

THIS IS AN UPDATED VERSION. UPDATES WERE MADE TO THE TEXT ON PAGE 21-
TABLE 34-LINES 3, 4, AND 5 OF THE NCS.



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

The 2016 National Citizen Survey™

January 20, 2017



Office of the City Auditor

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Office of the City Auditor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The 2016 National Citizen Survey™

The Honorable City Council
Palo Alto, California

This report presents the results of the 14th annual National Citizen Survey™ (NCS™) for the City of Palo Alto. We contract with the National Research Center to conduct the statistically valid NCS™, which gathers resident opinions across a range of community issues, including the quality of the community and City-provided services.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2014, we increased the number of surveys distributed to City of Palo Alto residents from 1,200 to 3,000, and we distributed the surveys within six geographic areas of the City. The larger sample size allowed us to maintain statistical validity within each of the six geographic areas, as well as in the north and south areas of the City, and report survey results for these geographic areas (see the maps on report pages 4 and 5 for a breakdown of the north and south and the six geographic areas). The margins of error for the survey results are:

- Overall – plus or minus 4 percentage points
- North/South – plus or minus 5 percentage points
- Six geographic areas – plus or minus 10 percentage points

The survey response rate has declined gradually since we conducted the first survey in 2003, from a high of 51 percent in 2004, to a low of 25 percent in 2015. The response rate increased one percentage point, to 26 percent, in 2016. Increasing the number of surveys mailed from 1,200 to 3,000 has captured responses from more residents, despite the lower response rate.

Survey Response Rate: 2003 through 2016

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Response Rate¹	48%	51%	43%	42%	38%	36%	37%	36%	37%	27%	29%	27%	25%	26%
Number of Responses	557	582	508	495	437	415	424	624 ²	427	316	337	796	721	744

¹ The response rate is based on the number of surveys mailed minus the number of surveys returned by the post office as undeliverable e.g., because the housing unit was vacant.

² 1,800 surveys were mailed in 2010, which resulted in a higher number of respondents despite a slight decline in the response rate.

RESULT HIGHLIGHTS

Quality of Life

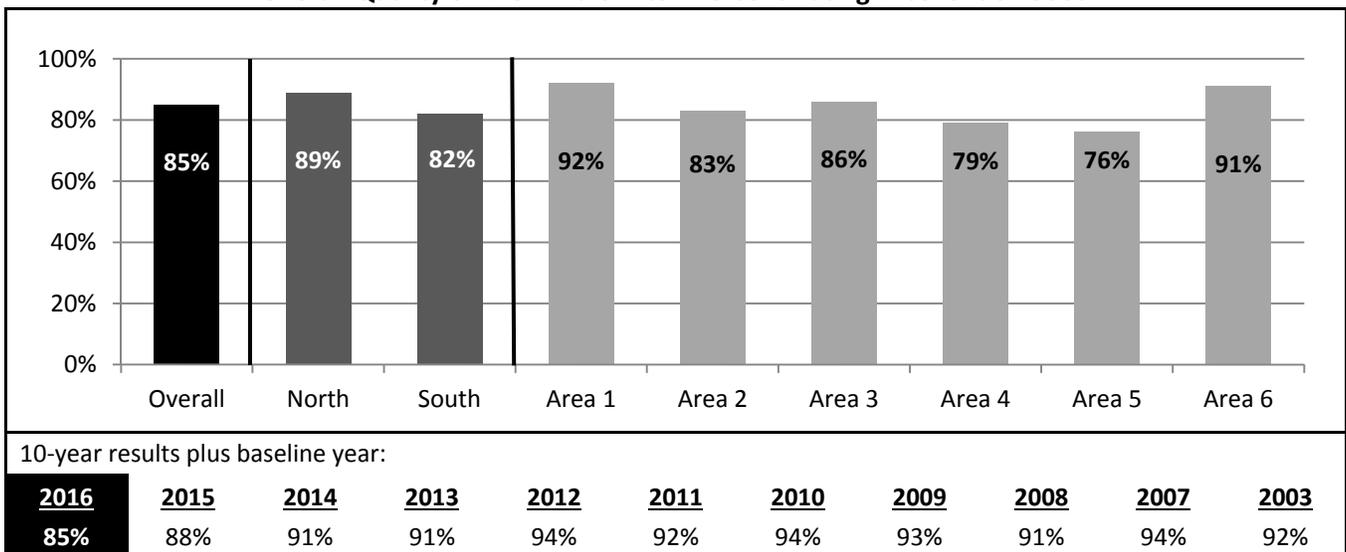
Residents generally like living in Palo Alto: 85 percent of respondents rated the overall quality of life in Palo Alto as excellent or good, and 75 percent of respondents said it is very or somewhat likely that they would remain in Palo Alto for the next five years. However, both of these percentages have declined over time, and this is the second year that less than 90 percent of respondents rated the overall quality of life as excellent or good and the first year that less than 80 percent of respondents said that they are likely to remain in Palo Alto for the next five years.

The average rating for all of the quality of life questions is 79 percent, primarily because only 50 percent of respondents rated Palo Alto as an excellent or good place to retire. This is the first year that the average fell below 80 percent, primarily because the average in area 5 declined significantly, from an average rating of 84 percent in 2015 to 69 percent in 2016.

