

**CITY OF SAN DIEGO
2003 RESIDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

November 2003

Prepared for

City of San Diego
San Diego, California

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by the City of San Diego, California. The primary purpose of this effort was to measure residents' satisfaction with City services. More specifically, this study addressed the following issues:

- Attitudes about the quality of life in San Diego;
- Overall satisfaction with the City's performance in providing services;
- Satisfaction with 34 specific City-provided services;
- Utilization of selected City-provided services and facilities;
- Attitudes about safety in the City of San Diego.

This study represents the ninth annual city-wide resident satisfaction study conducted for the City of San Diego. Where appropriate, comparisons are made to the prior studies.

The information contained in this report is based on 600 in-depth interviews conducted with a representative cross-section of San Diego residents. All of the interviewing on this project was conducted via telephone by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center during October 2003.

This EXECUTIVE SUMMARY provides a brief overview of the primary findings of this research. For a more detailed analysis of the findings generated in this research, please refer to the SUMMARY ANALYSIS report.

When comparing the overall results from this study with the overall results from the prior Resident Satisfaction Surveys, the reader is advised that variations between the studies must exceed six percent to be deemed statistically significant.

The Behavior Research Center has presented all of the data germane to the basic research objectives of this project. However, if City management requires additional data retrieval or interpretation, we stand ready to provide such input.

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OVERVIEW

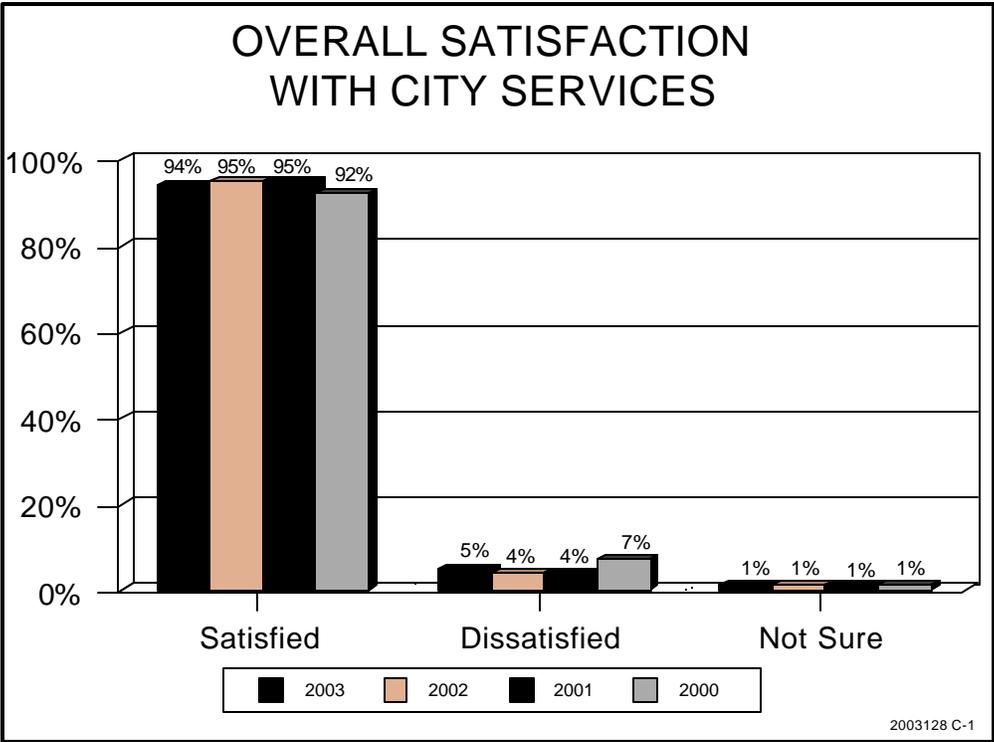
- KEY FINDINGS**

Three key findings are evident from this research effort:

- First, the City of San Diego continues to receive very high marks from residents for the services it provides, with better than nine out of ten residents (94%) indicating they are satisfied with the job the City does. Importantly, this attitude is universal among all population subgroups.
- Second, the City receives highly positive ratings in the vast majority of instances for its efforts in delivering the 34 specific municipal services surveyed.
- Third, the quality of life that San Diego offers continues to be viewed very highly with a positive rating of 79 percent among residents. Again, this attitude is generally held by all the various socio-demographic subgroups making up the City.

- OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES**

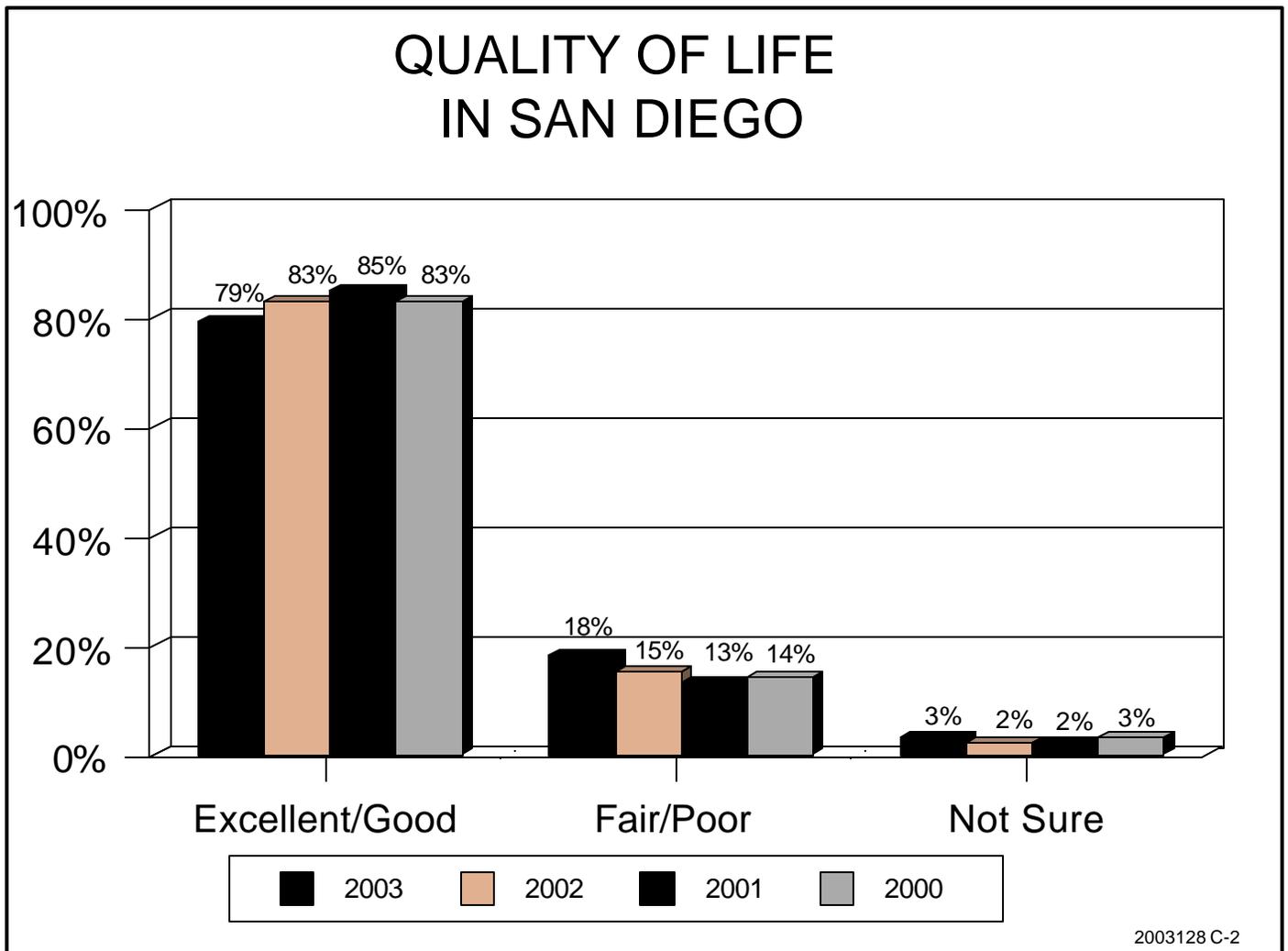
Better than nine out of ten San Diego residents (94%) continue to indicate they are either very satisfied (39%) or somewhat satisfied (55%) with the services the City provides. Demographically, overall satisfaction with the services the City provides does not drop below 91 percent within any population subgroup. This response pattern again indicates broad-based satisfaction with City services among residents.



- QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

San Diego residents also continue to rate the quality of life in the City very highly with nearly eight out of ten residents (79%) indicating it is either excellent (38%) or good (41%) compared to other large cities in California. In comparison, 18 percent of residents rate the quality of life as either fair or poor.

When residents' attitudes about the quality of life in San Diego are analyzed by demographic subgroups, we find that among residents who earn between \$25,000 and \$34,999 (60%) and non-whites (68%) the positive response drops below 70 percent.



- **SATISFACTION WITH SELECTED CITY SERVICES**

San Diego residents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with each of 34 services provided by the City of San Diego – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Each of the positive responses (very satisfied, somewhat satisfied) to this series of questions was then combined to generate a "satisfaction rating" for each of the 34 services. For example, 41 percent of residents indicate they are very satisfied with the overall quality of police service and 43 percent indicate they are somewhat satisfied – an 84 percent satisfaction rating.

Presented on the following two charts are the satisfaction ratings for each of the 34 services studied. As may be seen, five of the services received a satisfaction rating from nine out of ten residents or more:

- City-provided home recycling service (97%);
- Residential trash collection service (96%);
- Library services (94%);
- Fire emergency service (93%); and
- City's web site (92%).

Also receiving very positive ratings from residents were ten additional services which received a satisfaction rating of between 80 and 89 percent from residents:

- Quality of parks and recreation facilities (88%);
- Maintenance of street landscaping (87%);
- Quality of housing in your neighborhood (86%);
- 911 emergency response service (85%);
- Overall quality of police service (84%);
- City Attorney's efforts to reduce domestic violence (84%);
- Police concern for citizen safety (83%);
- Emergency medical service (82%);
- Lifeguard services (81%); and
- Police RSVP Program (80%).

A third tier of 12 City services received a satisfaction rating of between 70 and 79 percent from residents:

