

# Monterey Community Survey 2009

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Overview

A new millennium, the first decade – change, challenges. In that time, the City hosted the sesquicentennial (150 year) celebration of California statehood, the Presidio closed the 3<sup>rd</sup> and most direct route to Pacific Grove, Lighthouse Avenue was changed to “No left turns,” the City was hit hard with budget cuts half-way through the decade and now faces them again.

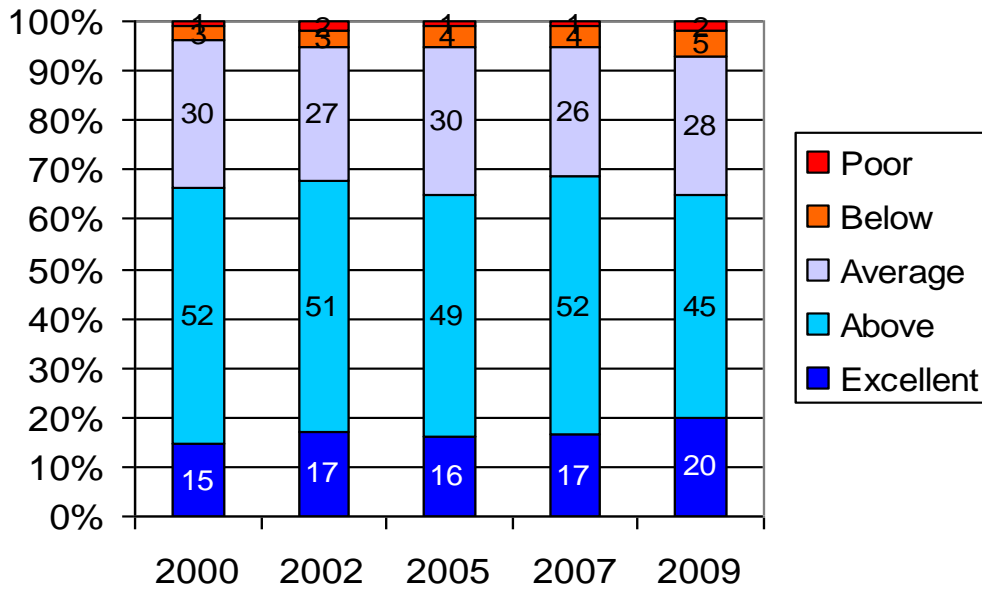
This report summarizes the opinions of citizens of the City of Monterey from 2000 to 2009, with a focus on this year’s results. Over 500 citizens responded to this year’s survey. This report and the survey were organized around five key areas:

1. City appearance
2. City government
  - Protecting the environment
  - Communication with the community
  - Communication vehicles
3. Community services
  - Public services
  - Transportation issues
  - Programs for various age groups
4. Neighborhoods and business districts
  - Your neighborhood
  - Your business district
  - Neighborhood traffic issues
5. Safety at night

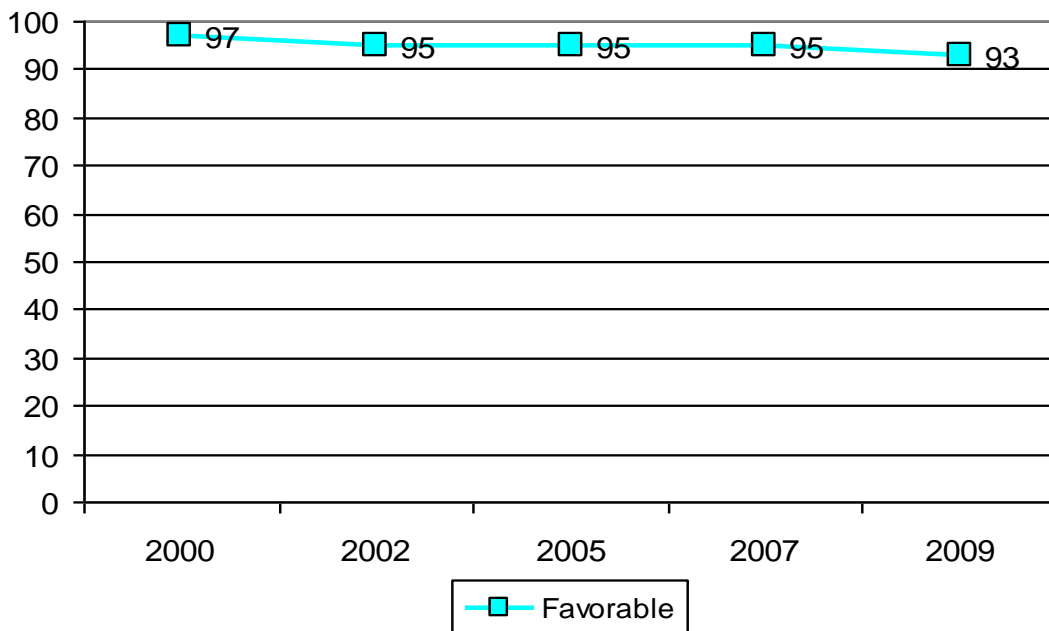
Additionally, open-ended comments were examined and are summarized in the final section.

## Ratings

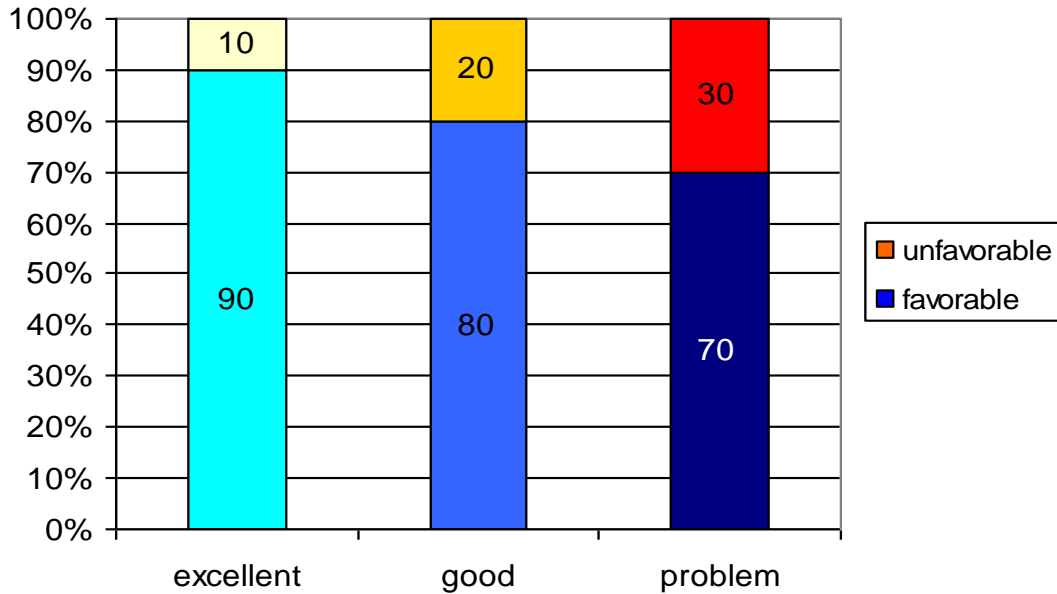
Most of the items on the survey (indicated by *italics*) were rated on a five-point scale, labeled “excellent, above average, average, below average, poor.” For illustration, one of the items from the first section, ratings of the City’s *overall cleanliness*, is shown for the decade. All five rating categories are displayed as a stacked bar, totaling to 100%.



