

The National  
**CITIZEN SURVEY™**

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**Report of Results for the  
City of Tucson, Arizona**



Submitted by:

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# **SURVEY BACKGROUND**

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™**

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and The International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically reweighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The City of Tucson staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries we used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Tucson staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

# UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

## ***Survey Administration***

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 3,000 households, surveys were mailed to the same residences approximately one week later. A reminder letter and a new survey were sent to the same households after two weeks. Of the mailed postcards, 255 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 888 residents, for a response rate of 32%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey of 3,000 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 3 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the City of Tucson. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix II. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix III.)

## ***Survey Validity***

The question of survey validity has two parts: 1) how can we be confident that the results from our sample are representative of the results we would have gotten had we administered the survey to the entire population? and 2) how closely do the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do?

To answer the first question, we use the best survey research practices for the resources spent to assure that the results from the sample reflect the opinions of residents in the entire jurisdiction. These practices include:

- 1) Using a mail-out/mail-back methodology, which typically gets a higher response rate than phone for the same dollars spent.
- 2) Selecting households at random within the jurisdiction.

- 3) Over-sampling attached units to improve response from hard-to-reach, lower income, or younger apartment dwellers.
- 4) Selecting the respondent within the household using an unbiased sampling procedure<sup>1</sup>.
- 5) Contacting potential respondents three times to encourage response from people who may have different opinions or habits than those who would respond with only a single prompt.
- 6) Soliciting response on jurisdiction letterhead signed by the highest ranking elected official or staff member.
- 7) Providing a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
- 8) Offering the survey in Spanish when appropriate and requested by city officials.
- 9) Using the most recent available information about the characteristics of jurisdiction residents to reweight the data to reflect the demographics of the population.

The answer to the second question about how closely the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do is more complex. Resident responses to surveys are influenced by a variety of factors. For questions about service quality, residents' expectations for service quality play a role as well as the "objective" quality of the service provided, the way the resident perceives the entire community (that is, the context in which the service is provided), the scale on which the resident is asked to record her opinion and, of course, the opinion, itself, that a resident holds about the service. Similarly a resident's report of certain behaviors is colored by what he or she believes is the socially desirable response (e.g. reporting tolerant behaviors toward "oppressed groups," likelihood of voting a tax increase for services to poor people, use of alternative modes of travel to work besides the single occupancy vehicle), her memory of the actual behavior (if it is not a question speculating about future actions, like a vote), her confidence that she can be honest without suffering any

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<sup>1</sup> *The birthday method requests that the respondent in the household be the adult (18 years old or older) who most recently had a birthday, irrespective of year of birth.*

negative consequences (thus the need for anonymity) as well as the actual behavior itself.

How closely survey results come to recording the way a person really feels or behaves often is measured by the coincidence of reported behavior with observed current behavior (e.g. driving habits), reported intentions to behave with observed future behavior (e.g. voting choices) or reported opinions about current community quality with objective characteristics of the community (e.g. feelings of safety correlated with rates of crime). There is a body of scientific literature that has investigated the relationship between reported behaviors and actual behaviors. Well-conducted surveys, by and large, do capture true respondent behaviors or intentions to act with great accuracy. Predictions of voting outcomes tend to be quite accurate using survey research, as do reported behaviors that are not about highly sensitive issues (e.g. family abuse or other illegal or morally sanctioned activities). For self-reports about highly sensitive issues, statistical adjustments can be made to correct for the respondents' tendency to report what they think the "correct" response should be.

Research on the correlation of resident opinion about service quality and "objective" ratings of service quality tend to be ambiguous, some showing stronger relationships than others. NRC's own research has demonstrated that residents who report the lowest ratings of street repair live in communities with objectively worse street conditions than those who report high ratings of street repair (based on road quality, delay in street repair, number of road repair employees). Similarly, the lowest rated fire services appear to be "objectively" worse than the highest rated fire services (expenditures per capita, response time, "professional" status of fire fighters, breadth of services and training provided). Whether some research confirms or disconfirms that relationship between what residents think about a community and what can be seen "objectively" in a community, we have argued that resident opinion is a perspective that cannot be ignored by government administrators. Elsewhere we have written, "If you collect trash three times a day but residents think that your trash haul is lousy, you still have a problem."

### ***Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale***

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity is one we did not want to dismiss because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

### ***“Don’t Know” Responses***

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix I. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

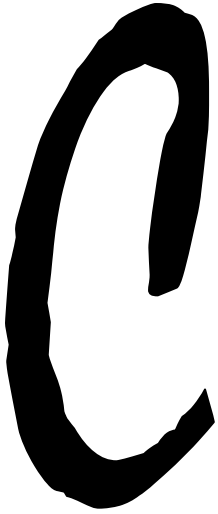
For two of the items related to crime victimization and crime reporting, “don’t know” responses were not removed. These questions were not evaluative; rather, respondents were asked if they or any member of their household had been a victim of a crime within the last year. If they were, they were then asked whether the crime had been reported to police.

### ***Putting Evaluations Onto a 100-Point Scale***

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 4 representing the best rating and 1 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 3 points based on all respondents.

### ***Interpreting Comparisons to Previous Years***

This report contains comparisons with prior years’ results. In this report, we are comparing 2004 data with 2001 data in the graphs. In the graphs, there are two separate representations labeled by year. The table following a graph contains 2004 data only, and is labeled accordingly.



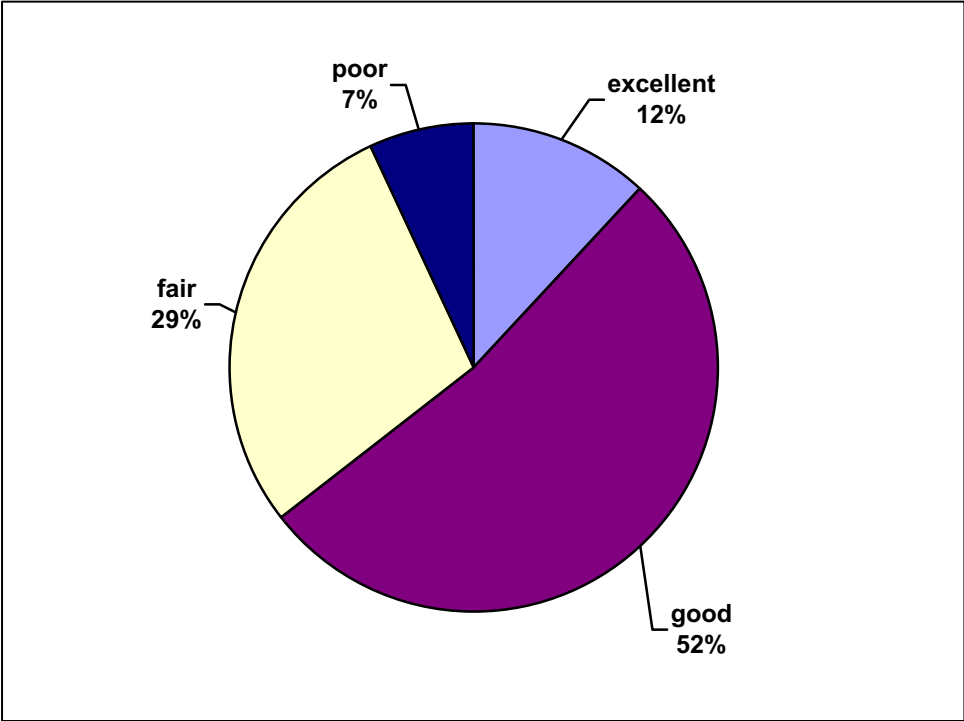
# COMMUNITY LIFE

The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to the life of residents in the community. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as other aspects of quality of life in Tucson. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Tucson. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Tucson.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

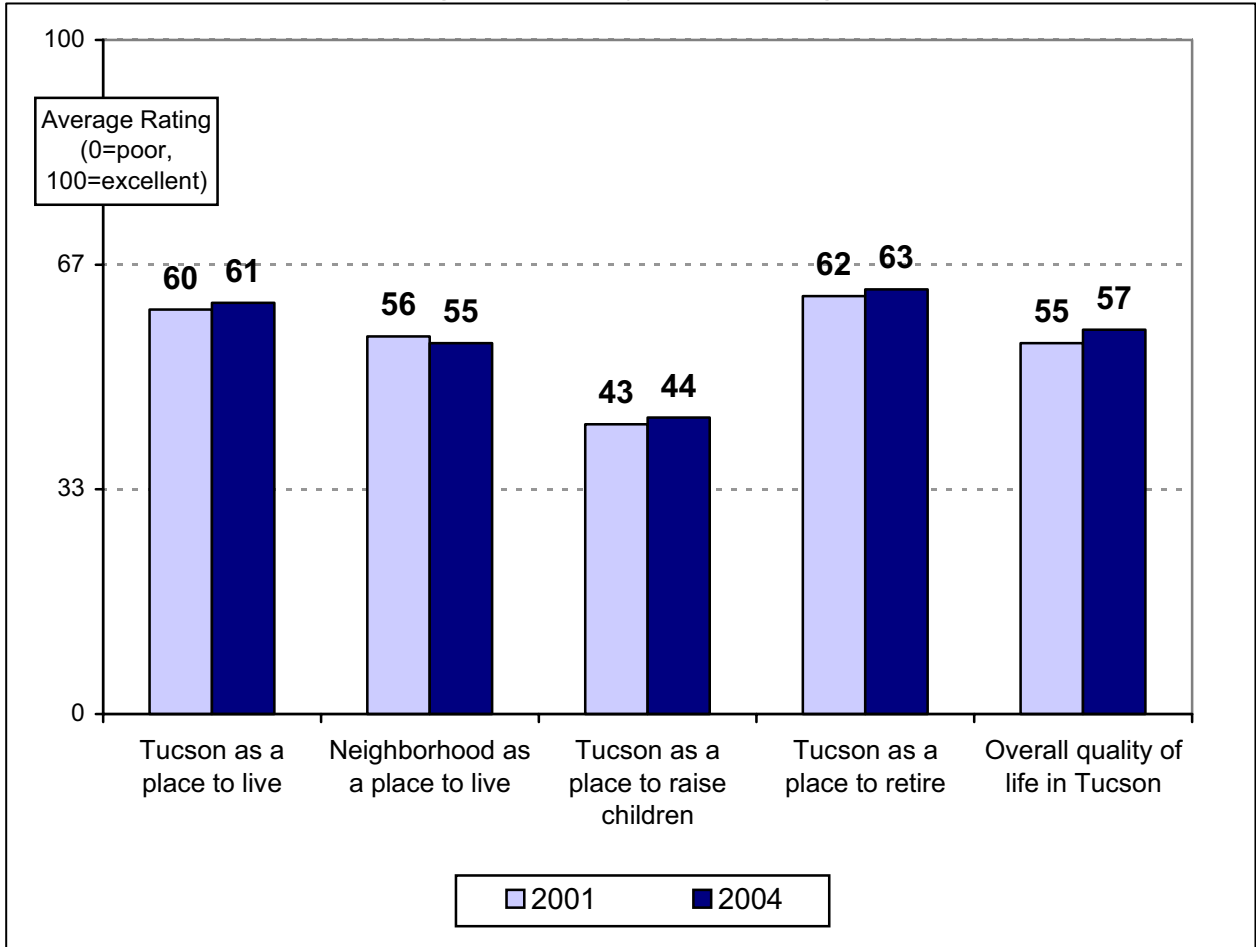
When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Tucson, 12% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 7% rated overall quality of life as “poor.”

