

# Leader Survey Results

Fall 2005



A collaborative effort of

- The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region
- Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership
- United Way Fox Cities

# TABLE of CONTENTS

Introduction and Purpose .....	3
Survey Methods and Sample .....	3
Results .....	4
Satisfaction with Quality of Life.....	4
L.I.F.E. at Work.....	7
L.I.F.E. of Learning .....	7
L.I.F.E. of Self Sufficiency .....	8
L.I.F.E. in the Natural Environment.....	9
A Safe L.I.F.E. ....	9
A Healthy L.I.F.E. ....	10
L.I.F.E. of Leisure .....	10
L.I.F.E in the Community .....	11
Highest and Lowest Rated Items by Category.....	12
Regional Leadership.....	13
Future Priorities .....	14

Presented by  
Dr. Lora H. Warner, Ph.D., President  
PO Box 28436  
Green Bay, WI 54324-0436  
<http://www.planning-evaluation.com>



## Introduction and Purpose

This report presents results of the L.I.F.E. in the Fox Cities Leader Survey. In 2000-2001, the L.I.F.E. (Local Indicators For Excellence) study painted a broad picture of the quality of life in a 3-county area including the Fox Cities. The study, which compiled results from citizen and leader surveys, panels of experts, and an analysis of secondary data, had broad impact and sparked numerous community efforts to address needs. In 2005-2006 sponsors repeat the work to understand trends and identify current conditions of the community, now calling it “Leading Indicators for Excellence” (2006 L.I.F.E. Study).

The primary research objective of the Leader Survey is to gauge how a range of regional leaders perceive the quality of life in the Fox Cities (the 2005 Leader Survey differs a great deal from the 2001 Leader Survey and thus comparisons will not be made to 2000) and its strategic direction. More specifically, we examined:

- the current quality of life and the direction being taken by the Fox Cities
- regional leadership effectiveness
- strategic priorities suggested for the region in the future

The L.I.F.E. Study examines nine aspects of quality of life: Education, Self-sufficiency (basic needs), Economy, Home (children and families), Environment, Leisure, Health, Community, and Safety.

## Survey Methods and Sample

We conducted a mail survey (shown in Appendix A) of identified Fox Cities leaders<sup>1</sup> representing the following segments of the community:

- Government
- Faith community
- Business and industry
- Media
- Nonprofits and foundations
- Healthcare
- Education
- Community coalitions

The actual mailing list was constructed by the L.I.F.E. Study Advisory and Steering Committees and to the extent possible was balanced by geographic, gender, and racial/ethnic factors.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of those who participated in the survey. Fifty-three percent responded to the survey (n=285). While all sectors had leaders that responded, the majority of respondents represented government, business, nonprofits, and education. The sample heavily favors long time residents: three in five respondents had lived in the Fox Cities more than 20 years while only 7% had lived in the region five years or less. The number of leaders from minority racial or ethnic groups reflects their relative proportion

---

<sup>1</sup> Individuals who are in a leadership role in the community, either through their work roles or volunteer involvement (mostly philanthropic and boards of directors). A person with a leadership role is defined as someone who is responsible for decisions that impact the region in some way, someone with a network of contacts with many different people, someone who influences public opinion, someone whose work influences many in the community.

of the areas' population, as 4% of responding leaders indicated their racial or ethnic heritage was of a diverse nature. We believe that this is a solid sample that broadly represents regional leadership.

**Figure 1**

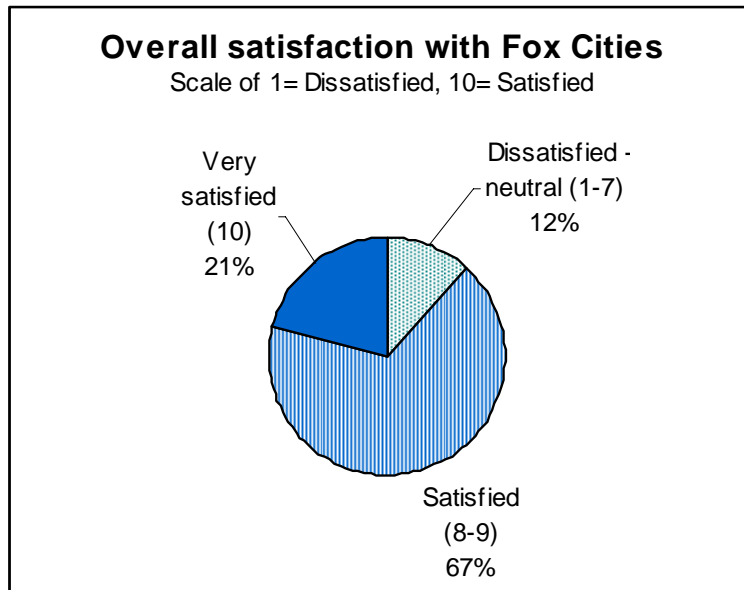
**2005 Leader Survey Respondents**

<b>Time Lived in Fox Cities</b>	7.4%	5 years or less
	8.8%	6-10 years
	17.2%	11-20 years
	58.2%	Over 20 years
	8.5%	Do not live here/no answer
<b>Employment</b>	7.4%	Not employed
	21.8%	Government
	4.2%	Faith Community
	19.6%	Business and industry
	1.8%	Media
	6.3%	Healthcare provider
	20.4%	Nonprofit (not healthcare)
	11.9%	Education
	3.9%	Other, specify
<b>Race</b>	2.8%	Missing
	94%	White
	4%	Minority
	3%	Did not specify

