



# 2026 Community Survey Results

Presented in partnership with ETC Institute  
City Council Study Session  
June 30, 2026  
Item 1

## Agenda

- What is the Community Survey?
- Reports Produced
- Methodology
- Results
  - Perceptions
  - Services and Infrastructure
  - Public Safety
  - Neighborhood Issues and Funding Priorities
  - Community Participation and City Communication
  - Summary

# What is the Community Survey?

## General Overview

- Objective random sample survey of Tacoma residents
- Assesses City services, perceptions of Tacoma, and funding priorities
- Done every two years: 2024, 2022, 2020, 2018, 2014, 2010

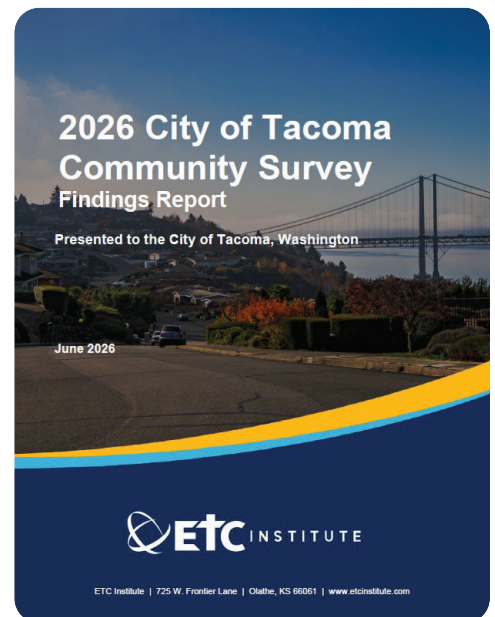
## 2026 Survey

- City contracted with ETC Institute (same as 2024)
- Questions were mostly the same as previous years, developed with City departments
- Survey was conducted in April 2026



## Reports Produced

- 2026 Findings Report
- Benchmarking Report (*Tacoma compared to U.S. national data*)
- Trends Report (*2024 compared to 2026*)
- Maps by Census Block Group
- Maps by Council District
- Crosstabs Reports (*Questions by demographics*)
- Dashboard
- All are posted on City's webpage: [tacoma.gov/communitysurvey](https://tacoma.gov/communitysurvey)



### Who We Are

**ETC Institute** is the Nation's leading provider of market research for local governments

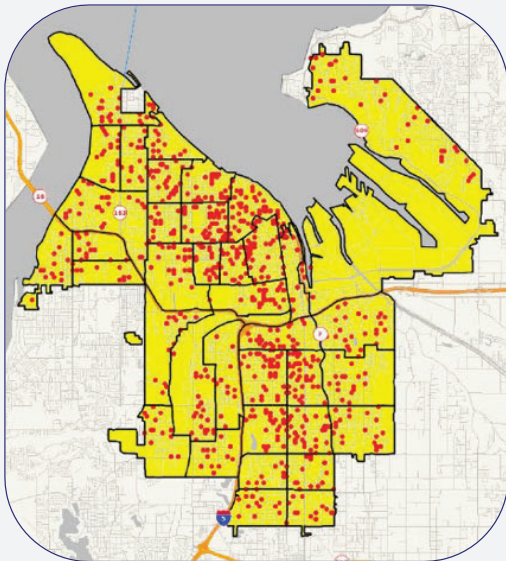
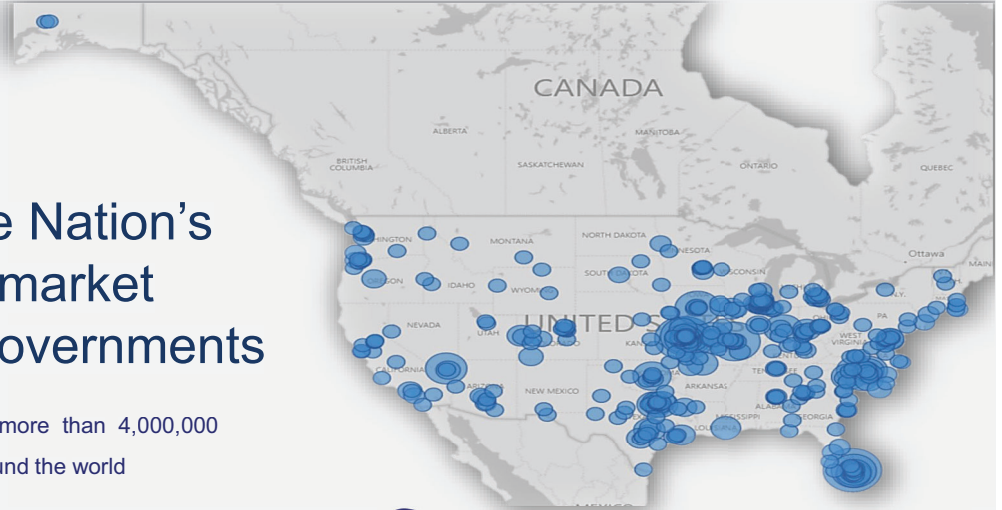
Since 2012, ETC Institute has surveyed more than 4,000,000 people in more than 1,200 communities around the world

### Our Mission

For more than 40 years, our mission has been to help local governments gather and use survey data to make better decisions

### Our Goal

To provide an objective assessment that community leaders can depend on to make data-driven decisions to improve the lives of residents



Distribution of responses coded to block level to maintain anonymity

## Methodology

- Administered by mail, phone, and online with follow-ups by text, email, and social media to the random sample of residential addresses.
- Sample designed to ensure results are statistically valid and representative.
- 902 completed surveys were collected; Margin of Error: +/-3.26% at 95% level of confidence.
- Goal was 900 responses with at least 150 from each Council District (achieved).
- Survey was conducted in English and offered in Spanish, Korean, Russian, Ukrainian, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.
- Throughout the survey administration process, ETC Institute monitors response distribution to maintain geographic balance

# Perceptions



## Perceptions

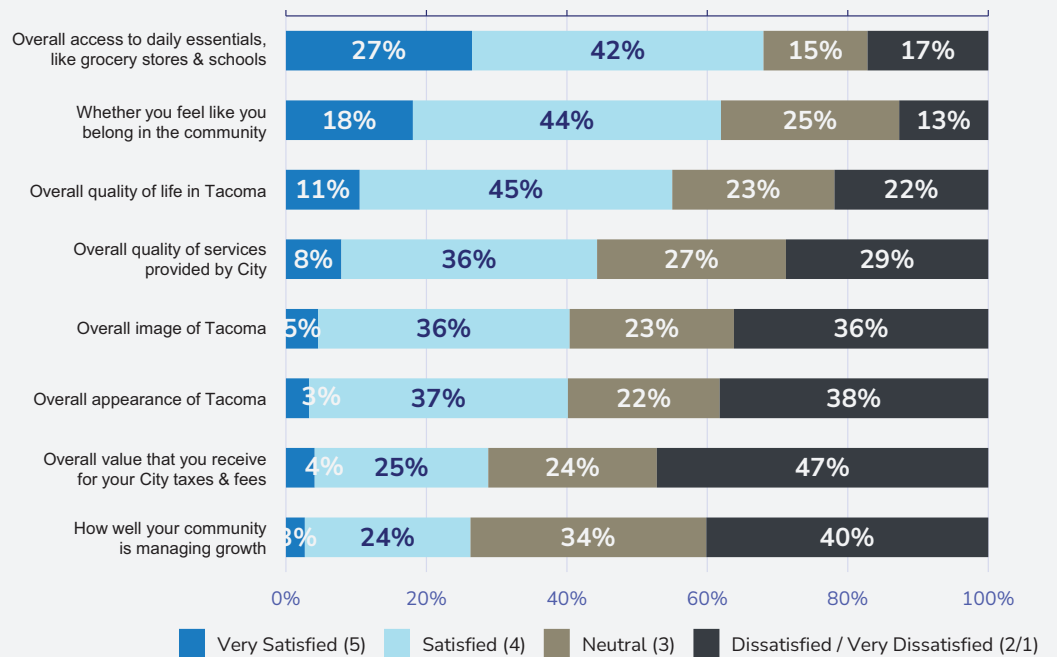
### Highest Rated

- Access to daily essentials – 69%
- Belonging in the community – 62%
- Overall quality of life – 56%

### Lowest Rated

- Appearance of Tacoma – 40%
- Value received from taxes – 29%
- Managing growth – 27%

