

TRANSLATED COMMUNITY SURVEY: Half report City is doing a good job

April 2017

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Nhìn chung, quý vị đánh giá như thế nào về công tác của chính quyền Thành Phố trong việc cung cấp các dịch vụ?

总体而言，您如何评价市政府提供的服务？

В целом, как вы оцениваете качество работы городских властей в сфере предоставления услуг?



Portland City Auditor
Audit Services Division

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Portland City Auditor
Audit Services Division

Production / Design
Robert Cowan
Public Information Coordinator



April 25, 2017

TO: Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioner Chloe Eudaly
Commissioner Nick Fish
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Commissioner Dan Saltzman

SUBJECT: Audit Report: *Translated Community Survey: Half report City is doing a good job* (Report #496)

As promised in our 26th annual Community Survey report, we conducted the annual Community Survey in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian. The results showed that respondents to both English and translated surveys share similar rankings of City services.

We appreciate the work of the four individual Community Engagement Liaisons who administered the translated surveys in their respective language communities.

Mary Hull Caballero
City Auditor

Audit Team: Drummond Kahn
Bob MacKay

Attachment



TRANSLATED COMMUNITY SURVEY:

Half report City is doing a good job

For the past 26 years, the Portland City Auditor’s Office has conducted a Community Survey to see how Portlanders view the quality of City services. In 2016, the Community Survey was translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese (Mandarin), and Russian. This report presents a snapshot of those survey responses.

Respondents’ rankings of City service quality and livability show similarities (percent very good or good)

	Translated	English
Fire & Emergency Services	1st	1st
Neighborhood livability	2nd	2nd
Water	3rd	7th
9-1-1	4th	5th
Parks	5th	3rd
City livability	6th	8th
Police	7th	9th
Rec Centers and activities	8th	6th
Garbage/recycling/compost	9th	4th
Sewers	10th	11th
City’s overall delivery of services	11th	13th
Storm drainage	12th	12th
Street lighting	13th	10th
Street maintenance	14th	16th
Housing inspections	15th	14th
Planning for future land use	16th	15th
Opportunities to influence government	17th	17th
Nuisance inspections	18th	18th

Survey data indicate that all respondents – whether completing the survey in English or another language – share similar perceptions of the overall quality of City services. The table above shows the rankings of the overall City service areas, plus questions about city and neighborhood livability. These are rank ordered by positive responses (percent very good or good) from all 2016 survey respondents, both translated and English. Of note, both of the two highest and lowest-

ranked services were identical in order and topic for both the English and translated surveys. Translated and English survey respondents also ranked the same five City services the lowest.

The total number of returned translated surveys was small (171), and became even smaller once responses were broken down by satisfaction ratings. Eleven individual questions had response levels large enough to perform meaningful statistical tests between the translated and English surveys. Of those questions, the following three responses were significantly different from English language responses:

Significant response differences between translated and English Community Surveys

Fewer felt safe walking alone in neighborhood during day



More drove alone to work



Fewer felt positive about neighborhood livability



Results from translated Community Surveys

Fifty percent of respondents rated the overall provision of City services favorably, and 28 percent felt they had opportunities to influence government decisions.

Neighborhood livability was rated higher than city livability (67 percent compared to 60 percent), which is consistent with response trends seen in the English version of the survey.

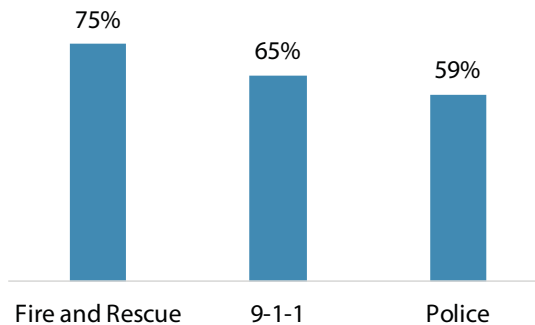
Respondents were very community oriented, with nearly two-thirds (65 percent) having attended a public meeting or involved in a community project in the past year.

Positive and negative responses for translated survey participants were about equal on housing affordability (28 percent and 26 percent respectively).

