

CITY OF BELLINGHAM
RESIDENTIAL SURVEY REPORT
CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RESEARCH

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Prepared for
The City of Bellingham

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Overview

The 2018 City of Bellingham Residential Survey (Survey) is a collaboration between the City of Bellingham and the Center for Economic and Business Research (The Center) to collect information regarding City residents' views about issues facing the community.

This Survey is modeled after similar surveys administered by the City of Bellingham. Results from previous surveys (2008, 2010, 2013, and 2016) are used in a historical analysis of most questions. Each question is also analyzed to determine whether any significant response differences exist based on demographic subgroups.

About the Authors

The Center for Economic and Business Research is an outreach center at Western Washington University located within the College of Business and Economics. The Center connects the resources found throughout the University to assist for-profit, non-profit, government agencies, quasi-government entities and tribal communities in gathering and analyzing useful data. We use a number of collaborative approaches to help inform our clients so that they are better able to hold policy discussions and craft decisions.

The Center employs students, staff and faculty from across the University as well as outside resources to meet the individual needs of those we work with. Our work is based on academic approaches and rigor and not only provides a neutral analysis perspective but also provides applied learning opportunities. We focus on developing collaborative relationships with our clients and not simply delivering an end product.

The approaches we utilize are insightful, useful, and are all a part of the debate surrounding the topics we explore; however, none are absolutely fail-safe. Data, by nature, is challenged by how it is collected and how it is leveraged with other data sources; following only one approach without deviation is ill-advised. We provide a variety of insights within our work – not only on the topic at hand but the resources (data) that inform that topic.

We are always seeking opportunities to bring the strengths of Western Washington University to fruition within our region. If you have a need for analysis work or comments on this report, we encourage you to contact us at 360-650-3909. To learn more about CEBR visit us online at <https://cbe.wvu.edu/cebr/center-economic-and-business-research>.

The Center for Economic and Business Research is directed by Hart Hodges, PhD and James McCafferty.

About the Survey

The Center for Economic and Business Research, located within the College of Business and Economics at Western Washington University, conducted the research and analysis services for this survey.

The purpose of the Survey is to seek feedback from residents about their experience as citizens of the city of Bellingham. A combination of multiple choice, rank order, and open-ended questions aim to gather information from respondents about their demographic details, quality of life, satisfaction with City services, opinions on budget priorities, views on challenges facing the community, and ideas for the future. The Survey is designed in reference to previous residential surveys conducted by the City of Bellingham. Questions aim to gather information surrounding and related to each of the nine Legacies and Strategic Commitments adopted by the Bellingham City Council, including:

- Clean, safe drinking water
- Healthy environment
- Vibrant sustainable economy
- Sense of place
- Safe and prepared community
- Mobility and connectivity options
- Access to quality of life amenities
- Quality, responsive City services
- Equity and social justice

The Center has worked with the City to make question adjustments to previous surveys that are expected to enhance readability, decrease response bias, and reflect the City's current priorities. This report includes historical analysis of most questions based on results from the previous surveys – it is noted when question or response wording differs from year to year.

Survey Methodology

Surveys were taken by phone with a Western Washington University researcher or through an online survey form. The Center sent out a letter and reminder postcard to 7,000 randomly selected Bellingham residences, including a description of the Survey purpose, as well as instructions for both phone and online response options. Respondents were screened within the survey to ensure their residency. The survey was left open for approximately four weeks, from mid-October to mid-November. A total of 1,295 responses were obtained – 73 by phone, and 1,159 online. Respondents were able to skip questions at their discretion, so the total number of responses varies between questions.

The US Census Bureau estimates the 2017 population of Bellingham to be 89,045 based on an estimated 9.6% net migration from the 2010 census.

Executive Summary

The results from the 2018 City of Bellingham Residential Survey provide important insights about residents' opinions regarding City services and community priorities. While the quality of life in Bellingham is very high, there are notable trends regarding challenges facing the community and the City. We note the following key points and overall trends in reviewing the research.

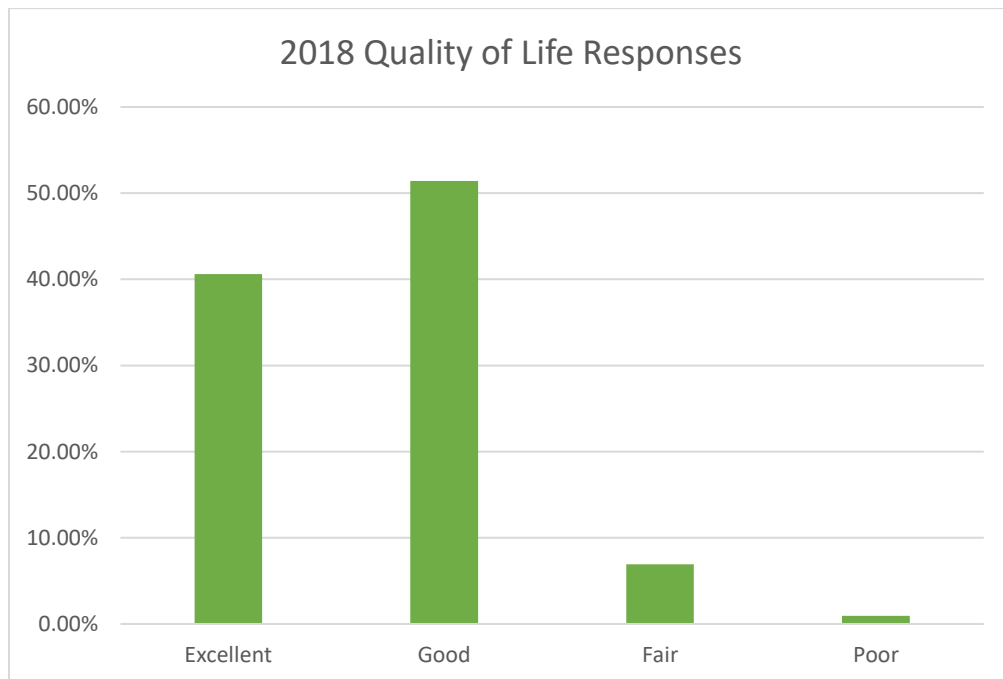
Respondent Demographics

- 79 percent of households responding to the survey classify themselves as **homeowners**, and approximately 20 percent classify themselves as renters.
 - The US Census Bureau estimates that within Bellingham 45% of housing units are occupied by the owner, indicating that the response rate for renters has remained excessively low as in previous studies.
- The 2018 study took efforts to increase rental responses and was able to raise the response rate for renters by 5% from the 2016 study.
- The **majority (51 percent) of respondents identify as female**, 43 percent identify as male, and 1 percent identify as neither male nor female. 5 percent of respondents prefer not to report their gender.
- There are **respondents from every neighborhood** in the city of Bellingham.
 - Some neighborhoods account for very large rates of response (Columbia, Samish, and South Hill), while others only accounted for a handful (Meridian and Irongate). However, these response rates tend to correspond with the population density in those areas.
- For the most part, the survey respondents are seasoned residents of the Bellingham – **almost 70 percent of respondents have lived here for more than 10 years**.
- 25 percent of respondents report having children in their household under the age of 18. This could include not only parents, but also guardians of minors and other household arrangements.
- **More than half (54 percent) of survey respondents are at least 55 years old**. 7 percent of responses came from people between 18 and 30 years old.
 - This is disproportionate to Bellingham's overall demographics – as of 2010, only 24 percent of the total population is 55 or older, and more than 26 percent fall into the 20-29 age range (US Census, 2010).
- Historically, the respondents of this year's survey have **higher incomes** than those in previous surveys.
 - 19 percent of respondents report annual household incomes less than \$35,000, 34 percent report household incomes between \$35,000 and \$75,000, and 47 percent report household incomes over \$75,000.
- **Total sample: n = 1295**
 - Homeowners: n = 1026
 - Renters: n = 265

Life in Bellingham

Respondents are **extremely positive about the overall quality of life in Bellingham**. Approximately 92 percent of respondents rated our city's quality of life positively (either *Excellent* or *Good*), while approximately 7 percent give a rating of *Fair*. Only 12 respondents in the entire survey rated the quality of life in Bellingham as *Poor*.

This represents a very positive conclusion that should be taken into account when considering the following results of the survey – **even though there are always ways for Bellingham to improve and grow, residents clearly appreciate and value it as a place to live**. Additionally, the thought and time that many respondents put into their open-end responses demonstrate that residents of Bellingham truly care about their city's future.



Summary of Notable Trends

Homelessness

The issue of homelessness is heavily present throughout survey responses. **Respondents rank *Homelessness* as the most important challenge facing Bellingham.** Additionally, hundreds of responses to open-end questions discuss the challenge of homelessness in Bellingham in depth. A few notable trends from these results include:

- **61 percent of respondents list that *Homelessness* is either the #1 or #2 top challenge facing Bellingham.** This is up from 55 percent in the 2016 study.
- Those who responded that the City's efforts to prevent crime and protect the community were either *Fair* or *Poor* elaborate that "**Homelessness**" contributed to that rating more than any other topic. Many of these responses connect homelessness to other community concerns, including but not limited to topics such as:
 - "Property crimes"
 - "Drug enforcement"
 - "Unsafe downtown"
 - "Unsafe parks and trails," (especially Maritime Heritage Park and Cornwall Park)
 - "Mental health options and other social services"
 - "Problems with gangs and loitering"
- When asked what positive changes respondents would make as a City leader, "**Solve homelessness**" is mentioned more than any other topic. People also offer their ideas for solutions related to homelessness, including but not limited to topics such as:
 - "Affordability"
 - "Improve public healthcare, including mental health"
 - "Create jobs"
 - "Community involvement," especially with social issues and policies

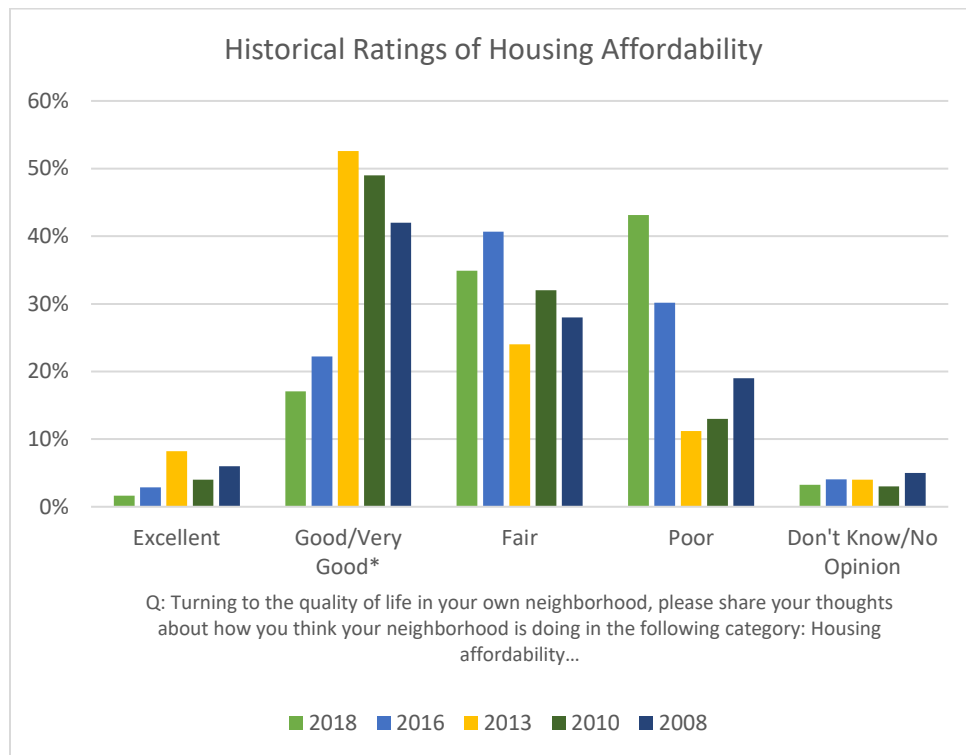
Housing Affordability

Housing affordability is rated as the **second most important challenge facing Bellingham** – 52 percent of respondents listed it as either the #1 or #2 most important challenge facing our city. This is up from 43 percent in 2016.

The current ratings of housing affordability have dropped significantly since 2013.

- Positive housing affordability ratings (*Excellent, Good, or Very Good**) have decreased to 19 percent (2018) from 25 percent (2016), and 61 percent (2013).
- Negative housing affordability ratings (*Fair or Poor*) have increased to 78 percent (2018) from 71 percent (2016) and 35 percent (2013).

The decline in housing affordability is reflected throughout the state. In Washington State, median sales price rose to \$373,400 in the Second Quarter of 2018, a 10.6 percent increase from a year before. In Whatcom County, median sales price sits at \$385,000, a 12.1 percent increase from the year before according to the Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies at the University of Washington.



*It should be noted that this year's survey only has four rating options: *Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor*. Previous surveys have had five options: *Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, and Poor*. Historical analysis combines previous ratings of *Very good* and *Good* into one category. Explanations of historical analysis observe the trends in the total of all positive responses (*Excellent, Good, or Very good**), and the total of all negative responses (*Fair or Poor*).

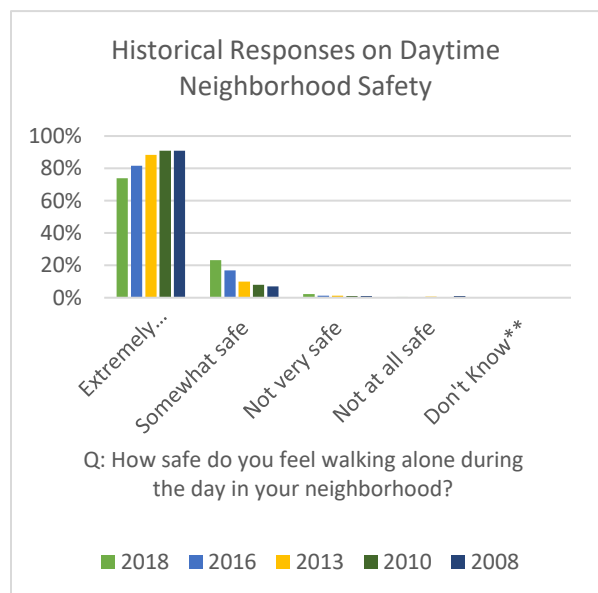
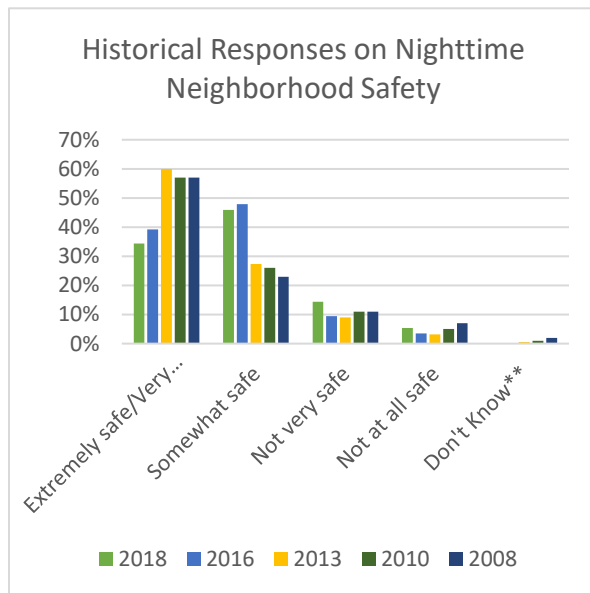
Neighborhood Safety

Neighborhood Safety is rated as the **third most important challenge facing Bellingham** – 21 percent of respondents listed it as either the #1 or #2 most important challenge facing our city. There is no change in the proportion of respondents rating neighborhood safety as the #1 or #2 most important challenge facing Bellingham compared to the 2016 study. The reason neighborhood safety rose to the third most important challenge appears to be due to economic development’s rank dropping.

Respondents report feeling **less safe walking alone in their neighborhood during the day and night** than in any previous survey. 34 percent of respondents report feeling *Extremely safe* walking alone in their neighborhood at night. While 46 percent do feel *Somewhat safe*, 19 percent feel *Not very safe* or *Not at all safe*. During the day, 74 percent of respondents report feeling *Extremely safe*, 23 percent report feeling *Somewhat safe*, 3 percent report feeling *Not very safe* or *Not at all safe*.

Notable **demographic differences** in responses concerning nighttime neighborhood safety include:

- Women feel less safe than men when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night. Only 23 percent of women feel *Extremely safe* walking alone in their neighborhoods at night compared to 48 percent of men.
- Young respondents (under age 30) feel less safe walking alone in their neighborhoods at night. Of respondents age 18-24, 52 percent feel unsafe at night in their neighborhoods (*Not very safe* or *Not safe at all*). Of respondents age 25-29, 29 percent feel unsafe at night in their neighborhoods, compared to the average of 20 percent.



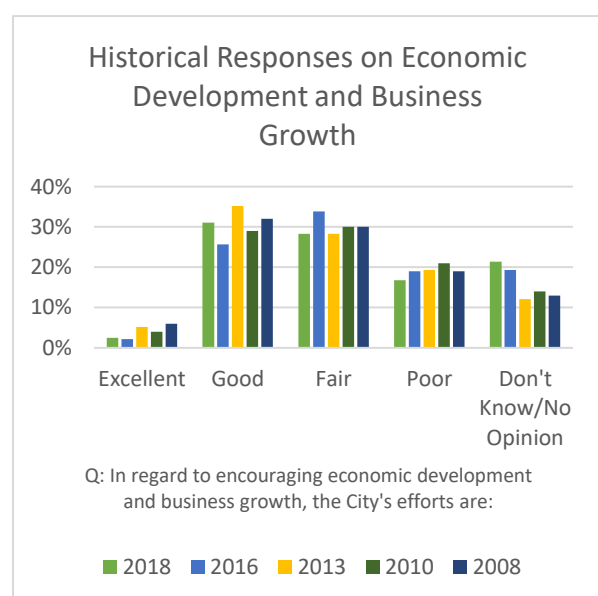
* This year the survey only offered four levels of safety as options: *Extremely safe*, *Somewhat safe*, *Not very safe*, and *Not at all safe*. Previous surveys included a fifth option of *Very safe*, which has been included with the *Extremely safe* section in our historical analysis figures. The 2013, 2010 and 2008 Survey also offered a *Don't Know* option.

Growth and Economic Development

Economic Development is notably rated as the **fourth most important challenge facing Bellingham** – 19 percent of respondents listed it as either the #1 or #2 challenge facing our city. This is down from 28 percent of respondents in 2016, causing economic development to fall below neighborhood safety.

Historically, there has been a negative trend concerning respondents' views of the job the City is doing to plan for future growth overall, encourage economic development, and stimulate business growth. 2018 reports the **lowest proportion of positive responses regarding the City's efforts planning for growth** since the beginning of the survey. This survey, just under 29 percent of respondents rate the City's efforts planning for growth as *Excellent* (2 percent), or *Good* (26 percent), compared to a 30 percent positive response rate in 2016, 36 percent in 2013, 38 percent in 2010, and 33 percent in 2008.

Additionally, many respondents think there is **room to grow when it comes to the City's efforts encouraging economic development and business growth**. Just less than 3 percent rate the City's efforts in this area as *Excellent*, 31 percent rate *Good*, 28 percent rate *Fair*, and 17 percent believe the City's efforts are *Poor*. 21 percent answered *Don't Know/No Opinion* (a sharp increase from previous years). This indicates respondents feel



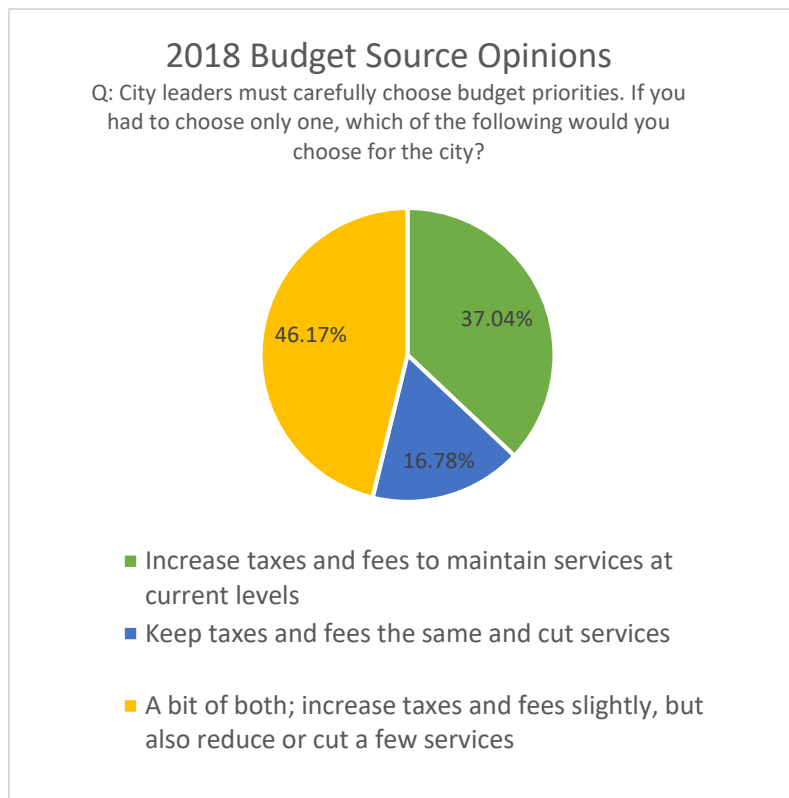
Budget Preferences

A common trend in responses to questions about the City budget is that **respondents would rather increase taxes and fees than cut services.**

Concerning overall budget priorities, almost half (46 percent) of respondents would prefer a *combination* of increasing taxes/fees and reducing services. 37 percent would prefer to *increase taxes/fees* and keep services at current levels, and 17 percent would prefer to *reduce services* and keep taxes/fees the same.

