

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

Lake Zurich, IL  
Community Livability Report

2015



2955 Valmont Road Suite 300  
Boulder, Colorado 80301  
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863



777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002  
icma.org • 800-745-8780

# Contents

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

The National Citizen Survey™  
© 2001-2015 National Research Center, Inc.

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 Lake Zurich. 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.

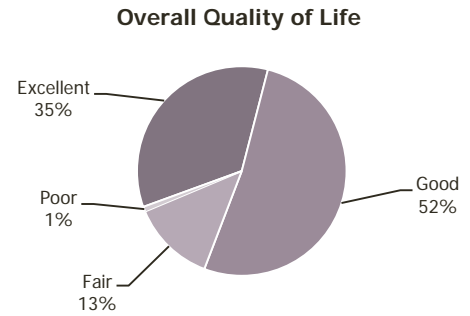
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 512 residents of the Village of Lake Zurich. 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 Lake Zurich

Most residents rated the quality of life in Lake Zurich as excellent or good. This rating was similar to the ratings given in other communities across the nation and in select Illinois 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.

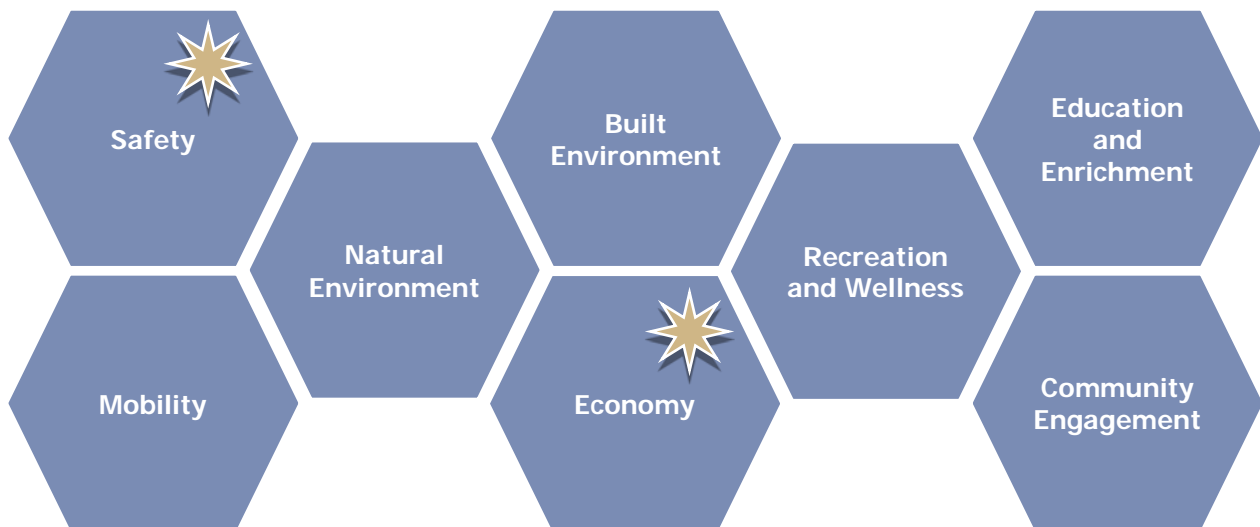
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Lake Zurich community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Lake Zurich residents gave favorable ratings to these facets of community. Ratings for the facets of Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment, and Community Engagement were also 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 Lake Zurich’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

- Most important



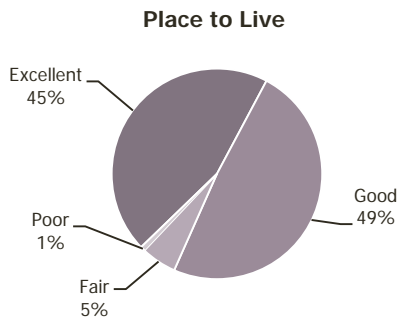
# Community Characteristics

*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 Lake Zurich, 94% rated the Village as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Lake Zurich as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation and to ratings in selected Illinois jurisdictions.

