

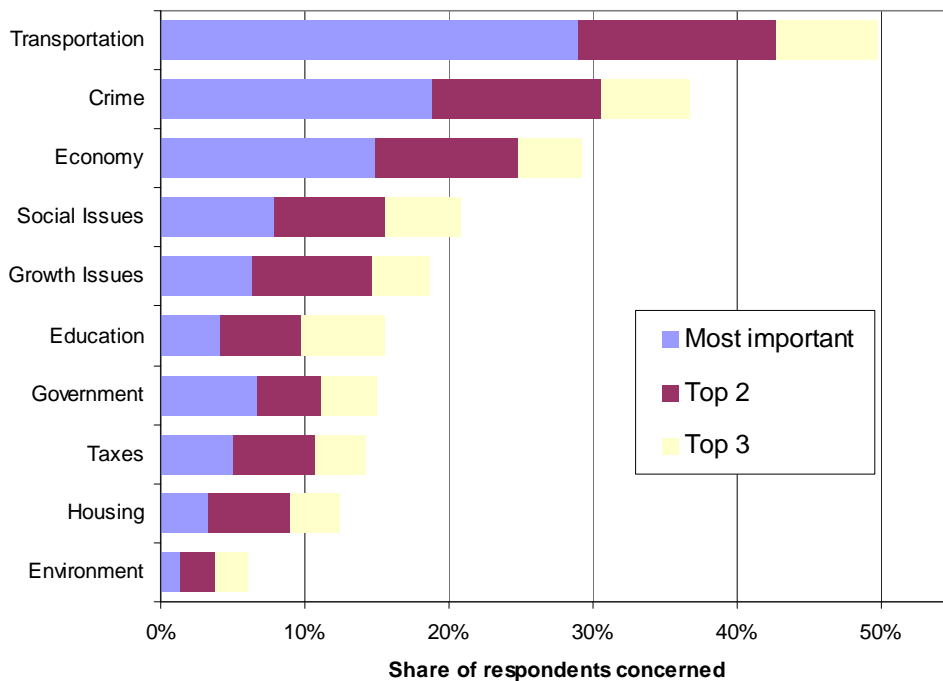
Quality of Life

- Positive feelings about the Twin Cities region have been consistent over three decades of Metropolitan Council surveys; 96 percent of residents said the region is a better or much better place to live than other metropolitan areas.
- When asked about the Twin Cities region’s most attractive feature, 35 percent identified the region’s parks, trails, lakes and natural environment. Other assets cited include arts and cultural opportunities (7 percent), people and population diversity (7 percent), beautiful cities and downtown areas (7 percent), good neighborhoods and neighborhood characteristics (7 percent), and other quality of life characteristics (6 percent). These results are fairly consistent over repeated, annual polls of the region’s residents.

Issues Facing the Region

- Asked about issues facing the region, 29 percent named traffic congestion, road conditions, limited transit options or other transportation challenges as the region’s single most important problem. Still, the incidence of transportation problems identification has trended downward for the past six years.

Overall concern: Top three problems identified, 2009



n=1337, confidence +/-3%

- This is a different way of looking at problems. Survey respondents identified a most important problem, as well as second and third additional problems.
- Respondents could list up to three problems, so the total will be greater than 100%.

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Section 4: Residential Preferences

Key Findings

- Five percent of survey respondents indicated they live in a rural setting; 8 percent in a small town; 32 percent in a growing suburb; 30 percent in an older suburb; 20 percent in a central cities neighborhood; and 5 percent in a very urban or downtown setting.
- One-quarter of Twin Cities' residents said they would prefer to relocate or live in a different type of area.
- A trend of rural or small town preference is apparent. If all residents who said they preferred a rural setting actually lived in a rural setting, the region would experience a doubling of its rural population. The preference is problematic since greater population is what transforms rural areas and small towns into something else.

Discussion

Where people currently live

The Twin Cities region includes a continuum of communities at different stages of development, with varying patterns of community form. As distance from the region's center increases, community form becomes less urban and more rural.

For this section, analysis draws on survey respondents' self-identified community type. Survey participants were asked to characterize their community by choosing one of six descriptions: a very urban or downtown setting, a central city neighborhood, an older suburb, a growing suburb, a small town or a rural setting. (For example, the Metropolitan Council considers Dayton, Minnesota, to be a developing community. Hypothetically, survey participants from Dayton could also self-identify as small town or growing suburb).

