



CITY OF ELK GROVE, CA 2011

Report of Open-ended Question

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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).

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The City of Elk Grove staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries NRC used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Elk Grove staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

ABOUT CLOSED-ENDED AND OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Questions can either be asked in a closed-ended or open-ended manner. A closed-ended question is one where a set of response options is listed on the survey. Those taking the survey respond to each option listed. Open-ended questions have no answer choices from which respondents select their response. Instead, respondents must “create” their own answers and state them in their own words. The verbatim responses are categorized by topic area using codes. An “other” category is used for responses falling outside the coded categories. In general, a code is assigned when at least 5-10% of responses will fit the code.

Advantages of an open-ended question include:

- Responses are not prompted, allowing respondents to provide answers that are not anticipated or well known.
- This type of question tends to capture response options that come to mind most quickly.
- The final result can be richer, since verbatim responses are included in an appendix, giving you and others a chance to “hear” the voice of respondents in their own words.
- There is a smaller risk of missing important dimensions.

VERBATIMS

Respondents were asked to record their opinions about Elk Grove in the following question:

- The City of Elk Grove is interested in increasing your participation in how local government decisions are made. Based on your previous response, please explain how the City can involve you more in the local decision making process.

The verbatim responses were categorized by topic area and those topics are reported in the following table with the percent of responses given in each category. Because some comments from residents covered more than a single topic, each topic mentioned by a resident was categorized and counted for the following table. Verbatim comments that contain more than one topic nevertheless appear only once (in the category of the first topic listed), however the analysis in the table below counts each of the topic areas given by all respondents regardless where those topics appeared in the comment.

Results from the open-ended question are best understood by reviewing the table of frequencies that summarize responses as well as the actual verbatim responses themselves.

<p>The City of Elk Grove is interested in increasing your participation in how local government decisions are made. Based on your previous response, please explain how the City can involve you more in the local decision making process.</p>	<p>Percent of Respondents</p>
<p>Provide more information and notices through various channels to increase communication</p>	<p>33%</p>
<p>Provide more opportunities to voice opinions through surveys, voting, and asking for responses</p>	<p>13%</p>
<p>Don't have the time/ability to be involved, or choose not to be involved</p>	<p>12%</p>
<p>Better listening to voices in the community</p>	<p>8%</p>
<p>Change time, location, and amount of meetings</p>	<p>5%</p>
<p>Response not related to question</p>	<p>18%</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>6%</p>
<p>Don't know/No comment</p>	<p>8%</p>
<p>Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one category.</p>	

VERBATIM RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The following pages contain the respondents' verbatim responses as written on the survey and have not been edited for spelling or grammar. Responses have been organized by coded topic areas.

THE CITY OF ELK GROVE IS INTERESTED IN INCREASING YOUR PARTICIPATION IN HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISIONS ARE MADE. BASED ON YOUR PREVIOUS RESPONSE, PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW THE CITY CAN INVOLVE YOU MORE IN THE LOCAL DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

Provide more information and notices through various channels to increase communication

- An email or letter to inform residents.
- Ask! Advertise or send out notices of when meetings are and what will be on the meeting agendas. Create an email list...? Newsletter? Go to your local college (CRC) and have a meet your local council member's event...
- Better notification re key issues up for council debate/vote. Seeing decisions impacting me/my family "after the fact" is frustrating to say the least.
- By giving or sending out information on when these events will be occurring.
- By making the opportunities to do so more available, maybe by mail or posting signs around town.
- Continue notices in Elk Grove citizen newspaper or by U.S mail as I am not on line.
- Do not like phone calls. E-mail is better. Of course you need the E-mail address of everyone!
- Email notifications on city on-goings.
- Explore ways to increase public awareness of what's going on in city council meetings thru mass media.
- Inform the citizens.
- I've lived in Elk Grove for more than 15 years and to date I've not seen any advertisements for, received by mail notification of, or heard through local news where Elk Grove residents are united to a "city of Elk Grove meet & greet", "Elk Grove cultural diversity day", "Homeless in Elk Grove Awareness Month", and mayor's "thank you for voting for me" social (choice of veggies on ice cream optional) "know your neighbor hay ride". It saddens me when I think about how difficult it was to drive my graduating SR (Sheldon high 2010) to college in Houston, TX (even though she wanted to attend college here @ home) because it cost more to attend college here than in TX. Money that could be spent in my community. I attend college and rely on community/public library services to access a computer/copier to complete assignments but have to compete with children being cared for by childcare providers AKA library staff at every Elk Grove library. Please designate "adult days" @ the library thank you.
- Live pod casts of events/meetings, twitter feeds - technology drives better communication and interactivity.
- More communication, E mail updates for topics that the public is interested in.
- More publication (email/mail).
- On TV or newspaper let know when and where.
- Provide information on how to receive information on above via email or text msgs.
- Provide more information about the issue - promote meetings more.
- Publicize in a more welcoming manner so it's not so intimidating to attend.

