

# Public Opinion Survey



## 2007/2008

Conducted By:  
The Citizens Advisory Committee  
in the spring of 2008

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Citizens Advisory Committee, appointed by the City Council, is a group of individuals of various ages and interests bound together by their concern for Visalia. The committee's mission is to be an advocate and informed voice for the community and an active resource for City Council and staff. The committee prioritizes local issues and concerns and develops recommendations that will affect the future of Visalia. This survey is produced annually by the committee.

The City of Visalia appreciates the help from the Citizens Advisory Committee members, city staff, and other volunteers for their generous help in completing this survey and analyzing the results.

### **CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Dirk Holkeboer, Chairman-Citizens Advisory Committee

Matthew Ainley  
Sylvia Baggs  
Lois Bollinger  
Chris Gomez  
Nyla Hallum  
Nathan Hernandez  
Betty McNutt

Phil Mirwald  
Donna Orozco  
George Ouzounian  
Paul Sanders  
George Shelton Jr.  
David Wheeler

### **PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY SUBCOMMITTEE**

Paul Sanders  
George Ouzounian  
Betty McNutt

Nyla Hallum  
Nathan Hernandez

### **SURVEY VOLUNTEERS**

Eric Frost  
VIPS – Volunteers in Police Services

Cass Cook

### **CITY OF VISALIA STAFF**

Kim McGee  
Songjie Li, Finance Intern

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

The City of Visalia continuously strives to improve the quality of services that it provides to its citizens and identifies key areas to focus on to make Visalia a great place to live. In response to the necessary changes Visalia is undergoing, feedback from the community is needed. The survey is intended as a basic guide to measure the public concerns such as public works, public safety, and recreational activities to name a few.

The survey is entitled the 2007/2008 Public Opinion Survey. Although the phoning of citizens took place in the spring of 2008, questions were asked based upon the quality of services provided in the 2007 calendar year. Work on the 2008/2009 survey will begin in January of 2009.

A current residential telephone list was used for the 2007/2008 survey which included telephone listings for rental units.

Survey response data was collected and fed into an Excel spreadsheet. The data was evaluated and graphs and charts were created reflecting the response data. Although statistical software was not available for an in-depth analysis this year due to time and cost constraints, the information gathered is valuable nonetheless in providing some insight as to what is important to the citizens of Visalia and in what areas we need to focus our attention.

## SURVEY SUMMARY

### **Overall**

Overall it appears that Visalians enjoy living in Visalia, but they are concerned about gangs, fast growth, road maintenance and traffic conditions. Below is a general summary of the survey results.

### **Quality of Life**

More than three quarters, 76%, of four hundred respondents rate the overall quality of life in Visalia as high or very high.

### **Public Safety**

The survey shows that the Citizens of Visalia are concerned about gangs and violent crimes. More than half of the survey respondents rated the City's efforts at providing a safe community as high or very high.

98% of the respondents who contacted with the fire department rated the quality of their services as good or very good.

### **Public Works**

Visalians give priority to essential services in the following order: road maintenance, traffic signs and signals, recreational activities, and park maintenance.

It appears that Visalians are increasingly concerned about the quality of road maintenance. Garbage service received consistently high ratings, this year, 77% of respondents rated the garbage service as good or very good.

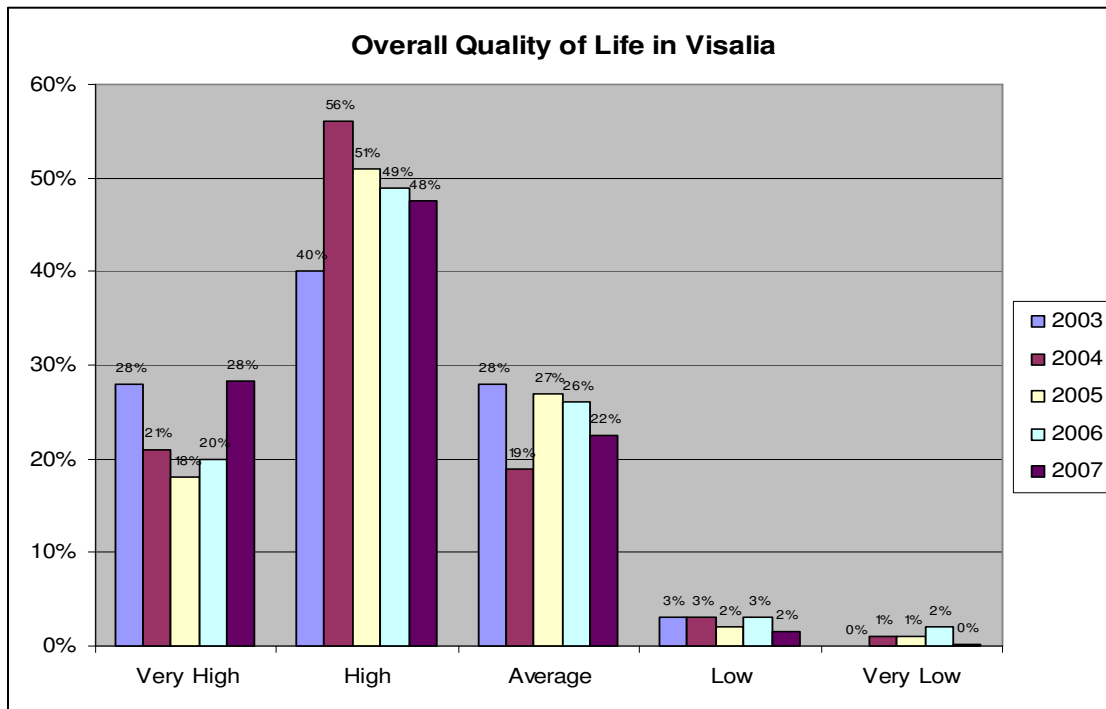
### **Parks and Recreation**

More than half of the respondents rated the quality of the City's recreational activities as good or very good. Park maintenance was viewed as good to very good by 57% of respondents, 20% rated it as average.

### **Other Services**

Those who had an opinion about transit services generally had a positive view. Residents also feel the need for a more enhanced downtown area, since 68% of respondents emphasized the importance of a vibrant downtown. However, most respondents do not see the need to have an Olympic style aquatic center.

**Taking all things in to consideration, how would you rate the overall quality of life in Visalia?**



2007 Significant Demographics						
Household Makeup						
	Single	Single with children	Married no children	Married with children	Non-related no children	Non-related with children
Very High	31%	27%	27%	29%	0%	40%
High	49%	37%	45%	50%	67%	20%
Average	18%	33%	27%	21%	0%	20%
Low	3%	0%	1%	0%	33%	20%
Very Low	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%

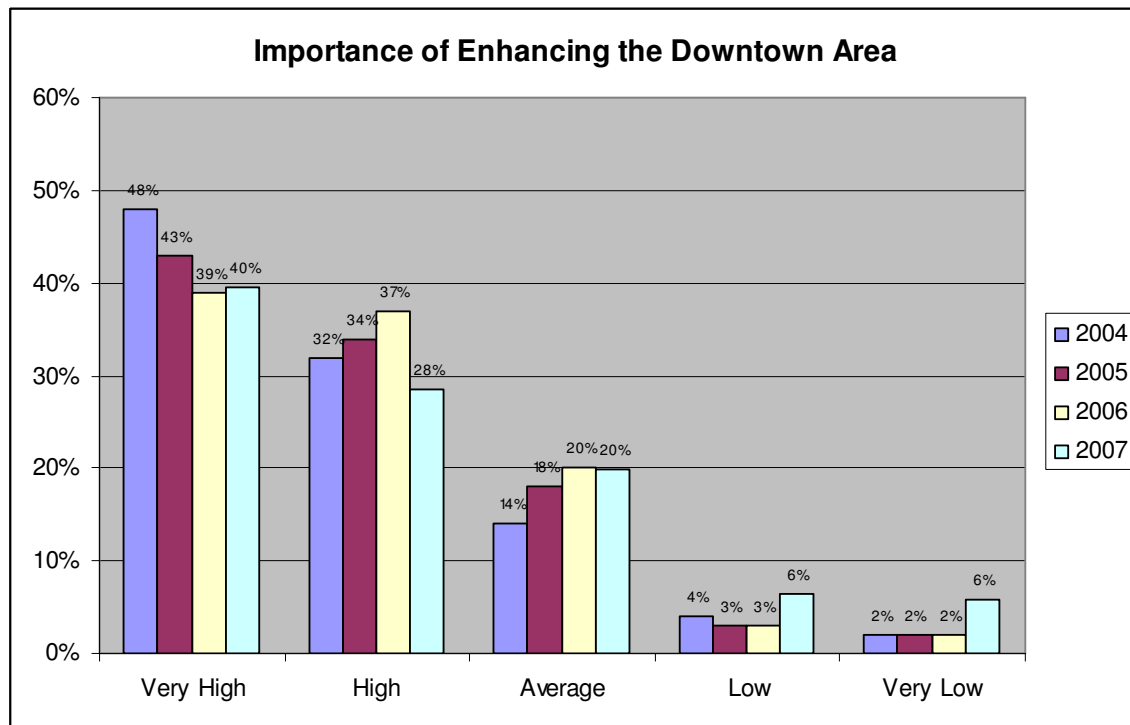
Income					
	Less than \$15k	\$15k - \$40k	\$40k - \$70k	\$70k - \$100k	\$100k and over
Very High	17%	25%	26%	23%	33%
High	28%	36%	52%	56%	54%
Average	44%	35%	22%	18%	13%
Low	11%	3%	0%	4%	0%
Very Low	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Age			
	18 -34	35-54	55 and over
Very High	16%	23%	34%
High	48%	50%	47%
Average	33%	26%	18%
Low	2%	2%	1%
Very Low	2%	0%	0%

Year-To-Year					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very High	28%	21%	18%	20%	0%
High	40%	56%	51%	49%	0%
Average	28%	19%	27%	26%	0%
Low	3%	3%	2%	3%	0%
Very Low	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%

76% of respondents rate the quality of life here in the City as high or very high, compared to 69 % last year. Younger and lower income residents are the least satisfied.

## How important is it to you to enhance and expand the downtown area?



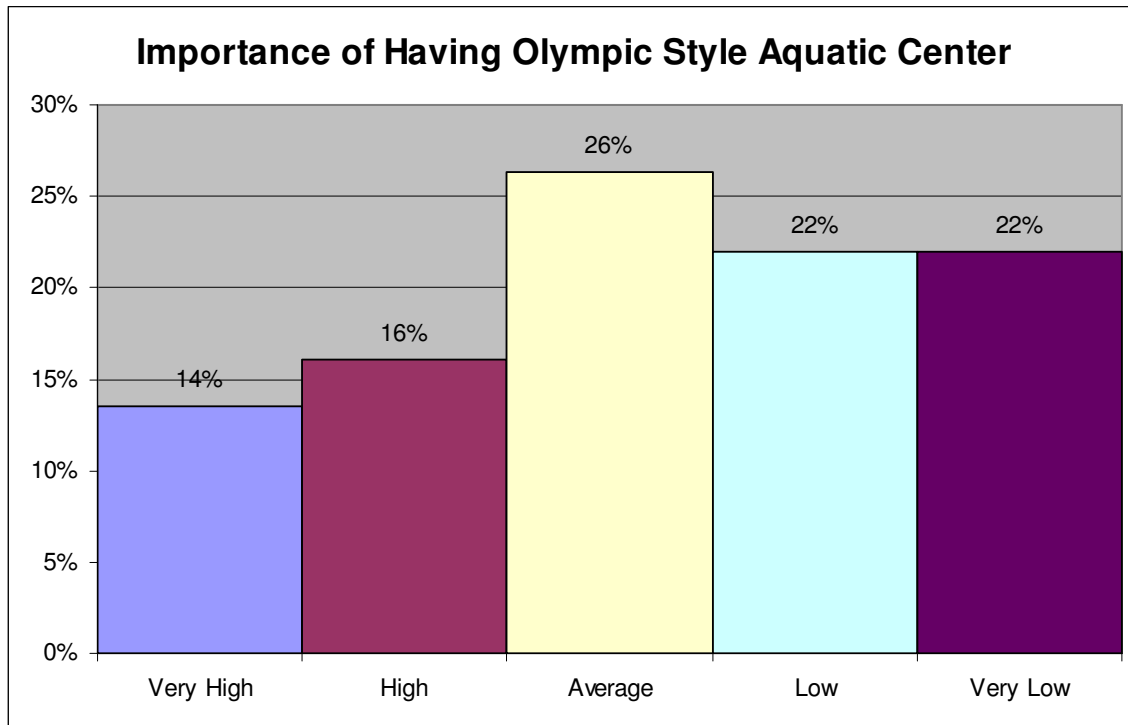
2007 Significant Demographics					
Income					
	Less than \$15k	\$15k - \$40k	\$40k- \$70k	\$70k - \$100k	\$100k and over
Very High	12%	34%	37%	51%	47%
High	18%	28%	33%	25%	29%
Average	35%	25%	23%	9%	14%
Low	6%	4%	5%	9%	9%
Very Low	29%	10%	2%	7%	1%

Quadrant				
	Northeast	Southeast	Northwest	Southwest
Very High	38%	36%	44%	36%
High	36%	25%	25%	33%
Average	17%	22%	20%	19%
Low	8%	7%	6%	5%
Very Low	2%	11%	4%	6%

Year-To-Year				
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very High	48%	43%	39%	40%
High	32%	34%	37%	28%
Average	14%	18%	20%	20%
Low	4%	3%	3%	6%
Very Low	2%	2%	2%	6%

68% of respondents rated the importance of having a vibrant downtown as high or very high. Those who have higher incomes are more likely to agree. Residents living in all quadrants of the City seem to have similar views about the downtown area.

