2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey

City of Pensacola

March 4, 2025

Haas Center
UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

City of Pensacola Resident Satisfaction Survey 2024

Executive Summary

Most respondents, 70 percent, indicate the City of Pensacola is going in the right direction – an improvement from 67 percent in 2023. Surveyed residents "love" Pensacola for the waterfront access, arts, culture and festivals and feeling of safety. Reducing homelessness and addressing the high cost of housing were the top 2 priorities for residents surveyed. While reducing homelessness was also the top priority in 2023, decreasing crime was the second highest priority. Decreasing crime was the fourth highest priority among participating residents in 2024. About 81 percent of respondents would utilize discounted parking permits for city residents if they were offered.

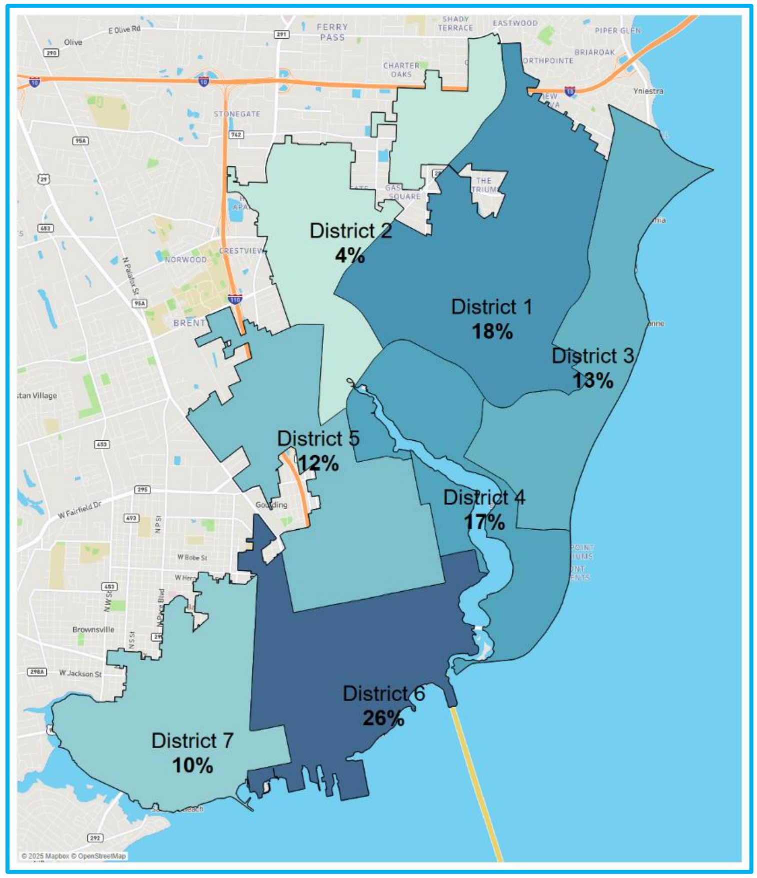


Figure 1: City District Map with Response Rates

Methodology

The 2024 resident satisfaction survey was conducted from December 9, 2024, through January 17, 2025. Researchers disseminated the survey to residents via postcard, email, and social media. Postcards containing a QR code and URL, as well as a phone number for residents to call, were sent to 20,801 residences within the city limits. The Haas Center obtained 2,863 responses from individuals over the age of 18, and of them, 1,504 lived within the city limits of Pensacola. Results were weighted by gender and race to better align with the city's population. According to the U.S. Census, the city of Pensacola has approximately 54,026 residents residing within the city limits. **Figure 1** shows the map of districts with response rates from the 2024 survey. The district demographics are summarized in the appendix. There are 7 districts, each home to an even population range of 13-15 percent of the city's total population. The results of the survey suggest that districts 2 and 7 are slightly underrepresented in the survey data, as there were 4 percent and 10 percent respectively. Whereas districts 1, 4, and 6 are slightly oversampled, yielding 17 percent or higher in the survey.

What makes Pensacola special?

Good jobs, proximity to waterfront, and recreational activities are just a few of the reasons why residents call Pensacola home. When asked what residents "*love*" most about living in Pensacola, 31 percent *love* access to waterfront; 27 percent *love* arts, culture, and festivals; 20 percent *love* feeling safe in their community; and 10 percent *love* the cost of living. The remaining reasons are listed in **Figure 2**. Most responses came from long-term residents. About 67 percent of the respondents have been living in Pensacola for 6 or more years, 18 percent lived here for 3-5 years and about 15 percent have been residents for 2 years or less.

Residents were asked which industry they felt would bring the most growth to the Pensacola economy. The top selection was hospitality/tourism, with 26 percent, followed by aviation and aerospace with 23 percent. The 8 industries included in the survey are summarized by **Figure 3**.

Figure 2: What do you love most about living in the City of Pensacola?

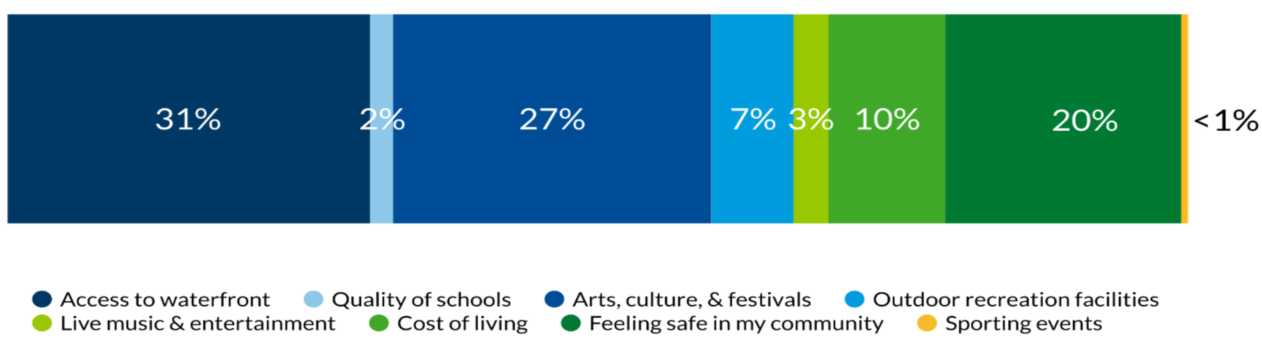
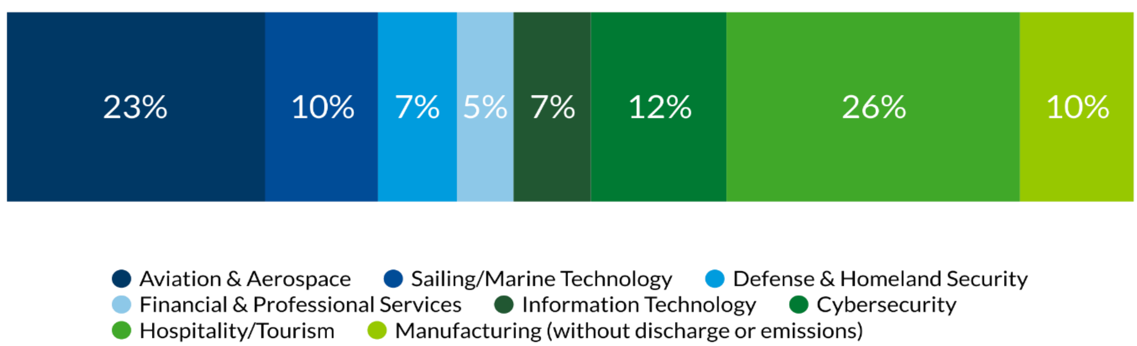
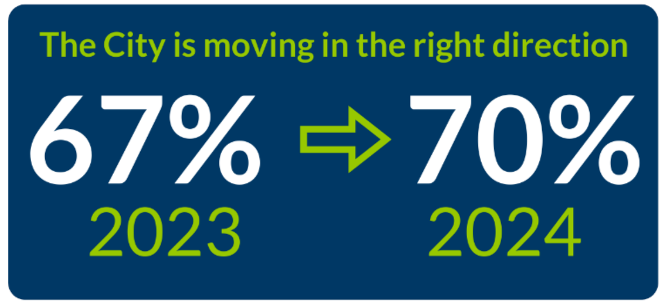


Figure 3: Which industry has the greatest potential to grow the Pensacola economy?