## Q1. Perceptions of Tacoma by percentage of respondents (excluding don't know)

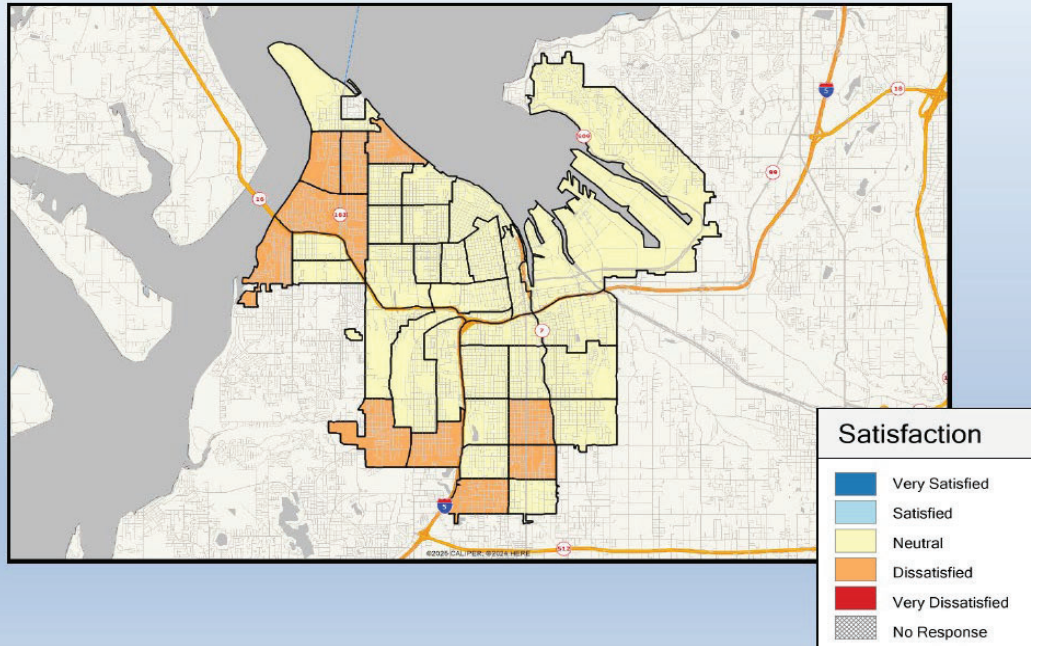


## GIS Maps: Managing Growth

GIS maps provide a visual representation of how responses vary across the city by displaying the average response for each geographic area.

In this example, most of Tacoma reported neutral perceptions of how well the community is managing growth, while several areas exhibited comparatively lower satisfaction, indicating opportunities for targeted improvements.

### Q1.06: How well your community is managing growth Mean: 2.76



## Perceptions: Trends

7/8 areas saw increases from the 2024 survey.

### Biggest Increases

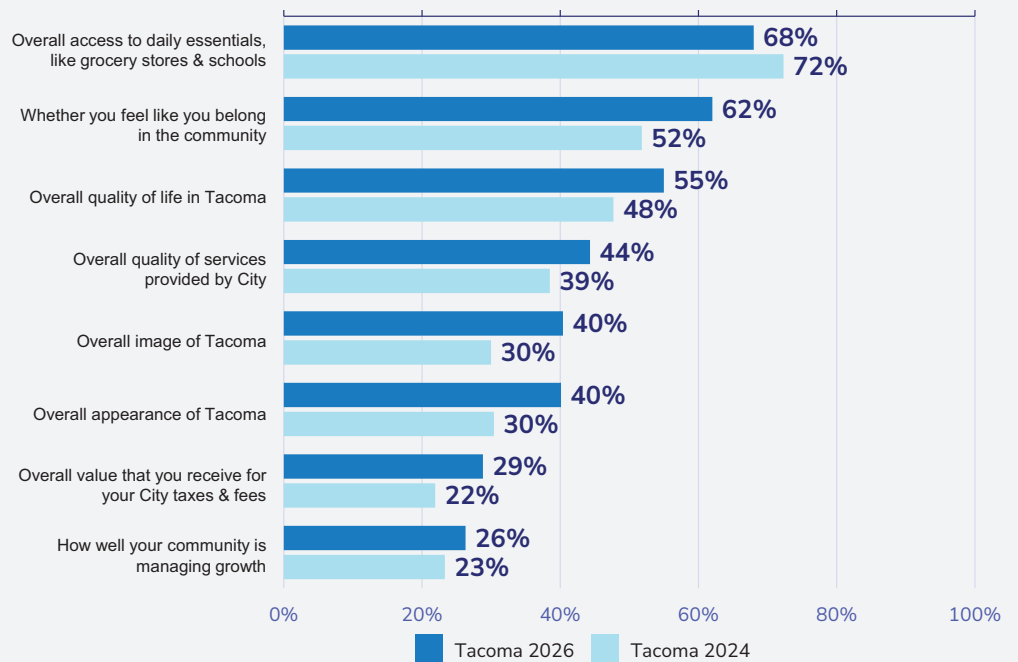
Belonging in the Community **+10 pts**

Image of Tacoma **+10 pts**

Appearance of Tacoma **+10 pts**

## Q1. Perceptions of Tacoma

"Very satisfied" and "satisfied" ratings were combined to provide valid comparisons



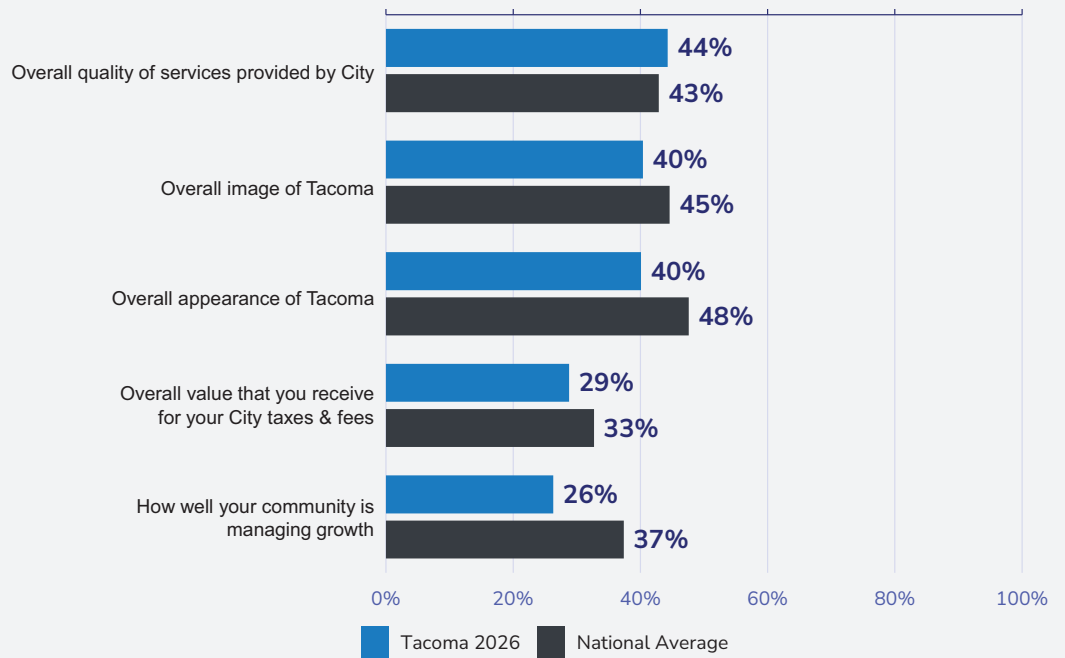
# Perceptions: Benchmarking

Overall, Tacoma lags between 4-8% behind in 4/5 perception questions.

The national survey was conducted by ETC Institute during the summer of 2025 with a random sample of more than 5,000 residents across the continental United States.

