

City of Ashland Community Attitude Opinion Survey • 1998



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INTRODUCTION

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The City of Ashland has commissioned Scudder & Associates Research to conduct a Community Attitude & Opinion study in 1998 to serve as a new Benchmark for future studies to be conducted in 1999 and 2000. Community Attitude and Opinion studies have been conducted in 1995 and 1996, however the 1998 survey instrument has been modified considerably since the previous studies. Any questions that have remained unchanged are compared to the previous 1996 research findings.

A total of 400 telephone interviews were completed with Ashland residents. The interviews took place from the office of Scudder & Associates Research between November 11 and November 21, 1998. This sample size ensures a 95% confidence level with a margin of error no greater than $\pm 5\%$. This means that if the survey were replicated using the same methodology, 95 times out of 100 you would get the same percentages within a range of $\pm 5\%$.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the research is to measure change in the community's attitudes and opinions since the Baseline and subsequent tracking surveys were conducted. The objectives have been revised and updated and are as follows:

- To provide actionable data for use in the City Council's upcoming Strategic Plan;
- To measure the Community's level of satisfaction with the quality of life in Ashland;
- To measure the Community's satisfaction with the current level of key City services;
- To identify how the Community views the City Council,
- To identify methods the Community uses to gather information about the City,
- To measure the incidence of RVTD transit use as well as barriers to use, and;
- To explore the Community's awareness of Ashland Fiber Network as well as the desire to have the City explore 'Green Power' and willingness to pay for such resources.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following bulleted points summarize the research findings. Following this summary is a more detailed analysis of the data.

- The sample is comprised of Ashland residents, who on average have lived there 14.7 years. Seven out of ten (69%) own their home and the majority are registered voters (87%). The sample is well qualified to answer the survey questions.
- One-half of the sample is evenly split between those 45 – 54 years old (24%) and those 65 or older (27%). Nearly two-thirds (64%) are employed, with the highest percent of the sample falling in the combined annual household income category of \$50,000 - \$74,999 (18%). Three out of ten households (29%) have children at home.
- One-half of those surveyed (50%) feel the quality of life in Ashland has stayed the same over the past couple of years, and that the City is going in the right direction (58%). There is a core group of supporters who feel things have improved (22%) and the City is going in the right direction. This group tended to rate the City high in all areas and were generally optimistic in their responses. There is another group of opposers who feel the quality of life in Ashland has gotten worse (22%) and the City is on the wrong track (30%). These individuals who gave the City the lowest ratings throughout tend to be the long-time residents (lived in Ashland 21 years or more) and the empty nesters (those 55 – 64 years old). It is interesting to note that those who are most critical of the City and pessimistic are not the ones offering to become involved in City government.
- Respondents consider the City 'somewhat responsive' (41%) in addressing and working on the problems and needs of the community. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 = 'very responsive', the City scored a 3.41 average mean.
- Over one-half (57%) feel growth and development in Ashland during the past several years has been 'too fast'.
- However, respondents believe it is important for the City of Ashland to invest in and encourage tourism. Three-fourths of the sample (75%) rated investing in tourism as 'important', with 44% saying it is 'very important'. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 = 'very important', investing in tourism scored a 4.04 average mean.
- The residents of Ashland feel positive about their community. What respondents like most about living in Ashland is the small town/community size/atmosphere, mentioned by one-third (34%). The natural beauty of the surroundings was mentioned by roughly one-fourth of the sample (22%), followed by the good, caring, nice people who live in Ashland (19%). When asked to suggest a change that could make Ashland a better place to live the most frequent response was 'nothing, can't think of anything' (16%). Those who did mention things they would like to see changed mentioned 'cutting down on the traffic' most often (8%). Growth and development was a topic that was mentioned frequently.
- The three biggest issues facing Ashland in the next couple years is 'pacing growth' (37% mentioned), water supply/quality (37%) and 'traffic congestion' (20%).
- Employment opportunities is the area that is mentioned most as having 'gotten worse' over the past couple of years (26%). The second most frequently mentioned is 'availability of senior services' (25%). Most have noticed improvement in 'recycling opportunities' and 'social services for the financially disadvantaged'.
- When asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with the services the City provides 45% of the sample said 'somewhat satisfied', an additional 18% said 'very satisfied'. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 = 'very satisfied', overall satisfaction with the level of services provided by the City scored a 3.68 average mean.
- On an individual basis the emergency services (fire and ambulance) received the highest mean scores in their performance. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 'excellent', fire protection scored a 3.66 average mean, followed by ambulance services (3.64) and electric services (3.64).
- Police protection received a mean score of 3.58, or a 'good' rating. When asked to compare how safe the respondent feels their neighborhood is now compared to a year or two ago, one-half (51%) feel it is 'the

same', and 40% feel it is 'safer'.

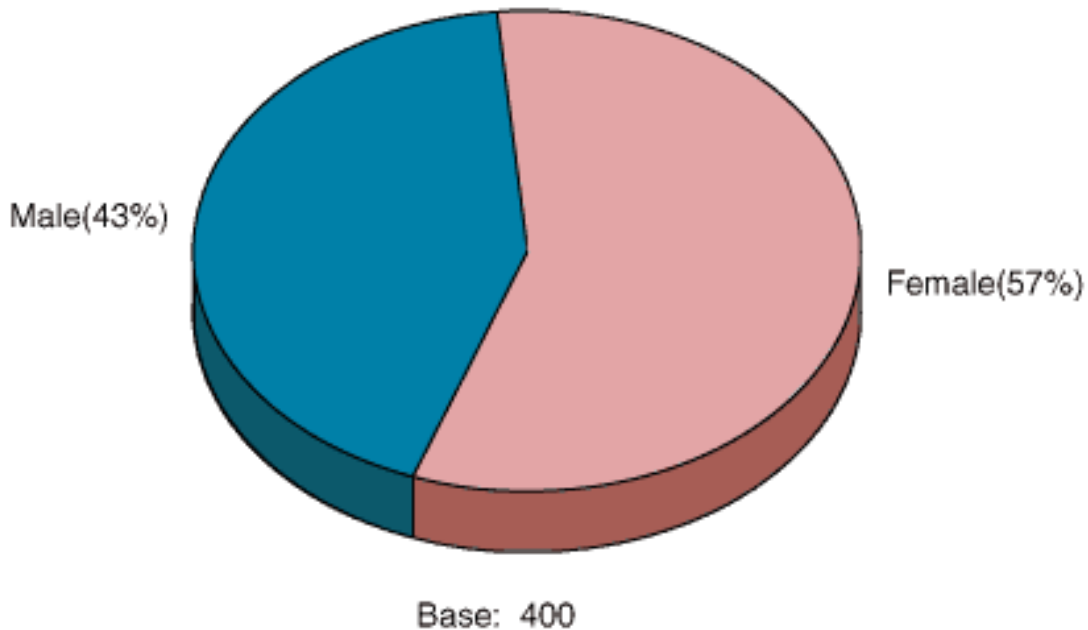
- One-half of the sample (50%) are 'satisfied' with the opportunities provided to the citizens of Ashland to give input on City decisions.' On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 'very satisfied' the total mean score given is 3.33.
- Four out of ten (41%) feel there is 'trust' in the local government. One-fourth (24%) have attended a City Council meeting in person, with an additional 63% saying they have watched a meeting on Cable Access TV. Over one-third (35%) are willing to participate in City government. Most often by serving on a committee or attending the City Council meetings.
- At least three out of ten (31%) feel the City money is being effectively used. Three out of four (74%) feel the overall quality of the work performed by City employees is 'good to excellent'. On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 'excellent', overall quality of the work performed scored a 3.98 average mean. Among the 65% who had contact with City staff over one-half (54%) gave staff courteousness an 'excellent' rating.
- Two-thirds of the sample (66%) feel the City of Ashland should offer Green Power as an option to its customers. A similar percent (68%) feel Ashland should develop solar power locally. At least 44% of the sample are willing to pay more for Green Power should it be developed.
- Awareness of Ashland's Fiber Network is high, close to three out of four surveyed are aware of it (72%). When asked to describe some of the services it will provide over one-half (58%) identified cable TV and cable modem, among other things. Two-thirds of the sample (65%) indicate they have a personal computer in their household, of which 78% are connected to the Internet. While utility bill inserts are the most frequently used source for obtaining information about Ashland (32% refer to these 'always' and 35% 'sometimes') close to 60% have used Ashland's web page.
- Two out of ten residents surveyed ride an RVTB bus in an average month. Twelve percent of the sample (12%) indicate they would never use the bus under any circumstance. The most frequent barriers mentioned to riding the bus are the 'need of the car for errands and stops along the way' (26%), followed by the timing and frequency of the bus schedules (23%). In regards to parking in downtown Ashland, 60% of the sample consider it to be 'difficult', with 23% saying 'very difficult'.

THE SAMPLE

Following is a profile of the demographic characteristics of the randomly pulled sample of 400 Ashland residents. The only screening question was that the respondent resides in Ashland and is 18 years of age or older.

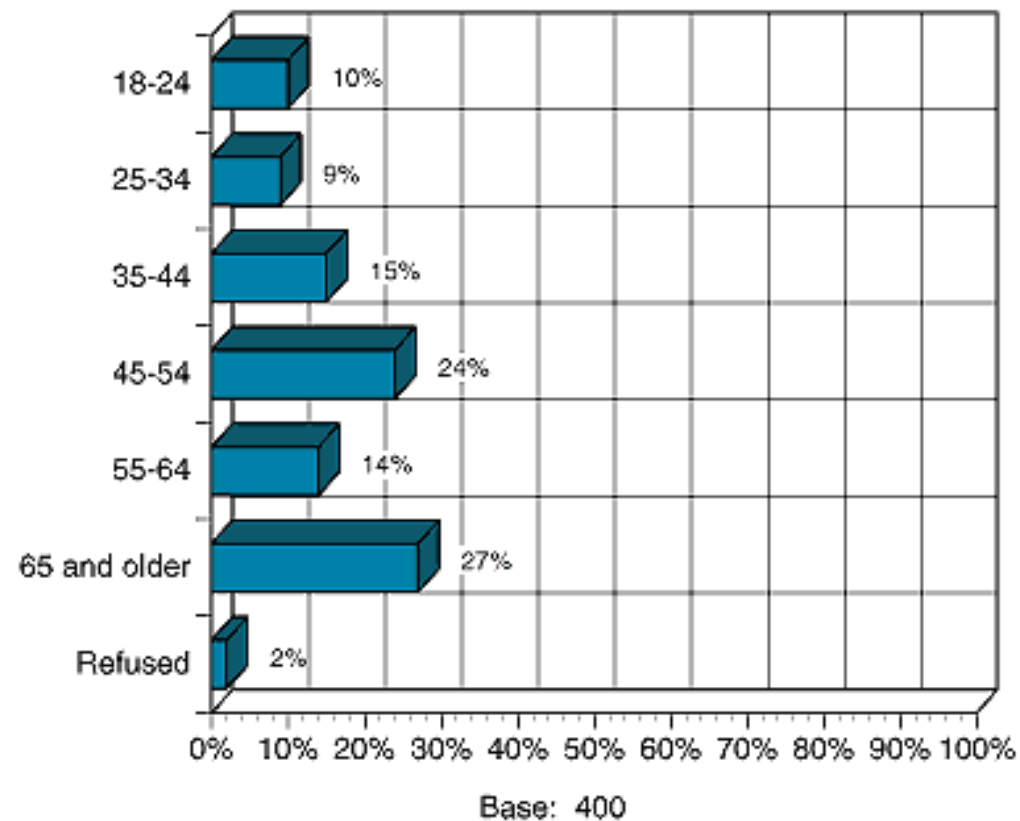
The sample is skewed heavier towards females (57%) than males (43%) which is not unusual in telephone surveys. The sample also skews toward an older age group, one-fourth are 65 years of age or older. Roughly three out of ten households surveyed have children living at home. In 1996 52% of the sample were female and 19% were 65 or older. With the previous study's sample being younger it is not surprising there were more households with children at home (37%). While a higher percent of this year's sample refused to provide their income, among those who did the income levels are up slightly compared to 1996. Close to two-thirds of the sample (64%) are employed, with most of them working in Ashland (42%). In the previous survey nine out of ten (91%) were employed, with more working outside of Ashland (59%). Seven out of ten (69%) own their home, which is similar to the previous survey findings in 1996 (73%). The sample is primarily registered voters (87%). The average number of years the sample has lived in Ashland is 14.7 years. Only 3% have lived in Ashland less than one year, and the longest a respondent has lived there is 71 years. One-fourth have lived in Ashland 21 years or more.

