

Resident perceptions about quality of life and City services in San José

COMMUNITY SURVEY

2023 marked San José's third year of participation in the Community Opinion Survey (referred to throughout this report as the community survey). The survey was developed by True North Research (working closely with the City Auditor's Office and the City Manager's Office) 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 1,048 randomly selected residents of the city who responded by telephone or online. The survey was administered in four languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Complete survey results are posted online at sanjoseca.gov/servicesreport and include breakdowns by demographics and geography. The end of this chapter provides more specific information about the survey methodology.

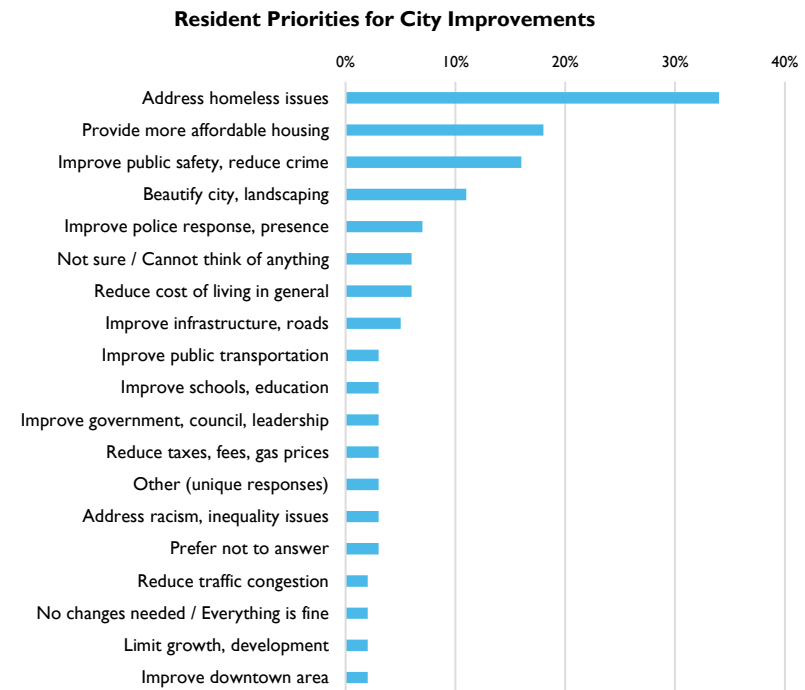
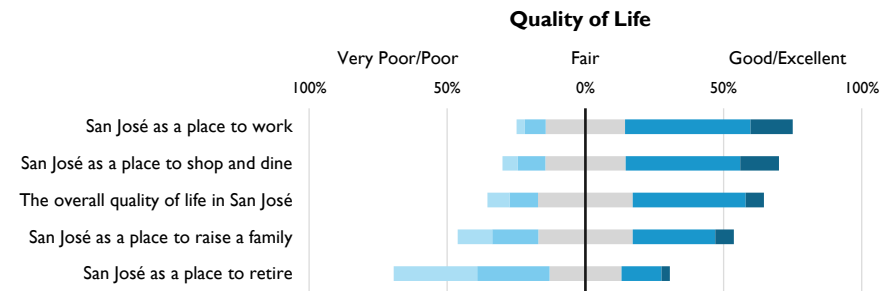
Separate from the annual Community Opinion Survey, the City is conducting a quarterly Focus Area Community Survey to understand resident opinions on the Focus Area topics.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN JOSÉ

How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community.

Similar to last year, about half of surveyed residents rated the overall quality of life in San José as "excellent" or "good." Respondents had the most favorable opinions of San José as a place to work (58 percent rated as "excellent" or "good") and as a place to shop and dine (55 percent rated as "excellent" or "good") and as a place to raise a family (34 percent rated as "excellent" or "good"). About a third rated the City as an "excellent" or "good" place to raise a family.

Among resident priorities for specific changes to make San José a better place to live, addressing homeless issues was the most commonly mentioned (34 percent), followed by providing more affordable housing (18 percent), and improving public safety and reducing crime (16 percent). Resident responses and priorities differed according to whether respondents were generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services.



Note: Verbatim responses were recorded and later grouped.