## How important is it to you to have an Olympic style aquatic center in Visalia?



2007 Significant Demographics						
Household Makeup						
	Single	Single with children	Married no children	Married with children	Non-related no children	Non-related with children
Very High	6%	24%	12%	15%	0%	40%
High	12%	24%	16%	18%	0%	0%
Average	28%	24%	27%	25%	33%	40%
Low	26%	21%	27%	19%	33%	20%
Very Low	28%	7%	17%	24%	33%	0%

Income					
	Less than \$15k	\$15k - \$40k	\$40k - \$70k	\$70k - \$100k	\$100k and over
Very High	18%	16%	11%	5%	18%
High	12%	21%	14%	14%	12%
Average	6%	30%	33%	39%	20%
Low	24%	23%	19%	21%	25%
Very Low	41%	10%	23%	21%	25%

Age			
	18 -34	35-54	55 and over
Very High	18%	17%	11%
High	18%	18%	15%
Average	26%	27%	26%
Low	18%	21%	24%
Very Low	21%	16%	25%

This question regarding the construction of an Olympic style aquatic center is new this year, and residents do not seem to like this idea. 70% respondents gave low or average ratings for such new aquatic center. Those who have lower income and elderly residents disagree more frequently. In addition, residents are not willing to pay for the construction cost. Most respondents think those who will use it should help pay for it via user fees.



## **PUBLIC SAFETY SUMMARY**

### **Police Department**

#### *Police Service Rating*

A majority, 76% of respondents who had contact with the Police Department in 2007 considered the quality of the service they received as good or better.

#### *Effort at Providing a Safe Community*

57% of the respondents thought the City's efforts at providing a safe community were high to very high.

#### *What Criminal Activity Should the City Target?*

The residents of Visalia are most concerned about gang activity and violent crimes. The concerns for gang activities increased by 8% since 2006, but 10% of respondents worry less about violent crimes. A number of respondents mentioned that all crimes should be targeted, and they were categorized into the category, "other".

### **Fire Department**

#### *Fire Service Rating*

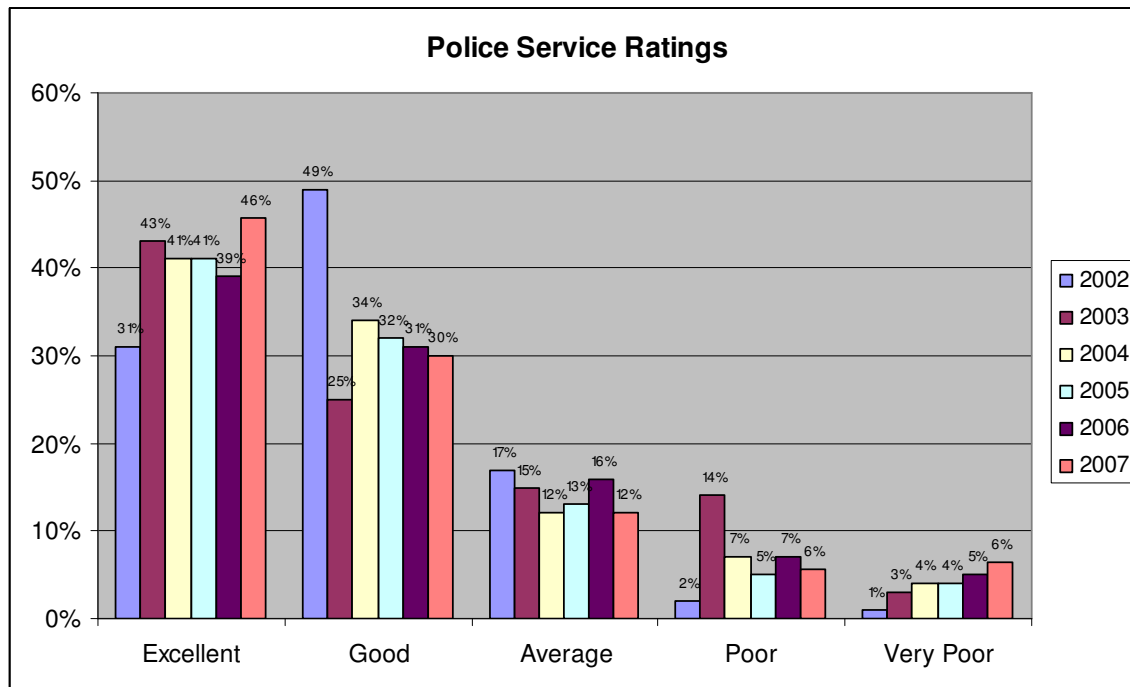
Of those who had contact with a firefighter in 2007, the majority, 80% comment that they provided excellent service. In addition, another 18% of respondents rated the service they received from the Fire Department as good.

#### *Quality of Emergency Medical Response by Fire*

Of the total responses, 59% rated the quality of medical response by fire as good to very good. This is about the same compared to 2006 and an 11% increase as compared to 2005.

The increase might be attributed to the recent training of the firefighters and ambulance operators as paramedics.

## How do you rate the quality of service you received from the Police Department?

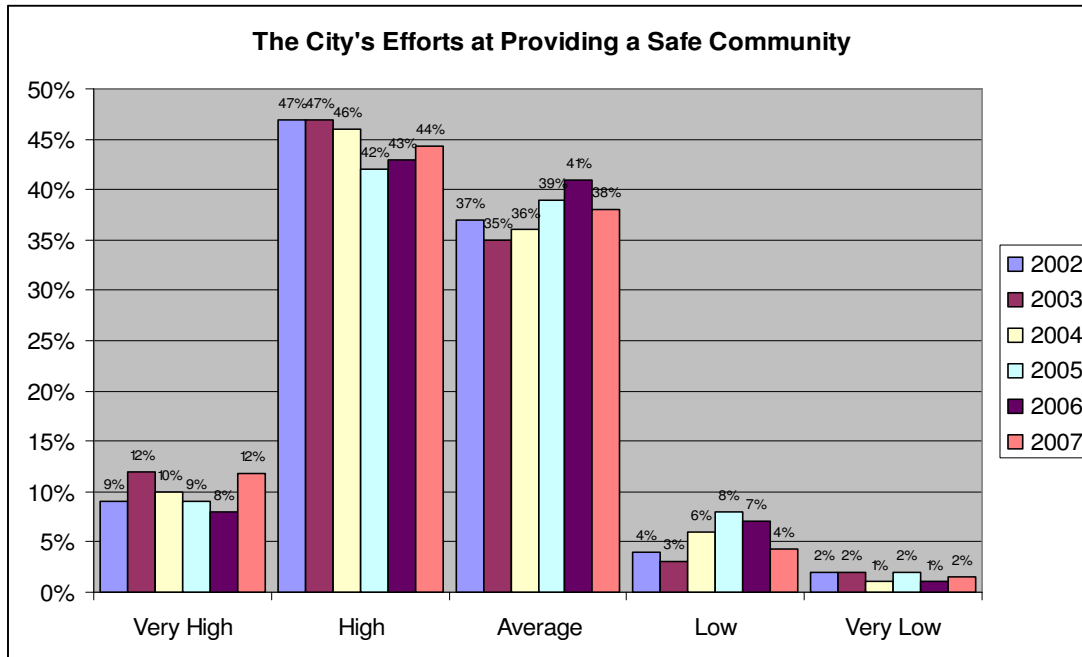


2007 Significant Demographics			
Age			
	18 -34	35-54	55 and over
Excellent	38%	52%	45%
Good	28%	26%	33%
Average	28%	12%	6%
Poor	7%	5%	6%
Very Poor	0%	5%	10%

Year-To-Year						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Excellent	31%	43%	41%	41%	39%	46%
Good	49%	25%	34%	32%	31%	30%
Average	17%	15%	12%	13%	16%	12%
Poor	2%	14%	7%	5%	7%	6%
Very Poor	1%	3%	4%	4%	5%	6%

35% of respondents had contact with the Police Department, 76% of them considered the quality of services they received were good or better. Younger respondents were more likely to give lower ratings to their encounters with the police, and those who are 35 or older were happy with the services they received. 46% of respondents felt police services were excellent, higher than all previous years. Another 30% gave police good ratings. The overall satisfaction is higher than last year's 70%, however, the below average ratings also increased from 3% in 2002, to this year's 12%.

## How do you rate the City's efforts at providing a safe community?



2007 Significant Demographics					
	Income				
	Less than \$15k	\$15k - \$40k	\$40k - \$70k	\$70k - \$100k	\$100k and over
Very High	6%	10%	11%	12%	13%
High	22%	30%	53%	44%	52%
Average	44%	52%	35%	40%	30%
Low	22%	7%	1%	2%	5%
Very Low	6%	1%	0%	2%	1%

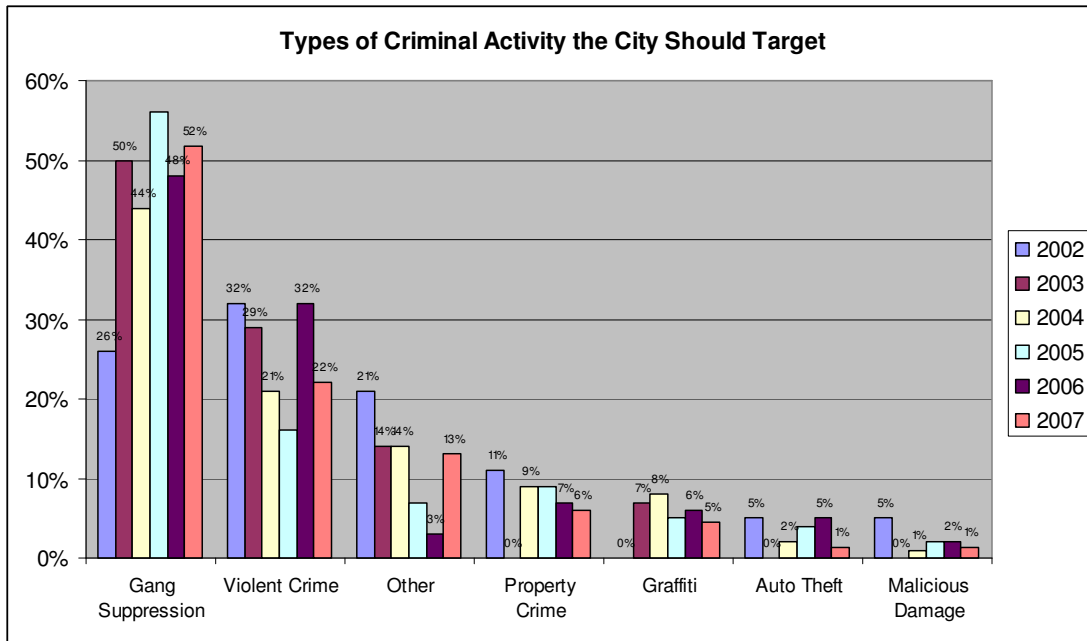
	Quadrant			
	Northeast	Southeast	Northwest	Southwest
Very High	15%	12%	12%	9%
High	30%	52%	48%	41%
Average	42%	32%	35%	45%
Low	9%	1%	4%	5%
Very Low	4%	3%	1%	0%

	Age		
	18 -34	35-54	55 and over
Very High	8%	12%	13%
High	42%	42%	46%
Average	44%	38%	37%
Low	3%	6%	4%
Very Low	3%	2%	1%

	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very High	9%	12%	10%	9%	8%	12%
High	47%	47%	46%	42%	43%	44%
Average	37%	35%	36%	39%	41%	38%
Low	4%	3%	6%	8%	7%	4%
Very Low	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%

More than half of the respondents thought the City's efforts at providing a safe community were high to very high. Those from the Southeast were more likely to give higher ratings. Also elderly residents give higher ratings than younger residents. Since 2003, there has been a gradual decrease in the ratings, but this year, the ratings were higher than the previous two years.

