

Monterey Community Survey

2007

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Overview

Over 600 citizens responded to this year's survey, higher than the past several years and comparable to rates five years ago. This may be due, in part, to the stunning cover of the City Focus, which featured this year's survey.

This report and the survey were organized around five key areas: City appearance, City government, community services, neighborhoods and business districts, and safety concerns. Additionally, open-ended comments were examined and summarized in the final section.

Ratings

Most of the items (indicated by *italics*) on the survey were rated on a five-point scale, labeled "excellent, above average, average, below average, poor." For ease of comparison, average or better ratings are combined as "percent favorable" and the remaining percentage represents below average and poor ratings (percent unfavorable).

Percent favorable ratings of 90 or higher are considered excellent; ratings of 80-89% favorable are good, and those below 70% as problems. Of the 41 rated items, 59% were in the 90s, 27% in the 80s, 12% in the 70s, and 1 item below 70—City street conditions (69%). The average of all these items was 88% favorable.

Highlights

The top rated areas are: fire department, preservation of historic resources, protection and cleanliness of parks, library, cleanliness of beaches, WAVE, harbor/marina services, as well as the overall cleanliness of the City and overall services provided.

The lowest rated areas are: City street conditions, availability of parking in business districts, neighborhood street conditions, police presence in the neighborhoods, availability of bike lanes, City government listening to citizens, as well as concerns with speeding in neighborhoods and safety in some areas at night.

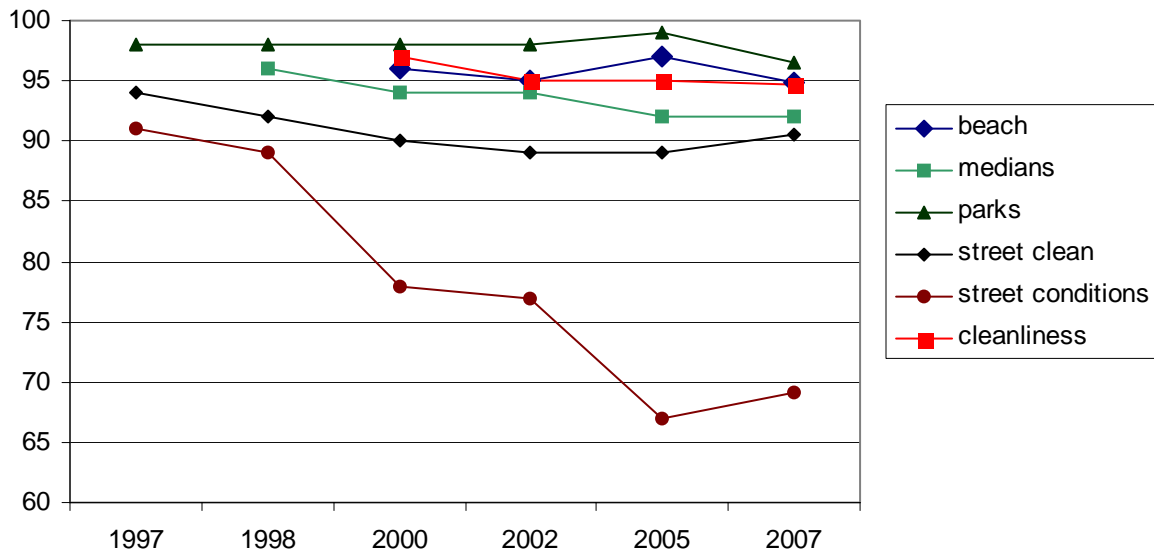
Of these lowest rated items, City streets, business parking, police presence, and listening to citizens have all shown improvements since 2005.

Also on the rise are: programs for teens, City TV, cleanliness and safety in neighborhoods. Decreases were noted for the availability of bike lanes and cleanliness of business districts. There was an increase in serious concerns about traffic issues and neighborhood walkways and an increased concern with safety in City parks at night.

This was also a banner year for Monterey. Over the past seven years, these were the highest ratings for: availability of parking, harbor services, programs for children, youth, teens and adults, the WAVE, listening to citizens, protecting historic resources and parks, the City website and TV, beach and street cleanliness, as well as cleanliness and safety in one's own neighborhood. The dramatic decline (24 points) in ratings of City street conditions stopped and took a slight increase; similarly, the library had shown a continuous decline of 8 points and has also halted and risen slightly.