In addition to rating the Village as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Lake Zurich as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Lake Zurich and its overall appearance. More than 9 out of 10 residents gave positive ratings to Lake Zurich as a place to raise children and their neighborhood as a place to live. About 7 out of 10 residents positively rated Lake Zurich's overall image and overall appearance.

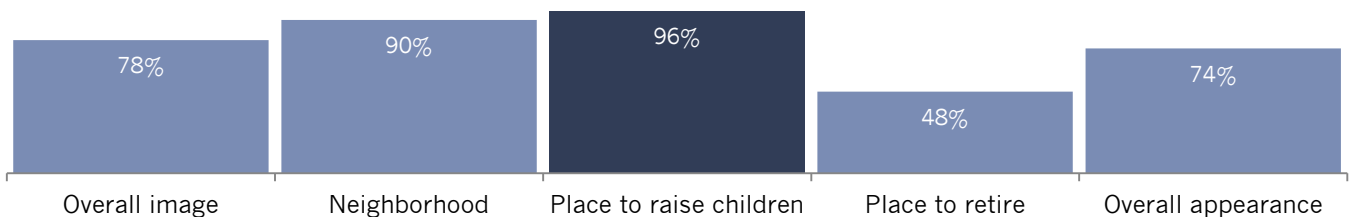
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Nearly all residents gave positive ratings to all aspects of Safety with at least 9 in 10 rating these items as excellent or good. Similarly, at least a majority of respondents gave positive ratings to all aspects of Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement. Within the facet of Natural Environment, 8 in 10 residents rated all aspects as excellent or good. Ratings for Mobility, Built Environment and Economy all varied. Within the facet of Mobility, about three-quarters of respondents were pleased with overall ease of travel and travel by car in Lake Zurich, and half or more gave favorable ratings to paths and walking trails and ease of walking in the Village. These ratings were similar to the national benchmark. Within the facet of Built Environment, at least 6 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the availability of affordable quality housing and housing options, both of which were rated higher than the benchmark. Shopping opportunities within the facet of Economy also received high ratings, with 7 in 10 residents rating it "excellent" or "good"; this rating was higher than the national benchmark. Meanwhile, aspects such as cost of living, Lake Zurich as a place to visit and as a place to work saw positive ratings from about half of residents or more. Generally, most aspects of Community Characteristics were rated higher than or similar to the benchmark with the exception of certain aspects of Mobility (travel by public transportation), Built Environment (new development in Lake Zurich) and Economy (vibrant downtown/commercial area), which were rated lower than the benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



