



Houston, TX

Community Survey

April - June 2026

Powered by  Zencity



Survey Methodology

The current cycle of the web-based Community Survey collected survey data between April - June 2026. Respondents were digitally recruited (e.g., over social media, mobile apps, websites, and survey panels). These ads are targeted to residents, and responses are only included in the data when a local valid zipcode is provided.

Respondents who self-reported being under 18, who declined to provide any demographic information, or those who provided an invalid zipcode are excluded from the results.

1003 valid respondents participated in the web-based Community Survey during this cycle.

Representation

Zencity ensures broad demographic representation in several ways:

Before data collection, Zencity employs national statistical data to establish response targets. These targets are defined based on race/ethnicity, age, and gender.

During data collection, we track the demographic composition of the survey responses in real time, comparing them to the predetermined targets. We fine-tune our distribution and advertising strategies as needed to target all demographic groups.

After data collection, Zencity employs an industry-standard statistical technique called rake weighting. This assigns a unique weight to each respondent based on their demographic characteristics. This method ensures that the distribution of these characteristics in the final weighted sample aligns with the community's overall demographics.

Executive Summary

Key Takeaways

- Overall quality of life held steady at 66% satisfaction (unchanged from the previous cycle), staying above the cohort average (63%) and roughly on par with the national average (67%).
- Long-term attachment remains a point of stability, with 71% of residents (unchanged) expecting to still be living in Houston five years from now — far exceeding the cohort average (59%).

Affordable Housing

- Satisfaction with the availability of affordable housing rose to 45% (up 3 ppt), continuing to outperform the national (37%) and cohort (41%) averages, with the highest satisfaction among higher-income (\$150K+, 56%) and younger (18–34, 50%) residents.
- Residents named providing financial support for renters (25%) as the most important step to improve affordable housing, narrowly ahead of building and operating affordable units (23%) — a reversal from the prior cycle, when building units ranked first.

Budget & Funding Preferences

- 43% of residents feel the city allocates funding well to the most important community needs (36% neutral, 21% negative), with far greater confidence among younger residents (18–34, 53%) than older residents (55+, 27%).
- Asked where budget cuts would do the least harm, residents most often named zoning (39%), animal control (27%), and permitting and licensing (26%); core services such as police, fire, and sanitation were not among the most commonly named.

Sense of overall safety

45% ↑ 3%

Neutral

33% · --

Negative

22% · ↓ 3%

Public Safety

Social listening from Zencity Listen identifies public safety as a high-salience theme: Violence and Crime was by far the largest public safety subtopic by interaction volume ($\approx 2.86\text{M}$ interactions, Jan–Jun 2026), well ahead of Police ($\approx 1.29\text{M}$) and Fire Department ($\approx 258\text{K}$).

The shift in residents' sense of overall safety since Q1 was modestly favorable on both ends: positive sentiment rose 3 ppt and negative sentiment fell 3 ppt, suggesting some residents moved from feeling unsafe toward feeling safe rather than into neutrality.

The citywide gain masks a wide spread across the city — positive sentiment ranges from 36% to 55% depending on age, ethnicity, and council district — making safety perceptions one of the most unevenly distributed measures in this cycle.

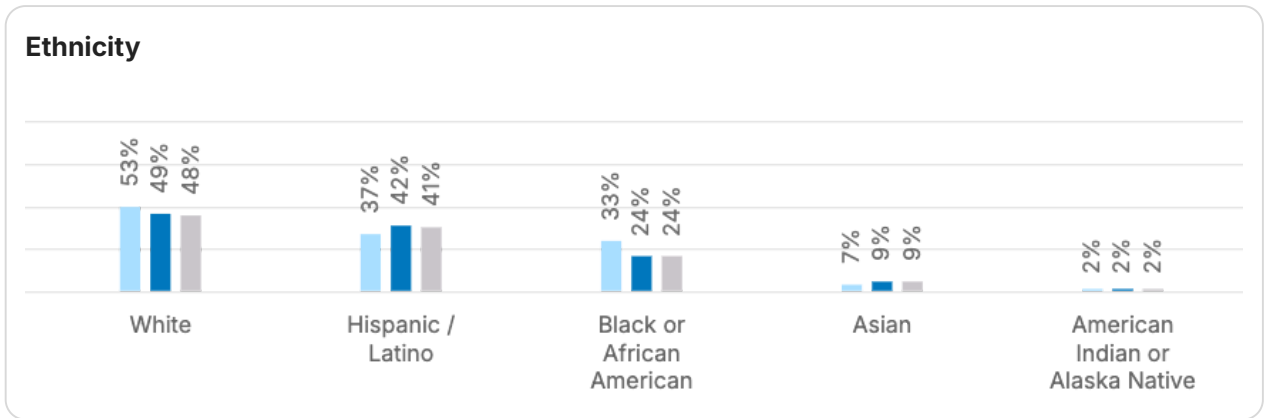
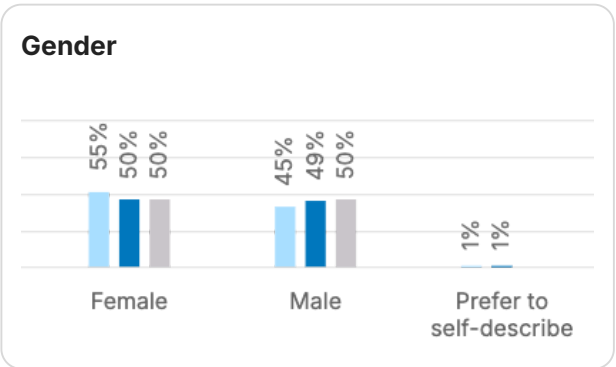
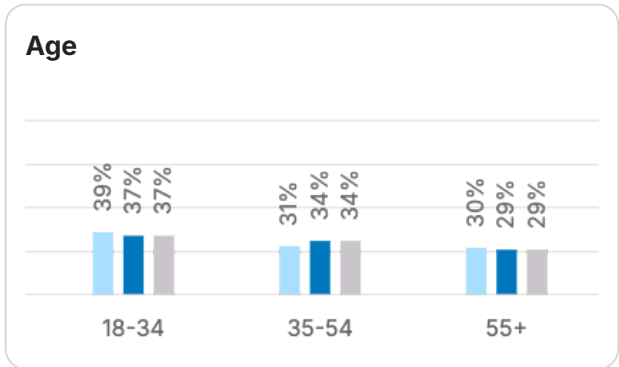
Sample Composition

1003 valid respondents

Key

-  **Unweighted demographics** - What we collected, without adjustments
-  **Weighted demographics** - Our sample, adjusted to be representative of the population
-  **Population demographics** - The demographics of the 18+ population

* The "Other" category includes missing data, people who selected "prefer not to say", and other groups not defined in the census.



Overall Quality of Life

Residents' quality of life is a key metric for local government leaders. Here, we present how Houston residents are feeling about their quality of life, looking at how this changes by demographic group and geography.

We will show the percent of valid respondents who reported either a 4 or a 5 on the 1-5 scale, weighted by age, gender, and race/ethnicity (see page 3 for details).

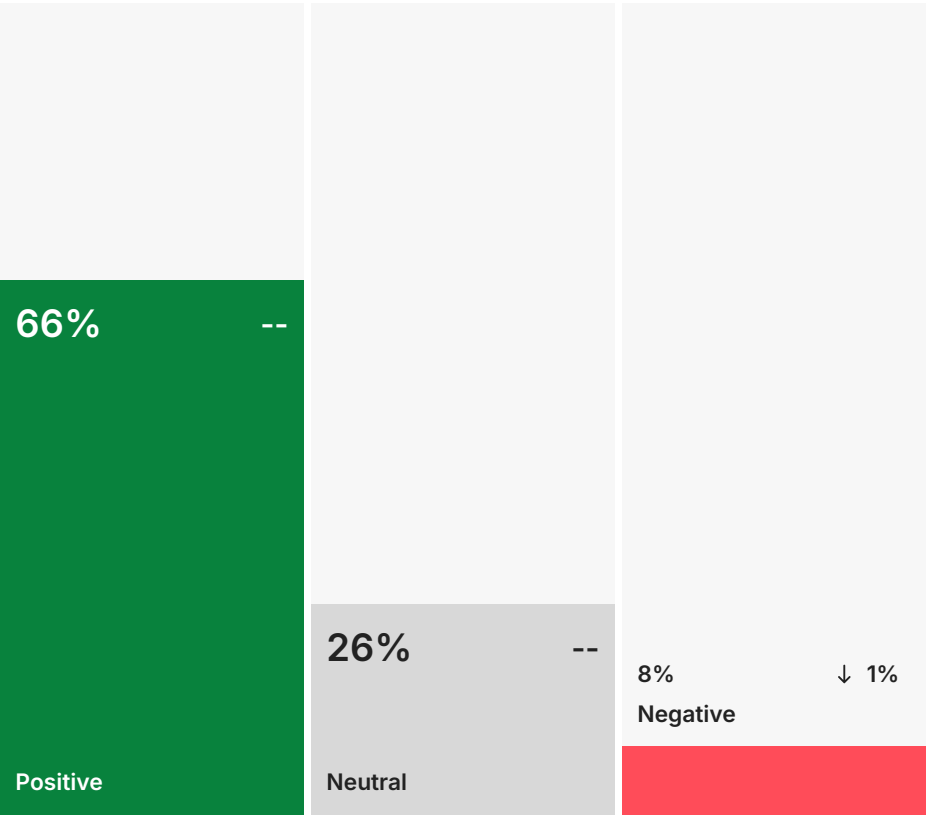
Scores will be shown only for groups (e.g., for a geographic area or for a demographic group) with at least 30 responses. For groups between 30 and 49 respondents, we highlight the small sample size using an (!). Use these scores with caution.