Figure 1: Overall Quality of Life in Tucson



The average rating of overall quality of life on a 100-point scale was 55 in 2001. In 2004, the rating was 57. Tucson as a place to raise children received an average rating of 43 on a 100-point scale in 2001, compared to 44 in 2004. Other ratings can be seen in the charts below.

**Figure 2: Quality of Life Ratings**



**Figure 2b: 2004 Quality of Life Ratings**

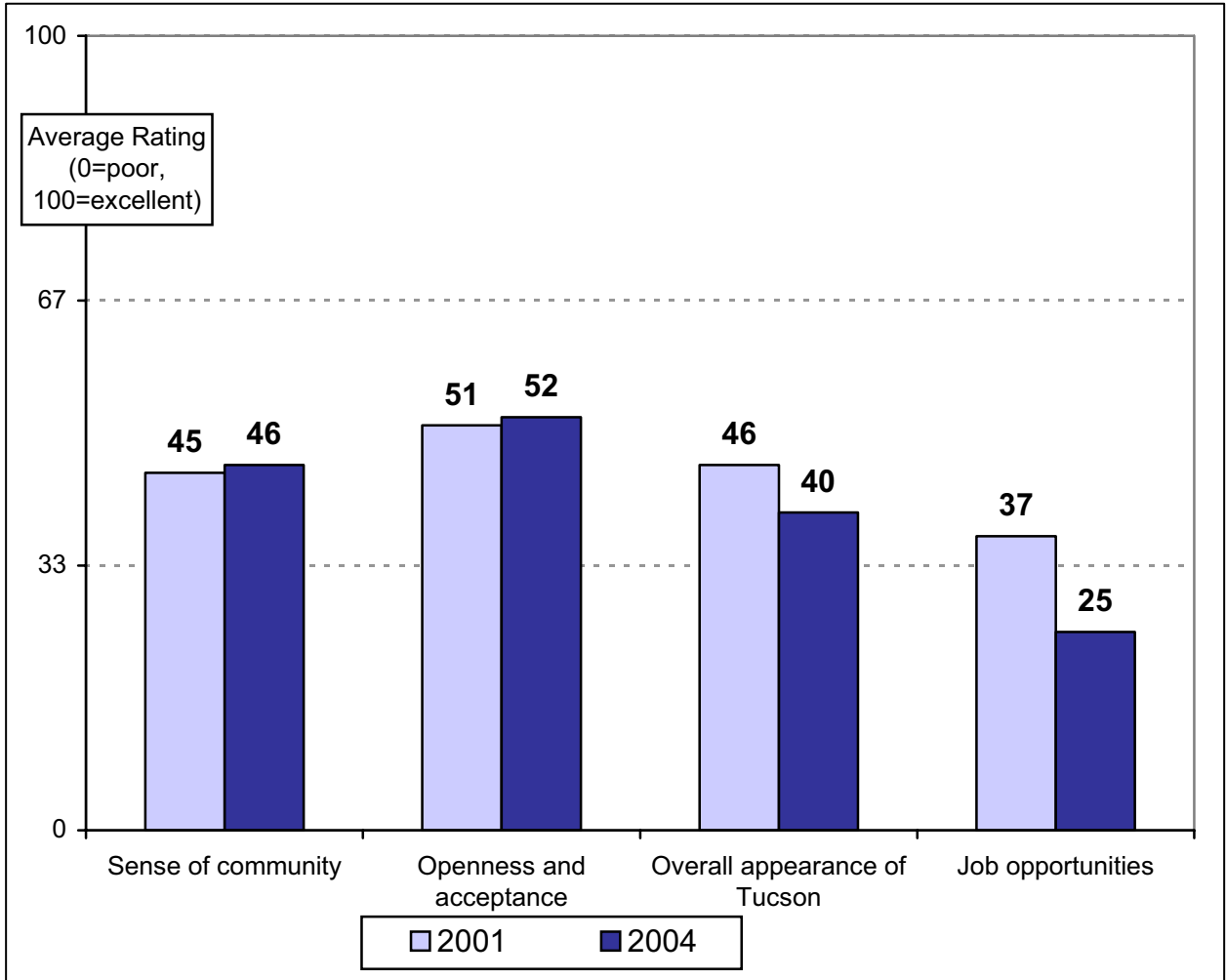
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
How do you rate Tucson as a place to live?	19%	52%	24%	6%	100%
How do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live?	14%	49%	25%	12%	100%
How do you rate Tucson as a place to raise children?	8%	36%	36%	20%	100%
How do you rate Tucson as a place to retire?	25%	48%	19%	8%	100%
How do you rate the overall quality of life in Tucson?	12%	53%	29%	7%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

# RATINGS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS IN TUCSON

In 2004, the highest rated characteristics of Tucson were Openness and Acceptance, Sense of Community, and Overall Appearance of Tucson. The average rating on a 100-point scale given to Openness and Acceptance in 2004 was 52 compared to 51 in 2001. Average ratings given to all the characteristics are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

**Figure 3: Characteristics of the Community:  
General and Opportunities**

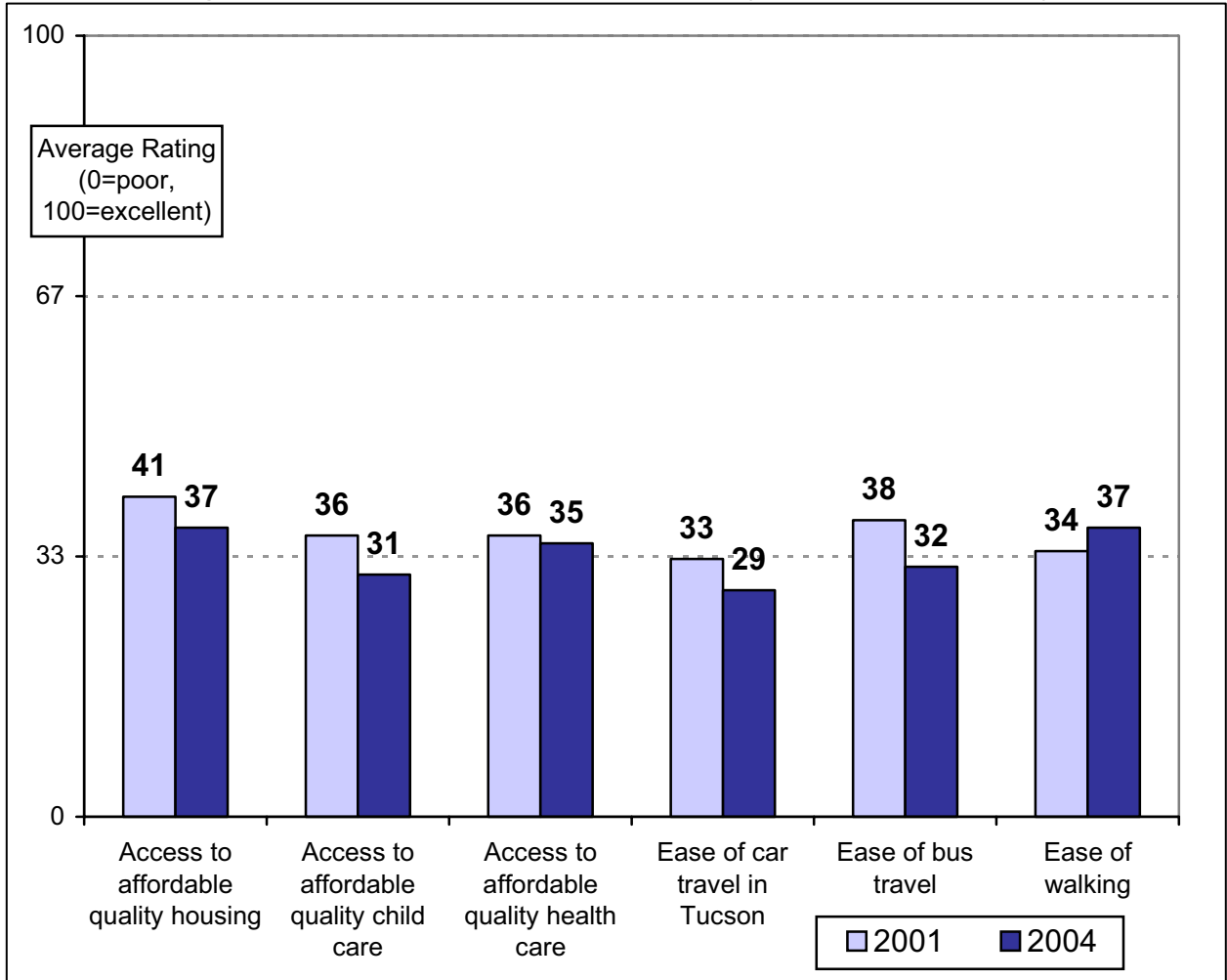


**Figure 3b: 2004 Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Sense of community	6%	39%	42%	13%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	10%	48%	32%	10%	100%
Overall appearance of Tucson	5%	30%	45%	20%	100%
Job opportunities	3%	15%	37%	45%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 4: Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility**