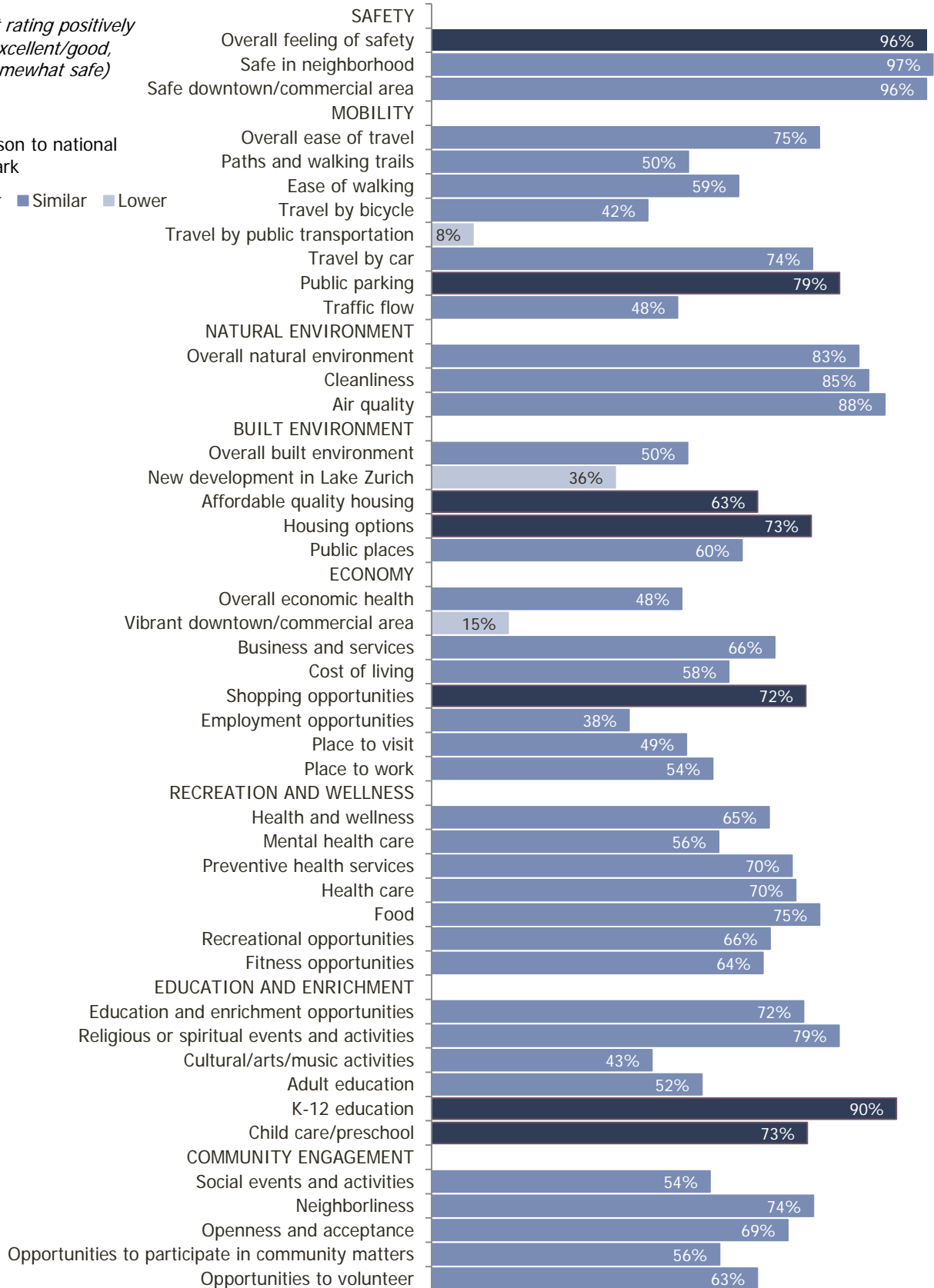
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



# Governance

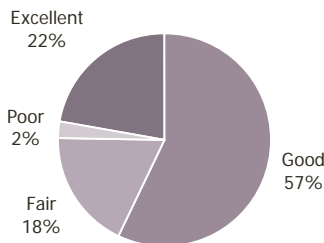
*How well does the government of Lake Zurich meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Lake Zurich as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. In Lake Zurich, 79% of respondents rated the overall quality of Village services as “excellent” or “good” and 30% rated the services provided by the Federal Government as “excellent” or “good.” These ratings were similar to ratings given in other communities nationwide and in select Illinois jurisdictions.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Lake Zurich’s leadership and governance. About 8 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings for customer service and almost two-thirds favorably rated the job Lake Zurich’s government does at treating all residents fairly. Half or more of residents were pleased with the government acting in the best interest of Lake Zurich and being honest, and at least 4 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, the overall direction that Lake Zurich is taking, the job Lake Zurich government does at welcoming citizen involvement, and overall confidence in Village government.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Lake Zurich. Ratings were generally positive across all facets of Mobility, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement and most respondents gave positive ratings for all aspects. The highest rated aspects included police, crime prevention, recycling, yard waste pick-up, and public libraries; these services were rated favorably by at least 9 in 10 residents and received ratings higher than the national benchmark. Almost all ratings within the pillar of Governance were similar to or higher than ratings given in other communities; the only exception to this was drinking water within the facet of Natural Environment, which was rated positively by 57% of survey respondents and received ratings lower than those seen in other communities across the nation.

