



CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

CITY MANAGER – COMMUNICATIONS

10 N. DIVISION ST. ROOM 206 BATTLE CREEK MI 49014
PHONE (269) 966-3378 FAX (269) 966-6654 WWW.BATTLECREEKMI.GOV

July 6, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact: City Manager Rebecca Fleury, (269) 966-3378

City responds to citizen survey results

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. — The results are in and the City of Battle Creek is reviewing and responding to the results of the 2015 citizen survey, which took place this spring.

The survey was sent to a random sampling of 3,000 city addresses. With about 8 percent returned as undeliverable and 626 completed, the city saw a 23 percent response rate. The survey later was posted online for anyone to complete, and saw a response of 864.

Through their responses, residents gave the city both praise and criticism, and staff continue to review the results to determine how to use them in various decision-making processes. The city takes all results with the understanding that we have not surveyed residents since 2009; we plan to conduct surveys every three years going forward.

Our community also has a variety of ongoing processes that address some of the results directly. One of the survey's conclusions was that the economy is a top priority in the coming years. To that end, the Kellogg Company and W.K. Kellogg Foundation have led the BC Vision initiative to improve Battle Creek's economic conditions. The city also is working through an Inspections Division review.

The city plans to connect the citizen survey, its results and future surveys to ongoing efforts for increased transparency, citizen engagement and new mission and vision statements. The city also has begun a move toward Priority Based Budgeting, an innovative way to address our fiscal health and wellness in ways to best allocate funds to priority services and programs and meet our strategic objectives.

"All of this is to better engage with our community and make sure what we do supports our mission and vision," said City Manager Rebecca Fleury. "We can take the input we receive from the community and use that to examine our processes and priorities, leading us to being better service providers and better stewards of taxpayer dollars."

All of the final citizen survey reports are available on the city's website, www.battlecreekmi.gov, under "Current topics" on the home page.

****Please see the following pages for full responses to the survey results from various city department heads.**

CITY OF BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

MISSION: TO ENSURE A SAFE, PROSPEROUS AND CULTURALLY ENRICHED COMMUNITY.

VISION: WE ENVISION BATTLE CREEK AS AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.



CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

CITY MANAGER – COMMUNICATIONS

10 N. DIVISION ST. ROOM 206 BATTLE CREEK MI 49014
PHONE (269) 966-3378 FAX (269) 966-6654 WWW.BATTLECREEKMI.GOV

Community Services Department (Marcie Gillette, director):

Related to land use, planning and zoning, we look to improve the quality of service by leading a community engagement process to update our Master Plan, which meets the current and future land use, planning and zoning needs of the community. This updated Master Plan is a working document used to guide conversations, initiatives and decision making.

Related to code enforcement, we will work to improve the quality of service by better communicating city ordinance requirements and enforcement processes. We also plan to decrease the number or observed code violations or other hazards in Battle Creek by continuing both proactive and complaint-driven enforcement, in addition to implementing improved enforcement processes.

Fire Department (David Schmaltz, chief):

We are pleased with the overall survey results related to the Fire Department. They show that the majority of respondents and, therefore, the public, feel we are providing a quality service.

That being said, the rating for Fire Prevention was not as high as we would like to see. That showed us that our community feels we need to be more engaged. We are taking that message to heart and will use this as an opportunity to be more proactive with our messages and education related to fire prevention. We are always trying to serve our community better and find new ways to provide the best service possible.

Parks and Recreation Department (Jeff Hovarter, director):

Eighty percent of residents indicated on the survey that health and wellness opportunities were an essential or very important focus over the next two years.

The Parks and Recreation Department mission is “To provide recreation programs and services that improve the physical health and wellbeing of the individual and the community.” Based on the survey results — such as reported use of city recreation centers and visits to neighborhood or city parks — we clearly need to better communicate the many public facilities and opportunities available in the community for residents to be physically active and get moving.

CITY OF BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

MISSION: TO ENSURE A SAFE, PROSPEROUS AND CULTURALLY ENRICHED COMMUNITY.

