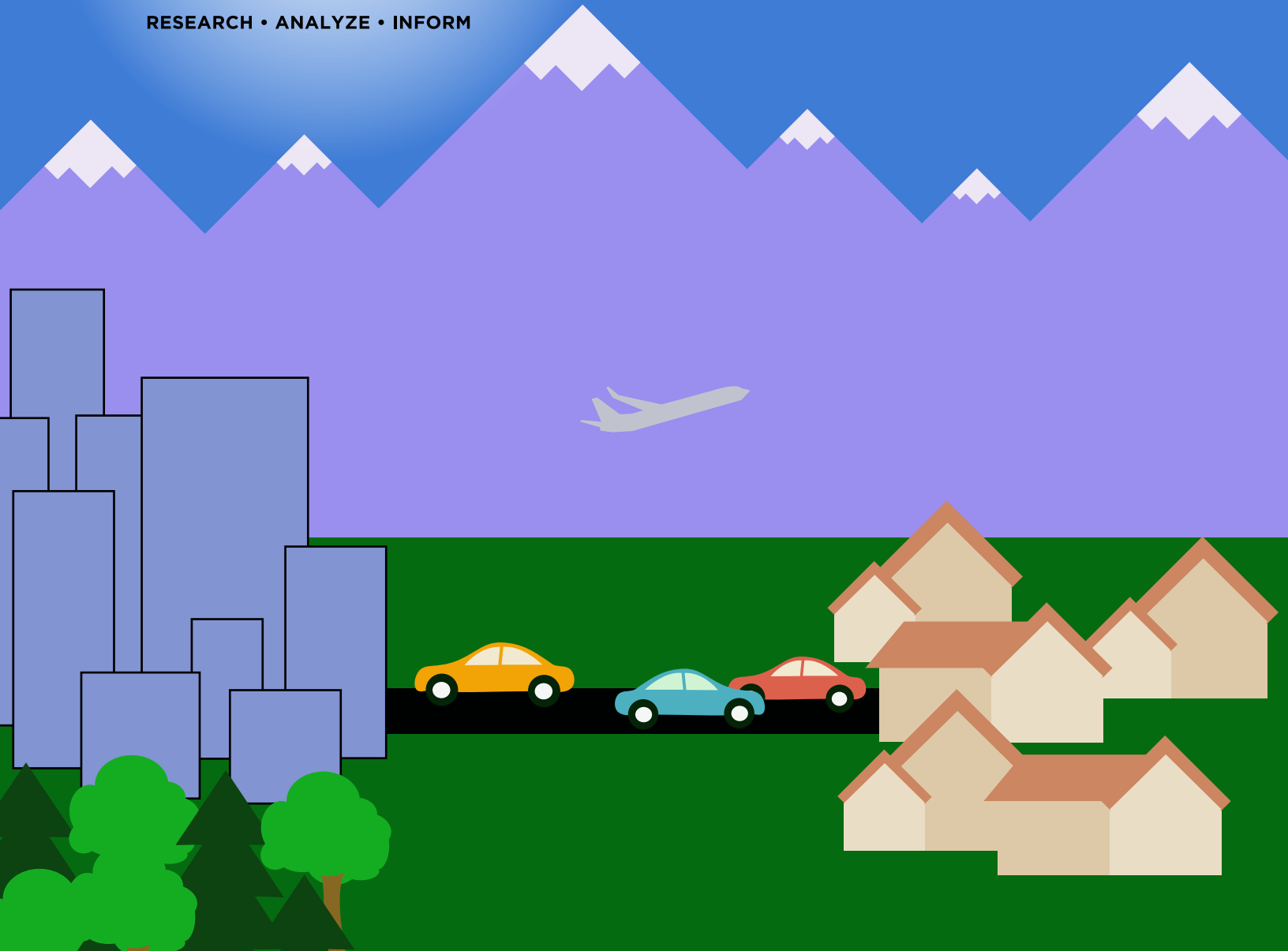




UTAH FOUNDATION

RESEARCH • ANALYZE • INFORM



UTAH FOUNDATION QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

Measuring Utahns' Perceptions
of their Communities, Personal Lives

2018 QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

Special thanks to

Intermountain Healthcare and Lighthouse Research

for supporting this report.

Project Staff

Shawn Teigen, *Vice President and Director of Research, Co-Author*
Christopher Collard, *Research Analyst, Co-Author*
Justin Poll, Ph.D., *Research Psychologist at Intermountain Healthcare, Contributor*
Peter Reichard, *President*
Dan Bammes, *Communications Director*
Sam Brucker, *Research Analyst*

Board of Trustees

Brent Jensen, <i>Chair</i>	Neil Abercrombie	J. Philip Cook	Celeste McDonald
Elizabeth Hitch, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Lloyd Allen	Bill Crim	Forrest McNabb
Peter Mann, <i>Treasurer</i>	Brian Autry	Fred Esplin	Kelly Mendenhall
Mark Buchi, <i>Fund-Raising Chair</i>	Scott Barlow	Aaron Evans	Brad Mortensen
Nathan Anderson, <i>Executive Board</i>	Zachary Barrus	David Gessel	Dale Newton
Dan Eldredge, <i>Executive Board</i>	Martin Bates	Terry Grant	Angie Osguthorpe
Bryson Garbett, <i>Executive Board</i>	Blake Bauman	Michael Gregory	Wayne Pyle
Raymond Hall, <i>Executive Board</i>	Scott Beck	Andrew Gruber	Rona Rahlf
Annalisa Holcombe, <i>Executive Board</i>	Mike Bills	Matt Hirst	Cameron Sabin
Jonathan Johnson, <i>Executive Board</i>	Doug Boudreaux	Matt Huish	Tim Sheehan
Dennis Lloyd, <i>Executive Board</i>	Craig Broussard	Robert Hyde	Harris Simmons
Kelly Mendenhall, <i>Executive Board</i>	Benjamin Brown	Richard Lambert	Art Turner
Steve McDougal, <i>Executive Board</i>	Jonathan Campbell	David Litvack	Heidi Walker
Scott Parson, <i>Executive Board</i>	Gary Carlston	Dennis Lloyd	LaVarr Webb
Gregory Poulsen, <i>Executive Board</i>	Carlton Christensen	Frank Lojko	Gary Whatcott
Melissa Shanjengange, <i>Executive Board</i>	Tom Christopoulos	Linda Makin	
Matt Sibul, <i>Executive Board</i>			
Mark Walker, <i>Executive Board</i>			
Mike Washburn, <i>Executive Board</i>			
Chad Westover, <i>Executive Board</i>			

Research Report 756



UTAH FOUNDATION
RESEARCH • ANALYZE • INFORM

150 S. State St., Ste. 444
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
utahfoundation.org

About Utah Foundation

The mission of Utah Foundation is to promote a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce and a high quality of life for Utahns by performing thorough, well-supported research that helps policymakers, business and community leaders and citizens better understand complex issues, and providing practical, well-reasoned recommendations for policy change.

