



Helper Wellbeing Survey Findings May 2020

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Helper is one of 25 cities participating in the Utah Wellbeing Project. This project is designed to assess the wellbeing and local perspectives of city residents and to provide information to city leaders to inform their general planning process.

Eighteen cities participated in an online survey effort in February and March 2020. Helper City advertised the survey via social media, a newsletter, and flyers. All city residents age 18 and over were encouraged to take the online Qualtrics survey, available from February 7, 2020 to March 16, 2020.

A total of **101 completed surveys** were recorded during this effort. This report contains descriptive information based on Helper resident responses and comparisons with other cities from this most recent survey effort.

Public intercept surveys with iPads were conducted in Summer 2019. A report based on those findings is available at <https://extension.usu.edu/business-and-community/utah-wellbeing-project/index>.

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Respondent Characteristics

The vast majority of Helper survey respondents (95%) were full-time residents. Length of residency ranged from 1 to 90 years with an average of 24 years. The majority of respondents (70%) had been living in Helper more than 5 years.

Table 1 details the demographic characteristics of the respondents and allows for comparison with U.S. Census information from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey. As the table shows, females and those age 40-50 were over-represented in the survey sample. The survey under-represents those without a college degree and those with low incomes. There is no census comparison for religion. These characteristics should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings from the survey, as survey respondents are not fully representative of Helper residents.

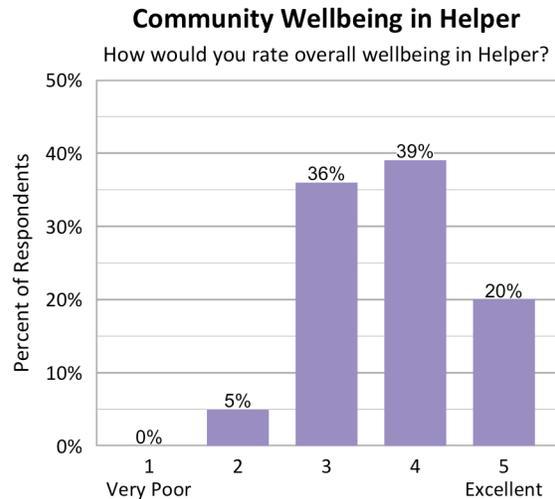
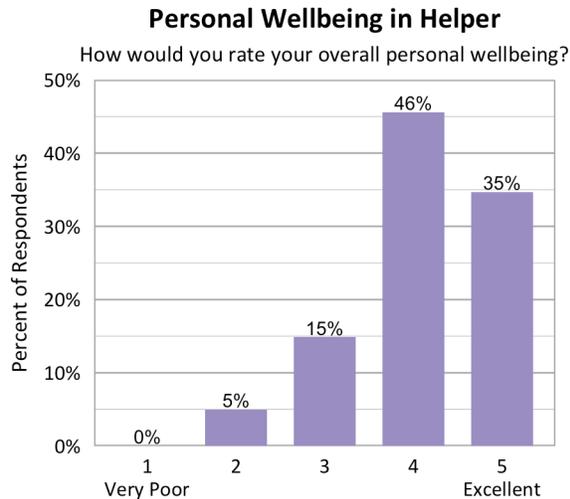
Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents and U.S. Census Data for Helper

Demographic Characteristics	Helper iPad Survey 2019 (62 Respondents)	Helper Online Survey 2020 (101 Respondents)	American Community Survey 2014-2018 Estimates
Age 18-39	35.5%	26.7%	34.1%
Age 40-59	30.6%	43.3%	31.7%
Age 60 or over	33.9%	30.0%	34.1%
Female	59.7%	61.8%	50.8%
Male, other	40.3%	38.2%	49.2% (Male only)
No college degree	77.0%	57.3%	84.2%
College degree (4-year)	23.0%	42.7%	15.8%
Median household income	NA	NA	\$53,309
Income under \$50,000	32.7%	24.7%	46.0%
Income \$50,000 to \$74,999	34.5%	37.6%	28.5%
Income \$75,000 to \$99,999	25.9%	18.8%	18.1%
Income \$100,000 to \$149,999	3.4%	14.1%	4.5%
Income \$150,000 or over	3.4%	4.7%	2.9%
Religion: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	30.4%	14.6%	NA
Other religion	39.3%	52.8%	NA
No religious preference	30.4%	32.6%	NA
White (non-Latino)	83.6%	86.7%	83.6%
Nonwhite or Latino	16.4%	13.3%	16.4%
Children under 18 in household	NA	38.9%	26.7%
Employed (combined)	NA	66.3%	57.1% (in labor force age 16+)
Out of work and looking for work	NA	1.1%	2.1% (unemployed)
Other	NA	32.3%	40.8% (not in labor force)