**To provide a safer community, what type of criminal activity should the City target?**



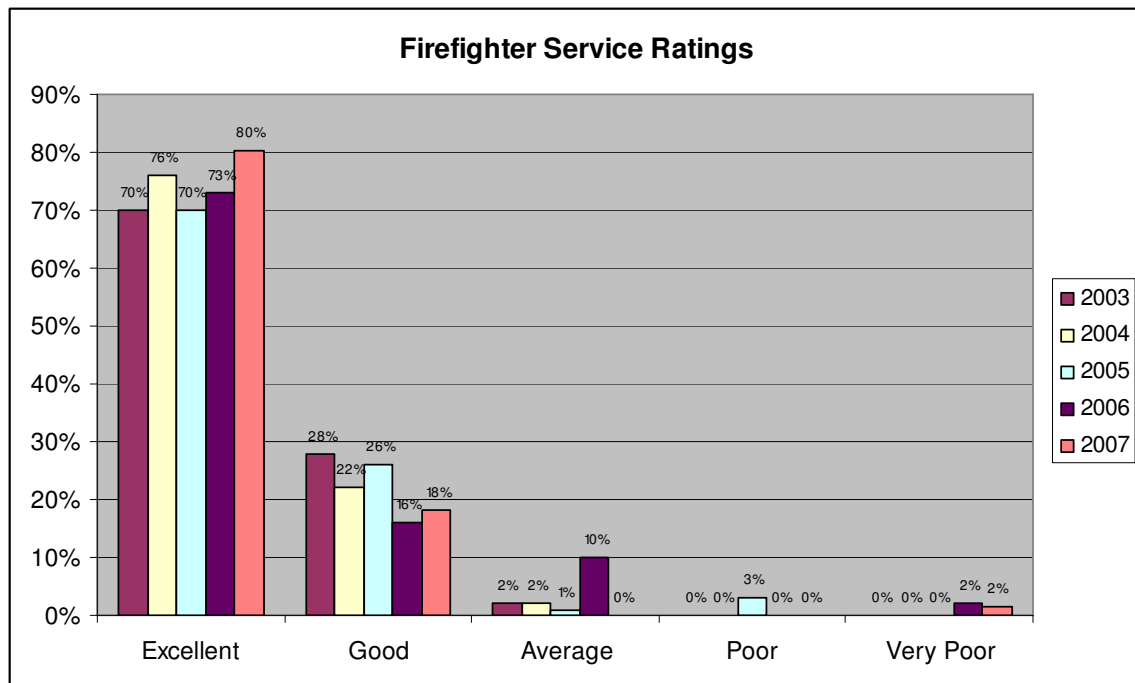
2007 Significant Demographics					
Income					
	Less than \$15k	\$15k - \$40k	\$40k - \$70k	\$70k - \$100k	\$100k and over
Violent Crime	17%	33%	22%	15%	18%
Property Crime	0%	5%	8%	7%	8%
Auto Theft	0%	3%	2%	2%	0%
Malicious Damage	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%
Graffiti	0%	4%	3%	7%	6%
Gang Suppression	61%	40%	52%	60%	60%
Other	22%	14%	10%	9%	8%

Homeownership			
	Own	Rent	Other
Violent Crime	18%	37%	31%
Property Crime	6%	6%	8%
Auto Theft	2%	0%	0%
Malicious Damage	1%	0%	8%
Graffiti	6%	0%	0%
Gang Suppression	54%	46%	38%
Other	14%	10%	15%

Year-To-Year						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Gang Suppression	26%	50%	44%	56%	48%	52%
Violent Crime	32%	29%	21%	16%	32%	22%
Other	21%	14%	14%	7%	3%	13%
Property Crime	11%	0%	9%	9%	7%	6%
Graffiti	0%	7%	8%	5%	6%	5%
Auto Theft	5%	0%	2%	4%	5%	1%
Malicious Damage	5%	0%	1%	2%	2%	1%

The residents of Visalia are most concerned about gang activity and violent crimes. There has been a 4% increase in gang suppression concerns from 2006, but the concerns for violent crimes dropped by 10%. For all income brackets, residents seem to have similar concerns regarding crime. Homeownership also does not make a difference in residents' concerns. The category "other" includes residents who believe all crimes should be targeted.

## How would you rate the service you received from the Fire Department?



2007 Significant Demographics						
Household Makeup						
	Single	Single with children	Married no children	Married with children	Non-related no children	Non-related with children
Excellent	88%	67%	80%	78%	0%	100%
Good	13%	33%	20%	19%	0%	0%
Average	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Poor	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Very Poor	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%

Homeownership			
	Own	Rent	Other
Excellent	79%	80%	100%
Good	19%	20%	0%
Average	0%	0%	0%
Poor	0%	0%	0%
Very Poor	2%	0%	0%

Year-To-Year					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Excellent	70%	76%	70%	73%	80%
Good	28%	22%	26%	16%	18%
Average	2%	2%	1%	10%	0%
Poor	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Very Poor	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%

Of those 15% respondents who had contact with a firefighter in 2007, the majority comment that they are providing an excellent service. Factors like household makeup and homeownership do not make a difference in residents' opinions. More importantly, this high rating is not only consistent, but also increases almost every year.

## **PUBLIC WORKS SUMMARY**

Visalians give priority to essential services in the following order: road maintenance, traffic signs and signals, recreational activities, and park maintenance. This section of the survey will look at those services provided by public works. The following sections will analyze the ratings given for parks and recreation.

### **Traffic & Roads**

#### *Road Maintenance*

Only 29% of respondents in 2007 rate road maintenance as good or very good. In 2007, 73% of respondents rated road maintenance as at least average.

#### *Traffic Conditions*

64% of respondents rate traffic conditions as average or below. Significantly less than half of the respondents are satisfied with traffic conditions.

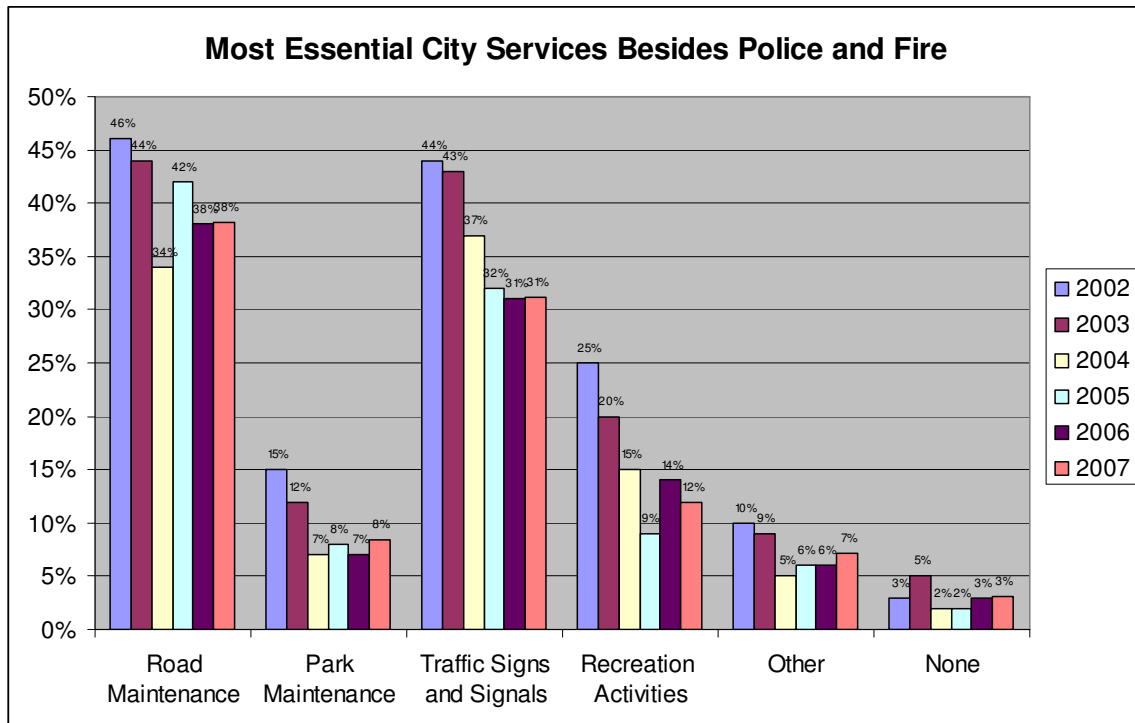
### **Garbage Service**

In 2007, 42% of respondents rated the quality of garbage service as good and 35% rated the quality as very good. Only 6% of respondents rated the service as poor or very poor.

### **Street Lighting**

Half of the respondents rated street lighting as good to very good.

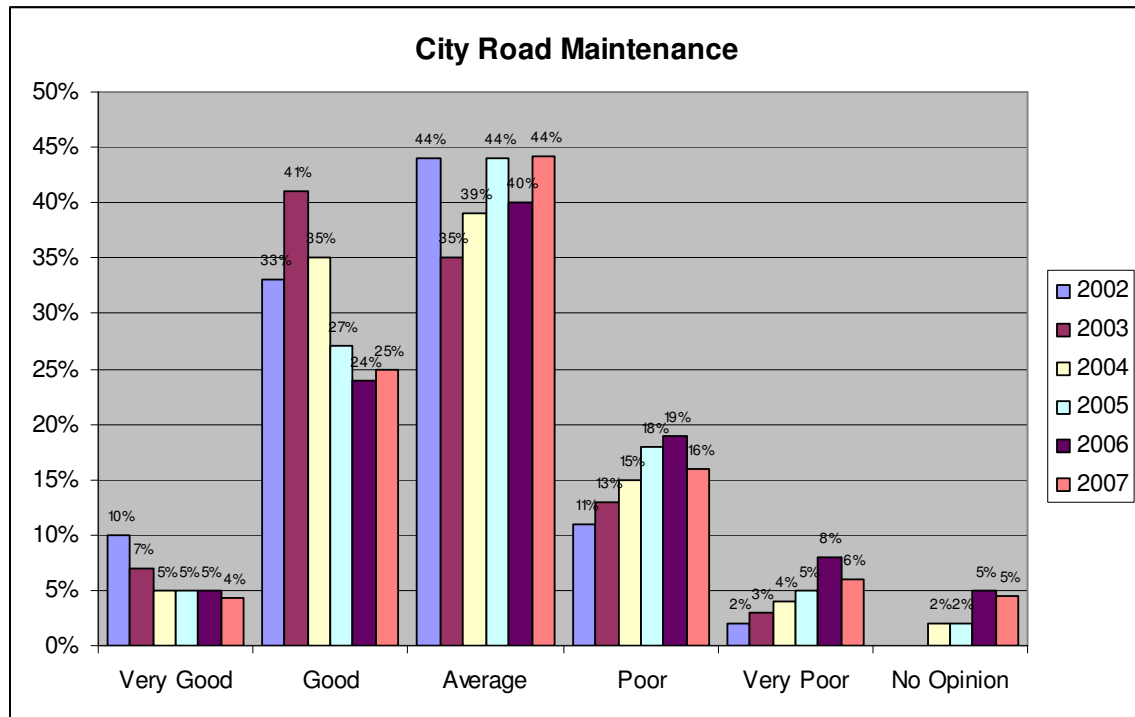
## What do you consider the most essential City services besides Police and Fire?



Year-To-Year						
	Road Maintenance	Park Maintenance	Traffic Signs and Signals	Recreation Activities	Other	None
2002	46%	15%	44%	25%	10%	3%
2003	44%	12%	43%	20%	9%	5%
2004	34%	7%	37%	15%	5%	2%
2005	42%	8%	32%	9%	6%	2%
2006	38%	7%	31%	14%	6%	3%
2007	38%	8%	31%	12%	7%	3%

Visalians give priority to essential services in the following order: road maintenance, traffic signs and signals, recreational activities, and park maintenance. Multiple answers were allowed, and the total responses do not add up to exactly 400. On one hand, the concerns for road and traffic all decreased somewhat since 2002, but they are still issues that the City should focus on. On the other hand, the demand for better or more recreation activities and park services has been increasing in the last few years.