Gender

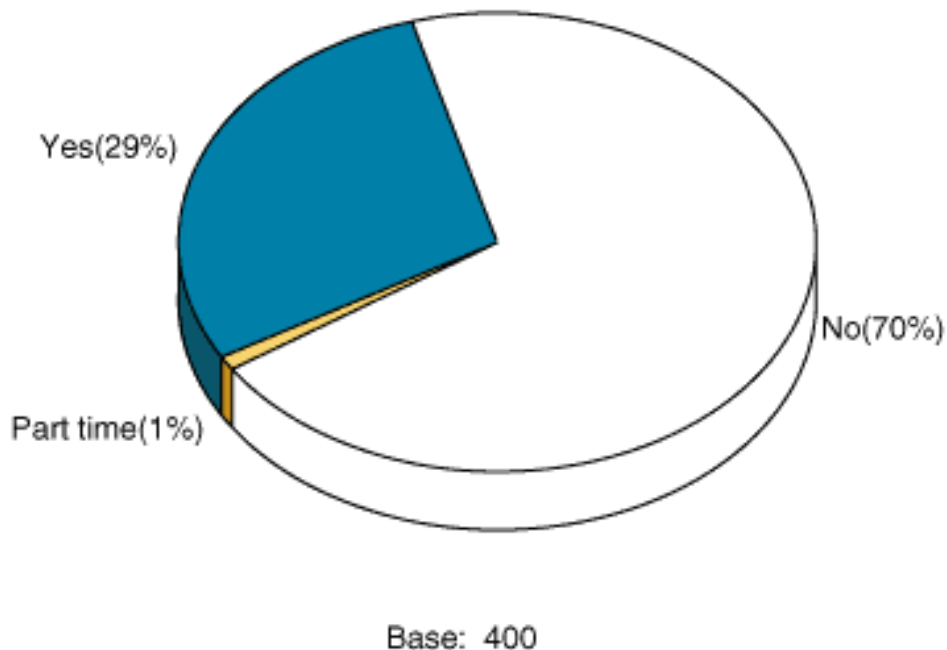


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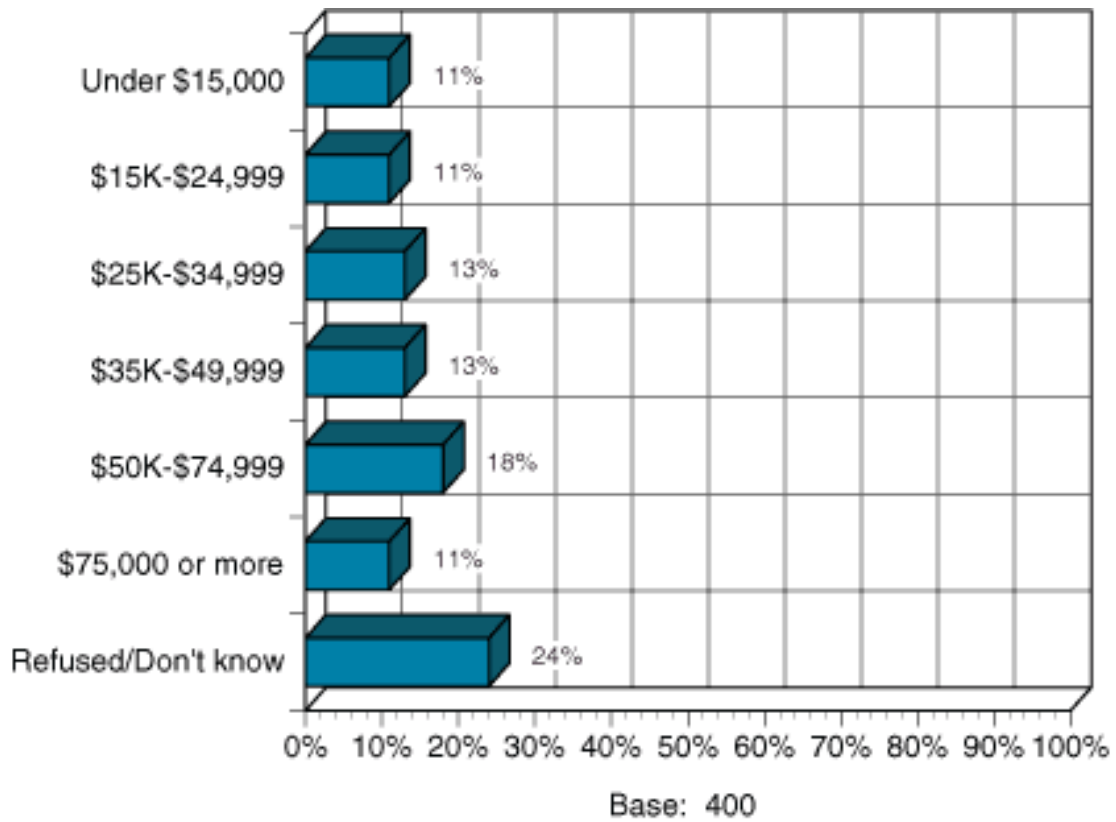
Age Category



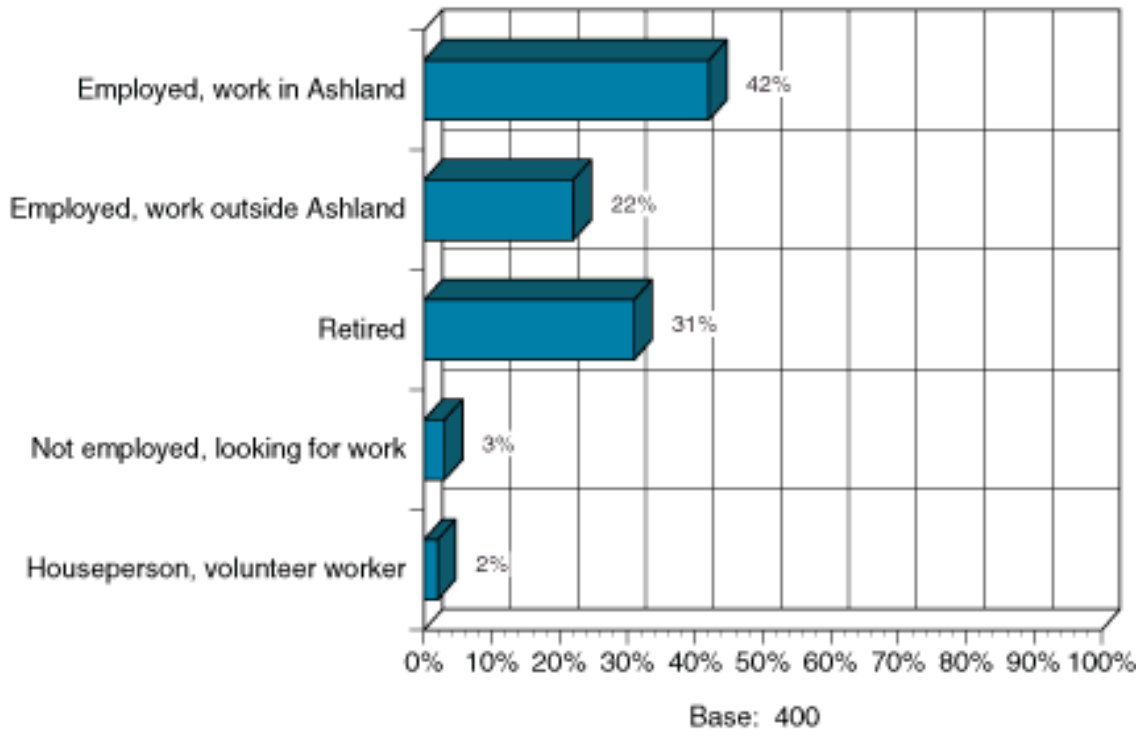
Children At Home



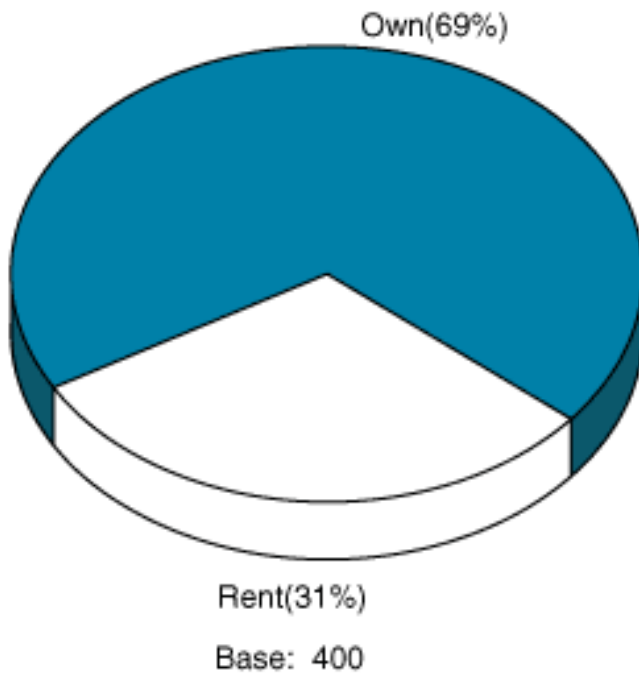
Income Range



Employment Status

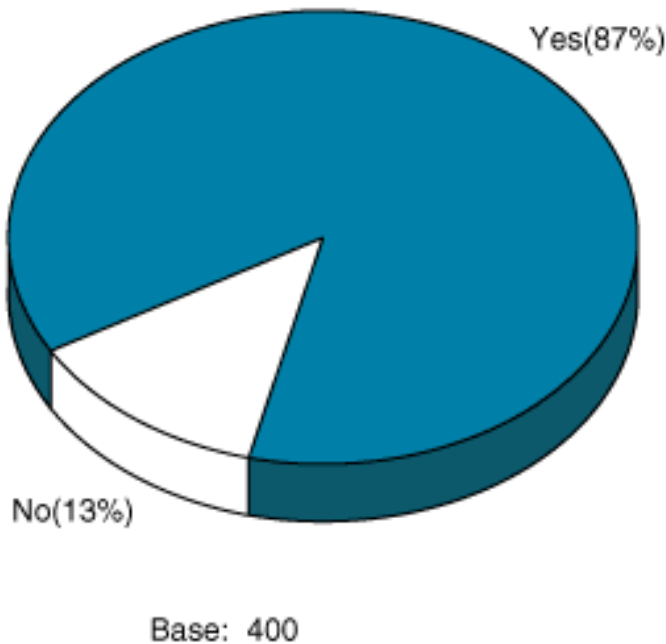


Home Ownership

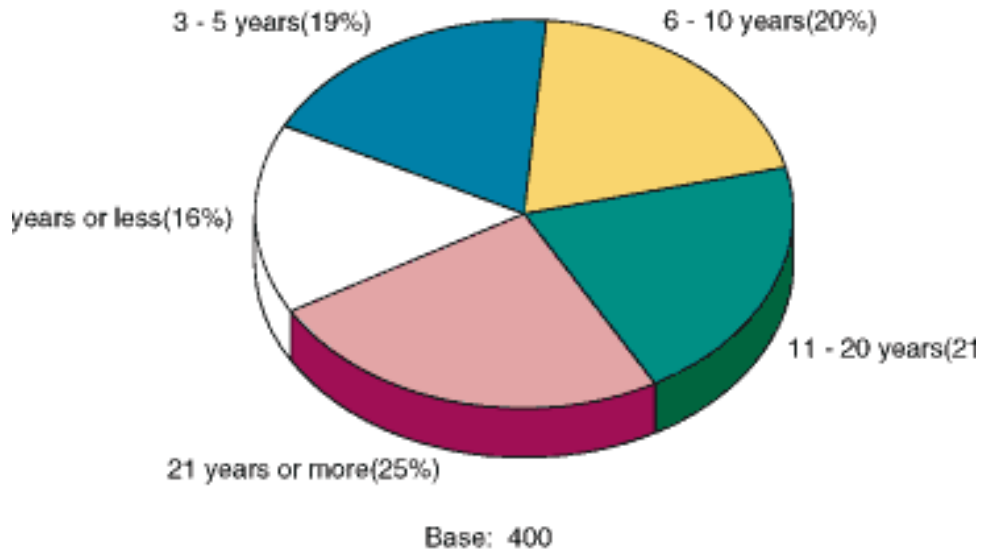


Registered to Vote

- 18-24 year old respondents, those who have lived in Ashland 2 years or less and renters are statistically less likely to be voters.
- 65 + year old respondents and home owners are statistically more likely to be voters.

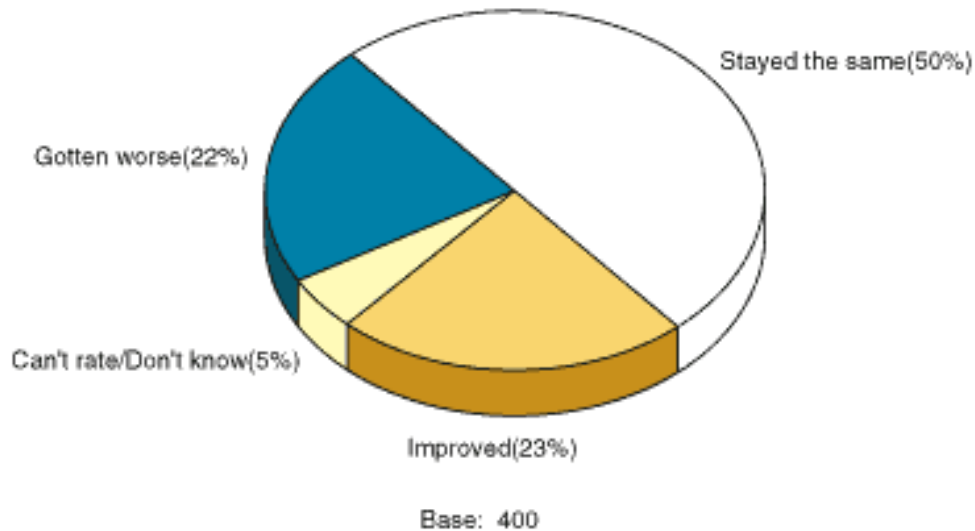


Length of Residency



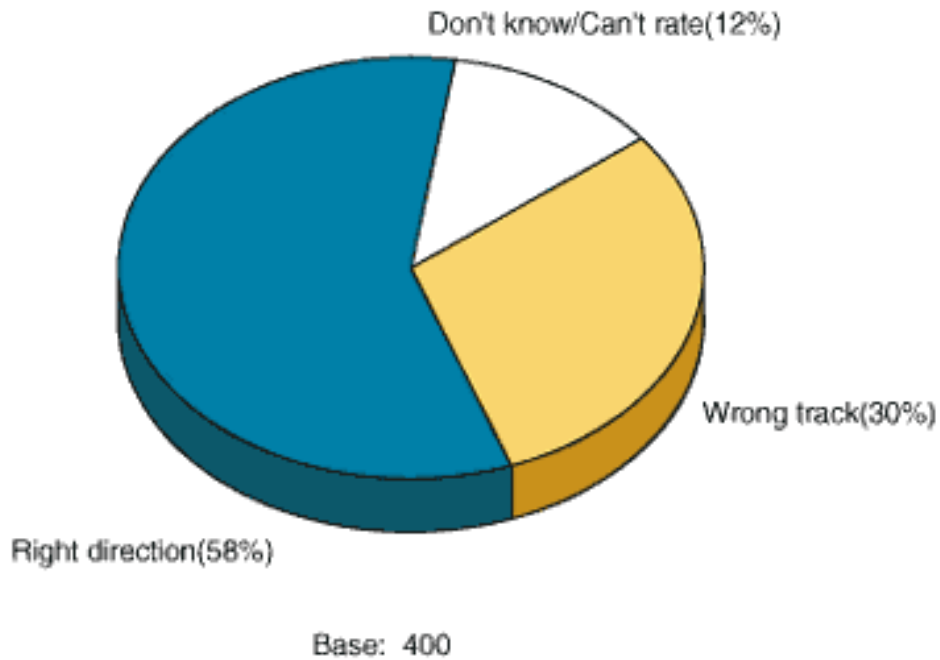
One half (50%) of the Ashland residents sampled feel that life there during the last few years has generally stayed the same when compared to a few years ago. The remaining one-half of the sample is nearly evenly split between those who feel that life in Ashland has gotten worse (22%) or improved (23%).

How Does Life Compare to a Few Years Ago?



Those respondents who feel the quality of life in Ashland has stayed the same are statistically more likely to be those 18 – 34 years old and those who have lived in Ashland 5 years or less. In contrast, those 55-64 years old, those who have lived in Ashland 21 years or more and home owners are statistically more likely to say things have gotten worse. It is interesting to note that those who said the City is going in the right direction are statistically more likely to say that life in Ashland has improved (34%), or stayed the same (57%); while those who feel the City is going in the wrong direction are statistically more likely to say that life has gotten worse (57%).

What Direction Are Things in Ashland Going?



Those respondents who have lived in Ashland 2 years or less are statistically more likely to say that things in Ashland are going in the right direction (74%), as are respondents 25-34 years old (78%) and renters (68%). However, those who have lived there for 21 years or more are statistically more likely to say things are off on the wrong track (50%), as are those 55-64 (43%) and home owners (35%).

