

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

**Bettendorf, IA**  
Community Livability Report

2016



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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Bettendorf. 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 476 residents of the City of Bettendorf. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% 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.

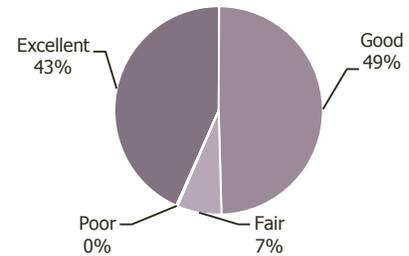


# Quality of Life in Bettendorf

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Bettendorf as excellent or good. This rating was similar to those seen in other communities across the nation (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.

Overall Quality of Life



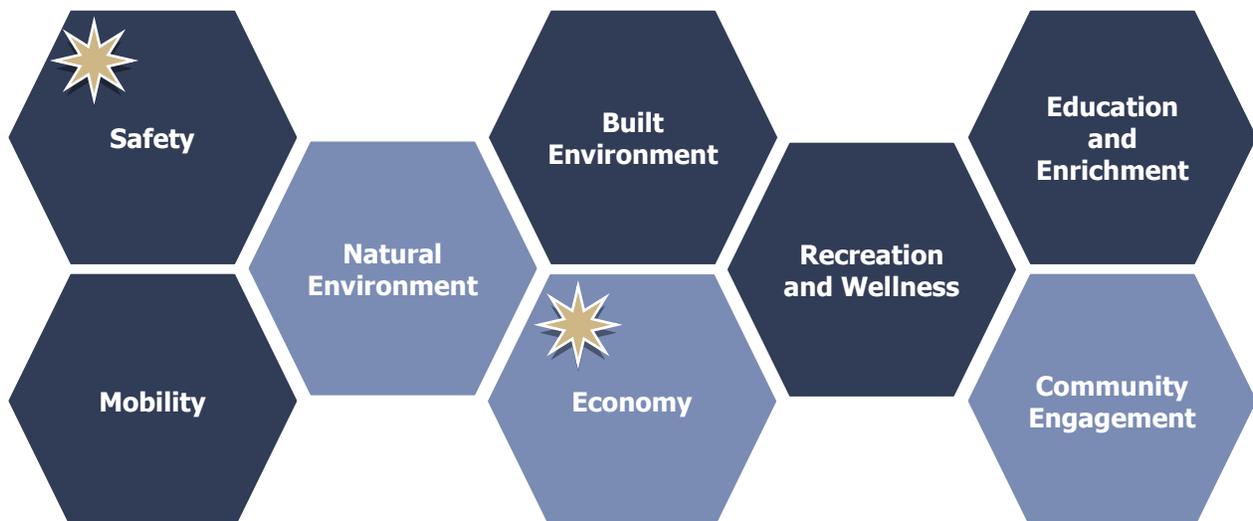
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Bettendorf community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Bettendorf residents gave exceptionally strong ratings to Safety as well as to Mobility, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment. Ratings for Natural Environment, Economy and Community Engagement 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 Bettendorf'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 Bettendorf, 96% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Bettendorf as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation.

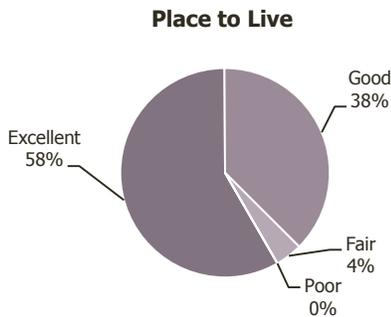
In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Bettendorf as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Bettendorf and its overall appearance. Roughly 9 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall image and appearance of Bettendorf, to their neighborhoods and to Bettendorf as a place to raise children; all of these ratings were higher than ratings in comparison communities. About 7 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to Bettendorf as a place to retire, a rating that was similar to ratings in other communities across the country.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. At least 9 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to all aspects of Safety and Natural Environment; within these facets, ratings for overall feeling of safety, overall natural environment and City cleanliness were above the national benchmarks. About 9 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall ease of travel in Bettendorf, ease of walking and travel by car. Ratings within Mobility were very strong: all aspects of Mobility were rated higher than in comparison communities. Within Built