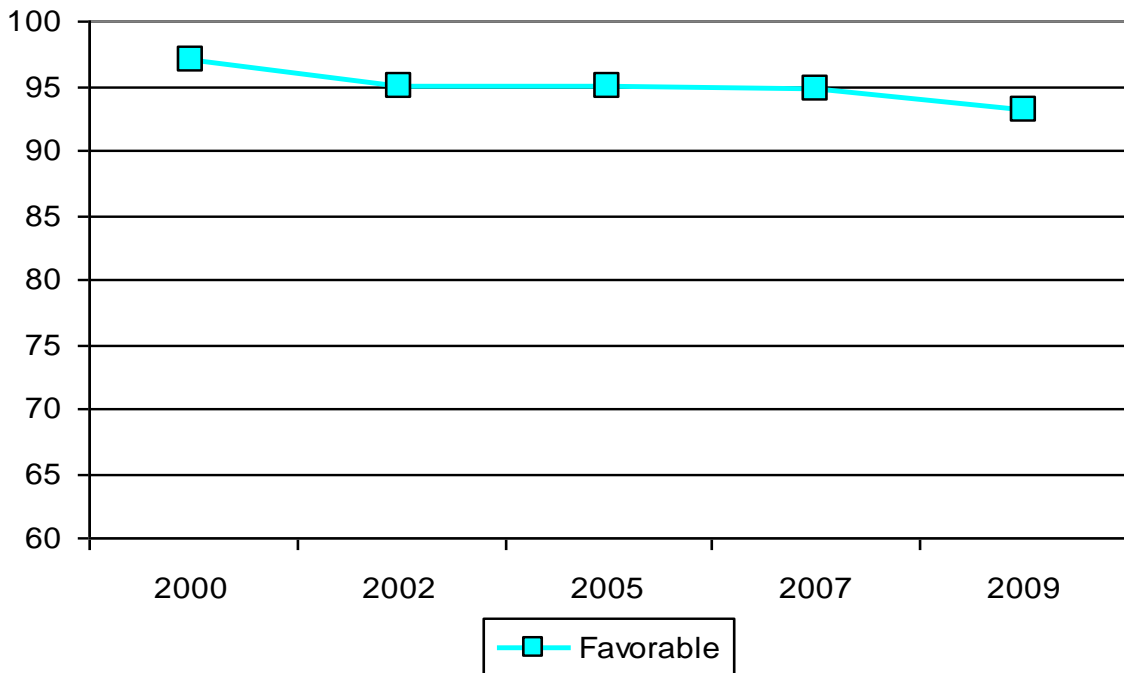
For ease of comparing multiple items, average or better ratings are combined as “percent favorable” and the remaining percentage represents below average and poor ratings (“percent unfavorable”). The chart above is shown next as a trend line representing the percent favorable at each collection point over the decade.



No matter what scale is used and what percentages are obtained, people want to know if that is “good or bad.” Surveys in many entities (company, city), and this survey program, consider favorable ratings of 90% or higher as “excellent” (i.e., less than 1 in 10 rate it unfavorably); ratings between 80 and 89% favorable are considered “good” (less than 1 in 5 rate it unfavorably). If the percent favorable is below 70%, this is indicative of a problem area (more than 1 in 4 rate it unfavorably).



Given this reference, and to make it easier to see the variations, all but one of the rating charts is shown with the range of 60 to 100% favorable, rather than 0 to 100%. The exception is the chart for City public services, on which all services had favorable ratings between 90 and 100%. Ratings for the City’s *overall appearance* look like this chart and may be considered “excellent.” The numbers for each rating are omitted on charts with multiple items, as they become unduly cluttered and too difficult to read.



## Highlights

### 2009

The top rated services in 2009, all with ratings above 90% favorable are, in order:

- *Fire services* (100% favorable)
- *Cleanliness of parks* (98%)
- *Harbor/Marina* (97%)
- *Cleanliness of beaches* (95%)
- *Preservation of historic resources* (95%)
- *Preservation of parks and open space* (94%)
- *Library services* (93%)
- *Wave shuttle* (93%)
- *Garbage/recycling services* (92%)
- *Police* (92%)
- *Safety in one's own neighborhood* (92%)

These six items below had less than 80% favorable ratings, three of which deal with street conditions, though only the first qualifies as a “problem area.” Starting with the lowest rated item:

- *City street conditions* (67% favorable)
- *Street conditions in your neighborhood* (71%)
- *Availability of parking* (73%)
- *Programs for teens* (76%)
- *Availability of bike lanes* (76%)
- *Street conditions in your business district* (79%)

The overall ratings of the *City's appearance* and *services* are excellent (both have 93% favorable ratings in 2009) and have remained so throughout the decade. There is a long list of what citizens in the community would like changed, as expressed in their written comments, however, the overall tone is positive, supportive, and appreciative.

## 2000-2009

There are two significant declines in ratings over the decade:

- *street conditions* in one's neighborhood fell from 81% favorable in 2000 to 71% favorable in 2009
- *availability of bike paths* went from a high of 84% favorable in 2005 to 76% favorable in 2009

Four items showed significant improvement in ratings:

- *City listening to its citizens* went from a low of 75% favorable to 81% favorable in 2009
- *parking* has improved from a low of 67% to 73% favorable in 2009
- *programs for teens* went from a low of 71% favorable in 2000 to 76% favorable in 2009, though this is down from its highest rating of 80% in 2007
- *police presence* in one's neighborhood improved from a low of 73% favorable in 2005 to a high of 81% favorable in 2009

Fewer people (45%) in 2009 expressed *Safety* concerns in the North Fremont district than in 2000 (56%), however, increases in concerns are noticeable for Cannery Row (13 to 18%), City parks (40 to 46%), and the coastal recreation trail from the wharf to the Aquarium (34 to 44%), though the increase in the latter was noticeable by the 2002 survey.

