COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR

CITY OF LA MESA

MAY 2023

TRUE NORTH
R E S E A R C H

T A B L E   O F   C O N T E N T S

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INTRODUCTION

Known as the *Jewel of the Hills*, the City of La Mesa encompasses approximately nine square miles in the rolling hills of southern San Diego County. Incorporated as a general law city in 1912, La Mesa has a rich and colorful history that extends more than a century from its agricultural origins in the late 1800s and has been well-preserved throughout the City with more than three-dozen historical landmarks. Today, La Mesa is home to an estimated 60,418 residents[1] and has a team of full-time and part-time employees that provides a full suite of services to the community through seven primary departments: City Manager's Office, Community Development, Community Services, Finance, Fire, Police, and Public Works.

As part of its commitment to provide high quality services and responsive local governance, the City of La Mesa engages its residents on a daily basis and receives regular feedback on issue, policy, and performance matters. Although these informal feedback mechanisms are a valuable source of information for the City in that they provide timely and accurate information about the opinions of specific residents, it is important to recognize that they do not necessarily provide a statistically accurate picture of the community as a whole. For the most part, informal feedback mechanisms rely on the resident to initiate feedback, which creates a self-selection bias. The City receives feedback only from those residents who are motivated enough to initiate the feedback process. Because these residents tend to be those who are either *very* pleased or *very* displeased with the service they have received, their collective opinions are not necessarily representative of the City's resident population as a whole.

PURPOSE OF STUDY The motivation for the current study was to design and employ a methodology that would avoid the self-selection bias noted above and provide the City with a *statistically reliable* understanding of its residents' satisfaction, priorities, and concerns as they relate to services and facilities provided by the City. Ultimately, the survey results and analyses presented in this report will provide Council and staff with information that can be used to make sound, strategic decisions in a variety of areas, including service improvements and enhancements, measuring and tracking internal performance, budgeting, policy, and planning. To assist in this effort, the City selected True North Research to design the research plan and conduct the study. Broadly defined, the study was designed to:

· Identify key issues of concern for residents, as well as their perceptions of the City.

· Measure residents' overall satisfaction with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, as well as their satisfaction with a variety of specific services.

· Determine the effectiveness of the City's communication with residents.

· Gather opinions on specific topics including public safety and policing, traffic, and code enforcement.

· Collect additional background and demographic data that are relevant to understanding residents' perceptions, needs, and interests.

This is not the first statistically reliable 'resident satisfaction' survey conducted for the City—similar studies have been implemented in prior years dating back to 1989, with the most recent being completed by True North in 2006, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2021. Because of

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1. Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates, January 2023.

the natural interest in tracking the City's performance in meeting the evolving needs of its residents, where appropriate the results of the current study are compared with the results of identical questions included in previous studies.

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE Many figures and tables in this report present the results of questions asked in 2023 alongside the results found in prior surveys for identical questions. In such cases, True North conducted the appropriate tests of statistical significance to identify changes that likely reflect actual changes in public opinion between the most recent prior survey (2021) and the current (2023)—as opposed to being due to chance associated with selecting two samples independently and at random. Differences between the two studies are identified as *statistically significant* if we can be 95% confident that the differences reflect an actual change in public opinion between the two studies. Statistically significant differences within response categories over time are denoted by the † symbol which appears in the figure next to the appropriate response value for 2023.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY A full description of the methodology used for this study is included later in this report (see *Methodology* on page 54). In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 1,069 adults who reside within the City of La Mesa. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (email, text, and telephone) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Administered in English and Spanish between May 1 and May 9, 2023, the average telephone interview lasted 20 minutes. For sampling and analytical purposes, all respondents were grouped into one of four geographic subareas (quadrants) shown in Figure 1 based on the location of their residence.

FIGURE 1 QUADRANTS IDENTIFIED IN STUDY
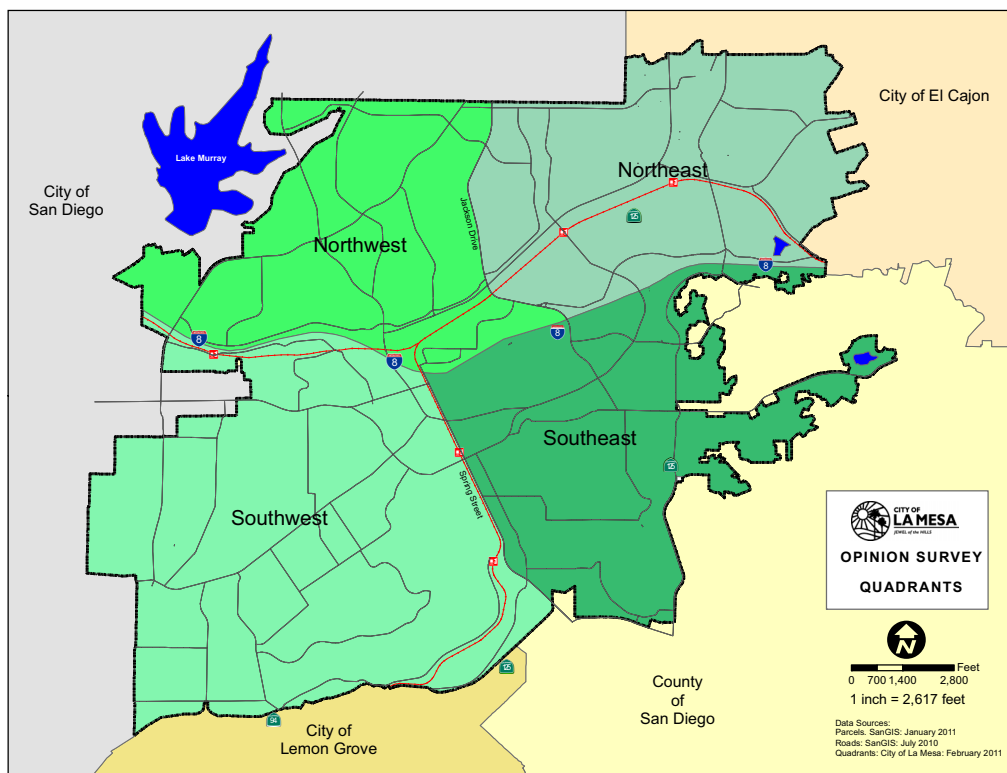
ORGANIZATION OF REPORT   This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the section titled *Key Findings* is for you. It provides a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in a Question & Answer format. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), as well as a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. And, for the truly ambitious reader, the questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 57), and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS   True North thanks the staff at the City of La Mesa who contributed their valuable input during the design stage of this study. Their collective experience, local knowledge, and insight improved the overall quality of the research presented here.

DISCLAIMER   The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors—Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles at True North Research—and not necessarily those of the City of La Mesa. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

ABOUT TRUE NORTH   True North is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities, and concerns of their residents and customers. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews, as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps its clients to move with confidence when making strategic decisions in a variety of areas—such as planning, policy evaluation, performance management, organizational development, establishing fiscal priorities, and developing effective public information campaigns.

During their careers, Dr. McLarney (President) and Mr. Sarles (Principal Researcher) have designed and conducted over 1,200 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 400 studies for California municipalities and special districts.

KEY FINDINGS

As noted in the *Introduction*, this study was designed to provide the City of La Mesa with a statistically reliable understanding of the opinions, priorities, and concerns of its residents. Operating from the philosophy that you can't manage what you don't measure, since 1989 La Mesa has periodically used the survey as a community needs assessment and performance measurement tool. In short, the study presents an opportunity to profile residents' needs and priorities, measure how well the City is performing in meeting these needs through existing services and facilities, and gather data on a variety of quality-of-life, issue, and policy-related matters. More than just a profiling exercise, the City has been a leader in using the information gained from the surveys to adjust and improve its services—all toward the goal of building and sustaining a high level of community satisfaction.

Whereas subsequent sections of this report are devoted to conveying the detailed results of the survey, in this section we attempt to 'see the forest through the trees' and note how the collective results of the survey answer the key questions that motivated the research.

What is the context for the 2023 Community Opinion Survey?

The past few years leading up to the *2023 Community Opinion Survey* were punctuated by a series of difficult and dramatic events in La Mesa. The coronavirus pandemic that arrived in early 2020 has taken lives, threatened livelihoods, and forced dramatic changes in the way residents live, work, socialize, and play. Although many of the public health restrictions were eased in 2021 with the advent of vaccines, the negative impacts of the pandemic continued near full force in terms of COVID-19 cases, deaths, and economic disruptions. Indeed, 2021 proved to be an even deadlier year for the pandemic than 2020, and 2022 started with the number of 7-day average cases and deaths higher than anything witnessed in 2020.

Although the public health impacts of the pandemic eased in 2022, the economic fallout (labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, and inflationary trends) continued and in some cases increased. Inflation hit a 40-year high, equities remain well below where they began the year, and both the cost of housing and the cost of borrowing for a mortgage trended sharply upward.

Of course, the pandemic and related economic impacts were not the only challenges during this period. The killing of George Floyd in May 2020 during an arrest in Minneapolis sparked outrage, prompted thousands of protests across the nation, and prompted a national discussion about structural racism and calls for social justice reforms. Adding to the charged atmosphere felt nationally was a local arrest that prompted a weekend of protests in La Mesa that were initially peaceful but later devolved into violence, looting, vandalism, and clashes between protesters and police.

Even nature conspired to make this a difficult period, with weather ranging from severe drought and heat waves to unseasonably low temperatures with higher than average rain and flooding—straining residents' utility budgets and patience.

The events of the past three years form the backdrop necessary for understanding and interpreting the results of the *2023 Community Opinion Survey*. Although the vast majority of La Mesa residents continue to have positive opinions about the overall quality of life in the City and are satisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services, many of the metrics tracked in the survey were understandably lower in 2023 when compared to past surveys.

How do residents view the quality of life in La Mesa and the City's performance?

Approximately three-quarters (73%) of respondents shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in La Mesa in 2023, with 17% reporting it is excellent and 56% stating it is good. An additional 24% of residents indicated the quality of life in the City is fair, while less than 3% used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in the La Mesa. Over the past few years, the percentage who rated the quality of life in the City as excellent or good declined significantly (-12%), while the percentage who rated it as fair increased 10% (see *Quality of Life* on page 10). It is noteworthy that during this same period, concerns about homelessness, lack of affordable housing, and public safety also increased.

Likewise, approximately seven-in-ten residents (71%) surveyed in 2023 indicated they were satisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services. Although a solid satisfaction score considering the circumstances, it is approximately 10% lower than the level recorded in 2021, with all of that movement coming from the *very* satisfied category (see *Overall Satisfaction* on page 14).

When asked to rate the City's performance in providing 21 *specific* services, the vast majority of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the City performance for all but three (3) service areas, with satisfaction being highest for fire protection services (92% very or somewhat satisfied), emergency medical services (88%), keeping public buildings and facilities clean and attractive (84%), maintaining parks and sports fields (81%), providing community events (80%), and providing animal control services (80%). Although satisfaction levels remained high for most service areas in 2023, the levels of satisfaction were lower this year when compared to 2021 (see *Specific Services* on page 16).

How do residents view City staff's performance?

Staff members at the City of La Mesa are often the "face" of the City for residents who are using city facilities, participating in various programs or events, or in need of assistance from the City on any number of matters. City staff were a bright spot in the *2023 Community Opinion Survey*. Close to one-quarter (24%) of respondents indicated that they had

contacted La Mesa staff at least once during the 12 months prior to the interview, and at least 85% of residents indicated that staff members were professional (93%), responsive (86%), and helpful (85%) during these interactions. The positive findings for staff's performance in 2023 are consistent with those recorded in prior survey cycles (see *Staff Interactions* on page 41).

Where should the City focus its efforts in the future?

In addition to measuring the City's current performance, a key goal of this study is to look *forward* and identify opportunities to adjust services, improve facilities, and/or refine communications strategies to best meet the community's evolving needs and expectations. Although residents were generally satisfied with the City's performance in many areas (as described above), there is always room for improvement. Below we note some of the areas that present the best opportunities in this regard.

Considering respondents' verbatim answers regarding what they feel city government could do to make La Mesa a better place to live (see *Ways to Improve Quality of Life* on page 12), as well as the list of services and their respective priority status for future city attention (see *Performance Needs & Priorities* on page 20), the top priorities for residents are addressing homelessness, facilitating the creation of affordable housing, maintaining and repairing streets, providing neighborhood police patrols, and creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community.

With the recommendation that the City focus on these areas, as in past years it is equally important to stress that when it comes to improving satisfaction in service areas, the appropriate strategy is often a combination of better communication and actual service improvements. That is, in some cases service improvements are needed to raise satisfaction with the City's performance. In other cases, particularly those that involve policies affecting services and facilities which are not readily apparent, the key may instead be to communicate better with residents about current efforts and future plans with respect to a particular service area. It may be, for example, that many residents are simply not aware that the City has taken action to address homelessness through its 2021 to 2026 Homeless Action Plan and Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement (HOME) Program developed through recommendations provided by the Citizen's Task Force on Homelessness. Choosing the appropriate balance of actual service improvements, policy changes, and efforts to raise awareness on these matters will be a key to maintaining and improving the community's overall satisfaction in the short- and long-term.

What do the survey results reveal about residents' perceptions of the Police Department?

The 2021 and 2023 surveys addressed public perceptions of safety and the La Mesa Police Department head-on. In addition to questions that were included in past surveys designed to track the Department's performance in maintaining a low crime rate, providing crime prevention programs, and providing neighborhood police patrols, a suite of new questions was added to provide a more nuanced understanding of how residents perceive the Department's interactions with the community and how they characterize the Department when it comes to professionalism, trustworthiness, and accountability (2021 & 2023), as well as equal treatment of residents (new in 2023).

With respect to the **safety** of La Mesa as a place to live, 85% of residents described the City as either very safe or somewhat safe, and this pattern was strikingly consistent across most demographic subgroups (see *Perceived Safety* on page 23). However, the percentage of residents who felt very safe experienced a statistically significant decline between 2021 and 2023 (-7%), as did their overall perception of safety (85% vs. 88%).

Interestingly, however, in more specific safety *scenarios* there were no statistically significant changes during the past two years. During daylight hours, nine-in-ten residents who provided an opinion felt safe walking alone in their neighborhood (93%) or in business and retail areas (90%), and eight-in-ten (80%) felt safe walking alone in parks and on paths and recreation trails during the day. After dark, fewer residents felt safe walking alone in business and retail areas of the City (58%) and in their neighborhood (56%).

When asked to rate various aspects of the La Mesa Police Department's **performance**, between 63% and 71% of residents indicated they were generally satisfied with the Department's efforts to enforce traffic laws (71%), maintain a low crime rate (70%), provide crime prevention programs (69%), and provide neighborhood police patrols (63%). From 2021 to 2023, resident satisfaction with the Department's efforts to enforce traffic laws (-10%) and provide neighborhood police patrols (-6%) experienced significant declines, whereas ratings were consistent for maintaining a low crime rate and providing crime prevention programs.

The Police Department also received high marks from many respondents for maintaining a presence and being visible (48% excellent or good), engaging and interacting with the public (42%), working with the community to solve problems (41%), and communicating with La Mesa residents and local businesses (41%). Ratings for the Department's efforts to investigate crimes were softer (36%). From 2021 to 2023, performance ratings declined for investigating crimes (-7%) and maintaining a presence and being visible (-6%), but remained statistically consistent across the other three performance areas (see *Ratings of Police Department's Performance* on page 29).

Turning to perceptions of **conduct** and **culture**, most La Mesans agreed that they trust the Police Department to protect and serve the public (68%) and perceived that the Department demonstrates professionalism when interacting with the public (64%), while opinions were more divided regarding whether the Department treats people the same regardless of their race, income, or identity (46% in agreement, 27% in disagreement, 27% unsure) and how well it holds its officers accountable (46% in agreement, 21% in disagreement, 33% unsure). From 2021 to 2023, agreement with the statements tested in both years (trust, professionalism, and accountability) remained statistically unchanged.

Considering how each respondent rated the Department on the aforementioned dimensions, close to six-in-ten (59%) generally held positive perceptions of the Police Department, whereas 19% generally held negative perceptions, 16% were mixed, and 6% did not provide an opinion (see *Professionalism, Trust, Accountability & Equal Treatment* on page 30). Attitudes about the La Mesa Police Department are somewhat related to interactions with the Department, with those who had personally interacted with a Police officer during the past year being more likely to express positive views of the Department. These same attitudes also appear to be associated with broader opinions about the community and the City's performance. Those with positive (or even mixed) views of the Police Department were much more likely than those with negative views to rate the quality of life in the City as excellent or good and indicate that they are satisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services.

How well is the City communicating with residents?

The importance of city communication with residents cannot be overstated. Much of a city's success is shaped by the quality of information that is exchanged in both directions, from the City to the community and from the community to the City. This study is just one example of La Mesa's efforts to enhance the information flow *to* the City to better understand the community's concerns, perceptions, and needs. Some of La Mesa's many efforts to communicate with its residents include its newsletters, timely press releases, website, and CivicMedia channels.

Keeping up with the challenge of communicating with residents has been difficult for many public agencies in recent years. As the number of information sources and channels available to the public have dramatically increased, so too has the diversity in where residents regularly turn for their information. Not only have entirely new channels arisen to become mainstream and nearly ubiquitous (e.g., social media), within these channels there exists a proliferation of alternative services. To add to the challenge, resident preferences for information sources are also dynamic, subject to change as new services are made available while others may fade in popularity, making thorough, effective communication a *moving* target for public agencies.

The trends noted above likely underlie some of the changes in resident satisfaction with the City of La Mesa's communication efforts over the past 15 years. In 2006, for example, eight-in-ten residents (80%) indicated that they were generally satisfied with the City's efforts to communicate with them through newsletters, the Internet, and other means, with 45% stating that they were *very* satisfied. The corresponding figures in the 2023 survey were 54% and 17%, respectively. La Mesa is not alone in this area, as many other municipalities have displayed similar trends in satisfaction with city-resident communication.

The above notwithstanding, the 2023 study did find a significant percentage of respondents who were unsure (21%) when asked about their satisfaction with the City's communication efforts, much higher than the 12% to 15% range recorded since 2015. Factoring those responses out of the analysis reveals greater consistency in city-resident communication over the past two years (2021: 72%, 2023: 69%). The relationship between city-resident communication and perceptions of the City's overall performance in providing municipal services was also pronounced, with those satisfied with the City's communication efforts also being much more likely than their counterparts to be satisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services (see *Communication* on page 44).

It should be noted that La Mesa has made a concerted effort to enhance its communication efforts in recent years by live streaming City Council meetings on Facebook, adding Instagram as another social media engagement tool, and improving access to archived information on the City's website. To help improve how well it communicates with residents and businesses, in 2021 a Community Engagement Plan was adopted that included the creation of a Communications Manager position. To continue to stay ahead of the curve, La Mesa, like other cities, should periodically conduct a careful review of its communications strategies and budget to ensure that both are evolving accordingly.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The opening series of questions in the survey was designed to assess residents' top of mind perceptions about the quality of life in La Mesa, and what city government could do to improve the quality of life in the City, now and in the future.

QUALITY OF LIFE   At the outset of the interview, respondents were asked to rate the quality of life in the City using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 2 below, close to three-quarters (73%) of respondents shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in La Mesa, with 17% reporting it is excellent and 56% stating it is good. Approximately 24% of residents indicated the quality of life in the City is fair, while less than 3% used poor or very poor to describe the quality of life in the City. When compared to 2021, there were statistically significant declines in the percentage who rated the quality of life in the City as excellent or good and a corresponding increase in the percentage who rated it as fair.

Question 2   *How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*

FIGURE 2 OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY STUDY YEAR
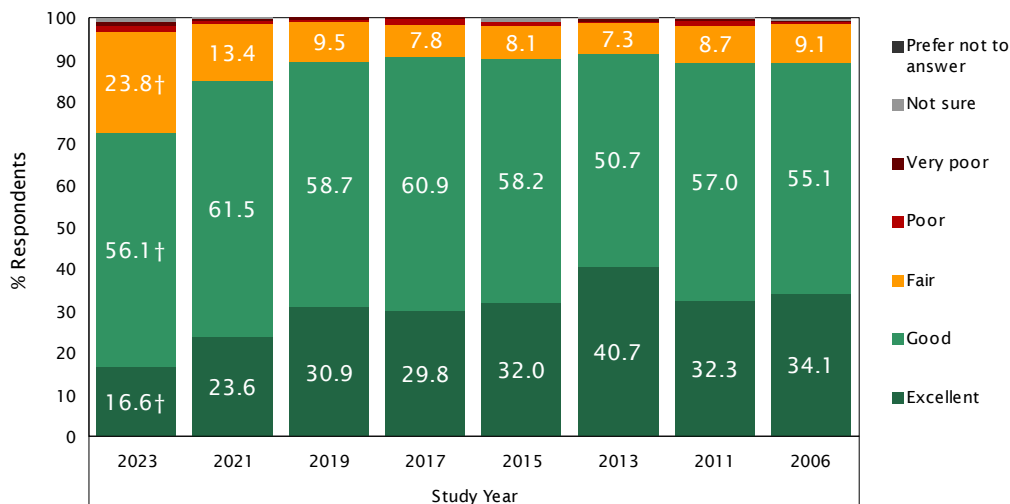
† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

For the interested reader, figures 3-5 on the next page show how ratings of the quality of life in the City varied by years living in La Mesa, home ownership status, opinions of La Mesa's Police Department, age of the respondent, ethnicity, the quadrant of the City where the respondent resides, presence of a child in the home, gender, and perceptions of safety. Quality of life ratings showed the most variation by age of the respondent, their opinions about the Police Department, and the overall safety of La Mesa. Older residents (65+) and those who felt La Mesa was safe and had positive or mixed opinions on the Police Department expressed the highest ratings for the quality of life in the City, whereas younger residents (18 to 29) and those with negative views on city safety and/or the Police Department were less positive about the overall quality of life in the City.

FIGURE 3 OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEARS IN LA MESA, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
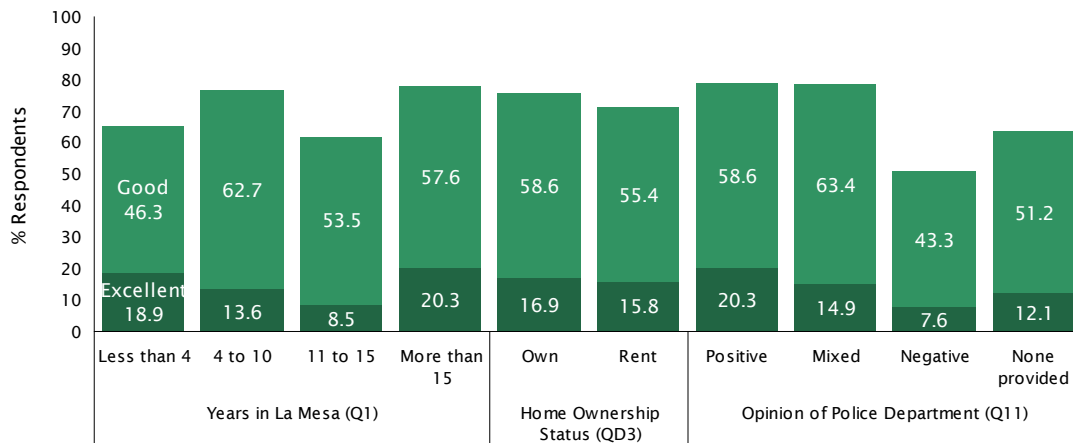
FIGURE 4 OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY AGE & ETHNICITY
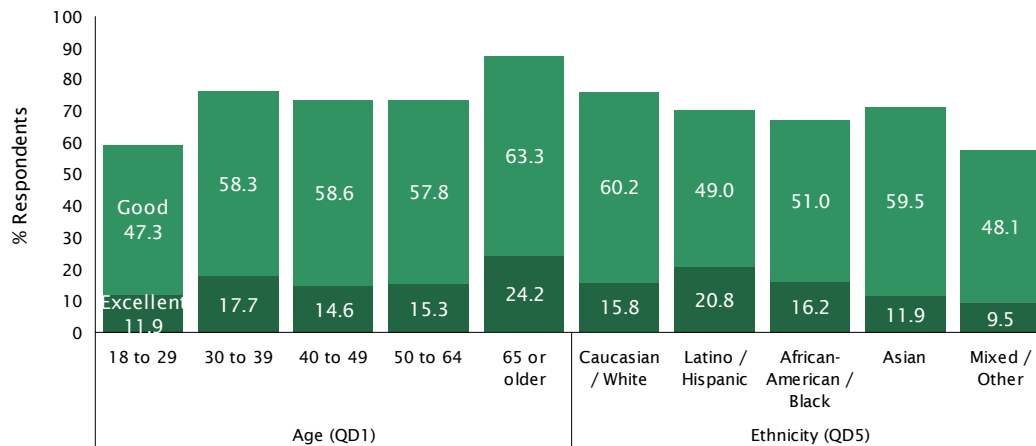
FIGURE 5 OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY QUADRANT OF CITY, CHILD IN HSLD, GENDER & PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY
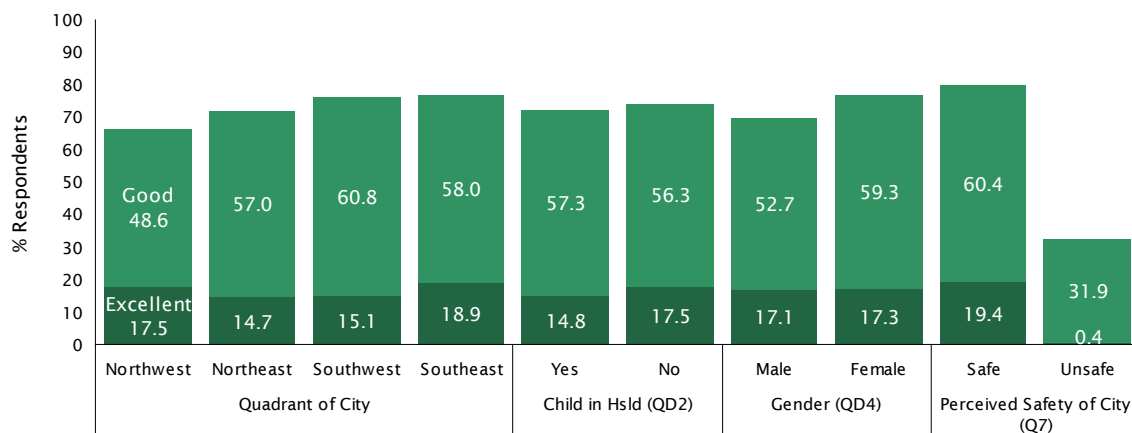
WAYS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE   Respondents were next asked to indicate the one thing the City could change to make La Mesa a better place to live, now and in the future. Question 3 was asked in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any change that came to mind without being prompted by, or restricted to, a list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 6.

