


Omaha Conditions Survey: 1991



Future Outlook and Quality of Life: The Metro Area

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The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1991 asked respondents to indicate their levels of agreement with a series of statements about the Omaha metro area. Specific facets addressed through the survey included: outlook for the future, opportunities for recent high school graduates, quality of life, the quality of governmental and corporate leadership, and satisfaction with the status quo.

This report summarizes findings for these items using information gathered through interviews with 632 respondents included in the metropolitan sample of the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1991. The summary concludes with comparisons to findings from the 1990 survey.

In addition to summary findings, significant differences across population subgroups are reported. For purposes of

analysis, the following demographic characteristics were examined for significant differences across population subgroups in rating the Omaha area: gender, age, race, education, income, presence of children in the household, and homeownership. A reference map of the survey area is presented on page 4. For complete details on the sample and respondent characteristics, see the separate report, "Survey Methodology and Respondent Profile: The Metro Sample" (the complete list of Omaha Conditions Survey: 1991 publications is on the back cover).

Outlook on the Future

Several items were used to obtain information about respondent views of the Omaha area's future outlook and quality of life. Each person participating in the survey was asked whether he or she strongly agree, agree, feel neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

As table 1 shows, 87.6 percent of the respondents either strongly agree or agree with the statement, "The Omaha area's future looks bright."

In looking at the population subgroups, significant differences were found for whites and non-whites, and across respondents with different income and education levels. Non-white respondents are more likely to disagree (either

Key Findings

- About 9 out of 10 respondents agree the future of the Omaha area looks bright, and 80.8 percent agree the area is an ideal place to live.
- Less than one-half (49.1 percent) of those responding to the survey agree that younger residents tend to stay in the Omaha area after graduating from high school.
- Roughly equal proportions of those persons questioned agree as disagree that most residents of the Omaha area are satisfied with things as they are. Three-fourths (75.4 percent) of survey respondents disagree with a statement that the Omaha area is good enough as it is without change.
- In general, respondents approve of the Omaha area's leadership. Slightly less than 6 of every 10 respondents (58.1 percent) agree that the area has good governmental leaders. Corporate leaders are rated more positively, with 72.5 percent saying they agree that the Omaha area has good corporate leaders.
- Women and respondents who are non-white, who have lower household incomes, and who have lower levels of education generally give lower ratings to the Omaha area.
- Compared to 1990, ratings of the Omaha area's future outlook are up by almost 10 percentage points. Five other key indicators of the public's rating of the area are either equal to or slightly above levels found in the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1990.

Table 1 - Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area's future looks bright."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	79	12.7
Agree	466	74.9
Neutral	41	6.6
Disagree	34	5.5
Strongly disagree	2	0.3
Total	622	100.0

strongly disagree or disagree) with the statement that the area's future looks bright. For example, 16.4 percent of non-whites disagree with the statement, while only 4.9 percent of whites disagree.

Respondents with lower levels of education are also more likely to disagree that the Omaha area's future is bright. Just over 1 out of every 5 (20.9 percent) respondents with less than a high school education disagree, while only 5.5 percent of those with some college education disagree. Income is also related to respondent ratings of the Omaha area's future, with a lower income associated with a more negative rating of the future of the area. Among those earning less than \$20,000 a year, 12.1 percent disagree with the statement on a bright future. Respondents earning \$20,000 or more each year, were much less likely to disagree (5.0 percent disagree).

Opportunities for Young People

One survey item dealt with opportunities for young people. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement, "Younger residents of the Omaha area tend to stay here after completing high school."

As can be seen in table 2, less than one-half of the respondents either strongly agree or agree with the statement. About 1 in 3 (30.3 percent) either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, and the rest report that they feel neutral.

Race was the only characteristic related to variations in responses to the statement about opportunities for young people, with non-whites more likely than whites to disagree. Almost one-half of

Table 2 - Responses to the Statement, "Younger residents of the Omaha area tend to stay here after completing high school."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	2.2
Agree	267	46.9
Neutral	118	20.7
Disagree	163	28.7
Strongly disagree	9	1.6
Total	569	100.1*

*Numbers do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

non-whites (45.3 percent) either strongly disagree or disagree, while 28.6 percent of whites report the same response.

Omaha as a Place To Live

The number and percentage of responses to the statement, "The Omaha area is an ideal place to live," is shown in table 3. The proportion of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement is 80.8 percent. This is slightly lower than the percentage agreeing that the future of the area looks bright.

No statistically significant differences were found in various subgroups' responses to this statement.

Table 3 - Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area is an ideal place to live."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	75	12.0
Agree	432	68.8
Neutral	43	6.9
Disagree	69	11.0
Strongly disagree	8	1.3
Total	627	100.0

The Need for Change

Two items measured each respondents' attitude toward change and the need for change in the Omaha area. One item addressed the perception that Omaha area residents are satisfied with their community. A second item focused

on whether respondents thought the Omaha area is good enough as it is without change.

