

Public Attitudes Toward Municipal Services in Hartford

A Public Opinion Survey Conducted for the City of Hartford

by

JEF Associates

In accordance with Public Bid # 4198

Methodology

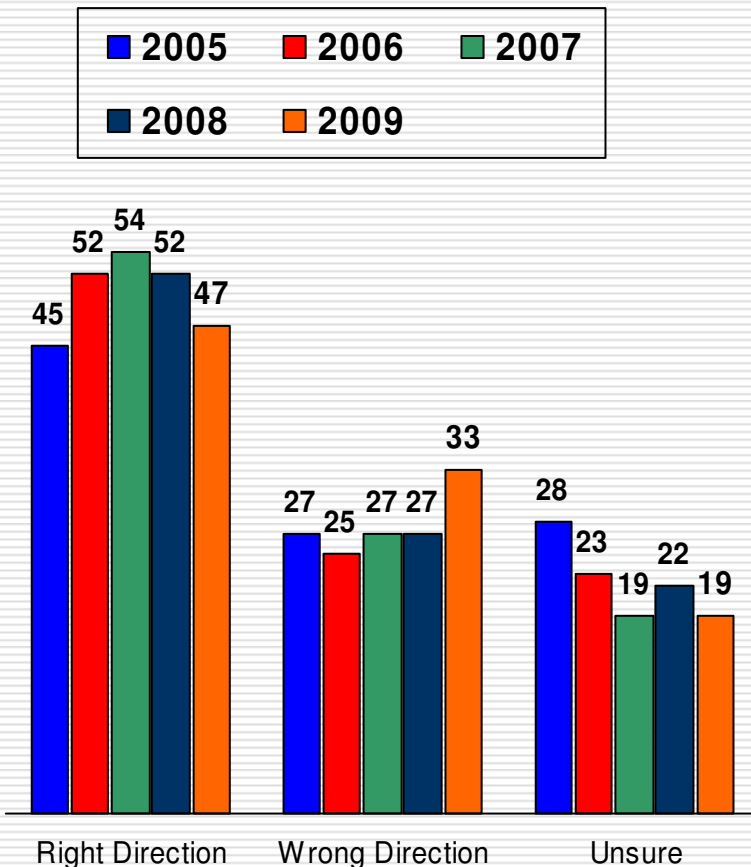
- Poll was conducted between 1/12/09 and 1/19/09
- 600 residents of Hartford (margin of error 4.0%)
- Sample demographics (gender, age, education, neighborhood, racial & ethnic identity, homeownership, children per household) agree with the most recent census data.

HIGHLIGHTS

- More people believe the City is going in the right direction than wrong direction (47% vs 33%)
 - More people believe that public safety is getting better than getting worse (30% vs 18%)
 - More people feel safe than unsafe in their neighborhoods (72% to 28%)
 - 80% of respondents expressed confidence in the Hartford Police Department
 - 3 times as many people feel that education in Hartford is getting better than getting worse (36% vs 13%)
 - City services remained fairly constant with prior years
 - Respondents continue to target Youth Services, Speeding, Roads & Sidewalks and Affordable Housing as areas that need improvement
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Direction of the City of Hartford

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



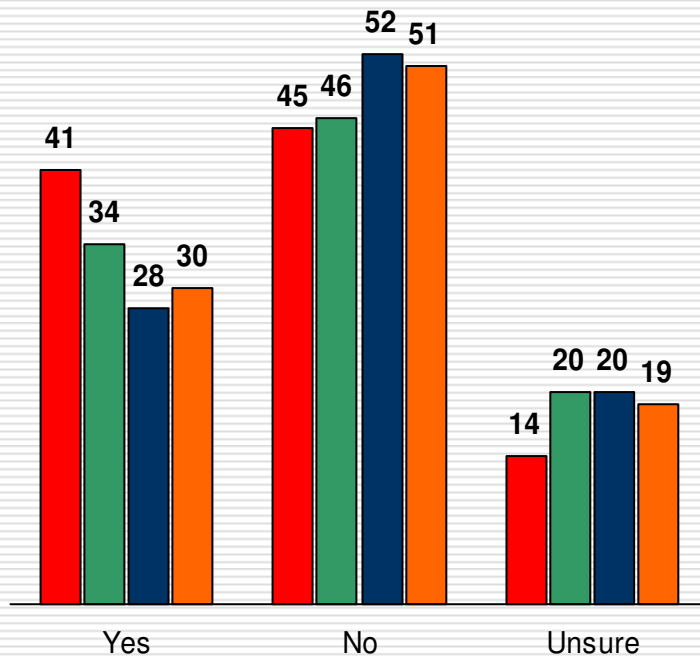
This is a general way to determine people's overall opinion about Hartford.

There is a 5% reduction in the number of people who believe Hartford is going in the right direction.

We restarted the trend of less people being unsure about the direction of the City.

Housing

Do you believe there is adequate affordable housing in Hartford?

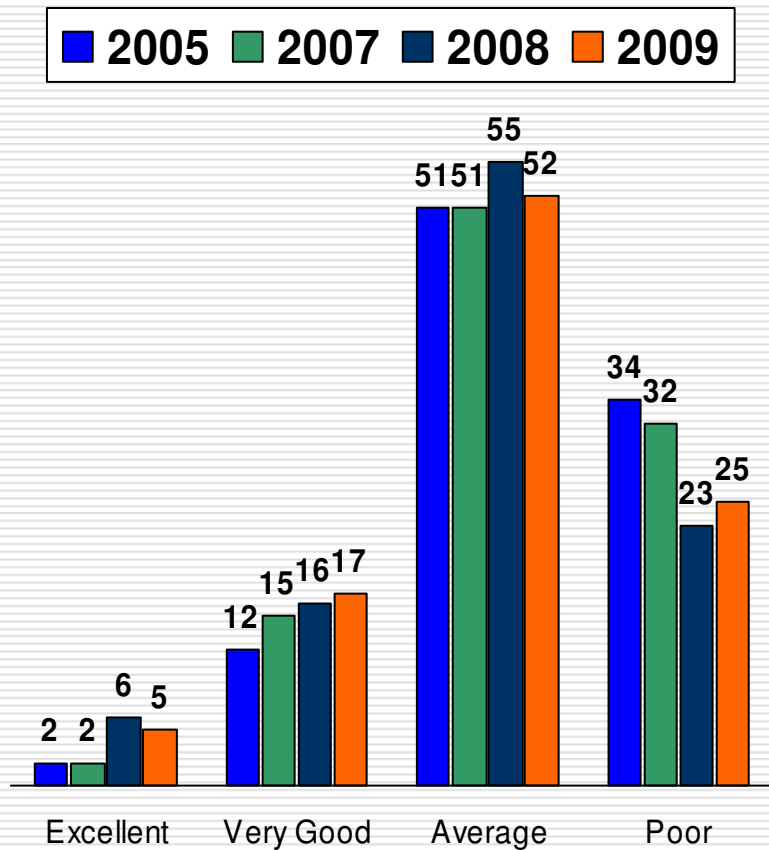


There a very slight increase in the number of people who believe that there is adequate affordable housing.

It may be inside the margin of error, but it reverses a trend over the last 3 years.

Public Safety

How would you rate public safety in Hartford?

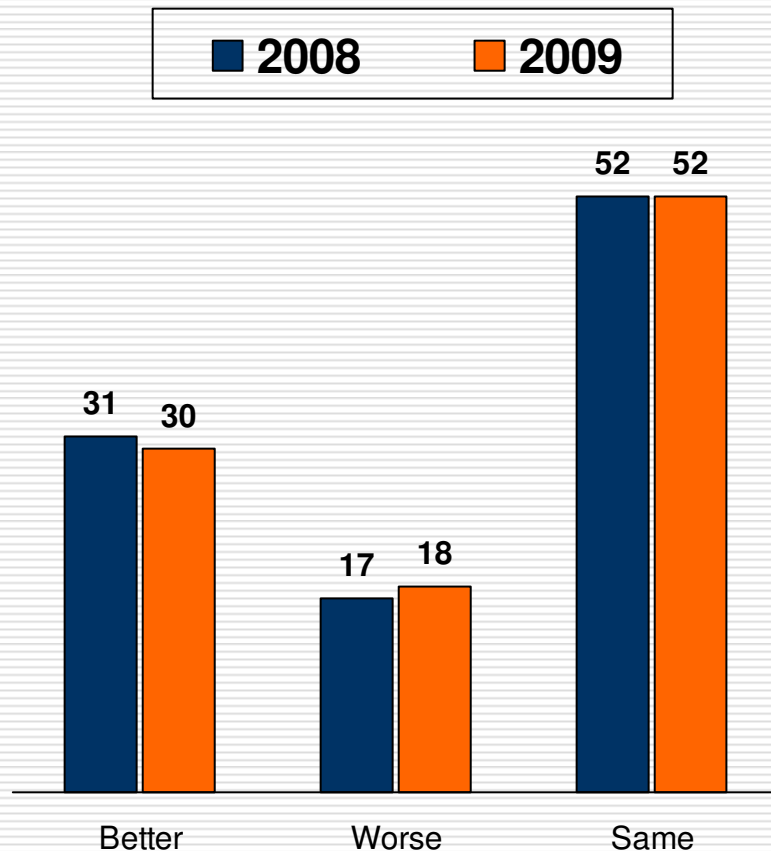


There has been little change in the overall opinion of public safety.

