

# The City of Powell Community Attitudes Survey

*Saperstein Associates, Inc. | Summer 2016*

**This research gives residents of Powell a voice. It allows the voting public to express opinions on myriad issues – and, in doing so, provides city officials important data as planning for the future continues.**

**Similar studies were conducted in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014.**

# Methodology

- **Telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of more than 400 registered voters living in Powell.**
- **Averaging 18 minutes in length,\* the interviews were completed with residents on cell phones (81%) and landlines (19%) from May 12 through May 23.**
- **The margin of error for this survey is  $\pm 4.9$  percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.**
- **The sampling frame was developed from records provided by the Delaware County Board of Elections.**
- **The number of residents refusing to participate this year declined from 611 in 2014 to 499, a decrease of 18% – and the likely result of the city’s efforts to inform residents of the survey’s timing.**

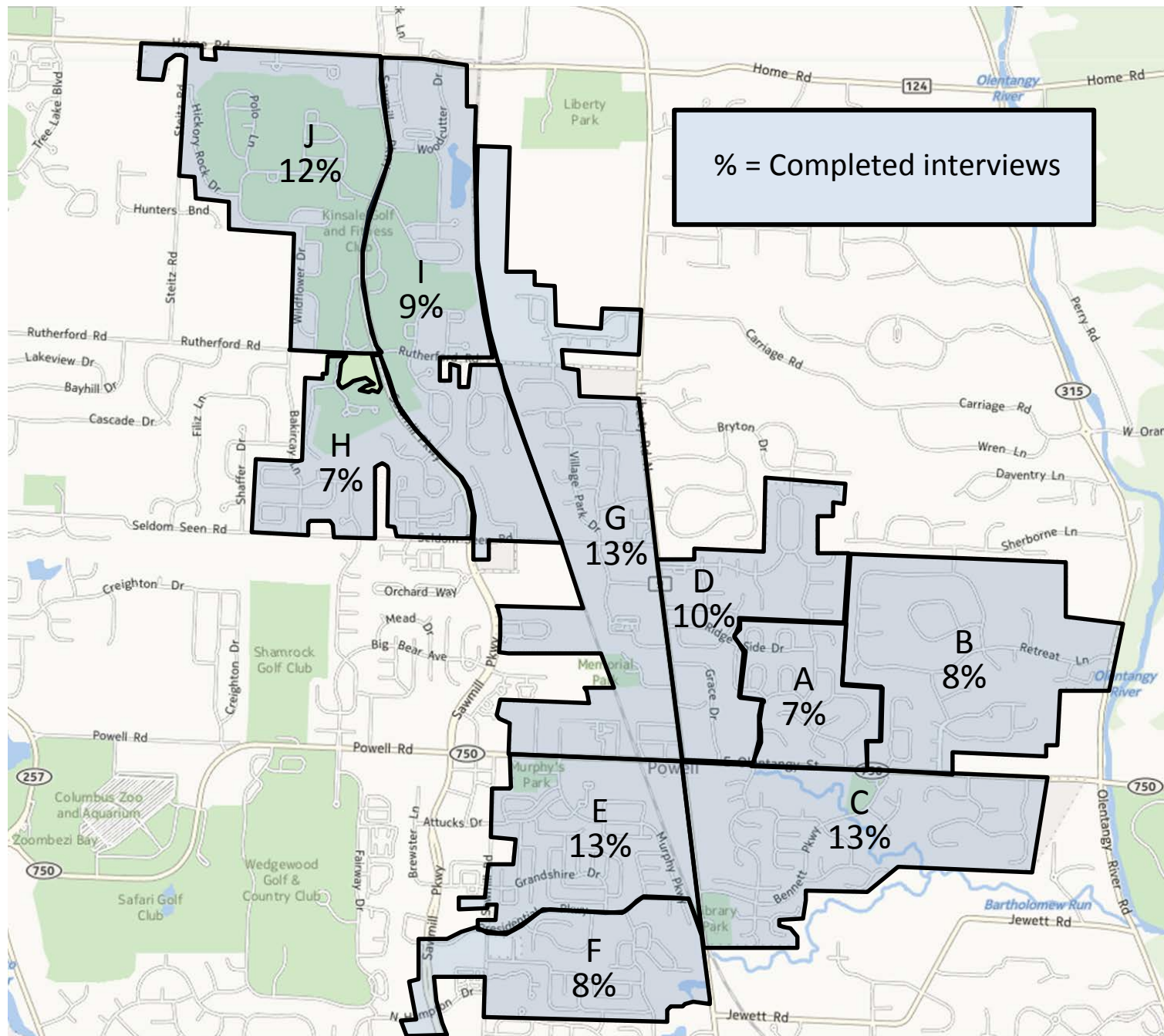
\*In 2014, the average length was 17 minutes.

**The survey respondents represent Powell's registered voters on several key dimensions, including gender, age, ...**

|             | Actual* | Sample |
|-------------|---------|--------|
| Gender      |         |        |
| Male        | 49%     | 49%    |
| Female      | 51%     | 51%    |
| Age         |         |        |
| 18 to 24    | 10%     | 9%     |
| 25 to 34    | 10%     | 9%     |
| 35 to 44    | 22%     | 22%    |
| 45 to 54    | 25%     | 27%    |
| 55 to 64    | 17%     | 17%    |
| 65 or older | 16%     | 16%    |

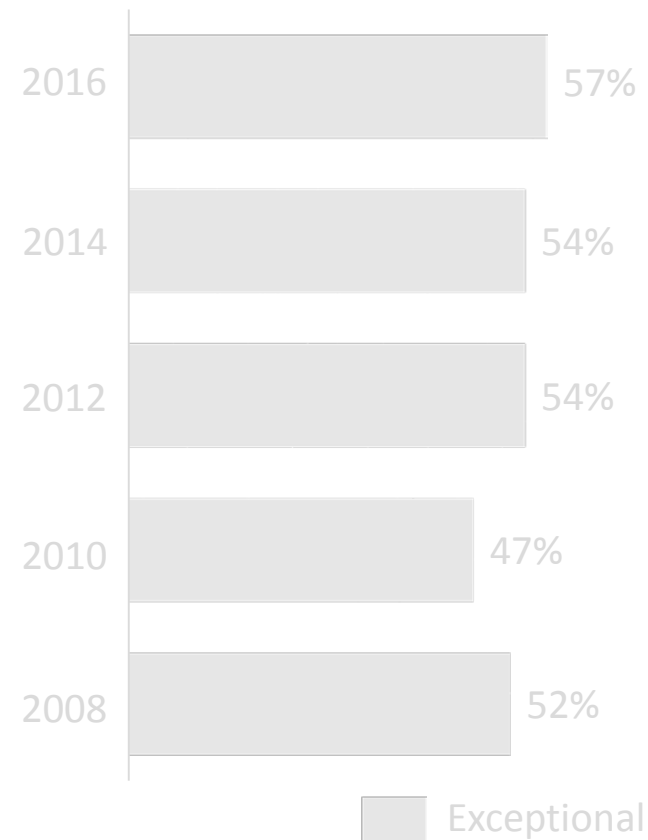
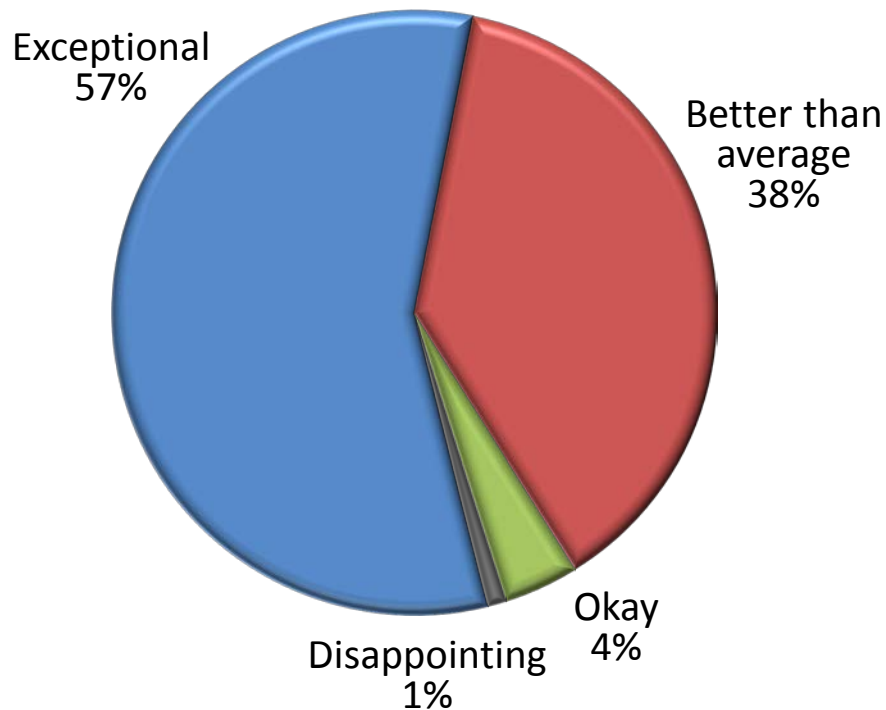
**... and political jurisdiction.**

|              | Actual* | Sample |
|--------------|---------|--------|
| Jurisdiction |         |        |
| Precinct A   | 7%      | 7%     |
| Precinct B   | 8%      | 8%     |
| Precinct C   | 12%     | 13%    |
| Precinct D   | 9%      | 10%    |
| Precinct E   | 13%     | 13%    |
| Precinct F   | 9%      | 8%     |
| Precinct G   | 13%     | 13%    |
| Precinct H   | 9%      | 7%     |
| Precinct I   | 9%      | 9%     |
| Precinct J   | 11%     | 12%    |

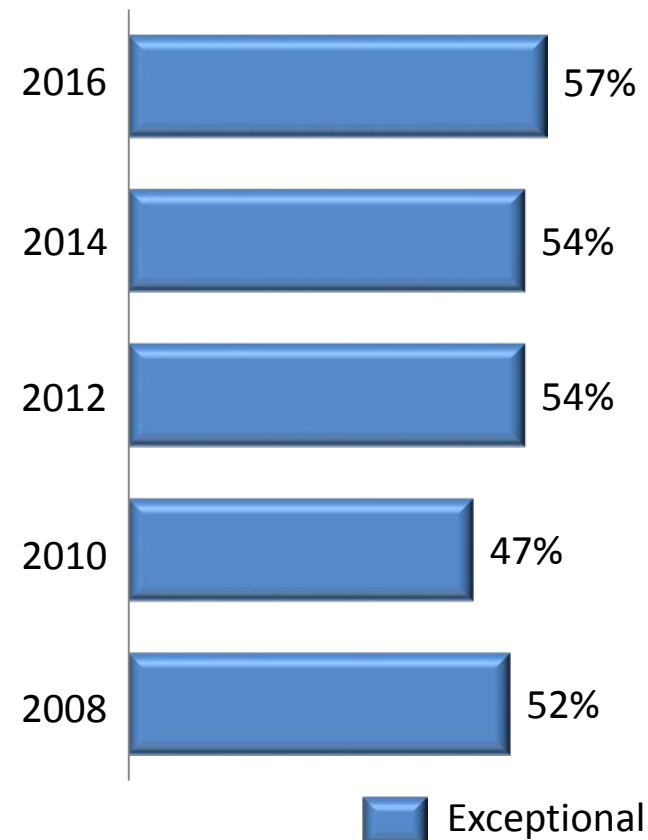
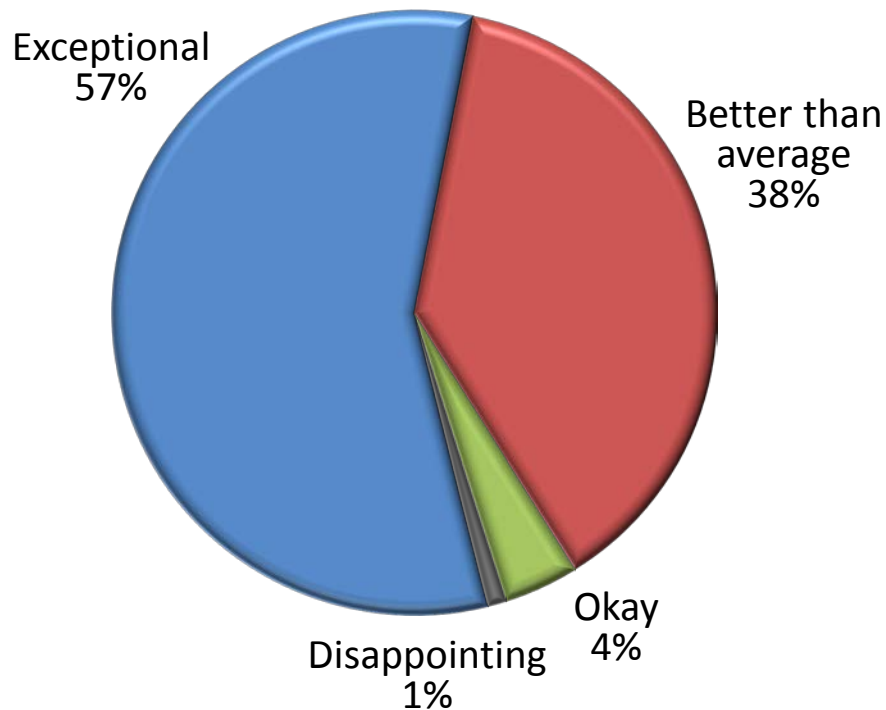


# Powell as a Place to Live

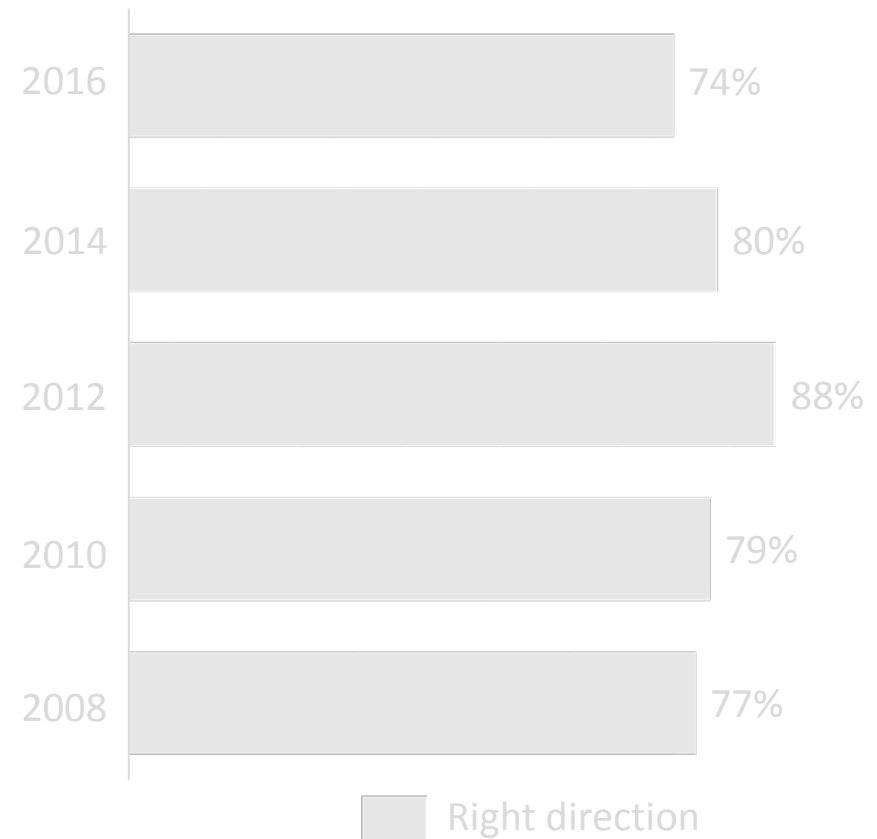
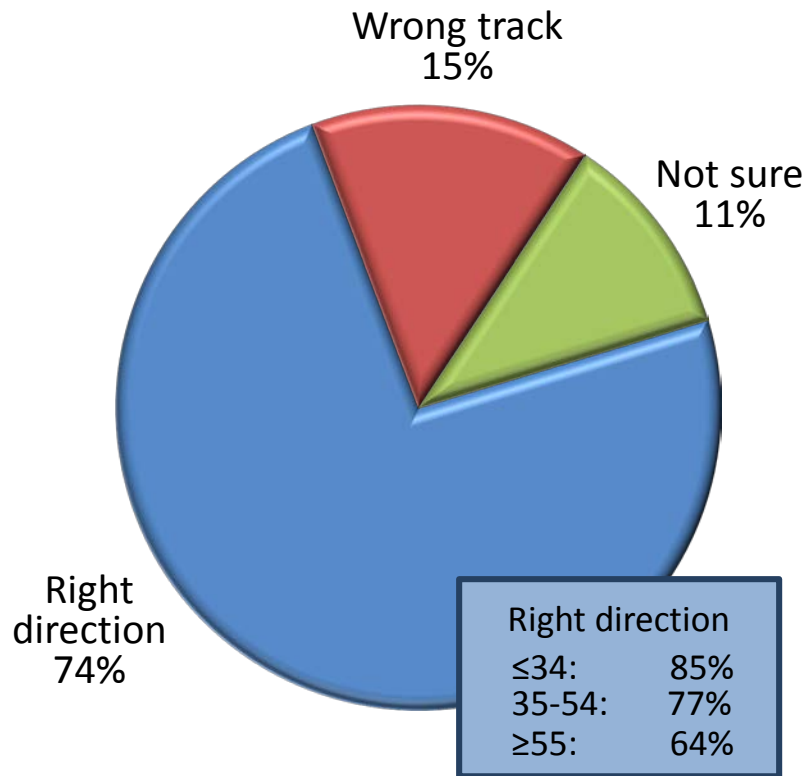
**Nearly six out of ten residents (57%) consider Powell exceptional as a place to live. Almost everyone else (38%) considers the city better than average.**



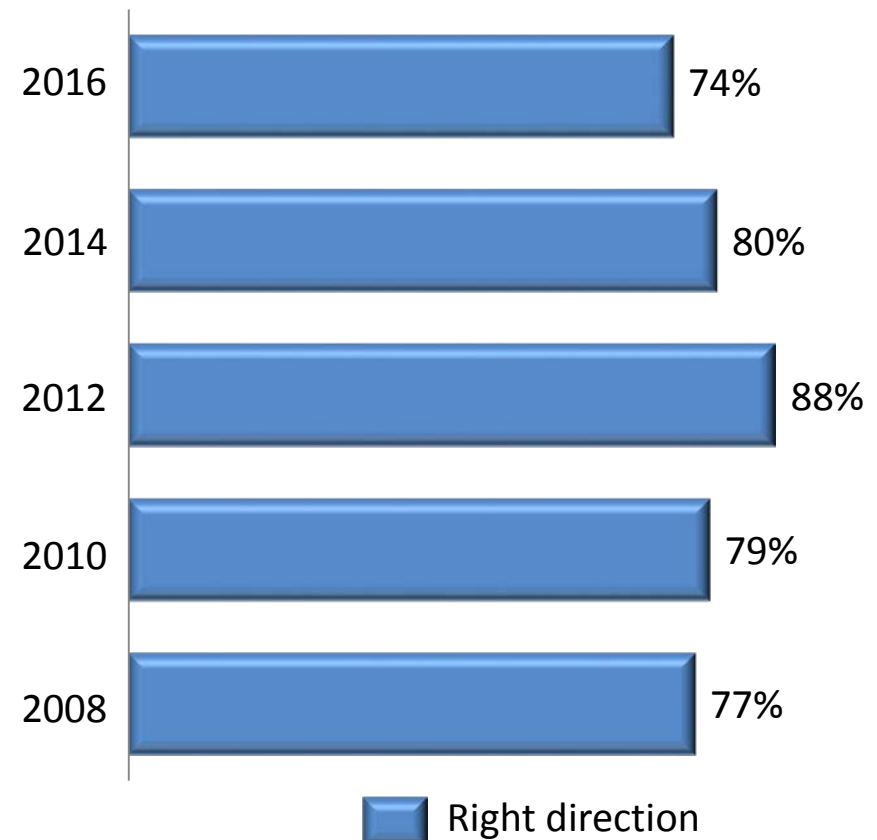
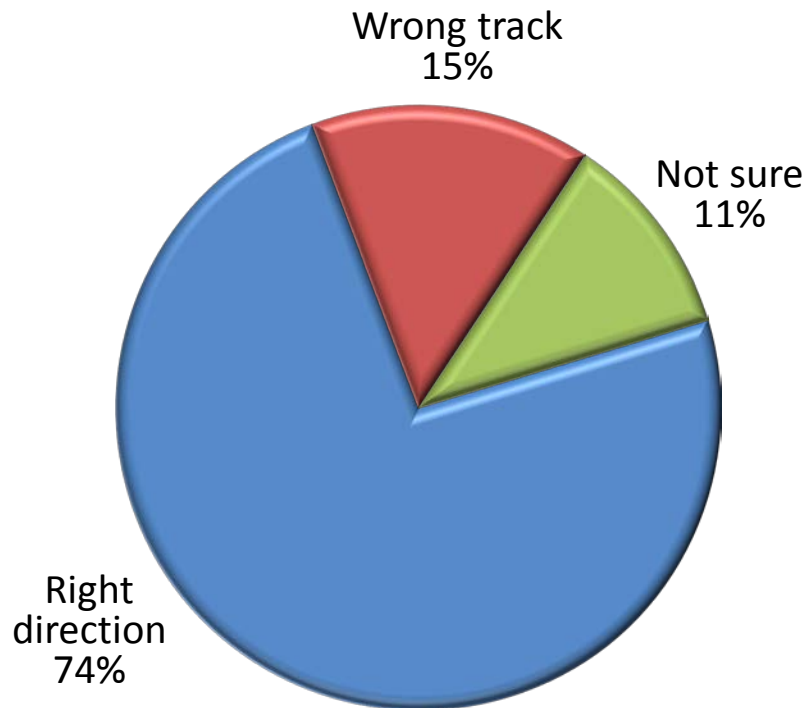
## Positive impressions of Powell have increased markedly since 2010 – and are up slightly from 2014.



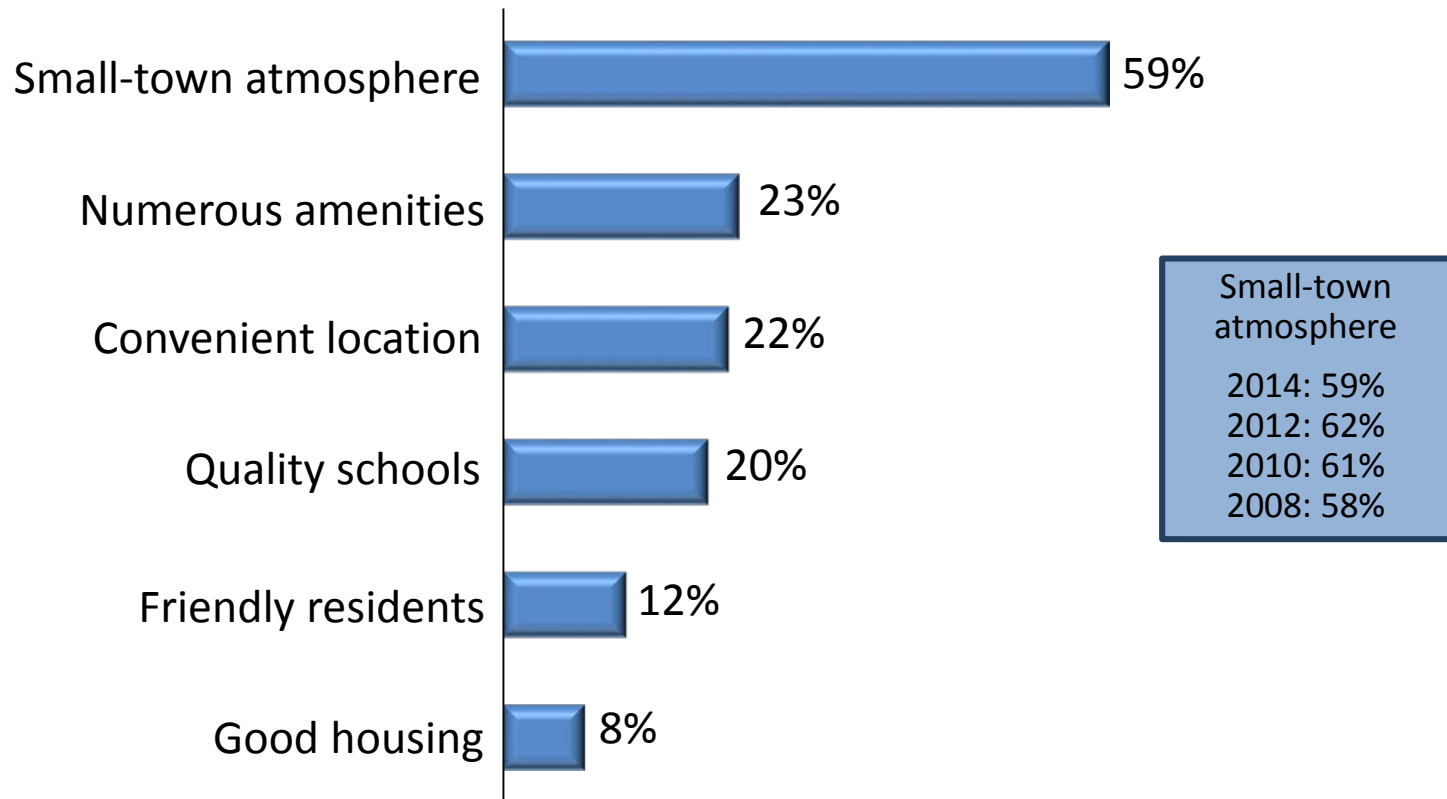
# Three out of four residents (74%) feel that Powell is heading in the right direction, a perception especially common among younger residents.



**Though most residents continue to believe that Powell is heading in the right direction, their numbers are declining, a shift first noticed in 2014.**



**As in past surveys, a small-town atmosphere, by far, is Powell's most appealing asset.**

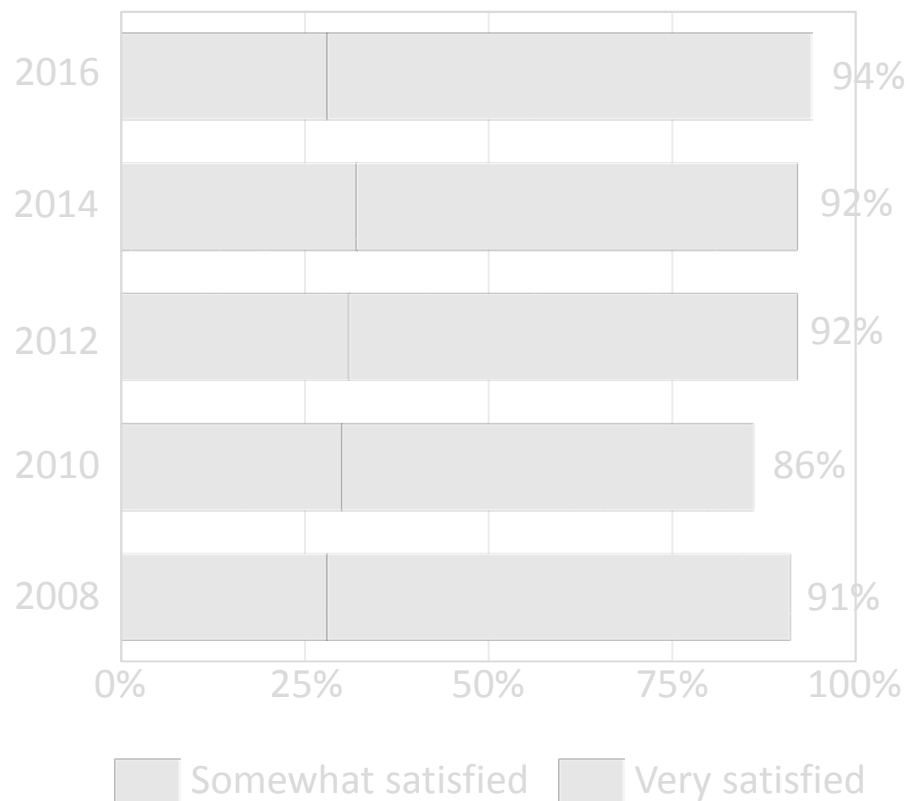
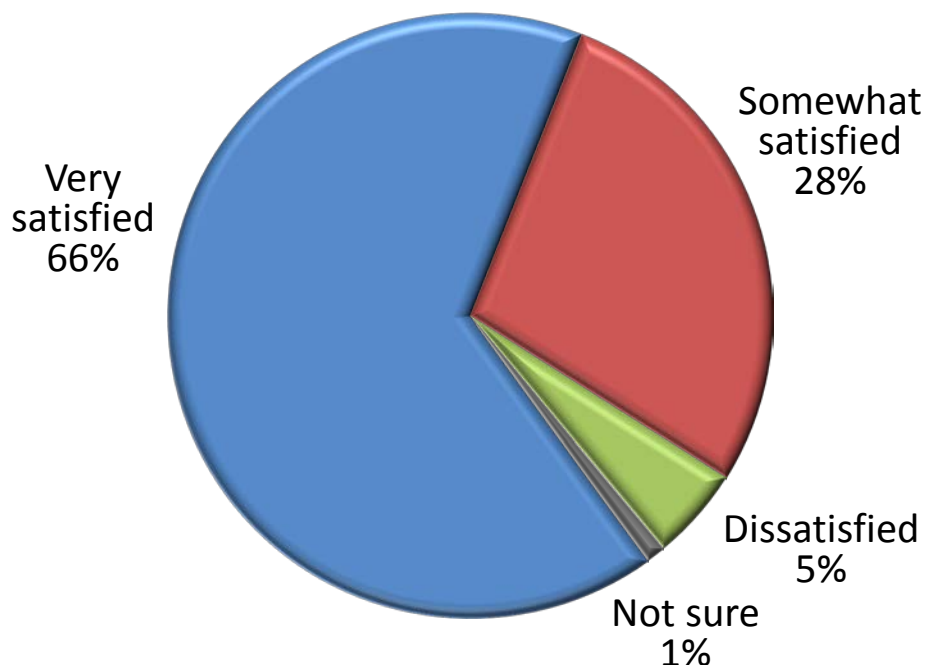


## **“Small-town atmosphere” means that Powell is ...**

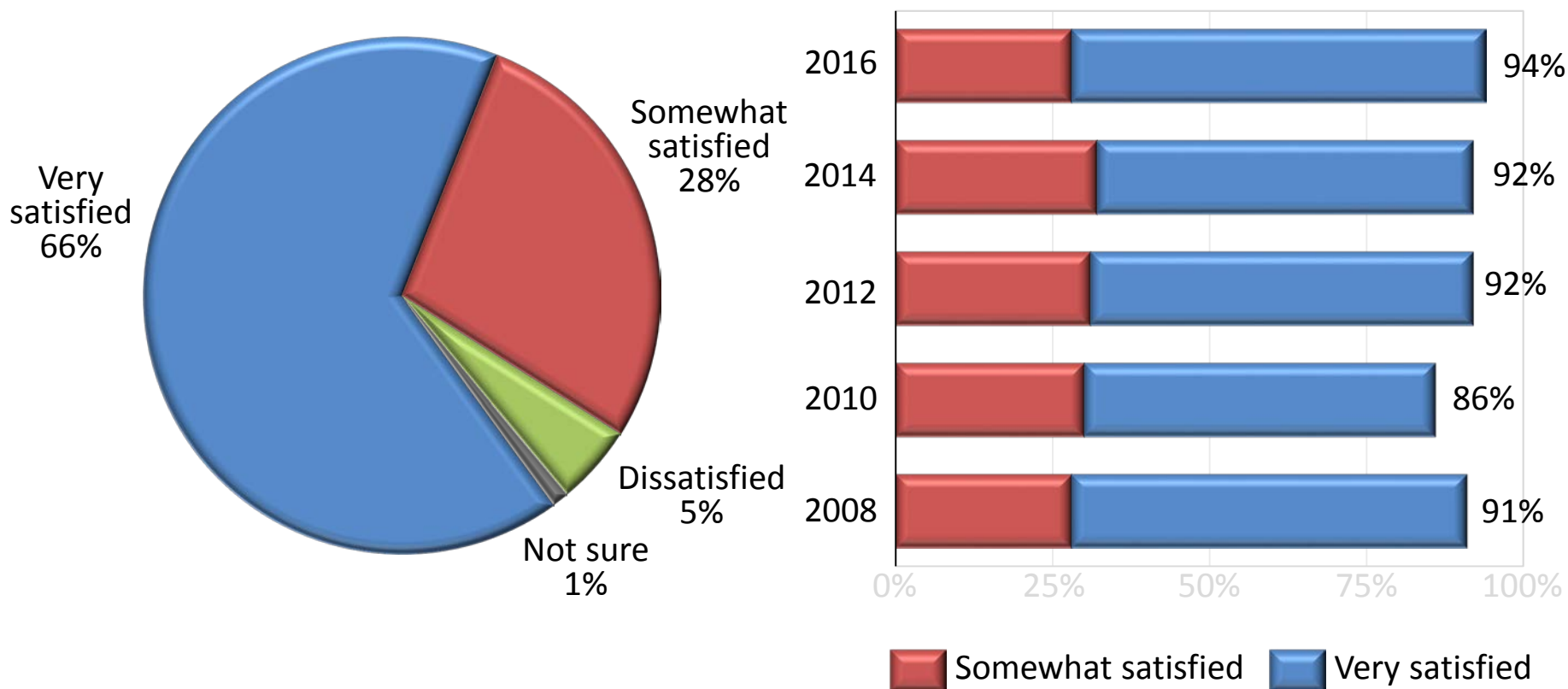
- Family-oriented;
- Well maintained;
- Verdant;
- Pedestrian-friendly;
- Quiet;
- Safe;
- Peaceful; and
- Less commercial.

