

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
REQUEST FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACTION
For Inclusion on Board Agenda

Resolution or Ordinance (Blue) _____ *Waiver of First Requested*
X Recommendations of Boards, Commissions & Committees (Green)
Other Business (Pink)

TO: PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FROM: Community Relations Committee

DATE: July 13, 2016 (B of T) Date: July 21, 2016

TITLE: National Citizen Survey Recommendation

BACKGROUND/POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Attached please find information regarding a recommendation from the Community Relations Committee to contract the National Research Center to conduct a Village wide resident survey.

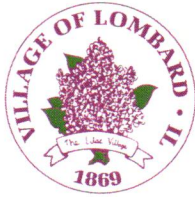
The Community Relations Committee is recommending the approval of the proposed survey package as part of the Village's Strategic Plan goal of implementing a Village wide survey.

Please place this item on the July 21, 2016 Board of Trustees consent agenda.

Review (as necessary):

Village Attorney X _____ Date _____
Finance Director X _____ Date _____
Village Manager X *[Signature]* _____ Date 7/14/16

NOTE: All materials must be submitted to and approved by the Village Manager's Office by 12:00 noon, Wednesday, prior to the Agenda Distribution.



#150372

MEMORANDUM

TO: Village Board of Trustees

FROM: Community Relations Committee

DATE: July 21, 2016

SUBJECT: Recommendation of National Citizen Survey

The Community Relations Committee was asked to review options for implementation of a community survey method. A community survey will be used to assess public feedback regarding the Village's level of service, gauge priorities of Lombard residents, support current Village goals, and realign future goals. Upon review and discussion, the Community Relations Committee recommends approval of the National Citizen Survey with an expanded sample size to complete a community survey.

The Community Relations Committee and Village staff researched and considered several options for completion of a community survey. Online surveys, while cost effective, are considered biased due to computer access restrictions. An alternative survey option is to hire a marketing firm to develop a survey or to develop and implement a survey internally. While these options are available, their scope is limited due to their lack of comparable data from other municipalities and the inability to evaluate the responses against any benchmarks. Further, these options would also require the Village to develop questions and administer the survey, which could potentially impact the level of bias in the data and responses.

Staff has recommended, and the Community Relations Committee has accepted, utilizing the National Citizen Survey (NCS), a premier survey instrument that was collaboratively developed between the International City and County Management Association (ICMA) and the National Research Center (NRC.) The NCS has been conducted in over 500 cities nationwide, in 45 states, and was among the first scientific surveys to gather resident opinion on a range of community issues.

The National Citizen Survey (The NCS) comes highly recommended due to its detailed reports that are based in scientific surveys. The survey will be administered by mail to a sample size of 1,500 residences, and will return 300-500 responses (20-25%). The NCS ensures accuracy with its question format, with a margin of error of +/-5%. This level is considered to produce scientifically accurate results. Additional survey options are available for additional costs, including an increased sample size from 1,500 to 3,000 residents and an online version of the survey that allows all residents to give their feedback. (The online survey report is separate from the NCS's scientific survey results.)

The NCS includes an expertly developed list of questions that have a proven successful track record. It is also customizable to best fit Lombard's needs, and includes an option to create custom questions that are specific to the Lombard community. The survey contains evaluative

questions about the community and local governmental services, as well as community participation, local policies, and demographics.

Surveys are completed by a representative cross-section of the population, thus ensuring neutrality on who receives the survey. Multiple attempts to contact residents will help to ensure adequate response rates. The information will be collected, analyzed, and presented by National Research Center, and will allow Lombard to remain neutral. Perhaps one of the most important features of the NCS is that collected data will be compared with communities that are similar in size and demographics to that of Lombard, and will provide insight via comparison. The survey package would include multiple reports to communicate results to a variety of audiences.