**Results**

**Satisfaction with Quality of Life**

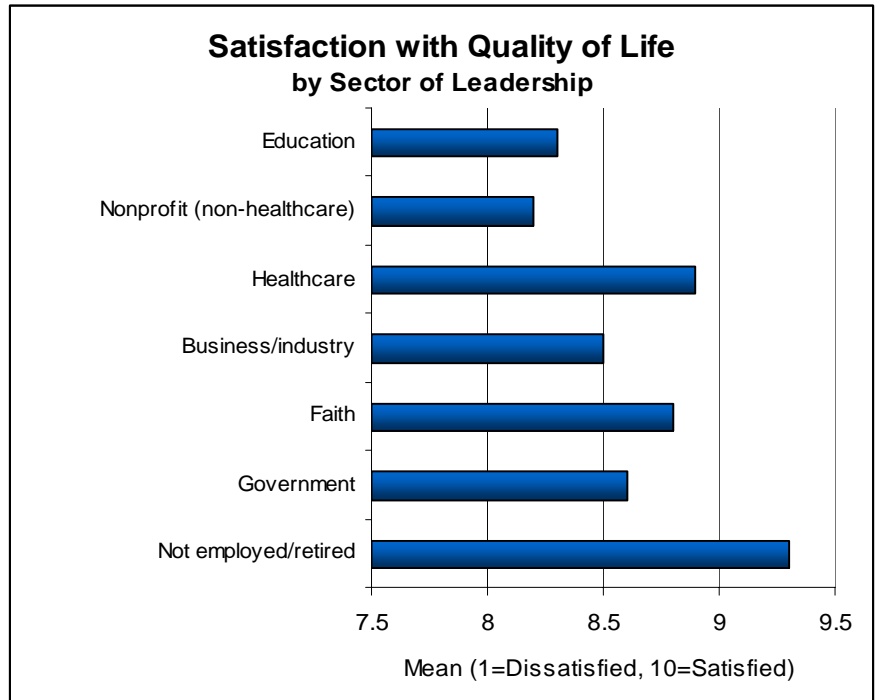
**Figure 2**



Leaders, overall, were very satisfied with the quality of life in the Fox Cities Region, with only 12% scoring the area 7 or lower on a 10 point scale. In fact, one in five leaders gave the region the highest score possible.

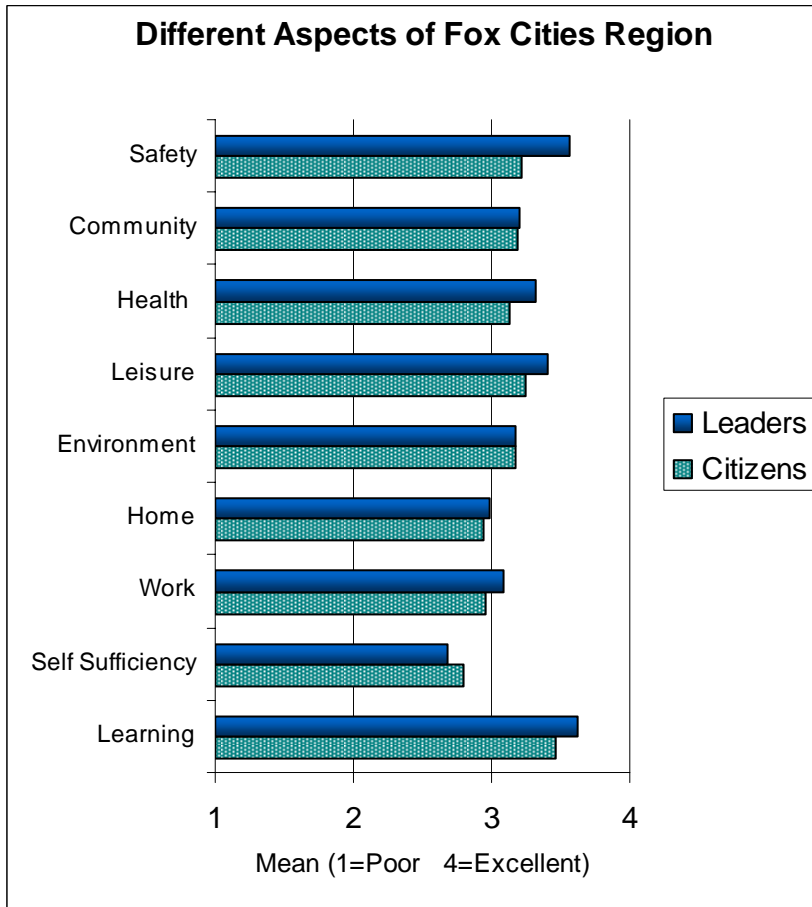
We looked at how various types of leaders rated the quality of life in the region. While only 10 leaders representing racially and ethnically diverse groups completed the survey, their average satisfaction with the “overall quality of life” was 7.4 (where 10=excellent) compared to an average of 8.5 for Caucasian leaders.

Figure 3



Leaders who were retired or not employed were highly pleased with the quality of life in the Fox Cities, while nonprofit and educational leaders were least satisfied (although still averaging “Satisfied”).