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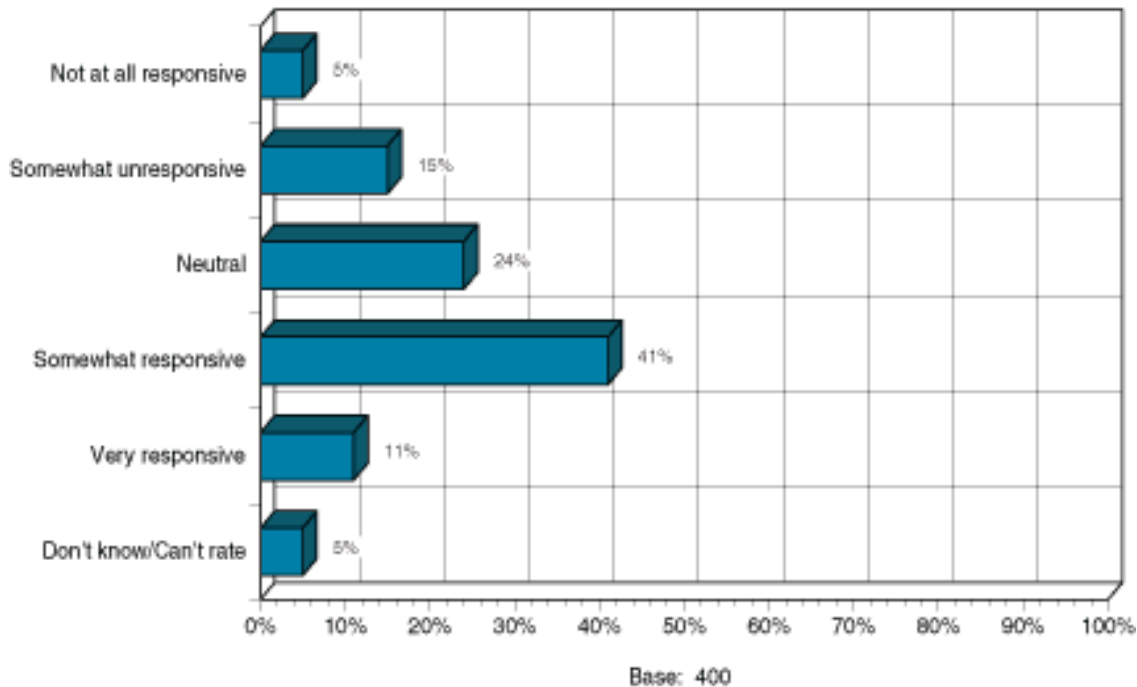
OPINIONS REGARDING QUALITY OF LIFE IN ASHLAND

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Respondents were asked how responsive the City of Ashland is in addressing and working on the problems and needs of the community. Overall respondents find the City 'somewhat responsive' (41%). Using a rating scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = not at all responsive and 5 = very responsive, a mean score of 3.41 was assigned to the City's responsiveness.

How Responsive is the City?

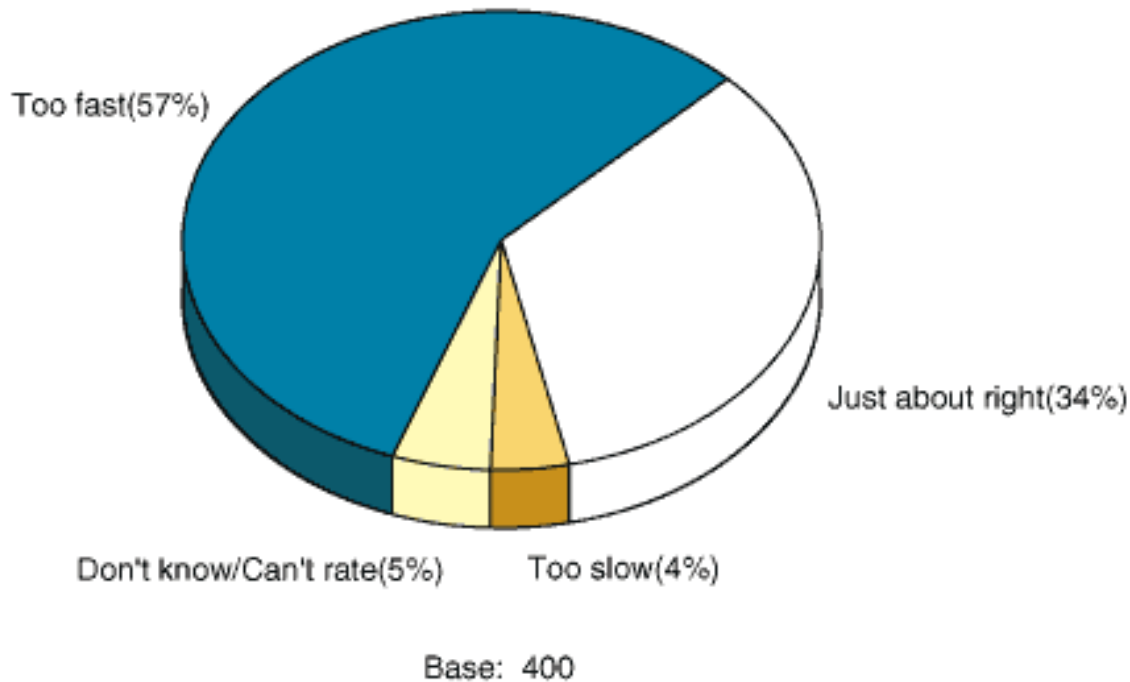


The highest mean scores for responsiveness were given by respondents 18 – 24 years old (3.74), 25 – 34 years old (3.71), those who have lived in Ashland 3 – 5 years (3.68), and those who feel the City is moving in the right direction (3.82), and that life in Ashland has improved (3.88). Those who have lived in Ashland 2 years or less are statistically more likely to say 'don't know/can't rate' (13%).

The lowest mean scores were given by those who have lived in Ashland 21 years or more (3.12) and those who feel the City is on the wrong track (2.64), and quality of life has gotten worse (2.80). Those who have lived in Ashland 21 years or more are statistically more likely to say that the City is 'somewhat unresponsive' (25%) and those with combined annual household incomes of \$15,000 - \$24,999 are more likely to say the City is 'not at all responsive' (11%).

Respondents were asked if they believe growth and development in Ashland during the past several years has been too fast, too slow, or just about right. Over one-half of the sample (57%) feel growth and development have been 'too fast'. When asked to identify the three biggest issues facing Ashland 'pacing growth, not growing too rapidly' was mentioned most often, by 37% of the sample.

How is Growth and Development in Ashland During the Past Several Years?



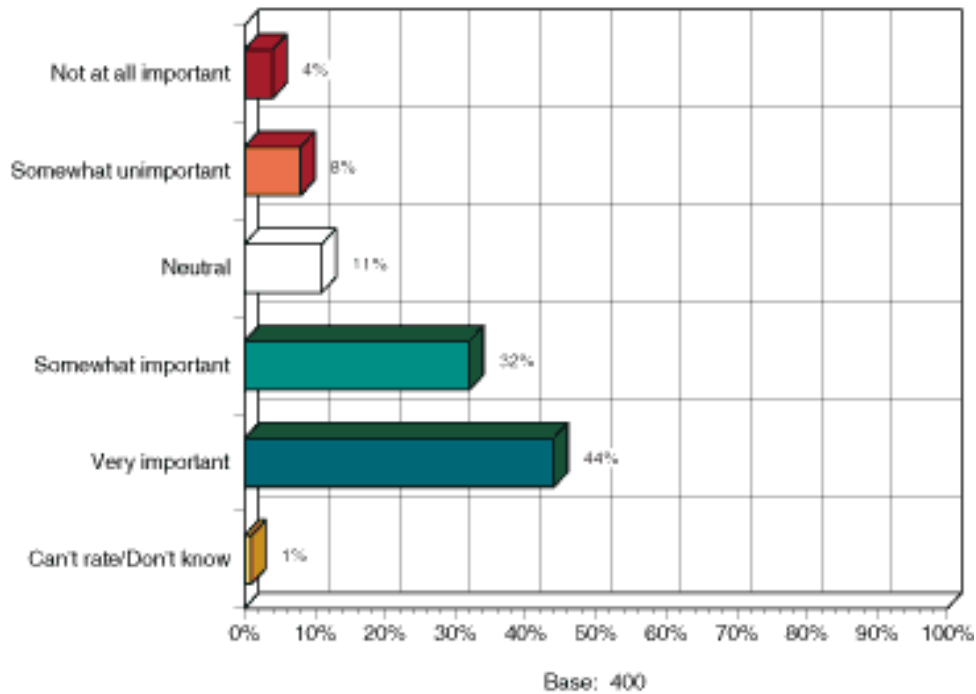
Respondents who have lived in Ashland two years or less are statistically more likely to say 'don't know/can't rate' (13%), or 'just about right' (48%). Those who feel Ashland is moving in the right direction are statistically more likely to say that growth and development are 'just about right' (44%), as do those who feel the quality of life has 'stayed the same' (43%).

Those respondents who have lived in Ashland for 21 years or more are statistically more likely to say that growth and development have been 'too fast' (69%), as do those who feel the City is on the wrong track (71%) and that life in Ashland has gotten worse (75%). Female respondents and home owners are also more likely to say 'too fast' (62% and 61%, respectively).

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Respondents were asked how important they believe it is for the City of Ashland to invest in and encourage tourism. A five-point rating scale was used to calculate mean scores, where 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important. A mean score of 4.04 was calculated for the total sample, indicating 'somewhat important'. At least four out of ten (44%) respondents said tourism is 'very important'.

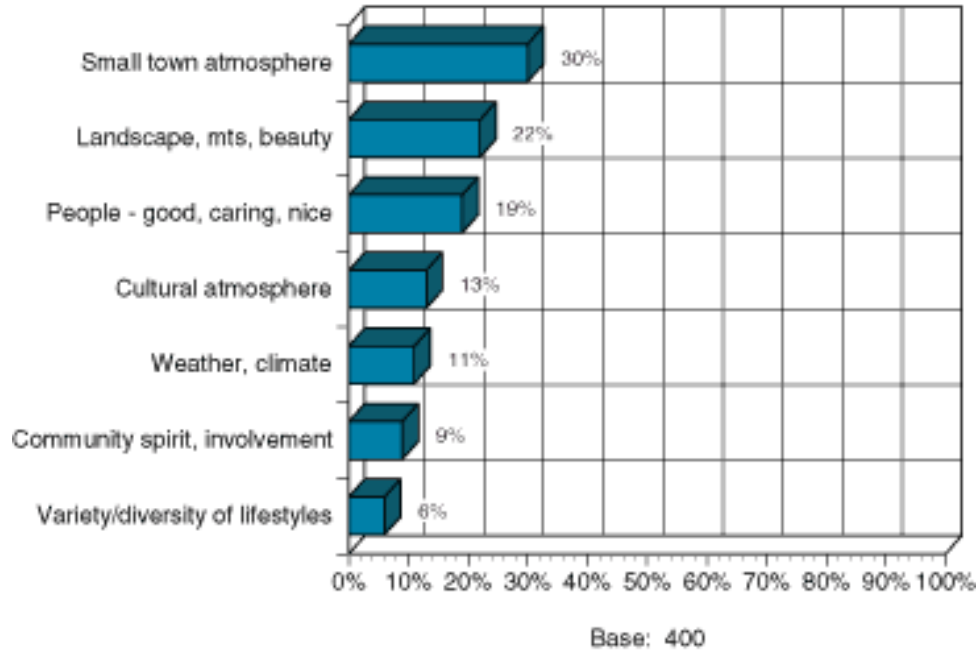
How Important is Investing and Encouraging Tourism?



Based on calculated mean scores tourism is considered to be more important to those who have lived in Ashland 3 – 5 years (4.28) and those with combined annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more (4.23). Respondents who feel the quality of life in Ashland has improved gave the highest mean score (4.31).

In an open-ended response question respondents were asked what they like most about living in Ashland. Over one hundred different responses were coded. The graph below shows the most frequent mentions, please refer to Data Table 8 for a complete listing.

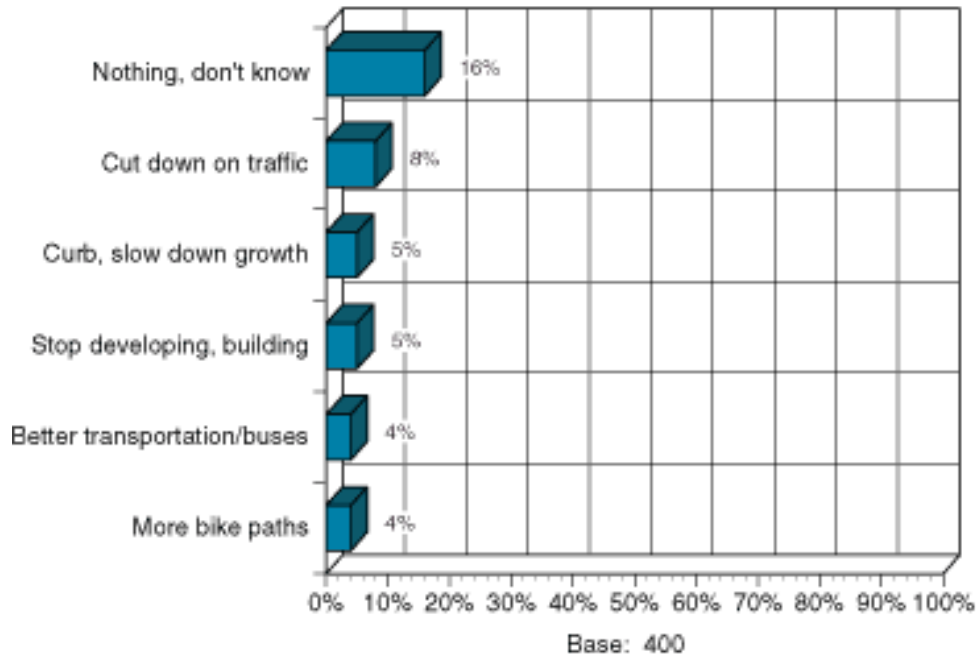
What is Liked Most About Living in Ashland?



Home owners are statistically more likely to say ‘small town/community size/ atmosphere (34%), while households with children are statistically more likely to say ‘variety of lifestyle/diverse community’ (10%), great schools (10%), and great place to raise kids (6%). A high chi-square value indicates there is a strong relationship between the age of the respondent and what is liked most. Those respondents 45 – 54 years old are more likely to say ‘cultural atmosphere/ opportunities’ (23%), location of Ashland (7%), and shops/restaurants (7%). Respondents 65 and older and those who have lived in Ashland 21 years or more are more likely to say ‘weather/climate’ (20%). Those who have lived in Ashland 6 – 10 years are more likely to say ‘people are good, caring, friendly, nice’ (30%) and ‘community feeling, spirit, involvement (16%). Respondents who feel the City is on the wrong track or that the quality of life is worse are more likely to say ‘landscape, mountains, beauty’ (29%).