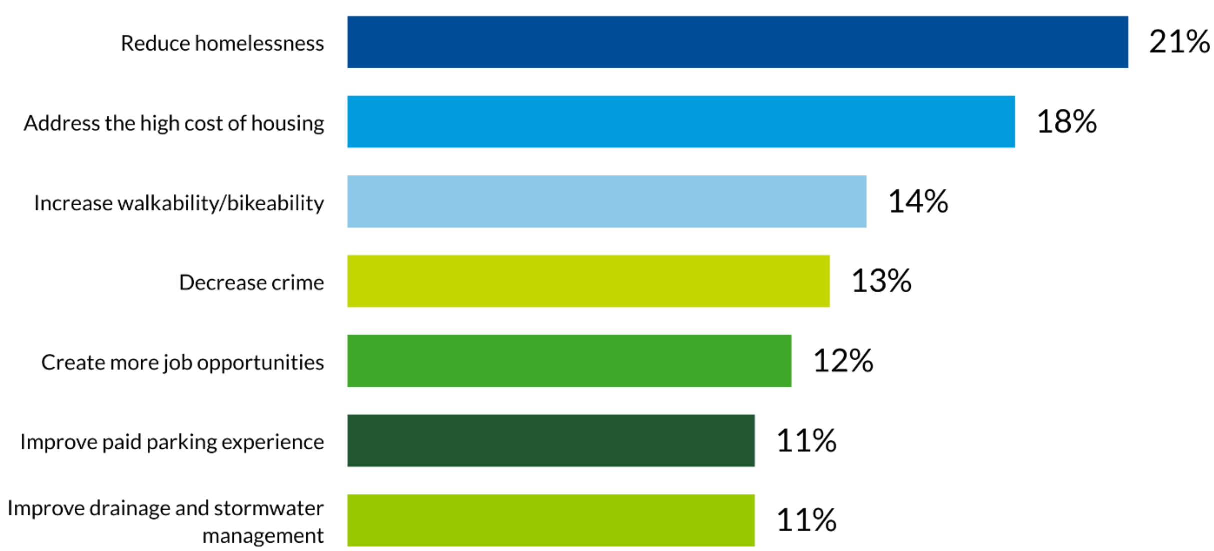
Most respondents, 70 percent, felt that the City is going in the right direction – an improvement from 67 percent in 2023. As for downtown Pensacola, 69 percent felt that the area was the crucial economic, tourism, and placemaking driver as the leading tax generator of the city, also improving since the prior year by one percentage point.



City Initiatives

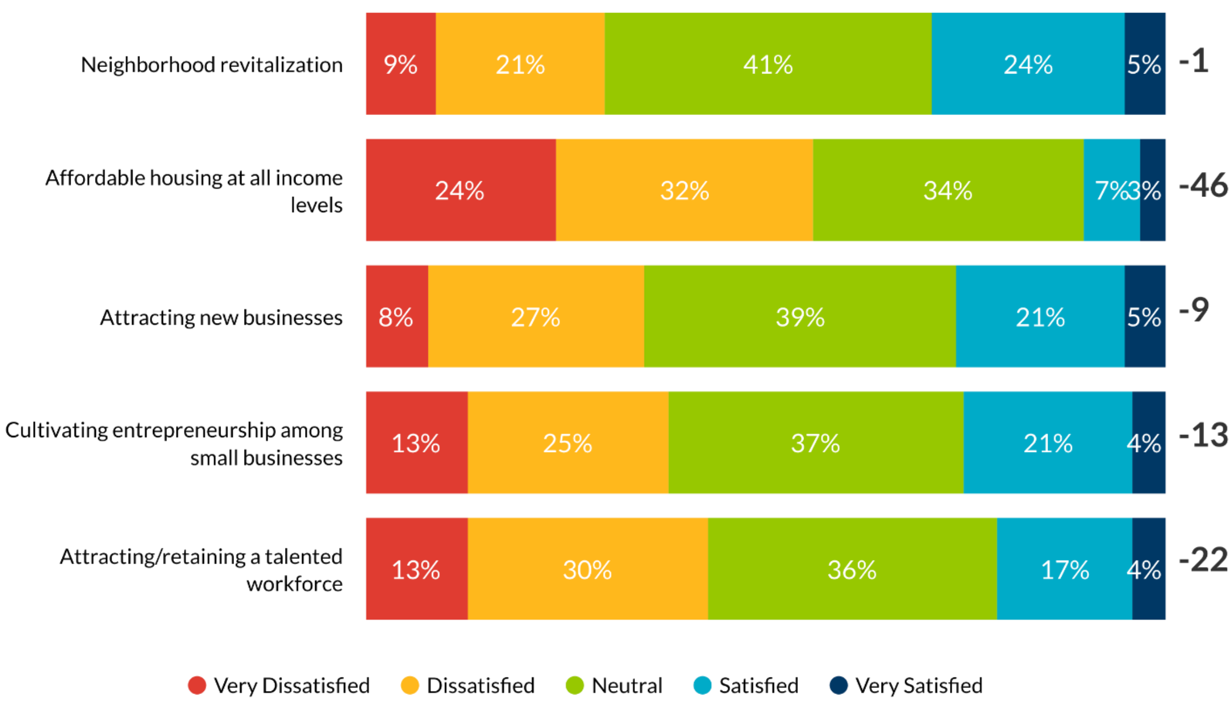
Participants were given a list of city initiatives and asked to choose their top 2 priorities. Results for 2024 are shown in **Figure 4**, with 21 percent of participants reporting their top priority is to reduce homelessness. Addressing the cost of housing was the second highest priority with 18 percent. Unfortunately, housing affordability is a challenge across the nation. While reducing homelessness was also the top priority in 2023, decreasing crime was the second highest priority. Decreasing crime was the fourth highest priority among participating residents in 2024. Improving the paid parking experience and improving drainage and stormwater management tied as the lowest priority for participating residents with 11 percent each.

Figure 4: Please select your top 2 priorities



When residents were asked how satisfied they were with the City's efforts to improve over the last year, the results were overwhelmingly neutral for all groups. By removing the neutral responses, we can better understand the participants' satisfaction levels. **Figure 5** shows the satisfaction levels by percentage, as well as the satisfaction score at the end of each category. Neighborhood revitalization had the highest level of satisfaction with 29 percent and an overall satisfaction score of -1, but it did decline in satisfaction from 2023 to 2024 by 2 percentage points. Attracting new businesses rated the second highest with 26 percent and -9 overall. Affordable housing at all income levels had the highest rate of dissatisfaction with 56 percent and an overall satisfaction rate of -46.

