

Resident perceptions about Quality of Life and City Services in San José

# RESIDENT SURVEY

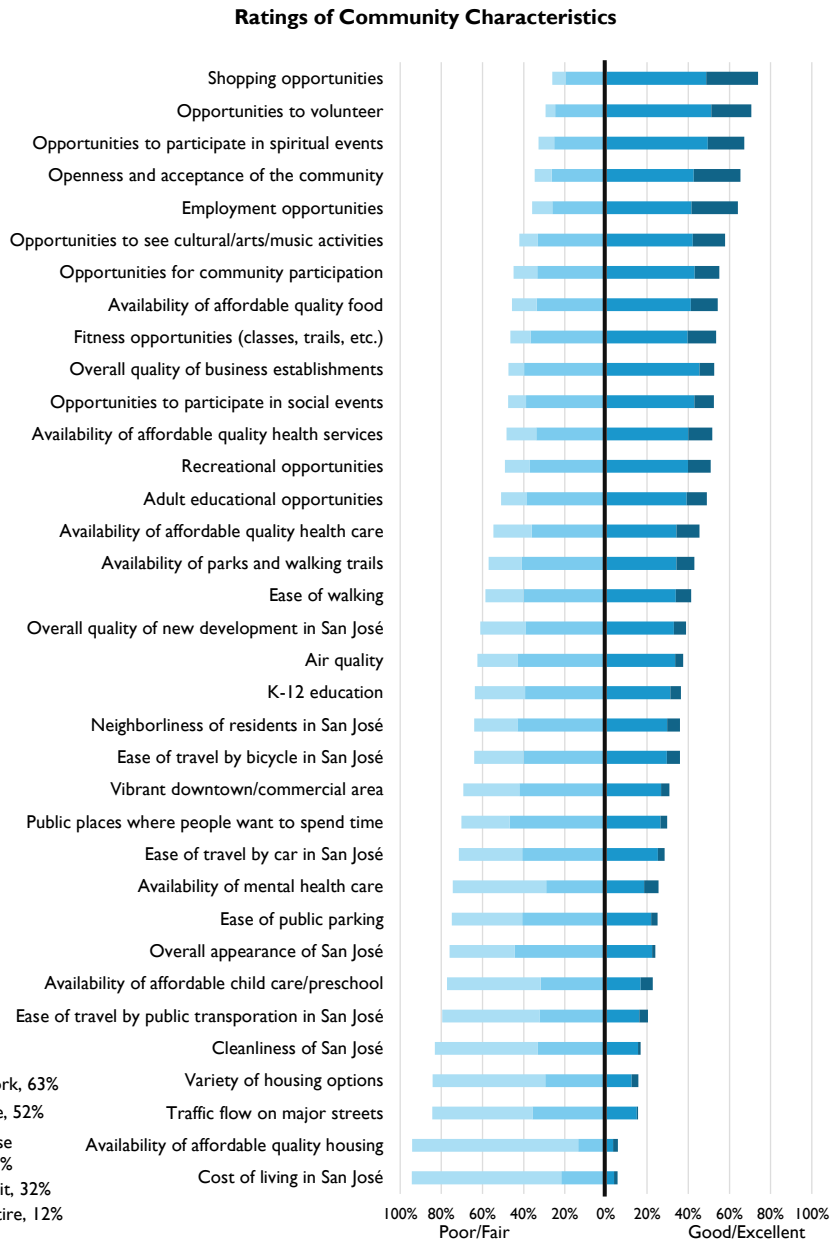
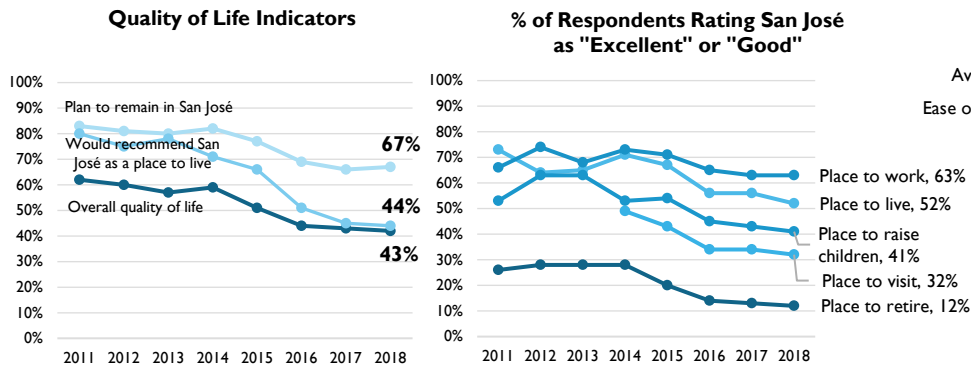
2018 marked San José's eighth year of participation in The National Citizen Survey™ (referred to throughout this report as the resident survey). The National Citizen Survey™ is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The survey was developed by NRC to provide a statistically valid sampling of resident opinions about their community and services provided by local government. Survey results in this chapter and in the following chapters provide the opinions of 3,688 residents of the City who responded to either a mail or online survey.

