Community Opinion Survey
Research Report

prepared for the
City of La Mesa

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents i
List of Tables iii
List of Figures iv
Introduction 1
Purpose of Study 1
Overview of Methodology 2
Statistical Significance 3
Organization of Report 3
Acknowledgements 3
Disclaimer 3
About True North 3
Just the Facts 4
Quality of Life 4
City Services 4
Public Safety & Neighborhood Issues 4
Traffic 5
Parks & Recreation 5
Staff Interactions 6
Communication 6
Conclusions 7
Quality of Life 10
Overall Quality of Life 10
Question 2 10
Ways to Improve Quality of Life 11
Question 3 12
City Services 13
Overall Satisfaction 13
Question 4 13
Specific Services 14
Question 5 15
Question 6 17
Performance Needs & Priorities 18
Individualized Priority Analysis 18
Public Safety & Neighborhood Issues 21
Perceived Safety 21
Question 7 21
Question 8 23
Neighborhood Issues 24
Question 9 25
Code Enforcement 26
Question 10 26
Question 11 27
Emergency Preparedness 28
Question 12 28
Neighborhood Watch 29
Question 13 29
Question 14 29
Traffic 30
Traffic Circulation 30
Question 15 30
Parks & Recreation 33
Programs 33

Question 16 33
Question 17 35
Facilities 36
Question 18 36
Future Projects 37
Question 19 37
Staff Interactions 39
Question 20 39
Question 21 40
Communication. 41
Overall Satisfaction. 41
Question 22 41
Information Sources 42
Question 23 43
City's Website. 44
Question 24 44
Question 25 46
Question 26 46
Question 27 47
Background & Demographics 48
Methodology 49
Questionnaire Development 49
Programming & Pre-Test. 49
Sample 49
Margin of Error due to Sampling. 50
Data Collection. 51
Data Processing 51
Rounding 51
Questionnaire & Toplines. 53
Crosstabulations . . . . . Appendix A (bound separately)

List of Tables

Table 1 Statistically Significant Changes Between 2011 and 2013 9
Table 2 Top Changes to Improve La Mesa (2006 to 2013) 12
Table 3 Importance of Services (2006 to 2013) 16
Table 4 Satisfaction With Services (2006 to 2013) 17
Table 5 Needs & Priority Matrix 19
Table 6 Perceptions of Personal Safety (2006 to 2013) 22
Table 7 Neighborhood Issues (2006 to 2013) 25
Table 8 Perception of Traffic Circulation (2006 to 2013) 31
Table 9 Rating of Park & Recreation Facilities by Quadrant of City (2006 to 2013) 36
Table 10 Recreation Priorities by Age & Child in Hsld (Showing % High Priority) 37
Table 11 Recreation Priorities by Quadrant of City & Gender (Showing % High Priority) 38
Table 12 Opinion of City Staff (2011 & 2013) 40
Table 13 Demographics of Sample 48

List of Figures

Figure 1 Quadrants Identified in Study . . . 2
Figure 2 Overall Quality of Life (2006 to 2013) . . . 10
Figure 3 Overall Quality of Life by Years in La Mesa & Age . . . 11
Figure 4 Overall Quality of Life by Household Income & Quadrant of City . . . 11
Figure 5 One Change to Improve La Mesa . . . 12
Figure 6 Overall Satisfaction . . . 13
Figure 7 Overall Satisfaction by Years in La Mesa & Age . . . 14
Figure 8 Overall Satisfaction by Household Income & Quadrant of City . . . 14
Figure 9 Importance of Services . . . 15
Figure 10 Satisfaction with Services . . . 17
Figure 11 Resident Service Needs . . . 20
Figure 12 Perceptions of Personal Safety . . . 21
Figure 13 Perceptions of Personal Safety by Age (Showing % Very Safe) . . . 22
Figure 14 Perceptions of Personal Safety by Quadrant of City & Gender (Showing % Very Safe) . . . 22
Figure 15 Perceptions of Personal Safety Compared With Five Years Ago (2011 & 2013) . . . 23
Figure 16 Perceptions of Personal Safety Compared With Five Years Ago by Years in La Mesa & Age . . . 24
Figure 17 Perceptions of Personal Safety Compared With Five Years Ago by Household Income, Quadrant of City & Gender . . . 24
Figure 18 Neighborhood Issues . . . 25
Figure 19 Neighborhood Issues by Quadrant of City (Showing % Big Problem) . . . 26
Figure 20 Satisfaction with Code Enforcement (2006 to 2013) . . . 26
Figure 21 Satisfaction with Code Enforcement by Home Type, Home Ownership Status & Quadrant of City . . . 27
Figure 22 Reason for Dissatisfaction With Code Enforcement . . . 27
Figure 23 Household Emergency Preparedness (2011 & 2013) . . . 28
Figure 24 Neighborhood Watch & Assistance in the Event of Disaster . . . 29
Figure 25 Neighborhood Watch & Assistance in the Event of Disaster by Home Type, Household Income & Quadrant of City . . . 29
Figure 26 Perception of Traffic Circulation . . . 30
Figure 27 Perception of Traffic Circulation Overall by Quadrant of City . . . 31
Figure 28 Perception of Traffic Circulation on Major Streets by Quadrant of City . . . 31
Figure 29 Perception of Traffic Circulation in Residential Areas by Quadrant of City . . . 32
Figure 30 Household Participation in Recreational or Cultural Program in Past 12 Months (2006 to 2013) . . . 33
Figure 31 Household Participation in Recreational or Cultural Program in Past 12 Months by Age, Home Ownership Status & Child in Hsld . . . 34
Figure 32 Household Participation in Recreational or Cultural Program in Past 12 Months by Household Income & Quadrant of City . . . 34
Figure 33 Overall Quality of Recreational & Cultural Programs (2006 to 2013) . . . 35
Figure 34 Overall Quality of Recreational & Cultural Programs by Child in Hsld, Gender & Quadrant of City . . . 35
Figure 35 Rating of Park & Recreation Facilities . . . 36
Figure 36 Recreation Priorities . . . 37
Figure 37 Contact With City Staff in Past 12 Months (2011 & 2013) . . . 39
Figure 38 Contact With City Staff in Past 12 Months by Quadrant of City, Age & Home Ownership Status . . . 39
Figure 39 Opinion of City Staff . . . 40
Figure 40 Satisfaction with Communication (2006 to 2013) . . . 41
Figure 41 Satisfaction with Communication by Years in La Mesa & Age . . . 42
Figure 42 Satisfaction with Communication by Household Income & Quadrant of City . . . 42

Figure 43 Information Sources 43
Figure 44 Top Information Sources (2011 & 2013) 43
Figure 45 City Website Visit in Past 12 Months (2006 to 2013) 44
Figure 46 City Website in Past 12 Months by Years in La Mesa & Age 44
Figure 47 City Website in Past 12 Months by Child in Hsld, Home Ownership Status & Household Income 45
Figure 48 City Website in Past 12 Months by Gender, Quadrant of City, Hsld Rec, Cultural Program Participation & Contact With Staff 45
Figure 49 Ease of Finding Information on City Website (2011 & 2013) 46
Figure 50 Satisfaction with City Website (2006 to 2013) 46
Figure 51 Maximum Margin of Error 51

INTRODUCTION

Known as the "Jewel of the Hills", the City of La Mesa encompasses approximately nine square miles in southern San Diego County and is currently home to an estimated 58,296 residents.[1] Incorporated as a general law City in 1912, the City's team of full-time and part-time employees provides a full suite of services through six departments: City Manager's Office, Community Development, Community Services, 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, they do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the community as a whole. Informal feedback mechanisms typically rely on the resident to initiate the 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 regarding a particular topic, 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 thereby 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 it 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 a host of specific topics, including public safety, traffic, and parks and recreation.
- Collect additional background and demographic data that is relevant to understanding residents' perceptions, needs, and interests.

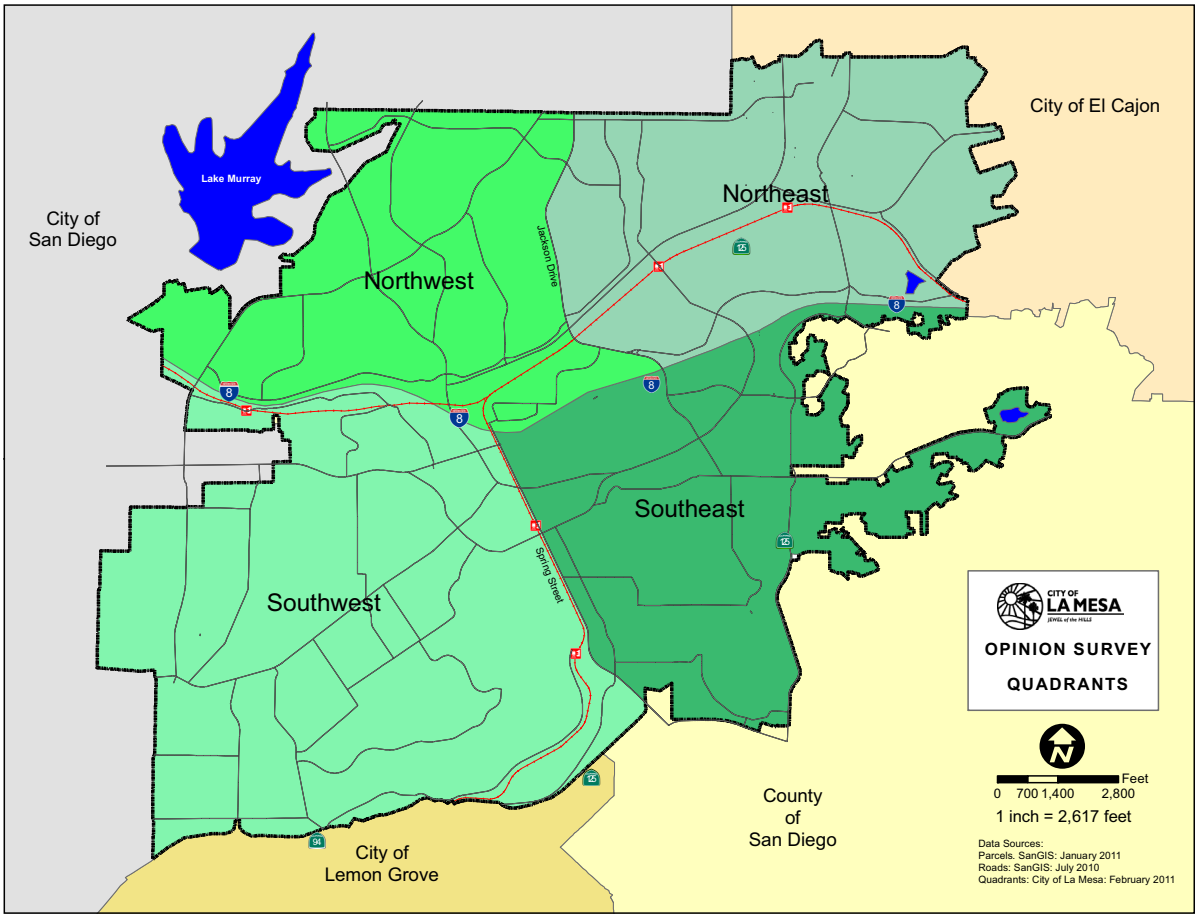
This is not the first resident satisfaction survey commissioned by the City. Similar studies have been implemented in prior years dating back to 1989, with the most recent being completed by True North in 2006 and 2011. Because of the natural interest in tracking the City's performance over time, where appropriate the results of the current study are compared with the results of identical questions included in the 2006 and 2011 studies. Because of methodological changes

1. California Department of Finance estimate, January 2012.

to the survey design that occurred in 2006, as well as changes to question wording, it is not possible to directly compare the results of the present survey with those conducted *prior* to 2006.[2]

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY A full description of the methodology used for the study is included later in this report (see *Methodology* on page 49). In brief, a total of 800 randomly selected adult residents participated in the survey between January 15 and January 21, 2013. The sample of telephone numbers used for the study consisted of both land lines and cell phones. Once selected at random, respondents were provided with the opportunity to participate in the survey by telephone or through a secure, password-protected website hosted by True North. Four areas of the City were identified by major cross-streets (see Figure 1) into which respondents were grouped, with approximately 200 in each quadrant. The telephone interviews averaged 20 minutes in length.

FIGURE 1 QUADRANTS IDENTIFIED IN STUDY



2. Unlike the 2013, 2011, and 2006 surveys which were administered by telephone, prior surveys (2003 and 2001) were administered by mail. Mail surveys often suffer from a host of methodological problems that make generalizing the results difficult. By switching to a telephone-based survey, the research team was able to control the sample design so that results are representative of the City's adult population and can be generalized within an acceptable statistical margin of error. For more information on the methodology and reliability of the survey results, see *Methodology* on page 49.

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE Many of the figures and tables in this report present the results of questions asked in 2013 alongside results found in the 2011 and 2006 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 during this period, as opposed to being due to chance associated with selecting two independent, random samples. 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 2013.

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 sections titled *Just the Facts* and *Conclusions* are for you. They provide a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in bullet-point format and a discussion of their implications. 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, and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A, which is bound separately.

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 800 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 300 studies for California municipalities and special districts.

Just the Facts

The following is an outline of the main factual findings from the survey. For the reader's convenience, we have organized the findings according to the section titles used in the body of this report. Thus, if you would like to learn more about a particular finding, simply turn to the appropriate report section.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- The overwhelming majority (92%) of residents shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in La Mesa in 2013, with 41% reporting it is 'excellent' and 51% stating it is 'good'. An additional 7% of residents indicated that the quality of life in the City is 'fair', and just 1% used 'poor' or 'very poor' to describe the quality of life in La Mesa.
- When asked what city government can do to improve the quality of life in La Mesa, the most common response to this question was "not sure" and "cannot think of anything specific", mentioned by nearly one-third (30%) of respondents. Another 5% of respondents indicated there are no problems in the City in need of attention from local government. Among the specific changes mentioned, the most common was increasing public safety (16%), followed by improving and repairing roads (8%) and reducing taxes and fees (5%).

CITY SERVICES

- Nine-in-ten (92% of) La Mesa residents indicated that they were satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, with 52% stating that they were *very* satisfied. A small portion of residents (4%) reported that they were dissatisfied, and 5% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion.
- Of the 19 specific services tested, La Mesa residents rated providing fire protection services as most important (95% extremely or very important), followed closely by two other public safety services: maintaining a low crime rate (94%) and providing emergency medical services (91%).
- When asked to rate their satisfaction with the City's efforts to provide the same list of 19 services, respondents were most satisfied with the City's efforts to provide fire protection services (98%), provide emergency medical services (98%), keep public buildings and facilities clean and attractive (97%), maintain landscaped street medians (95%), and maintain parks and sports fields (94%).

PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

- Residents' feelings of safety varied considerably depending on the setting. Nearly all residents indicated that they feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood (96%) and in business and retail areas of the City (96%) during the day. After dark, however, the corresponding percentages dropped to 76% and 73%, respectively.
- Approximately one-quarter (23%) of respondents felt that La Mesa had become a *less safe* place to live in the past five years, 11% said it was a *safer* place to live, and 56% felt it was about the same.
- The most commonly experienced neighborhood problems among those tested were speeding vehicles (49% at least a moderate problem) and crime (38%).

- More than one-third (37%) of La Mesa residents surveyed did not have an opinion about the City's code enforcement efforts. Among those with an opinion, approximately 11% indicated that they were dissatisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts. The remaining respondents were either very (50%) or somewhat (40%) satisfied.
- When those who were dissatisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts were asked if their dissatisfaction was motivated by a particular issue or code violation, the most commonly cited issues were unmaintained properties and lawns (32%) and illegal parking (23%).
- The vast majority of La Mesa households were in possession of emergency lighting and flashlights with extra batteries (88%), a First-Aid kit (82%), tools required to shut off water, gas, and electricity (78%), a 72-hour supply of prescription medications for all family members and pets (75%), and a 72-hour supply of emergency food and water for family members and pets (73%).
- Less than half of households reported that they had a family emergency plan they annually review or practice (38%) or a plan to reunite family members at a particular location upon being separated (48%).
- Overall, 14% of residents indicated that they were involved in a neighborhood watch program, and of those, 79% (or 11% of *all* respondents) said that the program would assist or benefit them and their families in the event of a disaster.

TRAFFIC

- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of residents rated traffic circulation in residential areas of La Mesa as excellent or good. Perceptions of overall circulation (75%), as well as circulation on major streets (74%), were somewhat less positive.

PARKS & RECREATION

- A little less than one-third (29%) of respondents indicated that their household had participated in a recreational or cultural program offered by the City of La Mesa in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- Overall, participants gave high marks to the City's recreational and cultural programs, with 90% indicating that the quality was either excellent (46%) or good (44%). Approximately 7% indicated that the programs were of fair quality, whereas less than 1% indicated that the quality was poor or very poor.
- La Mesa residents also gave high marks to the appearance and overall quality of the parks and recreation facilities in the city, as well as the availability of parking and perceived safety at the sites.
- When asked to prioritize among seven possible improvements to parks and recreation facilities in La Mesa, residents were most interested in installing safety and security lighting at parks and recreation facilities (87% felt it should be a high or medium priority), followed by upgrading or replacing worn-out recreation and playground equipment at existing parks and sports fields (80%), and upgrading and expanding community and recreation centers (71%).

STAFF INTERACTIONS

- One-third (33%) of residents indicated that they had contact with City staff in the 12 months prior to the interview.
- Approximately 97% of respondents who had interacted with staff in the past 12 months felt staff were very (78%) or somewhat (19%) professional. Similarly, 95% felt staff was very or somewhat responsive, and 95% found them very or somewhat helpful.

COMMUNICATION

- Overall, 80% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with City's efforts to communicate with residents through newsletters, the Internet, or other means, and just 13% indicated they were dissatisfied with the City's efforts in this respect.
- The most frequently cited source for city-related information, mentioned by 30% of respondents, was the Internet in general, followed by the City's website (24%), and the City's Newsletter, *La Mesa Focus* (17%). Another 10% mentioned receiving flyers or brochures from the City, and 5% mentioned receiving an email, which may refer to a message sent to residents who sign up to be notified when a new issue of *La Mesa Focus* is posted on the City's website.
- Half (50%) of La Mesa residents indicated that they had visited the City's website in the 12 months prior to the interview.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of those who had visited the City's website in the past year felt it was very easy (41%) or somewhat easy (48%) to find what they were looking for. Ten percent (10%) said it was somewhat difficult, and only 1% found it very difficult.
- Overall, 93% of City website visitors indicated that they were either very satisfied (50%) or somewhat satisfied (43%) with the resources available on the site.

Conclusions

As noted in the *Introduction*, this study was designed to provide the City of La Mesa with a statistically reliable understanding of its residents' satisfaction, priorities and needs as they relate to services and facilities provided by the City. As such, it can provide the City with information needed to make sound, strategic decisions in a variety of areas—including service improvements and enhancements, measuring and tracking internal performance, budgeting, policy development, and planning. 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 some of the key questions that motivated the research. The following conclusions are based on the True North's interpretations of the results, as well as the firm's experience conducting similar studies for municipalities throughout the State.

How well is the City performing in meeting the needs of La Mesa residents?

La Mesa residents are among the more satisfied resident groups that True North has encountered. Moreover, the results of the 2013 study indicate that, despite ongoing state and national economic struggles and their impacts on the City's budget in recent years, La Mesa has managed not only to sustain its high level of performance in providing services and facilities to the community in all areas, it has also made significant gains in several specific areas.

In the 2011 community satisfaction study, 90% of residents indicated that they were generally satisfied with the job the City of La Mesa is doing to provide municipal services. In 2013 the overall satisfaction level increased to 92%, and although that difference is not statistically significant, there was a significant *decrease* in the percentage of residents who were *somewhat dissatisfied*, from 6% in 2011 to less than 3% in 2013.

As was the case in 2011, the high level of satisfaction expressed with the City's performance in general in 2013 was echoed when residents were asked to comment on the City's efforts to provide a variety of specific services. For all 19 services tested, the City is meeting the needs of *at least* 80% of residents, and for the majority of the services the City is meeting the needs of more than 90% of residents.

To the extent that the survey results can be viewed as a report card on the City's performance, the City receives mostly A's and a few B's for all service areas. When compared with more than 200 similar studies that True North's research team has conducted for California municipalities, as well as a nationwide survey sponsored by True North regarding residents' perceptions of local government performance, the scores found in this study place the City of La Mesa comfortably within the top 10% of municipalities in terms of service performance.[3]

3. Top performing cities come in all shapes and sizes. One characteristic they often share, however, is a reasonably strong and stable tax base that allows them to weather economic downturns without substantially altering service levels.

How does the City's performance impact the quality of life in the City?

The City's performance in providing municipal services has contributed to a high quality of life in the City. Nine out of ten (91% of) residents in 2013 rated the quality of the life in the City as excellent or good, with a statistically significant jump in the percentage who cited it as *excellent*, from 32% in 2011 to 41% in 2013.

Another indicator of a well-managed City meeting its residents' needs is that when asked to indicate one thing that city government could do to make La Mesa a better place to live, by far the most common response from residents was a request that the City continue what it is already doing (i.e., no changes), or a shrug of the shoulders (i.e., not sure).

Where should the City focus its efforts in the future?

Perhaps the most important recommendation, and one that is occasionally overlooked in customer satisfaction research, is for the City to recognize the many things that it does exceptionally well and to focus on continuing to perform at a high level in these areas. As discussed in this section and noted elsewhere throughout this report, respondents were largely pleased with the City's efforts to provide services, programs, and facilities and have a favorable opinion of the City's performance in virtually all areas. The top priority for the City should thus be to do what it takes to maintain the high quality of services that it currently provides.

As La Mesa continues to strive for improvement, however, the results of this study suggest opportunities to further bolster community satisfaction and continue positive trends with respect to specific program and service provision. Considering the list of services and their respective priority status for future City attention provided in the body of this report (see *Performance Needs & Priorities* on page 18) and residents' verbatim responses about ways the City can be improved (see *Ways to Improve Quality of Life* on page 11), three priorities stand out: 1) Improving police services and reducing the crime rate, 2) Repairing and maintaining streets, and 3) Adding/maintaining sidewalks and creating a pedestrian-friendly community. Considering the perceived importance of these service areas to residents, they are the best candidates for the City's attention as they represent the best opportunities for increasing residents' overall satisfaction in the short- and long-term.

Having recommended that the City focus on these service areas, it is equally important to stress that when it comes to improving resident satisfaction in service areas, the appropriate strategy is often a combination of better communication and actual service improvements. It may be, for example, that many residents are simply unaware of the City's actual crime rate, the performance of the Police Department, or related public safety matters. Choosing the appropriate balance of actual service improvements and efforts to educate the public on these matters will be a key to maintaining and improving residents' overall satisfaction in the future.