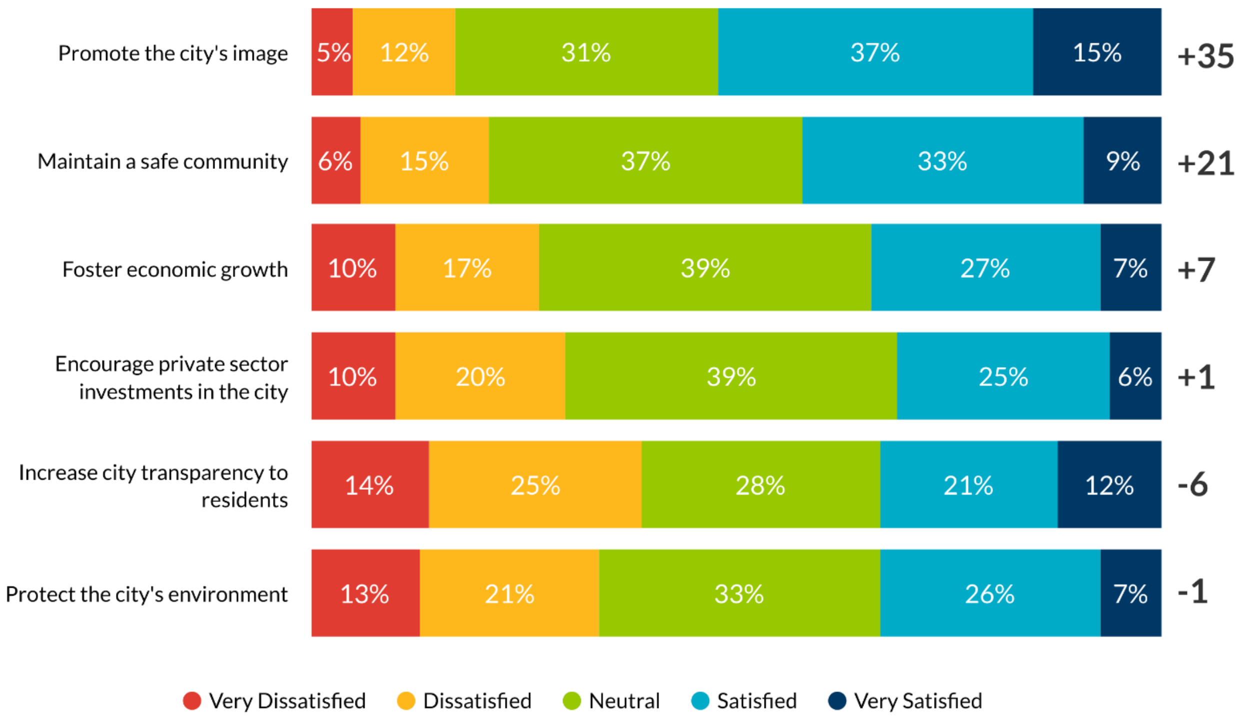
Figure 5: When thinking about efforts to improve the city, how satisfied are you with the following?



Residents were polled about the performance of the city in key categories where they rated 1 if they were very dissatisfied and 5 if they were very satisfied. **Figure 6** has the key areas and respondents' level of satisfaction, as well as the overall satisfaction scores after removing neutral responses. About 52 percent of individuals were satisfied or very satisfied with the efforts to promote the city's image, resulting in a +35 overall satisfaction score. Maintaining a safe community had the second highest satisfaction rate with 42 percent of participants being either satisfied or very satisfied and an overall score of +21. Increasing city transparency to residents and protecting the city's environment had the lowest overall satisfaction scores with -6 and -1, respectively.

Though these two questions had a negative score, they still yielded an improvement from 2023. The percent of respondents that agree/strongly agree with these categories each increased from 22 percent in 2023 to 33 percent in 2024.

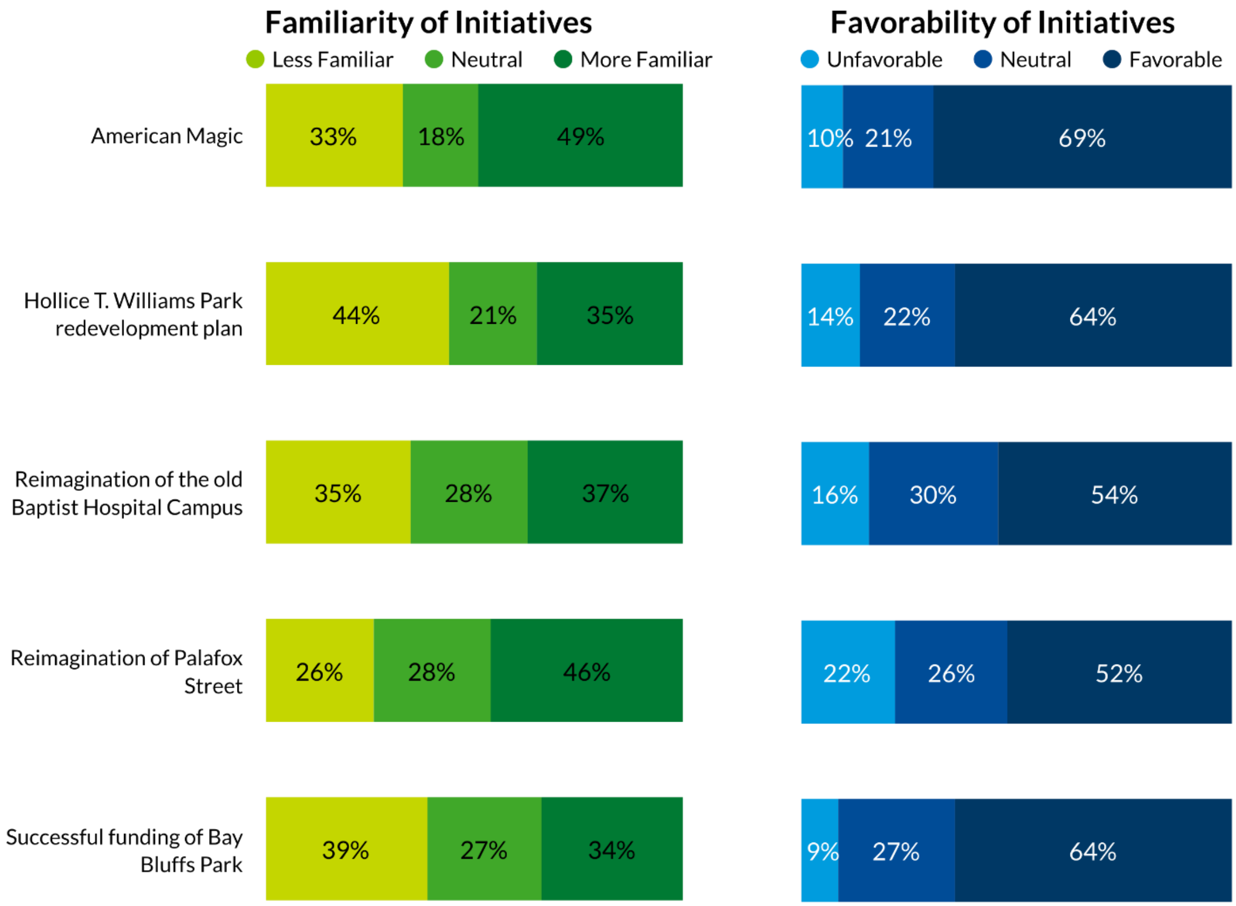
Figure 6: When thinking about the City's performance in the following key areas, how satisfied are you with the following?



The 2024 survey asked how familiar residents were with new city initiatives. If residents were familiar with the initiative, they were then asked how favorably they viewed the city initiative. The survey used a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was not at all familiar and not at all favorable, and 5 was extremely familiar and extremely favorable. **Figure 7** summarizes the level of familiarity with recent city initiatives, as well as how favorably the initiatives are perceived. The initiative that residents were the most familiar with was American Magic, with 49 percent, followed closely by the reimagination of Palafox Street, with 46 percent. Residents expressed less familiarity towards the funding of Bay Bluffs Park and the redevelopment plan for Hollice T. Williams Park, with 44 percent and 39 percent, respectively.

Based on participants that were familiar with these city initiatives, American Magic had the highest rate of favorability with 69 percent. The Hollice T. Williams Park redevelopment plan and successful funding of Bay Bluffs Park initiatives had the second highest favorability ratings with 64 percent each. Participants viewed the reimagination of Palafox Street least favorably, however 52 percent still viewed the initiative favorably.

