

2016

Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #1: Regional, City, and Neighborhood Quality of Life

Social Science Research Center, Old Dominion University

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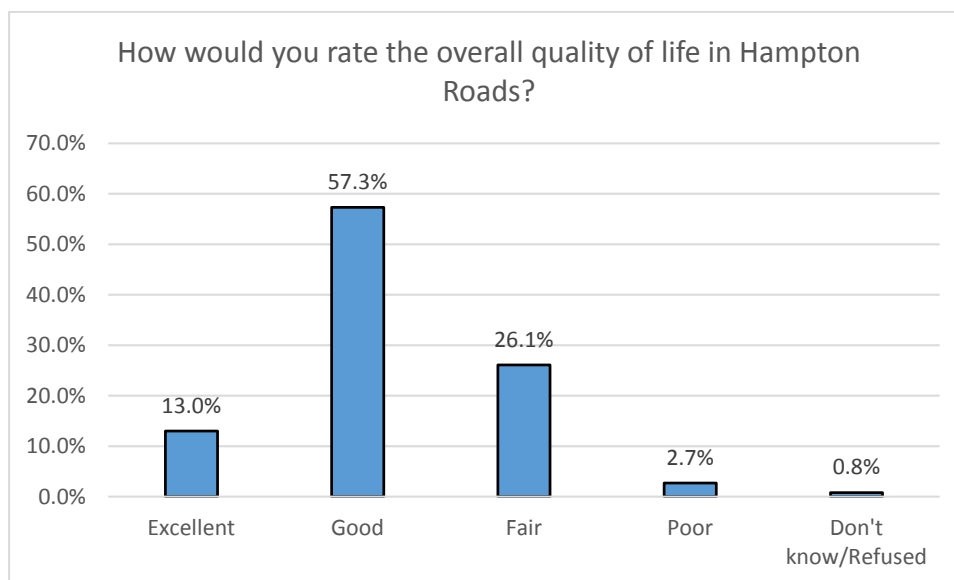
Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #1

Regional, City and Neighborhood Quality of Life

The Old Dominion University Social Science Research Center is proud to release the first part of the 2016 Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) Survey Report. LIHR has been conducted by the Social Science Research Center with support from the Old Dominion University Office of Research and the College of Arts and Letters since 2010 and is now in its seventh year. Release #1 focuses on regional quality of life indicators. Data from prior years is also provided when available to show comparisons in responses over time. Responses were weighted by city population, race, age, gender, and phone usage (cell versus land-line) to be representative of the Hampton Roads region. Subsequent releases will focus on health and education, crime and politics, transportation and tolls, and flooding and sea level rise. For additional information on survey methodology, and analyses of other issues, please see the SSRC website at www.odu.edu/ssrc.

