

FINAL REPORT

**City of Bellingham
Residential Survey 2013**

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Pamela Jull, PhD
Rachel Williams, MA
Joyce Prigot, PhD
Carol Lavoie



APPLIED RESEARCH NORTHWEST, LLC
P.O. Box 1193
1116 Key Street Suite 203
Bellingham, Washington 98227
360.647.6067
www.arnorthwest.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The City of Bellingham (the City) contracted with Applied Research Northwest (ARN) to conduct a survey of Bellingham's residents. This survey was conducted on-line and by phone from mid-November to early December, 2013. It is part of the planning process for City programs and to evaluate the progress the City is making towards its nine *Legacies and Strategic Commitments*.

This survey followed similar efforts conducted in 2008 and 2010. The 2013 survey repeated many of the questions asked in 2008 and 2010 in an effort to identify changes over time. Results of opinion surveys such as this one are among numerous ways the City is measuring its performance and determining if City programs and services are meeting long-term goals. An overview of the City's *Legacies and Strategic Commitments* can be found in the appendices to this report, and more information about these goals and City performance measurement can be found on the City website (www.cob.org.)

PURPOSE

The purpose of the survey was to better understand people's perceptions of and experiences with City services and to measure the City's performance in delivering results on community priorities. Included in the survey were questions that provide information for the City of Bellingham's nine long-term legacy goals. These nine goals cover:

1. Clean, Safe Drinking Water
2. Healthy Environment
3. Vibrant Sustainable Economy
4. Sense of Place
5. Safe and Prepared Community
6. Mobility and Connectivity
7. Access to Quality of Life Amenities
8. Equity and Social Justice, and
9. Quality, Responsive City Services

Survey questions included two different types of measures: Community indicators which require community involvement to change and City Performance Measures which reflect the City of Bellingham's current perceived performance.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was administered by delivering letters from Mayor Kelli Linville's office to about 3,500 randomly sampled households with Bellingham zip codes. The letter stated that the Bellingham City Council and the Mayor are seeking residents' input about City government services and issues facing our community. The letter indicated that the survey could be taken either on-line, for which a web-link was provided, or by telephone, for which a toll-free number was provided.

The survey consisted of 48 questions; 42 were substantive and six demographic questions for statistical purposes. Surveys took a median of 15-½ minutes to complete. The survey garnered a 17% response rate and yielded a margin of error of 4%. The data were examined and all complete surveys from City of Bellingham residents were included in the final sample of 597 residents.

MAJOR FINDINGS FOR EACH LEGACY

Below is a summary of the significant findings for each City legacy.

Clean, Safe Drinking Water:

- The vast majority of residents (91%) of residents said that it was at least *somewhat important* that the City prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect drinking water. The importance was particularly high among older residents, females and lower income residents.

Healthy Environment:

- The vast majority of residents viewed the City's job protecting the environment positively with 80% saying it was *good* or *excellent*, up from 73% in 2010, and 68% gave similar ratings to the job the City is doing leading local and regional efforts to reduce human impact on the environment.
- The importance of the City promoting the use of renewable energy was rated as *very* or *extremely* important by 63% of respondents, more so by females and those with lower incomes than males or those of moderate or higher incomes. Similarly, 61% gave such a rating the importance that the City reduce auto trips by improving transit, bike and pedestrian choices.
- Some residents (10%) identified environmental concerns as among the most important problem facing Bellingham today.

Vibrant Sustainable Economy

- 46% of residents rated the job the City is doing encouraging economic development and business growth as *good* or *excellent*. These ratings showed an increase of 7% over 2010 ratings. Women gave more favorable ratings as did younger residents and those of lower incomes.

- The economy was the most prevalent topic addressed when respondents were asked what the most important problem was facing Bellingham that City leaders can do something about (19% of responses). Some residents (7%) viewed Bellingham as needing more and better paying jobs, while others focused on business development (5%).
- Concerns about impacts from the proposed coal terminal (17%) and waterfront redevelopment (13%) were also frequently mentioned.

Sense of Place

- Residents' ratings and responses to open-ended questions indicate a high degree of satisfaction with Bellingham life. Community characteristics, natural environment, recreation opportunities and public services and amenities were noted by 78% of respondents as what they value the most about Bellingham.
- Residents' ratings of close-ended questions and responses to open-ended questions describe growth and related issues as significant problems that are impacting the lives of residents. Almost 10% of people responding to open-ended questions identified growth-related issues as the important problems facing Bellingham.
- Over two-thirds (70%) of the residents in the survey rated the City as doing an *excellent* or *good* job protecting the livability of Bellingham's neighborhoods. However, in 2010 76% gave the city as high a rating. Similarly, residents' ratings of the job the City is doing planning for growth declined slightly from 44% in 2010 to 41% in 2013.

Safe Prepared Community

- Overall, the ratings of the job the City is doing providing safety services (fire, police and Medic-One) were highly positive, with 88% saying the City is doing a *good* or *excellent* job. Separate ratings of fire services, emergency medical services and crime prevention work also showed increases over 2010. Homeowners rated crime prevention slightly higher than did renters.
- More than half of all residents (61%) indicated that they feel *very* or *extremely* safe when walking alone at night in their neighborhoods. However, this is not the case for a minority of City residents. Over one in ten (12%) said they feel *not very* or *not at all* safe in their neighborhoods at night.
- More residents felt unsafe alone in the downtown area at night (41%) than those who felt safe there (19%). People's sense of safety downtown during the day declined from 77% feeling *extremely* or *very* safe in 2010 to 70% in 2013. Females were particularly likely to report feeling *not very* or *not at all* safe downtown at night (52% vs. 33% of males).
- Some residents' responses to open-ended questions indicated they value Bellingham's low crime rate and feeling of safety (8%), while others (6%) indicated public safety issues are important problems.
- Just over half (56%) of Bellingham residents reported that they were prepared to sustain themselves and their families for 72 hours after a major disaster. Almost another third (29%) reported that they were *somewhat* prepared in case of a major disaster. Emergency preparedness declined substantially between 2008 (64%) and 2010 (54%) and has recovered only slightly since (+2%). Preparedness is higher among those with children in the household, homeowners and those who've lived in Bellingham longer.

Mobility and Connectivity Options:

- The majority of residents (61%) viewed the job the City is doing improving streets as *excellent* or *good* while more than one third of residents (39%) said they are *only fair* or *poor*. Neighborhood street condition was rated as *good*, *very good*, or *excellent* by 79% of respondents.
- The vast majority of City residents (84%) rated walking-distance access to bus stops positively. Similarly, a large portion (90%) rated their access to shopping and other services as *good*, *very good* or *excellent*.
- Neighborhood street safety was rated best for pedestrians (74% *good*, *very good* or *excellent*) followed by traffic speed (70%) and bicyclists (64%). All of these ratings represent improvements over 2010 ratings of street safety.
- Some residents (21%) indicated they valued the community's local and regional ease of access, while others (26%) identified transportation-related concerns as important problems.

Access to Quality of Life Amenities

- Over ninety percent of residents (94%) rated the quality of life in Bellingham *excellent* or *good*. It is especially high among home owners and those over age 50.
- Of residents surveyed, (90%) rated the job the City of Bellingham is doing maintaining parks and trails as *excellent* or as *good*.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of residents reported that the job the City is doing creating opportunities for education in culture and the arts as *excellent* or *good*. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of residents reported that the job the City is doing providing library services as *excellent* or *good*.
- Many varied factors were mentioned in describing what they valued most about Bellingham, including the size of the community, the relaxed pace of life, and enjoyment of the people who live here.

Equity and Social Justice

- Since 2010 there has been improvement in ratings on housing affordability with 27% saying it is *excellent* or *very good* compared to 18% in 2010. This is the among the most substantial changes for all survey items.
- While opportunity for housing ratings improved, opportunities for living wage jobs were mentioned as a concern in open-ended questions.
- Social service and social justice issues were identified by 8% of respondents as important problems for City leaders to address.

Quality and Responsive City Services

- Resident's ratings of the job the City has been doing using tax dollars responsibly included 56% saying *excellent* or *good*, with the balance saying it was *only fair* or *poor*. A comparison of 2010 to 2013 ratings of the job the City has been doing using tax dollars responsibly shows a change for the better, and is one of the largest shifts in the survey (+8%).

- Just over half of the residents (57%) rated the City's job of involving the public in important community decisions positively. The overall pattern of responses was slightly better in 2013 compared to 2010 (+5%).
- Just over half the residents (55%) rated the City as doing an *excellent* or *good* job communicating with citizens about important community decisions. A comparison of 2010 to 2013's ratings shows promising change with a 8% improvement in ratings.

CONCLUSION

Residents' descriptions of Bellingham were very positive, and many felt there is a very high quality of life here. Aspects of Bellingham life that were highly valued by residents included Bellingham being a right-sized city, with a strong sense of community, a casual, small-town feel and full of friendly, interesting people. Residents appreciated the fact that there are beautiful, natural open spaces within the city and that the City is in close proximity to outdoor recreation and rural areas. Residents valued having beautiful parks and greenways with good trails and having recreation activities and events outdoors. Residents appreciated the presence of art and culture in their midst, lots of entertainment options and the presence of higher education opportunities. Finally, they valued that Bellingham is a safe place in which to live.

Many aspects of City performance on metrics associated with the key legacies showed no change or improvement. Of particular note were four substantial shifts for the better – housing affordability increased 9%, responsible use of tax dollars increased by 8%, communicating with the public increased 8% as did ratings of the job the City is doing protecting the environment. Other improvements were seen in provision of safety service (fire, crime prevention and emergency medical), access to bus stops, shopping and other amenities, and feeling safe in people's neighborhoods.

Areas that may warrant some attention included protecting the livability of neighborhoods, which slipped by 6% in 2013. Ratings of the City's plans for growth were down slightly as was peoples' sense of safety walking downtown, especially at night. Finally, although encouraging economic development was up 6%, still a minority of residents (46%) rated the City as doing an *excellent* or *good job* on this measure.

Aspects of Bellingham life that were considered by residents as important problems that City leaders can address included overcrowding and sprawl, with its concomitant traffic congestion and other growth-related issues. Also mentioned as important problems were Bellingham needing more employment, specifically better paying jobs, and more local and industrial business development.

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The City of Bellingham (the City) contracted with Applied Research Northwest (ARN) to conduct a survey of Bellingham's residents. This survey was conducted on-line and by phone from mid-November to early December, 2013 as a part of the planning process for City programs and to evaluate the progress the City is making towards its nine *Legacies and Strategic Commitments*, adopted by the Bellingham City Council in July, 2009.

This survey follows similar efforts conducted in 2008 and 2010. The 2013 survey repeats many of the questions asked in 2008 and 2010 in an effort to track changes over time. Results of opinion surveys such as this one are among numerous ways the City is measuring its performance and determining if City programs and services are meeting long-term goals. An overview of the City's *Legacies and Strategic Commitments* can be found in Appendix K, and more information about these goals and City performance measurement can be found on the City website (www.cob.org.)

The purpose of the survey was to better understand people's perceptions of and experiences with City services and to measure the City's performance in delivering results on community priorities. Included in the survey were questions that would provide information for the City of Bellingham's nine long term legacy goals. These nine goals cover Clean, Safe Drinking Water, Healthy Environment, Vibrant Sustainable Economy, Sense of Place, Safe and Prepared Community, Mobility and Connectivity, Access to Quality of Life Amenities, Equity and Social Justice, and Quality, Responsive City Services. Survey questions included two different types of measures. Community indicators involve topics which require community involvement to change. City Performance Measures reflect the City of Bellingham's current perceived performance.

As noted in the 2010 survey report, the key objectives for this survey included the following:

- Quantifying opinions about City efforts to provide Clean, Safe Drinking Water to City residents by limiting development in the Lake Whatcom watershed;
- Assessing perceptions of City actions taken to promote a Healthy Environment;
- Evaluating attitudes about City efforts made to provide a Vibrant Sustainable Economy;
- Determining effectiveness of actions taken to establish a Sense of Place for residents;
- Measuring opinions regarding the Safety and the degree of Preparedness of the Community;
- Assessing attitudes about the Mobility and Connectivity Options supported by the City;
- Classifying how residents feel about current Quality of Life Amenities;
- Measuring ratings of the Quality and Responsiveness of City Services; and
- Identifying positions about neighborhood housing affordability as a component of the City's commitment to Equity and Social Justice.

FINDINGS

In this section of the report, summaries of the responses from 597 residents to each survey question are presented using text and graphics. The data are compared to 2010 findings for all metrics, and in cases where differences exist a comparison is provided.

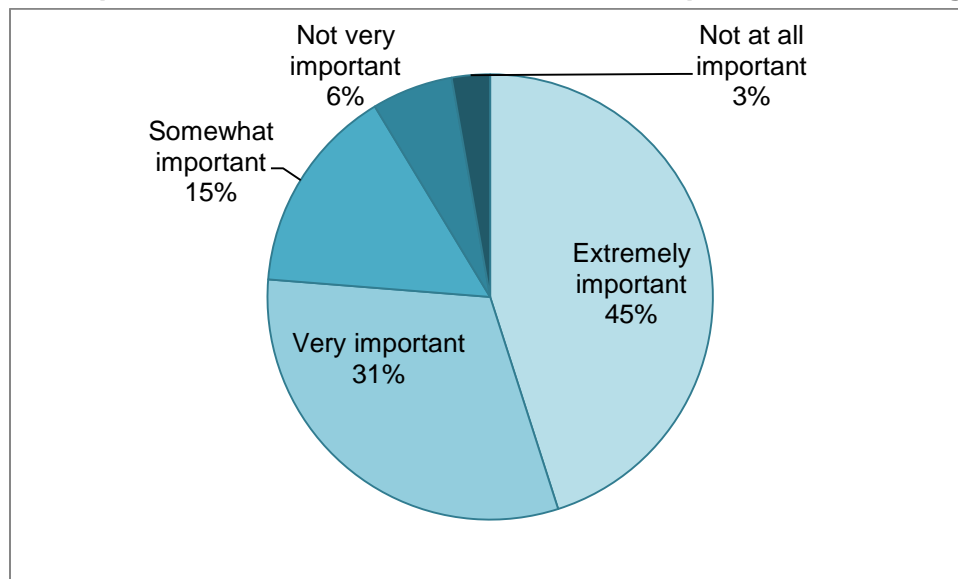
In some cases, residents' responses to survey questions were associated with characteristics of the residents. Some findings were associated with residents' gender, age, income, home ownership, number of years they had lived in Bellingham, and whether or not they were living with minor children. Every survey question was analyzed for these possible influences. For every survey question subgroup differences are presented in this section when statistically significant.

CLEAN SAFE DRINKING WATER

The City of Bellingham has committed to protecting and improving drinking water sources, including both Lake Whatcom Reservoir and the watershed surrounding it.

In addition it has elected to use efficient, ecological treatment techniques, to maintain a reliable distribution system, and to promote water conservation.

Figure 1: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect our drinking water.



(n=586)

Residents were asked how important it is that the City of Bellingham prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect our drinking water. Almost half of all residents (45%) replied that it was *extremely important* and almost a third (31%) replied that it was *very important* to prevent further development. Fifteen percent replied that it was *somewhat important*.

That is, over three-quarters of residents (76%) view it as *very* or *extremely* important. Moreover, 91% of residents view protecting Lake Whatcom Reservoir and its watershed as at least *somewhat important*.

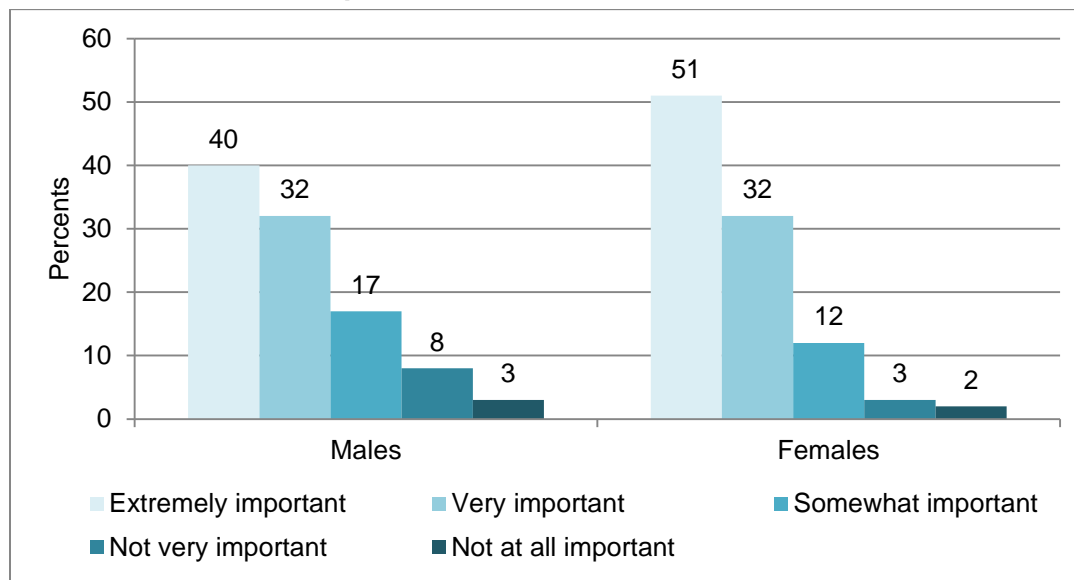
Fewer than ten percent of residents replied that it was *not very important* (6%) or *not at all important* (3%). The 2013 pattern of responses is similar to those from 2010.

These findings about development in the watershed are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with findings about Lake Whatcom development

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of how important it is that the City of Bellingham prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect our drinking water were investigated. The gender, age and income level of residents were found to be associated with these ratings.

Figure 2: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect our drinking water: Gender difference in responses.



(n=577)

Gender: Responses to this question about the importance of protecting Lake Whatcom Reservoir were associated with the gender of the resident.

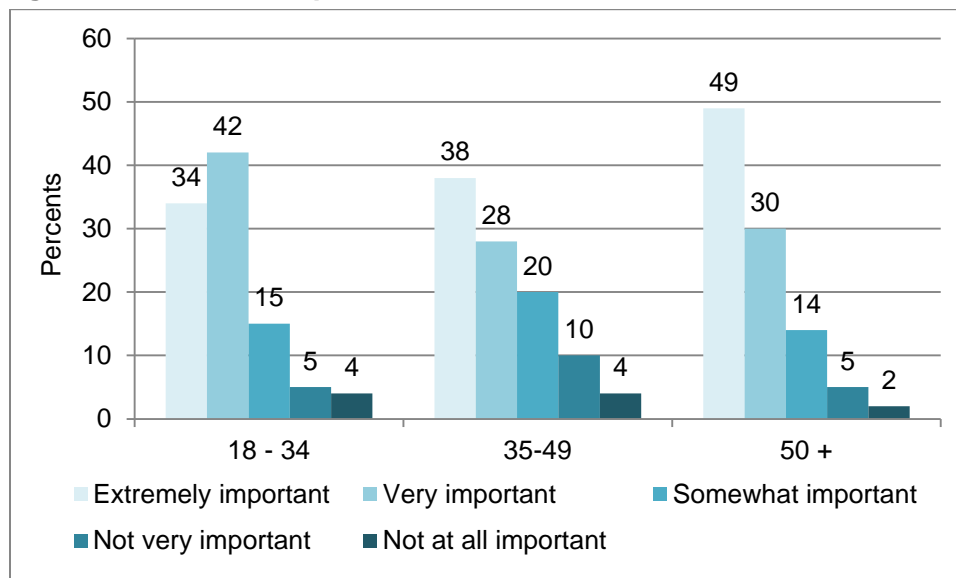
Females were more likely (83%) to rate protection as *extremely important* and *very important* compared to males (72%).

Males (17%) were more likely to rate protection as *somewhat important* compared to females (12%).

In addition, males (8%) were more likely to rate protection as *not very important* compared to females (3%).

This association of ratings of watershed development with residents' gender is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 3: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect our drinking water: Age differences in responses.



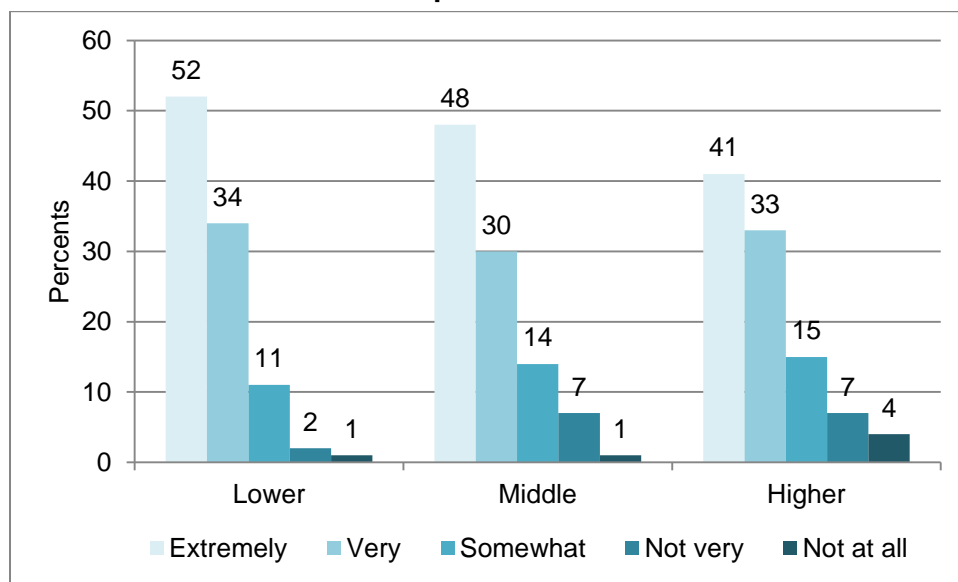
(n=576)

Age: Responses to this question about the importance of protecting Lake Whatcom Reservoir were associated with the residents' age as well.

A lower percentage of residents aged 35-49 (66%) said that prevention of development in the watershed is *extremely important* and *very important*, compared to the two other age groups (76% for residents 18-34 and 79% for those 50 and older.)

These differences in ratings about watershed development associated with the age of residents are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 4: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect our drinking water: Income level differences in responses.



(n=501)

(Lower: <24,999K; Middle: 25-74,999K; Higher: 75+K)

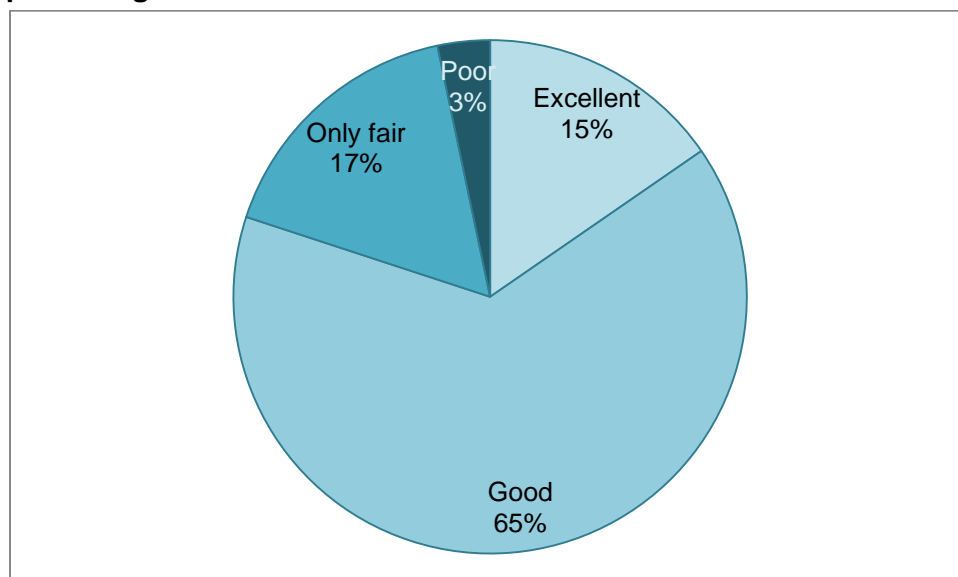
Income: Responses to this question about the importance of protection of Bellingham's water supply were also associated with residents' income level. A greater percentage of residents with a lower level of income (52%) said it was *extremely important* to protect the water shed compared to those with a higher level of income.

This difference in responses associated with income is illustrated in the figure above.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The City of Bellingham has committed to providing residents with a healthy environment in which to live. It has pledged to protect and improve the health of waterways within and around it, to protect the environment's ecological functions and the habitat it provides. Further the City aims to conserve natural and consumable resources and thereby reduce human contributions to climate change.

Figure 5: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing protecting the environment?



(n=556)

The vast majority of residents (80%) replied that the City is doing an *excellent* or a *good* job protecting the environment.

Almost two-thirds of residents replied that the City is doing a *good* (65%) job protecting the environment. Fifteen percent of residents (15%) said the City was doing an *excellent* job with environmental protection. Thus, 80% of the ratings were positive.

Twenty percent said that the City was doing *only a fair* job (17%) or a *poor* job (3%) protecting the environment.

These findings about environmental protection are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 6: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of the job the City is doing protecting the environment.



(2013: n=556)

Compared to 2010, about the same percentage of residents said the City was doing an *excellent* job of protecting the environment (14% in 2010 vs. 16% in 2013.)

A slightly higher percentage of residents said the City was doing a *good* job in 2013 compared to 2010 (59% in 2010 vs. 65% in 2013.)

The comparison of 2010 to 2013 responses about environmental protection is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics that influenced findings about environmental protection

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of the job the City is doing protecting the environment were investigated. Residents' home ownership status was found to be associated with these ratings.

Figure 7: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing protecting the environment: Differences between those who rent and own their homes.



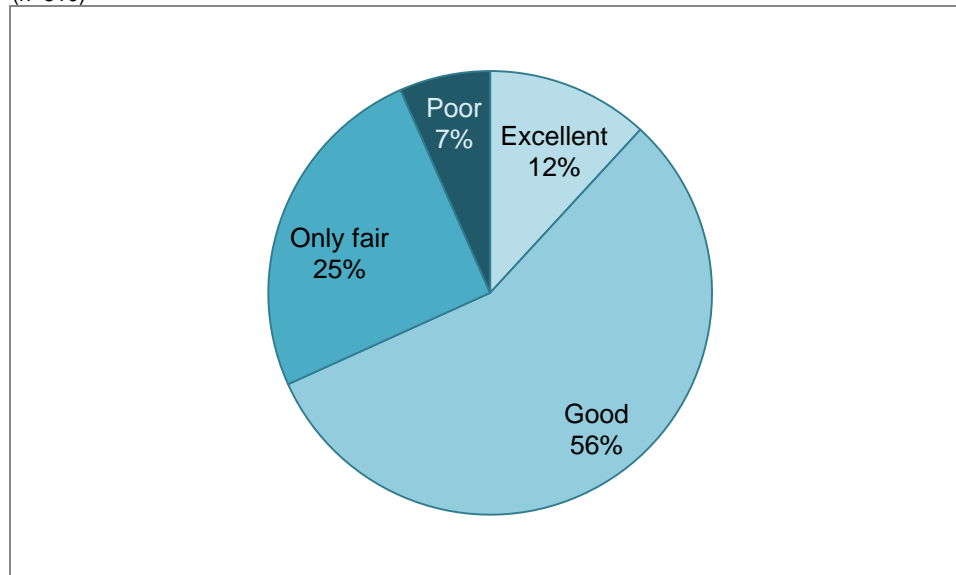
(n=552)

Homeownership: There was a difference in responses to this question depending on whether residents owned or rented their homes. A higher percentage of those who rent their homes (21%) said the City was doing an *excellent* job with environmental protection compared to those who own their homes (14%).

This difference in responses associated with home ownership is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 8: How would you rate the job the City is doing leading local and regional efforts to reduce human impact on the environment?

(n=510)



The job the City is doing leading environmental efforts was rated as *excellent* or *good* by 68% of residents.

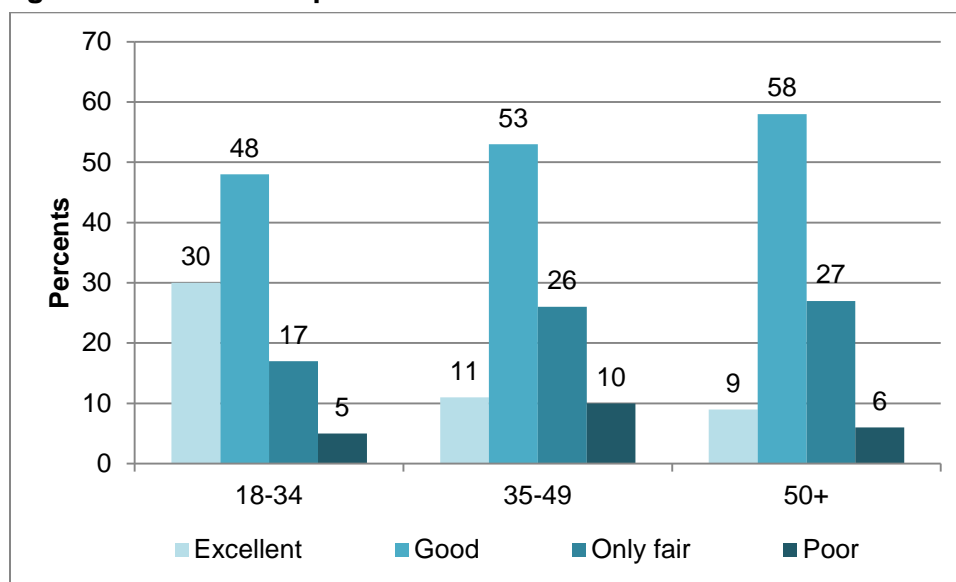
Over half the residents (56%) rated the job the City is doing leading local and regional efforts to reduce human impact on the environment as *good*. While twelve percent rated the City's job as *excellent*, 25% of residents rated it as *only fair*. Another seven percent rated the job the City is doing to reduce human impact on the environment as *poor*.

These findings about environmental leadership are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with environmental leadership ratings

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of the job the City is doing leading local and regional efforts to reduce human impact on the environment were investigated. Residents' age was found to be associated with these ratings.

**Figure 9: How would you rate the job the City is doing leading local and regional efforts to reduce human impact on the environment:
Age differences in responses.**



(n=502)

Age: A greater percentage of residents in the 18-34 age group (30%) rated the City's job of reducing the human impact on the environment as *excellent* as compared to those residents in the 35-49 age group (11%) and those residents aged 50 or above (9%).

