



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

# Lake Zurich, IL

Community Livability Report

2017



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# 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.

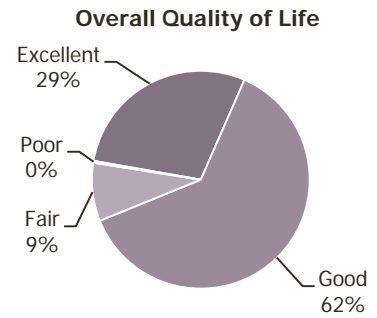
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 497 residents of the Village of Lake Zurich. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% 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 Lake Zurich

Most residents (91%) rated the quality of life in Lake Zurich as excellent or good. This was similar to the national benchmark comparison (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.

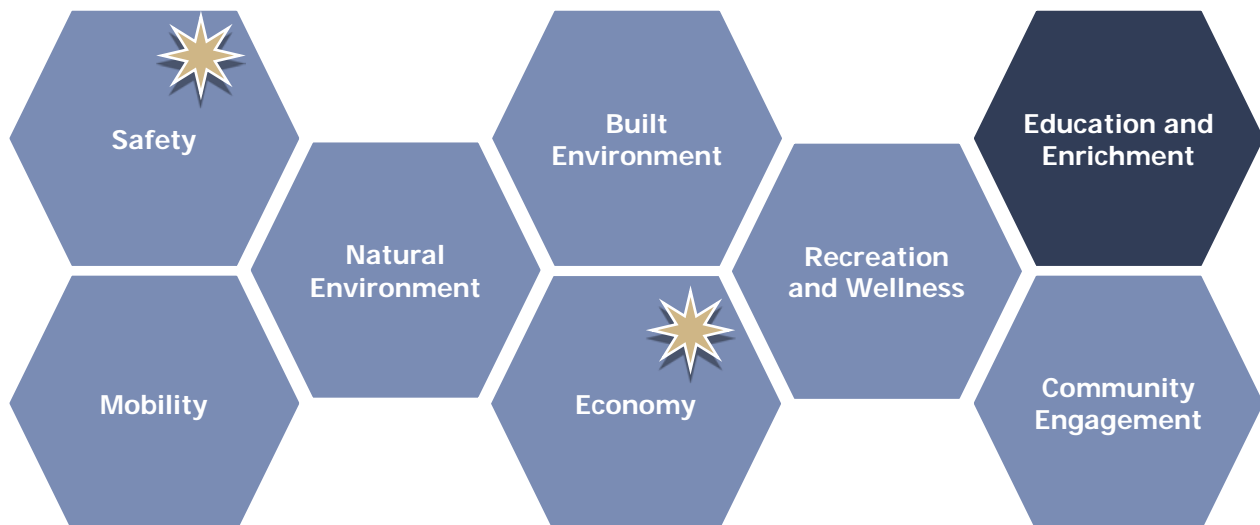
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2015, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Lake Zurich community in the coming two years. Though not felt to be an important area of focus, respondents gave higher than average marks to Education and Enrichment. 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



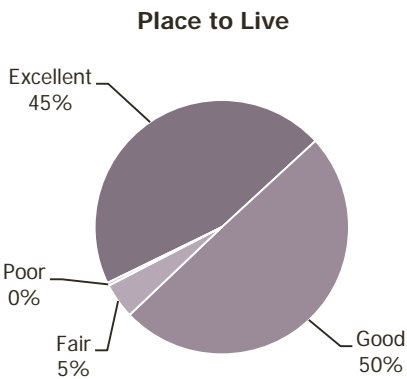
# Community Characteristics

*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, 95% 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.

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. Roughly 9 in 10 Lake Zurich residents were pleased with their neighborhood as a place to live, which was similar to the national average, and the Village as a place to raise children, which was higher. About 8 in 10 residents gave positive evaluations to the overall image and overall appearance of the Village, which was on par with other communities. Only about 4 in 10 favorably rated Lake Zurich as a place to retire, which was lower than average.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Generally, residents felt safe in their neighborhood and downtown and the Village received higher than average ratings for the overall feeling of safety. Within Mobility, respondents evaluated travel by public transportation lower than the national average, although this rating increased from 2015 to 2017 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover). Traffic flow and overall ease of travel also saw an increase in excellent or good assessments over the two survey administrations, though these ratings remained similar to the benchmarks.



Shopping opportunities in Lake Zurich were higher than the benchmark but the vibrancy of the downtown area was lower. However, residents gave more positive reviews in 2017 compared to 2015 to the overall economic health of the Village and employment opportunities.

Recreation and Wellness as well as Education and Enrichment also were strengths in Lake Zurich. Higher ratings were given to fitness opportunities, mental health care, health and wellness and education and enrichment opportunities in 2017 than in 2015. Village residents also gave higher marks to mental health care, K-12 education and child care/preschool than did those in other communities.