Respondents were positive about public safety services across the board

The majority of respondents felt positive about City public safety services and reported feeling safe walking alone in their neighborhood, downtown or in a park in the daytime.

Most respondents felt positive about public safety services



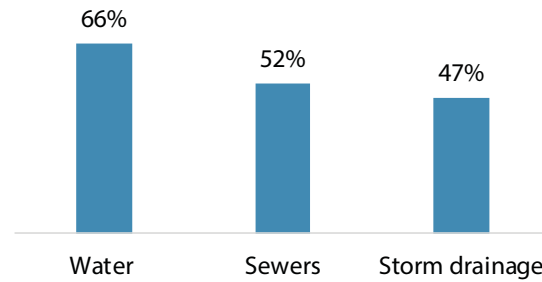
Other public safety responses

Positive	Question
91%	Home break-ins reported to police
76%	Have at least three days supplies in case of emergency
64%	Support police efforts to regulate officer conduct
61%	Quality of 9-1-1 calltaker
58%	Vehicle break-ins reported to police
22%	Know where to get assistance to start/join neighborhood anti-crime activities

Respondents gave generally positive ratings to public utilities

Of all City public utility services, only the cost of garbage/recycling/composting and overall quality of storm drains were below 50 percent positive (45 percent and 47 percent respectively).

Respondents were mainly positive toward overall quality of City utility services



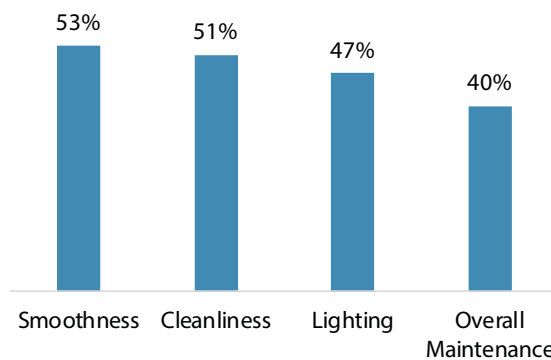
Other public utility responses

Positive	Question
71%	Quality of tap water
55%	Sewer and storm drainage systems protect water quality in local streams and rivers
53%	Quality of garbage/recycling/compost services
45%	Cost of garbage/recycling/compost services

Streets and City transportation services received lower ratings than other City services

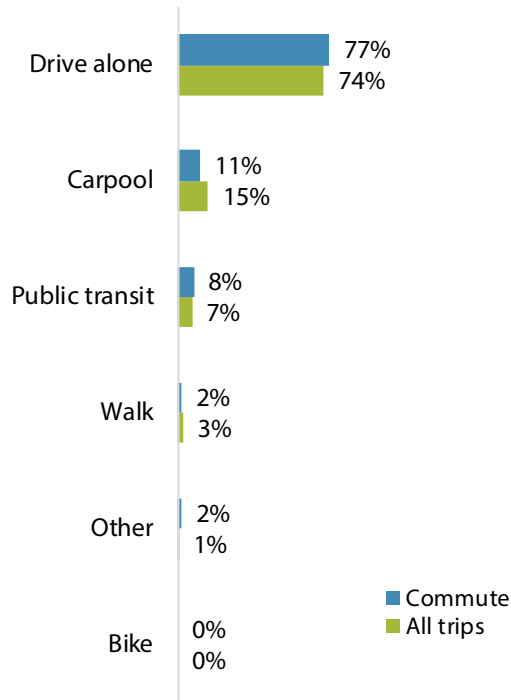
While both street smoothness and street cleanliness were given positive ratings by respondents, overall street maintenance stood at 40 percent.

Ratings of City streets



Large majorities of respondents reported driving alone for both commuting to work and for all trips.

