



City of Cañon City

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***Office of the
City Administrator***

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Tony O'Rourke, City Administrator

DATE: September 26, 2016

RE: 2016 Citizen Survey

The National Research Center (NRC) has completed Cañon City's first annual survey. The NRC randomly selected 1,500 households in the City and mailed survey to them in order to solicit citizen input about Cañon City's quality of life, community characteristics, governance, participation, City services and special topics. About 5% of the 1,500 surveys mailed were returned because the housing unit was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed.

The overall survey response rate was 39% which is at the high end (20% to 40%) of NRC's response rate for this survey. The survey results are weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the residents of the community. This is an important method to adjust for potential non-response bias.

In addition to the scientific, mail-in survey, the NRC also conducted a non-scientific online version of the survey so more residents could provide feedback to the City Council. Over 700 citizens participated in the on-line survey which is extremely high for a community the size of Cañon City. The results of the on-line survey, though not scientific, or official are attached.

In addition, the survey findings are also broken down by household income, age, City Council districts, and benchmarked against over 400 communities who evaluated the same kinds of topics on the National Citizen Survey.

Following are highlights of the 2016 Citizen Survey

1. Quality of life

The overall quality of community life represents the ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indication of the overall health and well-being of a community.

In the case of Cañon City a majority of citizen (66%) rated Cañon City’s quality of life as excellent or good. This rating was lower for citizen aged 18-44% (51%) residents of District 1 (56%), on-line residents (59%) and ranked 361 out of 422 other communities across the nation.

Key quality of life characteristics rated included the following:

<u>Community Quality</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
• Overall quality of life	66%	59%
• Cañon City as a place to live	71%	67%
• Place to visit	69%	77%
• Place to retire	76%	70%
• Overall natural environment	77%	77%
• Overall built environment	46%	40%
• Overall City image/reputation	39%	27%
• Vibrant Downtown/commercial area	23%	18%
• Overall economic health	24%	14%
• Overall appearance	53%	44%
• Overall quality of businesses	35%	31%

2. Community Characteristics

Delving deeper into the quality of life in Cañon City, the Citizen Survey rated over 40 features of the community’s livability within the following eight facets of community life:

- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Mobility
- ✓ Natural Environment
- ✓ Built Environment
- ✓ Economy
- ✓ Recreation/Wellness
- ✓ Education/Environment
- ✓ Community Engagement

Residents identified public safety, the economy and community engagement as priorities for the Cañon City community. Ratings on safety, the natural environment, recreation and wellness, education and enrichment and community engagement were favorable and similar to often benchmark communities. Ratings on overall community appearance, streets, code enforcement, storm water drainage and employment opportunity were unfavorable and lower compared to other benchmark communities.

A quick summary of where residents see strong performance as well as, greatest opportunities for community improvements are as follows:

<u>Safety</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Overall feeling of safety	76%	72%
Overall feeling of safety in your neighborhood	92%	89%
Overall feeling of safety in downtown/commercial area	85%	84%

<u>Mobility</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Traffic flow on major streets	34%	39%
Ease of public parking	40%	40%
Overall condition of City streets	8%	7%
<u>Natural Environment</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Overall quality of natural environment	76%	79%
Cleanliness of Cañon City	61%	55%
Air quality	86%	89%
<u>Built Environment</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Overall Built Environment	46%	44%
Overall appearance	53%	44%
Overall quality of new development	23%	17%
Observed a code violation	74%	78%
<u>Economy</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Overall economic health	24%	14%
Employment opportunities	11%	7%
Shopping opportunities	16%	14%
Overall quality of Businesses	35%	18%
Vibrant downtown	23%	18%
<u>Recreation/Wellness</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Recreational opportunities	59%	69%
Affordable quality healthcare	36%	31%
Affordable mental health care	30%	26%
<u>Education/Enrichment</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Opportunities for education/enrichment	39%	35%
Available affordable childcare	36%	26%
K-12 education	53%	47%
Opportunities to attend cultural	47%	47%
Opportunities to attend religious/spiritual	78%	75%
<u>Community Engagement</u> (excellent/good rating)		On-line survey
Opportunity to Volunteer	65%	71%
Opportunity to participate in Community Matters	52%	55%
Neighborliness of residents	43%	46%
Openness/acceptance of diverse people	31%	31%