After a significant reduction in the number of people who believed public safety was poor, it seems to have leveled off.

Public Safety

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



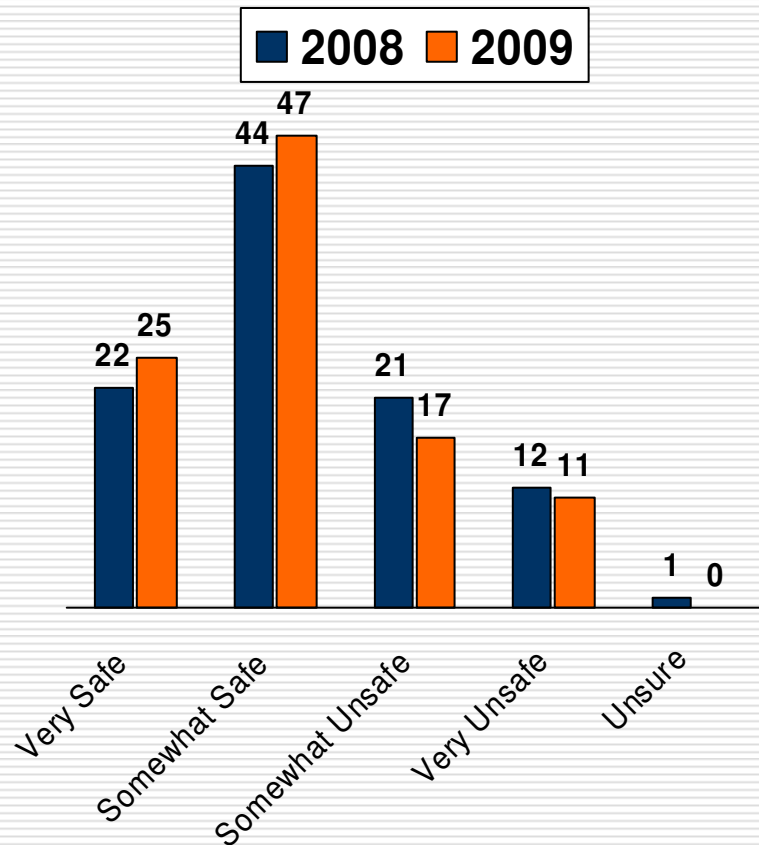
There is little change over last year in this response as well.

As long as more people believe public safety is getting better rather than getting worse we consider this a positive result.

It was interesting to note that only 22% believe public safety was either excellent or very good, while 30% think it is getting better.

Public Safety

How safe do you feel from crime in your neighborhood?



There was a slight increase in the number of people who feel safe in their neighborhoods.

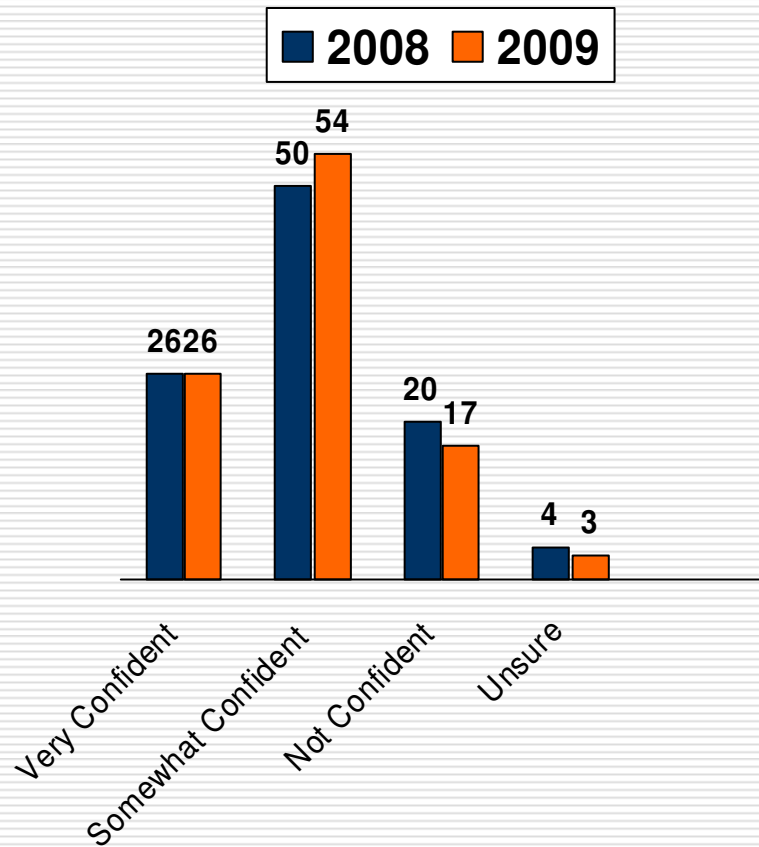
Considering how they feel about public safety in general, these are encouraging results.

72% of the people in Hartford feel very or somewhat safe in their neighborhood.

There is a 14% differential between those who feel very safe and those who feel very unsafe.

Public Safety

How would describe your confidence in the Hartford Police Department?



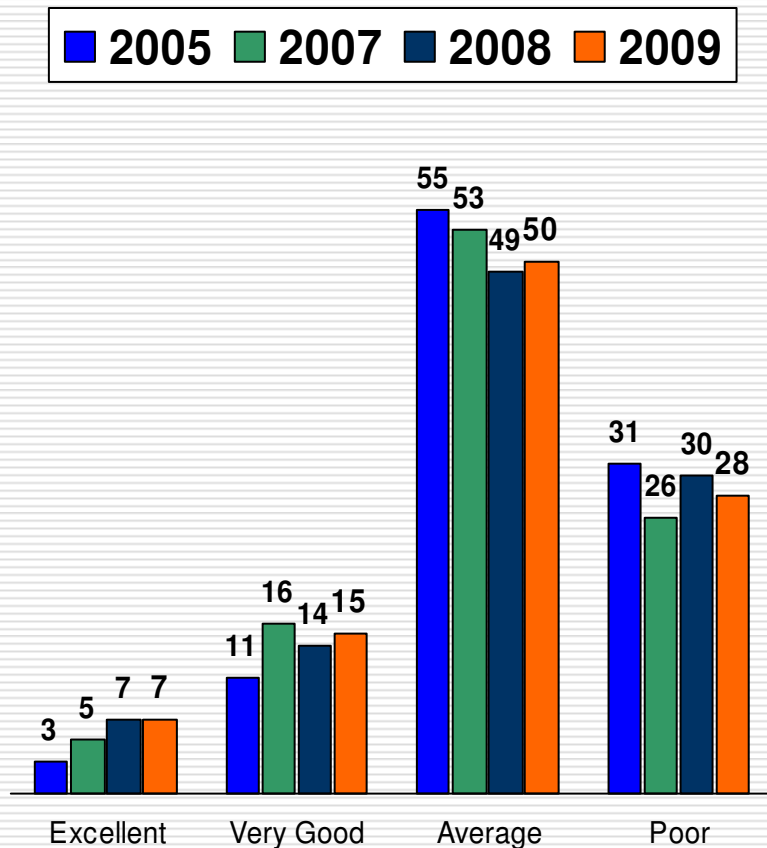
It was interesting to note that 80% are very or somewhat confident in the Police Department.

There isn't a big jump from last year, but these are still solid results.

There is also a 9% differential between people who are very confident and those not confident.

Education

How would you rate education in Hartford?



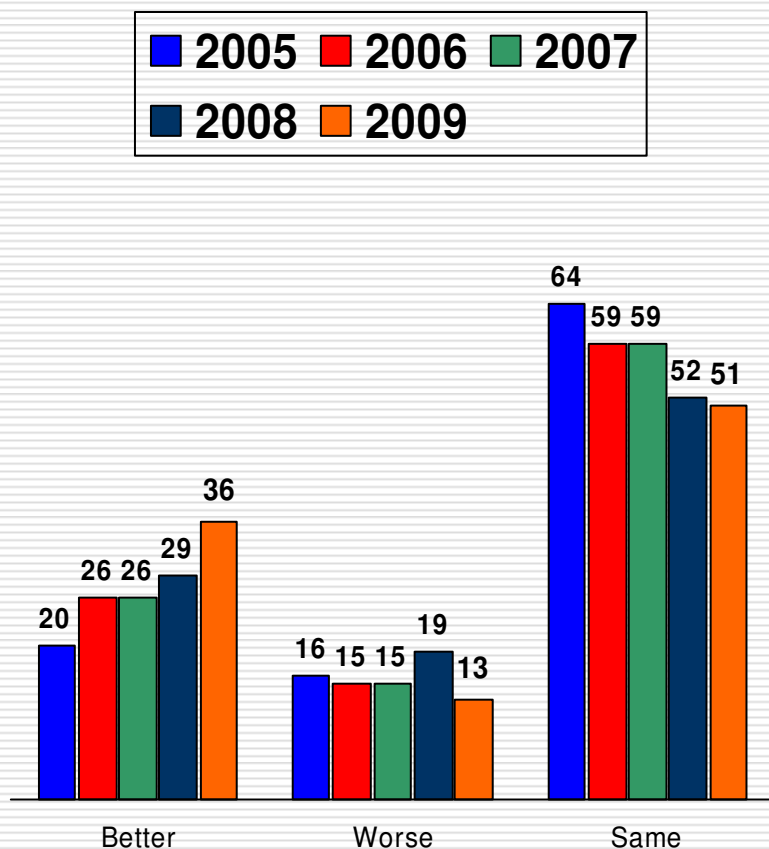
There has been very little movement in people's opinions of education in Hartford

The results did rise slightly, but well within the margin of error.

