

# ***Dakota County 2004 Citizen Survey***

Summary of Findings  
May 2004

Analysis/Interpretation by Jack Ditmore,  
OMB Division Director

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In February 2004, the Board of Commissioners authorized the County Administrator to enter into a joint project with Scott County to conduct a household survey. By collaborating in this way, we lowered costs for both counties.

Based on price quotations for potential providers, the National Research Center, Inc. in Boulder, Colorado was engaged to do the survey.

## ***Study Background***

- Survey Purpose
  - To provide residents the opportunity to rate the quality of life, service delivery and their satisfaction with local government.
  - To provide feedback to government on what is working well and what is not.
  - To share resident priorities for community planning and resource allocation.
- Dakota and Scott Counties collaborated on this survey project to develop a survey instrument with a set of shared questions, as well as questions unique to each county

Since 1991, the Board of Commissioners has conducted a survey of households in the County each two to three years to better understand what we are doing that is working well and what is not working so well for our citizens.

The residential survey provides citizens the opportunity to rate the quality of government services and express their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with County government. The survey provides an opportunity to gain a statistically valid perspective on interests and priorities of our residents.

This year, working through the National Research Center's database of questions asked throughout the country, we have gained a better opportunity to understand how we compare with other counties in the database who are asking their residents similar questions.

## ***Study Methods***

- Survey administered by phone to a random, representative sample of 700 residents in March 2004
- A total of 100 surveys were completed in each of seven County Commissioner Districts with an overall response rate of 15%
- Survey results were weighted by age, gender and income to better reflect the community
- The margin of error is +/- 3.7%. (At the individual Commissioner District level, the margin of error is about  $\pm$  ten percentage points.)

## ***Respondent Demographics***

- 77% of respondents are age 18-54
  - No respondents under 18 years; 23%, 55 years or older
- 49% of respondents are female; 51% are male
  - Census 2000 = 49%, male; 51%, female
- 67% of respondents reported an income of at least \$25,000 to less than \$100,000
  - Census 2000 = 67% (household income)
- 86% of respondents who are employed, are employed full-time
  - 41%, in Dakota County; 16%, Minneapolis; 13%, St. Paul
  - 54% who are not employed are retired; 18% of respondents who are not employed are looking for work
- 89% of respondents have had continuous healthcare coverage for the last 12 months

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Surveys were conducted only with persons 18 years of age or older. About three-quarters of those surveyed were between 18 and 54 years of age and about one-quarter were over 55 years of age.

Slightly less than half of the respondents were female and about two-thirds said that the income for their household was between \$25,000 and \$100,000. About one-half of those sampled reported incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

These demographics closely resemble statistics found by the most recent U.S. Census.

Most of respondents – 86% – were employed. Seven out of ten worked in Dakota County, four out of ten in Minneapolis or St. Paul.

## ***Study Methods***

### ■ **New Feature: 100-Point Scales**

- Method of displaying average rating for responses
- Allows comparison between years and jurisdictions where scales have similar, but differing, labels (e.g., “very satisfied,” “excellent,” and “most important”)

### ■ **New Feature: National Comparisons**

- By comparing Dakota County services to other counties, better understanding if “good” is better compared to others
- Comparisons are provided when similar questions have been asked in at least 5 counties

With the National Research Center (NRC), we have the advantage of several new features of the analysis.

The NRC uses a 100-point scale as a method of displaying the average rating for responses to questions. The scale they have developed allows both for comparison between years and between counties where similar questions have been asked. By comparing our results to the results from other counties, we can better understand how our only average responses still means we are doing better than other counties.

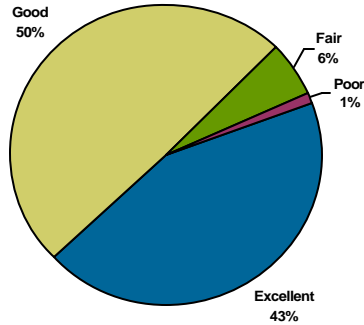
For example, a priority of the Board of Commissioners is assuring that citizens of the County are well informed about what we are doing. Looking only at the rating we received, the average rating has fallen from 2001 to 2004. However, compared to seven other counties that have asked their citizens the same question, Dakota County’s rating is still the highest among the seven counties.

## ***Study Methods***

- When **comparisons to other counties** are available, 3 indicators show how well we do
  - Rank of Dakota County's rating among other counties where a similar question was asked (number of counties also shown)
  - The percentile, to show distance from the top score
    - For example, the 5<sup>th</sup> highest score of 25 counties translates to the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile
  - A statistical comparison to the norm for counties
    - "Above" or "below" norm based on statistical difference from the average rating on the 100-point scale

Further, where we can make comparisons to other counties, the National Research Center provides us with three indicators. These three indicators provide a useful perspective beyond only the trend in percentage of respondents.

# Overall Quality of Life



| Dakota County Rating | Rank | Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison | Dakota County Percentile | Comparison of Dakota County Rating to Norm |
|----------------------|------|--|--------------------------|--|
| 78                   | 1    | 6                                      | 100%ile                  | Above the norm                             |

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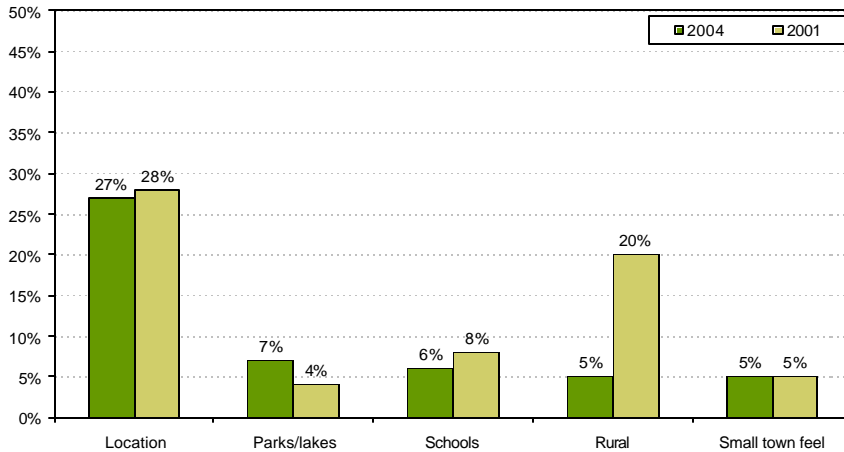
The Board of Commissioner’s vision for the future of Dakota County is a County that is recognized as a premier place in which to live and work. How residents perceive their overall quality of life in the County is an indicator of how well we are doing in achieving this vision.