When asked what one thing the respondent would change about Ashland to make it a better place to live the most frequent response given was ‘nothing’ or ‘don’t know’ (16%). This was an open-ended response and over one hundred different responses were coded. The graph below shows the most frequent mentions, please refer to Data Table 9 for a complete listing.

What Changes Would Make Ashland a Better Place to Live?

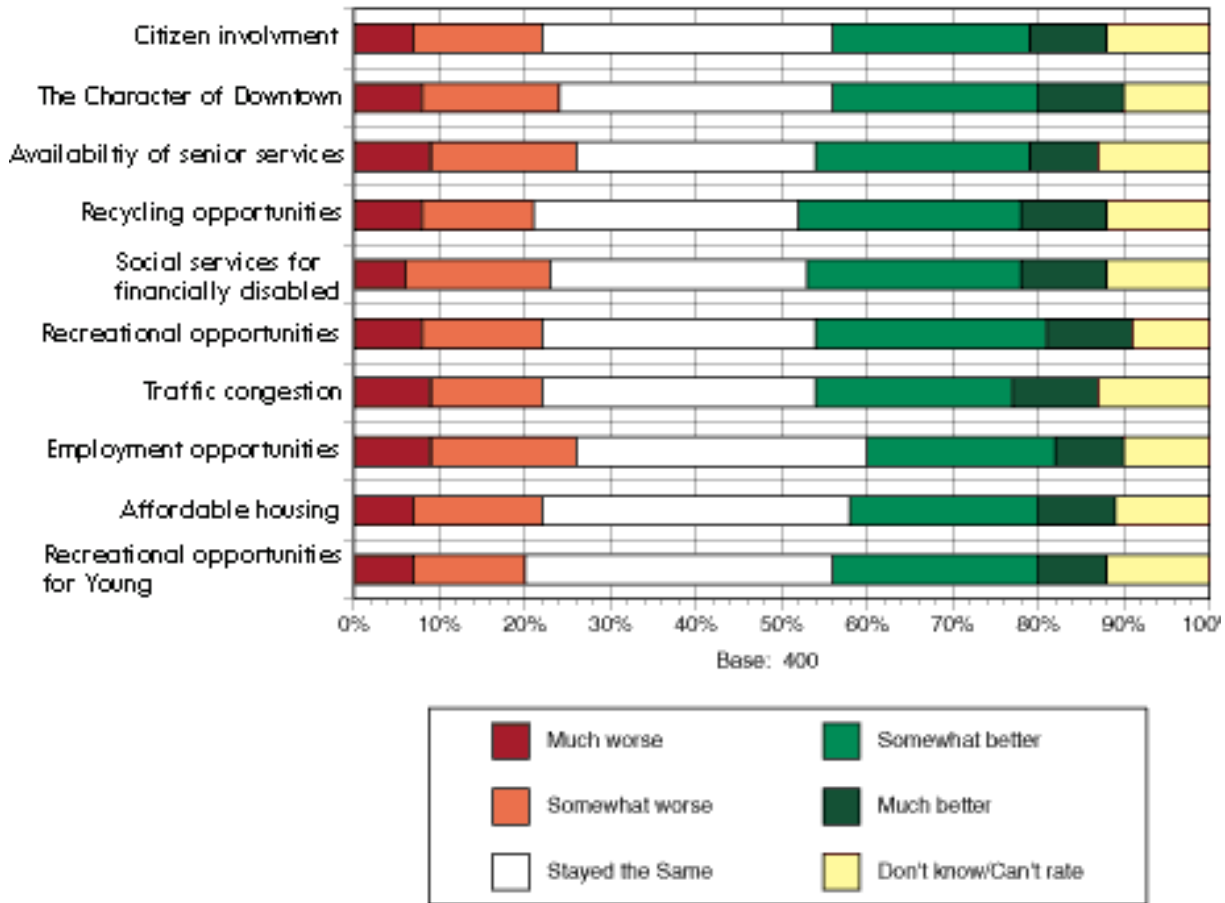


Those respondents who have lived in Ashland 2 years or less are statistically more likely to say ‘nothing/don’t know’ (29%), as do those who feel the City is moving in the right direction (22%) or quality of life is the same (20%). Those who feel the City is off track or that the quality of life has gotten worse are statistically more likely to say ‘stop developing, building’ (9% and 10%, respectively), ‘new City Council/government’ (5% and 6%, respectively) or ‘new mayor’ (5% and 6%, respectively). Males are statistically more likely to say ‘cut down on traffic’ (12%), as are those 55 – 64 years old (19%), and those with combined annual household incomes of \$50,000 - \$74,999 (16%).

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Respondents were read a list of ten characteristics of life in Ashland and were asked if they feel each one has gotten better, worse or stayed the same – and to which degree. The list of items was rotated in the survey so that the order in which they were presented changes to reduce any order bias. The graph below shows the distribution of responses for each item on the list. The more red that is visible the worse that item is, in contrast the more green that is visible the better the item is considered to be. Employment opportunities is considered to have deteriorated the most (26% worse), followed by availability of services for seniors (25% worse). Recycling opportunities services for the financially disadvantaged’ are considered to have improved the most (36% and 35% better, respectively).

Rating of Various Characteristics of Life in Ashland



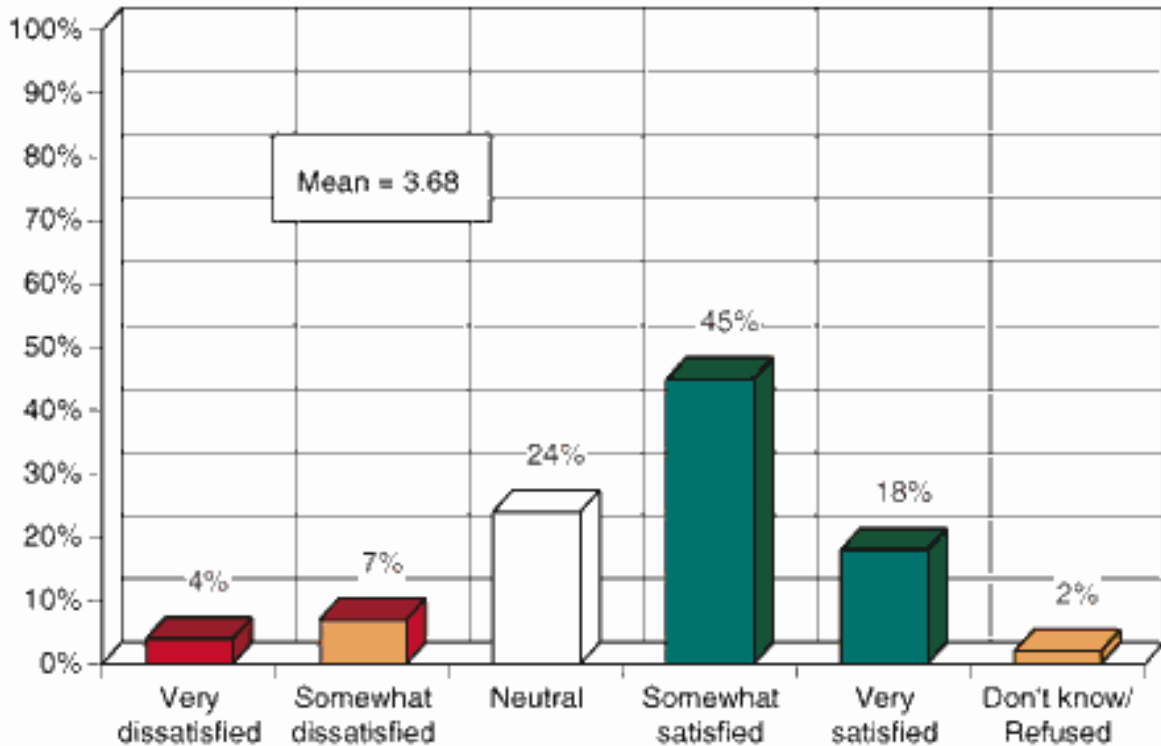
One-third of the sample 34% could not rate "social services for the financially disabled" or "availability of senior services (31%).

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While it may appear that respondent satisfaction with the overall level of services provided by the City of Ashland has declined since 1996 it may be due to a change in the question. In the previous study 36% of the sample indicated they are ‘very satisfied’ with the overall level of services provided by the City, compared to 18% who are ‘very satisfied’ today. The percent of the sample that indicate they are ‘somewhat satisfied’ has changed very little, from 48% in 1996 to 45% today. The percent that are ‘very dissatisfied’ declined one percentage point from 5% in 1996 to 4% today, while the percent that are ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ increased one percentage point from 6% in 1996 to 7% today. In the current survey respondents were asked to use a 5-point rating scale, where 1 = not at all satisfied and 5 = very satisfied. The addition of a ‘neutral’ rating position may attribute to the decline in the percent that said ‘very satisfied’.

The mean score for overall level of satisfaction is 3.68 – ‘somewhat satisfied’. The highest mean scores were given by those 65 and older (3.80), 55 – 64 years old (3.79), those who lived in Ashland 3 – 5 years (3.85), households with incomes of \$50,000 - \$74,999 (3.83), those who feel the quality of life has improved (3.90) and those who feel the City is moving in the right direction (3.87).

Satisfaction With Overall Level of Serives Provided

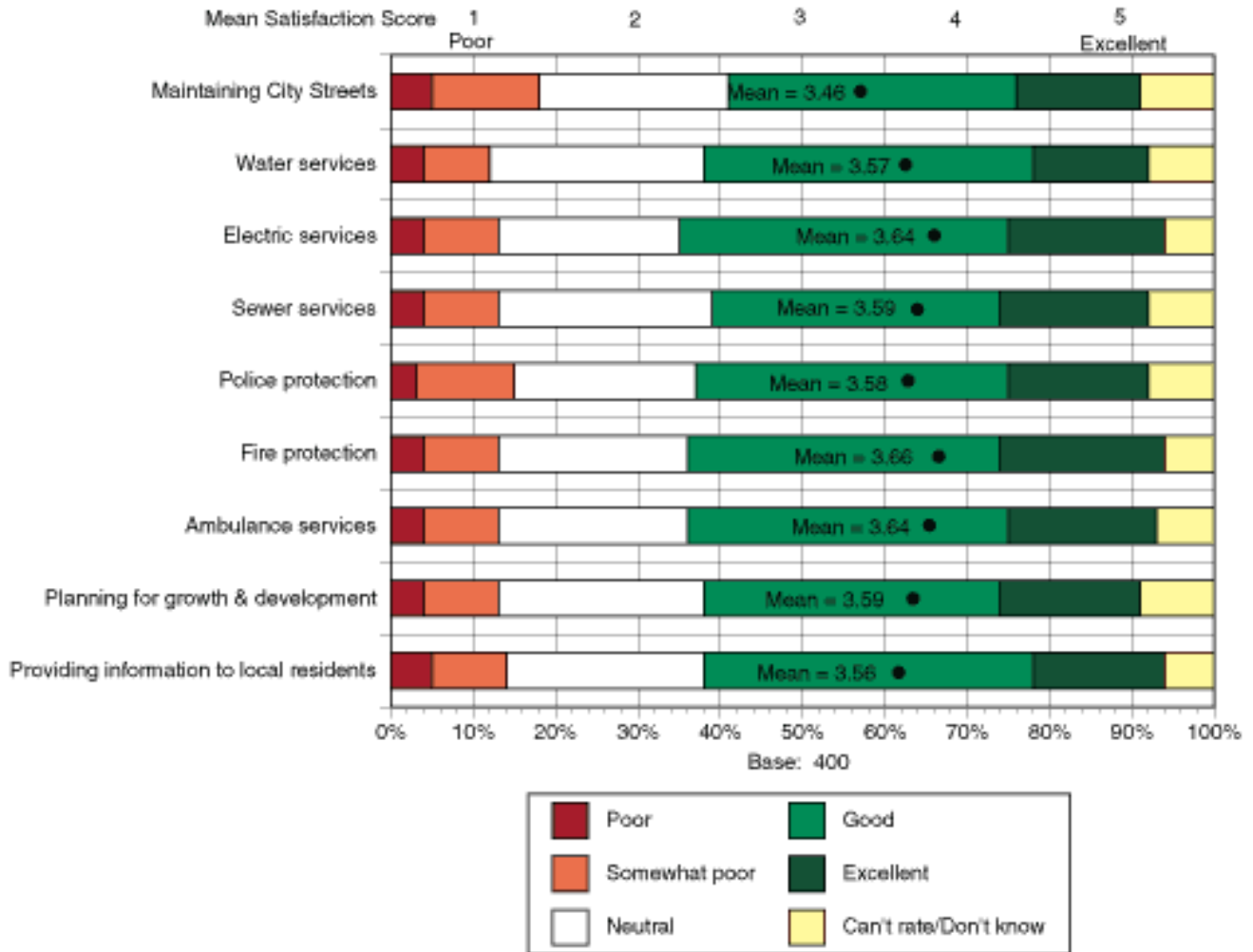


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Respondents were read a list of nine services provided by the City and asked to rate the City’s performance on each one. The list was rotated so that the order each service appears in the survey changes to reduce any list bias. A rating scale of 1 – 5 was used, where 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent. Mean scores were calculated for each service, and the services receiving the highest mean scores are given to emergency and vital services. Fire protection received the highest score (3.66), followed by ambulance service (3.64) and electric service (3.64). The lowest score was given to maintaining city streets (3.46).