In a following question, respondents rank services (that rely on taxpayer dollars) based on budget priority.

- **High priority services** include *Emergency Response Services* (31 percent rated #1) and *Crime Prevention* (29 percent rated #2).
- **Low priority services** include *Culture and arts experiences* (27 percent rated last) and *Recreational programs* (16 percent rated last).

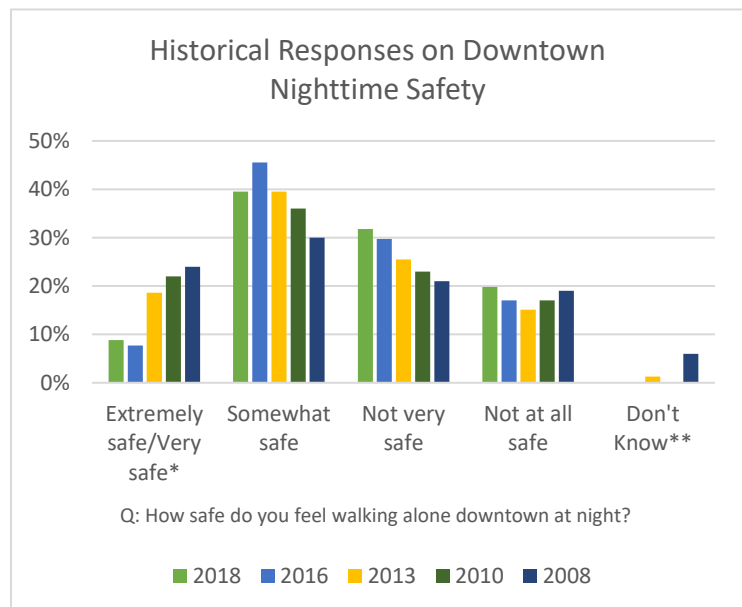
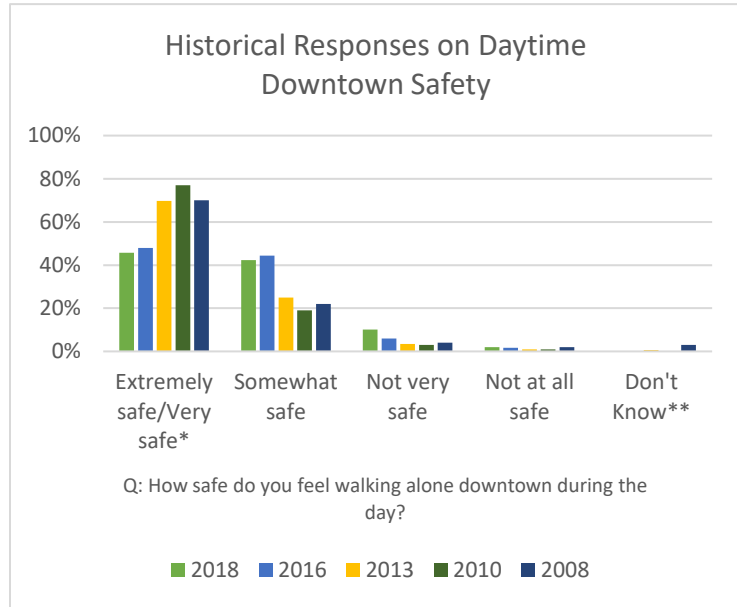


Feelings of Safety Downtown

Respondents report feeling **less safe downtown during the day and night** than in any previous survey. Notably, only 9 percent of respondents report feeling *Extremely safe* walking alone downtown at night. While 40 percent do feel *Somewhat safe*, 32 percent feel *Not very safe*, and 20 percent feel *Not at all safe*.

Notable **demographic differences** in responses concerning nighttime downtown safety include:

- Women feel less safe than men when walking alone downtown at night. When walking alone downtown at night, 59 percent of men feel safe downtown (*Extremely safe* or *Somewhat safe*) as opposed to 41 percent of women.
- Age does not affect overall feelings of safety walking alone at night downtown, in contrast to 2016, which showed those under the age of 30 felt significantly safer than average downtown at night.



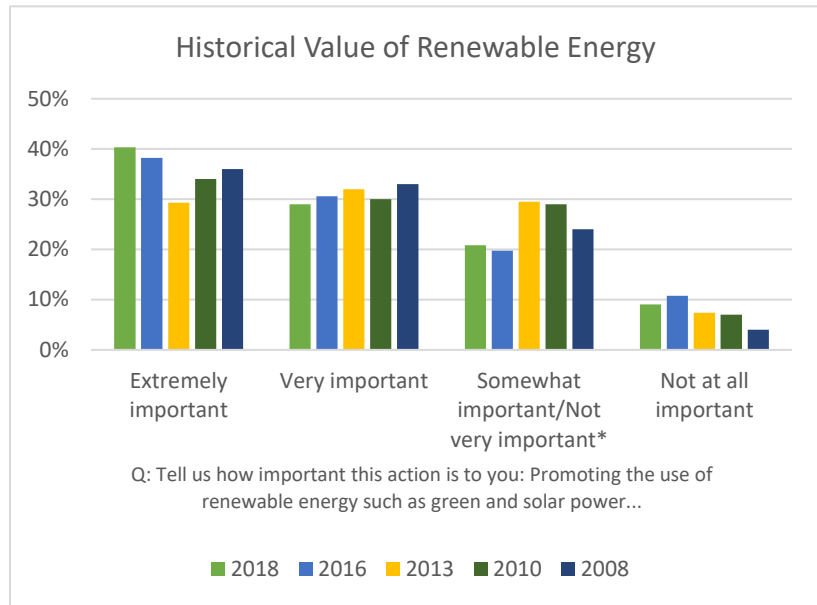
* Since 2016, the survey includes only four levels of safety as options: *Extremely safe*, *Somewhat safe*, *Not very safe*, and *Not at all safe*. Previous surveys included a fifth option of *Very safe*, which has been included with the *Extremely safe* section in our historical analysis figures. The 2013 and 2008 Survey also offered a *Don't Know* option.

Renewable Energy

Promoting the use of renewable energy (such as green and solar power) is viewed by current respondents as more important than in any other survey year.

69 percent of respondents think it is *Extremely* (40 percent) or *Very* (29 percent) *important* for the City to promote the use renewable energy, such as green and solar power.

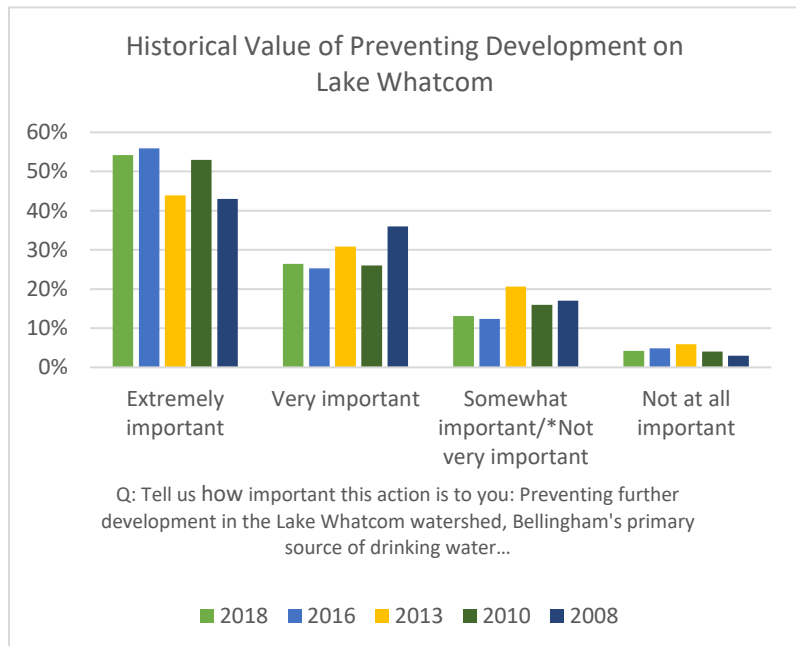
However, 9 percent of respondents consider promoting renewable energy use to be *Not at all important*, which is a decrease from 11 percent (2016).



Lake Whatcom Watershed

Historically, views of the importance of preventing development on Lake Whatcom have varied – this survey, respondents think this environmental action is as important as ever.

A distinguished majority of respondents (81 percent) think it is *Extremely* or *Very important* for the City to prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed. Only 4 percent of respondents think this action is *Not at all important*.

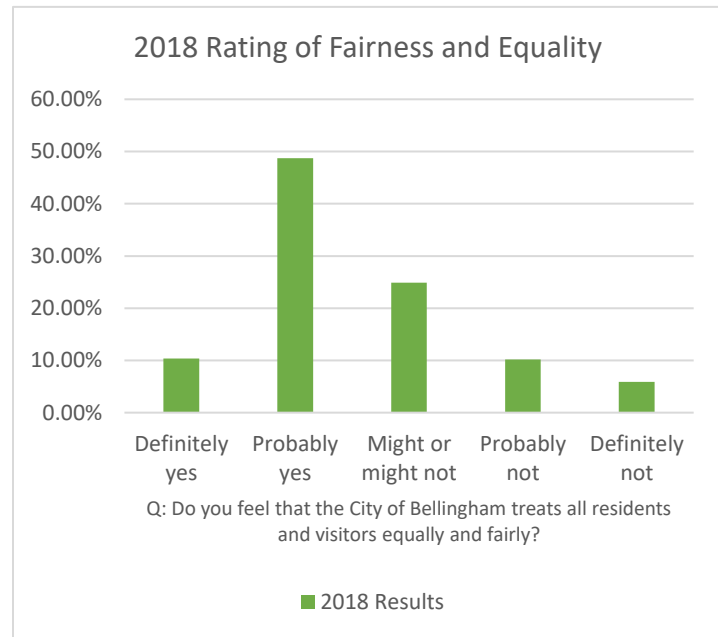


Equitability of City Resources

The 2018 study was the first to include a section regarding public perception of fairness and equality in the City of Bellingham.

59 percent of respondents think it the City of Bellingham is fairly and equally treating its residents and visitors, with 49 percent of respondents answering *Definitely yes* and 10 percent responding *Probably yes*

However, 16 percent of respondents consider the City's treatment of residents and visitors is *Probably not* (10 percent) or *Definitely not* (6 percent) fair and equal.



When asked how the City of Bellingham was doing in terms of equitability in different aspects of support and services offered, Respondents felt that the City of Bellingham was least equitable in regards to:

- *Housing options and affordability*
- *Racial/Cultural Integration*
- *Racial/Cultural Diversity*

On the other hand respondents felt that the City of Bellingham was most equitable in regards to:

- *Supporting community celebration and events*
- *Providing physical access to public facilities*
- *providing adequate inclusive services for diverse sexual orientations*

This is the first year that the survey has asked this question– there are no historical survey results.

Possible Limitations

In analyzing the results and processes used for this survey we note several items of importance:

- Possible **survey fatigue** is an issue for all surveys fielded. With the advent of inexpensive and easy to field surveys, nearly all publicly involved businesses and organizations are sending requests for opinions throughout the developed world. In general, this reduces overall participation. Survey fatigue also increases the opportunities for respondent bias as specific demographics with certain opinions are more likely to continue to take surveys beyond that of other demographics. Surveys, such as this one, may have a higher response rate among demographics of citizens with deep convictions about the ways their city or neighborhood should be managed.
- This respondent bias can also be referred to as **Self-Selection Bias** – households that actually respond to the survey may have different characteristics as a group than the entirety of households that received an invitation to the survey, which was randomized.
- Respondents put a **significant amount of time and effort** into this survey – with 68 total questions, and 6 unlimited open-end questions, the survey is lengthy and in-depth. Some respondents did not complete the entire survey but their answers, as they stand, are still considered. The median duration of the survey for both complete and incomplete surveys was approximately 20 minutes.
- **Survey language**, used in past studies and this one, may vary in both how questions are expressed and the answer choices provided. While every effort has been made to reduce this, multiple edits were made to help reduce survey bias from word choice within the instrument. This has been noted in the relevant questions within this report.
- **Respondent demographics** differ significantly between phone and web responses. While the survey in general attracted an older sampling than the general population, the phone response option was much more attractive to the older demographics. This has been analyzed in a number of questions.
- The **random sample** of 9,000 Bellingham addresses was provided by the City. Western did not supervise the creation of this list nor can we provide any assurance beyond that of the City that this was a random selection.

Survey Results

Demographics

In order to fully digest the data presented from the survey questions, it is paramount to understand who the respondents are and how that might influence the results of this research. Given the overall statistical sample parameters of the study there is little concern that these demographics have led to significant sampling error. We have every reason to believe that the data provided within this report are a statistically representative sample of Bellingham residents.

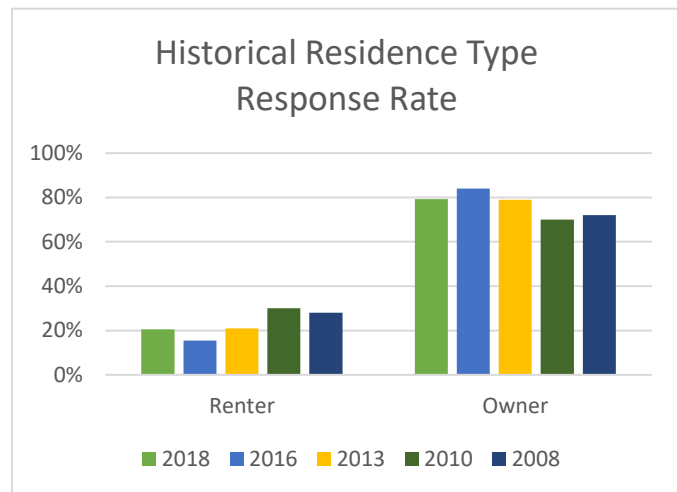
Where appropriate, the following demographic data points have been used to further analyze questions throughout the survey.

Residence Type

Q: In thinking about your residence in Bellingham, how would you classify your household?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|---------------------|--------------|-------|
| Renter | 20.46% | 265 |
| Owner | 79.23% | 1026 |
| Non-Resident | 0.31% | 4 |
| Total | 100% | 1295 |

79 percent of households classify themselves as homeowners, and approximately 20 percent classify themselves as renters. Less than 1 percent reported as non-residents, and were directed to the end of the survey since they do not meet the survey requirements (being a resident).



In this study, there were less homeowners and more renters than the previous survey year. This is a reversal of the trend of increasing homeowners and decreasing renters that was present in all previous years – except 2010.

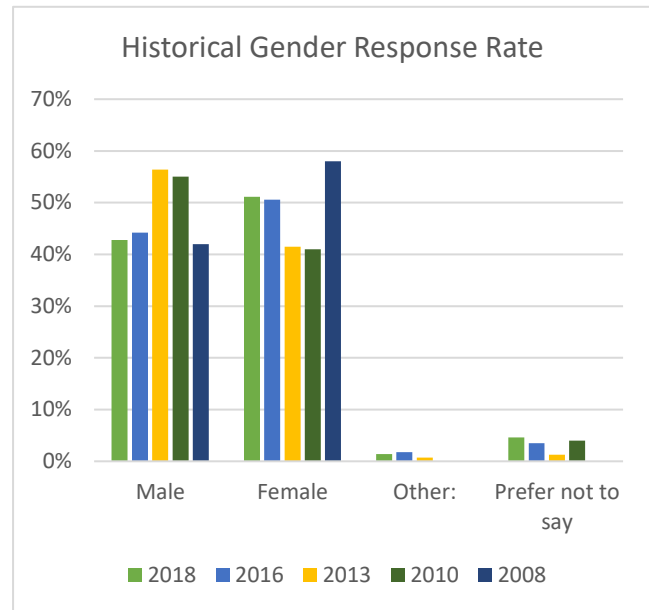
The US Census Bureau estimates that within Bellingham 45% of housing units are occupied by the owner, indicating that the response rate for renters would be excessively low. The Census collects this data through an annual statistical sample over a 6-year period with the option of a residence being occupied by the owner or non-owner. Non-owners are assumed to be renters.

Gender

Q: Which gender do you prefer to identify as?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Male | 42.79% | 516 |
| Female | 51.16% | 617 |
| Other: | 1.41% | 17 |
| Prefer not to say | 4.64% | 56 |
| Total | 100% | 1206 |

A greater proportion (51 percent) of respondents identify as female, 43 percent identify as male, and 1 percent identify as neither male or female. 5 percent of respondents prefer not to report their gender.



Other surveys also garner higher response rates

from females. According to the coverage rates reported by US Census Bureau, females have had a higher response rate to the American Community Survey every year since 2000.

The 1 percent of respondents identifying as an 'other' gender further specify themselves as couples (taking the survey together), or gender fluid. However, a predominant number of these responses, based on comments provided within their response, are people who chose this option to express their dissatisfaction with the presence of a third option. While this only accounts for a small proportion of respondents' views overall, it does speak to the fact that the issue of gender identity is still debated in our community.

Historically, there has been some fluctuation in this category – 2018, 2016, and 2008 surveys garnered many more women respondents, while 2013 and 2010 had many more men.

Neighborhood

Q: Which neighborhood in Bellingham do you consider yourself a resident of?

The respondents from the survey accounted for at least some of every neighborhood in the City of Bellingham. Some neighborhoods with large response rates include the Columbia (8 percent of respondents), Alabama Hill (7 percent) and South Hill (7 percent) neighborhoods. The neighborhoods with lower response rates include Meridian, City Center and Irongate, each contributing to less than 1 percent of total responses. These response rates tend to correspond directly with the population density in those neighborhoods – Meridian and Irongate have low response rates, but this is expected given that they are two of the city’s lowest density residential neighborhoods.

This question is followed by an option to write in the respondents’ street and block number in place of reporting their neighborhood, if unsure about their residence’s neighborhood classification.

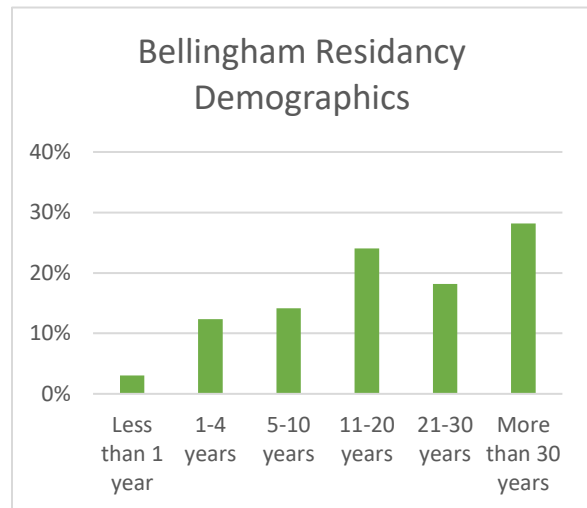
It should be noted in sections that analyze results based on neighborhood, the low response rate from particular neighborhoods results in less confidence about significant differences in these responses.

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Alabama Hill | 7.38% | 93 |
| Barkley | 4.44% | 56 |
| Birchwood | 6.58% | 83 |
| City Center | 0.63% | 8 |
| Columbia | 7.85% | 99 |
| Cordata | 3.01% | 38 |
| Cornwall Park | 3.57% | 45 |
| Edgemoor | 4.84% | 61 |
| Fairhaven | 3.97% | 50 |
| Happy Valley | 5.39% | 68 |
| Irongate | 0.40% | 5 |
| King Mountain | 2.06% | 26 |
| Lettered Streets | 4.20% | 53 |
| Meridian | 0.79% | 10 |
| Puget | 4.52% | 57 |
| Roosevelt | 3.73% | 47 |
| Samish | 6.90% | 87 |
| Sehome | 3.01% | 38 |
| Silver Beach | 4.44% | 56 |
| South | 0.79% | 10 |
| South Hill | 7.38% | 93 |
| Sunnyland | 4.76% | 60 |
| Whatcom Falls | 5.71% | 72 |
| York | 3.65% | 46 |
| Total | 100% | 1261 |

Length of Bellingham Residency

Q: How long have you lived in Bellingham?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Less than 1 year | 3.05% | 37 |
| 1-4 years | 12.36% | 150 |
| 5-10 years | 14.17% | 172 |
| 11-20 years | 24.05% | 292 |
| 21-30 years | 18.20% | 221 |
| More than 30 years | 28.17% | 342 |
| Total | 100% | 1214 |



For the most part, the survey respondents are seasoned residents of the city of Bellingham – almost 70 percent of respondents have lived in Bellingham for more than 10 years. This demonstrates that the responses from the Survey largely capture the opinions of residents who have been involved in the community for a significant amount of time, have seen the city of Bellingham grow and change, and are likely invested in its future. What does appear to be missing within these responses are the significant presence of college-aged students which would have shorter-term residency. It is recommended that in future surveys a question be added asking about any potential student status.