## Q1. Perceptions of Tacoma

"Very satisfied" and "satisfied" ratings were combined to provide valid comparisons



# Tacoma Services and Infrastructure



# Satisfaction With Tacoma

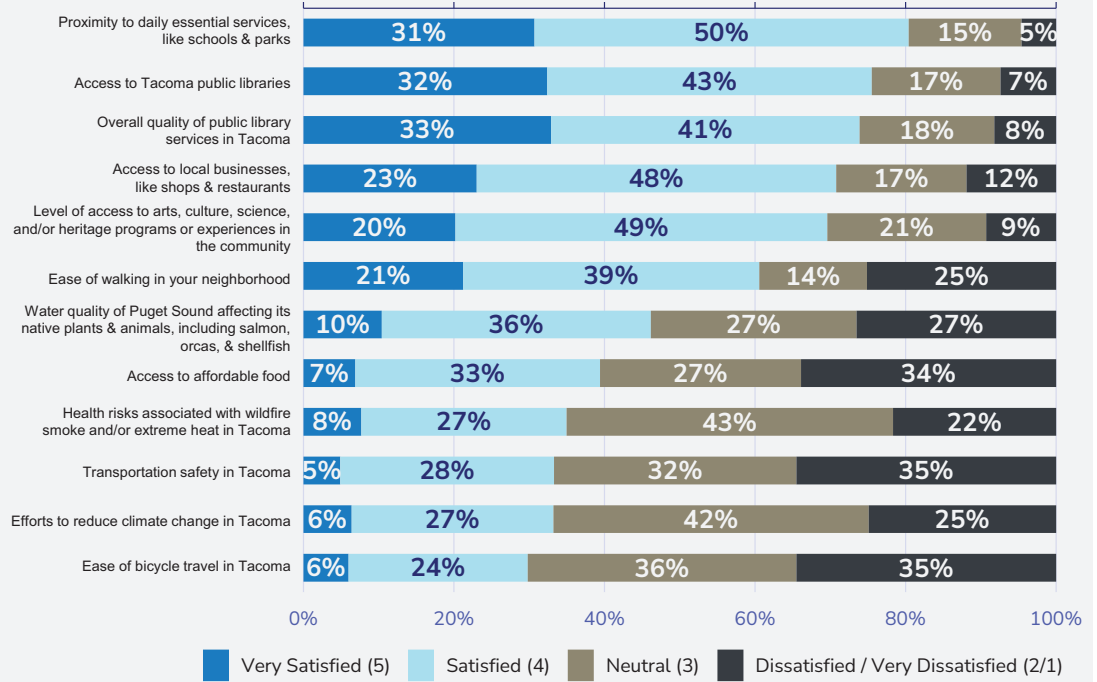
## Highest Rated

- Proximity to daily essentials – 81%
- Access to libraires – 75%
- Quality of libraries – 71%
- Level of access to arts – 69%

## Lowest Rated

- Transportation safety – 33%
- Efforts to reduce climate change – 33%
- Ease of bicycle travel – 30%

# Q2. Satisfaction with Tacoma by percentage of respondents (excluding don't know)

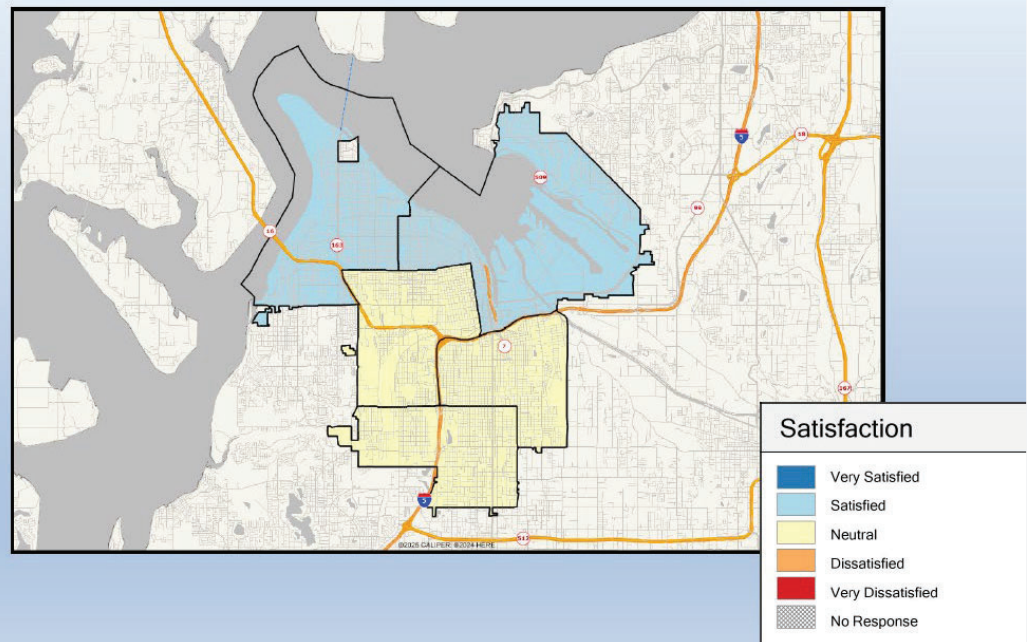


# GIS Maps: Ease of walking

GIS maps provide a visual representation of how responses vary across the city by displaying the average response for each geographic area.

In this example, most of Tacoma reported satisfied perceptions for the ease of walking in your neighborhood, while a couple areas exhibited comparatively lower satisfaction, indicating opportunities for targeted improvements.

## Q2.04: The ease of walking in your neighborhood Mean: 3.48

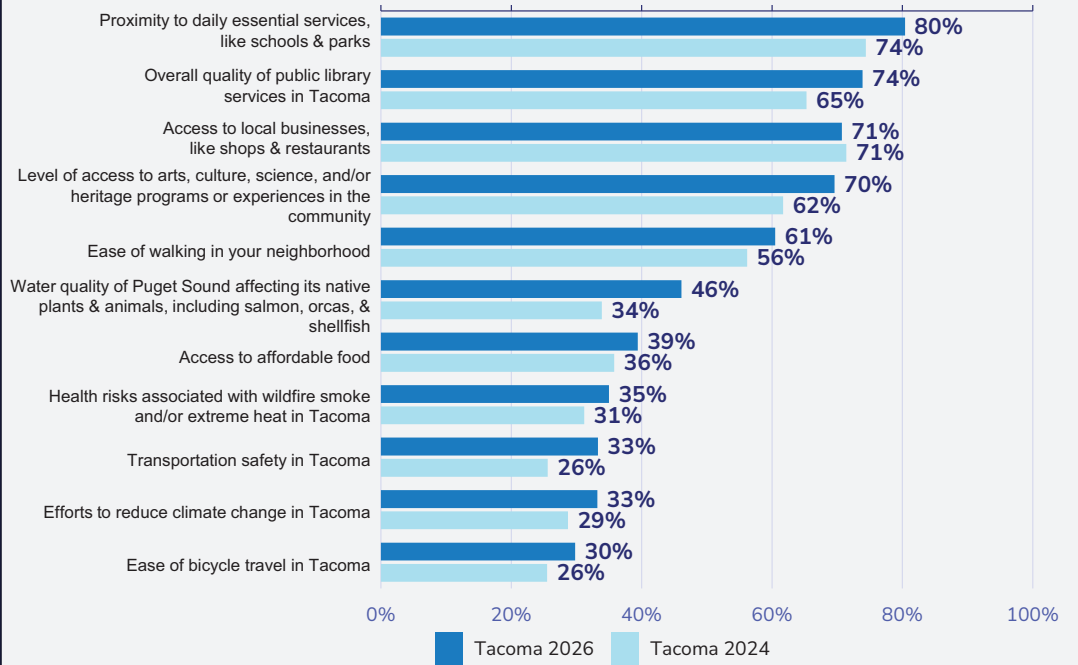


# Trends

Since 2024, Tacoma has seen increases in 10/11 of the areas. The only other area stayed consistent.

## Q2. Satisfaction with Tacoma

“Very satisfied” and “satisfied” ratings were combined to provide valid comparisons



# Infrastructure, Roads, Public Works

## Highest Rated

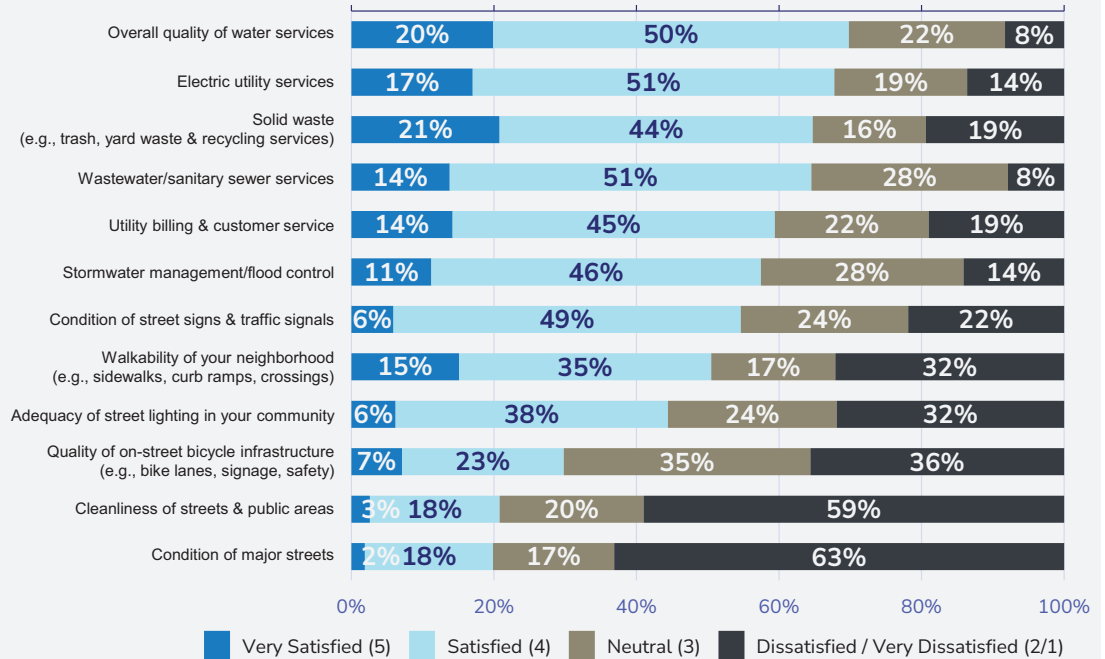
- Water Services – 70%
- Electric Utility Services – 68%
- Solid Waste Services – 65%
- Wastewater/Sanitary Services – 65%