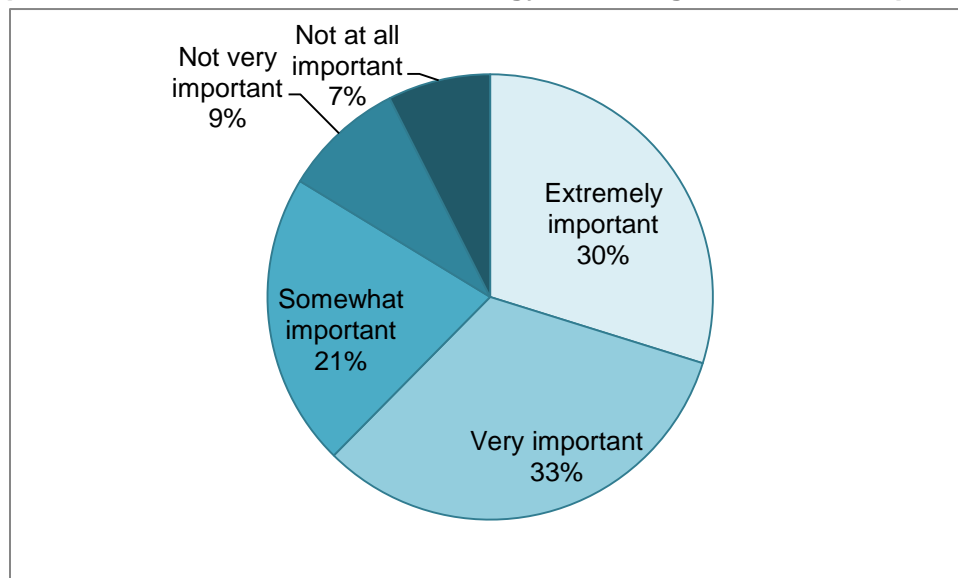
A higher percentage of residents 50 or older (58%) rated the City's job as *good* as compared to those residents in the 18-34 age group (48%) and those in the 35-49 age group (53%).

A lower percentage of residents aged 18-34 (17%) rated the City's job as *only fair* as compared to those residents in the 35-49 (26%) age group and those aged 50 or above (27%).

These differences associated with residents' age are illustrated in the figure above.

Specific actions taken to protect the environment

Figure 10: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham promotes the use of renewable energy such as green and solar power.



(n=586)

The vast majority of residents (84%) surveyed rated the City of Bellingham's promotion of renewable energy as at least *somewhat important*.

The majority of residents rated the City's promotion of renewable energy as important, 30% rating it as *extremely important* and 33% rating it as *very important*.

Another fifth of the residents (21%) rated it as *somewhat important*.

Nine percent of residents rated it as *not very important* and seven percent of residents rated it as *not at all important*.

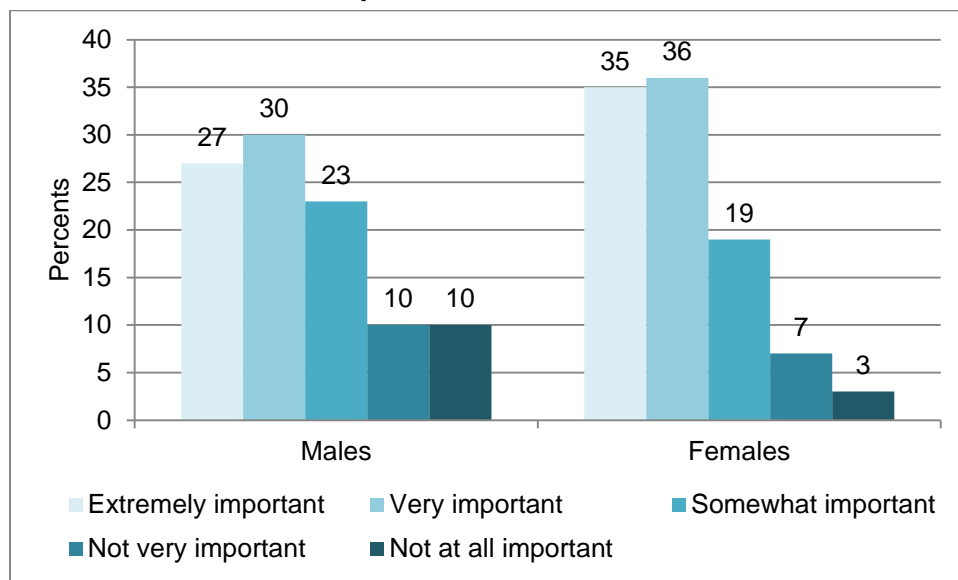
These findings are similar to those from the survey conducted in 2010.

These findings about the promotion of renewable energy are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with ratings about renewable energy

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of the City's promotion of the use of renewable energy were investigated. Residents' gender and income level were found to be associated with these ratings.

Figure 11: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham promotes the use of renewable energy such as green and solar power: Gender differences in responses.



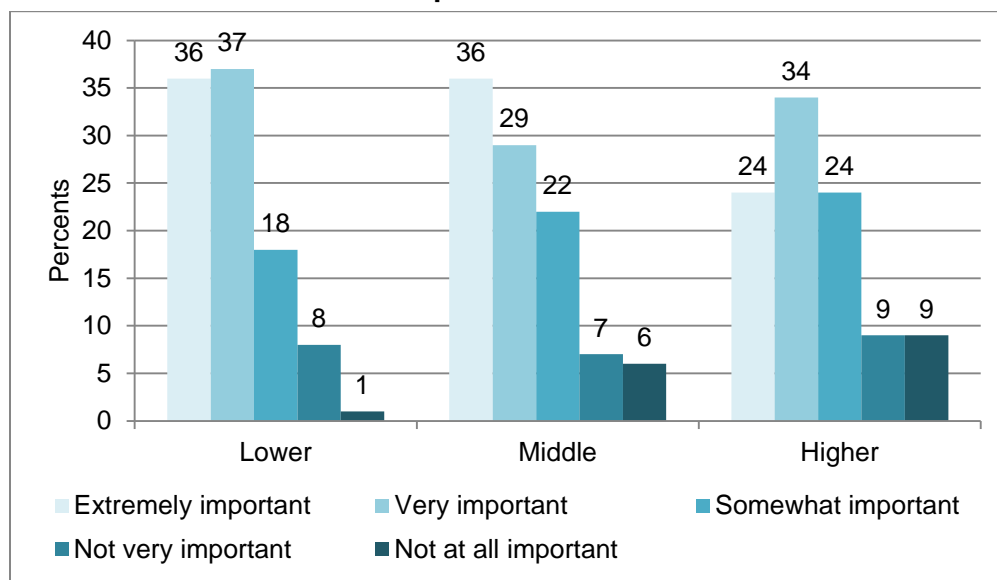
(n=577)

Gender: A higher percentage of females compared to males rated the City's promotion of renewable energy as *extremely important* (34% vs. males' 27%) and *very important* (36% vs. males' 30%).)

A higher percentage of males compared to females rated the City's promotion of renewable energy as *somewhat important* (23% vs. females' 19%) and *not at all important* (10% vs. females' 3%).)

These differences in ratings associated with residents' gender are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 12: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham promotes the use of renewable energy such as green and solar power: Income level differences in responses.



(n=499)

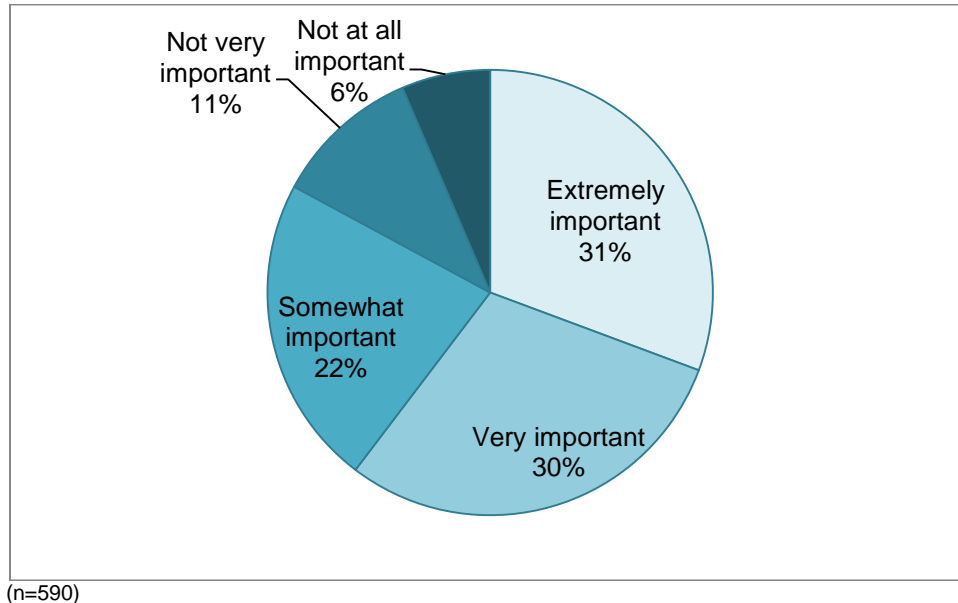
Income: Residents ratings of the importance of the City's promotion of renewable energy were associated with their level of income. A lower percentage of residents with a higher level of income (24%) rated the promotion of renewable energy as *extremely important* compared to residents in the lower (37%) or middle (36%) income levels.

A lower percentage of residents in the middle income level (29%) rated the promotion of renewable energy as *very important* compared to residents in the higher income level (37%) or higher (35%) income levels.

A higher percentage of residents in the higher income level (9%) rated the promotion of renewable energy as *not at all important* compared to residents in the lower (1%) and middle (6%) income levels.

This finding of an association of income level with ratings of the importance of the City's promotion of renewable energy is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 13a: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham reduce automobile trips by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices.

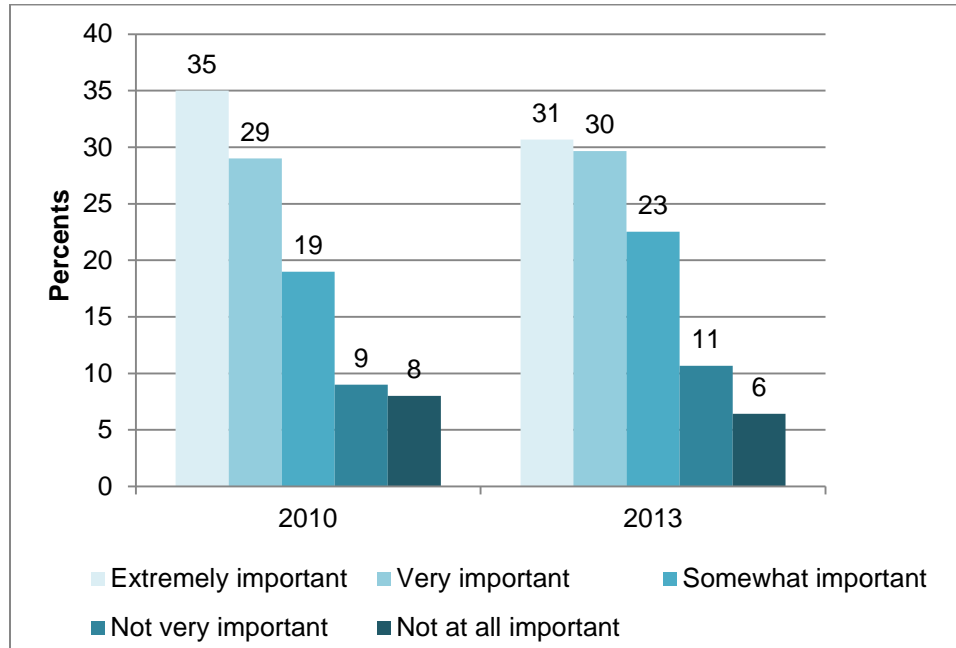


In 2013, 61% of residents reported that reducing automobile trips by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices was *extremely* and *very important*. An additional 22% reported that this was *somewhat important*, for a total of 83% of the responses being in the positive direction.

Seventeen percent (17%) of residents reported that reducing automobile trips by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices was *not very important* (11%) and *not at all important* (6%).

These findings are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 13b: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham reduce automobile trips by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices.



(n = 596)

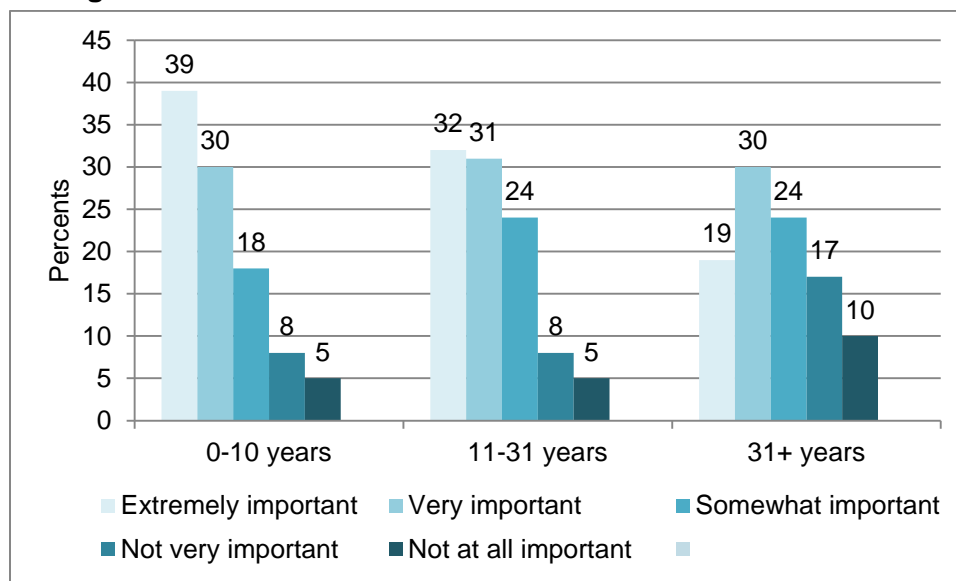
Since 2010, the percentage of residents rating transit improvements to reduce automobile trips as *extremely important* decreased from 35% to 31%.

This is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristic associated with ratings about transit choices

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of how important it is that the City reduce automobile trips by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices were investigated. The number of years residents have lived in Bellingham was found to be associated with these ratings.

Figure 14: Tell me how important it is that the City of Bellingham reduce automobile trips by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices: Differences in responses associated with the number of years residents have lived in Bellingham.



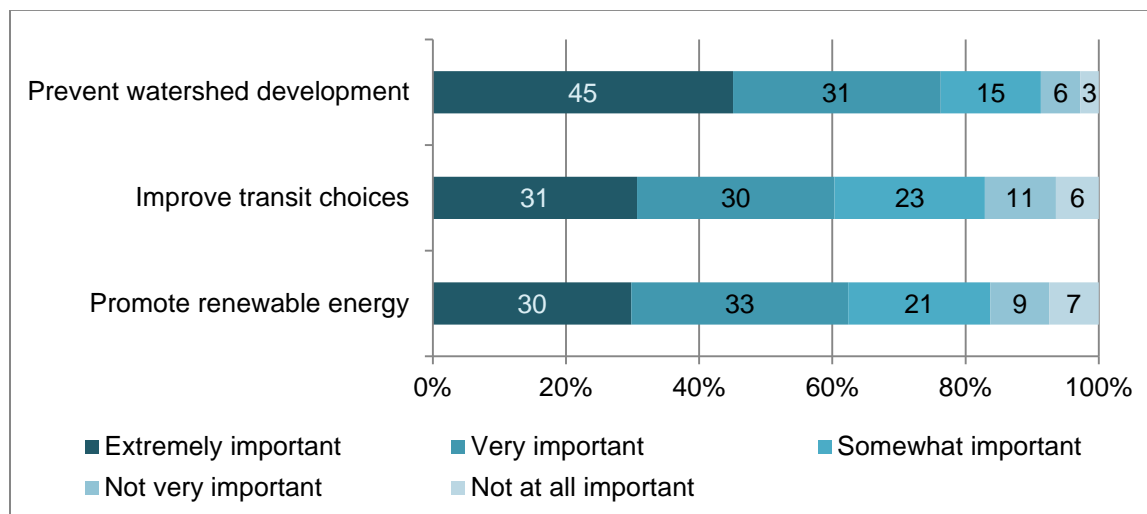
(n = 586)

Lived in Bellingham: A higher percentage of relative newbies to Bellingham, that is, those residents who have lived here 10 years or less, rated it *extremely important* (39%) that Bellingham improve transit choices to reduce automobile trips compared to residents who have lived here 11-31 years (32%) and to those who have lived here 31+ years (19%).

A lower percentage of residents who have lived here 10 years or less rated it as *somewhat important* that Bellingham improve transit choices to reduce automobile trips compared to residents who have lived here 11-31 years (24%) and those who have lived here 31+ years (24%). A higher percentage of residents who have lived here 31+ years (17%) rated it *not very important* that Bellingham improve transit choices to reduce automobile trips compared to residents who have lived here for shorter periods of time. These differences in ratings associated with the years residents have lived in Bellingham are illustrated in the figure above.

Comparison of actions the City of Bellingham is taking to protect the environment

Figure 15: Comparison of actions the City of Bellingham is taking to protect the environment.



The City of Bellingham is committed to protecting the environment for future generations and takes many actions to realize this goal. Three actions that the City is taking that were measured in this survey include preventing watershed development, improving transit choices, and promoting renewable energy.

Of these three actions, the one with the strongest support is preventing watershed development. Almost half of all residents (45%) rated this as *extremely important* for Bellingham to pursue. Another third of residents (31%) rated it as *very important*. An additional 15% rated it as *somewhat important*. Overall, 91% of residents rated it as having importance. Fewer than 10 percent of residents surveyed rated it as being *not very important* (6%) or *not at all important* (3%).

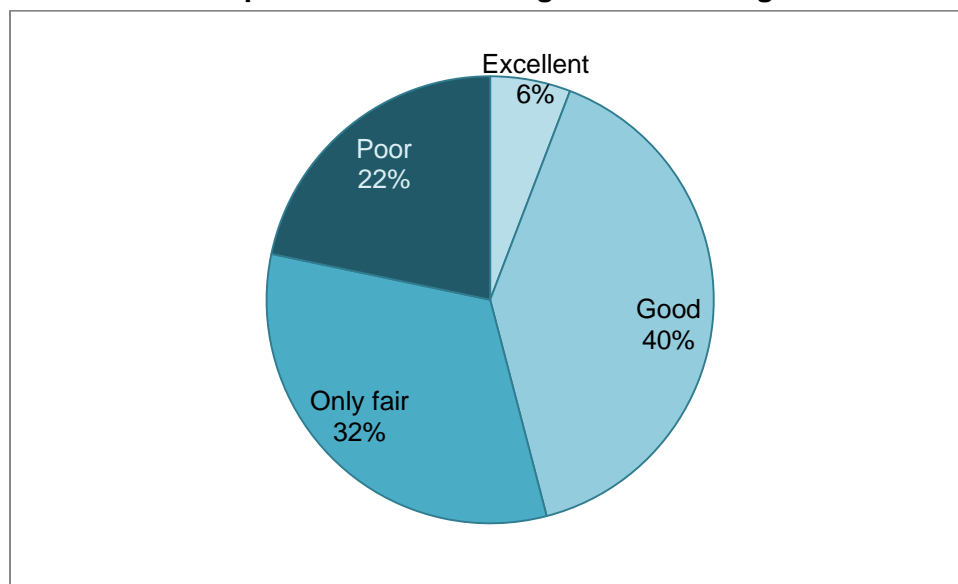
Improving transit choices and promoting renewable energy were also rated as having importance by the vast majority of residents, 84% in both cases.

This comparison among actions taken by the City to protect the environment is illustrated in the figure above.

VIBRANT SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The City of Bellingham supports the local economy across all its sectors, including the local agricultural economy, by creating conditions that encourage public and private investment. It is attempting to re-establish the vibrancy of downtown and promote other commercial centers as well. To achieve these aims, it acknowledges and grapples with the interdependence of environmental, economic and social interests within the community.

Figure 16a: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham?



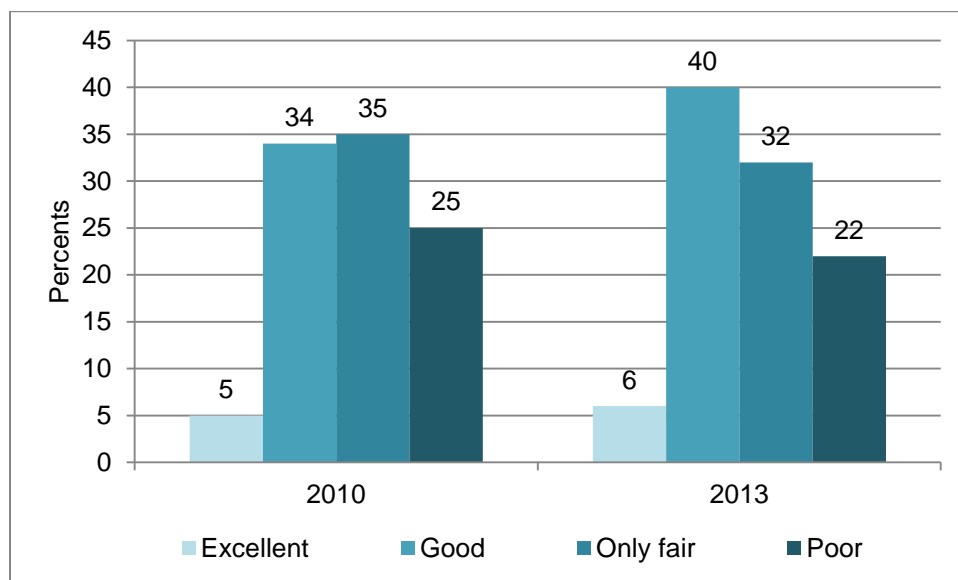
(n=525)

The highest proportion of residents (40%) rated the job the City is doing encouraging economic development as *good*. However, the category that garnered the second largest percentage was *only fair*, at 32%.

Over three times as many residents rated the City's job as being *poor* (22%) compared to those residents who rated it as *excellent* (6%).

These findings of the job the City is doing encouraging economic development are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 16b: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham: Comparison of 2010 and 2013.



(n for 2013=525)

Overall, residents view the job the City is doing encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham as improving since 2010. Since 2010, the percentage of residents who have rated the City's job in this regard as *excellent* or *good* has increased 7 percentage points.

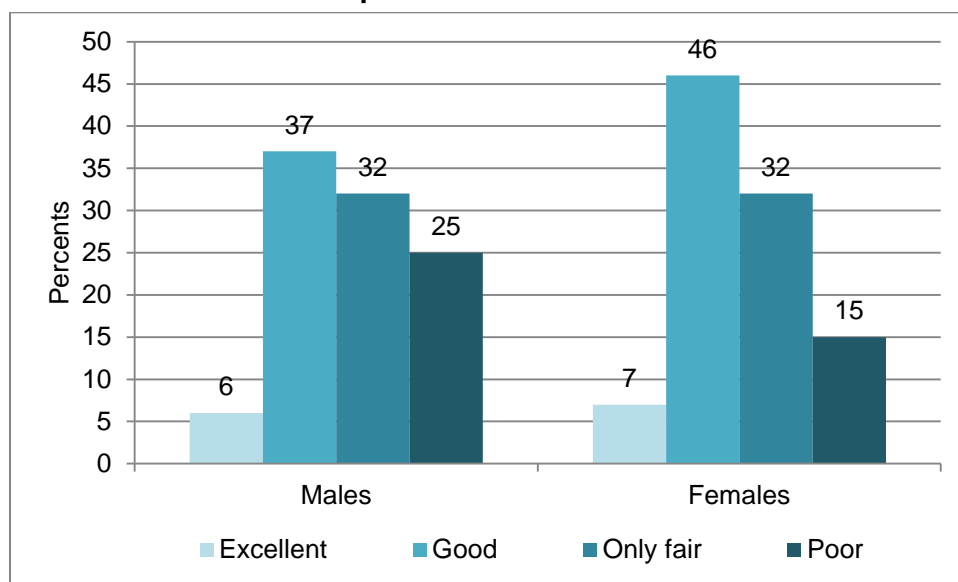
Importantly, this shift has been from both the only fair (3 points) as well as the poor (3) categories.

These changes in the ratings of the job the City is doing encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with 2013 ratings about economic development

Characteristics of residents that are associated with their ratings of the job the City of Bellingham is doing encouraging economic growth were investigated. Residents' gender, age and income level were found to be associated with these ratings.

**Figure 17 : How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham?
Gender differences in responses.**



(n=520)

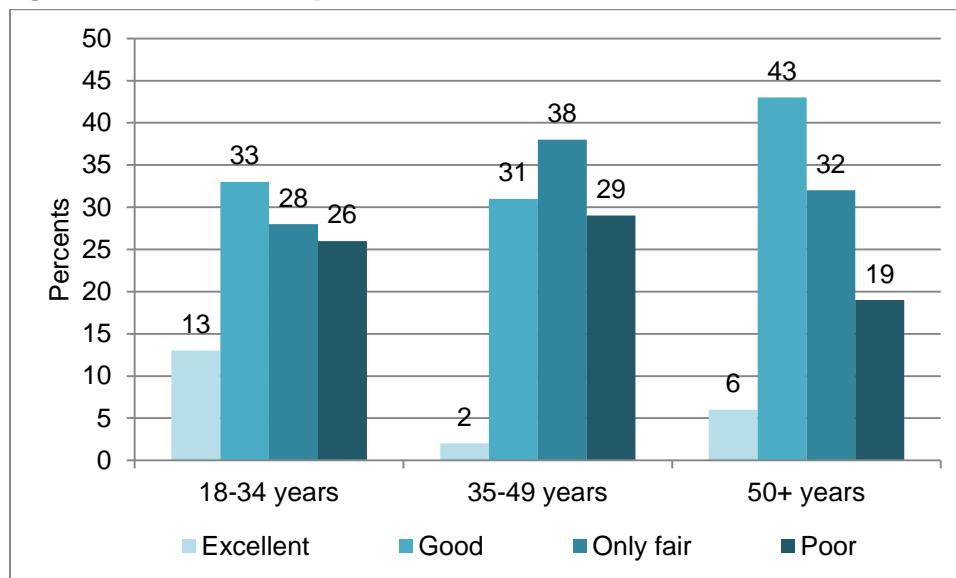
Gender: Residents' gender was found to be associated with their ratings about the job the City is doing encouraging economic development. A lower percentage of males (37%) compared to females (46%) rated the job the City is doing encouraging economic development as *good*.

A higher percentage of males (25%) compared to females (15%) rated the job the City is doing with economic development as *poor*.

The take-away is not the differences in ratings between the genders, however. The bigger picture is that neither males (6%) nor females (7%) viewed the City's performance in this area as *excellent*.

These differences associated with gender are illustrated in the figure above.

**Figure 18: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham?
Age differences in responses.**



(n=518)

Age: Residents' age was associated with their ratings of the job the City is doing encouraging economic development. Overall, those in the middle aged group (33% *excellent* and *good* ratings combined) rate the City's job more negatively compared to adults who are younger (46%) and adults who are older (49%) (*excellent* and *good* ratings combined).

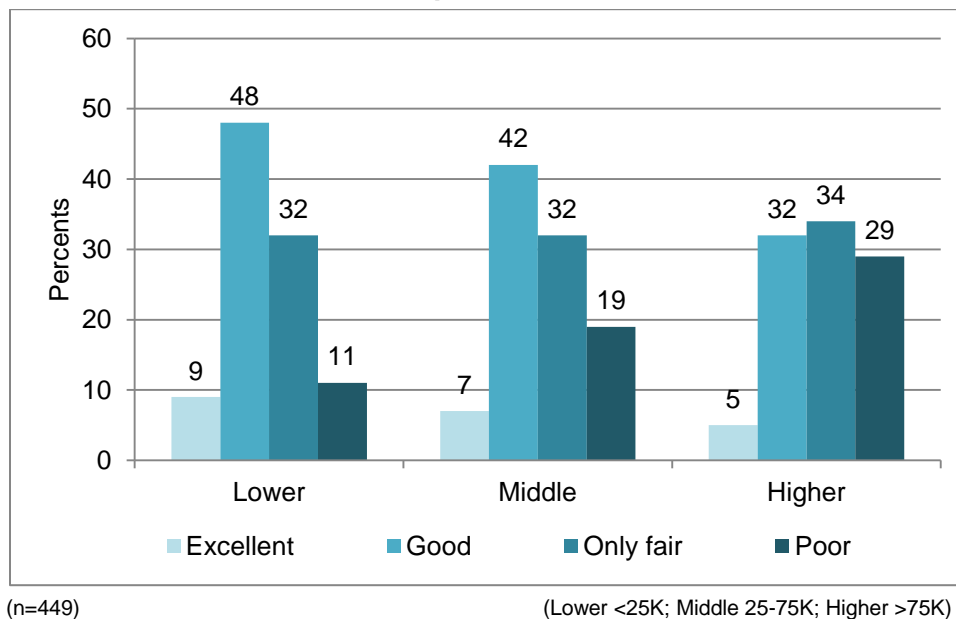
A higher proportion of the youngest adults (13%) rated the City's job as *excellent* compared to residents in either of the older age groups (2% for those aged 35-49 and 6% for those aged 50+ years.)

A higher proportion of the oldest adults (43%) rated the City's job as *good* compared to residents in either of the younger age groups (33% for those aged 18-34 years and 31% for those aged 35-49 years.)

A lower proportion of the oldest adults (19%) rated the City's job as *poor* compared to residents in either of the younger age groups (26% for those aged 18-34 years and 29% for those aged 35-49 years.)

These findings on the association of age with economic development ratings are illustrated in the figure above.

**Figure 19: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham?
Income level differences in responses.**



Income: Residents' income level was found to be associated with their ratings of how the City is doing with economic development. The take-a-way is that residents in the higher income bracket were less positive and more negative about the job Bellingham is doing encouraging economic development.

The lower the income level, the higher the percentage of ratings in the *good* category. That is, a higher proportion of residents with a lower level of income (48%) rated the City as doing a *good* job compared to those residents with a middle level of income (42%) and those with a higher level of income (32%).

Consistent with that, the lower the income level, the lower proportion of *poor* ratings. That is a lower proportion of residents with a lower level of income (11%) rated the City as doing a *poor* job compared to those residents with a middle level of income (19%) and those with a higher level of income (29%).

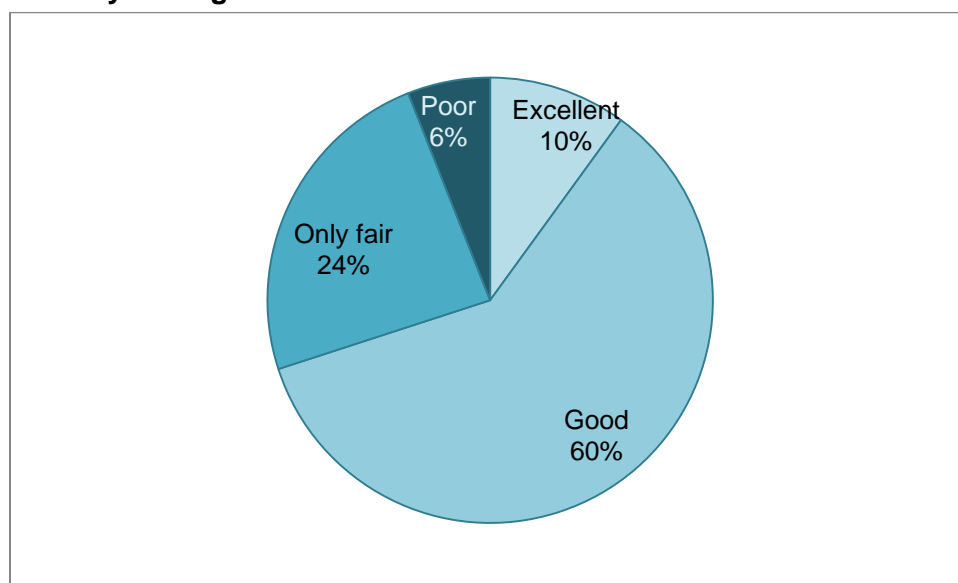
These findings of an association between income level and ratings of the City's economic performance are illustrated in the figure above.

