

**2007 Survey of Little Rock Citizens'
Opinions of City Services**

February 2007

by

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

The UALR Institute of Government Survey Research Center (SRC) conducted a telephone survey at the request of the City of Little Rock. The purpose of the survey was to measure Little Rock residents' use of city services as well as attitudes and opinions about city services. The survey also asked respondents to report what they perceived to be the main problem facing Little Rock today.

Methodology

Data was collected from 473 randomly selected Little Rock household residents. The sample was drawn from the population of Little Rock household residents age 18 and older. Respondents were individually screened to assure that they were 18 or older and residents of the city of Little Rock at the time of survey participation. Data collection began on January 4, 2007 and ended on January 25, 2007. Random digit dialing (RDD) was employed for sampling city residents, and participants were selected randomly from within each household.

Data was weighted in order to bring the sample representations in line with the actual population proportions in Little Rock. Data was weighted for age, gender, and race. The 2000 Census Summary File 1 provided the sample estimates that formed the basis for weighting.

A sample size of 473 provides a potential for sampling error of ± 5 percent at the conventional 95 percent confidence level. In theory, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results of surveying a sample differ no more than 5 percent in either direction from the results that would have been obtained by interviewing all adult Little Rock residents. For example, 66% of respondents report that they had come into personal contact with an individual who appeared to be homeless in the last 12 months. Because of the sampling error, one can be 95 percent confident that between 61% and 71% of the population had come into personal contact with an individual who appeared to be homeless in the last 12 months.

Findings

Overall, the City of Little Rock scored well on a variety of services and conditions included in the survey. Residents of 473 randomly selected Little Rock households gave city government high marks on such physical infrastructure provision and maintenance as traffic signs and street lighting. Similarly, respondents rated the City highly on services such as garbage collection, parks and recreational facilities, and the zoo. Not so highly rated were several structures and services such as the provision of sidewalks and code enforcement services.

What the City does well

The push made by the City in response to recommendations contained in FUTURE Little Rock and Vision Little Rock to improve traffic signage, street lighting, and downtown parking has paid dividends in the perception of Little Rock residents. Ninety (90) percent of respondents said that traffic signs are clear and easy to see (page 5). Sixty-one percent said that street lighting is adequate as compared to 37 percent who said more was needed (page 6). A similar percentage (60 percent) agreed that downtown parking had improved (page 9).

Respondents rated garbage collection highly, as 78 percent were very or somewhat satisfied and only 15 percent were dissatisfied (pages 13-15). Three-fourths (75 percent) indicated that they are very or somewhat satisfied with the city's parks and recreational facilities (page 17), although just over half (51 percent) were satisfied with programs and services provided at the parks and recreational facilities.

Fire and police services scored well in the survey. When asked to rate the fire department's response speed, 50 percent said excellent and 13 percent said good (page 24). A combined 62 percent rated the quality of services provided as excellent or good (page 24, 25). Slightly lower scores characterized respondents' rating of police services. Fifty-seven percent said excellent or good on police response speed (page 34) and on the quality of police services (page 36). An impressive 64 percent rated Little Rock police excellent or good on courtesy (page 35).

Two other service areas scored well. Animal services received a high rating on response speed (67 percent rated it excellent or good) and on the quality of its services (62 percent) (pages 31, 32). Most respondents contact Animal Services regarding loose, stray, or injured animals, while a much smaller number use it for pet adoption (page 30). Finally, 67 percent of respondents rated the Little Rock's zoo as excellent or good (page 38).

What the City could do better

In the opinion of those responding to this telephone survey, four areas of concern exist. They are the absence of sidewalks, code enforcement, homelessness, and communication with city hall.

Under half of the respondents (48 percent) thought that there are enough sidewalks in their part of town. Thirty-nine (39) percent disagreed. A slightly stronger number (51 percent) said that sidewalks where they live are in good condition. Twenty-nine (29) percent disagreed.

Regarding code enforcement, half (50 percent) characterized response rate as excellent or good; an equal number said fair or poor. These data reflect just seven percent (32 households) of the total sample.

The issue of homelessness was approached in the survey in terms of contact and severity as a social problem. While responses did not directly critique the City's forays into this issue, respondents signaled concern about the problem. For example, two-thirds (66 percent) indicated that they had come in contact with an individual who appeared to be homeless (page 10). By any measure, that is a significant majority. A smaller majority (51 percent) considers homelessness to be a major problem (page 11). Of particular concern, 28 percent felt that the homeless problem in Little Rock is worse than one year ago as compared to five percent who thought it is better (page 12). Fifty-seven (57) percent said it is the same.

Concerning communication with city hall, respondents had two interesting reactions. First, although a majority (55 percent) strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement "citizens are kept well-informed about city issues and services," a noticeable minority (37 percent) strongly or somewhat disagreed (page 2). Taking another tact, respondents were asked if they had had concerns they would have reported to city officials but didn't (page 20). One-third (34 percent) answered "yes." As a follow up, they were asked why they hadn't contacted city officials (page 21). Thirty (30) percent said they didn't think it would do any good, 12 percent admitted they didn't know who to contact, and nine percent felt that there are barriers in reporting problems. On the other hand, 14 percent said that they were too busy, 12 percent admitted that they were too lazy or they forgot.

Note: Concerning the very first question asked in the survey (page 1), "What would you say is the main problem facing Little Rock today?" there is no doubt that crime is the number one issue (51 percent). But, because of the way the question was asked, forcing the respondent to name just one problem (as opposed to ranking three or five top problems, for example), other significant problems rated lower than they might have in an alternative rating scheme.

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Main Problem Facing Little Rock Today

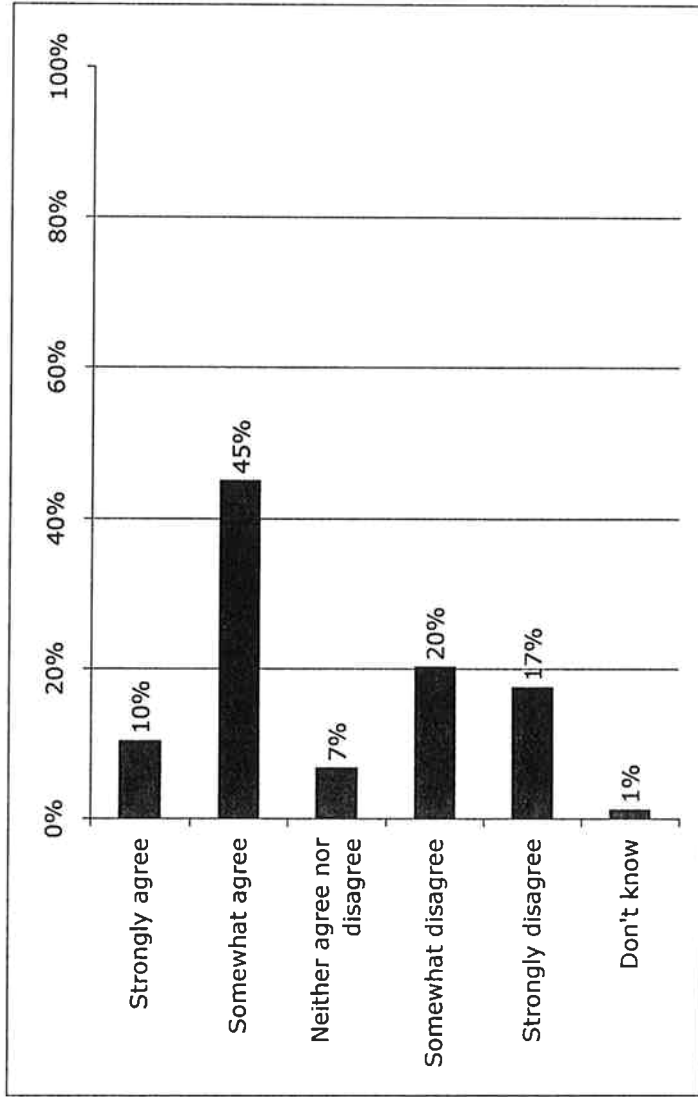
What would you say is the MAIN problem facing Little Rock today?

	Count	Percent
Crime/Too few police	240	51%
Education	44	9%
Need higher paying jobs/more economic opportunity	29	6%
Drugs/Gangs	15	3%
Traffic Problems	13	3%
City government credibility and trust problems/mismanagement/poor organization and planning	13	3%
Streets/Street lighting	11	2%
Leadership problems. Need more good leadership.	9	2%
Public transportation	7	1%
Lack of adequate entertainment options, especially for families	6	1%
Too much growth	6	1%
Taxes too high/Too many taxes/Improper use of taxes	6	1%
No Problems	6	1%
Poor city services/Poor implementation of services	5	1%
Poverty/Lack of funds/Standard of Living	5	1%
Homelessness	4	1%
Too little growth	3	1%
Other	17	4%
Don't know	31	7%
Refused	3	1%
Total	473	100%

Perception of Information About City Issues and Services

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Citizens are kept well-informed about city issues and services.

Highlights

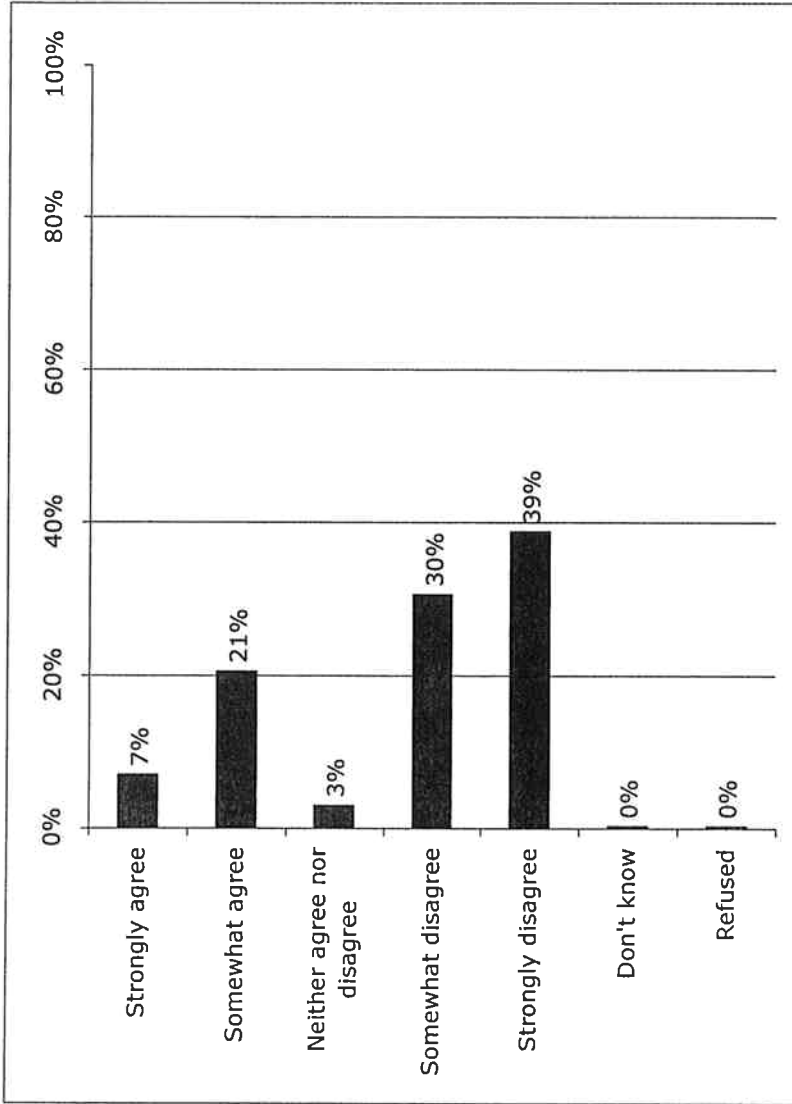


	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	48	10%
Somewhat agree	212	45%
Neither agree nor disagree	31	7%
Somewhat disagree	95	20%
Strongly disagree	82	17%
Don't know	5	1%
Total	473	100%

Street Conditions

Most streets in Little Rock are maintained and do not need repair.

