

City of Holland  
2024 Resident Survey  
May 20, 2024



## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The City of Holland partners with Frost Center for Data and Research at Hope College to conduct a biennial survey measuring residents' experiences and guiding future city planning and services. This summary provides aggregate results from the 2024 Resident Survey, as well as longitudinal data, to compare resident responses over time. A Tableau [dashboard](#) created by Frost Center and hosted by Hope College presents survey questions in an interactive format that allows users to compare survey item responses by various filter variables, such as age, education, ethnicity, home ownership, and housing affordability.

### Study Methods

Frost Center used a random sampling approach to conduct this study, making telephone calls to a random sample of 5,800 City of Holland residents who were at least 18 years of age. Of these, 1,148 (19.8%) were landline numbers and 4,652 (80.2%) were cell phone numbers. Frost Center staff called residents up to three times to conduct the survey, resulting in 6,572 call attempts between February 5 and March 14, 2024. The final sample includes 311 residents who completed the survey.

The 2024 survey mirrors the 2022 survey, with the exception of the removal of resident opinions on Waterfront development, and addition of Ottawa / Allegan County, as an additional entity to track perceptions on "going the right or wrong direction." All surveys were administered over the telephone by trained interviewers at various times of the day during Mondays through Thursdays. Telephone-administered surveys took approximately 20-25 minutes, on average, to complete. In the report that follows, we include all data from each individual who provided responses for a particular question, which could lead to different sample sizes for each item.

## 2024 Results

### **Respondent Demographics**

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to answer a series of demographic questions. The are presented below.

### **Individual Characteristics**

The majority of respondents identify as White (91.3%); 2.9% identify as a Person of Color; and 5.9% report an “Other” race (the majority providing a text response of Hispanic/Latinx/o/a) (See Table 1). Participants could select multiple categories, which is why the summed percentages exceed 100%. Of those who responded to the ethnicity question, 16.7% identify as Hispanic/Latino (See Table 2). A higher percentage of females (51.3%) responded than males (48.0%) (See Table 3). The majority of respondents were 55 and older (55.0%), whereas 45.0% were under 55 (See Table 4). The most common highest level of education was a Bachelor’s degree (35.1%) (See Table 5).

**Table 1: Race (N = 276)<sup>1</sup>**

	Frequency	Percent
White	252	91.3%
Black or African American	4	1.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.4%
Asian	3	1.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Other	28	10.1%
None	0	0.0%
Prefer not to answer	6	2.2%
Two or more races <sup>2</sup>	21	7.6%
No Answer/Missing	0	--
Total	276	100.0%

**Table 2: Ethnicity (n = 276)**

	Frequency	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	46	16.7%
Not Hispanic/Latino	228	82.6%
Refused	2	0.7%
Total	276	100.0%

<sup>1</sup> Reported categories of race and ethnicity are consistent with those used by the U.S. Census, although categories are combined into Person of Color, White, and Other on the Tableau dashboard to protect individual responses. Note that the majority of “Other” responses on the race survey question provided a text response of Hispanic/Latinx/o/a.

<sup>2</sup> Residents who reported two or more races were included in this category. For example, if they responded White and Asian, they are counted in the “White,” “Asian,” and “Two or more race categories.”

**Table 3: Gender (n = 275)**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	132	48.0%
Female	141	51.3%
Prefer to self-describe	1	0.36%
Prefer not to answer	1	0.36%
Total	275	100.0%

**Table 4: Age (N =271 )**

	Frequency	Percent
18-24	18	6.6%
25-34	26	9.6%
35-44	46	17.0%
45-54	32	11.8%
55-64	45	16.6%
65-74	58	21.4%
75 and older	46	17.0%
Total	271	100.0%

**Table 5: Education (n= 276)**

	Frequency	Percent
Less than high school degree	5	1.8%
High school graduate or equivalent	49	17.8%
Some college but no degree	32	11.6%
Associate degree	21	7.6%
Bachelor’s degree	97	35.1%
Master’s degree	54	19.6%
Doctoral degree	12	4.3%
Professional degree	2	0.7%
Don’t know/refused	4	1.4%
Total	276	100.0%

### **Household Characteristics**

Residents who responded to the survey had a variety of household characteristics. Over 50% of respondents have a household income between \$50,000 and \$150,000; approximately 20% have a household income less than \$50,000 (See Table 6). The majority of respondents (82.6%) owns their home in contrast to renting their home (14.5%) (See Table 7). The number of people residing in the household ranged from 1 to more than 8, with an average of 3.0 and median of 2.0 (See Table 8). Respondents report a large variation in number of years living in the City of Holland, with the average of 28.0 years (See Table 9).

