

Tauranga City Council

Annual Residents Survey

2024/25: Wave three:
01 February 2025 - 07 March 2025

Introduction

The Annual Residents Survey measures the perceptions of residents regarding various aspects of services that council provides. The results of this survey feed into the Tauranga City Council Long-term Plan reporting process and allow council to assess its performance against a set of pre-determined actions and performance levels.

What does this report show?

This report summarises the responses received from the third wave of Tauranga City Council's 2024/25 Annual Residents Survey. In this wave, 152 people responded. Responses are on-track to receiving feedback from at least 600 responses in total across all waves.

A high-level view of the responses received to date and how they compared to previous years is presented in this report. It is important to note that as the full year survey has not yet been completed, these results are indicative but do not meet the threshold of statistical relevance to be reflective of the views of the whole city.

Research Objectives:

- To determine residents' satisfaction with various Council services and facilities.
- To determine residents' perceptions about aspects of living, working, and playing in Tauranga.
- To identify progress towards Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in Council's Annual Report.
- To assess trends in perceptions and satisfaction through comparisons with previous survey results.

Methodology:

The 2024/25 annual study will target 600 responses from the residents in the Tauranga City Council area, with approximately 150 per wave.

Each wave's mail out quotas are applied according to age, gender, and ward, to ensure that a representative sample of Tauranga City's population is achieved.

The data is weighted to account for variances in the achieved quotas and to ensure that the sample reflects the population profile achieved.

Data collection is taking place in four waves between August 2024 and June 2025 to align with the quarterly reporting of the non-financial performance targets.

The overall results have an anticipated margin of error of +/- 4.6% at the 95% confidence level.

Summary results

Overall, the results reveal a mix of improvements and areas needing attention. While there have been positive strides in certain aspects such as the accessibility and quality of arts, cultural, and event spaces, and the general cleanliness of footpaths, there are also notable declines in other areas. Residents have expressed concerns about the quality of open spaces, leadership, and the affordability of opportunities to be physically active.

Increasing satisfaction trends YTD worth noting:

- The quality of services increased by 5%, from 42% to 47%.
- Overall road and footpaths satisfaction rose significantly by 15%, from 35% to 50%.
- Safety when cycling on roads and cycleways improved by 15%, from 42% to 57%, and safety on footpaths increased by 8%, from 61% to 69%.
- General cleanliness of footpaths went up by 8%, from 64% to 72%, and safety when driving on roads increased by 18%, from 39% to 57%.
- Overall waste management rose by 9%, from 68% to 77%, with the Te Maunga Transfer Station seeing an increase of 8%, from 63% to 71%.
- Efforts to help the city adapt to climate change improved by 8%, from 37% to 45%, and enabling residents to live sustainably increased by 7%, from 34% to 41%.
- Overall outdoor spaces satisfaction increased by 4%, from 71% to 75%, with specific improvements in parks and playgrounds.
- Council swimming pools saw an increase of 4%, from 72% to 76%, and community centres improved by 5%, from 59% to 64%.

Declining satisfaction trends YTD worth noting

- Invoicing clarity and correctness dropped by 6%, from 72% to 66%.
- The quality of drinking water decreased by 8%, from 71% to 63%.
- The Tauranga Art Gallery's satisfaction dropped by 10%, from 61% to 51%.