## How do you rate the quality of road maintenance?

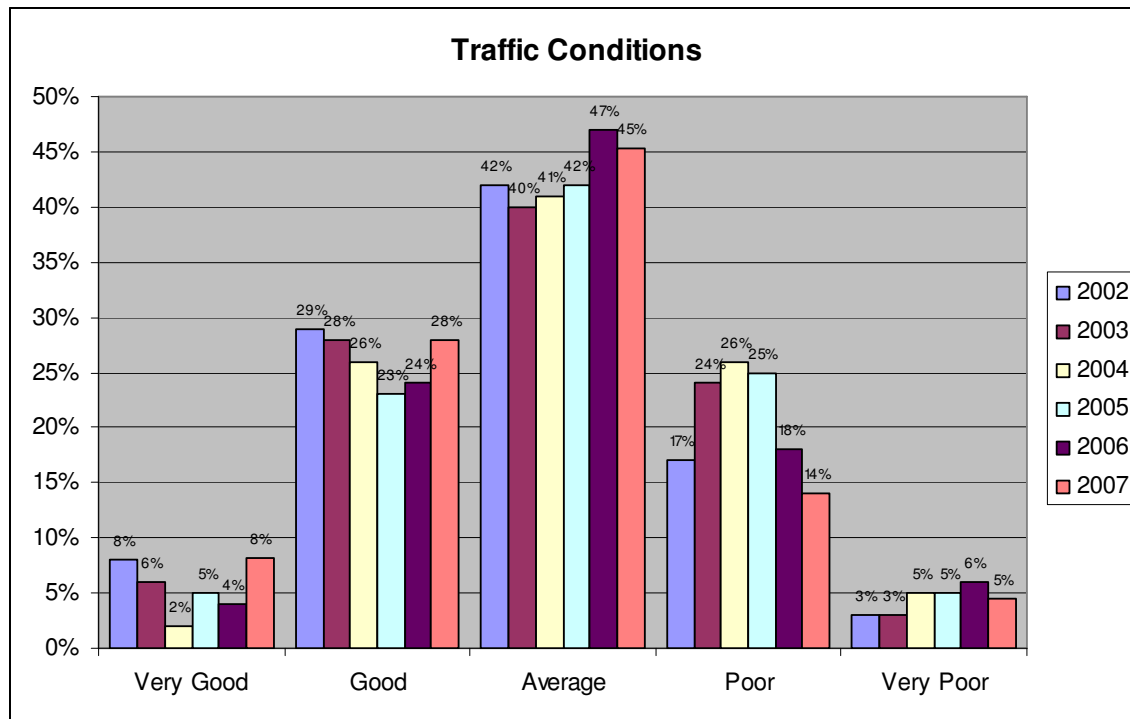


Year-To-Year						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	10%	7%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Good	33%	41%	35%	27%	24%	25%
Average	44%	35%	39%	44%	40%	44%
Poor	11%	13%	15%	18%	19%	16%
Very Poor	2%	3%	4%	5%	8%	6%
No Opinion	2%	2%	2%	2%	5%	5%

Only 29% of respondents in 2007 rate road maintenance as good or very good. Although 73% of respondents rated the road maintenance as average or higher - but the majority of those responses, or 44% were average, which is a 4% increase from last year. On a positive note, the percentage of poor ratings dropped from 27% to 22%.



## Do you view the traffic conditions in Visalia as...



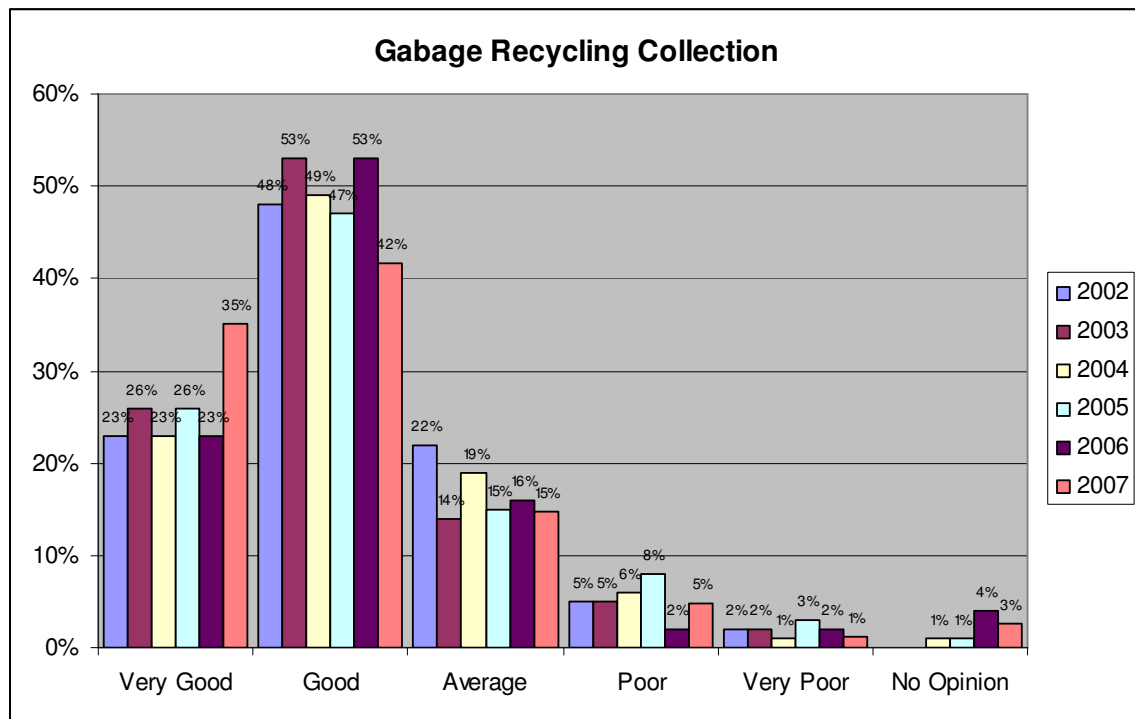
2007 Significant Demographics				
	Quadrant			
	Northeast	Southeast	Northwest	Southwest
Very Good	6%	4%	8%	12%
Good	30%	32%	26%	26%
Average	48%	39%	45%	49%
Poor	12%	21%	15%	9%
Very Poor	4%	4%	5%	5%

	Age		
	18 -34	35-54	55 and over
Very Good	17%	3%	8%
Good	27%	34%	26%
Average	43%	44%	46%
Poor	10%	15%	14%
Very Poor	3%	4%	5%

	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	8%	6%	2%	5%	4%	8%
Good	29%	28%	26%	23%	24%	28%
Average	42%	40%	41%	42%	47%	45%
Poor	17%	24%	26%	25%	18%	14%
Very Poor	3%	3%	5%	5%	6%	5%

Most of the respondents, 45% rated traffic conditions as average. 36% rated higher than average and 19% rated lower than average. Respondents from Southeast are the least satisfied with the traffic conditions, but age does not seem to be an important factor contributing to the ratings.

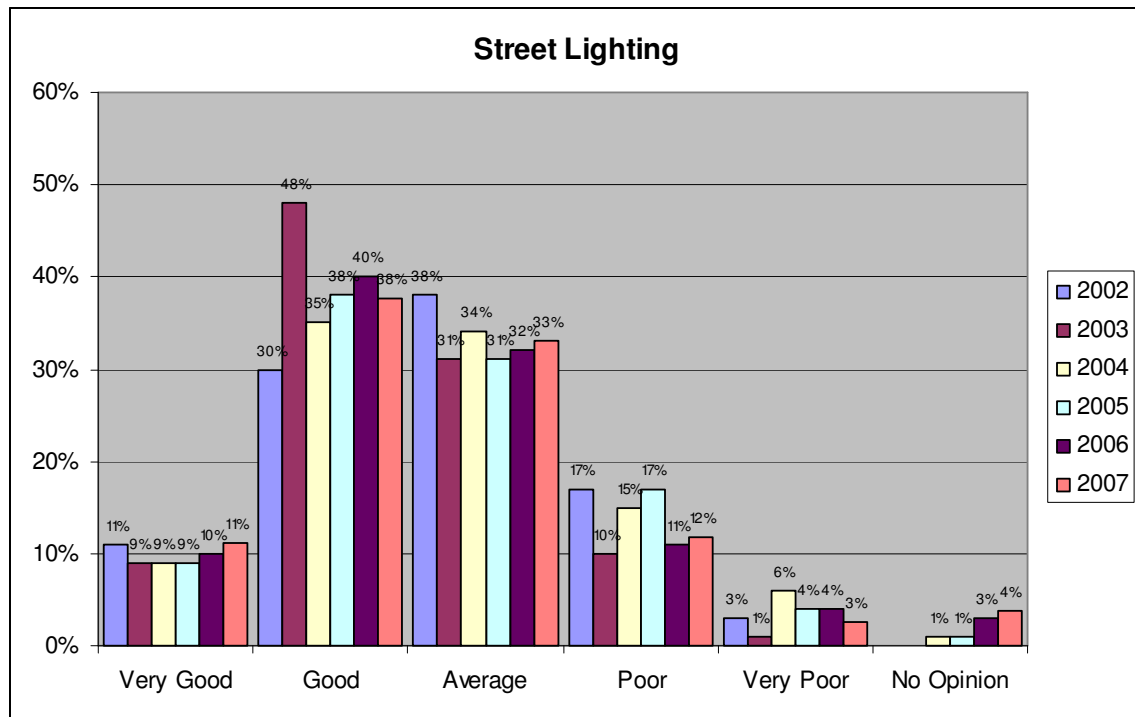
## How do you rate the quality of garbage service?



	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	23%	26%	23%	26%	23%	35%
Good	48%	53%	49%	47%	53%	42%
Average	22%	14%	19%	15%	16%	15%
Poor	5%	5%	6%	8%	2%	5%
Very Poor	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%
No Opinion	1%	1%	1%	1%	4%	3%

For 2007, residents of Visalia are a lot more satisfied with the garbage collection service. 12% more respondents gave them a very good rating this year compared to last. As a matter of fact, the garbage collection service consistently receives high ratings through the years. In addition, the average and poor ratings keep decreasing.

## How do you rate the quality of street lighting?



	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	11%	9%	9%	9%	10%	11%
Good	30%	48%	35%	38%	40%	38%
Average	38%	31%	34%	31%	32%	33%
Poor	17%	10%	15%	17%	11%	12%
Very Poor	3%	1%	6%	4%	4%	3%
No Opinion	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	4%

Half of the respondents rated street lighting as good to very good. Throughout the years, this rating has also been consistently high.

### **Recreation Activities**

Almost half of the respondents rated the quality of the City's recreational activities as good or very good. Those who have children were more satisfied than any other type of household makeup.

#### *Senior Citizen Services*

A third of respondents rated senior citizen services as good to very good. A significant number of respondents, 49%, had no opinion.

#### *Convention Center*

Over half of the respondents, 67%, attended at least one activity at the convention center last year. In 2006, 56% of respondents said they attended an activity at the convention center in the last year.

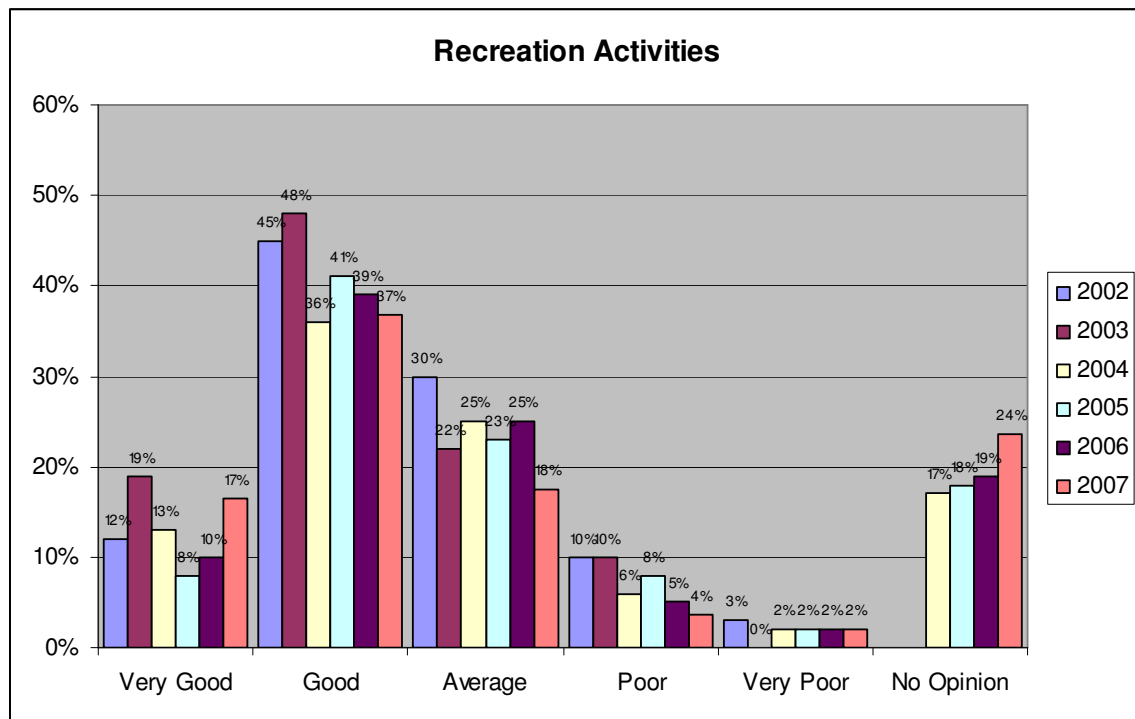
In 2007, respondents would like to attend, in descending order:

1. consumer shows,
2. concerts,
3. conferences,
4. holiday & reception events,
5. dances, and
6. other.