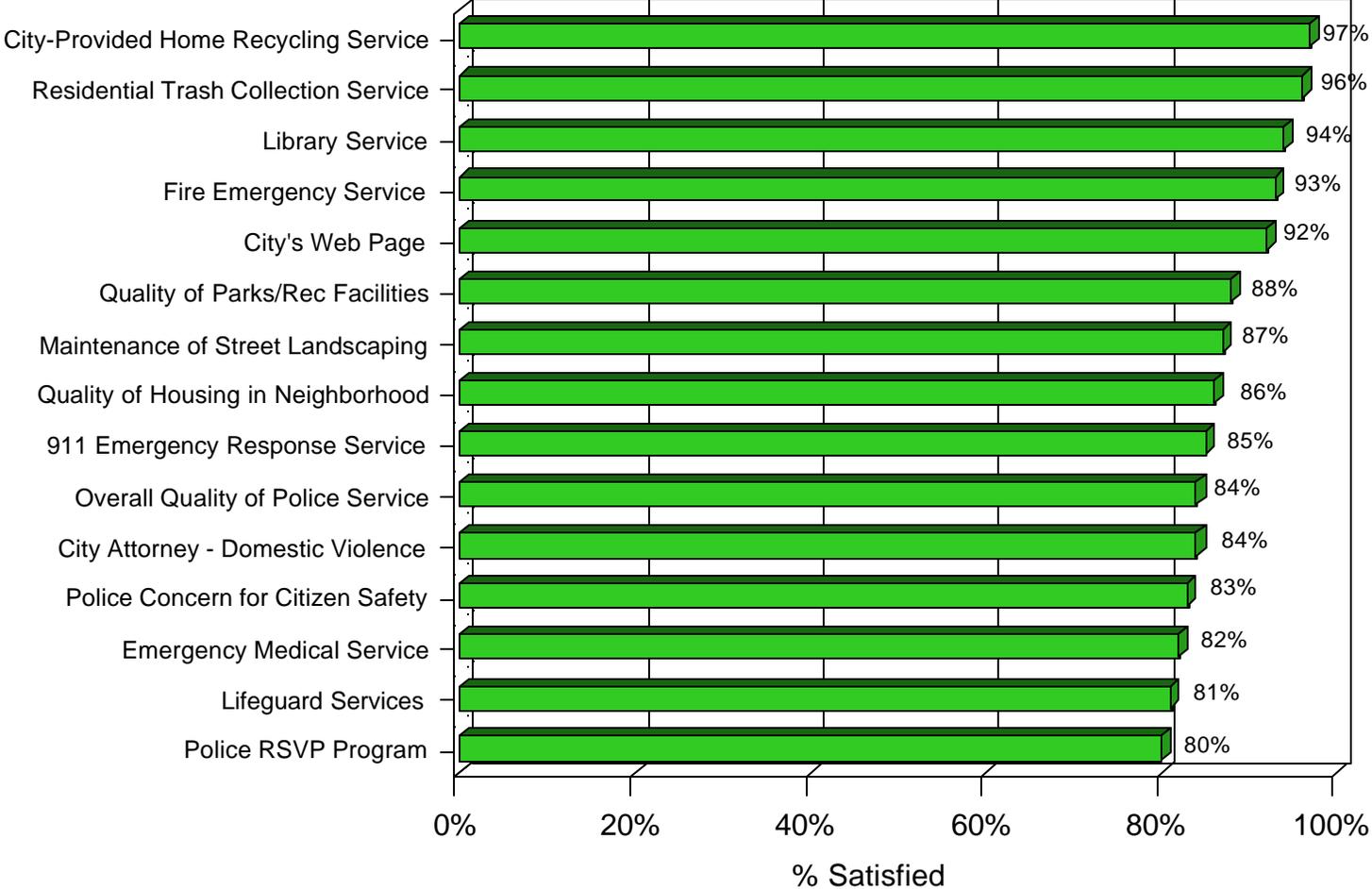
- Condition of City-owned buildings (79%);
- Art and cultural programs available (79%);
- Efforts to control/remove graffiti (79%);
- Quality of parks and recreation services (79%);
- Street sweeping (78%);
- Trash/litter programs (78%);
- Fire prevention programs (76%);
- Police efforts in addressing neighborhood crime (75%);
- Beach and water safety education (73%);
- Maintenance of sidewalks (72%);
- Police response to calls for assistance (72%); and
- Police efforts to address drug problems (71%).

Seven of the 34 City services evaluated in this study generated satisfaction ratings below 70 percent:

- Police efforts to address gang problems (65%);
- Accuracy of City water and sewer bills (61%);
- Street maintenance (61%);
- Taste, color and odor of City drinking water (61%);
- Traffic flow on major streets (55%);
- Attracting and retaining businesses (46%); and
- Affordability of housing (29%).

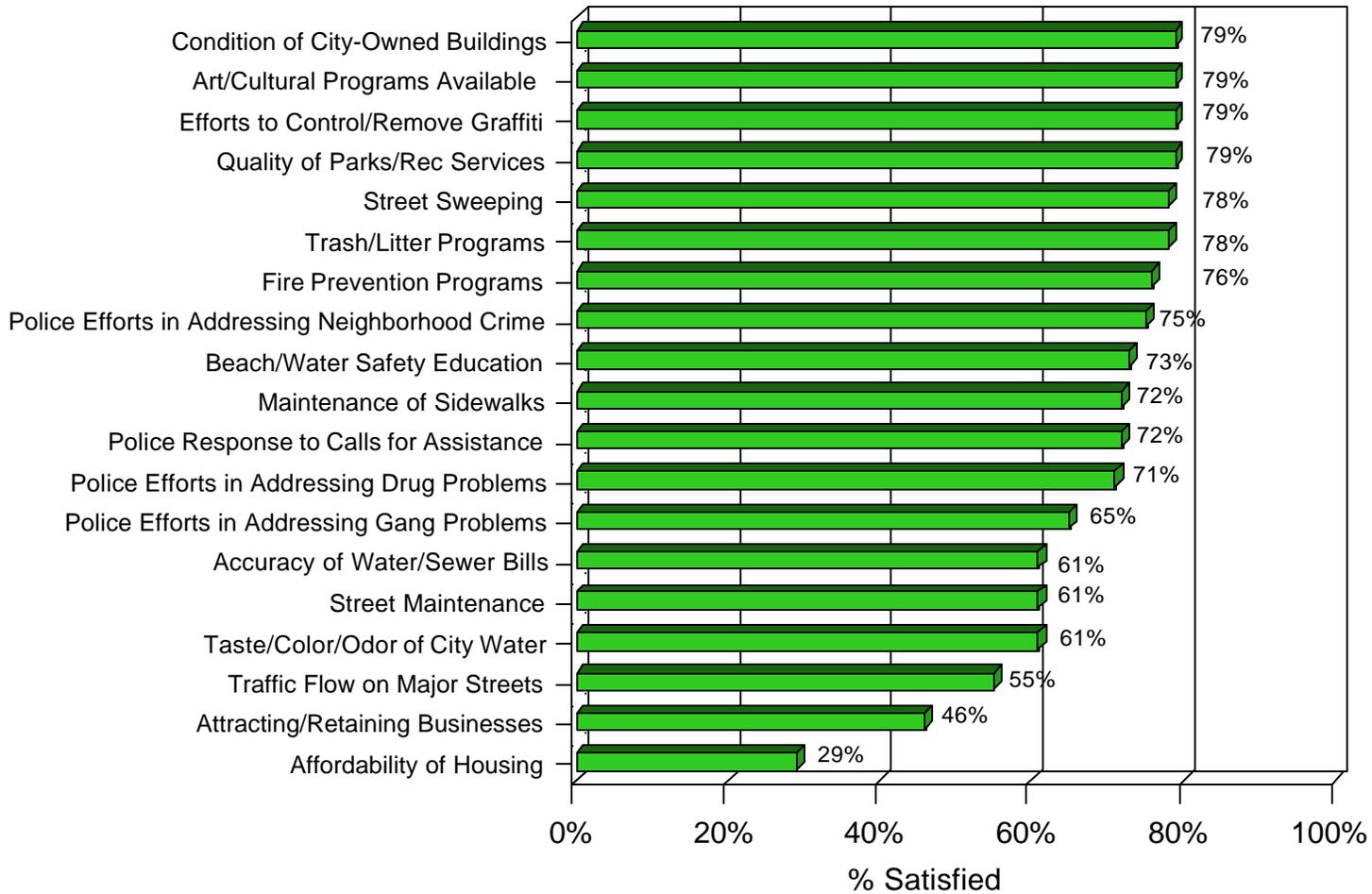
When the 2003 service ratings are compared to the 2002 ratings, we find that among the 33 services tested in both years (one new service was added in 2003), that in 32 cases the ratings are statistically unchanged (less than a six point positive or negative shift), while in only one case are they statistically less positive (more than a six point negative shift). The one service that receives a lower rating in 2003 than in 2002 is “attracting and retaining businesses” which is down nine points to 46 percent.

SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES - TOP RATED



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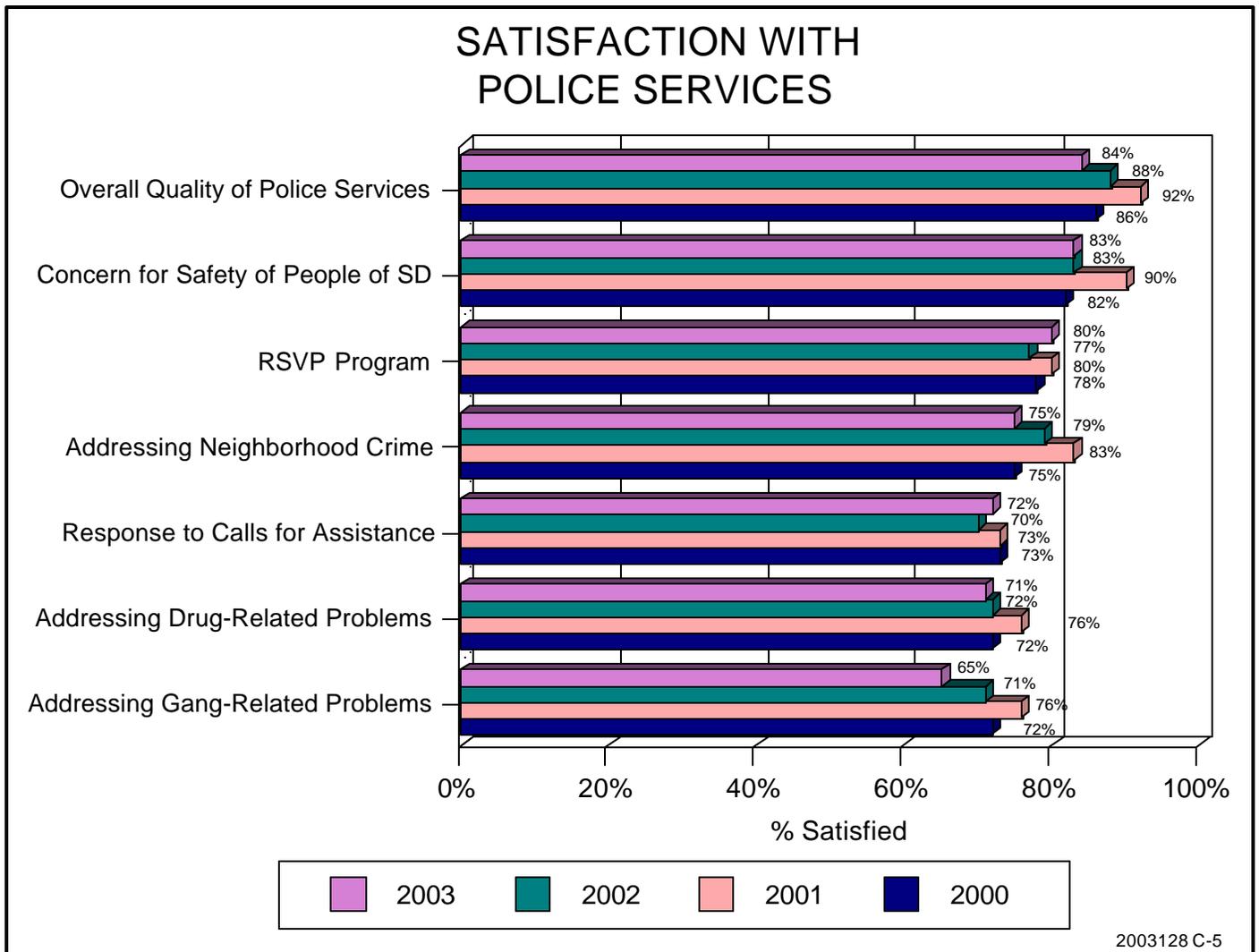
SATISFACTION WITH CITY SERVICES - OTHER SERVICES



