

CITY COUNCIL ACTION REPORT



TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: 1/30/89
FROM: General Services Department
SUBJECT: PRESENT RESULTS OF CITIZEN ATTITUDE
SURVEY CONDUCTED JANUARY 1989

AGENDA ITEM NO. /

Debbi Dollar
STAFF

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the results of a citizen attitude survey conducted as part of the needs assessment phase of the budget and policy process.

FACTS

Four hundred households were randomly selected from a list of registered voters in the city of Scottsdale for a telephone survey. The survey was conducted by Dr. William Kimmelman, a survey research analyst affiliated with the Opinion Research Center in Phoenix. Interviewing took place January 3 - 7, 1989. Results were tabulated by the responses of voters who lived north and by those who lived south of Indian Bend Road, as well as the total for all respondents and are based on 324 completed interviews.

The survey asked voters:

- 1) What they believed were the two most important problems facing the city of Scottsdale;
- 2) How they rated the overall performance of municipal services;
- 3) How they rated the overall management of financial resources by the city government;
- 4) How they rated the overall condition of streets and roads in the city; and
- 5) If the city placed a bond issue on the ballot, would they likely favor or oppose it.

Negative or "poor" responses were followed up with a second question: What was the major reason for rating the performance poor? Finally, voters were asked: If a city bond election were approved, what facilities or services do you feel should receive the highest priority?

Echoing the results of the citizen survey conducted two years ago by O'Neil Associates, the data shows the most basic problem perceived by Scottsdale voters is traffic congestion. The second most mentioned problem by many residents is that they believe the city is "growing too fast".

Overall, about 90 percent of those surveyed rated the municipal services of Scottsdale either very good or good. About 60 percent rated the city's management of its financial resources positively, while 16.7 percent indicated they were not sure or did not have information to be able to rate. Seventy percent of those surveyed believe the physical condition of the city's streets and roads is good to very good.

ACTION TAKEN _____

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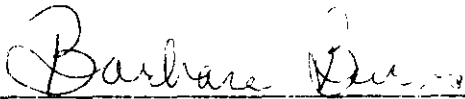
In the event a bond election were held today, the survey shows it would pass by a margin of about 2 to 1. However, about 18 percent indicated they were "not sure" and wanted more information. If the bond issue were approved, 49 percent of the respondents want the city government to improve streets and roads and 25 percent want some relief from the consequences of flooding (improving drainage and sewers). Regarding public safety, about 17.6 percent want expanded police protection, while 4.6 percent seek improved fire protection. Another 7.4 percent thought improving parks and recreation was a high priority.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The information and analysis contained in the survey will provide the City Council and City staff with information to better determine the City's overall needs, and consequently improve the City's ability to prioritize and finance needed projects.

FISCAL IMPACT

The survey was paid out of the Communications & Public Affairs operating budget at a cost of \$1,500. This report has been prepared for information and discussion purposes only.



Barbara Burns, General Manager



Jorge Carrasco, City Manager

Attachments:

- (1) January 1989 Citizen Survey

SURVEY OF SCOTTSDALE

BY

WILLIAM M. KIMMELMAN, PH.D
SURVEY RESEARCH ANALYST

JANUARY 11, 1989

PART I: PURPOSE OF SURVEY

A survey among registered voters of the city of Scottsdale was undertaken to ascertain by objective techniques the following:

- (1) What voters felt were the two most important problems facing the city of Scottsdale;
- (2) How voters rated the overall performance of municipal services in Scottsdale;
- (3) If any respondents rated the performance poor, what was the major reason for rating the performance poor;
- (4) How voters rated the overall management of financial resources by the city government of Scottsdale;
- (5) If any respondents rated the performance poor, what the major reason was for rating the performance poor;
- (6) How voters rated the overall condition of the streets and roads in the city of Scottsdale;
- (7) If the city government of Scottsdale, placed a bond issue on the ballot, how likely would the voter favor it or oppose it;
- (8) If respondent opposed the bond issue, what was the major reason why he/she opposed it.
- (9) If the city bond issue is approved by the voters, what facilities or services do you feel should receive the highest priority by the city government.

PART II: SUMMARY OF SURVEY PROCEDURE

Four hundred households were randomly selected from a list of registered voters in the city of Scottsdale for the telephone survey. In order to complete at least 300 interviews, we oversampled since some of the selected voters would either decline or not be at home for the days we called. Interviewing commenced Monday, January 3, 1989 and was completed Saturday, January 7, 1989. A total of 324 voters were interviewed. The results which follow are based upon the 324 completed interviews.

PART III: SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

The results and analysis include the questionnaire item, the results in percentages, and any significant comment. Moreover, the results were tabulated by the responses of voters who lived north (N) and by those who lived south (S) of Indian Bend Road, as well as the aggregate (Total) for all respondents of the survey.