Figure 4

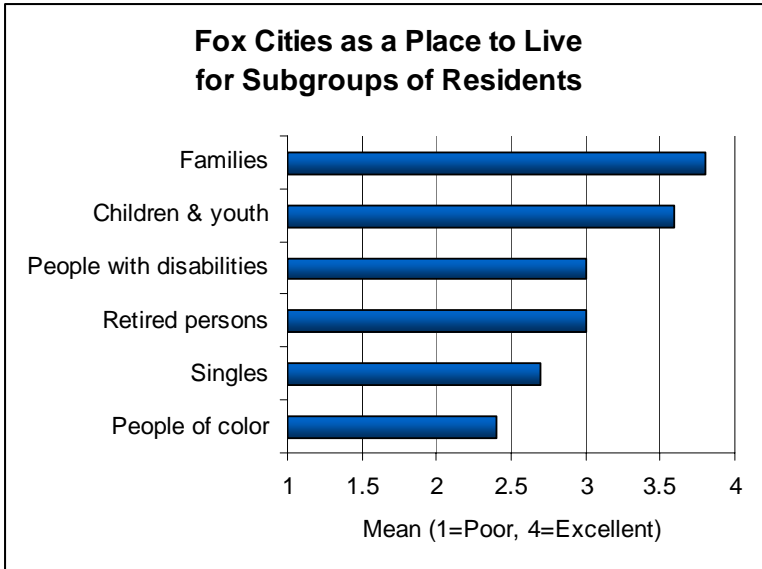


When viewing how leaders rated various aspects of the region, most categories received good scores led by Learning and Safety. Leaders gave the lowest scores to self-sufficiency, or “meeting the overall needs of the poor,” scoring it between “fair” and “good.”

This was the only issue where leaders gave lower ratings to the region than did Fox Cities citizens, who were asked the same question on the Citizens’ Survey (conducted simultaneously as a part of the L.I.F.E. Study).

While there are slight differences between how the average citizens and leaders perceived these aspects, in general the two groups viewed things similarly.

Figure 5



Leaders had strong consensus that the region is a great place for families and children; they rated the region “good” for those who are retired or disabled. For people of color and single adults, leaders were much less favorable about the quality of life.

Figure 6

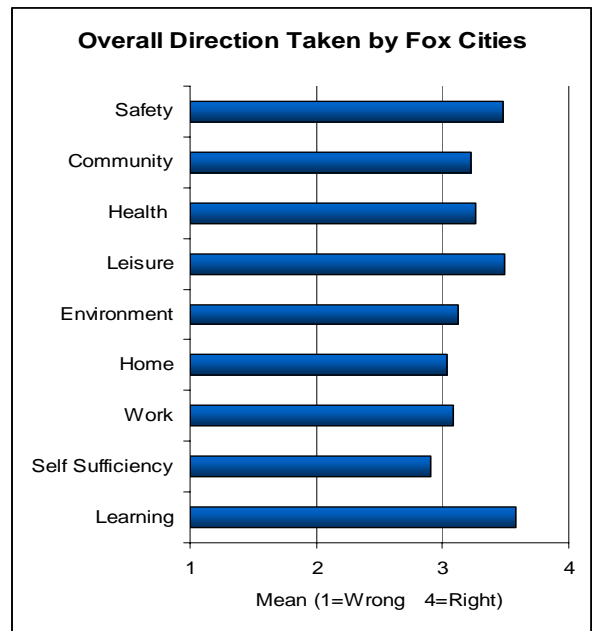


Figure 7

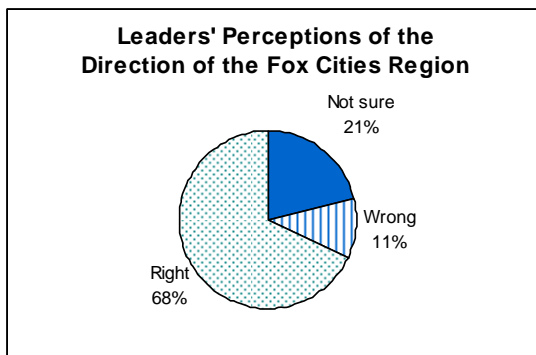
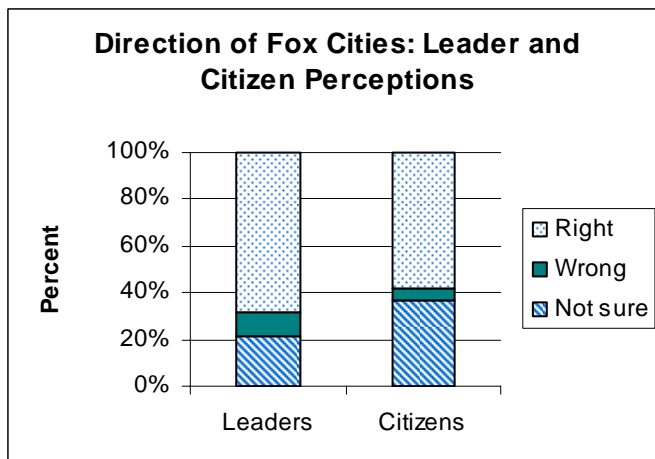


Figure 8



The results of the question “Is the region headed in the right or wrong direction?” followed a pattern similar to the quality of life ratings by category, with generally positive directions perceived.

Proportionately more citizens were “not sure” about the direction being taken by the region, while a higher percentage of leaders saw the region as heading in the “right” direction.

Figure 9

**L.I.F.E. at Work**

The majority of leaders expressed the opinion that the region does well providing the infrastructure that businesses need and providing “quality of life” features to attract business. Fewer believed in the region’s ability to attract young professionals or its ability to implement regional strategies to adapt the economy to changing conditions.

