

Decision  
Resources Ltd.

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2006 City of Golden Valley  
Residential Study

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Volume One:  
Frequencies and Analysis

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Decision Resources, Ltd.  
March 2007

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## Survey Overview

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Decision Resources, Ltd., is pleased to present the results of this study to the City of Golden Valley. This section provides a brief introduction to the specifications of the survey and a guide to the organization of the written analysis.

While the most statistically sound procedures have been used to collect and analyze the information presented herein, it must always be kept in mind that surveys are not predictions. They are designed to measure public opinion within identifiable limits of accuracy at *specific points in time*. This survey is in no way a prediction of opinions, perceptions, or actions at any future point in time. After all, in public policy analysis, the major task is to impact these revealed opinions in a constructive fashion.

The Principal Investigator for this study was Dr. William D. Morris; the Project Director overseeing all phases of the research and analysis was Mr. Peter Leatherman.

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## Research Design

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This study contains the results of a telephone survey of 400 randomly selected residents of the City of Golden Valley. Survey responses were gathered by professional interviewers across the community between November 27<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

The average interview took 27 minutes.

All respondents interviewed in this study were part of a randomly generated sample of the City of Golden Valley. In general, random samples such as this yield results projectable to their respective universe within  $\pm 5.0$  percent in 95 out of 100 cases.

Interviews were conducted by **Decision Resources, Ltd.**, trained personnel from telephone banks in St. Paul, Minnesota. Approximately twenty percent of all interviews were independently validated for procedure and content by a Decision Resources, Ltd., supervisor. Completed interviews were edited and coded at the company's headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Statistical analysis and cross-tabulations were produced by the company's CfMC Mentor Analysis System and SPSS 10.0 for Windows Statistical Package.

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## Organization of the Study

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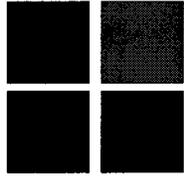
The results of this study are presented in the following order:

The *Analysis* consists of a written report of the major findings. The results contained herein were also presented verbally to the client.

The *Questionnaire* reproduces the survey instrument as it was used in the interviewing process. This section also includes a response frequency distribution for each question.

The *Graphics* section provides a visual representation of the data assembled in this survey analysis.

Any further questions the reader may have about this study which are not answered in this report should be directed to either Dr. Morris or Mr. Leatherman.



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**Analysis**

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# **Chapter One: Residential Demographics**

# Residential Demographics

City of Golden Valley residents were asked a series of questions about their demographic backgrounds. These questions were asked for two reasons: first, to validate this sample against updated 2000 U.S. Census findings; and, second, to track any differences between subgroups and the rest of the population. There were no statistically significant differences between the findings of this survey and the census data. And, throughout the course of this study, subgroup differences will be discussed.

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## Residential Longevity

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Respondents were asked:

*Approximately how many years have you lived in Golden Valley?*

The typical adult resident lived in the community for 14.8 years:

LESS THAN FIVE YEARS .....	20%
FIVE TO TEN YEARS .....	21%
TEN TO TWENTY YEARS .....	22%
20 TO 30 YEARS .....	12%
OVER THIRTY YEARS .....	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%

While 20% moved to Golden Valley during the past five years, 15% resided there for over 30 years.

“Less than five years” is reported more often by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

“Five to ten years” is cited more often by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government

“Ten to twenty years” is mentioned more frequently by:

- forty-five to sixty-four year olds

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

“Twenty-one to thirty years” is mentioned most frequently by:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“Over thirty years” is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- women
- over sixty-four year olds
- home owners

## **Residential Expectations**

Respondents were queried:

*As things now stand, how long in the future do you expect to live in Golden Valley?*

Seventy-four percent of the residents have no plans to move from the community during the next ten years:

LESS THAN TWO YEARS	2%
TWO TO FIVE YEARS	5%
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	10%
OVER TEN YEARS	26%
REST OF LIFE	48%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	9%

Two percent plan to move during the next two years, while another five percent expect to move during the next two-to-five years.

“Five to ten years” is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government

“Over ten years” is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for thirty years or less
- households with children
- men
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

“Rest of life” is stated more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners
- Precincts Five and Six residents

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## **Household Composition**

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Respondents were told:

*Could you please tell me how many people in each of the following age groups live in your household.*

A list of three age groups was then read:

### ***Persons 55 or over?***

Forty-six percent of the households in the community contain adults over 55 years old:

NONE	54%
ONE	16%
TWO OR MORE	30%

### ***Adults under 55?***

Thirty-nine percent of the households are composed exclusively of adults over 55 years old:

NONE	39%
ONE	11%
TWO	48%
THREE OR MORE	3%

### ***School-aged children and pre-schoolers?***

Thirty-three percent of the households in the city contain school-aged children and pre-schoolers:

NONE	67%
ONE	15%
TWO	15%
THREE OR MORE	3%

This percentage is much higher than other first-ring suburban communities.

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## Home Ownership

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Residents were queried:

*Do you own or rent your present residence?*

Eighty-two percent report owning their current residence:

OWN	82%
RENT	18%
REFUSED	0%

Eighteen percent are renters.

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## Age of Respondent

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Residents were queried:

*What is your age, please?*

The typical adult resident of Golden Valley was 54.3 years old:

18-24	4%
25-34	10%
35-44	24%
45-54	18%
55-64	18%
65 AND OVER	28%
REFUSED	0%

While 14% are under 35 years old, 28% post ages of 65 years old and above.

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## Household Occupation

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Respondents were asked:

*What is your occupation and, if applicable, the occupation of your spouse or partner?*

Upscale White Collar workers — Professional-Technical and Owner-Manager job holders — head 37% of the households in the community:

REFUSED .....	3%
PROFESSIONAL-TECHNICAL .....	24%
OWNER-MANAGER .....	13%
CLERICAL-SALES .....	18%
BLUE COLLAR .....	15%
RETIRED .....	27%
SCATTERED .....	1%

Eighteen percent are headed by Clerical-Sales workers, while 27% of the households are headed by retirees. Fifteen percent of the households in the city are led by Blue Collar workers.

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## Gender of Respondent

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The gender of each respondent was noted:

MALE .....	47%
FEMALE .....	53%

Women outnumber men by six percent in the sample.

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## Location of Residence

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The precinct of each respondent's residence was also noted:

PRECINCT 1 .....	12%
PRECINCT 2 .....	15%
PRECINCT 3 .....	12%
PRECINCT 4 .....	12%
PRECINCT 5 .....	10%
PRECINCT 6 .....	10%
PRECINCT 7 .....	18%
PRECINCT 8 .....	12%

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## School District

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The School District of each respondent was also coded for analysis purposes:

### *School District*

Sixty-three percent reside in the Robbinsdale Public School District:

ROBBINSDALE SD .....	63%
HOPKINS SD .....	37%

The remaining 37% live in the Hopkins Public School District.

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## Summary and Conclusions

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Golden Valley still retains the characteristics of both a mature, generally stable community combined with a significant element of transience, particularly among a segment of younger renters. The median longevity of adult residents is 14.8 years. Twenty percent of the sample report moving to the city during the past five years, while 25% have lived there for over three decades. In looking toward the future, the typical resident expects to remain in the community for at least another ten years, although seven percent envision leaving within the next five years.

Forty-six percent of the households have individuals at least 55 years old; in fact, 39% of the households are composed entirely of over 55 year olds. Nineteen percent of the households with seniors in residence report participation in senior programs offered by the City of Golden Valley. Virtually all of the participants rate their experiences positively and see no specific offerings missing from the current array.

Thirty-three percent of the households possess school-aged children and/or pre-schoolers. Eighty-two percent own their current residences, whereas eighteen percent rent.

The average age of respondents is 54.3 years old. Fourteen percent of the sample fall into the 18-34 year age range, with 28% 65 years old or older. Thirty-seven percent of the households are headed by up-scale White Collar job holders — Professional-Technical or Owner-Manager positions. Eighteen percent of the households are headed by Clerical-Sales people, while 15% are headed by Blue Collar job holders. Twenty-seven percent of the households within the community are headed by retirees.

Residents are classified according to the precinct in which they live. Twenty-seven percent reside in Precincts 1 or 2; twenty-four percent in Precincts 3 or 4; twenty percent in Precincts 5 or 6; and, 30% in Precincts 7 and 8. Sixty-three percent are in the Robbinsdale Public School

District, and 37% live in the Hopkins Public School District. Women outnumber men by six percent in the sample.

# **Chapter Two: General Perceptions of the Community**

# General Perceptions of the Community

Golden Valley residents were asked a series of questions about their general perceptions of the city. First, they were asked for a rating of their quality of life. Then, residents were requested to point to aspects of “high quality” as well as “low quality,” and discuss issues they saw facing the community. Next, a summary judgment on the direction of the city was obtained.

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## General Quality of Life

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Respondents were asked:

*How would you rate the quality of life in Golden Valley  
– excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

Ninety-seven percent rate the quality of their life as either “excellent” or “good:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	55%	50%	50%	36%
GOOD .....	43%	46%	47%	61%
ONLY FAIR .....	2%	4%	3%	3%
POOR .....	0%	0%	1%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	0%	0%	0%

Positive ratings have remained stable since the 1994 study, while “excellent” ratings decrease 14% between the 2001 and 2006 surveys.

Ratings peak among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- home owners

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## High Quality and Low Quality Aspects of the Community

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Residents were told:

*Many people talk about "quality" these days. They might  
say something is "high quality" or "low quality." I'd like*

*you to think about the City of Golden Valley for a moment.*

They were then asked:

*When you think about this community, what comes to mind, if anything, as being "high quality?"*

“City services” and “sense of community” are the two “high quality” aspects leading the list:

UNSURE .....	4%
SENSE OF COMMUNITY .....	18%
CITY SERVICES .....	22%
SAFE .....	12%
LOCATION .....	9%
PARKS AND RECREATION .....	13%
WELL-MAINTAINED CITY .....	5%
SCHOOLS .....	7%
HOUSING .....	4%
DOWNTOWN AREA .....	3%
NATURAL AREAS/OPEN SPACES .....	2%
SCATTERED .....	2%

“Safe” and “parks and recreation facilities” form the second tier of choices.