How do the results of this study compare with those from the 2011 Community Opinion Study?

As noted in this section and throughout this report, the findings of this study compare quite favorably with the findings of the 2011 Community Opinion Study. Statistically significant changes were identified for 20 separate question items asked in both surveys, with 14 of them positive, 5 neutral, and 1 negative. A summary of the statistically significant changes is presented below in Table 1.

TABLE 1 STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES BETWEEN 2011 AND 2013

Positive Change Between 2011 and 2013
Higher perceived quality of life in La Mesa (Question 2)
Increased satisfaction with City services (Question 4)
Increased satisfaction with maintaining and repairing streets (Question 6a)
Increased satisfaction with maintaining a low crime rate (Question 6e)
Increased satisfaction with providing crime prevention programs (Question 6f)
Increased satisfaction with providing animal control services (Question 6i)
Increased satisfaction with reducing stormwater pollution (Question 6r)
Reduction in crime perceived as a problem in neighborhood (Question 9e)
Reduction in unmaintained landscapes, buildings perceived as a problem in neighborhood (Question 9c)
Reduction in presence of sex offenders perceived as a problem in neighborhood (Question 9h)
Increased satisfaction with code enforcement (Question 10)
Increased perceived helpfulness of City staff (Question 21a)
Increased satisfaction with City-resident communication (Question 22)
Increased satisfaction with City website (Question 26)
Neutral Change Between 2011 and 2013
Increased importance of maintaining landscaped street medians (Question 5b)
Increased importance of keeping public buildings and facilities clean and attractive (Question 5l)
Increased importance of providing programs for seniors (Question 5p)
Increased importance of providing special events like community festivals (Question 5q)
Increased importance of creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community (Question 5s)
Negative Change Between 2011 and 2013
Fewer households with 72-hour supply of prescription medications in case of disaster (Question 12b)

With consideration to the recommendations on the prior page, it must be noted that the 2013 study revealed significant increases in resident satisfaction with *maintaining and repairing streets*, *maintaining a low crime rate*, and *providing crime prevention programs*, as well as a reduction in the percentage of residents who perceived crime as a big or moderate problem in their neighborhood. Despite these areas remaining top priorities in the City, the findings of this study clearly indicate that La Mesa residents as a whole have taken notice of the City's progress over the past two years. Continued levels of outreach and service improvements by the City in these areas are likely to extend this positive trend into the coming years.

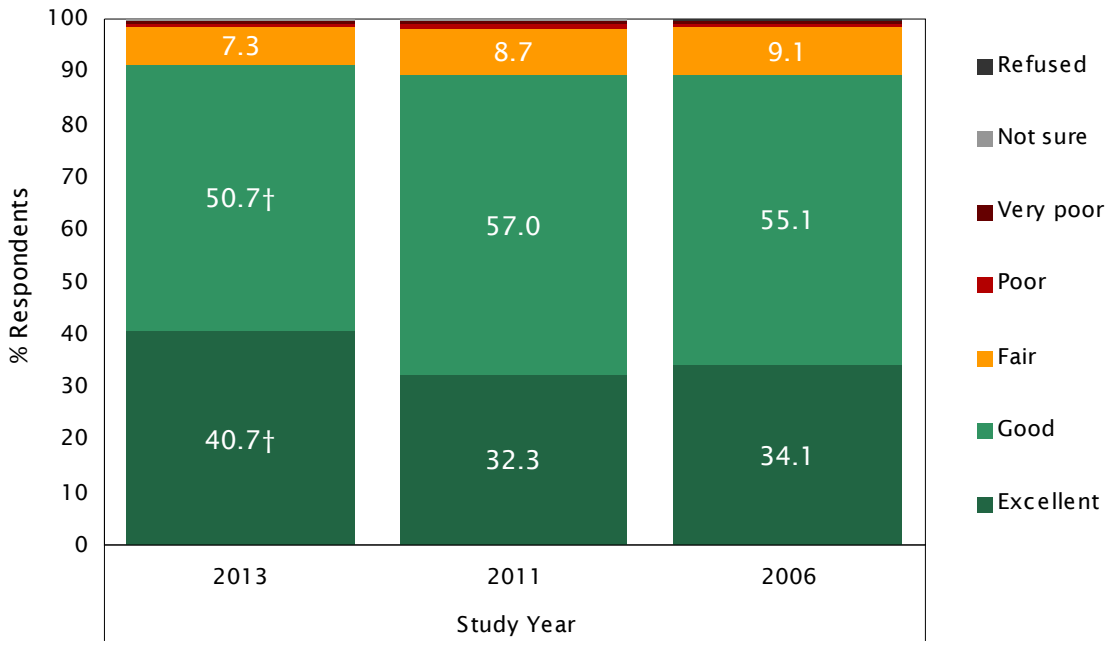
Quality of Life

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.

OVERALL 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, the overwhelming majority (92%) of residents shared favorable opinions of the quality of life in La Mesa in 2013, with 41% reporting it is 'excellent' and 51% stating it is 'good'. An additional 7% of residents indicated that the quality of life in the City is 'fair', and just 1% used 'poor' or 'very poor' to describe the quality of life in La Mesa. Compared with results of the 2013 study, there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of respondents who cited the quality of life as excellent.

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 (2006 TO 2013)



† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

For the interested reader, figures 3 and 4 show how ratings of the quality of life in the City varied by years residing in La Mesa, age of the respondent, household income, and the quadrant of the City where the respondent resides. Although there were some differences in the perceived quality of life by several key variables, the most striking pattern in the figures is the relative consistency of positive opinion. Regardless of subgroup category, respondents generally held positive opinions of the quality of life in La Mesa.

FIGURE 3 OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY YEARS IN LA MESA & AGE

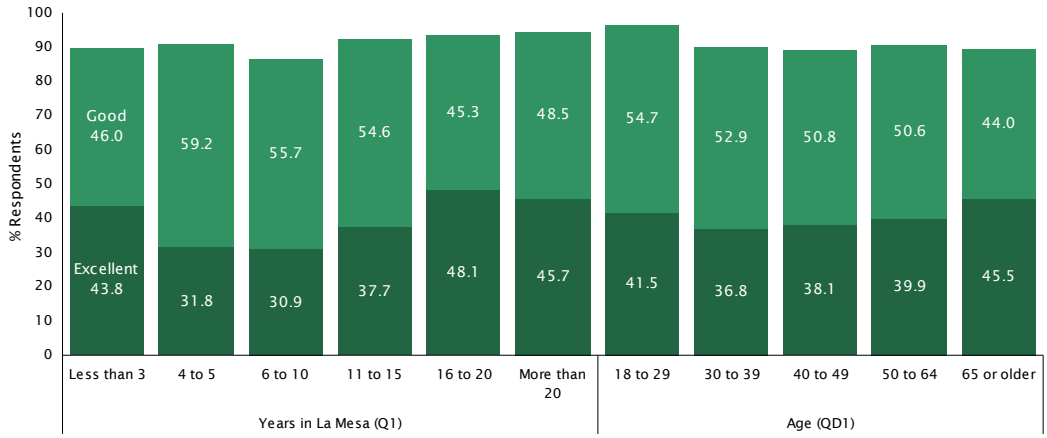
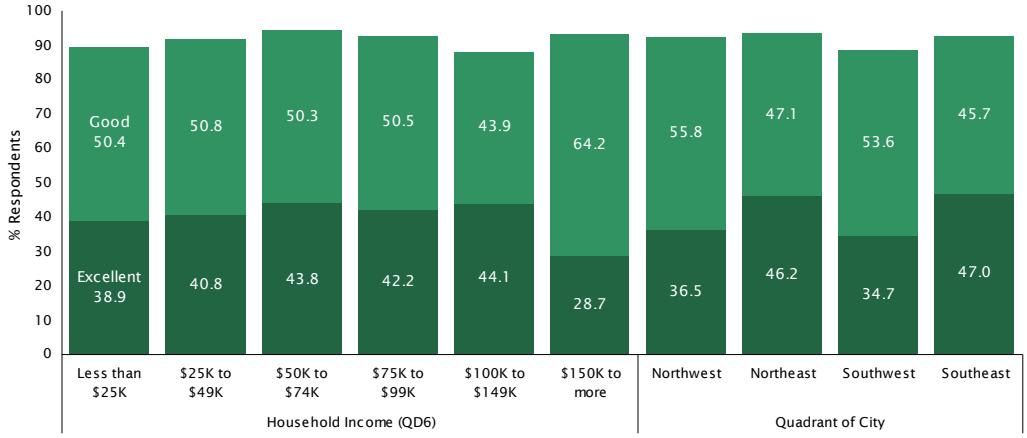


FIGURE 4 OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME & QUADRANT OF CITY



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, which allowed respondents to mention any change that came to mind without be prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 5 on the next page.

Overall, the most common response to this question was "not sure" and "cannot think of anything specific", mentioned by nearly one-third (30%) of respondents. Another 5% of respondents indicated there are no problems in the City in need of attention from local government. Among the specific changes mentioned, the most common was increasing public safety (16%), followed by improving and repairing roads (8%) and reducing taxes and fees (5%). No other single improvement was mentioned by at least 5% of respondents.

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 5 ONE CHANGE TO IMPROVE LA MESA

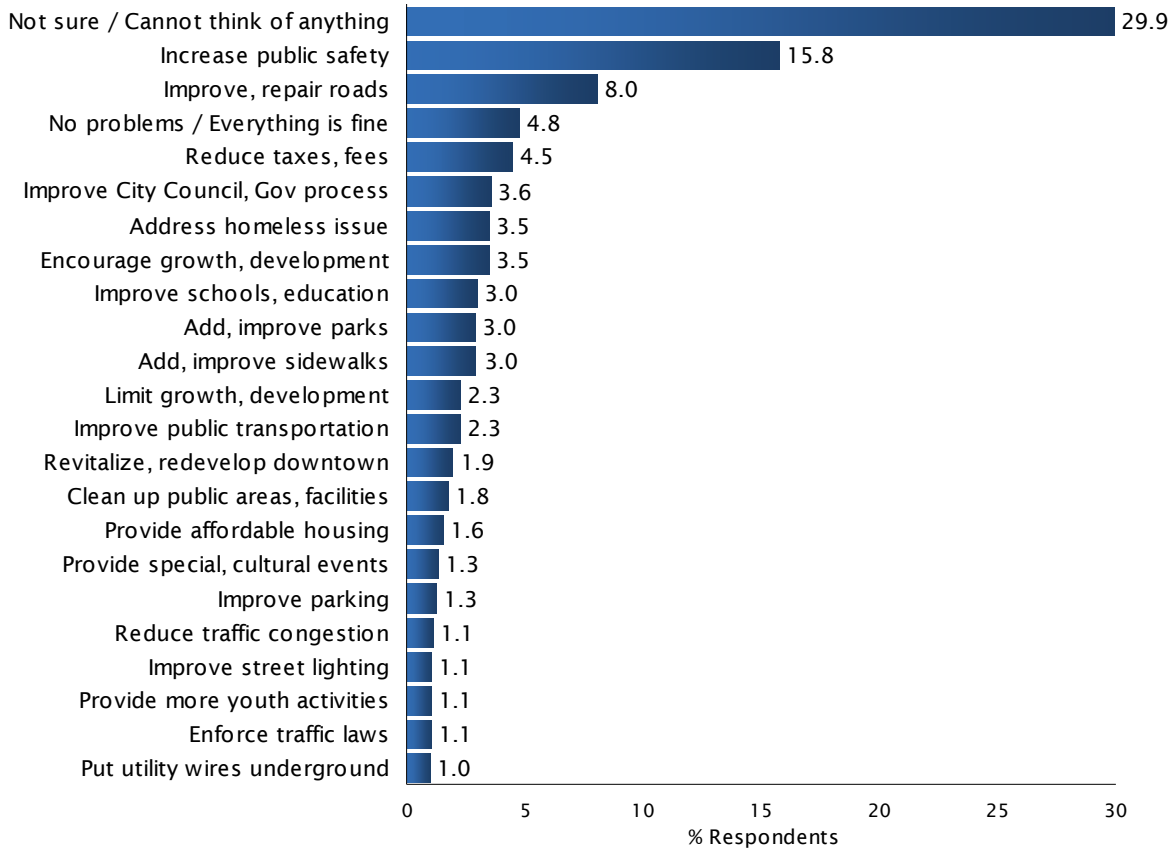


Table 2 below shows the top five response categories from 2013, 2011, and 2006. The top five categories were identical between 2011 and 2013, with mentions of "no problems" moving up from fifth to fourth in the list in the current study.

TABLE 2 TOP CHANGES TO IMPROVE LA MESA (2006 TO 2013)

Study Year		
2013	2011	2006
Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything	Not sure / Cannot think of anything
Increase public safety	Increase public safety	No problems / Everything is fine
Improve, repair roads	Improve, repair roads	Increase public safety
No problems / Everything is fine	Reduce taxes, fees	Reduce traffic congestion
Reduce taxes, fees	No problems / Everything is fine	Improve, repair roads

City Services

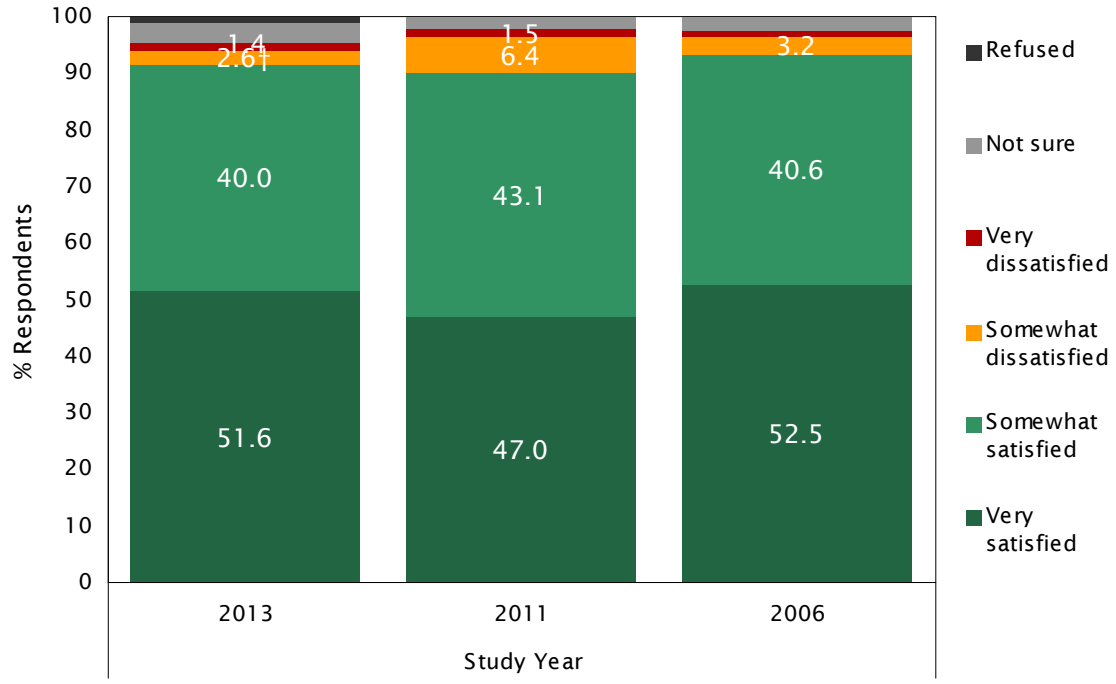
After measuring perceptions of the quality of life in La Mesa, the survey turned to assessing residents' opinions about the City's performance in providing various municipal services.

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 6, nine-in-ten (92% of) La Mesa residents indicated that they were satisfied with the City's efforts to provide municipal services, with 52% stating that they were *very* satisfied. A small portion of residents (4%) reported that they were dissatisfied, and 5% were unsure or unwilling to state their opinion. When compared with 2011, there was a slight increase in overall satisfaction, with a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of respondents who were *somewhat dissatisfied*.

Question 4 *Generally speaking, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the job the City of La Mesa is doing to provide city services?*

FIGURE 6 OVERALL SATISFACTION



† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

The next two figures display how residents' opinions about the City's overall performance in providing municipal services varied by years residing in La Mesa, age of the respondent, household income, and the quadrant of the City where the respondent resides. Once again, the most striking pattern in all of the figures is that the high levels of satisfaction exhibited by respondents as a whole (see Figure 6) were also found across all subcategories of residents.

FIGURE 7 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY YEARS IN LA MESA & AGE

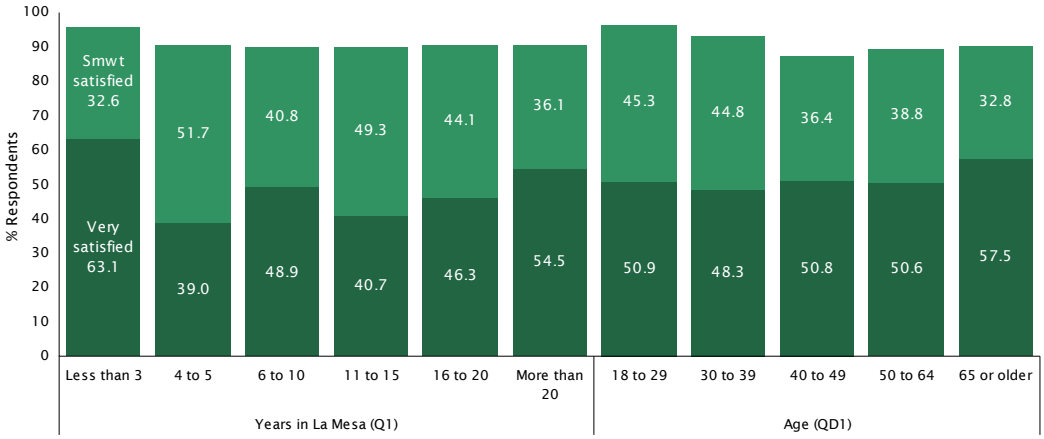
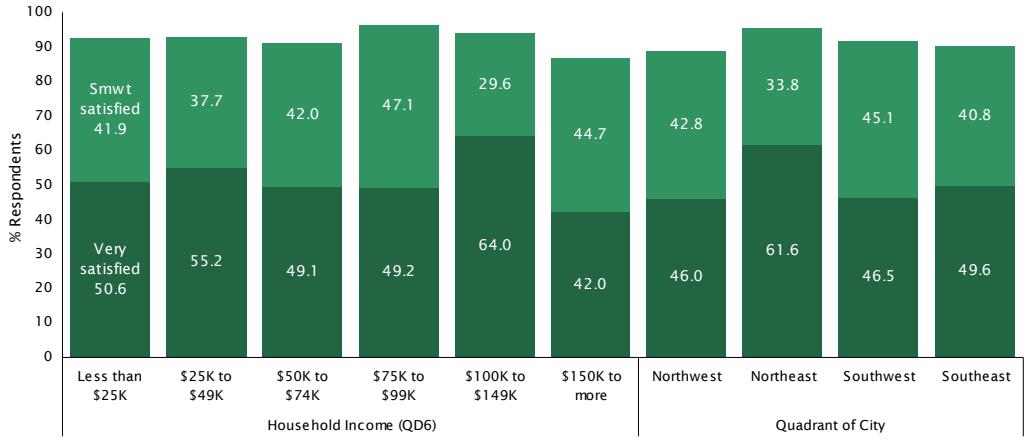


FIGURE 8 OVERALL SATISFACTION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME & QUADRANT OF CITY

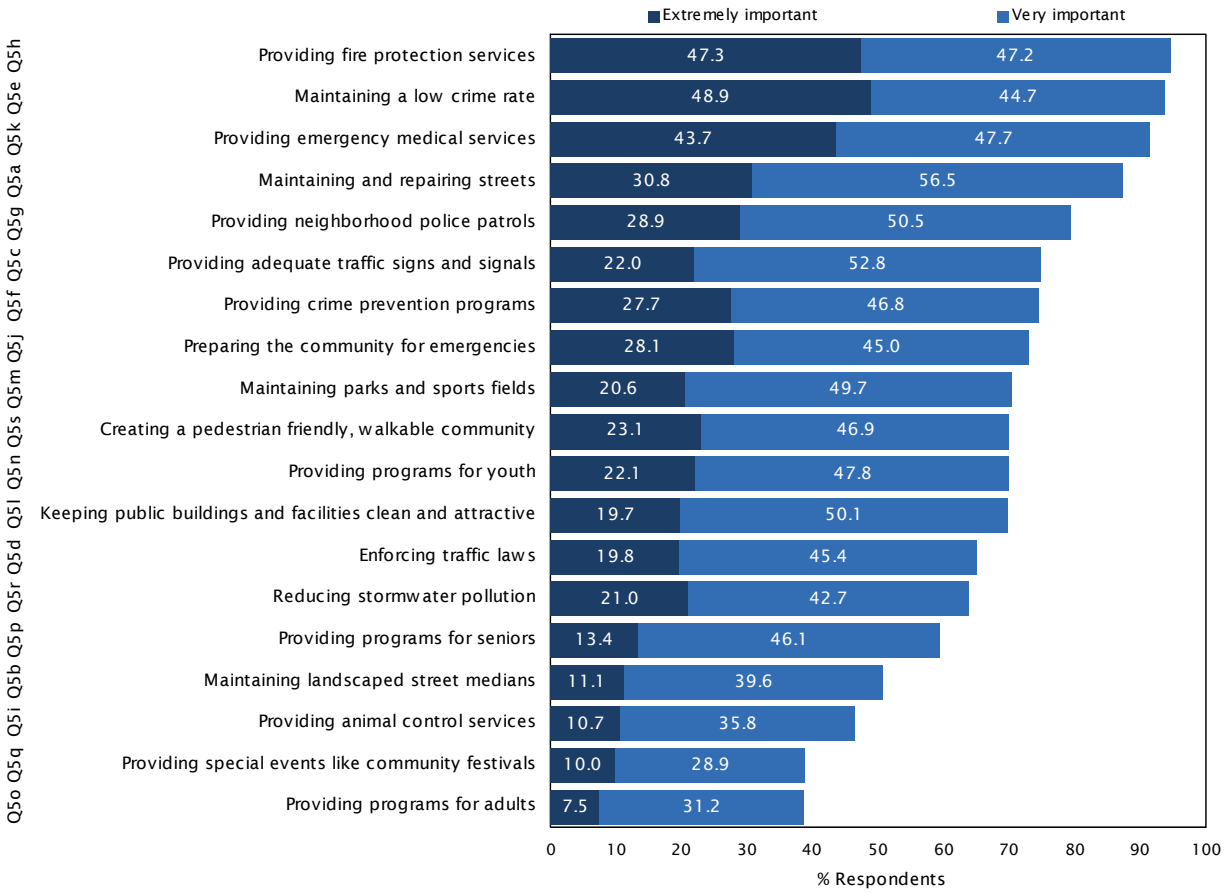


SPECIFIC SERVICES Whereas Question 4 addressed the City's *overall* performance, the next series of questions asked respondents to rate the importance of *specific* services offered by the City, as well as their level of satisfaction with efforts to provide these services. For each service respondents 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 9 on the next page 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 most important (95% extremely or very important) among the 19 services tested, followed closely by two other public safety services: maintaining a low crime rate (94%) and providing emergency medical services (91%). At the other end of the spectrum, providing programs for adults (39%), providing special events like community festivals (39%), providing animal control services (47%), and maintaining landscaped street medians (51%) 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 9 IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES



For the interested reader, Table 3 on the next page displays the percentage of respondents who viewed each service as extremely or very important for 2013, 2011, and 2006, as well as the difference between 2013 and 2011. When compared with 2011, there was a general trend of assigning higher importance to all services tested, with statistically significant increases for five of them.