SENSE OF PLACE

The City of Bellingham has committed to preserving the precious, distinct sense of Bellingham's neighborhoods and connections between and among people within them as the population of Bellingham increases. In order to do this the City protects neighborhoods' historic and cultural resources, their natural green settings and residents' access to open spaces and encourages development within existing infrastructure.

Protecting livability of neighborhoods

Figure 20: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing protecting the livability of neighborhoods?



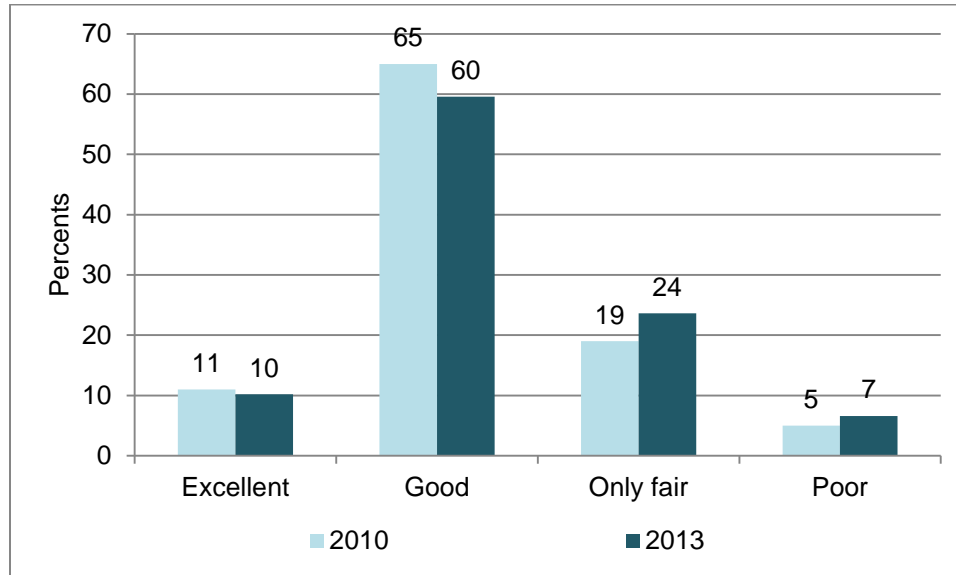
(n=559)

Well over half (60%) of the residents in the survey rated the City as doing a *good* job protecting the livability of Bellingham's neighborhoods. An additional ten percent (10%) responded that the City was doing an *excellent* job with neighborhood livability.

However, almost a third of residents reported that the City was doing *only a fair* job (24%) or a *poor* job (6%) in protecting the livability of Bellingham's neighborhoods.

These findings are illustrated in the above figure.

Figure 21: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of the job the City is doing protecting the livability of neighborhoods.



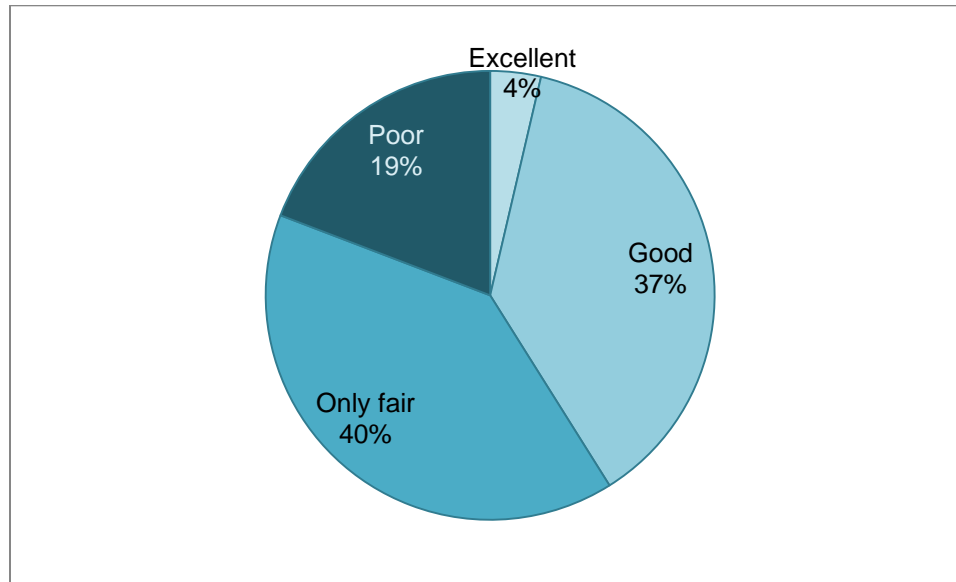
(2013: n=559)

Since 2010, the percentage of good responses decreased slightly (from 65% to 60%) while the percentage of *only fair* responses increased (from 19% to 24%) regarding the job the City is doing protecting the livability of neighborhoods.

The comparison of 2010 to 2013's responses about neighborhood livability is illustrated in the figure above.

Planning for growth

Figure 22: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing planning for growth?



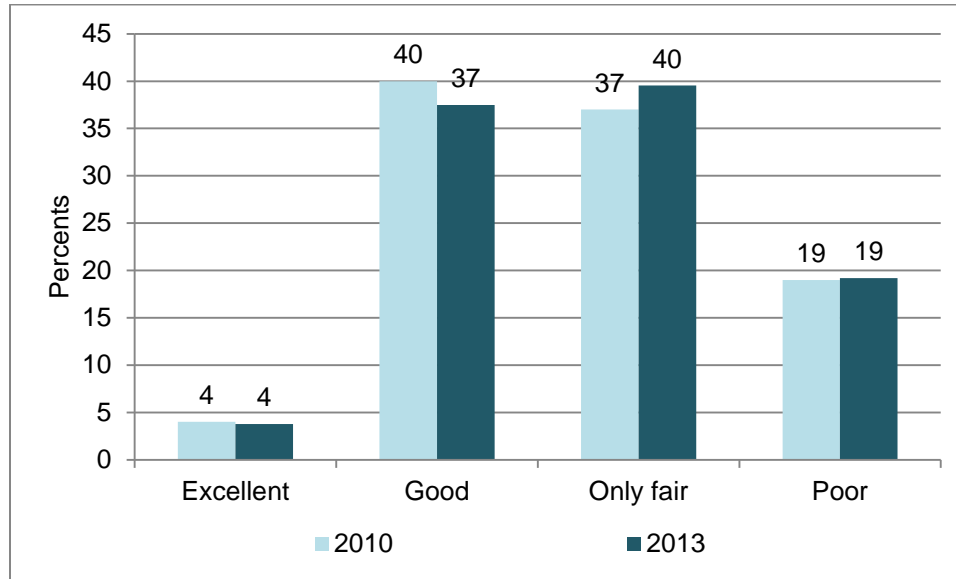
(n=531)

A small percentage of residents (4%) rated the job the City has been doing planning for growth as *excellent*. Over one third of residents (37%) rated the City's planning as *good*.

The job the City has been doing regarding planning for growth was rated as *only fair* by 40% of the residents and as *poor* by 19% of the residents.

These findings on the job the City has been doing planning for growth are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 23: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of the job the City is doing planning for growth.



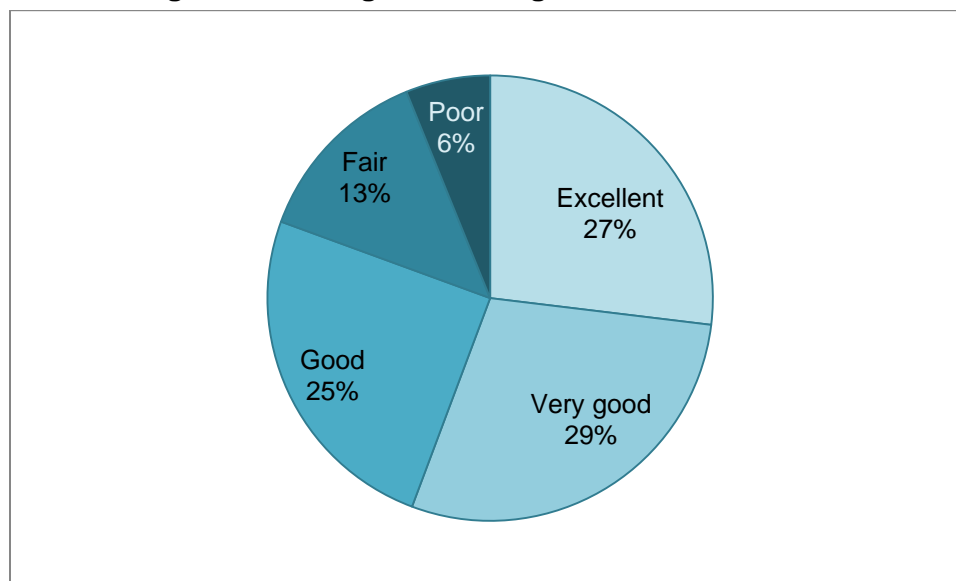
(2013: n=531)

Since 2010, a lower percentage of residents (40% in 2010 vs. 37% in 2013) in 2013 rated the City's job of planning for growth as *good* while a higher percentage of residents (37% in 2010 vs. 40% in 2013) rated it as *only fair*.

The comparison of 2010 to 2013's responses is illustrated in the figure above.

Neighborhood social connections

Figure 24: How do you rate your neighborhood on social connections, such as neighbors looking out for neighbors?



(n=587)

Overall, the clear majority of residents viewed the social connections they have in their neighborhoods on the positive side. Over half the residents rated their neighborhoods' social connections as being either *excellent* (27%) or *very good* (29%). One quarter (25%) rated them as being *good*.

Fewer than twenty percent of residents rated the connections negatively. Thirteen percent of the residents rated them as *fair* and 5% rated them as being *poor*.

These findings about social connections among neighbors are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with ratings of social connections among neighbors

Characteristics of residents that might have been associated with their ratings of neighborhood social connections were investigated. Residents' gender, age and home ownership status were all associated with ratings of neighborhood social connections.

Figure 25: How do you rate your neighborhood on social connections, such as neighbors looking out for neighbors? Gender differences in responses.



(n=578)

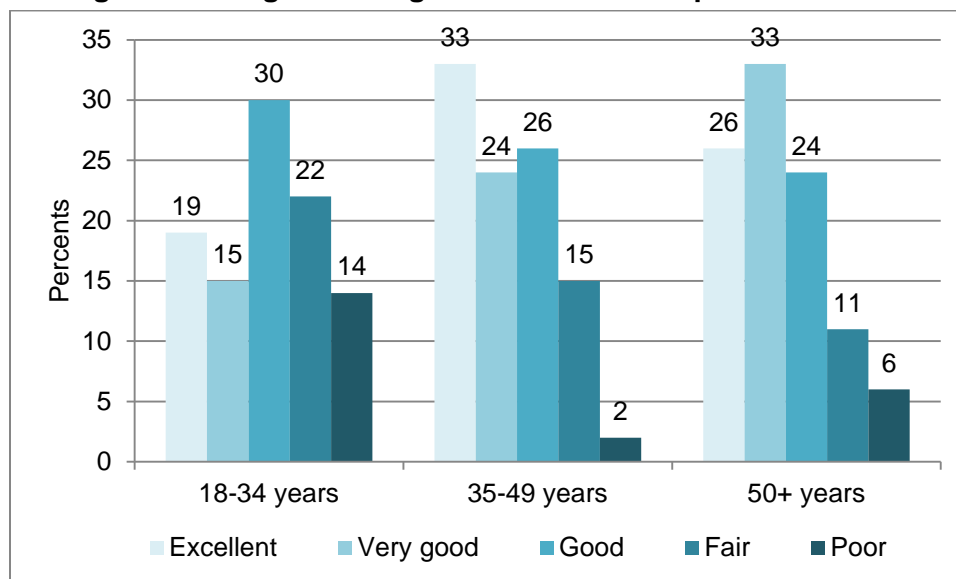
Gender: How residents responded to this question about their neighborhoods' social connections depended on whether they were female or male.

Males view their neighborhoods' social connections more negatively compared to females. A lower percentage of males (22%) rated their neighborhoods' social connections as *excellent* compared to females (33%).

A higher percentage of males (28%) rated their neighborhood's social connections as *good* compared to females (20%).

These differences in neighborhood connectivity ratings associated with residents' gender are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 26: How do you rate your neighborhood on social connections, such as neighbors looking out for neighbors? Age differences in responses.



(n=577)

Age: How residents responded to the question about neighborhood connectivity was associated with their age level.

Residents aged 18-34 years did not give their neighborhoods' connectivity very high ratings compared to adults in the older age levels, rating their neighborhoods' connectivity as *excellent* and *very good* 34% of the time. In comparison, residents aged 35-49 years provided ratings of *excellent* and *very good* 57% of the time while residents aged 50 and older gave their neighborhoods *excellent* and *very good* ratings 59% of the time.

Consistent with this, a higher percentage of residents aged 18-34 years gave their neighborhoods' connectivity ratings of *fair* (22%) and *poor* (14%), compared to adults in the middle age level (15% rated it as *fair* and 2% rated it as *poor*) and the older age level (11% rated it as *fair* and 6% rated it as *poor*.)

These differences in neighborhood connectivity associated with age are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 27: How do you rate your neighborhood on social connections, such as neighbors looking out for neighbors? Home ownership differences in responses.



(n=582)

Home ownership: How residents responded to this question about neighborhood social connections was associated with whether they rented or owned their homes.

Overall, residents who own their homes tended to be more positive and less negative about the social connections in their neighborhoods, compared to those who rent.

Eighty-four percent (84%) of home owners rated connectivity as *good* or better, compared to 67% of renters.

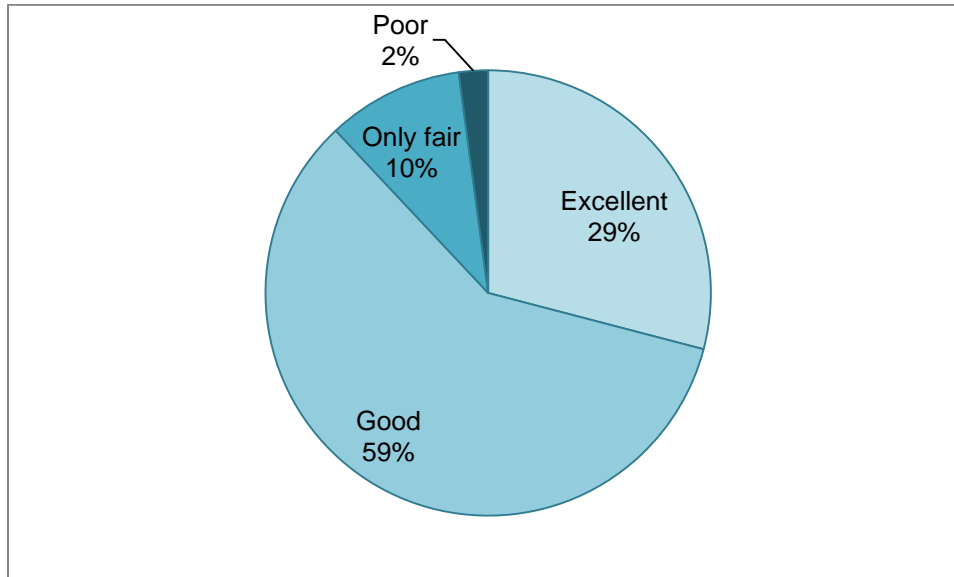
In addition, 10% of home owners rated the connectivity as being *fair* while over a quarter (26%) of renters did.

These differences in neighborhood connectivity ratings associated with home ownership status are illustrated in the figure above.

SAFE AND PREPARED COMMUNITY

One of the essential tasks of the City of Bellingham is to prevent and respond to crime and other emergencies such as fire and life-threatening medical conditions. To prevent or at least decrease the severity of possible natural and man-made crises, the City aims to increase community readiness and resilience, which includes ensuring safety of all existing infrastructure.

Figure 28: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing providing public safety services, such as police, fire and emergency medical service?



(n=577)

The vast majority of residents had a positive view of the job the City is doing providing public safety services. Almost one third (29%) of residents said that the City was doing an *excellent* job providing public safety services. Over half (59%) said that the services were *good*.

Ten percent indicated that the public safety services were *only fair*, while two percent said they were *poor*.

These findings about public safety services are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 29: Metric: Comparison of 2010 to 2013's ratings of the job the City is doing providing public safety services, such as police, fire and emergency medical service.



(2013: n=577)

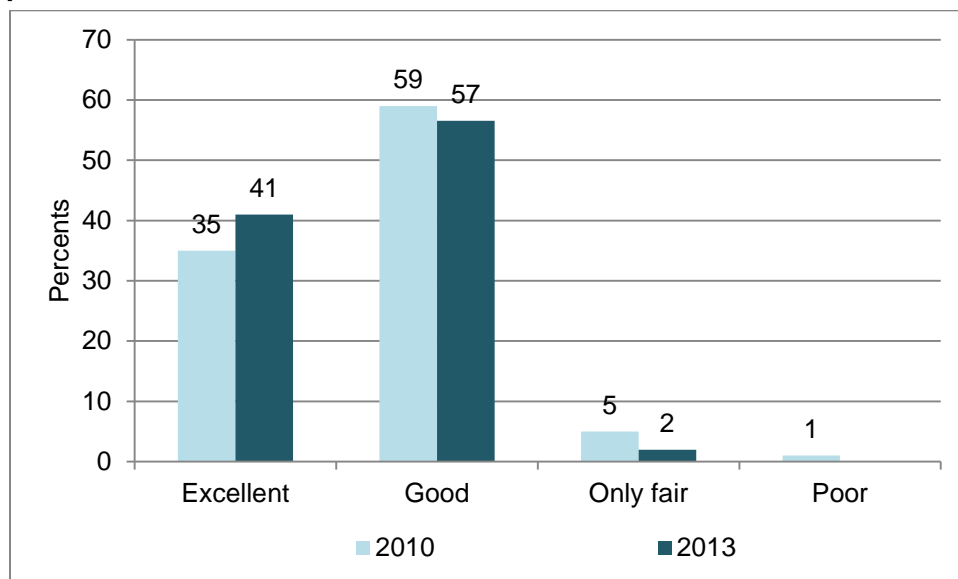
Ratings this year of the job the City is doing providing public safety services are similar to those from 2010. The clear majority of residents viewed the City's provision of safety services as *excellent* or *good* in both years (.84% in 2010 and 88% in 2013.)

The comparison of 2010 to 2013's responses is illustrated in the figure above.

Fire protection, Medic One and crime prevention services

In addition to asking for an overall public safety service rating, respondents were asked to rate fire, emergency medical services and crime prevention separately. These are presented in comparison to their 2010 ratings.

Figure 30: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing providing fire protection services?



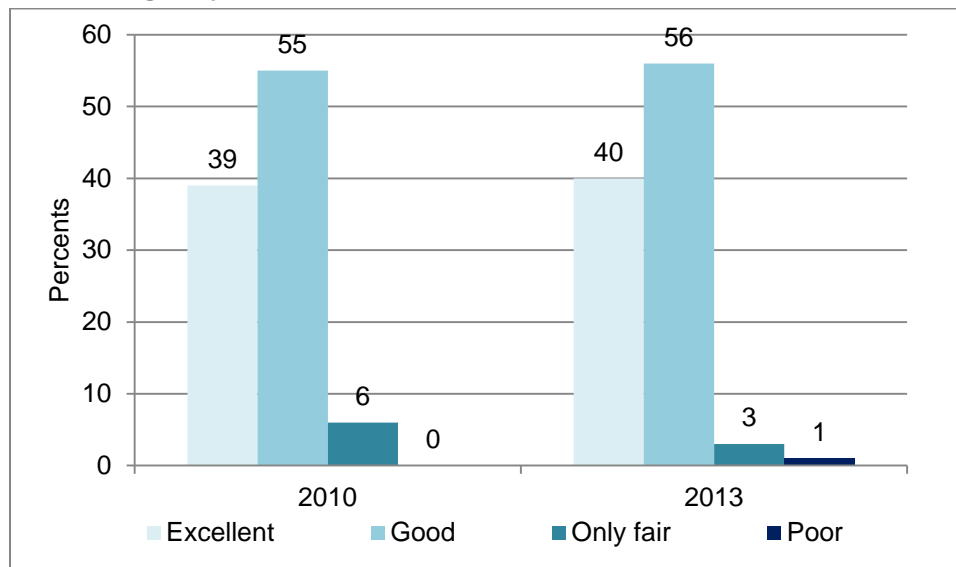
(2013: n=524)

The City received 98% positive ratings for the job they are doing providing fire protection services. Over forty percent (41%) of residents rated the job the City is doing providing fire protection services as *excellent*. Over half (57%) rated the job as *good*.

There was no change from ratings obtained in 2010.

This finding about ratings of fire protection services is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 31: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing providing Medic-One emergency medical services?



(2013: n=478)

The City received 96% positive ratings for the job they are doing providing Medic One protection services. Forty percent (40%) of residents rated the job the City is doing providing Medic One protection services as *excellent*. Over half (56%) rated the job as *good*. There was no change from ratings obtained in 2010.

This finding about ratings of Medic One protection services is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with ratings about Medic One

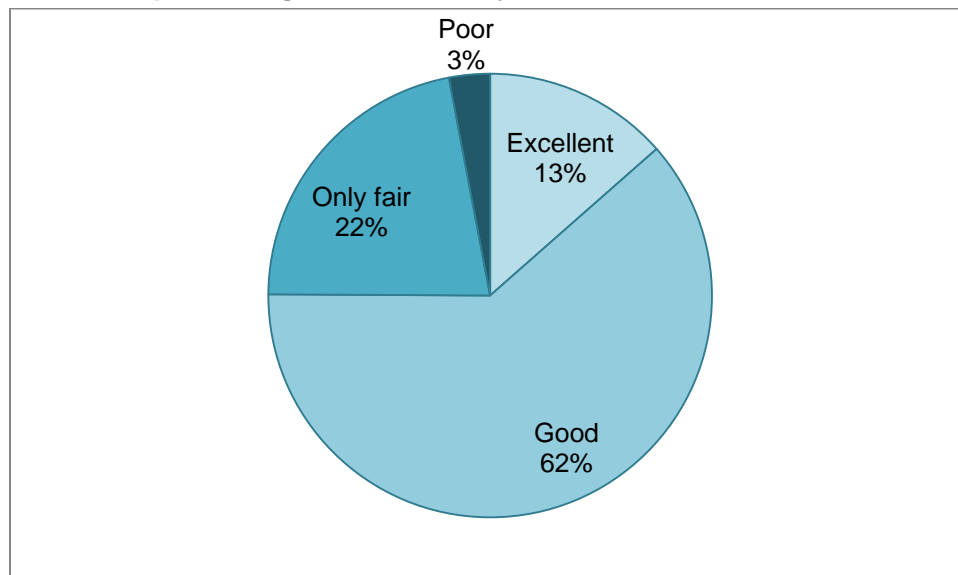
Characteristics of residents that might have been associated with their ratings of Medic One services were investigated. Residents' age and the number of years they have lived in Bellingham were associated with these ratings.

Age: Residents' age was associated with their ratings of Medic One services.

A higher percentage of residents aged 50 and older (43%) rated Medic One services as *excellent* compared to residents in younger age groups (30% for residents aged 18-34 and 29% for residents aged 35-49.)

A lower percentage of residents aged 50 and older (55%) rated Medic One services as *good* compared to residents in the younger age groups (63% for residents aged 18-34 and 60% for residents aged 35-49).

Figure 32: Metric: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing preventing crime and protecting the community?



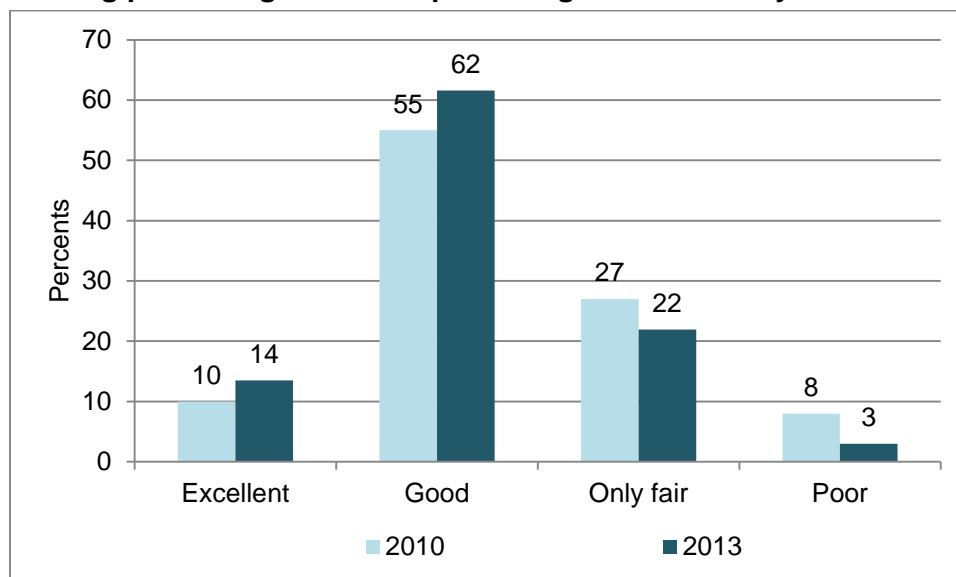
(n=570)

Overall, the job the City of Bellingham has been doing preventing crime and protecting the community was viewed on the positive side in 2013 by 75% of residents. The City earned the rating of *excellent* from 13% of residents and the rating of *good* from another 62% for a total of 75% positive ratings.

One quarter of residents viewed the job the City of Bellingham has been doing preventing crime and protecting the community more negatively. Twenty-two percent (22%) of residents said crime protection services were *only fair* while 3% of residents said they were *poor*.

These findings about the City's crime prevention efforts are illustrated in the figure above

Figure 33: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of the job the City of Bellingham is doing preventing crime and protecting the community



(2013: n=570)

Overall, the ratings of the job the City of Bellingham has been doing preventing crime improved since 2010. In both years the majority of responses were positive, 65% *excellent* and *good* ratings in 2010 and 76% in 2013.

In 2013, there was an increase in both *excellent* (from 10% in 2010 to 14% in 2013) and *good* (from 55% in 2010 to 62% in 2013) ratings and conversely a decrease in negative ratings.

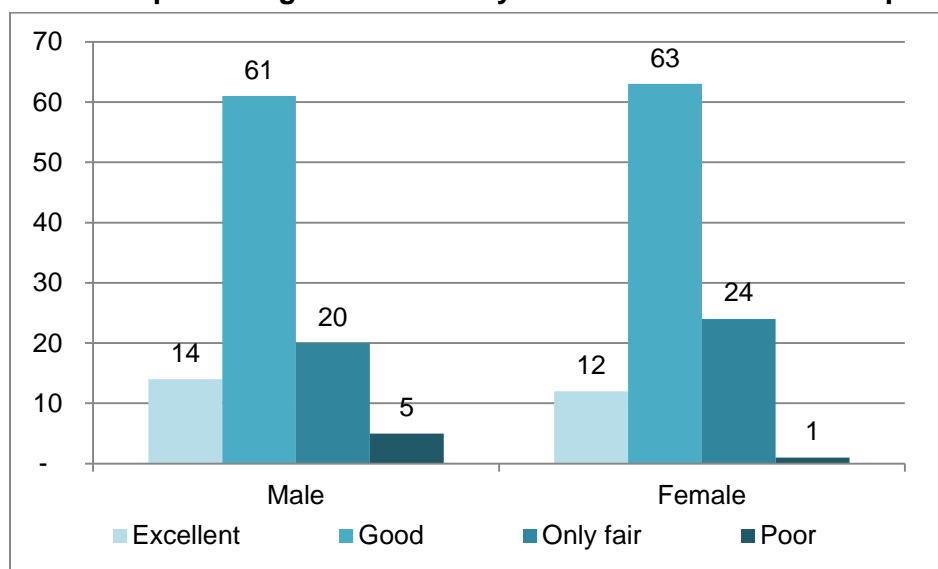
Both *fair* (27% in 2010 and 22% in 2013) and *poor* (8 percent in 2010 and 3% in 2013) ratings of the City's job of crime prevention were lower in 2013 than they were in 2010.

This comparison of 2010 to 2013's crime prevention efforts is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics and the City's crime prevention efforts

Characteristics of residents that might have influenced the ratings of the job the City is doing preventing crime and protecting the community were investigated. The factors below were found to be associated with ratings about how the City is doing with crime prevention.

Figure 34: Metric: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing preventing crime and protecting the community: Gender differences in responses.



(n=562)

Gender: Whether the residents were males or females was associated with ratings on this question

A higher percentage of females rated the City's crime prevention efforts as *only fair* compared to males (20%).

This gender difference in ratings about crime prevention is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 35: Metric: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing preventing crime and protecting the community: Home ownership differences in responses.



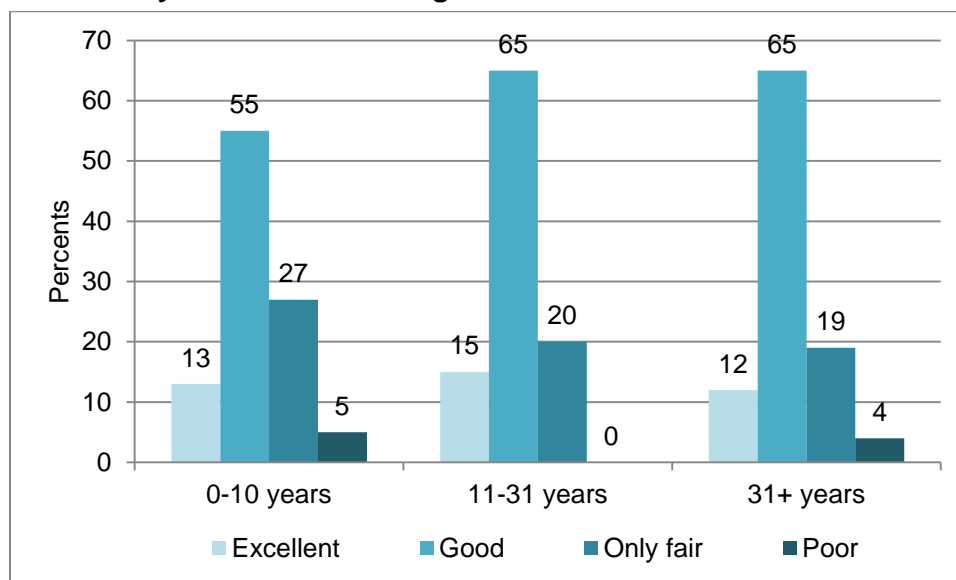
(n=567)

Home ownership: The pattern of responses to this question about crime prevention was different depending on whether residents owned or rented their homes. A higher percentage of homeowners (63%) rated the City's job of crime prevention as *good* compared to residents who rent their homes (55%).

Renters were more negative than homeowners. A higher percentage of renters (26%) rated the City's job of crime prevention as *only fair* compared to home owners (21%). In addition, a higher percentage of renters (7%) rated the City's job of crime prevention as *poor* compared to home owners (2%).

This finding about the association of home ownership with crime prevention responses is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 36: Metric: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing preventing crime and protecting the community: Differences in responses associated with the number of years lived in Bellingham.



