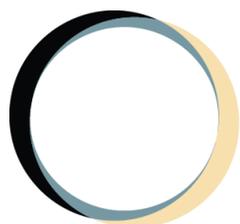


**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

**Sevierville, TN**  
Community Livability Report

2015



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# 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 279 residents of the City of Sevierville. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% 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.

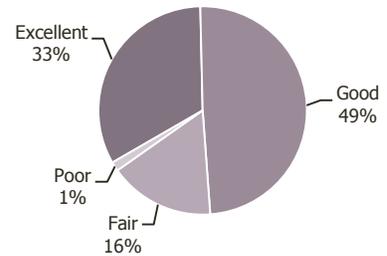


# Quality of Life in Sevierville

Most residents rated the quality of life in Sevierville as excellent or good. This rating was similar to 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



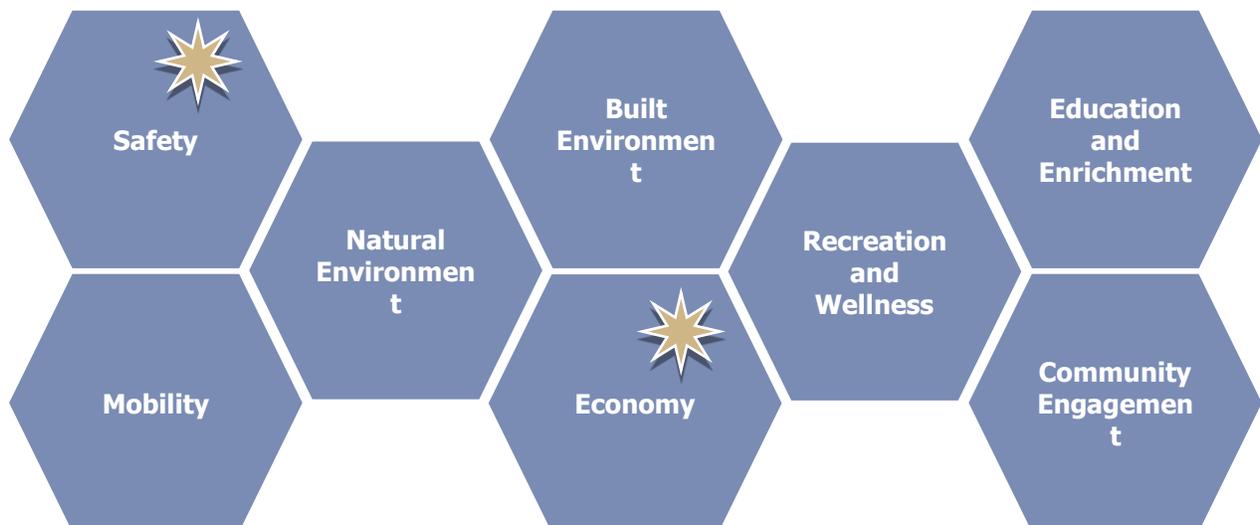
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Economy and Safety as priorities for the Sevierville community in the coming two years. Ratings for these and 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 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, 88% 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. About 8 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings to their neighborhoods, Sevierville as a place to raise children, Sevierville as a place to retire and the overall appearance of Sevierville. Three-quarters of residents rated Sevierville's overall image positively; these ratings tended to be similar to the national benchmark. Sevierville as a place to retire was rated higher than the benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Most residents gave positive ratings for Safety and Natural Environment; and all features within these facets were rated similar to the benchmark. Ratings varied within the facet of Mobility: a majority of residents gave favorable ratings to the overall ease of travel, paths and walking trails, ease of walking, travel by bicycle, travel by car and public parking. About one-third of residents rated traffic flow favorably. All features within Mobility were similar to the benchmark with the exception of overall ease of travel, which was lower than the benchmark. Within the facet of Built Environment, all features were rated as excellent or good by a majority of respondents except the availability of affordable quality housing, %. All aspects of Built Environment were rated similar to the benchmark. Within Economy, most aspects were rated positively by a majority of respondents with the exception of vibrant downtown/commercial area and employment opportunities, which were rated as excellent or good by 35% and 48% of respondents, respectively. Most aspects of Economy were rated similar to the benchmark; however ratings for shopping opportunities and the city as a place to visit were both higher than the national benchmark. All features within the facets of Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were rated positively by a majority of residents with the exception of mental health care in

