

2009 Ames Resident Satisfaction Survey
27TH ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT

The City of Ames, Iowa, conducts an annual satisfaction survey of community residents. In early 2009, the City mailed questionnaires to 1,350 city residents whose names were randomly selected from the City of Ames utility users list (population=19,610). Additionally, 1,586 Iowa State University students were randomly selected from a mailing list generated by the ISU Office of the Registrar. Utility bill customers received a 12-page survey booklet via U.S. Mail. The booklet included standard benchmarking questions, as well as issue-related questions written specifically for this survey. The ISU students received the same survey via email developed using the SurveyMonkey program. New questions in the survey were formulated with assistance from City of Ames department managers, and Timothy Borich and Nora Ladjahasan of the Institute for Design Research and Outreach (IDRO), College of Design, Iowa State University Extension. This analysis was completed with assistance from Nora Ladjahasan, Assistant Scientist II.

This statistical report summarizes results from 651 respondents who returned usable questionnaires, an increase of 281 returned surveys from 2008, and a response rate of 13% for the students and 33% for Ames residents. The total response rate for this survey is 22%. The number of questionnaires mailed or emailed included an oversampling of students in order to come up with the desired sample size that would reflect target populations. The sample size needed to confidently generalize the findings was 583. The number of completed surveys was 12% more than the required sample size. This is based on 95% confidence level and a 4 confidence interval. This means that we are 95% confident that the responses to the questions are within +/-4% of the results obtained if everybody participated. For more details on calculating sample size, refer to: <http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>.

Respondents' Personal and Social Characteristics

Table 1 illustrates the personal and social characteristics of respondents who completed the questionnaire. Column 1 lists characteristics that respondents were asked in the survey. Column 2 shows personal and social characteristics of Ames residents during the 2007 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Columns 3-7 show personal and social characteristics of individuals who completed surveys between the years of 2005 and 2009.

Of the respondents in this year's survey, 52% of respondents are male, which compares well to 2007 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates for Ames. Also, 62% of respondents have a college degree. Fifty-three percent of respondents are employed full-time and 32% are full-time students. Full-time students returning this year's survey increased by 2% from 2008 to 2009. Nearly a third (30%) of respondents reported their household income to be less than \$25,000, 22% report their income is between \$25,000 and \$49,999, 28% report earning \$50,000 to \$99,999, and 20% of respondents make more than \$100,000 annually.

Table 1. 2009 Ames Resident Satisfaction Survey respondent characteristics (%)

<u>Characteristics</u>	2007 Census	Survey Year				
		<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Years lived in Ames						
Less than 1 yr		4	0	0	1	1
1-3 yr		21	24	20	27	28
4-6 yr		17	17	17	17	15
7-10 yr		5	10	10	9	10
More than 10 yr		53	49	53	46	47
Gender						
Male	51	49	53	53	54	52
Female	49	51	47	47	46	48
Age						
18-24	36	25	22	19	24	25
25-44	30	26	31	26	29	29
45-64	22	27	28	37	26	27
65-74	6	11	11	9	11	10
Over 75	6	11	8	9	10	9
Education						
Some HS	4	1	1	1	1	1
HS diploma	19	9	7	5	9	8
Some college	21	30	29	25	29	30
College degree	38	23	25	25	24	22
Some graduate work		10	11	13	9	11
Graduate degree	18	27	28	31	28	29
Employment status						
Employed full-time	-	41	46	49	41	53
Employed part-time	-	17	24	21	24	30
Retired	-	21	17	22	21	25
Full-time homemaker	-	3	4	3	3	5
Full-time student	-	28	28	20	30	32
Unemployed	-	1	2	4	7	9
Household income						
Less than \$25,000	24	-	28	-	29	30
\$25,000-\$49,999	28	-	25	-	22	22
\$50,000-\$74,999	18	-	16	-	14	17
\$75,000-\$100,000	13	-	15	-	13	11
More than \$100,000	17	13	16	21	21	20

While nearly six out of 10 (58%) respondents own their residence, the others (42%) rent. The majority of renters (63%) reported renting due to their short-term stay in Ames. In 2005, 23% of renters reported they rented due to lack of adequate income. That figure rose to 37% in 2006, and rose to 40% in the 2007 survey. In the 2008 survey, that number rose to 44%. This year, 46% of renters reported lack of adequate income was the reason for renting a home rather than owning a home. (Table 2)

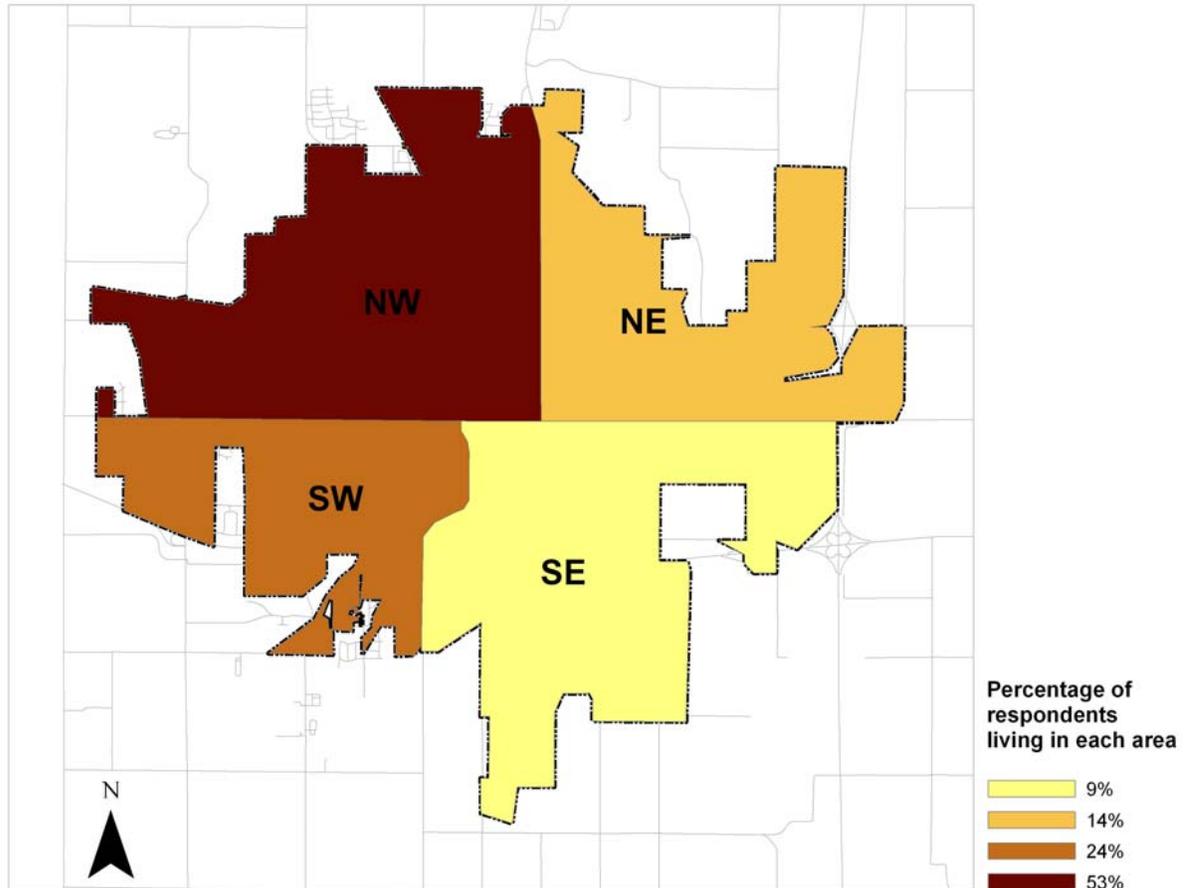
Respondents who are homeowners differ from renters on several personal and social characteristics. Homeowners have lived in Ames longer than renters (25 years and 5.7 years, respectively). Of those who have lived in Ames more than 10 years, nearly nine in 10 (89%) are homeowners. Of those who have lived in Ames for four to 10 years, less than half (46%) own their home. More than half (54%) of renters have lived in Ames for three years or less. Not surprisingly, respondents who are homeowners (55 years old) tend to be older than renters (29 years old). Of those between 25 and 44, over half (54%) are homeowners. Of those between the ages of 45 to 64, nearly nine in 10 (85%) are homeowners. In contrast, 93% of those under 25 years old rent, and nine in 10 (94%) fulltime college students currently rent. For those who have at least completed college, 67% are homeowners and 33% are renters. Finally, homeowners typically have bigger household income than renters. Three-quarters (75%) of homeowners earn \$50,000 or more, whereas nearly nine in 10 (88%) renters earn less than \$50,000. (Figures from this paragraph are not shown in any tables.)

Table 2. Housing characteristics

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>2007 Census</u>	<u>Survey Year</u>				
		<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u> <i>Percent</i>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Housing type						
Own	56	62	60	67	56	58
Rent	44	38	40	31	40	42
If rent, for what reason?						
Short term stay in Ames	-	62	55	53	62	63
Little or no upkeep	-	14	27	34	37	35
More security	-	1	7	5	10	8
Lack of adequate income	-	23	37	40	44	46
Location of home						
Northeast	-	22	15	17	13	14
Northwest	-	43	54	46	50	53
Southeast	-	14	11	12	12	9
Southwest	-	21	20	25	25	24

Respondents also were asked about the place where they live. As seen on Figure 1, half (53%) of survey respondents came from the northwest section of the city. Fourteen percent came from the northeast, while 24% were from the southwest, and 9% were from the southeast part of the city.

Figure 1. Geographic Sections



Priorities for On-Going Services

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they thought future budgets should spend less, spend the same, or spend more on several services paid for by property or sales taxes. Spending priorities are shown in Table 3. A majority of respondents reported that they would like city to spend the same amount as previous years for 11 out of 11 services provided. Respondents were given a list of services paid for out of property tax or local option sales tax dollars. The category “other” received 28 responses (see appendix for the complete list).

