



F A R M E R S B R A N C H  
**Citizen Satisfaction Survey**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**December 2012**

Prepared by:  
National Service Research



# Table of Contents

	Page
Project Overview	3
Key Findings – City Service Priorities	6
Key Findings – Quality of Life	13
Key Findings – City Services	16
Key Findings – Public Safety	27
Key Findings - Fire and Medical Services	31
Key Findings – Trash and Recycling	34
Key Findings – City Communication Efforts	38
Benchmark Data	41
Demographics of Survey Respondents	45
Conclusions	48
National Service Research – Background/Contact Information	50



# Project Overview

# Study Objectives

National Service Research (NSR) completed a comprehensive research study for the City of Farmers Branch, Texas, a community of 28,616 residents. The purpose of the citizen assessment study was to provide an indicator of the City's performance measures for various city departments and programs.

- ✓ Identify key measures of quality of life, public safety and service delivery
- ✓ Input from citizens will assist city officials in resource allocation, budget and policy decisions
- ✓ Identify where to maintain and improve city services

*This study provides a measurement of how citizens feel about city service delivery and programs. The data should be considered along with other factors such as input from city officials and city staff when making budget and policy decisions.*

NSR worked closely with the City of Farmers Branch staff throughout the research process. The survey design was based upon input from city staff.

The citizen survey and detailed survey tables are presented in the Appendix of the technical volume report.

# Sampling Plan and Data Collection Overview

- ✓ The sampling plan included a mailed survey to 8,000 households (single and multi-family units) proportionately distributed throughout the city. Households had the option of completing the mailed survey or completing the survey online via the City website.
- ✓ Residents were informed about the survey through a multifaceted approach:
  - Press releases from the City (one introductory release prior to the survey mailing one mid-way through the campaign and one during the final week of data collection)
  - Announcement printed on water bill
  - Large advertisements displayed in City Facilities (City Hall, library, recreation center)
  - Mailed survey to 8,000 households
  - Branch Bulletin E-newsletter (on-going throughout the data collection period)
  - Cable News crawl - (on-going throughout the data collection period)
  - Social media – Facebook, Twitter ((on-going throughout the data collection period)
  - City website front page online survey link (on-going throughout the data collection period)
- ✓ Surveys were mailed on August 27, 2012, the survey cut-off date was September 21, 2012.
- ✓ A total of 784 responses were received via the mailed survey and 717 from the online survey. The margin of error of this sample size (1501) at a 95% confidence level is plus or minus 2.6%.
- ✓ Citizen surveys were conducted in 2008 and 2010. A total of 500 completed telephone surveys were conducted in 2010 and 400 telephone surveys were completed in 2008 for each of those studies. Comparisons are presented where applicable.
- ✓ The citizen survey and detailed survey tables are presented in the Appendix of the technical volume report.



# KEY FINDINGS

## City Service Priorities

# Importance / Quality Rating of City Services

(All Respondents)

City Service	Q. How Important are these city services?		Q. Rate the Quality of these Farmers Branch city services		Importance Rank
	Very/Somewhat Important %	Importance Mean Score	Excellent Good %	Quality Mean Score	
Providing public safety (police, fire, etc.)	98.2%	3.93	97.2%	3.70	1
Maintaining streets and roads	97.5	3.78	77.5	2.97	2
Programs to revitalize the city's retail areas	90.1	3.53	54.3	2.55	3
Residential trash services	96.0	3.80	87.1	3.35	4
Programs to revitalize the city's residential areas	89.0	3.51	53.6	2.54	5
Code enforcement services	88.1	3.46	61.8	2.68	6
Maintaining appearance of parks, landscapes and facilities	93.5	3.55	93.1	3.45	7
Senior citizen services	77.8	3.21	89.0	3.25	8
Library services	82.4	3.26	83.4	3.12	9

**Importance Rank** – The sum of the first, second and third most important rankings for each City service.

**Mean Score** = A weighted average calculated on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being excellent or very important and 1 being poor or not at all important. Respondents who did not rate a city service were excluded from the mean score calculation.

# Importance / Quality Rating of City Services

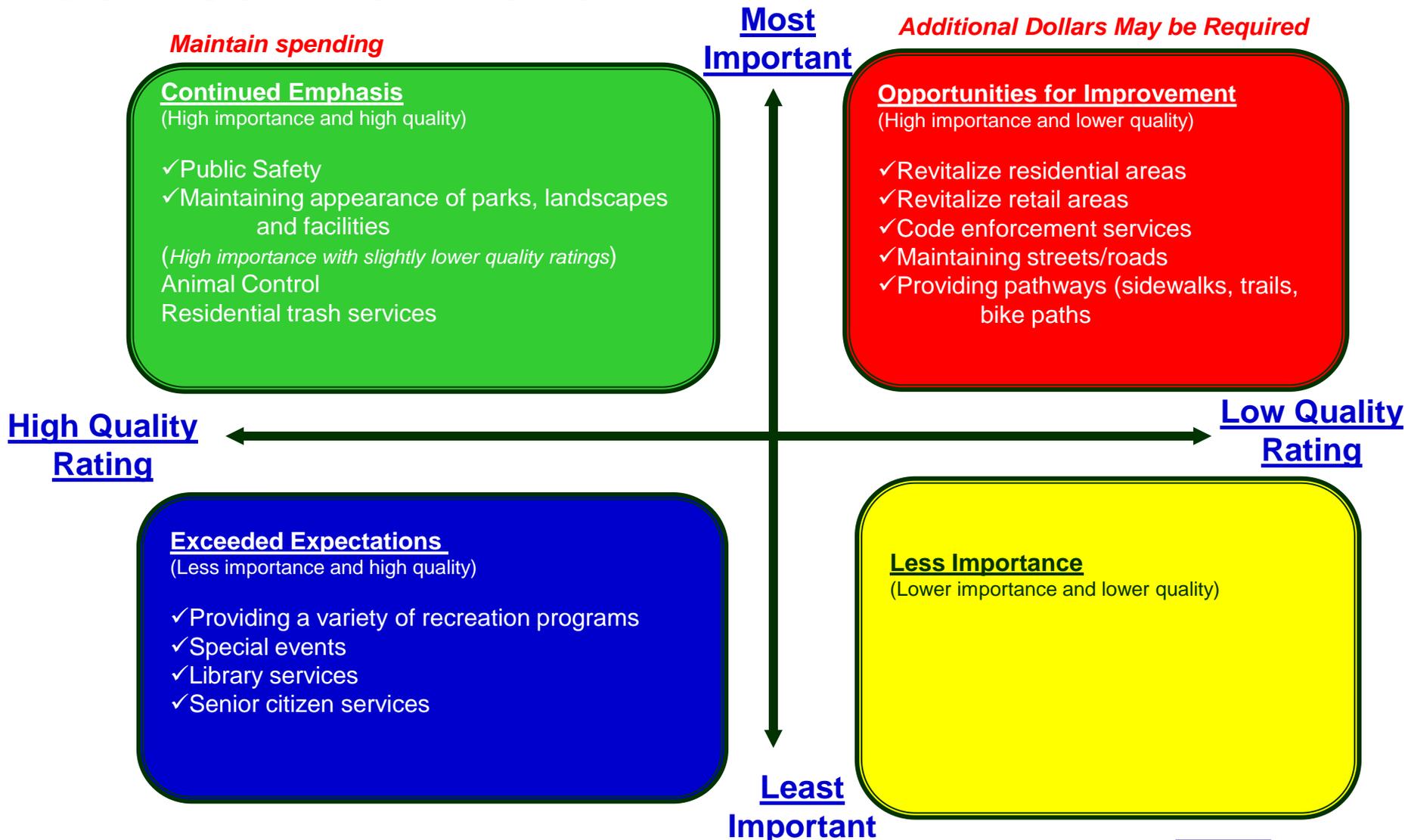
(All Respondents)

City Service	Q. How Important are these city services?		Q. Rate the Quality of these Farmers Branch city services		Importance Rank
	Very/Somewhat Important %	Importance Mean Score	Excellent Good %	Quality Mean Score	
Providing pathways – sidewalks, trails, bike paths	84.9	3.31	67.9	2.80	10
Animal control services	85.7	3.33	76.6	2.96	11
Special events (Liberty Fest, Blue Grass, Christmas, etc.)	65.8	2.85	82.5	3.17	12
Providing variety of recreational programs	71.2	2.93	80.3	3.06	13

# Importance Mean Scores by City Services by Respondent Sub-Groups

City Service	Mean Importance Scores		
	All Respondents	Mailed Respondents	Online Respondents
Providing public safety (police, fire, etc.)	3.93	3.95	3.91
Maintaining streets and roads	3.78	3.80	3.76
Programs to revitalize the city's retail areas	3.53	3.52	3.55
Residential trash services	3.80	3.85	3.75
Programs to revitalize the city's residential areas	3.51	3.51	3.51
Code enforcement services	3.46	3.52	3.40
Maintaining appearance of parks, landscapes and facilities	3.55	3.57	3.54
Senior citizen services	3.21	3.27	3.15
Library services	3.26	3.28	3.23
Providing pathways – sidewalks, trails, bike paths	3.31	3.31	3.32
Animal control services	3.33	3.40	3.25
Special events (Liberty Fest, Blue Grass, Christmas, etc.)	2.85	2.85	2.85
Providing variety of recreational programs	2.93	2.93	2.94

# Service Prioritization



*Citizens may be willing to give up dollars for the services that are less important*

# Service Prioritization

- **Continued Emphasis** (High importance and high quality)
  - This area shows where the City is meeting customer expectations. Items in this area have a significant impact on the customer's overall level of satisfaction. The City should maintain (or slightly increase) emphasis on items in this area.
- **Opportunities for Improvement** (High importance, lower quality)
  - This area shows where the City is not performing as well as residents expect the City to perform. This area has an impact on customer satisfaction and the City should increase emphasis on items in this area.
- **Exceeded Expectations** (Less importance, high quality)
  - This area shows where the City is performing significantly better than customers expect the City to perform. Items in this area do not significantly affect overall satisfaction of residents. The City should maintain (or possibly reduce) emphasis on items in this area.
- **Less Important** (Lower importance, lower quality)
  - This area shows where the City is not performing well relative to the City's performance in other areas, however, this area is generally considered to be less important to residents. This area does not significantly affect overall satisfaction with City services because these items are less important to residents. The City should maintain current levels of emphasis in these areas.