It is at the recommendation of the Community Relations Committee to contract National Citizen Survey to conduct a non-biased, scientifically based, community-wide survey to gain knowledge about resident feedback and concerns. The standard package begins at \$13,860 and includes 1,500 residence surveys and general benchmark data. In order to assess the needs of a large sample size, the Community Relations Committee recommends adding an increased sample size, to bring about a better margin of error for an additional \$5,696. Additional custom benchmark data that provides comparison of Lombard against communities meeting specific criteria would be a cost of \$945. The total cost of the standard survey including the increased sample size and custom benchmark comparisons would be \$20,601. This includes a 10% discount for ICMA members. If approved, the Community Relations Committee will be tasked with developing the content of the survey.

All 2016 pricing listed below includes a 10% ICMA member discount.

The NCS™ Basic Service

Instrument development; assistance with crafting custom questions; three part mailing of 1,500 pieces each (pre-notification postcard, and two mailings of the five-page survey with cover letters and postage-paid return envelope), all survey recipients will have the option to complete the survey online if they prefer, additional community-wide opt-in Web survey; data entry and analysis of returned surveys; draft reports for review; electronic final reports that include national benchmark comparisons, analysis and detailed methods; technical assistance in understanding survey results via phone and email with key staff for The NCS; one-hour telephone debrief with The NCS staff. About 400 total returned, ±5% MOE \$13,860

Increased Sample Size

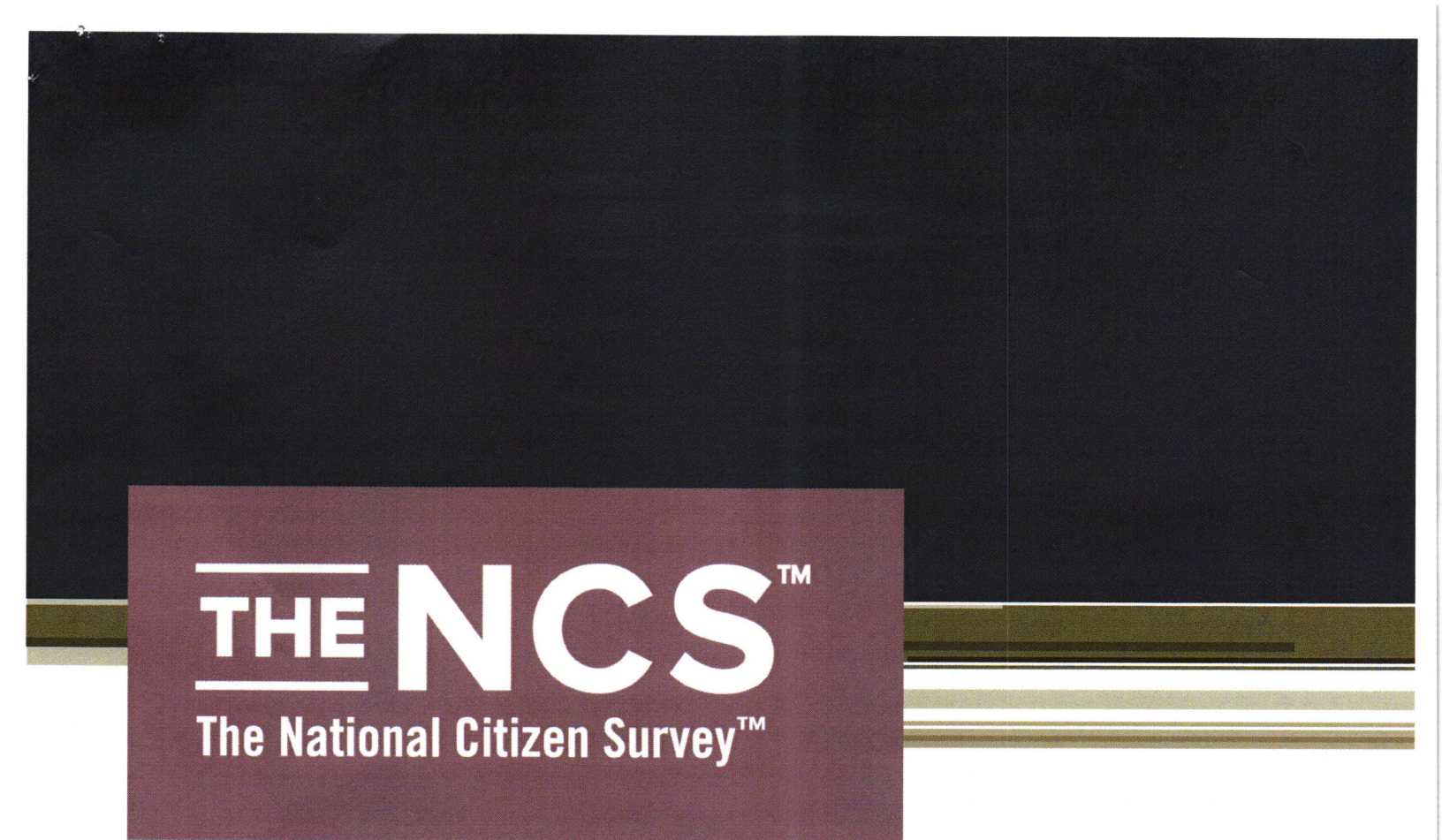
NRC recommends the Village consider increasing the sample to bring about a better margin of error (MOE). We have provided an option for increasing the sample size with an estimated MOE based on a 30% response rate. 1,500 additional surveys (3,000 total). About 900 total returned, ±3% MOE.....\$ 5,796

