

AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF CEDAR  
CITY RESIDENTS: A SUPPLEMENT TO THE CITY'S MASTER PLAN

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Master of Arts in Professional Communication

by  
Timothy Gray

Dr. Art Challis, Project Supervisor

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## APPROVAL PAGE

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of Humanities and Social Science, have examined the thesis (project) entitled

### AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF CEDAR CITY RESIDENTS: A SUPPLEMENT TO THE CITY'S MASTER PLAN

presented by Timothy Gray,

a candidate for the degree of Master of Art in Professional Communication,

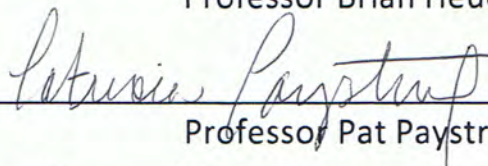
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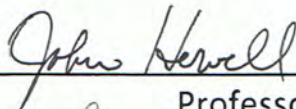
Professor Art Challis



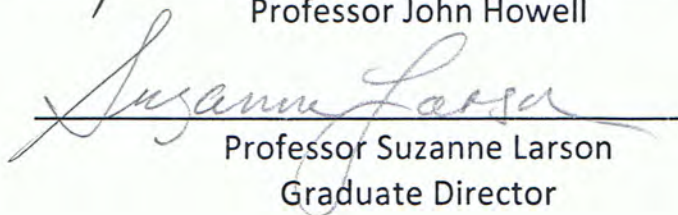
Professor Brian Heuett



Professor Pat Paystrup



Professor John Howell



Professor Suzanne Larson  
Graduate Director

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ABSTRACT

Cedar City is currently in the process of updating its Master Plan for the city. One of the components of the Master Plan is the building and funding of recreation facilities. There has been some disagreement on the different proposed recreation facilities; a recreation center, new baseball fields, parks, biking and walking trails. There has also been disagreement on how to fund these projects; through taxes, user fees, and impact fees. The city wanted to include the community in the decision making process by conducting a survey of their opinion and attitude towards the different recreation facilities and funding options.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY OF THE ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF CEDAR CITY

RESIDENTS: A SUPPLEMENT TO THE CITY'S MASTER PLAN

In November of 2007 the City Manager of Cedar City, Ron Chandler, solicited Southern Utah University to conduct a survey for the city. The city was undergoing the process of updating its Master Plan and wanted to gather information from the residents about the attitudes and opinions towards proposed recreation facilities and different funding options.

Survey work in the public sector is an integral part of the proper functioning of government. Public officials are charged with representing and working for the public. One of the ways to accomplish this charge is to conduct public opinion surveys. Lois Wise (2003) states that "Representative bureaucracy pertains to the extent to which the bureaucracy responds to the preferences of society" (p. 343); conducting a survey is one way to gather those preferences.

Another aspect of conducting public opinion surveys for government entities has to do with "hot button issues" or issues that are of great local concern. According to Robert Stake (2004) "when a program becomes a matter of public concern, or is attacked or aggressively advocated by a stakeholder or group, then outside group opinions become much more important" (p. 127). Currently in Cedar City the issue of a recreation facility is a "hot button issue". The community pool will be closed in 2010, as well as there being a community group dedicated to voicing its support for a community

recreation center for the youth of the city; the recreation issues issue needs to be addressed by city administration.

The value that a public opinion survey adds to the functioning of government is the reason that I chose to accept the task of conducting the survey for the city. It not only would provide me with valuable experience, but would also prepare me for a future working in the public sector.

### Literature Review

My research centers on two main topics: The first is the research that has been done on creating and writing a survey and its implementation. The second is what other cities have done in terms of citizen attitude and opinion surveys.

When conducting a survey, error is one of the main concerns regarding validity and reliability of the survey and manifests in three main forms. The first type of error is coverage error and "occurs when the list...from which a sample is drawn does not include all elements of the population" (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 16). The second source of error is sampling error and "occurs when only a subset or sample of all people in a population [are surveyed] instead of conducting a census" (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 17). The third source of error is non-response error and is simply when a respondent chooses not to answer the survey completely or just specific questions within the survey (Umbach, 2005, p.97).

Coverage and sampling error can be addressed by a deliberate effort to include as many subjects into the sample or population selected, non-response error is an aspect of survey construction that needs special attention. To eliminate non-response error and increase response rates of a survey, researchers have suggested that the visual appearance and wording play a crucial role. Surveys must look professional, important, clean, simple and conventional and be easy to read (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Backstrom & Hursh-Cesar, 1981; Fowler, 1993). Attention needs to be given to the words chosen and the order in which they appear. Surveys should be short and easy to answer and must be brief, clear and focused (Alreck & Settle, 1995; Fowler, 1993; Salant & Dillman, 1994). Don Dillman has developed the Total Design Method (TDM), and later altered it slightly to create the Tailored Design Method (TDM) for survey research that takes a holistic look at constructing and implementing surveys to reduce all three elements of error. According to Dillman (2000):

The original TDM consisted of two parts. The first was to identify each aspect of the survey process that seemed likely to affect either the quality or quantity of response and to shape each one in such a way that the best possible responses could be obtained. It was guided by a theoretical view, social exchange, about why people responded to questionnaires. The second part was to organize the survey efforts so that the design intentions were carried out in complete detail. It was guided by an administrative plan that assured coordination of all of the parts. (p. 9)



TDM brings together efforts of survey construction, wording and visual construction with careful consideration of implementation issues and recording methods to reduce sampling and coverage error, and to increase response rate and reduce non-response error. Much of this TDM effort is based on social exchange theory to include building and establishing trust, increase rewards, not monetary but social validation, and to reduce social costs in time and effort (Dillman, 2000, p. 27).

In regard to non-response error, the research suggests that emphasizing and establishing salience with the respondent will greatly reduce non-response error. Salience is "how important or relevant a survey topic is to the survey respondent" (Porter, 2004, p. 14). The way to increase salience is to place questions that might appeal most to respondents first in the order of the survey or to appeal to the relevant issues of the survey in a cover letter (Porter, 2004, p. 14).

Another way to reduce non-response error is through the careful evaluation of the survey appearance and questions asked. Floyd Fowler (1993) suggests that "evaluation of survey questions may be one of the most important and cost-effective ways to reduce survey error" (p. 145). Regarding evaluation of questions Fowler (1993), also suggests that "it almost always is valuable to conduct focused discussions with people who are in the study population about the issues to be studied" (p. 95). Focus groups are an excellent way to evaluate your survey in draft form and is suggested and recommended in almost all of the literature reviewed. It's important to remember that focus group data is qualitative in nature and does not give concrete information, rather

it gives an exploratory look into how well the survey is conducted (Alreck & Settle, 1995, p. 393). Following the TDM method of conducting surveys, paying close attention to the details that go into construction and implementation as well as conducting focus groups is one of the ways to reduce non-response error and increase response rates.

My second method of research was to look into what other cities have done with citizen attitude and opinion surveys. I did an internet search and found the USU Wellsville City Survey (<http://extension.usu.edu/files/surveys/1994/wellsv.htm>), and the City of Honeyville Utah Community Survey (<http://extension.usu.edu/files/surveys/1996/honeyvil.htm>). I spoke with Neil Ambercrombie, a policy analyst for the Utah League of Cities and Towns who gave me a copy of their "Services Survey 2007" (N. Ambercrombie, personal communications, November 12, 2007). I also found information on a series of three surveys conducted in the city of Ashland, Oregon (<http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=21>), and had personal correspondence with the lead staff person Ann Seltzer, who was very informative as to the reasons why the city of Ashland conducted the survey, lessons learned and suggestions for me in conducting a survey for Cedar City. The city of Ashland conducted its "Citizen Survey" in 1998, 2000, and 2003 as a "communication tool and a performance tool to track changes over the years" (A. Seltzer, personal communications, November 15, 2007). She recommended that before I begin the survey I get "buy-in" from the City Council and City Manager so that they would understand the science of statistics and would be open to any criticism that may be received (A. Seltzer,

personal communications, November 15, 2007). She also recommended that the city conduct “a ‘series’ of surveys because you can build each subsequent survey on the previous ones” (A. Seltzer, personal communications, November 20, 2007).

The examples of surveys found, and the advice I was given gave me samples to follow in the construction of a survey device. Fowler (1993) states that “taking advantage of the work others have done is very sensible” (p. 97), as long as you read their work in a critical way as to not repeat any mistakes they have made. I took from the research surveys those questions I felt most related to the information Cedar City wanted to receive from its residents.

### Survey Construction and Implementation

#### *First Meeting*

I asked Dr. Patricia Keehley, Director of the Masters of Public Administration program at SUU to accompany me to my first meeting with City Manager Chandler and the Mayor of Cedar City, Gerald Sherratt to discuss exactly what the city wanted to accomplish through this survey. Both Mayor Sherratt and City Manager Chandler agreed that the main aspect of the survey would be to inquire about the attitudes and opinions residents had regarding proposed recreation facilities as well as options to fund those facilities. The proposed facilities were a recreation center, new baseball fields, parks and green space, and walking and biking trails. The options for funding these facilities were to increase taxes, use impact fees, or use user fees.

Dr. Keehley and I felt strongly that since this was the city's first survey that they should not only inquire into these issues, but also inquire into the perceptions the residents had of the job the elected officials were doing at keeping them informed, as well as find out which sources the residents' used to get their information from the city. This would allow the city to focus its efforts and resources into the modes of communication that are most used. It would also allow for the city to start the benchmarking process. Benchmarking is described by the International Government Benchmarking Association as the learning process that focuses on "specific operating practices, compare measures and results, and identify improved processes within their organizations" (<http://www.igba.org>). This process includes data gathering from surveys of measures, processes and best practices, both internally within departments and externally (<http://www.igba.org>).

Mayor Sherratt and City Manager Chandler were interested and supportive of our ideas for a look into communication avenues and satisfaction with the elected officials. During that first meeting we established the path the survey would take and discussed potential methods of gathering the data. Mayor Sherratt was in favor of phone interviews while City Manager Chandler was in favor of mail surveys. Dr. Keehley and I were also both in favor of mail surveys for the structure and control that comes with them compared to phone interviews. Mail surveys also provide reduced costs and resources and a higher coverage rate. We agree with the literature that with mail surveys you have no control over what happens to the survey once you mail it out and

that people are less likely to respond than with other methods (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 37) but realized that with the limited resources of the city in terms of money and personnel, mail surveys would be the best option if proper detail was paid to the construction and wording of the survey to boost response rates.

