

# The National Citizen Survey™

## Scottsdale, AZ

Community Livability Report

2014

# Contents

About.....	1
Quality of Life in Scottsdale .....	2
Community Characteristics .....	3
Governance .....	5
Participation .....	7
Special Topics.....	9
Conclusions .....	11

The National Citizen Survey™  
© 2001-2014 National Research Center, Inc.

National Research Center, Inc.  
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300  
Boulder, CO 80301  
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

International City/County Management Association  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002  
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

# About

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

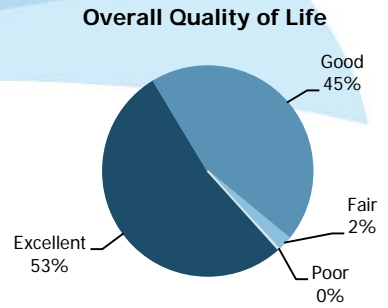
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample selected from 1,200 residents of the City of Scottsdale. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for the entire sample (248 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Scottsdale

Almost all residents rate the quality of life in Scottsdale as “excellent” or “good.” This rating was higher than ratings in other comparison communities.

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.

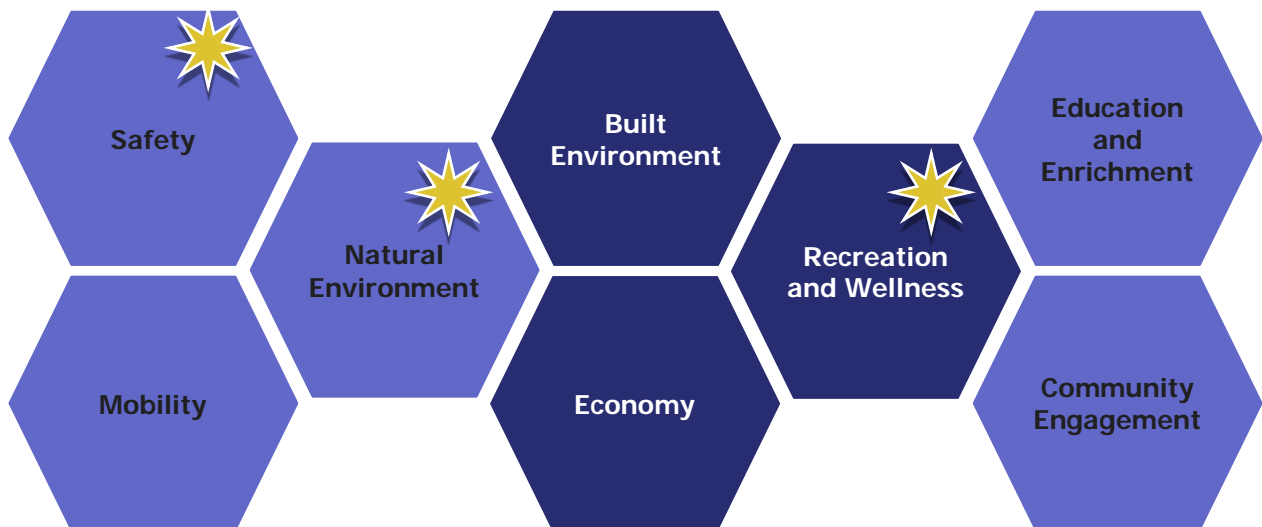


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents’ overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life (Safety, Natural Environment and Recreation and Wellness) as the most central to what makes Scottsdale their home. It is noteworthy that Scottsdale residents gave strong ratings to each of these facets of community. Ratings for Built Environment, Economy and Recreation and Wellness were positive and higher than other communities while the remaining five facets were 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 Scottsdale’s unique questions.

## Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark
- Benchmark comparison not available
- ★ Most important to quality of life



# Community Characteristics

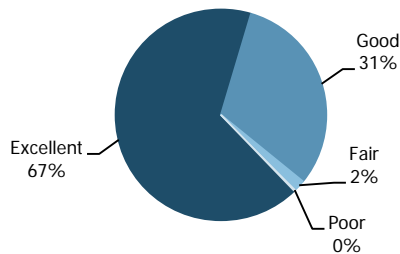
*What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?*

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 Scottsdale, almost all rated the City as an “excellent” or “good” place to live. Respondents’ ratings of Scottsdale as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Scottsdale as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Scottsdale and its overall appearance. These aspects of community were rated as “excellent” or “good” by at least 9 in 10 respondents. The overall appearance of Scottsdale, the overall image, neighborhood as a place to live and Scottsdale as a place to retire were higher than the benchmark comparisons. Scottsdale as a place to raise children was rated similar to the benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. These ratings tended to be higher than ratings in comparison communities. A handful were rated similarly to comparison communities; none were rated lower. At least 94% of respondents rated aspects of Safety as “excellent” or “good.” Of the eight aspects of Economy, seven were rated higher than the benchmark comparisons and one was similar; all but two of these ratings were rated as “excellent” or “good” by at least 8 in 10 respondents. Each of the seven aspects of Recreation and Wellness were rated higher than the benchmark comparison. The facet of Mobility had mixed ratings with five of the eight aspects rated similar to other communities; ratings ranged from 40% to 89% “excellent” or “good.”

Place to Live



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower ■ Not available

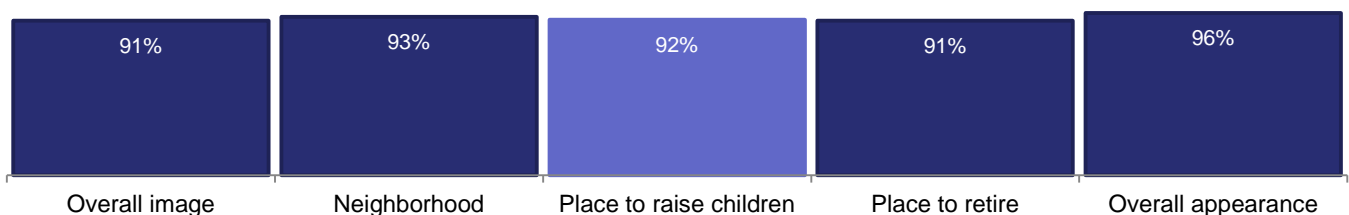
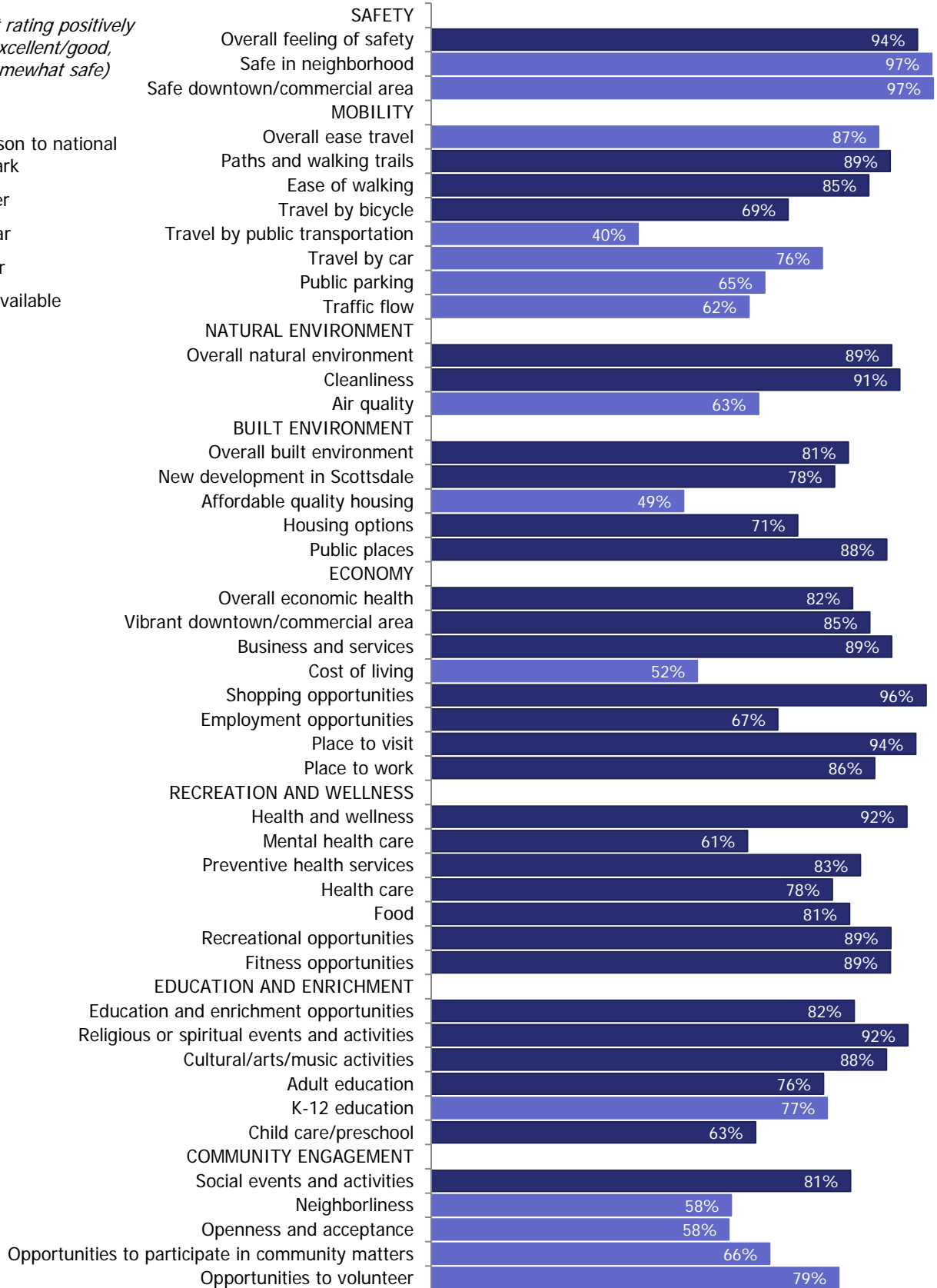