Rating City Services



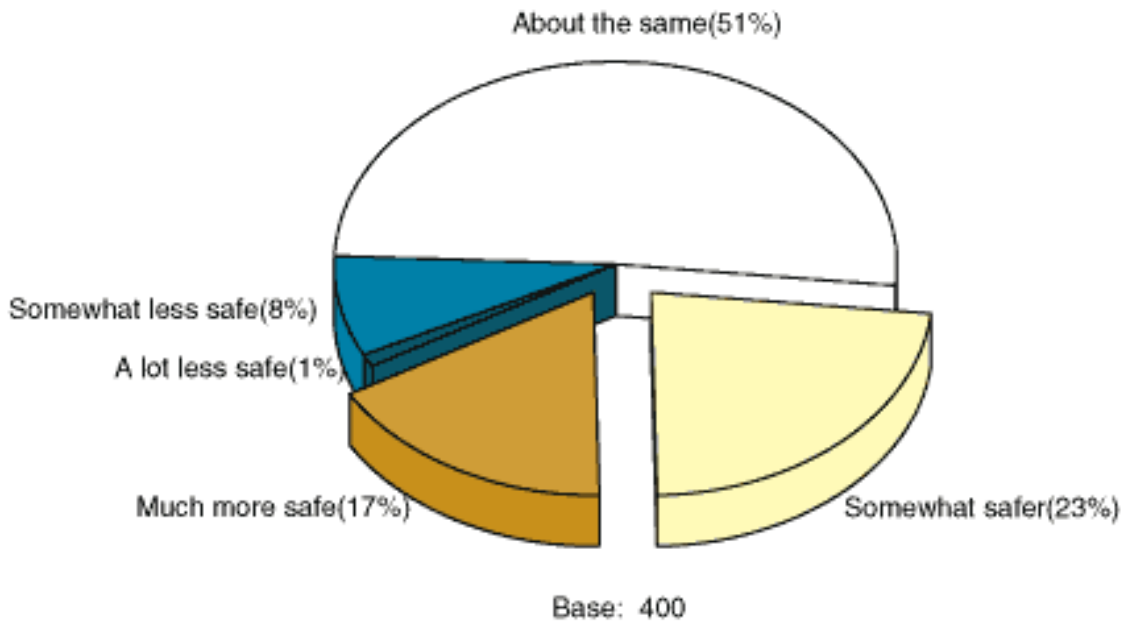
Comparisons to 1996 are difficult since the survey wording has been changed. Among those that can be compared we find ‘maintaining city streets’ has improved, up from a score of 3.3 (in 1996) to 3.46. Planning for growth and development is 3.59 today, in 1996 protection is 3.66 today, and in 1996 ‘fire response time’ received a score of 4.5.

Ambulance services received a score of 3.64 today, while ‘ambulance response time’ received a score of 4.4 in 1996. Water services received a mean score of 3.57 today, and ‘quality of water service’ received a score of 3.8 in 1996.

Those respondents who have lived in Ashland two years or less are statistically more likely to say they ‘can’t rate or don’t know’. Higher mean scores were given by those who have lived in Ashland 3 – 5 years, while lower scores were given by those who have lived there 21 years or more. Similarly, those respondents who believe the City is moving in the right direction gave higher mean scores than those who feel the City is on the wrong track. Those who feel the quality of life has improved gave higher mean scores than those who feel life has gotten worse. Those respondents who feel the City is on the wrong track and/or that the quality of life has gotten worse are statistically more likely to give ‘poor’ ratings to all nine services rated.

Respondents were asked to compare how safe they feel their neighborhood is compared to a year or two ago. As can be seen in the pie chart below half of the sample (51%) feel their neighborhood is as safe as it was then. Only 9% feel their neighborhood is less safe, while 40% feel their neighborhood is safer. It is not surprising that those respondents who rated ‘police protection’ as ‘excellent’ are statistically more likely to say their neighborhood is ‘much more safe’ (26%). Those with children in the household are statistically more likely to say ‘somewhat less safe’.

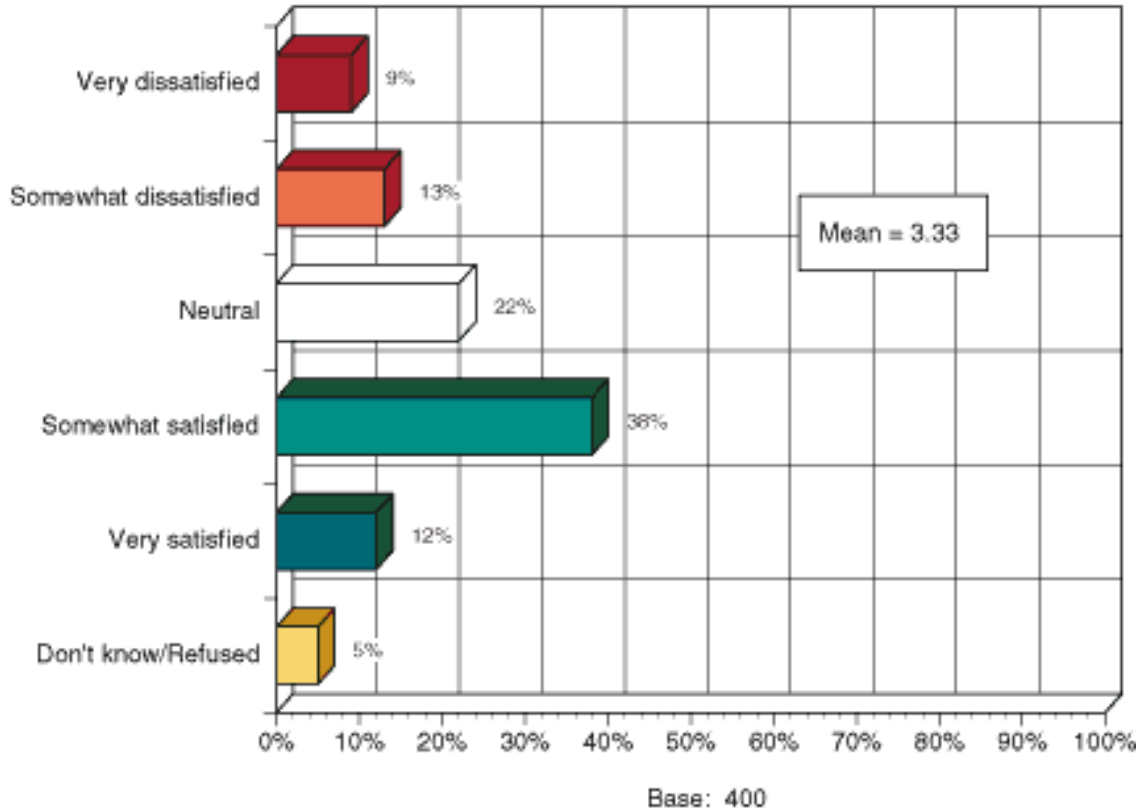
How Safe is Your Neighborhood Compared to a Year or Two Ago?



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Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the opportunities provided to the citizens of Ashland to give input on City decisions. One-half of the sample (50%) are 'satisfied'. A 5-point rating scale was used, where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied. The total mean score given is 3.33.

Level of Satisfaction With Opportunities to Give Input



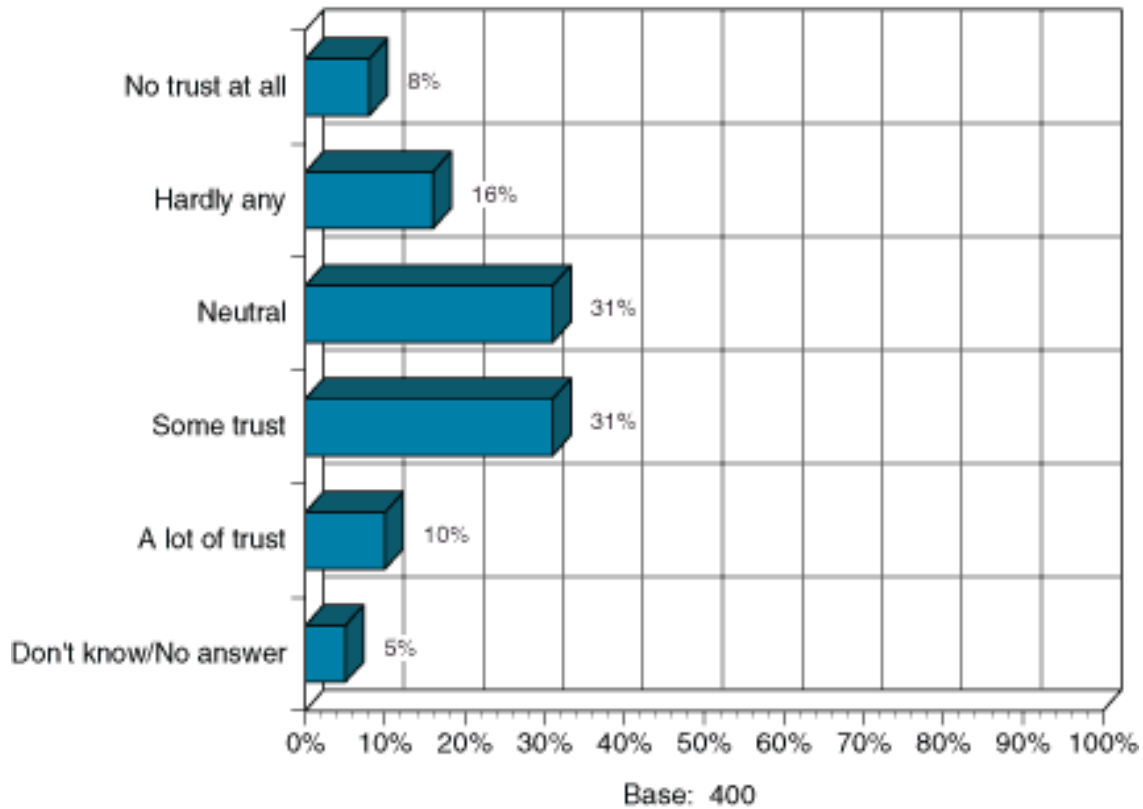
The highest level of satisfaction with the opportunities to provide input are among those who feel the City is going in the right direction (3.71), who feel the quality of life has improved (3.69), and those who have lived in Ashland 3 – 5 years (3.65). The lowest satisfaction scores were given by those who feel the City is on the wrong track (2.63), those who feel the quality of life has gotten worse (2.90), those with combined annual household incomes of \$15,000 - \$24,999 (2.97) and those 55-64 years old (3.06).

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When thinking of the community as a whole, only one-fourth (24%) feel there is no trust in the local government. Most respondents gave a ‘neutral’ rating (31%), or feel there is ‘some trust’ (31%). Ten percent of the sample (10%) feel there is a ‘lot of trust’ in local government.

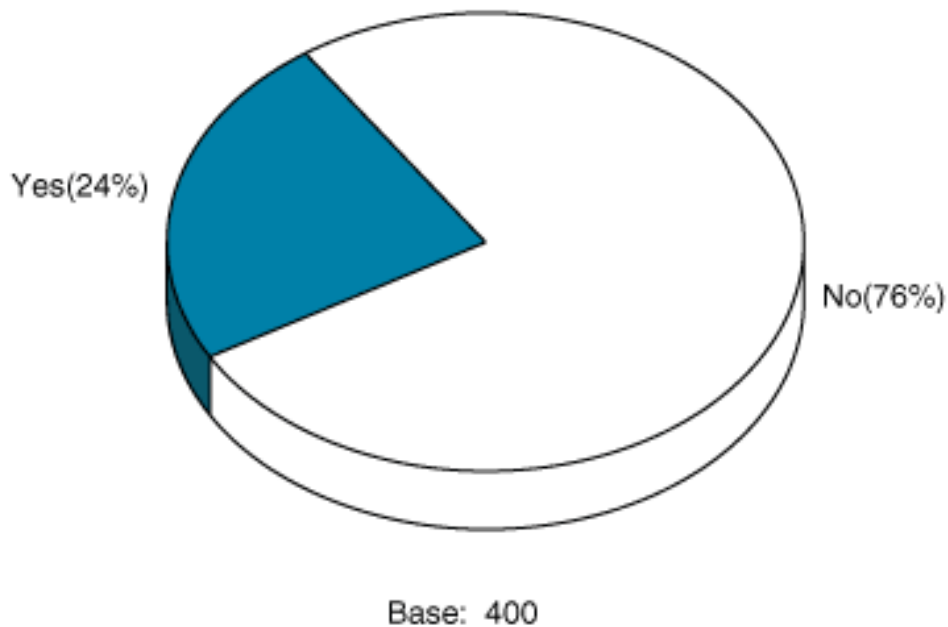
Those respondents who feel the City is off track are statistically more likely to say there is ‘no trust at all’ (20%) or ‘hardly any trust’ (29%). Similarly, those who feel the quality of life has gotten worse are more likely to say there is ‘no trust at all’ (20%) or ‘hardly any trust’ (25%). However, those who feel the City is moving in the right direction are statistically more likely to say there is ‘some trust’ (40%) or ‘a lot of trust’ (14%), as do those who feel the quality of life has improved - ‘some trust’ (39%) or ‘a lot of trust’ (22%).

Level of Trust in Local Government

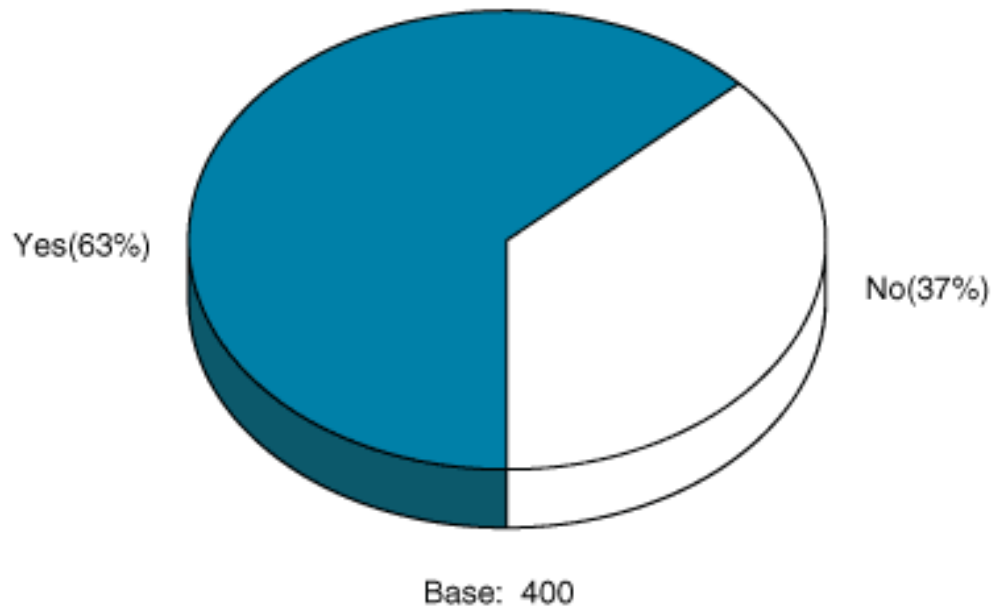


One-fourth (24%) of the total sample have attended a City Council meeting in person in the last year. Homeowners are statistically more likely to have attended a meeting (29%), as are those who feel the quality of life has gotten worse (35%), those with annual combined household incomes of \$75,000 or more and those who have lived in Ashland 6 – 10 years (32%). If they have not attended a council meeting in person, it is very likely that respondents have watched one on Cable Access TV (63%).