Dakota County residents were asked to rate the overall quality of life in the County. Forty-three percent of respondents gave the overall quality of life a rating of “excellent,” and about half (50%) rated the quality of life as “good.” In 2001, only 33% rated the overall quality of life as “excellent,” although 61% called it “good.”

These ratings were converted to the 100-point scale, where 100 equals “excellent” and 0 equals “poor” for comparison to the County’s 2001 survey and evaluations of residents in counties across the nation.

Dakota County’s average rating on the 100-point scale was 78. This rating was similar to the 2001 rating, 76 on the 100-point scale, and Dakota County’s overall quality of life was higher than ratings given by any of the six comparative counties.

## ***What Respondents Like Most About Living in Dakota County***



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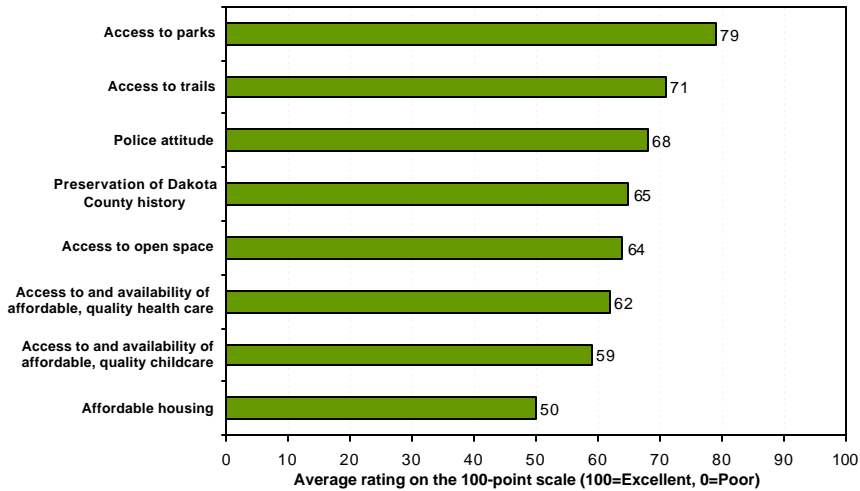
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When given an opportunity to offer what they like most about living in Dakota County, citizens most often noted their “location.”

The perspective of being “rural” shows a sharp decline from responses that were given in 2001. Even when potentially similar responses such as “small town feel,” “open space,” and “city/rural mix” are added in, there still is a statistically significant difference in this response.

It is interesting to note that the responses from Scott County residents to what they like most about living in their county also was its “location” in about the same share as Dakota County (27%, Dakota County; 26%, Scott County). However, Scott County residents feel much stronger about the rural, small town feel of their County (23% to 10%).

## *Characteristics of the Community*



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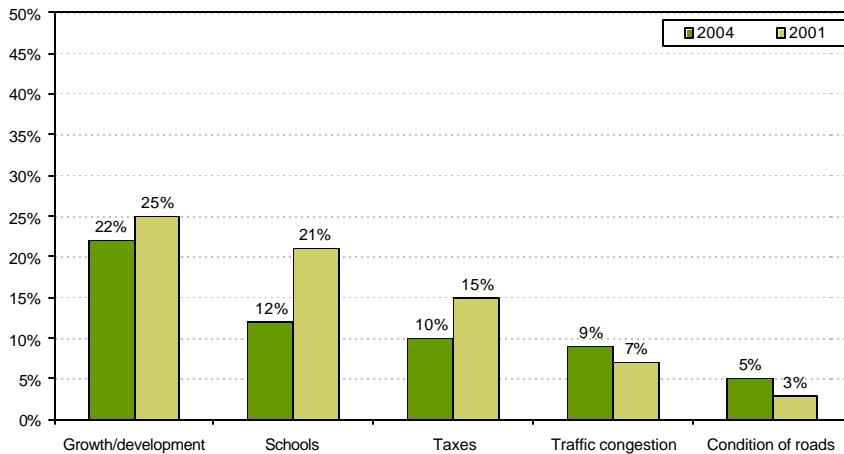
Those responding to the survey were given a set of county characteristics to rate. The highest rated characteristics in Dakota County were access to parks (average rating of 79 on the 100-point scale), and access to trails (71 out of 100). 94% called the access to parks either “excellent” or “good,” and 85% called access to trails “good” or “excellent.”

Police attitude averaged about “good.” Close to 67 on the 100-point scale were police attitude (68 out of 100), as did efforts to preserve the County history (65), and provide access to open space (64).

Affordable housing (50 out of 100) received the lowest average rating which was midway between “fair” and “good.” The average rating for affordable housing was lower than the norm for 11 comparison counties.

**Compared to national norms,** Dakota County’s ratings for the availability of affordable, quality child care were lower than the norm for counties, ranking fourth among five counties who asked a similar question, although 70% of respondents did rate availability of child care as “excellent” or “good.”

## ***Most Serious Issues Facing the County***



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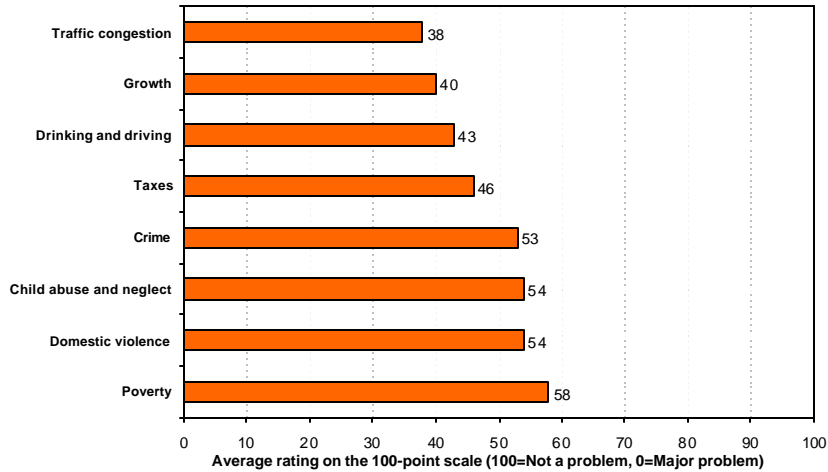
Growth and development continues to be viewed as the most serious issue in Dakota County. This also is the most serious issue that our neighbors in Scott County are facing, although their residents now identify it as the most serious issue almost twice as often (45% of responses compared to 22%) as Dakota County residents.

This is a drop from 2001, perhaps reflecting citizens' awareness of our new Farmland and Natural Areas Protection program to protect open spaces, funded by the state's first successful county-level referendum approved by voters in the 2002 election.