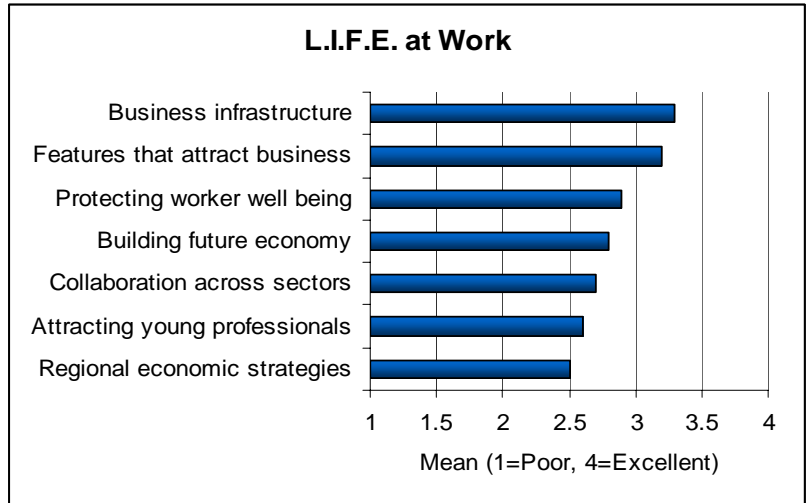
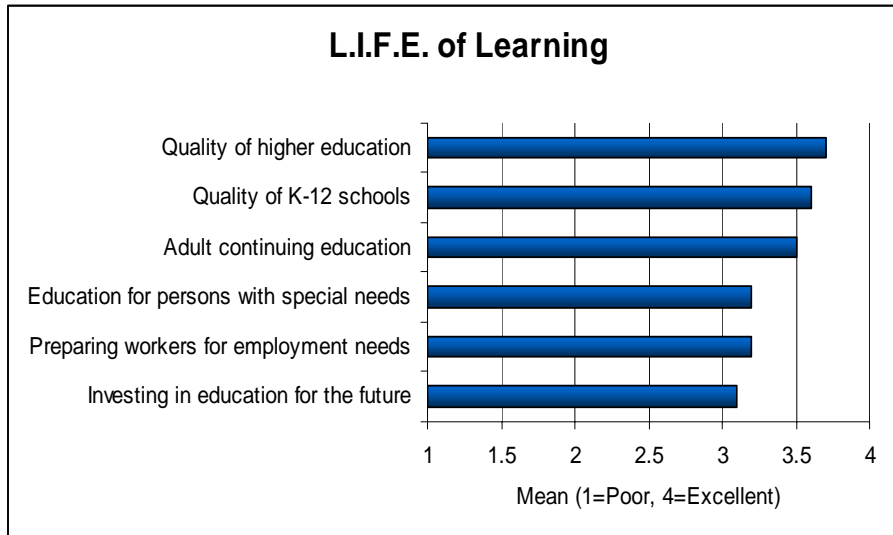


Figure 10

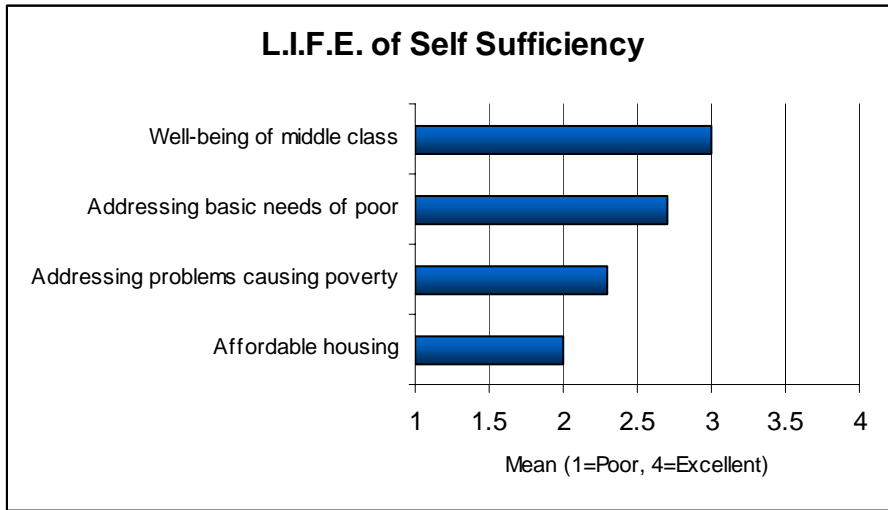


**L.I.F.E. of Learning**

The education available in the Fox Cities was the highest rated aspect of quality of life for both Leaders and Citizens we surveyed. The specific questions confirmed these perceptions: leaders noted the current quality of K-12, higher, and continuing education, with mean scores at or above “Good.” Scores fell for teaching persons with special needs and preparing the right kinds of workers for the region, and investing in the future of education system (“Good”).

## L.I.F.E. of Self Sufficiency

Figure 11

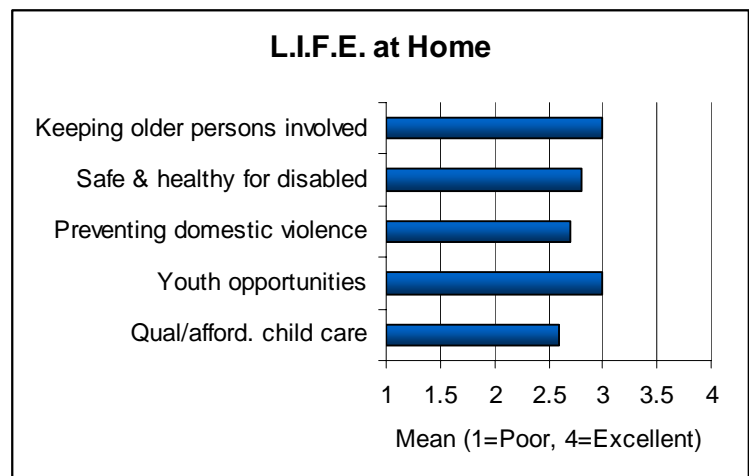


Of all nine categories, the lowest rated aspect of quality of life relates to how the region supports the basic needs of persons with low incomes. “Maintaining adequate affordable housing for lower income residents” was the lowest rated item on the entire survey. While the well-being of the middle class was “good”, leaders rated the region’s actions to address poverty only slightly above “fair.”

