

Executive Summary

City-Wide Community Needs Survey – City of La Crosse Planning Department

Introduction

The City of La Crosse Planning Department surveyed 2295 people living in the La Crosse area on how the City should prioritize its federal community development funds and how to best revitalize its neighborhoods. The survey revealed that the priorities already set by the Mayor and Council are on track. The City should continue to prioritize funding that re-develops the city's older housing stock into newer or renovated housing that meets modern market demand, while addressing urban blight through stepped-up code enforcement. While most citizens felt satisfied with their neighborhoods, they felt the City to continue to focus on safety concerns, continue to maintain and repair existing roads, address storm water management and flooding issues, provide better street lighting.

KEY FINDINGS

Safety, Security, and Satisfaction

Safety, security, and satisfaction in La Crosse's neighborhoods are key issues for residents and major priorities for the City government. A large majority of city residents 90% reported feeling either very safe or somewhat safe in their neighborhoods¹. This is a 12% increase in safety perception since the last time residents took the survey 5-years ago. 85% stated that they were somewhat or very satisfied with their neighborhood. This also showed a slight increase since the last time residents were surveyed. Common reasons for satisfaction included having wonderful neighbors, proximity to parks, employment, and other amenities, quality schools, and libraries, well-maintained historical properties. These results show that policing, park, and other initiatives so far are yielding results.

Neighborhood Revitalization and Housing Programs

Neighborhood revitalization continues to be a significant priority for City administration and local non-profit organizations. Housing programs that aim to increase housing quality of both rentals properties and owner-occupied properties were highly rated. Residents also expressed a concern about addressing the homelessness problem and ensuring housing programs address a range of income levels.

These measures had broad support in the survey with 84% of resurvey takers supporting programs that help individuals fix up their home and 81% supporting programs that replace deteriorating housing with new housing. For programs that target rental properties, 83% of survey takers support programs that fix up deteriorating properties and 78% supported programs that provide permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness and increase the amount of code enforcement.

Capital Improvement Projects

For City's Capital Improvement projects, 95% of residents thought it was somewhat or very important to undertake improvements to the City's streets, 86% supported stormwater/flooding projects, and 84% supported street lighting projects.

Economic Development

The survey results showed less support for incentives provided to businesses but licensed child care and access to food-based businesses emerged as needs for neighborhoods.

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Community Services

Respondents also showed strong support for non-profit services aimed at reducing factors that contribute to instability in the community. Respondents were asked to select for public service programs. Mental health services (59%), homeless services (57%), low-cost health services (41%), crime prevention and public safety (38.6%), substance abuse prevention (30%), all emerged as high priorities. In particular, services for the homeless, mental health, and health care related services were higher priorities this survey than 5-years ago.

Past Performance

City of La Crosse project funded through the CDBG funds ranked very well, with over 70% of respondents ranking the replacement housing program, new street lighting as good or excellent. The Housing Rehabilitation Program and Powell Park/Poage Park renovation ranking slightly lower. The feedback was not enough residents knew about the housing rehab program and people wished there was additional public input into the design of these two parks . In examining the projects that the City funded other organization to do, residents reported wanting to see more results for housing people experiencing homelessness (only 47% ranked the program as good or excellent). People were not familiar with the City's efforts to support entrepreneurs.

About the Survey

This survey was conducted from September 24, 2019 through December 1, 2019. The results of this survey were a critical component in assessing community priorities relating to housing programs, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization as part of the planning process for the 5-Year Consolidated Plan that dictates the allocation of the City's Community Development Block Grant funds. The survey was distributed through a link on the City's website, notices in the La Crosse Tribune, as well as meetings and emails with neighborhood groups, community stakeholders, and government agencies.

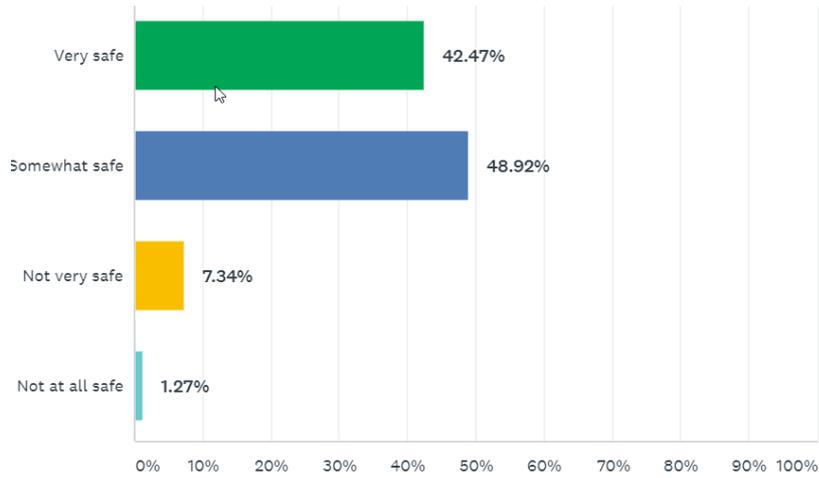
Survey Demographics

Of the total 2295 responses, 81% reported living in the City of La Crosse. Non-residents were primarily non-profit organization staff or City/County employees. Results stated above were for residents only (about 1895 people). A majority of the respondents (67%) were homeowners. 58% of households made more than \$50,000 per year. Racial or ethnic minorities were 8% of total responses (this represents a slight underrepresentation as they make up 11.3% of La Crosse's population) .

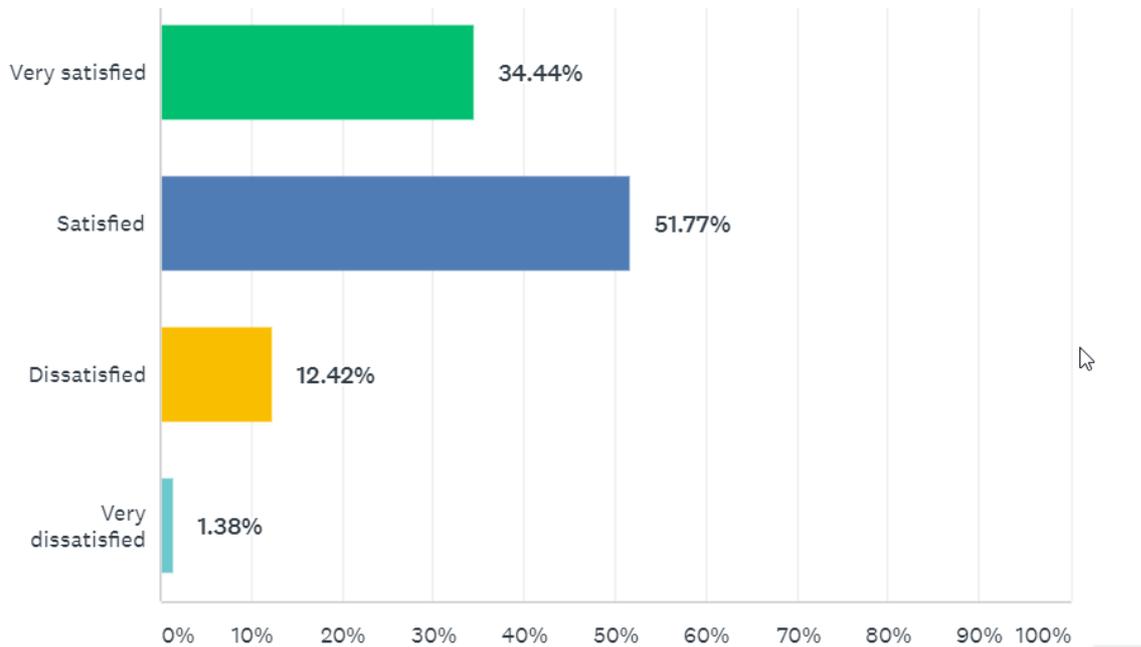
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How safe do you feel in your neighborhood?



How satisfied are you with your neighborhood?

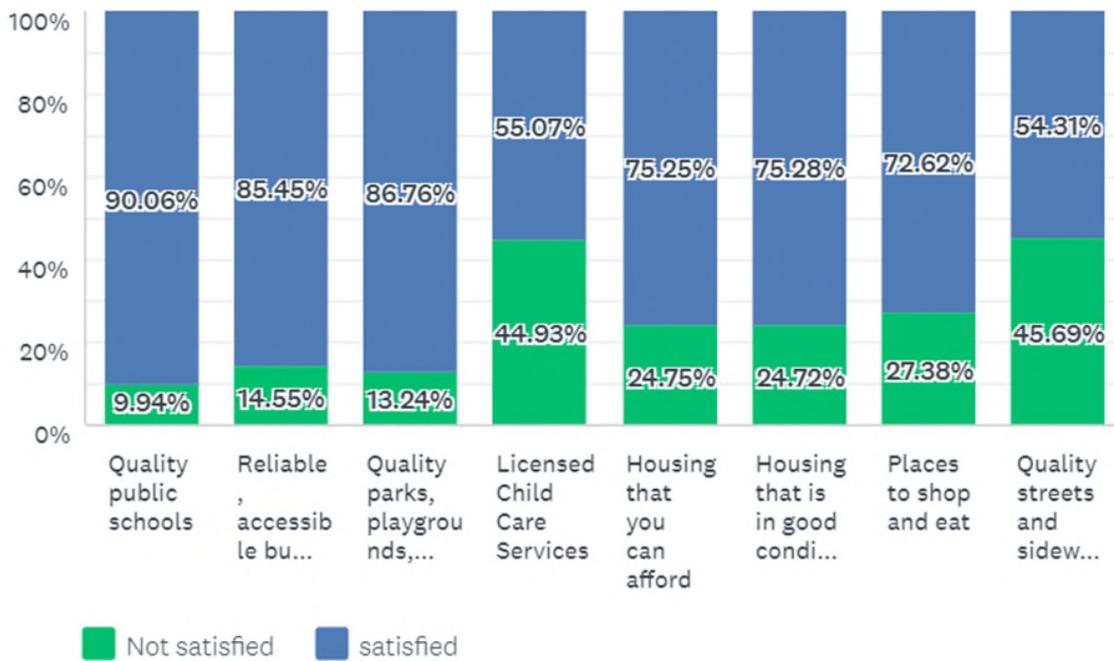


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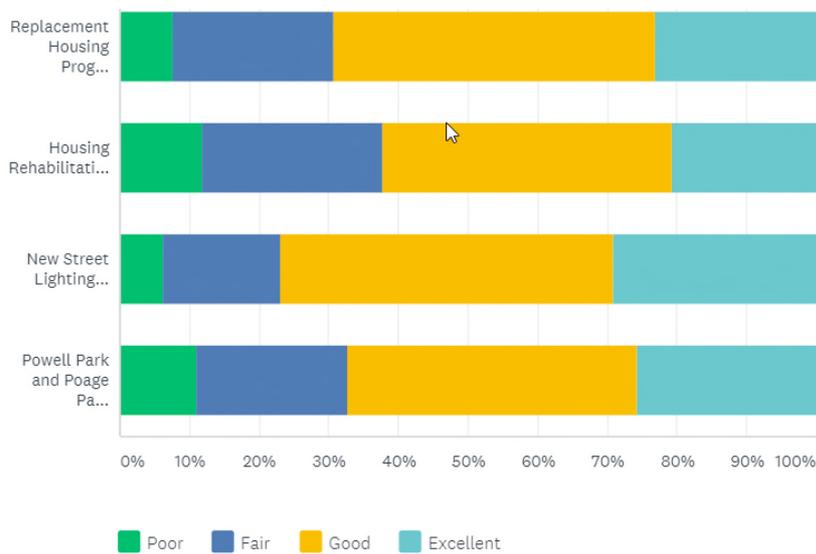
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How satisfied are you with your access to the following resources?



Rate the quality and effectiveness of City Programs

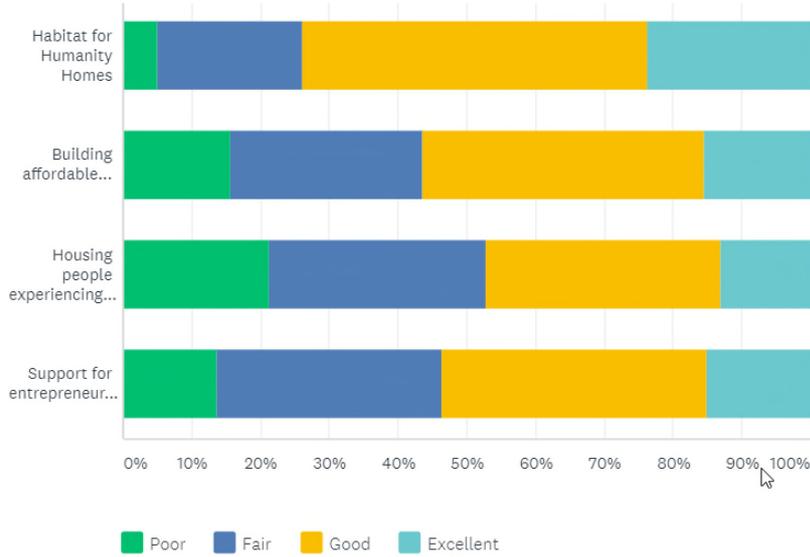


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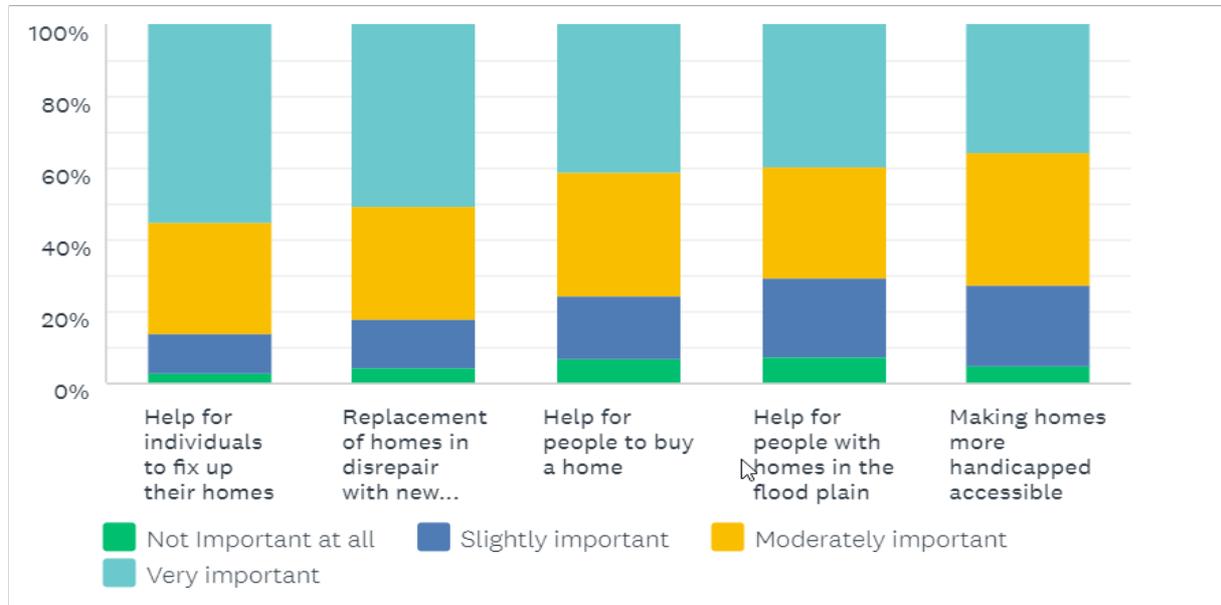
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Rate the quality and effectiveness of programs funded by the City.