Large majority drive alone, none by bike



Other transportation responses

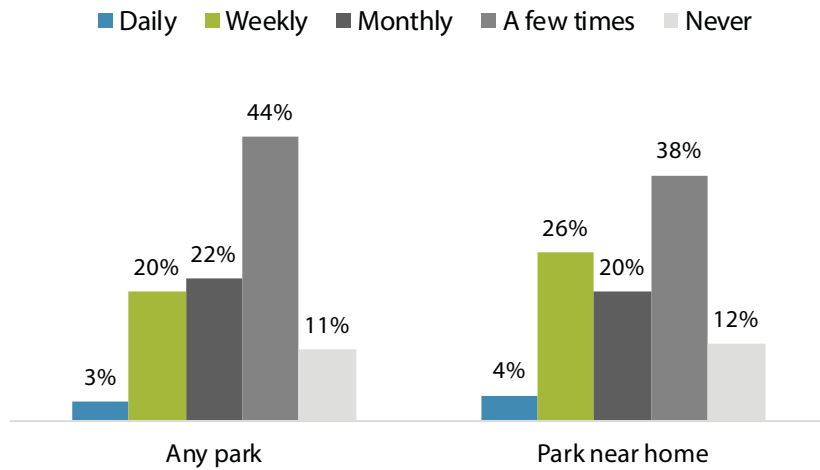
Positive	Question
52%	Safety of pedestrians
43%	Safety of cyclists
Negative	Question
50%	Rush hour congestion
19%	Off-peak traffic congestion

The majority of respondents had positive opinions of Parks and Recreation

A larger percentage of respondents rated parks favorably (63 percent) than rated recreation centers/activities favorably (56 percent). Just 28 percent of respondents reported that someone in their household had participated in a Parks & Recreation activity in the past year.

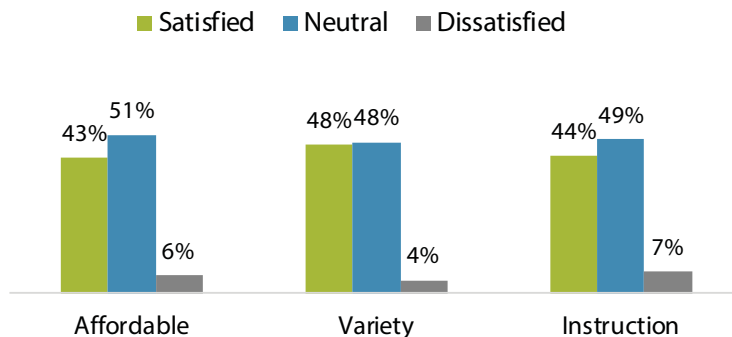
Close to 90 percent of respondents reported visiting a park. The frequency of visits, however, was low. This may be due in part to a lower percentage of respondents reporting that their neighborhood is close to parks and open spaces (46 percent).

Most visited parks, but not often



Respondents reported less than 50 percent satisfaction with City recreation programs' affordability, the variety of recreation programs, and the quality of instruction in recreation programs. 'Neutral' was the largest response category for all three questions.

'Neutral' was largest response for recreation programs in all categories



Positive Question	Other parks and recreation responses
55%	Well-maintained park grounds, near home
50%	Well-maintained park facilities, near home

Respondents had mixed opinions of City community development efforts

Nearly one third of respondents rated the City's ability to plan for future land use as positive (32 percent). While 61 percent of respondents reported seeing both commercial and residential development in their neighborhoods, they were not generally favorable of the attractiveness of the new development or how the development would improve their neighborhood.

