

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

**Morristown, TN**  
Community Livability Report

2018



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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Morristown. 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.

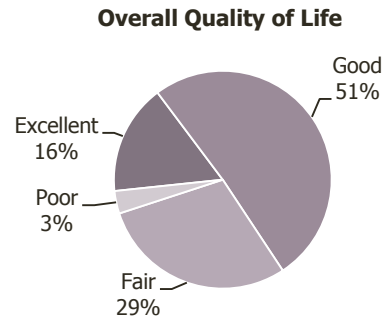
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 411 residents of the City of Morristown. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for all respondents. 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 Morristown

About two-thirds of residents rated the quality of life in Morristown as excellent or good. This rating was similar to the national benchmark (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.

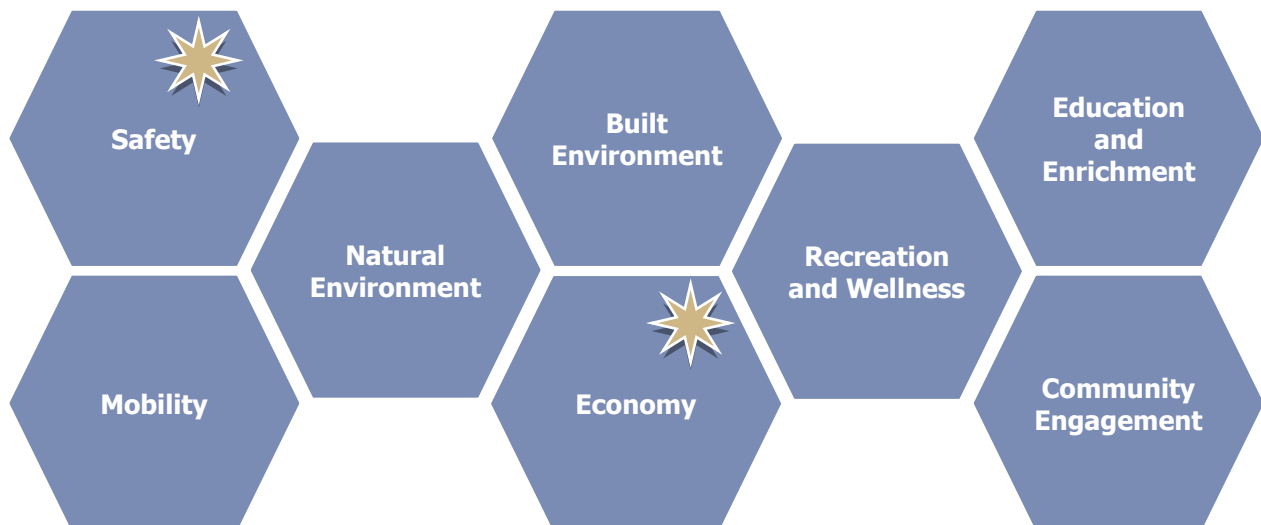
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2017, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Morristown community in the coming two years. Ratings for each facet were reviewed positively and were similar to national averages. 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 Morristown’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

★ Most important



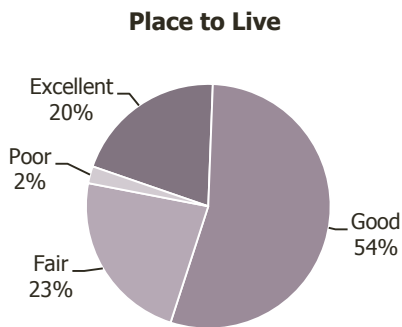
# Community Characteristics

*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. Around three-quarters of survey respondents positively scored the city as an excellent or good place to live. Residents' reviews of Morristown as a place to live were on par with other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Morristown as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Morristown and its overall appearance. About two-thirds or more of residents were pleased with their neighborhood as a place to live and Morristown as a place to raise children and as a place to retire, all of which were similar to the benchmark comparison. Fewer respondents felt positively about the overall image and appearance of the city, which lagged behind comparison communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, at least half of respondents positively scored most aspects of Community Characteristics, tending to yield ratings similar to national benchmarks. Within the facet of Safety, all aspects were rated positively by at least 7 in 10 survey respondents and were comparable with national averages. Similarly, ratings for Recreation and Wellness measures continued to be on par with comparison communities as in previous survey iterations; however, more residents were pleased with the availability of affordable quality food in 2018 (see the *Trends over Time Report* for more details).