How is the overall quality of life in Houston?

66%

of 1003 surveyed residents
are satisfied with the overall
quality of life in Houston

-- vs. previous cycle

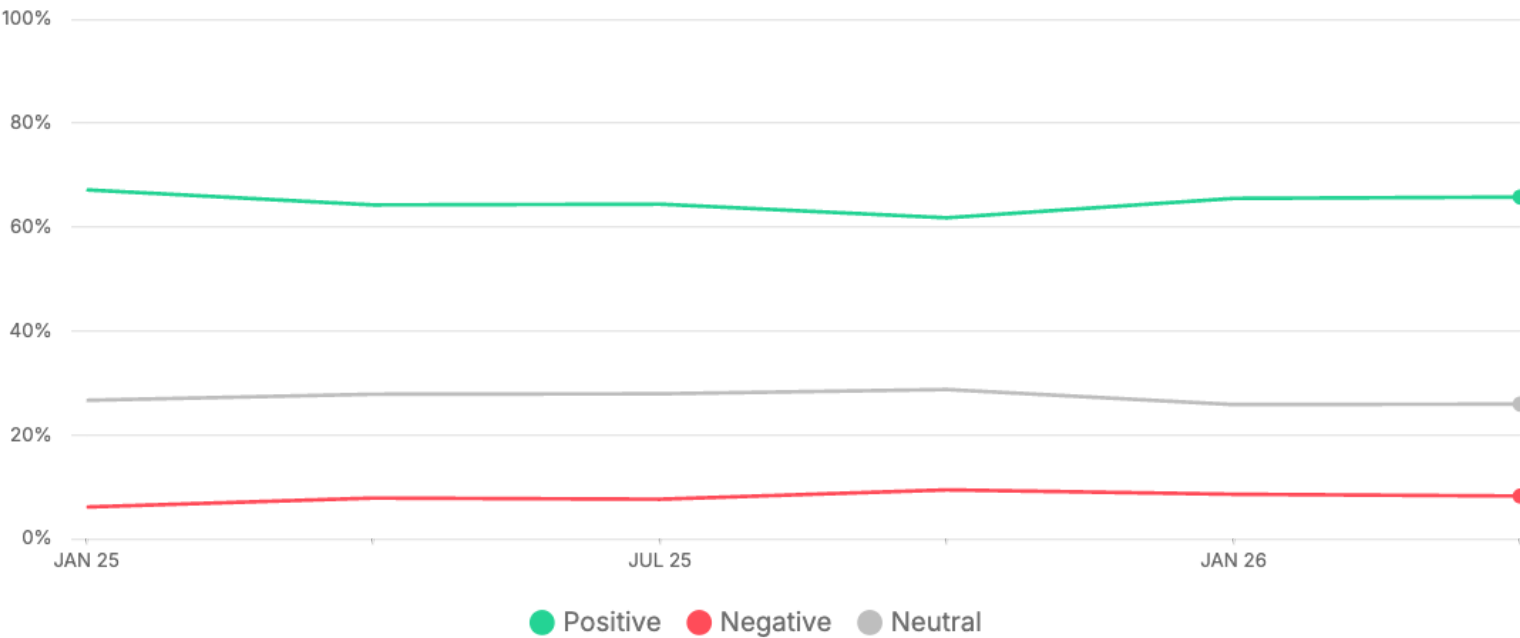


How is the overall quality of life in Houston?

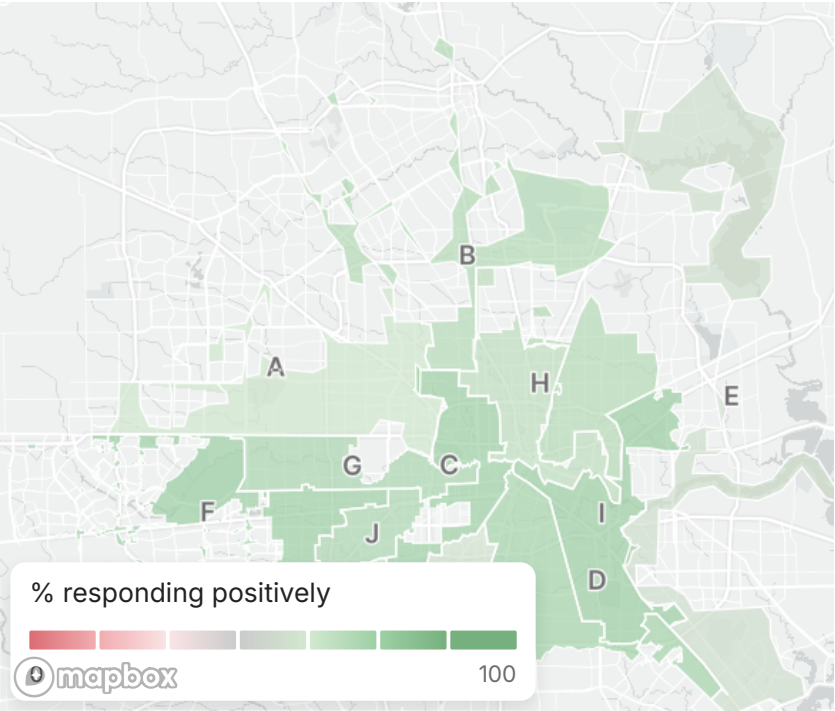
66% --

Neutral
26% · --

Negative
8% · ↓ 1%



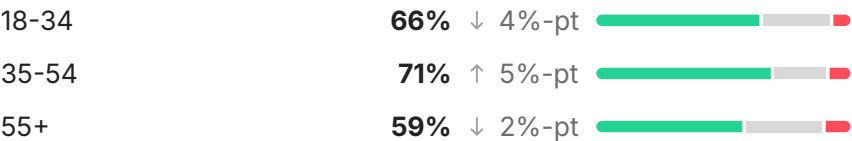
How is the overall quality of life in Houston? | Geographic Breakdown



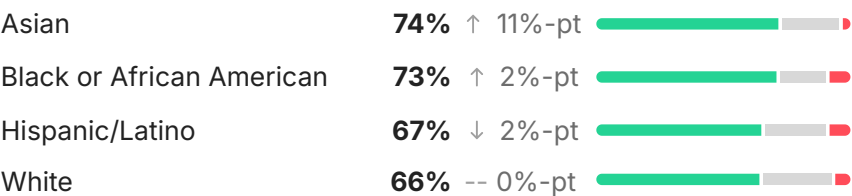
Area	Resident Satisfaction	
A	61% • ↑ 2%	
B	66% • ↑ 4%	
C	71% • ↑ 8%	
D	69% • ↑ 9%	
E	57% • --	
F	71% • ↑ 2%	
G	68% • ↑ 7%	
H	65% • ↓ 1%	
I	71% • ↓ 7%	
J	68% • ↑ 3%	
K	58% • ↓ 1%	

How is the overall quality of life in Houston? | Demographic Breakdown

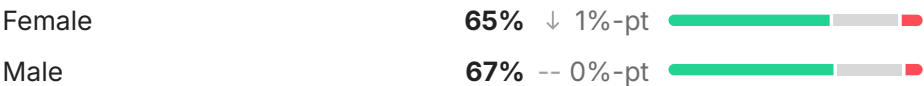
AGE



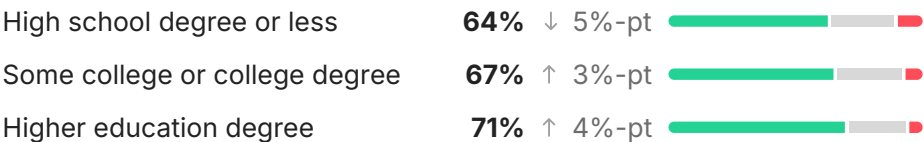
ETHNICITY



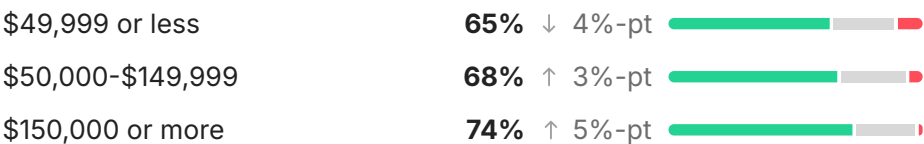
GENDER



EDUCATION



INCOME



Other measures of satisfaction with life in Houston

How likely are you to recommend
Houston as a place to live?