Support Our Work

Utah Foundation relies on the support of business and civic leaders and average citizens to produce the high-quality, independent research for which we're known. To become a member or sponsor one of our projects or programs, contact us at 801-355-1400.

INTRODUCTION

In collaboration with Intermountain Healthcare, Utah Foundation occasionally surveys Utahns in an effort to understand how they feel about both their community and their personal quality of life.

Since 2011, Utah Foundation has measured community quality of life through its Community Quality of Life Index. Beginning in 2018, Utah Foundation and Intermountain Healthcare also began asking respondents about their personal well-being as part of a new Personal Quality of Life Index.

In this report, Utah Foundation discusses the results of the 2018 survey, breaks out the data by population groups and compares 2018 data to previous years, highlighting the most significant findings.

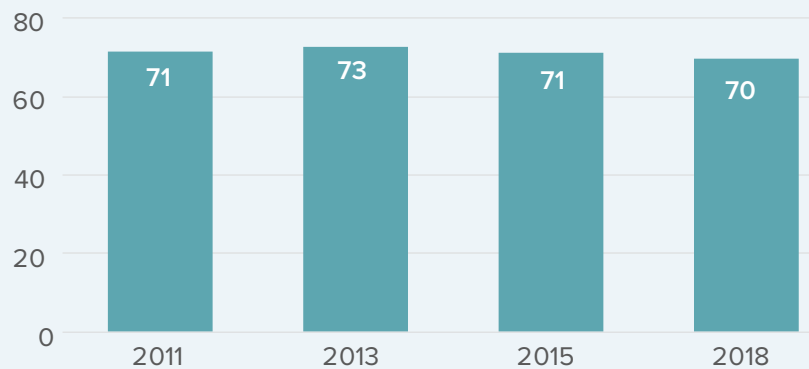
The 2018 Community Quality of Life Index uses a different methodology than previous years. However, past data were retrofitted to current methods. For more information on past and current methodologies, please refer to appendices B and C. It should be noted that this report addresses only those correlations or relationships that are statistically significant at least at the 95% level.

COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE

Utah Foundation's Community Quality of Life Index stands at 70 out of a possible 100 points, down from 71 in the 2015 index and 73 in the 2013 index (see Figure 1). Although the index has shifted from survey to survey, these small fluctuations

While year-to-year variation is small, the index has seen a decrease since 2013.

Figure 1: Community Quality of Life Index



KEY FINDINGS OF THIS REPORT

- Despite improvements in the economy, Utahns' perceptions of their community quality of life has declined since 2013 from a score of 73 to 70.
- The availability of good jobs is the only aspect on Utah Foundation's Community Quality of Life Index that improved from 2015 to 2018.
- Affordable housing has the lowest rating in the index. Air quality, streetscapes and traffic are also among Utahns' biggest concerns.
- Three aspects declined in performance since 2015 to 2018: affordable housing; air and water quality; and good parks and recreation.
- Utahns living along the Wasatch Front, those who are religiously affiliated and those with higher incomes all reported better community quality of life. Those respondents who identified with a religion indicated a higher community quality of life on 19 of 20 aspects on the index.
- Utahns with higher incomes indicated a higher rating on all seven aspects of the Personal Quality of Life Index. Those who are religiously affiliated and younger Utahns also reported better personal quality of life.
- Being "secure financially" is far and away the poorest performing measure among the personal quality of life questions.

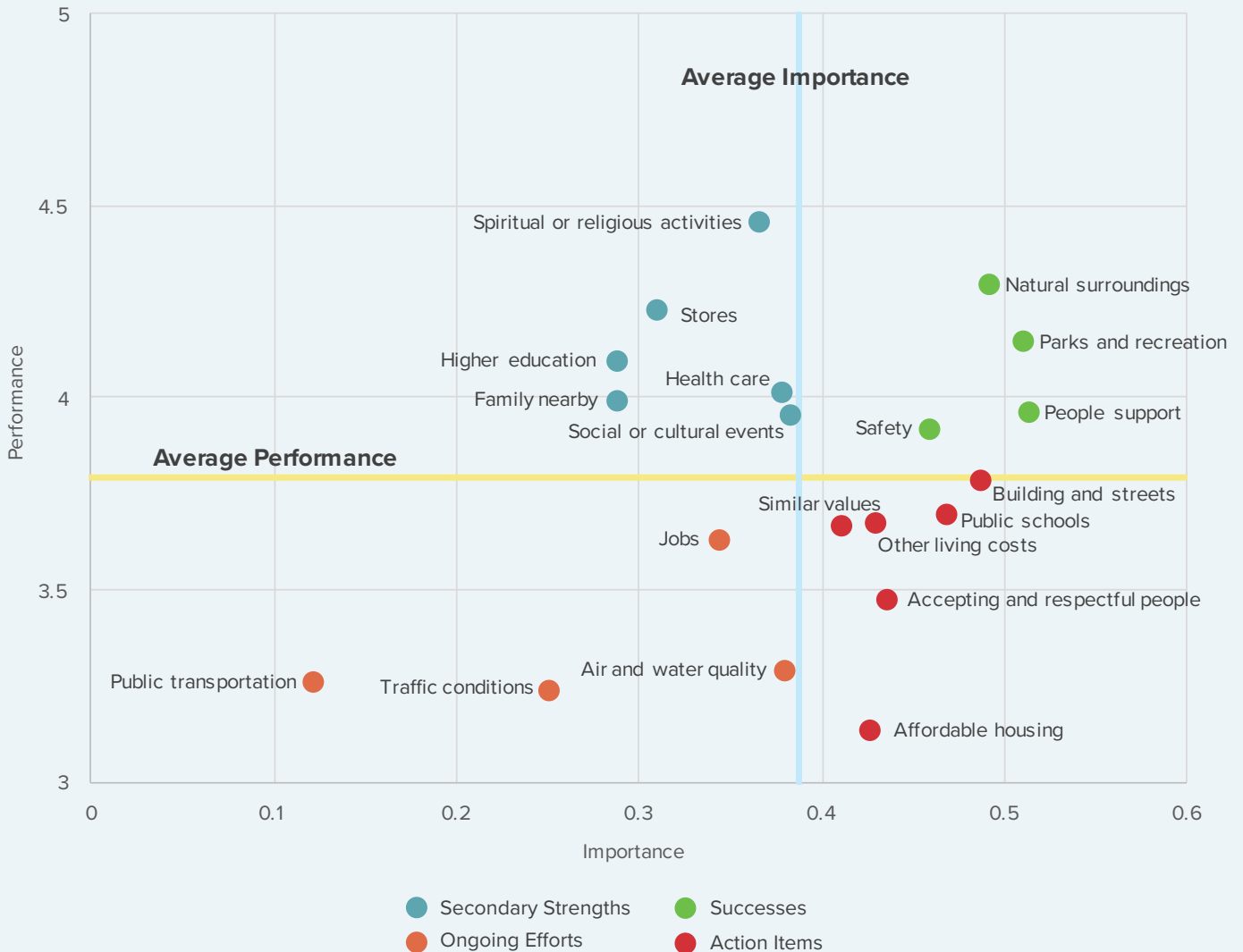
are not always meaningful. However, the change from 2013 to 2018 is significant – Utahns’ sentiments about their quality of life have declined since 2013. (See all aspects of community rankings in Appendix A.)

