

The City of Palo Alto, California

Report of Results
2007



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SURVEY BACKGROUND

About The National Citizen Survey™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The City of Palo Alto staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries NRC used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Palo Alto staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

Survey Administration

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 1,200 households, surveys were mailed to the same residences approximately one week later. A reminder letter and a new survey were sent to the same households after two weeks. Of the mailed postcards, 43 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 437 residents, for a response rate of 38%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey of 437 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 5 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the City of Palo Alto. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix B. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix C.)

Survey Validity

The question of survey validity has two parts: 1) how can we be confident that the results from our sample are representative of the results we would have gotten had we administered the survey to the entire population? and 2) how closely do the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do?

To answer the first question, we use the best survey research practices for the resources spent to assure that the results from the sample reflect the opinions of residents in the entire jurisdiction. These practices include:

1. Using a mail-out/mail-back methodology, which typically gets a higher response rate than phone for the same dollars spent.
2. Selecting households at random within the jurisdiction.
3. Over-sampling attached units to improve response from hard-to-reach, lower income, or younger apartment dwellers.
4. Selecting the respondent within the household using an unbiased sampling procedure¹.

¹ The birthday method requests that the respondent in the household be the adult (18 years old or older) who most recently had a birthday, irrespective of year of birth.

5. Contacting potential respondents three times to encourage response from people who may have different opinions or habits than those who would respond with only a single prompt.
6. Soliciting response on jurisdiction letterhead signed by the highest ranking elected official or staff member.
7. Providing a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
8. Offering the survey in Spanish when appropriate and requested by City officials.
9. Using the most recent available information about the characteristics of jurisdiction residents to weight the data to reflect the demographics of the population.

The answer to the second question about how closely the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do is more complex. Resident responses to surveys are influenced by a variety of factors. For questions about service quality, residents' expectations for service quality play a role as well as the "objective" quality of the service provided, the way the resident perceives the entire community (that is, the context in which the service is provided), the scale on which the resident is asked to record her opinion and, of course, the opinion, itself, that a resident holds about the service. Similarly a resident's report of certain behaviors is colored by what he or she believes is the socially desirable response (e.g. reporting tolerant behaviors toward "oppressed groups," likelihood of voting a tax increase for services to poor people, use of alternative modes of travel to work besides the single occupancy vehicle), her memory of the actual behavior (if it is not a question speculating about future actions, like a vote), her confidence that she can be honest without suffering any negative consequences (thus the need for anonymity) as well as the actual behavior itself.

How closely survey results come to recording the way a person really feels or behaves often is measured by the coincidence of reported behavior with observed current behavior (e.g. driving habits), reported intentions to behave with observed future behavior (e.g. voting choices) or reported opinions about current community quality with objective characteristics of the community (e.g. feelings of safety correlated with rates of crime). There is a body of scientific literature that has investigated the relationship between reported behaviors and actual behaviors. Well-conducted surveys, by and large, do capture true respondent behaviors or intentions to act with great accuracy. Predictions of voting outcomes tend to be quite accurate using survey research, as do reported behaviors that are not about highly sensitive issues (e.g. family abuse or other illegal or morally sanctioned activities). For self-reports about highly sensitive issues, statistical adjustments can be made to correct for the respondents' tendency to report what they think the "correct" response should be.

Research on the correlation of resident opinion about service quality and "objective" ratings of service quality tend to be ambiguous, some showing stronger relationships than others. NRC's own research has demonstrated that residents who report the lowest ratings of street repair live in communities with objectively worse street conditions than those who report high ratings of street

repair (based on road quality, delay in street repair, number of road repair employees). Similarly, the lowest rated fire services appear to be “objectively” worse than the highest rated fire services (expenditures per capita, response time, “professional” status of fire fighters, breadth of services and training provided). Whether some research confirms or disconfirms that relationship between what residents think about a community and what can be seen “objectively” in a community, we have argued that resident opinion is a perspective that cannot be ignored by government administrators. Elsewhere we have written, “If you collect trash three times a day but residents think that your trash haul is lousy, you still have a problem.”

Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity is one we did not want to dismiss because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

“Don’t Know” Responses

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix A. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

For two of the items related to crime victimization and crime reporting, “don’t know” responses were not removed. These questions were not evaluative; rather, respondents were asked if they or any member of their household had been a victim of a crime within the last year. If they were, they were then asked whether the crime had been reported to police.

Putting Evaluations Onto a 100-Point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 1 representing the best rating and 4 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 3 points based on all respondents.

Interpreting Comparisons to Previous Years

This report contains comparisons with prior years’ results; found primarily in the graphic representations of the data. In these graphs, data from 2007 (the current survey year) are compared to data from 2003 (the first year the survey was conducted) and 2006 (the most recent year the survey was conducted). The table following a graph contains 2007 data only, and is titled accordingly. Differences between years can be considered “statistically significant” if they are greater than 5 percentage points or 3 points on the 100 point scale.

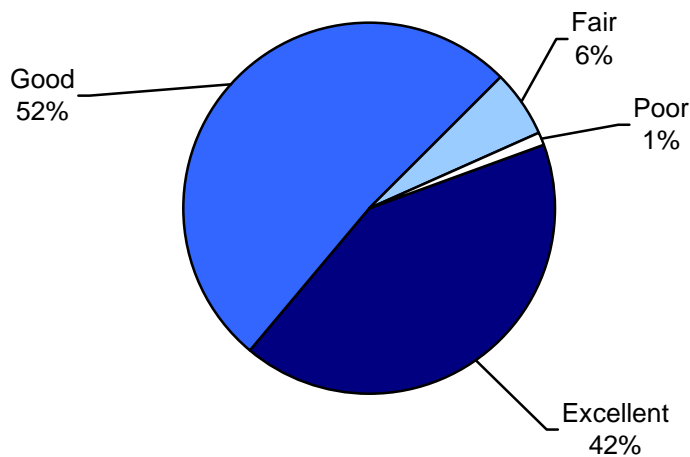
COMMUNITY LIFE

The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to the life of residents in the community. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as other aspects of quality of life in Palo Alto. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Palo Alto. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Palo Alto.

Quality of Life

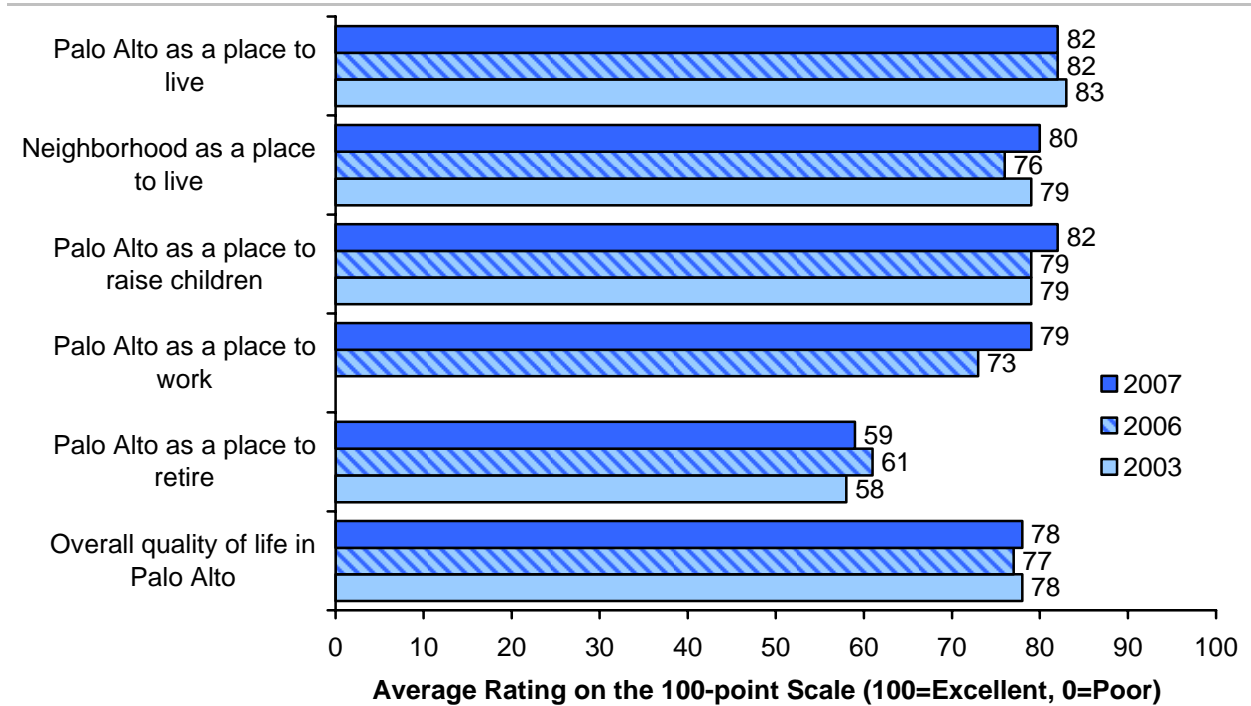
When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Palo Alto, 42% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 1% rated overall quality of life as “poor.”

Figure 1: Overall Quality of Life in Palo Alto



The average rating of overall quality of life on a 100-point scale was 78 in 2003 and 77 in 2006. In 2007, the rating was 78. Palo Alto as a place to raise children received an average rating of 79 on a 100-point scale in 2003 and in 2006, compared to 82 in 2007. Other ratings can be seen in the charts below.

Figure 2: Quality of Life Ratings



2007 Quality of Life Ratings

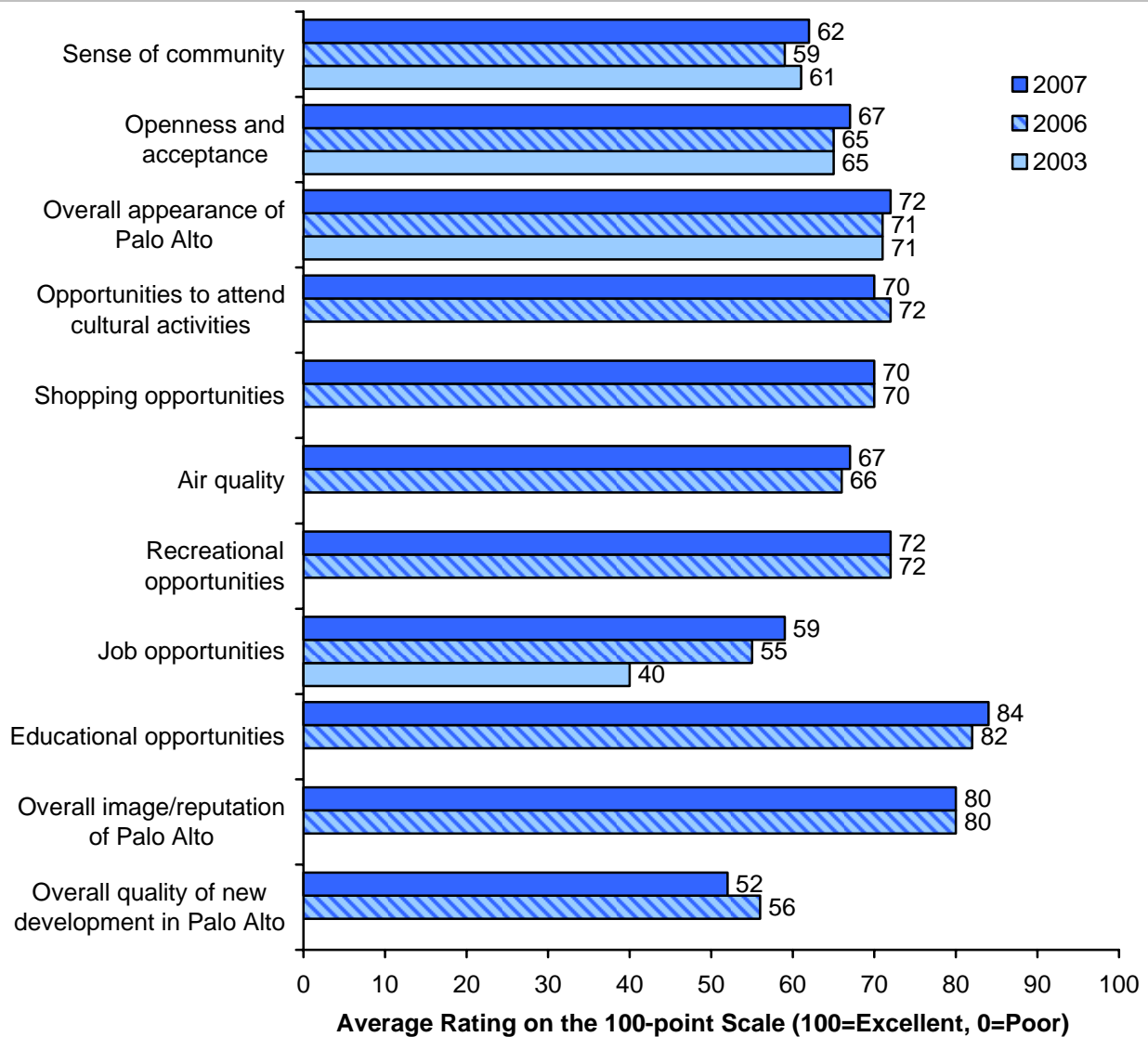
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to live?	52%	43%	4%	1%	100%	82
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	49%	43%	8%	1%	100%	80
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to raise children?	55%	37%	7%	2%	100%	82
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to work?	51%	40%	7%	2%	100%	79
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to retire?	32%	28%	23%	16%	100%	59
How do you rate the overall quality of life in Palo Alto?	42%	52%	6%	1%	100%	78

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Ratings of Community Characteristics in Palo Alto

In 2007, the highest rated characteristics of Palo Alto were educational opportunities, overall image/reputation of Palo Alto, and ease of walking. The average rating on a 100-point scale given to educational opportunities in 2007 was 84 compared to 82 in 2006. Average ratings given to all the characteristics are shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5.

Figure 3: Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities

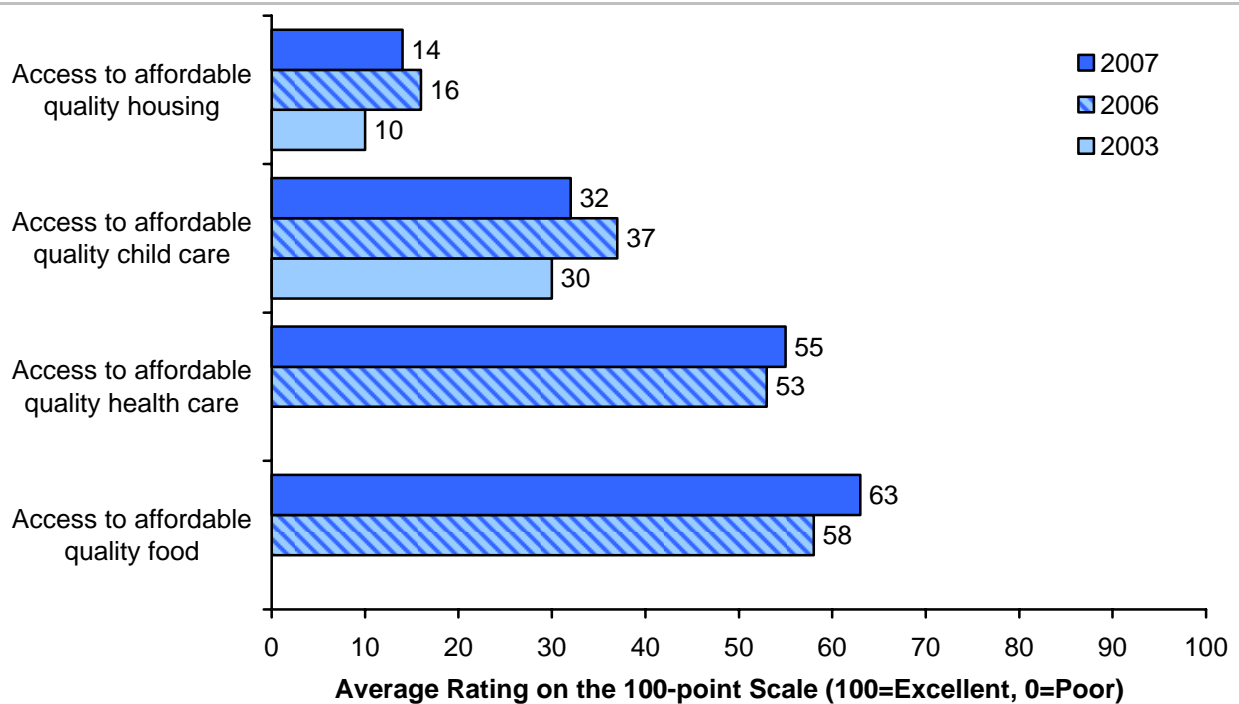


2007 Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Palo Alto as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
Sense of community	20%	50%	26%	5%	100%	62
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	26%	53%	18%	3%	100%	67
Overall appearance of Palo Alto	32%	54%	11%	2%	100%	72
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	34%	46%	14%	6%	100%	70
Shopping opportunities	35%	44%	17%	3%	100%	70
Air quality	25%	54%	18%	2%	100%	67
Recreational opportunities	31%	54%	14%	1%	100%	72
Job opportunities	24%	37%	32%	7%	100%	59
Educational opportunities	60%	34%	5%	1%	100%	84
Overall image/reputation of Palo Alto	48%	45%	6%	1%	100%	80
Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto	11%	46%	30%	13%	100%	52

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 4: Characteristics of the Community: Access

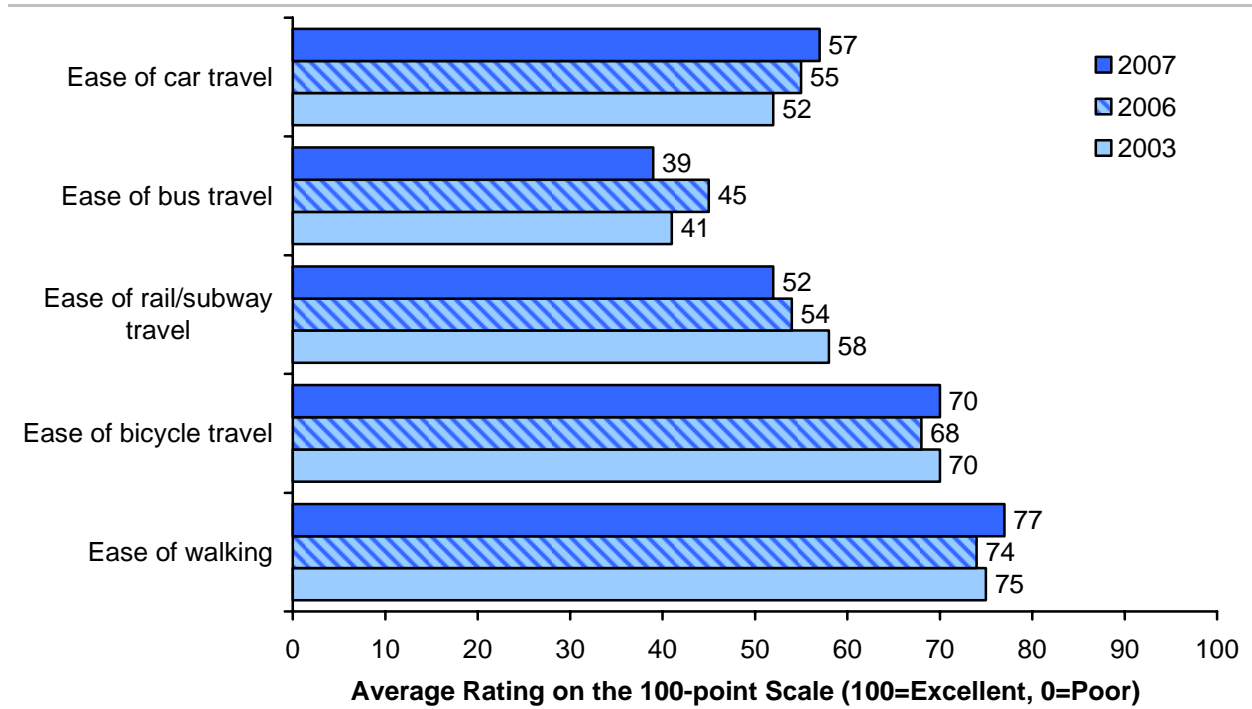


2007 Characteristics of the Community: Access

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Palo Alto as a whole:					Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor		
Access to affordable quality housing	2%	8%	21%	69%	100%	14
Access to affordable quality child care	6%	20%	37%	37%	100%	32
Access to affordable quality health care	27%	29%	25%	19%	100%	55
Access to affordable quality food	27%	44%	21%	8%	100%	63

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 5: Characteristics of the Community: Mobility