Overall Personal Wellbeing and Overall Wellbeing in Helper

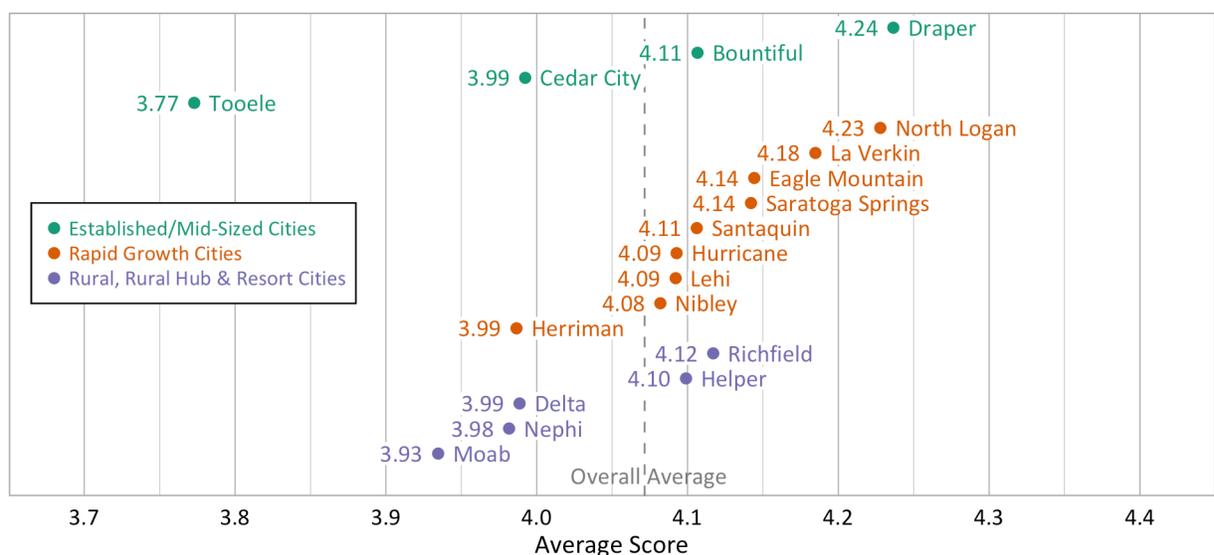
Survey participants were asked about their overall personal wellbeing and overall community wellbeing in Helper. These wellbeing indicators are both measured on a 5-point scale from *very poor* (1) to *excellent* (5). The average personal wellbeing score in Helper was **4.10**, with **81%** indicating their wellbeing at a 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale. The average score for community wellbeing in Helper was **3.74**.



The average personal wellbeing score in Helper falls above the average of all cities surveyed in early 2020. The Utah League of Cities and Towns classifies Helper in the “Rural, Rural Hub, & Resort Cities” group, along with four other cities in this study as indicated in the graph below. There is no statistically significant difference among these cities on personal wellbeing.

Overall Personal Wellbeing Scores from Sampled Utah Cities (2020)

(On a scale from 1=Very Poor to 5=Excellent)

