MEMORANDUM

TO: Trustee Bill Johnston, Chairperson
Economic and Community Development Committee

FROM: Jennifer Ganser, AICP, Assistant Director of Community Development

MEETING DATE: May 8, 2017

SUBJECT: **National Citizen Survey**

The National Citizen Survey was recently issued to 3,000 Lombard residents, by random. The community survey was 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.

Survey Conclusions

•Most residents rated their quality of life positively and think that Lombard is an excellent or good place to live. Most survey participants gave positive ratings for the overall image and overall appearance of Lombard and the vast majority also think Lombard is an excellent or good place to raise children. About 8 in 10 survey participants planned on remaining in Lombard for the next five years and 9 in 10 would recommend living in Lombard to others.

•Residents indicated that Safety and Economy as important facets for Lombard to focus on in the coming two years.

•When asked about sources of information about Lombard, the top source was the Village Pride newsletter.

•Most residents noted that they would be very or somewhat likely to contact the Village or seek out information about the Village if needed.

•Lombard outpaced the National Average in the following categories:

- ◦Paths and riding trails
- ◦Travel by bicycle
- ◦Use of public transportation
- ◦Affordable quality housing
- ◦Housing options
- ◦Shopping opportunities
- ◦Health care
- ◦Child care/preschool

Attached is the Community Livability Report showing Lombard's desirability. Staff will give an overview of the survey results at the May 8th ECDC meeting.

COMMITTEE ACTION REQUESTED

No action is requested. This item is for information and discussion purposes.

H:\CD\WORDUSER\EDADM\ECDCMTE\2017\May 8\comm survey memo.docx

THE NCS™

The National Citizen Survey™

Lombard, IL

Community Livability Report

2016

NRC
National Research Center Inc

ICMA
Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

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

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

Contents

About 1
Quality of Life in Lombard 2
Community Characteristics 3
Governance 5
Participation 7
Special Topics 9
Conclusions 13

Charter Members
AAPOR Transparency Initiative
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

The National Citizen Survey™
© 2001-2016 National Research Center, Inc.

The NCS™ is presented by NRC in collaboration with ICMA.

NRC is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the "livability" of Lombard. 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.

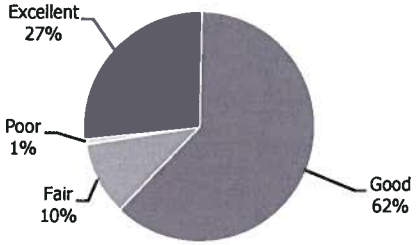
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents' opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 1,043 residents of the Village of Lombard. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 3% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* (www.villageoflombard.org/NCS) provided under separate cover.

Quality of Life in Lombard

Most residents rated the quality of life in Lombard as excellent or good. This rating was similar to ratings given in other communities across the nation and in communities in the North Central East region with populations 20,000 to 60,000 (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

Overall Quality of Life



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.

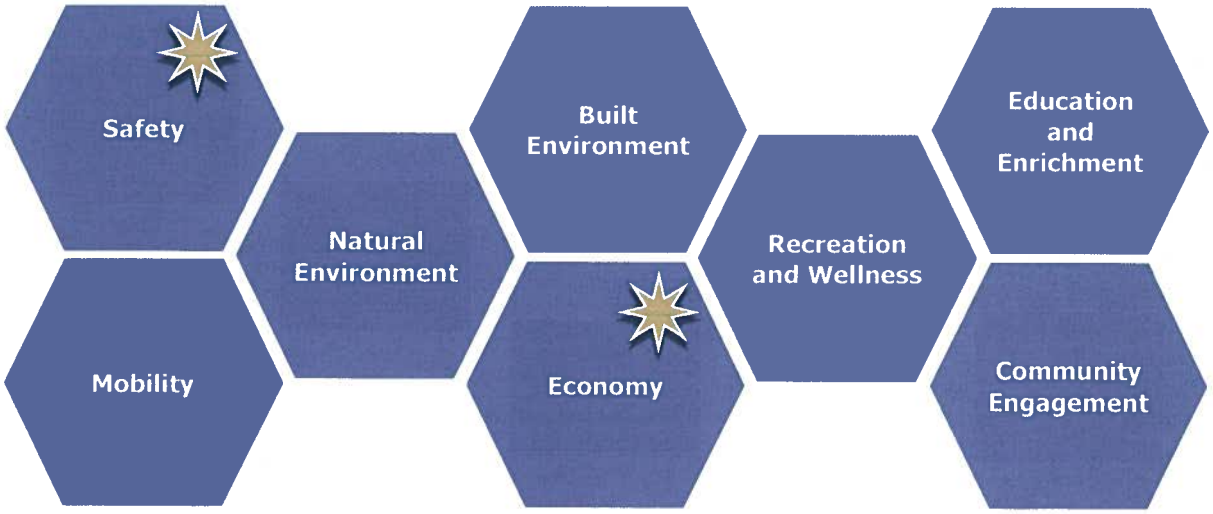
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Lombard community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Lombard residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community. Ratings for these and all other facets of community livability were positive and similar to other communities. 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 Lombard's unique questions.

Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark

- Most important



Community Characteristics

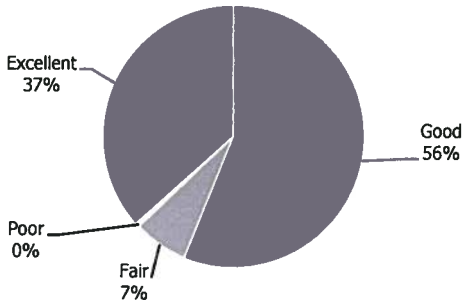
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 Lombard, 93% rated the Village as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Lombard as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the Village as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Lombard as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Lombard and its overall appearance. About 9 in 10 residents positively rated Lombard as a place to raise children, and more than 8 in 10 were pleased with their neighborhood as a place to live and the overall appearance of Lombard. About three-quarters of survey participants gave favorable ratings to the overall image of the Village and about 6 in 10 positively rated Lombard as a place to retire. All of these aspects received ratings similar to the national and peer communities benchmark comparisons.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Ratings across all facets of Community Characteristics tended to be strong. Almost all residents gave positive ratings to aspects of Safety, and at least 8 in 10 favorably rated all aspects of Natural Environment. These aspects were all rated similar to the national benchmarks. About three-quarters of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to all aspects of Recreation and Wellness; these also received ratings that were similar to the national benchmarks except for the availability of affordable quality health care, which was higher. Ratings within the facets of Mobility, Built Environment, Economy and Education and Enrichment tended to vary a bit more widely, but at least a majority of residents gave positive ratings to almost all aspects within these facets, and all were rated similar to or higher than the national comparisons. Aspects that were rated higher than the benchmark included the availability of paths and riding trails, ease of travel by bicycle, the availability of affordable quality housing, the variety of housing options, shopping opportunities and the availability of affordable quality child care/preschool. All ratings for Community Characteristics were similar to ratings given in other North Central East communities with populations 20,000-60,000 except for the availability of paths and riding trails, which was higher.

Place to Live



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

Comparison to national benchmark

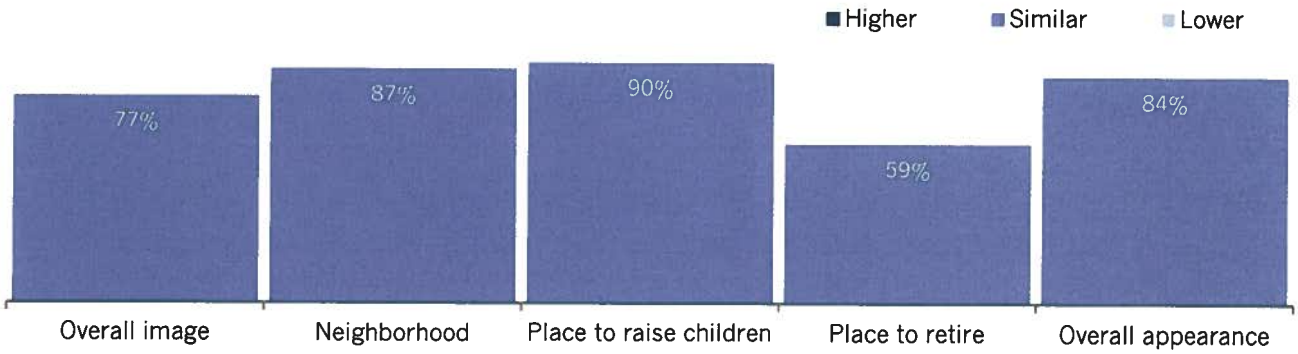
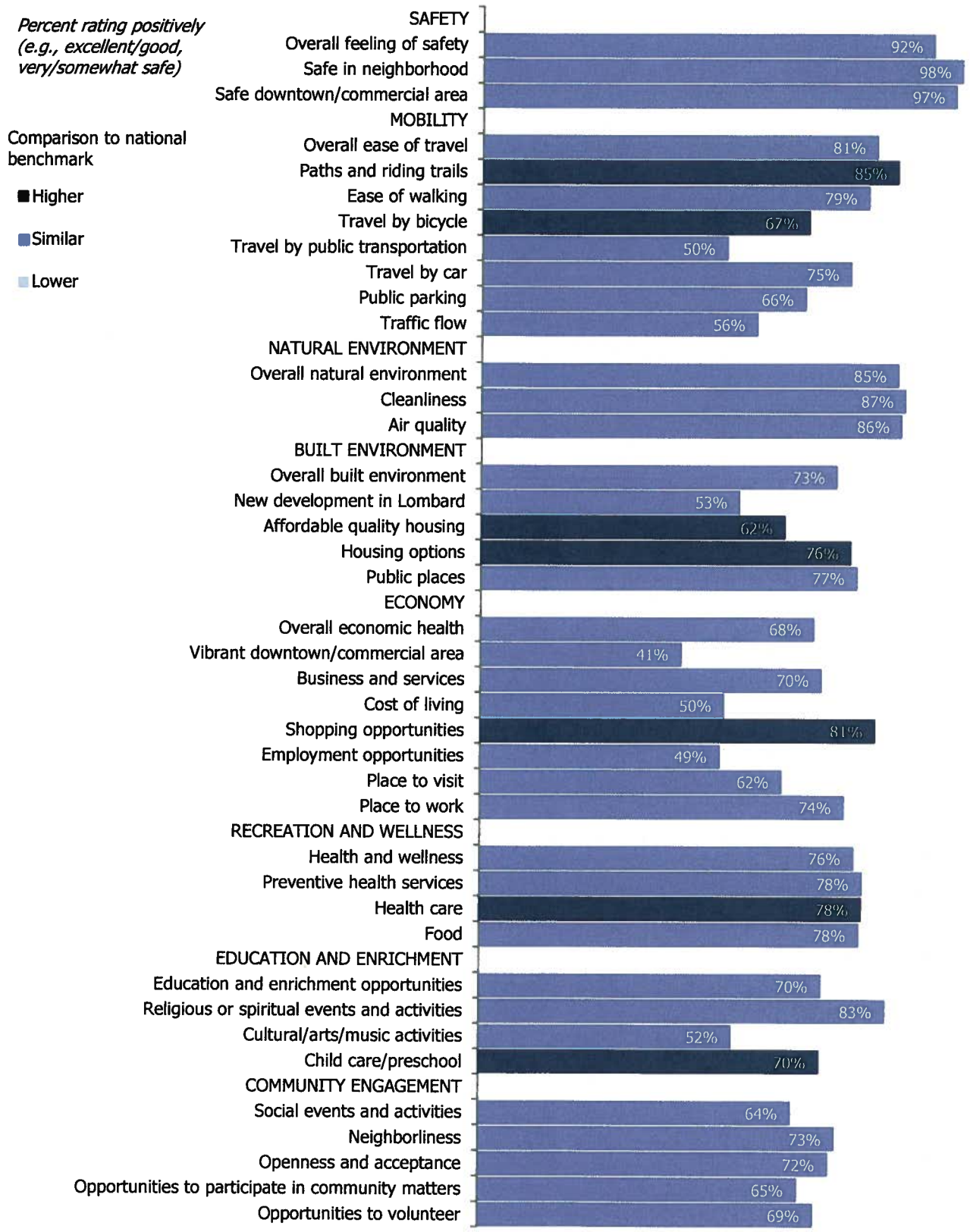