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



# Governance

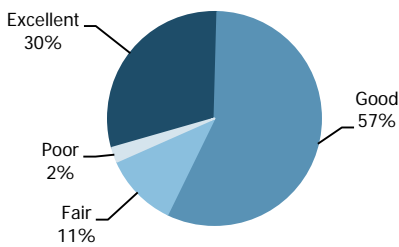
*How well does the government of Scottsdale meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Scottsdale as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 87% of respondents rated the overall quality of services provided by Scottsdale as “excellent” or “good” while only 34% rated the services provided by the Federal Government as “excellent” or “good.” Both of these ratings were similar to those in comparison communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Scottsdale’s leadership and governance. About three-quarters of residents rated the overall direction highly and even more (80%) rated the customer service of Scottsdale employees highly. At least 6 in 10 residents gave “excellent” or “good” ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, confidence in City government and acting in the best interest of Scottsdale. Most leadership and governance ratings were similar to the benchmark; however ratings for the value of services for taxes paid was higher than the benchmark comparison.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Scottsdale. These ratings were either similar to or higher than the benchmark. Ratings for Safety were high, with at least 4 in 5 respondents rating police, fire, ambulance or emergency medical services, crime prevention, fire prevention and animal control as “excellent” or “good.” About 9 in 10 respondents or more gave high ratings to aspects of Recreation and Wellness and each aspect was rated higher than in comparison communities. Across each of the eight facets, all aspects received an “excellent” or “good” rating by a majority of respondents.