Growth and development actually declined slightly as the "most serious issue" from 2001 to 2004, as did schools and taxes. The declines for both schools, from 21% to 12%; and taxes, 10% to 15%; were statistically significant changes.

At the same time, two roadway-related concerns began to climb in level of perception as the "most serious" issue for the County. While neither the increase in recognition of traffic congestion or condition of roads met the test of statistical significance, they do appear to be a trend that appears elsewhere in the survey findings.

## *Potential Problems Facing the Community*



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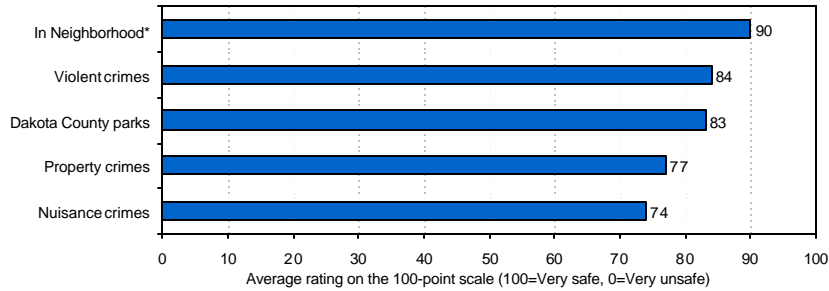
To gauge the perception of residents about important problems facing the County, residents were asked to rate eight potential community problems.

While none of the problems received an average rating higher than approximately midway between a “moderate” and a “minor problem,” the two issues identified as most problematic were related, growth and traffic congestion, with each considered a “major problem” by about three in ten respondents and a moderate-to-major problem by about two-thirds of all respondents.

Drinking and driving appears fairly high on this list, with an average rating of third of eight potential problems on the list. When asked in another question about health concerns in the County, underage drinking was identified as the most serious concern based on the 100-point average rating scale for our citizens in this survey.

Crime and poverty were the least problematic, with less than one respondent in ten selecting “major problem” to describe each.

## Ratings of Safety in Dakota County



|                        | Dakota County Rating | Rank | Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison | Dakota County Percentile | Comparison of Dakota County Rating to Norm |
|------------------------|----------------------|------|--|--------------------------|--|
| In your neighborhood*  | 90                   | NA   | NA                                     | NA                       | NA   |
| Violent crimes         | 84                   | 2    | 5                                      | 80%ile                   | Above the norm                             |
| In Dakota County parks | 83                   | NA   | NA                                     | NA                       | NA   |
| Property crimes        | 77                   | 2    | 5                                      | 80%ile                   | Above the norm                             |
| Nuisance crimes        | 75                   | NA   | NA                                     | NA                       | NA   |

\*Question wording in 2001 included the phrase "walking alone," which was omitted in the 2004 survey.  
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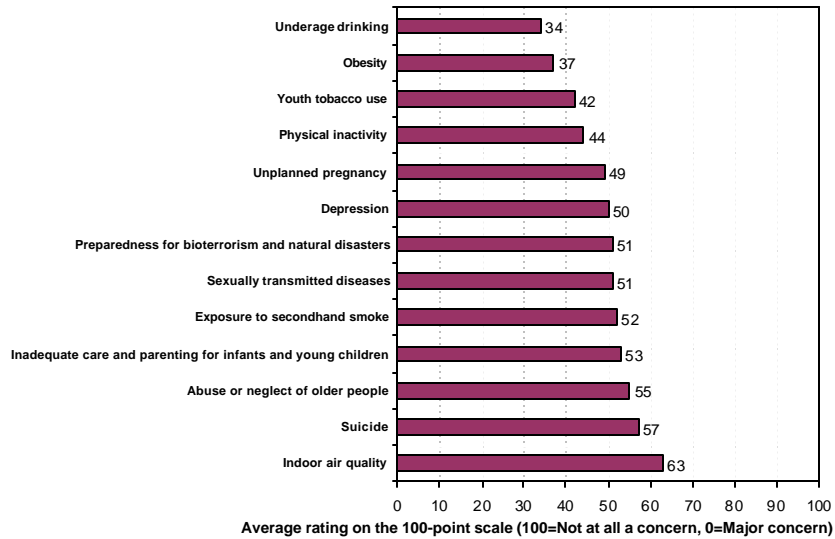
To be a premier County in which to live and work, a strategic objective for the County to achieve is safe, healthy citizens.

County residents assessed their feelings of safety from different types of crime and in two locations in the County. Ninety-four percent of respondents said they felt "somewhat" or "very safe" from violent crimes (average rating of 84 on the 100-point scale) and about nine in ten respondents felt at least "somewhat" safe from property crimes (77 out of 100).

Comparisons to other counties were available for ratings of safety from property crimes and violent crimes. Dakota County's average ratings were higher than the norm in both of these areas.

The average rating for safety in the neighborhood was higher in 2004 than in 2001. However, this may be attributed to a difference in question wording between the surveys. The 2001 survey included the phrase "walking alone" which was omitted from the 2004 survey.

## *Health Concerns in Dakota County*



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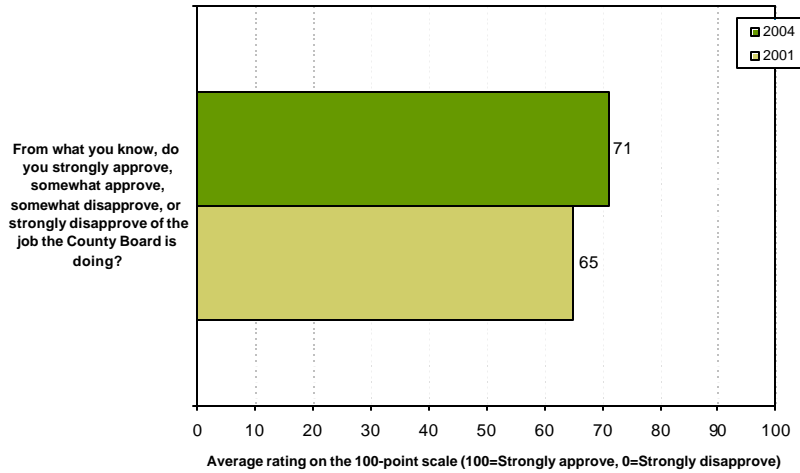
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While we know from other surveys that residents perceive their overall health as “good” to “excellent” in about nine out of ten cases, in the residential survey we looked at potential health concerns.

As noted earlier, underage drinking was identified as a “major” health concern by one-third of respondents. Another three in ten respondents said that obesity was a “major” health concern in the County and 27% said youth tobacco use was a “major concern.”

Just 7% of residents believed indoor air quality to be a “major concern” and about one-quarter felt that it was not a concern at all, making it the most positively rated potential concern.