Table 4 shows the distribution of responses to the statement, "Most residents of the Omaha area are satisfied with things as they are." Interestingly, the proportion of respondents who say they strongly agree or agree is about equal to the proportion who say they strongly disagree or disagree. One out of 5 (20.0 percent) say they feel neutral toward the statement.

Among the population subgroups examined for this report, women and non-whites tend to disagree with the statement. While just over one-third of male respondents (34.9 percent) say they disagree, almost one-half of the females (44.8 percent) responding to the survey disagree that most residents are satisfied with things as they are. This pattern is even more pronounced for non-whites. Among this group, the proportion who either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement is about 60 percent greater than is found among white respondents (61.7 percent for non-whites and 38.4 percent for whites).

A more direct measure of Omaha area residents' attitude toward change is represented by the statement, "The

Table 4 - Responses to the Statement, "Most residents of the Omaha area are satisfied with things as they are."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	.7
Agree	238	39.1
Neutral	121	20.0
Disagree	233	38.3
Strongly disagree	11	1.9
Total	607	100.0

Responses to the Statement, "The Omaha area is good enough as it is without trying to change it."

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	3	0.5
Agree	100	15.9
Neutral	51	8.2
Disagree	433	69.0
Strongly disagree	40	6.4
Total	627	100.0

Omaha area is good enough as it is without trying to change it.” As can be seen in table 4, 8.2 percent say they feel neutral about the statement and 16.4 percent either agree or disagree. The preponderance of respondents—75.4 percent—say they either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Significant differences in response patterns for this item were found for only two of the demographic variables. Respondents with lower levels of education (e.g., less than a high school education) are more likely to agree with the statement. Respondents without children are also more likely to report that they agree or strongly agree with this statement.

Quality of Leadership

Two statements focused on the quality of the metropolitan area’s governmental and corporate leadership. In general, the respondents approve of the area’s leadership.

Of the two measures, the item on governmental leaders received the lowest ratings, with 58.1 percent responding that they either strongly agree or agree with the statement, “The Omaha area has good governmental leaders.” Almost 1 out of every 4 respondents (24.9 percent) say they feel neutral about the area’s governmental leaders.

The only demographic factor related to different evaluations of the area’s governmental leaders is race, with non-whites more likely than whites to disagree with the statement. While 14.9 percent of whites disagree that the area has good governmental leaders, 35.8 percent of non-whites disagree.

As can be seen in table 5, 72.5 percent of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “The Omaha area has good corporate leaders.” Roughly 1 out of 5 (19.2 percent) say they feel neutral about the statement and 8.3 percent say they either disagree or strongly disagree.

Unlike the governmental leadership indicator, several demographic factors were found to be related to variations in respondent ratings of the metropolitan area’s corporate leaders. Females, for example, were more likely to report neutral feelings than are males (27.7 percent and 13.4 percent, respectively).

Table 5 - Responses to the Statement, “The Omaha area has good governmental leaders.”

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	1.5
Agree	354	56.6
Neutral	156	24.9
Disagree	92	14.7
Strongly disagree	14	2.3
Total	625	100.0

Responses to the Statement, “The Omaha area has good corporate leaders.”

	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	41	6.8
Agree	399	65.7
Neutral	117	19.2
Disagree	47	7.7
Strongly disagree	4	.6
Total	608	100.0

Non-whites are more likely than whites to say they either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement (23.0 percent and 7.0 percent, respectively). Finally, education and income were found to be related to evaluations. Respondents having either less than a high school education or earning less than \$20,000 a year are more likely to disagree with the statement about corporate leaders.

Comparing the 1990 and 1991 Metro Area Ratings

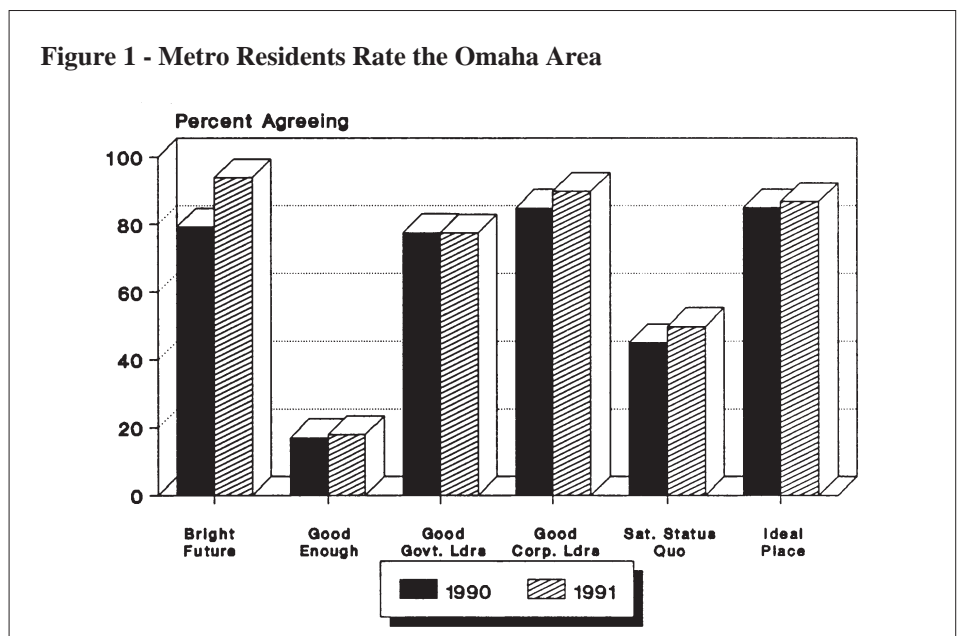
One of the basic goals of the Omaha Conditions Survey is to identify and monitor changes in key aspects of life in the Omaha metropolitan area. This section compares the 1991 and 1990 ratings.