### **Park Maintenance**

Park maintenance was viewed as good to very good by 57% of respondents, 20% rated it as average.

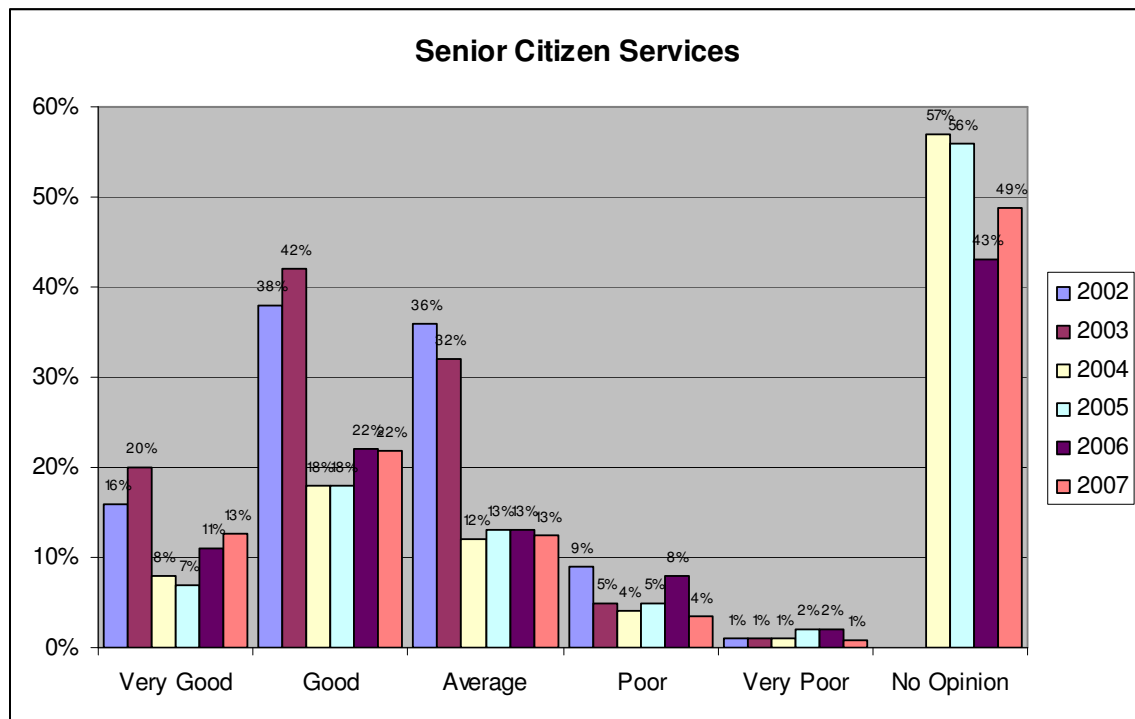
## How do you rate the quality of recreation activities?



	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	12%	19%	13%	8%	10%	17%
Good	45%	48%	36%	41%	39%	37%
Average	30%	22%	25%	23%	25%	18%
Poor	10%	10%	6%	8%	5%	4%
Very Poor	3%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%
No Opinion			17%	18%	19%	24%

Almost half of the respondents rated the quality of the City's recreational activities as good or very good. However, there are 24% of residents who have no opinion regarding this issue. There has been little variation in response over the past few years.

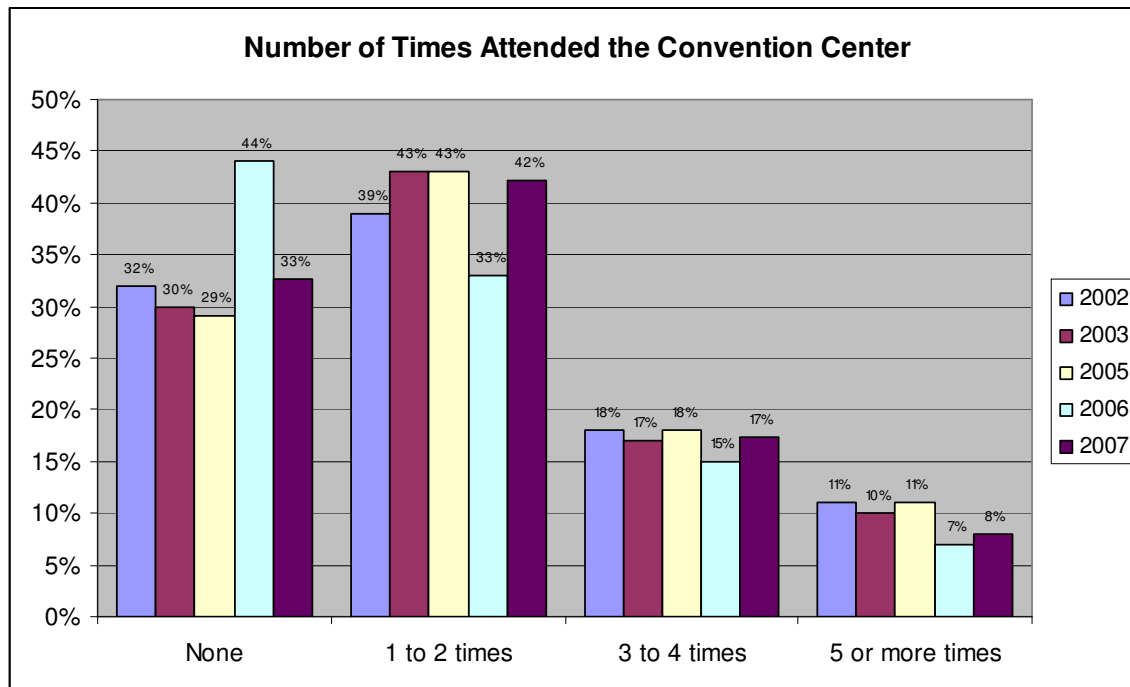
## How do you rate the quality of senior citizen services?



	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	16%	20%	8%	7%	11%	13%
Good	38%	42%	18%	18%	22%	22%
Average	36%	32%	12%	13%	13%	13%
Poor	9%	5%	4%	5%	8%	4%
Very Poor	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
No Opinion			57%	56%	43%	49%

35% of respondents rates senior citizen services as good or very good. A significant number of respondents, 49% had no opinion.

## How many times have you attended activities at the convention center in the last year?



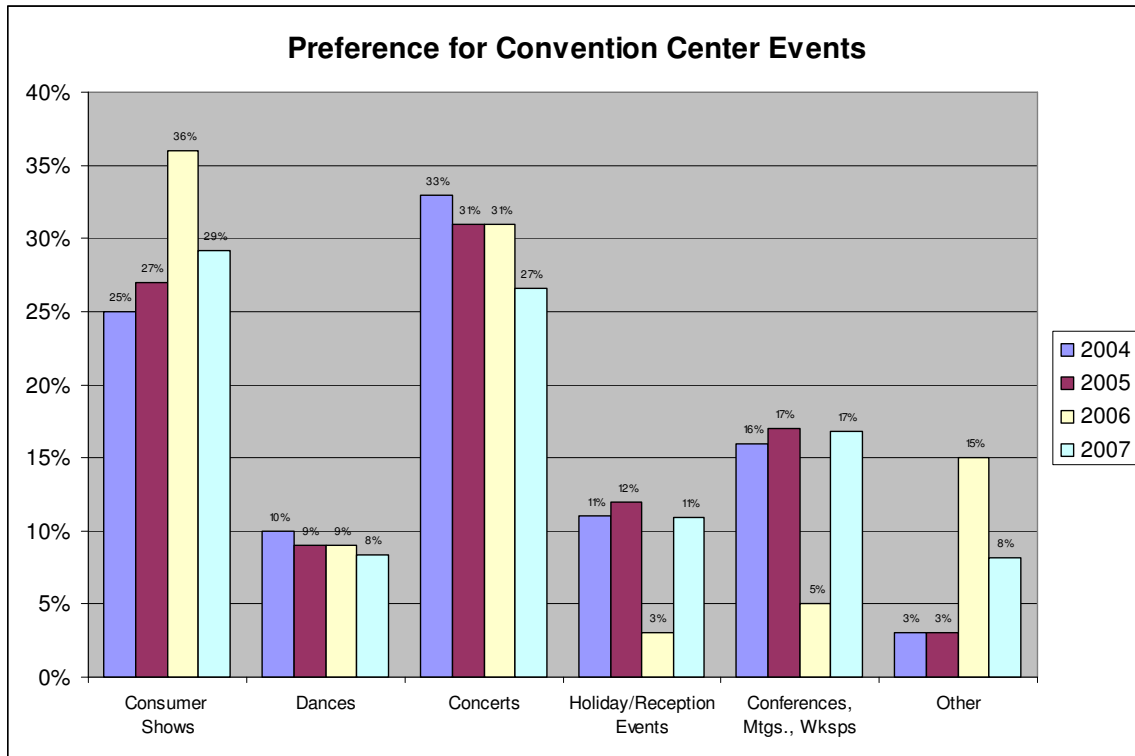
2007 Significant Demographics					
	Income				
	Less than \$15k	\$15k - \$40k	\$40k - \$70k	\$70k - \$100k	\$100k and over
None	72%	48%	28%	23%	17%
1 to 2 times	28%	35%	49%	40%	51%
3 to 4 times	0%	7%	19%	23%	20%
5 or more times	0%	10%	4%	14%	11%

	Age		
	18 -34	35-54	55 and over
None	34%	24%	36%
1 to 2 times	41%	51%	38%
3 to 4 times	18%	15%	18%
5 or more times	7%	10%	7%

	Year-To-Year				
	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007
None	32%	30%	29%	44%	33%
1 to 2 times	39%	43%	43%	33%	42%
3 to 4 times	18%	17%	18%	15%	17%
5 or more times	11%	10%	11%	7%	8%

67% of the respondents attended at least one activity or event at the convention center last year and 8% attended more than five times. Those who have higher incomes were more likely to attend events at the convention center, but age does not seem to be a factor contributing to residents' preferences. Over the years, an increasing number of people have begun to visit the convention center.

## What type of events would you like to attend at the convention center in the future?

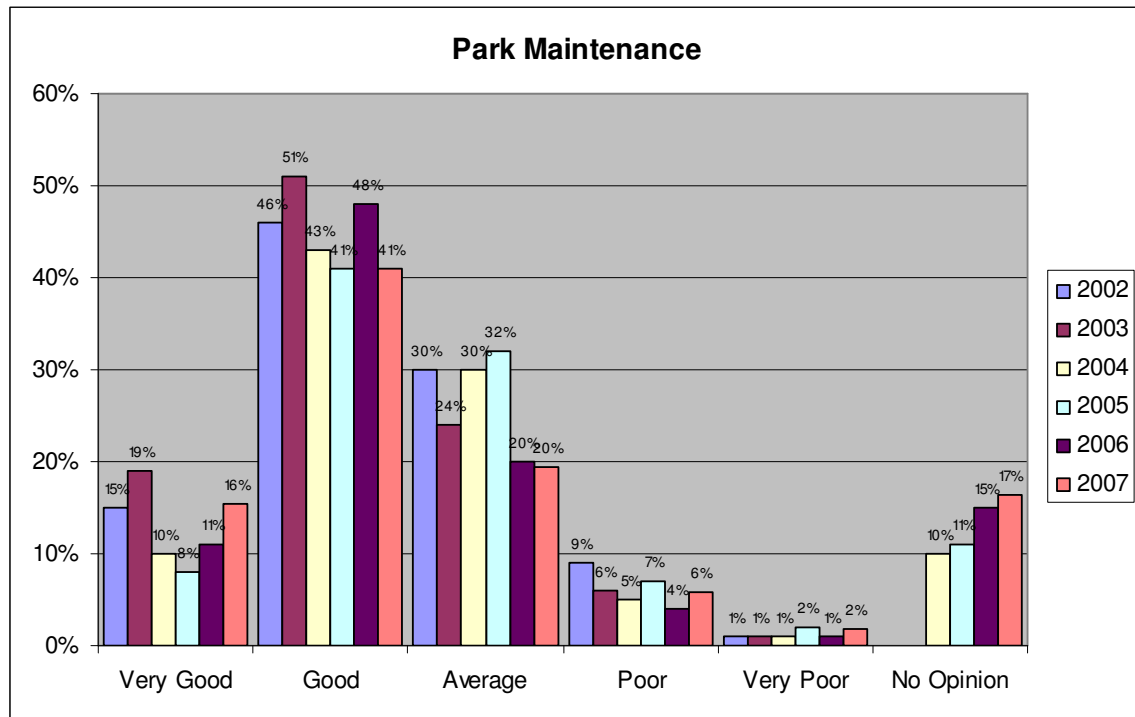


Year-To-Year						
	Consumer Shows	Dances	Concerts	Holiday/Reception Events	Conferences, Mtgs., Wksp	Other
2004	25%	10%	33%	11%	16%	3%
2005	27%	9%	31%	12%	17%	3%
2006	36%	9%	31%	3%	5%	15%
2007	29%	8%	27%	11%	17%	8%

In 2007, respondents would like to attend in descending order; consumer shows, concerts, conferences, holiday & reception events, dances, and other. In 2006 the greatest preference was for consumer shows.