64% ↓ 1%

Neutral

23% • ↑ 2%

Negative

13% • ↓ 1%

How likely are you to be living in
Houston 5 years from now?

71% --

Neutral

15% • ↓ 1%

Negative

14% • ↑ 1%

Community Characteristics

Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with a range of community characteristics on a scale from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent).

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTIC		SATISFACTION SCORE	CHANGE	KEY
Quality of Fire Services		73% 21% 6%	↑ 2% - 0%	
Availability of a variety of art and cultural events		72% 21% 8%	↓ 4% ↑ 1%	● POSITIVE ● NEUTRAL ● NEGATIVE ○ NON-SUBSTANTIATIVE
Access to quality health care services		65% 23% 12%	- 0% ↓ 2%	↓ ↑ CHANGE IN POSITIVE SCORE
Acceptance of residents of all backgrounds		62% 27% 11%	↓ 4% ↑ 1%	↓ ↑ CHANGE IN NEGATIVE SCORE
Quality of parks and recreational amenities		62% 28% 9%	↑ 1% ↓ 1%	NOTEWORTHY
Access to quality education		61% 27% 12%	↑ 1% ↓ 3%	SOMEWHAT NOTEWORTHY
Overall quality of services provided by the city		55% 32% 14%	↑ 3% ↓ 2%	The 'Change' column shows percentage point changes from the previous cycle. Questions with changes above 5% are highlighted.
Sense of community among residents		53% 33% 14%	↑ 2% ↓ 4%	

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTIC		SATISFACTION SCORE	CHANGE	KEY
Ease of getting around by public transportation		52% 25% 22%	↑ 6% ↓ 8%	
Availability of jobs that pay a living wage		50% 31% 19%	↑ 2% ↓ 1%	● POSITIVE ● NEUTRAL ● NEGATIVE ○ NON-SUBSTANTIATIVE ↓ ↑ CHANGE IN POSITIVE SCORE ↓ ↑ CHANGE IN NEGATIVE SCORE   NOTEWORTHY  SOMEWHAT NOTEWORTHY

The 'Change' column shows percentage point changes from the previous cycle. Questions with changes above 5% are highlighted.

Change Matrix Highlights

The Change Matrix showcases the questions with the largest changes from the previous cycle, highlighting the demographic groups and geographic areas contributing to these shifts.

Top Questions	Overall Score	Total Change	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Geographic Area
Ease of getting around by public transportation	52%	↑ +6%	Asian	Male	35-54	D
			↑ +19%	↑ +11%	↑ +12%	↑ +10%
Availability of a variety of art and cultural events	72%	-4%	Black or African American	Male	18-34	I
			↓ -7%	-5%	↓ -8%	↓ -10%
Acceptance of residents of all backgrounds	62%	-4%	Asian	Female	18-34	H
			↑ +15%	↓ -7%	↓ -8%	↓ -10%

Priority Matrix

The Priority Matrix helps prioritize community characteristics by plotting them based on resident satisfaction and their impact on quality of life.

X-axis (Satisfaction): How residents rated each community characteristic.

Y-axis (Impact on quality of life): How strongly each characteristic predicts overall quality of life (calculated using statistical analysis, not direct resident input).

The matrix divides all community characteristics into quadrants using median values for both satisfaction and impact scores, ensuring a balanced distribution across all four categories for strategic prioritization purposes.

Learn more [HERE](#)

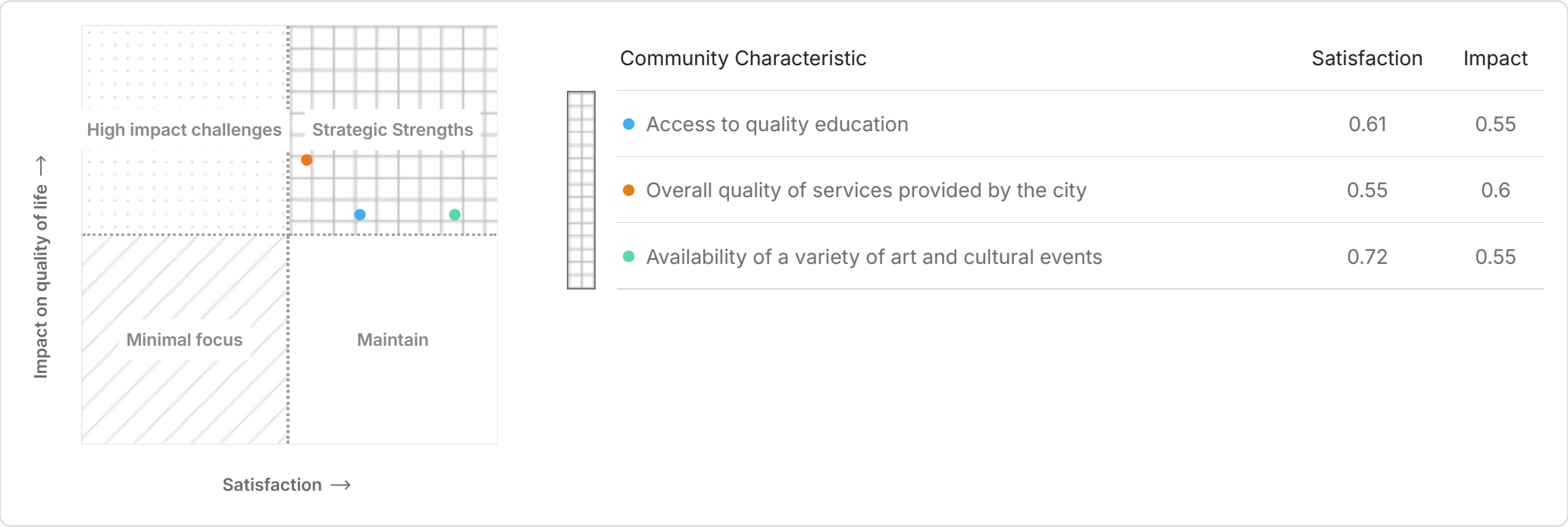
High Impact Challenges (Low satisfaction, High impact)

These are lower satisfaction areas that significantly affect residents' lives and community well-being; as such, they are high-impact challenges that should be prioritized.



Strategic Strengths (High satisfaction, High impact)

These are characteristics that residents value highly and are satisfied with. Maintain or leverage these as community strengths.