Approximately 15% of respondents said they could not think of a change they desire for the City of La Mesa. Among specific changes mentioned, the most common was addressing homeless issues (22%), followed by improving and repairing roads (13%), limiting growth and development (9%), increasing public safety (7%), and adding/improving sidewalks (7%). No other single improvement was mentioned by at least 5% of respondents overall, although there were specific references to additional public safety-related items including improving police presence/ response (4%), enforcing traffic laws (4%), and increasing support for the Police Department (2%).

Question 3   *If the City government could change one thing to make La Mesa a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see?*

FIGURE 6 CHANGES TO IMPROVE LA MESA
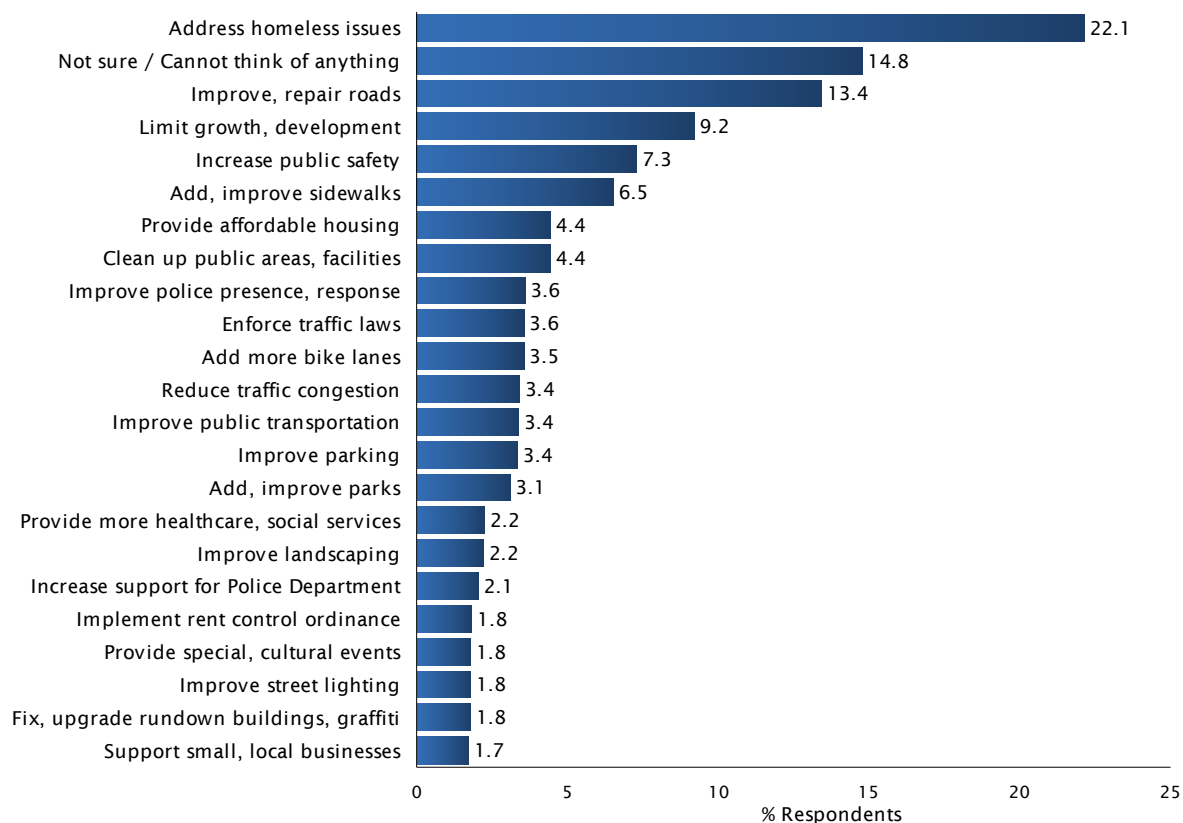
Table 1 below shows the top five response categories from 2023, as well as each of the previous studies. The qualitative nature of recording, categorizing, and coding verbatim responses limits the ability to perform statistical significance testing between surveys. That said, homeless issues, which first appeared in the top-5 list in 2015, have moved up the ranks to be the most frequently mentioned issue in 2023. Limiting growth/development, which dropped to sixth place in 2021, moved back into the top five this cycle.

TABLE 1 TOP CHANGES TO IMPROVE LA MESA BY STUDY YEAR

Study Year							
2023	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2006
Address homeless issues	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything
Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Address homeless issues	Address homeless issues	Improve, repair roads	Increase public safety	Increase public safety	Increase public safety	No problems / Everything is fine
Improve, repair roads	Improve, repair roads	Improve, repair roads	Address homeless issues	Improve, repair roads	Improve, repair roads	Improve, repair roads	Increase public safety
Limit growth, development	Increase public safety	Provide affordable housing	Improve, police presence, response	Address homeless issues	No problems / Everything is fine	Reduce taxes, fees	Reduce traffic congestion
Increase public safety	Clean up public areas, facilities	Limit growth, development	Increase public safety	Add, Improve parks	Reduce taxes, fees	No problems / Everything is fine	Improve, repair roads

CITY SERVICES

After measuring perceptions of the quality of life in La Mesa, the survey turned to assessing residents' opinions about the City's performance in providing various municipal services.

OVERALL SATISFACTION   The first question in this series asked respondents to indicate if, overall, they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of La Mesa is doing to provide city services. Because this question does not reference a specific program, facility, or service and requested that the respondent consider the City's performance in general, the findings of this question may be regarded as an *overall performance rating* for the City.

As shown in Figure 7 below, 71% of La Mesa residents indicated that they were satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, with 20% saying they were *very* satisfied. Approximately 20% of residents reported that they were dissatisfied, whereas 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. When compared with 2021, overall satisfaction (very + somewhat) declined 10%, with all of that movement coming from the *very* satisfied category.

Question 4   *Next, I'm going to ask a series of questions about services provided by the City of La Mesa. Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of La Mesa is doing to provide city services?*

FIGURE 7 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY STUDY YEAR
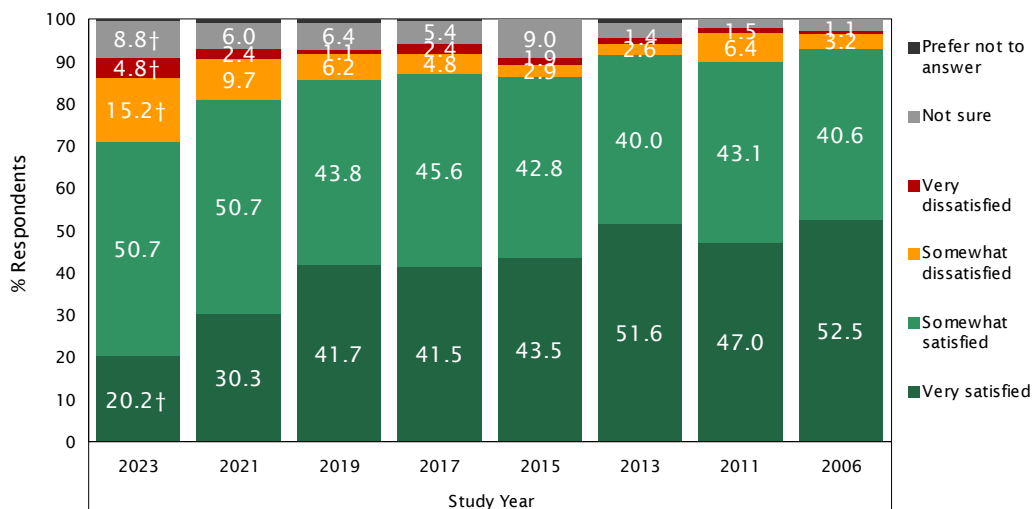
† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

The next three figures display satisfaction levels with the City's performance among respondents who provided an opinion. When compared to their respective counterparts, overall satisfaction with the City's performance was generally highest among those who had lived in the City ten years or less, renters, those holding a positive view of the Police Department or who did not provide an opinion, those 65 and older, respondents with an ethnicity *other* than African-American or mixed/other, those living in the Northwest or Southwest areas of La Mesa, respondents who did not have a child in the home, and those who perceive the City to be safe. Opinions regarding the Police Department and general safety of La Mesa bore a reasonably strong relationship to opinions about the City's overall performance in providing municipal services.

FIGURE 8 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN LA MESA, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
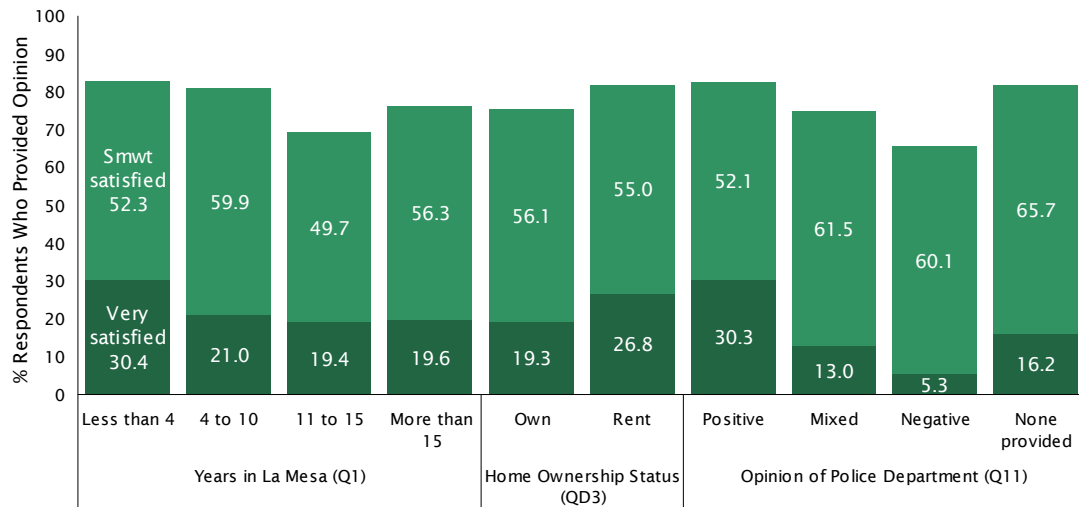
FIGURE 9 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY AGE & ETHNICITY
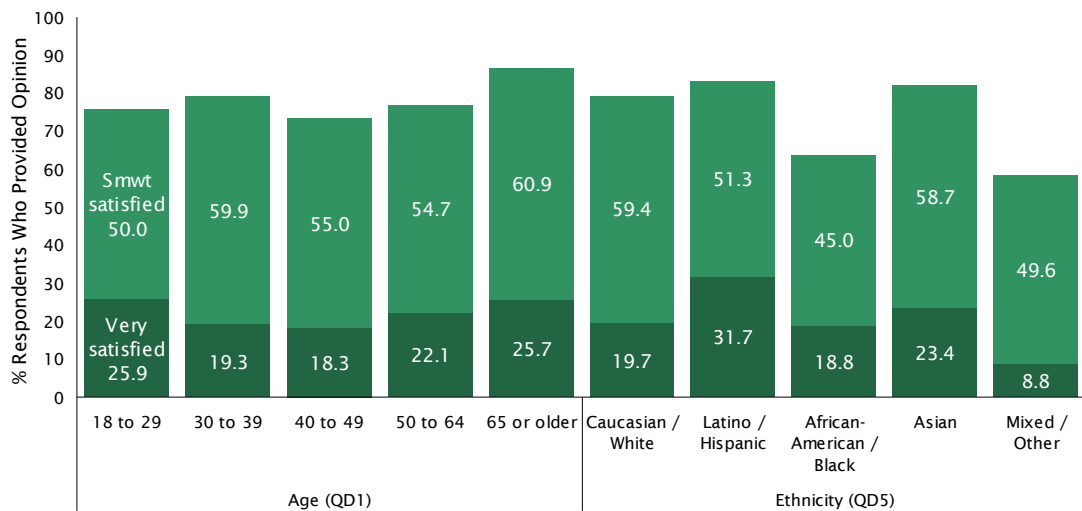
FIGURE 10 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY QUADRANT OF CITY, CHILD IN HSLD, GENDER & PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY
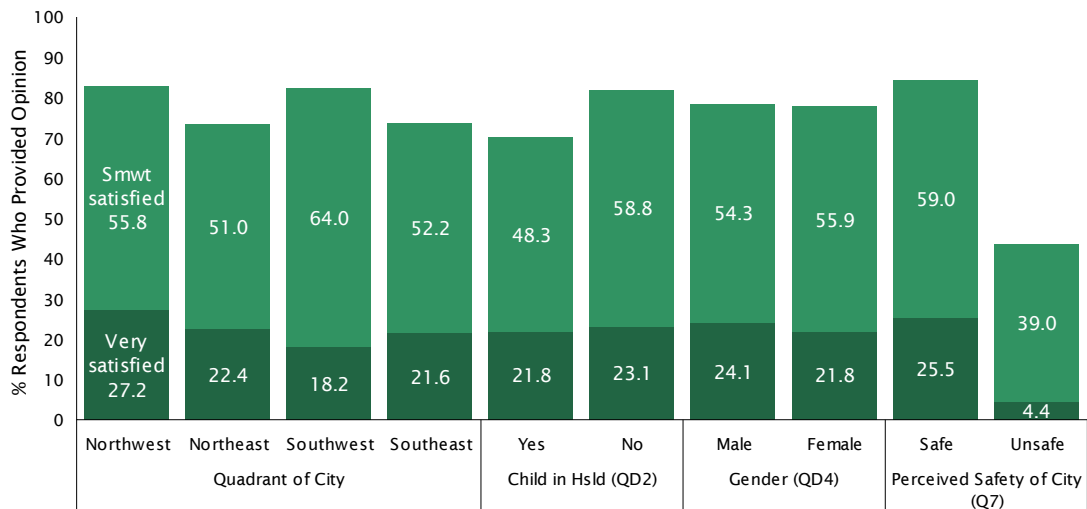
SPECIFIC SERVICES   Whereas Question 4 addressed the City's *overall* performance, the next series of questions asked respondents to rate the importance of *specific* services offered by the City, as well as their level of satisfaction with efforts to provide these services. For each service, respondents were first asked if they thought a service was extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important. Respondents were then asked about their satisfaction with these same services. The order of the items was randomized for each respondent to avoid a systematic position bias.

Figure 11 presents the services sorted by order of importance according to the percentage of respondents who rated a service as *at least* very important. Overall, La Mesa residents rated providing fire protection services as the most important (94% extremely or very important) among the 21 services tested, followed by providing emergency medical services (93%), addressing homelessness (90%), maintaining and repairing streets (90%), and maintaining a low crime rate (90%). At the other end of the spectrum, providing programs for adults (40%), animal control services (47%), and community events (48%) were viewed as less important.

Question 5   *For each of the services I read, please tell me whether the service is extremely important to you, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important.*

FIGURE 11   IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES
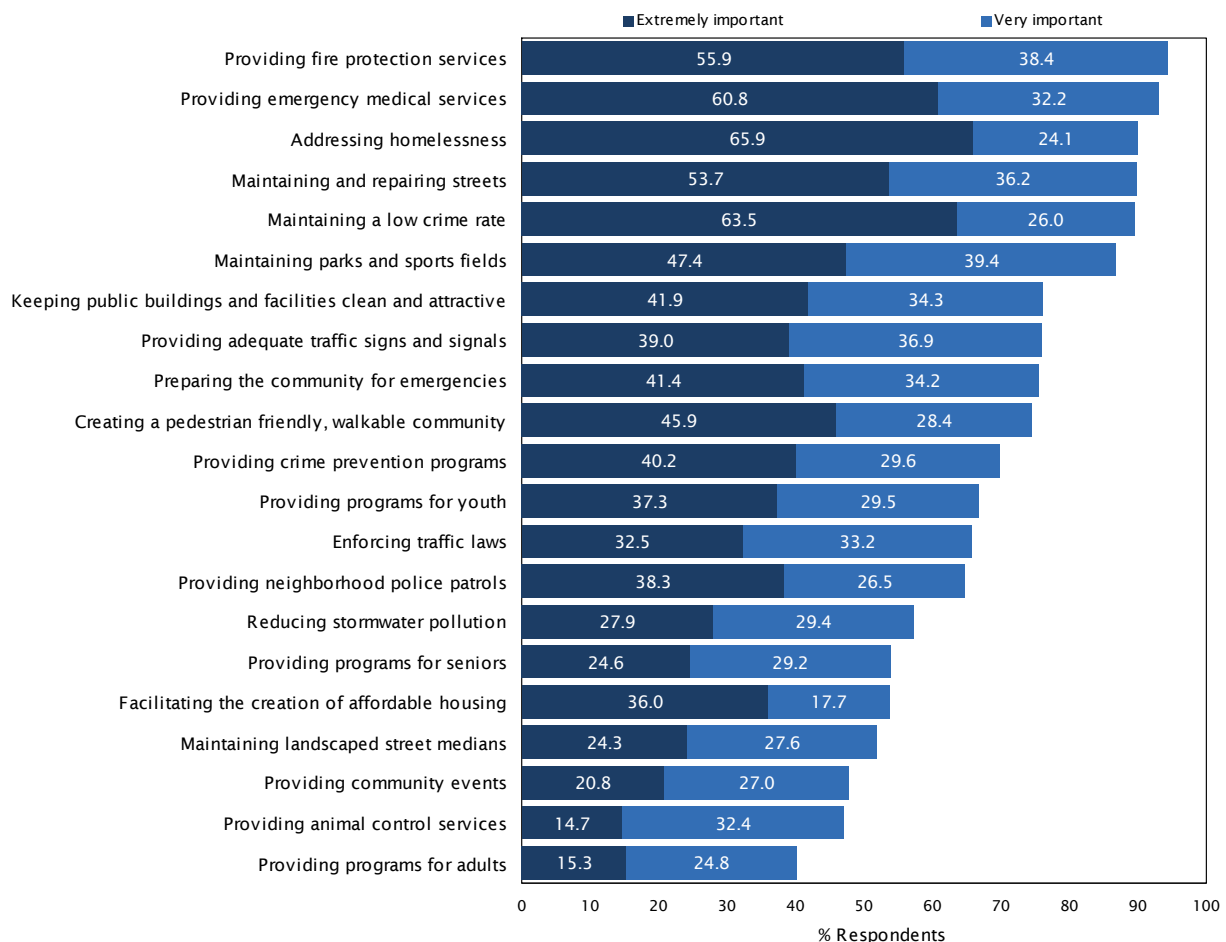
For the interested reader, Table 2 displays the percentage of respondents who viewed each service as extremely or very important by study year, as well as the difference between 2021 and 2023. Over the past two years, there was a statistically significant increase in the importance rating assigned to one of the services tested (enforcing traffic laws, +6%), and decreases in importance ratings for six services (largest decline for providing programs for youth, -11%).

TABLE 2 IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES BY STUDY YEAR

	Study Year								Change in Extremely + Very Important '21 to '23
	2023	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2006	
Enforcing traffic laws	65.7	60.2	67.5	67.5	61.8	65.2	63.7	77.8	+5.5†
Providing special events like community festivals	47.8	43.8	45.6	45.6	43.0	38.9	33.9	57.7	+4.0
Maintaining parks and sports fields	86.8	84.6	80.2	78.4	71.5	70.3	67.1	71.2	+2.2
Providing fire protection services	94.4	92.2	94.2	92.9	95.2	94.5	91.2	91.0	+2.2
Addressing homelessness	89.9	88.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	+1.5
Creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	74.3	73.9	74.2	78.3	76.6	69.9	65.1	N/A	+0.4
Maintaining and repairing streets	89.9	89.7	93.8	91.1	88.6	87.2	86.8	83.8	+0.2
Maintaining landscaped street medians	51.9	52.5	53.9	46.9	47.9	50.7	39.2	61.8	-0.6
Providing emergency medical services	93.0	94.3	89.9	93.9	89.1	91.4	91.3	87.9	-1.3
Providing animal control services	47.1	48.6	51.6	45.9	41.5	46.6	46.1	61.0	-1.5
Maintaining a low crime rate	89.5	91.4	97.0	93.9	98.1	93.6	94.2	91.1	-1.9
Keeping public buildings and facilities clean and attractive	76.2	79.2	77.6	78.1	72.6	69.8	62.3	75.8	-3.0
Providing adequate traffic signs and signals	75.9	79.1	80.0	78.0	76.3	74.8	73.0	79.9	-3.2
Facilitating the creation of affordable housing	53.7	57.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-3.7
Providing programs for adults	40.1	44.9	45.5	46.9	40.6	38.6	35.3	N/A	-4.8
Providing neighborhood police patrols	64.8	71.6	79.0	79.0	80.3	79.5	78.5	84.4	-6.8†
Providing crime prevention programs	69.8	77.8	75.8	78.8	75.3	74.5	74.6	82.9	-8.0†
Providing programs for seniors	53.8	62.1	63.5	58.4	66.4	59.5	52.0	N/A	-8.2†
Preparing the community for emergencies	75.6	83.9	84.2	83.1	81.0	73.1	71.3	N/A	-8.3†
Reducing stormwater pollution	57.3	66.7	70.5	74.2	67.9	63.7	59.3	70.4	-9.4†
Providing programs for youth	66.8	77.3	75.5	74.7	68.5	69.9	66.4	N/A	-10.5†

† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

Turning to the satisfaction component, Figure 12 on the next page sorts the same list of 21 services according to the percentage of respondents who indicated they were either very or somewhat satisfied with the City's efforts to provide the service.[2] Overall, respondents were most satisfied with the City's efforts to provide fire protection services (92% very or somewhat satisfied), provide emergency medical services (88%), keep public buildings and facilities clean and attractive (84%), maintain parks and sports fields (81%), provide community events (80%), and provide animal control services (80%). Respondents were notably less satisfied with the City's efforts to address homelessness (23%), facilitate the creation of affordable housing (38%), and maintain and repair streets (48%).

Table 3 at the bottom of the next page displays the percentage of respondents who were satisfied with each service by study year, and shows there were 12 statistically significant declines from 2021 to 2023.

2. Note that to allow for an apples-to-apples comparison of the satisfaction ratings, only respondents who held an opinion (either satisfied or dissatisfied) are included in Figure 12. Those who did not have an opinion were removed from this analysis. The percentage who held an opinion for each service is shown to the right of the service label in brackets.