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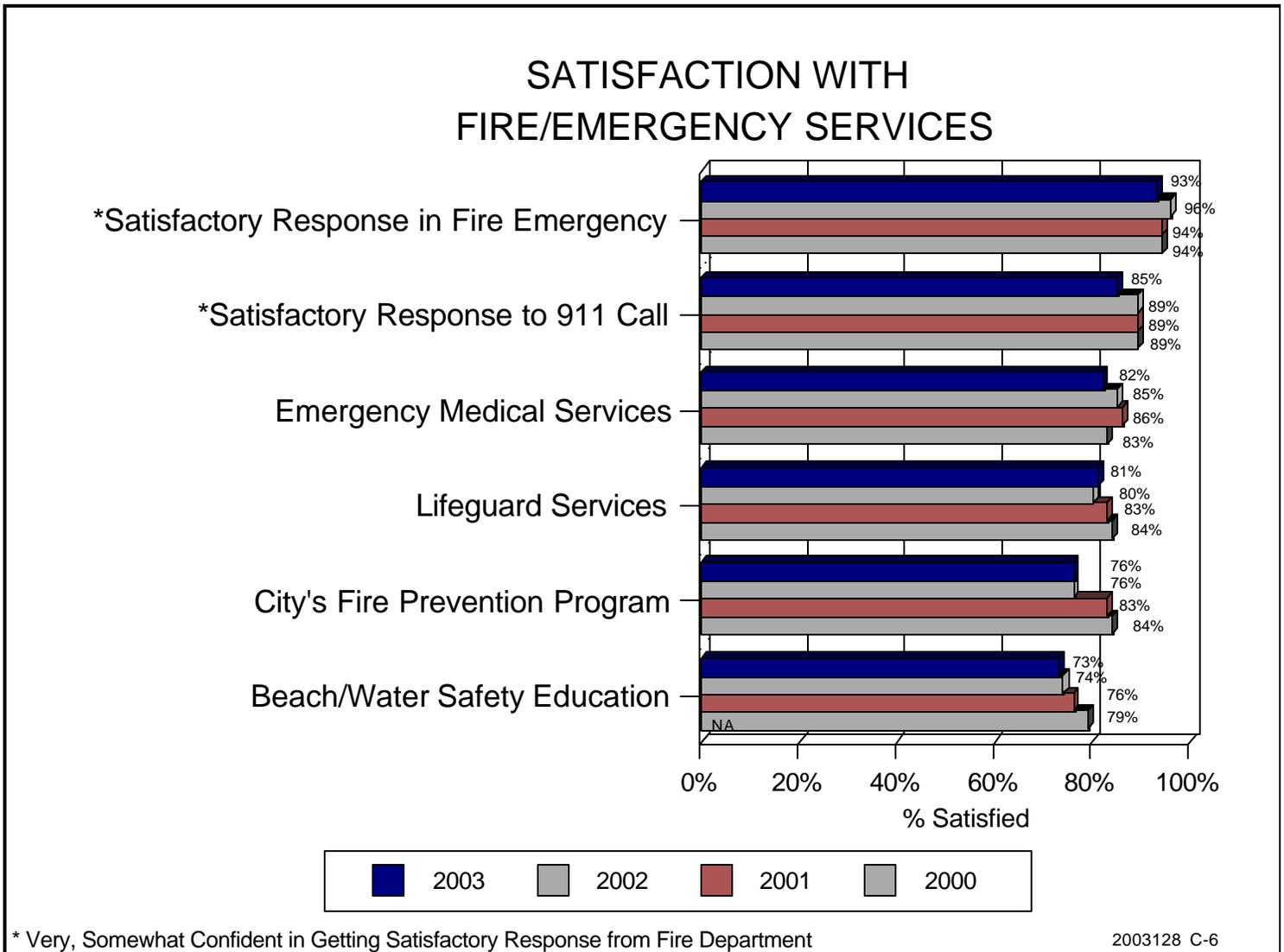
- **SATISFACTION WITH POLICE SERVICES**

Residents reveal high levels of satisfaction with the Police Department in a variety of areas. Those areas where the Police Department receives its highest satisfaction ratings are: 1) the overall quality of service provided by the Department (84%); 2) the Department's concern for the safety of the people of San Diego (83%), and; 3) the Department's RSVP Program (80%). In three additional areas satisfaction ratings are received from seven out of ten residents or more: 1) efforts in addressing neighborhood crime (75%); 2) the Department's response after calls for assistance (72%), and; 3) efforts in addressing drug-related problems (71%). The only area which records a rating below 70 percent is the Department's effort in addressing gang-related problems, with a reading of 65 percent – down from 71 percent last year and from 76 percent in 2001. Most of the other ratings in this series of questions reflect levels of satisfaction that are similar to those observed in 2002.