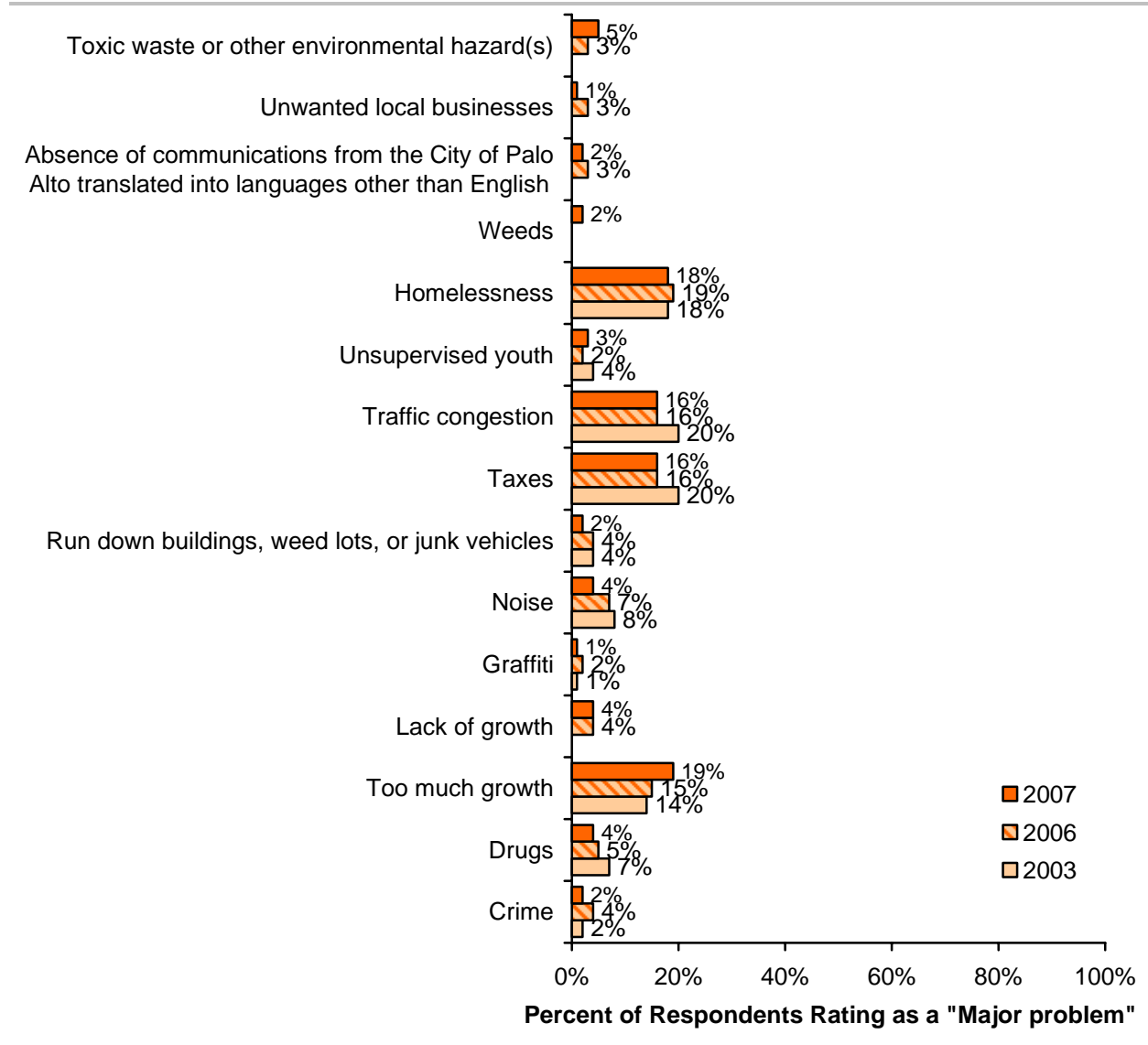
2007 Characteristics of the Community: Mobility

Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Palo Alto as a whole:					Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor		
Ease of car travel in Palo Alto	14%	50%	26%	9%	100%	57
Ease of bus travel in Palo Alto	8%	28%	34%	29%	100%	39
Ease of rail/subway travel in Palo Alto	15%	40%	30%	15%	100%	52
Ease of bicycle travel in Palo Alto	29%	54%	14%	2%	100%	70
Ease of walking in Palo Alto	47%	41%	9%	3%	100%	77

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

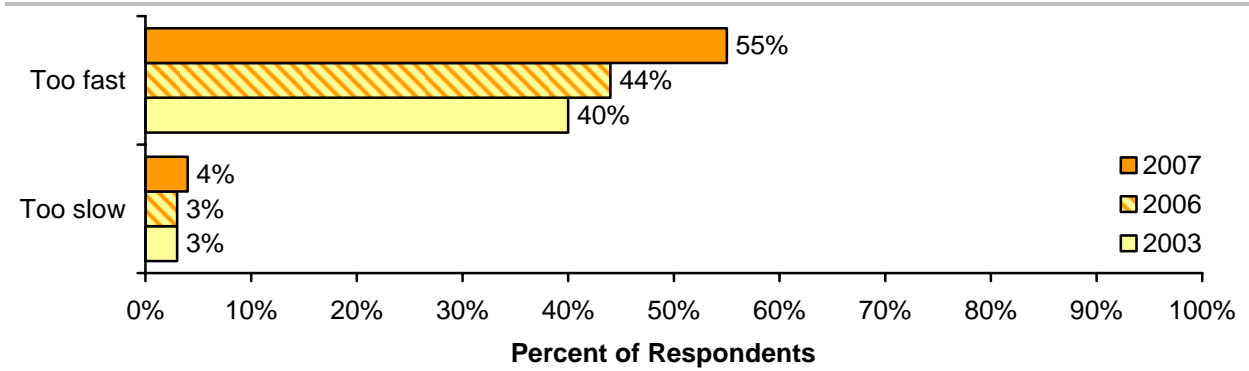
When asked about potential problems in Palo Alto, the concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” in 2007 were too much growth, homelessness, traffic congestion and taxes. In 2007 19% rated too much growth as a “major problem” compared to 14% in 2003 and 15% in 2006.

Figure 6: Ratings of Potential Problems in Palo Alto



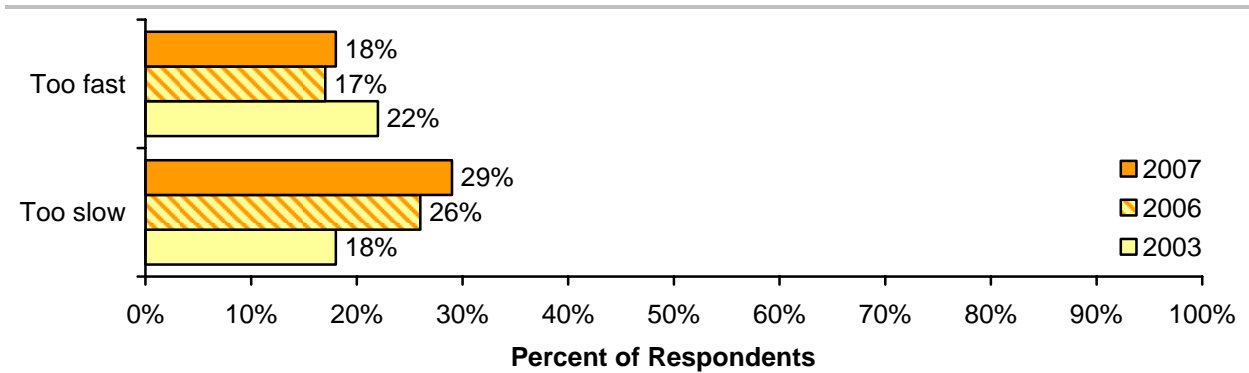
In 2007, the rate of population growth in Palo Alto was viewed as “too fast” by 55% of respondents, while 4% thought it was “too slow.”

Figure 7a: Ratings of Population Growth by Year in Palo Alto



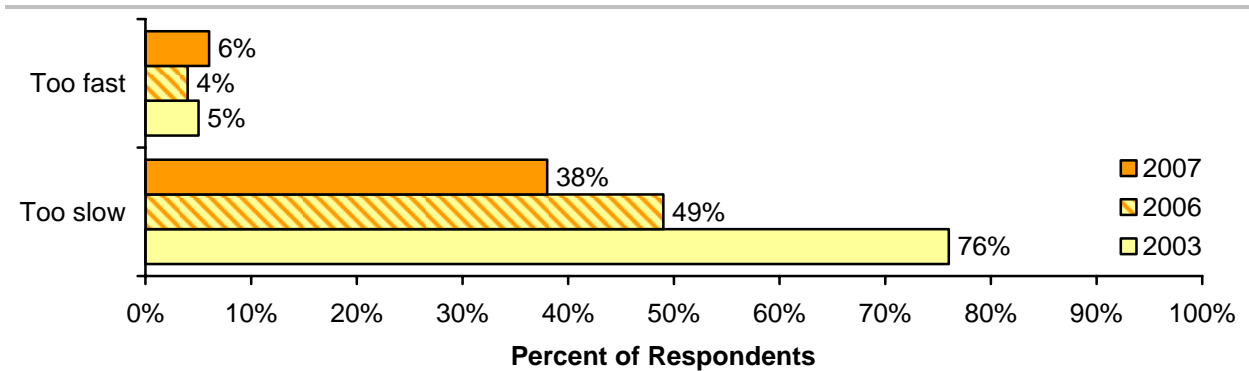
Note: Responses of “right amount” were omitted.

Figure 7b: Ratings of Retail Growth by Year in Palo Alto



Note: Responses of “right amount” were omitted.

Figure 7c: Ratings of Jobs Growth by Year in Palo Alto



Note: Responses of “right amount” were omitted.

In 2007, 25% of respondents felt the impact of the economy would be positive on their family income in the next 6 months, while 19% felt it would be negative. In 2003, 25% of respondents and in 2006, 26% felt the impact of the economy would be positive.

Figure 8a: 2007 Perceptions of Economy

What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be...

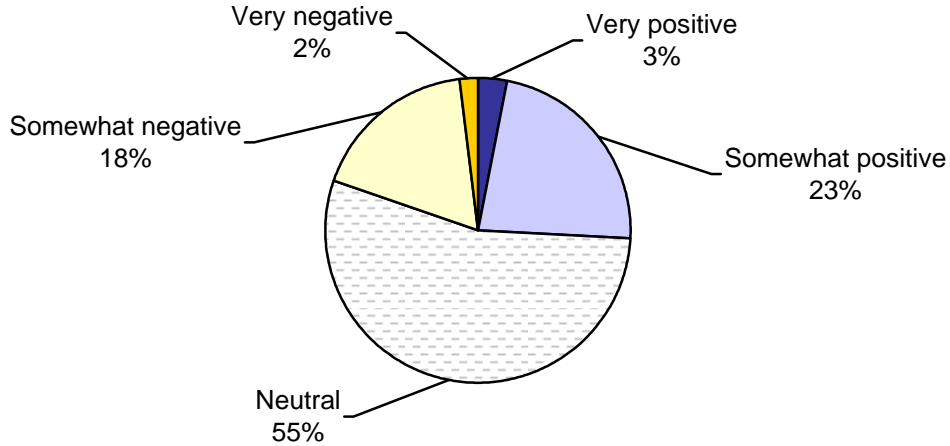
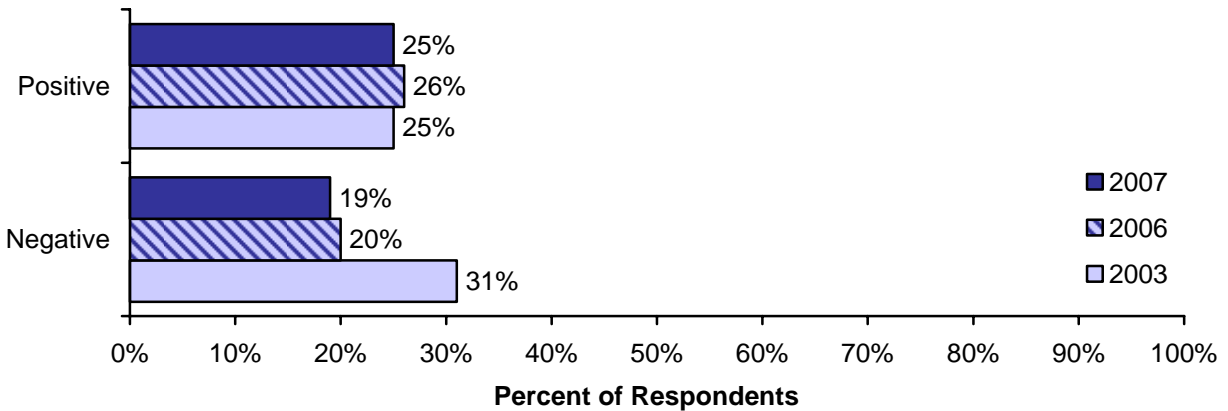


Figure 8b: Comparisons of Perceptions of Economy by Year



Note: Responses of "neutral" were omitted.

Perceptions of Safety

When evaluating safety in the community, 86% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Palo Alto in 2007, compared to 84% in 2003 and 75% in 2006. In their neighborhood after dark, 85% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe” in 2007, compared to 83% in 2003 and 79% in 2006.

In 2007, as assessed by the survey, 9% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. In 2003, 13% of households had reported that at least one member had been a crime victim, while 12% reported so in 2006. Of those who had been the victim of a crime in 2007, 61% had reported it to police.

Figure 9: Ratings of Safety from Various Problems in Palo Alto by Year

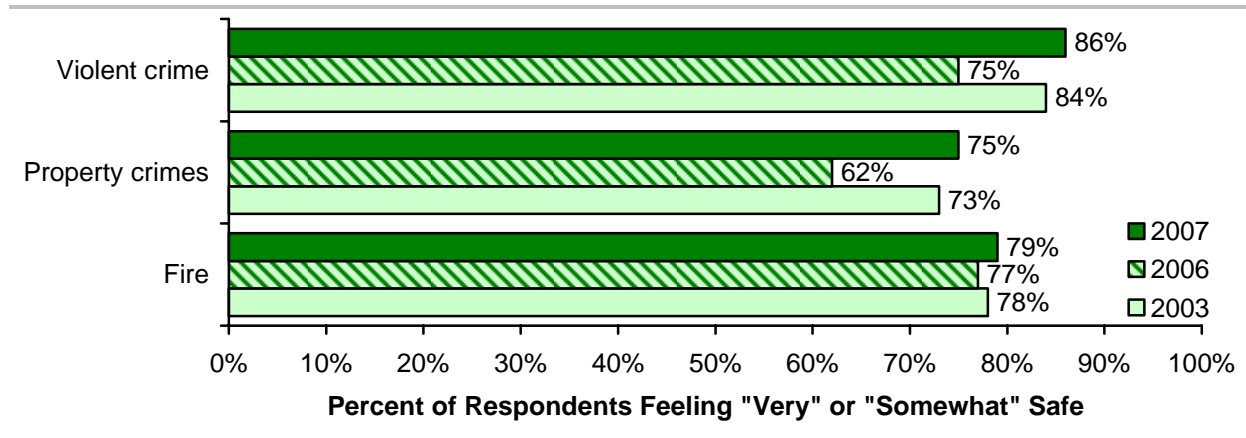


Figure 10: Ratings of Safety in Various Areas in Palo Alto by Year

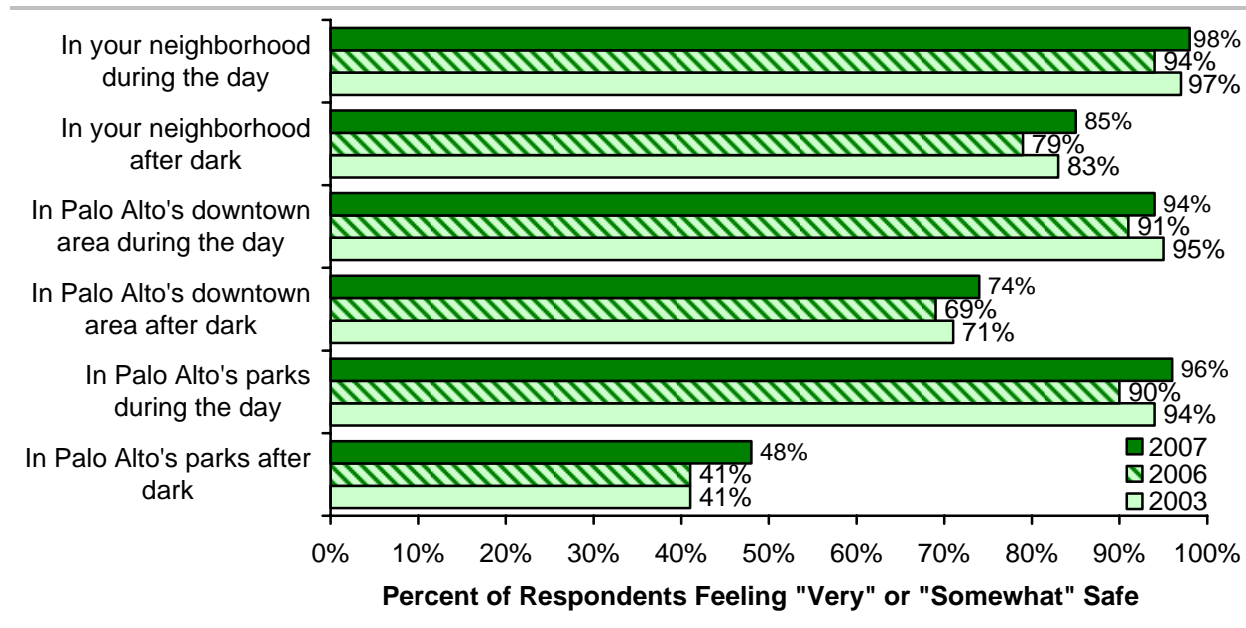


Figure 11: Percent of Respondents' Households That Were Victim of a Crime in the Last 12 Months by Year

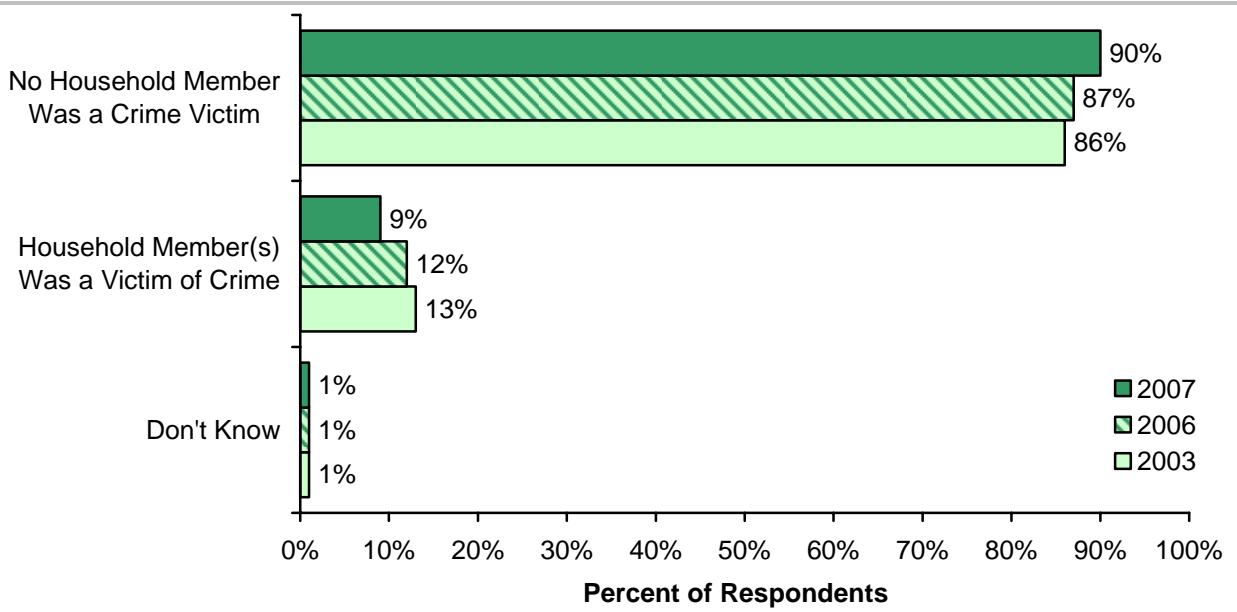
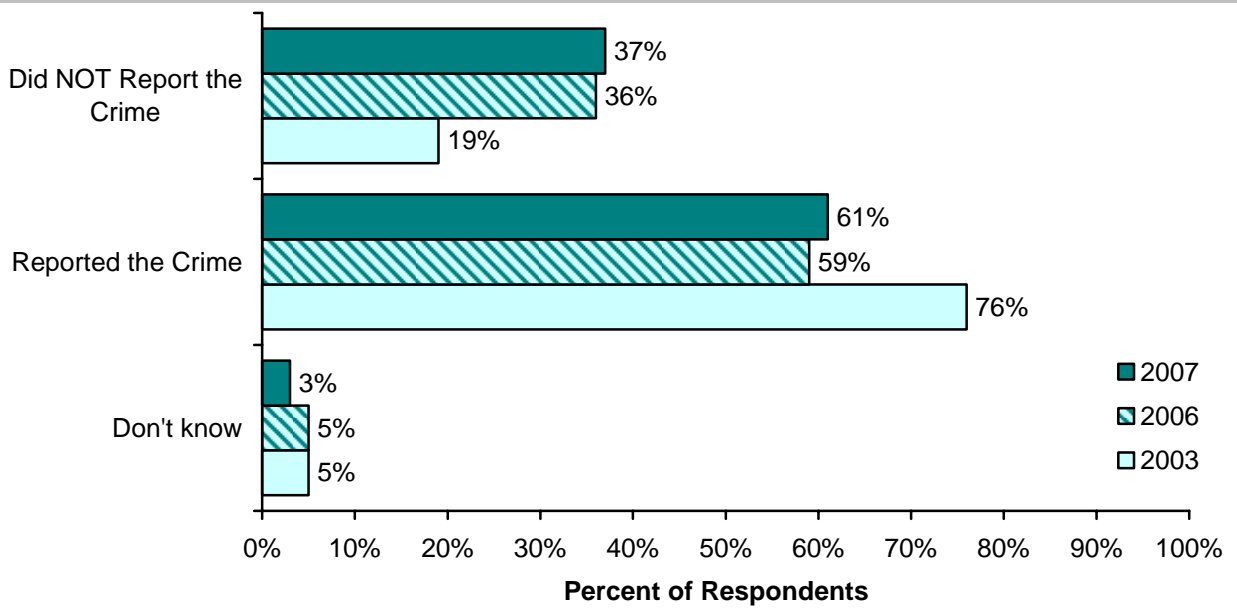