## CITY APPEARANCE

Five specific areas of responsibility are identified for ratings: beaches, medians, parks, street cleanliness and street conditions. Then, an overall rating of the City's cleanliness was given.

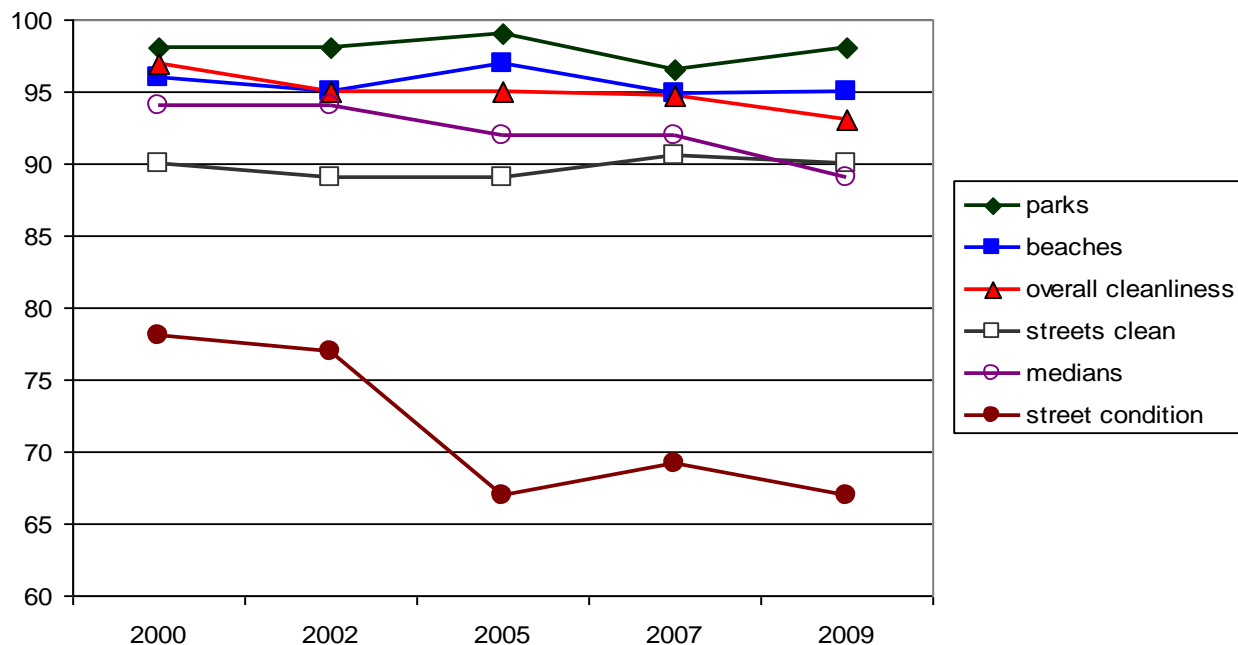
Ratings of *street conditions* dropped 10 percentage points between 2002 and 2005, with budget cuts coming between those dates, and those ratings have remained a problem area for the past four years, with less than 70% favorable ratings.

Ratings of *street cleanliness*, on the other hand, have remained excellent at around 90% favorable.

Ratings of *cleanliness of medians* are excellent, with percent favorable in the 90s, but have shown a slight but steady decline of about 5 points to 89%.

Ratings of maintenance of the *beaches* and *parks* have remained excellent over the decade, as both have percent favorable ratings in the 90s.

Overall ratings of *City cleanliness* have declined slightly, but not significantly, to 93% favorable, which is an excellent rating.



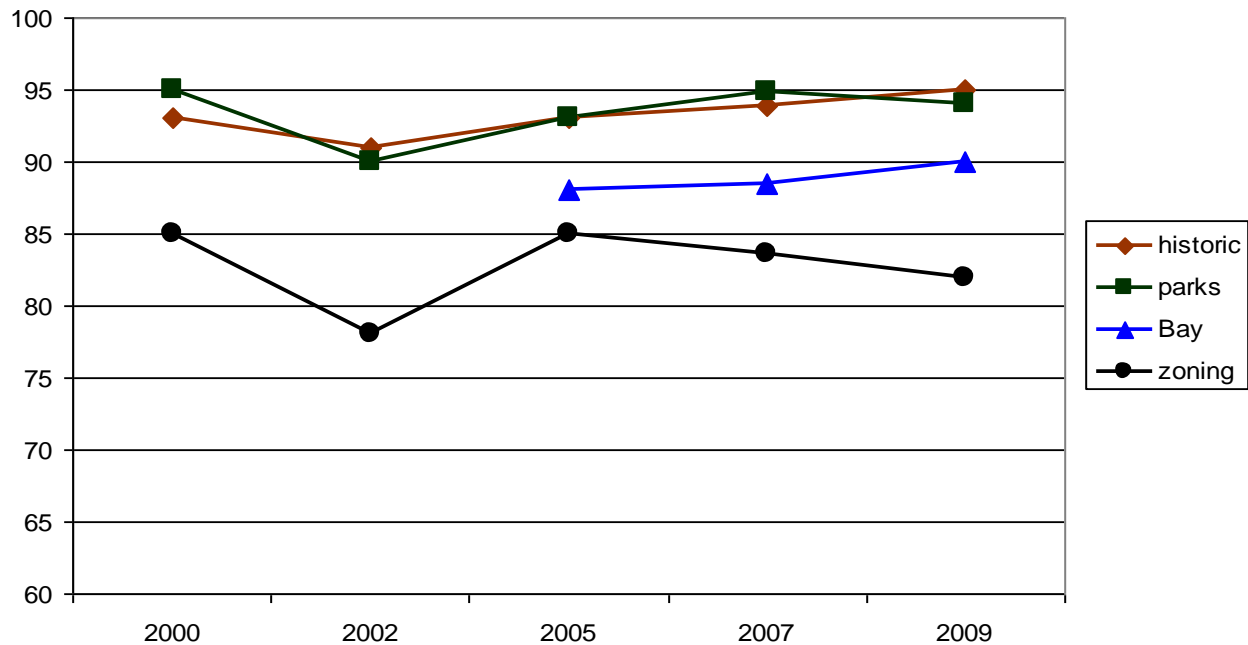
## CITY GOVERNMENT

Three aspects of City government were assessed: those dealing with protecting the environment in its broadest sense, communication with the community, and communication vehicles.

### Protecting the environment

Ratings of the City's *preservation of historic resources, parks and open space, and protecting the Bay from pollutants* have remained excellent (percent favorable in the 90s), even showing slight, but not yet significant, improvement.

