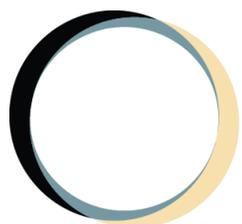


**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

**Sevierville, TN**  
Community Livability Report

2017



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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 Sevierville. 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 314 residents of the City of Sevierville. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Sevierville

Most residents rated the quality of life in Sevierville as excellent or good. This rating was similar to ratings in comparison communities (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).



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.

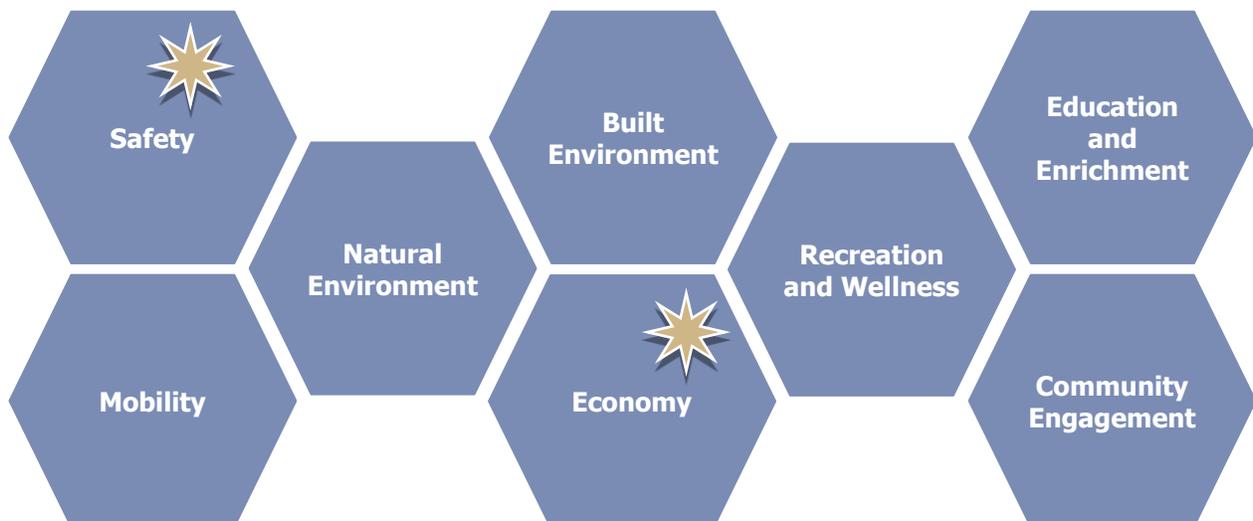
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Sevierville community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets 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 Sevierville’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?*

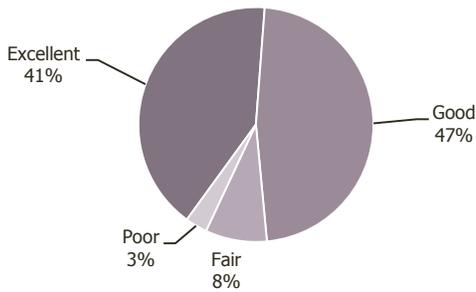
Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Sevierville, 89% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Sevierville as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Sevierville as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Sevierville and its overall appearance. Each aspect of community quality was rated as excellent or good by about 4 in 5 respondents. Ratings for Sevierville as a place to retire were higher than the national benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Sevierville's ratings tended to be similar to other communities across the U.S., with Economy as a strength; some Economy characteristics had ratings above national averages.

At least 4 in 5 respondents rated each aspect of Safety a favorably. About half or more of respondents positively rated each aspect of Natural Environment, Education and Enrichment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement. While Built Environment ratings tended to be positive and similar to the national benchmarks, ratings for housing options were lower than the benchmark. Within Economy, residents gave higher ratings to cost of living, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities and Sevierville as a place to work than residents in comparison communities.

