamonga, California, in order to help city leaders make critical decisions regarding a potential Prop 218 ballot measure to fund landscape improvements in one of their eight landscape assessment districts. EMC worked closely with the city to design an effective methodology and craft a survey questionnaire that would provide input on key strategic issues, including the potential assessment amount. The research showed majority support for the measure among the voting property owners, and generally favorable conditions for a second attempt at a Prop 218 ballot measure. EMC's recommendation was that with a dedicated education effort to inform property owners about key elements of the measure, it could likely succeed. The City decided to move forward with the Prop 218 ballot measure and it passed in June 2013 with 58% weighted support from voting property owners. We are now working with the city to help them come up with a strategy to renew and increase assessments in their other seven landscape assessment districts.

**Lori Sassoon**

City of Rancho Cucamonga  
(909) 477-2700 x2400  
Lori.Sassoon@cityofrc.us

**City of Seattle (WA)**

EMC has conducted numerous studies for the City of Seattle, including a survey in both the City of Seattle and all of King County designed to measure priorities for tax dollars, support for various tax measures, and to assess general satisfaction with services and the state of the City and County. Other research projects for Seattle have included focus groups and a telephone survey regarding its citywide Climate Action Plan, focus groups and a telephone survey to gauge support for fire protection upgrades, focus groups and a telephone survey to determine transportation infrastructure funding priorities, and focus groups and a telephone survey among the "baby boomer" generation that determined how people in this age group view Seattle as a place to live, work, and retire, and whether their plans include retiring in Seattle at all. The City is using the results of the "boomer" survey to develop programs to help the people in this age group stay and thrive in Seattle.

**Tim Ceis**

(206) 265-1800  
tim@cbestrategic.com

**City of Kirkland (WA)**

In 2012, EMC Research was hired by the City of Kirkland to conduct a survey that would assess and track residents' attitudes and opinions about quality of life in Kirkland, priorities for the future and satisfaction with city government and its services. EMC provided the City with actionable data that identified improvement opportunities for the City through gap analysis, homing in on the specific service areas that were identified as important to residents, but where ratings of the City's performance left room for improvement.

**Kurt Triplett**

City of Kirkland

(425) 587-3020

KTriplett@kirklandwa.gov

**City of Lake Forest Park (WA)**

The City of Lake Forest Park brought in EMC in 2010 to conduct a survey on budgeting and citizen priorities, along with citizen perceptions of the City and its performance and trustworthiness in general. The survey showed that while the citizens generally thought the City was doing a good job and was fiscally responsible, they were not aware of the financial hardships the City was facing. In the course of the survey, the more information citizens received about the nature of the city's funding gap and how it might be addressed, the more they supported a range of revenue generating options. The survey has given the City the tools it needs to understand how voters view City priorities, and it continues to assist the City in making the tough decisions on how to close the budget gap while involving its citizens.

**Catherine Stanford**

City of Lake Forest Park

(206) 368-5440 ext. 251

CStanford@cityofflp.com

## F. COMPENSATION/PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The cost of the survey is determined by the length of the questionnaire, the screens employed, languages required and the number of interviews. Should these change the survey cost would need to be adjusted accordingly.

For a 400 interview voter telephone survey in the City of Manhattan Beach, with an average survey length of 15 and 20 minutes, the cost is not to exceed **\$15,900 and \$19,990**, respectively. This cost includes all aspects of conducting the research, including all meetings and presentations, as well as ongoing consulting on application of results.

Following is a breakdown of costs for each survey length by the phases outlined above.

Phase	15 minute survey length	20 minute survey length
Phase I: Research Design	\$3,975	\$4,990
Phase II: Survey Administration	\$7,950	\$9,995
Phase III: Analysis	\$2,385	\$3,000
Phase IV: Reporting and Presentation	\$1,590	\$2,005
Phase V: Ongoing Consulting	<i>Included</i>	<i>Included</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,900</b>	<b>\$19,990</b>



# Telephone Survey of Walnut Creek Voters Conducted for The City of Walnut Creek

*Presentation of Results*

*October 1, 2013*



**EMC Research, Inc.**

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EMC 13-4967

## Methodology

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- ▶ Telephone survey of registered voters in the City of Walnut Creek
- ▶ 401 completed interviews
- ▶ Overall margin of error:  $\pm 4.9$  percentage points
- ▶ Survey conducted September 4-8, 2013
- ▶ Sample included landline and cell phones
- ▶ Interviews conducted in English only by trained, professional interviewers, and monitored by EMC Research staff
- ▶ Where applicable, results are compared to:
  - ▶ National Citizen Mail Survey; Jan-Feb, 2012; n=717 MoE:  $\pm 4\%$
  - ▶ EMC Research Phone Survey: Dec 7-9, 2003; n=423 MoE:  $\pm 4.9\%$

*As with any opinion research, the release of selected figures from this report without the analysis that explains their meaning would be damaging to EMC. Therefore, EMC reserves the right to correct any misleading release of this data in any medium through the release of correct data or analysis.*

*Please note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to exactly 100%*



# Key Findings

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- ▶ Voters are very optimistic about the direction of the city, and rate Walnut Creek as an excellent place to live.
- ▶ Respondents have a lot of trust in the City Council.
- ▶ Only one third of voters have even heard about the city's fiscal situation, and a minority believe that the city will have to cut programs absent any new revenue. Those who have heard about the fiscal situation have significantly different attitudes than the rest of the population.
- ▶ Voters are evenly divided over the best way to fix the city's budget problems.
- ▶ Police services are by far the highest ranked city service, followed by road maintenance and city parks and open space.



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## Sample Demographics

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	Weighted Sample %	All Voters in WC %		Weighted Sample %	All Voters in WC %
Male	45	44	18-49	33	35
Female	55	55	50-64	27	27
			65-74	18	16
Latino	4	5	75+	23	21
Asian	3	5			
Other	93	90	Democrat	48	45
			Republican	33	30
Mt Diablo USD	46	45	DTS/Other	19	25
San Ramon VUSD	2	2			
Acalanes UHSD	52	52			



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## Issue Environment

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### Voters are very optimistic about the direction of the city

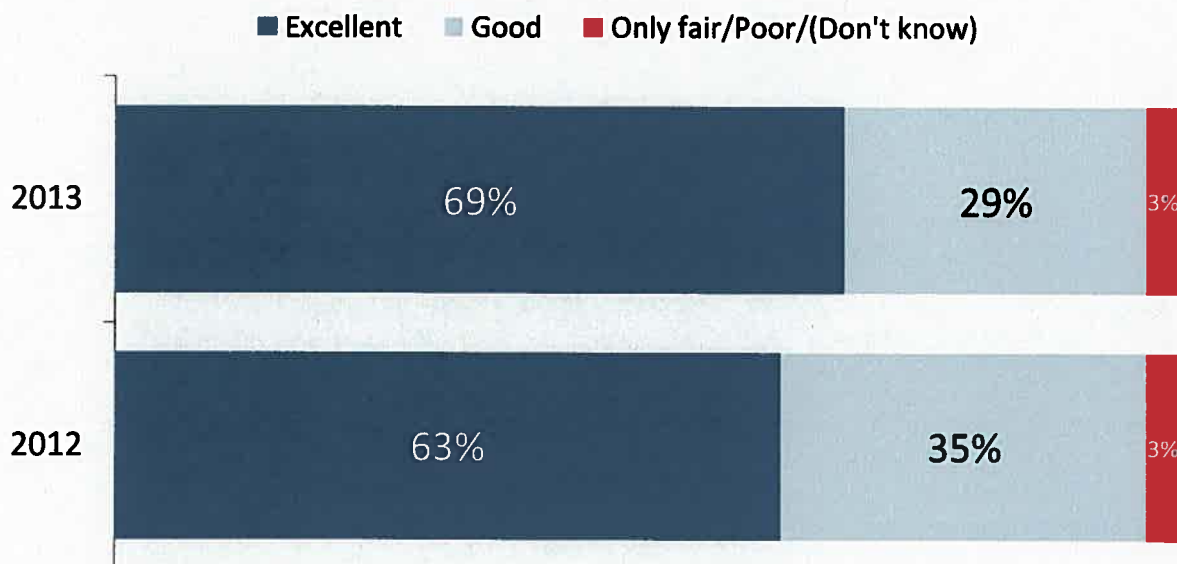
**Q3: Do you think things in Walnut Creek are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?**