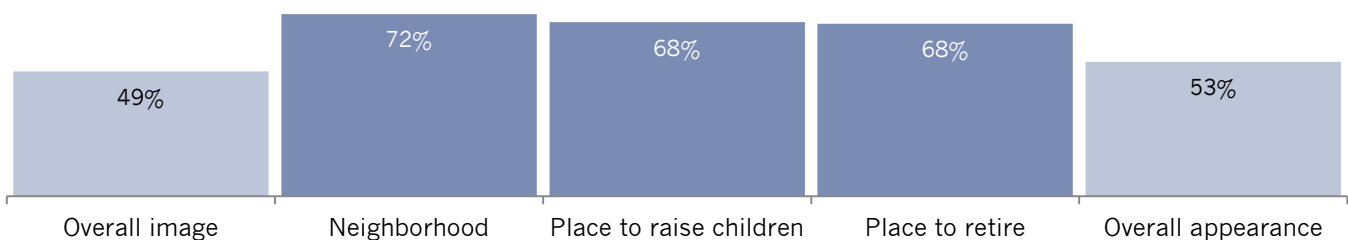
Ratings for other areas tended to be varied; for example, within Mobility, about three-quarters felt positively about the overall ease of travel and at least half awarded high marks to measures related to car travel (ease of travel by car, public parking and traffic flow). However, scores for alternative modes of transportation were below average, including the availability of paths and walking trails, ease of walking (which declined since 2017) and travel by bicycle. Likewise, about two-thirds of community members awarded high marks to the overall natural environment, but assessments for cleanliness and air quality in Morristown were below average.

Participants' evaluations for Economy-related aspects were also on either side of the spectrum; scores for Morristown as a place to visit were lower than comparison communities. On the other hand, residents' reviews for employment opportunities increased in 2018 and outpaced the national average. Additionally, about half thought highly of other Economy measures, including overall economic health, cost of living, and shopping opportunities; these were similar to ratings given in comparison communities and to ratings awarded in previous years.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



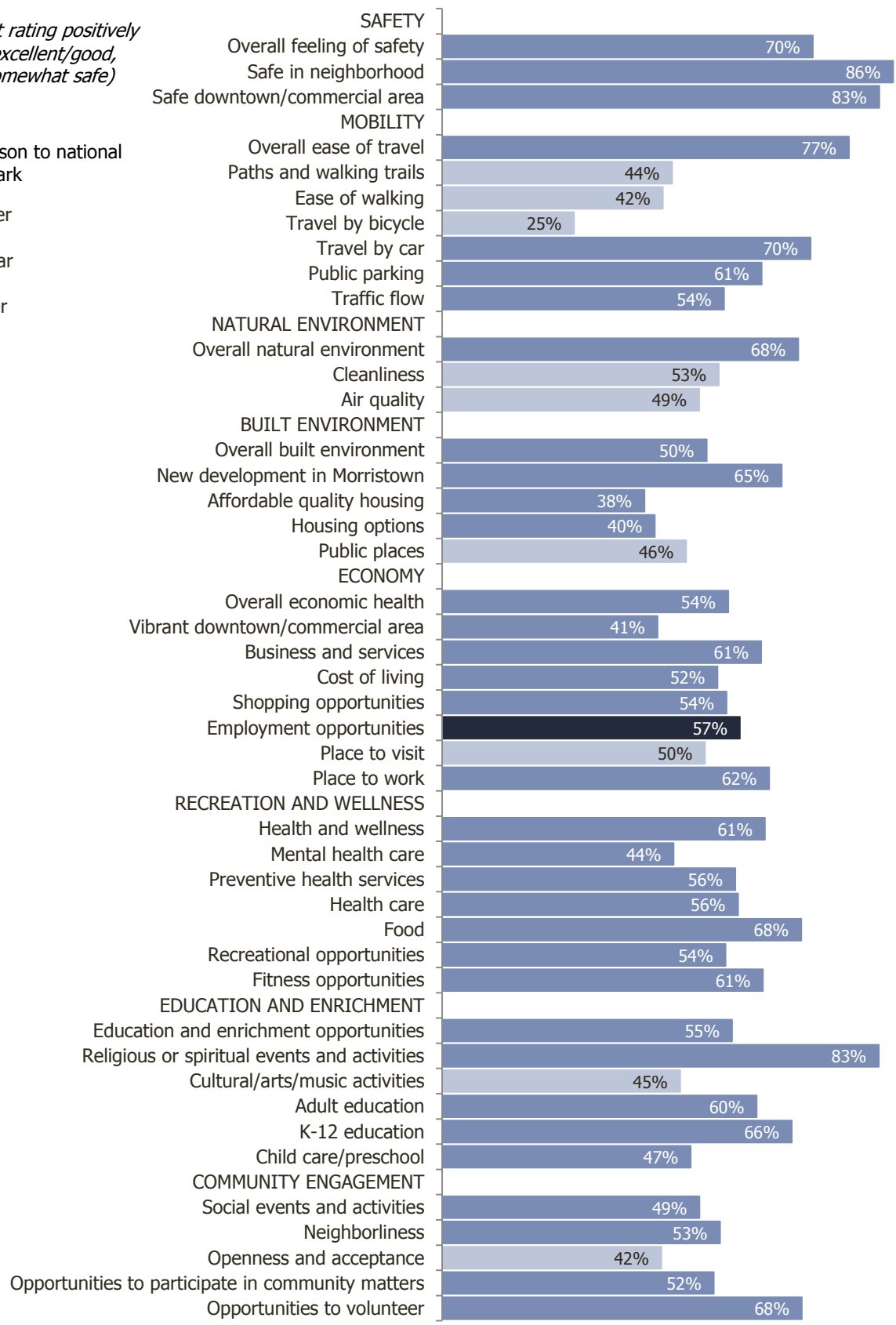
# The National Citizen Survey™

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 Morristown meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