## How do you rate the quality of park maintenance?



	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	15%	19%	10%	8%	11%	16%
Good	46%	51%	43%	41%	48%	41%
Average	30%	24%	30%	32%	20%	20%
Poor	9%	6%	5%	7%	4%	6%
Very Poor	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
No Opinion			10%	11%	15%	17%

Park maintenance is viewed as good to very good by 57% of respondents, 20% rate it as average. Respondents are more favorable of park maintenance in 2006 overall, but there are 5% more respondents who rate the services provided as very good in 2007.

## OTHER SERVICES SUMMARY

The services in this section of the survey did not correspond to a specific department. These services include: bus services, services for disabled persons, and private ambulance services.

### *Quality of Bus Services*

28% of respondents rated bus services as good to very good and 56% had no opinion. Even though the ridership is up, most residents still do not use the public transportation system. As gas prices increase, this number should be closely monitored in future years.

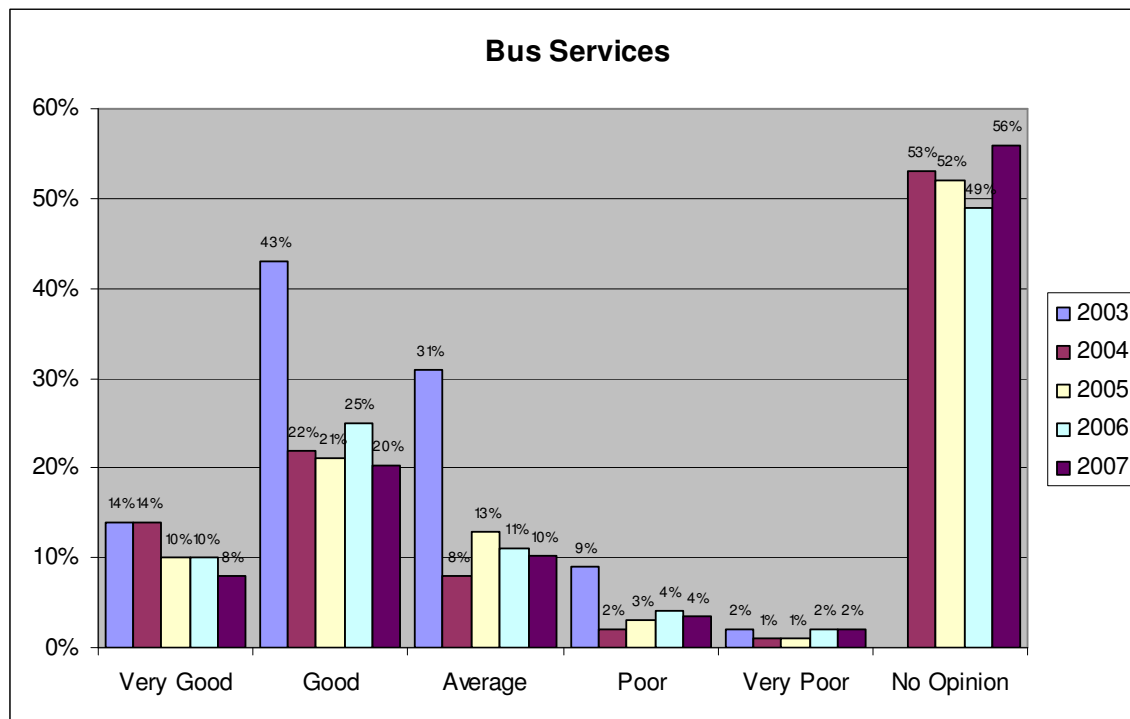
### *Quality of Services for Disabled Persons*

25% of respondents rated the quality of services for disabled persons as good or very good. 57% of respondents had no opinion.

### *Quality of Private Ambulance Services*

The majority of respondents, 55%, had no opinion about the quality of ambulance. A good or very good rating was received by 37% of respondents in the 2007.

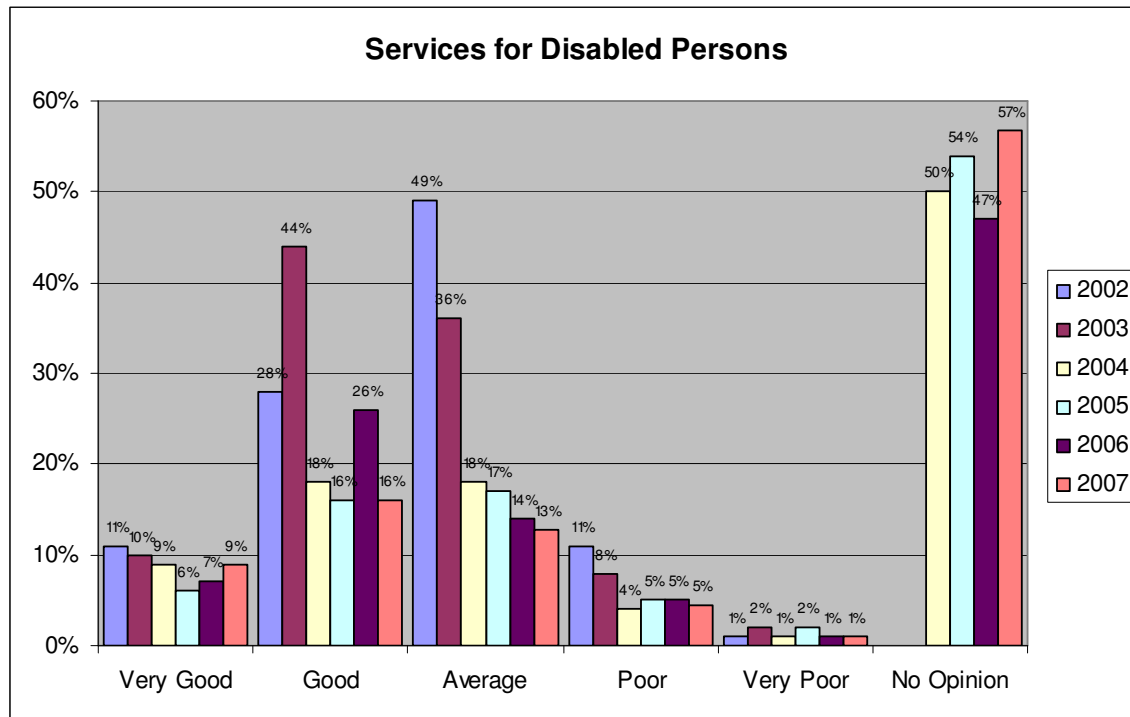
## How do you rate the quality of bus services?



Year-To-Year					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	14%	14%	10%	10%	8%
Good	43%	22%	21%	25%	20%
Average	31%	8%	13%	11%	10%
Poor	9%	2%	3%	4%	4%
Very Poor	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
No Opinion		53%	52%	49%	56%

A significant amount, 56% of the respondents have no opinion regarding the bus services provided by the City, and among those who responded to this question, 28% of them rated bus services as good to very good. This actually decreased from previous years' 35%.

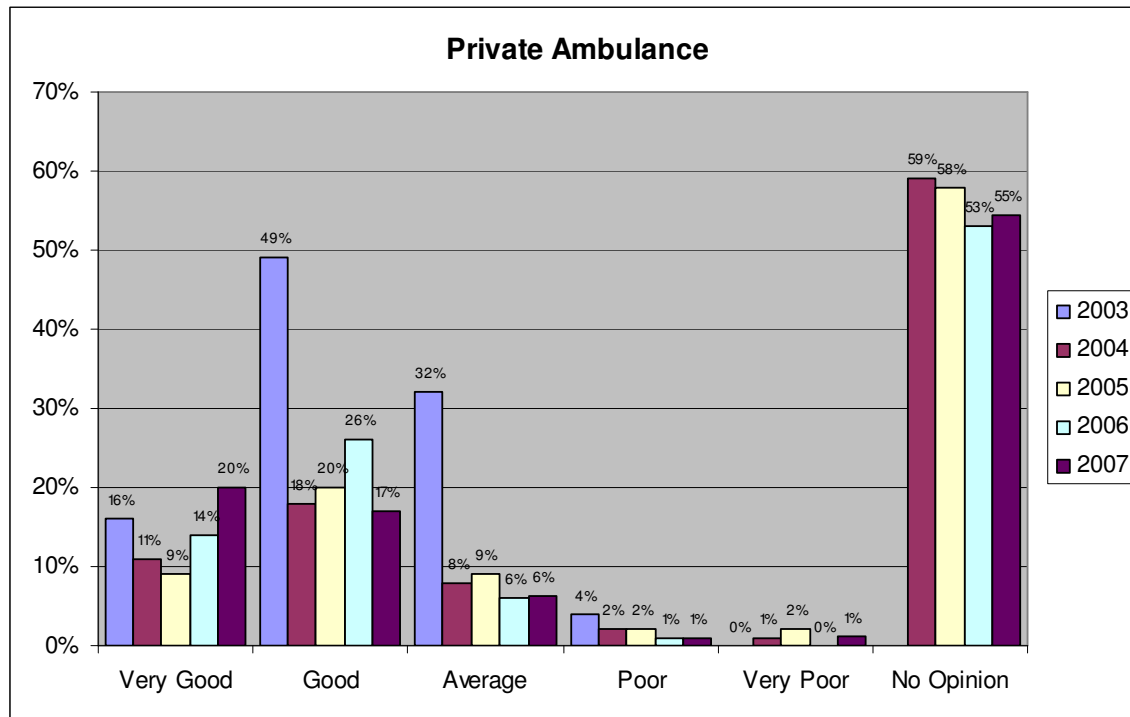
## How do you rate the quality of services for disabled persons?



	Year-To-Year					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	11%	10%	9%	6%	7%	9%
Good	28%	44%	18%	16%	26%	16%
Average	49%	36%	18%	17%	14%	13%
Poor	11%	8%	4%	5%	5%	5%
Very Poor	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
No Opinion			50%	54%	47%	57%

25% of respondents rated the quality of services for disabled persons as good or very good. 57% of respondents had no opinion.

## How do you rate the quality of private ambulance services?



Year-To-Year					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Very Good	16%	11%	9%	14%	20%
Good	49%	18%	20%	26%	17%
Average	32%	8%	9%	6%	6%
Poor	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Very Poor	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%
No Opinion		59%	58%	53%	55%

The majority of respondents, 55%, had no opinion about the quality of private ambulance. 37% rated this service good or very good.

## **SUMMARY OF OPEN RESPONSES**

Survey respondents were asked what they thought was the most serious issue facing Visalia. With the format of an open-ended question, multiple responses were allowed. The total of responses to this question does not equal the four hundred. The most frequent words in the responses were gang, growth, violence, crime, and drugs. A representative sample of the responses are attached in the appendix.

For the most part citizens are concerned about gangs, violence and crime, as well as growth. Crime in this case involves any acts involving drugs, violence, and theft. Several responses included gangs and gang violence along with graffiti. Growth concerns related mostly to the rapid expansion and farming land conversion. Citizens also felt traffic conditions could be less congested. Another traffic problem was speeding vehicles and general road maintenance concerns. A few suggestions by the respondents included bringing in more businesses, more activities or programs for youth, improving the air quality and more recreational places for kids to enjoy.