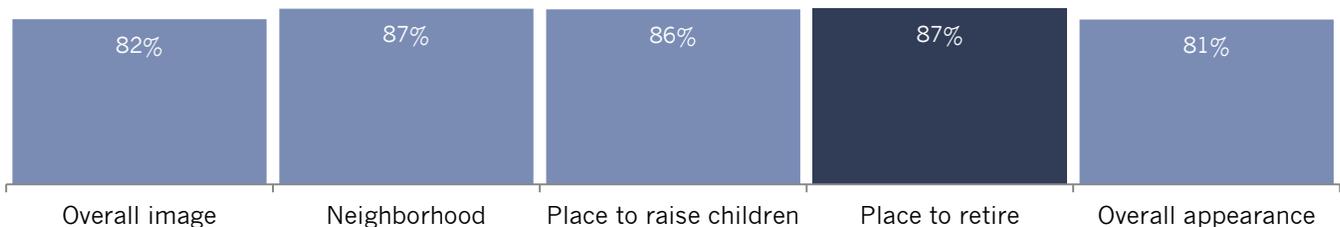
**Place to Live**



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



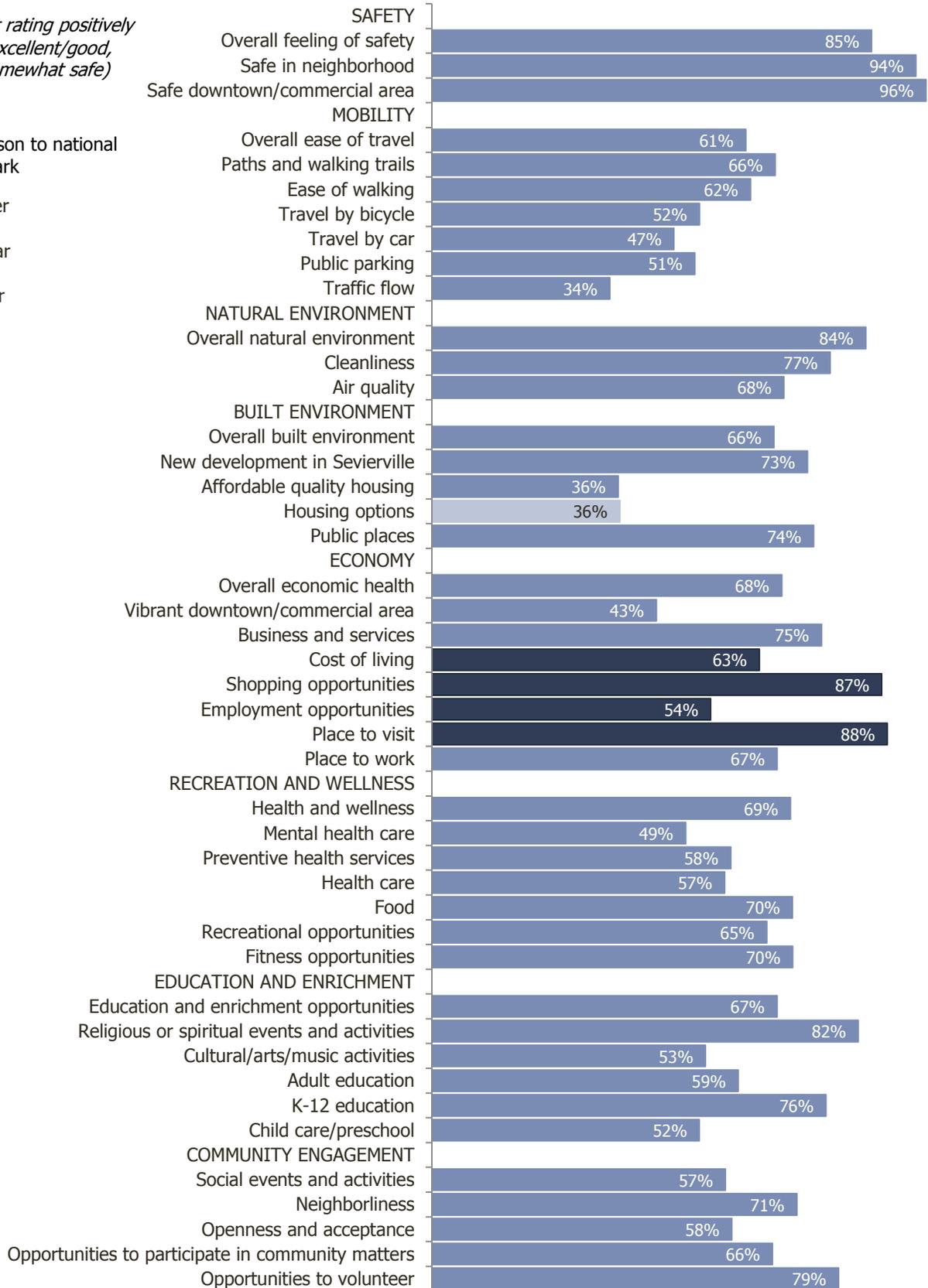
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

