

**CITY OF MARYSVILLE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR ACTION**

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE: March 14, 2016**

<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b> Citizen Survey	<b>AGENDA SECTION:</b> New Business	
<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Gloria Hirashima, Chief Administrative Officer	<b>AGENDA NUMBER:</b>	
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. List of sample survey questions from NCS</li> <li>2. National Citizen Survey General Information</li> <li>3. Sample NRC Citizen Survey Report</li> </ol>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	
	<b>MAYOR</b>	<b>CAO</b>
<b>BUDGET CODE:</b> 00199513.549000	<b>AMOUNT:</b>	

City staff reviewed options for a general citizen survey to evaluate perceptions on city services and livability. The survey will be utilized to baseline current community views and assist City elected officials and staff in developing strategic plans. The use of community surveys is helpful to benchmark resident opinions on a range of community issues and will be a tool for improving service delivery and stakeholder communications.

We received quotes from three firms to conduct a community survey. National Research Center (NRC) was identified as the preferred company. NRC is affiliated with ICMA. The NRC Citizen Survey benchmarks results against more than 500 citizen surveys which will enable us to obtain a normative comparison to other communities. NRC also conducted the 2002 citizen survey for Marysville, which provides us with an internal baseline and comparison over time. NRC also quoted the lowest price for the service, including a 10% discount because of our prior survey with them.

A list of survey questions from NRC is attached. Survey questions that do not apply to Marysville can be removed from the questionnaire. We may also identify a few custom questions as part of the survey.

The base cost for conducting a survey with a sample size of 1,500 households is \$13,860 (discounted rate). The NRC offers additional add on services such as larger sample size, open ended question and Spanish translation for an additional cost, which can be referenced on attachment 2. The NRC reports that a sample size of 1500 households will provide results reflecting an approximate margin of error plus or minus 5% for the data.

<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b> Authorize staff to negotiate and Mayor to sign a contract with National Research Center to conduct a Citizen Survey for the City of Marysville with a sample size of 1,500 households.
<b>COUNCIL ACTION:</b>

# The XYZ of ABC 2016 Citizen Survey

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult’s year of birth does not matter. Please select the response (by circling the number or checking the box) that most closely represents your opinion for each question. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

**1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in ABC:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
ABC as a place to live .....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live.....	1	2	3	4	5
ABC as a place to raise children .....	1	2	3	4	5
ABC as a place to work.....	1	2	3	4	5
ABC as a place to visit .....	1	2	3	4	5
ABC as a place to retire .....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5

**2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to ABC as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Overall feeling of safety in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit.....	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall “built environment” of ABC (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Health and wellness opportunities in ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall economic health of ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5

**3. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:**

	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Somewhat likely</i>	<i>Somewhat unlikely</i>	<i>Very unlikely</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recommend living in ABC to someone who asks .....	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in ABC for the next five years .....	1	2	3	4	5

**4. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:**

	<i>Very safe</i>	<i>Somewhat safe</i>	<i>Neither safe nor unsafe</i>	<i>Somewhat unsafe</i>	<i>Very unsafe</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
In your neighborhood during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In ABC’s downtown/commercial area during the day .....	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to ABC as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Traffic flow on major streets .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of public parking.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by car in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by public transportation in ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by bicycle in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails .....	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality .....	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Public places where people want to spend time .....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing .....	1	2	3	4	5
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventive health services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality mental health care .....	1	2	3	4	5

**6. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to ABC as a whole:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool.....	1	2	3	4	5
K-12 education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Adult educational opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cost of living in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of business and service establishments in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Vibrant downtown/commercial area.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters.....	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Neighborliness of residents in ABC.....	1	2	3	4	5

**7. Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.**

	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Made efforts to conserve water.....	1	2
Made efforts to make your home more energy efficient.....	1	2
Observed a code violation or other hazard in ABC (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.).....	1	2
Household member was a victim of a crime in ABC.....	1	2
Reported a crime to the police in ABC.....	1	2
Stocked supplies in preparation for an emergency.....	1	2
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate.....	1	2
Contacted the XYZ of ABC (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information.....	1	2
Contacted ABC elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion.....	1	2

**8. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following in ABC?**

	<i>2 times a week or more</i>	<i>2-4 times a month</i>	<i>Once a month or less</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
Used ABC recreation centers or their services.....	1	2	3	4
Visited a neighborhood park or XYZ park.....	1	2	3	4
Used ABC public libraries or their services.....	1	2	3	4
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in ABC.....	1	2	3	4
Attended a XYZ-sponsored event.....	1	2	3	4
Used bus, rail, subway or other public transportation instead of driving.....	1	2	3	4
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone.....	1	2	3	4
Walked or biked instead of driving.....	1	2	3	4
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in ABC.....	1	2	3	4
Participated in a club.....	1	2	3	4
Talked to or visited with your immediate neighbors.....	1	2	3	4
Done a favor for a neighbor.....	1	2	3	4

**9. Thinking about local public meetings (of local elected officials like City Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards, town halls, HOA, neighborhood watch, etc.), in the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members attended or watched a local public meeting?**

	<i>2 times a week or more</i>	<i>2-4 times a month</i>	<i>Once a month or less</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
<u>Attended</u> a local public meeting.....	1	2	3	4
<u>Watched</u> (online or on television) a local public meeting.....	1	2	3	4

# The XYZ of ABC 2016 Citizen Survey

## 10. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in ABC:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Police/Sheriff services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance or emergency medical services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning .....	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal .....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance .....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling .....	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up .....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage .....	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Power (electric and/or gas) utility.....	1	2	3	4	5
Utility billing.....	1	2	3	4	5
XYZ parks .....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning and zoning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control.....	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development .....	1	2	3	4	5
Health services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services .....	1	2	3	4	5
Cable television.....	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations).....	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts.....	1	2	3	4	5
ABC open space.....	1	2	3	4	5
XYZ-sponsored special events .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall customer service by ABC employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5

## 11. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The XYZ of ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government .....	1	2	3	4	5

## 12. Please rate the following categories of ABC government performance:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The value of services for the taxes paid to ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that ABC is taking .....	1	2	3	4	5
The job ABC government does at welcoming citizen involvement .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall confidence in ABC government.....	1	2	3	4	5
Generally acting in the best interest of the community .....	1	2	3	4	5
Being honest.....	1	2	3	4	5
Treating all residents fairly .....	1	2	3	4	5

