

2009 Metropolitan Survey

Transportation top among issues facing the region

Once again, Twin Cities residents ranked transportation issues as the region's top public concern in 2009. This marks the sixth year out of the past seven that transportation concerns ranked first.

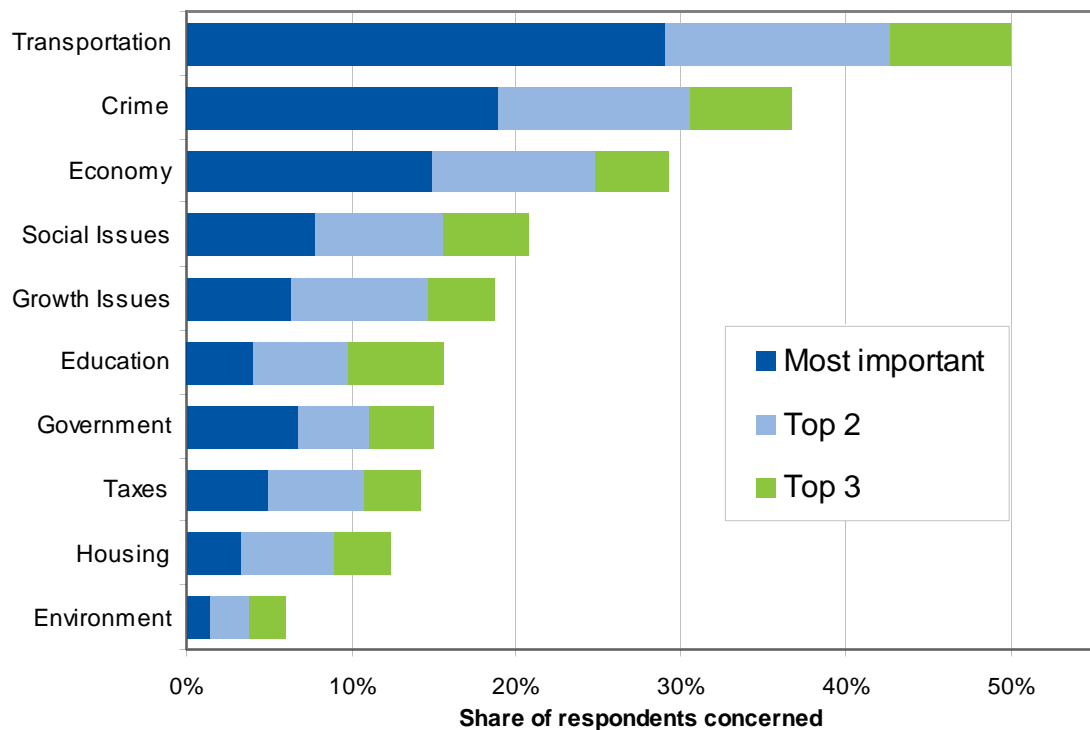
When asked about "the single most important problem" facing the region, 29 percent of respondents cited transportation-related issues. Among the specific concerns raised in the survey were traffic congestion, availability of mass transit, and adequacy and condition of metro roads.

Crime was cited as the most significant problem by 19 percent of respondents. Specifically, respondents noted gang activity, drug-related crime, and youth crimes as concerns.

Transportation was the top concern regardless of the type of community in the region. Though larger shares of residents in the suburbs and rural areas listed it first, transportation is the greatest concern in the central cities. This is a shift from earlier in the decade when crime was the dominant issue in the central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Concerns regarding the regional economy increased slightly in 2009 – 15 percent of residents cited the economy as their top concern, up from 11 percent in 2008. Past Metro Residents Surveys – in 2001 and 1992 – showed similar numbers of residents citing the economy as a top regional issue. The survey was conducted during October and November 2009. More than 1,400 residents participated.