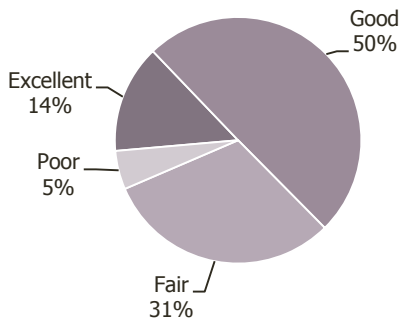
The overall quality of the services provided by Morristown as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of survey respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall services provided by the City. Marks for City services as well as services provided by the Federal Government were similar to national averages.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Morristown’s leadership and governance. Respondents’ reviews for the overall direction of the City and the government treating all residents fairly were higher in 2018. All local efforts were rated similarly to communities across the nation.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Morristown. Broadly, a majority of residents rated these services and amenities as excellent or good, and similar to communities across the nation. The highest rated services tended to be related to Safety and the Natural Environment, including fire, ambulance/EMS, garbage collection, and recycling, with at least 8 in 10 awarding high marks to each. Moreover, respondents awarded higher assessments for emergency preparedness and recycling, open space and natural areas preservation services in 2018 than 2017.

All Mobility-related services were favorably evaluated by about one-third or more of respondents and were similar to ratings awarded in previous years; however, ratings for sidewalk maintenance increased, while assessments for street cleaning decreased from 2017 to 2018. Other notable trends were improvements in evaluations for economic development, health services and public information services.

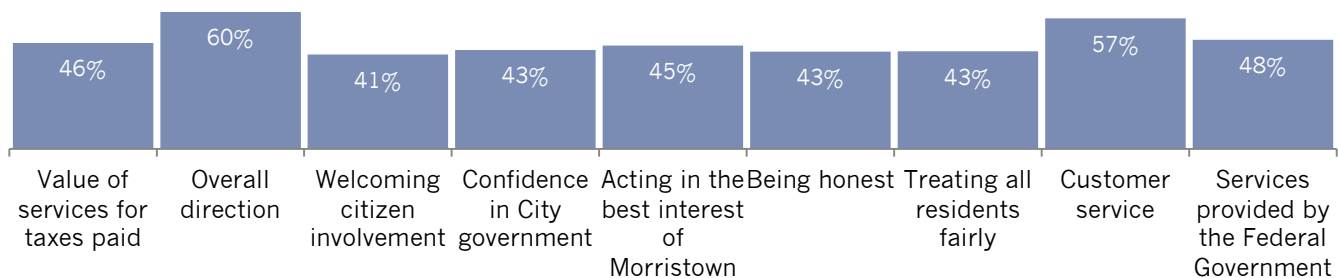
**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

*Comparison to national benchmark*

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



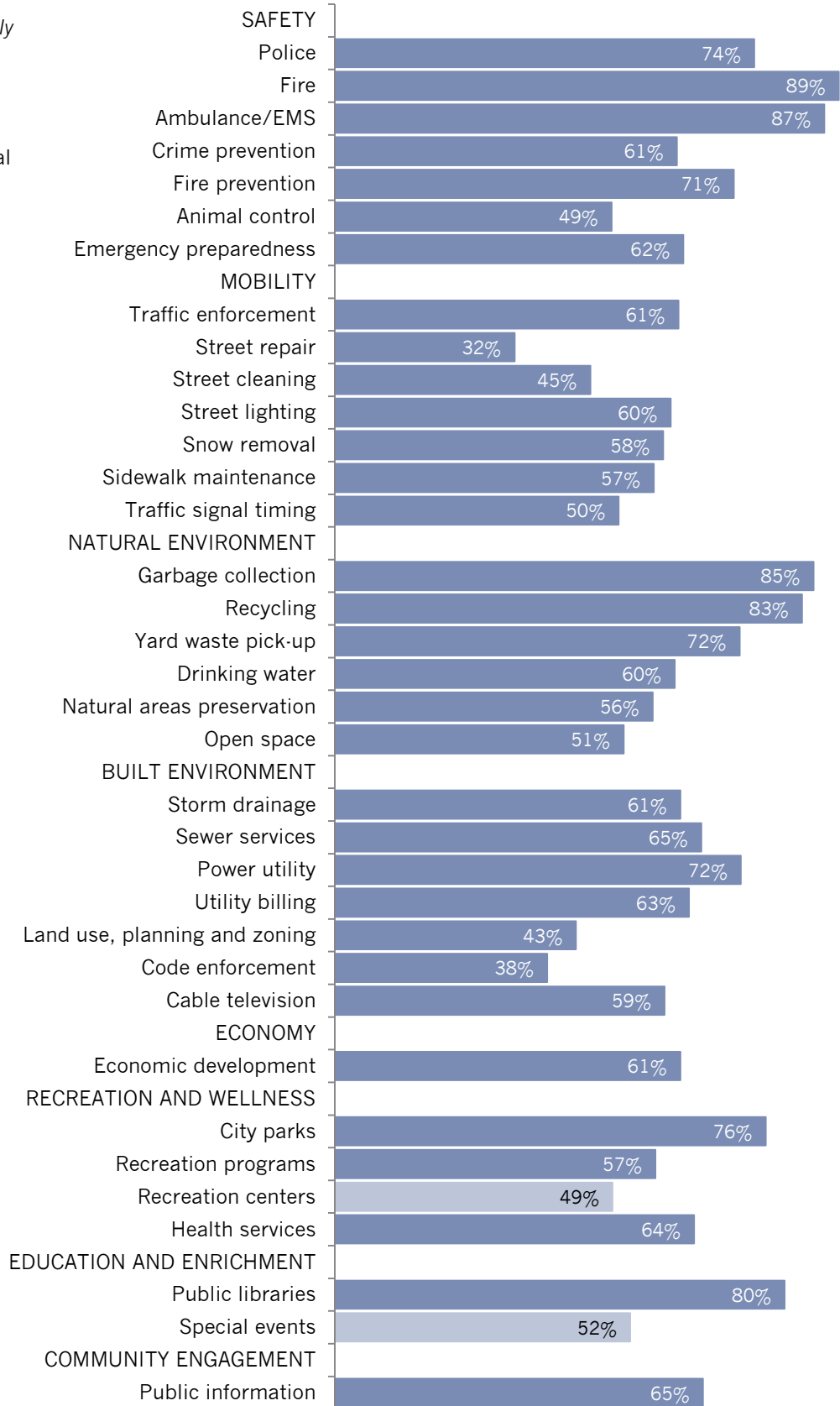
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower





# Participation

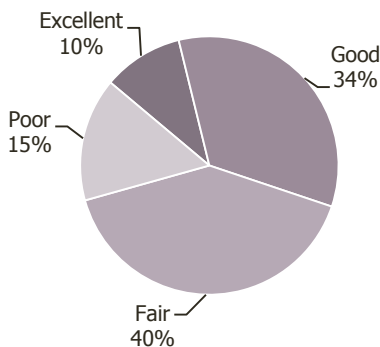
*Are the residents of Morristown connected to the community and each other?*

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. Lower than other communities in the U.S., about 4 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good scores to the sense of community in Morristown.

The survey included over 20 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates within Morristown varied widely and tended to be on par with Morristown’s national peers. At least 8 in 10 participants indicated they purchased goods or services in the community, visited a City park, participated in healthy eating habits and regularly engaged in moderate or vigorous physical activity; however, fewer residents reported they were in very good or excellent health in 2018 and this level lagged behind those reported by residents elsewhere. As for Community Engagement, most residents reported high attention to local news and voting behaviors.

Morristown residents exhibited higher than national average participation rates for working in the community and participating in religious or spiritual activities. Compared to municipalities across the country, fewer Morristown community members reported they had walked or biked instead of driving, recycled at home, used City public libraries or attended a City-sponsored event.