Community Quality of Life Matrix

A useful way of visualizing the ratings of community quality-of-life aspects is by plotting them onto a matrix, as presented in Figure 2. The four matrix quadrants categorize factors based on performance and importance. High-performance, high-importance aspects can be thought of as “successes” while high-performance, low-importance items are “secondary strengths.” Low-performance, low-importance items can be thought of as “ongoing efforts” while low-performance, high-importance items are “action items.” It can be argued that the action item quadrant is the most important on the matrix. As such, it is the only quadrant discussed in this report.

Six items are identified as “action items” – with high importance, but low performance.

Figure 2: Community Quality of Life Matrix



Note: Performance is rated on a 1-5 scale. Importance is rated on a 0-1 scale.

The six action items are:

- Availability of good housing that is affordable.
- Acceptance and respectfulness of individual and group differences.
- How much people share similar values or views of the world.
- Affordability of living costs other than housing.
- Quality of public schools.
- Attractiveness of the streets, homes, and other buildings.

Only three items were on this list in the initial survey in 2011: acceptance and respectfulness of individual and group differences; quality of public schools; and opportunities for good jobs.

“Opportunities for good jobs” was also an action item in 2013. But as job prospects improved, the aspect understandably improved in performance and also became less linked to Utahns’ overall community quality of life. Nonetheless, perception of the performance of this aspect remains below average.

Significant Changes

The Community Quality of Life Index peaked in 2013. The decrease since then stems from Utahns’ sentiments about their community declining across eight factors – and improving in only one factor.

The one improvement was in the “opportunities for good jobs.” This is likely due to the consistently-improving job market in Utah since the end of the Great Recession.

Three items declined in perceived performance between 2015 and 2018, while the other five items declined over the longer time-period – from 2013 to 2018.

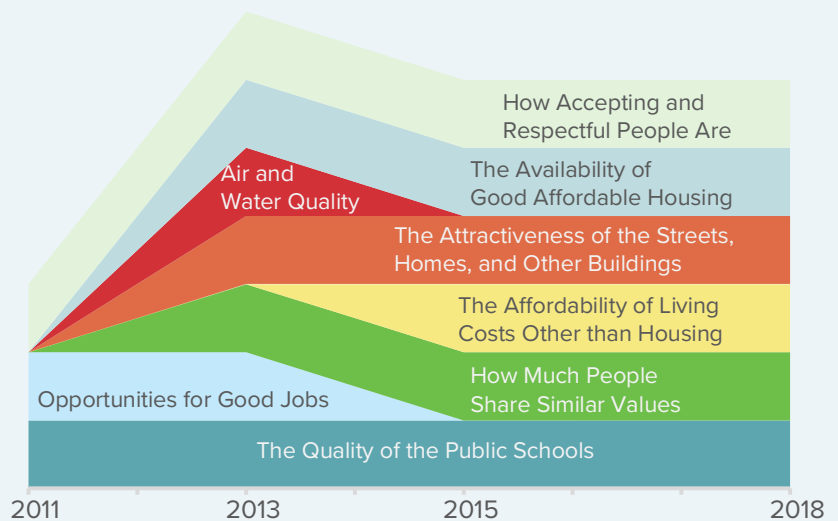
The three factors where residents’ assessments declined from 2015 were “the availability of good housing that is affordable,” “the quality of the environment such as air and water quality,” and “the availability of good parks, green spaces or places for recreation.”

Of these three significant changes, housing has the largest decrease in assessed performance. Utah’s rapidly rising housing costs have made many Utahns feel like rents and ownership are no longer affordable.

One possible explanation for the decline of air and water quality is a change in the time of the year that the survey was administered. In 2018, it was administered in March – shortly after some Utahns’ faced winter-time inversion and issues with particulate matter. In past years, it had been administered in early to late fall.

The “action items” have been relatively consistent since 2013, indicating that concerns remain unresolved.

Figure 3: “Action Items” over the Course of the Survey



With respect to “the availability of good parks, green spaces or places for recreation,” it is not immediately clear why this aspect might have decreased in performance over the period.

Population Differences

Various population factors have an important effect on Community Quality of Life. The three largest impacts pertain to religious affiliation, income and where people live.

Religion. Utah Foundation compared individuals who identified with a religion to those who were unaffiliated with a religion. Religiously affiliated Utahns were more likely to rate their communities better in all of the quality-of-life aspects except “traffic conditions on the roads and highways.” Of the 19 aspects in which religious Utahns rate their communities’ more favorably, four aspects stood out for their higher average ratings:

- How much people share similar values or views of the world.
- The availability of spiritual or religious activities or groups.
- How much people support and help each other.
- How accepting and respectful people are of individual and group differences.

Religiously affiliated Utahns had a Community Quality of Life Index of 72 while non-affiliated individuals had an index of 62, after accounting for other factors.

Income. Utah Foundation compared Utahns with household incomes of greater than \$50,000 to Utahns below that threshold. Respondents with higher incomes specifically rated the performance of nine aspects higher. The biggest differences were seen in the following factors:

- The attractiveness of streets, homes and other buildings.
- The affordability of living costs other than housing, such as food, utilities and services.
- The level of safety in your area and security from crime.
- Opportunities for good jobs.

Utahns with a household income lower than \$50,000 had a Community Quality of Life Index four points lower than those households earning \$50,000 or more, after accounting for other factors. Those earning \$50,000 or more had an index of 72, while those earning less had an index of 68.

Location. Utah Foundation compared Utahns in more urban locations along the Wasatch Front (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake and Utah counties) to their more rural counterparts. Utahns in these more rural counties tended to indicate that the following aspects had higher performance than did their Wasatch Front peers:

- The quality of the environment such as air and water quality.
- Traffic conditions on the roads and highways.
- The attractiveness of the natural surroundings.

However, these more rural Utahns rated the performance of the following aspects lower:

- The availability of quality health care services.

- The availability of quality education beyond high school such as good trade schools, colleges and universities.
- The availability of quality public transportation such as buses or trains.
- The availability of recreational, social, or cultural events and programs.
- The availability of good stores or other places to get the food and other things people want and need.

Even with the number of aspects that favored Wasatch Front respondents, Utahns along the Wasatch Front reported a Community Quality of Life Index that was three points higher than their more-rural peers, after accounting for other factors. That resulted in an index of 71 for those in more urban counties and 68 for those in more rural counties.

Other Population Factors. Other population factors played a role in the average rating of certain aspects of the Community Quality of Life Index, but not the index itself.

Utah Foundation compared people with at least a bachelor’s degree to people without. Respondents with bachelor’s degrees or more education were likely to rank the following aspects more favorably:

- The availability of good parks, green spaces or places for recreation.
- The availability of recreational, social or cultural events and programs.