Top 10 concerns in the metro area - 2009



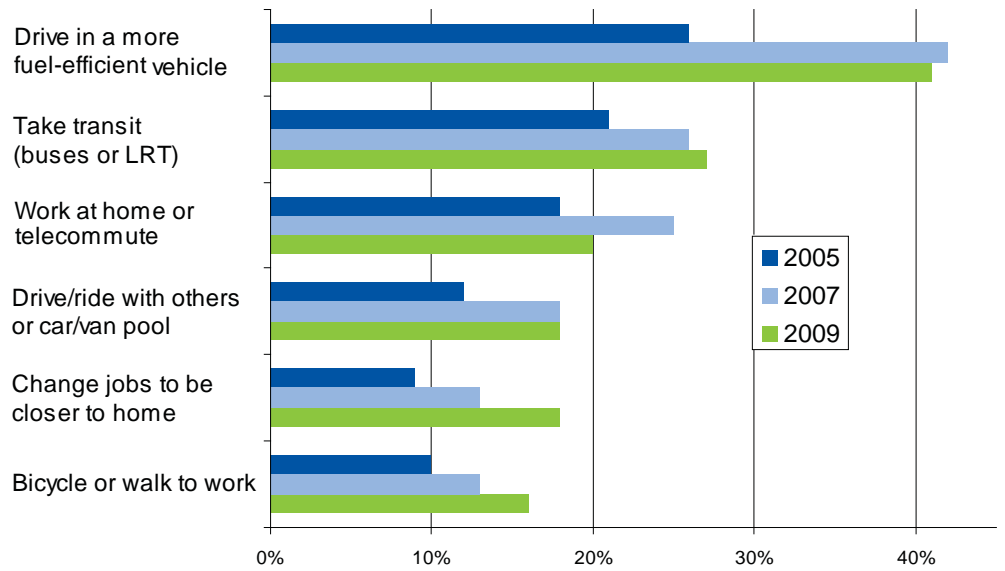
The Metropolitan Council's survey asks about the "single most important problem," but also about "other important problems" facing the region. Fifty percent of residents included transportation among their top three concerns for the metro area. Thirty-seven percent said crime ranked among their top three concerns. A more in-depth report of survey findings is available online at www.metrocouncil.org/Reports/

Alternative commutes

Improving mobility for commuters in the region is a key Council goal – which includes encouraging practical commuting alternatives for residents. With transportation issues such as congestion and road conditions consistently among the top issues, many metro residents indicate interest in commuting alternatives.

Forty-one percent of residents said they are already driving a more fuel-efficient vehicle or are very likely to try it. Other commuting alternatives are on the rise, as well: 27 percent said they are using or would try using transit, up from 23 percent in 2008; 18 percent said they would change or have changed jobs to be closer to home, up from 14 percent in 2008; and 16 percent said they are or would try walking or biking to work, up from 13 percent in 2008.

Commuters ‘very likely’ to try alternatives

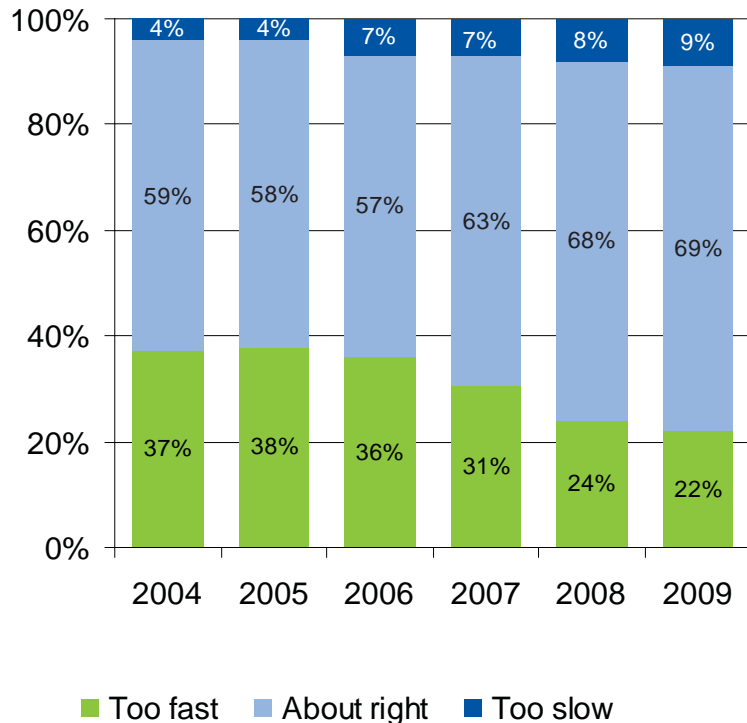


Region growing at the right pace

The majority of metro area residents – 69 percent – indicate the pace of growth in their local communities “about right,” according to the survey. And in 2009, the survey showed only a slight variation in results from 2008 in all categories. Twenty-two percent say their communities are growing too fast, a slight decrease from 2008, and 9 percent say growth is too slow, a slight increase from the previous year.

The region has experienced a significant decline in new residential and nonresidential construction since 2006. Data show a direct relationship between public opinion regarding community growth and the pace of growth in the region’s housing units.