“City services” is posted at a higher rate by:

- households with seniors
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

“Sense of community” is indicated more frequently by:

- men
- Precincts Three and Four residents

“Parks and recreation” is posted more often by:

- Precincts Five and Six residents

Next, respondents were asked:

*And, when you think about this community, what comes to mind, if anything, as being "low quality?"*

No one aspect of the community is cited by ten percent or more of the respondents:

UNSURE .....	16%
NOTHING .....	35%

TRAFFIC .....	2%
STREET REPAIR .....	3%
CITY GOVERNMENT .....	2%
HIGH TAXES .....	3%
LACK OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS .....	2%
RUNDOWN HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS .....	7%
LACK OF SIDEWALKS .....	3%
LACK OF RETAIL AND DINING .....	8%
HIGH CRIME .....	8%
DEER POPULATION .....	2%
QUALITY OF SCHOOLS .....	2%
LACK OF JOBS .....	2%
DON'T HAVE OWN SCHOOL DISTRICT .....	2%
SCATTERED .....	4%

“Lack of retail and dining opportunities” and “crime” are mentioned by eight percent each, while “rundown housing and neighborhoods” is posted by seven percent. But, a comparatively large 35% report there are “no low quality” aspects of the community.

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

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### Most Serious Issue facing the City

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Respondents were queried:

*What do you think is the most serious issue facing Golden Valley today?*

“Taxes,” at 25%, leads the list of concerns:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	21%	23%	20%	15%
TAXES .....	10%	13%	12%	25%
CRIME .....	12%	20%	4%	9%
SCHOOL FUNDING .....	6%	6%	9%	9%
GROWTH .....	10%	15%	15%	7%
CITY GOVERNMENT .....	5%	3%	3%	0%
TOO MUCH LOW INCOME .....	3%	2%	4%	0%
LACK OF DEVELOPMENT .....	0%	4%	11%	2%
TRAFFIC .....	0%	4%	8%	2%
HOUSING .....	0%	4%	0%	0%
STREETS .....	26%	3%	0%	2%
MAINTAINING HIGH QUALITY .....	3%	2%	0%	0%
NOTHING .....	0%	0%	3%	15%
CITY SPENDING .....	0%	0%	6%	2%

LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING . . . .	0%	..	0%	..	0%	..	4%
RUNDOWN AREAS . . . . .	0%	..	0%	..	0%	..	4%
DEER POPULATION . . . . .	0%	..	0%	..	0%	..	2%
ENVIRONMENT . . . . .	0%	..	0%	..	2%	..	0%
LACK OF JOBS . . . . .	0%	..	0%	..	0%	..	2%
SCATTERED . . . . .	3%	..	4%	..	5%	..	2%

“Taxes” has doubled as a concern in five years.

“Taxes” is a concern among:

- home owners
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

“Nothing” is posted at a higher rate by:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- renters

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## General Direction of the City

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Residents were asked:

*All in all, do you think things in Golden Valley are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?*

While 86% think the City of Golden Valley is headed in the “right direction,” 12% see it “off on the wrong track:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006			
RIGHT DIRECTION . . . . .	80%	..	77%	..	85%	..	86%
WRONG TRACK . . . . .	13%	..	14%	..	8%	..	12%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED . . . . .	7%	..	9%	..	7%	..	3%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

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## Summary and Conclusions

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A solid 97% again rate the quality of life as either “excellent” or “good;” fifty percent rating it as “excellent,” unchanged from the 2001 study. A small three percent post “only fair” or “poor” ratings. Ratings, then, held constant during the five-year period.

In thinking about “high quality” aspects of Golden Valley, 22% point to “city services,” while 18% cite its “sense of community.” “Park and recreation system” is critical to 13%, “safe” is key to 12%, while “location” is mentioned by nine percent. Seven percent consider “schools” as a high quality aspect of Golden Valley, and “well-maintained city” is posted by five percent.

In discussing “low quality” aspects of the city, 16% are unable to respond to the query. Thirty-five percent are “boosters” — residents who see no “low quality” aspects of the community. This “booster” level is almost five times higher than the Metropolitan Area suburban norm, and is consistent with the 2001 study results. “Lack of retail and dining opportunities” and “crime” top the list at only eight percent each, followed by “rundown housing and neighborhoods” at seven percent.

In thinking about serious issues facing the city, 25% point to “high taxes,” twice the level in the 2001 study. “Crime” and “school funding” follow at nine percent each. Seven percent cite “too much growth,” down from its 2001 level. Eighty-six percent feel the city is moving in the “right direction,” unchanged from the 2001 study. Twelve percent think it is going “off on the wrong track.” In general, residents endorse the direction of the city and its recent policies.

# **Chapter Three: Development and Redevelopment Issues**

# Development and Redevelopment Issues

Golden Valley residents were asked a series of questions about development and redevelopment issues facing the community. First, they were asked to evaluate the City on a number of dimensions, both demographic and developmental. Then, commuter patterns were assessed to measure one aspect of city growth, and intra-city traffic congestion was highlighted. Finally, the use, both actual and potential, of public transportation was examined in some detail.

## Condition of Industrial and Commercial Properties

Respondents were asked:

*How would you rate the general condition and appearance of industrial and commercial properties – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

Seventy-two percent rate the general condition and appearance of industrial and commercial property highly, while 27% are more critical:

EXCELLENT .....	10%
GOOD .....	62%
ONLY FAIR .....	26%
POOR .....	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

Ratings are higher among:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- home owners

They are lower among:

- residents for ten years or less
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- renters

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## Licensing for Rental Purposes

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Residents were queried:

*Would you support or oppose licensing single and two-family residential properties when used for rental purposes, in order to assure that the homes are well-maintained and safe?*

By a very solid 72%-15% margin, residents support licensing single and two-family residential properties when used for rental purposes, in order to assure that the homes are well-maintained and safe:

SUPPORT .....	72%
OPPOSE .....	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	13%

Supporters tend to be:

- residents for more than thirty years
- home owners

Opponents are typically:

- men
- Precincts One and Two residents

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## Adequate Mix of Housing

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Respondents were asked:

*Do you think Golden Valley's current housing supply is an adequate mix of all types of housing?*

A comparatively high 83% regards the current housing supply as adequate:

YES .....	83%
NO .....	14%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	3%

Only 14% disagree.

Agreement is higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

It is lower among:

- residents for ten years or less
- residents planning to move in five to ten years
- households with seniors
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

Those viewing the mix as “inadequate” were asked a follow-up question:

***What type of housing do you think is needed in Golden Valley?***

“Affordable housing” and “low income housing” are the two types of housing leading the list of needs:

UNSURE .....	5%
LOW INCOME .....	28%
STARTER HOMES .....	11%
MIDDLE INCOME .....	7%
HIGH END HOUSING .....	2%
TOO MUCH MULTI-HOUSING .....	2%
AFFORDABLE HOUSING .....	32%
AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS .....	7%
SENIOR HOUSING .....	7%

“Starter homes” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents planning to move in less than five years

Even so, only one-in-seven residents view the overall mix of housing in Golden Valley as “inadequate.”

## **Remodeling and Reconstruction**

Residents were told:

*Recent trends have encouraged significant remodeling, additional property subdivisions and even the tearing down and reconstruction of homes in Golden Valley.*

They were then asked:

*Do you think this is a good idea or bad idea in the City of Golden Valley? Do you feel strongly that way?*

While 70% think this trend in a “good idea,” 22% see it as a “bad idea:”

GOOD IDEA/STRONGLY .....	14%
GOOD IDEA .....	56%
BAD IDEA .....	19%
BAD IDEA/STRONGLY .....	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	9%

“Good idea” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- Precincts One, Two, Five and Six residents

“Bad idea” is stated most frequently by:

- men
- Precincts Three, Four, Seven and Eight residents

Next, respondents were queried:

*Do you support or oppose a city ordinance which would limit the size of residential additions and new construction in Golden Valley? Do you feel strongly that way?*

By a 64%-22% margin, residents support a city ordinance which would limit the size of residential additions and new construction in Golden Valley:

STRONGLY SUPPORT .....	17%
SUPPORT .....	47%
OPPOSE .....	19%
STRONGLY OPPOSE .....	3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	14%

Supporters are more apt to be:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- women
- over sixty-four year olds

Opponents are typically:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- men
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

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## City Codes

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Residents were instructed:

*For each of the following, please tell me whether the City is too tough, about right, or not tough enough in enforcing city codes on the nuisances.*

Two nuisances were then read:

*The number of vehicles parked on a residential property?*

Sixty-eight percent think the enforcement of codes on the number of vehicles parked on a residential property is “about right:”

TOO TOUGH .....	4%
NOT TOUGH ENOUGH .....	19%
ABOUT RIGHT .....	68%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	9%

Only 19% think the enforcement is “not tough enough.”

“Not tough enough” is stated most frequently by:

- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- home owners
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

“About right” is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- home owners

***Storage of RV's on a residential property?***

Sixty-nine percent also think the enforcement of codes regulating the storage of RV's on a residential property is "about right:"

TOO TOUGH .....	7%
NOT TOUGH ENOUGH .....	12%
ABOUT RIGHT .....	69%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	12%

Only 12% consider the enforcement to be "not tough enough."

"Not tough enough" is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

"About right" is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- over sixty-four year olds
- home owners

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**Commuter Patterns**

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Residents were initially asked:

***Do you leave the City of Golden Valley on a regular or daily basis to go to work?***

Fifty percent regularly leave the City of Golden Valley to go to work:

	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	60%	55%	50%
NO .....	15%	20%	17%
NOT EMPLOYED/RETIRED .....	25%	26%	34%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	0%	0%

Thirty-four percent, though, are either unemployed or retired, while the remainder work in the community.