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



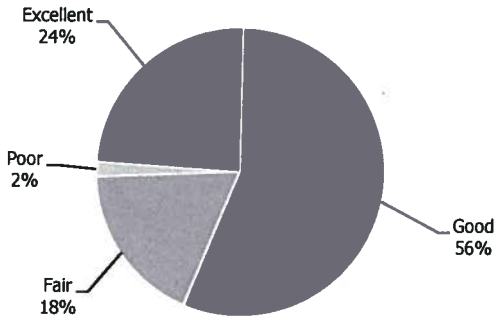
Governance

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

The overall quality of the services provided by Lombard as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. In Lombard, about 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the Village and about one-third favorably rated the services provided by the Federal Government. Both of these ratings were similar to the national and peer community benchmarks.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Lombard's leadership and governance. About 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall customer service provided by Village employees, and about two-thirds gave excellent or good ratings to the overall direction that Lombard is taking, the Village government acting in the best interest of Lombard, being honest and treating all residents fairly. These aspects all received ratings that were similar to those given in other communities, both nationally and within the peer community comparisons.

Overall Quality of Village Services



Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Lombard. At least a majority of residents gave positive ratings to all services in the Village, and all were rated similar to the national comparison and to the peer community subset. The highest-rated services were rated positively by at least 4 in 5 respondents and included police, fire, and ambulance/EMS services as well as fire prevention, garbage collection, drinking water and sewer services.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