Public opinion on local community growth



Regional parks remain top feature

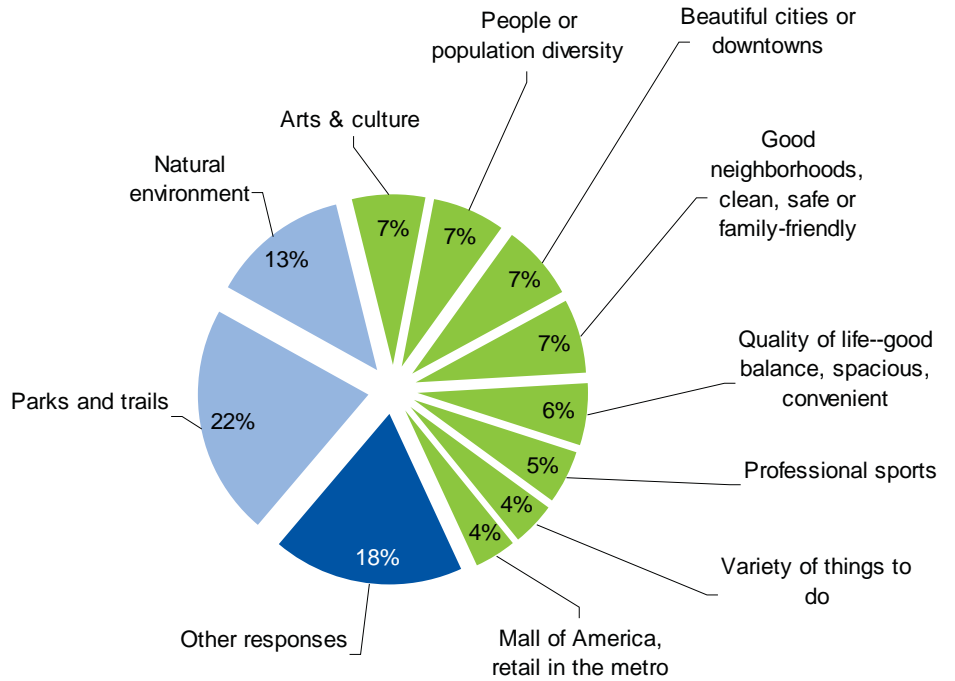
As was consistently the case over the past decade, the region's parks and trails are among the area's most attractive features, according to metro residents, along with the natural environment the Twin Cities region offers.

The regional park system boasts about 55,000 acres or 82 square miles, and about 231 miles of regional trails – roughly the distance from Minneapolis to Fargo. More than 38 million visitors use the regional park system each year.

Favorite parks include the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, the Como Zoo and Conservatory, Minnehaha Falls, and Silverwood, the newest regional park, which opened in 2009 in St. Anthony.

Residents also noted the range of activities available in the region, including arts and cultural activities, the diversity of the region's population, beautiful cities and downtowns, and good, family-friendly neighborhoods.

Region's most attractive feature



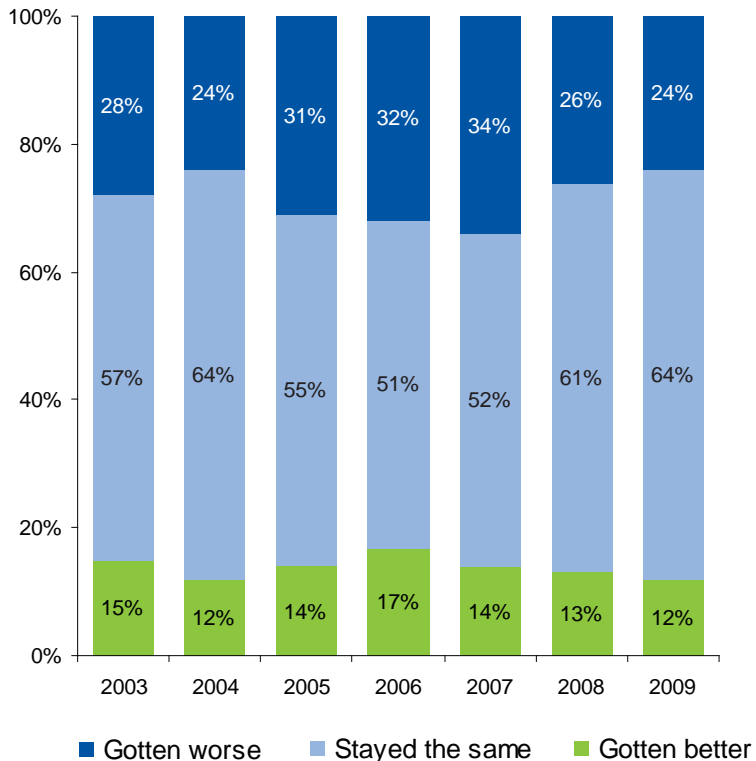
A great place to live

Twin Cities region residents agree that the area is a better place to live than other metropolitan areas. Ninety-six percent of residents said it was much better or slightly better than other areas. These results have been consistent over the 27 years the survey has been conducted.

Twelve percent of residents said the quality of life in the region improved from the previous year, down from 13 percent, and 24 percent said the quality of life declined, an improvement from earlier in the decade.

Most residents, 64 percent, indicated that the quality of life in the region has stayed the same over the previous year, an increase from earlier in the decade.