Custom Benchmark Comparisons

Results will be compared against communities meeting specific criteria such as all jurisdictions in a region or population range among other factors. Tables showing the responses will be included..... \$945

Total Cost to Lombard (Basic Service plus add-on options listed above)

To enroll in The NCS™ the initial payment of \$9,500 is due upon project initiation, which will be applied to the total cost of the project \$20,601

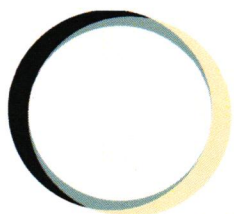


THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Carlton, IA

Sample Community Livability Report

2015



NRC
National Research Center Inc

2955 Valmont Road Suite 300
Boulder, Colorado 80301
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
icma.org • 800-745-8780

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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).

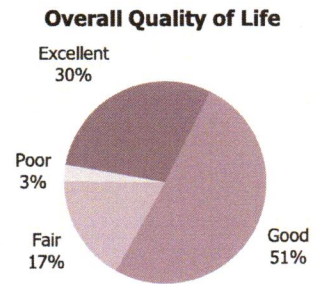
The *Community Livability Report* provides the opinions of a representative sample of 1,200 residents of the City of Carlton. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample (382 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical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

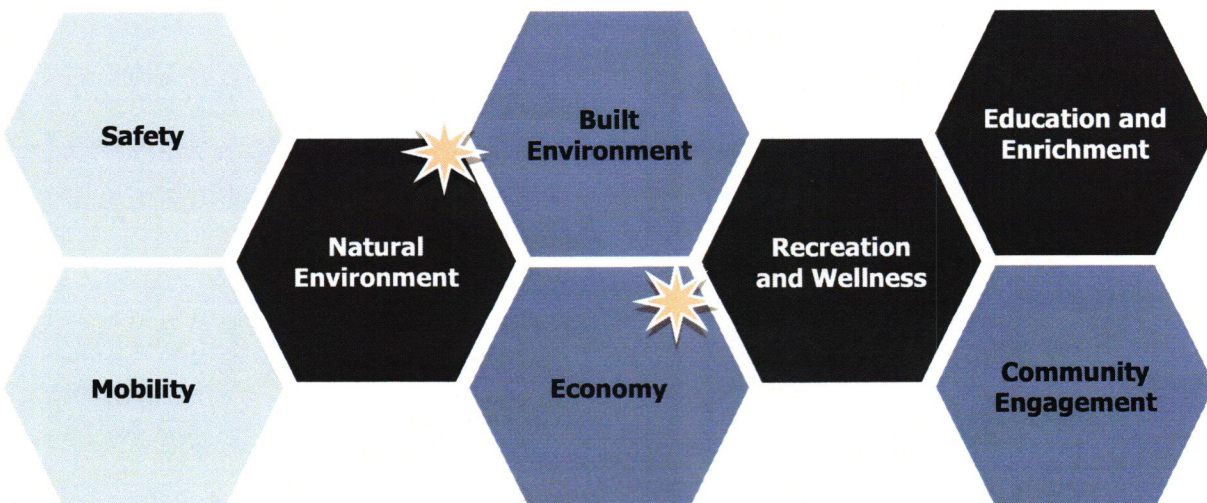


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents’ overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life, Natural Environment and Economy, as the most central to what makes Carlton 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



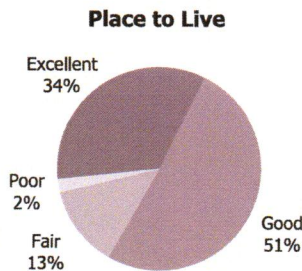
Community Characteristics

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.

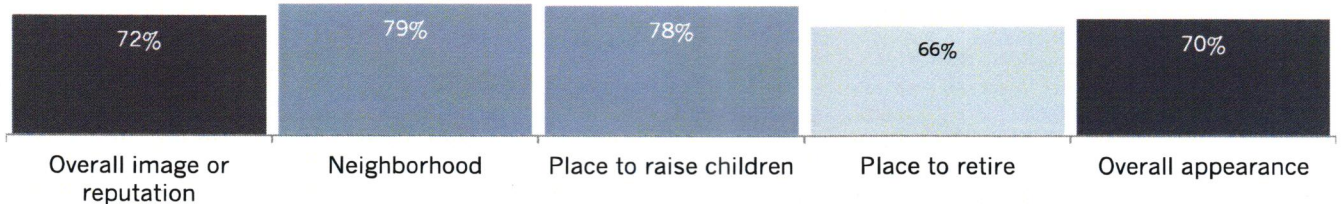


Challenges for Carlton may lie in the areas of Safety and the Built Environment. About two-thirds of respondents rated the overall feeling of safety in Carlton as “excellent” or “good,” which was lower than the national benchmark. While the majority of respondents felt “very” or “somewhat” safe in their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