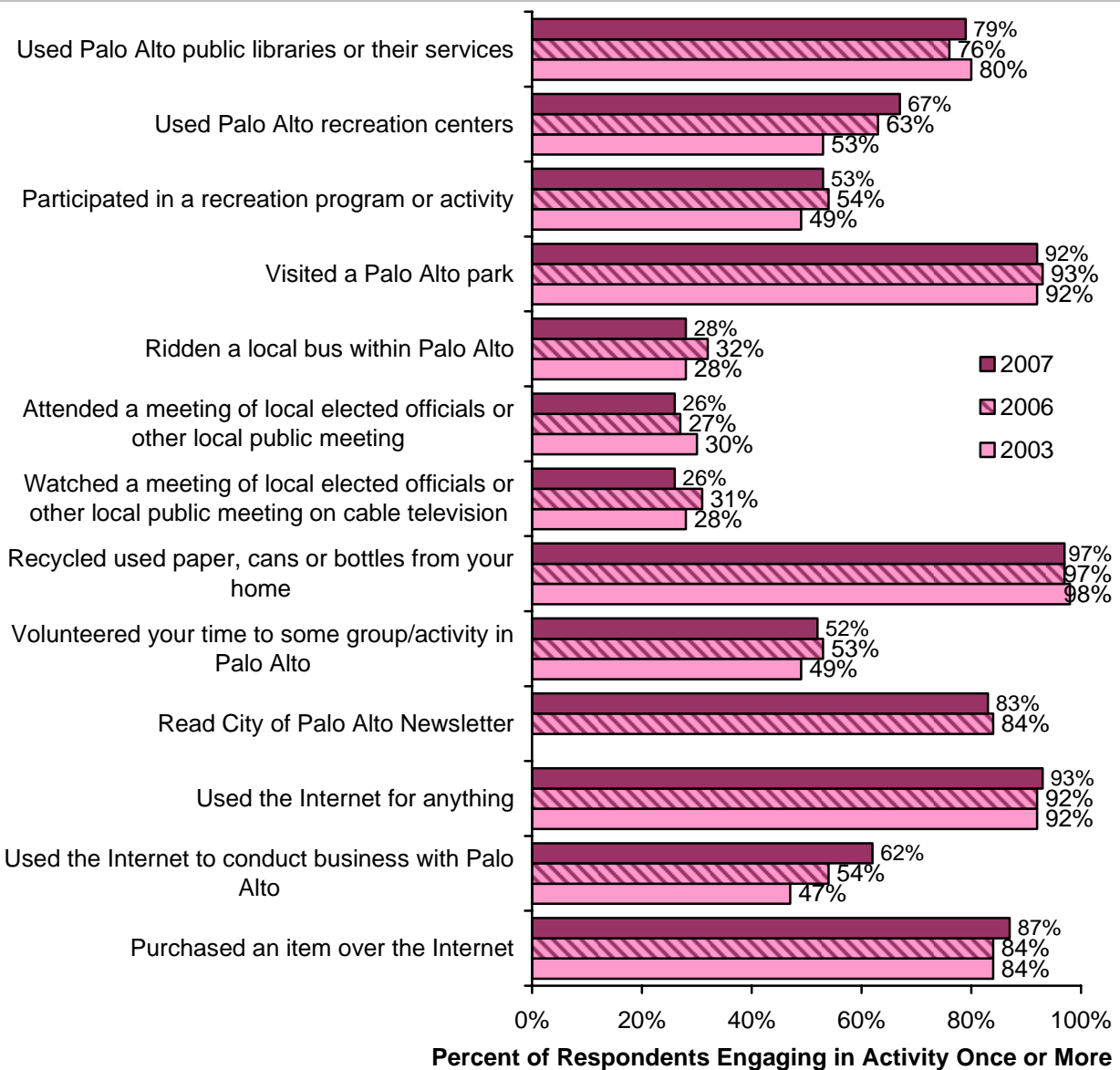
Figure 12: Percent of Respondents' Households That Were Victim of a Crime Who Reported the Crime by Year



Community Participation

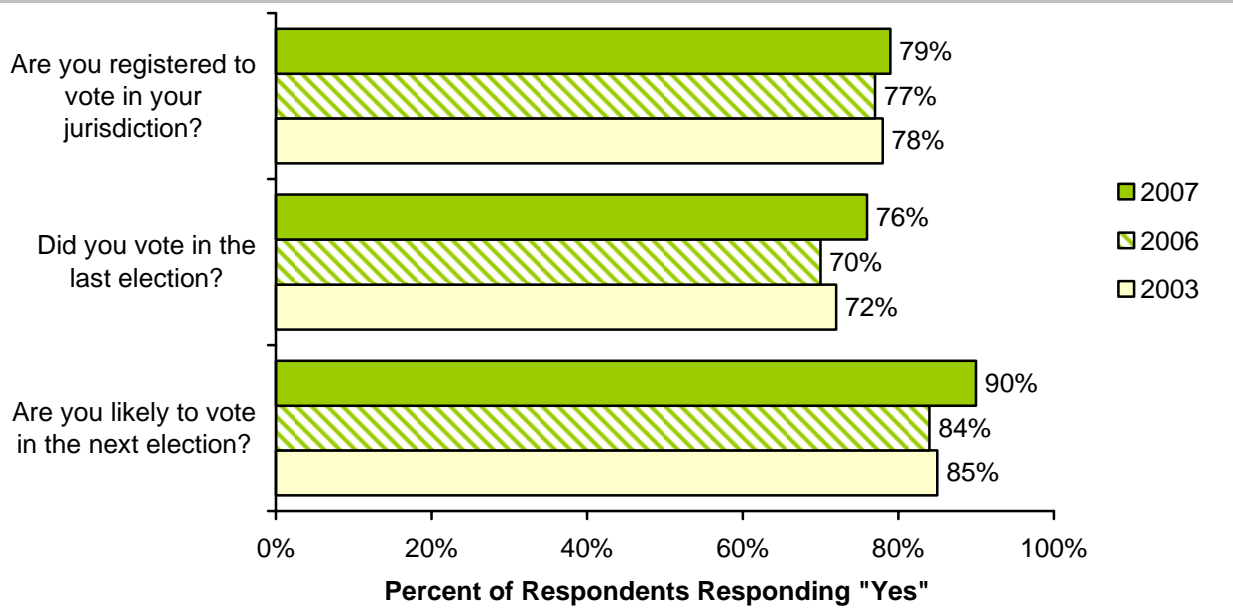
Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Palo Alto during the past year was assessed on the survey. The proportion of respondents engaging in various activities is shown in the chart below, with comparisons made between 2007, 2006 and 2003. Among those completing the questionnaire in 2007, 67% reported using Palo Alto recreation centers in the past year compared to 53% in 2003 and 63% in 2006. Voter status was also estimated, and is shown on the next page.²

Figure 13: Percent of Respondents Engaging in Various Activities in Palo Alto in the Last 12 Months by Year



² In general on a survey, a greater proportion of people will report having voted, than actual voting records verify.

Figure 14: Voter Status and Activity by Year



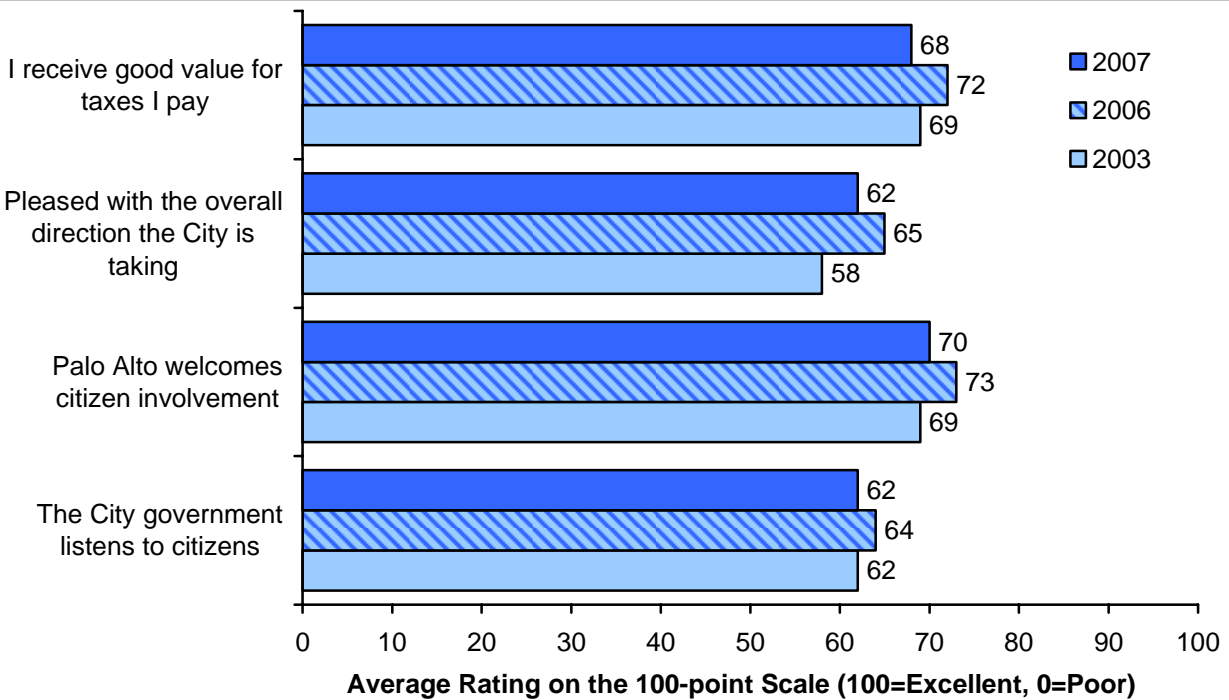
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Palo Alto were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey™. They were asked how much trust they placed in their local government, and what they felt about the services they receive from the City of Palo Alto. Those who had any contact with a City of Palo Alto employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

Public Trust

When asked to evaluate whether they were pleased with the overall direction taken by the City of Palo Alto, residents gave an average rating of 62 on a 100-point scale in 2007, compared to 58 in 2003 and 65 in 2006.

Figure 15: Ratings of Public Trust by Year



2007 Public Trust Ratings

Please rate the following statements:	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Strongly agree, 0=Strongly disagree)
I receive good value for the City of Palo Alto taxes I pay	28%	39%	17%	11%	5%	100%	68
I am pleased with the overall direction that the City of Palo Alto is taking	20%	37%	22%	15%	7%	100%	62
The City of Palo Alto government welcomes citizen involvement	27%	41%	23%	7%	3%	100%	70
The City of Palo Alto government listens to citizens	17%	35%	29%	13%	5%	100%	62

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Service Provided by Palo Alto

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Palo Alto was rated as 69 on a 100-point scale in 2007, compared to 72 in 2003 and 73 in 2006. Ratings given to specific services are shown on the following pages.

Figure 16: Overall Quality of Services Provided by the City of Palo Alto

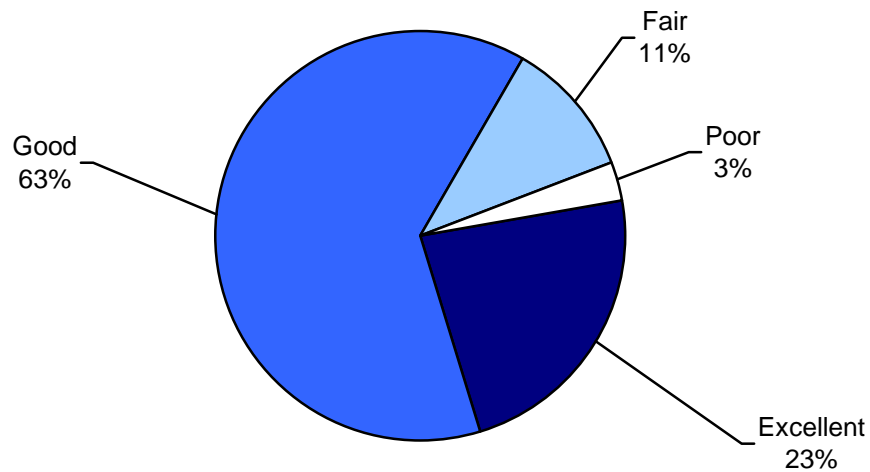
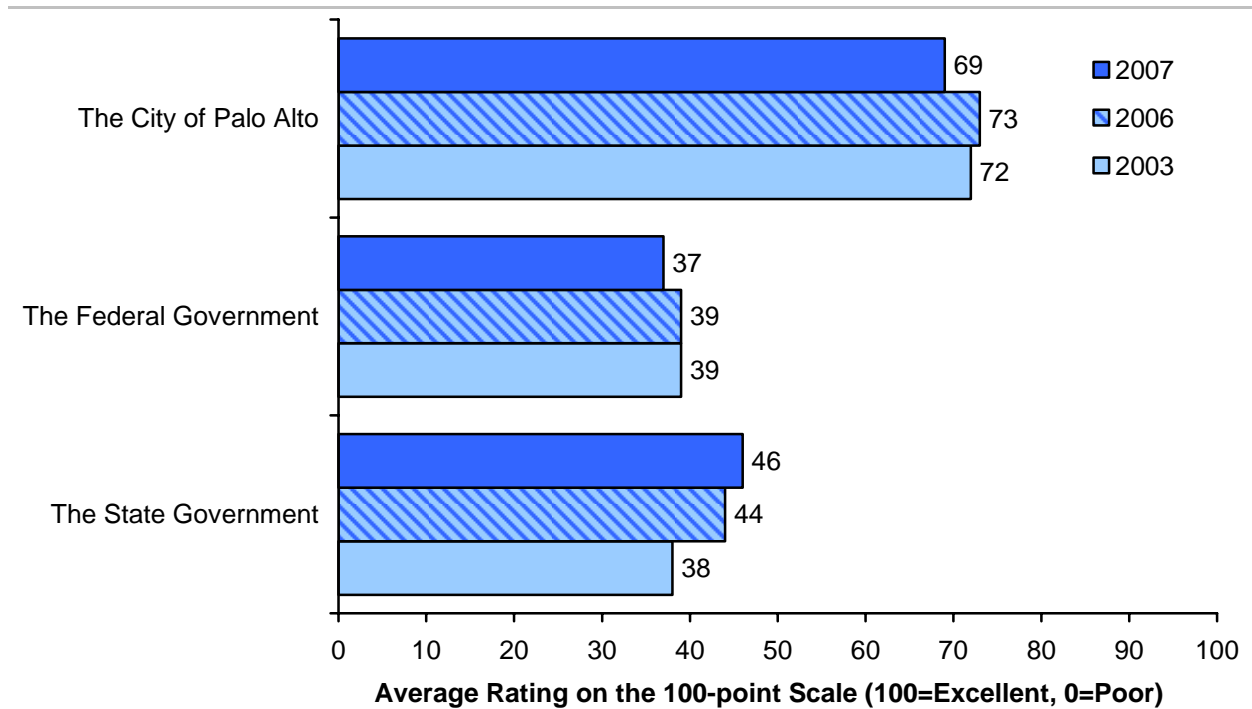


Figure 17: Rating of Overall Quality of Services Provided by Various Levels of Government by Year

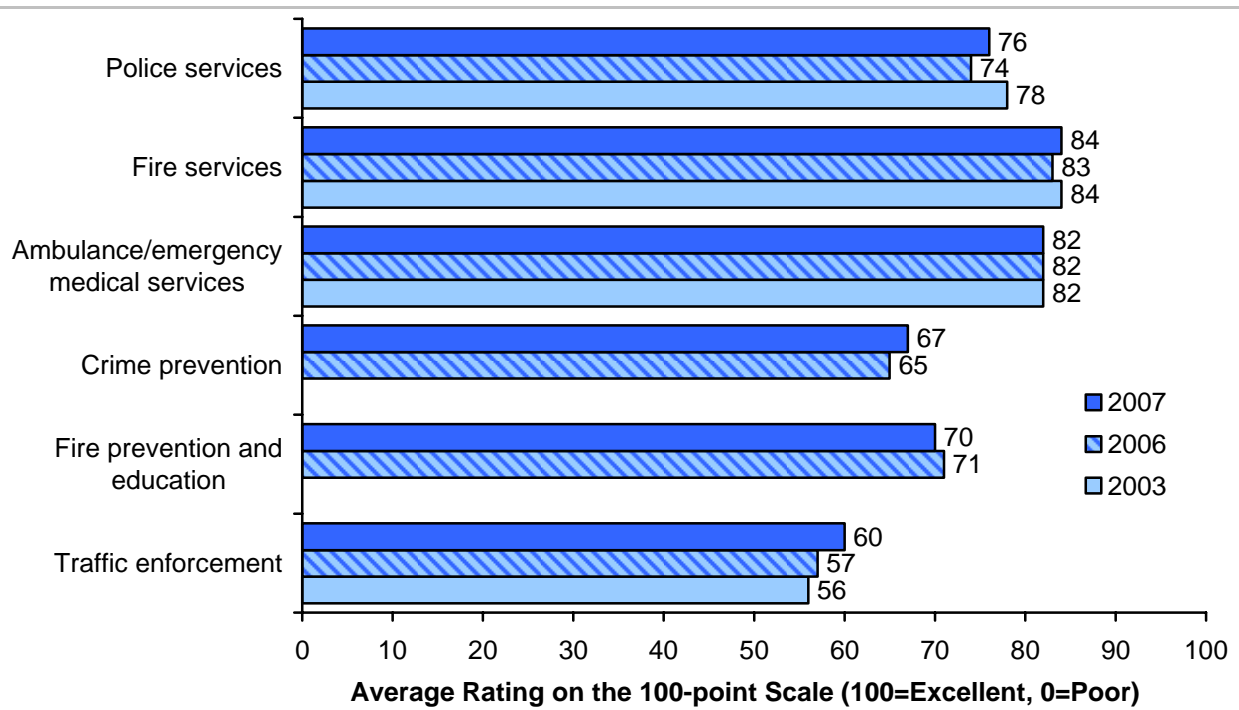


2007 Overall Quality of Services: City of Palo Alto, Federal Government and State Government

Overall, how would you rate the quality of services provided by...	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
The City of Palo Alto	23%	63%	11%	3%	100%	69
The Federal Government	4%	29%	42%	25%	100%	37
The State Government	5%	39%	45%	11%	100%	46

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 18: Quality of Public Safety Services by Year

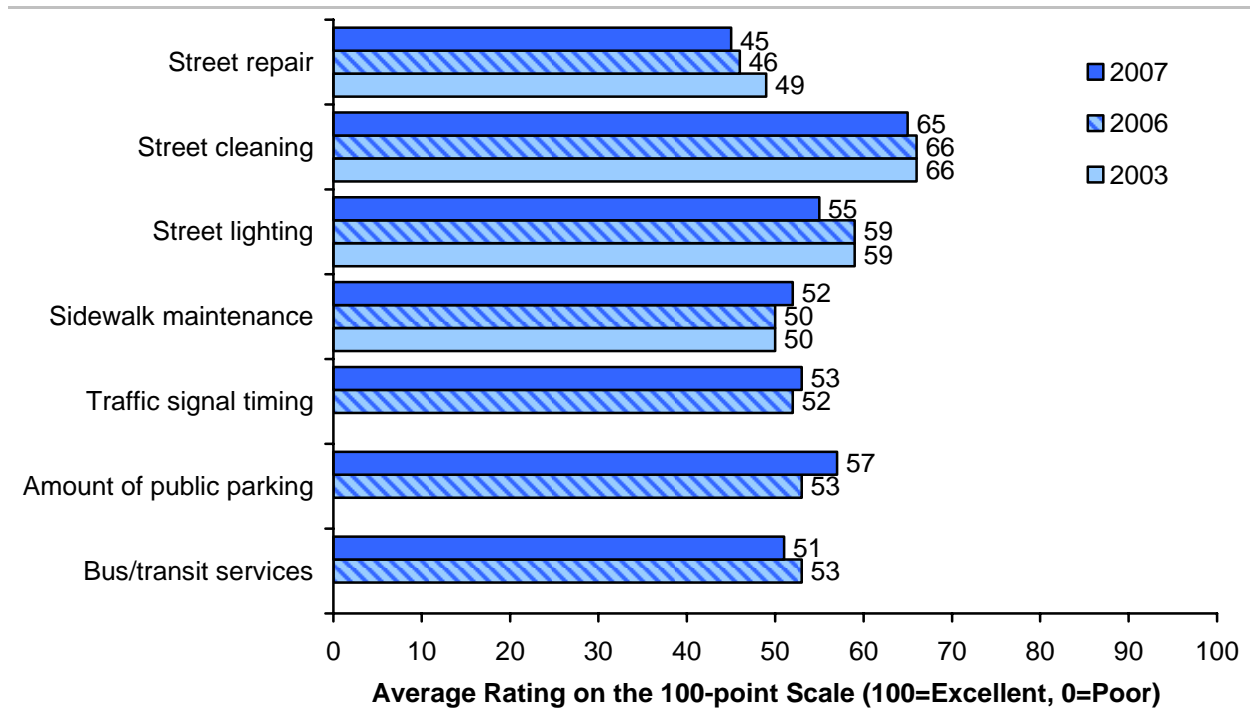


2007 Quality of Public Safety Services

How do you rate the quality of each of the following services?					Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor		
Police services	40%	51%	7%	2%	100%	76
Fire services	56%	42%	2%	0%	100%	84
Ambulance/emergency medical services	52%	42%	5%	1%	100%	82
Crime prevention	21%	62%	13%	4%	100%	67
Fire prevention and education	26%	60%	13%	1%	100%	70
Traffic enforcement	18%	53%	20%	9%	100%	60

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 19: Quality of Transportation Services by Year