**Table 6: Household Income (n = 275)**

	Frequency	Percent
Less than \$20,000	9	3.3%
\$20,000-34,999	19	6.9%
\$35,000-49,999	30	10.9%
\$50,000-74,999	51	18.5%
\$75,000-99,999	50	18.2%
\$100,000-149,999	51	18.5%
\$150,000-199,999	20	7.3%
\$200,000 or more	10	3.6%
Prefer not to answer	35	12.7%
Total	275	100.0%

**Table 7: Ownership of House (n = 276)**

	Frequency	Percent
Own	228	82.6%
Rent	40	14.5%
Other arrangement	7	2.5%
Prefer not to answer	1	0.4%
Total	276	100.0%

**Table 8: Number People in Home (n = 275)**

	Frequency	Percent
1	50	18.2%
2	95	34.5%
3	53	19.3%
4	40	14.5%
5	22	8.0%
6	8	2.9%
7	1	0.4%
8 or more	6	2.2%
Total	275	100.0%

**Table 9: Number of Years in the City (n = 283)**

	Frequency	Percent
1-9	57	20.1%
10-19	52	18.4%
20-29	57	20.1%
30-39	36	12.7%
40-49	27	9.5%
50-59	22	7.8%
60-69	21	7.4%
70-79	10	3.5%
80-89	1	0.4%
90-99	0	0.0%
Total	283	100.0%

**Summary of 2024 Survey Results**

**General City Rankings**

- On average, respondents rated Holland as a place to live as 1.44, with 1 meaning “excellent” and 4 meaning “poor”. Nearly 60% of respondents rated Holland as an “excellent” place to live, and 36% as “good.” 4% of respondents rated as either “fair” or “poor”.

**Changes in my City, County, State, and Country**

- On a five-point scale with 1 meaning “going in the wrong direction” and 5 meaning “going in the right direction,” respondents on average rated the City of Holland the highest (3.92), followed by the State of Michigan (3.35), Ottawa/ Allegan County (2.92), and the Country (2.43).

**City Amenities and Services**

- On a five-point scale, respondents rated the Holland Fire Department and EMT services the highest (4.63), and downtown parking (3.62) and street maintenance (3.67) the lowest among the amenities and services listed on the survey.

**Allocating City Resources**

- On a five-point scale with 1 meaning “devote less resources” and 5 meaning “devote more resources,” respondents reported that affordable housing (4.14), environmental and sustainability issues (3.79) and recreation for youth (3.77) should receive the most additional resources, and downtown development is the least in need of more resources (3.06).

**Level of Trust**

- Residents reported their trust level in various Holland entities on a five-point scale. Trust in the Holland Fire Department was highest (4.73), followed by the Holland Board of Public Works (4.33), Holland Police Department (4.22), City of Holland Municipal Employees (4.16), and City Council (3.71).

***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion***

- Respondents were most likely to agree with the statement “I am treated fairly and equitably in Holland” (4.29). Out of the four DEI items, Holland residents were least likely to agree with “Holland is open and accepting of people with diverse backgrounds” (3.51).
- Residents indicated that in the last 12 months, meaningful interactions across different religious beliefs, political opinions, race or ethnicity, social class, disability status, or sexual orientation were common, with over 80% of respondents indicating “yes” for each of these items.
- Residents reported the highest proportions of meaningful interactions across religious differences (92.3%) and political difference (91.2%), and the lowest proportions indicating meaningful interactions with those who have physical or observable disability (81.0%) and across differences in sexual orientation (83.3%).