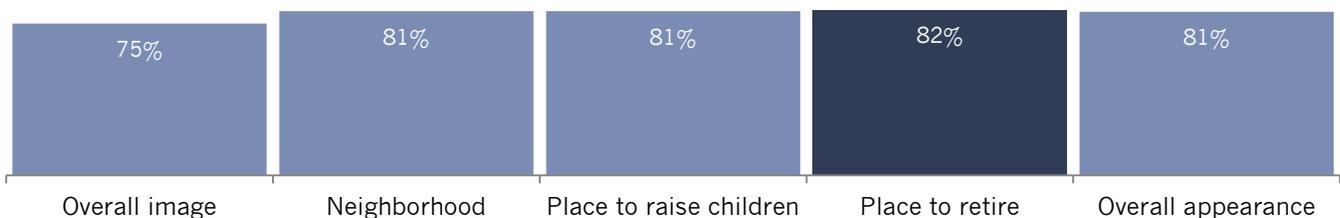


Recreation and Wellness and cultural/arts/music activities in Education and Enrichment, which were both rated positively by about 4 in 10 respondents. All features within these three facets were rated similar to the national benchmark.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



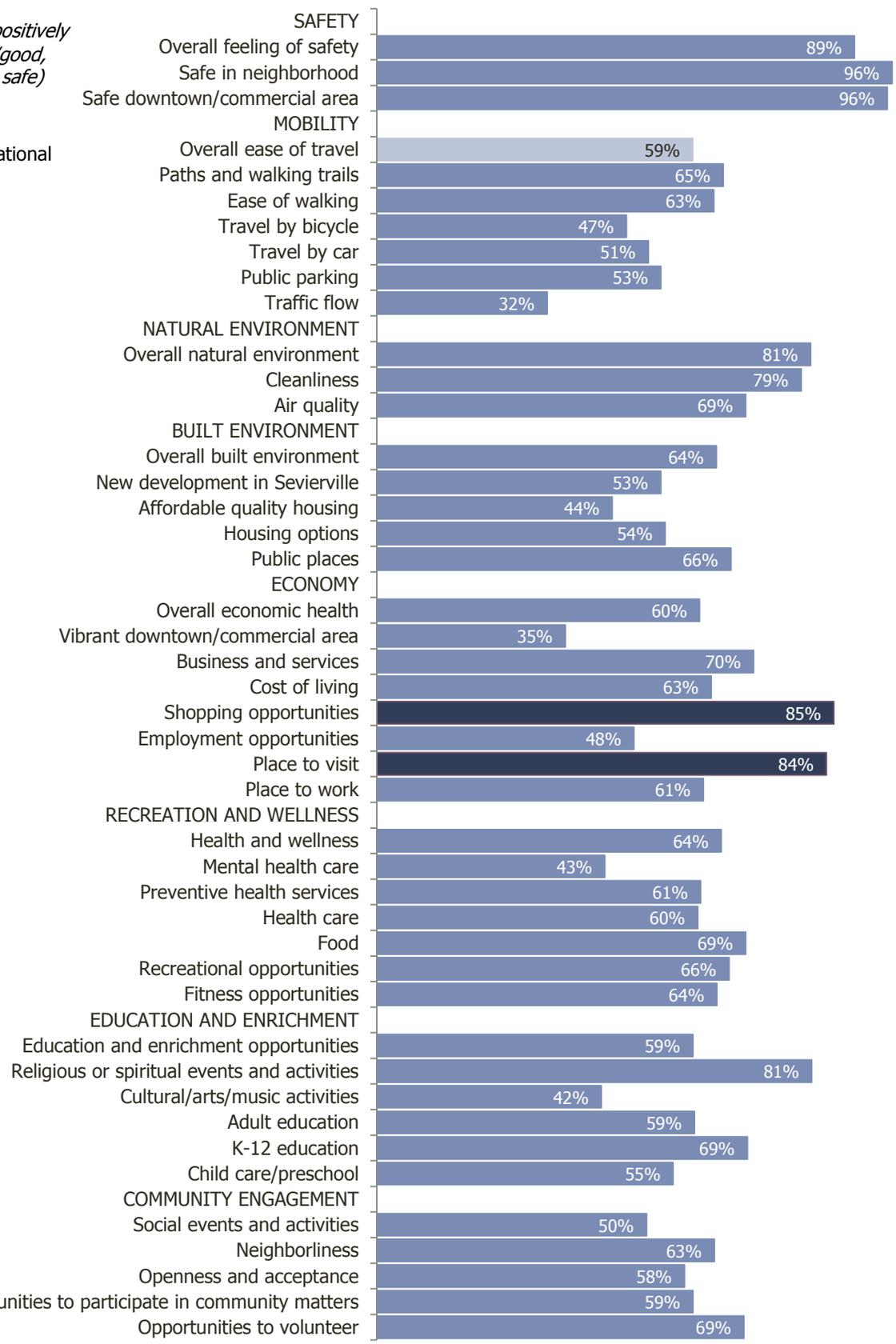
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