On a scale of 1 to 3 (1 being less spending, 2 as the same, and 3 as more), only two programs were rated below 2.0. Those were land use planning and arts programs. Of those selecting “spend more,” 22% of respondents wanted to spend more on recreational opportunities, followed by 20% who would like to see more money spent on human service agency funding. Thirty-five percent of respondents would like to spend less on art programs, 12% would like to spend more, and 53% would like to spend the same. (Table 3)

Table 3. On-going service priorities

<u>On-going service</u>	Should the city spend ...?			Average
	<u>Less (1)</u>	<u>Same (2)</u>	<u>More (3)</u>	
Sanitation/food inspections (n=464)	6%	76%	18%	2.1
Transit system (CyRide) (n=481)	9%	76%	15%	2.1
Recreational opportunities (n=486)	18%	60%	22%	2.0
Parks activities (474)	16%	65%	19%	2.0
Fire protection (N=453)	9%	80%	12%	2.0
Human service agency funding (ASSET) (n=462)	18%	62%	20%	2.0
Ames Public Library (n=471)	19%	62%	19%	2.0
Ames Animal Shelter & animal control (n=484)	16%	68%	16%	2.0
Law enforcement (n=467)	18%	63%	19%	2.0
Land use planning (both current and long-term) (n=473)	28%	59%	13%	1.9
Arts programs (Public Art & COTA) (n=495)	35%	53%	12%	1.8
Other (Please specify)___ (n=28)	11%	7%	61%	

Table 4 shows trends in spending preferences. The table demonstrates that the percent of respondents wanting to spend more for each of those services is declining over time. Less than one-quarter of the respondents wanted the city to spend more on the programs listed in Table 4. However, recreational opportunities still remained to be the top category in "spending more." All of the service categories declined in "spending more" responses except for "law enforcement," which increased by 1%.

Table 4. Trends in “spend more” responses for on-going services (%).

	Survey Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	<i>Percent</i>				
Recreational opportunities	29	28	34	29	22
Human Service Agency funding	26	23	25	23	20
Park activities	21	20	22	27	19
Library	21	25	24	23	19
Law enforcement	11	14	20	18	19
Sanitation/food inspections	19	20	28	28	18
Ames Animal Shelter and Animal Control	17	18	19	22	16
Transit system (CyRide)	21	20	18	23	15
Long range and current planning	13	19	16	16	13
Art programs	22	20	19	20	12
Fire protection	9	15	18	12	12

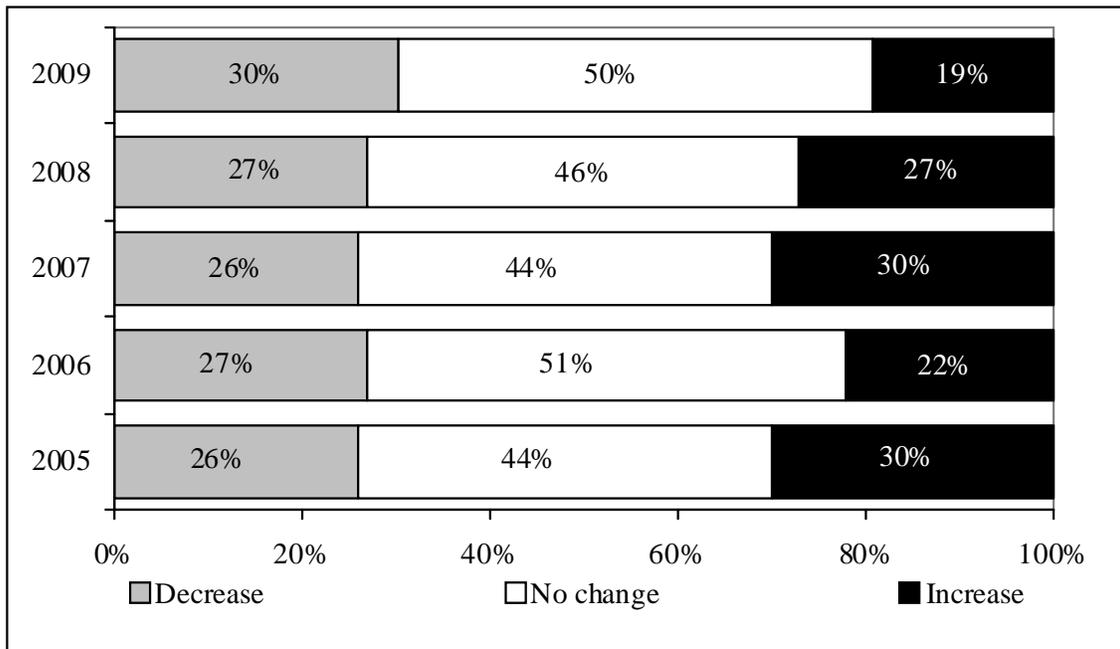
There were statistically significant differences noted between social characteristics and responses to some services. The data were examined for differences by length of residency, age, gender, home ownership, and household income. Notable differences between groups who wanted to spend less or spend more are bulleted below.

- Recreational Opportunities. Employed respondents (part-time and full-time) were more likely to want to spend more on recreational opportunities (M= 2.15 and 2.10, respectively). However, retired respondents were more likely to spend less on recreational opportunities (M= 1.84). Respondents who want to spend more on recreational opportunities have lived in Ames for significantly less time (M = 16.6 years) than those who want to spend less (M = 23.0 years) and those who want to spend the same (M = 19.5 years). Those respondents who want to spend more on recreation are significantly younger (M=41.4 years) than those who want to spend the same (M=48.3 years) or less (51.8 years). The trend is the same for 2008.
- Fire protection. The older the respondent, the more funds they want the city to spend on fire protection (M=53 years for more funding, 48.8 years old for same funding, and 41.8 years of age for less funding). The number of years lived in the city showed no significant relationship with the amount of funding for fire protection. Both male and females showed the same amount of support to fire protection.
- Human service agency. Female respondents are more likely to want to spend more on human service agency funding than males (M= 2.09 for female compared with 1.96 for males). There is a positive correlation between human service agency spending and age, and length of residence in Ames. The older the respondent, the more likely they want to spend more on human service agency funding. Likewise, the longer they have lived in Ames, the more likely they want to spend more.
- Sanitation/food inspections. No comparisons were statistically significant based on the data.

- Law enforcement. There is no significant difference between gender responses. However, there is a positive correlation between law enforcement spending and age, and length of residence in Ames. The older the respondent and longer they live in Ames, the more likely they want to spend more on law enforcement.
- Parks Activities. There is no significant difference between gender responses. There is a negative correlation between age and spending pattern in parks activities. Younger respondents wanted the city to spend more on park activities, while older respondents wanted less spending. Those who have lived longer in Ames wanted the city to spend more on park activities compared to those who have stayed shorter in the city.
- Ames Animal Shelter and Animal Control. There is no significant difference between gender responses. However, the younger the respondent, the more they want the city to spend more on Ames Animal Shelter and Animal Control.
- Long range and current planning. No statistically significant comparison based age, length of residence and age.
- Ames Public Library. There is no significant difference between gender responses. The older the respondent, the more they want the city to spend more on Ames Public Library. The trend is the same for those who have lived longer in the city.
- Transit system (CyRide). No statistically significant comparison based age, length of residence and age.

Residents were asked how much they thought property taxes should be adjusted next year in light of their spending priorities. Figure 2 illustrates how respondents have answered this question over the past 5 years of the survey. The figure shows variation in responses to this question over time, with 2009 results showing a significant decrease from 2008, and even lower than 2006. Again, respondents showed a preference for no change in property tax rates with 51% respondents suggesting the rate stay the same. Thirty percent suggested a decrease in property tax and only 19% suggest an increase.

Figure 2. Trends in preferred property tax adjustments for next year



Capital Improvement Priorities

Next, respondents were asked to rate the importance of six capital improvement projects and given the option of “other.” This question has been pared down over the last few years from as many as 10 items. As shown in Table 5, reconstructing existing streets was the top priority for capital improvement (mean value of 3.19). It was rated as somewhat or very important by 84% of the respondents. Storm water drainage improvements were noted as the second most important capital improvement projects, followed by traffic flow improvement, library facility improvements, bike path improvements, and existing parks improvements.

Thirty-six responses were given to “other,” and those answers can be viewed in the appendix.

Table 5. Capital improvement priorities.

	Somewhat or Very Unimportant	Somewhat or Very Important	Average*
Reconstructing existing streets (n=591)	16%	84%	3.19
Traffic flow improvements (n=589)	35%	84%	2.82
Storm water drainage improvements (n=589)	27%	73%	2.93
Library facility improvements (n=588)	42%	58%	2.60
Bike path improvements (n=588)	47%	53%	2.51
Improvements to existing parks (n=592)	50%	50%	2.44
Other (specify _____) (n=36)	28%	72%	

*1=very unimportant; 2=somewhat unimportant; 3=somewhat important; 4=very important

Table 6 illustrates trends in respondents' views about the importance of each of the capital improvement projects over time. The highest rated priorities continue to focus on restructuring existing streets, traffic flow improvements, and storm water drainage improvements.

Table 6. Trends in capital improvement priorities

<u>Service</u>	<u>Survey Year</u>				
	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
	<i>Percent very or somewhat important</i>				
Reconstructing existing streets	80	74	77	84	84
Traffic flow improvements	68	66	64	65	84
Storm water drainage improvements	70	74	61	67	73
Library improvements	62	54	57	53	58
Bike path improvements	57	51	48	51	53
Improvements to existing parks	65	50	54	55	50

Table 7 shows the distribution when asked to rank the categories as priorities, the top three categories ranked as the highest are 1) Reconstruct existing streets, 2) Traffic flow improvements, and 3) Storm water drainage improvements. This is consistent with the average value for each category as shown in Table 5.