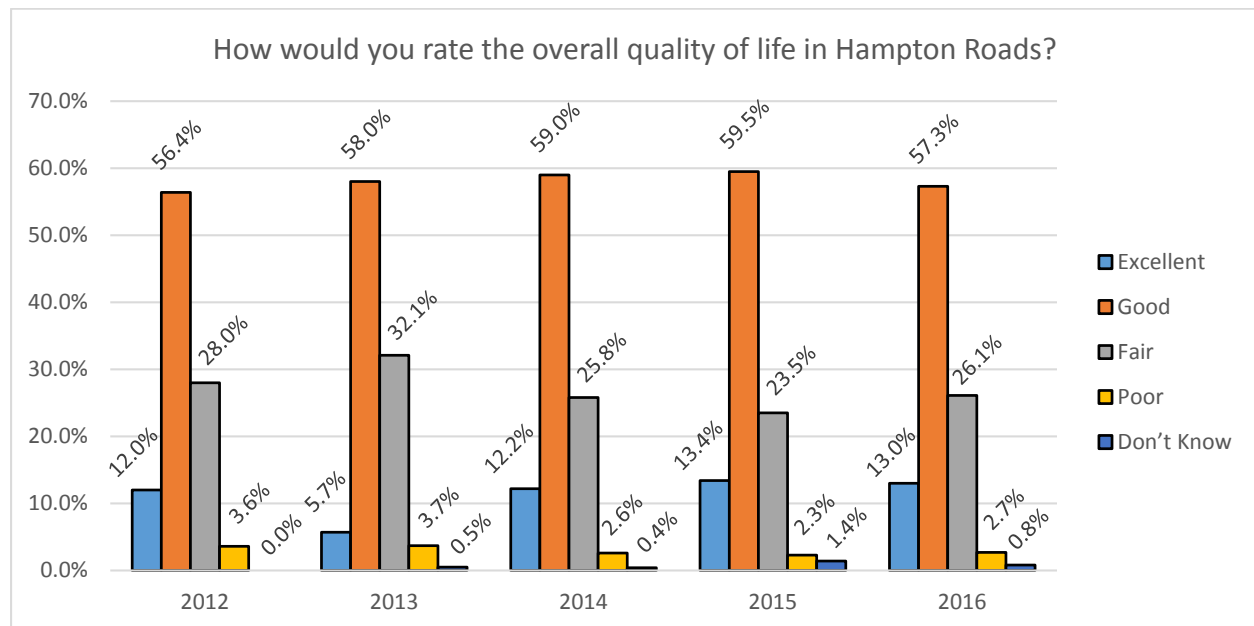
Overall Quality of Life

The overall quality of life in Hampton Roads has remained steady. The 2016 Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) survey continues to show a generally good regional quality of life. The majority of those interviewed (70.3%) reported that the overall quality of life in Hampton Roads was excellent or good while 28.8 percent found it to be fair or poor. The portion of respondents rating regional quality of life as good or excellent is slightly lower than last year's portion (72.9%). However, recreational opportunities, including beach access, remain a key plus for the regional quality of life, while crime and transportation are key challenges.



Quality of Life in Hampton Roads

Over the last several years, quality of life has remained relatively consistent in Hampton Roads. In 2012, 68.4 percent of respondents rated the quality of life in Hampton Roads as excellent or good. In 2013, 64.7 percent of respondents rated quality of life in Hampton Roads as excellent or good, in 2014, 71.2 percent, and in 2015, 72.9 percent. In 2016, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who rated quality of life in Hampton Roads as excellent or good (70.3%). Focusing on the other end of the spectrum, ratings of the quality of life as poor has been consistently low (always less than 5%) and decreasing from 3.6 percent in 2012 to 2.7 percent in 2016.