Highlights

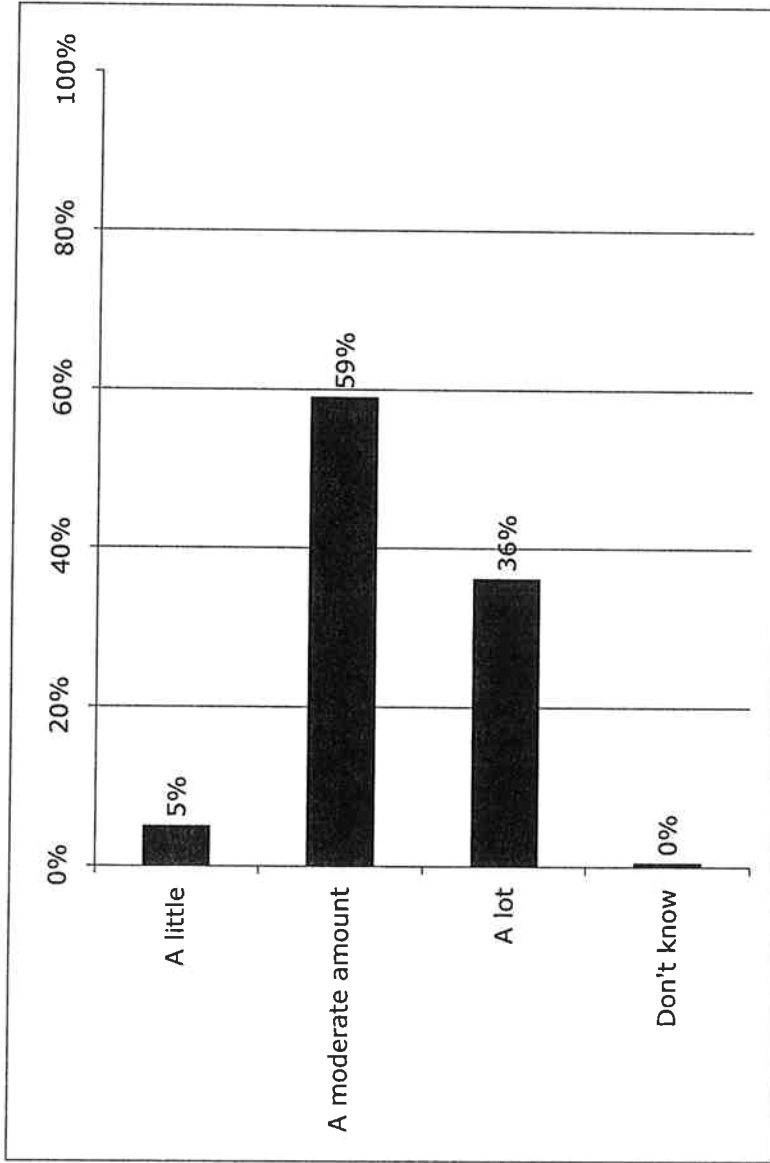


Response	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	33	7%
Somewhat agree	97	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	14	3%
Somewhat disagree	144	30%
Strongly disagree	183	39%
Don't know	1	0%
Refused	1	0%
Total	473	100%

Amount of Street Repair Needed

Would you say that the streets needing repair need a little, a moderate amount, or a lot of repair?

Highlights



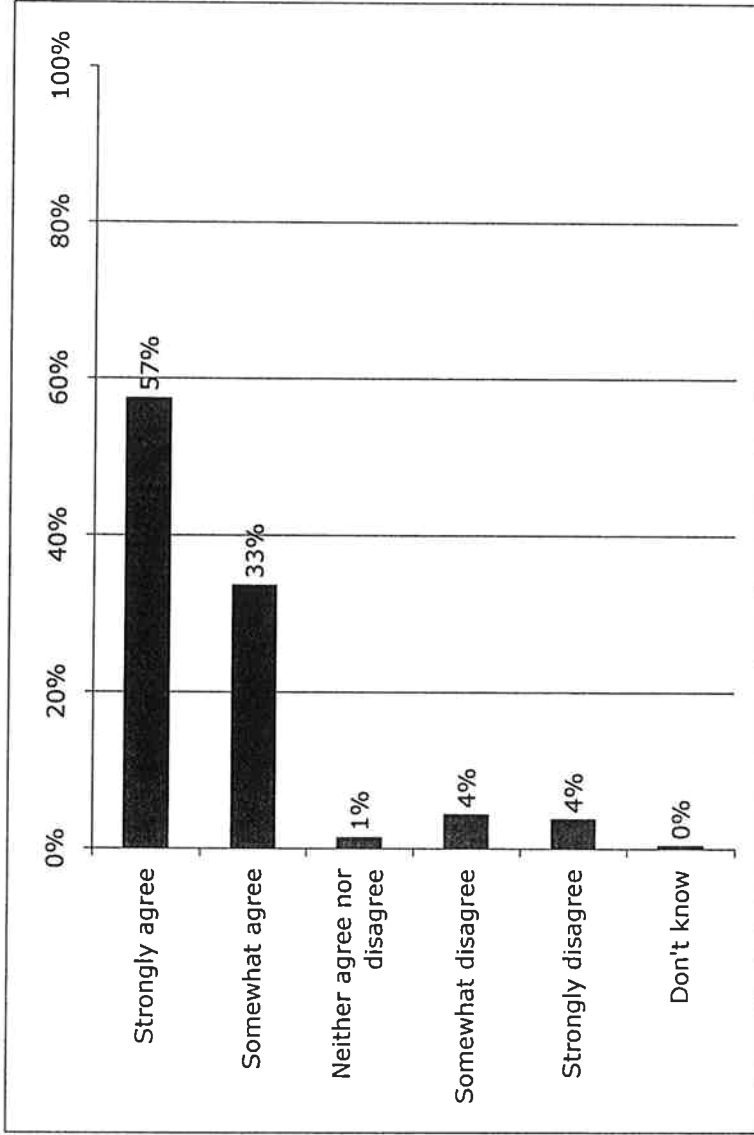
N=328

	Count	Percent
A little	16	5%
A moderate amount	193	59%
A lot	118	36%
Don't know	1	0%
Total	328	100%

Visibility and Clarity of Traffic Signs

Traffic signs in Little Rock; like, stop signs, and one-way signs are, for the most part, clear and easy to see.

Highlights

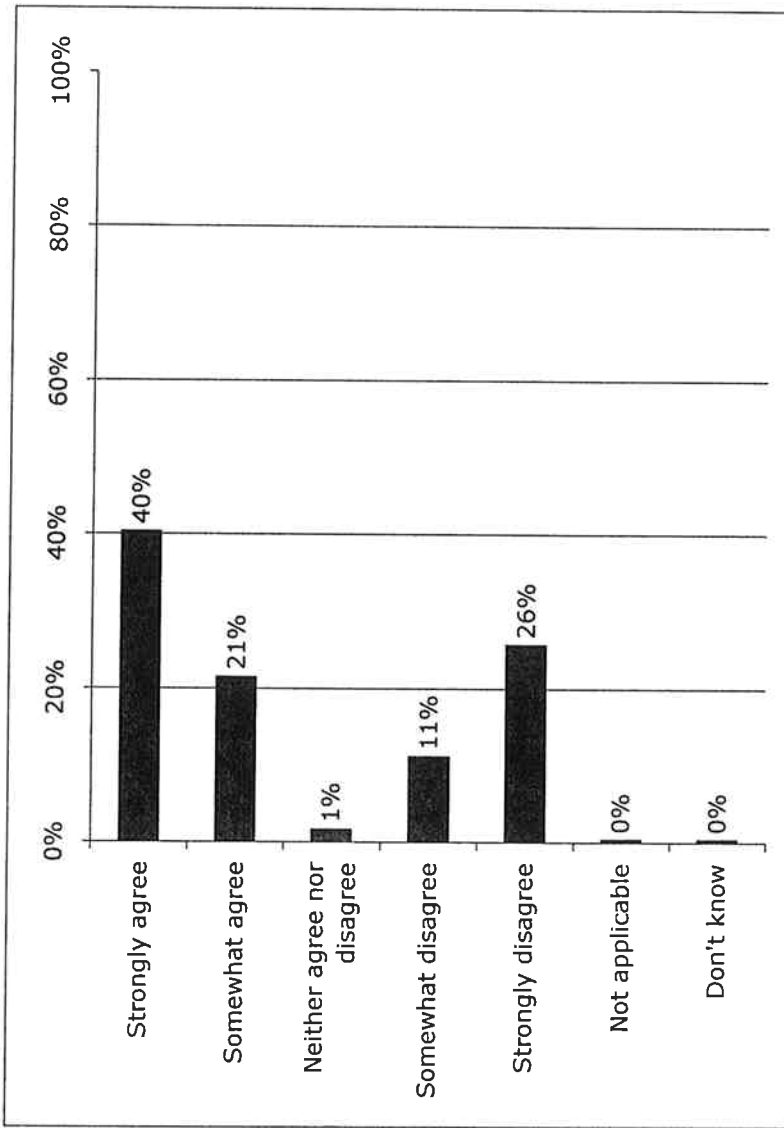


Response Category	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	271	57%
Somewhat agree	158	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	6	1%
Somewhat disagree	20	4%
Strongly disagree	17	4%
Don't know	1	0%

Street Lighting

There is enough street lighting at night in the area where I live.