Due to refinements in the wording of the metropolitan area rating items used in the Omaha Conditions Survey: 1991 (“neutral” was added as a response choice), it was necessary to adjust the respondent base. This was handled by dropping respondents who indicate they have a neutral feeling toward a given rating item. The result is a set of response choices—strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree—that is comparable for each year.

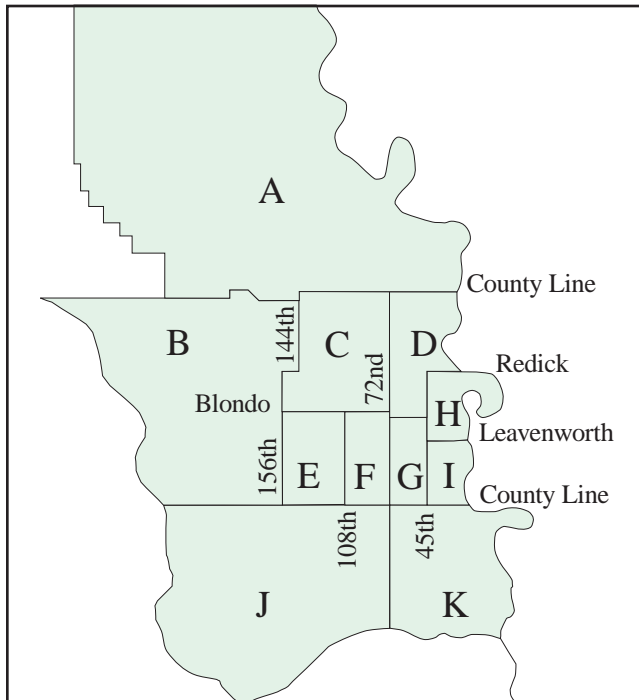
In using these comparisons, the reader should keep in mind that the proportion of respondents reporting a neutral feeling is less than 10 percent for three of the items and close to 20 percent for three items.

Figure 1 portrays the results for the six indicators reported in both 1990 and 1991. As can be seen, ratings of the Omaha area’s future outlook are up by almost 10 percentage points, from 84.3 percent in 1990 to 93.8 percent in 1991. Ratings for the other key indicators are either equal to or slightly above 1990 levels.

Figure 1 - Metro Residents Rate the Omaha Area



Reference Map Showing Geographic Distribution of the Weighted Metropolitan Sample



Area	Percent of Respondents	Zip Code
A	2.7	68002, 68008, 68023, 68029, 68034, 68068
B	7.6	68007, 68022, 68064, 68069, 68116, 68118, 68130, 68135
C	9.8	68122, 68134, 68142, 68164
D	9.4	68104, 68112, 68152
E	9.9	68010, 68137, 68144, 68154
F	10.3	68114, 68124, 68127
G	8.5	68106, 68117, 68132
H	8.8	68102, 68110, 68111, 68131
I	11.6	68105, 68107, 68108
J	8.6	68028, 68046, 68059, 68128, 68136, 68138
K	12.8	68005, 68113, 68123, 68133, 68147, 68157

Interested In Receiving Additional Reports From The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1991?

Write or call the Center for Public Affairs Research, Peter Kiewit conference Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska 68182; (402) 595-2311 for reports on one or more of the following topics:

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About the Omaha Conditions Survey

The Omaha Conditions Survey: 1991 is the second in a series of annual studies of the Omaha area conducted by the Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. This study is part of CPAR's initiative to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to decisionmakers. It is one component of the Nebraska Urban Conditions Research Program.

This year, the study focuses on 3 new issues: environment/recycling, health care, and police-community relations. In addition, quality of life issues are studied annually. The 1991 survey involves 3 samples. The Metropolitan sample is composed of interviews with 632 adults from households in Douglas, Washington, and Sarpy counties. The North Omaha sample interviewed 200 minority adults from census tracts in North Omaha that have 85 percent or more minority residents (according to 1990 census data). The Hispanic sample of 200 adults was obtained primarily from households in the South Omaha area.