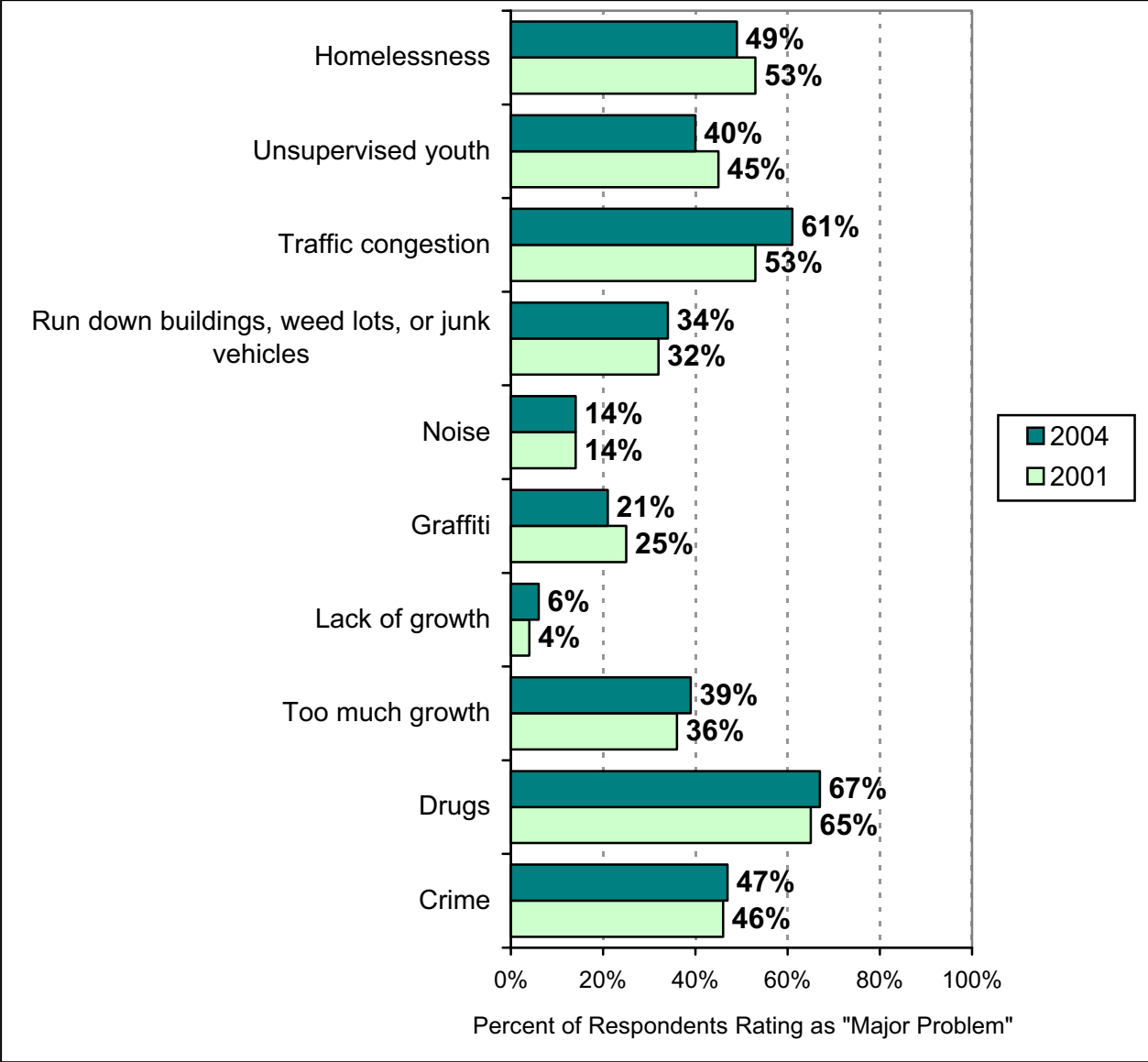
**Figure 4b: 2004 Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Access to affordable quality housing	6%	25%	42%	26%	100%
Access to affordable quality child care	3%	22%	42%	33%	100%
Access to affordable quality health care	6%	24%	39%	31%	100%
Ease of car travel in Tucson	4%	20%	37%	40%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Tucson	6%	22%	35%	37%	100%
Ease of walking in Tucson	5%	30%	37%	28%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

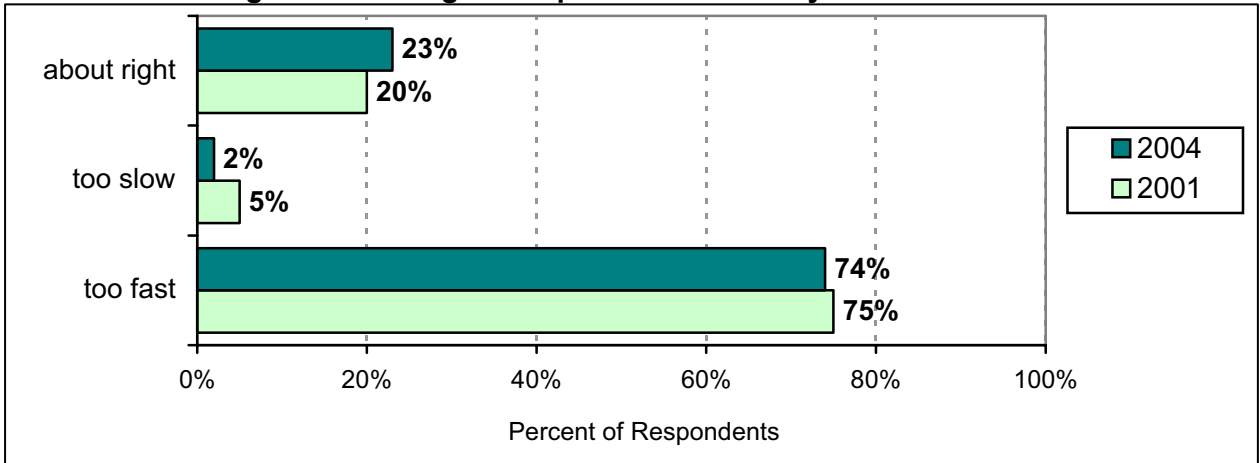
When asked about potential problems in Tucson, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” in 2004 were Drugs, Traffic Congestion, and Homelessness. In 2004 67% rated Drugs as a “major problem” compared to 65% in 2001.

**Figure 5: Ratings of Potential Problems in Tucson**

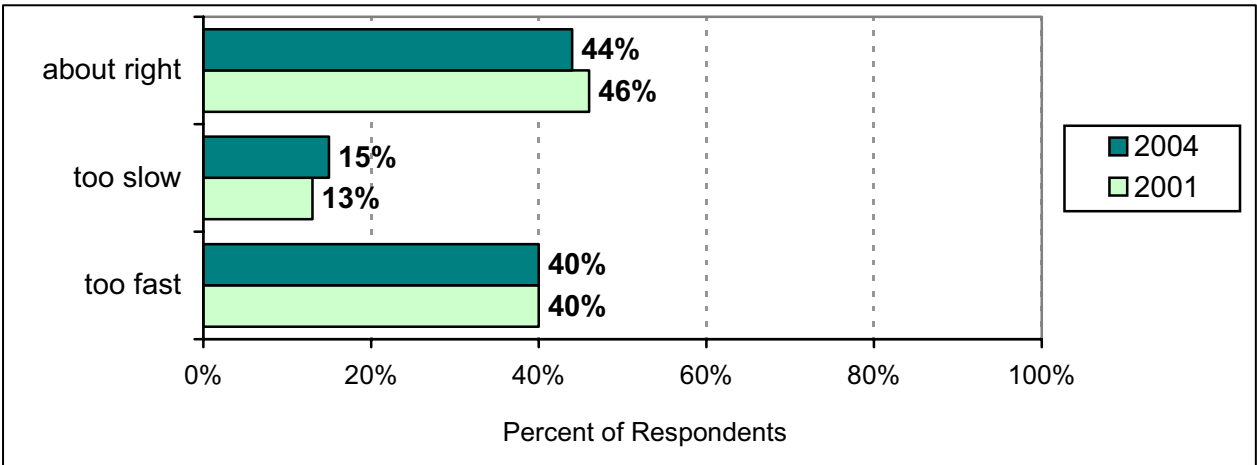


In 2004, the rate of population growth in Tucson was viewed as “too fast” by 74% of respondents, while 2% thought it was “too slow.”

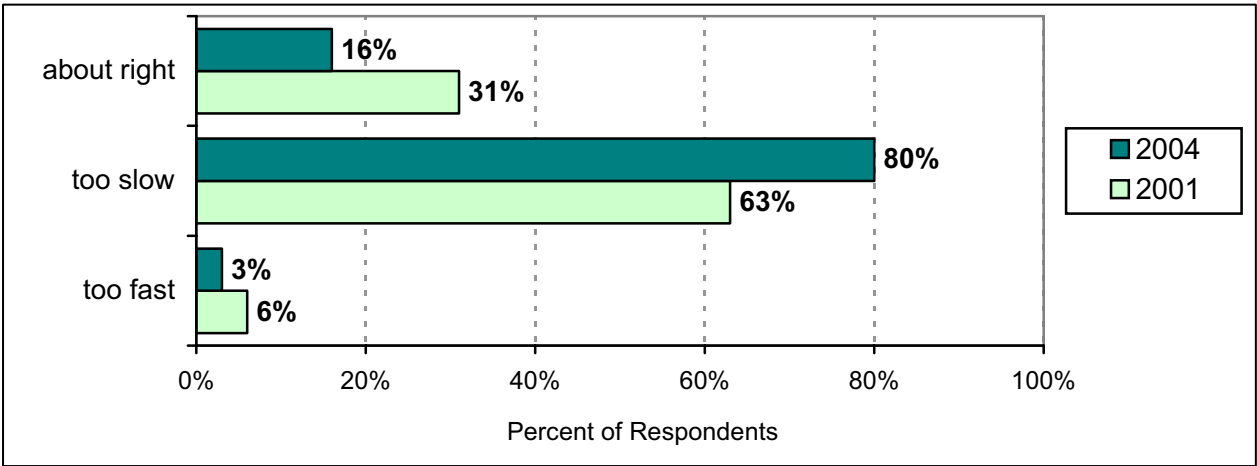
**Figure 6a: Ratings of Population Growth by Year in Tucson**



