

# Public Attitudes Toward Municipal Services in Hartford

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A Public Opinion Survey Conducted for the City of Hartford

by

**JEF Associates**

In accordance with Public Bid # 3803

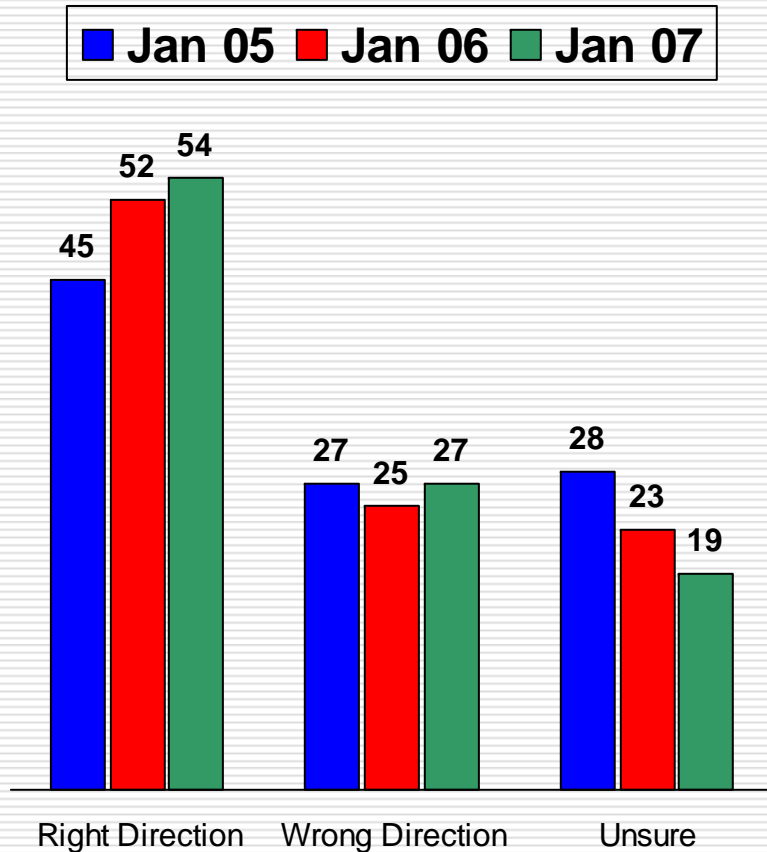
## Methodology

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- Poll was conducted between 12/6/06 and 12/14/06
- 831 residents of Hartford (margin of error 3.3%)
- Sample demographics (gender, age, education, neighborhood, racial & ethnic identity, homeownership, children per household) agree with the most recent census data.

# Direction of the City of Hartford

In your opinion, is the City of Hartford going in the right direction or the wrong direction?



There has been a slow rise in people's opinion of the direction of Hartford over the three years.

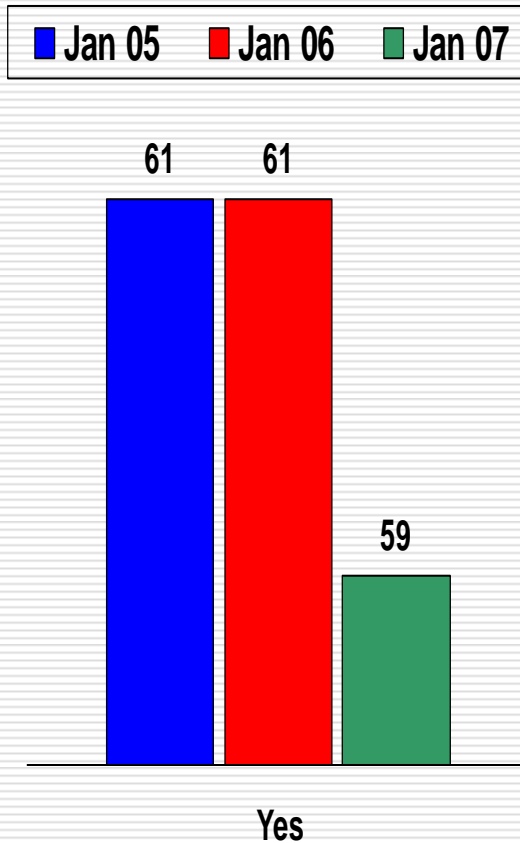
The people who believe the City is going in the wrong direction have remained constant.

Residents over 70 years old were the most likely to believe the City is going in the right direction.

## Housing

Do you believe homeownership in Hartford has increased in the last year?

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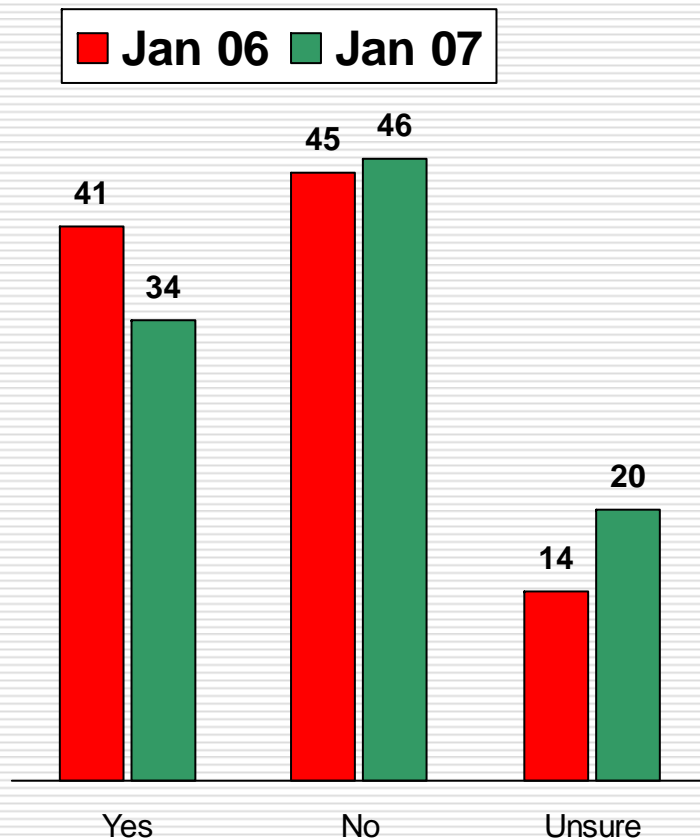
The belief that home ownership increased has remained steady.

There has been little change in the last few years on this issue.

Middle income, and Blue Hills residents (by a wide margin), are more likely to believe that homeownership has increased.

## Housing

Do you believe there is adequate affordable housing in Hartford?



There are a significant number of people who believe that there is not enough affordable housing in Hartford.

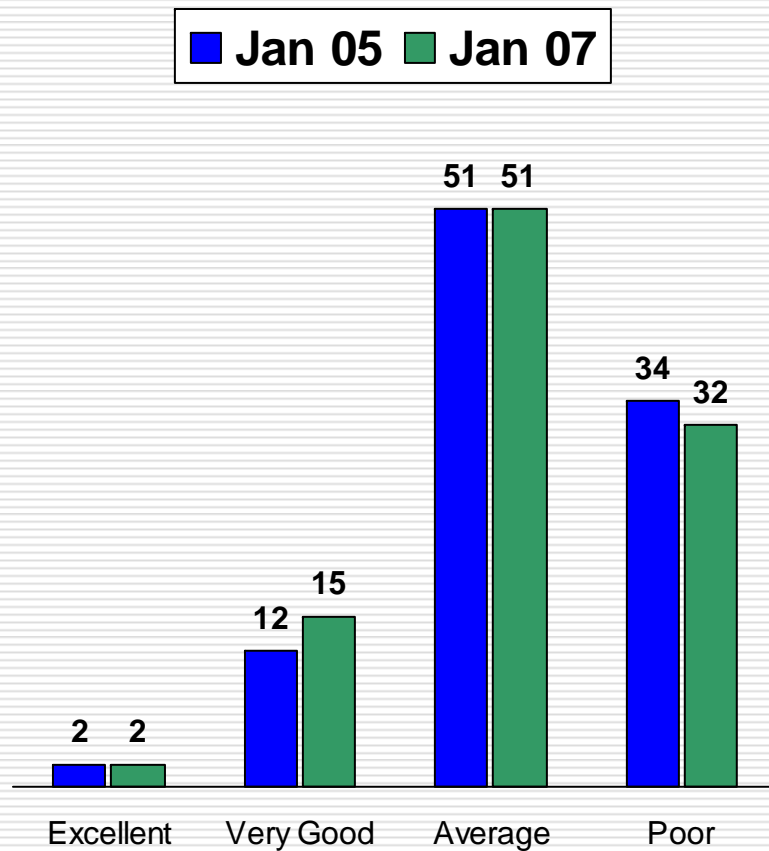
It is clear that the respondents are more unsure in this survey than the previous one.

Low income, North End residents, and women are more likely to believe that affordable housing is lacking.