**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

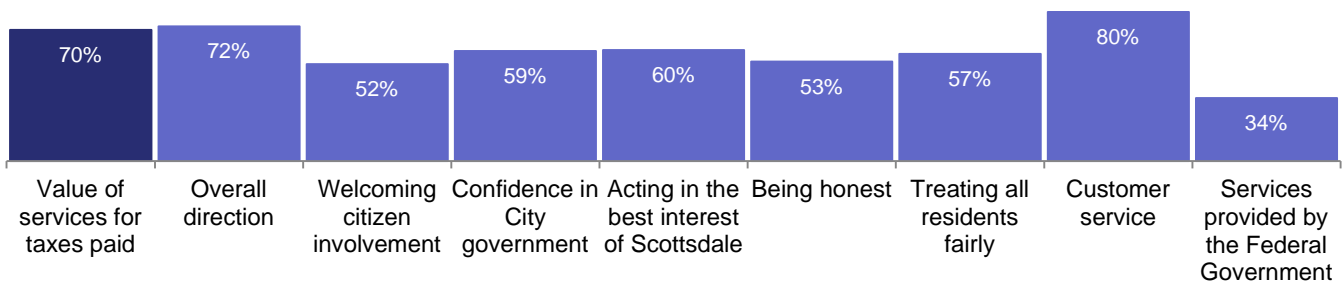
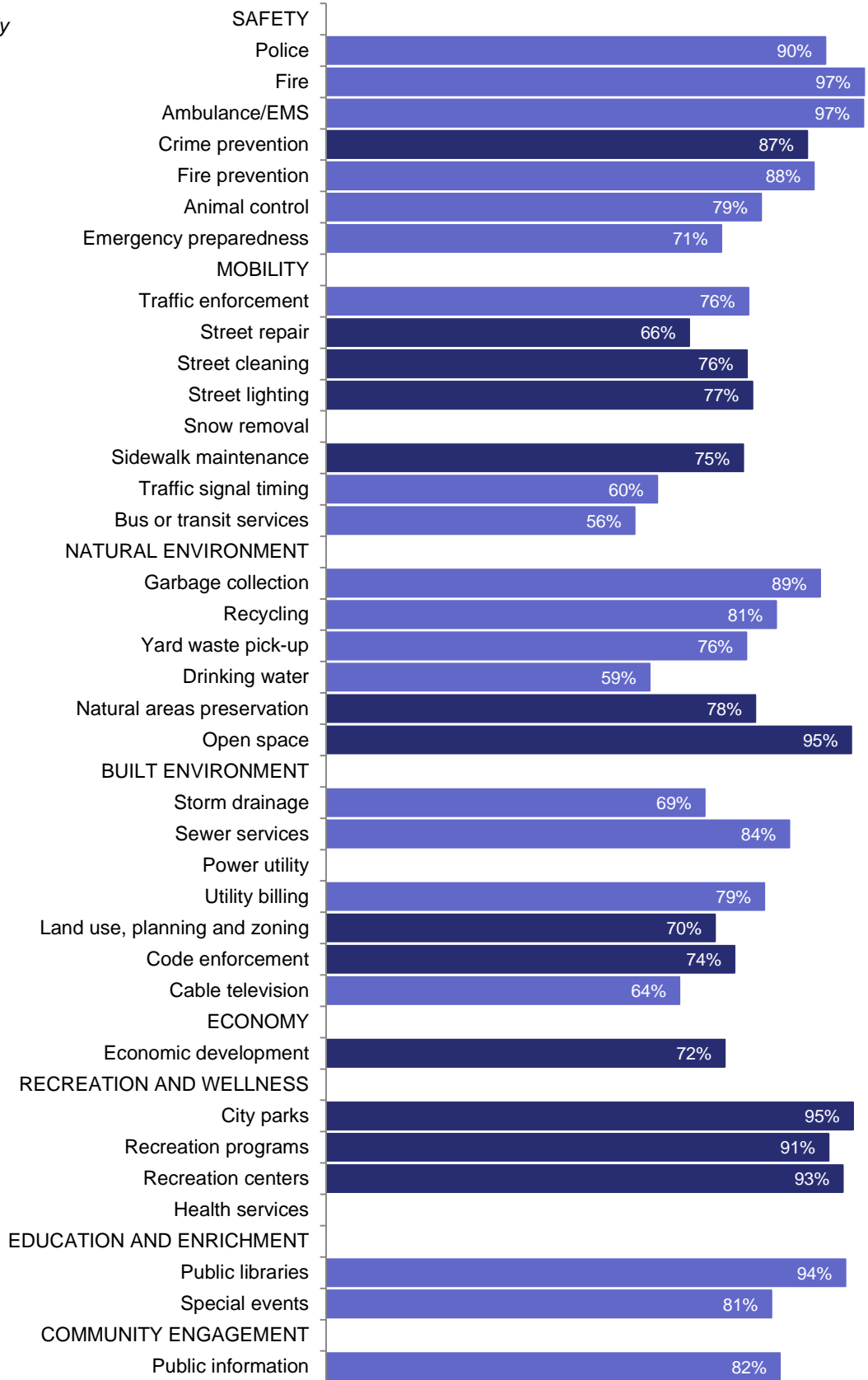