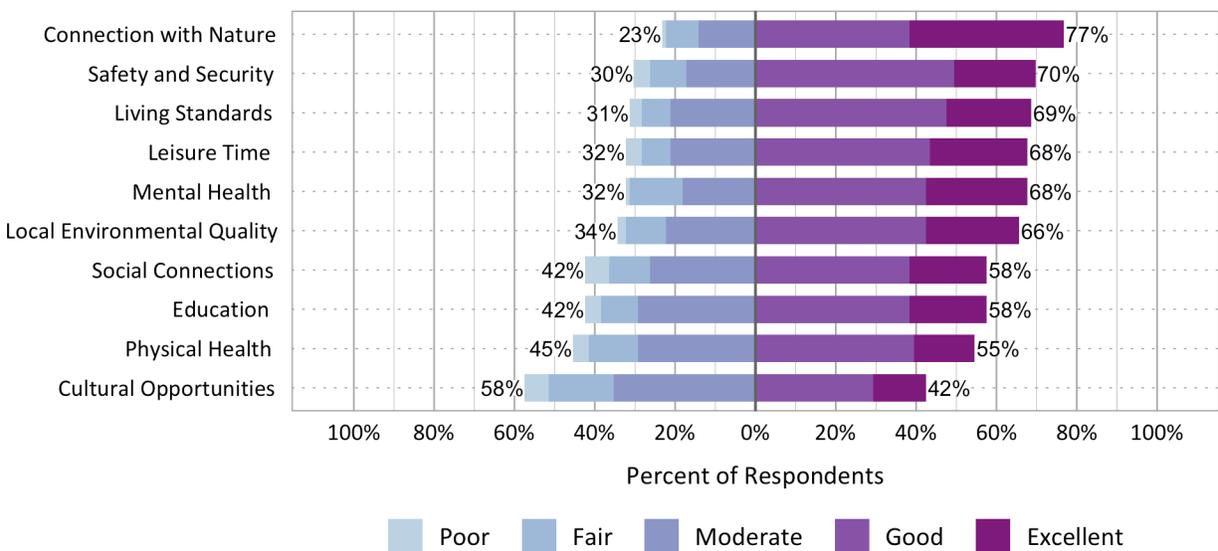


Wellbeing Domains in Helper

According to national and international entities tracking wellbeing, a number of common domains make up wellbeing. In this survey, respondents rated ten domains on a 5-point scale from *poor* to *excellent*, and indicated their importance to their overall personal wellbeing on a 5-point scale from *not at all important* to *very important*. Based on percentage with a *good* or *excellent* rating, the top three highest rated wellbeing domains for respondents were **connection with nature, safety and security, and living standards**. The top three most important wellbeing domains were **safety and security, physical health, and mental health**.

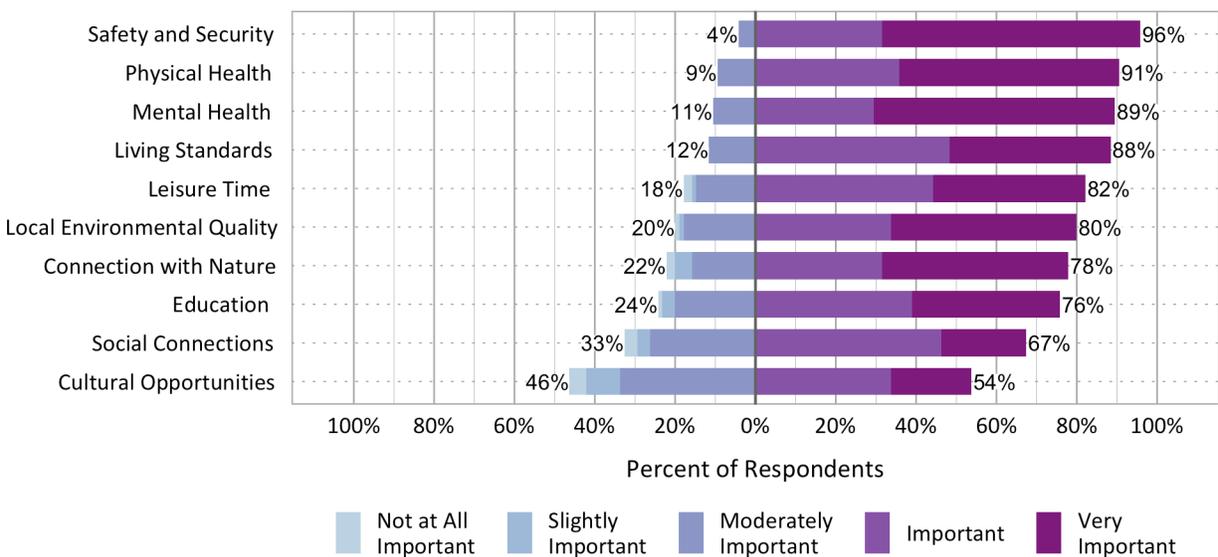
Wellbeing Domain Ratings in Helper

How would you rate your level of personal wellbeing in each of the following categories?



Wellbeing Domain Importance in Helper

How important are the following categories to your overall personal wellbeing?



The demographic variables for age, gender, education, religion, income, and race/ethnicity were significantly related to a few wellbeing perspectives among Helper respondents. These relationships are shown in Table 2 and are based on a multivariate generalized linear model using the categories from Table 1, excluding children in household and employment. Sample size may have affected results.