Finances turned out to be the biggest factor in the decision making process. Along with being a key factor in choosing to go with mail surveys, it also played a role in the survey only being one page in length and being mailed out with the utility bill. This would save the city money on postage as well as use an existing mailing list of over 7000 residents. The limitations of this decision were realized at the onset, and will be discussed later.

The last detail of our first meeting was to establish a timeframe for the survey. City manager Chandler wanted the survey data to help support the finalization of the city's master plan, which was to be completed in April. We established a deadline to have the survey mailed out with the January utility bill, which would allow a month for residents to respond and a month for the data to be entered and a report compiled. The findings and report would then be presented to the city, as well as shared with the members of the Planning Commission.

This gave me roughly two months to research survey designs, research similar surveys that have been conducted previously in different cities, apply for IRB approval, conduct a focus group, and finalize the survey by the 28<sup>th</sup> of December to go to print.

### *Second Meeting*

Two weeks after the first meeting I went back to meet with Mayor Sherratt and City Manager Chandler. I had compiled a five page list of questions that I took to them to ask what was most important to them. Since we were going to use one sheet of paper double sided for the survey we had to narrow the questions asked. I had a possible twenty-four questions to use under four broad categories. The four categories were: Demographics, City Services, Communication, and Recreation and Funding. Together we narrowed down the questions, keeping the four categories, but removing the questions we did not want to ask. We ended up with a total of eight questions we wanted to ask for sure and then rated our next top ten questions that would be used in order of their rank based on space available.

### *Third Meeting*

One week later I met with Mayor Sherratt and City Manager Chandler with a final draft of the questions we agreed upon, in a format that took into account the TDM aspects of a professional appearance, short, concise and to the point questions that would not require much time from the respondent but also increases the salience to the respondent, hopefully to reduce the non-response error and increase the response rate. Mayor Sherratt and City Manager Chandler both approved of the draft.

*The Final Month of Preparation*

After I received approval from the city, I conducted a focus group to evaluate the survey instrument I had created. My goal was to get eight to twelve people randomly selected from the Cedar City phone book to attend the focus group. I secretly choose numbers out of a hat for my random selection method. I randomly chose to start with the letter "B" and chose from every other letter. I then selected to start two pages from the start of that letter, count down six people and then count down five from that entry to start calling. Every time there was no answer, or the person refused, I would continue to count down five listing for my next call. I received a member from the community from all of my 13 letters of the alphabet except for the last three letters of V, X, Z, due to a lack of pages and entries for a total of ten members of the focus group.

The focus group was held in the Sharwan Smith Center rotunda of Southern Utah University, a location that was hopefully familiar with residents and was a way to associate the study with the University for sponsorship and prestige to increase participation. I held two focus group sessions at 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm, in order to accommodate all participant's schedules. When the participants arrived, I briefly explained the purpose of the focus group again and asked them to fill out the survey, and then to write in any comments or problems they found with the wording, grammar, or to explain any confusion they experienced in filling out the survey.

I received feedback from the focus group, and beside the hardship of cold calling residents, found it to be invaluable to the construction of the survey. The participants

pointed out grammar mistakes, improper or confusing wording present and even suggested a follow up question that inquired about how responsive the city was to input given from the residents. I then made the corrections to the survey and received approval from Mayor Sherratt and City Manager Chandler for the new question and gave the survey to Larry Baker, the Public Relations Director, who sent the survey to the printers, who would include it with the utility bills (see Appendix A).

During the time of the focus group I applied for IRB approval and received final approval on December 29<sup>th</sup> 2007.

#### *Data Collection and Entry*

The survey was mailed out and received by residents the second week of January. Respondents either mailed the survey back with their utility bill, or they dropped it off in the utility payment drop off box at the city. A city employee separated the surveys. Beginning one week after the survey was mailed out, I revisited the city offices to collect the returned surveys. Upon collection I first: numbered the surveys and second: recorded the write-in answers and third: entered the data into SPSS. We stopped collecting the surveys one week after the utility payment was considered late. We mailed 7,510 surveys and 1,032 surveys were sent back for a response rate of just under 14 percent. The City and I felt good about the response rate and the research suggests that "mail surveys with response rates of 30 percent is rare. Response rates are often only about 5 or 10 percent" (Alreck & Settle, 1995, p. 35).



The time spent on data entry was one hour per 50 surveys, for a total of 20 hours of quantitative data analysis. I spent another 15 hours entering the write in answers respondents' provided as well as to analyze and group the responses into categories and I spent another five hours running my reports for a total of approximately forty hours of data entry.

### *Reporting the Findings*

I compiled the results of the survey into a bound document (see Appendix C) for the City Council, Mayor, and City Manager. Since this was a public document and was being presented at a public City Council meeting, I had two copies made for the press present at the meeting, as well as extra copies for any citizen that would want a copy of the report. I presented my findings at the April 19, 2008 City Council meeting. I was scheduled to be the first presenter at the meeting and prepared a 10 minute presentation with power point (see Appendix D) and allowed for roughly five minutes of questions.

In my presentation, I informed the Council of the background of the study, what the limitations were, the highlights of the findings and my recommendations. I emphasized to the Council that the report should be made available to the public, via the website as the City of Ashland. I also suggested the survey be used every two to three years in order to track how well the City is doing as an entity as well as to track the communication and perceptions of the public.

The Council had questions that I fielded well. I was asked about the limitations and how they might overcome those in the future, if an internet survey would help increase rates, as well as for clarification on some of the graphs, specifically regarding the recreation facilities and the breakdown in regards to age.

### Limitations

The limitations of this study suggest that the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of Cedar City due to two main issues. We only surveyed property owners in Cedar City and consciously chose not to include members of the community who lived in apartments, care facilities or University students. The second limitation of this study that does not allow it to be generalized to the entire population of Cedar City is that the results we received were from self-selected individuals. The survey was not mandatory and therefore the only incentive for someone to respond was if they felt strongly about one of the issues on the survey. Therefore our results were biased.

In the planning stages of the survey, we realized the limitations this study would have; however, we decided to proceed because the population we did select, property owners in Cedar City, was an easy and cost effective population to survey. This survey would provide the Planning Commission with valuable information of the attitudes and opinion of residents in Cedar City, even if the survey was not generalizable to the entire population.

Because of this decision we focused the attention on reducing non-response error and increase response rates. We gave a great deal of attention to the appearance of the survey, the questions asked, order of appearance, as well as to creating a sense of importance to the respondent. We knew that our results would not be generalizable, and to counter that we wanted to do what we could to get as many people to respond so that at least we would have a substantial set of data for the Planning Commission.

### Recommendations

For follow up surveys in Cedar City as well as for other researchers interested in conducting citizen attitude and opinion surveys I strongly recommend following the TDM method of survey construction and implementation. When you work with or for a public entity, there is usually not a treasure chest full of money to fund a project like this. Decisions will need to be made based on the amount of funding that is available, therefore following the TDM method allows a researcher to consider all aspects of sampling, coverage and non-response error. Through close attention to detail, the researcher can do as much as they can to reduce those sources of error.

Specific to this particular survey and in my presentation and recommendation to the City Council of Cedar City, I suggested that the city consider sending two surveys to each household as a way to reduce coverage error and include more residents of Cedar City. My second suggestion was to allow residents to complete an online version of the

survey. This would allow for residents who do not own property to participate as well as for those who pay their utility bill online.

One drawback to an online survey is cost. In this particular survey, we found that only three percent of respondents used the internet and City website to get the information about what is going on in the city and with the City Council. Resources may be scarce, and therefore hard to justify investing money into an online survey when such a small percentage of the residents use the internet, but with proper advertising of the survey, through media specific outlets that are utilized by residents (as found in this survey), response rates should increase.

My final recommendation is that Cedar City, as well as other cities utilize public attitude and opinion surveys as a form of representative democracy. Surveys give a voice to residents in a local or state government that might not normally participate in government. Another benefit of conducting surveys on a regular interval is that the city administration can use the information gathered as a way to address positive job performances and identify areas or departments that are lacking in performance or need improvement. John Bryson (2003) states that strategic planning "is concerned with identifying and responding to the most fundamental issues facing an organization" (p. 38), and in the case when a city administration is the organization, public concerns should be fundamental issues that surveys can identify. Rick Ponting and Linda Henderson (2005) point out that:

Regardless of whether or not politicians are inclined to use empirical research when setting broad policy directions, program designers in government need empirical research. At the level of program design and delivery, ideology and political expediency are insufficient foundations for sound decision-making.

Evidence-based-policy-making and program design is the ideal. (p.10)

The Cedar City *Citizens' Attitude and Opinion Survey 2008* provide decision and policy makers with the evidence that is needed to base their decisions on current issues facing the city, but is set up in a way to be adaptable for future changes.

### Impressions

This survey provided me with an invaluable experience into the world of survey work. I have gained the knowledge needed in constructing a survey that is workable as well as readable to decrease non-response error through the proper construction, formatting, wording and word sequence. I have also learned how important salience is in increasing response rates. I have learned the importance of conducting a focus group as a pilot study as well as to gather information and recommendations for clarification, and then being flexible enough to apply that information and adapt the survey if need be. I have reinforced my knowledge of coding, entering and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data, and the technique of running reports in order to translate the hard data into a meaningful and readable form. I have also put my education to use through report writing and presentations that were given to a

government entity, an area that will be the focus of my career aspirations. To sum up this experience I can say is that it has increased my efficacy in knowing that I will be able to take on a challenge like this at any time in the future, which is exactly what I needed.