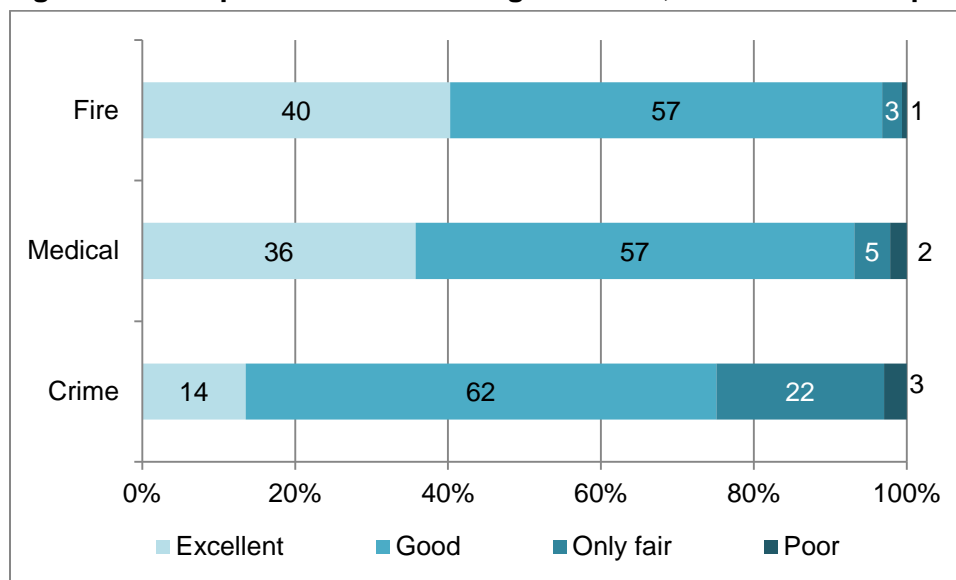
(n=567)

Years lived in Bellingham: The pattern of responses to this question about crime prevention was different depending on how long residents had lived in Bellingham.

A lower percentage (55%) of relative newcomers to town, i.e., those who had lived here between 0-10 years, rated the City's crime prevention performance as *good* compared to residents who had lived in Bellingham longer (65% for those who have lived in Bellingham 11-31 years and 64% for those who had lived in Bellingham for 31+ years.)

A higher percentage (27%) of relative newcomers to town, i.e., those who had lived here between 0-10 years, rated the City's crime prevention performance as *only fair* compared to residents who had lived in Bellingham longer (20% for those who have lived in Bellingham 11-31 years and 19% for those who had lived in Bellingham for 31+ years.)

These finding of an association of length of time lived in Bellingham with crime prevention ratings is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 37: Comparison of 2013 ratings of crime, medical and fire prevention services.

(crime: n=570; medical: n=478; fire: n=524)

A comparison can be made among the 2013 ratings of the job the City is doing providing public safety services, such as crime, medical and fire services.

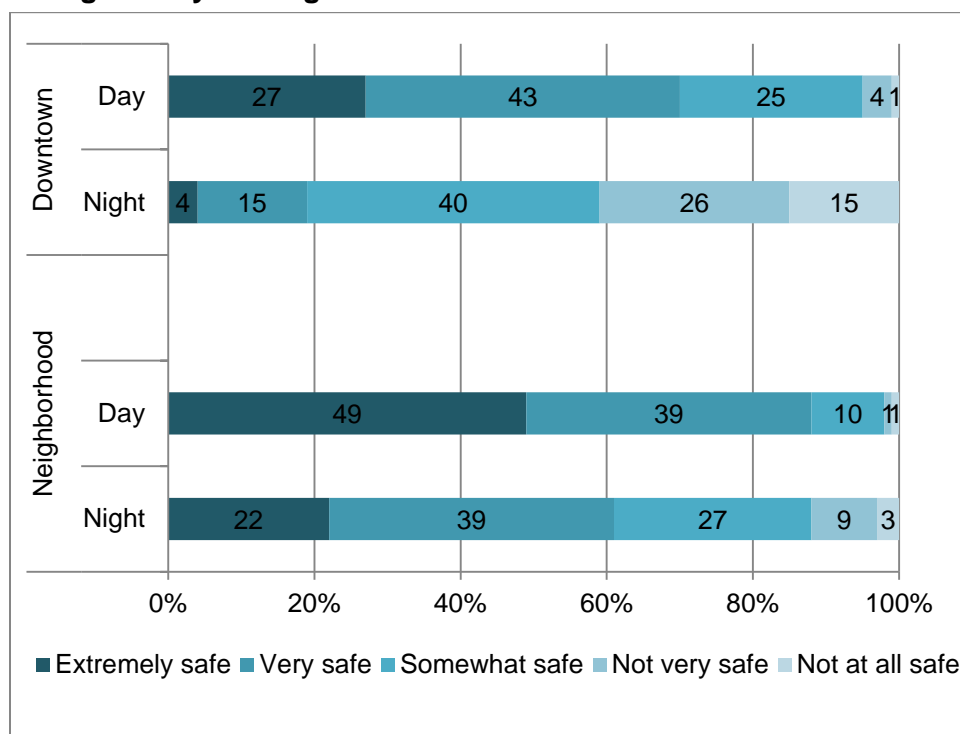
Overall, the ratings of all three services were in the positive range. More than 75% of the ratings were positive, i.e., were *excellent* and *good*, for all of the services. In fact, for both medical and fire the ratings that were positive, i.e., *excellent* and *good*, was over 90%.

In comparison to views of medical and fire services, crime services were viewed as more problematic in 2013. Fourteen percent of residents judged crime services as *excellent*, compared to medical service's 36% and fire service's 40%. Further, 25% of residents viewed crime services negatively - 22% viewed crime services as being *only fair* and 3% viewed them as *poor*.

This comparison among public safety services in 2013 is illustrated in the figure above.

Feelings of safety while walking in Bellingham neighborhoods

Figure 38: Comparison of 2013 ratings of safety in own neighborhood vs. downtown during the day and night.



Overview: Respondents were asked about their feelings of safety when walking in their neighborhoods in the day and night as well as downtown during day and night. Most people felt *extremely* or *very safe* in their neighborhoods and downtown during the day (88% and 70% respectively). At night, a majority felt *very* or *extremely safe* in their neighborhoods (61%) but few felt as safe downtown (19%).

Downtown: Day vs. Night: It is clear from the responses that residents felt safer downtown during the day than they do at night. Seventy percent of residents reported feeling *extremely safe* or *very safe* in the downtown area during the day compared to 19% who felt either *extremely safe* or *very safe* in the downtown area during the night. Conversely, five percent of residents reported feeling *not very safe* or *not at all safe* downtown during the day but at night 41% or residents felt *not very safe* or *not at all safe*.

Neighborhood: Day vs. Night: The difference between feelings of safety during the day versus the night was less pronounced in neighborhoods. Seventy-nine percent of residents reported feeling *extremely safe* or *very safe* in their own neighborhoods during the day compared to 61% who felt either *extremely safe* or *very safe* near home at night. Conversely, 11% of residents

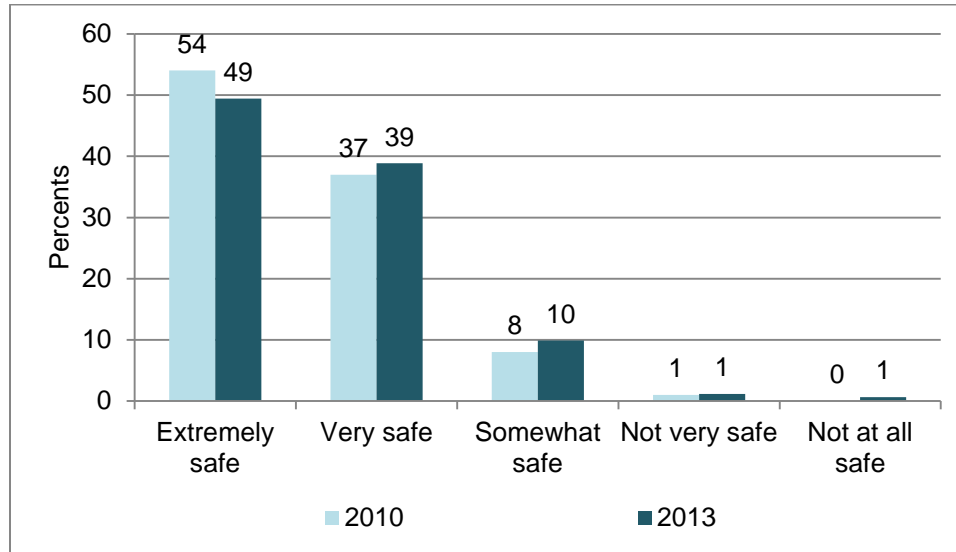
reported feeling *not very safe* or *not at all safe* in their neighborhoods during the day compared to 12% of residents who reported feeling *not very safe* or *not at all safe* near home at night.

Downtown vs. Neighborhood: A higher percentage of residents felt *extremely safe* in their own neighborhoods compared to downtown both during the day and night. During the day, 40% of residents felt *extremely safe* near home compared to 27% who felt that way downtown. At night, while 3% of residents reported feeling *extremely unsafe* in their own neighborhoods, 15% of residents reported feeling *extremely unsafe* in downtown Bellingham.

These findings are illustrated in the figure above.

More detailed analyses about feelings of safety while walking alone downtown at night are found in Figure 47 below.

Figure 39: How safe would you feel walking alone during the day in your neighborhood: 2010 and 2013 compared.



(n=597)

In 2013, most people felt *extremely* or *very safe* in their neighborhoods during the day (88%).

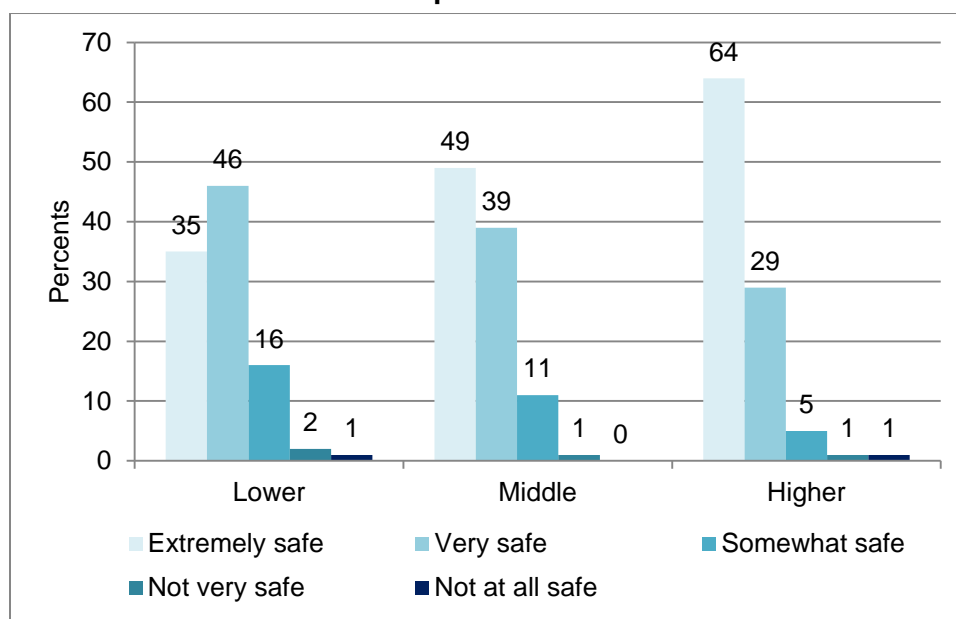
Feelings of safety while walking on one's neighborhood during the day have decreased slightly from 2010 to 2013.

The figure above illustrates this comparison across years.

Resident characteristics associated with feelings of safety during the day in one's neighborhood

Characteristics of residents that might have influenced their ratings of feelings of safety while walking in their own neighborhood during the day were investigated. Ratings on this measure were found to be associated with residents' income levels, home ownership status, and the number of years they have lived in Bellingham.

Figure 40: How safe would you feel walking alone during the day in your neighborhood: Income level differences in responses.



(n=508)

(Lower <25K; Middle 25-75K; Higher >75K)

Income level: Residents' level of income was associated with how safe they felt walking in their neighborhoods alone during the day. These differences fall in the first three categories of positive ratings, there is no difference among income level and the two most negative ratings, *not very safe* and *not at all safe* ratings.

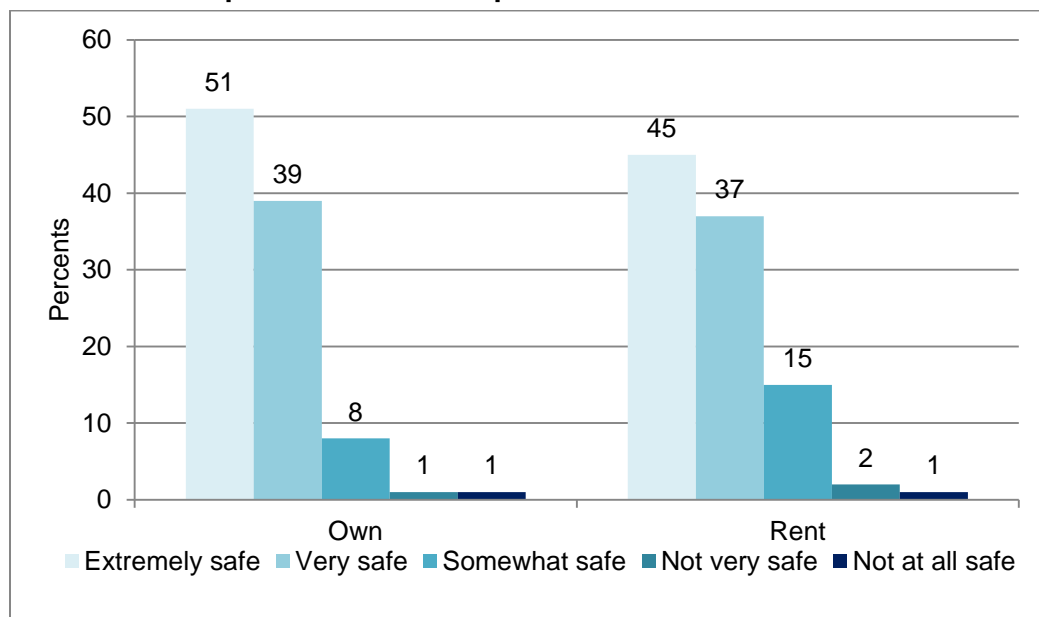
A lower percentage of residents in the lower level of income (35%) reported feeling *extremely safe* in their neighborhoods during the day compared to residents in the middle level of income (49%) and in the higher level of income (64%). This indicates that about one in three residents in the lower income level (35%) and just under half of the residents in the middle income level (49%) could report feeling *extremely safe* in their neighborhoods during the day.

A higher percentage of residents in the lower income level (46%) reported feeling *very safe* near home during the day, compared to 39% of residents in the middle income level and 29% in the higher income level.

Sixteen percent (16%) of residents in the lower income level of income reported feeling somewhat safe, compared to 11% in the middle income level and 5% in the higher income level.

These findings of an association of income level with ratings of safety in one's neighborhood during the day are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 41: How safe would you feel walking alone during the day in your neighborhood: Home ownership differences in responses.



(n=592)

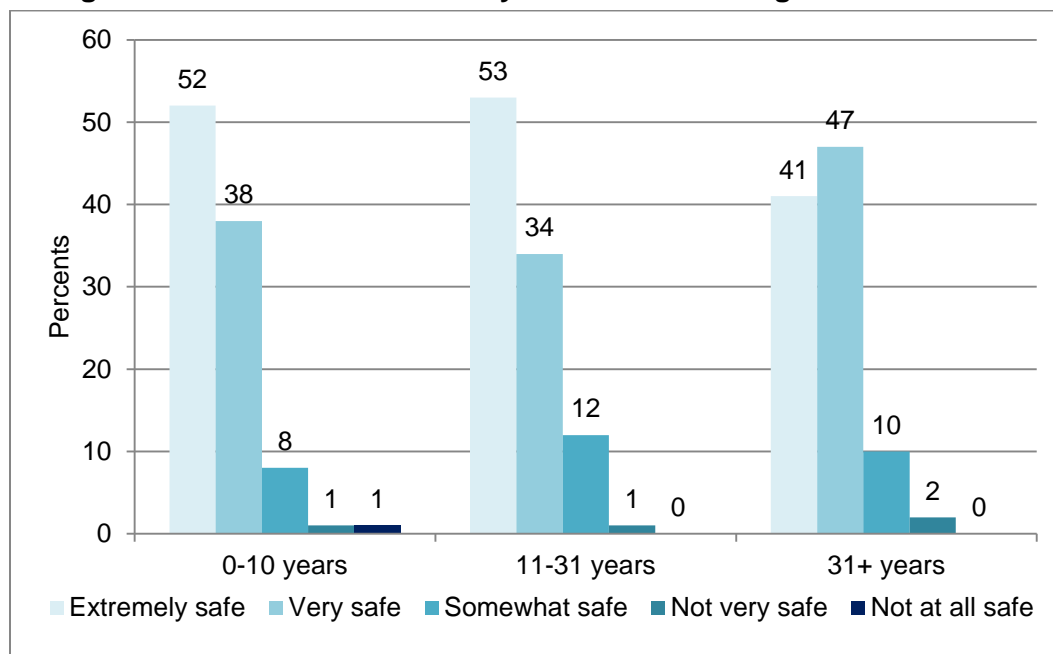
Home ownership: Residents' home ownership status was associated with how safe they felt walking in their neighborhoods alone during the day.

In general, a higher percentage of home owners reported feeling *extremely safe* and *very safe* (90%) in their own neighborhoods during the day compared to renters (82%).

The two most extreme negative categories did not differ between owners and renters, nor did the category *very safe* (39% vs. 37%).

This association of residents' safety ratings near home during the day with their home ownership status is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 42: How safe would you feel walking alone during the day in your neighborhood: Ratings associated with number of years lived in Bellingham.



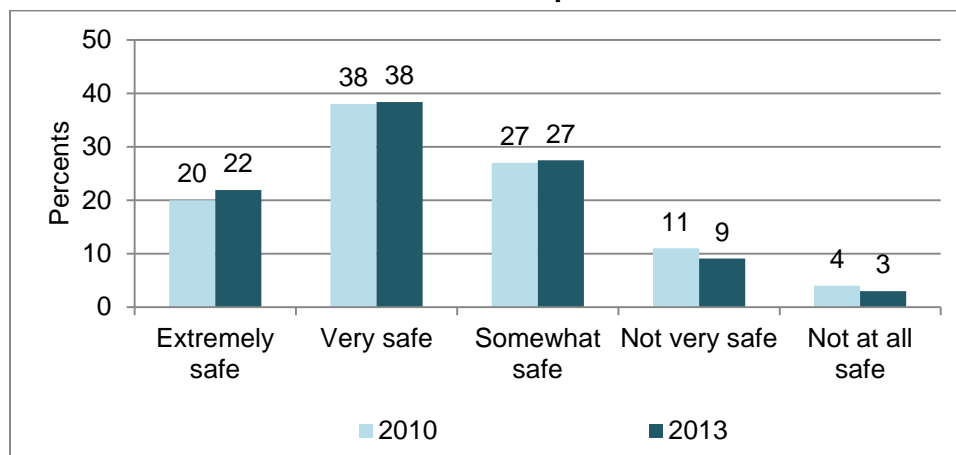
(n=593)

Years in Bellingham: The number of years residents have lived in Bellingham was associated with how safe they felt walking in their neighborhoods alone during the day. The major difference was that a lower percentage of residents who have lived here 31 or more years reported feeling *extremely safe* in their own neighborhoods compared to those who have lived in Bellingham a shorter period of time.

Over half of the residents who have lived here up to 10 years (52%) and over half of residents who have lived here between 11 and 31 years (53%) reported feeling *extremely safe* alone during the day waling in their own neighborhoods, compared to 41% of residents who have lived here 31 or more years. A higher percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham for 31 or more years (47%) reported that they felt *very safe* compared to those who have lived here up to 10 years (38%) and those who have lived here between 11 and 31 years (34%).

If one considers the categories of *extremely safe* and *very safe* together, there was no difference across the three groups. For those residents who have lived here 0-10 years, the joint percentage was 90%; for those who have lived here 11-31 years, the joint percentage was 87%; and for those who have lived here 31 or more years, the joint percentage was 88%. These findings of an association between safety ratings during the day near home are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 43: Metric: How safe would you feel walking alone at night in your neighborhood: 2013 described and 2010 and 2013 compared.



(n=594)

In 2013, more than half of all residents (60%) indicated that they feel safe when walking alone at night in their neighborhoods. Twenty-two percent (22%) of residents responded this year that they feel *extremely safe* and 38% said they feel *very safe*. Just over a quarter or residents (27%) replied that they feel *somewhat safe* walking alone at night in their neighborhoods.

However, this is not the case for a minority of City residents. Almost one in ten (9%) said they feel *not very safe*. In addition, three percent of residents indicated that they felt *not at all safe* in their neighborhoods.

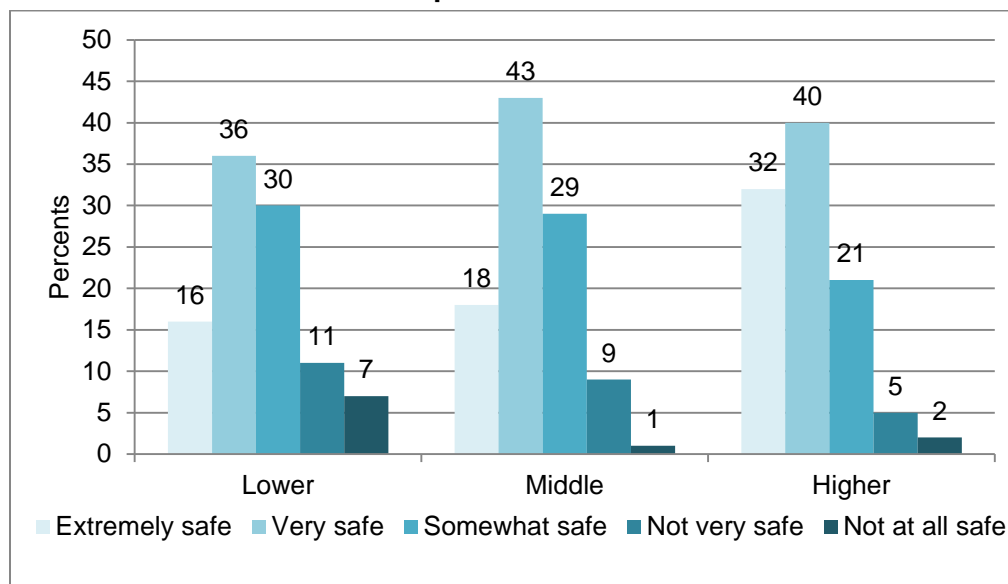
There has been no change in findings about feelings of safety at night in one's own neighborhood since 2010.

These 2013 findings with comparison to 2010 findings are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics that influenced findings about feeling safe walking alone at night in one's neighborhood

Characteristics of residents that might be associated with their ratings of safety while walking alone at night in one's own neighborhood were investigated.

Figure 44: Metric: How safe would you feel walking alone at night in your neighborhood: Income level differences in responses.



(n=507)

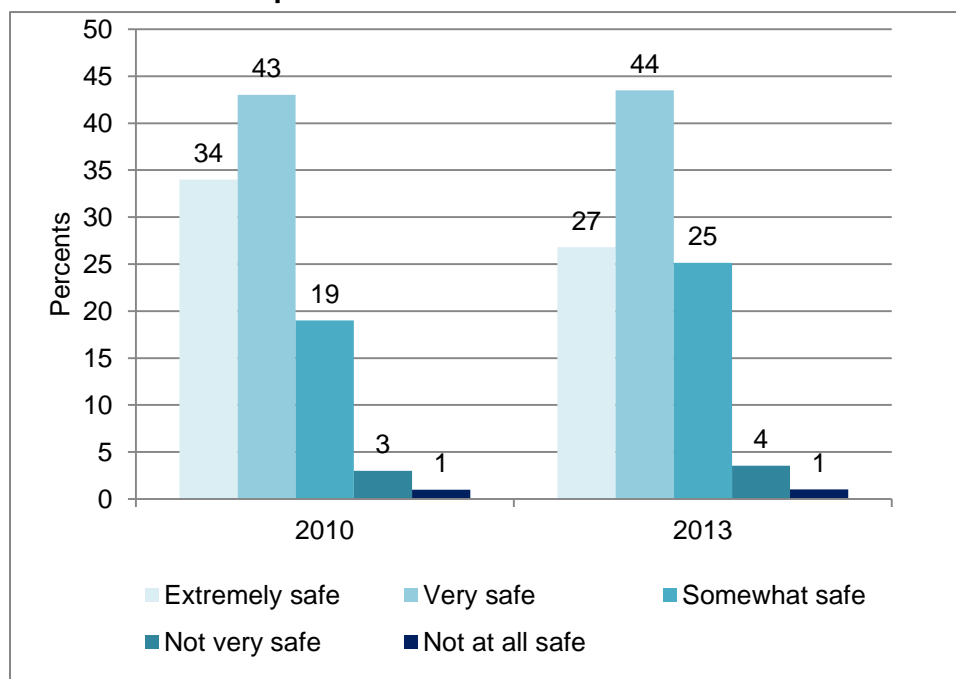
Note: (Lower = <\$25K; Middle = \$25K-\$74,999; Higher = \$75K and above)

Income level: Patterns of responses were different depending upon residents' level of income. A higher percentage of residents (32%) in the higher level of income rated themselves as feeling *extremely safe* while walking alone at night in their own neighborhood compared to those residents in the lower (16%) or middle (18%) income levels. A lower percentage of lower income level residents (36%) rated themselves as feeling *very safe* in their own neighborhoods at night compared to those residents in the middle (43%) or higher (40%) income levels. A lower percentage of residents in the higher level of income (21%) rated themselves as feeling *somewhat safe* in their own neighborhoods at night compared to those residents in the lower (30%) or middle (29%) income levels.

A lower percentage of residents in the higher level of income (5%) rated themselves as feeling *not very safe* in their own neighborhoods at night compared to those residents in the lower (11%) or middle (9%) income levels. A higher percentage of residents in the lower level of income (7%) rated themselves as feeling *not at all safe* at night in their own neighborhoods compared to those residents in the middle (1%) or higher (2%) levels of income. These income-level differences are illustrated in the figure above.

Feelings of safety while walking in downtown Bellingham

Figure 45: How safe would you feel walking alone downtown during the day: 2010 and 2013 compared.



(n=593)

In 2013 a smaller percentage of residents (27%) reported feeling *extremely safe* walking alone downtown during the day compared to residents in 2010 (34%).

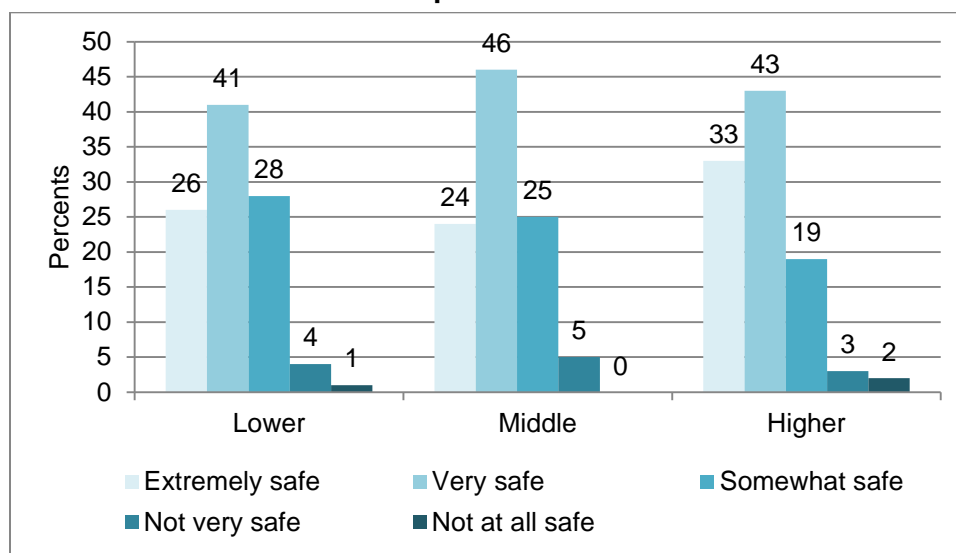
In 2013, a higher percentage of residents (25%) reported feeling *somewhat safe* walking alone downtown during the day compared to residents in 2010 (19%).

This shift in ratings between these two categories is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics that were associated with their ratings of safety downtown during the day

Characteristics of residents that might have been associated with their ratings of how safe they feel walking alone downtown during the day were investigated.

Figure 46: How safe would you feel walking alone downtown during the day: Income level differences in responses.



(n= 507)

(Lower: <24,999K; Middle: 25-74,999K; Higher: 75+K)

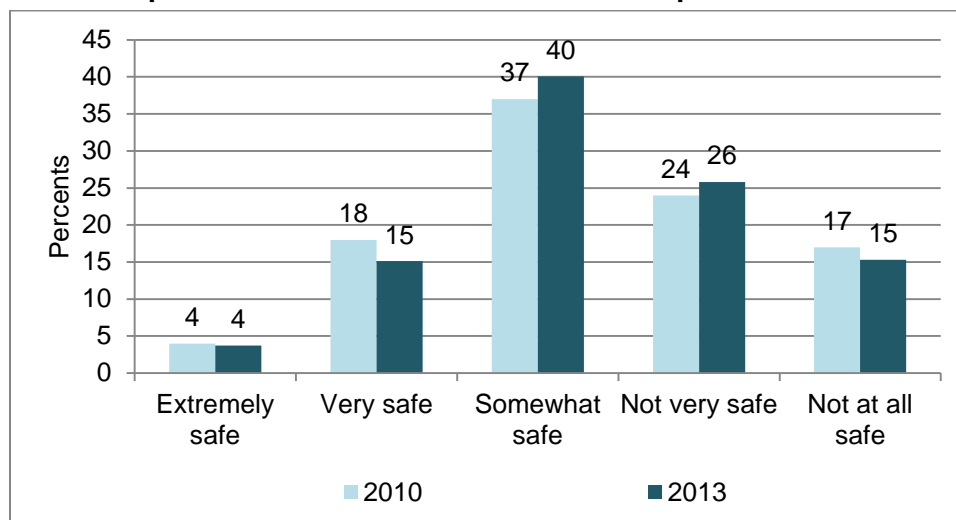
Income level: Residents level of income was found to be associated with their ratings of how safe they felt walking alone downtown during the day.

Those residents in the higher income level reported that they felt *extremely safe* a higher percentage of the time (33%) compared to residents in the lower level of income (26%) and residents in the middle level of income (24%).

Those residents in the higher income level reported that they felt *somewhat safe* a lower percentage of the time (19%) compared to residents in the lower level of income (28%) and residents in the middle level of income (25%).

This difference in safety ratings while walking alone downtown during the day is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 47: Metric: How safe would you feel walking alone in downtown at night: 2013 data provided and 2010 and 2013 data compared.