## Lowest Rated

- Bicycle Infrastructure – 30%
- Cleanliness of streets – 21%
- Condition of major streets – 20%

## Q7. Satisfaction with Infrastructure, Roads, and Public Works

by percentage of respondents (excluding don't know)

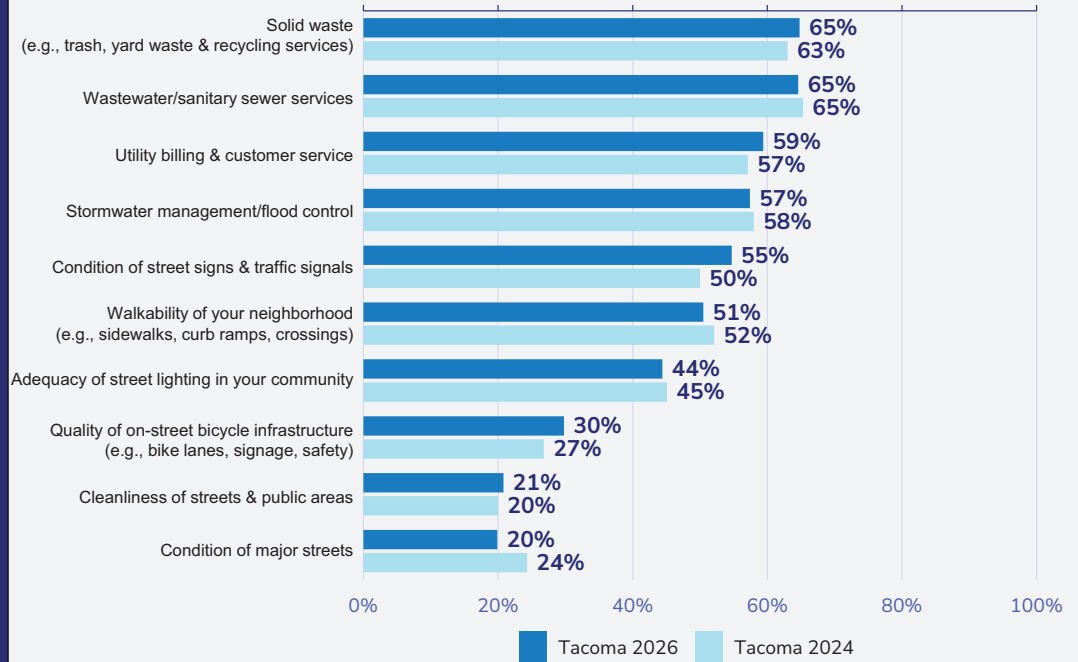


## Trends

Since 2024, Tacoma has seen 4 areas increase, 4 areas decrease, and 1 area stayed consistent.

## Q7. Satisfaction with Infrastructure, Roads, and Public Works

“Very satisfied” and “satisfied” ratings were combined to provide valid comparisons



## Infrastructure: Importance

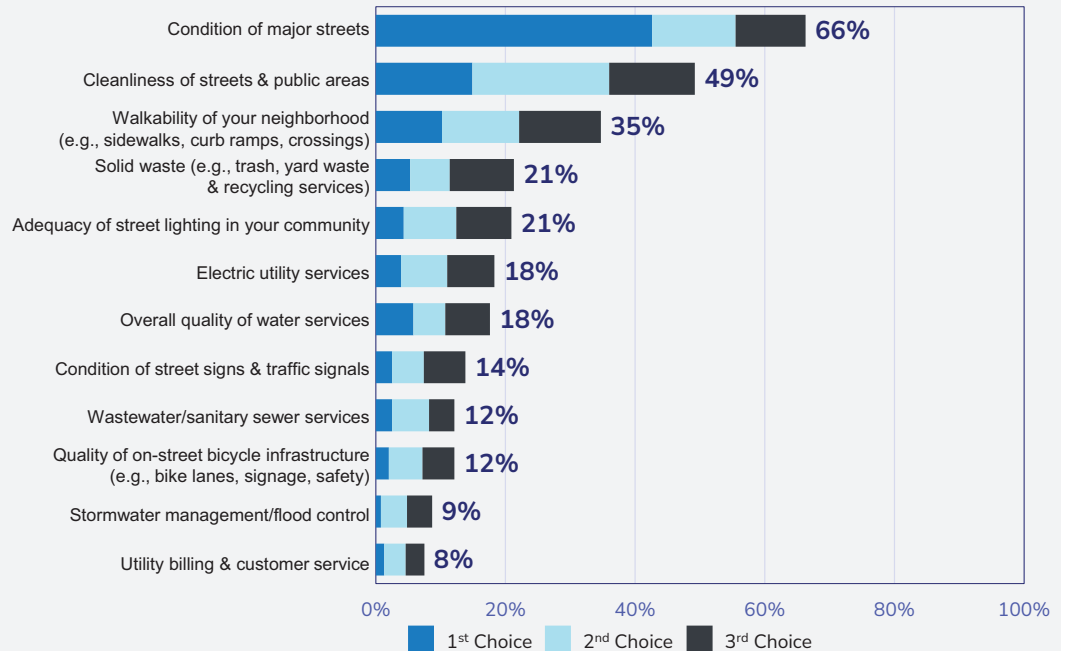
Clear top three most important items according to residents.

### Top Three

- Condition of Major Streets – 66%
- Cleanliness of streets – 49%
- Walkability – 35%

## Q8. Which Three Of The Infrastructure, Roads, and Public Works Services Do You Think Are Most Important For The City To Provide?

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



# Infrastructure: Priorities for Investment

ETC's Importance-Satisfaction Analysis for the infrastructure, roads and public works in Tacoma indicated 4 items that rose to a "high" or "very high" priority.

## 2026 Importance-Satisfaction Ratings Tacoma, Washington Infrastructure, Roads, and Public Works



Priority	Service Area	Importance	Satisfaction	I-S Score
<b>Very High</b>	Condition of major streets	66%	20%	0.5311
<b>Very High</b>	Cleanliness of streets & public areas	49%	21%	0.3897
<b>High</b>	Walkability of your neighborhood (e.g., sidewalks, curb ramps, crossings)	35%	51%	0.1718
<b>High</b>	Adequacy of street lighting in your community	21%	44%	0.1162
<b>Medium</b>	Quality of on-street bicycle infrastructure (e.g., bike lanes, signage, safety)	12%	30%	0.0849
<b>Medium</b>	Solid waste (e.g., trash, yard waste & recycling services)	21%	65%	0.0750
<b>Medium</b>	Condition of street signs & traffic signals	14%	55%	0.0625
<b>Medium</b>	Electric utility services	18%	68%	0.0591
<b>Medium</b>	Overall quality of water services	18%	70%	0.0532
<b>Medium</b>	Wastewater/sanitary sewer services	12%	65%	0.0428
<b>Medium</b>	Stormwater management/flood control	9%	57%	0.0371
<b>Medium</b>	Utility billing & customer service	8%	59%	0.0305