According to the article “Non-Response in Student Surveys: The Role of Demographics, Engagement, and Personality”, those with high levels of community involvement (for the general population as well as the student population specifically) are more likely to respond to a survey regarding current community issues (Porter and Whitcomb, *Research in Higher Education*, 2005).

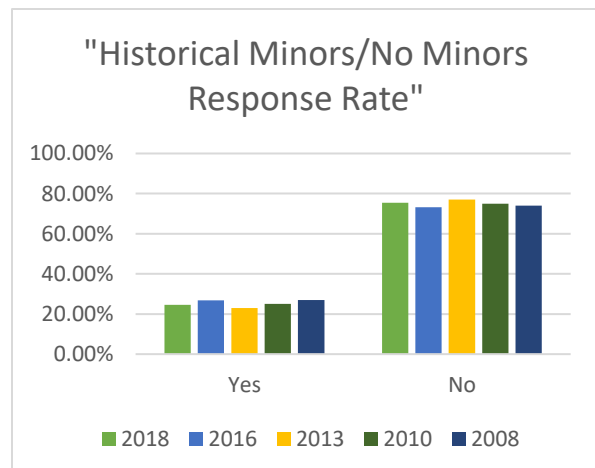
Minors in Household

Q: Do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your household?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Yes | 24.63% | 299 |
| No | 75.37% | 915 |
| Total | 100% | 1214 |

Approximately 25 percent of households report having children under the age of 18. This could include not only parents, but also guardians of minors and other household arrangements.

Historically, the amount of respondents with at least one minor in their household has remained stable.



Age

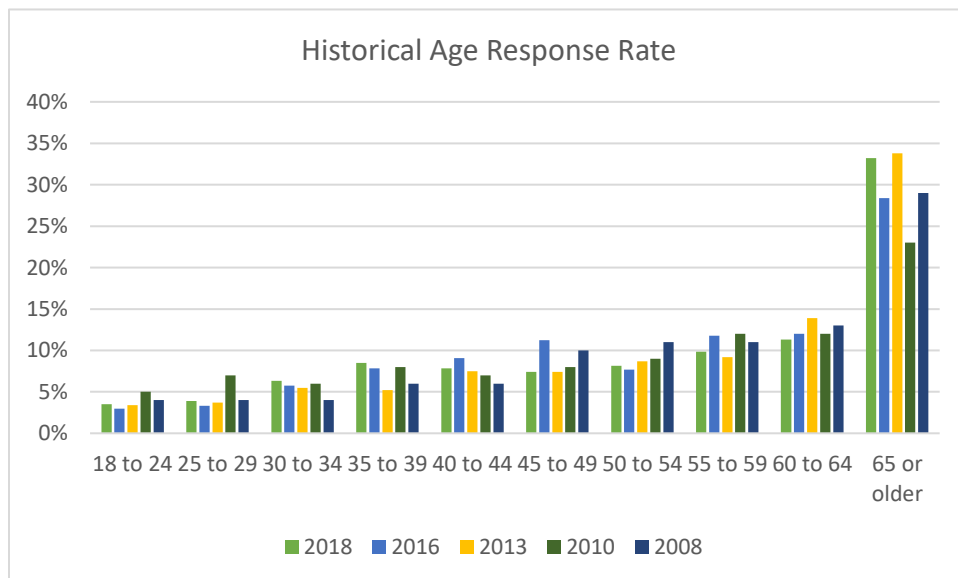
Q: Which of the following best describes your age?

While we obtained responses from large range of age groups, more than half (54 percent) of survey respondents are at least 55 years old. Only 7 percent of responses came from people between 18 and 30 years old. Previous surveys (2010 and 2013) also report high response rates from older individuals and low response rates from younger individuals.

This is disproportionate to Bellingham’s overall demographics – as of 2010, only 24 percent of the total population is 55 or older, and more than 26 percent fall into the 20-29 age range (US Census, 2010). This should be kept in mind when considering the results of the survey.

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 18 to 24 | 3.50% | 42 |
| 25 to 29 | 3.91% | 47 |
| 30 to 34 | 6.33% | 76 |
| 35 to 39 | 8.49% | 102 |
| 40 to 44 | 7.83% | 94 |
| 45 to 49 | 7.41% | 89 |
| 50 to 54 | 8.16% | 98 |
| 55 to 59 | 9.83% | 118 |
| 60 to 64 | 11.32% | 136 |
| 65 or older | 33.22% | 399 |
| Total | 100% | 1201 |

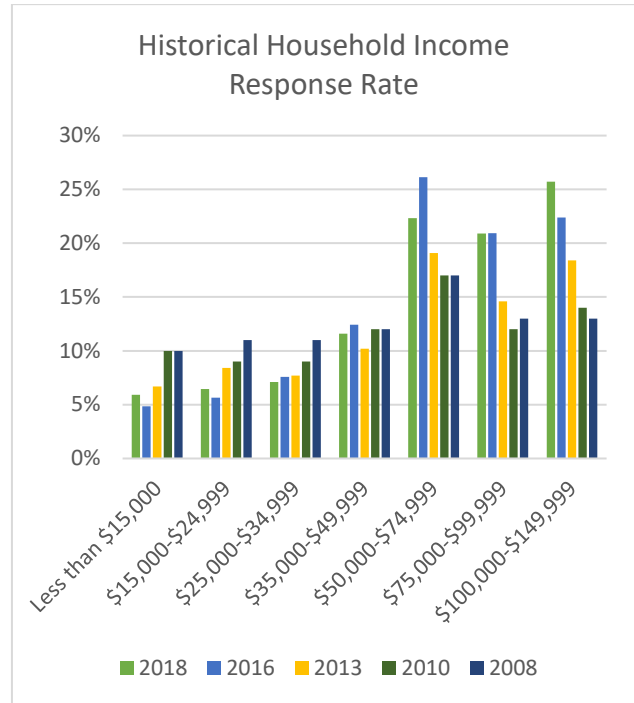
Other research on age demographics and survey participation, like the article “Assessing the Representativeness of Public Opinion Surveys” indicates that older individuals are usually less likely to participate in surveys (Pew Research Center, 2012). We recommend that future surveys take a closer look at possible causes of the disparity between age response rate in other societal surveys and age response rate in this survey.



Household Income

Q: What is your annual household income before taxes?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Less than \$15,000 | 5.91% | 54 |
| \$15,000-\$24,999 | 6.46% | 59 |
| \$25,000-\$34,999 | 7.11% | 65 |
| \$35,000-\$49,999 | 11.60% | 106 |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 22.32% | 204 |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 20.90% | 191 |
| \$100,000-\$149,999 | 25.71% | 235 |
| Total | 100% | 914 |



19 percent of respondents report annual household incomes less than \$35,000, 34 percent report household incomes between \$35,000 and \$75,000, and 47 percent report household incomes over \$75,000.

Historically, the respondents of this year’s survey have higher incomes than those in previous surveys.

The US Census Bureau estimates the median household income in Bellingham to be \$44,441, indicating a possible self-selection bias. According to the article “Non-Response in Student Surveys: The Role of Demographics, Engagement, and Personality”, in the general population more affluent or educated individuals are more likely to participate in surveys (Porter and Whitcomb, *Research in Higher Education*, 2005).

General Observations

This section is designed to gain a view of how residents feel about life in Bellingham overall, with a combination of multiple choice, rank order, and open-ended questions concerning the quality of life, values, and the challenges of life in Bellingham.

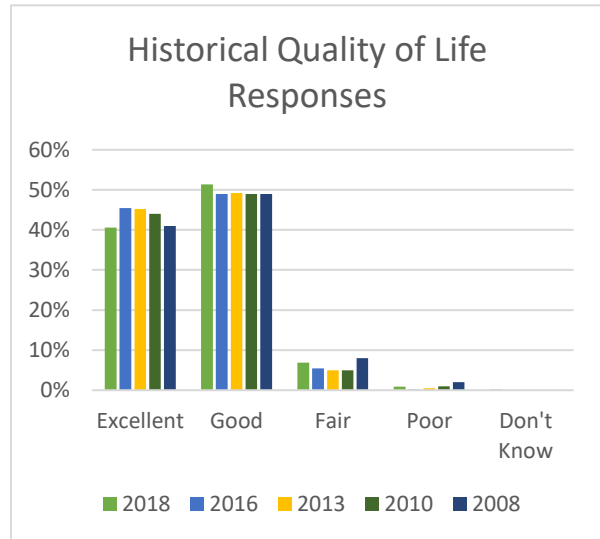
Quality of Life

Q: Overall, how would you rate the quality of life in Bellingham?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 40.61% | 523 |
| Good | 51.40% | 662 |
| Fair | 6.91% | 89 |
| Poor | 0.93% | 12 |
| Don't Know | 0.16% | 2 |
| Total | 100% | 1217 |

More than 92 percent of respondents rate the quality of life in Bellingham as at least *Good* (51 percent), if not *Excellent* (41 percent). Less than 8 percent rate the quality of life in Bellingham as either *Fair* (7 percent) or *Poor* (less than 1 percent).

For the first time since 2008, the reported quality of life decreased overall, 41 percent of respondents rated the quality of life in Bellingham as *Excellent*, compared to 45 percent in 2016. While a relatively small effect this marks a departure from the upward trend in resident's reported quality of life and may be something to consider moving forward.



Bellingham Values

Q: What do you value most about Bellingham as a place to live? Drag and drop the answer choices in order of preference, from the attributes that you value most to those you value the least.

This question asks respondents to rate the following from most to least important:

- *Education options*
- *Environmental friendliness*
- *Recreation programs and opportunities*
- *Economic environment*
- *Safety of neighborhoods*
- *Infrastructure quality*
- *Arts and culture*
- *Sense of community*
- *Quality of EMS*
- *Nightlife*
- *Public transportation*
- *Housing affordability*
- *Shopping*
- *Public involvement in City decisions*

The top-rated values about Bellingham as a place to live include:

1. Sense of community (22 percent rated #1, 13 percent rated #2)
2. Recreational programs and opportunities (18 percent rated #1, 13 percent rated #2)
3. Safety of neighborhoods (16 percent rated #1, 14 percent rated #2)
4. Environmental friendliness (15 percent rated #1, 17 percent rated #2)

The least valued aspects of Bellingham (rated last) include:

1. Nightlife (35 percent rated last)
2. Housing affordability (24 percent rated last)
3. Shopping (16 percent rated last).

Q: Is there another aspect of Bellingham that you value that was not included in this list?

This is an open-ended question requiring a text entry from respondents. It should be noted that some respondents expressed confusion with this particular question – many interpreted it to be asking about their general values, instead of existing aspects of Bellingham that they value.

The following table contains a count of topics that are mentioned. One response may contain multiple topic tags, so total count of topics exceeds total responses. To view the full text responses see appendix.

| Count | Answer Category |
|-------|-------------------------------|
| 69 | Parks, Trails, and Greenways |
| 61 | Location |
| 55 | Natural Beauty |
| 42 | Community |
| 42 | Outdoors |
| 27 | Bikeability, Walkability |
| 26 | Values |
| 25 | Climate |
| 23 | Town Size |
| 19 | Social Services |
| 19 | Food and Dining Opportunities |
| 18 | Diversity |
| 17 | Education Options |
| 15 | Healthcare |
| 12 | Traffic |
| 12 | Marina/Bay Access |
| 9 | Government Services |
| 8 | Art, Music, and Culture |
| 8 | Air/Water Quality |
| 8 | Environmental Friendliness |
| 8 | Business |
| 8 | Safe/Peaceful |
| 8 | Library |
| 7 | Uniqueness |
| 6 | Job Opportunities |
| 5 | Cost of Living |
| 5 | Cleanliness |
| 4 | Religious Tolerance |

Bellingham Challenges

Q: What do you think is the most important challenge facing Bellingham today that City leaders can do something about? Drag and drop the answer choices in order of preference, from most to least important.

This question asks respondents to rate the following from most to least valuable:

- *Education options*
- *Environmental friendliness*
- *Recreation programs and opportunities*
- *Safety of neighborhoods*
- *Safety of roads and Infrastructure quality*
- *Quality of EMS*
- *Public transportation*
- *Housing affordability*
- *Homelessness*
- *Public involvement in City decisions*
- *Economic development*

The top-rated challenges facing Bellingham include:

1. Homelessness (37 percent rated #1, 24 percent rated #2)
2. Housing affordability (27 percent rated #1, 26 percent rated #2)
3. Safety of Neighborhoods (8 percent rated #1, 13 percent rated #2)
4. Economic development (9 percent rated #1, 10 percent rated #2)

The lowest rated challenges facing Bellingham (rated last) include:

1. Recreation programs and opportunities (19 percent rated last)
2. Public transportation (16 percent rated last)
3. Education Options (13 percent rated last).

Q: Is there another challenge facing Bellingham that was not included in this list?

This is an open-ended question requiring a text entry from respondents. The following table contains a count of topics that are mentioned. One response may contain multiple topic tags, so total count of topics exceeds total responses. To view the full text responses see appendix.

| Count | Answer category |
|-------|-----------------------------|
| 37 | Homelessness |
| 32 | Traffic |
| 32 | Mental Health |
| 27 | Diversity and Equity |
| 26 | Infrastructure |
| 22 | Housing |
| 22 | Taxes |
| 21 | Drugs |
| 21 | Growth |
| 21 | City Government |
| 20 | Cost of Living |
| 18 | Zoning Laws/Development |
| 17 | Community |
| 15 | City Jail |
| 14 | Pollution |
| 13 | Crime |
| 13 | Public Safety |
| 12 | Parks and Libraries |
| 12 | Bikes |
| 12 | Climate Change |
| 9 | Emergency Services |
| 7 | Political Differences |
| 7 | Healthcare |
| 5 | Composting |
| 4 | Education/Childcare |
| 4 | Senior Activities |
| 3 | Dirty Public Areas |
| 2 | Native American Populations |
| 2 | Arts |
| 2 | Canadian Tourism |

Concluding Remarks

Q: We greatly value feedback and ideas from community members like you. If you were a City leader, would there be any additional positive changes you would make in our community?

This is an open-ended question asked at the conclusion of the survey, once respondents have had a chance to gauge the subject matter of all survey questions. The following table contains a count of topics that are mentioned. One response may contain multiple topic tags, so total count of topics exceeds total responses. To view the full text responses see appendix.

| Count | Answer Category |
|-------|---|
| 121 | Solve homelessness |
| 113 | Improve roads and parking |
| 76 | Affordability |
| 59 | Improve government management |
| 53 | Community involvement |
| 46 | Improve parks, greenways, trails and public areas |
| 45 | Bikeability |
| 44 | Density management |
| 42 | Equity |
| 42 | Less regulations and taxes |
| 40 | Walkability |
| 40 | Improve public healthcare including mental health |
| 33 | Develop the economy |
| 32 | Environmental protection |
| 28 | Create jobs |
| 28 | More public transportation |
| 27 | Safety |
| 22 | Improve law enforcement |
| 21 | Develop the waterfront |
| 15 | Libraries |
| 12 | Protect drinking water |
| 12 | Crime |
| 11 | Improve waste management |
| 10 | Help small businesses |
| 9 | Enforce zoning regulations |
| 7 | Fix jail system |
| 7 | Improve schools |
| 6 | Train/railroad management |
| 6 | Respect property rights and protect views |
| 2 | Raise minimum wage |
| 1 | Disaster preparedness |

City Services

This section asks respondents to rate the City's efforts to achieve a number of general community priorities – livability of neighborhoods, planning for growth, protecting the environment, using tax dollars responsibly, and providing public safety services. The questions in this section were presented in a randomized order help eliminate possible consistent biases resulting from framing.

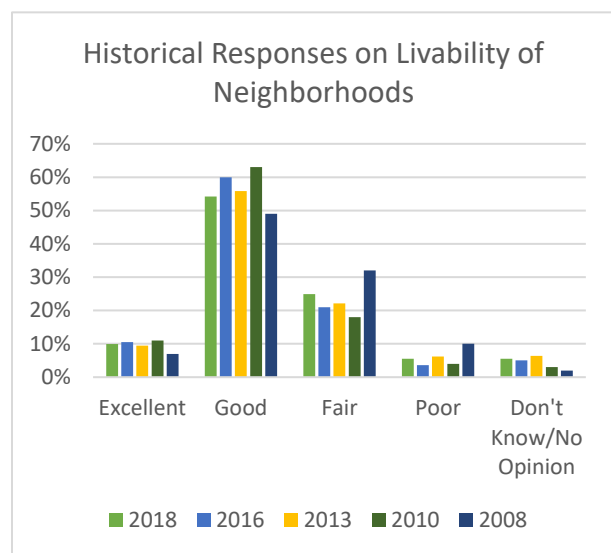
Respondents to these questions have high rates of *Don't Know/No Opinion* responses which may indicate either a lack of exposure to the topics or a feeling of not having enough information to have an informed opinion. This may represent an opportunity for the City to further educate the public regarding these areas of operations.

Livability of Neighborhoods

Q: In regard to the livability of neighborhoods, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 9.90% | 124 |
| Good | 54.19% | 679 |
| Fair | 24.90% | 312 |
| Poor | 5.51% | 69 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 5.51% | 69 |
| Total | 100% | 1253 |

Most respondents (64 percent) believe the City's efforts are at least *Good* (54 percent), if not *Excellent* (10 percent), when it comes to the livability of neighborhoods.



Historically, residents' perceptions of the livability of neighborhoods have been trending upwards. In 2008, 42 percent of respondents rated the livability of neighborhoods negatively (*Fair or Poor*), compared to only 30 percent of respondents in 2018. Reasons for this shift are unclear and out of the scope of this survey.

Neighborhood Influence

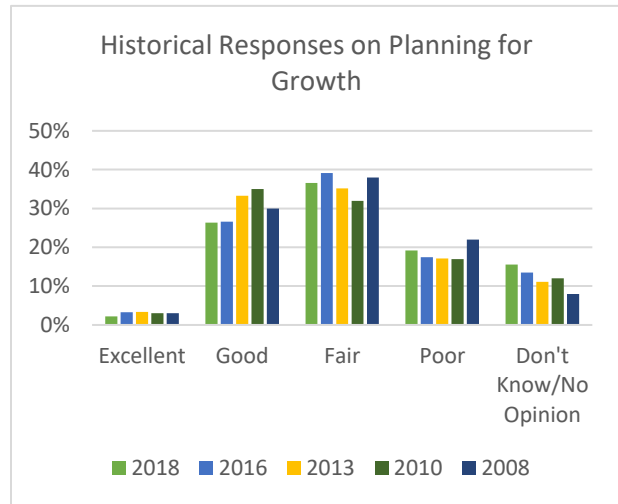
Some neighborhoods rated the City's efforts to ensure the livability of neighborhoods significantly higher or lower than average. Respondents from Edgemoor and South Hill neighborhoods rated the livability of neighborhoods more positively than average. Respondents from the City Center and King Mountain neighborhoods rated the livability of neighborhoods more negatively than average.

Planning for Growth

Q: In regard to planning for growth, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 2.24% | 28 |
| Good | 26.38% | 330 |
| Fair | 36.61% | 458 |
| Poor | 19.18% | 240 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 15.59% | 195 |
| Total | 100% | 1251 |

More than half (56 percent) of respondents think the City's efforts planning for growth are *Fair* or *Poor*. 26 percent responded that the City's efforts are *Good*, and only 2 percent believe the efforts to plan for growth are *Excellent*.



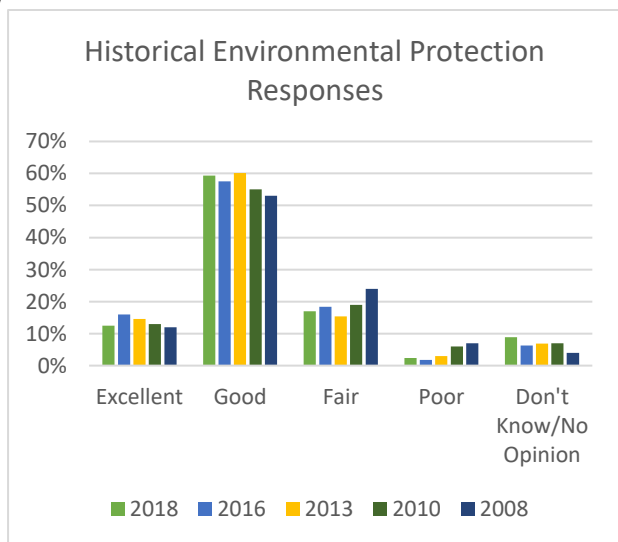
2018 reports the lowest proportion of positive responses regarding the City's efforts planning for growth since 2008. In this study, only 29 percent of respondents rated planning for growth as *Excellent* (2 percent), or *Good* (26 percent), compared to a 30 percent positive response rate in 2016, 36 percent in 2013, 38 percent in 2010, and 33 percent in 2008.