■ Right Direction   ■ (Don't know)   ■ Wrong Track



## Nearly all rate Walnut Creek as an excellent or good place to live

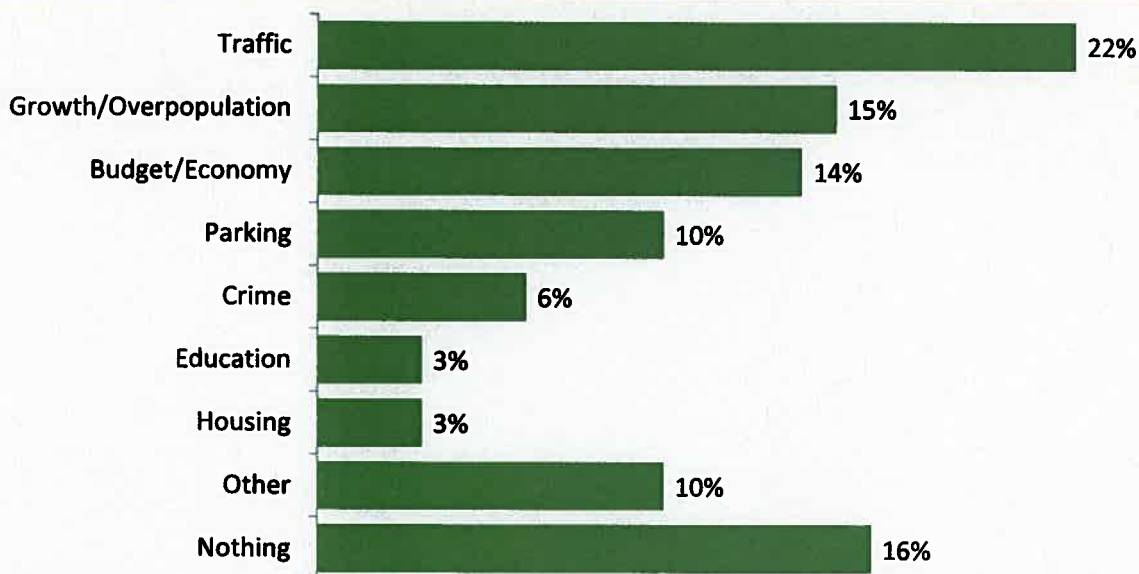
7  
Q4: How would you rate Walnut Creek as a place to live? Would you say it is...



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## Traffic, growth and the economy are top-of-mind concerns

8  
Q5: What do you think is the most important problem facing Walnut Creek today? (Open ended, accept one response)

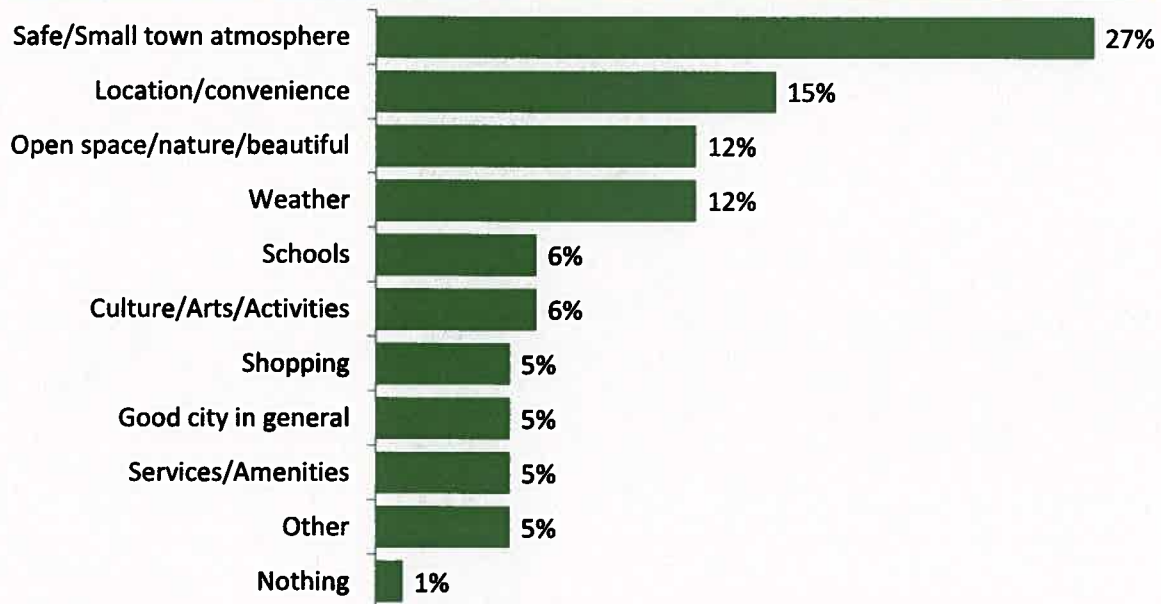


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## Over one-quarter say the safe, small town atmosphere is the best thing about living in Walnut Creek

9

Q6: What is the best thing about living in Walnut Creek? (Open ended, accept one response)

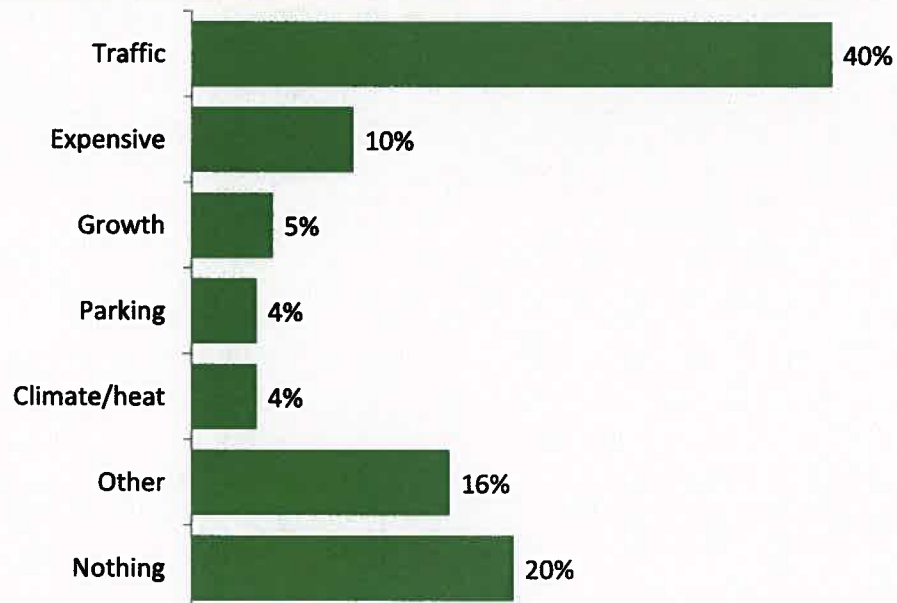


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## 40% say traffic is the worst thing about living in Walnut Creek