Complete survey results are posted online at [sanjoseca.gov/servicesreport](http://sanjoseca.gov/servicesreport). The end of this chapter provides more specific information about the survey methodology.

## QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN JOSÉ

How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. This can include opinions about a community's natural and built environments; the availability of services and amenities; overall feelings about safety or the economic health of the community; and other aspects of life.

Several aspects of community quality were rated highly by survey respondents, including shopping opportunities and opportunities to volunteer. Most ratings from 2018 are similar compared to those from 2017. Positive results on employment opportunities increased from 58 percent to 64 in the past year. The availability of affordable housing and the cost of living remain the lowest rated community characteristics.

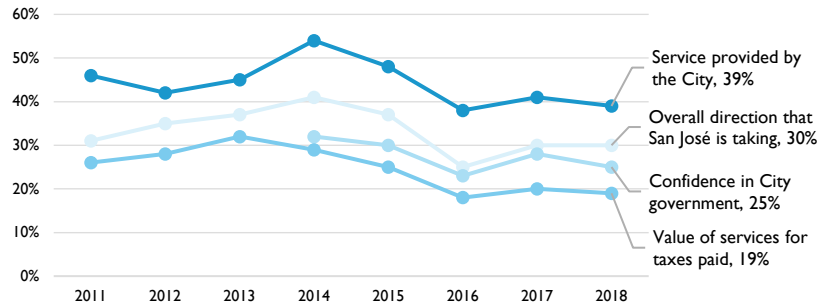


## CITYWIDE QUALITY OF SERVICES

In the resident survey, the percentage of surveyed residents that rated the overall quality of City services “excellent” or “good” is about the same as last year. However, it is still down from prior years.

Satisfaction with specific government services ranges from a high of 82 percent of residents rating fire services as “excellent” or “good” to a low of 13 percent for code enforcement. Other highly rated government services include the ease of using the Mineta San José International Airport (SJC); public libraries; and recycling, garbage, and yard waste pick-up. More information on survey results related to specific services can be found in individual department pages later in this report.

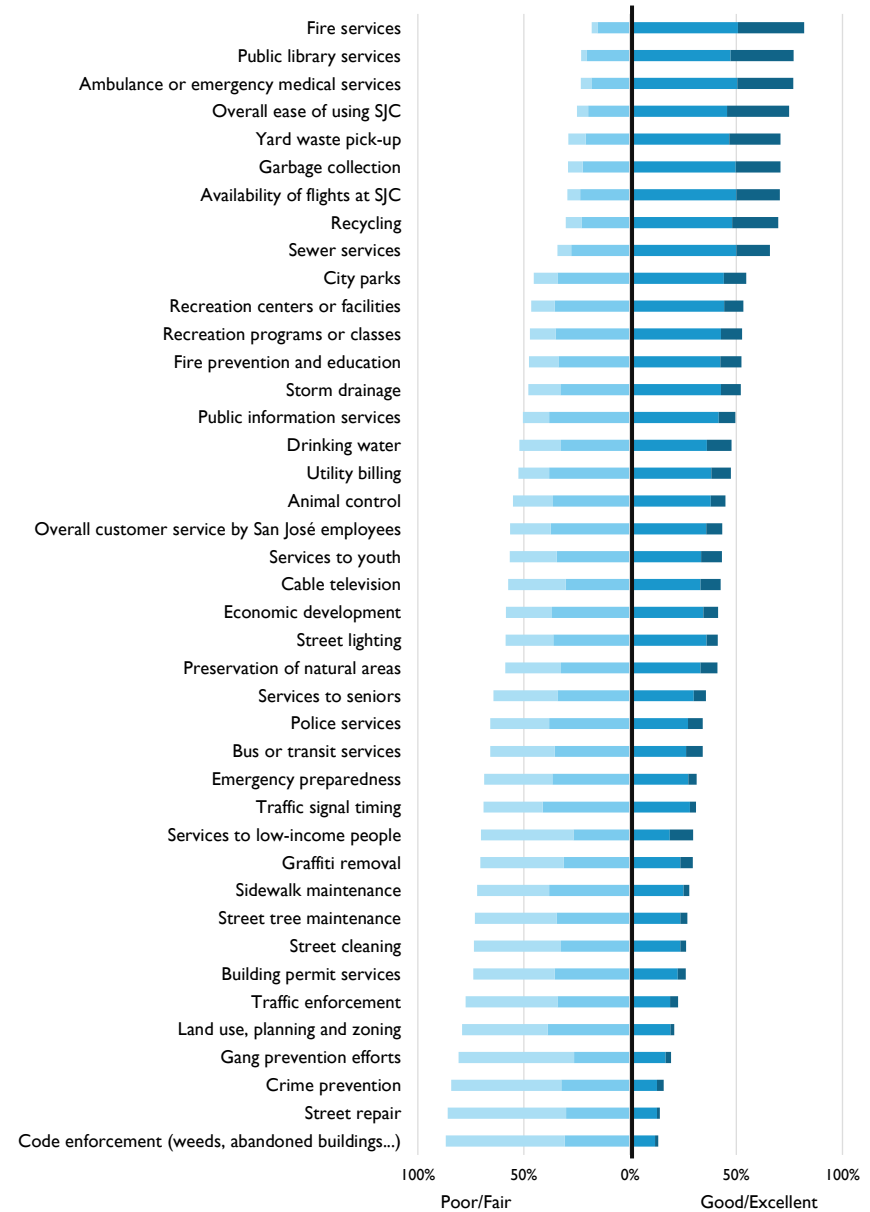
**% of Respondents Rating as "Excellent" or "Good"**



