

Old Dominion University

**ODU Digital Commons**

---

Life in Hampton Roads Survey Report

Social Science Research Center

---

2021

## **Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #1: Quality of Life**

Social Science Research Center, Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ssrc\\_lihr](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ssrc_lihr)



Part of the [Community-Based Research Commons](#), [Place and Environment Commons](#), [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#), [Regional Sociology Commons](#), and the [Social Statistics Commons](#)

---

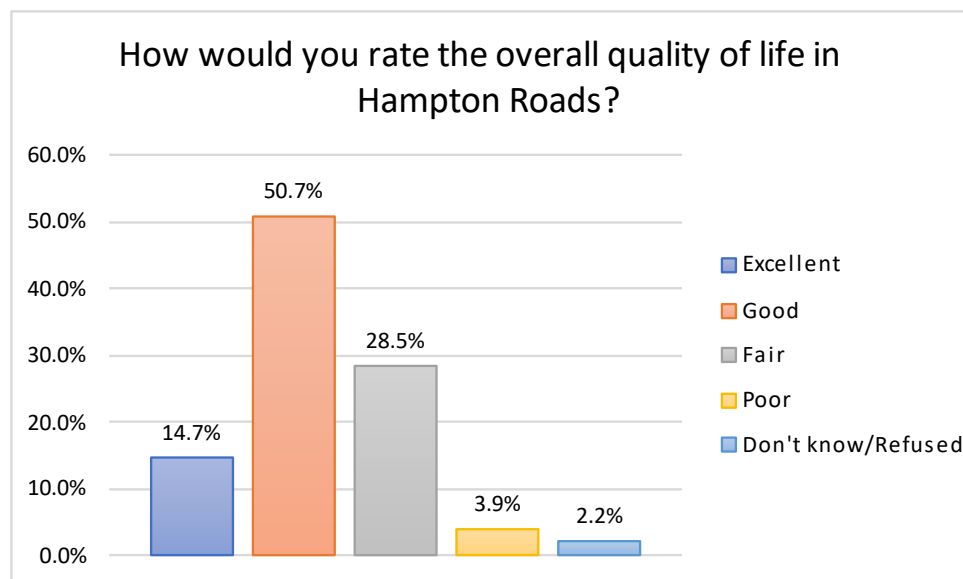
# Life in Hampton Roads 2021 - Quality of Life

## Introduction

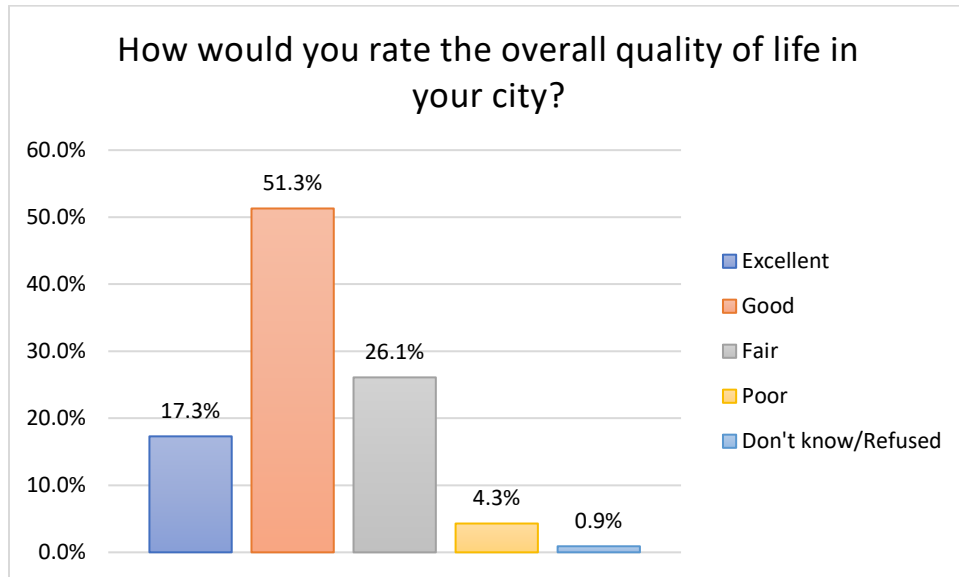
The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Old Dominion University recently completed data collection for the 12th annual Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) survey. The purpose of the survey is to gain insight into residents' perceptions of the quality of life in Hampton Roads and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other topics of local interest such as perceptions of police, employment and other issues. A total of 796 online and telephone surveys were completed between July 12 and Oct. 3, 2021. It is important to note that the methodology this year differs from previous Life in Hampton Roads surveys. For several reasons, including continued concerns about COVID-19 and labor shortages, we conducted both telephone surveys and online panels. This change limits to some degree the ability to compare this year's results with those from previous years or to confidently generalize the results to the Hampton Roads population as a whole. Nonetheless, we note that an increasing number of surveys have moved online in recent years, and that in many instances useful data has been developed despite the challenges of online survey research. For more detailed information on the methodological changes and potential impacts please see the Methodology section in the full report, or please contact the SSRC directly.