10

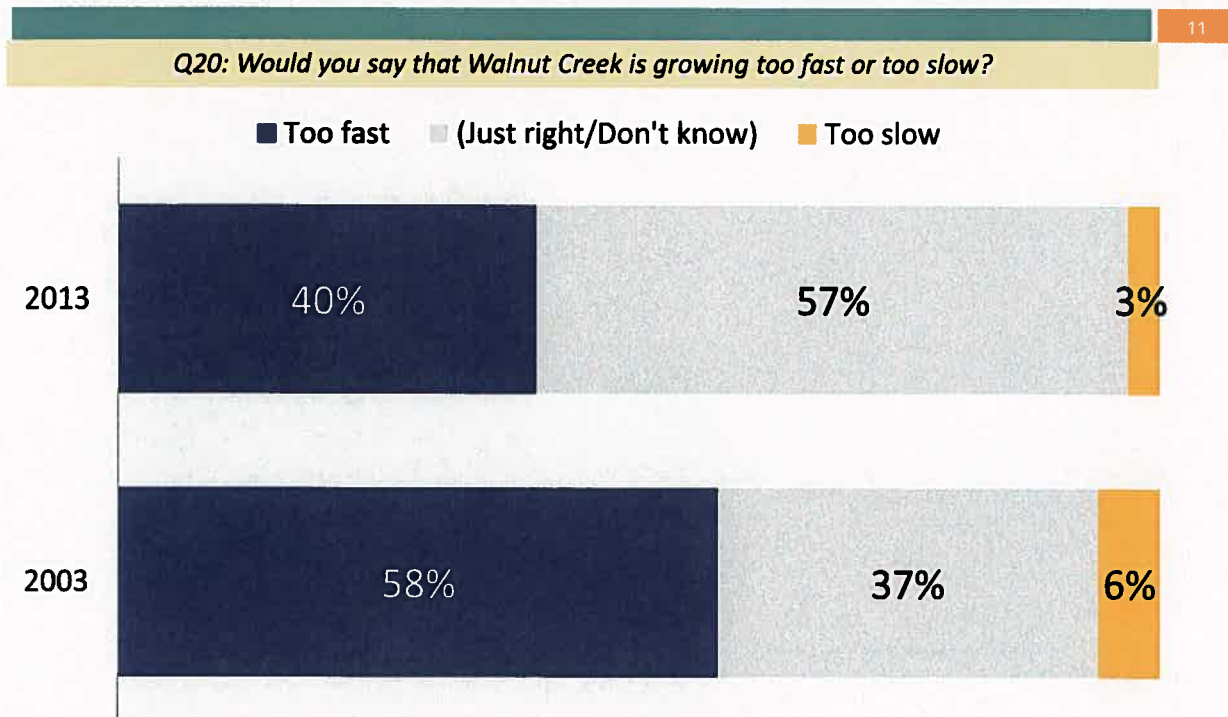
Q7: What is the worst thing about living in Walnut Creek? (Open ended, accept one response)



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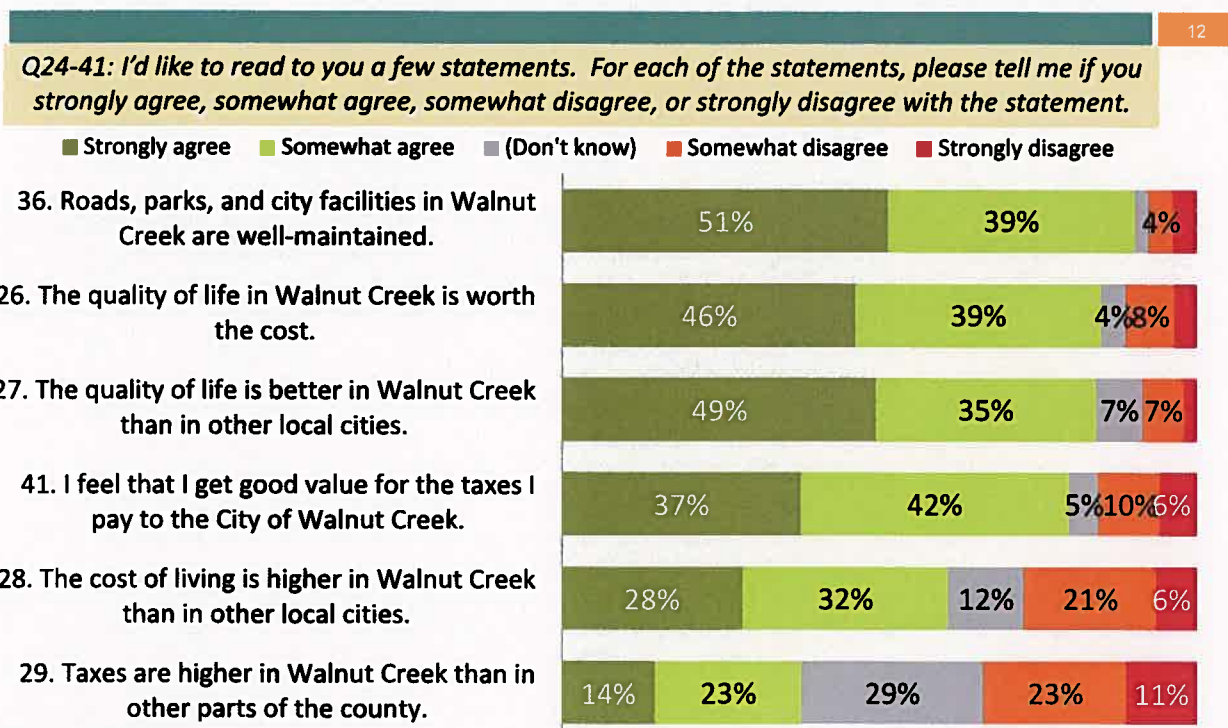


Concern about the pace of growth has lessened since 2003, but there remains a sizable minority who believe the city is growing too fast



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85% say the quality of life in Walnut Creek is worth the cost



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## Trust in the City Council is high

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**Q24-41: I'd like to read to you a few statements. For each of the statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.**

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ (Don't know) ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

25. I trust the Walnut Creek City Council to do what is best for the City.



24. I trust the Walnut Creek City Council to properly manage our tax dollars.



32. The City of Walnut Creek has enough money; it just does a poor job of managing its finances.



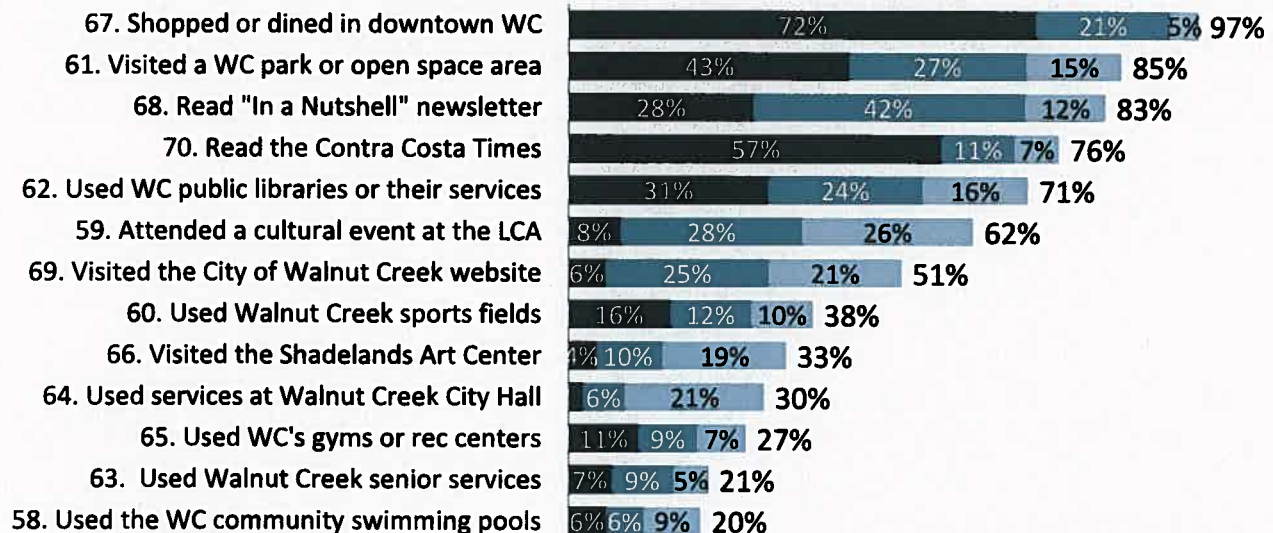
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## Some city services are used by nearly all respondents; other services are used by a small minority

14

**Q58-70: In the last 12 months, about how many times do you think you or another household member has done each of the following activities?**