Question 1: Screening question

Question 2: What do you think are the two most important problems facing the city of Scottsdale?

Results:

	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Taxes	0.0	7.6	4.6
2. Streets and roads	4.8	10.6	8.3
3. Growing too fast	23.8	24.2	24.1
4. Parks and recreation	0.0	0.0	0.0
5. Traffic Congestion	61.9	53.0	56.5
6. Sewer drainage	0.0	0.0	0.0
7. Sanitation and garbage	0.0	0.0	0.0
8. Others (specify)	35.7	28.8	31.5
1. Lack of traffic patterns	9.5	3.1	5.6
2. Lack of efficient planning	9.5	1.5	4.6
3. Air pollution	4.8	3.1	3.7
4. Water supply	4.8	4.5	4.6
5. Overdevelopment	7.1	3.1	4.6
6. Neighborhood deterioration	0.0	6.0	3.7
7. Don't pay attention to "Old Scottsdale"	0.0	3.1	1.9
8. Pima Road is too narrow	0.0	4.5	2.8
9. Not sure	13.4	9.1	10.2

Comment: The data show that the most basic problem perceived by the Scottsdale voters is traffic congestion. Many believe that this problem is a by-product of the tremendous growth of Scottsdale during the past 10 to 15 years. More importantly, however, is the perception that the city government either fails to recognize this problem or recognizes the problem but does not have the ability to correct it. This problem has been mentioned by both residents who live north and south of Indian Bend Road. The second most mentioned problem by many residents is that they believe the city is "growing too fast." Consequently there is an apparent dichotomy developing between those who believe the development and growth of the city should continue and those who believe the city government should plan for a much slower pace of development. This problem has also been mentioned about equally between those who live north and south of Indian Bend Road. The survey data show two other sources of friction and irritation from the residents who live south of Indian Bend Road. One is that some of the "old timers" of Scottsdale believe there is not enough attention paid to their concerns, and the other is the feeling that their neighborhoods are deteriorating because the city government is not enforcing the ordinance which restricts one family to a housing unit. In addition many also believe that their streets are being cluttered with a number of old and broken down cars which make their streets appear like a "used car lot."

Question 3: "How would you rate the overall performance of the city services in Scottsdale? Would you say they are very good, good, fair, or poor?"

Results:

	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Very good	59.5	37.9	46.3
2. Good	38.1	48.5	44.4
3. Fair	2.4	10.6	7.4
4. Poor	0.0	1.5	0.9
5. Not sure	0.0	1.5	0.9

Comment: The data is very convincing. Overall about 90 percent of the residents have rated the municipal services of Scottsdale either very good or good. This positive rating of about 90 percent is compared to less than 1 percent who rated these same services negatively. When the residents rate their city government that high, the image of their city government is also quite high. This positive rating of city services holds for both geographic regions of Scottsdale.

Question 4: "What are the major reasons why you rate the overall performance of city services poor?" (Asked only to those who rated the performance of services as "poor")

Results:

	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. City government doesn't pay attention to "Old Scottsdale."	0.0	1.5	0.9

Comment: The respondent indicated that the city government doesn't pay enough attention to the older parts of the city.

Question 5: "How would you rate the city government's overall management of the city's financial resources, that is its revenues and expenditures? Would you say the city is doing a very good, good, fair, or poor job?"

Results:

	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Very good	19.0	21.2	20.4
2. Good	45.2	36.4	39.8
3. Fair	14.3	24.2	20.3
4. Poor	2.4	3.0	2.8
5. Not sure	19.0	15.2	16.7

Comment: The data show that about 60 percent have rated the city 's management of its financial resources positively; only about 2.8 percent rated its management negatively. Another one in six or about 16.7 percent indicated not sure or did not have enough information to be able to rate. Where as residents are more certain of the services they receive they are not familiar enough with the financial operation of their city government. In simpler terms many residents do not follow the complex operations of city finances. However, the data do show that most residents have no reason to believe that the city finances are not handled in a satisfactory manner.

Question 6: "What are the major reasons why you rate the city government's management of the city financial resources as "poor"?"

Results:

	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. The city subsidizes the developers too much	2.4	1.5	1.9

Comment: There are some residents who believe that the city government favors the use of city funds to advance the financial opportunity of developers.

Question 7: "How would you rate the overall condition of the roads and streets in the city of Scottsdale? Would you rate their overall condition as very good, good, fair, or poor?"