## *Dakota County Board Approval*



\*Response scale was worded slightly differently in 2001.

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Public trust is essential for achieving the Board of Commissioner's vision for the future of the County and its mission for County government.

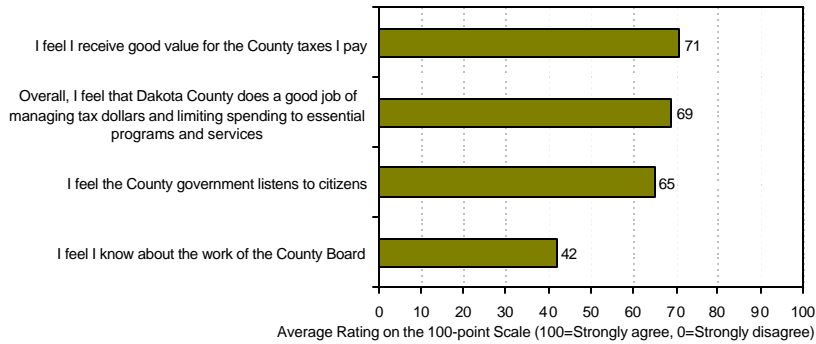
Public trust begins with the perception of the Board of Commissioner's stewardship of the interests of residents.

Ninety-four percent of County residents reported "somewhat" or "strongly" approving of the job the Dakota County Board of Commissioners is doing. The average rating was a 71 on the 100-point scale.

The rating in 2004 was higher than the 2001 rating (65 out of 100). (The question was worded very similarly in the two years, although the scale was presented in an alternative way in 2001, where respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved of the job the Board of Commissioner's was doing, and then if they felt strongly that way.)

However, one out of four survey respondents were unable (or, refused) to answer this question. In a following question, "I feel I know about the work of the County Board," less than half (43%) agreed. This continues to suggest the importance of focusing on communicating the value of what the County does, which is one of the goals that has been assigned by the Board of Commissioners to County staff this year.

# Public Trust



|  | Dakota County Rating | Rank | Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison | Dakota County Percentile | Comparison of Dakota County Rating to Norm |
|--|----------------------|------|--|--------------------------|--|
| I feel I receive good value for the County taxes I pay | 63                   | 2    | 8                                      | 88%ile                   | Above the norm                             |
| I feel the County government listens to citizens       | 61                   | 3    | 7                                      | 71%ile                   | Similar to the norm                        |

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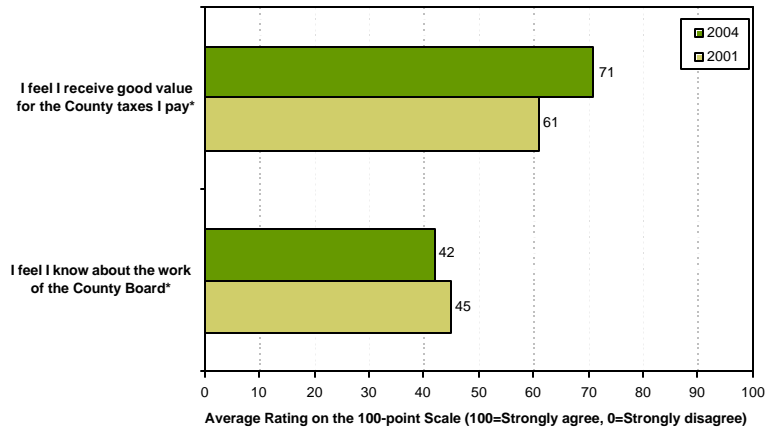
Focusing even more directly on public trust with respect to stewardship of resources, survey respondents were read four statements about Dakota County government and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

More than eight in ten residents “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed with statements about receiving good value for the County taxes they pay (87% of respondents), feeling that the County does a good job managing tax dollars (88%), and feeling that the County government listens to citizens (82%). Each of these statements received an average rating that was between “somewhat agree” (67 on the 100-point scale) and “strongly agree” (100 on the 100-point scale).

There were two statements that could be compared to other counties. “I feel I receive good value for the Dakota County taxes I pay” and “Dakota County government listens to citizens.” Both received higher ratings than other counties in the normative data set, ranking one or two among the comparative counties.

The average rating when citizens were asked if they feel they receive a good value for the County taxes they pay rose by ten points from 2001 to 2004.

## *Public Trust Compared by Year*



\*Question wording was different in 2001 than 2004.

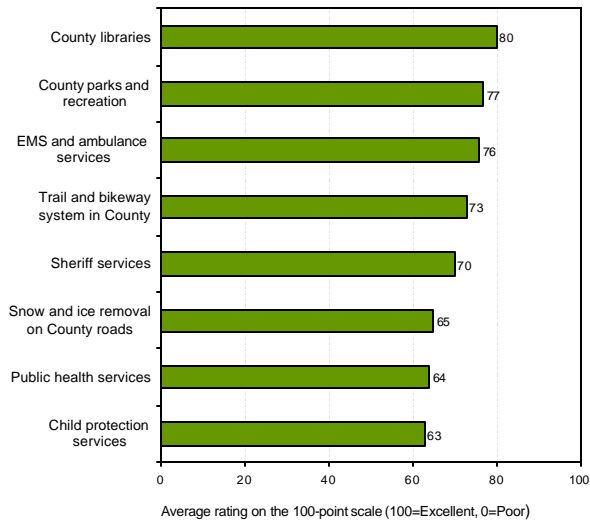
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In 2004, residents gave higher ratings to the statement, “I feel I receive good value for the County taxes I pay” than they did in 2001. The average rating rose from 61 (on the 100-point scale) in 2001 to (71 in 2004). However, it should be noted that the tax value statement was evaluated on a different scale in 2001. While the scale was adjusted for comparability, this could have some effect on the overall finding.

The rating for knowing about the work of the County Board was similar in the two years with the average rating declining from 45 in 2001 to 42 in 2004. The wording of the question between survey years varied slightly in that the 2001 survey asked respondents to rate how much they felt they knew about the work of the County Board.

## ***Ratings of Service Delivery***



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Dakota County's mission of efficient, effective, responsive government emphasizes service delivery. In the 2004 residential survey, Dakota County residents provided ratings of 16 County services.