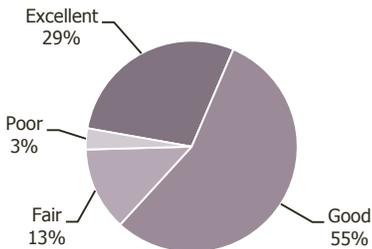
*How well does the government of Sevierville meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Sevierville as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 4 in 5 residents gave high marks to the overall quality of City services, while about half gave high marks to the services provided by the Federal Government. Both of these ratings were similar to ratings in comparisons communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Sevierville’s leadership and governance. A majority of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to each aspect, and these ratings were similar to the national benchmarks.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Sevierville. Across all facets, ratings tended to be positive and similar to ratings in other communities across the nation. However, ratings for sidewalk maintenance were higher than in comparison communities while ratings for recycling were lower than ratings reported elsewhere.

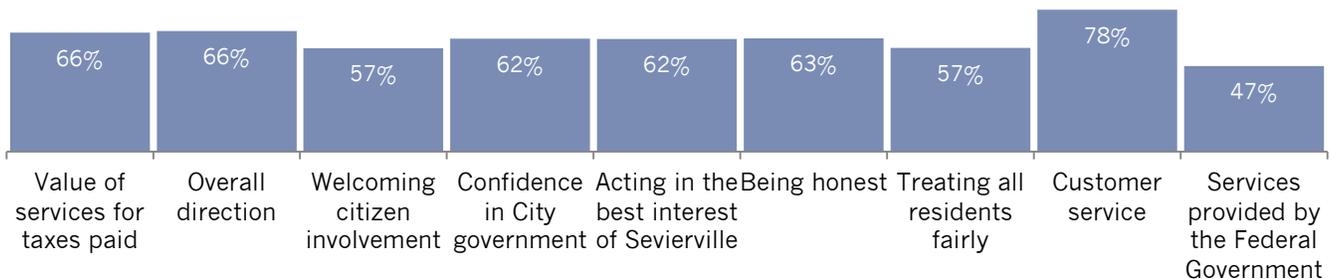
**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