## Public Safety

### How would you rate public safety in Hartford?

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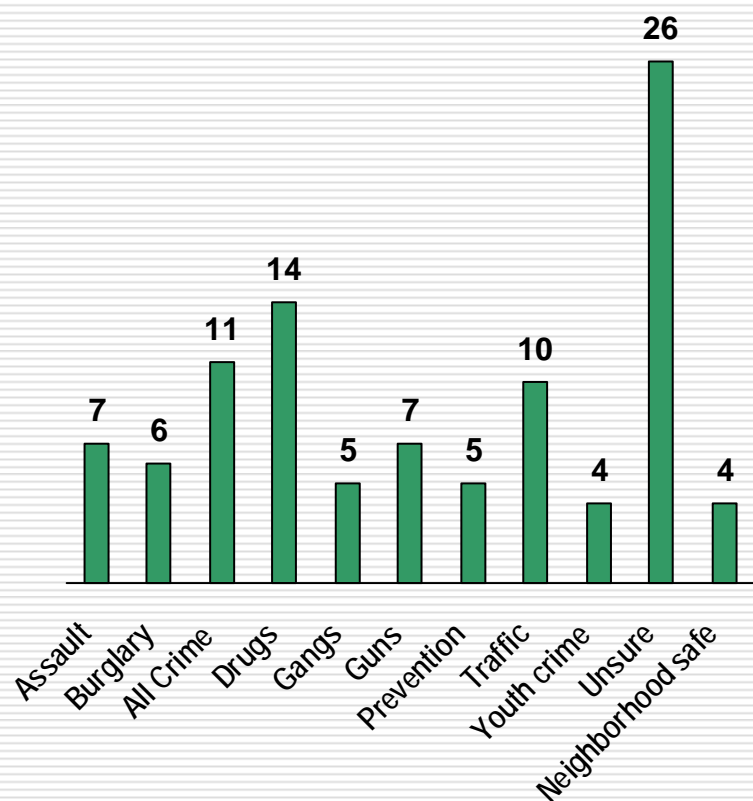
Seniors are more likely to believe that Hartford is safe.

Younger, poorer residents, are less likely to think the City is safe.

## Public Safety

### What public safety issue concerns you the most?

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It is interesting to note that people's issues with crime are wide ranging.

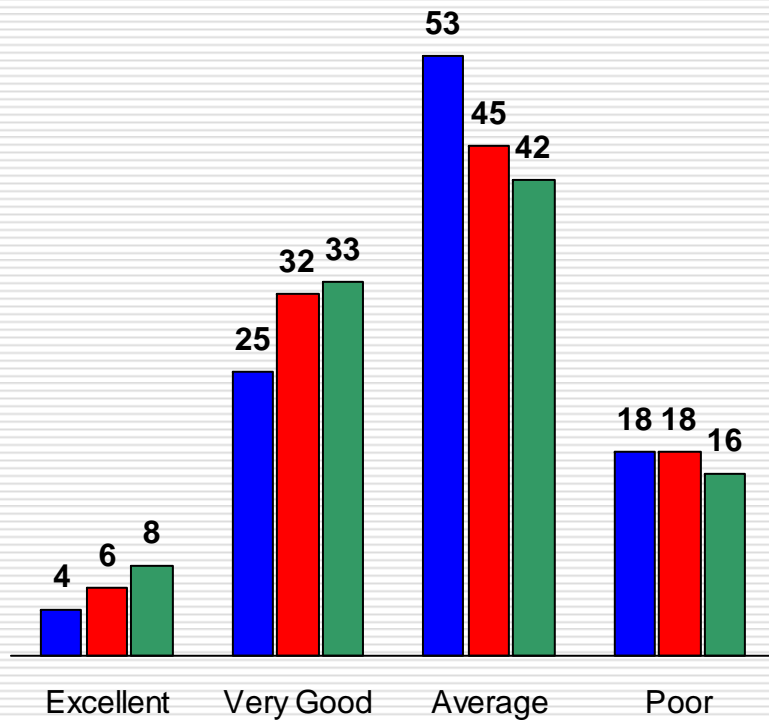
Gang responses are lower than in most urban centers.

Resident who state "unsure" are less likely to have had direct contact with crime, and tend to state beliefs based on perceptions.

## Police

### How would you rate the Hartford Police Department's community policing effort?

■ Jan 05 ■ Jan 06 ■ Jan 07



There is a small but steady rise in the perception of community policing efforts in the city.

Seniors, West End residents, and men are more likely to think community policing is going well.

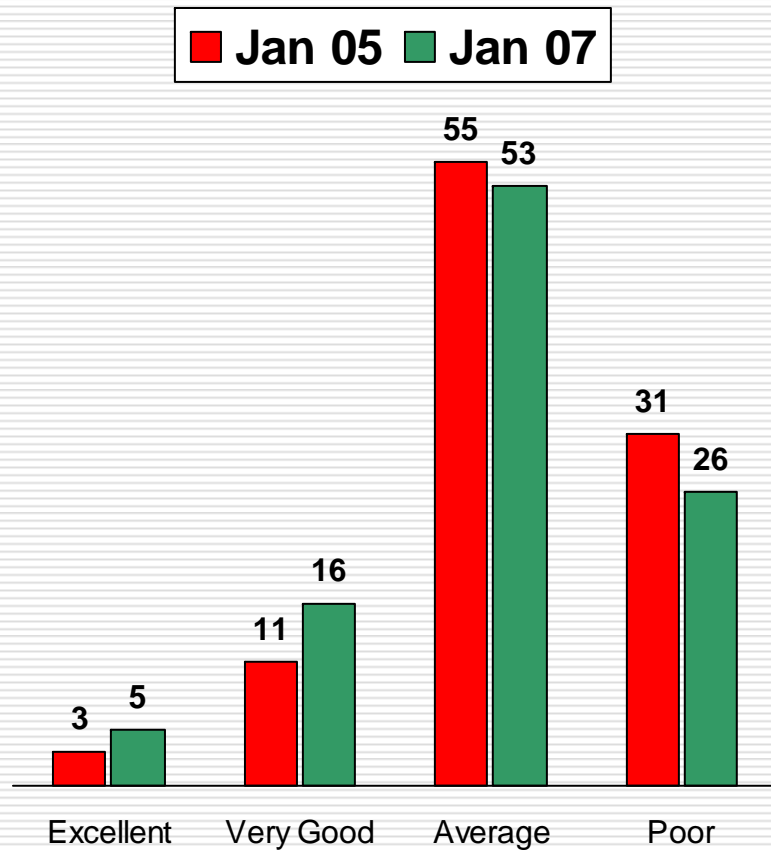
Youth, North End residents, and homes with children are not yet convinced.



## Education

### How would you rate education in Hartford?

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The perception of education in Hartford has risen over the last 2 years.

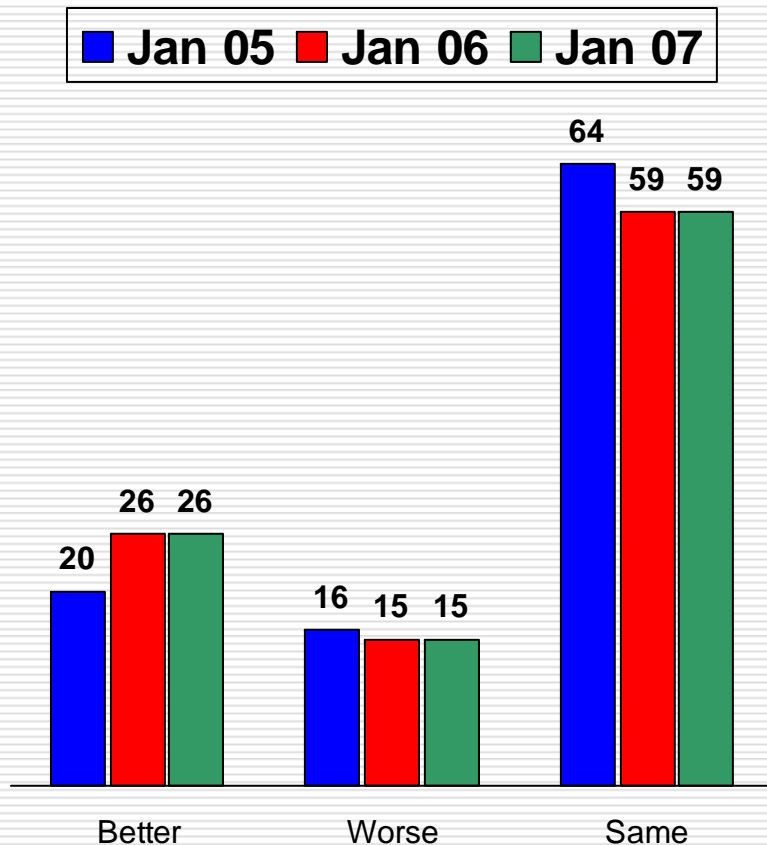
The 5% reduction of "poor" responses is significant.

Low income residents are more likely to rate education higher.

Families with children were split within the margin of error.

## Education

Do you believe public education in the city of Hartford is getting better, worse or staying about the same?



Over the past 2 years, we see a positive trend in this area.