City Appearance

Residents evaluated how well the City has been doing in maintaining the *beaches*, *parks*, *medians-greenbelt-street trees*, the *cleanliness* and *conditions* of the streets, and an *overall rating* of the cleanliness of the City as a whole. All ratings but those of street conditions are in the 90s. The dramatic decline in views of street conditions may have ceased. At 69% favorable, it is the only item below 70% on the survey this year.



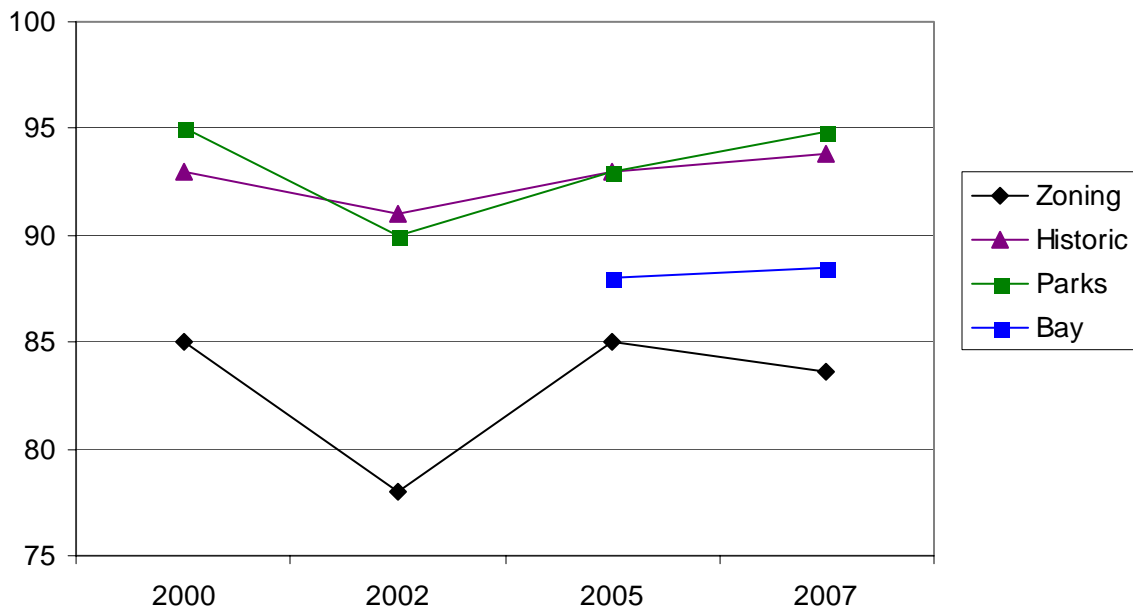
A vast majority of written comments that addressed any of these were directed at street conditions, one of the most frequent topics for comments. Most of these were directed at specific issues and locations (e.g., downtown potholes). The landscape of medians was complimented.

City Government

The items in this section are organized into three groups: care for the welfare of the City and its environment, communication with the community, and citizen involvement.