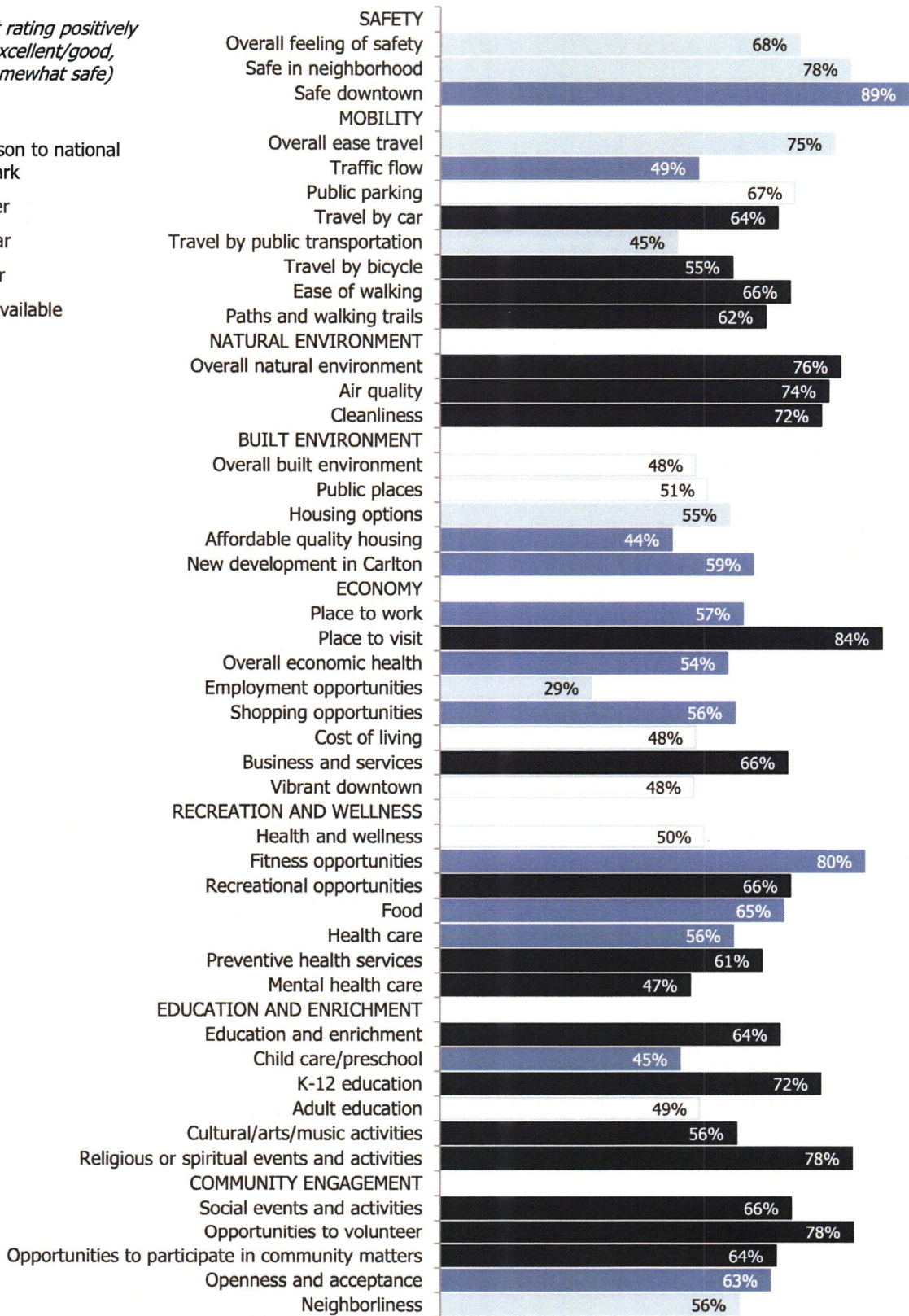
Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

■ Similar

■ Lower

□ Not available



Governance

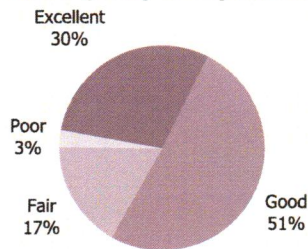
How well does the government of Carlton meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

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

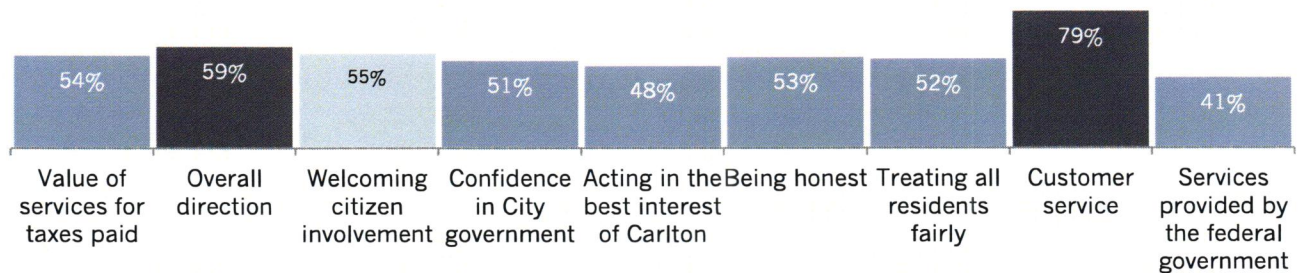


Carlton may face some challenges in the areas of Mobility and the Built Environment. Overall, ratings for Mobility and Built Environment tended to be rated lower when compared to other services provided by the City; between half to three-quarters of respondents rated these services as “excellent” or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