# Satisfaction With City-Managed Services and Amenities

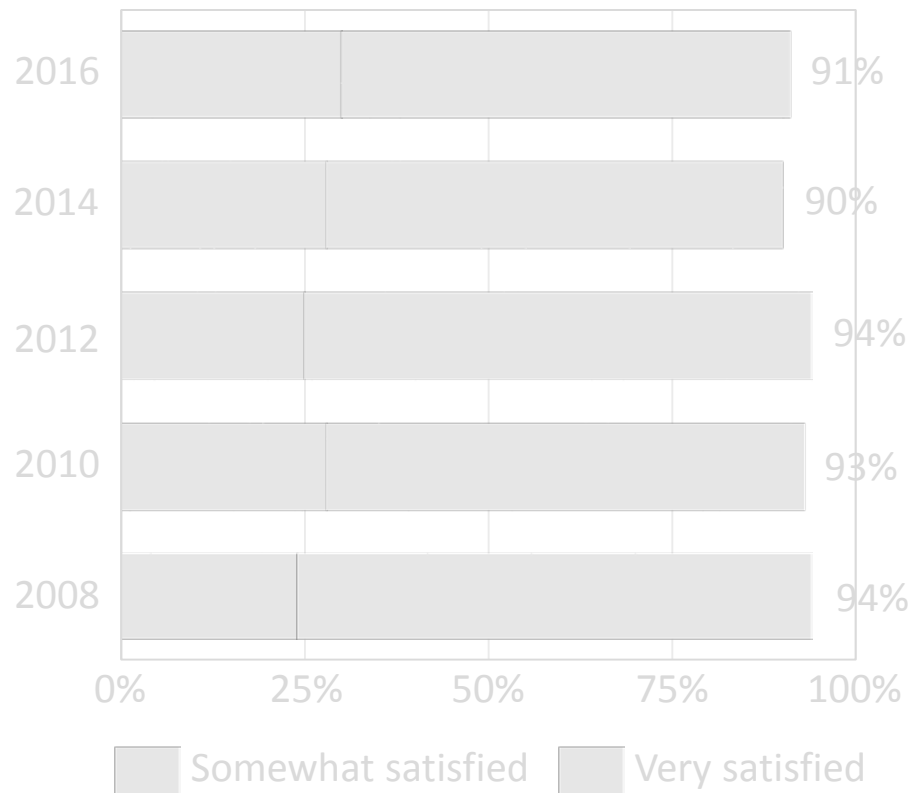
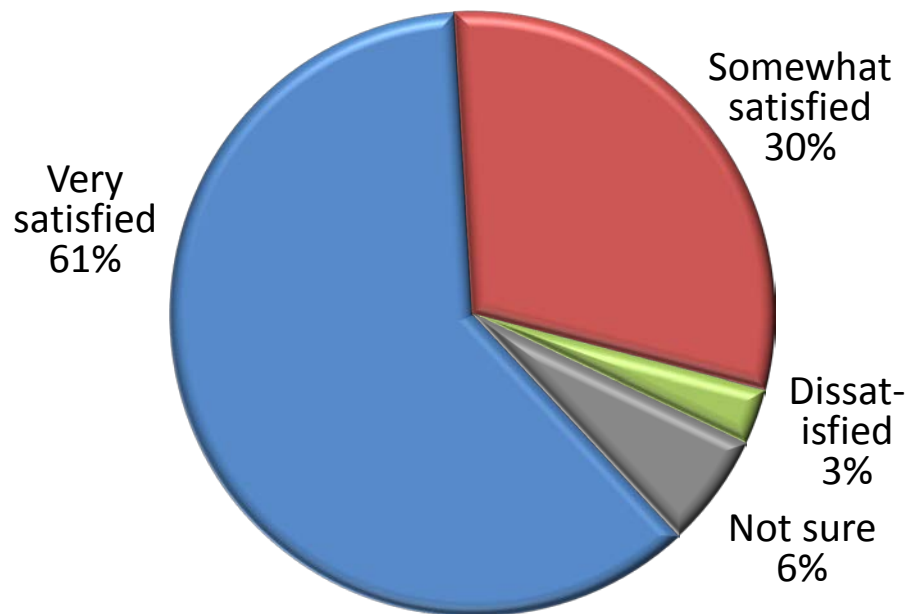
**More than nine out of ten residents (94%) are satisfied with Powell's parks, open spaces, and bike paths. Two out of three are very satisfied.**



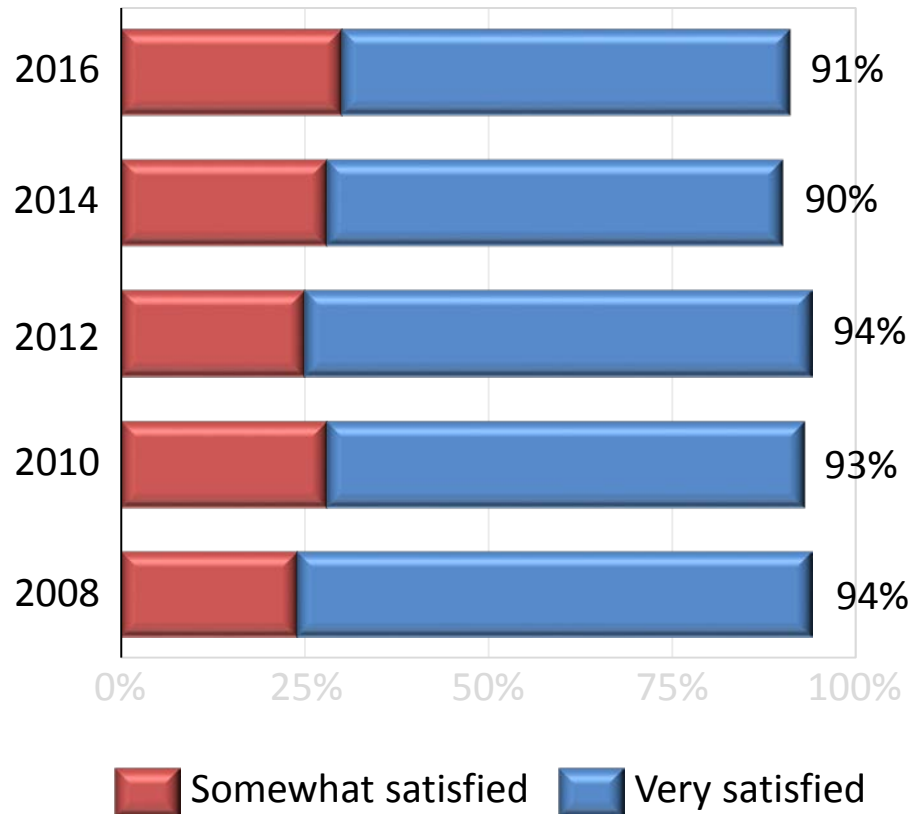
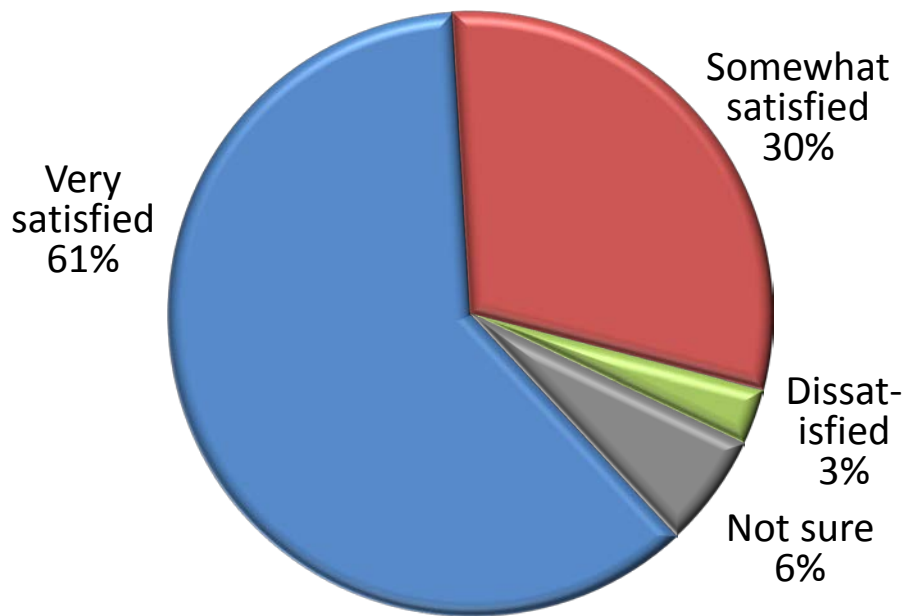
## Positive impressions of Powell's parks, open spaces, and bike paths have jumped since 2010 and continue to make incremental gains.



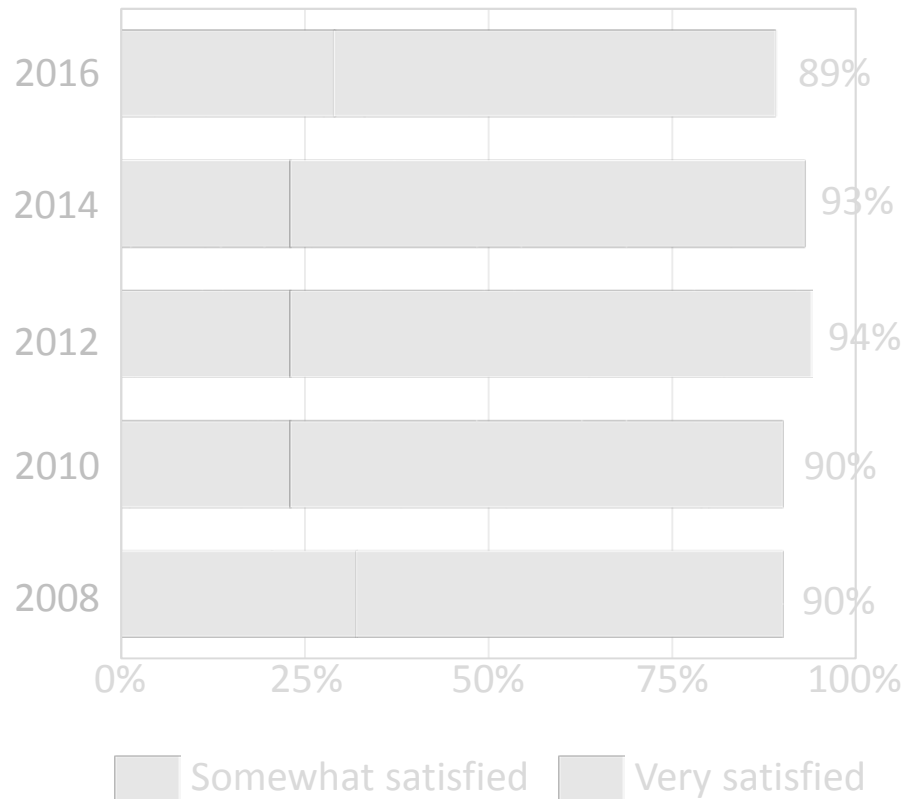
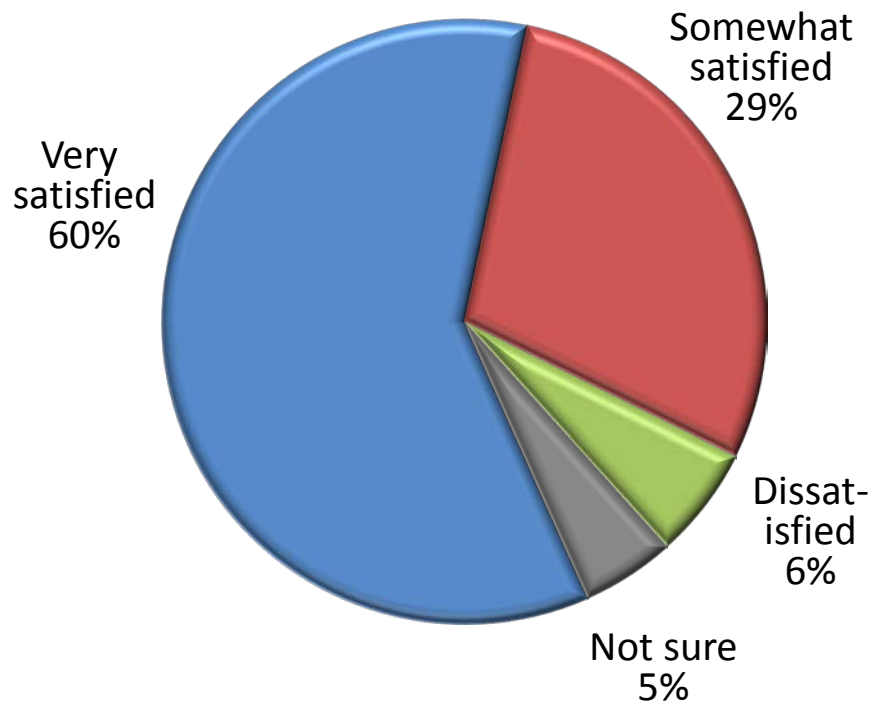
**Nine out of ten residents (91%) are satisfied with the events and activities the city sponsors. Six out of ten (61%) are very satisfied.**



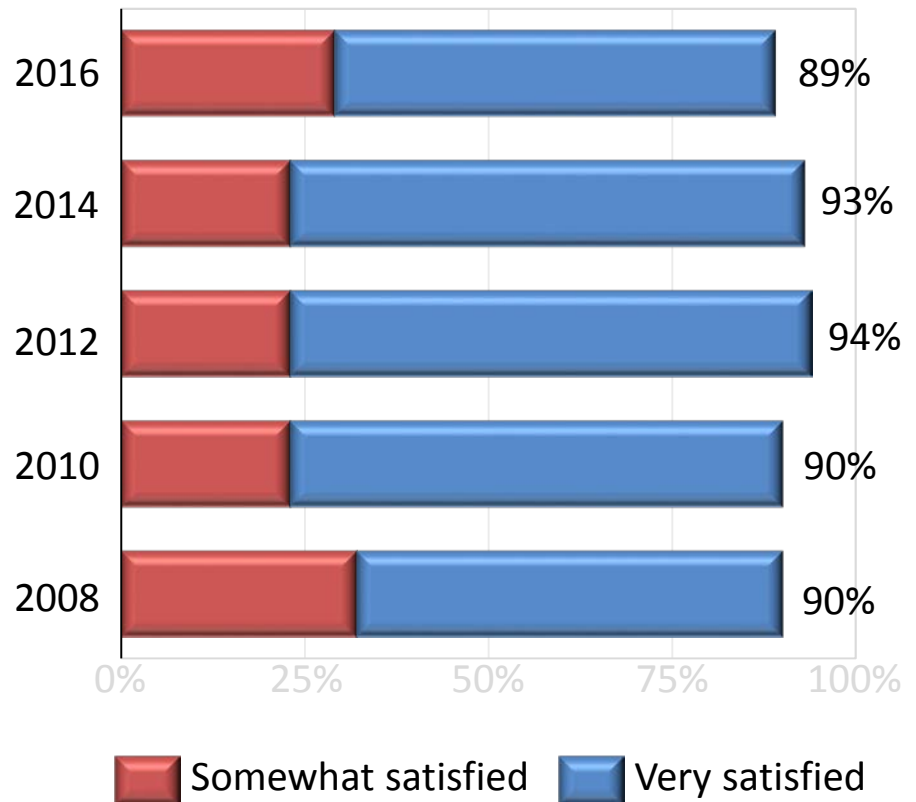
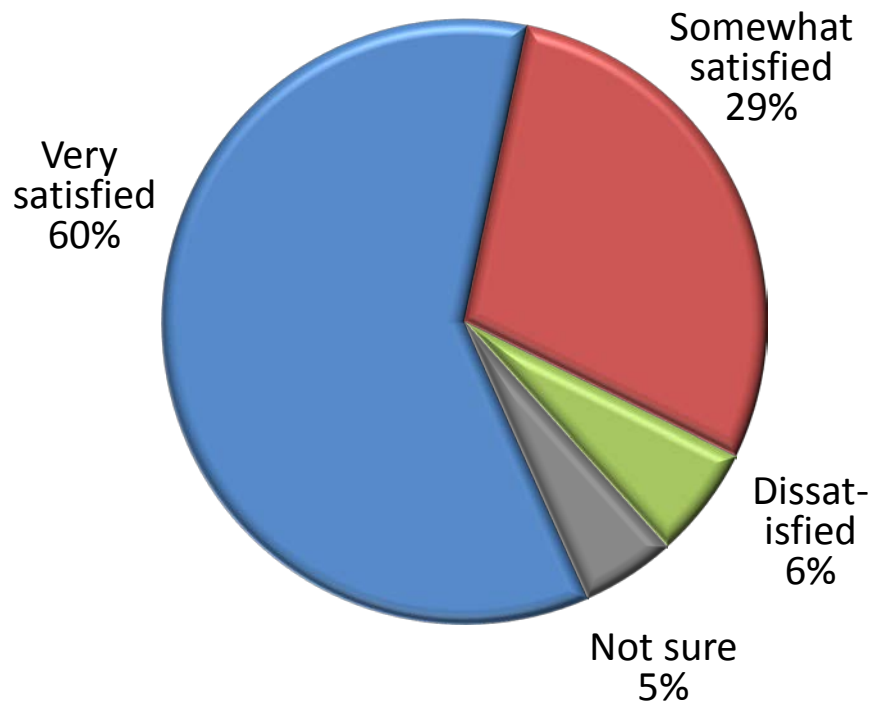
## Little has changed since 2014.



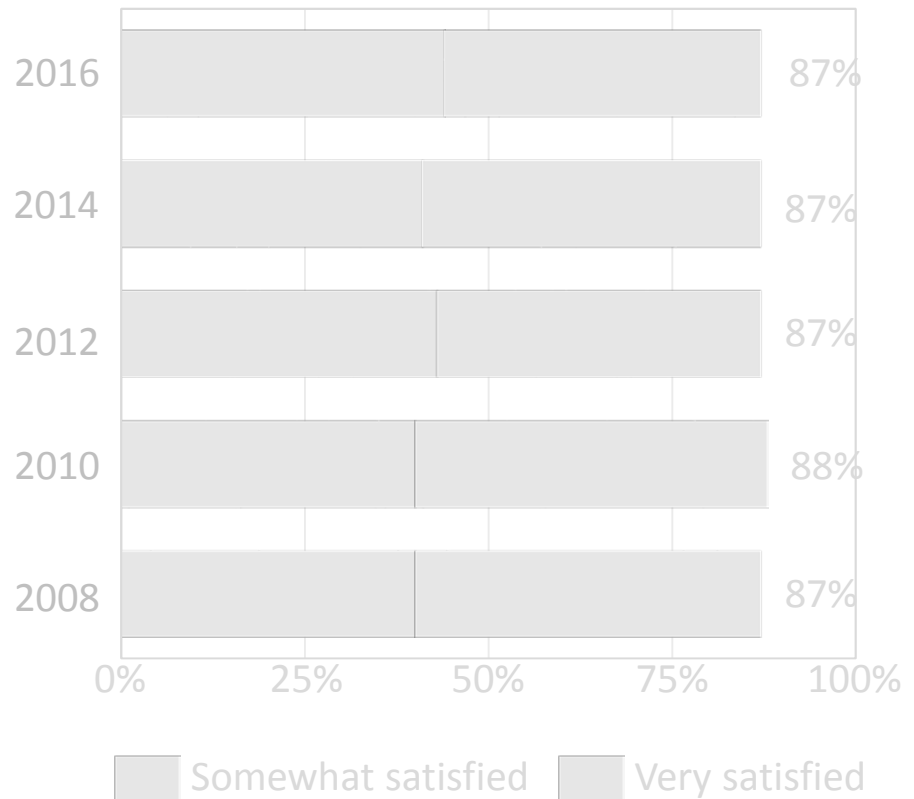
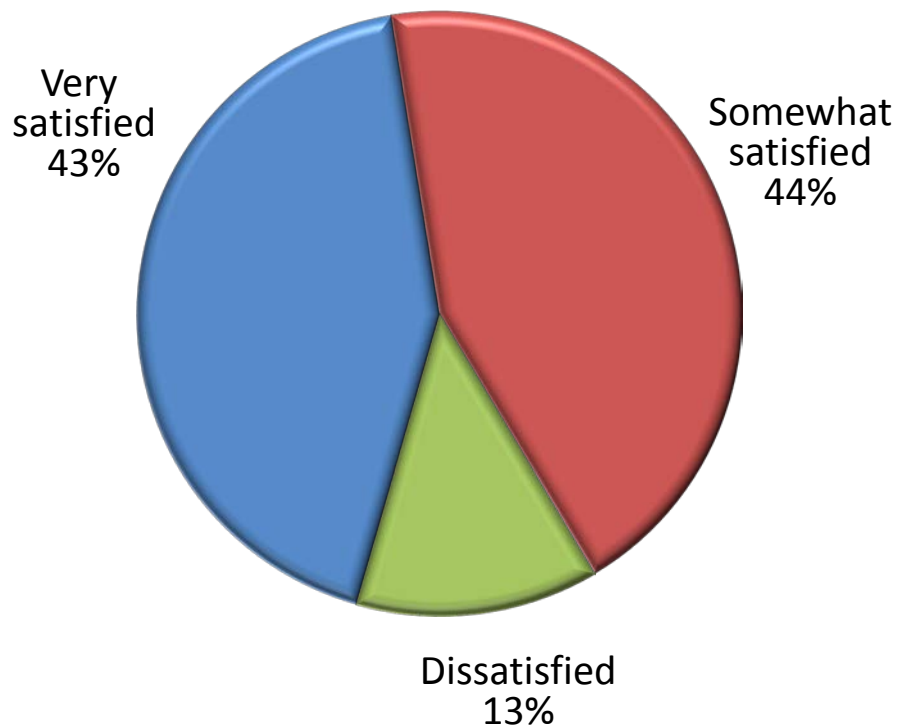
## Nine out of ten residents (89%) are satisfied with snow removal in Powell ...



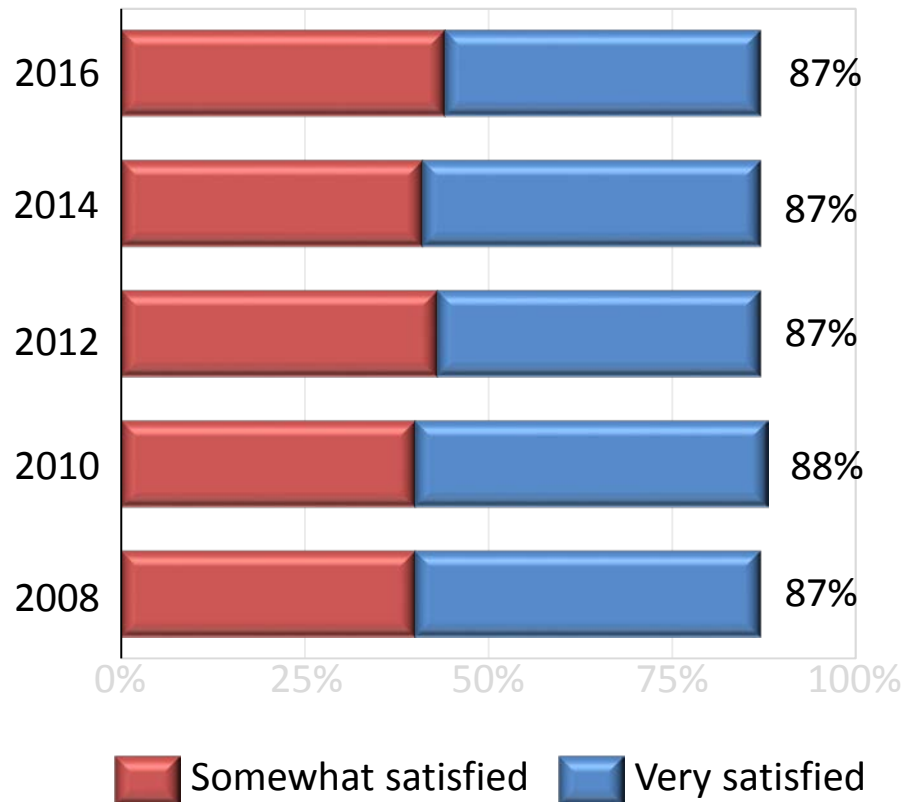
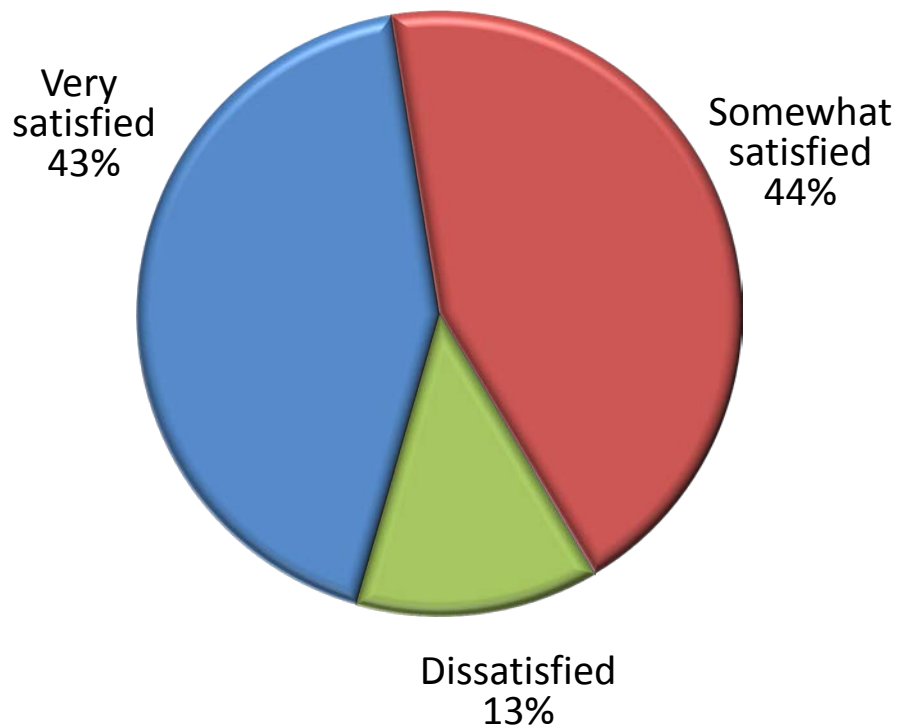
**... down slightly since 2014, a year with more snow.**