Incidence of Attending a City Council Meeting



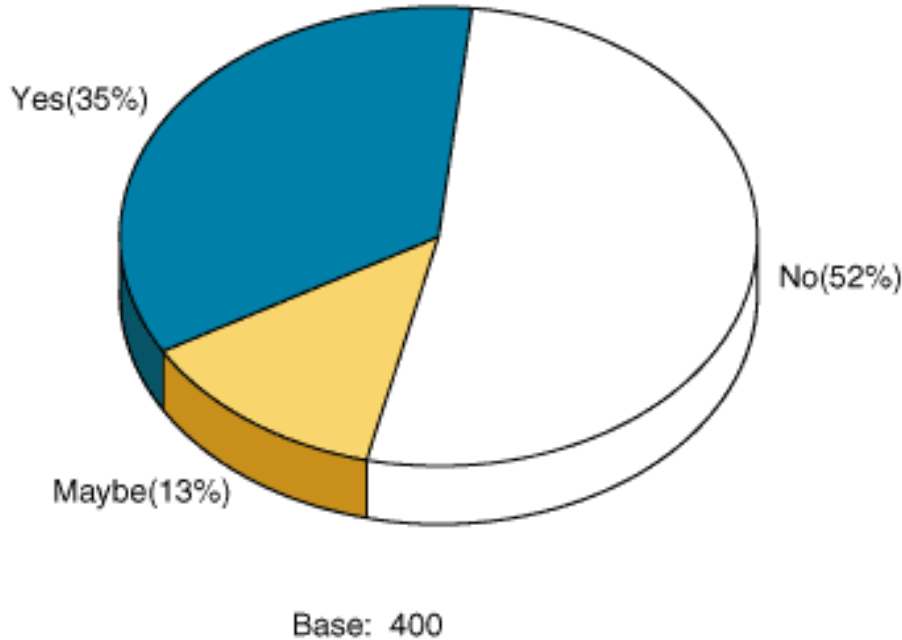
Incidence of Watching a City Council Meeting on Cable Access TV



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At least one-third of the sample (35%) are willing to participate in City government, to some degree. Males are statistically more likely to be willing to participate (41%), as are those 35 – 44 years old (48%) or 45 – 54 (46%), those with kids at home (48 %) and those who have lived in Ashland 6 – 10 years (46%).

Willingness to Participate in City Government

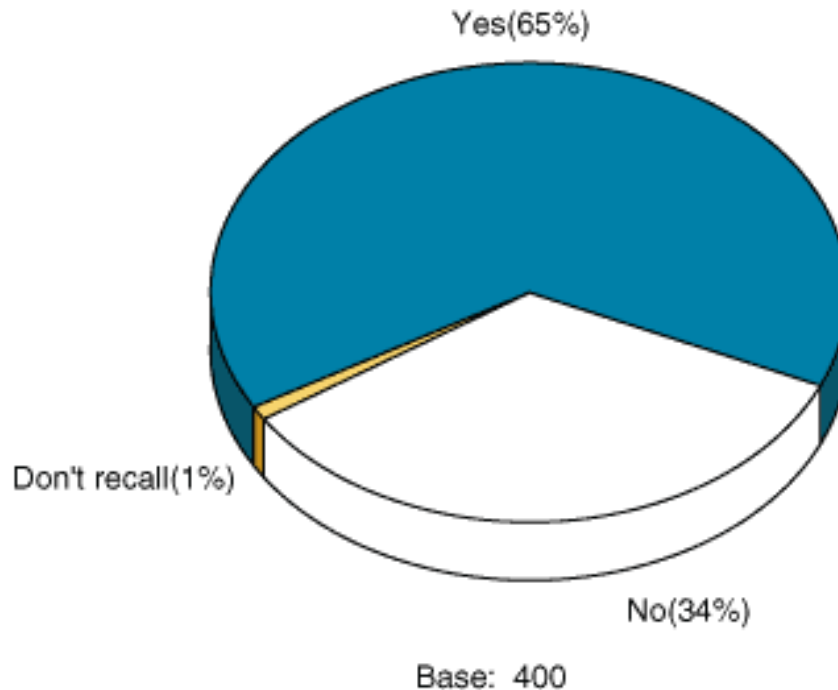


Respondents who said ‘yes’ (141 respondents) they would be willing to participate in city government were asked to describe in which way. The responses were varied, with some mentioning any way they could be of service, they would; or if there was something that matched their skills and interest level they would help there. The table below shows some of the more popular ways citizens would be willing to get involved in Ashland City government. Refer to Data Table 36 for a complete list of responses.

Ways Willing to Participate	Percent of Mentions
Serving on, or working with communities	18%
Attend City Council Meetings	15%
Volunteer Work	10%
Don't know/ Can't think of anything specific	9%
Anywhere I can give my advice, input, surveys	7%

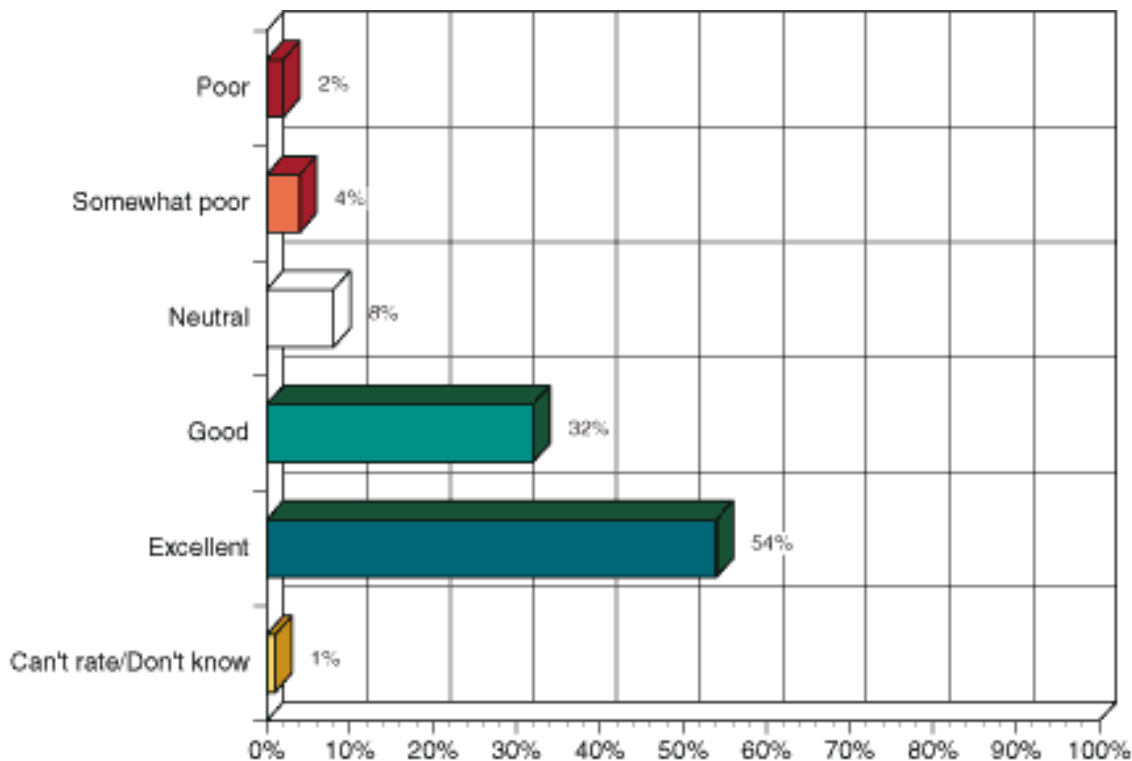
Roughly two-thirds of the sample (65%) have had contact with someone at the City within the past 12 months. Those who are statistically more likely to have contacted the City include homeowners (71%), those 35 – 44 years old (80%), households with children (74%), and those who feel the quality of life in Ashland has improved (74%).

Incidence of Contacting City in the Past Year



Those respondents who have had contact with someone at the City were asked to rate the courteousness of the staff. A 5-point rating scale was used where 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent. City staff received one of the highest satisfaction scores given by respondents (4.33). Over one-half (54%) of those who have contacted the City rate the staff 'excellent' in courteousness. Those respondents who feel the City is moving in the right direction are statistically more likely to rate the staff 'excellent' (59%) as are those who feel the quality of life in Ashland has improved (67%), those who are 35 – 44 years old (67%) and females (59%). Those who have lived in Ashland 6 – 10 years are statistically more likely to give a 'somewhat poor' rating (9%). The graph on the following page shows the distribution of responses to this question.

Rating Courteousness of City Staff

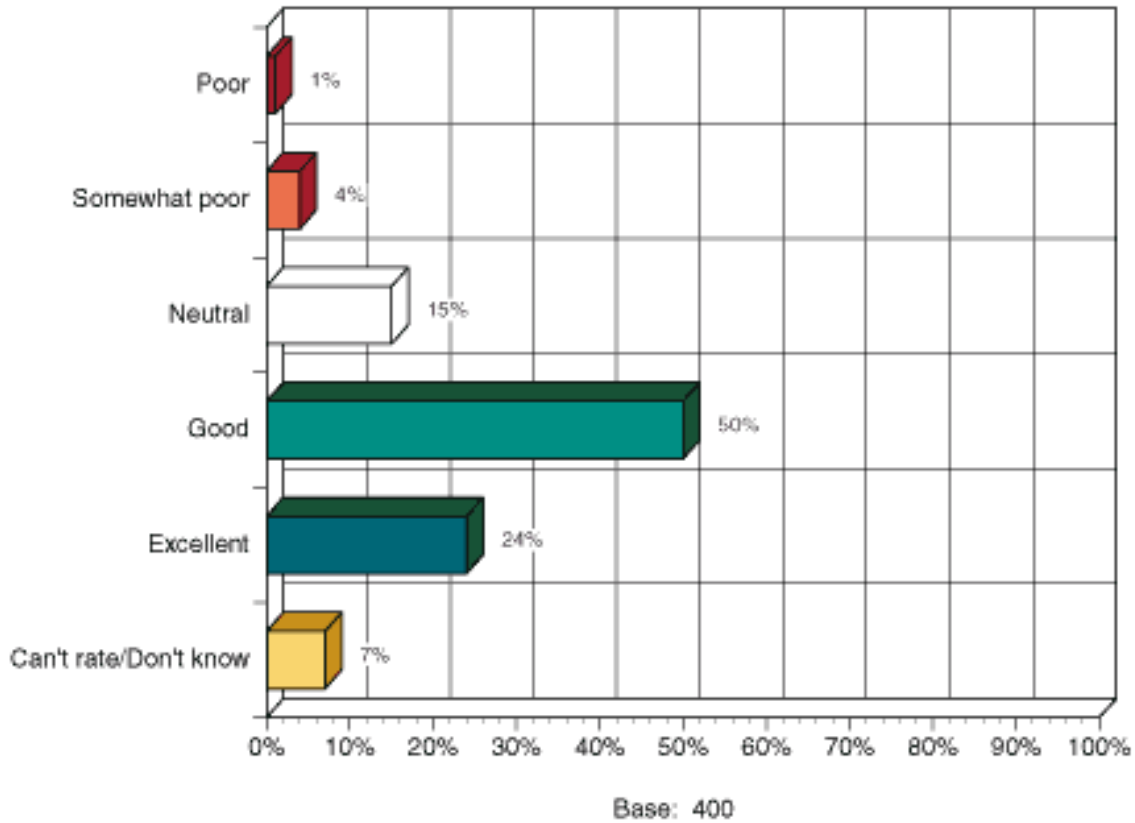


Base: 261 - those who had contact with the City

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All respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of the work performed by City employees. A 5-point rating scale was used where 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent. The mean score given for overall quality of work performed is 3.98, or 'good'. One-half of the sample (50%) give the quality of work a 'good' rating.

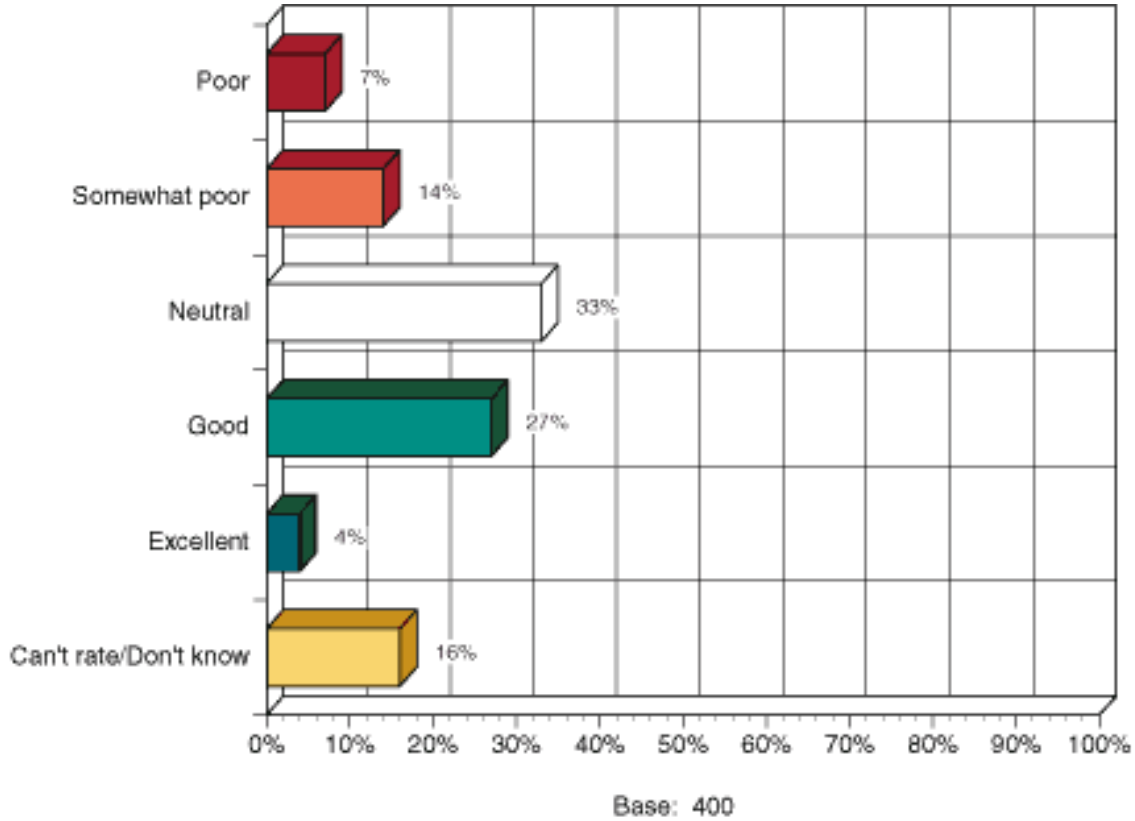
Rating Overall Quality of Work Performed by City Employees



Higher mean scores were given by those respondents who feel the quality of life in Ashland has improved (4.22), those who feel the City is moving in the right direction (4.17) and those who have lived in Ashland less than 10 years.

Respondents were asked to rate how effectively City money is being used. A 5-point rating scale was used where 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent. A mean score of 3.09 was given, at least one-third of the sample (33%) gave a 'neutral' rating. At least three out of ten (31%) feel positive about how the City money is being used.

