



389 Spruce St. • Morgantown, WV 26505 • T: (304) 284-7405 • www.morgantown.com

The City of Morgantown, West Virginia

Summary Report

2006



National Research Center, Inc.
3005 30th St. • Boulder, CO 80301 • T: (303) 444-7863 • F: (303) 444-1145 • www.n-r-c.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Survey Background.....	1
About The National Citizen Survey™	1
Understanding the Results.....	1
Profile of Morgantown	3
Community Life.....	4
Quality of Life.....	4
Ratings of Community Characteristics	4
Perceptions of Safety.....	4
Community Participation	4
Local Government	5
Public Trust	5
Service Provided by Morgantown	5
The City of Morgantown Employees	5
Additional Questions	6

SURVEY BACKGROUND

About The National Citizen Survey™

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

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, 73 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 337 residents, for a response rate of 30%. 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 Morgantown. (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 MORGANTOWN

As assessed by the survey, about 31% of Morgantown residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years and 38% are over age 34. Another 11% are over age 64. Sixty-six percent are currently employed; 58% rent; 42% own and 48% live in detached single family homes. Over 87% of Morgantown residents have at least some college and 30% have annual household incomes above \$50,000. Two percent of Morgantown residents reported that they are Spanish, Hispanic or Latino and 94% said they are White or Caucasian.

COMMUNITY LIFE

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 Morgantown. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Morgantown. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Morgantown.

Quality of Life

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Morgantown, 14% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 5% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Morgantown as a place to raise children received an average rating of 53 on a 100-point scale.

Ratings of Community Characteristics

The highest rated characteristics of Morgantown were recreational opportunities, opportunities to attend cultural activities, and openness and acceptance. When asked about potential problems in Morgantown, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were traffic congestion, too much growth, and drugs. The rate of population growth in Morgantown was viewed as “too fast” by 73% of respondents, while 2% thought it was “too slow.”

Perceptions of Safety

When evaluating safety in the community, 61% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Morgantown. In their neighborhood after dark, 69% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 22% 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, 77% had reported it to police.

Community Participation

Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Morgantown during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 85% reported visiting a park in Morgantown in the past year and 25% had attended a meeting of elected officials or other local public meeting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Morgantown 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 Morgantown. Those who had any contact with a City of Morgantown employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

Public Trust

When asked to evaluate whether they felt they received good value for taxes they pay, residents gave an average rating of 56 on a 100-point scale.

Service Provided by Morgantown

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Morgantown was rated as 52 on a 100-point scale.

The City of Morgantown Employees

Impressions of the City of Morgantown employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a City of Morgantown employee in the past year (60%) rated their overall impression as 57 on a 100-point scale.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Four additional questions were asked by the City of Morgantown as listed below. The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results. . Open-ended results can be found under a separate cover.

Policy Question #1					
Please indicate to what degree you would support or oppose the City...	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total
Placing limits on number of rental units in neighborhoods	34%	35%	20%	11%	100%
Providing the opportunity to pay city fees and taxes online	49%	40%	8%	3%	100%
Continuing to improve downtown infrastructure	56%	35%	6%	4%	100%
Providing stricter ordinances to address trash, dilapidated buildings, rental property and truck traffic	68%	28%	4%	1%	100%
Providing municipal owned city-wide wireless broadband	60%	29%	5%	6%	100%
Consolidating City services with other small cities surrounding Morgantown	33%	41%	19%	7%	100%
Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.					

Policy Question #2

Please rate how important or unimportant it would be to use tax dollars to fund each of the following community improvements in the next 2-3 years:

	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	Total
Additional street paving in the City	30%	27%	40%	4%	100%
Renovation of existing sidewalks	20%	36%	37%	8%	100%
Neighborhood Association assistance	9%	27%	47%	17%	100%
Greater availability of Public Information such as newsletters and mailings	5%	18%	51%	26%	100%
Cultural events	10%	27%	47%	16%	100%
Park improvements	11%	30%	49%	10%	100%
Trail improvements	14%	28%	45%	14%	100%
More City trees and tree maintenance	18%	30%	35%	17%	100%
Additional landscaping such as plantings and flowers	15%	29%	39%	18%	100%
New City Comprehensive plan	29%	36%	25%	10%	100%
Additional city programming on Channel 15 (cable system)	8%	15%	39%	38%	100%

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

Policy Question #3

To what extent would you support or oppose a new or increased resident user fee that would pay for each of the following?

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total
Construction of new sidewalks throughout the City	22%	38%	25%	16%	100%
Additional police officers for neighborhood patrols	24%	38%	22%	17%	100%
Additional firefighters in each of the three Fire stations	28%	46%	17%	9%	100%

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