VISION: WE ENVISION BATTLE CREEK AS AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.



CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

CITY MANAGER – COMMUNICATIONS

10 N. DIVISION ST. ROOM 206 BATTLE CREEK MI 49014
PHONE (269) 966-3378 FAX (269) 966-6654 WWW.BATTLECREEKMI.GOV

Police Department (Jim Blocker, chief):

Overall, survey responses related to our services averaged “good” ratings, which we believe to be in line with national averages. Though unchanged for about the last decade, this should not go unchallenged. “Good” is not good when we can do so much better.

One of our challenges is continuing to educate the community about what police actually can do to resolve community-based problems, and what we cannot do. I would note that more than 53 percent of all calls for service are not criminal. However, the Police Department is the only government agency that will respond almost immediately after a phone call, and can also do more to prepare our officers to be resilient and professionally equipped to address those non-criminal issues, or connect community members with the right organizations and personnel to assist them.

We are utilizing technology to help with this — www.nextdoor.com is an example of how we are using a free smartphone app to address and respond to neighborhood concerns in real time. To date, more than 600 homes are signed up after 120 days. We also actively use Facebook and Twitter.

We have engaged in multiple strategies to increase customer satisfaction. The BCPD is always seeking new and creative ways to improve our responsiveness to the community, including initiatives like the Fair and Impartial Policing training scheduled for this fall. This training will involve a healthy discussion on bias and the negative impacts bias has in our profession.

Transportation Department (Larry Bowron, director):

I am pleased to know that the survey results indicate that public transportation is a strong feature of our community.

Other indicators in the survey tell us that we may be able to reach more people to educate and inform them about the benefits to using public transit as a good alternative to driving. As such, we will take a look at the ways we market our services, to ensure we are reaching the people who need and desire our services the most, as well as reaching out to those who might like to learn more and give our transportation services a try.

CITY OF BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

MISSION: TO ENSURE A SAFE, PROSPEROUS AND CULTURALLY ENRICHED COMMUNITY.

VISION: WE ENVISION BATTLE CREEK AS AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.



CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

CITY MANAGER – COMMUNICATIONS

10 N. DIVISION ST. ROOM 206 BATTLE CREEK MI 49014
PHONE (269) 966-3378 FAX (269) 966-6654 WWW.BATTLECREEKMI.GOV

Public Works Department (Chris Dopp, director):

The Public Works Department is comprised of a variety of services; we are charged with maintaining most of the public infrastructure and these services go mostly unnoticed when delivered without interruption. The survey results seem to reflect that.

Residents seem to have a view in the normal expectation range for our transportation network for cars, paths and ease of travel. The exception is for the sidewalk network, which received poor marks. Our policy since 1996 is to perform routine maintenance of sidewalk trip hazards, in conjunction with the routine surface treatments of our roads. This avoids a situation in which our sidewalks reach poor condition and is meant to eliminate damaged portions, not necessarily fully replace an old sidewalk. Another sidewalk concern might be the need to construct new sidewalks where none currently exist, which is not funded at this time. Both of these areas could be considered for more funding if sidewalks are, indeed, a high priority.

The condition and maintenance of our street network also was rated poorly, including street cleaning and snow removal. Our engineering staff uses the broadly-recognized PASER pavement rating system on our streets. Our ratings for both local and major roads are consistently in the desirable range, requiring routine maintenance. Compared to the survey results, this tells us we might need to better educate our residents about our results, how we compare to other communities and which streets we own, as compared to those in our network owned and funded by other government agencies.

Street sweeping and snow plowing are based on our available funding. We have cut back on these service levels due to the shortfall in street revenues since the early 2000s, since gasoline tax revenues have trended downward. This funding might increase in the future, if new proposals are passed by state and federal legislators. In the meantime, we perform these services each year to the best of our ability, and share our schedules and processes throughout the year.

###

CITY OF BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

MISSION: TO ENSURE A SAFE, PROSPEROUS AND CULTURALLY ENRICHED COMMUNITY.

VISION: WE ENVISION BATTLE CREEK AS AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.