

## 3.1 Community Survey

City of Rio Rancho officials decided that prior to creating future policy and investment decisions that would impact future generations, it was important to determine what the citizens of Rio Rancho thought, felt, and desire for their City.

In December, 1997, the City's Development Department retained Research & Polling, Inc. to conduct a Citizen Satisfaction Survey for a three-fold purpose; (1) address major issues of concern among the residents, (2) identify opportunities for improvement of services and programs, and (3) provide useful community satisfaction information to assist in the development of the Vision 2020 - Integrated Comprehensive Plan. A total of 607 randomly selected adults residing in Rio Rancho were contacted through telephone interviews in June, 1998. The 60-question survey was intended to scientifically assess citizens' concerns relating to quality of life, growth, development, and transportation issues within the community.

The survey was designed for maximum accuracy with a margin of error less than 5%: it was the equivalent of interviewing every adult in Rio Rancho with 95% of the responses being the same as those who were sampled. That is, in 95 out of 100 cases, the results obtained from such a sample would differ by no more than 5.0% in either direction from what would have been obtained by interviewing all adults residing in Rio Rancho.

The survey showed that Rio Rancho residents enjoy the overall quality of life offered by the community. Not only were the majority of residents pleased with their City, they were twice as likely to feel the overall quality of life in Rio Rancho had improved over the previous year as opposed to becoming worse. This satisfaction, however, was tempered with concern about the future. Growth and infrastructure related problems, such as traffic congestion, public transportation, and water reserves were perceived to be the most serious problems currently facing the residents of Rio Rancho. While nearly 8 out of 10 citizens thought continued growth was a positive force, another question reflected that 6 out of 10 thought that growth needs to occur at a slower rate, or not at all.

Additionally, the survey told us that people like living in Rio Rancho but they had concerns about how fast the City was growing. It revealed that most of us wanted more regional cooperation to address problems like air quality, transportation and the availability of water. It also told us that 66% of the respondents were concerned about the lack of adequate public transportation. The survey reflected that most of us preferred continued growth while wanting that growth to occur at a slower pace and with more master planning.

While 85% of the residents favor regional cooperation with Albuquerque to work on regional air quality and transportation plans, three-fourths of these residents strongly identified with living in Rio Rancho rather than in Albuquerque.

With respect to housing, affordable single-family housing was considered a very important part of what Rio Rancho has to offer its citizens, and nearly 40% noted that this was the reason they moved to Rio Rancho. The residents seemed to be split on whether more multiple family housing should be provided, or whether there should be a designated downtown.

Traffic flow, adequate public transportation, and water reserves headed the list of serious problems facing the City of Vision. Rio Rancho residents also noted that traffic and congestion, personal safety and crime, the lack of master planning were the most frequently cited concerns about growth in Rio Rancho.

- 72% considered Rio Rancho to be a good to excellent place to live.
- Funding priority responses: Police/Fire (41%); Streets/Sidewalks (24%); Parks (13%); Library (10%); Sr. Center (7%).
- 57% said that the gross receipts tax was reasonable and 68% said property taxes were reasonable.
- What people like the most about Rio Rancho was its low crime and it was less crowded than Albuquerque.
- They least like its traffic congestion.
- 78% felt part of the community of Rio Rancho rather than Albuquerque, while 76% felt part of a neighborhood.
- 36% thought that Rio Rancho will be a better place to live in the future, while 32% felt it will be a worse place to live in the future.
- 78% favor growth while 19% do not want more growth. 61% want the City to comprise less than 100,000 persons in 2020. Only 5% desire to see it become a City of more than 100,000 persons.
- Biggest growth concerns are: traffic congestion & road repair (48%), crime & security (30%), and planned growth (34%). 55% supported mandatory water conservation for new dwelling units.
- Three top service problems were identified: major streets, down the hill traffic flow & inadequacy of public transportation. (Note - 66% said public transportation was a serious or very serious problem compared to just 32% for parks, 24% for library).
- 84% favor large lots for single-family homes. 65% are satisfied with their current lot size.
- The responses were split down the middle regarding having a downtown area and developing more multi-family housing.
- Broad support was identified for: affordable single-family housing (82%); regional problem solving (85%); strict development regulations (79%); water conservation and xeriscaping programs (72%).