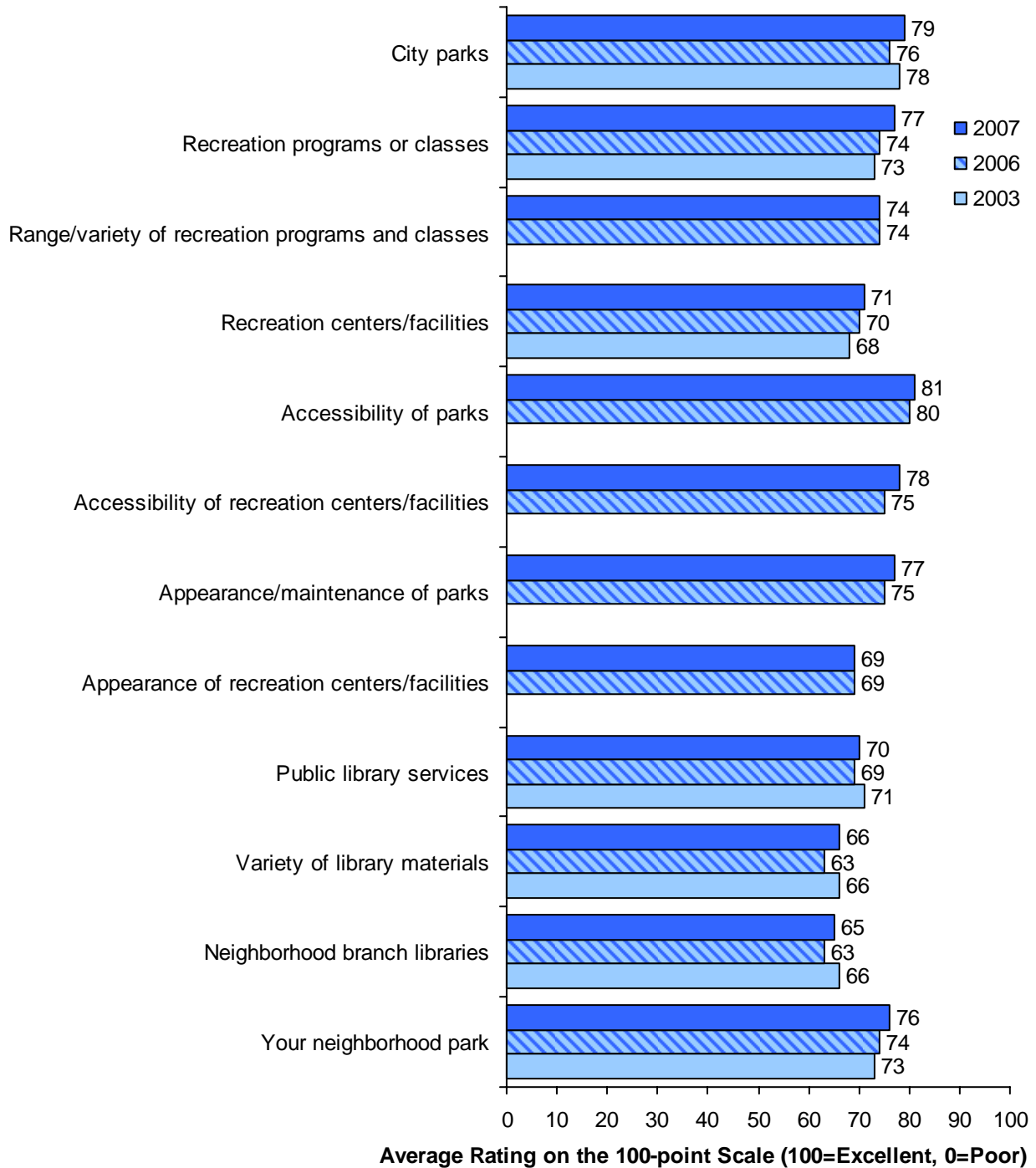


2007 Quality of Transportation Services

How do you rate the quality of each of the following services?	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)				Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor		
Street repair	8%	39%	33%	20%	100%	45
Street cleaning	22%	55%	19%	4%	100%	65
Street lighting	16%	45%	29%	10%	100%	55
Sidewalk maintenance	13%	43%	31%	13%	100%	52
Traffic signal timing	13%	46%	28%	12%	100%	53
Amount of public parking	15%	50%	27%	8%	100%	57
Bus/transit services	13%	44%	27%	16%	100%	51

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 20: Quality of Leisure Services by Year

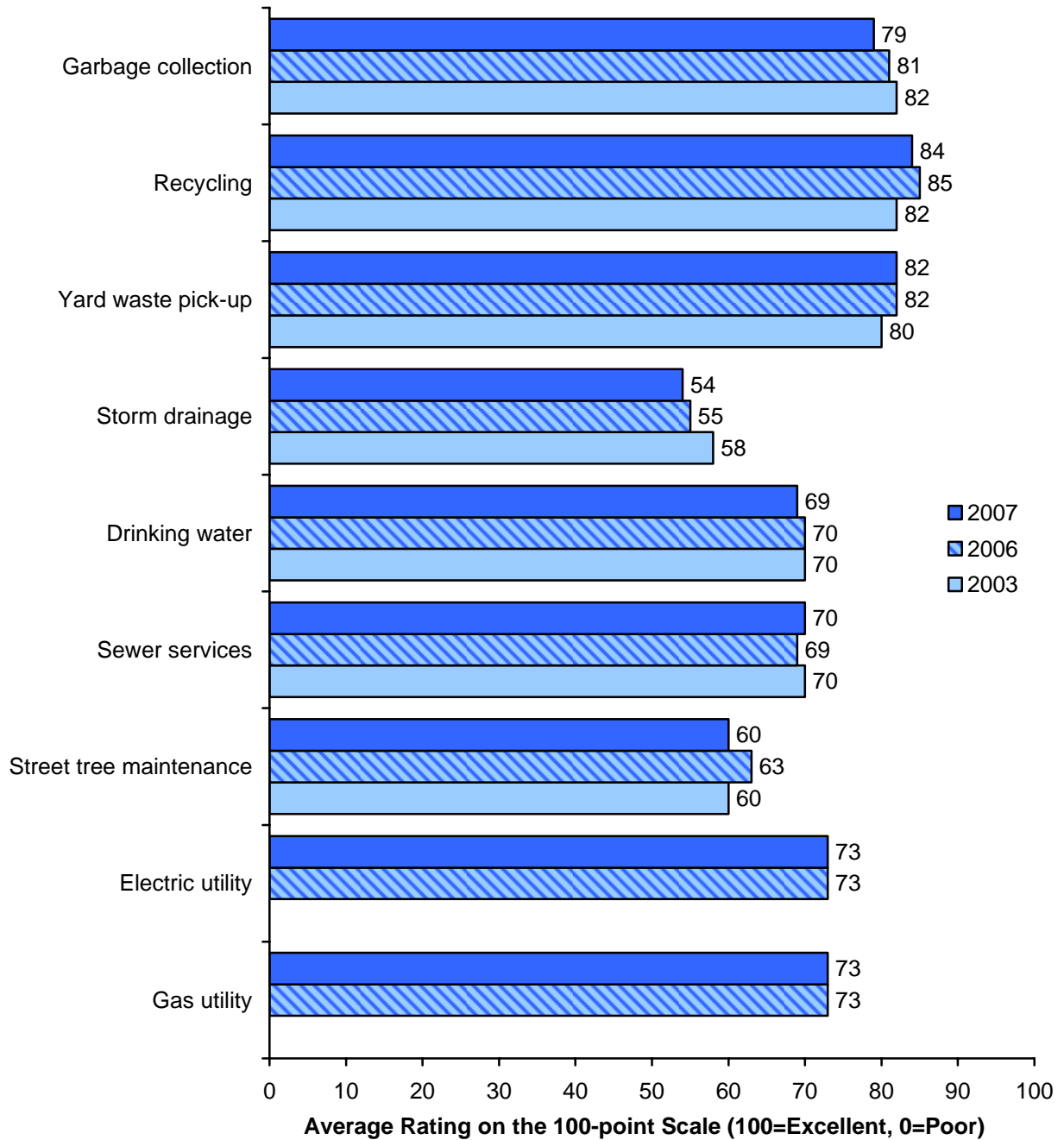


2007 Quality of Leisure Services

How do you rate the quality of each of the following services?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
City parks	45%	46%	9%	0%	100%	79
Recreation programs or classes	43%	47%	9%	1%	100%	77
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes	42%	40%	16%	2%	100%	74
Recreation centers/facilities	32%	50%	15%	2%	100%	71
Accessibility of parks	48%	48%	4%	1%	100%	81
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	43%	48%	9%	0%	100%	78
Appearance/maintenance of parks	40%	51%	8%	1%	100%	77
Appearance of recreation centers/facilities	30%	51%	17%	2%	100%	69
Public library services	33%	48%	15%	4%	100%	70
Variety of library materials	29%	46%	19%	6%	100%	66
Your neighborhood park	40%	49%	10%	1%	100%	76
Neighborhood branch libraries	29%	46%	16%	9%	100%	65

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 21: Quality of Utility Services by Year

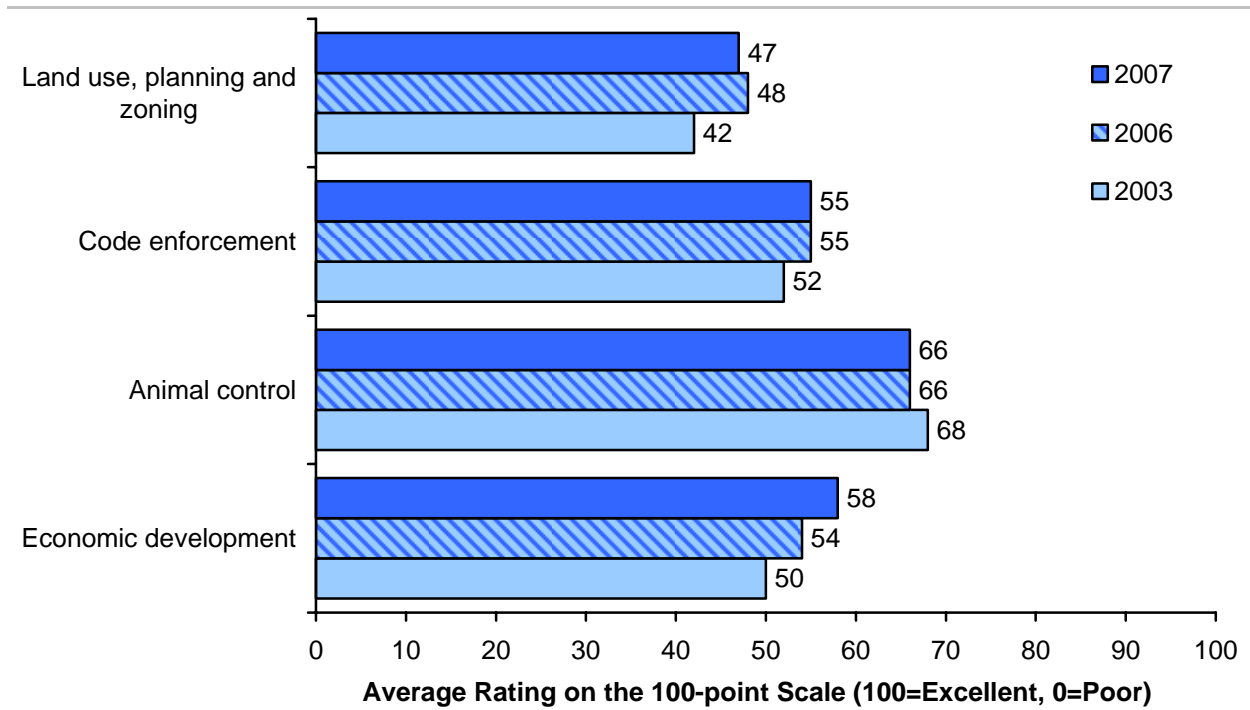


2007 Quality of Utility Services

How do you rate the quality of each of the following services?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
Garbage collection	49%	42%	7%	2%	100%	79
Recycling	60%	33%	6%	1%	100%	84
Yard waste pick-up	53%	40%	5%	2%	100%	82
Storm drainage	14%	46%	31%	10%	100%	54
Drinking water	37%	42%	13%	8%	100%	69
Sewer services	30%	52%	13%	4%	100%	70
Street tree maintenance	21%	46%	25%	8%	100%	60
Electric utility	35%	51%	12%	2%	100%	73
Gas utility	35%	50%	13%	2%	100%	73

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 22: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services by Year

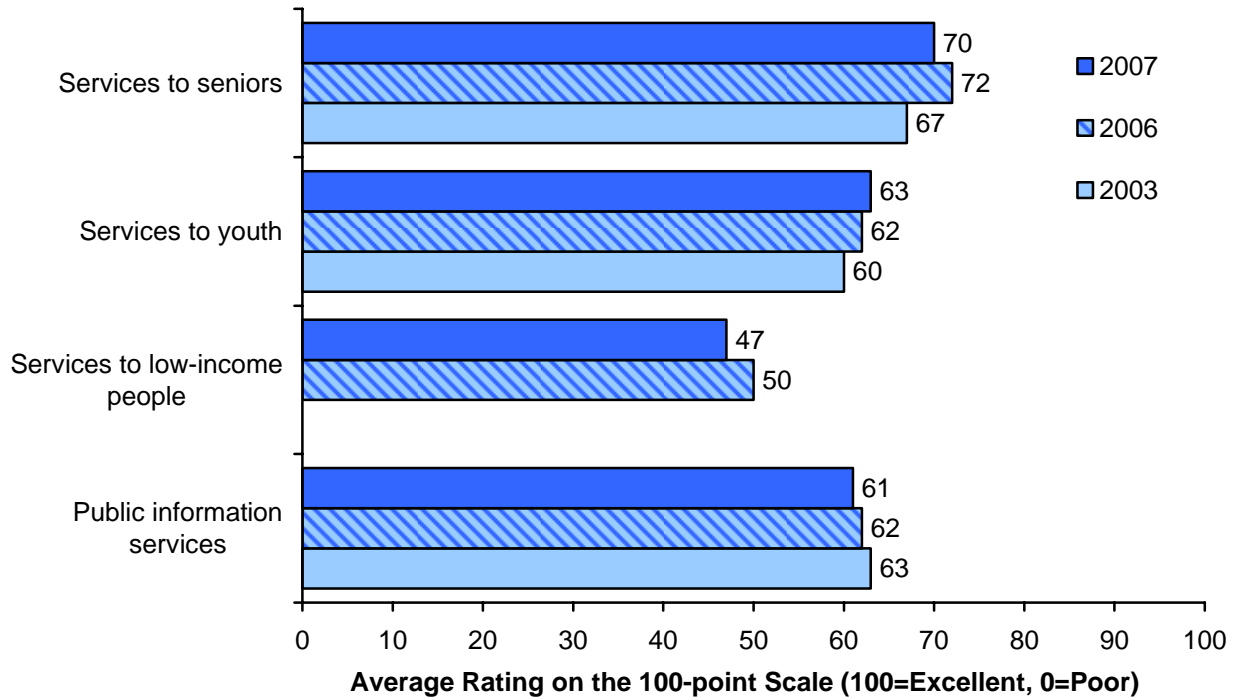


2007 Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services

How do you rate the quality of each of the following services?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
Land use, planning and zoning	11%	38%	34%	17%	100%	47
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	16%	42%	32%	10%	100%	55
Animal control	25%	53%	16%	5%	100%	66
Economic development	19%	42%	30%	9%	100%	58

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Figure 23: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services by Year



2007 Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services

How do you rate the quality of each of the following services?	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)				Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor		
Services to seniors	31%	49%	19%	1%	100%	70
Services to youth	22%	51%	21%	6%	100%	63
Services to low-income people	17%	30%	31%	23%	100%	47
Public information services	19%	54%	20%	7%	100%	61

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

The City of Palo Alto Employees

Impressions of the City of Palo Alto employees were assessed on the questionnaire. In 2007, those who had been in contact with a City of Palo Alto employee in the past year (57%) rated their overall impression as 70 on a 100-point scale, compared to an average rating of 72 received in both 2003 and 2006.

Figure 24: Percent of Respondents Who Had Contact with a City of Palo Alto Employee in 2007

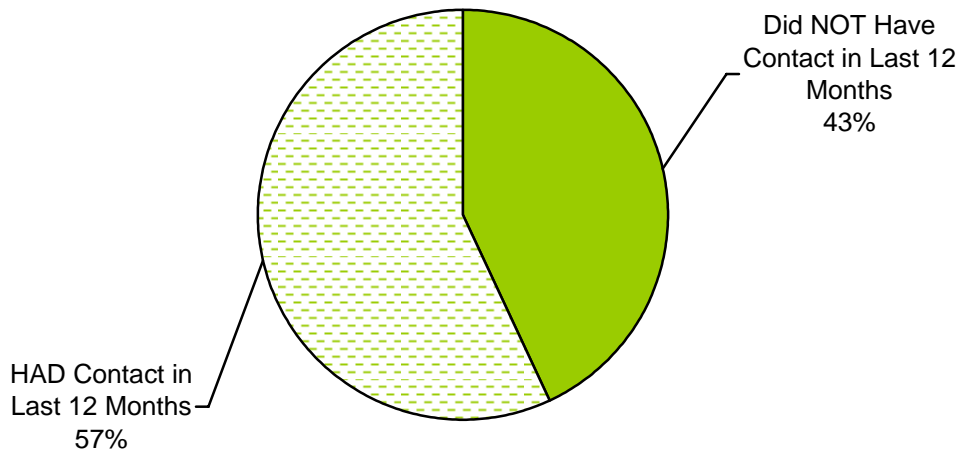
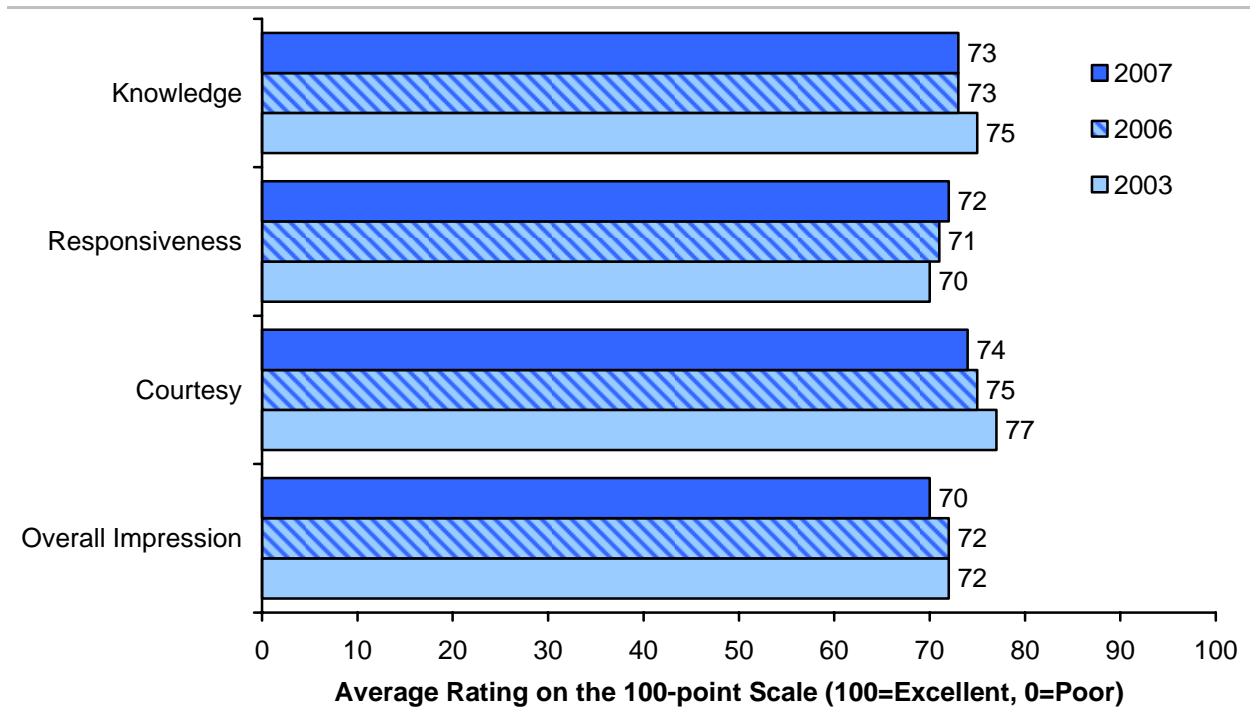


Figure 25: Ratings of Contact with the City of Palo Alto Employees by Year



2007 Ratings of Contact with City of Palo Alto Employees

What was your impression of employees of the City of Palo Alto in your most recent contact?					Total	Average rating on a 100-point scale (100=Excellent, 0=Poor)
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor		
Knowledge	38%	47%	13%	3%	100%	73
Responsiveness	42%	38%	12%	8%	100%	72
Courtesy	45%	39%	9%	7%	100%	74
Overall Impression	41%	38%	13%	8%	100%	70

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Three additional questions were asked by the City of Palo Alto. The results for these questions are displayed below.

Policy Question #1

During the past twelve months, did you or anyone in your family household have contact with the Palo Alto Police Department?

Yes	33%
No	67%
Total	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Policy Question #2

If yes, how do you rate the overall quality of your contact with the Palo Alto Police Department

Excellent	41%
Good	40%
Fair	11%
Poor	8%
Total	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Policy Question #3

Are you and your household prepared to sustain yourselves for 72 hours with sufficient food and water in the event of a major disaster such as an earthquake or flood?

Yes	57%
No	43%
Total	100%

APPENDIX A: FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES TO ALL SURVEY QUESTIONS

This appendix displays the complete distribution of responses to questions in 2007. The “don’t know” responses are shown, where applicable.