Care for the welfare of the City

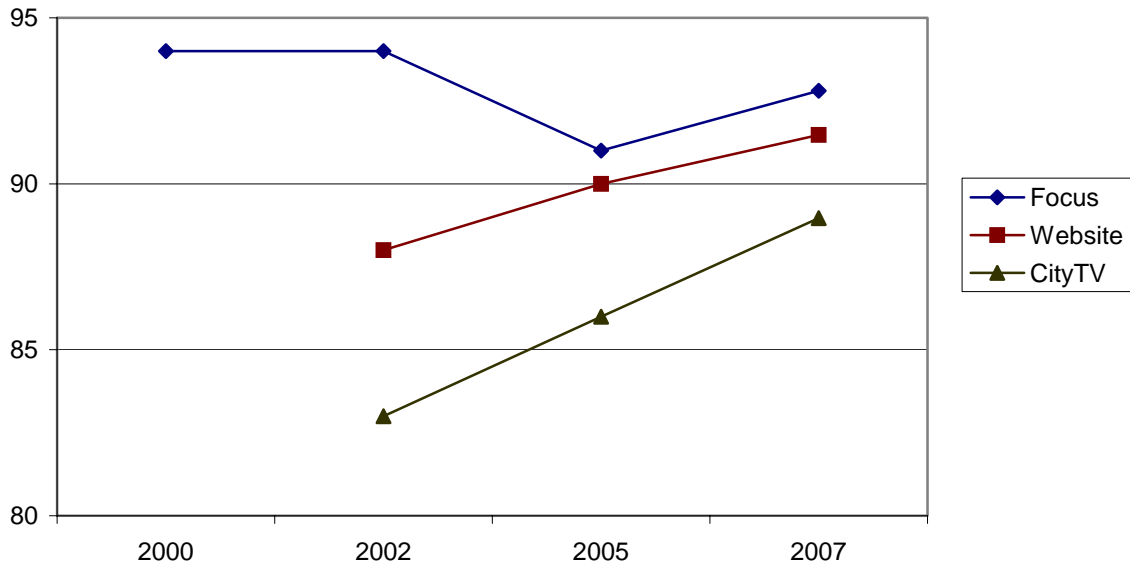
The first group of items concerns the City government's *efforts to preserve historic resources, parks/open space, to keep pollutants out of the Bay, and Code/zoning regulation enforcement*. There was a significant improvement over the past five years in perceptions of how well the City is doing to preserve its parks and open space. Relatively little change is noticed in the other areas.



These items, while well-rated, do not receive many comments.

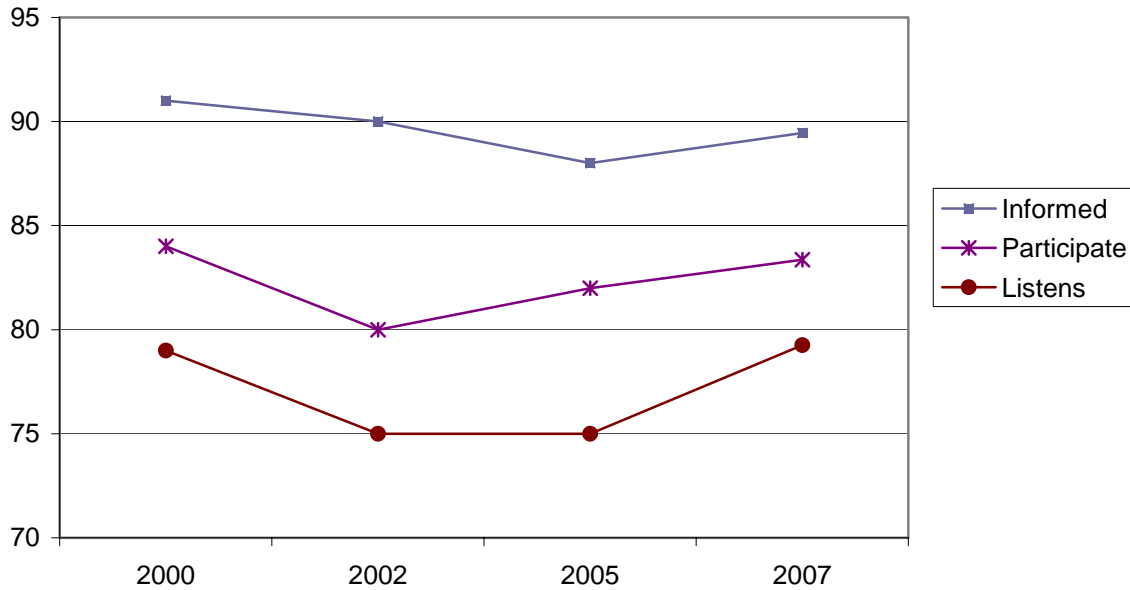
Communication with the community

In the next graph, three items address the City's communication with the community: the *information value of the City Focus newsletter*, the *City Web site*, and *City TV programs*. These items continue to receive high ratings and the City TV programs have shown significant improvement in the past five years, the second largest gain on the survey over this time. Positive comments are made about City TV, particularly the broadcasting of the City Council meetings. The *City Focus* continues to be one of the highest rated items on the survey.