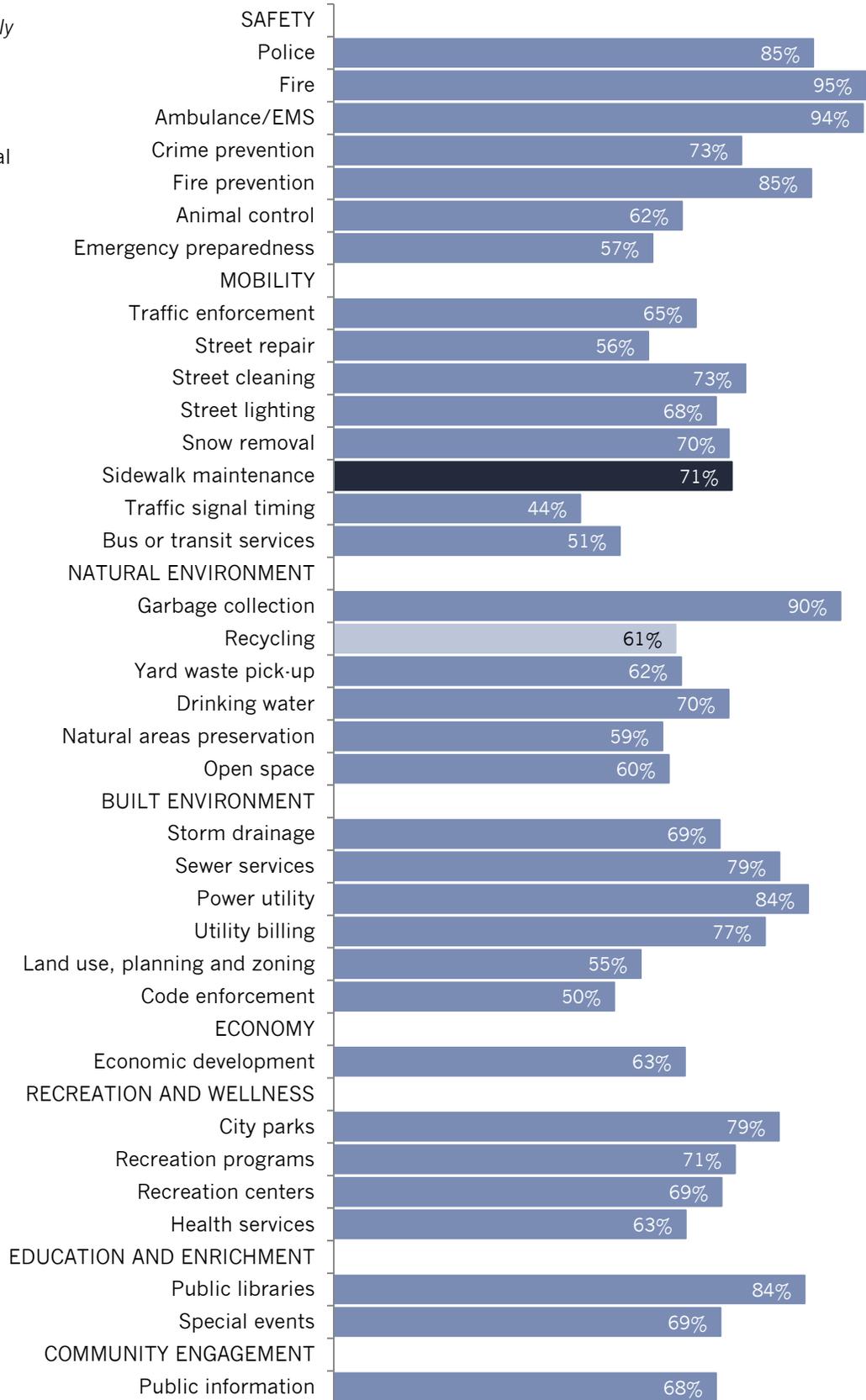
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

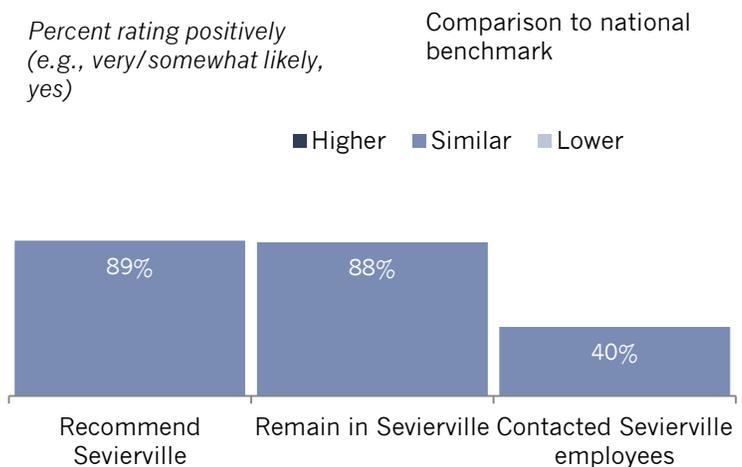
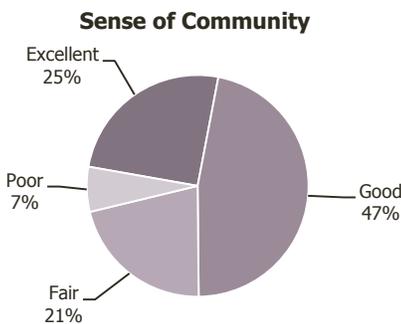