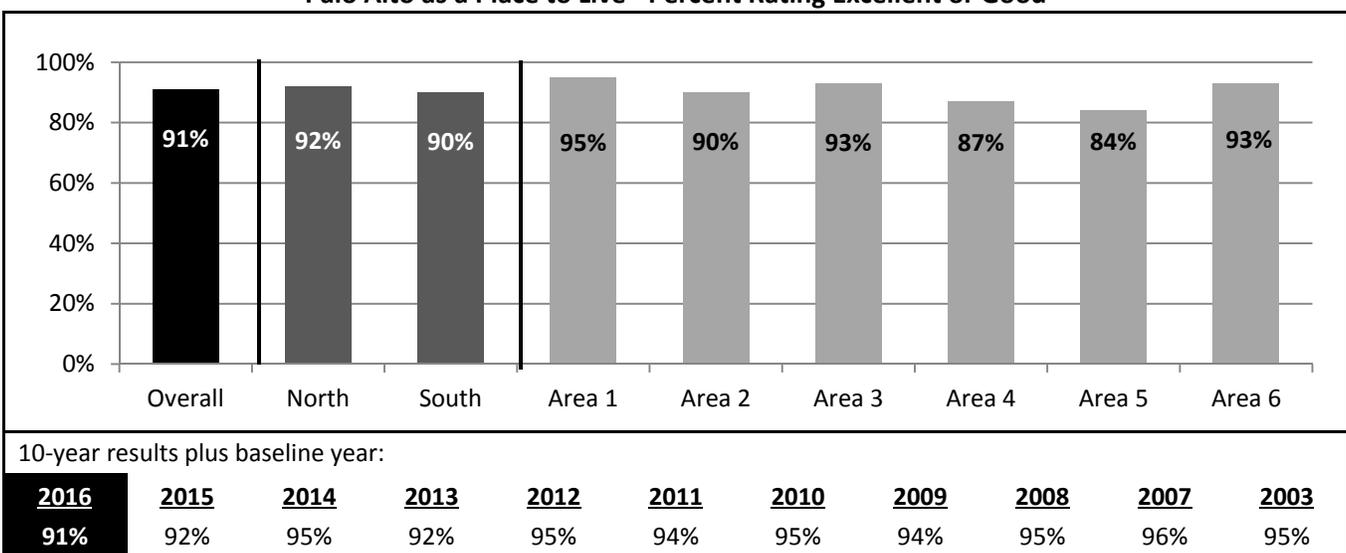
The number of residents who said they are very or somewhat likely to remain in Palo Alto for the next five years fell from 80 percent in 2015 to 75 percent in 2016. This is the first year that the average fell below 80 percent and represents declines of one to ten percentage points in all of the geographic areas except area 5, which increased six percentage points. The likelihood of residents in the six geographic areas remaining in Palo Alto for the next five years ranged from 70 percent in area 4 to 82 percent in area 3.

The following tables show the results of the quality of life questions asked in the survey.

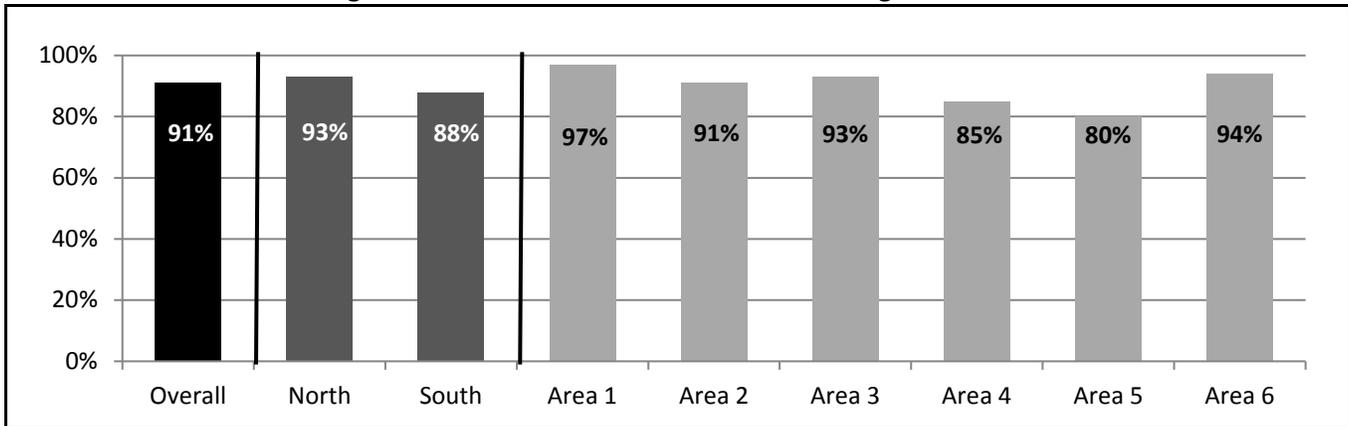
Overall Quality of Life in Palo Alto - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



Palo Alto as a Place to Live - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



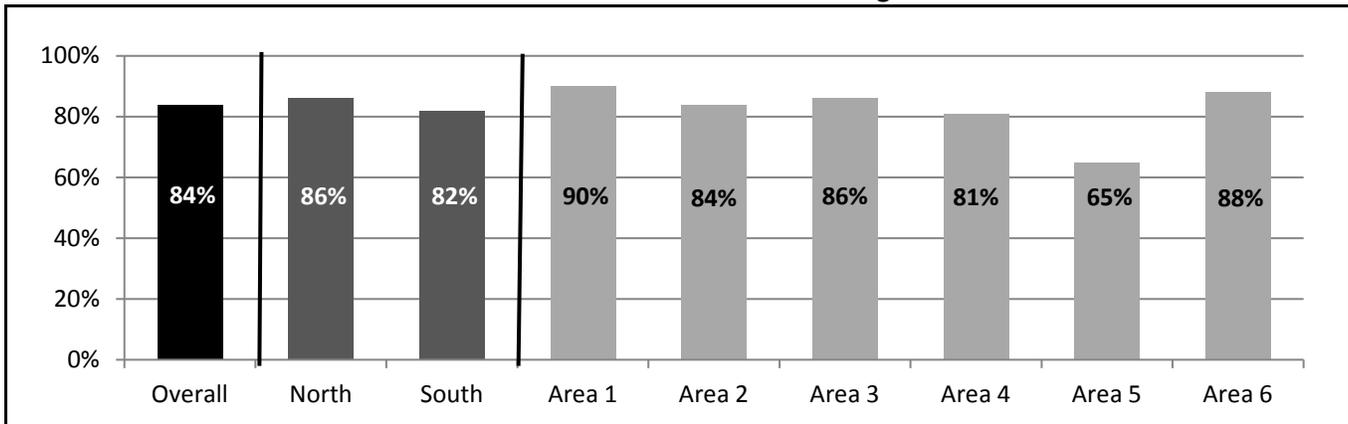
Your Neighborhood as a Place to Live - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