These overall results mirror the public safety numbers discussed earlier.

Education

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



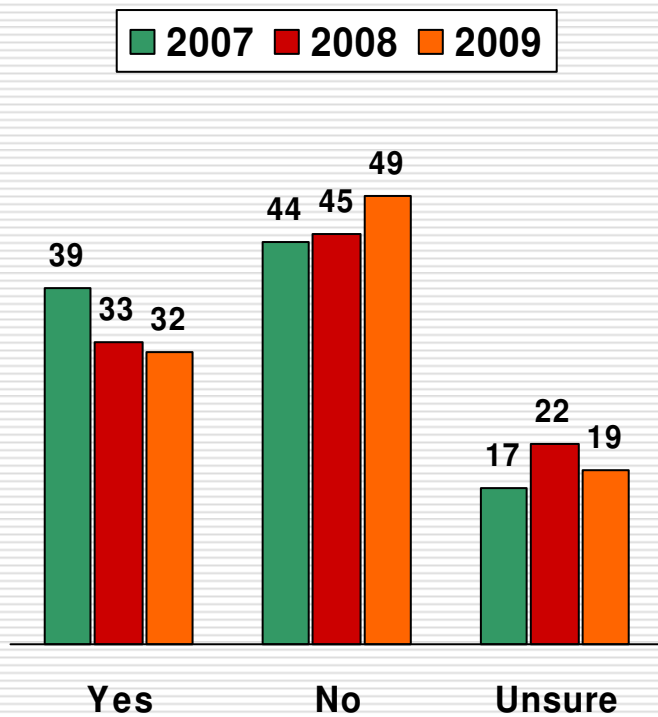
There was a significant jump in people who believe education is getting better.

It is slightly outside the margin of error and a significant jump over the last 3 years.

It is also a 16% jump over the 2005 results.

Education

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

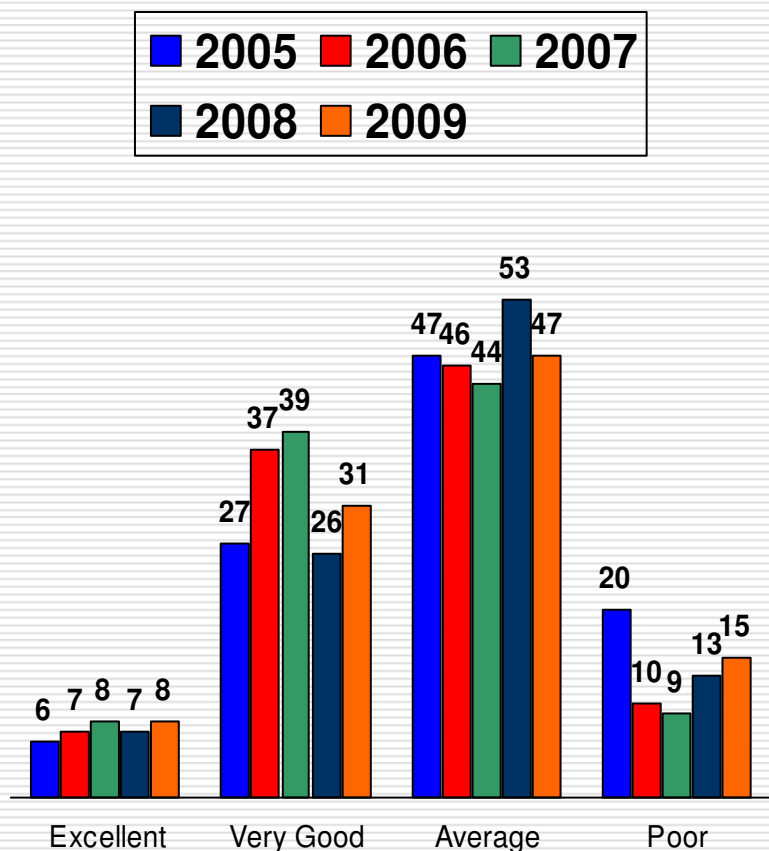


Even though there is an increase in the positive opinion of the current education system in Hartford, more people don't believe that there is enough money spent in the system.

This is not a surprising result, but it is worth noting for the future that even though the system is getting better, we have to increase the number of people who believe that education is very good or excellent before they will believe the system receives enough money.

City Services

How would you rate the city services in Hartford?



There was a slight increase in both the number of people who believe city services are either excellent, very good or poor.

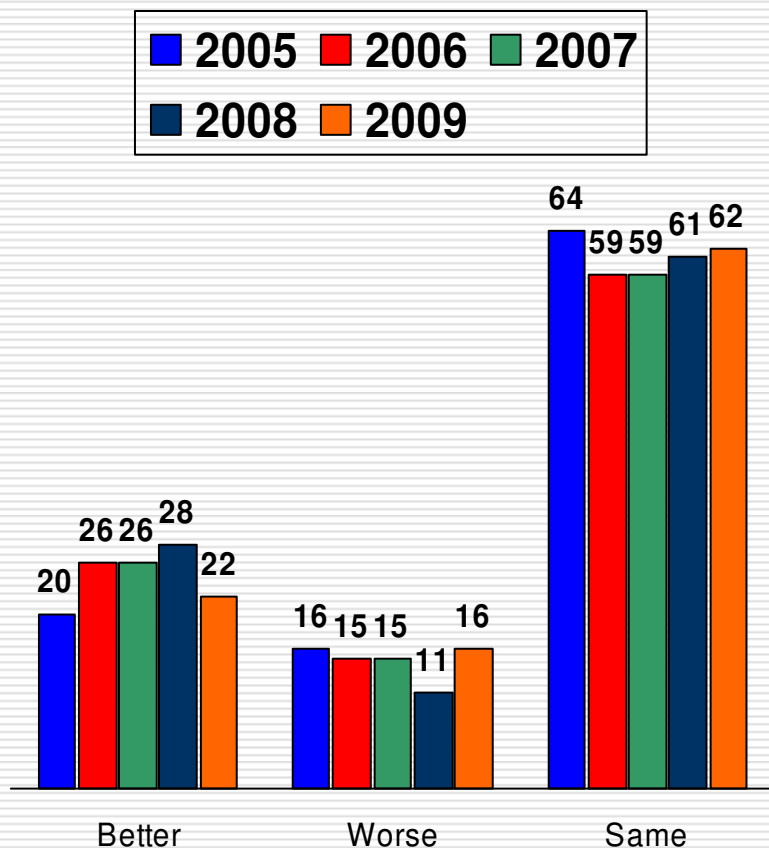
The public's opinion is being solidified.

After the big drop last year, we are starting to see better results.

As we look into individual departments, the results become more encouraging.

City Services

Do you believe City services in Hartford are getting better, worse or staying about the same?

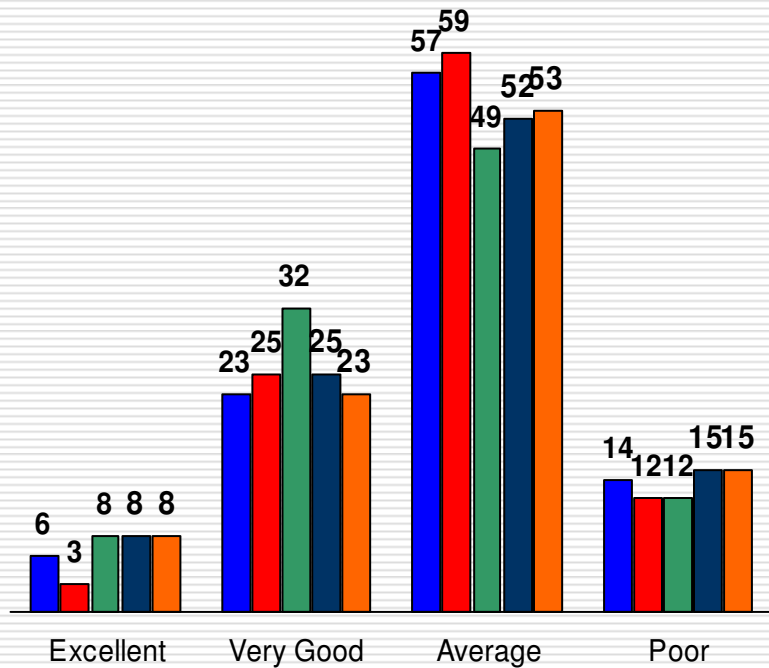
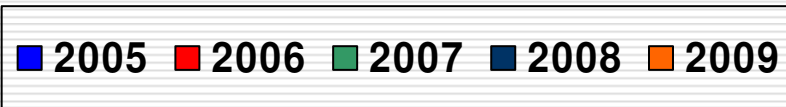


However, there was a drop outside the margin of error in the number of people who believe services are getting better.