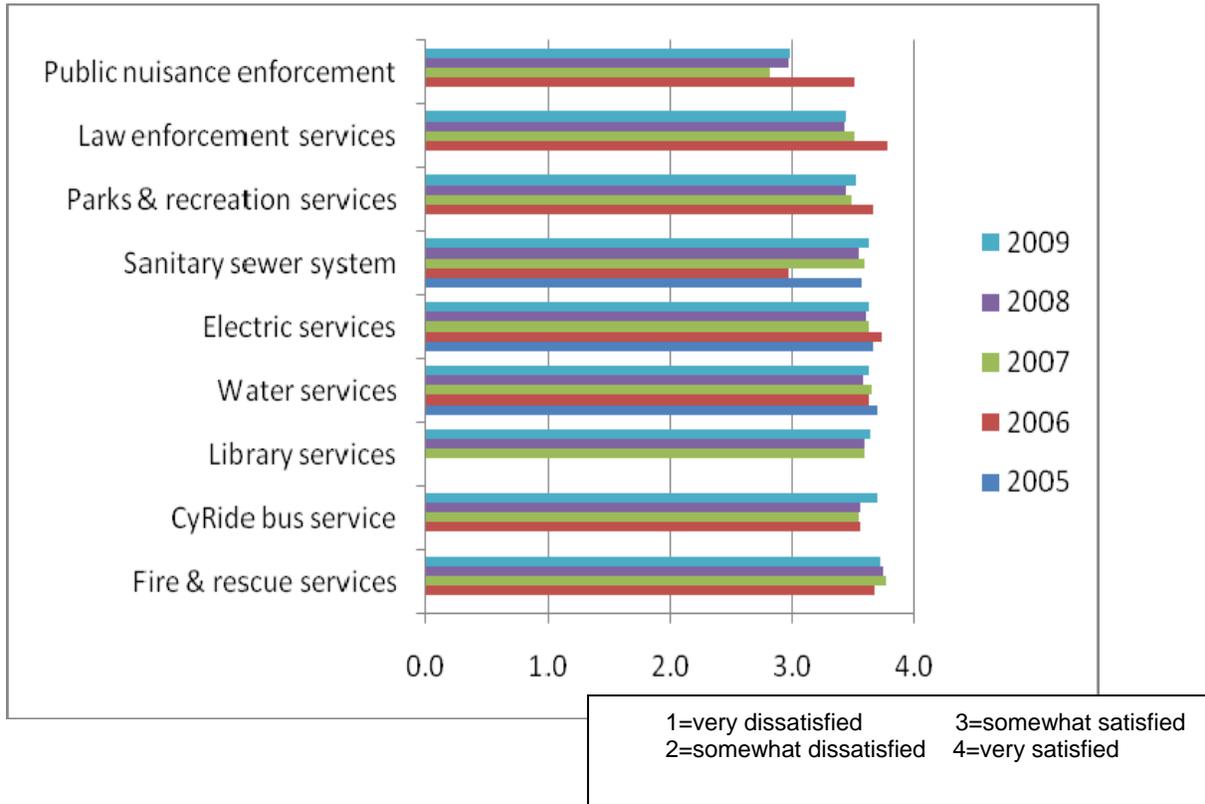
Table 7. Ranking of Capital Improvement Priorities

	<u>Highest Priority</u> (N=579)	<u>Second Highest Priority</u> (N=571)	<u>Third Highest Priority</u> (N=564)
Reconstructing existing streets	42%	27%	12%
Traffic flow improvements	20%	21%	17%
Bike path improvements	10%	11%	13%
Library facility improvements	8%	12%	17%
Improvements to existing parks	5%	8%	17%
Storm water drainage improvements	15%	20%	23%
Other (N=11)	1%	1%	1%

Resident Satisfaction with City Services

Respondents were asked to determine their level of satisfaction with services provided by the City. Table 8 groups the responses into “very/somewhat dissatisfied” and “very/somewhat satisfied” with don’t know/don’t use removed. It also shows the average value for each service with 1 as very dissatisfied to 4 very satisfied. Figure 3 shows the perceived satisfaction level on the services provided by the city over time. As in previous years, the level of satisfaction with City services continues to be high. From 2005 to 2009, all of the nine services were rated high (satisfied to very satisfied) by the respondents except for public nuisance enforcement. Likewise, level of satisfaction remained the same or slightly increased from 2008 to 2009.

Figure 3. Perceived Satisfaction Levels on Services.



Respondent satisfaction with City departments remained high in 2009, with every department receiving 90% or more “somewhat or very satisfied” responses (Table 8). This compares favorably to previous years (Figure 3). Public nuisance enforcement, which can cross into various departments, had more than one-quarter of the respondents who were not satisfied with services.

Table 8. Summary Table of Satisfaction with City Services (removing “don’t know”)

<u>City Services</u>	<u>Very/ Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very/ Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Average*</u>
CyRide (n=440)	5%	96%	3.7
Fire Department services(n=435)	2%	98%	3.7
Electric Department services (n=562)	4%	96%	3.6
Library services (n=499)	3%	97%	3.6
Sanitary sewer system (n=539)	3%	97%	3.6
Water Department services (n=566)	4%	96%	3.6
Parks & Recreation services (n=540)	5%	95%	3.5
Law enforcement services (n=561)	10%	90%	3.4
Public Nuisance Enforcement (n=460)	29%	72%	3.4

*1=very dissatisfied; 2=somewhat dissatisfied; 3=somewhat satisfied; 4=very satisfied

Police Department

Respondents' preference for future emphasis for Police Department activities is shown in Table 9. In Table 10, the preferences are tracked over a period of several years to identify trends. When respondents were asked to report whether they thought specific activities by the Ames Police Department should receive less emphasis, the same emphasis, or more emphasis, more than half of respondents indicated emphasis should be the same for every category but one. In the categories of illegal drug use prevention and enforcement, 43% of respondents said it should receive more emphasis and 9% suggested less emphasis. Nearly four in 10 respondents (37%) said parking laws enforcement should receive less emphasis, 14% thought speed limit enforcement should receive less emphasis, and 14% believed noise laws and nuisance party enforcement should receive less emphasis. Forty-six percent of respondents reported that sex-related crimes enforcement should receive more emphasis, and 44% said more emphasis should be given to violent crimes investigation.

Table 9. Future emphasis for Police Department activities.

<u>Police Department activity</u>	<u>Less (1)</u>	<u>Same (2)</u> <i>Percent</i>	<u>More (3)</u>	<u>Average*</u>
Sex-related offenses investigation (n=566)	1%	53%	46%	2.45
Violent crimes investigation (n=569)	1%	55%	44%	2.44
Domestic violence and family dispute resolution (n=566)	1%	60%	38%	2.37
Illegal drug use prevention and enforcement (n=569)	9%	48%	43%	2.34
Crime prevention and education activities (n=569)	3%	63%	35%	2.32
Bad checks, fraud and identity theft investigation (n=561)	3%	67%	31%	2.28
Juvenile crimes investigation (n=563)	3%	74%	23%	2.21
Alcohol-related crimes enforcement (n=567)	14%	56%	30%	2.17
Residential patrolling (n=568)	5%	75%	20%	2.15
School resource officer services (n=565)	9%	73%	18%	2.1
Noise laws and nuisance party enforcement (n=568)	14%	66%	20%	2.07
Traffic control and enforcement (n=568)	9%	76%	15%	2.05
Speed limit enforcement (n=569)	14%	68%	18%	2.04
Animal control and sheltering (n=567)	12%	75%	13%	2.02
Business district patrolling (n=564)	9%	86%	5%	1.96
Parking laws enforcement (n=569)	37%	58%	5%	1.68

*1=less; 2=the same; 3=more

Trends in opinions about Police Department activities are shown in Table 10. For the past several years, illegal drug use prevention and enforcement, and sex-related offenses investigation have continued to be the categories respondents desire “more emphasis.” In 2009, an emphasis on violent crimes investigation showed a jump with 44% of respondents suggesting more emphasis. This is an increase of 11% from 2006. The trend is the same for domestic violence/family dispute resolution, an increase of 9% from 2008 to 2009 (29% vs. 38%).

Table 10. Trends in “more emphasis” for police department activities

<u>Police Department activity</u>	<u>Survey Year</u>				
	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
			<i>Percent</i>		
Sex-related offenses investigation	47	40	43	40	46
Violent crimes investigation	-	33	36	36	44
Illegal drug use prevention and enforcement	46	50	54	46	43
Domestic violence/family dispute resolution	33	28	31	29	38
Crime prevention and education activities	31	30	31	33	35
Bad checks, fraud, identity theft investigation	28	29	33	36	31
Alcohol-related crimes enforcement	27	36	41	33	30
Juvenile crimes investigation	16	23	27	23	23
Residential patrolling	19	19	27	24	20
Speed limit enforcement	17	20	27	17	20
School resource officer services	17	22	19	22	18
Noise laws and nuisance party enforcement	17	20	27	17	18
Traffic control and enforcement	15	13	17	15	15
Animal control and sheltering	9	7	15	16	13
Business district patrolling	5	4	8	6	5
Parking laws enforcement	7	3	7	4	5

Fire Department

Fire Department activities also were addressed in the survey. In Table 11, respondents' satisfaction ratings are illustrated. Almost all of the respondents indicating an opinion were very satisfied with ambulance assistance (98.3%) and efforts at putting out fires (98.3%). Ninety-six percent were satisfied with fire prevention education and outreach, and 87.3% said they were very satisfied with safety inspections for both home and business. A substantial number of respondents indicated that they did not know how satisfied they were with each of these activities, and these individuals were excluded from the data in Table 11.

Table 11. Satisfaction with Fire Department activities (“Don’t Know” removed)

Fire Dept. Activity	Very/Somewhat	Somewhat/Very	Average*
	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Satisfied</u>	
Ambulance assistance	1.7	98.3	3.7
Putting out fires	1.7	98.3	3.7
Fire prevention educ. & outreach	4.1	95.9	3.6
Home & business safety inspections	12.7	87.3	3.4

*1=very dissatisfied; 2=somewhat dissatisfied; 3=somewhat satisfied; 4=very satisfied

Ames Electric Services

The number of respondents who have experience a power outage increased by 10% from 2008 to 2009 (45% to 55%, respectively). In 2006, a series of weather events contributed to 74% of respondents being impacted by an outage. In 2007, that figure dropped to 59% and dropped again to 45% in 2008. The increase in 2009 could be attributed to several factors included planned outages necessary for infrastructure improvements. The number of respondents observing a burned out light stayed nearly the same (2% decrease), and the number reporting a burned out light increased by 6%. Among those who reported a burned-out light, 62% said that the light was repaired within 10 days. About one in ten (12%) respondents indicated that they experienced a power outage which affected their computer operations, down from 16% the year before.