Protecting the Environment

Q: In regard to protecting the environment, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 12.45% | 156 |
| Good | 59.30% | 743 |
| Fair | 17.00% | 213 |
| Poor | 2.39% | 30 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 8.86% | 111 |
| Total | 100% | 1253 |

Many respondents believe that the City's efforts to protect the environment are at least *Good* (59 percent), if not *Excellent* (12 percent). As discussed later in the Survey, Bellingham residents consider the environmental protection and remediation efforts to be quite important.

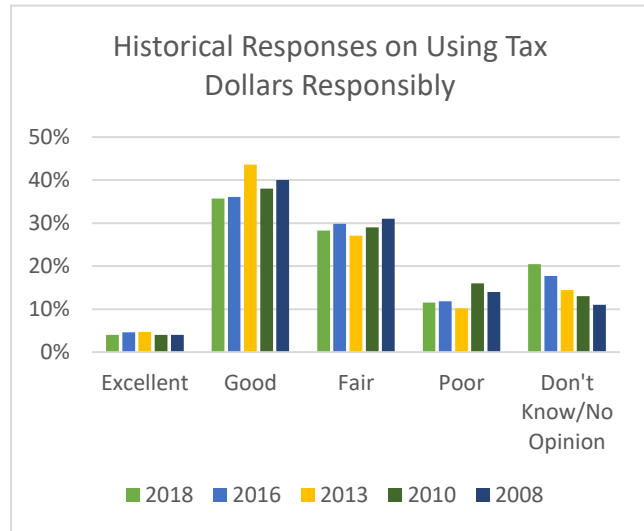


Historically, Respondent's views of the City's environmental protection have been steadily more positive since 2008. In 2018, the number of *Excellent* responses dropped to the lowest it has been since 2008 (12 percent). *Don't Know/No Opinion* responses are the highest they have ever been (9 percent) indicating that respondents are less informed about the City's environmental protection efforts.

Using Tax Dollars Responsibly

Q: In regard to using tax dollars responsibly, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 4.01% | 50 |
| Good | 35.74% | 446 |
| Fair | 28.29% | 353 |
| Poor | 11.54% | 144 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 20.43% | 255 |
| Total | 100% | 1248 |



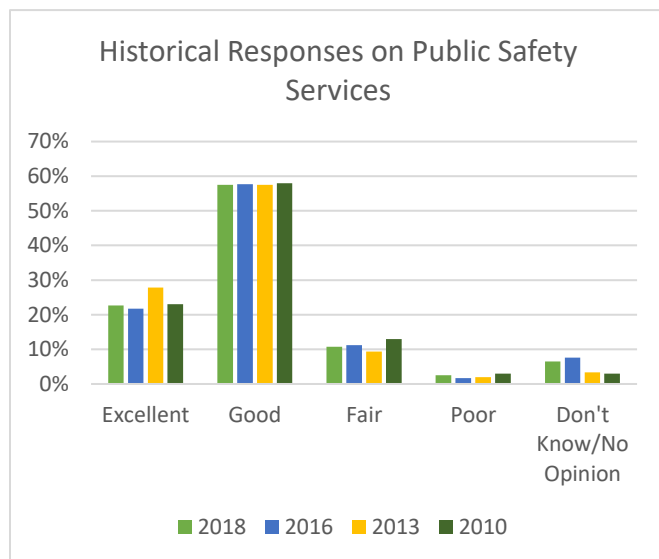
The majority of respondents are more neutral about this subject – 36 percent of respondents rated the City's efforts to use tax dollars responsibly as *Good*, and 28 percent rated the City's efforts as *Fair*.

Historically, views of the City's efforts to use tax dollars responsibly have fluctuated. In this survey, the total positive response rate (*Excellent* or *Good*) was 40 percent, the lowest of all four years. Also, the rates of *Don't Know/No Opinion* have been steadily increasing over the years, from 11 percent (2008) to 20 percent (2018).

Public Safety Services

Q: In regard to providing public safety services (such as police, fire, and emergency medical services), the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 22.67% | 284 |
| Good | 57.54% | 721 |
| Fair | 10.77% | 135 |
| Poor | 2.55% | 32 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 6.46% | 81 |
| Total | 100% | 1253 |



In regard to providing public safety services, the majority (80 percent) of respondents rate the City's efforts as *Good* (58 percent), if not *Excellent* (23 percent). Less than 3 percent of respondents rate the City's efforts as *Poor*.

Since the 2016 survey, *Excellent* responses have increased to 23 percent (2018) from 22 percent (2016). Since 2010, *Don't Know/No Opinion* responses have increased from 3 percent (2010 and 2013) to 6 percent (2018). Data from 2008 is not available for this question.

Services relying on taxpayer dollars

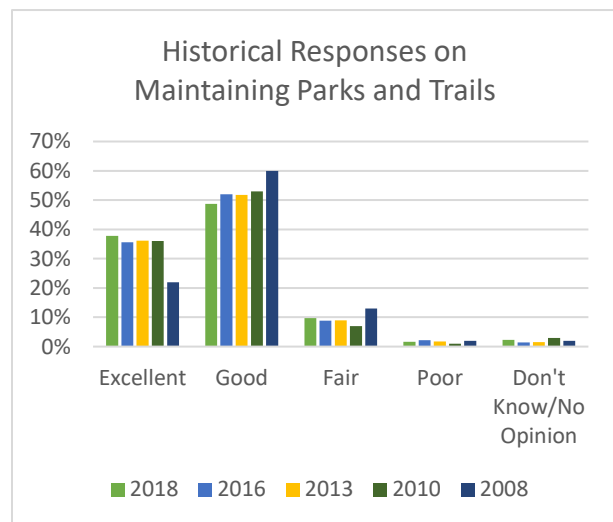
This section focuses specifically on City services which rely on taxpayer dollars. Respondents are asked to rate the quality of the City’s efforts providing each of these services. The questions in this section were presented in a randomized order to eliminate possible bias.

Respondents have high rates of *Don’t Know/No Opinion* responses for particular questions in this section. This accounts for the questions concerning economic development and business growth (21 percent), recreational programs (18 percent responded *Don’t Know/No Opinion*), fire protection services (17 percent), emergency medical services (18 percent), reducing human impact on the environment (17 percent), and involving the public (15 percent). This result may indicate that these are sections that respondents either don’t have experience with, or do not feel opinionated about.

Maintaining Parks and Trails

Q: In regard to maintaining parks and trails, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 37.77% | 468 |
| Good | 48.67% | 603 |
| Fair | 9.69% | 120 |
| Poor | 1.61% | 20 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 2.26% | 28 |
| Total | 100% | 1239 |



Park and trail maintenance is recognized by respondents as one of the City’s strong points. 49 percent responded that the City’s efforts to maintain parks and trails are *Good*, and almost 38 gave an *Excellent* rating.

Historically, ratings of park and trail maintenance have pulled up slightly after remaining relatively steady from 2010 to 2016.

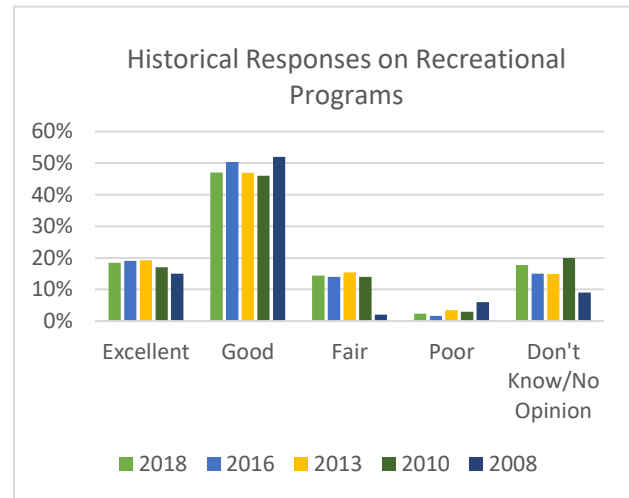
Recreational Programs

Q: In regard to providing recreational programs for youth and adults, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 18.42% | 229 |
| Good | 47.06% | 585 |
| Fair | 14.40% | 179 |
| Poor | 2.33% | 29 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 17.78% | 221 |
| Total | 100% | 1243 |

In regard to providing recreational programs, respondents rate the City's efforts quite positively – 47 percent give a rating of *Good*, and 19 percent give a rating of *Excellent*.

This survey represents a slight decrease on the positive response rate regarding recreational programs, with a total of 65 percent rating *Excellent* or *Good*, compared to 69 percent in 2016.



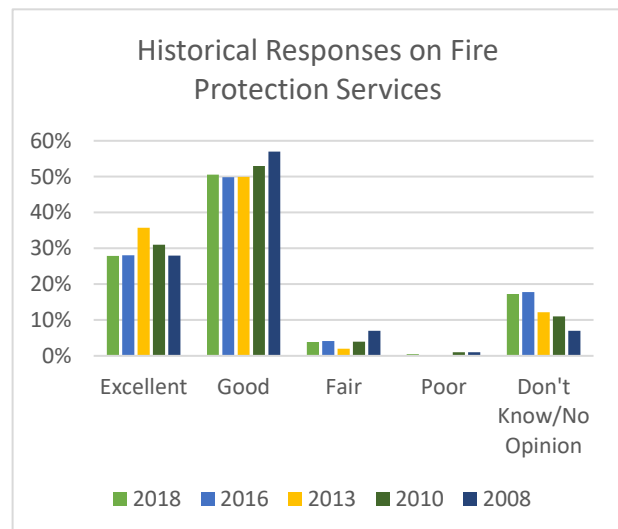
Fire Protection Services

Q: In regard to providing fire protection services, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 27.92% | 347 |
| Good | 50.52% | 628 |
| Fair | 3.86% | 48 |
| Poor | 0.48% | 6 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 17.22% | 214 |
| Total | 100% | 1243 |

The City's efforts providing fire protection services are recognized as a positive aspect of our community – 49 percent of respondents rate the City's efforts as *Good*, and another 29 percent gave a rating of *Excellent*.

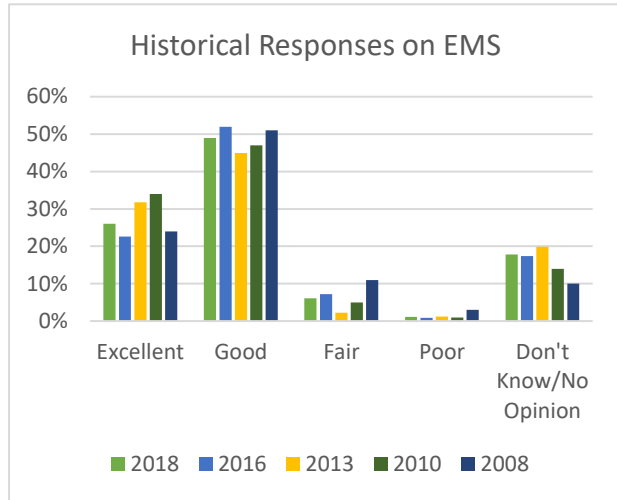
Historically, fire protection services have always been rated quite positively – the highest rate of negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) came in 2008, which was a low 8 percent. This study showed very little change in responses from 2016.



Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Q: In regard to providing Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 26.05% | 323 |
| Good | 48.95% | 607 |
| Fair | 6.05% | 75 |
| Poor | 1.13% | 14 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 17.82% | 221 |
| Total | 100% | 1240 |



Respondents also recognize the City's efforts providing EMS – 48 percent rate EMS services as *Good*, and 26 percent give an *Excellent* rating. Only 1 percent believe the City is doing a *Poor* job providing EMS.

Historically, this survey showed an increase in *Excellent* responses, and a decrease in *Good* responses compared to the previous survey. Residents' opinions seem to be skewing upward with regards to EMS services.

A similar percent of respondents replied in the *Don't Know/No Opinion* category as the previous question regarding general fire services, possibly indicating a lack of overall knowledge of the particular services available.

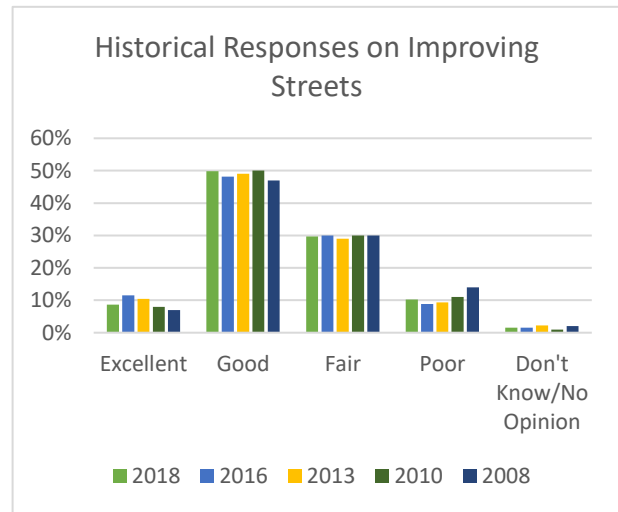
Improving Streets

Q: In regard to improving streets (such as fixing potholes, signage, bike lanes, sidewalks, and traffic lights), the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 8.70% | 108 |
| Good | 49.80% | 618 |
| Fair | 29.73% | 369 |
| Poor | 10.23% | 127 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 1.53% | 19 |
| Total | 100% | 1241 |

In regard to improving streets (for example, fixing potholes, signage, bike lanes, sidewalks, and traffic lights), 8 percent of respondents rated the City's efforts as *Excellent*, 50 percent rated *Good*, 30 percent rated *Fair*, and 10 percent rated *Poor*.

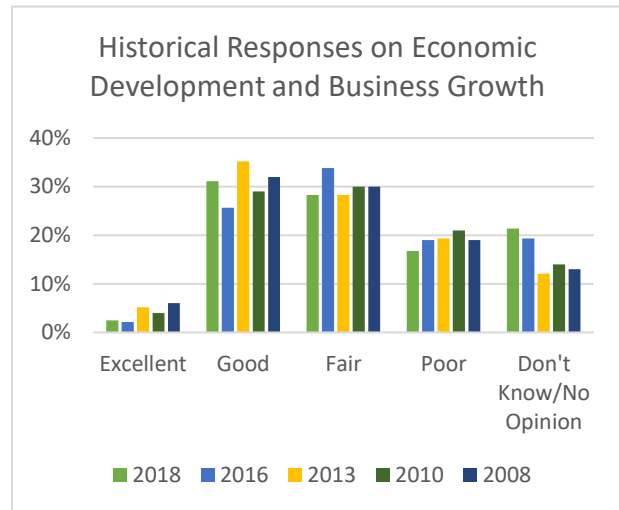
This survey, *Excellent* responses decreased from 12 percent (2016) to 9 percent (2018), and *Good* responses increased from 48 percent (2016) to 50 percent (2018). This is a departure from the previous trend in which views of the City's efforts to improve streets had steadily become more positive.



Economic Development and Business Growth

Q: In regard to encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 2.50% | 31 |
| Good | 31.10% | 386 |
| Fair | 28.28% | 351 |
| Poor | 16.76% | 208 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 21.35% | 265 |
| Total | 100% | 1241 |



Many respondents think there is room to grow when it comes to the City's efforts encouraging economic development and business growth. Only 2 percent rated the City's efforts as *Excellent*, 31 percent rated *Good*, 28 percent rated *Fair*, and 17 percent believe the City's efforts are *Poor*.

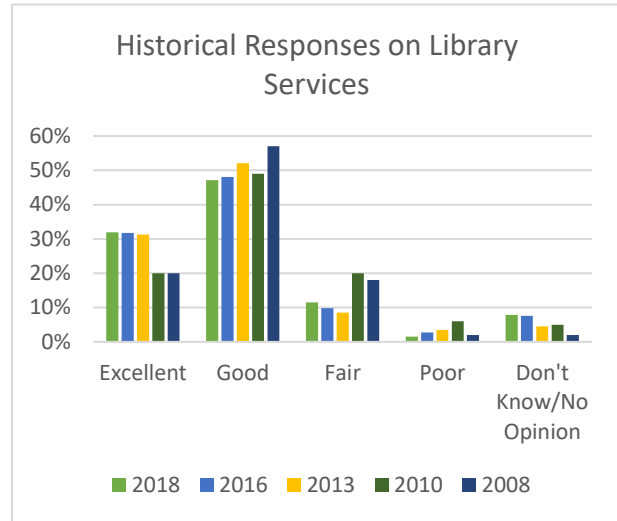
Historically, this represents the lowest rate of negative responses (*Poor* or *Fair*). The rate of *Don't Know/No Opinion* responses has spiked to 21 percent (2018) from a steadier rate between 12 and 14 percent from 2008 and 2013.

It should be noted that the term "economic development" is open to fairly wide-interpretation based on a person's background and experiences.

Library Services

Q: In regard to providing library services for the community, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 31.91% | 396 |
| Good | 47.14% | 585 |
| Fair | 11.52% | 143 |
| Poor | 1.53% | 19 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 7.90% | 98 |
| Total | 100% | 1241 |



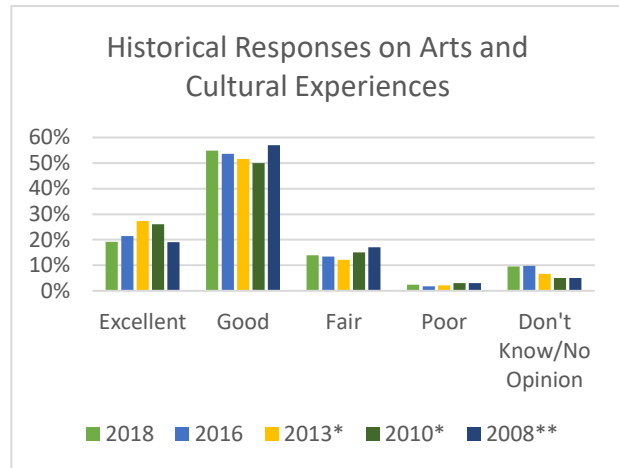
Regarding library services, respondents rated the City's efforts very positively – 32 percent rated *Excellent*, and 48 percent rated *Good*. Only 11 percent rated the City's efforts as *Fair*, and 2 percent rated *Poor*.

Historically, *Excellent* responses have remained steady around 32 percent since 2013. In this study, as well as both the 2016 and 2013 studies have seen a significant increase in total positive responses (*Excellent* or *Good*) and a decrease in total negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) compared to the 2010 and 2008 views of community library services.

Arts and Cultural Experiences

Q: In regard to fostering arts and cultural experiences, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 19.18% | 238 |
| Good | 54.88% | 681 |
| Fair | 13.94% | 173 |
| Poor | 2.42% | 30 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 9.59% | 119 |
| Total | 100% | 1241 |



Respondents feel positive about the City's efforts fostering arts and cultural experiences – 19 percent rated *Excellent*, and 56 percent rated *Good*. Only 16 percent rated the City's efforts negatively – 14 percent rated *Fair*, and 2 percent rated *Poor*.

Compared to 2010, 2013, and 2016, this study's *Excellent* response rate has decreased, and the *Good* response rates have increased. This suggests that in recent years, people's views on arts and cultural experiences provided by the City have become more moderate.

Follow-Up

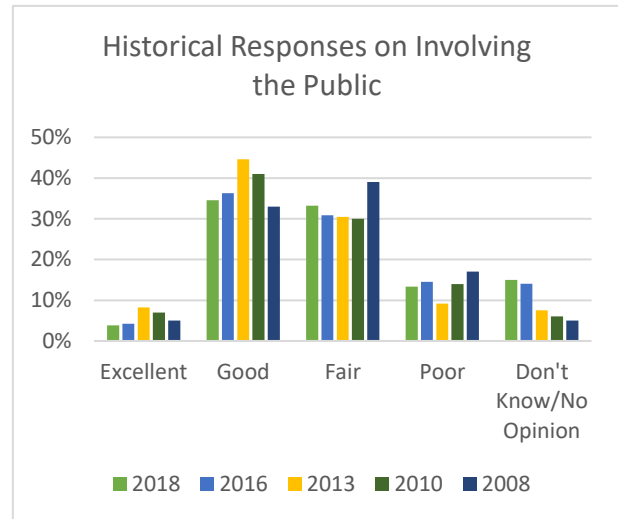
The Survey follows up with respondents who rate the City's efforts fostering arts and cultural experiences as either *Fair* or *Poor* (203 respondents) by asking them to elaborate on their choice in an open-end text entry. The following table contains a count of some of the most popular topics that are mentioned. One response may contain multiple topic tags, so total count of topics exceeds total responses. To view the full text responses see appendix.

| Count | Answer Category |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 18 | Not a high priority |
| 18 | Public awareness |
| 15 | Private arts community more important |
| 15 | Not my thing |
| 14 | More diverse culture |
| 14 | Decrease arts funding |
| 13 | More funding for art |
| 12 | Too expensive |
| 12 | Cultural events |
| 11 | More public art needed |
| 10 | More venues |
| 6 | Opportunities for the youth |
| 4 | Music |
| 1 | Public involvement |

Involving the Public

Q: In regard to involving the public in making decisions that affect the community, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 3.86% | 48 |
| Good | 34.54% | 429 |
| Fair | 33.25% | 413 |
| Poor | 13.37% | 166 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 14.98% | 186 |
| Total | 100% | 1242 |



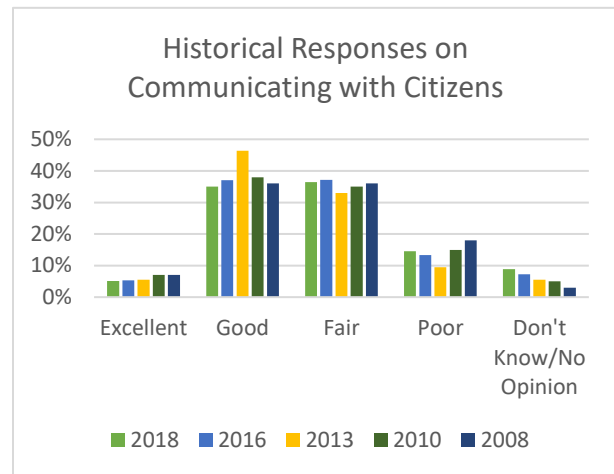
Responses regarding the City's efforts involving the public in community decision-making are generally moderate. 4 percent rate the City's efforts as *Excellent*, 35 percent rate *Good*, 33 percent rate *Fair*, and 14 percent rate *Poor*.