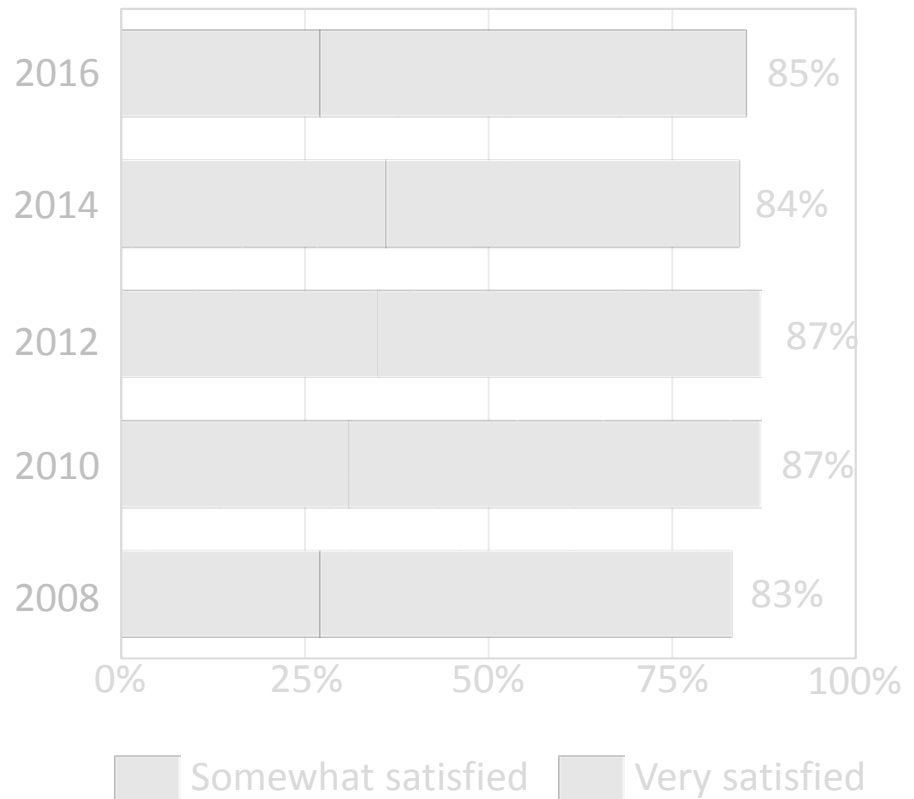
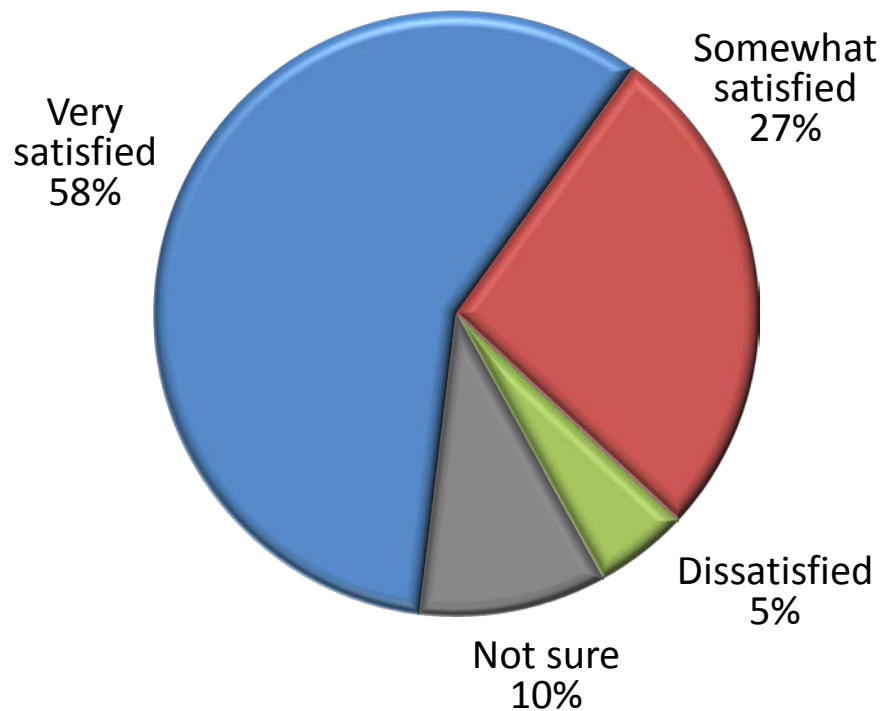
**Nearly nine out of ten residents (87%) are satisfied with the maintenance of streets and roads. Only two out of five, however, are very satisfied.**



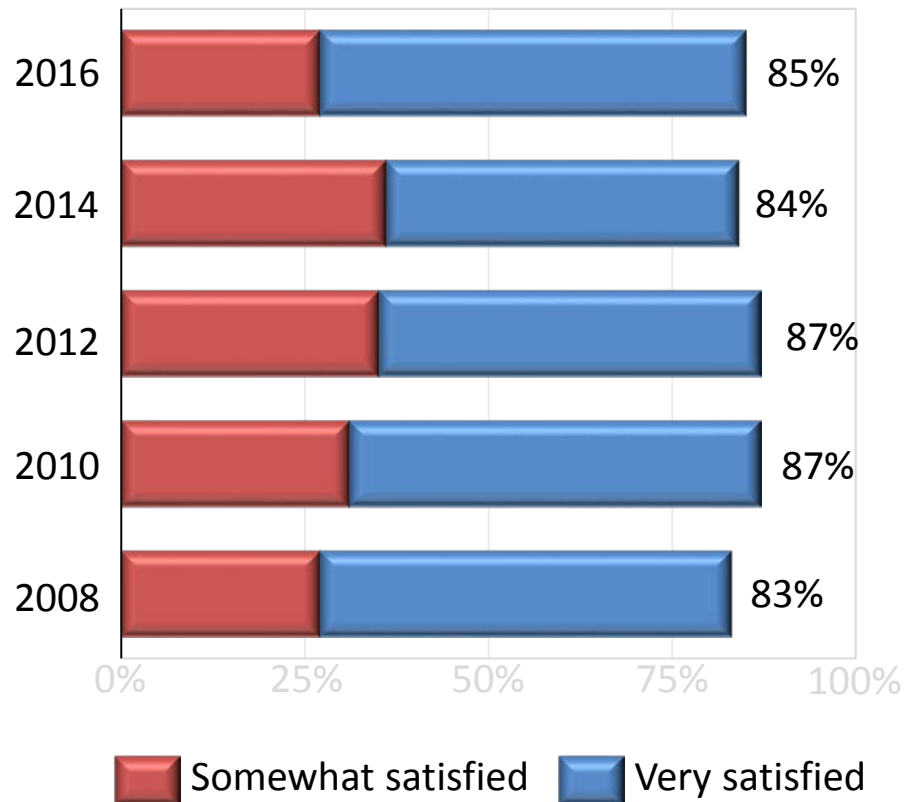
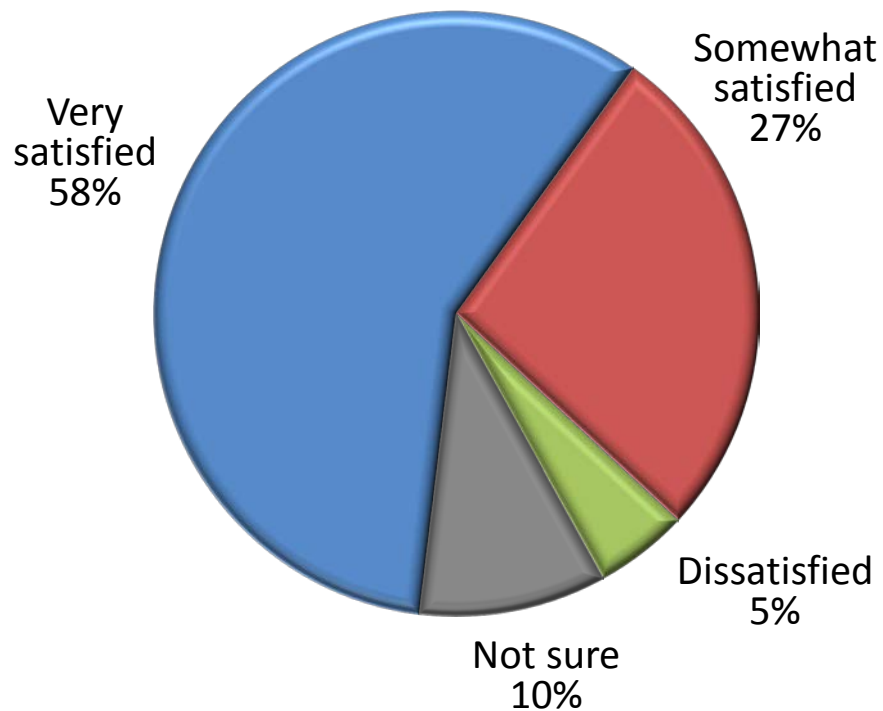
**Little has changed since 2008.**



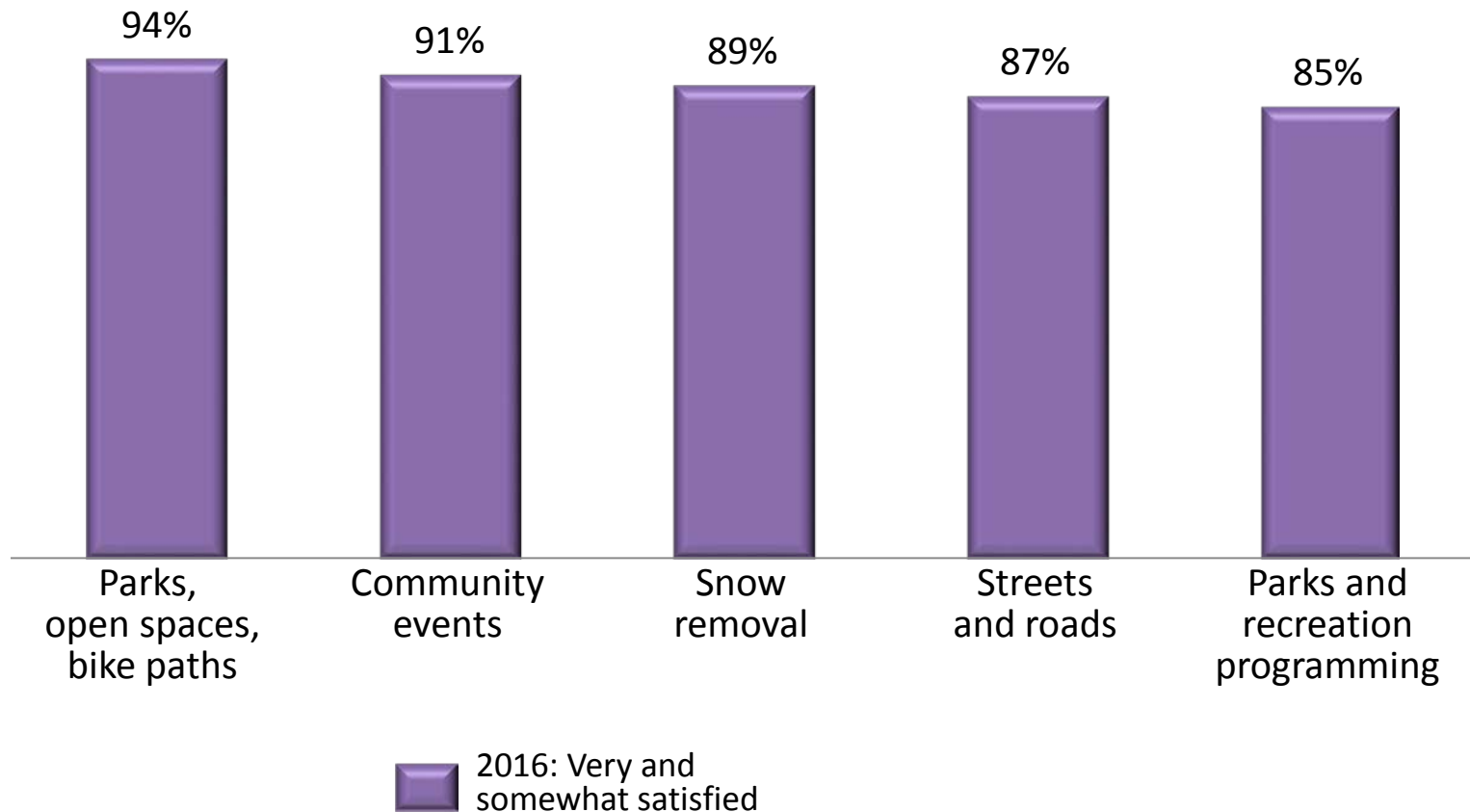
## More than eight out of ten residents (85%) are satisfied with parks and recreation programming ...



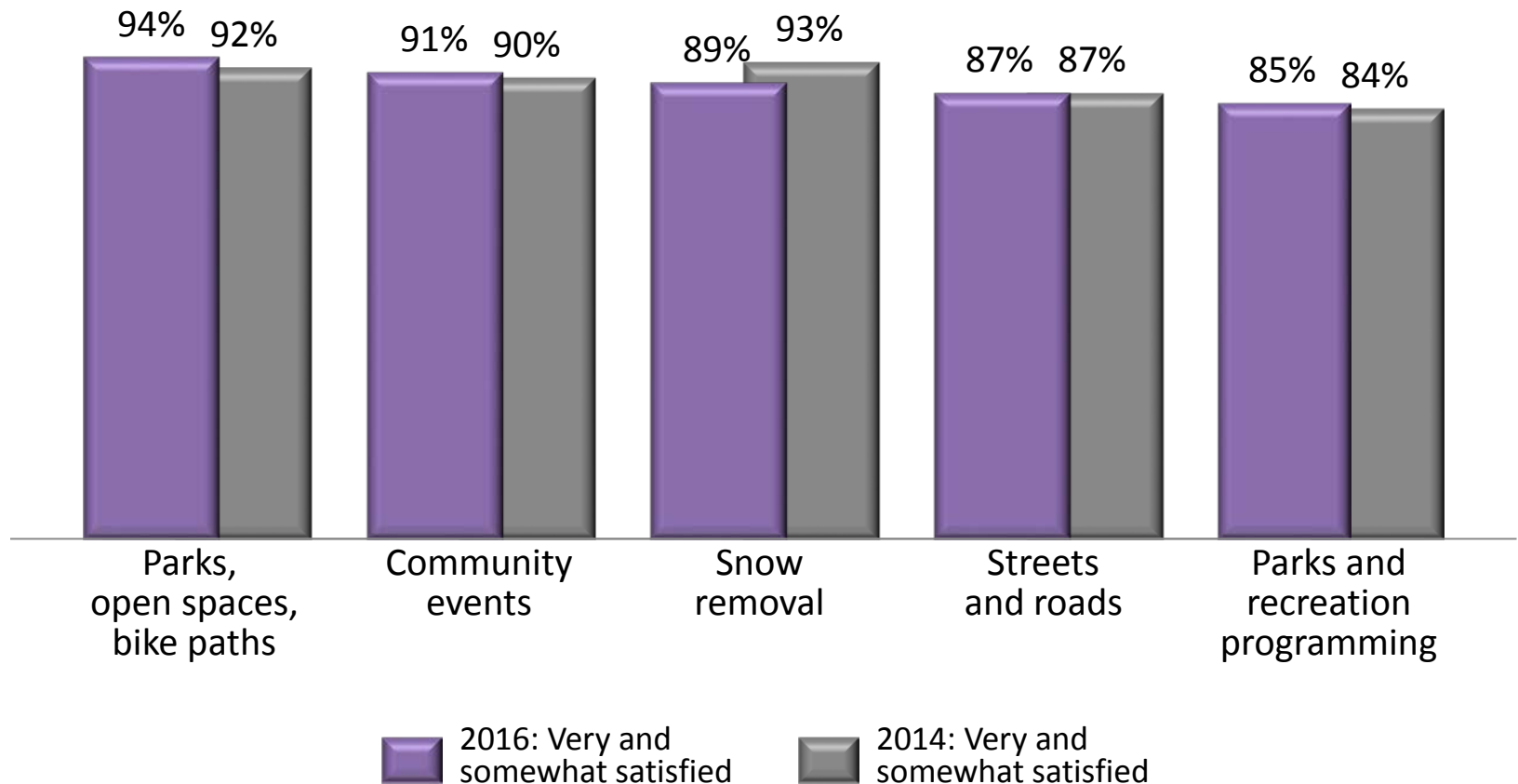
... again, just as they were in previous surveys.



## In short, on each service or amenity assessed, satisfaction is widespread ...

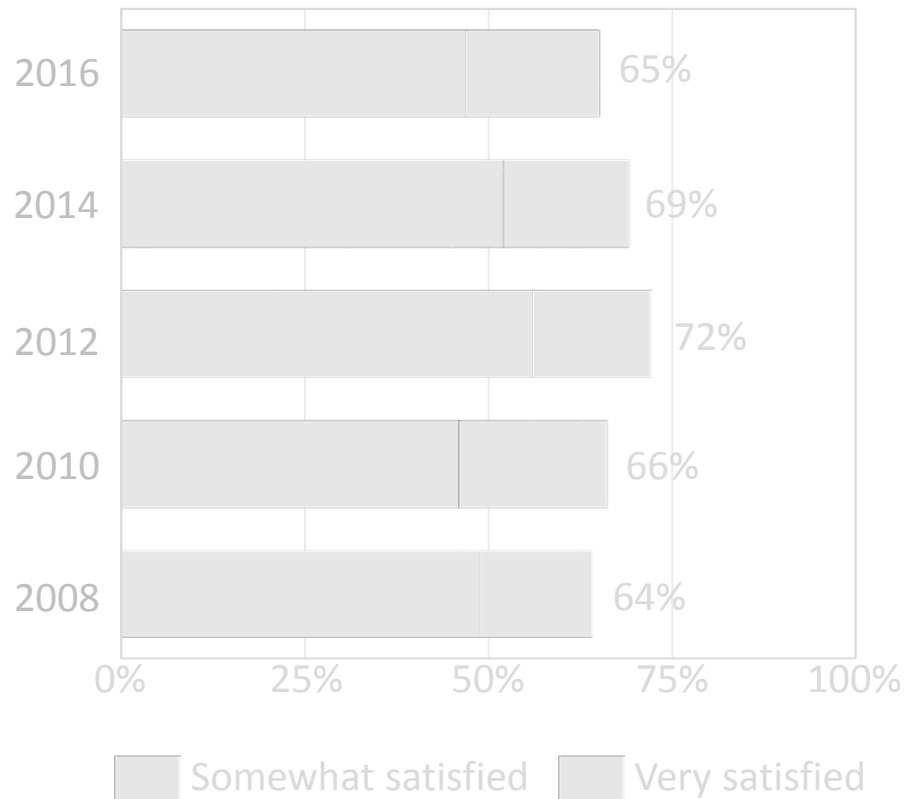
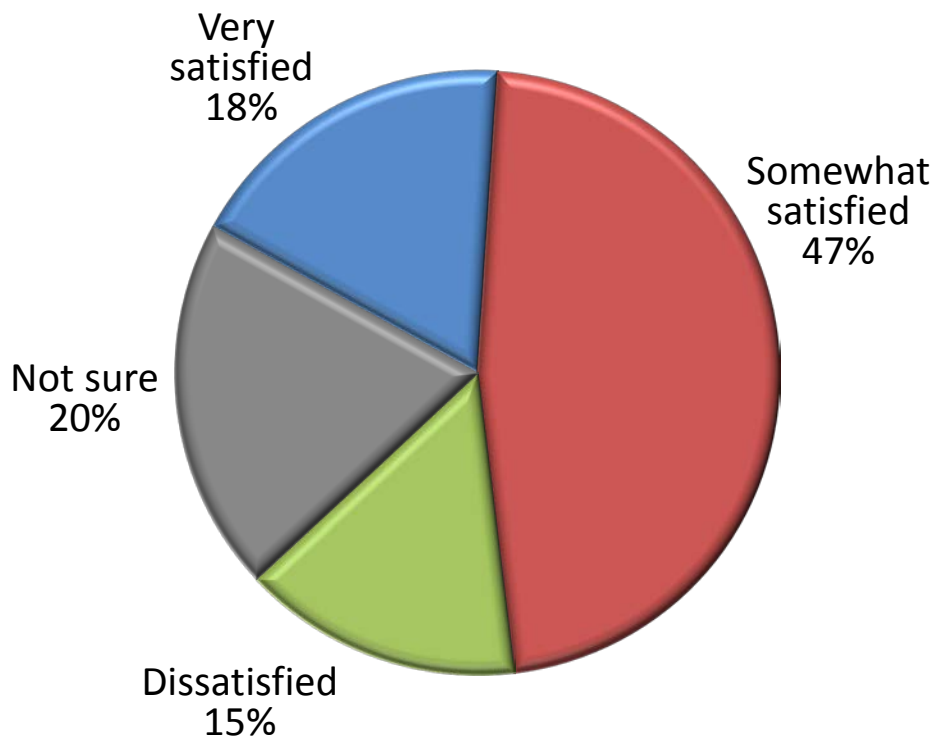


**... with little change since 2014.**

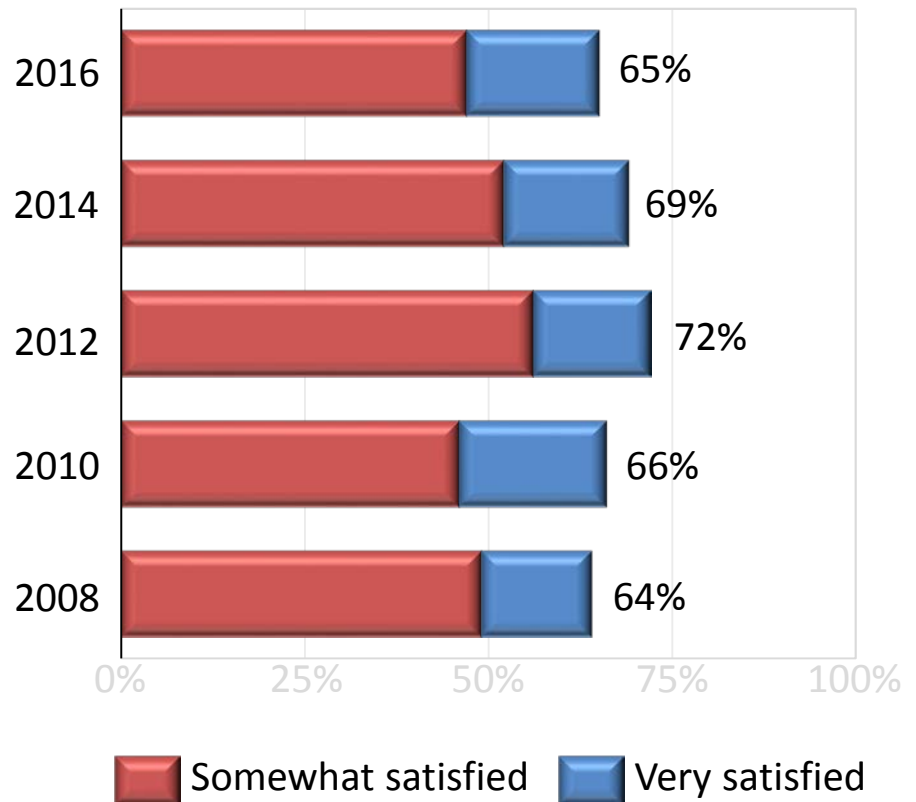
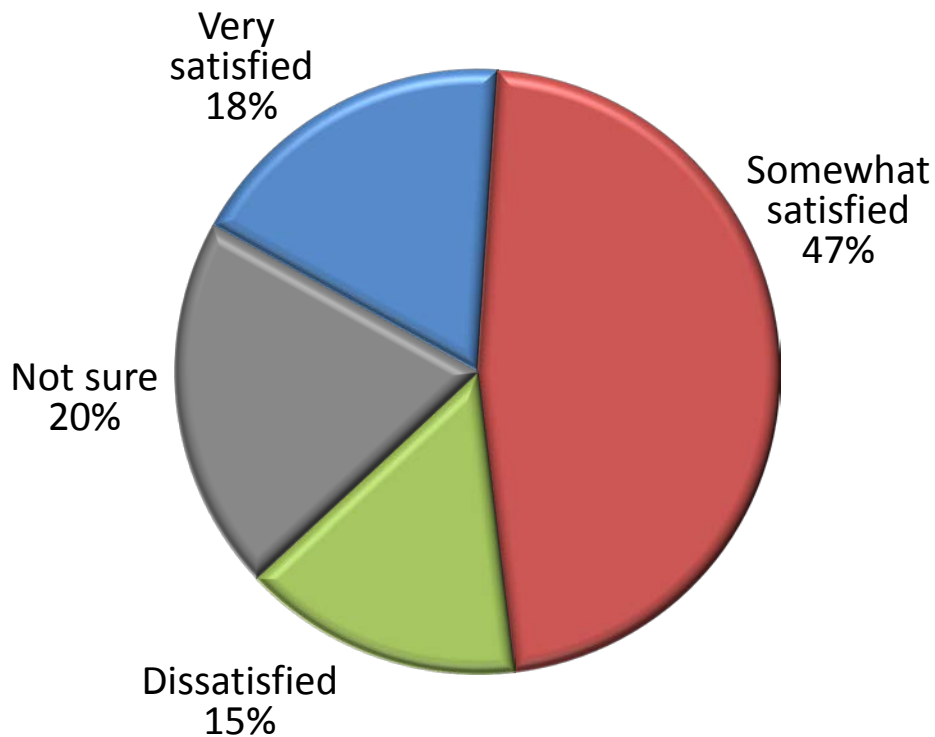


# Satisfaction With City Officials: Managing and Planning

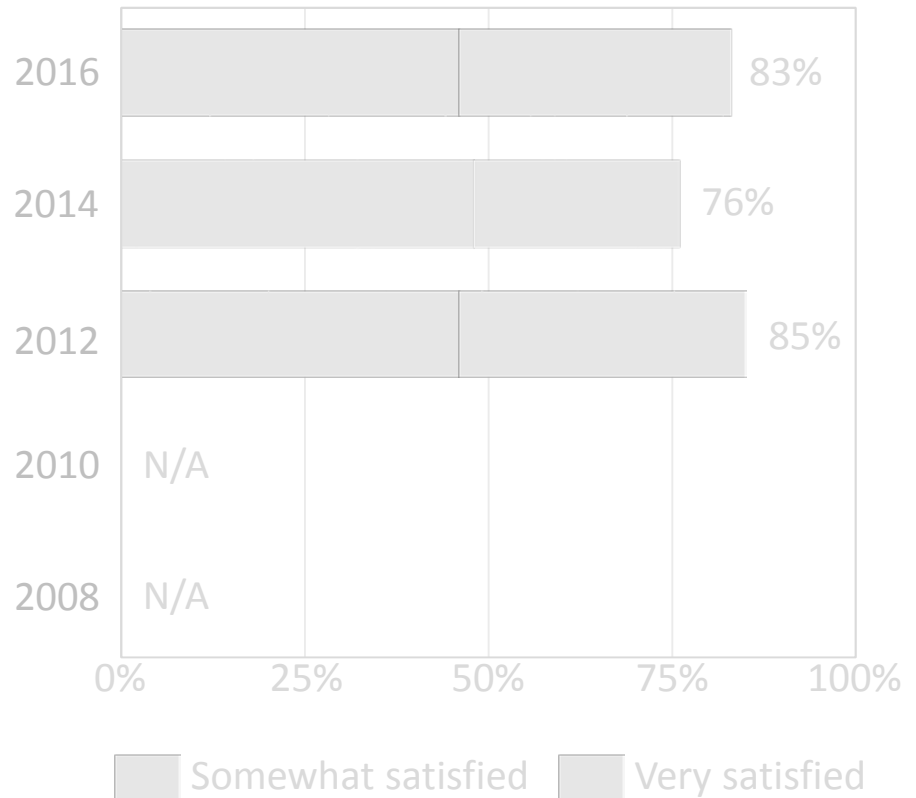
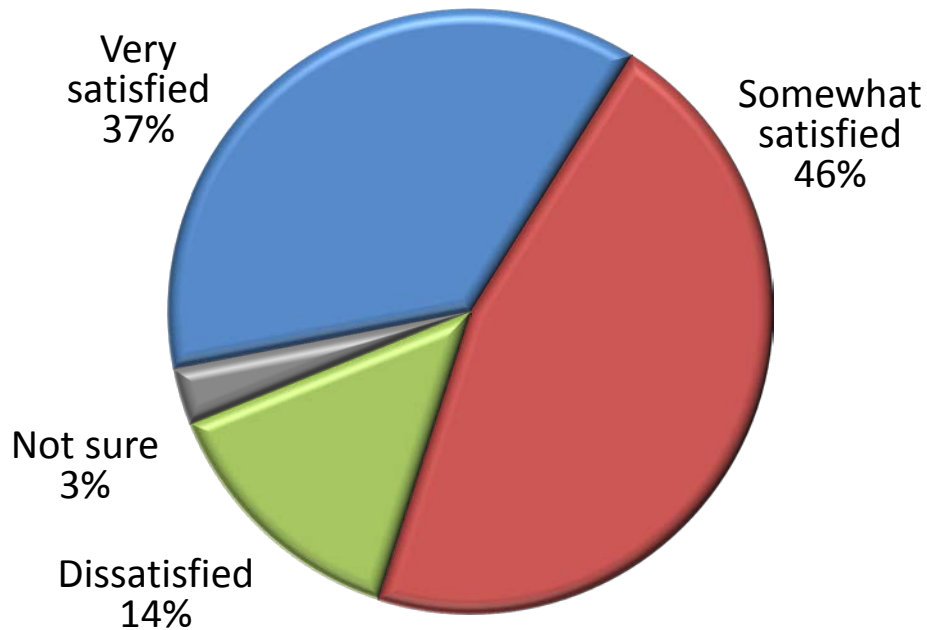
**Two out of three residents (65%) are satisfied with City Council.  
One out of seven (15%) is dissatisfied.**



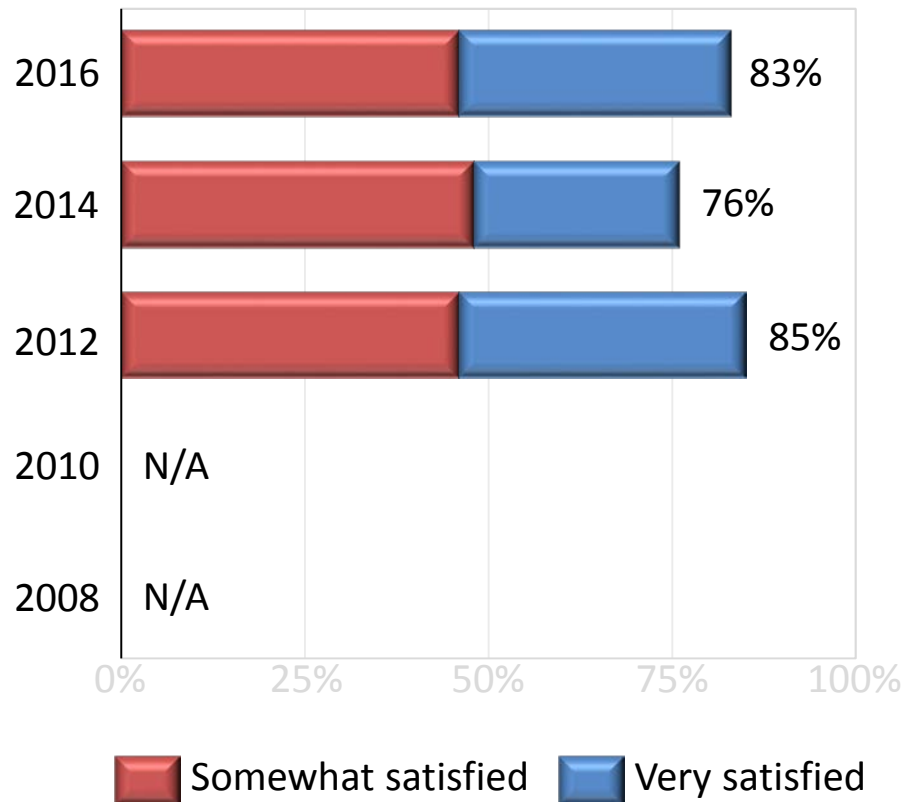
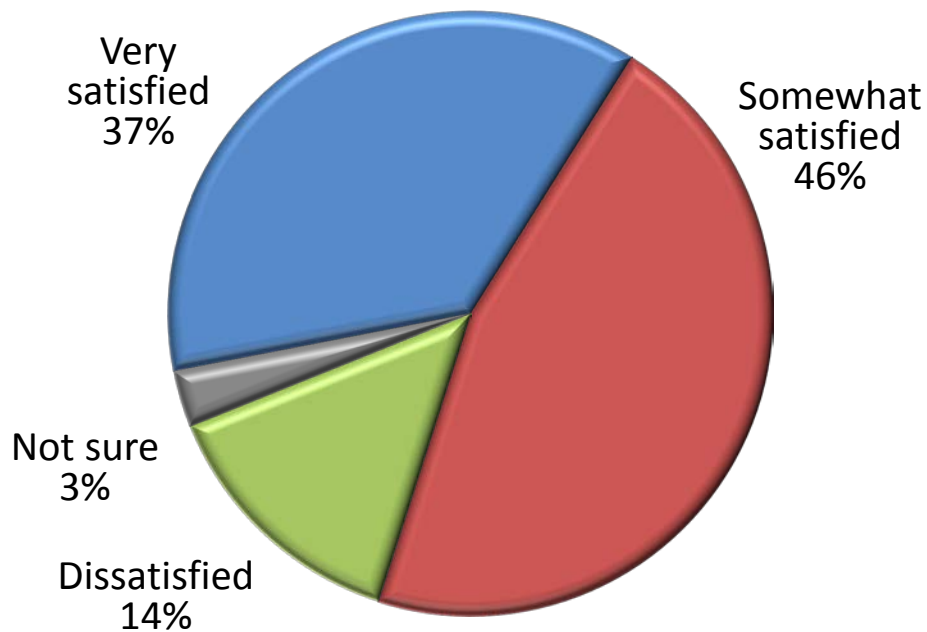
## Satisfaction with City Council is trending downward.