Things I have learned from this experience go against what the literature suggests while at the same time also supports it. The literature suggests that demographic questions should be asked at the end of the survey. The rationale to this is that if the respondent does not want to give personal responses to demographic questions and they stop at that point, you have at least captured all of the previous information from them. I chose to ask the demographic questions first because I did not ask any personal demographic questions such as educational attainment, household income or race. It was my hope that by not asking personal demographic questions and openly state that in the beginning, it would reduce the threat respondents face with filling out a survey and would hopefully increase the number of respondents. Next, the literature suggests that the most important issues, the ones that create salience, should be placed in the beginning of the survey to convey what the survey is about as well as create an interest in completing the survey. I chose to place the most important issues at the end of the survey because I felt that if I started off with the questions on the recreation facilities, respondents would stop after that and not continue to the communication aspect of the survey.

Overall, I think my survey construction was successful in that by starting with non-threatening demographic questions, the respondent could freely answer the

questions. The introduction of the survey mentioned that a major component of the survey had to do with recreation facilities, which I felt would create salience for them, and since the first questions were non-threatening, it would facilitate them to complete the entire survey.

The other major lesson I learned had to do with coverage error. Based on our decisions to use the utility bill mailing list as our survey population, the major limitation of this survey was that it did not reach all residents of Cedar City, nor was it a random sample. Doing survey work for a government entity will most likely reproduce similar situations where cost is a major issue, and therefore similar methods may be required to use. In the future, under these conditions, I would add a second survey to each utility bill to hopefully gather information from both heads of the household, which is a way to reduce coverage error. Another method to reduce coverage error would be to also administer the survey online. This would enable people who do not own property the opportunity to complete the survey. This will increase the cost of the survey, but will reduce coverage error and has the potential to generate more data from the residents.

Even with the limitation of this survey and the lessons learned, I feel that the survey was a success and that Cedar City has received valuable information that they will be able to use for planning and benchmarking purposes. Since my presentation to them, they have taken my advice in putting the results and report of the survey online for all residents to see and comment. They have also looked at some of the surprising statistics, specifically the low rate of internet usage by the residents, and have

undertaken a project to revamp the city's website, and ways to advertise and let the residents know what benefits and features their website provides. City Manager Chandler was very thankful for the survey and the results found, and has already incorporated them into the decisions and future planning of the city, which to me, equals a success.



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## APPENDIX A

### Final Draft of Survey

### Residents of Cedar City:

We ask that you take a moment to fill out this short survey for the city. It is completely voluntary and you may skip any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also discontinue the study at any time without penalty; however it would help us tremendously if you would take the time to fill it out. We are gathering information from our residents about life in Cedar City, satisfaction with Cedar City's government, the best way to inform residents, as well as to get feedback on proposed recreation facilities. This information will be used in the finalization of the city's Master Plan, as well as by the city for the best ways to inform the citizens and gather information from them in the future. We also would like to give you the opportunity to write in any additional comments you would like, or feel necessary. Please answer the questions honestly. You may return the survey in the envelope along with your bill, or drop it off separately at the city offices. The surveys will be separated at the offices from the bills, and will remain anonymous; in no way will the respondents be associated with the survey by name or address if you chose to send in the survey with your bill.

Thank you

<b>Gender:</b>		<b>Do you own or rent your residence?</b>	
Male	_____	Own (buying)	_____
Female	_____	Rent	_____
		Other	_____
<b>Age category:</b>		<b>Length of residence in Cedar City:</b>	
18-25	_____	Less than 2 years	_____
26-35	_____	2 – 5 years	_____
36-45	_____	5 – 10 years	_____
46-55	_____	More than 10 years	_____
56-65	_____		
Over	_____		

### How would you rate the following conditions in Cedar City?

	EXCE- LLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW
-Communication between elected officials and citizens	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-Citizen involvement in city affairs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-Youth activities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-Opportunities to participate in cultural activities such as music, drama, art	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-Facilities and activities available for senior citizens	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
-Overall quality of life	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

### What do you like best about living in Cedar City

[PLEASE RANK FROM MOST TO LEAST IMPORTANT WITH 1 BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT AND 7 BEING THE LEAST IMPORTANT]

Rural atmosphere	_____
Near family and friends	_____
Physical setting	_____
Low crime rates	_____
Clean environment (air, water, ground)	_____
Schools	_____
Other [Please list _____]	_____

**From which source do you get the most information about Cedar City? [PLEASE MARK ONLY ONE]**

Daily newspaper \_\_\_\_\_  
 Weekly newspaper \_\_\_\_\_  
 City newsletter \_\_\_\_\_  
 Internet/city website \_\_\_\_\_  
 Word of mouth \_\_\_\_\_  
 Friends and family \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other [Please list \_\_\_\_\_] \_\_\_\_\_  
 None \_\_\_\_\_

### How satisfied are with opportunities to give input to the city?

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Somewhat satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Neutral \_\_\_\_\_

Somewhat dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

No Answer/Don't give input \_\_\_\_\_

**How responsive do you feel the city is to your input?**

Very responsive \_\_\_\_\_

Somewhat responsive \_\_\_\_\_

Neutral \_\_\_\_\_

Somewhat unresponsive \_\_\_\_\_

Very unresponsive \_\_\_\_\_

No Answer/Don't give input \_\_\_\_\_

**City department(s) contacted in past 12 months**  
**[PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]**

City Recorder  
Finance  
Electric  
Public Works  
Economic Development  
Planning/Zoning  
Parks and Recreation  
Administration  
Other/Don't recall  
None

**Please rate the courteousness of the staff  
for that contact**  
**[1 =EXCELLENT, 2 = NEUTRAL, 3 =  
POOR]**

[illegible]

**How good of a job are the Cedar City elected officials doing at keeping you informed?**

Excellent	_____
Good	_____
Neutral	_____
Somewhat poor	_____
Poor	_____
Can't rate/Don't know	_____

**Which of the following recreation facilities would you like to see developed or expanded in Cedar City?**

**[PLEASE RANK IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE WITH 1 BEING MOST IMPORTANT AND 5 BEING THE LEAST IMPORTANT]**

Bicycle/walking paths/trails	_____
Parks/green space	_____
New baseball field	_____
Recreation Center	_____
Other [please list _____]	_____

**Would you support financing recreation facilities with a tax increase:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you support financing recreation facilities with impact fees:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you support financing recreation facilities with user fees:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you support financing recreation facilities with other methods:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 [please specify \_\_\_\_\_]

**Please list any additional comments or concerns you would like to add to this survey:**

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## APPENDIX B

Report given to City Council



## Introduction

Cedar City commissioned Southern Utah University to conduct the first *Citizens' Attitude and Opinion Survey* to serve the City Council and the Planning Commission in drafting the final version of the city's Master Plan. The survey begins the process benchmarking the job that the city is doing to meet the needs of its residents in terms of communication and satisfaction. This instrument can be carried over in future years to track and compare the attitudes of residents about the job the city is doing and it is also flexible enough to change certain aspects to meet the future needs of the changing city.

A total of 7510 surveys were mailed out in the January 2008 utility bill to all property owners in Cedar City. Residents were asked to either send back the completed survey with their utility payment or to drop it off at the city offices. A total of 1032 surveys were returned which equals a response rate of just under 15%

When reading these results one must keep in mind that even though there were significant results found in the survey, they cannot be completely generalized to the entire population of Cedar City. Only property owners were surveyed. This left out of the results the opinions and attitudes of residents in care facilities, apartments and University students. Also, only one survey was sent to each household, potentially reducing the amount of respondents to half of the actual property owners. This was done to save on costs and to aide in convenience. These results offer the Planning Commission and City Council important insights regarding the residents' desire for recreation facilities and how they should be funded, as well as good insights into communication efforts between the city and its residents.

## Objectives

The overall objective of this survey was to gauge the wants and desires residents' had regarding new recreation facilities in Cedar City, as well as determining different funding options for the facilities. Another focus of this survey was to gauge residents' attitudes and opinions relating to communication between the city and the residents' and the overall quality of life in Cedar City. This portion of the survey can be used in future surveys to gauge how well the city is doing over a period of time and in any benchmarking that the city may want to do. The objectives are as follows:

- Provide the Planning Commission with data to aide in the finalization of the city's Master Plan.
- Gather information on the type of recreation facilities residents would like.
- Inquire about how residents want to fund new recreation facilities.
  
- Provide information to the City Council, Mayor and City Manager relative to residents' attitudes and opinions in regards to communication efforts.
- Gather information on how most residents get their information from the city.
- Gauge how satisfied residents are in giving input to City Council.
- Gauge the residents' opinions on how well their input is received and what the response is.
  
- Gather information on the quality of life in Cedar City
- Gather information on what aspects of life in Cedar City are most important
- Gauge residents opinions on the services provided
- Gather information on the quality of the city staff

## Highlights of Survey Findings

These bulleted items summarize the major findings of the survey. Following is a more detailed analysis of the findings.

- The survey is comprised of property owners in Cedar City that have primarily (65.3%) resided here for over 10 years. Over half of the respondents were age 56+ (54.7%), and over half (56%) that responded were female.
- Rating the following conditions in Cedar City, respondents had an overall positive response to communication between elected officials and the citizens (60.8%); with citizen involvement in city affairs (61.9%); youth activities (63.4%); and activities for senior citizens (67.6%).
- Respondents had an overwhelmingly positive response for the opportunities to participate in cultural activities in Cedar City (92.3%), and the overall quality of life in Cedar City (91.7%).
- Residents' felt that the best attributes of living in Cedar City were: living near family and friends ranked first (33.0%), the rural atmosphere was second (22.5%), the physical setting was third (18.3%) and a clean environment was fourth (13.3%).
- Local schools were ranked last (3.6%) in what was best about living in Cedar City.
- Almost half (45.4%) of the respondents received their information about Cedar City from the local daily newspaper. The top three sources were the daily newspaper, weekly newspaper, and city newsletter (78.1%). Twelve percent of the respondents incorrectly marked this question by checking all three choices instead of the one choice requested.
- The Cedar City website (3.0%) was the least used by respondents.
- Over half of the respondents (52.1%) felt satisfied with opportunities to give input to the city, but dropped (45.9%) when asked about the responsiveness of the city to their input.
- A low percentage (18.1%) felt dissatisfied with opportunities to give input, and that number rose slightly (24.2%) towards the responsiveness of the city to input.
- In both questions of satisfaction to give input and responsiveness to that input, almost one third of the respondents (29.9%) felt neutral to both.
- More than half of the respondents (65.6%) had contacted the city in the last year. The Public Works department was the most contacted (32.0%) with Parks and Recreation (23.6%) and the City Administration (23.7%) departments getting contacted the second and third most.