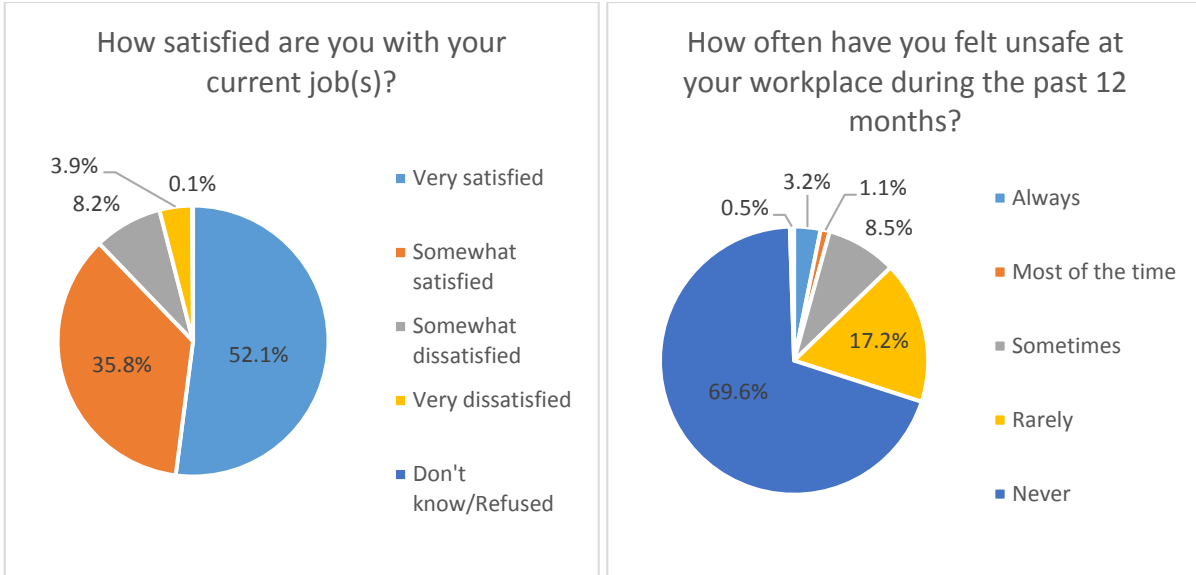


In addition to rating the overall quality of life in Hampton Roads, participants were asked to provide a few words as to why they choose their rating. The respondents (70.3%) who rated the quality of life as good or excellent mentioned several common themes. The most common was access to excellent recreational resources, such as beaches, museums, restaurants, shopping, and parks. Although a few respondents complained about too few such opportunities near them, this was the most commonly given answer to why Hampton Roads was rated favorably. Several other factors were also frequent positives for the region. The availability of quality schools and health care facilities was often cited. The

economic climate in Hampton Roads was also seen as a plus by a number of respondents, with job or economic opportunities mentioned regularly. The weather and climate also ranked well, with almost all of those who mentioned the weather considering it a positive aspect for the region. Diversity of the region was another positive of Hampton Roads that was cited several times.

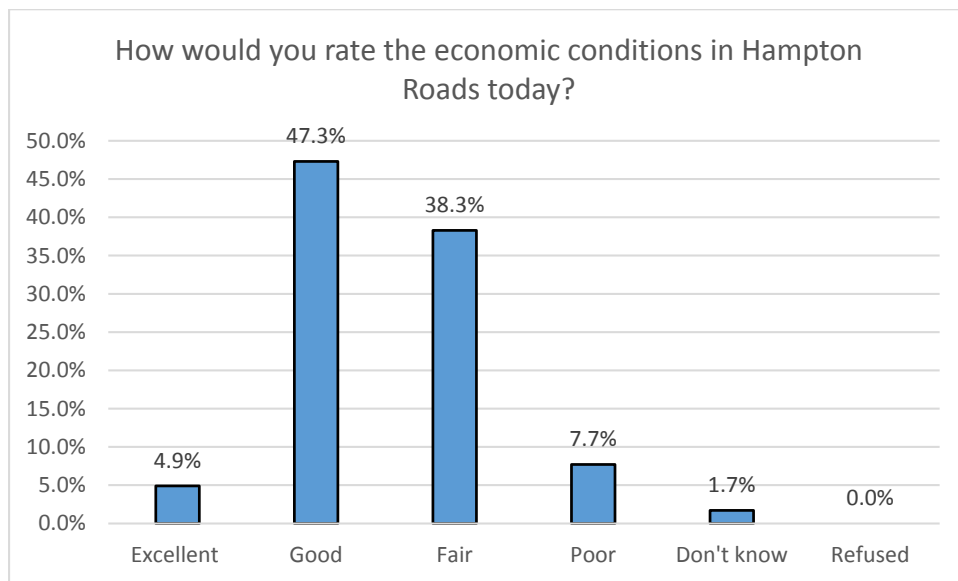
Crime was the most commonly cited reason for giving a fair or poor rating for quality of life in Hampton Roads, with several respondents pointing towards shootings that have eroded their sense of safety. Transportation issues, such as poor road quality, bridges, traffic congestion, public transit limitations, and tolls, were the second most often cited negative. Respondents also indicated that economic issues, such as a higher cost of living, inequality, homelessness, and poverty were a negative.