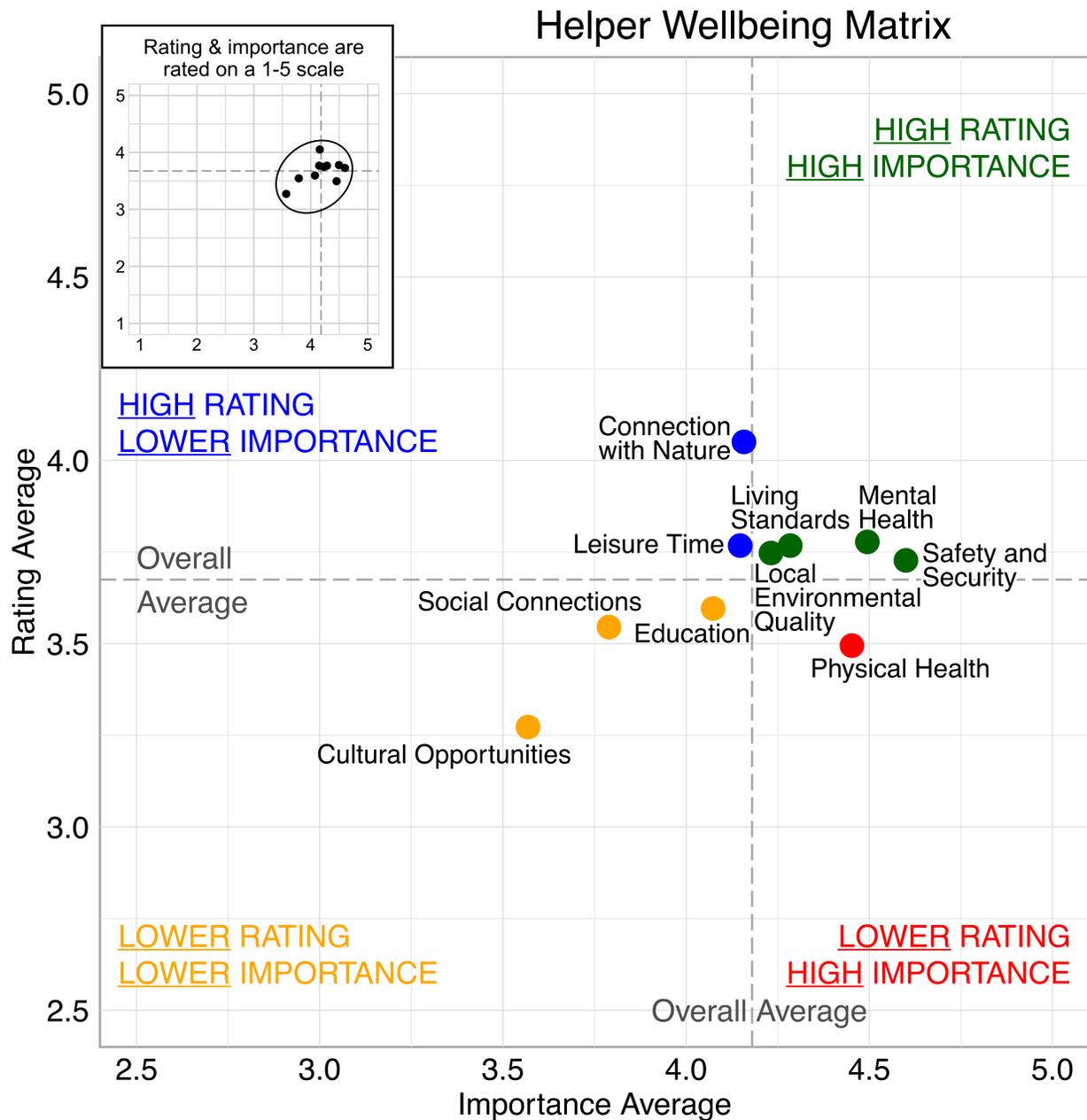
Table 2

Relationships Between Demographic Characteristics and Wellbeing Domains

Domains Rated	Demographic Variables					
	Age 60+	Female	College Degree	Latter-day Saint	Higher Income	Nonwhite or Latino
	Wellbeing Ratings					
Overall Personal Wellbeing						
Wellbeing in Cedar City						+
Connection to Nature						
Cultural Opportunities						
Education		+	+		\$150,000+ > \$75,000-\$99,999	
Leisure Time						
Living Standards					+	
Local Environmental Quality					\$150,000+ > \$50,000-\$74,999	
Mental Health					+	
Physical Health		+		- vs other religion	\$150,000+ > \$50,000-\$74,999	
Safety and Security						
Social Connections						
	Domain Importance					
Connection to Nature			+			
Cultural Opportunities			+			
Education						
Leisure Time			+		\$150,000+ > \$100,000- \$149,999	
Living Standards						
Local Environmental Quality	+ vs 18-39		+		-	
Mental Health						
Physical Health		+				
Safety and Security						
Social Connections		+				