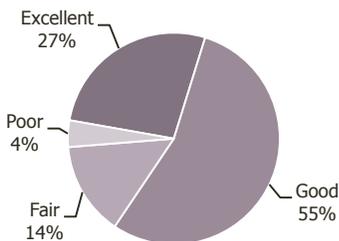
*How well does the government of Sevierville meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

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 positive ratings for the overall quality of City services, but less than half gave positive ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the Federal Government. Both the City of Sevierville and the Federal Government’s ratings were similar those in comparison communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Sevierville’s leadership and governance. About 8 in 10 rated customer service positively, while about two-thirds rated value of services for taxes paid, overall direction and confidence in City government as excellent or good. About 6 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to acting in the best interest of Sevierville, being honest and treating all residents fairly. Fifty-four percent of respondents gave the City a positive rating for welcoming citizen involvement. These ratings were all similar to the national benchmarks.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Sevierville. A majority of residents rated all features within the facets of Safety, Natural Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement favorably; all of these were rated similar to the benchmark with the exception of recycling, which was rated lower than the benchmark. Within the facet of Mobility, ratings varied: a majority gave positive ratings to street lighting, snow removal, traffic enforcement, street cleaning and sidewalk maintenance. Close to half of residents rated street repair positively and about 4 in 10 gave positive ratings to traffic signal timing and bus or transit services. All features of Mobility were rated similar to the benchmark except bus or transit services, which was rated lower than the benchmark. Within Built Environment, 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to power utility and three-quarters rated sewer services and utility billing favorably. About 70% of respondents rated storm drainage positively, while about half gave positive ratings to land use, planning and zoning and code enforcement. All features of Built Environment were rated similar to the benchmark.

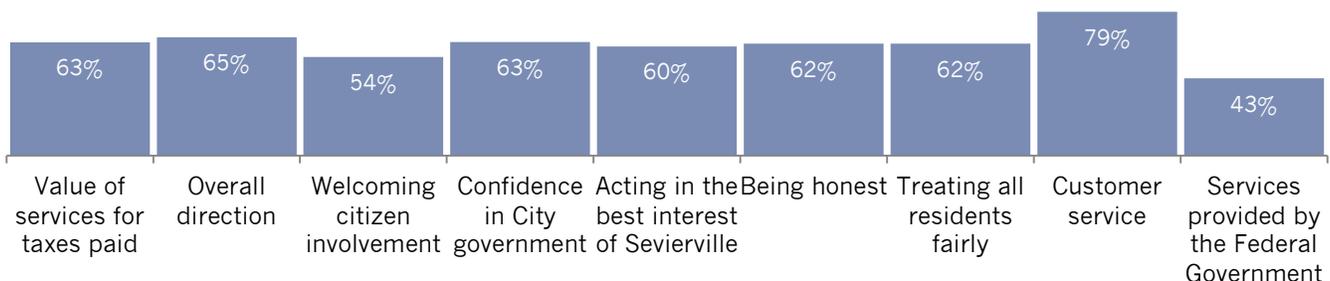
**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