# Suggestions for Improving the Quality of Any City Service - 2012

38% of respondents provided a suggestion regarding improving the quality of city services, top mentions are listed below.

- Improve recycling/make it convenient/provide curbside recycling
- Improve trash/recycling service (provide containers, more consistent service, etc.)
- Enhance code enforcement
- More businesses in shopping areas (better quality restaurants)
- Update/improve library
- Improve animal control
- Update or tear down dilapidated commercial buildings and apartments
- Add bike lanes and sidewalks
- Stop spending tax dollars on lawsuits
- Enhance perception of schools
- Improve Don Showman pool/expand hours



# KEY FINDINGS

## Quality of Life

# Rating of Farmers Branch

Q. How Would You Rate:	2012 Excellent / Good %	2010 Excellent / Good %	2008 Excellent / Good %
Overall quality of life in Farmers Branch	93%	95%	94%
Overall quality of services versus the taxes paid	85	92	93
Overall appearance of the City	84	93	87
Farmers Branch as a place to raise children	83	89	88
Farmers Branch as a place to work	83	91	87
Farmers Branch as a place to retire	82	92	90

*Although a majority of respondents rated the overall quality of life in Farmers Branch as excellent or good, other ratings show slight declines from previous years which should be considered in the City's planning priorities.*

*Percentages EXCLUDE don't know/no answer responses*

# Rating of Farmers Branch Mean Score Comparisons by Respondent Sub-Groups

Q. How Would You Rate:	All Respondents	Mailed Respondents	Online Respondents
Overall quality of life in Farmers Branch	3.35	3.41	3.28
Overall quality of services versus the taxes paid	3.21	3.25	3.17
Overall appearance of the City	3.14	3.18	3.09
Farmers Branch as a place to retire	3.17	3.25	3.08
Farmers Branch as a place to raise children	3.16	3.23	3.07
Farmers Branch as a place to work	3.14	3.18	3.11

*The mailed responses show slightly higher mean scores than the online respondents. The mailed respondents tend to be slightly older, longer term Farmers Branch residents.*

**Mean score** = A weighted average calculated on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being excellent and 1 being poor. Respondents who did not rate a city service were excluded from the mean score calculation.

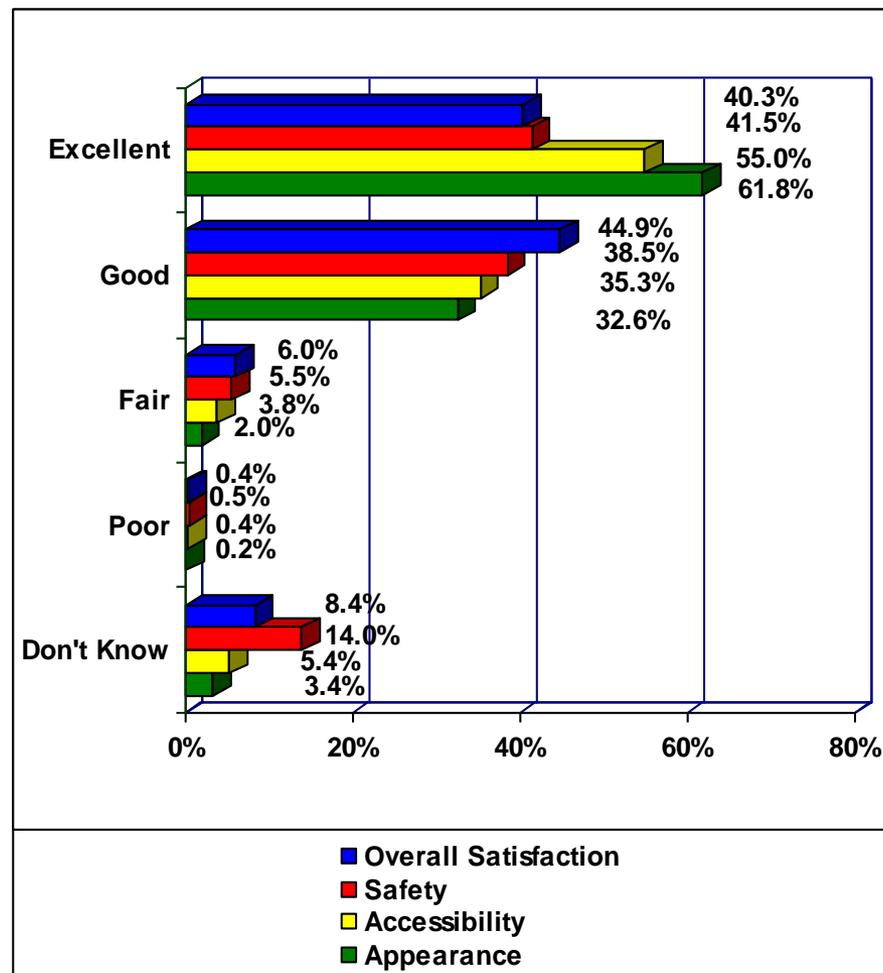


# KEY FINDINGS

## City Services

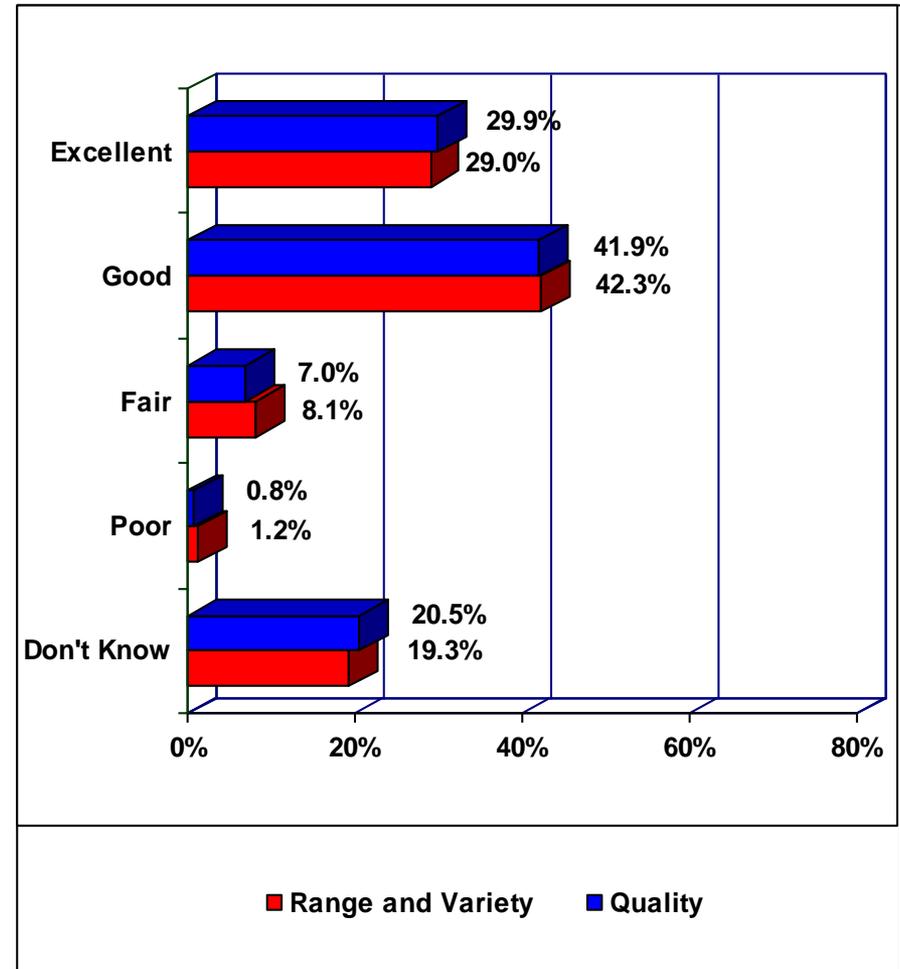
# Parks and Recreation - 2012

- It is very clear that respondents are satisfied with the appearance, accessibility and safety of parks and recreation services in Farmers Branch. Very few respondents rated these characteristics fair or poor.
- Comments among the few who rated these characteristics as fair or poor included the following:
  - Need new pool/update pool
  - Improve access/parking
  - More policing of parks
  - Better/more lighting
  - Need a dog park
- 2012 excellent/good ratings are slightly lower when compared to the 2010 and 2008 survey data.
- Overall satisfaction scores in 2010 were 92% excellent/good compared to the 2012 score of 85%.



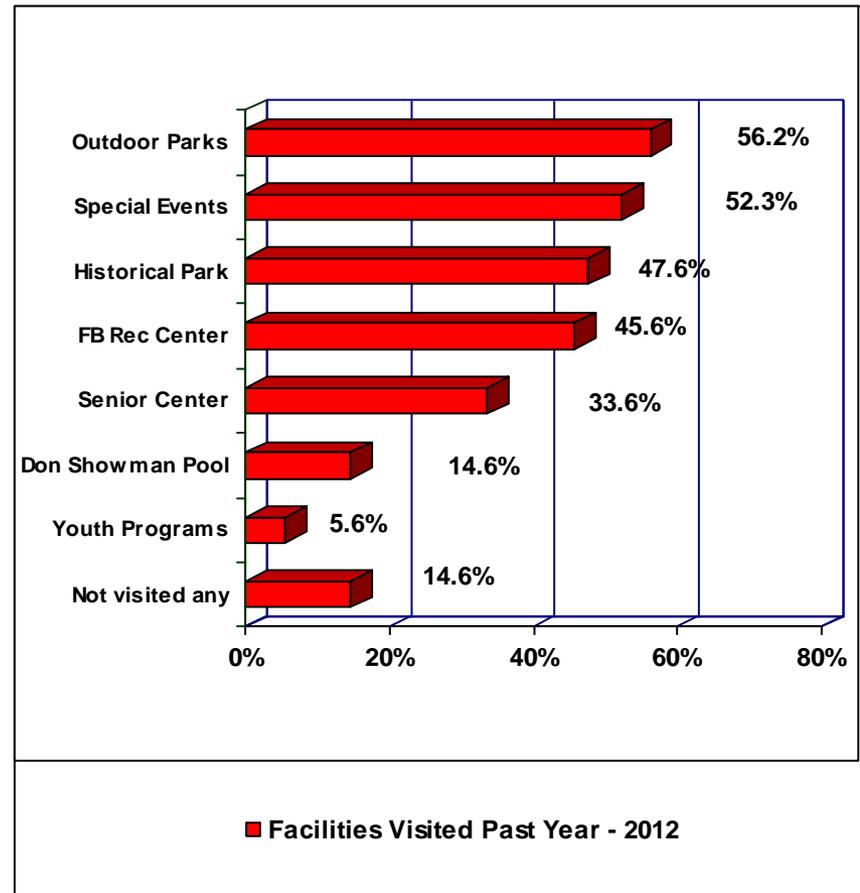
# Parks and Recreation Programs - 2012

- About one in five respondents are not familiar with the park and recreation programs. However, a majority of those who are familiar with the City's programs rated them as excellent or good. Very few respondents rated programs fair or poor.
- Comments among the few who rated the programs as fair or poor included the following:
  - Need programs for adults
  - More evening programs for working moms and adults
  - More summer programs for teens
- 2012 "excellent" ratings are slightly lower than in 2010.
- 2010 scores: Range/variety; 38% excellent, 38% good and for quality; 37% excellent and 39% good.