Environment, at least 7 in 10 survey participants gave positive ratings to the overall built environment, new development in Bettendorf, housing options and public places. Ratings within Economy tended to be mixed. About 8 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall economic health of Bettendorf and Bettendorf as a place to work which were higher than the national benchmarks. However, only about one-quarter of residents gave positive ratings to downtown/commercial areas in Bettendorf, a rating that was lower than the national benchmark. Ratings in both Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment were strong and mostly higher than the benchmarks. At least 8 in 10 respondents gave high marks to overall health and wellness opportunities, fitness opportunities, overall

education and enrichment opportunities and K-12 education. All aspects of Community Engagement were rated positively by at least 6 in 10 residents and were similar to the benchmarks.

Ratings for several aspects within Community Characteristics decreased between 2014 and 2016 (see the *Trends over Time* report provided under a separate cover for more detail). Despite these declines, ratings within Community Characteristics were generally strong and similar to or higher than national benchmarks.



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

Comparison to national benchmark  
 ■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



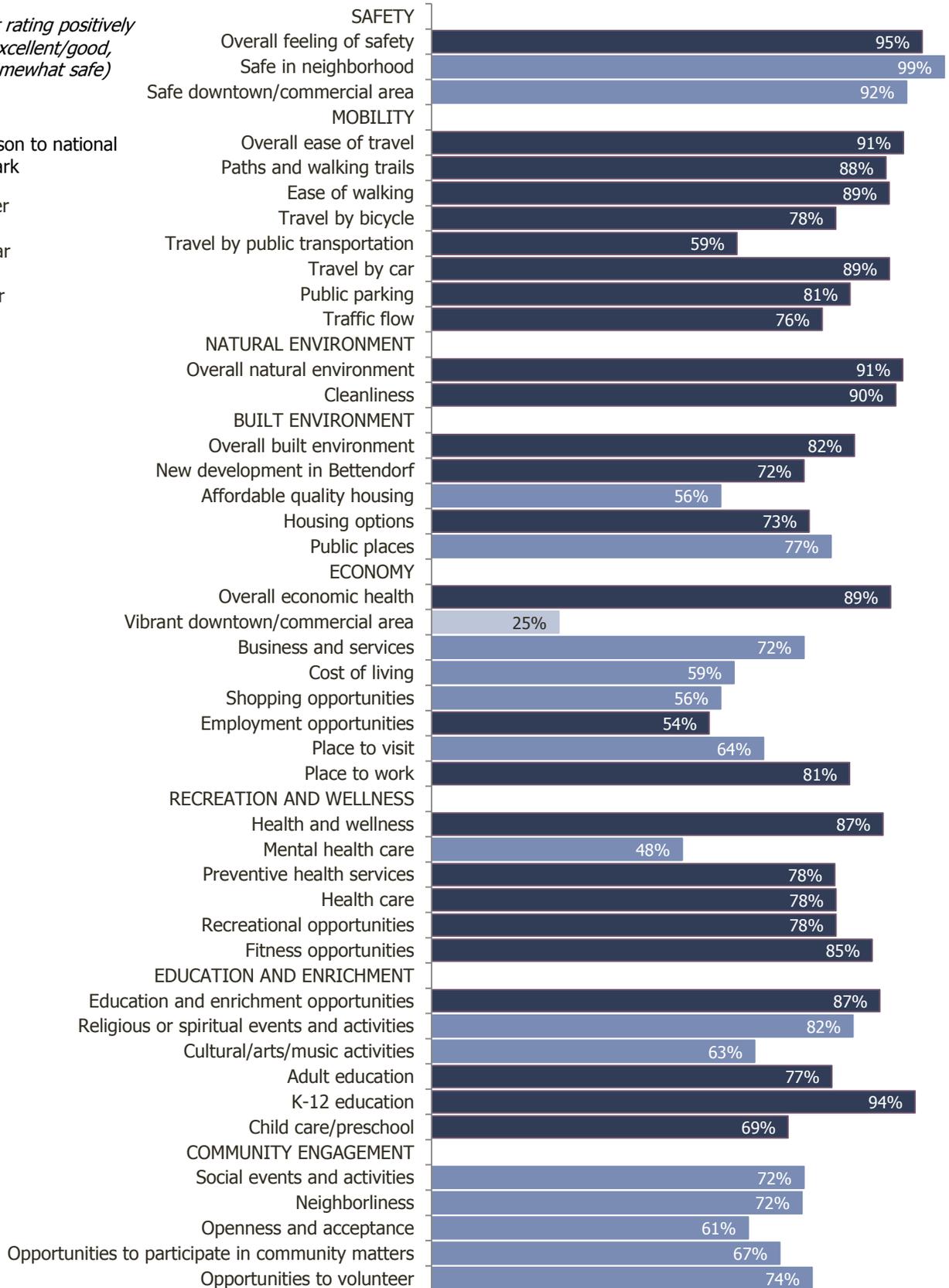
# The National Citizen Survey™

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 Bettendorf meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Bettendorf as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 9 in 10 survey respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the City of Bettendorf; this rating was higher than the national benchmark. Fewer than half of residents gave favorable ratings to the services provided by the Federal Government.