Compared to previous years, positive responses (*Excellent* or *Good*) regarding "involving the public" have decreased significantly. The positive response rate is 38 percent in 2018, compared to 40 percent in 2016, 48 percent in 2010, and 53 percent in 2013. The rate of *Don't Know/No Opinion* responses has been steadily increasing from 5 percent in 2008 to 15 percent in 2018.

Communicating with Citizens

Q: In regard to communicating with citizens about City issues, decisions, and services, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 5.14% | 64 |
| Good | 35.02% | 436 |
| Fair | 36.39% | 453 |
| Poor | 14.54% | 181 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 8.92% | 111 |
| Total | 100% | 1245 |



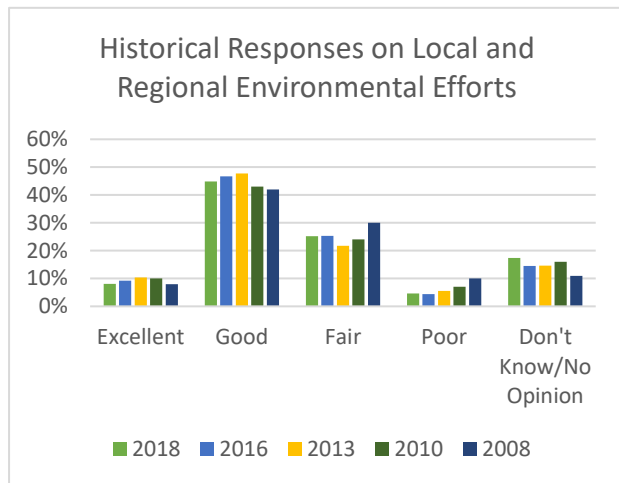
Respondents are also generally moderate in their opinions about the City's efforts to communicate with citizens about City issues, decisions, and services. 5 percent rate the City's efforts as *Excellent*, 34 percent rate *Good*, 37 percent rate *Fair*, and 15 percent rate *Poor*.

This survey's responses are more negative than 2013 responses, but in line with the responses from 2008, 2010, and 2016. Since 2013, positive responses (*Excellent* or *Good*) have decreased from 52 percent (2013) to 40 percent (2018), and negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) have increased from 43 percent (2013) to 51 percent (2018).

Reducing Human Impact on the Environment

Q: In regard to leading local and regional efforts to reduce human impact on the environment, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 8.06% | 100 |
| Good | 44.84% | 556 |
| Fair | 25.16% | 312 |
| Poor | 4.60% | 57 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 17.34% | 215 |
| Total | 100% | 1240 |



Concerning local and regional efforts to reduce the human impact on the environment, most

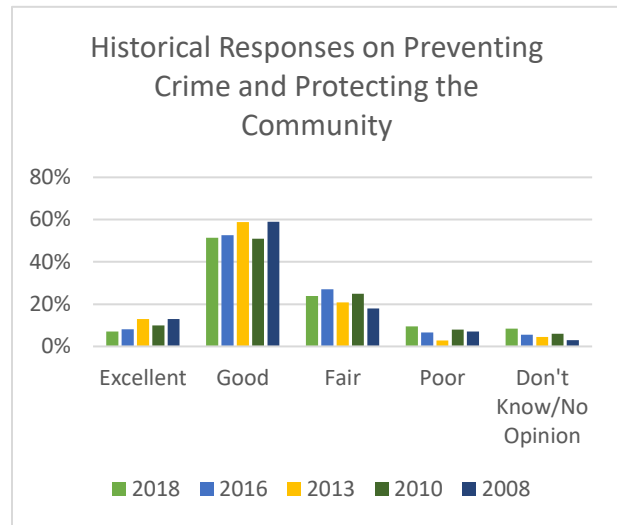
respondents' rate the City's efforts positively – 8 percent rate *Excellent*, and 44 percent rate *Good*. About a quarter (25 percent) of respondents rate the City's efforts as *Fair*, and 5 percent rate *Poor*.

Responses to this question have become slightly more positive over the years. There has been a steady decrease in *Poor* responses, from 10 percent (2008) to 5 percent (2016).

Preventing Crime and Protecting the Community

Q: In regard to preventing crime and protecting the community, the City's efforts are...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 6.99% | 87 |
| Good | 51.37% | 639 |
| Fair | 23.87% | 297 |
| Poor | 9.41% | 117 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 8.36% | 104 |
| Total | 100% | 1244 |



When it comes to preventing crime and protecting the community, 7 percent of respondents rate the City's efforts as *Excellent*, 51 percent rate *Good*, 24 percent rate *Fair*, and 10 percent rate *Poor*.

Historically, positive responses (*Excellent* or *Good*) have slightly decreased, from 72 percent (2008) to 58 percent (2018). Also, negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) have increased, from 25 percent (2008) to 33 percent (2018).

Follow-Up

The Survey follows up with respondents who rate the City's efforts preventing crime and protecting the community as either *Fair* or *Poor* (395 respondents) by asking them to elaborate on their choice in an open-end text entry. The following table contains a count of some of the most popular topics that are mentioned. One response may contain multiple topic tags, so total count of topics exceeds total responses. To view the full text responses see appendix.

| Count | Answer Category |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 138 | Homelessness |
| 81 | Property crimes |
| 81 | Drug enforcement |
| 50 | Mental health options/Social services |
| 36 | Unsafe downtown |
| 36 | Police budget |
| 36 | Unsafe trails/ parks |
| 34 | Police visibility |
| 24 | Traffic/ parking enforcement |
| 24 | Violent crime |
| 23 | Quality of police |
| 22 | Police response time |
| 21 | Sexual crimes/abuse |
| 11 | Jail overcrowding |
| 10 | Concern for marginalized populations |
| 6 | Problems with gangs |
| 6 | Loitering |
| 5 | Politicized police |
| 4 | Community efforts to support police |

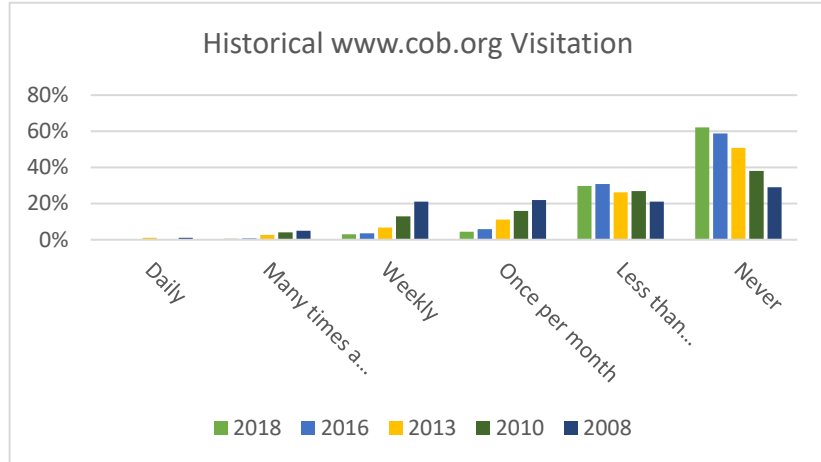
Media Services

BTV Viewing Frequency

Q: Which statement best describes your typical viewing of BTV?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--|--------------|-------|
| Daily | 0.17% | 2 |
| Many times a week | 0.50% | 6 |
| Weekly | 3.00% | 36 |
| Once per month | 4.41% | 53 |
| Less than monthly, but several times a year | 9.07% | 109 |
| Once or twice a year, or less | 20.63% | 248 |
| Never | 62.23% | 748 |
| Total | 100% | 1202 |

Approximately 8 percent of respondents view BTV *at least* once per month (*Daily, Many times a week, Weekly, or Once per month*). Almost 31 percent of respondents view BTV occasionally during the year (*Less than monthly, but several times a year, or Once or twice a year, or less*), and 62 percent report *Never* having watched BTV.



Historically, the proportion of respondents who report *Never* watching BTV has increased **significantly** each year – rising from 29 percent (2008) to 62 percent (2016). The rate of regular BTV viewing (*Daily, Many times a week, Weekly, or Once per month*) has been steadily decreasing since 2008, and the rate of occasional BTV viewing (*Less than monthly, but several times a year, or Once or twice a year, or less*) has increased since 2008.

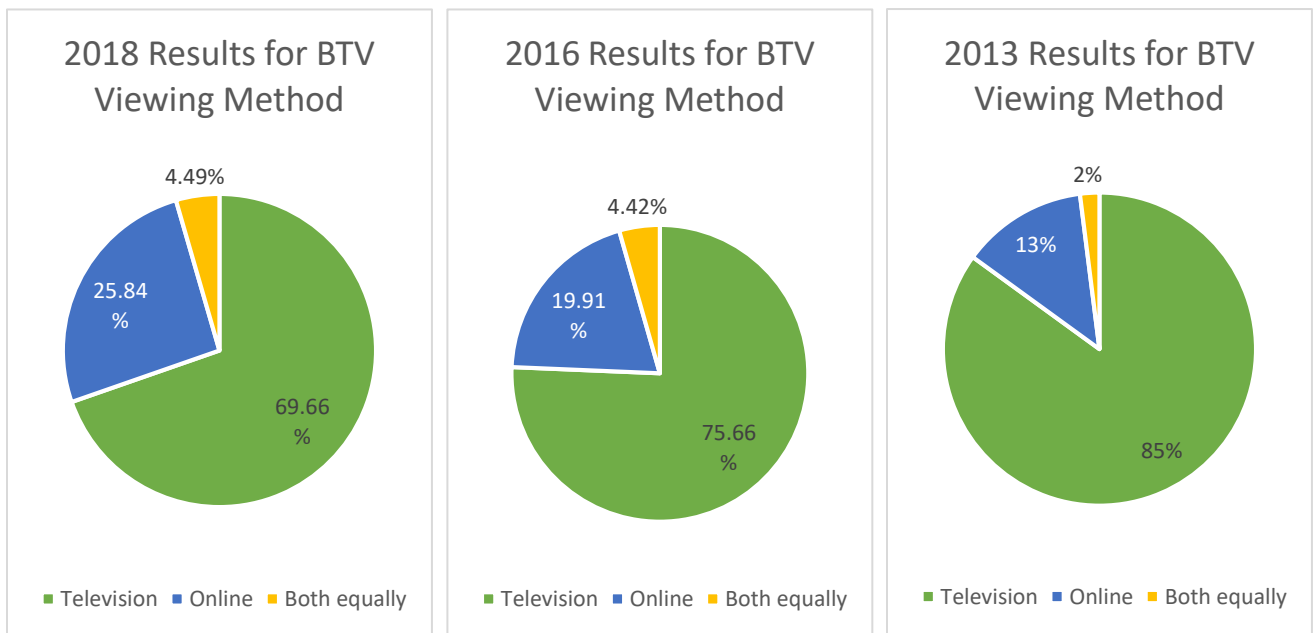
BTV Viewing Method

Q: When you watch BTV programs, do you usually watch on television or online?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Television | 69.66% | 310 |
| Online | 25.84% | 115 |
| Both equally | 4.49% | 20 |
| Total | 100% | 445 |

Among the respondents who watch BTV programs (all who did **not** answer *Never* or *Don't Know* to previous question), most report watching on television, about 70 percent), some report watching online (26 percent), and some report watching both equally (5 percent).

Since 2013, the rate of television viewing has decreased from 85 percent (2013) to 70 percent (2018), and the rate of online viewing has increased from 13 percent (2013) to 25 percent (2018). Data from 2008 and 2010 is not available for this question.

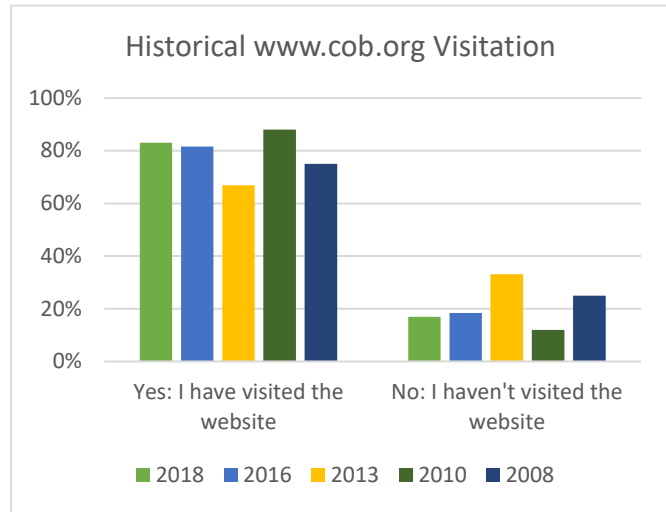


COB Website Visitation

Q: Have you ever visited www.cob.org?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Yes | 83.02% | 1022 |
| No | 16.98% | 209 |
| Total | 100% | 1231 |

Almost 83 percent of respondents report having visited www.cob.org. This question and the following question (online visitation frequency) are the only questions in the survey that are significantly affected by survey method; of respondents who took the survey by phone (as opposed to online), only 59 percent have ever visited www.cob.org.



Demographic Influence

Historical rates of COB website visitation vary from year to year. This may be a result of survey methodology – in 2008, the survey was administered solely by phone, the 2010 survey introduced an online response option (80 percent of responses) in addition to phone responses (20 percent), the 2013 survey offered online (59 percent) and phone (41 percent) options. 2016's survey was taken predominantly online: 94 percent online responses and 6 percent phone responses. This survey 97 percent of responses were taken online, with only 3 percent being taken on the phone. Of the responses taken **by phone**, only 59 percent reported having ever visited the COB website. Respondents who choose to take the survey by phone most likely have different computer habits than those who chose to take the survey online, which could account for the variation in responses to this question.

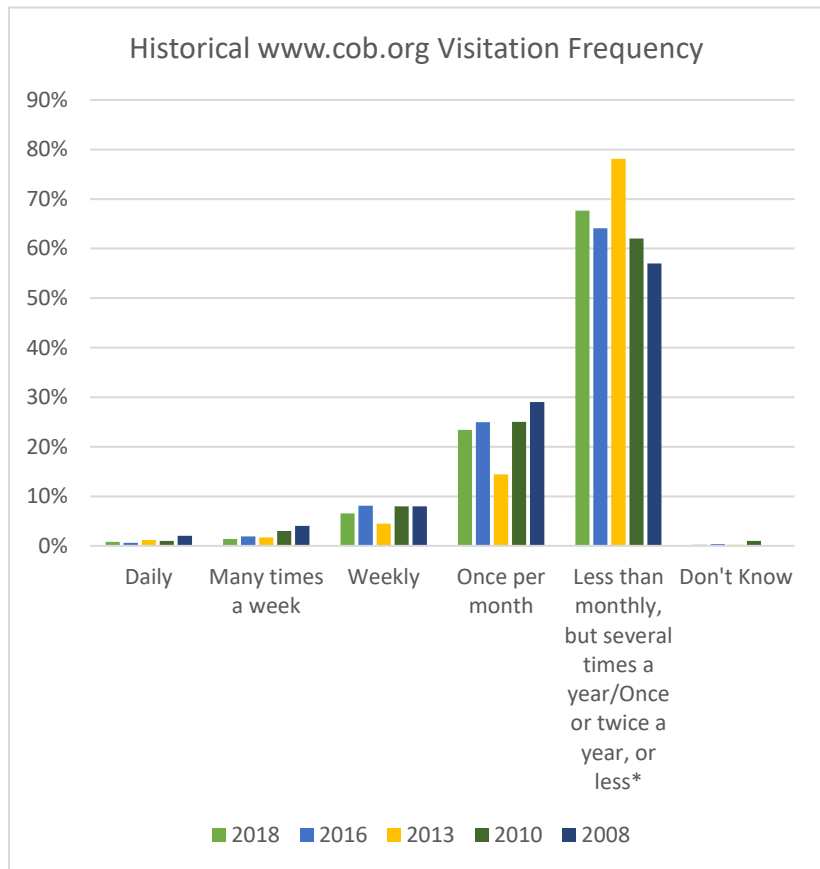
COB Website Viewing Frequency

Q: How often do you visit www.cob.org?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--|--------------|-------|
| Daily | 0.78% | 8 |
| Many times a week | 1.37% | 14 |
| Weekly | 6.56% | 67 |
| Once per month | 23.41% | 239 |
| Less than monthly, but several times a year | 41.23% | 421 |
| Once or twice a year, or less | 26.44% | 270 |
| Don't Know | 0.20% | 2 |
| Total | 100% | 1021 |

Of respondents who report having visited the COB website in the previous question, almost 32 percent report visiting *at least* once per month (*Daily, Many times a week, Weekly, or Once per month*), and 68 percent report visiting occasionally during the year (*Less than monthly, but several times a year, or Once or twice a year, or less*).

Of those who have visited the COB website, the rate of regular visitation (*Daily, Many times a week, Weekly, or Once per month*) has generally been decreasing over time, and the rate of occasional visitation (*Less than monthly, but several times a year, or Once or twice a year, or less*) has generally been increasing.



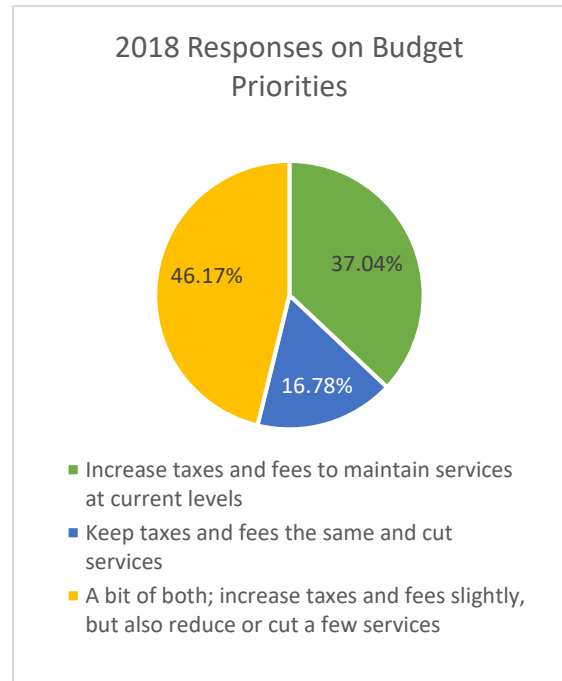
Budget

The following questions ask residents to put themselves in the shoes of City leaders, and choose priorities for the future City budget.