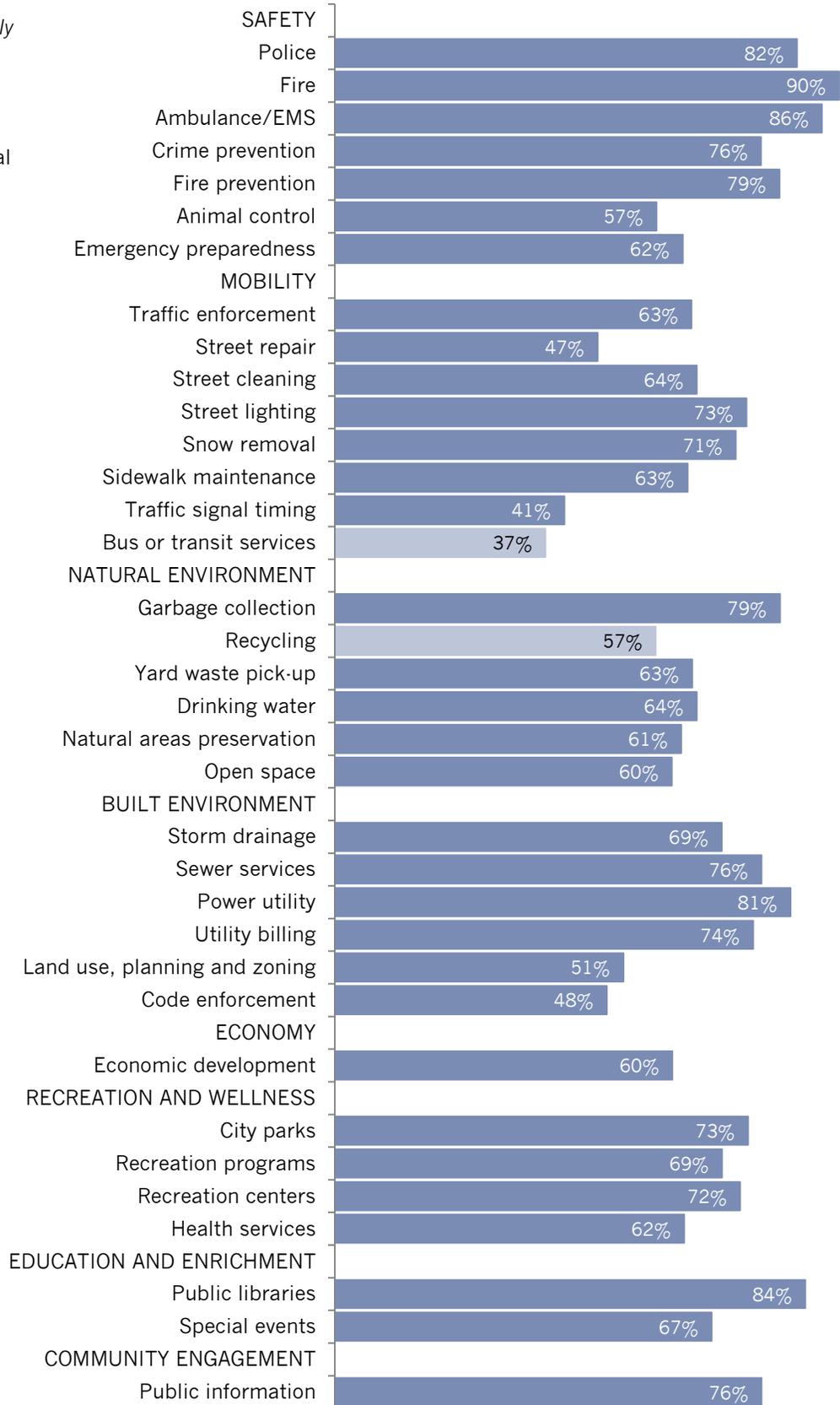
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



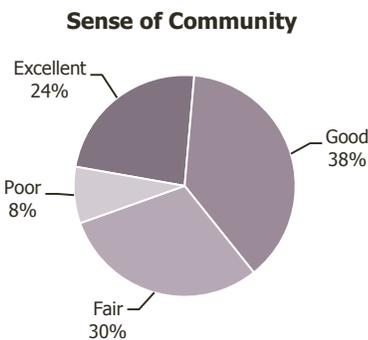
# Participation

*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. Similar to other communities, 61% participants rated the sense of community in Sevierville positively. About 4 in 5 residents plan on remaining in Sevierville would recommend living in Sevierville to others.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. A majority of respondents participated in all aspects of Natural Environment, Built Environment and Recreation and Wellness; these rates of participation tended to be similar to the benchmark. However, fewer residents in Sevierville reported that they had made efforts to make their homes more energy-efficient, recycled at home or visited a City park than in comparison communities. Within Safety, about 9 in 10 respondents were not the victim of a crime and about 30% had stocked supplies for an emergency, and both of these were similar to the benchmark. About 4 in 5 residents did not report a crime, which was a higher rate than other communities across the nation. Within Mobility, more than 1/3 of respondents reported that they had carpooled instead of driving, which was a rate similar to the benchmark. About 30% had walked or biked instead of driving and 16% had used public transportation instead of driving, both of which were lower than the benchmark. Within Economy, virtually all residents had purchased goods or services in Sevierville. More Sevierville residents reported that the economy would have a positive impact on their income and worked in