	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Very good	28.6	15.2	20.4
2. Good	52.4	47.0	49.1
3. Fair	14.3	27.3	22.2
4. Poor	4.8	10.6	8.3
5. Not sure	0.0	0.0	0.0

Comment: The data show that about 70 percent of the residents believe the streets and roads are good to very good. This question differentiates between the physical condition of the roads and the traffic patterns and/or traffic congestion. One should note there is a slight difference of ratings between residents north of Indian Bend Road who rate the condition of streets and roads higher than the residents south of Indian Bend Road. Part of this difference can be attributed to the perception that the city pays more attention to the newly annexed areas but part can be attributed to the difficulties with Hayden and Pima Roads. Overall, however, they are quite satisfied with the condition of the roads and streets in Scottsdale.

Question 8: "Suppose the city government of Scottsdale places a bond issue on the ballot to improve its public buildings, its water and sewer facilities, and/or its streets and roads. If the city bond issue election were held today, would you most likely favor it or oppose it? How strongly?"

Results:

	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Favor strongly	9.5	10.6	10.2
2. Favor	45.2	47.0	46.3
3. Not sure	19.1	16.7	17.6
4. Oppose	21.4	18.2	19.4
5. Oppose strongly	4.8	7.6	6.5

Comment: The survey data show that if the election were held today the bond issue would pass by a margin of about 2 to 1. However, experience teaches us that bond issues are very difficult to predict. They have very low turn-outs and those who have the strongest opinions about the issue usually turn-out to vote. Moreover, those who oppose the issue are more likely to turn-out than those who favor the issue. The City Government has several things working in its favor: its image is high, the residents are quite satisfied with their services, and there is a genuine trust in its government. One will note that about 18 percent indicated they were "not sure." Many in this category stated that they wanted to hear more about the specifics such as, "What is the money going to be spent for? How much will the bond issue raise our taxes? Are the services or improvements needed? Are these new revenues going to help the developers? Will these funds be spent in North Scottsdale rather than be equally distributed?" At the same time, many of these "not sures" indicated that once these questions are answered they will probably favor the because they understand that capital

improvements are needed to maintain a high quality of life that they now enjoy. With some underlying conflicts between those who favor development and those who want to slow down the growth, it seems fair to say that the bond issue should concentrate on maintaining those services that make Scottsdale a quality city to live in rather than emphasize growth and development. Furthermore, it seems fair to say from this survey that a special emphasis should be made to communicate to the "Old Scottsdale" residents that they are not going to be neglected. One last point should be made. The bond issue has a much better chance of being passed by the voters if they perceive that the mayor, the council, the professionals, and the city leaders are behind the issue. If they perceive a cleavage, many will walk away from the dilemma. Bond issues usually fail because many voters do not see a "need", many voters see that the revenues will benefit one group at the expense of another, or that there is a cleavage among those who govern. To be sure, this bond issue will likely succeed if the mayor, the city council, the city professionals, and the city leaders all favor it enthusiastically. Or at least, if there are honest differences, these differences do not emerge as a test of wills.

Question 9: "If the respondents oppose, ask: What is the major reason why you oppose the bond issue?"

Results:

	<u>Total</u>
1. Raises taxes	9.3
2. Everything is fine. (Maintain the <u>status quo</u>)	7.4
3. Helps the developers too much	3.7
4. Costs are too high	0.9
5. Mis-management of funds	5.6
6. Overspends revenues in North Scottsdale	0.9
7. Should stay within budget	2.8

Comment: The data show the common variety of opposition one would find in any governmental jurisdiction.

Question 10: "If the city bond issue is approved by the voters of Scottsdale, what facilities or services should receive the highest priority by the city government?"

Results:

	<u>Total</u>
1. Improving streets and roads	49.1
2. Improving public buildings	0.9
3. Improving drainage and sewers	25.0
4. Improving parks and recreation	7.4
5. Improving (expanding) police protection	17.6
6. Improving fire protection	4.6
7. Improving sanitation and garbage	2.8
8. Others (specify):	15.7
1. Develop better traffic patterns	5.6
2. Increase water supply	4.6
3. Reduce air pollution	1.9
4. Provide services in newly annexed areas.	0.9
5. Widen streets (Pima and Hayden)	0.9
6. Rapid transit	0.9
7. Spend on human or social services of needy and elderly	0.9
9. Not sure	14.8

(Adds up to more than 100 percent due to multiple responses.)

Comment: The survey data show that about 49 percent of residents want the city government to maintain high quality of streets and roads. In addition, about 5.6 percent of the residents want the city government to develop better traffic patterns to ease the traffic congestion. Still another 25 percent want some relief from the consequences of flooding due to the periodic heavy rainfalls. Yet about 17.6 percent want the police protection expanded to provide better service in the newly annexed areas of Scottsdale while those in old Scottsdale want better police protection to assist in enforcing the ordinances regarding littering and the cluttering of streets with a number of old broken down cars in their neighborhood which diminishes the value of their property.