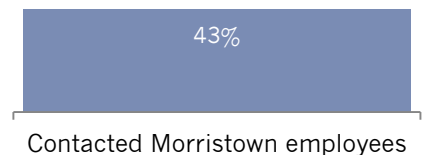
**Sense of Community**



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

*Comparison to national benchmark*

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



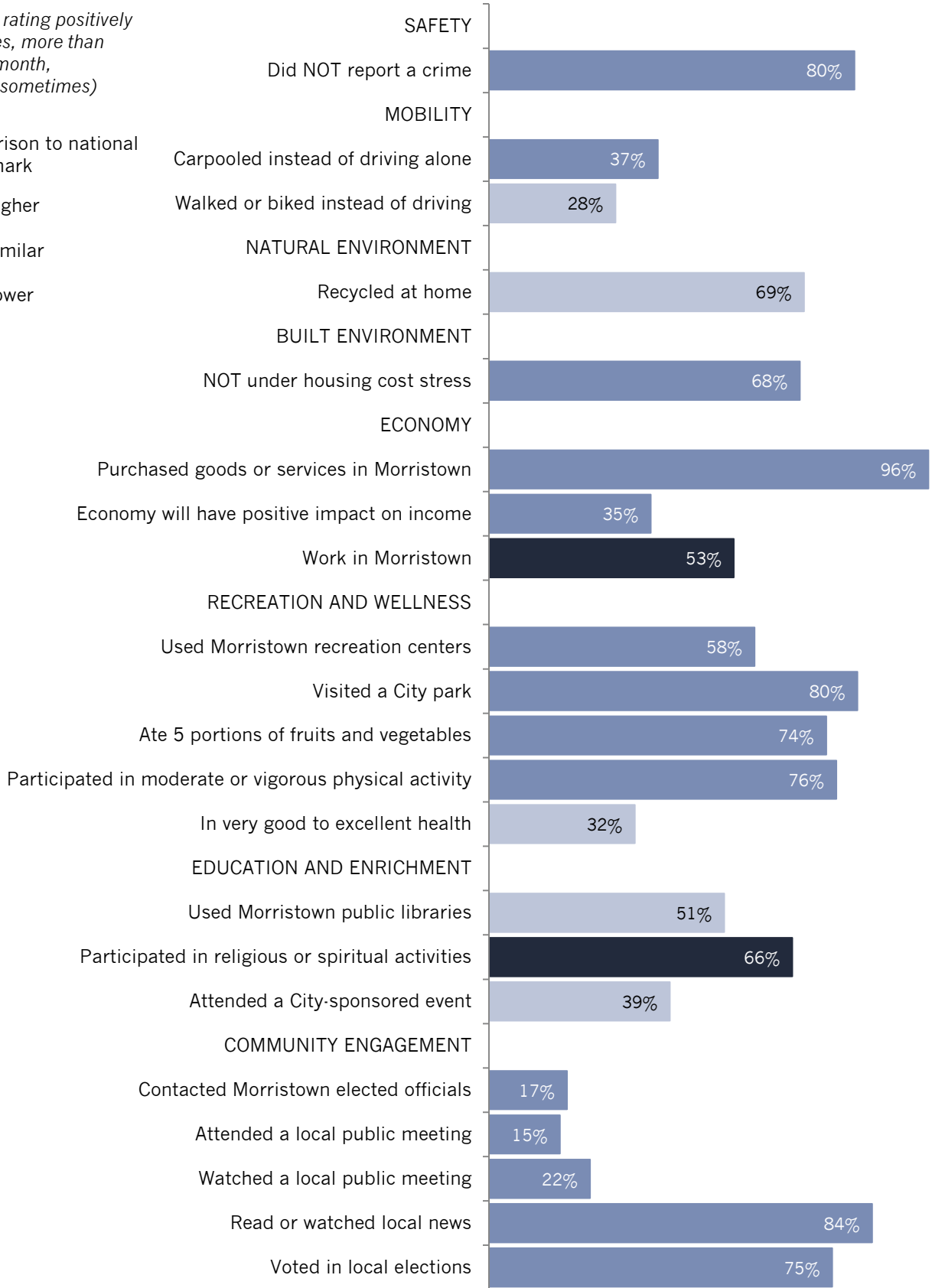
# The National Citizen Survey™

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

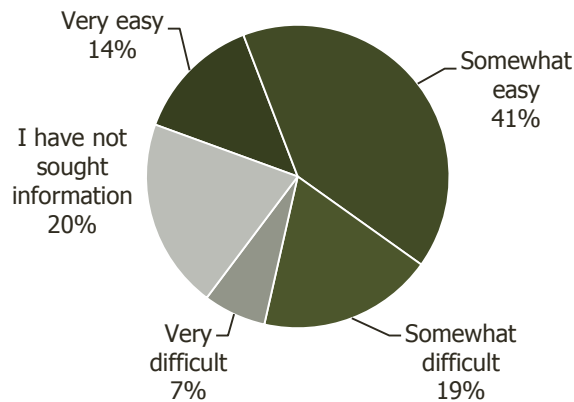


# Special Topics

The City of Morristown included eight questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought feedback from residents regarding flow of information about the City and community events, sense of safety from crime and other possible dangers, contact with City leadership, amenities for a community center and public transportation.

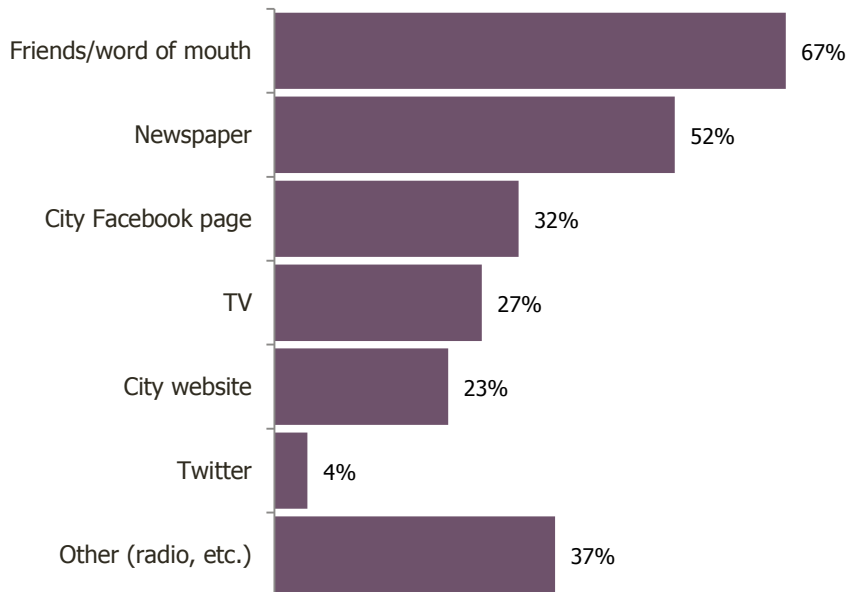
About half of Morristown residents reported they found information about City services or events with ease, while about 2 in 10 indicated they had a somewhat difficult time learning about the City. A similar proportion stated they had not sought out information.