“Yes” is stated more often by:

- residents for thirty years or less
- residents planning to move in five to ten years
- households with children
- eighteen to sixty-four year olds

“No” is posted most frequently by:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- renters

“Not employed/retired” is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- women
- over sixty-four year olds
- Precincts Five and Six residents

Those leaving the City regularly for work were then asked:

A value judgment was requested:

*How would you rate the ease of getting to and from work -- excellent, good, only fair or poor?*

Eighty-five percent consider the ease of getting to and from work to be either “excellent” or “good:”

	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	42%	51%	20%
GOOD .....	38%	27%	65%
ONLY FAIR .....	9%	16%	15%
POOR .....	8%	6%	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	3%	1%	0%

Sixteen percent are more negative in their judgments. But, these results show a six percent decrease in negative ratings during the intervening five years between studies.

Ratings peak among:

- households with seniors

## Intra-City Travel

Respondents were asked:

*How would you rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City of Golden Valley -- excellent, good, only fair or poor?*

Ninety-one percent think the ease of getting from place to place within the city was either “excellent” or “good.”

	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	35%	44%	15%
GOOD .....	57%	47%	76%
ONLY FAIR .....	6%	6%	8%
POOR .....	2%	2%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	1%	1%

Only eight percent rate it as “only fair” or “poor.”

Favorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters

## Public Transportation

Residents were initially asked:

*Have you used public transportation during the past two years?*

Fourteen percent, almost twice the suburban norm, report using public transportation during the past two years:

	2001	2006
YES .....	18%	14%
NO .....	82%	86%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	0%

Users tend to be:

- residents for ten years or less

- residents planning to move in five to ten years
- households with children
- renters

Non-users are typically:

- empty nesters
- home owners
- Precincts One and Two residents

Respondents who used public transportation were asked the follow-up question:

*How would you rate your experience — excellent, good, only fair or poor?*

While 73% rate the experience either “excellent” or “good,” 16% rate it lower:

	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	27%	16%
GOOD .....	46%	67%
ONLY FAIR .....	20%	12%
POOR .....	7%	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	2%

Positive evaluations increased 10% during the past five years.

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Respondents who did not use public transportation were asked the follow-up query:

*Would you use public transportation if there were more routes and destinations offered?*

Eighteen percent report they would use public transportation if more routes and destinations are offered:

	2001	2006
YES .....	26%	18%
NO .....	70%	80%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	4%	2%

The percentage expressing willingness dropped eight percent in five years.

“Yes” is stated more often by:

- residents planning to move in five to ten years
- women

“No” is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- men

Current non-users who might be inclined to take a re-configured public transit system were next asked:

***Would you support or oppose an expansion in public transportation routes and destinations if it meant more buses on residential streets?***

By four-to-one, these residents support an expansion even if it meant more buses on residential streets:

	2001	2006
SUPPORT .....	66%	80%
OPPOSE .....	23%	20%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	11%	0%

Support is higher among:

- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government

It is lower among:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

Supporters were then asked a more specific question:

***Would you still support an expansion in public transportation routes and destinations if it meant more buses on your residential street?***

By over four-to-one, they continue to support an expansion even if it meant more buses on their own residential street:

	2001	2006
SUPPORT .....	81%	79%
OPPOSE .....	18%	17%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	2%	4%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Expansion in residential areas, then, could increase committed ridership an additional twelve percent citywide.

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## Summary and Conclusions

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Seventy-two percent rate the general condition and appearance of industrial and commercial properties as either “excellent” or “good;” twenty-seven percent, however, rate them as “only fair” or “poor.”

A solid 72% would support licensing single and two-family residential properties when used for rental purposes, to assure the homes are well-maintained and safe. Only 15% oppose this proposal.

A large 83% think Golden Valley’s current housing supply is an adequate mix of all types of housing; fourteen percent disagree. Respondents seeing the mix as inadequate register a need for more “low income housing” and more “affordable housing.”

Seventy percent view the significant remodeling, additional property subdivisions, and the tearing down and reconstruction of homes in Golden Valley as a “good idea.” Twenty-two percent, though, label this trend as a “bad idea.” As a precaution, residents support a city ordinance limiting the size of residential additions and new construction by a 64%-22% margin.

In discussing the enforcement of city codes, large majorities give high marks on two aspects. Sixty-nine percent think the enforcement of codes limiting the number of vehicles parked on a residential property is “about right;” nineteen percent say the enforcement is “not tough enough.” And, 68% think the enforcement of codes limiting the storage of RVs on a residential property as “about right;” twelve percent think it is “not tough enough.”

Fifty percent leave Golden Valley on a regular or daily basis to go to work, a decrease of five percent in five years. Seventeen percent do not leave the community to go to work, while 34% are currently unemployed or retired. Eighty-five percent of residents leaving the city rate the ease of getting to and from work as either “excellent” or “good;” sixteen percent are more negative in their evaluations. Similarly, 91% rate the ease of getting from place to place within the City favorably; only eight percent are more critical.

Fourteen percent of the sample report using public transportation during the past two years. Among public transit users, 83% rate their experience favorably, while 16% are more negative in their evaluations. Favorable ratings increase by ten percent in five years. Only 18% of the current non-users would take public transportation if there were more routes and destinations offered. Among these potential users, 80% would still support an expansion in routes and destinations even if it meant more buses on residential streets, and 63% would still do so even if it mean more buses on their residential street.

# **Chapter Four: City Taxes and City Services**

# City Taxes and City Services

Residents of the City of Golden Valley were asked a series of questions about city taxes and services. Knowledge of city property tax levels and their comparison with other nearby areas was ascertained. Citizens were asked to rate an array of current city services, and provide comparisons with nearby communities. Finally, the value of city services was examined and willingness to bear increased taxes to maintain services was also measured.

## City Property Tax Levels

Residents were asked:

*As you may know, property taxes are divided between the City of Golden Valley and various other units of local government. Thinking about the amount going to the City....*

*Do you think the city portion of your property taxes, which funds City services in Golden Valley is very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low in comparison with nearby suburban communities?*

Twenty-three percent consider Golden Valley property taxes to be “about average,” one-half of the 2001 level:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
VERY HIGH .....	8%	6%	10%	18%
SOMEWHAT HIGH .....	21%	20%	21%	39%
ABOUT AVERAGE .....	44%	47%	46%	23%
SOMEWHAT LOW .....	5%	4%	4%	0%
VERY LOW .....	0%	1%	0%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	22%	23%	20%	20%

Fifty-seven percent see them as “high,” while four percent think they are “low.”

“High” is posted at a higher rate by:

- households with children
- home owners

“About average” is indicated at a higher rate by:

- empty nesters

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

## **Rating of City Services**

Residents were instructed:

*I would like to read you a list of a few city services. For each one, please tell me whether you would rate the quality of the service as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

A list of twelve city services was then read:

### ***Police protection?***

Ninety-four percent rate police protection either “excellent” or “good:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	37%	39%	47%	34%
GOOD .....	54%	53%	48%	60%
ONLY FAIR .....	6%	5%	4%	3%
POOR .....	0%	1%	1%	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	3%	3%	1%	2%

Only four percent rate it lower. “Excellent” ratings decreased by 13% since the 2001 study.

Ratings peak among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- households with seniors
- over sixty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

### ***Fire protection?***

Ninety-five percent rate fire protection highly, while one percent are more critical:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	36%	33%	43%	30%
GOOD .....	52%	52%	51%	65%
ONLY FAIR .....	5%	2%	1%	0%
POOR .....	0%	0%	1%	1%

DON'T KNOW/REFUSED ..... 8% . 13% .. 5% .. 5%

“Excellent” ratings dropped by 13% in five years.

Favorable ratings are given more often by:

- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years

***Recycling and brush pick-up?***

While 89% rate recycling and brush pick-up highly, three percent are more critical in their evaluations:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	43%	32%	43%	25%
GOOD .....	46%	55%	47%	64%
ONLY FAIR .....	9%	8%	6%	3%
POOR .....	1%	2%	3%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	2%	3%	2%	8%

“Excellent” ratings declined by 18% since the 2001 survey.

Favorable ratings are posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

***Storm drainage and flood control?***

Eighty-four percent rate storm drainage and flood control positively, while four percent are more negative in their judgments:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	21%	14%	14%	13%
GOOD .....	52%	57%	56%	71%
ONLY FAIR .....	12%	11%	13%	2%
POOR .....	3%	3%	5%	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	13%	15%	12%	12%

Favorable ratings increased by 14% in five years.

Favorable ratings are cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

***Park maintenance?***

Ninety-three percent rate park maintenance highly, while one percent are more negative in their evaluations:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	33%	26%	30%	24%
GOOD .....	53%	61%	60%	69%
ONLY FAIR .....	9%	5%	5%	1%
POOR .....	1%	0%	1%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	4%	8%	4%	7%

Favorable ratings are stated more often by:

- households with children
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- home owners

***City-sponsored recreation programs?***

Seventy-three percent rate city-sponsored recreation programs as either “excellent” or “good:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	23%	19%	21%	14%
GOOD .....	44%	51%	47%	59%
ONLY FAIR .....	15%	9%	12%	3%
POOR .....	2%	2%	3%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	16%	20%	17%	25%

Three percent rate them as “only fair” or “poor.”

Favorable ratings are cited more frequently by:

- households with children

***Neighborhood Watch Programs?***

Seventy-nine percent rate Neighborhood Watch Programs as either “excellent” or “good.”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	26%	19%	26%	14%
GOOD .....	43%	53%	47%	65%
ONLY FAIR .....	17%	10%	10%	3%
POOR .....	4%	3%	4%	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	11%	15%	13%	19%

Four percent rated them lower.

Favorable ratings are indicated at a higher rate by:

- home owners

***Animal control?***

Eighty percent rate animal control favorably, while nine percent are unfavorable:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	15%	11%	15%	8%
GOOD .....	51%	52%	54%	72%
ONLY FAIR .....	17%	10%	10%	7%
POOR .....	4%	6%	5%	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	12%	22%	17%	11%

Positive ratings improved by 11% over the past five years.

