

2024 Civic Services Survey Results

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon (City) conducts two annual surveys: (1) Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey and (2) Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities & Preferences. These surveys assess residents' perspectives on quality of life in Saskatoon, satisfaction with civic services, areas for improvement, and future priorities. Overall, respondents report high satisfaction with living in Saskatoon, with a large majority rating the quality of life as good or very good. However, despite overall positive ratings, homelessness and crime/public safety are rated as the two most pressing issues in 2024. The data shows that people's perception of crime/public safety is influencing their views towards quality of life in Saskatoon.

BACKGROUND

City Council, at its meeting held on [September 13, 2023](#), received the [2023 Civic Services Surveys](#) report outlining the results of the two annual civic surveys. Overall, respondents reported a high satisfaction with living in Saskatoon, with the majority rating the quality of life as good or very good. A large majority of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the quality of services provided by the City. When asked for their perspective on the single most important issue facing the City, the most common responses were homelessness (19%), crime/public safety (15%), and roads and sidewalk maintenance (8%).

In 2023, the two civic services surveys transitioned exclusively to a professional online panel for data collection. The online panel employs random sampling and is designed to be representative of Saskatoon's population based on age and gender, based on the 2021 Census. Given these parameters, survey results are considered to be reliable and unbiased.

CURRENT STATUS

In May and June 2024, two online surveys were conducted by Forum Research Inc. For each online survey, panelists were selected at random from the Forum Fuzion™ and partner panels to complete surveys online, ensuring the accuracy of online research results. All panelists who were residents of Saskatoon were provided with a link to access the survey online.

Survey #1, the Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey, was conducted between May 21– June 11, 2024. The online panel survey responses (815) gave insights on the City's performance and residents' experience/impressions related to quality of life, important issues, and the value of programs and services provided. The margin of error is +/- 3.43%, 19 times out of 20.

Survey #2, the Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities and Preferences, was conducted between June 4 – 24, 2024. The online panel survey responses (812) gave

insights on residents' experience/impressions related to the quality of services and preferences on service levels. The margin of error is +/-3.43%, 19 times out of 20. The survey methodology for 2024 is largely consistent with previous years, as this helps to analyze response trends to assist in making operational and policy decisions. That said, minor adjustments were made to some questions for the 2024 edition. These include compost collection (green bins) within waste management questions; walking and cycling infrastructure within the transportation and utilities services questions; and to update language around communication methods to reflect the change from Twitter to "X".

The Appendices provide the main highlights from the online panel respondents.

Specifically:

- Appendix 1 provides an overview of the results for online respondents for Survey #1, the 2024 Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey.
- Appendix 2 provides an overview of the results respondents for Survey #2, the 2024 Civic Services Performance, Priorities and Preferences Survey.

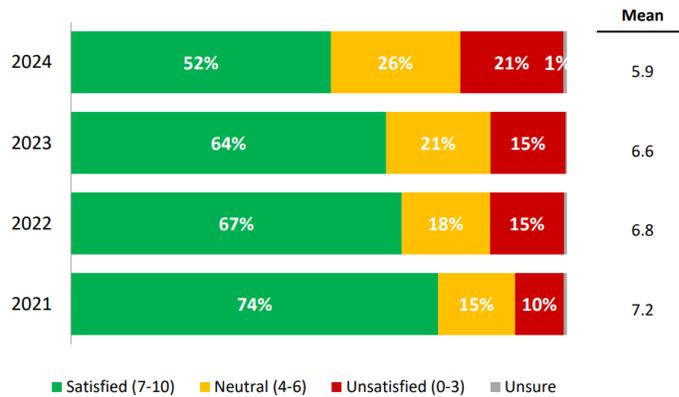
Full copies of the detailed Civic Services Survey results can be found on the City of Saskatoon's website at <https://www.saskatoon.ca/civic-services-surveys>.

While the report was being finalized by Forum Research, the Administration began researching national trends, as it became clear that some scores from Saskatoon residents were declining. The Administration wanted to understand how our trends compare to those occurring in Canada.

Surveys by Nanos Research¹ shows in 2024 about one in two Canadians (52%) say they are satisfied with Canada as a country, which is a substantial decrease relative to 2021 (74%).