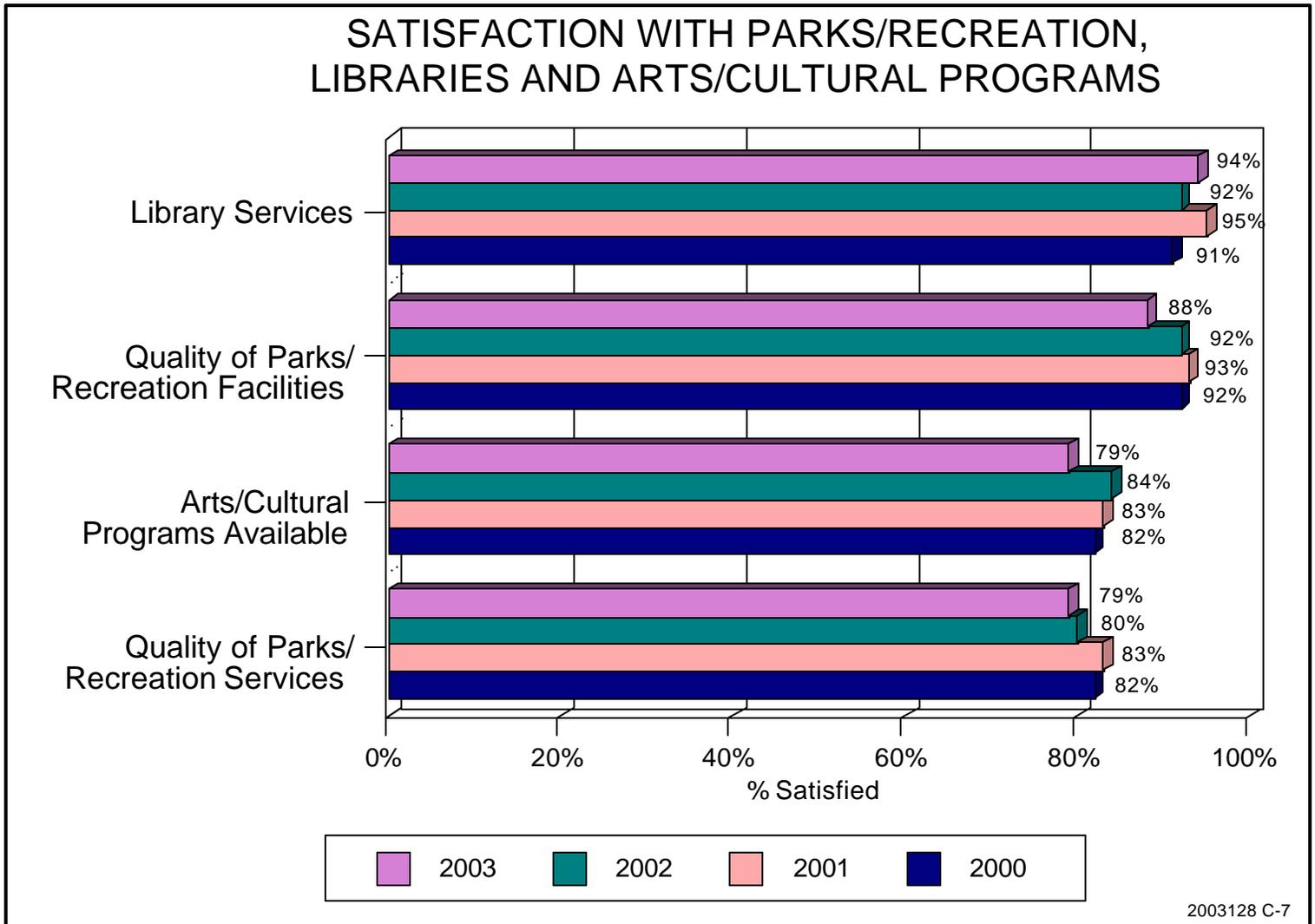
- **SATISFACTION WITH FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

San Diego residents continue to rate the City's fire and emergency services very highly, with roughly three out of four residents or more indicating they are satisfied with each of six primary services: 1) fire emergency services (93%); 2) 911 services (85%); 3) emergency medical services (82%); 4) lifeguard services (81%); 5) fire prevention programs (76%), and; 6) beach and water safety education (73%). These ratings are consistent with the 2002 ratings.



- SATISFACTION WITH PARKS/RECREATION, LIBRARIES AND ARTS/CULTURAL PROGRAMS**

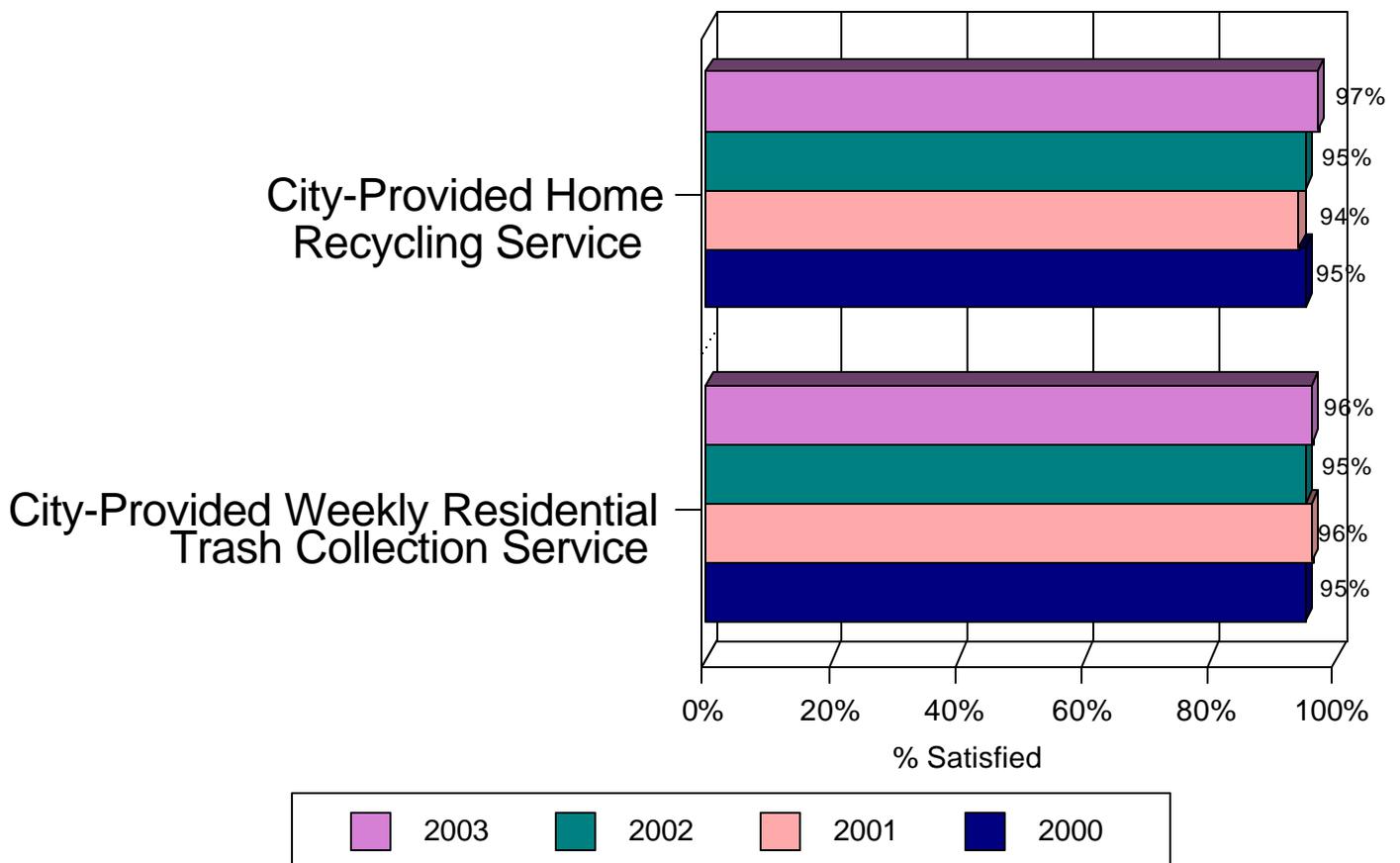
The City's parks/recreation, libraries and arts/cultural programs continue to draw very positive ratings from residents. Thus we find nearly nine out of ten residents or more indicate satisfaction with the quality of the City's library services (94%) and the City's parks/recreation facilities (88%). Receiving slightly lower ratings, albeit still very positive ones, are the availability of arts/cultural programs (79%) and the quality of parks/recreation services (79%).