Question 1: Quality of Life Ratings						
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know	Total
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to live?	52%	43%	4%	1%	0%	100%
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	49%	43%	8%	1%	0%	100%
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to raise children?	47%	31%	6%	1%	15%	100%
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to work?	38%	30%	6%	2%	25%	100%
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to retire?	27%	24%	19%	13%	17%	100%
How do you rate the overall quality of life in Palo Alto?	42%	52%	6%	1%	0%	100%

Question 2: Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Palo Alto as a whole

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know	Total
Sense of community	19%	48%	25%	4%	4%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	25%	52%	17%	3%	4%	100%
Overall appearance of Palo Alto	32%	54%	11%	2%	0%	100%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	33%	45%	13%	5%	4%	100%
Shopping opportunities	35%	44%	17%	3%	0%	100%
Air quality	25%	52%	18%	2%	3%	100%
Recreational opportunities	30%	53%	13%	1%	3%	100%
Job opportunities	17%	28%	23%	5%	26%	100%
Access to affordable quality housing	2%	8%	19%	63%	9%	100%
Access to affordable quality child care	3%	10%	19%	19%	49%	100%
Access to affordable quality health care	23%	25%	21%	16%	14%	100%
Access to affordable quality food	26%	43%	21%	8%	2%	100%
Ease of car travel in Palo Alto	14%	49%	25%	9%	3%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Palo Alto	5%	15%	18%	16%	46%	100%
Ease of rail/subway travel in Palo Alto	12%	32%	24%	12%	20%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Palo Alto	25%	47%	12%	2%	13%	100%
Ease of walking in Palo Alto	46%	40%	9%	3%	2%	100%
Educational opportunities	55%	31%	4%	1%	8%	100%
Overall image/reputation of Palo Alto	48%	45%	6%	1%	1%	100%
Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto	8%	34%	22%	10%	25%	100%

Question 3: Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Palo Alto over the past two years

	Much too slow	Somewhat too slow	Right amount	Somewhat too fast	Much too fast	Don't know	Total
Population growth	1%	1%	28%	28%	10%	31%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants etc.)	4%	19%	43%	12%	3%	20%	100%
Jobs growth	2%	16%	26%	2%	0%	53%	100%

Question 4: To what degree are the following problems in Palo Alto

	Not a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Major problem	Don't know	Total
Crime	18%	50%	21%	2%	9%	100%
Drugs	16%	33%	16%	3%	32%	100%
Too much growth	21%	20%	23%	15%	20%	100%
Lack of growth	52%	17%	8%	3%	20%	100%
Graffiti	36%	43%	10%	1%	10%	100%
Noise	29%	42%	24%	4%	2%	100%
Run down buildings, weed lots, or junk vehicles	38%	43%	15%	2%	3%	100%
Taxes	17%	23%	32%	13%	15%	100%
Traffic congestion	7%	37%	39%	16%	1%	100%
Unsupervised youth	31%	35%	11%	3%	20%	100%
Homelessness	11%	35%	30%	16%	9%	100%
Weeds	38%	41%	10%	2%	10%	100%
Absence of communications from the City of Palo Alto translated into languages other than English	45%	13%	4%	1%	37%	100%
Unwanted local businesses	54%	19%	5%	1%	22%	100%
Toxic waste or other environmental hazard(s)	30%	25%	6%	3%	35%	100%

Question 5: Please rate how safe you feel from the following occurring to you in Palo Alto

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know	Total
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	50%	34%	9%	4%	0%	1%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	27%	47%	13%	10%	1%	2%	100%
Fire	39%	37%	18%	2%	0%	3%	100%

Question 6: Please rate how safe you feel:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know	Total
In your neighborhood during the day	83%	16%	2%	0%	0%	0%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	39%	45%	7%	6%	1%	1%	100%
In Palo Alto's downtown area during the day	75%	19%	4%	2%	0%	1%	100%
In Palo Alto's downtown area after dark	33%	37%	12%	10%	3%	5%	100%
In Palo Alto's parks during the day	70%	22%	3%	1%	0%	4%	100%
In Palo Alto's parks after dark	9%	30%	21%	15%	7%	18%	100%

Question 7: During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?

	No	Yes	Don't know	Total
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	90%	9%	1%	100%

Question 8: If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?

	No	Yes	Don't know	Total
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	37%	61%	3%	100%

Question 9: In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members done the following things in the City of Palo Alto?

	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Used Palo Alto public libraries or their services	21%	19%	27%	17%	16%	100%
Used Palo Alto recreation centers	33%	28%	24%	8%	7%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	47%	20%	19%	7%	7%	100%
Visited a Palo Alto park	8%	18%	28%	20%	25%	100%
Ridden a local bus within Palo Alto	72%	12%	9%	3%	4%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	74%	17%	7%	1%	1%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	74%	15%	8%	2%	1%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	3%	1%	4%	8%	84%	100%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Palo Alto	48%	15%	12%	9%	15%	100%
Read City of Palo Alto Newsletter	17%	16%	22%	17%	28%	100%
Used the Internet for anything	7%	2%	2%	4%	86%	100%
Used the Internet to conduct business with Palo Alto	38%	17%	18%	6%	21%	100%
Purchased an item over the Internet	13%	6%	26%	14%	41%	100%

Question 10: How do you rate the quality of each of the following services in Palo Alto?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know	Total
Police services	33%	42%	6%	2%	17%	100%
Fire services	39%	29%	2%	0%	30%	100%
Ambulance/emergency medical services	33%	26%	3%	0%	38%	100%
Crime prevention	15%	45%	9%	3%	27%	100%
Fire prevention and education	15%	36%	8%	1%	41%	100%
Traffic enforcement	16%	46%	17%	7%	14%	100%
Garbage collection	48%	41%	7%	2%	2%	100%
Recycling	59%	32%	6%	1%	2%	100%
Yard waste pick-up	41%	30%	4%	1%	24%	100%
Street repair	8%	38%	32%	20%	2%	100%
Street cleaning	21%	53%	18%	4%	3%	100%
Street lighting	16%	44%	29%	10%	1%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	13%	42%	30%	12%	4%	100%
Traffic signal timing	13%	45%	27%	12%	2%	100%
Amount of public parking	14%	47%	26%	8%	4%	100%
Bus/transit services	7%	22%	14%	8%	49%	100%
Storm drainage	10%	33%	22%	7%	28%	100%
Drinking water	35%	40%	13%	7%	5%	100%
Sewer services	24%	42%	11%	3%	20%	100%
City parks	43%	44%	8%	0%	4%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	28%	31%	6%	1%	34%	100%
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes	29%	27%	11%	1%	31%	100%
Recreation centers/facilities	24%	37%	11%	2%	27%	100%
Accessibility of parks	44%	44%	4%	1%	7%	100%
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	32%	35%	7%	0%	26%	100%
Appearance/maintenance of parks	38%	48%	8%	1%	5%	100%
Appearance of recreation centers/facilities	22%	38%	13%	1%	26%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	8%	27%	25%	12%	28%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	11%	30%	22%	7%	30%	100%
Animal control	18%	38%	12%	4%	29%	100%
Economic development	13%	30%	21%	6%	30%	100%

Question 10: How do you rate the quality of each of the following services in Palo Alto?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know	Total
Services to seniors	14%	22%	9%	1%	55%	100%
Services to youth	11%	25%	10%	3%	52%	100%
Services to low-income people	6%	11%	11%	8%	64%	100%
Public library services	29%	42%	13%	4%	12%	100%
Variety of library materials	24%	39%	16%	5%	15%	100%
Public information services	14%	39%	15%	5%	27%	100%
Street tree maintenance	19%	41%	22%	7%	11%	100%
Electric utility	31%	47%	11%	2%	9%	100%
Gas utility	30%	44%	11%	2%	13%	100%
Your neighborhood park	37%	45%	10%	1%	8%	100%
Neighborhood branch libraries	24%	38%	13%	8%	18%	100%

Question 11: Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by...

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know	Total
The City of Palo Alto	22%	60%	11%	3%	4%	100%
The Federal Government	3%	23%	34%	20%	20%	100%
The State Government	4%	32%	36%	9%	20%	100%

Question 12: Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Palo Alto within the last 12 months?

	No	Yes	Total
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Palo Alto within the last 12 months?	43%	57%	100%

Question 13: What was your impression of the employees of the City of Palo Alto in your most recent contact?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know	Total
Knowledge	36%	44%	12%	3%	6%	100%
Responsiveness	40%	36%	11%	7%	5%	100%
Courtesy	43%	38%	9%	7%	3%	100%
Overall Impression	39%	37%	13%	8%	3%	100%

Question 14: Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
I receive good value for the City of Palo Alto taxes I pay	25%	34%	15%	10%	4%	11%	100%
I am pleased with the overall direction that the City of Palo Alto is taking	18%	34%	20%	14%	6%	7%	100%
The City of Palo Alto government welcomes citizen involvement	20%	31%	17%	5%	2%	25%	100%
The City of Palo Alto government listens to citizens	12%	25%	21%	10%	4%	28%	100%

Question 15: What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months?

	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Neutral	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Total
What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:	3%	23%	55%	18%	2%	100%

Question 16a: Policy Question 1

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
During the past twelve months, did you or anyone in your family household have contact with the Palo Alto Police Department?	33%	66%	0%	100%

Question 16b: Policy Question 2

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know	Total
If yes, how do you rate the overall quality of your contact with the Palo Alto Police Department	32%	31%	9%	7%	20%	100%

Question 16c: Policy Question 3

	Yes	No	Total
Are you and your household prepared to sustain yourselves for 72 hours with sufficient food and water in the event of a major disaster such as an earthquake or flood?	57%	43%	100%

Question 17: Do you live within the City limits of the City of Palo Alto?

	No	Yes	Total
Do you live within the limits of the City of Palo Alto?	2%	98%	100%

Question 18: Employment Status

	No	Yes	Total
Are you currently employed?	34%	66%	100%

Question 18a: Usual Mode of Transportation to Work

What one method of transportation do you usually use (for the longest distance of your commute) to travel to work?	
Motorized vehicle	74%
Bus, Rail, Subway, or other public transportation	3%
Walk	7%
Work at home	7%
Other	8%
Total	100%

Question 18b: Drive Alone or Carpool

	No	Yes	Total
If you checked the motorized vehicle (e.g. car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc.) box in 18a, do other people usually ride with you to or from work?	90%	10%	100%

Usual Mode of Transportation to Work, Including Carpooling

Usual mode of transportation to work	
Motorized vehicle, no others (SOV)	67%
Motorized vehicle, with others (MOV)	7%
Bus, rail, subway, or other public transportation	3%
Walk	7%
Work at home	7%
Other	8%
Total	100%

Question 19: Length of Residency

How many years have you lived in Palo Alto?	
Less than 2 years	15%
2 to 5 years	25%
6 to 10 years	12%
11 to 20 years	17%
More than 20 years	32%
Total	100%

Question 20: Type of Housing Unit

Which best describes the building you live in?	
One family house detached from any other houses	55%
One family house attached to one or more houses	3%
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	40%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Question 21: Tenure Status

	Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment?	Owned by you or someone in this house	Total
Is this house, apartment, or mobile home...	43%	57%	100%

Questions 22 to 25: Household Characteristics

	No	Yes	Total
Do any children age 12 or under live in your household?	72%	28%	100%
Do any teenagers ages 13 through 17 live in your household?	84%	16%	100%
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	75%	25%	100%
Does any member of your household have a physical handicap or is anyone disabled?	88%	12%	100%

Question 26: Education

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

12th Grade or less, no diploma	0%
High school diploma	3%
Some college, no degree	5%
Associate's degree (e.g. AA, AS)	4%
Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, AB, BS)	28%
Graduate degree or professional degree	60%
Total	100%

Question 27: Annual Household Income

How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year?

Less than \$24,999	8%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	8%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	23%
\$100,000 or more	62%
Total	100%

Question 28: Ethnicity

	No	Yes	Total
Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?	95%	5%	100%

Question 29: Race

What is your race?	Percent of Respondents
American Indian or Alaskan native	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	23%
Black, African American	2%
White/Caucasian	73%
Other	4%
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one category.	

Question 30: Age

In which category is your age?	
18 to 24 years	3%
25 to 34 years	21%
35 to 44 years	18%
45 to 54 years	24%
55 to 64 years	12%
65 to 74 years	9%
75 years or older	13%
Total	100%

Question 31: Gender

	Female	Male	Total
What is your gender?	53%	47%	100%

Questions 32 to 34: Voter Status and Activity

	No	Yes	Don't know	Total
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	21%	78%	2%	100%
Did you vote in the last election?	24%	76%	0%	100%
Are you likely to vote in the next election?	10%	86%	4%	100%

APPENDIX B: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The National Citizen Survey™ was developed to provide local jurisdictions an accurate, affordable and easy way to assess and interpret resident opinion about important community issues. While standardization of question wording and survey methods provide the rigor to assure valid results, each jurisdiction has enough flexibility to construct a customized version of The National Citizen Survey™ that asks residents about key local services and important local issues.

Results offer insight into residents' perspectives about local government performance and as such provide important benchmarks for jurisdictions working on performance measurement. The National Citizen Survey™ is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The National Citizen Survey™ permits questions to test support for local policies and answers to its questions also speak to community trust and involvement in community-building activities as well as to resident demographic characteristics.

The methods detailed in the following section are for the 2007 administration of The NCS in the City of Palo Alto. Information about the implementation in previous years can be found in past reports.

Sampling

Approximately 1,200 households were selected to participate in the survey using a stratified systematic sampling method.³ An individual within each household was selected using the birthday method.⁴

Survey Administration

Selected households received three mailings, one week apart, beginning September 7, 2007. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey. The next mailing contained a letter from the City Auditor inviting the household to participate, a questionnaire and postage-paid return envelope. The final mailing contained a reminder letter and another survey and postage-paid return envelope. Completed surveys were collected over the following five weeks.

Response Rate and Confidence Intervals

Of the 1,157 eligible households, 437 completed the survey providing a response rate of 38%. Approximately 43 addresses sampled were “vacant” or “not found.”⁵ In general, the response rates

³ Systematic sampling is a method that closely approximates random sampling by selecting every Nth address until the desired number of households is chosen.

⁴ The birthday method is a process to remove bias in the selection of a person within the household by asking the “person whose birthday has most recently passed” to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys but leaving selection of respondent to household members will lead to bias.

⁵ “Eligible” households refer to addresses that belong to residences that are not vacant within the City of Palo Alto.

obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%. The sample of households was selected systematically and impartially from a list of residences in the United States maintained by the U.S. postal service and sold to NRC through an independent vendor. The sample drawn for Palo Alto used USPS data to approximate the geographic boundaries of the jurisdiction, though some households just outside the city limits may have received surveys. The survey completers who technically do not reside in the jurisdiction may choose to respond to the survey because they feel an affiliation with the jurisdiction and its services. Local governments often have a sphere of influence – providing in-jurisdiction services that perimeter-residents use or even providing services outside the jurisdiction boundaries.

In theory, in 95 cases out of 100, the results based on such samples will differ by no more than 5 percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained had responses been collected from all Palo Alto adults. This difference is also called a “margin of error.”⁶ This difference from the presumed population finding is referred to as the sampling error. For subgroups of responses, the margin of sampling error is larger. In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of the public may introduce other sources of error. For example, the failure of some of the selected adults to participate in the sample or the difficulty of including all sectors of the population, such as residents of some institutions or group residences, may lead to somewhat different results.

Weighting and Analyzing the Data

The surveys were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package. Frequency distributions and average (mean) ratings are presented in the body of the report.

The demographic characteristics of the sample were compared to those of the City of Palo Alto as reflected in the information sent by staff to National Research Center, Inc. When necessary, survey results were statistically adjusted to reflect the known population profile.

Generally, only two variables are used in a weighting scheme. Known population characteristics are compared to the characteristics of survey respondents. Generally, characteristics chosen as weighting variables are selected because they are not in proportion to what is shown in a jurisdiction’s demographic profile and because differences in opinion are observed between subgroups of these characteristics. The two socioeconomic characteristics that were used to weight the survey results were gender/age and tenure. Other discrepancies between the whole population and the sample were also aided by the weighting due to the intercorrelation of many socioeconomic characteristics, although the percentages are not always identical in the sample compared to the population norms. The results of the weighting scheme are presented in the table on the following page.

⁶ The margin of error was calculated using the following formula: $1.96 * \text{square root } (0.25/400)$. This margin of error is calculated in the most conservative way. The standard error was assumed to be the greatest for a binomial distribution: 50%/50%.

Weighting Scheme for the City of Palo Alto Citizen Survey

Respondent Characteristics	Population Norm⁷	Unweighted Survey Data	Weighted Survey Data
Tenure			
Rent Home	43%	26%	43%
Own Home	57%	74%	57%
Type of Housing Unit			
Single-Family Detached	59%	65%	55%
Attached	41%	35%	45%
Ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic	95%	96%	95%
Hispanic	5%	4%	5%
Race			
White/Caucasian	76%	75%	71%
Non-White	24%	25%	29%
Gender			
Female	52%	55%	53%
Male	48%	45%	47%
Age			
18-34	25%	7%	24%
35-54	43%	40%	42%
55+	32%	53%	34%
Gender and Age			
Females 18-34	12%	4%	12%
Females 35-54	22%	21%	22%
Females 55+	18%	30%	19%
Males 18-34	13%	4%	13%
Males 35-54	20%	19%	20%
Males 55+	14%	23%	14%

⁷ Source: 2000 Census

APPENDIX C: SURVEY MATERIALS

The following pages contain copies of the survey materials sent to randomly selected households within the City of Palo Alto. All households selected for inclusion in the study were first sent a prenotification postcard informing them that they would be receiving a questionnaire within the following week. A week later, a cover letter and survey were sent, with a postage paid return envelope. Two weeks later a second cover letter and survey were sent. The second cover letter asked that those who had responded not do so again, while urging those who had not yet returned their surveys to please do so.

City of Palo Alto

Office of the City Auditor

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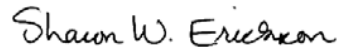
P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit NO.94

Dear Palo Alto Resident,

Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the City of Palo Alto. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,

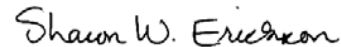


Sharon W. Erickson
City Auditor

Dear Palo Alto Resident,

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Sincerely,

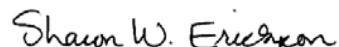


Sharon W. Erickson
City Auditor

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Sincerely,




Sharon W. Erickson
City Auditor

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Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the City of Palo Alto. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,



Sharon W. Erickson
City Auditor

City of Palo Alto

Office of the City Auditor

September 2007

Dear Palo Alto Resident:

The City of Palo Alto wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in Palo Alto's 2007 Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your answers will help the City Council make decisions that affect our community. You should find the questions interesting and we will definitely find your answers useful. Please participate!

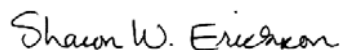
To get a representative sample of Palo Alto residents, the adult (anyone 18 years or older) in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey. Year of birth of the adult does not matter.

Please have the appropriate member of the household spend a few minutes answering all the questions and return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Your responses will remain completely anonymous.**

Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey please call 650.329.2667.

Please help us shape the future of Palo Alto. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,



Sharon W. Erickson
City Auditor

P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650.329.2667
650.329.2297 fax

City of Palo Alto

Office of the City Auditor

October 2007

Dear Palo Alto Resident:

About one week ago, you should have received a copy of the enclosed survey. **If you completed it and sent it back, we thank you for your time and ask you to discard this survey. Please do not respond twice.** If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, we would appreciate your response. The City of Palo Alto wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in the City of Palo Alto Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your answers will help the City Council make decisions that affect our community. You should find the questions interesting and we will definitely find your answers useful. Please participate!

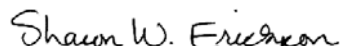
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Please have the appropriate member of the household spend a few minutes answering all the questions and return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Your responses will remain completely anonymous.**

Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey please call 650.329.2667.

Please help us shape the future of Palo Alto. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,



Sharon W. Erickson
City Auditor

P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650.329.2667
650.329.2297 fax

THE CITY OF PALO ALTO 2007 CITIZEN SURVEY

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult's year of birth does not matter. Please circle the response that most closely represents your opinion for each question. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

1. Please circle the number that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to live?	1	2	3	4	5
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	1	2	3	4	5
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to raise children?	1	2	3	4	5
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to work?	1	2	3	4	5
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to retire?	1	2	3	4	5
How do you rate the overall quality of life in Palo Alto?	1	2	3	4	5

2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Palo Alto as a whole:

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Sense of community	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Job opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Access to affordable quality housing	1	2	3	4	5
Access to affordable quality child care	1	2	3	4	5
Access to affordable quality health care	1	2	3	4	5
Access to affordable quality food	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of car travel in Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bus travel in Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of rail/subway travel in Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bicycle travel in Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Educational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image/reputation of Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Palo Alto over the past 2 years:

	<u>Much too slow</u>	<u>Somewhat too slow</u>	<u>Right amount</u>	<u>Somewhat too fast</u>	<u>Much too fast</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Population growth	1	2	3	4	5	6
Retail growth (stores, restaurants etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Jobs growth	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. To what degree, if at all, are the following problems in Palo Alto:

	Not a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Major problem	Don't know
Crime	1	2	3	4	5
Drugs	1	2	3	4	5
Too much growth	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of growth	1	2	3	4	5
Graffiti	1	2	3	4	5
Noise	1	2	3	4	5
Run down buildings, weed lots, or junk vehicles	1	2	3	4	5
Taxes	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic congestion	1	2	3	4	5
Unsupervised youth	1	2	3	4	5
Homelessness	1	2	3	4	5
Weeds	1	2	3	4	5
Absence of communications from the City of Palo Alto translated into languages other than English	1	2	3	4	5
Unwanted local businesses	1	2	3	4	5
Toxic waste or other environmental hazard(s)	1	2	3	4	5

5. Please rate how safe you feel from the following occurring to you in Palo Alto:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fire	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Please rate how safe you feel:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
In your neighborhood during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
In your neighborhood after dark	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Palo Alto's downtown area during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Palo Alto's downtown area after dark	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Palo Alto's parks during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Palo Alto's parks after dark	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?