(2013: n=589)

The most commonly chosen rating for feelings of safety when walking alone downtown at night was *somewhat safe* (40%). Considering ratings other than his middle one, more residents felt unsafe alone in the downtown area at night (26% reporting they felt *not very safe* and 15% reporting that they felt *not at all safe*) than those who felt safe there (4% reporting that they felt *extremely safe* and 15% reporting that they felt *very safe*.)

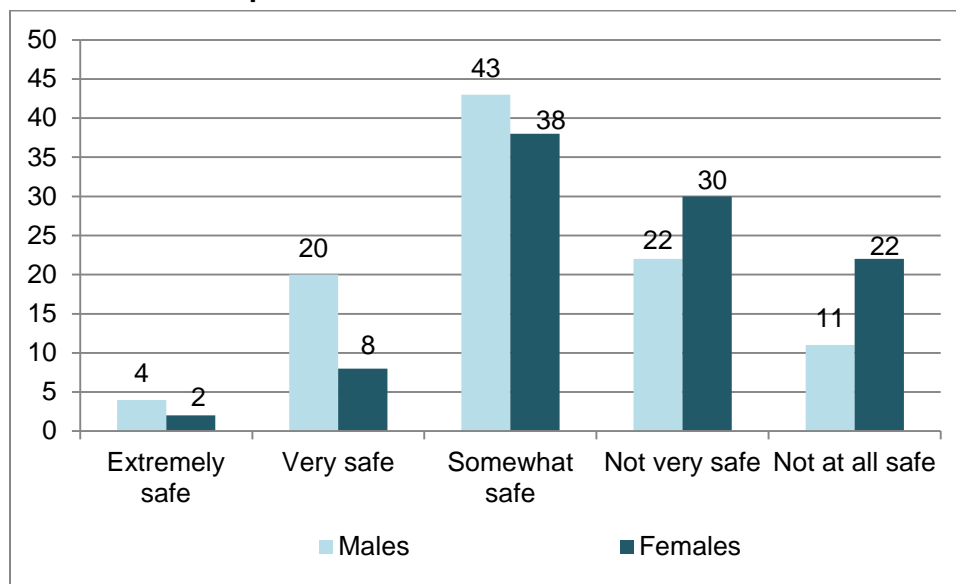
The pattern of 2013 responses about feelings of safety while walking alone in downtown at night was similar to that reported in 2010.

The comparison of 2010 to 2013's responses is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristic that were associated with residents ratings of safety downtown at night

Characteristics of residents that might have influenced their ratings of feelings of safety while walking alone downtown at night were investigated.

Figure 48: Metric: How safe would you feel walking alone in downtown at night: Gender differences in responses.



(n=580)

Gender: How safe residents felt walking alone downtown at night was associated with whether they are females or males.

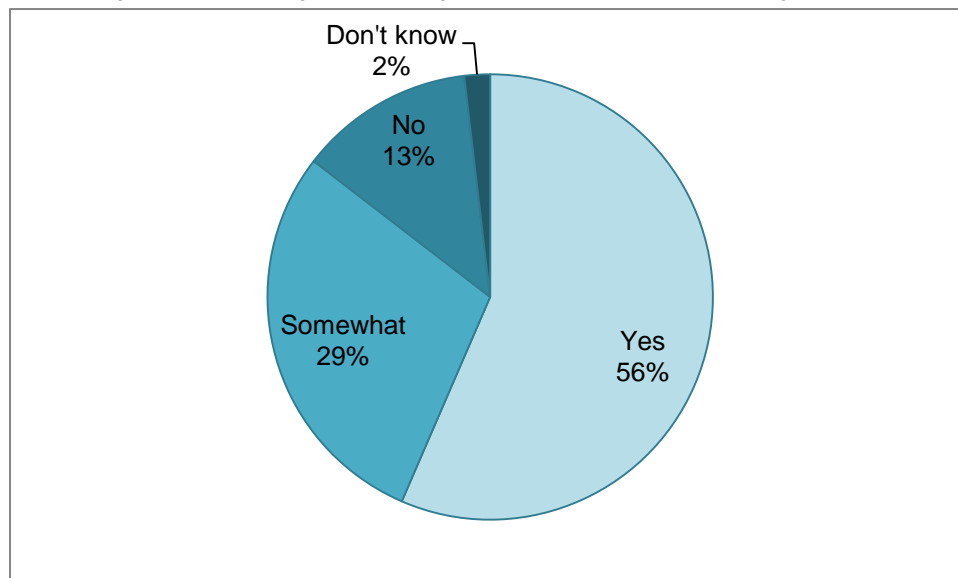
Generally, males felt safer when alone at night downtown compared to females. A higher percentage of males (20%) reported that they felt *very safe* downtown at night alone compared to females (8%). A higher percentage of males (43%) reported that they felt *somewhat safe* downtown at night alone compared to females (38%).

The inverse was true for females. In general, females felt less safe when alone at night downtown compared to males. A higher percentage of females (30%) reported feeling *not very safe* when alone downtown at night compared to males (22%). Also, a higher percentage of females (22%) reported feeling *not at all safe* when alone at night downtown compared to males (11%).

These gender differences in feelings of safety at night downtown are illustrated in the figure above.

Disaster/emergency preparedness

Figure 49: Metric: Thinking about your household, would you say you are prepared to sustain yourself and your family for 72 hours after a major disaster?



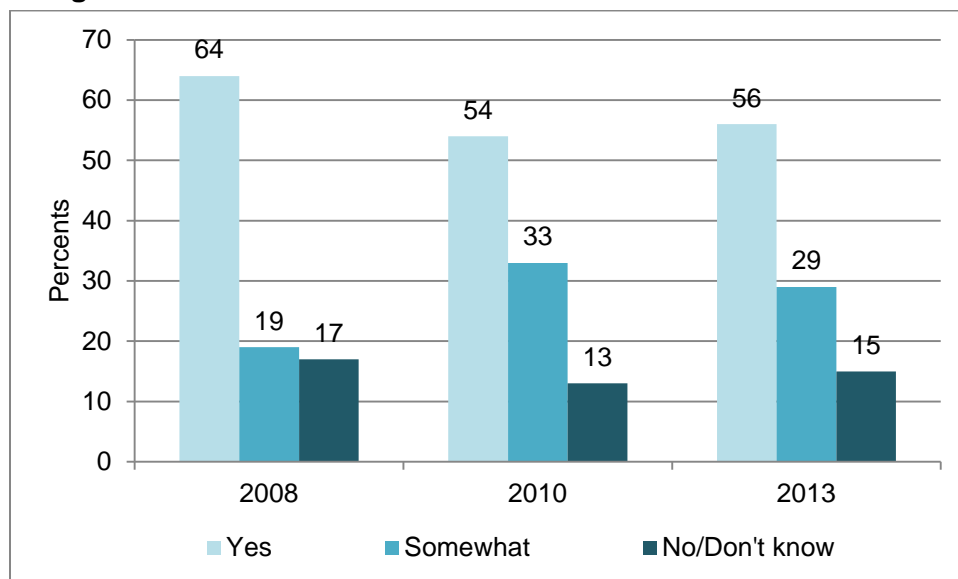
(n=596)

Just over half (56%) of Bellingham residents reported that they were prepared to sustain themselves and their families for 72 hours after a major disaster. Almost another third (29%) reported that they were *somewhat* prepared in case of a major disaster. This could be interpreted as either just over half (56%) are really prepared or 85% are at least *somewhat* prepared.

Thirteen percent said they were not prepared to handle an emergency situation for that long. Two percent reported that they did not know whether or not they were prepared to sustain themselves in case a disaster should strike.

These findings about emergency preparedness are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 50: Metric: Comparison among 2008, 2010 to 2013's's disaster preparedness ratings.



(2013: n=596)

A comparison can be made among residents' ratings of household emergency preparedness in 2008, 2010 and 2013. Generally, there has been a decline in households that report themselves prepared for emergency situations, 64% reporting being prepared in 2008 compared to 54% in 2010 and 56% in 2013.

The percentage of households that report being *somewhat* prepared has increased across the years, from 19% in 2008 to 29% in 2013.

Finally, there has been a decline in the percentage of residents saying they are not prepared, 17% in 2008 compared to 15% in 2013.

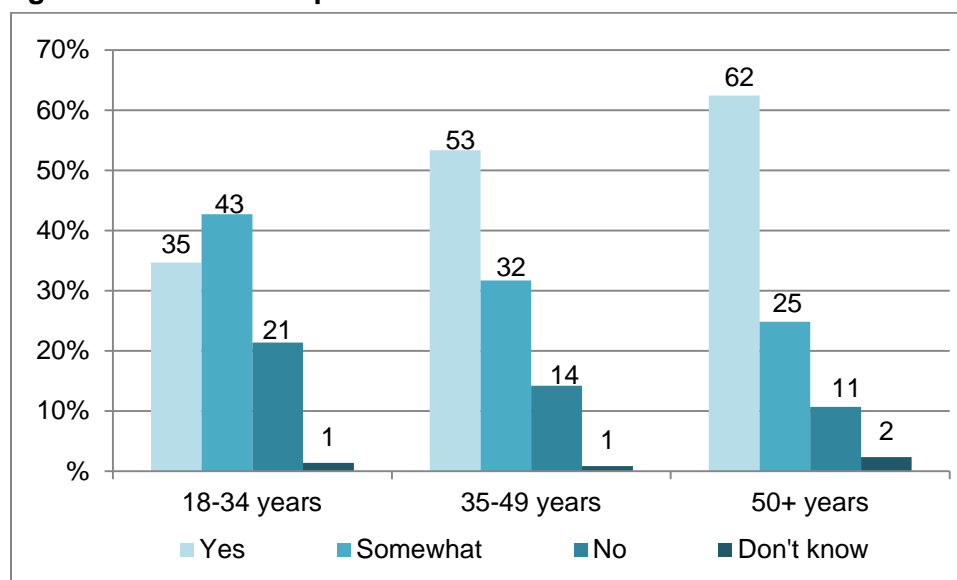
More change in all three rating categories occurred between 2008 and 2010 compared to between 2010 and 2013.

These emergency preparedness findings from 2008 to 2013 are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics that were associated with ratings of disaster preparedness

Characteristics of residents that might have influenced their ratings of their households' disaster preparedness were investigated.

Figure 51: Metric: Ratings of household disaster preparedness: Age differences in responses.



(n=586)

Age: Ratings of household disaster preparedness were associated with residents' age.

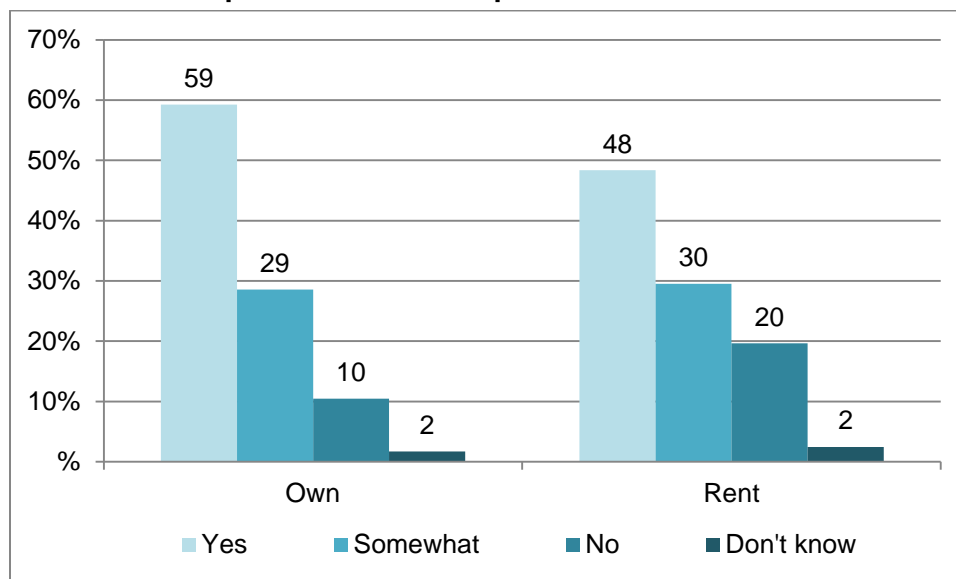
A higher percentage of residents aged 50 and older (62%) reported that they were prepared for serious emergencies compared to those aged 18-34 (35%) and those aged 35-49 (53%).

A lower percentage of residents aged 50 and older (25%) reported that they were *somewhat* prepared for serious emergencies compared to those aged 18-34 (43%) and those aged 35-49 (32%).

A higher percentage of residents aged 18-34 (21%) reported that they were not prepared for serious emergencies compared to those aged 35-49 (14%) and those aged 50 and older (11%).

These findings about the association of residents' age with disaster preparedness are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 52: Metric: Ratings of household disaster preparedness: Home ownership differences in responses.



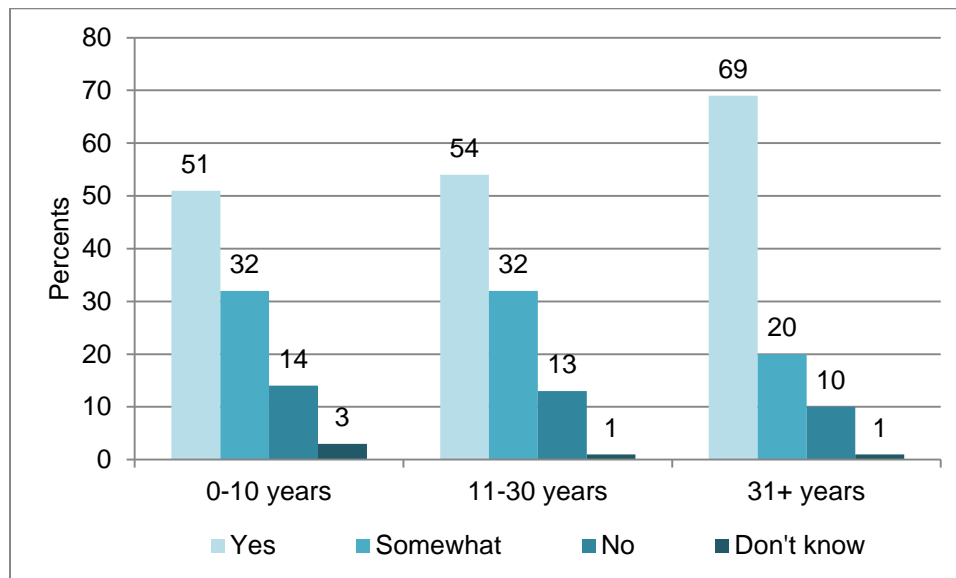
(n=591)

Home ownership: Ratings of household disaster preparedness were associated with whether residents owned or rented their homes.

A higher percentage of residents who own their homes (59%) reported that they were prepared for a disaster compared to those who rent (48%.) Conversely, a smaller percentage of residents who own their homes (10%) reported that they were not prepared should a disaster strike, compared to those who rent (20%.)

This finding of the association of homeownership status with emergency preparedness ratings is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 53: Metric: Ratings of household disaster preparedness: Differences associated with the number of years lived in Bellingham.



(n=592)

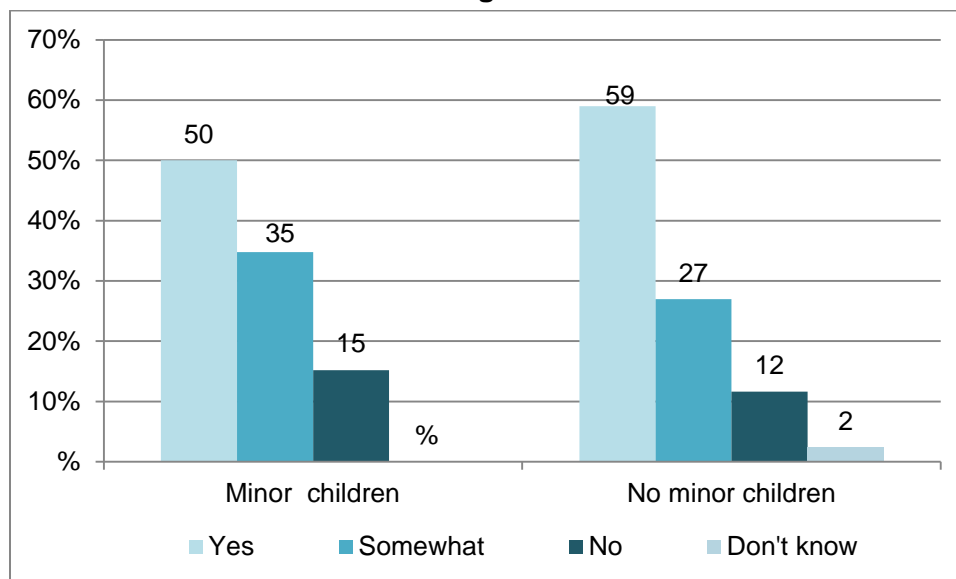
Years lived in Bellingham: Ratings of household disaster preparedness were associated with how many years residents have lived in the City of Bellingham.

A higher percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham 31 or more years (68%) reported that they were ready for a disaster, compared to those who have lived here for shorter periods of time (about 50% for both other groups.)

A lower percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham 31 or more years (20%) reported that they were *somewhat* ready for a disaster, compared to those who have lived here for shorter periods of time (32% for both groups.)

This finding that the number of years lived in Bellingham was associated with emergency preparedness ratings is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 54: Metric: Ratings of household disaster preparedness: Differences associated with having minor children in the home.



(n=594)

Minor children at home: Ratings of household disaster preparedness were associated with minor children living in the household.

A lower percentage of residents in households with minor children (50%) reported that they were prepared for an emergency compared to residents in households without minor children (59%).

A higher percentage of residents in households with minor children (35%) reported that they were *somewhat* prepared for an emergency compared to residents in households without minor children (27%).

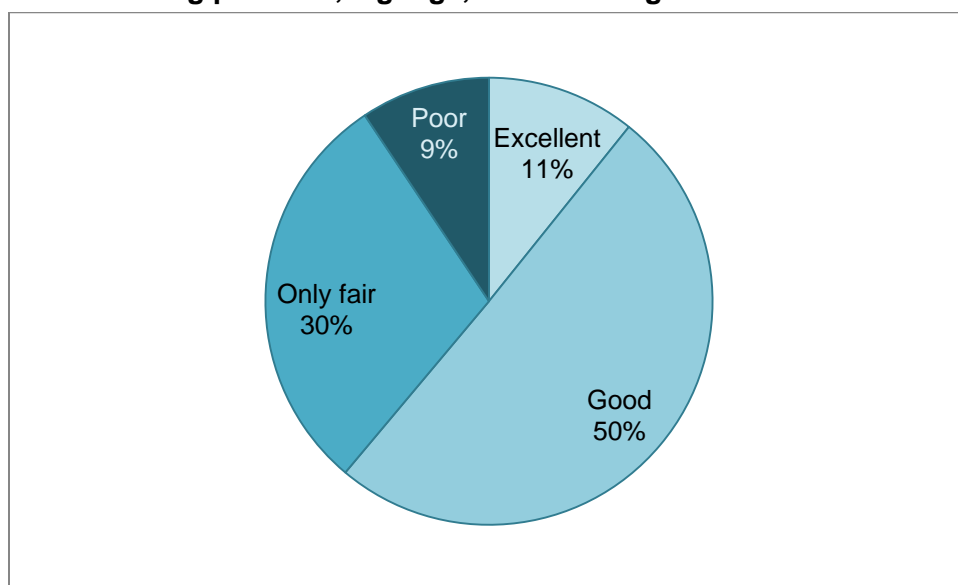
This finding of an association of the presence of minor children with emergency preparedness ratings is illustrated in the figure above.

MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

An important responsibility of the City of Bellingham is to provide safe, well-connected transportation choices for all residents, including automobile drivers, bicyclists, bus riders as well as pedestrians. To do this it is committed to limit sprawl and improve and increase infrastructure such as streets, bike lanes and trails. The City also encourages the reduction of single-occupancy polluting vehicles.

Streets

Figure 55: Metric: Please rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing improving streets, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights.

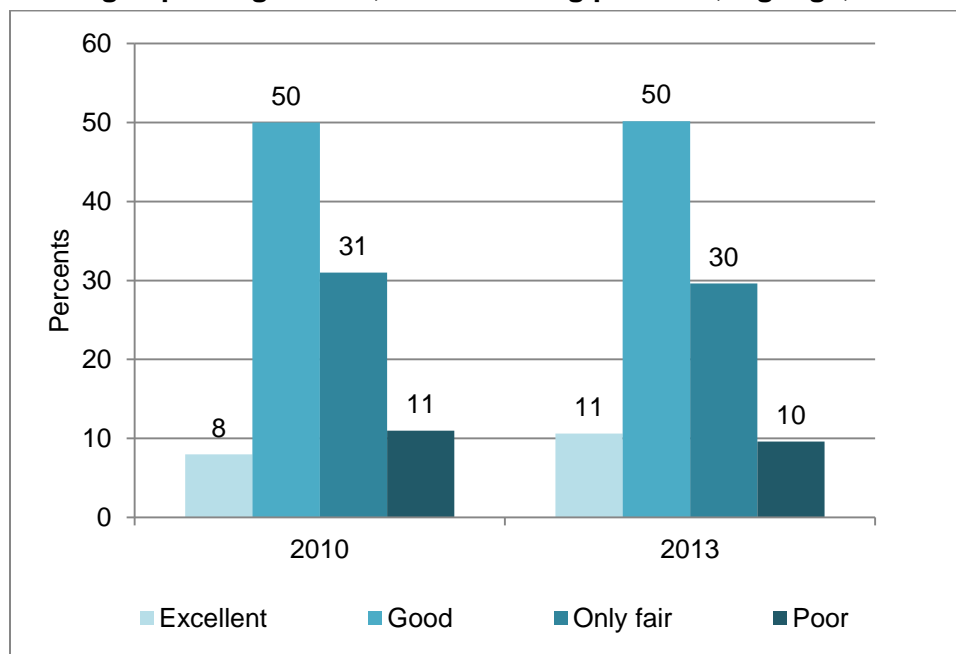


(n=584)

Just over ten percent (11%) of residents view the City of Bellingham's street improvement efforts as *excellent*. Half (50%) reported the City's efforts to improve streets as *good*. Almost one third of residents (30%) said the street improvement efforts are *only fair*. Nine percent (9%) rated them as *poor*.

These findings about street improvements are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 56: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of the job the City of Bellingham is doing improving streets, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights.



(2013: n=584)

A comparison of the 2010 to the 2013 ratings of the job the City is doing improving streets indicates that ratings have remained quite static.

2013 saw a small increase in the proportion of residents who rated the City's job with street improvements as *excellent* (8% in 2010 vs. 11% in 2013).

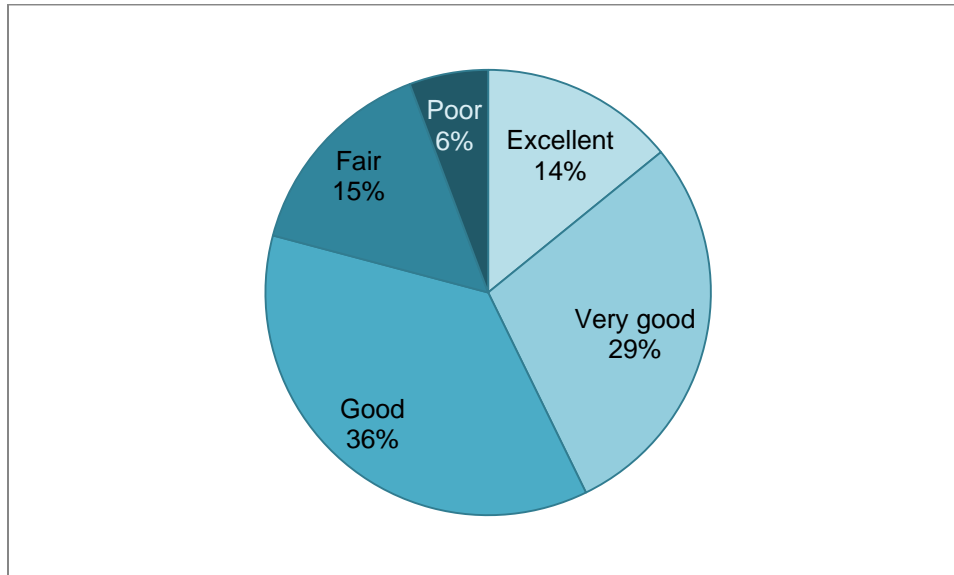
In both years, half (50%) the residents rated the City's job with street improvements as *good*.

In both years, about thirty percent of the residents rated the City's job with street improvements as *only fair* (31% in 2010 vs. 30% in 2013).

In both years, about ten percent of the residents rated the City's job with street improvements as *poor* (11% in 2010 vs. 10% in 2013).

These findings are illustrated in the figure above.

**Figure 57: How do you rate the streets in your neighborhood:
Physical condition of streets?**



(n=594)

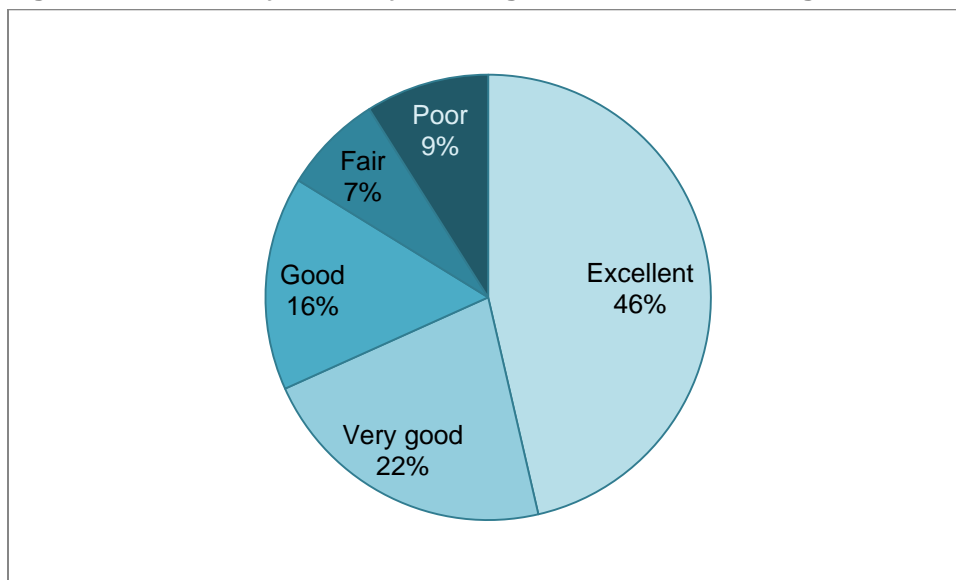
Forty-three percent of residents rated the physical condition of their streets as being either *excellent* (14%) or *very good* (29%). An additional 36% of residents rated their streets as being *good*.

Street condition was rated as being fair by 15% of residents and as being poor by 6% of residents.

These findings on ratings about the physical conditions of streets is illustrated in the figure above.

Access to bus stops and shopping

Figure 58: How do you rate your neighborhood on walking distance to a bus stops?



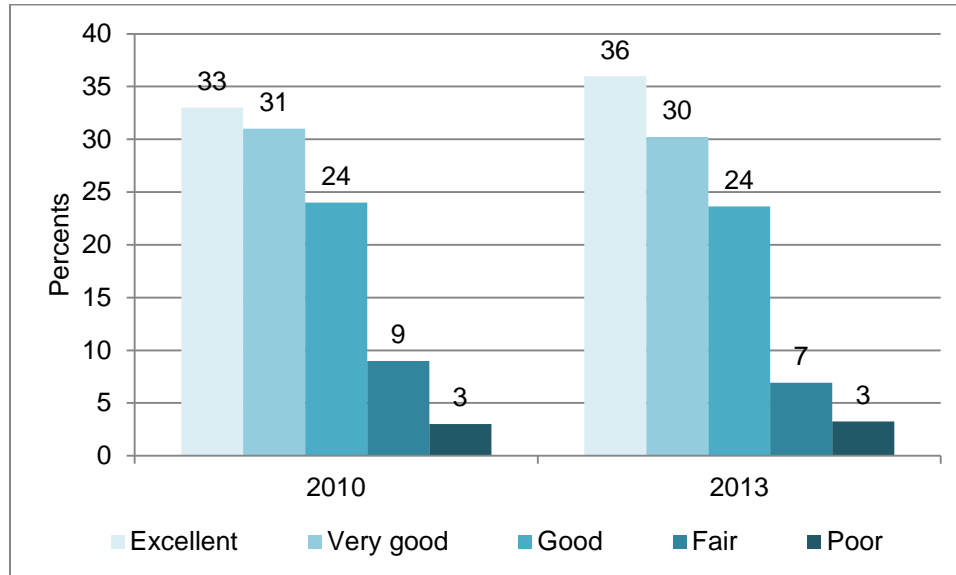
(n=580)

Two-thirds of residents (68%) reported that their neighborhood had *excellent* (36%) or *very good* (30%) access to shopping or other services. Almost another quarter of residents (24%) reported that their neighborhoods' access to shopping or other services was *good*. This totals to 84% of ratings being positive about bus stop distances.

Sixteen percent (16%) of residents surveyed were dissatisfied with the access of their neighborhoods to bus services. Seven percent (7%) of residents reported access as being *fair* while 9% rated it as being *poor*.

These findings on neighborhoods accessibility to bus stops is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 59: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of access to shopping or other services.



(2013: n=580)

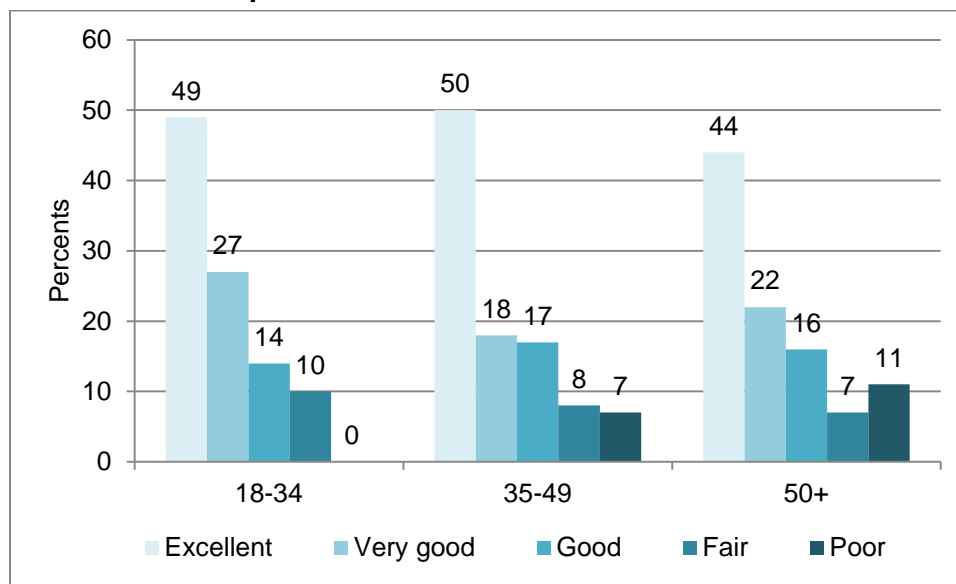
A comparison of 2010 to 2013 residents' ratings of how their neighborhoods rate on access to shopping or other services shows that ratings have been static.

The comparison of ratings of accessibility from 2010 to 2013 is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics that were associated with ratings of walking distance to bus stops

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of distance to a bus stop in their neighborhood were investigated.