Opinions were mixed on City's community development efforts

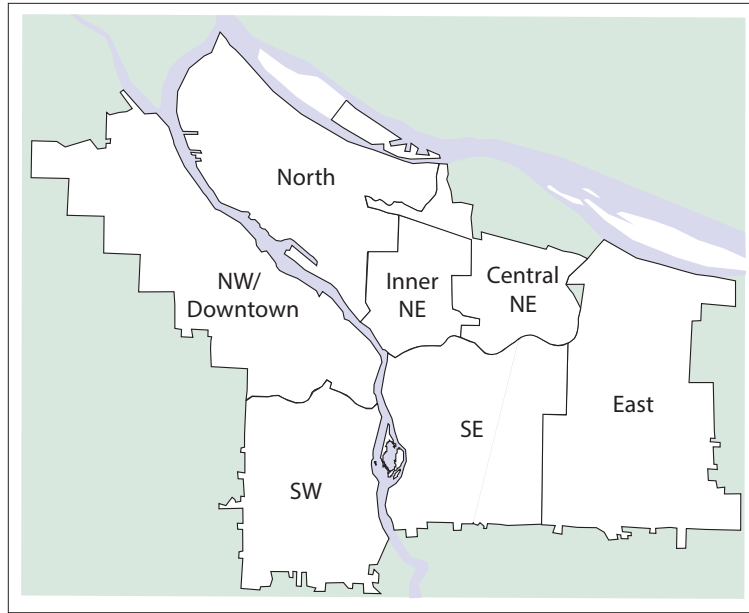


Other community development responses

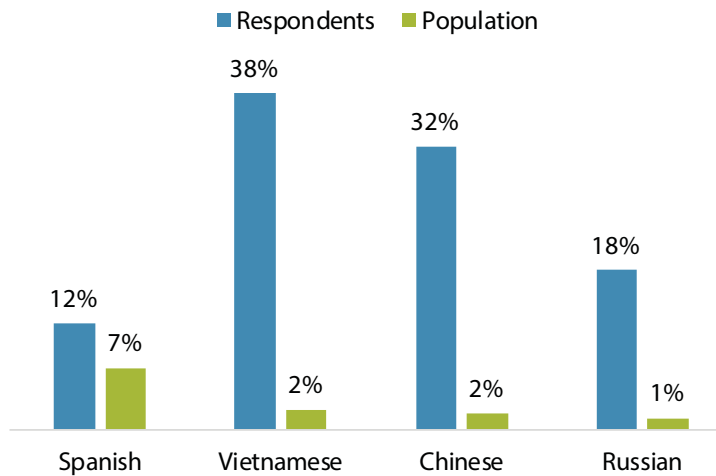
Positive	Question
47%	Attractiveness of new commercial development in neighborhood
40%	On-street parking in neighborhood
38%	Attractiveness of new residential development in neighborhood

DEMOGRAPHICS

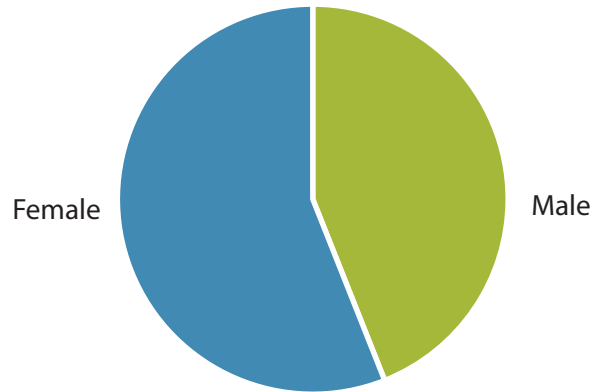
97% of translated survey respondents live East of the Willamette River



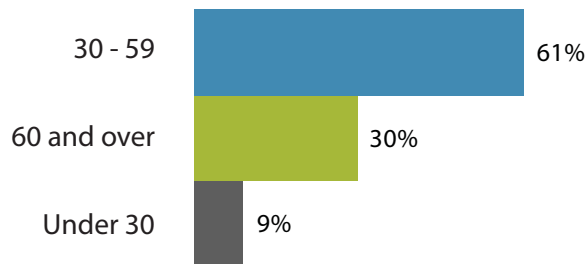
By language, survey respondents were not representative of the proportions of language speakers in the City



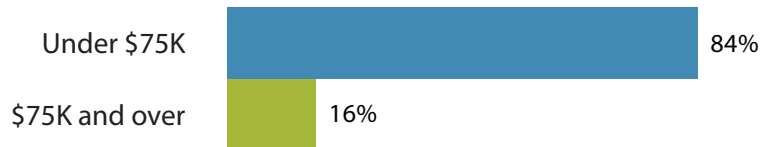
Slightly more females completed the translated survey