As well as a increase in those who think they are getting worse.

There is still 6% differential between those who believe services are better than those who believe they are worse.

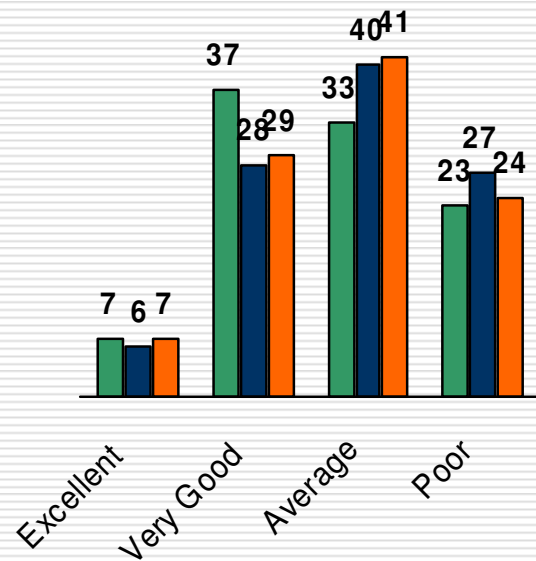
Parks and Pools



There was little difference in opinions on parks and pools.

We had an increase in 2007, but it seems we are back where we were.

Litter Cleanup

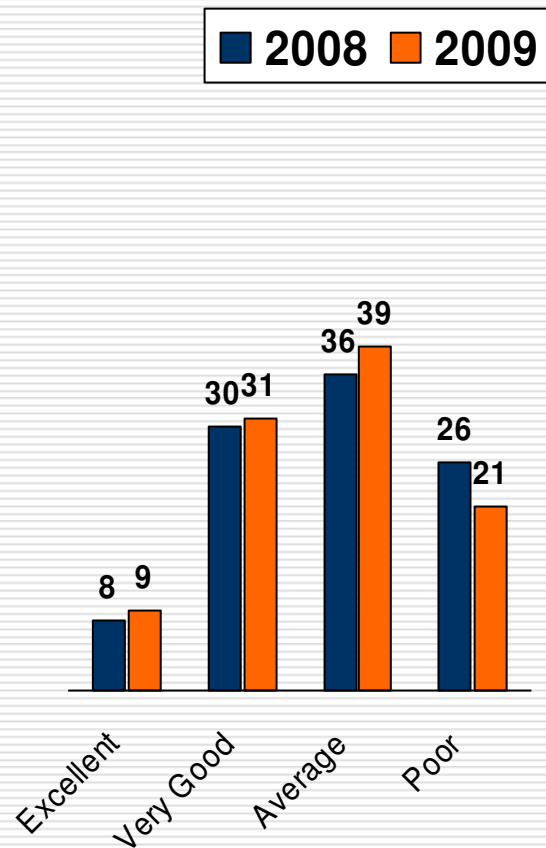


There was a very slight positive increase, within the margin of error on litter clean up.

The number stating poor dropped 3% and is close to the 2007 levels.

This is a good sign since we saw negative results the year before.

Snow Removal

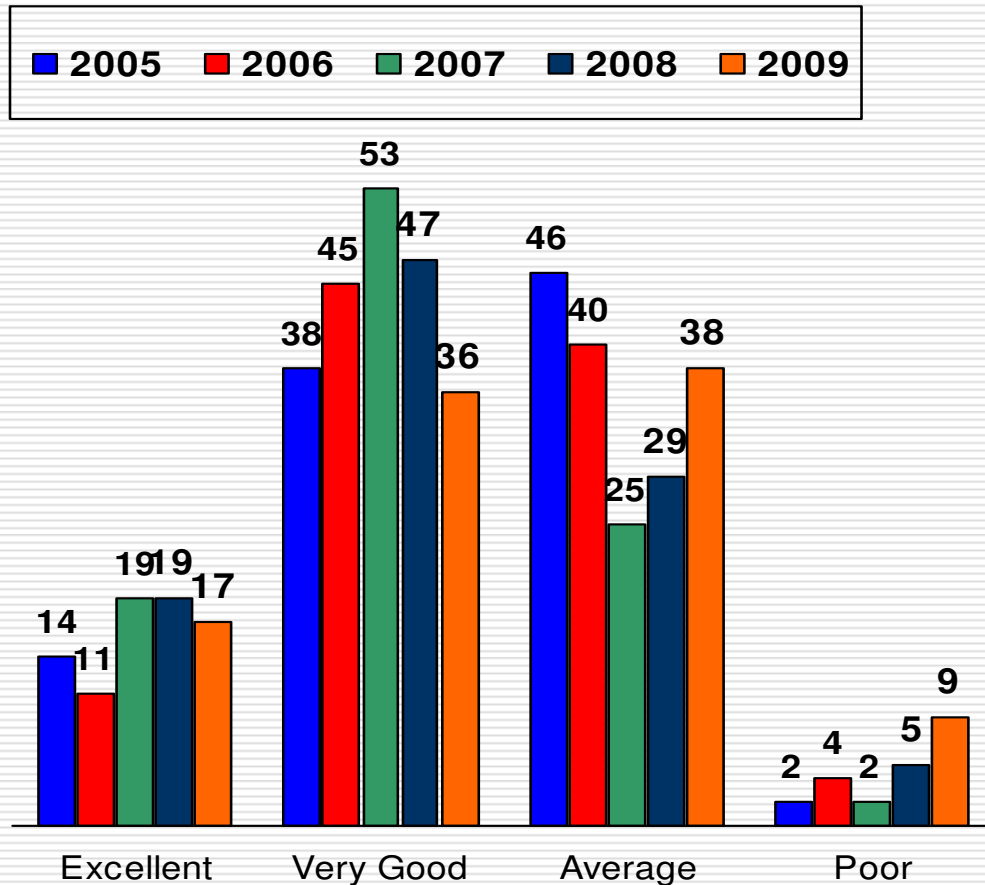


Satisfaction with snow removal increased slightly.

The number of people stating it was poor dropped 5%. Just outside the margin of error.

Considering we had just gotten a storm when we did the survey, and last year's results came from March calls, this is a positive result.

Libraries

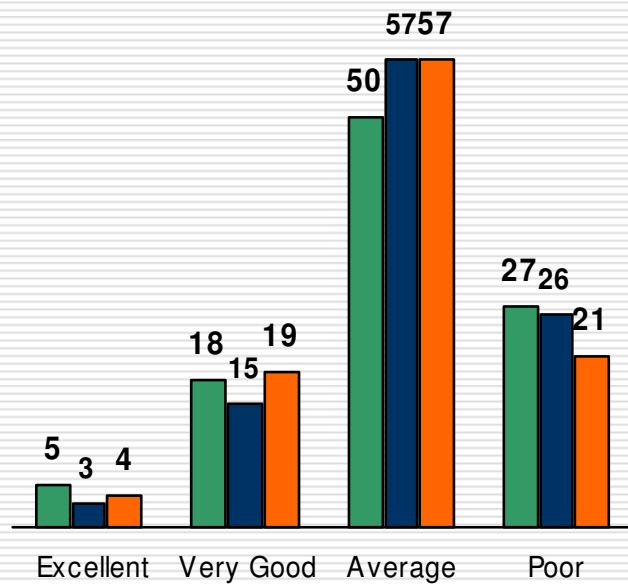


Libraries saw a drop in approval.

Considering the press coverage over the last few months this was to be expected.

Even so, the total approval for libraries is 64%. Still one of our leading services.

Youth Services

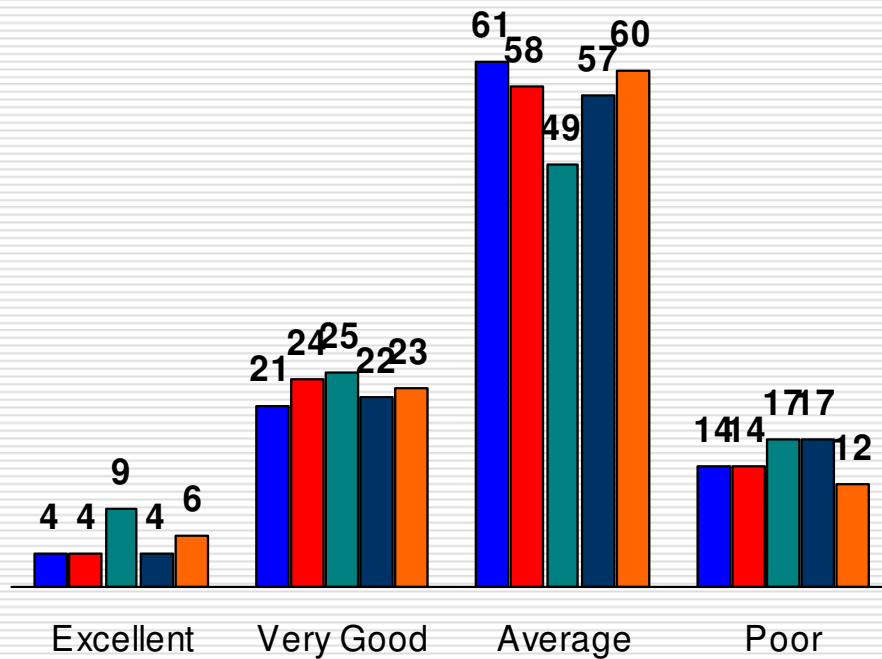
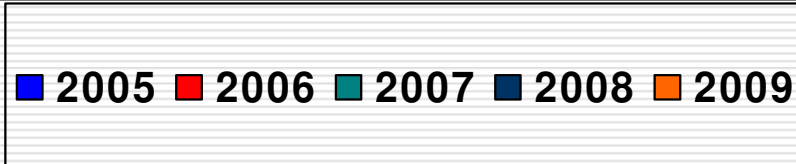


Youth services improved slightly, but still lags overall.