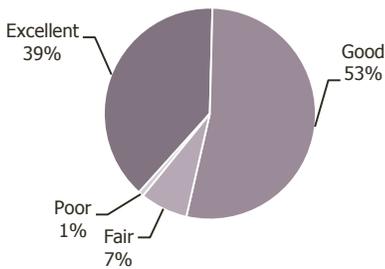
Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Bettendorf's leadership and governance. More than 4 in 5 survey participants gave excellent or good ratings to the overall customer service provided by City employees and the overall direction of Bettendorf. About three-quarters of residents gave positive ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, their confidence in the City government, acting in the best interest of Bettendorf, treating all residents fairly and being honest. All of these ratings were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Bettendorf. Overall, ratings for services in Bettendorf tended to be higher than ratings given in other communities received positive ratings from a majority of residents. Ratings within the facets of Safety, Mobility, Economy and Recreation and Wellness were particularly strong: a majority of aspects within these facets received ratings that were higher than the benchmarks. At least 4 in 5 residents gave excellent or good ratings to police services, fire services,

ambulance/EMS, crime prevention, fire prevention, traffic enforcement, street lighting, snow removal, City parks, recreation services and health services. Ratings within Built Environment and Natural Environment were also strong: about 9 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to garbage collection and yard-waste pickup and about 8 in 10 gave high marks to recycling services, sewer services, storm drainage and utility billing. Almost all residents rated Bettendorf public libraries as excellent or good and about 8 in 10 gave high marks to public information; both of these ratings are higher than ratings in other communities across the nation.

Almost all ratings remained stable over time; however, ratings for sewer services and City-sponsored special events declined from 2014 to 2016

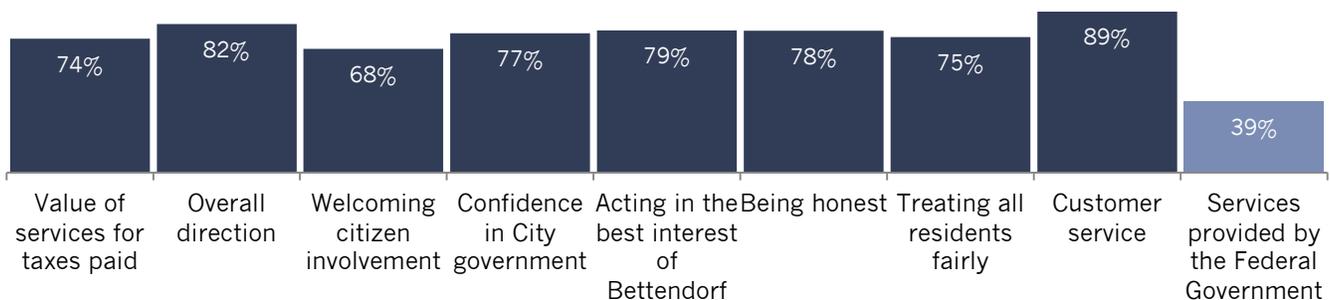
**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