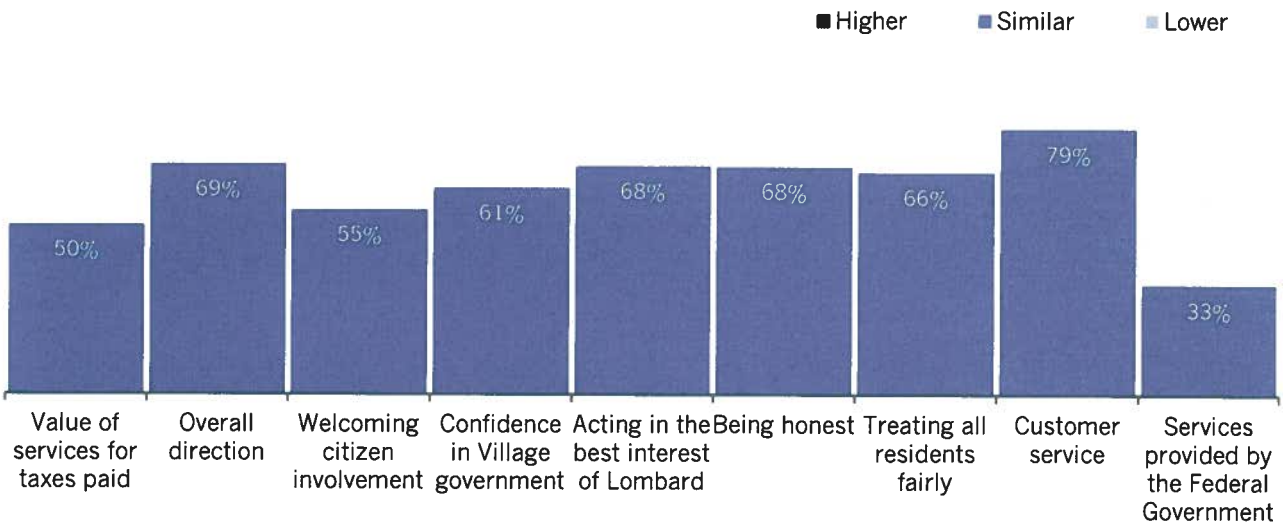
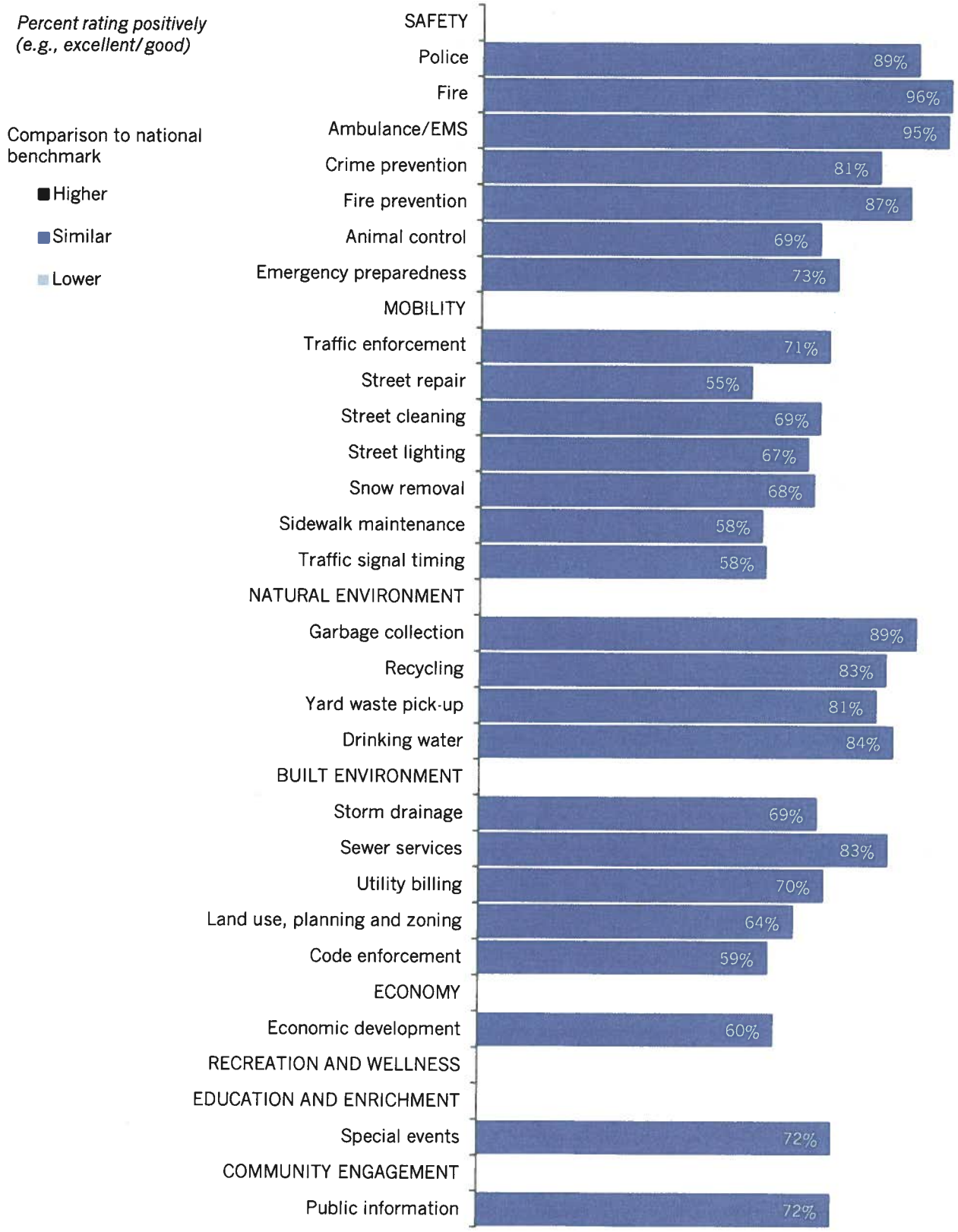


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance



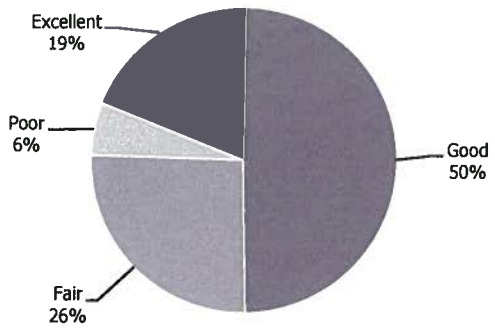
Participation

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

An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. About 7 in 10 survey participants gave positive ratings to the sense of community in the Village; further, more than 9 in 10 would recommend Lombard to someone who asked and about 8 in 10 planned to remain in the Village for the next five years. About 4 in 10 survey respondents had contacted a Village employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. These ratings were similar to the national and peer community benchmarks.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates across the different facets tended to vary. Almost all residents reported that they recycled at home, had purchased goods or services in the Village, had talked to or visited with their neighbors and had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey. In Mobility, about two-thirds of residents had walked or biked instead of driving and about 4 in 10 had carpooled instead of driving alone or used public transportation instead of driving (this rate was higher than the national and peer community benchmarks). Other rates of Participation tended to be similar to rates reported in other communities nationwide, except for the proportion of those who worked in the Village, volunteered or read or watched local news; these rates were lower than rates seen in other communities nationwide. Additionally, the proportions of residents who were not under housing cost stress or who had read or watched local news were lower than levels seen in other North Central East communities with populations 20,000-60,000.