**Figure 6b: Ratings of Retail Growth by Year in Tucson**



**Figure 6c: Ratings of Jobs Growth by Year in Tucson**

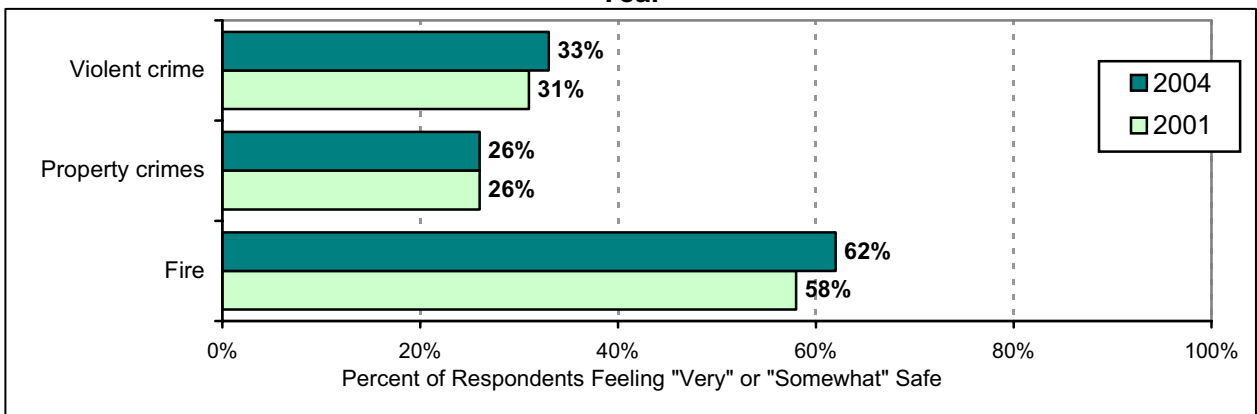


# PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

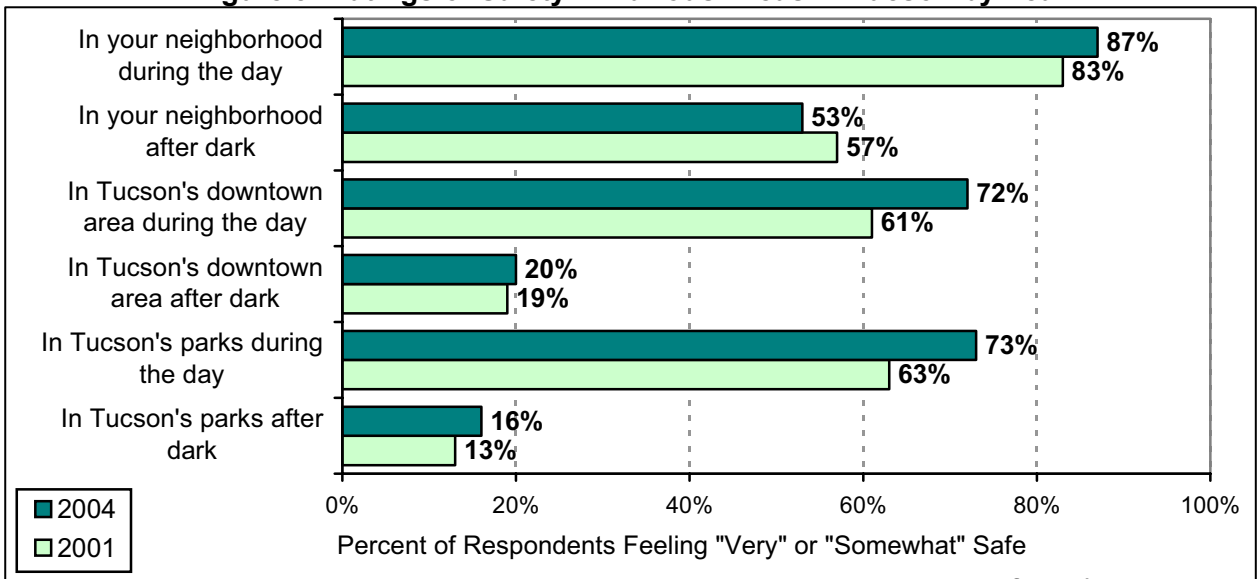
When evaluating safety in the community, 33% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Tucson in 2004, compared to 31% in 2001. In their neighborhood after dark, 53% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe” in 2004, compared to 57% in 2001. 73% of respondents reported feeling “somewhat” or “very safe” in Tucson parks during the day, up from 63% in 2001.

In 2004, as assessed by the survey, 29% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. In 2001, 27% of households had reported that at least one member had been a crime victim. Of those who had been the victim of a crime in 2004, 76% had reported it to police.

**Figure 7: Ratings of Safety from Various Problems in Tucson by Year**

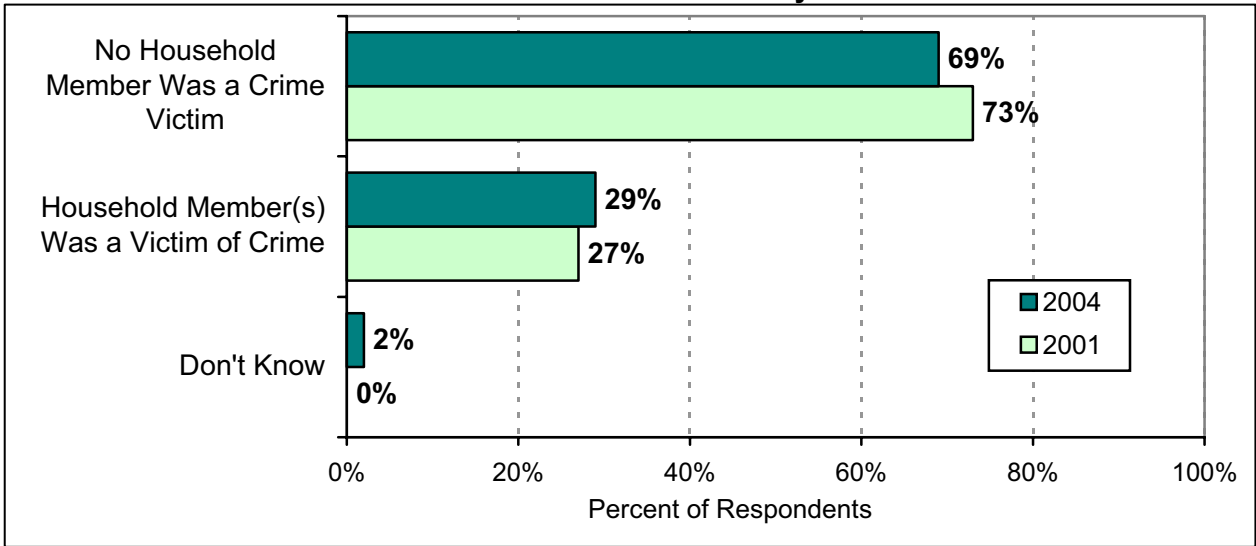


**Figure 8: Ratings of Safety in Various Areas in Tucson by Year**

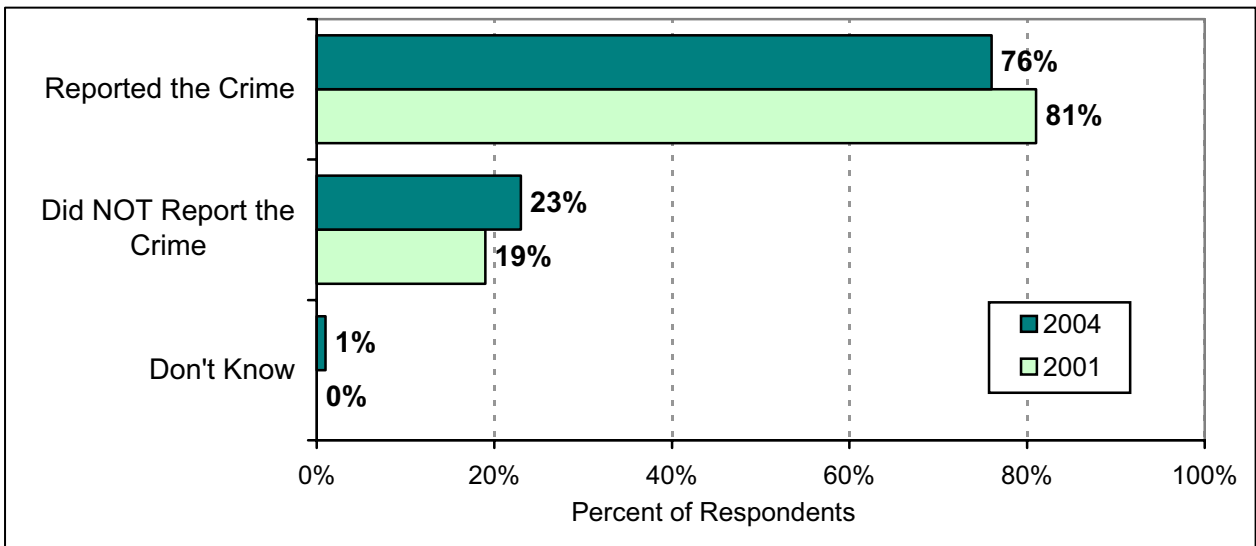


Report of Results

**Figure 9: Percent of Respondents' Households That Were Victim of a Crime in the Last 12 Months by Year**



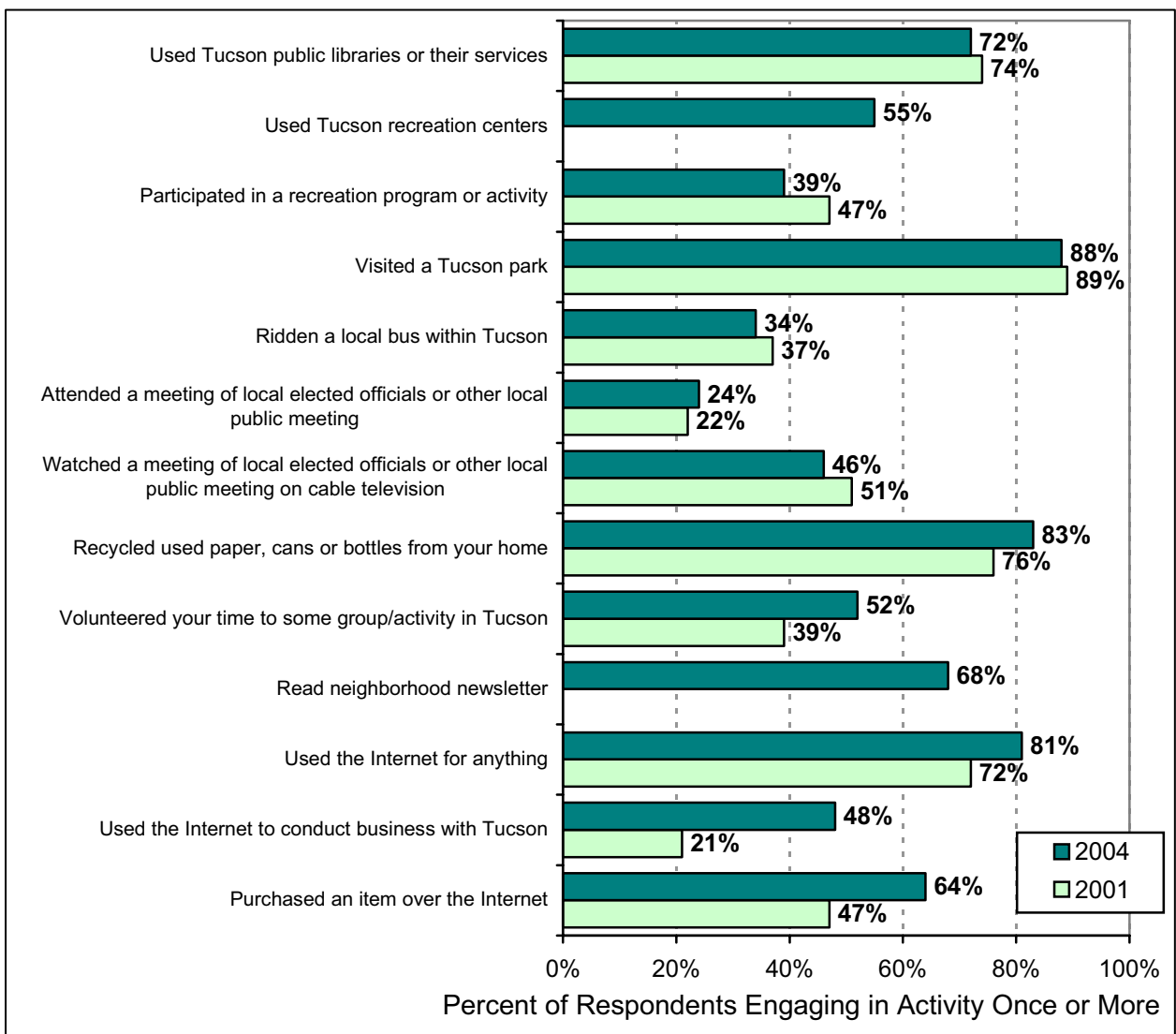
**Figure 10: Percent of Respondents' Households That Were Victim of a Crime Who Reported the Crime by Year**



# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

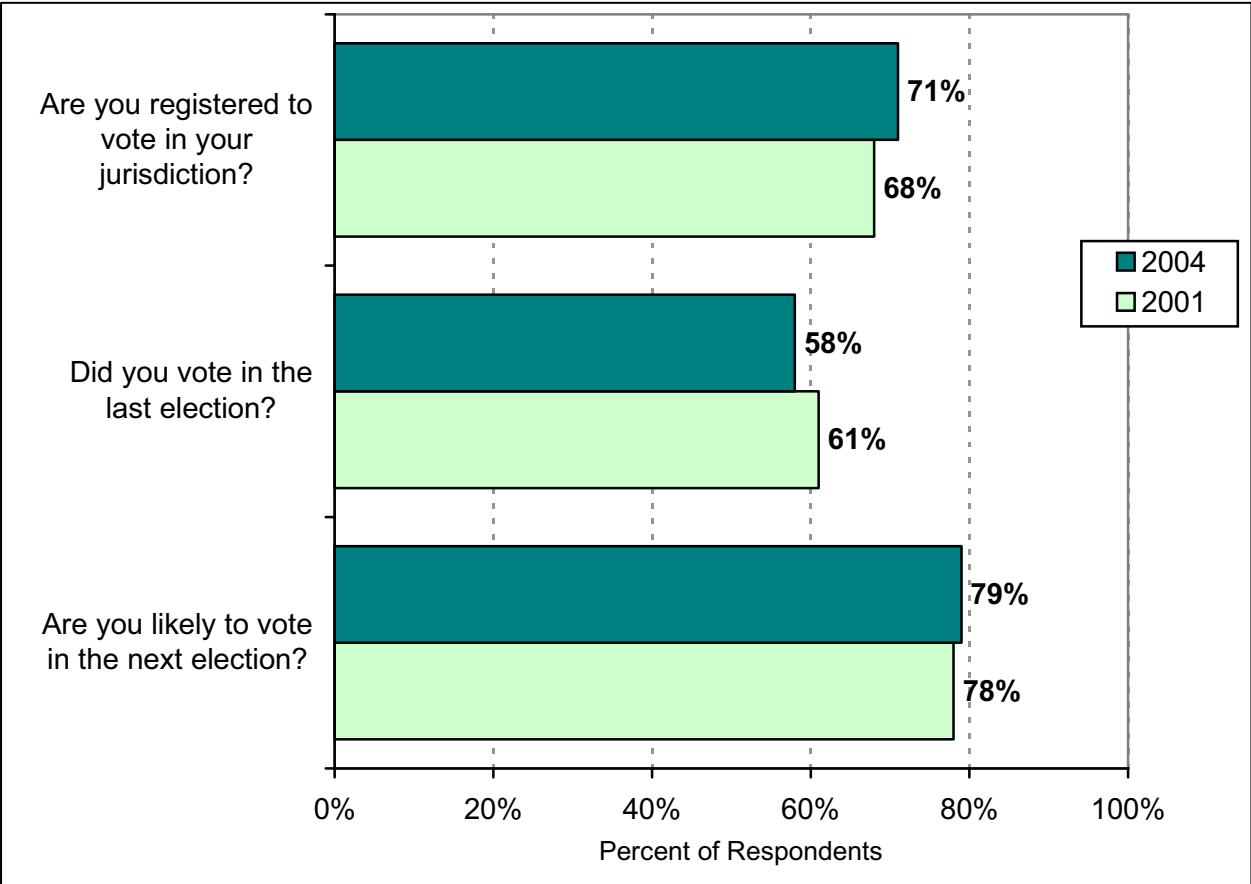
Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Tucson during the past year was assessed on the survey. The proportion of respondents engaging in various activities is shown in the chart below, with comparisons made between 2004 and 2001. Among those completing the questionnaire in 2004, 48% reported using the internet to conduct business with the City of Tucson in the past year compared to 21% in 2001. 83% of residents completing the survey reported recycling used paper, cans or bottles from their homes, up from 76% in 2001.

**Figure 11: Percent of Respondents Engaging in Various Activities in Tucson in the Last 12 Months by Year**

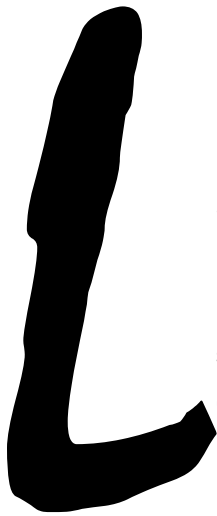


Voter status was also estimated.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 12: Voter Status by Year



<sup>2</sup> In general on a survey, a greater proportion of people will report having voted, than actual voting records verify.



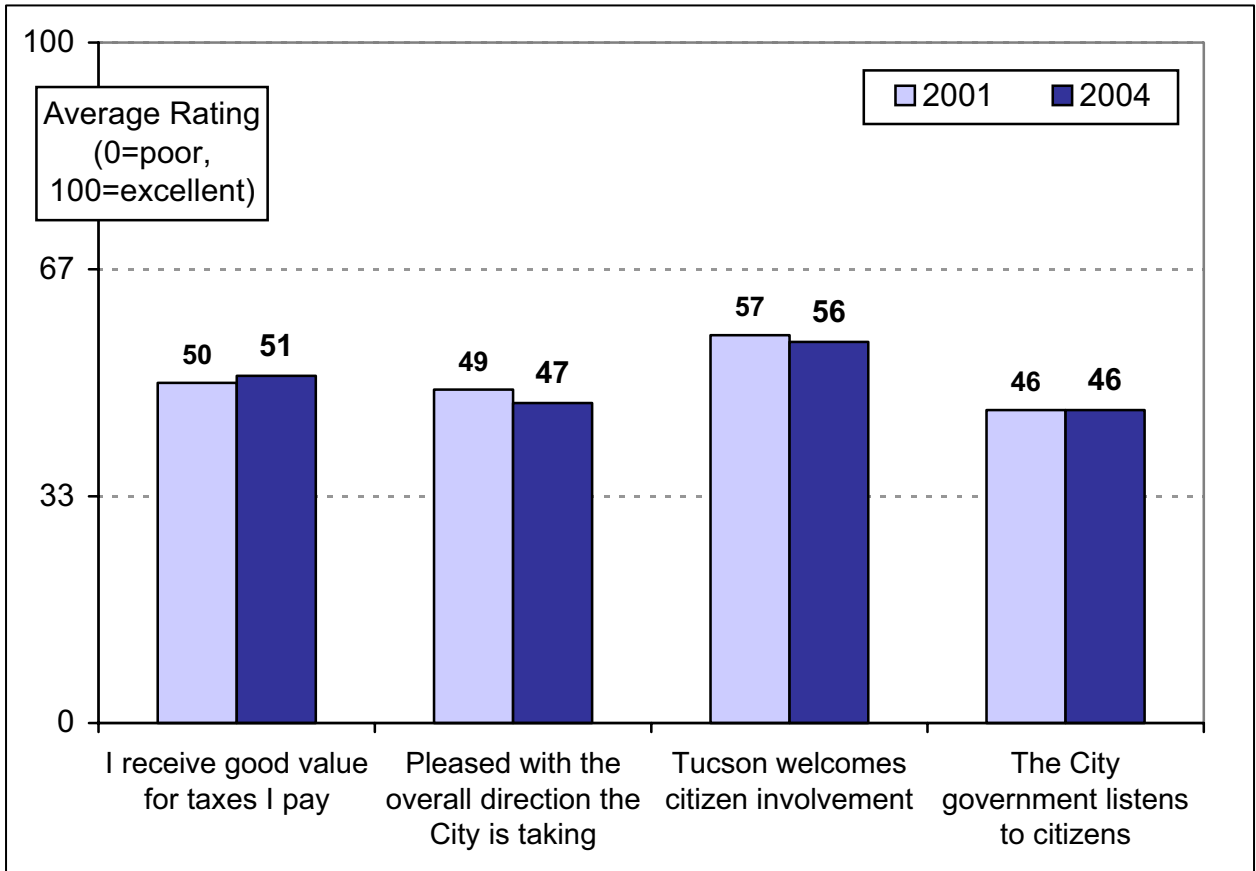
# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Tucson were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey.™ They were asked how much trust they placed in their local government, and what they felt about the services they receive from the City of Tucson. Those who had any contact with a City of Tucson employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

## PUBLIC TRUST

When asked to evaluate whether they were pleased with the overall direction taken by the City of Tucson, residents gave an average rating of 47 on a 100-point scale.

Figure 13: Ratings of Public Trust by Year

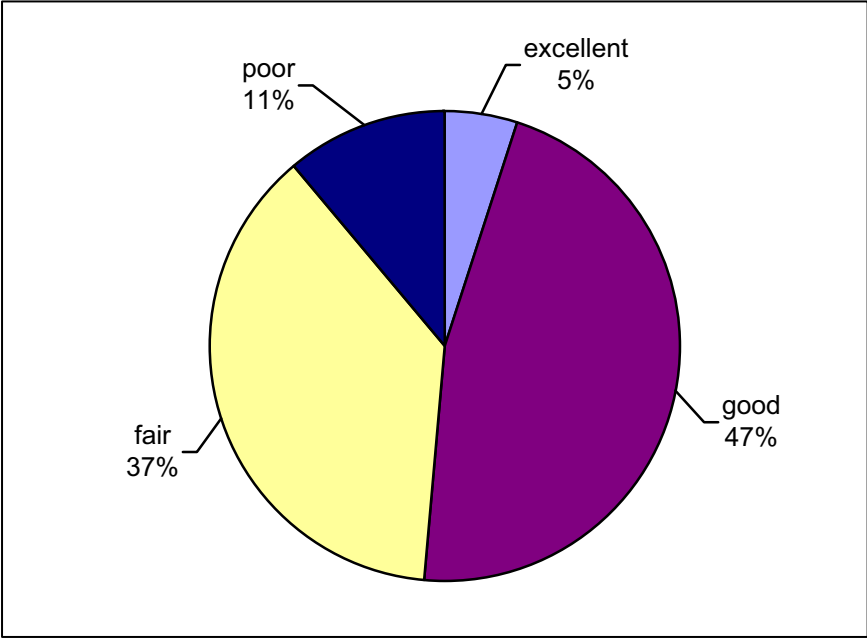


<b>Figure 13b: 2004 Public Trust Ratings</b>						
	<b>strongly agree</b>	<b>somewhat agree</b>	<b>neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>somewhat disagree</b>	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
I receive good value for the City of Tucson taxes I pay	5%	36%	26%	21%	11%	100%
I am pleased with the overall direction that the City of Tucson is taking	5%	27%	30%	26%	12%	100%
The City of Tucson government welcomes citizen involvement	9%	34%	36%	13%	8%	100%
The City of Tucson government listens to citizens	4%	26%	33%	20%	16%	100%
Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed						