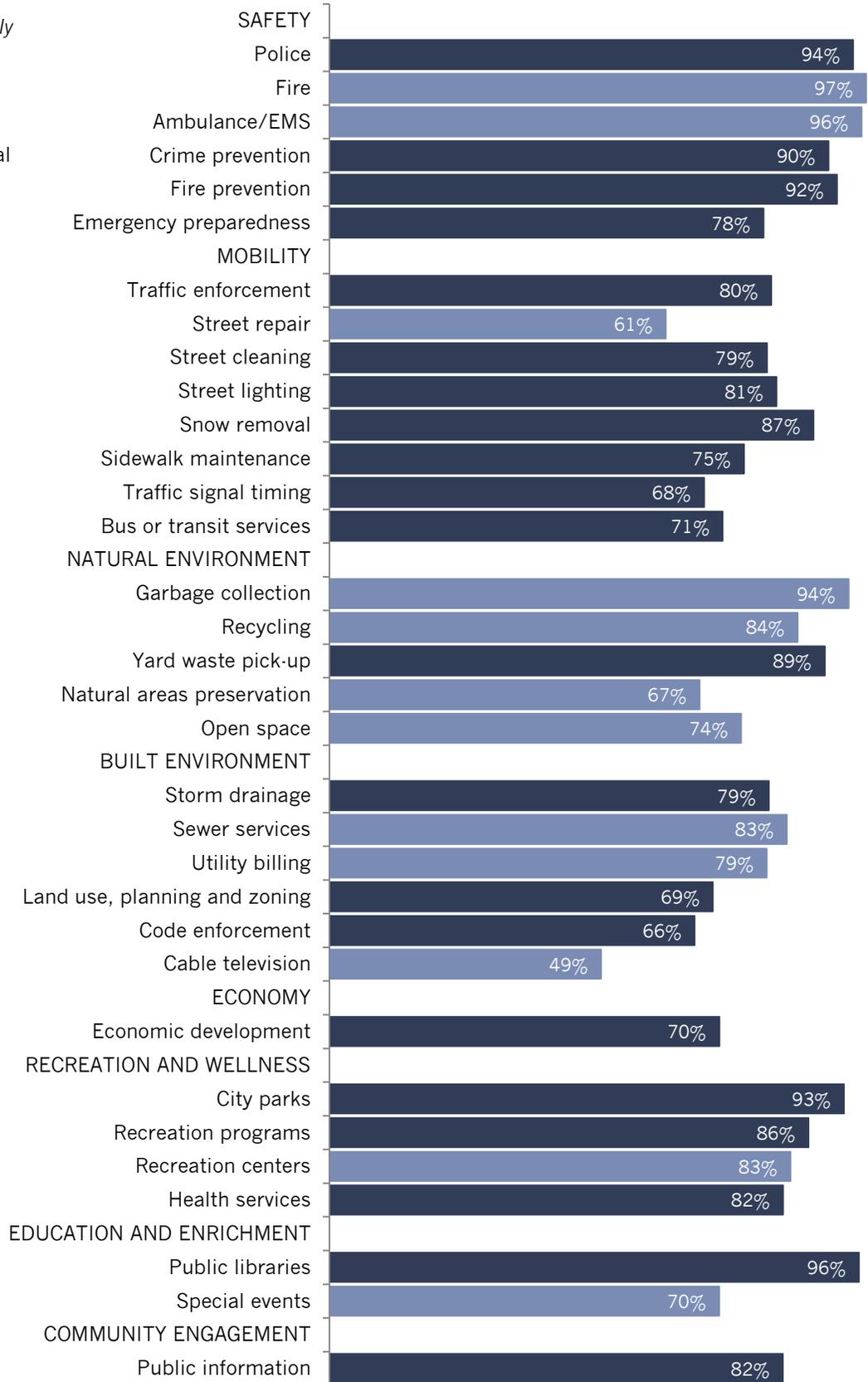
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