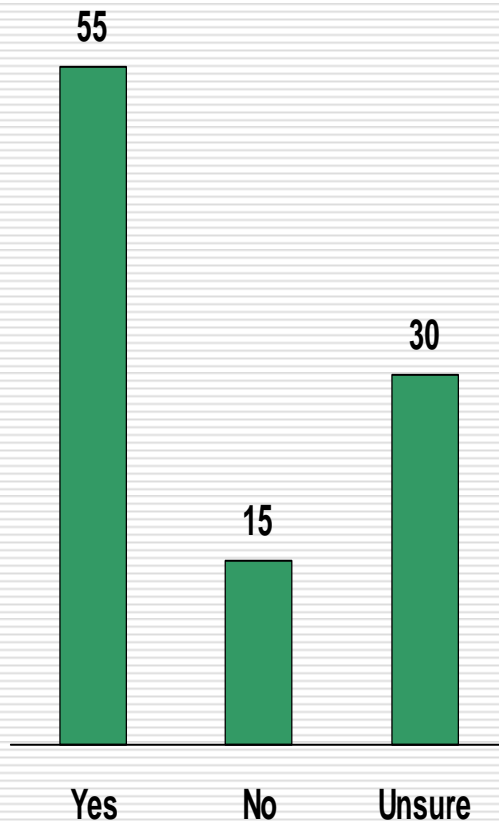
Younger, wealthy residents, families with children and men think public education is getting better.

We will probably never be able to change the minds of the 15% who think education is getting worse.

## Education

Are you satisfied with the school construction and revitalization project?

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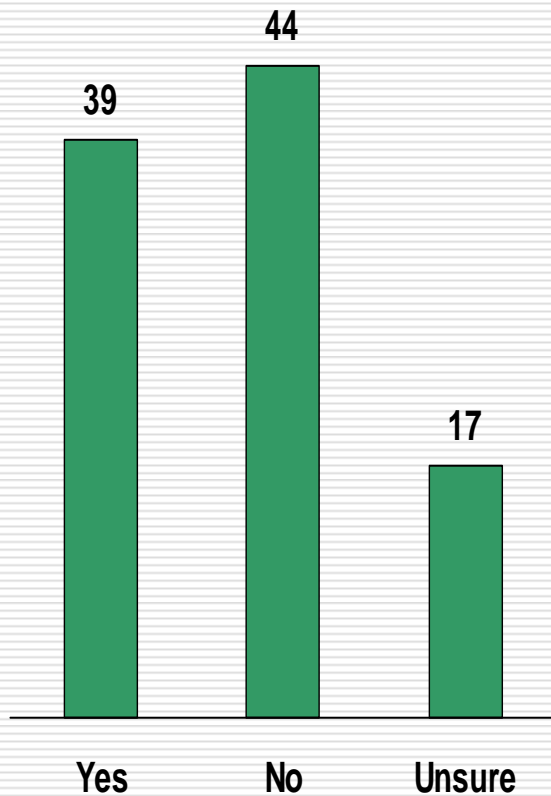
Obviously, there are a significant number of people who believe this program is working.

It may be more interesting to note that many people have heard and have an opinion about it.

## Education

**Do you feel the city is spending enough money on the public school system?**

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There is not a great difference between those who think the city spends enough on education and those who don't.

Wealthy respondents believe we spend enough on education.

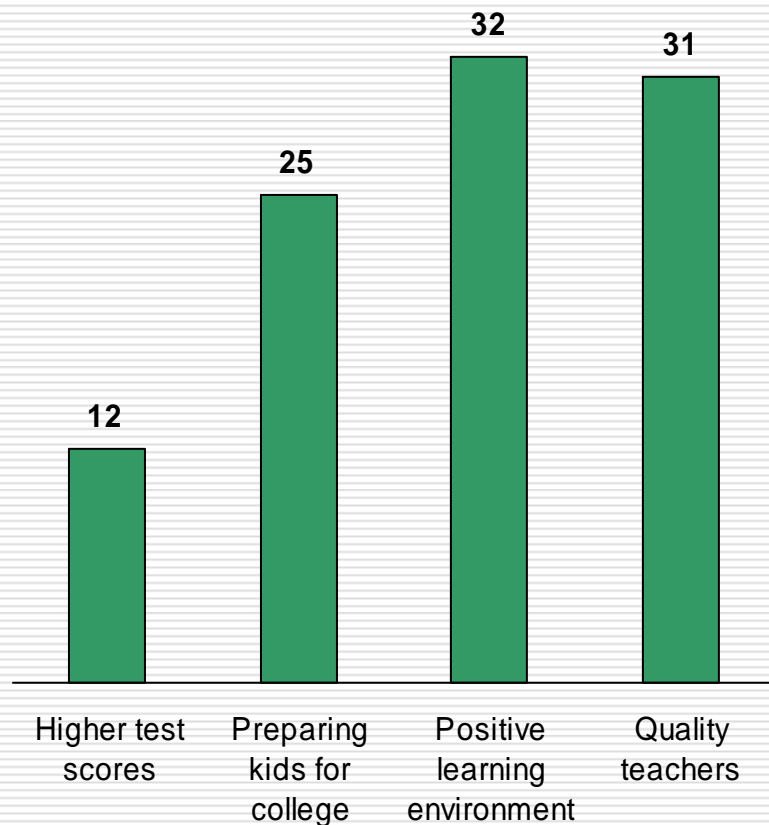
Women don't think we spend enough.

Surprisingly, families with children were split evenly on this issue.

## Education

Which one of these education initiatives is most important to you?

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It is clear that test scores may measure performance, but they are not a great concern for residents.

Younger residents want a positive learning environment.

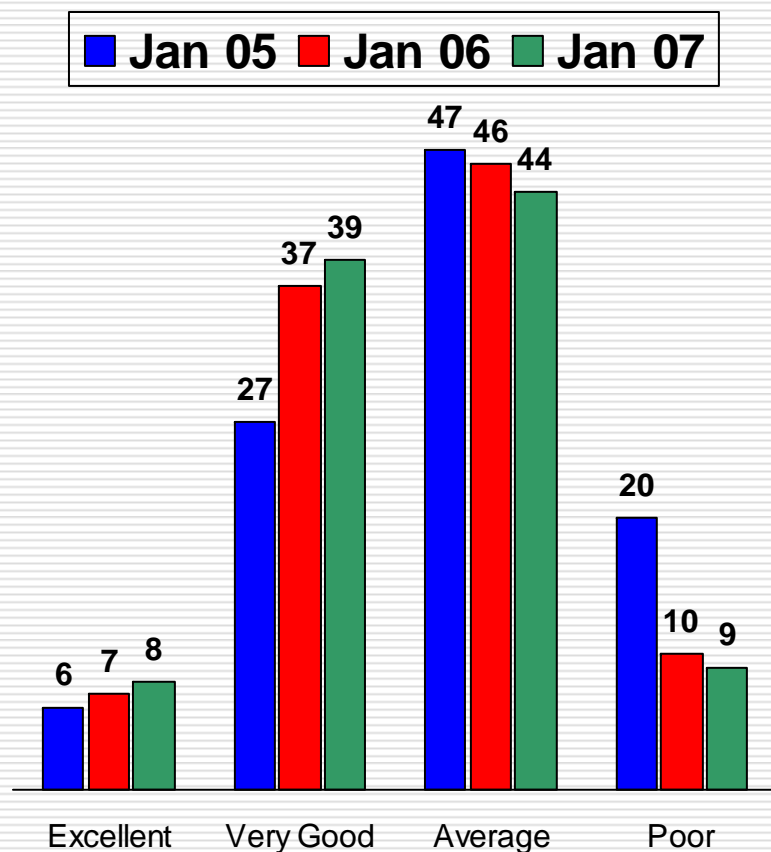
Middle age respondents favor preparing for college.

Seniors look for higher test scores.

Families with children are split.

## City Services

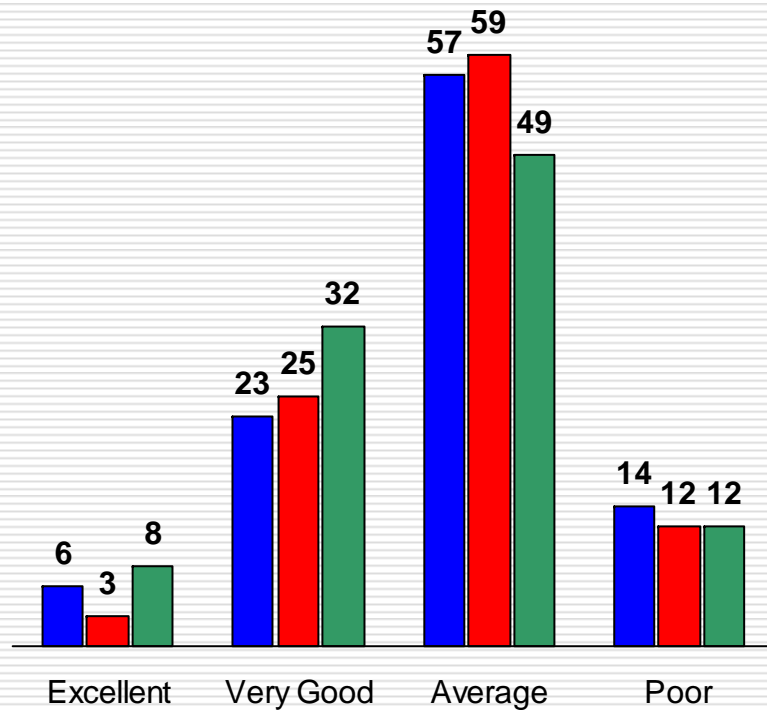
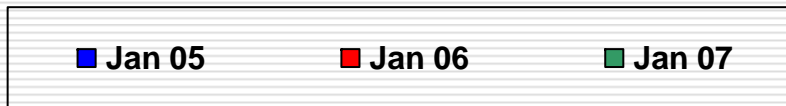
### How would you rate the city services in Hartford?