Question 6   *For the same list of services I just read I'd like you to tell me how satisfied you are with the job the City of La Mesa is doing to provide the service. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to: _____, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 12 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES
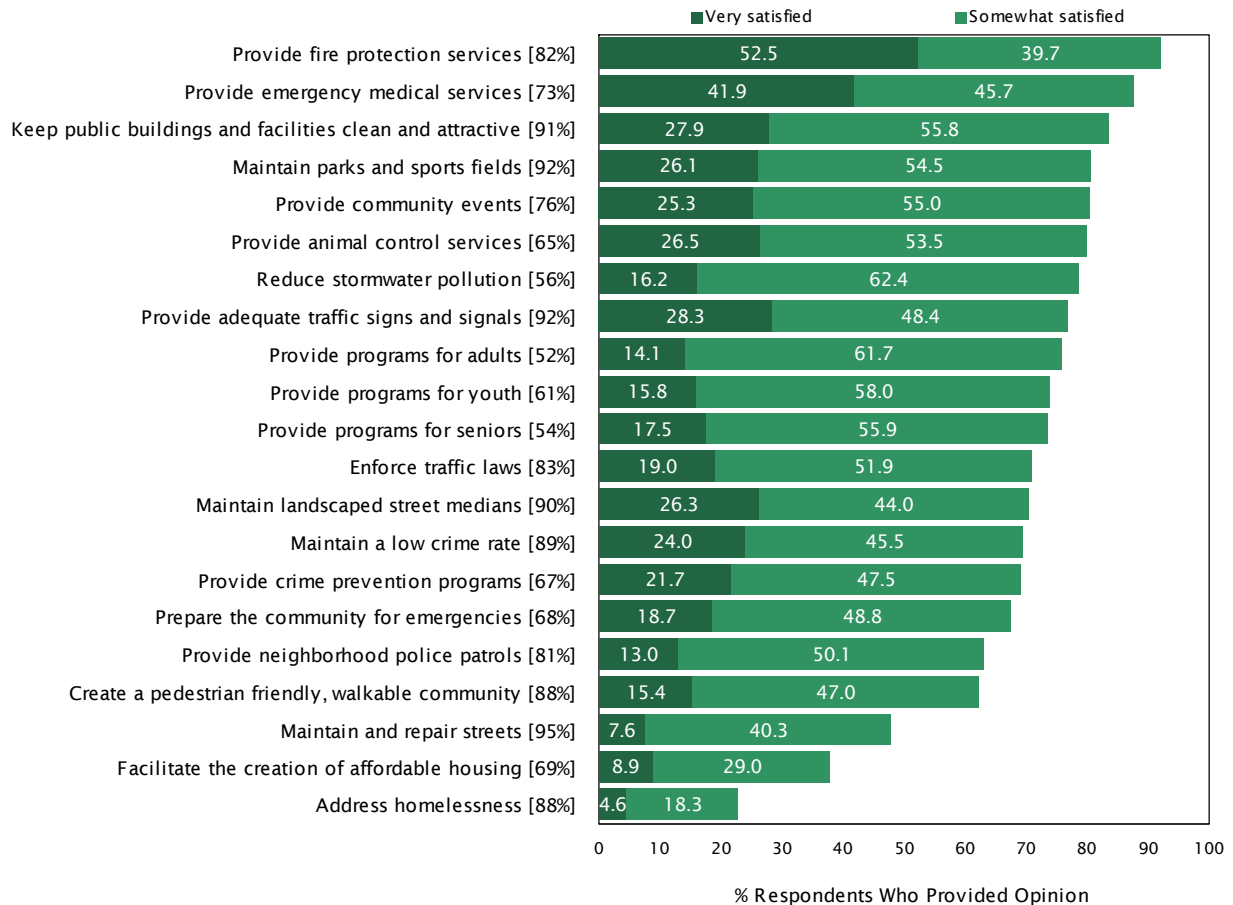
TABLE 3 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES BY STUDY YEAR

	Study Year								Change in Satisfaction '21 to '23
	2023	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2006	
Reduce stormwater pollution	78.6	74.1	79.0	68.7	92.7	91.1	86.1	85.2	+4.5
Provide special events like community festivals	80.4	78.6	88.1	82.1	91.6	93.0	95.2	87.6	+1.7
Provide programs for adults	75.8	75.5	87.8	85.0	87.6	93.1	90.3	N/A	+0.3
Keep public buildings and facilities clean, attractive	83.7	86.8	87.3	86.2	93.4	96.7	94.9	90.2	-3.1
Provide programs for youth	73.9	77.1	84.3	82.2	90.8	91.4	88.9	N/A	-3.2
Maintain a low crime rate	69.5	73.2	87.5	81.5	86.4	85.8	79.5	85.7	-3.7
Provide crime prevention programs	69.2	73.1	85.7	82.2	87.4	88.9	84.7	86.5	-3.8
Prepare the community for emergencies	67.5	71.4	78.8	78.1	85.8	86.1	84.0	N/A	-3.9
Maintain parks and sports fields	80.5	85.1	88.3	85.1	90.1	94.0	92.2	91.8	-4.5
Provide fire protection services	92.2	96.8	99.3	98.8	98.7	98.2	97.1	94.8	-4.6†
Provide programs for seniors	73.4	78.7	87.2	84.5	92.6	93.2	93.4	N/A	-5.3†
Provide neighborhood police patrols	63.1	69.4	83.6	77.5	87.1	87.1	83.5	83.7	-6.2†
Facilitate the creation of affordable housing	37.9	45.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-7.1†
Address homelessness	22.8	29.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-7.1†
Provide animal control services	80.0	87.5	83.1	90.9	85.7	93.6	87.6	87.4	-7.5†
Provide emergency medical services	87.6	96.0	92.0	94.1	98.8	98.1	97.1	93.0	-8.4†
Create a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	62.4	72.6	71.4	71.3	80.2	84.8	84.8	N/A	-10.2†
Enforce traffic laws	70.9	81.2	82.4	90.3	87.4	89.7	90.2	88.2	-10.3†
Maintain landscaped street medians	70.4	81.7	85.6	84.6	90.7	94.4	91.1	89.1	-11.3†
Provide adequate traffic signs and signals	76.8	89.5	87.3	91.9	92.0	93.6	94.8	87.6	-12.7†
Maintain and repair streets	47.9	62.5	68.5	66.7	80.5	79.7	72.0	80.6	-14.6†

† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

DIFFERENTIATORS OF OPINION   For the interested reader, Table 4 displays how the level of satisfaction with each specific service tested in Question 6 varied according to residents' overall performance ratings for the City (see *Overall Satisfaction* on page 14). The table divides residents who were satisfied with the City's *overall performance* into one group and those dissatisfied into a second group. Also displayed is the difference between the two groups in terms of the percentage who indicated they were satisfied with the City's efforts to provide each service tested in Question 6 (far right column). For convenience, the services are sorted by that difference, with the greatest differentiators of opinion near the top of the table.

When compared with their counterparts, those who were satisfied with the City's *overall* performance in providing city services were also more likely to express satisfaction with the City's efforts to provide each of the services tested in Question 6. That said, the greatest specific differentiators of opinion between satisfied and dissatisfied residents were found with respect to the City's efforts to provide programs for youth and prepare the community for emergencies, followed by maintain a low crime rate, reduce stormwater pollution, provide programs for seniors, and maintain parks and sports fields.

At the other end of the spectrum, there was much less difference between the two resident groups regarding their satisfaction with the City's efforts to provide fire protection services, provide neighborhood police patrols, and facilitate the creation of affordable housing.

TABLE 4 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES BY OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CITY

		Satisfaction With City's Overall Performance (Q4)		Difference Between Groups For Each Service
		Very or somewhat satisfied	Very or somewhat dissatisfied	
% Respondents Satisfied With Each Service	Provide programs for youth	83.2	38.3	44.9
	Prepare the community for emergencies	79.3	34.9	44.3
	Maintain a low crime rate	80.4	42.9	37.5
	Reduce stormwater pollution	85.5	48.2	37.3
	Provide programs for seniors	81.3	44.5	36.8
	Maintain parks and sports fields	88.0	51.5	36.5
	Keep public buildings and facilities clean and attractive	89.1	57.1	32.0
	Provide emergency medical services	94.2	63.4	30.8
	Provide programs for adults	82.5	52.3	30.2
	Maintain and repair streets	54.5	27.1	27.5
	Create a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	68.0	41.0	27.0
	Maintain landscaped street medians	76.8	54.1	22.6
	Provide community events	85.2	64.8	20.3
	Enforce traffic laws	76.4	56.4	20.0
	Address homelessness	26.6	6.9	19.7
	Provide crime prevention programs	75.5	55.9	19.6
	Provide adequate traffic signs and signals	80.8	61.3	19.5
	Provide animal control services	84.6	65.4	19.2
	Facilitate the creation of affordable housing	42.7	27.8	14.9
	Provide neighborhood police patrols	67.4	56.3	11.1
	Provide fire protection services	94.5	84.7	9.7

PERFORMANCE NEEDS & PRIORITIES

With a measure of the importance of a service to residents as well as a measure of satisfaction with the City's efforts to provide the service, True North is able to examine the relationship between these two dimensions and identify areas where the City has the greatest opportunities to improve resident satisfaction—and identify for which services the City is meeting, and even exceeding, the majority of residents' needs.

Rather than rely on *averages* to conduct this analysis, True North has developed an *individualized* approach to identifying priorities. This approach is built on the recognition that opinions will vary from resident to resident and that understanding this variation is required for assessing how well the City is meeting residents' needs.[3] Table 5 on the next page presents a grid based on the importance and satisfaction scales. The horizontal axis corresponds to the four *importance* options, and the vertical scale corresponds to the four *satisfaction* options. The 16 cells within the grid are grouped into one of six categories based on how well the City is meeting, or not meeting, a resident's needs for a particular service. The six groups are as follows:

Exceeding Needs	The City is exceeding a respondent's needs if a respondent is satisfied and the level of expressed satisfaction is higher than the importance that the respondent assigned to the service.
Meeting Needs, Moderately	The City is moderately meeting a respondent's needs if the respondent is satisfied and the level of satisfaction is commensurate with the level of importance assigned to the service.
Meeting Needs, Marginally	The City is marginally meeting a respondent's needs if the respondent is satisfied with the City's efforts to provide the service, but their level of satisfaction is lower than the level of importance assigned to the service.
Not Meeting Needs, Marginally	The City is marginally *not* meeting a respondent's needs if the respondent is somewhat dissatisfied, but the service is also viewed as just somewhat or not at all important.
Not Meeting Needs, Moderately	The City is moderately *not* meeting a respondent's needs if a) a respondent is very dissatisfied with the City's efforts to provide the service, but the service is viewed somewhat or not at all important, or b) a respondent is somewhat dissatisfied and the service is very important.
Not Meeting Needs, Severely	The City is severely *not* meeting a respondent's needs if a) a respondent is dissatisfied and the service is viewed as extremely important, or b) a respondent is very dissatisfied and the service is viewed as very important.

3. Any tool that relies on the opinions of the average respondent will provide a limited and occasionally distorted picture of how well an agency is performing. The simple fact is that a city is not comprised of average residents—it is comprised of unique individuals who vary substantially in their opinions of the City's performance in different service areas. Thus, although the arithmetic average of these individuals' opinions is a useful statistic, it does not capture the variation in opinions that occurs among residents, and it is this variation that is critical for truly assessing how well the City is meeting the needs of its residents.

TABLE 5 RESIDENT SERVICE NEEDS & PRIORITIES MATRIX

		Importance			
		Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Satisfaction	Very satisfied	Exceeding needs	Exceeding needs	Meeting needs, moderately	Meeting needs, moderately
	Somewhat satisfied	Exceeding needs	Meeting needs, moderately	Meeting needs, marginally	Meeting needs, marginally
	Somewhat dissatisfied	Not meeting needs, marginally	Not meeting needs, marginally	Not meeting needs, moderately	Not meeting needs, severely
	Very dissatisfied	Not meeting needs, moderately	Not meeting needs, moderately	Not meeting needs, severely	Not meeting needs, severely

Using this framework, True North categorized each respondent individually for each of the 21 services tested in the study. Thus, for example, a respondent who indicated that addressing homelessness was somewhat important and they were very satisfied with the City's efforts in this service area would be categorized in the *exceeding needs* group for this service. The same respondent may be grouped in the *marginally not meeting needs* group for another service (e.g., facilitating the creation of affordable housing) if they were somewhat dissatisfied with the City's efforts to provide the service, but the service was viewed as only somewhat important.

Figure 13 on the next page presents the 21 services tested, along with the percentage of respondents who were grouped into each of the six possible categories. For ease of interpretation, the color-coding in Figure 13 is consistent with that presented in Table 5. Thus, for example, in the service area of addressing homelessness, the City is exceeding the needs of 1% of respondents, moderately meeting the needs of 6% of respondents, marginally meeting the needs of 15% of respondents, marginally not meeting the needs of 2% of respondents, moderately not meeting the needs of 10% of respondents, and severely not meeting the needs of 65% of respondents.

As shown in Figure 13, the City is meeting the needs of at least 70% of residents for 14 of the 21 services tested. Operating from the management philosophy that, all other things being equal, the City should focus on improving those services that have the highest percentage of residents for which the City is moderately or severely not meeting their needs, the services have been sorted in order of priority. Thus, addressing homelessness is the top priority, followed by facilitating the creation of affordable housing, maintaining and repairing streets, providing neighborhood police patrols, and creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community.

FIGURE 13 RESIDENT SERVICE NEEDS

Service	Exceeding needs	Meeting needs moderately	Meeting needs marginally	Not meeting needs marginally	Not meeting needs moderately	Not meeting needs severely
Addressing homelessness	1	6	15	2	10	65
Facilitating the creation of affordable housing	12	13	14	7	12	42
Maintaining and repairing streets	1	14	33	1	11	40
Providing neighborhood police patrols	6	25	32	2	11	24
Creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	5	23	35	3	9	26
Maintaining a low crime rate	3	24	43	2	4	25
Preparing the community for emergencies	6	20	42	4	11	17
Providing crime prevention programs	5	30	35	3	8	19
Enforcing traffic laws	8	24	39	6	4	19
Providing programs for youth	3	26	45	4	7	15
Maintaining landscaped street medians	15	35	20	9	7	14
Providing adequate traffic signs and signals	8	30	38	3	7	14
Providing programs for adults	7	39	29	4	9	11
Providing programs for seniors	5	30	39	7	5	14
Maintaining parks and sports fields	1	34	46	1	4	14
Reducing stormwater pollution	7	35	37	4	9	8
Providing special events like community festivals	13	42	26	4	6	9
Providing animal control services	12	41	28	5	8	7
Keeping public buildings, facilities clean, attractive	7	31	45	2	3	11
Providing emergency medical services	1	44	43	0	5	7
Providing fire protection services	1	54	37	1		6

% Respondents who Provided Opinion

PUBLIC SAFETY & POLICE

Ensuring the personal safety of residents is the most basic function of local government. It is important to keep in mind, of course, that public safety is as much a matter of perception as it is a matter of reality. Regardless of actual crime statistics, if residents do not *feel* safe then they will not enjoy the many cultural, recreational, and shopping opportunities available in the City of La Mesa that will enhance their quality of life.

PERCEIVED SAFETY The survey included several questions designed to measure respondents' perceptions of safety, La Mesa's Police Department, and code enforcement. The first of these questions simply asked residents to describe how safe La Mesa is as a place to live. As shown in Figure 14 below, 85% of respondents rated the City as either very safe (28%) or somewhat safe (57%). Approximately 12% described the City as somewhat unsafe, while 2% felt La Mesa is a very unsafe place to live. The percentage of residents who felt very safe experienced a statistically significant decline from 2021 to 2023 (-7%), as did their overall perception of safety (85% vs. 88%).

Question 7 *Overall, how safe is the City of La Mesa as a place to live? Would you say it is very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?*

FIGURE 14 PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY BY STUDY YEAR
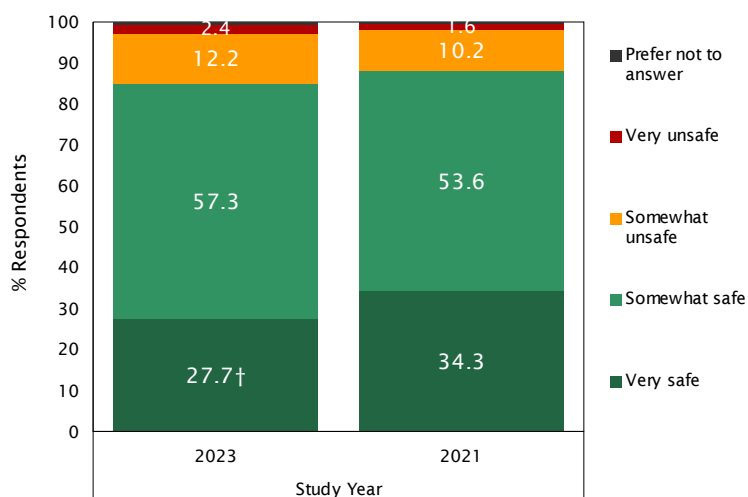
† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

Figures 15-17 demonstrate that opinions regarding the safety of La Mesa as a place to live were generally consistent, ranging from 79% to 92% across most subgroups. Noticeably lower ratings were reported among respondents with a mixed/other ethnic background (55%) and those dissatisfied with the City's overall efforts to provide municipal services (60%). Opinions regarding the safety of La Mesa were not strongly tied to opinions about the Police Department in 2023 like they were in 2021. Regardless of their opinion of the Police Department, at least eight-in-ten respondents felt the City is a safe place to live, with only a 6% point difference between those holding a negative view of the Department (81%) and those with a positive view (87%).

FIGURE 15 PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY BY YEARS IN LA MESA, HOME OWNERSHIP & OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
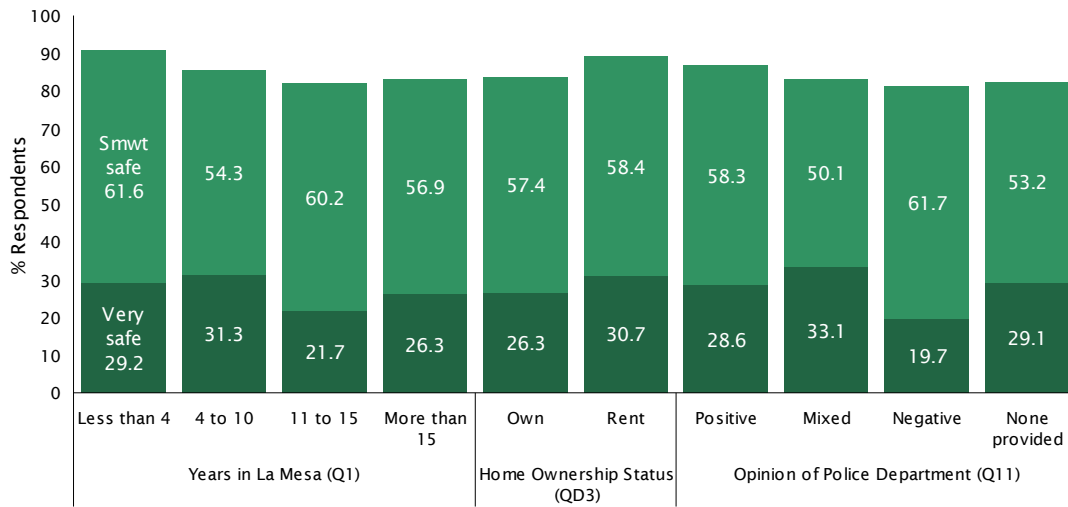
FIGURE 16 PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY BY AGE & ETHNICITY
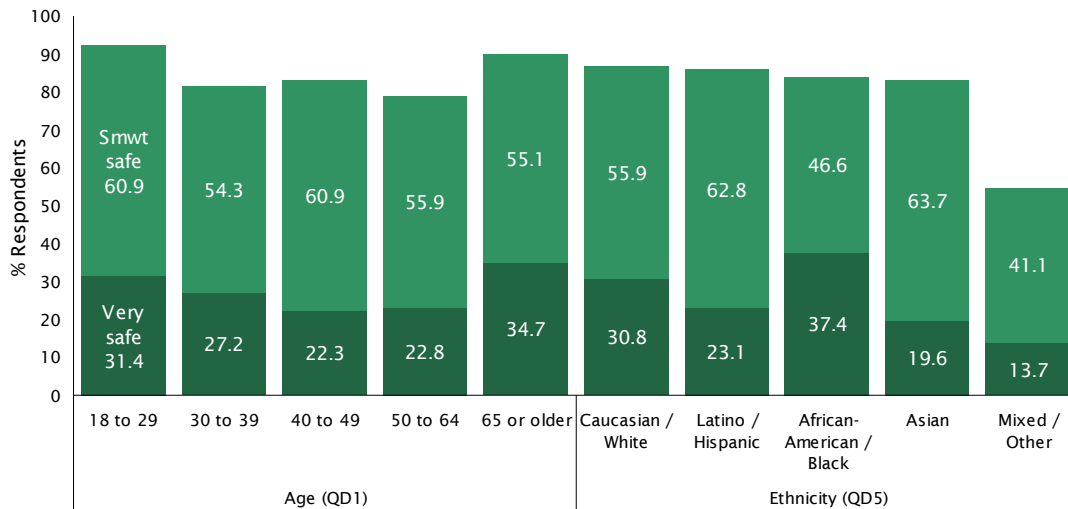
FIGURE 17 PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY BY QUADRANT OF CITY, CHILD IN HSLD, GENDER & OVERALL SATISFACTION

Having measured respondents' opinions regarding the *overall* safety of the City, the survey next focused on perceived safety in each of the five scenarios described at the bottom of Figure 18. As shown in the figure, residents' feelings of safety varied considerably depending on the setting. Nine-in-ten residents who provided an opinion indicated that they feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood (93%) or in business and retail areas (90%) during the day, and eight-in-ten (80%) feel safe walking alone in parks and on paths and recreation trails during the day. After dark, however, less than six-in-ten residents stated they feel safe walking alone in business and retail areas of the City (58%) and in their neighborhood (56%).

Question 8   *Next, I'd like to ask a few questions about personal safety and security in the City of La Mesa. When you are:_____, would you say that you feel very safe, reasonably safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?*

FIGURE 18 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY
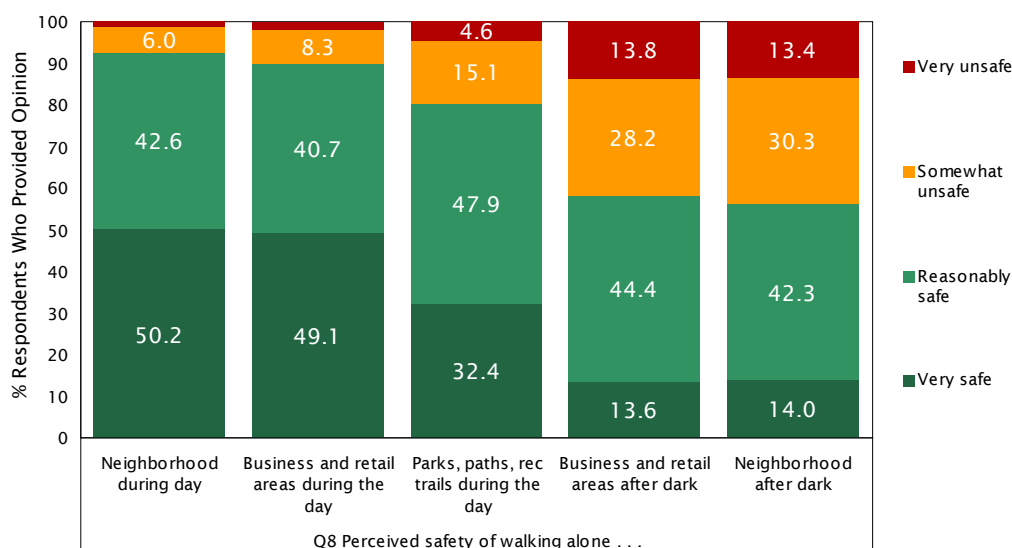
Among those who had an opinion, Table 6 displays the percentage of respondents who stated they feel very or reasonably safe in each scenario by study year, as well as the difference between 2021 and 2023. Between the two most recent studies, there were statistically significant declines in perceived safety within each scenario.

TABLE 6 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY BY STUDY YEAR

	Study Year								Change in Very + Reasonably Safe '21 to '23
	2023	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2006	
Neighborhood during day	92.8	95.6	95.6	96.1	94.4	97.1	96.8	97.5	-2.9†
Business areas after dark	58.0	62.3	70.5	71.3	66.4	78.7	77.4	76.0	-4.3†
Parks, paths, rec trails during the day	80.2	86.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-6.0†
Business areas during day	89.8	97.3	97.3	95.1	94.8	97.5	96.8	97.9	-7.5†
Neighborhood after dark	56.3	64.1	70.1	73.1	72.5	78.8	74.7	75.1	-7.8†

† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

Figures 19-22 on the next page display how perceived safety (showing the percentage who felt very or reasonably safe) varied by respondent age, participation in a neighborhood watch program, quadrant of residence, gender, opinions of the La Mesa Police Department, and ethnicity.

Consistent with the relationship between overall safety ratings for the City and opinions about the Police Department (see Figure 15), *individual* feelings of safety in the specific scenarios tested in Question 8 show only a slight to modest relationship with opinions about the La Mesa Police Department (Figure 21 on next page).