Citizen involvement

Three other items address citizen involvement: *keeping you informed about City services, events and issues; opportunities to participate in City decision-making process; and considers/listens to citizen comments/input*. Keeping you informed has remained consistently high and opportunities to participate and listening to citizen input have increased over the past five years.

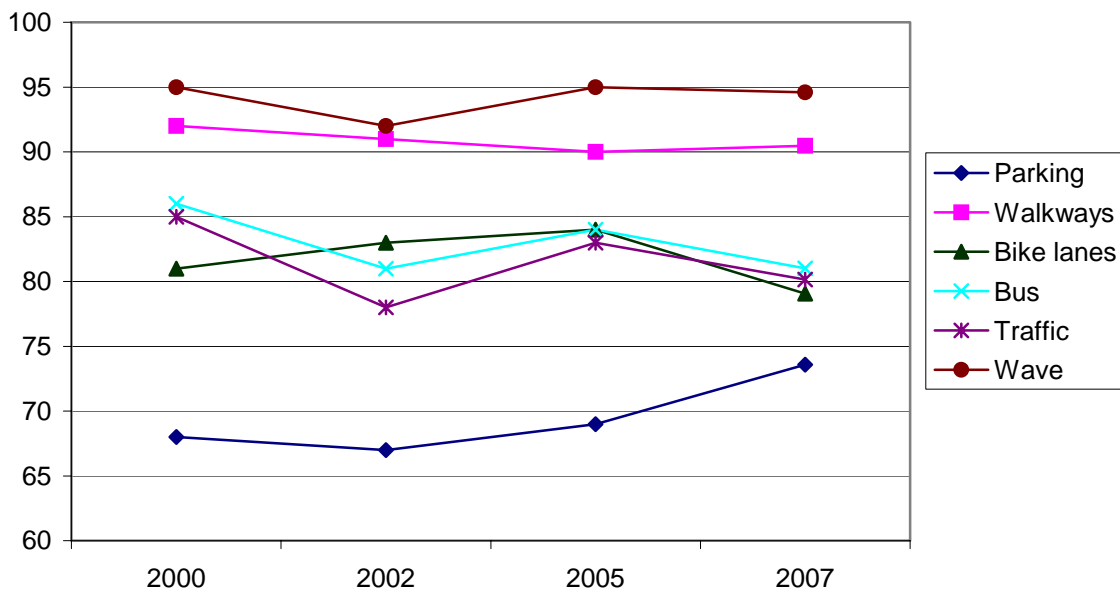


Community Services

This comprehensive section of the survey is grouped into three categories for ease of presentation: issues related to streets and transportation, services related to public welfare, and programs designed for citizens of different age groups.

Transportation

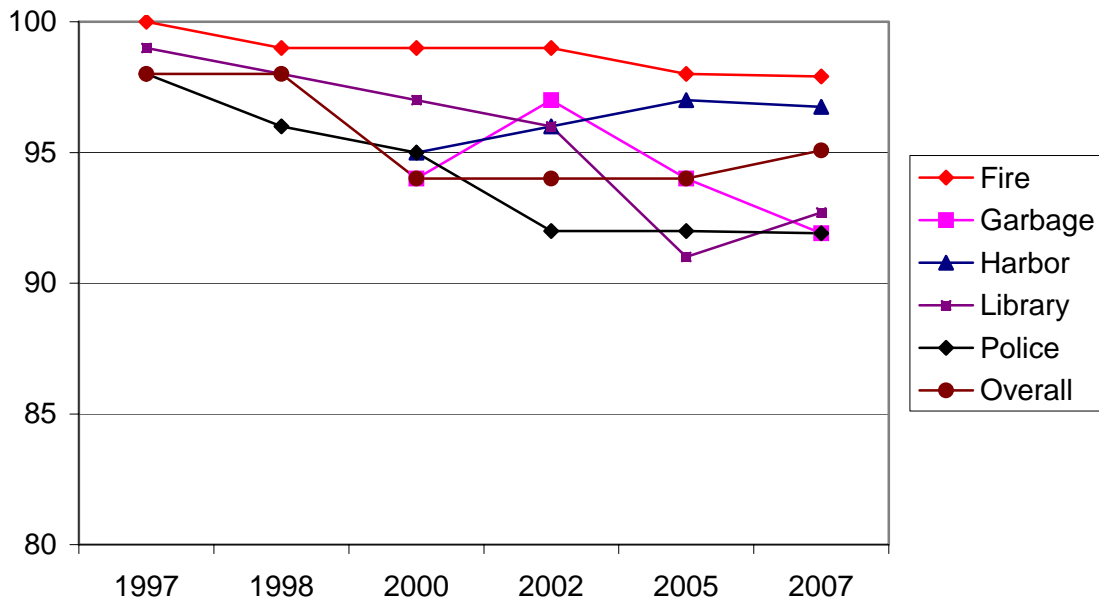
All but one of the items related to transportation received high ratings, listed in order of favorability: *WAVE shuttle service*; *availability of pedestrian walkways/areas*; *bus service (operated by MST)*; *vehicle traffic enforcement*; and *bicycle lanes*. *Availability of parking in business districts* has made significant improvements in the past five years. It had been the only other item rated below 70% favorable and is now above that mark. The availability of bike lanes, conversely, has declined significantly in the past three years and is now below 80% favorable.