Ratings of *enforcement of code/zoning regulations* have remained good, with percent favorable in the 80s. The sharp drop from 2000 to 2002 was recovered by 2005.

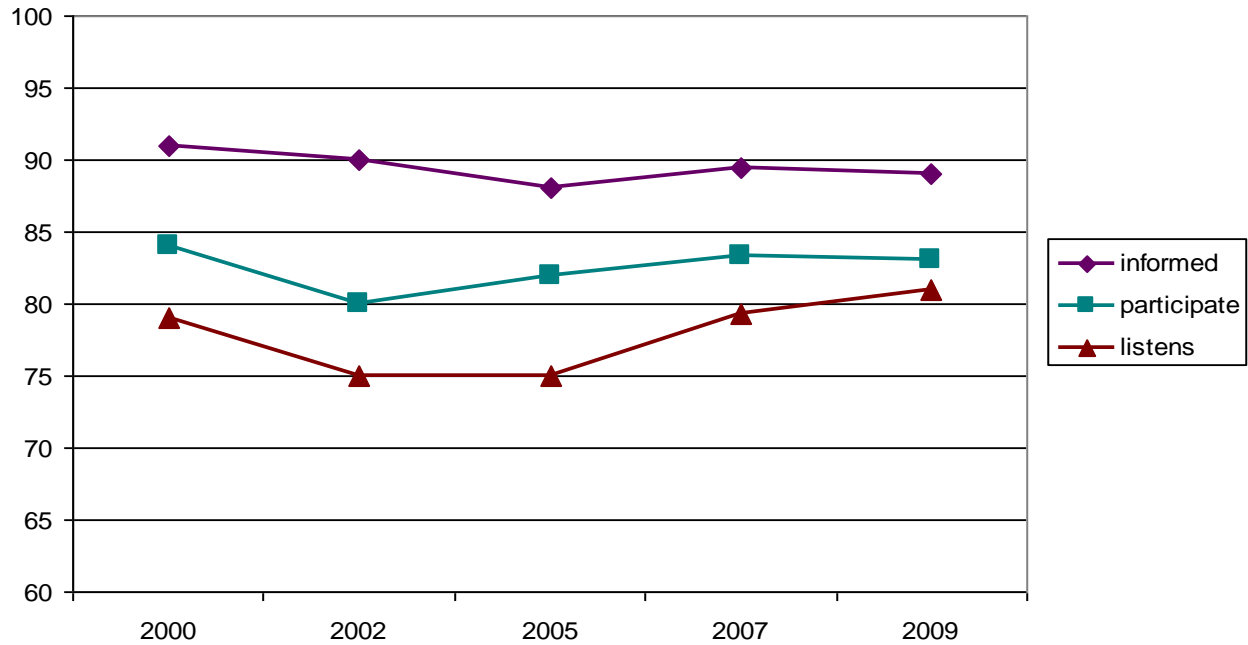


## Communication with the community

Ratings of the City's efforts to *keep citizens informed about City services, events and issues* have remained excellent throughout the decade, averaging about 90% favorable.

Ratings of *opportunities to participate in the City's decision-making process* have been good (percent favorable in the 80s) and stable.

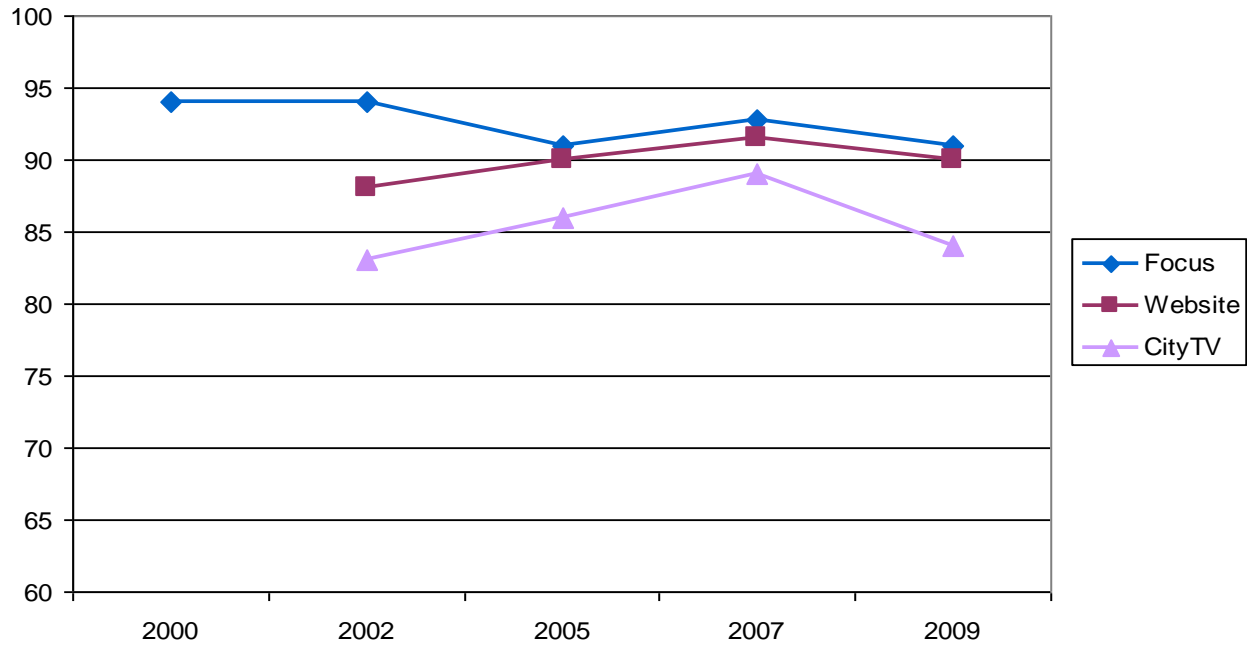
Ratings of the openness of the City in *considering and listening to citizen comments and input* have shown a significant improvement over the past four years, from 75% to 81% favorable in 2009, which now can be considered a good rating.



## Communication vehicles

Among the reasons the City has been so effective in communicating with its citizens has been the *City Focus* newsletter, which has maintained excellent ratings for its information value the entire decade.

Ratings of the *information value of the City Web site* and *TV programs*, first rated in 2002, have been good. Ratings of the *City TV programs* had increased significantly from 2002 until 2007, but ratings have declined to the original levels in 2009.



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

This section is organized into three areas: the public services provided to the community, transportation issues, per se, and the programs available for different age groups.