However, Utahns with bachelor’s degrees or more rated the performance of the following aspects as lower:

- The quality of the environment such as air and water quality.
- The availability of quality public transportation such as buses or trains.

There were several other significant differences in the Community Quality of Life Index aspects based upon population characteristics. Women reported a higher performance for “the availability of quality public transportation such as buses or trains.” Age played a role in three community quality-of-life factors. Older Utahns



UTAH PRIORITIES PROJECT

How are the Community Quality of Life Index and Utah Foundation’s quadrennial Utah Priorities Project related? The short answer is that they are not.

For example, while “the availability of quality health care services” and “quality of the environment such as air and water quality” are rated with below average importance in the 2018 Community Quality of Life Index, health care and air quality top the list on Utah Foundation’s 2016 Utah Priorities Project.

Why is that? One reason is that the questions are different. The Utah Priorities Project asks respondents:

Thinking about issues facing Utah, please rate how concerned you are about each of the following issues. Use a 1-5 scale with one meaning you are “not at all concerned” and five meaning you are “very concerned.”

Someone could be concerned about an issue, but not deem it as a top issue in their communities’ quality of life, and vice versa.

Furthermore, the calculations are different. This survey address quality of life and uses implicit statistical calculations. The Utah Priorities Project uses explicit prioritization of issues.

Respondents focus biggest improvements on transportation, housing affordability and air quality.

Figure 4: “What Could Most Improve Your Area as a Place to Live?”

Improvement	Share of responses
Reduce traffic	15%
Improve affordability of housing	13%
Improve air quality	12%
Improve roads and sidewalks (better condition, lighting)	9%
Improve public transportation (more bus/train routes)	8%

Note: 88% of survey respondents provided an answer to this question. Some respondents stated more than one answer.

tended to think health care was better, but thought that their communities performed worse than younger Utahns in terms of “the availability of good housing that is affordable” and “the affordability of living costs other than housing, such as food, utilities and services.”

Improving Community Quality of Life

How can quality of life be improved for Utahns? One way to improve it is by taking public policy measures to address relevant Community Quality of Life Index action items. Utah Foundation’s survey also sought to answer this question another way.

In an open-ended survey question, respondents were asked what could most improve their areas as places to live. Interestingly, three of the top five measures related to transportation: reducing traffic (15%), improving road and sidewalks (9%) and improving public transportation (8%). The other two of the top five are improving affordability of housing (13%) and improving air quality (12%). These top five open-ended categories accounted for roughly half of survey responses. Four of these five items align with the lowest-performing items on the index.

This suggests that policymakers and community support groups should focus not only on “action items,” but also consider issues that would most improve people’s place to live – which are also below-average items on the index. Taken together, the areas of greatest possible impact to improve community quality of life are the following:

1. Promote production of quality, affordable housing.
2. Build on policies and programs aimed at improving air quality.
3. Invest in streetscapes and promote attractive, high-quality developments.
4. Invest in transportation infrastructure and programs to reduce traffic and improve the quality of roads and highways.

PERSONAL QUALITY OF LIFE

A major new feature in the 2018 Quality of Life survey was the inclusion of personal quality-of-life questions. The seven aspects of personal well-being that make up the Personal Quality of Life Index are:

- I am happy.
- I am physically healthy.
- I have positive and supportive relationships with others.
- I feel comfortable or secure financially.
- I find meaning or purpose in my life.
- I feel comfortable or at peace spiritually.
- I like my job.

There is certainly overlap in these categories. For instance, where does happiness end and meaning or purpose in life begin? How interrelated are these issues? They are likely far more interrelated than the issues in the Community Quality of Life Index, but should themselves provide some insight as to the areas which could use the most improvement. (For a further discussion on how the Personal Community Quality of Life Index and Community Quality of Life Index interact, please see Appendix D.)

In terms of performance, “positive and supportive relationships with others” ranked highest, followed closely by respondents finding “meaning or purpose” in life, feeling “comfortable or at peace spiritually” and simply being “happy.”

Far and away the lowest ranking for personal quality of life is that respondents “feel comfortable or secure financially.”

Personal Quality of Life Matrix

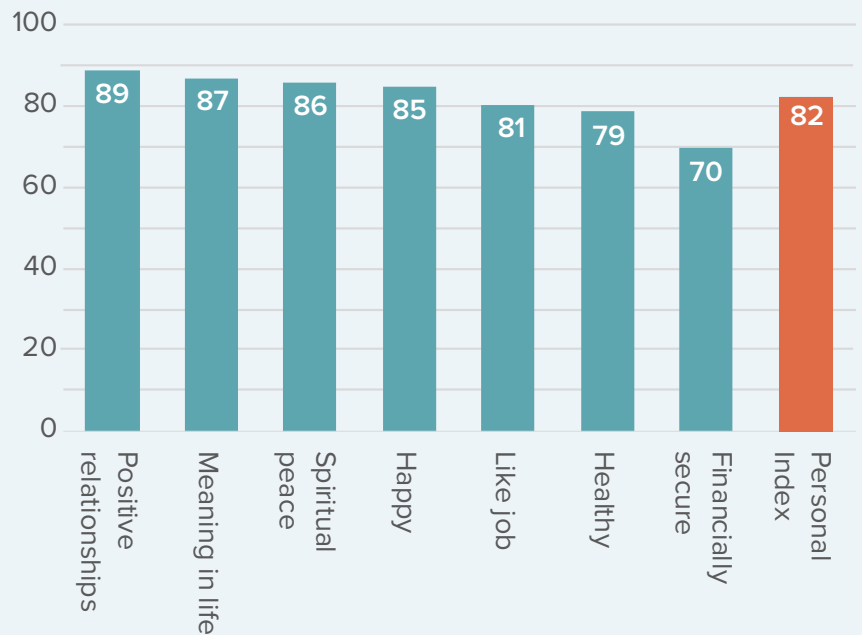
Utah Foundation created a Personal Quality of Life Matrix to show the interplay between the performance of the aspects and their contributing importance to the overall personal quality of life.

Being happy is the most important in terms of overall personal quality of life. Good health is the least important of the seven aspects.

Again, being financially secure has the lowest quality or performance of the aspects but is still important. In terms of “action items,” financial security is the only aspect that lands in the higher importance but lower-performance quadrant.