Figure 4: Ease of Finding City Information  
*Please rate how easy or difficult it is to learn about City services or events:*



When they were seeking information about community events, a majority of respondents used friends/word of mouth and newspapers to do so. Less than one-third of residents looked for event information via the City Facebook page, TV or the City website.

Figure 5: Sources of Information about Community Events  
*How do you learn about community events? (Check all that apply)*



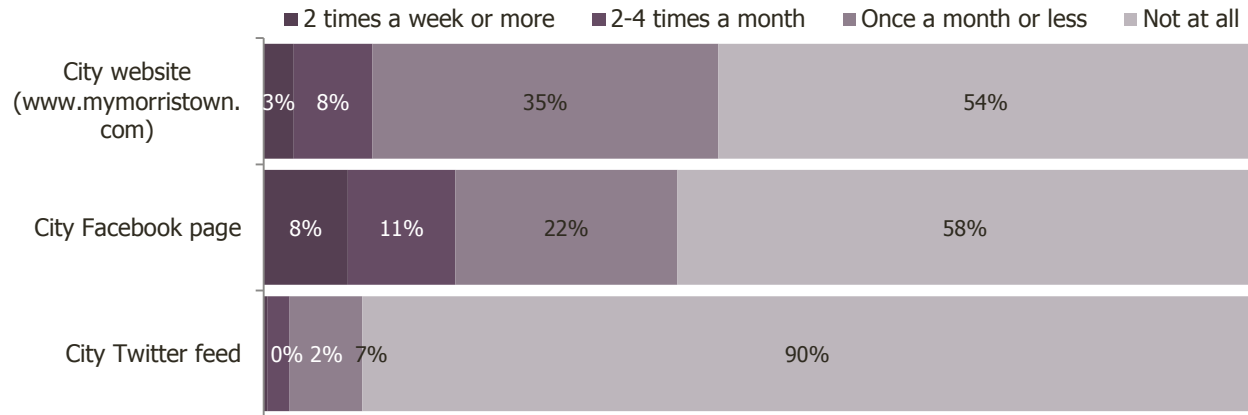
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

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Further, less than half of survey participants had visited the City website, Facebook or Twitter feed pages more than once in the 12 months prior to the survey. However, the Morristown Facebook page was used more regularly than other online sources, with about 2 in 10 indicating they had used the page at least two times a month.

Figure 6: City Sources of Information

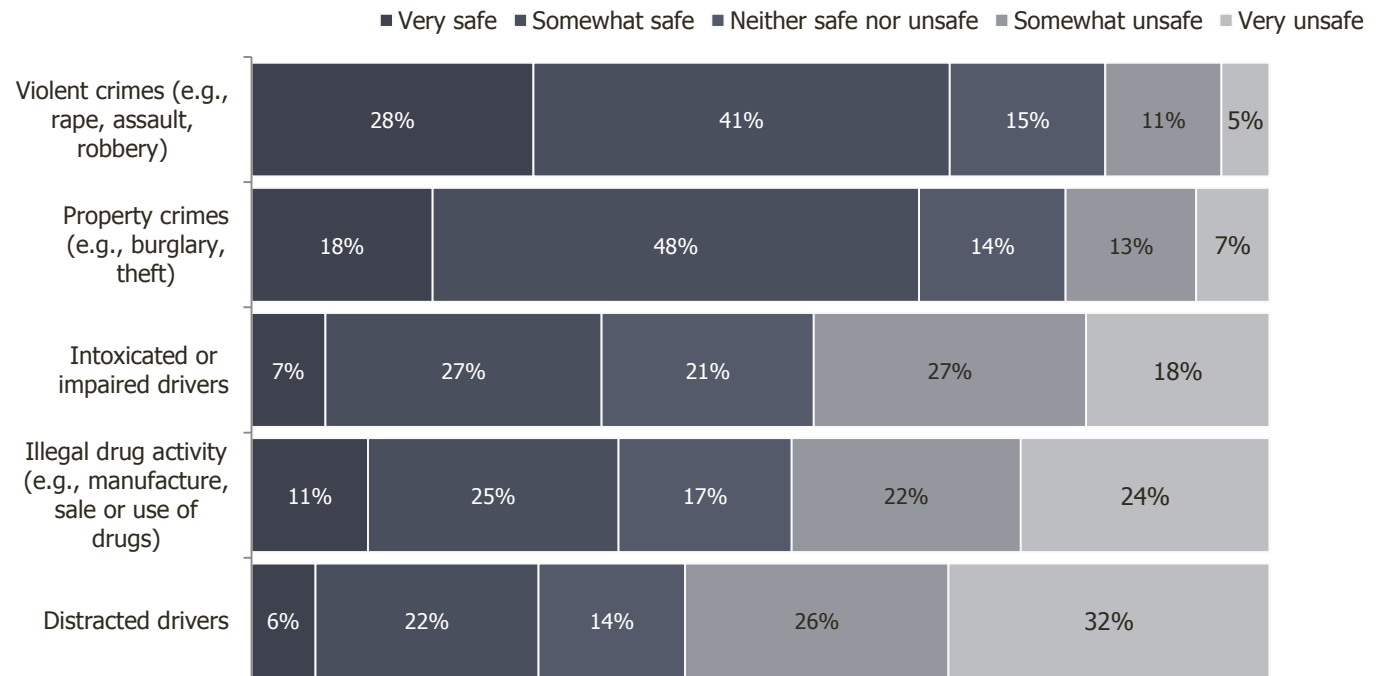
*In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members visited each of the following:*



Residents were asked to gauge their perceptions of personal safety from various possible dangers in the community. Around two-thirds of participants felt safe from violent and property crimes and about half also felt very or somewhat safe from illegal drug activity and intoxicated or impaired drivers. Residents felt the least safe from distracted drivers, with close to 6 in 10 reporting they felt somewhat or very unsafe.