## L.I.F.E. at Home

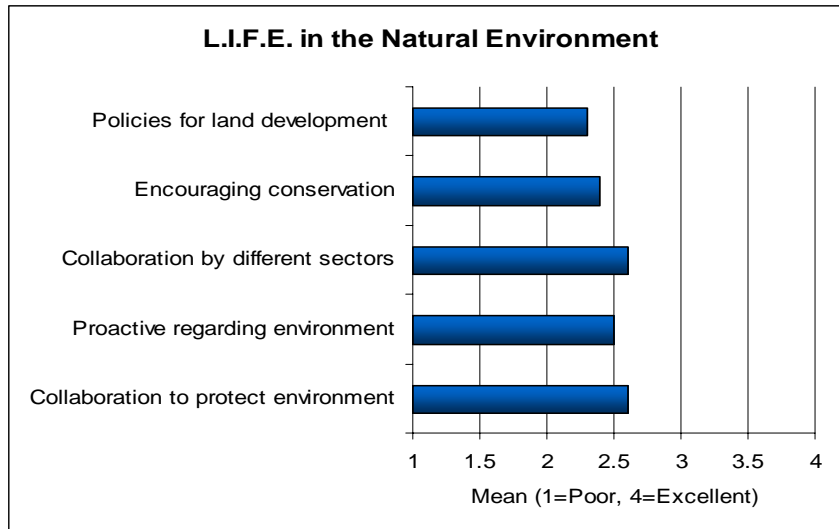
Most aspects of quality of life related to caring for children, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons were rated in the “good” range by leaders. The region’s ability to provide “quality affordable child care” (mean 2.6) ranked just above “fair” in the minds of leaders.

Figure 12



## L.I.F.E. in the Natural Environment

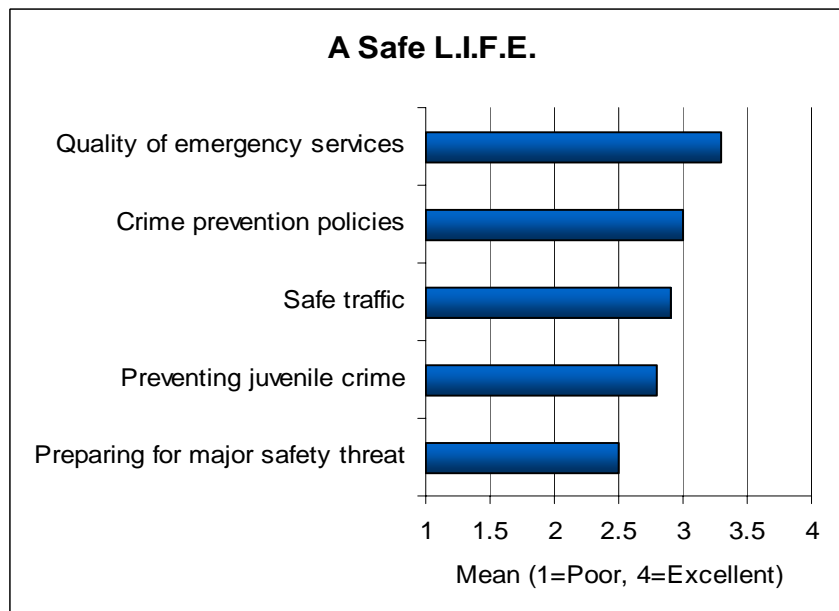
Figure 13



Leaders were asked about the region's efforts to conserve and to protect the environment. For the most part leaders rated all items quite similarly, with their average rating between fair and good. The lowest scoring item had to do with "implementing policies for wise development of land in the region (mean 2.3).

## A Safe L.I.F.E.

Figure 14

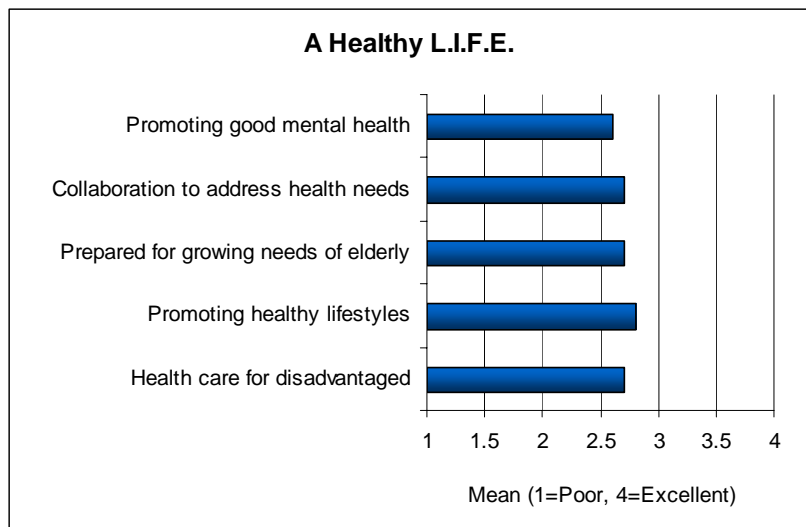


Earlier, the leaders' overall rating for "providing for the safety of our citizens" was 3.6. In breaking down that overall rating, the only specific aspect of safety receiving a comparably high score was emergency services. The region's ability to prepare for a major safety threat had a mean score of 2.5, one of the lowest rated items on the survey.