10-year results plus baseline year:

<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2003</u>
91%	90%	92%	91%	90%	90%	91%	90%	91%	91%	88%

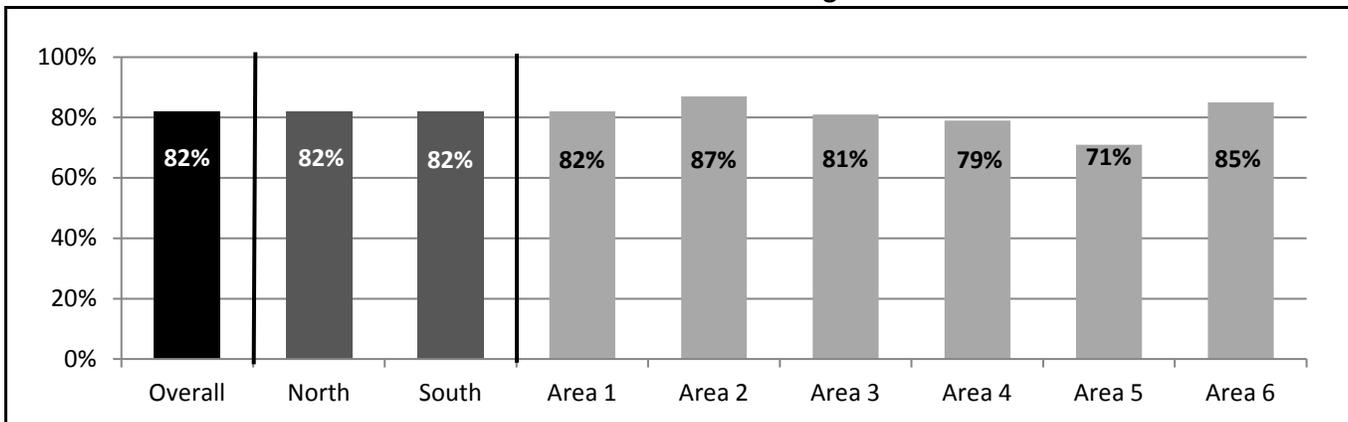
Palo Alto as a Place to Raise Children - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



10-year results plus baseline year:

<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2003</u>
84%	87%	93%	90%	92%	93%	93%	91%	94%	92%	90%

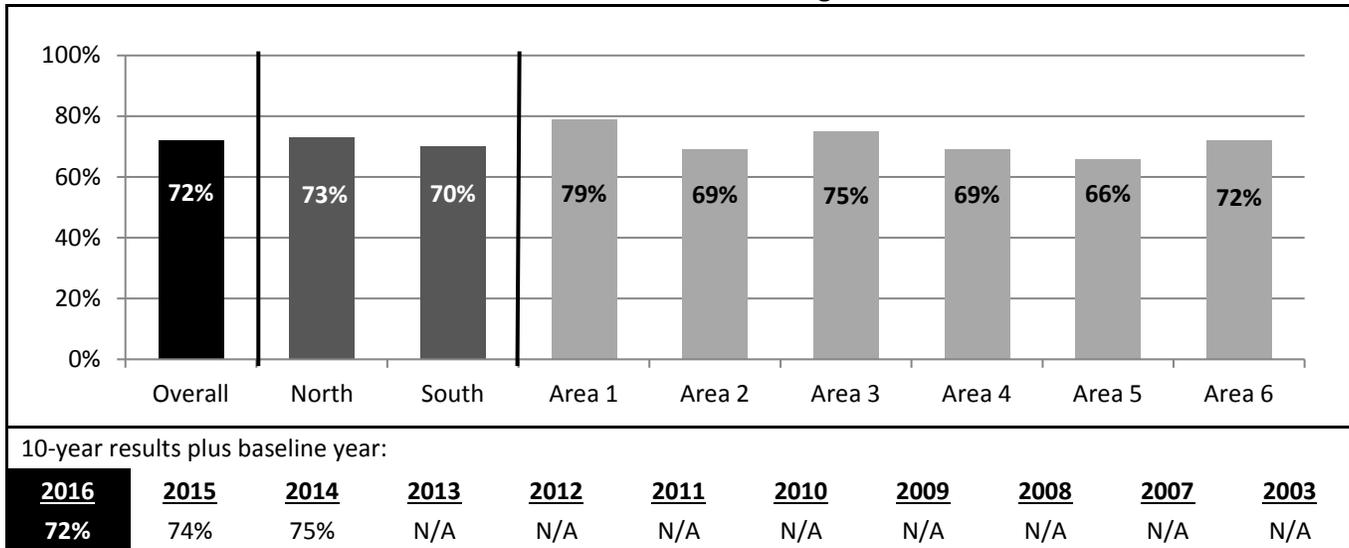
Palo Alto as a Place to Work - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