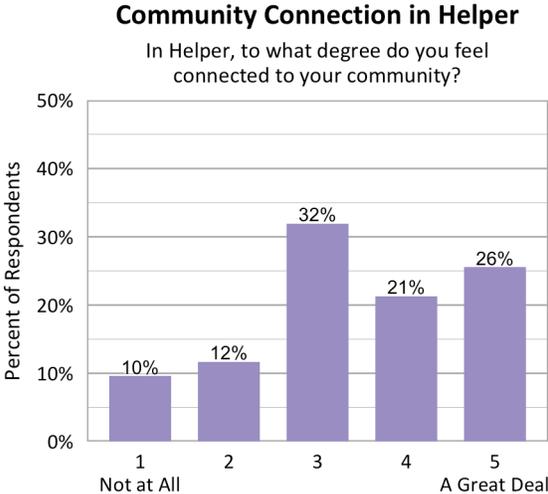
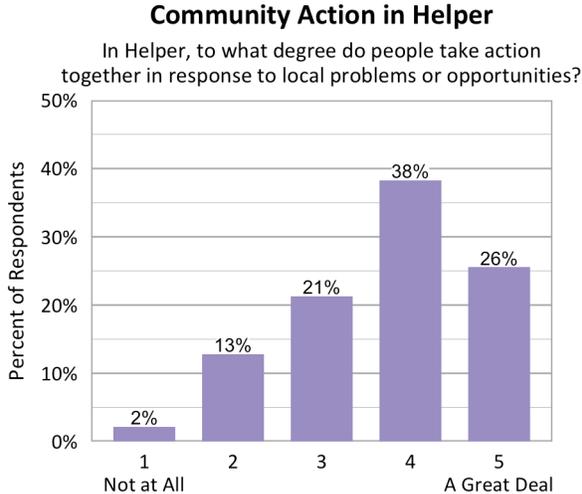
Wellbeing Matrix for Helper

The graph below illustrates the relationship between the average rating and the average importance of wellbeing domains for survey respondents from Helper. Physical Health falls into the red quadrant, indicating that it was of higher than average importance but rated lower than average. It is important to note that all domains have an average rating above 3.0 (moderate) and the importance score for all domains is higher than 3.0 (moderately important).



Community Action and Connections in Helper

Survey participants were asked about community actions and connectedness to community in Helper. Both questions were scored on a 5-point scale from *not at all* (1) to *a great deal* (5). When asked about the degree to which people take action together in response to local problems or opportunities in Helper, the average score was **3.72**. When asked about the degree they feel connected to their community, the average score was **3.41**.