TABLE 3 IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES (2006 TO 2013)

	Study Year			Change in Extremely + Very Important
	2013	2011	2006	'11 to '13
Maintaining landscaped street medians	50.7	39.2	61.8	+11.5†
Providing programs for seniors	59.5	52.0	N/A	+7.6†
Keeping public buildings and facilities clean and attractive	69.8	62.3	75.8	+7.5†
Providing special events like community festivals	38.9	33.9	57.7	+4.9†
Creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	69.9	65.1	N/A	+4.8†
Reducing stormwater pollution	63.7	59.3	70.4	+4.4
Providing programs for youth	69.9	66.4	N/A	+3.5
Providing programs for adults	38.6	35.3	N/A	+3.3
Providing fire protection services	94.5	91.2	91.0	+3.3
Maintaining parks and sports fields	70.3	67.1	71.2	+3.3
Preparing the community for emergencies	73.1	71.3	N/A	+1.8
Providing adequate traffic signs and signals	74.8	73.0	79.9	+1.8
Enforcing traffic laws	65.2	63.7	77.8	+1.5
Providing neighborhood police patrols	79.5	78.5	84.4	+1.0
Providing animal control services	46.6	46.1	61.0	+0.5
Maintaining and repairing streets	87.2	86.8	83.8	+0.4
Providing emergency medical services	91.4	91.3	87.9	+0.2
Providing crime prevention programs	74.5	74.6	82.9	-0.1
Maintaining a low crime rate	93.6	94.2	91.1	-0.6

† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

Turning to the satisfaction component, Figure 10 on the next page sorts the same list of 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.[4] Overall, respondents were most satisfied with the City's efforts to provide fire protection services (98%), provide emergency medical services (98%), keep public buildings and facilities clean and attractive (97%), maintain landscaped street medians (95%), and maintain parks and sports fields (94%).

Although respondents were less satisfied with the City's efforts to maintain and repair local streets (80%), create a pedestrian friendly, walkable community (85%), maintain a low crime rate (86%), prepare the community for emergencies (86%), and provide neighborhood police patrols (87%) even these services received positive satisfaction ratings from at least 8 out of 10 of residents.

Table 4 displays the percentage of respondents who were satisfied with each service for 2013, 2011, and 2006, as well as the difference between 2013 and 2011. The overall trend in satisfaction since 2011 was positive, with significant increases in satisfaction with the City's efforts to maintain and repair streets, maintain a low crime rate, provide animal control services, reduce stormwater pollution, and provide crime prevention programs.

4. Note that to allow for an apples-to-apples comparison of the satisfaction ratings, only respondents who held an opinion (either satisfied or dissatisfied) were included in Figure 10. 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.*

FIGURE 10 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

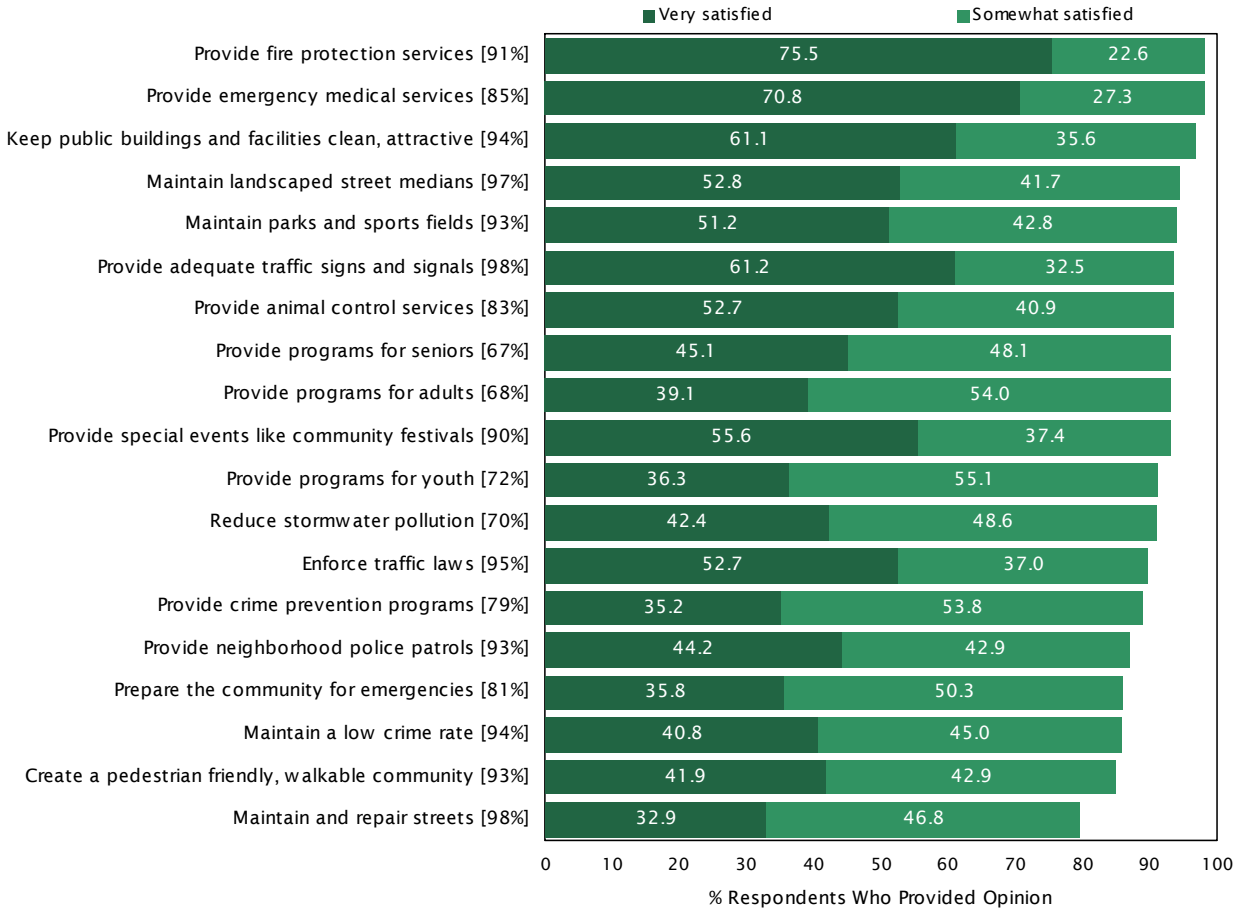


TABLE 4 SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES (2006 TO 2013)

	Study Year			Change in Satisfaction
	2013	2011	2006	'11 to '13
Maintain and repair streets	79.7	72.0	80.6	+7.7†
Maintain a low crime rate	85.8	79.5	85.7	+6.3†
Provide animal control services	93.6	87.6	87.4	+6.0†
Reduce stormwater pollution	91.1	86.1	85.2	+4.9†
Provide crime prevention programs	88.9	84.7	86.5	+4.2†
Provide neighborhood police patrols	87.1	83.5	83.7	+3.6
Maintain landscaped street medians	94.4	91.1	89.1	+3.3
Provide programs for adults	93.1	90.3	N/A	+2.8
Provide programs for youth	91.4	88.9	N/A	+2.5
Prepare the community for emergencies	86.1	84.0	N/A	+2.1
Keep public buildings and facilities clean, attractive	96.7	94.9	90.2	+1.9
Maintain parks and sports fields	94.0	92.2	91.8	+1.8
Provide fire protection services	98.2	97.1	94.8	+1.1
Provide emergency medical services	98.1	97.1	93.0	+1.0
Create a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	84.8	84.8	N/A	-0.0
Provide programs for seniors	93.2	93.4	N/A	-0.2
Enforce traffic laws	89.7	90.2	88.2	-0.5
Provide adequate traffic signs and signals	93.6	94.8	87.6	-1.2
Provide special events like community festivals	93.0	95.2	87.6	-2.2

† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

Performance Needs & Priorities

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

INDIVIDUALIZED PRIORITY ANALYSIS Rather than rely on sample *averages* to conduct this analysis, True North has developed and refined an *individualized* approach to identifying priorities that 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 the needs of its residents.[5] Table 5 on the next page presents a two-dimensional grid based on the importance and satisfaction scales. The horizontal axis corresponds to the four *importance* response options, whereas the vertical scale corresponds to the four *satisfaction* response 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.

5. Any tool that relies solely on the opinions of the average respondent will provide a limited and occasionally somewhat distorted picture of how well a City is performing. A City is not comprised of *average* residents—it is comprised of unique individuals who will 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—it is this variation that is critical for assessing how well the City is meeting the needs of its residents. Thus, True North conducts the priority analysis at the individual respondent level, rather than at an aggregated level using the *average* of respondent's opinions.

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.

TABLE 5 NEEDS & PRIORITY 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

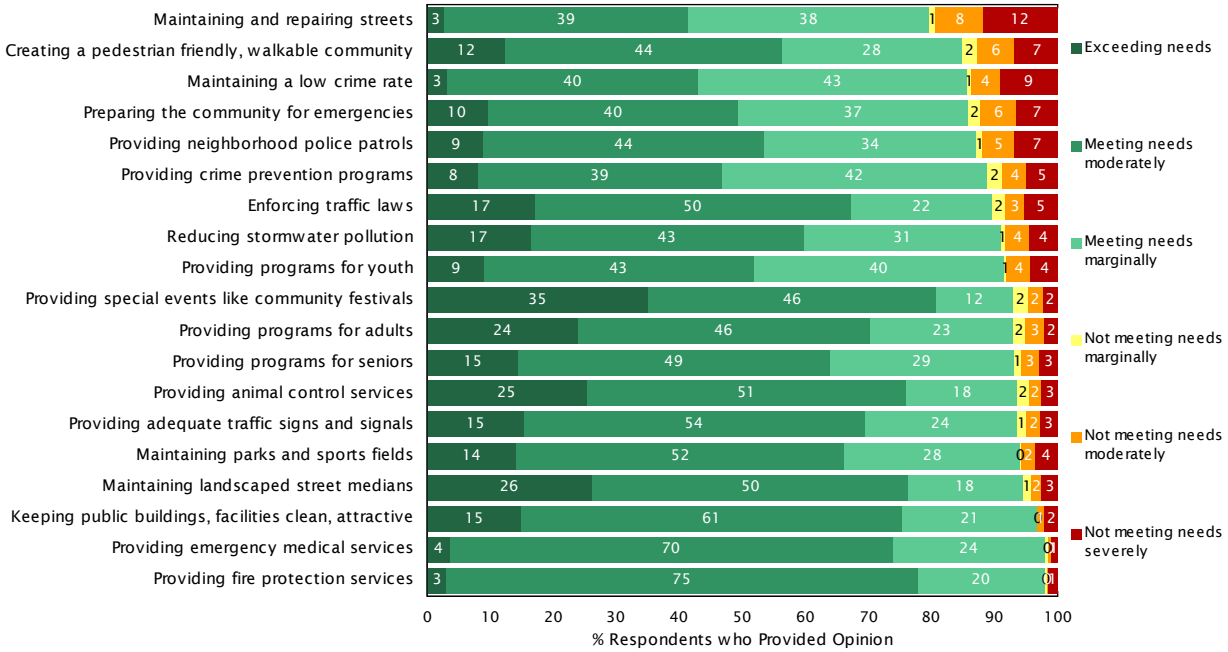
Using this framework, True North categorized each respondent individually for each of the 19 services tested in the study. Thus, for example, a respondent who indicated that maintaining and repairing streets was somewhat important and they were very satisfied with the City's efforts in this service area 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., maintaining a low crime rate) if they were somewhat dissatisfied with the City's efforts to provide the service, but the service was viewed as only somewhat important.

Figure 11 presents the 19 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 11 is consistent with that presented in Table 5. Thus, for example, in the service area of maintaining and repairing streets, the City is exceeding the needs of 3% of respondents, moderately meeting the needs of 39% of respondents, marginally meeting the needs of 38% of respondents, marginally not meeting the needs of 1% of respondents, moderately not meeting the needs of 8% of respondents, and severely not meeting the needs of 12% of respondents.

As shown in Figure 11, the City is meeting the needs of at least 80% of residents for all 19 services tested. Moreover, the City is meeting the needs of at least 90% of residents for 13 of the 19 services.

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 currently *not* meeting their needs, the services have been sorted in rank order of priority. Thus, maintaining and repairing local streets is the top priority, followed by creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community, maintaining a low crime rate, preparing the community for emergencies, and providing neighborhood police patrols.

FIGURE 11 RESIDENT SERVICE NEEDS



Public Safety & Neighborhood Issues

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 perceptions 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 and potential neighborhood issues. The first of these questions presented respondents with the four scenarios described at the bottom of Figure 12 and asked them to rate how safe they feel in each scenario according to the scale shown to the right of the figure. As shown in the figure, residents' feelings of safety varied considerably depending on the setting. Nearly all residents indicated that they feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood (96%) and in business and retail areas of the City (96%) during the day. After dark, however, the corresponding percentages dropped to 76% and 73%, respectively.

Question 7 *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 12 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY

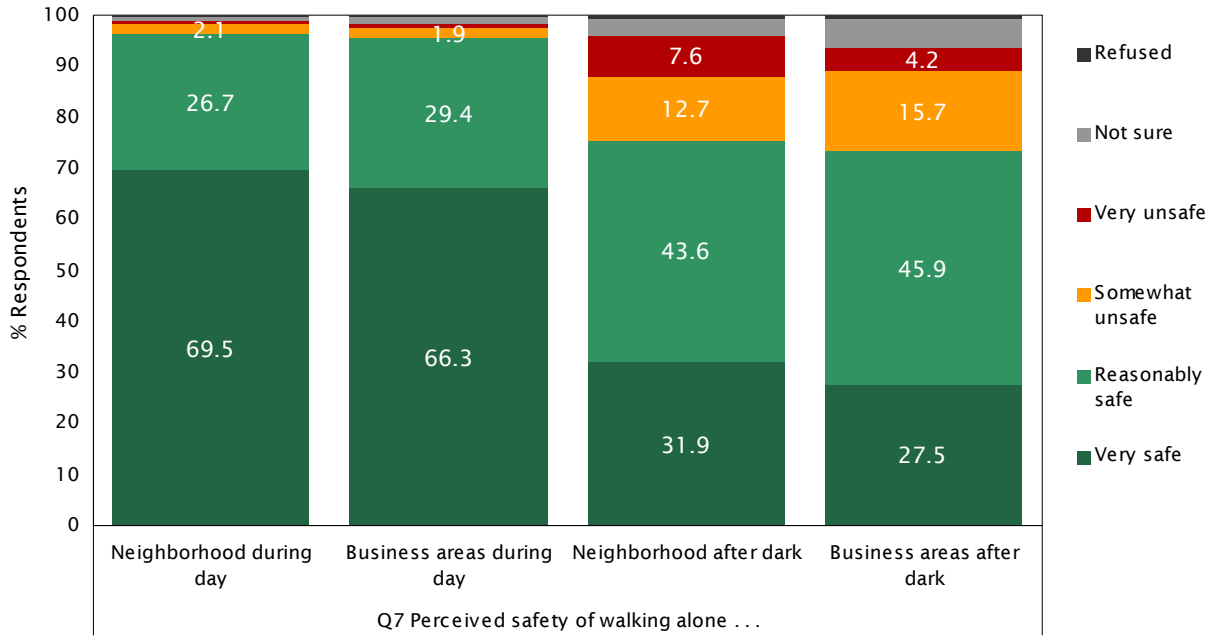


Table 6 on the next page displays the percentage of respondents who felt very or reasonably safe in each scenario for 2013, 2011, and 2006, as well as the difference between 2013 and 2011. There were no statistically significant differences between the two studies.

TABLE 6 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY (2006 TO 2013)

	Study Year			Change in Very + Reasonably Safe '11 to '13
	2013	2011	2006	
Neighborhood after dark	75.5	71.5	69.4	+4.0
Neighborhood during day	96.2	95.7	96.1	+0.5
Business areas during day	95.7	95.7	95.8	+0.0
Business areas after dark	73.4	74.2	70.4	-0.8

For the interested reader, Figures 13 and 14 display how perceived safety varied by respondent age, quadrant of the City, and gender. Older residents and women were less likely than their counterparts to feel very safe in all four scenarios tested, which is a typical finding in personal safety research.

FIGURE 13 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY BY AGE (SHOWING % VERY SAFE)

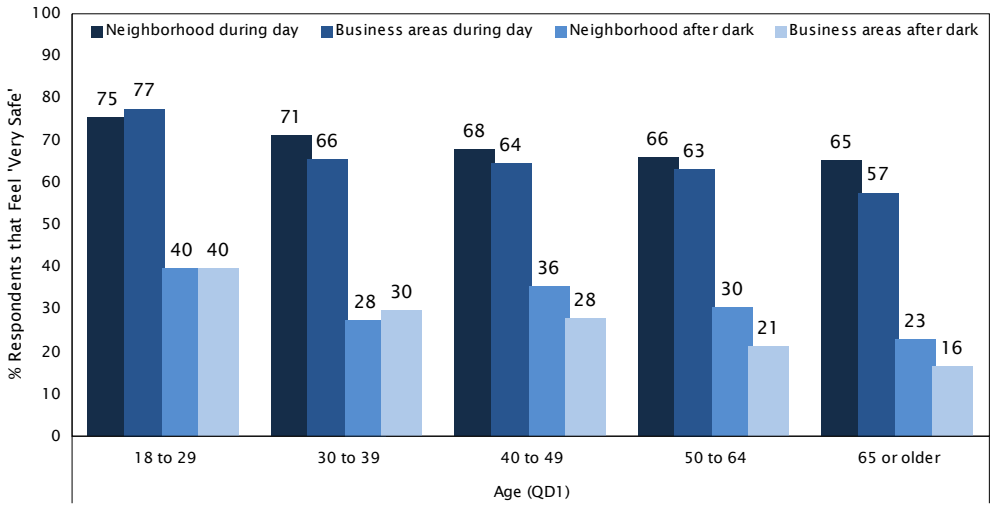
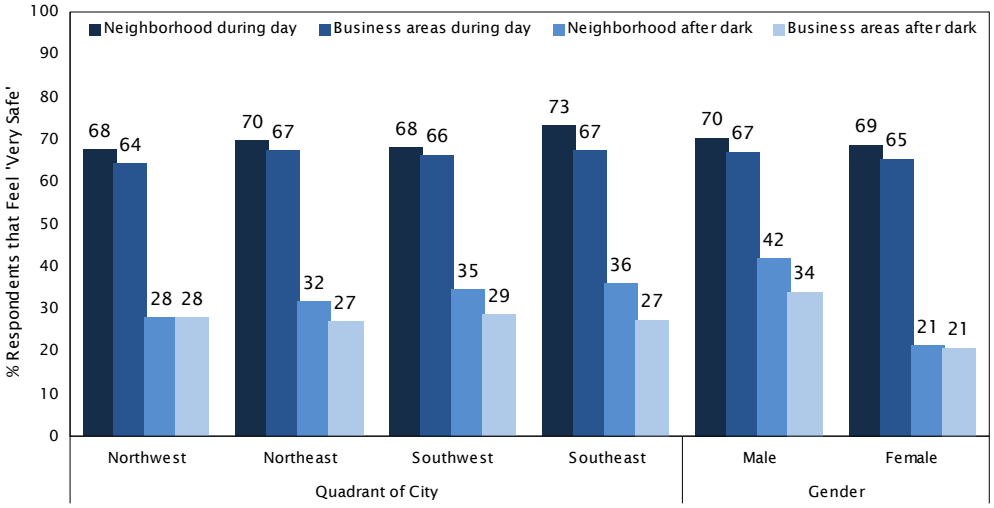


FIGURE 14 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY BY QUADRANT OF CITY & GENDER (SHOWING % VERY SAFE)

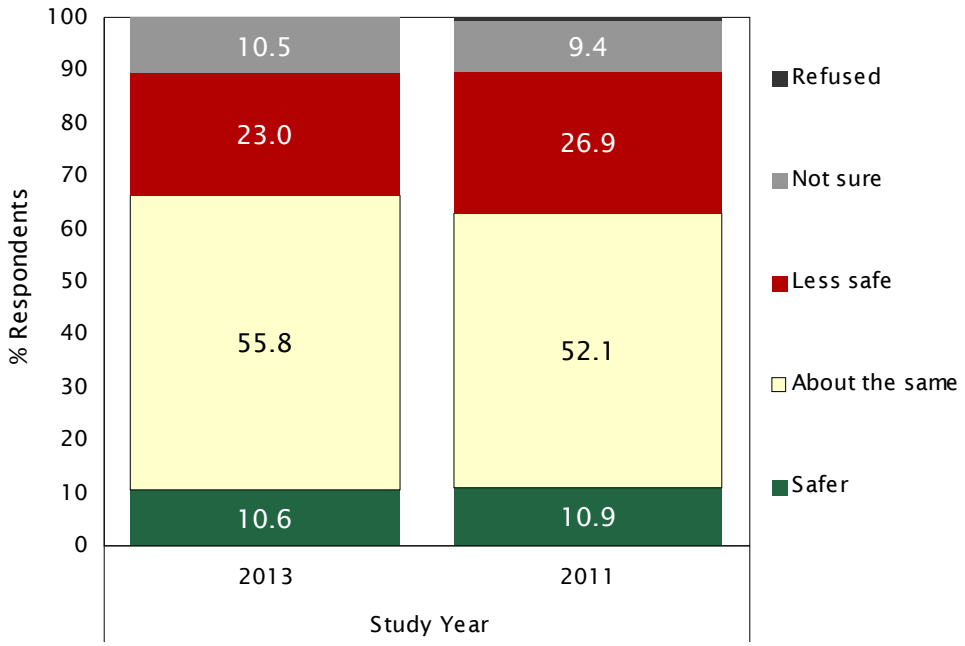


Question 8 of the survey asked respondents if they felt that La Mesa, compared with five years ago, has become a safer place to live, a less safe place to live, or is about the same. As shown below in Figure 15, 23% of respondents felt that La Mesa had become a *less safe* place to live in the past five years, 11% said it was a *safer* place to live, and 56% felt it was about the same. There were no statistically significant changes from the 2011 study.