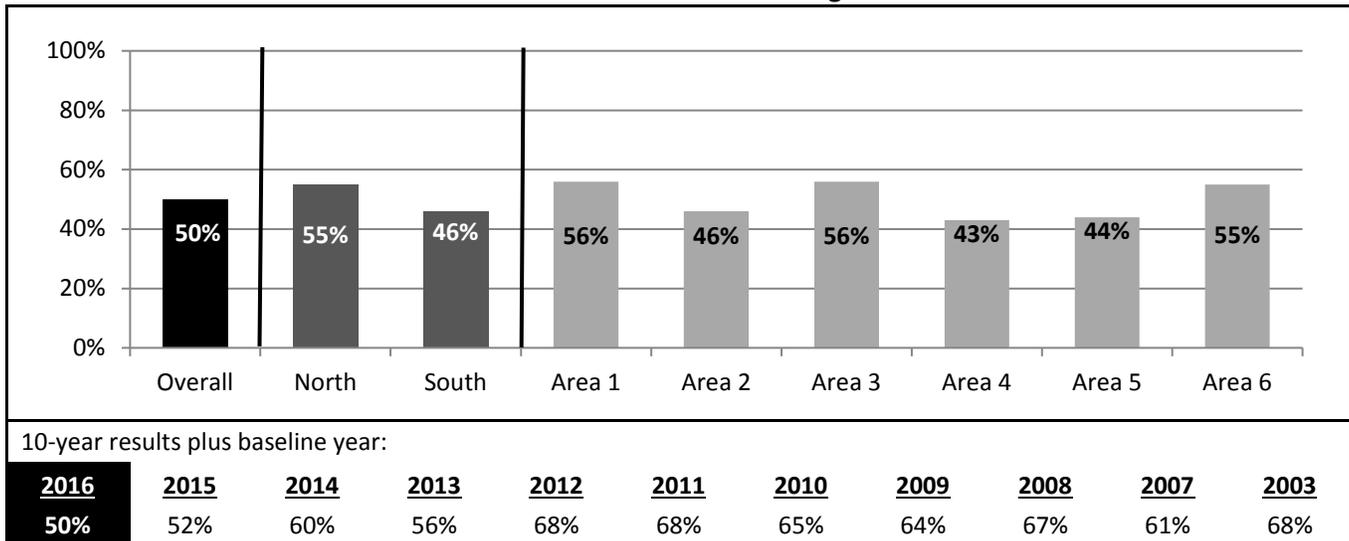
10-year results plus baseline year:

<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2003</u>
82%	87%	86%	89%	88%	89%	87%	87%	90%	90%	N/A

Palo Alto as a Place to Visit - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



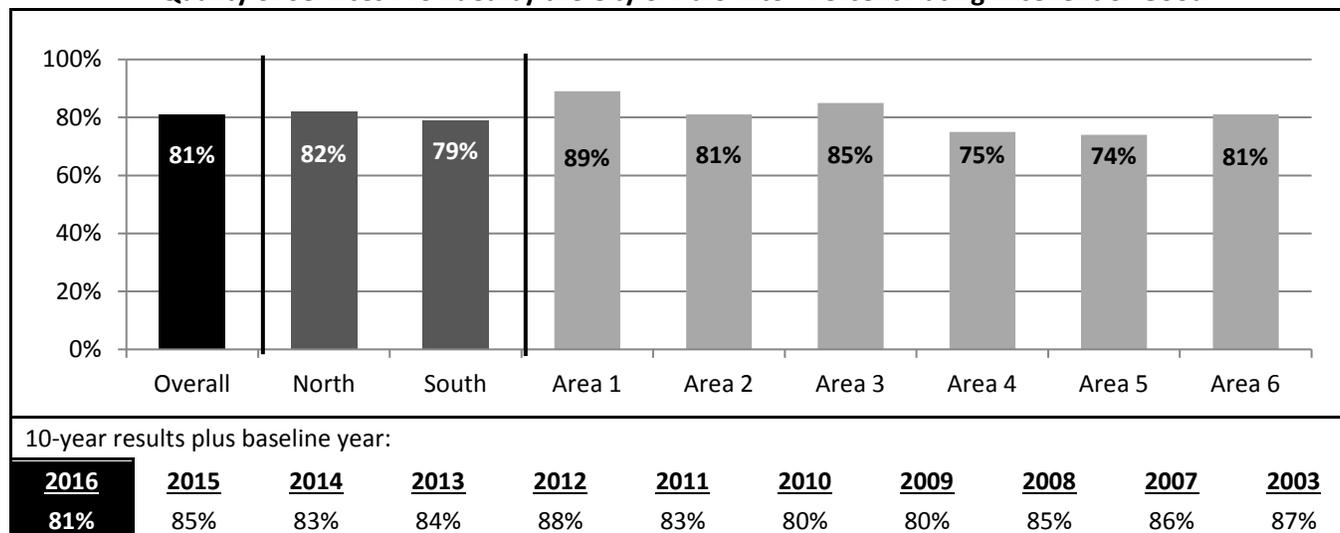
Palo Alto as a Place to Retire - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



Quality of Services

The NCS™ also collects residents' opinions regarding the quality of services provided by the City of Palo Alto. Although the percentage of residents who rated the quality of Palo Alto services as excellent or good declined four percentage points from 2015 to 2016, that decline is not statistically significant and may be more representative of the fluctuations in this rating that have occurred over the years.

Quality of Services Provided by the City of Palo Alto - Percent Rating Excellent or Good



Results by Facet

The NCS™ collects residents' opinions across eight facets. Although overall ratings declined in 2016 for five of the eight facets, only the decline in community engagement was statistically meaningful. Residents' attitudes toward these facets of life in Palo Alto are generally less favorable than their attitudes toward the overall quality of life in Palo Alto, which had an average excellent/good rating of 79 percent.