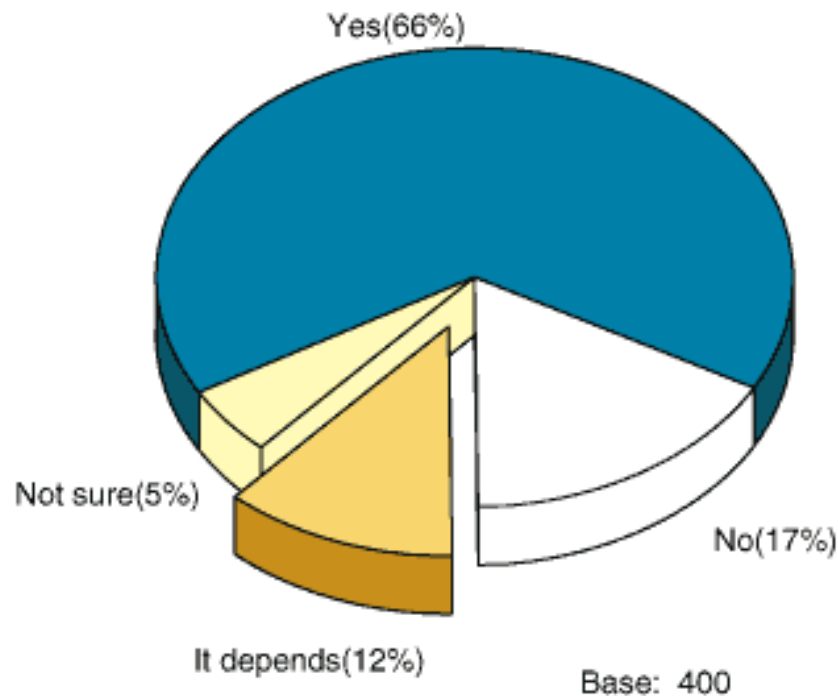
Rating How Effective City Money in Used



Those respondents who feel the City is off track are statistically more likely to give a 'poor' (18%) or 'somewhat poor' (27%) rating. Those who feel the City is moving in the right direction are statistically more likely to give a 'good' (36%) or 'excellent' (6%) rating. Similarly, those who feel the quality of life in Ashland has improved are statistically more likely to say 'good' (46%) or 'excellent' (9%). Those who feel the quality of life has gotten worse are more likely to give a 'poor' (18%) or 'somewhat poor' (21%) rating. Renters are statistically more likely to say 'don't know/can't rate' (24%).

Respondents were told that the City of Ashland is exploring Green Power, which is a broad term used to designate electricity from sources which are more environmentally friendly, such as solar or wind power. Respondents were also told that Green Power typically comes at a higher cost to consumers. After this brief explanation respondents were asked if they think Ashland should offer Green Power as an option to its customers. Two-thirds of the sample (66%) think Ashland should offer Green Power.

Should Ashland Offer Green Power to its Customers?

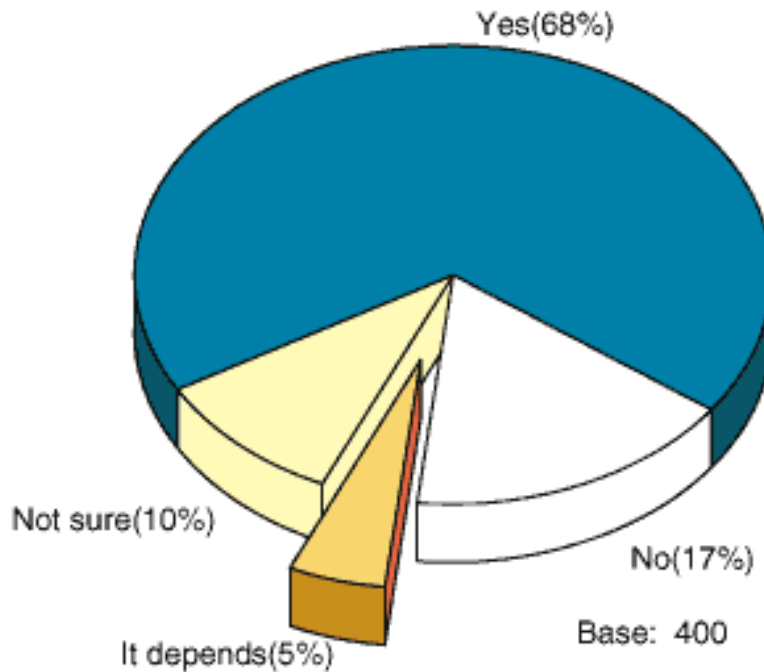


Respondents who are statistically more likely to say Ashland should offer Green Power as an option are those who feel the City is moving in the right direction (74%) and those who feel the quality of life has improved (81%). Also, those who have lived in Ashland 11 – 20 years are statistically more likely to want Green Power (76%), as are those 18 – 24 (84%) or 25 – 34 years old (81%) and renters (77%).

Those respondents who said ‘it depends’ were asked what their decision is dependent upon. One-third said ‘only if it’s an option – not required of citizens’ (36%), and depending on the ‘cost’ (34%). Residents do not want to see everyone have to pay for it, but not everyone use it (6%).

When asked if Ashland should be doing more to develop solar power locally seven out of ten (69%) respondents said ‘yes’.

Should Ashland Develop Solar Power Locally?

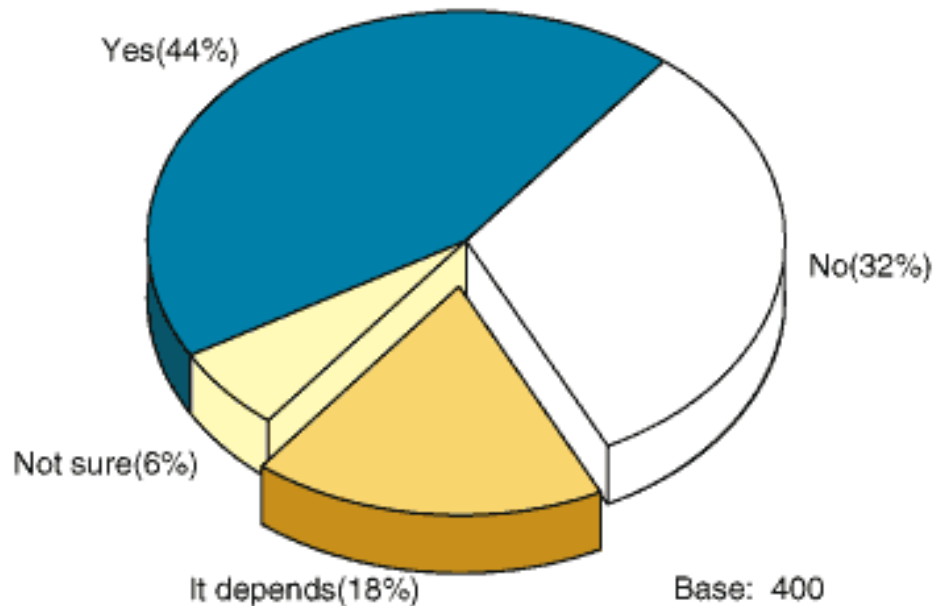


Those respondents with combined annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more are statistically more likely to say ‘no’ (32%). Those respondents 35 – 44 years old are statistically more likely to say ‘yes’ (85%).

Those respondents who said ‘it depends’ were asked what their decision is dependent upon. One-fourth said ‘it depends on the cost’ (25%), and ‘as long as there is no additional cost during rainy/cloudy days’ (15%).

While it is easy to say ‘yes’ the City of Ashland should develop Green Power, it is more telling if the residents are willing to pay the higher costs associated with Green Power. At least 4 out of 10 respondents (44%) said ‘yes’ they would be willing to pay more for electricity provided by a Green Power source.

Willingness to Pay More for Green Power

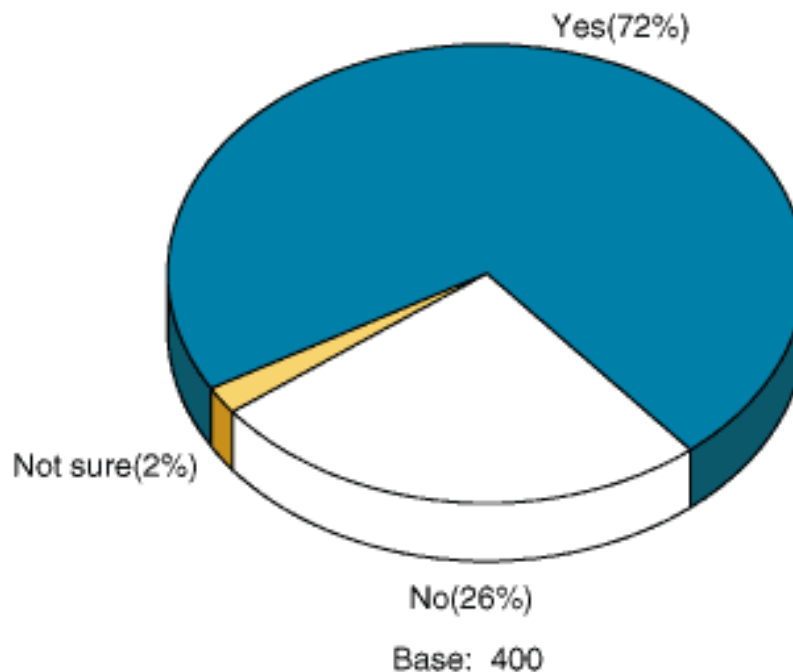


Those respondents who are willing to pay more are statistically more likely to be those who feel the City is moving in the right direction (51%), those who feel the quality of life has improved (58%) and those who are 25 – 34 years old (62%). Those who are statistically more likely to say ‘no’ are those who have lived in Ashland 21 years or more (49%) and those who feel the City is off track (44%).

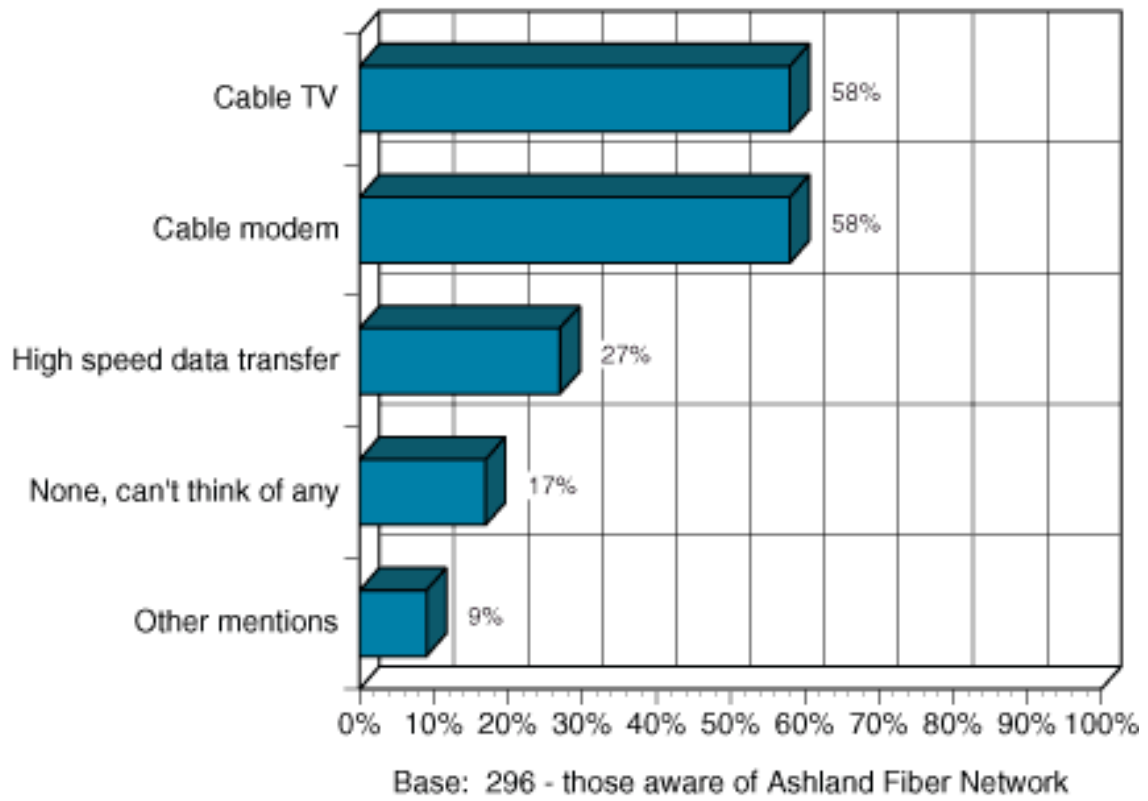
Those respondents who said ‘it depends’ were asked what their decision is dependent upon. Two-thirds said ‘it depends on the cost’ (67%). Some are willing to as long as the price increase is not great, or if their income increases.

Awareness of Ashland's Fiber Network is high, nearly three-fourths of the sample (73%) are aware of it. Awareness is statistically higher among those respondents who have lived in Ashland 6 – 10 years (82%), those with combined annual household incomes of \$35,000 - \$49,999 (86%) or \$50,000 - \$74,999 (84%) and home owners (78%). Not only is awareness high, but at least 8 out of 10 can name some of the services it will provide.

Awareness of Ashland's Fiber Network

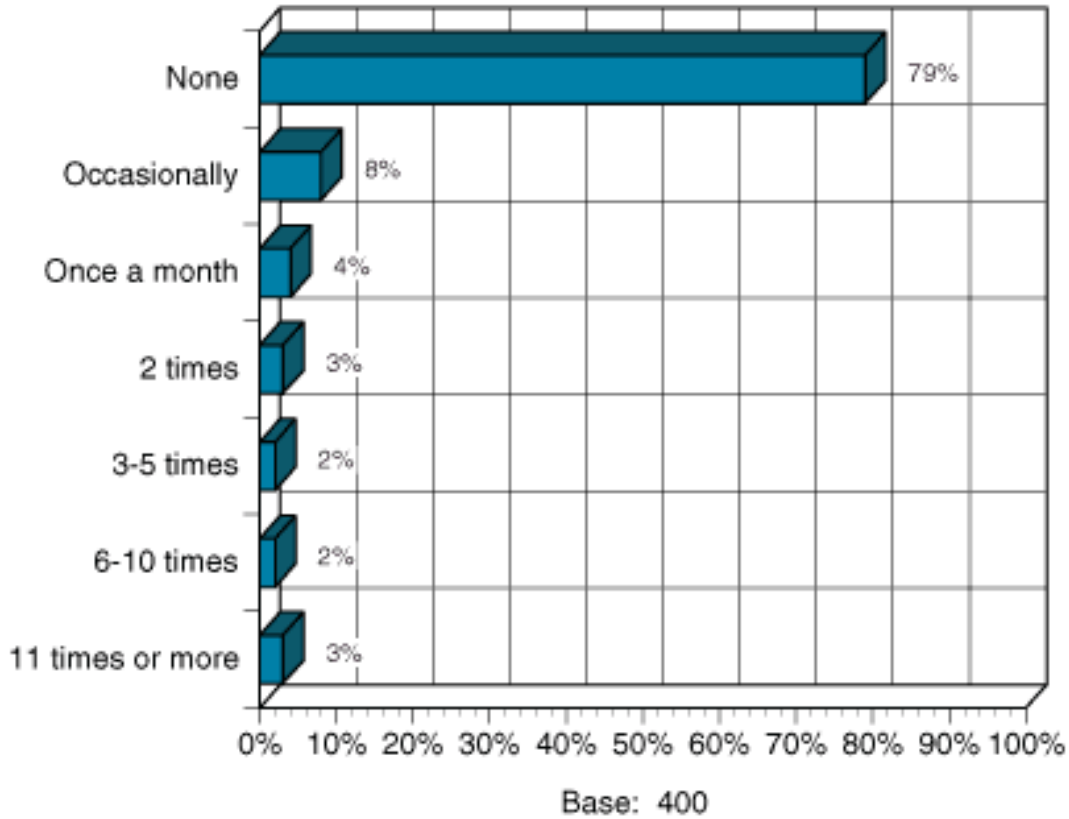


Services Offered by Ashland's Fiber Network



Approximately eight out of ten respondents (79%) do not ride an RVTB bus at any time during an average month, 3% are frequent riders. Twelve percent (12%) of the sample indicated they would never use the bus under any circumstance.