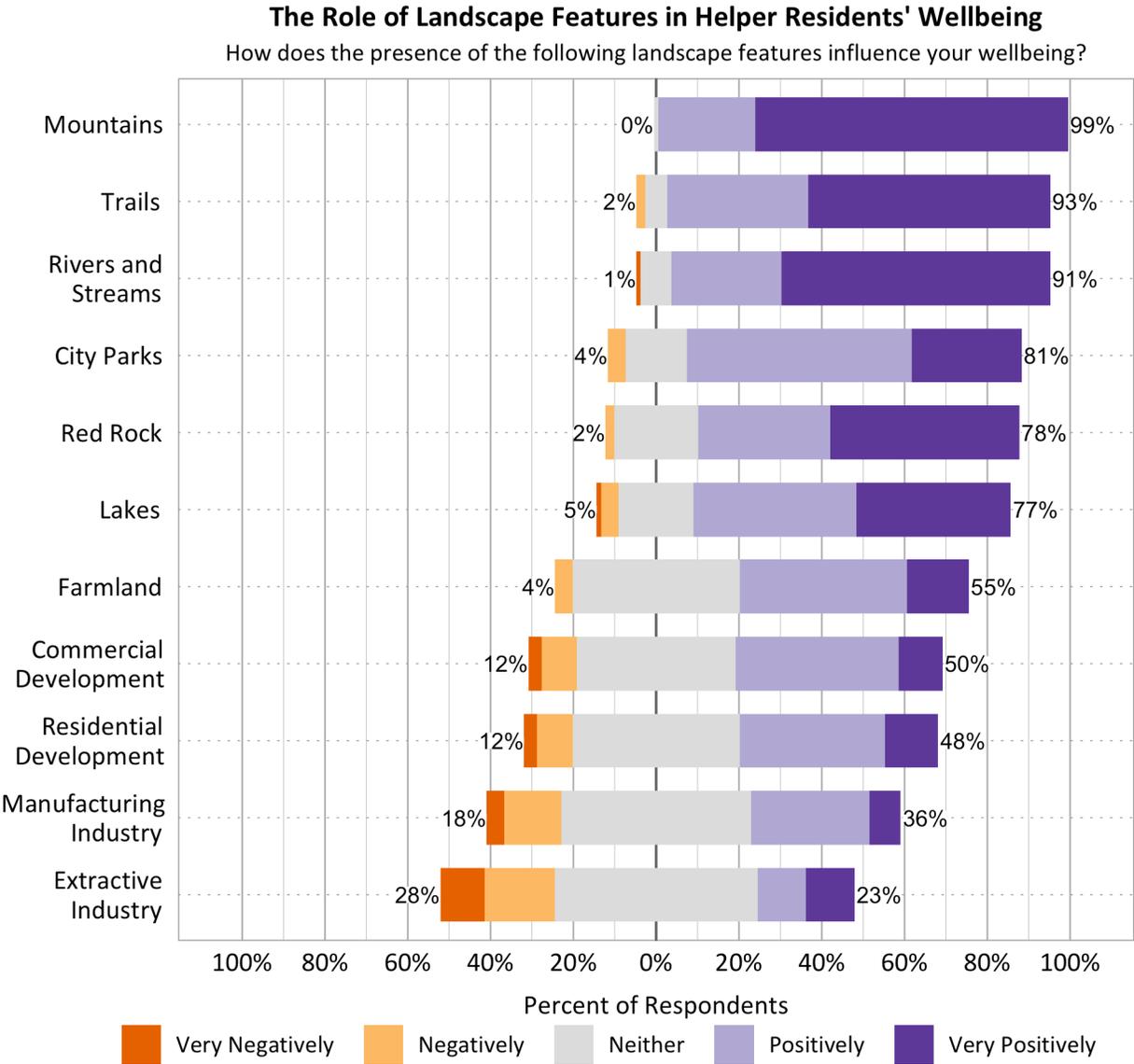


There were no significant relationships in the Helper survey data between demographics and these community questions. Likewise, there was no significant relationship between community connection and overall personal wellbeing in Helper.

Influence of Landscape Features on Wellbeing

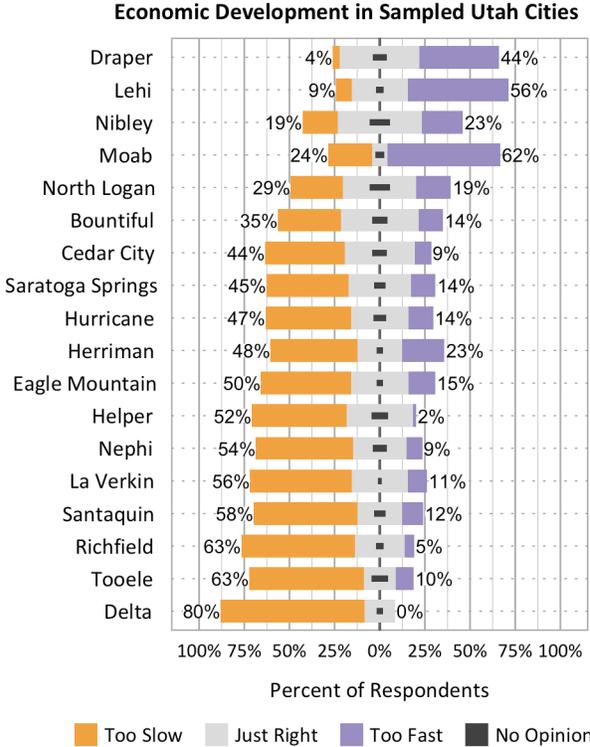
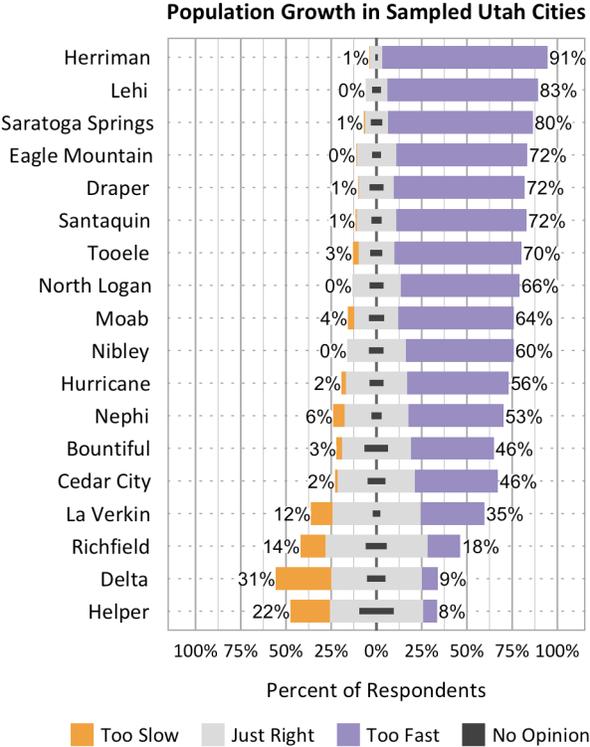
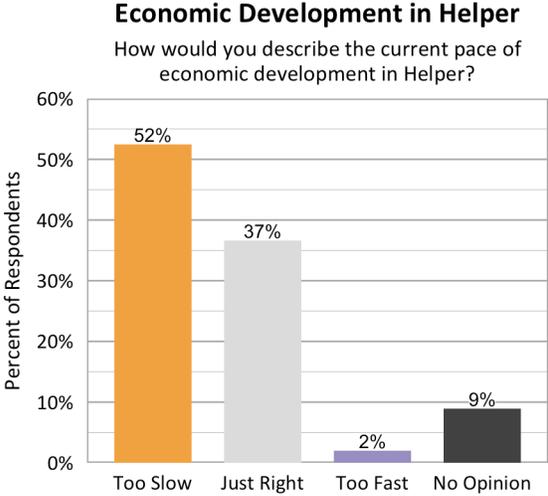
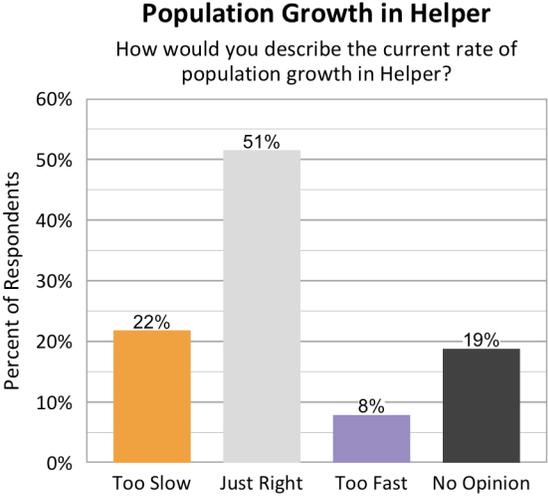
Survey participants were asked about the influence of landscape features on their wellbeing. Natural landscape including mountains, rivers and streams, red rock, and lakes, as well as trails and city parks were found to have an overwhelmingly positive influence on wellbeing. Farmland also had a positive influence for the majority of survey respondents.