This is a popular area for comments. Of these, traffic leads the list with parking close on its heels. Traffic receives both general comments as well as in specific locations; parking usually focuses on one area. Absence of walkways is a source of comments, specifically in residential areas.

Public services

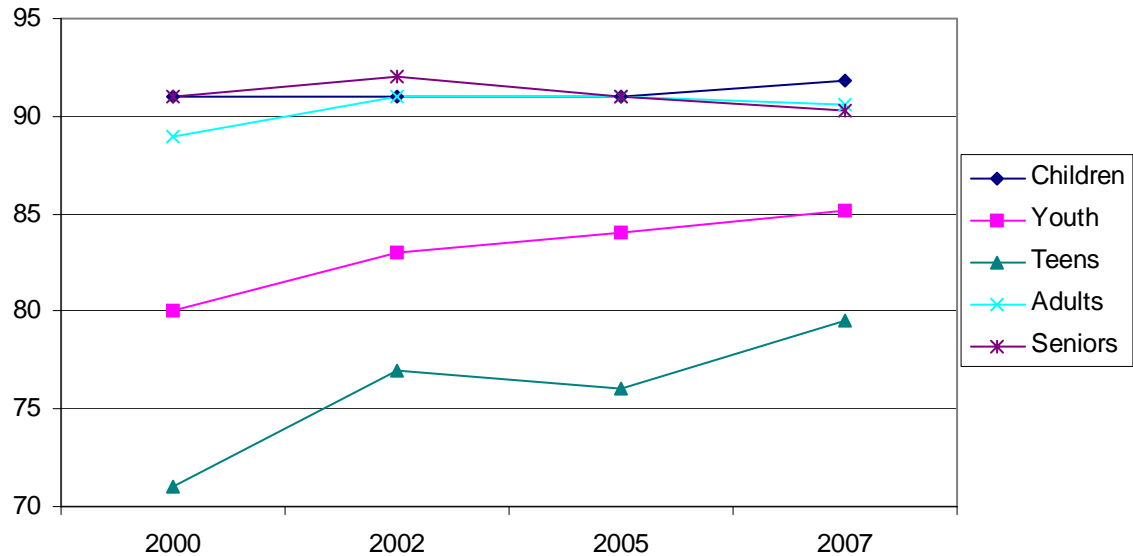
A second group of items represent services for the public welfare. The graph below can be deceptive. Please note that ALL of these items had favorable ratings higher than 90%. Ranked in order, they are: *fire services*, *Harbor/Marina services*, *library services*, *garbage collection/recycling*, and *police services*. *Library services* had dropped significantly, but appear to have stopped the decline. *Garbage services* (contracted) have dropped five points in the past five years.



A few comments are made relative to this area, though they often reference the police. The police are usually mentioned in the context of speeders, parking violators, vagrants, neighborhood patrols or general visibility. The library always receives a few compliments.

Community programs

The third group of community services relate to programs designed for different age groups. The ratings, in order, are: *programs for children (preschool to elementary)*, *programs for adults*, *services for senior adults*, all of which received more than 90% favorable ratings; followed by *programs for youth (middle/junior high school)* and *programs for teens (high school)*. The latter two programs have shown significant improvement since 2000. The rise in ratings for programs for teens is the largest on the survey.