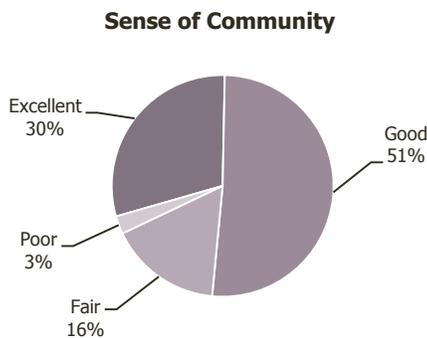


# Participation

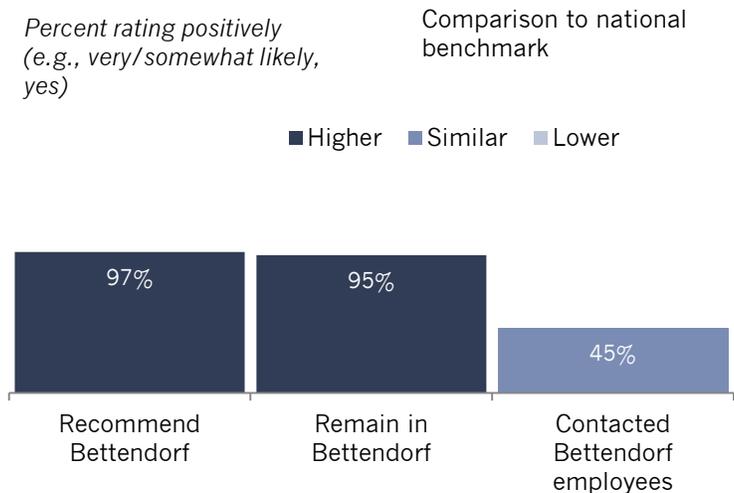
## *Are the residents of Bettendorf connected to the community and each other?*

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 8 in 10 participants rated the overall sense of community favorably; this rating was higher than the national benchmark. Nearly all of Bettendorf's residents reported that they were likely to recommend living in the City and that they were likely to remain in Bettendorf in the coming five years.

The survey included over 20 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Levels of Participation tended to be mixed across the different facets, but reported rates were mostly similar to those in comparison communities. Within the facet of Safety, about 9 in 10 residents did NOT report a crime and were NOT the victim of a crime in the past 12 months. About half of survey participants reported that they had walked or biked instead of driving; however, fewer than 1 in 10 respondents reported that they had used public transportation instead of driving (a rate that was lower than the benchmark). Rates of Participation within the facet of Economy were also mixed; over 9 in 10 residents reported purchasing goods or services in Bettendorf, but only about one-quarter of residents reported that they work in Bettendorf. Within Built Environment, about 8 in 10 residents reported that they were not under housing cost stress, which was also higher than the benchmark. The facet of Education and Enrichment also had strong levels of Participation: more Bettendorf residents reported that they had used City public library services than residents from comparison communities. At least a majority of resident reported participating in all aspects of Natural Environment and Recreation and Wellness; these participation rates were similar to those seen in comparison communities. Rates of Participation in the facet of Community Engagement varied: almost all Bettendorf residents reported that they had talked to or visited with a neighbor (95%) while only 13% reported that they had contacted a City elected official. Overall, rates of Participation were stable across all facets from 2014 to 2016.