CITYWIDE QUALITY OF SERVICES

Surveyed residents were fairly split in their satisfaction with the City's overall performance in providing services. About half (49 percent) of surveyed residents expressed satisfaction with the City's overall performance in providing services, 46 percent expressed dissatisfaction, and 5 percent said they were unsure or preferred not to answer. The results for "overall dissatisfied" were similar to last year, while the percentage of "very dissatisfied" declined by 4 percentage points, a statistically significant decline.

Satisfaction with specific government services varied, with modest improvement in many areas compared to last year. Highly rated government services include the City's efforts to operate the Mineta San José International Airport; providing library services; providing trash, recycling, and yard waste services; and providing fire protection and prevention services.

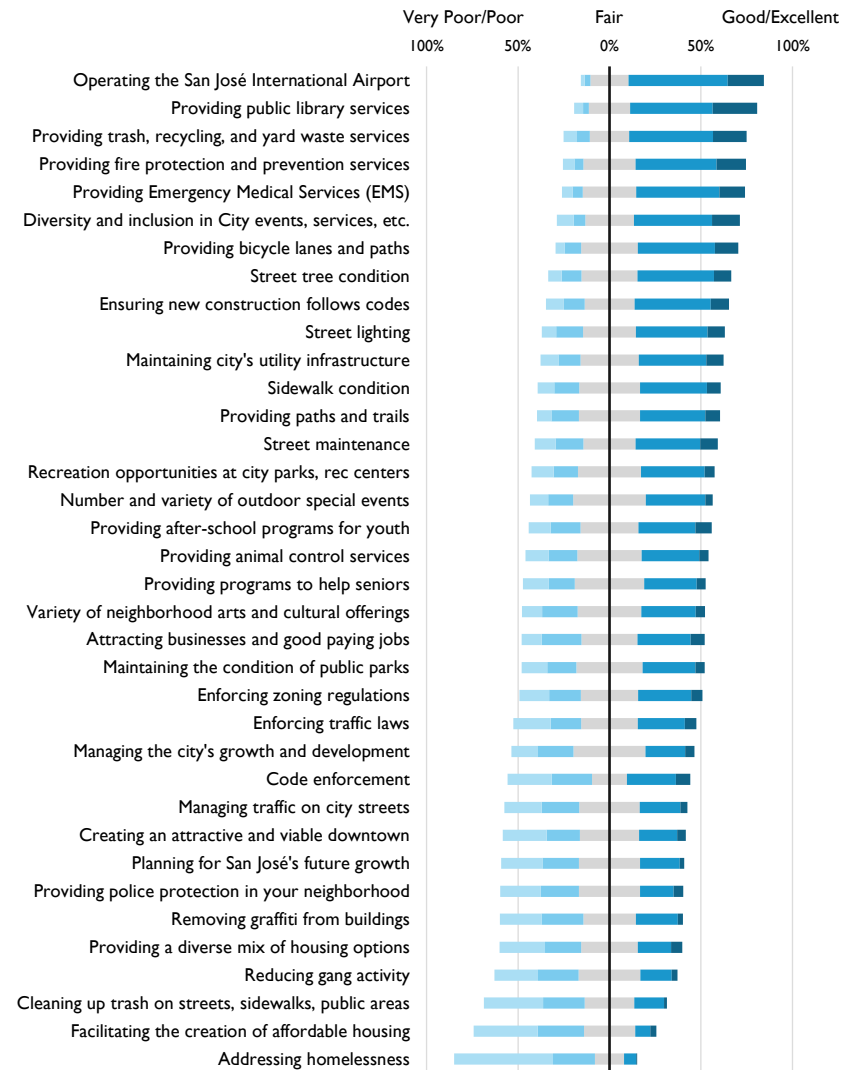
In comparison, few surveyed residents rated the City's performance in addressing homelessness, facilitating the creation of affordable housing, and cleaning up dumped litter and trash "excellent" or "good."

Relative to last year, resident ratings of the City's job providing after-school programs for youth and maintaining utility infrastructure saw statistically significant changes in satisfaction. Overall, 40 percent of respondents rated after-school programs as "excellent" or "good" (up from 32 percent), and 46 percent for maintaining utility infrastructure (up from 39 percent).