■ More than 12 times ■ 3-12 times ■ 1-2 times

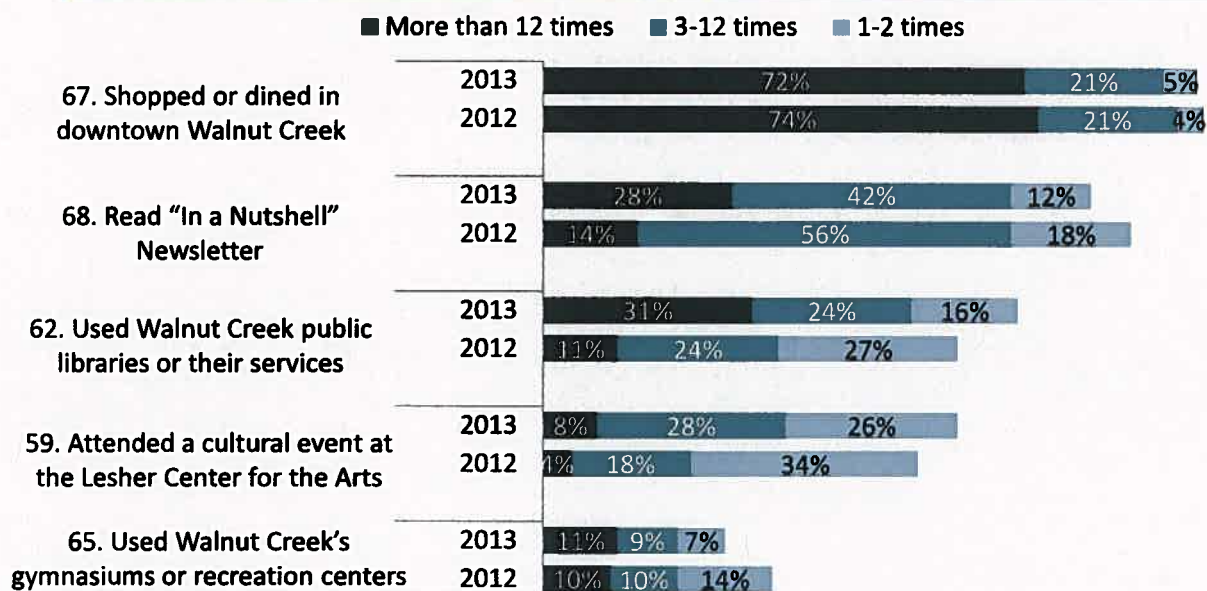


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## Results are similar to the 2012 NCS Survey

15

**Q58-70: In the last 12 months, about how many times do you think you or another household member has done each of the following activities?**



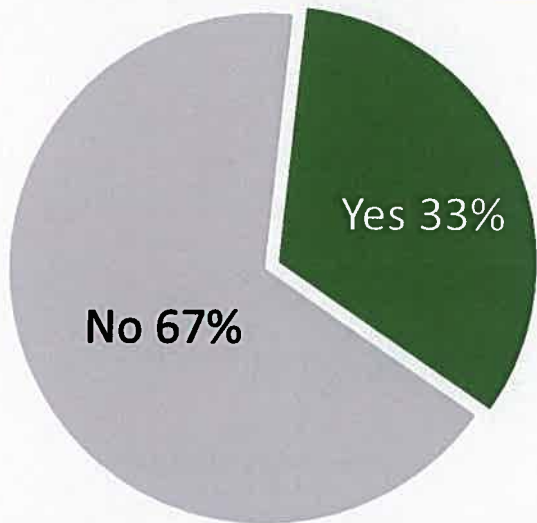
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## The Fiscal Situation

## Two-thirds have not heard about the fiscal situation

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**Q21: Have you heard anything recently about Walnut Creek's financial situation?**



**Q22: What have you heard recently about Walnut Creek's Fiscal Situation? n=132**

Trouble balancing budget	24%
General financial trouble	18%
Reduction of services	13%
Don't have enough money	11%
Doing fine/no change	8%
Working on budget	5%
Spending too much	4%
Pension issues	2%
Other	8%
Don't know	1%

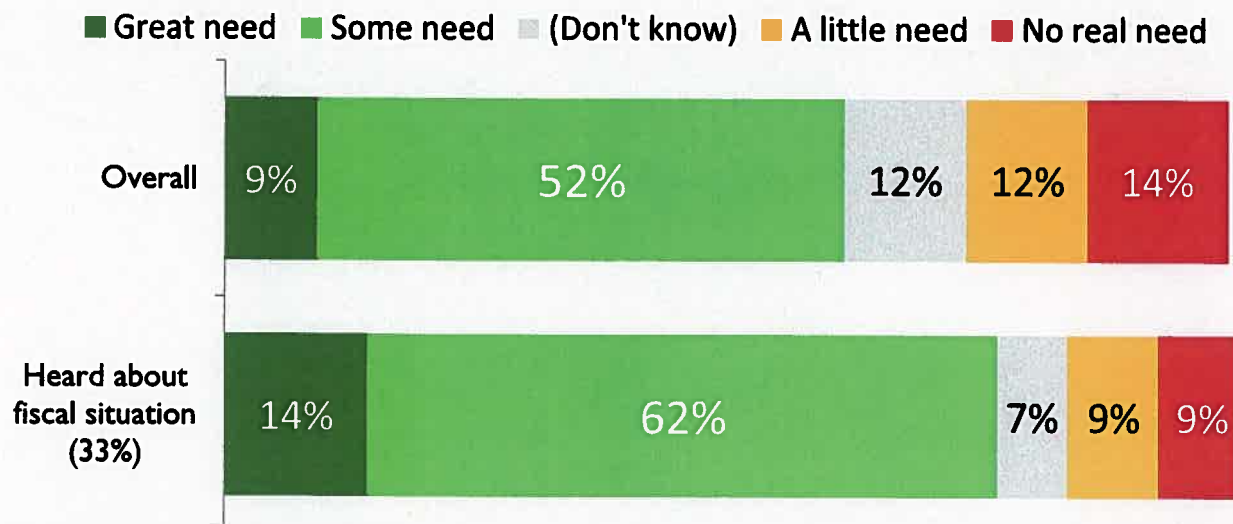


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61% believe the city has at least some need for more money; those who have heard about the fiscal situation are more likely to say the city needs money

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**Q23: Would you say the City of Walnut Creek has a great need for more money, some need, a little need, or no real need for more money?**



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## Voters are evenly split on how to solve the fiscal problem

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*Q42: As you may know, the City of Walnut Creek is facing difficult budget decisions. Without finding a way to bring in more money, they cannot afford to keep offering all of the current programs and services they currently provide. In general, which of the following statements do you most agree with? (Randomize responses)*

It is important to our quality of life to maintain the level of city services in Walnut Creek, and the City should explore additional revenue sources to do that, including new taxes and fees.

45%

The City should tighten its belt and cut spending back to only the most essential services to avoid asking for new taxes and fees from the public.

46%

(Don't know)

8%



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## The results are the same among those who have heard about the city's fiscal situation

20

■ Overall

■ Heard about fiscal situation (33%)

It is important to our quality of life to maintain the level of city services in Walnut Creek, and the City should explore additional revenue sources to do that, including new taxes and fees.

45%

46%

The City should tighten its belt and cut spending back to only the most essential services to avoid asking for new taxes and fees from the public.

46%

48%

(Don't know)

8%

6%



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## Over two thirds agree that the best way to fix the financial situation is to attract new businesses

21

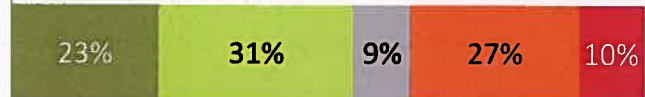
Q24-41: I'd like to read to you a few statements. For each of the statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ (Don't know) ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

38. The best way to fix the city's financial situation is to attract new businesses to Walnut Creek.



37. Walnut Creek should not dip into its "rainy-day" fund, even if it means we might have to reduce or cut some city services.



40. The best way to fix the city's financial situation is by contracting some city services to private companies.



39. The best way to fix the city's financial situation is to cut employee costs.



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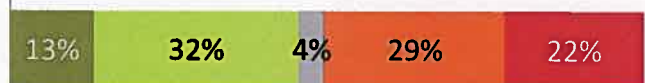
## Voters are split on whether they would be willing to pay more to keep the city from making cuts

22

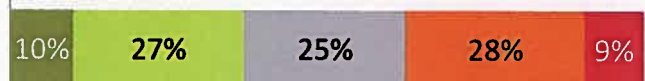
Q24-41: I'd like to read to you a few statements. For each of the statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ (Don't know) ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

31. I would be willing to pay more in taxes or city fees in order to ensure that the City does not have to cut any services.



30. In the near future, The City of Walnut Creek will no longer be able to pay for all of the programs and services that it currently provides to the community.