- Put more information on the internet involves the city decision making process.
- Receive notice of proposed meeting by mail or flyer.
- Send a letter about what you are doing.
- Send out more information on ways we can participate and local issues.
- Send out more letters or emails often so people can voice out their opinions on the local government since most of us are not able to attend physical meetings.
- Send out more letters. Have a local voting ballot so the residents can make decisions and be more involved.
- Sending newsletter.
- Working directly with the people & throughout the process to ensure that concerns are considered. Partnering with the people in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of solutions.

Provide more opportunities to voice opinions through surveys, voting, and asking for responses

- Get my opinion by mail before decision making.
- I like the open election of mayor instead of passing it on to a select few. Citizens need to vote.
- If there is a chance of changing the city plan by encroaching on rural properties please inform the appropriate neighborhood organizations example GSREHA in ample time to give us a chance to respond.
- Inform us of progress of new developments/projects and we are concerned on waste of our \$ on mall project. Too many houses are now vacant increasing crime and reduce values.
- Need to allow citizen vote on various issues for the city.
- Send letters out requesting feedback from me!
- Send out more questionnaires for responses.
- Send survey like this or email about projects, taxes, issues around growth, traffic, etc. And let me respond.
- Sending this type of survey to more residents of Elk grove just like me at this time.
- This form is one way local newspaper articles public forum schools.
- This questionnaire is a good start.
- Through survey & or referendum.
- Through surveys of current concerns through the mail process. Thank you!!
- Use modern technology such as smart phones and internet to poll residents. 150,000 people attending a town meeting isn't realistic. Provide residents a directory explaining what services are available and how to obtain them.
- Well I am finally happy that the people of Elk Grove now get to vote. For our mayor - long time coming. Stop the growth!

Don't have the time/ability to be involved, or choose not to be involved

- Because of my back disability and medical issues I'm going thru - It's very difficult for me to function properly.
- Can't since I do not like attending meetings - unless they do it via the internet.
- Council meetings on other TV besides cable.
- Due to my schedule, I do not wish to participate in the local decision making process at this time.
- I don't have some time & I find politics too frustrating.

- I don't have time to go to anything.
- I would like to participate more with local government decisions but fail to find the time to do this.
- I'm 84 years old, only participate in events at the apartment complex where I live. It's very unlikely that I would be interested in participating in some government decision making.
- Not interested in getting involved.
- Not interested. I am an older retired citizen.
- Not very active in government. Just want to feel safe, have employment and local shopping for U.S made products or local crafts.
- Probably more my responsibility to make sure that I am involved.

Better listening to voices in the community

- Actually care & listen then respond.
- Don't believe they will be interested. I fell they want to keep in control of any decisions or ruling.
- Elk grove and other city Gov. Will have all the meetings they want to please the people of the city on whatever the issues are. But ultimately do what they want to line their pockets. We didn't want Elk grove to grow like this. You let the crime from florin to take over Elk grove. We need cops on every corner.
- I feel that too many times positive public input has been given "lip service only". Only now is positive action being taken to improve the economic climate of the community. The "feel" is that the council members are more interested in being reflected rather than what is truly the "right" thing to do.
- I have gone to meetings, voiced my opinion, wrote letters to the editor, all to no avail. Just raised my blood pressure. The city is going to do what it wants to do with no pretense of what its citizens say. I've lived here since 1978. P.S. How can we (the city of E.G.) afford to pay a company in N.J. To do a survey for them? Waste of money. Typical!!!
- I live in a community of 270 & homes with a club have a representative from Intel Gov't can come and discuss their points of view a task to many.
- I'm tired of hearing "nothing can be done". When I contact someone - please make an effort to do something.
- Listen to the planning commission. Seating at meetings should be for Elk Grove citizens - overflow for others. Need more effective neighborhood/issue meetings & bring information to the council.
- Listen to what the citizens of Elk grove have to say not the developers. Stop out sourcing.
- Listen to what we have to say! & not take us aside during the meeting to talk to us outside in the hall so the topic can be changed.
- More listening to all the citizens not just the special interests that get board members reelected.
- The only way the city - will get my involvement is if the city will listen to the citizens and not the developers / applicant - and heed what the citizens want in their community or not want!