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available



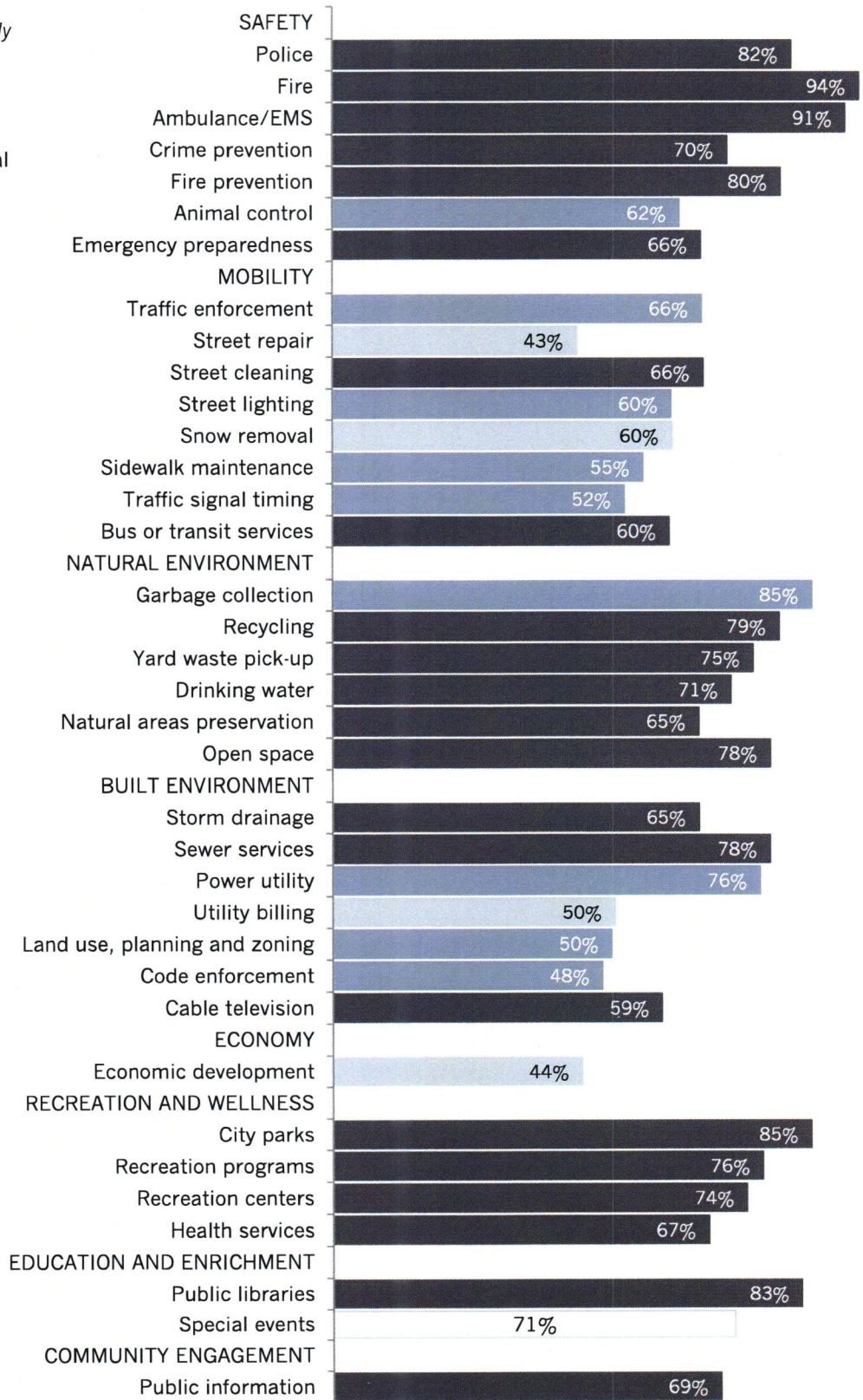
The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