Do you think the quality of life has changed in the past year?



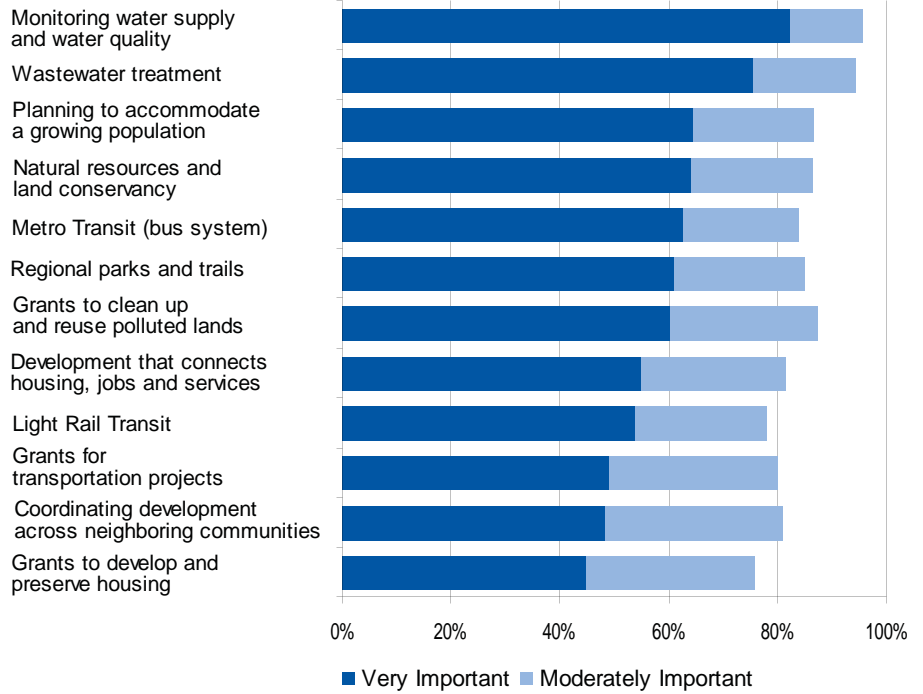
Council fills important role

More than 90 percent of residents noted the Council's role in monitoring water supply and water quality, as well as its responsibility for treating wastewater (sewage), as moderately or very important to the region's quality of life.

At least 75 percent of residents evaluated every service provided by the Council as moderately or very important to the region's quality of life. In nearly every category, the numbers remained consistent or grew from 2008.

From the regional parks and trails, to the transit system, to grant programs encouraging development and revitalization, residents agree the Metro Council's programs are a significant part of making the Twin Cities a great place to live and work.

Council programs considered very or moderately important

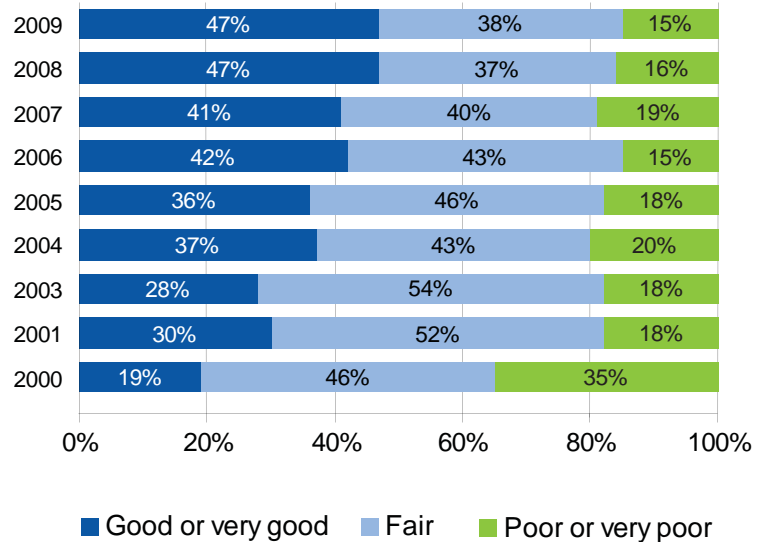


Council approval remains high

Seventy-one percent of the region's residents can identify the Council and its role. Nearly half of these residents – 47 percent – gave good or very-good ratings for the Council's performance, the same number as residents indicated in 2008, which was an all-time high.

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. The Council runs the regional bus and light rail system, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans regional parks and administers funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor.

Public opinion of Metropolitan Council performance



Methodology

Results are based on the responses of 1,410 participants, collected during October and November 2009 by Metropolitan Council research staff and Information Specialists Group, Inc. Central cities, suburban and rural residents were selected randomly and invited to participate in the Metro Residents Survey. Survey results reflect the demographic and geographic distribution of the region's adult population. Survey results have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent.