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# The City of Novi, Michigan

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## Summary Report 2006



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# SURVEY BACKGROUND

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## About The National Citizen Survey™

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The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

## Understanding the Results

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### Survey Administration

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 1,200 households, surveys were mailed to the same residences approximately one week later. A reminder letter and a new survey were sent to the same households after two weeks. Of the mailed postcards, 64 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 419 residents, for a response rate of 35%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey of 1,200 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 5 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the City of Novi. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix B in the Report of Results. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix C of the Report of Results.)

### Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

## Putting Evaluations onto a 100-Point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 4 representing the best rating and 1 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 5 points based on all respondents.

## PROFILE OF NOVI

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As assessed by the survey, about 14% of Novi residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years and 72% are over age 34. Another 15% are over age 64. Seventy-nine percent are currently employed; 25% rent; 75% own and 50% live in detached single family homes. Over 91% of Novi residents have at least some college and 71% have annual household incomes above \$50,000. Two percent of Novi residents reported that they are Spanish, Hispanic or Latino and 88% said they are White or Caucasian.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

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The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to the life of residents in the community. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as other aspects of quality of life in Novi. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Novi. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Novi.

### Quality of Life

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When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Novi, 27% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Zero percent rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Novi as a place to raise children received an average rating of 79 on a 100-point scale.

### Ratings of Community Characteristics

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The highest rated characteristics of Novi were shopping opportunities and the overall image/reputation of Novi. When asked about potential problems in Novi, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were traffic congestion, taxes, and too much growth. The rate of population growth in Novi was viewed as “too fast” by 61% of respondents, while 1% thought it was “too slow.”

### Perceptions of Safety

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When evaluating safety in the community, 89% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Novi. In their neighborhood after dark, 88% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 8% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 65% had reported it to police.

### Community Participation

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Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Novi during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 70% reported visiting a park in Novi in the past year and 85% had read City of Novi Newsletter.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Several aspects of the government of the City of Novi were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey™. They were asked how much trust they placed in their local government, and what they felt about the services they receive from the City of Novi. Those who had any contact with a City of Novi employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

### Public Trust

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When asked to evaluate whether they felt they received good value for taxes they pay, residents gave an average rating of 59 on a 100-point scale.

### Service Provided by Novi

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The overall quality of services provided by the City of Novi was rated as 65 on a 100-point scale.

### The City of Novi Employees

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Impressions of the City of Novi employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a City of Novi employee in the past year (54%) rated their overall impression as 72 on a 100-point scale.

# ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Two additional questions were asked by the City of Novi as listed below. The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results.

## Question 16a: Policy Question 1

<b>The City of Novi is interested in knowing what priorities you think are important for your municipal government. Please rate how important you think each of the following priorities should be to the City of Novi over the next five years:</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Total</b>
Increase the tax base by retaining and attracting retail business	21%	38%	31%	10%	100%
Increase the tax base by retaining and attracting office/service businesses	24%	41%	26%	9%	100%
Make annual investments in facilities and equipment for police and fire	28%	39%	28%	4%	100%
Make annual investments in municipal infrastructure (i.e. roads, water and sewer)	32%	47%	21%	0%	100%
Make annual investments in parks and recreation/cultural facilities	20%	37%	38%	5%	100%
Work cooperatively with neighboring communities, school districts and other public entities	26%	45%	28%	2%	100%
Preserve natural areas (including open spaces, wetlands and woodland)	41%	35%	22%	3%	100%
Promote a City Government that listens to the community's needs and desires	48%	41%	11%	0%	100%
Adjust new and existing services to address Novi' changing demographics	27%	41%	28%	4%	100%
Promote services and programs for seniors	17%	41%	38%	4%	100%
Expand and enhance recreational and cultural programs	12%	41%	41%	6%	100%
Promote and maintain an attractive community	41%	46%	13%	0%	100%
Uphold a high standard of customer service from the City's employees	49%	40%	10%	1%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

**Question 16b: Policy Question 2**

**Please rate the following statements by circling the number that most clearly represents your opinion:**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
I can envision living in Novi five years from now	42%	28%	15%	10%	5%	100%
If I were looking to purchase/rent a new home I would look exclusively in Novi	15%	24%	23%	21%	16%	100%
I would recommend Novi to friends as a place to live	38%	38%	17%	4%	3%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.