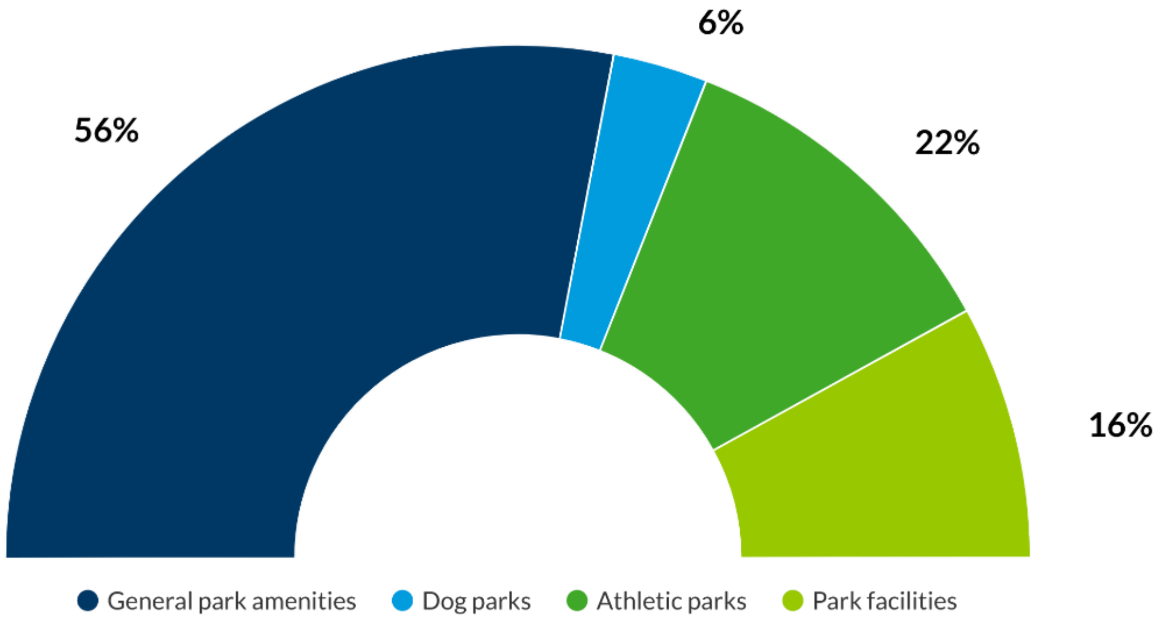
Figure 7: How familiar are you with the following efforts? If familiar, how favorable do you view the city initiatives?



City of Pensacola Services

Funding for various city initiatives and local infrastructure improvements come from tax collections and is supplemented through other funding sources, such as paid city parking. Given that 85 percent of paid parking revenues come from non-city residents, respondents were asked to choose the option that they preferred to fund potential new projects, for example, building a new $20 million parking garage. Very few residents, 12 percent, prefer the project to be funded through a bond which would rely on the city of Pensacola taxpayers. In contrast, 88 percent prefer funding the garage, or other projects, through parking revenues, which are primarily funded by non-residents.

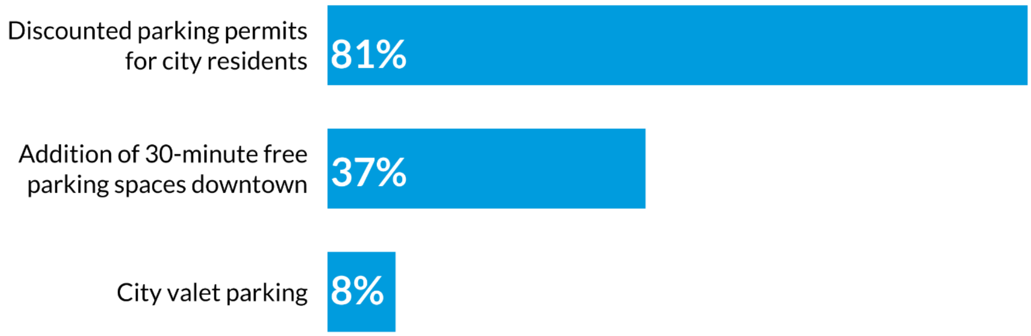
Figure 8: Which of the following is your top priority?



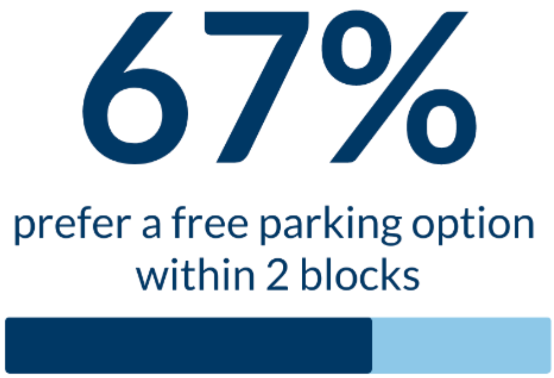
While Pensacola has made improvements on many fronts, the city parks have been a topic of interest for local officials. The city has $1.6M earmarked for maintenance and improvements to city parks. Residents were asked their top priority given this information. **Figure 8** displays their priorities, with the leading priority focused on improving general park amenities, 56 percent. Respondents were least concerned with improvements being made to dog parks with 6 percent. Sales tax revenues collected within the city limits are shared throughout Escambia County. Only about 1/6 of LOST (Local Option Sales Tax) revenue is allocated to the city. Only 35 percent of residents were aware of this tax distribution.

Parking remains a hot topic for city officials as they move towards a different system for residents. Mayor Reeves is considering offering a discounted parking option for residents. **Figure 9** shows the various options considered by the mayor and how residents plan to utilize them. Only 8 percent would utilize city valet parking, while 37 percent would utilize the 30-minute free zone in downtown Pensacola. In contrast, 81 percent would use the discounted permits for city residents.

Figure 9: Identify which of these you would utilize – select all that apply

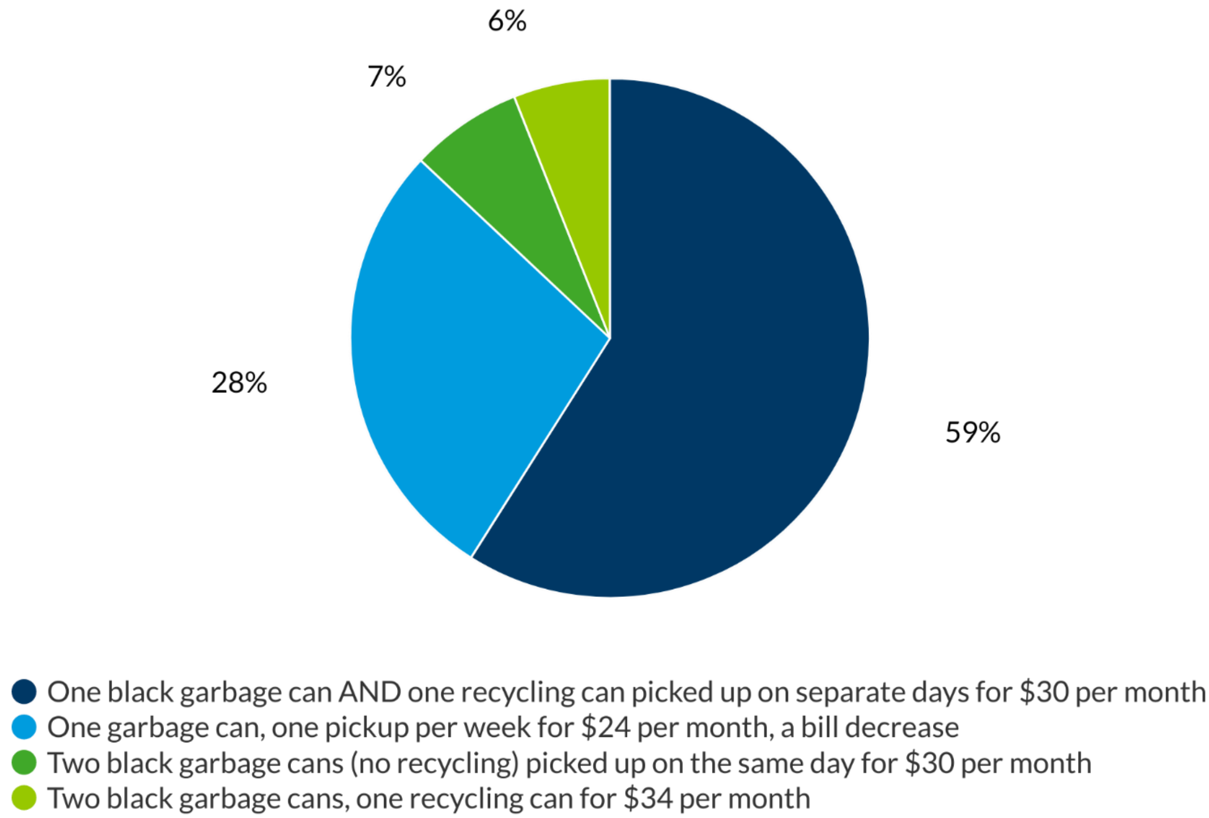


Parking scenarios in the survey measure preference towards distance and cost. Approximately 67 percent of residents prefer a free parking option within 2 blocks. This highlights that residents prefer free parking, even if it requires a further parking option, as opposed to closer parking that is a paid space.