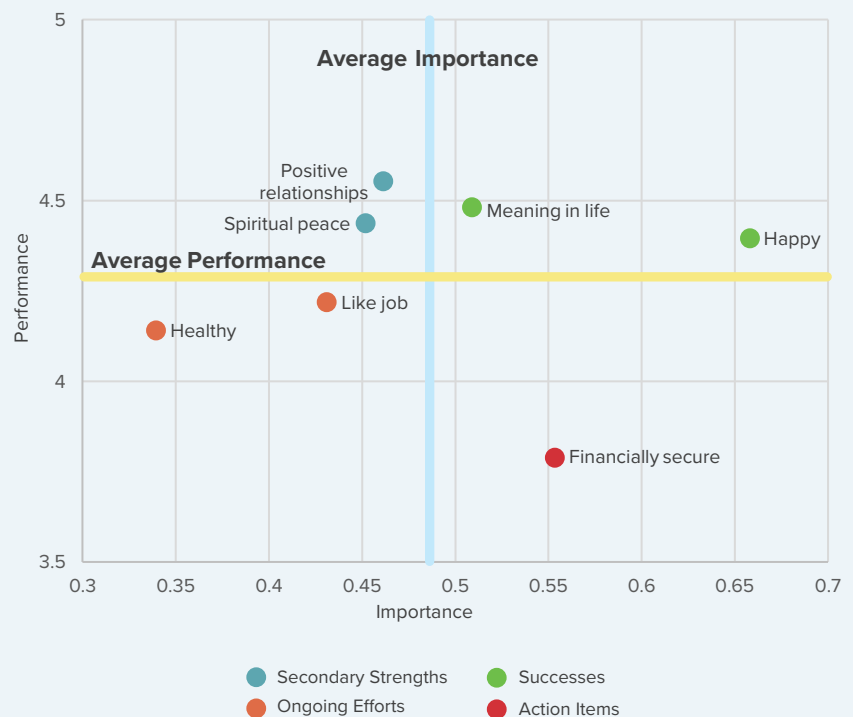
Being “secure financially” has the lowest performance on the Index.

Figure 5: Personal Quality of Life Aspects and Index



Only one item is an “action item” – financial security.

Figure 6: Personal Quality of Life Matrix



Note: Performance is rated on a 1-5 scale. Importance is rated on a 0-1 scale.

Population Differences

As with Utahns' community quality-of-life responses, population characteristics have an important effect on personal quality-of-life responses. The largest impacts on personal quality of life have to do with religious affiliation and income. Higher incomes and religion are tightly linked to better personal quality of life. Youth also has an effect, but to a lesser extent.

Religion. Utah Foundation compared individuals who identified with a religion to those who were unaffiliated with a religion. Individuals who identified with a religion reported a higher average personal quality of life (83) than their non-religious counterparts (78). They were five points higher, after accounting for other factors. Religiously affiliated Utahns specifically rated the performance of the following aspects as higher:

- I am happy
- I find meaning or purpose in my life

Income. Utahns with household earning at least \$50,000 reported an average Personal Quality of Life Index nine points higher than those below that income, after accounting for other factors. Those earning at least \$50,000 reported an index of 86, while those earning less reported an index of 77. This was driven by the fact that the Utahns in the higher income group reported a higher average rating on all seven aspects. The responses with the most pronounced differences based on income were:

- I am happy.
- I feel comfortable or secure financially.

Age. Age played a smaller a role in Personal Quality of Life Index differences. When comparing younger and older Utahns generally, there is no difference. However, when accounting for income and religion, younger Utahns reported a higher personal quality of life on average. Younger Utahns reported a better personal quality of life based on four factors:

- I am physically healthy.
- I have positive and supportive relationships with others.
- I feel comfortable or secure financially.
- I find meaning or purpose in my life.

Other Population Factors. Overall, women and men scored the same on the Personal Quality of Life Index. However, women reported a higher performance for the following two factors:

- I have positive and supportive relationships with others.
- I like my job.

In contrast to the Community Quality of Life Index, there were no significant differences in personal quality of life on the Wasatch Front versus more rural communities.

CONCLUSION

Several of the findings of the 2018 Utah Foundation Quality of Life Survey confirm what many already suspected: Utahns are feeling pinched by increasing housing costs; they don't enjoy sitting in traffic; they're worried about air quality; and they think the quality of public schools could be better.

Not surprisingly, those with lower incomes are more concerned than others about their finances, less pleased with the quality of their communities and more worried about crime. And, as the economy has improved, Utahns are less worried about jobs than they were a few years ago.

But, perhaps surprisingly, the economy has not boosted overall perceptions of community quality of life. In fact, the index has decreased since 2013. And being "secure financially" is far and away the poorest performing measure among the Personal Quality of Life Index questions.

Among the most striking findings is the tight linkage between religious affiliation and a significantly higher community quality of life. In fact, those respondents who identified with a religion indicated a higher quality of life on 19 of 20 aspects of the community index.

Similarly, there is a strong connection between income and personal quality of life. Those earning more than \$50,000 reported a higher performance on all seven of the aspects of the personal index.

Looking ahead, several policy areas emerge from the findings as being in need of attention. They include reducing traffic and improving the quality of roads and highways; promoting the production of quality, affordable housing; improving air quality; and investing in streetscapes and promoting attractive, high-quality developments.

With progress in these areas, future Utah Foundation Quality of Life surveys may find citizens feeling better about the quality of their communities. They might even be happier.

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL FIGURES

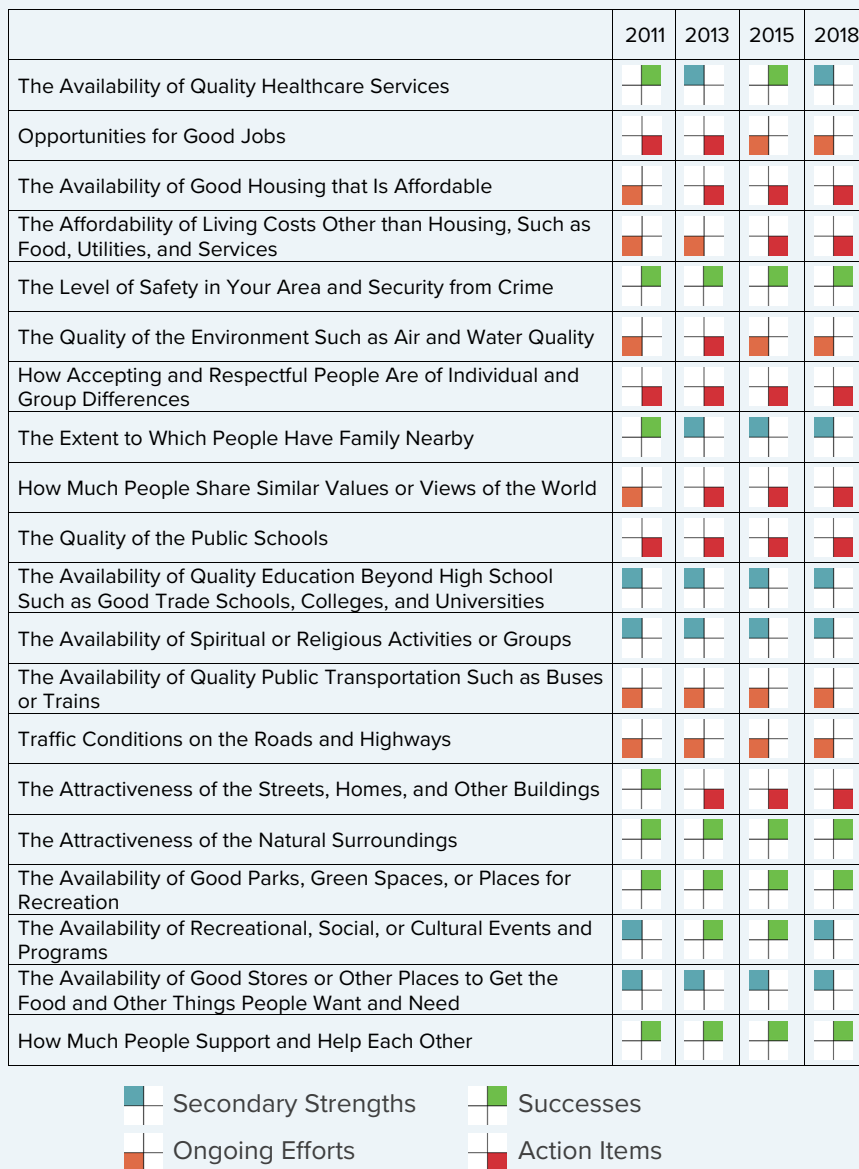
Figure 7: Aspect Performance Rating, 1-to-5 scale

