



RAPP CONSULTING GROUP

TO: Ben Martig, City Administrator

FROM: Craig Rapp, Rapp Consulting Group

RE: Strategic Planning Outreach Survey Results

DATE: March 5, 2021

The 2021 strategic planning process for the City of Northfield includes an “assessment of the current operating environment”. This is done early in the process in order to provide useful information for the City Council so that informed choices can be made during the strategic planning retreat.

Assessing the environment includes three primary activities:

- Stakeholder outreach
- Environmental scanning
- Development of an Organizational Profile

This memorandum addresses Stakeholder outreach. City staff is preparing the Environmental Scan and Organizational Profile, also presented on Tuesday, but communicated separately.

The stakeholder outreach process made use of POLCO technology. It was deployed in three ways: (1) a community survey—in both English and Spanish; (2) A survey of City employees and Board and Commission members; and (3) a survey of City Council members as part of a survey/interview process.

The purpose behind all of these activities is to serve strategic planning decision-making. As such, the surveys were short and limited in scope. The questions centered on City services and community life—the central responsibilities of the City—and the focus of strategic planning.

Included with this memorandum are summary results of the community and employee-Board & Commission surveys. At the City Council meeting on Tuesday, I will provide more details regarding all surveys/responses, and the complete data set with narrative answers.

Community Survey

The community survey was open for approximately three weeks. 416 people responded to the English version, five (5) to the Spanish version. Of the English total, 365 identified as residents, 41 as business owner/residents, two (2) as business owner/non-residents, seven (7) as students, and three (3) as a non-resident property owner. All five Spanish respondents identified as residents. The English-version results:

- Overall, the respondents were pleased with the quality of life in Northfield with 73% rating it “more than satisfactory” or “excellent”, and only 3% “less than satisfactory”
- City services were rated highly with 55% rating services as either “better than expected” or “excellent” and only 6% rating them “less than expected”.
- When asked to rate the top three current strategic priorities, they were, in rank order: (1) Economic Development-56%; (2) Affordable Housing-51%; and (3) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion-44%.
- The final question dealt with the effects of the pandemic. When asked how the pandemic had affected them, the two overwhelming responses were: (1) Mental Health-59%; and (2) Learning and Development of students-47%.

The Spanish version, with the small sample size, yielded positive, but slightly different results:

- 100% rated the quality of life satisfactory or above, however 60% rated it “satisfactory”
- 80% rated City services “better than expected” or “excellent”
- The top priorities were a tie between Affordable Housing, Infrastructure and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-60%
- In terms of pandemic effects, 100% said “Employment” and 80% said “Mental Health”

Employee and Boards-Commission Survey

A survey of employees along with members of the City’s Boards and Commissions was deployed at the same time as the Community Survey. A total of 66 people responded: 25 employees and 41 Board and Commission members.

A set of questions similar to the Community Survey was asked with the following results:

- 49% rated the quality of City services as either “more than satisfactory” or “excellent” with 7% indicating “less than satisfactory” or “poor”
- 80% rated the quality of life as either “more than satisfactory” or “excellent” with 3% indicating “less than satisfactory”
- The three most important strategic priorities in rank order: (1) Affordable Housing-65%; (2) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-50%; (3) Economic Development-47%, with Climate Change Impacts a close fourth at 44%
- The two greatest challenges to maintaining service delivery levels: (1) Funding; (2) Staffing levels
- Effects of the pandemic: Mental Health-55%; Learning and Development of Students-33%