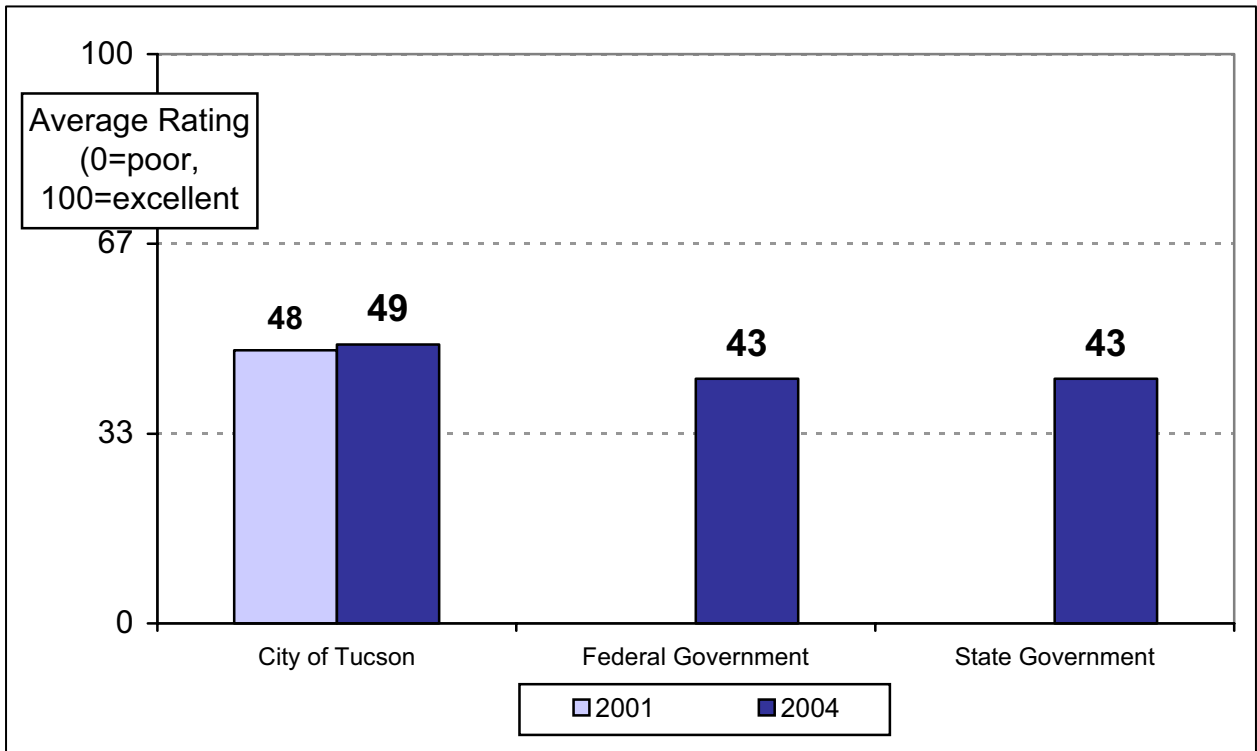
# SERVICES PROVIDED BY TUCSON

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Tucson was rated as 49 on a 100-point scale in 2004, compared to 48 in 2001. Ratings given to specific services are shown on the following pages.

**Figure 14: Overall Quality of Services Provided by the City of Tucson in 2004**



**Figure 15: Rating of Overall Quality of Services Provided by Various Levels of Government by Year**

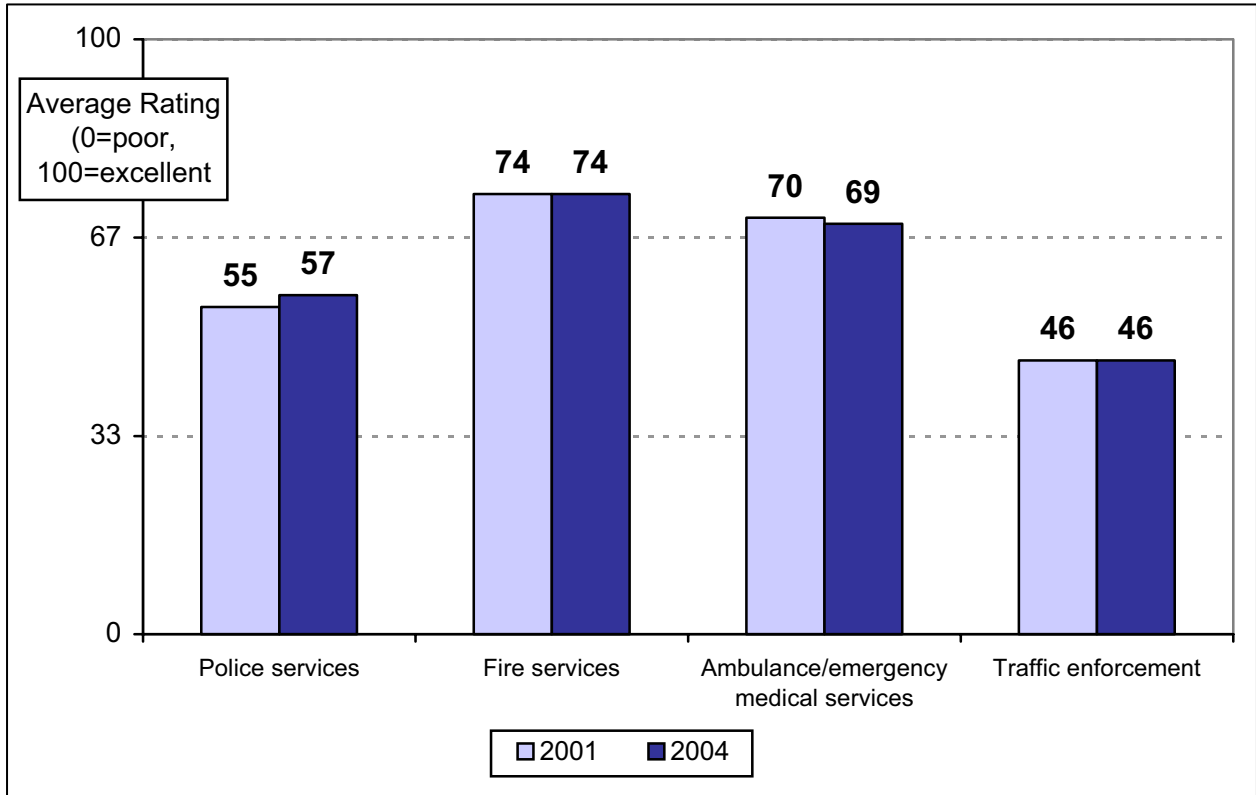


**Figure 15b: 2004 Overall Quality of Services: City of Tucson, Federal Government and State Government**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the City of Tucson?	5%	46%	37%	11%	100%
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the Federal Government?	5%	36%	40%	18%	100%
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the State Government?	4%	38%	42%	16%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 16: Quality of Public Safety Services by Year**

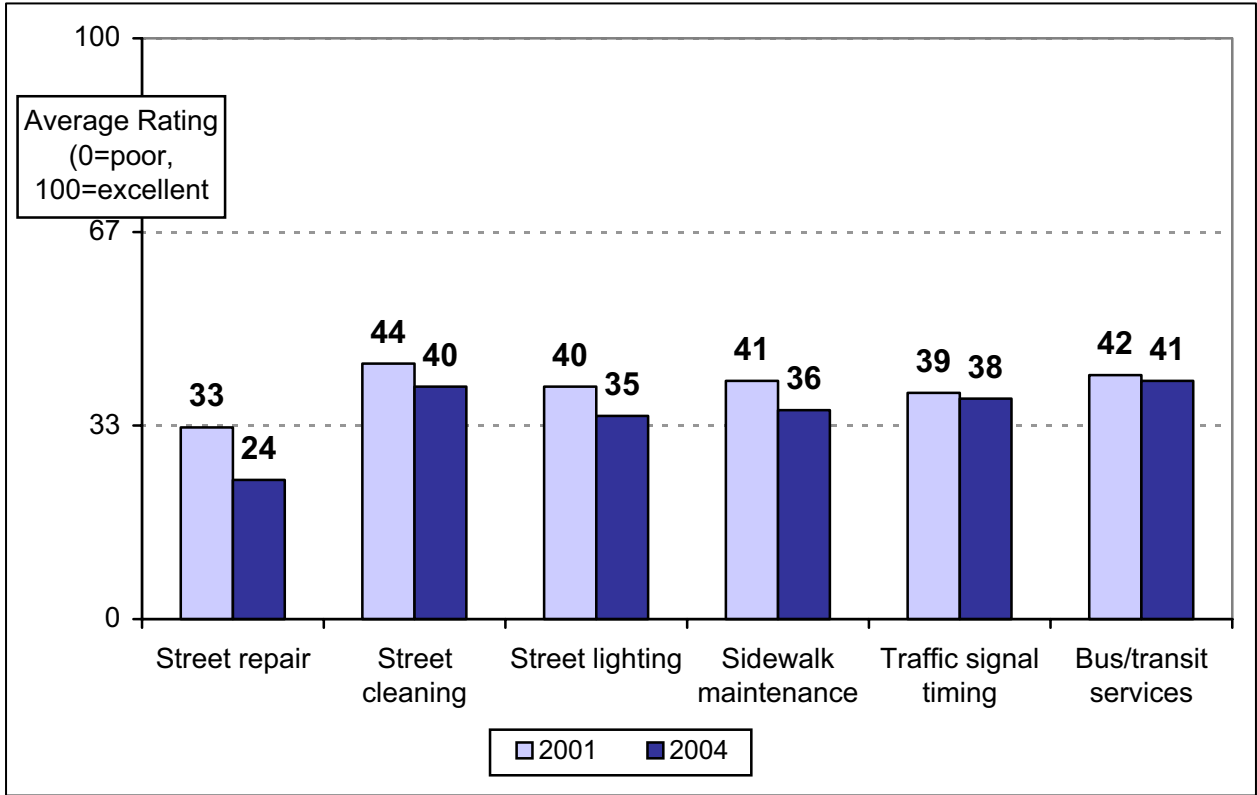


**Figure 16b: 2004 Quality of Public Safety Services**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Police services	17%	47%	26%	9%	100%
Fire services	35%	55%	9%	1%	100%
Ambulance/emergency medical services	28%	53%	15%	3%	100%
Traffic enforcement	10%	39%	30%	21%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 17: Quality of Transportation Services by Year**