Survey Results by Facet

Area	Average Percent Rating Excellent or Good		Range of Percent Rating Excellent or Good		Percent Rating Essential or Very Important	
	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015
Safety	86%	86%	69% to 97%	74% to 97%	80%	82%
Natural environment	83%	83%	78% to 90%	73% to 88%	84%	81%
Education and enrichment	78%	82%	39% to 91%	49% to 92%	70%	67%
Recreation and wellness	74%	78%	46% to 91%	53% to 93%	65%	61%
Economy	67%	69%	7% to 83%	8% to 87%	82%	78%
Built environment	62%	63%	6% to 89%	8% to 91%	82%	80%
Community engagement	61%	66%	40% to 79%	48% to 82%	73%	71%
Mobility	57%	57%	28% to 80%	26% to 83%	80%	82%

Most residents were pleased with the areas of safety and the natural environment, as shown by the 86 percent and 83 percent average ratings of excellent or good in those areas, but generally did not favorably view the economy, built environment, community engagement, and mobility facets, which all had average excellent or good ratings of less than 70 percent. The following questions had average excellent/good ratings that were 50 percent or less.

Looking at the results by facet based on the number of questions in each facet produces similar results. Only Safety and the Natural Environment had more questions, 10 of 13 and 10 of 16, respectively, where the excellent or good rating was 80 percent or higher than the number of questions that rated less than 80 percent. Only one of the 26 Community Engagement questions and 3 of the 19 mobility questions had excellent or good ratings that were 80 percent or higher.

Questions With An Average Excellent/Good Rating of 50 Percent or Less

Facet	Question	Excellent/Good Percentage
Built environment	Availability of affordable quality housing	6%
	Variety of housing options	17%
	Land use, planning, and zoning	37%
	Overall quality of new development	42%
Community engagement	Overall direction that Palo Alto is taking	40%
	Generally acting in the best interest of the community	44%
	The job Palo Alto government does at welcoming citizen involvement	44%
	Overall confidence in Palo Alto government	44%
	Treating all residents fairly	47%
Economy	Cost of living in Palo Alto	7%
Education and enrichment	Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	39%
Mobility	Ease of travel by public transportation in Palo Alto	28%
	Traffic flow on major streets	30%
	Ease of public parking	33%
	Bus or transit services	42%
	Ease of travel by car in Palo Alto	44%
	Traffic signal timing	50%
Recreation and wellness	Availability of affordable quality mental health care	46%

Residents' low participation rate in certain community engagement activities means that most residents do not provide input on issues that could affect the direction of City policies. For example, respondents reported that, in the last 12 months, only:

- 28 percent campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause, or candidate (was 24 percent in 2015)
- 21 percent attended a local public meeting (was 22 percent in 2015)
- 14 percent watched (online or on television) a local public meeting (was 18 percent in 2015)
- 17 percent contacted Palo Alto elected officials (in-person, phone, email, or web) to express their opinion (was 15 percent in 2015)

Some responses seem to contradict others. For example, many respondents rated the quality of code enforcement as fair or poor although they also said they had not observed any code violations. We ran a correlation analysis of the question that asked if the resident had observed a code violation and the question that asked residents to rate the quality of code enforcement. There was a weak positive correlation coefficient of 0.32.¹ Another example is how respondents rated the overall quality of life (85 percent rated it as excellent or good) compared to the average excellent or good rating of 67 percent for the survey as a whole, which addresses various aspects of quality of life in Palo Alto.

¹ Correlation analysis shows the strength of a linear relationship between pairs of variables and is measured in terms of a correlation coefficient. A correlation coefficient of +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, meaning that as variable A increases, variable B will increase similarly; and a correlation coefficient of -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, meaning that as variable A decreased, variable B will decrease similarly. The relationship weakens as the correlation coefficient moves closer to 0, meaning that it is less likely that there is a linear relationship between the variables.

Changes From Last Year and Over Time

Overall, ratings in the City were generally stable, with 111 questions rated similarly in 2015 and 2016. Results are generally considered similar if the ratings from one year to the next if they differ by less than five percentage points, which is statistically meaningful. Residents responded more favorably to two questions and less favorably to 22 questions in 2016 than in 2015:

Survey Question	2015	2016	Percentage Point Change
How safe or unsafe you feel in Palo Alto's downtown/commercial areas after dark (very/somewhat safe)	67%	74%	+7%
Street repair (excellent/good)	51%	57%	+6%
Availability of affordable quality health care (excellent/good)	70%	65%	-5%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Palo Alto (excellent/good)	77%	72%	-5%
Recreation centers or facilities (excellent/good)	86%	81%	-5%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations) (excellent/good)	74%	69%	-5%
Public places where people want to spend time (excellent/good)	81%	75%	-6%
Attended a City-sponsored event (at least once in last 12 months)	57%	51%	-6%
Treating all residents fairly (excellent/good)	53%	47%	-6%
Availability of affordable quality mental health care (excellent/good)	53%	46%	-7%
Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto (excellent/good)	49%	42%	-7%
Opportunities to participate in community matters (excellent/good)	76%	69%	-7%
Opportunities to learn about City services through social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook (excellent/good)	75%	68%	-7%
Bus or transit services (excellent/good)	49%	42%	-7%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.) (excellent/good)	59%	52%	-7%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Palo Alto (excellent/good)	65%	58%	-7%
How well Palo Alto government does at being honest (excellent/good)	62%	55%	-7%
Recommend living in Palo Alto to someone who asks (excellent/good)	80%	72%	-8%
Economic development (excellent/good)	69%	61%	-8%
The overall direction that Palo Alto is taking (excellent/good)	48%	40%	-8%
Overall confidence in Palo Alto government (excellent/good)	53%	44%	-9%
How well Palo Alto government does at generally acting in the best interest of the community (excellent/good)	53%	44%	-9%
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool (excellent/good)	49%	39%	-10%
The job Palo Alto government does at welcoming citizen involvement (excellent/good)	61%	50%	-11%