# Park and Recreation Facilities or Programs Used within Past 12 Months - 2012

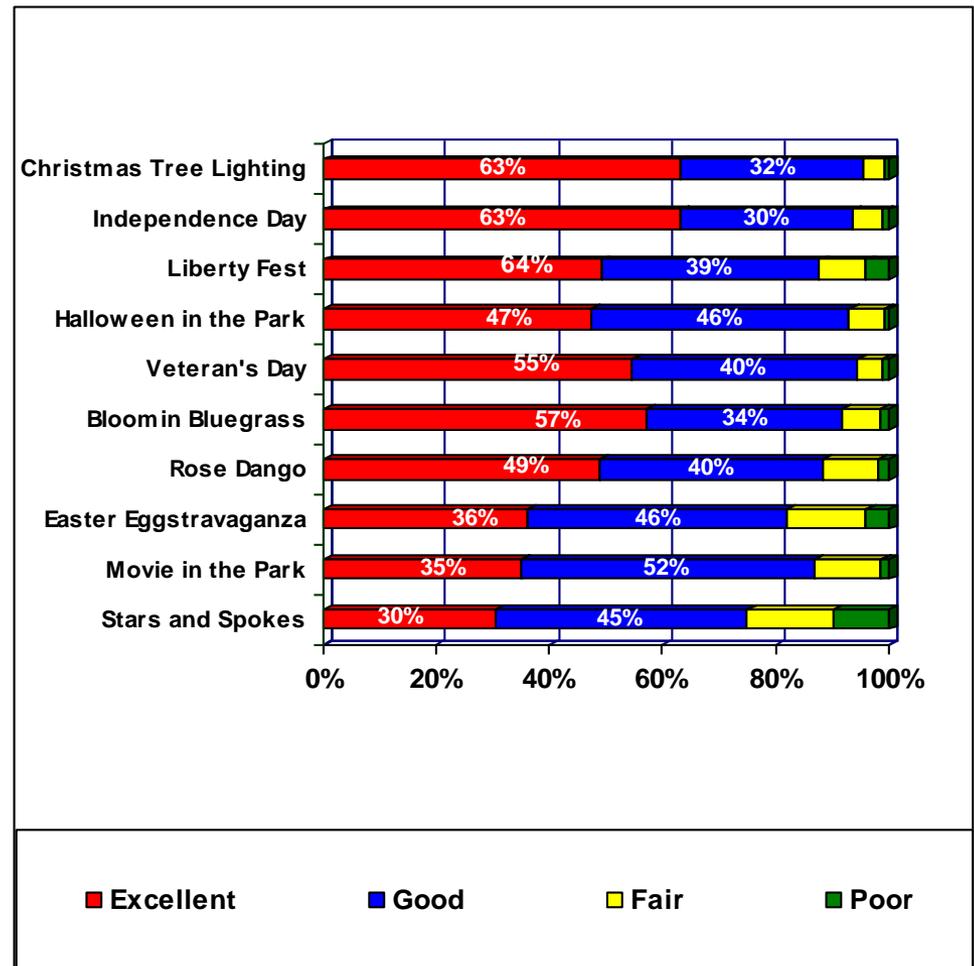
- More than half of all respondents surveyed have visited Farmers Branch outdoor parks and/or special events within the past year.
- 46% (48% in 2010) of all respondents have visited the Farmers Branch Community Recreation Center, while 34% (25% in 2010) have visited the Senior Center and 15% (18% in 2010) have visited Don Showman Swimming Pool.
- Use of the Historical Park increased from 43% in 2008 to 55% in 2010 and decreased 48% in 2012.
- Use of the Don Showman Pool has shown slight decreases; from 23% in 2008 to 18% in 2010 to 15% in 2012.



# Special Events - 2012

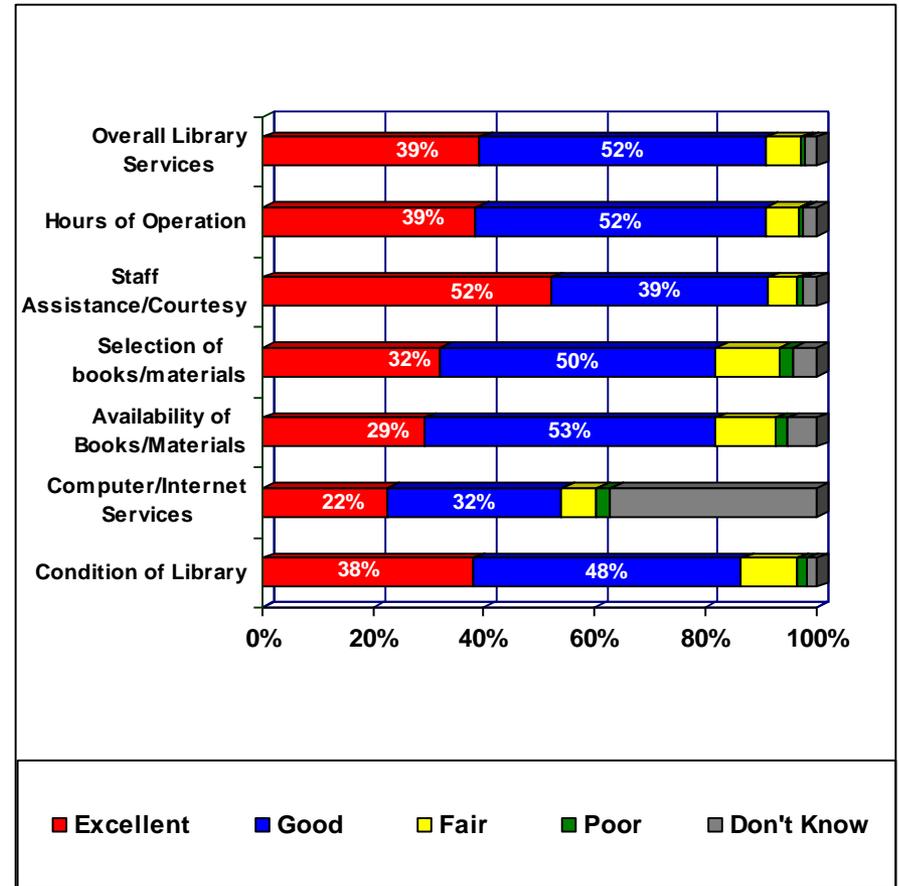
- Almost all respondents rated the events they attended as excellent or good.
- Ratings are presented for those who attended each event and exclude non-attenders.
- Percentage of respondents who did attend special events:

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2012</u>
□ Christmas Tree Lighting	45%	57%
□ Independence Day	38%	39%
□ Liberty Fest	30%	35%
□ Halloween in the Park	21%	25%
□ Veteran's Day	15%	23%
□ Bloomin Bluegrass	-	18%
□ Easter Eggstravaganza	13%	13%
□ Movie in the Park	10%	11%
□ Bark in the Park	9%	-
□ Rose Dango	5%	15%
□ Stars & Spokes Bike Race	-	7%



# Library - 2012

- 63% (69% in 2010 and 73% in 2008) of all respondents polled have used the Manske Library or its services during the past 12 months.
- More than 90% of library users rated hours of operation, staff assistance/courtesy, selection and availability of books/materials as excellent or good.
- 37% (46% in 2010) of library users could not rate computer/internet access, and therefore, probably do not use these services. Excluding those who do not use the library computers, 86% (96% in 2010) rated this service as excellent or good.
- Comments for the 2012 survey for fair/poor ratings were very similar to 2010 comments:
  - Availability/selection – not enough current books, increase collection of books, more movies
  - Computers – need more computers and internet access (have separate computers for children doing homework)
  - Staff – improve courtesy to customers, more knowledgeable staff
  - Hours – longer hours
  - Condition of the Library – outdated, needs to be updated