**Perception of Governance**



**Quality of Government Services**



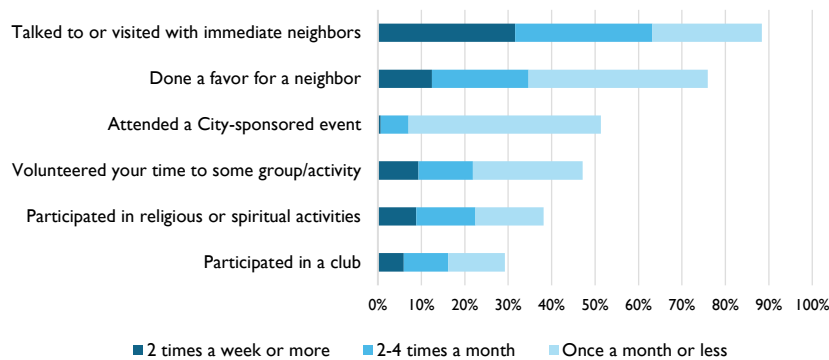
# RESIDENT SURVEY

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & CITYWIDE PUBLIC TRUST

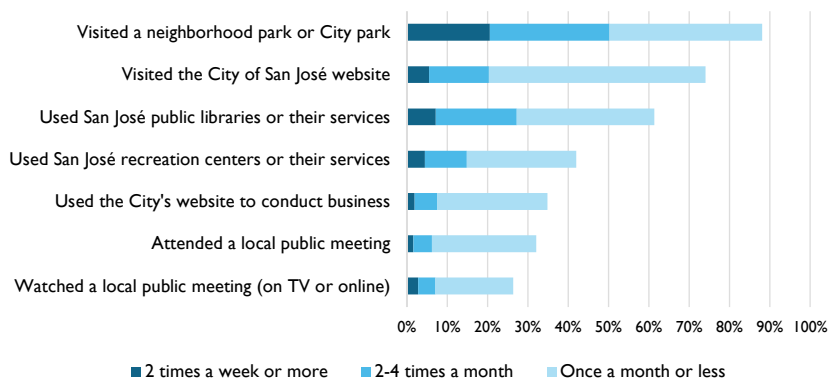
The resident survey also asked residents a variety of questions about their participation in the community, contact with City government, and confidence in San José's governance. Nearly three in four respondents said that they think it is essential or very important for San José to focus on sense of community in the next two years (just 26 percent of respondents rated San José's sense of community positively).

Public participation has increased in recent years. Fifty-five percent of respondents said they had contacted the City of San José (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information in the past year.

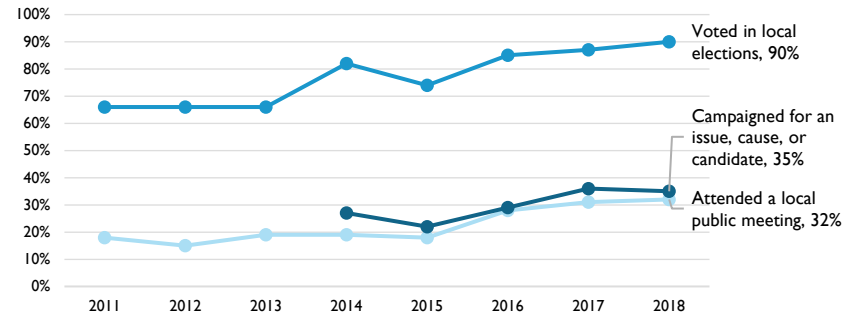
**Participation in the San José Community**