The 5% drop in those who stated poor is outside the margin and a positive trend.

The 4% who responded excellent is the lowest service in the survey.

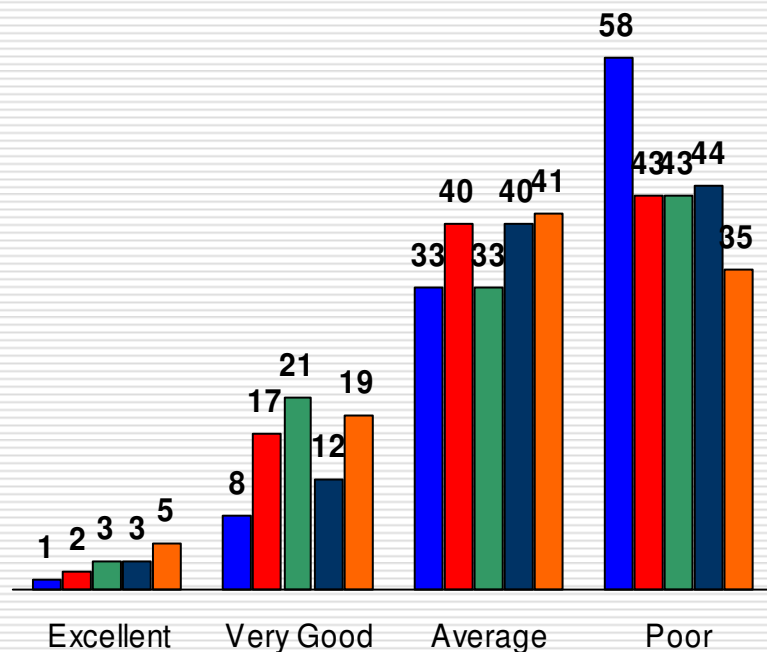
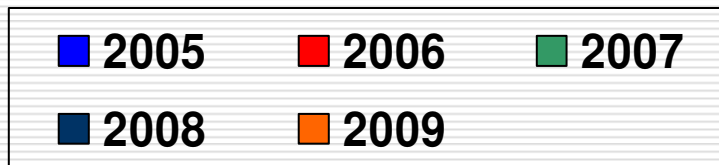
Senior Services



Senior services also saw positive movement.

The people stating poor dropped by 5% to its lowest result in the 5 surveys conducted.

Condition of Roads and Sidewalks

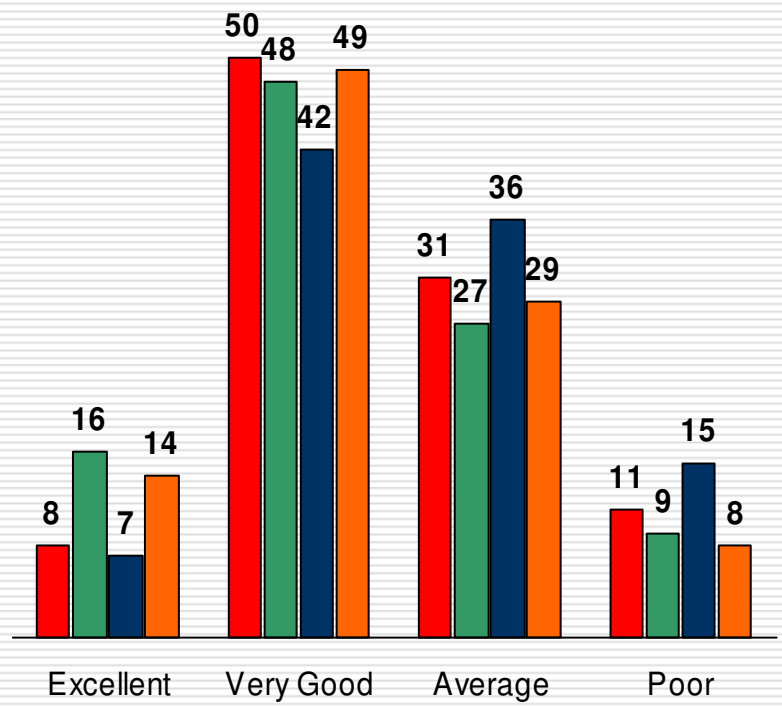


After a drop in results last year we saw a strong rebound in 2009.

Having a 24% positive rating is not a goal, but it is going in the right direction.

The 9% drop in poor responses is significant, but the 23% drop since 2005 is a strong indication of improvement.

Trash Collection



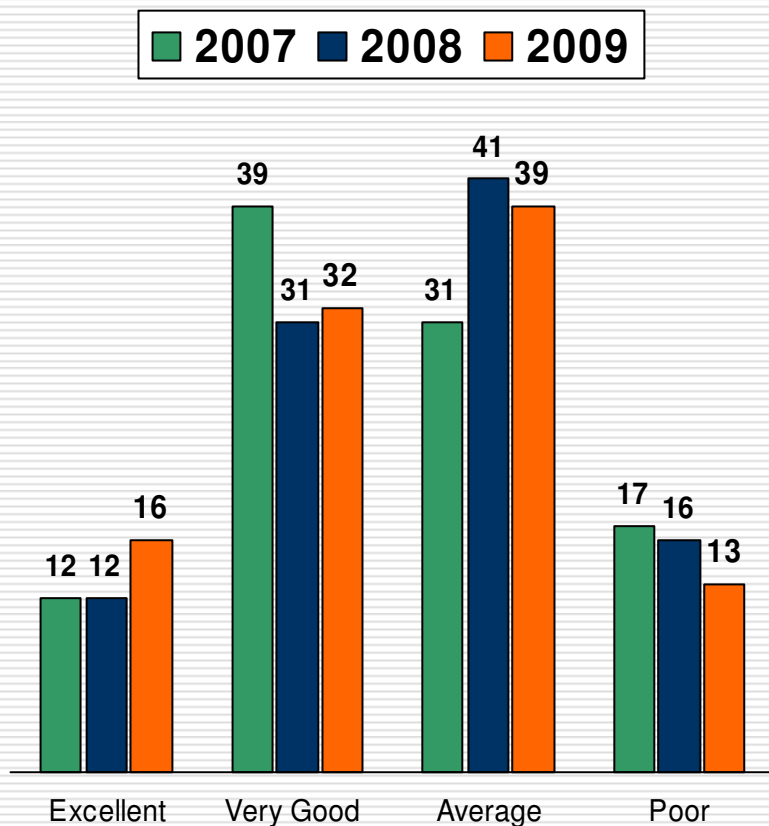
We also saw strong improvement in opinions of trash collection.

Like roads and sidewalks we took a step back in 2008, but rebounded all the way back in 2009.

While there was more long term positives for roads and sidewalks, trash collection started out in a better position. There are 63% who rated trash collection as either excellent or very good.

Cleanliness

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

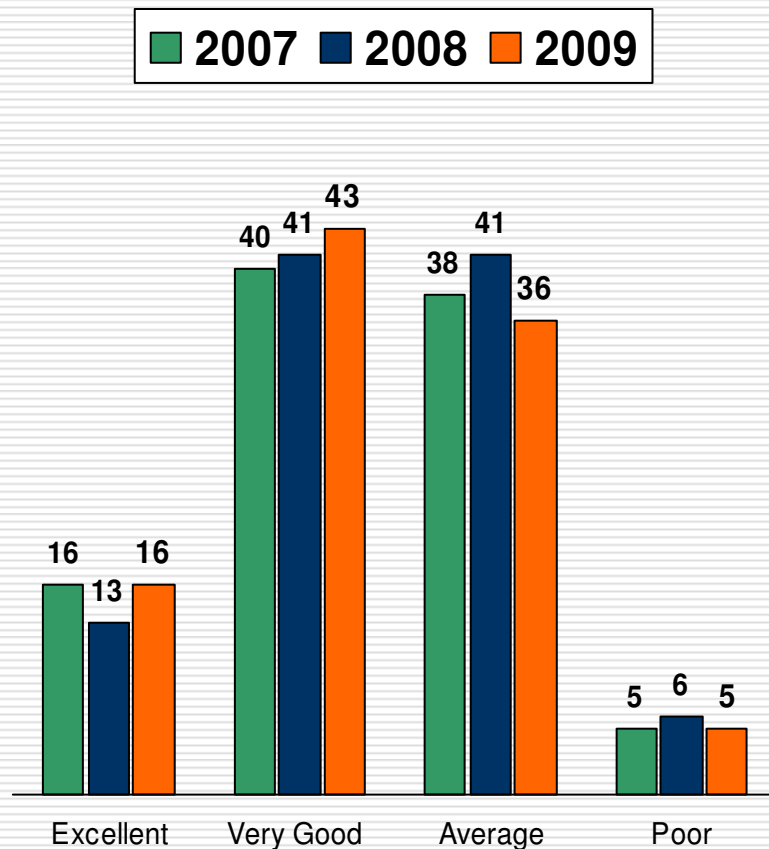


There was a small but near the margin of error increase in people's opinion of cleanliness in their neighborhood.