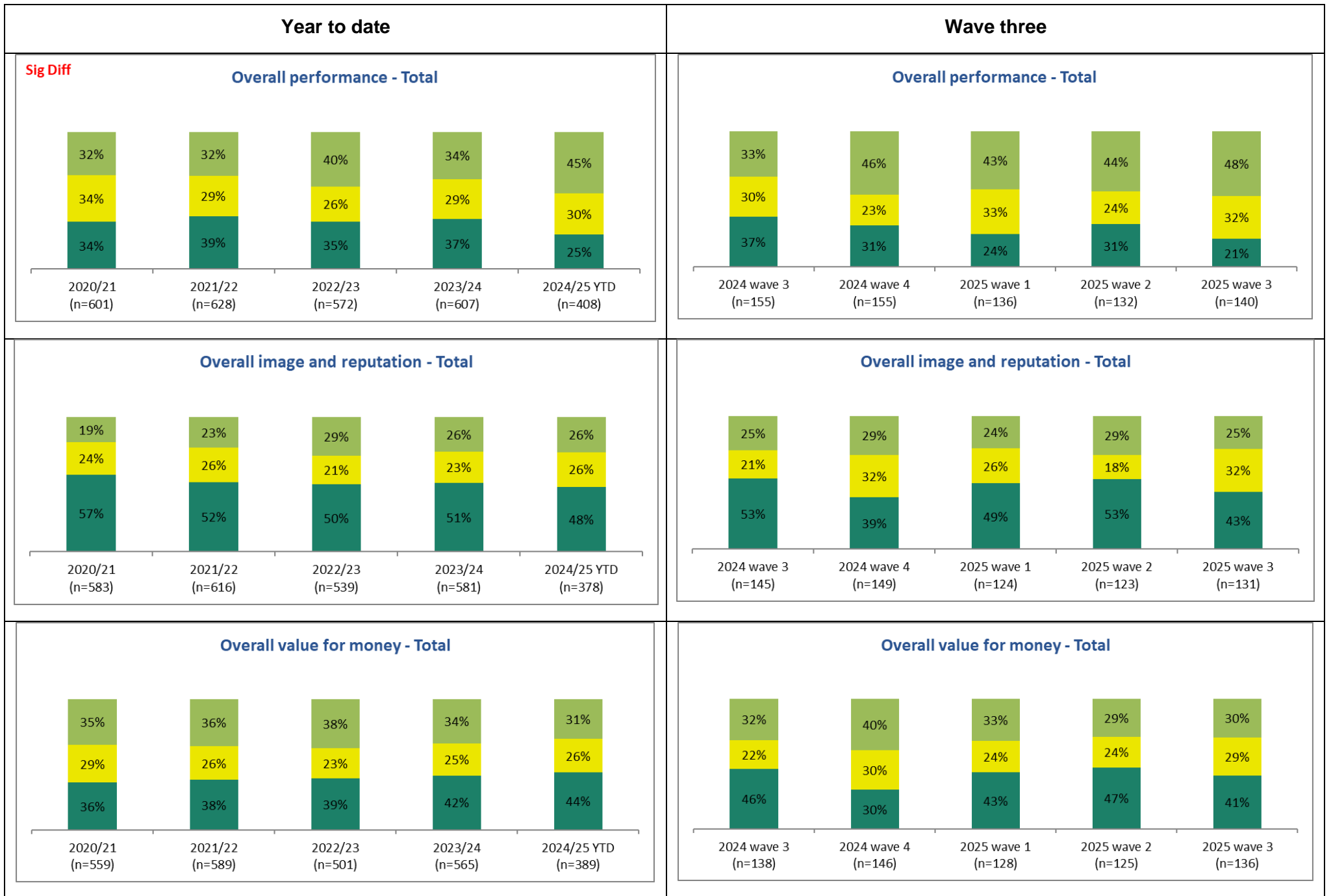
Some measures remained unchanged. Overall reputation stayed the same at 26%, efforts to consult and engage directly with the community remained at 27%, protection from flooding stayed at 66%, and the quality of facilities for physical activity remained at 65%.