There has been significant improvement over previous surveys.

Note the difference between very good and poor over the years.

# Parks



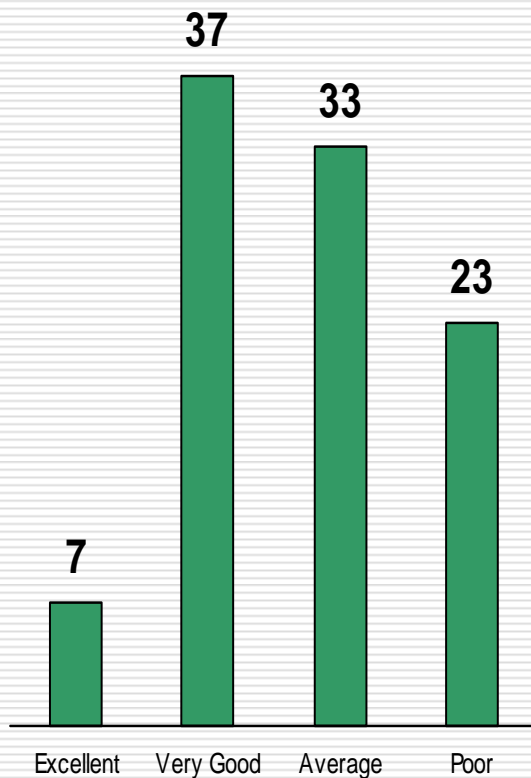
Parks rebounded over last years survey.

Seniors tend to like the parks more.

Younger residents were less likely to view the parks as excellent.

## Litter Cleanup

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Compared to most other services, there are a similar number of respondents who believe that litter clean up is excellent.

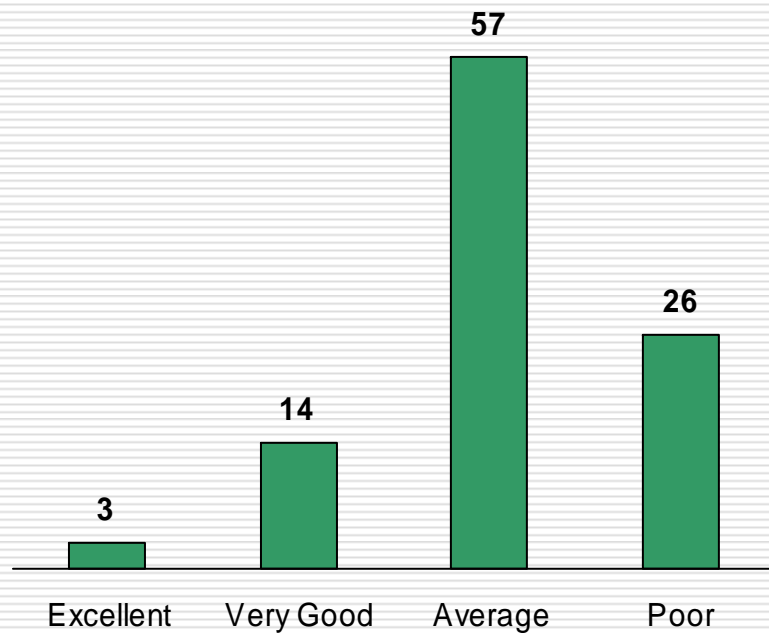
The more interesting response was the 37% who stated litter clean up was very good.

Younger, North End residents, and women are less satisfied with litter clean up.



## Building Inspections

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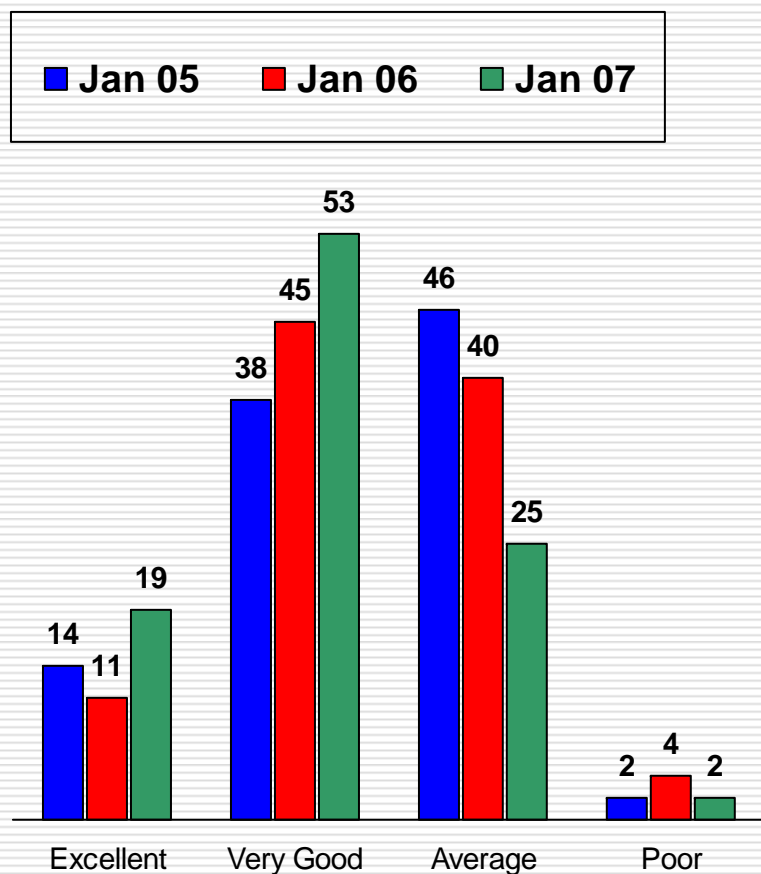


Building inspections usually are not a major concern for most residents.

Most people regard building inspections as Average or better.

Younger, less wealthy and North End residents make up most of those likely to believe the building inspections are poor.

# Libraries



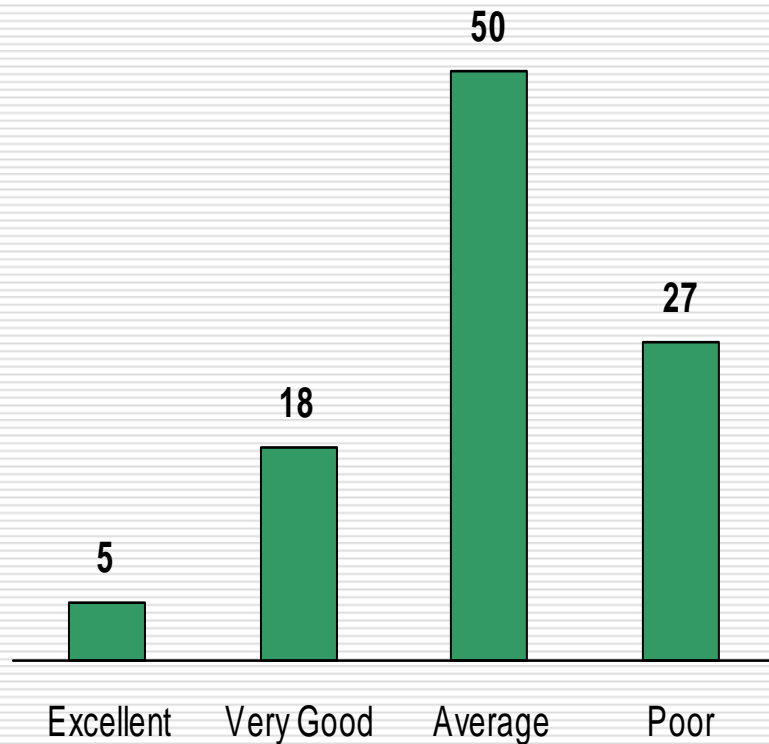
Libraries have been and still are the area with the strongest results.

Even the dip in 2006 was within the margin of error.

People between 30-59, wealthy and West End residents are more likely to think the libraries are excellent.

