



2005

State of the Cities Research Highlights

- "Q" responses from surveys completed by mayors and city managers/administrators, Appendix B, Section I.
- "FD" responses from surveys completed by the finance directors, Appendix B, Section II.
- "C" responses come from surveys completed by elected city officials, Appendix C.

Meeting city's essential needs Q4

67% Optimistic
33% Pessimistic

Meeting city's economic development needs Q6

43% Optimistic
61% Pessimistic

Overall economic conditions of community Q6

37% Major problem
44% Moderate problem
19% No problem

Current city budget condition Q6

56% Major problem
34% Moderate problem
10% No problem

Better/less able to meet financial needs than 5 years ago FD3

73% Less
14% Same
13% Better

Better/less able to meet financial need over next 5 years FD3

82% Less
10% Same
8% Better

Current impact of unfunded mandates Q6

55% Major problem
38% Moderate problem
7% No problem

City property tax base Q6

37% Major problem
35% Moderate problem
28% No problem

Sales tax base Q6

45% Major problem
43% Moderate problem
23% No problem

Paying more/less debt service as % of operating budget than 5 years ago FD6

40% More
15% Same
44% Less

Used reserves to balance budget FD7

57% Yes
35% No

Economic development increased city revenues FD12

49% Moderate/significant increase
26% Minimal/no increase

Impacts on services city can deliver C2

79% Road deterioration
62% Less park maintenance
40% Decrease in police protection

City increased user fees C7

78% Yes
22% No

Most improved conditions over last 5 years (top 3 of 30) Q7

- Drinking water systems
- Sanitary sewer
- Parks and recreation

Most deteriorated condition over last 5 years (top 3 of 30) Q8

- City budget conditions
- Impacts of unfunded mandates
- Traffic congestion

Most important issues to address (top 3 of 30) Q9

- City budget conditions
- Impacts of unfunded mandates
- Traffic congestion

Most negative impact on city budget (top 5 of 19) Q14

- Tax limiting voter initiatives
- Cost of employee health benefits
- Infrastructure needs
- Amount of state aid to cities
- State/federal mandates

Most positive impact on city budget (top 5 of 19) Q14

- Amount of reserves
- Reliance on user fees
- Value of city property tax base
- Value of city sales tax base
- Value of other city tax base

Infrastructure replacement needs/priorities (in order, highest first) Q15

- Streets
- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Water
- Sidewalks
- Street lighting
- Bridges

Infrastructure new capacity needs/priorities (in order, highest first) Q15

- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Streets
- Sidewalks
- Water
- Street lighting
- Bridges

Effective local strategies to meet budget needs (very helpful) Q16

66% Local approval of tax increase
48% Enhanced community awareness
47% Regional economic development
35% Local government/business collaboration

Effective state strategies to meet budget need (very helpful) Q16

89% State funding for infrastructure (capital projects)
79% Increase state gas tax distribution to cities
72% State funding support for maintaining basic services
64% Overall increase in state gas tax
60% Funding tools for economic development