**13. Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the ABC community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:**

	<i>Essential</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Not at all important</i>
Overall feeling of safety in ABC.....	1	2	3	4
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit.....	1	2	3	4
Quality of overall natural environment in ABC .....	1	2	3	4
Overall “built environment” of ABC (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems) .....	1	2	3	4
Health and wellness opportunities in ABC .....	1	2	3	4
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment.....	1	2	3	4
Overall economic health of ABC.....	1	2	3	4
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4

**xx. Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1 Custom Question #1**

- Scale point 1       Scale point 2       Scale point 3       Scale point 4       Scale point 5

**xx. Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2 Custom Question #2**

- Scale point 1       Scale point 2       Scale point 3       Scale point 4       Scale point 5

**xx. Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3 Custom Question #3**

- Scale point 1       Scale point 2       Scale point 3       Scale point 4       Scale point 5

**xx. OPTIONAL [See Worksheets for details and price of this option] Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question Open-Ended Question**

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# The XYZ of ABC 2016 Citizen Survey

**Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.**

**D1. How often, if at all, do you do each of the following, considering all of the times you could?**

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Always</i>
Recycle at home .....	1	2	3	4	5
Purchase goods or services from a business located in ABC .....	1	2	3	4	5
Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day .....	1	2	3	4	5
Participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity .....	1	2	3	4	5
Read or watch local news (via television, paper, computer, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Vote in local elections.....	1	2	3	4	5

**D2. Would you say that in general your health is:**

- Excellent     
  Very good     
  Good     
  Fair     
  Poor

**D3. What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:**

- Very positive     
  Somewhat positive     
  Neutral     
  Somewhat negative     
  Very negative

**D4. What is your employment status?**

- Working full time for pay  
 Working part time for pay  
 Unemployed, looking for paid work  
 Unemployed, not looking for paid work  
 Fully retired

**D5. Do you work inside the boundaries of ABC?**

- Yes, outside the home  
 Yes, from home  
 No

**D6. How many years have you lived in ABC?**

- Less than 2 years     
  11-20 years  
 2-5 years     
  More than 20 years  
 6-10 years

**D7. Which best describes the building you live in?**

- One family house detached from any other houses  
 Building with two or more homes (duplex, townhome, apartment or condominium)  
 Mobile home  
 Other

**D8. Is this house, apartment or mobile home...**

- Rented  
 Owned

**D9. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?**

- Less than \$300 per month  
 \$300 to \$599 per month  
 \$600 to \$999 per month  
 \$1,000 to \$1,499 per month  
 \$1,500 to \$2,499 per month  
 \$2,500 or more per month

**D10. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?**

- No     
  Yes

**D11. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?**

- No     
  Yes

**D12. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)**

- Less than \$25,000  
 \$25,000 to \$49,999  
 \$50,000 to \$99,999  
 \$100,000 to \$149,999  
 \$150,000 or more

**Please respond to both questions D13 and D14:**

**D13. Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?**

- No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino  
 Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino

**D14. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.)**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander  
 Black or African American  
 White  
 Other

**D15. In which category is your age?**

- 18-24 years     
  55-64 years  
 25-34 years     
  65-74 years  
 35-44 years     
  75 years or older  
 45-54 years

**D16. What is your sex?**

- Female     
  Male

**D17. Do you consider a cell phone or land line your primary telephone number?**

- Cell     
  Land line     
  Both

**Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the postage-paid envelope to: National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 549, Belle Mead, NJ 08502**



## Planning for the future shouldn't be guesswork. Use The NCS™ for a data-based picture of community needs and perspectives.

Understanding the needs of your community is crucial to ensuring resident satisfaction and high livability standards. Getting a clear and accurate picture from the residents themselves is the best way to accomplish this.

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is the gold standard in community assessments — in fact, we wrote the book on citizen surveys. The NCS is tried and trusted and provides a broad but accurate picture of community quality and resident perspectives about local government services, policies and management. The NCS uses scientific survey methods to guarantee valid findings and compare local results with benchmarks compiled from surveys conducted across the U.S.

Our unique community livability framework facilitates connections among different groups in your community by providing valuable insight into shared community needs.

The NCS was developed by experts to produce clear, unbiased and accurate results that can be used as the basis for action. The NCS can be tailored to your specific needs with custom questions to best fit your community's topical issues and comparisons to the opinions of residents in communities across the country to help interpret results.

Visit [www.n-r-c.com/thencs](http://www.n-r-c.com/thencs) to learn more about The NCS.

City managers and local government leaders across the nation already use The NCS for:

**Strategic  
planning**

**Program  
and capital  
investment**

**Budgeting**

**Performance  
monitoring**

**Communications**

**Fundraising**



National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) is the leading public-sector research firm with over 20 years of experience in survey research for government. Our skilled team of researchers supports cities, counties, foundations and nonprofit organizations in using research to move communities forward. Visit [www.n-r-c.com](http://www.n-r-c.com) to learn how our suite of surveys — The NCS™, The NES™, The NBS™ and CASOA™ — provide a complete picture of your community.



The NCS is presented by National Research Center, Inc. in collaboration with ICMA.



## THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ NEXT

BUILDING UPON YEARS OF RESEARCH ON CITIZEN SURVEYS AND COMMUNITY LIVABILITY, NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER, INC. IS PROUD TO PRESENT THE NCS™ *NEXT*.

THE NCS NEXT INCORPORATES ALL OF THE BEST FEATURES OF THE NCS INTO A SUITE OF PRODUCTS TO HELP YOU DISCOVER WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY.

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) was among the first scientific surveys to gather resident opinion on a range of community issues, and has been used by more than 350 unique jurisdictions in 44 states. Communities using The NCS have reported that the tool improved service delivery, strengthened communications with community stakeholders and identified clear priorities for use in strategic planning and budget setting. The NCS is the only citizen survey tool endorsed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the National League of Cities (NLC).

The NCS **Next** begins with a customizable survey of questions relevant to your community. The survey measures public opinion in eight key areas of community livability. In each domain, residents report their perceptions about the quality of their community and related services, as well as their own engagement within the community.