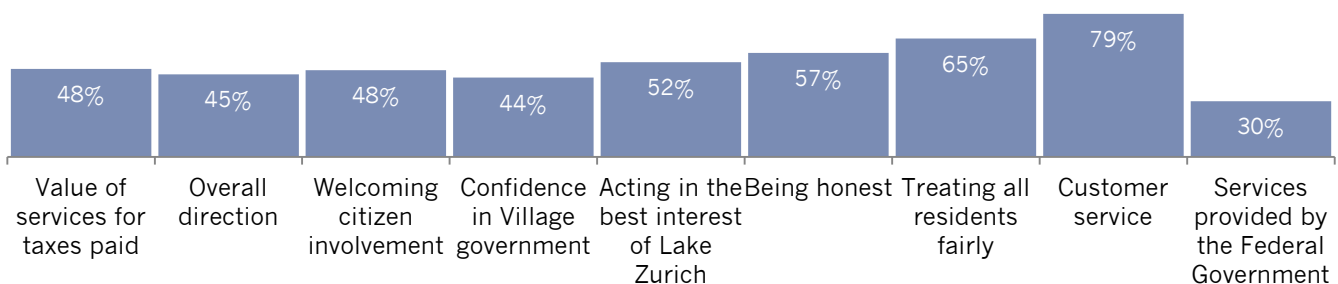
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



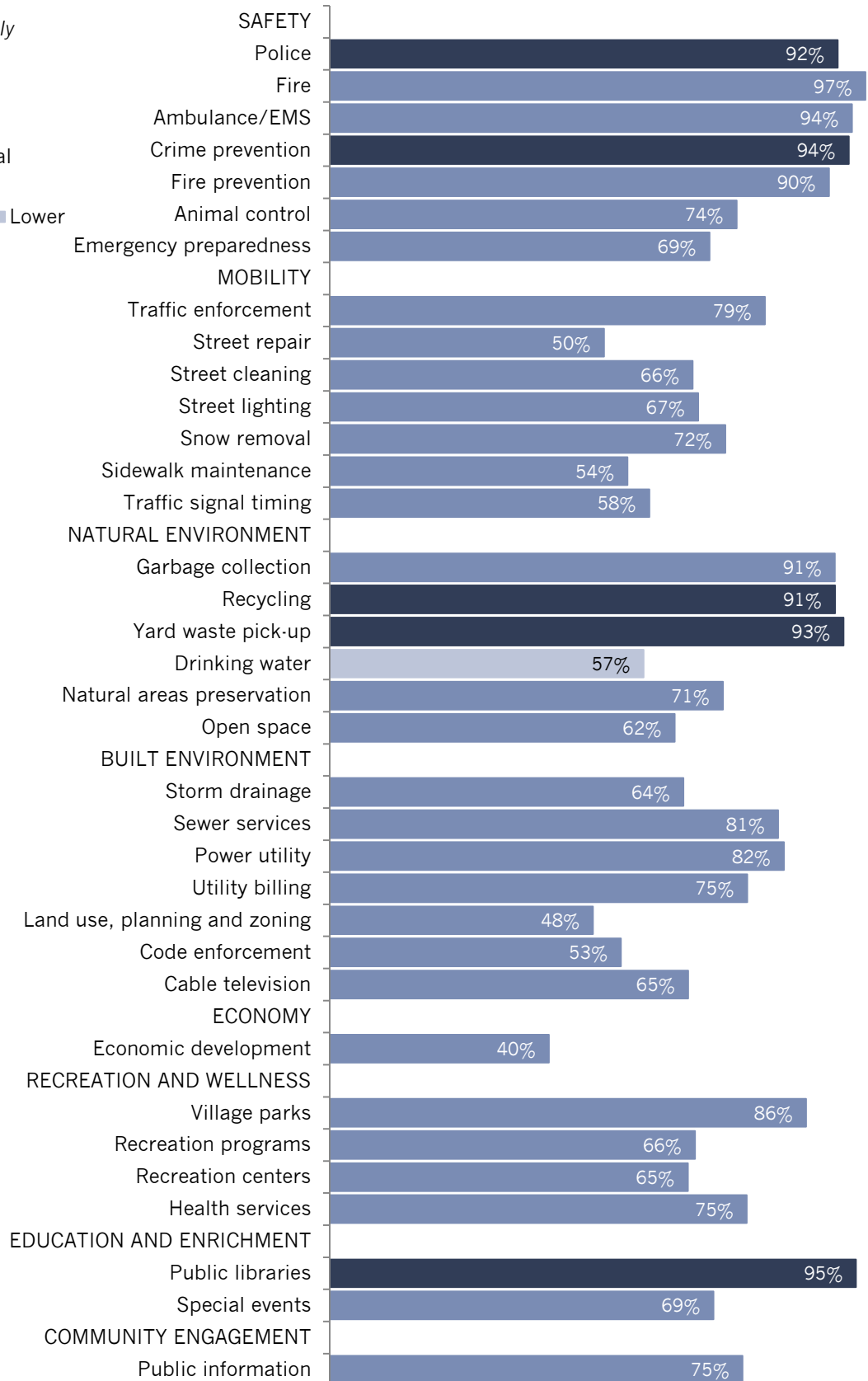
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower





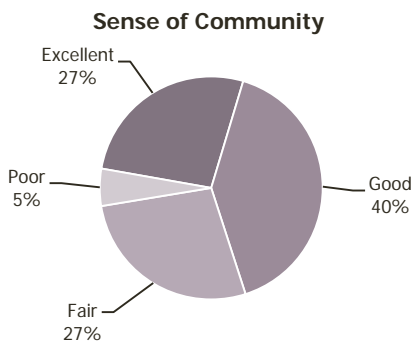
# Participation

*Are the residents of Lake Zurich 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 two-thirds of Lake Zurich residents rated the sense of community as “excellent” or “good,” which was similar to ratings given in other communities nationwide and in selected Illinois communities. Most residents reported that they would recommend Lake Zurich to others and more than 8 in 10 stated that they planned to remain in Lake Zurich for the next five years.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Ratings across the facets of Participation varied. Within the facets of Natural Environment, Built Environment and Recreation and Wellness, positive ratings were given by at least a majority of respondents. Within the facets of Recreation and Wellness and Built Environment, rates of participation were similar to the benchmark, while within the facet of Natural Environment, the rate at which respondents reported recycling at home was higher than the benchmark. Within the facet of Safety, almost all residents reported they had not been victim of a crime (which was a rate similar to those seen in other communities) and a majority of residents had not reported a crime (a rate higher than seen in other communities). Meanwhile, only 23% of residents had stocked supplies for an emergency, which was a rate lower than the benchmark. In the facet of Mobility, nearly 7 out of 10 residents reported that they had walked or biked instead of driving, which was a higher rate than reported in other communities nationwide. Ratings varied most widely within the facet of Community

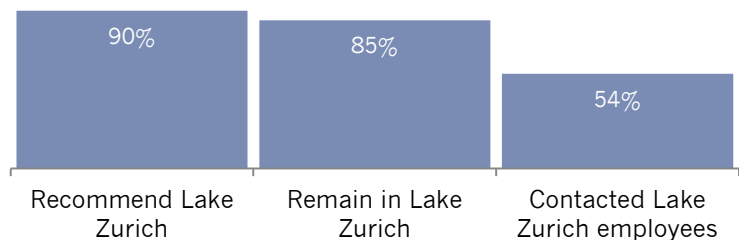
Engagement. Nearly all residents had talked or visited with neighbors, almost 9 in 10 residents reported having done a favor for a neighbor or having read or watched local news, and 8 in 10 expressed that they had voted in local elections (all measures which were similar to the benchmark). Less than half of Lake Zurich residents had volunteered, and less than a quarter had campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate, contacted Lake Zurich elected officials, participated in a club, or attended or watched a local public meeting. Within the facet of Education and Enrichment, two ratings were higher than the benchmark: at least 8 in 10 residents reported using Lake Zurich’s public libraries, and almost 7 in 10 had attended a Village-sponsored event.