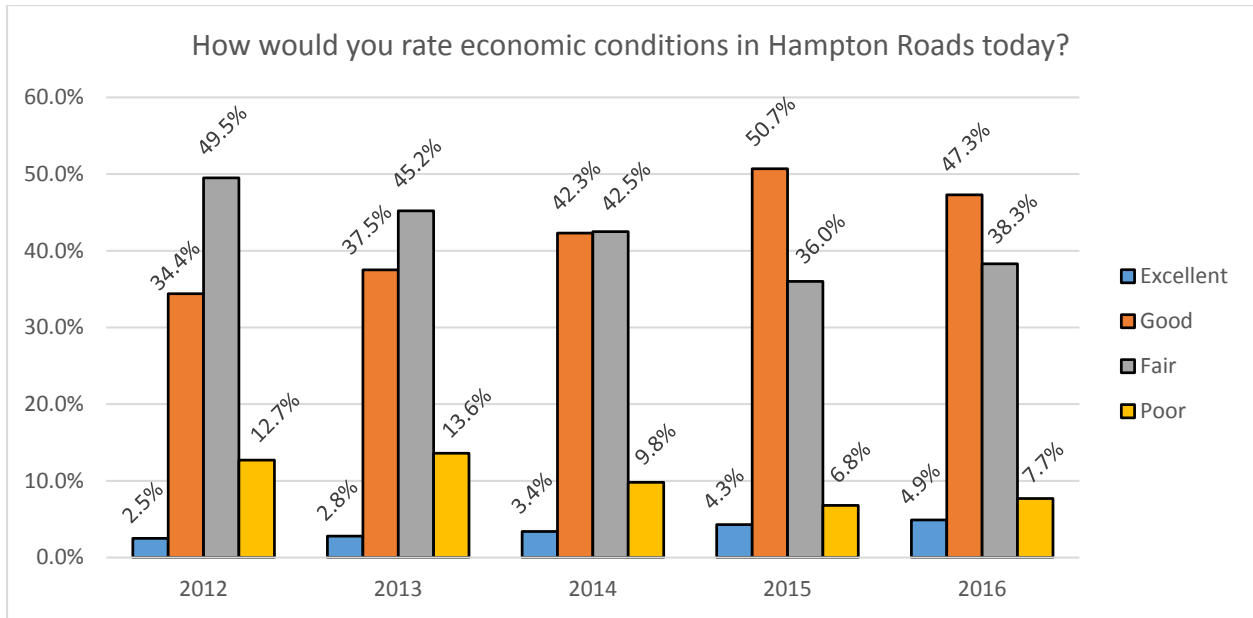
In 2016, respondents were asked questions about job satisfaction and how safe they feel within their workplace. The majority of Hampton Roads residents who work reported being satisfied with their current job with 52.1 percent being very satisfied and another 35.8 percent being somewhat satisfied. Conversely, only 12.1 percent reported being either somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (8.2% and 3.9%, respectively). Additionally, 69.6 percent reported never feeling unsafe at their workplace in the past 12 months and 17.2 percent reported rarely feeling unsafe at their workplace in the past 12 months. It is worth noting that 4.3 percent reported either feeling unsafe at their workplace in the past 12 months most of the time (1.1%) or always (3.2%).



Economic Conditions in Hampton Roads

Consistent with the mixed role played by the economy in respondents' evaluation of regional quality of life, ratings of the regional economy remained relatively stable from years. Over half (52.2%) of respondents rated the economic conditions in Hampton Roads as either excellent or good, while 30.2 percent rated economic conditions as fair or poor. This year's percentage did decrease slightly from 2015 (55.0%) but it is still considerably higher than both 2014 (45.7%) and 2013 (40.3%).





Home Ownership in Hampton Roads

Respondents were asked whether or not they own or are in the process of buying their home, rent, or have some other arrangement. Similar to past years, the majority of residents reported that they own or are in the process of buying their home (64.3%). Another 32.7 percent indicated that they rent, while only 2.2 percent reported having another arrangement.