## A Healthy L.I.F.E.

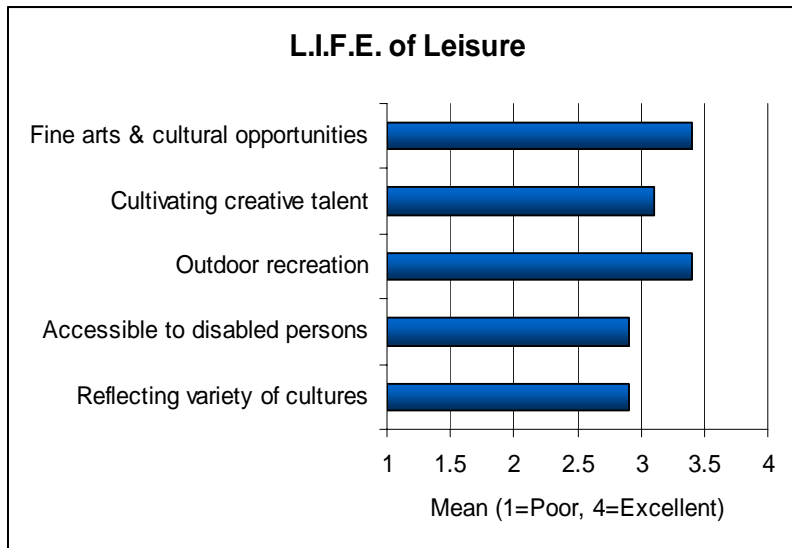
Leaders, on average, rated aspects of health care in the Fox Cities region between “fair” and “good.”

Figure 15



## L.I.F.E. of Leisure

Figure 16

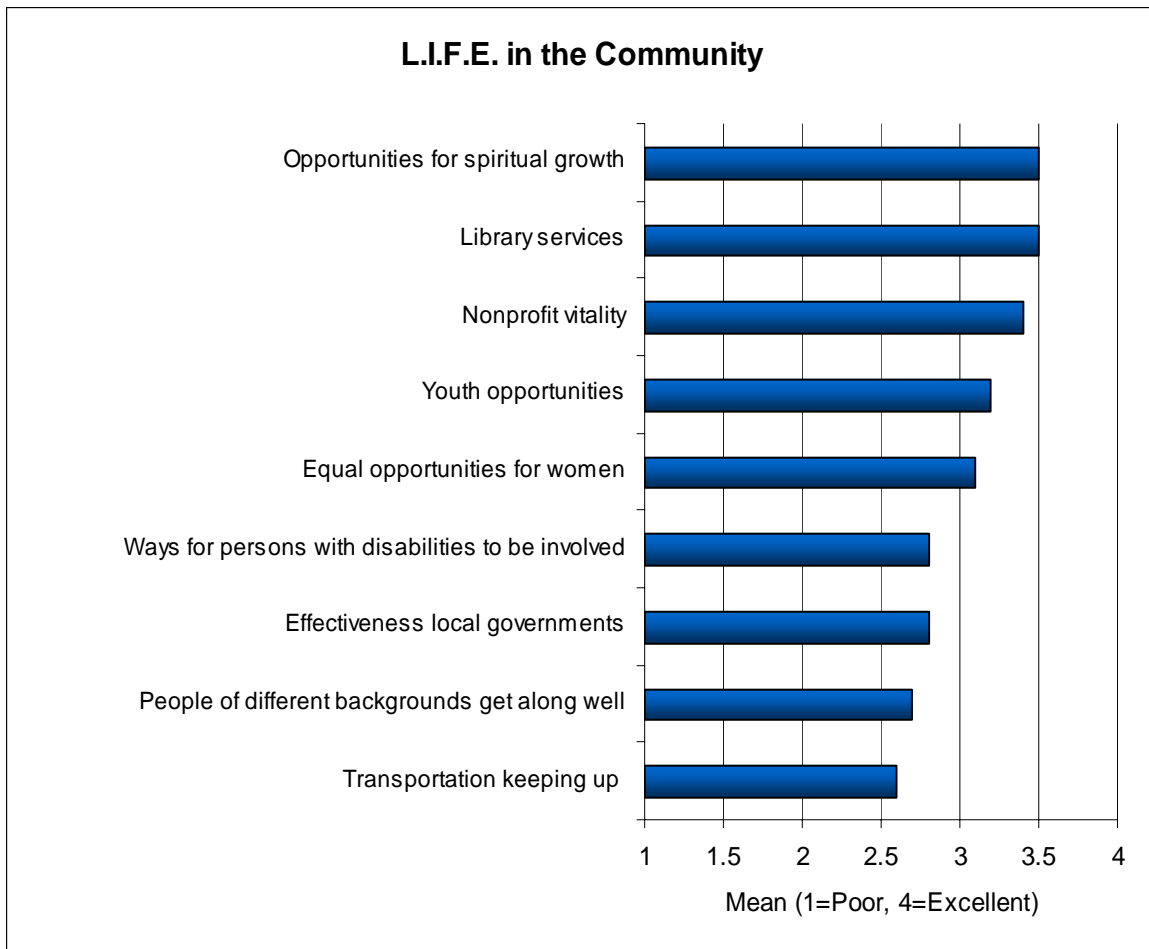


Outdoor and fine arts/cultural opportunities were some of the highest rated aspects of the region on the entire survey.

## **L.I.F.E in the Community**

The “Community” category addressed a variety of aspects of community life, from services and organizations to how well people get along. The opportunities for spiritual growth, library services, and nonprofit sector were rated close to excellent. The following aspects of community life did not fare as well, ranking between fair and good: transportation keeping up with growth, the extent that people with different backgrounds got along well, opportunities for persons with disabilities, and effectiveness of local governments.