Figure 60: How do you rate your neighborhood on walking distance to a bus stop? Age differences in responses.



(n=571)

Age: Residents' age group was found to be associated with their ratings of walking distance to a bus stop.

When considering the most positive categories of *excellent* and *very good* together, a higher percentage of younger residents choose these categories (49% *excellent*; 27% *very good*; 76% combined) compared to residents in either the middle level (50% *excellent*; 18% *very good*; 68% combined) or the older age level (44% *excellent*; 22% *very good*; 66% combined.)

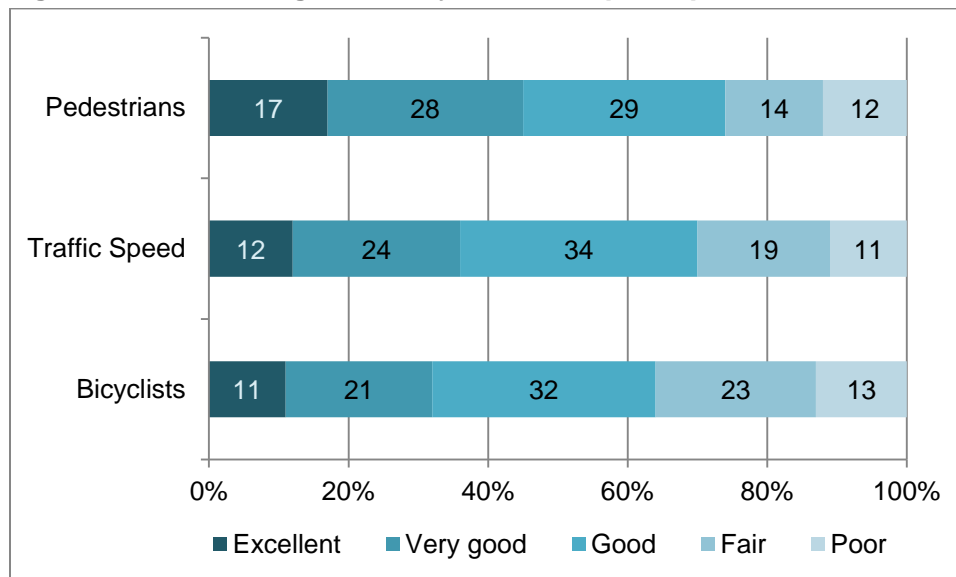
In addition, a higher percentage of residents in the older age level (11%) rated distance to a bus stop as *poor*, compared to 7% for those residents in the middle age group and 0% for those residents in the younger age group.

These findings on the association of age level with ratings of walking distances to a bus stop are illustrated in the figure above.

Neighborhood street safety

Residents were asked to rate to three aspects of street safety: traffic speed, pedestrian safety and bicyclist safety. For all three measures of street safety the majority of residents rated safety as *good* or better (74% for pedestrians' safety; 70% for traffic speed safety; and 64% for bicyclists' safety.) In addition, fewer than one in five residents rated any of these measures as *poor* (12% for pedestrians' safety; 11% for traffic speed safety; and 13% for bicyclists' safety.)

Figure 61: 2013 ratings of safety of traffic speed, pedestrians and bicyclists



(pedestrians: n=597; traffic speed: n=594; bicyclists: n=571)

This comparison among street safety ratings is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 62: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of street safety: safety of traffic speed.

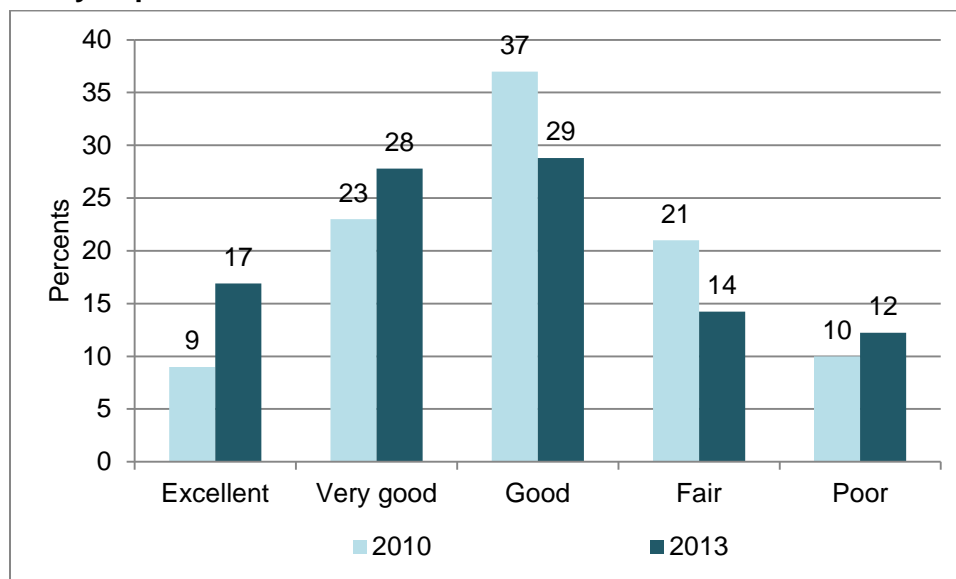


(2013: n=594)

There has been a positive shift in ratings of traffic speed safety since 2010. There have been increases in the rating categories of *excellent* (from 8% in 2010 to 12% in 2013) and *very good* (21% in 2010 to 24% in 2013.)

However, these gains have been due a decrease in *good* ratings (41% in 2010 to 34% in 2013) rather than from a shift up from the rating categories of either *fair* or *poor*, which have not changed since 2010.

Figure 63: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of street safety: safety of pedestrians.



(2013: n=597)

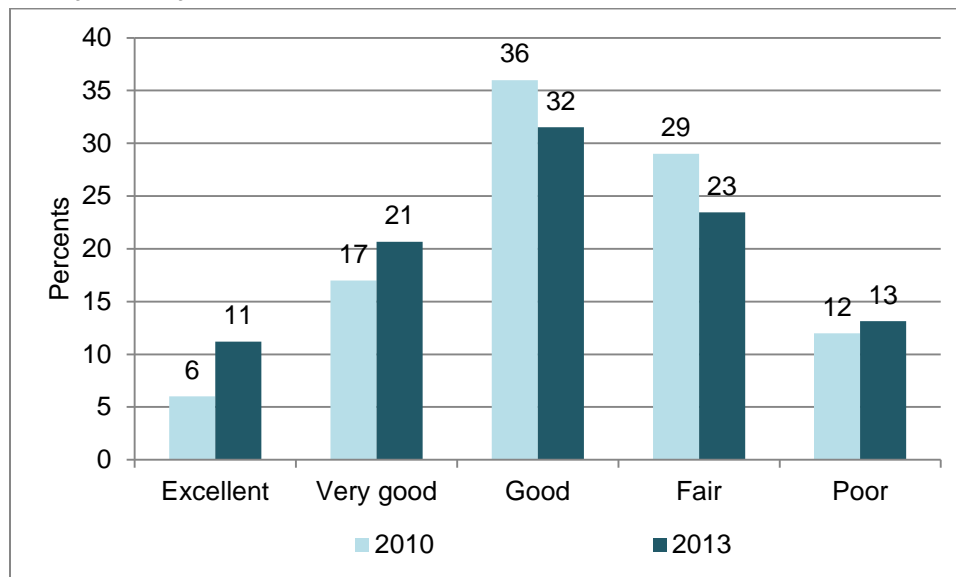
There has been a positive shift in ratings of pedestrian safety since 2010. There have been increases in the rating categories of *excellent* (from 9% in 2010 to 17% in 2013) and *very good* (23% in 2010 to 28% in 2013.)

These gains have been due a decrease in both *good* ratings (37% in 2010 to 29% in 2013) as well as *fair* ratings (21% in 2010 to 14% in 2013).

The percentage of *poor* ratings (10% in 2010 and 12% in 2013) has not changed since 2010.

These findings are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 64: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of street safety: safety of bicyclists.



(2013: n=571)

There has been a positive shift in ratings of bicyclists' safety since 2010. There have been increases in the rating categories of *excellent* (from 6% in 2010 to 11% in 2013) and *very good* (17% in 2010 to 21% in 2013.)

These gains have been due a decrease in both *good* ratings (36% in 2010 to 32% in 2013) as well as *fair* ratings (29% in 2010 to 23% in 2013).

The percentage of *poor* ratings has changed minimally since 2010.

These findings are illustrated in the figure above.

ACCESS TO QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES

The high quality of life in Bellingham, compared to other locales, is of great value to the majority of residents. To maintain and improve it, the City maintains and enhances publicly owned assets, fosters the arts, culture and lifelong learning, provides recreational opportunities, and ensures availability of and convenient access to City parks and trails.

The quality and valuable aspects of life in Bellingham

Figure 65: Metric: Overall, would you rate the quality of life in Bellingham as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?



(n=597)

Over all, over ninety percent of residents (94%) rated the quality of life in Bellingham positively. Forty-five percent (45%) of residents rated Bellingham's quality of life as *excellent* and forty-nine (49%) rated it as *good*. A minority of residents report dissatisfaction with Bellingham's quality of life: 5% reported it as being *only fair* and 1% reported it as being *poor*.

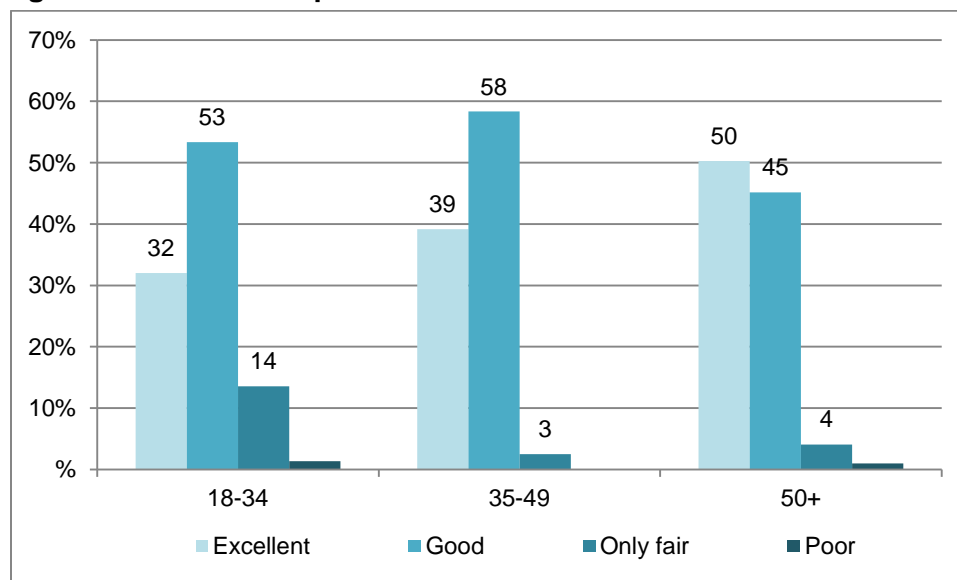
These 2013 quality of life findings are illustrated in the figure above.

Quality of life ratings for Bellingham have remained unchanged since 2010.

Resident characteristics that were associated with quality of life ratings

Characteristics of residents that might have influenced their ratings of the quality of life in Bellingham were investigated.

**Figure 66: Metric: Quality of life in Bellingham:
Age differences in responses.**



(n=587)

Age: How residents rated the quality of life in Bellingham's was associated with their age.

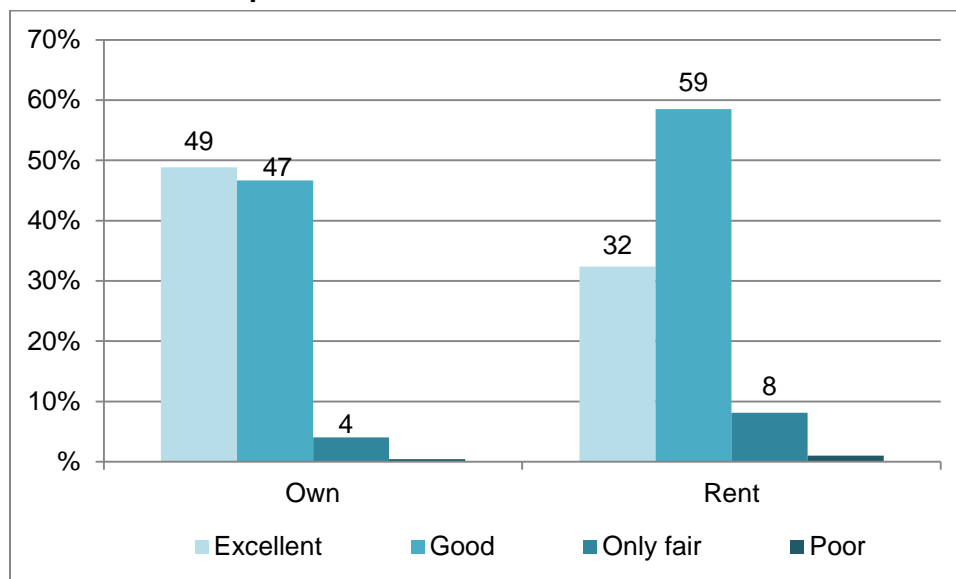
A higher percentage of residents aged 50 and older (50%) rated the quality of life in Bellingham as *excellent*, as compared to residents aged 18-34 (32%) and residents aged 35-49 (39%).

A lower percentage of residents aged 50 and older (45%) rated the quality of life in Bellingham as *good*, as compared to residents aged 18-34 (53%) and residents aged 35-49 (58%).

A higher percentage of residents aged 18-34 (14%) rated the quality of life in Bellingham as *only fair*, as compared to residents aged 35-49 (3%) and residents aged 50 and older (4%).

These findings of the association of age with quality of life ratings are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 67: Metric: Quality of life in Bellingham: Home ownership differences in responses.



(n=592)

Home ownership: How residents rated the quality of life in Bellingham was associated with whether they owned or rented their home.

A higher percentage of owners (49%) rated the quality of life in Bellingham as *excellent* compared to residents who rent (32%).

A lower percentage of owners (47%) rated the quality of life in Bellingham as *good* compared to residents who rent (59%).

This finding of an association of home ownership with quality of life ratings is illustrated in the figure above.

What respondents valued most

Respondents were asked to describe what they valued most about Bellingham as a place to live. Their open-ended answers were reviewed and coded and organized according to the City's Legacies and Commitments. The coded responses are presented in Table 1 below. The original, verbatim open-ended responses are provided in the appendices to this report.

Aspects of Bellingham that were highly valued by residents (i.e., garnered 50 or more responses) and modifiable through City efforts included Bellingham being a right-sized community (small or moderate), having a strong sense of community with a casual, small-town feel full of friendly, interesting people. For example, one resident said:

Not to big but not so small as to be missing out on things, i.e. stores, movies, restaurants, nightlife. Also the many parks and trails.

Another noted:

It is culturally diverse and socially progressive. I love the fact that there are so many people into sustainable living, cooperative farming, arts and culture, and that value education and preserving our wonderful natural environment.

Residents appreciated the fact that there are beautiful, natural open spaces within the city and that the City is in close proximity to outdoor, rural areas. Residents value having beautiful parks and greenways with good trails and having recreation activities and events outdoors.

This one noted the breadth of amenities, cultural assets and proximity to rural lands:

Greenbelts, tree lined boulevards, views. Proximity of productive farmlands. The city is an independent entity separate from Vancouver and Everett. Mt. Baker theater. Easy access to needs such as church, shopping, medical offices and the big outdoors. Airport shuttle and train service to and from Bellingham. Preservation of older buildings in keeping with city history. The Lighthouse Mission.

Finally, residents appreciated the presence of art and culture in their midst and the presence of higher education opportunities. Finally, they value that Bellingham is a safe place in which to live.

This resident described a wide variety of valued aspects:

My neighborhood sense of community. The physical beauty is unsurpassed, including city parks, the general beauty of the various neighborhoods and the surrounding mountains and ocean. But mostly Bellingham has a peaceful progressive feel that makes it an excellent place to raise children, with great schools, arts, music and civic facilities. The presence of WWU brings much to our community economically and culturally. It's a small-town feel with cosmopolitan overtones provided by our neighbors to the north and south. Let me add that the in the past, having spent twenty years living in the county and twenty years living in Bellingham,

I found the socio-political differences of Whatcom County to be an education in tolerance, and provided opportunities to educate others that we are all human in the end. I am so glad that my wife and I moved here back in 1975 and raised two children here with two grand children.

Table 1: What do you value most about Bellingham as a place to live?

What Residents Value Most about Bellingham	n	%
Sense of Place / Community Characteristics	448	75
Right-sized / small / moderate community	74	12
Casual / Relaxed pace / Small town feeling	64	11
Friendly / welcoming / interesting people	63	11
Strong sense of community / community involvement / pride	52	9
Liberal, progressive thinking (residents & gov't staff)	34	6
Environmentally smart / sustainability / green	33	6
Nice / cohesive / tree-lined neighborhoods (Fairhaven)	33	6
My hometown / family and friends are here	27	5
Family friendly / good place to raise children	23	4
Diverse population (has young, old, students, retired, families)	16	3
Educated, well informed population	12	2
Peaceful / Quiet	11	2
Healthy Physical Environment	382	64
Beautiful / natural / open spaces / the environment	162	27
Close proximity to mountains / water / outdoors / rural areas	123	21
Temperate / Mild weather / climate / seasons	56	9
Clean air	16	3
Clean water	13	2
Clean City / clean area	12	2
Outdoor Services and Recreation	347	58
Good parks / beautiful parks	118	20
Greenways / Interurban trail system / good trails	98	16
Sports and recreation programs / activities / events (outdoor)	96	16
Pedestrian &/or bike friendly	35	6
Public Services and Amenities	296	50
Art / culture (inc. visual, performing, music, museums, etc.)	52	9
Presence of colleges / higher education / WWU	51	9
Breadth of activities / amenities	40	7
Good / fun retail stores /shopping / bookstores	34	6
Restaurants / Pubs / Coffeehouses	21	4
Quality of schools	20	3
Nightlife & entertainment	18	3
Support of local businesses	18	3
Good libraries	14	2
Good downtown	14	2
Farmers' & Public Market / Locally grown or healthful food	11	2

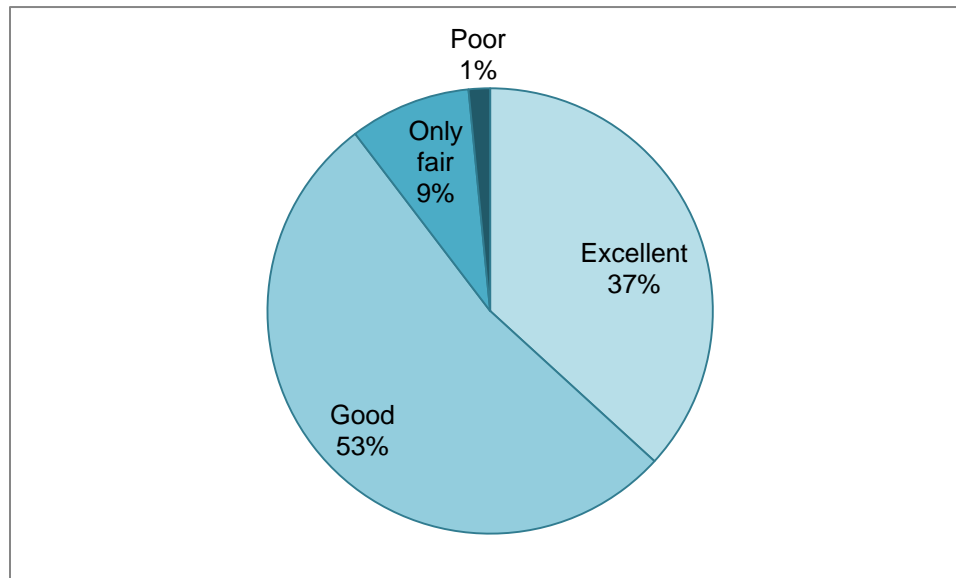
Table 1, continued: What do you value most about Bellingham as a place to live?

What Residents Value Most about Bellingham	n	%
Transportation and Accessibility	208	35
Close to major Metro areas (Seattle & Vancouver)	49	8
Easy or convenient to get around / easy access	45	8
Location (general)	41	7
Access to medical and health services	27	5
Less car &/or pedestrian congestion / not crowded	19	3
Accessible shopping	10	2
Public Safety	158	26
Low crime rate / safe place to live / feel secure	75	13
City services (general, transit, bus)	48	8
Public safety services (police / Medic One)	35	6
Equity & Social Justice	13	2
Services for poor / homeless / developmentally challenged	13	2
Other: Dog parks, activities for seniors, pollution, etc.	28	5

Multiple response question: 597 residents provided 1,880 responses. Responses that could not be placed into the categories were scored as "Other." Sum of percentages equaling 101% is due to decimal rounding.

Parks, trails and recreation programs

Figure 68: Metric: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing maintaining parks and trails?



(n=588)

Over one third of residents surveyed (37%) rated the job the City of Bellingham is doing maintaining parks and trails as *excellent*. Over half (53%) of the residents rated City park and trail maintenance as *good*.

Almost ten percent (9%) rated the job the City was doing maintaining parks and trails as *only fair*. One percent (1%) of residents rated it as a *poor* job.

These findings about park and trail maintenance efforts are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 69: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of park and trail maintenance.

(2013: n=588)

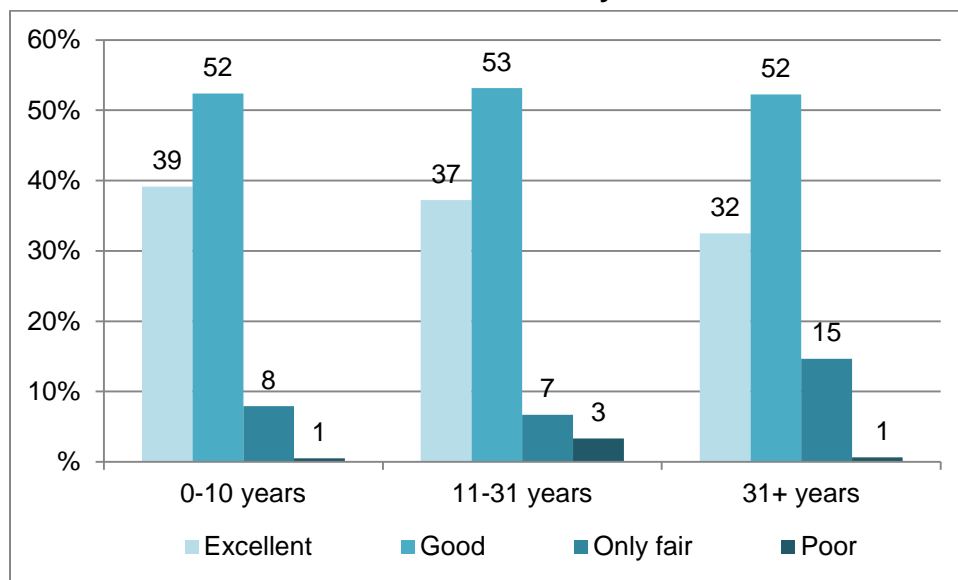
A comparison of ratings of park and trail maintenance show virtually no change from 2010 to 2013.

A comparison of 2010 to 2013's responses about park and trail maintenance efforts is illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics that were associated with ratings of park and trail maintenance

Characteristics of residents that might be associated with their ratings of the job the City of Bellingham is doing maintaining parks and trails were investigated.

Figure 70: Metric: Ratings of the job the City of Bellingham is doing maintaining parks and trails: Association with the number of years residents have lived in the City.



(n= 588)

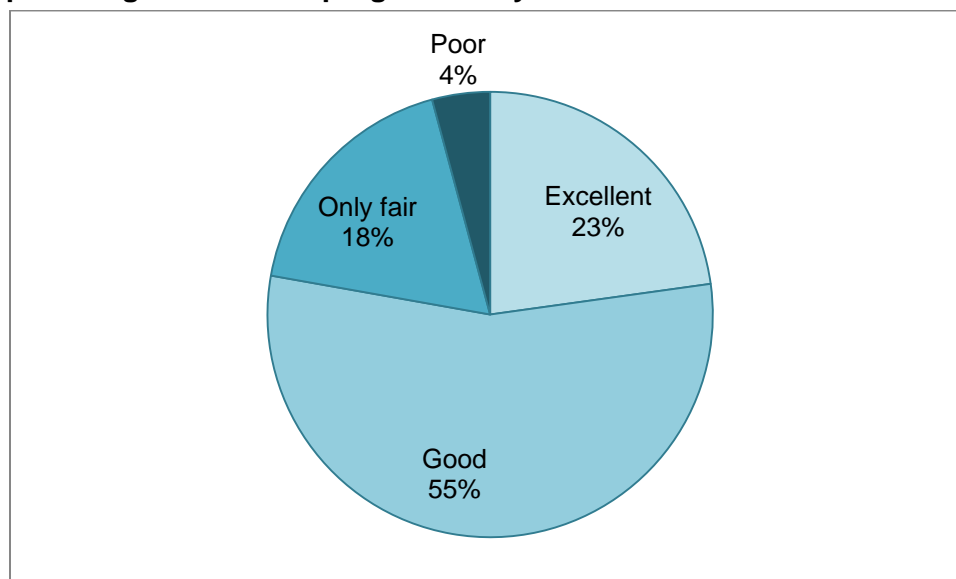
Years lived in Bellingham: Ratings of the job the City of Bellingham is doing maintaining parks and trails was associated with how many years residents have lived in the City.

A higher percentage of relatively new residents (39%) rated the City's job maintaining parks and trails as *excellent* compared to residents who have lived in the City for 31 or more years (32%.)

A higher percentage of long-term residents, those who have lived in the City 31 or more years rated the City's job maintaining parks and trails as *only fair* compared to residents who have lived in the City for shorter periods of time.

This finding of an association of the number of years lived in Bellingham with ratings of the job the City is doing maintaining parks and trails is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 71: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing providing recreational programs for youth and adults



(n=508)

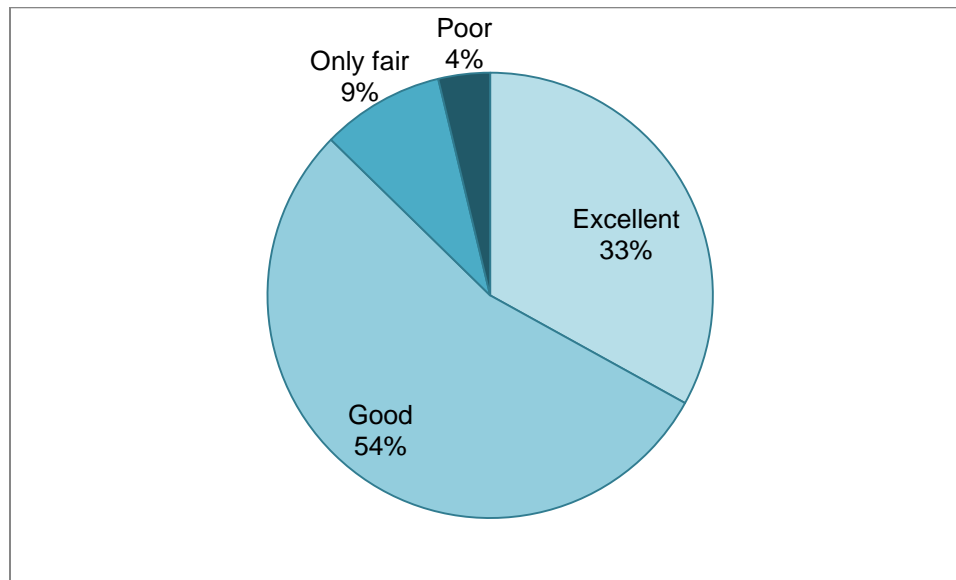
Almost one quarter (23%) of residents rated the job the City is doing providing recreational programs as *excellent*. Over half (55%) rated the job as *good*. These two positive categories together represented 78% of residents' ratings.

Less than a quarter of the residents rated the job the City has been doing with recreational programs in a negative manner. Almost twenty percent (18%) of residents rated the City's job with recreation programs as *only fair*. Four percent (4%) rated the job as *poor*.

These findings about ratings of recreational programs are illustrated in the figure above.

Library services and culture and the arts

Figure 72: Rate the job the City is doing providing library services for the community.



(n=570)

The vast majority (87%) of residents gave the City positive ratings for its provision of library services: One third of residents (33%) rated the City's library services as *excellent* and over half rated them as *good* (54%.)

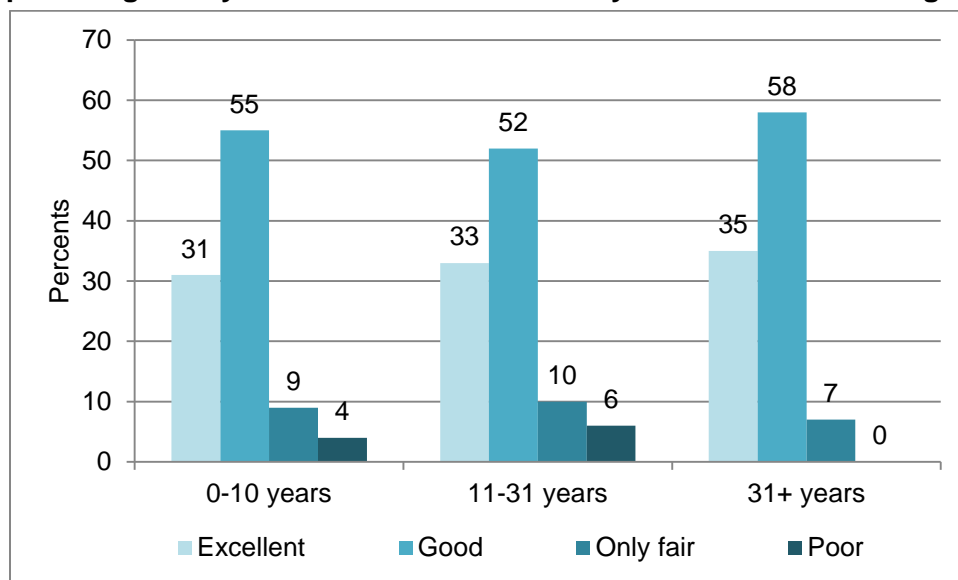
Thirteen percent (13%) gave the City negative ratings: 9% rated the services as *only fair* while 4% rated them as *poor*.

These findings about library services are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristic that was associated with ratings of library service

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of the job the City is doing providing library services for the community were investigated.