Figures 11 and 12 show most survey participants living in either an older suburb (30 percent) or a growing suburb (32 percent). Twenty percent live in a central cities neighborhood and 5 percent in a very urban or downtown setting. The remainder identify themselves as rural area (5 percent) or small town residents (8 percent).

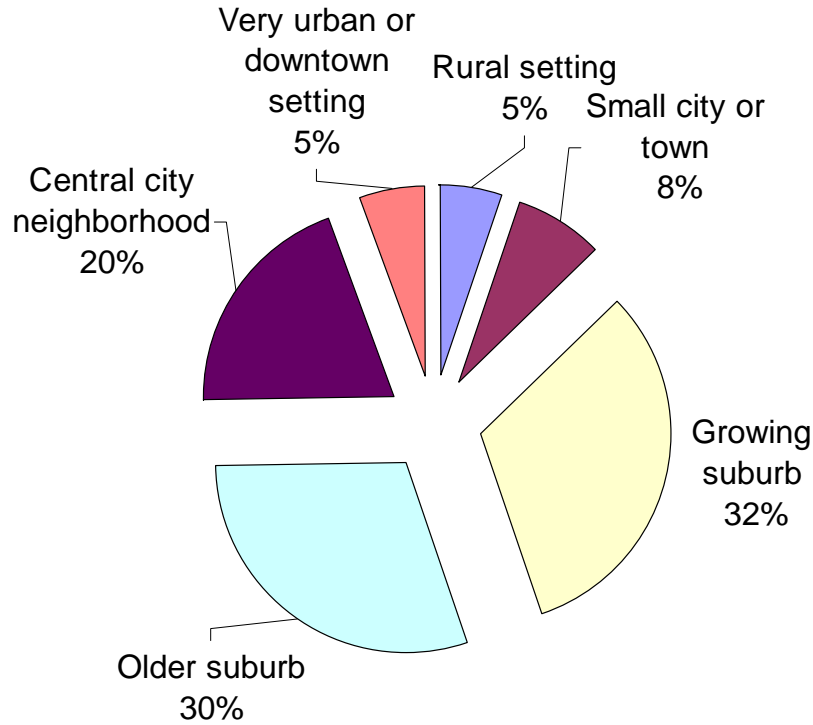
Where people would prefer to live

Survey participants were asked whether they would like to relocate to a different kind of area. Most Twin Cities residents are satisfied with their community setting. However, 25 percent said they would prefer to relocate to a different type of area (Table 4.01).

Relocation interest was lowest among rural area residents (13 percent), small town and growing suburb residents (24 percent each) and senior citizens (12 percent) (Table 4.02).

Table 4.03 and Figure 13 show preferred areas compared with where people currently live. A trend of rural or small town preference is apparent. If all residents who said they preferred a rural setting actually lived in a rural setting, the region would experience a

Figure 12: “How would you describe the area where you now live?”



n = 1,389, confidence +/-3%

Table 4.01: “Would you prefer to live in a different kind of area?”

Currently living in:	No	Yes, prefer different area
Respondents living in:		
A rural setting	87%	13%
A small city or town	76%	24%
A growing suburb	76%	24%
An older suburb	73%	27%
A central cities neighborhood	74%	26%
A very urban/downtown setting		N/A*
All areas combined	75%	25%

n varies from 165 to 329, confidence from +/-8% (small city or town) to +/-6% (growing suburb, older suburb)

- There were too few respondents to accurately represent very urban/downtown residents.

Table 4.02: Interest in relocation, by age cohort

	No	Yes, prefer different area
Age 65+	88%	12%
Ages 50-64	76%	24%
Ages 40-49	77%	23%
Ages 18-39	69%	31%