Although not showing a statistically meaningful change from the prior year, residents' opinions in several areas have improved or declined over time, which is more likely to represent real shifts in residents' perspectives. Since 2006, the changes in responses to 39 questions have been statistically meaningful:

Areas That Improved or Declined Over Time	2006	2016	Percentage	Trend
Percent Rating Excellent or Good	Rating	Rating	Point Change	
Variety of library materials (excellent/good)	59%	82%	+23%	↑
Neighborhood branch libraries (excellent/good)	73%	89%	+16%	↑
Storm drainage (excellent/good)	61%	75%	+14%	↑
Public library services (excellent/good)	78%	91%	+13%	↑
Quality of services provided by the federal government (excellent/good)	33%	46%	+13%	↑
Employment opportunities (excellent/good)	59%	70%	+11%	↑
Street repair (excellent/good)	47%	57%	+10%	↑
Sidewalk maintenance (excellent/good)	52%	61%	+9%	↑
How safe or unsafe you feel in your neighborhood after dark (very/somewhat safe)	79%	87%	+8%	↑
Availability of affordable quality health care (excellent/good)	57%	65%	+8%	↑
Quality of services provided by state government (excellent/good)	38%	46%	+8%	↑
How safe or unsafe you feel in Palo Alto's downtown/commercial areas after dark (very/somewhat safe)	67%	74%	+7%	↑
Drinking water (excellent/good)	80%	87%	+7%	↑
Public information services (excellent/good)	72%	78%	+6%	↑
Street lighting (excellent/good)	66%	71%	+5%	↑
Sewer services (excellent/good)	83%	88%	+5%	↑
Street tree maintenance (excellent/good)	66%	71%	+5%	↑
Gas utility (excellent/good)	82%	87%	+5%	↑
Overall image or reputation of Palo Alto (excellent/good)	91%	86%	-5%	↓
Availability of affordable quality housing (excellent/good)	11%	6%	-5%	↓
Traffic signal timing (excellent/good)	55%	50%	-5%	↓
Garbage collection (excellent/good)	92%	87%	-5%	↓
Recreational opportunities (excellent/good)	83%	77%	-6%	↓
Attended a local public meeting (at least once in the last 12 months)	27%	21%	-6%	↓
Quality of services provided by the City of Palo Alto (excellent/good)	87%	81%	-6%	↓
Ease of walking in Palo Alto (excellent/good)	87%	80%	-7%	↓
The overall quality of life in Palo Alto (excellent/good)	92%	85%	-7%	↓
Palo Alto as a place to raise children (excellent/good)	92%	84%	-8%	↓
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Palo Alto (at least once in the last 12 months)	53%	45%	-8%	↓
Traffic flow on major streets (excellent/good)	39%	30%	-9%	↓
Sense of community (excellent/good)	66%	57%	-9%	↓
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.) (excellent/good)	61%	52%	-9%	↓
Land use, planning, and zoning (excellent/good)	50%	37%	-13%	↓
Bus or transit services (excellent/good)	58%	42%	-16%	↓
Ease of travel by car in Palo Alto (excellent/good)	60%	44%	-16%	↓
Watched (online or television) a local public meeting (at least once in the last 12 months)	31%	14%	-17%	↓
Palo Alto as a place to retire (excellent/good)	68%	50%	-18%	↓
Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto (excellent/good)	62%	42%	-20%	↓
Ease of travel by public transportation in Palo Alto (excellent/good)	60%	28%	-32%	↓

Comparative Results for Geographic Areas

The statistically significant variances in the combined excellent and good responses between the North and South subgroups, as well as for the six area subgroups are shaded grey in the report. The following table shows the statistically significant variances for the North and South subgroups.

Percent Rating Excellent or Good (if not excellent or good, other rating indicated in parentheses)	North	South	Overall	Difference
				North less South
Bus or transit services	51%	33%	42%	18%
Ease of walking in Palo Alto	86%	75%	80%	11%
Used bus, rail or other public transportation instead of driving (in last 12 months)	58%	48%	53%	10%
Palo Alto as a place to retire	55%	46%	50%	9%
Overall "built environment" of Palo Alto (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	64%	55%	59%	9%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Palo Alto	76%	67%	72%	9%
Vibrant downtown/commercial area	78%	69%	73%	9%
Crime prevention	84%	76%	80%	8%
Overall quality of life in Palo Alto	89%	82%	85%	7%
Shopping opportunities	83%	77%	80%	6%
Walked or biked instead of driving	90%	84%	87%	6%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	93%	88%	91%	5%
Visited a neighborhood or City park	90%	95%	93%	-5%
K-12 education	87%	93%	89%	-6%
Variety of library materials	78%	86%	82%	-8%
Opportunities to volunteer	72%	81%	77%	-9%
Sidewalk maintenance	55%	66%	61%	-11%
Used Palo Alto public libraries or their services at least once in last 12 months	67%	78%	73%	-11%
Opportunities to learn about City services through social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook	61%	74%	68%	-13%

Demographic Analysis

We analyzed the survey results by demographic characteristics, with a focus on the questions related to quality of life; mobility; and the built environment, including housing; and identified some trends:

- Quality of Life – There were several trends in how different demographic groups responded to the quality of life questions:
 - Males and females similarly rated four of the five quality of life questions as excellent or good. Males rated Palo Alto as a place to work about eight percentage points higher than females. Females rated Palo Alto as a place to raise children and Palo Alto as a place to visit about six and nine percentage points, respectively, higher than males.
 - Homeowners gave excellent or good ratings that were 6 to 18 percentage points higher than renters did for six of the quality of life questions. Homeowners and renters rated Palo Alto as a place to work similarly.
 - Except for Palo Alto as a place to retire, residents with children living in the household gave higher percentages of excellent or good ratings for the quality of life questions than residents who did not have children living in the household.