Highlights

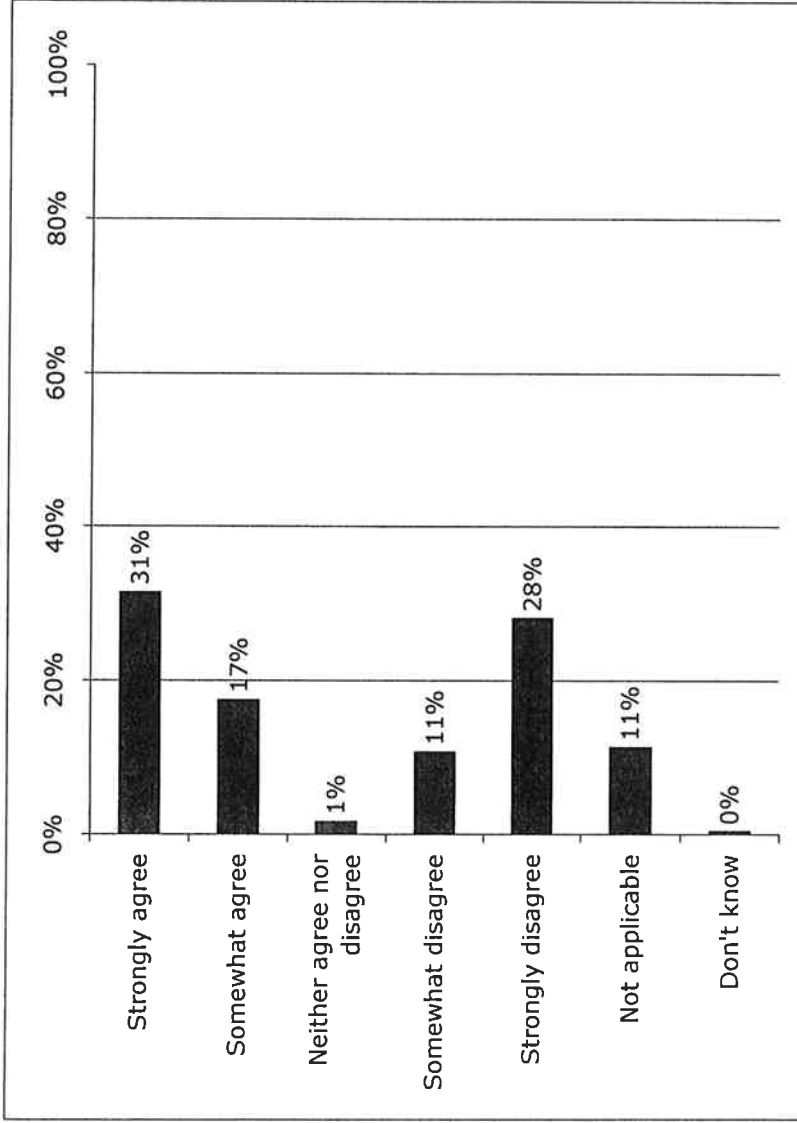


Response	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	190	40%
Somewhat agree	101	21%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	1%
Somewhat disagree	52	11%
Strongly disagree	121	26%
Not applicable	1	0%
Don't know	1	0%
Total	473	100%

Number of Sidewalks

There are enough sidewalks in the area where I live.

Highlights

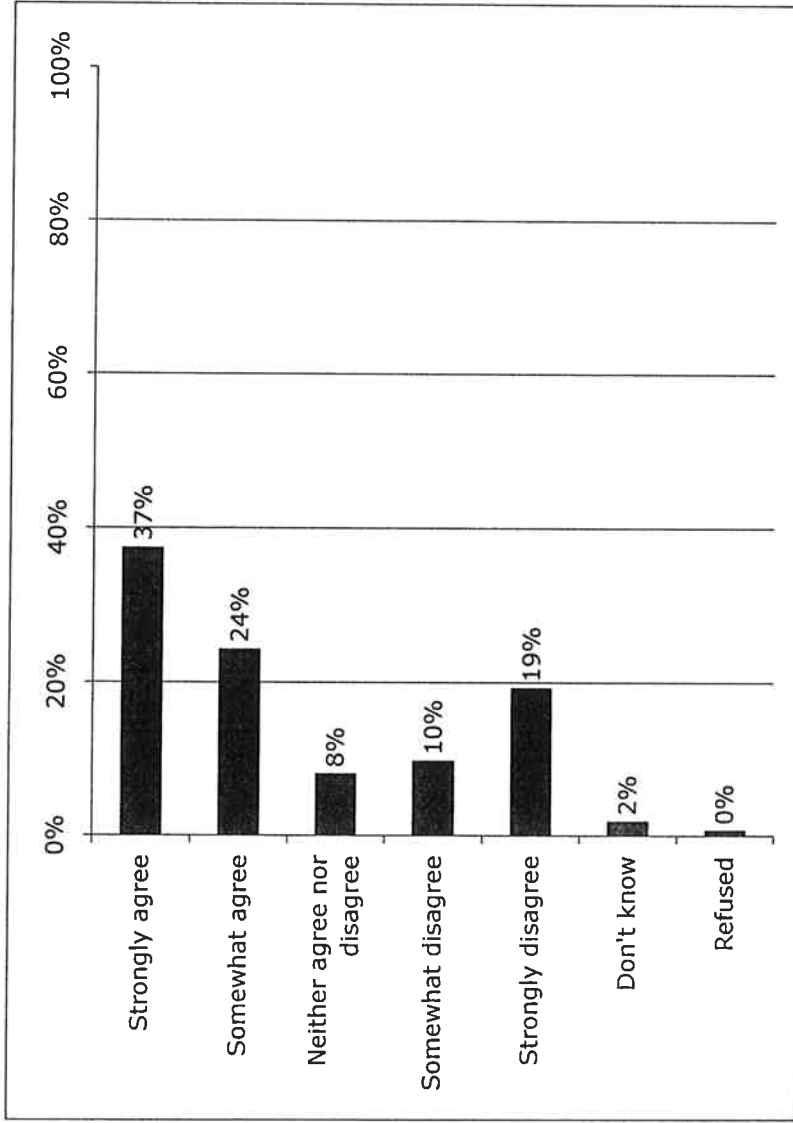


Response Category	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	148	31%
Somewhat agree	82	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	1%
Somewhat disagree	50	11%
Strongly disagree	132	28%
Not applicable	53	11%
Don't know	1	0%
Total	473	100%

Condition of Sidewalks

Sidewalks in the area where you live are in good condition.

Highlights



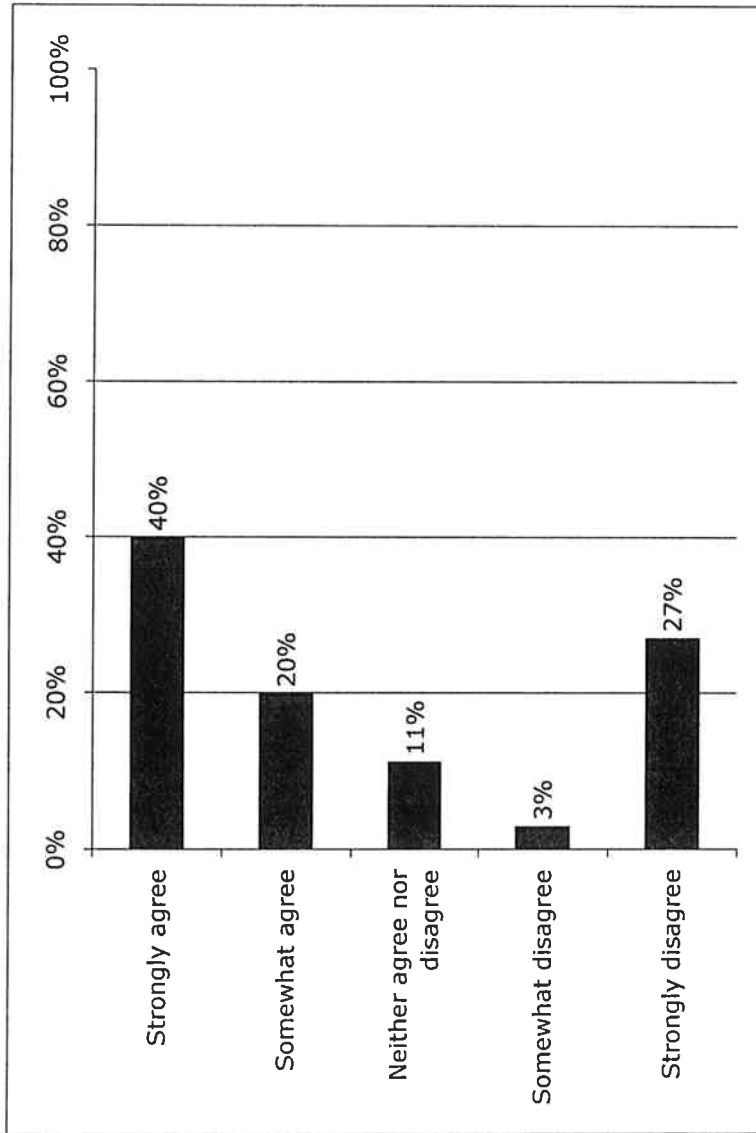
N=419

Response Category	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	156	37%
Somewhat agree	101	24%
Neither agree nor disagree	33	8%
Somewhat disagree	40	10%
Strongly disagree	80	19%
Don't know	7	2%
Refused	2	0%
Total	419	100%

Downtown Little Rock Parking

When trying to park in downtown Little Rock, how often do you have difficulty finding a parking space?

Highlights

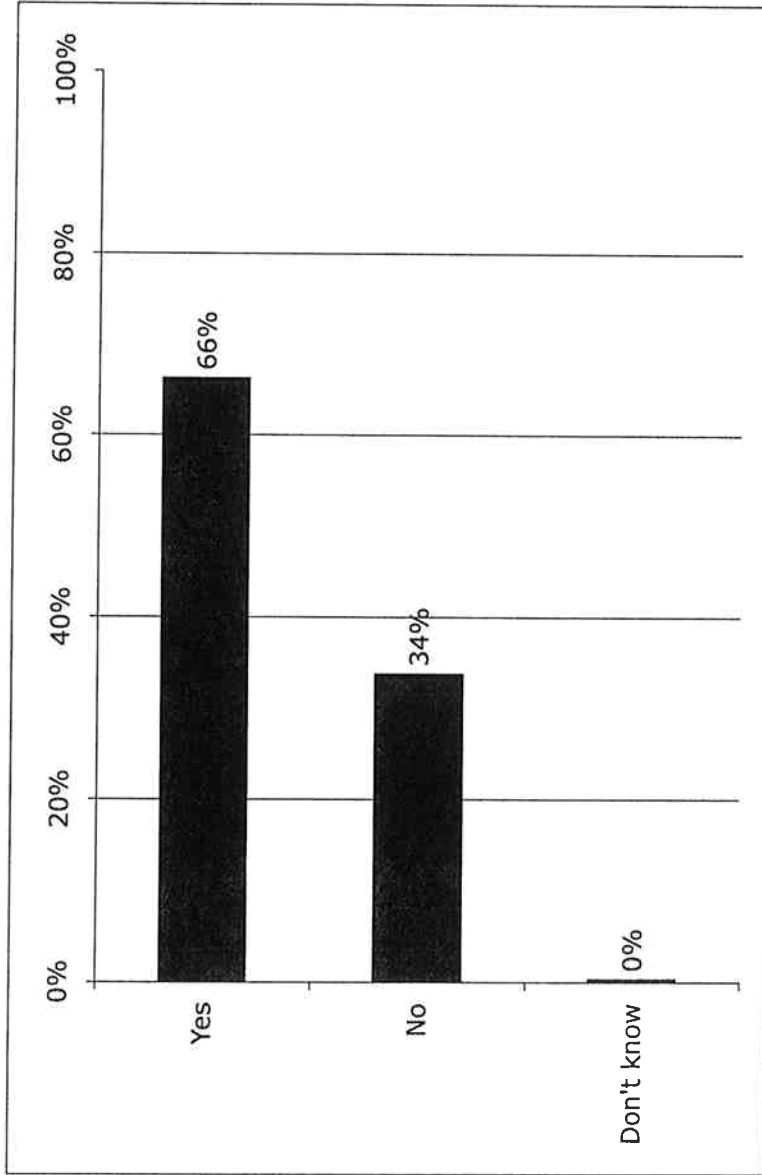


	Count	Percent
Strongly agree	188	40%
Somewhat agree	93	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	52	11%
Somewhat disagree	13	3%
Strongly disagree	127	27%
Total	473	100%

Contact with Homeless

During the past 12 months, have you come into personal contact with an individual who appeared to be homeless?