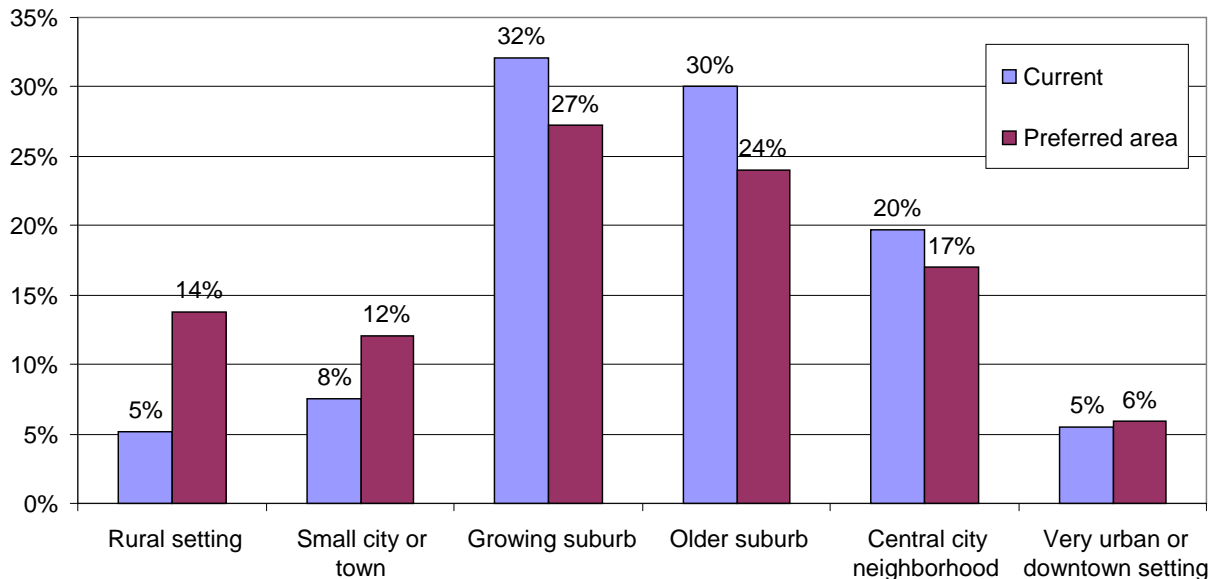
n for age cohorts varies from 267 to 491, confidence varies from +/-6% (age 18-39) to +/-5% (age 65 and over)

Table 4.03: Where people live and where they would prefer to live

	Rural setting	Small town	Growing suburb	Older suburb	Central cities neighborhood	Very urban/downtown
Area of <i>current</i> residence	5%	8%	32%	30%	20%	5%
<i>Preferred</i> area, including relocators and current residents	14%	12%	27%	24%	17%	6%

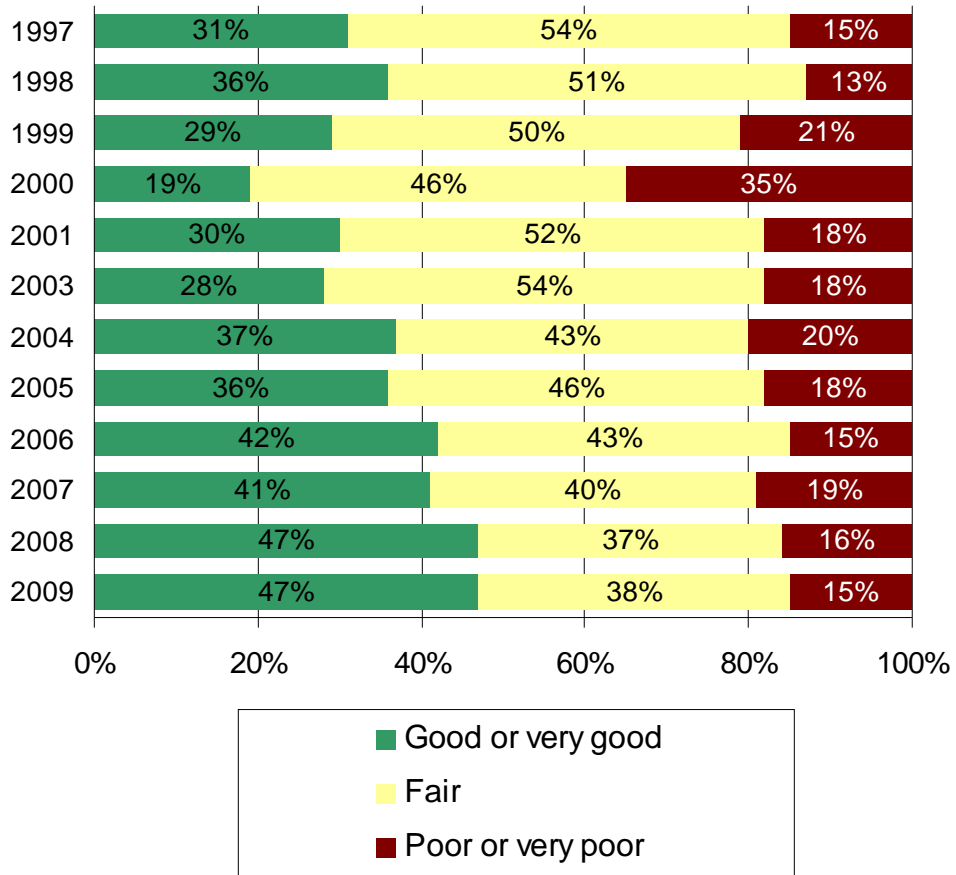
n= 1,389 for current area, n= 1,383 for preferred area, confidence +/- 3%