- Residents in the survey's highest household income bracket, \$300,000 or more annually, gave higher percentages of excellent or good ratings six of the seven quality of life questions than residents in the other household income brackets.
- 91 percent of respondents rated their neighborhood as an excellent or good place to live, but only 82 percent of respondents with household incomes of less than \$50,000 and only 83 percent of respondents in the 25-34 age bracket rated their neighborhood as an excellent or good place to live.
- 83 percent of respondents in the 35-44 age bracket, a bracket that is more likely to have children living in the household, rated Palo Alto as an excellent or good place to raise children, compared to a range of 55 percent (18-24 age bracket) to 77 percent (45-54 age bracket) in the other age brackets.
- Respondents were more likely to rate Palo Alto as an excellent or good place to work if they were already working either full- or part-time for pay or were less than 65 years old.
- Respondents who are fully retired, 65 years or older, or lived in Palo Alto for more than 20 years were more likely than other respondents to rate Palo Alto as an excellent or good place to retire.
- Although not specifically a quality of life question, we also identified trends in responses related to the value of services for taxes paid to Palo Alto. Residents who have lived in Palo Alto more than 20 years gave the highest percentage of excellent or good ratings, 53 percent, than other residents. 54 percent of homeowners who responded to the question rated it excellent or good compared to 39 percent of renters. Respondents with annual household incomes of \$150,000 or more rated the question as excellent or good more often than lower-income respondents.
- Mobility
 - Residents who have lived in Palo Alto for more than 20 years gave the lowest percentage of excellent or good ratings for five of the six mobility questions and the second lowest percentage for the sixth question, ease of travel by bicycle in Palo Alto.
 - Renters gave a higher percentage of excellent or good ratings than homeowners gave for five of the six mobility questions, with a difference of four to ten percentage points.
 - Unemployed residents gave a higher percentage of excellent or good ratings than residents who work for pay gave. In contrast, residents who work for pay were more likely to say that it is very or somewhat important for the City to focus on the overall ease of getting to places they normally have to visit.
 - Residents' ratings of the ease of public parking mirrored the amount of time they have lived in Palo Alto – the longer they have lived here, the less likely they were to rate it as excellent or good. Forty percent of respondents who have lived here for two to five years rated it as excellent or good. That number gradually declined, to 24 percent, for respondents who have lived here for more than 20 years.
 - Respondents under age 65 gave higher percentages of excellent or good ratings to the questions related to ease of getting around using various modes of transportation (mode not specified, by car, using public transportation, or on a bicycle) compared to respondents age 65 or older. Although the difference was only 4 percentage points for ease of travel by public transportation, there was a 34 percentage point difference for ease of travel by car in Palo Alto.
- Built Environment
 - Although 14 percent of renters rated the variety of housing options as excellent or good compared to 19 percent of homeowners, renters gave slightly higher ratings of excellent or good, 6 percent,

compared to homeowners' 5 percent rating, when asked about the availability of affordable quality housing.

- Respondents who have a household income of less than \$25,000 annually gave the highest percentage of excellent or good ratings to the two housing questions – 27 percent for the variety of housing options compared to 17 percent overall, and 12 percent for availability of affordable quality housing compared to 6 percent overall.
- No respondents in the 18-24 age bracket gave ratings of excellent or good to either of the two housing questions.
- 52 percent of the respondents who have lived in Palo Alto for more than 20 years gave an excellent or good rating to the overall built environment compared to 63 percent of all other respondents.
- 25 percent of respondents who are fully retired, 27 percent of respondents who have lived in Palo Alto for more than 20 years, and 26 percent of respondents age 65 or older gave excellent or good ratings for the overall quality of new development in Palo Alto compared to an overall rating of 42 percent.
- Respondents who are retired or have lived in Palo Alto for more than 20 years were less likely to give excellent or good ratings for land use, planning, and zoning. Their ratings were 23 percent and 24 percent, respectively, compared to the overall rating of 37 percent.
- 74 percent of respondents who have lived in Palo Alto for five years or less and 86 percent of homeowners felt it was very or somewhat important for Palo Alto to focus on the overall built environment compared to 84 percent of those who have lived in Palo Alto for six or more years and 73 percent of renters.

The survey does not ask why respondents answered the way they did. Further in-depth questioning, such as through targeted focus groups, could explain why differing opinions exist among the various subgroups.

National Benchmark Comparisons

When available, benchmark comparisons are shown as the last table for each question. The average rating column shows the City's rating converted to a 100 point scale. The rank column shows the City's rank among communities that asked a similar question. The comparison to benchmark column shows "similar" if Palo Alto's average rating within the standard range of 10 points of the benchmark communities, "higher" or "lower" if Palo Alto's average rating is greater than the standard range, and "much higher" or "much lower" if Palo Alto's average rating differs by more than twice the standard range. Palo Alto rated much higher than the benchmark communities on 2 questions, higher on 23 questions, lower on 9 questions, and much lower on 3 questions.