35. City governments should only fund the services necessary for the city to operate, and nothing else.



33. The City of Walnut Creek is facing a fiscal crisis.



34. The City of Walnut Creek has a budget surplus.

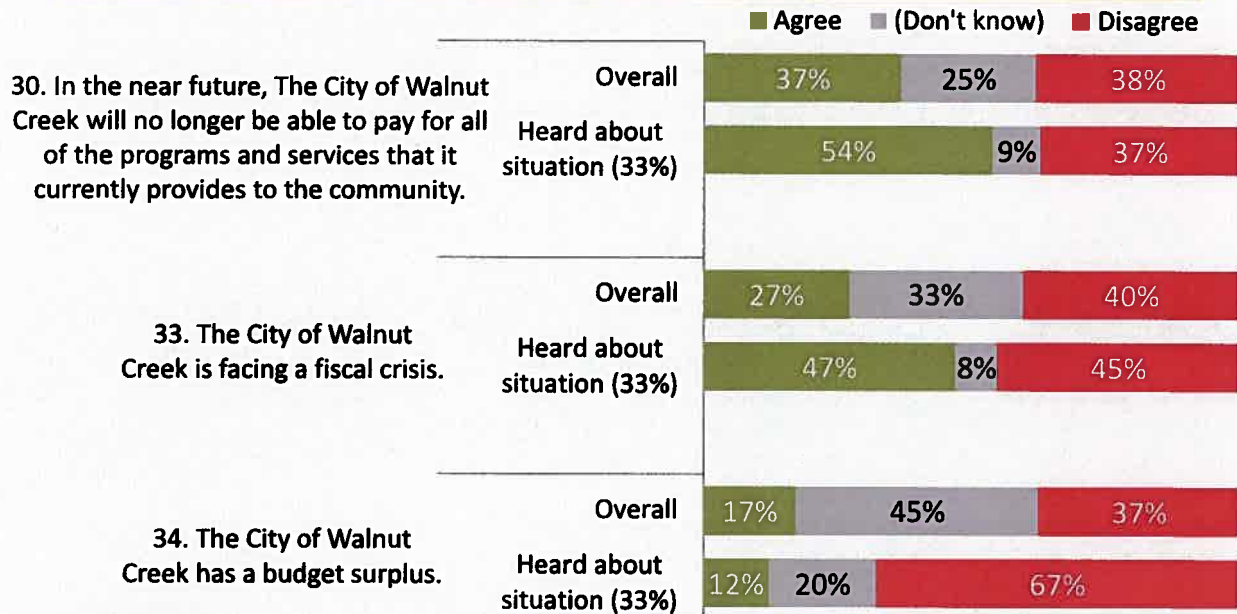


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## Even among respondents who say they have heard about the city's fiscal situation, less than half agree that there is a fiscal crisis

23

*Q24-41: I'd like to read to you a few statements. For each of the statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.*



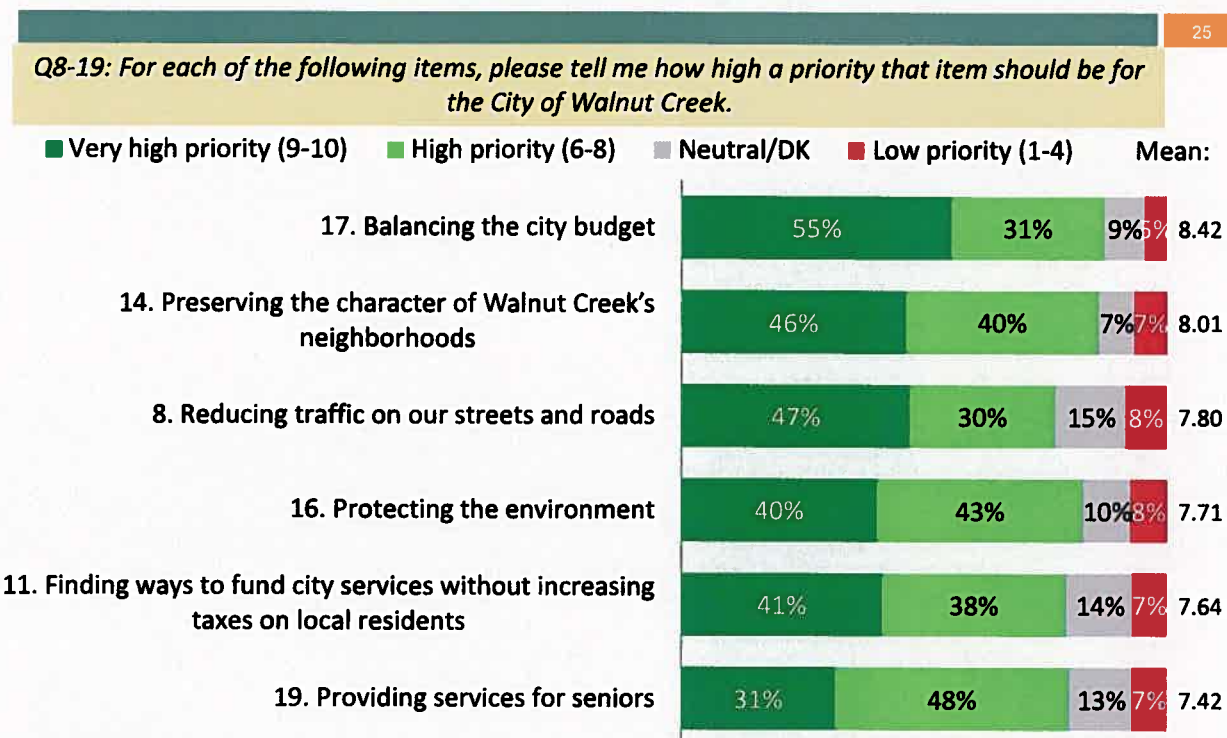
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## City Service Rankings

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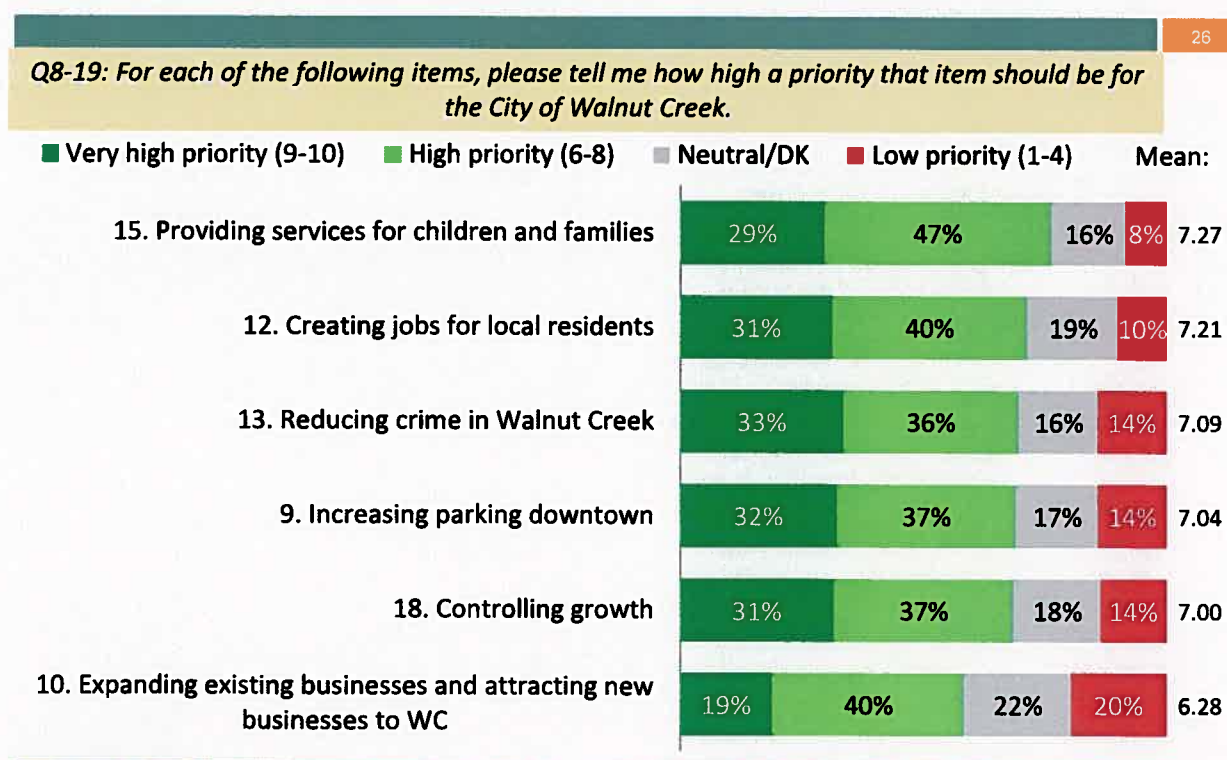


## Balancing the city budget is a top priority



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## Attracting new businesses is a lower priority



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# Service Ranking Methodology

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Each respondent was read a series of lists of four city services of the ten at right. For each list, the respondent was asked to pick their one highest priority from the list. Combining the answers to this series of questions, results in a robust understanding of how survey respondents rank the importance of the entire set of city services.