3. Governance

The overall quality of services provided by City government is a key component of resident's overall rating of quality of life. The overall quality of services provided by the City received excellent or good ratings from 50% or half of residents, a rating lower than seen in comparison benchmark communities (375 out of 409). Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Cañon City's leadership and governance. Approximately 6 of 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to customer service provided by City employees. However, ratings for value for service for taxes paid, overall direction the City is taking and confidence in local government are lower than comparison communities.

General Governance (excellent/good rating)

On-line survey

City of Cañon City	50%	46%
Value of Service for taxes paid Cañon City	33%	35%
Overall Direction City is Taking	29%	30%
Overall Confidence in City govt	26%	24%
Overall Customer Service	58%	60%

City Service

excellent/good

On-line survey

Police	71%	68%
Fire	89%	93%
Ambulance/EMS	82%	87%
Animal Control	47%	50%
Traffic Enforcement	49%	52%
Street Repair	7%	5%
Snow Removal	39%	44%
Traffic signal timing	21%	21%
Garbage	82%	82%
Recycling	50%	50%
Drinking Water	68%	70%
Storm Drainage	29%	23%
Sewer	73%	79%
Utility billing	59%	58%
Planning/Zoning	25%	29%
Code Enforcement	17%	15%
Economic Development	17%	13%
City Parks	78%	81%
Recreation Progress	52%	53%
Public Library	68%	74%
Public Information	42%	47%

4. Participation

An engaged community harnesses its most valuable asset, its residents. The connection and trust between residents, government, business and other community's organizations help to create a sense of community and partnership. Forty-one percent of residents rated the sense of community in Cañon City as excellent or good. This rating is lower than benchmark comparisons (251 out of 281).

Rating (excellent/good rating)

On-line survey

Remain in Cañon City for next 5 years	82%	78%
Recommend living in Cañon City	77%	66%
Purchase good/service in Cañon City	96%	95%
Attend City-sponsored events once-a-month	65%	58%
Votes in local election	85%	97%
Contacted City elected official	17%	36%

5. Special Topics

The City included six question of special interest in the Citizen Survey. They are as follows:

1. Please rate how important, if at all, your think that the City invest in each of the following:

	Essential/very important	On-line survey
Road improvement	91%	92%
Public Safety	82%	81%
Storm water Improvement	62%	67%
Downtown Revitalization/Economy Dev	58%	69%
Parks and Recreation Improvement	54%	57%
River Corridor Improvement	54%	61%
Overall Aesthetics (signage, buildings, façade)	48%	61%
Future Trail development	47%	50%

2. Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the Cañon City community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:

	Essential/very important	On-line survey
Overall feeling of safety	86%	87%
Ease of getting to places	72%	74%
Quality of Natural environment	72%	79%
Overall Built Environment	64%	73%
Health/Wellness	78%	82%
Education/Enrichment	78%	86%
Economic Health	87%	93%
Sense of Community	81%	83%

3. Support for Recreation/Aquatic Center

	<u>Strongly Support/ Somewhat Support</u>	<u>On-line survey</u>
Funding construction of a new Recreation/Aquatic Community Center with public and private partners and no tax increase	81%	87%

Funding the rehabilitation and repairs of the existing Rec District pool with no tax increase	80%	85%
Funding the rehabilitation and Winter cover of the existing Rec District pool to allow year-round use With no tax increase	75%	80%
Funding the rehabilitation and Repair of the existing Rec District pool with a tax increase	61%	52%

4. Proposition 2A: Sales Tax Increase

The City is proposing to increase the sales tax by 1% for 10 years to generate \$3.5 million annually to fund only street improvements and repairs, with such expenditures subject to an annual independent audit for public review. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose this proposal.