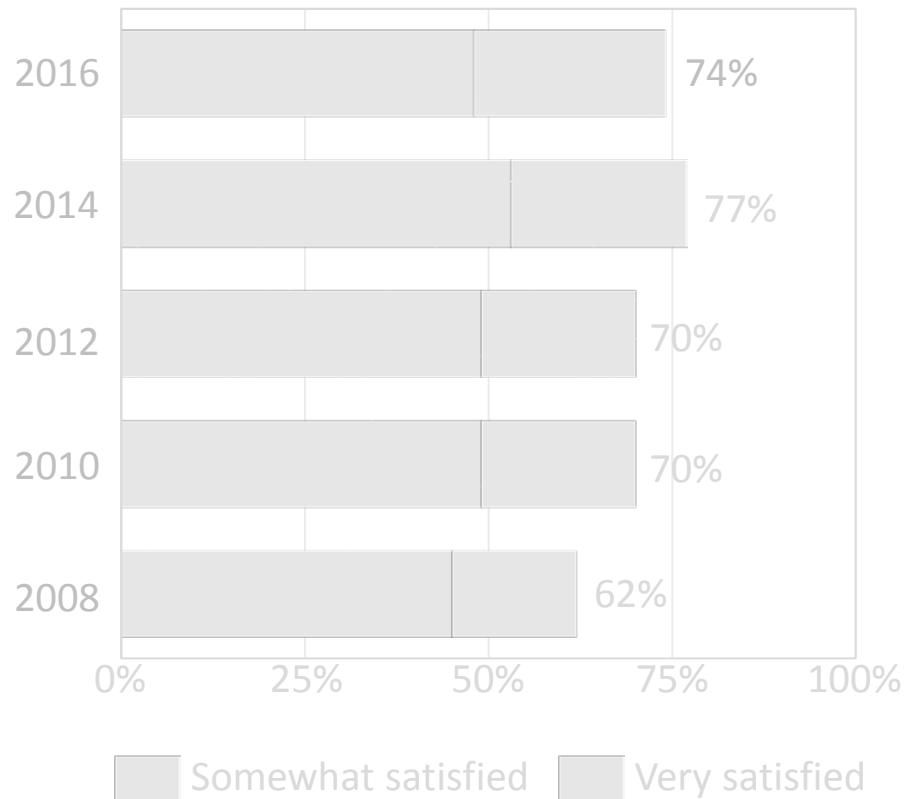
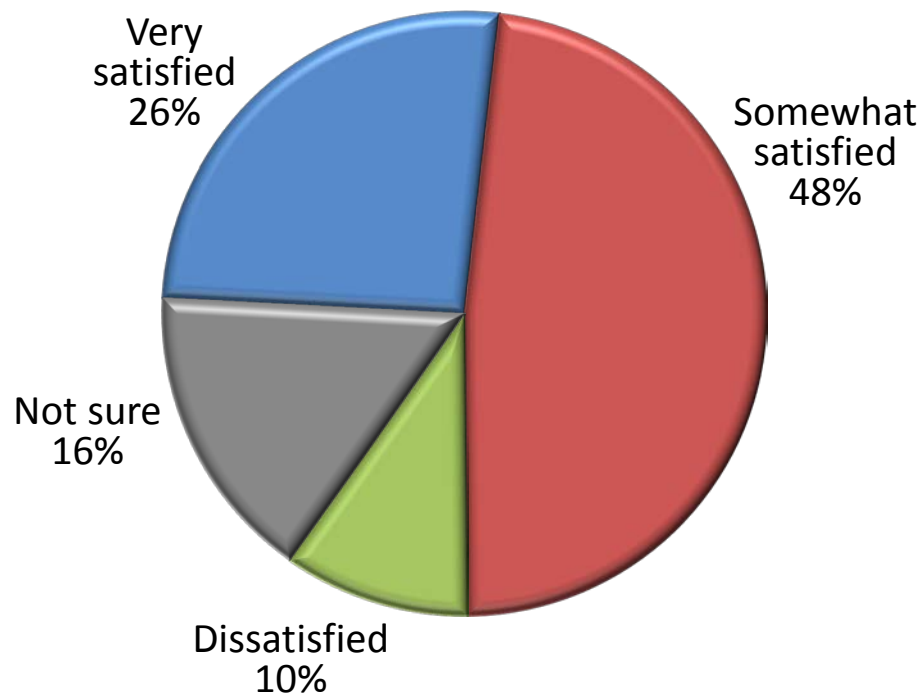
# More than eight out of ten residents (83%) are satisfied with how city officials keep them informed of important local issues, ...



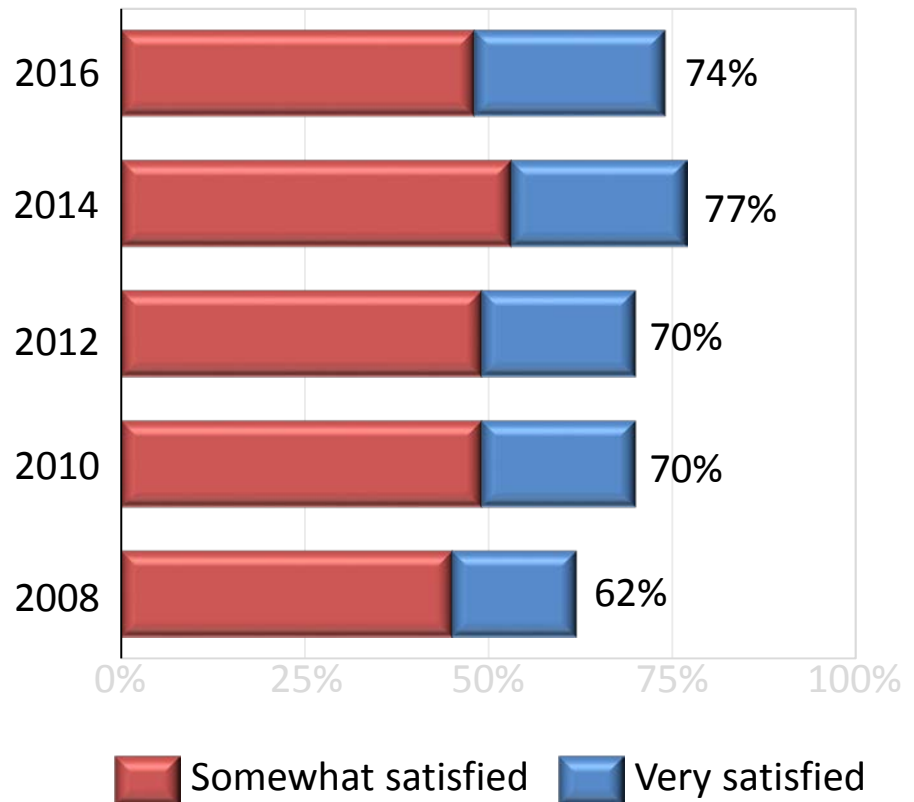
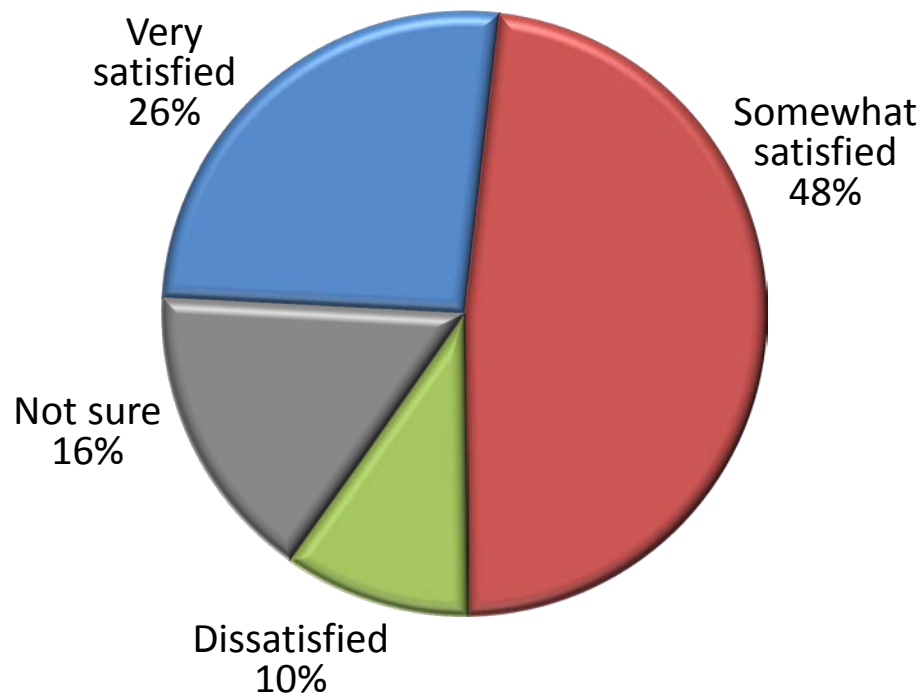
... up from 2014.



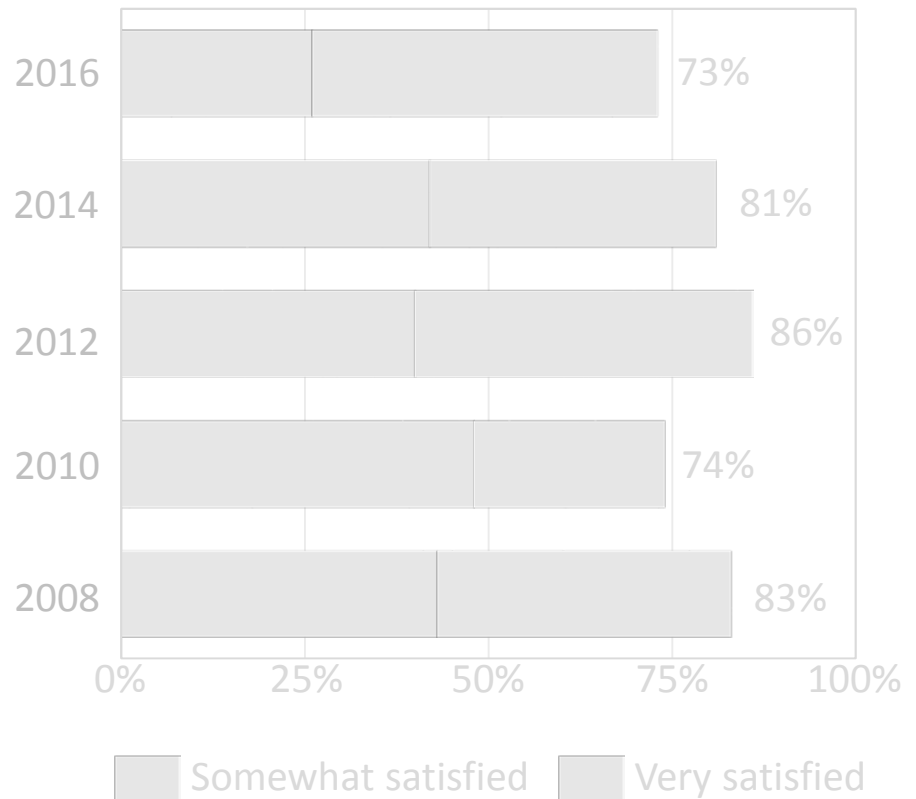
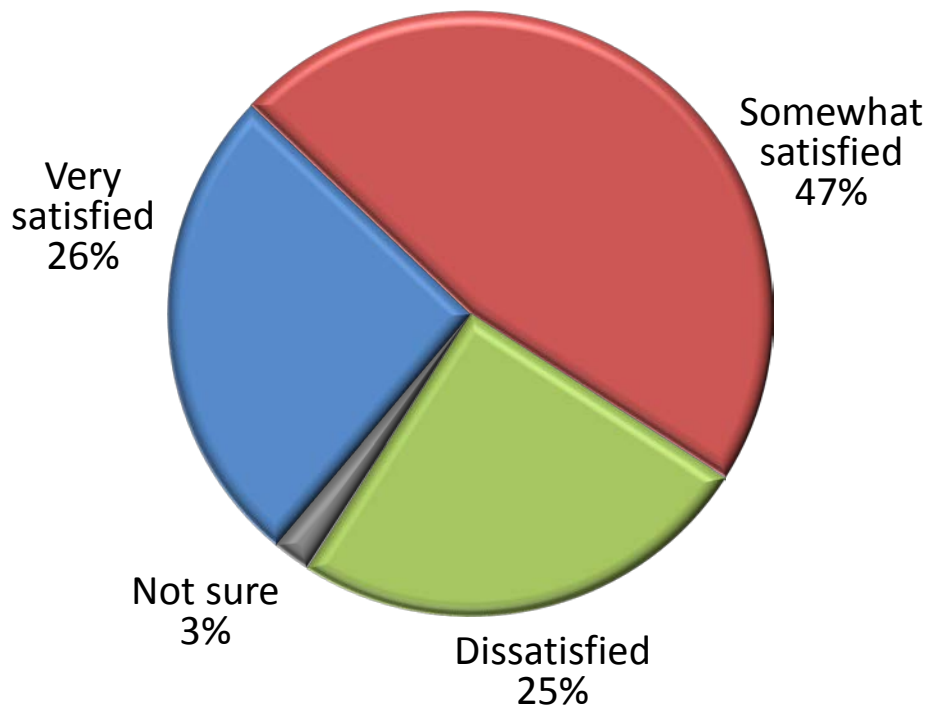
## Nearly eight out of ten residents (77%) are satisfied with how city officials manage the city's finances, ...



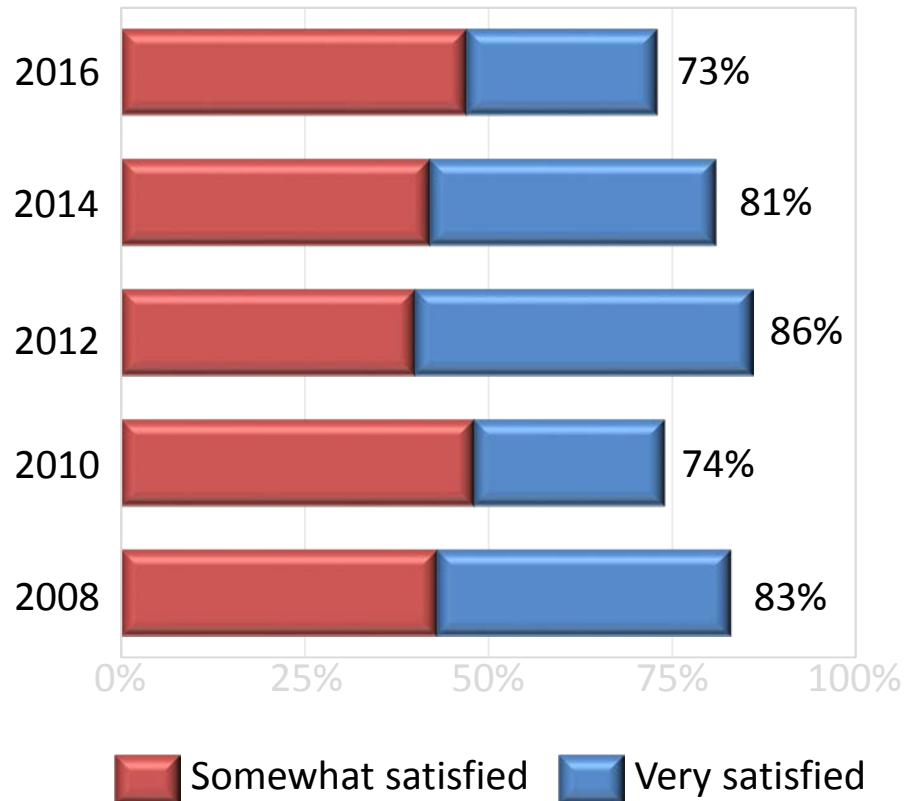
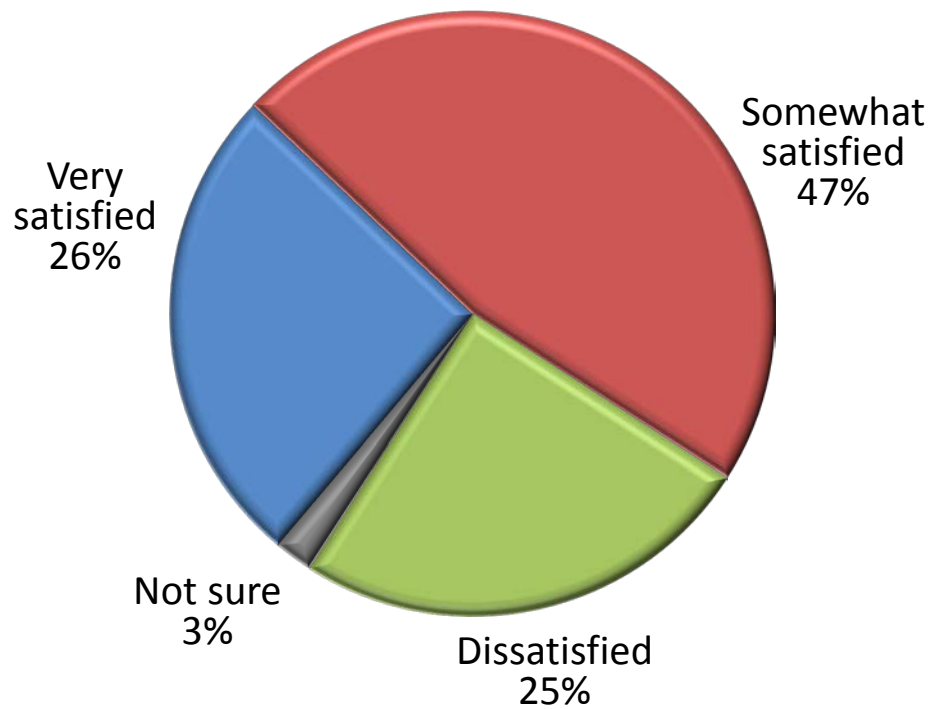
**... down slightly since 2014, but higher than observed on earlier surveys.**



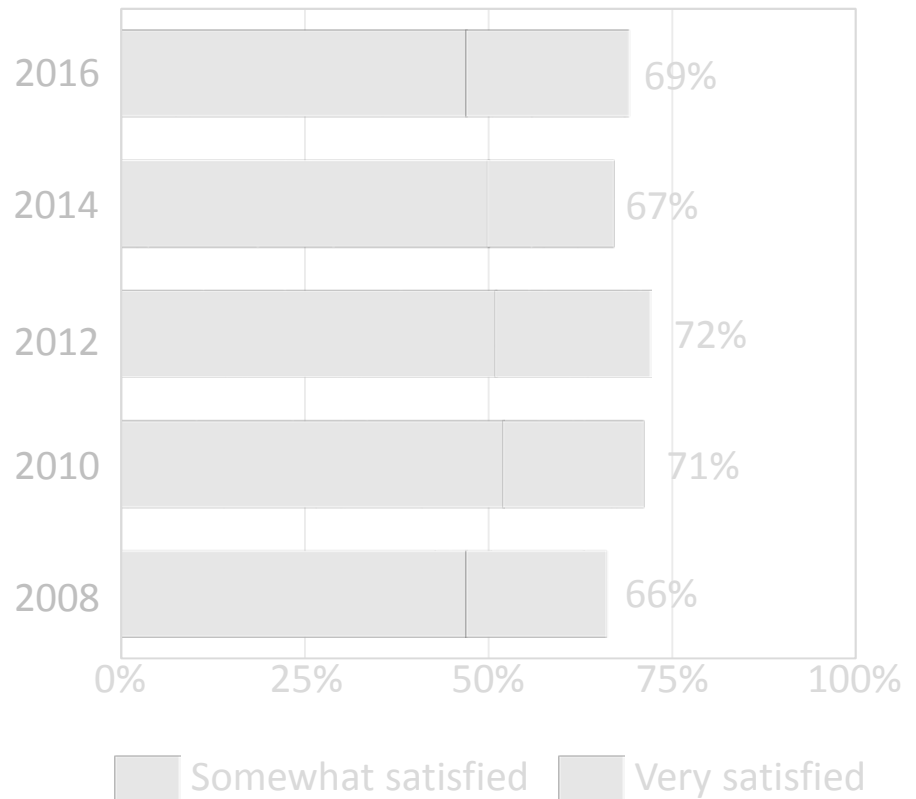
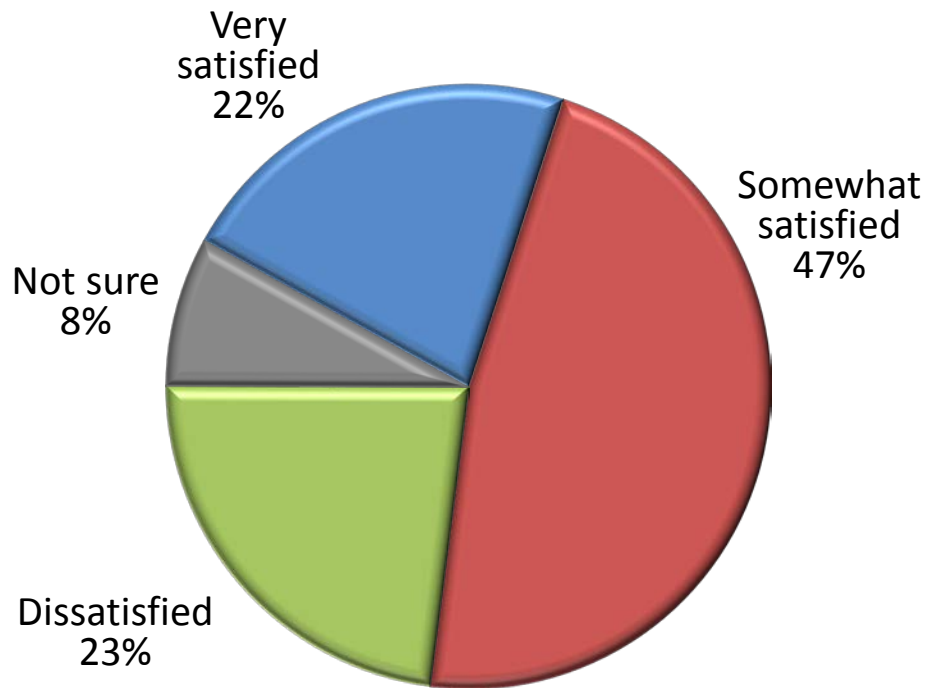
## Three out of four residents (73%) are satisfied with the city's efforts to revitalize downtown, ...



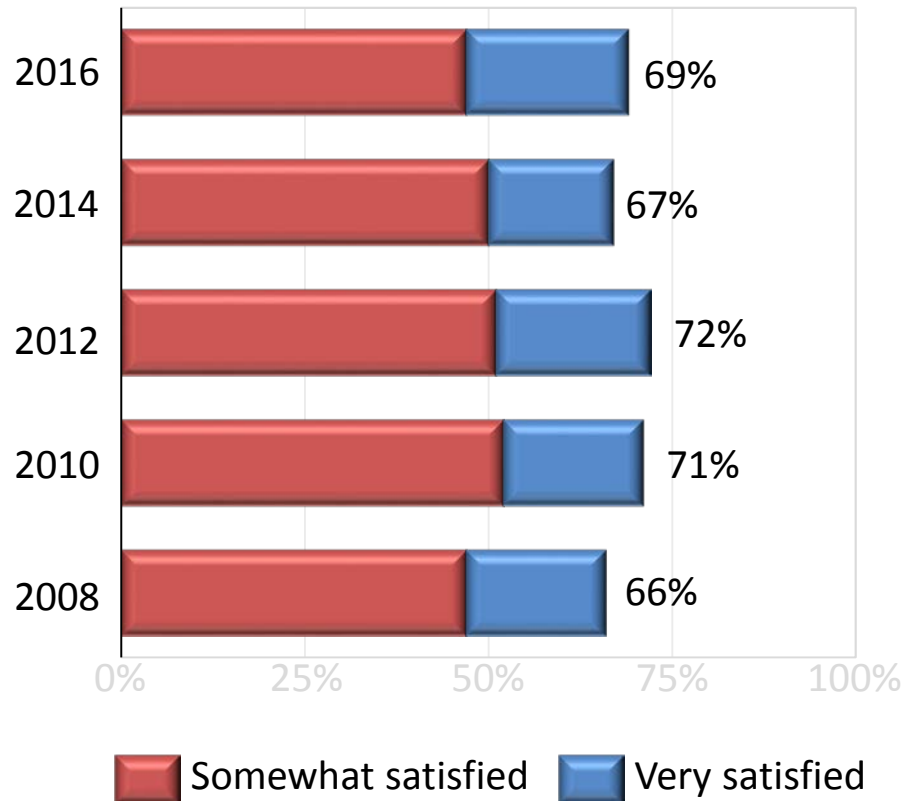
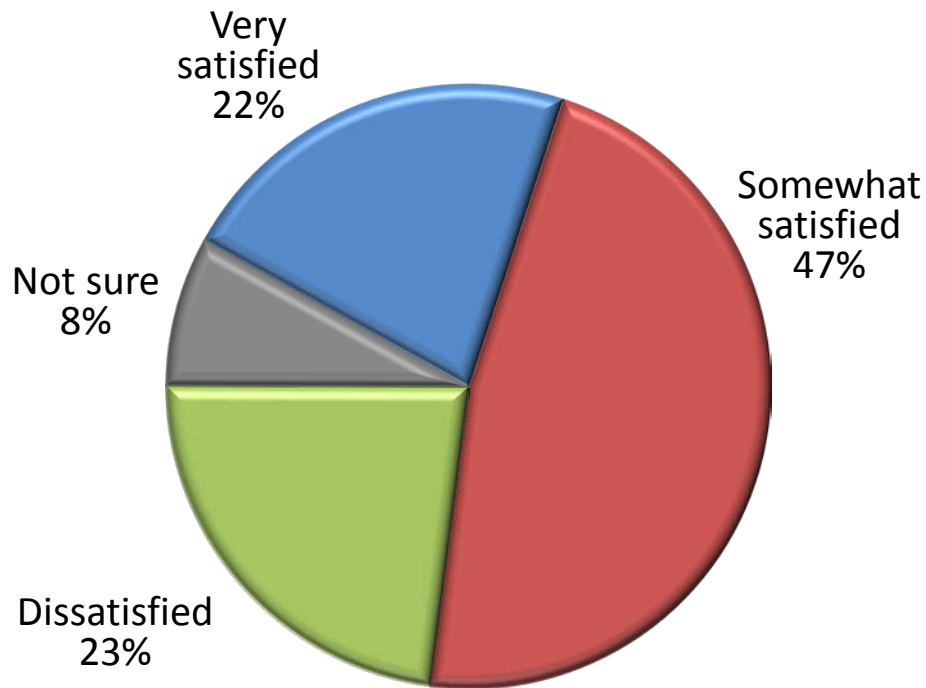
... a decline from the levels achieved in 2014 and 2012.