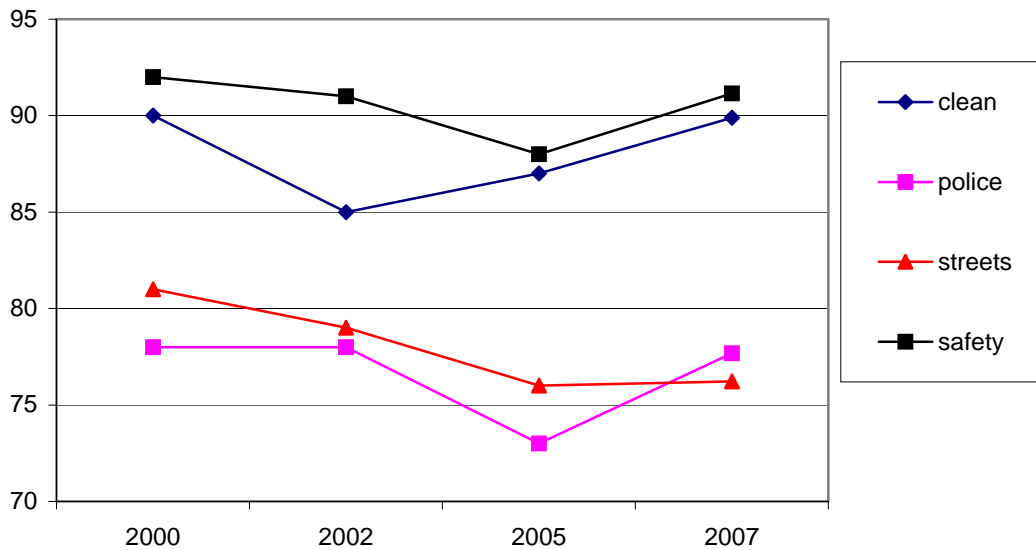
More programs for children and teens are frequently requested.

Neighborhood and business district

A set of items that first appeared in 2000 addressed neighborhood issues. The same set of items was extended in 2005 to one's business district.

Neighborhood

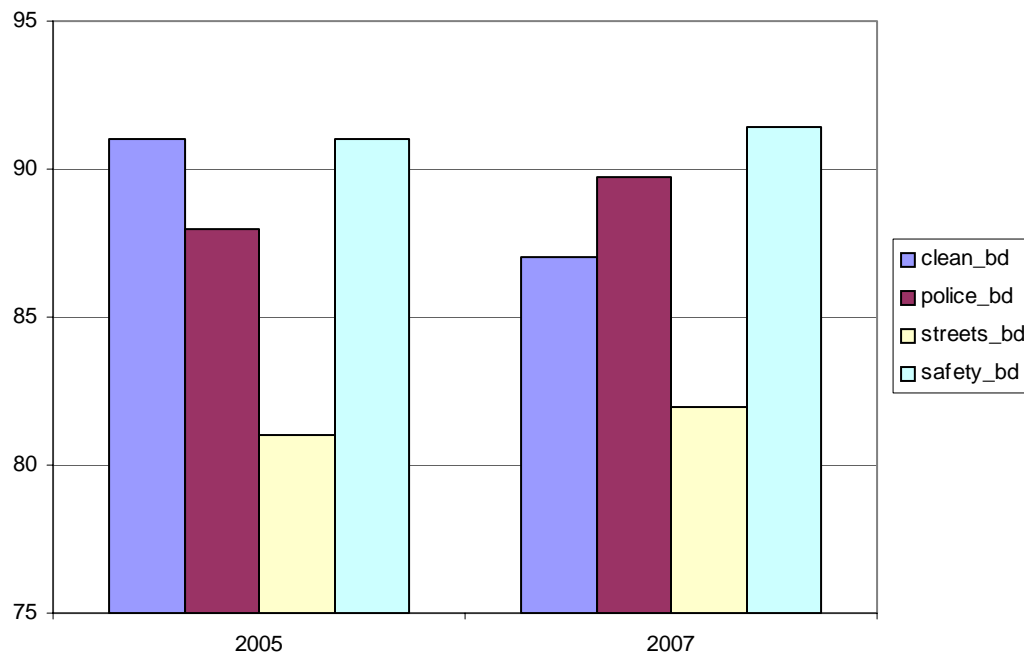
Citizens were asked to rate *cleanliness in your neighborhood*, *neighborhood police patrol*, *neighborhood street conditions* and *safety of your neighborhood*. Safety and street cleanliness are highly rated, the latter showing significant improvement over the past five years. Neighborhood street conditions remain low, but neighborhood police presence has made significant improvement in the past two years.