It reverses the negative trend from 2008, and shows a decrease in the number of people who think it is poor.

Cleanliness

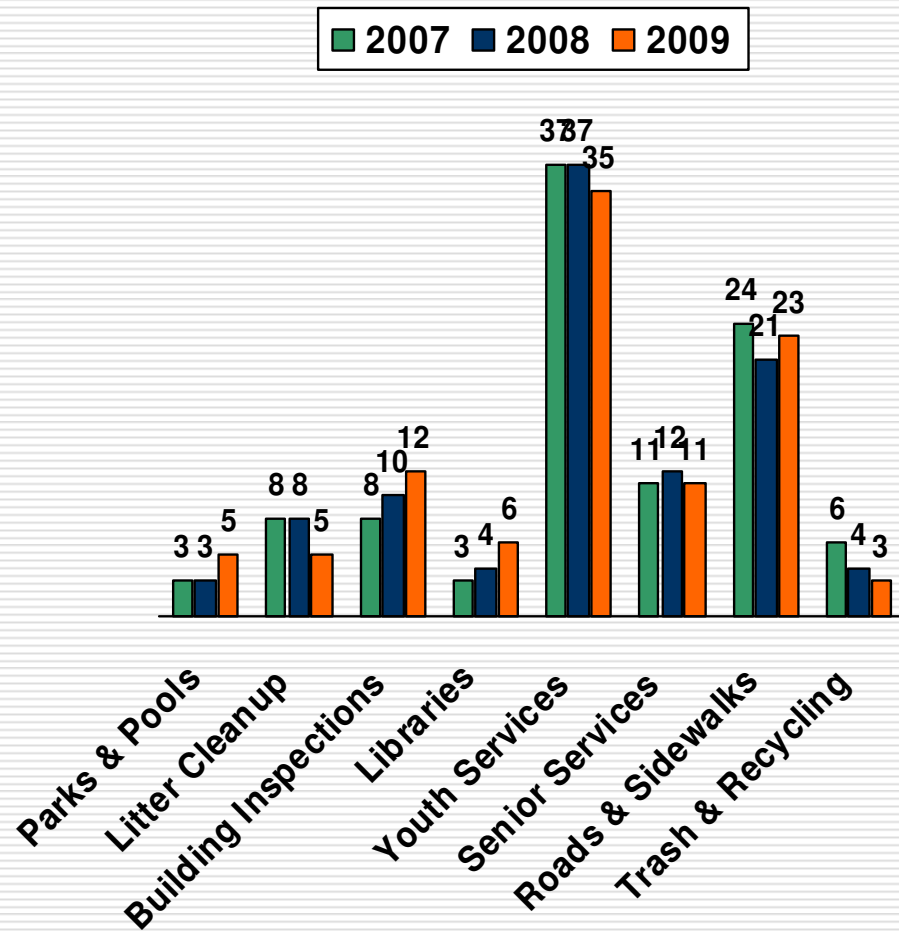
Thinking about cleanliness in general, how would you rate the following in terms of litter: downtown



There was a a smaller change in opinions of cleanliness downtown.

In the past more people thought downtown was cleaner than their neighborhood and now the results have become more even.

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

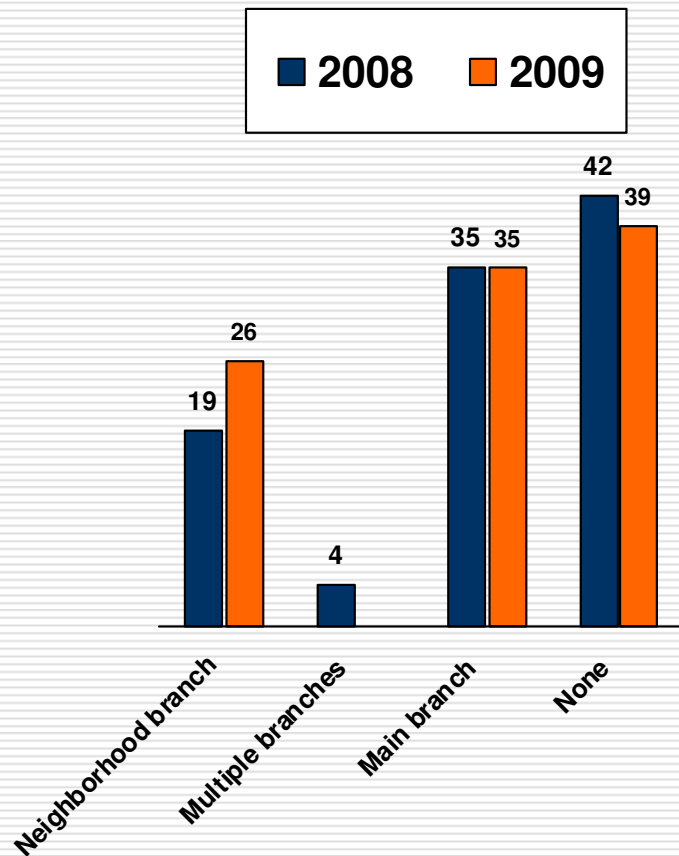


The results haven't changed in 3 years. Youth services, and roads/sidewalks made improvement but still scored poorly.

People feel these areas need to be addressed.

Over all positives for these areas included parks at 32%, litter at 36%, libraries at 53%, youth services at 23%, senior services at 29%, roads at 24%, and trash at 63%.

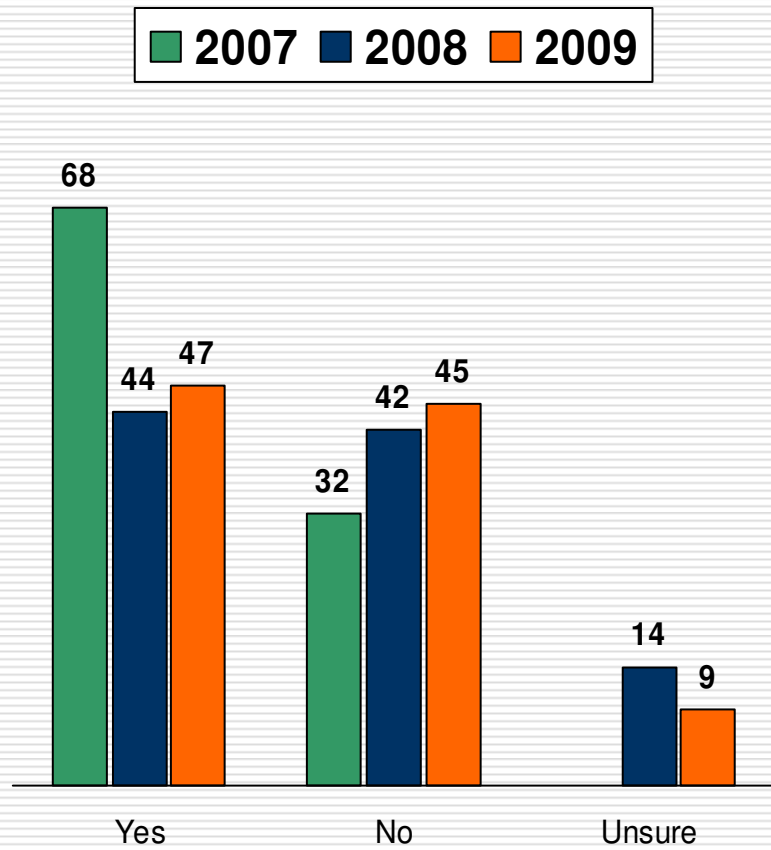
Which of the public libraries have you visited in the last 6 months?



We found similar results compared to 2008. There is a slight increase, just inside the margin, of people who visited a library.

We added the small number of people who went to multiple branches, about 2/3 of which included trips to the main branch, into the neighborhood branch column.