In terms of development and industry in the landscape, half of respondents indicate that commercial development is a positive feature in the landscape and nearly half (48%) of respondents find residential development as a positive feature. Over one-third of respondents (36%) also see manufacturing industry as a positive feature. Comparatively, more respondents find extractive industry as a negative feature than as a positive feature, yet almost half of respondents (49%) see it as neither a positive nor a negative feature.



Perspectives on Population Growth and Economic Development in Helper

Most survey respondents noted that population growth in Helper is just right (51%), while just over one-fifth of respondents stated that it is too slow (22%). On the question of the pace of economic development, 52% said it is too slow, while 37% said it is just right. Compared to other cities surveyed in early 2020, Helper had the smallest percentage of survey respondents that stated that population growth was too fast and the second highest percentage that stated that it was too slow. Comparatively, Helper was in the top half of cities that find economic development too slow and has the second smallest percentage of respondents that state economic development is too fast.



Risks and Assets for Wellbeing in Helper

Survey respondents indicated the degree to which local issues were a major or minor risk or asset to wellbeing in Helper (see Table 3).

Table 3

Top Rated Assets and Risks by Helper Respondents

Highest Rated Assets (Indicated by at least 71% of respondents)	Highest Rated Risks (indicated by at least 31% of respondents)
Air Quality	Substance Abuse
Access to Public Land	Employment Opportunities
Recreation Opportunities	Shopping Opportunities
Public Safety	Opportunities for Youth
Roads and Transportation	

Respondents also wrote in other assets and risks as shown in Table 4. It is clear that some people not only listed current assets, but also those they wish Helper had.

Table 4

Other Assets and Risks Mentioned by Helper Respondents

Other Assets	Other Risks
Cultural opportunities and events (2)	Drug problems and transients
Parks/green spaces/trails (2)	Electrical grid
Mental health	Job opportunity
New business	No gym
Property protection	Recycling
School	
Variety of religious groups	