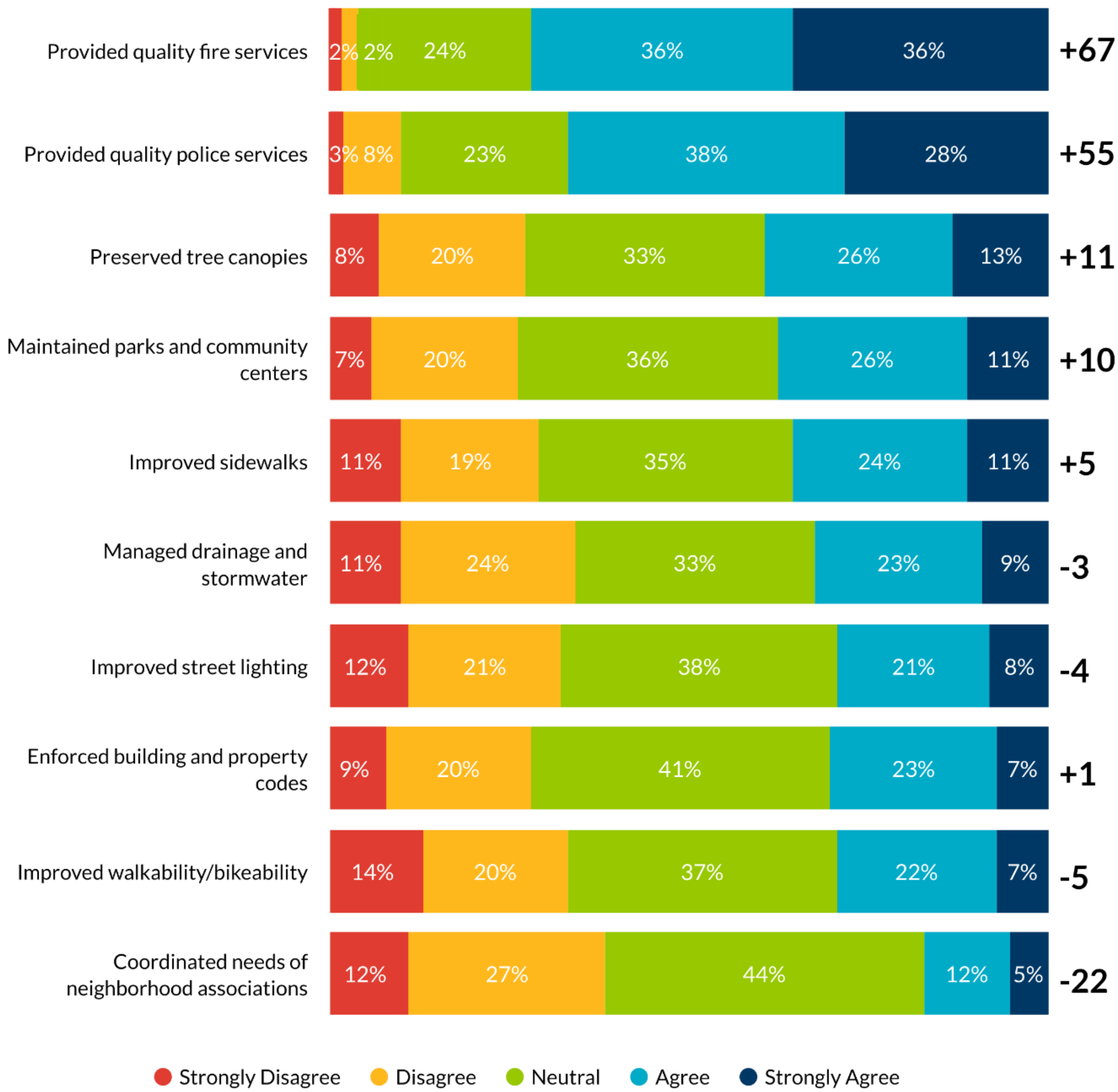
Currently, the city charges about $29 per month for sanitation services. The city plans to streamline its sanitation services and offer curbside recycling again. Residents were asked to select their preference amongst the 4 options for sanitation services. **Figure 10** shows the ways in which the city plans to streamline these services. Residents prefer an option that provides both a trash can and a recycling bin, and they do not mind a marginal price increase. Only 7 percent opted for two trash cans picked up on the same day and no recycling, with a $1 increase, versus 6 percent that wanted two trash cans and one recycling for a $5 increase. Lastly, 28 percent preferred one trash can, and a bill decreased to $24 a month.

Figure 10: Your current sanitation bill is around $29 per month for sanitation services. Given this, which of these four options would you choose?



When thinking about the city's infrastructure and neighborhood, residents were asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with recent progress over the last year. **Figure 11** shows the level of agreement with each of the statements. A whopping 72 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the city provided quality fire services, and 66 percent felt the same about police services. Additionally, fire and police services had the highest overall agreement scores with +67 and +55, respectively. Coordinated needs of neighborhood associations had the highest percentage of respondents that disagreed or strongly disagreed that progress had been made by the city over the last year, with 39 percent and an overall agreement score of -22. This section also had the highest percentage of neutral participants with 44 percent.

Figure 11: When thinking about the City's infrastructure and your neighborhood, how strongly do you disagree or agree with the following?



Public Safety

Residents were asked to consider the City's progress toward improving key areas of public safety over the last year. **Figure 12** shows the level of agreement for each category. Many respondents felt unopinionated towards these areas of improvement, with each of them at 41 percent or higher in the neutral zone.

In regard to public safety, residents were also asked to consider their top safety concern. **Figure 13** shows how the given public safety concerns were rated by participants, with 42 percent showing the most concern over gun violence. Concern over gun violence, however, has decreased 10 percentage points from the previous year. With the decrease in concern over gun violence, participants indicated an increased concern in other areas, such as theft and burglary, which grew from 19 percent to 25 percent, as well as an increase in concern over human trafficking, which increased from 7 percent to 12 percent. Participants showed the least concern in regard to sexual assault, with only 4 percent. When we look at results by city council district, gun violence was the top concern for every district, except for District 2, where their top concern was reported to be theft and burglary.

Figure 12: When thinking about public safety, how strongly do you disagree or agree with the following?