Favorable ratings are posted most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- men
- home owners

***Communications, such as newsletters, cable television, media coverage and web site?***

Communications is rated highly by 96% and more negatively by three percent:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	24%	21%	25%	19%
GOOD .....	54%	59%	55%	77%
ONLY FAIR .....	15%	9%	12%	2%

POOR .....	3%	..	4%	..	4%	..	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	5%	..	7%	..	4%	..	2%

Positive ratings increased by 16% during the past five years.

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

***Street lighting?***

Eighty-six percent rate street lighting as either “excellent” or “good,” while 14% see it as “only fair” or “poor:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	16%	. 14%	. 13%	. 10%
GOOD .....	48%	. 55%	. 46%	. 76%
ONLY FAIR .....	23%	. 19%	. 27%	. 11%
POOR .....	10%	.. 9%	. 14%	.. 3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	4%	.. 3%	.. 1%	.. 1%

Positive ratings increased significantly – 27% in five years.

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Residents were next instructed:

***Now, for the next two city services, please consider only their job on city-maintained street and roads. That means excluding interstate highways, state and county roads that are taken care of by other levels of government. Hence, Interstate 394, Highway 55, Highway 100, County Road 156 or Winnetka Avenue, should not be considered. How would you rate ....***

Two more city services were listed:

***City street repair and maintenance?***

Ninety-one percent rate city street repair and maintenance as either “excellent” or “good:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	18%	. 12%	. 24%	. 16%
GOOD .....	62%	. 62%	. 54%	. 75%
ONLY FAIR .....	15%	. 20%	. 17%	.. 7%

POOR .....	3%	..	5%	..	4%	..	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	3%	..	1%	..	1%	..	1%

Nine percent are more critical in their judgments.

Between 2001 and 2006, positive ratings increased by 13%.

Favorable ratings are cited most frequently by:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

### *Snow plowing?*

Ninety-six percent rate snow plowing highly, while three percent are more critical in their evaluations:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	38%	. 27%	. 37%	. 22%
GOOD .....	50%	. 61%	. 51%	. 74%
ONLY FAIR .....	7%	. 10%	.. 8%	.. 3%
POOR .....	1%	.. 1%	.. 3%	.. 0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	5%	.. 2%	.. 1%	.. 1%

Positive ratings improved by eight percent between the 2001 and 2006 studies.

Favorable ratings are mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds

Respondents awarding any city service a negative rating were asked a follow-up question:

### *Why did you rate ..... as only fair/poor?*

“Not enough street lights” and “poor street conditions” are the most deeply held points of contention:

POOR STREET CONDITIONS .....	20%
FLOOD CONTROLLING .....	8%
LOOSE ANIMALS .....	11%
NOT ENOUGH POLICE PATROLLING .....	8%
NOT ENOUGH STREET LIGHTS .....	26%
TOO MANY DEER .....	8%
SLOW SERVICE .....	3%

BETTER COMMUNICATION .....	4%
NEED BETTER ORGANIZED NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM .....	3%
POOR QUALITY OF SNOW PLOWING .....	3%
MORE VARIETY OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS .....	3%
SCATTERED .....	2%

“Not enough street lights” is stated most frequently by:

- empty nesters
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

“Loose animals” is indicated more frequently by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years

Another follow-up query was posed:

*Would you favor or oppose a tax increase to improve  
\_\_\_\_\_? Do you feel strongly that way?*

By a 54%-31% margin, residents would oppose a property tax increase to improve the city service they rated negatively:

STRONGLY FAVOR. ....	2%
FAVOR .....	29%
OPPOSE .....	45%
STRONGLY OPPOSE .....	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	17%

Opposition increases among:

- home owners

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## **Services in Comparison with Other Communities**

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Respondents were asked:

*How would you rate Golden Valley city services in comparison with neighboring communities – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

Seventy-seven percent rate Golden Valley city services as either “excellent” or “good” in comparison with neighboring communities:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	33%	21%	28%	15%
GOOD .....	47%	57%	50%	62%
ONLY FAIR .....	7%	6%	8%	8%
POOR .....	1%	1%	1%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	12%	17%	12%	16%

Eight percent rate them lower. “Excellent” ratings slipped by 13% in five years.

Ratings peak among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

## Value of City Services

Residents were queried:

*When you consider the property taxes you pay and the quality of city services you receive, would you rate the general value of city services as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

Seventy-three percent rate the general value of city services as either “excellent” or “good:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	21%	22%	20%	8%
GOOD .....	59%	59%	61%	65%
ONLY FAIR .....	14%	15%	13%	13%
POOR .....	3%	2%	2%	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	4%	3%	5%	14%

Fourteen percent rate the value as either “only fair” or “poor.” “Excellent” ratings decreased by 12% over the five year interim period.

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

They are lower among:

- residents planning to move in less than five years
- home owners

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## Tax Increase to Maintain City Services

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Respondents were asked:

*Would you favor or oppose an increase in city property taxes, if it were needed to maintain city services at their current level?*

By a narrow 43%-36% plurality, residents oppose a property tax increase to maintain city services at their current level:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
FAVOR .....	50%	36%	47%	36%
OPPOSE .....	38%	46%	43%	43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	12%	18%	10%	21%

Support dropped by 11% in the five years between studies.

“Favor” is cited most often by:

- households with seniors
- over sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“Oppose” is mentioned more frequently by:

- home owners

Opponents of a property tax increase were asked a follow-up query:

*What services would you be willing to see cut?*

The vast majority of residents would cut no services, instead relying upon “trimming the budget fat:”

UNSURE .....	10%
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NONE .....	67%
PARKS AND RECREATION .....	15%
ADMINISTRATION .....	2%
RECYCLING .....	2%
STREET MAINTENANCE .....	3%
SCATTERED .....	1%

“None” is stated more often by:

- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

“Parks and recreation” is stated most frequently by:

- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- Precincts Three and Four residents

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## Fire Department

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Respondents were initially asked:

*Are you aware that fire protection in the City of Golden Valley is provided by paid on-call firefighters consisting of residents and corporate employees in the city?*

Eighty-four percent report awareness of the way in which fire services are provided in Golden Valley:

YES .....	84%
NO .....	15%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

“Yes” is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- home owners
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

“No” is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- renters

Residents were next asked:

***Would you or any members of your household ever consider becoming a firefighter in the city?***

Eight percent report members would consider becoming a firefighter in the city:

YES	.....	8%
NO	.....	89%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	3%

“No” is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

Residents who reported members would not consider becoming a firefighter were asked a follow-up question:

***Could the City of Golden Valley offer anything to entice you or members of your household to become a firefighter? What would that be?***

A thundering “no” is the response:

NO	.....	99%
HIGHER PAY THAN CURRENT JOB	.....	1%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

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## **Summary and Conclusions**

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On the issues of property taxes and city services, residents take a very cautious approach. They split — 43% to 37% — in opposition to an increase in their property taxes if it were needed to maintain city services at their current levels; in 2001, residents split in favor of a property tax increase by a 47% to 43% margin. When asked about the property taxes in Golden Valley compared with nearby areas, 57% feel they are “high,” a jump of 26% in five years. Twenty-three percent report they are “about average,” one-half the level in the 2001 study.

Seventy-seven percent rate Golden Valley city services as “excellent” or “good” in comparison with neighboring communities. Only eight percent see them as “only fair” or “poor,” while 16% are unsure. Seventy-three percent consider the value of city services in terms of property taxes

paid as either “excellent” or “good,” down eight percent from the 2001 level. Fourteen percent rate it lower. Reflective of the increase in concern about property taxes, the perceived value of city services has slightly dropped.

City services evaluations are very positive. Police protection, fire protection, park maintenance, communications, snow plowing, and city street repair and maintenance score approval ratings of ninety percent or higher. Recycling and brush pick-up, storm drainage and flood control, animal control, and street lighting finish above the eighty percent positive threshold. City-sponsored recreation programs and Neighborhood Watch Programs exceed the seventy percent approval level; these lower approval ratings are due to uncertainty rather than to negative ratings. Five city service ratings improved by at least 10% since the last study: storm drainage and flood control, animal control, communications, street lighting, and city street repair and maintenance. In almost every case, these city service approval ratings are above or at the suburban norm.

A very high 84%, up 14% since 2001, know the Golden Valley Fire Department operates as a paid on-call organization. Eight percent report there are members of their households who would consider becoming a firefighter in the city; no enticement, though, would change the mind of households who would not consider this opportunity.

# **Chapter Five: Neighborhood and Residential Issues**

# Neighborhood and Residential Issues

Golden Valley residents were asked a series of questions about neighborhood and residential issues. First, “I and I” was considered. Then, public safety was discussed, focusing on the feeling of safety when walking alone at night or in their homes. The adequacy of police patrolling was considered next. Participation in the curbside recycling system was ascertained. Residential streets and sidewalks were covered in some detail. And, finally, City-sponsored senior programs were explored with members of households containing senior citizens.

## “I and I”

Residents were asked:

*Are you aware of Inflow and Infiltration, called “I and I,” which is caused by utility customers improperly connecting sump pumps, foundation drains, and roof drains to the sanitary sewer system, leading to unnecessary treatment costs and higher operating costs for the sanitary sewer utility?*

Forty-seven percent report awareness of Inflow and Infiltration:

YES	47%
NO	52%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

“Yes” is cited more often by:

- men
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is mentioned more frequently by:

- residents for ten years or less
- women
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters
- Precincts Three and Four residents

Next, they were queried:

***Are you aware that the Metropolitan Council is charging cities for the added sewer system volume caused by Inflow and Infiltration or “I and I,” which raises sanitary sewer fees and increases your City utility bill?***

Only 38% report awareness of the Metropolitan Council charge:

YES	.....	38%
NO	.....	61%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	1%

“Yes” is selected most often by:

- men
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is mentioned at a higher rate by:

- women
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

**Unsafe Areas in the City**

City residents were asked:

***Are there areas in Golden Valley where you would not feel safe walking alone at night?***

Forty-nine percent report there are areas within the community where they would not feel safe walking alone at night:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES	56%	54%	53%	49%
NO	42%	39%	43%	50%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	3%	8%	5%	1%

Results are relatively stable across the period.