***Civic Engagement***

- On questions to assess civic participation in the past twelve months, the greatest proportions of respondents indicated that they have visited downtown Holland (97.5%) and voted in a local election (84.9%). The smallest proportions reported having attended a City Council meeting (12.9%) and contacting a City Council member (14.4%).

***City Communication***

- On a five-point scale, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 5 meaning “strongly agree,” respondents indicated on average that the City of Holland gathers feedback from residents (3.45) and keeps residents informed on city issues (3.64).

***News Sources***

- The greatest percentage of respondents replied that they get most of their news related to the City of Holland from word of mouth (80%), and the smallest percentage of respondents claimed to receive most of their news from the city Twitter page (7%).

***Taxes and Services***

- The vast majority (88%) of respondents would elect to keep the City services as they are now, with 39% indicating that they would want to keep the same level of services even if it means raising taxes.

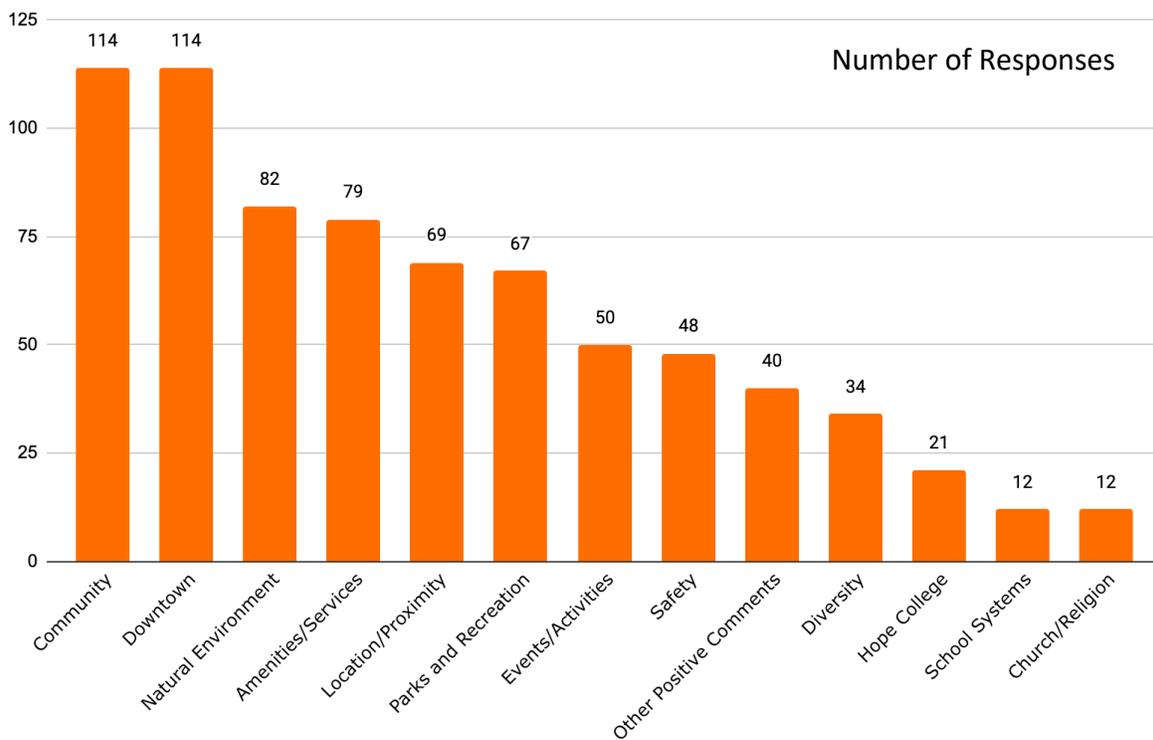
**Open Ended Responses**

At the end of the survey, residents were asked three open-ended questions about their overall perception of living in the City of Holland: what they like most about living in Holland, what they would most like to see change about living in Holland, and what they feel are the most important local issues to face Holland in future years. These open-ended responses were coded by two researchers to identify themes. The tables below present a summary of the responses in order of most frequent to least frequent.