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



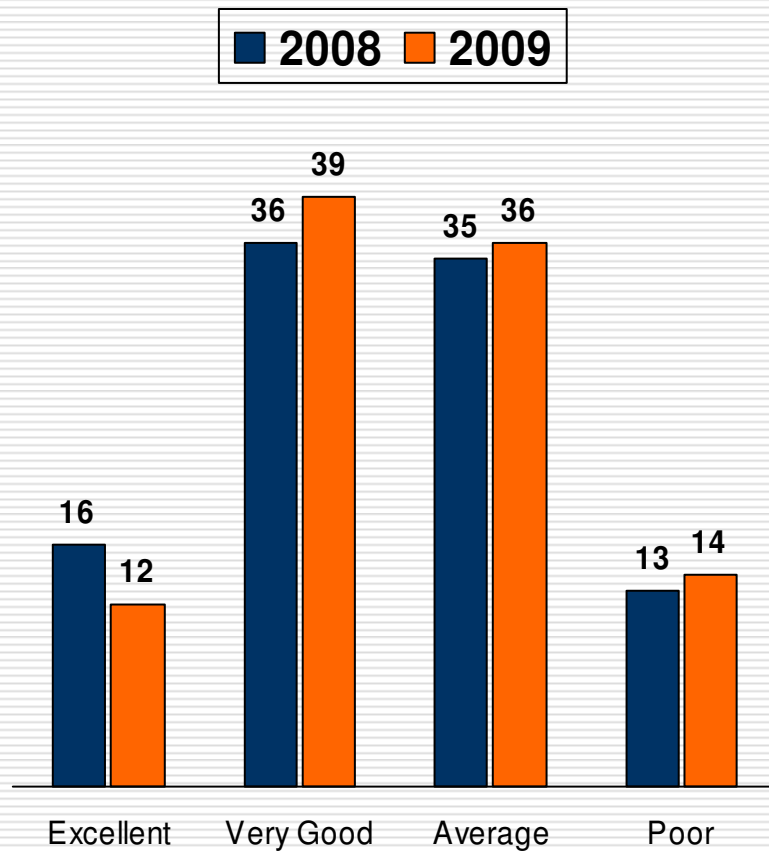
We found similar results to 2008, which continued the trend of less people wanting to pay increased taxes to maintain services.

The number of people in favor and against tax increases are nearly equal.

With the economy in its current state, it is not surprising that less people are unsure.

Quality of Life

How would you rate the Quality of life in Hartford?

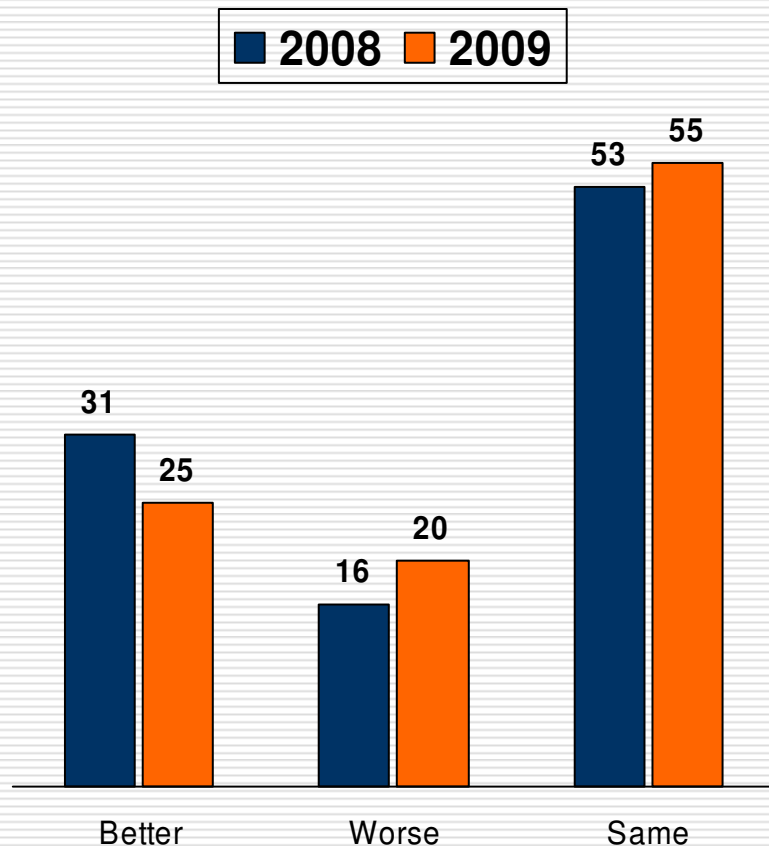


With less people responding excellent and more very good the results are not much different than last year.

There are still 51% who rate the quality of life as excellent or very good.

Quality of Life

Do you believe the quality of life in Hartford is getting better, worse or staying about the same?

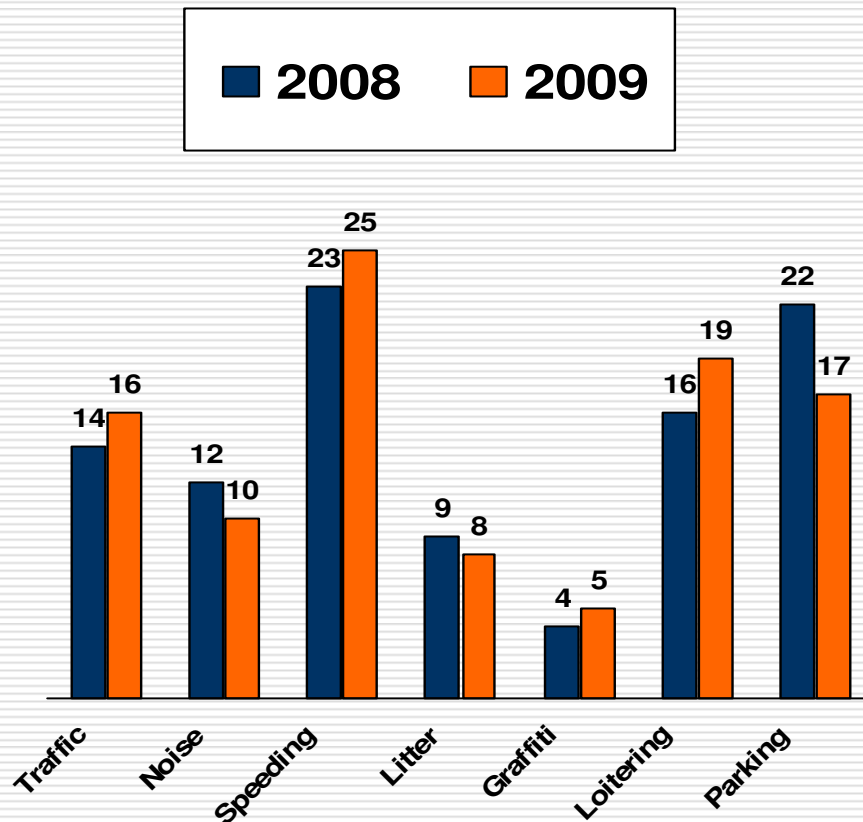


While we saw a 6% drop in people who think the quality of life is getting better, they were split between getting worse and staying the same.

This breaks a trend in other areas that saw people believe that different services and departments may not be great, but they were getting better.

The national economic crisis may have had an effect in this question.

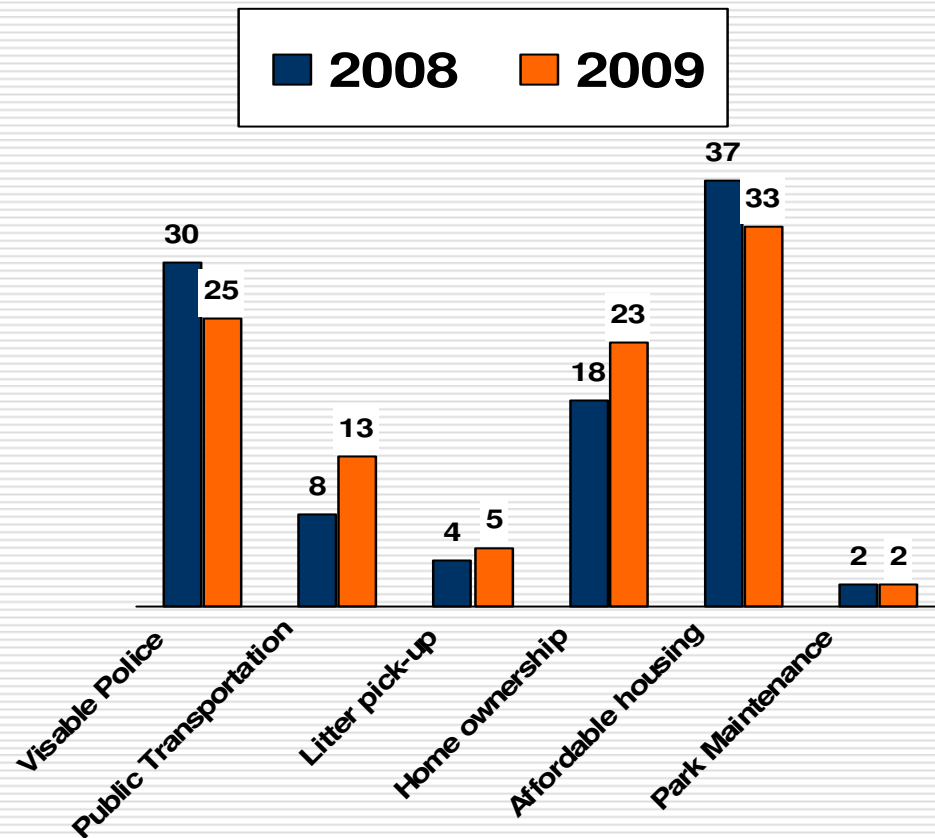
Which of the following areas do you feel needs the most attention?