“Yes” is selected most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- women

- over sixty-four year olds

“No” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- men
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Those report feelings of fear in the community were asked a follow-up question:

***What areas do you not feel safe walking alone at night?***

Fifty-seven percent feel unsafe “everywhere:”

THEODORE WIRTH PARK .....	20%
EVERYWHERE .....	57%
RETAIL AREAS .....	3%
MINNEAPOLIS BORDER .....	6%
BASSETT CREEK .....	2%
PARKING RAMPS .....	3%
TRAILS .....	2%
DOUGLAS DRIVE .....	3%
SCATTERED .....	2%

Twenty percent specifically cite Theodore Wirth Park.

“Everywhere” is cited more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- renters

“Theodore Wirth Park” is stated at a higher rate by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts One and Two residents

Next, residents were asked:

***Do you feel safe in your immediate neighborhood walking alone at night?***

Seventy-one percent report feeling safe walking in their neighborhood alone at night, down 10% since 2001:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	77%	80%	81%	71%
NO .....	23%	18%	17%	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	2%	2%	1%

“Yes” is posted more often by:

- men

“No” is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- women
- over sixty-four year olds

## **Police Patrolling**

Respondents were asked:

*How would you rate the amount of traffic enforcement by the police in your neighborhood — too much, about right amount or not enough?*

Eighty-three percent think there is “about the right amount” of traffic enforcement in their neighborhood:

	2001	2006
TOO MUCH .....	2%	1%
ABOUT RIGHT AMOUNT .....	72%	83%
NOT ENOUGH .....	22%	14%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	4%	1%

Fourteen percent, though, disagree and regard the amount as “not enough.”

“About the right amount” is cited most frequently by:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters

“Not enough” is indicated most frequently by:

- Precincts One and Two residents

## Curbside Pick-Up of Recyclables

Residents were asked:

*Does your household currently participate in the curbside pickup of recyclables?*

An 86% participation rate results, down eight percent in five years:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	95%	96%	94%	86%
NO .....	5%	4%	6%	13%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	0%	1%	1%

Participation is higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

It is lower among:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters
- Precincts Five and Six residents

Next, respondents were asked:

*Are there any changes or improvements you would make to the curbside recycling program? What would that be?*

Seventy-eight percent are either “unsure” or have “no suggestions” to offer:

UNSURE .....	6%
NO .....	72%
TAKE MORE VARIETY .....	9%
BETTER COMMUNICATION ABOUT ACCEPTED ITEMS ...	2%
BIGGER BINS .....	6%
SINGLE SORT SYSTEM .....	3%
SCATTERED .....	2%

“No” is posted at a higher rate by:

- men
- over sixty-four year olds

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## Refuse Collection

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Golden Valley residents were asked:

*Most communities have one of two systems for refuse collection. In a multiple collection system, like the City of Golden Valley, residents choose their hauler from several different companies serving the community. Several other cities use an organized collection system, where the City contracts with one hauler for the entire community. In a multiple collection system, residents have the ability to choose, but many neighborhoods may have numerous trucks collecting garbage on their street at different times throughout the day and week. In an organized collection system, all residents are assigned a specific hauler, but only that company’s truck appears in the neighborhood on a specific day.*

*Would you favor or oppose the City of Golden Valley changing from the current system in which residents may choose from several different haulers to a system where the City chooses a hauler for the whole community? Do you feel strongly that way?*

By a 64%-19% margin, residents oppose changing from the current system to a system where the City chooses a hauler for the whole community:

STRONGLY FAVOR .....	6%
FAVOR .....	13%
OPPOSE .....	52%
STRONGLY OPPOSE .....	12%
DON’T KNOW/REFUSED .....	18%

Support increases among:

- households with children
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

It decreases among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

- home owners

Next, residents were queried:

*In another option, the City would continue to give residents the option of choosing their own hauler, but require all haulers to pick-up garbage on the same day in a neighborhood.*

*Would you favor or oppose the City of Golden Valley continuing to allow residents to choose their own hauler, but require all haulers to pick-up garbage on the same day in a neighborhood? Do you feel strongly that way?*

By a 65%-20% majority, residents favor requiring all haulers to pick-up garbage on the same day in a neighborhood:

STRONGLY FAVOR .....	18%
FAVOR .....	47%
OPPOSE .....	18%
STRONGLY OPPOSE .....	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	16%

Support is higher among:

- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- home owners

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- over sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

## **City Sidewalk System**

Respondents were initially asked:

*How would you rate the City's sidewalk system – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

Seventy-one percent rate the City's sidewalk system favorably, while 25% are unfavorable:

EXCELLENT .....	6%
GOOD .....	65%

ONLY FAIR .....	16%
POOR .....	9%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	4%

Ratings are higher among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- renters

They are lower among:

- residents for ten years or less
- households with children
- home owners

Residents providing unfavorable ratings were asked a follow-up query:

***Why did you rate it as only fair/poor?***

Eighty-seven percent believe there are “not enough sidewalks” in the community:

NOT ENOUGH SIDEWALKS .....	87%
NEED MORE IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS .....	8%
NEED BETTER MAINTENANCE .....	5%

“Not enough sidewalks” is stated most frequently by:

- Precincts One and Two residents

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**Senior Programs**

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Respondents reporting the presence of seniors in their household were asked:

***Have any household members participated in any senior programs offered by the City of Golden Valley?***

Nineteen percent report senior household members participated in City-sponsored programs:

	2001	2006
YES .....	24%	19%
NO .....	76%	81%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	1%

Participation increases among:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

It decreases among:

- men
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

Respondents reporting participation in City-sponsored programs were asked a follow-up question:

*How would you rate your experience — excellent, good, only fair or poor?*

Ratings were almost entirely positive:

	2001	2006
EXCELLENT . . . . .	57%	26%
GOOD . . . . .	43%	71%
ONLY FAIR . . . . .	0%	3%
POOR . . . . .	0%	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED . . . . .	0%	0%

“Excellent” ratings dropped by 31% between the two studies.

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Next, they were asked:

*Do you feel there are any programs lacking or missing?  
What are they?*

No senior program candidates for additions or expansions were reported:

	2001	2006
UNSURE . . . . .	21%	3%
NO . . . . .	79%	97%

Not surprisingly, there are no statistically significant sub-group differences noted.

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## **Summary and Conclusion**

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Forty-seven percent are aware of the issue of “Inflow and Infiltration.” But, only 38% are aware the Metropolitan Council is charging cities for the added sewer system volume caused by Inflow and Infiltration, raising sanitary sewer fees and increasing city utility bills.

While 50% report there are no areas in the community where they would feel unsafe walking

alone at night, 49% indicate there are such unsafe areas within the city. Twenty percent of the residents feeling there are unsafe areas specifically point to "Theodore Wirth Park." But, 57% of this group think "everywhere" in the community would be unsafe walking alone at night. Seventy-one percent feel safe in their immediate neighborhood walking alone at night, down 10% from the 2001 level.

Eighty-three percent, nine percent higher than in 2001, think there is "about the right amount" of traffic enforcement by the police in their neighborhood, while 14% say there is "not enough" and one percent, "too much."

Sixty-one percent rate the City's sidewalk system as either "excellent" or "good," while 25% rate the system either "only fair" or "poor." The major reason for negative ratings is the "lack of existing sidewalks."

Eighty-six percent participate in the curbside recycling program by separating recyclable items from the rest of their garbage. Modest percentages suggest expanding the type of items picked up and providing larger bins.

By a 64%-19% margin, residents oppose changing from the current garbage collection system in which residents may choose from several different haulers to a system where the City chooses a hauler for the whole community. However, by a 65%-20% margin, residents favor continuing to allow individual choices, but requiring all haulers to pick-up garbage on the same day in a neighborhood.

# **Chapter Six: Parks and Recreation Issues**

# Parks and Recreation Issues

Golden Valley residents were asked a short series of questions about their parks and recreation system. First, general household usage of each component was estimated. Then, the adequacy of existing recreational facilities and recreational programs were discussed. Finally, interest in and support for a Golden Valley Community Recreation Center was examined.

## Park System Usage

Residents were instructed:

*The Golden Valley park system is composed of larger community parks, and smaller neighborhood parks, trails, community ballfields and open spaces and natural areas. Of these facilities, which have you or members of your household used during the past year?*

A list of eight park system components was then read:

*Community parks and/or neighborhood parks?*

Sixty-five percent report household members had used the community parks and/or neighborhood parks during the past year:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	81%	83%	76%	65%
NO .....	18%	16%	24%	35%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	1%	0%	0%

Usage dropped 11% since the 2001 study.

“Yes” is stated more often by:

- households with children

“No” is selected at a higher rate by:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters

*Trails?*

Sixty-one percent report household members used the city's trails during the past year:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	64%	65%	62%	61%
NO .....	35%	35%	38%	39%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	1%	0%	0%

Usage is generally stable throughout the time period.