### Public services

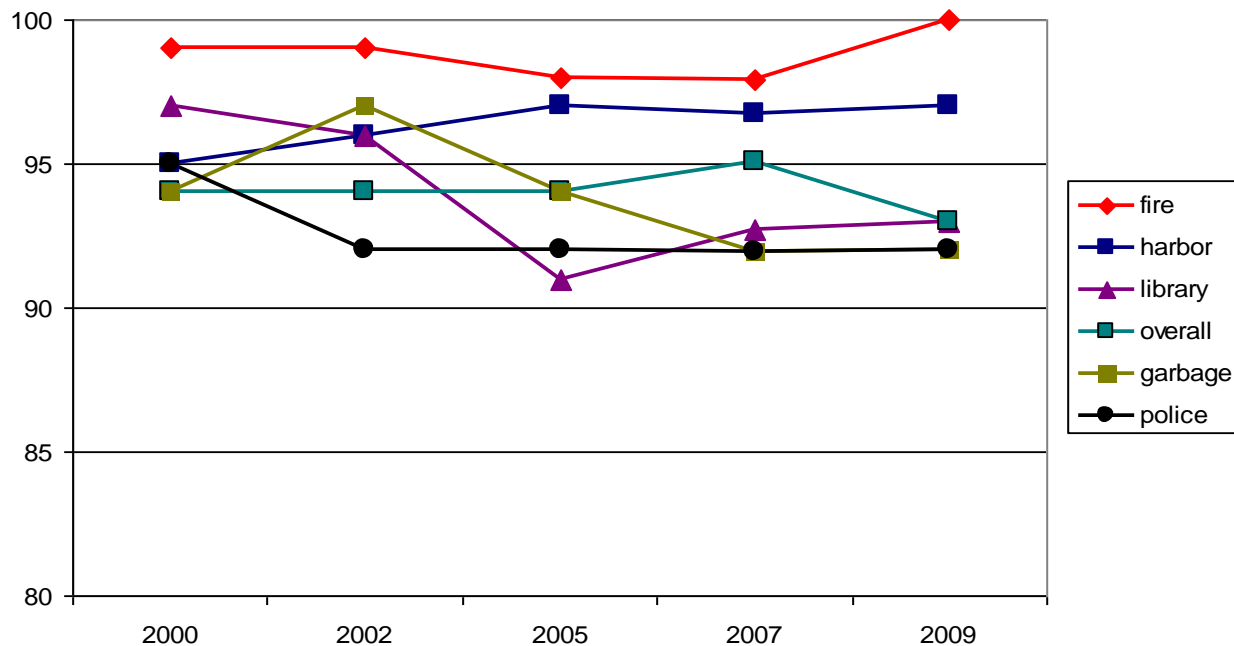
Ratings of all community services are excellent and have remained so throughout the decade, with the percent favorable for all ratings in the 90s.

Ratings of *fire services* have always had the highest ratings, reaching 100% favorable this year!

Ratings of the *library*, second only to *fire services* at the start of the decade, significantly declined after the budget cuts between 2002 and 2005, though the percent favorable (93%) is still excellent.

Ratings of the City's *garbage collection and recycling services* are also in the excellent range (92% favorable), though down from its highest rating of 97% favorable in 2002.

Ratings of the *harbor/marina* and the *police* have remained excellent throughout the decade, as has the *overall* rating of City services.



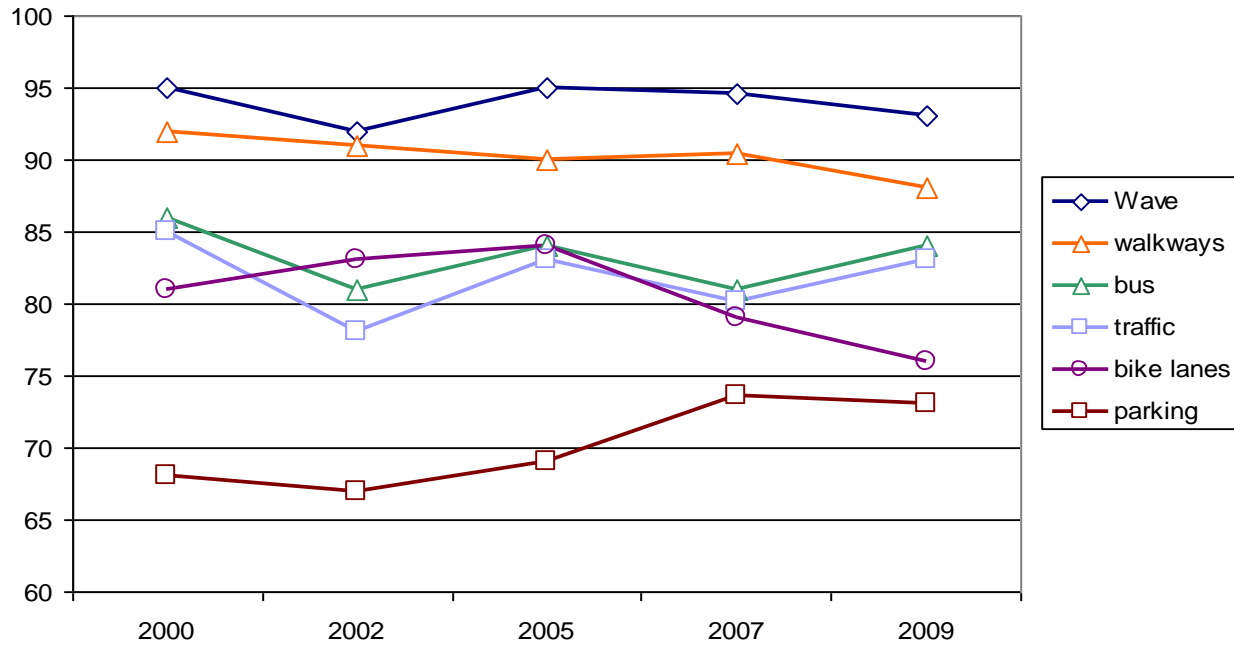
## Transportation issues

Ratings of the *WAVE* shuttle service and the *availability of pedestrian walkways/areas* have been excellent through the decade, with favorability ratings in the 90s for the most part.

Ratings of the *MST bus service* (independent of the City) have stayed good this decade, as has *vehicle traffic enforcement* (percent favorable in the 80s).

Ratings of the *availability of bike lanes* had been good, but have declined significantly over the past four years, from 84% to 76% favorable in 2009.

Ratings of the *availability of parking in business districts* have been one of the lowest rated items on these surveys, but a significant upward trend is noticeable and the ratings are no longer below 70% as they had been for the first half of the decade.