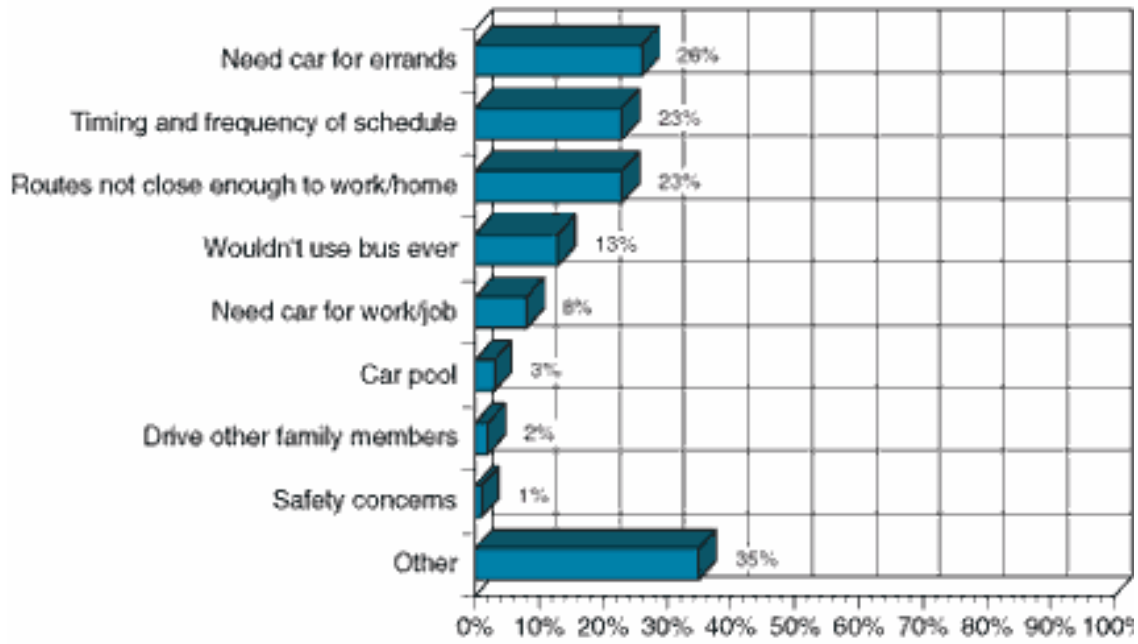
Frequency of Riding an RVTB Bus in an Average Month



Frequent bus riders are statistically more likely to be renters and those with combined annual household incomes of \$15,000 or less. While homeowners (82%) and those with combined annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more are statistically more likely to say they do not ride the bus in an average month.

Those who ride the bus fewer than 3 times a month, or none at all, were asked to identify their biggest barriers to using the bus, or using it more often, for commuting to work, school or elsewhere. The biggest barrier identified is the need of a car for errands and making stops along the way (26%), followed by the timing and frequency of the bus schedules (23%). The graph on the following page highlights the most frequent barriers mentioned. Please refer to Data Table 53 for a complete list.

Barriers to Using RVTB Bus Services

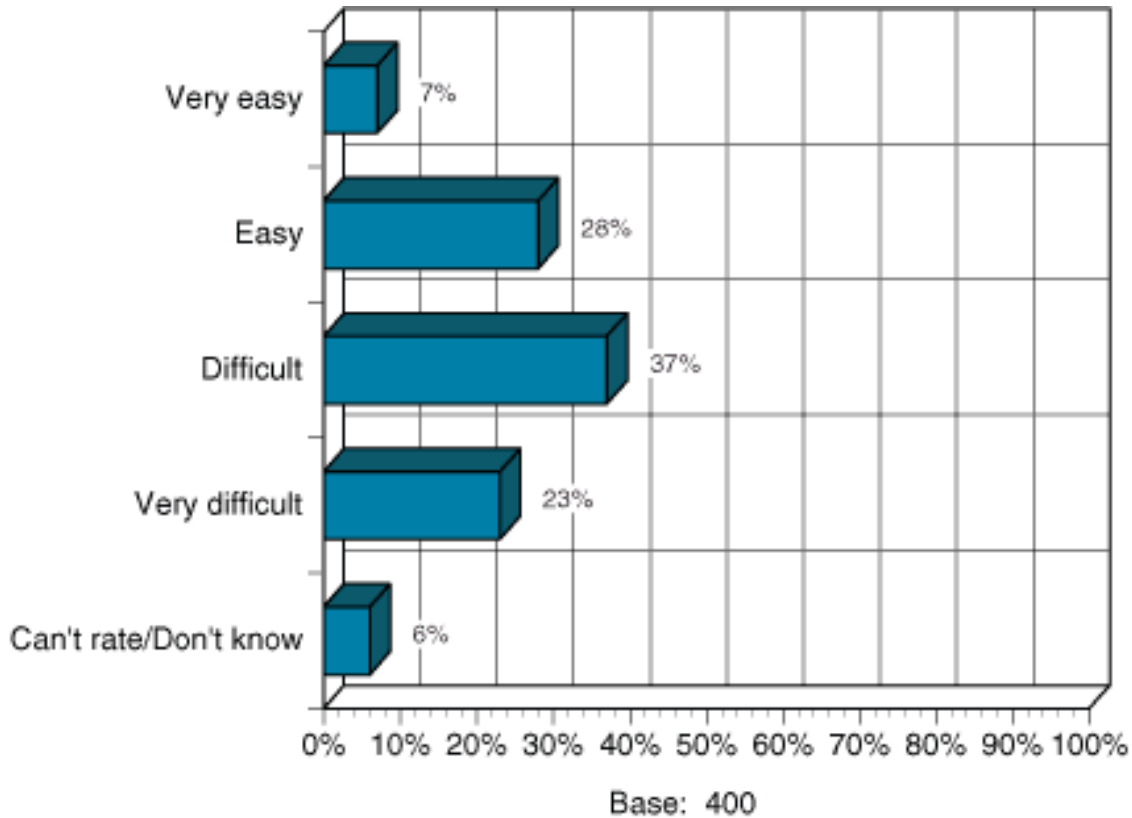


Base: 372 - those ride bus 2 times or less per month

Those respondents who don't feel the bus routes go close enough to home are statistically more likely to be homeowners (24%) and those respondents 65 years of age or older (29%). Other barriers mentioned by non-riders are that they walk, rather than need to take the bus (30 mentions), their own transportation is more convenient (23 mentions), everything is close by (17 mentions), or they ride a bike (11 mentions). Renters are statistically more likely to mention 'bike riding'.

When asked to identify the three biggest issues facing Ashland 20% of the sample mentioned ‘traffic congestion’. At least six out of ten respondents (60%) find that when visiting downtown Ashland locating a parking space is difficult.

Parking in Downtown Ashland

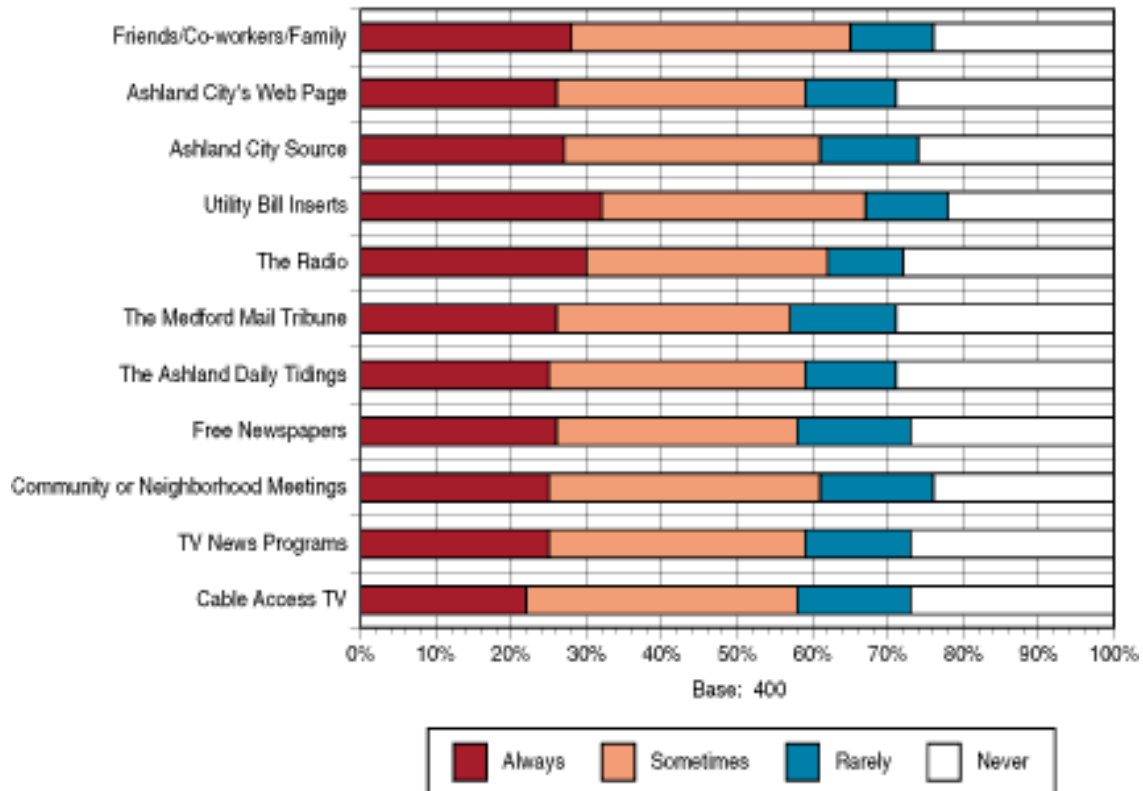


Those who tend to find a parking place downtown to be ‘easy’ are statistically more likely to be those who feel the City is moving in the right direction (32%) and those who feel the quality of life in Ashland has ‘stayed the same’ (33%). Those who find parking downtown to be ‘very difficult’ are statistically more likely to be those respondents who have lived in Ashland 21 years or more (35%), are 55 – 64 years old (35%), females (26%), those who feel the City is off track (35%) and those who feel the quality of life has gotten worse (38%).

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Utility bill inserts are the most frequently used source for obtaining information about Ashland, one-third (32%) refer to these 'always' and an additional 35% 'sometimes'. The second most often used source is friends, co-workers and family members, used 'always' by 28% and 'sometimes' by 37%. The following chart shows how often each source of is used to get information about Ashland.

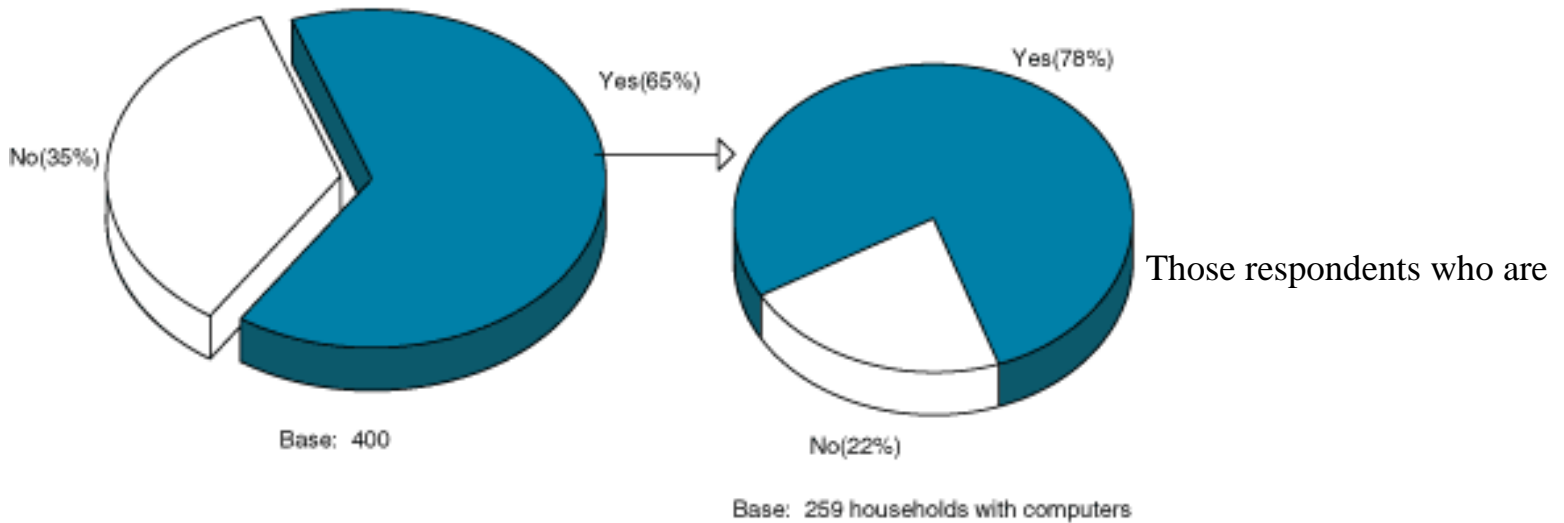
Sources Used to Get Information About Ashland



Ashland City's Web Page is used by 70% of the sample as a source of obtaining information about Ashland. Two-thirds of the sample (65%) indicate they have a personal computer in their household, of which 78% are connected to the internet.

Incidence of Owning a Personal Computer

Connected to Internet



statistically more likely to have a personal computer in their home are those 35 – 44 (78%) or 45 – 54 years old (87%), those with children in the household (87%) and males (73%).