Users tend to be:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Non-users are typically:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds

### *Community ballfields?*

Twenty-four percent report household members used community ballfields during the past year, down nine percent from the 2001 study:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	37%	35%	33%	24%
NO .....	61%	64%	67%	76%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	1%	1%	0%

Use is higher among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents planning to move in five to ten years
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

It is lower among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds

***Open spaces and natural areas?***

Fifty-one percent report household members visited open spaces and natural areas in the city:

YES	.....	51%
NO	.....	49%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	0%

Use increases among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

It decreases among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Brookview Golf Course?***

Twenty-six percent report household members used the Brookview Golf Course during the past year:

YES	.....	26%
NO	.....	74%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	0%

“Yes” is stated at a higher rate by:

- households with children
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is mentioned more often by:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Brookview Community Center?***

Twenty-six percent also report household members visited the Brookview Community Center during the past year:

YES	.....	26%
NO	.....	74%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	0%

Users are more apt to be:

- households with children

Non-users tend to be:

- empty nesters

***The Davis Community Center, also known as the Meadowbrook Community Center?***

Thirteen percent report visiting the Davis Community Center during the past year:

YES	.....	13%
NO	.....	87%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	0%

Use increases among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- households with children
- Precincts Three and Four residents

It decreases among:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

***Brookview Picnic Shelters?***

Thirty-three percent report household members used the Brookview Picnic Shelters during the past year:

YES	.....	33%
NO	.....	67%

DON'T KNOW/REFUSED ..... 1%

“Yes” is stated more often by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

“No” is posted at a higher rate by:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters

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## Adequacy of Recreational Facilities

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Residents were asked:

*In general, do you feel that existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of you and members of your household?*

Ninety-four percent, slightly up from earlier studies, regard existing recreational facilities to be adequate in meeting the needs of their households:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	87%	88%	89%	94%
NO .....	11%	7%	8%	4%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	5%	4%	3%

“Yes” is cited more often by:

- households with seniors

The small number of respondents feeling their households’ needs were “unmet” were asked a follow-up query:

*What additional recreational facilities would you like to see the City offer its residents?*

A “swimming pool” is the most requested facility:

POOL .....	44%
TRAILS .....	19%
BALLFIELDS .....	6%
COMMUNITY CENTER .....	13%
TENNIS COURTS .....	6%

ICE ARENA .....	6%
SENIOR CENTER .....	6%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

## City Recreation Programming

Golden Valley residents were initially asked:

*Have you or members of your household participated  
in any City park and recreation programs?*

Twenty percent report participating in City park and recreation programs, one-half the 2001 level:

	2001	2006
YES .....	40%	20%
NO .....	59%	80%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	2%	0%

Participants tend to be:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Non-participants are typically:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds

Members of participating households were asked two follow-up questions. First, the type of program was ascertained:

*Which ones?*

“Softball/Baseball” is the most popular program, noted by 42% of the participants, up eight percent in five years:

	2001	2006
SOFTBALL/BASEBALL .....	34%	42%
GOLF .....	11%	7%

SOCCER .....	17%	..	20%
SENIOR ACTIVITIES .....	4%	..	0%
KID'S ACTIVITIES .....	7%	..	15%
TENNIS .....	5%	..	0%
MUSIC/DANCE .....	8%	..	4%
FITNESS .....	4%	..	2%
COMMUNITY EDUCATION .....	3%	..	4%
SCATTERED SPORTS .....	4%	..	5%
SCATTERED .....	3%	..	1%

“Soccer” and “kid’s activities” rank second.

“Softball/Baseball” is reported at a higher rate by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Then, participants were queried:

*Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your experience?*

Satisfaction is again virtually unanimous:

	2001	2006
SATISFIED .....	99%	.. 99%
DISSATISFIED .....	0%	.. 0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	.. 1%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Next, residents were questions about the adequacy of current programming:

*Does the current mix of City park and recreation programming meet the needs of your household?*

Ninety-four percent report their household needs were being met:

	2001	2006
YES .....	87%	.. 94%
NO .....	7%	.. 3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	7%	.. 4%

Only three percent reported their needs are unmet.

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Dissidents were asked the follow-up question:

***What programs do you feel are lacking?***

“More variety of youth programs” is the most common theme:

UNSURE .....	10%
SWIMMING LESSONS .....	20%
PROGRAMS IN THE EVENING .....	10%
MORE VARIETY OF YOUTH PROGRAMS .....	50%
FITNESS PROGRAMS .....	10%

“Swimming lessons” is cited at a higher rate by:

- households with seniors

Next, respondents were asked about regularly leaving the city in order to recreate:

***Do you or members of your household currently leave the city for park and recreation facilities or activities? What would that be?***

Twenty-two percent report household members currently leave the city for park and recreation facilities or activities elsewhere:

NO .....	78%
LAKES .....	5%
WALKING TRAILS .....	3%
BIKING TRAILS .....	1%
ICE ARENA .....	1%
SWIMMING POOL .....	6%
GOLF .....	2%
FITNESS CENTER .....	1%
SCATTERED .....	3%

“No” is indicated more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- renters

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**Summary and Conclusion**

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Usage of the various components of the park system vary markedly. During the past year, 65% of the households used community parks and/or neighborhood parks, down 11% in five years. Sixty-one percent used the city’s trails, while 51% visit open spaces and natural areas. Thirty-three percent report using the Brookview Picnic Shelters. Twenty-six percent each visited the

Brookview Golf Course or the Brookview Community Center. Only 13% report household members went to the Davis Community Center, also known as the Meadowbrook Community Center. Ninety-four percent feel the existing recreational facilities offered by the City meet the needs of their household, while a very small four percent feel they do not.

Twenty percent of the sample, one-half the level in the 2001 study, report household members participated in City park and recreation programs. The most popular programs are “softball/baseball,” “soccer,” “children’s activities,” and “golf.” Satisfaction with the offerings remains virtually unanimous. Ninety-four percent view the current mix of City park and recreation programming as meeting the needs of their households; only three percent disagree.

Twenty-two percent say household members currently leave the city for park and recreational facilities and activities elsewhere; this level is 44% lower than the 2001 level. The most popular were “lakes,” “swimming pools,” and “walking trails.” This level of recreational “leakage” to other communities is about 60% lower than the suburban norm.

# **Chapter Seven: City Government and City Staff**

# City Government and City Staff

Citizens of Golden Valley were asked a short series of questions about the Mayor and City Council and the City Staff. First, feelings of empowerment were measured. Next, residents were asked about their knowledge of the work of the Mayor and City Council and their evaluation of it. Similarly, they were asked about first-hand contact with the City Staff and their evaluation of their jobs. The focus then shifted to the awareness of the “Envision Golden Valley” visioning program.

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## Empowerment

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Respondents were asked:

*Other than voting, do you feel that if you wanted to, you could have a say about the way the City of Golden Valley runs things?*

Sixty-one percent think they could have a say, if they wanted, about the way things run:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	64%	62%	59%	61%
NO .....	32%	31%	35%	32%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	5%	7%	6%	8%

Thirty-two percent did not think so.

“Yes” is posted more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is stated more frequently by:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

## **Mayor and City Council**

Residents were initially asked:

*How much do you feel you know about the work of the Mayor and City Council – a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or none at all?*

Thirty-seven percent feel they know either “a great deal” or “a fair amount” about the work of the Mayor and City Council:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
A GREAT DEAL .....	7%	.. 5%	. 12%	.. 2%
A FAIR AMOUNT .....	34%	. 40%	. 38%	. 35%
VERY LITTLE .....	50%	. 46%	. 42%	. 48%
NONE AT ALL .....	8%	.. 9%	.. 8%	. 14%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	2%	.. 1%	.. 1%	.. 2%

Sixty-two percent, though, judge their knowledge levels to be lower. Knowledge levels decreased by 13% during the past five years.

“A lot” is posted more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- men
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- home owners

“Not a lot” is mentioned more often by:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- renters

Next, residents were asked:

*From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the job the Mayor and City Council are doing? And do you feel strongly that way?*

Fifty-seven percent approve of the job of the Mayor and City Council, down eight percent from the 2001 study:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
STRONGLY APPROVE .....	6%	.. 8%	. 17%	.. 3%

APPROVE .....	44%	53%	48%	54%
DISAPPROVE .....	15%	12%	9%	11%
STRONGLY DISAPPROVE .....	5%	5%	6%	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	30%	23%	21%	32%

Twelve percent report disapproval, relatively unchanged from earlier levels.

Approval is higher among:

- Precincts Five and Six residents
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

Respondents indicating approval or disapproval were asked a follow-up question:

*Could you tell me why you feel that way?*

Thirty-one percent cite “no problems,” while 26% point to “good job” as their reasons for their approval:

UNSURE .....	2%
NO PROBLEMS .....	31%
GOOD JOB .....	26%
SPECIFIC ISSUE .....	6%
DON'T LISTEN .....	6%
NICE CITY .....	4%
GOOD CITY SERVICES .....	2%
GOOD COMMUNICATIONS .....	7%
HELPFUL .....	2%
COULD IMPROVE .....	5%
LISTEN .....	5%
POOR SPENDING .....	4%

“No problems” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government

“Good job” is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

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## City Staff

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Residents were initially asked:

*How much first hand contact have you had with the Gol-*

*den Valley City staff – quite a lot, some, very little, or none?*

Thirty-five percent report either “quite a lot” or “some” first hand contact with the Golden Valley City Staff:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
QUITE A LOT .....	10%	5%	8%	4%
SOME .....	25%	28%	27%	31%
VERY LITTLE .....	43%	47%	45%	36%
NONE .....	20%	19%	22%	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	2%	1%	0%	1%

Less or no contact is indicated by 64% of the sample.

“A lot” is stated at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners
- Precincts One and Two residents

“Not a lot” is posted more frequently by:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters
- Precincts Three and Four residents

Next, citizens were asked:

*From what you have heard or seen, how would you rate the job performance of the Golden Valley City Staff – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

Fifty-eight percent rate the job performance of the Golden Valley City Staff as either “excellent” or “good,” down 14% from the 2001 level:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
EXCELLENT .....	10%	13%	17%	9%
GOOD .....	50%	56%	55%	49%
ONLY FAIR .....	10%	10%	10%	5%
POOR .....	4%	2%	2%	1%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	26%	20%	16%	36%

Six percent rate them lower, while uncertainty increases by 20%.

Ratings peak among:

- men
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

Residents providing a rating were asked a follow-up question:

*Could you tell me why you feel that way?*

Forty-eight percent report they are “helpful,” while 18% feel they are “friendly.”