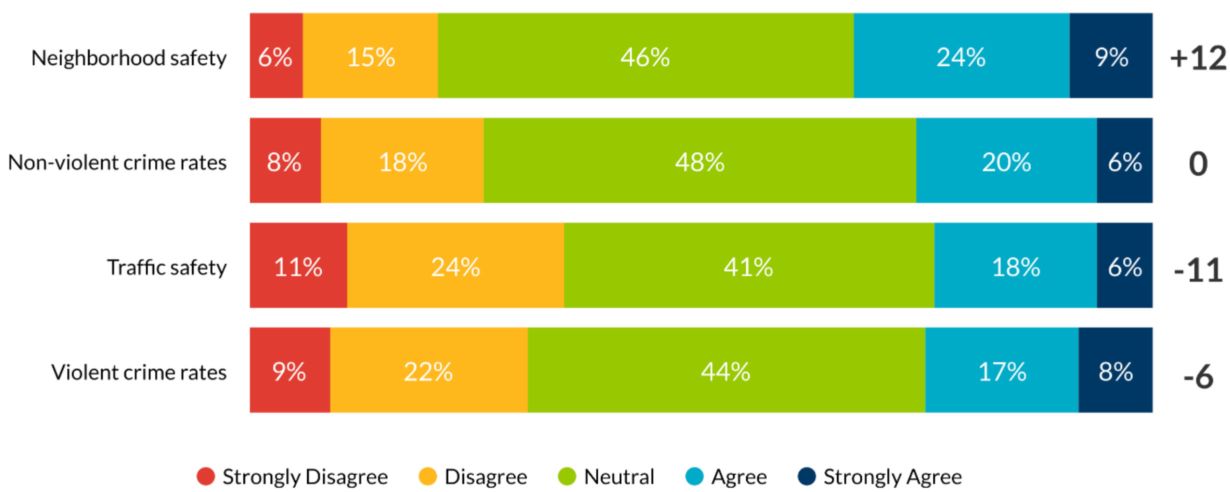
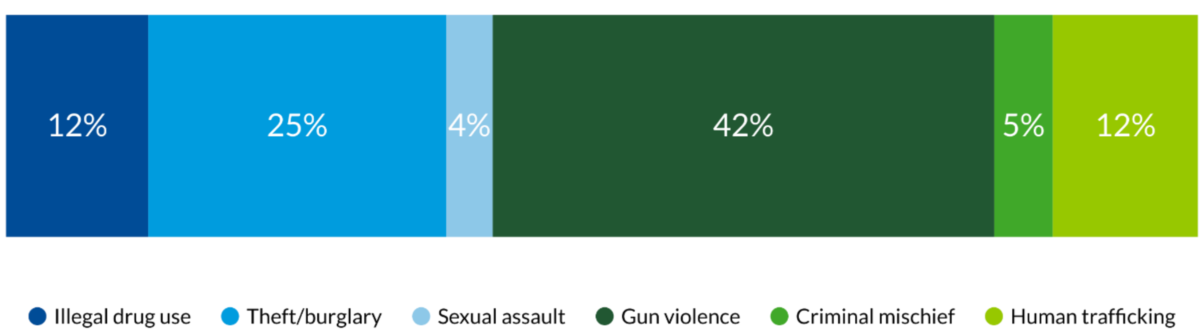


Figure 13: What is your top public safety concern?



Communications

Residents were asked how they currently receive information from the city and how they would prefer to receive it. Both questions allowed respondents to select multiple answers, resulting in totals over 100 percent. **Figure 14** compares the method in which residents currently receive City info, and the method that they prefer to use. The City of Pensacola website also yielded about 47 percent of responses. For their preferred method, residents lean to social media, as well as online/print media.

About 8 percent of respondents indicated they used a method other than those listed, while 6 percent said they preferred a method other than those listed. For those that selected the "other" option, they were able to specify through written text. Note that some write-in responses were simplified to fit broader categories. **Figure 15** exhibits two word clouds for current and preferred methods to receive info from the City. The size of the word is associated with the number of times it was present in the responses.

Figure 14: How do you currently receive City info, and how do you prefer to receive it?

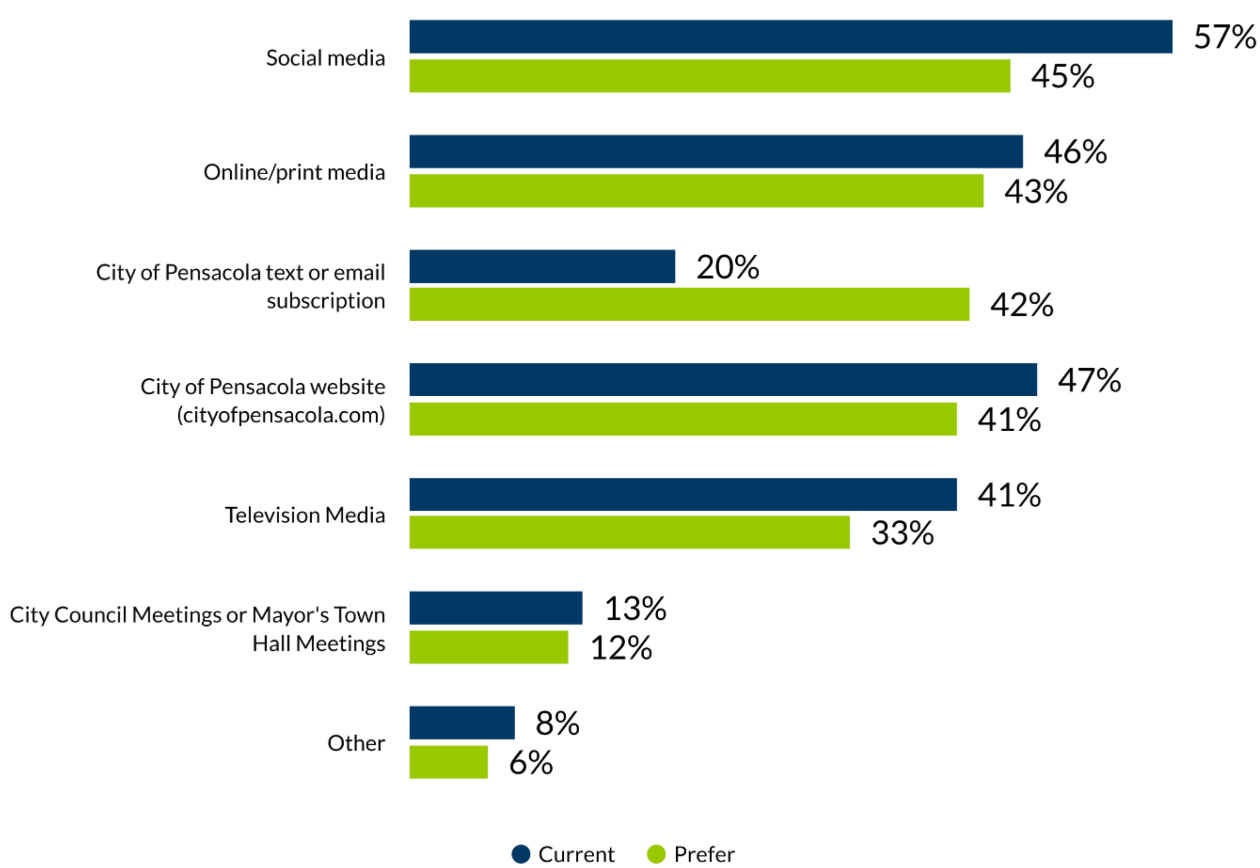


Figure 15: Written response to current channel and preferred method of communication

Department Engagement

Residents were also asked about their engagement with the City's public safety services over the last year, displayed in **Figure 16**. The fire department had the least interactions with our survey respondents, while majority of people, 56 percent, had no interactions with either department. However, of those that interacted, 59 percent called for an emergency, 46 percent interacted in public, 30 percent interacted in a community gathering, and 11 percent at a city hall meeting, **Figure 17**.

Figure 16: Which did you interact with?

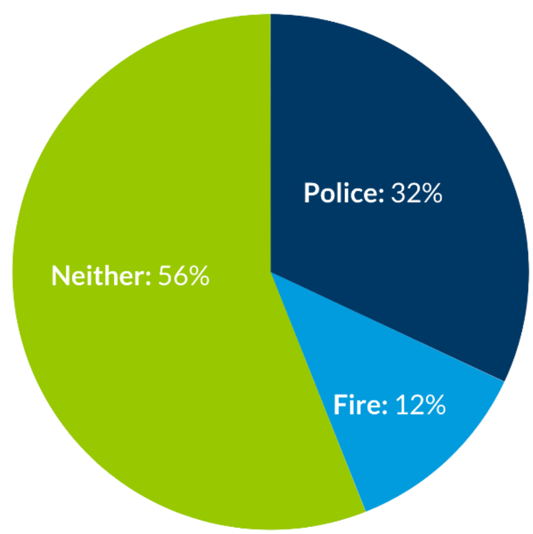


Figure 17: How did you interact with public safety services?