The highest average rating was for the County libraries (80 on the 100-point scale). The next most highly rated services were:

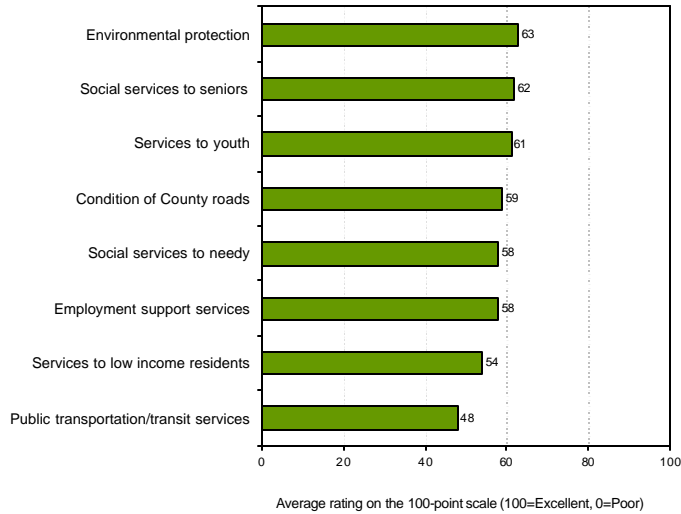
- County parks and recreation (77 out of 100);
- The trail and bikeway system in the County (73 out of 100); and Sheriff services (70 out of 100).

Each of these services averaged higher than "good" ratings from residents.

The lowest rated service was public transportation/transit services, with an average rating of 48 on the 100-point scale.

While not a direct County service, EMS and ambulance services were rated by respondents and received the third highest average rating in the survey (76 out of 100).

## *Ratings of Service Delivery*



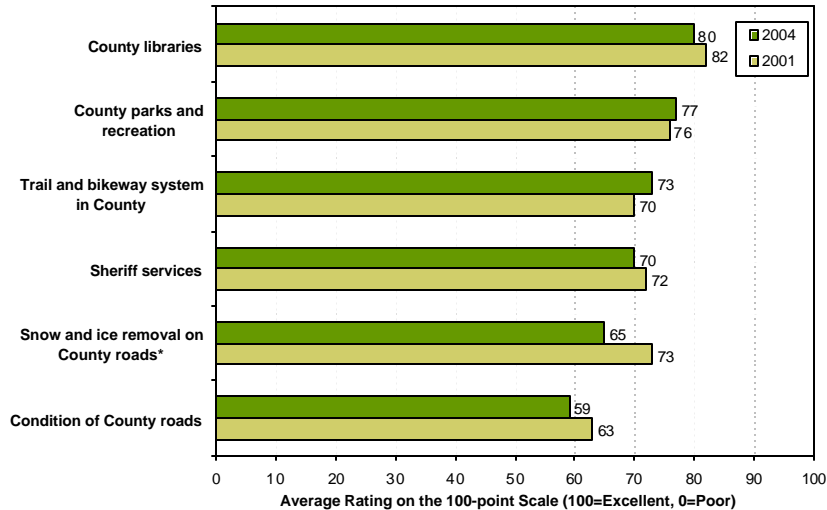
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It is interesting to note that although it is the lowest rated element of service delivery in the County, the average rating given to public transportation and transit services (48 on the 100-point scale), still ranked fourth among the ratings for nine counties in which a similar question was asked. The ranking was “above the norm” for the counties in which a similar question was asked.

Clearly, other county governments also are struggling with questions about transportation and public transportation services.

## Service Delivery Compared by Year



\*Question wording in 2001 slightly different in the 2004 survey.  
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The National Research Center was able to compare six service ratings from 2004 with adjusted 2001 ratings. Four of the services received similar ratings in the two years, County libraries (80 out of 100 in 2004 vs. 82 in 2001), County parks and recreation (77 vs. 76), the trail and bikeway system in the County (73 vs. 70), and Sheriff's Department services (70 vs. 72).

Two services received a lower average rating in 2004 than in 2001, both reflecting the growing concern with transportation in the County. Snow and ice removal on County roads decreased from an average rating of 73 in 2001 to 65 in 2004 and the condition of County roads fell from 63 to 59. A change in wording could account for some of the change, however. Perhaps more significant, the average ratings were both **higher** than the national norm.

Overall, the County received average ratings that were higher than the norm for nine services. In addition to the condition of county roads and snow and ice removal, and public transportation/transit services discussed earlier, the Sheriff's services, County libraries, County parks and recreation, public health services, services to youth, and services to low income residents received average ratings higher than the national norms. Three services were given average ratings that were similar to other counties - social services to seniors, social services to the needy, and EMS and ambulance services.

## ***Relative Service Quality and Awareness***

|                             |        | Relative Perceived Quality  |   |
|-----------------------------|--------|---|---|
|                             |        | Higher  | Lower   |
| Relative Resident Awareness | Higher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ County libraries</li> <li>■ County parks and recreation</li> <li>■ Snow and ice removal on county roads</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Condition of county roads</li> <li>■ Public transportation/transit services</li> </ul> |
|                             |        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ EMS and ambulance services</li> </ul>  |   |
|                             |        |   |   |
|                             | Lower  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sheriff Services</li> <li>■ Public health services</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Services to youth</li> <li>■ Services to low income residents</li> </ul>               |
|                             |        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Social services to seniors</li> <li>■ Social services to needy</li> </ul>  |   |
|                             |        |   |   |

Above the norm
  Similar to the norm
  Below the norm

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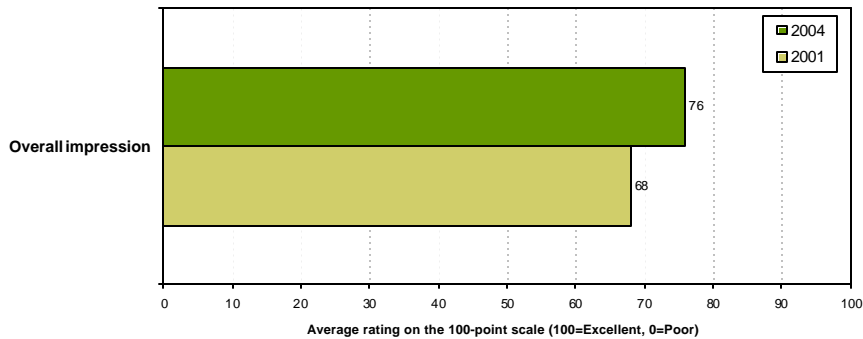
This table is an attempt to compare ratings of awareness about the services that Dakota County provides with ratings of the quality of the services delivered.

Services for which less than one-fifth of the the respondents (19% or less) of respondents said they “don’t know” when asked about the service were defined as having higher awareness. Lower awareness services were those for which 20% or more of respondents reported “don’t know.”

Services with lower relative quality were those receiving an average rating of 63 or lower, that is, below “good” when respondents had excellent, good, fair, or poor, while higher relative quality service had an average rating of over 63.