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



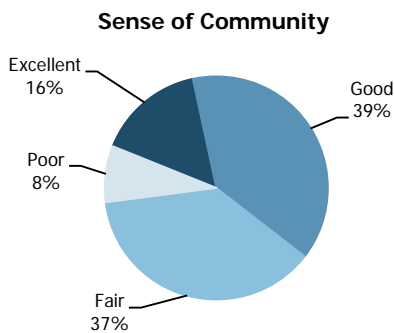


# Participation

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

An engaged community is a livable community. 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 half of Scottsdale residents rated the sense of community as “excellent” or “good.” This rating was similar to the benchmark comparison. Almost all residents would recommend living in Scottsdale and plan to remain in Scottsdale. About two in five residents contacted Scottsdale employees in the last 12 months, a rating lower than the benchmark comparison.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. While most Participation ratings were similar to the benchmark, one aspect saw a higher rate of participation than the benchmark (those who felt the economy would have a positive impact on their income) and a handful saw lower rates (those who stocked supplies for an emergency, used public transportation instead of driving, used Scottsdale public libraries, etc.). Within the facet of Mobility, two aspects received lower participation ratings compared to the benchmark (used public transportation instead of driving and walked or biked instead of driving). Natural Environment and Recreation and Wellness saw high participation rates across all aspects within each facet; about 8 in 10 or more survey respondents had conserved water, made their home more energy efficient and recycled at home while 9 in 10 participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity. Aspects within Community Engagement received a wide range of participation rates; most residents had not campaigned, contacted Scottsdale elected officials, volunteered, participated in a local club or attended or watched a local public meeting in the last 12 months. At least 4 in 5 residents had voted in local elections, read or watched local news or talked to or visited with neighbors.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