The NCS **Next** includes:

- Multiple reports to communicate results in a way that enables every audience – staff, elected officials, business owners, and residents – to quickly find the information they need and want
- Surveys completed by a representative cross-section of the population
- Multiple contacts with residents to ensure adequate response rates





- Benchmarking to compare local results to those of similar communities
- Customized questions and reporting options to address specific needs

The NCS **Next** also includes access to The NCS Toolkits, a suite of materials and workshops that can provide you with additional insights and help you create an action plan that takes your community to the next level.

## DISCOVER WHAT'S *NEXT* FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300  
Boulder, Colorado 80301



phone 303.444.7863

fax 303.444.1145

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## THE NCS PRICING

### THE NCS BASIC SERVICE INCLUDES:

- Full report of results, plus multiple layers of reporting to meet the needs of different stakeholders
- Responses weighted to reflect characteristics of your entire community
- Complimentary educational webinar: Inspire creative decision-making with the 6 E's of Action
- Benchmarking against more than 500 citizen survey results
- Tracking of results and response rates by geographic area
- Opt-in web survey included in addition to the scientific, random-sampled survey

### FIRST STEP: CHOOSE YOUR BASIC SERVICE COLLECTION METHOD

	<b>Full price</b>	<b>Discounted price*</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Primarily by mail (most common choice); the mailed survey is also available online at no added cost.	\$15,400	\$13,860	Includes a sample size of 1,500 households
Web only, with mail invitations (using a scientific sample)	\$11,900	\$10,710	Includes a sample size of 1,800 households
Web only, all residents are eligible, you promote participation (non-scientific)	\$7,650	\$6,885	Opt in; no mailed or other individual invitations to participate

### SECOND STEP: CHOOSE YOUR ADD-ON OPTIONS

	<b>Full price</b>	<b>Discounted price*</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Larger sample size!	Varies	Varies	See below for example sample sizes
Reminder postcard (4th mailing)	Varies	Varies	See below for example sample sizes
Demographic Subgroup Comparison Report	\$900	\$810	Compare results by population demographics
Geographic Subgroup Comparison Report	\$900	\$810	Compare results by geographic area
Spanish	\$750	\$675	Respondents can complete the survey online in Spanish
Custom Benchmark Comparisons	\$1050	\$945	Benchmark results against communities meeting specific criteria
One open-ended question	\$1,950	\$1,755	Includes one open-ended question added to survey. Responses will be categorized and reported in a table under separate cover, accompanied by a complete list of verbatim responses.
In-person presentation	\$3,500	\$3,150	Assumes location within 50 miles of int'l airport
Next steps workshop	\$4,350	\$3,915	Assumes location within 50 miles of int'l airport
Compare prior results	\$2,000	\$1,800	Compare current results to those of a previous (non-NCS) survey

## EXAMPLE SAMPLE SIZES

	<b>Regular mailing (3 contacts)</b>		<b>Reminder postcard (4th contact)</b>	
	Full Price	Discounted Price*	Full Price	Discounted Price*
+0	–	–	\$990	\$891
+300 (1,800 total)	\$1,430	\$1,287	\$1,120	\$1,008
+700 (2,200 total)	\$3,100	\$2,790	\$1,310	\$1,179
+1,100 (2,600 total)	\$4,770	\$4,293	\$1,490	\$1,341
+1,500 (3,000 total)	\$6,440	\$5,796	\$1,680	\$1,512

\*Please note all prices are subject to change.

\*You are eligible for a 10% discount on The NCS, The NES, The NBS or CASOA if you:

- Have conducted any of these surveys in the past

- Are an ICMA member, work with an ICMA CMS partner or use ICMA Insights
- Are an NLC member
- Are an Association of Government Accountants member

Not sure if you're eligible? Just give us a call!

### CANCELLATION POLICY

We will withhold an administrative fee of \$700 from any refund for a cancellation before hours/costs are expended; once the project work has begun and money has been spent (hours or hard costs), we're unable to make a refund.

**DON'T SEE WHAT YOU NEED? CONTACT US TODAY FOR ADDITIONAL OPTIONS!**

\* Please note all prices subject to change.

2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300  
Boulder, Colorado 80301



phone 303.444.7863

fax 303.444.1145

Join our mailing list

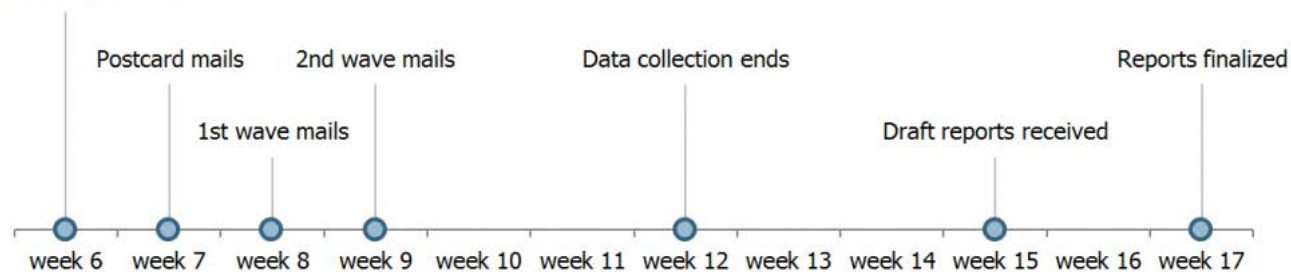
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## THE NCS TIMELINE

We have created the following sample timeline for a typical administration of The NCS. Should you prefer to have additional time for survey development, extend data collection or shift the delivery of the final reports – or any other revisions – we will work closely with you to design a timeline that meets your needs.

### Finalize survey materials



### Preparing for the Survey

The NCS survey process is initiated upon receipt of your first payment	week 1
NRC emails you information to customize The NCS	week 1
Due to NRC: Selection of add-on options	week 3
Due to NRC: Drafts of the optional custom questions to be included in the survey	week 3
Due to NRC: Zip code information and GIS boundary data	week 4
Due to NRC: Additional payment for add-on options	week 5
NRC finalizes the survey instrument and mailing materials and sends pdf samples for your records	week 6

NRC generates the sample of households in your community	weeks 5-6
NRC prints materials and prepares mailings	week 6
Due to NRC: Selection of custom benchmark profile(s) (if custom benchmark add-on selected)	week 6
<b>Conducting the survey</b>	
Survey materials are mailed	weeks 7 to 9
Prenotification postcards sent	week 7
1st wave of surveys sent	week 8
2nd wave of surveys sent	week 9
Data collection: surveys received and processed for your community	weeks 8-12
Due to NRC: Final count of returned postcards	week 12
Survey analysis and report writing	weeks 12-14
NRC emails draft report (in PDF format) to you along with invoice for balance due on The NCS Basic Service and any additional add-on options	week 15
Due to NRC: community feedback on the draft report (most final reports are identical to the draft reports, except being labeled as final instead of draft)	week 16
NRC emails final report and data file to you	week 17