Figure 73: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing providing library services for the community: Years lived in Bellingham



(n=567)

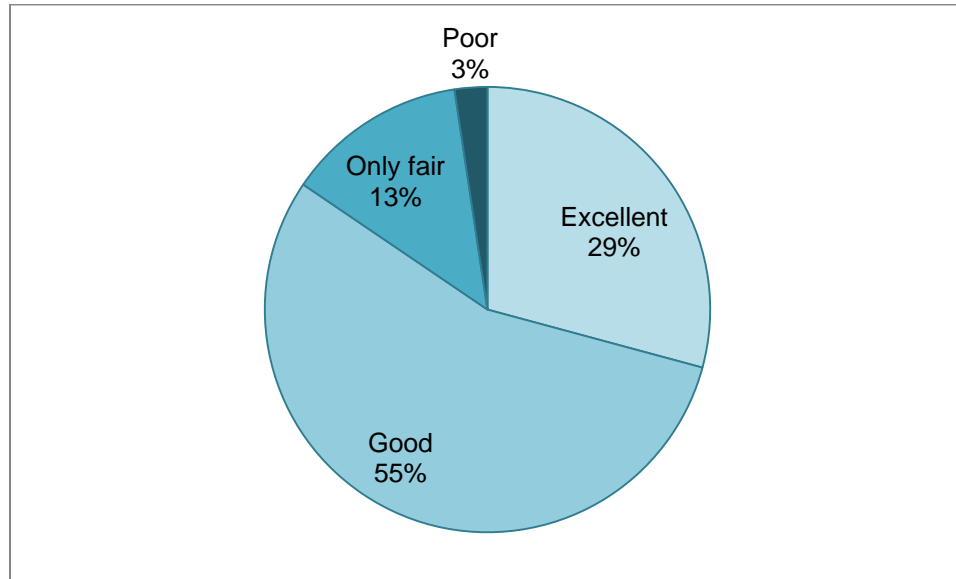
Years in Bellingham: How long residents have lived in Bellingham was associated with their ratings of the job the City is doing providing library services.

The residents who have lived in Bellingham the longest, 31 or more years, were most positive in their ratings of library services compared to residents in the two younger age groups.

This can be seen by the higher percentage of *good* ratings (58%) given by residents who have lived in Bellingham the longest compared to residents in the two other groups (55% and 52%). It can also be seen by the fact that no one who has lived in Bellingham 31 or more years rated the library services as poor, compared to residents in the two other groups (4% and 6%).

This association of length of time residents lived in Bellingham with their ratings of library services is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 74: Metric: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing creating opportunities for education in culture and the arts?

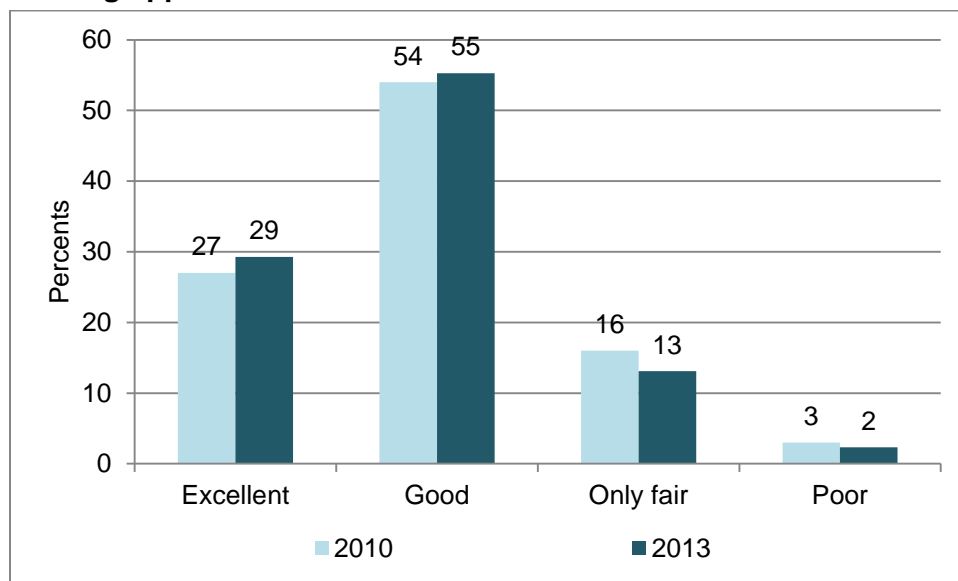


(n=557)

About one third (29%) of residents report that the job the City of Bellingham is doing creating opportunities for education in culture and the arts is *excellent*. Over half of residents (55%) reported that the City was doing a *good* job providing such educational opportunities. Thirteen percent (13%) of residents indicated that they consider the job being done to provide cultural and artistic education as *only fair*. Three percent (3%) of residents viewed the City's current job of cultural and artistic education as being *poor*.

These findings about arts education opportunities are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 75: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of the City of Bellingham's job creating opportunities for education in culture and the arts.



(2013: n=570)

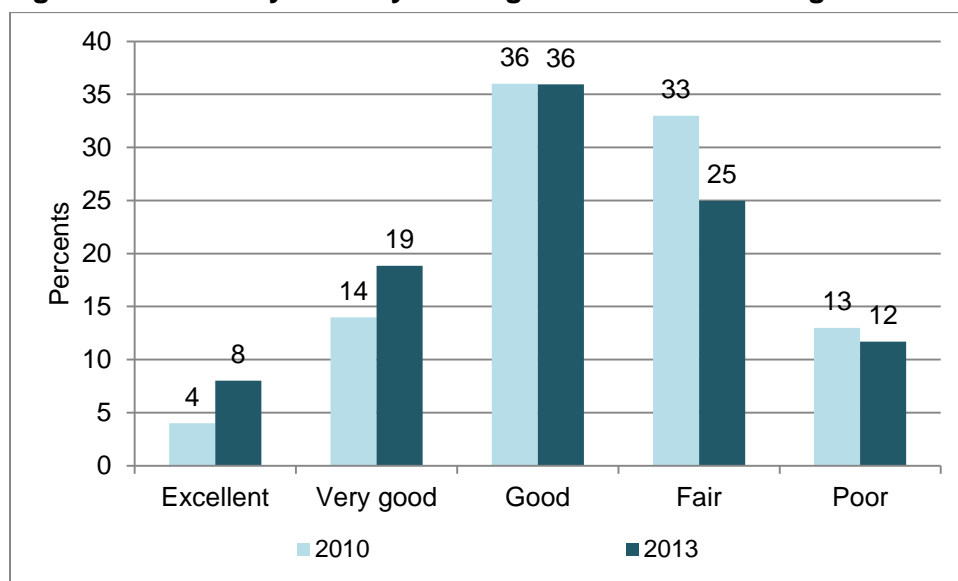
A comparison of 2010 vs. 2013 ratings for the job the City of Bellingham is doing creating educational opportunities for education in culture and the arts shows them to have improved slightly from 81% *good* or *excellent* to 84% in 2013.

The comparison of 2010 to 2013's findings is illustrated in the figure above.

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The City of Bellingham supports safe, affordable housing, aims to increase living-wage employment opportunities, provides access to problem-solving resources, provides support services for lower-income residents, and cultivates respect and appreciation for diversity.

Figure 76: How do you rate your neighborhood on housing affordability?



(n=573 in 2013)

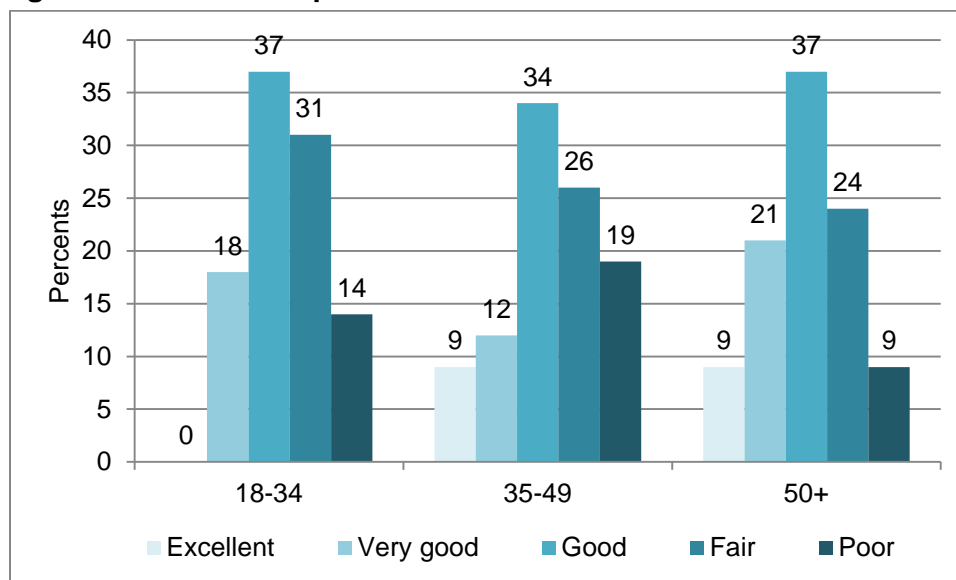
Since 2010 there has been improvement in ratings on housing affordability. Overall, the percentage of *fair* ratings has decreased (from 33% to 25%) while the percentages of more positive categories have increased. *Excellent* ratings have increased from 4% to 8% and *very good* ratings have increased from 14% to 19%.

These changes in ratings of housing affordability since 2010 are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics that were associated with ratings of housing affordability

Characteristics of residents that were associated with their ratings of neighborhood housing affordability were investigated.

Figure 77: How do you rate your neighborhood on housing affordability?: Age differences in responses.



(n=563)

Age: The residents' ratings of housing affordability were associated with their age level. No resident in the youngest age level rated housing affordability as *excellent*, compared to 9% in both other age levels.

A lower percentage of residents in the middle aged (35-49) group (12%) rated housing affordability as *very good*, compared to residents in the 18-34 age level (18%) and residents in the age level 50 and older (21%).

A higher percentage of residents in the younger aged (18-34) group (31%) rated housing affordability as *fair* compared to residents in the 35-49 age level (26%) and residents in the age level 50 and older (24%).

A lower percentage of residents in the 50 and older age level (9%) rated housing affordability as *poor* compared to residents in the 18-34 age level (14%) and residents in the 35-49 age level (19%).

This finding of an association of residents' age with their ratings on housing affordability is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 78: How do you rate your neighborhood on housing affordability?: Association with having minor children at home.



(n=571)

Minor children at home: Whether or not residents had minor children in the home was found to be associated with their ratings of neighborhood housing affordability.

A lower percentage of residents with minor children in the home rated housing affordability as *very good* (9%) compared to residents with no children at home (22%).

Consistent with this, a higher percentage of residents with children in the home rated housing affordability as *fair* (32%) or *poor* (16%) compared to residents with no children at home, 23% of whom gave the rating of *fair* and 10% of whom gave the rating it *poor*.

This finding of an association of having minor children in the home with ratings of housing affordability is illustrated in the figure above.

QUALITY AND RESPONSIVE CITY SERVICES

The City of Bellingham has committed to deliver municipal services in an efficient, effective and accountable manner. To accomplish this, the City has pledged to use transparent processes, involve stakeholders in decisions, provide accurate information, and to recruit, train and support quality employees.

Important problems facing Bellingham that City leaders can address

Respondents were asked to describe what they thought was the most important problem facing Bellingham today that City leaders can do something about. Their open-ended answers were reviewed and coded and organized according to the City's Legacies and Commitments. The coded responses are presented in Table 2 below. The original, verbatim open-ended responses are provided in the appendices to this report.

Aspects of Bellingham life that garnered 50 or more responses as problems City leaders can do something about included overcrowding and sprawl, with its concomitant traffic congestion, need for more employment and specifically better paying jobs. Residents also said that more business development, industrial and local, were needed. For example, one resident said:

Lack of industry and lack of family-wage JOBS!!! Bellingham is a very hard city to make a living in, and we need more industry in this area to sustain a healthy economy

Some described a need to consider both quality of life and economic development. For example:

Control growth to strike a balance between commercial development with its impact on job growth and prosperity and the need to protect public spaces for recreation and culture. Work to make downtown an attractive place to shop, stroll and conduct business.

Many mentioned several issues in response. For example transportation, government spending and safety were all mentioned by this resident:

Safety (drugs, increased homeless population). Rein in the spending which is paid by us the taxpayers!! Why has it taken almost 6 months to get the road paved by WWU?? Too many consultants paid large money for little end product.

There were 99 responses (9%) about coal trains and the proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point, the majority of which were opposed to it (anti=78; could not tell=11; pro=10).

Proposed waterfront development plans were mentioned as well by 76 people (7%) as a problem the City is currently facing, the outcome of which they say can harm or help the City.

Table 2: What is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that City leaders can do something about?

	n	%
Economy	195	33
Insufficient employment / better paying jobs	72	12
Need more business development / more industry /help local	52	9
Overall economy / property values / taxes	36	6
Vibrant downtown / commercial centers	35	6
Miscellaneous	192	32
Coal (anti=78; could not tell=11; pro=10)	99	17
Waterfront development	76	13
Schools / quality / overcrowding	17	3
Transportation, Mobility & Connectivity	156	26
Traffic problems /congestion / speeding	98	16
Street repair / more/ takes too long	14	2
Public transportation / better / more	11	2
Infrastructure (water treatment, bridges, fiber optics)	11	2
Pedestrians / trails / sidewalks	8	1
Bikes / lanes / safety	8	1
Parking / parking meters	6	1
Sense of Place / Community Characteristics	145	24
Growth/sprawl /overcrowding/overbuilding	90	15
Inadequate zoning/ planning permits	29	5
Protect look and feel of neighborhoods /small City	26	4
Healthy Physical Environment	103	17
Lk. Whatcom water quality / Lk. Whatcome watershed	36	6
Protecting the environment (general)	27	5
Pollution (air, noise, light)	21	4
Protect /create more open / green spaces / parks	13	2
Conservation / alternative energy / sustainability	6	1
Equity & Social Justice	87	15
Homelessness / Teen loitering	47	8
Affordable housing	22	4
Welfare / social services / hunger	18	3
Public Safety & Prepared Community	68	11
Crime / safety / security	44	7
Gangs	10	2
Drugs / illegal drug use	12	2
Emergency responsiveness	2	0
Quality, Responsive City Services	45	8
City government management / prioritizing	29	5
City government spending	12	2
Loss of services / programs	3	1
Lack of transparency	1	0

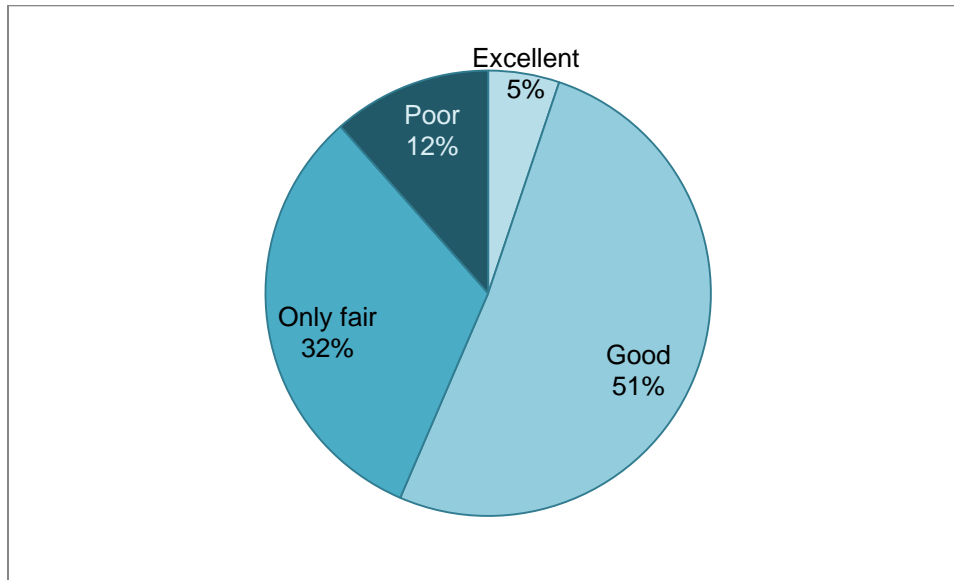
Table 2 continued: What is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that City leaders can do something about?

	n	%
Quality of life amenities	20	3
Preserve quality of life	13	2
More support for arts / culture / entertainment	5	1
Library	2	0
Other	18	3
Don't Know	21	4

Multiple response question: 597 residents provided 1050 responses.

Budget and taxes: Responsible use of tax dollars

Figure 79: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly?



(n=511)

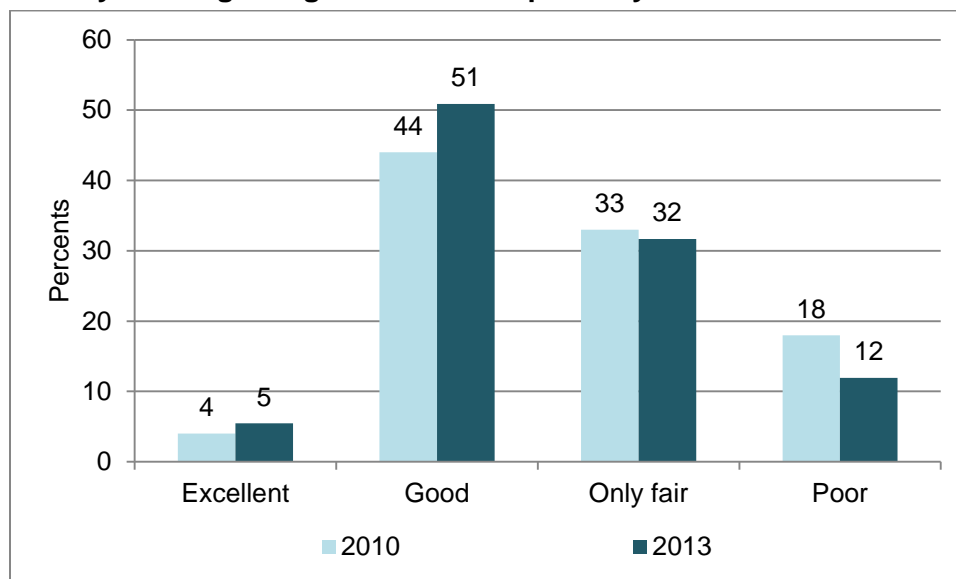
Resident's ratings of the job the City of Bellingham has been doing using tax dollars responsibly was about evenly split between positives and negatives.

On the positive side, just over half rated the City's use of tax dollars as *excellent* (5%) or *good* (51%), for a total of 56% positives.

On the negative side, 32% of residents rated the job the City's use of tax dollars as *only fair* and 12% rated it as *poor*, for a total of 44% negatives.

These findings about the use of tax dollars responsibly are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 80: Metric: Comparison of 2010 and 2013 ratings of the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly?



(2013: n=511)

A comparison of 2010 to 2013 ratings of the job the City has been doing using tax dollars responsibly shows a change for the positive. When considering the ratings of *excellent* and *good*, there has been an 8% shift upward since 2010.

Further, there was a lower percentage of extreme negative ratings. In 2010 18% of residents rated the City's job handling tax dollars as *poor*, compared to only 12% in 2013.

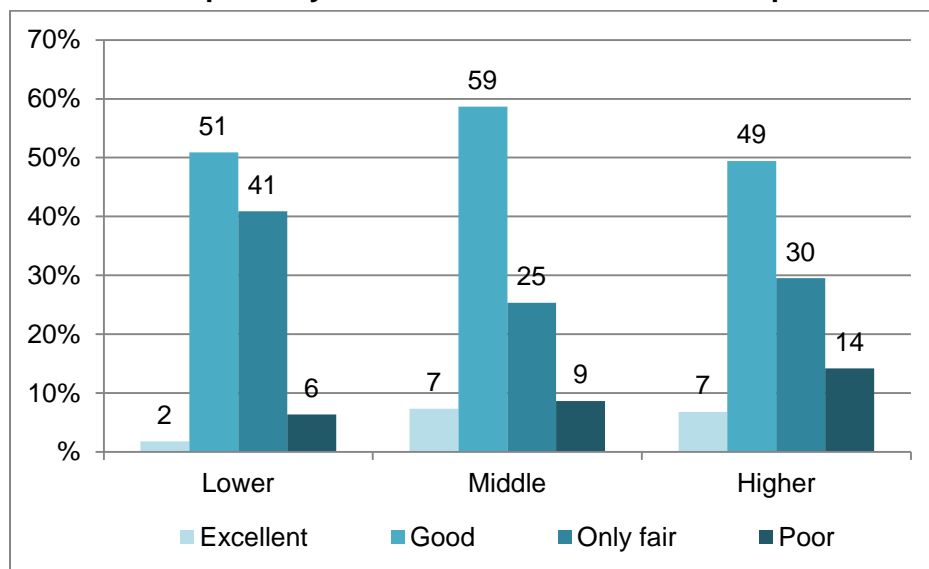
For both years, the more extreme positive rating of *excellent* was chosen by a smaller percentage of residents than was the extreme negative rating of *poor*. In addition, there has been no decrease in the number of residents who rate the City's job with tax dollars as *only fair*.

These findings comparing ratings from 2010 to 2013 about the responsible use of tax dollars are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with ratings of responsible use of tax dollars

Characteristics of residents that might have influenced their ratings of the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly were investigated.

Figure 81: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly: Income level differences in responses.



(n=436)

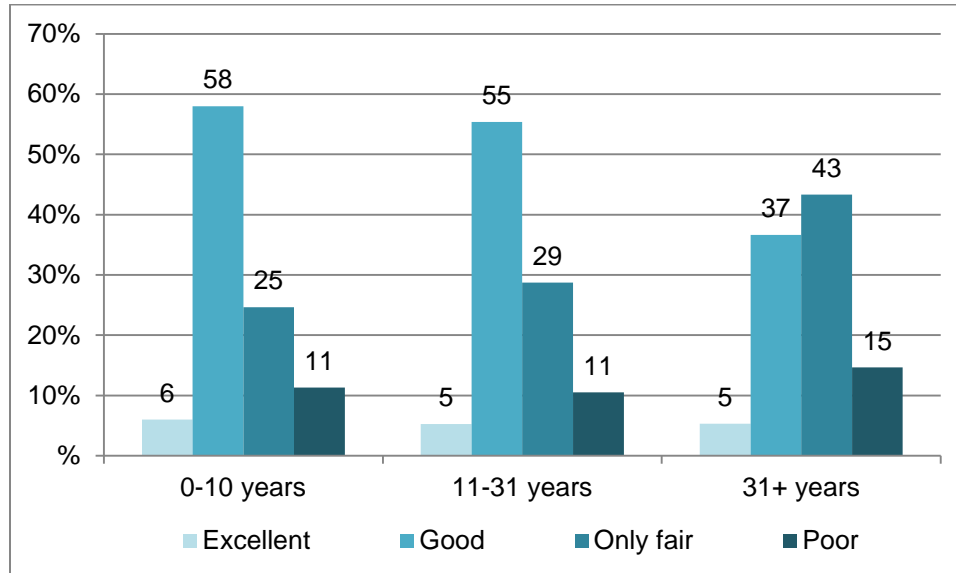
Income level: Ratings of the job the City has been doing using tax dollars responsibly were associated with residents' level of income.

A higher percentage of residents (59%) in the middle income level rated the City's use of tax dollars as *good* compared to those in the lower income level (51%) and the higher income level (49%).

A higher percentage of residents (41%) in the lower income level rated the City's use of tax dollars as *only fair* compared to residents the middle income level (25%) and the upper income level (30%).

These findings of about the association of income level with ratings of the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 82: Metric: How would you rate the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly: Association with the number of years residents lived in the City.



(n=509)

Years in Bellingham: Ratings of the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly were associated with the number of years residents have lived in the City of Bellingham.

The percentage of ratings of *excellent* was the same across all levels of income (about 5%.)

A higher percentage of the newer residents (58%) and those who have lived in Bellingham between 11-31 years (55%) rated the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly as *good* compared to residents who have lived in the City 31 years or more (37%.)

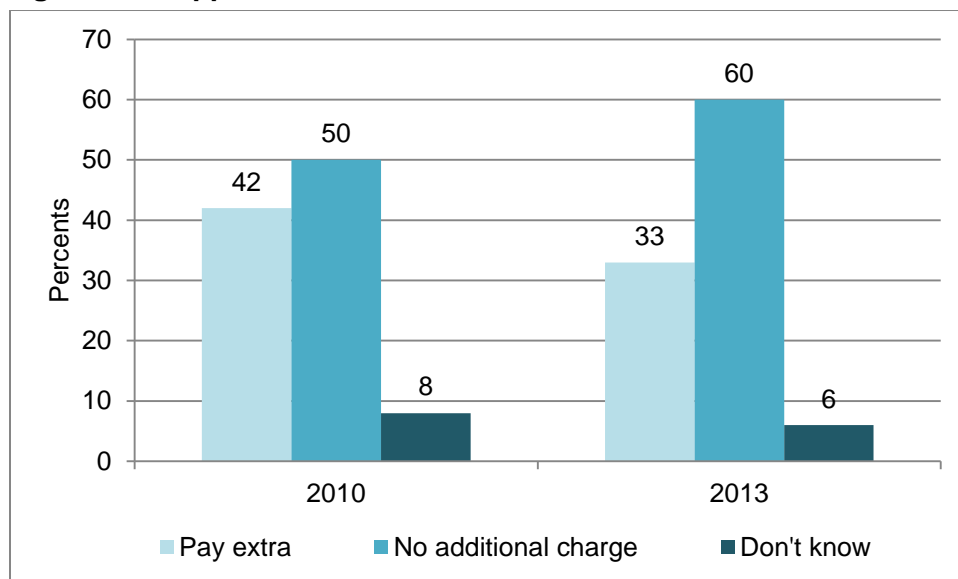
A higher percentage (43%) of residents who have lived in the City of Bellingham for 31 years or more rated the job the City has been doing using tax dollars responsibly as *only fair* compared to residents who have lived here for fewer years (both just over 50%.)

These findings about the association of the number of years residents have lived in Bellingham with ratings of the job the City is doing using tax dollars responsibly are illustrated in the figure above.

Implementation of non-residential user fees

Respondents were asked if they thought that people who live outside the City should pay extra for tax-supported recreation and cultural programs and facilities.

Figure 83: Support for a non-resident fee for recreation and cultural amenities



(n=594)

In 2013, the majority of residents (60%) reported that there should be *no additional charge* for non-residents who use City recreational and cultural programs and facilities. This category increased 10% since 2010.

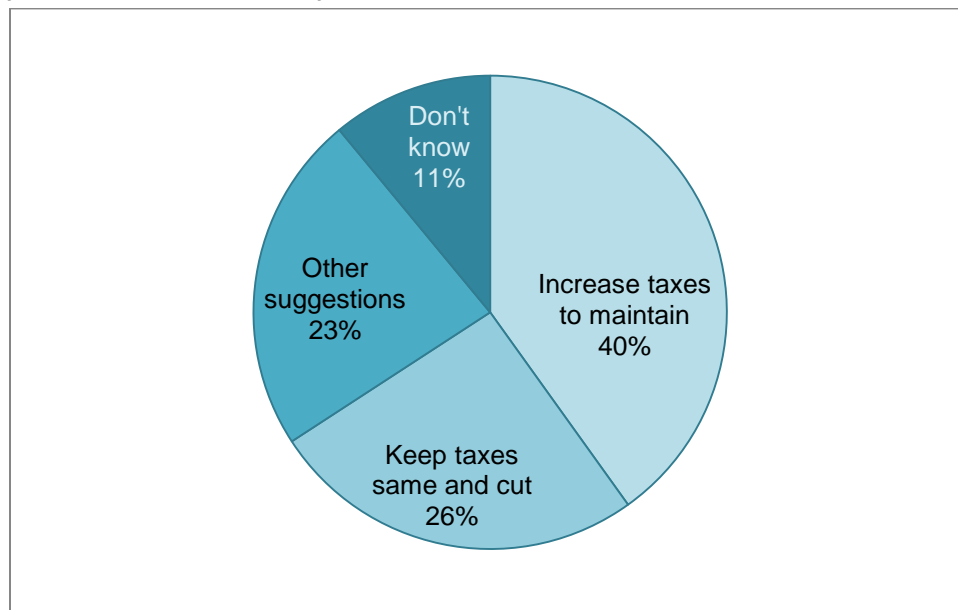
The percentage of residents who reported that non-residents should *pay extra* for City services and programs was 33% in 2013, which was a decrease of 9% since 2010.

The comparison of 2010 vs. 2013 ratings on non-resident fees is illustrated in the figure above.

Choices for Taxation and Service Levels

Respondents were asked how the city should respond to budget priorities as the local economy recovers from the recession. This question asked residents to make a choice for the City: should the City increase taxes and fees to maintain services at current levels or should it keep taxes and fees the same and cut services?

Figure 84: Budget priorities: If you had to choose only one, which of the following would you choose for the City?



(n=591)

Results found many in favor of increasing taxes (40%) compared to those in favor of keeping taxes the same and cutting services (26%). Almost a quarter of residents did not choose but instead offered alternative ideas for managing the budget (23%). Those suggestions are presented in Table 3, below. Eleven percent (11%) said they didn't know.

The 2013 responses about taxation and service choices are illustrated in the figure above.

There was no change in the pattern of responses to this question in 2013 compared to the 2010.

Table 3: “Something else” choices for taxation and service levels.

“Something else” choices for taxation and service levels.	n	%
Be more efficient	19	12
Prioritize services	19	12
Reduce staff salaries / staff (higher level, redundant, non-productive)	18	12
Better manage revenue / employees	15	10
Increase taxes (of those with higher incomes)	11	7
Cut/reduce taxes	11	7
Taxes at same or lower level without cuts or with additions to services	11	7
Cut services / hours available	9	6
Questions / comments about the question	9	6
Business opportunities / Bring in industry / encourage small businesses	4	3
Institute user fees	4	3
Get revenue elsewhere	3	2
Use volunteers	3	2
Other	19	12

Open-ended, multiple response question: 138 residents provided 155 responses.

Responses that could not be placed into categories were scored as “other.”

The most popular alternative ideas, those top four ideas with 10% or more responses, involved City revenue and employee management including being more efficient, prioritizing services, reducing salaries and managing revenue and employees better. The next three most popular ideas (each garnered 7% of these 138 responses) were specifically about taxation, some wanting to increase the level and some wanting to decrease it.

Nine percent (9%) of responses to this question contained a question about the wording of this question. It was not clear to them why taxes needed to be increased to keep services at the present level.

Other responses were so categorized because they were relativistic (“Depends on the programs, taxes, and fees), highly specific (“Restore the programs and apparatus that were eliminated from the Fire Dept. “) or unique (“involve the community and its intelligence” and “allow each citizen to state how taxes are spent, then follow the vote”).

Verbatim open-ended responses are provide in the appendices to this report

Examples of verbatim comments:

Take an example from private industry. Employ lean practices and cut waste

Restrain salaries. Oversee cost effectiveness of departments v contractors

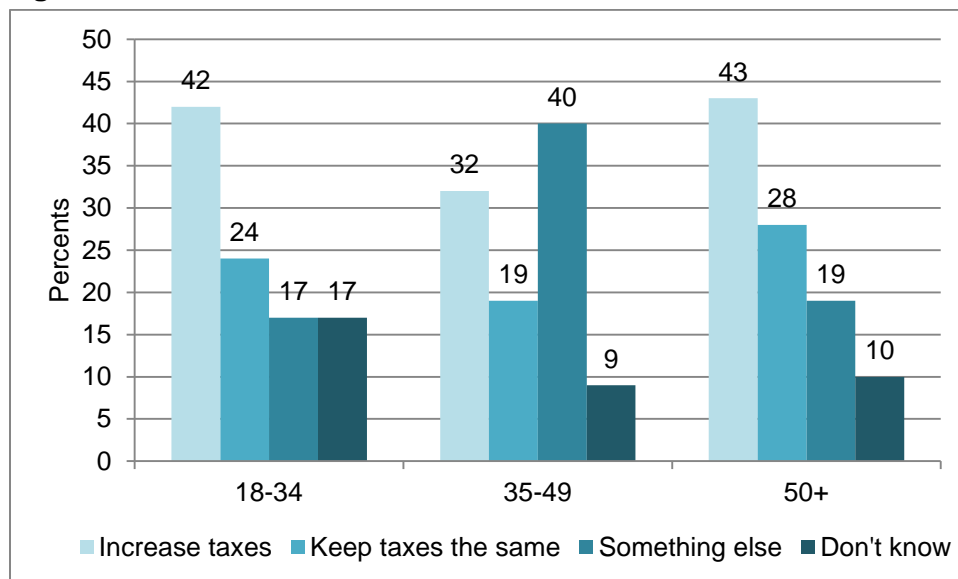
Increase taxes on those who can afford it, not on the people with 2+ pt jobs

Increase taxes and fees to restore services and staff to previous levels

Resident characteristics that were associated with taxation and services choices

Characteristics of residents that might be associated with their choices for taxation and service levels were investigated. Three resident characteristics were found to be associated with these responses.