Table 12. Respondents’ experience with electric service interruption.

<u>Service outage</u>	Survey Year				
	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
	<i>Percent who responded “yes”</i>				
Observed burned out streetlight	55	54	46	47	45
Experienced power outage	48	74	59	45	55
Experienced power surge which affected computer operations	18	25	21	16	12
Reported burned out light	15	19	15	12	18

Satisfaction with various services provided by the electrical department is shown in Table 13. More than 95% of Ames customers were somewhat or very satisfied with power quality. When removing respondents who marked “Does Not Apply,” 54% of respondents were very satisfied with the ease of reporting an outage and 59% were very satisfied with response of employees. Nearly 60% of those responding said they were very satisfied with the time to restore service after an outage.

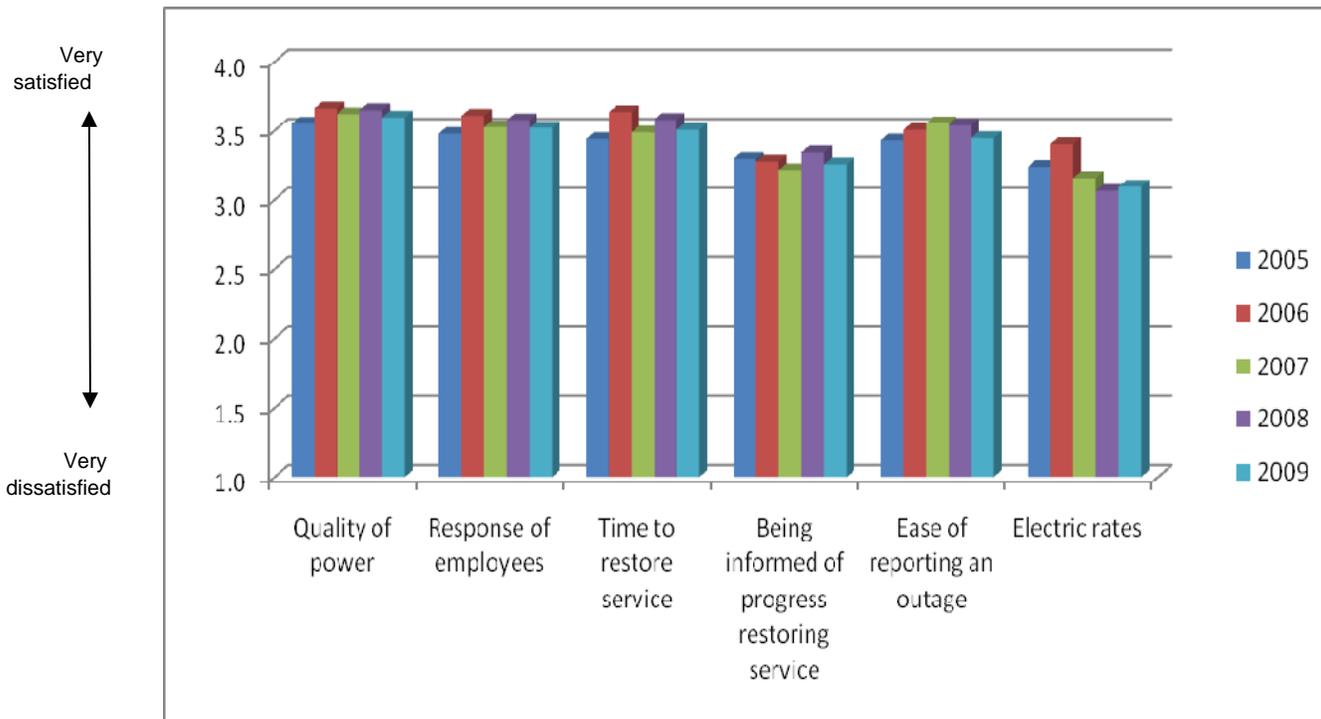
This trend is almost the same in the past five years from 2005 to 2009. Generally, the respondents were satisfied with the services received from electric department. The lowest rating was given to electric rates.

Table 13. Satisfaction with Electric Department services

	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Does not Apply**</u>
Being informed of progress restoring service (N=325)	3%	10%	45%	42%	30%
Ease of reporting an outage (N=332)	1%	8%	37%	54%	28%
Response of employees (N=337)	1%	4%	36%	59%	27%
Time to restore service (N=370)	0%	5%	39%	56%	21%
Electric rates (N=491)	5%	13%	51%	32%	2%
The quality of power (N=486)	<1%	3%	33%	63%	4%

* "Does not apply" excluded when calculating percentages for "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied."

Figure 5. Satisfaction with City Electric Department activities

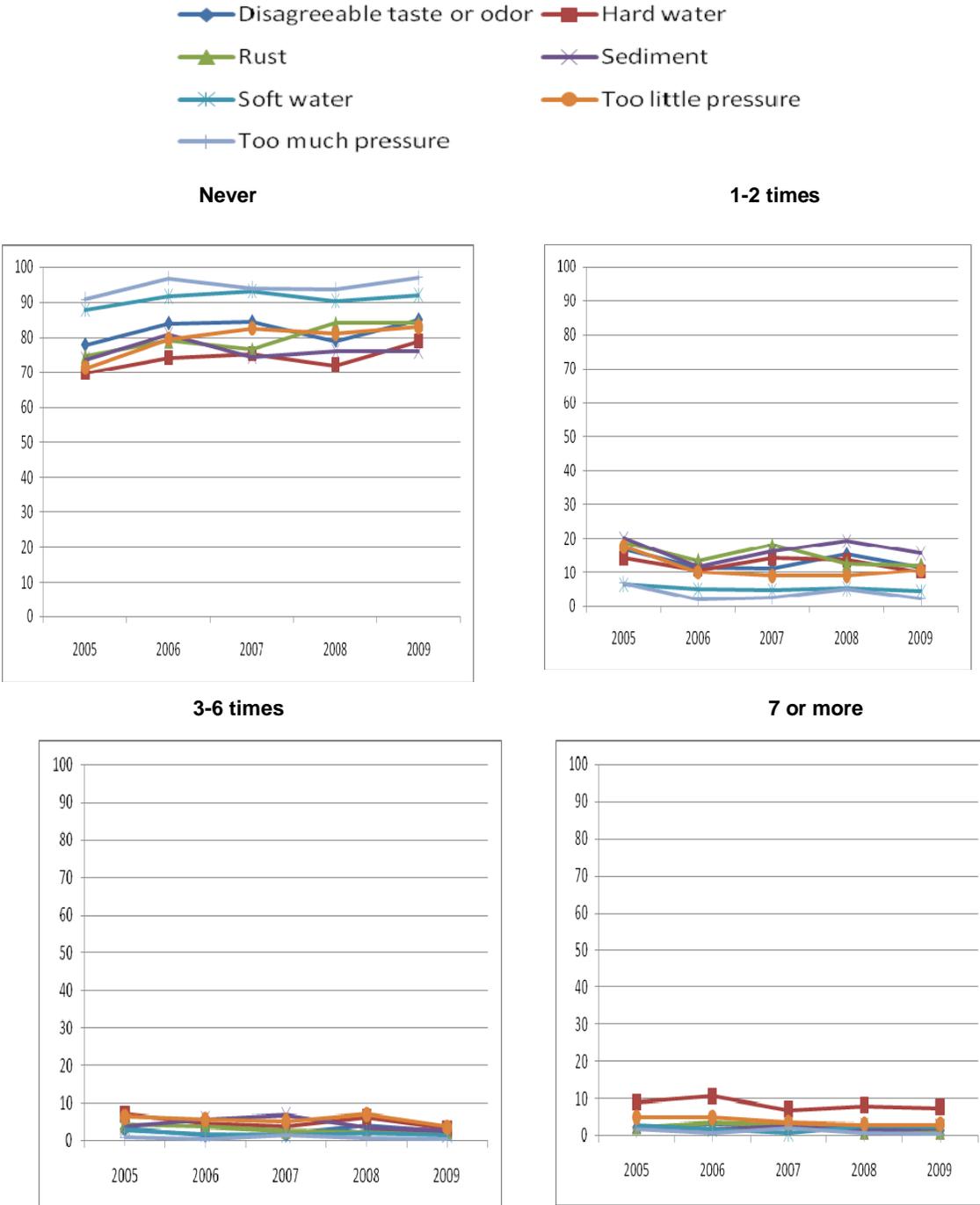


Water and Sanitary Sewer Utilities

Nearly all of the respondents (93%) use City of Ames water and sewer services in their homes. Of those, more than two-thirds reported never having problems such as too much pressure (97%), soft water (92%), disagreeable taster or odor (85%), rust (84%), too little pressure (83%), hard water (79%), or sediment (76%). Only 2% to 16% have had any of those problems once or twice in the past year. Four percent said they had a problem with low pressure three to six times, and 7% reported