## Public Safety



## Police Services

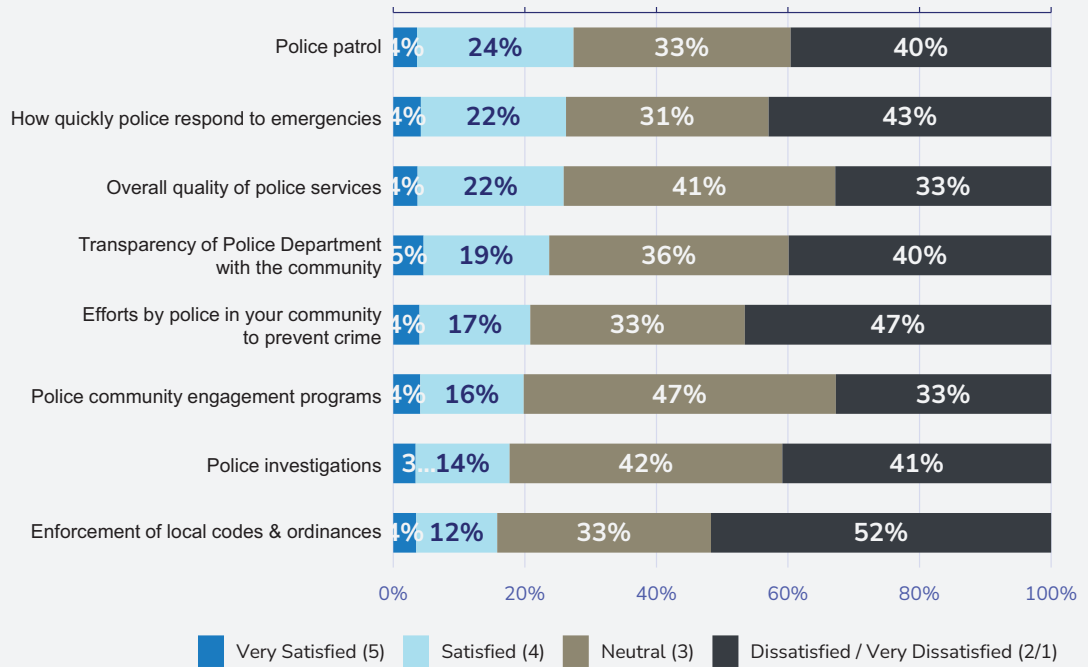
High Neutral ratings and high “don’t know” ratings impacted the Police ratings.

## Top Rated

- Police Patrol – 27%
- Response Times – 26%
- Quality of Police Service – 26%

## Q3. Police Services

by percentage of respondents (excluding don’t know)

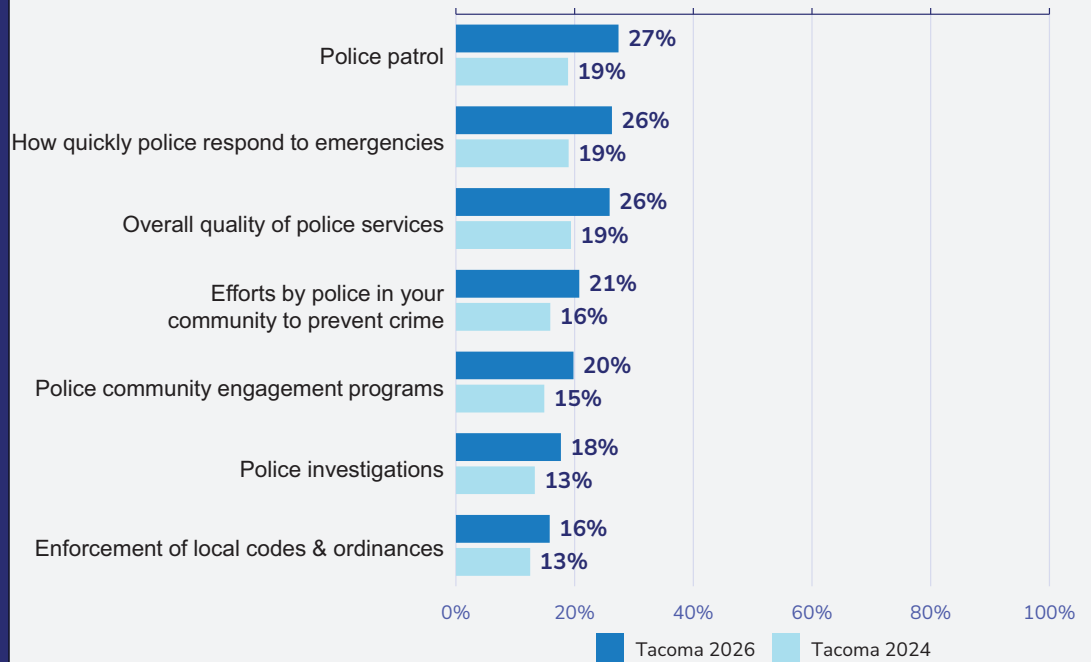


## Police Services: Trends

Since 2024, all areas assessed have seen increases in ratings.

## Q3. Police Services

“Very satisfied” and “satisfied” ratings were combined to provide valid comparisons



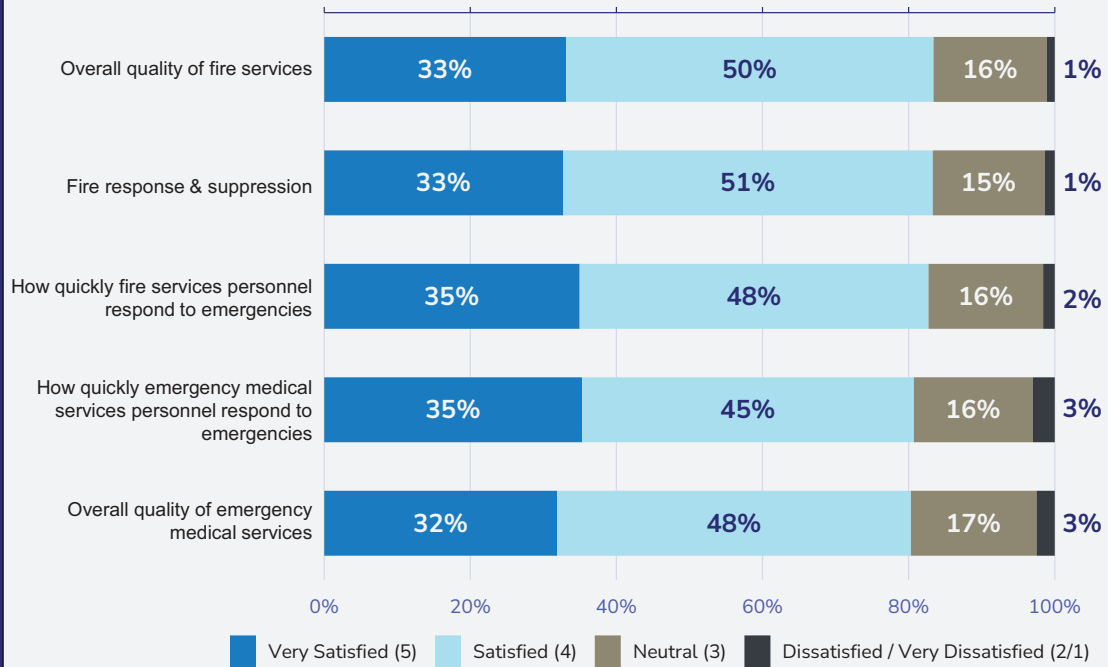
## Fire Services

Fire and EMS services saw some of the highest ratings on the entire survey.

## Top Rated

- Quality of Fire services – 83%
- Fire Response – 83%
- Response Times – 83%

## Q5. Fire and Emergency Medical Services by percentage of respondents (excluding don't know)

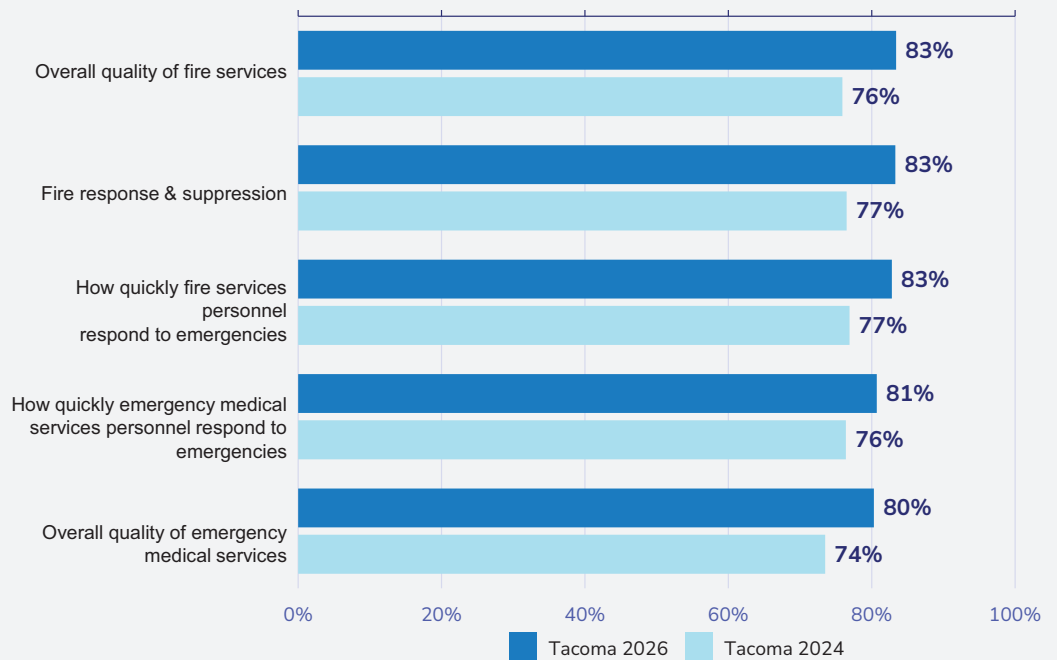


## Fire Services: Trends

Once again, since 2024 Tacoma saw increases in all areas assessed.