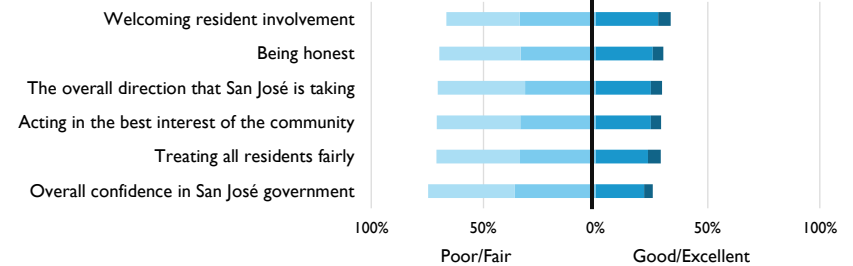
**Contact with City Government**



**Public Participation in San José**



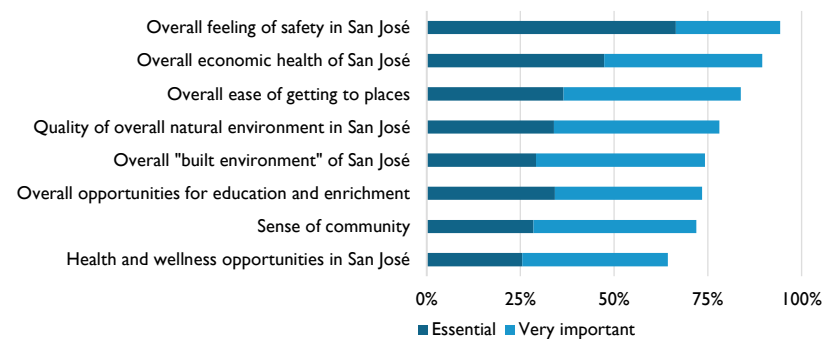
**Public Trust and Confidence in City Government**



## PRIORITY ISSUES FOR RESIDENTS

Residents were asked to assess priorities for the San José community to focus on in the coming two years. Nearly all respondents felt that it was essential or very important to focus on the overall feeling of safety in San José and nearly nine out of ten residents also felt it was essential or very important to focus on economic health.

**Resident Priorities in San San José**



## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey data presented in this report was collected and analyzed by the [National Research Center, Inc.](#) on behalf of the the City Auditor's Office.

The survey consultant mailed surveys to a statistically valid sample of 3,000 San José households in August 2018. They also sent postcards to an additional 1,000 random households inviting residents to complete the survey online. (Of these, 80 were returned to sender.) Completed surveys were received from 613 residents, for a response rate of 16 percent.

The consultant selected survey respondents at random and tracked survey responses by each quadrant of the City (Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, Southwest). Participation was encouraged with multiple mailings; self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes; and three language choices—English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The survey consultant statistically re-weighted results, as necessary, to reflect the actual demographic composition of the entire community.

An additional 3,075 residents completed an online “opt-in” survey, which was publicized through a press release and social media. A link to the survey was also posted on the City's website. The survey consultant has protocols to review the integrity of “opt-in” survey responses, such as checking for repeat IP addresses.

Upon completion of data collection of both the mail and “opt-in” surveys, the survey consultant compared data from the two samples to determine whether it was appropriate to combine, or blend, both samples together. Based on the similarity of the mail and “opt-in” sample characteristics, the survey consultant determined that the two samples could be blended.

To blend the data, the consultant weighted “opt-in” survey data using a calibration technique that takes into consideration behavioral characteristics of the sample, as well as demographic data. This calibration technique reduces the differences that may occur between the mail and “opt-in” samples by using the mail results to inform the weighting scheme of the “opt-in” sample. To do this, the survey consultant calculated an index score based on respondents' levels of engagement in the community (e.g., contact with City employees, recreation center use, frequency of volunteering). They then categorized index scores into four equal groups and used the “norms” for the categorized index scores from the random mail sample as part of the weighting scheme for the “opt-in” sample.

The precision of estimates made from surveys are usually described by a “level of confidence” and accompanying “confidence interval” (or margin of error). A traditional level of confidence, and the one used here, is 95 percent. The margin of error around results for this survey is plus or minus two percentage points. With this margin of error, one may conclude that when 60 percent of survey respondents report that a particular service is “excellent” or “good,” somewhere between 58 to 62 percent of all residents are likely to feel that way. Differences between 2017 and 2018 results can be considered statistically significant if they are plus or minus six percentage points.

For complete methodology, see Appendix C of the Technical Appendices, posted online at [sanjoseca.gov/servicesreport](http://sanjoseca.gov/servicesreport).