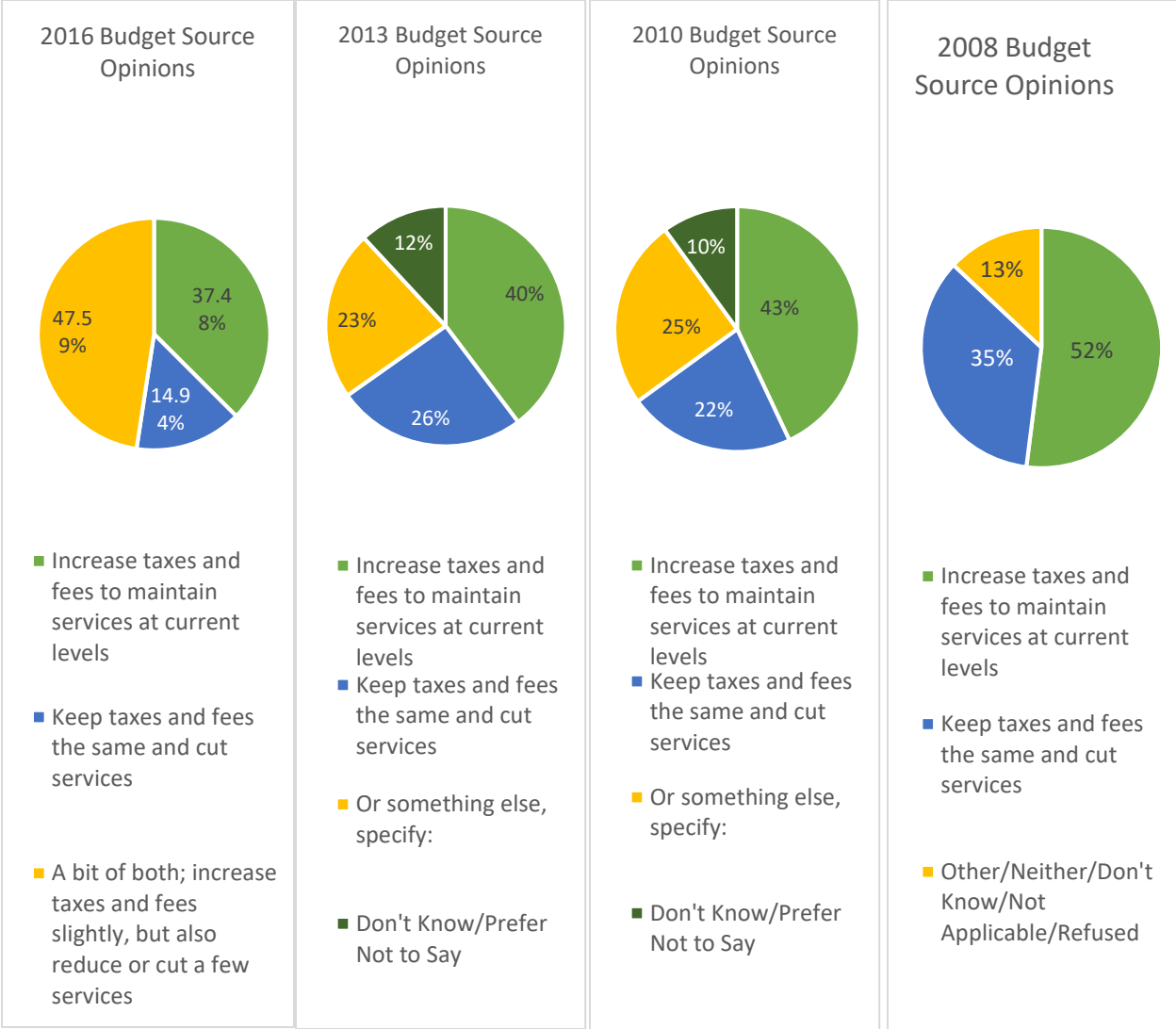
Budget Priorities

Q: City leaders must carefully choose budget priorities. If you had to choose only one, which of the following would you choose for the City?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Increase taxes and fees to maintain services at current levels | 37.04% | 426 |
| Keep taxes and fees the same and cut services | 16.78% | 193 |
| A bit of both; increase taxes and fees slightly, but also reduce or cut a few services | 46.17% | 531 |
| Total | 100% | 1150 |



Concerning budget priorities, almost half (46 percent) of respondents would prefer a combination of increasing taxes/fees and reducing services. 37 percent would prefer to increase taxes/fees and keep services at current levels, and 17 percent would prefer to reduce services and keep taxes/fees the same.



Historically, it should be noted that this question varies in methodology, making it difficult to draw comparisons between survey results. However, it can be seen that in **every** year, respondents prefer to *Increase taxes and fees to maintain services at current levels* over *Keep taxes and fees the same and cut services*.

Tax or Fee Preference

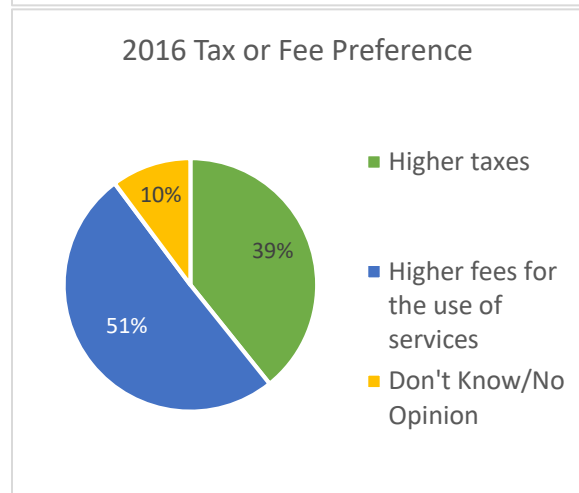
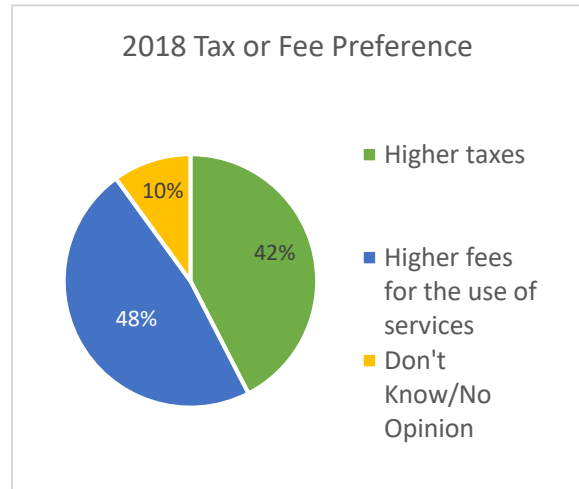
Q: What would you be more likely to support?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Higher taxes | 42.42% | 403 |
| Higher fees for the use of services | 47.58% | 452 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 10.00% | 95 |
| Total | 100% | 950 |

Only respondents who selected *Increase taxes and fees to maintain services at current levels* or *A bit of both* in the previous question (902 respondents total) were asked this question.

44 percent of these respondents would be more likely to support *Higher taxes*, and 47 percent would be more likely to prefer *Higher fees for the use of services*.

This is the second year that the survey has asked this question – the percentage of respondents who would prefer “*Higher taxes*” increased from 39 percent in 2016 to 42 percent in 2018. The percentage of *Don't Know/No Opinion* responses have been steady at 10 percent in both 2016 and 2018.



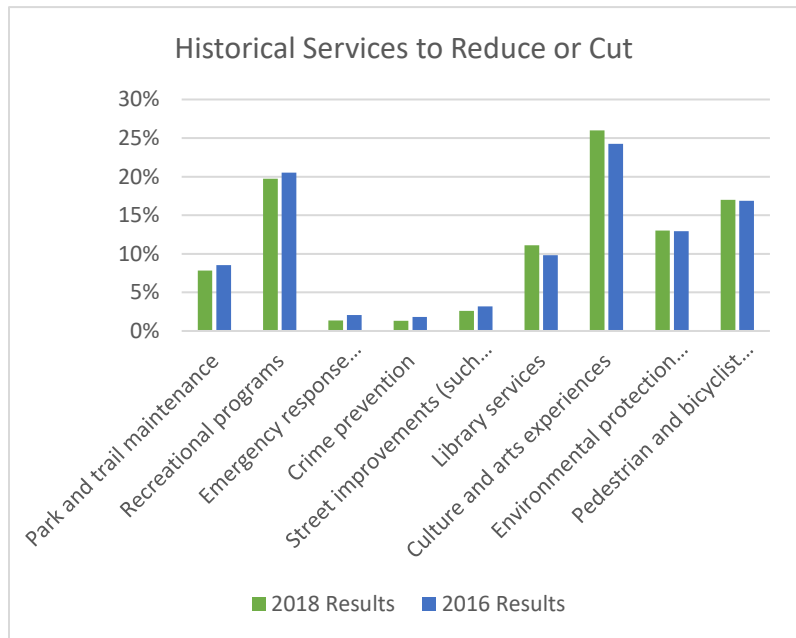
Services to Reduce or Cut

Q: What services would you reduce or cut? Select all that apply

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Park and trail maintenance | 7.85% | 126 |
| Recreational programs | 19.75% | 317 |
| Emergency response services (such as fire, police, EMS) | 1.37% | 22 |
| Crime prevention | 1.31% | 21 |
| Street improvements (such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights) | 2.62% | 42 |
| Library services | 11.09% | 178 |
| Culture and arts experiences | 25.98% | 417 |
| Environmental protection efforts | 13.02% | 209 |
| Pedestrian and bicyclist safety (such as sidewalks or bike lanes) | 17.01% | 273 |
| Total | 100% | 1605 |

Only respondents who answered that they would prefer to either *Keep taxes and fees the same and cut services* or *A bit of both* in the budget priorities question (724 respondents total) were asked this question. They are able to select all that apply, so the total response count exceeds the number of respondents.

Many responded that they would reduce the following services: *Culture and arts experiences* (416 responses), *Recreational Programs* (308 responses), or *Pedestrian and bicyclist safety* (273 responses).



Few indicated that they would reduce the following services: *Emergency response services* (22 responses), *Crime prevention* (21 responses), and *Street improvements* (42 responses).

This is the second year that the survey has asked this question. Responses have remained steady from 2016 to 2018, with ratings fluctuating less than two percentage points in all categories.

Service Priorities

Q: As a community member, how would you prioritize the following services? Please drag and drop the answers below into a rank order, from your top priority to your lowest priority.

This question asks all respondents to rate the following services that rely on taxpayer dollars, from most to least important:

- Park and trail maintenance
- Recreational programs
- Emergency response services
- Crime prevention
- Street improvements
- Library services
- Culture and arts experiences
- Environmental protection efforts
- Pedestrian and bicyclist safety

Respondents feel the most important services that rely on taxpayer dollars are:

1. Emergency response services (30 percent rated #1)
2. Crime prevention (29 percent rated #1)
3. Environmental Protection Efforts (17 percent rated #1)

The least important services that rely on taxpayer dollars, according to respondents, are:

1. Culture and arts experiences (27 percent rated last)
2. Recreational programs (16 percent rated last)
3. Library Services (14 percent rated last)

These results correspond to the results of the previous question, which asked **only** people who preferred at least some service cuts in replace of tax or fee increases to identify service priorities. This question is available to all respondents, and results show that service priorities are similar among all groups of respondents.

Environmental Actions

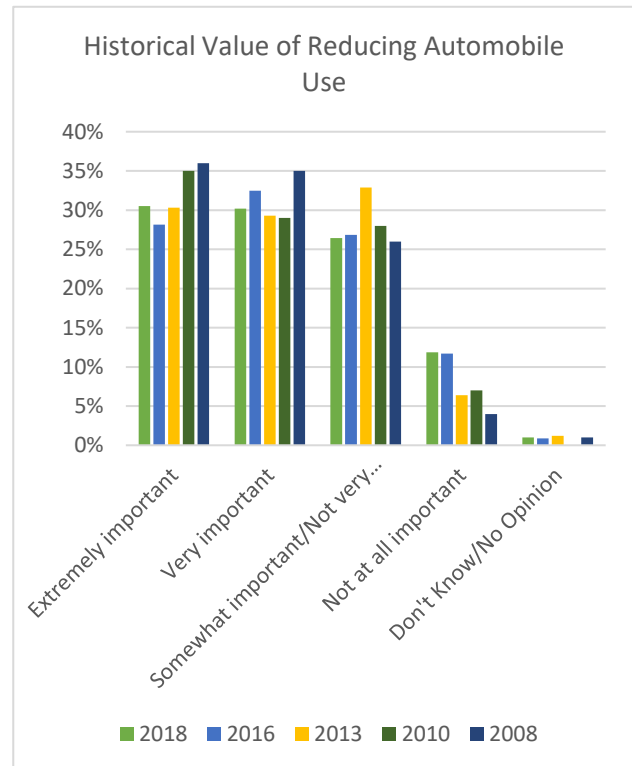
The following questions ask respondents to report the importance of current environmental actions the City is taking. The questions in this section are presented in a randomized order to eliminate possible bias.

Importance of Reducing Automobile Use

Q: Tell us how important this action is to you: Reducing automobile trips by improving public transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely important | 30.53% | 374 |
| Very important | 30.20% | 370 |
| Somewhat important | 26.45% | 324 |
| Not at all important | 11.84% | 145 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 0.98% | 12 |
| Total | 100% | 1225 |

61 percent of respondents think it is *Extremely* (31 percent) or *Very* (30 percent) *important* for the City to reduce automobile trips by improving public transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices. Only 12 percent of respondents consider this action to be *Not at all important*.



Historically, reducing automobile use has become less important to respondents. The rate of *Extremely important* responses has decreased from 36 percent (2008) to 31 percent (2018), and the rate of *Not at all important* responses has increased from 4 percent (2008) to 12 percent (2018).

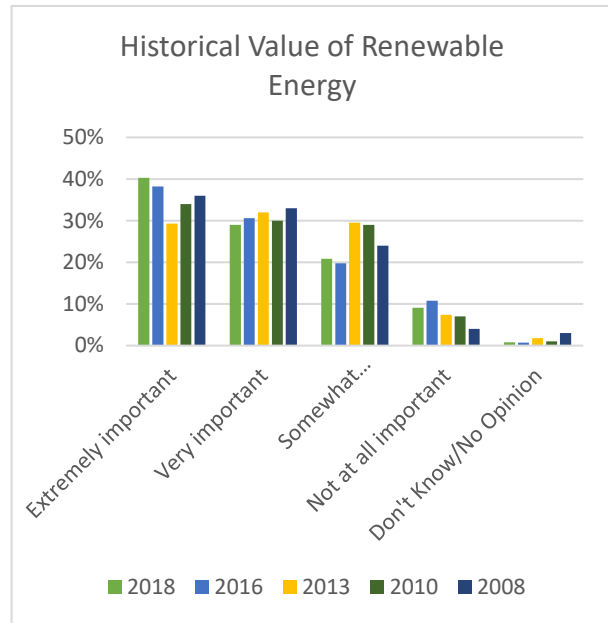
One possible explanation for this trend, although outside the scope of this study, is that past success with trip reduction, both real and perceived, has led fewer people to believe that it remains a high priority focus.

Importance of Renewable Energy

Q: Tell us how important this action is to you: Promoting the use of renewable energy such as green and solar power...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely important | 40.33% | 494 |
| Very important | 28.98% | 355 |
| Somewhat important | 20.82% | 255 |
| Not at all important | 9.06% | 111 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 0.82% | 10 |
| Total | 100% | 1225 |

70 percent of respondents think it is *Extremely* (40 percent) or *Very* (30 percent) *important* for the City to promote the use of renewable energy, such as green and solar power. 9 percent of respondents consider promoting renewable energy use to be *Not at all important*.

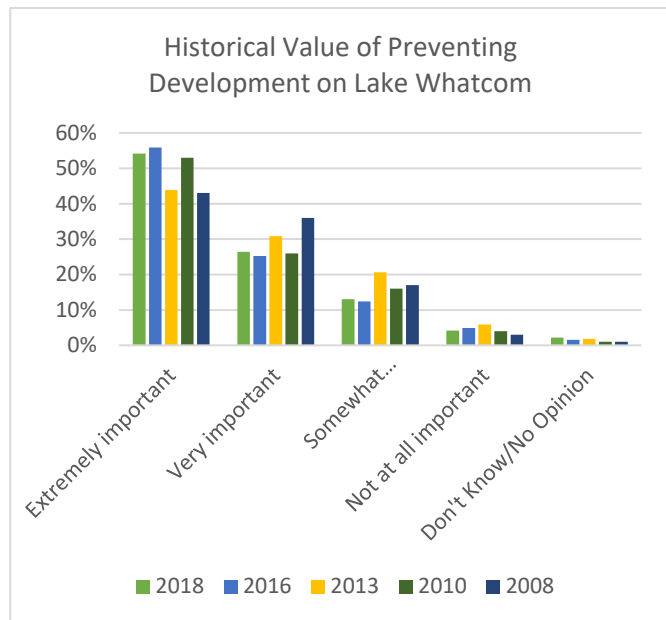


Between 2008 and 2013, the historical trend indicates that promoting renewable energy had been becoming less important to respondents as an environmental action (decreasing rates of *Extremely important*, increasing rates of *Not at all important*). Instead of following that trend this survey, respondents seem to be polarizing their opinions about the importance of renewable energy – there is an increase in the rate of responses for both *Extremely important* and *Not at all important*, and a decrease in the rate of *Somewhat important/Not very important** responses.

Lake Whatcom Watershed

Q: Tell us how important this action is to you: Preventing further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed, Bellingham's primary source of drinking water...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely important | 54.17% | 663 |
| Very important | 26.39% | 323 |
| Somewhat important | 13.07% | 160 |
| Not at all important | 4.17% | 51 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 2.21% | 27 |
| Total | 100% | 1224 |



A distinguished majority of respondents (81 percent) think it is *Extremely* or *Very important* for the City to prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed – more than half (54 percent) rate this environmental protection action as *Extremely important*, and a quarter (27 percent) rate it as *Very important*. Only 4 percent of respondents think this action is *Not at all important*.

The historical results concerning the importance of preventing further development on Lake Whatcom show that this survey's results are similar to results from 2010, and 2016. Compared to 2013, current respondents find preventing Lake Whatcom development to be more important – positive responses (*Extremely* or *Very important*) increased from 75 percent (2013) to 80 percent (2016), and negative responses (*Somewhat important/Not very important* or Not at all important*) decreased from 27 percent (2013) to 17 percent (2016).

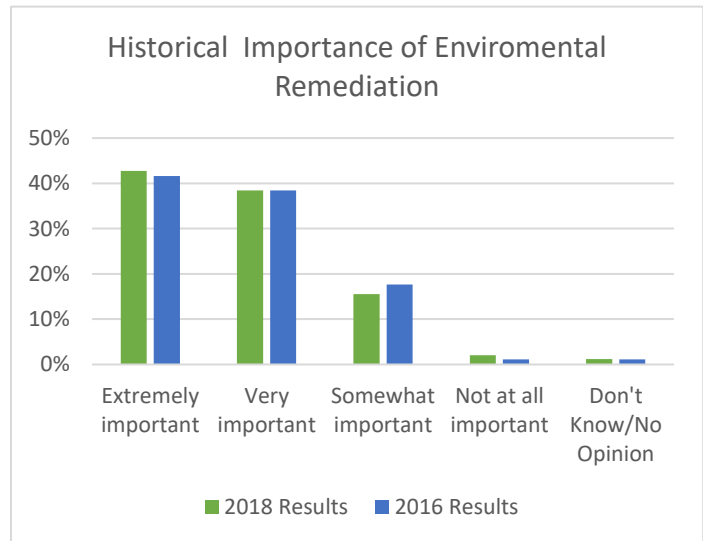
Neighborhood Influence

63 percent of respondents from Silver Beach, and 76 percent of respondents from Barkley, think it is either *Extremely* or *Very important* for the City to prevent further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed (compared to 80 percent of all respondents).

Environmental Remediation

Q: Tell us how important this action is to you: Environmental remediation and cleanup of contaminated sites...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely important | 42.76% | 523 |
| Very important | 38.43% | 470 |
| Somewhat important | 15.54% | 190 |
| Not at all important | 2.04% | 25 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 1.23% | 15 |
| Total | 100% | 1223 |



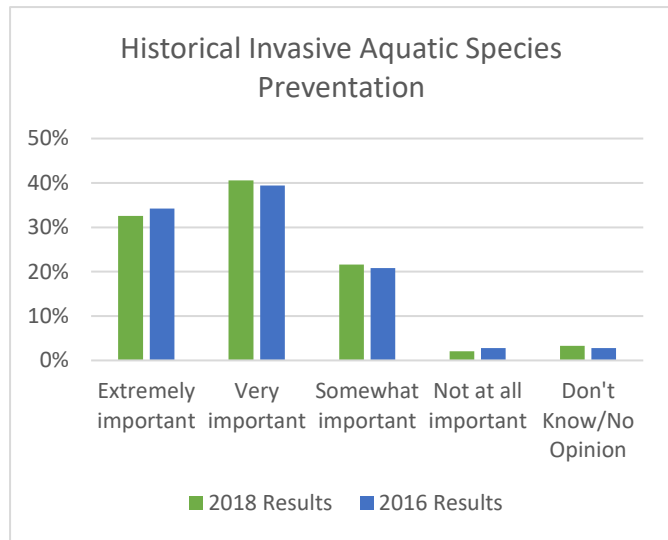
82 percent of respondents think that it is *Extremely* (42 percent) or *Very* (40 percent) *important* for the City to conduct environmental remediation and cleanup of contaminated sites. Only 2 percent of respondents believe that this environmental protection action is *Not at all important*.

This is the second year that the survey has asked this question – the number of *Extremely important* and *Not at all important* responses both saw small increases compared to 2016, indicating that the community may be seeing increased polarization on the issue of environmental remediation.