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**THE NCS™**  
The National Citizen Survey™

## Carlton, IA

Sample Community Livability Report

2015



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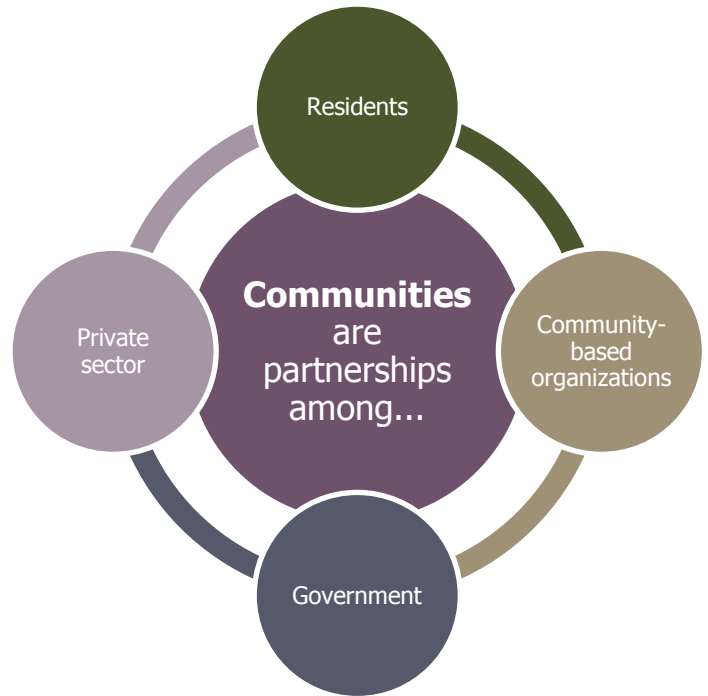


# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Carlton. The phrase “livable community” is used here to evoke a place that is not simply habitable but that is desirable. It is not only where people do live, but where they want to live.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) and across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement).

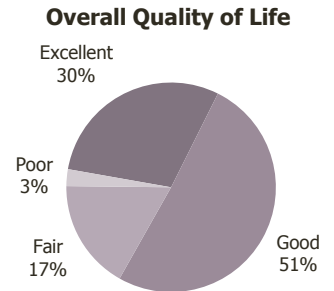
The *Community Livability Report* provides the opinions of a representative sample of 1,200 residents of the City of Carlton. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample (382 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Carlton

Most residents rated the quality of life in Carlton as “excellent” or “good,” which was similar to ratings in other communities across the U.S.

Shown below are the eight facets of community. The color of each community facet summarizes how residents rated it across the three sections of the survey that represent the pillars of a community – Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation. When most ratings across the three pillars were higher than the benchmark, the color for that facet is the darkest shade; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest shade. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

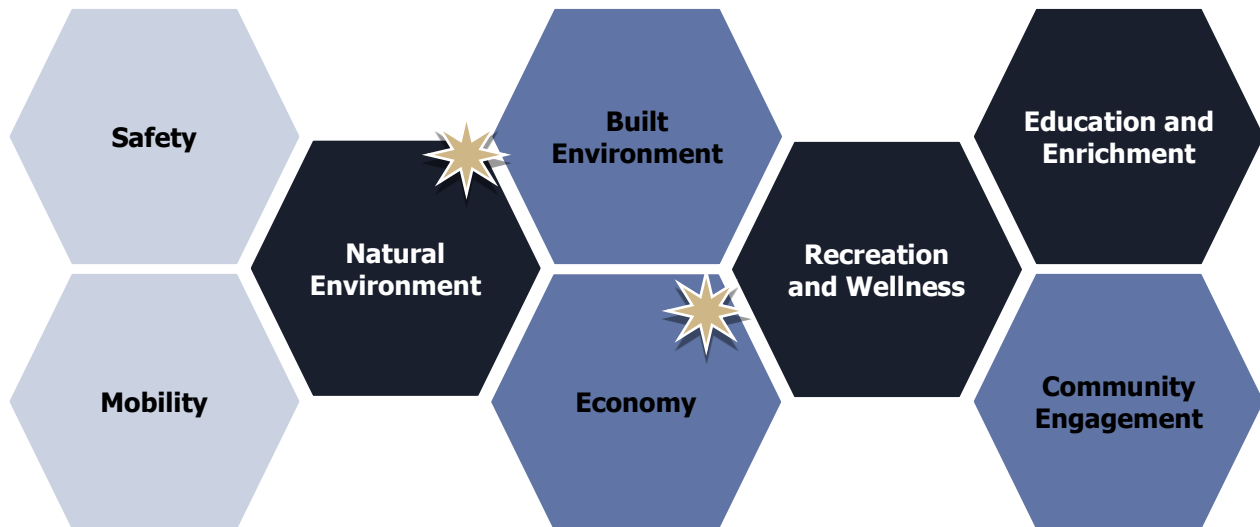


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents’ overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life, Natural Environment and Economy, as the most central to what makes Carlton their home. It is noteworthy that Carlton residents gave favorable ratings to most aspects of livability, especially in the areas of Safety and Recreation and Wellness. This overview of the key aspects of community quality provides a quick summary of where residents see exceptionally strong performance and where performance offers the greatest opportunity for improvement. Linking quality to importance offers community members and leaders a view into the characteristics of the community that matter most and that seem to be working best.

Details that support these findings are contained in the remainder of this Livability Report, starting with the ratings for Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation and ending with results for Carlton’s unique questions.

## Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark
- Benchmark comparison not available
- ★ Most important to quality of life



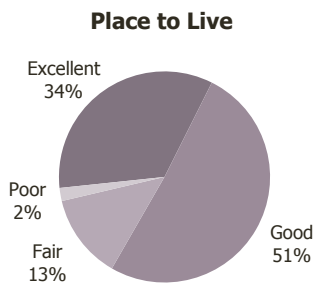
# Community Characteristics

*What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?*

Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Carlton, 80% of residents rated their overall quality of life as “excellent” or “good” while only 3% of respondents felt they had a “poor” quality of life. Respondents’ ratings of quality of life in Carlton were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

In addition to rating their overall quality of life, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Carlton as a place to live, raise children and retire, as well as their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Carlton and its overall appearance. Carlton as a place to live was rated the most positively with 85% of respondents rating this aspect of the community as “excellent” or “good;” these ratings were similar to other communities in the U.S. While slightly fewer respondents in Carlton rated the overall image or reputation of Carlton and the overall appearance of Carlton positively (about 70% “excellent” or “good”), these aspects of the community were higher in Carlton than in other communities across the nation.

Delving deeper into Community Quality, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight dimensions of Community Livability. Carlton performed strongly in the areas of the Natural Environment and Education and Enrichment. For example, aspects of the Natural Environment (including the overall natural environment, air quality and cleanliness) were rated as “excellent” or “good” by at least 7 in 10 respondents and all three aspects received ratings higher than the national benchmark.

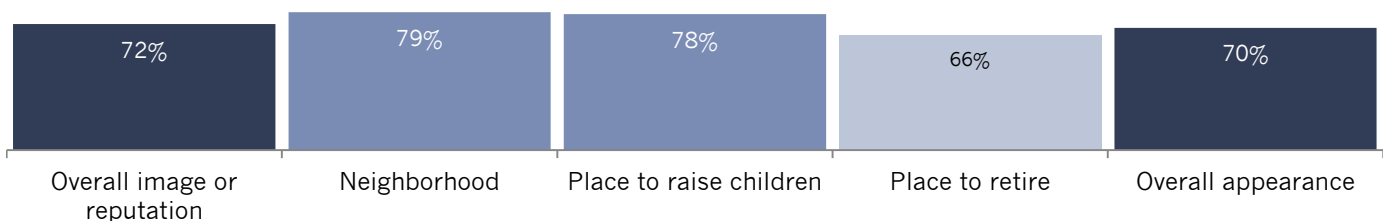


Challenges for Carlton may lie in the areas of Safety and the Built Environment. About two-thirds of respondents rated the overall feeling of safety in Carlton as “excellent” or “good,” which was lower than the national benchmark. While the majority of respondents felt “very” or “somewhat” safe in their neighborhood (78%), these ratings were lower in Carlton than in other communities in the U.S.

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available



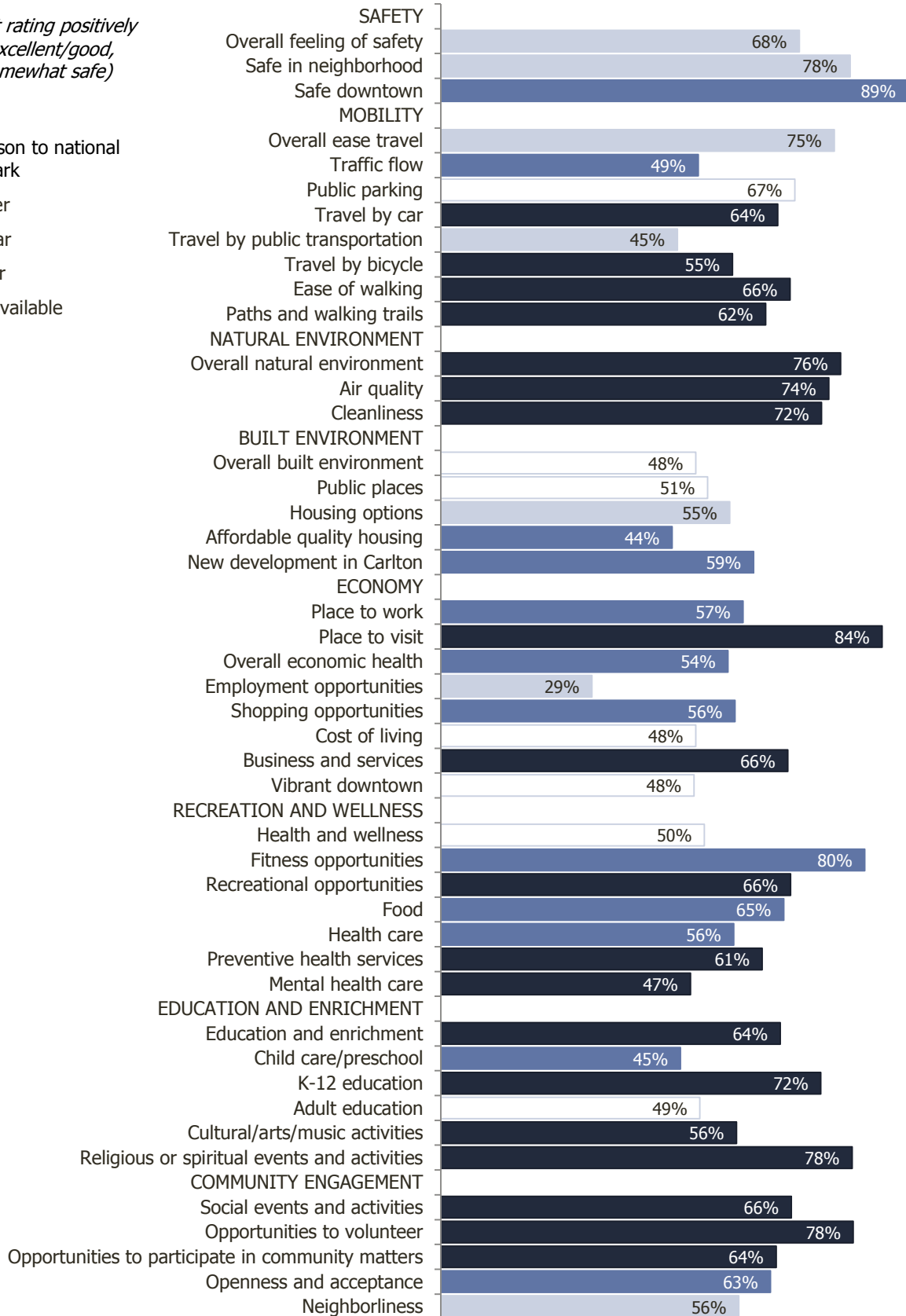
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