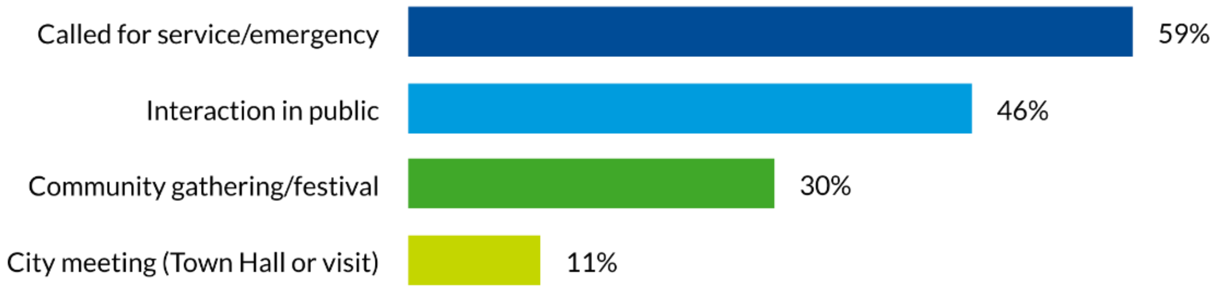
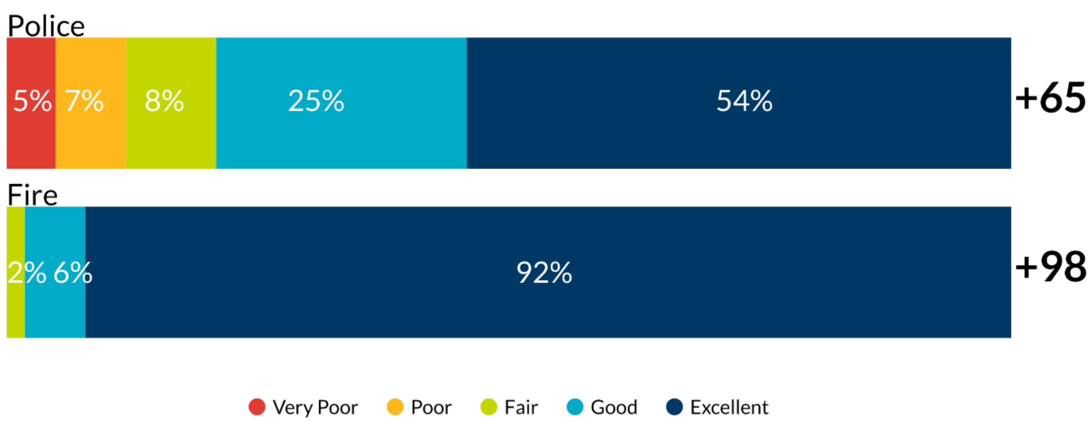


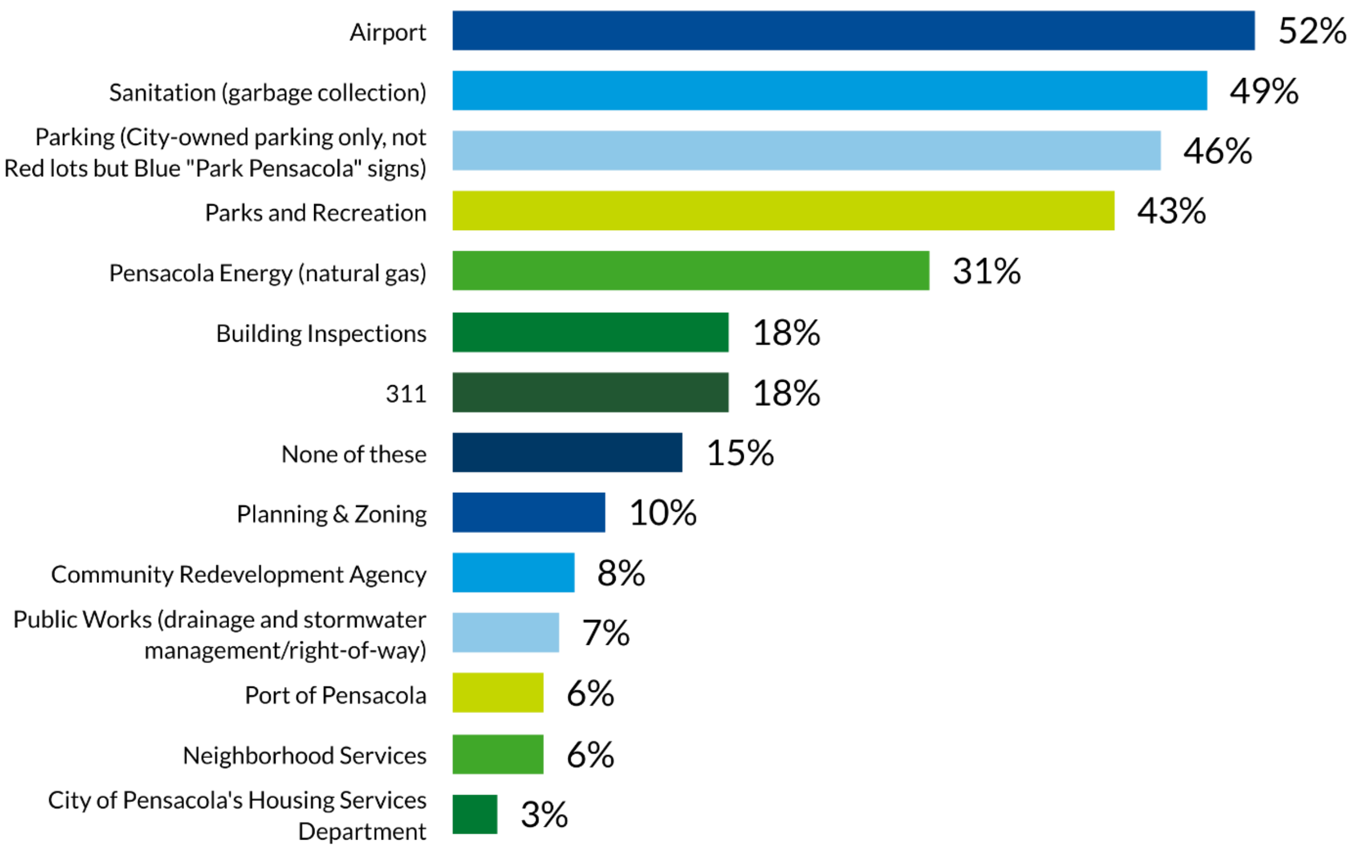
Figure 18: Public safety customer service review



Customer service rankings for those departments were exceptionally high. The public safety departments are rated in **Figure 18**. The highest rating went to fire services, which bolstered 98 percent of responses as good or excellent. Police services scored a bit below them but still managed to garner 79 percent of responses as “good” or “excellent”.