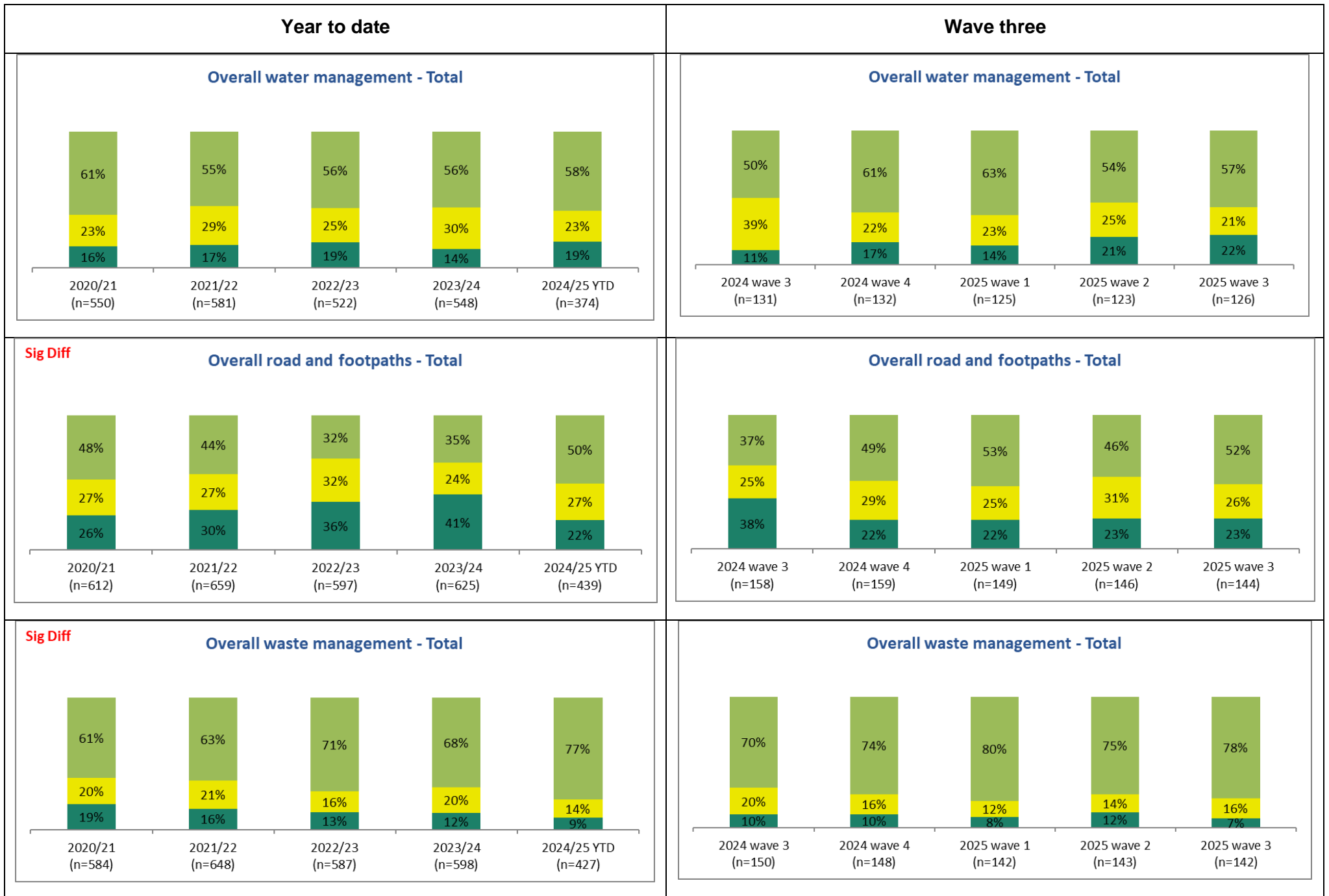
Further top-level overall details on these are below:

Key

- Satisfied (%7-10)
- Neutral (%5-6)
- Dissatisfied (%1-4)

Sig Diff = Showing a significant difference for year 2023/24 and 2024/25 YTD (%7-10)







Sig Diff

Overall image and reputation

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|----------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall | 26% | 26% | = |
| Leadership | 29% | 27% | ▼ |
| Trust | 26% | 25% | ▼ |
| Financial Management | 22% | 21% | ▼ |
| Quality of services | 42% | 47% | ▲ |

The survey results for the 2024/2025 period indicate that overall satisfaction remains unchanged at 26%. However, there are slight declines in several key areas: leadership, trust, and financial management. On a positive note, the quality of services has improved from 42% to 47%.

Verbatim comments:

Leadership: Residents have expressed concerns about council's leadership, citing a lack of vision and responsiveness to community needs. There is a perception that council is overly influenced by developers and financial interests, rather than prioritising the needs and opinions of the community.

Trust: Trust in council is low, with residents feeling that their concerns are not being heard and that decisions are made without adequate consultation or transparency. Council's reputation and perceived financial mismanagement have further eroded trust among residents.

Financial Management: Many residents believe that council is spending money on unnecessary projects and vanity initiatives, leading to a perception of wasteful spending and poor financial management. There are calls for more transparency, accountability, and prudent use of funds to ensure that ratepayers' money is being used effectively.

Quality of Services: While some residents appreciate the existing services, others feel that there is room for improvement, particularly in areas like road maintenance, public transport, and waste management. The recent improvement in the quality of services suggests that council is making progress in addressing some of these concerns, but there is still work to be done to meet residents' expectations.