<u>Strongly Support/ Somewhat Support</u>	<u>On-line survey</u>
74%	71%

5. Recreation Improvement

Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the City taking the following actions.

	<u>Strongly support/ Somewhat Support</u>	<u>On-line survey</u>
Funding the enhancement of existing playground equipment at Centennial Park with no tax increase	81%	86%
Funding rehabilitation and repairs of the pond at Centennial park with no tax increase	80%	88%
Funding the construction of a new fountain/splash pad at Centennial Park with public and Private partners and no tax increase	75%	75%
Funding the construction of a new fountain/splash pad at Macon Plaza with public and private partners and no tax increase	61%	65%

6. The final two special-interest questions asked residents about their support or opposition for marijuana cultivation but not for sale in industrial and commercial zones. About half of respondents supported marijuana cultivation in industrial zones of Cañon City and about 4 in 10 supported cultivation permits in commercial zones. Interestingly, all four council districts supported cultivation in industrial zones at 51%, and the 18-44 age group was the only age group opposed to marijuana cultivation in industrial zones

	<u>Strongly support/ Somewhat Support</u>	<u>On-line survey</u>
<p>A. The City is attempting to reduce cultivation of marijuana in residential homes and areas. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the adoption of zoning and special review conditions to permit the cultivation, but not the sale of marijuana in <u>industrial</u> zones in the city.</p>	51%	60%
<p>B. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the adoption of zoning and special review conditions to permit the cultivation, but not the sale, of marijuana in <u>commercial</u> zones in the City.</p>	44%	52%

Conclusion

- ✓ A majority of respondents, nearly 7 of 10, felt positive about the overall quality of life in Cañon City, and the City as a place to live. Notably, nearly 8 of 10 respondents reported they plan to remain in Cañon City and 76% said the City is a good place for retirement.
- ✓ Nearly 9 of 10 residents indicated that Public Safety and the Economy, should be the main areas of community focus over the next two years. Only 24% of residents indicated the City overall economic health was positive.
- ✓ The vast majority of survey respondents identified Road Improvements, Public-Safety, Downtown Revitalization/Economic Development and Storm Water Improvements as the most important investment the City should make.
- ✓ Over half of respondents raised concerns about the City's built environment, code violations and quality of new development.
- ✓ Cañon City residents reflect similar or higher levels of participation in the community compared to residents in one 400 benchmark communities.
- ✓ The overall quality of services provided by the City received excellent or good ratings from 50% of residents, a rating lower than seen in comparison benchmark communities (375 out of 409). Strong City services were Police (71%), City Parks (78%), Library (68%) and Drinking water (68%). The lowest rated City service were street repair (7%), Code Enforcement (17%), and Planning/Zoning (25%).
- ✓ Residents' ratings of value for services for taxes paid (33%), overall direction of the City (29%), and confidence in City government (26%), are all lower than seen in comparison benchmark communities.
- ✓ There is strong community support for funding construction of a new Recreation/Aquatic Center with public and private partners and no tax increase (81%) and even stronger on-line (87%) support.
- ✓ After multiple failed attempts to gain public support for a tax increase to rebuild City roads in the past twenty years, respondents support (74%) a 1% sales tax increase to fund street improvements.
- ✓ The community indicated strong support both in the mail survey and on-line survey to fund playground, pond, and splash pad enhancements at Centennial Park.
- ✓ About half of respondents support cultivation of marijuana, but not for sale, in industrial zones. About 4 in 10 support cultivation in commercial zones. On-line support for industrial zone cultivation was 60%, and 52% for commercial zones cultivation.
- ✓ Nearly 4 in 10 respondents indicated a positive overall image and reputation of Cañon City, with 18-44 year olds rating it positive at only 24% compared to a 52% positive rating among 55 and older respondents. The overall image rating of 39% is lower than comparison benchmark communities (284 out of 319).