*Percent rating positively  
(e.g., excellent/good,  
very/somewhat safe)*

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



# Governance

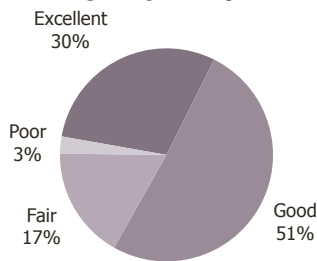
*How well does the government of Carlton meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of services provided by Carlton as well as the manner in which these services are provided are key components of how residents rate their quality of life. About 8 in 10 survey respondents rated the overall quality of services provided by Carlton as “excellent” or “good” (about half as many felt this way about the services provided by the federal government). Ratings for the services provided by Carlton were higher than the benchmark when compared to other communities in the U.S.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Carlton’s leadership and governance. Overall, about half of respondents felt the City did an “excellent” or “good” job of welcoming citizen involvement, acting in the best interest of Carlton and treating all residents fairly. While about 60% of respondents were pleased with the overall direction of Carlton, fewer (51%) had confidence in the government of Carlton. About 8 in 10 survey respondents felt City employees provided “excellent” or “good” customer service, a rating that was higher in Carlton when compared to its national peers.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Carlton. Carlton performed well in the areas of Safety, Natural Environment and Recreation and Wellness. Of the seven Safety services rated, six were rated higher the national benchmark: fire, ambulance/EMS, police, fire prevention, crime prevention and emergency preparedness. Ratings for services related to the Natural Environment faired similarly well and all four Recreation and Wellness services were rated higher in Carlton when compared to other communities across the nation.

**Overall Quality of City Services**

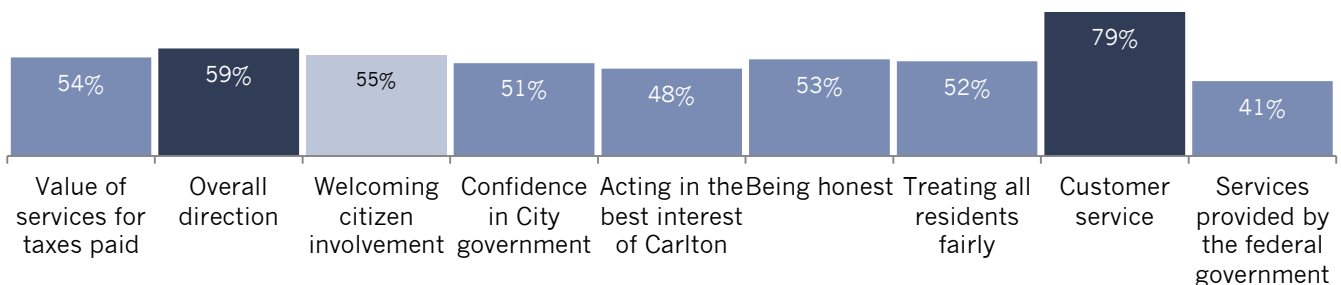


Carlton may face some challenges in the areas of Mobility and the Built Environment. Overall, ratings for Mobility and Built Environment tended to be rated lower when compared to other services provided by the City; between half to three-quarters of respondents rated these services as “excellent” or “good.”

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available



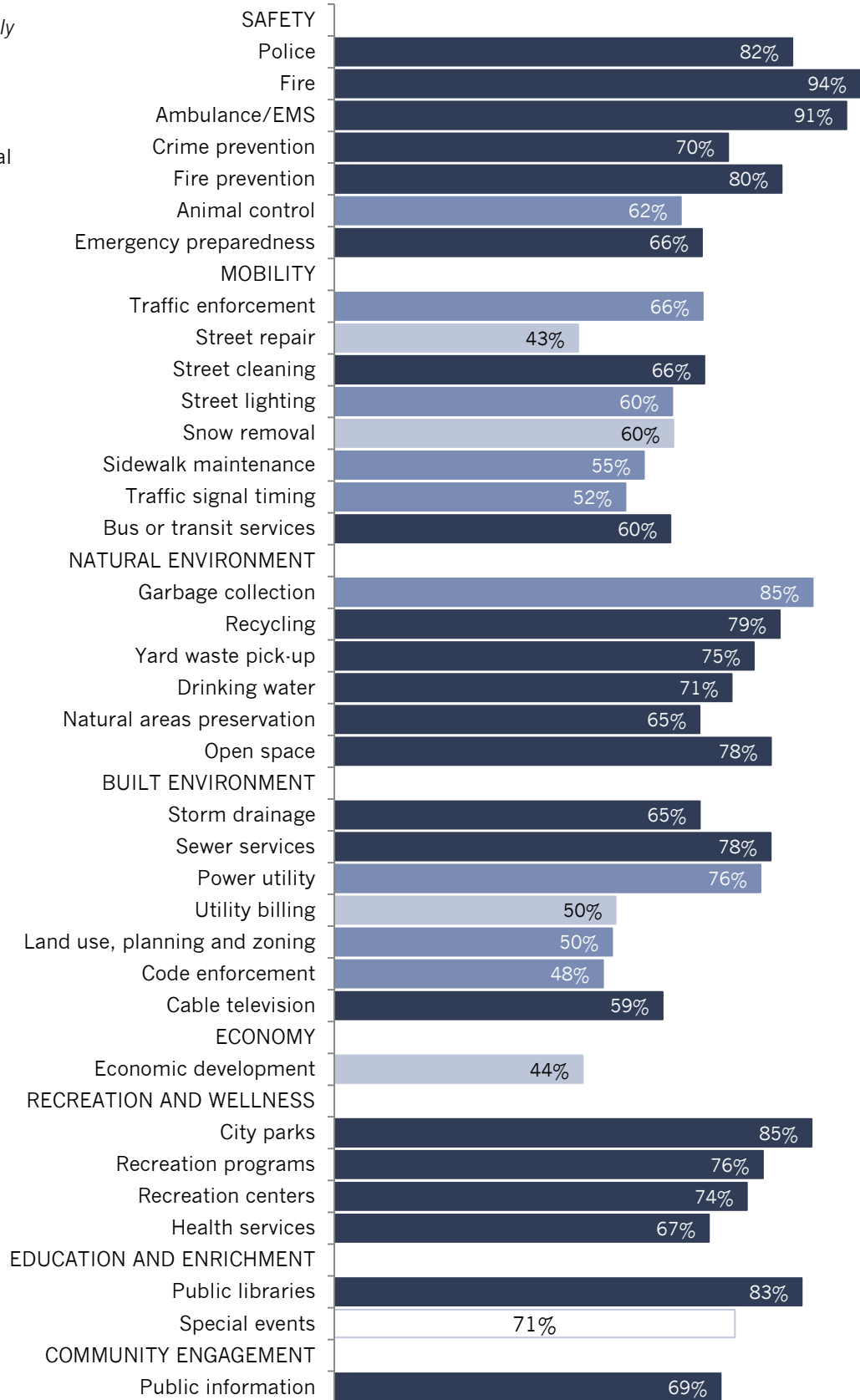
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