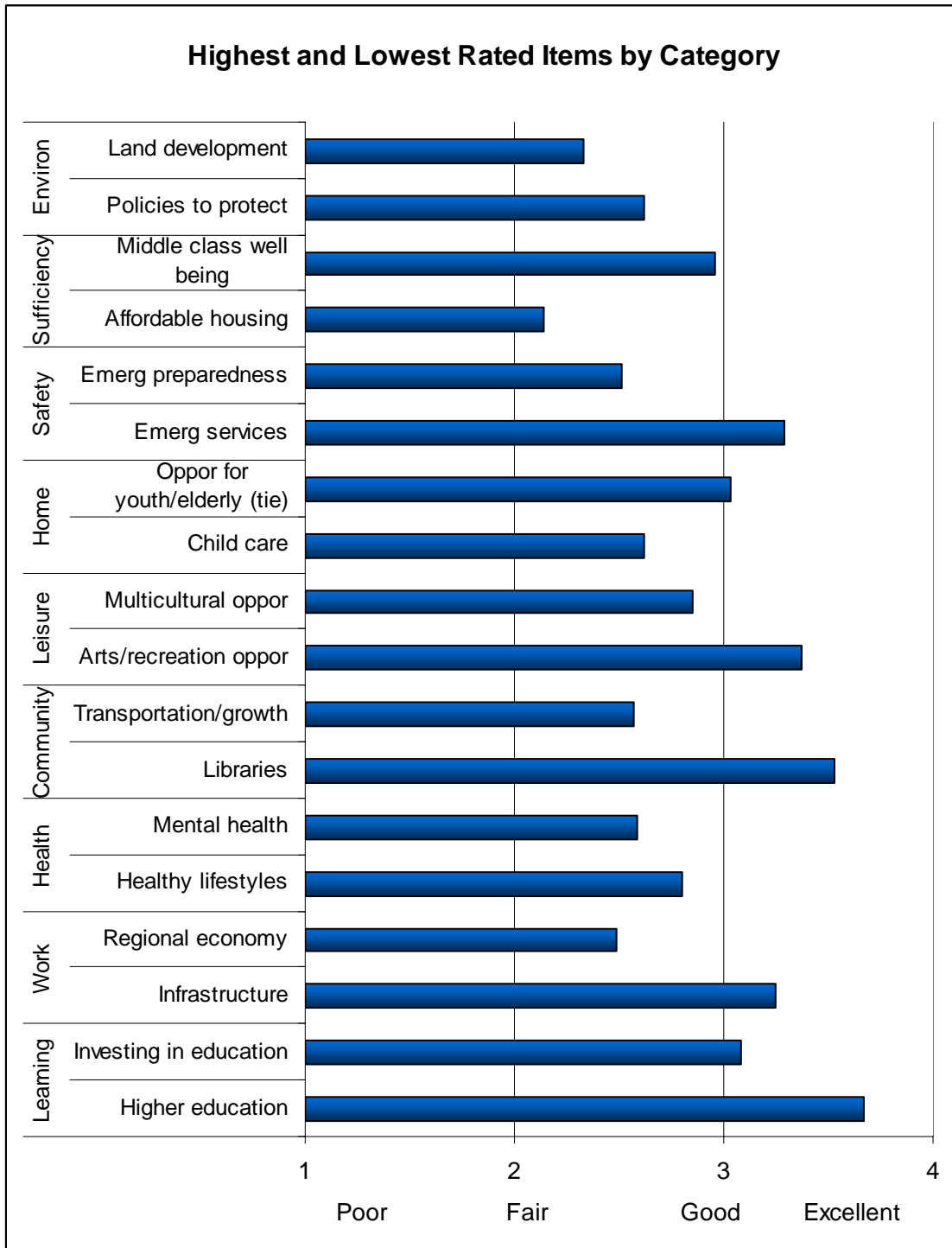
**Figure 17**



### **Highest and Lowest Rated Items by Category**

Figure 18 shows the highest and lowest scored items for every category examined for the L.I.F.E. Study. Additionally, one can see the highest and lowest rated items overall for the survey and how they compare across categories. Caution should be used, however, since one category may have had several higher and lower-rated items but only one per category is shown on this chart.

**Figure 18**



## Regional Leadership

Respondents considered the overall effectiveness of regional leaders across public and private sectors in the Fox Cities.

On average, responding leaders moderately disagreed that “the Fox Cities is a place where persons of color take on leadership roles in the community.”

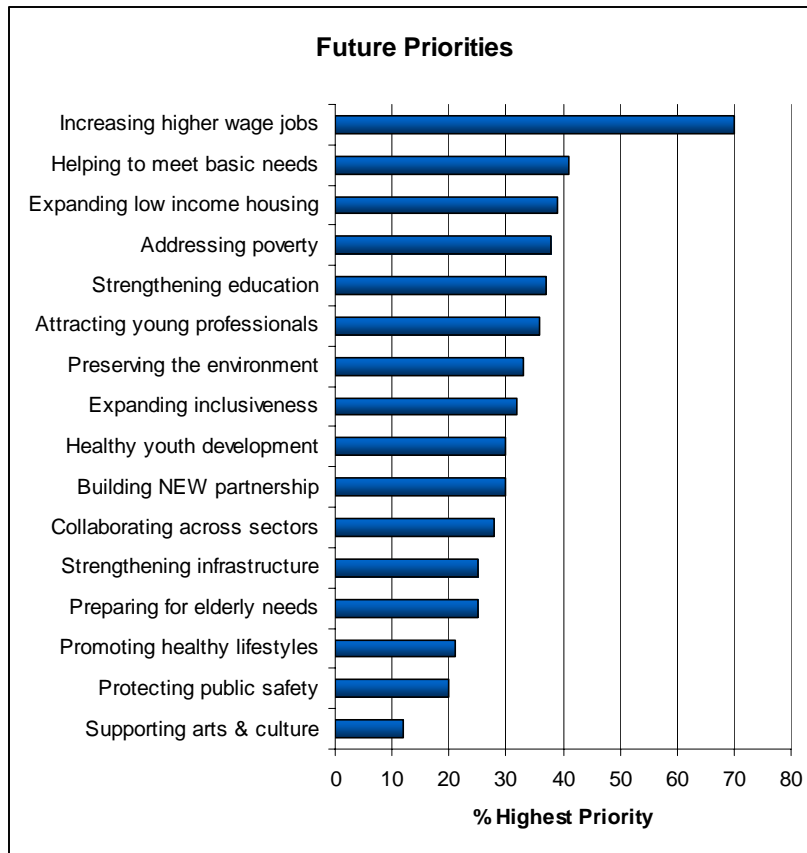
Leaders appear to believe that regional leaders are good but not great in most regards: they “moderately agreed” that the Fox Cities is a place that re-invests in the area, has women in leadership, collaborates across sectors, focuses on long-term, has mutual respect, is creative and proactive. They were more neutral on whether media provides adequate coverage of local events.