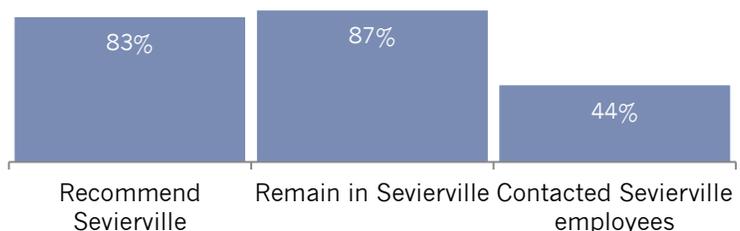
Sevierville than in comparison communities. In Education and Enrichment, 60% of residents had participated in religious or spiritual activities (higher than benchmark) and about 4 in 10 had attended a City-sponsored event (similar to benchmark). Rates of participation varied widely within Community Engagement: about 90% of residents had talked to or visited with neighbors or read or watched local news, and about 8 in 10 had done a favor for a neighbor or voted in local elections. About 4 in 10 residents had volunteered, and one-quarter had participated in a club; about 2 in 10 had campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate or attended a local public meeting; and 13% had contacted Sevierville elected officials. Despite the wide range in rates of participation, all features within Community Engagement were rated similar to the benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



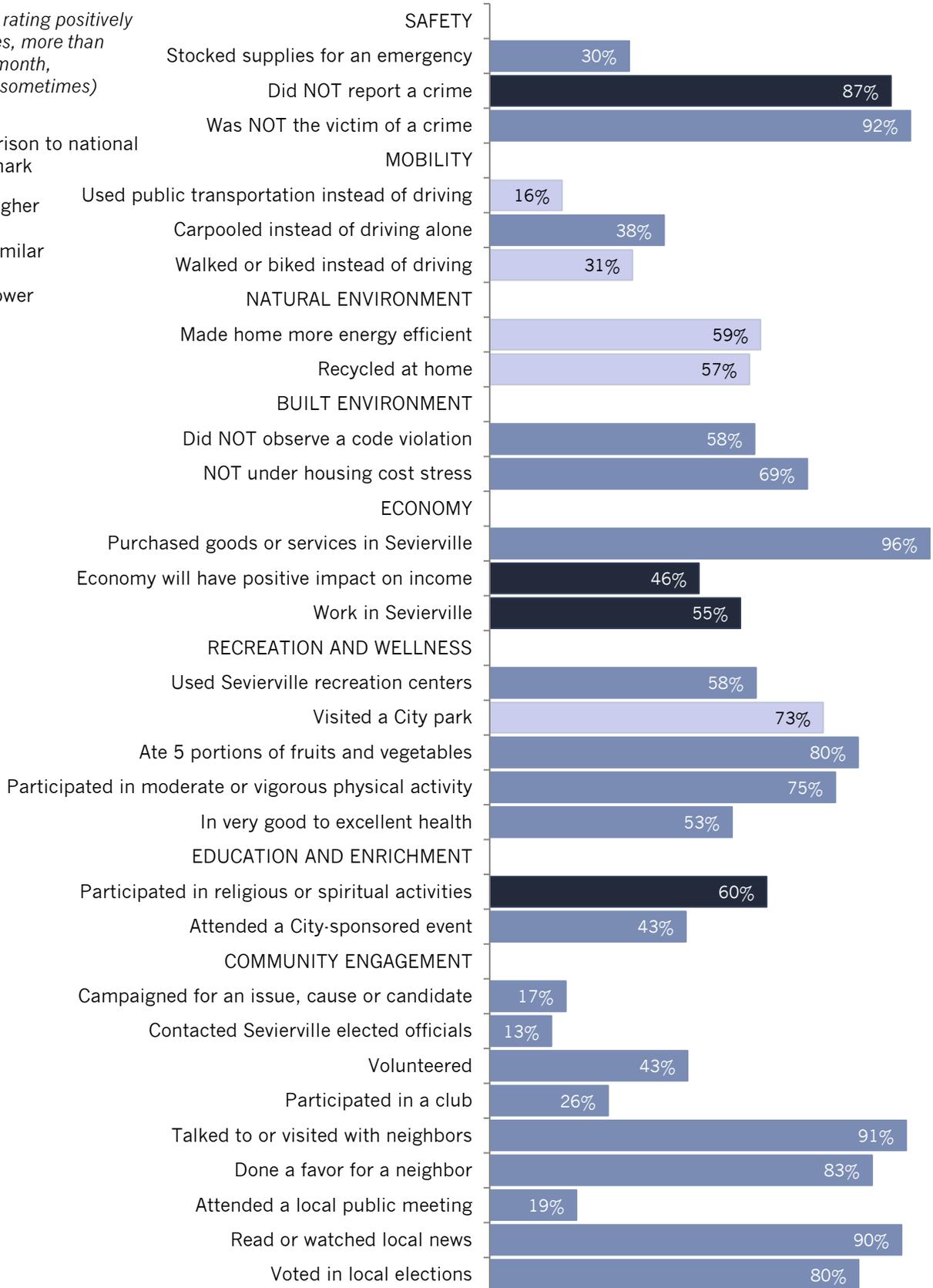