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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



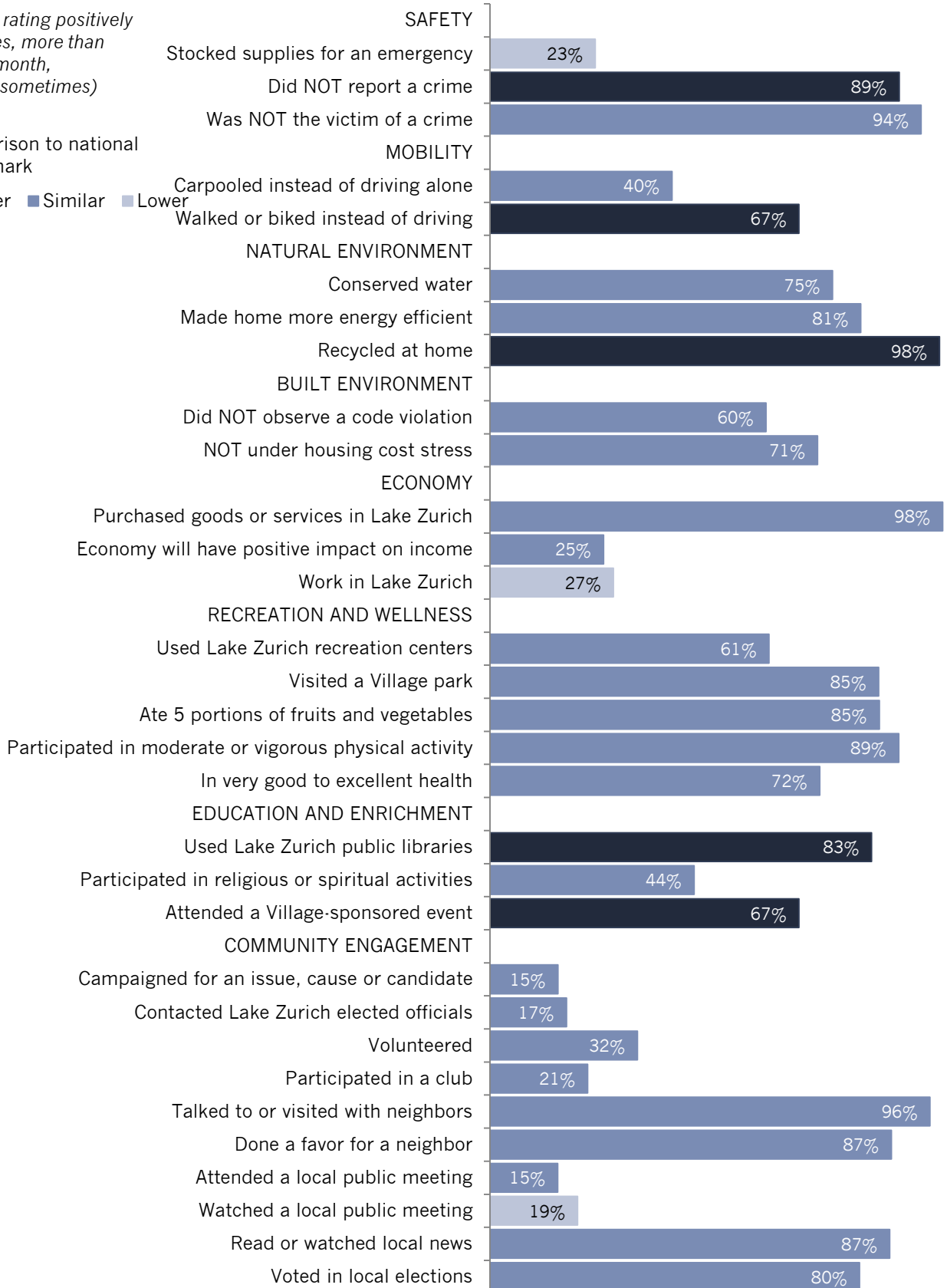
## The National Citizen Survey™

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



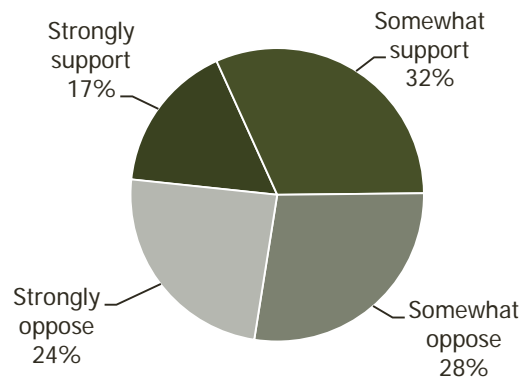
# Special Topics

The Village of Lake Zurich included three questions of special interest on The NCS. The first special-interest question asked respondents whether they supported or opposed switching to Lake Michigan water. Almost half the respondents either strongly or somewhat supported it.