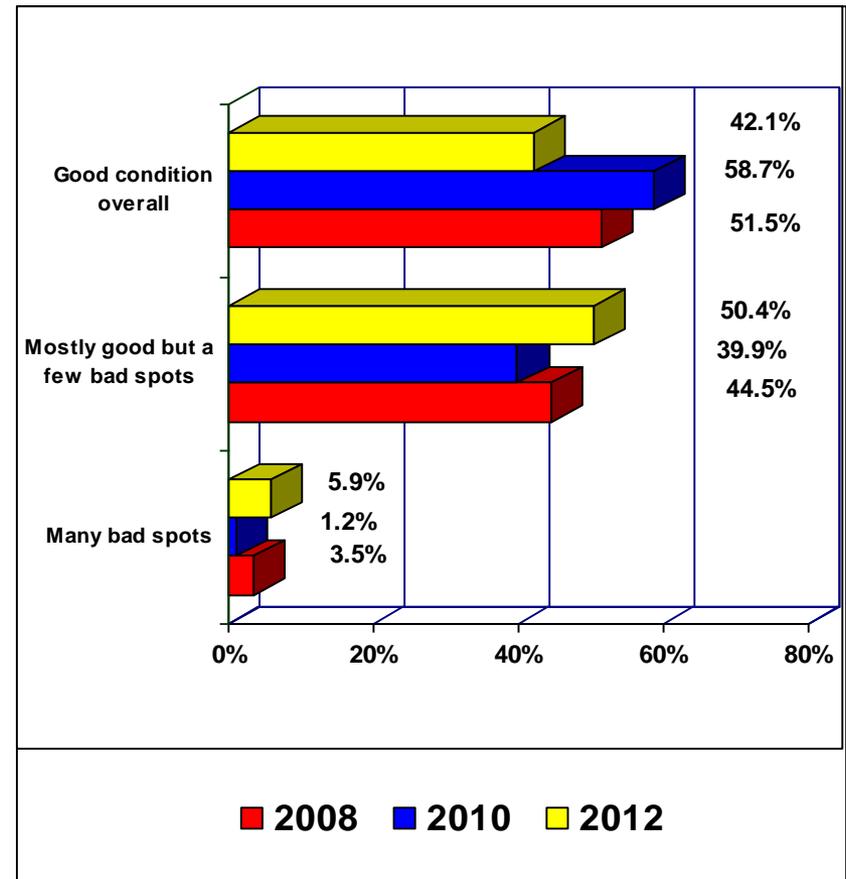


# Library - 2012

- **What library services, programs or materials are the most valuable to you? (Most frequent mentions)**
  - Internet/online access
  - Children's books
  - CD's/DVD's
  - Books (wide range; best sellers, newest, research materials, how-to-books, fiction, non-fiction, reference/resources)
  - Magazines
  
- **What would you like to see changed or improved about library services, programs, materials, or the facility? (Most frequent mentions)**
  - Need newer building
  - Renovate restrooms
  - Improve staff knowledge and courtesy
  - More/better internet/online access
  - Improve allocation of computer usage
  - More iPads, iMacs – go digital
  - Longer hours including weekends
  - More DVD rentals
  - Larger selection of books (more variety, up-to-date, expand collection, reference/research books)
  - More audio books with audio download capability
  - Continue to add more children's programs
  - Add self checkout

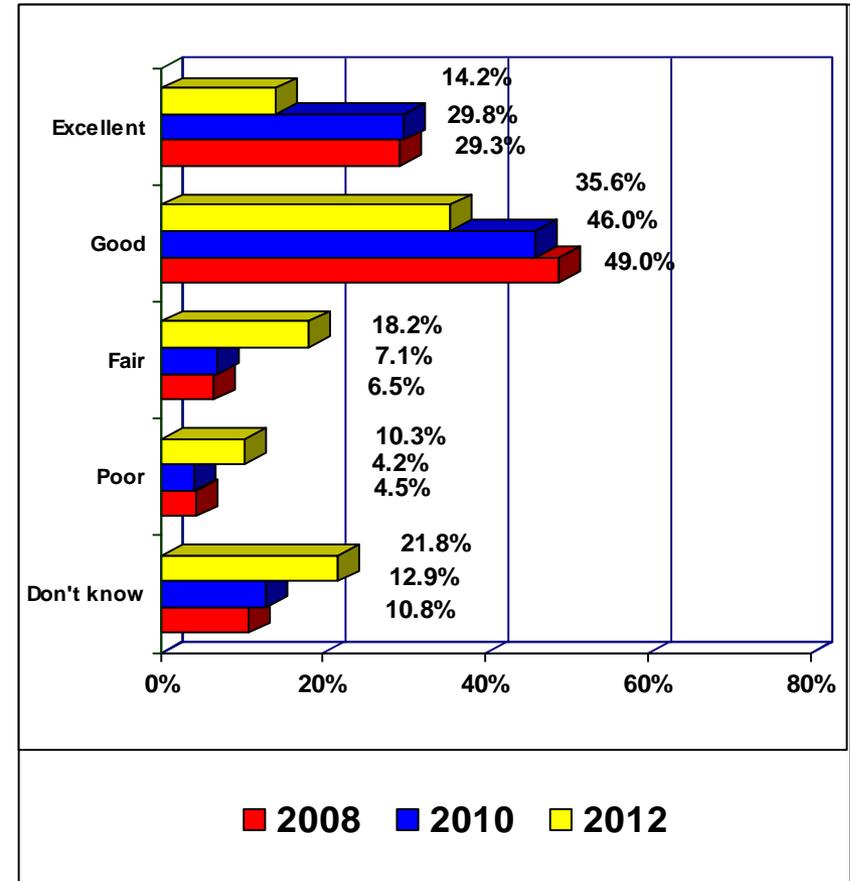
# Condition of Streets/Roads in your Neighborhood - 2012

- 42% of all respondents said the streets in their neighborhood are in good condition, a decrease over the 2010 and 2008 results.
- 50% said they are mostly good but there are a few bad spots.
- Only 6% said there were many bad spots compared to 1% in 2010 and 4% in 2008.
- *These statistics indicate the City should consider neighborhood street maintenance to be a priority.*



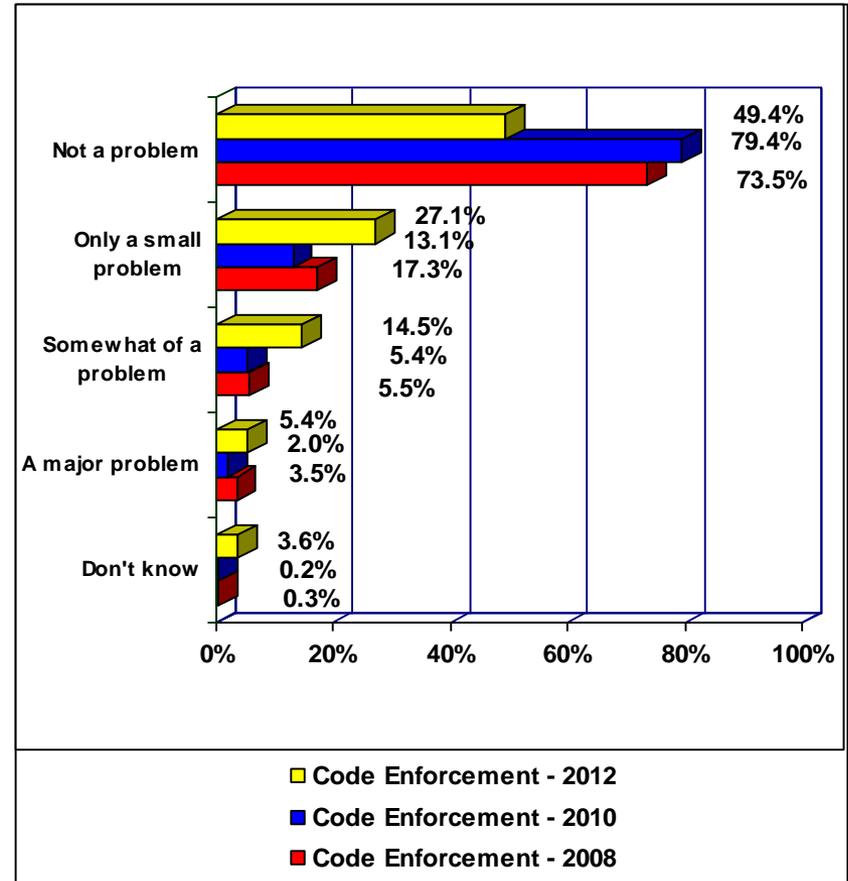
# Quality of Street Sweeping Services - 2012

- Half of residents polled reported the quality of street sweeping services in their neighborhood is excellent or good a decline from 2010 and 2008.



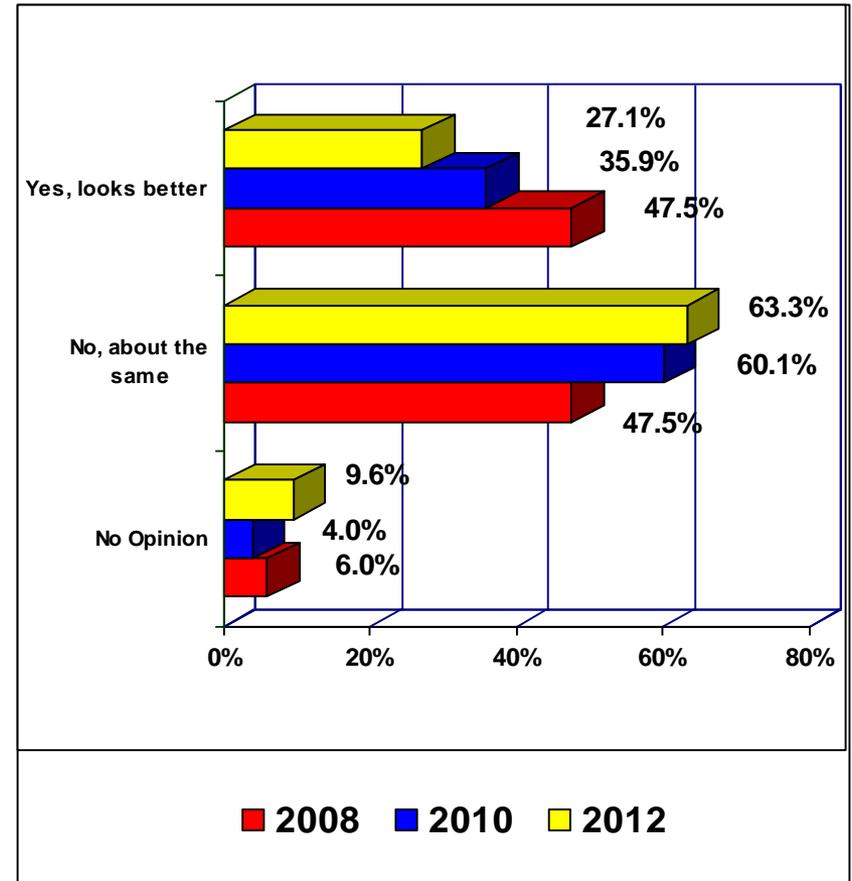
# Code Enforcement - 2012

- Half of respondents, down from 79% in 2010, said that tall weeds/grass, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and dilapidated buildings were not a problem in their neighborhood.
- 27% reported they are only a small problem, a 14% increase over 2010 results.
- These statistics indicate enhanced Code Enforcement services may be needed.
- Those who indicated it is a major problem cited these issues:
  - Codes are not enforced quickly or uniformly
  - Improve code enforcement for run down apartments
  - Deterioration of neighborhood yard and alley maintenance
  - Dilapidated fences, carports, garages, non-functioning cars
  - Tall weeds/grass/trash in alleys
  - Too many vehicles on streets
- *More proactive, consistent code enforcement is needed*



# Neighborhood Condition - 2012

- 27% of respondents said their neighborhood looks better than it did a year ago compared to 36% in 2010
- 63% said it looks the same.