FIGURE 19 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY BY AGE & IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM
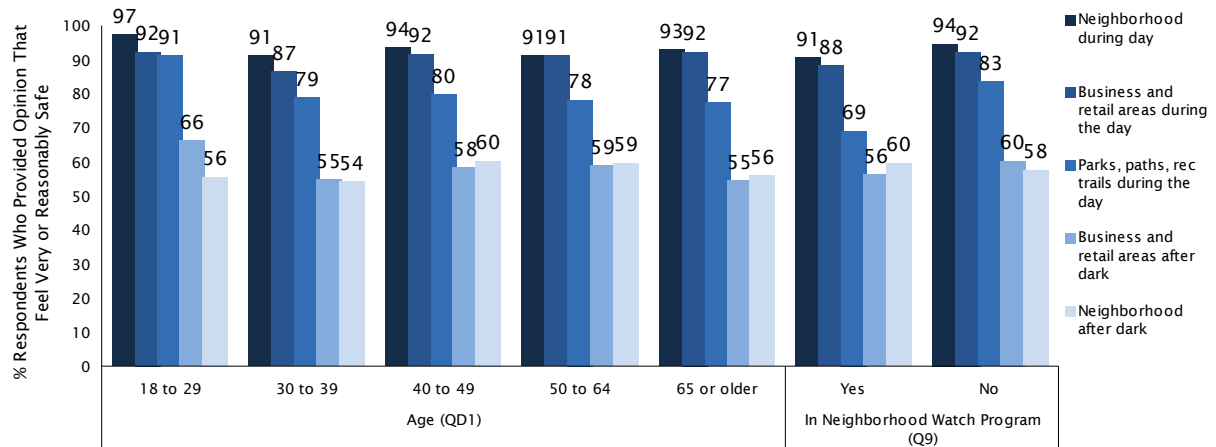
FIGURE 20 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY BY QUADRANT OF CITY & GENDER
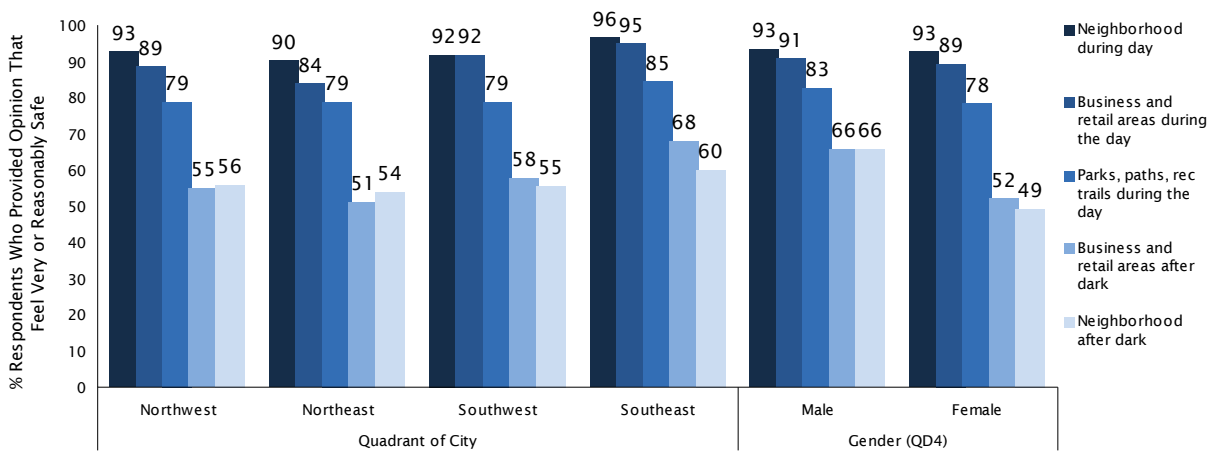
FIGURE 21 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY BY OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
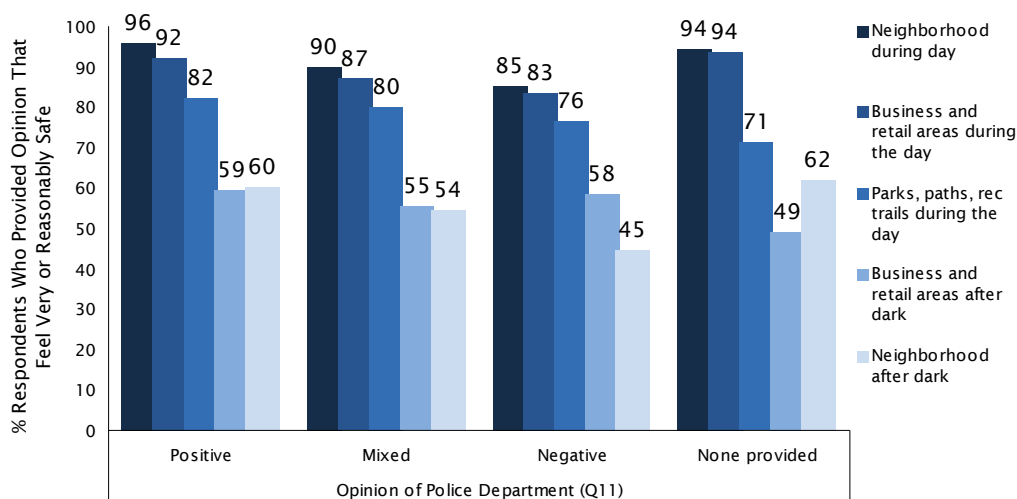
FIGURE 22 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY BY ETHNICITY
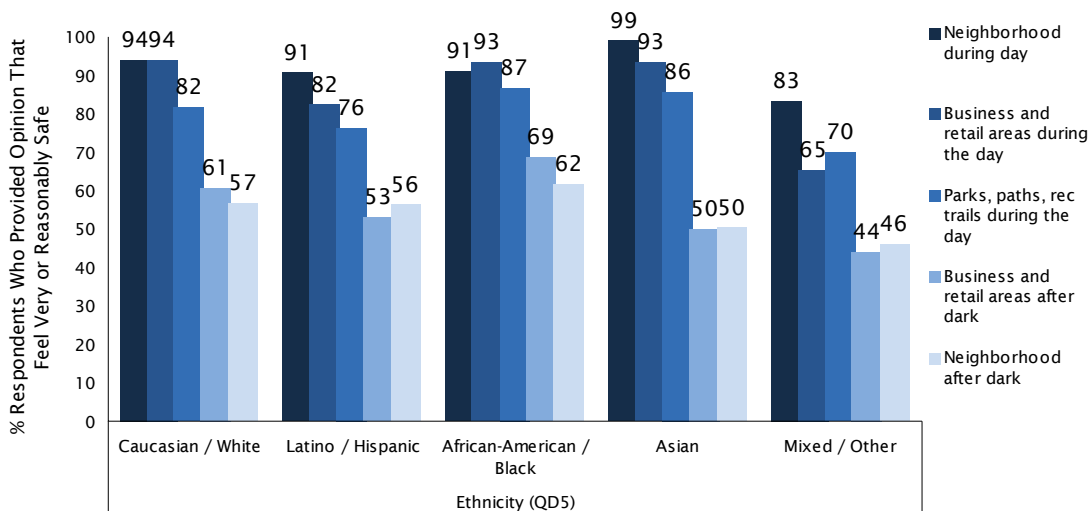
NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH Neighborhood watch is a crime prevention program that enlists the active participation of residents in cooperation with law enforcement and other community agencies to reduce crime, solve problems, and improve the quality of life in their area. The Police Department serves as one of many such resources, although ultimately program success requires sustained resident participation and effort. First presented in 2013 was a question that simply asked La Mesa residents if they were involved in a neighborhood watch program. Overall, 11% of survey respondents indicated that they were involved in a neighborhood watch program in 2023, which is statistically consistent with the percentage recorded in 2021 (see Figure 23 on the next page). As shown in figures 24 to 26, residents who have lived in La Mesa at least 11 years, home owners, those with a positive or mixed opinion of the Police Department, residents at least 40 years of age, African-American/Black residents, those with a child in the household, and those who feel the City is unsafe were the most likely to report involvement in a neighborhood watch program.

Question 9 *Are you involved in a neighborhood watch program?*

FIGURE 23 INVOLVED IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM BY STUDY YEAR
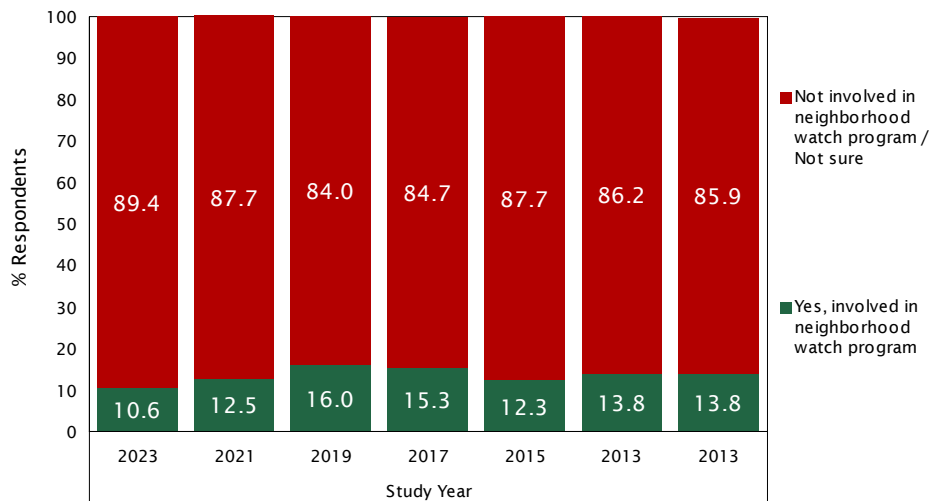
FIGURE 24 INVOLVED IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM BY YEARS IN LA MESA, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
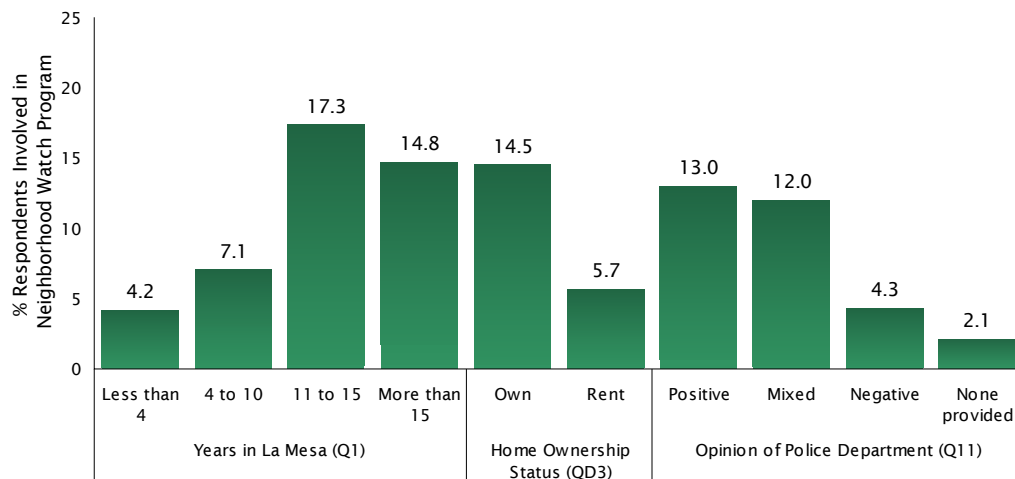
FIGURE 25 INVOLVED IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM BY AGE & ETHNICITY
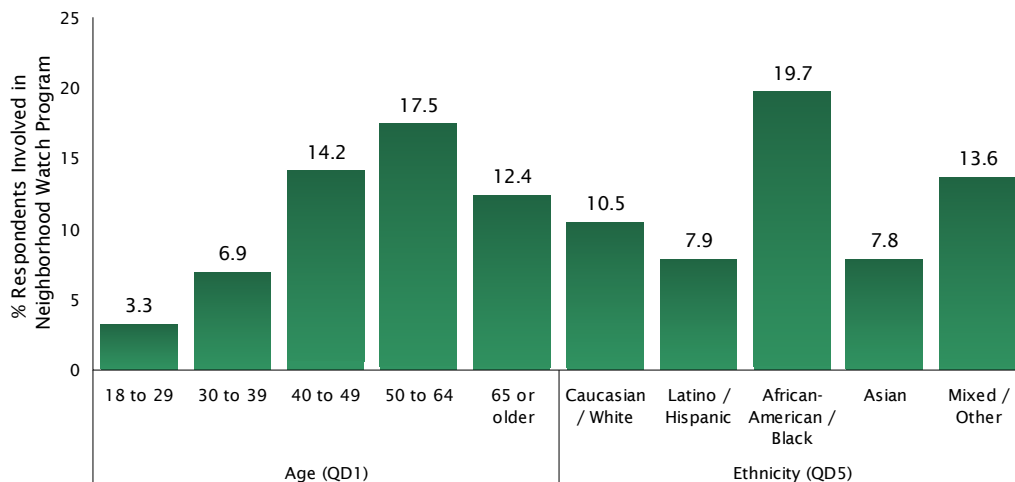
FIGURE 26 INVOLVED IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM BY QUADRANT OF CITY, CHILD IN HSLD, GENDER & PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY
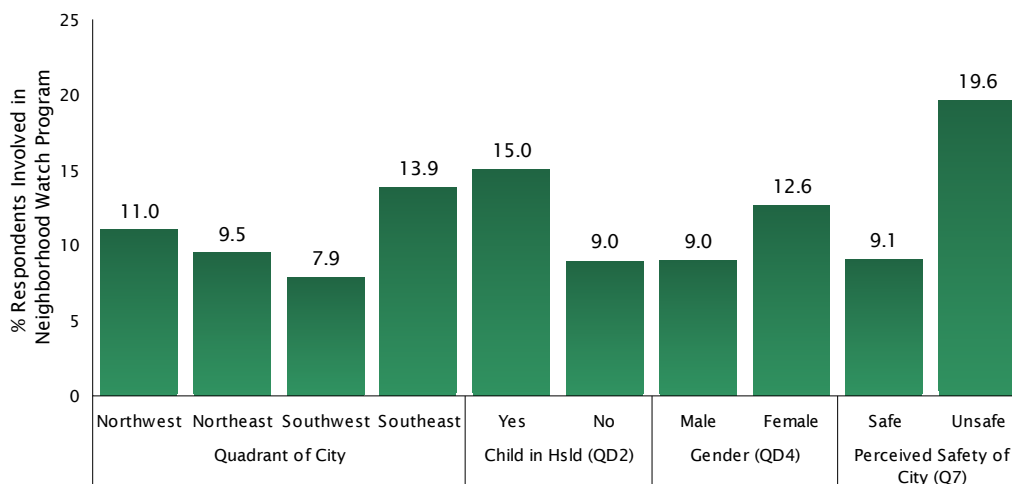
RATINGS OF POLICE DEPARTMENT'S PERFORMANCE All respondents were next asked to rate the La Mesa Police Department's performance on a variety of dimensions, including investigating crimes, engaging and interacting with the public, and working with the community to solve problems. Overall, the Police Department received its highest mark for maintaining a presence and being visible (48% excellent or good), followed by engaging and interacting with the public (42%), working with the community to solve problems (41%), communicating with La Mesa residents and local businesses (41%), and investigating crimes (36%). The percentage who rated the Department as poor or very poor on a dimension ranged from 16% for investigating crimes to 20% for engaging and interacting with the public, and the percentage unsure ranged from 8% (maintaining a presence and being visible) to 22% (investigating crimes).

Question 10 *Thinking of the La Mesa Police Department, please tell me how well you feel the Department performs in the following areas.*

FIGURE 27 OPINION OF POLICE PERFORMANCE
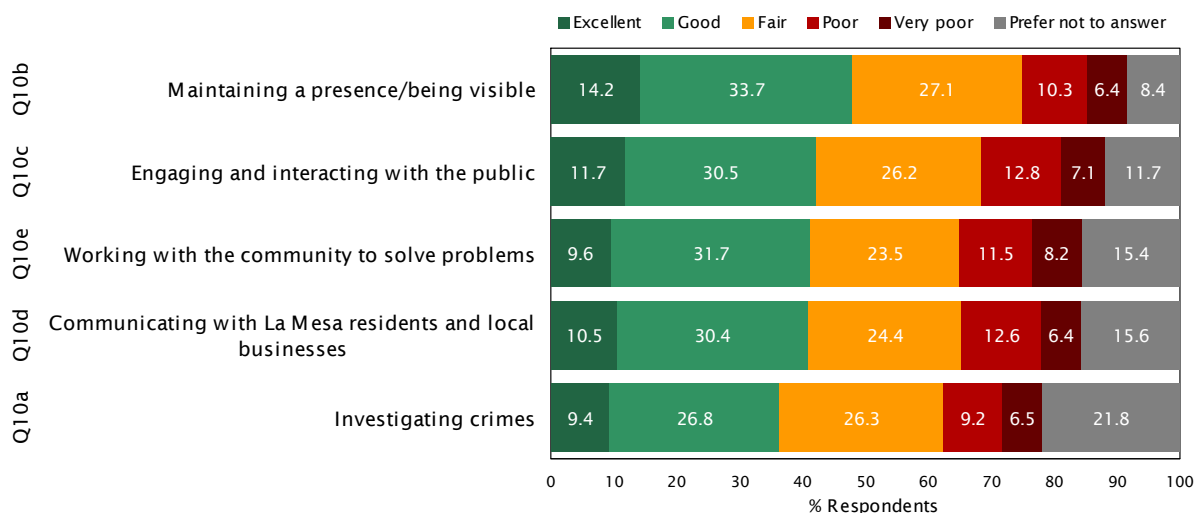
From 2021 to 2023, performance ratings declined for investigating crimes (-7%) and maintaining a presence and being visible (-6%), and remained statistically consistent across the other three performance areas.

TABLE 7 OPINION OF POLICE PERFORMANCE BY STUDY YEAR

	Study Year		Change in Excellent + Good '21 to '23
	2023	2021	
Working with the community to solve problems	41.3	39.8	+1.4
Engaging and interacting with the public	42.2	41.3	+1.0
Communicating with La Mesa residents and local businesses	40.9	41.9	-1.0
Maintaining a presence/being visible	47.9	54.0	-6.1†
Investigating crimes	36.3	43.8	-7.6†

† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

PROFESSIONALISM, TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY & EQUAL TREATMENT In addition to rating the La Mesa Police Department's performance (see above), the survey also explored respondents' perceptions of the Department when it comes to professionalism, trustworthiness, accountability, and equal treatment. For each of the statements shown along the bottom of Figure 28, respondents were simply asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Close to seven-in-ten respondents (68%) agreed with the statement *I trust the La Mesa Police Department to protect and serve the public*, whereas 21% disagreed with the statement and 11% were unsure. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) also agreed that *The Police Department demonstrates professionalism when interacting with the public*, while 15% disagreed and 21% were unsure. Respondents were more mixed when it came to the statements *The La Mesa Police Department treats people the same regardless of their race, income, or identity* (46% in agreement, 27% in disagreement, 27% unsure) and *The Police Department holds its officers accountable* (46% in agreement, 21% in disagreement, 33% unsure).

Question 11 *Next, I'm going to read you a few statements about the La Mesa Police Department. For each, I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the statement.*

FIGURE 28 AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Q11 Agreement with statements about Police Department . . .
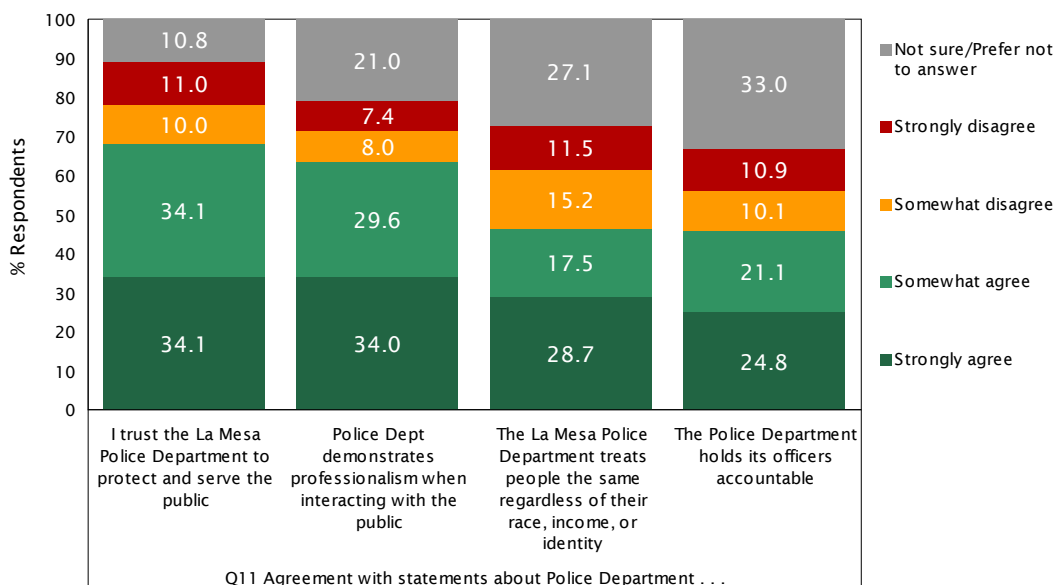
From 2021 to 2023, agreement with each of the statements tested in both years (trust, professionalism, and accountability) remained statistically consistent (Table 8).

TABLE 8 AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT POLICE DEPARTMENT BY STUDY YEAR

	Study Year		Change in Strong + Smwt '21 to '23
	2023	2021	
Police Dept demonstrates professionalism when interacting with the public	63.6	64.2	-0.6
I trust the La Mesa Police Department to protect and serve the public	68.2	69.9	-1.7
The Police Department holds its officers accountable	45.9	47.9	-2.0
La Mesa Police Dept treats people the same regardless of race, income, identity	46.2	N/A	N/A

To help clarify how opinions and perceptions of La Mesa's Police Department vary among La Mesa residents, each survey participant was classified into one of four categories (positive, negative, mixed, or none provided) based on how they responded to the statements tested in Question 11. Those who generally disagreed with the statements were classified as negative, those who generally agreed with the statements were classified as positive, whereas those with a mix of responses (agree and disagree) were grouped into the mixed category.[4]

FIGURE 29 OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
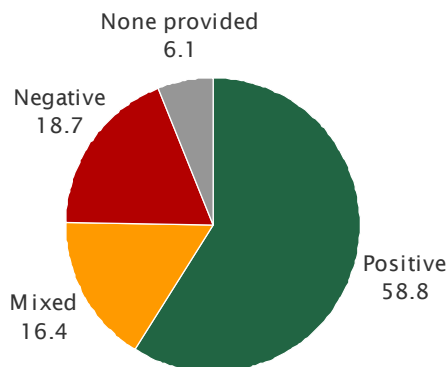
Nearly six-in-ten La Mesa residents (59%) generally held positive perceptions of the Police Department, whereas 19% generally held negative perceptions, 16% were mixed, and 6% did not provide an opinion (Figure 29). When compared to their respective counterparts, positive perceptions of the Department were most frequently found among those who had lived in the City 11 years or longer, respondents who perceived the City to be safe, those in a neighborhood watch program, home owners, seniors, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, and Caucasian respondents, residents who had interacted with the Police Department in the past two years, those with a child in the home, and respondents who were satisfied with the City's overall performance in providing municipal services (see figures 30-33).

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4. More specifically, respondents who agreed with all of the statements or three of the statements with the fourth being unsure were classified as positive. Respondents who disagreed with all of the statements or three of the statements with the fourth being unsure were classified as negative. Respondents who did not provide an opinion to all four of the statements were classified as none provided. Any other combination of answers was classified as mixed.