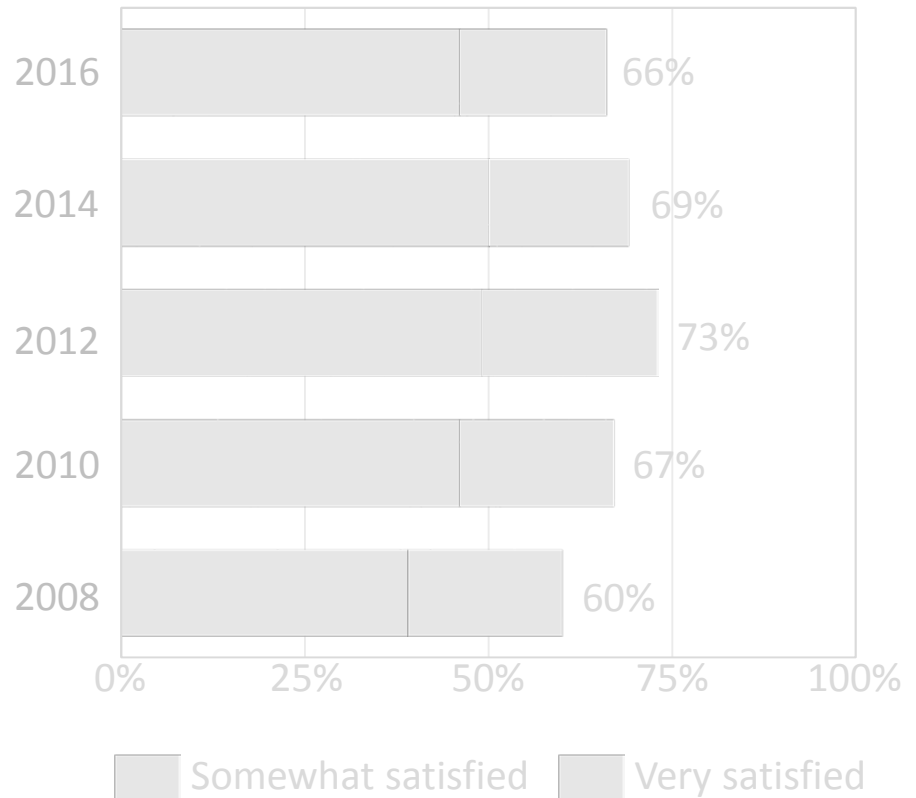
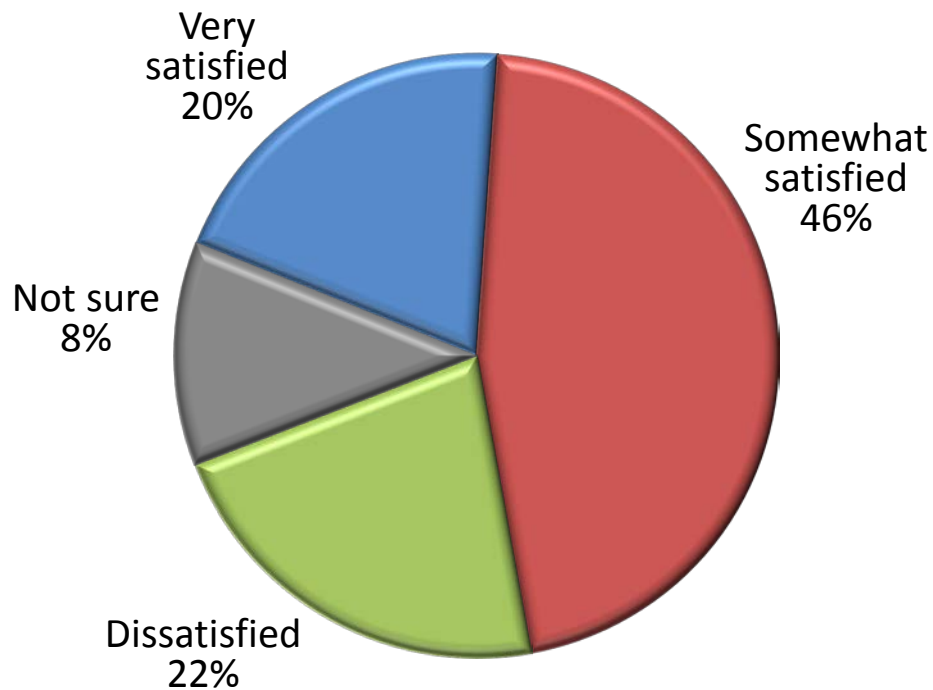
## Seven out of ten residents (69%) agree that city officials plan well for the future.



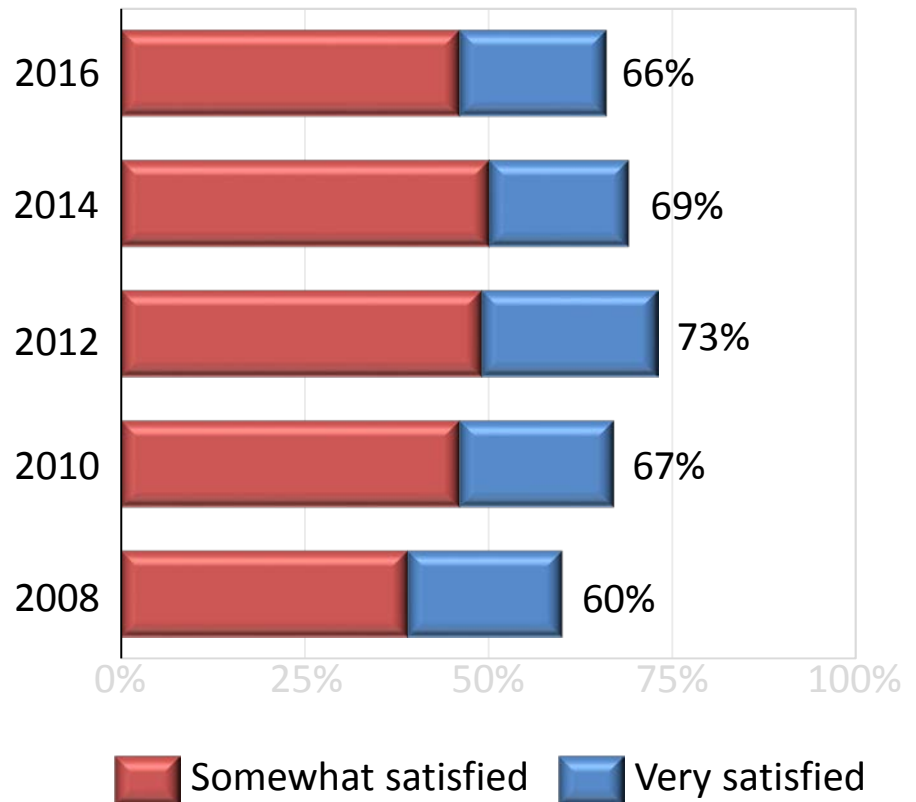
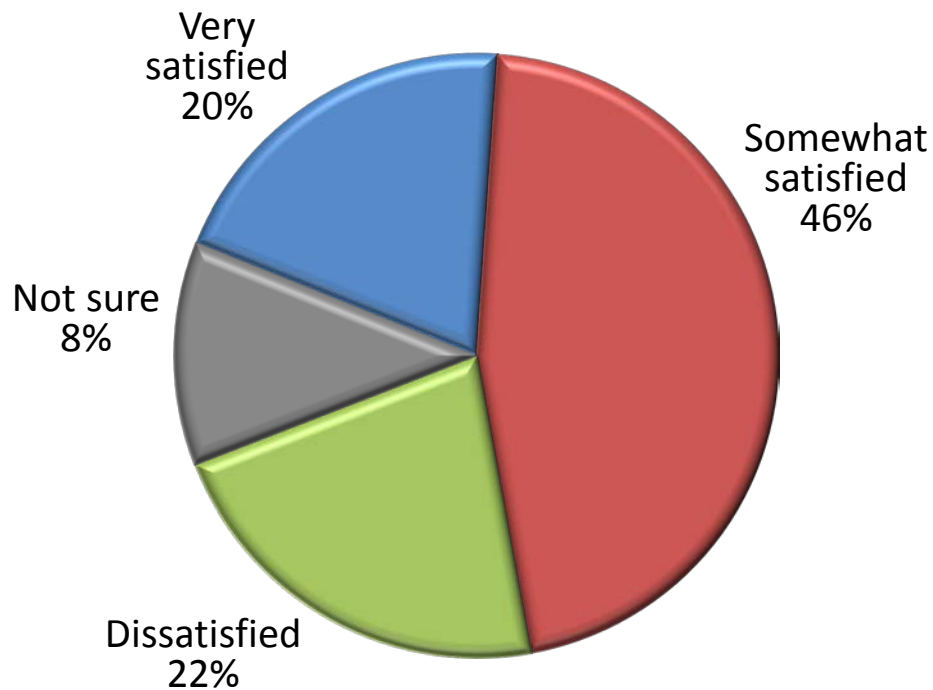
## Little has changed since 2014.



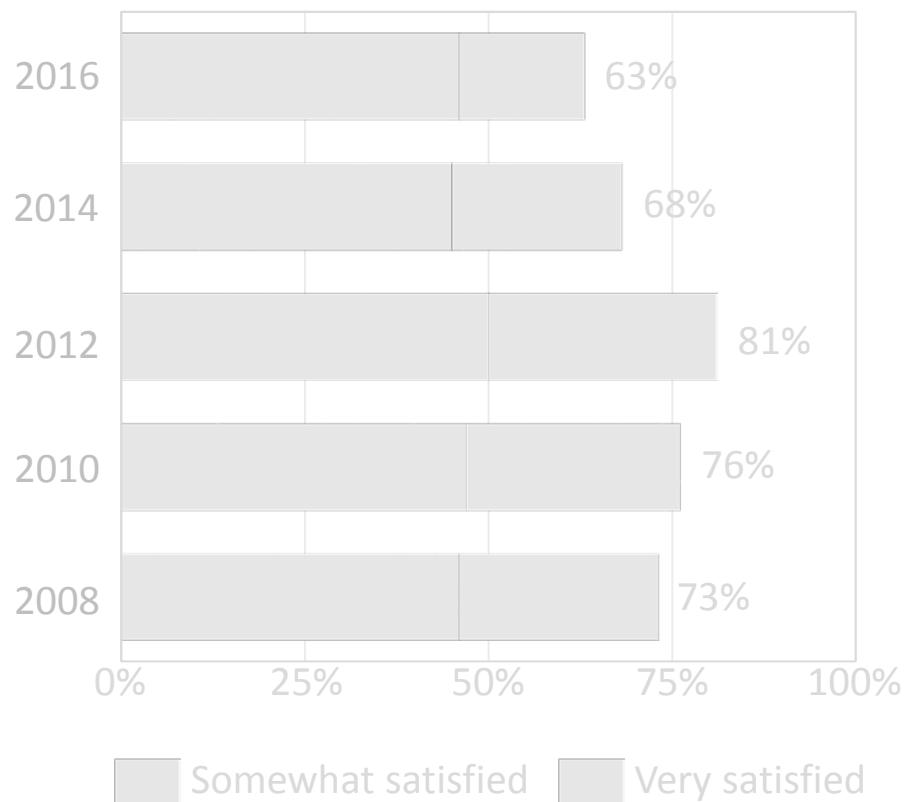
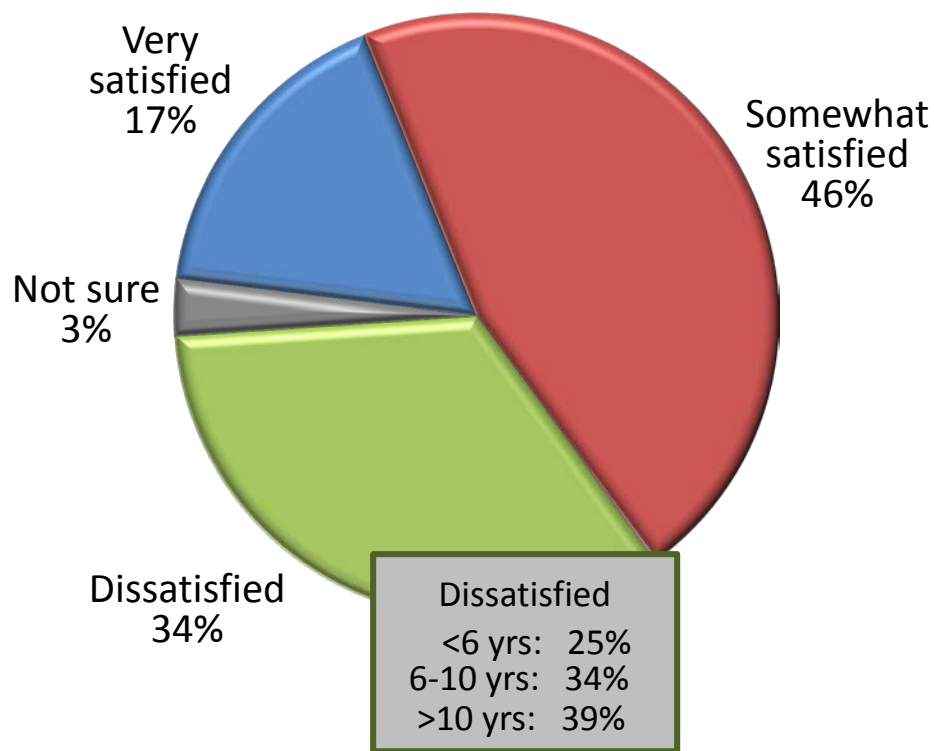
## Two out of three residents (66%) feel that city officials listen to the concerns of residents ...



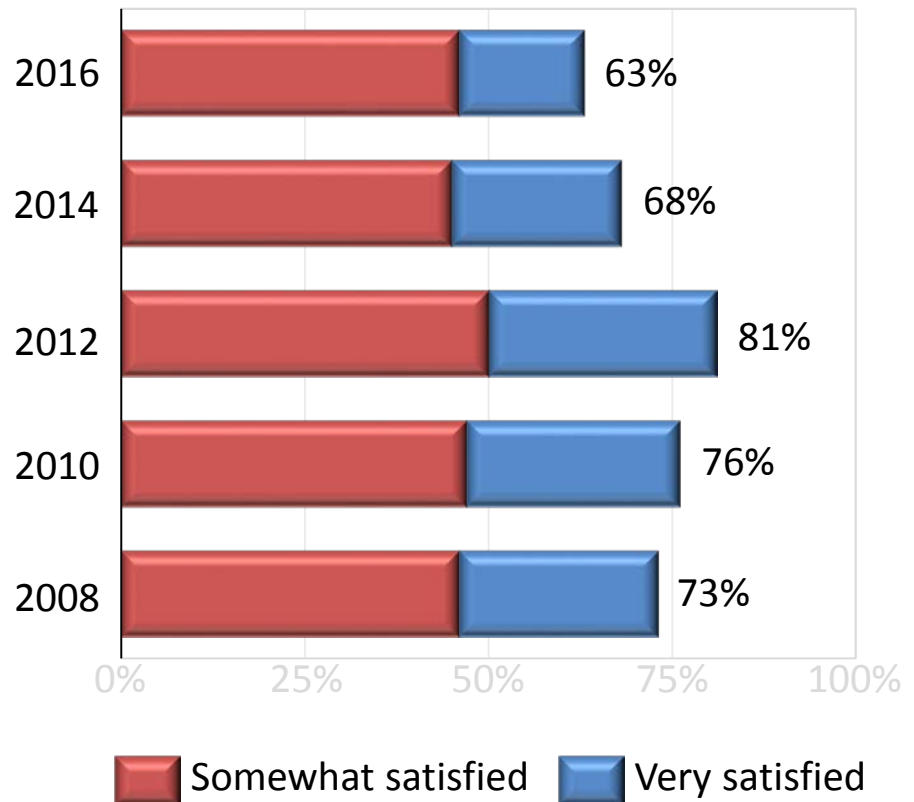
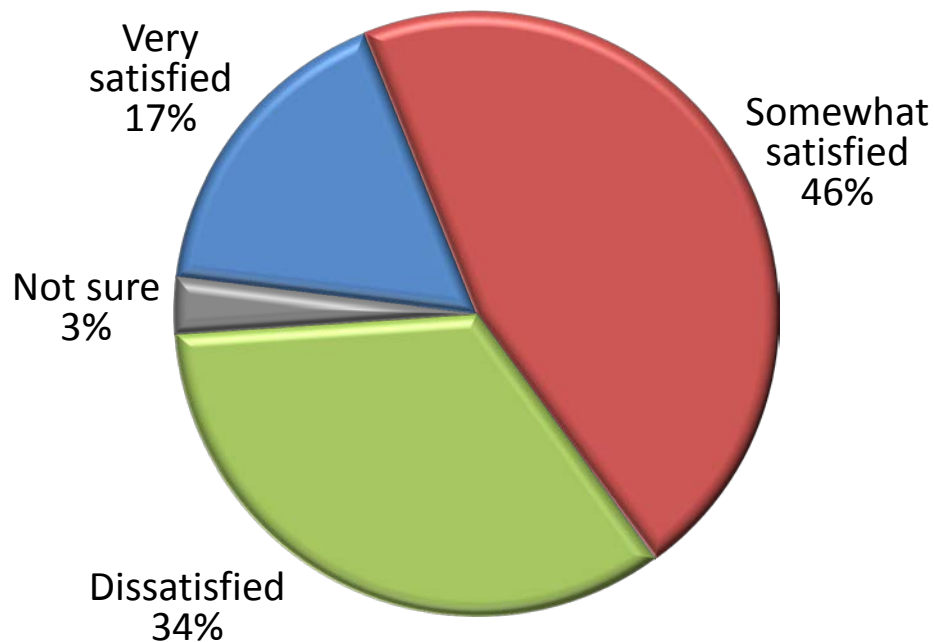
**... a decline from both 2014 and 2012.**



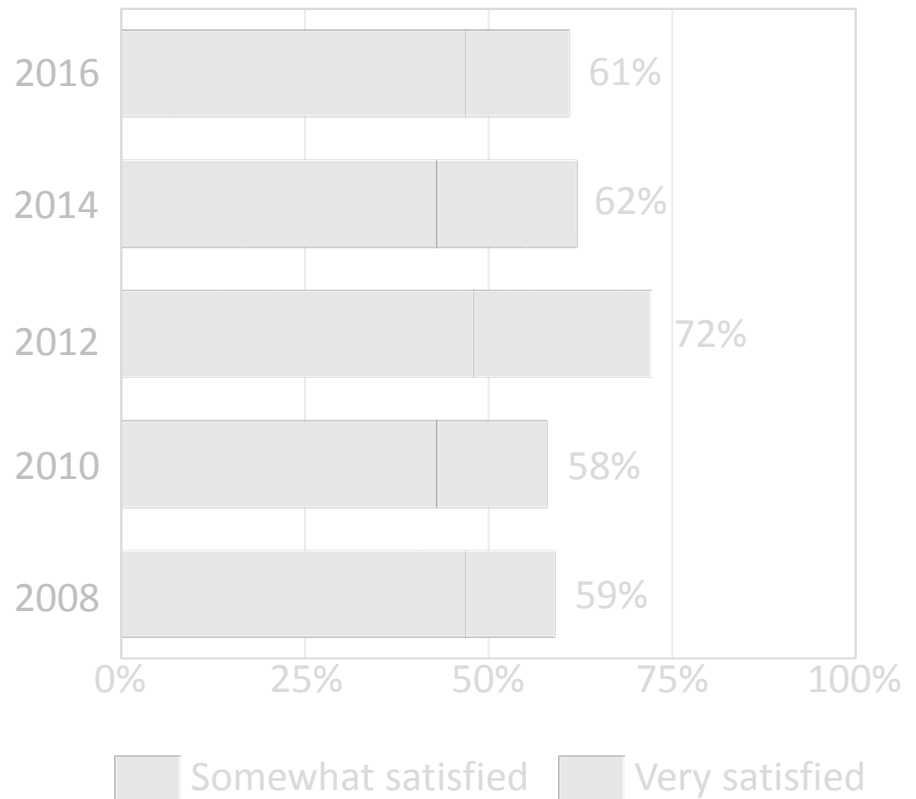
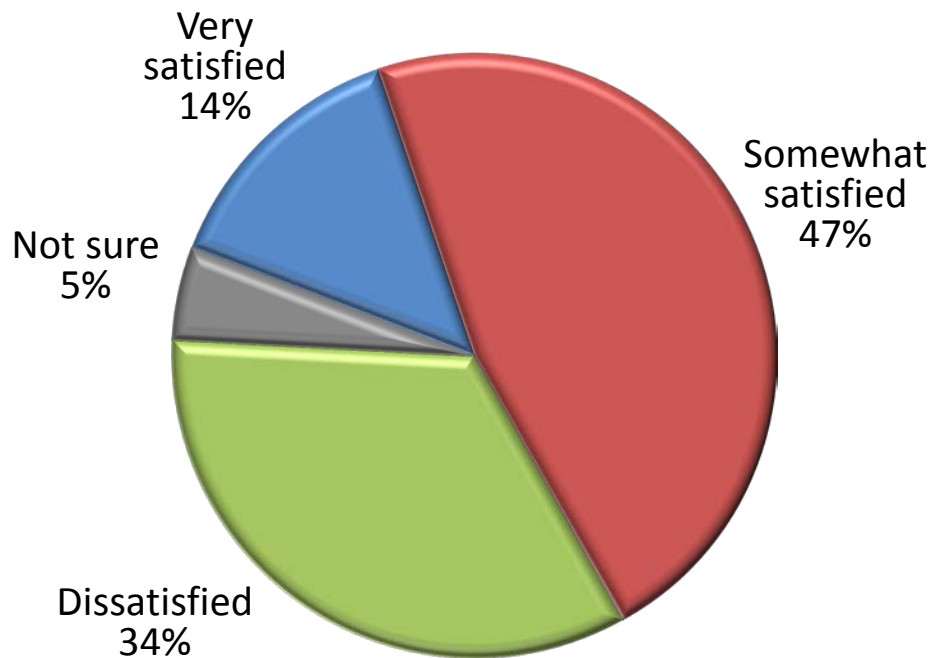
**More than six out of ten residents (63%) are satisfied with the city's efforts to control residential growth and development. One out of three (34%), however, is dissatisfied.**



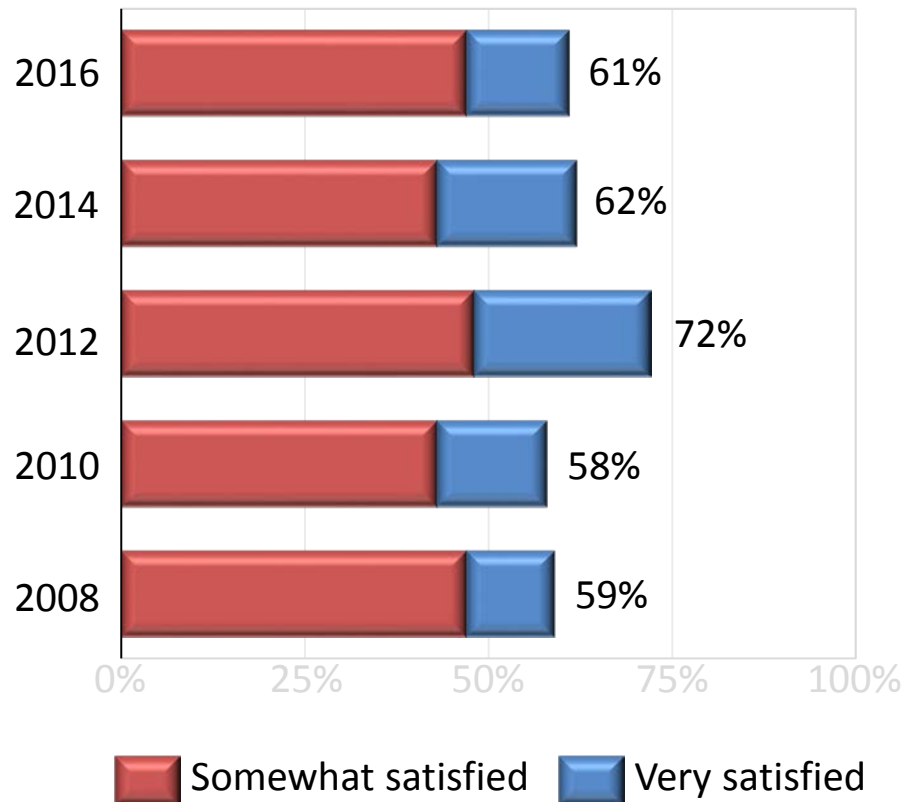
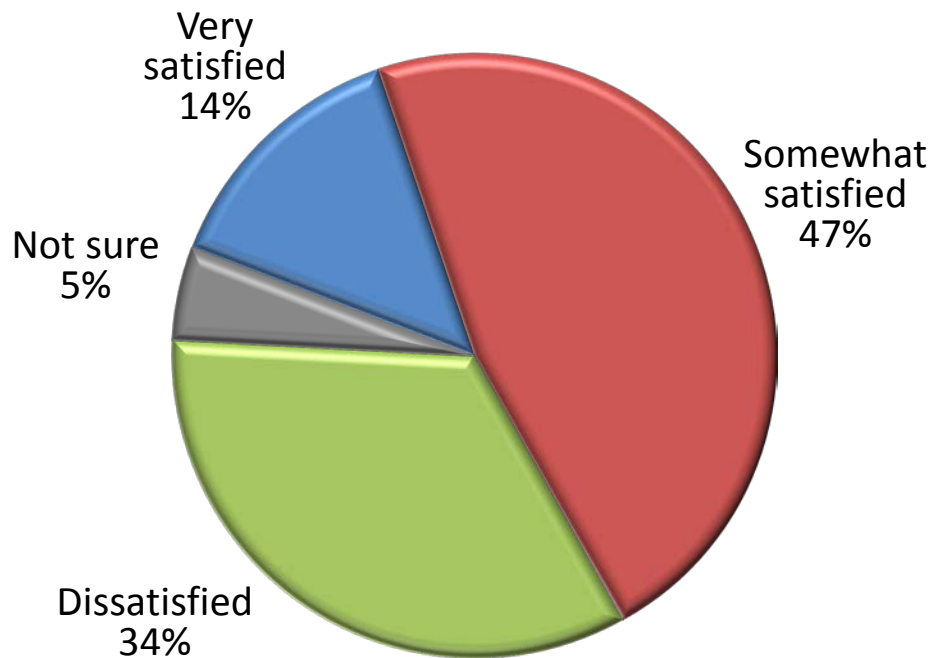
## Satisfaction with the city's efforts to control residential growth and development continues to decline.



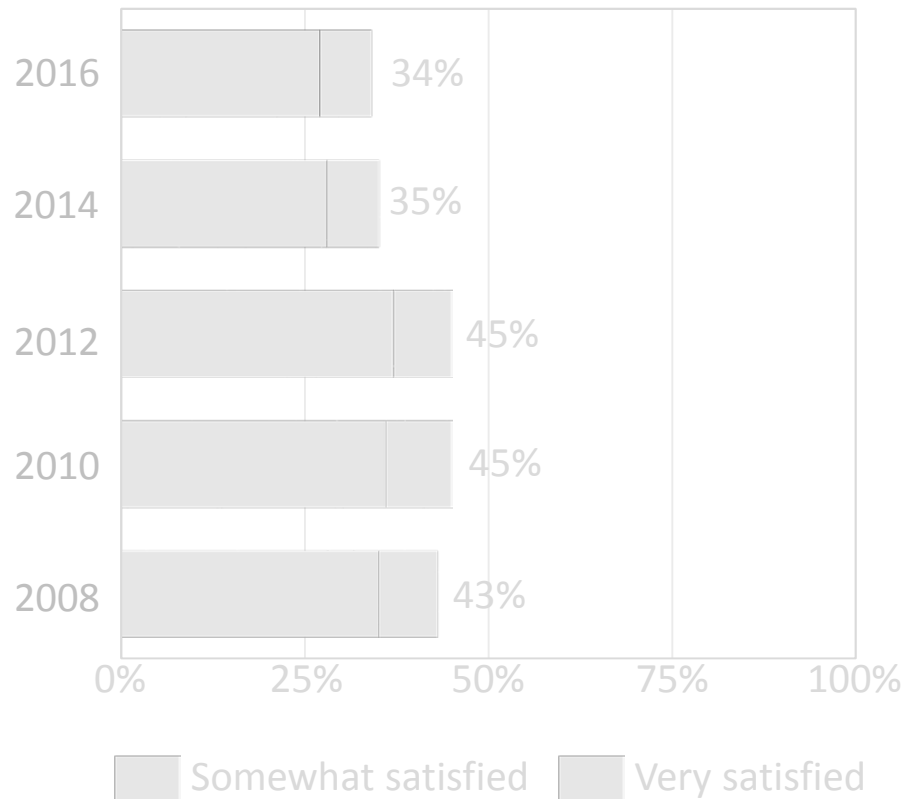
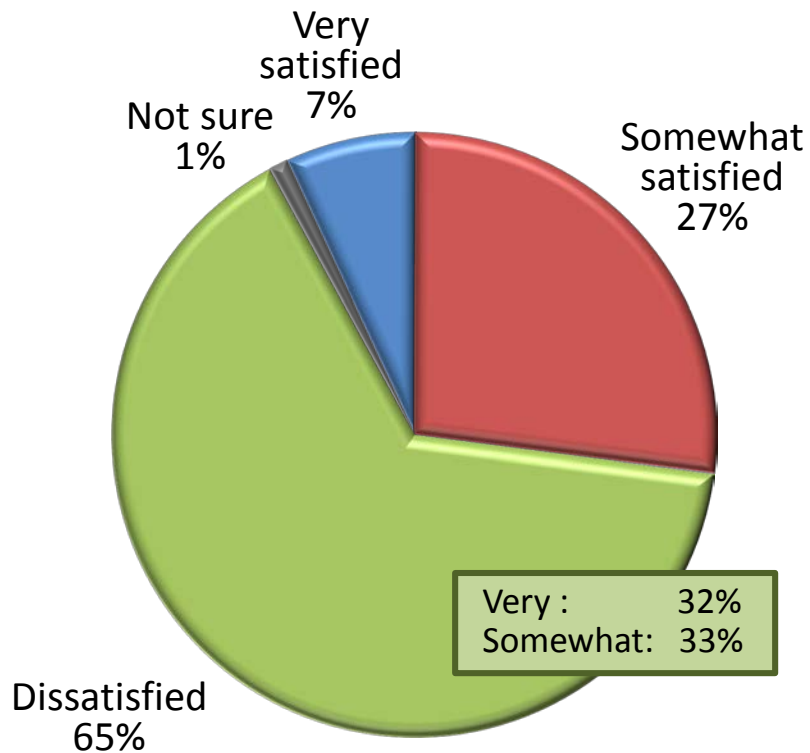
**Six out of ten residents (61%) are satisfied with the city's efforts to manage commercial growth and development. Again, one out of three (34%) is dissatisfied.**



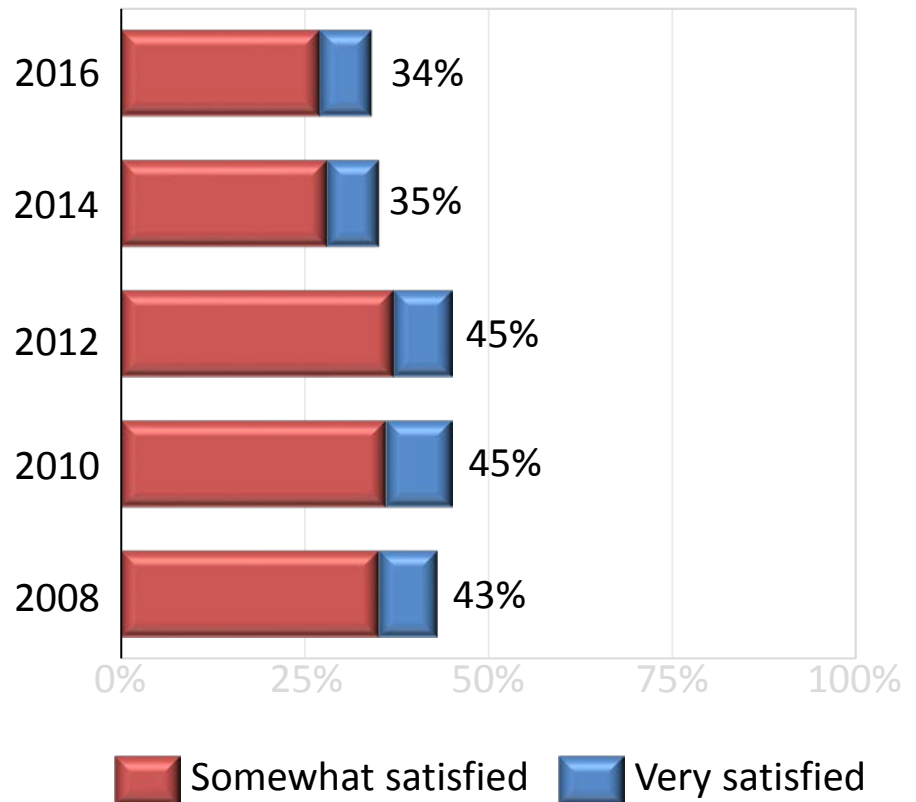
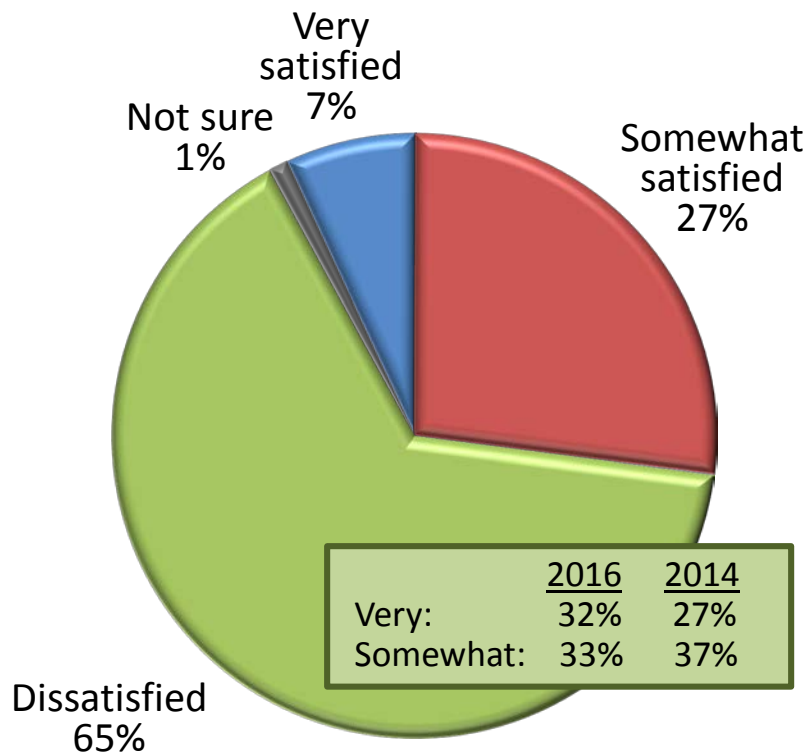
## Apparently, 2012 was an atypical year.