**Like Most about Holland**

When asked what respondents like most about living in Holland, the most common responses focused on a sense of community and Downtown Holland (see Figure 1). Additionally, many residents stated positive comments about the natural environment and amenities / services offered in Holland. Other frequent responses focused on appreciation for location / proximity and parks and recreation activities.

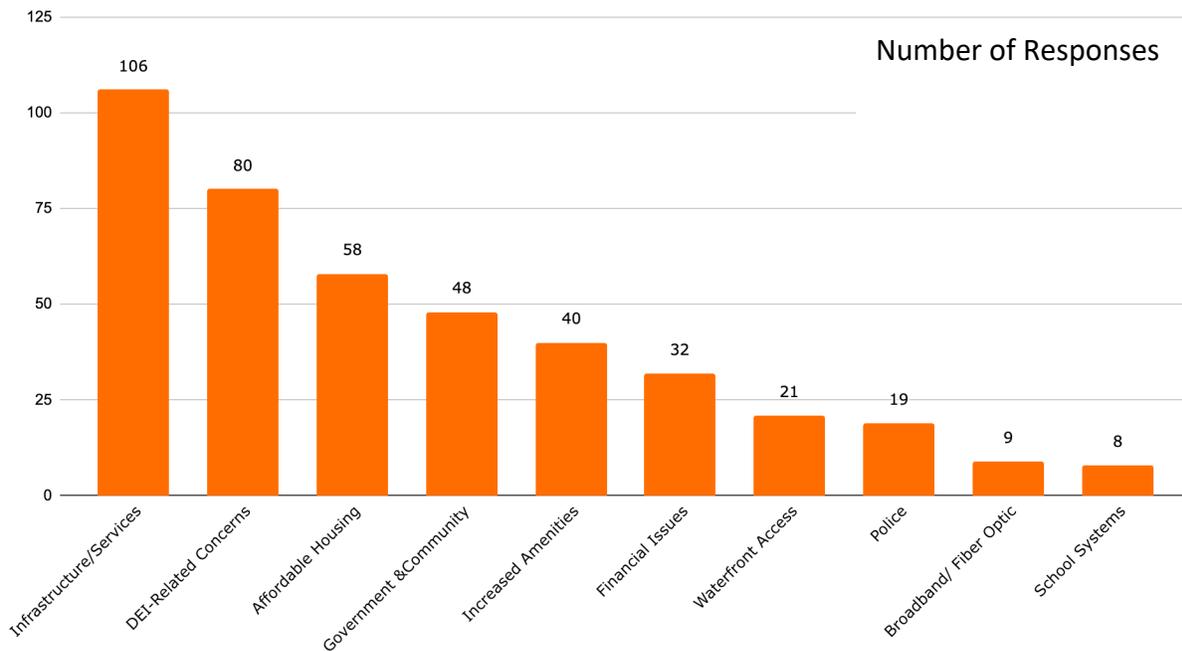
Figure 1. What Respondents Like Most about Holland (N=270)



### ***Change about Holland***

When asked what residents would most like to change about living in Holland, the most common response focused on infrastructure or services (see Figure 2). The second most common response focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), although it should be noted that answers ranged from being negative to positive about DEI initiatives. Residents frequently responded with comments about the need for more affordable housing options.