Overall value for money

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall | 34% | 31% | ▼ |
| Annual rates fair and reasonable | 25% | 24% | ▼ |
| Water rates fair and reasonable | 42% | 43% | ▲ |
| Invoicing clear and correct | 72% | 66% | ▼ |
| Payment arrangements fair and reasonable | 69% | 70% | ▲ |
| Rates in Tauranga are affordable | - | 23% | NA |
| Rent in Tauranga is affordable | - | 2% | NA |
| Cost of living in Tauranga is affordable | - | 18% | NA |

Comments:

The survey results for 2024/2025 YTD indicate a slight decline in overall satisfaction with value for money. Feedback highlights dissatisfaction with rates and value for money, with residents calling for more prudent financial management, transparency, and accountability from council. There is a desire for council to focus on essential services and infrastructure, ensuring that residents receive better value for the money they pay.

Verbatim Summary:

Annual Rates: Many residents expressed frustration with high rates, feeling that they do not receive good value for the money they pay. There are concerns about wasteful spending on unnecessary projects and financial mismanagement. Residents believe that council needs to focus on essential services and infrastructure rather than expensive and poorly planned projects.

Water Rates: While some residents are satisfied with their water rates, others feel that they are too high. There is a perception that council is not managing funds responsibly, leading to higher costs for residents.

Invoicing: Comments indicate that residents generally find invoicing to be clear and correct, although there is room for improvement. Some residents mentioned issues with the frequency and timing of rate invoices, suggesting a need for more consistent communication.

Payment Arrangements: Residents have mixed opinions on the fairness of payment arrangements. While some appreciate the discounts for low-income earners, others feel that the rating system is unfair, particularly for those who do not use certain services or live in lifestyle villages. There are calls for more equitable and transparent payment arrangements.

Cost of Living: Many residents are struggling with the high cost of living, which includes rates, rent, and other expenses. There is a strong sentiment that council needs to be more mindful of the financial pressures faced by residents.

Community Engagement and Communications

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Involves the public in the decisions it makes | 25% | 30% | ▲ |
| Decisions being in the best interests of the city | 28% | 27% | ▼ |
| Efforts to consult and engage directly with the community | 27% | 27% | = |
| Influence the public has on the decisions Council makes | 14% | 19% | ▲ |
| Contact council when and how you want | 56% | 60% | ▲ |

Comments:

YTD results show a mixed picture regarding community engagement and decision-making. There has been a slight improvement in involving the public in decisions, and in the influence the public has on Council decisions. However, the perception that decisions are in the best interests of the city has slightly declined. On a positive note, satisfaction with the ability to contact council when and how residents want has improved.

Verbatim Summary:

Residents have expressed a range of opinions on engagement and communication. Many residents feel that communication could be improved, suggesting regular updates via email, more advertising on social media and local newspapers, and better public education and consultation on important issues. Some residents appreciate council's call centre and the opportunity to provide feedback through surveys, while others feel that community consultation is often superficial and predetermined.

There are calls for more transparency and opportunities for residents to have their voices heard, such as online voting on important issues and more accessible forums for community input. Some residents suggest using community notice boards and engaging retired individuals with valuable experience to contribute to council projects. Additionally, there is a desire for better communication about council meetings and events, as well as more emphasis on listening to ratepayers and addressing their concerns.

Overall Water management

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|--|--------|------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall | 56% | 58% | ▲ |
| Protection from flooding | 66% | 66% | = |
| Quality of drinking water | 71% | 63% | ▼ |
| Know ways to conserve water | 88% | 85% | ▼ |
| Have conserved water in last 12 months | 83% | 81% | ▼ |

Comments:

YTD results for satisfaction with overall water management has increased slightly when compared to results from 2023/24. However, sentiment has declined significantly in drinking water quality.

Verbatim Summary:

Some residents appreciate the stormwater system in Papamoa, describing it as brilliant, especially when on-road drainage systems are maintained. There is also recognition of council's efforts in managing water demand through restrictions and seeking additional water sources to cope with growth. Additionally, some residents have noted improvements in flood management and the installation of flood barriers as positive steps. A few residents mentioned having no problems with water or flooding and are satisfied with the current situation.