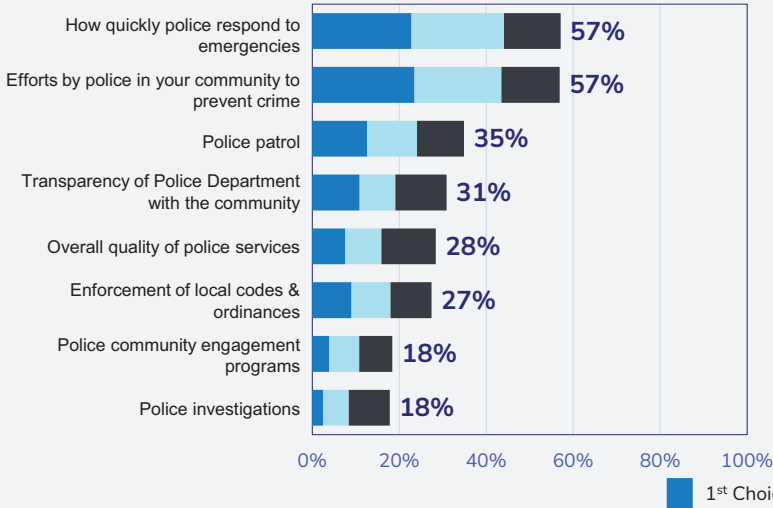
## Q5. Fire and Emergency Medical Services

"Very satisfied" and "satisfied" ratings were combined to provide valid comparisons

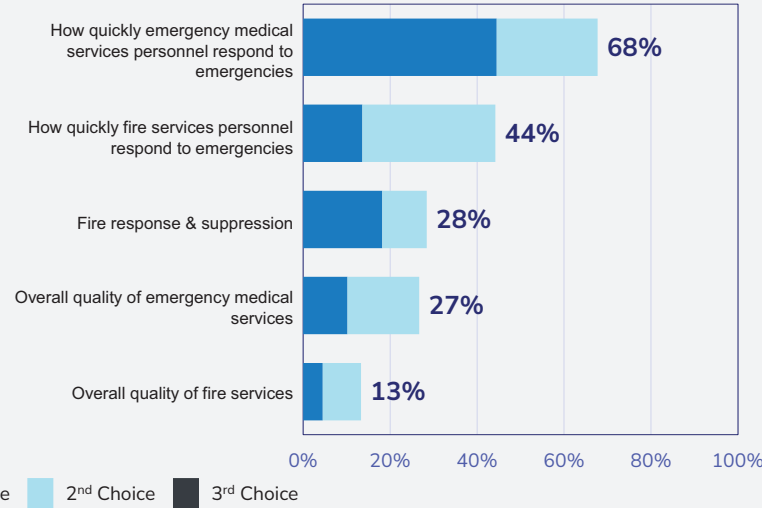


# Police and Fire Importance

## Police Importance



## Fire Importance



## Public Safety: Priorities for Investment

Because of the low satisfaction scores, it's not surprising to see all of the Police services be "very high" or "high" priority items.

On the other hand, because of the high satisfaction scores for Fire, only one item is a "high" priority.

### 2026 Importance-Satisfaction Ratings Tacoma, Washington Police Services



Priority	Service Area	Importance	Satisfaction	I-S Score
Very High	Efforts by police in your community to prevent crime	57%	21%	0.4506
Very High	How quickly police respond to emergencies	57%	26%	0.4208
Very High	Police patrol	35%	27%	0.2534
Very High	Transparency of Police Department with the community	31%	24%	0.2358
Very High	Enforcement of local codes & ordinances	27%	16%	0.2307
Very High	Overall quality of police services	28%	26%	0.2104
High	Police community engagement programs	18%	20%	0.1476
High	Police investigations	18%	18%	0.1465

### 2026 Importance-Satisfaction Ratings Tacoma, Washington Fire and Emergency Medical Services



Priority	Service Area	Importance	Satisfaction	I-S Score
High	How quickly emergency medical services personnel respond to emergencies	68%	81%	0.1307
Medium	How quickly fire services personnel respond to emergencies	44%	83%	0.0760
Medium	Overall quality of emergency medical services	27%	80%	0.0526
Medium	Fire response & suppression	28%	83%	0.0474
Medium	Overall quality of fire services	13%	83%	0.0221

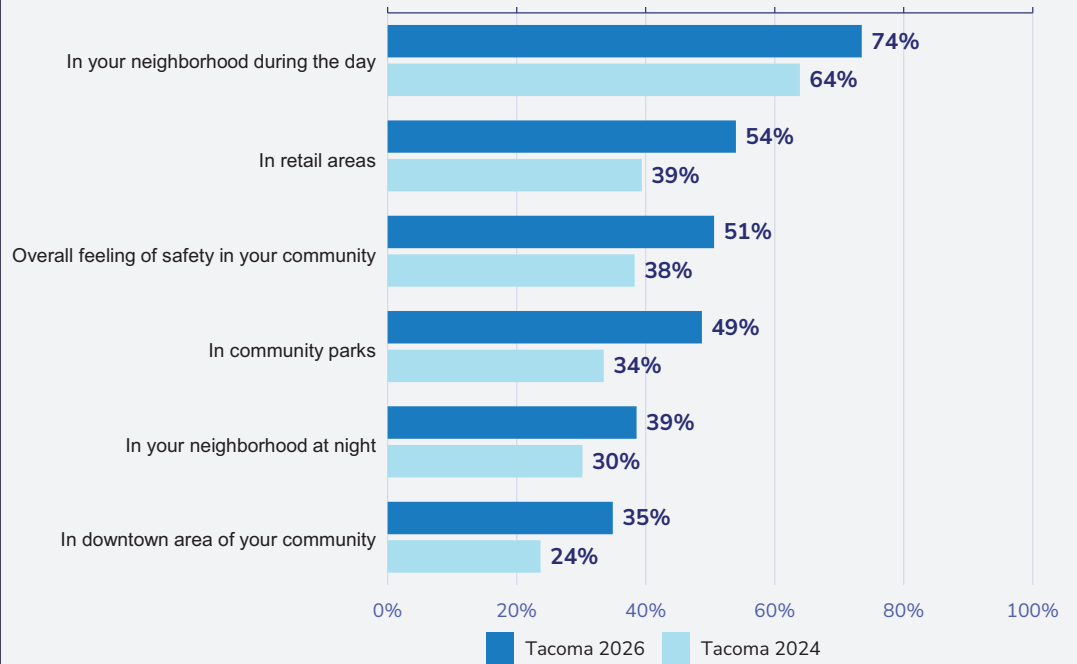
## Feelings of Safety

Overall, respondents are feeling safer in all areas of the community since 2024, indicating that City efforts to improve perceptions of safety have had a positive impact.

Only 22% of respondents indicated that they have been a victim of a crime in the last 12 months. Of those who have been a victim of a crime 73% reported it to Police.

## Q11. How Safe Do You Feel?

"Very safe" and "safe" ratings were combined to provide valid comparisons



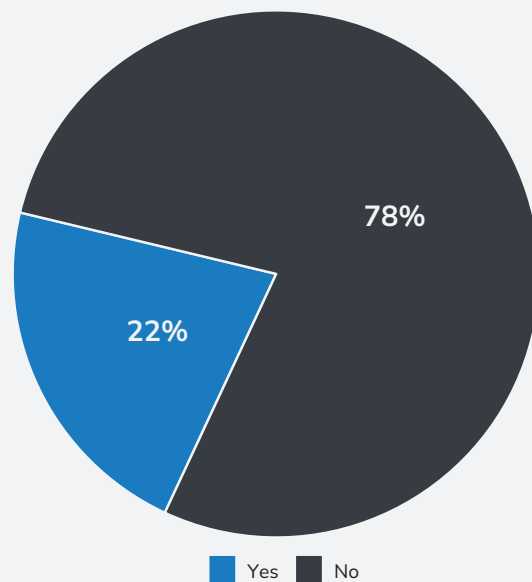
## Victims of Crime

Only 22% of respondents indicated that they have been a victim of a crime in the last 12 months. Of those who have been a victim of a crime 73% reported it to Police.