Comparison to national benchmark



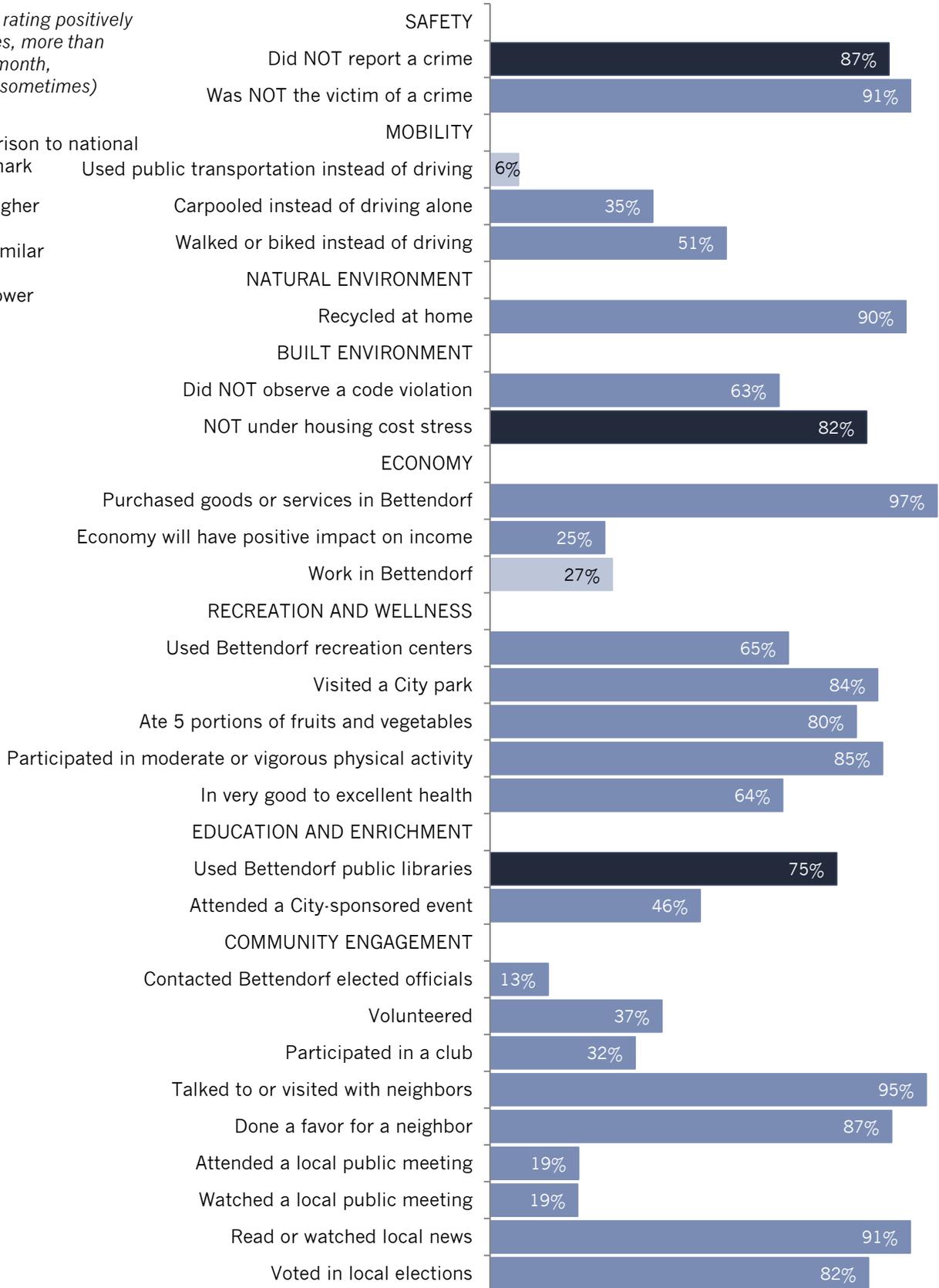
# The National Citizen Survey™

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

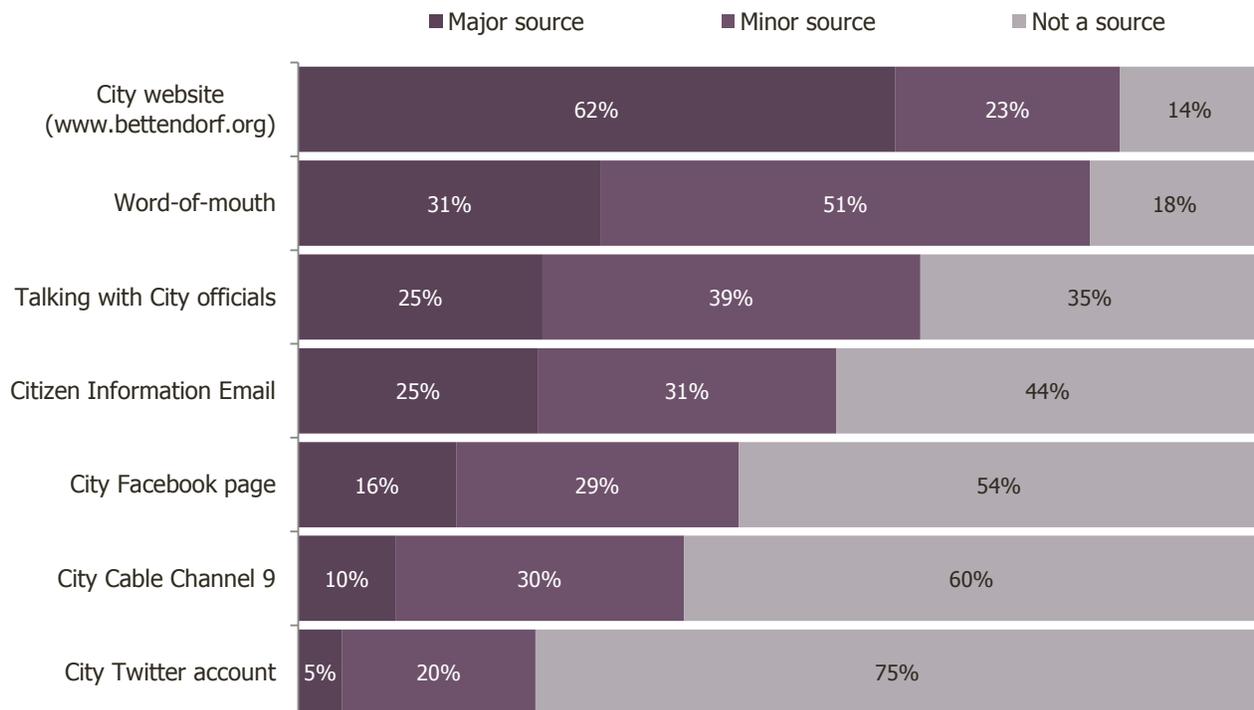


# Special Topics

The City of Bettendorf included two custom questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked residents how much of a source, if at all, they considered different sources to be for obtaining information about the City. At least 8 in 10 residents considered the City website and word-of-mouth to be a major or minor source of information. A majority of residents also indicated that they considered talking with City officials and Citizen Information Email to be at least minor sources of information. Fewer than half of respondents indicated that the City Facebook page, City Cable Channel 9 and the City Twitter account were sources of information.

Figure 4: Sources of Information about the City Government

*Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the City government and its activities, events and services:*