Percent rating positively  
(e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



# Participation

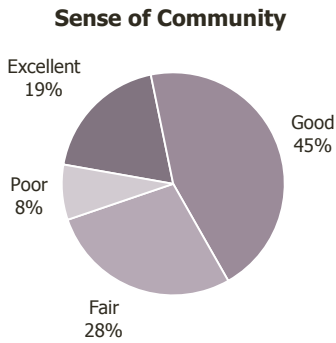
## *Are the residents of Carlton connected to the community and each other?*

The sense of community in Carlton was similar to other communities across the nation with about two-thirds of survey respondents rating it as “excellent” or “good.” About three-quarters of respondents were “very” or “somewhat” likely to recommend living in Carlton to someone who asks (similar to the national benchmark) and to remain in Carlton for the next five years (higher than the national benchmark). Also, about half of respondents had reached out to the City for help or information, a proportion that was lower in Carlton than in its national peers.

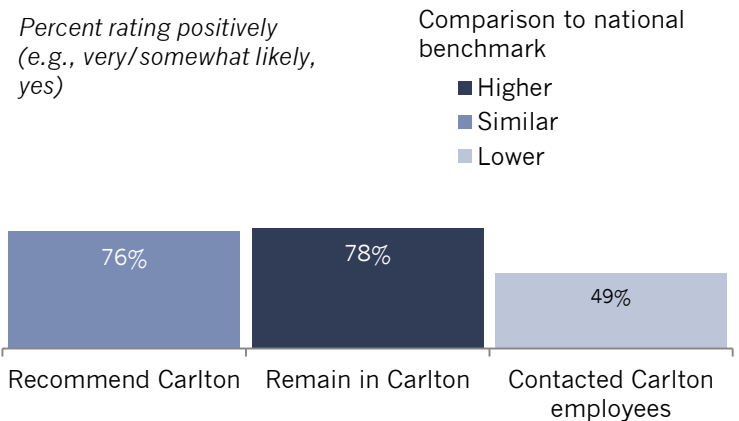
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors that respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, for the 18 activities for which benchmark comparisons were available, Carlton residents tended to participate in these various activities at rates similar to or lower than residents in other communities across the country.

In the area of Community Engagement, about one-quarter of respondents had attended or watched a local public meeting, a proportion that was higher in Carlton than in other communities. However, fewer respondents in Carlton than in other U.S. communities had participated in other Community Engagement activities such as volunteering, talking with neighbors or voting in local elections.

While the proportion of residents who had visited a City park was similar to that of other communities (about 30%), compared to the national benchmark fewer residents in Carlton took advantage of other Recreation and Wellness activities such as using recreation centers (15% of respondents) or public libraries (21%). The percent of Carlton residents who reported themselves as being in “excellent” or “very good” health (69%) was similar to the national benchmark.



Survey respondents exhibited lower than average engagement in the area of the Natural Environment. Less than 6 in 10 respondents “sometimes” or “always” recycled at home, a rate that was lower in Carlton than in other communities across the nation. About one-third of respondents had conserved water or made their homes more energy efficient in the past 12 months; benchmark comparisons for these two activities were not available.



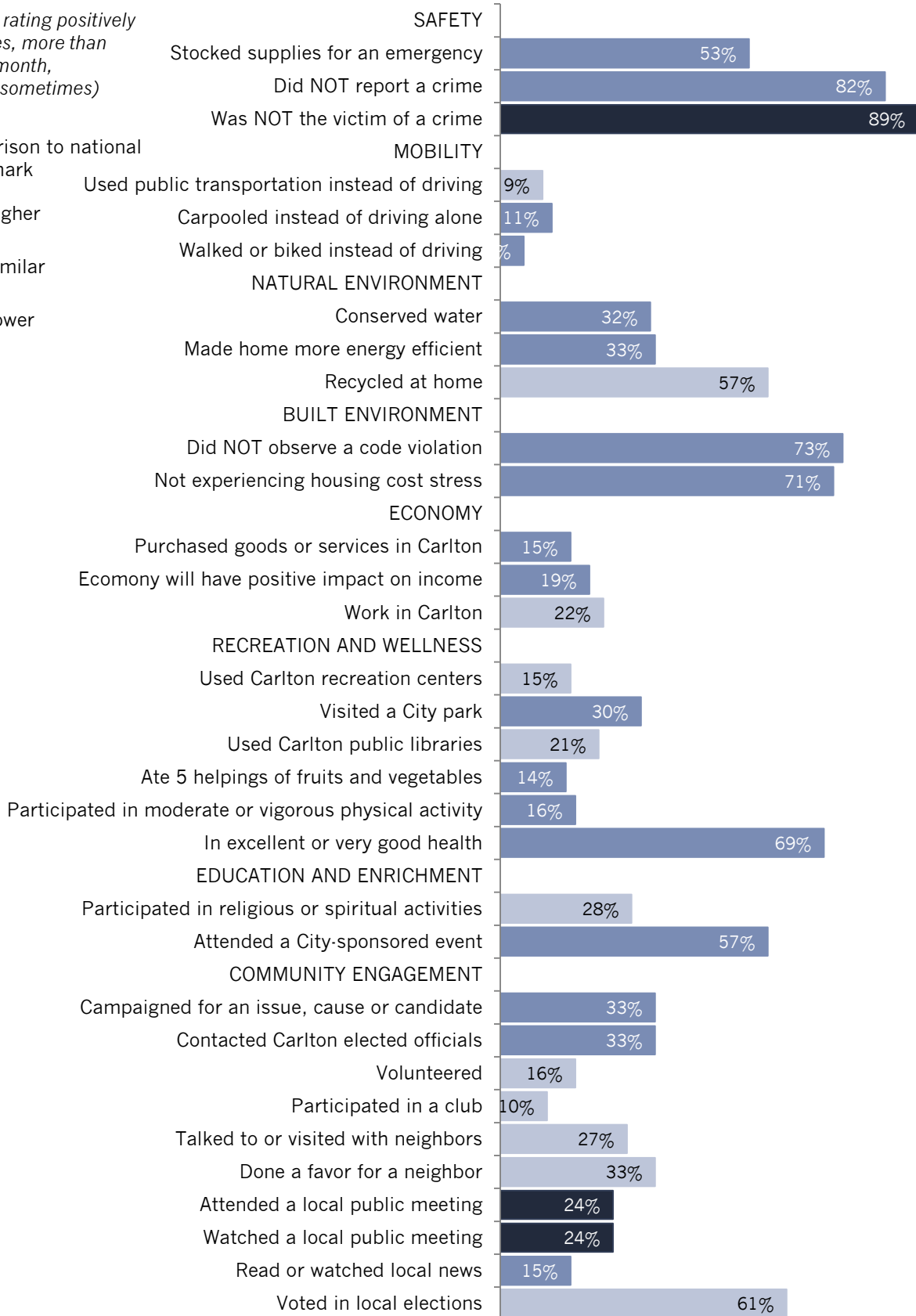
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