Sense of Community



Percent rating positively (e.g., very/somewhat likely, yes)

Comparison to national benchmark

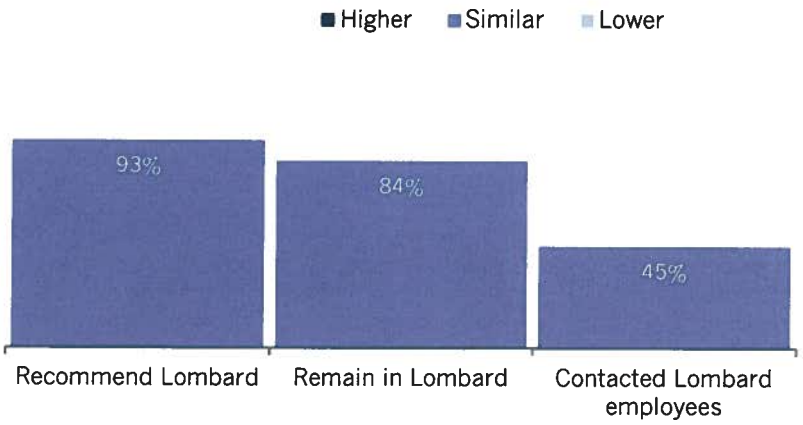
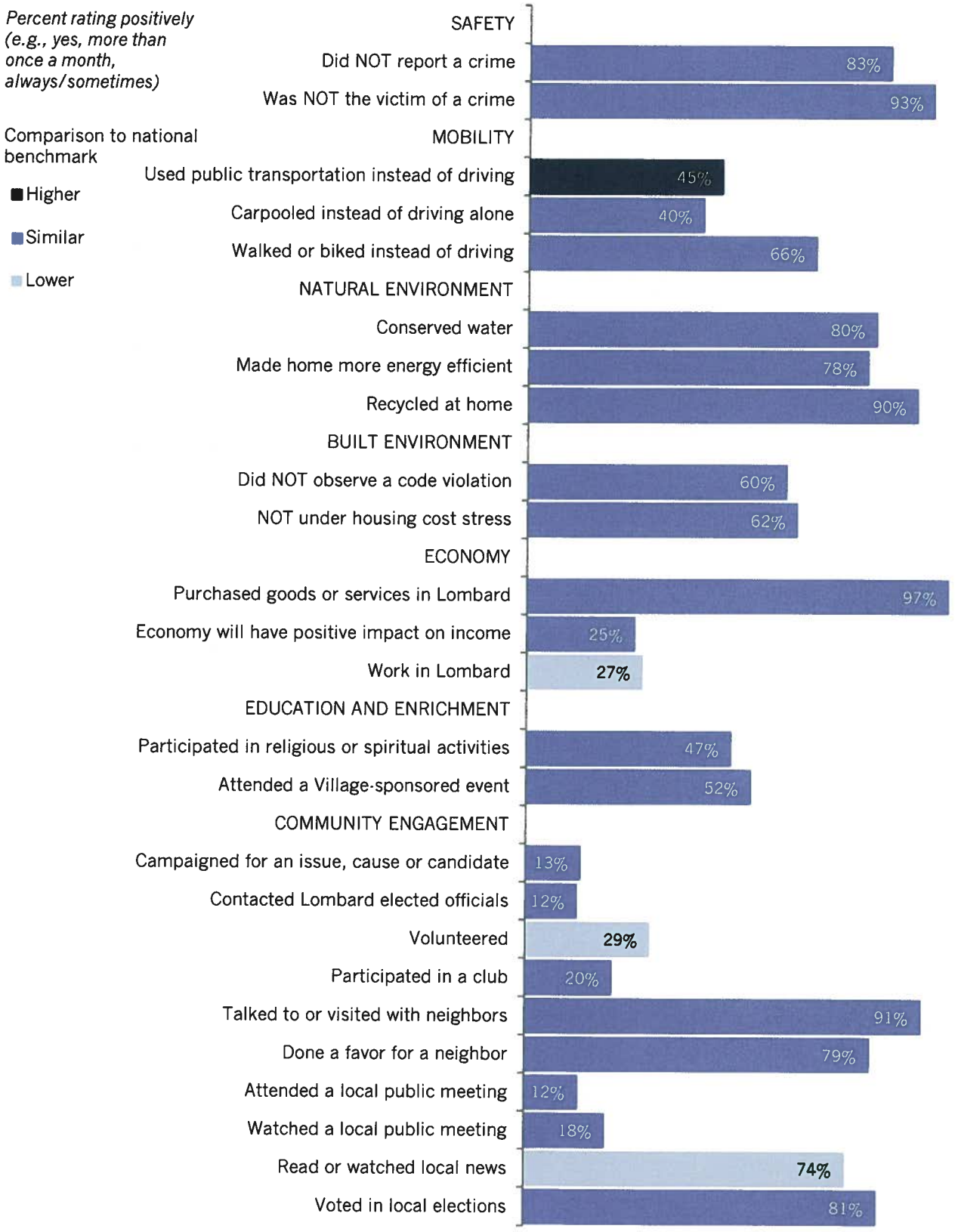