# The National Citizen Survey™

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

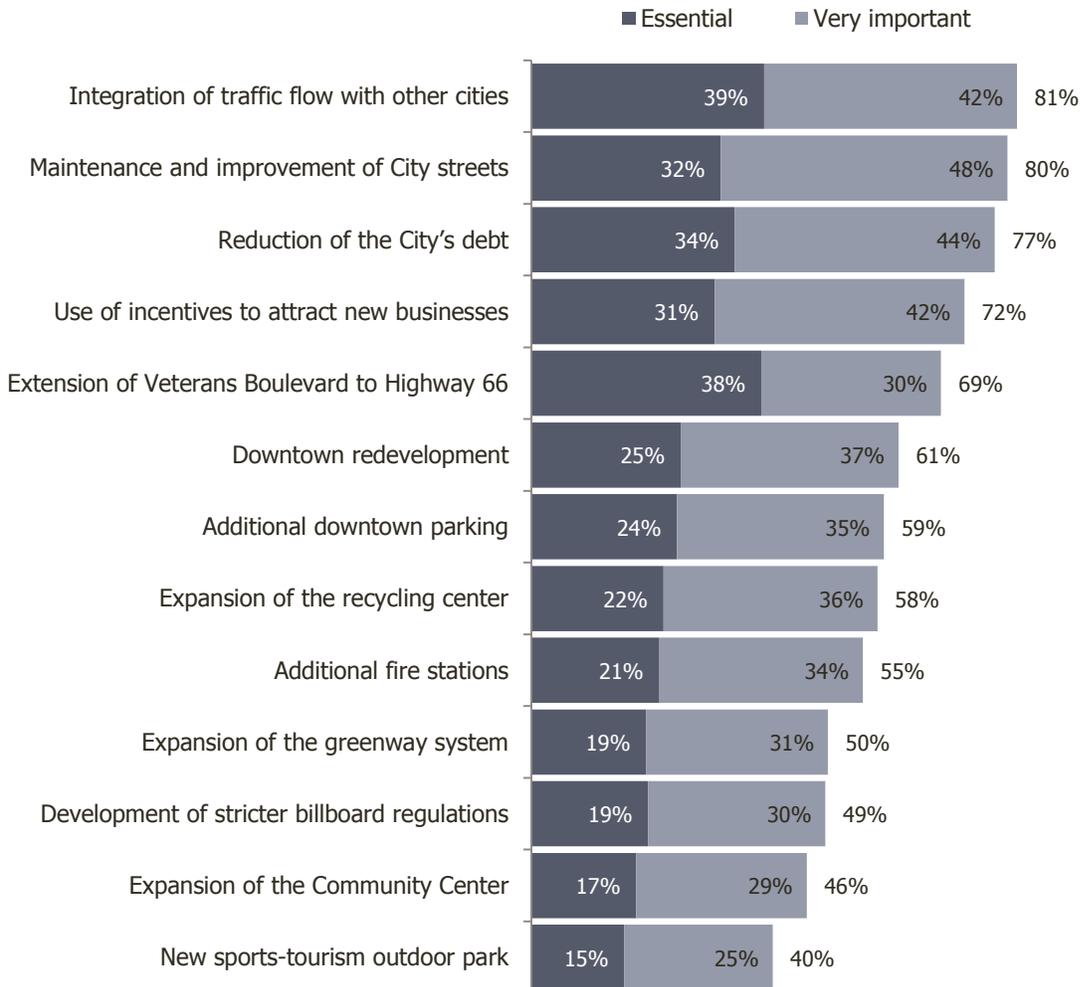


# Special Topics

The City of Sevierville included three questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked residents to rate the importance of several focus areas for the City over the next five years. About 4 in 5 residents rated the integration of traffic flow with other cities and maintenance and improvement of City streets as essential or very important, and about three-quarters rated the reduction of the City’s debt as essential or very important. A majority of residents rated the use of incentives to attract new businesses, the extension of Veterans Boulevard to Highway 66, downtown redevelopment, additional downtown parking, expansion of the recycling center and additional fire stations as essential or very important to focus on. Fewer residents indicated that that the remaining four options were essential or very important areas of focus.