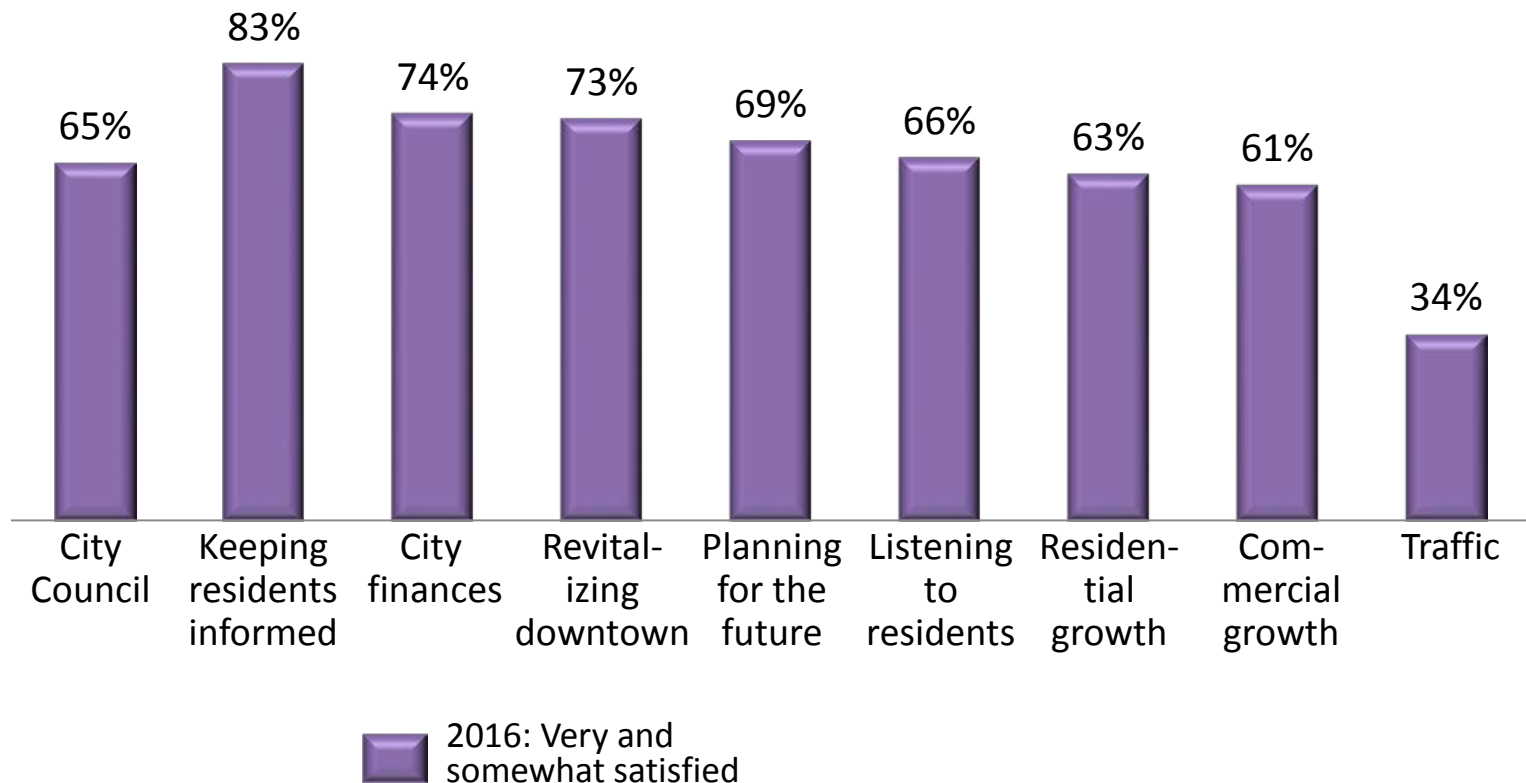
**Only one resident in three (34%) is satisfied with the city's efforts to manage the flow traffic within Powell. Two out of three are dissatisfied.**



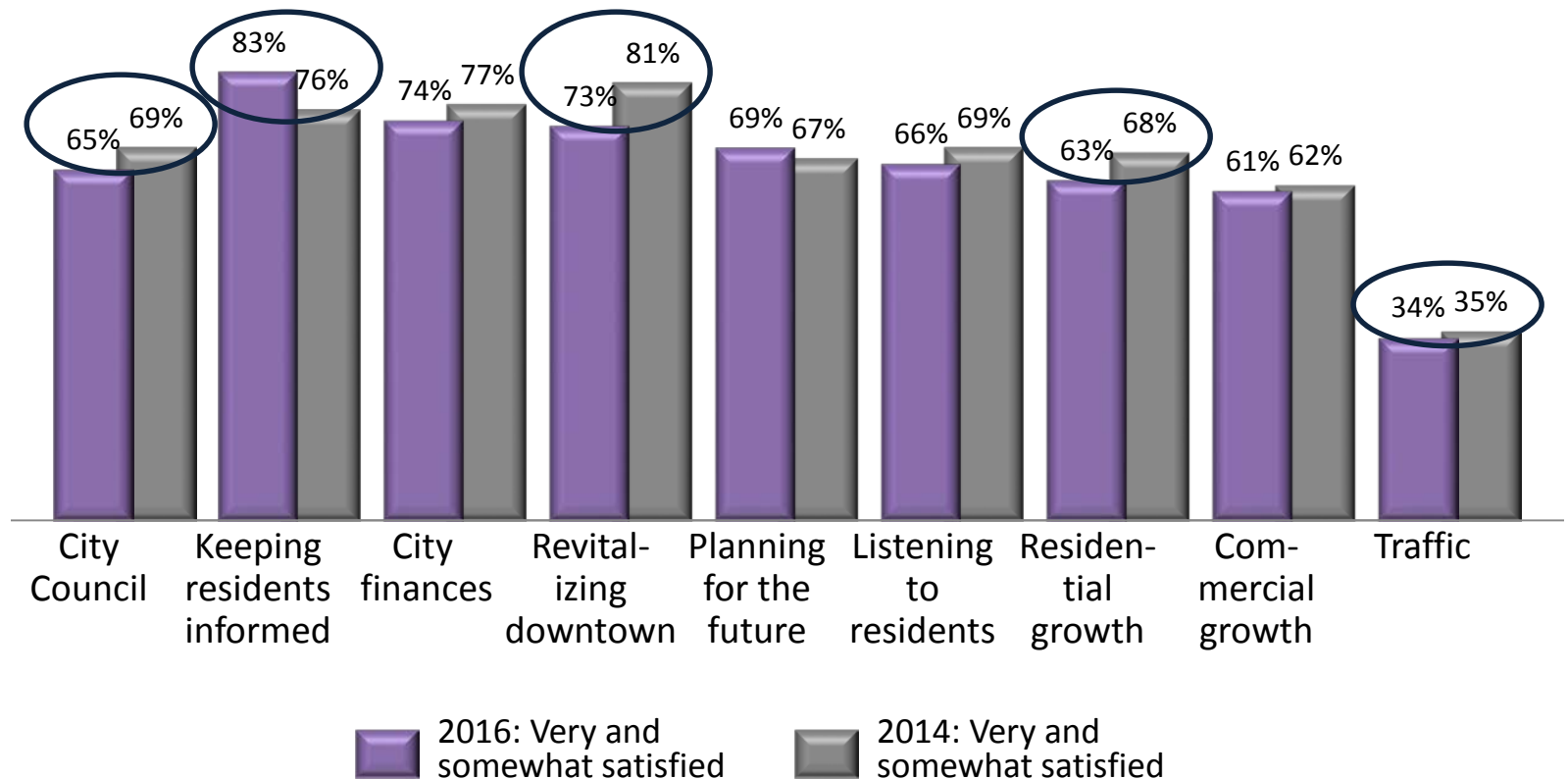
**Since 2014, the shift in opinion reflects a change in intensity, not in direction.**



**In short, though a majority of residents tend to be satisfied with the performance of city officials ...**

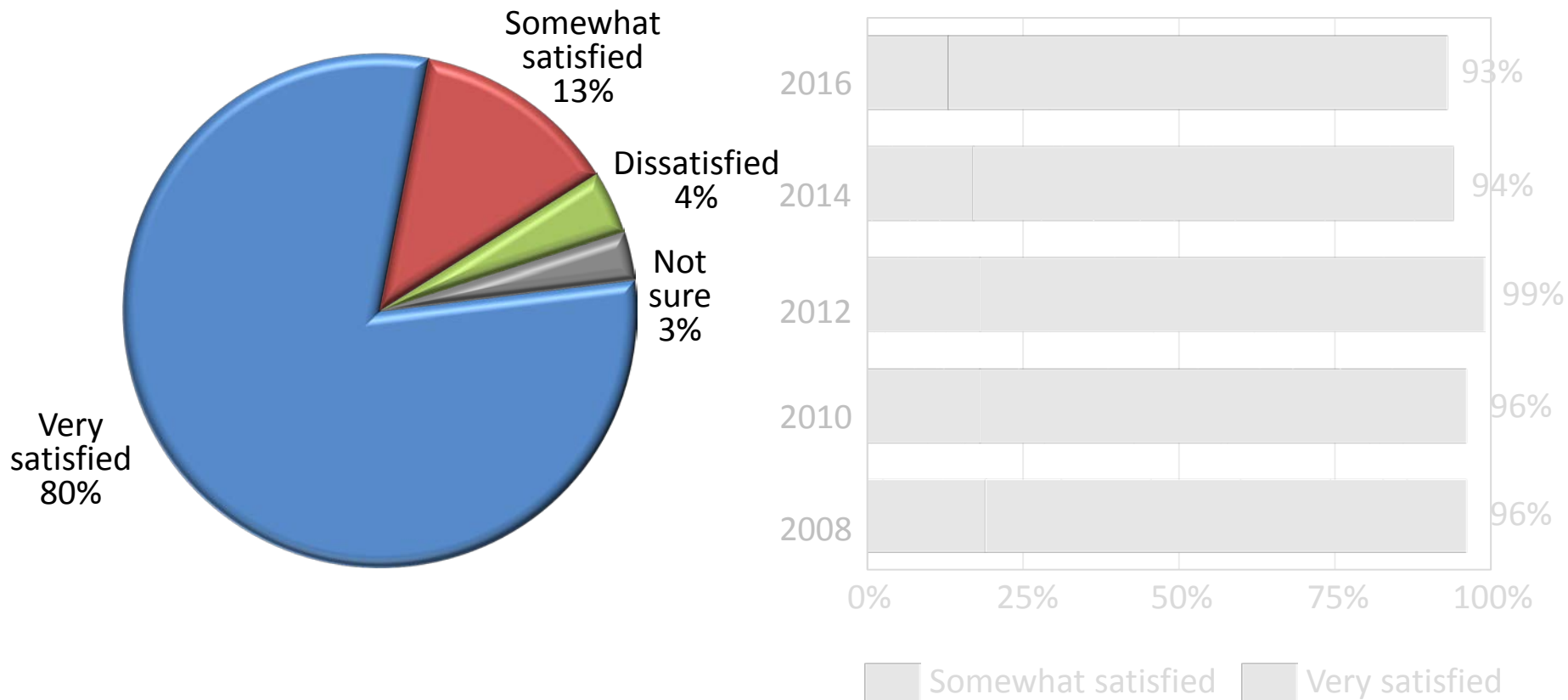


... positive impressions of City Council have declined, as they have for the city's efforts to revitalize downtown and to manage residential growth and development. Managing traffic through Powell continues to be a source of concern. On the upside, more residents feel that city officials keep them informed.

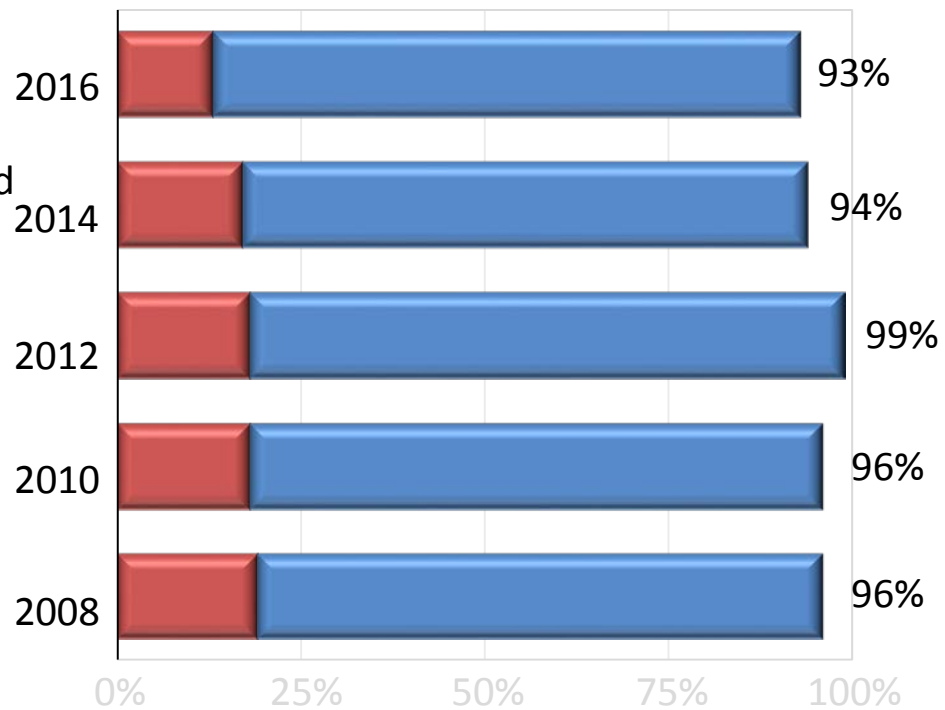
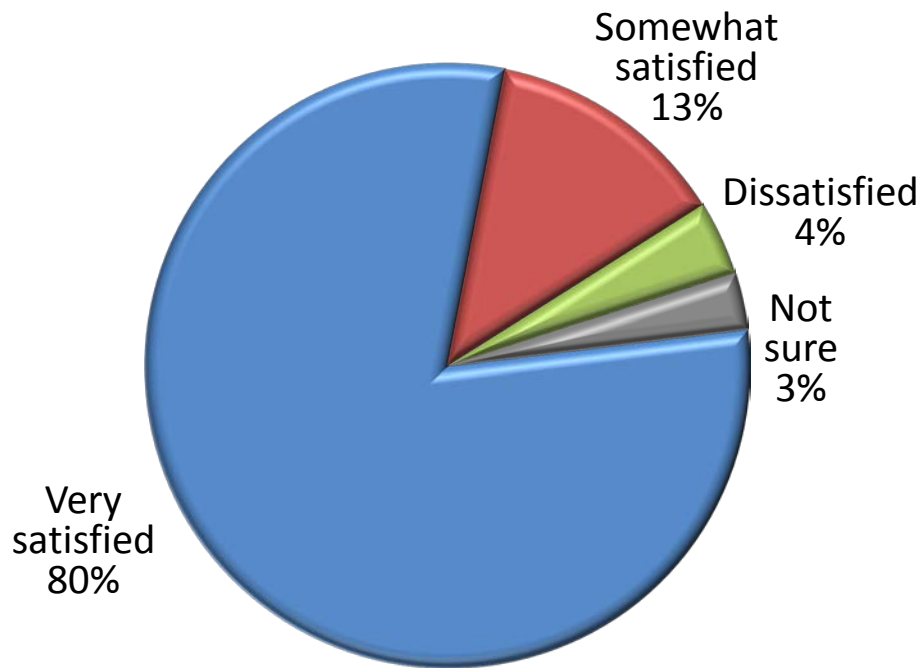


# First Responders

**More than nine out of ten residents (93%) are satisfied with the Powell police. Most (80%) are very satisfied.**

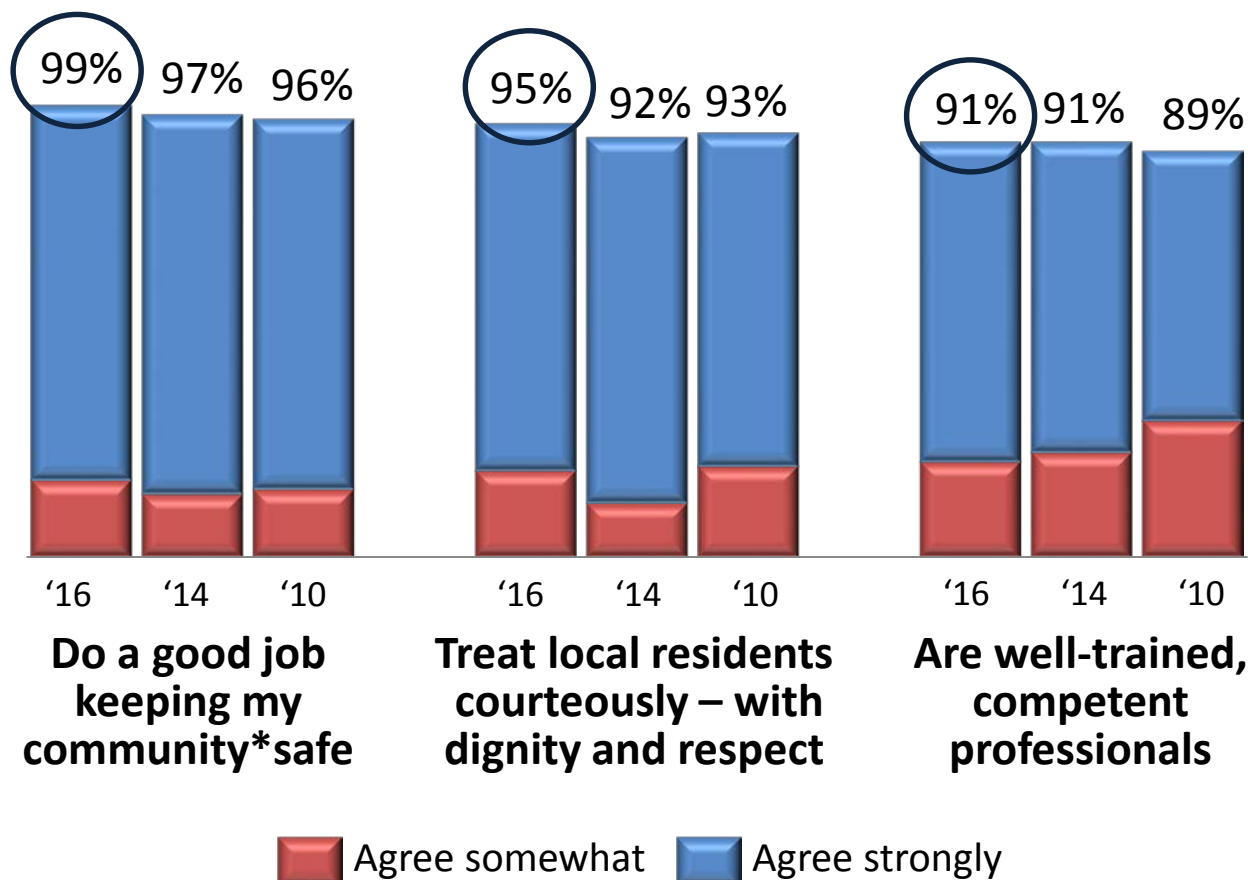


## Little has changed since 2014.

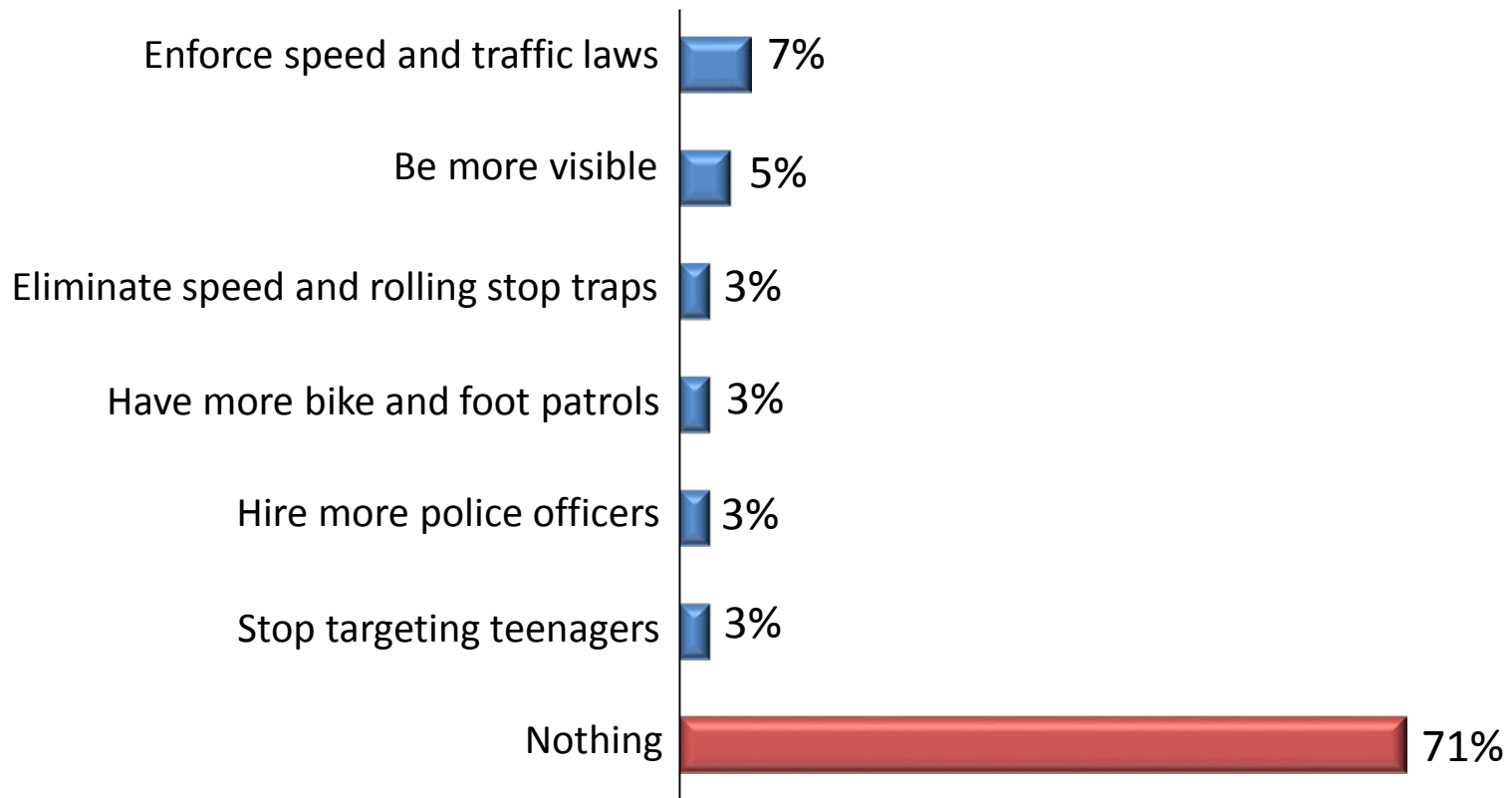


 Somewhat satisfied  Very satisfied

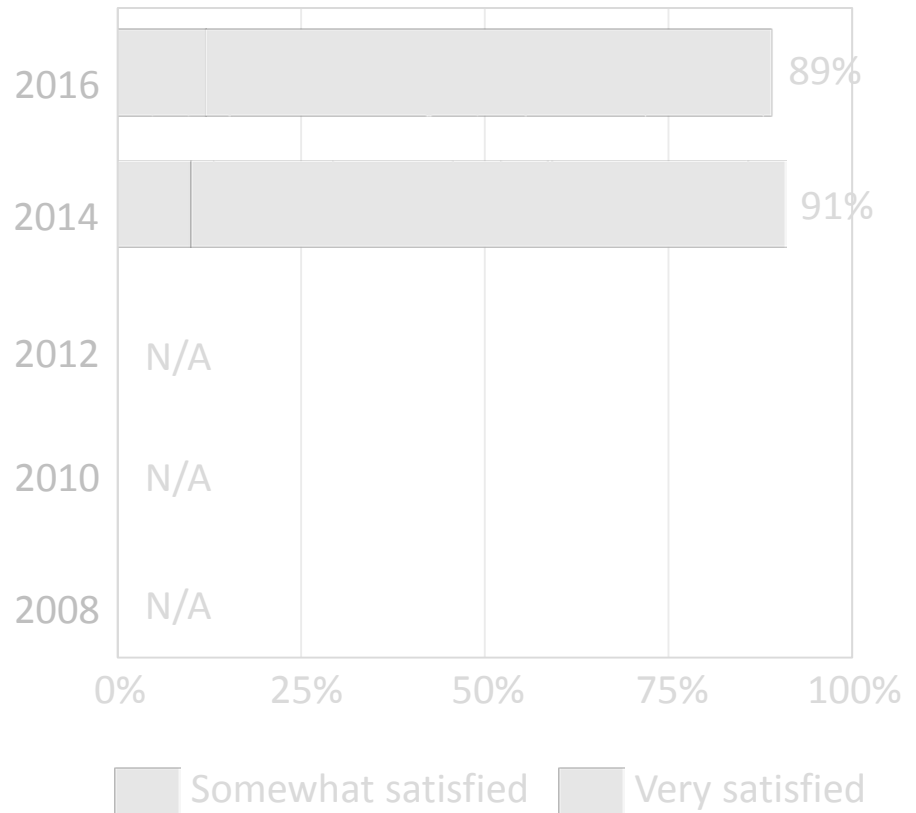
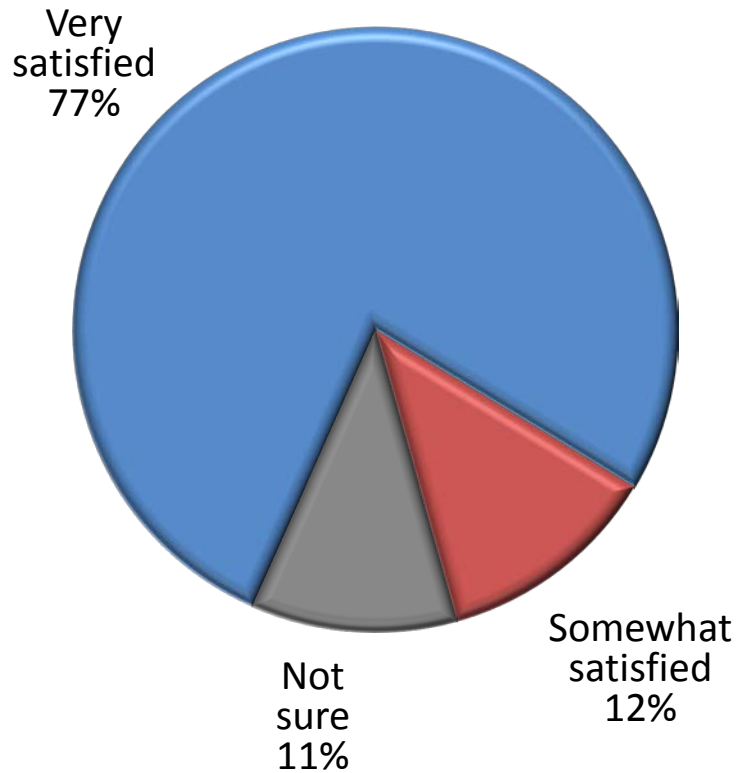
**Most residents continue to agree that the Powell police keep the community safe (99%); treat residents courteously (95%); and are well-trained, competent professionals (91%).**