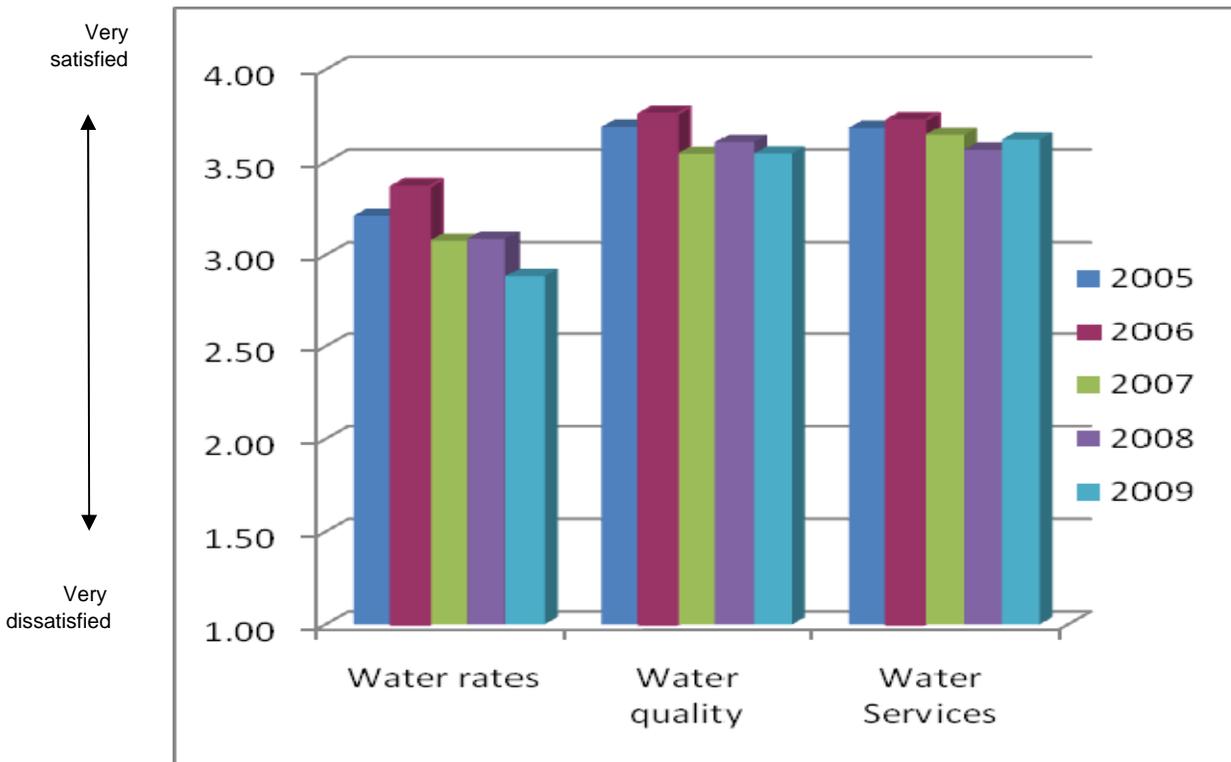
hard water occurring seven or more times last year. For the past five years, the frequency of occurrence of water problems is consistent (Figures 6).

Figure 6. Frequencies of water service problems



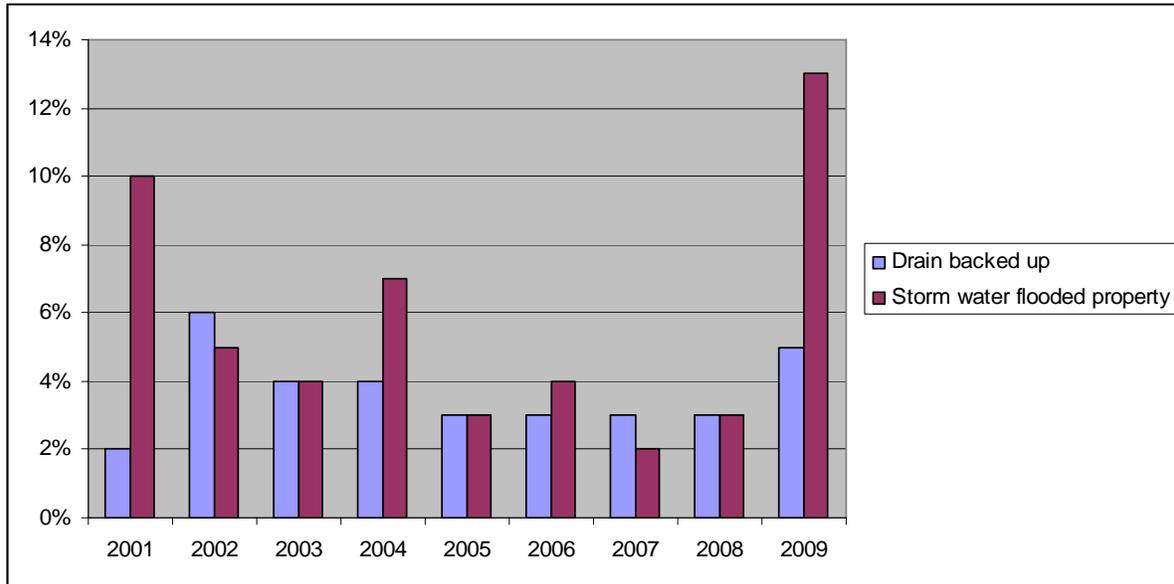
Using a four-point scale from “very satisfied” (value of 4) to “very unsatisfied” (value of 1), Ames water and sewer users were asked to rate their level of satisfaction. Overwhelmingly, respondents seem pleased with their water service. Figure 7 shows that the level of satisfaction on water services slightly increased as compared to 2008 (3.57 vs. 3.62). However, the level of satisfaction on water quality and water rates decreased by .06% and .20%, respectively. Figure 7 also shows that level of satisfaction is highest in 2006 for all the water issues (rates, quality and services).

Figure 7. Trends in satisfaction with city water quality (in percentages)



Residents were also asked if the City sewer system caused a back-up in their basement/home. Only 4% (n=24) said yes. Of those who had a sewer problem, less than half (46%) reported the problem to the city. Finally, residents were asked whether the sewer system caused any problems by backing up a drain or flooding their property. In 2009, an increasing number of respondents answered “yes” to a drain back-up (5%) and or reported storm water had flooded property (13%). This information is detailed in Figure 9. Of the 73 respondents who experienced flooding, only 17% reported the problem to the city. When asked how satisfied they were with the city’s response to the flooding problem, respondents were somewhat satisfied (M=2.82).

Figure 9. Respondents' experience with city sewer system problems



Neighborhood Nuisance Enforcement

Respondents' satisfaction with enforcement efforts against neighborhood nuisances is illustrated in Table 14. Among those who expressed opinions, more than two-thirds were "somewhat" to "very satisfied" with each enforcement effort. Average satisfaction is high (level ranges from 3.4 to 3.7). Between 19% and 42% of respondents indicated they did not have an opinion on each of these activities. These individuals were excluded from the denominator when percentages for "satisfied" and "dissatisfied" were calculated. When satisfaction was compared against respondent characteristics (such as age, gender, length of residence, geographic locations, and student status), no comparisons were statistically significant.

Table 14. Satisfaction neighborhood nuisances enforcement (No opinion removed)

<u>Nuisance</u>	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Average*</u>
	<i>Percent</i>					
Over-occupancy enforcement (n=291)	22	43	21	14	42	3.7
Noise (n=402)	23	47	23	7	24	3.4
Front yard parking (n=360)	24	44	21	11	30	3.5
Upkeep of yards (n=420)	22	41	25	12	21	3.2
Upkeep of property (n=414)	19	46	24	11	21	3.2
Junk on property (n=427)	20	40	29	12	19	3.1

*1=very dissatisfied; 2=somewhat dissatisfied; 3=somewhat satisfied; 4=very satisfied

Transportation

Residents were given the opportunity to rate street and bike path maintenance using a four-point scale from “very good (4)” to “very poor (1).” The average values ranged from 2.64 to 3.09. When looking at “very good” and “good” responses combined, the responses ranged from 63% for snow plowing in your neighborhood to 93% for street sweeping in business areas. (Table 15.)

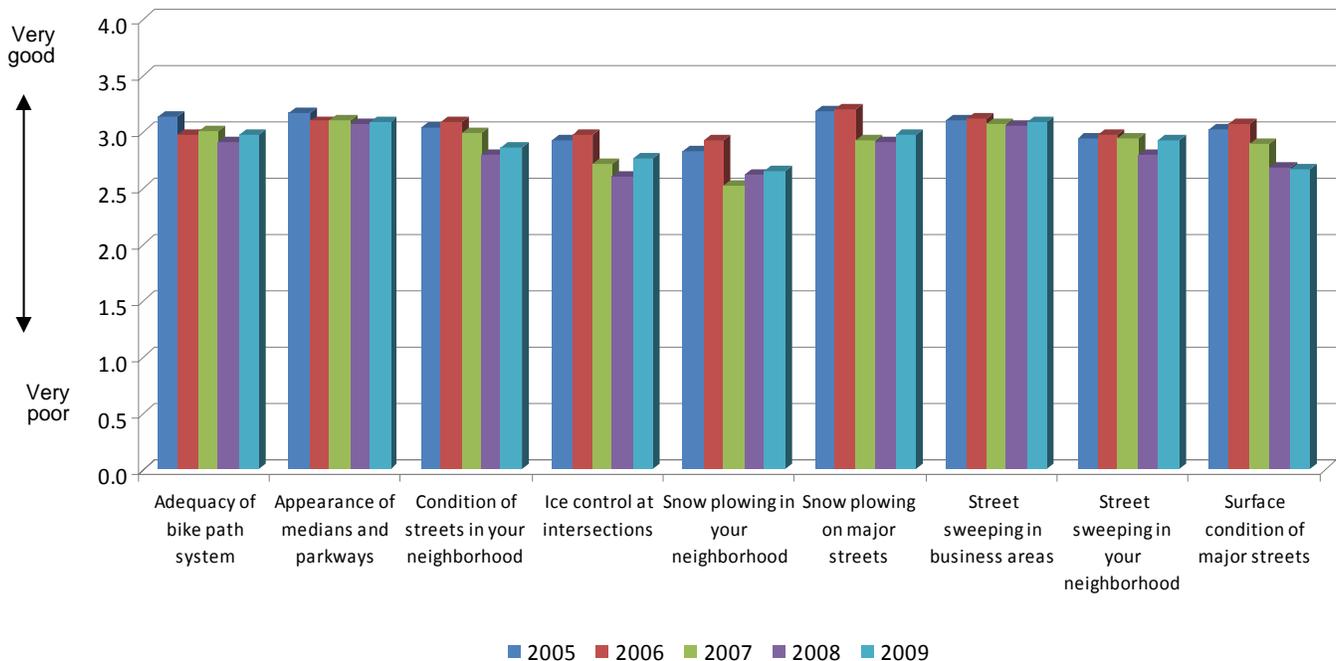
Table 15. Road service ratings

Road Service	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Average*
	Percent				
Appearance of medians and parkways (n=563)	19	72	8	1	3.09
Street sweeping in business areas (n=544)	17	76	6	1	3.09
Adequacy of bike path system (n=548)	17	66	14	3	2.97
Snow plowing on major city streets (n=576)	25	54	13	8	2.97
Street sweeping in your neighborhood (n=557)	15	68	13	5	2.93
Condition of streets in your neighborhood (n=568)	16	61	17	6	2.86
Ice control at intersections (n=567)	15	56	22	8	2.77
Surface condition of major streets (n=568)	10	56	27	8	2.67
Snow plowing in your neighborhood (n=569)	15	48	23	14	2.64