Figure 13: Where people live and where they would prefer to live



n= 1,389 for current area, n= 1,383 for preferred area, confidence +/- 3%

Figure 14: Public opinion of Metropolitan Council performance, 1997-2009



n = 771 for performance approval, confidence +/- 4%

Table 5.01: Name recognition and public approval of Metropolitan Council performance, 2001-2009

	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Name recognition	68%	74%	78%	69%	73%	74%	74%	71%
“What is your impression of the Metropolitan Council’s performance addressing regional issues?”								
Very good job	4%	2%	3%	5%	6%	6%	7%	9%
Good job	26%	26%	34%	32%	36%	35%	40%	38%
Fair job	52%	54%	43%	46%	43%	40%	37%	38%
Poor job	12%	14%	14%	14%	12%	13%	12%	9%
Very poor job	6%	4%	6%	4%	3%	6%	4%	6%

n = 1387 for name recognition, confidence +/- 3%

n = 771 for performance approval, confidence +/- 4%

- For comparison over time, the table excludes “no opinion/don’t know.”

Table 5.02: Name recognition and public approval of Metropolitan Council performance, by demographic segment, 2009

	Name recognition	Impression of Council’s performance		
		Very good or good	Fair	Poor or very poor
Optimistic outlook – believe quality of life has improved or stayed the same	68%	54%	36%	10%
Pessimistic – believe quality of life has gotten worse	78%	28%	43%	29%
Minority or Multi-Race	57%	N/A	N/A	N/A
White, Non-Hispanic	74%	48%	38%	14%
Senior citizens (65+)	77%	51%	39%	10%
Older Boomers (50-64)	86%	47%	40%	13%
Young Boomers (40-49)	71%	44%	40%	16%
Gen X and Gen Y (18-39)	67%	47%	33%	20%
Minneapolis and St. Paul	71%	48%	35%	17%
Developed suburbs	71%	50%	39%	11%
Developing communities	69%	45%	39%	16%
Rural areas	71%	37%	38%	25%
All residents of region	71%	47%	38%	15%

- n for name recognition varies from 128 to 1027, confidence ranges are +/-9% (minority or multi-trace), +/-6% (age cohorts, planning areas, also pessimistic segment) to +/-4% (optimistic outlook)
- n for performance approval varies from 105 to 558, confidence ranges are +/-10% (for age 18-39), +/-8% (other age cohorts, planning areas), +/-7% (pessimistic outlook), +/-5% (optimistic)

Table 5.03: How important are the following Council programs for maintaining the quality of life in the Twin Cities metro area?

Council Program	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	<i>Correlation with approval rating</i>
Monitoring water supply and water quality	1%	3%	13%	82%	0.30
Wastewater treatment	1%	5%	19%	76%	0.26
Planning to accommodate a growing population	4%	10%	22%	65%	0.32
Natural resources and land conservancy	3%	10%	22%	64%	0.34
Metro Transit (bus system)	7%	9%	21%	63%	0.33
Regional parks and trails	3%	12%	24%	61%	0.36
Grants to clean up and reuse polluted lands	3%	10%	27%	60%	0.31
Development that connects housing, jobs and services	7%	11%	27%	55%	0.36
Light Rail Transit	10%	12%	24%	54%	0.32
Grants for transportation projects	6%	14%	31%	49%	0.37
Coordinating development across neighboring communities	6%	13%	33%	49%	0.38
Grants to develop and preserve housing	8%	16%	31%	45%	0.39

n for importance scores varied between 1292 and 1363 for the various programs, confidence +/-3%

Correlations between program importance and performance utilized 766 records. Correlation scores measure the statistical association, on a scale of 0 to 1, between perceived importance of each program and approval of Council's performance.