Comments about street conditions, cleanliness and police visibility are frequent topics for comments. 'More' and 'better' are the operational words included.

Business District

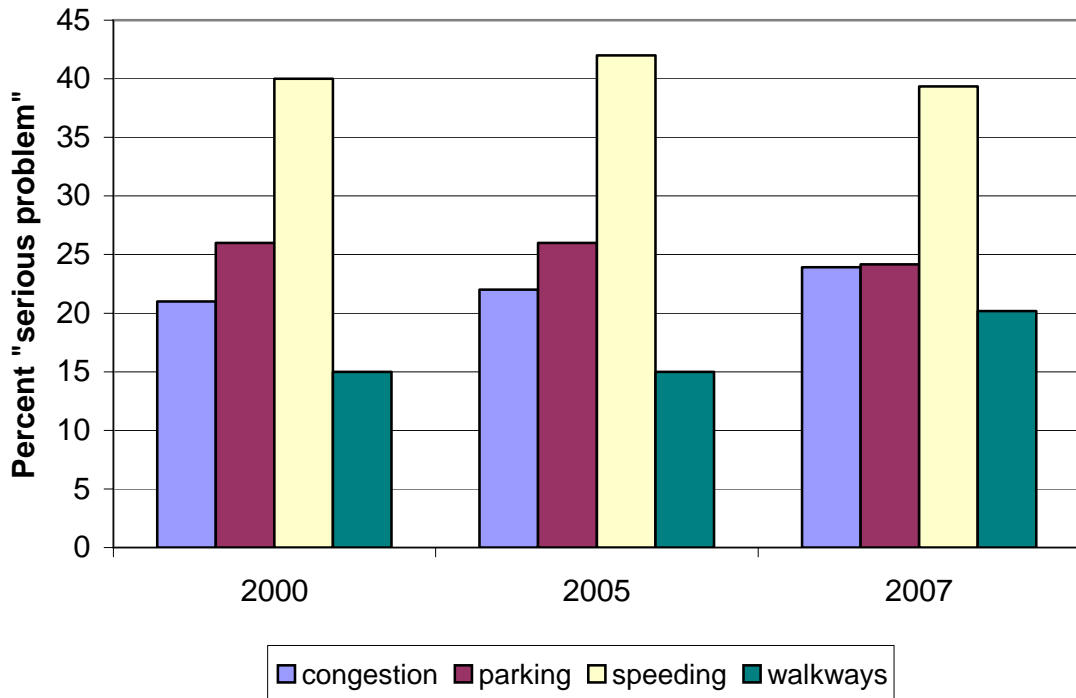
Starting in 2005, citizens were asked to rate the same features of their business district. Street conditions are rated significantly higher than in neighborhoods, as is police presence. Two years ago, business districts were rated higher for street cleanliness than in neighborhoods; this has reversed.



A number of comments are made about cleanliness in business districts, followed by comments about police presence, though fewer than comments about one's neighborhood.

Neighborhood traffic

Citizens were asked to indicate whether the following items were: a serious concern, somewhat of a concern, or no concern. The items were: *congestion*, *parking*, *speeding vehicles in your neighborhood*, and *walkways (crosswalks, sidewalks)*. *Speeding vehicles* continue to be viewed as a serious concern by about 40% of citizens. Serious concerns about walkways have shown a significant increase in the past two years.



Speeding in neighborhoods draws a high number of comments. Parking issues are also mentioned frequently, particularly by those that are near key sites to visit.