FIGURE 30 OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT BY YEARS IN LA MESA, PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY & IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM
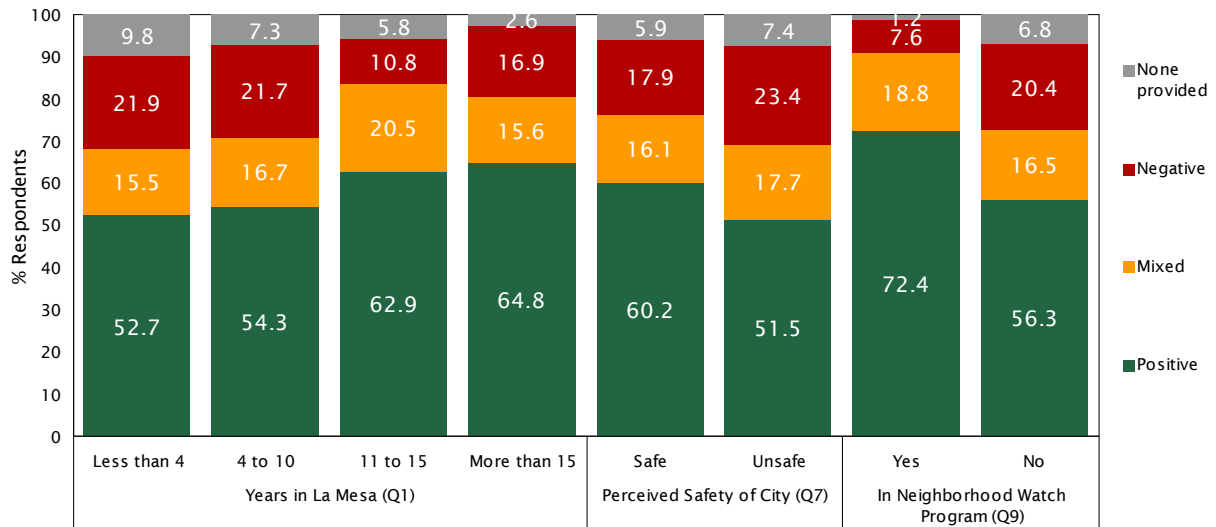
FIGURE 31 OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, GENDER & QUADRANT OF CITY
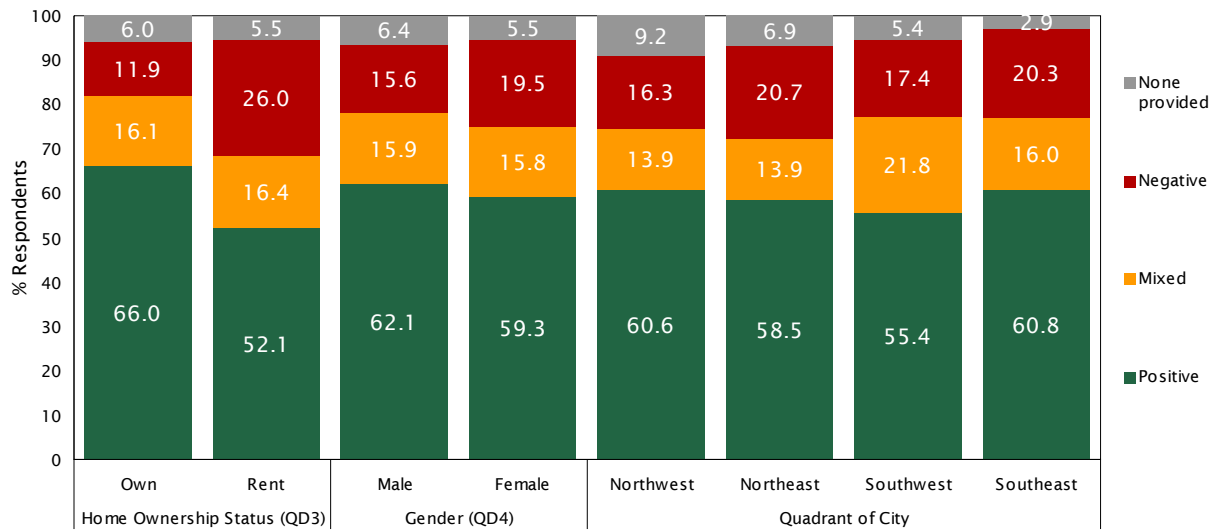
FIGURE 32 OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT BY AGE & ETHNICITY
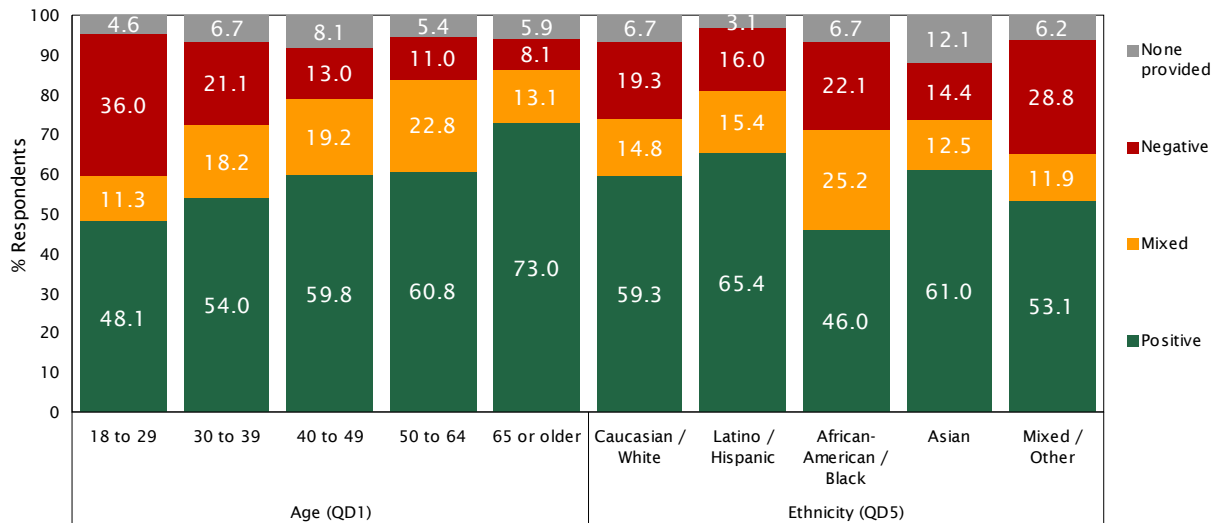
FIGURE 33 OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT BY CONTACT WITH STAFF, INTERACTED WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PAST 2 YEARS, CHILD IN HSLD & OVERALL SATISFACTION
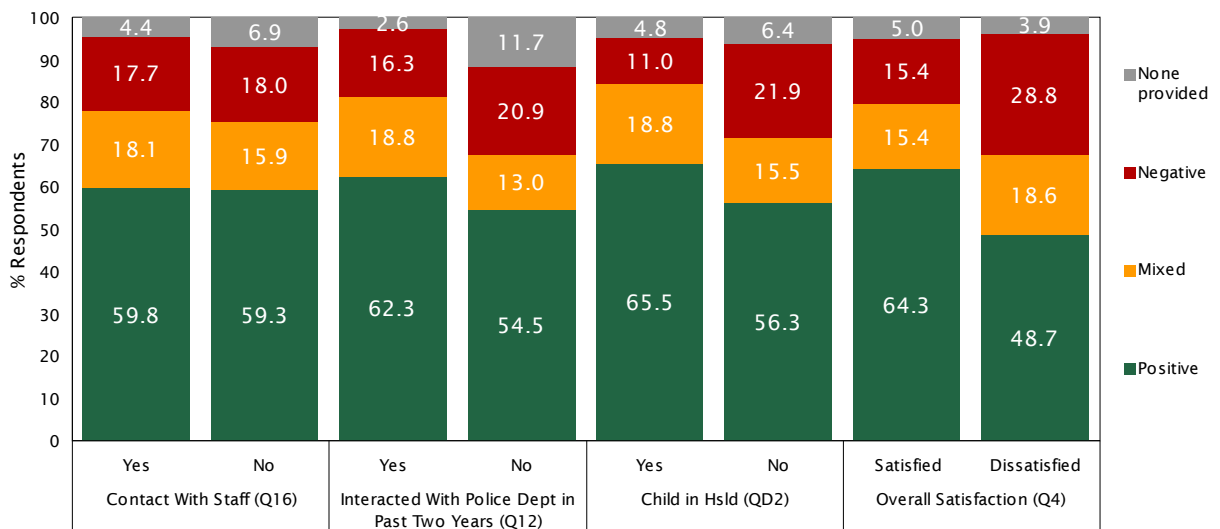
INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT New to the 2023 survey, respondents were asked whether they had interacted with the Police Department by calling the Department, interacting at a community event, or being pulled over or stopped by an officer over the past two years. Approximately four-in-ten residents had called the La Mesa Police Department for assistance (41%) or talked or interacted with a La Mesa Police Officer at a community event or other setting (39%), whereas 7% had been stopped or pulled over by a La Mesa Police Officer (see Figure 34 on next page).

Question 12 *In the past two years, have you: _____?*

FIGURE 34 INTERACTIONS WITH LA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PAST 2 YEARS
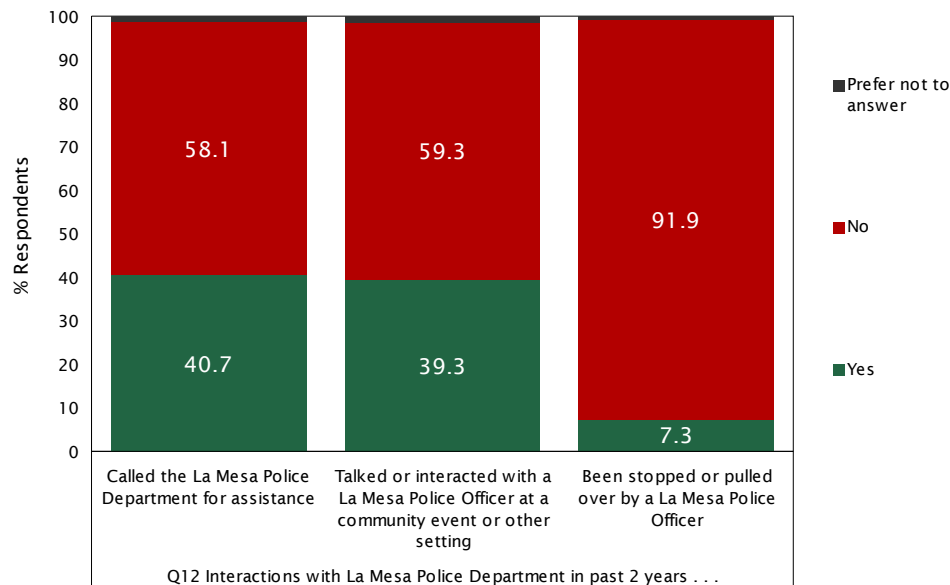
Figures 35 to 37 displays residents' interactions with the Police Department over the past two years by age, involvement in a neighborhood watch program, quadrant of the City, gender, opinion of Police Department, and ethnicity. As one might expect, residents in a neighborhood watch program were the most likely to have talked or interacted with a La Mesa Police Officer at a community event or other setting or called the Department for assistance. Respondents with a positive or mixed opinion of the Department were also more likely than those with a negative opinion or no opinion to have interacted in those two ways. Those with a negative opinion were more likely to have been stopped or pulled over than those with a positive opinion, and those 18 to 29 years of age reported the highest percentage of being pulled over or stopped by police (16%).

FIGURE 35 INTERACTIONS WITH LA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PAST 2 YEARS BY AGE & IN NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM
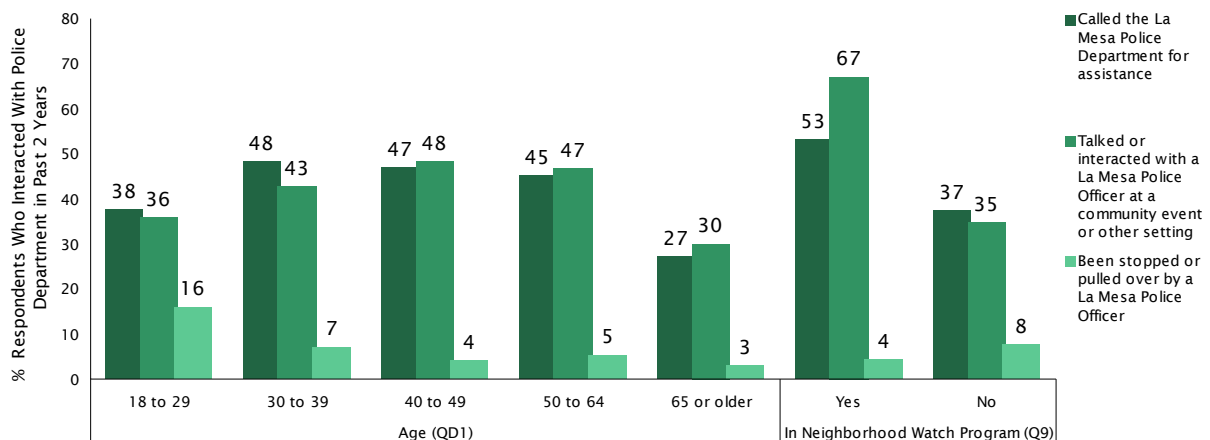
FIGURE 36 INTERACTIONS WITH LA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PAST 2 YEARS BY QUADRANT OF CITY & GENDER
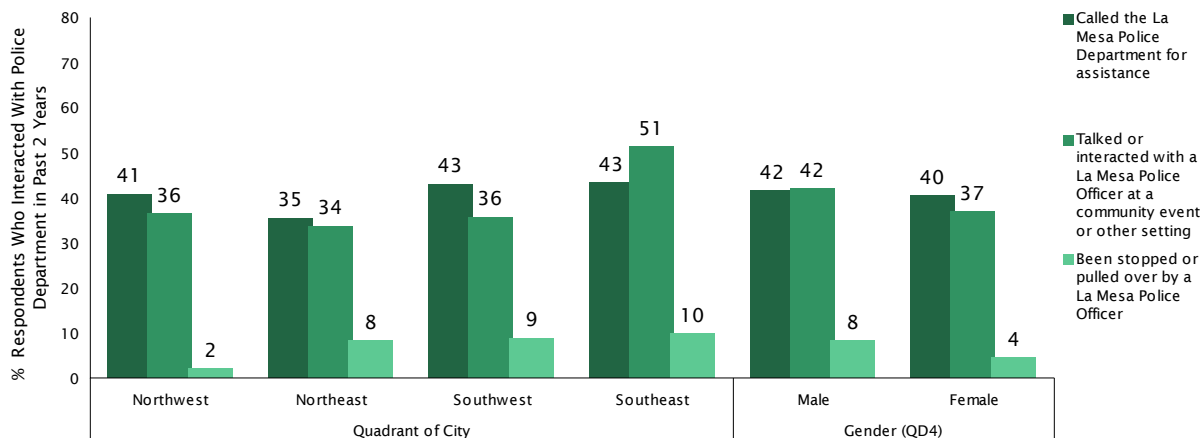
FIGURE 37 INTERACTIONS WITH LA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PAST 2 YEARS BY OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT & ETHNICITY
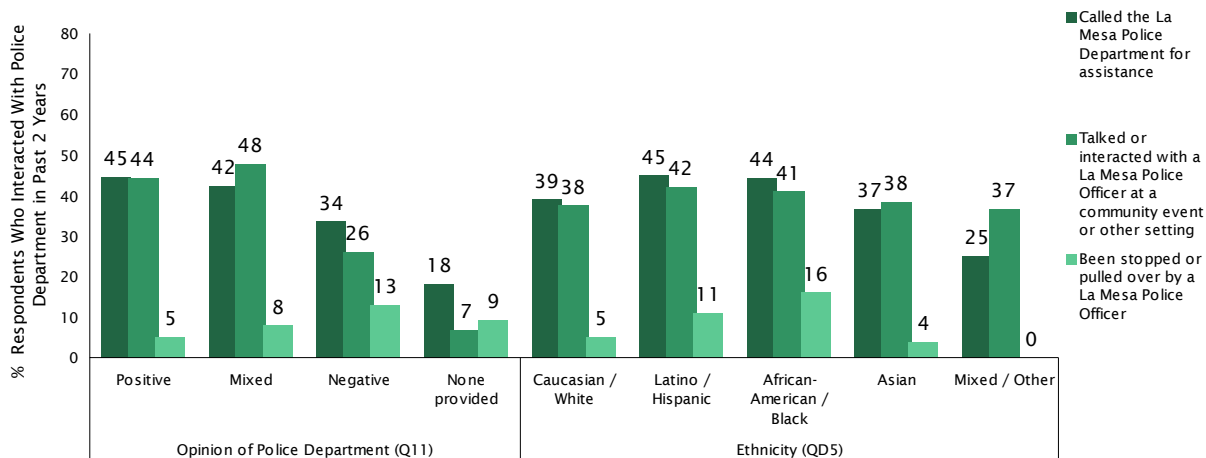
CODE ENFORCEMENT Respondents were next informed that the City has created codes to address and prevent a variety of issues that can affect a neighborhood, including illegal parking, abandoned vehicles, non-permitted construction, junk storage, and properties not being properly maintained. They were then asked if, in general, they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to *enforce* code violations, or if they do not have an opinion on the matter.

Figure 38 on the next page provides the responses to Question 13 among those who provided an opinion. In 2023, 27% of residents did not have an opinion. Among those with an opinion, approximately 63% indicated they were satisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts, while the remaining 37% were dissatisfied. The overall level of satisfaction with the City's code enforcement efforts in 2023 (63%) was statistically lower than 2021 (68%), and was driven by a statistically significant increase in the perception who reported being *very* dissatisfied.

Question 13 *The City of La Mesa has created codes to address a variety of issues that can affect a neighborhood, such as illegal parking, abandoned vehicles, non-permitted construction, junk storage, and properties not being properly maintained. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to enforce code violations, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 38 SATISFACTION WITH ENFORCEMENT BY STUDY YEAR
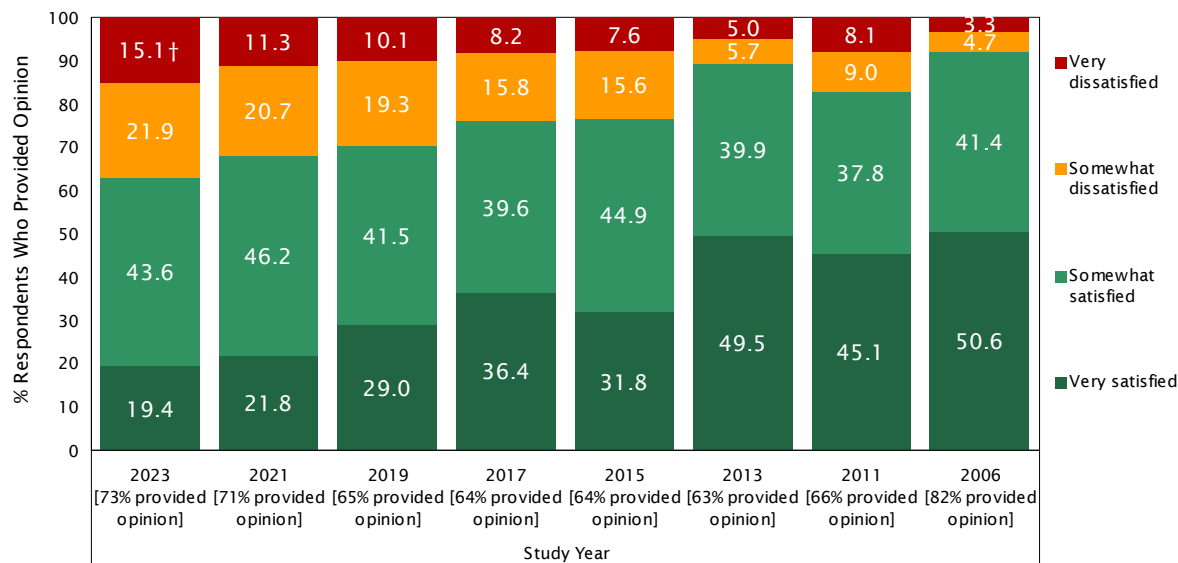
† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

Figures 39 to 41 demonstrate how satisfaction with the City's code enforcement efforts varied by length of residence, home ownership status, general opinion of La Mesa's Police Department, age, ethnicity, quadrant of residence, presence of a child in the home, gender, and perceived safety of La Mesa. There is a striking correlation between perceived safety of La Mesa and opinions regarding the City's code enforcement efforts, with those who perceive the City as a safe place to live being much more likely to also be satisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts. Respondents with a positive opinion of the Police Department were also much more likely than those with another viewpoint to be satisfied with code enforcement.

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FIGURE 39 SATISFACTION WITH ENFORCEMENT BY YEARS IN LA MESA, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
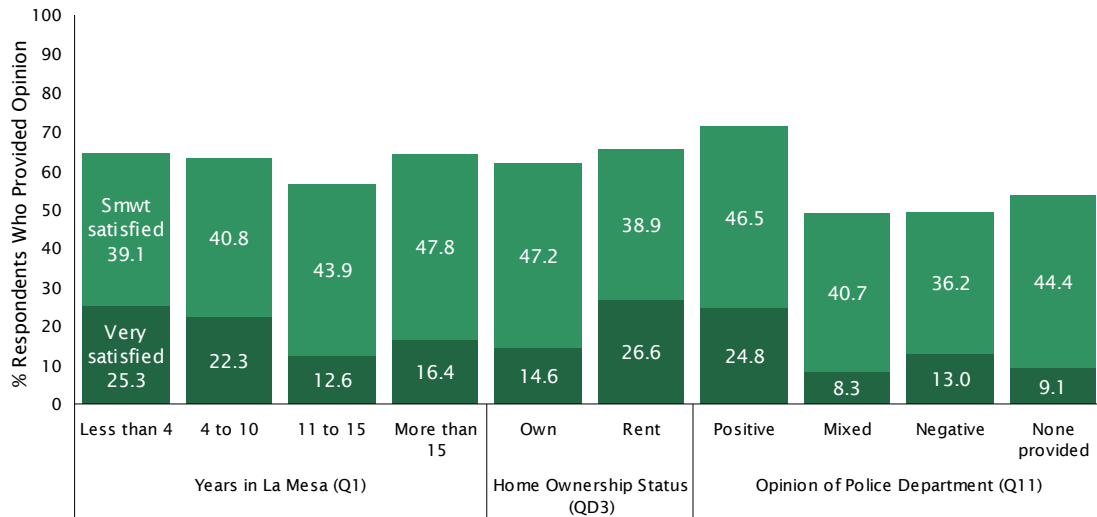
FIGURE 40 SATISFACTION WITH ENFORCEMENT BY AGE & ETHNICITY
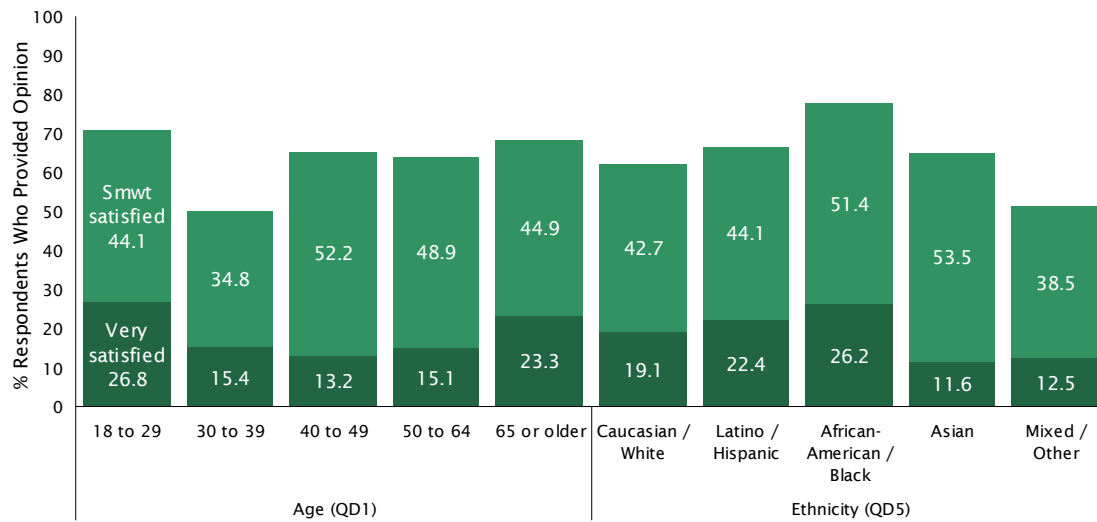
FIGURE 41 SATISFACTION WITH ENFORCEMENT BY QUADRANT, CHILD IN HSLD, GENDER & PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY

Respondents who reported they were dissatisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts were subsequently asked if their dissatisfaction was motivated by a particular issue or violation. Illegal parking and unattended/abandoned vehicles (28%) and homeless issues (25%) were the most frequently mentioned, followed by unmaintained properties and lawns (16%) and violations not being enforced fairly (11%). Approximately one-in-ten residents (11%) who were dissatisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts could not provide a particular reason for their sentiment.

Question 14   *Is there a particular issue or code violation that the City isn't addressing that leads you to be dissatisfied?*

FIGURE 42 REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH CODE ENFORCEMENT
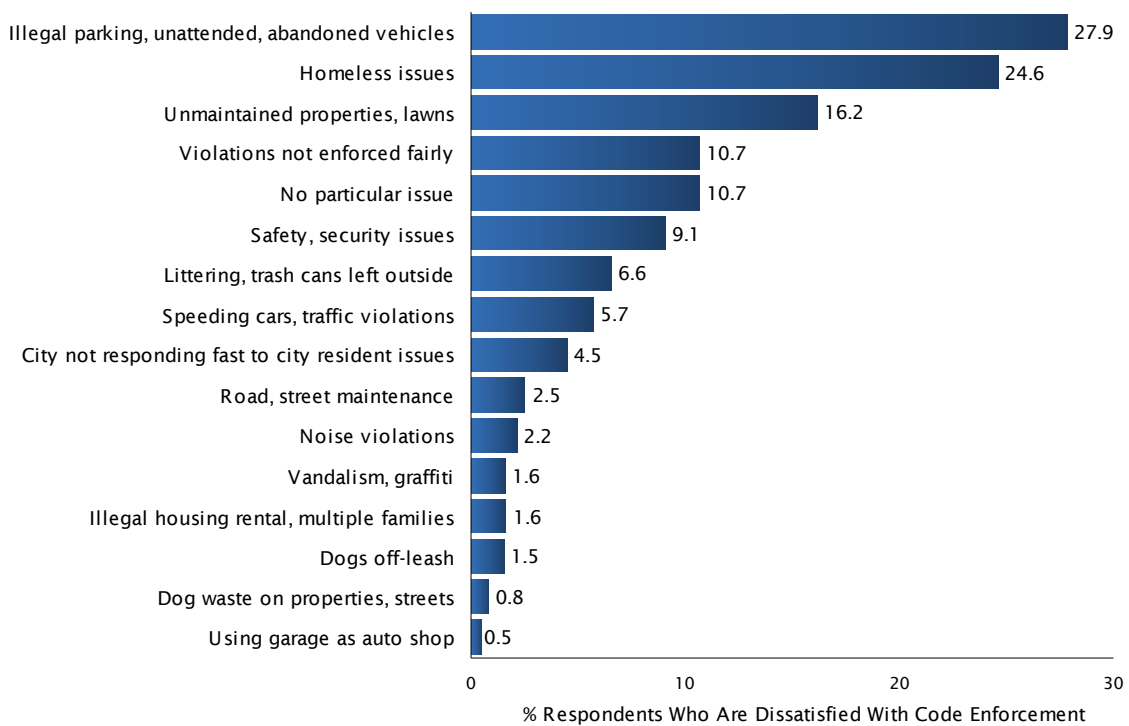
TRAFFIC

In most southern California cities, traffic congestion has traditionally ranked among the most pressing problems that residents would like local and regional governments to solve. La Mesa has been exceptional over the past decade in that traffic congestion has *not* been among the top five issues that residents felt were needed to make the City a better place to live (see Table 1 on page 13). Nevertheless, the survey took the opportunity to probe residents' perceptions regarding traffic circulation and identify how they vary by geographic quadrant.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION   As shown in Figure 43, 71% of residents in 2023 rated traffic circulation in residential areas of La Mesa as excellent or good. Approximately six-in-ten respondents (59%) also rated traffic circulation in the City overall as excellent or good, whereas just over half (52%) held similarly positive views of circulation on major streets in La Mesa.