## Youth Services

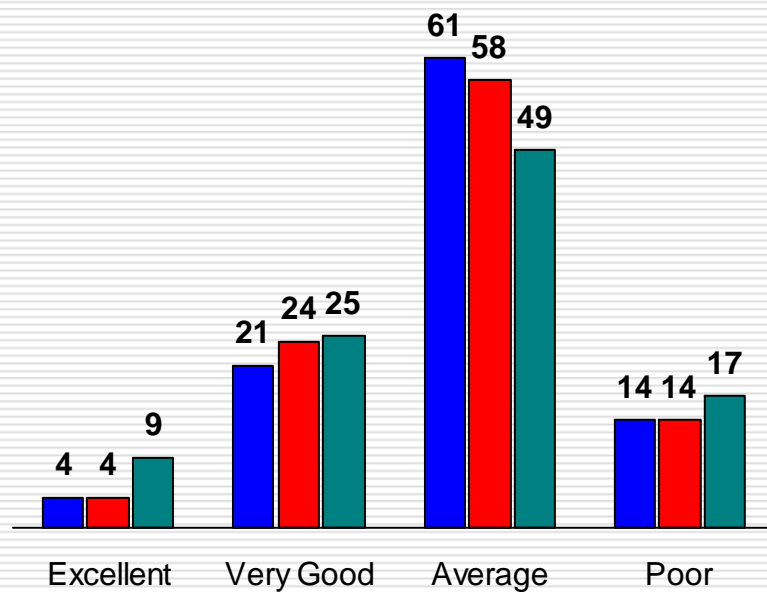
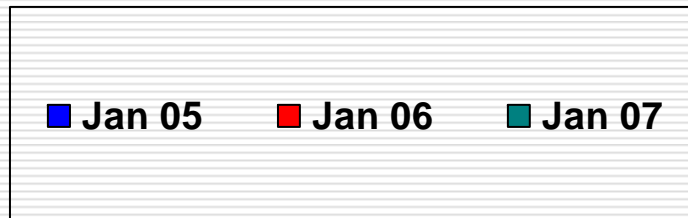
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A significant number of people tend to be concerned with youth issues.

People between 30-49 years old, North End residents and families with children comprise most of the group more likely to think youth services are poor.

## Senior Services

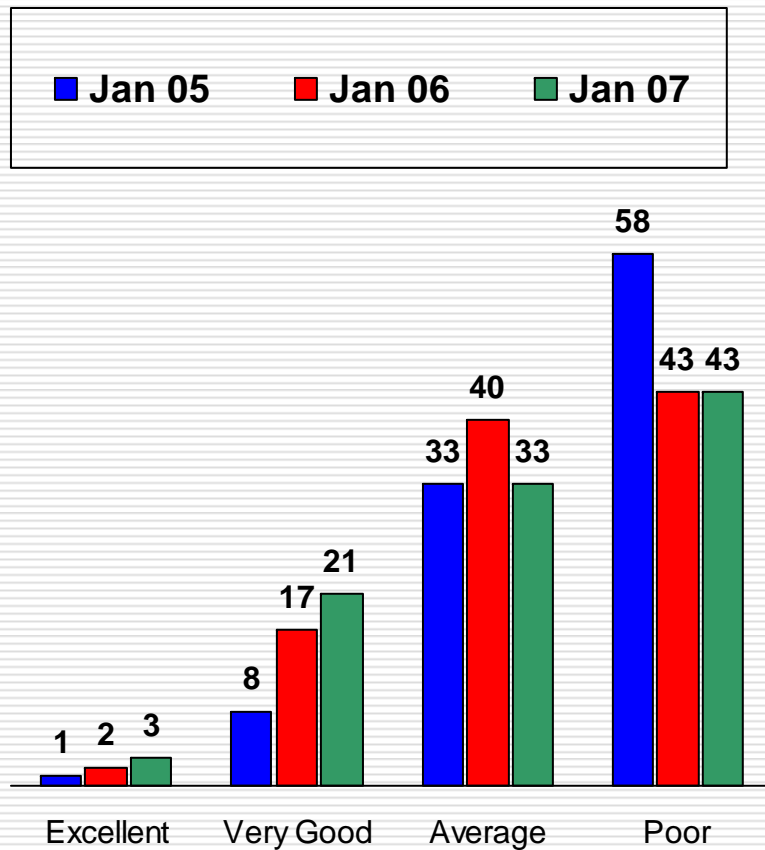


Senior services show increased satisfaction over the previous years.

There is a slight rise in the “poor” response, but it is within the margin of error.

Seniors are not any more or less satisfied than other age groups.

## Condition of Roads and Sidewalks



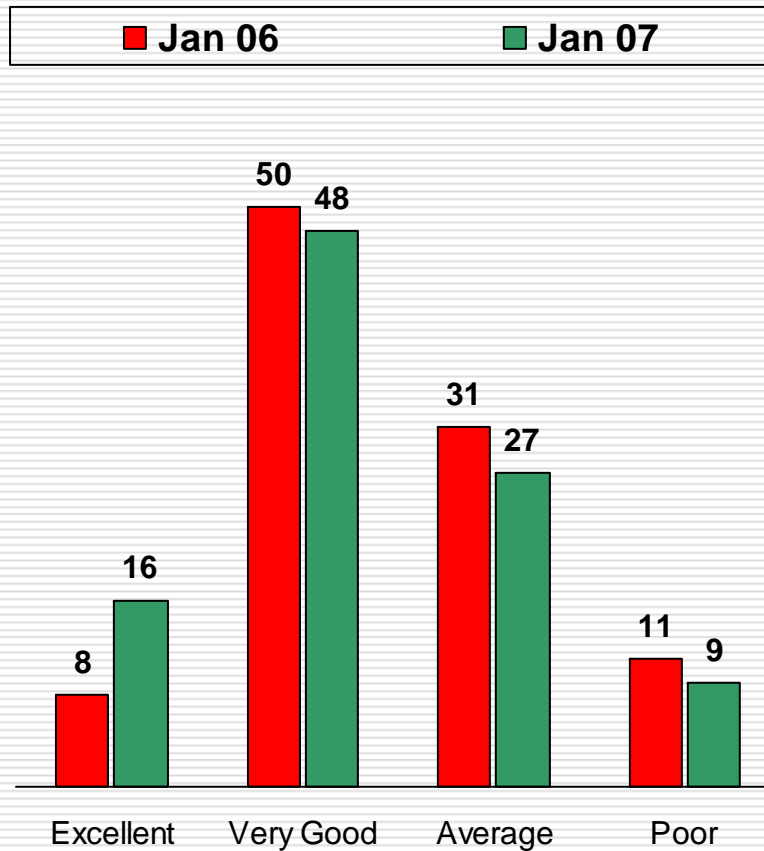
Over the past 2 years there has been a dramatic increase in people's perception that the conditions of roads and sidewalks are improving.

Downtown residents are more likely to approve of the conditions.

Women, North End and South End residents are less likely to approve.

Note the large drop in "Poor" over the past 2 years.

# Trash Collection



Trash collection approval also continued to improve.

The “excellent” responses have doubled and the “poor” are slightly down.

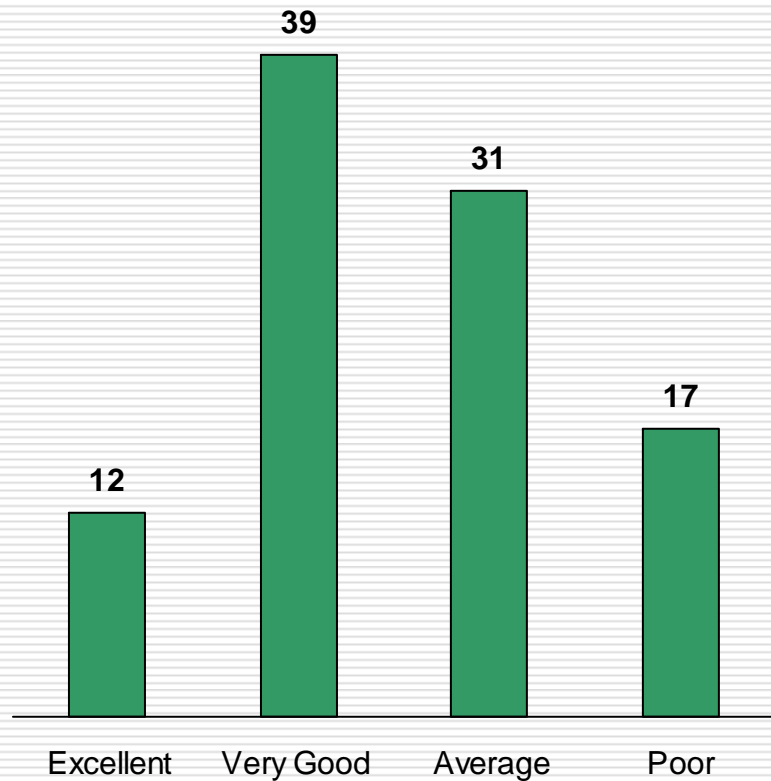
It is the second lowest “poor” response tested.

Respondents between 30-59 years old and West End residents are more likely to think trash collection is excellent.

## Cleanliness

Thinking about cleanliness in general, how would you rate the following in terms of litter: your neighborhood

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Most people believe that their neighborhood is relatively clean.