The findings of this question and the previous question show an interesting split in how La Mesa residents view public safety in the City. As we saw in Table 6 on page 22, there has been little change in residents' perceived safety since 2006—residents interviewed in 2013 felt as safe today as those who were asked two years ago in the 2011 survey and seven years ago in the 2006 survey. However, when the 2013 respondents were asked to compare the safety of the City overall today versus five years ago, almost one-quarter felt it is less safe today—suggesting that perceptions of the past are more optimistic than reality when it comes to public safety.

Question 8 *When compared to five years ago, would you say that La Mesa has become a safer place to live, is less safe now, or is it about the same?*

FIGURE 15 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY COMPARED WITH FIVE YEARS AGO (2011 & 2013)



The next two figures display the percentage of respondents who felt that La Mesa has become a safer place to live (green bars) and the percentage of respondents who felt that La Mesa has become a less safe place to live (red bars) by a variety of subgroups. One of the most notable findings is that newer residents and those under the age of 40 were considerably more likely than their counterparts to feel that La Mesa has become a safer place to live.

FIGURE 16 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY COMPARED WITH FIVE YEARS AGO BY YEARS IN LA MESA & AGE

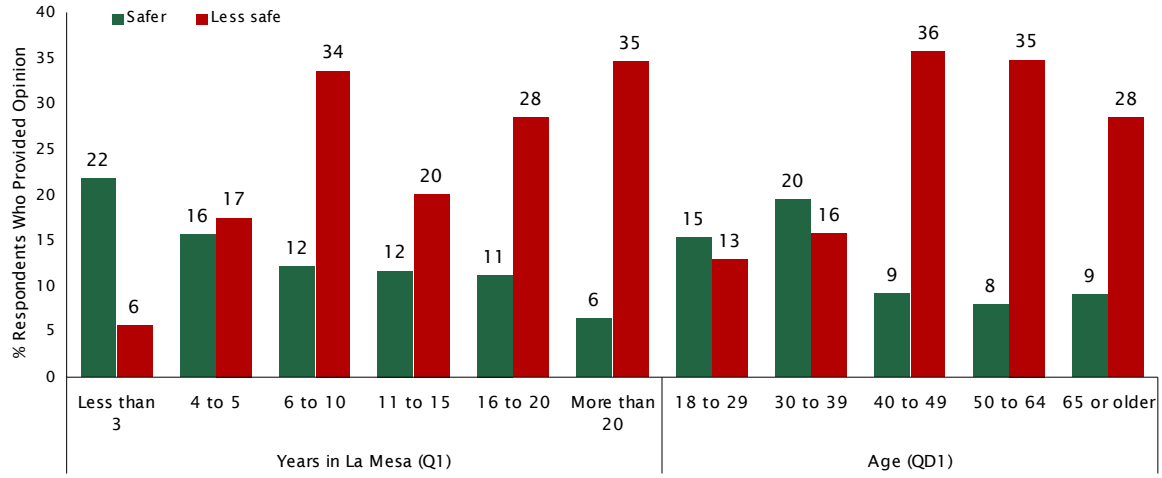
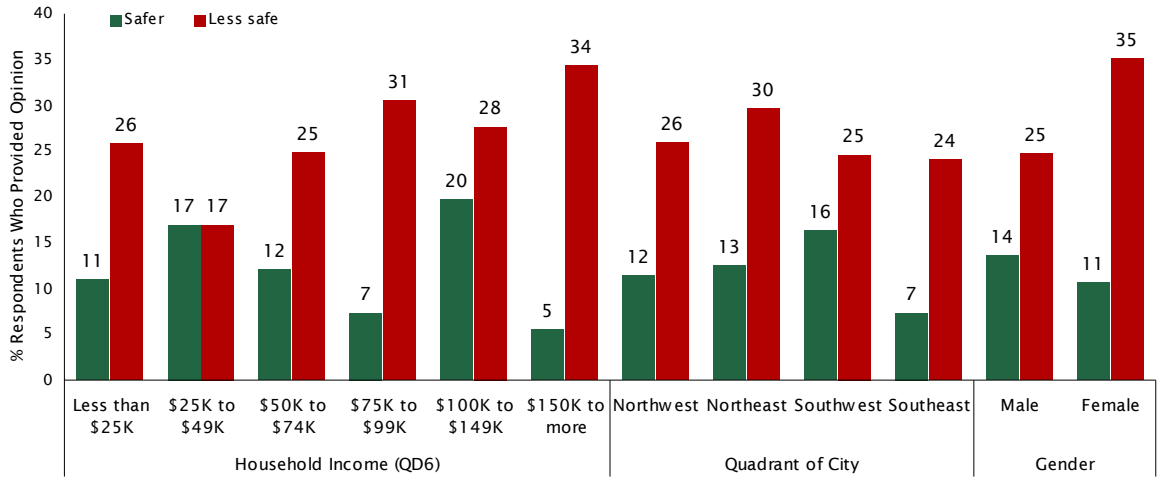


FIGURE 17 PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL SAFETY COMPARED WITH FIVE YEARS AGO BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, QUADRANT OF CITY & GENDER



NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES Research has shown that fear of crime and perceptions of personal safety can be influenced by factors that, although not directly related to crime, when present in a community are suggestive of an unsafe environment. Graffiti, unkempt yards, and abandoned vehicles, for example, are problems that can lead a resident to feel that their neighborhood is not safe.

Accordingly, the survey presented respondents with each of the issues shown to the left of Figure 18 and asked, for each, whether the issue is a big problem, moderate problem, small problem, or not a problem in their neighborhood. The most commonly experienced neighborhood problems among those tested was speeding vehicles (49% at least a moderate problem) and crime (38%). Table 7 presents the percentage of respondents in 2013, 2011, and 2006 who considered each issue a big or moderate problem, as well as the difference between the two studies. There were statistically significant decreases in the past two years in the percentage of residents who cited crime, unmaintained landscapes and buildings, and presence of sex offenders as a big or moderate problem in their neighborhood.

Question 9 *As I read the following issues, please indicate whether each issue is a big problem, a moderate problem, a small problem, or not a problem in your neighborhood.*

FIGURE 18 NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

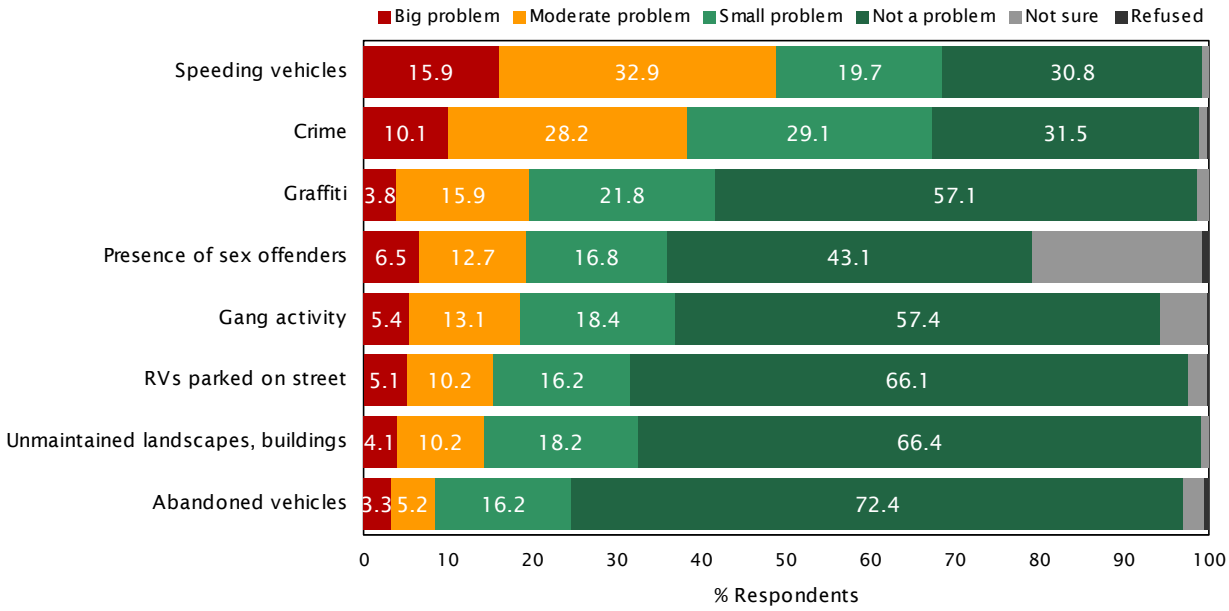


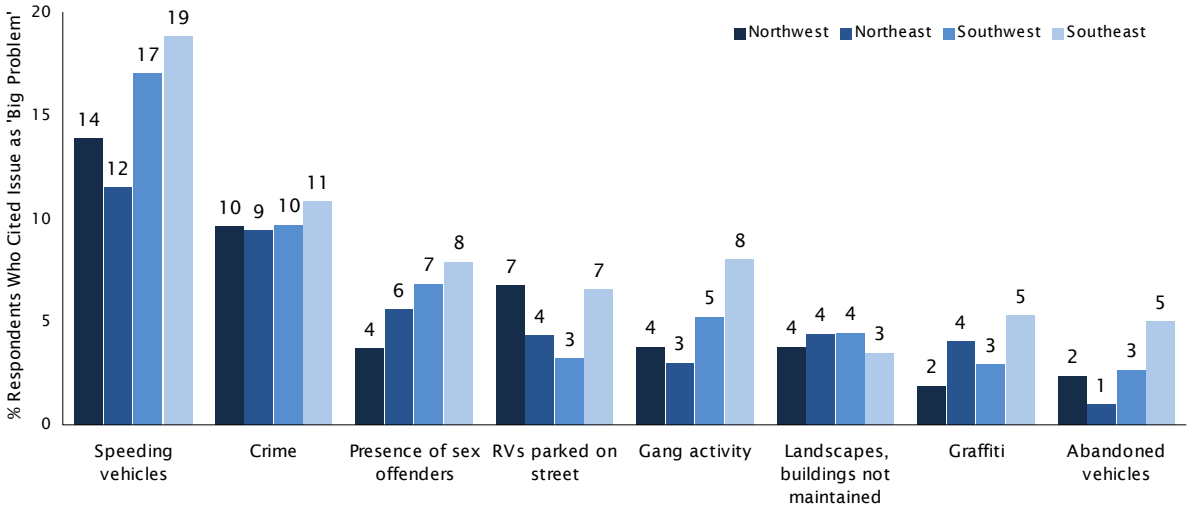
TABLE 7 NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES (2006 TO 2013)

	Study Year			Change in Big + Moderate Problem '11 to '13
	2013	2011	2006	
Crime	38.3	43.6	N/A	-5.3†
Unmaintained landscapes, buildings	14.3	19.4	21.3	-5.1†
Presence of sex offenders	19.2	23.6	23.8	-4.4†
Graffiti	19.7	23.2	19.6	-3.5
RVs parked on street	15.3	18.3	22.7	-3.0
Gang activity	18.4	20.6	19.8	-2.1
Speeding vehicles	48.8	50.5	48.1	-1.8
Abandoned vehicles	8.5	8.8	16.4	-0.4

† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

For the interested reader, Figure 19 on the next page displays each of the eight neighborhood issues tested, as well as the percentage of respondents in each of the four quadrants of the City that indicated an issue was a "big problem". Residents from the Southwest and Southeast quadrants were somewhat more likely than their counterparts to perceive speeding vehicles as a big problem in their neighborhoods.

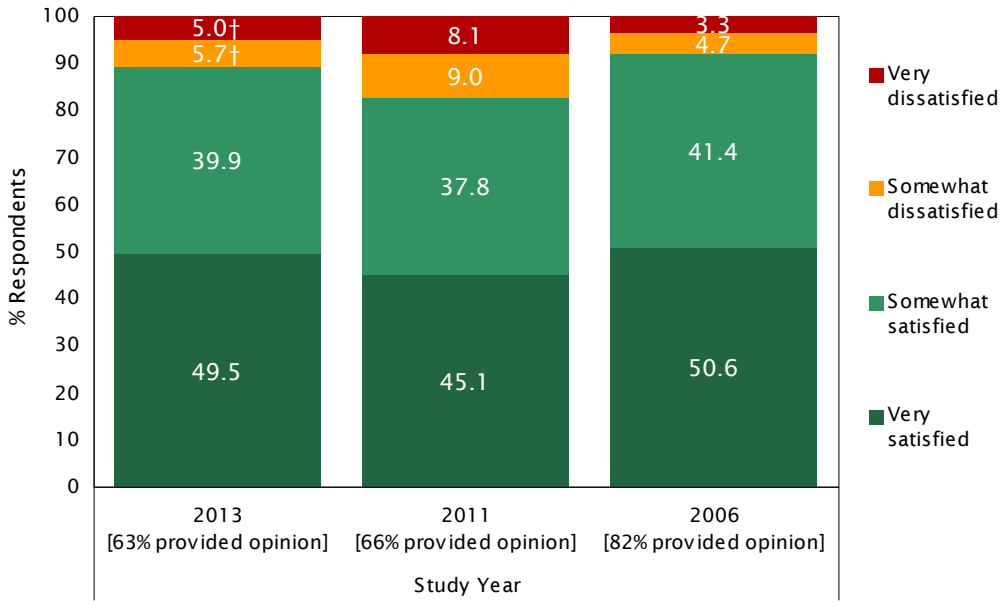
FIGURE 19 NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES BY QUADRANT OF CITY (SHOWING % BIG PROBLEM)



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 unkempt yards. 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.

Question 10 *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?*

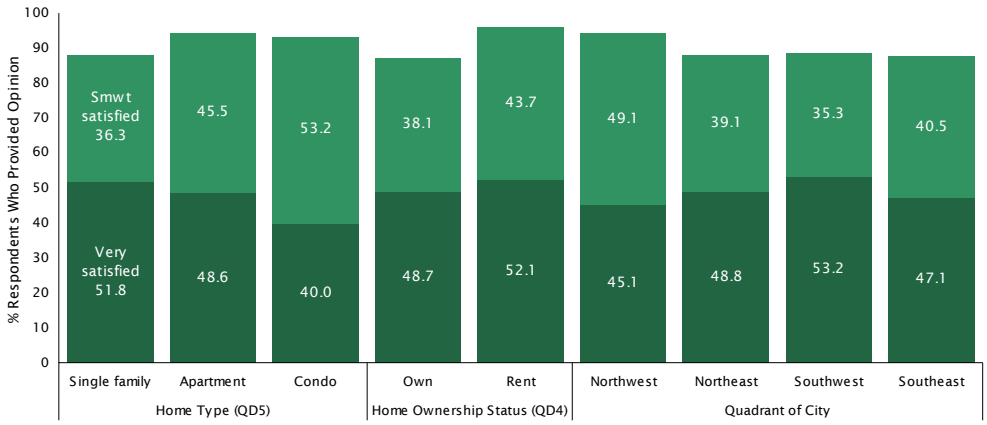
FIGURE 20 SATISFACTION WITH CODE ENFORCEMENT (2006 TO 2013)



† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

Figure 20 on the previous page provides the responses to Question 10 among those who provided an opinion. In 2013, more than one-third (37%) of residents surveyed did not have or provide an opinion. Among those with an opinion, approximately 11% indicated that they were dissatisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts, which represents a significant decrease from the 2011 study. The remaining respondents were either somewhat (40%) or very (50%) satisfied. Below, Figure 21 shows how satisfaction with the City's code enforcement efforts varied by the respondents' home type, home ownership status, and quadrant of residence.

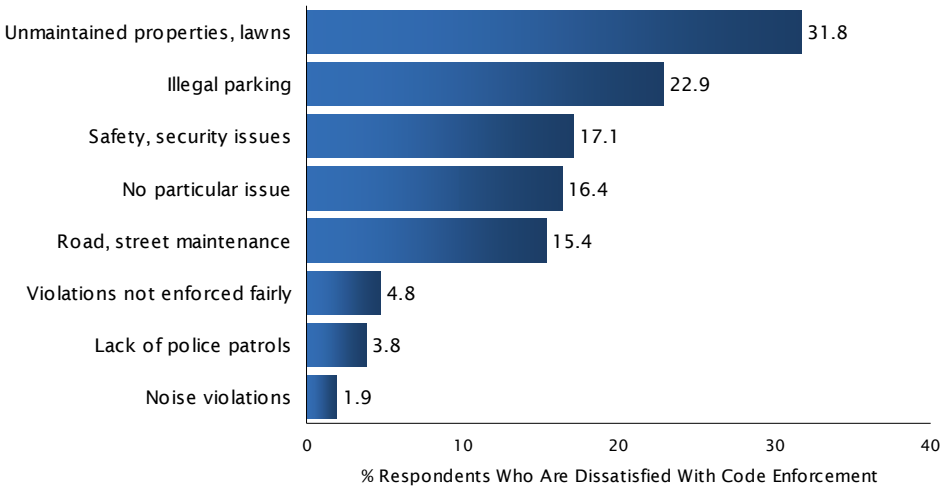
FIGURE 21 SATISFACTION WITH CODE ENFORCEMENT BY HOME TYPE, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & QUADRANT OF CITY



Respondents who were dissatisfied with code enforcement efforts were asked if their dissatisfaction was motivated by a particular issue or code violation. As shown in Figure 22, unmaintained properties and lawns was cited by approximately one-third (32%) of respondents who were dissatisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts, followed by illegal parking (23%). Just 5% of those who were dissatisfied with the City's code enforcement efforts expressed concern about the perceived fairness of enforcement.

Question 11 *Is there a particular issue or code violation that the City isn't addressing that leads you to be dissatisfied?*

FIGURE 22 REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH CODE ENFORCEMENT

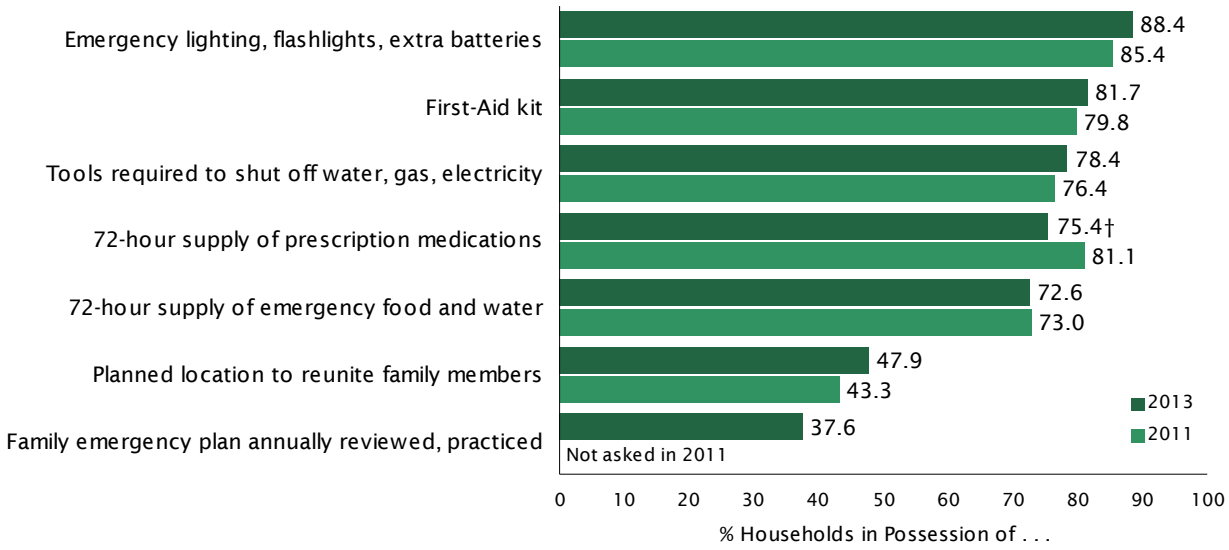


EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS In the event of a natural disaster or other emergency that affects a large percentage of the La Mesa population, police, fire, and other emergency services will not be immediately available to tend to all residents. It is important, therefore, that residents are prepared to be self-sufficient for some time after the event. Returning to the public safety theme, the survey next presented respondents with a list of emergency-preparedness supplies and asked if their household was in possession of each.

Figure 23 presents the findings of this question and shows that the vast majority of households were in possession of emergency lighting and flashlights with extra batteries (88%), a First-Aid kit (82%), tools required to shut off water, gas, and electricity (78%), a 72-hour supply of prescription medications for all family members and pets (75%), and a 72-hour supply of emergency food and water for family members and pets (73%). Less than half of households reported that they had a family emergency plan they annually review or practice (38%) or a plan to reunite family members at a particular location upon being separated (48%). When compared with 2011, there was a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of households that reported having a 72-hour supply of prescription medications.

Question 12 *We are interested in how prepared your household is to be self-sufficient in the event of a natural disaster or other city-wide emergency. Does your household have: _____?*

FIGURE 23 HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (2011 & 2013)



† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH New to the 2013 survey, questions 13 and 14 asked residents about their involvement in a neighborhood watch program and whether or not that program (if applicable) would assist or benefit their household in the event of a disaster. Figure 24 combines the results of these two questions. Overall, 14% of residents indicated that they were involved in a neighborhood watch program, and of those, 79% (or 11% of *all* respondents) said that the program would assist or benefit them and their families in the event of a disaster.

For the interested reader, Figure 25 displays the percentage of households involved in a neighborhood watch program and the percentage of households involved in a neighborhood watch program that would assist or benefit the household in the event of a disaster.