In 2024, 35% of residents reported being the victim of a crime, of which 70% reported it.

## Q12. Have You Or Someone In Your Household Been The Victim Of A Crime In Tacoma In The Last 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents (excluding not provided)



# Neighborhood Issues and Funding Priorities



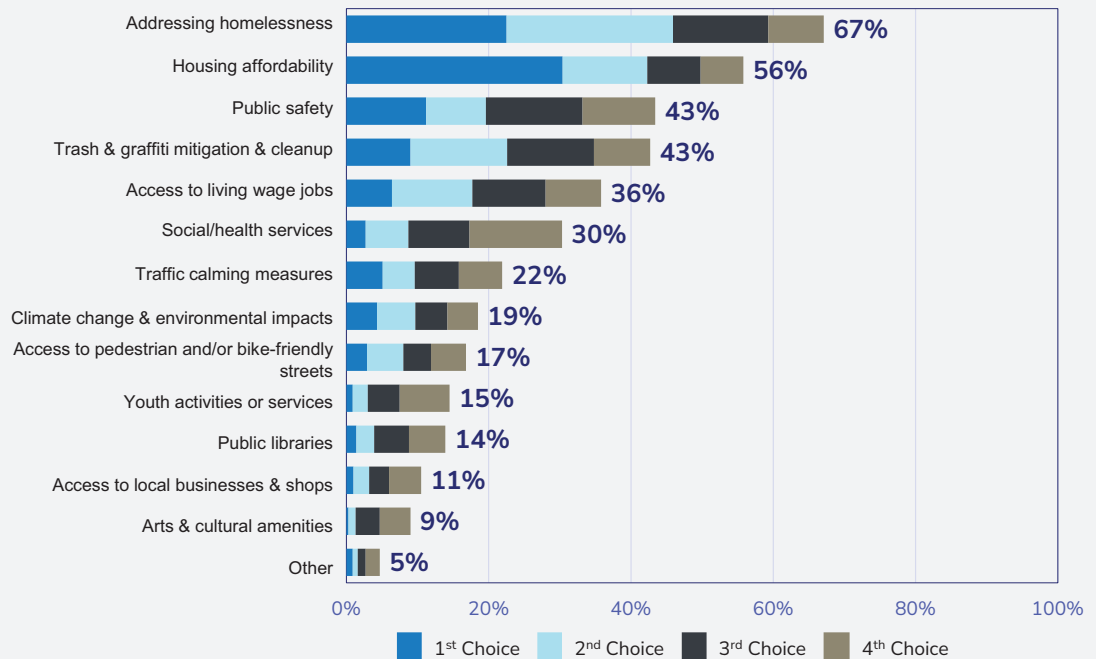
## Neighborhood Issues

Respondents top 4 issues they believe are most important for the City to address.

1. Addressing Homelessness
2. Housing Affordability
3. Public Safety
4. Trash/Graffiti cleanup

### Q9. Issues In Your Neighborhood You Think Are Most Important For The City Of Tacoma And Partners To Address

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices



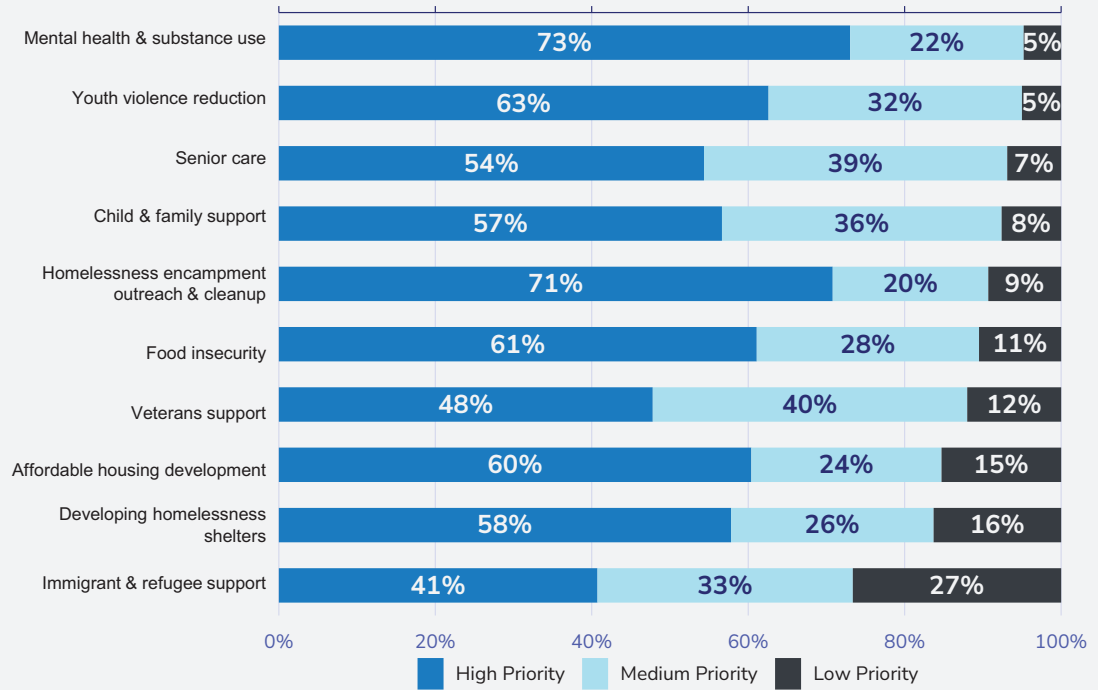
# Funding Priorities

When combining “high” and “medium” priority items the top 5 items residents believe are top priorities

1. Mental Health/Substance Abuse
2. Youth Violence Reduction
3. Senior Care
4. Child/Family Support
5. Homelessness Encampment

## Q24. Funding Priorities

by percentage of respondents (excluding don't know)



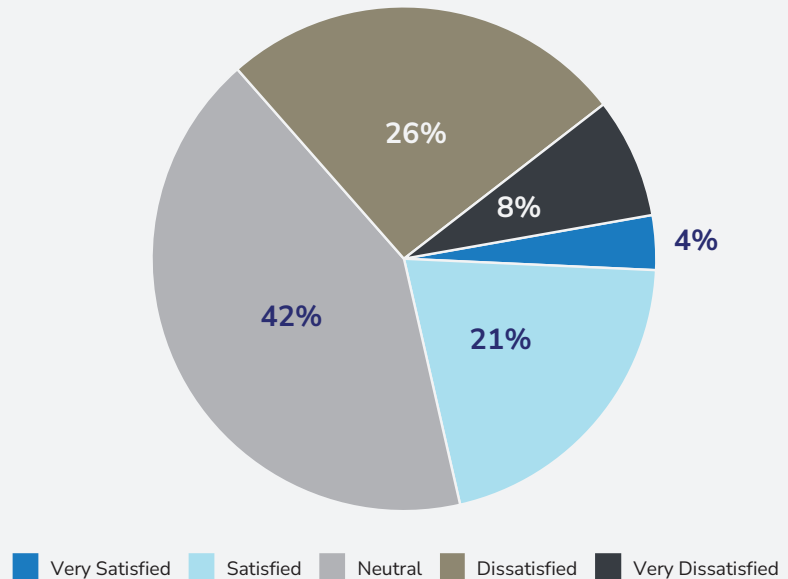
# Overall Satisfaction

25% of residents are currently very satisfied or satisfied with the amount of services Tacoma currently devotes to Social Services.

34% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

## Q25. Overall, How Satisfied Are You With The Amount Of Services Tacoma Devotes To Social Services?

by percentage of respondents (excluding don't know)



# Participation and Communication



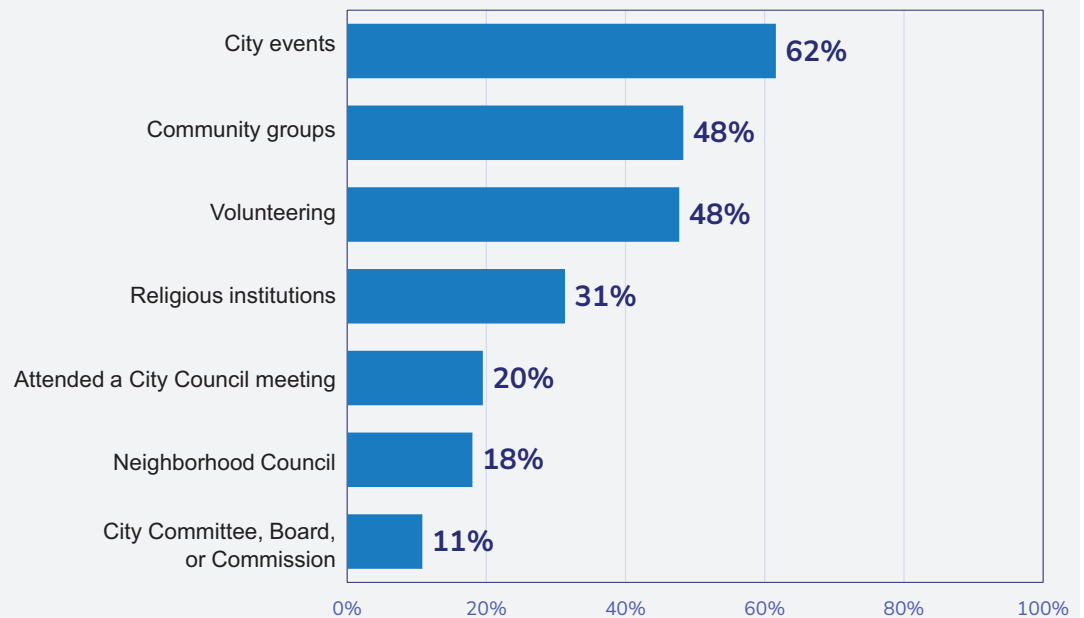
## Civic Participation

62% of respondents indicated they have participated in City Events in the last 12 months.

Most areas saw an increase in participation when compared to 2024.

### Q17. Have You Participated In Any Of The Following Civic Activities In The Last 12 Months?

by percentage of respondents



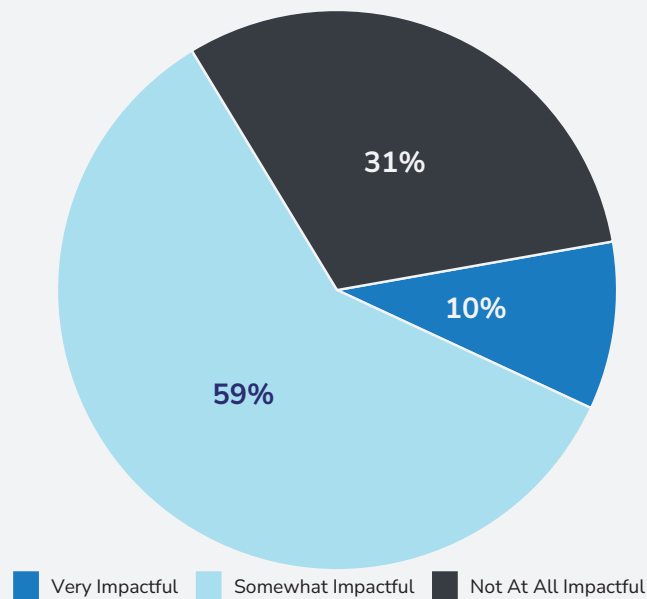
## Civic Participation Impact

69% of respondents believe their participation has had at least somewhat of an impact on the community.

Was 49% in 2024.

## Q18. How Much Of An Impact Do You Believe Your Participation Has Had On The Community?

by percentage of respondents (excluding not provided)

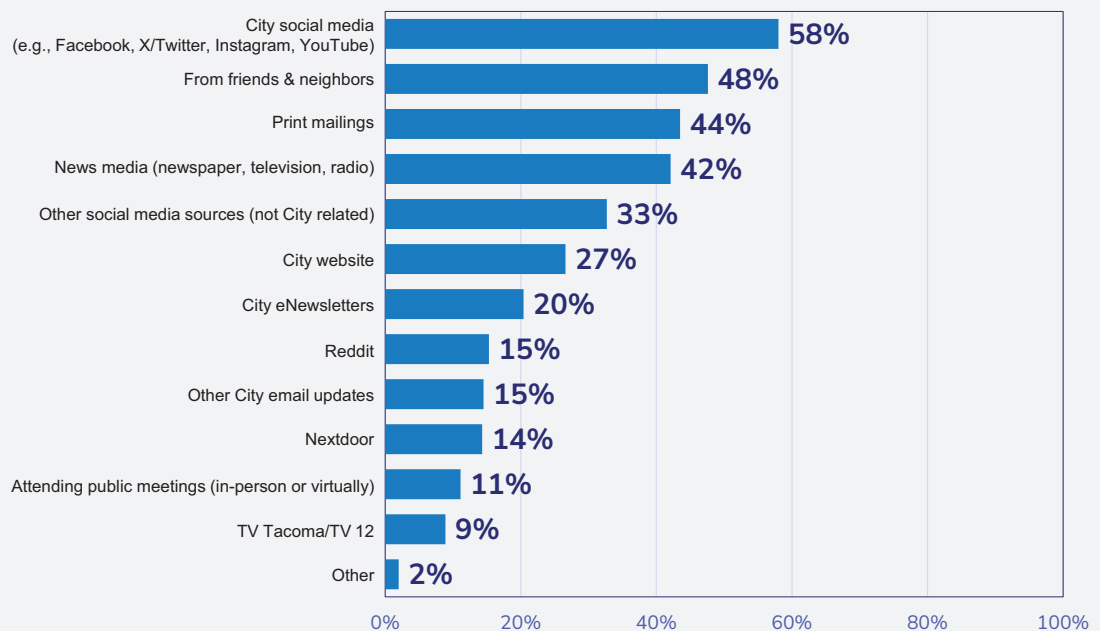


## Current Communication

Currently, residents are getting information from City Social Media, Friends and Neighbors, Print Mailings, and News Media.

## Q19. Where Do You Currently Get News And Information About City Programs, Services, And Events?

by percentage of respondents



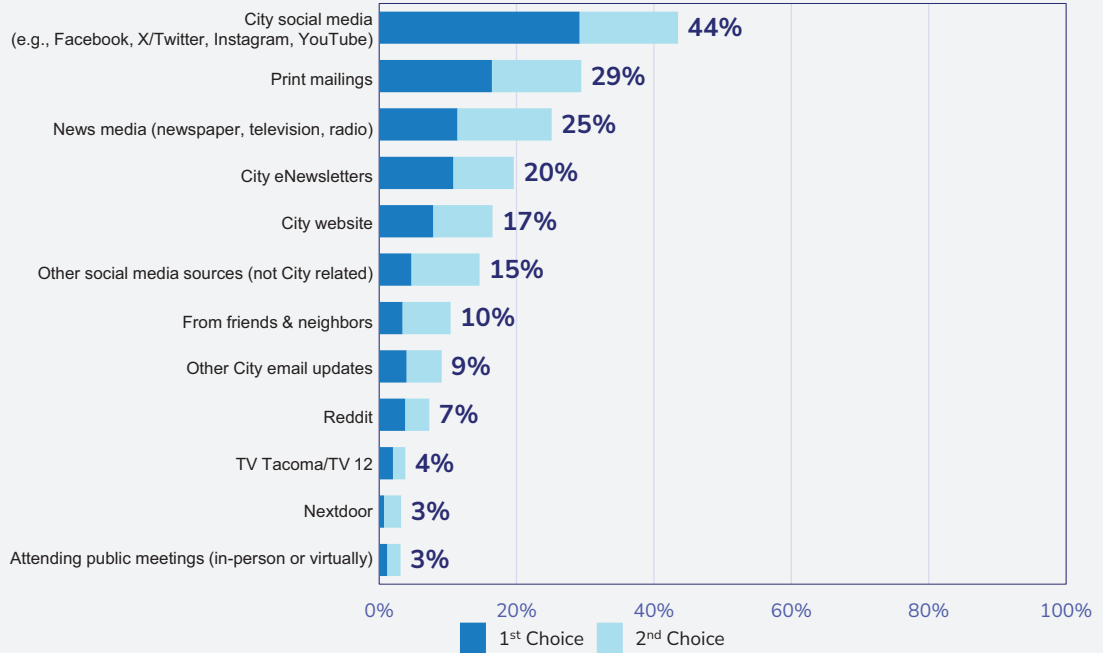
# Communication Preferences

Residents prefer to get information from City Social Media, Print Mailings, and News Media.

Aligning with these communication preferences will help the City in the long-term.

## Q20. The Information Sources You Most Prefer To Get News And Information About City Programs, Services, And Events?

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



# Summary

- Since 2024, Tacoma has seen improvement and increases in almost all areas on the survey.
  - Feelings of Safety
  - Police and Fire
  - Civic Participation
- Residents identified the following as the community's highest priorities:
  - Homelessness
  - Housing affordability
  - Neighborhood conditions
  - Behavioral health
  - Public safety
- Continuing to align City communication with resident preferences will continue to help increase ratings and perceptions in Tacoma.



Thank you!

## Get In Touch

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# Tacoma.gov/communitysurvey