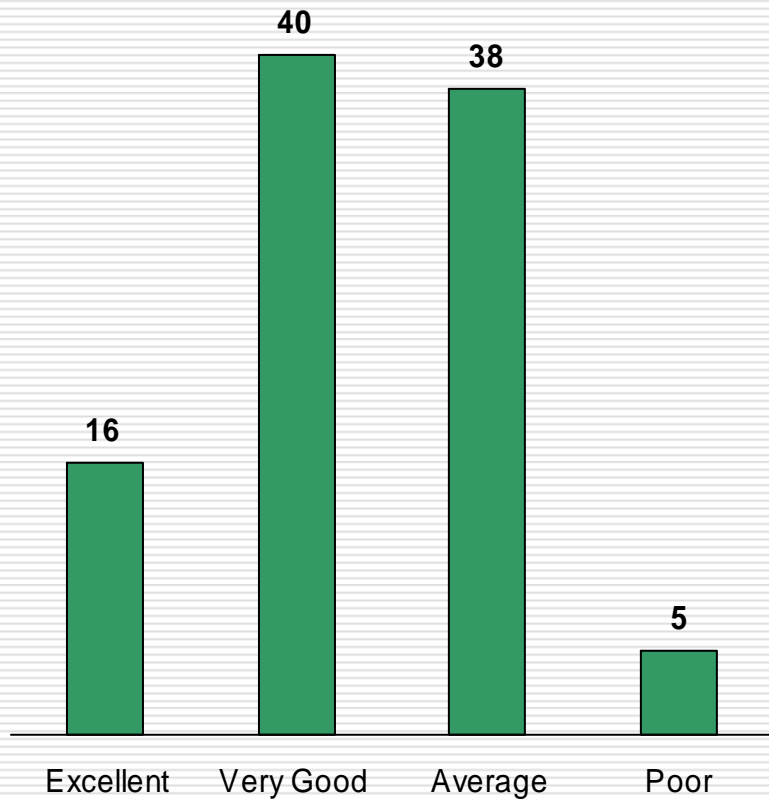
Downtown residents are more likely to think their neighborhood is clean.

North End residents are less satisfied.

## Cleanliness

Thinking about cleanliness in general, how would you rate the following in terms of litter: downtown

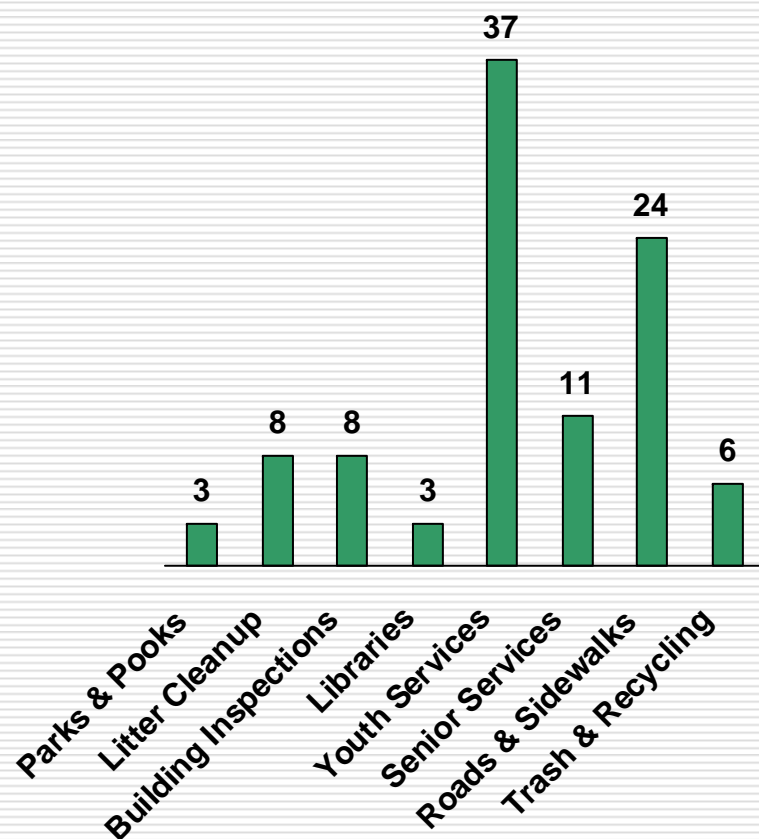
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Most people are very satisfied with the cleanliness of the downtown area.



## Other than education and public safety, which of the following areas or city services should receive most of your tax dollars?



Education and public safety are always important in urban centers.

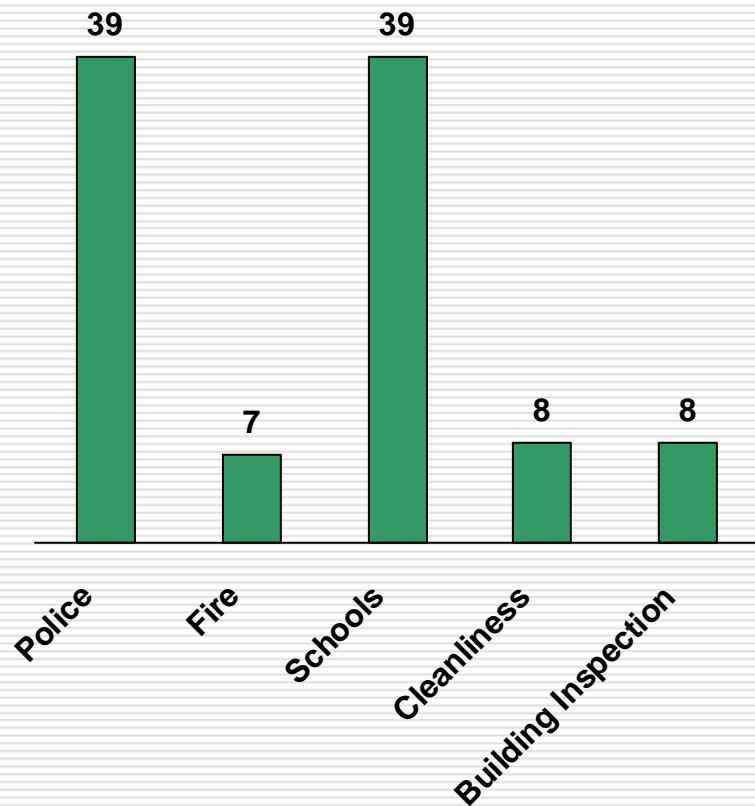
When we exclude them Youth Services takes a significant jump.

Not surprising were the groups more likely to be concerned about youth services. They include people between 18-49, less wealthy, North End residents and homes with children.

Note how high roads and sidewalks scored.

## On which department would you spend more of the city's limited resources?

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There is no surprise here.

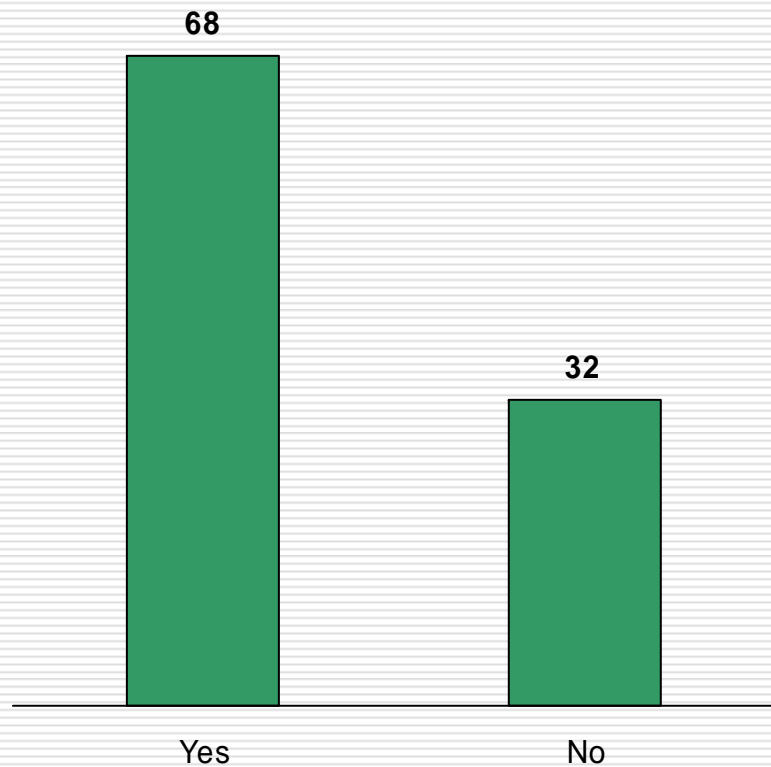
People in urban centers almost always have concerns with public safety and education.

Seniors, West End, Downtown, and male respondents care more about public safety.

People 30-39 years old, and families with children are more likely to care about education.