UNSURE .....	2%
NO PROBLEMS .....	5%
GOOD JOB .....	8%
SPECIFIC ISSUE .....	2%
POOR JOB .....	4%
GOOD CITY SERVICES .....	6%
GOOD COMMUNICATIONS .....	6%
HELPFUL .....	48%
FRIENDLY .....	18%
COULD IMPROVE .....	3%

“Helpful” is key to:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds

“Friendly” is stated at a higher rate by:

- empty nesters

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## **Envision Golden Valley**

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Residents were told:

*As you may know, the City of Golden Valley involved residents in a visioning program for the future of Golden Valley. This program was called “Envision Golden Valley.”*

They were then asked:

*Were you aware of “Envision Golden Valley?”*

Sixty-seven percent are aware of “Envision Golden Valley:”

YES	67%
NO	33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	1%

Awareness is higher among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

It is lower among:

- residents for ten years or less
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

Next, residents were queried:

***Did you or any members of your household participate in “Envision Golden Valley?”***

Twenty percent, a comparatively high percentage, report participation in the process:

YES	20%
NO	80%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	0%

Participants tend to be:

- men
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

Non-participants are typically:

- residents for more than thirty years
- women
- over sixty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

Next, residents were instructed:

***I am going to read you a list of goals the City Council adopted, which were also identified as priorities through***

***“Envision Golden Valley.” For each one, please tell me if you were aware of it or not.***

A list of six priorities was then read:

***A study of zoning and development of the I-394 corridor?***

Fifty-six percent report awareness of this goal:

YES	.....	56%
NO	.....	43%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	1%

“Yes” is stated more often by:

- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is selected at a higher rate by:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Adoption of stronger housing maintenance goals and enforcement?***

Fifty-four percent report awareness of the goal to “adopt stronger housing maintenance goals and enforcement:”

YES	.....	54%
NO	.....	46%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	0%

“Yes” is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is mentioned more often by:

- residents planning to move in less than five years

- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Sponsorship of Mighty Tidy Day to encourage community clean-up?***

Forty-seven percent report awareness of this goal:

YES	.....	47%
NO	.....	53%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	1%

“Yes” is reported more often by:

- households with children
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents planning to move in less than five years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Started a long-term park master plan process?***

Thirty-nine percent report awareness of the goal to “start a long-term park master plan process.”

YES	.....	39%
NO	.....	61%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	.....	1%

“Yes” is mentioned most often by:

- households with children
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners
- Precincts Three and Four residents

“No” is indicated more often by:

- empty nesters
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Encouraged continued citizen involvement through  
“Connecting Golden Valley?”***

Forty-five percent report awareness of this goal:

YES .....	45%
NO .....	54%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

“Yes” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Conducted a Council Social gathering to meet informally  
with residents?***

Thirty-nine percent report awareness of the goal to “conduct a Council Social gathering to meet informally with residents:”

YES .....	39%
NO .....	61%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

“Yes” cited most frequently by:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“No” is stated at a higher rate by:

- residents for ten years or less
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters
- Precincts Three and Four residents

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## Summary and Conclusion

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Sixty-one percent feel they could have an impact on the way things are run in Golden Valley; thirty-two percent think they could not. Overall, this level of empowerment is above the suburban area norm and the result is relatively unchanged from the 2001 study. Golden Valley residents, then, feel connected to their local decision-makers.

Thirty-seven percent report having a “great deal” or “fair amount” of knowledge about the work of the Mayor and City Council, down 13% from the 2001 level. Fifty-seven percent either “strongly approve” or “approve” of their job, while only twelve percent register disapproval. The eight percent decrease in approval ratings reflect an increase in uncertainty, not negativity. Positive ratings are based upon the “perception of a good job” and “lack of city problems;” critics point to an “unwillingness to listen” and “disagreement with City Council decisions.”

Thirty-five percent report having contact with the Golden Valley City Staff; this level of contact is unchanged from the 2001 study. Fifty-eight percent rate the staff as “excellent” or “good,” down 14% from the 2001 level, while only six percent rate them critically, one-half of the 2001 level. These results reflect an increase of uncertainty, from 16% in 2001 to 36% in 2006. Positive evaluations are based on the “perception of a good job,” “helpfulness,” “friendliness,” and “lack of problems in the community;” negative judgments are based upon “room for improvement” and “perception of a poor job.”

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents are aware of the “Envision Golden Valley” visioning program. Twenty percent report household members participated in the process.

Less than 60% are aware of any of the six goals adopted by the City Council as a result of this visioning process. In fact, only 39% are aware of two goals: “started a long-term park master plan process” and “conducted a Council Social Gathering to meet informally with residents.” Forty-five percent report awareness of “encouraged continued citizen involvement through “Connecting Golden Valley,” while 47% are aware of “sponsorship of Mighty Tidy Day to encourage community clean-up.” The high levels of awareness, 54% and 56%, respectively, are posted for: “adoption of stronger housing maintenance goals and enforcement” and “a study of zoning and development of the I-394 corridor.”

# **Chapter Eight: Communications Issues**

# Communications Issues

Golden Valley residents were asked an extensive series of questions about the ways in which they obtain information about City Government and its activities. Current communications channels were identified, and preferences were ascertained. The City Newsletter was measured for both effectiveness and reach. Similarly, cable television programming was examined. Finally, the use of the Internet was explored.

## Principal Source of Information

Residents were asked:

*What is your principal source of information about Golden Valley City Government and its activities?*

A 58% majority point to the “City Newsletter:”

NOTHING .....	2%
LOCAL NEWSPAPER .....	23%
CITY NEWSLETTER .....	58%
WORD OF MOUTH .....	6%
WEBSITE .....	3%
MEETINGS .....	2%
CABLE TV .....	5%
SCATTERED .....	2%

Twenty-three percent cite the “local newspaper.”

“City newsletter” is stated more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- empty nesters

“Local newspaper” is selected more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years

## Preferred Source of Information

Residents were asked a related question:

*How would you prefer to receive information about Golden Valley City government and its activities?*

An identical 58% prefer to receive information in a “City Newsletter,” while 20% prefer to read it in “local newspapers:”

NONE .....	2%
LOCAL NEWSPAPER .....	20%
CITY NEWSLETTER .....	58%
WORD OF MOUTH .....	5%
WEBSITE .....	4%
CABLE TV .....	5%
MAILINGS .....	3%
E-MAIL .....	2%
SCATTERED .....	2%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

## The “Golden Valley City News”

Golden Valley residents were asked:

*During the past year, did you receive the "Golden Valley City News," the City's newsletter which comes out every other month?*

Ninety-five percent report receiving the “Golden Valley City News:”

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	87%	85%	91%	95%
NO .....	9%	10%	7%	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	4%	5%	2%	0%

Receipt peaks among:

- home owners

Next, regular readership was established:

***Do you or any members of your household regularly read it?***

Ninety percent of those receiving the newsletter report household members regularly read it:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	92%	95%	95%	90%
NO .....	8%	6%	5%	10%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	1%	0%	0%

The overall reach of the newsletter is 86% of the city's households.

Readers tend to be:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over forty-five year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

Non-readers are more likely to be:

- residents for ten years or less
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters
- Precincts Three and Four residents

Those reading the newsletter were next asked:

***How would you rate the content of the newsletter – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

A very impressive 94% rate the content of the newsletter favorably:

EXCELLENT .....	14%
GOOD .....	80%
ONLY FAIR .....	6%
POOR .....	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%

Only six percent are more critical.

Favorable ratings are encountered more often among:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

- Precincts Five and Six residents

Next, readers were asked:

***How would you rate the format and appearance of the newsletter – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?***

Ninety-one percent rate the format and appearance of the newsletter as either “excellent” or “good.”

EXCELLENT .....	15%
GOOD .....	76%
ONLY FAIR .....	9%
POOR .....	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

Nine percent rate them negatively.

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

Finally readers were asked:

***Are there any changes or improvements you would make to the City's newsletter?***

No meaningful suggestions were offered:

NO .....	90%
MORE FREQUENT .....	2%
BLACK AND WHITE .....	2%
LARGER PRINT .....	2%
SCATTERED .....	4%

“No” is reported at a higher rate by:

- Precincts Five and Six residents

Finally, readers were queried:

***Do you sometimes clip the entire page or a specific article for future reference, or do you throw it away or recycle after you have read it?***

Twenty-nine percent report “sometimes clipping a page or an article,” down six percent from the 2001 level:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
SOMETIMES CLIP .....	50%	40%	35%	29%

THROW AWAY/RECYCLE .....	34%	. 48%	. 46%	. 34%
BOTH .....	12%	. 10%	. 18%	. 37%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	3%	.. 3%	.. 1%	.. 0%

Thirty-four percent “throw it away or recycled it after reading,” down 12% from five years ago.

“Sometimes clip” is stated more often by:

- Precincts Three and Four residents

“Throw away or recycle” is indicated at a higher rate by:

- residents planning to move in less than five years
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

“Both” is posted at a higher rate by:

- Precincts Five and Six residents

## Cable Television

Residents were initially asked:

*Does your household currently subscribe to cable television?*

Sixty-seven percent of the households currently subscribe to cable television:

	1994	1999	2001	2006
YES .....	50%	. 54%	. 67%	. 67%
NO .....	50%	. 45%	. 33%	. 33%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	.. 1%	.. 0%	.. 0%

Subscribers are more apt to be:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds

Non-subscribers tend to be:

- over sixty-four year olds

Cable television subscribers were next asked:

*I would like to read a short list of programs shown on Golden Valley Government Channels. For each one, please tell me if you frequently watch it, occasionally*

*watch it, or do not watch it.*

A list of five programs was then read:

***Bulletin Board listing of meetings, events and information?***

Forty-three percent at least “occasionally” watch the Bulletin Board listing of meetings, events and information:

FREQUENTLY .....	6%
OCCASIONALLY .....	37%
DO NOT WATCH IT .....	57%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%

“Occasionally” is reported more often by:

- home owners

“Do not watch at all” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Live or taped re-broadcasts of City Council meetings?***

Forty-eight percent either “frequently” or “occasionally” watch live or taped re-broadcasts of City Council meetings:

FREQUENTLY .....	10%
OCCASIONALLY .....	38%
DO NOT WATCH IT .....	52%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%

“Frequently” is reported more often by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- over sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

“Occasionally” is stated more frequently by:

- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- home owners
- Precincts Five and Six residents

“Do not watch it” is selected at a higher rate by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Cable 12 News?***

Fifty-three percent report at least “occasionally” tuning in on Cable 12 News:

FREQUENTLY .....	10%
OCCASIONALLY .....	43%
DO NOT WATCH IT .....	47%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%

“Frequently” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- women
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government

“Occasionally” is cited at a higher rate by:

- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“Do not watch it” is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for ten years or less
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***Northwest Cities?***

Thirty-two percent either “frequently” or “occasionally” watch “Northwest Cities:”

FREQUENTLY .....	3%
OCCASIONALLY .....	29%
DO NOT WATCH IT .....	67%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

“Occasionally” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents for more than thirty years

- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“Do not watch it” is stated most frequently by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

***City programming, such as city updates and special meetings?***

Thirty-three percent at least “occasionally” watch City programming, such as city updates and special meetings:

FREQUENTLY .....	3%
OCCASIONALLY .....	30%
DO NOT WATCH IT .....	67%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

“Occasionally” is reported more often by:

- men
- residents with a lot of knowledge about city government
- home owners

“Do not watch it” is stated most frequently by:

- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- residents with not a lot of knowledge about city government
- renters

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**The Internet**

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Golden Valley residents were initially asked:

***Do you have access to the Internet at home only, at work only, at both home and work, or at neither place?***

Seventy-two percent of the respondents have access to the Internet:

	1999	2001	2006
HOME ONLY .....	24%	26%	36%
WORK ONLY .....	12%	8%	2%
BOTH .....	30%	42%	34%
NEITHER .....	34%	25%	28%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	0%	0%

Seventy percent could access the Internet from home, while only two percent could do so from work.