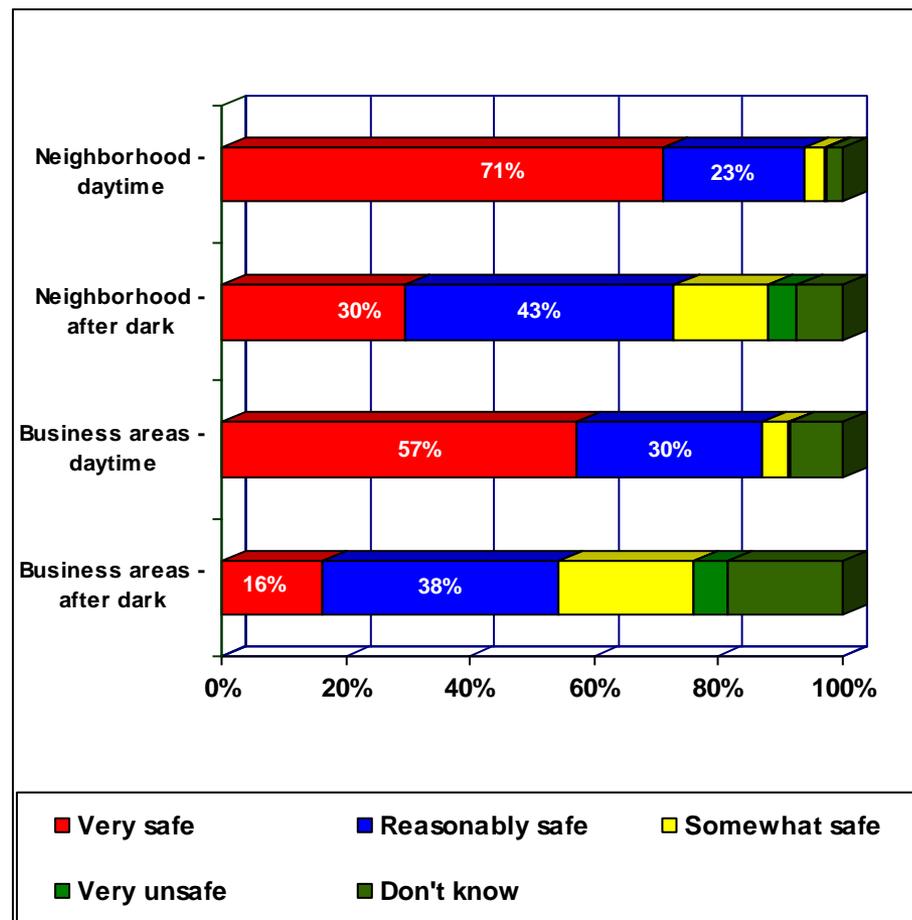


# KEY FINDINGS

## Public Safety

# Neighborhood / Business Area Safety - 2012

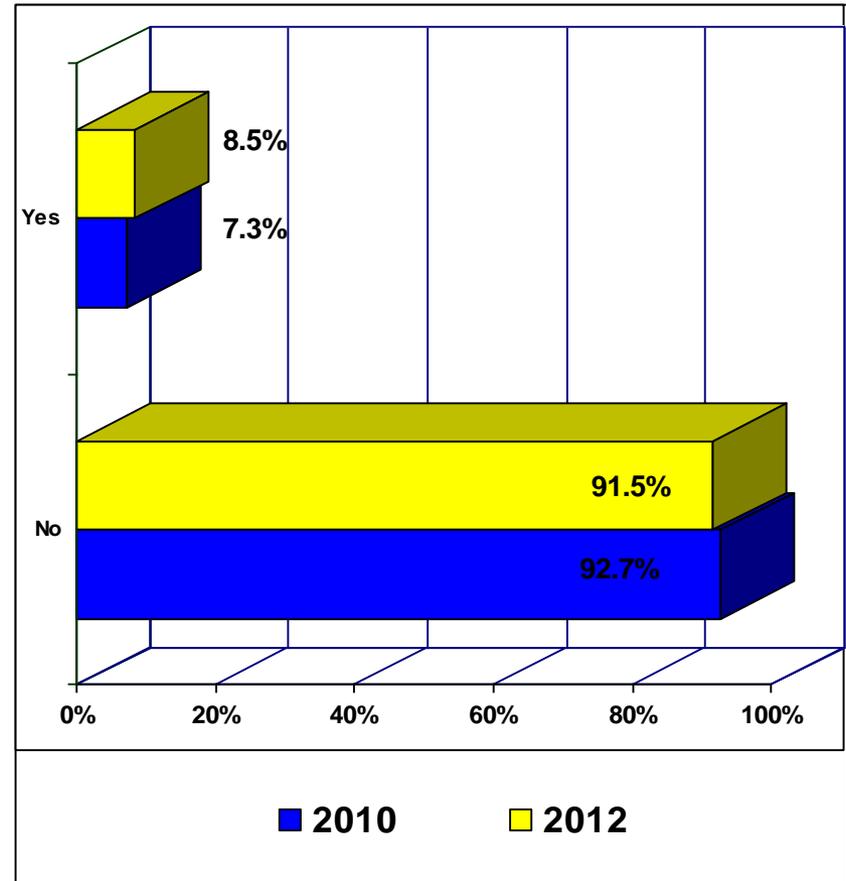
- A majority of residents feel very or reasonably safe in their neighborhoods (94% compared to 96% in 2010) and business areas during the daytime (87% in 2012 compared to 93% in 2010).
- 73% of residents in 2012 and 2010 feel very or reasonably safe in their neighborhoods after dark.



# Victim of Any Crime - 2012

- According to the survey, very few respondents were the victim of any crime in the city.
- 82% of respondents in 2012 reported the crime(s) they were a victim of to police compared to 73% in 2010.

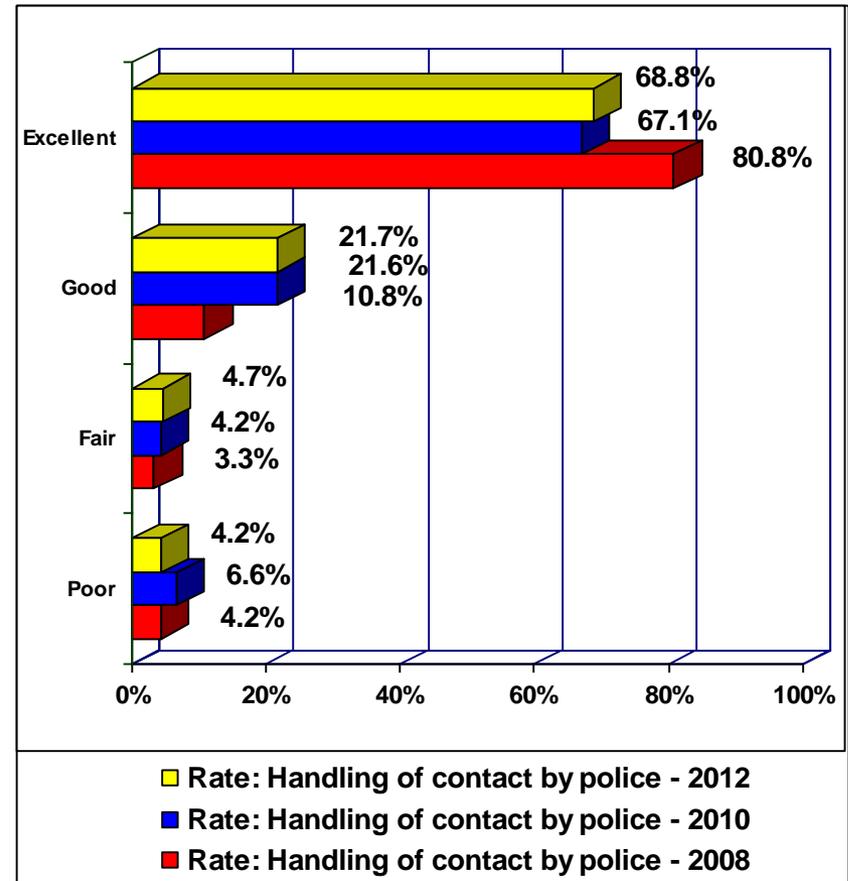
Q: Were you the victim of any crime within the past 12 months?