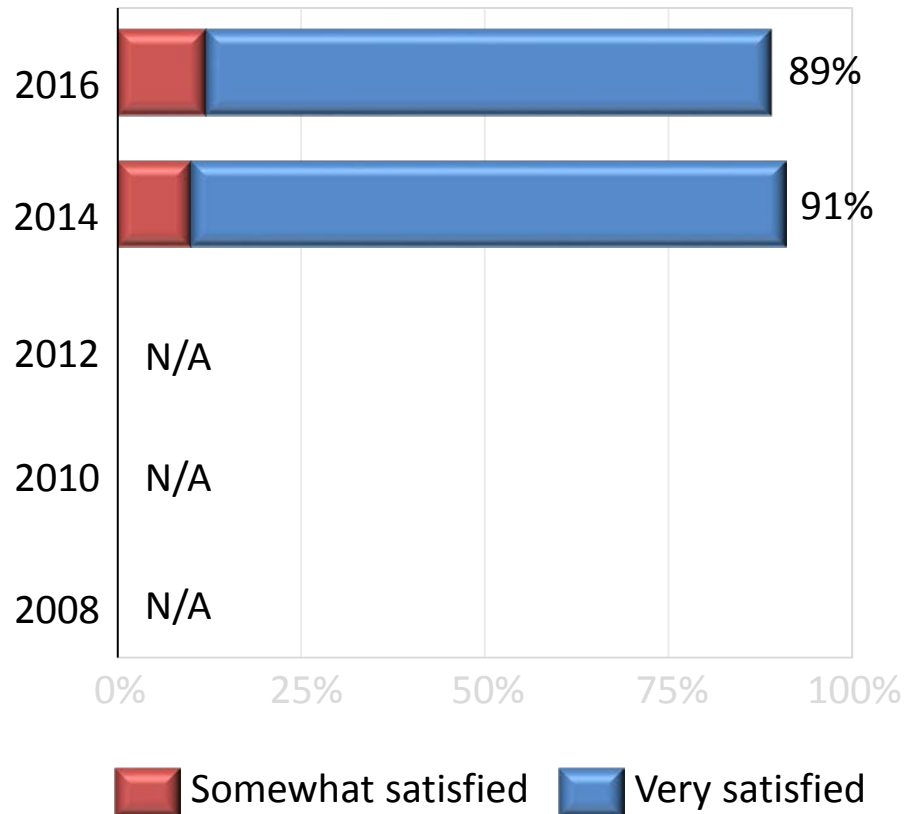
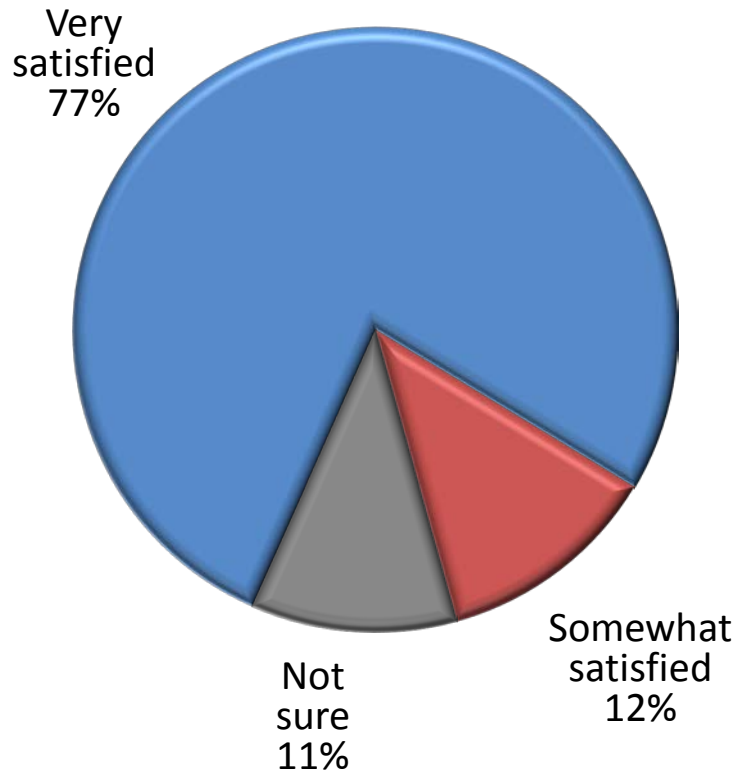
**Seven out of ten residents (71%) had neither a suggestion nor recommendation for the Powell police. Among those who did, the most common (7%) involved the enforcement of speed and traffic laws, often in neighborhoods.**



**Nine out of ten residents (89%) are satisfied with the Liberty Township Fire Department and EMS. Three out of four (77%) are very satisfied.**

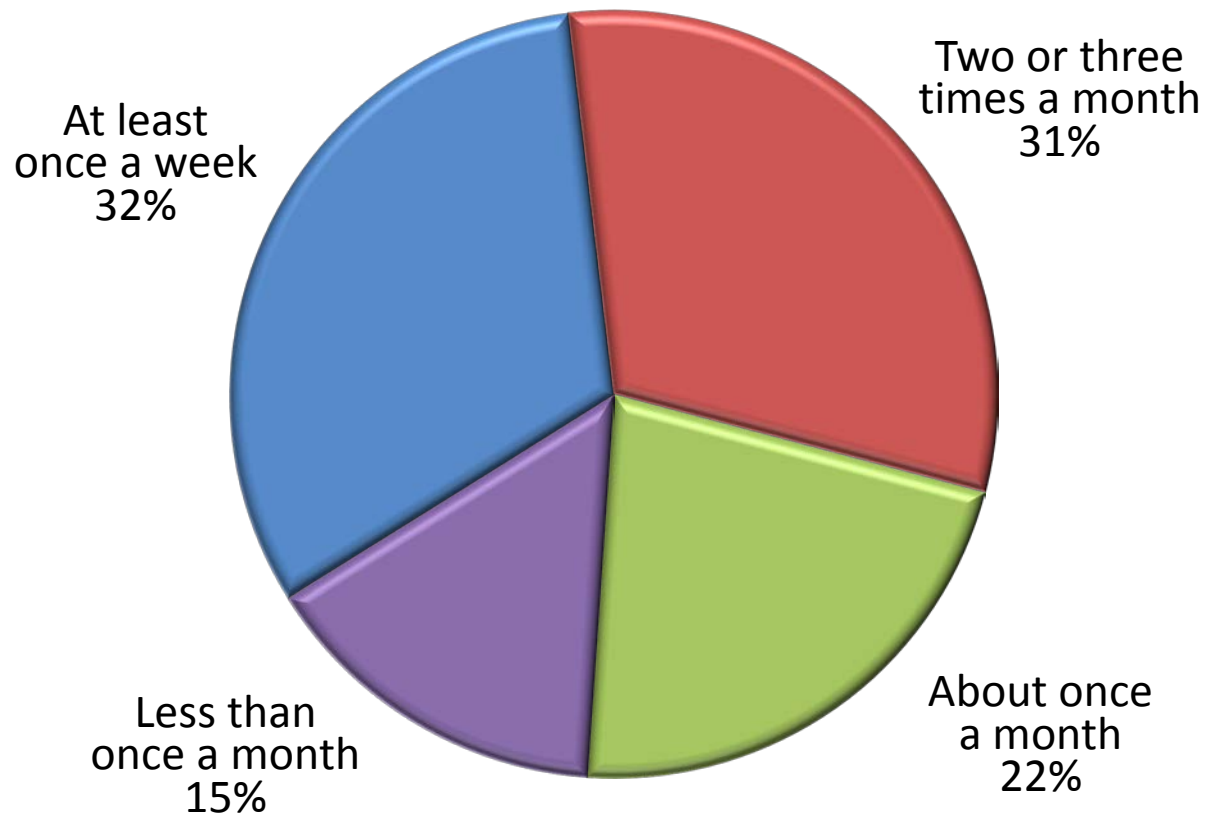


## Little has changed since 2014.

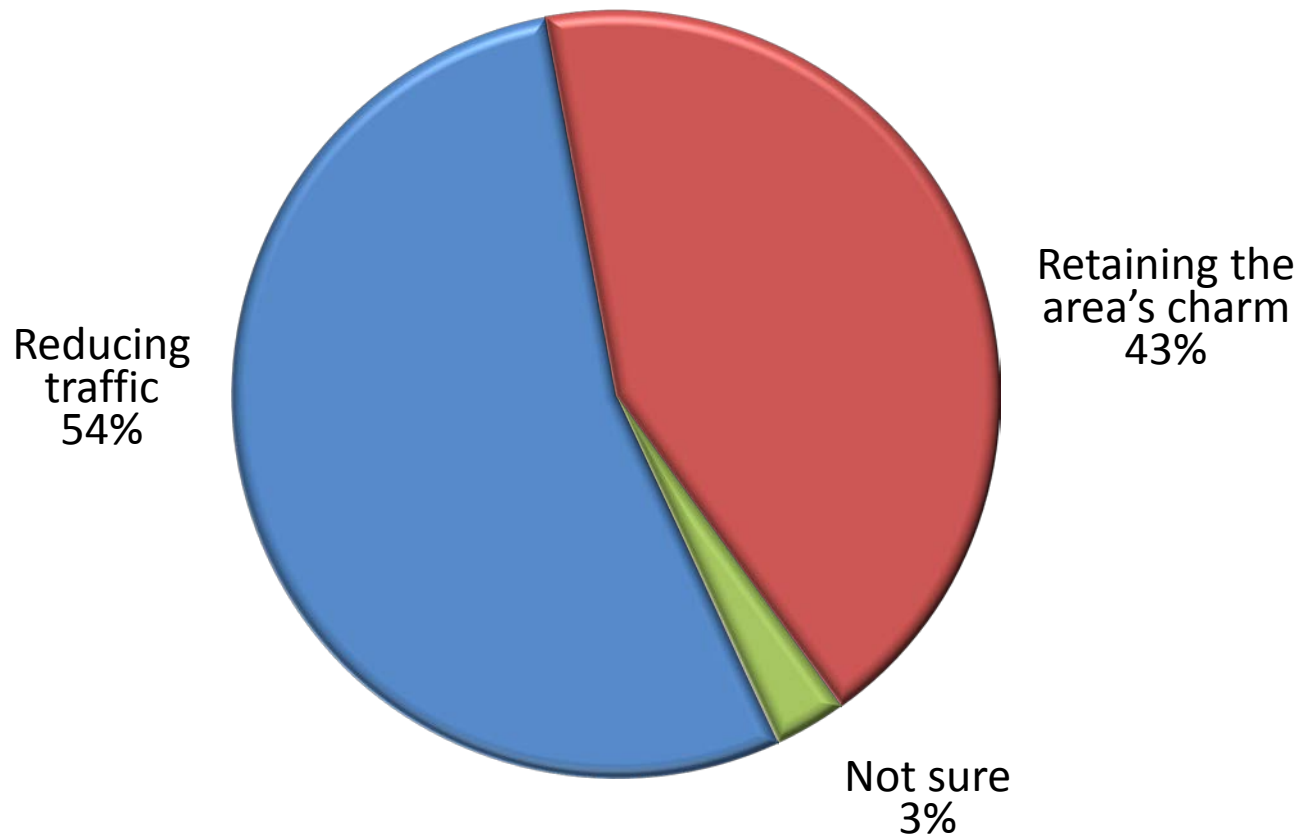


# Downtown Powell

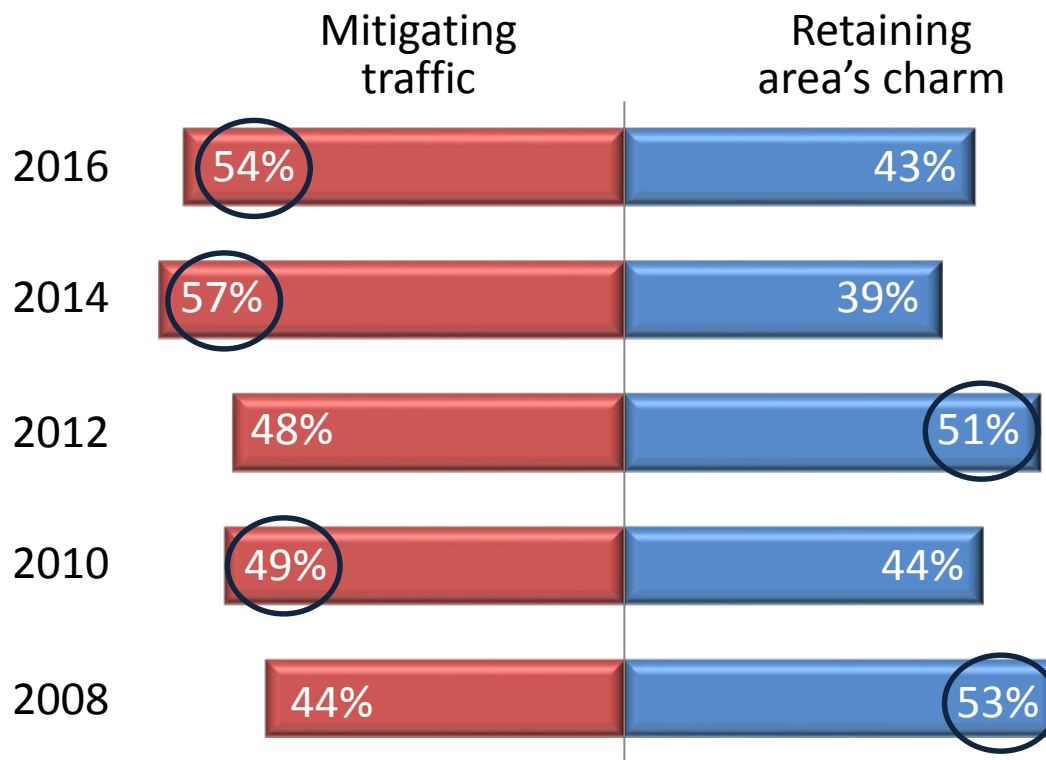
**One out of three residents (32%) visits a store or restaurant in downtown Powell at least once a week. More than eight out of ten (85%) visit a store or restaurant in downtown Powell at least once a month.**



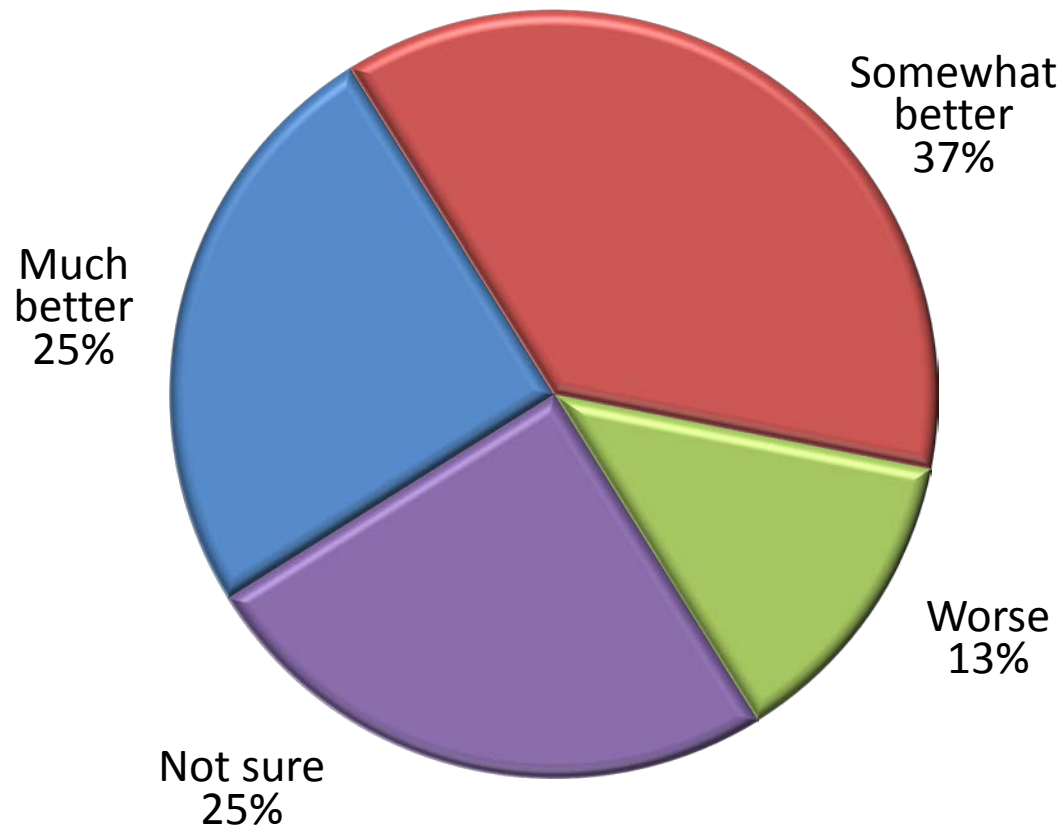
**A majority of residents (54%) feel that mitigating traffic is more important for downtown Powell than retaining the area's charm (43%).**



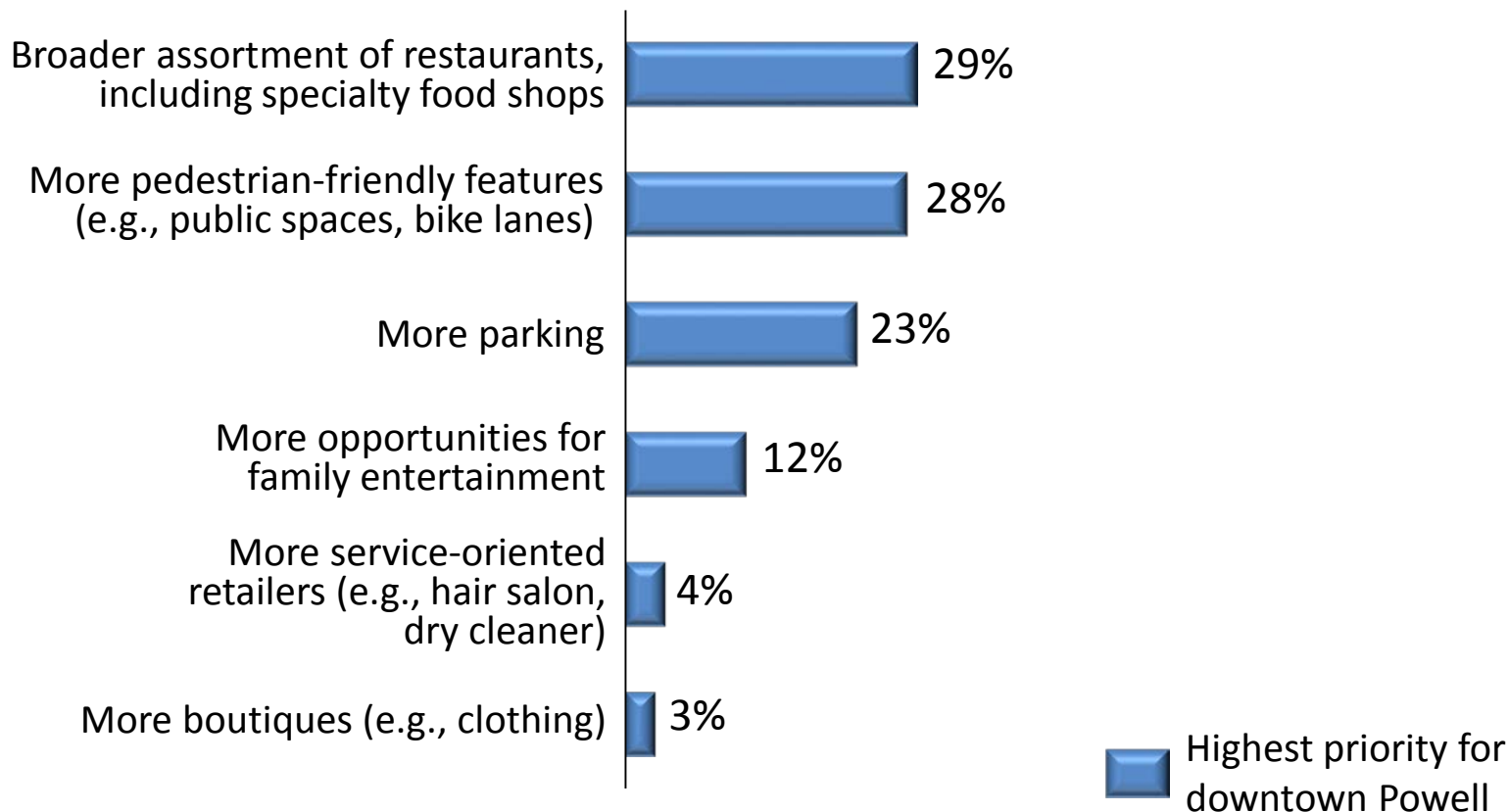
**For the first time, a majority has voiced this opinion in successive surveys.**



**The concern with traffic notwithstanding, six out of ten residents (62%) feel that downtown Powell has changed for the better over the past few years.**

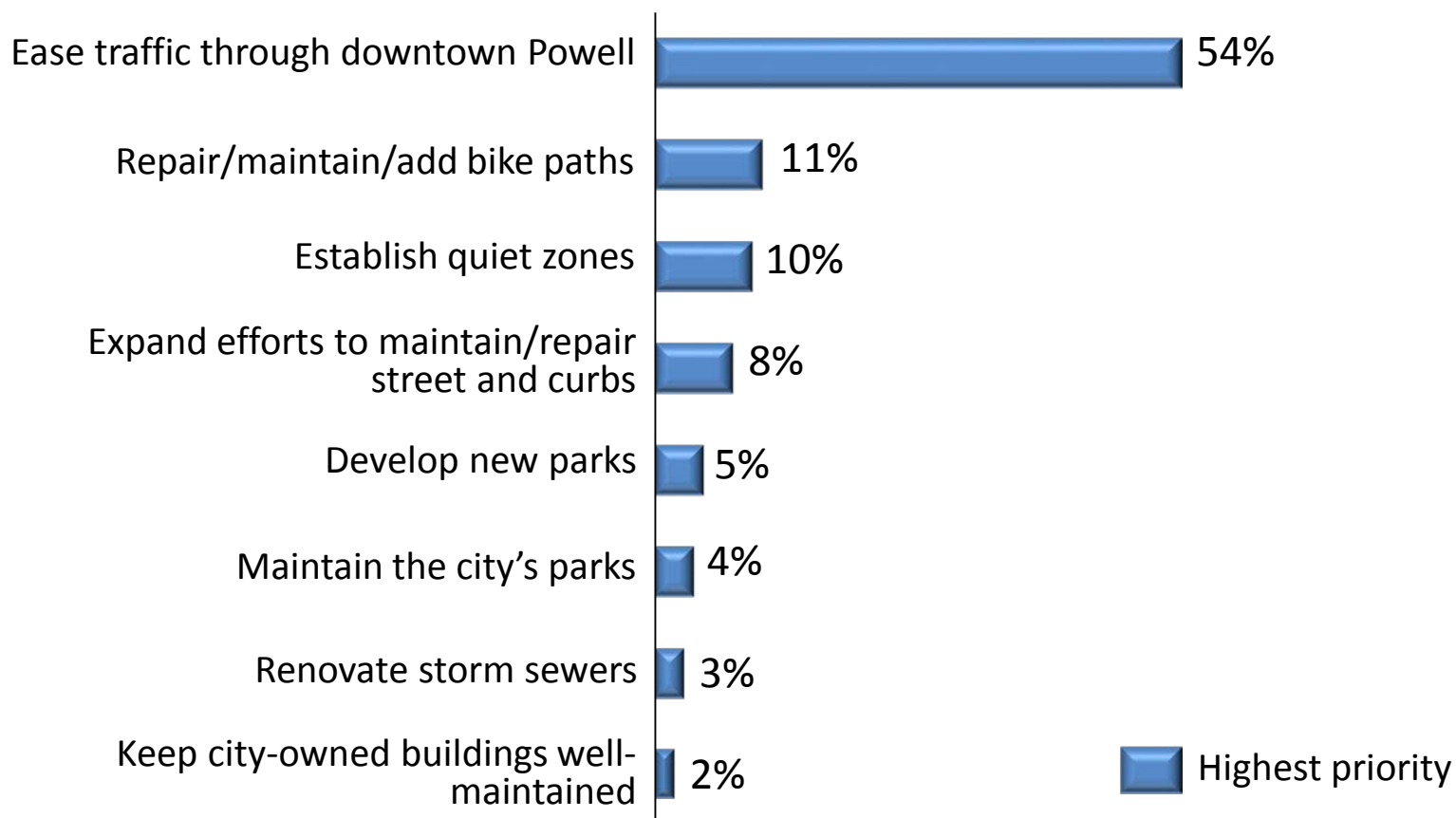


## Among the five enhancements proposed, food and pedestrian-friendly features were the most commonly mentioned top priorities for downtown Powell.



# Capital Improvements

**Among the eight capital improvements proposed, easing traffic through downtown Powell was the top priority for more than half the residents. Nothing else was close.**

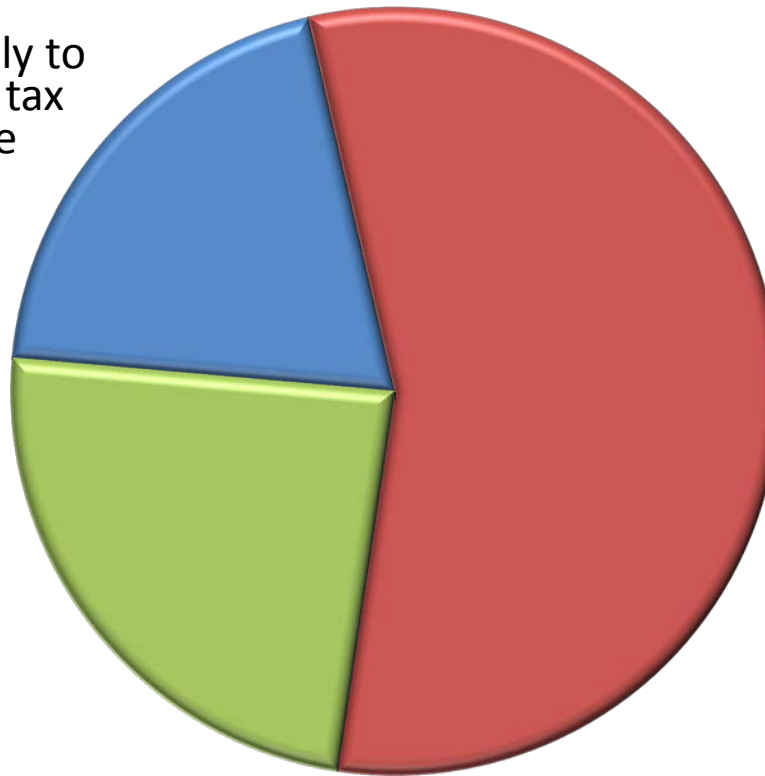


One out of five residents (20%) is unlikely to support a tax increase for any of these projects. One out of four (24%) would support a project they value. Half (55%) are open-minded.

