

# **DECISION RESOURCES, LTD.**

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS** *2010 City of Lakeville Residential Study*

### ***Residential Demographics:***

The typical adult Lakeville residents lived in the community for 13.9 years. Sixteen percent have lived there for five years or less, while nine percent have lived in the city for over 30 years. The typical adult resident is also 46 years old. Sixteen percent post ages under 35 years old, while 10% are over 65 years old. Men and women evenly split the sample.

Thirteen percent of the households contain seniors; in fact, eleven percent are composed entirely of people over 65 years old. Forty-seven percent of the households contain school-aged children or pre-schoolers. Eight percent rent their current residence. The typical owner-occupied home is valued at \$250,000.00; fifty-one percent of the homes in the community are in the \$200,000 to \$300,000 value range.

### ***Quality of Life:***

“Housing” and “schools” remain the major reasons for settling in the City of Lakeville. The search for “small town or rural ambience” is a secondary motive for locating in the community. When they moved to the city, “location” – nearness to areas that matter to the individual – remains the most often valued characteristic of the community. Aspects of the community which are also prized include “small town ambience,” “strong neighborhoods,” “good schools,” and “quiet and peaceful.”

A very high 98% rate the quality of life in Lakeville favorably. This favorable rating is the highest in the Metropolitan Area. In fact, 40% rate the quality of life as “excellent.”

When considering aspects of the city they like least, a record 40% report there is “nothing.” This level of city boosters is also the highest in the Metropolitan Area. “High taxes,” at 21%, leads the list of concerns, and increased five percent in three years. This level of concern, though, is lower than in other Metropolitan Area suburbs. “Growth/Crowding” and “roads/traffic” are moderate concerns, but diminished during the past three years.

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Eight percent have plans to move from the community within the next five years. Retirements are the major reason for departing, followed by the need to downsize and the search for warmer climates.

**City Service Ratings:**

When only the opinions of residents providing ratings of a service are considered, the percentage of favorable ratings ranges between 72% and 99%. The table below arrays each service with the percentage of informed respondents who rate it as either “excellent” or “good.”

<b>City Service</b>	<b>Favorable Rating</b>
Fire protection	99%
Community celebrations	98%
Police protection	97%
Upkeep and maintenance of parks	96%
Education programming provided by the Police and Fire Department	96%
Storm drainage and flood control	95%
Condition of city trails	94%
Senior Center programming	93%
Park and recreation programming	92%
Arts Center programming	92%
Traffic enforcement	92%
Street lighting	90%
Mowing of boulevards	89%
Street sweeping	89%
Snowplowing of city streets	89%
Snow removal on city trails	88%
Park ranger program	88%
Property maintenance enforcement	88%

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<b>City Service</b>	<b>Favorable Rating</b>
Forestry program	86%
Animal control	86%
Upkeep and maintenance of city beaches	84%
Building and inspection services	83%
Economic development and planning	82%
Quality of drinking water	82%
Lighting along bicycle and pedestrian trails	77%
Street maintenance and repair	75%
Outdoor ice rinks	72%

The mean favorable percentage for all city services is 88.6% – about four percent higher than the Metropolitan Area suburban norm.

***Importance of City Services:***

The table below shows each service with the percentage of respondents who consider it to be “essential” in the first column. Then, the second column provides an “importance score,” which is the rank of the service’s combined “essential” and “very important” ratings .

<b>City Service</b>	<b>Essential Rating</b>	<b>Importance Score</b>
Police protection	81%	1
Fire protection	78%	2
Traffic enforcement	61%	3
Snowplowing of city streets	54%	4
Quality of drinking water	45%	5
Street maintenance and repair	45%	6
Storm drainage and flood control	38%	7
Street lighting	33%	8

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<b>City Service</b>	<b>Essential Rating</b>	<b>Importance Score</b>
Economic development and planning	30%	9
Upkeep and maintenance of parks	21%	10
Property maintenance enforcement	11%	11
Building and inspection services	9%	12
Mowing of boulevards	17%	13
Street sweeping	21%	14
Community celebrations	13%	15
Animal control	10%	16
Lighting along bicycle and pedestrian trails	11%	17
Education programming provided by the Police and Fire Department	6%	18
Condition of city trails	5%	19
Upkeep and maintenance of city beaches	5%	20
Park and recreation programming	9%	21
Senior Center programming	9%	22
Arts Center programming	3%	23
Snow removal on city trails	7%	24
Forestry program	3%	25
Outdoor ice rinks	4%	26
Park ranger program	2%	27

The average essential rating given to the 27 city services is 23.4%. The top eight scoring services are awarded ratings almost double the norm.