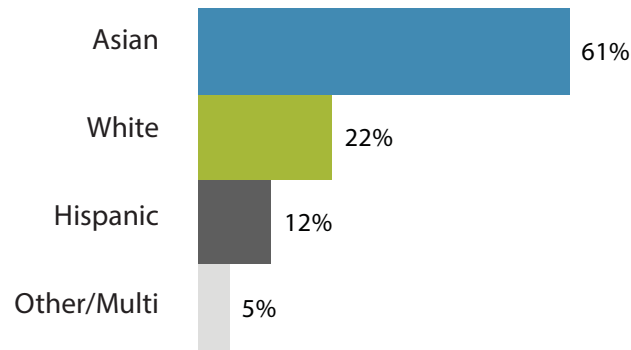
Over 60 percent were between age 30 and 60



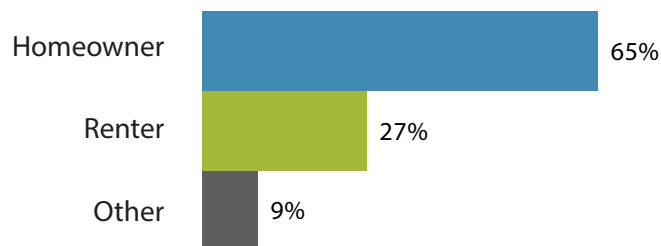
Eighty-four percent make under \$75,000 a year



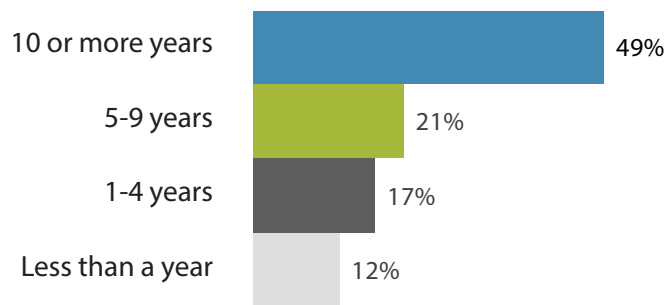
Asians made up a majority of respondents



Nearly two-thirds owned their homes



Almost half reported living in the same residence for 10 years or more



Other demographic responses	
Positive	Question
29%	Hold a bachelors degree or higher
3%	Identify as having a disability

Objective, Scope and Methodology

This project grew out of the Auditor's Annual Community Survey. In June 2016, the survey was translated into the next four most-spoken languages in Portland - Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin), Russian, and Vietnamese. These languages were identified by data collected from the 2014 American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Notice of the translated surveys was included in multiple mailings sent to all households in the citywide random sample.

In October 2016, we contracted with Community Engagement Liaison Services to offer the survey to residents in each of the four translated languages. Even though the translated survey and the English version contained the same questions and response choices, the translated surveys were administered under very different circumstances. While the English version was mailed to an equal number of randomly-selected households within each of the City's seven neighborhood coalition areas, the translated surveys were distributed in person by the liaisons. This effort was not a random sample, but was intended to take a snapshot of resident perceptions. We obtained 171 usable translated surveys after removing those that were blank, or were completed by respondents who lived outside of Portland. For the graphs showing differences between the English and translated survey responses, we calculated statistical significance based on a 95 percent confidence level to determine if there was a true difference between the surveys. When there were fewer than 100 respondents answering a specific question, we did not run statistical tests. Differing methodologies make in-depth comparisons between the translated and English surveys problematic.

To help City bureaus more equitably serve all Portlanders, more rigorous, scientific study would be needed. Future research could better determine resident views of City service areas and the differences in satisfaction ratings by other language speakers in Portland. More research could also study why a number of variables had very high 'neutral' responses, including some where neutral responses were higher than both positive and negative responses.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate

evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

**Audit Services Division
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Translated Community Survey: Half report City is doing a good job

Report #496, April 2017

Audit Team: Bob MacKay

Mary Hull Caballero, City Auditor
Drummond Kahn, Director of Audit Services

Other recent audit reports:

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Portland Building Reconstruction: City faced with important post-planning decisions to ensure project success (#482, December 2016)

Americans with Disabilities Act: Coordination gaps complicate City response (#476, December 2016)

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