Change time, location, and amount of meetings

- Have more local neighborhood meetings.
- Have the meetings on weekends.
- Have webinars - Have focused one topic meetings.
- Hold town hall meetings in our HOA lodge.
- If meetings were held daytime rather than evening - also more visibility of council member in everyday life rather than at expensive fund raisers.
- Meeting through senior citizens group. Flyers too.

Response not related to question

- Have city councilmen be more active in their areas and to seek the insights out from their constituents. The city is turning into a cess pool of crime and needs to set a barrier between it and South Sacramento. In 10 years the crime here will have driver me out. Water is too expensive and the crime, again the crime. If the city is fiscally sound then it needs to cut taxes and keep all non residents out of Elk Grove schools. Our school taxes should go to our schools only. [REDACTED]. I suggest toll roads to be placed at our northern surface street borders.
- Having lived here many years and raised our children here, I have found more is not necessarily better. Too much crime, traffic, etc.
- Hire more police officers, Elk Grove is a safe place to live let's keep it that way!
- If anything about sr. citizens comes up - please have a sr. citizen on the board esp. housing.
- Need street lighting at corner of Waterman and Sheldon.
- Need to find ways to keep (maintain) up w/ lawns of foreclosed/short sale homes. Don't want house values to drop even more. Have city of Elk Grove enforce homes to keep up w/ lawns some have weeds, dry grass - makes neighborhood look bad - existing home owners. Housing value has dropped drastically which is very unfortunate. Nice walkways, parks, shopping, restaurants in Elk Grove.
- Need to have the E.G. Police dept to discontinue harassment of motorists.
- New to area (from Amador Co. - rural) traffic in E.G. Is terrible!! Train traffic & waiting is unbearable are either of these concerns for city officials?
- Once elected they fall off the radar!
- Overall comments - 1. There is a growing gang problem in Elk grove, 2. Abandon house (i.e. Repose are a problem, messy, trash, etc.), 3. Property taxes plus fees (particularly the fees) are out-of-line. You price people out of the market, 4. Business fees are extreme, 5. Does the city really our involvement? I don't believe it!, 6. Sac county services are really expensive!, 7. Graffiti major issue.
- Please do not build any more apartments! There are too many already. There were none here when we bought our house and since the explosion of apartments in the last 10 years, I've noticed a lower standard and care in the neighborhoods around the city!
- Police Dept - very dissatisfied with no follow through.
- Properly utilize the vacant bind and property parcels. Need a second phone provider to lower internet and phone services. Give incentives to companies like Fry's to open their business. We need 24hrs outlet like win co for traffic and business convenience. We need patrol cars on streets especially during festivities and long weekend.
- Start with competent people in government.
- The police never patrol my area, also I have seen 3 patrol cars taking dinner at the same time & same place. Also I have been driving and the patrol cars going at a hi rate of speed with no

lights or siren. They should at least have the rear amber lights on. We need to make a larger traffic dept. To enforce basic traffic violations. Also it would be great to see regular police get out of there patrol cars & walk the shopping centers come the holidays, and advertise on T.V. & news. That we will be proactive in reducing crime in Elk Grove. Also use regular police caps with the badge “metal” on the hat. It looks more professional similar to L.A.P.D., the baseball caps look cheap & unprofessional try a few & ask community to rate the new look of E.G.P.D. Thank you.

- They need to reach out to professionals in the city, they need to reward their Downtown, they need to attract high end retail like Rocklin, Roseville and stop opening discount stores, liquor stores, cigarette stores, etc.
- We (Elk Grove) is trying to expand when there are so many vacant buildings and residences. Our ordinances are too strong and drives business and residents out. The local / vital prices are too high. Politicians as everywhere else are fighting against each other, instead of working together.
- We need more low income/fixed income complexes for seniors.
- Would like to know why frontier has a monopoly in Elk Grove. Their service sucks.

Other

- Ask my opinion on Poppy Ridge / Bruceville Walmart. I am a strong Walmart supporter. Build it please!
- Enforce Cars!!
- Good job allowing residents to become involved.
- If Elk grove can have good water, good land, phone company like AT & T, it will be a great city to live in.
- I'm not interested. I am more interested in fixing the EGUSD.
- Please let us be able to turn left instead of lowing to make all the U turns we have to make now. Complete traffic lanes in Bruceville & Elk Grove Blvd.
- Please raise taxes so we have more services.
- They do a reasonable job now.

Don't know/No comment

- Don't know
- Don't know
- Don't know
- No comment