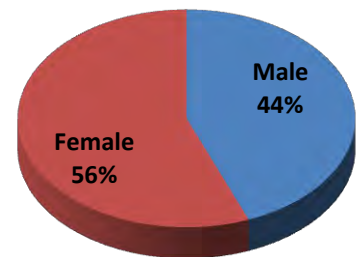
- As a follow up, residents' rated how courteous the staff was when they contacted the department and over half of the respondents gave them an excellent score. The highest percentages were the City Recorder (76.8%) and Parks and Recreation (72.2%) getting excellent marks.
- The overall performance the elected officials had done in keeping residents' informed was an above average rating of (56.8%), while only (15.0%) gave a below average rank.
- In response to which recreation facilities respondents wanted, a recreation center was ranked as the first choice at (39.9%), with trails and walking/bike paths as second (38.2%).
- Baseball fields ranked last (7.4%).
- The majority of respondents (64.8%) did not want a tax increase to finance recreation facilities. Overwhelmingly (75.5%) of respondents wanted to pay for the facility through user fees. The choice to use impact fees for financing these facilities was an almost even split with (52.4%) in favor of using them while (47.9%) were not in favor.

## The Sample: Demographics

The following is a profile of the demographics of the respondents of the survey.

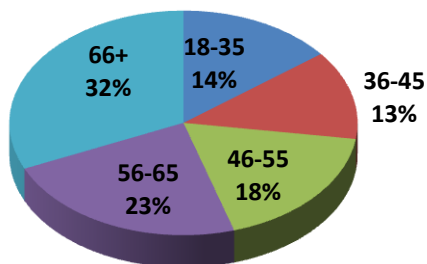
Females comprised 56% of the responses and males only 44%.

### Gender



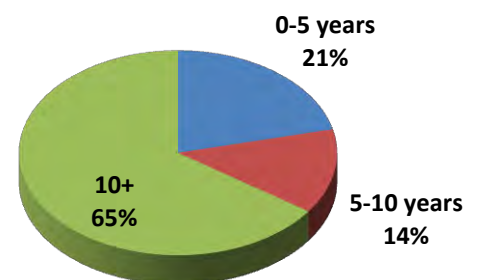
In terms of age, 18-25-year-olds made up 2% of the population. For the sake of the reports, we combined that age range with the 26-35-year-olds to create 18-35-year-olds, which made up 14.5% of the respondents. The remaining age breakdown was 36-45-year-olds made up 14%, 46-55-year-olds made up 18%, 56-65-year-olds made up 23% and the age group of 66 and above made up 32% of the population.

### Age



In terms of length of residence in Cedar City, 21.3% have lived here five years or less, 13.4% have lived here between five and ten years, and a majority 65.3% have lived in Cedar City ten years or longer.

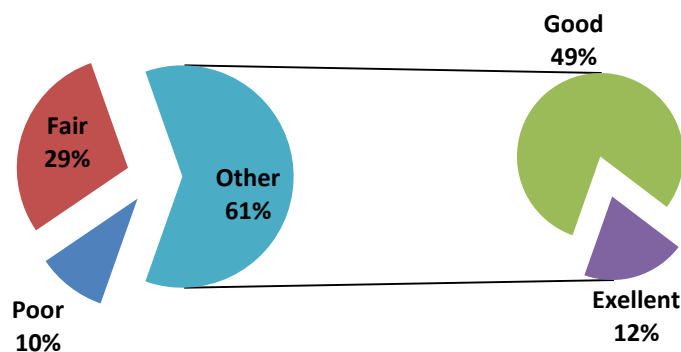
### Length of Residence



## Communication: Between and With Citizens and Elected Officials

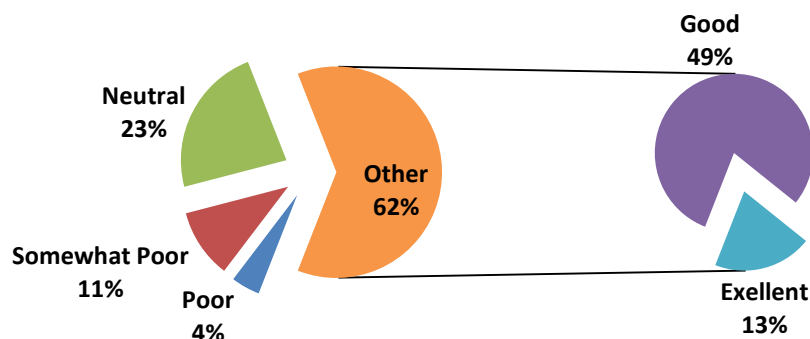
Regarding communication between the elected officials and citizens, 61% of respondents had a positive impression, with 12% rating communication as excellent and 49% rated communication as good.

### Communication Between Elected Officials and Citizens



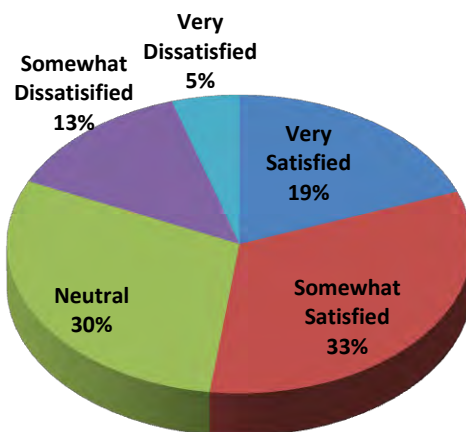
In terms of how well the City Council does at keeping the citizens informed similar results were found with 62% of the respondents had an overall positive rating for how well City Council members are doing with 13% saying they do an excellent job and 49% say they do a good job.

### How Well are the Elected Officials Doing at Keeping the Residents Informed

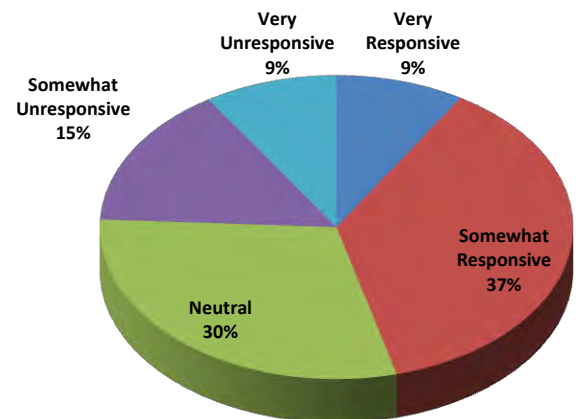


On the question that inquired about how satisfied residents' were with opportunities to give input to the City, 52.1% had an overall high level of satisfaction. As a follow up question, we asked how responsive they felt the City was to that input. The level of responsiveness dropped slightly but was still high at 45.9%. In both questions, almost 30% felt neutral in both cases.

### Level of Satisfaction with Opportunities to Give Input

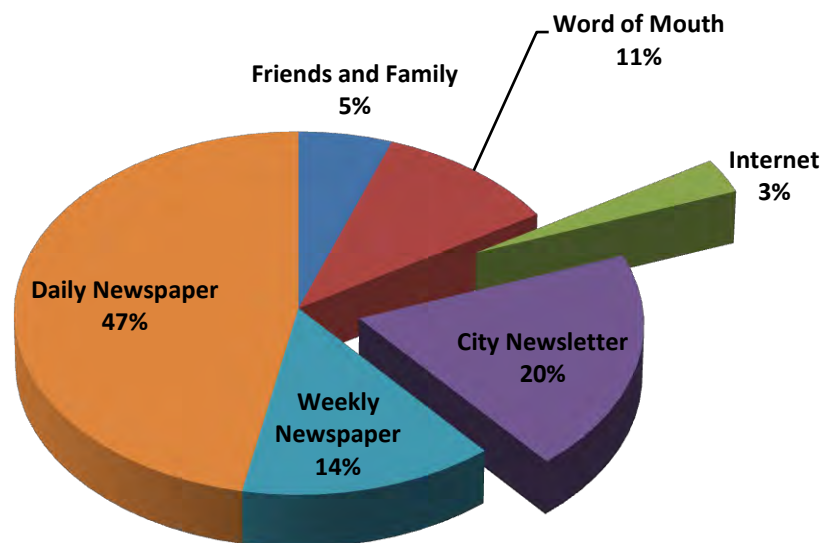


### How Responsive is the City to Input



The residents were also asked about what source is used to get information about the city. The daily newspaper ranked highest at 47%, The Mayor's newsletter ranked second at 20%, and the weekly newspaper third at 14%; totaling 78.1%. Only 3.0% of the respondents used the City's website for information. Age did not play a factor in internet usage.

### What Sources are Used to Gather Information

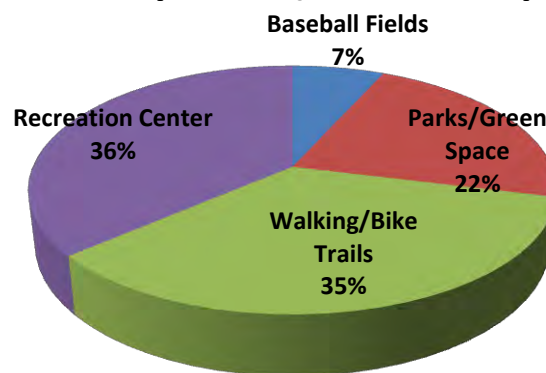




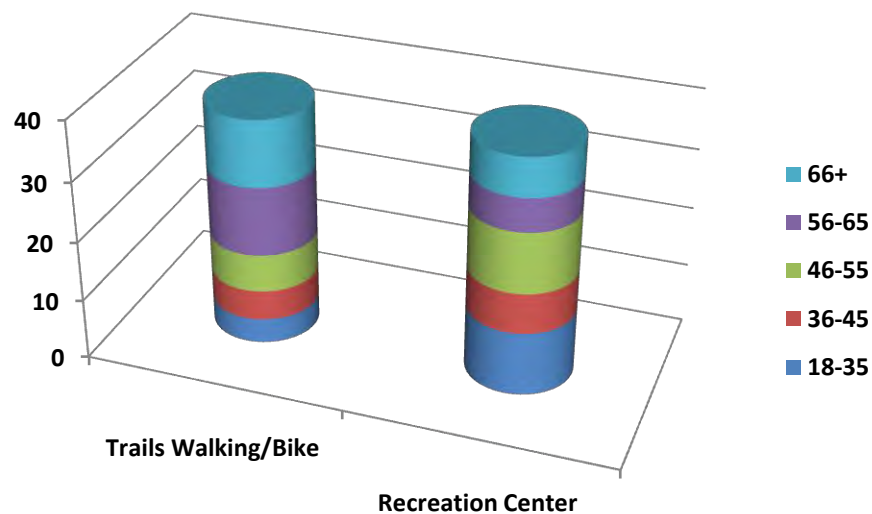
## Recreation Facilities and Funding

A recreation center received the highest response at 36% with the walking and bicycle trails getting the second highest response at 35%. Parks and green spaces were ranked third at 22%, and baseball fields ranked fourth with 7%.