Out of those 308 who responded to this question, the word "gang" appeared in 151 of the responses. Gang related issues should be the top priority of the City. 59 responses included the words "violence" or "crime". 34 responses contained the word "growth", followed by 11 responses including the word "traffic". This information indicates the top concerns of the residents.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

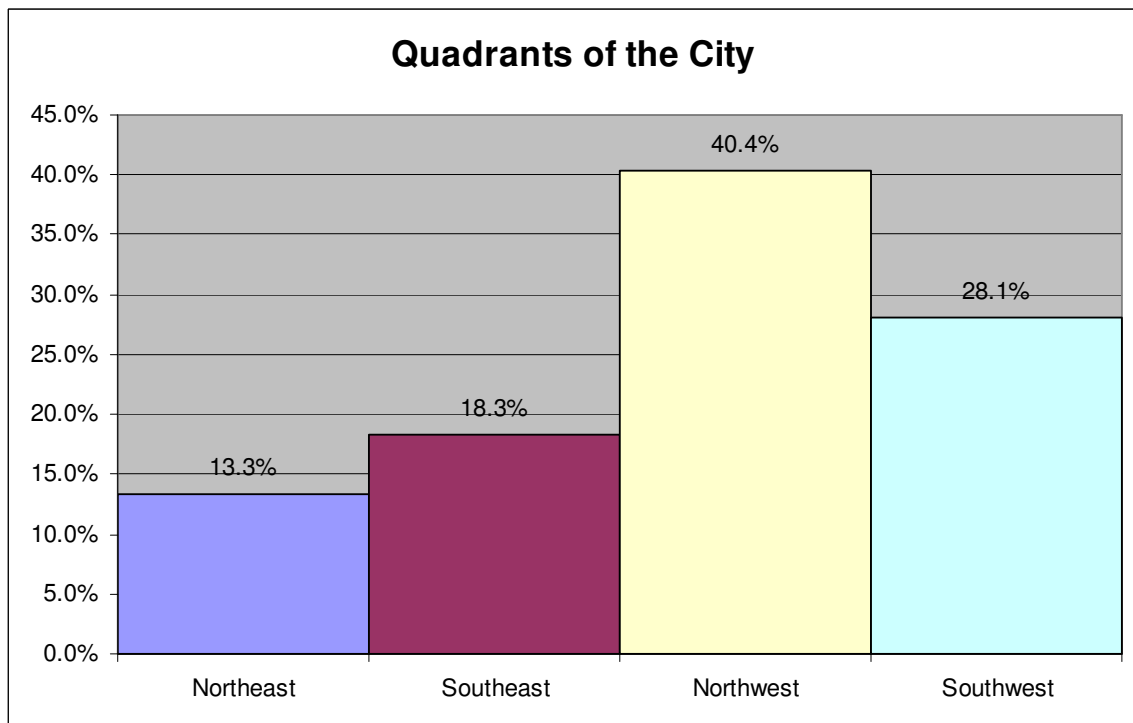
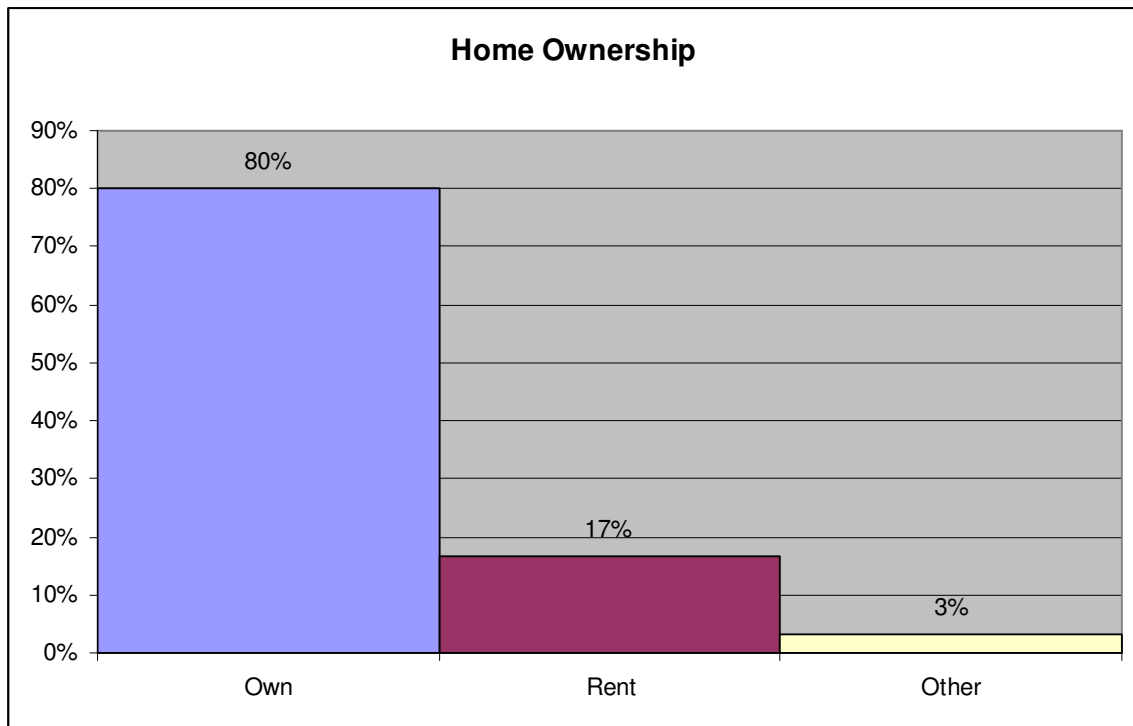
As in years past, the CAC collected and analyzed the respondent's age, ethnicity, gender, gross income, whether they owned a home or rented, whether they are a voter or not, the length of time and quadrant in which they live in Visalia and the family makeup of the household.

There were some demographics with insufficient responses to make them statistically significant. They include: length of residency in Visalia, voter registration, home ownership, gender, and ethnicity. With this in mind the sample best represents those living here more than 10 years, who are voters, home owners, female and Caucasian.

### **Year to Year Survey Comparison Methods**

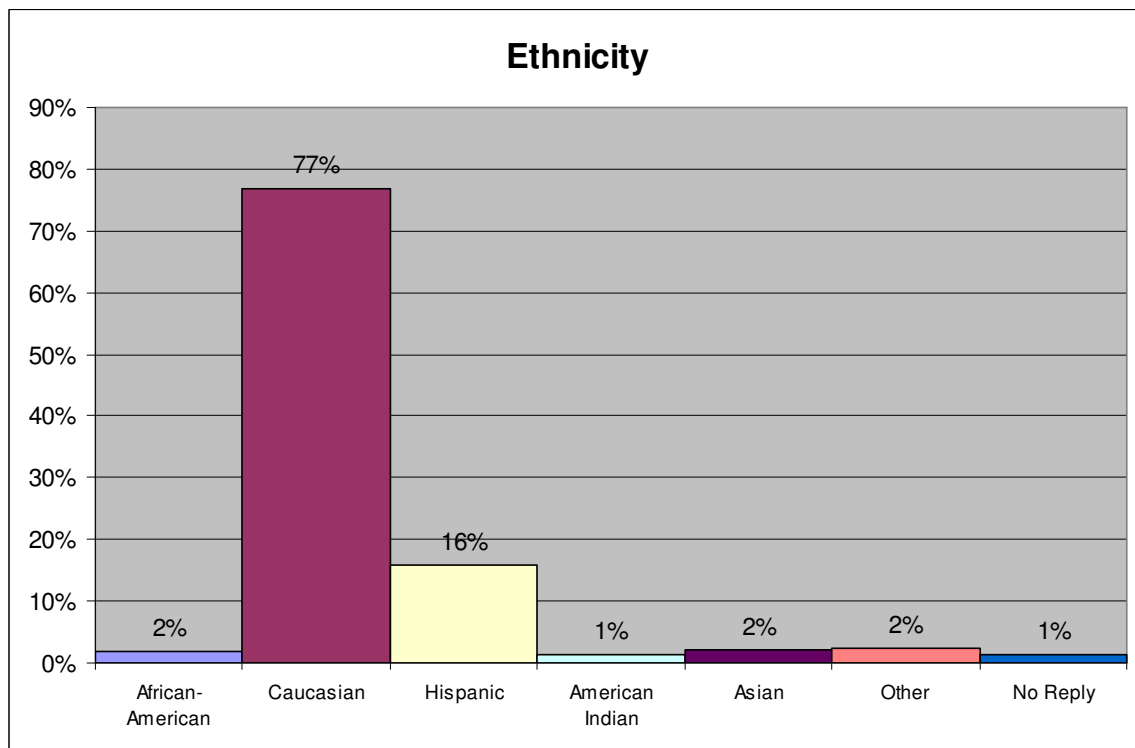
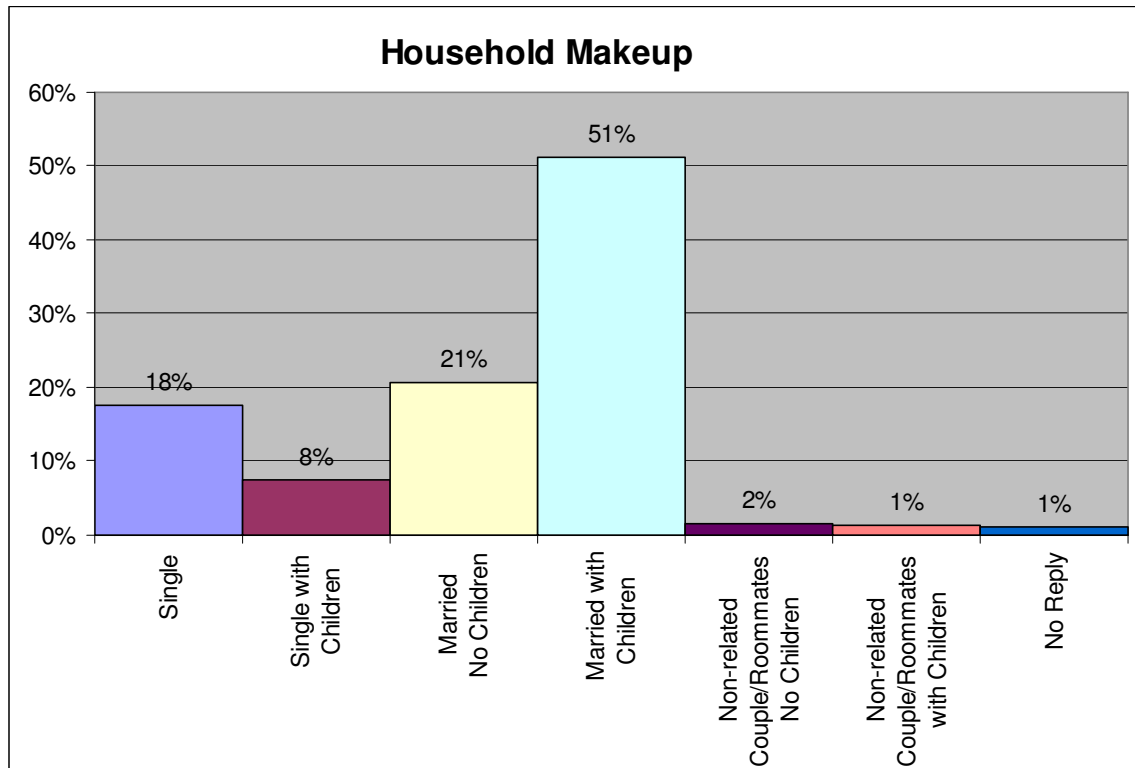
In 2003 the survey included 300 respondents. The phone numbers were gathered from the telephone book. In 2004 and 2005 the CAC used a phone list from CalWater. In 2006 a phone list was used from AT&T including rental residences. The 2007 survey includes 400 respondents contacted from an up to date phone list from AT&T also including rental residences.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