“Both” is cited more often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- households with children
- men
- eighteen to sixty-four year olds
- home owners

“Neither” is mentioned most frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- women
- over sixty-four year olds
- renters

Residents with Internet access possibilities were asked ten follow-up questions.

First, the type of connection was discussed:

*How do you connect to the internet at home – on a dial-up modem at 28K, on a dial-up modem at 56K, DSL, T-1 line, Comcast High Speed Internet, or some other way?  
How?*

Forty-six percent have Comcast High Speed Internet Service:

YES/DIAL-UP AT 28K .....	5%
YES/DIAL-UP AT 56K .....	16%
YES/DSL .....	25%
YES/T-1 .....	0%
YES/COMCAST HIGH SPEED .....	46%
YES/WIRELESS .....	2%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	5%

Twenty-five percent have a DSL line, while 16% use a dial-up modem at 56K speed.

“Dial-up at 56K” is selected at a higher rate by:

- residents with no plans to move in the next ten years

“DSL” is posted at a higher rate by:

- residents planning to move in five to ten years

Next, Internet-capable residents were queried:

*Have you accessed the City’s web site?*

Forty-six percent actually access the web site:

	2001	2006
YES .....	47%	46%
NO .....	52%	53%
DON’T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%	1%

Overall, 33% of all respondents access the website, almost triple the suburban norm.

“Yes” is cited most often by:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds
- Precincts Seven and Eight residents

“No” is mentioned more frequently by:

- residents for more than thirty years
- households with seniors
- empty nesters
- over sixty-four year olds

Web site visitors were next asked:

*How would you rate the city’s website – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*

Eighty-six percent rate the city’s website as either “excellent” or “good:”

EXCELLENT .....	2%
GOOD .....	84%
ONLY FAIR .....	12%
POOR .....	1%
DON’T KNOW/REFUSED .....	1%

Thirteen percent are more critical in their evaluations.

Ratings peak among:

- Precincts One and Two residents

Website visitors were then asked:

*How often do you visit the web site — daily, weekly, monthly, less often or whenever needed?*

Eighty-five percent reported visiting the web site less often than on a monthly basis:

	2001	2006
DAILY .....	0%	0%
WEEKLY .....	1%	4%
MONTHLY .....	18%	11%
LESS OFTEN .....	39%	35%
WHENEVER NEEDED .....	42%	50%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	0%	0%

Less frequent visitors tend to be:

- Precincts One and Two residents

All web site visitors were then asked:

*Were you able to find what you were looking for?*

An impressive 92% report they are able to find what they are looking for:

	2001	2006
YES .....	88%	92%
NO .....	7%	5%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	5%	2%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

They were next asked:

*What information were you looking for?*

Thirty-one percent seek “park and recreation system information:”

UNSURE .....	12%
PARK AND RECREATION .....	31%

PLANNING AND ZONING .....	8%
COMMUNITY EVENTS .....	10%
CITY SERVICE INFORMATION .....	2%
GENERAL INFORMATION .....	9%
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES .....	9%
CODES AND ORDINANCES .....	6%
RECYCLING .....	11%
LICENSING .....	2%
ROAD CONSTRUCTION .....	2%

Eleven percent seek “recycling information,” while 10% want information about “community events.”

“Parks and recreation” is cited more often by:

- households with children
- eighteen to forty-four year olds

“Recycling” is mentioned most frequently by:

- women

All city residents with internet access were then asked:

***What information would you like to see on the City of Golden Valley’s web site?***

Eight percent want more “general information” about the community:

UNSURE .....	26%
NONE .....	40%
PARKS AND RECREATION .....	7%
PLANNING AND ZONING .....	7%
COMMUNITY EVENTS .....	3%
GENERAL INFORMATION .....	8%
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES .....	3%
SCATTERED .....	6%

Seven percent each would like to see “parks and recreation information” or “planning and zoning information.”

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

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## Wireless High-Speed Internet

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Residents were told:

*As you may know, some cities are starting to offer non-profit services, such as high-speed wireless internet, to their residents. The high-speed wireless Internet service is somewhat faster than dial-up, but somewhat slower than cable or DSL. Also, it is less expensive than cable or DSL, but more expensive than dial-up.*

They were then asked:

*Would you support or oppose Golden Valley offering wireless high-speed Internet access? Do you feel strongly that way?*

By a 38%-22% margin, a plurality of residents support the City offering wireless high-speed Internet access:

STRONGLY SUPPORT .....	7%
SUPPORT .....	31%
OPPOSE .....	16%
STRONGLY OPPOSE .....	6%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED .....	41%

But, 41% are “unsure” about this potential city action.

Support is higher among:

- residents for eleven to thirty years
- residents planning to move in five to ten years
- households with children
- forty-five to sixty-four year olds

Those supportive of the City offering this service were next asked:

*How much would you be willing to pay for wireless high-speed Internet service offered by the City of Golden Valley? Would you be willing to pay \$\_\_\_ per month? How about \$\_\_\_ per month?*

The typical supporter would be willing to pay \$21.30 per month for a City-offered high-speed Internet service:

LESS THAN \$20.00 .....	30%
\$20.00 .....	30%

\$25.00	24%
\$30.00	6%
\$35.00	0%
MORE THAN \$35.00	0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	11%

There are no statistically significant sub-group differences.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

The City Newsletter is regarded as the principal source of information about Golden Valley City Government and its activities by 58%, up 15% since the 2001 study. The newsletter has clearly increased both its public awareness and its impact. Local newspapers are regarded as the principal source of information about city government and activities by 23%. Six percent rely upon the “grapevine,” while five percent mention cable television.

Fifty-eight percent prefer to receive information about City Government and its activities through the city’s newsletter. Twenty percent prefer newspaper coverage. Five percent or less point to the “grapevine,” “city’s website,” “cable television,” “mailings,” and “e-mail.”

In assessing the reach of various communications channels, the “Golden Valley City News” newsletter registers a very high reach of 95%, an increase of five percent over the 2001 level. Ninety percent of those receiving the city newsletter report regularly reading it. Twenty-nine percent sometimes clip parts and keep them around for later reference, while 34% toss it after reading. Thirty-seven percent, though, double the percentage in 2001, report saving or tossing the issue depending upon its coverage. Ninety-four percent rate the content of the newsletter highly, while 91% rate the format and appearance of the newsletter favorably.

Sixty-seven percent of the surveyed households currently receive cable television, the same level as in the 2001 study. Among cable television subscribers, an impressive 53% report watching Cable 12 News either “frequently” or “occasionally.” Among subscribers, a comparatively high 48% “frequently” or “occasionally” watch Golden Valley City Council Meeting live or taped telecasts during the past year. Forty-three percent report watching the Community Bulletin Board on Channel 16 during the past year. Thirty-three at least “occasionally” tune in to city programming, such as city updates and special meetings, and 32% similarly catch “Northwest Cities.”

Seventy-two percent report having access to the Internet from home or at work. In fact, 70% have access from their homes. Among those having access to the Internet, 46% connect through Comcast High-Speed Internet, 25% use DSL, and 16% have a dial-up modem at 56K speed. Forty-six percent report accessing the City’s website – translating to 32% of the households across the community. The typical website visitor rates it as either “excellent” or “good,” accesses the site less than once per month, is able to find what he/she is looking for, and tends to be concerned with information about park and recreational offerings, community events, general city information, and City Council Meeting minutes.

By an unconvincing 38%-22% margin, residents support Golden Valley offering high-speed

wireless service. But, a very large 41% are unsure. The typical supporter of a City-operated system would be willing to pay \$21.30 for this high-speed Internet service.

# **Chapter Nine: Final Thoughts**

## Final Thoughts

Once again, Golden Valley citizens remain very pleased with their community — city services, City Staff and City Council. In almost every case, very favorable ratings are either stable or improved from five years ago. Community identity and neighborliness remain at remarkably high levels for an inner-ring suburban community. Residents express great satisfaction with their current park and recreation system, and concerns about the sidewalk system have clearly abated. And, “boosterism,” already extraordinarily strong, increases to include over one-third of the sample. There are two pressing concerns; however; one is a Metropolitan Area-wide issue while the other is a particular first-ring suburban issue. While anxiety about property taxes has significantly increased since the 2001 study; this increase is in line with a pattern found throughout the suburbs during 2006. It does, however, provide a cautionary constraint on the ability of City Councils to substantially raise their levies for program funding. The second concern, crime, is consistent with increases during the past year in the inner-ring suburban communities. In part, this increase reflects events in Minneapolis, but residents appear less comfortable with the generally safe nature of the community, particularly in areas bordering Minneapolis. But, beyond these two issues, residents are markedly contented with their quality of life.