## Quality of Life

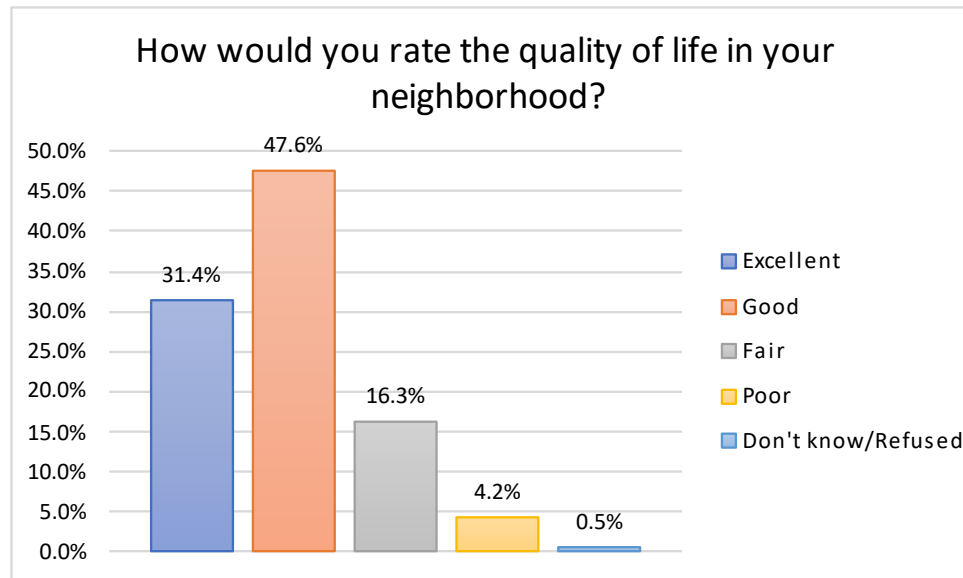
Almost two-thirds of respondents rated the quality of life in the region as excellent or good (65.4%). This is slightly lower than in previous, non-COVID years (ranging from 68% to 71% between 2017-2019). A total of 28.5% of respondents rated Hampton Roads' quality of life as fair and 3.9% rated it as poor.



Consistent with previous years, respondents rated the quality of life in their city and their neighborhood more highly than they did for the region as a whole. Just over 68% rated the quality of life in their city as good or excellent (68.6%) and 26.1% rated their city as fair. Only 4.3% rated their city's quality of life as poor.



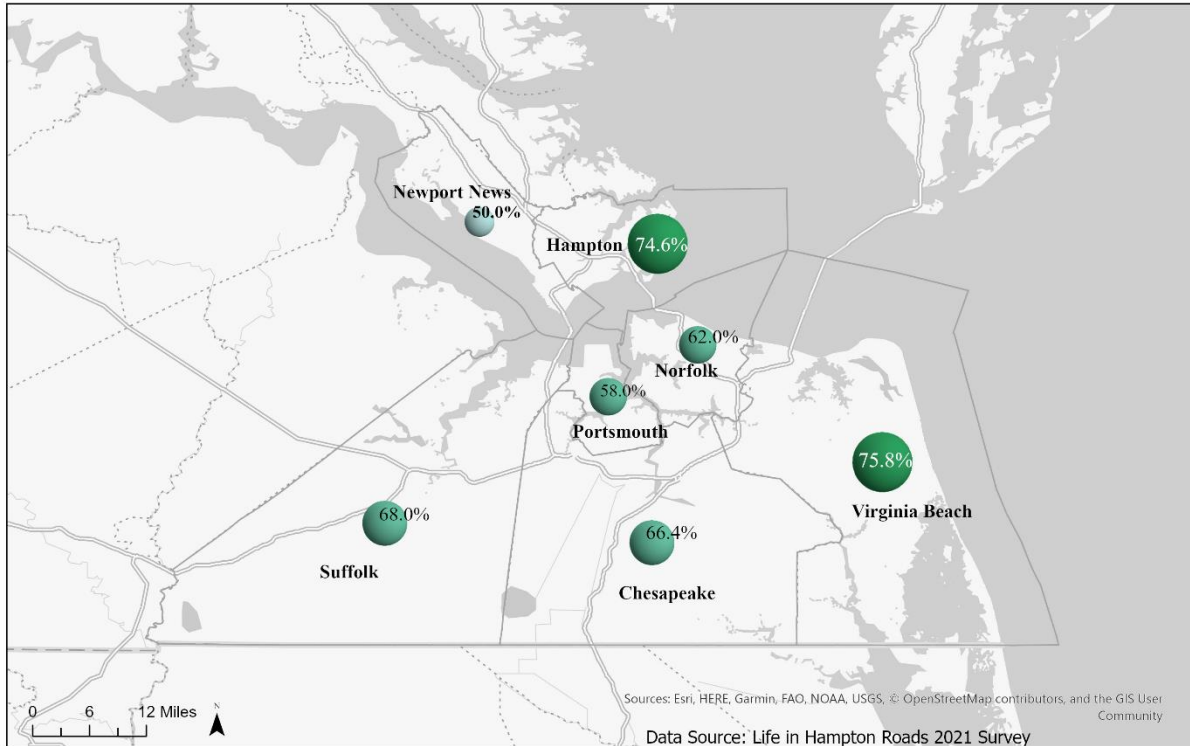
Neighborhood ratings of quality of life were the highest, with 79% rating their neighborhood as excellent or good. Only 16.3% rated their neighborhood quality of life as fair and 4.2% rated it as poor.