Question 15   *Next, I'd like to ask you a few questions about traffic circulation. By traffic circulation, I mean the ability to drive around La Mesa without encountering long delays. Would you rate: _____ within the City of La Mesa as excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*

FIGURE 43 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION
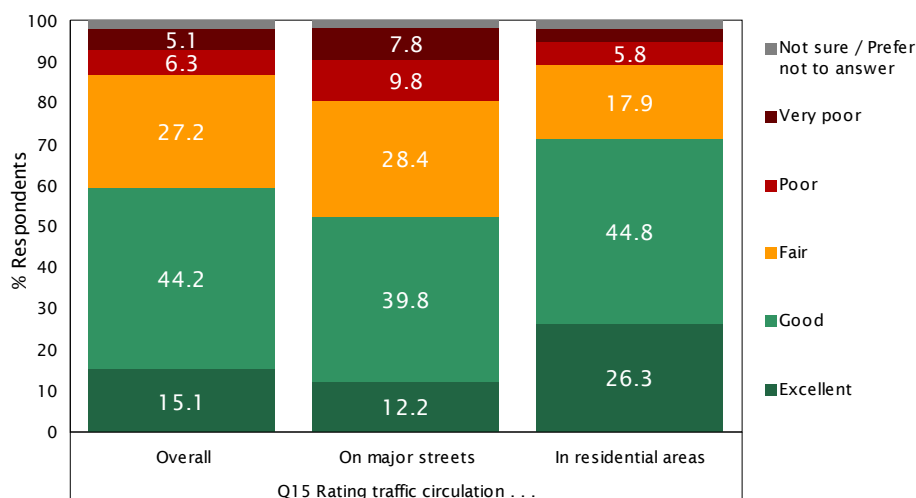
Table 9 provides the percentage of respondents who regarded traffic congestion as excellent or good *overall*, on major streets, and in residential areas by study year. Compared with the 2021 survey, there was a statistically significant decline in the percentage of residents who rated traffic circulation in each of the three categories as excellent or good.

TABLE 9 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION BY STUDY YEAR

	Study Year								Change in Excellent + Good '21 to '23
	2023	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2006	
Traffic on major streets	52.0	63.9	63.7	67.1	61.2	73.8	70.3	63.7	-11.9†
Traffic in residential areas	71.1	84.4	81.7	86.0	83.0	88.2	87.5	81.6	-13.3†
Traffic overall	59.3	73.9	69.1	72.1	73.2	75.4	72.5	70.8	-14.6†

† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

Figures 44 through 46 present ratings of traffic circulation overall, on major streets, and in residential areas according to the quadrant of the City in which respondents reside.

FIGURE 44 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION OVERALL BY QUADRANT OF CITY
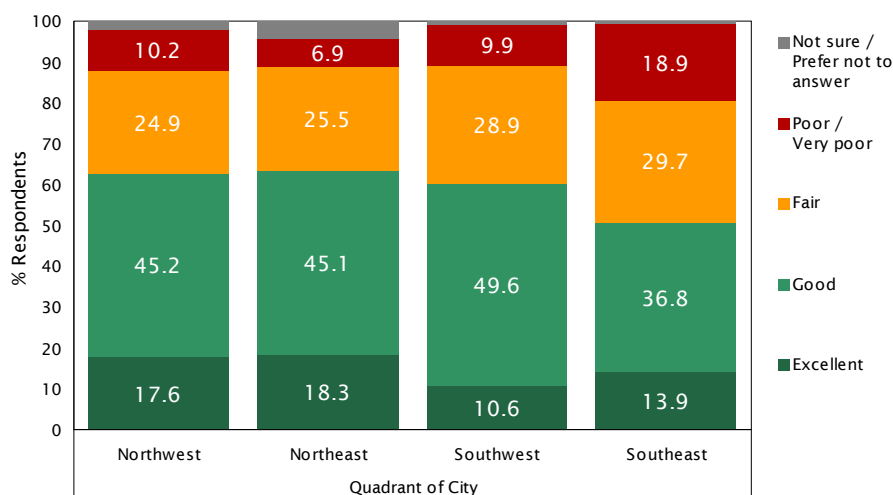
FIGURE 45 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION ON MAJOR STREETS BY QUADRANT OF CITY
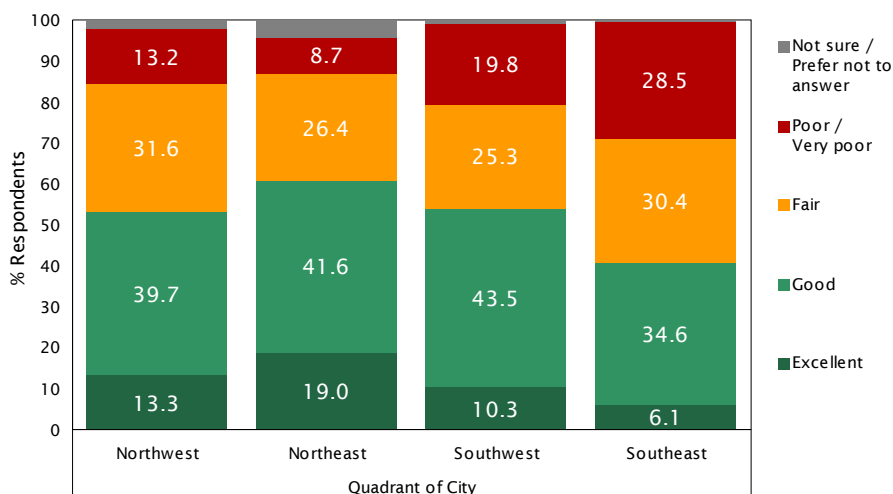
FIGURE 46 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS BY QUADRANT OF CITY
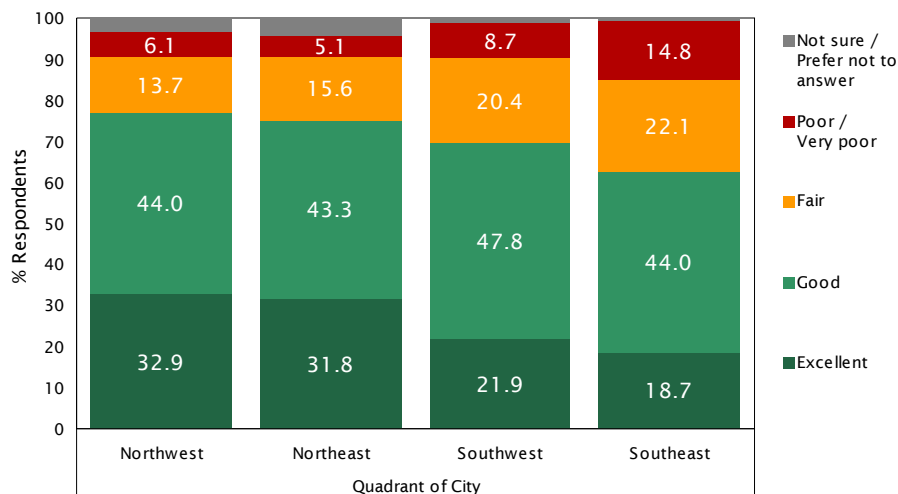
STAFF INTERACTIONS

Although much of the survey focused on residents' satisfaction with the City's efforts to provide services, like other progressive cities La Mesa recognizes there is more to good governance than simply providing satisfactory services and facilities. What percentage of residents have inter-acted with staff in the past year? Do they perceive that staff is responsive to their needs? Does staff serve their needs in a professional manner? Answers to questions like these are as impor-tant as service- or policy-related questions in measuring the City's performance in meeting the needs of its residents. Accordingly, they were the focus of the next section of the survey.

The first of these questions asked respondents if they had been in contact with city staff in the 12 months prior to the interview. As shown in Figure 47, 24% of residents indicated that they had contact with city staff in the 12 months prior to the interview. The percentage of residents who interacted with city staff in the past year declined significantly when compared to 2021. For the interested reader, figures 48-49 on the next page provide the responses to Question 16 by respondents' age, area of residence, home ownership status, ethnicity, overall satisfaction, and perceived safety of the City.

Question 16   *In the past 12 months, have you been in contact with City of La Mesa staff?*

FIGURE 47 CONTACT WITH CITY STAFF IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY STUDY YEAR
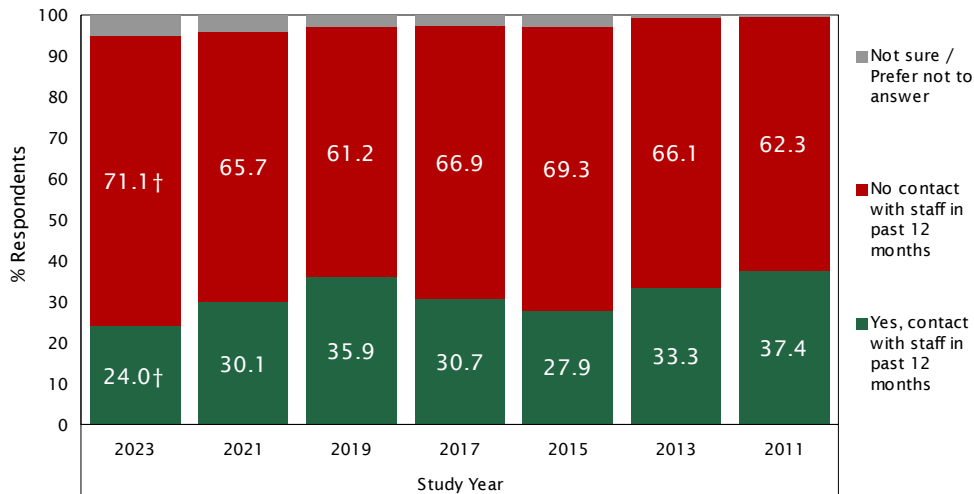
† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

FIGURE 48 CONTACT WITH CITY STAFF IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY AGE & QUADRANT OF CITY
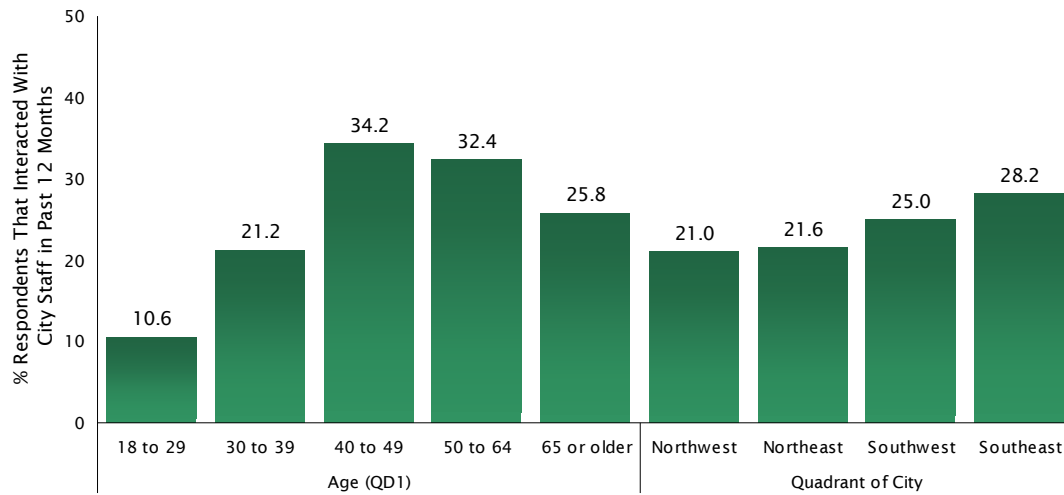
FIGURE 49 CONTACT WITH CITY STAFF IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, ETHNICITY, OVERALL SATISFACTION & PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY
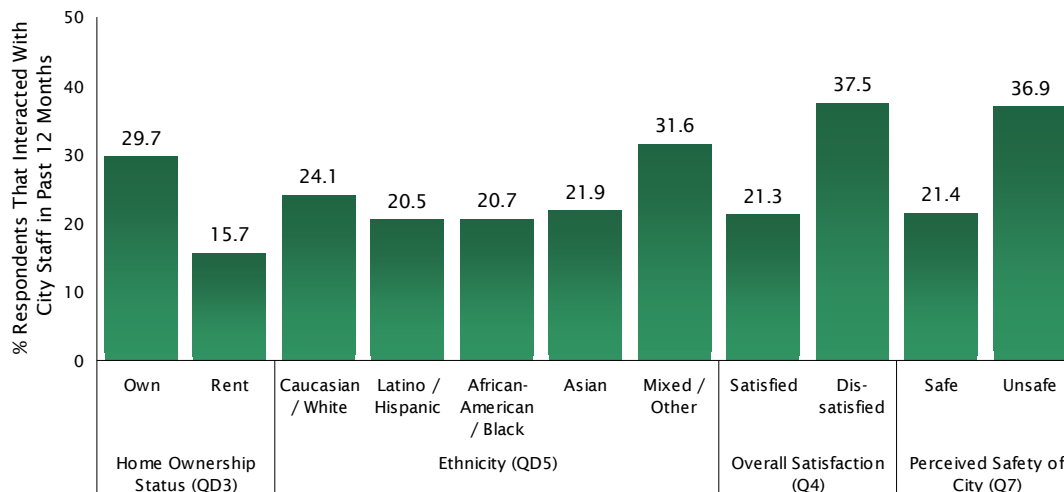
The next question in this section asked respondents who had been in contact with staff to rate staff members' helpfulness, professionalism, and responsiveness. The findings of this question are presented on the next page in Figure 50, and show that staff received high ratings for all three dimensions tested. Approximately 93% of respondents who had interacted with staff in the past 12 months and provided an opinion felt staff were very (64%) or somewhat (29%) *professional*. Similarly, 86% felt staff was very or somewhat *responsive* and 85% found them very or somewhat *helpful*. Table 10 on the next page provides the responses to this question for the current study compared with 2021. The percentage who provided ratings of *very* or *somewhat* professional, helpful, or responsive changed very little from 2021 to 2023.

Question 17 *In your opinion, is the staff at the City very _____, somewhat _____, or not at all _____.*

FIGURE 50 OPINION OF CITY STAFF (AMONG THOSE WHO PROVIDED OPINION)
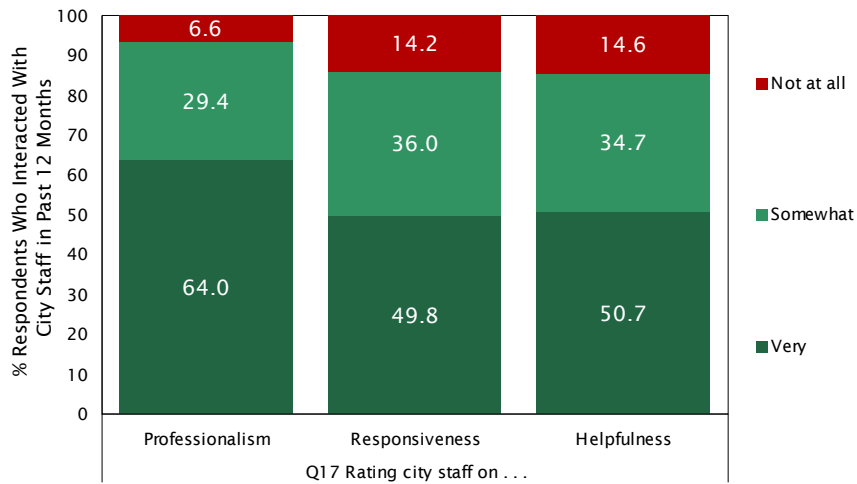
TABLE 10 OPINION OF CITY STAFF BY STUDY YEAR

	Study Year							Change in Very + Somewhat '21 to '23
	2023	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	
Responsiveness	85.8	84.7	93.1	93.6	93.2	96.9	95.3	1.1
Helpfulness	85.4	85.5	92.1	93.0	93.6	96.9	94.4	-0.1
Professionalism	93.4	93.4	97.1	95.8	97.3	98.5	97.0	0.0

COMMUNICATION

The importance of city communication with residents cannot be overstated. Much of a city's success is shaped by the quality of information that is exchanged in both directions, from the City to the community and from the community to the City. This study is just one example of La Mesa's efforts to enhance the information flow *to* the City to better understand the community's concerns, perceptions, and needs. Some of La Mesa's many efforts to communicate with its residents include its newsletters, timely press releases, and its website. In this section, we present the results of several communication-related questions.

OVERALL SATISFACTION   Question 18 asked residents to report their overall satisfaction with city-resident communication in the City of La Mesa. Overall, 54% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with City's efforts to communicate with residents through newsletters, the Internet, or other means, 25% indicated they were dissatisfied with the City's efforts in this respect, and 22% were not sure or chose not to provide an opinion (see Figure 51). Driven by a statistically significant increase in the percentage who were unsure, satisfaction declined from 2021 (61%) to 2023 (54%). However, when the percentage of respondents who were unsure or declined to provide an opinion were factored out of the analysis, satisfaction with communication was statistically consistent from 2021 (72%) to 2023 (69%).

Question 18   *Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to communicate with residents through newsletters, the Internet, and other means?*

FIGURE 51 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY STUDY YEAR
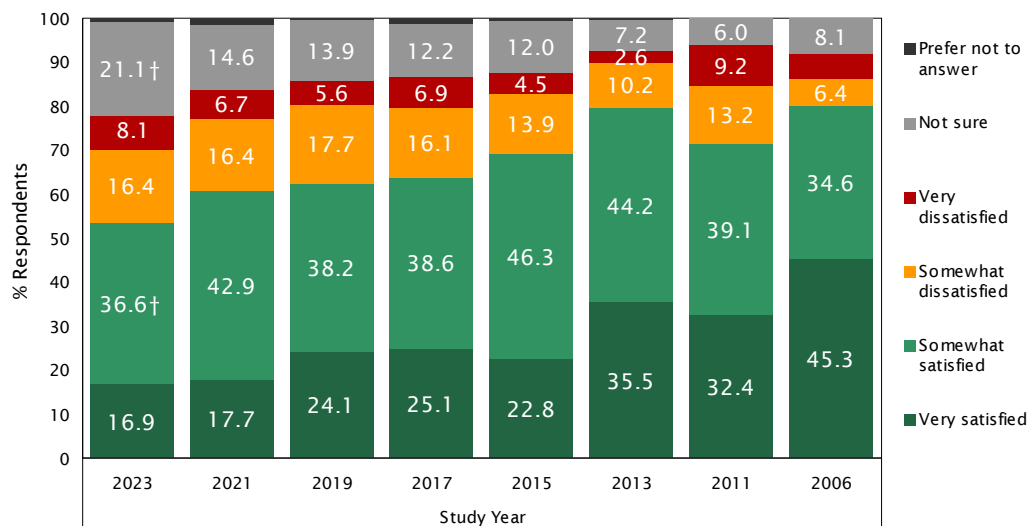
† Statistically significant change (p < 0.05) between the 2021 and 2023 studies.

Figures 52 to 55 on the next page display how overall satisfaction with the City's efforts to communicate with residents *among those who provided an opinion* varied by resident subgroups. Satisfaction with communication was most strongly correlated with respondents' overall performance rating for the City and perceived safety of La Mesa as a place to live.

FIGURE 52 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY YEARS IN LA MESA, VISITED CITY WEBSITE & CHILD IN HSLD
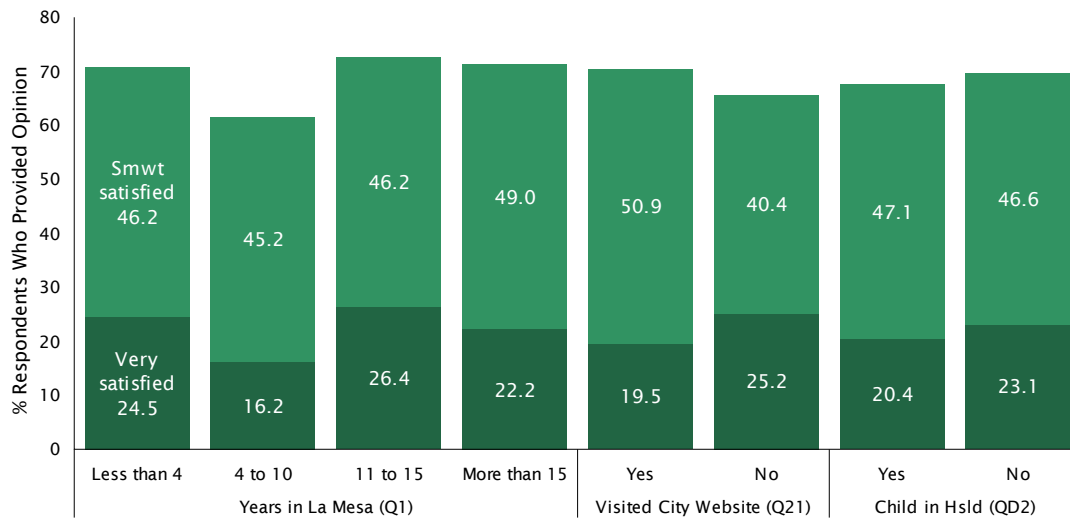
FIGURE 53 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY AGE & QUADRANT OF CITY
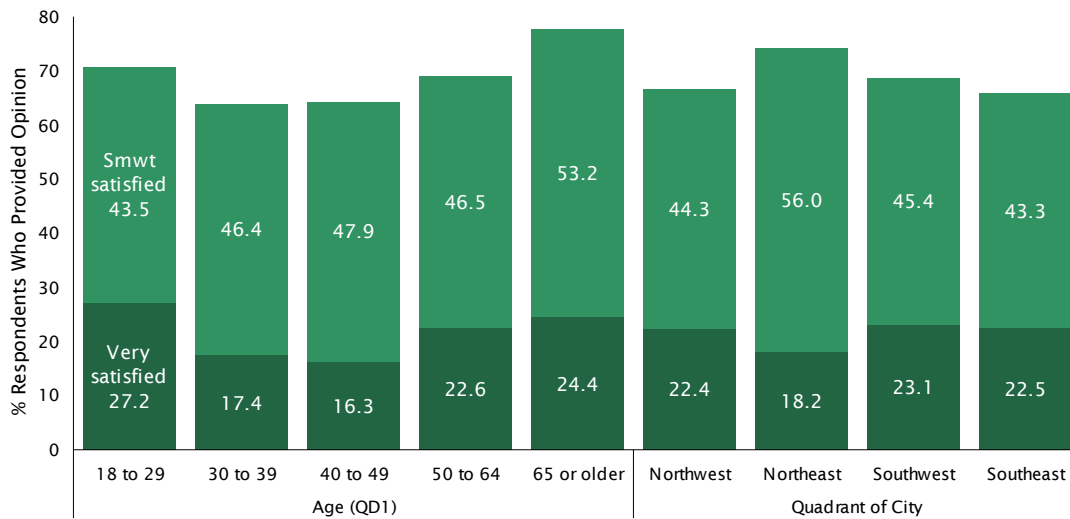
FIGURE 54 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY ETHNICITY, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, GENDER & OVERALL SATISFACTION
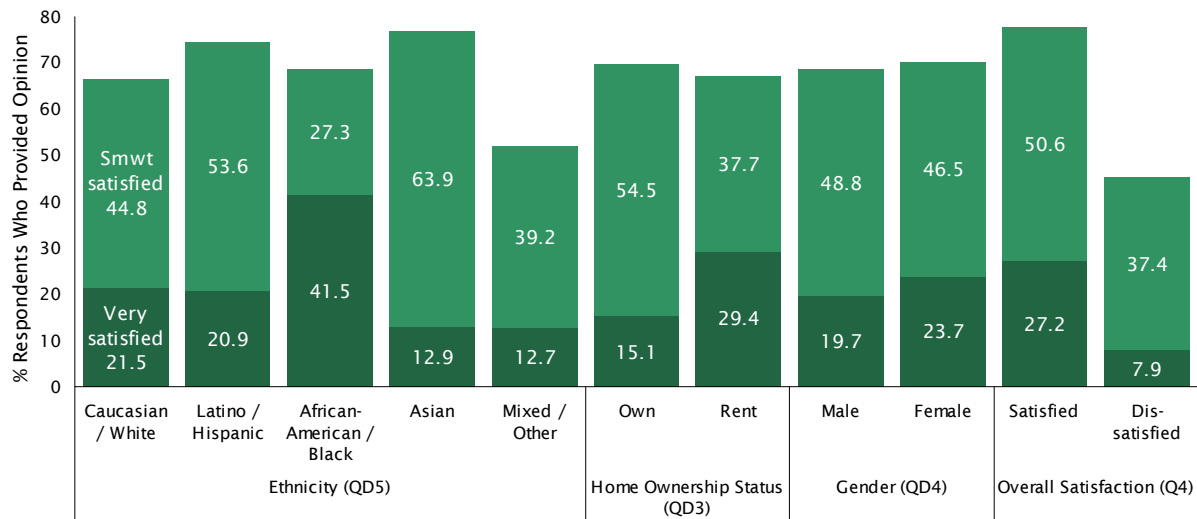
FIGURE 55 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY, INTERACTED WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PAST 2 YEARS & OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT
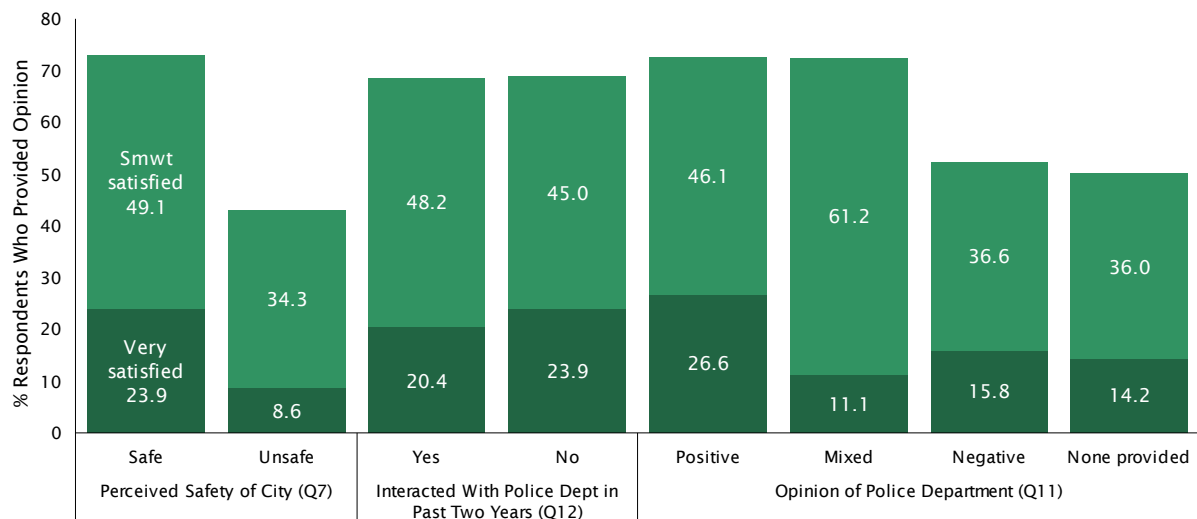
COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES   To help the City identify the most effective means of communicating with residents, it is helpful to understand which methods of communication residents prefer. Accordingly, for each of the methods shown to the left of Figure 56 on the next page, respondents were simply asked to indicate if it would be an effective way for the City to communicate with them.