Palo Alto's Ratings Compared to Benchmark Communities

<u>Much Higher</u>	
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	Employment opportunities
<u>Higher</u>	
Adult educational opportunities	Overall economic health of Palo Alto
Availability of preventive health services	Overall feeling of safety in Palo Alto
City parks	Overall image or reputation of Palo Alto
Did not observe a code violation or other hazard in Palo Alto (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	Palo Alto as a place to live
Drinking water	Palo Alto open space
Ease of travel by bicycle in Palo Alto	Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts
Ease of walking in Palo Alto	Shopping opportunities
Health and wellness opportunities in Palo Alto	Street cleaning
K-12 education	Utility billing
Made efforts to conserve water	Vibrant downtown/commercial area
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	Yard waste pick-up
Overall appearance of Palo Alto	
<u>Lower</u>	
Ease of public parking	Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto
Ease of travel by car in Palo Alto	Overall direction that Palo Alto is taking
Ease of travel by public	Palo Alto as a place to retire
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	Recommend living in Palo Alto to someone who asks
transportation in Palo Alto	Traffic flow on major streets
<u>Much Lower</u>	
Availability of affordable quality housing	Variety of housing options
Cost of living in Palo Alto	

CUSTOM QUESTIONS

In addition to the standard survey questions, we asked 9 custom questions (14 through 22) regarding transportation, residents' interest in converting to being "green," and Cubberley Community Center, as well as an open-ended question regarding one improvement that the City could make to its parks, arts, or recreation activities and programs to better serve the community. Some of the transportation questions, the Cubberley question, and the open-ended question were repeat questions from last year's survey.

Transportation

Palo Alto residents' primary mode of transportation for getting around town is driving (77 percent), followed by walking (13 percent), and biking (8 percent), and riding a bus (1 percent). Other modes of transportation make up less than one percent of residents' primary mode of transportation. As in 2015, residents cited biking and walking as the most convenient ways to get around town without a car, with 74 percent of respondents rating biking and 71 percent rating walking as "very convenient" or "somewhat convenient." These are also residents' preferred method for getting around town without a car when convenience is not an issue; however, walking is becomes more preferred (94 percent) than biking (75 percent). Bus, train, free shuttle, taxi, rideshare services, and carpooling were less preferred. For details, see tables 62-66 in the report.

Interest in Converting to “Green”

We asked questions to assess residents’ interest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We asked about the likelihood that they would purchase a non-gas vehicle if they planned to buy a new one within the next two years, and we asked about their interest in converting their home heating system or major appliances (hot water heater, cooktop or stove, and clothes dryer) from natural gas or other fuels to electricity based on various levels of increases in their energy bill.

There was significant overlap in how residents responded to the question about their interest in converting from a gas car to another type of energy-sourced vehicle. Although 392 respondents (71 percent) said that they were very or somewhat likely to purchase a gas car, 252 of those same respondents also said they were very or somewhat likely to purchase a hybrid, 160 were very or somewhat likely to purchase a plug-in hybrid, and 150 were very or somewhat likely to purchase an electric car. This overlap prevented us from being able to draw conclusions regarding the true likelihood that residents will convert to a non-gas vehicle.

We were also unable to draw conclusions regarding residents’ true level of interest in converting their heating system or major appliances to electricity because of a lack of alignment in their responses. In all instances, the likelihood of residents being willing to convert to electricity was highest if their energy bill remained the same and declined if their energy bill would increase. However, the number of respondents who said in a preliminary question that they already had electric-powered heating systems or appliances did not match what they said in the specific questions about their interest in converting to electricity. For example, 485 respondents said in the preliminary question that their clothes dryer is powered by electricity and 146 respondents said it is powered by natural gas or other fuel, but when asked about their interest in converting to electricity, only 248 said their clothes dryer was already electric and 181 said that they would be very or somewhat likely to convert to electricity. However, based on the responses to the preliminary question, which show that almost 70 percent of respondents’ hot water heaters and home heating systems are nonelectric, those two systems could be an area for the City to focus on if they want to encourage residents to convert those to electric.

Cubberley Community Center

We asked residents to rate how much of a priority, if at all, various future uses of the Cubberley Community Center are to them. The City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto Unified School District are working together on a master plan for the Cubberley Community Center to meet future community and school needs, and the results of this survey question will be considered as they develop that plan. The five priorities receiving the highest percentage of high or medium priority responses were the same as in 2015, with no statistically meaningful difference in opinions (Tables 75 and 76 in the report):

Response Category	Percent of High and Medium Priority Responses	
	2015	2016
Indoor sports and health programs	75%	74%
Outdoor sports	72%	71%
Senior wellness, including stroke and cardiovascular programs	69%	70%
Rooms available to rent for other activities	65%	61%
Education – private schools and special interest classes	61%	61%

Suggested Improvements to Parks, Arts, or Recreation Activities and Programs

We asked residents to share one improvement to the City of Palo Alto's parks, arts, or recreation activities and programs that the City could make to better serve the community. The Community Services Department will consider these responses, along with data it has already collected from other community surveys as it finalizes its long range parks, recreation, trails, and open space master plan. Slightly more than half of the respondents (397 of 744) provided ideas, which we categorized into 15 topic areas (Table 77 in the report). Adding bathrooms/restrooms to City parks remained residents' top priority in 2016, but their other priorities changed from 2015:

Response Category	Number of Responses	
	2015	2016
Bathrooms/Restrooms	36	39
Programs and Classes – General	16	39
Dog Parks/Leash Enforcement	19	33
Park, Recreation, and Art Facilities and Amenities (other than bathrooms/restrooms)	34	32
Park Spaces (Green Space)	35	25
Information/Registration	18	22
Maintenance/Cleanliness	10	21
Parking/Transportation	17	20
Bike/Walking Path Improvements	20	16
Programs and Classes - Adult/Senior	22	15