Also included in the table is a reminder of the position of each service relative to normative data for other counties. By considering these data in concert with one another, we can identify those services about which Dakota County residents are relatively more aware but are considered of lower relative quality. In the table you will note that there was no service about which residents were more aware that received a quality rating that was below the norm.

## ***Ratings of Dakota County Employees***



|                    | Dakota County Rating | Rank | Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison | Dakota County Percentile | Comparison of Dakota County Rating to Norm |
|--------------------|----------------------|------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Overall impression | 76                   | 1    | 7                                      | 100%ile                  | Above the norm                             |

\*Question wording was different in 2001 than 2004.

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To achieve our mission of efficient, effective, responsive government, the way we treat citizens is critical. Based on the responses from those surveyed, about one-half of our adult residents will contact a Dakota County office during a one-year period.

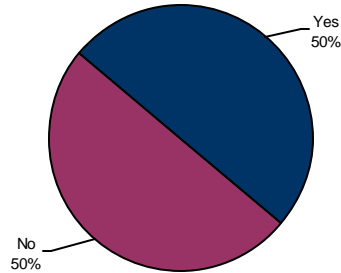
Residents who had contacted a government office were asked to rate their overall impression of Dakota County in their most recent contact. About half of respondents rated their impression as “excellent,” 37% as “good,” 13% called their most recent contact “fair” (7%), or “poor” (6%).

The average rating of 76 on the 100-point scale in 2004 was higher than the rating of 68 in 2001 and higher than average ratings from other counties.

However, it should be noted that the 2001 survey asked respondents to rate five aspects (convenience of the location, convenience of the operating hours of the facility, promptness of the service, and courtesy of the staff) of their last contact or visit using a five-point scale where 5 was "excellent" and 1 was for "poor." The 2004 results have been adjusted to reflect the difference in the scales.

## ***Contact with County Office in Last 12 Months***

Have you visited or telephoned a County government office within the previous 12 months?



- Offices most commonly contacted
  - License Center (10%)
  - Social/Community Services (10%)
  - Taxes (9%)
  - Office of the Sheriff (6%)
  - Births and Deaths, Marriage and Passport Office (4%)
  - Library (4%)

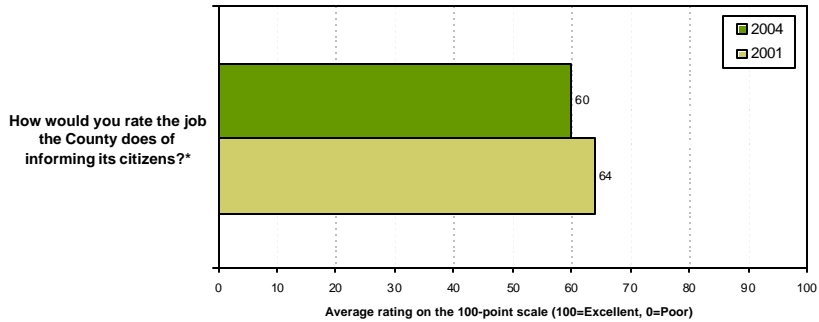
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This slide shows how often and with which offices the most frequent contacts were reported in the survey.

Those who had contacted a government office in the last 12 months were asked to identify the specific office. The most common departments were the License Center and Social/Community Services, each cited by 10% of respondents. The next most frequently contacted departments that citizens associated with their taxes which could be either Assessing Services or Treasurer/Auditor (9% of respondents), and the office of the Sheriff (6%).

## Job County Does of Informing Its Citizens Compared by Year



| Dakota County Rating | Rank | Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison | Dakota County Percentile | Comparison of Dakota County Rating to Norm |
|----------------------|------|--|--------------------------|--|
| 60                   | 1    | 7                                      | 100%ile                  | Above the norm                             |

\*Question wording was different in 2001 than 2004.

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In February, the Board of Commissioners discussed a survey and analysis developed by the Association of Minnesota Counties and identified the importance of focusing on communicating value to our citizens. In the residential survey we asked a series of questions related to this goal.

Overall, the residential survey revealed that 68% of Dakota County residents say that the County does an “excellent” or “good” job of informing its citizens. However, almost one-third said the job is “fair” (25%) or “poor” (6%). The average rating of 60 on the 100-point scale in 2004 is slightly lower than the adjusted 2001 rating, 64 out of 100.

Clearly, other counties also are struggling with this issue, too, because when compared to average ratings from other counties, Dakota County’s rating still ranked first among the seven counties that asked a similar question.

## ***Job County Does of Informing its Citizens***

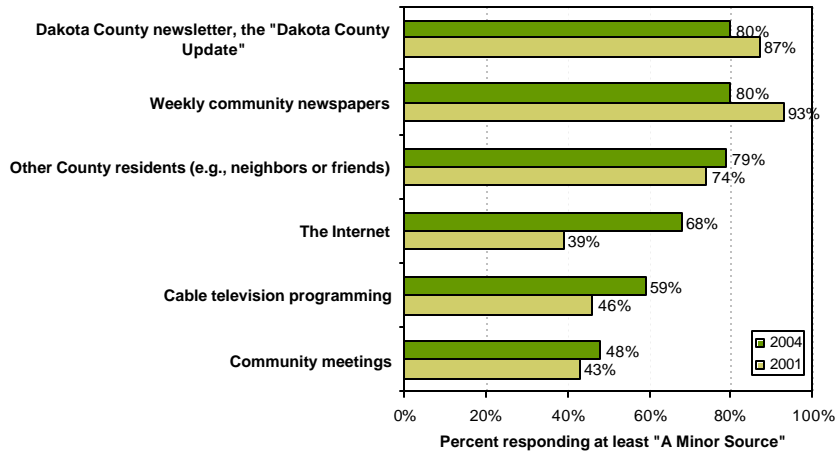
- An important consideration for counties
  - Asking about satisfaction with services, in 5 of 6 Community Services areas, over 3 out of 10 “don’t know”
    - Services to low-income residents (36%)
    - Social services to seniors (36%)
    - Employment support services (36%)
    - Child protection services (34%)
    - Social services to need (31%)
  - Over half of spending for operations (56%) is for Community Services programs ...nearly half (46%) of County staff supply these services

Combining the survey responses about satisfaction with our services and the importance of communication with our citizens, there is an interesting result.

While more than 30% of residents responded “don’t know” when asked about their satisfaction with services in five key responsibilities of the Community Services Division, services in this Division are where over one-half of county operating dollars are spent and nearly one-half of county staff are employed.

This finding may help explain part of why county government in Minnesota is viewed by many as the “invisible” layer of government.