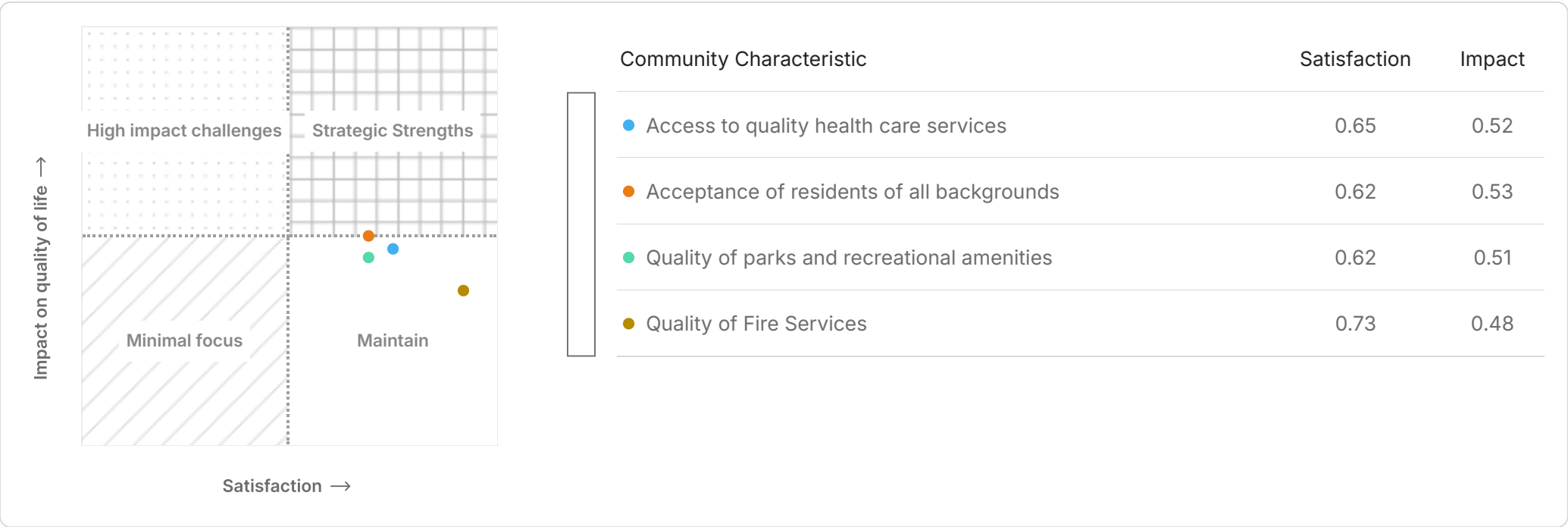
Minimal Focus (Low satisfaction, Low impact)

These are lower satisfaction areas that do not strongly influence quality of life, suggesting a lower priority for investment unless specific strategic goals apply.



Maintain (High satisfaction, Low impact)

These are well-regarded characteristics with a smaller influence on the overall quality of life. While they can be maintained efficiently, they may warrant attention if they align with specific strategic goals.



Focus Areas

The next pages highlight community characteristics of interest and provide insights into these characteristics, along with breakdowns by relevant groups for further analysis.

These insights are designed to support targeted strategic planning and deeper analysis. Where applicable, follow-up questions were included, focusing on responses that highlighted challenges (e.g., low ratings).

Follow-up questions in Zencity surveys gather detailed feedback, clarify responses, or provide context triggered by prior answers to help address issues or improve services.

Availability of affordable housing

45% ↑ 3%

Neutral

33% • ↓ 2%

Negative

22% • ↓ 1%

AGE

18-34 50% ↑ 9%-pt 

35-54 46% ↓ 2%-pt 

55+ 36% ↑ 1%-pt 

INCOME

\$49,999 or less 42% ↑ 1%-pt 

\$50,000-\$149,999 46% -- 0%-pt 

\$150,000 or more 56% ↑ 12%-pt 

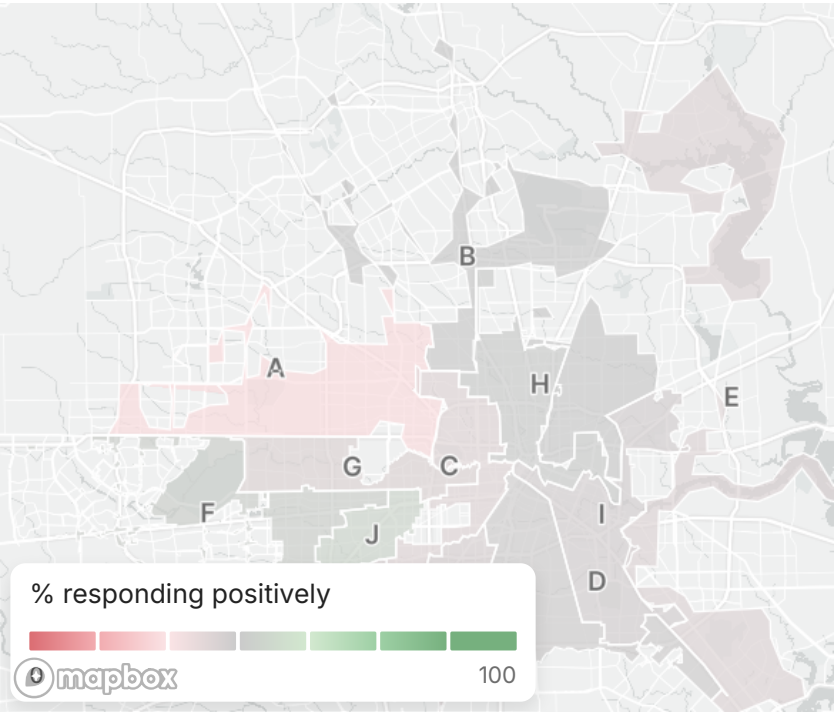
ETHNICITY

Asian 51% ↑ 9%-pt 

Black or African American 54% ↑ 1%-pt 

Hispanic/Latino 47% ↑ 3%-pt 

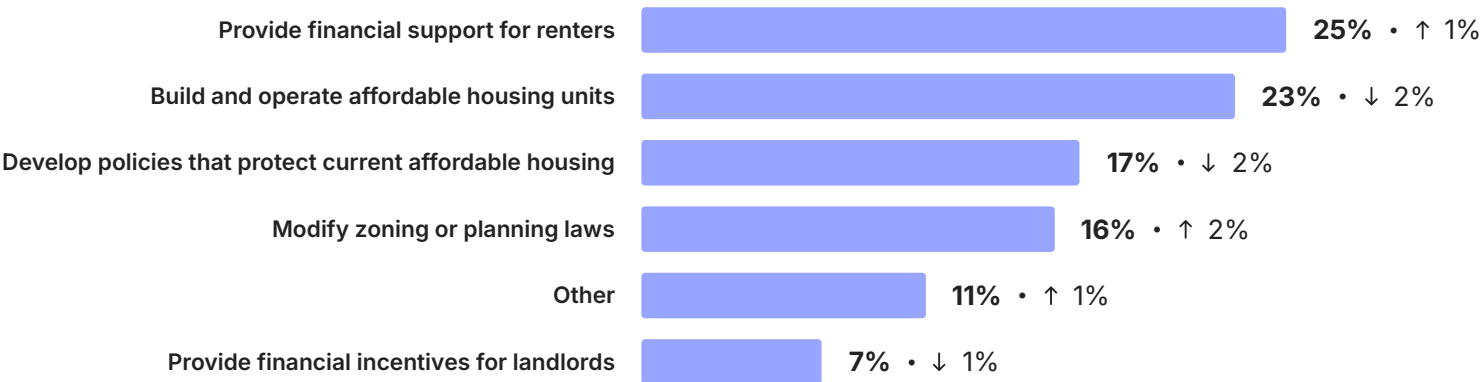
White 40% -- 0%-pt 



AREA

A	35%	↑ 2%-pt	
B	46%	↑ 3%-pt	
C	42%	↑ 3%-pt	
D	45%	↑ 4%-pt	
E	42%	-- 0%-pt	
F	48%	↓ 1%-pt	
G	42%	↑ 3%-pt	
H	47%	↓ 1%-pt	
I	44%	↓ 3%-pt	
J	51%	↑ 4%-pt	
K	43%	↑ 1%-pt	

What is the most important thing you think Houston can do to improve the availability of affordable housing?



To view the full question breakdown, visit your Zencity [dashboard](#)

Sense of overall safety

45% ↑ 3%

Neutral 33% · -- Negative 22% · ↓ 3%

AGE

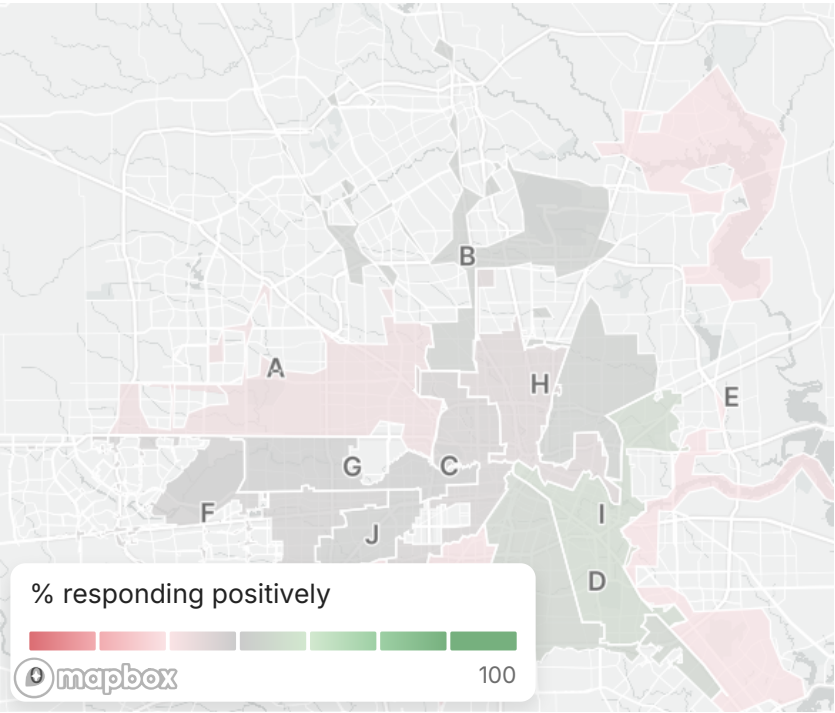
18-34	45%	↓ 2%-pt	
35-54	53%	↑ 13%-pt	
55+	36%	↓ 2%-pt	