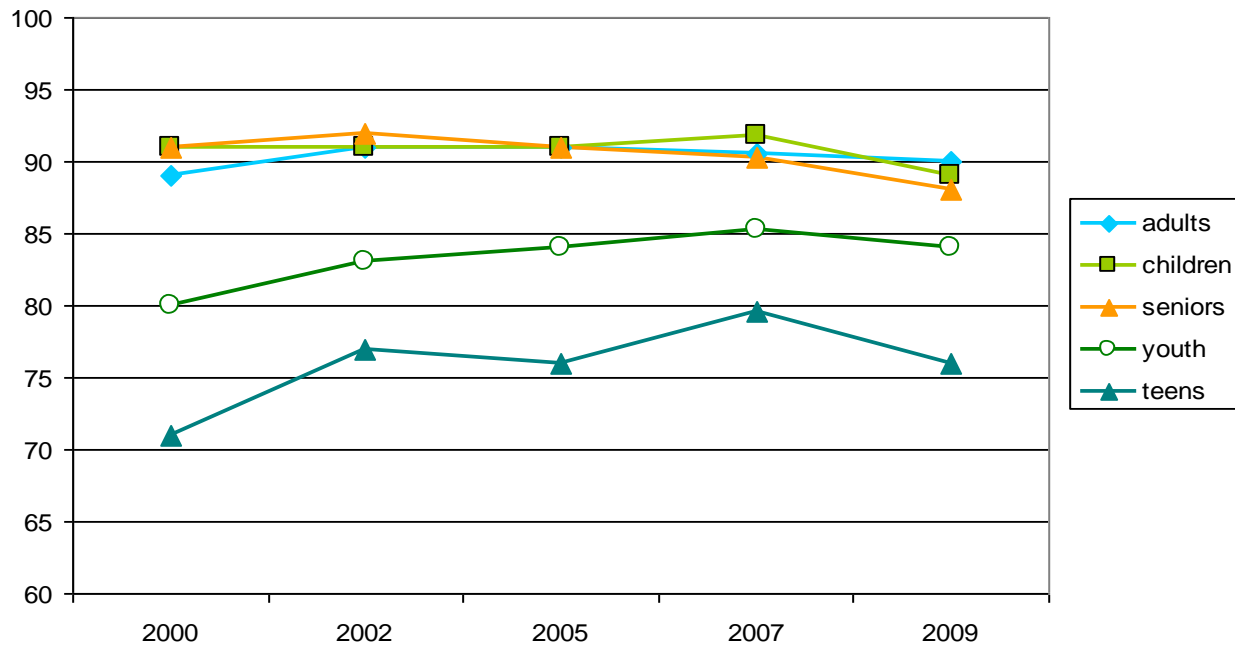


## Programs for various age groups

Ratings of City-sponsored *services for senior adults, programs for adults and for children (preschool to elementary)* have continued to be excellent this decade, averaging about 90% favorable.

Significant improvements had been made in ratings of *programs for youths*, who are in *middle/junior high school*, and these ratings have been good all decade (favorable percent in the 80s).

Ratings of *programs for teens / high school students* were among the lowest rated items at the start of the decade. A skateboard park was installed in the park at El Estero Lake, and significant improvements have been noticed since then. There has been a decline in the past two years but these teen programs are still significantly better than the start of the decade.



## NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS

This section of the report also has three separate areas: those that pertain directly to one's own neighborhood, the business district one frequents, and a focus on traffic-related issues within neighborhoods.

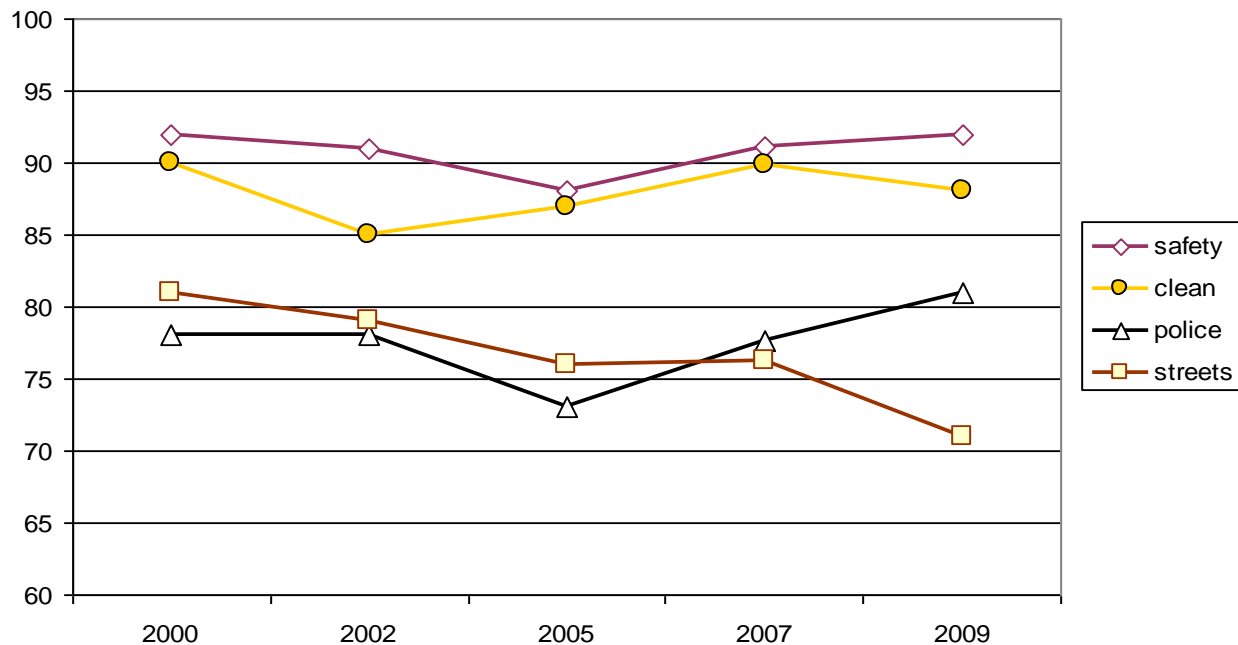
### Your neighborhood

Ratings of citizens' sense of *safety in their own neighborhoods* have consistently remained excellent, averaging about 90% favorable.

Ratings of the *cleanliness of neighborhoods* have fluctuated, but remain good, averaging just under 90% favorable.

Over the decade, there has been a significant, 10 percentage point drop in ratings of *neighborhood street conditions*, from 81 to 71% favorable in 2009, similar to ratings of the *City street conditions*.

Meanwhile, citizens show a significant increase in ratings over the past four years in the *police patrols in their neighborhood*, which reached its highest rating of 81% favorable in 2009.