*1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=good; 4=very good

Figure 10 compares this year’s road service ratings with ratings from previous years. Quality of street maintenance was perceived almost constantly by the respondents over time. Five out of nine street features were perceived to be below 3.0 (good) by the respondents. However, there was a very slight increase (.1% to .2% increase) in 4 out of nine features. While “snow plowing the neighborhood” improved from 2008 to 2009, it continues to be an issue of concern for residents.

Figure 10. Quality of street maintenance features (2005-2009).



When looking at ice control at intersections and characteristics of the respondents, no comparisons were statistically significant. In 2009, those living in northeast Ames had the highest rating for ice control at intersections (M=2.99), which is statistically significant different from those living in northwest (M=2.84) and southwest (M=2.60). In terms of snow plowing in the neighborhood and major streets, those living in northeast Ames gave the highest rating (M=3.0 and 3.3, respectively), followed by northwest residents (M=2.7 and 3.0, respectively), then by southeast residents (M=2.6 and 2.9, respectively), and lastly, by southwest Ames (M=2.3 and 2.8, respectively). Street sweeping in the neighborhood was rated highest by northeast residents compared to southeast residents.

Another survey question dealt with the placement of traffic signs. As shown in Table 16, more than three-quarters of respondents (79%) said the level of traffic signs found along the streets that they travel is the “right number.” The response to this question is almost constant for the past five years and is even higher for 2009 compared to 2008. The survey also asked about the effectiveness of coordination between traffic signals. As seen in Table 17, while 47% of respondents said coordination was “often and/or always” effective, 48% said the coordination was “rarely to sometimes” effective.

Table 16. Traffic signal placement along streets that respondent travels

Placement	Survey Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	<i>Percentage</i>				
Too many	9	19	16	18	16
Right number	81	76	78	76	79
Too few	10	5	6	6	5

Table 17. Signal Coordination Effectiveness, 2009

	Percent
Rarely Effective	12
Sometimes Effective	36
Often Effective	32
Always Effective	15
Don't know	6

Parking

Figure 11 shows when respondents are most likely to attempt parking in downtown Ames or in Campustown. The pattern of parking in downtown Ames has varied from year to year. Five to 8 p.m. is the most common time respondents park in downtown Ames, followed by 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (22%), and 2 to 5 p.m. (20%). This reflects a 4% drop in parking from 2 to 5 p.m. from 2008 data. Early morning (8 to 11 a.m.) and evening (after 8 p.m.) are the least popular times participants park in

downtown Ames. Figure 11 shows that parking in Campustown from 5 to 8 p.m. as the most popular time.

Figure 11. Time most likely to park downtown Ames

Time	Survey Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Downtown					
8-11 AM	11	8	10	9	11
11 AM – 2 PM	31	27	30	23	22
2-5 PM	34	26	27	26	20
5-8 PM	30	28	25	29	26
After 8 PM	8	6	7	7	11
Campustown					
8-11 AM	9	15	8	9	8
11 AM – 2 PM	25	24	18	16	13
2-5 PM	17	20	15	10	13
5-8 PM	36	38	25	22	22
After 8 PM	23	18	12	12	15

Table 19 shows respondents' adequacy ratings for parking. In 2006, the wording on the question was changed from "good or very good parking" to "somewhat or very adequate parking." In 2009, just over one-quarter of the respondents (28%) rated parking in Campustown as "somewhat" or "very adequate," whereas nearly eight in 10 (78%) gave the same ratings to downtown parking. The rating for downtown parking has dropped 6% from its high rating of 84 percent in 2005. Parking in downtown Ames has consistently rated higher than Campustown parking for the past five years. However, the number of respondents rating Campustown parking as adequate has shown a gradual improvement over the past three years (2007 to 2009).

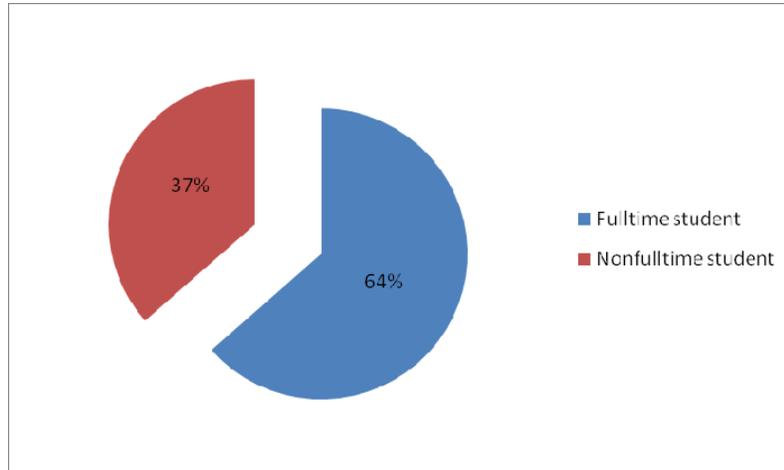
Figure 12. Adequacy of parking

Place	Survey Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Percent good or very good/somewhat adequate or very adequate</i>					
Downtown	84	80	72	69	78
Campustown	24	25	22	26	28

CyRide

Ames' mass transportation system – CyRide – was addressed next in the questionnaire. Figure 13 shows how user/non-user patterns differ between respondents who are fulltime students versus non-fulltime students. Fulltime student respondents were more likely to use CyRide at least one time per week (63.5%) when compared to non-fulltime students (36.5%).

Figure 13. Use CyRide at least once a week



For 2009, nearly two-thirds (64%) of survey respondents indicate they never rode CyRide, while 36% took CyRide anywhere from once to ten times or more per week. It is interesting to note the number of respondents who rode CyRide more than ten times per week climbed from 3% in 2007 to 8% in 2008 and stayed the same in 2009. The trend in the use of CyRide is quite consistent in the past years. (Table 18). There is some correlation between resident demographics and CyRide usage. CyRide users are mostly younger (33 years of age) and have stayed in Ames for a shorter period of time (10 years). However, the non-CyRide users were older (average age 50.6) and have lived in Ames longer (21.6 years). The majority of those who used CyRide were students (63%) and were mostly renters (69%).

Table 18. Respondents' weekly CyRide usage

Weekly use	Survey Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Never	56	65	66	66	64
1	14	4	7	4	5
2 to 6	12	17	18	13	15
7 to 10	6	8	6	9	8
More than 10	12	6	3	8	8

Table 19 considers reasons CyRide is not used more often. Less than half (48%) of respondents indicated that they prefer to drive their own car, and another 14% said a car is required for work. Twenty-two percent attributed their low usage to an inconvenient route or schedule, which is 5% increase from the 2008. The category “other” was added to the survey in 2006 and was selected by 13% of respondents. (Those comments are available in the appendix.)

Table 19. Trends in reasons CyRide not used more often

Reason	Survey Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	<i>Percent</i>				
Prefer to drive own car	61	50	49	53	48
Inconvenient route or schedule	20	20	20	17	22
Car required for work	15	12	14	10	14
Lack of information about CyRide system	2	1	5	3	5
Too costly	1	1	2	2	2
Other	-	25	18	19	13

Community recreation

Residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with recreational facilities on a four-point scale from “very good (4)” to “very poor (1).” Individuals who did not use a facility are not included in Table 20 ratings. Satisfaction with parks and recreational facilities continues to be high with 76% to 97% of facility users providing either a “very good” or “good” rating. The average rating ranges from 3.2 to 3.5 on the 4-point scale. “Restrooms” is the only recreational facility that was rated below 3.0. (Table 20)