Section 6: Methodology

This report describes the findings of the 2009 Metro Residents Survey; 3,300 addresses in the seven-county Twin Cities area were randomly selected and residents were invited to participate in this study. Sampled addresses were stratified by zip codes to provide balanced numbers in four geographic sectors: Central Cities, Developed Suburbs, Developing Communities, and Rural Areas.

In October 2009, each sampled resident was sent a postcard announcing the coming survey. One week later (October 16), each sampled resident was sent a survey packet: a letter from the Council Chairman, a survey questionnaire to be completed, and a postage-paid return envelope. To encourage participation by recent immigrant groups, the questionnaire included instructions in Spanish, Somali and Hmong languages. The instructions offered the reader the opportunity to arrange an interview in another language.

Data collection began October 22. Throughout the process, received responses and returned mail were tracked by Metropolitan Council's survey contractor, Information Specialists Group Inc. One week after the October survey packet was mailed, non-respondents were flagged for telephone follow-up. Information Specialists Group Inc. conducted telephone interviews through December 4, and accepted mail-returned survey questionnaires for inclusion through this date.

Of the initial 3,300 sampled residents, 215 were determined to be unlocatable. This left 3,085 active records in the sample database.

Survey participation

In total, 420 telephone interviews, 786 mail-returned surveys, and 105 online user surveys were completed and received. The combined pool of 1,311 responses represents a 42 percent response rate among those receiving the initial 2009 survey questionnaire.

Ninety-nine useable cell phone interviews were collected as well. Cell phone users were approached through an independent, random sampling. Response rate within the cell phone user sample was 10 percent.

Both the sample size and response rate are relevant to the reliability of survey analysis. With a respondent pool of 1,410, the margin of error due to sample sufficiency is +/-3 percent, with 95 percent confidence. Margins of error increase where questions were answered by a smaller number of respondents. (Table 6.01)

The response rate is considered acceptable. However, Council researchers are concerned that the survey under-represents certain demographic segments. This concern is addressed through targeted over-sampling, through the addition of cell phone user survey interviews, and through weighting of response data.

Comparing the response distributions of the telephone interview and mail-return participants, there are some observed differences in demographic characteristics, behavior (for example, commute mode), and public opinion (for example, Metropolitan Council

name recognition). Some respondents are more likely to answer a mail-in survey, while others are more willing to respond in a telephone interview. Therefore, a multi-modal data collection method was employed to achieve a higher response rate and to more completely capture residents’ views and experiences.

Preparation for analysis: weighting

Weighting of the data was necessary to correct for sample design – specifically the deliberate over-sampling of rural areas and the small size of an independent sample of cell phone users – as well as demographic imbalances in response and participation. Individual survey responses are given greater (or lesser) weight in order to represent population segments. The unadjusted pool of collected survey responses *under*-represented people under 40 and minority-identified residents. The raw, unadjusted pool *over*-represented senior citizens and people living alone.

Weight factors were independently calculated for age and gender combination, race, household size, telephone market segment, and geographic sector. For most of these variables the distribution of survey participants was benchmarked against 2008 American Community Survey statistics for adults in the Twin Cities region. For geographic sector, the distribution was benchmarked against the Metropolitan Council’s own 2008 population estimates. The five factors were then multiplied together (age and gender weight X minority weight X household size weight X telephone market weight X geographic weight) to yield “case weights” for each of the 1,410 survey responses.

The end product is a survey dataset that fairly represents the region’s demographic diversity: Survey participants from each age cohort fairly represent their share of the region’s population; minority participants and white, non-Hispanic segments fairly represent their share of the population.

The survey instrument is found in the Appendix section of this report.