Aspect	Performance
The Availability of Spiritual or Religious Activities or Groups	4.45
The Attractiveness of the Natural Surroundings	4.29
The Availability of Good Stores or Other Places to Get the Food and Other Things People Want and Need	4.22
The Availability of Good Parks, Green Spaces, or Places for Recreation	4.14
The Availability of Quality Education Beyond High School Such as Good Trade Schools, Colleges, and Universities	4.09
The Availability of Quality Healthcare Services	4.01
The Extent to Which People Have Family Nearby	3.99
How Much People Support and Help Each Other	3.96
The Availability of Recreational, Social, or Cultural Events and Programs	3.95
The Level of Safety in Your Area and Security from Crime	3.91
The Attractiveness of the Streets, Homes, and Other Buildings	3.78
The Quality of the Public Schools	3.69
The Affordability of Living Costs Other than Housing, Such as Food, Utilities, and Services	3.67
How Much People Share Similar Values or Views of the World	3.67
Opportunities for Good Jobs	3.62
How Accepting and Respectful People Are of Individual and Group Differences	3.47
The Quality of the Environment Such as Air and Water Quality	3.29
The Availability of Quality Public Transportation Such as Buses or Trains	3.26
Traffic Conditions on the Roads and Highways	3.23
The Availability of Good Housing that Is Affordable	3.13

Figure 8: Aspect Importance Score, 0-to-1 scale

Aspect	Importance
How Much People Support and Help Each Other	0.51
The Availability of Good Parks, Green Spaces, or Places for Recreation	0.51
The Attractiveness of the Natural Surroundings	0.49
The Attractiveness of the Streets, Homes, and Other Buildings	0.49
The Quality of the Public Schools	0.47
The Level of Safety in Your Area and Security from Crime	0.46
How Accepting and Respectful People Are of Individual and Group Differences	0.44
The Affordability of Living Costs Other than Housing, Such as Food, Utilities, and Services	0.43
The Availability of Good Housing that Is Affordable	0.43
How Much People Share Similar Values or Views of the World	0.41
The Availability of Recreational, Social, or Cultural Events and Programs	0.38
The Quality of the Environment Such as Air and Water Quality	0.38
The Availability of Quality Healthcare Services	0.38
The Availability of Spiritual or Religious Activities or Groups	0.37
Opportunities for Good Jobs	0.35
The Availability of Good Stores or Other Places to Get the Food and Other Things People Want and Need	0.31
The Extent to Which People Have Family Nearby	0.29
The Availability of Quality Education Beyond High School Such as Good Trade Schools, Colleges, and Universities	0.29
Traffic Conditions on the Roads and Highways	0.25
The Availability of Quality Public Transportation Such as Buses or Trains	0.12

Figure 9: Action Items Over Time



APPENDIX B: 2018 SURVEY AND REPORT METHODOLOGY

The Utah Foundation Quality of Life Index measures Utahns’ quality of life in two different ways.

The first method asks survey respondents a series of questions on 20 aspects of their local communities (the area within a 30-minute drive). Respondents ranked these on a five-point scale, from “poor to excellent.” Utah Foundation creates the Quality of Life Index by averaging the responses about each aspect and adjusting them to a 100-point scale. (For a deeper understanding of how these 20 aspects were chosen, see the first Utah Quality of Life Index report which was released in 2011.*)

The survey measures the importance of each factor in two ways. First, there is a measure of the implicit link between the aspect and the overall quality of life. Second, the survey asked respondents an explicit open-ended question: What do you think could most improve your area as a place to live?

The 2018 survey introduced a second method of measuring quality of life by asking Utahns to rate the performance of seven aspects of their personal lives – as opposed to just asking about their communities. Respondents rated these on a five-point scale, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Utah Foundation created the Personal Quality of Life Index by averaging the responses about performance and adjusting them to a 100-point scale.

Like the Community Quality of Life Index, the importance of each of these Personal Quality of Life Index aspects were inferred by a statistical analysis of the strength of the relationship between each of the aspects of quality of life and the question related to overall personal quality of life, based upon the 5-point scale, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” using this statement: “I am content or comfortable with my life overall.” These questions were selected from an Intermountain Healthcare survey instrument with the help of Intermountain Healthcare research staff.

In addition to these main questions, the survey asked a number of demographic questions. These allowed Utah Foundation and Intermountain Healthcare to more accurately represent Utah’s population and make comparisons between groups.

Lighthouse Research in Salt Lake City conducted landline and mobile telephone surveys of randomly selected samples of adult Utah residents 18 years and older: 570 residents in 2018, 605 in 2015, 608 in 2013, and 621 in 2011. In 2018 the survey reached respondents from 26 of the state’s 29 counties. Responses were weighted using survey demographic data and U.S. Census Bureau data by income, gender and age to more closely represent the demographic profile of Utah as a whole.**

In past incarnations of the survey, Utah Foundation asked respondents to rate the importance of the Community Quality of Life Index’s 20 aspects. In 2018, Utah Foundation and Intermountain Healthcare made a major change to the survey methodology, which was then applied retroactively to the previous surveys. In 2018, Utah Foundation did not ask respondents to rate the importance of each of the 20 aspects of community quality of life. Instead, the measure of importance is now inferred by a statistical analysis of the strength of the relationship between each of the aspects of quality of life and the question related to overall quality of life in their area, based upon the five-point scale, from “poor” to “excellent,” using this question: “Now, overall, how would you rate your area as a place to live?” The result is an importance score for each aspect on a 0-to-1 scale.

For more details on methodological changes, please see Appendix C.