## If a tax increase were necessary to maintain current levels of city services, would you support that increase?

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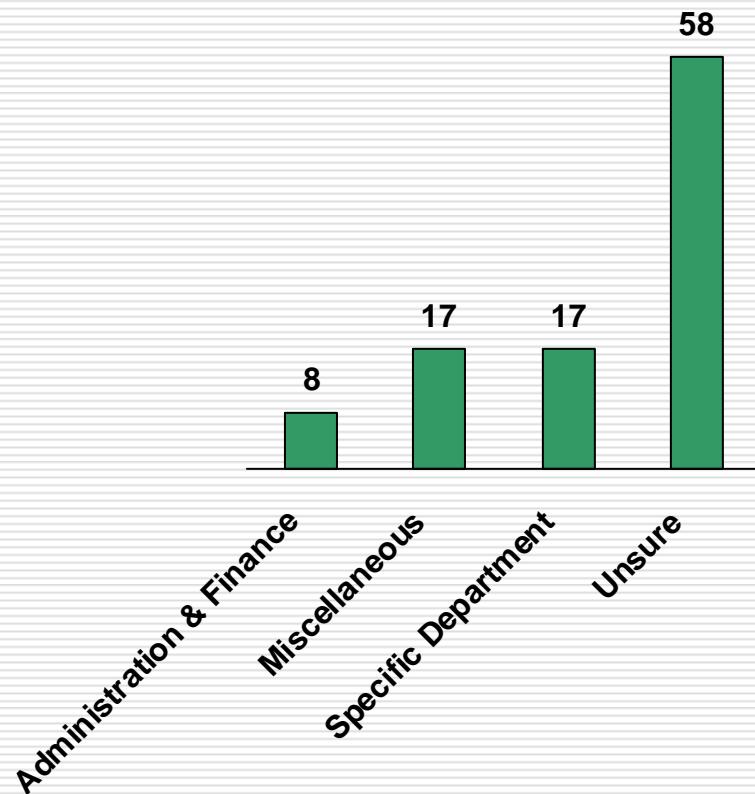
There is a strong concern from respondents that services are important in their lives.

Less wealthy, West End residents, and men would be more willing to incur a tax increase.

Obviously home owners are more likely to be against a tax increase, but not by the margin you may think.

## If you would not support an increase, what city services would you eliminate or reduce?

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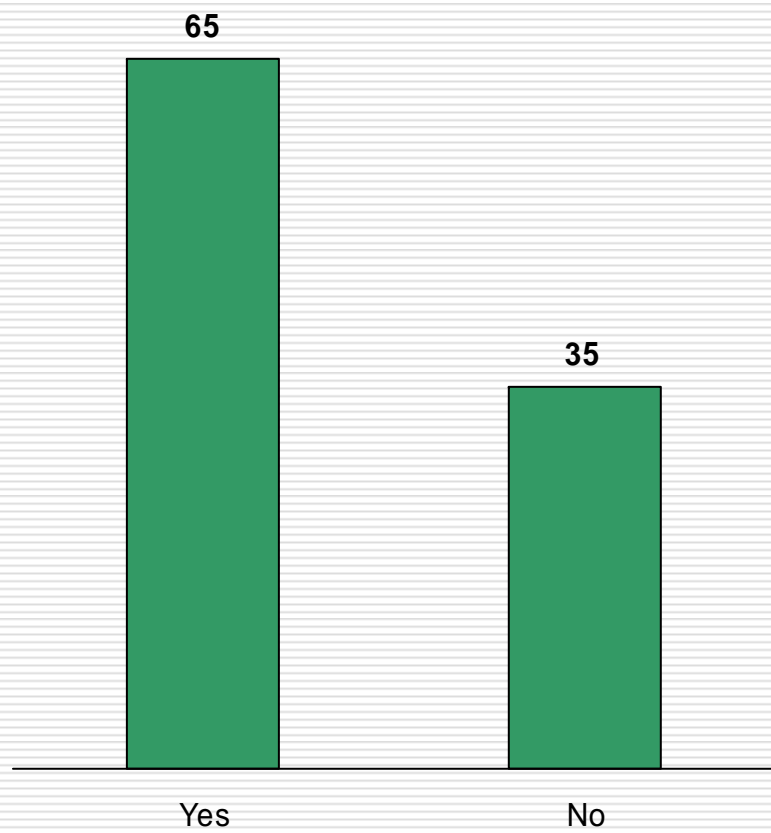


Many of the people who don't want to get a tax increase are not able to name the cuts they would prefer.

Only 17% could name a specific department.

## Do you believe that there is a neighborhood in the city that needs a greater share of city services?

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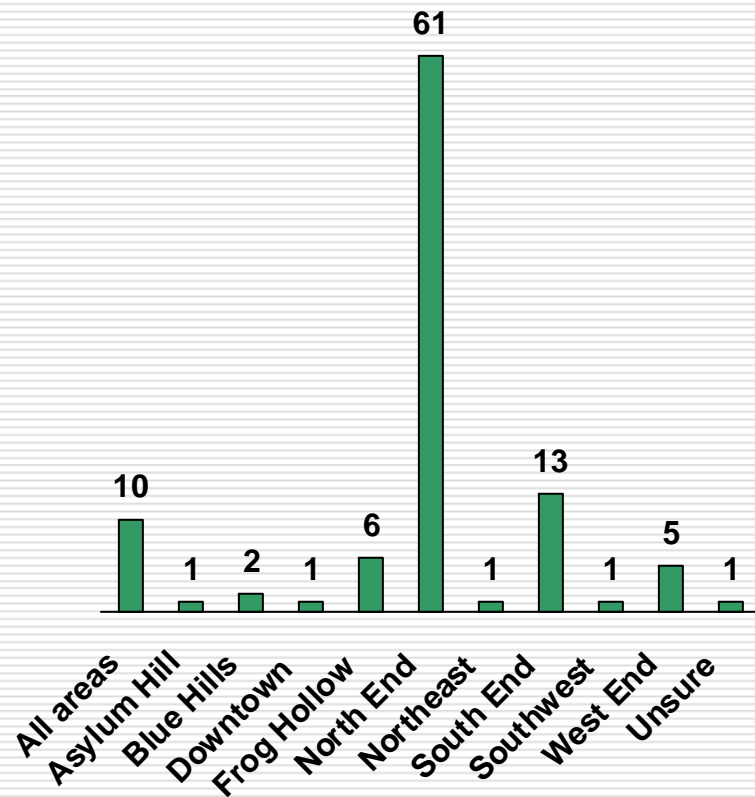


It is clear that many people believe that there are neighborhoods that need particular attention.

Most demographic groups across the board agree with this statement.

Women were the only group who, more than men thought specific neighborhood need attention.

## Which neighborhood needs more services?



Of the people who said a particular neighborhood needed attention 61% named the North End.

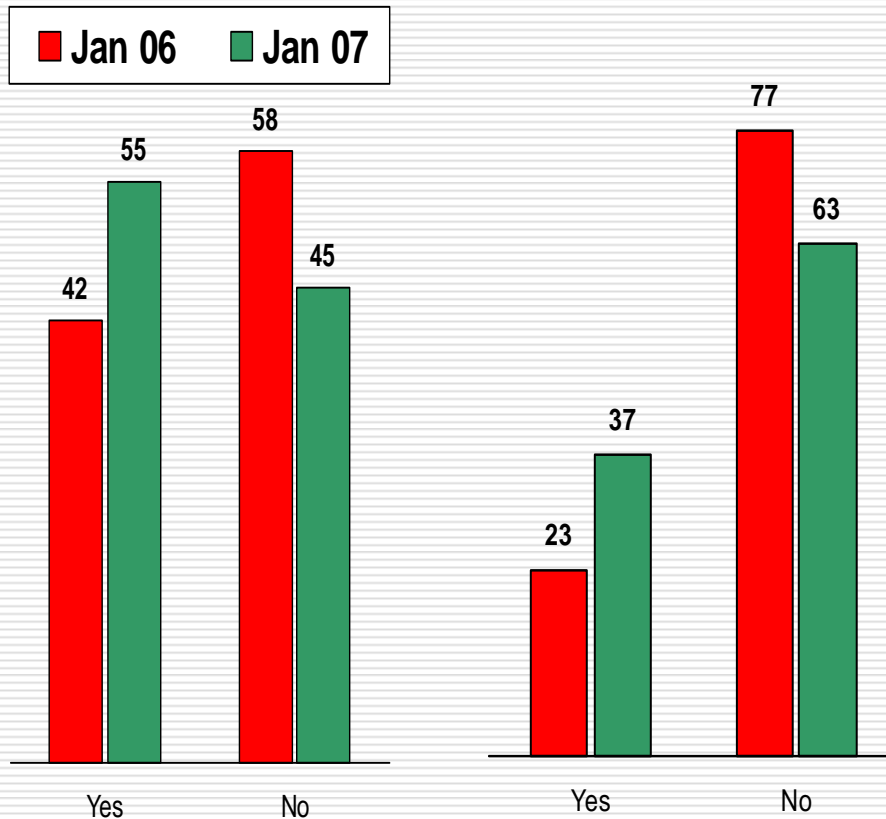
Younger respondents were more inclined to name the North End.

Over 65% of the people in the West End who named a neighborhood chose the North End.

Not one person in the West End named the West End as an area that needed attention.

## Technology & Communication

The City of Hartford uses several methods of communicating. Please tell me whether you have seen or heard of any of the following:



**Mayor's Newsletter**

**City Website**

There is an obvious increase in the viewing of the newsletter and web site.