- No → Go to question #9 Yes → Go to question #8 Don't know

8. If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?

- No Yes Don't know

9. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Palo Alto?

	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times
Used Palo Alto public libraries or their services	1	2	3	4	5
Used Palo Alto recreation centers	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a recreation program or activity	1	2	3	4	5
Visited a neighborhood or City park	1	2	3	4	5
Ridden a local bus within Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	1	2	3	4	5
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	1	2	3	4	5
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Read Palo Alto Newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
Used the Internet for anything	1	2	3	4	5
Used the Internet to conduct business with Palo Alto	1	2	3	4	5
Purchased an item over the Internet	1	2	3	4	5

10. How do you rate the quality of each of the following services in Palo Alto?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Police services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance/emergency medical services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement.....	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling.....	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance.....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of public parking.....	1	2	3	4	5
Bus/transit services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage.....	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services.....	1	2	3	4	5
City parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes.....	1	2	3	4	5
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers/facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility of parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Appearance/maintenance of parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Appearance of recreation centers/facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning and zoning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc).....	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control.....	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to seniors.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to youth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to low-income people.....	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of library materials.....	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street tree maintenance.....	1	2	3	4	5
Electric utility.....	1	2	3	4	5
Gas utility.....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood park.....	1	2	3	4	5
Neighborhood branch libraries.....	1	2	3	4	5

11. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The City of Palo Alto.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government.....	1	2	3	4	5
The State Government.....	1	2	3	4	5

12. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Palo Alto within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?

- No → Go to question #14 Yes → Go to question #13

13. What was your impression of employees of the City of Palo Alto in your most recent contact? (Rate each characteristic below.)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Knowledge.....	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness.....	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression.....	1	2	3	4	5

14. Please rate the following statements by circling the number that most clearly represents your opinion:

	Strongly <u>agree</u>	Somewhat <u>agree</u>	Neither agree <u>nor disagree</u>	Somewhat <u>disagree</u>	Strongly <u>disagree</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
I receive good value for the City of Palo Alto taxes I pay	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am pleased with the overall direction that the City of Palo Alto is taking.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
The City of Palo Alto government welcomes citizen involvement	1	2	3	4	5	6
The City of Palo Alto government listens to citizens	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:

- Very positive
 Somewhat positive
 Neutral
 Somewhat negative
 Very negative

16. Please check the response that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:

a. During the past twelve months, did you or anyone in your family household have contact with the Palo Alto Police Department?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

b. If yes, how do you rate the quality of your contact with the Palo Alto Police Department?

- Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor
 Don't know

c. Are you and your household prepared to sustain yourselves for 72 hours with sufficient food and water in the event of a major disaster such as an earthquake or flood?

- Yes
 No

Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

17. Do you live within the City limits of the City of Palo Alto?

- No Yes

18. Are you currently employed?

- No → Go to question #19
 Yes → Go to question #18a

18a. What one method of transportation do you usually use (for the longest distance of your commute) to travel to work?

- Motorized vehicle (e.g. car, truck, van, motorcycle etc...)
 Bus, Rail, Subway, or other public transportation
 Walk
 Work at home
 Other

18b. If you checked the motorized vehicle (e.g. car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc.) box in 18a, do other people (adults or children) usually ride with you to or from work?

- No Yes

19. How many years have you lived in Palo Alto?

- Less than 2 years 11-20 years
 2-5 years More than 20 years
 6-10 years

20. Which best describes the building you live in?

- One family house detached from any other houses
 House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)
 Building with two or more apartments or condominiums
 Mobile home
 Other

21. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home...

- Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment?
 Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear?

22. Do any children 12 or under live in your household?

- No Yes

23. Do any teenagers aged between 13 and 17 live in your household?

- No Yes

24. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?

- No Yes

25. Does any member of your household have a physical handicap or is anyone disabled?

- No Yes

26. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (mark one box)

- 12th Grade or less, no diploma
 High school diploma
 Some college, no degree
 Associate's degree (e.g. AA, AS)
 Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, AB, BS)
 Graduate degree or professional degree

27. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)

- Less than \$24,999
 \$25,000 to \$49,999
 \$50,000 to \$99,999
 \$100,000 or more

28. Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?

- No Yes

29. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be)

- American Indian or Alaskan native
 Asian or Pacific Islander
 Black, African American
 White/Caucasian
 Other

30. In which category is your age?

- 18-24 years 55-64 years
 25-34 years 65-74 years
 35-44 years 75 years or older
 45-54 years

31. What is your sex?

- Female Male

32. Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?

- No Yes Don't know

33. Did you vote in the last election?

- No Yes Don't know

34. Are you likely to vote in the next election?

- No Yes Don't know

**Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the postage paid envelope to:
National Research Center, Inc., 3005 30th St., Boulder, CO 80301**

City of Palo Alto

Office of the City Auditor

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The City of Palo Alto, California

Report of Normative
Comparisons
2007



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SURVEY BACKGROUND

About The National Citizen Survey™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The City of Palo Alto staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries NRC used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Palo Alto staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

UNDERSTANDING THE NORMATIVE COMPARISONS

Comparison Data

National Research Center, Inc. has collected citizen surveys conducted in over 500 jurisdictions in the United States. Responses to thousands of survey questions dealing with resident perceptions about the quality of community life and services provided by local government were recorded, analyzed and stored in an electronic database.

The jurisdictions in the database represent a wide geographic and population range as shown in the table below.

Jurisdiction Characteristic	Percent of Jurisdictions
Region	
West Coast ¹	17%
West ²	20%
North Central West ³	11%
North Central East ⁴	13%
South Central ⁵	9%
South ⁶	25%
Northeast West ⁷	3%
Northeast East ⁸	2%
Population	
Less than 40,000	41%
40,000 to 74,999	20%
75,000 to 149,000	16%
150,000 or more	23%

¹ Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii

² Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico

³ North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota

⁴ Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin

⁵ Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas

⁶ West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, Washington DC

⁷ New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey

⁸ Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine

Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity is one we did not want to dismiss because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

Putting Evaluations onto a 100-Point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 1 representing the best rating and 4 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 3 points based on all respondents.

Interpreting the Results

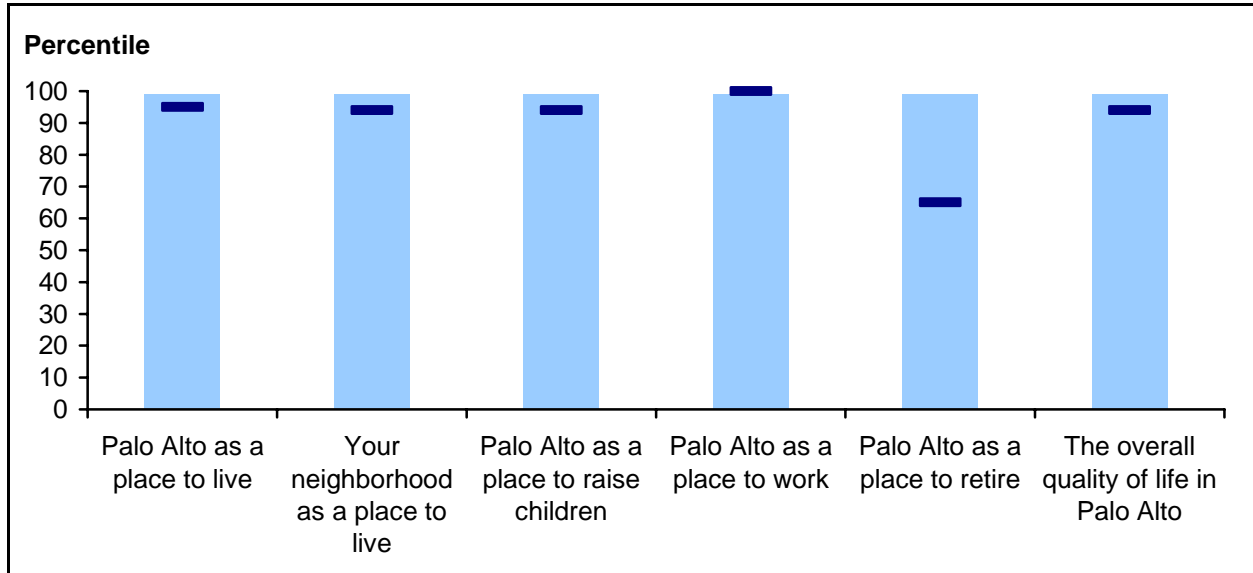
Comparisons are provided when similar questions are included in our database, and there are at least five other jurisdictions in which the question was asked. Where comparisons are available, three numbers are provided in the table. The first column is your jurisdiction's rating on the 100-point scale. The second column is the rank assigned to your jurisdiction's rating among jurisdictions where a similar question was asked. The third column is the number of jurisdictions that asked a similar question. Fourth, the rank is expressed as a percentile to indicate its distance from the top score. This rank (5th highest out of 25 jurisdictions' results, for example) translates to a percentile (the 80th percentile in this example). A percentile indicates the percent of jurisdictions with identical or lower ratings. Therefore, a rating at the 80th percentile would mean that your jurisdiction's rating is equal to or better than 80 percent of the ratings from other jurisdictions. Conversely, 20 percent of the jurisdictions where a similar question was asked had higher ratings.

Alongside the rank and percentile appears a comparison: "above the norm," "below the norm" or "similar to the norm." This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of your jurisdiction's rating to the norm (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked). Differences of no more than 3 points on the 100-point scale between your jurisdiction's ratings and the average based on the appropriate comparisons from the database are considered "statistically significant," and thus are marked as "above" or "below" the norm. When differences between your jurisdiction's ratings and the national norms are less than 3 points, they are marked as "similar to" the norm.

The data are represented visually in a chart that accompanies each table. Your jurisdiction's percentile for each compared item is marked with a black line on the chart.

COMPARISONS

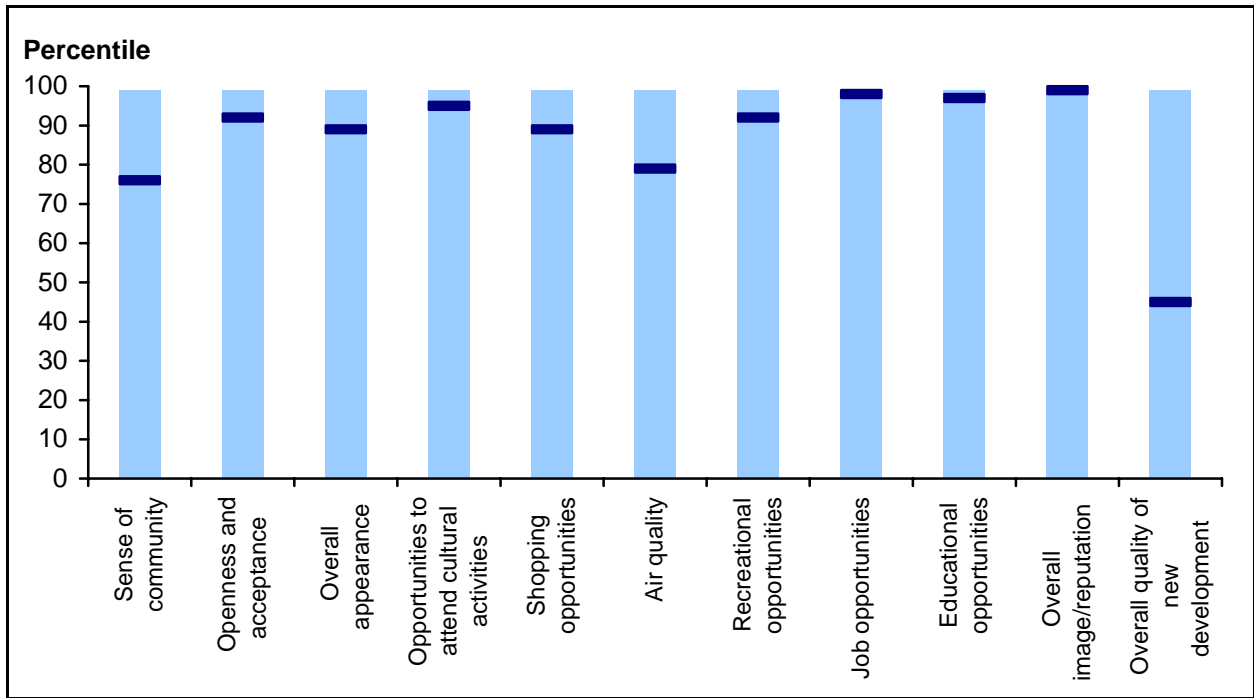
Figure 1: Quality of Life Ratings



Quality of Life Ratings

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to live?	82	12	228	95%ile	Above the norm
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	80	10	159	94%ile	Above the norm
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to raise children?	82	13	199	94%ile	Above the norm
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to work?	79	1	121	100%ile	Above the norm
How do you rate Palo Alto as a place to retire?	59	64	182	65%ile	Above the norm
How do you rate the overall quality of life in Palo Alto?	78	14	237	94%ile	Above the norm

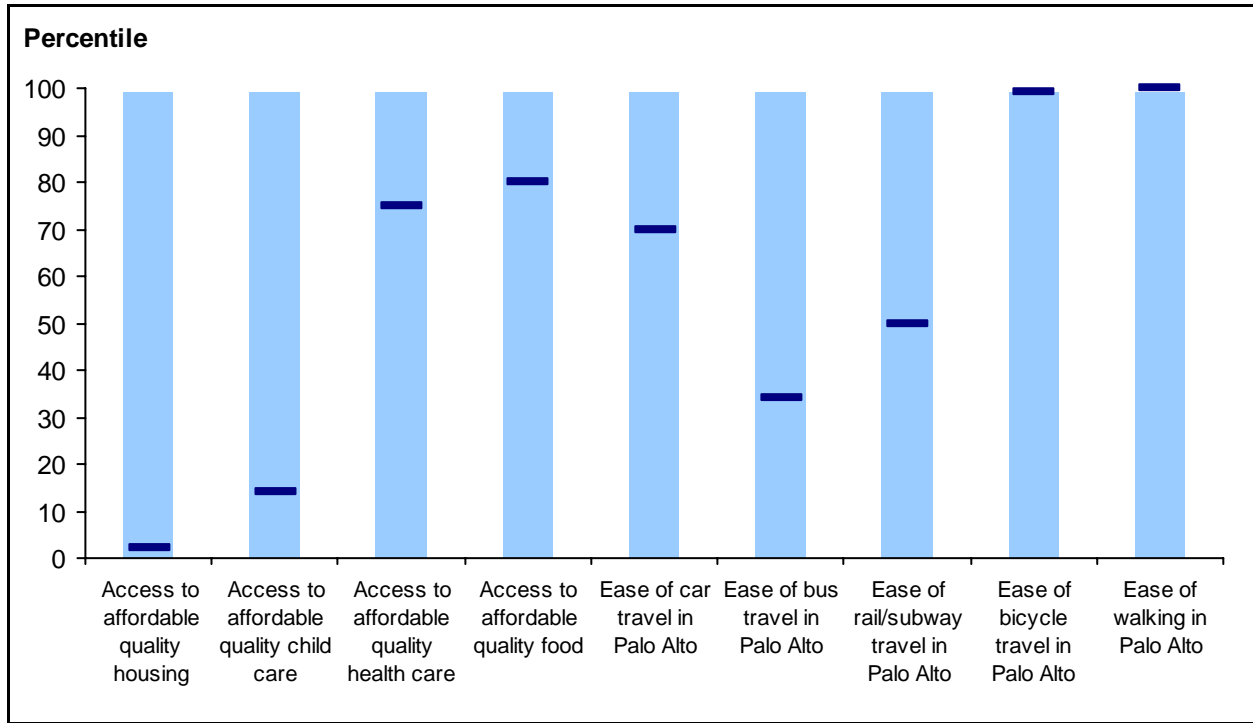
Figure 2: Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities



Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities

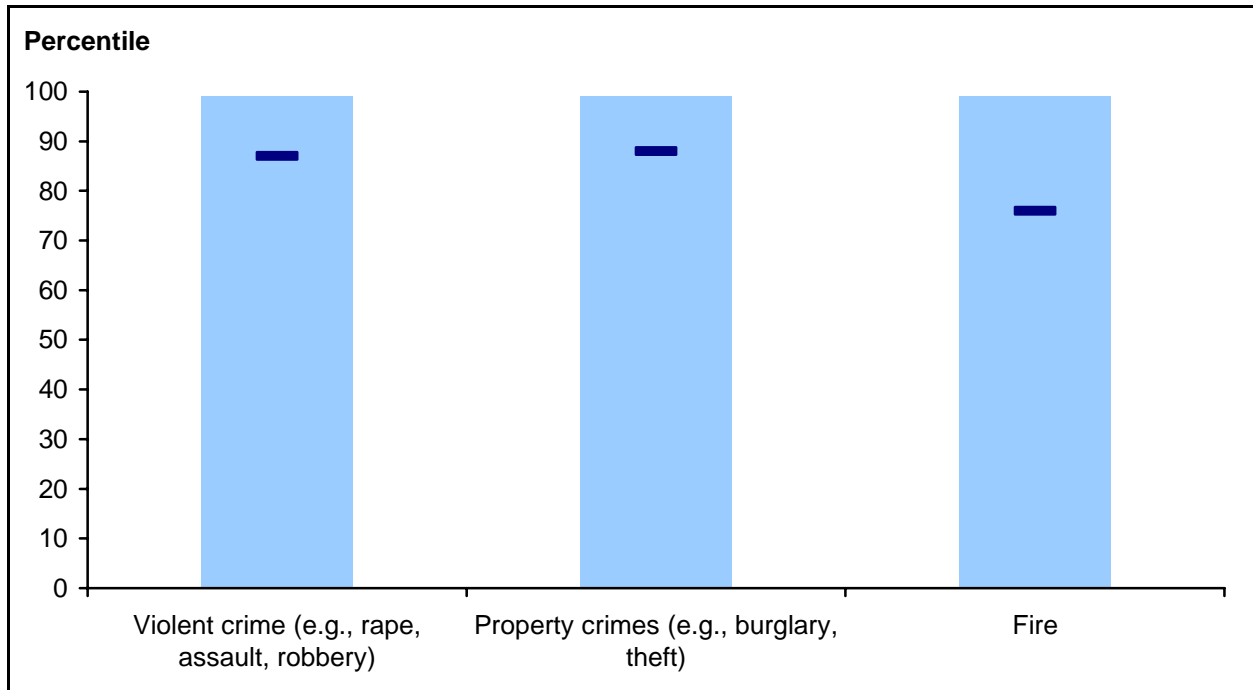
	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Sense of community	62	38	158	76%ile	Above the norm
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	67	12	131	92%ile	Above the norm
Overall appearance of Palo Alto	72	20	180	89%ile	Above the norm
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	70	8	141	95%ile	Above the norm
Shopping opportunities	70	16	141	89%ile	Above the norm
Air quality	67	19	86	79%ile	Above the norm
Recreational opportunities	72	14	155	92%ile	Above the norm
Job opportunities	59	4	164	98%ile	Above the norm
Educational opportunities	84	3	76	97%ile	Above the norm
Overall image/reputation of Palo Alto	80	2	117	99%ile	Above the norm
Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto	52	53	95	45%ile	Similar to the norm

Figure 3: Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility



Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility					
	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Access to affordable quality housing	14	188	192	2%ile	Below the norm
Access to affordable quality child care	32	96	111	14%ile	Below the norm
Access to affordable quality health care	55	26	102	75%ile	Above the norm
Access to affordable quality food	63	10	47	80%ile	Above the norm
Ease of car travel in Palo Alto	57	43	139	70%ile	Above the norm
Ease of bus travel in Palo Alto	39	61	92	34%ile	Below the norm
Ease of rail/subway travel in Palo Alto	52	13	25	50%ile	Above the norm
Ease of bicycle travel in Palo Alto	70	3	141	99%ile	Above the norm
Ease of walking in Palo Alto	77	1	139	100%ile	Above the norm

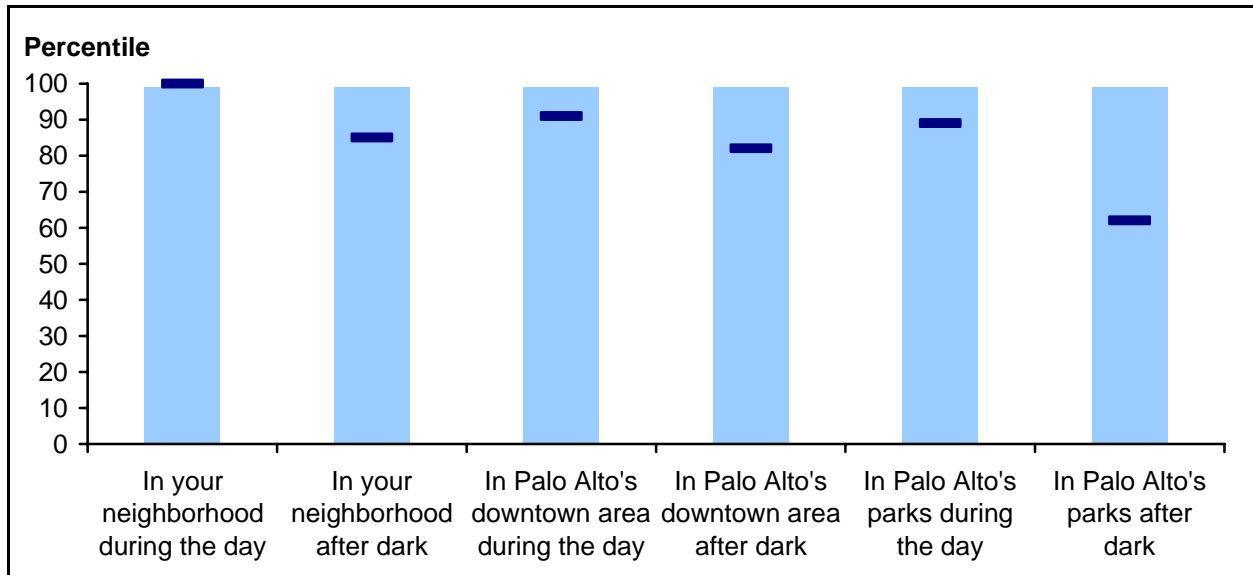
Figure 4: Ratings of Safety from Various Problems