Table 20. Users’ satisfaction with parks and recreation facilities

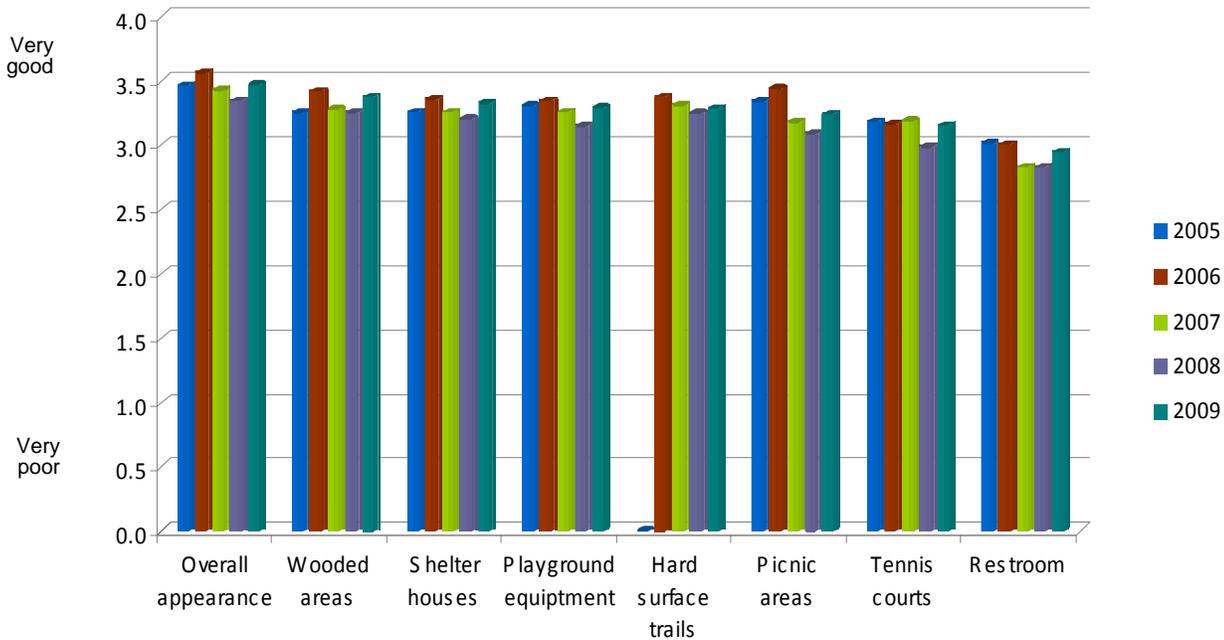
Facility	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Use*	Average**
	<i>Percent</i>					
Overall appearance of parks (n=537)	49	48	3	0	6	3.5
Wooded areas (n=453)	42	53	5	0	18	3.4
Shelter houses (n=448)	38	57	5	<1	16	3.3
Playground equipment (n=352)	35	60	5	1	32	3.3
Hard surface trails/crushed rock trails (n=433)	32	64	4	0	21	3.3
Picnic areas (tables/grills) (n=469)	32	60	8	0	15	3.2
Tennis courts (n=240)	27	63	8	2	53	3.2
Restrooms (n=399)	19	57	22	2	25	2.9

* “Don’t Know/ Don’t Use” excluded when calculating percentages & average for “very good” to “very poor.”

**1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=good; 4=very good

Figure 14 shows the ratings of each recreational facility in the past five years. Quality of all the recreational facilities improved from 2008 to 2009. However, restrooms still got the lowest rating. It was consistently rated from poor to good in the past five years.

Figure 14. Rating of Parks and Recreation features in the past 5 years.



Outdoor freestyle bike park, rebuilding Brookside Park tennis courts, and a community gathering space were three possible future capital improvement projects considered in one question. Estimated costs related to each project were included to determine the importance of these potential projects. Looking at the frequency distribution as show in Table 21, “community gathering spaces” garnered the most support (64%), followed by Brookside Park tennis courts (38%) and an outdoor freestyle bike park (25%). There were many comments in the “other” section, and those are listed in the appendix.

Table 21. User viewpoints on future recreation facilities, 2009.

	<u>Very Unimportant</u>	<u>Somewhat Unimportant</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Average*</u>
Outdoor Freestyle Bike Park (15,000-sq.ft. park, similar to the Skate Park, for riding non-motorized bikes. Cost: \$450,000 with \$175,000 from City funds combined with private sources) (N=580)	49%	27%	20%	4%	1.79
Rebuilding Brookside Park Tennis Courts (\$300,000) (N=577)	23%	39%	34%	4%	2.19
Community Gathering Spaces (Including a pavilion for special events such as Farmer's Market, green space, and an at-grade water feature/interactive fountain with changing water patterns for people to observe; and for children to interact and play. Cost: \$1,000,000, with \$300,000 from City funds combined with private resources). (N=579)	19%	16%	39%	25%	3.48
Other recreation opportunities you'd like to see:(N=33)	12%	0%	15%	73%	

*1=very unimportant; 2=somewhat unimportant; 3=somewhat important; 4=very important

Ames Public Library

Generally, Ames Public Library was rated highly by the respondents. This holds true with the 13 services and facilities categories included on the survey. On the 4-point scale, average scores ranged from 3.3 to 3.6. Features or services mostly used/visited and were rated highly by respondents are welcome desk, customer service, range of available materials and availability of seating. The Bookmobile was used by only one-third of the respondents. However, it was rated high by those who used it. The least used facilities/services are online library from home, programs such as story hour, book, discussions, concerts, *Page One* (library newsletter) and Bookmobile service.

Only 49% of the respondents used the Ames public library as often as they would like to use it.

Table 22. Users' rating with Ames Public Library features, 2009

Feature	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Poor</u> Percent	Very Poor	<u>Don't use*</u>	<u>Average**</u>
Bookmobile service (n=164)	66	31	2	1	65	3.6
Asking questions of staff by phone or in person (n=245)	60	39	<1	0	48	3.6
Programs (story hours, book discussions, concerts) (n=220)	61	37	2	1	54	3.6
Customer service (n=399)	57	41	1	<1	21	3.6
Range of materials available (n=409)	60	37	2	1	20	3.6
Use of library resources from home via computer (n=234)	59	38	3	<1	52	3.6
Welcoming atmosphere (n=411)	53	43	3	<1	19	3.5
Availability of seating (n=346)	48	47	5	<1	30	3.4
<i>Page One</i> library newsletter (n=146)	45	53	1	1	68	3.4
Meeting/study rooms (n=260)	40	57	3	<1	45	3.4
Wait time for requests/holds (n=283)	43	52	5	<1	42	3.4
Handicapped accessibility (n=188)	41	54	5	1	60	3.4
Internet/computer services (n=251)	36	58	5	2	48	3.3

* [Don't Use responses not included in calculating ratings](#)

**1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=good; 4=very good

Reasons for not using the library more often differ based upon whether the respondent is a fulltime Iowa State University student (Table 23). The reason a large majority of students do not use the Ames Public Library was because they are able to use other sources. The reason non-fulltime students report not using the library was because of lack of time (52%), followed by a problem with parking (30%). While 17 percent of non-fulltime students listed inconvenient hours as a reason for not using the Ames Public Library more often, only 5% of Iowa State students listed that as a reason.

Table 23. Comparing students & non-students' reasons for not using the Ames Public Library

<u>Student status</u>	<u>Parking problem</u>	<u>Use other sources</u>	<u>Hours not convenient</u>	<u>Don't have time</u>
	<i>Percent</i>			
Iowa State University fulltime student (n=120)	13%	23%	5%	10%
Non-fulltime student (n=159)	30%	28%	17%	52%

As shown in Table 24, more than six out of 10 (66%) respondents this year are “very satisfied” overall with Ames Public Library. This is increase of 4% from 2008, and 2% from 2007. The number of “somewhat satisfied” respondents decreased by 4%. In 2008, the number of respondents who were “very/somewhat satisfied” the library also was 97%. In 2009, the number was the same (97%).

Table 24. Trends in overall satisfaction with Ames Public Library.

<u>Satisfaction level</u>	<u>Survey Year</u>				
	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
	<i>Percent</i>				
Very satisfied	58	68	64	62	66
Somewhat satisfied	38	28	32	35	31
Somewhat dissatisfied	4	4	3	4	2
Very dissatisfied	0	<1	1	<1	1
Don't use	24	15	15	19	11

Carr Pool

When the new Furman Aquatic Center opens, the Ames City Council has stated its intention to close Carr Pool, demolish the pool basin, and consider ways to reuse the facilities and property for recreational purposes. A group of citizens has requested the City continue to operate Carr Pool, along with the new aquatic center. Last renovated in 1982, Carr Pool requires an annual operating property tax subsidy of approximately \$50,000. Currently, there are no estimates in regards to the cost of future capital improvements needed at this facility.

Given the statements above, the respondents were asked what they think the City should do with Carr Pool. Twenty-one percent of respondents would like to see the pool closed and demolished, while 22% would like the City to continue to operate the pool. The most popular response (38%) was for the City to lease Carr Pool to a private group who would take over the responsibility to operate and fund this facility. The remaining 19% suggested a private group should provide the City with the subsidy to operate the pool. Based on the results, it appears more than three-fourths of the respondents (78%) are opposed to the City subsidizing any continued operation of Carr Pool. (Table 25)

Table 25. Carr Pool.

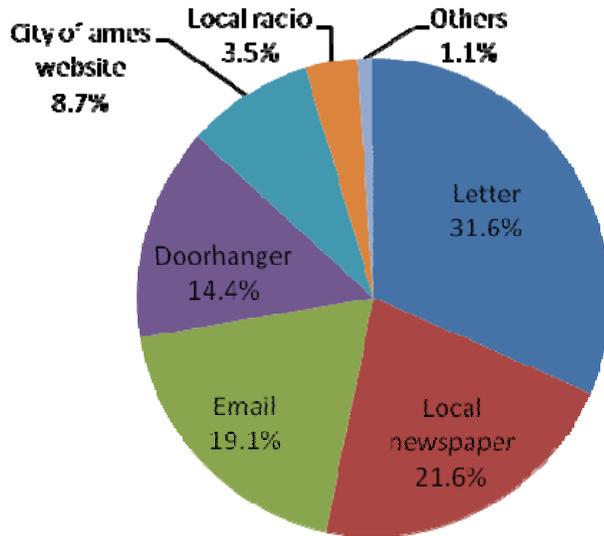
	Total	
	Responses	%
Lease to private group	205	38
Continue to operate using property tax	121	22
Close Carr Pool	113	21
Private group provides the city the necessary funds	104	19
TOTAL	543	100%

Public Information

The next section of the questionnaire asked respondents how they want to learn about City of Ames services, programs and projects, as well as their thoughts on the usefulness of various media sources. Figure 15 shows that almost one-third of respondents (31.6%) indicate a letter is the most popular method of communication. This is almost the same as in 2008. The newspaper was the next choice (22%), followed by email (19%). Doorhanger decreased from 17% to 14% and the City's website stayed the same as in 2008. For ISU students, letter is still the best way to communicate, followed by email and local newspaper, respectively.

A category of "other" was added, and those suggestions are listed in the appendix.