This technique enables a full pairwise comparison of all ten items while significantly reducing respondent burden.

**Question Text:** I'm going to read you some different lists of facilities and services in Walnut Creek that may need to be reduced or eliminated if the city can't find a way to raise the money to pay for them.

For each set of four items I read you, please tell me **which one** item would be your highest priority for the city to maintain at current levels.

City Services
Road maintenance
Senior Services
City parks and open space
Sports fields and recreation programs
City libraries
Art classes
Community swimming pools
Leshner Center programs
Police Services
Public parking

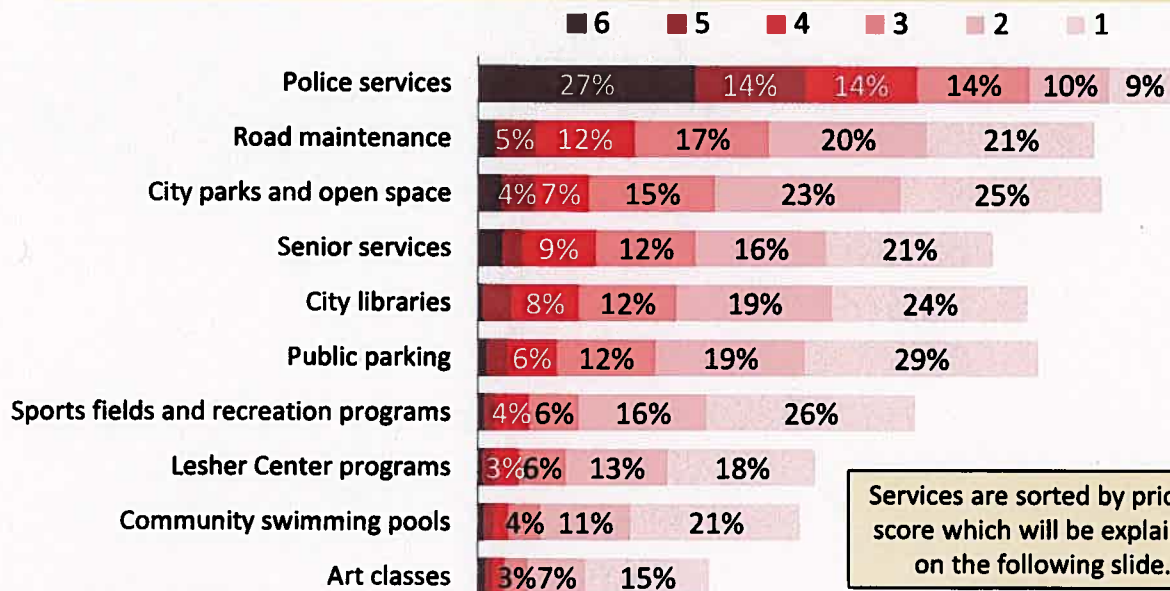


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## 27% of respondents chose “police services” all six times

28

**Q43-57: Total number of times each item was chosen**  
(6 is the maximum number of times each item could be chosen)



Services are sorted by priority score which will be explained on the following slide.



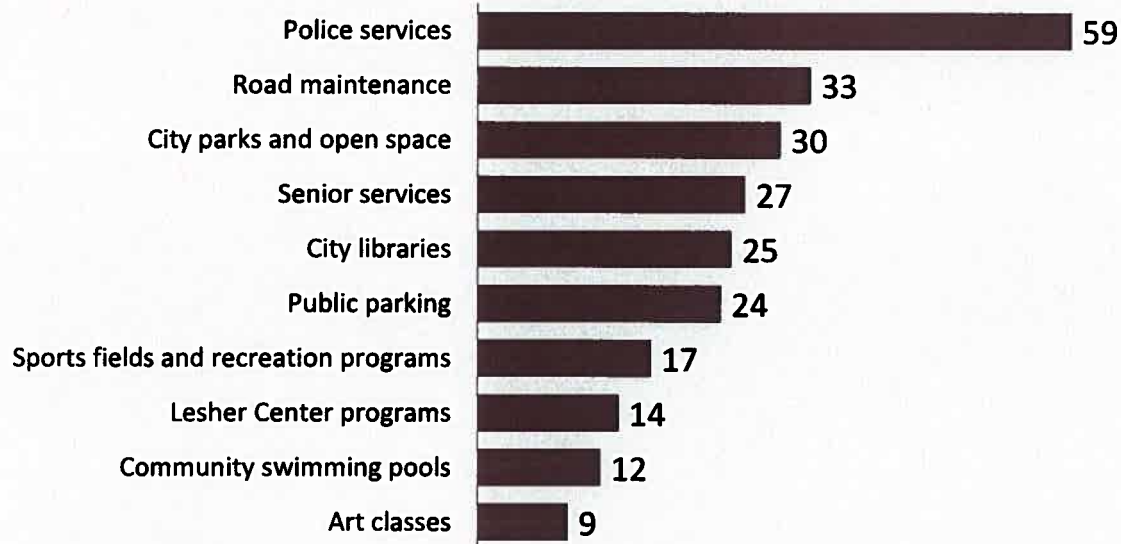
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## Police, road maintenance, and city parks scored highest

29

### Priority Scores

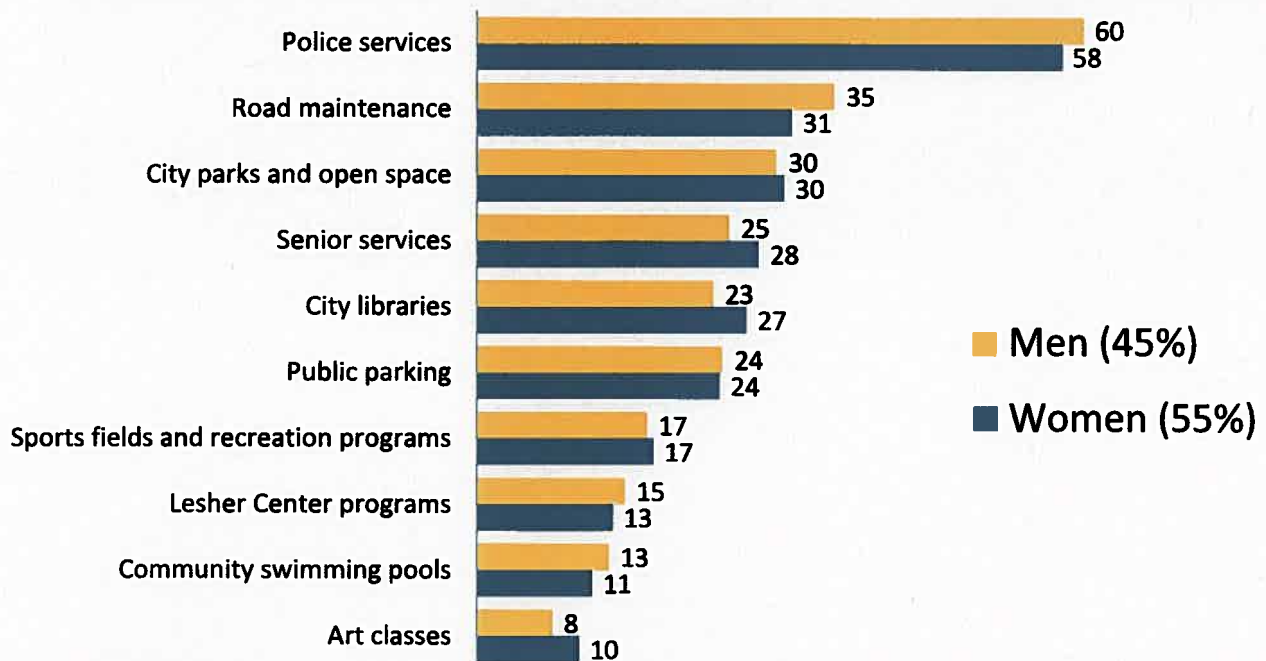
(The scores are calculated using the percentage of times each item was chosen.  
They are on a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 is the lowest and 100 is the highest priority)