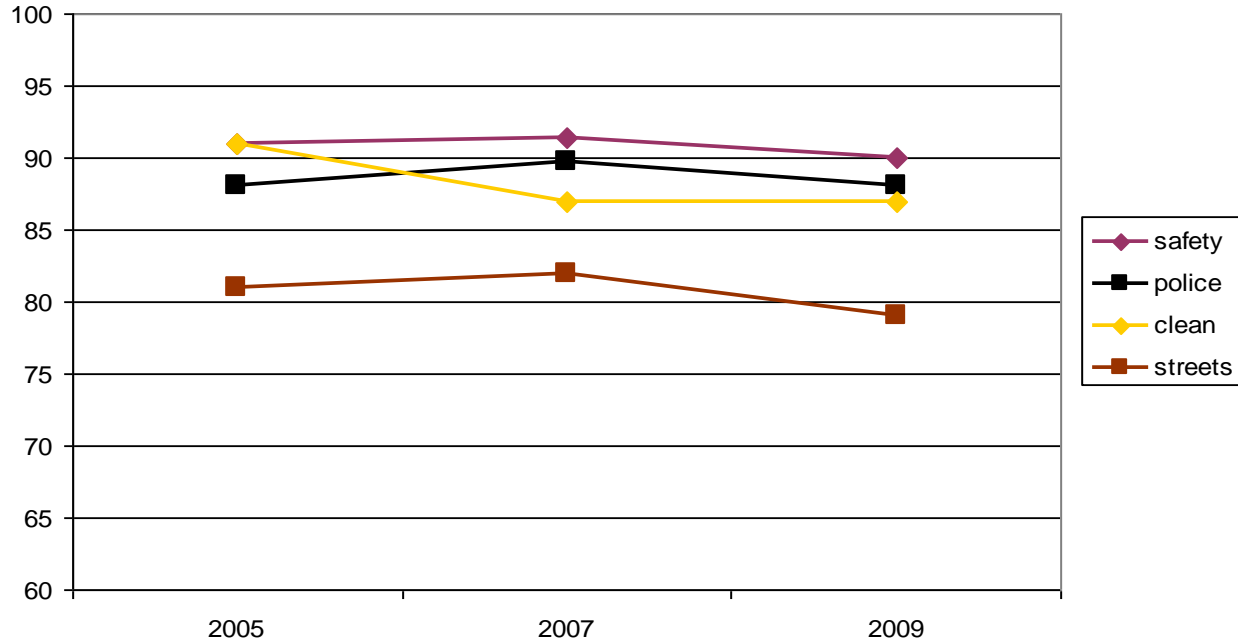


## Your business district

Beginning in 2005, the survey included similar items for rating the business districts that citizens use.

There have been no significant changes in any of these; ratings have been good to excellent, though ratings of *street conditions* are now below 80% favorable.

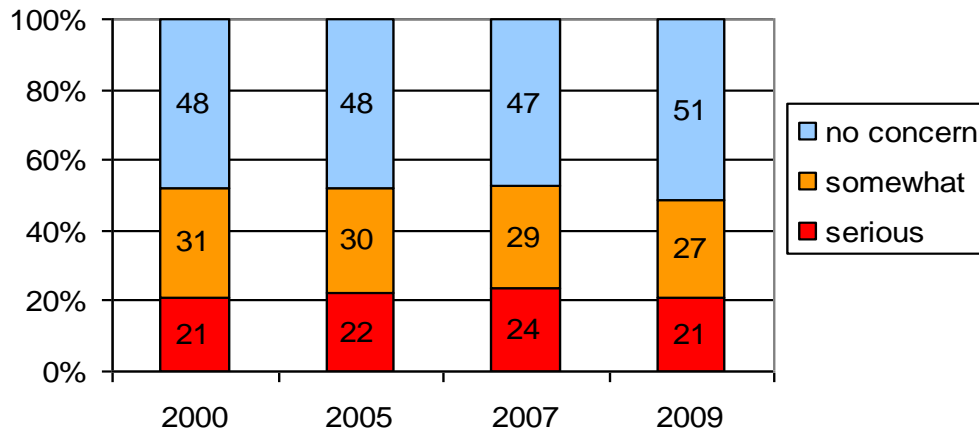
Ratings of *street conditions* and *police patrols* are significantly higher in business districts than in one's own neighborhood. Ratings of *cleanliness* and *safety* are about the same in both.



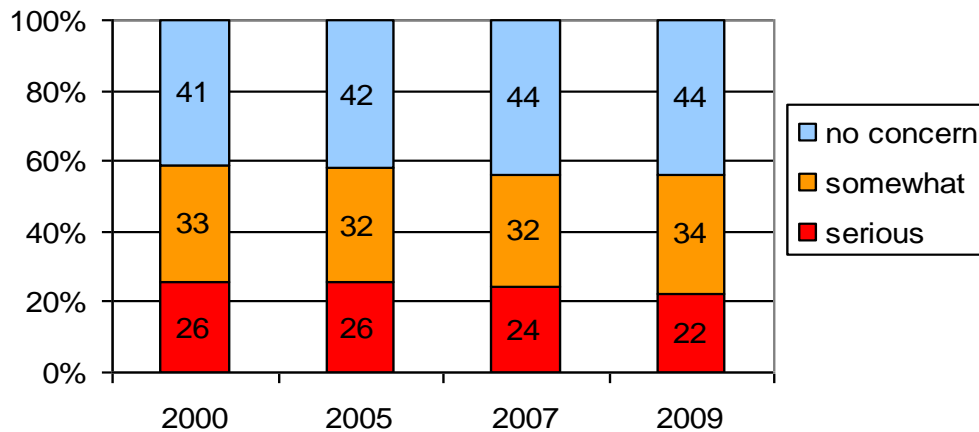
## Neighborhood traffic issues

Concerns about *speeding* traffic in one's neighborhood have been high all decade, significantly higher than the other issues presented here. A fair amount of citizens consider these to be a serious problem in their neighborhood: *congestion*, *parking*, and *walkways (crosswalks, sidewalks)*, though for about half of the citizens, these three are not a concern.