Figure 4: Lake Michigan Water

*The Village has been analyzing the possibility of obtaining its water supply from Lake Michigan. At this point, the current well supply is plentiful and there are no water quality issues. However, there are long-term concerns about the availability, quality, and potentially rising costs of deep aquifer water in the region. The cost of delivering Lake Michigan water to Lake Zurich is significant, with an estimated construction cost of \$43 million. In the absence of a municipal partner, the estimated increase to an average Lake Zurich resident could be in the range of \$300 - \$450 annually.*

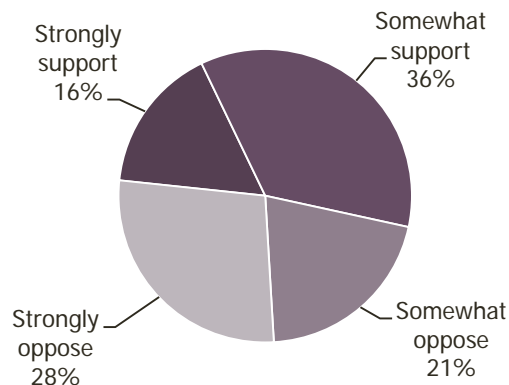
*Do you support or oppose Lake Zurich switching to Lake Michigan water?*



The second question asked to what extent residents would support or oppose the creation of a Park District for Lake Zurich that would ensure dedicated funding for parks and recreation, but also increase property taxes. Just over half of the respondents strongly or somewhat supported the measure.

Figure 5: Park District for Lake Zurich

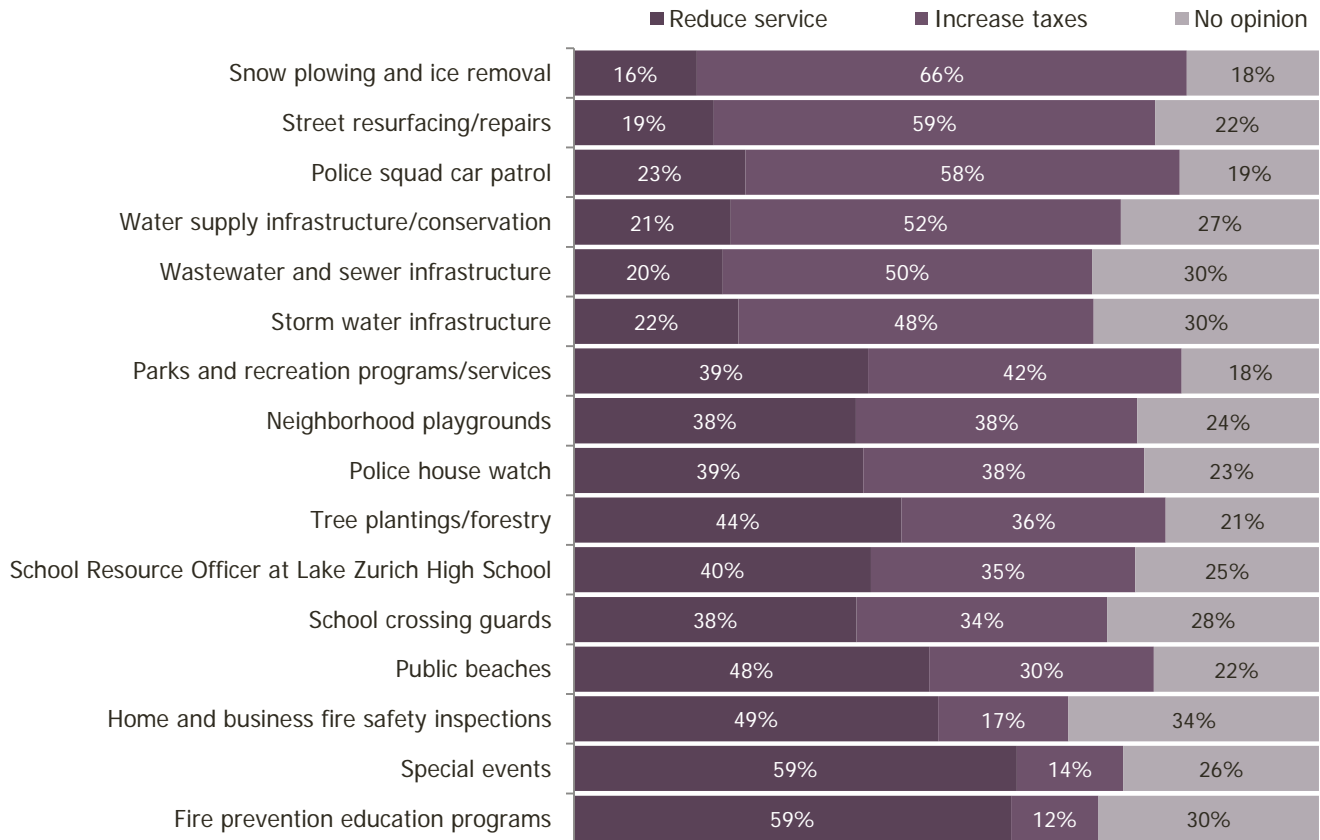
*Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose the creation of a Park District for Lake Zurich that would ensure dedicated funding for parks and recreation but also result in an additional taxing entity on your property tax bill?*