Highlights

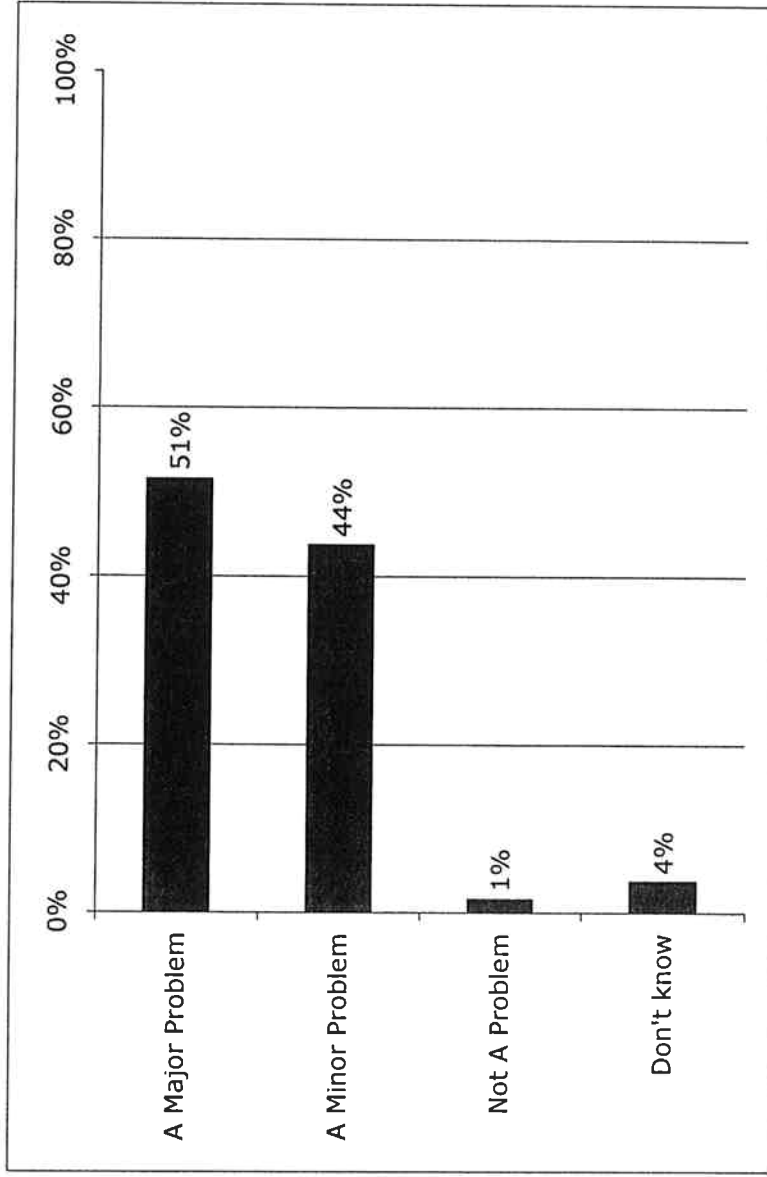


	Count	Percent
Yes	313	66%
No	159	34%
Don't know	1	0%
Total	473	100%

Perception of Homelessness in Little Rock

Would you say that homelessness in Little Rock is...

Highlights

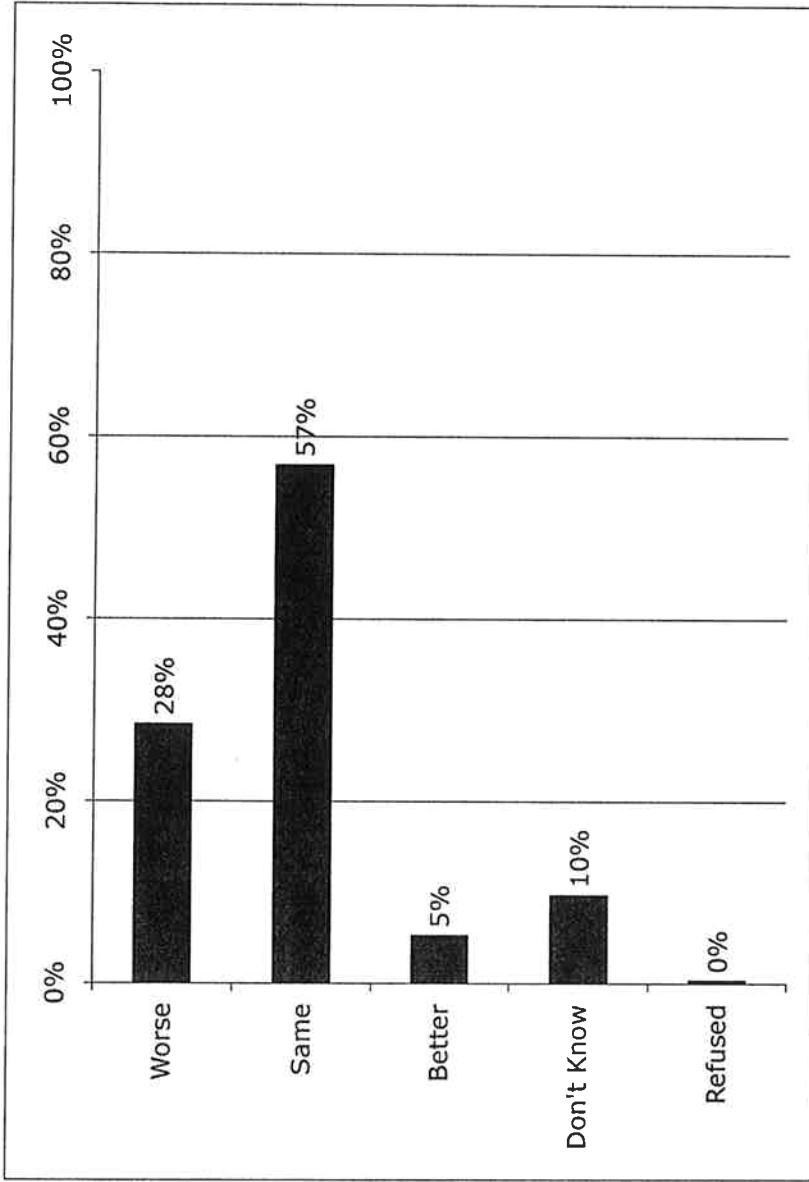


	Count	Percent
A Major Problem	243	51%
A Minor Problem	206	44%
Not A Problem	7	1%
Don't know	17	4%
Total	473	100%

Homelessness: Better or Worse than 1 Year Ago

Compared to one year ago, do you think the homeless problem in Little Rock now is ..

Highlights



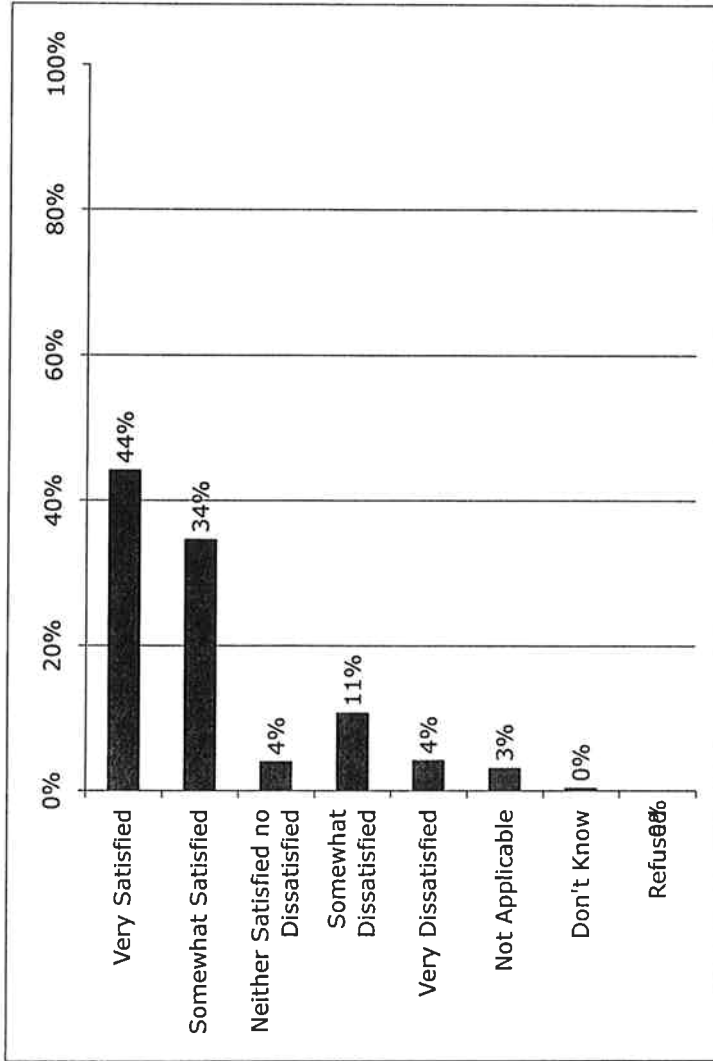
N=449

	Count	Percent
Worse	127	28%
Same	255	57%
Better	23	5%
Don't Know	43	10%
Refused	1	0%
Total	449	100%

Garbage Collection

Now I have a few questions about garbage collection at your home. What is your opinion of the city's garbage collection services. Would you say you are...