Overall, respondents indicated that the most effective methods were email (79% very or somewhat effective), electronic newsletters (76%), and text messages (72%), followed by local news media (67%), direct mail postcards, letters, and newsletters (66%), social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor (66%), the City's website (65%), and Townhall meetings (61%).

Question 19 *As I read the following ways that the City of La Mesa can communicate with residents, I'd like to know if you think they would be very effective, somewhat effective, or not an effective way for the City to communicate with you.*

FIGURE 56 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS
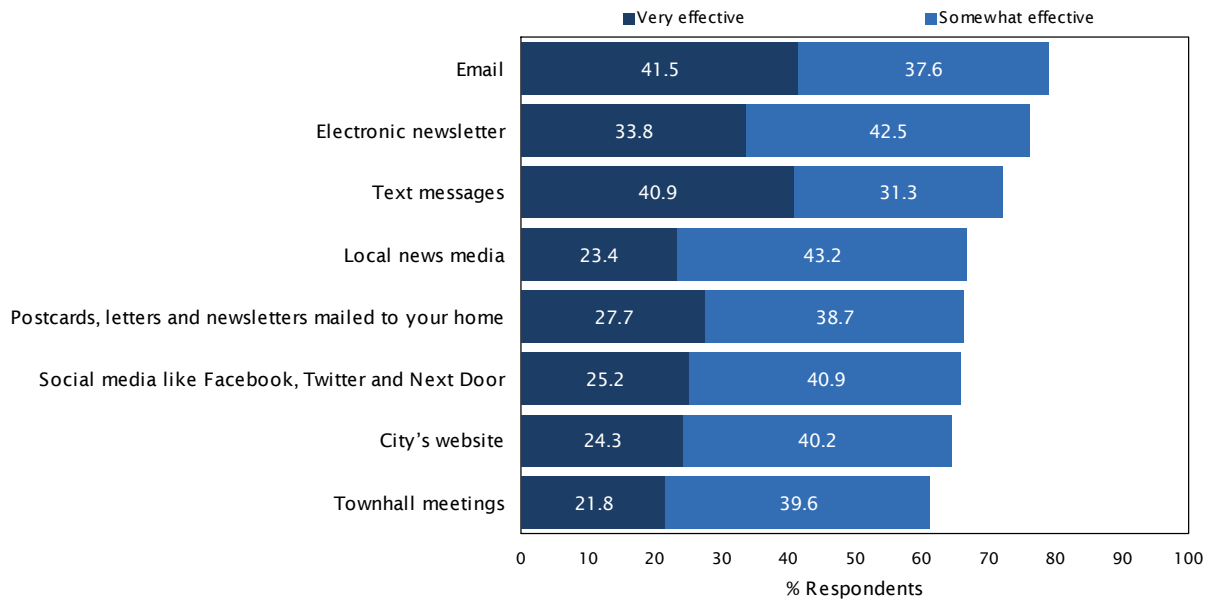
The following tables demonstrate how communication preferences varied (showing the percentage of respondents that viewed each method as *very* effective) by respondents' age, overall satisfaction with the City's performance in providing municipal services, satisfaction with the City's communication efforts, opinion of La Mesa's Police Department, ethnicity, home ownership status, quadrant of residence, and presence of a child in the home. To ease comparisons, the top three methods within each subgroup are highlighted green.

TABLE 11 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY AGE & OVERALL SATISFACTION (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

| | Age (QD1) | | | | | Overall Satisfaction (Q4) | |
	18 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 64	65 or older	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Email	38.0	43.1	46.9	42.2	46.4	42.8	41.5
Text messages	48.2	39.2	48.4	40.4	34.7	42.0	44.4
Electronic newsletter	27.2	33.6	35.7	39.3	38.6	36.0	30.5
Postcards, letters and newsletters mailed to your home	28.8	26.6	24.0	28.1	29.0	25.6	37.5
Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Next Door	25.6	31.1	31.9	24.1	15.5	24.9	24.4
City's website	26.7	25.6	20.2	23.6	25.3	25.2	22.9
Local news media	23.4	24.2	19.3	20.4	29.3	24.6	20.6
Townhall meetings	28.0	14.9	20.3	23.9	19.9	22.1	18.1

TABLE 12 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION & OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

	Satisfaction With Communication (Q18)			Opinion of Police Department (Q11)			
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Not sure	Positive	Mixed	Negative	None provided
Email	46.9	38.9	31.7	45.9	38.4	33.0	32.4
Text messages	47.6	37.9	29.1	40.8	46.1	43.8	19.2
Electronic newsletter	38.5	33.7	23.3	35.2	37.1	30.7	21.2
Postcards, letters and newsletters mailed to your home	30.5	32.0	15.9	31.5	29.0	19.3	13.4
Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Next Door	29.2	22.8	18.6	26.0	29.4	21.7	15.9
City's website	28.8	19.0	20.3	26.1	26.2	18.8	19.0
Local news media	26.9	24.2	13.4	27.3	16.1	19.4	17.8
Townhall meetings	24.3	22.2	13.6	22.2	23.1	22.2	12.6

TABLE 13 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY ETHNICITY & HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

	Ethnicity (QD5)					Home Ownership Status (QD3)	
	Caucasian / White	Latino / Hispanic	African-American / Black	Asian	Mixed / Other	Own	Rent
Email	40.7	41.4	45.3	41.5	55.8	41.8	43.6
Text messages	43.7	35.3	49.6	31.0	38.8	39.2	43.5
Electronic newsletter	33.7	35.0	36.6	25.2	29.9	33.4	35.1
Postcards, letters and newsletters mailed to your home	28.6	23.9	30.3	22.7	41.9	27.8	27.9
Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Next Door	23.4	29.1	31.3	21.2	26.4	21.5	31.8
City's website	21.2	29.3	39.9	16.0	13.1	20.4	30.5
Local news media	20.5	32.2	25.3	13.9	21.4	19.0	29.1
Townhall meetings	22.8	17.4	35.4	12.3	27.6	16.6	27.7

TABLE 14 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS BY QUADRANT OF CITY & CHILD IN HSLD (SHOWING % VERY EFFECTIVE)

	Quadrant of City				Child in Hsld (QD2)	
	Northwest	Northeast	Southwest	Southeast	Yes	No
Email	44.7	31.6	49.1	40.5	42.0	42.3
Text messages	37.7	33.7	46.6	45.6	40.6	41.4
Electronic newsletter	32.7	31.0	34.3	37.3	33.7	34.3
Postcards, letters and newsletters mailed to your home	25.7	23.6	31.1	30.3	30.6	26.8
Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Next Door	25.7	26.5	25.8	22.7	31.0	23.4
City's website	19.3	26.8	25.4	25.8	25.3	24.4
Local news media	23.8	27.1	24.3	18.4	20.3	24.4
Townhall meetings	23.3	21.1	21.7	21.0	20.4	22.1

PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA SITE   Respondents who indicated that social media was at least a somewhat effective method for the City to communicate with them were subsequently asked to identify the social media site that they use most often. Figure 57 on the next page shows responses to this question in the context of all respondents. Overall, Facebook (21%) and Instagram (20%) were the most common choices for social media, followed by Nextdoor (7%) and Twitter (5%). Overall, 43% of respondents indicated that they do not currently use social media and/or that it would not be an effective method for the City to communicate with them.

Question 20 *What is your preferred Social Media site - the one you currently use most often?*

FIGURE 57 PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA SITE
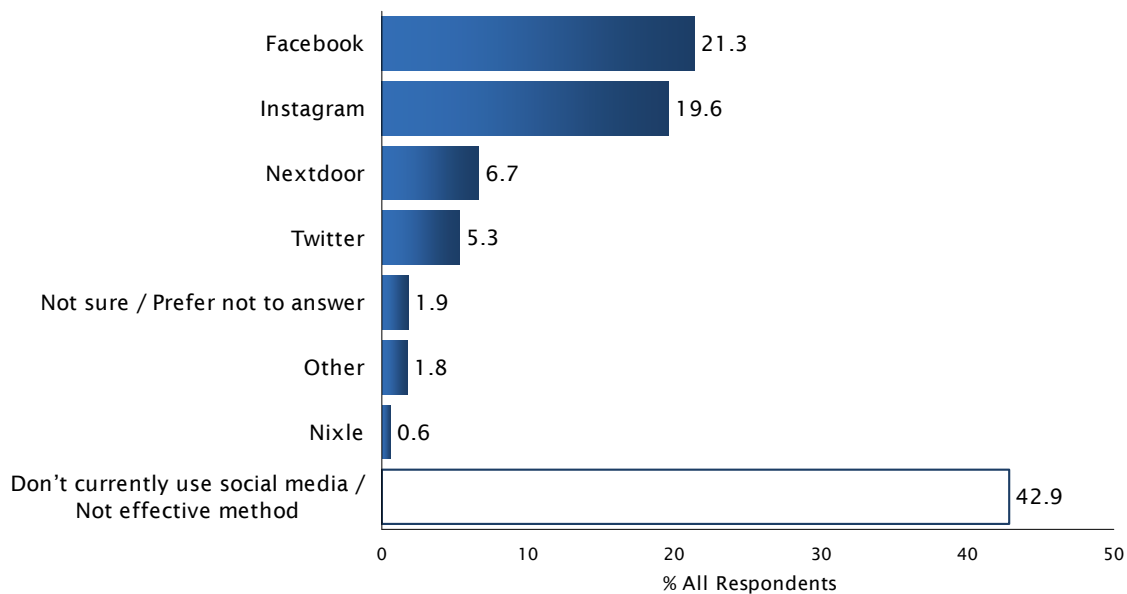
For the interested reader, figures 58-60 present the results to Question 20 for various subgroups of La Mesa residents. It's worth noting that the percentage who do not currently use social media and/or felt it would not be an effective method for the City to communicate with them reached majority status among seniors, those who perceived the City to be unsafe, respondents with a negative opinion of the Police Department or who did not provide an opinion either way, and those who identified their ethnicity as mixed/other.

FIGURE 58 PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA SITE BY YEARS IN LA MESA & AGE
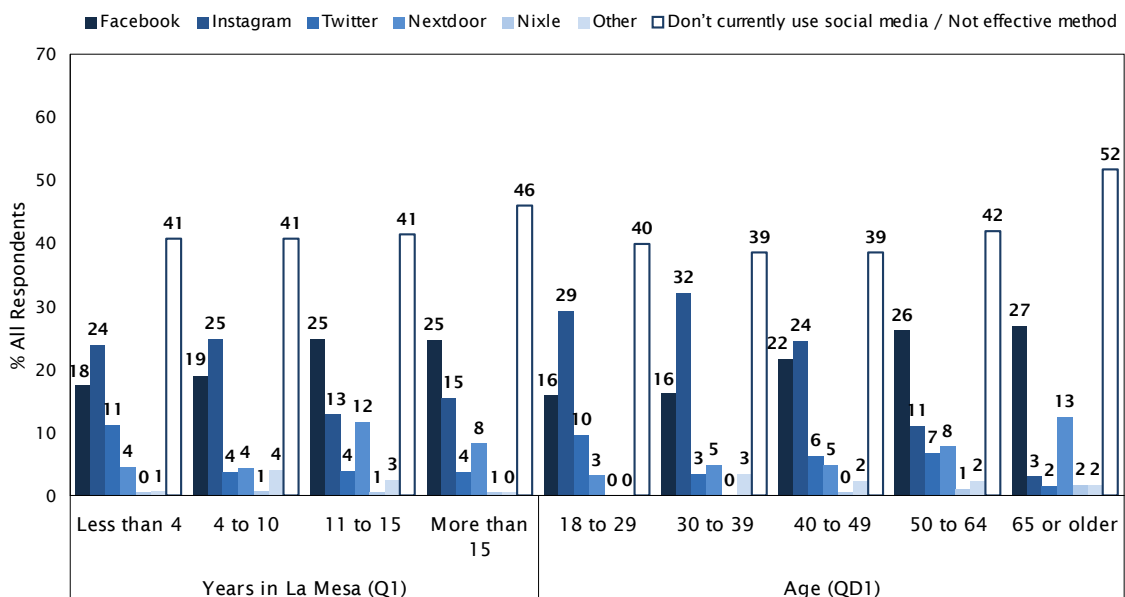
FIGURE 59 PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA SITE BY CHILD IN HSLD, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, QUADRANT OF CITY & PERCEIVED SAFETY OF CITY
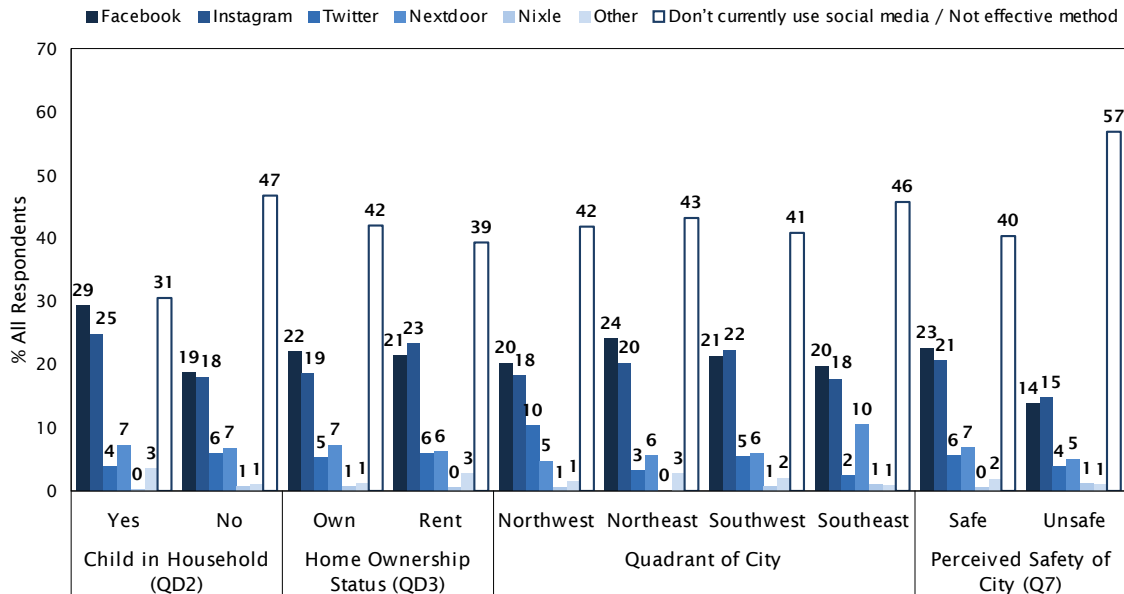
FIGURE 60 PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA SITE BY OPINION OF POLICE DEPARTMENT & ETHNICITY
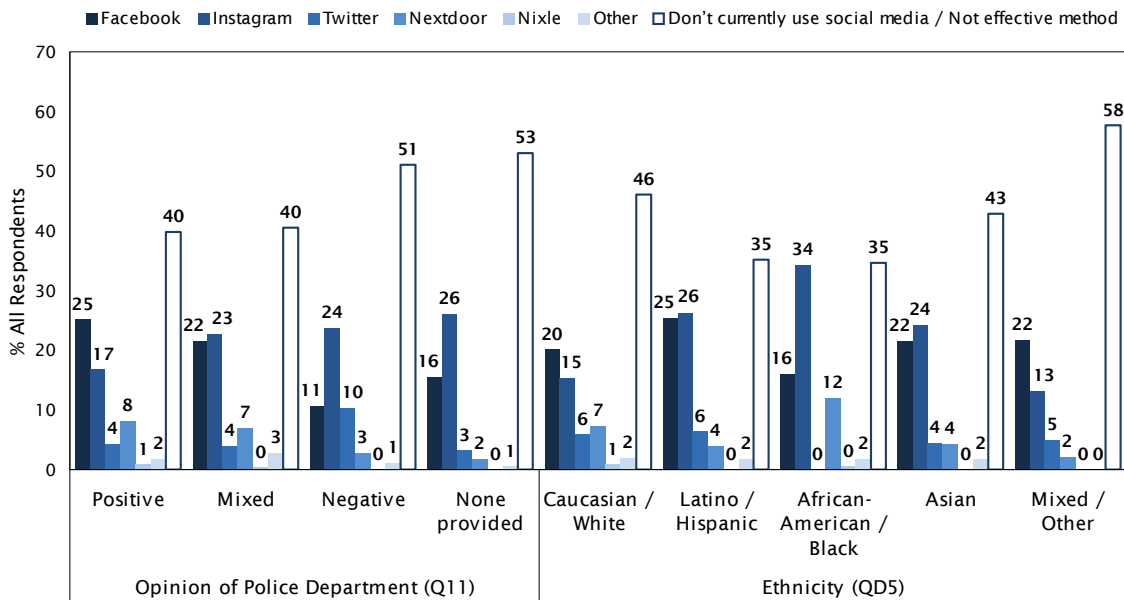
CITY'S WEBSITE   The final substantive question of the survey asked if, in the 12 months prior to the interview, the respondent had visited the City of La Mesa's website. As shown in Figure 61 on the next page, just over half (54%) of respondents in 2023 indicated that they had visited the site during this period, which is statistically similar to the percentage in 2021 (51%) and largely unchanged since 2011.

Question 21   *In the past 12 months, have you visited the City of La Mesa's website?*

FIGURE 61 CITY WEBSITE VISIT IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY STUDY YEAR
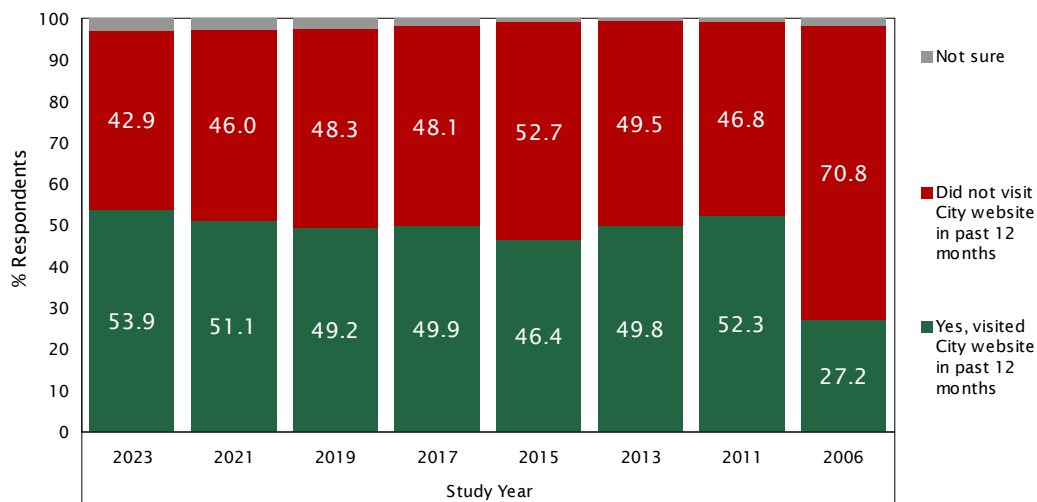
As displayed in figures 62 to 64, use of the City's website varied across demographic subgroups. Those most likely to have visited the website in the past 12 months were residents who had contact with city staff during the same period, respondents either satisfied or dissatisfied with city-resident communication (as opposed to not having an opinion), residents between 30 and 64 years of age, those with a child in the home, home owners, and Latino/Hispanic or mixed/other respondents.

FIGURE 62 CITY WEBSITE VISIT IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY YEARS IN LA MESA, CONTACT WITH CITY STAFF & SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION
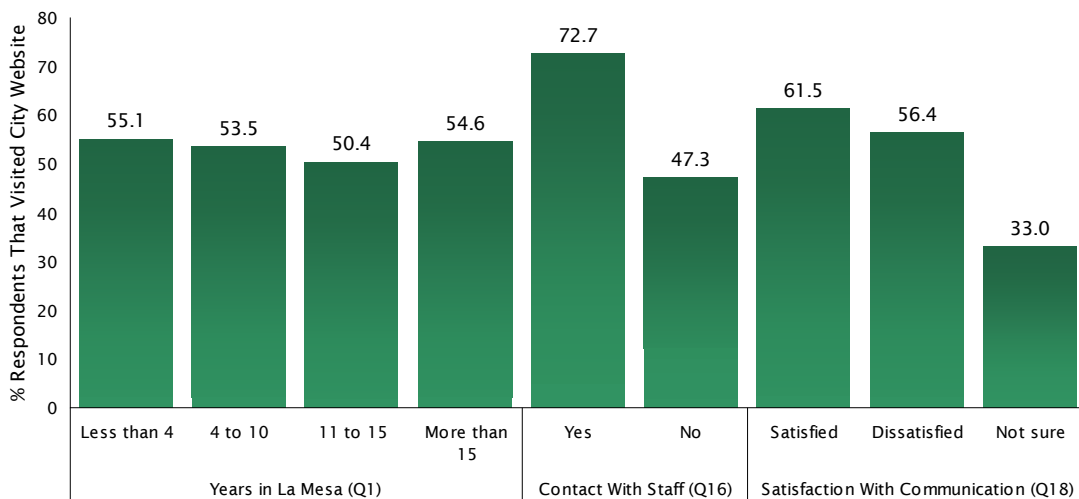
FIGURE 63 CITY WEBSITE VISIT IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY QUADRANT OF CITY, AGE & CHILD IN HSLD
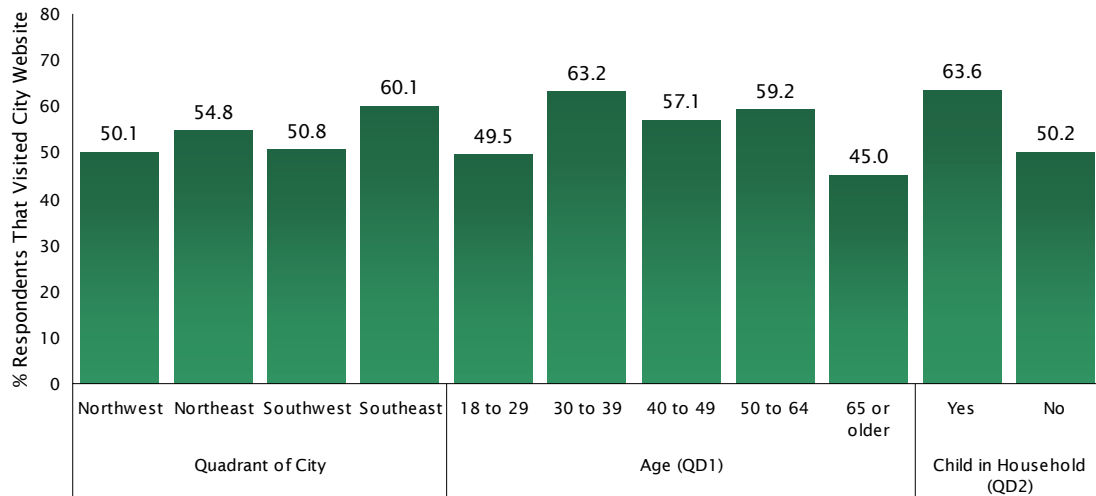
FIGURE 64 CITY WEBSITE VISIT IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, GENDER & ETHNICITY
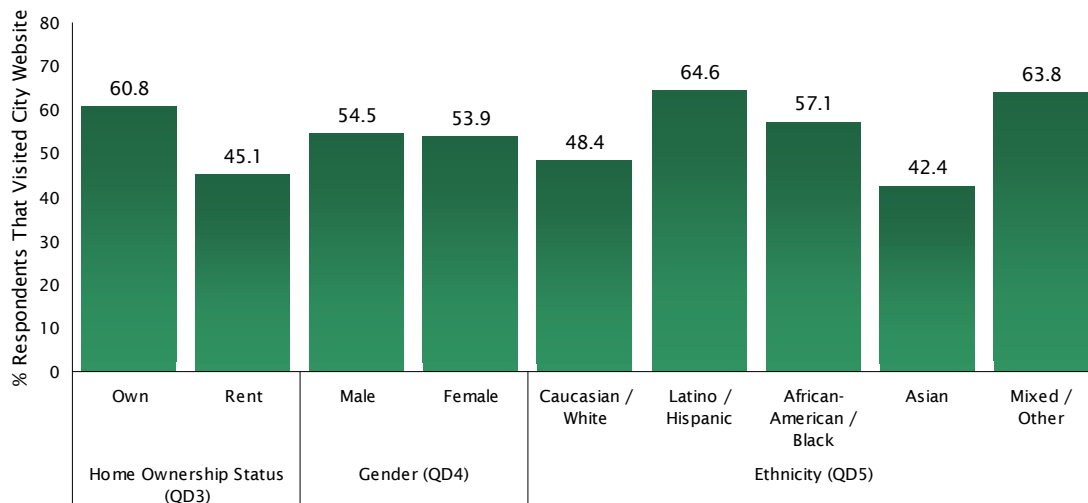
BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 15 presents the key demographic and background information collected during the survey. Because of the probability-based sampling methodology used in this study, the results shown in the table are representative of adult residents in the City of La Mesa. The primary motivation for collecting the background and demographic information was to provide a better insight into how results of the substantive questions of the survey vary by demographic characteristics.