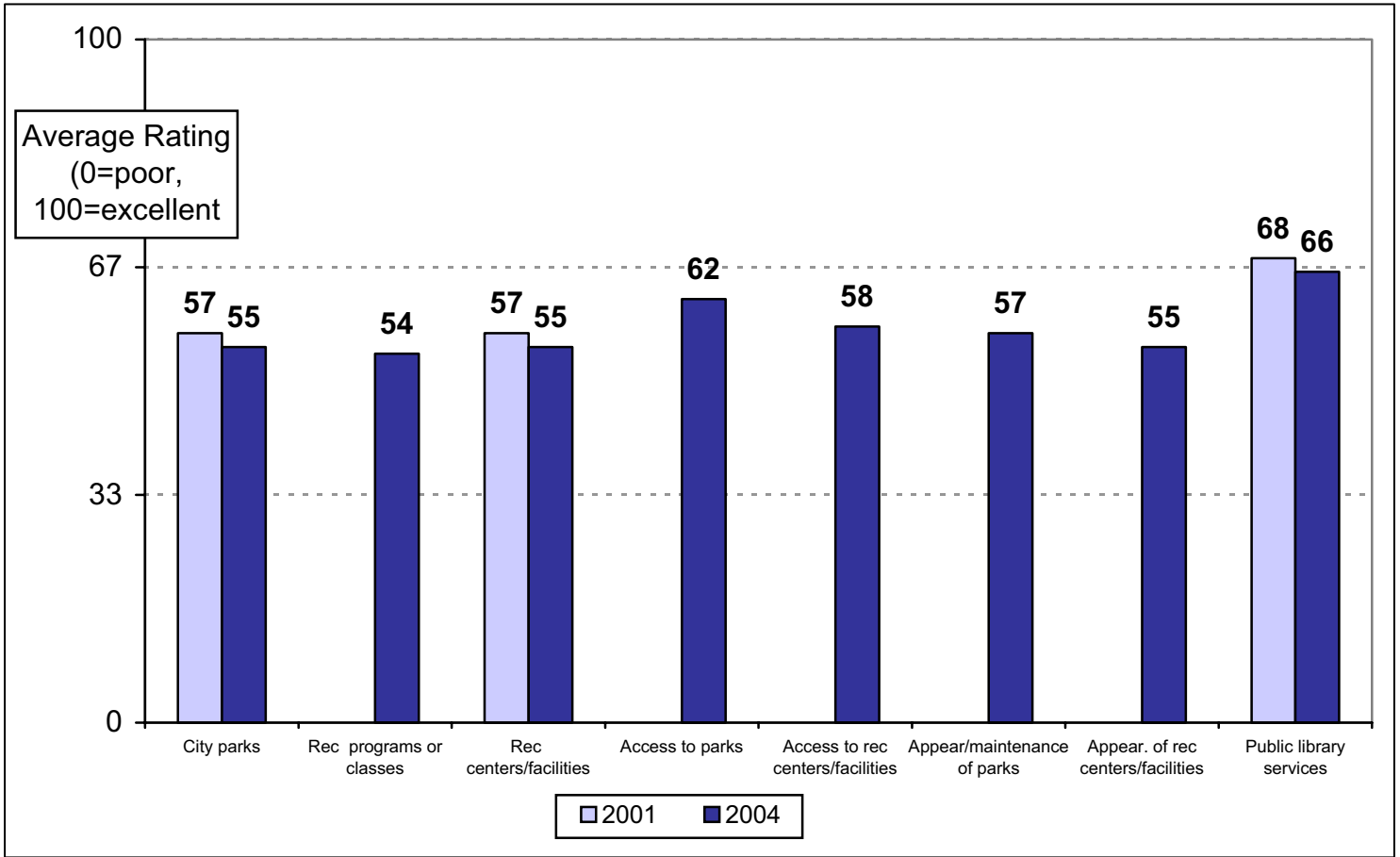


**Figure 17b: 2004 Quality of Transportation Services**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Street repair	2%	17%	29%	51%	100%
Street cleaning	7%	28%	42%	23%	100%
Street lighting	8%	25%	32%	35%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	6%	26%	37%	31%	100%
Traffic signal timing	6%	29%	38%	27%	100%
Bus/transit services	9%	33%	31%	27%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 18: Quality of Leisure Services by Year**

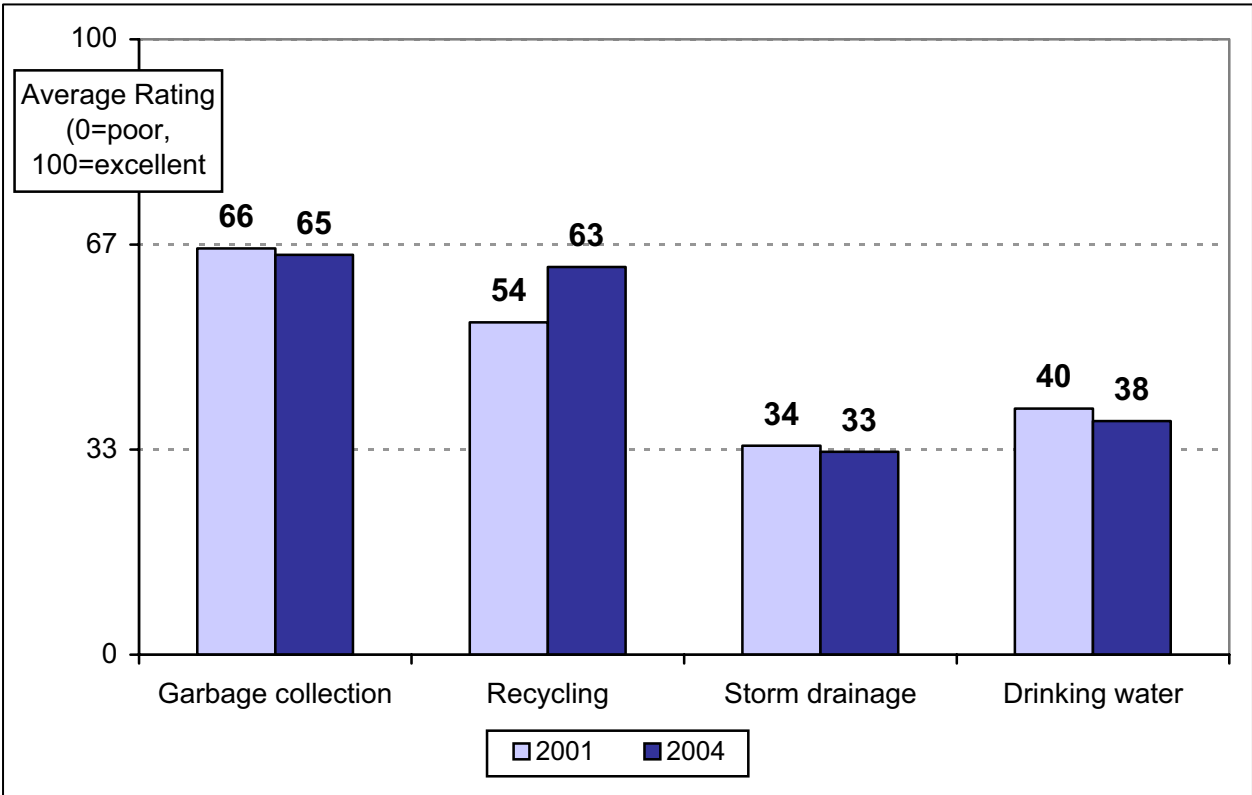


**Figure 18b: 2004 Quality of Leisure Services**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
City parks	12%	48%	33%	7%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	11%	48%	35%	6%	100%
Recreation centers/facilities	11%	49%	34%	7%	100%
Accessibility of parks	17%	54%	26%	3%	100%
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	14%	52%	28%	5%	100%
Appearance/maintenance of parks	12%	51%	31%	6%	100%
Appearance of recreation centers/facilities	10%	52%	33%	5%	100%
Public library services	24%	52%	21%	2%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 19: Quality of Utility Services by Year**

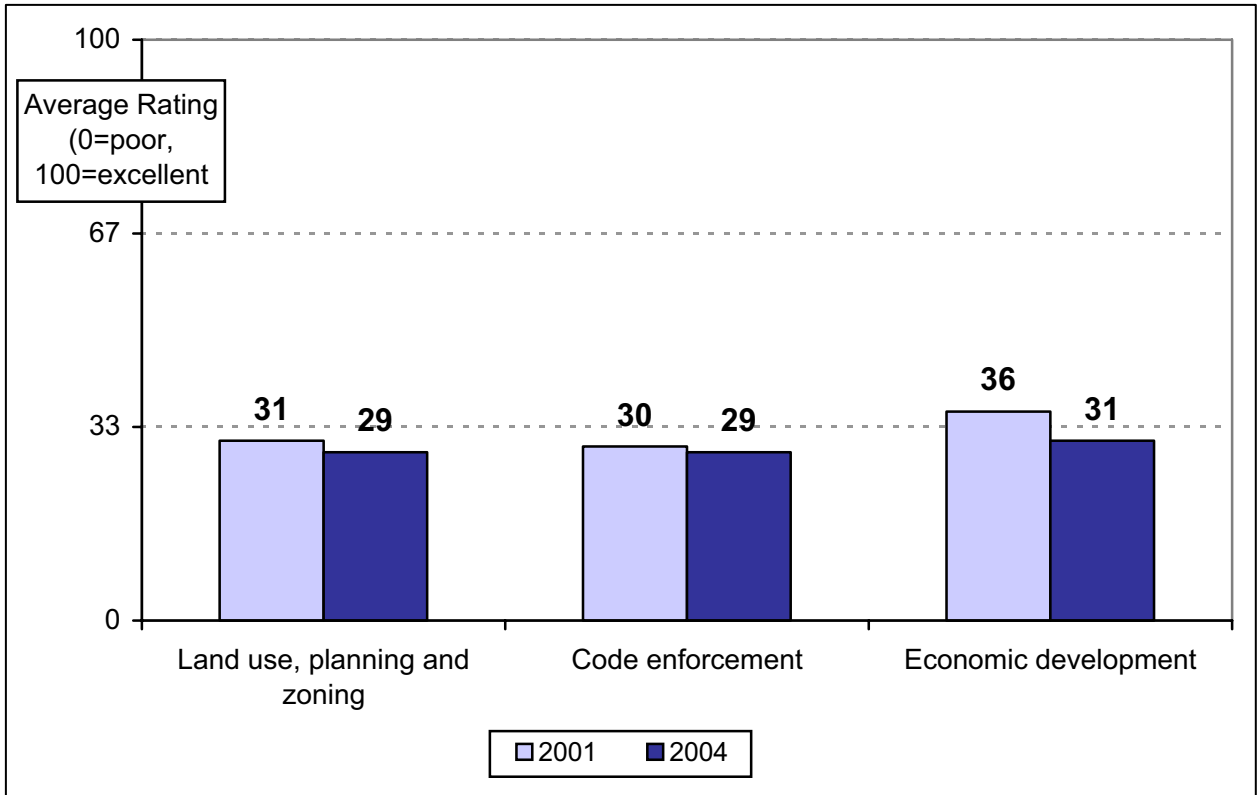


**Figure 19b: 2004 Quality of Utility Services**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Garbage collection	26%	50%	17%	6%	100%
Recycling	29%	43%	18%	10%	100%
Storm drainage	5%	23%	39%	33%	100%
Drinking water	6%	30%	34%	30%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 20: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services by Year**