The last special-interest question asked residents about their preferences regarding reductions in services or increases in taxes in the event additional revenue became unavailable. Almost 6 in 10 residents reported a preference for increased taxes for snow plowing and ice removal, while about the same proportion reported a preference for reducing services related to special events. More than 3 in 10 residents reported having no opinion on home and business fire safety inspections.

Figure 6: Service Funding

*Without additional revenue, services provided by the Village may have to be reduced in the future. From the following list of municipal services, please indicate if you would prefer a service reduction or a tax increase.*



# Conclusions

## Lake Zurich residents enjoy a high quality of life.

More than 8 in 10 residents rated their quality of life positively and virtually all residents think Lake Zurich is an excellent or good place to live. Almost all survey participants gave positive ratings for Lake Zurich as a place to raise children and about three-quarters think the overall image and appearance of Lake Zurich is excellent or good. More than 8 in 10 residents plan on remaining in Lake Zurich for the next five years and most survey respondents would recommend living in Lake Zurich to others.

## Safety is a priority for residents and is highly rated in Lake Zurich.

Safety was identified as an important area of focus in the coming years, and many aspects of Safety were rated positively by residents. Almost all respondents reported feeling safe in their neighborhood, in Lake Zurich's downtown/commercial area and in Lake Zurich overall. Additionally, at least 9 in 10 residents favorably rated police, fire, ambulance/EMS, crime prevention and fire prevention within the facet of Safety. Lastly, nearly 9 in 10 residents had not reported a crime and almost all residents said that they were not a victim of a crime.

## Economy is important to residents in Lake Zurich.

Residents also identified Economy as an important area for the village to focus on. Shopping opportunities received favorable ratings from more than 7 in 10 residents, a rating that was higher than the benchmark. Meanwhile, nearly half of respondents or more gave favorable ratings to the overall economic health of Lake Zurich, business services, and the cost of living in Lake Zurich, and also indicated that Lake Zurich is an excellent or good place to visit and to work. Almost all respondents said they had purchased goods or services in Lake Zurich, although only about a quarter of residents worked in Lake Zurich.

## Residents are pleased with the Natural Environment in Lake Zurich.

A majority of respondents gave positive ratings for almost all aspects of Natural Environment across the three pillars of community livability. At least 8 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings for the quality of the overall natural environment, cleanliness, and air quality in the Village. Additionally, the measures for recycling, yard waste pick-up, and recycling at home each received ratings higher than the national benchmark. Drinking water was the only aspect of Natural Environment that received ratings lower than ratings given in other communities across the nation.