Question 13 *Are you involved in a neighborhood watch program?*

Question 14 *Do you think your neighborhood watch program would assist or benefit you and your family in the event of a disaster?*

FIGURE 24 NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & ASSISTANCE IN THE EVENT OF DISASTER

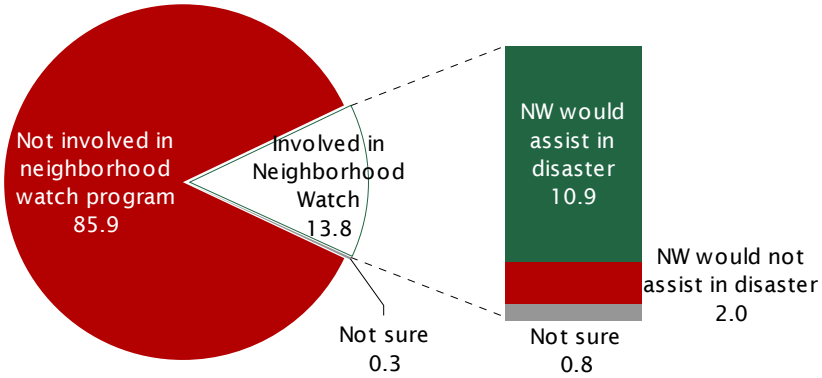
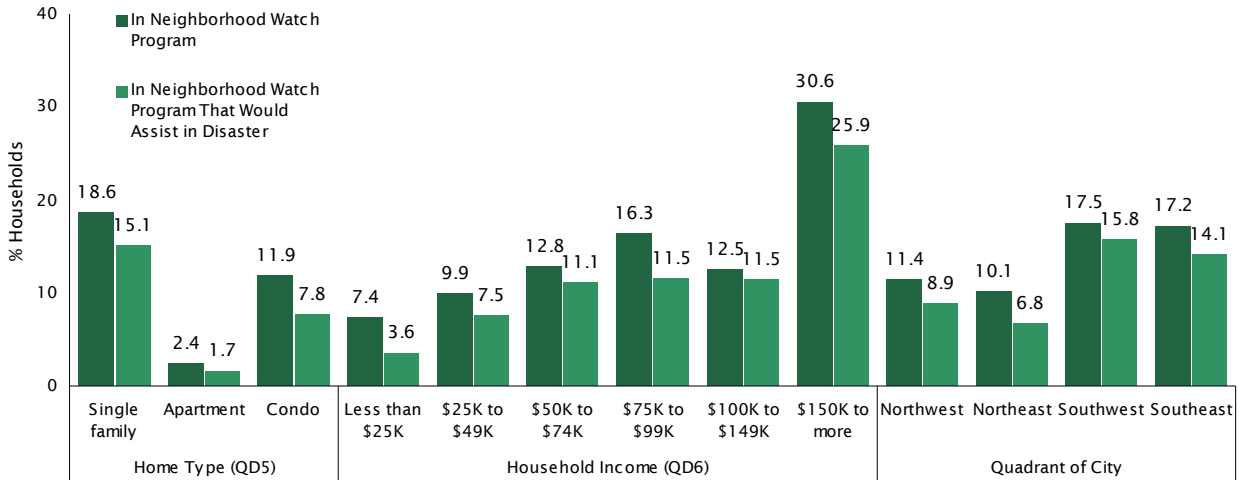


FIGURE 25 NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & ASSISTANCE IN THE EVENT OF DISASTER BY HOME TYPE, HOUSEHOLD INCOME & QUADRANT OF CITY



TRAFFIC

For most cities in California, traffic congestion ranks among the most pressing problems that residents would like local and regional governments to solve. In the 2006 survey, *reduced traffic congestion* was the second most commonly mentioned change cited by residents to make La Mesa a better place to live. Since then it has fallen out of the top ten mentions in the 2011 and current study. To look more closely at this issue and to compare current perceptions of traffic congestion with those from 2006 and 2011, the survey next measured residents' perceptions of traffic circulation in the City *overall*, on major streets, and in residential areas.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION As shown in Figure 26, in the current study, 88% of residents rated traffic circulation in residential areas as excellent or good. Perceptions of overall circulation (75%), as well as circulation on major streets (74%), were somewhat less positive. It should be noted that even in the case of major streets, however, only 7% of respondents rated traffic circulation in La Mesa as poor or very poor.

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 26 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

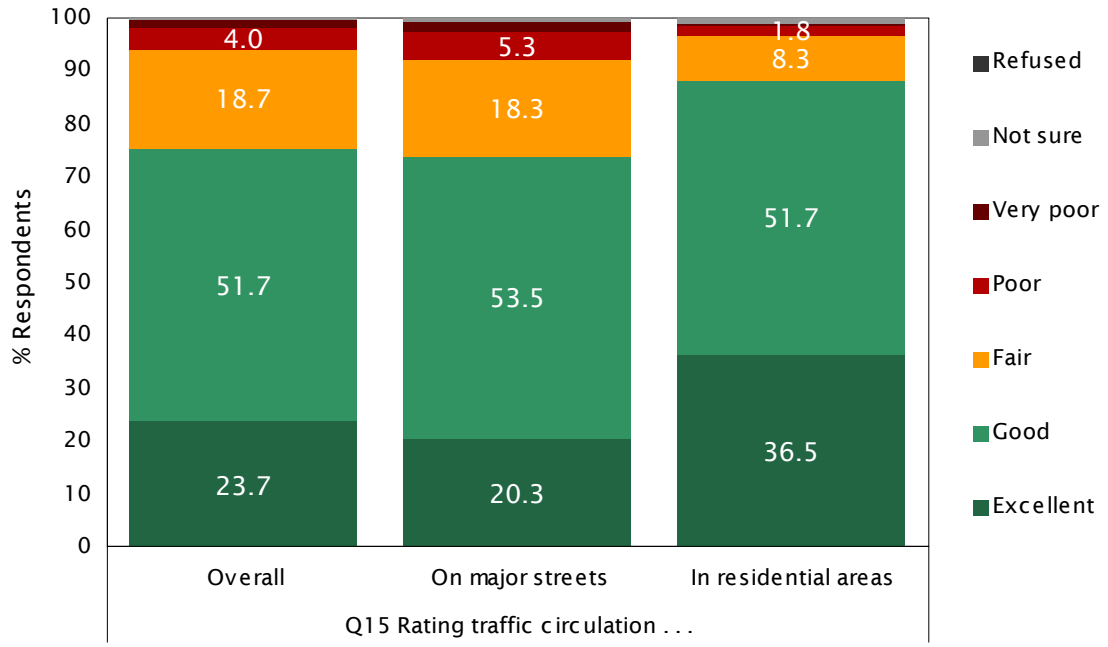


Table 8 on the next page provides the percentage of respondents in 2013, 2011, and 2006 who regarded traffic congestion as excellent or good *overall*, on major streets, and in residential areas. Although there were no statistically significant changes in the percentage of residents who considered traffic circulation excellent or good since 2011, the data continue to trend in a positive direction since 2006.

TABLE 8 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION (2006 TO 2013)

	Study Year			Change in Excellent + Good
	2013	2011	2006	'11 to '13
Traffic on major streets	73.8	70.3	63.7	+3.5
Traffic overall	75.4	72.5	70.8	+2.8
Traffic in residential areas	88.2	87.5	81.6	+0.7

For the interested reader, Figures 27 to 29 present ratings of traffic circulation overall, on major streets, and in residential areas according to the quadrant of the City in which respondents resided.

FIGURE 27 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION OVERALL BY QUADRANT OF CITY

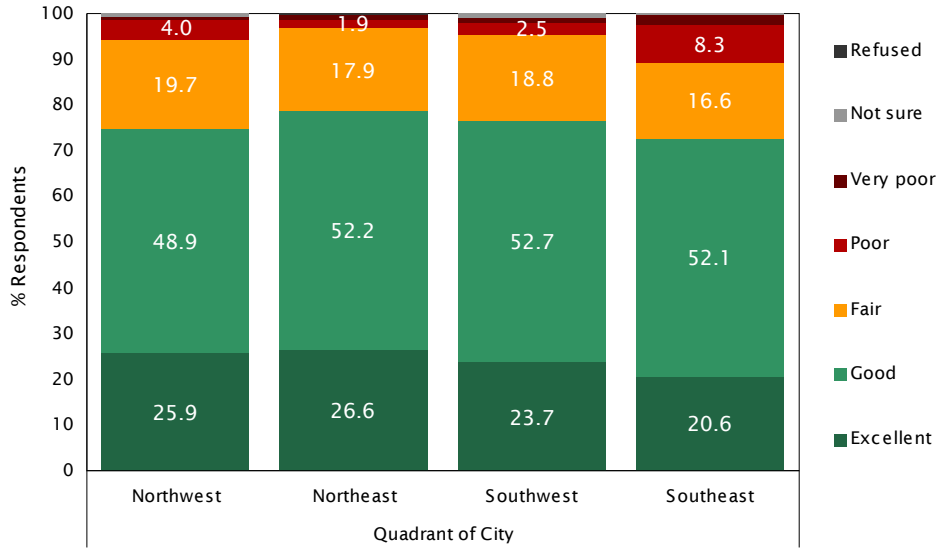


FIGURE 28 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION ON MAJOR STREETS BY QUADRANT OF CITY

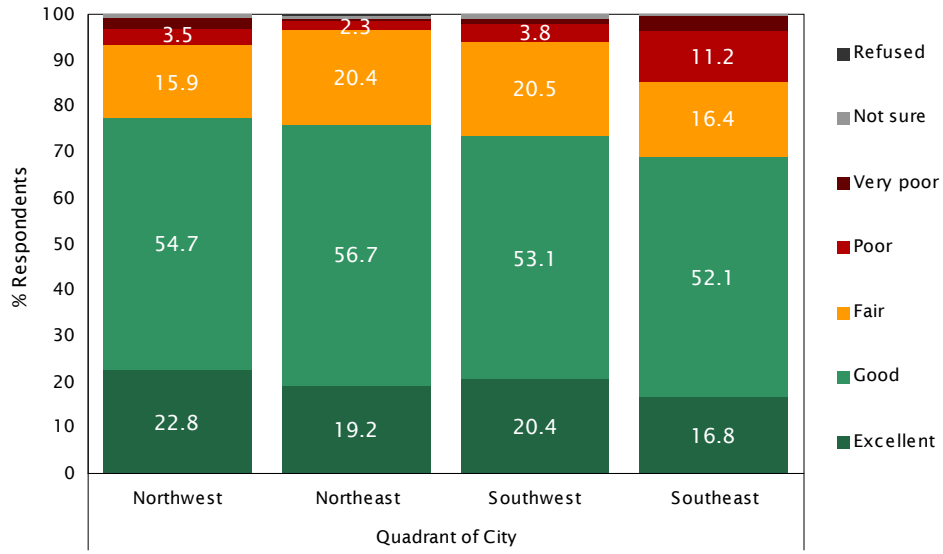
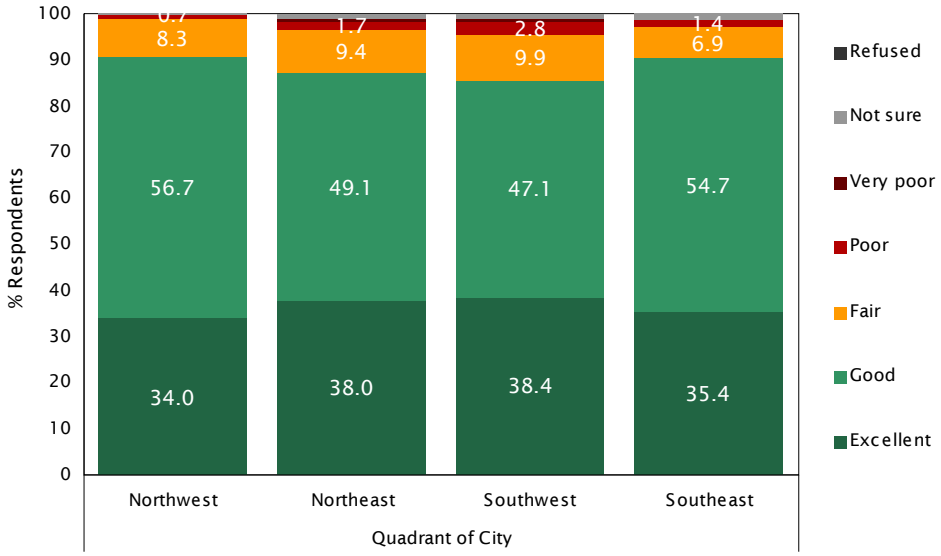


FIGURE 29 PERCEPTION OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS BY QUADRANT OF CITY



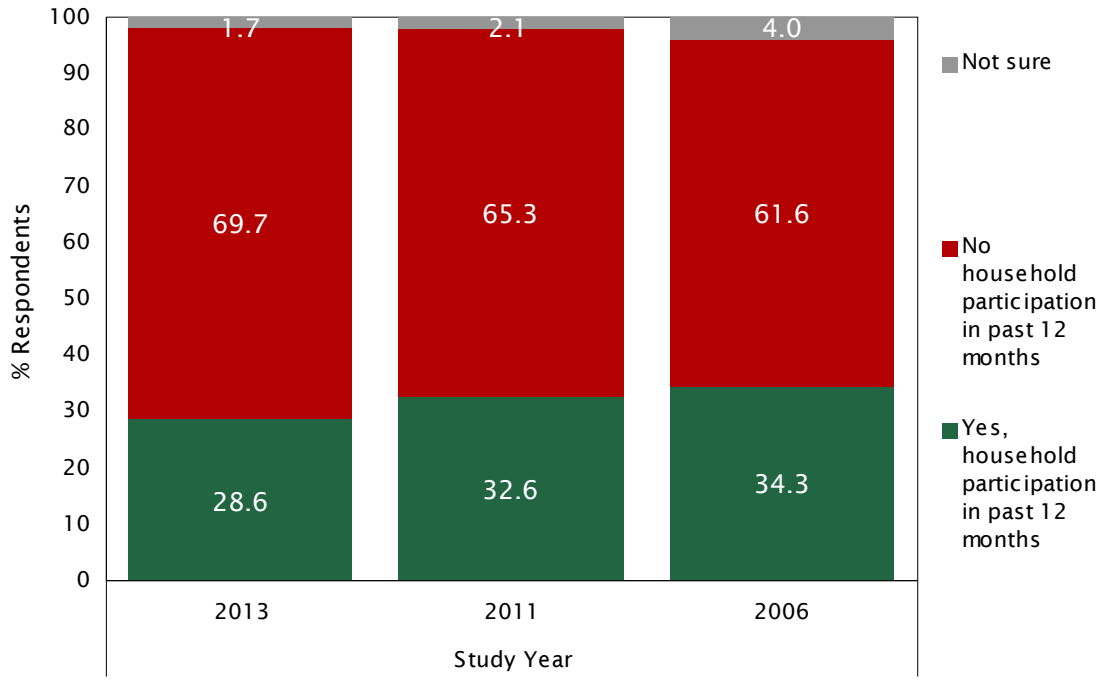
Parks & Recreation

This section of the report presents the results of a series of questions that addressed residents' perceptions and use of parks and recreation facilities and programs in the City.

PROGRAMS The first question in this series asked respondents if they or any members of their household had participated in a recreational or cultural program offered by the City of La Mesa in the 12 months prior to the survey. As shown in Figure 30, 29% of respondents indicated that their household had participated in a recreational or cultural program offered by the City during this period. This finding is slightly lower than the finding from 2011, although the difference is not statistically significant.

Question 16 *In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household participated in a recreational or cultural program offered by the City of La Mesa?*

Figure 30 Household Participation in Recreational or Cultural Program in Past 12 Months (2006 to 2013)



Participation in a city-provided recreational or cultural program was strongly related to a number of household characteristics (see figures 31 and 32). When compared with their respective counterparts, participation was notably higher among households with four or more people, owner-occupied households, households with at least one child, and households earning between $100,000 and $149,000 annually.

FIGURE 31 HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION IN RECREATIONAL OR CULTURAL PROGRAM IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY AGE, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & CHILD IN HSLD

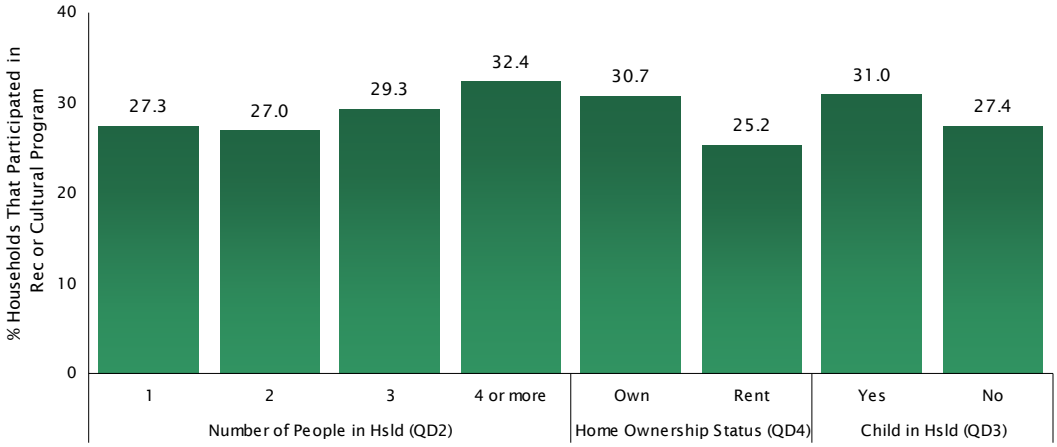
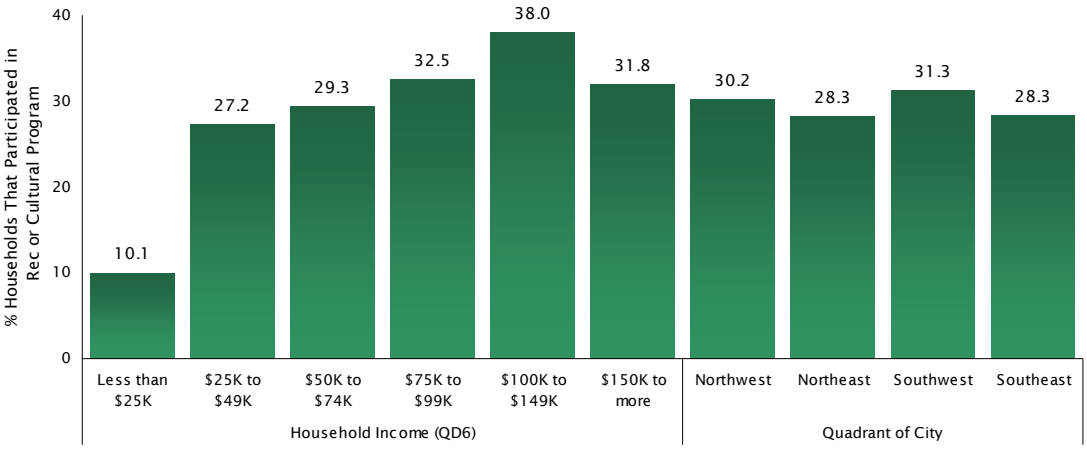


FIGURE 32 HOUSEHOLD PARTICIPATION IN RECREATIONAL OR CULTURAL PROGRAM IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME & QUADRANT OF CITY



Respondents who reported that their household had participated in a recreational and/or cultural program offered by the City were next asked to rate the *quality* of the program(s) in which their household participated, using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor.

Overall, participants gave high-marks to the City's recreational and cultural programs, with 90% indicating that the quality was either excellent (46%) or good (44%). Approximately 7% indicated that the programs were of fair quality, whereas less than 1% indicated that the quality was poor or very poor (see Figure 33 on the next page). There were no statistically significant changes from 2011 to 2013. Figure 34 displays how ratings of the programs varied by presence of a child in the home, gender, and residence location within the City.

Question 17 *Overall, how would you rate the quality of La Mesa's recreational and cultural programs that your household participated in? Would you say it was excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?*

FIGURE 33 OVERALL QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL & CULTURAL PROGRAMS (2006 TO 2013)

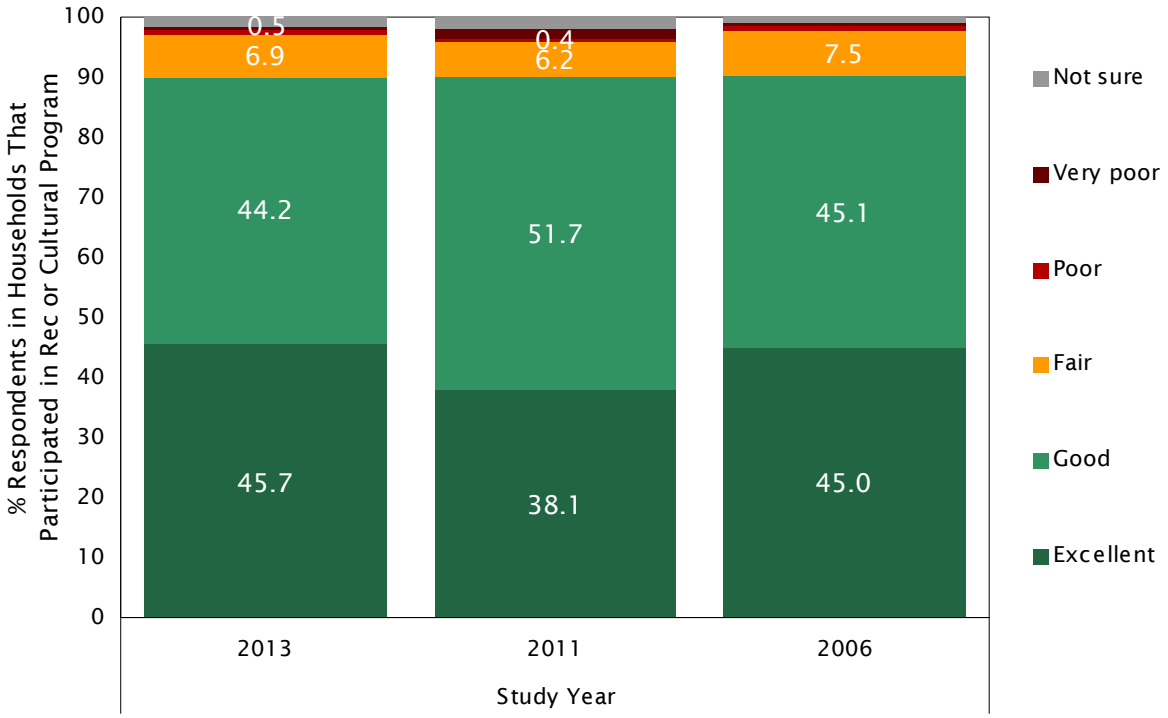
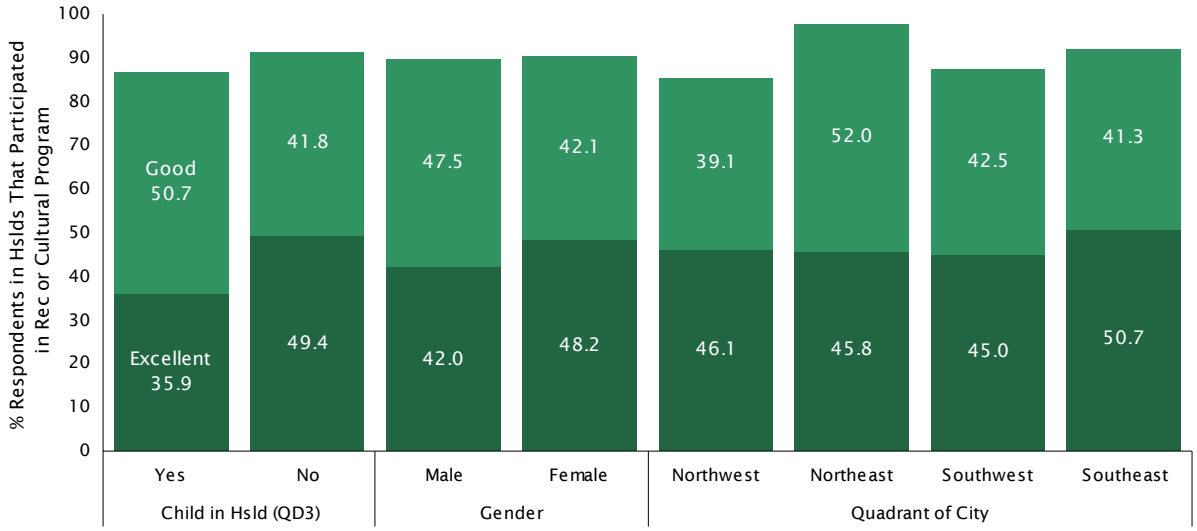


FIGURE 34 OVERALL QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL & CULTURAL PROGRAMS BY CHILD IN HSLD, GENDER & QUADRANT OF CITY



FACILITIES At this point, the survey transitioned from programs to parks and recreation *facilities*. Respondents were first asked to rate the overall quality, appearance, safety, and availability of parking at La Mesa's parks and recreation facilities using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or, very poor. Between 3% to 7% of respondents indicated that they were not sure when asked to comment on a specific aspect of the parks and recreation facilities. Of those with an opinion, however, the ratings were decidedly positive (see Figure 35). The appearance and overall quality of the parks and recreation facilities were rated the most positively, followed closely by the availability of parking and perceived safety at the sites.