Figure 7: Feelings of Safety

*Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Morristown.*

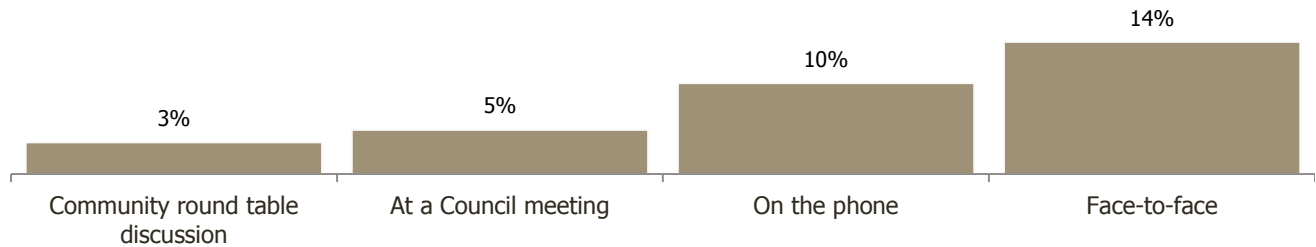


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Few survey respondents reported they had contact with a member of City Council in the previous 12 months; however, residents were more likely to have communicated face-to-face or on the phone than at a Council meeting or round table discussion.

Figure 8: Contact with City Council

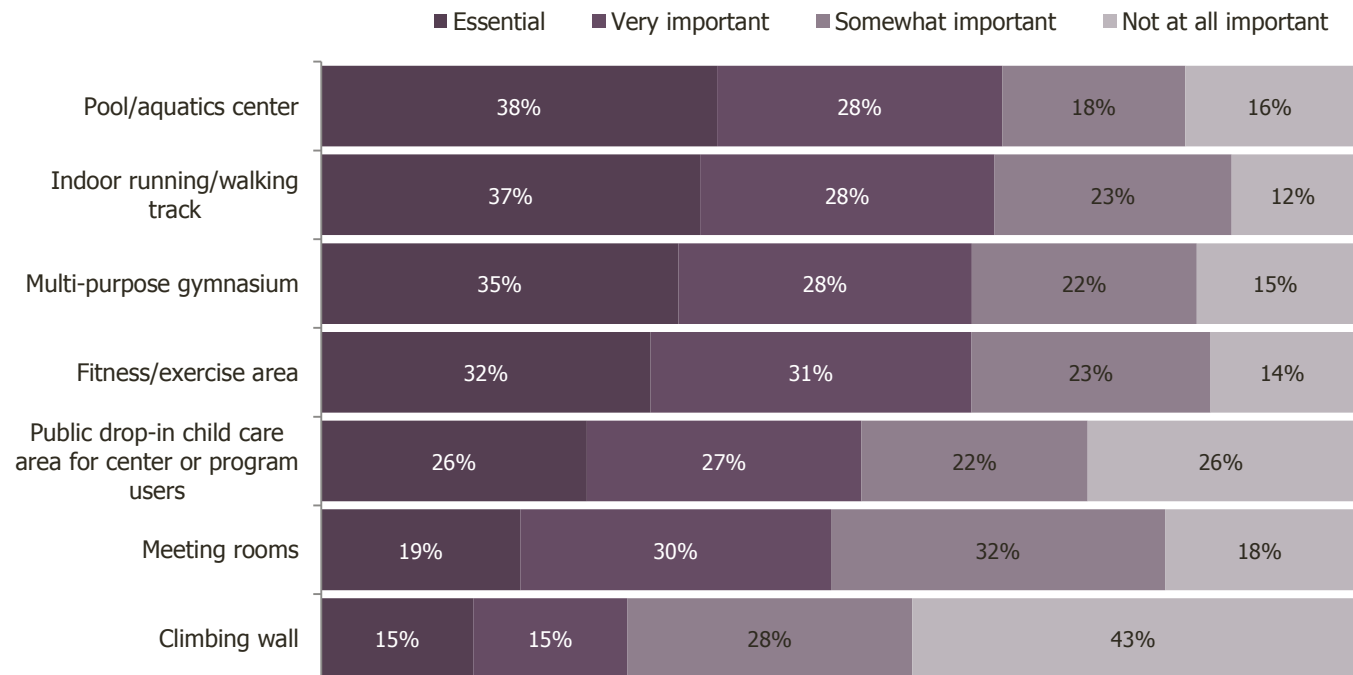
Please indicate if you have had contact with a City Council member in the past 12 months in each of the following ways:



The City also wanted to understand more about what amenities might be important for residents if leadership decided to move forward with building a community center. Participants placed the highest importance on a pool/aquatics center, indoor running/walking track, multi-purpose gymnasium and a fitness/exercise area, with around 6 in 10 indicating these amenities would be essential or very important. Only 30% of residents felt that a climbing wall would be a high priority for a new community center.