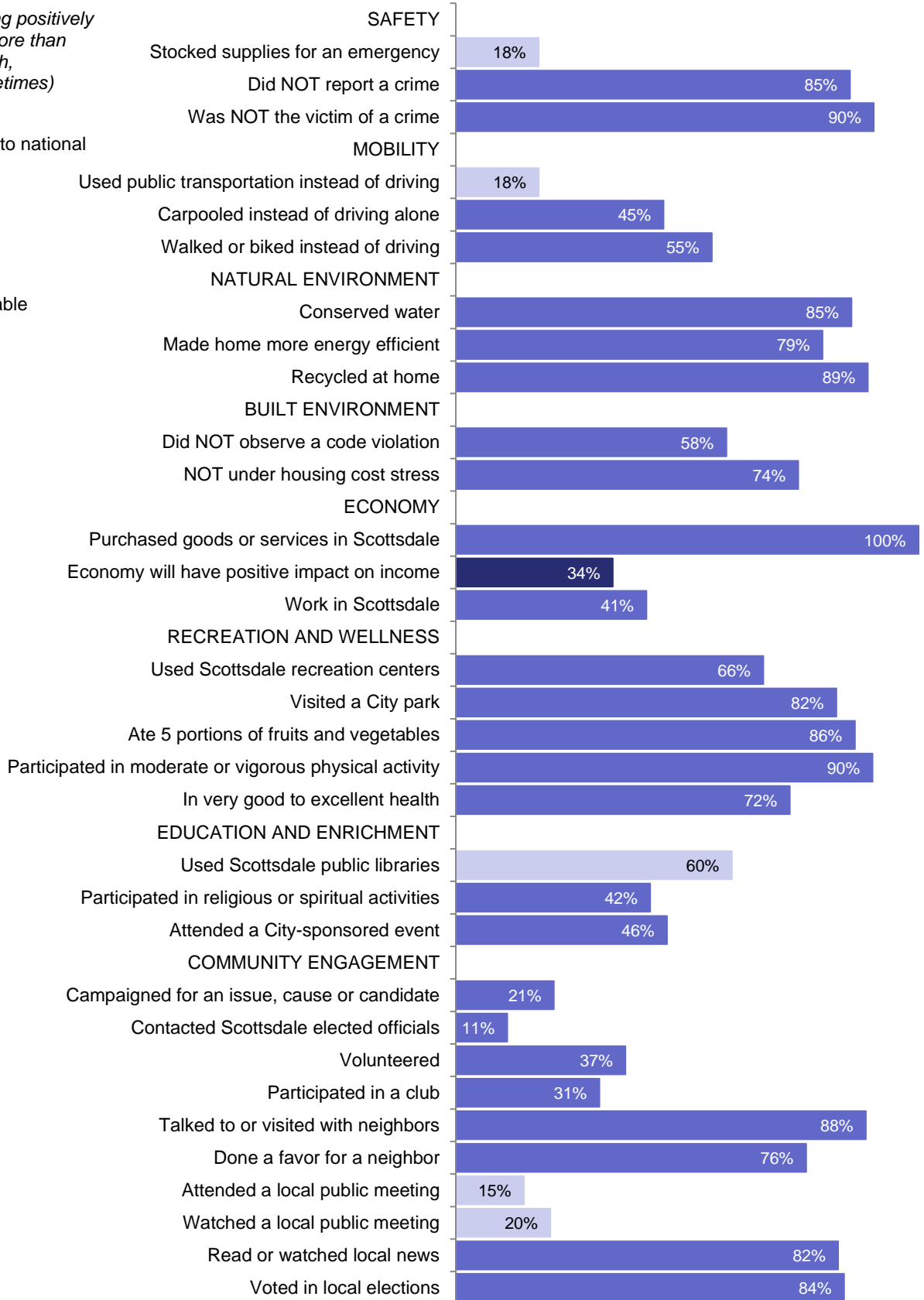


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

Percent rating positively  
(e.g., yes, more than  
once a month,  
always/sometimes)

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



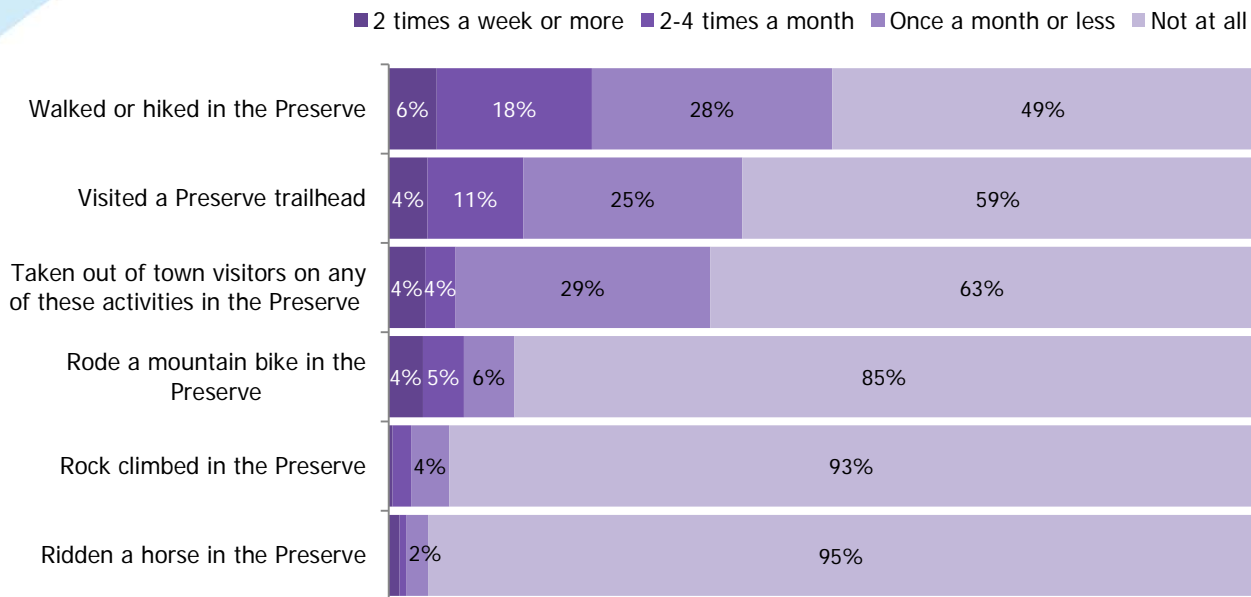
# Special Topics

The City of Scottsdale included four questions of special interest on The NCS.

The first special interest question asked residents to indicate how often they had done a variety of activities in the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve. A majority of respondents reported having walked or hiked in the Preserve once a month or less, and half of those respondents reported doing so at least 2-4 times a month. A majority of respondents had not visited a Preserve trailhead, taken out of town visitors on any activities, or ridden a mountain bike in the Preserve. Almost no respondents had rock climbed or ridden a horse in the Preserve.