How important are the following improvements that meet the needs of homeowners?

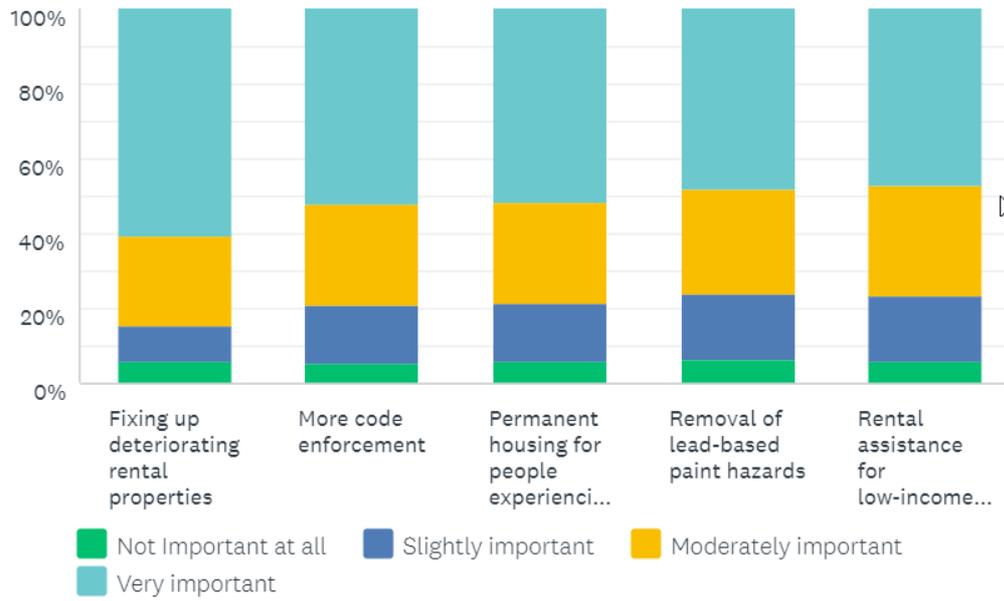


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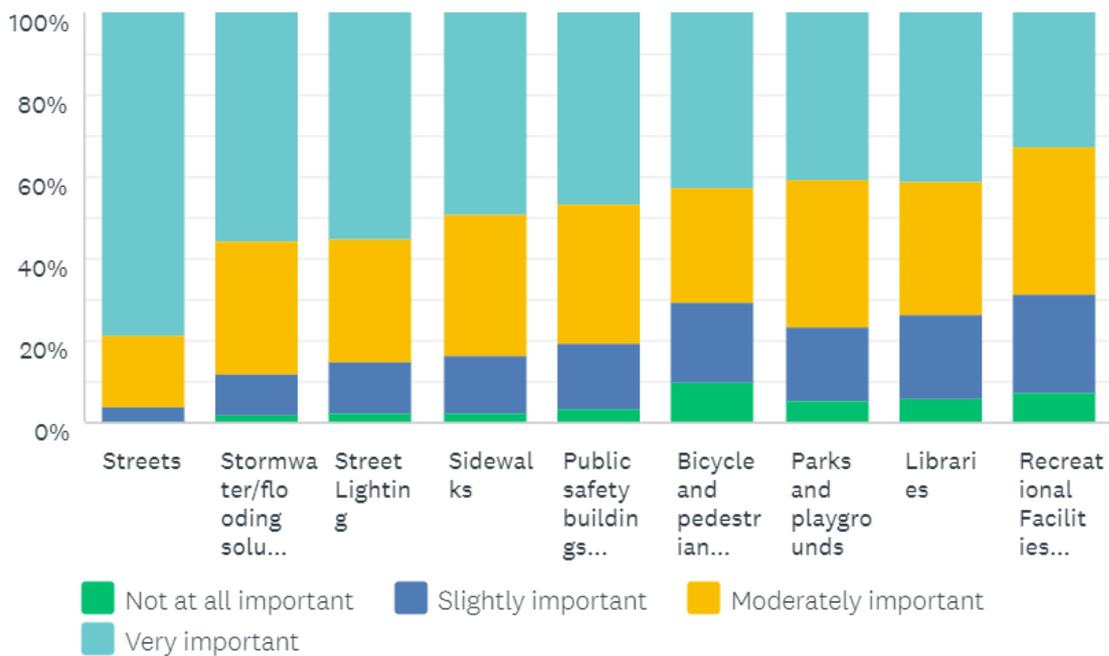
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How important are the following programs that address the issues faced by renters?