### Recreation Options (as most important)

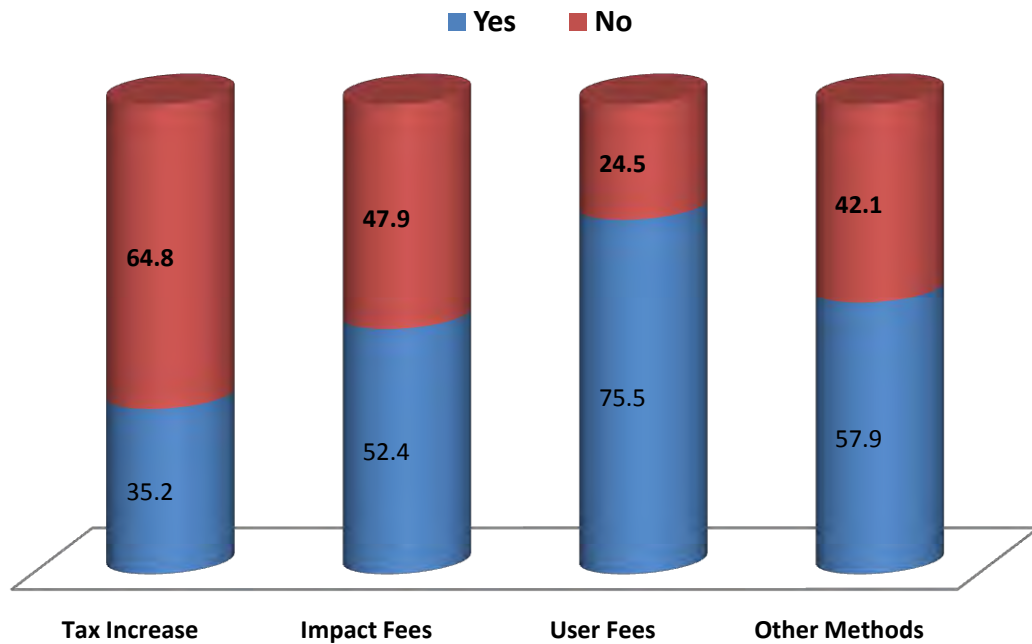


An interesting note is that when broken down by age, the age group of 18-55 supported the recreation center 70%, where the age group of 56 and above wanted more trails 59%.



Regarding financing of a recreation facility, 64.8% of respondents did not support a tax increase. The use of impact fees was nearly even with 52.4% supporting the use and 47.9% not supportive of using them to finance recreation facilities. Over three-quarters of the respondents 75.5% would support financing a recreation facility with user fees.

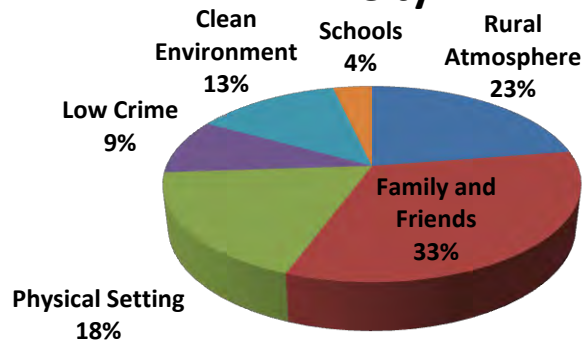
### How To Support Proposed Facilities



## Life in Cedar City

We asked residents to rank what they liked best about living in Cedar City. We found that living near family and friends was rated highest 33%, the rural atmosphere of Cedar City was second at 23%, and the physical setting was third 18%. The schools in Cedar City ranked last on the list 4%.

### What is Best About Living in Cedar City



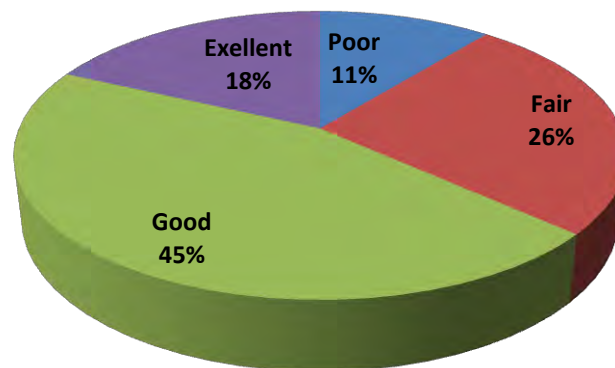
We then asked about citizen's ability to get involved in city affairs and found that 61.9% rated their ability to get involved positively, and only 8% saying that the opportunity for involvement was poor.

### Citizen Involvement in City Affairs



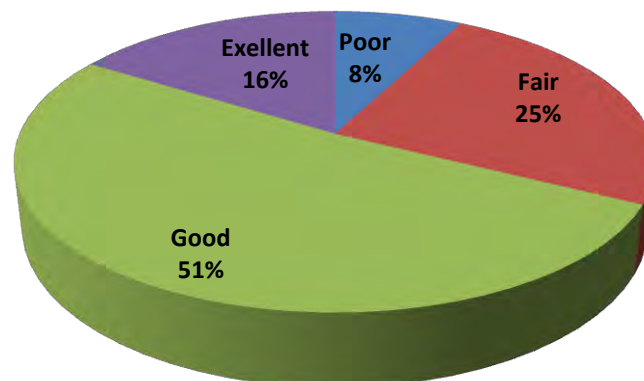
Youth activities received an overall positive response of 63.4%, with 18.1% rating youth activities as excellent.

### Youth Activities



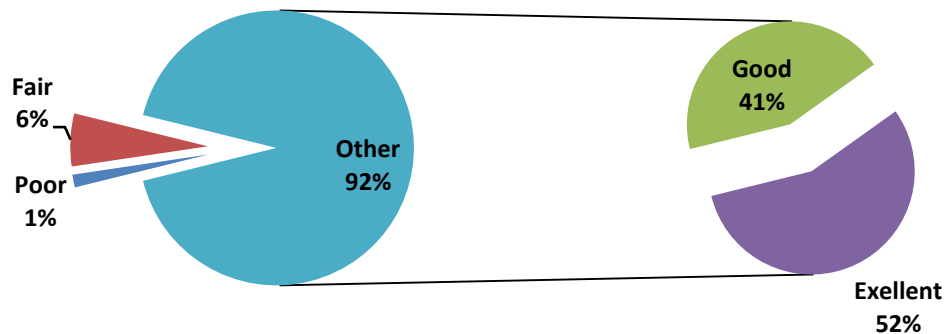
Similar results were found when asked about facilities and activities for senior citizens. There was an overall positive response 67.6%, with 16.2% rating them as excellent.

### Facilities and Activities for Senior Citizens



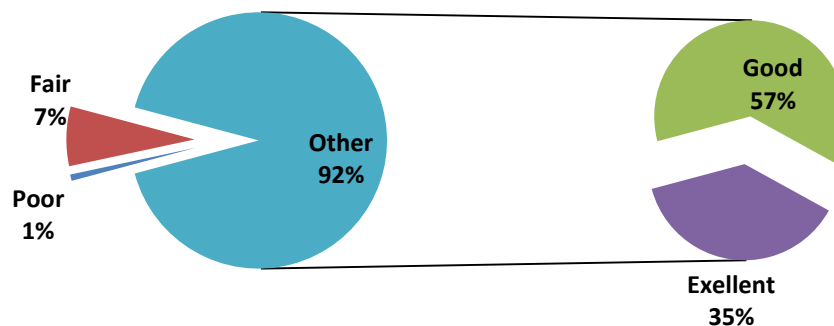
Two of the responses stood out as being extremely positive. We asked about the opportunity to participate in cultural events, such as music, drama or art events, there was an overwhelmingly positive response 92.3%, with 51.7% responding that the opportunities were excellent, and only 1% saying they were poor.

### Opportunities to Participate in Cultural Affairs



The same results were found when we asked respondents to rate the overall quality of life in Cedar City. There was an overwhelming positive response 91.7%, and less than 1% responded that the quality of life in Cedar City was poor.