Very unlikely to  
support a tax  
increase  
20%

| Would by Age |     |
|--------------|-----|
| ≤35          | 18% |
| 36 to 54     | 23% |
| ≥55          | 30% |

Would support  
a tax increase  
because funds  
are needed  
24%

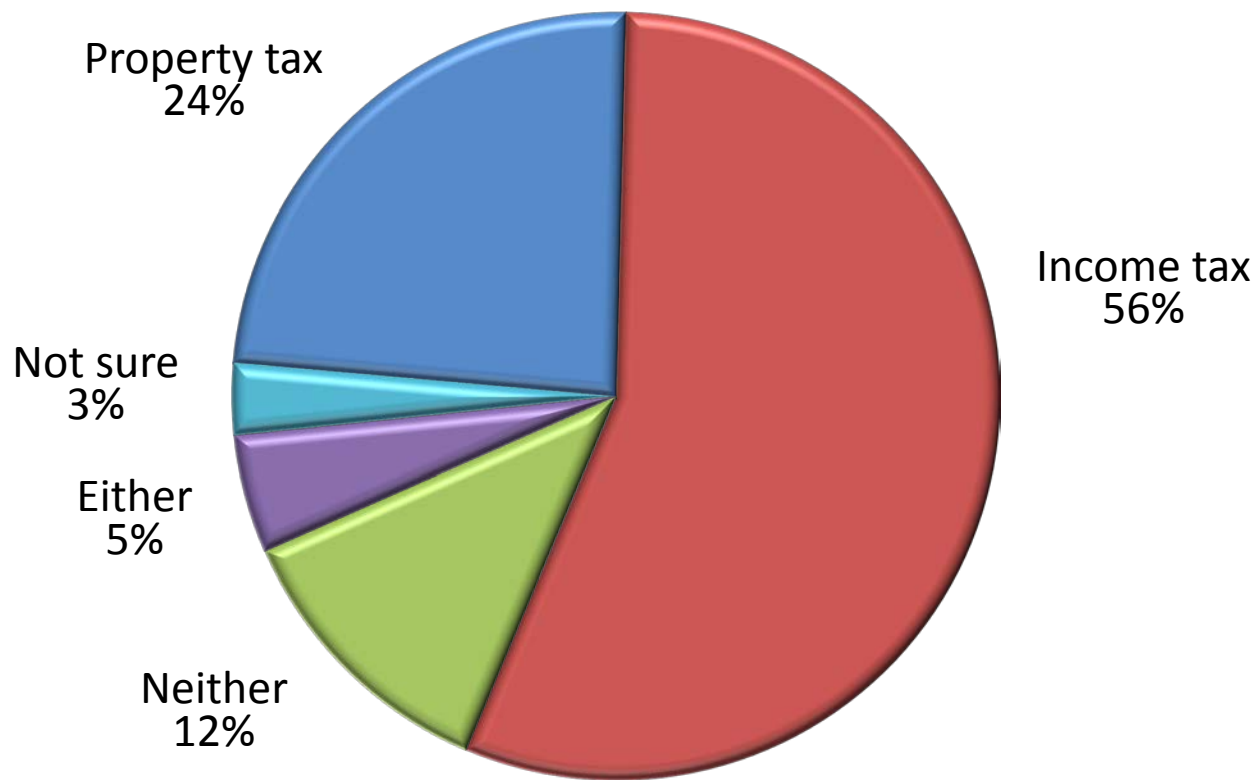


Would consider  
a tax increase  
with an  
open mind  
55%

| City of Delaware |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Unlikely         | 18%        |
| Consider         | 43%        |
| Would            | <b>37%</b> |
| Not sure         | 2%         |

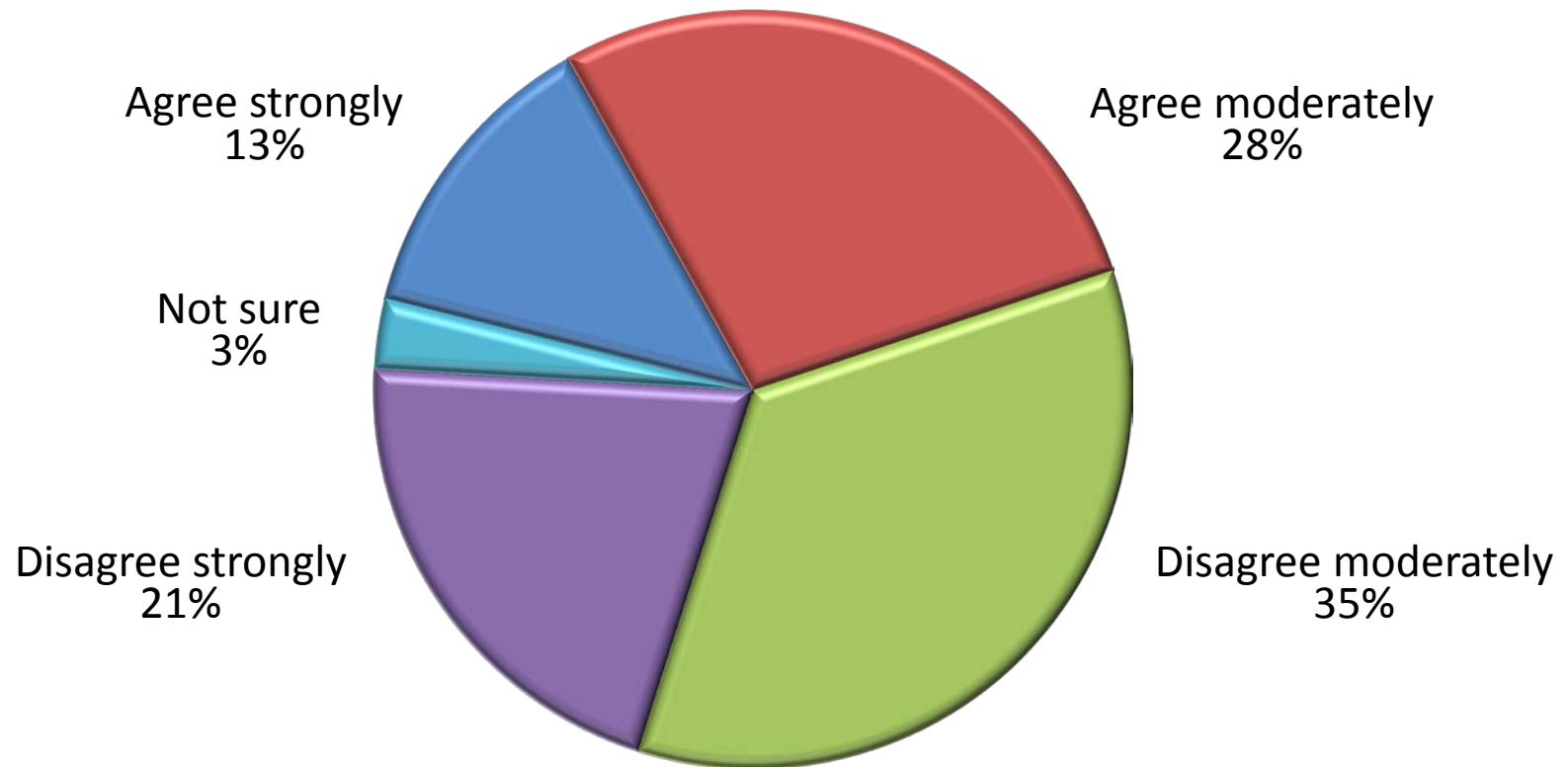


**Among residents with a funding preference, an income tax draws more than twice the support of a property tax.**



**Among residents who said that easing traffic through downtown Powell is their highest-priority capital improvements project, today, only 21% would support a tax increase to address it.**

**More than half the residents (56%) do not agree that the quality of life in Powell will begin to decline if additional funding for capital improvements cannot be found.**



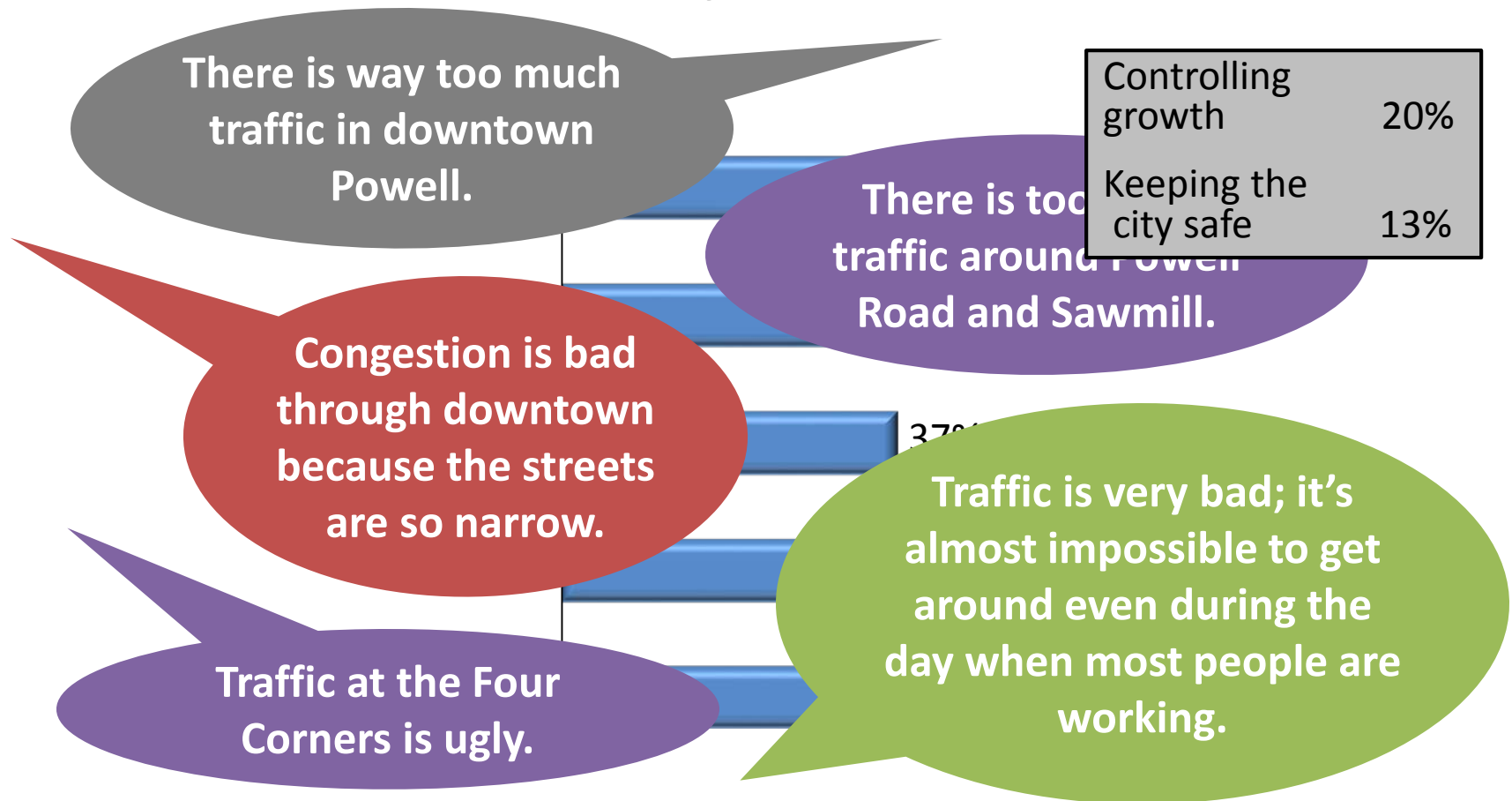
# The Future

**As in past years, residents were asked:**

**“When you think of issues, concerns, or problems facing the City of Powell, what should your local public officials consider their ... highest priorities?”**

**One issue was mentioned repeatedly.**

**Traffic, which, this year, was mentioned by six out of ten residents (61%), up slightly from 2014, but dramatically from two years earlier.**



**Residents were asked:**

**“What would you like to see more of in Powell?”**

Restore downtown charm  
Keep residents informed  
**Restaurants**  
Senior citizen center  
Parks and rec space  
Residential development  
Dog parks  
Walking trails  
**Green space**  
Shopping  
Parking  
**Bike paths**  
Small town charm  
Mom and pop stores  
Jobs  
Commercial development  
**City planning**  
Parks and rec programs  
Rec center  
Fiscal responsibility  
Downtown development  
Infrastructure repairs  
Sidewalks  
Diversity  
**Community events**

**Residents were asked:**

**“What would you like to see less of in Powell?”**

Commercial development

Nothing

Antique stores

Ignoring residents' concerns

Unrestricted growth

Bars

Multi-story buildings

Crime

Traffic

Strip malls

Geese

Residential development

Large businesses

Auto/tire shops

Apartments

Condos

Road construction

Train noise

Big-box stores

Dry cleaners

Taxes

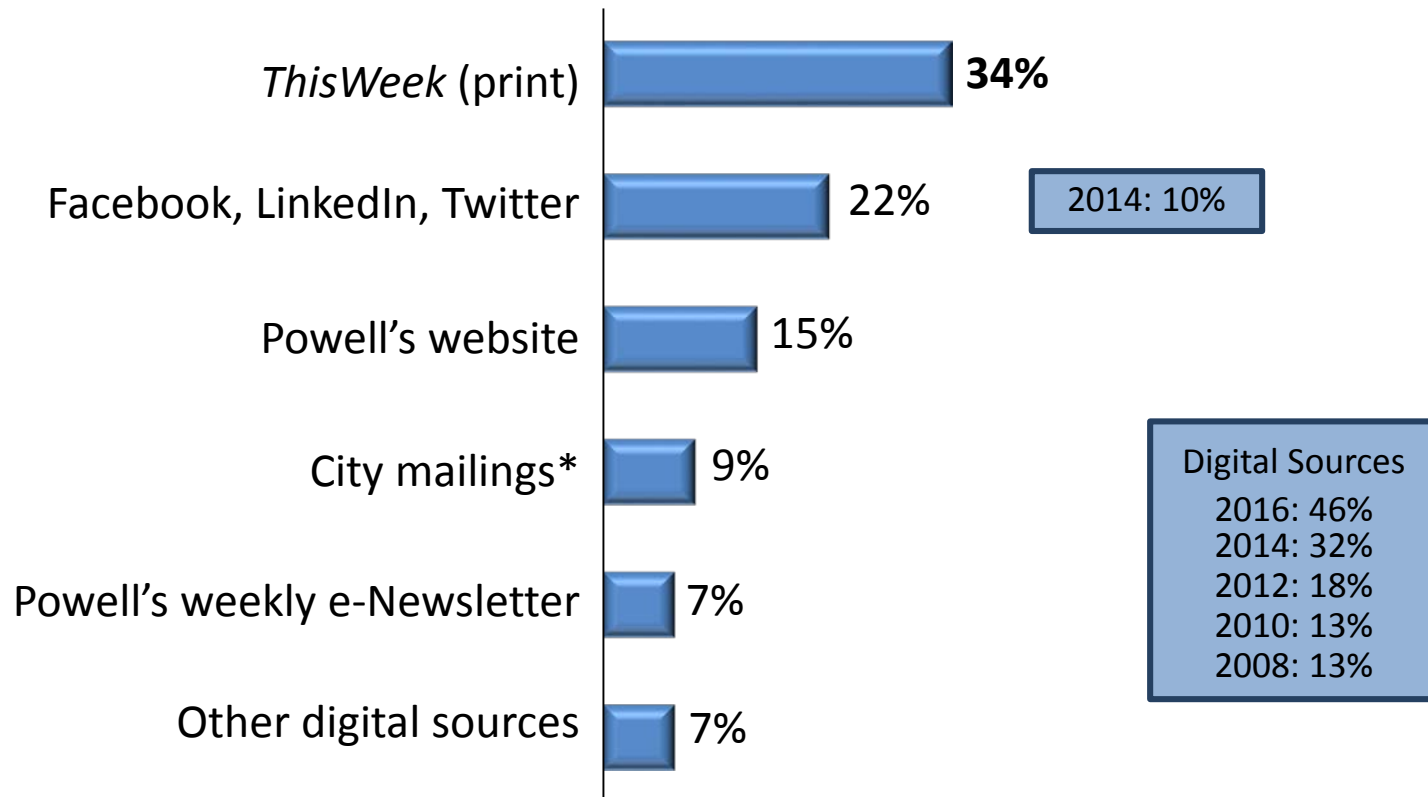
Chains

Eyesores

Vacant businesses

# Communications

**A plurality of residents get most of their news about Powell from the print edition of the local paper. Digital sources, however, have become more popular.**



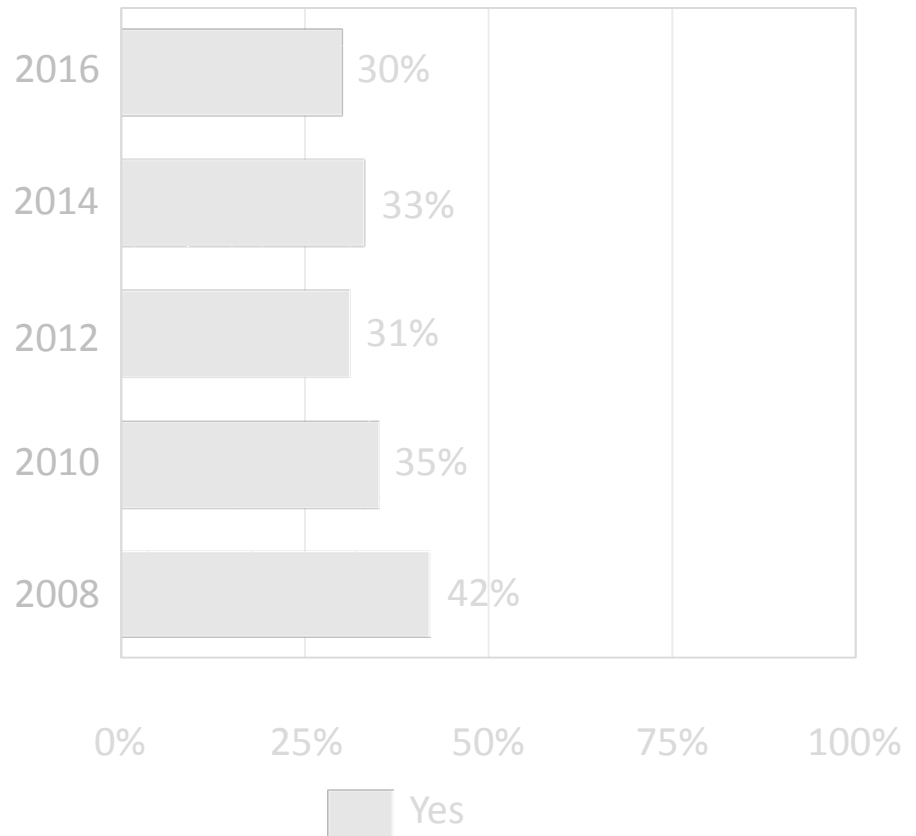
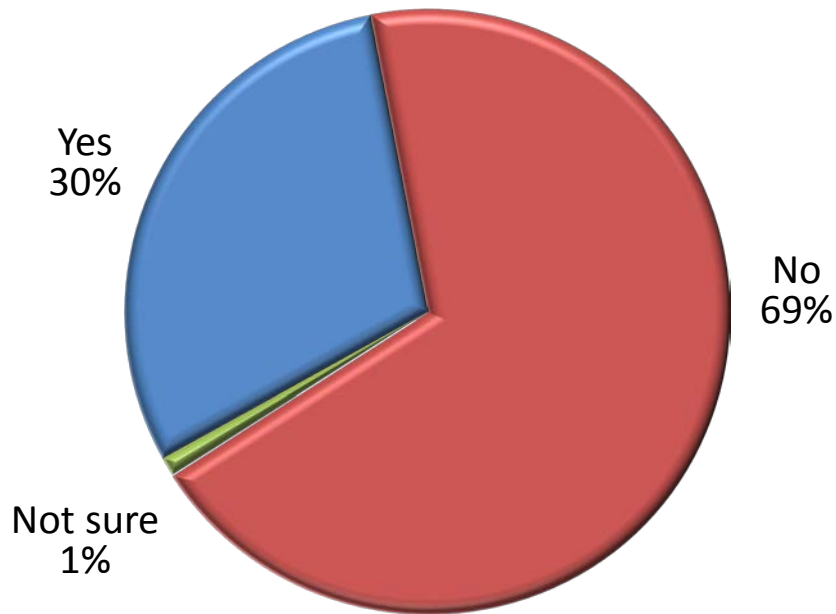
## Interest in social media continues to grow.

|                                   | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Have Facebook account             | 63%  | 67%  | 70%  |
| Been to Powell's Facebook page    | 15%  | 29%  | 39%  |
| Have a Twitter account            | 18%  | 29%  | 37%  |
| Follow Powell on Twitter          |      |      | 7%   |
| Have a LinkedIn account           |      |      | 56%  |
| Follow Powell on LinkedIn         |      |      | 3%   |
| Signed up for weekly e-Newsletter | 11%  | 19%  | 14%  |

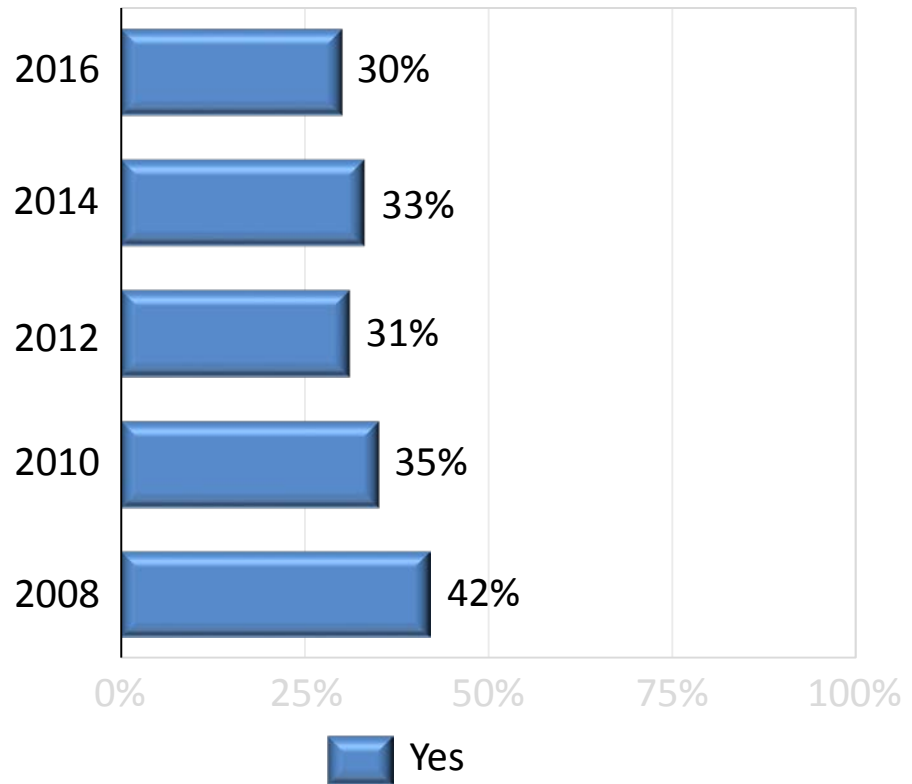
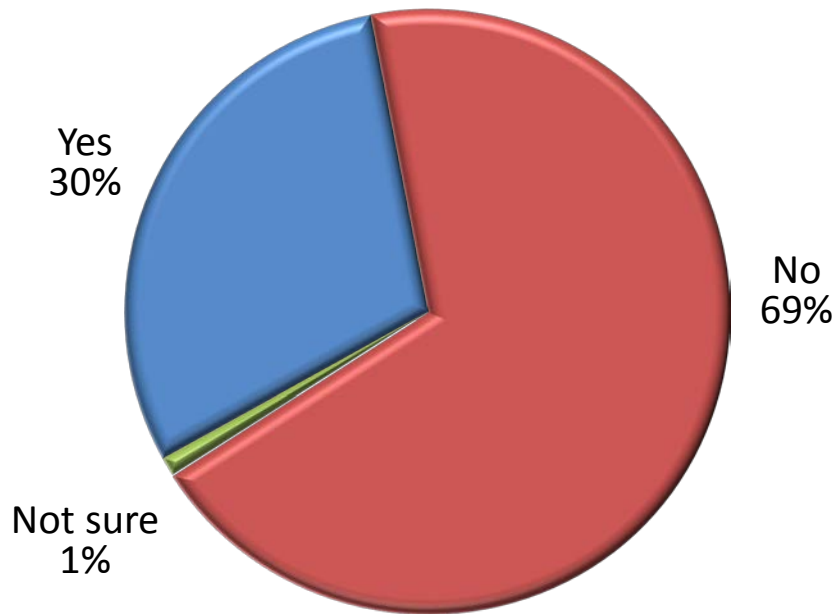
Q34: Have you signed up for Powell's weekly e-Newsletter?  
 Q36: Do you have a Facebook account?  
 Q37: Have you ever been to Powell's Facebook page? (all respondents)  
 Q38: Do you have a Twitter account?  
 Q39: Do you follow Powell on Twitter? (all respondents)  
 Q40: Do you have a LinkedIn account?  
 Q41: Do you Follow Powell on LinkedIn? (all respondents)

## Three out of ten residents (30%) have visited Powell's website over the past three months.

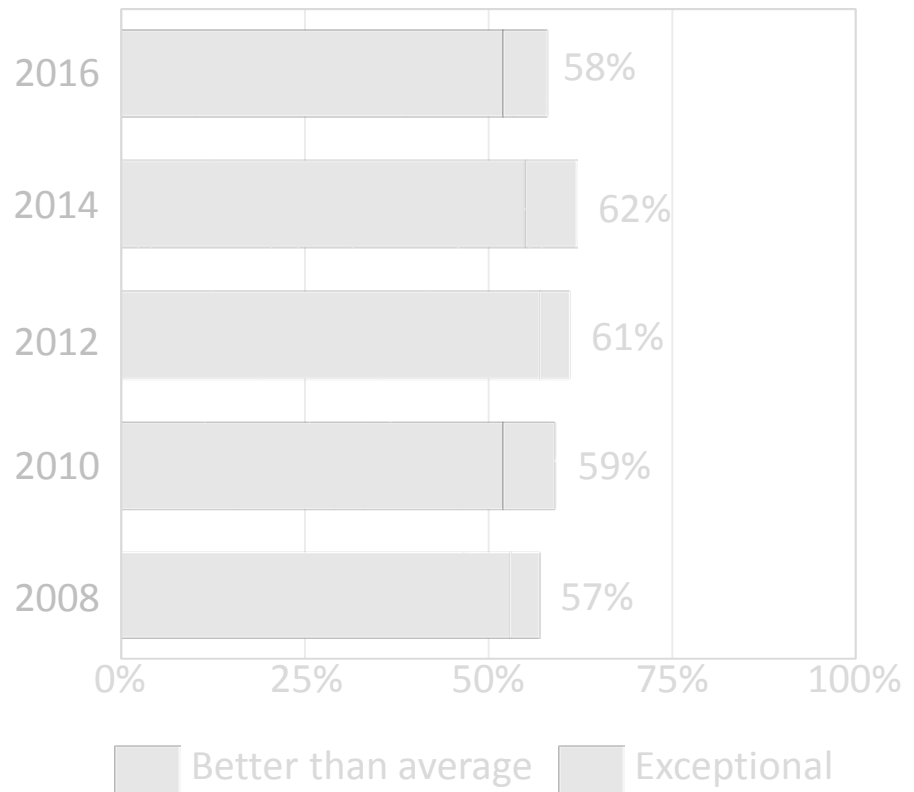
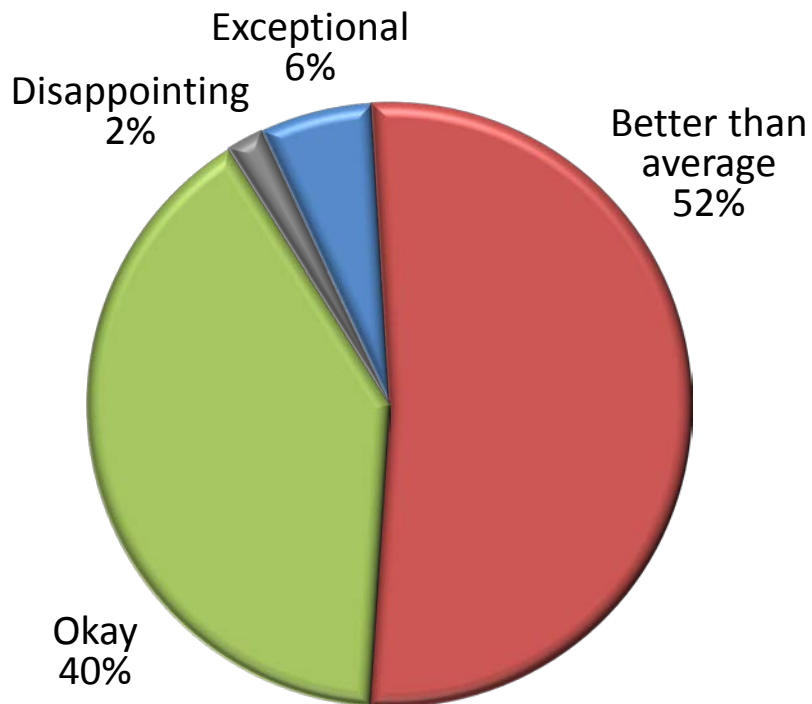
50% have been to the site in the past six months



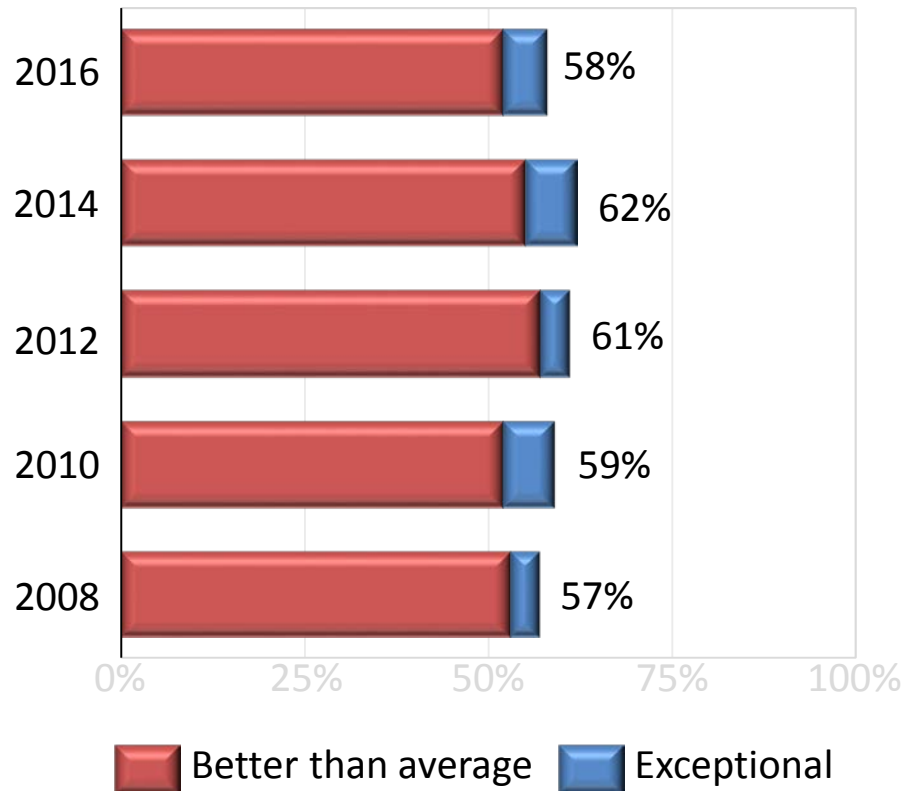
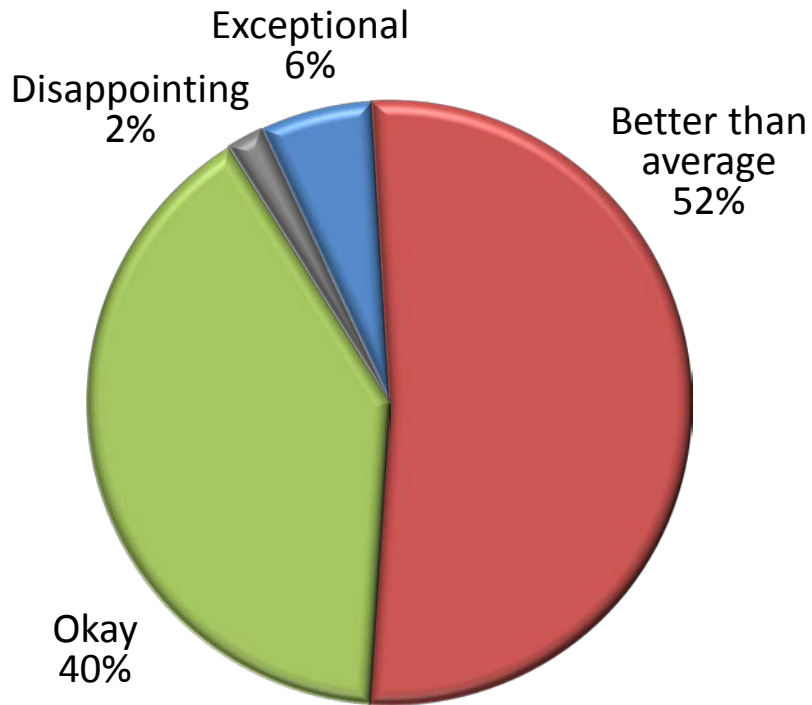
**The slight decline from 2014 may suggest that for information about Powell, residents are shifting from the city's website to more immediate digital platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook.**



**Six out of ten residents (58%) consider the city's website either exceptional or better than average. Two out of five (40%) consider it just okay.**



## Positive impressions of Powell's website declined slightly since 2014.



# Takeaways

- As in previous surveys, most residents consider the City of Powell an exceptional community. They praise the services and amenities the city provides as well as the community's small-town atmosphere.
- Fewer residents, however, agree that Powell is heading in the right direction. Two concerns are primarily responsible for these perceptions:
  - Traffic; and
  - Residential development.
- Though these concerns have been voiced for years, they appear to be growing.
- Residents have little enthusiasm for a tax increase tied to capital improvements, even to mitigate traffic, though if pushed, an income tax trumps a property tax.

- Other findings suggest that:
  - A revitalized downtown should include a broader assortment of restaurants, new pedestrian-friendly features, and more parking;
  - The city should continue its efforts to communicate with residents in a variety of digital formats; and
  - Council should initiate informal “listening sessions” during which residents may engage in a dialogue with individual members of council regarding issues of concern. These sessions should be scheduled on a continuing basis and publicized, especially on social media.

Questions?