Preventing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

Q: Tell us how important this action is to you: Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely important | 32.54% | 398 |
| Very important | 40.56% | 496 |
| Somewhat important | 21.59% | 264 |
| Not at all important | 2.04% | 25 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 3.27% | 40 |
| Total | 100% | 1223 |



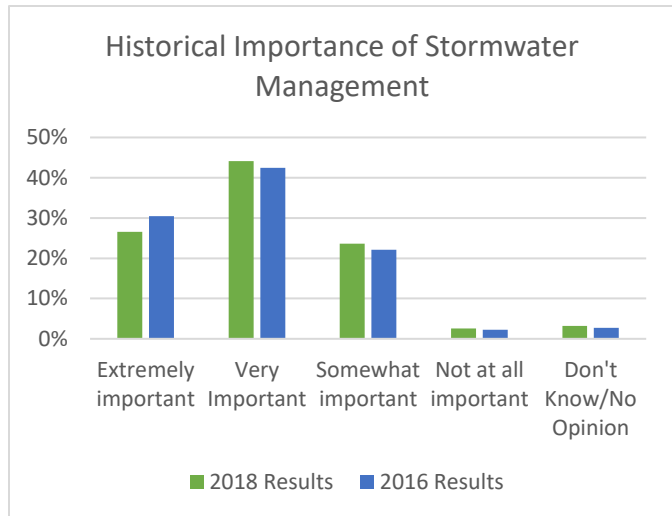
73 percent of respondents think that it is *Extremely* (32 percent) or *Very* (41 percent) *important* for the City to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Only 2 percent of respondents believe that this environmental protection action is *Not at all important*.

This is the second year that the survey has asked this question – The number of *Very* and *Somewhat important* responses saw a small increase, indicating that the community is moderating on their views of preventing the spread of invasive aquatic species.

Stormwater Management

Q: Tell us how important this action is to you: Stormwater management...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely important | 26.55% | 325 |
| Very Important | 44.12% | 540 |
| Somewhat important | 23.61% | 289 |
| Not at all important | 2.53% | 31 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 3.19% | 39 |
| Total | 100% | 1224 |



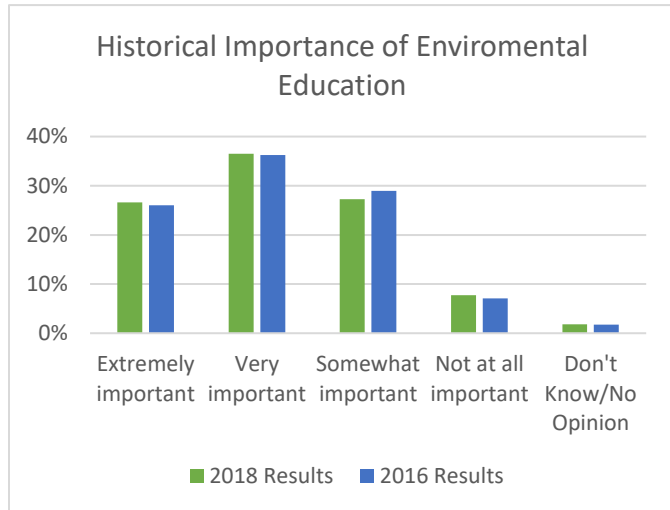
73 percent of respondents think that it is *Extremely* (32 percent) or *Very* (41 percent) *important* for the City to manage storm water. Only 2 percent of respondents believe that this environmental protection action is *Not at all important*.

This is the second year that the survey has asked this question – the number of *Extremely important* responses saw a decrease compared to 2016, while the number of *Very* and *Somewhat important* responses have seen increases when compared to 2016. This indicates that the community is viewing storm water management in 2018 as less important than they did in 2016.

Environmental Stewardship Education

Q: Tell us how important this action is to you: Educating community members to foster environmental stewardship...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely important | 26.63% | 326 |
| Very important | 36.52% | 447 |
| Somewhat important | 27.29% | 334 |
| Not at all important | 7.76% | 95 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 1.80% | 22 |
| Total | 100% | 1224 |



63 percent of respondents think that it is *Extremely* (25 percent) or *Very* (38 percent) *important* for the City to educate community members in order to foster environmental stewardship. 8 percent of respondents believe environmental education is *Not at all important*.

This is the second year that the survey has asked this question – the community’s view on the importance of environmental education has remained relatively stable between 2016 and 2018.

Additional Environmental Action Ideas

Q: Are there any other measures you think the City should be taking to protect the environment?

This is an open-ended question requiring a text entry from respondents. The following table contains a count of topics that are mentioned. One response may contain multiple topic tags, so total count of topics exceeds total responses. To view the full text responses see appendix.

| Count | Answer Category |
|-------|--|
| 42 | Protect natural areas |
| 42 | Improve recycling and composting programs |
| 39 | Protect Lake Whatcom/Watershed |
| 34 | Encourage non-car use (Public transportation, biking, walking) |
| 29 | Do not address environmental issues |
| 23 | Address homelessness |
| 20 | Educate citizens |
| 19 | Create/utilize clean energy opportunities |
| 16 | Create incentives for greener business practices |
| 16 | Improve roads and infrastructure |
| 15 | Raise density (will lower driving, etc.) |
| 13 | Address climate change |
| 12 | Storm water treatment and storage |
| 12 | Banning environmentally hazardous products (e.g. Styrofoam and plastic containers) |
| 12 | Develop the waterfront with the environment in mind |
| 11 | The City needs to make more informed decisions regarding the environment |
| 11 | Reduce mismanaged pet and livestock waste |
| 10 | Increase community participation in environmental projects |
| 9 | Do not allow coal or oil trains passage through Bellingham |
| 9 | Reduce land development |
| 9 | Hold polluters accountable |
| 9 | Tax high emission vehicles |
| 8 | Energy conservation in households |
| 8 | Decrease noise / light pollution |
| 8 | Teach environmental stewardship in public schools |

Community Safety

The following questions ask respondents to rate their feelings of safety when walking alone in different areas of the community, as well as their level of disaster preparedness.

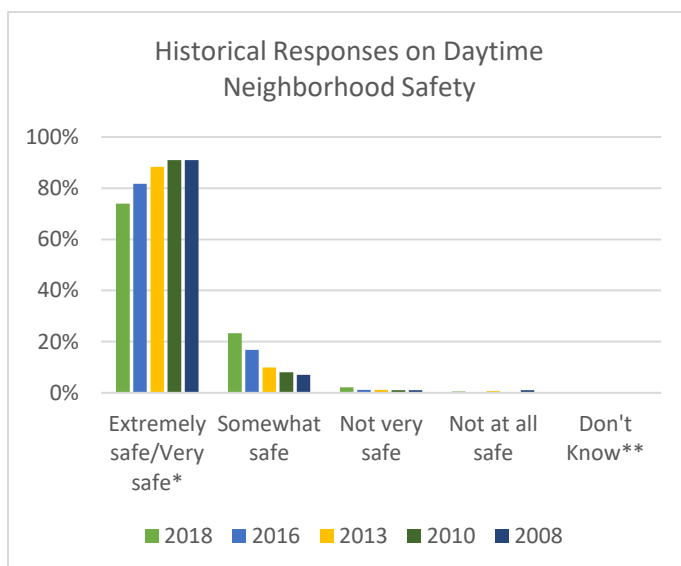
*Historical comparisons are difficult to make, because starting in the year 2016, the survey only offered four levels of safety as options: *Extremely safe*, *Somewhat safe*, *Not very safe*, and *Not at all safe*. Previous surveys included a fifth option of *Very safe*, which has been included with the *Extremely safe* section in our historical analysis figures. For this reason, each historical analysis shows a lower proportion of respondents feeling *Extremely safe* compared to other years, most likely because those who previously chose *Very safe* would have been divided between *Extremely* and *Somewhat safe* when faced with only four options. For this reason, explanations of historical analysis figures are excluded.

Daytime Neighborhood Safety

Q: How safe do you feel walking alone during the day in your neighborhood?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely safe | 73.94% | 905 |
| Somewhat safe | 23.28% | 285 |
| Not very safe | 2.21% | 27 |
| Not at all safe | 0.57% | 7 |
| Total | 100% | 1224 |

Most (73 percent) respondents feel *Extremely safe* walking alone during the day in their neighborhood. Just over 2 percent of respondents feel unsafe in their neighborhoods during the day (*Not very safe* or *Not at all safe*).



Neighborhood Influence

Respondents in some neighborhoods feel safer walking alone during the day than respondents in other neighborhoods. Edgemoor, Fairhaven, and Silver Beach neighborhoods feel safer than average during the day. The York, King Mountain, and Roosevelt neighborhoods feel less safe than average during the day.

Demographic Influence

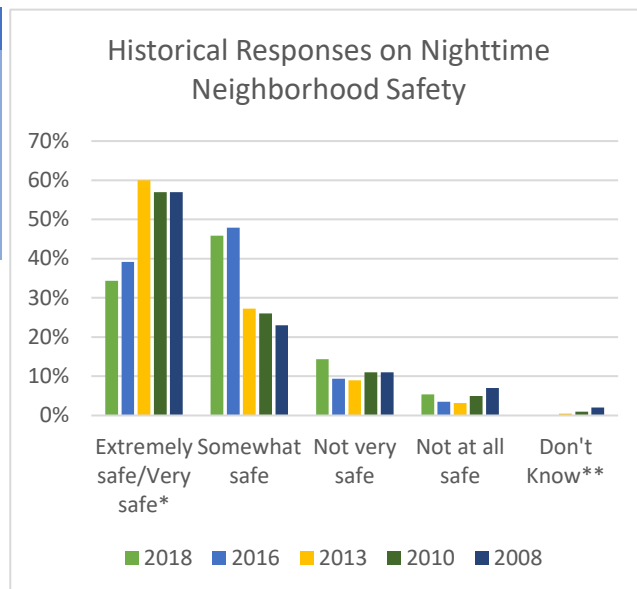
Gender does not affect overall feelings of safety walking alone during the day in neighborhoods. Younger respondents report feeling slightly less safe than average during the day in their neighborhoods. Roughly 52 percent of those age 18-24 and 68 percent of those age 25-29 report feeling *Extremely Safe* (compared to an overall average of 74 percent).

Nighttime Neighborhood Safety

Q: How safe do you feel walking alone at night in your neighborhood?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely safe | 34.33% | 415 |
| Somewhat safe | 45.91% | 555 |
| Not very safe | 14.39% | 174 |
| Not at all safe | 5.38% | 65 |
| Total | 100% | 1209 |

Most respondents feel at least *Somewhat safe* (46 percent), if not *Extremely safe* (34 percent) when walking alone at night in their neighborhood. 20 percent feel unsafe alone at night in their neighborhood (*Not very safe* or *Not at all safe*).



Neighborhood Influence

Respondents in some neighborhoods feel safer walking alone at night than respondents in other neighborhoods. Edgemoor, Fairhaven, and South Hill neighborhoods feel safer than average at night. The City Center, Birchwood, Cordata, King Mountain, Roosevelt, and York neighborhoods feel less safe than average at night.

Demographic Influence

Women feel less safe than men when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night. 48 percent of men report feeling *Extremely safe*, and 11 percent of men feel unsafe (*Not very safe* or *Not safe at all*). Only 23 percent of women feel *Extremely safe* walking alone in their neighborhoods at night, and 27 percent of women feel unsafe (*Not very safe* or *Not safe at all*).

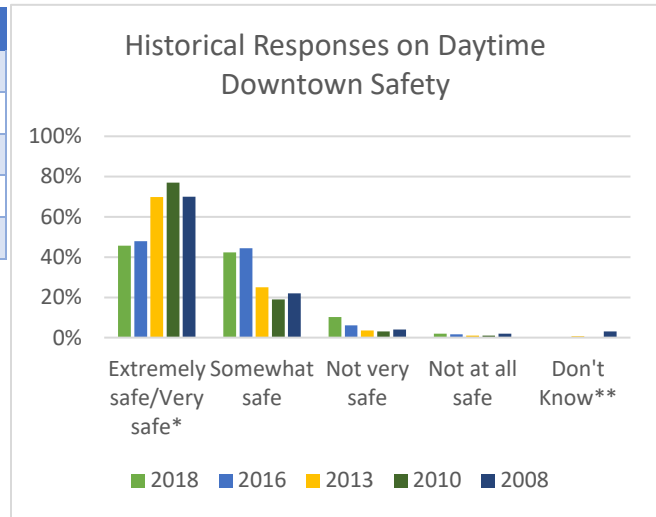
Young respondents (under age 30) feel less safe walking alone in their neighborhoods at night. Of respondents age 18-24, only 24 percent report feeling *Extremely safe*, and 52 percent feel unsafe at night in their neighborhoods (*Not very safe* or *Not safe at all*). Of respondents age 25-29, only 15 percent report feeling *Extremely safe*, and 29 percent feel unsafe at night in their neighborhoods (*Not very safe* or *Not safe at all*).

Daytime Downtown Safety

Q: How safe do you feel walking alone downtown during the day?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely safe | 45.66% | 553 |
| Somewhat safe | 42.28% | 512 |
| Not very safe | 10.16% | 123 |
| Not at all safe | 1.90% | 23 |
| Total | 100% | 1211 |

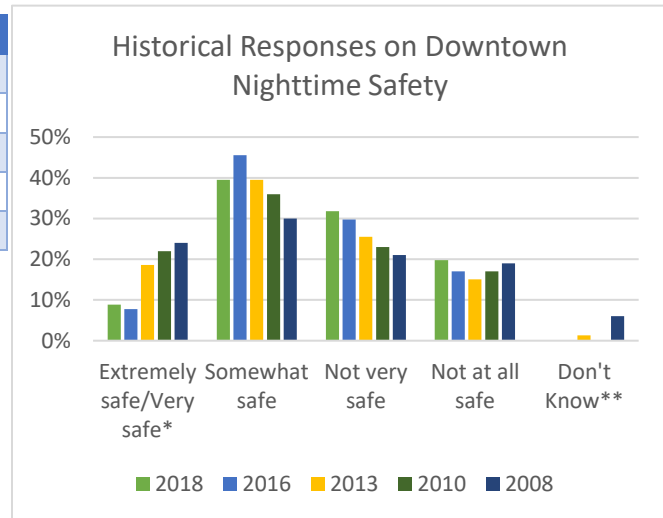
Most respondents feel either *Extremely safe* (46 percent) or *Somewhat safe* (42 percent) walking alone downtown during the day. 12 percent of respondents feel unsafe alone downtown during the day (*Not very safe* or *Not at all safe*). Age and gender do not affect general feelings of safety walking alone downtown during the day.



Nighttime Downtown Safety

Q: How safe do you feel walking alone downtown at night?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Extremely safe | 8.85% | 105 |
| Somewhat safe | 39.54% | 469 |
| Not very safe | 31.79% | 377 |
| Not at all safe | 19.81% | 235 |
| Total | 100% | 1186 |



Only 9 percent of respondents report feeling *Extremely safe* walking alone downtown at night. While 40 percent do feel *Somewhat safe*, 32 percent feel *Not very safe*, and 20 percent feel *Not at all safe* walking alone downtown at night.

Demographic Influences

Women feel less safe than men when walking alone downtown at night. When walking alone downtown at night, 14 percent of men feel *Extremely safe*, 45 percent feel *Somewhat safe*, 28 percent feel *Not very safe*, and 13 percent feel *Not at all safe*. Concerning women, 6 percent feel *Extremely safe*, 35 percent feel *Somewhat safe*, 36 percent feel *Not very safe*, and 24 percent feel *Not at all safe* when walking alone downtown at night.

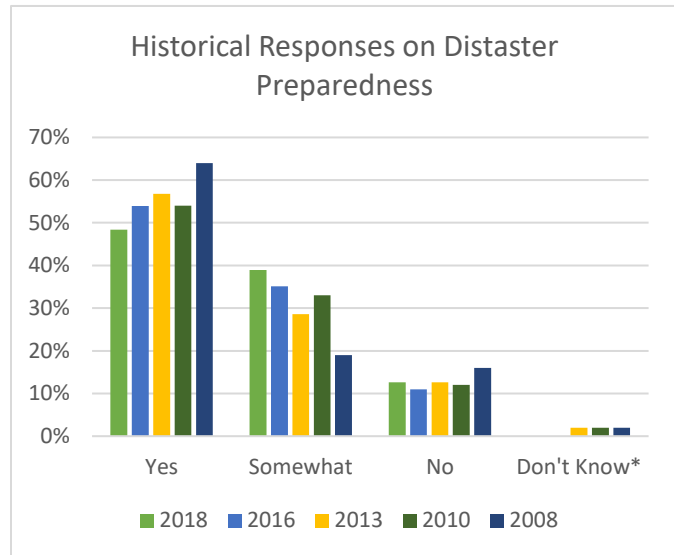
Age does not affect overall feelings of safety walking alone at night downtown, a contrast from 2016, which showed those under the age of 30 feeling significantly safer than average.

Disaster Preparedness

Q: When thinking about your household, would you say you are prepared to sustain yourselves for at least 72 hours after a major disaster?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|-----------------|--------------|-------|
| Yes | 48.40% | 590 |
| Somewhat | 38.97% | 475 |
| No | 12.63% | 154 |
| Total | 100% | 1219 |

The majority of respondents report that they are at least *Somewhat* (39 percent), if not completely (48 percent) prepared to sustain their households for at least 72 hours after a major disaster. 13 percent of respondents don't believe they could sustain their households for 72 hours in a time of crisis.



Since 2008, levels of complete preparedness (*Yes*) and complete unpreparedness (*No*) have decreased, while levels of partial preparedness (*Somewhat*) have increased.

Demographic Influence

Young residents are less likely to be completely prepared to sustain their households after a major disaster than older residents – only 29 percent of respondents under age 35 are completely prepared (*Yes*), and 26 percent are completely unprepared (*No*).

Mobility and Connectivity

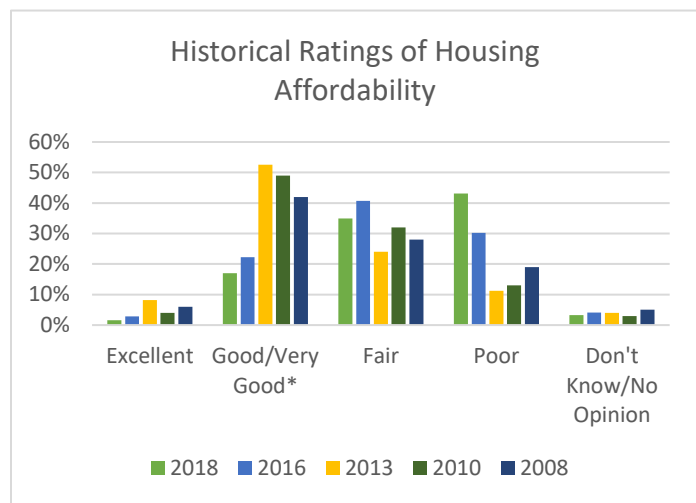
The following questions are designed to get a better picture of the quality of life in Bellingham neighborhoods. Respondents rate each of the following subjects in reference to their own neighborhood. The questions in this section were presented in a randomized order to eliminate possible bias.

*It should be noted that this year’s survey only has four rating options: *Excellent*, *Good*, *Fair*, and *Poor*. Previous surveys have had five options: *Excellent*, *Very good*, *Good*, *Fair*, and *Poor*. Historical analysis combines previous ratings of *Very good* and *Good* into one category. Explanations of historical analysis observe the trends in the total of all positive responses (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**), and the total of all negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*).

Housing Affordability

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Housing affordability...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 1.63% | 20 |
| Good | 17.05% | 209 |
| Fair | 34.91% | 428 |
| Poor | 43.15% | 529 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 3.26% | 40 |
| Total | 100% | 1226 |



Only 19 percent of respondents give their neighborhoods’ housing affordability a positive rating – 2 percent give an *Excellent* rating, and 17 percent give a *Good* rating. 35 percent of respondents rate housing affordability as *Fair*, and more than 43 percent rate it as *Poor*.

This survey’s responses regarding housing affordability are significantly more negative than previous results, especially those before 2013. Just in the past few years, positive housing affordability ratings (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**) have decreased from 61 percent (2013) to 19 percent (2018), and negative housing affordability ratings (*Fair* or *Poor*) have increased from 35 percent (2013) to 78 percent (2018). On the surface this appears to be following the trend of housing prices and months inventory available.

Neighborhood Influence

Respondents from Meridian and Cordata neighborhoods report housing affordability to be much more positive than the city average, while Lettered Streets neighborhood respondents view housing affordability more negatively than the city average.

State Trends in Housing Affordability

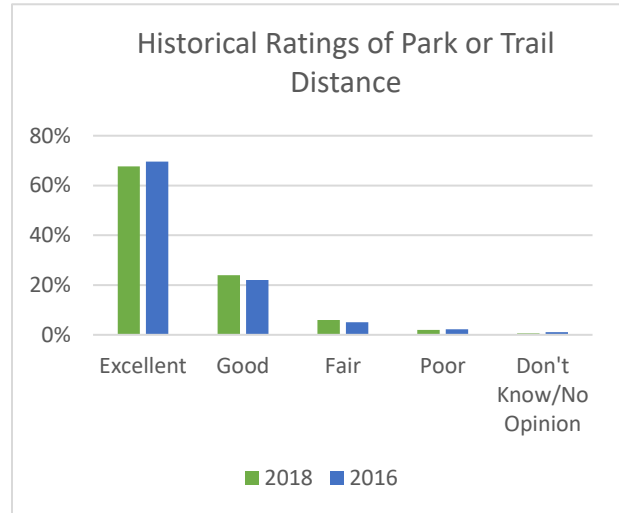
Bellingham is not alone – the decline in housing affordability is reflected throughout the state. In Washington State, median sales price rose to \$373,400 in the Second Quarter of 2018, a 10.6 percent

increase from a year before. In Whatcom County, median sales price sits at \$385,000, a 12.1 percent increase from the previous year according to the Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies at the University of Washington.