ETHNICITY

Asian	54%	↑ 18%-pt	
Black or African American	55%	↑ 7%-pt	
Hispanic/Latino	46%	↑ 4%-pt	
White	45%	↑ 2%-pt	

GENDER

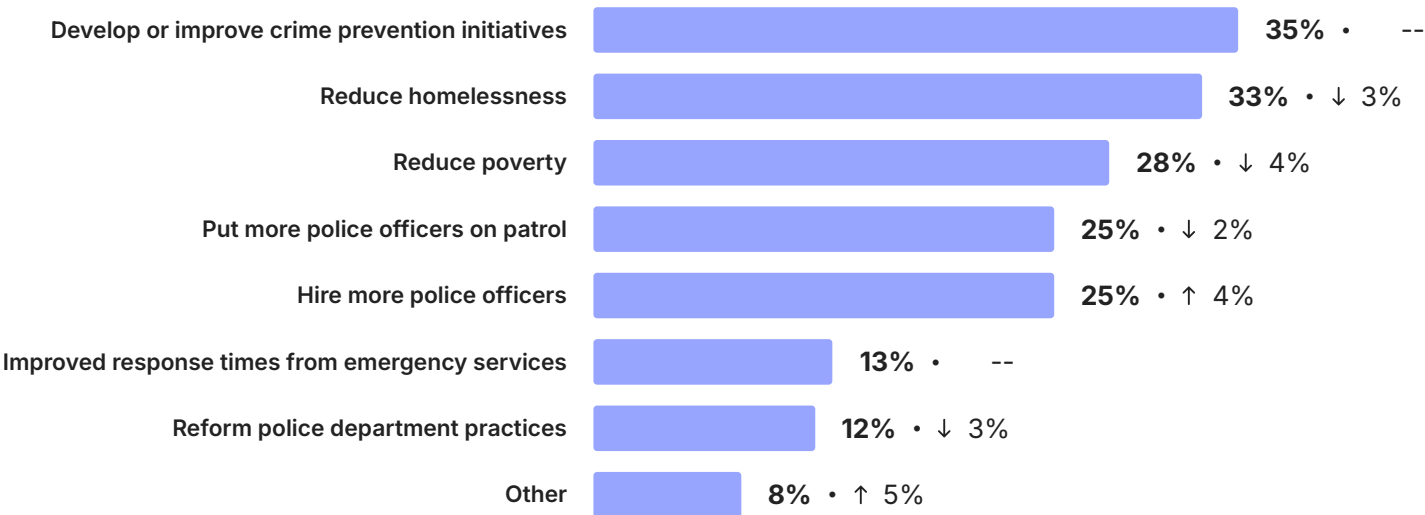
Female	42%	↑ 3%-pt	
Male	48%	↑ 2%-pt	



AREA

A	39%	↑ 3%-pt	
B	47%	↑ 4%-pt	
C	44%	↑ 6%-pt	
D	50%	↑ 8%-pt	
E	36%	↓ 5%-pt	
F	45%	↑ 1%-pt	
G	46%	↓ 5%-pt	
H	42%	↓ 2%-pt	
I	53%	↑ 1%-pt	
J	47%	↓ 4%-pt	
K	37%	↓ 4%-pt	

What is the most important thing you think Houston can do to improve your sense of overall safety?



To view the full question breakdown, visit your Zencity [dashboard](#)

Overall cleanliness and maintenance

44% ↑ 4% 

Neutral 33% • -- Negative 24% • ↓ 3%

 This result is somewhat noteworthy

AGE

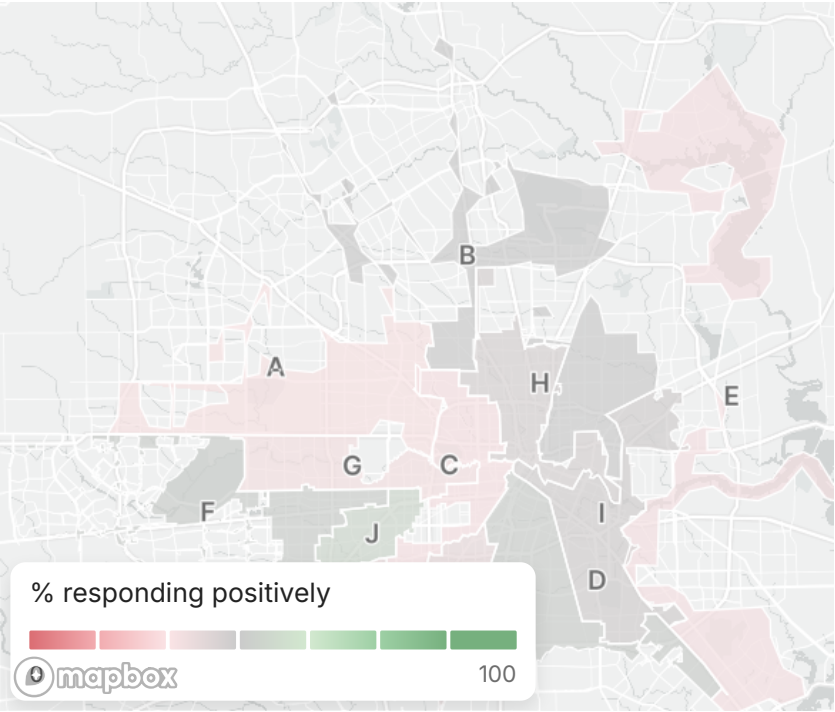
18-34	46%	↑ 2%-pt	
35-54	53%	↑ 12%-pt	
55+	29%	↓ 3%-pt	

INCOME

\$49,999 or less	46%	↑ 5%-pt	
\$50,000-\$149,999	43%	↑ 1%-pt	
\$150,000 or more	45%	↑ 9%-pt	

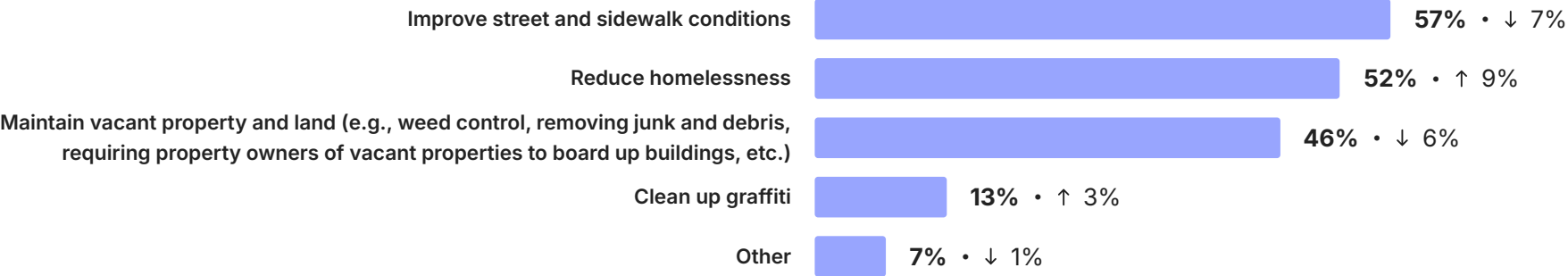
ETHNICITY

Asian	51%	↑ 18%-pt	
Black or African American	55%	↑ 6%-pt	
Hispanic/Latino	48%	↑ 4%-pt	
White	40%	↑ 2%-pt	



AREA			
A	37%	↓ 1%-pt	
B	46%	↑ 3%-pt	
C	37%	-- 0%-pt	
D	48%	↑ 11%-pt	
E	37%	↓ 4%-pt	
F	48%	↑ 2%-pt	
G	38%	↑ 5%-pt	
H	44%	↓ 3%-pt	
I	45%	↓ 2%-pt	
J	52%	↑ 3%-pt	
K	40%	↓ 6%-pt	

What is the most important thing you think Houston can do to improve the overall cleanliness and maintenance of city facilities and city-maintained areas?