¹ <https://nanos.co/satisfaction-with-canada-as-a-country-continues-to-decline-universities-and-colleges-top-positive-contributor-to-canada-being-a-better-country-nanos/>

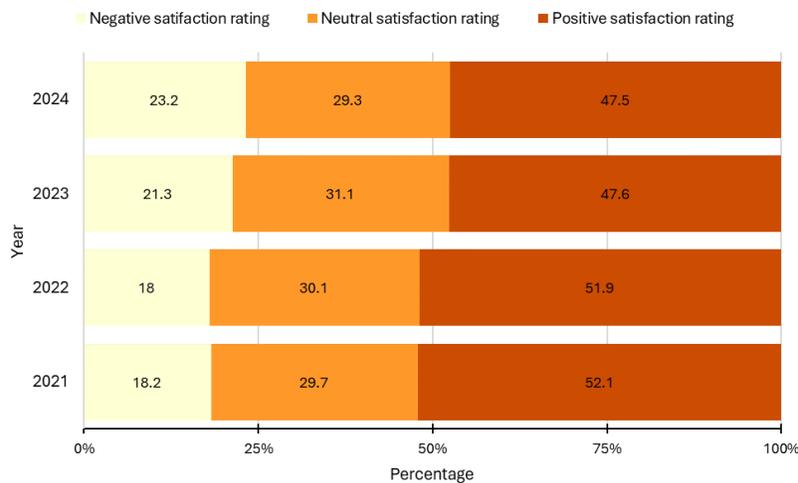
Level of satisfaction with Canada as a country - Tracking



Statistics Canada’s Canadian Social Survey² shows rising negative life satisfaction scores in Saskatchewan in 2024 relative to 2021.

Life Satisfaction Scores - Saskatchewan (2024 = Q1 2024)

Source: Statistics Canada Table 13-10-0843-01



From a municipal perspective it appears that the national mood/sentiment is reflective in their declining scores. For example, results from Calgary show declining quality of life scores. Specifically, the City of Calgary’s Spring 2024 survey shows that the overall quality of life in Calgary fell to 71% (5 percentage points) from Fall 2023³. The overall quality of life rating fell another 5 percentage points (66%) by Fall 2024⁴.

In addition, according to the City of Calgary’s 2024 Fall Municipal Benchmarking survey⁵ which includes four cities (Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal), the average rating for quality of life was 63%.

² [Surveys and statistical programs - Canadian Social Survey \(CSS\)](#)

³ <https://www.calgary.ca/research/satisfaction-survey.html>

⁴ <https://www.calgary.ca/research/satisfaction-survey.html>

⁵ <https://www.calgary.ca/research/satisfaction-survey.html>. Refer to the 2024 Municipal Benchmarking Survey PDF.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The purpose of the civic services surveys is to develop baseline performance data and identify trends, opportunities, and issues of importance. The City aims to use the results to inform decisions on strategic priorities, budgeting, service delivery, and to highlight opportunities for continuous improvement. A summary of the more important results is provided in this section of the report.

Survey #1 – 2024 Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey Results

Quality of Life & Satisfaction

- A large majority of respondents (84%) indicated that they are satisfied with living in Saskatoon, consistent with the 2023 and 2021 results.
 - Older age cohorts tend to have higher satisfaction levels. Relative to 2023, satisfaction levels fell for those in the 18-29 and 30-41 cohorts.
 - Looking at satisfaction levels by income cohorts, those respondents at the lowest and highest ends of the income cohorts tend to have lower satisfaction levels in 2024.

- Almost three quarters of respondents (72%) indicated the quality of life in Saskatoon is good or very good. This is a moderate decline from 2023 (6 percentage points).
 - The quality of life ratings dropped equally for both men and women. Large drops were observed at the highest rating level for both men and women.
 - Older respondents tend to give higher quality of life ratings, but the very good ratings fell across all cohorts in 2024 relative to 2023.
 - Quality of life ratings by household incomes show mixed results. Those at the very lowest and highest three income cohorts provide similar quality of life ratings in 2024 as in 2023, although they all saw reductions at the highest rating.

- Half of respondents (52%) indicated that the quality of life has either improved or stayed the same over the past three years. This is a decrease of 19 percentage points from 2023.
 - Quality of life has dropped more significantly for women in 2024 compared to men.
 - Quality of life has dropped significantly for age cohorts 18-29, 30-41, and 54-65 in 2024, compared to 2023.
 - Quality of life has worsened across all household income cohorts in 2024, compared to 2023. This is particularly observant for the three middle income cohorts.

Most Important Issues

When asked the question, what is the single most important issue facing the City, the most common responses were:

- Homelessness (23%)
 - Mentions of homelessness do not have a statistically significant influence on perceptions of a reduction in quality of life. For respondents who mention homelessness, the odds of reporting a worsening quality of life increase by approximately 24%, but this effect is not statistically significant, indicating that mentioning homelessness does not have a strong statistical impact on perceptions of a worsening quality of life, holding other variables constant.
- Crime/Public Safety/Policing (21%)
 - Mentions of crime have a statistically significant influence on perceptions of a reduction in quality of life. For respondents who mention crime, the odds of reporting a worsening quality of life increase by approximately 61%, holding other variables constant. The model shows that mentioning crime and gender differences are significant predictors of perceiving a worsening quality of life.
- Housing (8%); Roads/Sidewalk Maintenance (8%); Cost of Living (8%)

Quality & Value of Services

- A majority of respondents (75%) indicated they are satisfied with the quality of services provided by the City. This is a decrease of five percentage points from 2023.
 - Overall satisfaction levels fell for both men and women, but more significantly for women in 2024 relative to 2023.
 - Satisfaction with the quality of services has fallen for the two youngest and the oldest cohorts in 2024 relative to 2023.
 - Satisfaction levels dropped across all household income cohorts in 2024, except those in the \$40,001 - \$60,000 cohort.
- A majority of respondents (78%) indicated they receive good or very good value from the services provided by the City of Saskatoon. This is a decrease of five percentage points from 2023.
 - The value of services has fallen for the two youngest and the oldest cohorts in 2024 relative to 2023.
 - Value ratings dropped across all income cohorts except for the \$100,001 to \$250,000 cohort.