Table 9 provides the percentage of respondents in 2013, 2011, and 2006 who rated each of the aspects of parks and recreation facilities as excellent or good, among those who provided an opinion. There were no statistically significant differences between 2011 and 2013.

Question 18 *How do you rate the: _____. La Mesa's parks and recreation facilities? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?*

FIGURE 35 RATING OF PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES

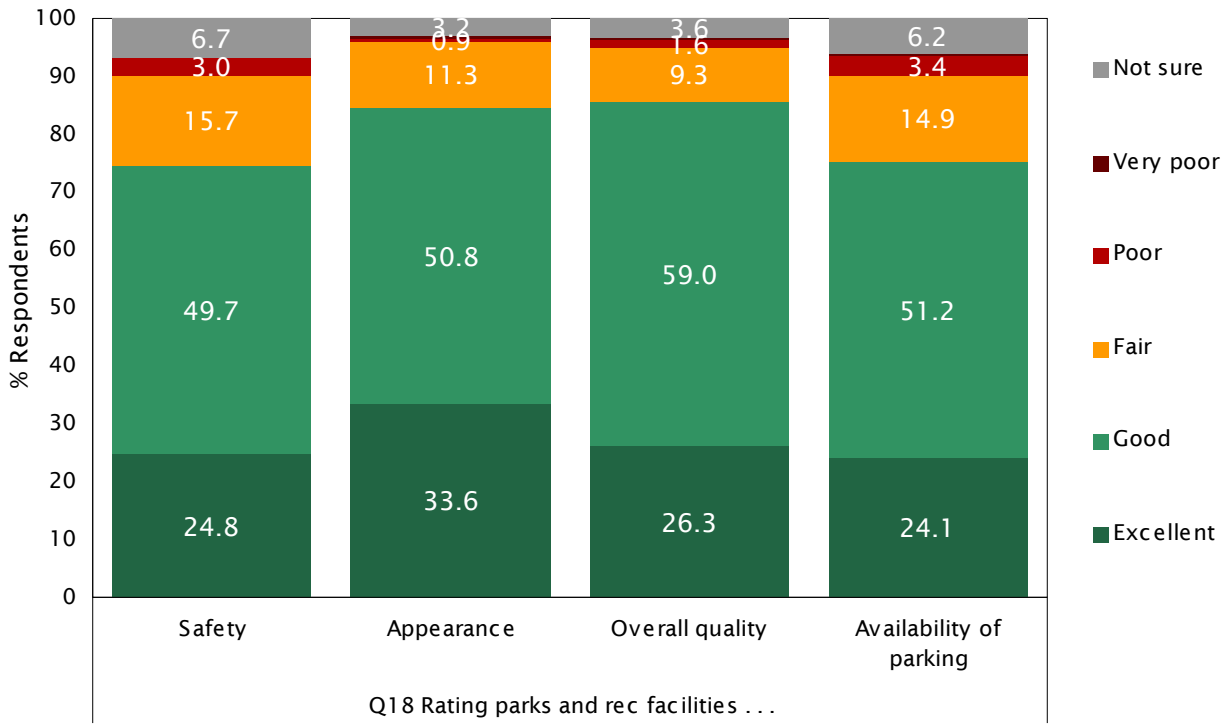


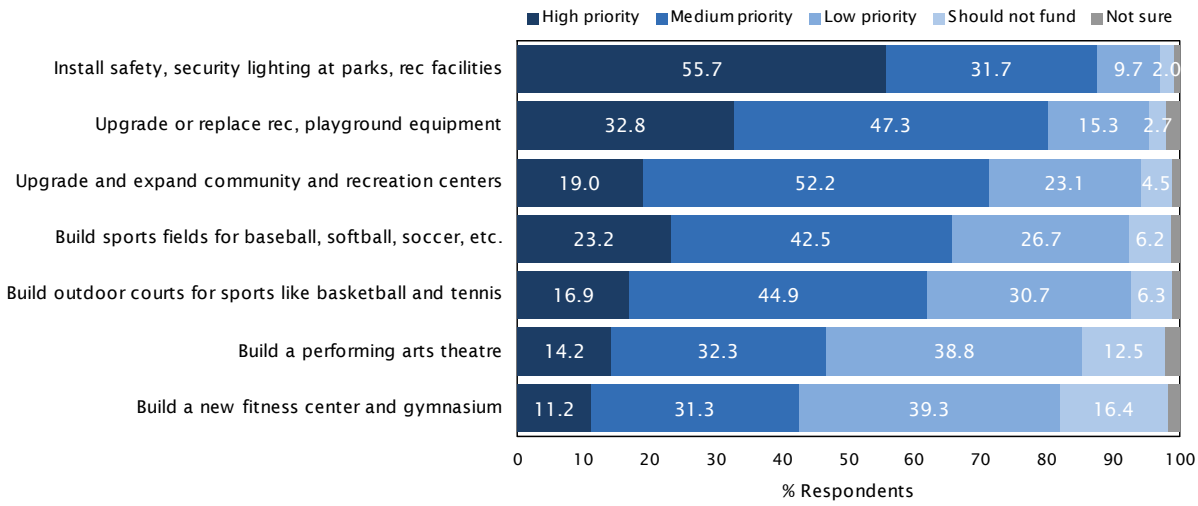
TABLE 9 RATING OF PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES BY QUADRANT OF CITY (2006 TO 2013)

	Study Year			Change in Excellent + Good
	2013	2011	2006	'11 to '13
Availability of parking	80.5	77.2	77.4	+3.1
Overall quality	88.6	85.0	86.6	+2.0
Appearance	87.3	84.3	89.7	-2.3
Safety	80.0	76.7	83.5	-3.6

FUTURE PROJECTS The final question in this series was designed to give the City as well as the La Mesa Park and Recreation Foundation a better understanding of the types of parks and recreational facility improvements that residents would be most interested in having the City focus on in the future. Question 19 presented respondents with a list of seven possible improvements—shown on the left of Figure 36—and asked them to indicate whether each improvement should be a high, medium, or low priority for future City spending. Respondents were also offered the opportunity to indicate that the City should *not* spend any money on the facility. Respondents were instructed to keep in mind that not all of the facilities can be high priorities.

Question 19 *As I read each of the following recreation improvements, I'd like you to indicate whether you think the City should make the item a high priority, a medium priority, or a low priority. If you feel the City should not spend any money on this item, just say so. Please keep in mind that not all of the items can be high priorities.*

FIGURE 36 RECREATION PRIORITIES



As shown in the figure above, residents were most interested in installing safety and security lighting at parks and recreation facilities (87% felt it should be a high or medium priority), followed by upgrading or replacing worn-out recreation and playground equipment at existing parks and sports fields (80%), and upgrading and expanding community and recreation centers (71%). The next two tables present the percentage of respondents who considered each proposed improvement a high priority by their age, presence of a child in the home, quadrant in which they reside, and gender.

TABLE 10 RECREATION PRIORITIES BY AGE & CHILD IN HSLD (SHOWING % HIGH PRIORITY)

	Age (QD1)					Child in Hsld (QD3)	
	18 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 64	65 or older	Yes	No
Install safety, security lighting at parks, rec facilities	62	59	56	51	49	59	54
Upgrade or replace rec, playground equipment	26	45	34	29	33	46	27
Build sports fields for baseball, softball, soccer, etc.	28	31	20	18	18	23	24
Upgrade and expand community and recreation centers	25	20	12	20	16	22	17
Build outdoor courts for sports like basketball and tennis	23	24	14	12	11	14	18
Build a performing arts theatre	11	18	16	15	12	12	15
Build a new fitness center and gymnasium	13	14	13	10	7	12	11

TABLE 11 RECREATION PRIORITIES BY QUADRANT OF CITY & GENDER (SHOWING % HIGH PRIORITY)

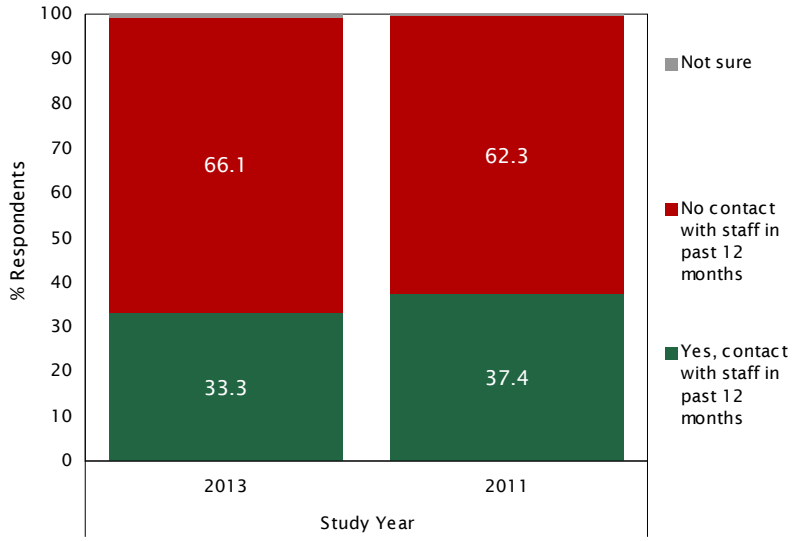
	Quadrant of City				Gender	
	Northwest	Northeast	Southwest	Southeast	Male	Female
Install safety, security lighting at parks, rec facilities	50	53	61	56	50	62
Upgrade or replace rec, playground equipment	23	35	32	38	31	34
Build sports fields for baseball, softball, soccer, etc.	21	22	26	22	22	24
Upgrade and expand community and recreation centers	15	14	22	21	19	18
Build outdoor courts for sports like basketball and tennis	21	13	13	19	19	15
Build a performing arts theatre	13	14	17	12	12	16
Build a new fitness center and gymnasium	11	11	10	13	12	11

Staff Interactions

Although much of the survey focused on residents' satisfaction with the City's efforts to provide specific services, like other progressive cities La Mesa recognizes that there is more to good local governance than simply providing satisfactory services. What percentage of residents have interacted with city staff in the past year? Do residents perceive that city staff are responsive to their needs? Does staff serve their needs in a professional manner? Answers to questions like these are just as important as service or policy-related questions in measuring the City's performance in meeting the needs and expectations of residents. Two questions were thus added to the 2011 survey, and asked again in 2013.

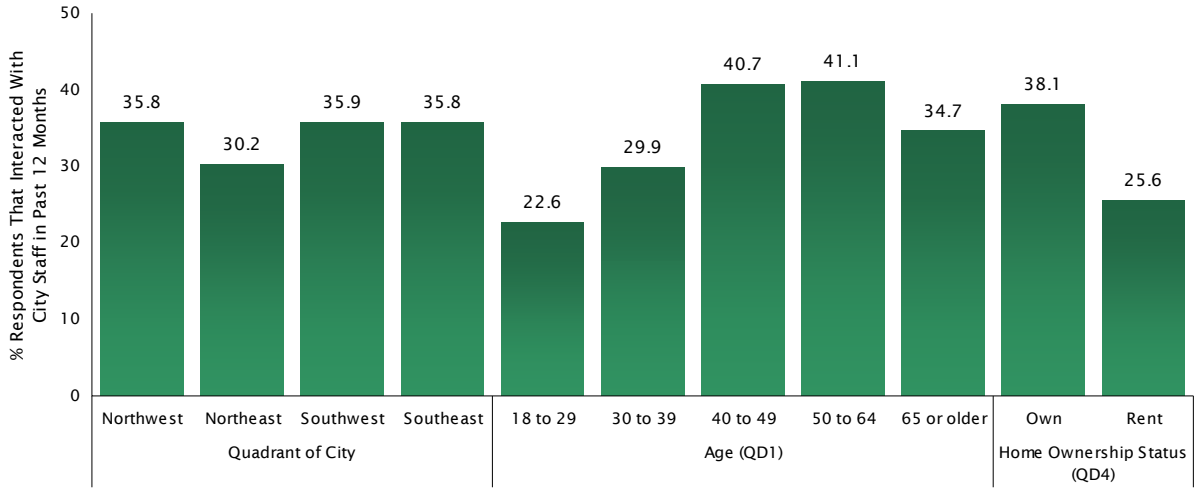
Question 20 *In the past 12 months, have you been in contact with City of La Mesa staff?*

Figure 37 Contact With City Staff in Past 12 Months (2011 & 2013)



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 37, 33% of residents indicated that they had contact with City staff in the 12 months prior to the interview, which was not significantly different from 2011. For the interested reader, Figure 38 below provides the responses to Question 20 by respondents' area of residence, age, and home ownership status.

Figure 38 Contact With City Staff in Past 12 Months by Quadrant of City, Age & Home Ownership Status



The next question asked respondents who had been in contact with staff to rate staff members' helpfulness, professionalism, and responsiveness. The findings of this question are presented below in Figure 39 and show that staff received high ratings for all three dimensions tested. Approximately 97% of respondents who had interacted with staff in the past 12 months felt staff were very (78%) or somewhat (19%) professional. Similarly, 95% felt staff was very or somewhat responsive, and 95% found them very or somewhat helpful. Table 12 below provides the responses to this question for the current study compared with 2011. All three aspects of customer service were rated more positively in 2013, with a statistically significant increase in the percentage of residents who felt that staff were very or somewhat helpful.

Question 21 *In your opinion, is the staff at the City very _____, somewhat _____, or not at all _____?*

FIGURE 39 OPINION OF CITY STAFF

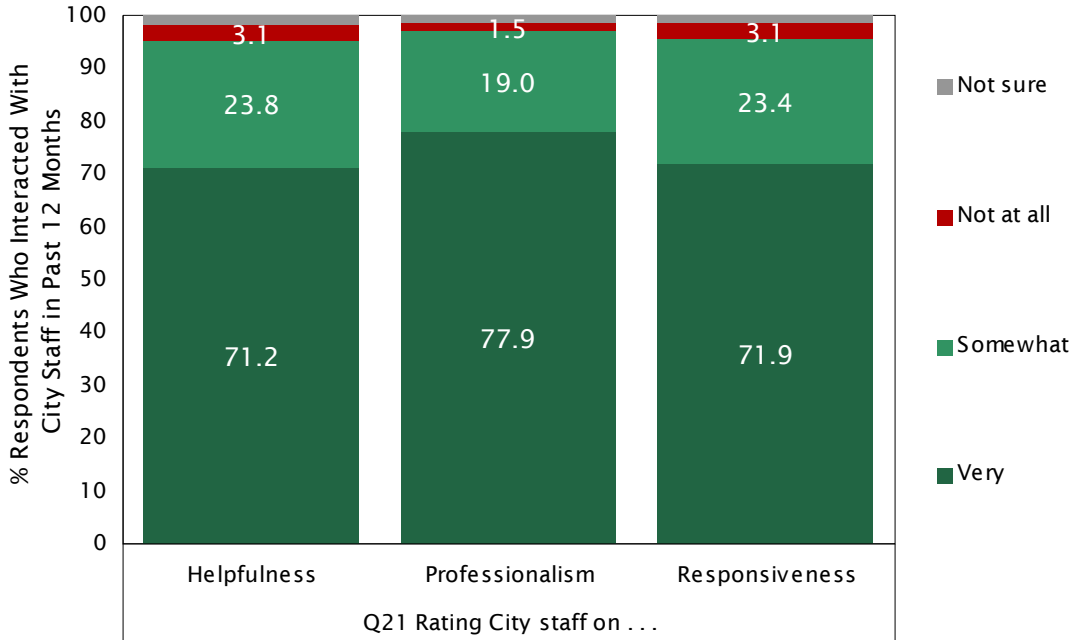


TABLE 12 OPINION OF CITY STAFF (2011 & 2013)

	Study Year		Change in Very + Somewhat
	2013	2011	'11 to '13
Helpfulness	71.2	61.1	+10.1†
Responsiveness	71.9	64.9	+7.0
Professionalism	77.9	71.9	+5.9

† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

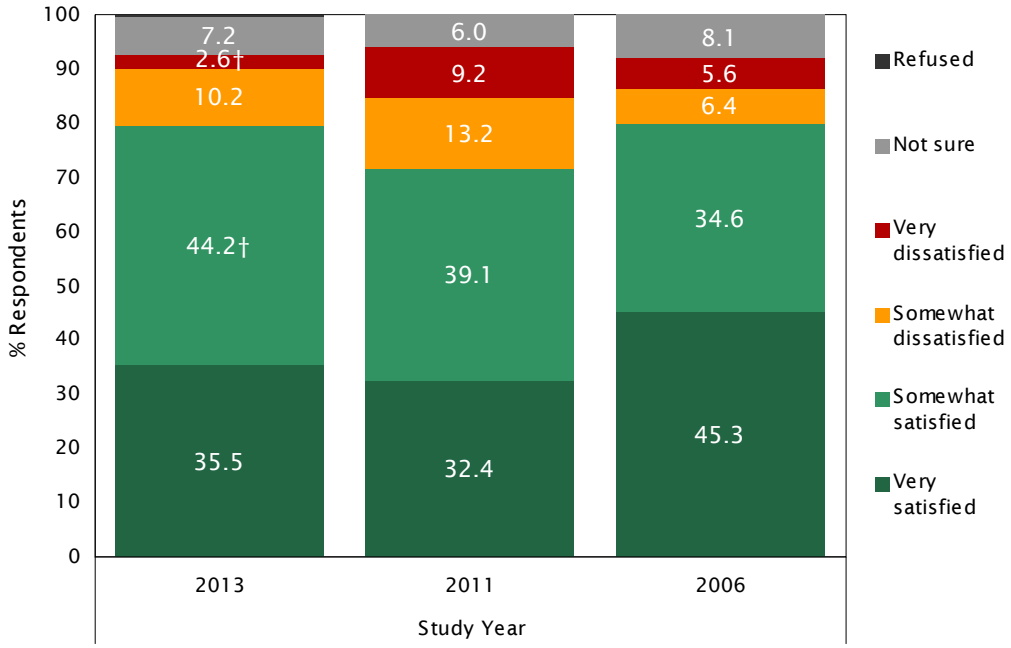
Communication

The importance of city-resident communication 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 its residents and from residents 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 citizens' concerns, perceptions, and needs. In this section of the report, we present the results of several communication-related questions.

OVERALL SATISFACTION Question 22 asked residents to report their overall satisfaction with city-resident communication in the City of La Mesa. Overall, 80% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with City's efforts to communicate with residents through newsletters, the Internet, or other means, and just 13% indicated they were dissatisfied with the City's efforts in this respect (see Figure 40). Compared with the findings of 2011, these numbers represent a statistically significant increase in satisfaction with city-resident communication over the past two years.

Question 22 *Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the City's efforts to communicate with residents through newsletters, the Internet, and other means?*

FIGURE 40 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION (2006 TO 2013)



† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

The next two figures display how overall satisfaction with the City's efforts to communicate with residents varied by years of residence in La Mesa, age, household income, and quadrant of the City. Overall satisfaction hovered around 80% for nearly all subgroups. Those most likely to be *very satisfied* included long-time residents, older residents, those in households with annual incomes of between $75,000 and $99,000, and those residing in the Southwest quadrant of the City.