Figure 4: Focus Areas

*Keeping a limited budget in mind, please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the City of Sevierville to focus on each of the following over the next five years:*

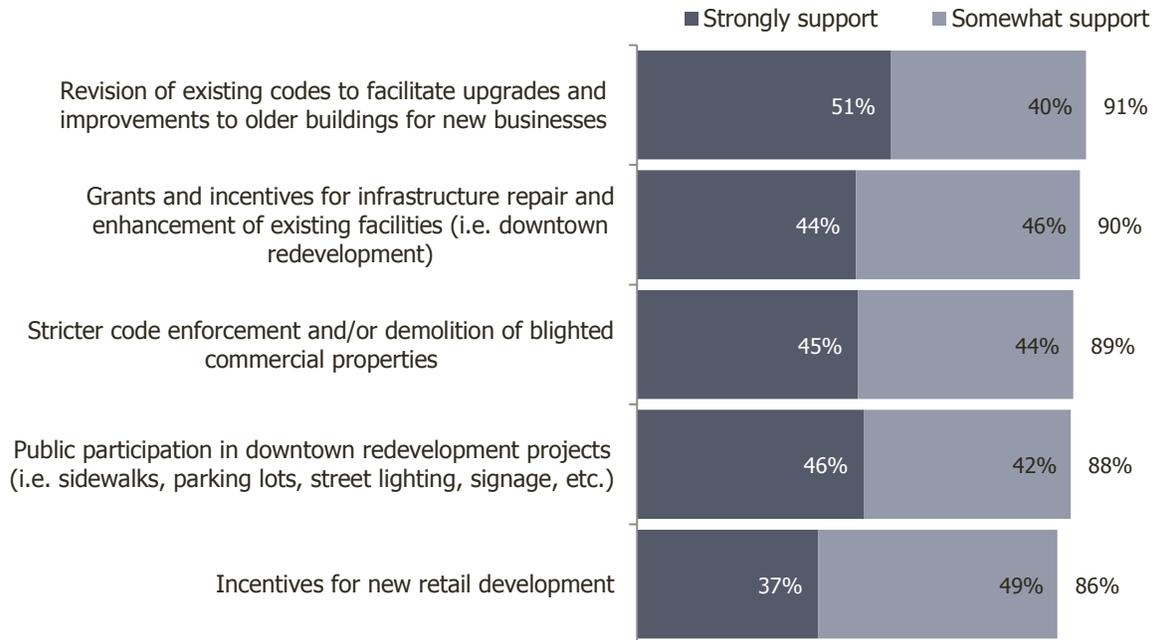


## The National Citizen Survey™

The second questions asked residents to indicate their support or opposition for activities related to retail development in Sevierville. A strong majority of residents either strongly or somewhat supported all of the listed possible activities.

Figure 5: Retail Development

*Please rate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following activities as they relate to retail development:*