**Figure 19**



## Future Priorities

Figure 20



In a clear consensus, across all sectors, respondents indicated that expanding efforts to increase the number of higher wage jobs in the region is the highest priority (70% of all leaders did so). Not surprisingly, 46% of business leaders gave “attracting young professionals” the highest priority.

The next three highest issues related to supporting persons with low incomes (indicating a consensus as well).

*“Do everything to maintain a diverse economy that can withstand the ups and downs of the world economy. This will help us deal with the communities’ needs.”*

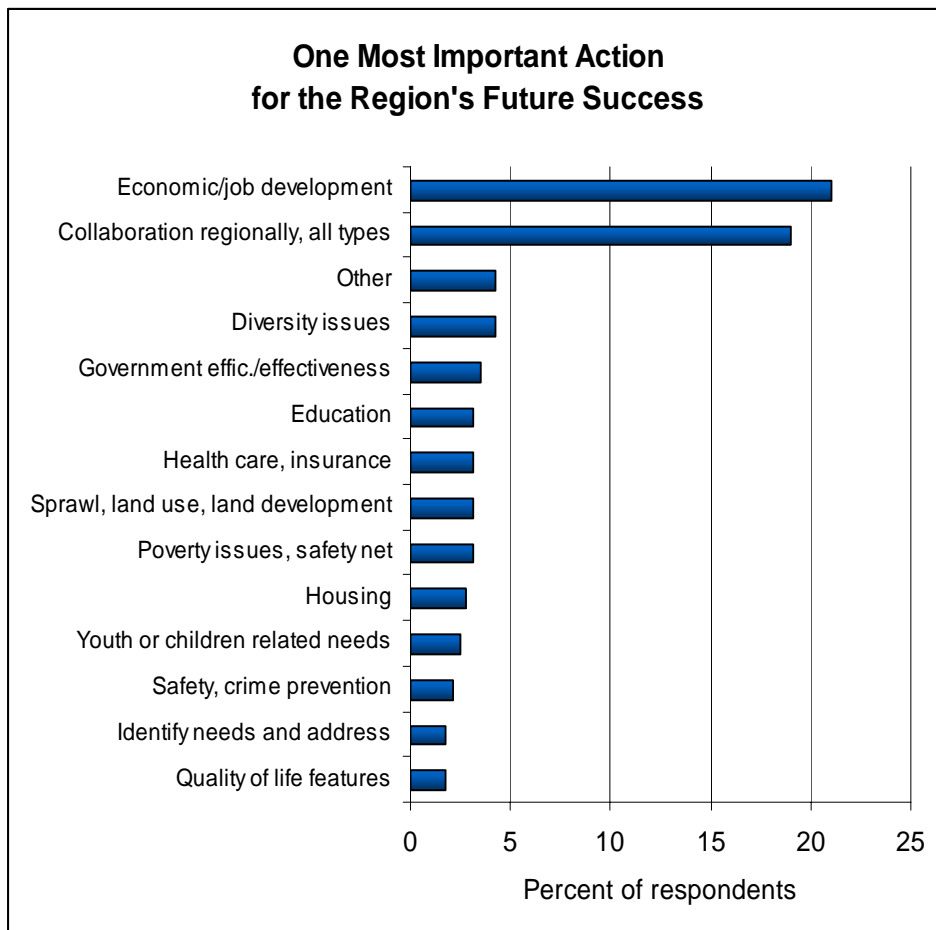
Figure 21  
Leaders Vary in the Priority Placed on Poverty Issues

Percent of Sector Leaders Indicating Issue is “Highest Priority”

	Gov't	Business	Nonprofit	Education	Other	Total (all)
Low income basic needs	37%	29%	54%	38%	46%	41%
Address issues of poverty	32	18	49	39	50	38
Expand affordable housing	39	20	57	28	47	40

We again looked at the breakdown of how various types of leaders ranked the priorities. While more than half of nonprofit leaders ranked “assisting low income persons to meet basic needs” as a high priority, only 29% of business sector leaders did so, with government, education, and other leaders in between. There were no prominent differences in how leaders of different sectors ranked education, protecting the environment, creating an inclusive community, and healthy development of youth.

Figure 22



When asked, “What is the one most important action that regional leaders must take to ensure that the Fox Cities region remains successful in the long term?” leaders had considered many issues as they completed the earlier parts of the survey. Here, in the final question, their responses were not constrained to any particular issue.

*“Break down the barriers between Fox Cities governments that create duplication of services.”*

Two issues overshadowed all others: economic development and regional collaboration. Economic development comments related to wages, job creation, and strategic mix of businesses in the region, as exemplified by these:

- *“Expand and diversify employment base.”*
- *“Attract business that has higher paying jobs to make up for lost jobs in paper and manufacturing”*
- *“Good, reasonable jobs to help people become and remain self-sufficient.”*

Leaders were thinking about partnerships and collaboration across all sectors, although many comments related specifically to reducing duplication in local governments. These comments are typical:

- *“All local government units must work together as though there is only one unit of government for the Fox Cities.”*
- *“Collaboratively work together for good of region not own interest in economic, government policies, and needs and services to poor.”*
- *“Develop a system to have us all work more cooperatively for regional development.”*