Figure 4: Question 13a

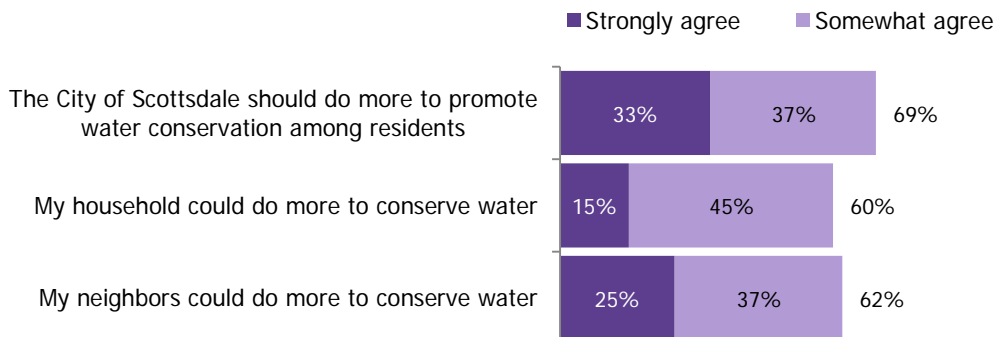
*Please indicate how often, if at all, you have done each of the following in the last 12 months in the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve.*



Survey respondents were asked a special interest question geared at water conservation. At least 6 in 10 survey respondents “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed that the City should do more to promote water conservation, their household could do more and their neighbors could do more to conserve water.

Figure 5: Question 13b

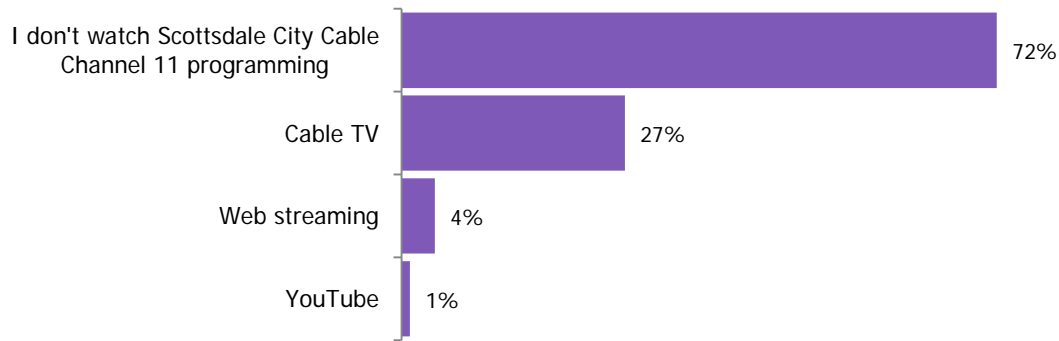
*To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?*



About three-quarters of survey respondents reported that they do not watch Scottsdale City Cable Channel 11 programming. One in four reported using cable TV to watch Scottsdale City Cable Channel 11 while only four percent reported using web streaming and even fewer used YouTube.

Figure 6: Question 13c

*Which of the following, if any, do you use to watch Scottsdale City Cable Channel 11 programming? (Mark all that apply.)*