To view the full question breakdown, visit your Zencity [dashboard](#)

Community Benchmark

We aim to help Zencity clients understand their results and put them into context. To that end, we will compare Houston's results to the United States as a whole and against communities with similar characteristics such as size, population density, and region (their "cohort").

These cohorts help to distinguish patterns unique to each client from those that are common in similar communities.

How we compare Houston to other similar communities

Creating the cohorts

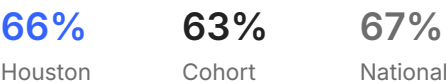
First, all cities, towns, and counties in the US--not just Zencity clients--are put into cohorts based on geography and demographics using a method known as cluster analysis. This method balances a range of different characteristics to put communities into cohorts that are statistically similar to one another. The result of this step is one set of cohorts for cities and towns and a second set for counties.

We chose this method to create objectively similar groups of communities with respect to characteristics that are likely to be correlated with answers to the survey questions. By creating cohorts of larger sets of communities we have found that our benchmark baselines tend to be more reliable than they would be if we had direct comparisons of a small number of communities. See our Help Site for more information on cohorts, including the full list of communities in your cohort.

Creating cohort scores and national benchmark scores

The Zencity National Benchmark Survey is conducted semiannually, collecting about 5000 responses across the country. The cohort scores are the weighted average of scores for respondents in each cohort. These weights are calculated to match the client's own demographics, to make them directly comparable to the clients' scores. National scores are calculated in a similar manner.

The overall quality of life in Houston is **3% higher** than its cohort and **lower** than the national score.



- Houston
- Cohort
- ▲ National

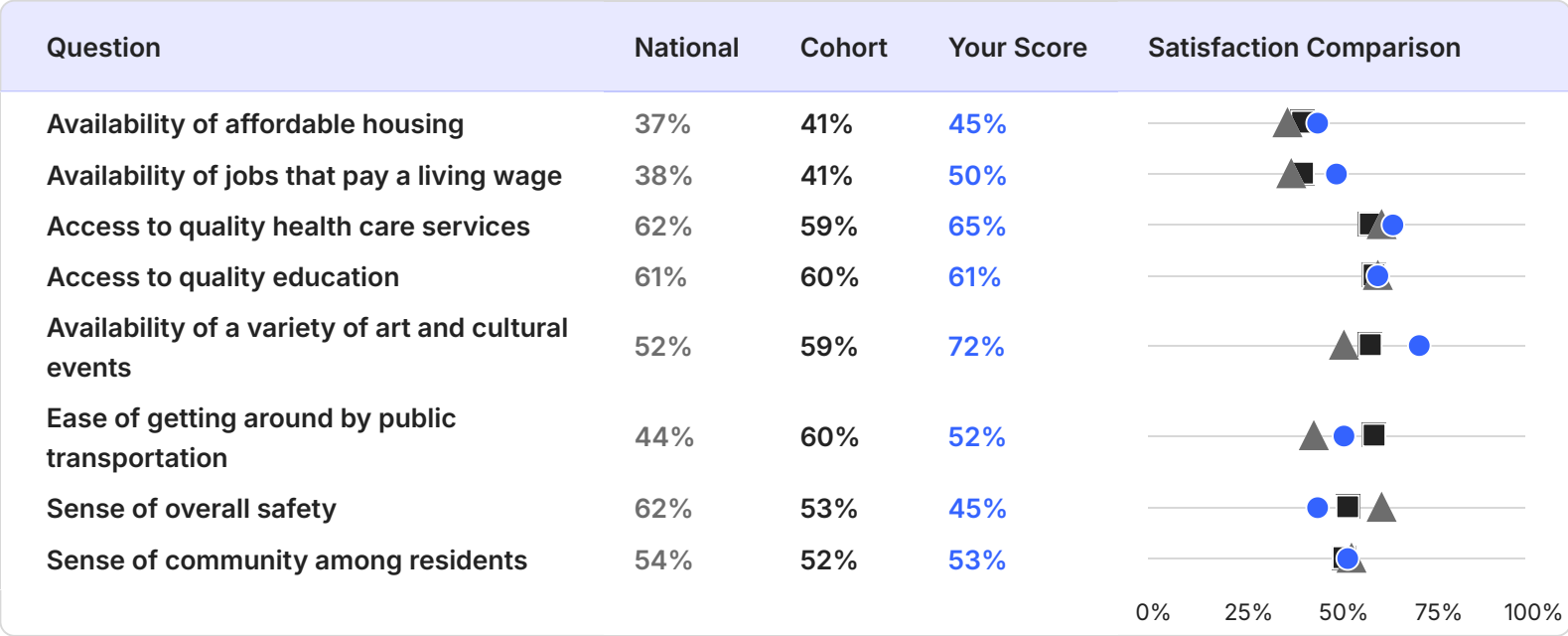
Question	National	Cohort	Your Score	Satisfaction Comparison
How is the overall quality of life in Houston?	67%	63%	66%	
How likely are you to recommend Houston as a place to live?	64%	63%	64%	
How likely are you to be living in Houston 5 years from now?	64%	59%	71%	

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Satisfaction with Life in Houston

Breakdown by characteristic

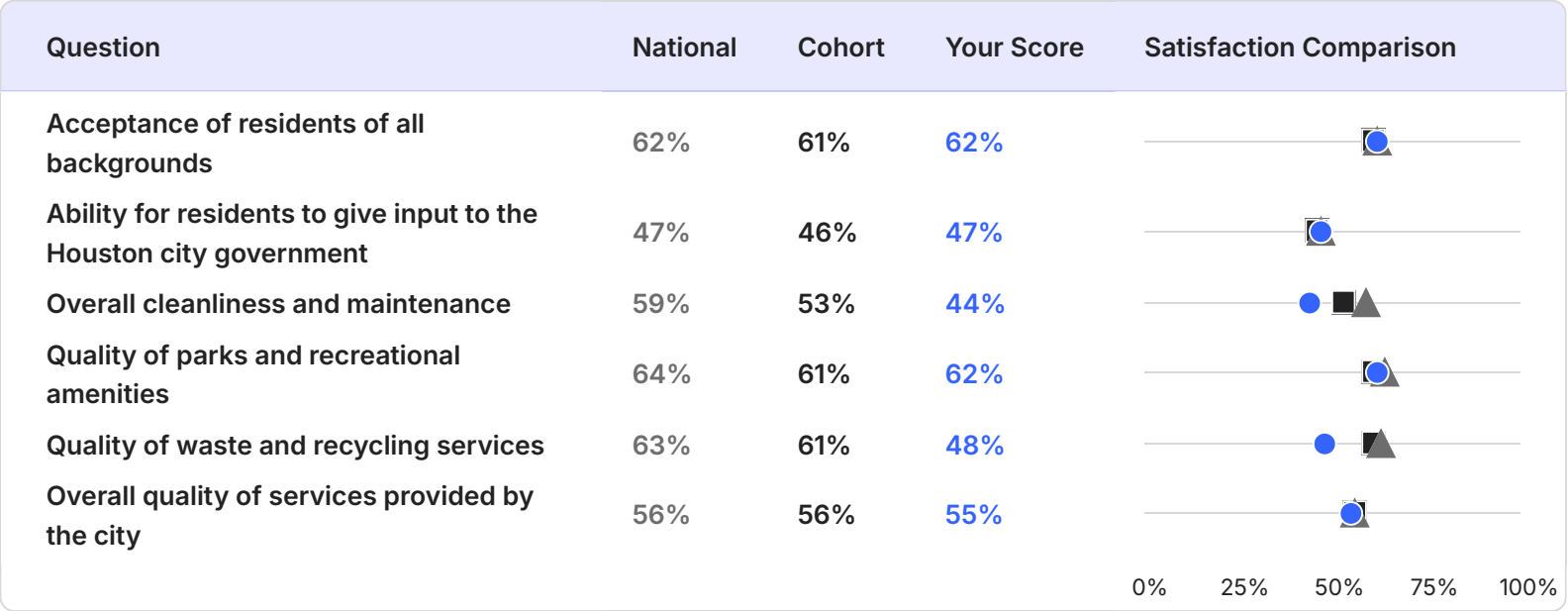
- Houston
- Cohort
- ▲ National



Satisfaction with Life in Houston

Breakdown by characteristic

- Houston
- Cohort
- ▲ National



Free-Text Responses

Respondents were asked open-ended questions about what the Houston government does well and how Houston could improve its services.