There were few changes in the areas chosen by respondents. Speeding and traffic were still in the top four.

However, we did see a small drop, outside the margin of error, of people who believe parking needs more attention.

What do you think would most improve the quality of life in Hartford?



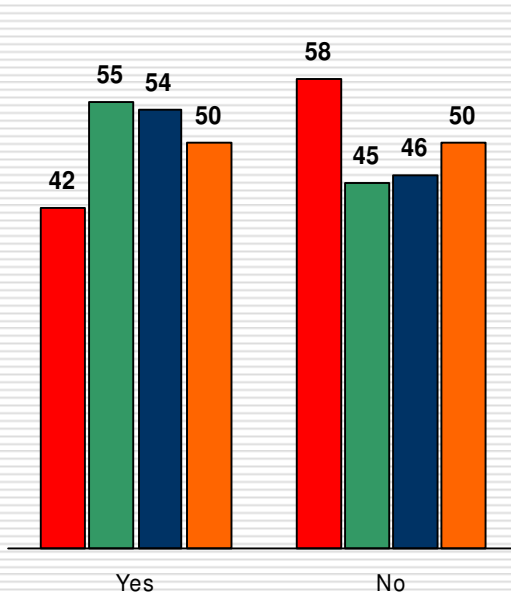
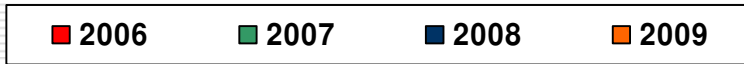
The order of importance didn't change, but the result became closer.

The question we can't answer is, are areas like affordable housing and police less important because people don't see the need for improvement.....

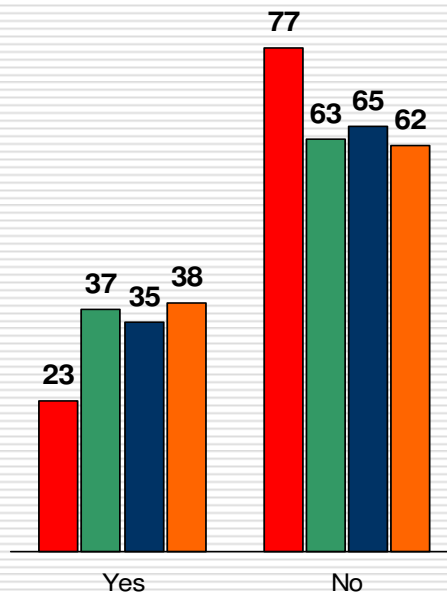
Or, has homeownership and public transportation become more important?

Technology & Communication

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



Mayor's Newsletter



City Website

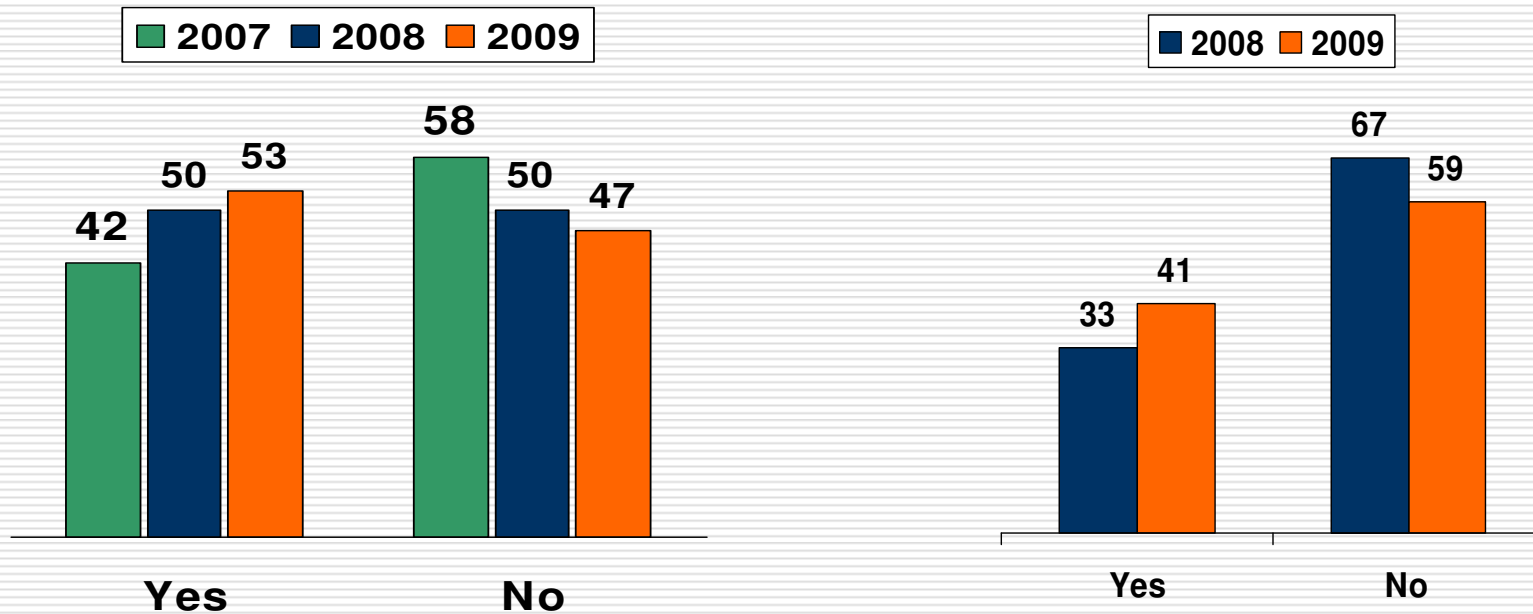
There is a slight drop in the number of people who read the newsletter.

There is a slight increase in the number of people who go to the web site.

There is no surprise in this, since we send out one less newsletter a year and people spend more time scanning the internet.

Customer Service

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

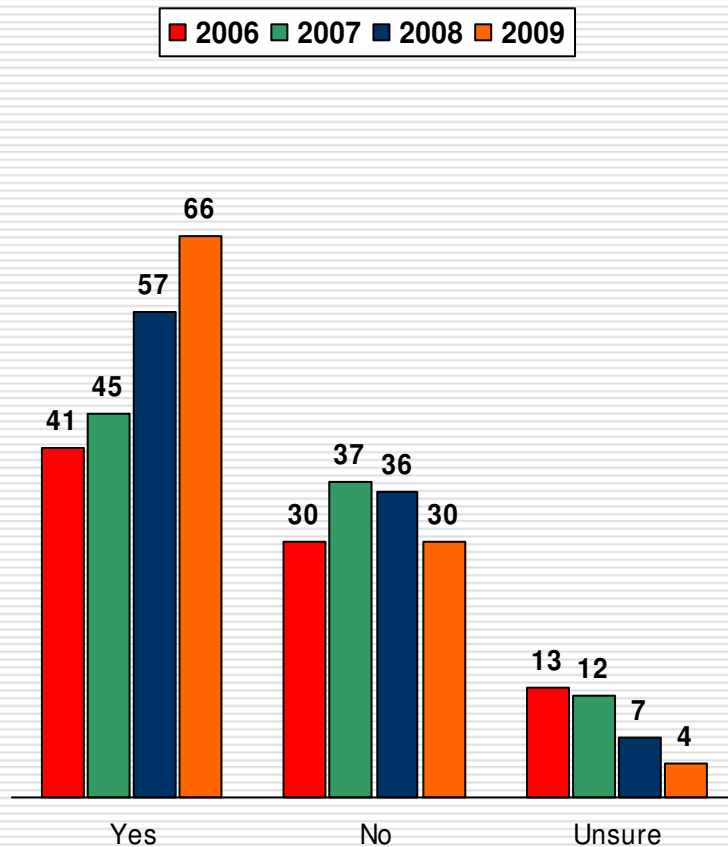


There is another slight increase in the number of people who have heard about 311.

Of the people who have heard if of 311 there was an increase in the number of people who use it.

Customer Service

Were you satisfied with the 311 results?



Of the people who use it there was a strong increase in the number of people who were satisfied.

The definition of satisfied is different for each person. But satisfaction is still the top goal.

Conclusion

- This year was interesting. It was the reverse of last year when the overall performance was better than most individual departments. That seems to have changed.
- We found most of the departments and services tested showed an increase in performance. Whether that increase was the department doing well or just getting better, there was across the board improvement.
- This means, on the ground where people deal with the City everyday, they see improvement or are more satisfied with the results.
- Last year we said you need to affect people on a personal level. These results showed that process has begun. But now we should try and translate the work on the ground into a general perception in the community. Take some of the personal successes and show the entire City that things are moving forward.