# Participation

*Are the residents of Sevierville 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. Close to ¾ of residents positively rated the overall sense of community in Sevierville. At least 4 in 5 respondents were likely to recommend living in Sevierville and were likely to remain in Sevierville for the next five years and about 4 in 10 reported that they had contacted a City employee in the last 12 months; these rates were all similar to the national benchmarks.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, Sevierville residents engaged in various aspects of the community at rates similar to residents across the country. Reported rates of experience and participation within the facets of Safety and Community Engagement were similar to the national benchmarks. Within Mobility, Sevierville residents were less likely to use alternative modes than residents in comparisons communities. Survey respondents also reported lower rates of Participation with Natural Environment. Within Economy, almost all residents reported having purchased goods or services in Sevierville and the number of residents that felt optimistic about the impact the economy would have on their income in the next six months was much higher than in other communities. Most rates of Participation within Recreation and Wellness were similar to the benchmarks, though fewer Sevierville residents had visited a City park compared to residents of other jurisdictions across the nation. Within Education and Enrichment, more Sevierville residents reported that they had participated in religious or spiritual events or activities.



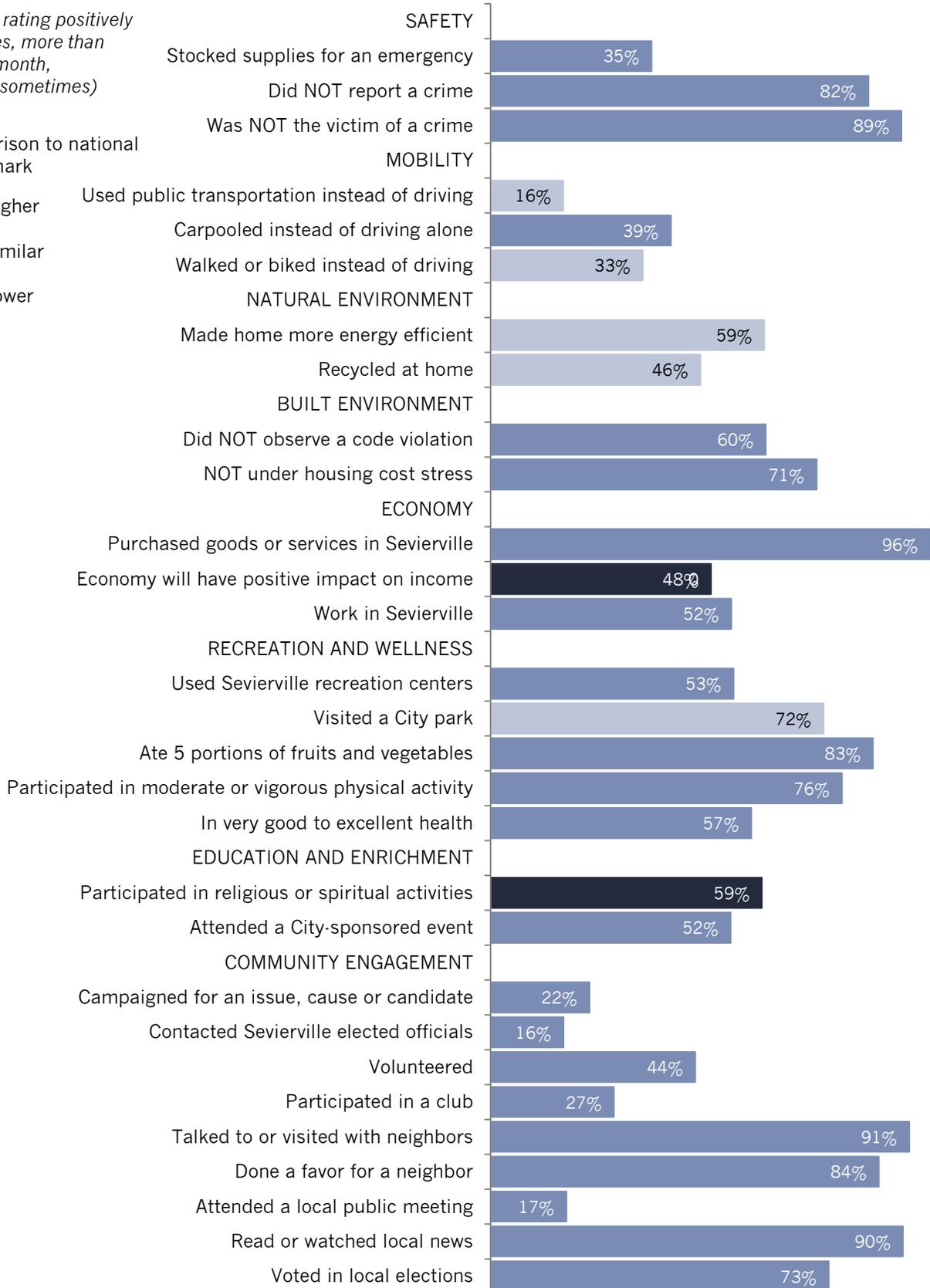
# The National Citizen Survey™

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

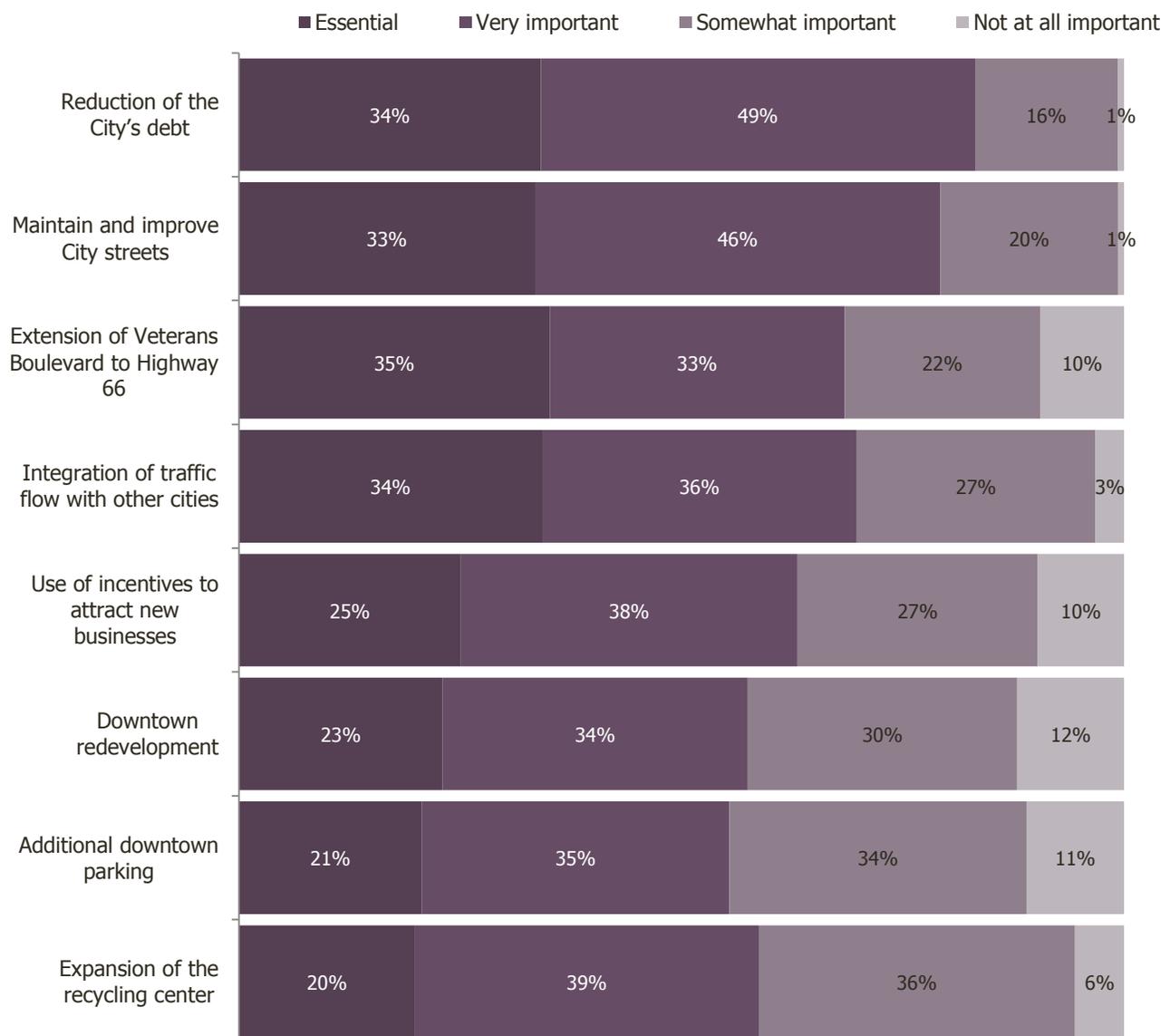


# Special Topics

The City of Sevierville included two questions of special interest on The NCS, including prioritizing the City’s budget and retail development efforts. The first question asked residents to rate the importance of several potential focus areas for the City. A majority rated each of the items as essential or very important. Among those who rated the importance of reducing the City’s debt, 83% deemed the reduction of the City’s debt the highest priority, following about 4 in 5 prioritizing maintaining and improving City streets. About half of the respondents thought the City should focus on additional downtown parking.

Figure 4: Potential City Priorities

*How important, if at all, do you think it is for the City of Sevierville to focus on each of the following over the next five years with its limited budget?*