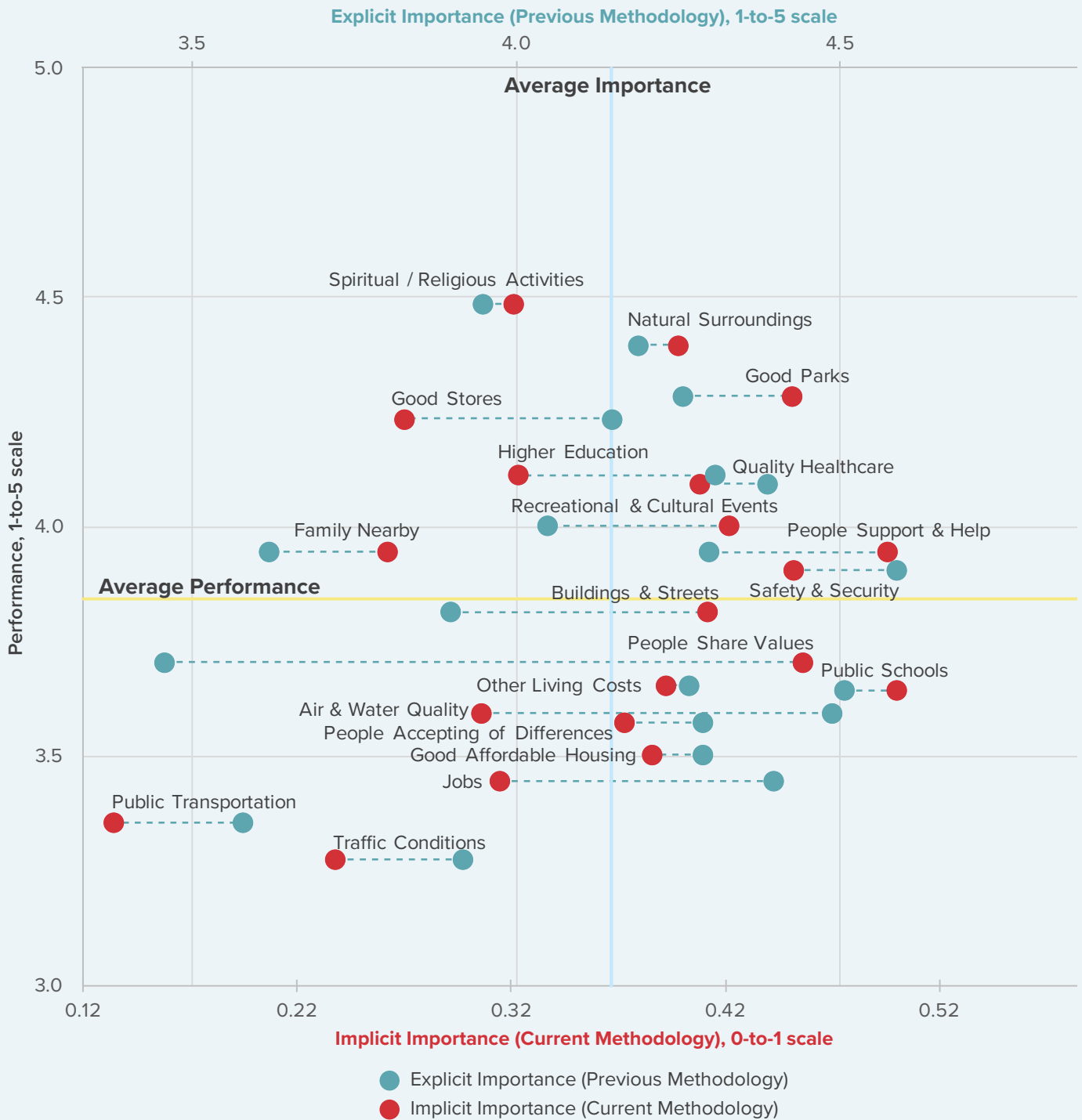
** Utah Foundation, The 2011 Utah Foundation Quality of Life Index First Biennial Survey Reveals Strengths, Weaknesses, 2011, <http://www.utahfoundation.org/uploads/rr703.pdf>.*

*** Utah Foundation and Intermountain Healthcare made the determination not to weight all of the demographic factors. While some races and ethnicities were not well represented, the samples were too small to weight appropriately. While the survey sample was somewhat more educated than the population as a whole, other metrics were weighted in lieu of these.*

APPENDIX C: VARIATIONS IN METHODOLOGY

As explained in Appendix B, Utah Foundation made a substantial methodological change in the 2018 iteration of the survey. In previous iterations of the survey, Utah Foundation explicitly asked respondents to rate the performance of each of the 20 factors on a scale of 1 to 5, and then separately, rank the importance of each of those factors on a scale of 1 to 5. This produced an explicit value that varied for each individual.

Figure 10: Differences in Importance by Methodology



In the 2018 iteration of the survey, instead of Utah Foundation asking respondents to explicitly rate the importance of each of the 20 factors, Utah Foundation created a pairwise correlation matrix with each of the 20 factors as well as respondents' assessment of their overall community quality of life. As a result, Utah Foundation's measure of importance now rates how tightly linked each of the factors are to an individual's overall quality of life. Unlike the explicit measure, where each individual has their own ratings of importance, this implicit measure can only be created by analyzing the correlation of factors at a group level.

Utah Foundation made this decision for a number of reasons. To begin with, there is a well-known phenomena in surveys that when speaking to a live individual (as was the case in our survey) respondents have a tendency to respond in more socially acceptable ways.

Another factor is that when individuals choose their communities, they weigh several factors. Often, many of those factors are explicit and can be measured, like wanting to live where there are good jobs or good public schools. However, individuals' choices on where to live also often reflect subtler aspects of the community of which they may not be as cognizant. For example, there is a growing body of evidence that individuals in United States are sorting themselves into communities.*** When exploring possible areas to live, like-minded individuals are likely drawn to similar factors. Individuals will likely feel much more comfortable with their communities when their neighbors – and others with whom they interact – share similar values. This is clear in the 2015 data.

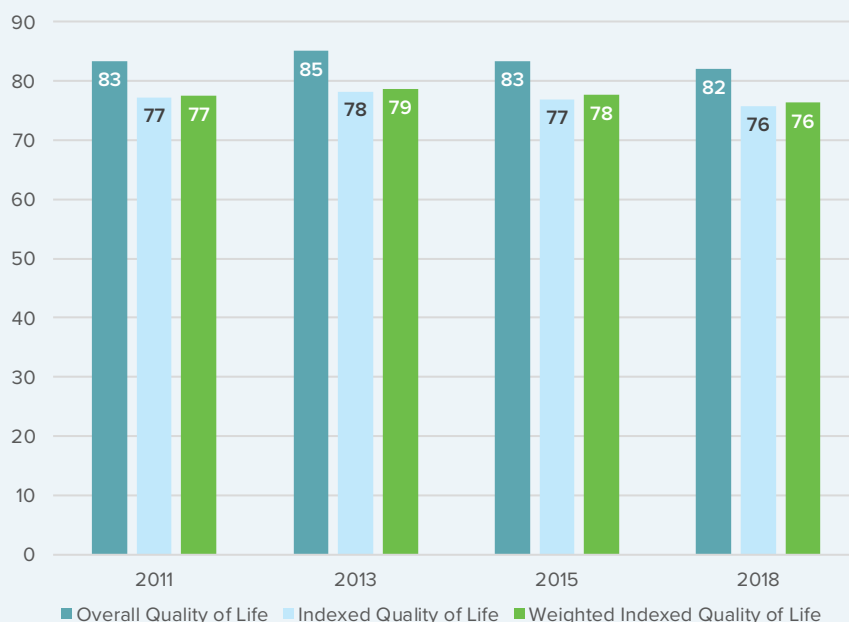
Because Utah Foundation explicitly asked importance in 2015, but had all the data required to retroactively create implicit levels of importance, it provides a clear example of the variation between explicit answers and implicit answers. When people were explicitly asked the importance of how much people share similar values or views of the world, individuals ranked it the least important of all the 20 factors – substantially

below the average. Yet when using the implicit methodology, it became the third most important factor in determining an individual's overall quality of life.