Park or Trail Distance

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Walking distance to a park or trail...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 67.62% | 829 |
| Good | 23.90% | 293 |
| Fair | 5.95% | 73 |
| Poor | 1.96% | 24 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 0.57% | 7 |
| Total | 100% | 1226 |



Most respondents (92 percent) rate the walking distance to a park or trail in their neighborhood positively – 68 percent rate park or trail distance as *Excellent*, and 24 percent rate *Good*. Only 8 percent of respondents rated their neighborhood’s walking distance to a park or trail negatively (*Fair* or *Poor*).

This is the second year that the survey has asked this question – the 2018 responses are slightly more neutral (*Good* or *Fair*) than in 2016.

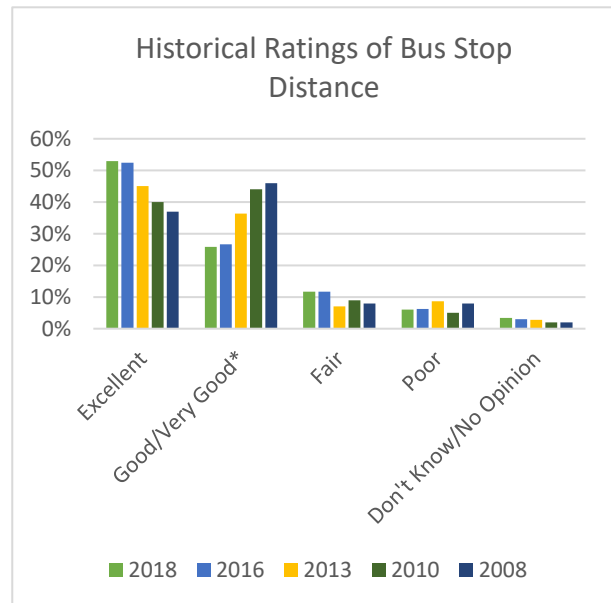
Neighborhood Influence

Respondents from Alabama Hill, Barkley, Cornwall Park, and Whatcom Falls neighborhoods report walking distance to a park or trail as more positive than the city average. On the other hand, respondents from Cordata and King Mountain neighborhoods report walking distance to a park or trail as more negative than the city average.

Bus Stop Distance

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Walking distance to a bus stop...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 52.98% | 649 |
| Good | 25.88% | 317 |
| Fair | 11.67% | 143 |
| Poor | 6.04% | 74 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 3.43% | 42 |
| Total | 100% | 1225 |



Most respondents (79 percent) rate the walking distance to a bus stop in their neighborhood positively – 53 percent rate bus stop distance as *Excellent*, and 26 percent rate *Good*. 17 percent of respondents rated their neighborhood’s walking distance to a bus stop negatively (*Fair* or *Poor*).

Historically, total positive responses (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**) and negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) considering bus stop distance have been relatively stable since 2008.

Neighborhood Influence

Responses concerning walking distance to a bus stop vary significantly by neighborhood.

Neighborhoods whose responses are more positive than the city average include: Columbia, Cornwall Park, Fairhaven, Happy Valley, Lettered Streets, Sunnyland, and York. Neighborhoods whose responses are more negative than the city average include: Alabama Hill, Barkley, Irongate, King Mountain, Meridian, Silver Beach, and South.

Shopping Access

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Access to shopping, or other services

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 41.62% | 509 |
| Good | 41.62% | 509 |
| Fair | 13.25% | 162 |
| Poor | 2.86% | 35 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 0.65% | 8 |
| Total | 100% | 1223 |



Most respondents (83 percent) rate access to shopping or other services in their neighborhood positively – 42 percent rate shopping access as *Excellent*, and 42 percent rate *Good*. 13 percent of respondents rated their shopping access negatively as *Fair*, and 3 percent gave a *Poor* rating.

Historically, total positive responses (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**) and negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) about shopping access have been relatively stable since 2008.

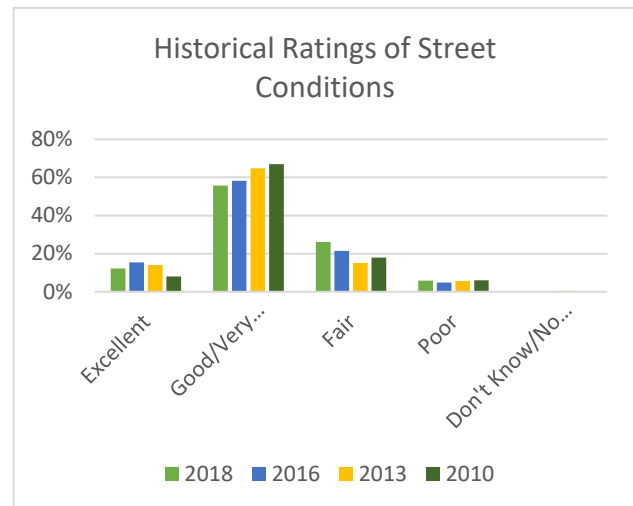
Neighborhood Influence

Respondents from Cornwall Park, Meridian, Sunnyland, and York neighborhoods report access to shopping or other services as more positive than the city average. On the other hand, respondents from Birchwood and Samish neighborhoods report access to shopping or other services as more negative than the city average.

Street Conditions

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Physical condition of streets...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 12.26% | 150 |
| Good | 55.76% | 682 |
| Fair | 26.08% | 319 |
| Poor | 5.81% | 71 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 0.08% | 1 |
| Total | 100% | 1223 |



Only 12 percent of respondents think the physical condition of the streets in their neighborhood is *Excellent*. Most respondents (56 percent) rate street conditions as *Good*, and 26 percent rate street conditions as only *Fair*. Just under 6 percent of respondents rate their neighborhood street conditions as *Poor*.

Historically, total positive responses (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**) and negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) considering street conditions have consistently declined since 2010. The 2008 survey did not include this question.

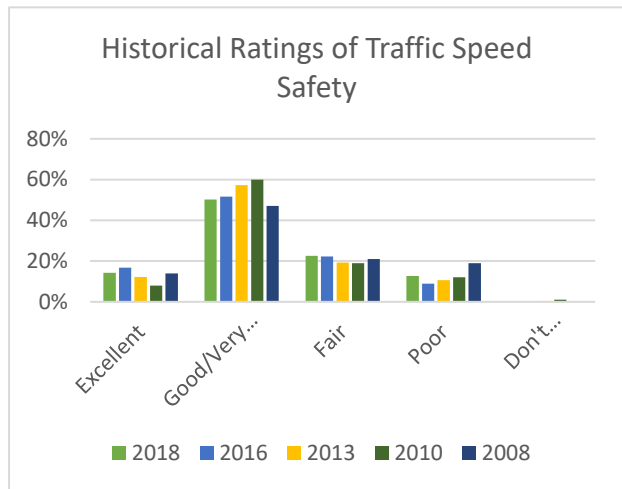
Neighborhood Influence

Respondents from Barkley, Cordata, and Meridian neighborhoods rate street conditions as slightly more positive than the city average. Respondents from Birchwood, King Mountain, and Sehome neighborhoods rate street conditions as slightly more negative than the city average.

Traffic Speed Safety

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Safety of traffic speed...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 14.27% | 174 |
| Good | 50.21% | 612 |
| Fair | 22.64% | 276 |
| Poor | 12.72% | 155 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 0.16% | 2 |
| Total | 100% | 1219 |



Only 14 percent of respondents rate the safety of traffic speed in their neighborhood as *Excellent*.

Most respondents (50 percent) rate traffic speed as *Good*, and 23 percent rate traffic speed as only *Fair*. Just under 13 percent of respondents rate the safety of traffic speed in their neighborhood as *Poor*.

This survey showed a departure from the trend that positive ratings (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**) of traffic speed safety have been steadily increasing and negative ratings (*Fair* or *Poor*) have decreased since 2008. In 2018 *Excellent* ratings fell from 17 percent (2016) to 14 percent (2018) and *Poor* ratings increased from 9 percent (2016) to 13 percent (2018).

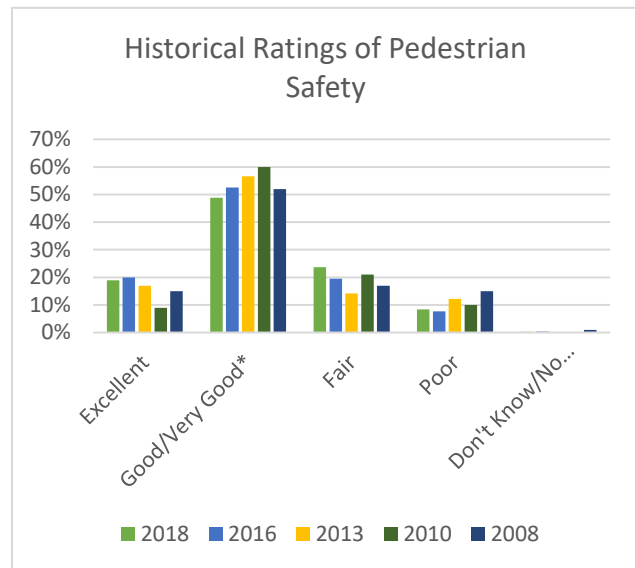
Neighborhood Influence

Respondents from the York neighborhood report that the safety of traffic speed in their neighborhood as more positive than the city average, while respondents from Sehome and Puget neighborhoods report that the safety of traffic speed in their neighborhood is more negative than the city average.

Pedestrian Safety

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Safety of pedestrians...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 18.90% | 231 |
| Good | 48.85% | 597 |
| Fair | 23.65% | 289 |
| Poor | 8.35% | 102 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 0.25% | 3 |
| Total | 100% | 1222 |



19 percent of respondents rate the safety of pedestrians in their neighborhood as *Excellent*, and 49 percent rate pedestrian safety as *Good*. 24 percent rate pedestrian safety as only *Fair*, and 8 percent give their neighborhood a rating of *Poor*.

Historically, positive ratings (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**) of pedestrian safety have been steady from around 70 percent. Negative ratings (*Fair* or *Poor*) have been steady around 30 percent.

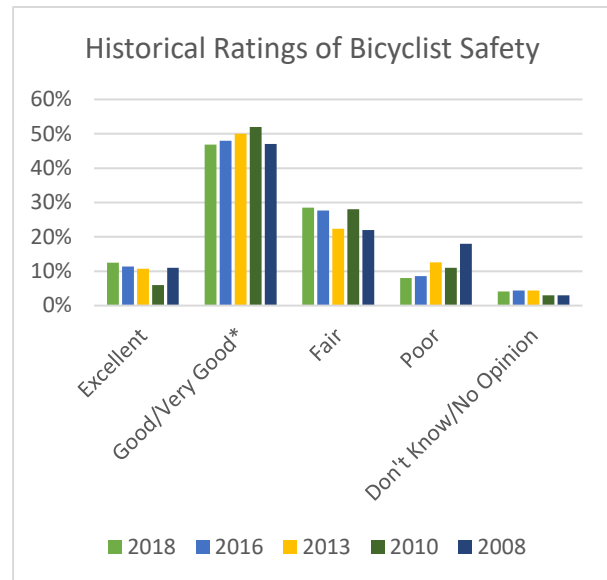
Neighborhood Influence

Respondents from Barkley, Columbia, Cordata, and Lettered Streets neighborhoods report that pedestrian safety is more positive than the city average. Respondents from Birchwood, King Mountain, Sehome, and South neighborhoods report that pedestrian safety is more negative than the city average.

Bicyclist Safety

Q: Turning to the quality of life in your own neighborhood, please share your thoughts about how you think your neighborhood is doing in the following category: Safety of bicyclists...

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Excellent | 12.51% | 153 |
| Good | 46.85% | 573 |
| Fair | 28.54% | 349 |
| Poor | 8.01% | 98 |
| Don't Know/No Opinion | 4.09% | 50 |
| Total | 100% | 1223 |



Just under 13 percent of respondents rate the safety of bicyclists in their neighborhood as *Excellent*. Many give a moderate rating for neighborhood bicyclist safety – 47 percent rate bike safety as *Good*, and 29 percent rate bike safety as only *Fair*. Almost 8 percent of respondents rate the safety of bicyclists in their neighborhood as *Poor*.

Historically, total positive responses (*Excellent*, *Good*, or *Very good**) and negative responses (*Fair* or *Poor*) about bicyclist safety have been relatively stable since 2008.

Neighborhood Influence

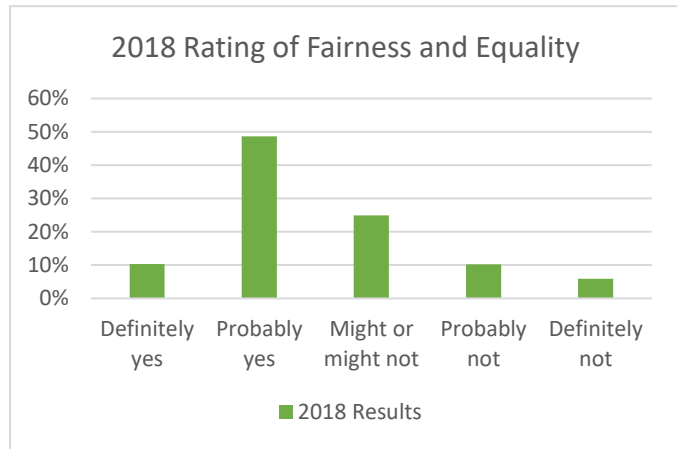
Respondents from Fairhaven and Sunnyland neighborhoods report that bicyclist safety is more positive than the city average. Respondents from Irongate, Puget, and Samish neighborhoods report that bicyclist safety is more negative than the city average.

Equity

Fair and Equal Treatment of Residents and Visitors

Q: Do you feel that the City of Bellingham treats all residents and visitors equally and fairly?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------|
| Definitely yes | 10.34% | 126 |
| Probably yes | 48.69% | 593 |
| Might or might not | 24.88% | 303 |
| Probably not | 10.18% | 124 |
| Definitely not | 5.91% | 72 |
| Total | 100% | 1218 |



59 percent of respondents rated the fairness and equality of the City of Bellingham’s treatment of residents and visitors positively (*Definitely yes* and *Probably yes*). 25 percent of respondents rated the City’s treatment as neutral (*Might or might not*). 16 percent of respondents rated the City’s treatment negatively (*Probably not* and *Definitely not*)

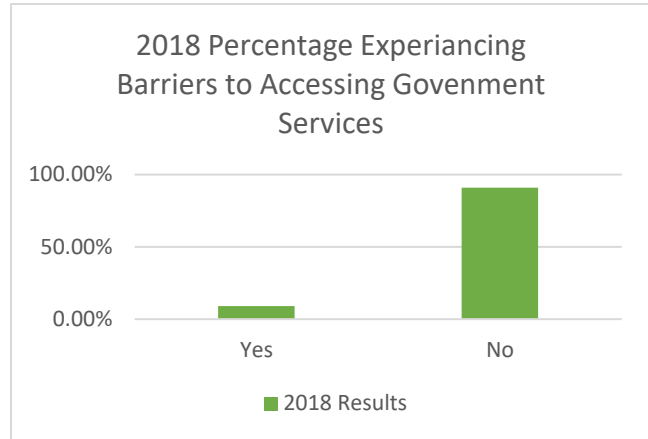
Male respondents had a more positive impression of the City’s treatment of residents and visitors, with 14 percent of males responding with *Definitely yes*, as opposed to only 7 percent of female respondents.

This is the first year that the survey has asked this question– there are no historical survey results.

Barriers to Accessing City Government Services

Q: Have you experienced any barriers to you accessing City government services?

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Yes | 8.98% | 110 |
| No | 91.02% | 1115 |
| Total | 100% | 1225 |



91 percent of respondents indicated that they had not experienced any barriers to accessing services provided by the City of Bellingham. Only 9 percent of respondents indicated that they had experienced barriers to accessing services.

Male respondents reported experiencing barriers to accessing City government services at a higher rate than female respondents. 10 percent of male respondents reported experiencing barriers as opposed to only 7 percent of female respondents.

This is the first year that the survey has asked this question— there are no historical survey results.

Barriers to Accessing City Government Services, Broken Down by Service

Those who responded *Yes* to the previous question, indicating they had experienced trouble accessing services provided by the City of Bellingham, were then asked to indicate which services they had experienced a barrier to accessing. Respondents were allowed to answer more than one service, so the total count is higher than the number of *Yes* responses. Respondents were then given the option of elaborating on the barrier they experienced in a short open text response.

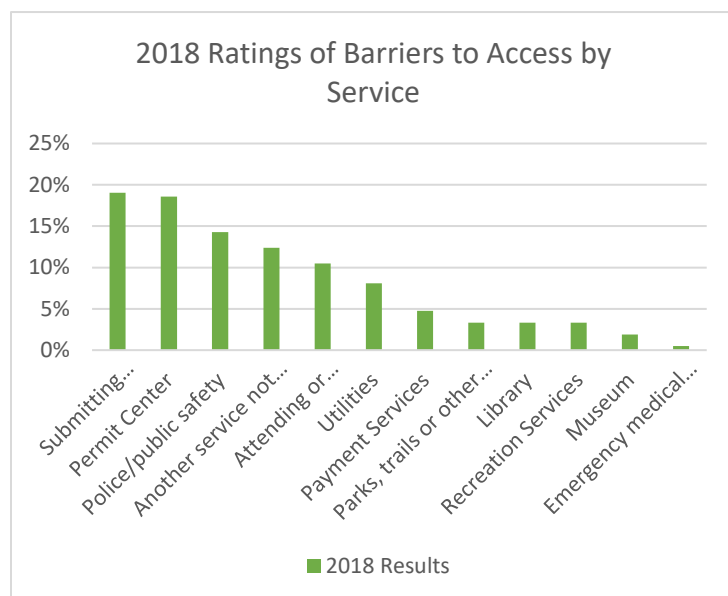
Q: You indicated that you personally have experienced barriers in accessing City government services. We are interested in understanding your experience. As you review the following list please select the box for any service(s) where you experienced a barrier to access.

| Answer | 2018 Results | Count |
|--|--------------|------------|
| Submitting complaints or feedback | 19.05% | 40 |
| Permit Center | 18.57% | 39 |
| Police/public safety | 14.29% | 30 |
| Another service not listed | 12.38% | 26 |
| Attending or receiving information from a public meeting | 10.48% | 22 |
| Utilities | 8.10% | 17 |
| Payment services | 4.76% | 10 |
| Parks, trails or other open spaces | 3.33% | 7 |
| Library | 3.33% | 7 |
| Recreation services | 3.33% | 7 |
| Museum | 1.90% | 4 |
| Emergency medical services | 0.48% | 1 |
| Total | 100% | 210 |

Respondents had the most barriers with *Submitting complaints or feedback* (19 percent), accessing the *Permit Center* (19 percent), and with *Police/public safety* (14 percent). Respondents had the least barriers to access for *Emergency medical services* (less than one percent), and the *Museum* (2 percent).

This was the first year the survey asked this question – there are no historical survey results.

Respondents had the option to elaborate on their experiences with an open text response. These responses are attached in the appendix.



Equitability of Bellingham

Q: For each of the following statements, please use the slider bar to indicate your perception of the statement with 1 representing the opinion that Bellingham is very equitable and 10 representing your opinion that Bellingham is very inequitable.

| Field | 2018 Mean | 2018 Std. Deviation | Count |
|---|-----------|---------------------|-------|
| Bellingham is a racially/culturally diverse community | 5.41 | 2.89 | 1106 |
| Bellingham is a racially/culturally integrated community | 5.48 | 2.73 | 1054 |
| Bellingham's housing options and affordability is equitable | 5.81 | 2.98 | 1081 |
| Bellingham provides adequate inclusive services for diverse sexual orientations | 4.54 | 2.87 | 935 |
| Bellingham provides adequate inclusive services for diverse gender identifications | 4.57 | 2.9 | 890 |
| Bellingham provides adequate inclusive services for diverse racial identities | 4.87 | 2.74 | 891 |
| Bellingham supports income and employment opportunities | 4.94 | 2.37 | 911 |
| Bellingham supports community celebrations and events | 4.32 | 2.93 | 1025 |
| Bellingham provides physical access to public facilities | 4.39 | 3 | 1040 |
| Bellingham provides physical access to private facilities | 4.64 | 2.49 | 774 |
| Bellingham provides the opportunity to communicate directly with City staff or elected representatives | 4.54 | 2.58 | 839 |

Respondents felt that the City of Bellingham was least equitable in regards to:

- *Housing options and affordability* (mean response 5.81)
- *Racial/Cultural Integration* (mean response 5.48)
- *Racial/Cultural Diversity* (mean response 5.41).

Respondents felt that the City of Bellingham was most equitable in regards to:

- *Supporting community celebration and events* (mean response 4.32)
- *Providing physical access to public facilities* (mean response 4.39)
- *providing adequate inclusive services for diverse sexual orientations* (mean response 4.54)

This is the first year that the survey has asked this question– there are no historical survey results.