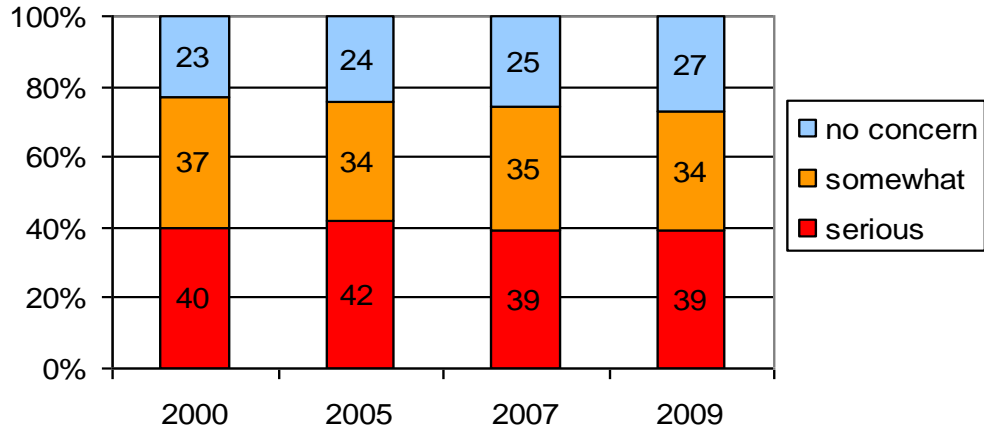
### Neighborhood congestion



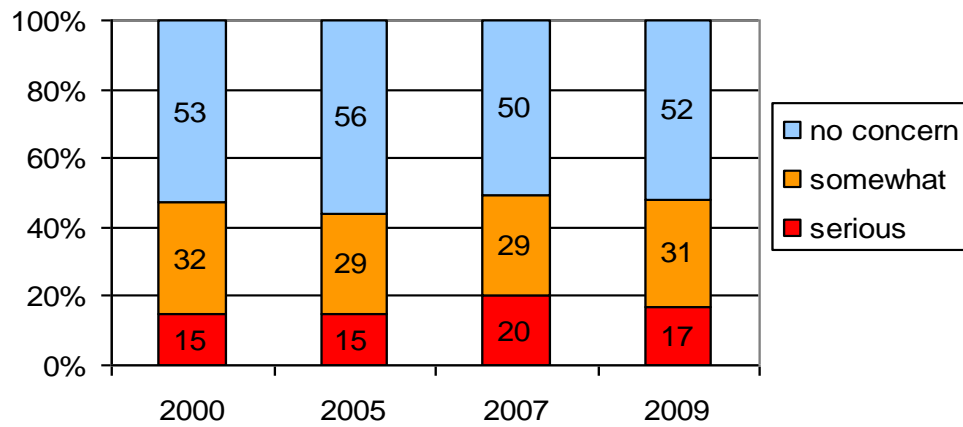
### Neighborhood parking



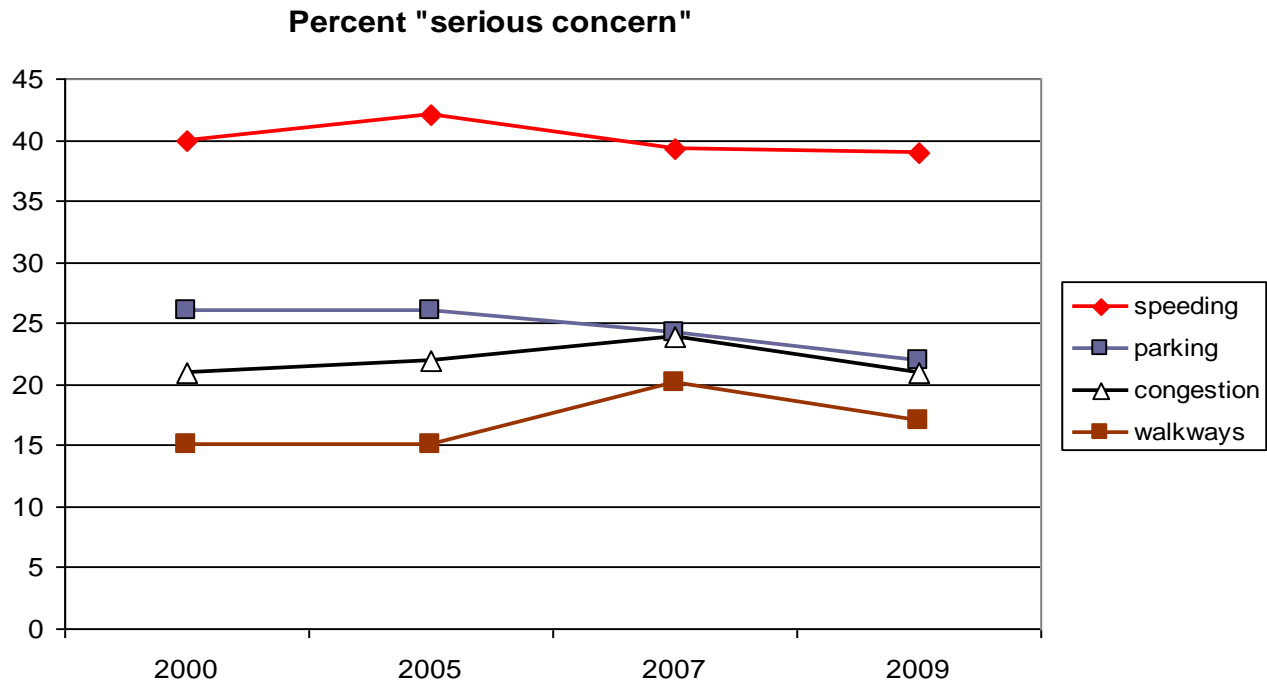
## Neighborhood speeding



## Neighborhood walkways



The following chart compares these four traffic-related issues for one's neighborhood, using only the percent indicating that it was a "serious problem."



## SAFETY AT NIGHT

Citizens were asked if there were specific locations that they would not feel safe at night. On this chart, the higher the percent, the less safe it is seen. More people cited the *coastal / recreation trail from El Estero to Seaside* as feeling unsafe than any other location and it has remained the most cited all decade without any change. Of those who responded to this item, 3 out of 4 citizens would not feel safe to walk there at night. Overwhelmingly, comments cite the presence of the homeless and vagrants.

About 40-50% of respondents expressed concerns about four locations. *City beaches* and the *North Fremont business district* are two of these locations, though significantly fewer citizens cite them now than at the start of the decade, indicating an improvement over the decade. *City parks* have remained of moderate concern. Finally, significantly more citizens cite the *coastal / recreation trail from the Wharf to the Aquarium* as a place they would not feel safe at night, compared to the start of the decade, however, this increase occurred between 2000 and 2002 after a tragic incident and has remained about the same in level of concern.

The six places where citizens feel relatively the safest are the *community centers*, though comments have suggested that these are becoming places for panhandlers to congregate, the *Del Monte Center*, though the park near there drew a number of comments about not feeling safe, the *Lighthouse (New Monterey) business district*, *Fisherman's wharf and the marina*, *downtown Monterey*, and *Cannery Row*.

Although there were not a sizeable number of "other" locations cited, the places cited most frequently were the bus stop downtown, Trader Joe's parking lot, City Hall and the library.