Respondents who reported being dissatisfied with the City's efforts to enforce code violations were asked to describe the particular issue in their neighborhood that the City isn't addressing to cause their dissatisfaction. Similar to last year, top responses crossed departmental responsibilities and included abandoned vehicles (31 percent), cars and RVs illegally parking on streets (22 percent), illegal dumping or trash (20 percent), and homeless camping and living in vehicles (15 percent).

More information on survey results related to specific services can be found in individual department pages later in this report.

Quality of Services and City Amenities



COMMUNITY SURVEY

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The community survey also asked residents a variety of questions about their interactions with City staff and their perceptions of the City.

Over a third of surveyed residents (38 percent) reported having contact with City staff in the past 12 months, either in person, on the phone, or by email. Most surveyed residents who had contact with City staff expressed satisfaction with staff's courtesy (75 percent), timeliness in response (61 percent), and competence (61 percent). Surveyed residents satisfaction with staff's competence was statistically higher in 2023 than 2022, an increase of 6 percentage points.

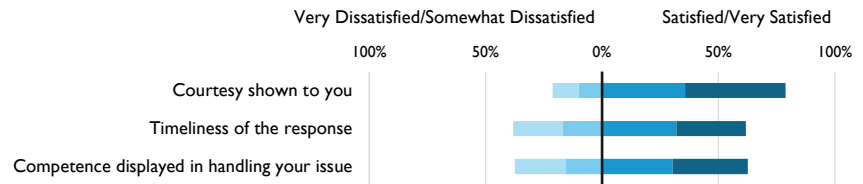
Eight percent reported that a language barrier had interfered with their ability to access City services, with 3 percent describing it as a major problem and 5 percent a minor problem.

GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC TRUST

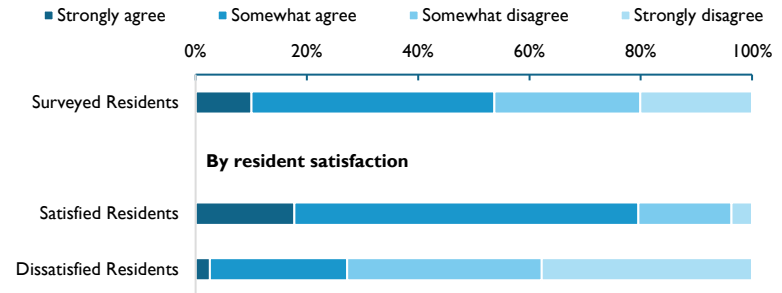
The community survey asked residents about their perceptions of the City's transparency and fiscal responsibility. About half of respondents with an opinion agreed that they trust the City of San José (54 percent strongly or somewhat agree) and that the City operates in a way that is open and accountable to the public (52 percent). Four in ten respondents also agreed that the City listens to residents when making important decisions (43 percent) and manages its finances well (39 percent). There were statistically significant improvements for respondents trust in the City (from 48 percent strongly or somewhat agree to 54 percent) and respondents perceptions of the City listening to residents when making important decisions (from 38 percent strongly or somewhat agree to 43 percent).

Residents' perceptions related strongly to their overall satisfaction with the City's performance in providing services. Residents that expressed satisfaction with City services were also much more likely to agree that they trusted the City, that it operates in an open and accountable way, and listens to residents.