### Quality of Life by City

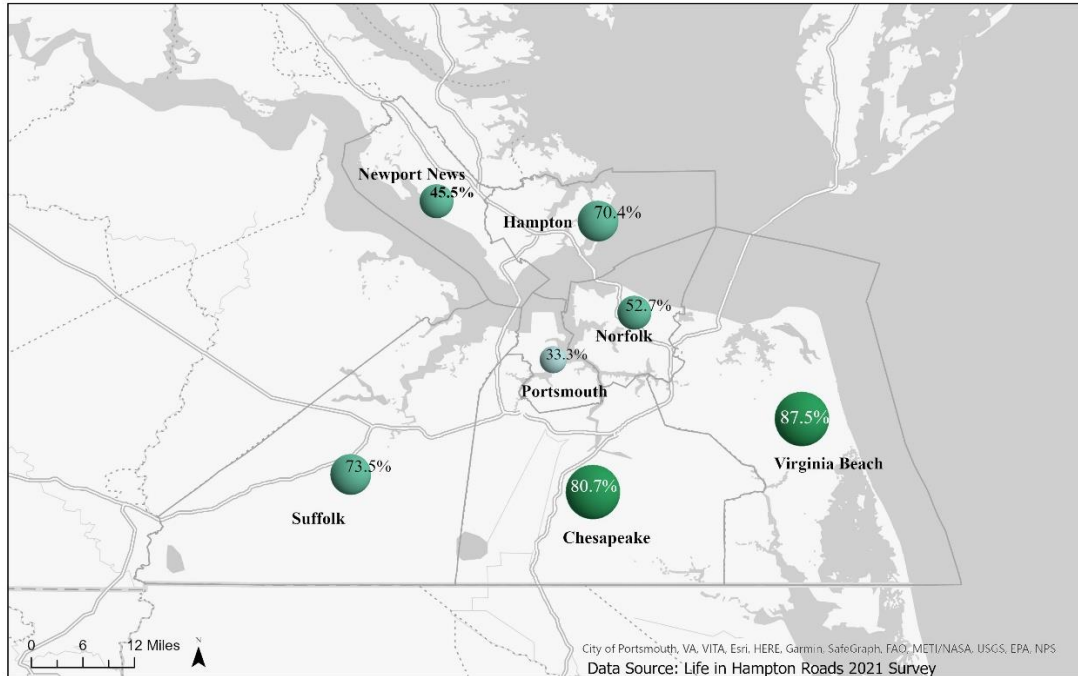
The ratings clearly and statistically varied based on where respondents live. Across the cities, only a small percentage rated the quality of life in Hampton Roads as poor with the highest percentage in Newport News (11%) followed by the city of Hampton with 6%. Fewer than 5% of residents in the other cities rated the quality of life in the area poorly. A larger proportion of residents rated the area as excellent with about 20% of those living in Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Suffolk reporting that the quality of life is excellent. Combining positive responses (good and excellent), Hampton and Virginia Beach residents were the most likely to rate the regional quality of life as excellent or good (75 and 76%, respectively). More than 60% of residents in Norfolk (62%), Chesapeake (66%), and Suffolk (68%) rated the area favorably while 58% of Portsmouth residents and just half of Newport News residents did so (49.5%).