## *Information Sources Compared by Year*



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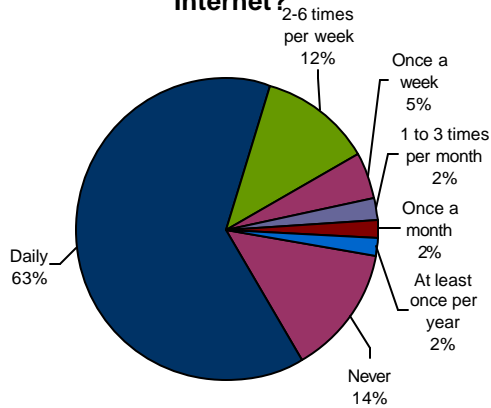
### **Public Information Sources**

Those responding to the survey indicated whether each of nine possible sources of information about the County was “major,” “minor,” or “not a source.” Weekly community newspapers were considered a “major” source by 45% of respondents. Daily newspapers, television news broadcasts, and the Dakota County newsletter were called “major” sources by 42%, 41%, and 40% of residents, respectively. Least frequently cited as a “major source” were County employees (11%) and community meetings (10%). Each of those sources was considered “not a source” by about half of respondents.

Weekly community newspapers and the Dakota County newsletter both lost ground as sources of information between 2001 and 2004. In 2004, the percentage of respondents considering weekly newspapers to not be a source of information about the County rose from 7% to 20%, and the percentage of respondents calling the County newsletter “not a source” increased from 13% to 20%. In 2004, more respondents reported using other County residents, the Internet, and cable television programming to be greater sources of information about the County. Respondents reported community meetings to be used similarly as a source in 2004 as in 2001.

# ***Computer and Internet Access***

**How often do you access the Internet?**



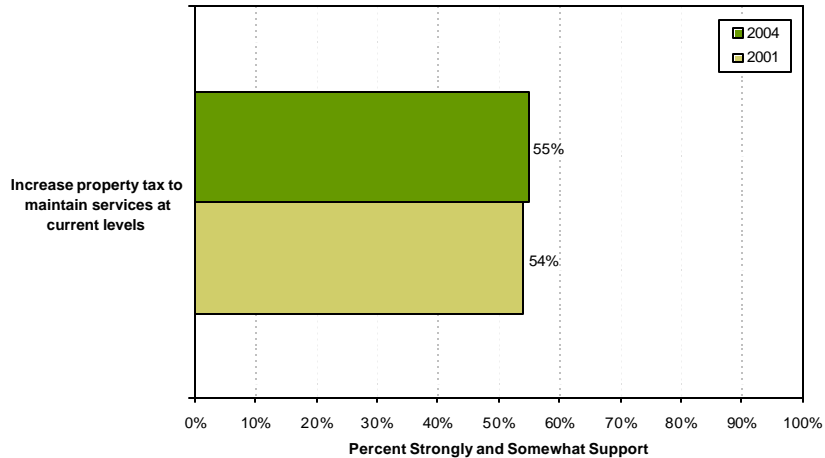
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Eight in ten survey respondents reported accessing the Internet at least once a week. Almost two-thirds of residents responding to the survey reported using the Internet on a daily basis, and 14% said they never access the Internet.

Unprompted responses about the information that residents would like to see on the Dakota County Web site appear in the table on the next page. One-quarter of respondents said they would like to access information about parks. Ten percent would like general information about the County, and 8% would like service information.

## ***Support for or Opposition to Property Tax Increase Compared by Year***



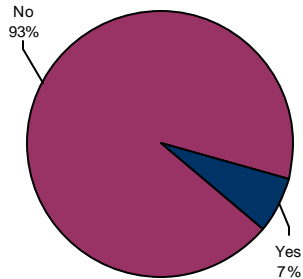
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As in 2001, County residents were asked whether they would support or oppose increasing their property tax to maintain services at current levels (though the scale used the word “favor” instead of “support” in 2001). Fifty-five percent of respondents said they would “somewhat” or “strongly support” a property tax increase. Strong support was offered by 12% of respondents compared with strong opposition from 22% of respondents. The percent of those respondents who supported increasing property taxes to maintain services at their current levels (55%) was similar to the support in 2001 (54%).

# *Restoration of County Services*

Are there any County services you would like to see restored?



## ■ Most Popular County Services Desired to be Restored

- Longer library hours (24%)
- Education funding (7%)
- Additional childcare vouchers/subsidized childcare (6%)
- Mental health services (6%)
- Child/youth services (6%)
- Other (31%)

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## **Restoration of County Services**

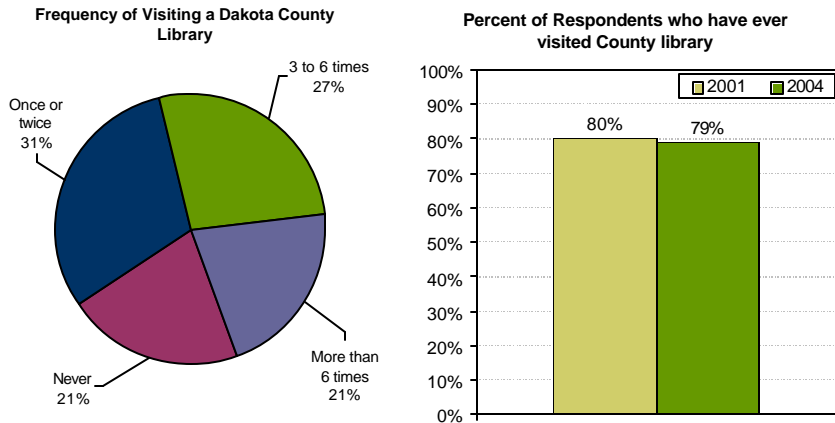
Just 7% of County residents said that there were County services that had been cut from budget that they would like to see restored. Ninety-three percent did not feel that there were any services that they thought should be restored.

Those who said that they did want to see Dakota County services restored were asked to identify those services. The largest category of unprompted responses was about library hours; about one-quarter of respondents wanted to see longer library hours restored. (Note that most of the “other” responses have been coded into more descriptive categories in the table below.)

Less popular services:

- Health services (5%)
- Visits from public health nurses (4%)
- Snow and ice removal (4%)
- Disability services (4%)
- Low income services (4%)
- Senior services (3%)
- Local extension programs (e.g., 4th, master gardener programs (2%))
- Drug treatment (2%)
- Transportation (2%)
- More police programs (1%)
- No services (5%)

# Library Use



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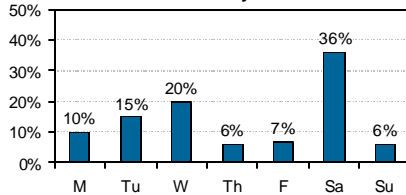
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## County Libraries

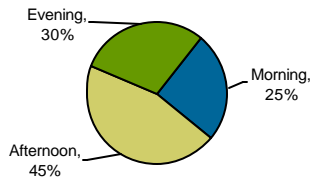
The survey included a set of questions about Dakota County libraries. About four-fifths of respondents said they had visited a County library at least once in the past three months. This was similar to 2001, when 80% of respondents reported themselves in that category.