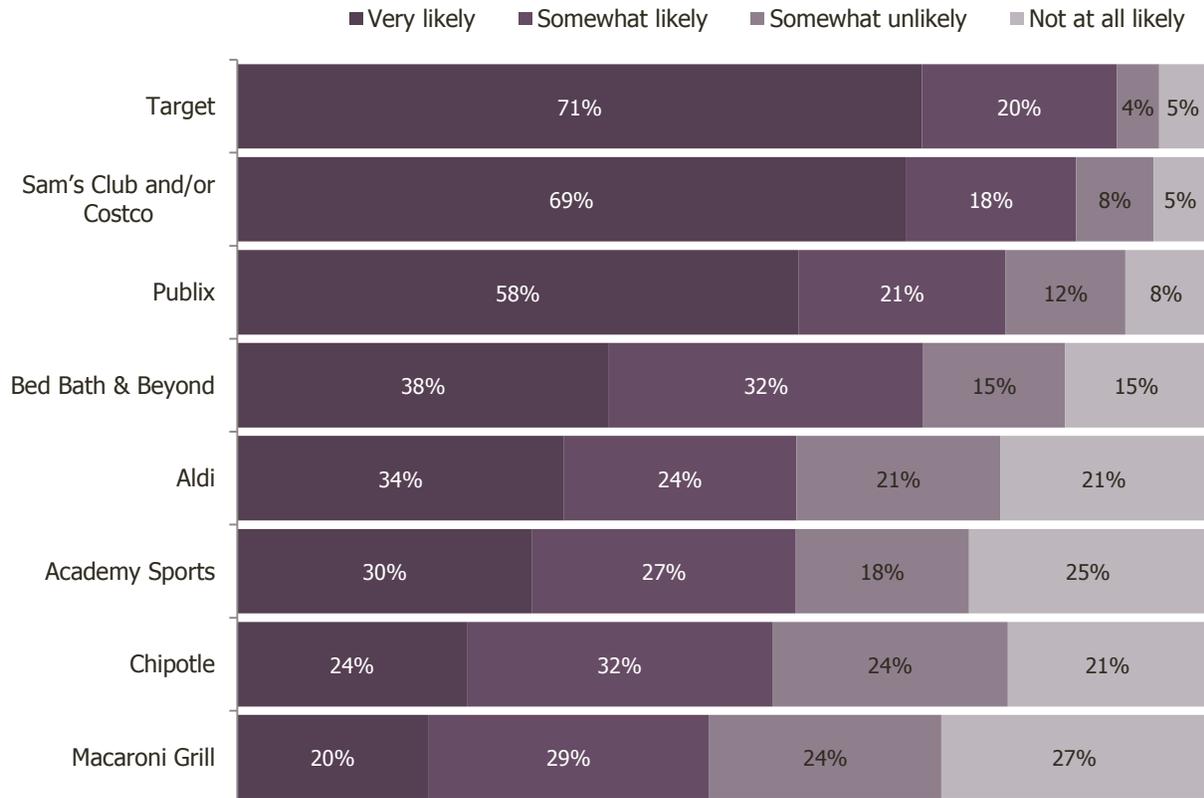


## The National Citizen Survey™

The final questions asked residents how likely or unlikely they were to visit establishments if they were located in Sevierville. About 9 in 10 residents indicated that they would be very or somewhat likely to visit Target or Sam’s Club and/or Costco, while about 8 in 10 would be at least somewhat likely to visit Publix. About 70% of respondents would be likely to visit Bed Bath and Beyond, and 6 in 10 would be likely to visit Aldi or Academy Sports. Out of the eight possible options, residents were least likely to visit Macaroni Grill and Chipotle.

Figure 6: Likelihood of Visiting Local Establishments

*The following establishments are currently located in Knoxville or other surrounding communities. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you or members of your household would be to visit these stores and restaurants if they were located in Sevierville:*



# Conclusions

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

At least 4 in 5 residents rated their quality of life positively and think Sevierville is an excellent or good place to live. Three-quarters of respondents or more gave positive ratings for their neighborhoods, for Sevierville as a place to raise children, Sevierville as a place to retire, the overall appearance of Sevierville and the overall image of Sevierville. These ratings remained stable over time (see the *Trends over Time* report for more information) and were similar to or higher than the national benchmarks. A strong majority of residents were likely to remain in Sevierville and would recommend living in Sevierville to others.

## **Economy is important to Sevierville residents.**

Out of the eight facets of community livability, Economy was rated as one of the most important to Sevierville residents. Participants generally gave positive ratings for most aspects of Economy across the three pillars of livability, and all features were rated similar to or higher than the national benchmarks. Virtually all residents had purchased goods or services in Sevierville, and a majority of residents worked in Sevierville and rated economic development positively. Ratings for economic development increased from 2013 to 2015. When asked how much they supported or opposed various activities related to retail development, about 9 in 10 Sevierville residents either strongly or somewhat supported all of the listed possible activities. Three-quarters of residents thought the use of incentives to attract new businesses was an essential or very important area of focus for Sevierville in the next five years.

## **Mobility ratings have increased but there are still opportunities for improvement.**

While ratings for Mobility were generally similar to the benchmark across the three pillars, residents rated overall ease of travel and bus or transit services lower than the benchmark; Sevierville residents also used public transportation and walked or biked instead of driving at a lower rate than other communities across the nation. Ratings for traffic flow, travel by car, travel by bicycle, ease of walking and paths and walking trails increased from 2013 to 2015. When asked about the importance of different areas of focus for Sevierville in the next five years, about 8 in 10 residents indicated that integration of traffic flow with other cities and maintenance and improvement of City streets were essential or very important.