# Contact with Farmers Branch Police -2012

- 45% of respondents in 2012 compared to one-third of respondents in 2008 and 2010 have had any contact with Farmers Branch police department during the past 12 months.
- A majority of respondents feel the handling of their contact by police was excellent or good. *These statistics indicates the Police Department is doing a good job at handling residents who have had contact with the department.*
- Among those who rated it fair or poor, comments included:
  - Improve customer service by staff
  - They were rude/not courteous
  - Improve feed back after filing a report
  - They need to be more proactive

Base = 646 respondents had contact with Farmers Branch Police in 2012





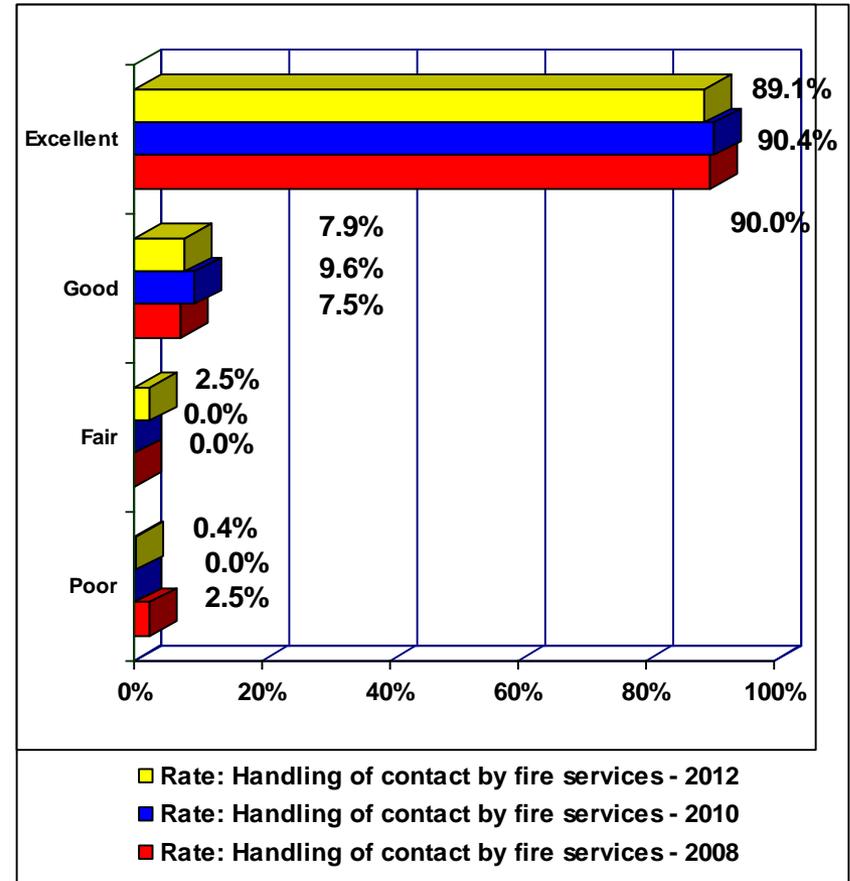
# KEY FINDINGS

## Fire/Medical Services

# Fire Services - 2012

- 16% in 2012 and one in ten of respondents in 2010 and 2008 have had any contact with Farmers Branch Fire Services during the past 12 months.
- 97% of respondents in 2012 who had contact with Fire Services rated the handling of their contact as excellent or good.
- *These statistics indicate the Fire Services Department is doing an excellent job with handling residents who have had contact with the department.*

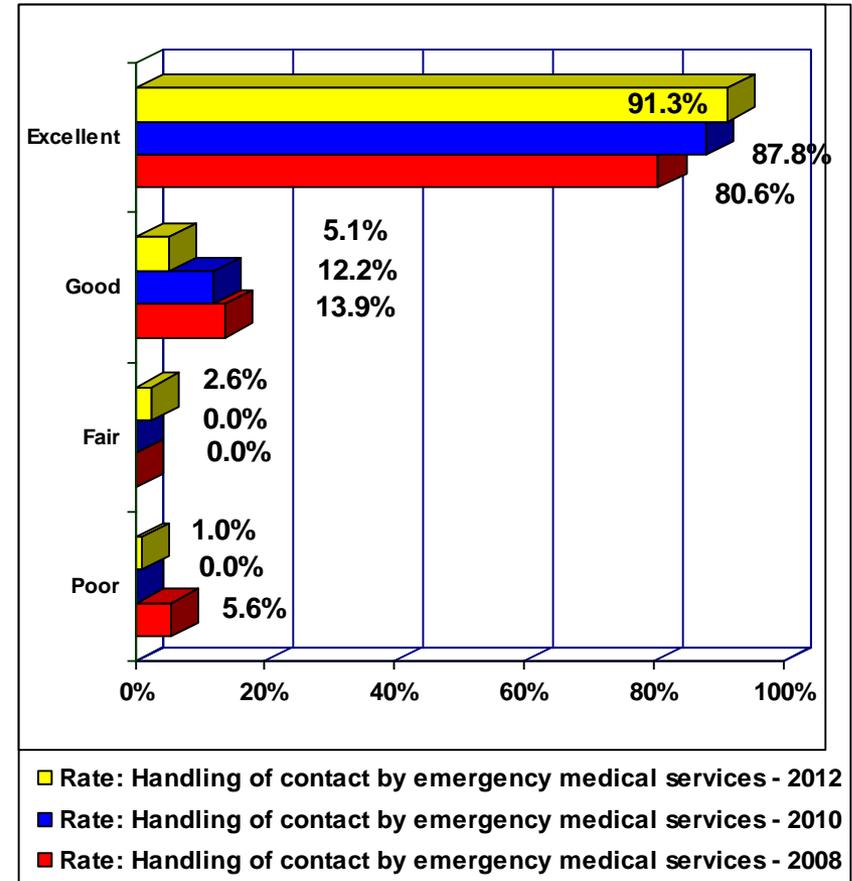
Base = 235 respondents had contact with Farmers Branch Fire Dept. 2012



# Emergency Medical Services/Ambulance - 2012

- 14% (8% in 2010 and 9% in 2008) of respondents have had any contact with Farmers Branch Emergency Medical Services or Ambulance Services during the past 12 months.
- A majority of respondents who had contact with the Emergency Medical Services or Ambulance Services rated the handling of the contact as excellent or good.
- *These statistics indicates the Emergency Medical Services Department is doing an excellent job with handling residents who have had contact with the department.*

Base = 196 respondents had contact with Farmers Branch Emergency Medical Services/Ambulance - 2012



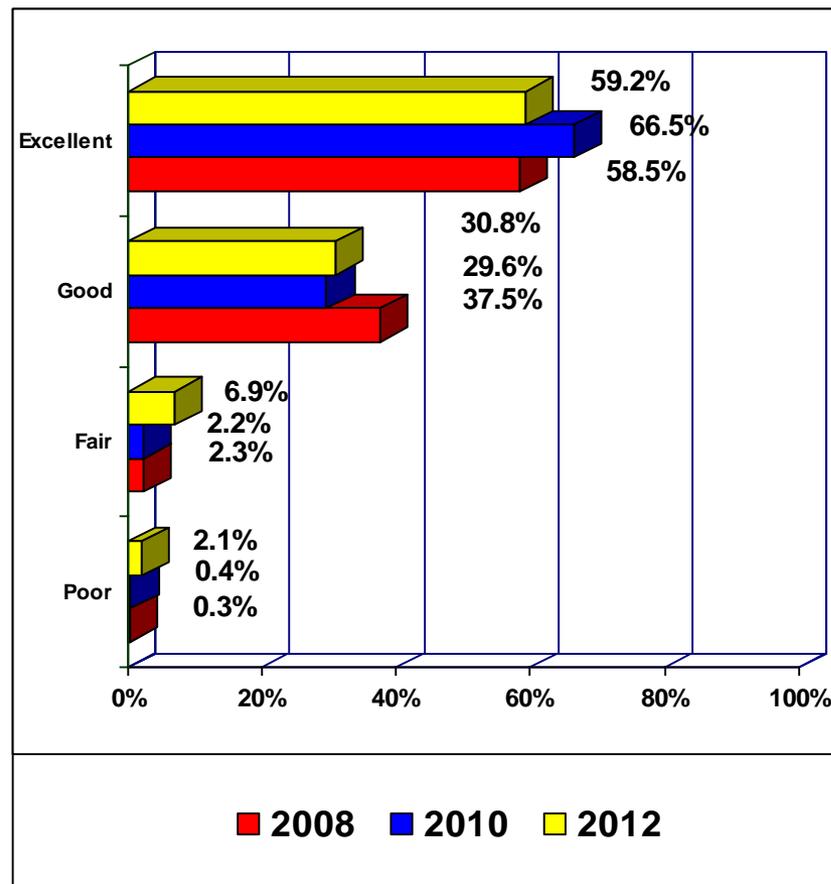


# KEY FINDINGS

## Trash and Recycling

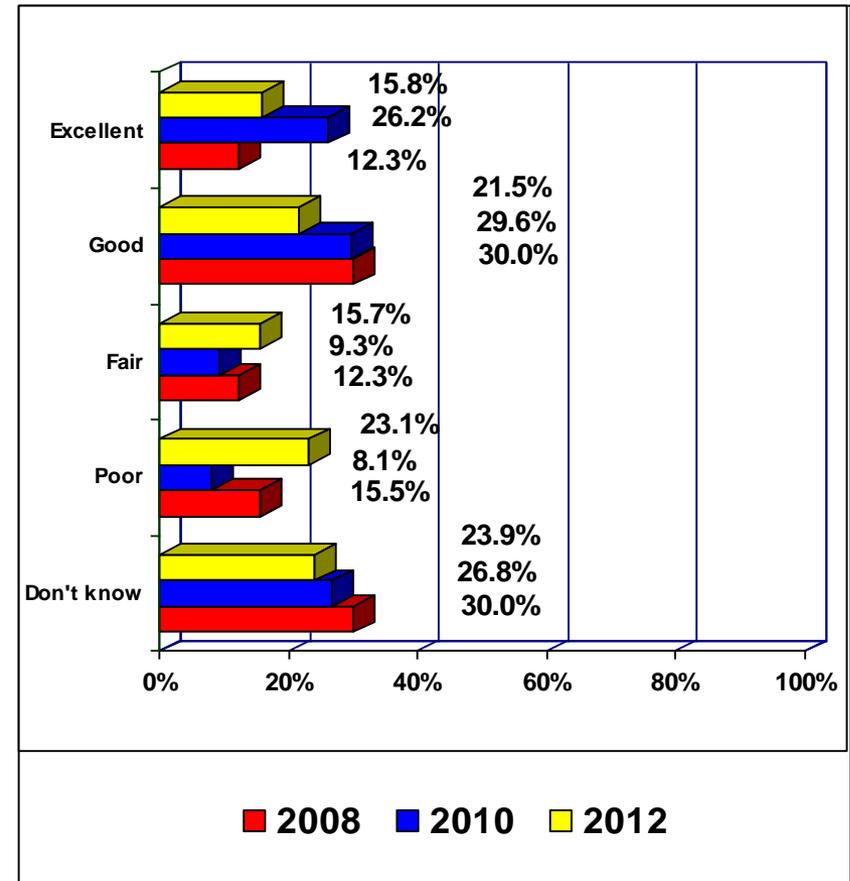
# Residential Garbage Collection Services - 2012