Figure 15. Preferred method to learn about City services, programs or projects



In Table 26, the City Side (utility bill insert), Ames Tribune, the City of Ames Web site, and the Des Moines Register newspaper were the most frequently cited sources of local government information. Respondents were also asked how useful those sources are to them when they use them. Most of the sources listed were determined somewhat or very useful to the respondents. This is the first year “The Sun,” a direct-mail newspaper was added to the list. All but three of the information sources had a value of 2.05 and above, with City of Ames Web, Ames Tribune newspaper, and CitySide as the most useful source of government information.

Table 26. Usefulness of media sources for government information (Don't use removed)

	Don't Use	Use	
	Percent	Percent	Average*
CitySide (utility bill insert) (403)	17%	83%	2.30
Ames Tribune newspaper (N=386)	22%	78%	2.38
City of Ames Web page (N=381)	26%	74%	2.39
Des Moines Register newspaper (N=361)	28%	72%	2.08
<i>The Sun</i> (direct-mail newspaper) (N=392)	32%	68%	1.89
ISU Daily newspaper (N=345)	37%	63%	2.12
KASI/KCCQ radio (N=249)	47%	53%	2.23
Cable TV12/Government Access Television (N=230)	52%	48%	1.91
Documents at the Ames Public Library (N=191)	60%	40%	2.05
<u>www.Ames365.com (Ames News Online) (N=135)</u>	71%	29%	1.99

***1=not useful; 2=somewhat useful; 3=very useful*

Figure 16 illustrates how useful respondents view these sources of information in the most recent five survey years. Those rankings have stayed fairly consistent over the years.

Figure 16. Usefulness of news sources over the past five years (Users only).

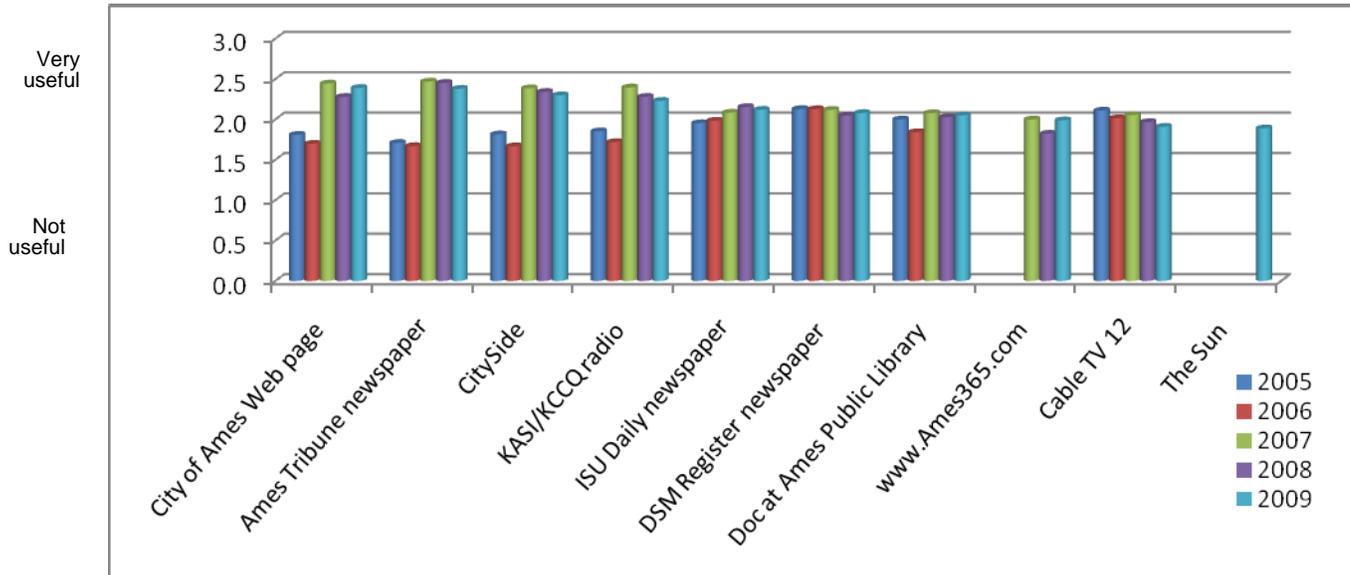


Table 27 indicates the usefulness of various communication tools based on whether or not the respondent was a fulltime student. There were significant differences between student and non-student responses. Ames Tribune and CitySide were more useful to non-fulltime ISU students than fulltime ISU students. However, ISU Daily newspaper was more useful to fulltime ISU students than to non-fulltime ISU students.

Table 27. Usefulness of news sources for students and non fulltime students.

	Non-fulltime student	Fulltime student
	-Average+-	
City of Ames Web page	2.42	2.36
Cable TV 12/Government Access Television	1.92	1.87
Ames Tribune newspaper	2.44	2.19*
ISU Daily newspaper	2.02	2.22*
Des Moines Register newspaper	2.00	2.25
KASI/KCCQ radio	2.28	2.07
www.Ames365.com (online news service)	2.02	1.93
CitySide (utility bill insert)	2.36	2.05**
Documents at the Ames Public Library	2.04	2.02
<i>The Sun</i> (direct-mail newspaper)	1.96	1.68*

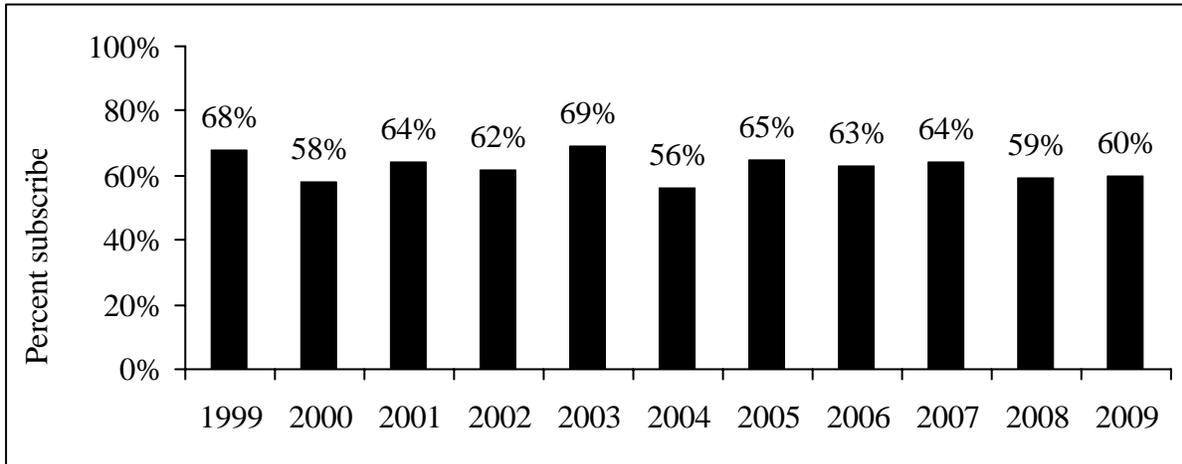
*statistically significant at .05 level

** statistically significant at .01 level

+ 1=not useful; 2=somewhat useful; 3=very useful

Figure 17 illustrates that six in ten (60%) respondents were cable TV subscribers. This figure is a decrease of 5% from the cable TV subscriber rate of 64% in 2007 and an increase of 1% from 2008. Residents who own their own homes were more likely to be Mediacom subscribers (55%) compared to renters (45%). Additionally, non-fulltime student respondents are more likely to be Mediacom subscribers (64.6%) compared to fulltime students (35.4%). These results are the opposite of 2008 results. In 2008, Mediacom subscribers were renter (65%) and fulltime students (55%).

Figure 17. Trends in city residents' cable subscription use



In Table 28, the number of hours per week that cable TV subscribers watch Government Access TV 12 is shown. Sixty-four percent responded they never watched Channel 12. This is an increase of 9% over 2008 when 55% of respondents said they never watch Channel 12. Of those who said they did watch, 47% of respondents reported watching approximately an hour per week and 16% reported watching two to three hours per week. Nine percent of respondents who watch Channel 12 are viewing four or more hours each week. Table 29 shows that nearly two-thirds (63%) of cable TV subscribers who watch Channel 12 are most likely to watch between 6 and 9 p.m.

Table 28. Hours per week that cable subscribers watch Channel 12

Hours per week	Survey Year	
	2008	2009
None	9	29
1	55	47
2	18	10
3	7	6
4 or more	11	9

Table 29. Trends in time cable subscribers are most likely to watch Government Access TV

Time	Survey year				
	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
	<i>Percent</i>				
Midnight to 6 AM	3	5	4	4	4
6 AM to Noon	8	5	2	7	8
Noon to 6 PM	9	4	10	13	8
6 to 9 PM	55	62	71	64	63
9 PM to midnight	16	24	12	11	18

For the fourth year, the survey asked questions about Internet connections at home. The number of respondents connected to Internet at home remains at nine of out 10 (90%), and high-speed connection continues to climb. Fifty-nine percent have high-speed/broadband with wireless and 32% have regular high-speed/broadband for a total of 91%.

Respondents who had Internet access in their home have a median age of 38 years, whereas those without the Internet have a median age of 55. Fulltime students were more likely to have Internet access in their home (97%) than non-fulltime students (85%), These responses are consistent with the responses from 2008. In addition, 2009 respondents renting homes were more likely to have internet access (90%) than homeowners (86%).

Table 30. Trend in Internet Service at Home

	Survey Year			
	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
	Percentage responding "yes"			
Internet Connection	87	87	88	90
High-Speed	75	84	89	91

City of Ames Overall Service Quality

The final survey question asked residents to rate the overall quality of services they receive from the City of Ames. This year, more than one-third (34%) of respondents provided a “very good” rating for their overall satisfaction with the quality of services received from the city. In comparison with the previous years, this rating represents a slight increase. The number of respondents rating the City of Ames as “good” was 64% in 2009. When the ratings are combined, 98% of Ames residents ranked their overall satisfaction with City services as good or very good.

Figure 18. Trends in overall satisfaction with City of Ames service quality