Home Ownership	2013	2014	2015	2016
Own or in the process of buying	71.4%	65.6%	65.5%	64.3%
Rent	25.5%	31.9%	30.6%	32.7%
Other arrangement	3%	2%	3.1%	2.2%
Don't know/Refused	0.1%	0.6%	0.9%	0.7%

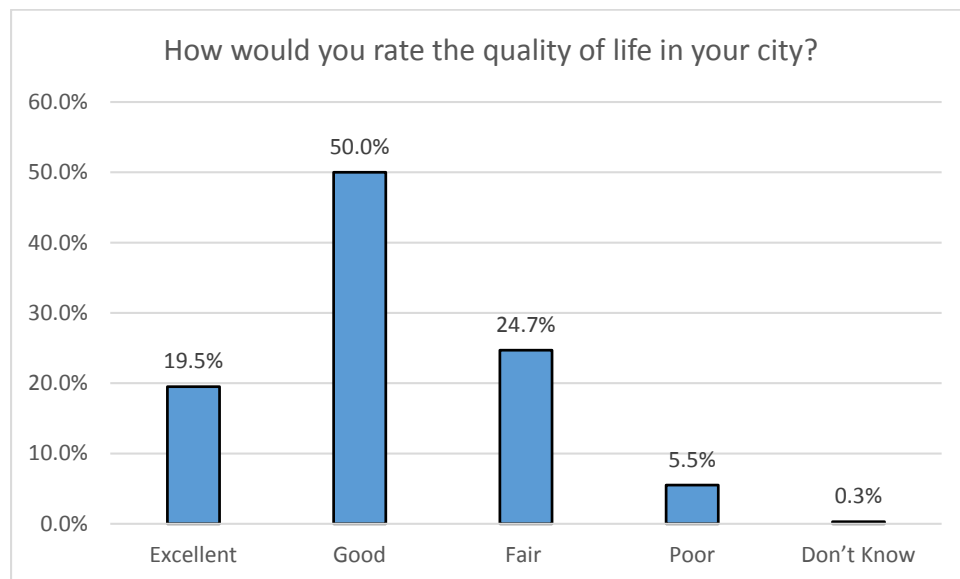
*This question was not asked in the 2012 survey.

Neighborhood and City Quality of Life Ratings

The 2016 Life in Hampton Roads survey examined sub-regional measures of neighborhood and city quality of life and governance, and also examined relevant measures at the city level. Although such analyses have significant value, they should also be understood in the context of the much greater uncertainty associated with inferences from sub-population analyses. The maximum margin of error, including design effects from weighting, for the entire sample of LIHR is 3.6 percent (95% confidence level). Thus, only quite large differences between subsample groups are statistically significant.