TABLE 15 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

	Study Year							
	2023	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2006
Total Respondents	*1,069*	*1,257*	*1,218*	*1,023*	*825*	*800*	*800*	*800*
QD1 Age								
18 to 29	22.7	25.4	25.0	26.4	24.2	24.8	21.7	22.4
30 to 39	21.2	21.0	20.9	17.6	18.5	17.2	19.4	19.4
40 to 49	13.1	13.9	13.3	14.3	15.6	16.5	19.2	18.2
50 to 64	20.0	21.3	20.9	20.7	23.8	22.7	18.2	16.2
65 or older	17.1	17.5	19.7	19.7	17.4	17.4	21.3	20.5
Prefer not to answer	5.9	1.0	0.2	1.2	0.5	1.4	0.3	3.3
QD2 Children in hsld								
Yes	27.1	28.1	28.2	28.1	27.9	30.8	33.2	31.2
No	69.7	70.2	70.6	69.5	71.5	67.0	66.4	65.4
Prefer not to answer	3.2	1.7	1.1	2.4	0.6	2.2	0.4	3.3
QD3 Home ownership status								
Own	51.1	58.0	60.1	60.7	60.1	60.6	64.8	55.6
Rent	42.0	40.2	38.3	37.6	38.7	37.2	34.7	39.8
Prefer not to answer	6.9	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.2	2.1	0.5	4.6
QD4 Gender								
Male	48.3	44.5	47.3	47.0	46.6	51.5	50.5	46.3
Female	45.8	52.1	51.6	52.3	53.2	48.5	49.5	53.7
Non-binary	2.6	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Prefer not to answer	3.4	2.6	1.1	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
QD5 Ethnicity								
Caucasian / White	55.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Latino / Hispanic	25.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
African-American / Black	7.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	5.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mixed / Other	3.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prefer not to answer	3.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

METHODOLOGY

The following sections outline the methodology used in the study, as well as the motivation for using certain techniques.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT   Dr. McLarney of True North Research worked closely with the City of La Mesa to develop a questionnaire that covered the topics of interest and avoided the many possible sources of systematic measurement error, including position-order effects, wording effects, response-category effects, scaling effects, and priming. Several questions included multiple individual items. Because asking items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, the items were asked in a random order for each respondent.

Some questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only respondents who had interacted with city staff in the past 12 months (Question 16) were asked to rate aspects of their experience with staff (Question 17). The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 57) identifies the skip patterns used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

Most of the questions asked in the 2023 survey were tracked directly from the 2021, 2019, 2017, 2015, 2013, 2011, and 2006 surveys to allow the City to track its performance over time.

PROGRAMMING, PRE-TEST & TRANSLATION   Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting the telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates the skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts the interviewer to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they happen during the interview. The survey was also programmed into a passcode-protected online survey application to allow online participation for sampled residents. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into random homes in the City of La Mesa prior to formally beginning the survey. The final questionnaire was also professionally translated into Spanish to allow for data collection in English or Spanish according to the preference of the respondent.

SAMPLE, RECRUITING & DATA COLLECTION   A comprehensive database of La Mesa households was utilized for this study, ensuring that all households in La Mesa had the opportunity to be selected to participate in the survey. Once selected at random, contact information was appended to each record including email addresses and telephone numbers for adult residents. Individuals were subsequently recruited to participate in the survey through multiple recruiting methods. Using a combination of email and text invitations, sampled residents were initially invited to participate in the survey online at a secure, passcode-protected website designed and hosted by True North. Each individual was assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only La Mesa residents who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that the survey could be completed only one time per passcode. An email reminder notice was also sent to encourage participation among those who had yet to take the survey. Following a period of online data collection, True North placed telephone calls to land lines and cell phone numbers of sampled residents that had yet to participate in the online survey or for whom only telephone contact information was available.

Telephone interviews averaged 20 minutes in length and were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM). It is standard practice not to call during the day on weekdays because most working adults are unavailable and thus calling during those hours would bias the sample. A total of 1,069 completed surveys were gathered online and by telephone between May 1 and May 9, 2023.

MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING   By using the probability-based sample as discussed above and monitoring the sample characteristics as data collection proceeded, True North ensured that the sample was representative of adult residents in the City of La Mesa. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* adult residents in the City. Because not every adult in the City participated in the survey, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 1,069 adults for a particular question and what would have been found if all of the estimated 48,646 adults in the City[5] had been interviewed.

For example, in estimating the percentage of adults who have been in contact with City of La Mesa staff in the past 12 months (Question 16), the margin of error can be calculated if one knows the size of the population, the size of the sample, a desired confidence level, and the distribution of responses to the question. The appropriate equation for estimating the margin of error, in this case, is shown below.

$$\hat{p} \pm t \sqrt{\left(\frac{N-n}{N}\right)\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n-1}}$$

where $\hat{p}$ is the proportion of adults who said had been in contact with staff (0.24 for 24% in this example), N is the population size of all adults (48,646), n is the sample size that received the question (1,069), and t is the upper $\alpha/2$ point for the t-distribution with $n-1$ degrees of freedom (1.96 for a 95% confidence interval). Solving the equation using these values reveals a margin of error of ± 2.5%. This means that with 24% of survey respondents indicating they had been in contact with city staff in the past 12 months, we can be 95 percent confident that the actual percentage of *all* adult residents in La Mesa in contact with staff during this period is between 21% and 27%.

Figure 65 on the next page provides a plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response (i.e., $\hat{p}$ = 0.5). For this survey, the maximum margin of error is ± 3.0% for questions answered by all 1,069 respondents.

Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by demographic characteristics such as quadrant of the City and age of the respondent. Figure 65 on the next page is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

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5. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, July 2022 estimate.

FIGURE 65 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR
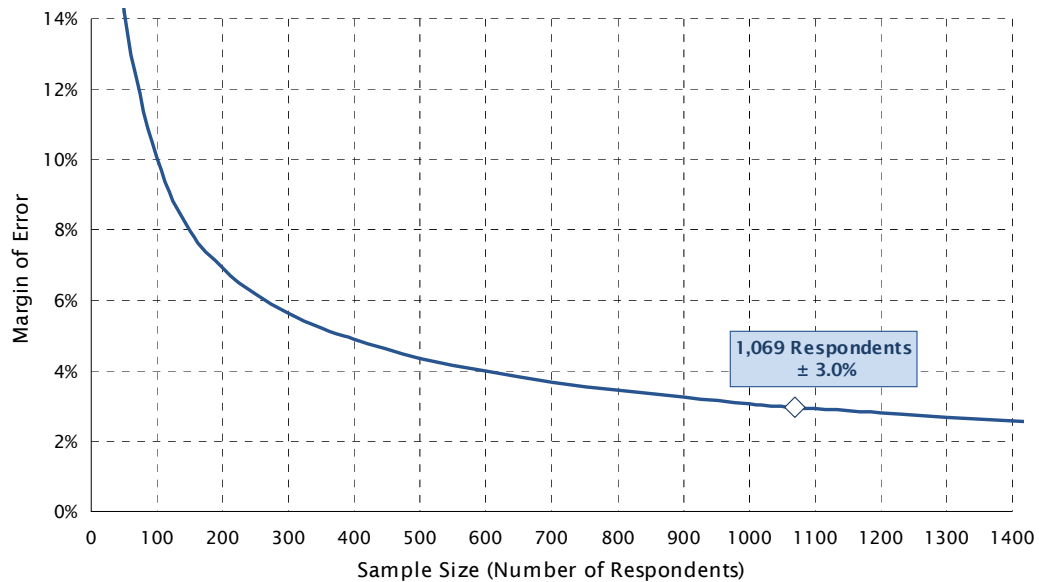
DATA PROCESSING & WEIGHTING   Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, categorizing verbatim responses, and preparing frequency analyses and cross-tabulations. Where appropriate, tests of statistical significance were conducted to evaluate changes in responses between the 2021 and 2023 studies. The final data were weighted to balance the sample by key demographics according to Census estimates.

ROUNDING   Numbers that end in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole number, whereas numbers that end in 0.4 or lower are rounded down to the nearest whole number. These same rounding rules are also applied, when needed, to arrive at numbers that include a decimal place in constructing figures and charts. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and figures for a given question. Due to rounding, some figures and narrative include numbers that sum to slightly more or less than 100%.

City of La Mesa
Resident Satisfaction Survey
Final Toplines (n=1,069)
May 2023

Section 1: Introduction to Study
Hello, may I please speak to _____. Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of TNR, a public opinion research company. We're conducting a survey about issues in La Mesa (la MAY-suh) and we would like to get your opinions.
If needed: This is a survey about important issues in your community – I'm NOT trying to sell anything and I won't ask for a donation.   *If needed:* The survey should take about 13 minutes to complete.   *If needed:* If now is not convenient, can you let me know a better time so I can call back?   *If the person says they are an elected official or is somehow associated with the survey, politely explain that this survey is designed to the measure the opinions of those not closely associated with the study, thank them for their time, and terminate the interview.*

Section 2: Land Line (only) Screener for Inclusion in the Study			
SC1	To begin, are you at least 18 years of age?		
	1	Yes	*Qualified*
	2	No	*Ask to speak to someone in household that is at least 18 years of age*
	99	Prefer not to answer	*Terminate*

Section 3: General Perceptions of City & Local Issues			
Q1	How long have you lived in the City of La Mesa?		
	1	Less than 1 year	6%
	2	1 to 3 years	16%
	3	4 to 5 years	12%
	4	6 to 10 years	17%
	5	11 to 15 years	11%
	6	16 to 20 years	8%
	7	More than 20 years	29%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%
Q2	How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?		
	1	Excellent	17%
	2	Good	56%
	3	Fair	24%
	4	Poor	2%
	5	Very Poor	1%
	98	Not sure	1%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Q3	If the City government could change one thing to make La Mesa a better place to live now and in the future, what change would you like to see? Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below. Categories mentioned by at least 2% of respondents presented here.	
	Address homeless issues	22%
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	15%
	Improve, repair roads	13%
	Limit growth, development	9%
	Increase public safety	7%
	Add, improve sidewalks	7%
	Provide affordable housing	4%
	Clean up public areas, facilities	4%
	Enforce traffic laws	4%
	Improve police presence, response	4%
	Add more bike lanes	4%
	Reduce traffic congestion	3%
	Improve parking	3%
	Add, improve parks	3%
	Improve public transportation	3%
	Improve street lighting	2%
	Improve landscaping	2%
	Provide special, cultural events	2%
	Fix, upgrade rundown buildings, graffiti	2%
	Support small, local businesses	2%
	Increase support for police department	2%
	Provide more healthcare, social services	2%
	Implement rent control ordinance	2%

Questionnaire & Toplines

Section 4: City Services			
Next, I'm going to ask a series of questions about services provided by the City of La Mesa.			

Q4	Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of La Mesa is doing to provide city services? *Get answer, then ask:* Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?	
	1	Very satisfied	20%
	2	Somewhat satisfied	51%
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	15%
	4	Very dissatisfied	5%
	98	Not sure	9%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Split Sample for Q5 and Q6. Even PINS receive items A-K, Odd PINS receive items L-U.

Q5	For each of the services I read, please tell me whether the service is extremely important to you, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important. **Make sure respondent understands the 4 point scale.**

	Randomize	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Maintaining and repairing streets	54%	36%	9%	0%	1%	0%
B	Maintaining landscaped street medians	24%	28%	41%	6%	1%	0%
C	Providing adequate traffic signs and signals	39%	37%	22%	1%	1%	0%
D	Enforcing traffic laws	32%	33%	26%	7%	1%	0%
E	Maintaining a low crime rate	64%	26%	6%	3%	0%	0%
F	Providing crime prevention programs	40%	30%	26%	3%	2%	0%
G	Providing neighborhood police patrols	38%	27%	23%	11%	1%	0%
H	Providing fire protection services	56%	38%	4%	0%	1%	0%
I	Providing animal control services	15%	32%	43%	8%	2%	0%
J	Preparing the community for emergencies	41%	34%	20%	2%	2%	0%
K	Providing emergency medical services	61%	32%	6%	1%	1%	0%
L	Keeping public buildings and facilities clean and attractive	42%	34%	21%	1%	1%	0%
M	Maintaining parks and sports fields	47%	39%	12%	1%	0%	0%
N	Providing programs for youth	37%	30%	25%	4%	3%	0%
O	Providing programs for adults	15%	25%	43%	14%	3%	0%

Questionnaire & Toplines

		Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
P	Providing programs for seniors	25%	29%	32%	10%	4%	0%
Q	Providing community events	21%	27%	39%	12%	1%	0%
R	Reducing stormwater pollution	28%	29%	30%	8%	4%	1%
S	Creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	46%	28%	20%	4%	1%	0%
T	Facilitating the creation of affordable housing	36%	18%	22%	22%	2%	1%
U	Addressing homelessness	66%	24%	7%	2%	1%	1%

Q6	For the same list of services I just read I'd like you to tell me how satisfied you are with the job the City of La Mesa is doing to provide the service. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? (*Get answer. If 'satisfied' or 'dissatisfied', then ask*): Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?

	Randomize	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Maintain and repair streets	7%	38%	27%	23%	4%	1%
B	Maintain landscaped street medians	24%	39%	16%	11%	9%	1%
C	Provide adequate traffic signs and signals	26%	45%	17%	4%	7%	1%
D	Enforce traffic laws	16%	43%	16%	8%	14%	3%
E	Maintain a low crime rate	21%	40%	20%	7%	10%	1%
F	Provide crime prevention programs	15%	32%	14%	7%	29%	3%
G	Provide neighborhood police patrols	11%	41%	19%	11%	16%	3%
H	Provide fire protection services	43%	32%	3%	3%	17%	1%
I	Provide animal control services	17%	35%	10%	3%	33%	2%
J	Prepare the community for emergencies	13%	33%	17%	5%	31%	1%
K	Provide emergency medical services	31%	34%	9%	1%	25%	1%
L	Keep public buildings and facilities clean and attractive	26%	51%	10%	5%	7%	1%
M	Maintain parks and sports fields	24%	50%	11%	7%	7%	1%
N	Provide programs for youth	10%	35%	13%	3%	36%	3%
O	Provide programs for adults	7%	32%	9%	4%	46%	2%
P	Provide programs for seniors	9%	30%	9%	5%	45%	1%
Q	Provide community events	19%	42%	12%	3%	21%	2%
R	Reduce stormwater pollution	9%	35%	9%	3%	42%	2%
S	Create a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	14%	42%	22%	11%	10%	2%
T	Facilitate the creation of affordable housing	6%	20%	19%	24%	26%	5%
U	Address homelessness	4%	16%	30%	38%	12%	1%

Section 5: Public Safety & Police			
Q7	Overall, how **safe** is the City of La Mesa as a place to live? Would you say it is very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?		
	1	Very safe	28%
	2	Somewhat safe	57%
	3	Somewhat unsafe	12%
	4	Very unsafe	2%
	99	Prefer not to answer	0%
Q8	When you are: _____, would you say that you feel very safe, reasonably safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?		

Randomize	Very Safe	Reasonably Safe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Walking alone in your neighborhood during the day	49%	42%	6%	1%	1%	1%
B	Walking alone in your neighborhood after dark	14%	41%	30%	13%	2%	1%
C	Walking alone in business and retail areas during the day	48%	40%	8%	2%	1%	1%
D	Walking alone in business and retail areas after dark	13%	42%	27%	13%	4%	1%
E	Walking alone in parks, paths, and recreational trails during the day	31%	46%	14%	4%	4%	1%

Q9	Are you involved in a neighborhood watch program?	
	1	Yes	10%
	2	No	83%
	98	Not sure	4%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%

Q10	Thinking of the La Mesa Police Department, please tell me how well you feel the Department performs in the following areas. Here is the (first/next) one: _____. Would you say the La Mesa Police Department does an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job in this area?						
	Randomize	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Prefer not to answer
A	Investigating crimes	9%	27%	26%	9%	6%	22%
B	Maintaining a presence/being visible	14%	34%	27%	10%	6%	8%
C	Engaging and interacting with the public	12%	30%	26%	13%	7%	12%
D	Communicating with La Mesa residents and local businesses	10%	30%	24%	13%	6%	16%
E	Working with the community to solve problems	10%	32%	24%	12%	8%	15%
Q11	Next, I'm going to read you a few statements about the La Mesa Police Department. For each, I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Here is the (first/next) one: _____. Do you agree or disagree, or do you not have an opinion? *If agree or disagree, ask*: Would that be strongly (agree/disagree) or somewhat (agree/disagree)?						
	Randomize	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	The Police Department demonstrates professionalism when interacting with the public	34%	30%	8%	7%	19%	2%
B	I trust the La Mesa Police Department to protect and serve the public	34%	34%	10%	11%	9%	1%
C	The Police Department holds its officers accountable	25%	21%	10%	11%	30%	3%
D	The La Mesa Police Department treats people the same regardless of their race, income, or identity	29%	18%	15%	11%	24%	3%
Q12	In the past two years, have you: _____?						

	Randomize	Yes	No	Prefer not to answer
A	Been stopped or pulled over by a La Mesa Police Officer	7%	92%	1%
B	Called the La Mesa Police Department for assistance	41%	58%	1%
C	Talked or interacted with a La Mesa Police Officer at a community event or other setting	39%	59%	1%

Q13	The City of La Mesa has created codes to address a variety of issues that can affect a neighborhood, such as illegal parking, abandoned vehicles, non-permitted construction, junk storage and properties not being properly maintained. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to <u>enforce</u> code violations, or do you not have an opinion? (*Get answer. If 'satisfied' or 'dissatisfied', then ask*): Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?			
	1	Very satisfied	14%	*Skip to Q15*
	2	Somewhat satisfied	32%	*Skip to Q15*
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	16%	*Ask Q14*
	4	Very dissatisfied	11%	*Ask Q14*
	98	Not sure	25%	*Skip to Q15*
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%	*Skip to Q15*
Q14	Is there a particular issue or code violation that the City isn't addressing that leads you to be dissatisfied? *If yes, ask*: Please briefly describe it to me. Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below.			
	Illegal parking, unattended, abandoned vehicles	28%		
	Homeless issues	25%		
	Unmaintained properties, lawns	16%		
	Violations not enforced fairly	11%		
	No particular issue	11%		
	Safety, security issues	9%		
	Littering, trash cans left outside	7%		
	Speeding cars, traffic violations	6%		
	City not responding fast to city resident issues	4%		
	Road, street maintenance	3%		
	Noise violations	2%		
	Vandalism, graffiti	2%		
	Illegal housing rental, multiple families	2%		
	Dogs off-leash	2%		
	Using garage as auto shop	1%		
	Dog waste on properties, streets	1%		

Section 6: Traffic								
Q15	Next, I'd like to ask you a few questions about traffic circulation. By <u>traffic circulation</u>, I mean the ability to drive around La Mesa <u>without</u> encountering <u>long</u> delays. Would you rate: _____ within the City of La Mesa as excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?								
	Read in Order	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Overall traffic circulation	15%	44%	27%	6%	5%	2%	0%
B	Traffic circulation on major streets	12%	40%	28%	10%	8%	2%	0%
C	Traffic circulation in residential areas	26%	45%	18%	6%	3%	2%	0%

Section 7: Staff Interactions							
Q16	In the past 12 months, have you been in contact with City of La Mesa staff?						
	1	Yes		24%		Ask Q17	
	2	No		71%		Skip to Q18	
	98	Not sure		4%		Skip to Q18	
	99	Prefer not to answer		1%		Skip to Q18	
Q17	In your opinion, is the <u>staff</u> at the City very _____, somewhat _____, or not at all _____. *(Read one item at a time, continue until all items are read).*						
	Randomize	Very	Somewhat	Not at all	Not sure	Prefer not to answer	
A	Helpful	49%	33%	14%	2%	2%	
B	Professional	62%	28%	6%	2%	2%	
C	Responsive	48%	34%	14%	2%	2%	

Section 8: Communication						
Q18	Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to communicate with residents through newsletters, the Internet, and other means? *(get answer, then ask):* Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?					

	1	Very satisfied	17%			
	2	Somewhat satisfied	37%			
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	16%			
	4	Very dissatisfied	8%			
	98	Not sure	21%			
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%			

Q19	As I read the following ways that the City of La Mesa can communicate with residents, I'd like to know if you think they would be very effective, somewhat effective, or not an effective way for the City to communicate with you.					

	Randomize	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Email	41%	38%	13%	5%	3%
B	Postcards, letters and newsletters mailed to your home	28%	39%	24%	6%	3%
C	Electronic newsletter	34%	43%	12%	8%	3%
D	City's website	24%	40%	26%	7%	3%
E	Local news media	23%	43%	23%	8%	3%
F	Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Next Door	25%	41%	21%	10%	3%
G	Townhall meetings	22%	40%	23%	12%	3%
H	Text messages	41%	31%	15%	9%	3%

Ask Q20 if Q19F=(1,2). Otherwise skip to Q21.						

Q20	What is your *preferred* Social Media site – the one you currently use most often?					

	1	Facebook	32%			
	2	Instagram	30%			
	3	Twitter	8%			
	4	Nextdoor	10%			
	5	Nixle	1%			
	6	Other	3%			
	7	Don't use social media currently	13%			
	98	Not sure	2%			
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%			

Questionnaire & Toplines

Q21	In the past 12 months, have you visited the City of La Mesa's website?	
1	Yes	54%
2	No	43%
98	Not sure	3%
99	Prefer not to answer	0%

Section 9: Background& Demographics

Thank you so much for your participation. I have just a few background questions for statistical purposes.

D1	In what year were you born? Year of birth recoded into age categories shown below.	
	18 to 29	23%
	30 to 39	21%
	40 to 49	13%
	50 to 64	20%
	65 or older	17%
	Prefer not to answer	6%

D2	Do you currently have any children under the age of 18 living in your home?	
1	Yes	27%
2	No	70%
99	Prefer not to answer	3%

D3	Do you own or rent your residence in the City of La Mesa?	
1	Own	51%
2	Rent	42%
99	Prefer not to answer	7%

D4	What is your gender?	
1	Male	48%
2	Female	46%
3	Non-binary	3%
99	Prefer not to answer	3%

D5	What ethnic group do you consider yourself a part of or feel closest to? *Read list if respondent hesitates.*	
	1	Caucasian/White	55%
	2	Latino/Hispanic	25%
	3	African-American/Black	7%
	4	Native American Indian or Alaskan Native	<1%
	5	Asian -- Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino or other Asian	6%
	6	Pacific Islander	<1%
	7	Mixed Heritage	1%
	8	Other	1%
	99	Prefer not to answer	3%

Those are all of the questions that I have for you! Thanks so much for participating in this important survey! This survey was conducted for the City of La Mesa.

Post-Interview & Sample Items	
S1	Quadrant
	1	Northwest	25%
	2	Northeast	25%
	3	Southwest	25%
	4	Southeast	25%