Balancing the Budget

- 26% of respondents prefer a combination of both property tax and user fee increases to balance the budget. This is consistent with findings in 2023.
- 23% of respondents prefer to stop providing a service to balance the budget. This is an increase of four percentage points from 2023.
- 15% of respondents prefer to introduce a new user or service fee to balance the budget. This is a decrease of three percentage points from 2023.

- 15% prefer to reduce services to balance the budget. This is an increase of three percentage points from 2023.
- 13% of respondents prefer to increase existing user fees. This is consistent with 2023.

Survey #2 – 2024 Civic Services Survey: Performance, Priorities and Preferences Results

Satisfaction with City Services (Performance)

- Resident satisfaction with City services was measured on a satisfaction scale from 1 to 10 in each of the following areas: transportation and utilities; community and public services; waste management; and recreation and culture. Overall, resident satisfaction with the services provided by the City of Saskatoon remains consistent year over year.
 - Reliability of electrical services, fire protection, recycling collection and outdoor sports fields are the service areas where residents are most satisfied.
 - Most other services performed comparably to previous years.
- Transportation & Utility Services: Reliability of electrical services (8.8), quality of drinking water (8.2), and speed of water main break repairs (7.5) continue to remain the top services where respondents are most satisfied. Neighbourhood street maintenance and back lane maintenance saw the largest decrease in this category, with each receiving scores one point lower than in 2023.
- Community & Public Services: Fire protection (7.9), maintenance of City parks (7.3), and maintenance of City trees (7.1) were the top services where respondents are most satisfied. Satisfaction with each community and public service remained consistent compared to 2023. The services in this category with the most noticeable decreases in satisfaction were police services (-0.6) and bylaw enforcement (-0.6).
- Waste Management: Like previous years, respondents continue to remain relatively satisfied with garbage collection (7.6), recycling collection (7.6), and landfill services (7.2). Compost collection (7.3) was a new option in 2024 and received similar satisfaction scores compared to other waste management services.
- Recreation & Culture: Overall, satisfaction levels remain high for all recreation and culture services. Those with the highest satisfaction results included outdoor sports fields (7.7), indoor leisure centres (7.5), and recreation programs (7.4).

Civic Services (Preferences)

- The highest scoring areas where respondents indicated they would like the City to provide more service are as follows:
 - Affordable Housing (70%) 10 percentage points higher than 2023

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- Road Maintenance (66%) 8 percentage points higher than 2023
 - Snow & Ice Management (57%) 2 percentage points higher than 2023
 - Police (51%) 7 percentage points higher than 2023
- The highest scoring area where respondents indicated they would like the City to provide the same level of service for are as follows:
 - Fire Services (69%)
 - Garbage collection and waste reduction programs and services (64%)
 - Parks Maintenance (64%)
 - Recreation & Cultural Programs (58%)
 - The highest scoring areas where respondents indicated they would like the City to provide less service are as follows:
 - Community Grants (15%)
 - Planning and Growth (10%)
 - Recreation and Cultural Programs (10%)
 - Affordable housing (10%)

Service Priorities: Key Weaknesses and Key Strengths

A quadrant analysis was conducted to determine services that are considered key weaknesses (high priority, low satisfaction), and key strengths (high priority, high satisfaction).

- Key strengths included maintaining services for quality of drinking water, fire protection, reliability of electrical services, speed of water main breaks repairs and garbage collection. These five were also identified as key strengths in 2023.
- Police Service is shown as a priority for service improvement. This is a change from 2023 where Police Service was identified as a key strength.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2024 operating budget includes a budget to be used towards the costs associated with the two civic services surveys. The cost of the surveys in 2024 is approximately \$22,100 plus applicable taxes.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social or environment implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

The City will use the results to inform decisions related to strategic priorities, budgeting, and service delivery, as well as to highlight opportunities for continuous improvement. To avoid unexpected disruptions to future surveys, Administration will continue conducting both surveys on an annual basis with online panel participants.

APPENDICES

1. 2024 Civic Satisfaction and Performance Survey Results, 2024 Results
2. 2024 Civic Services Performance, Priorities and Preferences Survey, 2024 Results

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Report Approval

Written by: Carla Blumers, Director of Communications and Public Engagement

Reviewed by: Richard Phillips, Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer

Approved by: Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager

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