This section presents the main themes from both questions. Using our proprietary AI algorithm, responses are analyzed and categorized into

unique topics and subtopics for Houston, with multiple labels assigned to responses when relevant.

To ensure comprehensive information, responses that have been flagged as invalid (e.g., under 18, missing demographic data, or invalid zip codes

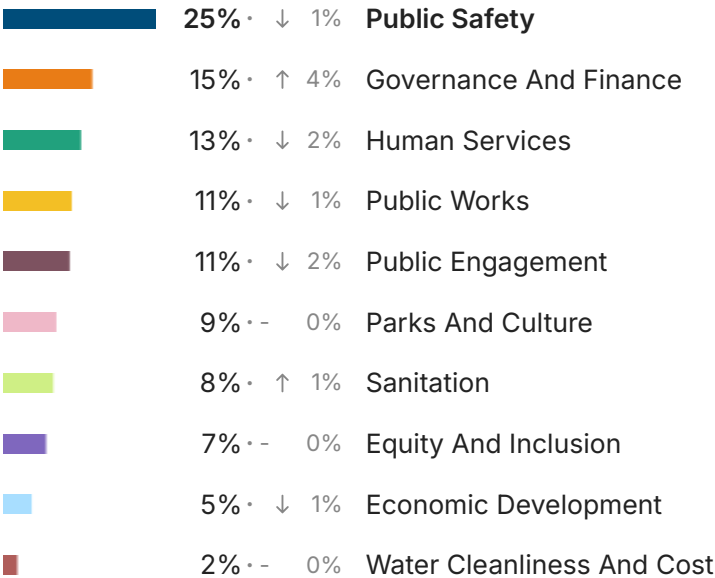
but claiming residency in Houston), as well as responses collected through self-distribution efforts, are analyzed in the free-text responses but excluded from the quantitative results.

BETA

Question:
What is the #1 thing you think the Houston government does well?

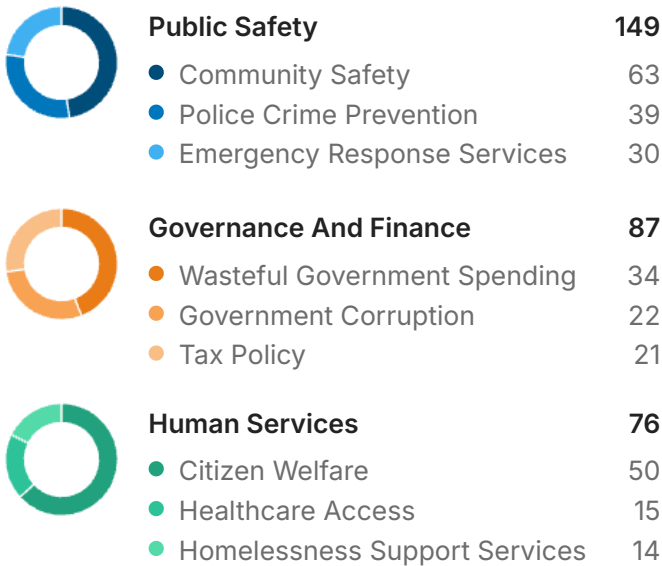
Most Common Topics

588 labeled responses out of 892



Top 3 Topics Breakdown

Number of responses by leading subtopic



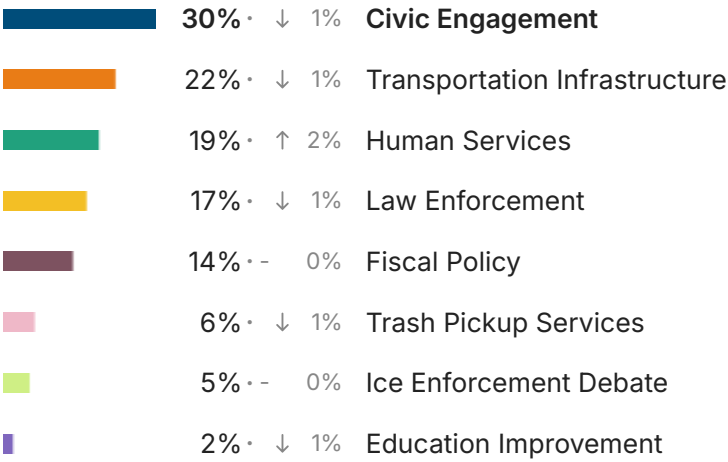
BETA

Question:

What is the #1 thing you think the Houston government could do to improve its services?

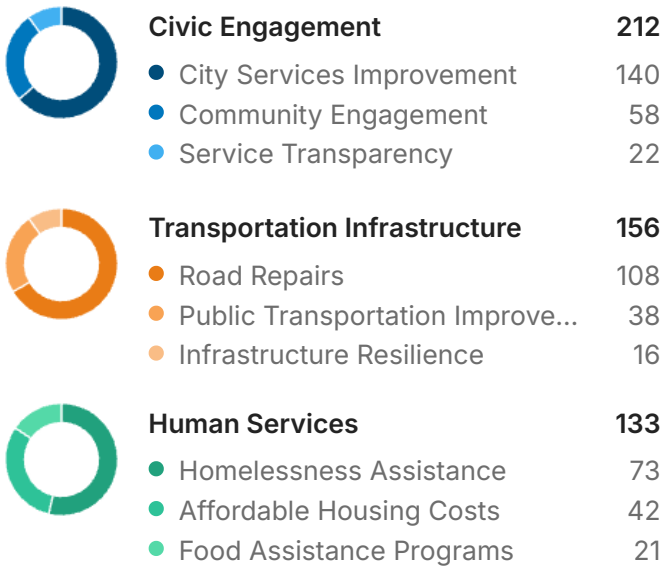
Most Common Topics

703 labeled responses out of 924



Top 3 Topics Breakdown

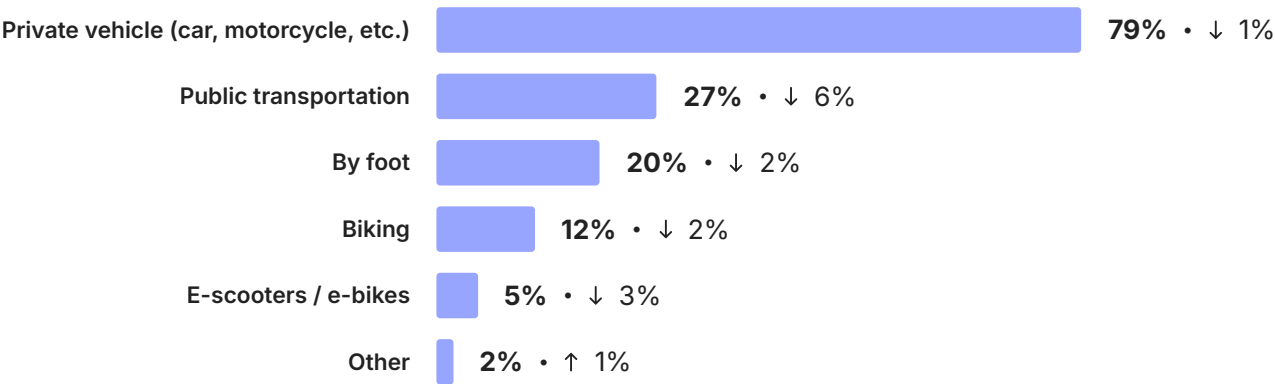
Number of responses by leading subtopic



Rotating Survey Section

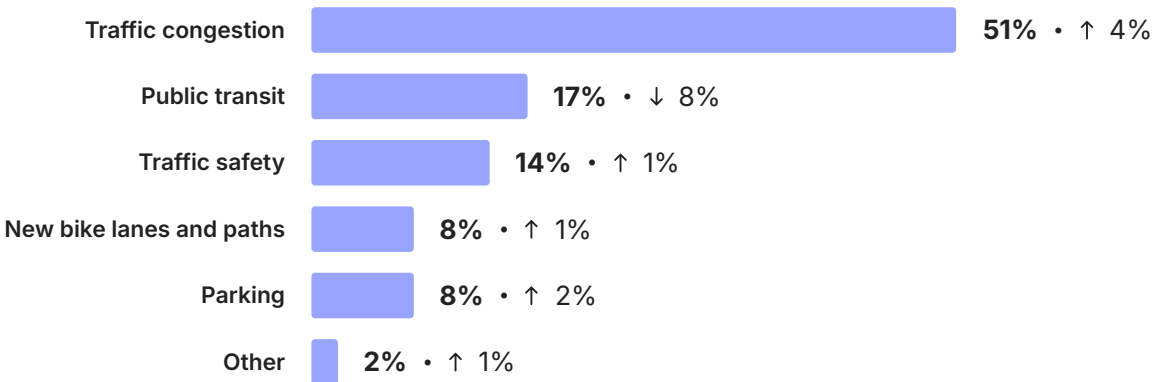
The rotating survey section focuses on areas of interest each cycle and can be updated as new areas of interest emerge.