Many residents are dissatisfied with the drinking water quality, describing it as horrible, metallic, or cloudy. There are strong objections to the addition of fluoride in the water, with some residents resorting to buying bottled water or using filters. Concerns about inadequate stormwater drainage systems, particularly in the Arataki area, and the risk of flooding due to delayed infrastructure projects were also raised. Some residents feel that the Council has not done enough to prevent flooding and manage water resources effectively, leading to increased insurance costs and dissatisfaction with water rates. There are also complaints about the lack of water storage facilities and the need for better maintenance of drains to prevent blockages and flooding. Issues such as water restrictions every summer, lowering water pressure due to new developments, and high water costs were also highlighted. Improved maintenance of drains to keep them clear of debris and prevent flooding is recommended. A resident suggested ensuring wastewater outflow to the sea is 99% effluent free and adding a stormwater outlet in Papamoa. Others recommend promoting the installation of household water tanks to conserve rainwater and reduce reliance on the city water supply. Improved flood modelling, quicker action during flooding events, and better drainage systems are also suggested. Additionally, residents want council to prevent the government from taking over water assets and to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with population growth.

Overall road and footpaths

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|--|--------|------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall | 35% | 50% | ▲ |
| Safety when cycling on roads and cycleways | 42% | 57% | ▲ |
| Safety on footpaths | 61% | 69% | ▲ |
| General cleanliness of footpaths | 64% | 72% | ▲ |
| Safety when driving on roads | 39% | 57% | ▲ |

Comments:

YTD result shows the overall satisfaction has seen a significant increase, rising from 35% in 23/24 to 50% in 24/25. Overall, there have been substantial improvements across all areas from the previous year to the current year.

Verbatim Summary:

Residents appreciate the improvements in accessibility for non-car commuting and movement, noting the health, economic, and social benefits of the new walkways and cycleways. The footpaths and cycle paths in the Papamoa area are praised for being excellent, and some residents have noted that the city is being improved with new intersections and cycle lanes. The Cameron Road upgrade is also seen as a positive development.

Many residents are dissatisfied with the current state of the roads, citing issues such as potholes, uneven footpaths, and traffic congestion. Suggestions for improvement include fixing potholes and using better quality asphalt for smoother driving experiences. There are concerns about the behaviour of cyclists, who often do not use designated cycle lanes and pose risks to pedestrians. The pedestrian crossings added to roundabouts are seen as dangerous and causing traffic congestion, especially during school times. Some residents feel that the cycle paths are a waste of money and underutilised, while others mention that the shared cycle and pedestrian paths are not working well and can be dangerous. Adding traffic lights at dangerous roundabouts and expanding road capacity to reduce congestion are also suggested. Implementing light rail and more frequent bus services on major routes are suggested for overall transportation safety and efficiency.

Overall sustainability and waste

Waste Management

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|--|--------|------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall | 68% | 77% | ▲ |
| Rubbish day collection | 82% | 86% | ▲ |
| State of street after collection day | 81% | 84% | ▲ |
| The management of street litter | 67% | 71% | ▲ |
| The management of litter bins in our parks and streets | 64% | 68% | ▲ |
| Te Maunga Transfer Station | 63% | 71% | ▲ |

Comments:

YTD the overall result has significantly improved by 9%. There are a number of significant increases in this area, including action to help the city reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate, being an organisation committed to sustainable outcomes, and Te Maunga satisfaction.

Verbatim Summary:

Many residents expressed satisfaction with the current waste management services. The addition of new recycling areas around the city has been well-received, with clear labelling and good presentation. Waste management in the Matua area is particularly praised for its efficiency. Additionally, rubbish collection is noted as being very efficient.

Several areas for improvement were highlighted by residents. There is a need for more litter bins, especially at the Beach Road waterfront, and existing bins need to be emptied more frequently. The Te Maunga transfer station is inadequate for the number of users, and the closure of the Maleme Street transfer station is a pain point. Soft plastics recycling options are limited, and the food waste programme has low participation and concerns about proper disposal. Public transportation is seen as too expensive and inconvenient, leading to high vehicle emissions. Better education on recycling and waste minimization is needed, and some residents prefer weekly rubbish bin collection instead of fortnightly. Traffic management issues are also causing unnecessary emissions.

Residents have provided several suggestions for enhancing sustainability and waste management. They want more information about council's climate action plans and sustainability goals. Setting up second-hand shops at dumps to repurpose items and reduce landfill waste is recommended. Encouraging and subsidizing household solar panels and water tanks for collecting roof water could promote sustainability. Investing in the sharing economy and circular economy through smart waste management is suggested. Expanding mobility options, such as more bus routes, ferry options, Bay Bus on Demand vans, cycle lanes, and possibly a tram network along Cameron Road, could reduce emissions. Residents are also interested in how council plans to protect key assets from sea level rises and suggest using rubbish burning power stations to eliminate landfill waste.