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation



Special Topics

The Village of Lombard included seven questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked respondents to indicate how much of a source of Village information they considered a number of possible sources to be, while the second question asked residents what their #1 source was. In both questions, the top response was the Village Pride newsletter, which 88% of respondents stated was at least a minor source of information for them and 31% indicated was their #1 source. About 8 in 10 residents rated both word of mouth and the Village website as major or minor sources of information; about one-quarter indicated that the Village website was their #1 source of information, while 11% said that word of mouth was their #1 source. The Lombardian was also a major or minor source of information for about 7 in 10 residents, and about 16% considered it their #1 source.

Figure 4: Sources of Village Information:
Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the Village of Lombard government and its activities, events and services:

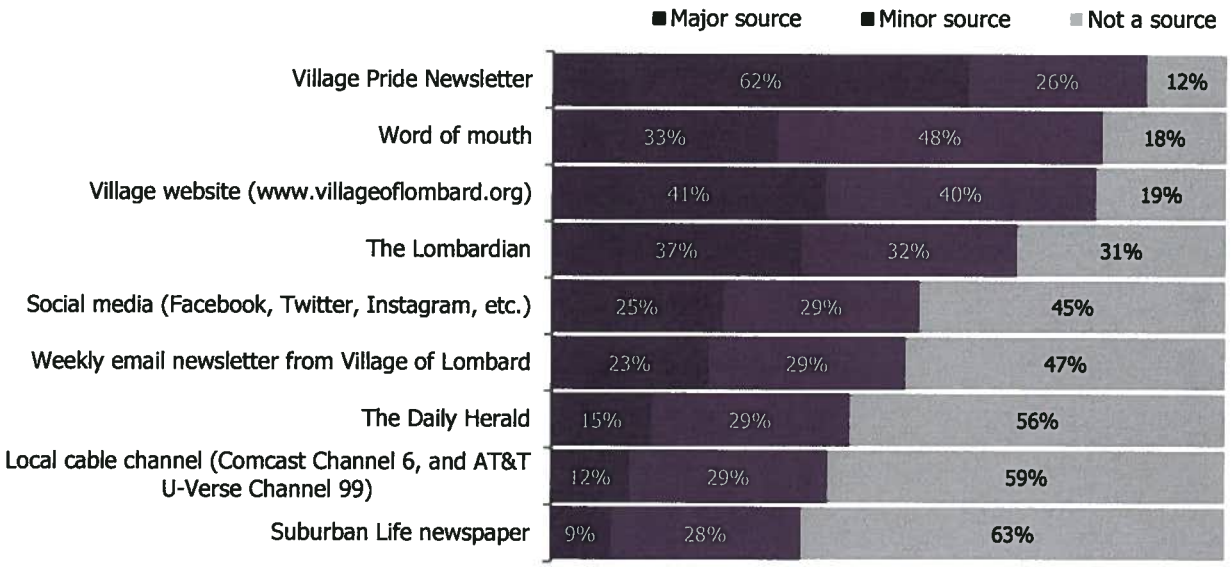
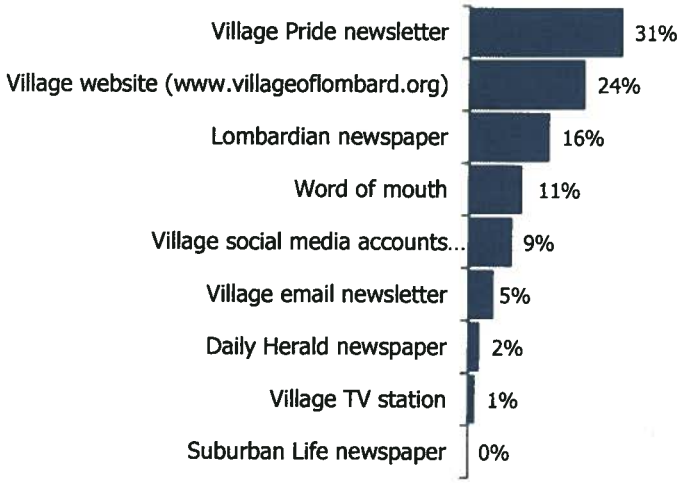
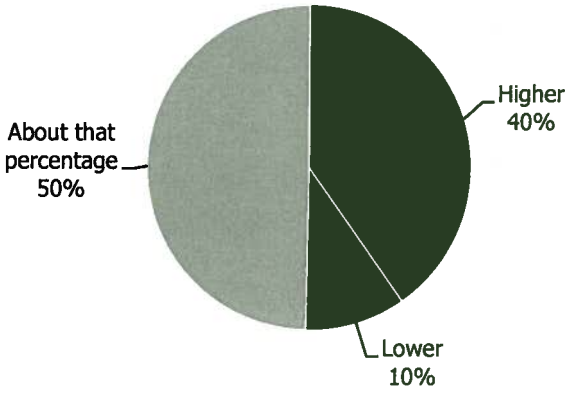


Figure 5: Top Communication Source
What would you say is your #1 communication source for obtaining information about the Village of Lombard, its activities, events, and services? (Please choose only one.)