Housing Findings in Helper

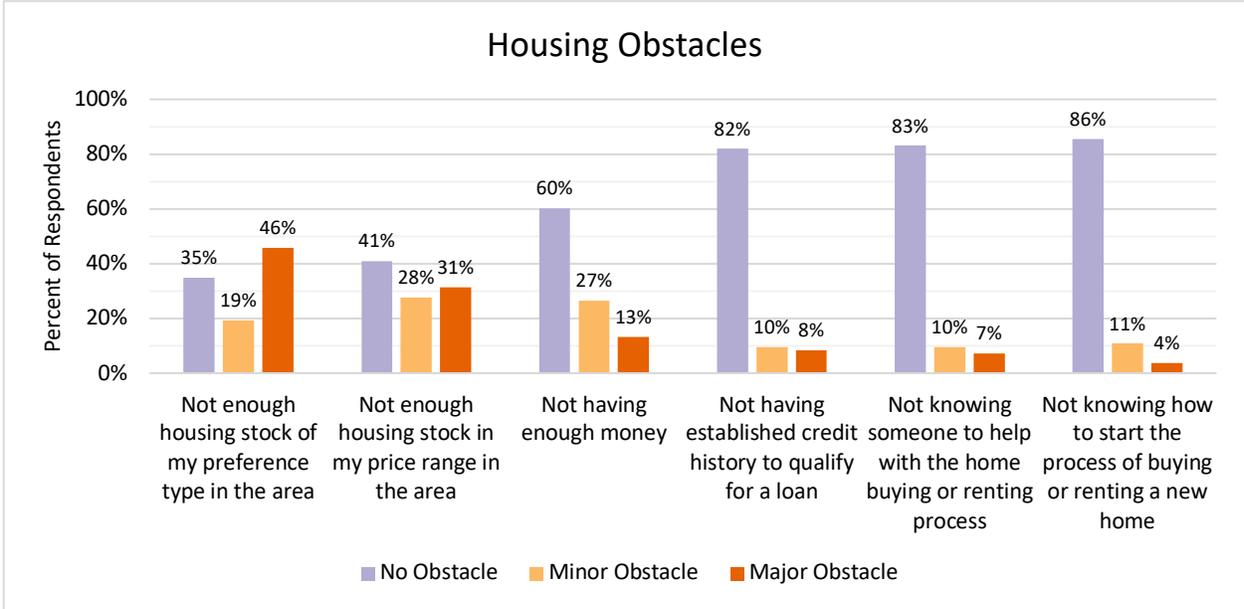
Of the survey respondents,

- **95%** live in a **single-family house**.
- **86%** **own** their home.
- **27%** **spend more than one-third of their after-tax income on rent or mortgage**.
- **21%** indicated they were **very likely to change housing** arrangements in next 5 years (17% were somewhat likely, 62% said they were not at all likely or not very likely).

For those desiring a housing change,

- **59%** seek to **own** their next housing (12% would seek to rent, 29% not sure)
- **88%** seek single-family housing

According to survey respondents, the greatest obstacles in seeking new housing include the price and type of housing stock. Not having enough money was also indicated as an obstacle for 40% of respondents.



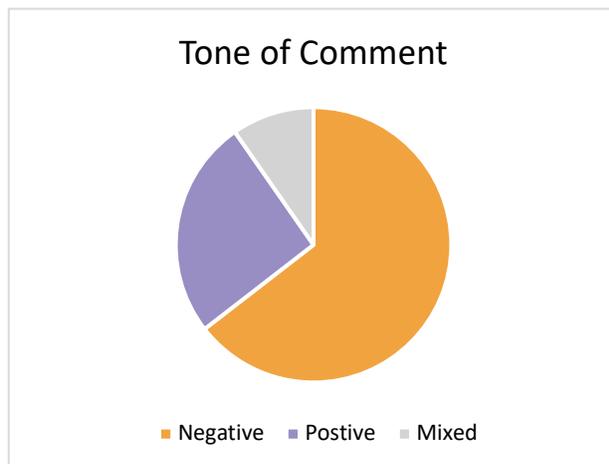
Summary of Open Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments at the end of the survey. Comments were made by 31 Helper respondents (31% of those that completed the survey). These comments indicate that Helper respondents see a lot of potential in their town and want to see it thrive. Many people are concerned about the lack of recreation and cultural opportunities and want to see more businesses and activities. People are also worried about economic growth and employment opportunities in Helper. Some people noted concerns about drug use and crime. Overall, residents want to revitalize the town and invest in its growth.

Dominant themes in comments

Included the following:

- Not enough economic growth and amenities
- Few recreational and cultural opportunities
- Concerns about substance abuse
- Many are happy living in Helper



A Few Quotes:

- *“Helper needs more of its residents to spend their money in Helper. Most residents spend their money in Price or over the mountain. We need to find a way to get people to invest more in their own community, because this town will never improve without its residents support.”*
- *“Helper is on the verge of becoming an active community again. We need more businesses and activities to bring more people into our town, give them employment, and a reason to reside here. Hopefully things will continue to progress.”*
- *“Love all of the great things that are happening in Helper and hope to play a role in continuing these developments.”*
- *“Helper is a nice town to live in. The people are friendly & helpful & the town is in good shape for as old as it is.”*