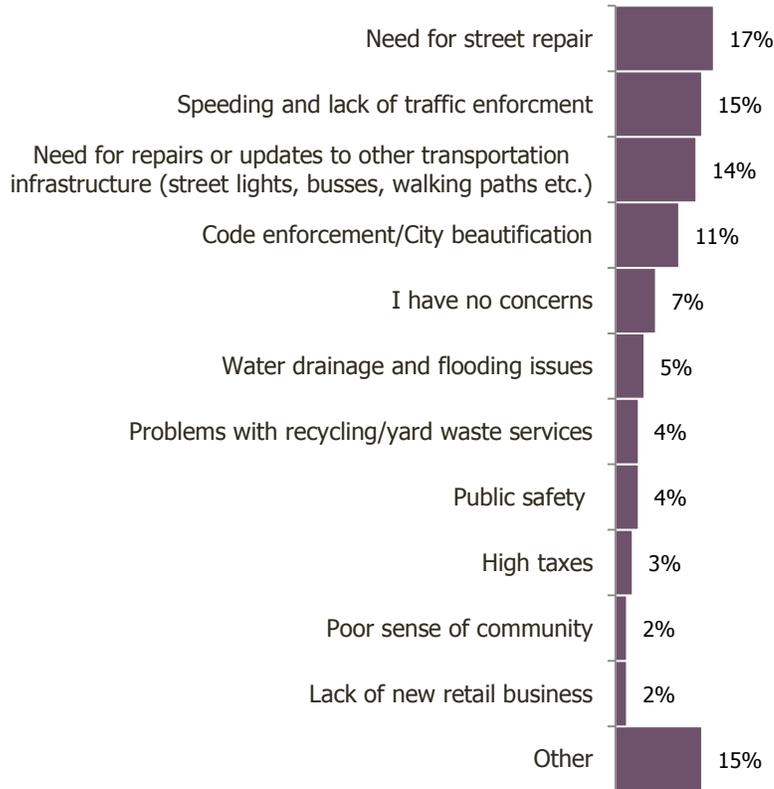


## The National Citizen Survey™

Survey recipients were asked to write-in one concern that they had in their neighborhood that they would want the City to know about. Of the 218 resident who wrote in a response, 17% mentioned a street repair related issues and 15% mentioned a speeding or traffic enforcement related concern (for full verbatim responses, see the *Open End Report* under separate cover).

Figure 5: Concerns in Resident Neighborhoods

*Please share a single specific concern in your neighborhood that you would like the City to know about, if any. If relevant, please list the street or location that is being discussed.*



# Conclusions

## **Bettendorf residents enjoy an exceptionally high quality of life.**

A vast majority of respondents (93%) rated the overall quality of life in Bettendorf as excellent or good. More than 9 in 10 residents said they would recommend Bettendorf and plan to remain living in Bettendorf for the next five years. Ratings for features that enhance quality of life, such as Bettendorf as a place to raise children, the overall image of the City and their neighborhoods as place to live were given positive ratings by almost all respondents; all of these ratings were higher than in comparison communities and remained stable from 2014 to 2016. Additionally, about 8 in 10 residents rated Bettendorf's sense of community as excellent or good, a rating that was higher than ratings in other communities across the nation.

## **Safety and Economy continue to be top priorities for the community.**

Residents indicated that Economy and Safety are important areas for the Bettendorf community to focus on in the next two years. Almost all residents (95%) gave excellent or good ratings to the overall feeling of safety in Bettendorf. Ratings for Safety-related services like police services, crime prevention and fire prevention, tended to be strong and higher than ratings in comparison communities. Close to 9 in 10 residents reported that they had NOT been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months; this rate is higher than rates seen in other communities.

Ratings for aspects of Economy tended to positive. About 9 in 10 survey participants gave excellent or good ratings to the overall economic health of the City. However, only about one-quarter of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the vibrant downtown/commercial area; this rating is lower than the benchmark and declined from 2014 to 2016. Ratings for other aspects of Economy tended to be similar to other communities: almost all residents (97%) reported buying goods or services in Bettendorf and about 7 in 10 gave positive ratings to local businesses and services.

## **Residents give high ratings to aspects of Mobility, but still see room for improvement.**

About 9 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall ease of travel in Bettendorf. Additionally, at least 8 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings to street lighting, snow removal, travel by car, ease of walking and paths and walking trails; all of these aspects received ratings that were higher than ratings in comparison communities. However, residents indicated that they still see room for improvement in Mobility: in Bettendorf's open-ended question, the top three types of concerns residents listed their neighborhoods were all related to Mobility. About 4 in 10 respondents listed concerns related to street repair, traffic enforcement, and other transportation-related infrastructure like bike paths and street lights.

## **City services consistently meet or exceed the needs and expectations of residents.**

Bettendorf residents gave high marks to the services provided by their City government: every facet in the pillar of Governance (except for Natural Environment) was rated higher than the national benchmarks. Public libraries, City parks, police services, fire prevention and yard-waste pick up were given positive ratings by at least 9 in 10 residents; all of these ratings were higher than ratings in comparison communities. Residents also indicated that they trusted and felt confident in the Bettendorf government: at least three quarters of residents gave excellent or good ratings to the job the City does at treating all residents fairly, being honest, acting in the best interest of the City and their confidence in the City government. Ratings for City services tended to remain stable from 2014 to 2016.