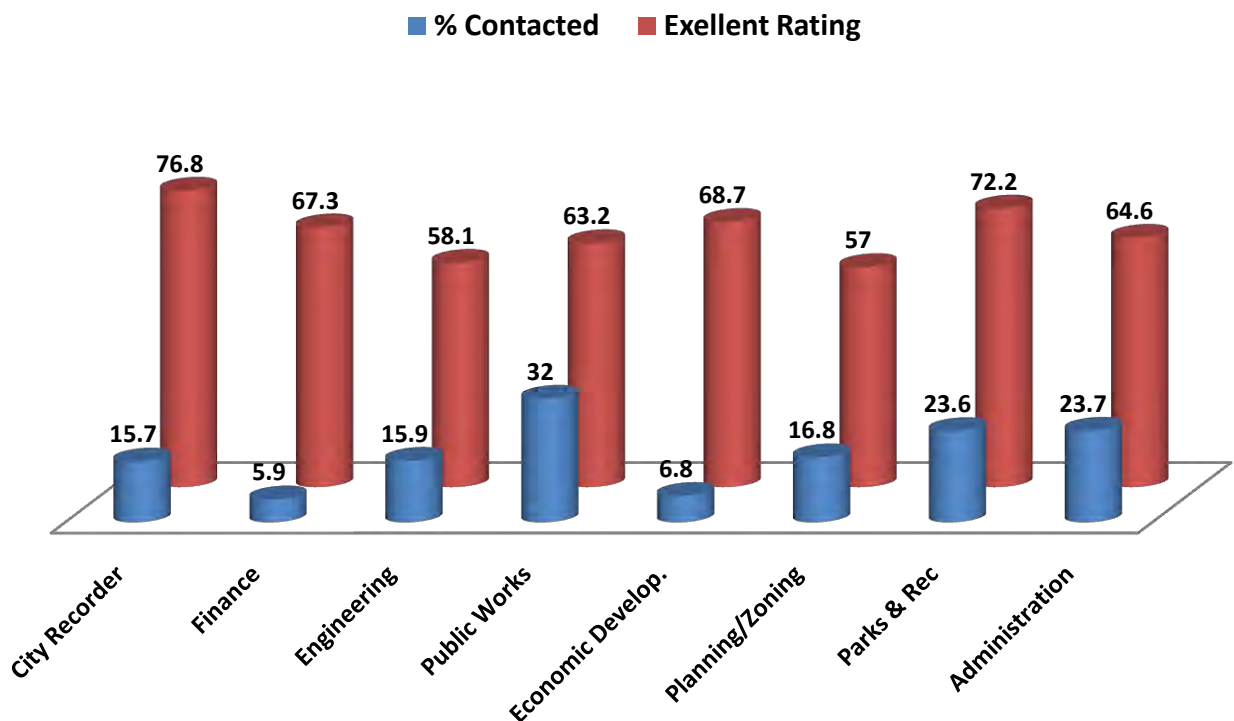
### Overall Quality of Life



## City Departments Contacted and Courteousness of Staff

In response to the question regarding the departments contacted by the residents, and the courteousness of that contact, we found that 65.6% of the respondents had contacted the city in the past year. The most contacted departments were the Public Works Department 32%, the City Administration 23.7%, and the Parks and Recreation Department 23.6%.

All of the departments had been rated as courteous more than half of the time. Some of the highlights came from the City Recorder Department 76.8% and the Parks and Recreation Department 72.2%.



## Recommendations

Conducting this survey is the first step toward getting the residents of Cedar City involved in the decision making process, but this cannot be the last step. The results of this survey should be reported or made visible to city residents. This will show that their voice has been heard, that elected officials are paying attention to what they have to say, and will strengthen the principles of democracy in local government. Another affect of reporting the results is that local residents will see how easy it is to get involved in local government that in future surveys, you may see a raise in the question on the level of satisfaction to give input as well as the responsiveness level should go up as well.

This should not be the last survey conducted by Cedar City. This is a very easy, inexpensive and effective way to get local residents to participate in local government. It is also a way for the city to gauge it performance and get an overall appraisal from the residents' perspective over the years. This survey was designed to be used multiple times, focusing on communication factors and conditions in Cedar City. This survey was also written to be flexible to meet the changing needs of the city for future use. By simply changing the questions on the recreation center and funding options, while leaving the rest of the questions in place:

- The city can benchmark its performance in communicating with residents.
- It can track the best attributes of life in Cedar City from year to year.
- The city can add in any question that they want the residents opinions on depending on the times and how Cedar City changes.

The key to conducting a survey like this is to let the residents know that their time was not wasted, that their voice is heard and that the city will take into account their opinions when making decisions. It is also a key element that the city act on the feedback given. Without this, there will be limited success in doing a survey like this in the future.

## Appendix



The **RED** percentages represent the actual percentages out of the 1032 respondents that returned the survey

The **BLUE** percentages represent the valid percentage of respondents that answered that particular question, and answered it properly

**Gender:**

Male	39.7%	44.0%
Female	50.5%	56.0%

**Do you own or rent your residence?**

Own (buying)	93.0%	96.8%
Rent	2.1%	2.2%
Other	1.0%	1.0%

**Age category:**

18-25	2.0%	
26-35	12.0%	14.5% (18-35)
36-45	12.4%	12.8%
46-55	17.3%	18.0%
56-65	22.2%	23.0%
Over	30.6%	31.7%

**Length of residence in Cedar City:**

Less than 2 years	4.7%	21.3% (0-5)
2 – 5 years	15.3%	13.4% (0-5)
5 – 10 years	12.6%	65.3% (10+)
More than 10 years	61.3%	

**How would you rate the following conditions in Cedar City?**

	EXC		GOOD		FAIR		POOR	
a. Communication between elected officials and citizens	10.7%	12.2%	42.3%	48.6%	25.4%	29.1%	8.8%	10.1%
b. Citizen involvement in city affairs	10.7%	12.6%	41.9%	49.3%	25.3%	29.8%	7.1%	8.3%
c. Youth activities	14.0%	18.1%	34.9%	45.3%	19.8%	25.7%	8.4%	10.9%
d. Opportunities to participate in cultural activities such as music, drama, art	46.1%	51.7%	36.2%	40.6%	5.5%	6.2%	1.4%	1.5%
e. Facilities and activities available for senior citizens	10.7%	16.2%	33.8%	51.4%	16.3%	24.7%	5.0%	7.7%
f. Overall quality of life	32.9%	34.7%	52.1%	57.0%	7.1%	7.5%	0.8%	0.8%

**What do you like best about living in Cedar City [PLEASE RANK FROM MOST TO LEAST IMPORTANT]**

Percentages given were the "most important" response

a. Rural atmosphere	15.1%	22.5%
b. Near family and friends	22.1%	33.0%
c. Physical setting	12.3%	18.3%
d. Low crime rates	6.1%	9.1%
e. Clean environment (air, water, ground)	9.0%	13.3%
f. Schools	2.3%	3.6%
g. Other (Please list _____)	3.9%	20.4%

**From which source do you get the most information about Cedar City?**

Daily newspaper	39.0%	45.4%	
Weekly newspaper	11.7%	13.7%	
City newsletter	16.3%	19.0%	
Internet/city website	2.6%	3.0%	
Word of mouth	8.9%	10.4%	
Friends and family	4.6%	5.3%	
Other [Please list _____]	2.8%	3.3%	
None	1.9%		

\*12.2% improperly marked answers 1, 2 and 3

**Level of satisfaction with opportunities to give input**

Very satisfied	16.4%	19.3%
Somewhat satisfied	27.8%	32.8%
Neutral	25.4%	29.9%
Somewhat dissatisfied	11.3%	13.4%
Very dissatisfied	4.0%	4.7%
No Answer/Didn't give input	4.8%	

**How Responsive do you feel the city is to your input**

Very responsive	7.0%	8.8%
Somewhat responsive	29.5%	37.1%
Neutral	23.7%	29.9%
Somewhat unresponsive	12.0%	15.1%
Very unresponsive	7.3%	9.1%
No Answer/ Didn't give input	20.3%	

**City department(s) contacted in past 12 months (please check all that apply)****Courteousness of City Staff**

Percentages are of those that did contact the department

Percentages of Excellent responses

City Recorder	15.7%	76.8%
Finance	5.9%	67.3%
Engineering	15.9%	58.1%
Public Works	32.0%	63.2%
Economic Development	6.8%	68.7%
Planning/Zoning	16.8%	57.0%
Parks and Recreation	23.6%	72.2%
Administration	23.7%	64.6%
Other/Don't recall	8.3% (Mostly the Police Department)	55.4%

Total percent contacted

65.6% have contacted the city in the past 12 months

**How good of a job is the Cedar City elected officials doing keeping you informed?**

Excellent	11.2%	12.5%
Good	44.3%	49.4%
Neutral	20.7%	23.1%
Somewhat poor	9.5%	10.6%
Poor	4.0%	4.4%
Can't rate/Don't know	7.9%	

**Which of the following recreation facilities would you like to see developed or expanded in Cedar City? (Please rank in order of importance to you)**

Percentages given were the "most important" response

Bicycle/walking paths/trails	25.7%	38.2%
Parks/green space	15.7%	24.3%
New baseball field	4.4%	7.4%
Recreation Center	25.8%	39.9%
Other (please list _____)	7.5%	

**Would support financing recreation facilities with a tax increase:** Yes 27.1% 35.2% No 50.0% 64.8%

**Would support financing recreation facilities with impact fees:** Yes 37.9% 52.4% No 34.8% 47.9%

**Would support financing recreation facilities with user fees:** Yes 60.2% 75.5% No 19.8% 24.5%

**Would support financing recreation facilities with other methods:** Yes 29.3% 57.9% No 21.3% 42.1%

(please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

**Please list any additional comments or concerns you would like to add to this survey:**

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The Question "What people like best about living in Cedar City" yielded these write in responses.

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### Summary of 187 write-in answers

- 31-Cultural opportunities to include Art, Music, Theater (USF and Neil Simon), Parades
- 20-People: Friendly, Neighbors, Co-workers, Helpful
- 19-Southern Utah University
- 13- Seasons/Climate
- 13-Outdoor Recreation: Hiking, Biking, Trails
- 13-Location: In Proximity to Larger Cities and to Mountains and National Parks
- 12-Good Place to Live: Quality of Life, Heritage
- 12-Jobs: Opportunity, Availability, Short Commute
- 7-Cost of Living
- 7-LDS Community/Church
- 5-Shopping

The question "Which source residents get their information about the city from" yielded these write in responses.

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### Summary of 56 write-in answers

15-Radio

9-Mayors Newsletter

8-Cedar City Review

5- T.V./Fox Evening News/ Sunrise St. George Channel 6

4-Involvement

3-Newspaper Gets Information Out After Event

The question "What other recreation option would you like to see" yielded these write in responses.

---

## Summary of 215 write in answers

52-Swimming Pool

27-Nothing: We Have Enough, Keep Taxes Low, Don't Assume Everyone Enjoys Outdoor Recreation, We Have Enough Ball Fields, Anything But a Baseball Field or Recreation Center

16-More Shopping: Restaurants, Clothing

16-Golf Course

9-Indoor Facilities: Tennis, Track, Soccer, Fitness

9-Ice Skating Rink

9-Youth Activities

7-Fishing Pond for Kids

6-Roller Skating Rink

5-Racetrack/Motor-Cross Track

5-Don't Develop Canyon

5-Facility for Music, Arts, Crafts

The question "What other funding alternatives would you suggest" yielded these write in responses.