Table 6.01: Margin of error for various sample sizes

Sample of “n”	Margin of error, with 95% confidence
1,067	+/- 3%
600	+/- 4%
384	+/- 5%
267	+/- 6%
196	+/- 7%
150	+/- 8%
119	+/- 9%
96	+/- 10%

Table 6.02: Distribution of 2009 survey sample and regional population

	Unadjusted distribution of survey participants	Demographic distribution of region's adult population*	Weighted, valid distribution of survey data, <i>excluding blank responses</i>
White only, Non-Hispanic	89%	83%	83%
Minority or multi-racial	9%	17%	17%
Refused/ missing information	2%		
Male	51%	49%	49%
Female	48%	51%	51%
Refused/ missing information	1%		
65+	23%	14%	14%
50-64	35%	25%	25%
40-49	22%	22%	22%
30-39	13%	18%	18%
18-29	6%	21%	21%
Refused/ missing information	1%		
Live alone	23%	15%	15%
2 in household	34%	35%	35%
3 in household	13%	19%	19%
4 in household	16%	18%	18%
5 or more in household	10%	13%	13%
Refused/ missing information	4%		
Cell phone only (no land-line)	11%	23% **	26%
Cell phone + land-line in home	72%	63% **	62%
No cell phone (including land- line only)	14%	14% **	12%
Refused/ missing information	3%		
Central cities	28%	23% ***	23%
Developed suburbs	25%	36% ***	36%
Developing	24%	35% ***	35%
Rural	23%	6% ***	6%

* For race, age, gender, and household size, 2008 adult population distributions from Census Bureau's American Community Survey are used as benchmarks.

** For telephone market segments, a regional distribution was not available. National survey estimates provided the benchmark for weights adjustment.

*** For geographic sub-region, the 2008 all-ages population in households, estimated by Metropolitan Council, is used as the benchmark. The residents' survey's stratified sampling is designed to yield statistically significant data for each of the four geographic sub-regions.

Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire is an eight-page document with 30 questions. (See following pages.)

2009 Annual Residents Survey

Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

You've been selected to participate in a survey on life in our region.
Please provide your responses in this questionnaire booklet.
Your responses will be used only for research.
Thank you for participating.



Para informacion en Español, vea el reverso de este folleto.

Xav paub cov xovxwm no txhais us lus Hmoob, saib nraum qab daim ntawv no.

Warbixin ku saabsan Somali kafiri dhinaca danbe ee form-kan.

Q1 How would you rate the Twin Cities as a place to live, compared to other metro areas? *(check one)*

- A much better place in which to live A slightly better place in which to live A slightly worse place in which to live A much worse place in which to live

Q2 Over the past year, do you think the quality of life in the Twin Cities has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse? *(check one)*

- Gotten better Stayed the same Gotten worse

Q3 What do you think is the single most attractive feature of the Twin Cities metro area today?

Q4 What do you think is the single most important problem facing the Twin Cities metro area today?

Q5 In your opinion, what is the best solution to this problem?

Q6 What other important problems are facing the Twin Cities today?

Please list up to three additional problems, in order of importance:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Q7 Have you heard of the Metropolitan Council?

- Yes → Please go to Question 8
- No → Please skip to Question 9

Q8 What is your impression of the Metropolitan Council’s performance addressing regional issues?
(check one)

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good
- No opinion/Don't know

Q9 The Metropolitan Council plans or manages a variety of regional programs. How important is each program to the quality of life in the region? (check one box on each line)

<u>Council programs</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>Slightly important</u>	<u>Moderately important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Metro Transit (bus system)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Light Rail Transit (LRT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning to accommodate a growing population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinating development across neighboring communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wastewater treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional parks and trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural resources and land conservancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring water supply and water quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants for transportation projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants for development that connects housing, jobs and services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants to develop and preserve housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants to clean up and reuse polluted lands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q10 Do you work outside of your home?

- Yes → Please go to Question 11
- No → Please skip to Question 13

Q11 If you work outside of your home, how do you normally get to work?

- Drive alone
- Drive/ride with others or car/van pool
- Take the bus
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Take LRT
- Some other way

Q12 If you work outside of your home, how likely are you to try the following commute solutions to reduce your costs? If you have already made this change to reduce your costs, please check “Made change.” (check one box on each line)

Commuting solutions	Made change	Not at all likely	Slightly likely	Moderately likely	Very likely	Don't know
Work at home or telecommute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change jobs to be closer to home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change homes to be closer to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bicycle or walk to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive in a more fuel-efficient vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive/ride with others or car/van pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take transit (buses or LRT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13 Have you moved or changed address in the past 5 years?