Percent rating positively  
(e.g., yes, more than  
once a month,  
always/sometimes)

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



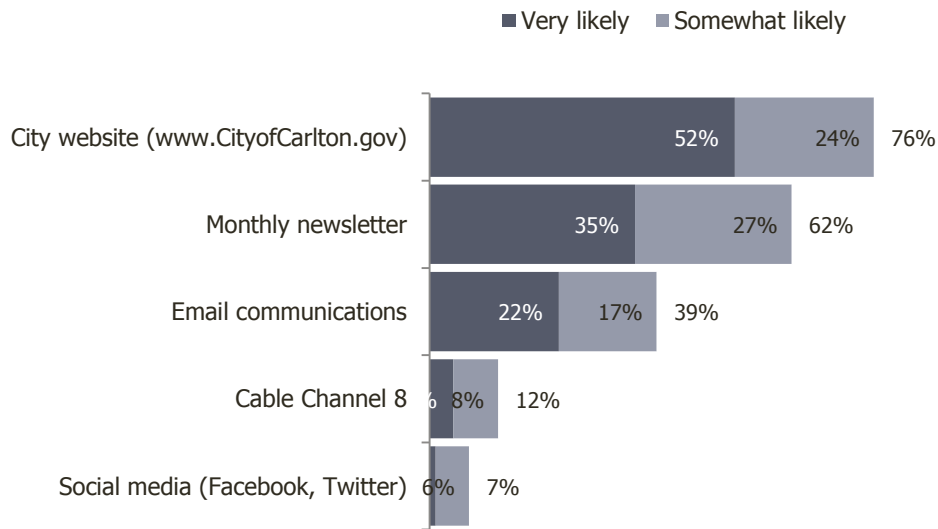


# Special Topics

The City of Carlton included a question of special interest on The NCS. The City was interested in knowing which information sources residents would be the most likely to use. Overall, residents expressed strong preferences for the City’s website and monthly newsletter, while few would use social media to find information about the City.

Figure 4: Question 13a

*How likely or unlikely are you to use each of the following sources to find information about the City, its services, programs and events?*



# Conclusions

## **The Natural Environment is an asset of Carlton.**

The overall natural environment, air quality and cleanliness of Carlton were rated as “excellent” or “good” by at least 7 in 10 respondents and all three aspects received ratings higher than the national benchmark. Between 65% and 85% of respondents rated recycling, open space, yard waste pick-up, drinking water and preservation of natural areas as “excellent” or “good” and all were higher than the national benchmark. However, less than 6 in 10 respondents “sometimes” or “always” recycled at home, a rate that was lower in Carlton than in other communities across the nation, and only one-third of respondents had conserved water or made their homes more energy efficient in the past 12 months.

## **Despite excellent Safety services and low crime victimization, residents do not feel safe.**

Of the seven Safety services rated, six were rated higher the national benchmark: fire, ambulance/EMS, police, fire prevention, crime prevention and emergency preparedness. About 1 in 10 respondents had been the victim of a crime (which was lower in Carlton when compared to other communities) and 82% had reported a crime to police (which was similar in Carlton when compared to other communities). While the majority of respondents felt “very” or “somewhat” safe in their neighborhood (78%), this rating was lower in Carlton than in other communities in the U.S. The overall feeling of safety was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 68% of respondents and was lower than the national benchmark.

## **Residents appreciate Carlton’s great Community Engagement opportunities.**

Social events and activities, opportunities to volunteer and opportunities to participate in community matters received ratings higher than the national benchmark, as did the City’s public information services. While higher proportions of residents in Carlton reported having attended or watched a local public meeting when compared to other communities across the country, fewer had volunteered, participated in a club, or voted in local elections. Both the sense of community and the openness and acceptance of people of diverse backgrounds were rated similar to the national benchmark. Compared to other communities in the U.S., Carlton residents were less likely to have talked or visited with neighbors or done a favor for a neighbor; this may account for the neighborliness of Carlton as being rated lower in Carlton than in other communities.

Custom Questions for survey – can choose up to 3 questions with multiple choice responses.

**Custom Question Option #1**

What do you believe the City’s priorities should be? Rank in order of importance with highest importance being 1 and lowest importance being 5.

- Public Safety (Police and Fire Services)
- Traffic improvements
- Economic Development – Business retention or attraction
- Recreational amenities
- Create a downtown waterfront district and define city identity

**Custom Question Option #2**

Prioritize the following in the order you would be most willing to fund with additional taxes. Rank in order of importance with 1 being of highest priority to fund with additional taxes and 5 being of lowest priority to fund with additional taxes. If you would not be willing to fund any items, please leave blank.

- Fire Station Construction – Goal of stand-alone fire facility for current/future needs
- Police/Jail Facility Construction – Goal of stand-alone police facility to meet current/future needs
- Combined Police/Fire Station – Goal of building combined public safety facility (instead of separate police and fire stations to address current/future needs)
- Waterfront Public Access Improvements – Goal of community recreation and tourism
- Civic Center Office and Community Center – Goal of improved community facilities and centralized city services

**Custom Question Option #3**

How likely are you to use each of the following sources to find information about the City, its services, programs and events?

- City website
- Mailed newsletter or flyer
- Email communications
- City cable channel
- Social media