Figure 9: Importance of Community Center Amenities

The City of Morristown is considering building a community center. Please rate how important, if at all, each amenity would be to you and your household:



## The National Citizen Survey™

Regarding public transportation, about 4 in 10 residents reported they were likely to utilize a fixed route public transportation option if it were available in Morristown, while a similar proportion were very unlikely to participate. However, including adequate stops to desirable locations, affordable pricing and a stop that was convenient or close to home would make at least 6 in 10 residents more likely to use a fixed route option.

Figure 10: Likelihood of Using Public Transportation

*How likely, if at all, would you be to utilize fixed route public transportation in Morristown?*

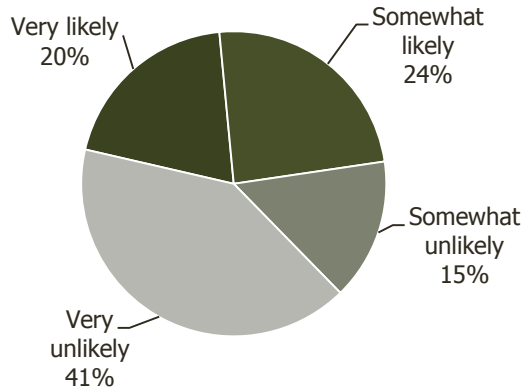


Figure 11: Factors to Increase Likelihood of Using Public Transportation

*Which of the following, if any, would make you more likely to use fixed route public transportation in Morristown? (Select all that apply)*



Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

# Conclusions

## **Residents value Recreation and Wellness and providing additional fitness-related amenities could enhance life in Morristown.**

Morristown residents rated most aspects of Recreation and Wellness positively and similarly to comparison communities. At least half of residents were pleased with health and wellness opportunities, recreational and fitness opportunities and services related to this area, including City parks and recreation programs. Additionally, community members gave higher reviews to the availability of affordable quality food and health services in 2018 than 2017. However, survey participants were less enamored with recreation centers, with less than half rating this amenity as excellent or good, which was lower than peer averages. Three-quarters or more of respondents reported engaging in activities related to Recreation and Wellness, although residents who reported being in good health fell below levels seen elsewhere and declined in 2018. When asked about amenities for a possible community center being considered by Morristown leadership, about one-third felt that a pool/aquatics center, indoor running/walking track, multi-purpose gym and fitness/exercise area were essential, and at least an additional one-quarter also felt these amenities would be very important for a new community center.

## **The Economy is an asset and communication about special events could make the community an attractive destination.**

As in previous years, residents identified Economy as an important area for the community to focus on in the coming years. Most aspects of Economy were rated positively by a majority of respondents and were similar to national comparisons. About 6 in 10 residents awarded high marks to Morristown's overall economic health and economic development (a rating that increased in 2018). Morristown was seen as an excellent or good place to work by around 6 in 10 residents, and about half reported working in the city, which outpaced rates seen elsewhere. Almost all residents had purchased goods or services in Morristown, and a majority of respondents were happy with the employment opportunities in Morristown, which improved since 2017 and eclipsed national averages. However, respondents' evaluations of the community as a place to visit lagged behind comparison communities, as did ratings for City-sponsored special events and participation in those events. Participants awarded higher scores to public information services in 2018, which may have contributed to the increase in residents' reliance on the City's Facebook page for information about community events. As respondents also relied heavily upon local newspapers for this community events and City information, utilizing these channels to increase communication about these events could help bolster resident and visitor attendance.

## **There is room for improvement in Mobility, but it may not be a priority for residents.**

Aspects of Mobility received ratings from residents that were mostly similar to national comparisons. Respondents felt positively about aspects of car travel (ease of travel, public parking and traffic flow), with at least half awarding high marks to each. A majority of survey participants also appreciated car-related services, such as traffic enforcement, street lighting, snow removal and traffic signal timing. On the other hand, residents' ratings for alternative modes of transportation, including paths and walking trails, ease of walking and travel by bicycle fell below national averages. Reviews for sidewalk maintenance did improve from 2017 to 2018, but evaluations for the ease of walking still declined since the last survey iteration. Furthermore, fewer Morristown residents walked or biked instead of driving compared to residents elsewhere, but did carpool at rates similar to national levels. In an effort to gauge participation in a fixed route public transportation option, the City asked residents if they would be likely to use this service, but less than half stated they would be very or somewhat likely to use this resource. Also, 4 in 10 reported they would be very unlikely to use fixed route public transit. However, 7 in 10 community members indicated they would be more likely to use public transit if there were adequate stops to desirable locations and if the pricing were affordable, and about 6 in 10 felt that the convenience and distance of the stops to their home would entice them to use the option.