FIGURE 41 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY YEARS IN LA MESA & AGE

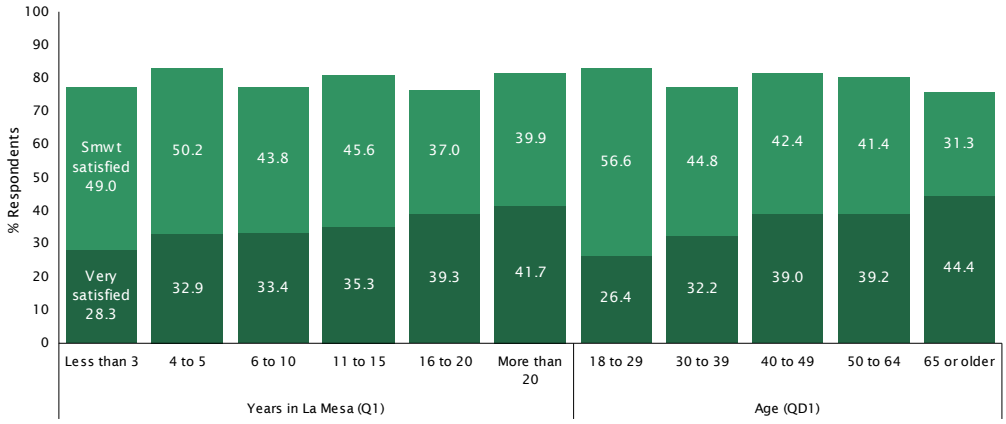
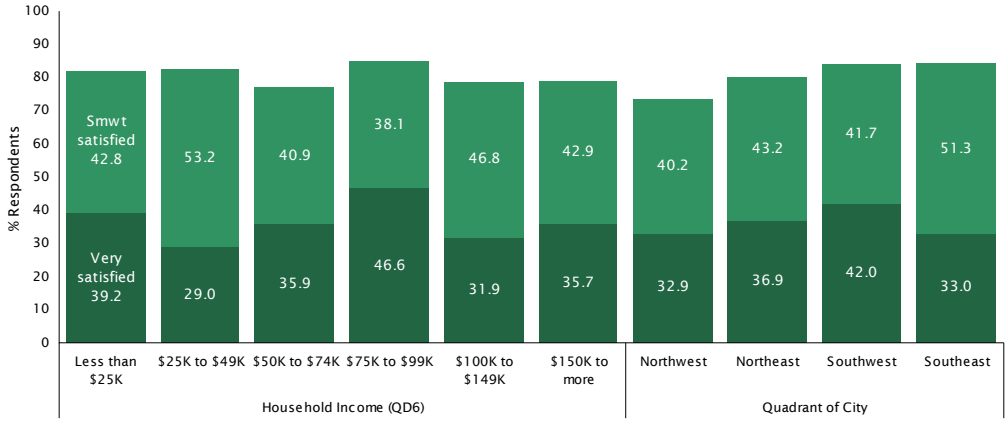


FIGURE 42 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME & QUADRANT OF CITY



INFORMATION SOURCES To help the City identify the most effective means of communicating with residents, it is helpful to understand what information sources they currently rely on for this type of information. In an open-ended manner, residents were asked to list the information sources they typically use to find out about City of La Mesa news, information, and programming. Because respondents were allowed to provide up to three sources, the percentages shown in Figure 43 represent the percentage of residents who mentioned a particular source and thus sum to more than 100%.

The most frequently cited source for city-related information, mentioned by 30% of respondents, was the Internet in general, followed by the City's website (24%), and the City's Newsletter, *La Mesa Focus* (17%). Another 10% mentioned receiving flyers or brochures from the City, and 5% mentioned receiving an email, which may refer to a message sent to residents who sign up to be notified when a new issue of *La Mesa Focus* is posted on the City's website.

When compared with 2011, there were significant increases in the percentage who mentioned City-sponsored sources such as the City Newsletter, flyers or brochures from the City, and email from the City, as well as *La Mesa Patch*, an online publication written and edited by area residents and business persons. There was also a significant decrease in the percentage of residents who cited the *San Diego Union Tribune* and television in general (see Figure 44).

Question 23 *What information sources do you use to find out about City of La Mesa news, information, and events?*

FIGURE 43 INFORMATION SOURCES

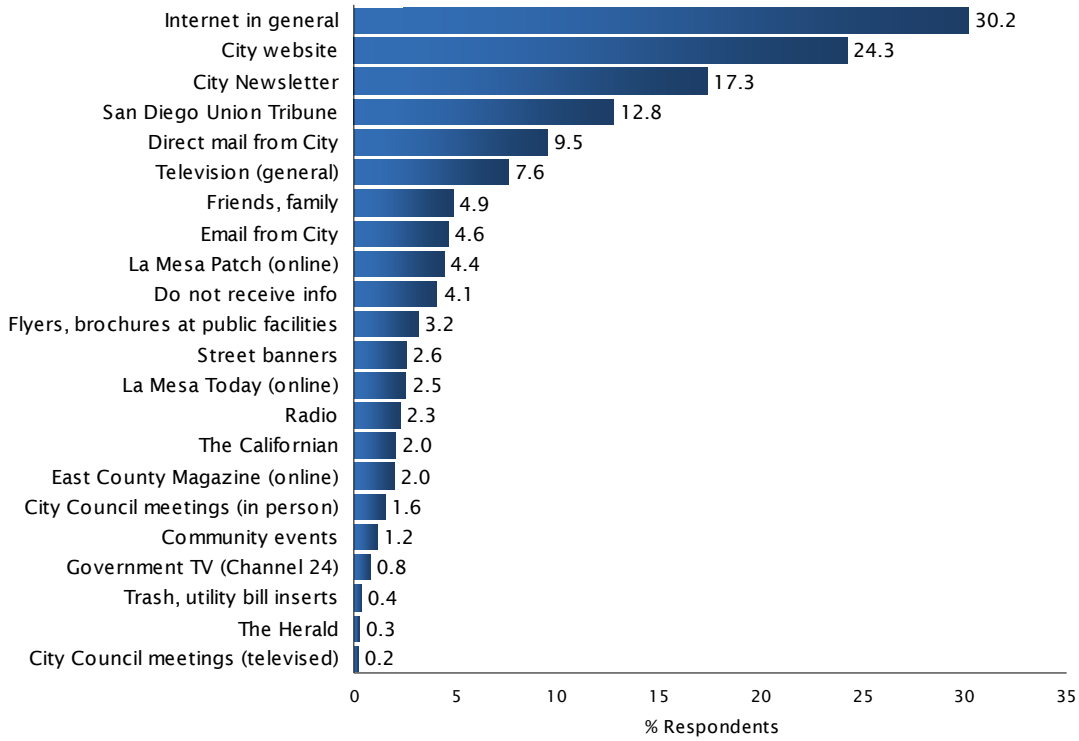
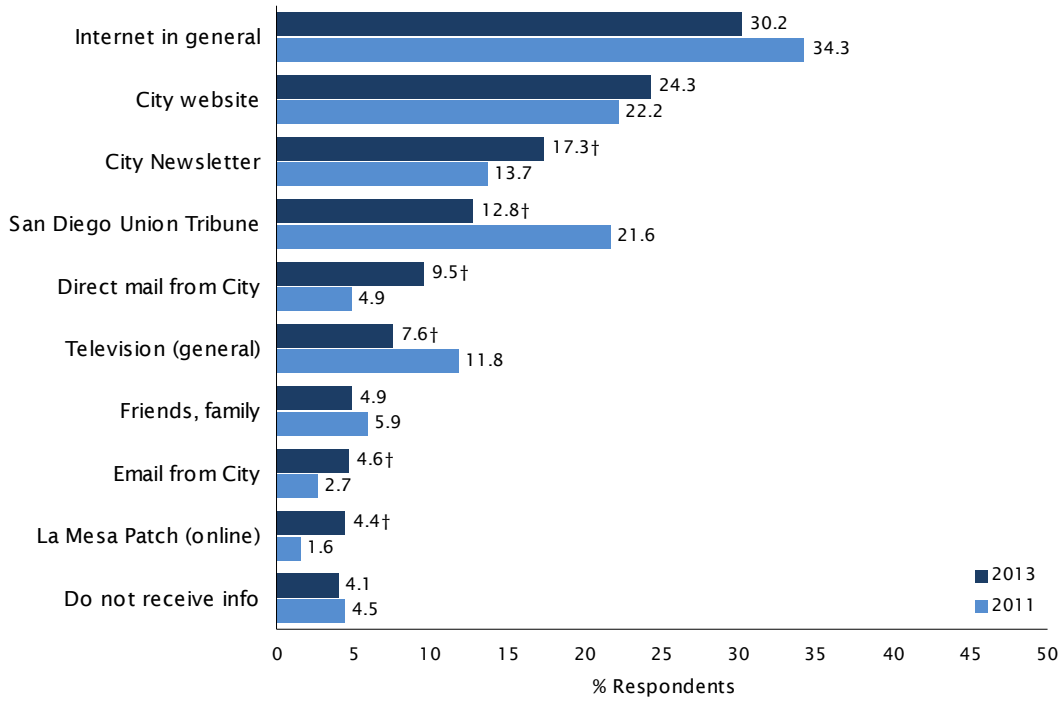


FIGURE 44 TOP INFORMATION SOURCES (2011 & 2013)

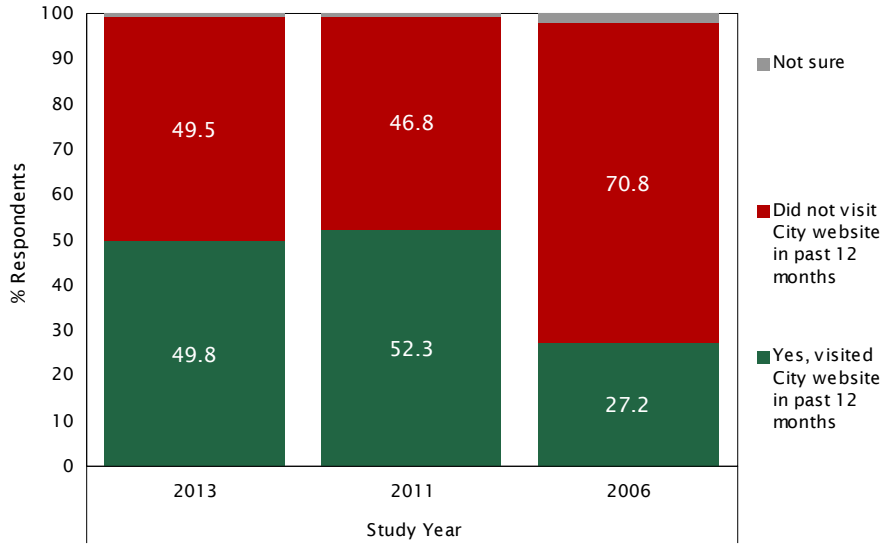


† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

CITY'S WEBSITE Four questions were included in the survey that pertained to the City's website. The first simply asked whether, in the 12 months prior to the interview, the respondent had visited the City of La Mesa's website. As shown in Figure 45, half (50%) of respondents indicated that they had visited the site during this period, nearly identical to the percentage (52%) that had visited the site in 2011.

Question 24 *In the past 12 months, have you visited the City of La Mesa's website?*

FIGURE 45 CITY WEBSITE VISIT IN PAST 12 MONTHS (2006 TO 2013)



† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

As displayed in figures 46 through 48, use of the City's website varied considerably across demographic subgroups. Those most likely subgroups to have visited the website in the past 12 months were those who have resided in the City between 6 and 15 years, those between 30 and 49 years of age, respondents with a child in the home, homeowners, those in households with annual incomes of $100,000 or more, men, those in the Northeast and Southwest quadrants, those in households that have participated in a recreation or cultural program in the past year, and those who have been in contact with City staff in the past year.

FIGURE 46 CITY WEBSITE IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY YEARS IN LA MESA & AGE

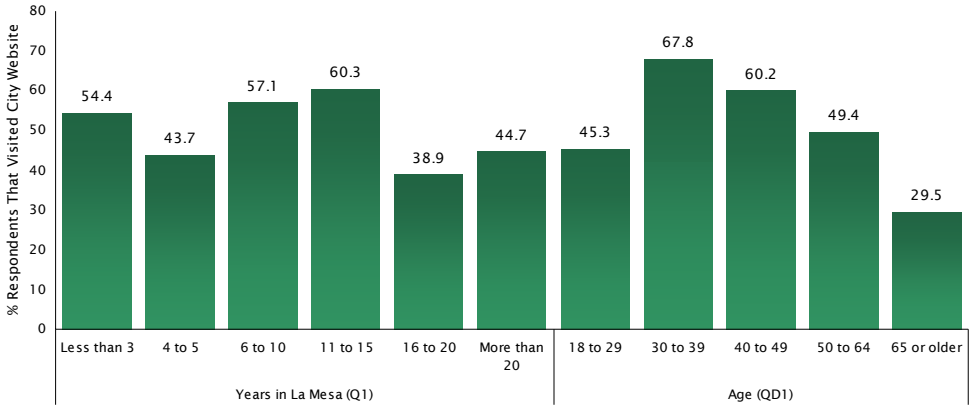


FIGURE 47 CITY WEBSITE IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY CHILD IN HSLD, HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS & HOUSEHOLD INCOME

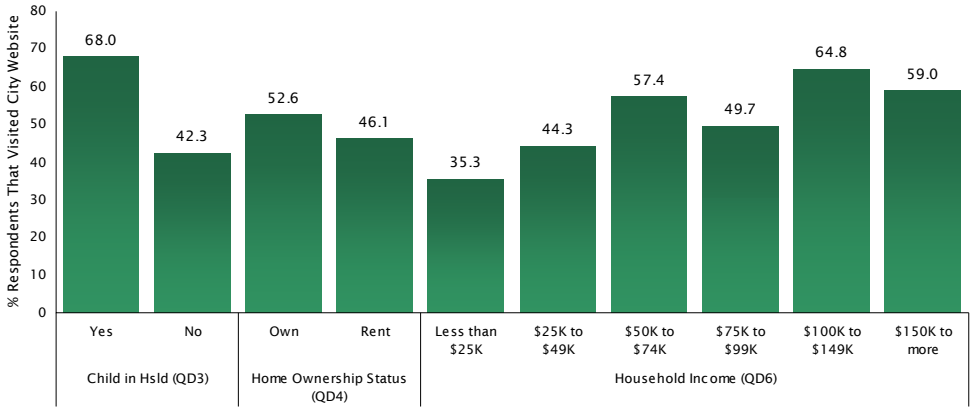
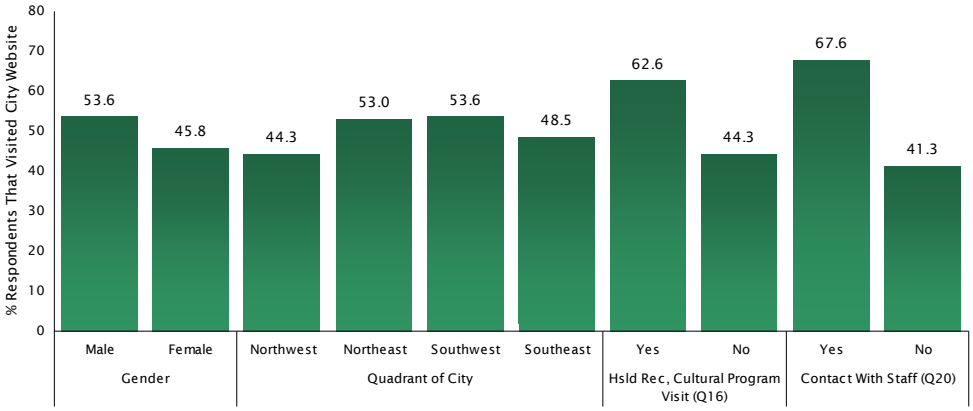


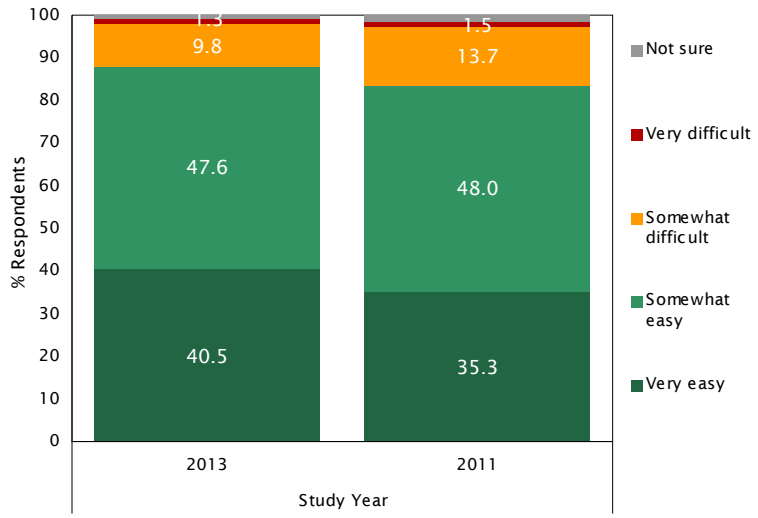
FIGURE 48 CITY WEBSITE IN PAST 12 MONTHS BY GENDER, QUADRANT OF CITY, HSLD REC, CULTURAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION & CONTACT WITH STAFF



Respondents who had visited the City's website in the past 12 months were next asked to indicate how easy or difficult it was to find the information they were looking for. Overall, 88% of those who had visited the City's website in the past year felt it was very easy (41%) or somewhat easy (48%) to find what they were looking for (see Figure 49 on the next page). Ten percent (10%) said it was somewhat difficult, and only 1% found it very difficult.

Question 25 *In general, how easy or difficult is it to find what you are looking for on the City's website? Would you say it is very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult?*

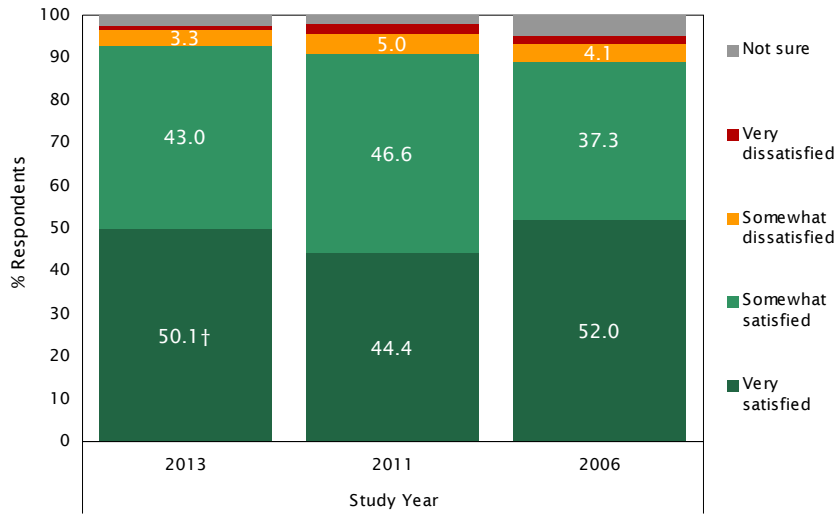
FIGURE 49 EASE OF FINDING INFORMATION ON CITY WEBSITE (2011 & 2013)



Visitors to the City's website were next asked to indicate whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the resources available on the site. Overall, 93% of visitors indicated that they were either very satisfied (50%) or somewhat satisfied (43%) with the resources available on the site. Approximately 5% of visitors stated that they were dissatisfied in this respect, and 2% were unsure (see Figure 50). When compared with 2011, the level of overall satisfaction found in the current study was similar, although there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of website visitors who were *very* satisfied.

Question 26 *Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the resources available on the City's website?*

FIGURE 50 SATISFACTION WITH CITY WEBSITE (2006 TO 2013)



† Statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) between the 2011 and 2013 studies.

The final substantive question of the survey asked respondents who were dissatisfied with the City's website if there was a particular reason for their dissatisfaction. Because so few respondents (a total of 17 residents surveyed) were dissatisfied with the website and provided a reason for their dissatisfaction, the specific verbatim responses are shown below. Most responses mentioned a lack of information or specific content on the website, difficulty in locating desired information, or difficult, cumbersome navigation.

Question 27 *Is there a particular reason why you are dissatisfied with the resources available on the City's website?*

- I just found out that they didn't have everything, but there is nothing in particular. I think that was the Octoberfest information that wasn't there, but I'm not so sure.
- When you make a complaint about street problems, they are not listening.
- It is hard to find schedules on community activities.
- I can't find what I need. They could make it user friendly, so I can easily find what I want.
- I was trying to find animal services. It just gives you a particular number but doesn't give the services.
- I could not find the information that I was looking for.
- They do not have the categories that I want. I want more explicit information on the zoning and how to take action against the City and property owners.
- There are not enough resources for adults and seniors.
- The searching function does not work right.
- There is not enough information.
- There are not enough resources that can be used for young families. They focus more on the elderly.
- It was because when I went online, I was looking for someone to contact, so I emailed them. They sent me an email saying that I was with the wrong department. Then they sent me an email again saying they don't accept emails. Their web site is confusing to me.
- Some information that I was looking for was not there. I was looking for some public school officer and we couldn't find the name there. I was also looking for Helix Water Corporation in the City's website because I wanted to call and look for someone to talk to but I couldn't find it. There are no email addresses attached to the name of anybody you want to talk to, like public officers. They should have email addresses.
- It does not provide enough information about the things that you are looking for.
- I can't get the information that I was looking for.
- It's hard to find information about park resources.
- It's not as user-friendly as it could be. There is too much searching necessary.

Background & Demographics

Table 13 Demographics of Sample

	Study Year		
	2013	2011	2006
Total Respondents	*800*	*800*	*800*
QD1 Age			
18 to 29	24.8	21.7	22.4
30 to 39	17.2	19.4	19.4
40 to 49	16.5	19.2	18.2
50 to 64	22.7	18.2	16.2
65 or older	17.4	21.3	20.5
Refused	1.4	0.3	3.3
QD2 Number of people in household			
One	17.7	20.2	21.4
Two	34.9	35.2	31.8
Three	19.0	18.0	18.4
Four	15.4	16.3	12.6
Five or more	10.1	8.8	7.8
Refused	3.0	1.6	8.0
QD3 Children under 18 in home			
Yes	30.8	33.2	31.2
No	67.0	66.4	65.4
Refused	2.2	0.4	3.3
QD4 Home ownership status			
Own	60.6	64.8	55.6
Rent	37.2	34.7	39.8
Refused	2.1	0.5	4.6
QD5 Home type			
Detached home	59.3	61.5	61.0
Apartment	23.3	23.1	24.3
Condo	13.3	13.8	11.0
Mobile home	0.4	1.3	0.5
Refused	3.7	0.4	3.3
QD6 Household income			
Less than $25K	10.2	9.9	9.3
$25K to $49K	17.7	20.2	20.6
$50K to $74K	16.5	21.7	18.7
$75K to $99K	18.0	15.5	12.1
$100K to $149K	15.3	14.8	5.6
$150K to $199K	3.0	3.4	1.5
$200K or more	3.0	2.2	0.7
Not sure / Refused	16.2	12.3	31.6
QD7 Gender			
Male	51.5	50.5	46.3
Female	48.5	49.5	53.7

Table 13 presents the key demographic and background information that was 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 the results of the substantive questions of the survey vary by demographic characteristics.

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 the items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, items were asked in random order for each respondent.

Some of the questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only respondents who had visited the City of La Mesa's website in the past year were asked about their experience with the website. The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 53) identifies the skip patterns that were used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

Most of the questions asked in the 2013 survey were tracked directly from the 2011 and 2006 surveys to allow the City to track its performance reliably over time

PROGRAMMING & PRE-TEST Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist the live 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 password-protected online survey application to allow respondents the option of participating via the web, if preferred. 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.

SAMPLE Households within the City of La Mesa were chosen for this study using a random digit dial (RDD) sampling method. An RDD sample is drawn by first selecting all of the active phone exchanges (first three digits in a seven digit phone number) and working blocks that service the area. After estimating the number of listed households within each phone exchange that are located within the area, a sample of randomly selected phone numbers is generated with the number of phone numbers per exchange being proportional to the estimated number of households within each exchange in the area. This method ensures that both listed and unlisted households are included in the sample. It also ensures that new residents and new developments have an opportunity to participate in the study, which is not true if the sample were based on a telephone directory. In addition, 20% of the sample was dedicated to cell phone numbers so that those who rely on cell phones were represented in the study.