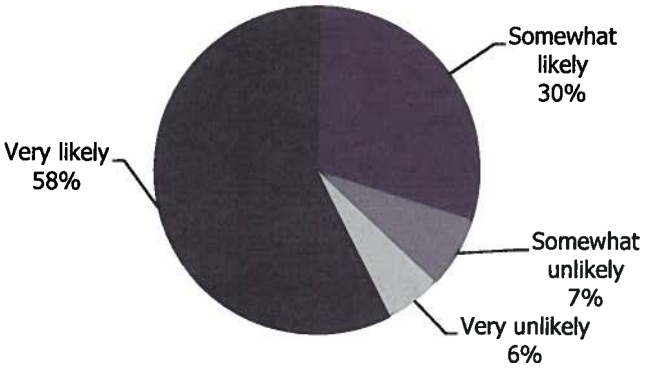
The next question asked residents about their perception of property taxes in the Village prior to the survey. About 4 in 10 respondents had thought the Village's allotment of property taxes were higher than the actual rate of 6-8%, about 1 in 10 had thought they were lower and about half had believed that percentage to be accurate.

Figure 6: Perception of Property Tax
From your total property tax paid to the County, between 6-8% goes to the Village of Lombard's municipal government. Prior to this survey, did you think that the percentage of property tax that went to the Village was higher than that, lower than that, or about that percentage?



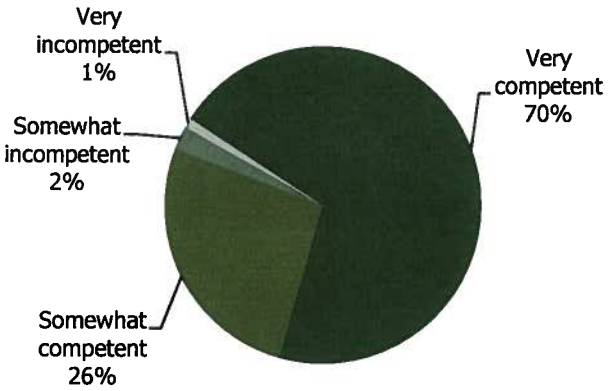
The following question asked residents to indicate how likely they would be to contact Lombard directly or directly reference a Village of Lombard communication source in the event they had a Village question, issue or concern. Most residents indicated that they would be very or somewhat likely to contact the Village or reference a Village communication source; only about 1 in 10 stated they would be somewhat or very unlikely.

Figure 7: Likelihood of Contacting the Village
If you had a Village question, issue, or concern, how likely would you be to contact to the Village of Lombard directly or reference a Village of Lombard communication source (www.villageoflombard.org, Facebook or Twitter pages, Pride newsletter, weekly e-news)?



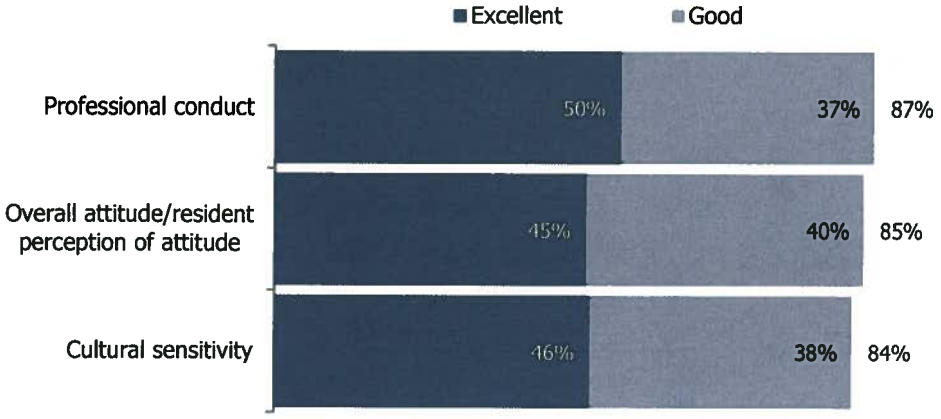
The next special-interest question asked Villagers to rate the overall competence of the Lombard Police Department. Virtually all residents rated the Department as very or somewhat competent, while only about 3% rated the Department as incompetent.