- **SATISFACTION WITH CITY-PROVIDED TRASH COLLECTION AND RECYCLING SERVICES**

Seventy-four percent of San Diego residents indicate they receive City-provided residential trash collection service and 67 percent recycling service. These residents continue to be satisfied with the service they receive with over nine out of ten such residents indicating they are satisfied – 97 percent for recycling service and 96 percent for trash collection service.

SATISFACTION WITH CITY TRASH COLLECTION AND RECYCLING SERVICE



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- **SATISFACTION WITH CITY MAINTENANCE**

When residents are asked to evaluate the City in terms of its maintenance efforts in seven selected areas, seven out of ten residents or more offer high satisfaction ratings in six of the areas studied: 1) street landscaping (87%); 2) the condition of City-owned buildings (79%); 3) graffiti control and removal (79%); 4) programs to keep streets and private property free of trash (78%); 5) street sweeping (78%), and; 6) sidewalk maintenance (72%). The one area where the City continues to receive a slightly lower satisfaction rating is street maintenance where 61 percent of residents offer a satisfied rating.

SATISFACTION WITH CITY MAINTENANCE

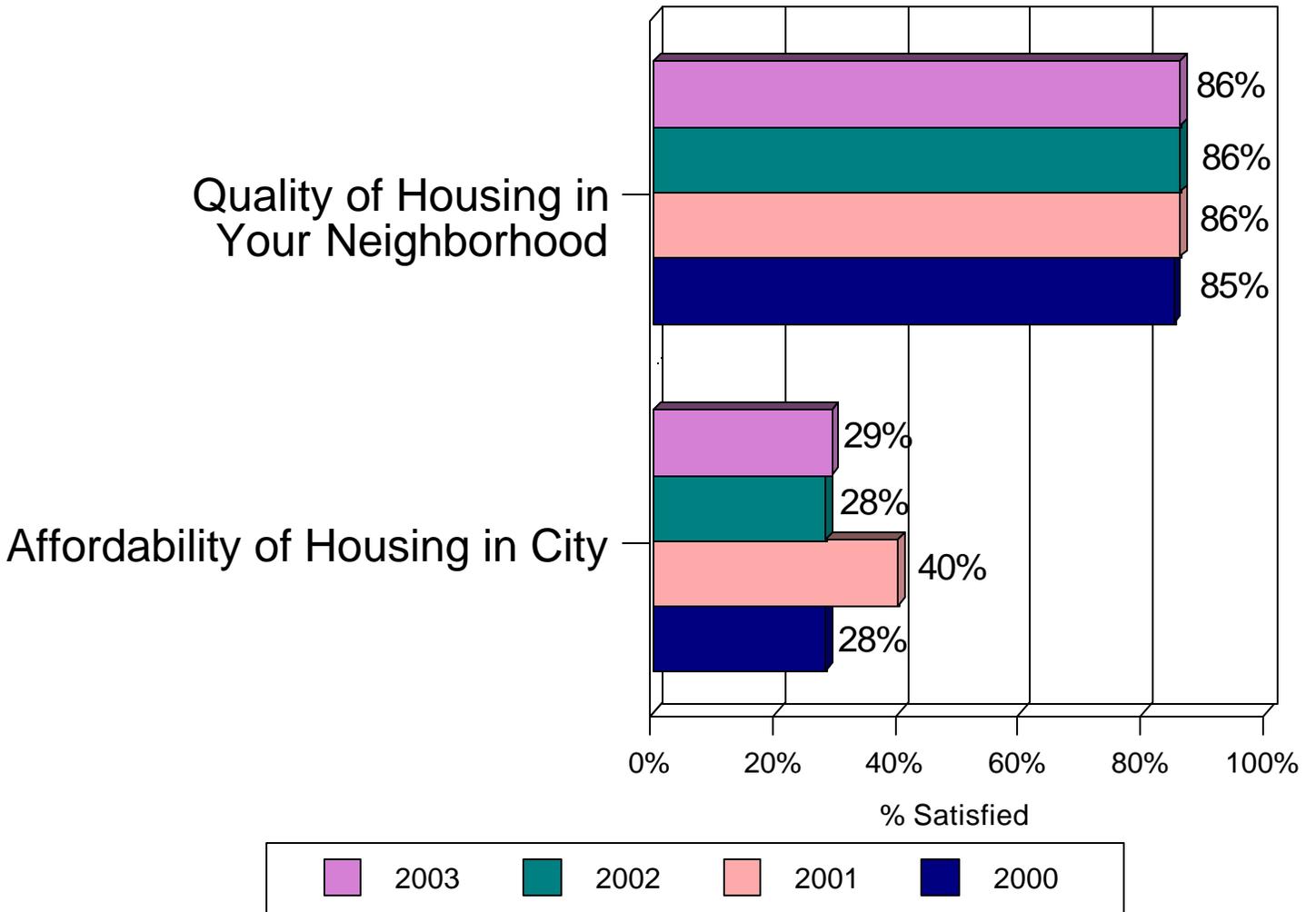


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- **SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING**