## % of City Residents Rating Quality of Life in the Hampton Roads Area as Good or Excellent



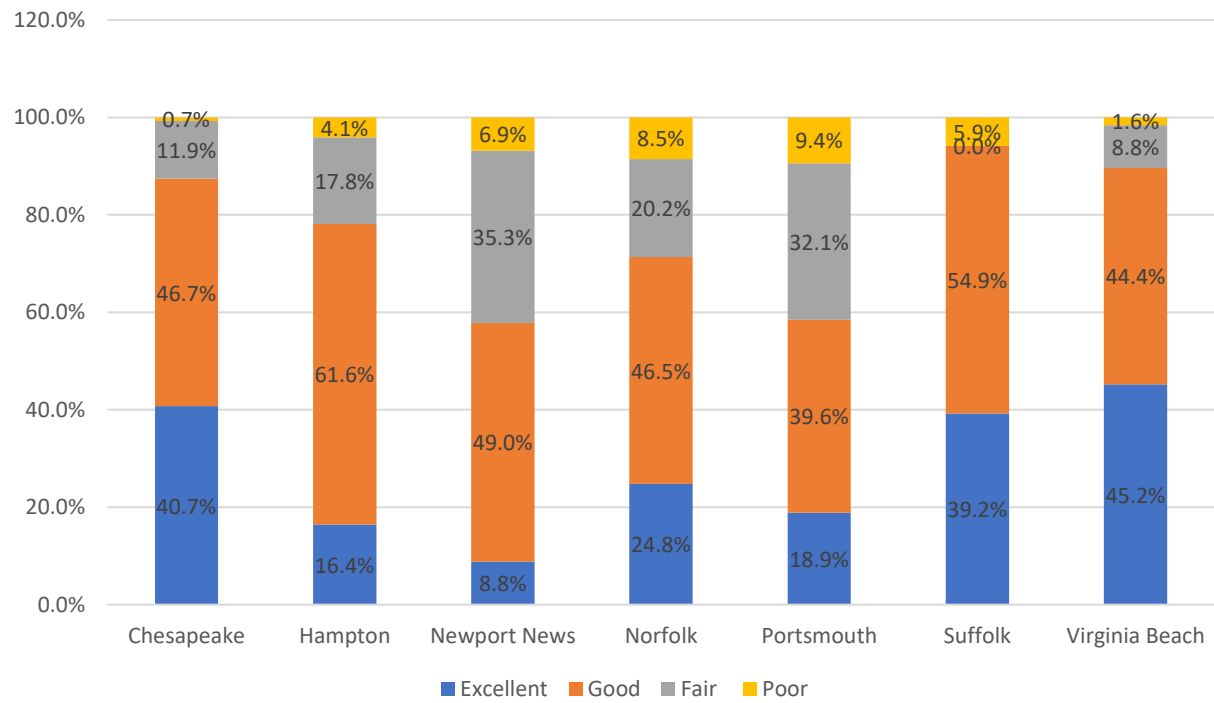
The differences are even more pronounced, however, when looking at residents' rating of the city where they live. In most cities, few people rated the quality of life as poor – less than 1% in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake and less than 5% in Suffolk. Less than 9% rated the quality of life as poor in Norfolk, Newport News and Hampton with only Portsmouth reaching double digits (16%). On the other end of the spectrum, more than one-quarter of residents rated the quality of life as excellent in Virginia Beach and Suffolk while fewer than 10% rated the quality of life as excellent in Portsmouth and Newport News. After combining excellent and good responses, more than 80% of residents in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake rate the quality of life favorable, as do more than 70% of Suffolk and Hampton residents. Over half of Norfolk residents rate their quality of life favorably while less than half of Newport News and Portsmouth residents report that their city quality of life is excellent or good.

## % of Residents Rating Quality of Life in their City as Good or Excellent



There is considerable variation in the sociodemographic and socioeconomic conditions of the neighborhoods within each of the cities of Hampton Roads and likely in the perceived quality of life across residents within each of the cities. When asked about quality of life in the neighborhoods they reside, citizen responses also varied greatly across cities. Clearly, though, and in contrast to perception of their city or the region as a whole, respondents viewed their neighborhoods favorably. In none of the cities did truly negative quality of life ratings (poor) in the neighborhood reach double digits. Furthermore, respondents across cities were more likely to rate the quality of life in their neighborhood as excellent with only Newport News being below than 15%. More than one-third of residents rated the quality of life in their neighborhoods as excellent in Suffolk, Chesapeake and Virginia Beach. When positive responses (good or excellent) are combined, well over half of residents across all cities rated the quality of life in their neighborhood positively.

## Quality of Life in the Respondents' Neighborhoods



---

The Life in Hampton Roads Data report and press releases 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 2021 Life in Hampton Roads survey should be addressed to:

Tancy Vandecar-Burdin, PhD  
Director  
The Social Science Research Center  
Old Dominion University  
757-683-3802 (office)  
[tvandeca@odu.edu](mailto:tvandeca@odu.edu)