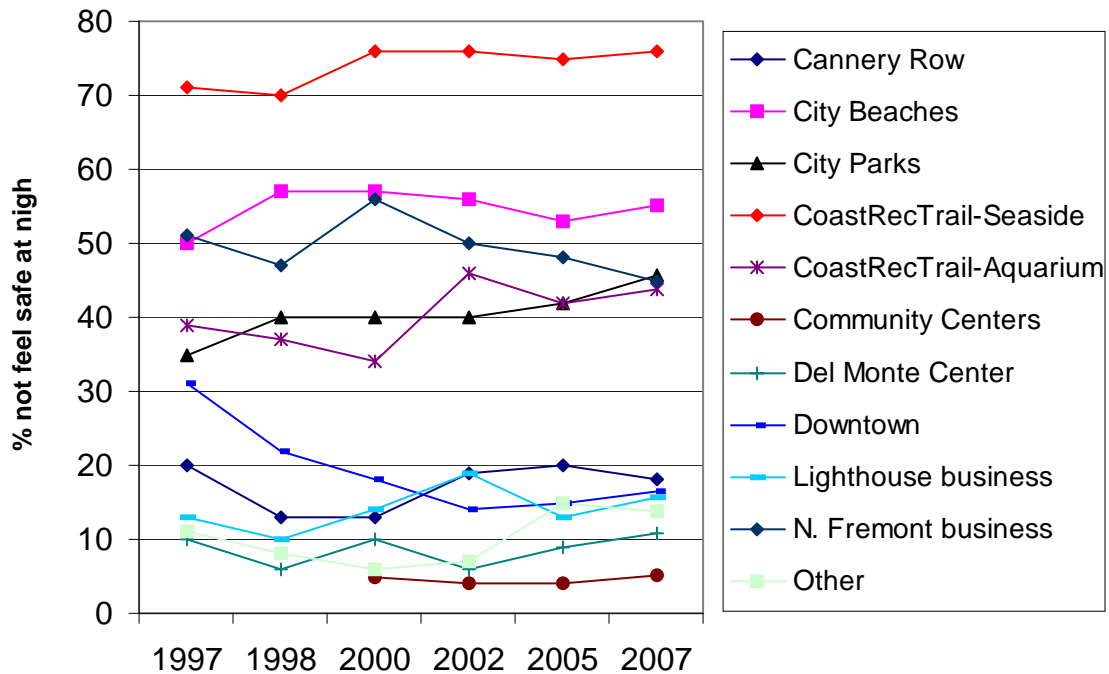
Safety around the City

Citizens have been asked since 1997 whether there are areas of the City where they would not feel safe walking at night. Of those who indicated a location, the highest continues to be the *Recreation trail: El Estero to Seaside* (76%).

The next cluster of locations include: *City beaches, North Fremont Avenue business district, Recreation trail: Wharf to Aquarium, and City parks.*

The final cluster, with 20% or fewer indicating a concern, include: *Cannery Row, Fisherman's Wharf/Harbor/Marina, Downtown Monterey, Lighthouse Avenue business district, Del Monte Shopping Center, and Community Centers.*

A significant change has been for *Downtown Monterey*, dropping from a high of 31% in 1997 to 15-16% since 2002. Over this same period, the concern with safety in City parks has increased from 35 to 46%.



Some parking lots are mentioned as a place of concern. Many of the comments in this area tend to be about the homeless, but concerns with safety per se are not frequently mentioned in general.

Comments

Each year, citizens are invited to write open-ended comments. A random and representative sample of these comments was typed and their frequency estimated. The most frequent comments made this year involved these issues:

- Community services
- Street conditions
- Speeding and other traffic violations
- Traffic conditions/congestion
- Parking
- Thanks to the City or some department
- Housing shortage

This list is similar to past years, the concerns and complaints similar, and there are no new issues that are currently salient.

Summary

Modest improvements were made in many areas and most areas addressed on the survey maintain high ratings of favorability. Many of the items on this survey received their highest ratings since 2000. Two items that were showing continuous decline, street conditions and the library, have shown slight improvements, indicating that the decline may have stopped.

Over the past five years, there have been significant improvements in ratings of the City protecting parks and opens spaces, programs for youth and for teens, City TV, neighborhood police patrols and business district parking. Concerns for safety at night are significantly down for downtown Monterey, yet up for City parks. Ratings for the availability of bike lanes have declined and there is an increased concern for neighborhood crosswalks and sidewalks.

Overall ratings of City services remain stable and excellent. In general, the trends have been positive or maintaining high levels of appreciation. Their pride in the City is frequently reflected in the comments of its citizens.