***City Taxes and Funding:***

The table below shows each service with the percentage of respondents who consider it to be “essential” and a score, which is its rank among all 27 services.

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<b>City Service</b>	<b>Cut/Eliminate Percentage</b>	<b>Funding Priority</b>
Fire protection	1%	1
Police protection	2%	2
Traffic enforcement	3%	3
Snowplowing of city streets	3%	3
Quality of drinking water	3%	3
Street maintenance and repair	3%	3
Street lighting	5%	7
Lighting along bicycle and pedestrian trails	10%	8
Senior Center programming	10%	8
Economic development and planning	11%	10
Property maintenance enforcement	12%	11
Building and inspection services	12%	11
Education programming provided by the Police and Fire Department	13%	13
Upkeep and maintenance of parks	13%	13
Storm drainage and flood control	13%	15
Animal control	14%	16
Condition of city trails	14%	16
Park and recreation programming	17%	18
Community celebrations	17%	18
Mowing of boulevards	18%	20
Street sweeping	19%	21
Upkeep and maintenance of city beaches	19%	22
Arts Center programming	27%	23

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<b>City Service</b>	<b>Cut/Eliminate Percentage</b>	<b>Funding Priority</b>
Snow removal on city trails	28%	24
Forestry program	35%	25
Park ranger program	35%	25
Outdoor ice rinks	43%	27

The average “cut/eliminate” percentage given to the 27 city services is 14.8%. The bottom five ranked services have “cut/eliminate” percentages almost double the norm.

Residents who wanted to increase funding for any service – 29% of the sample – narrowly favored a property tax increase to provide additional funding. But, among residents who wanted to maintain funding for any service, respondents opposed a property tax increase by a 58%-38% margin. In any case, a 63%-34% majority opposes service cuts even if it would reduce their current city property taxes.

***Communications:***

By far the most preferred sources of information about City Government and its activities are the “local newspaper,” and the “City Newsletter,” mentioned by 72% and 70%, respectively. Next, the “City’s website” is posted by 52%.

***Concluding Thoughts:***

To create an overall budget priority ranking, the scores indicating the importance of a service and the funding priority are combined – the lower the overall score, the greater the desire of the public to protect that service’s funding. The table below arrays the priority ranking for each service.

<b>City Service</b>	<b>Impor- tance</b>	<b>Funding Priority</b>	<b>Priority Ranking Score</b>	<b>Positive Rating</b>
Fire protection	2	1	3	99
Police protection	1	2	3	97
Traffic enforcement	3	3	6	92

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<b>City Service</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Funding Priority</b>	<b>Priority Ranking Score</b>	<b>Positive Rating</b>
Snowplowing of city streets	4	3	7	89
Quality of drinking water	5	3	8	82
Street maintenance and repair	6	3	9	75
Street lighting	8	7	15	90
Economic development and planning	9	10	19	82
Property maintenance enforcement	11	11	22	88
Storm drainage and flood control	7	15	22	95
Building and inspection services	12	11	23	83
Upkeep and maintenance of parks	10	13	23	97
Lighting along bicycle and pedestrian trails	17	8	25	77
Senior Center programming	22	8	30	93
Education programming provided by the Police and Fire Department	18	13	31	96
Animal control	16	16	32	86
Community celebrations	15	18	33	98
Mowing of boulevards	13	20	33	89
Street sweeping	14	21	35	89
Condition of city trails	19	16	35	94
Park and recreation programming	21	18	39	92
Upkeep and maintenance of city beaches	20	22	42	84
Arts Center programming	23	23	46	92
Snow removal on city trails	24	24	48	88
Forestry program	25	25	50	86
Park ranger program	27	25	52	88

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<b>City Service</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Funding Priority</b>	<b>Priority Ranking Score</b>	<b>Positive Rating</b>
Outdoor ice rinks	26	27	53	72

The top quartile of services – the first seven services boxed by a double-line border – should be prioritized to maintain funding at current levels and/or make changes which will improve these services. The second quartile of services – the second seven services boxed by a double-lined border – should have funding reduced judiciously, if necessary. The third quartile – the third seven services boxed by a double-lined border – should be considered candidates for moderate or average funding cuts. The fourth quartile – the fourth seven services boxed by a double-lined border – are primary candidates for large cuts or service termination. Any shaded cell indicates a positive service rating which is uniquely low and suggests a need for a more in-depth service review.

In general, residents view the City of Lakeville very favorably. Tax hostility remains virtually unchanged from three years ago, but the value of city services in terms of the city property tax level increased. Lakeville elected officials and city staff possess a decisive advantage, one not commonly found in growing cities: solid performance evaluations of their past policies and continued confidence in their ability to plan for the future.