Highlights

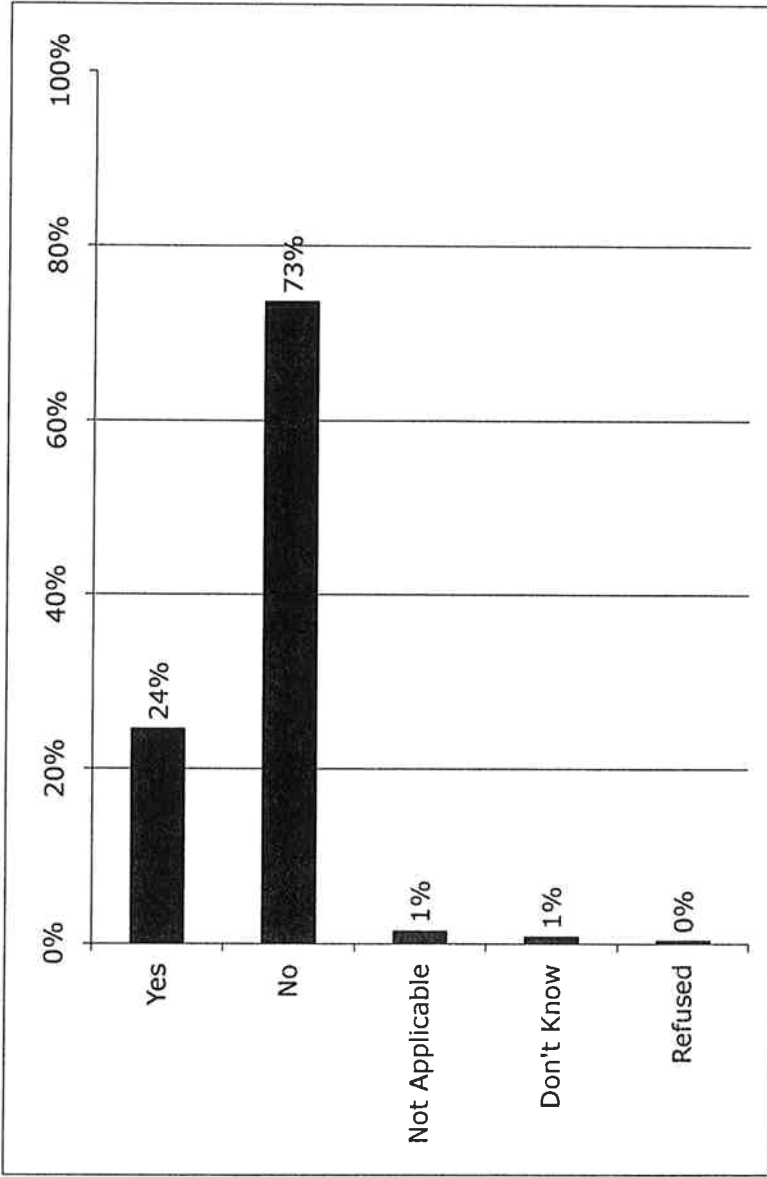


	Count	Percent
Very Satisfied	208	44%
Somewhat Satisfied	163	34%
Neither Satisfied no Dissatisfied	18	4%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	50	11%
Very Dissatisfied	19	4%
Not Applicable	14	3%
Don't Know	1	0%
Refused	0	0%
Total	473	100%

Missed Garbage Pick-Up

In the past 12 months, did the collectors ever miss picking up your garbage on the scheduled pick-up days other than rescheduling for holidays?

Highlights



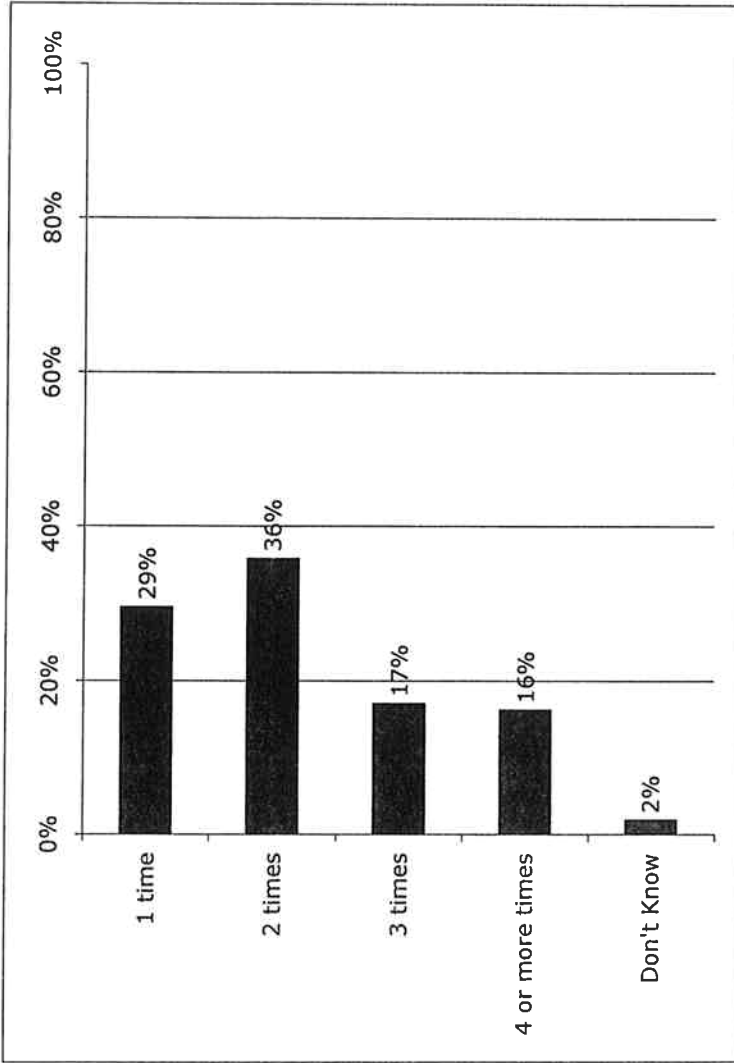
N=459

	Count	Percent
Yes	112	24%
No	337	73%
Not Applicable	6	1%
Don't Know	3	1%
Refused	1	0%
Total	459	100%

Number of Times Missed Pick-Up

Approximately how many times did they miss pick-up?

Highlights



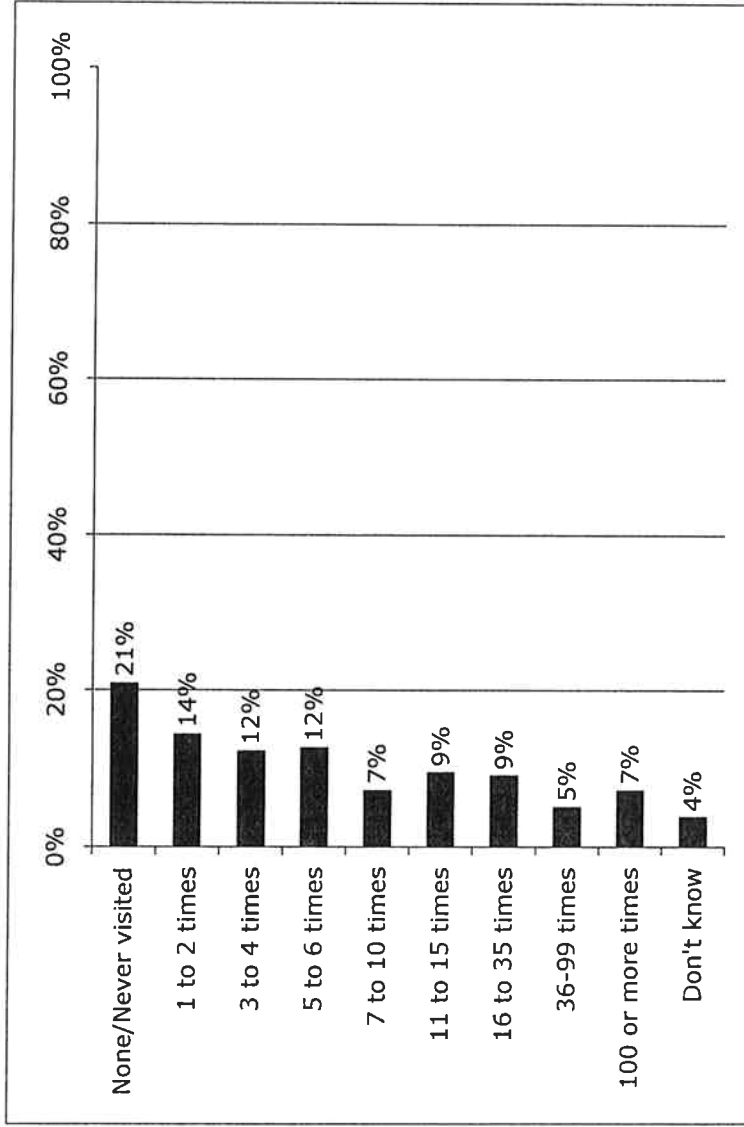
N=112

	Count	Percent
1 time	33	29%
2 times	40	36%
3 times	19	17%
4 or more times	18	16%
Don't Know	2	2%
Total	112	100%

Visits to a Park or Recreational Facility

During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you or any member of your household visited any city park or recreational facility? (It is okay to give an estimate if you are not sure of the exact number of times).

Highlights

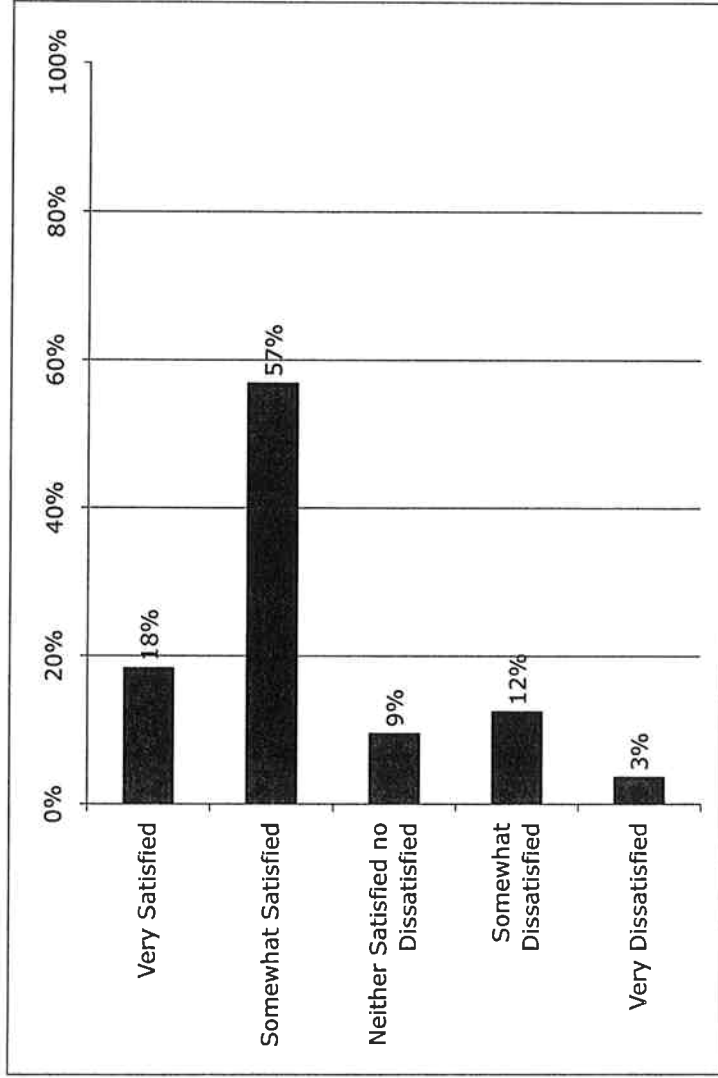


	Count	Percent
None/Never visited	98	21%
1 to 2 times	67	14%
3 to 4 times	57	12%
5 to 6 times	59	12%
7 to 10 times	33	7%
11 to 15 times	44	9%
16 to 35 times	42	9%
36-99 times	23	5%
100 or more times	33	7%
Don't know	17	4%
Total	473	100%