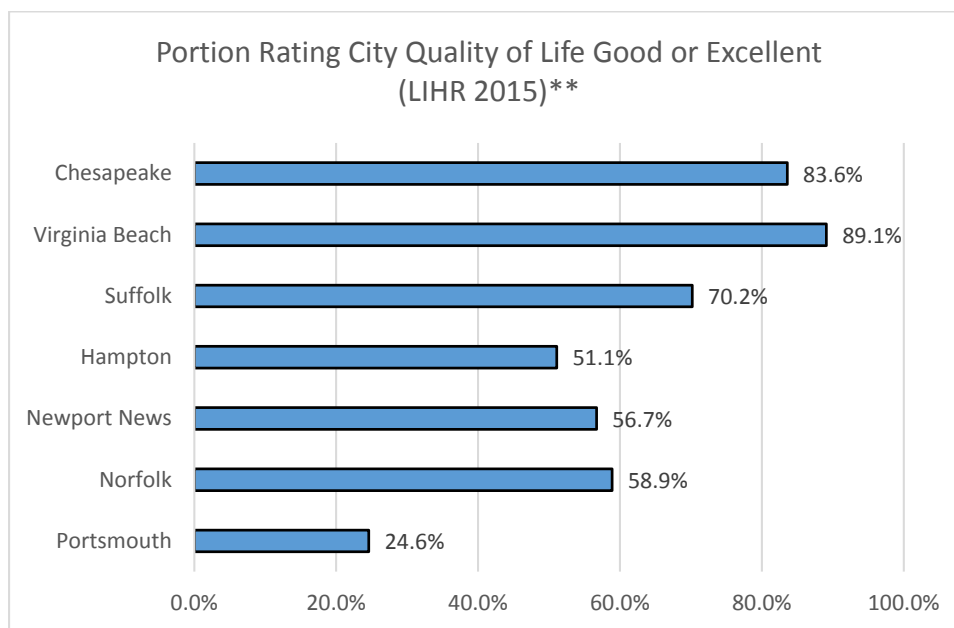
City Quality of Life

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of life for their city of residence. Almost 70% of respondents reported the quality of life in their city as excellent or good (19.5% and 50.0%, respectively). Another 30.2% rated the quality of life in their city as fair (24.7%) or poor (5.5%).



Perceptions of city quality of life varied significantly across the Hampton Roads region ($p < .05$). At the top end, 89.1 percent of respondents from Virginia Beach rated the quality of life in their city as good or excellent, as did 83.6 percent of respondents from Chesapeake. Suffolk was slightly lower, with 70.2 percent rating city quality of life good or excellent. Norfolk and Newport News ranked somewhat lower, at 58.9 percent and 56.7 percent respectively. Finally, Hampton and Portsmouth ranked substantially

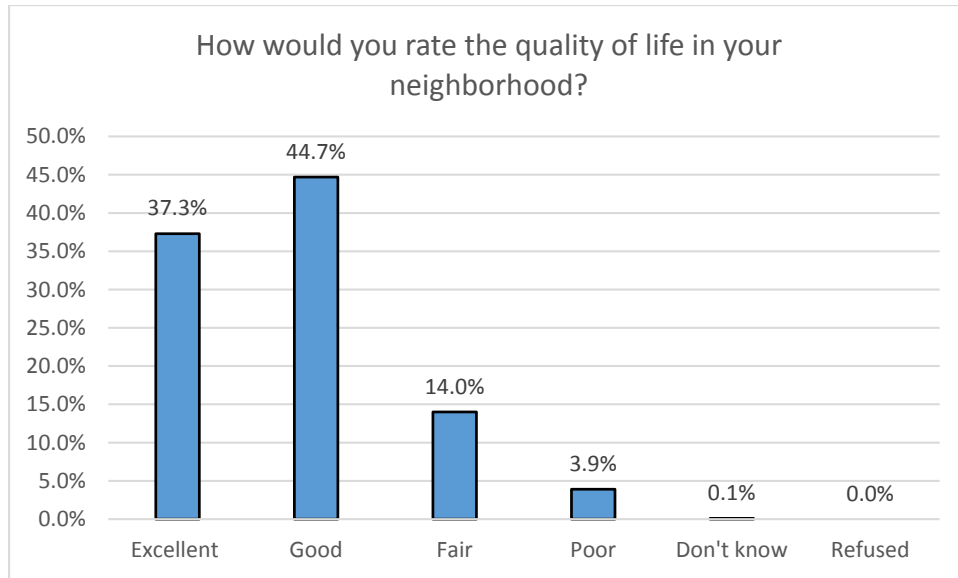
lower at 51.1 percent and 24.6 percent, respectively. Residents in some cities appear to have substantially higher perceptions of quality of life than others. Although the rankings within the top group (Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Suffolk) and the bottom group (Norfolk, Newport News, Hampton, and Portsmouth) cannot be known with statistical confidence, we can be confident at more than the 95 percent confidence level that the top group and bottom group are different, and the observed rankings are broadly consistent with patterns we have seen in previous survey years.