---

### Summary of 160 write in answers

28-Donations: Corporate, Business, Private

26-Grants: Federal, State, Matching, Rural

22-Fundraising

16-Bonds: Municipal

10-User Fee/Pay As You Go/Membership

10-RAP Tax

10-General Fund/Current Budget/Re-Allocation of Funds/Better Use of Funds

11-No Taxes: Already Raised Impact Fees, If We Don't Have the Money, Don't Do It

8-Raise Taxes: Sales Tax, Church, Fuel/Utility Tax, Out of State Tax, Temporary Tax, Reasonable Tax Increase, Even Tax for Property Owners and Renters

## Appendix C

### Power Point Presentation





# Citizens' Attitude and Opinion Survey

2008

In January of 2008, 7510 surveys  
were mailed out to property  
owners in Cedar City

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The questionnaire asked residents  
about:

- Communication between Elected  
Officials and residents
- Which sources residents gathered  
their information about city affairs
- The Quality of life in Cedar City
- Types of recreation facilities the  
residents wanted
- Ways to fund those facilities

The information is to be used by  
City Council, The Mayor, City  
Manager and The Planning  
Commission to gauge  
performance's and supplement the  
City's Master Plan

# THE SAMPLE

A total of 7510 surveys were mailed out, with 1032 of them being completed, for a return rate of just under 15%

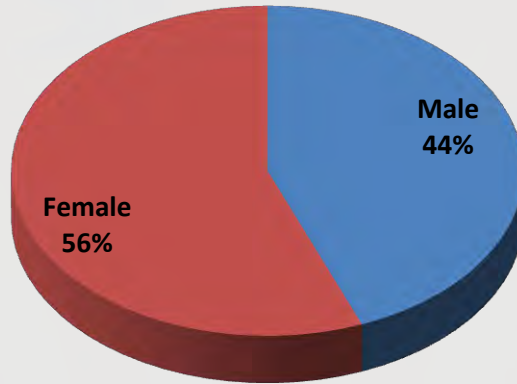
These results, while significant, cannot be generalized to the entire population of Cedar City:

- We only sampled property owners
- The respondents' were self-selected
- No attempt was made to gather information from residents living in apartments, care facilities or from college students

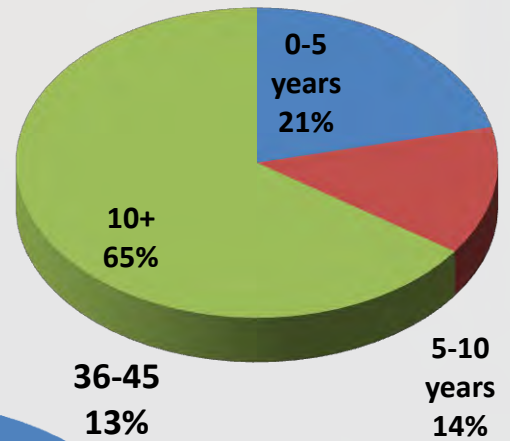
Even though these results cannot be generalized to the entire population of Cedar City, the sample size is very large and therefore can offer good insights

# D E M O G R A P H I C S

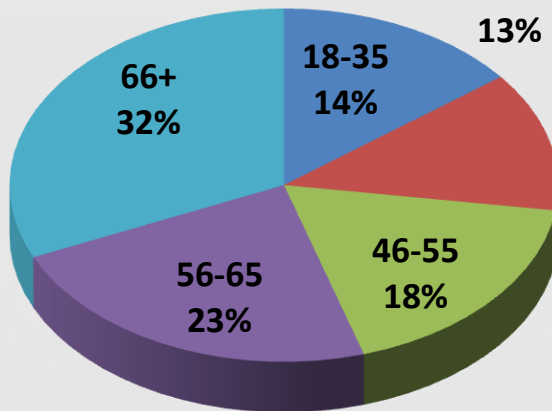
**Gender**



**Length of Residence**

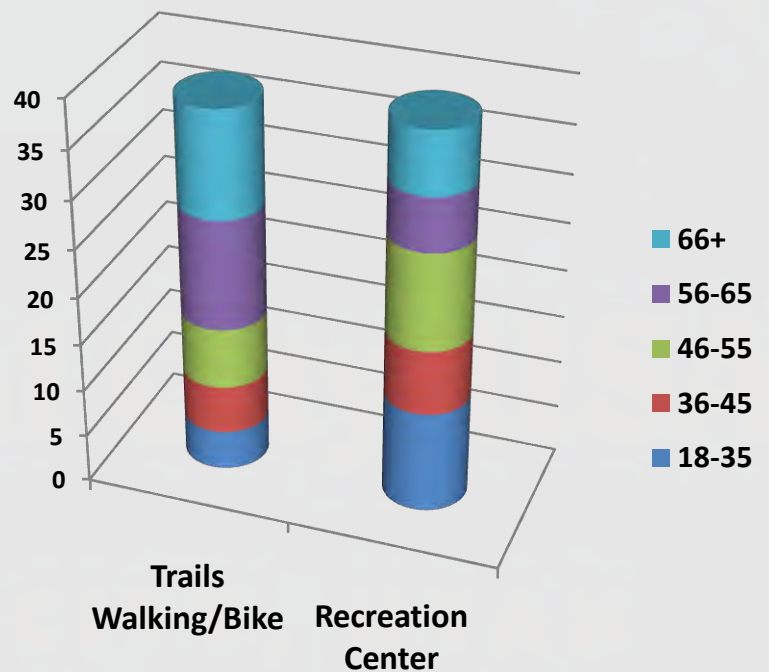
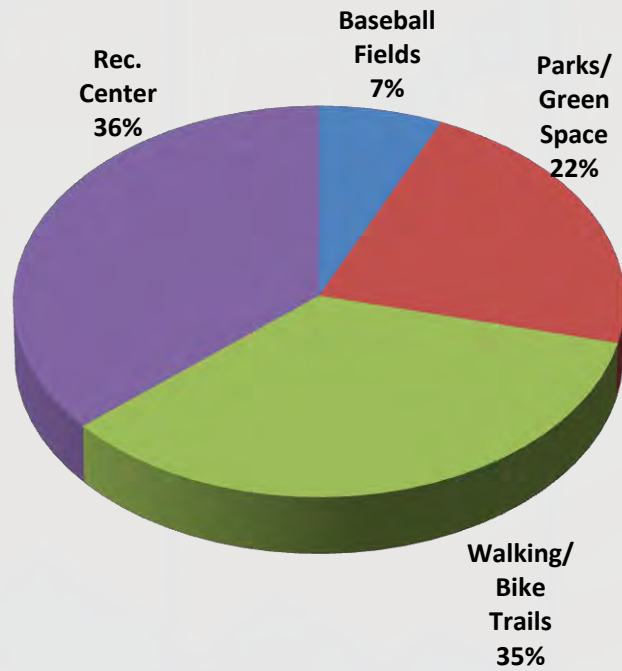


**Age**



# RECREATION

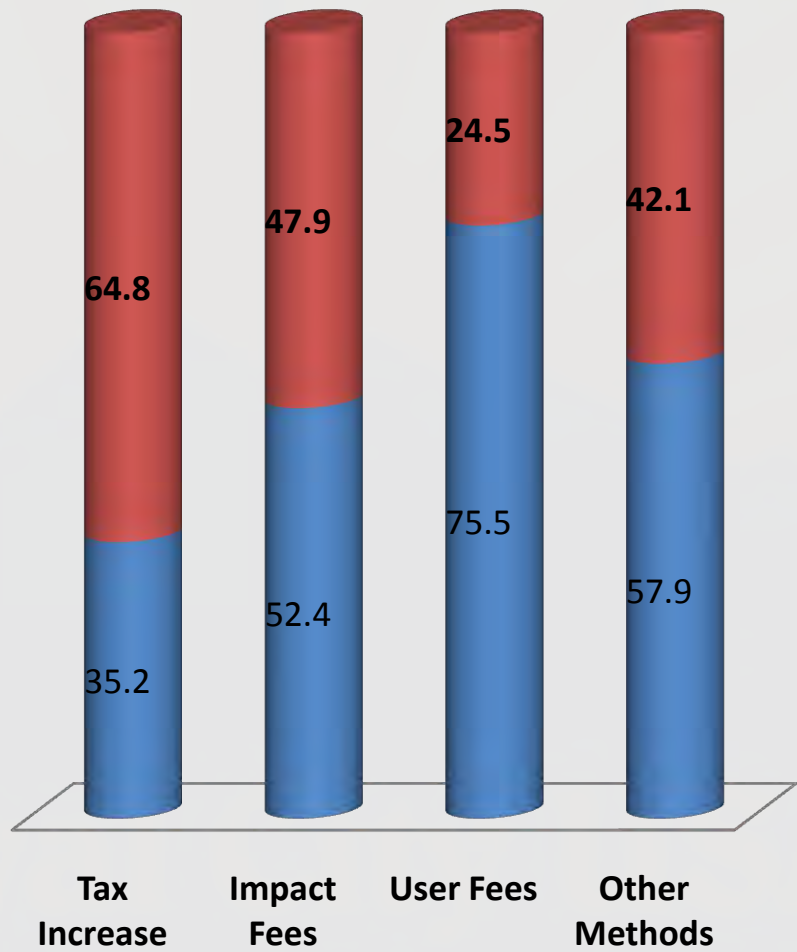
## Recreation Options (as most important)