- The City is doing a good job with residential garbage collection services since 90% (96% in 2010) of respondents rated it as excellent or good.
- Only 9% of respondents rated it fair or poor, the primary comments included:
  - Since Waste Management took over it is often inconsistent on pick-up days and times
  - Lower level of service compared to previous service



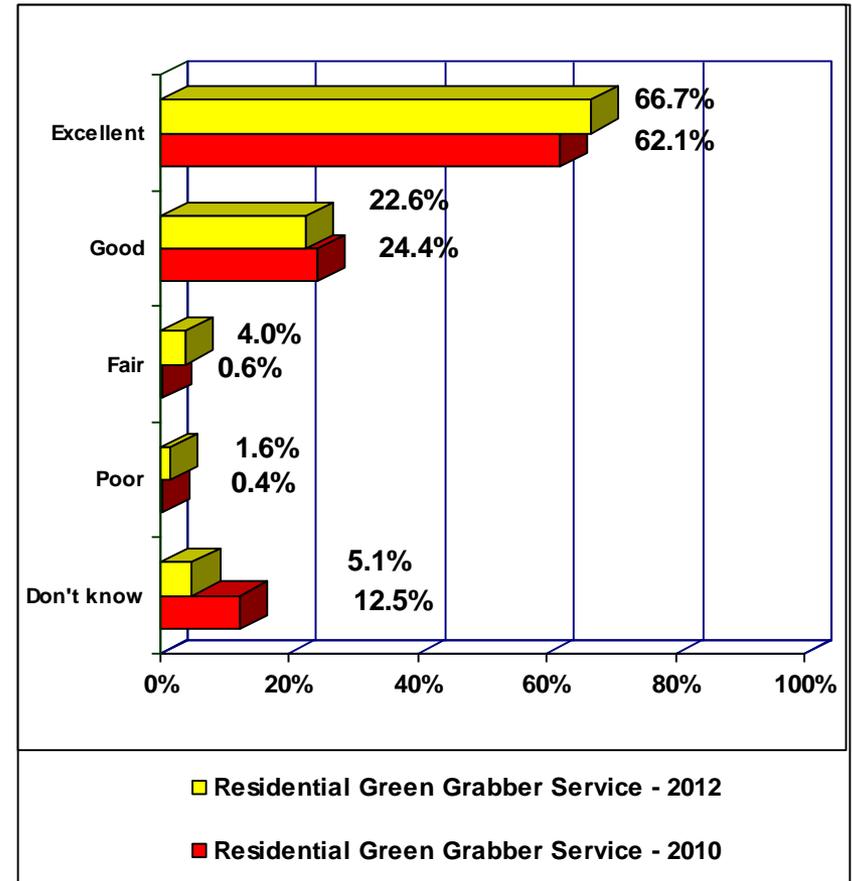
# Residential Recycling Services - 2012

- 37% (56% in 2010 and 42% in 2008) of residents polled reported residential recycling services are excellent or good.
- 39% (17% in 2010, 28% in 2008) of respondents rated it fair or poor, comments included:
  - Need curbside recycling services
  - It is inconvenient to take recyclables to a drop off location, it prevents many residents from participating in recycling
  - Need to provide recycle and trash containers
  - Need better recycling education on what is recyclable and where the collection centers are located
  - The off-site recycle containers are often full
  - Not aware of any city recycling program



# Residential Green Grabber Pickup -2012

- 89% (87% in 2010) of residents polled rated the green grabber pick up (bulky item pickup) services as excellent or good. (This question was not asked in the 2008 survey).
- Only 6% rated it fair or poor, primary comments included:
  - Green Grabber makes holes in my grass or tears up my trees
  - Green Grabber does not always pick-up on scheduled day



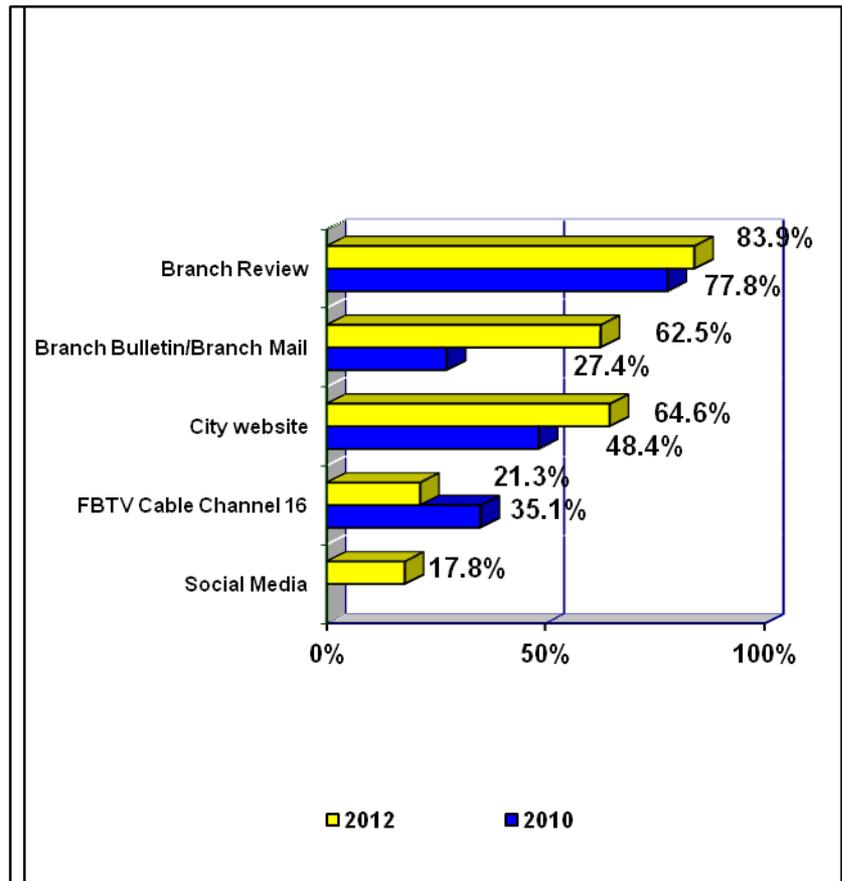


# KEY FINDINGS

## City Communication Efforts

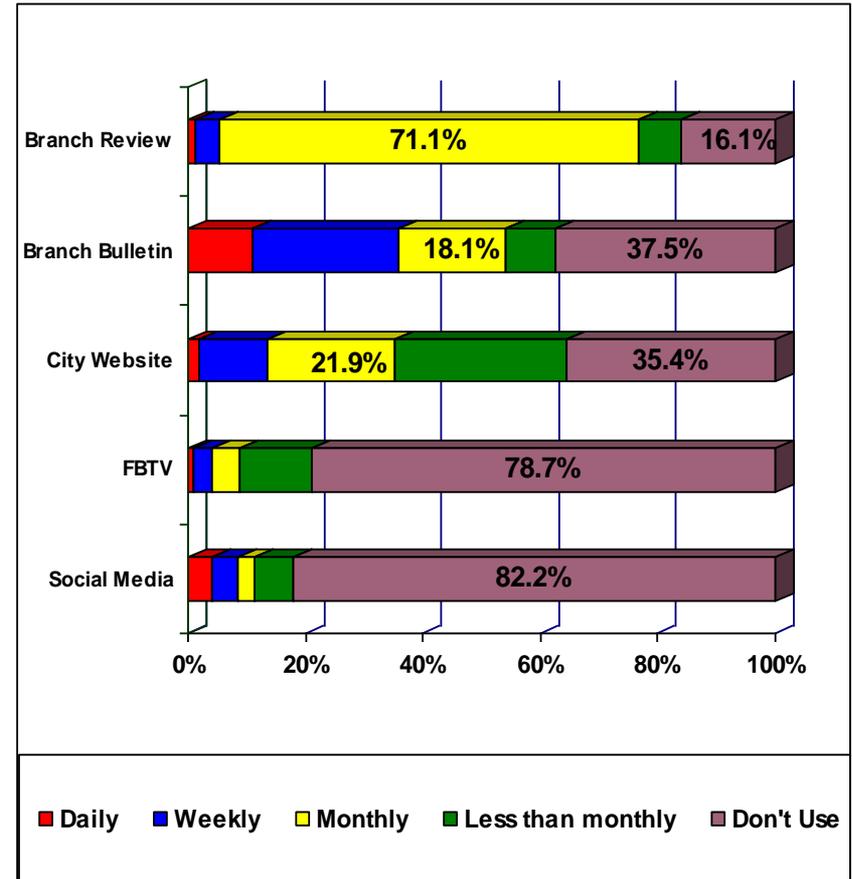
# Media Used to Obtain City Information - 2012

- Respondents utilize various media to obtain information about the City.
- More than three-fourths (84%, 78% in 2010) of respondents read Branch Review (City's water bill insert), while 65% (48% in 2010) visit the City's website
- A huge increase was shown in utilizing the Branch Bulletin, the city's email communication system or e-newsletter (63% from 27%).
- Fewer respondents utilize Farmers Branch TV cable channel than in 2010. (21% in 2012 from 35% in 2010).



# Frequency of Using Media Sources - 2012

- Among media sources used to obtain information about the City, Branch Review is utilized most, with 78% (73% in 2010) using this source monthly or more.
- Branch Bulletin (Branch Mail) is used second most with 54% using this source at least monthly (28% in 2010).
- The City website is used third most with 35% accessing it monthly or more (33% in 2010).





# Benchmark Data

# Benchmark Data

- Survey data presented on the following charts is from various municipal surveys conducted during 2011 and 2012 except for McKinney which was conducted in 2010.
- Percentages presented in the charts are for “excellent” and “good” ratings.
- Cities included in those with populations of:
  - 50,000 or less include LaPorte, San Marcos, Colleyville and Southlake.
  - 50,000 to 150,000 are College Station, McAllen, Flower Mound, McKinney and Pearland.
  - 150,000 or more are Arlington, Plano, El Paso and Dallas.
- In a few cases not all cities listed above are included in the benchmark averages because some questions were not included in each municipal survey.