Participation

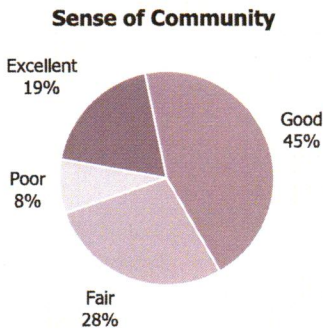
Are the residents of Carlton connected to the community and each other?

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.

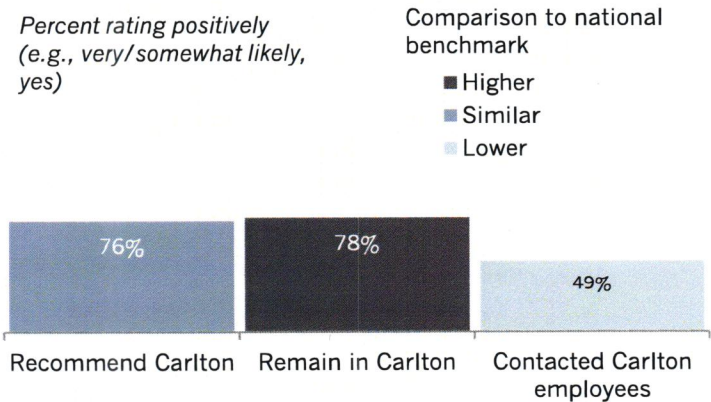
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors that respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, for the 18 activities for which benchmark comparisons were available, Carlton residents tended to participate in these various activities at rates similar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