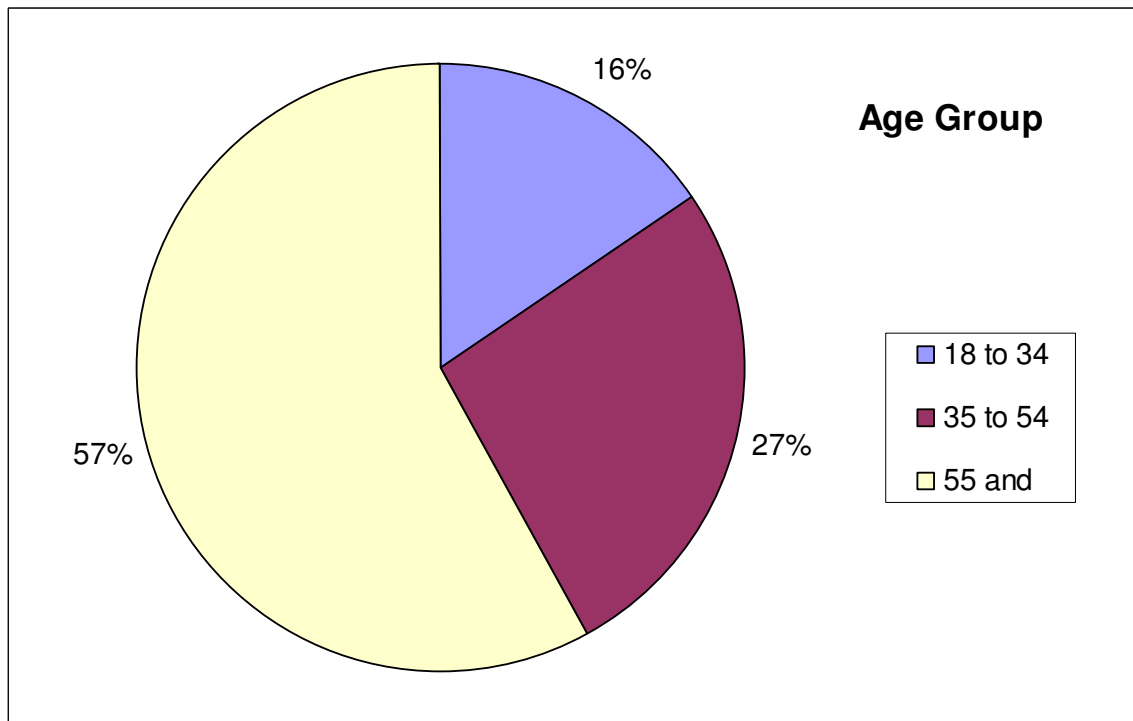
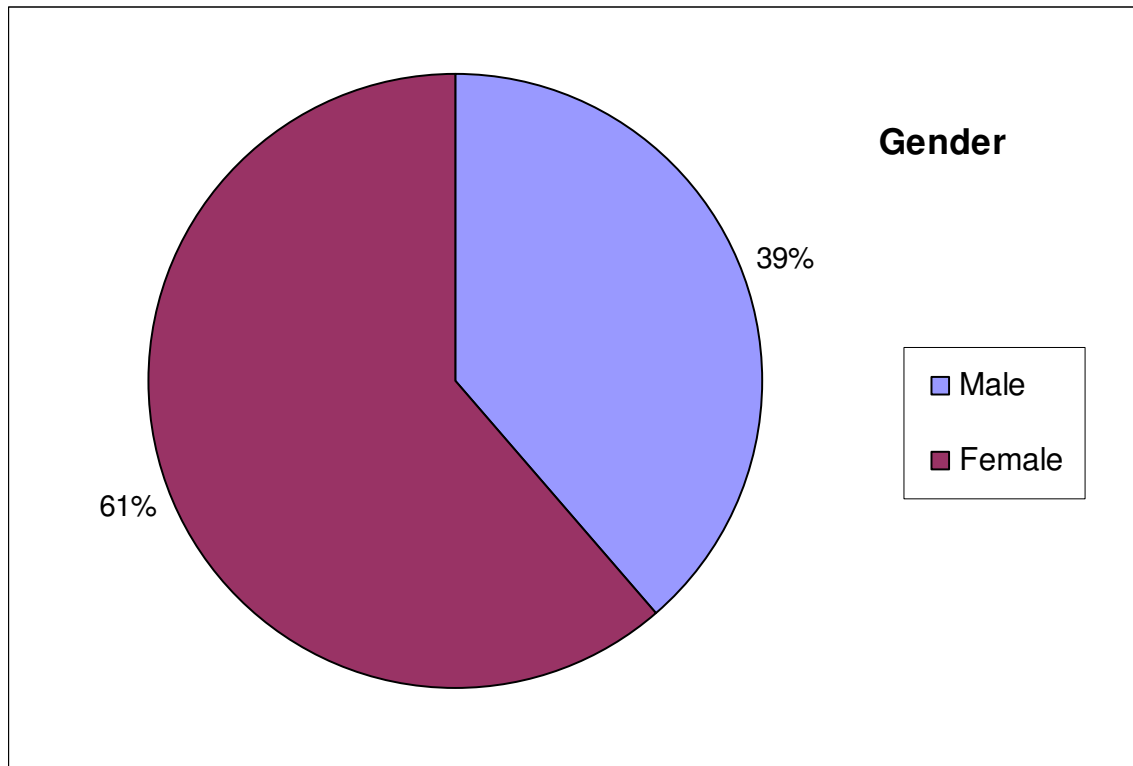




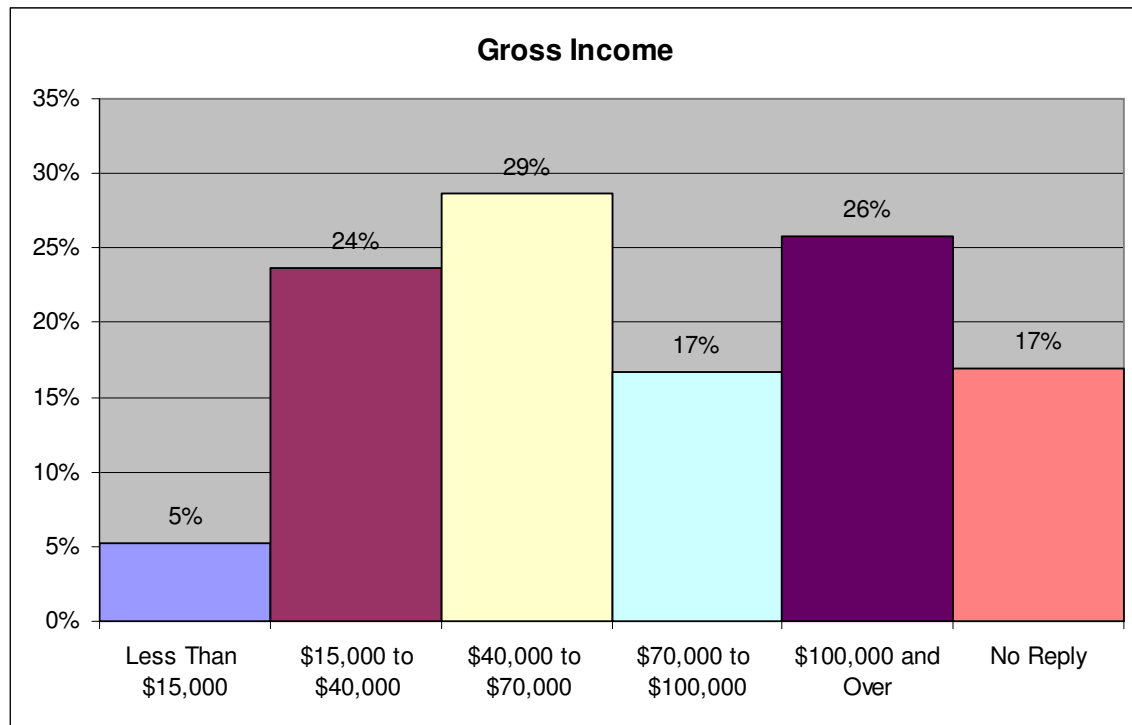
## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



## APPENDIX

*2007 Sample Survey*

*Methodology and Statistical Procedures*

*Representative Responses of the Open Ended Question*

## Sample Survey

### Public Opinion Survey 2007

1) How do you rate the City's efforts at providing a safe community?

1	2	3	4	5
Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low

---

1A) To provide a safer community, what type of criminal activity should the City target?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Violent Crime	Property Crime	Auto Theft	Malicious Damage	Graffiti	Gang Suppression	Other

---

2) Have you had contact with the Visalia Police Department in the past year? (if "Yes", ask question 2A)

1	2
Yes	No

2A) If so, was it with:

1	2	3	4	
An officer	Dispatch	Records	Other	*Explain difference between dispatch (phone) and records (reports/clerical)

2B) How would you rate the service you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion

---

3) Have you had contact with a Visalia firefighter in the last year? (if "Yes", ask question 3A)

1	2
Yes	No

3A) How would you rate the service you received?

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

---

4) What do you consider the most essential City services besides Police and Fire? *(Multiple answers OK)*

1	2	3	4	5	6
Road Maintenance	Park Maintenance	Traffic Signs and Signals	Recreation Activities	Other	None

---

5) How do you rate the quality of the following services in Visalia?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion
Emergency Medical Response by Fire Dept.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Private Ambulance	1	2	3	4	5	6
City Road Maintenance	1	2	3	4	5	6
Traffic Management	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bus Services	1	2	3	4	5	6
Street Lighting	1	2	3	4	5	6
Senior Citizen Services	1	2	3	4	5	6
Recreation Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
Services for Disabled Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6
Park Maintenance	1	2	3	4	5	6
Garbage+Recycling Collection	1	2	3	4	5	6

---

6) Do you view traffic conditions as ...

1	2	3	4	5
Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

---

7) How many times have you attended activities at the Convention Center in the last year?

1	2	3	4
None	1 to 2 times	3 to 4 times	5 or more times

---

8) What type of events would you like to attend at the Convention Center in the future? *(Multiple answers OK)*

1	2	3	4	5	6
Consumer Shows	Dances	Concerts	Holiday/Reception Events	Conferences, Mtgs., + Wksp.	Other

**Public Opinion Survey 2007 (continued)**

<b>The city is investing time and money into enhancing the downtown central core area. How important is it to you to enhance and expand the downtown area?</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	
Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low	
<b>9A) With enhancements such as bus services, lighting and activities in the downtown area, would you consider::</b>					
1	2	3	4		
Living downtown	Working downtown	Both living and working downtown	None of above		
<b>10) How important is it to you to have an olympic style aquatic center in Visalia?</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	
Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low	
<b>10A) If an olympic style aquatic center is built, how do you feel it should be paid for?</b>					
1	2	3	4		
User Fees	Taxes	Combination of both 1 and 2	Donations		
<b>11) Taking all things into consideration, how would you rate the overall quality of life in Visalia?</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	
Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low	
<b>12) How long have you lived in Visalia?</b>					
1	2	3	4		
Less than 2 years	2 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	More than 10 years		
<b>13) Are you a registered voter?</b>					
1	2				
Yes	No				
<b>14) Do you own or rent your home?</b>					
1	2	3			
Own	Rent	Other			
<b>15) Which quadrant of the City do you live in if Mooney and Hwy. 198 are considered the cross sections of town?</b>					
1	2	3	4		
Northeast	Southeast	Northwest	Southwest		
<b>16) What is the makeup of your household? *("Married with children" includes children not living at home)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Single	Single with children	Married no children	Married with children *	Non-related couple/roommates no children	Non-related couple/roommates with children
<b>17) What is your ethnicity? (Multiple races may apply - more than one OK)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	6
African-American	Caucasian	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian	Other
<b>18) What is your gender?</b>					
1	2				
Male	Female				
<b>19) What is your age group?</b>					
1	2	3			
18 to 34	35 to 54	55 and over			
<b>20) What was your households's total gross income before taxes in 2006?</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	
Less than \$15,000	\$15,000 to \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$70,000	\$70,000 to \$100,000	\$100,000 and over	
<b>21) In your opinion, what is the most serious issue facing Visalia, to which the City should respond? (Comment area. Mark respondent's answer in space below)</b>					

## **METHODOLOGY AND STATISTICAL PROCEDURES**

The survey was done in several phases. The first phase included a planning phase, a data collection phase, data compilation phase, data interpretation phase and a report phase.

### **Planning**

The planning phase included a revision of the questions that were asked. Simplicity and ease of reading the survey were also considered as a very important additional step.

### **Data Collection**

The survey was conducted by phone. Our limitations for data collection included: Only those over 18 years of age and residents of Visalia. Our sample included 400 participants who responded. It was not uncommon for us to pass over many phone numbers before finding someone who would be within our sample limitations or willing to respond. Random calling was utilized, but limitations such as those who were not willing to participate were common as there was no incentive for those who participated in the surveys.

### **Data interpretation**

There is an abundant amount of information that could be gathered from the survey but due to time and cost constraints it was interpreted only by comparing demographics and looking for trends from previous years. Some cross tabulation of variables were used to interpret major trends along with excel charts.

### **Report**

The report has been kept to standard from previous reports because it best represents our findings. We have made the report easy to read, with color graphics and brief interpretations have been included to further explain our findings. Some supplementary data has been added to the appendix to satisfy further analysis.

### **Procedures**

The procedures used here are limited to time and cost of the survey. Under no circumstance is this survey liable for any misinterpretation one might gather from the survey. The sample is attempting to approximate the general opinion of the population of Visalia.

## **Limitations**

Data was analyzed only using Excel due to time and cost constraint. Also Data analysis software was not available. A web based analysis tool was utilized for some of the questions.

A recommendation is to utilize a survey software program for future surveys to facilitate the process and to provide a more detailed analysis. Also recommended is a multi-faceted response method to acquire responses from several different sources such as via the city's website, internet, e-mail and US mail in addition to phone calls to capture the opinions of a better representative sample of the citizens of Visalia.



**REPRESENTATIVE  
RESPONSES TO  
OPEN-ENDED  
QUESTION**

parking garage inconvenient, downtown parking  
 provide youth program  
 growing crime  
 growth too fast  
 gangs  
 gangs  
 more careful regarding the growth and losing the farm lands  
 control growth  
 reduce tax for retired home owners  
 traffic on Mooney  
 crime  
 crime  
 too many new homes  
 handle the traffic congestion at shopping centers  
 more availability to seniors activities  
 keep on top of emergency problems  
 energy control  
 get a handle on the performance of city council  
 gangs and graffiti  
 gangs and crimes  
 manage growth and development  
 vacant buildings downtown, main street boarded up  
 parking structure gangs property theft  
 gang suppression  
 more officer patrol in neighborhoods  
 public transportation  
 gang suppression  
 gang activities  
 gang crime  
 gangs  
 rapid growth  
 gangs  
 more for the youth  
 growth air quality  
 gangs and crimes  
 gangs  
 gangs  
 poverty education  
 road developments horrible planning in the past years  
 public safety issue and centralized growth  
 restrooms in parks too many one-ways parking downtown  
 drugs  
 gangs  
 gangs  
 gangs  
 gangs  
 gangs  
 illegal immigrants  
 home burglary  
 violence  
 gangs