How important are the following capital improvements?

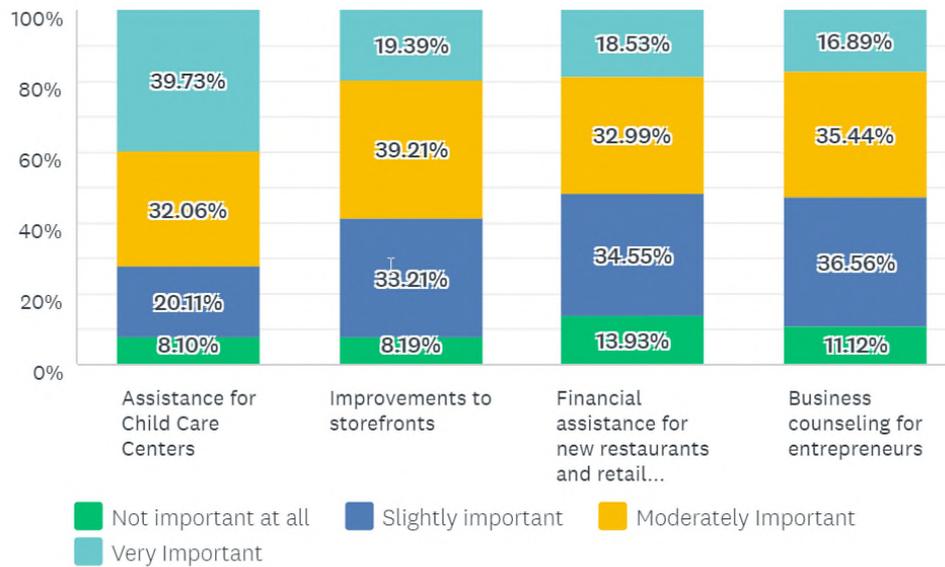


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How important are Economic Development Programs?



What are four types of services that the City of La Crosse should prioritize?

52%	1,020	▼	Mental Health Services (5)
48%	932	▼	Crime prevention and public safety (4)
44%	867	▼	Homeless services (housing, shelters, support) (2)
39%	756	▼	Low-cost health care services (16)
35%	690	▼	Substance abuse services and prevention (14)
30%	579	▼	Domestic violence and child abuse prevention (11)
25%	492	▼	Youth services and programs (8)
21%	410	▼	Child Care (9)
20%	382	▼	Parks and Recreation (13)
17%	334	▼	Community social workers and case management (12)
16%	308	▼	Job training (3)
15%	288	▼	Transportation services (bus, car repair) (10)
15%	287	▼	Food Banks (15)
10%	203	▼	Emergency shelters (7)
10%	196	▼	Tenant/landlord counseling (6)
9%	174	▼	Financial counseling services (1)