Figure 85: Choices for taxation and service levels associated with residents' age.



(n=583)

Age: Choices for taxation and service levels were associated with residents' age.

The group of residents least likely to want *taxes increased* were the 35-49 year olds (32%) compared to residents aged 18-34 (42%) and residents aged 50 and older (43%).

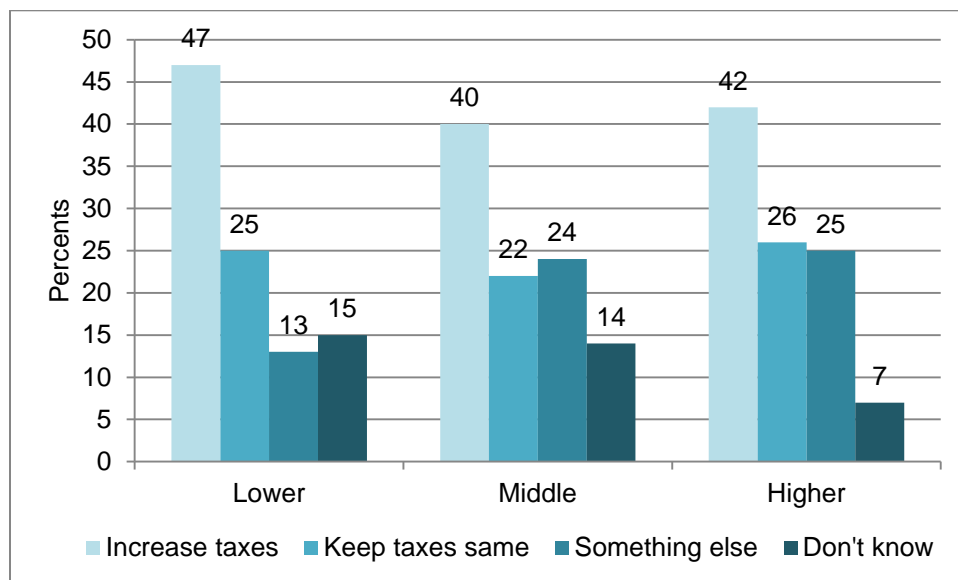
The group of residents least likely to want *taxes held at the same rate while services are cut* were the 35-49 year olds (19%) compared to residents aged 18-34 (24%) and residents aged 50 and older (28%).

The group of residents most likely to have *something else* to say were the 35-49 year olds (40%) compared to residents aged 18-34 (17%) and residents aged 50 and older (19%).

The youngest group of residents, aged 18-34, were more likely to say they *don't know* (17%) compared to residents aged 35-49 (9%) and residents aged 50 and older (10%).

These findings about the association of choices for taxation and services and residents' age level are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 86: Choices for taxation and service levels associated with residents' income level.



(n= 505)

(Lower: <24,999K; Middle: 25-74,999K; Higher: 75+K)

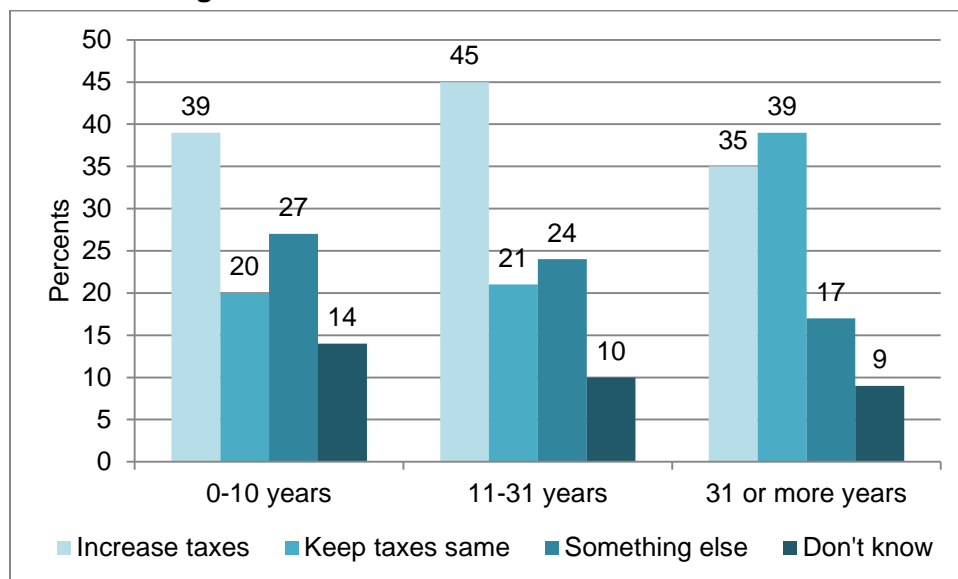
Income level: Choices for taxation and service levels were associated with residents' income levels.

Residents in the lower income level were less likely to choose *something else* as a response (13%) compared to those residents in the middle income level (24%) and residents in the higher income level (25%).

Residents in the higher income level were less likely to respond that they *don't know* (7%) compared to residents in the lower income level (15%) and residents in the middle income level (14%).

These findings about the association of choices for taxation and services and residents' income level are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 87: Choices for taxation and service levels associated with years residents have lived in Bellingham.



(n=587)

Years in Bellingham: Choices for taxation and service levels were associated with the number of years residents' have lived in Bellingham.

Almost twice as many residents who have lived in Bellingham for more than 31 years chose to *keep taxes the same* (39%) compared to residents who have lived in Bellingham 0-10 years (20%) and those who have lived in Bellingham 11-31 years (21%).

Residents who have lived in Bellingham for more than 31 years were less likely to choose *something else* (17%) compared to residents who have lived in Bellingham 0-10 years (27%) and those who have lived in Bellingham 11-31 years (24%).

These findings about the association of choices for taxation and services and residents' age are illustrated in the figure above.

Residents' suggestions for trimming City services

Respondents were asked which services the City should cut when demand for services outpace revenues. Their open ended responses were collapsed into relevant categories and are reported in the table below

Table 4: Suggestions for Cutting City Services

Suggestions for Cutting City Services	n	%
Don't know / refused	166	23
Parks & Recreation	62	8
None / do not cut services / raise taxes if necessary	60	8
Reduce admin staff /salaries / benefits / consultants / negotiate with unions	50	7
Be more efficient	39	5
Traffic / Parking patrols / police / fire	32	4
Art / culture / entertainment / museum	32	4
Prioritize services	30	4
Roundabouts / widening / nonessential road work	29	4
Better manage budget	21	3
Public transportation / WTA	19	3
Business development / planning / BPDA / permitting	13	2
Street cleaning / sweepers	13	2
Institute user fees	11	1
Land purchases (for parks)	10	1
Library / close branches / curtail hours	10	1
Cut across the board	10	1
Jails	6	1
Environmental / green projects	6	1
BTV / cable TV	6	1
Promotional efforts for growth / tourism	5	1
Cut / reduce taxes	3	<1
Need to see more info to answer question	38	5
Other	64	9

Multiple response question; 597 residents provided n=735 responses

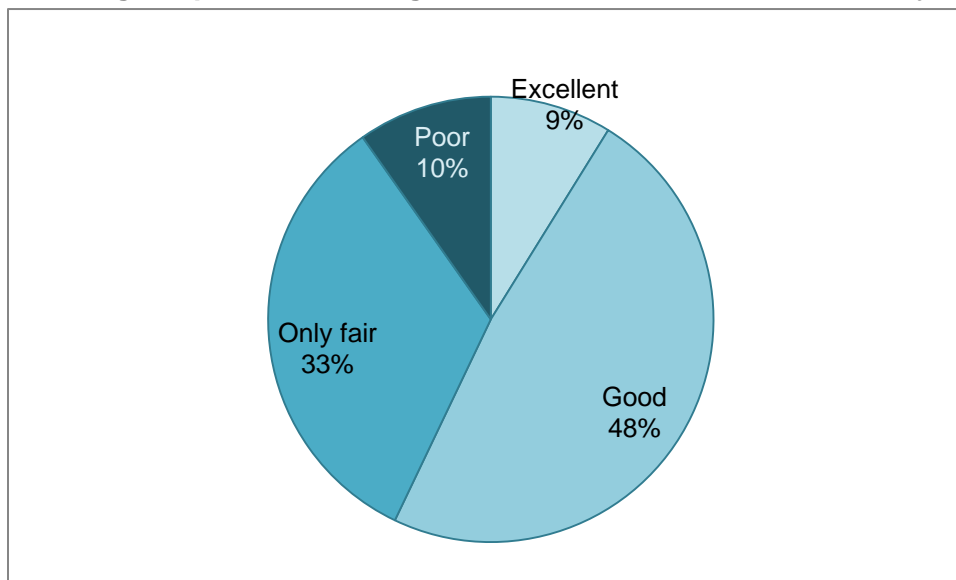
Nearly one-quarter of respondents said they didn't know or chose not to answer when asked about their suggestions for trimming City services. The top three suggestions for trimming the Bellingham City budget, accounting for 23% of the responses, offered diverse advice. Eight percent (8%) of the residents suggested that the services provided by the Parks and Recreation department could be cut back. Eight percent (8%) did not want any cuts to any services, and many (8%) said that taxes should be raised if need be. An additional seven percent (7%) recommended that high level staff salaries and benefits be reduced. An additional 5% counseled that the City be more efficient. Almost a fourth (23%) said they did not know what should be cut.

Other responses were so categorized because they advised what not to cut (“NOT the library” and “NOT fire, police or roads!”); were questions about the decision process (“What is the COB doing with any increases in revenues from new construction, property taxes, in numbers of home owners, etc. that some of the previous cuts could be restored? Is there a prioritized list of cuts that is referred to in such instances?”); were reactions to the question (“sort of a leading question,” “That is too broad a question,” and “trick question?”); were general statements (“I think services should come back up as revenue recovers,” “cut services,” and “You should have a public forum and let people talk about it”); were highly specific (“photo archives,” victims’ advocates,” and “LTAC grants”); or were unclear (“paper pushers”).

Categories of responses to the question about how the City should cut services when citizens’ demand for services outpace revenues are presented in the table above. Verbatim open-ended responses are provided in the appendices to this report.

Public involvement and communications

Figure 88: Metric: How would you rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing: involving the public in making decisions that affect the community?



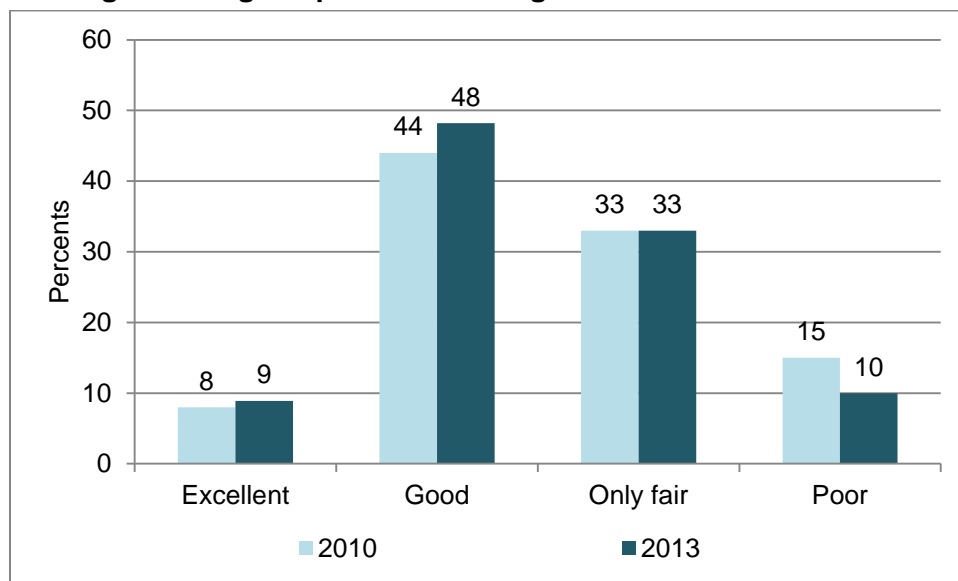
(n=552)

Almost ten percent (9%) of residents rated the City as doing an *excellent* job involving the public in important community decisions. At the other end of the rating spectrum, 10% of the residents rated the City as doing a *poor* job with community involvement.

Almost half (48%) of residents rated the City as doing a *good* job involving the public in the decision-making process while about one third (33%) felt the job the City was doing was *only fair*.

These findings about efforts to improve public involvement are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 89: Metric: Comparison of 2010 to 2013's ratings of the job the City is doing involving the public in making decisions that affect the community.

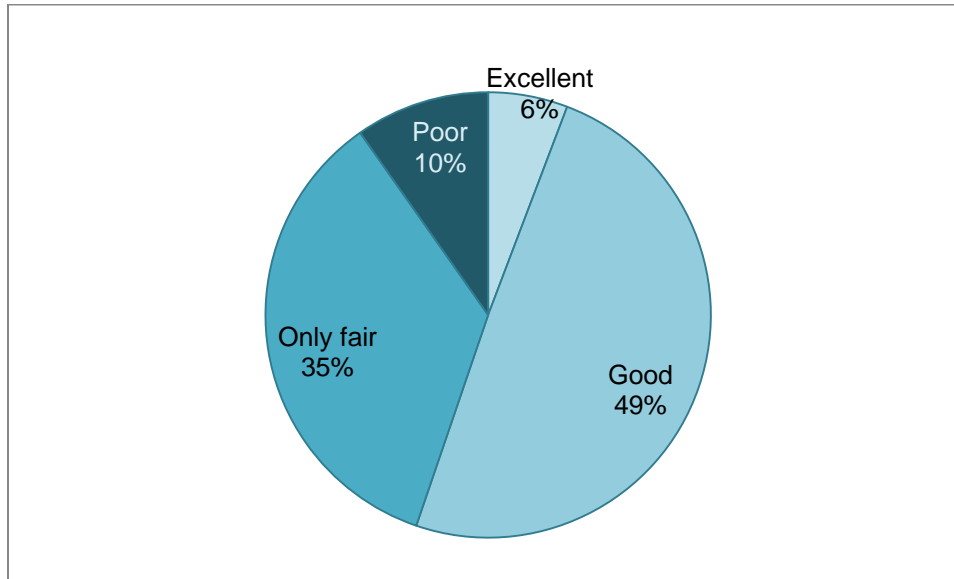


(2013: n=552)

The overall pattern of responses about the job the City is doing involving the public in the decision-making process is slightly more positive in 2013 compared to 2010; 57% of respondents rated the City *excellent* or *good* in 2013 compared to 52% in 2010.

The comparison of 2010 to 2013's responses about public involvement is illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 90: Metric: Rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing communicating with citizens about City issues, decisions, and services.



(n=564)

Six percent (6%) of residents rated the City as doing an *excellent* job communicating with citizens about important community decisions. At the other end of the rating spectrum, 10% of the residents rated the City as doing a *poor* job with communication.

Almost half (49%) of residents rated the City as doing a *good* job communicating with the public while about one third (35%) felt the job the City was doing was *only fair*.

These findings about public communication are illustrated in the figure above.

Figure 91: Comparisons of 2010 to 2013's ratings of the job the City is doing communicating with citizens about City issues, decisions, and services.



(2013: n=564)

A comparison of 2010 to 2013's ratings of the job the City is doing communicating with citizens shows two promising changes.

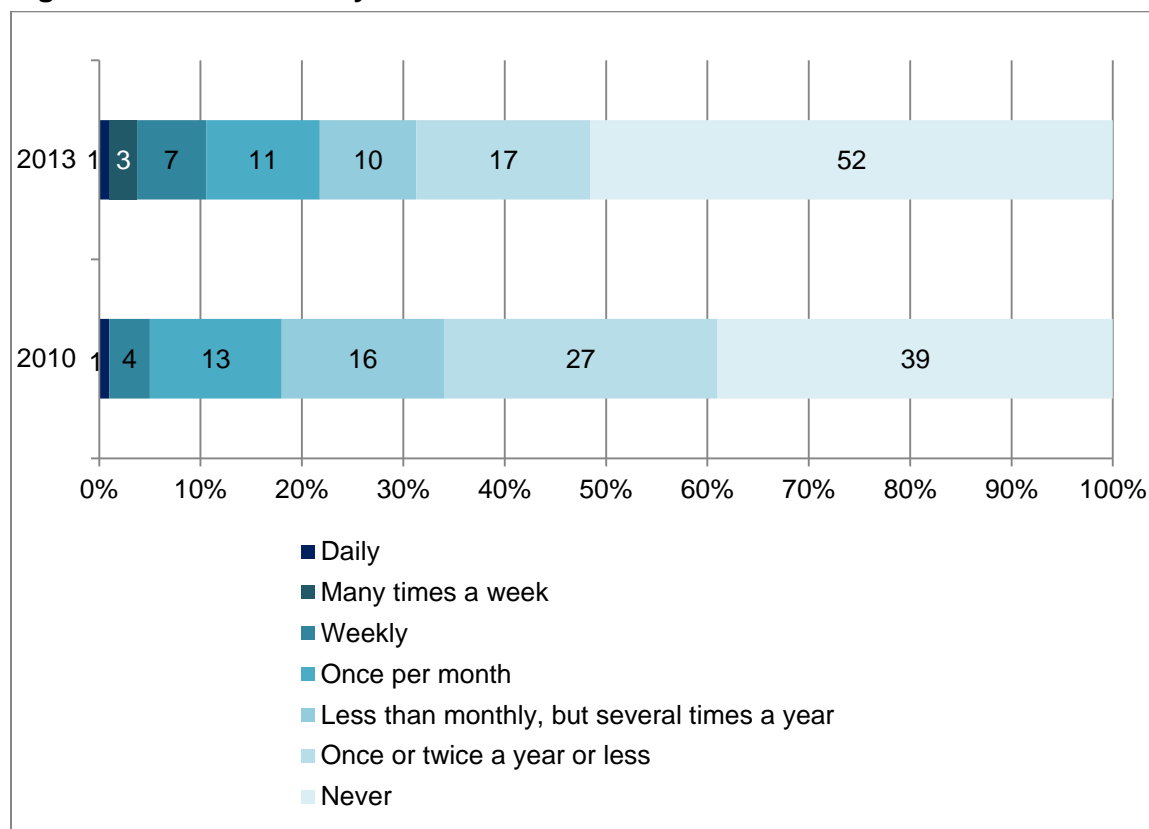
The percentage of *good* ratings has increased from 2010 to 2013, 40% and 49% respectively. In addition, the percentage of *poor* ratings has decreased from 2010 to 2013, 16% to 10%, respectively.

The percentages for the ratings *excellent* and *only fair* have remained constant from 2010 to 2013.

The comparison of findings about communication from 2010 to 2013 is illustrated in the figure above.

Frequency and method of watching City television channel

Figure 92: How often do you watch BTV-10?



(n 2013 =588)

Since 2010, the overall percentage of residents who watch BTV-10 *once per month or more* has not changed, 18% in 2010 and 21% in 2013.

The percentage of residents who watch BTV-10 infrequently, that is, *several times each year or less*, has dropped from 43% in 2010 to 27% in 2013.

In addition, the percentage of residents who did not watch BTV-10 at all (i.e., *never*) has risen from 39% in 2010 to 52% in 2013.

These findings on the frequency of residents' watching BTV-10 are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with watching BTV-10

Characteristics of residents that might be associated with how frequently they watch BTV-10 were investigated.

Age: Residents' age was found to be associated with how frequently they watch BTV-10. A higher percentage of residents who are 50 or older reported watching BTV-10 *weekly* (9%) compared to residents 18-34 (3%) and residents 35-49 (3%).

A higher percentage of residents who are 50 or older reported watching BTV-10 *once per month* (13%) compared to residents 18-34 (5%) and residents 35-49 (7%).

A lower percentage of residents who are 18-34 reported watching BTV-10 *once or twice a year* (9%) compared to residents 35-49 (19%) and residents 50 and older (18%).

A lower percentage of residents who are 50 or older reported *never* watching BTV-10 (45%) compared to residents 18-34 (70%) and residents 35-49 (63%).

Income level: Residents' income level was found to be associated with how frequently they watch BTV-10. Income was categorized as Lower: <24,999K; Middle: 25-74,999K; Higher: 75+K).

A higher percentage of residents in the lower income level reported that they watched BTV-10 *many times a week* (8%) compared with residents in the middle (1%) and higher (1%) income levels.

A lower percentage of residents in the lower income level reported that they watched BTV-10 *once or twice a year or less* (12%) compared with residents in the middle (18%) and higher (20%) income levels.

For those residents who reported that they never watch BTV-10, the higher the income level, the higher the percentage of residents who never watched: lower 45%; middle 51%; and higher 59%.

Years in Bellingham: The number of years residents have lived in Bellingham was found to be associated with how frequently they watch BTV-10.

A higher percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham 31 or more years (15%) reported that they watched BTV-10 *once per month* compared to residents who have lived in Bellingham 0-10 years (7%).

A higher percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham 31 or more years (20%) reported that they watched BTV-10 *once or twice a year* compared to residents who have lived in Bellingham 0-10 years (14%).

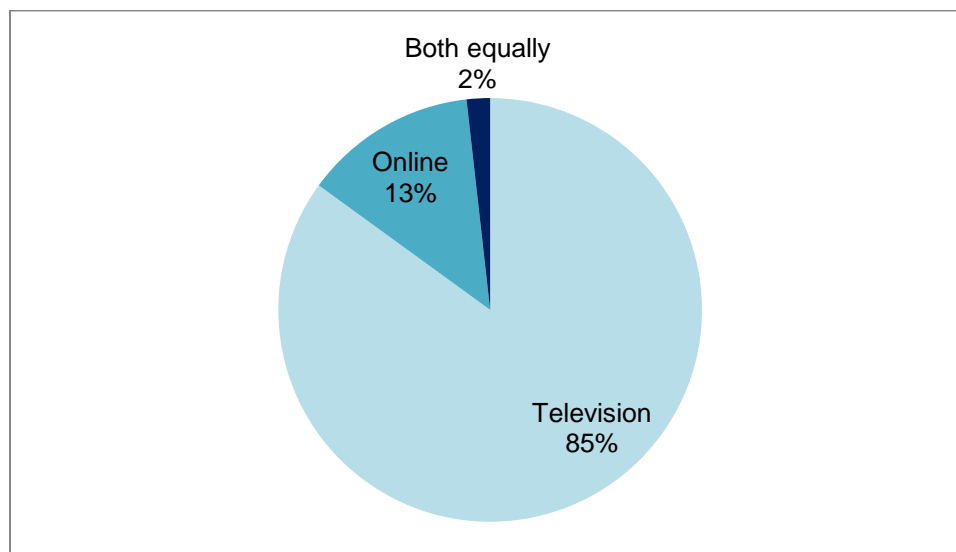
The longer residents have lived in Bellingham, the less likely they were to report *never* watching BTV-10: 0-10 years 60%; 11-31 years 52%; and 31 or more years 41%.

Minor children at home: Whether or not residents have minor children living at home was found to be associated with how frequently they watch BTV-10.

A higher percentage of residents with minor children in the home (33%) reported that they watched BTV-10 *less than monthly but several times a year* compared with residents without minor children (20%).

A lower percentage of residents with minor children in the home (18%) reported that they *never* watched BTV-10 compared with residents without minor children (38%).

Figure 93: When you watch BTV-10 programs, do you usually watch on television or online?



(n=280)

The vast majority of residents reported that they usually watched BTV-10 on television (85%) compared to 13% who usually watched it online. Two percent (2%) reported that they use both media about equally. These findings about how residents watch BTV-10 are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with how they watch BTV-10

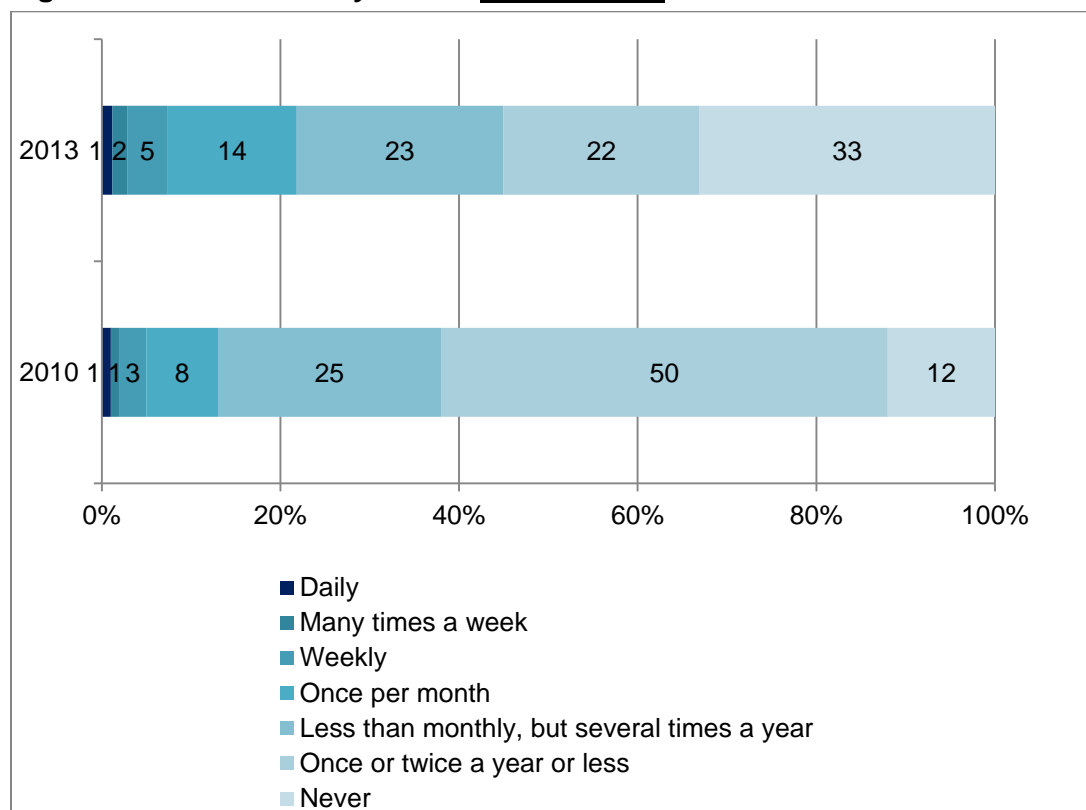
Characteristics of residents that might have influenced their ratings of how they watched BTV-10 were investigated.

Age: Residents' age was associated with how they watched BTV-10. Generally, the older the resident, the more likely it was that they reported watching BTV-10 on *television*: 68% of residents 18-34; 74% of residents aged 35-49; and 89% of residents aged 50 and older reported watching BTV-10 on television. A lower percentage of residents aged 50 and older (10%) reported watching BTV-10 *online*, compared with residents aged 18-34 (27%) and those aged 35-49 (21%).

Years in Bellingham: How many years residents have lived in Bellingham was associated with how they watched BTV-10. A lower percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham 0-10 years (72%) watched it on *television* compared with residents who have lived here 11-31 years (88%) and those who have lived here 31 or more years (90%). A higher percentage of those who have lived in Bellingham 0-10 years watched it *online* (24%) compared with residents who have lived here 11-31 years (12%) and those who have lived here 31 or more years (8%).

Awareness of City website

Figure 94: How often do you visit www.cob.org?



The percentage of residents who reported visiting the website *once per month* has increased from 8% in 2010 to 14% in 2013.

The percentage of residents who reported visiting the website *once or twice a year or less* has decreased from 50% in 2010 to 22% in 2013.

The percentage of residents who reported *never* visiting the website has increased from 12% in 2010 to 33% in 2013.

These findings about the City's website visitations are illustrated in the figure above.

Resident characteristics associated with their frequency of visiting the website

Characteristics of residents that might have been associated with their ratings of website visitations in 2013 were investigated.

Gender: Residents' gender was associated with their ratings of website visitations. A higher percentage of females (38%) reported that they *never* visit the City's website compared to males (30%).

Years in Bellingham: The number of years residents have lived in Bellingham was associated with their ratings of website visitations. A higher percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham 11-31 years (28%) reported visiting the City's website *once or twice a year* compared to residents who have lived in the City 0-10 years (19%) and to residents who have lived in the City 31 or more years (16%).

A higher percentage of residents who have lived in Bellingham 31 or more years (47%) reported *never* visiting the City's website compared to residents who have lived in Bellingham 0-10 years (28%) and to residents who have lived in the City 11-31 years (28%).

Minor children at home: Whether or not residents had minor children in the home was associated with their ratings of website visitations. A higher percentage of residents who have children in their households (33%) reported visiting the City's website *less than monthly, but several times a year* compared to residents without children (20%).

A lower percentage of residents who have children in their households (18%) reported *never* visiting the City's website compared to residents without children (34%).

CONCLUSION

Residents' descriptions of Bellingham were very positive, and many felt there is a very high quality of life here. Aspects of Bellingham life that were highly valued by residents included Bellingham being a right-sized city, with a strong sense of community, a casual, small-town feel and full of friendly, interesting people. Residents appreciated the fact that there are beautiful, natural open spaces within the city and that the City is in close proximity to outdoor recreation and rural areas. Residents valued having beautiful parks and greenways with good trails and having recreation activities and events outdoors. Residents appreciated the presence of art and culture in their midst, lots of entertainment options and the presence of higher education opportunities. Finally, they valued that Bellingham is a safe place in which to live.

Many aspects of City performance on metrics associated with the key legacies showed no change or improvement. Of particular note were four substantial shifts for the better – housing affordability increased 9%, responsible use of tax dollars increased by 8%, communicating with the public increased 8% as did ratings of the job the City is doing protecting the environment. Other improvements were seen in provision of safety service (fire, crime prevention and emergency medical), access to bus stops, shopping and other amenities, bicycle and pedestrian safety and traffic speeds.

Areas that may warrant some attention included protecting the livability of neighborhoods, which slipped by 6% in 2013. Peoples' sense of safety walking downtown could be improved, especially at night. Finally, although encouraging economic development was up 6%, still a minority of residents (46%) rated the City as doing an *excellent* or *good job* on this measure. Ratings of the City's planning for growth also received relatively low marks.

Aspects of Bellingham life that were considered by residents as important problems that City leaders can address included overcrowding and sprawl, with its concomitant traffic congestion and other growth-related issues. Also mentioned as important problems were Bellingham needing more employment, specifically better paying jobs, and more local and industrial business development.