At the same time, it can seem somewhat disingenuous and distrustful to give more credence to a inferential statistic rather than just asking people what they think. As a result, Utah Foundation left an open-ended question that gave individuals a chance to respond about the aspect that would most improve the community of life in their community.

Another reason Utah Foundation chose to change methodology is because the new survey might help survey fatigue. Previously respondents were asked to rate the quality of 20 factors and then the importance of

Figure 11: Comparison Between Possible Methodologies



the same 20 factors. Under the new methodology, respondents would only have to go through the list once.

Cutting those 20 questions on importance also allowed Utah Foundation to add additional (but not repetitive) questions about personal quality of life and create a new index looking at how individuals view their personal quality of life.

Often when surveys change methodologies it can invalidate past data. That was not a problem in this case. Utah Foundation had all the data it needed from previous surveys to recreate past data under the new methodology.

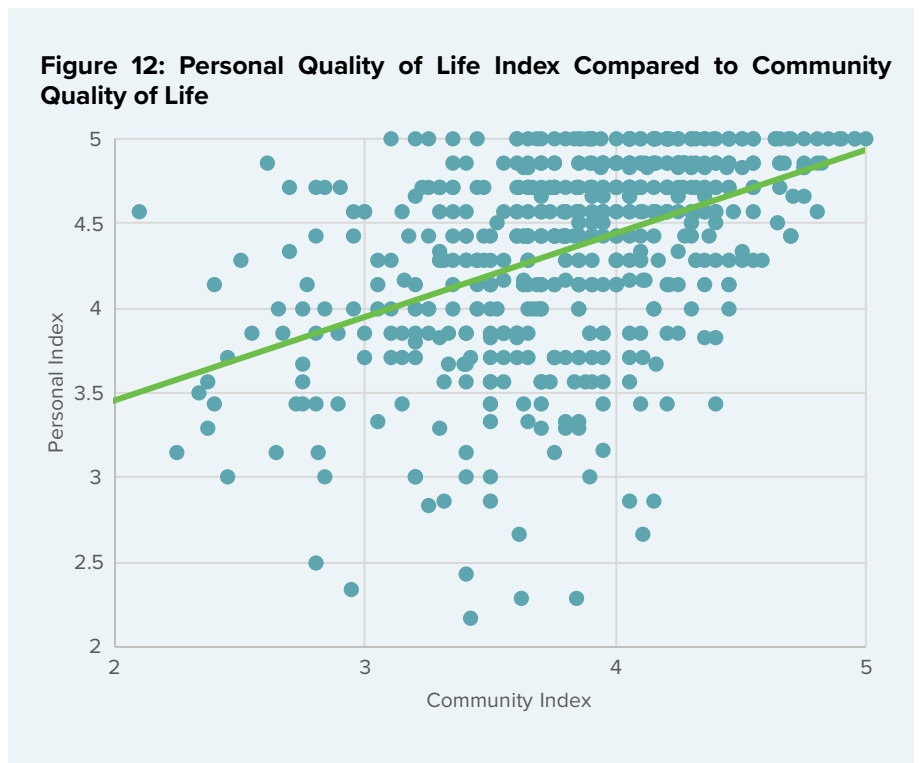
A related question regarding the index is whether Utah Foundation should apply the same weight to each of the 20 factors, or should vary their weights based on their importance. A comparison between the equal weight index and the importance-weighted index can be seen in Figure 10, as well as individuals rating of their overall quality of life. While all three provide slightly different measurements, they all demonstrate the same trend. As a result, Utah Foundation decided to stick with the simplest and previously used method of equal weights.

*** Florida, Richard, "America's big sort is only getting bigger," CityLab, Oct 25, 2016, <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2016/10/the-big-sort-revisited/504830/>; Gelman, Andrew, "Red state, blue state, rich state poor state: Why Americans vote the way they do - explained edition," Princeton Press, 2009.

APPENDIX D: HOW ARE THE COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE AND PERSONAL QUALITY OF LIFE RELATED?

Personal quality of life ratings tie directly to community quality of life. Generally, people with a higher personal quality of life were more likely to rate the area in which they live as having a high quality of life. The linkage between personal quality of life and community quality of life is stronger than the link between any of the population factors discussed in the report.

Certain questions of personal quality of life have a particular tie to community quality of life ratings. For instance, the question "I am content or comfortable with my life overall" has the strongest relationship with community quality of life ratings; those respondents that strongly agree about being content and comfortable also rated the area in which they live as having a high quality of life.





UTAH FOUNDATION

RESEARCH • ANALYZE • INFORM

PLATINUM MEMBERS



BUILDING AMERICA®

ZIONS BANK®



RioTinto



GEORGE S. AND DOLORES DORÉ ECCLES
FOUNDATION



GOLD MEMBERS



Let's turn the answers on.



The Brent and Bonnie
Jean Beesley Foundation



LAWRENCE T. & JANET T.
DEE FOUNDATION



SILVER MEMBERS

CBRE
Garbett Homes
Fidelity Investments
Management & Training Corp.
MountainStar Healthcare

Northrop Grumman
Salt Lake Chamber
Staker Parson Companies
University of Utah Health Care

Utah System of Higher Education
Wells Fargo
Wheeler Machinery
Workers Compensation Fund

BRONZE MEMBERS

Bank of Utah
Big-D Construction
Colleen Larkin Bell
CRS Engineers
Cranium Cafe
Deloitte
Dixie State University
Energy Solutions
Enterprise Holdings
Granite School District
HDR Engineering
Holland & Hart
J Philip Cook, LLC

Key Bank
Kirton | McConkie
Magnum Development
my529
Ogden City
Ray Quinney & Nebeker
Revere Health
Salt Lake Community College
Sandy City
South Jordan City
Snow College
Stoel Rives
Thanksgiving Point Institute

United Way of Salt Lake
University of Utah
Utah Farm Bureau Federation
Utah Hospital Association
Utah State University
Utah System of Technical Colleges
Utah Valley University
Visit Salt Lake
Wasatch Front Regional Council
Webb Publishing
Weber State University
West Valley City
Westminster College



UTAH FOUNDATION

RESEARCH • ANALYZE • INFORM

150 S. State St., Ste. 444
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
utahfoundation.org

UTAH FOUNDATION
QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

Special thanks to

Intermountain Healthcare

and

Lighthouse Research

for supporting this report.