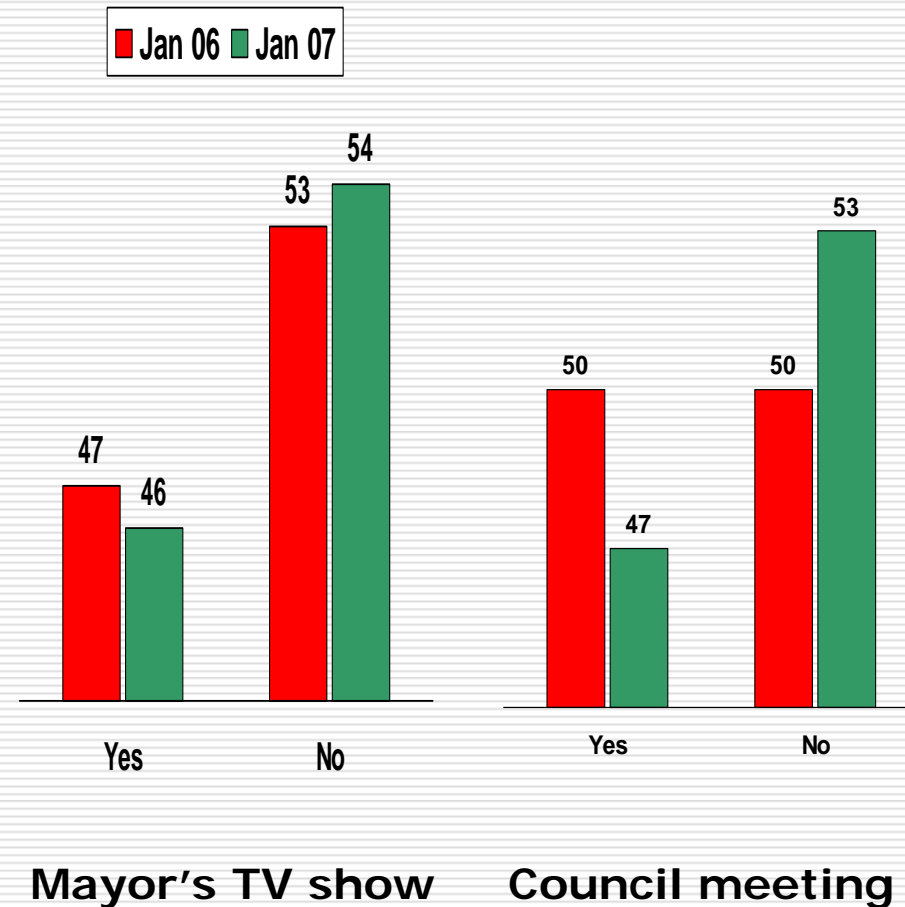
This may be partly due to the fact that more people in the City have internet service.

People who read the newsletter are more likely to believe Hartford is going in the right direction.

West End residents are more likely to read the newsletter and view the web site.

## Technology & Communication

The City of Hartford uses several methods of communicating. Please tell me whether you have seen or heard of any of the following:



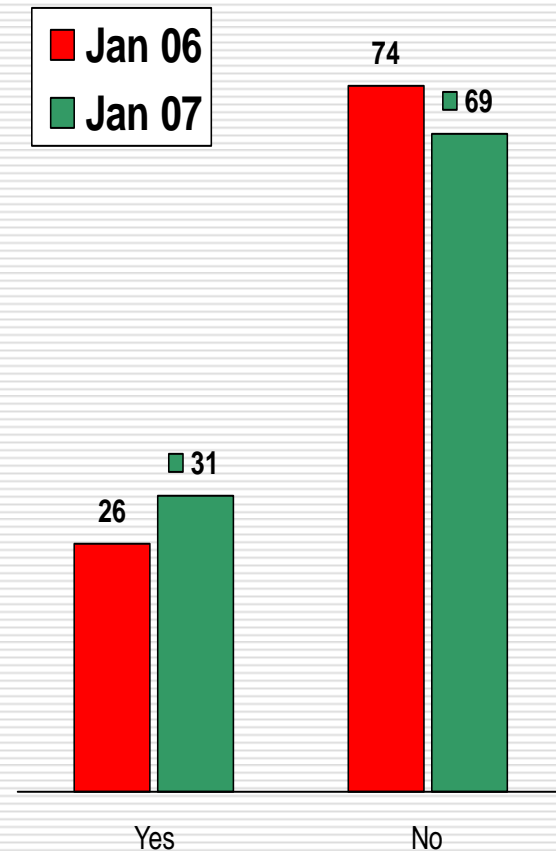
**Cable Access TV Shows:**  
The viewing of the cable access television show has held steady.

You may want to look for new ways to increase knowledge of the shows through the newsletter and web site.



## Customer Service

During the past 3 months, have you had any contact with an employee of the City of Hartford, whether in person or on the phone?



There is a 5% increase in the number of people who have contacted City Hall.

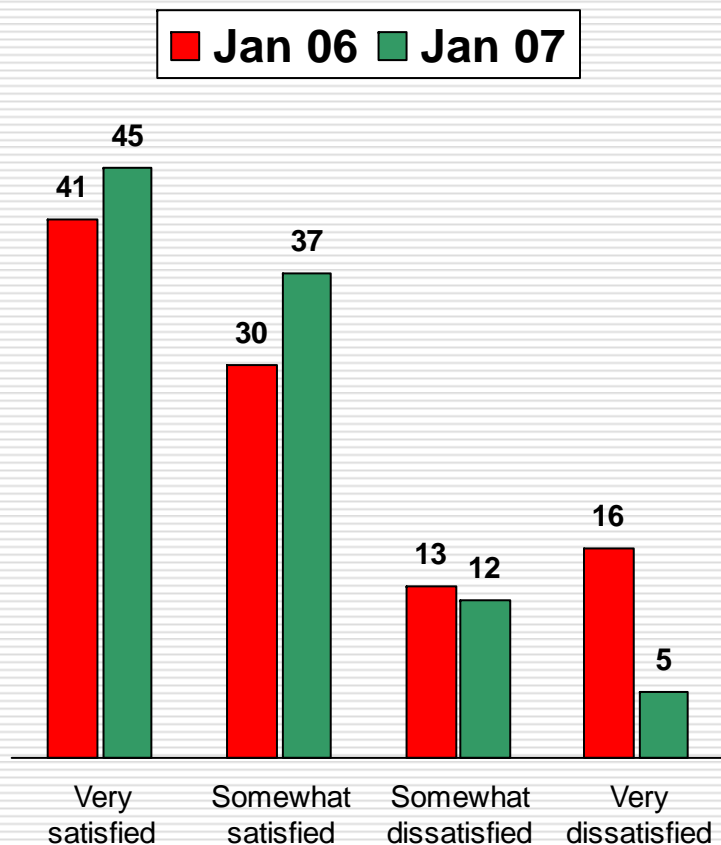
This is a large number considering in most communities the same small number of people call on a consistent basis.

West End and more wealthy residents are more likely to call City Hall.

## Customer Service

How satisfied were you with the response you received?

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These may be the most positive numbers in the survey.

Not only have the number of people calling increased, but so has their satisfaction, probably due to the new 311 service.

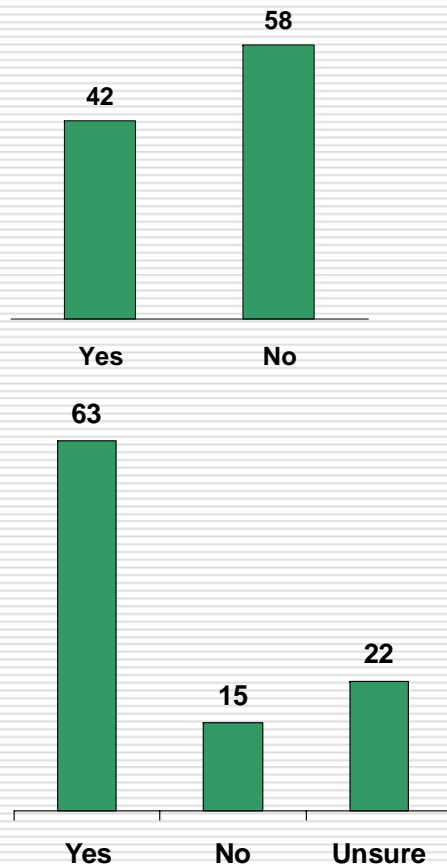
Senior and middle income residents are more likely to be satisfied.

Note the significant drop in the Very Dissatisfied numbers

## Customer Service

### Have you heard about the city's new 311 service?

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Considering the relative short existence of this program it is well known by the public.

Wealthy people, West End residents and men are more likely to know about this program.

Of the people who have heard about the program a large number of them think it will improve services.

The responses show the same result across demographic lines.

## Conclusion

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- The public's perception is that Hartford is moving in the right direction.
- We found most of the departments and programs tested improved at least slightly from the year before and in some cases dramatically over the past 2 years. This is obviously a trend you wish to continue.
- As with last year, general perceptions of the direction of the City as a whole were more positive than the results of testing specific issues or services. Reality needs to catch up with perception. (Specific service grades versus overall.)
- To close that gap, you need to affect people on a personal level – on what matters to them. Conducting focus groups to drill down into those numbers will help you determine the areas they care most about.