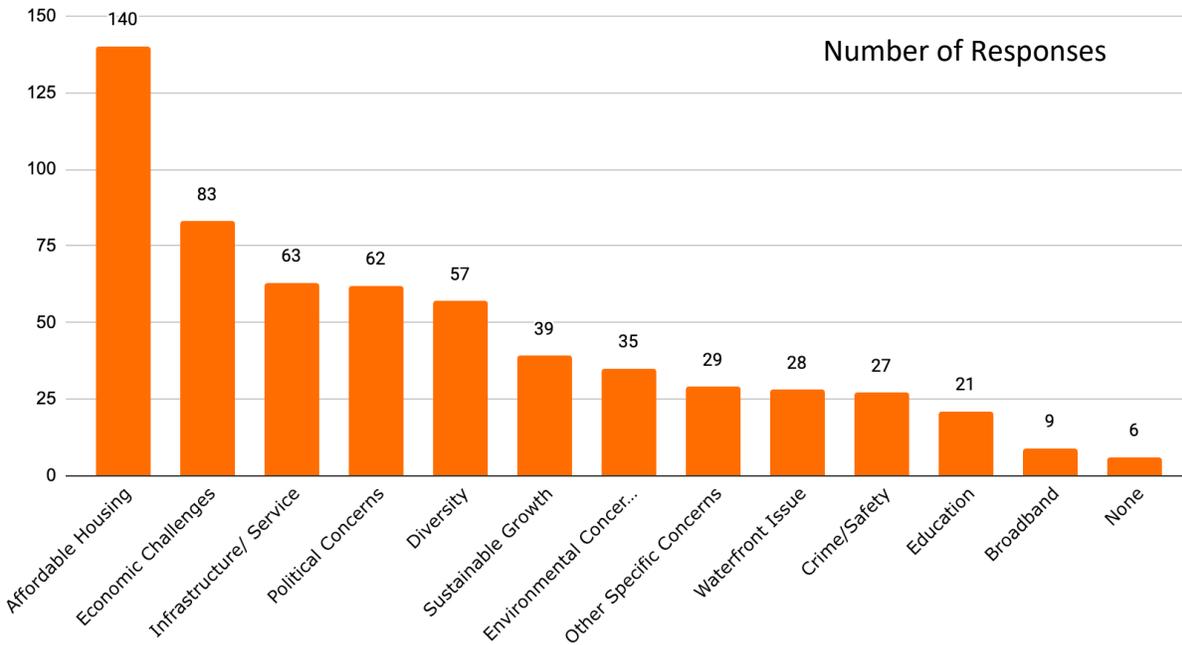
Figure 2. What Respondents would Most Change about Holland (N=233)



**Most Important Local Issues Facing Holland**

In Figure 3, the issue that stands out most to Holland residents in 2024 is the need for affordable housing options. Additionally, economic challenges, infrastructure or services, and political concerns were frequently mentioned.

Figure 3. Most Important Local Issues Facing Holland (N=255)



### Longitudinal Results

This section includes survey data from past survey administrations to make comparisons from year to year and highlight trends<sup>3</sup>.

#### City Amenities and Services over Time

- In a rating of city services and amenities (see Table 10), the top five changes from 2022 to 2024 are the Civic Center, Street Maintenance, and Recreation facilities, of which were ranked lower in 2024 compared to 2022. City Council and sidewalks were rated slightly higher in 2024 compared to 2022.

**Table 10. Rating of City Amenities and Services over Time**

Quality of City Amenities & Services **	2012	2016	2020	2022	2024
City Council	3.92	3.85	3.92	3.73	3.82
City Parks	4.52	4.55	4.48	4.62	4.47
Fire Dept. (and EMT)	4.52	4.50	4.67	4.75	4.63
Police Dept.	4.38	4.32	4.34	4.46	4.30
Recreation (programming)	4.15	--	4.11	4.30	4.16
Recreation facilities	-	4.00	4.17	4.35	4.16
Spring/Fall Curbside Cleanup	4.29	4.19	4.35	4.39	4.35
City of Holland Employees	4.21	4.14	4.27	4.39	4.26
Street Snow Removal	4.09	3.98	4.09	4.37	4.26
Animal Control	3.98	3.88	4.14	4.14	4.06
Sidewalks	3.85	3.85	4.03	4.10	4.11
Enforcement of Property Maintenance	3.81	3.88	3.80	3.80	3.72
Storm Water Drainage	3.66	3.90	4.02	4.17	4.06
Street Maintenance (potholes/sweeping)	3.55	3.62	3.80	3.88	3.67
Civic Center	-	3.03	4.28	4.32	4.10
Downtown	-	3.42 (parking)	4.48	4.66	4.55
Holland Board of Public Works	-	-	4.21	4.41	4.25
*If a cell is blank, the survey question was not asked during that year. **1 = Very Poor, 5 = Very Good					

<sup>3</sup> Due to slight methodological differences across years and unique characteristics of the sample each year, slight differences over time should not be over-interpreted.