# Benchmark Data – City Services

Percentages are for “excellent” or “good” ratings for each characteristic.

City Characteristic	Farmers Branch 2012*	Average of TX Cities with less than 50,000	Average of TX Cities with 150,000+	Average of TX Cities 50,000 to 150,000	Texas Average	U.S. Average
Public Safety	97%	83%	87%	84%	85%	83%
Sewer / Wastewater	NA	83	71	84	82	74
Garbage/Recycling	87	85	76	85	83	77
Maintenance/appearance of parks	93	86	86	82	86	77
Storm Drainage Management	NA	70	72	71	71	62
Library	83	82	85	73	74	NA
Traffic Enforcement	NA	72	55	70	69	NA
Street Maintenance	78	64	58	65	62	59
Animal Control	77	63	58	64	62	59
Senior Services	89	56	54	52	54	NA
Code Enforcement	62	55	50	56	54	50
Traffic Management	NA	55	51	51	52	54
<b>Overall quality of city services</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>57</b>

- Data is extracted from Q2, how would you rate the quality of these city services? Ratings are for excellent/good responses.
- Overall quality of city services for Farmers Branch is a weighted average of all excellent/good ratings.

# Benchmark Data – Quality of Life

Percentages are for “excellent” or “good” ratings for each characteristic.

<b>City Quality of Life Characteristics</b>	<b>Farmers Branch 2012</b>	Average of TX Cities with less than 50,000	Average of TX Cities with 150,000+	Average of TX Cities 50,000 to 150,000	Texas Average	U.S. Average
Your City as a place to live	NA	82%	75%	93%	86%	NA
You City as a place to raise a family	83	91	69	90	86	NA
Your neighborhood as a place to live	NA	91	69	89	86	NA
Your City as a place to work	83	63	66	62	64	NA
Your City as a place to retire	82	48	48	69	57	NA
Overall direction of City	NA	59	58	73	66	NA
Value of services for taxes paid	85	60	59	72	64	45
Overall quality of life in City	93	82	74	89	83	80



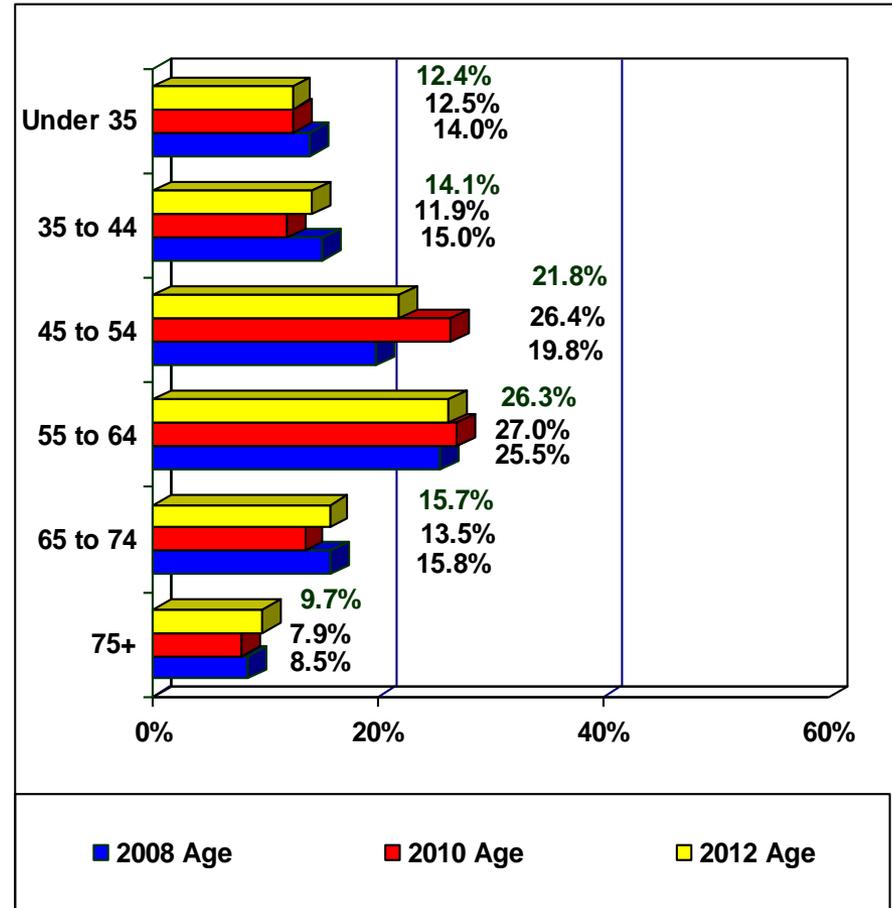
# KEY FINDINGS

## Demographics of Surveyed Respondents

# Respondent Demographics

- 85% own their home and 15% rent.
- 44% were male and 56% female.
- 74% (72% in 2010) have no children 18 or younger residing within their household.
- The age of surveyed respondents is representative of the U.S. Census data for Farmers Branch.
  - Mean Age:
    - Online survey 51
    - Mailed survey 57

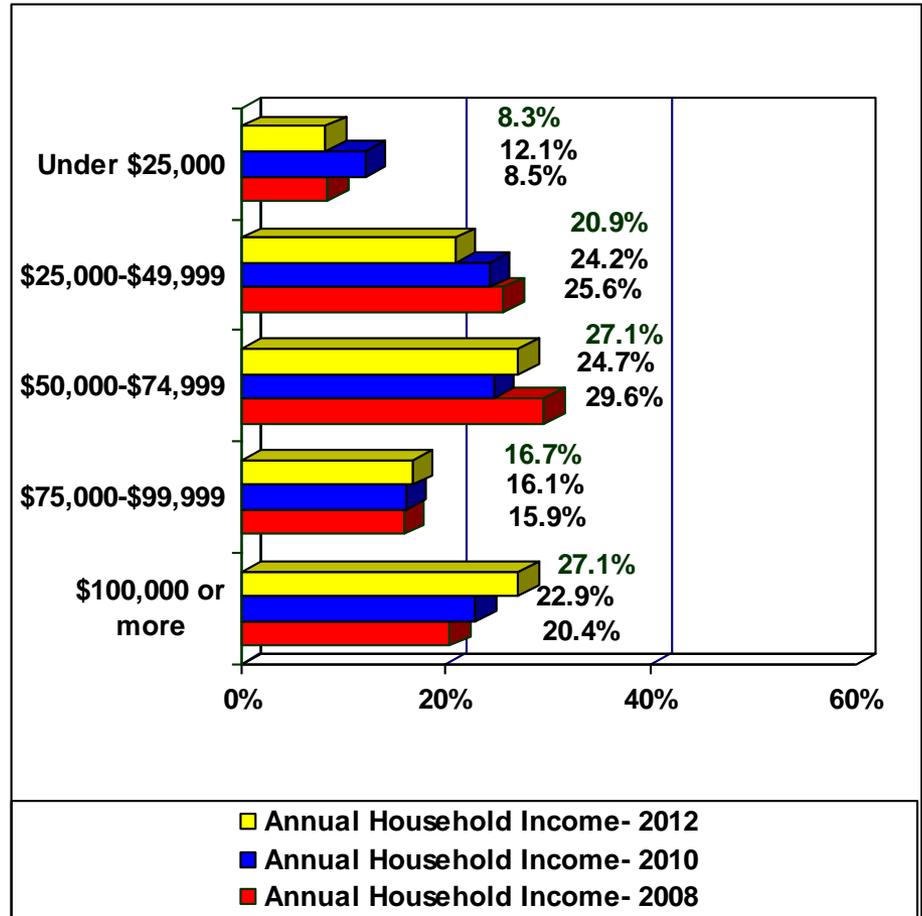
Age Category	City of Farmers Branch	
	2012 Survey	Census 2010
Under 35	12.4%	19.4%
35 to 44	14.1	19.0
45 to 54	21.8	21.3
55 to 64	26.3	16.4
65+	25.4	23.9



# Respondent Demographics

- Mean annual household income in 2012 is \$76,000, compared to \$75,650 in 2010.
- 87% live in a single family home (81% in 2010) and the remaining respondents live in live in an apartment, town home, apartment or duplex.
- Ethnicity of respondents interviewed:

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2010</u>
□ Caucasian	73.0%	76.2%
□ African Am.	5.4	2.4
□ Hispanic	18.7	18.8
□ Asian	2.4	1.2
□ Other	0.5	1.0



# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- Farmers Branch as a city and community is highly valued by its residents with 93% rating the overall quality of life in the City as excellent or good. 85% rated the overall value of services for the tax dollars they pay as excellent or good.
- The top priorities the city should continue emphasis whereby citizens rated these with high importance and rated the current quality of services high:
  - Public safety
  - Maintaining appearance of parks, landscapes and facilitiesTwo services that received high importance and slightly lower quality ratings the city should focus a slightly higher emphasis on:
  - Residential trash services
  - Animal control services
- Opportunities for improvement, citizens rated these with high importance and lower on quality:
  - Revitalizing residential and retail areas
  - Code enforcement services
  - Maintaining streets and roads
  - Providing pathways (sidewalks, trails and bike paths)
- Less emphasis can be placed on these services since respondents rated these services as less important and feel the city is providing them at a high quality level:
  - Providing a variety of recreation programs
  - Senior services
  - Special events
  - Library Services

# National Service Research

(Background/Contact Information)

Contact: Andrea Thomas, Owner

2601 Ridgmar Plaza, Suite 9

Fort Worth, Texas 76116

817-312-3606

817-326-6109-fax

e-mail: [andrea@nationalservicersearch.com](mailto:andrea@nationalservicersearch.com)

web site: [www.nationalservicersearch.com](http://www.nationalservicersearch.com)

National Service Research (NSR), founded in 1989, is a full-service market research consulting firm and conducts market studies for the public and private sector. NSR conducts various types of consumer and business research including focus groups and surveys nationwide. NSR's owner and founder, Andrea Thomas, has thirty-three years of professional market research experience.