Figure 8: Competence of Police Department
Please rate the overall competence of the Lombard Police Department:



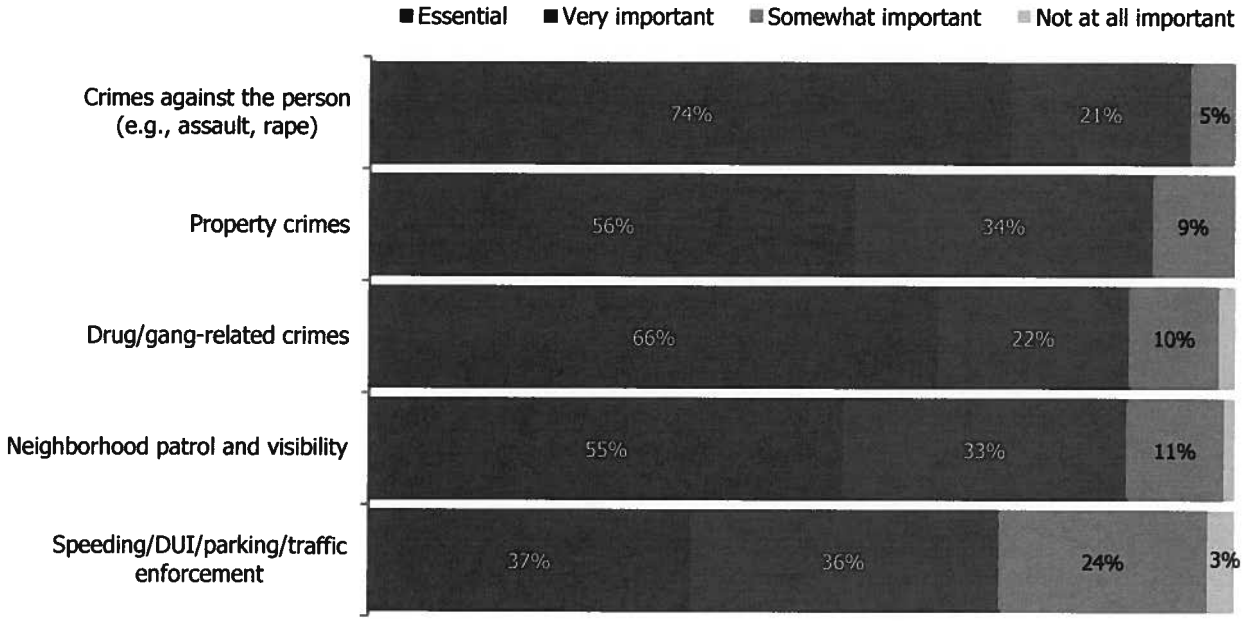
The next question asked Villagers to rate their perception of three different aspects of the attitudes and behavior of Lombard Police Officers. More than 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to all three aspects listed (professional conduct, overall attitude/resident perception of attitude and cultural sensitivity).

Figure 9: Perception of Lombard Police Officers
Please rate your perception of Lombard Police Officers' attitudes and behavior in the following categories:



The final special-interest question on the survey asked respondents to rate how important they thought each of five Police Initiatives were. Almost all residents thought that crimes against the person was an essential or very important initiative, and about 9 in 10 thought that property crimes, drug/gang-related crimes and neighborhood patrol and visibility were at least very important. Residents tended to rate the speeding/DUI/parking/traffic enforcement initiative as less important, although about three-quarters of residents still thought this was an essential or very important initiative.

Figure 10: Importance of Police Initiatives
Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the Village of Lombard to focus on each of the following Police Initiatives:



Conclusions

Lombard residents enjoy a positive quality of life.

Most residents rated their quality of life positively and think Lombard is an excellent or good place to live. Most survey participants gave positive ratings for the overall image and overall appearance of Lombard and the vast majority also think Lombard is an excellent or good place to raise children. About 8 in 10 survey participants planned on remaining in Lombard for the next five years and 9 in 10 would recommend living in Lombard to others.

Residents think Safety is important, and ratings for it are high.

Residents indicated that Safety is an important facet for Lombard to focus on in the coming two years. Ratings for Safety across the different pillars were generally positive and similar to other communities across the nation. Around 9 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to the overall feeling of safety in the Village as well as to feelings of safety in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area. Police, fire and ambulance/EMS services were also positively rated by most survey respondents. When asked to rate the overall competence of the Lombard Police Department, virtually all residents rated the Department as very or somewhat competent; further, when asked to rate their perception of the professional conduct, overall attitude/resident perception of attitude and cultural sensitivity of Lombard Police Officers, more than 8 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to all three items. Finally, when asked to indicate how important they thought a list of five Police Initiatives were, about three-quarters of residents or more thought that all five initiatives were essential or very important.

Most Lombard residents contact the Village or seek out Village communications when needed, and use a variety of other local media sources to get information about Lombard.

A special-interest question on the survey asked residents to indicate how likely they would be to contact Lombard directly in the event they had a Village question, issue or concern. Most residents noted that they would be very or somewhat likely to contact the Village or seek out information about the Village if needed, while only about 1 in 10 stated they would be somewhat or very unlikely to do so. About 4 in 10 survey respondents had contacted a Village employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. When asked about sources of information about Lombard, the top source was the Village Pride newsletter; about 9 in 10 respondents stated the newsletter was at least a minor source of information for them and about 3 in 10 indicated it was their #1 source. The other most common choices for receiving information about Lombard included the Village website, the Lombardian newspaper and word of mouth. However, only about three-quarters of residents indicated that they had read or watched local news in the 12 months prior to the survey, which was a lower rate than seen in other communities nationwide.