**Allocation of City Resources over Time**

- In comparison to 2022, respondents in 2024 report an increase in the need to devote resources to broadband/fiber optic (see Table 11).
- In comparison to 2022, respondents in 2024 report a decrease in the need to devote resources to recreation for adults, downtown development, and infrastructure.
- Note that in open-ended responses, infrastructure was still considered a top item to change in Holland.

**Table 11. Allocation of City Resources over Time**

Areas to Dedicate Resources in Future Years**	2016	2020	2022	2024
Affordable Housing	3.69	4.18	4.21	4.14
Broadband/Fiber optic	-	3.82	3.52	3.61
Crime Reduction	3.47	3.64	3.77	3.72
Downtown development	-	3.34	3.20	3.06
Diversity, equity, and inclusions initiatives	-	3.96	3.53	3.53
Infrastructure	3.26	3.73	3.68	3.55
Street Maintenance	3.41	3.62	3.62	3.61
Neighborhood Improvement Funds	3.18	3.86	3.70	3.67
Recreation for youth	3.47	3.92	3.81	3.77
Recreation for adults	3.19	3.53	3.53	3.33
Parks	3.23	3.62	3.58	3.57
Environmental and Sustainability issues	-	4.04	3.86	3.79
Other	3.82	4.33	4.35	4.50
*If a cell is blank, the survey question was not asked during that year.				
**1 = Devote less resources, 5 = Devote more resources				

**Taxes and Services over Time**

- In contrast to 2022, a larger percentage of respondents in 2024 indicated that they would prefer to keep the services the same, only if it meant taxes would stay the same (see Table 12).
- In contrast to 2022, a decrease in percentage of respondents in 2024 indicated that they would prefer to keep the services as they are now, even if it meant raising their taxes.

**Table 12. Taxes and Services over Time**

<b>“Thinking about ALL the services the City of Holland provides and the taxes you pay to support those services, which of the following best describes your view? “</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2024</b>
I would prefer to SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE the services I receive, if it means my taxes WILL BE LOWER	5.2%	6.9%	5.3%	5.1%
I would prefer to SOMEWHAT REDUCE the services I receive, if it means my taxes STAY THE SAME	8.3%	7.0%	4.7%	4.0%
I would prefer to KEEP the services as they are now, but only if my taxes STAY THE SAME	51.1%	48.3%	44.8%	49.5%
I would prefer to KEEP the services as they are now, even if that means RAISING my taxes	35.4%	37.8%	45.1%	38.6%

**Level of Trust over Time**

- Levels of trust in city entities remain high from 2016 through 2022, with slight decreases over the past two years for all entities (see Table 13).
- Trust remains highest for Holland Fire Department.

**Table 13. Level of Trust over Time**

<b>Current level of Trust with City of Holland Entities**</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2024</b>
City Council	3.65	3.82	3.72	3.71
Holland Police Department	4.26	4.17	4.32	4.22
Holland Fire Department	4.56	4.65	4.75	4.73
Holland Board of Public Works	4.01	4.15	4.36	4.33
City of Holland Municipal Employees	-	4.10	4.25	4.16
*If a cell is blank, the survey question was not asked during that year. **1 = Distrust very much, 5 = Trust very much				

## **Acknowledgements**

We want to express appreciation to the City of Holland for its ongoing partnership with Frost Center for Data and Research at Hope College for this biennial resident survey. We are grateful for the commitment and support provided by the City.

We are also immensely thankful to residents of the City of Holland who graciously participated in the survey, generously sharing their time and insights, which have been invaluable for informing our research efforts.

Furthermore, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the dedicated team at the Frost Center, both staff and student employees, whose contributions were instrumental in the success of this project. We commend the twelve Frost Center student employees who played integral roles—ten trained as Frost Center Interviewers, diligently conducting the telephone survey, and two as Frost Center Research Assistants, who lent their expertise to qualitative analysis for the report.