Ratings of Safety From Various Problems

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	83	21	150	87%ile	Above the norm
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	72	18	148	88%ile	Above the norm
Fire	79	36	148	76%ile	Above the norm

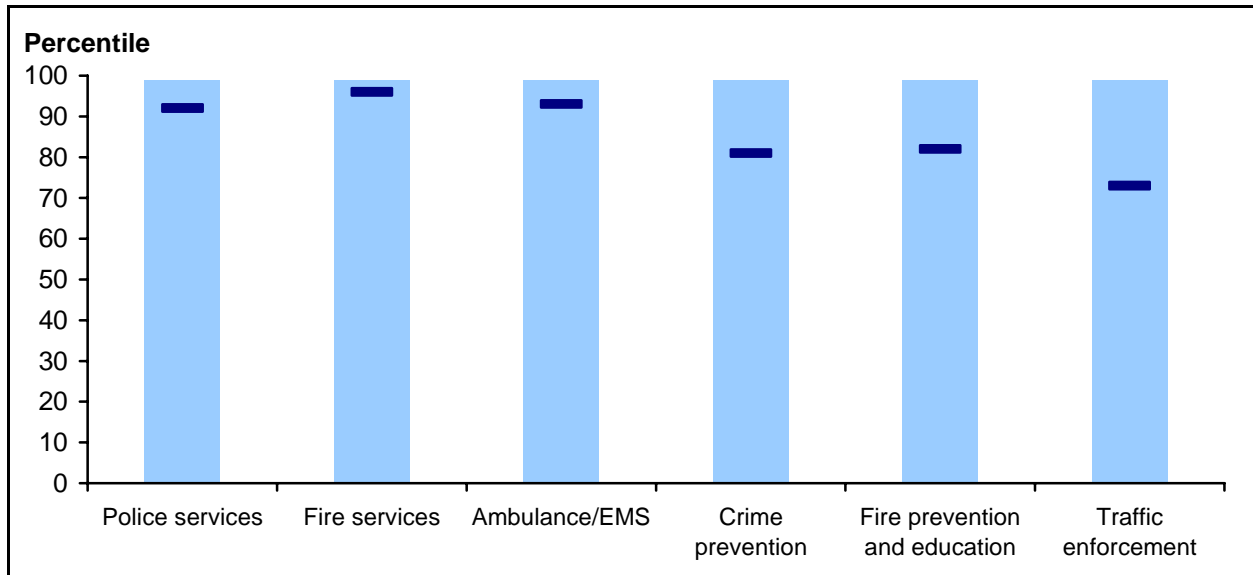
Figure 5: Ratings of Safety in Various Areas



Ratings of Safety in Various Areas

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
In your neighborhood during the day	95	1	180	100%ile	Above the norm
In your neighborhood after dark	79	30	189	85%ile	Above the norm
In Palo Alto's downtown area during the day	92	14	149	91%ile	Above the norm
In Palo Alto's downtown area after dark	73	30	164	82%ile	Above the norm
In Palo Alto's parks during the day	92	17	147	89%ile	Above the norm
In Palo Alto's parks after dark	56	56	147	62%ile	Above the norm

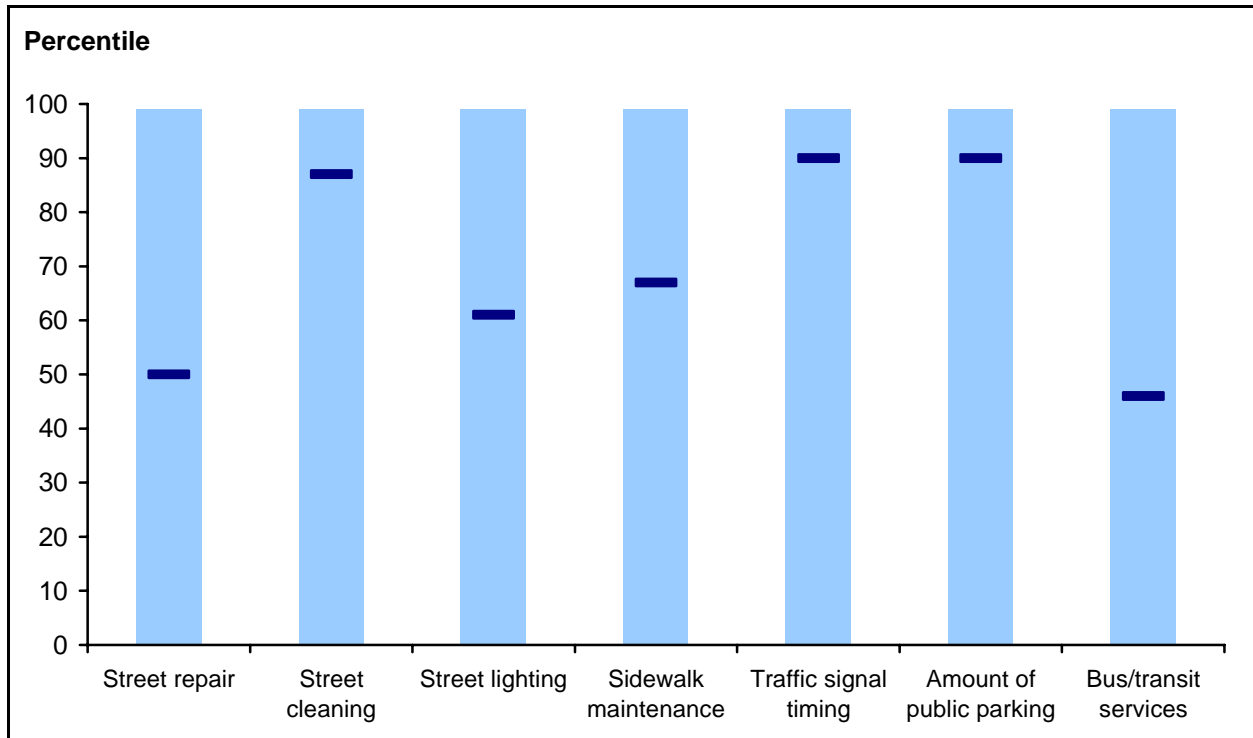
Figure 6: Quality of Public Safety Services



Quality of Public Safety Services

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Police services	76	22	262	92%ile	Above the norm
Fire services	84	10	217	96%ile	Above the norm
Ambulance/emergency medical services	82	14	182	93%ile	Above the norm
Crime prevention	67	31	161	81%ile	Above the norm
Fire prevention and education	70	24	129	82%ile	Above the norm
Traffic enforcement	60	54	196	73%ile	Above the norm

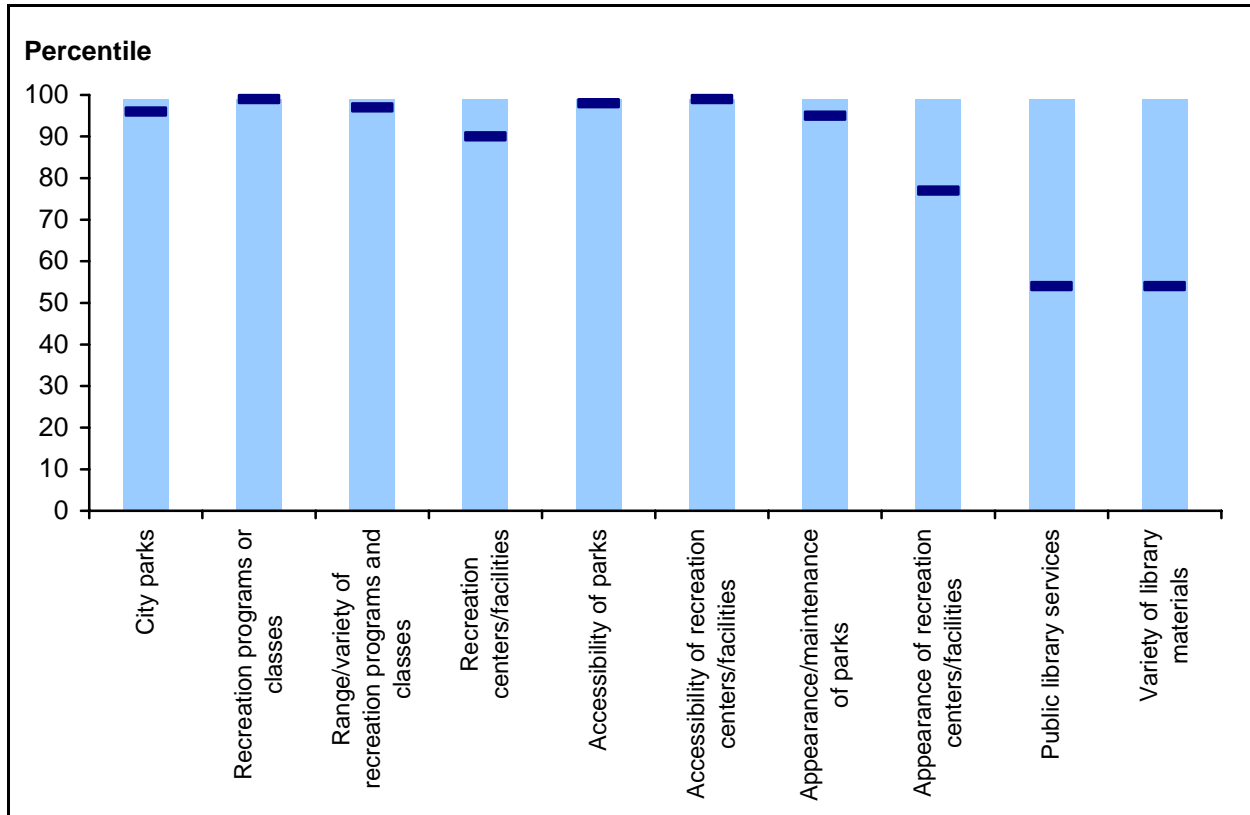
Figure 7: Quality of Transportation Services



Quality of Transportation Services

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Street repair	45	120	240	50%ile	Similar to the norm
Street cleaning	65	23	174	87%ile	Above the norm
Street lighting	55	74	186	61%ile	Similar to the norm
Sidewalk maintenance	52	52	157	67%ile	Above the norm
Traffic signal timing	53	12	114	90%ile	Above the norm
Amount of public parking	57	11	99	90%ile	Above the norm
Bus/transit services	51	62	115	46%ile	Similar to the norm

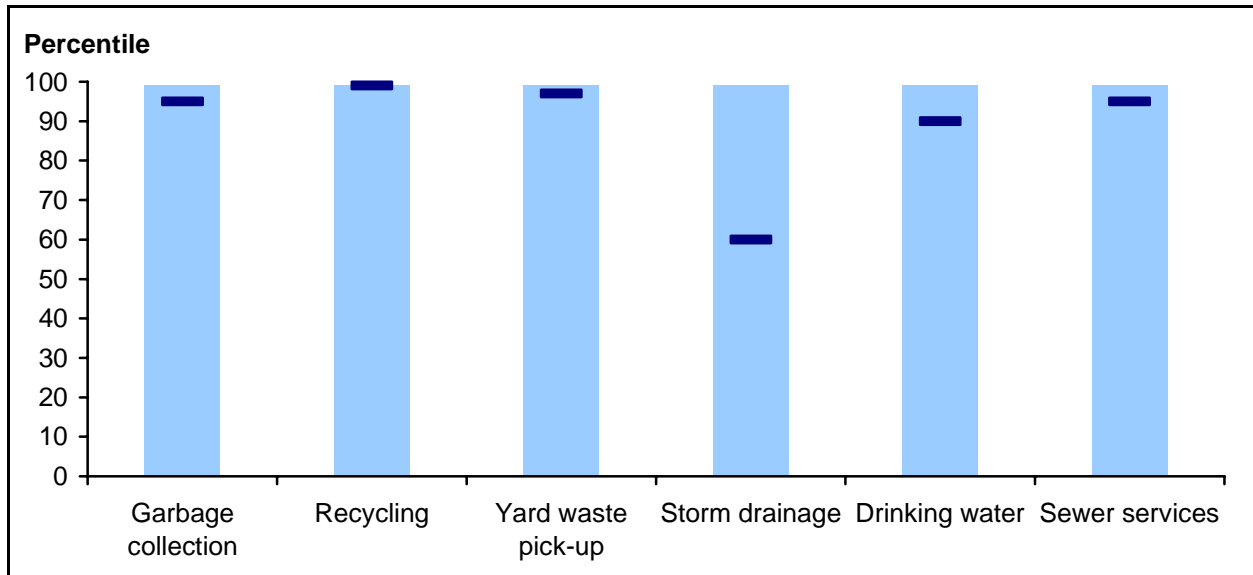
Figure 8: Quality of Leisure Services



Quality of Leisure Services

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
City parks	79	8	174	96%ile	Above the norm
Recreation programs or classes	77	2	186	99%ile	Above the norm
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes	74	5	121	97%ile	Above the norm
Recreation centers/facilities	71	15	144	90%ile	Above the norm
Accessibility of parks	81	3	129	98%ile	Above the norm
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	78	2	96	99%ile	Above the norm
Appearance/maintenance of parks	77	10	173	95%ile	Above the norm
Appearance of recreation centers/facilities	69	24	102	77%ile	Above the norm
Public library services	70	90	194	54%ile	Similar to the norm
Variety of library materials	66	45	97	54%ile	Similar to the norm

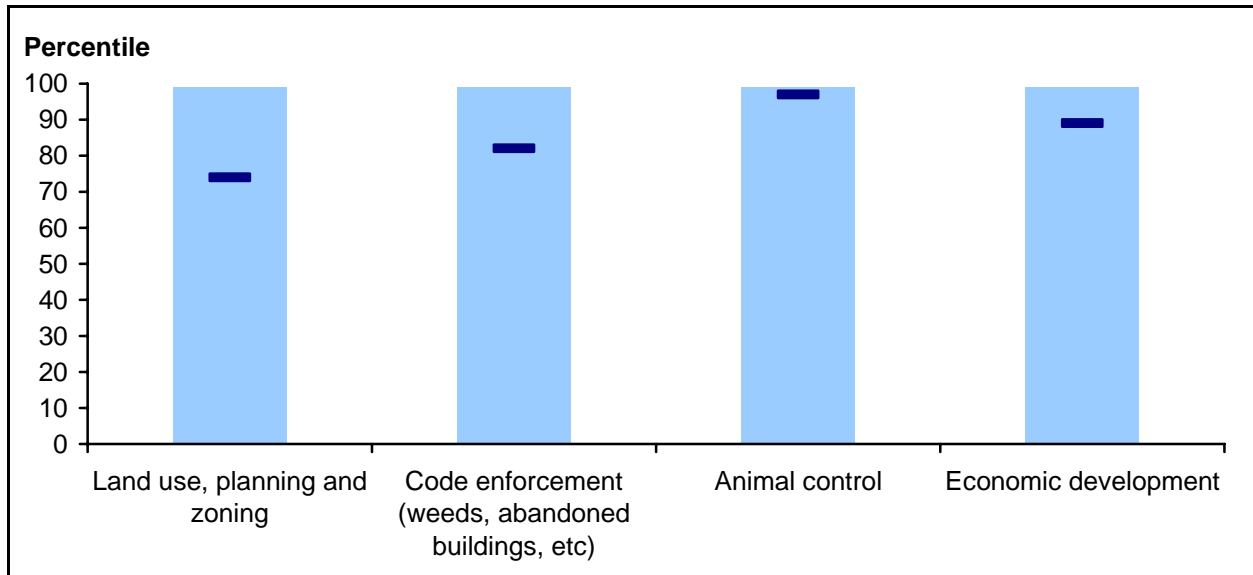
Figure 9: Quality of Utility Services



Quality of Utility Services

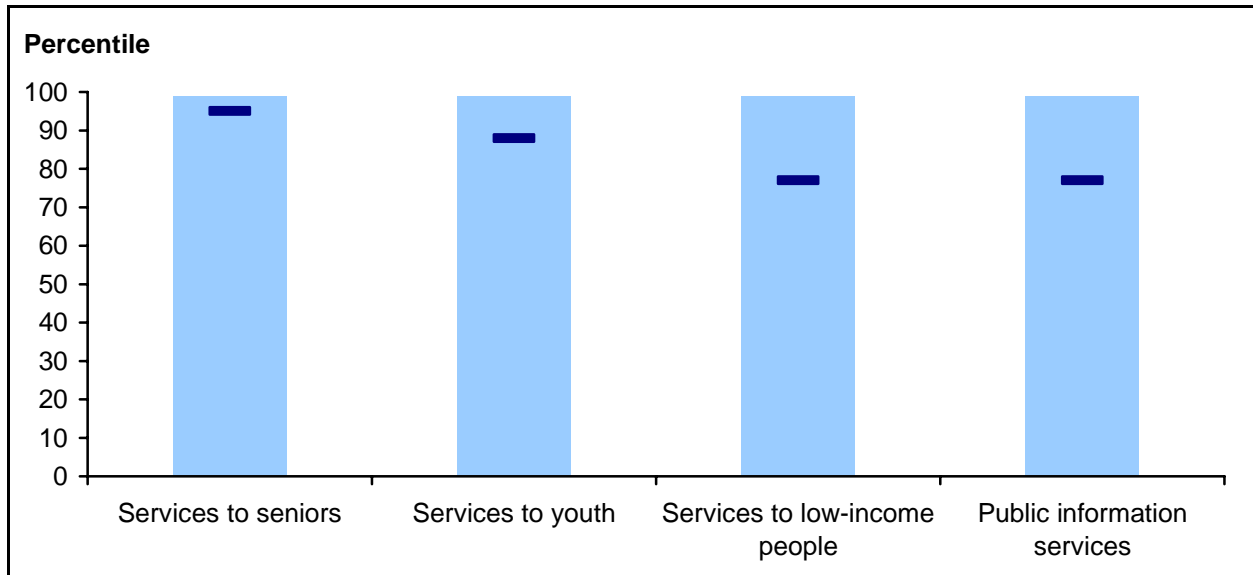
	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Garbage collection	79	12	203	95%ile	Above the norm
Recycling	84	3	173	99%ile	Above the norm
Yard waste pick-up	82	4	116	97%ile	Above the norm
Storm drainage	54	77	189	60%ile	Above the norm
Drinking water	69	16	145	90%ile	Above the norm
Sewer services	70	8	149	95%ile	Above the norm

Figure 10: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services



Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services					
	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Land use, planning and zoning	47	41	152	74%ile	Above the norm
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	55	35	195	82%ile	Above the norm
Animal control	66	6	169	97%ile	Above the norm
Economic development	58	16	142	89%ile	Above the norm

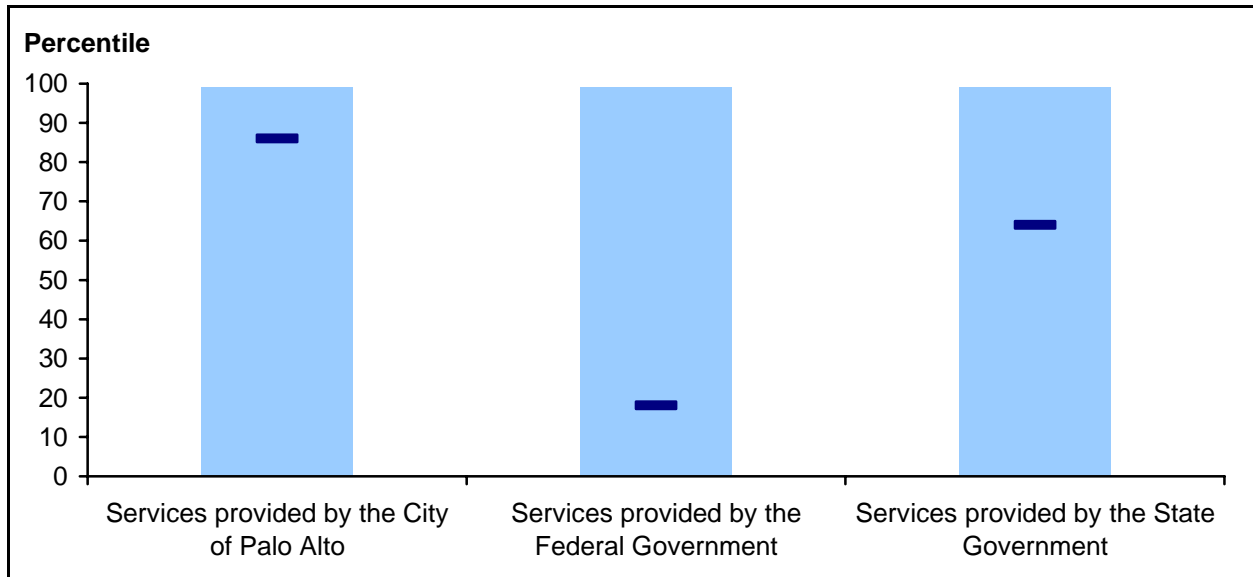
Figure 11: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services



Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services

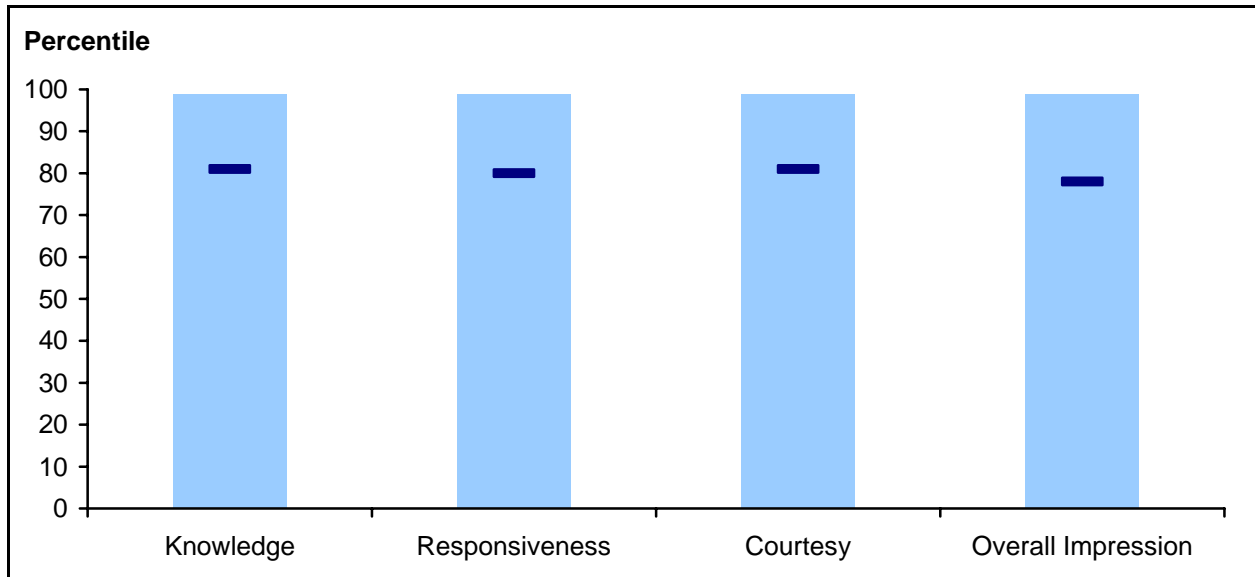
	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Services to seniors	70	8	154	95%ile	Above the norm
Services to youth	63	17	134	88%ile	Above the norm
Services to low-income people	47	27	113	77%ile	Above the norm
Public information services	61	38	163	77%ile	Above the norm

Figure 12: Overall Quality of Services



Overall Quality of Services					
	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Services provided by the City of Palo Alto	69	30	215	86%ile	Above the norm
Services provided by the Federal Government	37	112	136	18%ile	Below the norm
Services provided by the State Government	46	51	138	64%ile	Similar to the norm

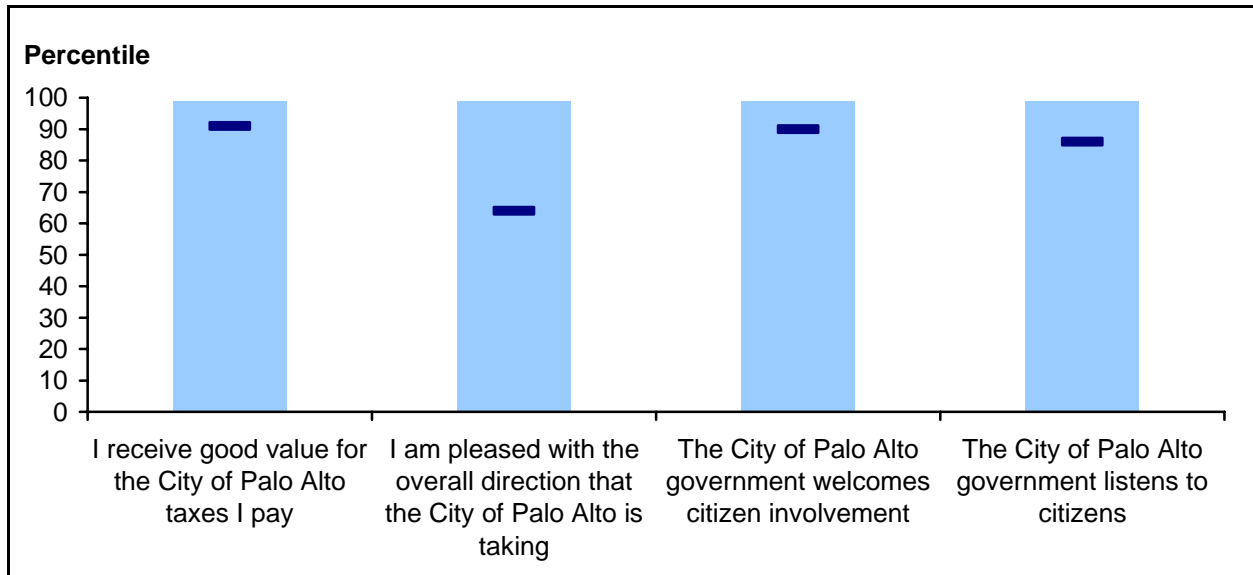
Figure 13: Ratings of Contact with City Employees



Ratings of Contact with the City Employees

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
Knowledge	73	36	182	81%ile	Above the norm
Responsiveness	72	36	180	80%ile	Above the norm
Courtesy	74	29	145	81%ile	Above the norm
Overall Impression	70	46	205	78%ile	Above the norm

Figure 14: Ratings of Public Trust



Ratings of Public Trust

	City of Palo Alto Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Palo Alto Percentile	Comparison of Palo Alto Rating to Norm
I receive good value for the City of Palo Alto taxes I pay	68	18	199	91%ile	Above the norm
I am pleased with the overall direction that the City of Palo Alto is taking	62	59	164	64%ile	Above the norm
The City of Palo Alto government welcomes citizen involvement	70	19	177	90%ile	Above the norm
The City of Palo Alto government listens to citizens	62	22	154	86%ile	Above the norm

APPENDIX A: LIST OF JURISDICTIONS INCLUDED IN NORMATIVE COMPARISONS

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Homer	AK	3,946
Alabaster	AL	22,169
Auburn	AL	42,987
Phenix City	AL	28,265
Fayetteville	AR	58,047
Fort Smith	AR	80,268
Hot Springs	AR	35,613
Siloam Springs	AR	10,000
Avondale	AZ	35,883
Chandler	AZ	176,581
Flagstaff	AZ	52,894
Florence	AZ	17,054
Phoenix	AZ	1,321,045
Safford	AZ	9,232
Scottsdale	AZ	202,705
Sedona	AZ	10,192
Tucson	AZ	486,699
Agoura Hills	CA	20,537
Bellflower	CA	72,878
Benicia	CA	26,865
Burlingame	CA	28,158
Capitola	CA	10,033
Carlsbad	CA	78,247
Chula Vista	CA	173,556
Claremont	CA	33,998
Concord	CA	121,780
Cupertino	CA	50,546
Del Mar	CA	4,389
El Cerrito	CA	23,171

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Galt	CA	19,472
La Mesa	CA	54,749
Laguna Beach	CA	23,727
Livermore	CA	73,345
Lodi	CA	56,999
Long Beach	CA	461,522
Los Angeles	CA	3,694,820
Lynwood	CA	69,845
Mission Viejo	CA	93,102
Morgan Hill	CA	33,556
Mountain View	CA	70,708
Oceanside	CA	161,029
Oxnard	CA	170,358
Palm Springs	CA	42,807
Poway	CA	48,044
Rancho Cordova	CA	55,060
Redding	CA	80,865
Richmond	CA	99,216
Ridgecrest	CA	24,927
Riverside	CA	255,166
San Bernardino County	CA	1,709,434
San Francisco	CA	776,733
San Jose	CA	894,943
San Ramon	CA	44,722
Santa Barbara County	CA	399,347
Santa Monica	CA	84,084
Sunnyvale	CA	131,760
Walnut Creek	CA	64,296
Archuleta County	CO	9,898
Arvada	CO	102,153
Boulder	CO	94,673
Boulder County	CO	291,288
Broomfield	CO	38,272
Castle Rock	CO	20,224
Denver (City and County)	CO	554,636

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Douglas County	CO	175,766
Durango	CO	13,922
Englewood	CO	31,727
Fort Collins	CO	118,652
Fruita	CO	6,478
Golden	CO	17,159
Greenwood Village	CO	11,035
Highlands Ranch	CO	70,931
Jefferson County	CO	527,056
Lakewood	CO	144,126
Larimer County	CO	251,494
Lone Tree	CO	4,873
Longmont	CO	71,093
Louisville	CO	18,937
Loveland	CO	50,608
Mesa County	CO	116,255
Northglenn	CO	31,575
Parker	CO	23,558
Thornton	CO	82,384
Westminster	CO	100,940
Wheat Ridge	CO	32,913
West Hartford	CT	63,589
Wethersfield	CT	26,271
Windsor	CT	28,237
Dover	DE	32,135
Belleair Beach	FL	1,751
Bonita Springs	FL	32,797
Bradenton	FL	49,504
Brevard County	FL	476,230
Broward County	FL	1,623,018
Cape Coral	FL	102,286
Charlotte County	FL	141,627
Clearwater	FL	108,787
Cooper City	FL	27,939
Coral Springs	FL	117,549

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Dania Beach	FL	20,061
Daytona Beach	FL	64,112
Delray Beach	FL	60,020
Duval County	FL	778,879
Eustis	FL	15,106
Kissimmee	FL	47,814
Melbourne	FL	71,382
Miami Beach	FL	87,933
Miami-Dade County	FL	2,253,362
North Port	FL	22,797
Oakland Park	FL	30,966
Ocoee	FL	24,391
Oldsmar	FL	11,910
Oviedo	FL	26,316
Palm Bay	FL	79,413
Palm Beach	FL	10,468
Palm Beach County	FL	1,131,184
Palm Beach Gardens	FL	35,058
Palm Coast	FL	32,732
Pinellas County	FL	921,482
Port Orange	FL	45,823
Sarasota	FL	52,715
Seminole	FL	10,890
South Daytona	FL	13,177
Tallahassee	FL	150,624
Titusville	FL	40,670
Volusia County	FL	443,343
Walton County	FL	40,601
Cartersville	GA	15,925
Columbus	GA	185,781
Decatur	GA	18,147
Macon	GA	97,255
Milledgeville	GA	18,757
Smyrna	GA	40,999
Honolulu	HI	876,156

The City of Palo Alto Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Maui	HI	128,094
Ames	IA	50,731
Ankeny	IA	27,117
Bettendorf	IA	31,275
Cedar Falls	IA	36,145
Clarke County	IA	9,133
Davenport	IA	98,359
Des Moines	IA	198,682
Indianola	IA	12,998
Iowa County	IA	15,671
Marion	IA	7,144
Newton	IA	15,579
Polk County	IA	374,601
Sheldahl	IA	336
Slater	IA	1,306
Urbandale	IA	29,072
Waukee	IA	5,126
West Des Moines	IA	46,403
Boise	ID	185,787
Moscow	ID	21,291
Batavia	IL	23,866
DeKalb	IL	39,018
Elmhurst	IL	42,762
Evanston	IL	74,239
Gurnee	IL	28,834
Highland Park	IL	31,365
Homewood	IL	19,543
Lincolnwood	IL	12,359
Naperville	IL	128,358
O'Fallon	IL	21,910
Palatine	IL	65,479
Shorewood	IL	7,686
Skokie	IL	63,348
Village of Oak Park	IL	52,524
Woodridge	IL	30,934

The City of Palo Alto Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Fishers	IN	37,835
Fort Wayne	IN	205,727
Gary	IN	102,746
Munster	IN	21,511
Calgary	INT	878,866
District of Saanich, Victoria	INT	103,654
North Vancouver	INT	44,303
Prince Albert	INT	34,291
Thunder Bay	INT	109,016
Winnipeg	INT	619,544
Arkansas City	KS	11,963
Lenexa	KS	40,238
Merriam	KS	11,008
Olathe	KS	92,962
Overland Park	KS	149,080
Salina	KS	45,679
Wichita	KS	344,284
Ashland	KY	21,981
Bowling Green	KY	49,296
Daviess County	KY	91,545
Lexington	KY	260,512
Jefferson Parish	LA	455,466
New Orleans	LA	484,674
Orleans Parish	LA	484,674
Andover	MA	31,247
Barnstable	MA	47,821
Cambridge	MA	101,355
Shrewsbury	MA	31,640
Worcester	MA	172,648
College Park	MD	242,657
Rockville	MD	47,388
Saco	ME	16,822
Ann Arbor	MI	114,024
Battle Creek	MI	53,364
Delhi Township	MI	22,569

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Detroit	MI	951,270
Meridian Charter Township	MI	38,987
Novi	MI	47,386
Ottawa County	MI	238,314
Sault Sainte Marie	MI	16,542
Troy	MI	80,959
Village of Howard City	MI	1,585
Blue Earth	MN	3,621
Carver County	MN	70,205
Chanhassen	MN	20,321
Dakota County	MN	355,904
Duluth	MN	86,918
Fridley	MN	27,449
Grand Forks	MN	231
Hutchinson	MN	13,080
Mankato	MN	32,427
Maplewood	MN	34,947
Medina	MN	4,005
Minneapolis	MN	382,618
North Branch	MN	8,023
Polk County	MN	31,369
Prior Lake	MN	15,917
Scott County	MN	89,498
St. Cloud	MN	59,107
St. Louis County	MN	200,528
St. Paul	MN	287,151
Washington County	MN	201,130
Blue Springs	MO	48,080
Columbia	MO	84,531
Ellisville	MO	9,104
Grandview	MO	24,881
Independence	MO	113,288
Joplin	MO	45,504
Kansas City	MO	441,545
Lee's Summit	MO	70,700

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Maryland Heights	MO	25,756
Maryville	MO	10,581
O'Fallon	MO	46,169
Platte City	MO	3,866
Springfield	MO	151,580
Biloxi	MS	50,644
Starkville	MS	21,869
Bozeman	MT	27,509
Cary	NC	94,536
Charlotte	NC	540,828
Concord	NC	55,977
Durham	NC	187,038
Hudson	NC	3,078
Knightdale	NC	5,958
Wilmington	NC	90,400
Grand Forks	ND	49,321
Cedar Creek	NE	396
Kearney	NE	27,431
Dover	NH	26,884
Lyme	NH	1,679
Willingboro Township	NJ	33,008
Alamogordo	NM	35,582
Albuquerque	NM	448,607
Bloomfield	NM	6,417
Farmington	NM	37,844
Los Alamos County	NM	18,343
Taos	NM	4,700
Carson City	NV	52,457
Henderson	NV	175,381
North Las Vegas	NV	115,488
Reno	NV	180,480
Sparks	NV	66,346
Washoe County	NV	339,486
Beekman	NY	11,452
Canandaigua	NY	11,264

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Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Rye	NY	14,955
Akron	OH	217,074
Columbus	OH	711,470
Delaware	OH	25,243
Dublin	OH	31,392
Hudson	OH	22,439
Lebanon	OH	16,962
Sandusky	OH	27,844
Westerville	OH	35,318
Broken Arrow	OK	74,839
Edmond	OK	68,315
Oklahoma City	OK	506,132
Stillwater	OK	39,065
Ashland	OR	19,522
Corvallis	OR	49,322
Gresham	OR	90,205
Lake Oswego	OR	35,278
Portland	OR	529,121
Springfield	OR	52,864
Borough of Ebensburg	PA	3,091
Cumberland County	PA	213,674
Ephrata Borough	PA	13,213
Philadelphia	PA	1,517,550
State College	PA	38,420
Upper Merion Township	PA	28,863
East Providence	RI	48,688
Newport	RI	26,475
Columbia	SC	116,278
Greenville	SC	10,468
Mauldin	SC	15,224
Myrtle Beach	SC	22,759
Pickens County	SC	110,757
Rock Hill	SC	49,765
Cookeville	TN	23,923
Oak Ridge	TN	27,387

The City of Palo Alto Citizen Survey

Jurisdictions in Comparisons

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Arlington	TX	332,969
Austin	TX	656,562
Benbrook	TX	20,208
Bryan	TX	34,733
Corpus Christi	TX	277,454
Dallas	TX	1,188,580
Duncanville	TX	36,081
El Paso	TX	563,662
Fort Worth	TX	534,694
Grand Prairie	TX	127,427
Irving	TX	191,615
Lewisville	TX	77,737
McAllen	TX	106,414
Missouri City	TX	52,913
Pasadena	TX	141,674
Round Rock	TX	61,136
San Marcos	TX	34,733
Shenandoah	TX	1,503
Sugar Land	TX	63,328
The Colony	TX	26,531
Farmington	UT	12,081
Riverdale	UT	7,656
Washington City	UT	8,186
Albemarle County	VA	79,236
Arlington County	VA	189,453
Bedford County	VA	60,371
Blacksburg	VA	39,357
Botetourt County	VA	30,496
Chesterfield County	VA	259,903
Hanover County	VA	86,320
Hopewell	VA	22,354
Lynchburg	VA	65,269
Newport News	VA	180,150
Northampton County	VA	13,093
Prince William County	VA	280,813

Jurisdiction Name	State	2000 Population
Stafford County	VA	92,446
Staunton	VA	23,853
Virginia Beach	VA	425,257
Williamsburg	VA	11,998
Chittenden County	VT	146,571
Bellevue	WA	109,569
Bellingham	WA	67,171
Kent	WA	79,524
King County	WA	1,737,034
Kirkland	WA	45,054
Kitsap County	WA	231,969
Lynnwood	WA	33,847
Marysville	WA	12,268
Ocean Shores	WA	3,836
Pasco	WA	32,066
Richland	WA	38,708
Tacoma	WA	193,556
Vancouver	WA	143,560
Appleton	WI	70,087
Ashland County	WI	16,866
Eau Claire	WI	61,704
Milton	WI	5,132
Ozaukee County	WI	82,317
Suamico	WI	8,686
Superior	WI	27,368
Village of Brown Deer	WI	12,170
Wausau	WI	38,426
Wauwatosa	WI	47,271
Whitewater	WI	13,437
Morgantown	WV	26,809
Cheyenne	WY	53,011
Gillette	WY	19,646
Teton County	WY	18,251

APPENDIX B: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CITIZEN SURVEY DATABASE

What is in the citizen survey database?

NRC's database includes the results from citizen surveys conducted in over 500 jurisdictions in the United States. These are public opinion polls answered by hundreds of thousands of residents around the country. We have recorded, analyzed and stored responses to thousands of survey questions dealing with resident perceptions about the quality of community life and public trust and residents' report of their use of public facilities. Respondents to these surveys are intended to represent over 50 million Americans.

What kinds of questions are included?

Residents' ratings of the quality of virtually every kind of local government service are included – from police, fire and trash haul to animal control, planning and cemeteries. Many dimensions of quality of life are included such as feeling of safety and opportunities for dining, recreation and shopping as well as ratings of the overall quality of community life and community as a place to raise children and retire.

What is so unique about National Research Center's Citizen Survey database?

It is the only database of its size that contains the people's perceptions about government service delivery and quality of life. For example, others use government statistics about crime to deduce the quality of police services or speed of pot hole repair to draw conclusions about the quality of street maintenance. Only National Research Center's database adds the opinion of service recipients themselves to the service quality equation. We believe that conclusions about service or community quality are made prematurely if opinions of the community's residents themselves are missing.

What is the database used for?

Benchmarking. Our clients use the comparative information in the database to help interpret their own citizen survey results, to create or revise community plans, to evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions, to measure local government performance. We don't know what is small or tall without comparing. Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. So many surveys of service satisfaction turn up at least "good" citizen evaluations that we need to know how others rate their services to understand if "good" is good enough. Furthermore, in the absence of national or peer community comparisons, a jurisdiction is left with comparing its fire protection rating to its street maintenance rating. That comparison is unfair. Streets always lose to fire. We need to ask more important and harder questions. We need to know how our residents' ratings of fire service compare to opinions about fire service in other communities.

So what if we find that our public opinions are better or – for that matter – worse than opinions in other communities? What does it mean?

A police department that provides the fastest and most efficient service—one that closes most of its cases, solves most of its crimes and keeps the crime rate low—still has a problem to fix if its clients believe services are not very good compared to ratings received by objectively “worse” departments.

National Research Center’s database can help that police department – or any city department – to understand how well citizens think it is doing. Without the comparative data from National Research Center’s database, it would be like bowling in a tournament without knowing what the other teams are scoring. We recommend that citizen opinion be used in conjunction with other sources of data to help managers know how to respond to comparative results.

Aren’t comparisons of questions from different surveys like comparing apples and oranges?

It is true that you can’t simply take a given result from one survey and compare it to the result from a different survey. National Research Center, Inc. principals have pioneered and reported their methods for converting all survey responses to the same scale. Because scales responses will differ among types of survey questions, National Research Center, Inc. statisticians have developed statistical algorithms, which adjust question results based on many characteristics of the question, its scale and the survey methods. All results are then converted to the PTM (percent to maximum) scale with a minimum score of 0 (equaling the lowest possible rating) to a maximum score of 100 (equaling the highest possible rating). We then can provide a norm that not only controls for question differences, but also controls for differences in types of survey methods. This way we put all questions on the same scale and a norm can be offered for communities of given sizes or in various regions.

How can managers trust the comparability of results?

Principals of National Research Center, Inc. have submitted their work to peer reviewed scholarly journals where its publication fully describes the rigor of our methods and the quality of our findings. We have published articles in *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* and *Governing*, and we wrote a book, *Citizen Surveys: How to do them, how to use them, what they mean*, that describes in detail how survey responses can be adjusted to provide fair comparisons for ratings among many jurisdictions. Our work on calculating national norms for resident opinions about service delivery and quality of life won the Samuel C. May award for research excellence from the Western Governmental Research Association.