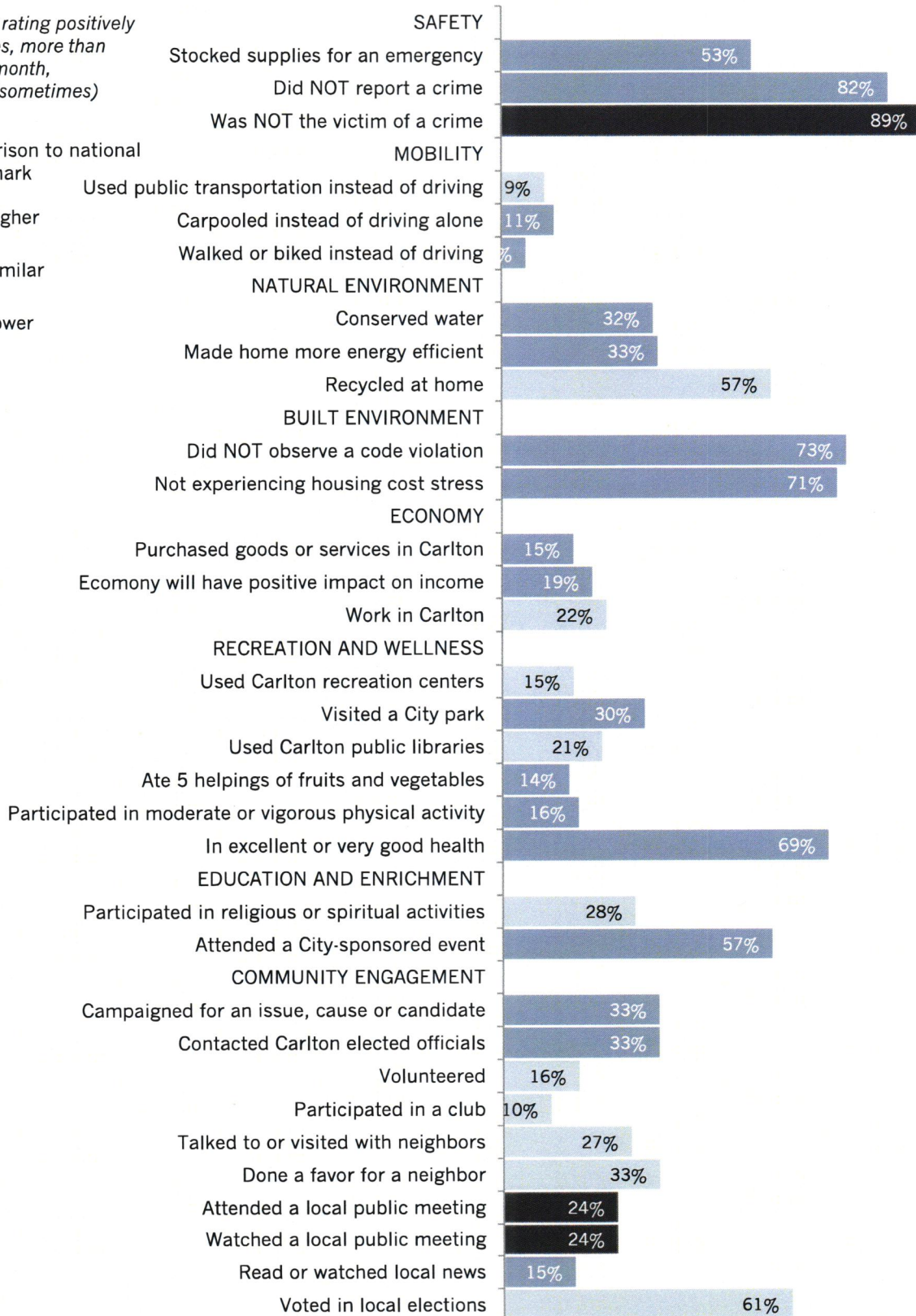
The National Citizen Survey™

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

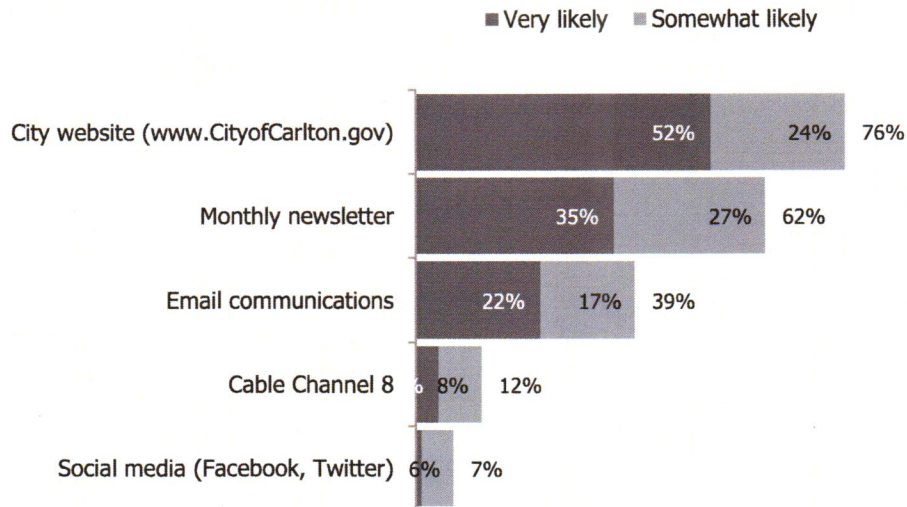


Special Topics

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.