Climate and Sustainability

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|--|--------|------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall* | - | 42% | NA |
| Help our city adapt to a changing climate | 37% | 45% | ▲ |
| Help our city reduce its emissions | 30% | 37% | ▲ |
| Enabling Tauranga residents to live sustainably | 34% | 41% | ▲ |
| An organisation that is committed to delivering sustainable outcomes | 31% | 42% | ▲ |

Improved communication about waste management practices and sustainability efforts is also desired.

*This is a baseline year for the overall climate and sustainability measure.

Overall outdoor spaces

Comments:

YTD results show overall positive trends in several areas related to parks, green spaces, and recreational facilities. The results indicate positive improvements in many areas, though there are still some aspects that need attention, particularly the affordability of physical activity options and the quality of boat ramps and associated parking.

Verbatim Summary:

Many appreciate the well-maintained parks, playgrounds, and cycling tracks, and enjoy using these spaces for recreational activities. However, there are calls for more diverse and accessible facilities, such as outdoor gyms, yoga centres, and senior exercise equipment. Some residents suggest adding fruit trees and reducing the use of chemicals like glyphosate in parks.

Parking is a recurring issue, with residents requesting more spaces and better management. There are also suggestions for improving the maintenance of lawns and playgrounds, with some areas being overgrown or neglected. Residents would like to see more dog-friendly spaces, better connectivity of shared spaces, and additional amenities like water fountains, shade sails, and outdoor workout equipment.

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|--|--------|------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall | 71% | 75% | ▲ |
| Enough parks or green spaces | 70% | 74% | ▲ |
| Quality of playgrounds | 70% | 76% | ▲ |
| Cemetery | 75% | 80% | ▲ |
| Boat ramps and associated parking | 74% | 70% | ▼ |
| Opportunities to access and experience nature | 75% | 76% | ▲ |
| Open spaces, park, and play spaces | 69% | 71% | ▲ |
| Availability of places to be physically active | 72% | 74% | ▲ |
| Affordability of options to be physically active | 60% | 58% | ▼ |
| Quality of facilities for physical activity | 65% | 65% | = |

Overall public facilities

| | Result | YTD Result | Trend |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Driver | 23/24 | 24/25 | |
| Overall | 70% | 71% | ▲ |
| Libraries | 90% | 88% | ▼ |
| Historic Village | 62% | 63% | ▲ |
| Tauranga Art Gallery | 61% | 51% | ▼ |
| Baycourt | 71% | 70% | ▼ |
| Council swimming pools | 72% | 76% | ▲ |
| Council indoor sports facilities | 74% | 77% | ▲ |
| Council community centres | 59% | 64% | ▲ |
| Community-share indoor sports facilities | 67% | 69% | ▲ |

Comments:

YTD result shows a significant decrease in satisfaction in Tauranga Art Gallery and a decrease for Baycourt. Results show an increased satisfaction with Historic Village, council swimming pools, indoor sports facilities, and community centres/halls. Reduced satisfaction in libraries is a result of more 'neutral' responses rather than increased dissatisfaction. Overall, public satisfaction has slightly increased compared to the previous year.

Note: Results include all survey responses, including users and non-users.

Verbatim Summary:

The Historic Village received mixed reviews, with some appreciating its charm and atmosphere, while others feel it is underutilised and lacks appeal for younger people. Parking at the Historic Village was highlighted as an issue, with residents finding it difficult to find spaces. There are calls for more diverse community centres, better maintenance of existing facilities, and updates to cater for population growth. The Ōtūmoetai Swimming Pool is valued but considered outdated, with suggestions for upgrading the building and adding a competitive 50-metre pool.

Residents appreciate the Tauranga Library and look forward to the new library. The library staff are generally praised for being helpful and friendly, and the facilities are well-maintained and pleasant. There are also positive comments about the well-maintained sports facilities and the variety of performances offered. However, some facilities are seen as old and tired, and there is a desire for more amenities for children and families. The entry/exit to Baypark is suggested to be improved, with cost of going to shows noted as expensive.