How do you prefer to get around the city?



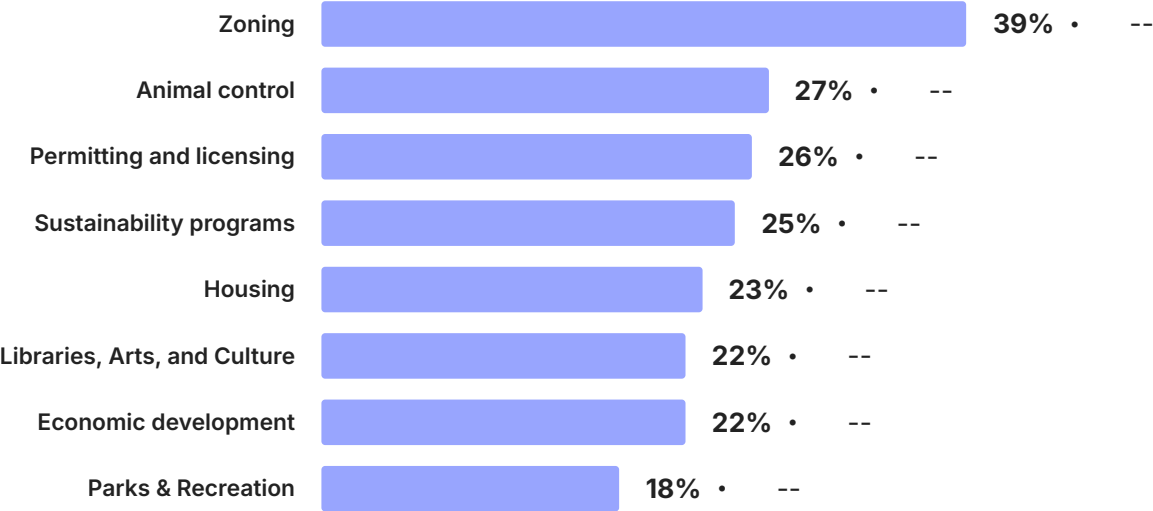
To view the full question breakdown, visit your Zencity [dashboard](#)

Which of the following would you most like to see improved around the city?



To view the full question breakdown, visit your Zencity [dashboard](#)

If your local government must make budget cuts, which three (3) areas do you think could be reduced with the least impact?



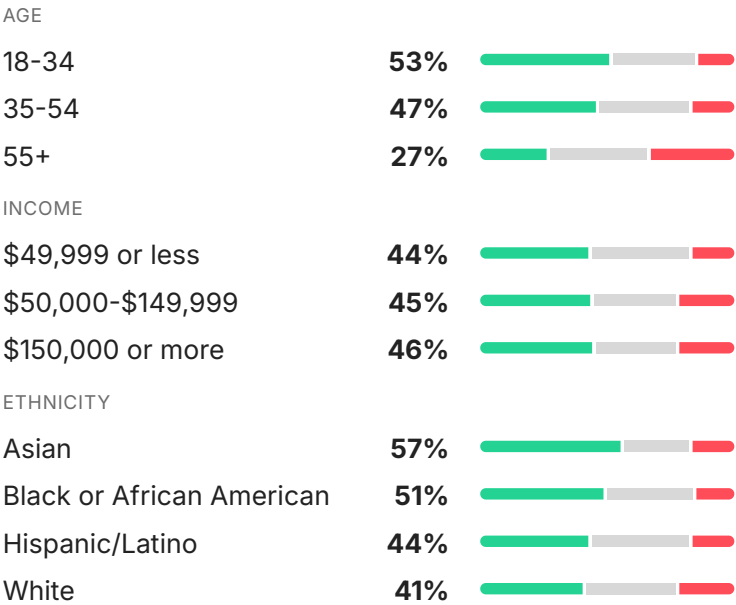
To view the full question breakdown, visit your Zencity [dashboard](#)

How well does your local government allocate funding to the most important community needs?

43%

Neutral
36%

Negative
21%



The Questionnaire

Questions	Choices
How long have you lived or worked in Houston?	0-5 years / 6-10 years / 11-20 years / 21-30 years / More than 30 years / Prefer not to say
How is the overall quality of life in Houston? *	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
How likely are you to recommend Houston as a place to live? *	1 - 5 Scale (Very unlikely - Very likely)
How likely are you to be living in Houston 5 years from now? *	1 - 5 Scale (Very unlikely - Very likely)
Availability of affordable housing *	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
What is the most important thing you think Houston can do to improve the availability of affordable housing?	Modify zoning or planning laws / Provide financial support for renters / Provide financial incentives for landlords / Develop policies that protect current affordable housing / Build and operate affordable housing units / Other
Availability of jobs that pay a living wage	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Access to quality health care services	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)

Questions	Choices
Access to quality education	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Availability of a variety of art and cultural events	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Ease of getting around by public transportation	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Sense of overall safety *	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
What is the most important thing you think Houston can do to improve your sense of overall safety?	Develop or improve crime prevention initiatives / Hire more police officers / Put more police officers on patrol / Reform police department practices / Reduce homelessness / Reduce poverty / Improved response times from emergency services / Other
Sense of community among residents	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Acceptance of residents of all backgrounds	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Ability for residents to give input to the Houston city government	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)

Questions	Choices
Overall cleanliness and maintenance *	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
What is the most important thing you think Houston can do to improve the overall cleanliness and maintenance of city facilities and city-maintained areas?	Clean up graffiti / Improve street and sidewalk conditions / Reduce homelessness / Maintain vacant property and land (e.g., weed control, removing junk and debris, requiring property owners of vacant properties to board up buildings, etc.) / Other
Quality of parks and recreational amenities	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Quality of waste and recycling services	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Quality of Fire Services	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
Overall quality of services provided by the city *	1 - 5 Scale (Poor - Excellent)
What is the #1 thing you think the Houston government does well?	Open Ended
What is the #1 thing you think the Houston government could do to improve its services?	Open Ended
How do you prefer to get around the city? *	By foot / Biking / Public transportation / Private vehicle (car, motorcycle, etc.) / E-scooters / e-bikes / Other

Questions	Choices
Which of the following would you most like to see improved around the city? *	Traffic congestion / Public transit / New bike lanes and paths / Parking / Traffic safety / Other
If your local government must make budget cuts, which three (3) areas do you think could be reduced with the least impact? *	Animal control / Economic development / Fire & Emergency Medical Services (Ambulances) / Housing / Libraries, Arts, and Culture / Parks & Recreation / Permitting and licensing / Police / Public health / Sanitation / Streets, lighting, and drainage / Sustainability programs / Transportation / Zoning
How well does your local government allocate funding to the most important community needs? *	Very well / Somewhat well / Neither well nor poorly / Somewhat poorly / Very poorly
In what year were you born? *	Open Ended
Which of the following do you identify as? *	Male / Female / Prefer to self-describe
Please state the gender you identify as.	Open Ended
Which one of these statements best describes your current situation? *	Full-time employed / Part-time employed / Unemployed / Student / Apprentice/intern / In retirement or early retirement / Permanently disabled / Fulfilling domestic tasks or looking after children/family / Prefer not to say / Other
Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? *	Yes / No / Prefer not to say
What is your race? *	White / Black or African American / American Indian or Alaska Native / Asian / Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, or other Pacific Islander / Prefer not to say / Other

Questions	Choices
Is your home: *	Owned by you or someone in your household, with or without a mortgage or loan? / Rented? / Occupied without payment of rent? / Prefer not to say
What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received? *	Less than a high school diploma / High school graduate or GED / Some college but no degree / Associate degree in college / Bachelor's degree (For example: BA, AB, BS) / Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MBA) / Professional School Degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD) / Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD) / Prefer not to say
Do any children under the age of 18 live in your household at least half of the time? *	Yes / No / Prefer not to say
Were you born in the United States? *	Yes, born in the United States / No, born outside the United States / Prefer not to say
Which category best represents your household's total income over the past year? *	\$14,999 or less / \$15,000-\$29,999 / \$30,000-\$49,999 / \$50,000-\$74,999 / \$75,000-\$99,999 / \$100,000-\$124,999 / \$125,000-\$149,999 / \$150,000-\$199,999 / \$200,000-\$299,999 / \$300,000 or more / Prefer not to say



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