Although the RDD method is widely used for community surveys, the method also has several known limitations that must be adjusted for to ensure representative data. Research has shown, for example, that individuals with certain demographic profiles (e.g., older women) are more likely to be at home and are more likely to answer the phone even when other members of the

household are available. If this tendency is not adjusted for, the RDD sampling method will produce a survey that is biased in favor of women—particularly older women. To adjust for this behavioral tendency, the survey included a screening question which initially asked to speak to the youngest male available in the home. If a male was not available, then the interviewer was instructed to speak to the youngest female currently available. This protocol was followed for landlines to the extent needed to ensure a representative sample. In addition to following this protocol, sample demographics were monitored as the interviewing proceeded to make sure they were within certain tolerances.

Additionally, because the City of La Mesa shares phone exchanges with neighboring communities, potential respondents were asked the ZIP code of their residence (Question SC1). Adults in ZIP codes 91941 and 91942 were asked a series of follow-up questions to determine if their residence was located in the City of La Mesa and, if so, in which of the four quadrants they resided.

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 800 adults for a particular question and what would have been found if all of the estimated 45,901 adults in the City[6] 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 (Q20), 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.

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

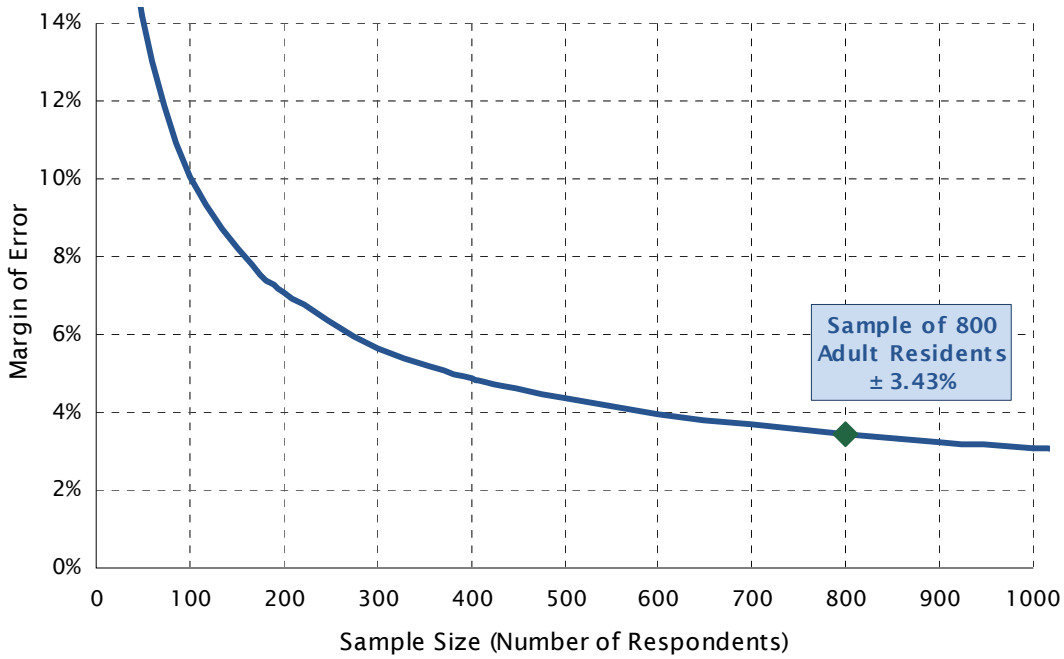
where $\hat{p}$ is the proportion of adults who said had been in contact with staff (0.33 for 33% in this example), N is the population size of all adults (45,901), n is the sample size that received the question (800), and t is the upper $\alpha/2$ point for the t-distribution with $n-1$ degrees of freedom (1.96 for a 95% confidence interval). Solving the equation using these values reveals a margin of error of ± 3.23%. This means that with 33% 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 30% and 36%.

Figure 51 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 ± 3.43% for questions answered by all 800 respondents.

6. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Data.

Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by demographic characteristics such as quadrant of the City, age of the respondent, and household income. Figure 51 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.

FIGURE 51 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR



DATA COLLECTION The method of data collection was telephone interviewing. Interviews were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM) between January 15 and January 21, 2013. 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. The interviews averaged 20 minutes in length. Respondents who preferred to participate online were allowed to do so at their convenience via a secure website hosted by True North. Each respondent who preferred to participate online was given a unique password that could be used only once.

DATA PROCESSING Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, categorizing open-ended responses, and preparing frequency analyses and cross-tabulations. Tests of statistical significance were also conducted to evaluate whether a change in responses between 2011 and 2013 was due to an actual change in opinions or was likely an artifact of independently drawn cross-sectional samples.

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 pie charts for a given question.

TRUE NORTH RESEARCH

City of La Mesa
Resident Satisfaction Survey
Final Toplines
January 2013

Section 1: Introduction to Study
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 around 15 to 18 minutes to complete. *If needed:* If now is not a convenient time, 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: Screener for Inclusion in the Study & Quadrants			
For statistical reasons, I would like to speak to the youngest adult male currently at home that is at least 18 years of age. *(if there is no male currently at home that is at least 18 years of age, then ask):* Ok, then I'd like to speak to the youngest female currently at home that is at least 18 years of age. *(If there is no adult currently available, then ask for a callback time.)* *NOTE: Adjust this screener as needed to match sample quotas on gender & age*			
SC1	To begin, I have a few screening questions. What is the ZIP code at your residence? (*Read ZIP code back to them to confirm correct*)		
	1	91941	*Skip to SC3*
	2	91942	*Ask SC2*
	3	Other ZIP code	*Terminate*
SC2	Do you live north or south of the 8 Freeway?		
	1	North	*Skip to SC6*
	2	South	*Ask SC3*
	99	Not sure / Refused	*Skip to SC7*
SC3	Do you live east or west of Spring Street?		
	1	East	*Ask SC4*
	2	West	*Skip to SC7*
	99	Not sure / Refused	*Ask SC4*
SC4	Do you live east or west of Highway 125? *If unsure, clarify:* Do you live on the Mount Helix (He-Licks) side of Highway 125 or the Grossmont Center side?		
	1	East / Mt. Helix side	*Ask SC5*
	2	West / Grossmont Center side	*Skip to SC7*
	99	Not sure / Refused	*Terminate*

SC5	Do you live within the City of La Mesa, or do you live just outside of the City in an area that is governed by the County?			
	1	Within City of La Mesa	*Skip to SC7*	
	2	Outside / Governed by County	*Terminate*	
	99	Not sure / Refused	*Terminate*	
SC6	Do you live east or west of Jackson Drive?			
	1	East	*Go to SC7*	
	2	West	*Go to SC7*	
	99	Not sure / Refused	*Go to SC7*	
SC7	*NEW Quadrants*			
	1	SC1=2 and SC2=1 and SC6=2	22%	Northwest
	2	SC1=2 and SC2=1 and SC6=1	22%	Northeast
	3	SC1=1 and SC3=2 OR SC1=2 and SC2=2 and SC3=2	25%	Southwest
	4	SC1=1 and SC3=1 and SC4=2 OR SC1=1 and SC3=1 and SC4=1 and SC5=1 OR SC1=2 and SC2=2 and SC3=1 and SC4=2 OR SC1=2 and SC2=2 and SC3=1 and SC4=1 and SC5=1	23%	Southeast
	5	Depends on status of missing info	4%	North unspecified
	6	Depends on status of missing info	2%	South unspecified
	7	Depends on status of missing info	4%	Unspecified

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	2%
	2	1 to 3 years	20%
	3	4 to 5 years	12%
	4	6 to 10 years	15%
	5	11 to 15 years	11%
	6	16 to 20 years	7%
	7	More than 20 years	33%
	99	Not sure / Refused	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	41%
	2	Good	51%
	3	Fair	7%
	4	Poor	1%
	5	Very poor	0%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Refused	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.		
	Not sure / Cannot think of anything		30%
	Increase public safety		16%
	Improve, repair roads		8%
	Reduce taxes, fees		5%
	No problems / Everything is fine		5%
	Improve City Council, Gov process		4%
	Add, improve sidewalks		3%
	Address homeless issue		3%
	Add, improve parks		3%
	Improve schools, education		3%
	Encourage growth, development		3%
	Revitalize, redevelop downtown		2%
	Provide affordable housing		2%
	Improve public transportation		2%
	Clean up public areas, facilities		2%
	Limit growth, development		2%
	Reduce traffic congestion		1%
	Improve street lighting		1%
	Provide more youth activities		1%
	Improve parking		1%
	Address gang issue		1%
	Enforce traffic laws		1%
	Improve landscaping		1%
	Improve waste collection		1%
	Put utility wires underground		1%

	Improve budgeting	1%
	Provide special, cultural events	1%

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	52%
	2	Somewhat satisfied	40%
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	3%
	4	Very dissatisfied	1%
	98	Not sure	4%
	99	Refused	1%

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	No Opinion	Refused
A	Maintaining and repairing streets	31%	56%	12%	1%	0%	0%
B	Maintaining landscaped street medians	11%	40%	44%	5%	0%	0%
C	Providing adequate traffic signs and signals	22%	53%	23%	2%	0%	0%
D	Enforcing traffic laws	20%	45%	30%	5%	0%	0%
E	Maintaining a low crime rate	49%	45%	5%	1%	1%	0%
F	Providing crime prevention programs	28%	47%	22%	2%	1%	0%
G	Providing neighborhood police patrols	29%	51%	18%	2%	1%	0%
H	Providing fire protection services	47%	47%	5%	0%	0%	0%
I	Providing animal control services	11%	36%	45%	6%	1%	0%
J	Preparing the community for emergencies	28%	45%	23%	3%	1%	0%
K	Providing emergency medical services	44%	48%	7%	1%	0%	0%
L	Keeping public buildings and facilities clean and attractive	20%	50%	27%	3%	0%	0%
M	Maintaining parks and sports fields	21%	50%	27%	3%	0%	0%
N	Providing programs for youth	22%	48%	24%	5%	1%	0%
O	Providing programs for adults	7%	31%	48%	13%	1%	0%
P	Providing programs for seniors	13%	46%	33%	7%	1%	0%

Q	Providing special events like community festivals	10%	29%	49%	11%	0%	0%
R	Reducing stormwater pollution	21%	43%	29%	5%	2%	0%
S	Creating a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	23%	47%	26%	3%	1%	0%
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	No Opinion	Refused
A	Maintain and repair streets	32%	46%	12%	7%	2%	0%
B	Maintain landscaped street medians	51%	40%	3%	2%	3%	0%
C	Provide adequate traffic signs and signals	60%	32%	4%	3%	2%	0%
D	Enforce traffic laws	50%	35%	6%	4%	5%	0%
E	Maintain a low crime rate	38%	42%	9%	4%	5%	1%
F	Provide crime prevention programs	28%	42%	7%	2%	21%	0%
G	Provide neighborhood police patrols	41%	40%	9%	3%	6%	0%
H	Provide fire protection services	69%	21%	1%	1%	9%	0%
I	Provide animal control services	44%	34%	3%	2%	17%	0%
J	Prepare the community for emergencies	29%	41%	8%	3%	19%	0%
K	Provide emergency medical services	60%	23%	1%	1%	15%	0%
L	Keep public buildings and facilities clean and attractive	58%	34%	2%	1%	5%	0%
M	Maintain parks and sports fields	48%	40%	4%	2%	7%	0%
N	Provide programs for youth	26%	40%	4%	2%	28%	0%
O	Provide programs for adults	27%	37%	3%	2%	31%	1%
P	Provide programs for seniors	30%	32%	4%	1%	33%	0%
Q	Provide special events like community festivals	50%	34%	4%	2%	9%	0%
R	Reduce stormwater pollution	30%	34%	5%	2%	29%	1%
S	Create a pedestrian friendly, walkable community	39%	40%	10%	4%	7%	0%

Section 5: Public Safety, Neighborhood Issues & Emergency Preparedness							
Q7	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?						
Randomize		Very Safe	Reasonably Safe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe	No Opinion	Refused
A	Walking alone in your neighborhood during the day	69%	27%	2%	1%	1%	0%
B	Walking alone in your neighborhood after dark	32%	44%	13%	8%	4%	1%
C	Walking alone in business and retail areas during the day	66%	29%	2%	1%	2%	0%
D	Walking alone in business and retail areas after dark	28%	46%	16%	4%	6%	1%

Q8	When compared to five years ago, would you say that La Mesa has become a safer place to live, is less safe now, or is it about the same?	
1	Safer	11%
2	Less safe	23%
3	About the same	56%
98	Not sure	11%
99	Refused	0%

Q9	As I read the following issues, please indicate whether each issue is a big problem, a moderate problem, a small problem, or not a problem in your neighborhood.						
	Randomize	Big Problem	Moderate Problem	Small Problem	Not a Problem	Not Sure	Refused
A	Graffiti	4%	16%	22%	57%	1%	0%
B	Recreational vehicles parked on the street for more than 72 hours at a time	5%	10%	16%	66%	2%	0%
C	Landscapes and buildings not being properly maintained	4%	10%	18%	66%	1%	0%
D	Speeding vehicles	16%	33%	20%	31%	1%	0%
E	Crime	10%	28%	29%	32%	1%	0%
F	Gang activity	5%	13%	18%	57%	6%	0%
G	Abandoned vehicles	3%	5%	16%	72%	2%	1%
H	Presence of sex offenders	7%	13%	17%	43%	20%	1%

Q10	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? (*Get answer. If 'satisfied' or 'dissatisfied', then ask*): Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?			
	1	Very satisfied	31%	*Skip to Q12*
	2	Somewhat satisfied	25%	*Skip to Q12*
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	4%	*Ask Q11*
	4	Very dissatisfied	3%	*Ask Q11*
	98	No opinion	36%	*Skip to Q12*
	99	Refused	0%	*Skip to Q12*

Q11	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.	
	Unmaintained properties, lawns	32%
	Illegal parking	23%
	Safety, security issues	17%
	No particular issue	16%
	Road, street maintenance	15%
	Violations not enforced fairly	5%
	Lack of police patrols	4%
	Noise violations	2%

Q12	We are interested in how prepared your household is to be self-sufficient in the event of a natural disaster or other city-wide emergency. Does your household have: _____?				
	Randomize	Yes	No	Not sure	Refused
A	A 72-hour supply of emergency food and water for family members and pets	73%	25%	2%	0%
B	A 72-hour supply of prescription medications for all family members and pets	75%	22%	2%	0%
C	A First-Aid kit	82%	17%	1%	0%
D	Emergency lighting & flashlights with extra batteries	88%	11%	1%	0%
E	Tools that are required to shut off water, gas and electricity	78%	18%	4%	0%
F	A plan to reunite family members at a particular location if you are separated	48%	49%	2%	1%
G	A family emergency plan that you annually review or practice	38%	61%	1%	0%

Q13	Are you involved in a neighborhood watch program?			
	1	Yes	14%	*Ask Q14*
	2	No	86%	*Skip to Q15*
	98	Not sure	0%	*Skip to Q15*
	99	Refused	0%	*Skip to Q15*

Q14	Do you think your neighborhood watch program would assist or benefit you and your family in the event of a disaster?		
	1	Yes	80%
	2	No	15%
	98	Not sure	6%
	99	Refused	0%

Section 6: Traffic

Q15 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?

	Read in Order	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion	Refused
A	Overall traffic circulation	24%	52%	19%	4%	1%	0%	0%
B	Traffic circulation on major streets	20%	53%	18%	5%	2%	1%	0%
C	Traffic circulation in residential areas	37%	52%	8%	2%	1%	1%	0%

Section 7: Park, Recreation & Special Events

Q16	In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household participated in a recreational or cultural program offered by the City of La Mesa?			
	1	Yes	29%	*Ask Q17*
	2	No	70%	*Skip to Q18*
	98	Not sure	2%	*Skip to Q18*
	99	Refused	0%	*Skip to Q18*

Q17	Overall, how would you rate the quality of La Mesa's recreational and cultural programs that your household participated in? Would you say it was excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?	
1	Excellent	46%
2	Good	44%
3	Fair	7%
4	Poor	1%
5	Very Poor	0%
98	Not sure	2%
99	Refused	0%

Q18	How do you rate the _____ La Mesa's parks and recreation facilities? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor?							
Randomize		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Not Sure	Refused
A	Safety of	25%	50%	16%	3%	0%	6%	1%
B	Appearance of	34%	51%	11%	1%	0%	3%	0%
C	Overall quality of	26%	59%	9%	2%	0%	3%	0%
D	Availability of parking at	24%	51%	15%	3%	0%	5%	1%

Q19	As I read each of the following recreation improvements, I'd like you to indicate whether you think the City should make the item a high priority, a medium priority, or a low priority. If you feel the City should not spend any money on this item, just say so. Please keep in mind that not all of the items can be high priorities. Here is the (first/next) one: _____. Should this be a high, medium or low priority for the City, or should the City not spend any money on this item?						
	Randomize	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Should not fund	No Opinion	Refused
A	Build sports fields for baseball, softball, soccer and other sports	23%	43%	27%	6%	1%	0%
B	Build outdoor courts for sports like basketball and tennis	17%	45%	31%	6%	1%	0%
C	Upgrade and expand community and recreation centers	19%	52%	23%	5%	1%	0%
D	Upgrade or replace worn-out recreation and playground equipment at existing parks and sports fields	33%	47%	15%	3%	2%	0%
E	Install safety and security lighting at parks and recreation facilities	56%	32%	10%	2%	1%	0%
F	Build a performing arts theatre	14%	32%	39%	13%	2%	0%
G	Build a new fitness center and gymnasium	11%	31%	39%	16%	2%	0%

Section 8: Staff Interactions				
Q20	In the past 12 months, have you been in contact with City of La Mesa staff?			
	1	Yes	33%	*Ask Q21*
	2	No	66%	*Skip to Q22*
	98	Not sure	1%	*Skip to Q22*
	99	Refused	0%	*Skip to Q22*

Q21	In your opinion, is the staff at the City very _____, somewhat _____, or not at all _____?					
Randomize		Very	Somewhat	Not at all	Not sure	Refused
A	Helpful	71%	24%	3%	2%	0%
B	Professional	78%	19%	2%	2%	0%
C	Responsive	72%	23%	3%	2%	0%

Section 9: Communication			
Q22	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	36%
	2	Somewhat satisfied	44%
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	10%
	4	Very dissatisfied	3%
	98	Not Sure	7%
	99	Refused	0%
Q23	What information sources do you use to find out about City of La Mesa news, information and events? *(Don't read list. Record up to first 3 responses).*		
	1	City Newsletter/La Mesa Focus	17%
	2	San Diego Union Tribune (paper)	13%
	3	The Californian/East County Californian	2%
	4	The Herald/East County Herald News	0%
	Online Newspapers/E-Newspapers		
	5	East County Magazine	2%
	6	La Mesa Patch	4%
	7	La Mesa Today	3%

	8	City Council Meetings (in person)	2%	
	9	City Council Meetings (televised)	0%	
	10	Radio	2%	
	11	Government TV Channel 24	1%	
	12	Television (general)	8%	
	13	City's website	24%	
	14	Internet (not City's site)	30%	
	15	Email notification from City	5%	
	16	Flyers or brochures (mailed to house)	10%	
	17	Flyers or brochures (displayed at public facilities)	3%	
	18	Trash & utility bill inserts	0%	
	19	Street banners	3%	
	20	Community events	1%	
	21	Friends/Family/Associates	5%	
	22	Other	3%	
	23	Do Not Receive Information about City	4%	
	98	Not sure	4%	
	99	Refused	1%	
Q24	In the past 12 months, have you visited the City of La Mesa's website?			
	1	Yes	50%	*Ask Q25*
	2	No	49%	*Skip to D1*
	98	Not sure	1%	*Skip to D1*
	99	Refused	0%	*Skip to D1*
Q25	In general, how easy or difficult is it to find what you are looking for on the City's website? Would you say it is very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult, or very difficult?			
	1	Very easy	41%	
	2	Somewhat easy	48%	
	3	Somewhat difficult	10%	
	4	Very difficult	1%	
	98	Not sure	1%	
	99	Refused	0%	

Q26	Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the resources available on the City's website? *Get answer, then ask:* Would that be very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?			
	1	Very satisfied	50%	*Skip to D1*
	2	Somewhat satisfied	43%	*Skip to D1*
	3	Somewhat dissatisfied	3%	*Ask Q27*
	4	Very dissatisfied	1%	*Ask Q27*
	98	Not sure	2%	*Skip to D1*
	99	Refused	0%	*Skip to D1*
Q27	Is there a particular reason why you are dissatisfied with the resources available on the City's website? Verbatim responses recorded and later grouped into categories shown below. Note: only 20 respondents were dissatisfied at Q26 and thus received this question.			
	Lacking information, content		44%	
	Difficult to find desired info		35%	
	Difficult, cumbersome navigation		15%	
	Other (unique responses)		7%	
	Confusing layout / Not user-friendly		3%	

Section 10: Background & Demographics			
Thank you so much for your participation. I have just a few background questions for statistical purposes.			
D1	Please stop me when I reach the category that includes your age.		
	1	18 to 29	25%
	2	30 to 39	17%
	3	40 to 49	17%
	4	50 to 64	23%
	5	65 or older	17%
	99	Refused	1%
D2	Including yourself, how many people live in your household?		
	1		18%
	2		35%
	3		19%
	4		15%
	5 or more		10%
	Refused		3%

D3	Do you currently have any children under the age of 18 living in your home?		
	1	Yes	31%
	2	No	67%
	99	Refused	2%
D4	Do you own or rent your residence in the City of La Mesa?		
	1	Own	61%
	2	Rent	37%
	99	Refused	2%
D5	Which of the following best describes your current home?		
	1	Single family detached home	59%
	2	Apartment	23%
	3	Condominium	13%
	4	Mobile home	0%
	99	Refused	4%
D6	This last question is for statistical purposes only. As I read the following income categories, please stop me when I reach the category that best represents your household's total annual income before taxes.		
	1	Less than $25,000	10%
	2	$25,000 to $49,999	18%
	3	$50,000 to $74,999	17%
	4	$75,000 to $99,999	18%
	5	$100,000 to $149,999	15%
	6	$150,000 to $199,999	3%
	7	$200,000 or more	3%
	98	Not sure	2%
	99	Refused	14%
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 Items			
D7	Gender		
	1	Male	51%
	2	Female	49%