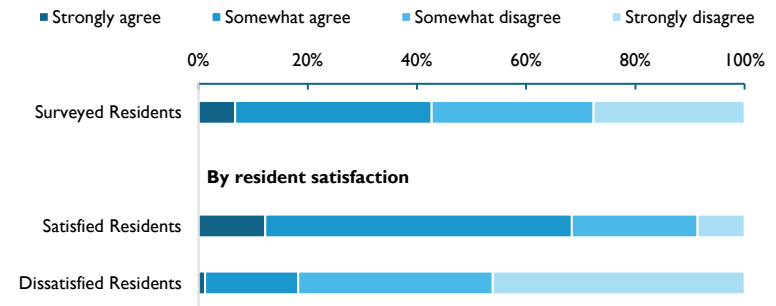
Resident Satisfaction with City Staff



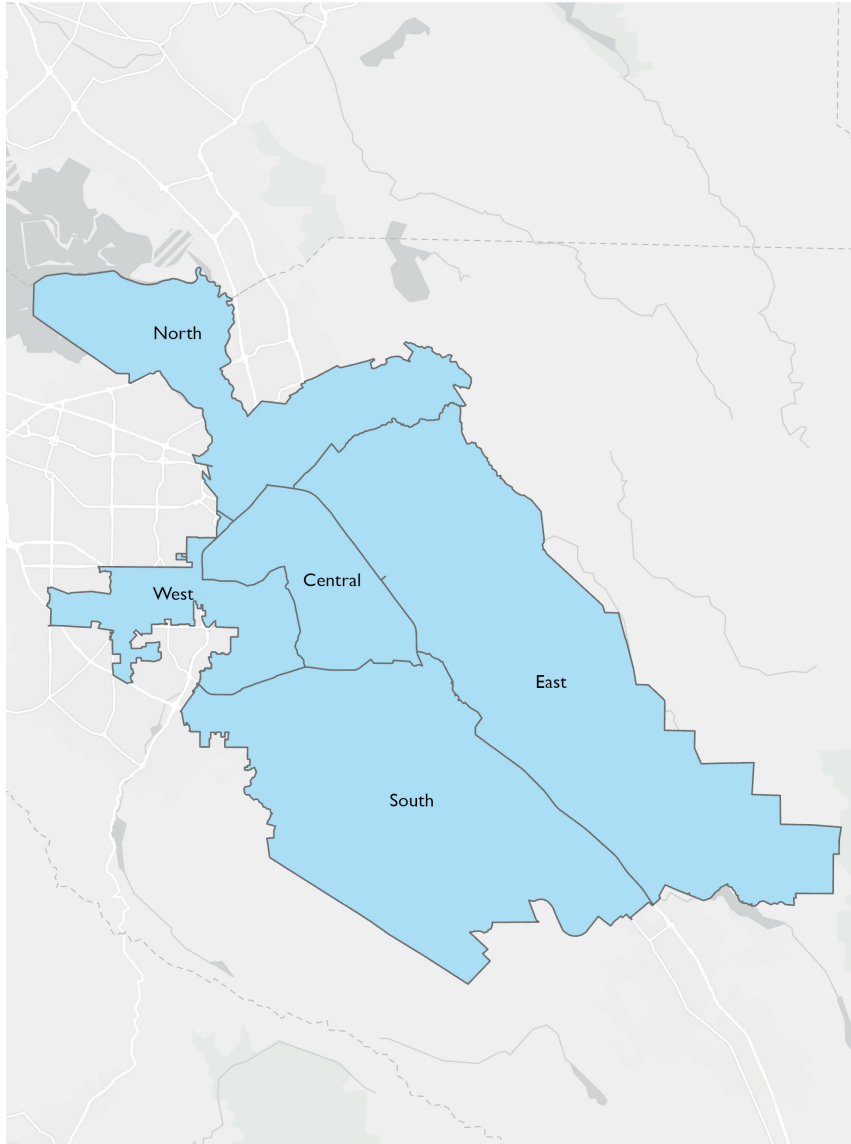
"I trust the City of San José"



"The City listens to residents when making important decisions"



SURVEY REGIONS



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

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

True North collected survey results from phone interviews and online surveys. To ensure all households had the opportunity to participate in the survey, True North used a database of San José households. Once randomly selected, individuals were recruited to participate in the survey either through text or email invitations to the online survey. After a period of online data collection, True North made calls to those who had not yet participated in the online survey (who were previously recruited via text or email) or for whom only telephone contact information was available.

A total of 1,048 completed surveys were gathered online and by telephone between September 6 and September 17, 2023. The survey was administered in four languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

True North re-weighted the final data results to balance the sample by age and ethnicity to closely reflect San José's demographic profile on age, ethnicity, home ownership, and presence of a child in the home based on the latest population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).

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 3 percentage points for questions answered by all 1,048 respondents. 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 57 to 63 percent of all residents are likely to feel that way. For questions where not all respondents provided a response (i.e., preferred not to answer), the margin of error is greater.

The survey collected responses by regions within the City. These regions are shown in the map to the left.

Complete survey report and cross tabulations are posted online at sanjoseca.gov/servicesreport.