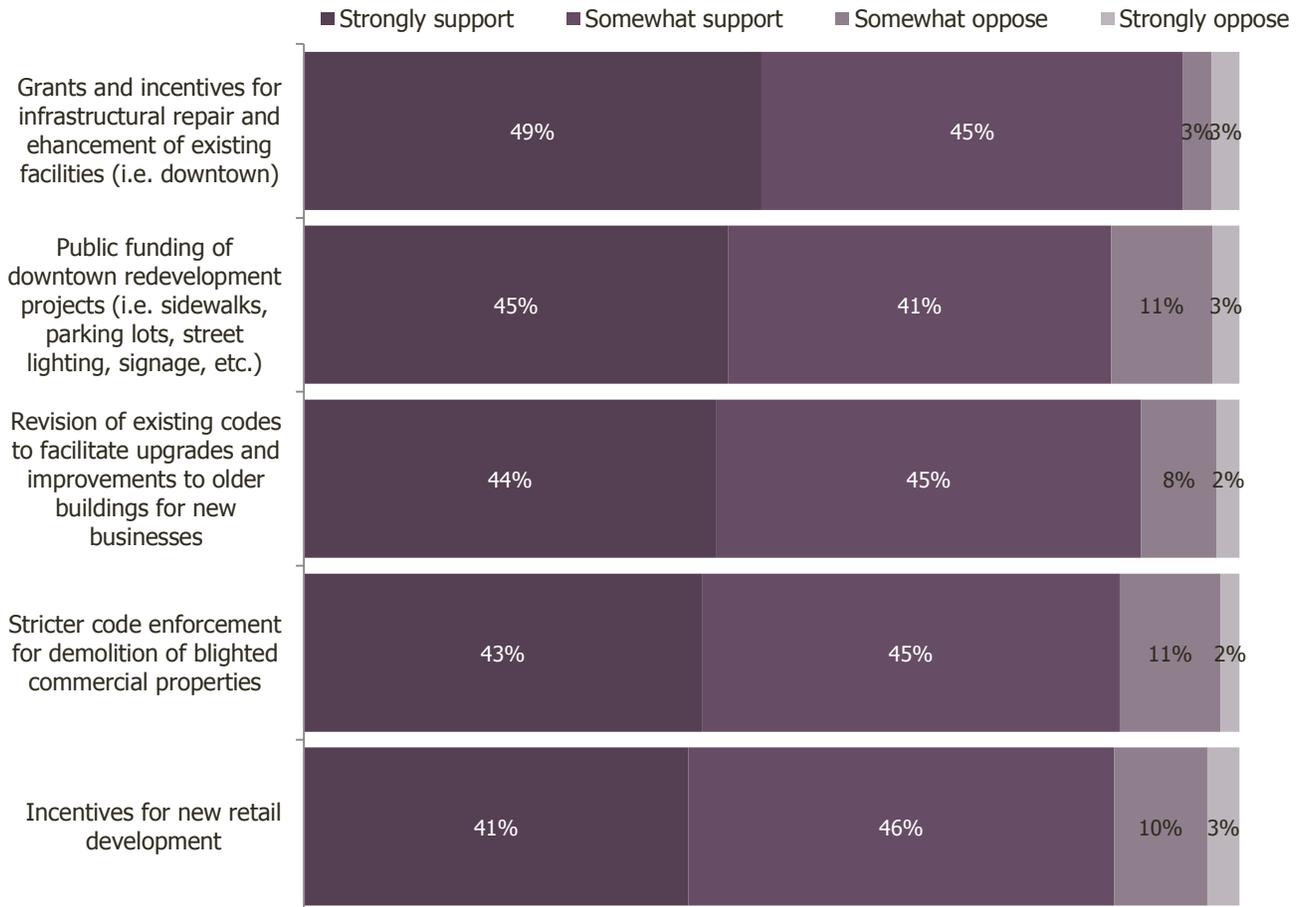


## The National Citizen Survey™

The second question asked residents to rate their level of support or opposition regarding the City’s participation in retail development activities. There was broad enthusiasm for all activities, with no obvious preferred activity at this time, though grants and incentives garnered the smallest opposition (6% were somewhat or strongly opposed). At least 4 in 5 respondents indicated support for each activity, and about 4 in 10 indicated strong support.

Figure 5: Retail Development Activities

*How much do you support or oppose the City’s participation in each of the following retail development activities?*



# Conclusions

## **Sevierville residents continue to enjoy a positive quality of life.**

Most residents rated their quality of life as excellent or good; Sevierville as a place to live was rated very favorably by residents as well. Ratings for Sevierville as a place to retire were higher than ratings in comparison communities. Overall, the facets that make a community livable were rated positively by a majority of respondents and were similar to other communities across the nation. These positive ratings were reflected again in residents' willingness to recommend Sevierville to others and to live there for the next five years. These positive ratings remained stable from 2015 to 2017 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover for more detail).

## **Residents are optimistic about the Economy and want Sevierville to invest in its future.**

Economy was identified as one of the top facets for the community to focus on in the next two years. Sevierville residents tended to have a positive view of aspects of Economy; all ratings were similar to or higher than the national benchmarks and ratings tended to remain stable from 2015 to 2017, with a single increase over time for ratings of vibrant downtown/commercial area. Sevierville residents had a more optimistic view of their personal economic future than residents nationwide. Ratings for the cost of living in Sevierville, shopping opportunities employment opportunities, Sevierville as a place to visit and Sevierville as a place to work were all higher than the national benchmarks. When asked about the City's involvement in potential retail development activities, at least 4 in 5 respondents supported each measure.

## **Safety is a priority for the community.**

Safety was identified as a key community focus area, and Sevierville residents gave positive ratings to each aspect of this facet. All Safety ratings were similar to the national benchmarks. About 4 in 5 residents positively rated the overall feeling of safety in the City almost all felt safe in their neighborhoods and downtown. All aspects of Safety within Governance received high marks from respondents. The vast majority of respondents had neither been the victim of a crime nor needed to report a crime.