Quality of Park and/or Recreational Facilities

*What is your opinion of the quality of the city's parks and recreation facilities?
Would you say you are...*

Highlights

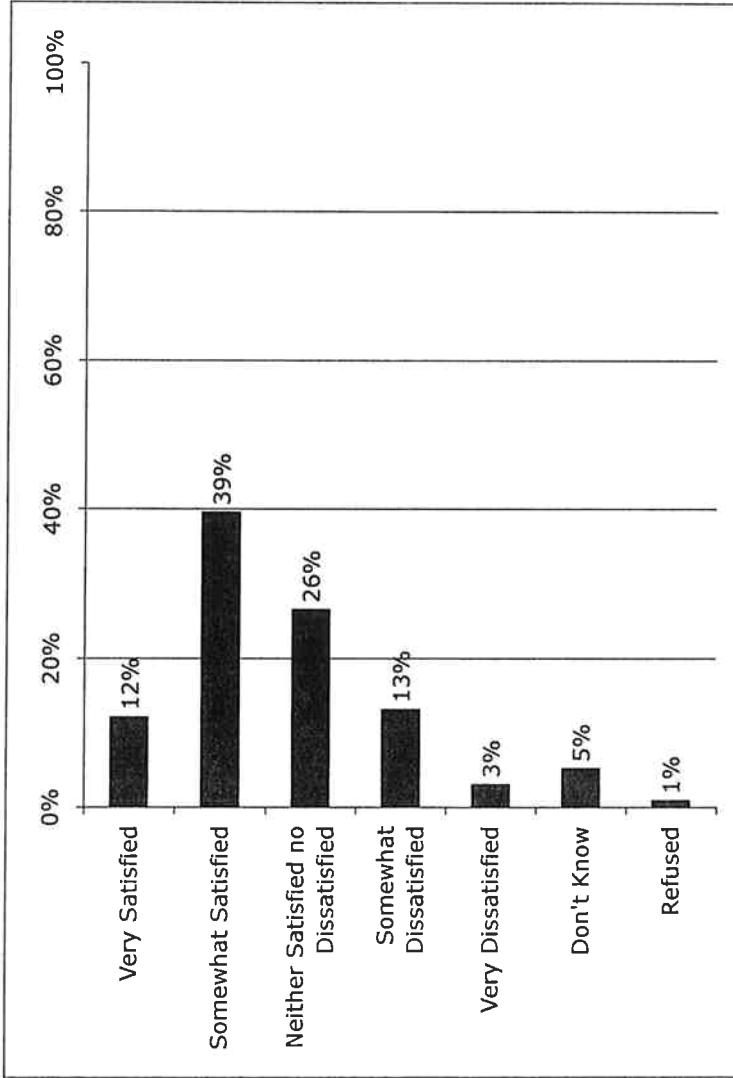


	Count	Percent
Very Satisfied	68	18%
Somewhat Satisfied	212	57%
Neither Satisfied no Dissatisfied	35	9%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	46	12%
Very Dissatisfied	13	3%
Total	374	100%

Opinion of Park and/or Recreational Facilities

What is your opinion of the programs and services provided at the Little Rock Parks and recreation facilities? Would you say you are...

Highlights

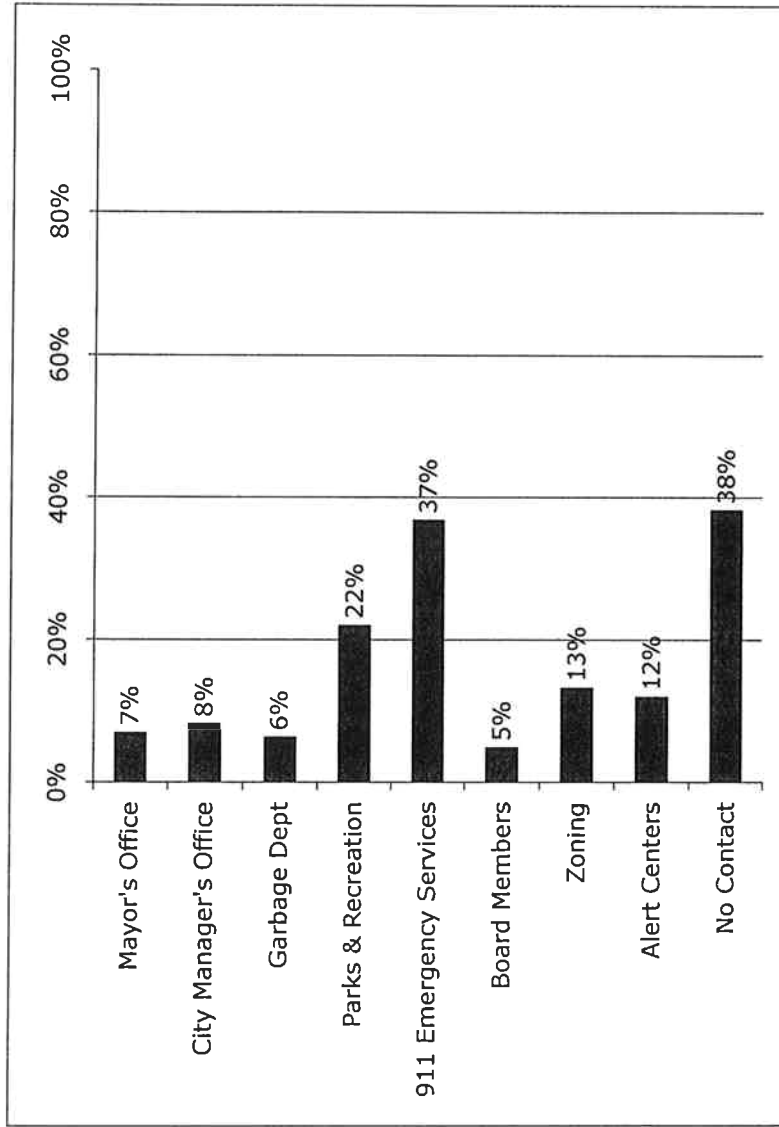


	Count	Percent
Very Satisfied	45	12%
Somewhat Satisfied	148	39%
Neither Satisfied no Dissatisfied	99	26%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	49	13%
Very Dissatisfied	11	3%
Don't Know	19	5%
Refused	3	1%
Total	374	100%

Household Contacted City Services

In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household contacted any of the following?

Highlights



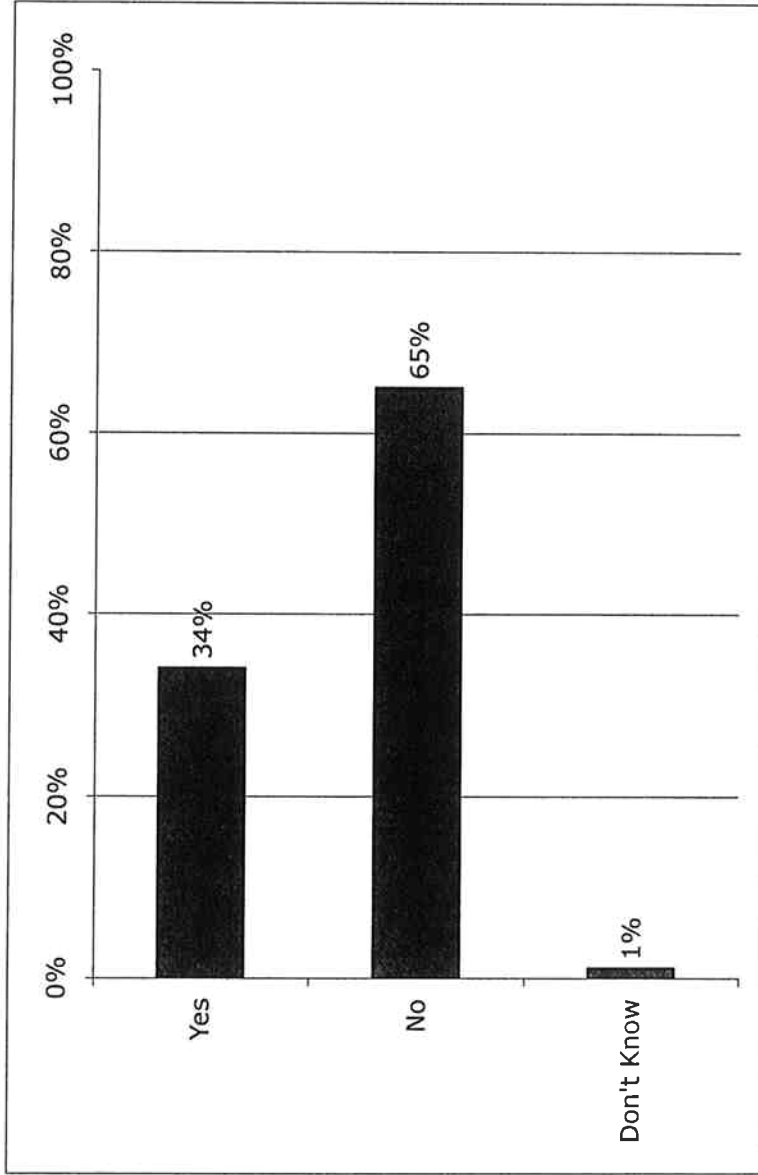
N=473

	Count	Percent
Mayor's Office	32	7%
City Manager's Office	38	8%
Garbage Dept	29	6%
Parks & Recreation	103	22%
911 Emergency Services	173	37%
Board Members	22	5%
Zoning	62	13%
Alert Centers	56	12%
No Contact	180	38%
Don't Know	4	1%

Unreported Concerns

Thinking back over the past 12 months, were there any concerns you would have liked to have reported to city officials but didn't?

