



CITY OF PALO ALTO COMMUNITY SURVEY 2024

Supplemental Benchmarks

November 2024



1241 John Q. Hammons Dr, Suite #203
Madison, WI 53717
info.polco.us • 608-709-8683

Bay Area Benchmark Comparisons

Table 1: Quality of Life

Quality of Life Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall image or reputation of Palo Alto	78%	5	14	Higher
The overall quality of life in Palo Alto	89%	4	15	Similar
Palo Alto as a place to live	91%	5	15	Similar
Recommend living in Palo Alto to someone who asks	78%	11	14	Similar
Remain in Palo Alto for the next five years	79%	11	14	Similar

Table 2: Governance

Governance Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall confidence in Palo Alto government	49%	7	14	Similar
The overall direction that Palo Alto is taking	47%	9	14	Similar
The value of services for the taxes paid to Palo Alto	56%	4	14	Similar
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	53%	7	14	Similar
Being honest	61%	5	14	Similar
Being open and transparent to the public	53%	6	13	Similar
Informing residents about issues facing the community	58%	2	13	Similar
The job Palo Alto government does at welcoming citizen involvement	54%	6	14	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	66%	3	14	Similar
Treating residents with respect	74%	3	13	Similar
The City of Palo Alto	74%	2	14	Similar
The Federal Government	41%	6	14	Similar

Table 3: Economy

Economy Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Palo Alto	71%	6	14	Similar
Variety of business and service establishments in Palo Alto	54%	7	13	Similar
Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area	59%	7	13	Similar
Shopping opportunities	66%	4	14	Higher
Palo Alto as a place to visit	70%	8	14	Similar
Palo Alto as a place to work	84%	2	14	Higher
Employment opportunities	64%	2	14	Higher
Cost of living in Palo Alto	8%	12	14	Lower

Table 4: Mobility

Mobility Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Traffic flow on major streets	48%	6	15	Similar
Ease of travel by car in Palo Alto	72%	6	14	Similar
Ease of travel by public transportation in Palo Alto	31%	11	14	Similar
Ease of travel by bicycle in Palo Alto	81%	2	14	Higher
Ease of walking in Palo Alto	82%	2	14	Higher
Ease of public parking	68%	4	14	Similar
Traffic enforcement	56%	8	15	Similar
Traffic signal timing	57%	4	14	Similar
Street repair	52%	7	15	Similar
Street cleaning	80%	2	15	Higher
Sidewalk maintenance	57%	5	14	Similar
Used bus, rail or other public transportation instead of driving	43%	5	14	Similar
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	59%	4	14	Similar
Walked or biked instead of driving	86%	1	14	Higher

Table 5: Community Design

Community Design Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall “built environment” of Palo Alto (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	75%	2	14	Higher
Your neighborhood as a place to live	93%	3	14	Similar
Overall quality of new development in Palo Alto	41%	9	14	Similar
Variety of housing options	24%	12	14	Similar
Availability of affordable quality housing	11%	12	14	Similar
Land use, planning and zoning	41%	8	15	Similar
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	44%	7	14	Similar

Table 6: Utilities

Utilities Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Affordable high-speed internet access	44%	10	13	Similar
Drinking water	84%	3	13	Higher
Sewer services	83%	4	13	Similar
Storm water management (storm drainage, dams, levees, etc.)	77%	2	14	Similar
Utility payment options	80%	1	12	Much Higher

Table 7: Safety

Safety Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall feeling of safety in Palo Alto	88%	4	14	Higher
Police emergency services	81%	4	15	Similar
Crime prevention	69%	5	14	Similar
Animal control	82%	1	13	Higher
Ambulance or emergency medical services	91%	1	13	Higher
Fire emergency services	92%	2	13	Similar
Fire prevention and education	80%	3	13	Similar

Table 8: Natural Environment

Natural Environment Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall quality of natural environment in Palo Alto	87%	5	14	Similar
Preservation of natural areas (open space, farmlands and greenbelts)	81%	5	14	Similar
Palo Alto open space (e.g. Foothills, Baylands)	89%	2	14	Higher

Table 9: Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of paths and walking trails	73%	8	14	Similar
City parks	90%	2	14	Higher
Recreational opportunities	79%	5	15	Similar
Recreation programs or classes	80%	2	14	Higher
Recreation centers or facilities	81%	2	14	Higher
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	78%	6	14	Similar

Table 10: Health and Wellness

Health and Wellness Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Palo Alto	85%	2	14	Higher
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	34%	7	14	Similar

Table 11: Education, Arts, and Culture

Education, Arts, and Culture Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	70%	3	15	Higher
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	34%	9	14	Similar
K-12 education	89%	1	14	Much Higher
Adult educational opportunities	83%	1	14	Higher

Table 12: Inclusivity and Engagement

Inclusivity and Engagement Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	61%	4	13	Similar
Palo Alto as a place to raise children	84%	4	15	Similar
Palo Alto as a place to retire	54%	7	15	Similar
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	71%	4	14	Similar
Making all residents feel welcome	68%	8	13	Similar
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds	59%	9	13	Similar
Valuing/respecting residents from diverse backgrounds	71%	6	13	Similar
Taking care of vulnerable residents (elderly, disabled, homeless, etc.)	52%	6	13	Similar
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	65%	5	14	Similar
Opportunities to participate in community matters	68%	5	14	Similar

Table 13: Participation

Participation Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Contacted the City of Palo Alto (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	57%	1	14	Higher
Contacted Palo Alto elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	17%	6	14	Similar
Attended a local public meeting (of local elected officials like City Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards,	17%	11	14	Similar
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	16%	11	14	Similar
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Palo Alto	40%	2	13	Higher
Voted in your most recent local election	73%	6	12	Similar

Table 14: Focus Areas

Importance Items	Percent essential or very important	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall economic health of Palo Alto.	78%	14	14	Similar
Overall “built environment” of Palo Alto (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	79%	3	14	Similar
Overall feeling of safety in Palo Alto	82%	12	14	Similar
Overall quality of natural environment in Palo Alto	79%	8	14	Similar
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Palo Alto	61%	14	14	Lower
Overall opportunities for education, culture and the arts	69%	7	14	Similar
Residents’ connection and engagement with their community	60%	13	14	Similar