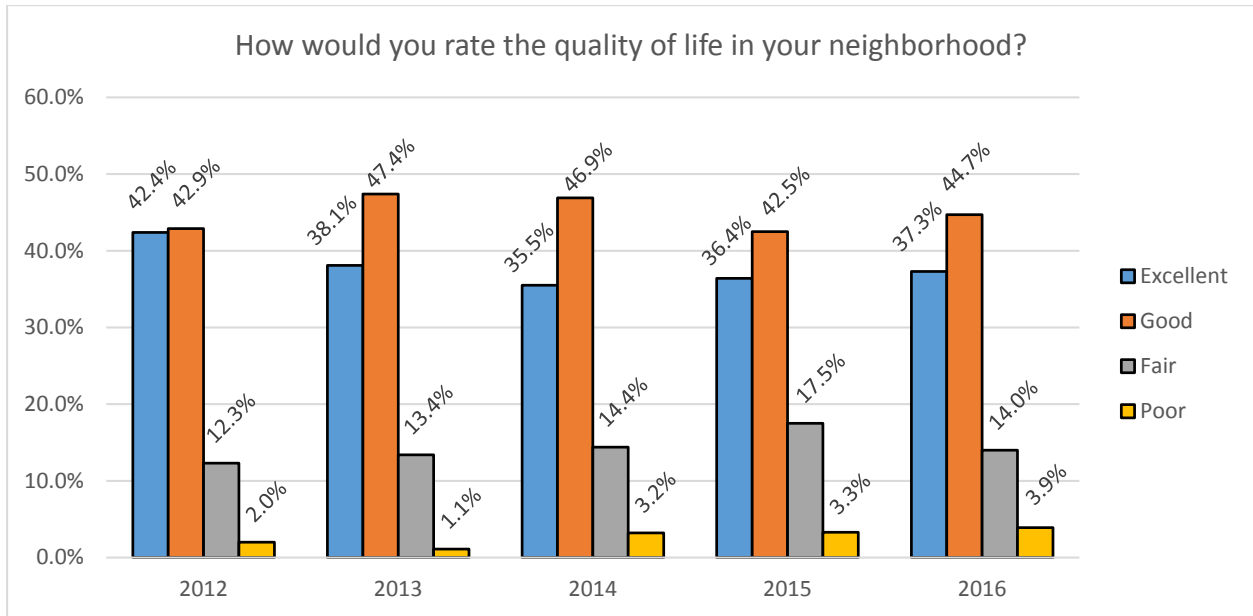
**p<.05 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

Neighborhood Quality of Life

Overall, respondents reported very high ratings for quality of life in their neighborhood. The majority of respondents (82%) rated the quality of life in their neighborhood as either excellent or good. In contrast, only 17.9 percent of respondents rated the quality of life in their neighborhood as fair or poor. Overall, quality of life was rated the highest (excellent and good) for respondent's neighborhood (82.0%), followed by Hampton Roads as a whole (70.3%), and finally city of residence (69.5%).



Across years, a strong majority of respondents rated the quality of life in their neighborhoods as good or excellent. While there was a general decline from 2012 (85.2%) to 2015 (78.9%), 2016 saw the percentage of respondents rating the quality of life in their neighborhood as excellent or good increase to back to similar levels (82%). In particular, respondents who rated quality of life in their Hampton Roads neighborhood as excellent had been on the decline for several years until 2015 when the percentage was 36.4 and 2016 when the percentage was 37.3 percent. This percentage is up slightly from only 35.5 percent in 2014. However, despite still representing a small percentage of Hampton Roads residents, this year marked the highest percentage of respondents' ratings of poor (3.9%) in the past five years for quality of life in neighborhoods.



In summary, overall quality of life in Hampton Roads remains relatively consistent with prior years. Although there were some differences between cities in the reported quality of life, respondents reported a higher quality of life in their neighborhoods in 2016 than last year. While there were some minor decreases in quality of life in Hampton Roads since last year, respondents reported a higher quality of life for 2016 than in 2013 and 2014.

All Life in Hampton Roads data summaries will be placed on the Social Science Research Center website as they are released (<http://www.odu.edu/al/centers/ssrc>). Follow-up questions about the 2016 Life in Hampton Roads survey should be addressed to:

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