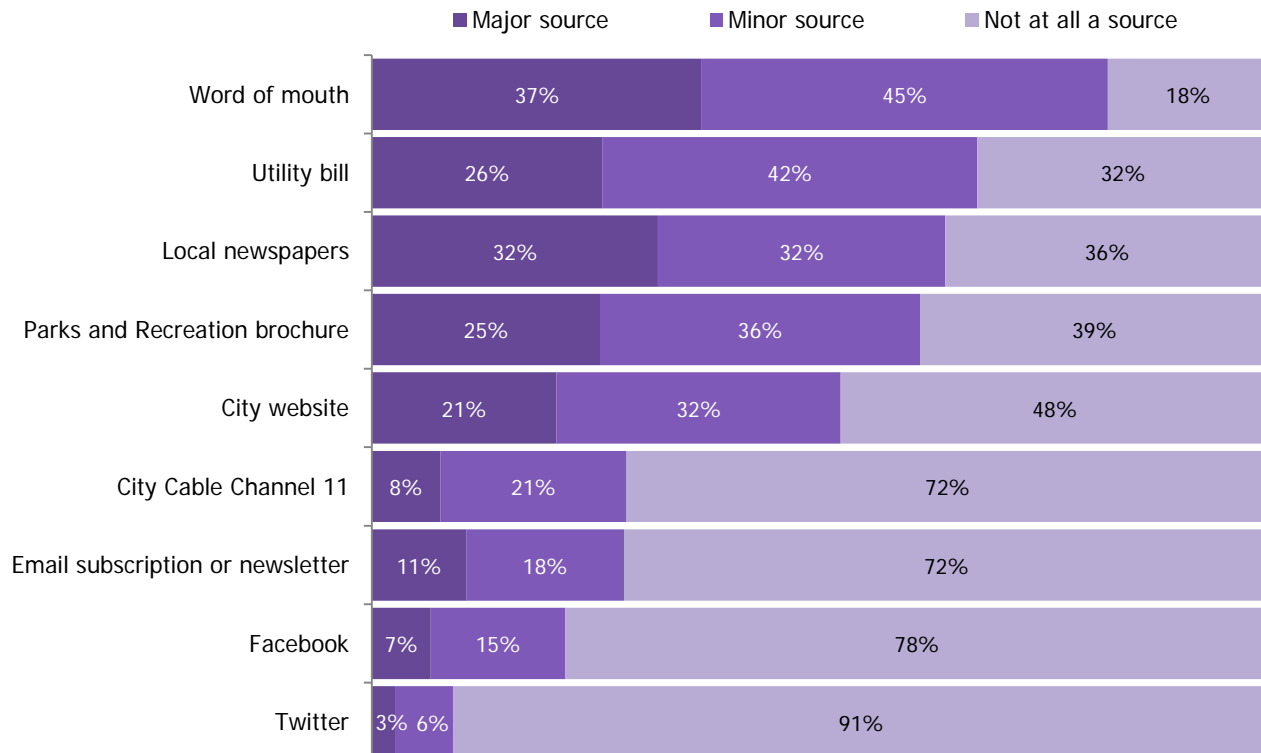


Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

The final special interest question asked residents about different types of information sources. Word of mouth, the utility bill, local newspapers, Parks and Recreation brochure and the City website were rated as a “major source” or a “minor source” of information by a majority of respondents. Fewer than a quarter of residents used Facebook as a “major source” or “minor source” and less than 10% reported Twitter as a “major source” or “minor source.”.

Figure 7: Question 13d

*Please indicate if each of the following is a major source, minor source or not a source of information for you about the City of Scottsdale and its activities:*



# Conclusions

## Scottsdale residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

Almost all residents rated their overall quality of life as “excellent” or “good” and 96% of residents would be “very” or “somewhat” likely to recommend Scottsdale as a place to live to someone who asks while 94% of respondents would be “very” or “somewhat” likely to remain in Scottsdale. These ratings are higher than seen in communities across the nation. Scottsdale’s overall appearance and overall image along with the City as a place to live, retire and raise children received high ratings by at least 9 in 10 residents. Most of the aspects that aid in community livability were rated positively and were at least similar to national benchmark comparisons. Most of these ratings had remained stable from 2010 to 2013 (see *Trends over Time Report* under separate cover).

## Recreation and Wellness, an important facet to maintaining residents overall quality of life, received high ratings.

Recreation and Wellness was identified as one of the facets most important to residents’ quality of life. Nearly all survey respondents felt all aspects of Recreation and Wellness within Community Characteristics and Governance were “excellent” or “good” receiving ratings that were higher than reported in communities in the U.S. Recreation and Wellness ratings within the facet of Participation were rated positively by at least 6 in 10 respondents with ratings similar to other communities in the U.S.

## The Economy is a feature that makes Scottsdale a livable community.

The Economy was identified as one of the facets most important to residents’ quality of life. Overall, Scottsdale received favorable ratings higher than the benchmarks for aspects in this facet including the overall economic health of Scottsdale, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities and business and services in Scottsdale. All survey respondents had purchased goods or services in Scottsdale and a third felt the economy would have a positive impact on their income; a rating higher than the benchmark.