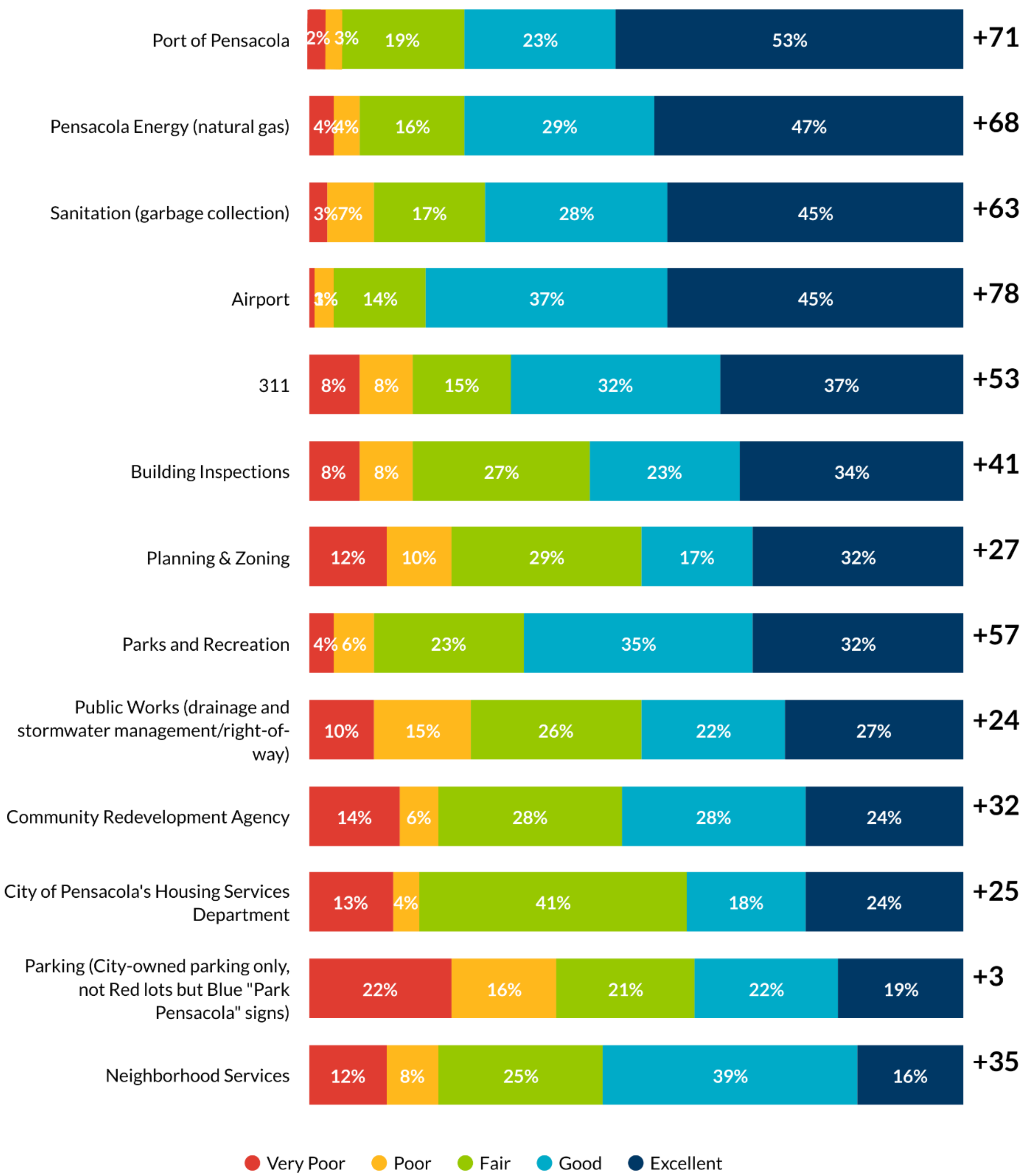
Figure 19 shows the offices that residents engaged with in the previous year. When looking at interactions with these offices, 49 percent of residents interacted with Sanitation (garbage collection) over the past year. Another 46 percent engaged with Parking services. Of all City offices, the airport continued to have the most engagement, indicating that Pensacola residents heavily rely on the airport for their travel needs. The City's Housing Services Department had the least engagement among participants, with only 3 percent.

Figure 19: Which of the following departments did you interact with?



Participants that reported interacting with City offices were given a follow-up question where they were asked to rate the customer service they received from the departments in which they interacted. In **Figure 20**, we see the customer service ratings where 1 star is rated very poor, and 5 star is excellent. In addition to the airport having the most interaction, they also had the highest customer service rating, with 82 percent of participants rating their customer service as either good or excellent and an overall satisfaction score of +78. The Port of Pensacola and Pensacola Energy followed closely behind, each with 76 percent of participants rating their customer service as good or excellent. The Port of Pensacola did have a slightly higher overall satisfaction score of +71 versus Pensacola Energy's overall score of +68. While Parking received the highest percentage of poor and very poor ratings with 38 percent, they still had an overall satisfaction score of +3.

Figure 20: Rate the customer service of each department



Conclusion

Pensacola boasts a unique residential experience with amenities like beautiful sandy beaches, adventurous outdoor recreation opportunities, historical and cultural enrichment, a bustling downtown area, and many more enticing amenities that attract individuals to the city. Some of the top attractions for residents are waterfront access, feeling safe in their community, and the recreational arts, crafts, and culture afforded to them in the city. Survey participants indicated reducing homelessness and addressing the high cost of housing were top priorities. Additionally, 81 percent of participants were interested in discounted parking for residents. The fire services performed extremely well in customer service, with 98 percent giving them a good or excellent review. Gun violence was a top concern, and human trafficking showed increasing concerns among residents.

Appendix

Table 1

	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7	City of Pensacola
Total Population	7,607	7,795	7,513	7,538	8,030	7,818	7,725	**54,026**
% of City	14.08%	14.43%	13.91%	13.95%	14.86%	14.47%	14.30%	100%
Households	3,345	3,801	3,535	3,573	3,579	3,765	3,628	**25,226**
% Female	46.63%	47.27%	47.77%	47.42%	46.16%	49.37%	46.37%	**47.28%**
% Male	53.37%	52.73%	52.23%	52.58%	53.84%	50.63%	53.63%	**52.72%**
Age Brackets								
0-4	5.24%	4.98%	4.47%	4.86%	6.71%	4.42%	6.07%	**5.25%**
5-14	10.54%	9.41%	9.34%	10.46%	11.82%	7.52%	11.90%	**10.14%**
15-19	5.14%	5.64%	5.34%	4.94%	5.74%	4.64%	5.95%	**5.34%**
20-24	4.90%	9.26%	5.24%	4.85%	5.36%	5.17%	4.81%	**5.66%**
25-34	13.57%	18.22%	12.10%	13.55%	15.19%	17.14%	14.55%	**14.90%**
35-44	12.61%	12.21%	11.52%	12.74%	11.91%	12.71%	11.97%	**12.24%**
45-54	10.16%	10.44%	10.13%	11.39%	10.31%	12.71%	11.05%	**10.88%**
55-64	13.40%	11.40%	15.68%	14.17%	13.95%	15.43%	14.14%	**14.02%**
65-74	13.20%	9.47%	15.02%	12.93%	11.22%	12.77%	11.74%	**12.34%**
75-84	7.52%	6.05%	7.99%	6.67%	5.27%	5.18%	5.65%	**6.33%**
85 +	3.73%	2.92%	3.17%	3.44%	2.52%	2.31%	2.17%	**2.89%**
Age 25+	5,643	5,512	5,680	5,645	5,650	6,118	5,505	**39,754**
Race and Ethnicity								
American Indian, Native	0.52%	0.52%	0.44%	0.47%	0.40%	0.30%	0.45%	**0.44%**
Asian	3.48%	4.61%	2.83%	1.90%	1.24%	1.53%	1.34%	**2.42%**
Black	7.97%	20.46%	4.11%	7.76%	47.71%	20.13%	51.34%	**22.78%**
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.11%	0.14%	0.05%	0.04%	0.13%	0.05%	0.11%	**0.09%**
White	78.07%	61.59%	83.95%	81.61%	42.51%	70.03%	39.34%	**65.30%**
Other	1.51%	3.15%	1.16%	1.08%	1.36%	1.30%	1.22%	**1.54%**
Multi-Race	8.35%	9.54%	7.45%	7.16%	6.65%	6.66%	6.19%	**7.43%**
Hispanic	5.68%	7.68%	5.58%	4.64%	4.81%	5.17%	4.35%	**5.42%**
Not Hispanic	94.32%	92.32%	94.42%	95.36%	95.19%	94.83%	95.65%	**94.58%**
Income								
Average HH Income	$93,013	$70,008	$122,432	$112,052	$72,225	$102,539	$52,329	**$89,228**
Median HH Income	$77,859	$53,879	$93,431	$88,206	$54,104	$70,901	$36,682	**$67,866**
Per Capita Income	$41,231	$35,142	$57,213	$52,008	$33,151	$51,492	$25,388	**$42,232**