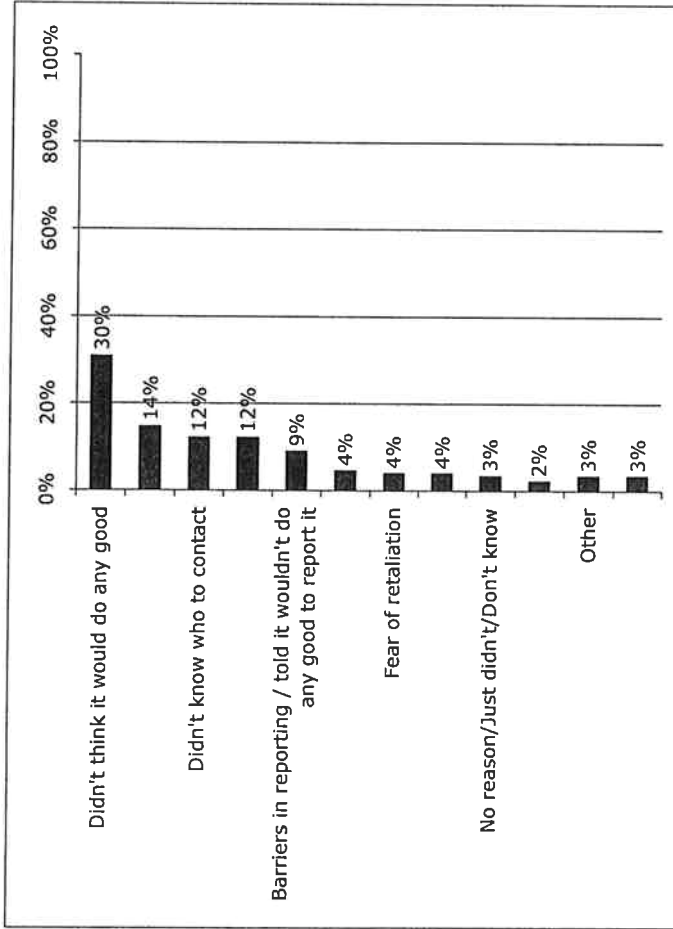
Highlights



	Count	Percent
Yes	161	34%
No	307	65%
Don't Know	5	1%
Total	473	100%

Reasons Concerns Went Unreported

What was the reason or reasons you did not report the concerns?



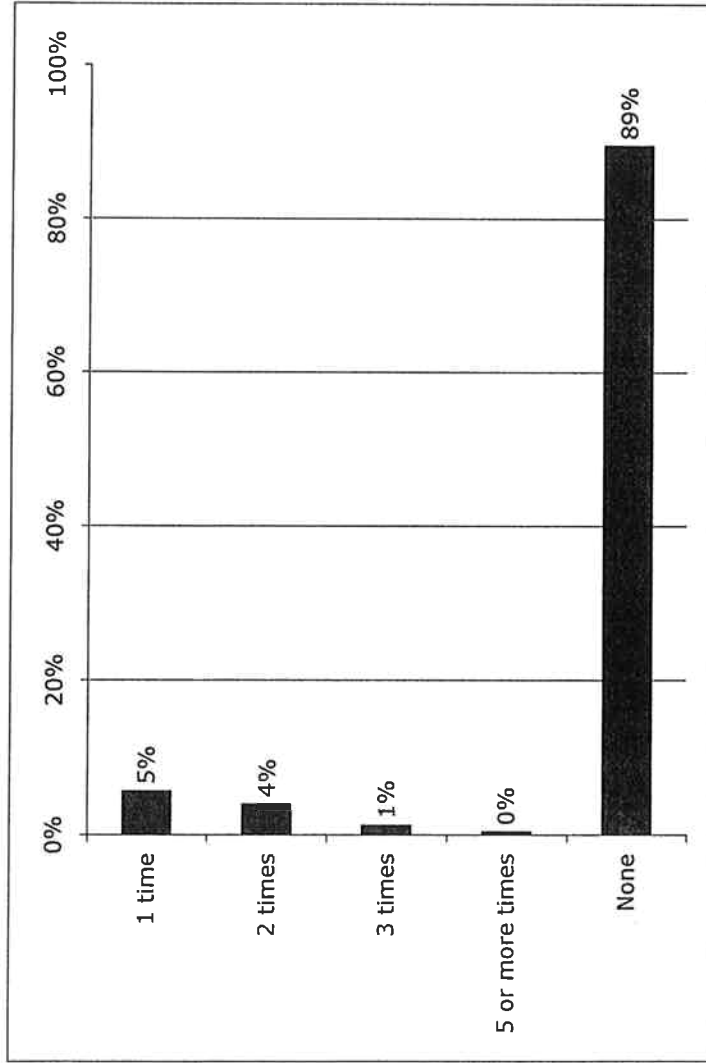
Highlights

	Count	Percent
Didn't think it would do any good	49	30%
Too busy/ Takes too much time/ Hassle	23	14%
Didn't know who to contact	19	12%
Laziness/ forgot/ procrastination	19	12%
Barriers in reporting / told it wouldn't do any good to report	14	9%
Called before. Problem was not resolved.	7	4%
Fear of retaliation	6	4%
Someone else reported it.	6	4%
No reason/Just didn't/Don't know	5	3%
Too minor to report	3	2%
Other	5	3%
Refused	5	3%
Total	161	100%

Times Used LR Fire Department

During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you or any member of your household used the services of the LITTLE ROCK FIRE DEPARTMENT?

Highlights

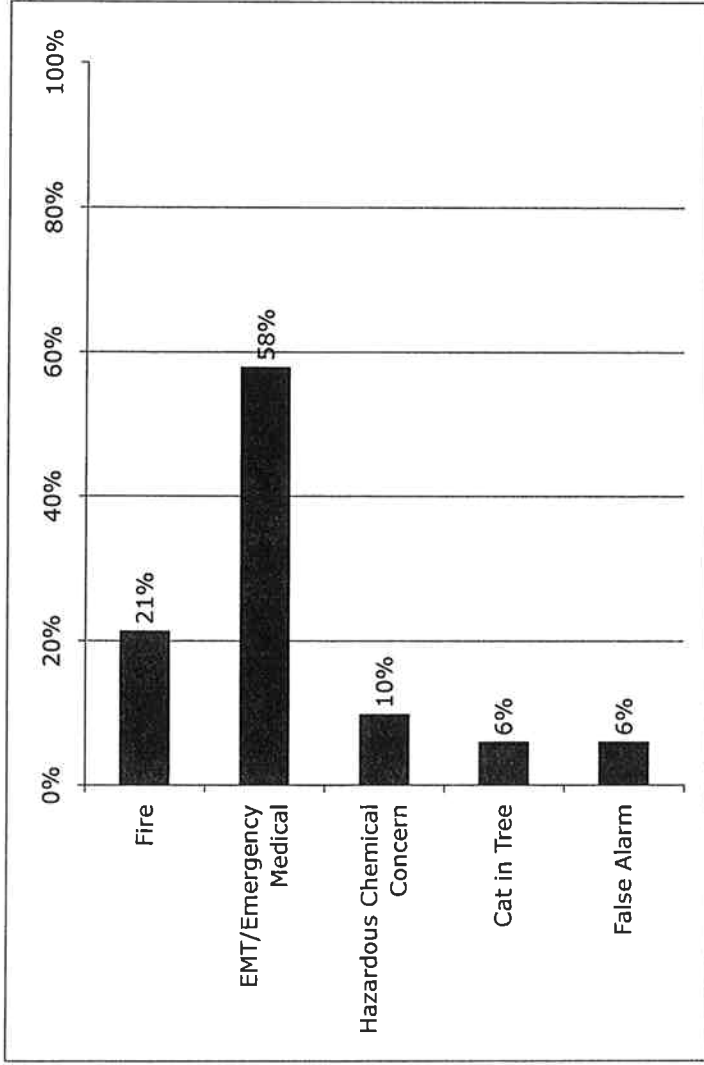


	Count	Percent
1 time	26	5%
2 times	18	4%
3 times	5	1%
5 or more times	1	0%
None	423	89%
Total	473	100%

Reason for Using Fire Department

Why were these services needed? (Multiple selection)

Highlights



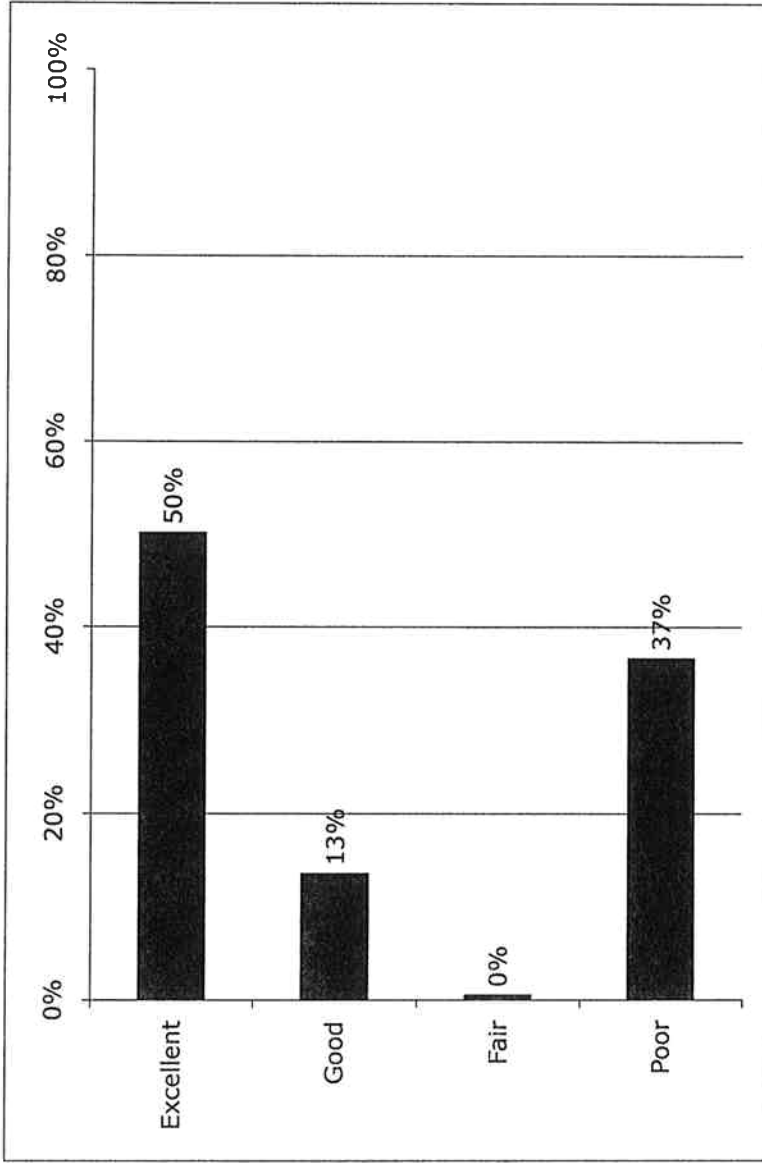
N=52

	Count	Percent
Fire	11	21%
EMT/Emergency Medical	30	58%
Hazardous Chemical Concern	5	10%
Cat in Tree	3	6%
False Alarm	3	6%
Total	52	100%

Rating of Fire Department Response Speed

How would you rate the Fire Department's response speed?