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## Gender: Men and women rank services similarly

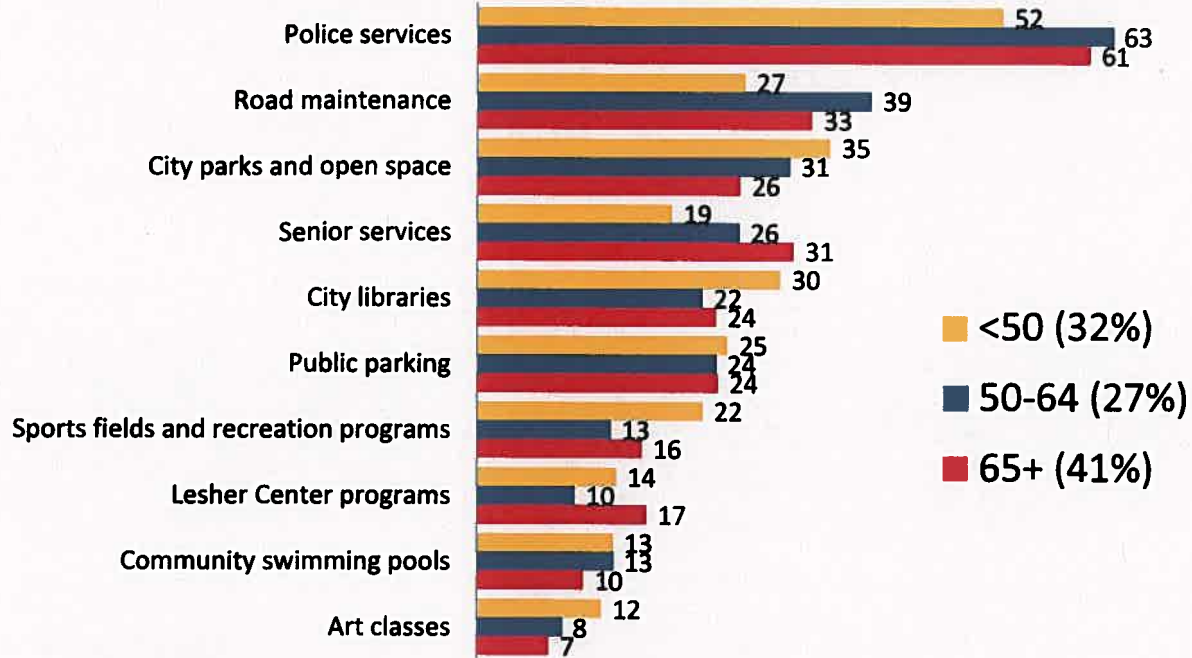
30



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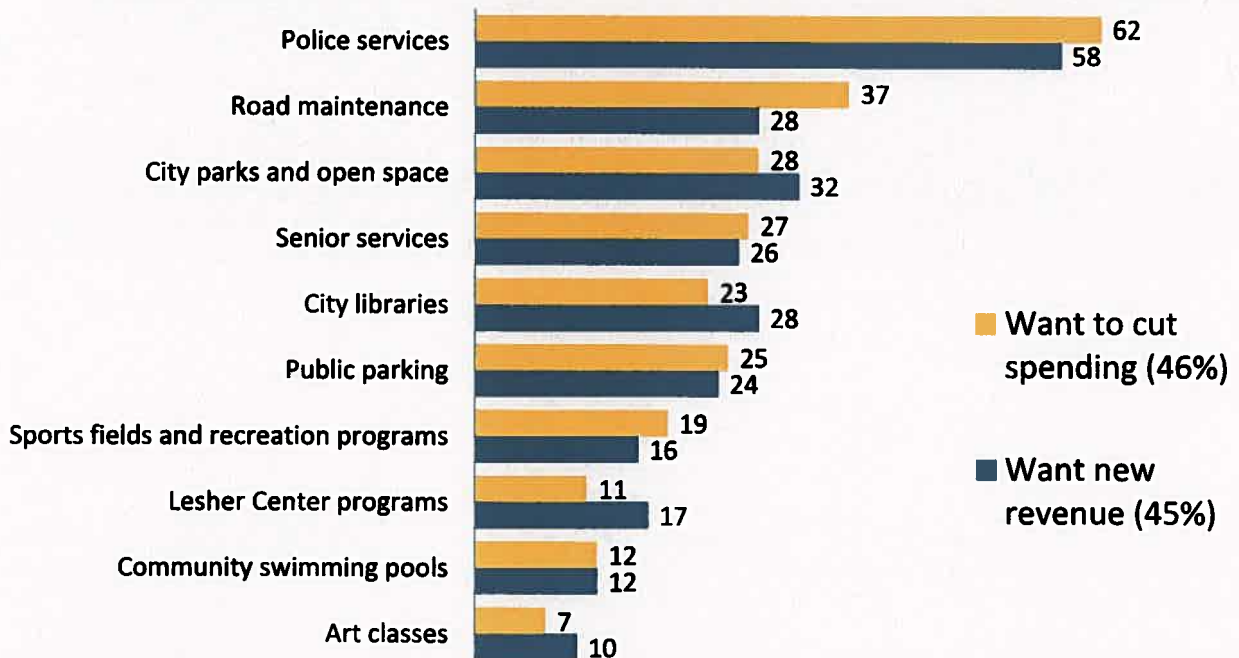


## Age: Younger respondents place a higher priority on parks, libraries, and sports fields and recreation programs



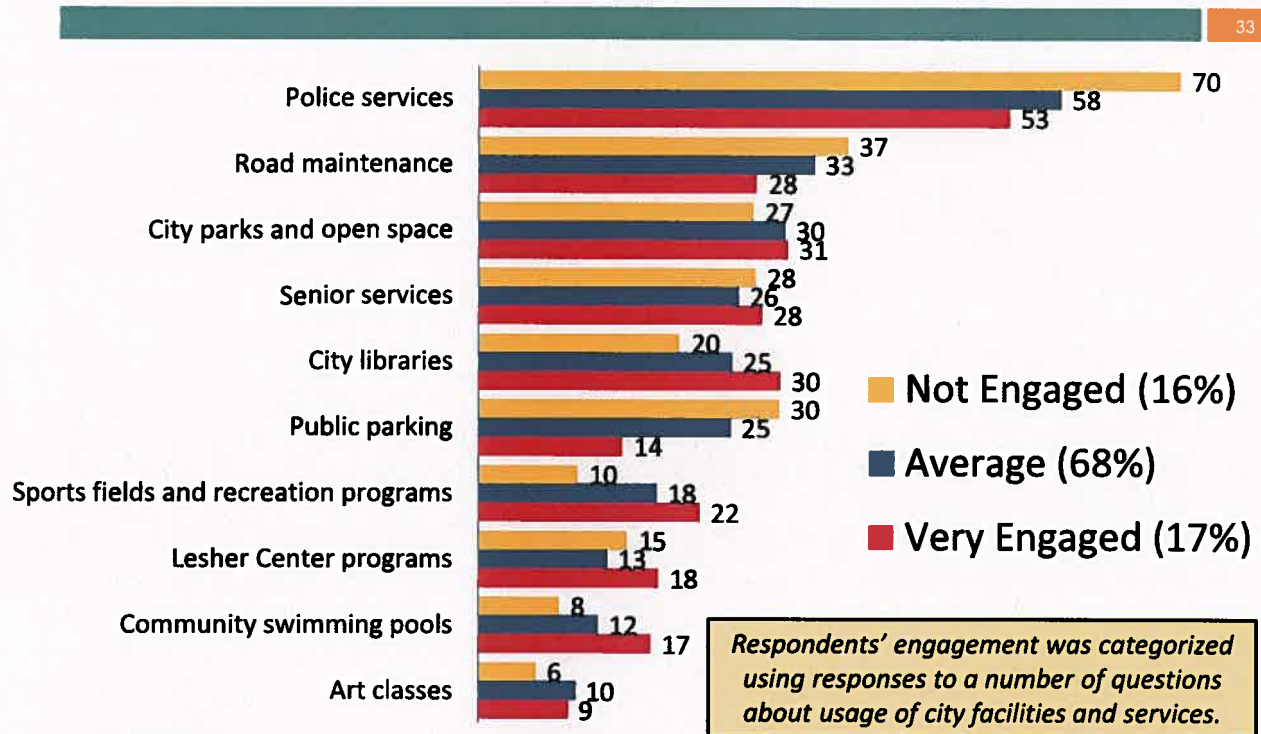
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## Q42: Those who want to cut spending are more supportive of road maintenance, and less supportive of libraries and Lesher Center programs