# Aspects of Library Visitation and Schedule

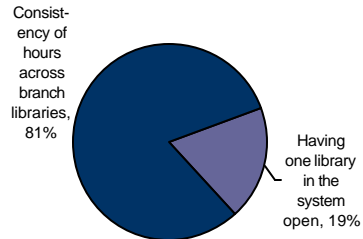
Most Likely Day of the Week to Visit the Library



Time of Day of Library Visits



Most Important Aspect of the Library Schedule



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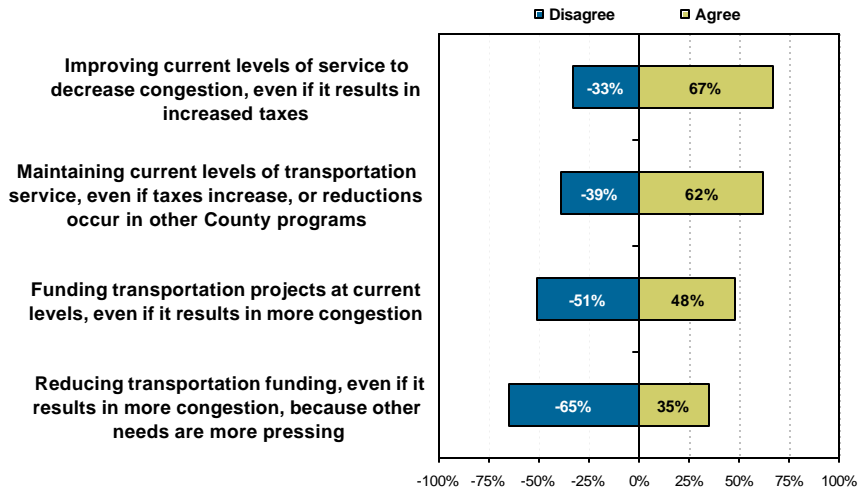
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Residents were asked to name the day of the week when they would be most likely to visit the library. Responses were distributed across the seven days of the week, with the greatest percentage saying that they would go on Saturday (36%) and the fewest respondents saying that they would go on Thursday (6%), Friday (7%), or Sunday (6%).

Still thinking about when they would be most likely to go to the library, respondents next answered a question about the most likely time of day for their visit. One-quarter of respondents said they would go in the morning, 45% offered that afternoon was more likely, and 30% suggested that they would make their visit in the evening.

In case budget cuts cause County libraries to reduce their hours, Dakota County wanted to know whether residents would prefer that one library remain open or that branch libraries have consistent hours. At a rate of four to one, respondents preferred consistent hours across branch libraries over a single library being open.

# Transportation Scenarios

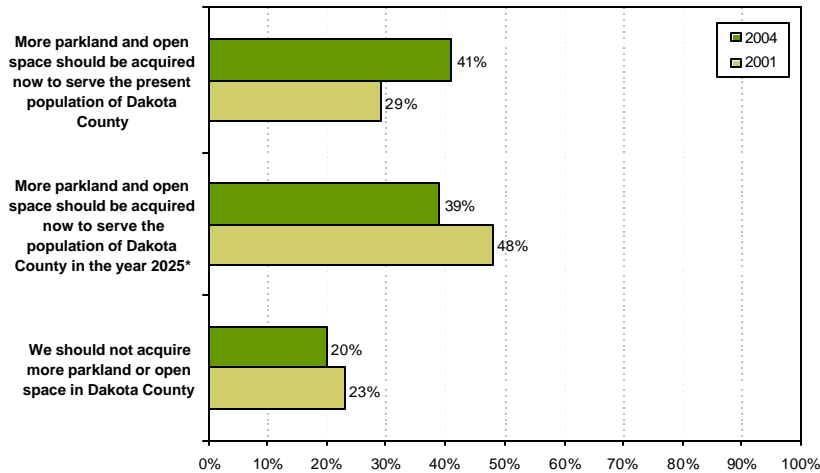


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Four transportation scenarios were presented to respondents with which they could agree or disagree. Two-thirds of residents “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed that current levels of service should be improved to decrease congestion, even if it results in increased taxes, while 62% at least “somewhat” agreed that current levels of transportation service should be maintained, even if taxes increase, or reductions occur in other County programs. About half of respondents “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed with funding transportation projects at current levels, even if more congestion results and about one-third “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed with the scenario, “Reducing transportation funding, even if it results in more congestion, because other needs are more pressing.” This statement elicited strong disagreement from 31% of respondents.

## ***Parkland and Open Space Preferences Compared by Year***



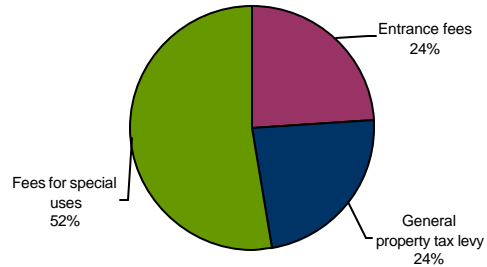
\*Question wording in 2001 referenced the year 2010.  
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County residents chose the statement that best fit their view regarding parks and open space from a list of three statements. Two statements, “More parkland and open space should be acquired now to serve the present population of Dakota County” and “More parkland and open space should be acquired now to serve the population of Dakota County in the year 2025” were each selected by about four in ten respondents. The remaining 20% said that the statement “We should not acquire more parkland or open space in Dakota County” best fit their view.

A greater percentage of respondents agreed with the statement “More parkland and open space should be acquired now to serve the present population of Dakota County” in 2004 (41% of respondents) than in 2001 (29%). Fewer respondents felt that parkland and open space should be acquired now to serve the future population (39% in 2004 vs. 48% in 2001), perhaps in part because the 2004 question referenced planning for the 2025 population, while the 2001 question referenced the year 2010. A similar proportion of respondents agreed in 2004 and 2001 that Dakota County should not acquire more parkland or open space.

## ***Preferred Method of Paying for Park System***



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Survey respondents were given three options for how the County could pay for the costs incurred by Dakota County parks and asked which they would prefer. About half of respondents said there should be fees for special uses, such as camping and pavilion space, and the remaining respondents were split evenly between entrance fees and a general property tax levy.