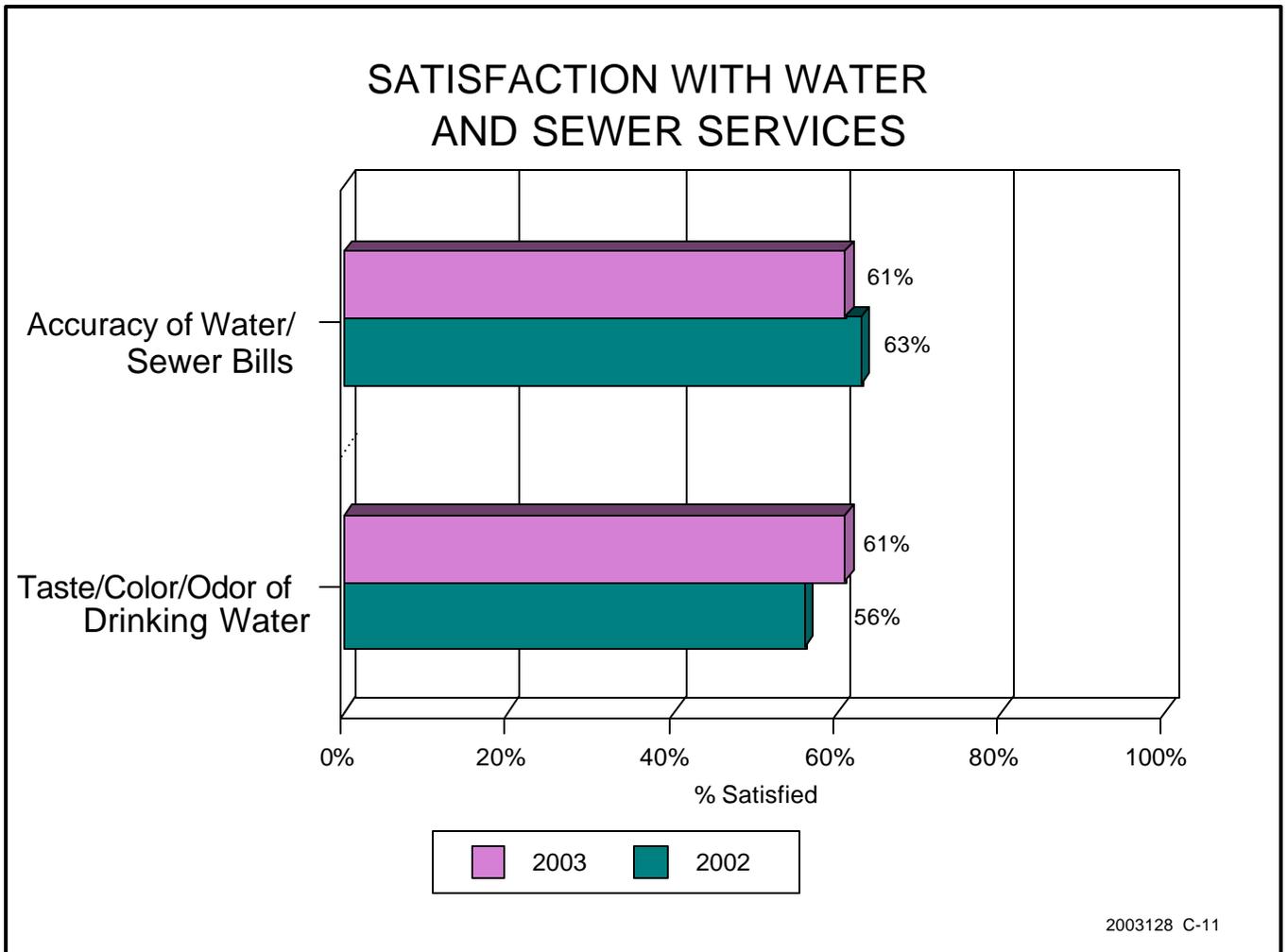
San Diego residents continue to be very positive in terms of their satisfaction with the quality of housing in their neighborhood (86%). The same cannot be said about their satisfaction with the affordability of housing in the City, with a rating of only 29 percent.

SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING



- **SATISFACTION WITH WATER AND SEWER SERVICES**

Residents were asked two new questions last year regarding the accuracy of the City's water and sewer bills and the taste, color and odor of the City drinking water they receive. The data reveals that 61 percent of residents are satisfied with the accuracy of City water bills, with 20 percent unable to offer a rating. If only those residents with an opinion are analyzed, the satisfactory rating increases to 76 percent. The taste, color and odor of City drinking water receives an identical satisfaction rating of 61 percent – up from 56 percent last year.



- **SATISFACTION WITH TRAFFIC FLOW**

Fifty-five percent of San Diego residents are satisfied with traffic on major streets in the City, while 44 percent are dissatisfied.

- **SATISFACTION WITH THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

Eighty-four percent of those residents who are familiar with the City Attorney's effort to reduce domestic violence are satisfied with the effort the Office is making in this area – up from 80 percent in 2002.

- **EVALUATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND CITY SAFETY**

Eighty-six percent of residents reveal they feel safe in their neighborhood, while 78 percent feel safe in the City as a whole. These readings are unchanged from 2002.

- **EVALUATION OF CITY'S EFFORTS IN ATTRACTING BUSINESSES AND JOBS**

Forty-six percent of San Diego residents give the City positive ratings in its efforts in attracting and retaining businesses – down from 55 percent in 2002 and 61 percent in 2001.

- **AWARENESS AND USAGE OF CITY'S WEB SITE**

Sixty percent of residents are aware of the City's web site which is up from 33 percent in 1996 and 58 percent last year. Ninety-two percent of users of the page are satisfied with it – statistically unchanged from 2002.

- **ATTENDANCE AT COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP MEETINGS**

Twenty-one percent of residents indicate they have been to a community planning meeting in their neighborhood during the past five years – similar to the ratings received in prior years.

- **USAGE OF CITY'S CABLE CHANNEL**

Fourteen percent of residents watch the City's cable channel at least once a week while 28 percent watch at least monthly. Overall, 57 percent of residents indicate they never watch the channel – an increase from the 48 percent recorded in 2002.