- Yes
- No

Q14 Do you own or rent your residence? Own Rent

Q15 (A) What type of housing do you live in? (check one)

- Single family home → Please skip to Question 16
- Townhome, duplex, triplex or fourplex
- Apartment
- Condominium or cooperative
- Mobile home / Manufactured home → Please skip to Question 16
- Group housing, assisted living, or other institutional housing → Please skip to Question 16
- Other: _____

(B) If you live in a condo or apartment building or other attached housing, how many housing units are in your specific building (or townhouse block)? (check one)

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5-9
- 10-19
- 20-49
- 50-99
- 100 or more
- Don't Know

- Q16 What is the finished area size (square footage) of your home? (check one)**
- Less than 900 square feet 1,500 – 1,799 square feet 2,600 – 3,600 square feet
- 900 – 1,199 square feet 1,800 – 2,199 square feet Over 3,600 square feet
- 1,200– 1,499 square feet 2,200 – 2,599 square feet Don't know
- Q17 Do you think the Twin Cities area as a whole is growing too fast, at the right pace, or too slow?**
- How about the city, suburb or town where you live?**
- Growth in the Twin Cities area as a whole is... Too slow About right Too fast
- Growth in the city, suburb or town where you live is.... Too slow About right Too fast
- Q18 How would you describe the area where you now live? Please check the description that best describes your community or neighborhood. (check one)**
- A rural setting A growing suburb A central city neighborhood
- A small city or town An older suburb A very urban or downtown setting
- Q19 Would you prefer to live in a different kind of area?**
- Yes → Please go to Question 20
- No → Please skip to Question 21
- Q20 What type of area would you prefer to live in?**
- A rural setting A growing suburb A central city neighborhood
- A small city or town An older suburb A very urban or downtown setting
- Q21 Have you visited a regional park or trail in the last 12 months?**
- Yes No Don't know/unsure
- Q22 How important is it to purchase land now for future regional parks and park expansion?**
- Not at all important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Don't Know

Q23 Are you male or female? Male Female

Q24 In what year were you born? _____ Year (e.g., 1977)

Q25 Including you, how many household members are in each of these age groups?

____ 0 to 17 ____ 18 to 39 ____ 40 to 64 ____ 65 and over

Q26 How many vehicles does your household have available for personal travel?

_____ # of Vehicles

Q27 (A) Do you have a cell phone for personal use?

Yes No → Please skip to Question 28

(B) Is the cell phone your only phone or do you also have a regular telephone (landline) at home that you can receive calls?

Cell is only phone Regular phone at home

(C) Of all the phone calls that you receive, about how many are received on your cell phone?

All or almost all More than half About half Less than half Very few/none

Q28 What was your annual total household income before taxes, in 2008? (check one)

Less than \$25,000 \$50,000 to \$74,999 \$100,000 to \$150,000
 \$25,000 to \$49,999 \$75,000 to \$99,999 Over \$150,000

Q29 How would you identify your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

White/Caucasian Asian/Asian American Hispanic/Latino
 Black/African American American Indian Other

Q30 What city, ZIP code, and county do you live in?

City and ZIP code: _____

County: _____

Your survey responses will be used only for research.
Metropolitan Council will not share or release your personal information.

Thank you for completing this survey.

- ❑ Usted ha sido seleccionado para participar en una encuesta sobre la vida en nuestra region. Si le gustaría una traducción al **Español**, favor de llamar al 1-800-439-3185 para hablar con un entrevistador. Sus respuestas serían completamente confidenciales. Gracias por participar.
-

- ❑ Waxa lagu doortey in aad ka qayb qaadatid tiro-koob ku saabsan nolosha oo lagu qabanayo gobolkan. Haddii aad rabtid in laguugu turjumo af **Soomli**, fadlan wac 1-800-439-3185 si aad ula hadashid qofka wareystaha. Xogwarankaagu waa sir aanay cid kale oganeyn.
-

- ❑ Koj tau raug xaiv los koom hauv ib qho kev nug txog kev ua neej hauv peb cheeb tsam. Yog hais tias koj xav tau ib tug neeg nyeem daim ntawv no ua lus **Hmoob**, thov hu rau 1-800-439-3185 es nrog ib tug neeg nug cov lus nug no tham. Koj cov lus teb yuav muab khaws cia kom zoo uas tsis pub neeg paub. Ua tsaug rau koj txoj kev koom tes.
-

Please return the survey in the addressed, postage paid return envelope. The mailing address is:

2009 Metro Residents Survey, P.O. Box 5703, Hopkins MN 55343-7063