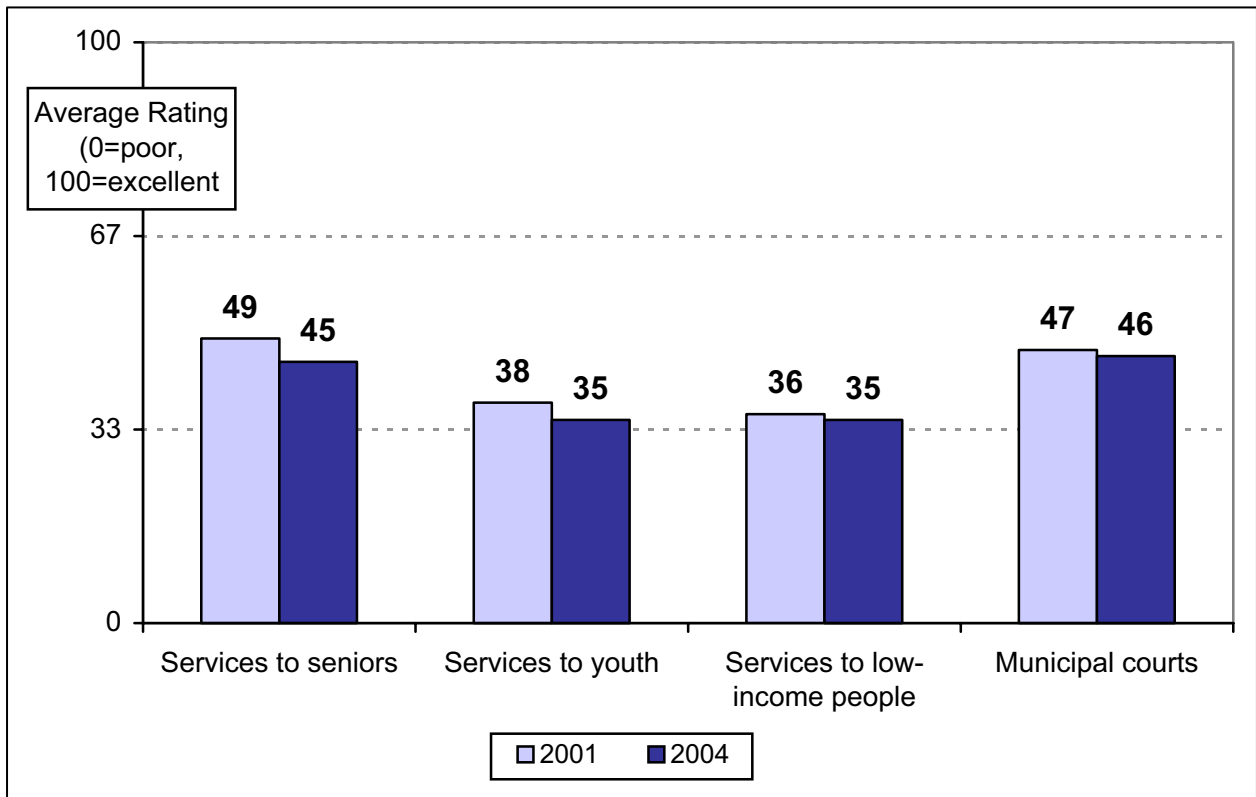


**Figure 20b: 2004 Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services**

	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Land use, planning and zoning	3%	20%	38%	39%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	4%	18%	37%	41%	100%
Economic development	3%	22%	42%	33%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 21: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services by Year**



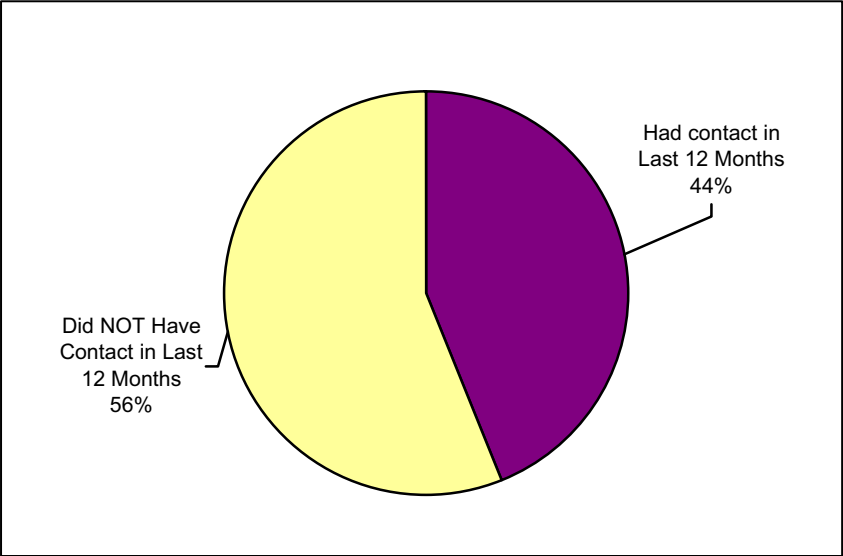
	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Services to seniors	10%	33%	38%	19%	100%
Services to youth	5%	25%	40%	30%	100%
Services to low-income people	6%	26%	34%	33%	100%
Municipal courts	8%	38%	37%	17%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

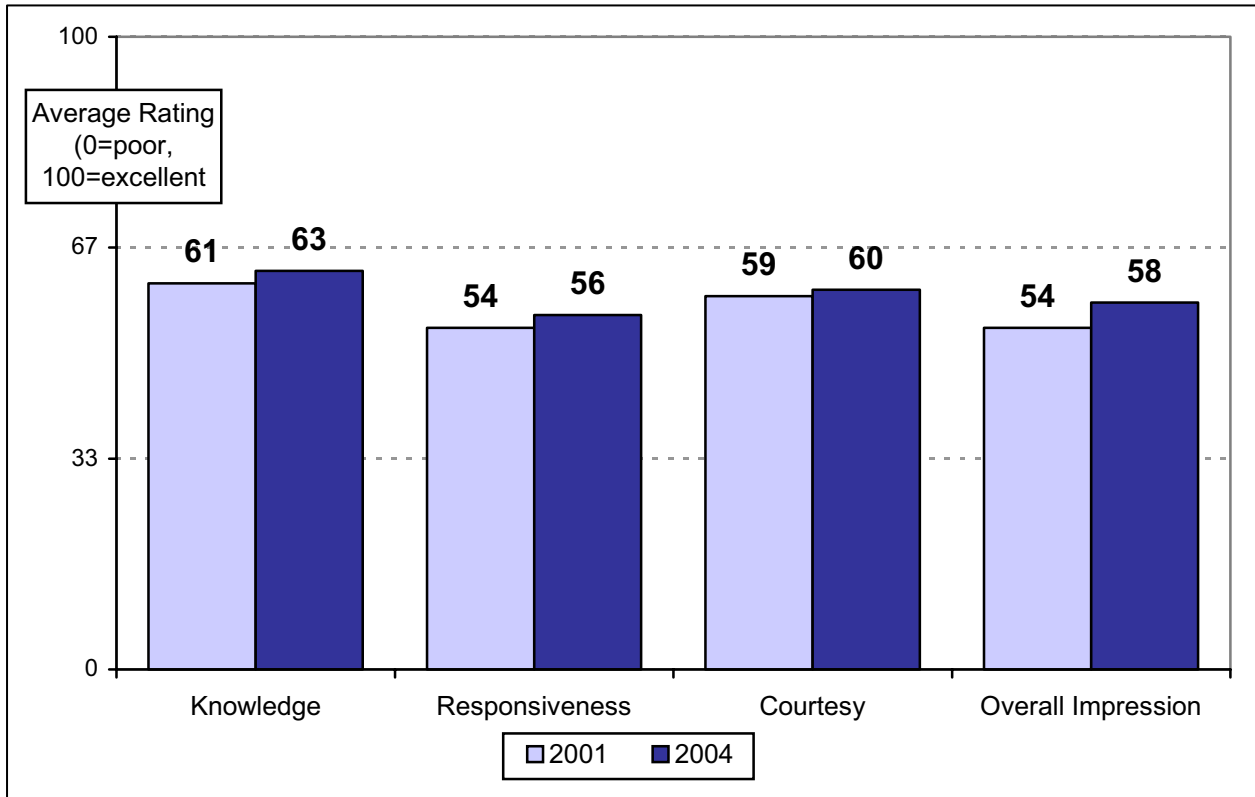
# THE CITY OF TUCSON EMPLOYEES

Impressions of the City of Tucson employees were assessed on the questionnaire. In 2004, those who had been in contact with a City of Tucson employee in the past year (44%) rated their overall impression as 58 on a 100-point scale, compared to an average rating of 54 received in 2001.

**Figure 22: Percent of Respondents Who Had Contact with a City of Tucson Employee in 2004**

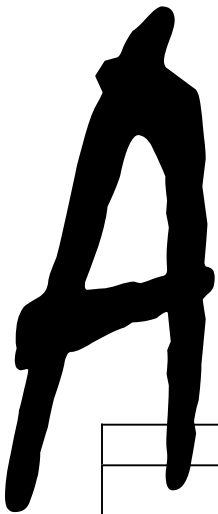


**Figure 23: Ratings of Contact with the City of Tucson Employees by Year**



	excellent	good	fair	poor	Total
Knowledge	22%	53%	17%	8%	100%
Responsiveness	22%	43%	18%	17%	100%
Courtesy	25%	47%	14%	15%	100%
Overall Impression	22%	45%	19%	15%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed



## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Three additional questions were asked by the City of Tucson. The results for these questions are displayed below.

**Figure 24: Importance of each service to the quality of life in Tucson**

	essential	very important	somewhat important	not at all important	Total
Public Safety	71%	24%	5%	1%	100%
Parks	25%	46%	27%	2%	100%
Recreational Programs	19%	45%	33%	3%	100%
Public transit	43%	41%	13%	3%	100%
City road improvements	48%	36%	13%	3%	100%
Street maintenance & repair	49%	40%	10%	1%	100%
Library	34%	45%	19%	2%	100%
Land use planning	41%	42%	16%	2%	100%
Water quality & supply	69%	28%	3%	0%	100%
Environmental Services	56%	38%	7%	0%	100%
Social Services	40%	38%	19%	3%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

**Figure 25: To what extent would you support paying more for each of the following services to avoid reductions or eliminations**

	strongly support	somewhat support	neither support nor oppose	somewhat oppose	strongly oppose	Total
Public Safety	62%	22%	9%	3%	5%	100%
Parks	20%	37%	27%	10%	6%	100%
Recreational Programs	17%	32%	32%	12%	7%	100%
Public transit	33%	34%	21%	7%	5%	100%
City road improvements	40%	33%	18%	5%	5%	100%
Street maintenance & repair	43%	37%	14%	4%	2%	100%
Library	27%	34%	28%	7%	5%	100%
Land use planning	26%	30%	32%	7%	5%	100%
Water quality & supply	57%	30%	10%	1%	2%	100%
Environmental Services	41%	35%	16%	4%	4%	100%
Social Services	33%	29%	21%	10%	8%	100%

Note: "Don't Know" responses are removed

<b>Figure 26: What is your current zip code?</b>		
		<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Zip Code	85741, 85743, 85745, 85746	11%
	85710, 85715, 85748, 85749	22%
	85704, 85705, 85718, 85719	19%
	85707, 85708, 85730, 85747, 85641	9%
	85701, 85706, 85713, 85714	12%
	85711, 85712, 85716	27%
Total		100%