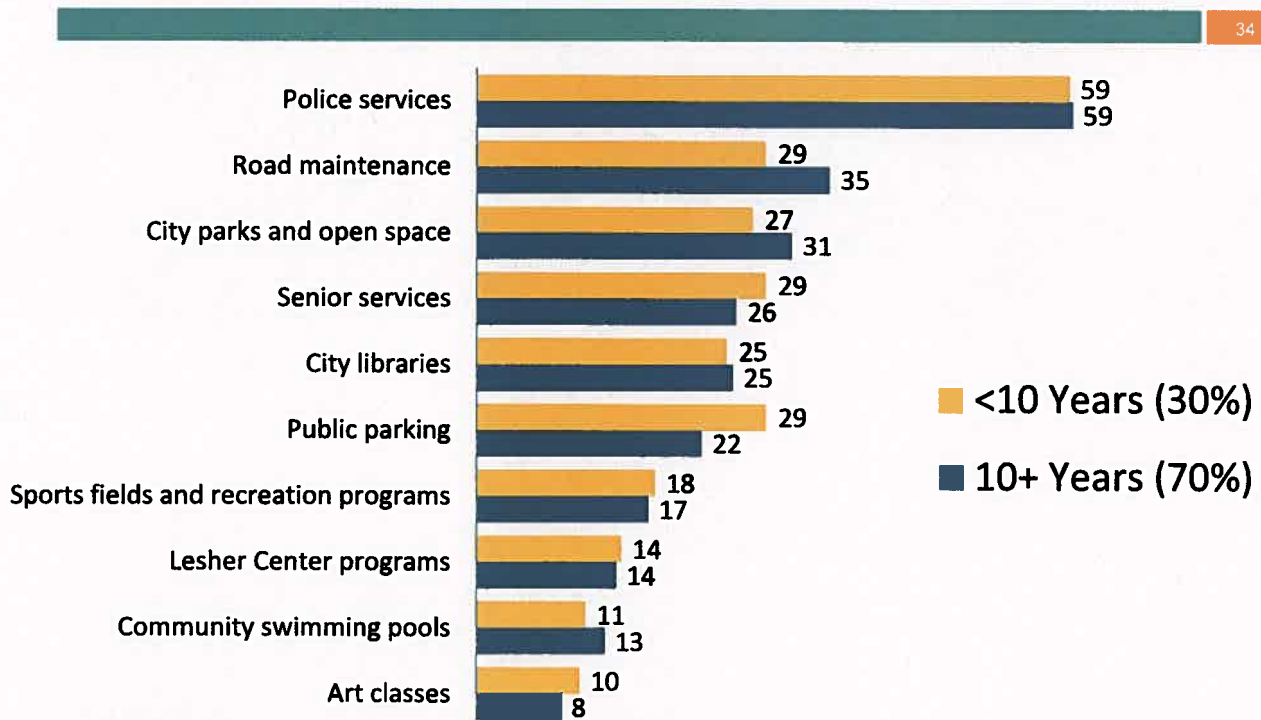
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## Civic Engagement: The most engaged respondents place a higher priority on libraries, sports fields, and community swimming pools



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## Time in Walnut Creek: Newer residents place a higher priority on parking and a lower priority on road maintenance



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## Open Town Hall Comparison

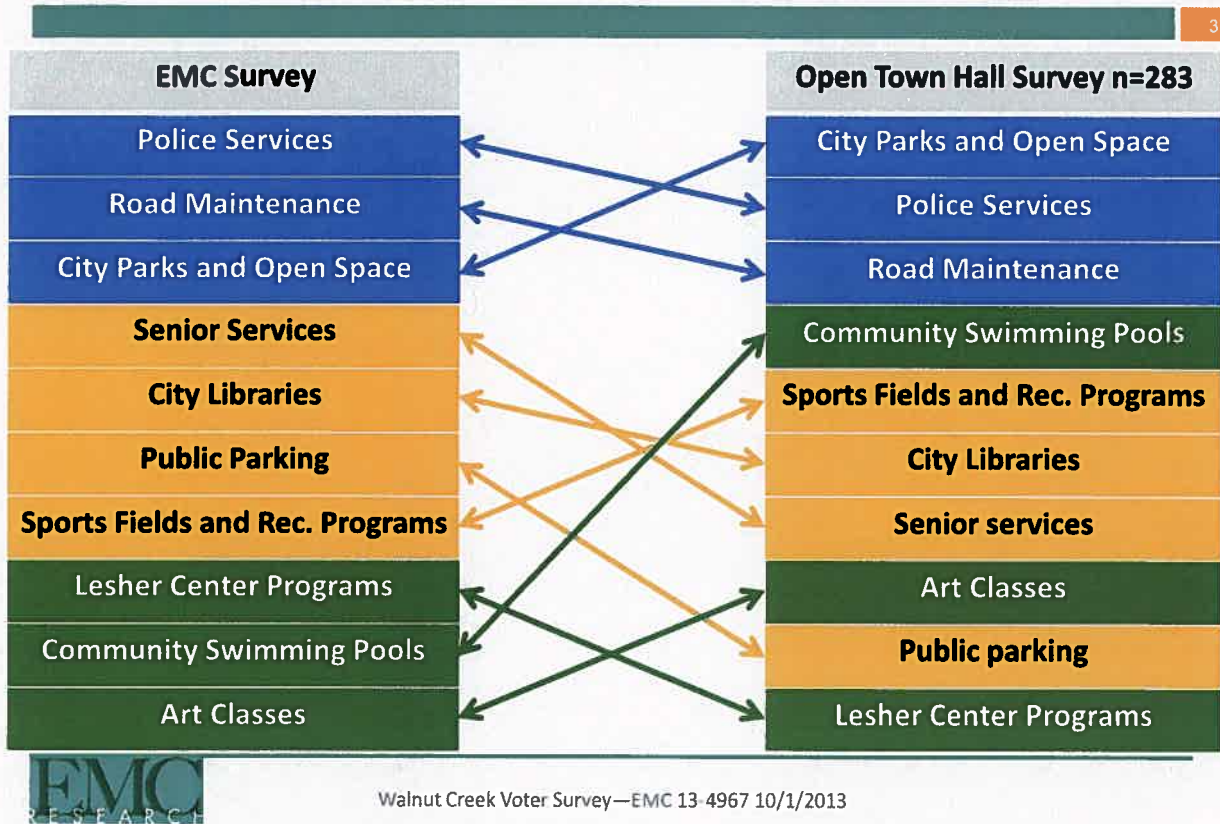
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## Open Town Hall Survey Methodology

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- ▶ The City worked with Open Town Hall (OTH) to receive additional public comments and to augment the research done by EMC.
- ▶ OTH is a web-based civic engagement platform that helps local governments receive input from their constituents.
- ▶ Participants were asked to rank the same ten city services and programs that were used in the EMC Research Survey.
- ▶ The OTH survey was conducted from Sep 9-16; it was advertised via Facebook, Twitter, Constant Contact and the city's website.
- ▶ There were 350 respondents to the OTH ranking question, and 283 of those were Walnut Creek residents.
- ▶ OTH respondents did not represent a random sample of Walnut Creek residents.

## Community swimming pools were rated much higher in the Open Town Hall Survey



## Key Findings Recap

- 38
- ▶ Voters are very optimistic about the direction of the city, and rate Walnut Creek as an excellent place to live.
  - ▶ Respondents have a lot of trust in the City Council.
  - ▶ Only one third of voters have even heard about the city's fiscal situation, and a minority believe that the city will have to cut programs absent any new revenue. Those who have heard about the fiscal situation have significantly different attitudes than the rest of the population.
  - ▶ Voters are evenly divided over the best way to fix the city's budget problems.
  - ▶ Police services are by far the highest ranked city service, followed by road maintenance and city parks and open space.