Highlights



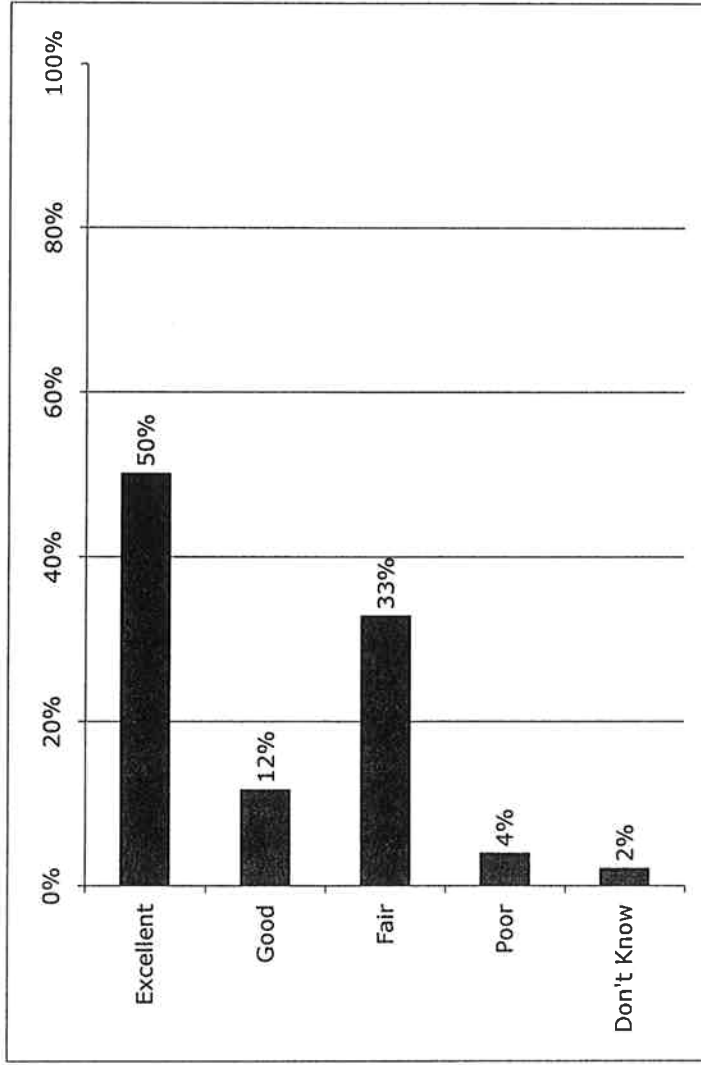
N=52

	Count	Percent
Excellent	26	50%
Good	7	13%
Fair	0	0%
Poor	19	37%
Total	52	100%

Quality of Fire Department Services

How would you rate the quality of the services provided?

Highlights



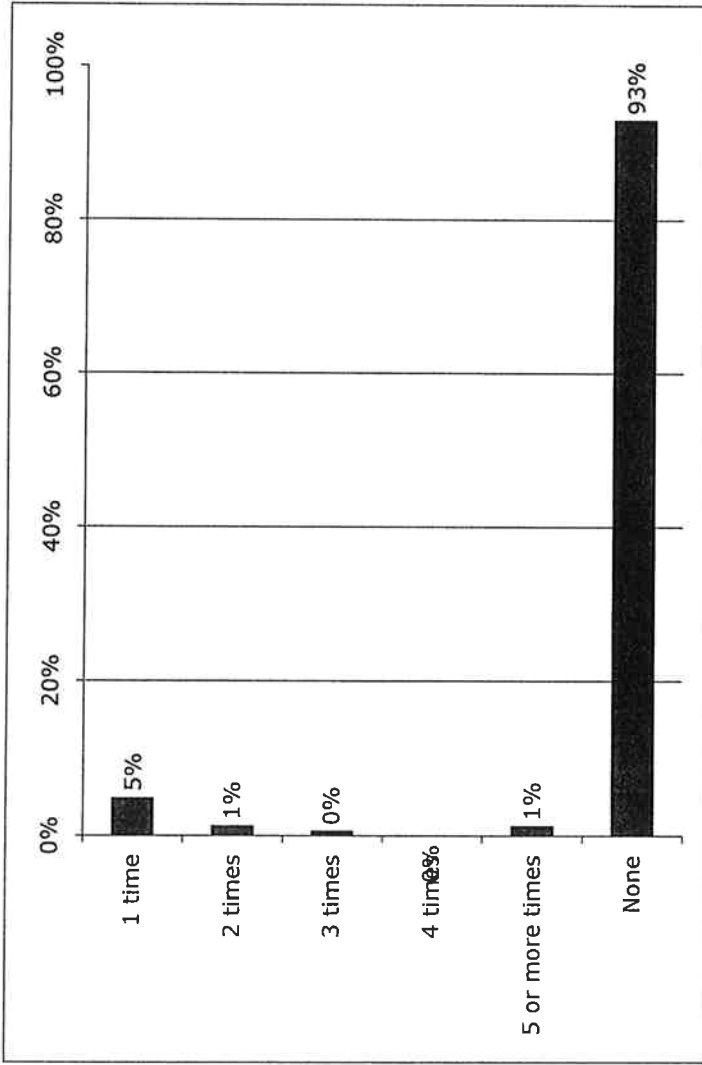
N=52

	Count	Percent
Excellent	26	50%
Good	6	12%
Fair	17	33%
Poor	2	4%
Don't Know	1	2%
Total	52	100%

Times Used LR Code Enforcement

During the past 12 months, approximately how many times have you or any member of your household used the services of the LITTLE ROCK CODE ENFORCEMENT?

Highlights

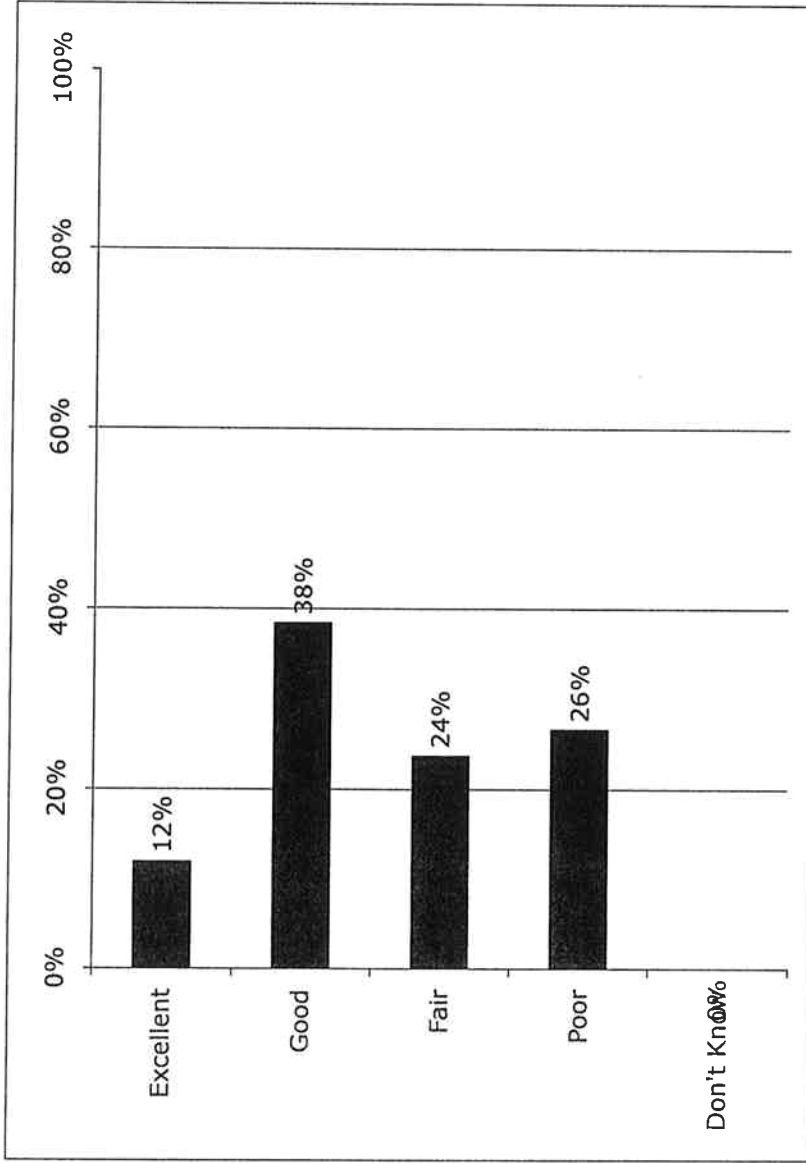


	Count	Percent
1 time	22	5%
2 times	5	1%
3 times	2	0%
4 times	0	0%
5 or more times	5	1%
None	439	93%
Total	473	100%

Rating of Code Enforcement Response Speed

How would you rate their response speed?

Highlights



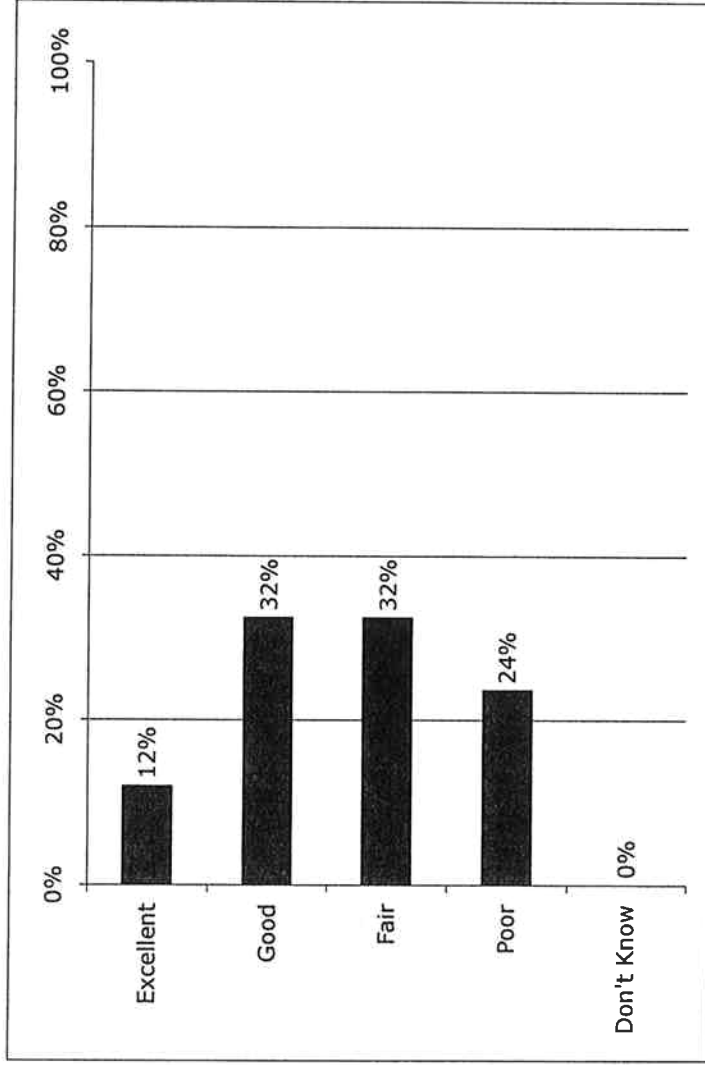
N=34

	Count	Percent
Excellent	4	12%
Good	13	38%
Fair	8	24%
Poor	9	26%
Don't Know	0	0%
Total	34	100%

Quality of Code Enforcement Services

How would you rate the quality of the services provided?

Highlights



N=34

	Count	Percent
Excellent	4	12%
Good	11	32%
Fair	11	32%
Poor	8	24%
Don't Know	0	0%
Total	34	100%