FUNDING

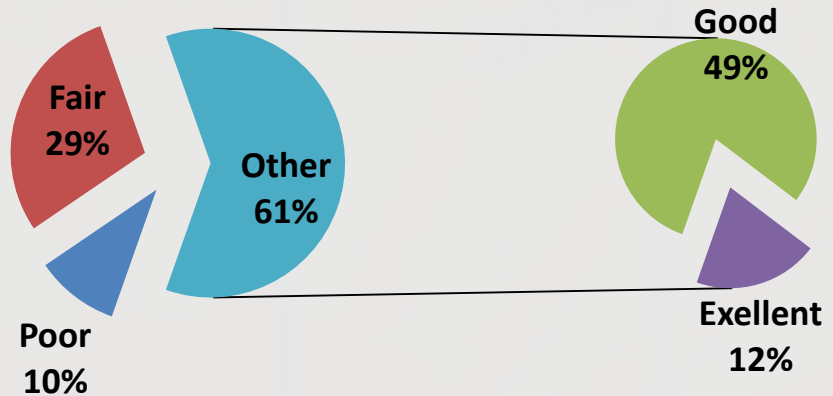
### How To Support Proposed Facilities

■ Yes ■ No

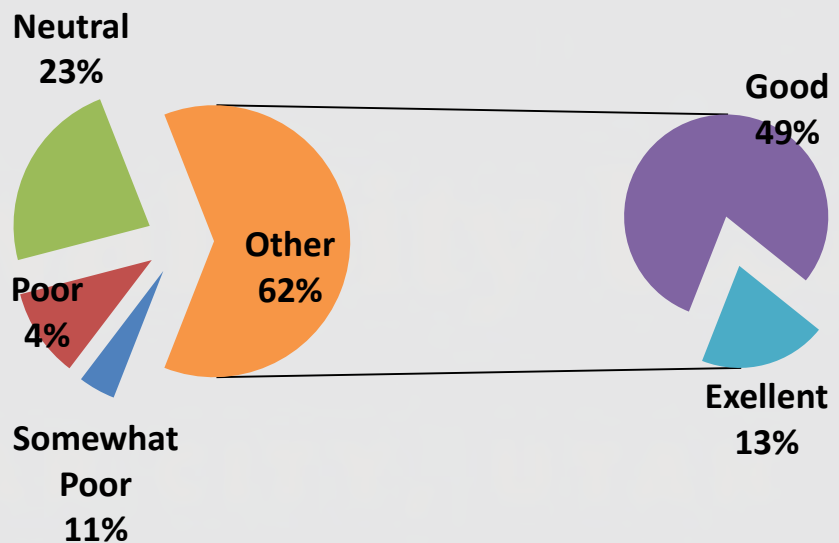


# C O M M U N I C A T I O N

## Communication Between Elected Officials and Citizens

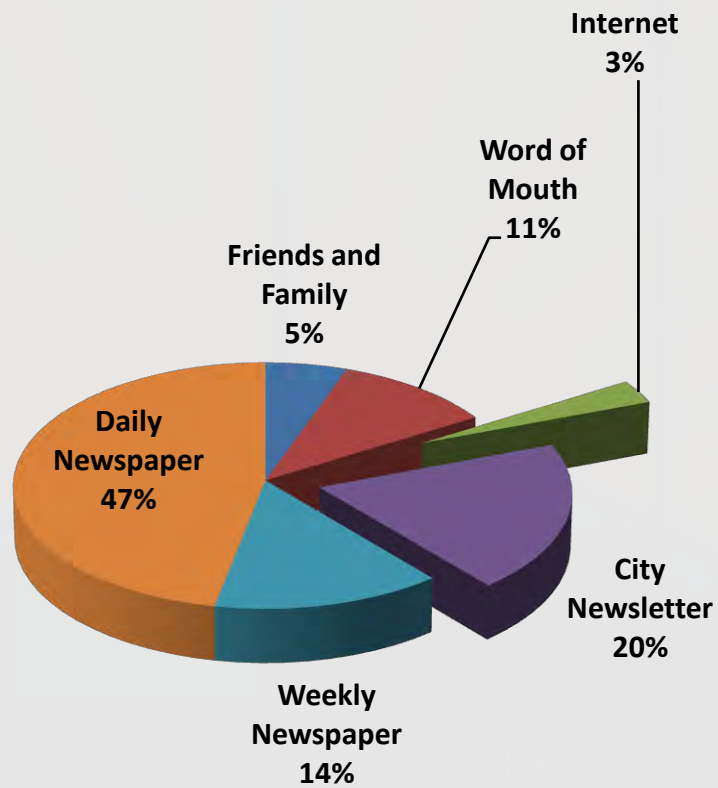


## How Well are the Elected Officials Doing at Keeping the Residents Informed



## What Sources are Used to Gather Information

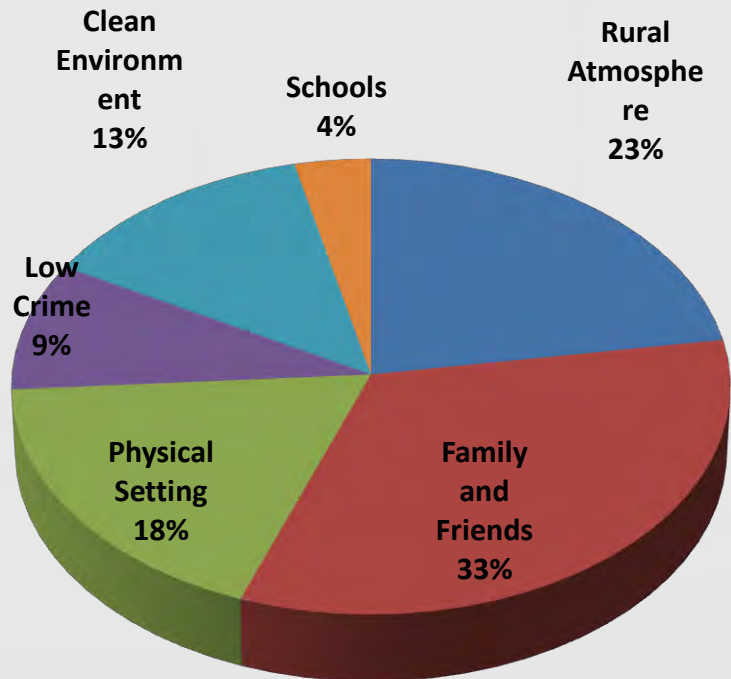
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# L I F E I N C E D A R C I T Y

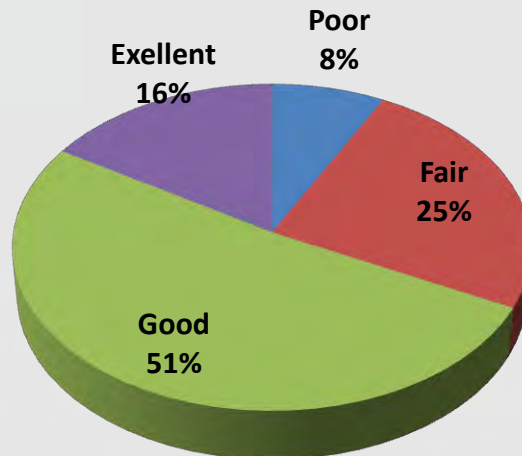
## What is Best About Living in Cedar City



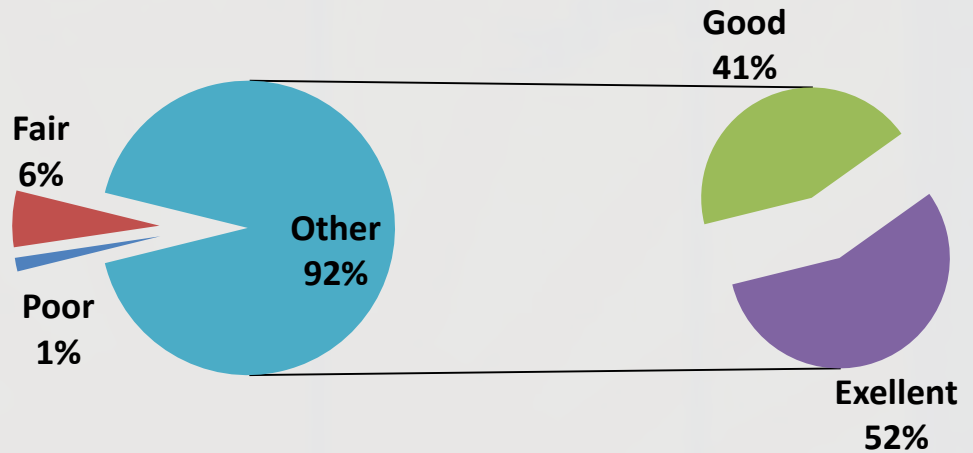
## Youth Activities



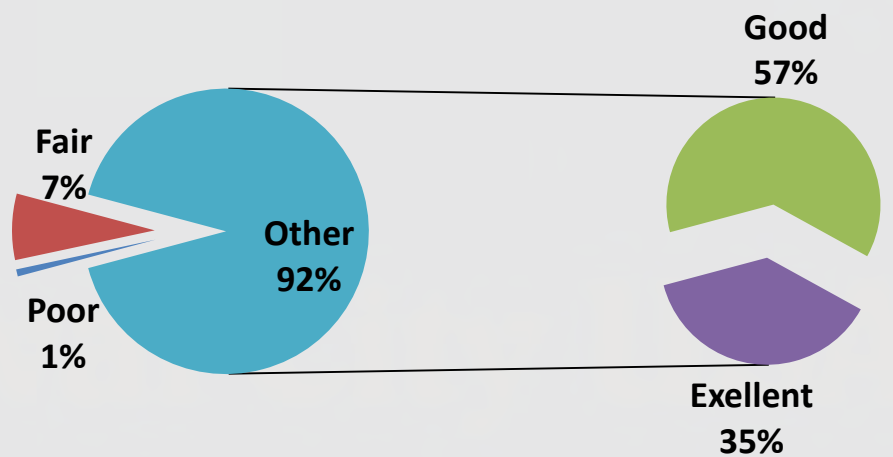
## Facilities and Activities for Senior Citizens



## Opportunities to Participate in Cultural Affairs



## Overall Quality of Life



# R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

## Don't Let This be the Last Survey:

- Use this information as a benchmark to gauge future performance
- Measure the strengths and weaknesses of the City Administration
- Use as a tool to see where improvements can be made when communicating with the residents
- Gives an alternative voice to the residents who cannot or do not know how else to get involved

## Publish or Report the Findings:

- This lets the citizens know their time was not wasted
- That their voice is heard
- Will help to improve future response rates
- Will get more residents involved in the process

## Act on the Feedback Given