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

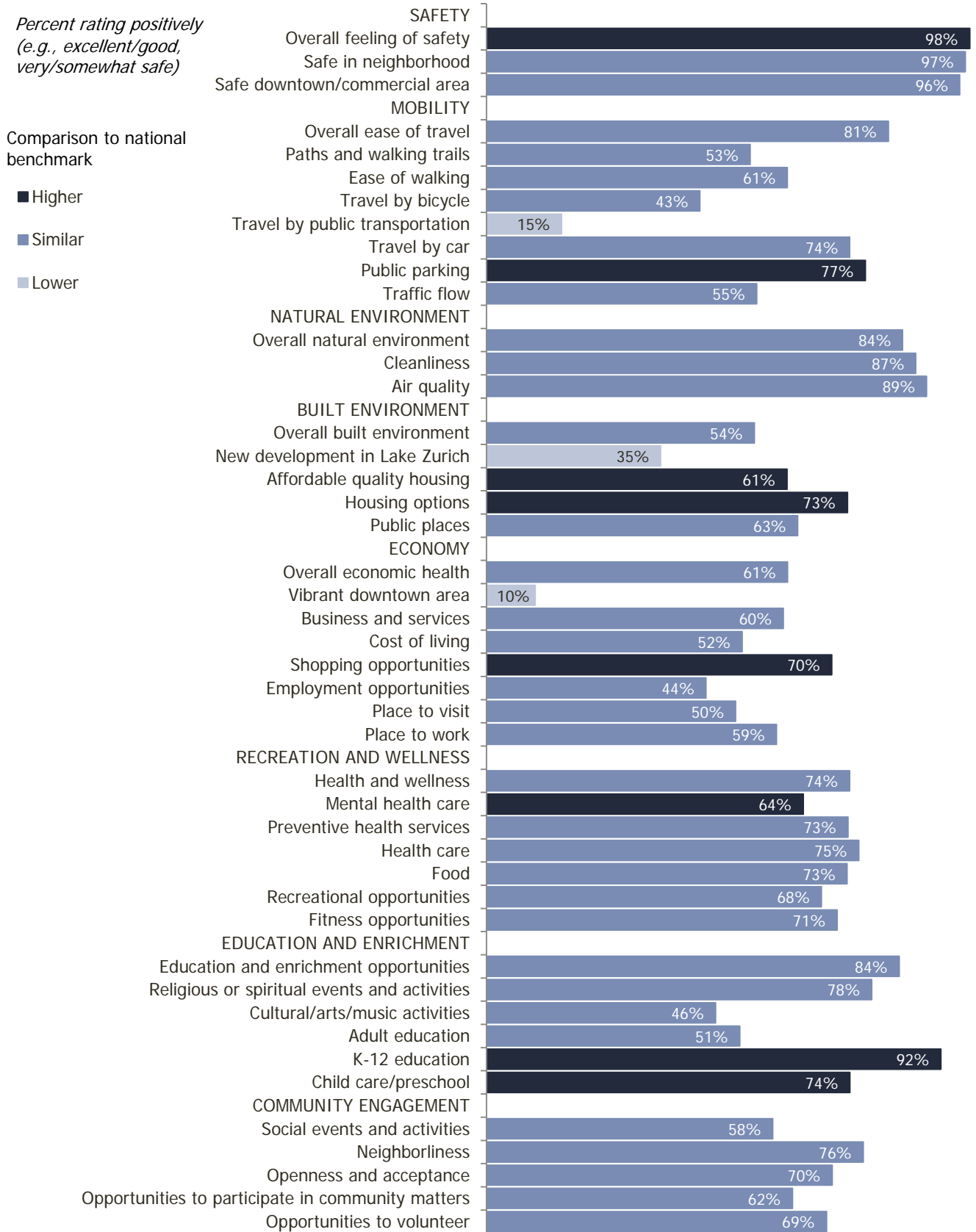
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



# Governance

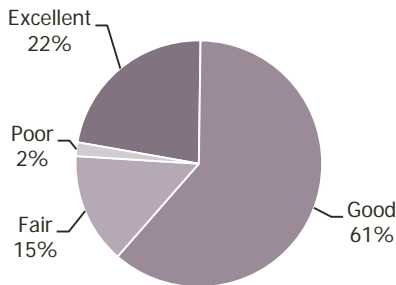
*How well does the government of Lake Zurich meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Lake Zurich as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. In Lake Zurich, about 8 in 10 survey respondents gave favorable ratings to the overall quality of Village services and 3 in 10 were pleased with the services provided by the Federal Government. These were similar to ratings given in other communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Lake Zurich’s leadership and governance. Generally, between half and two-thirds of respondents gave positive reviews to all aspects of government performance and these were all similar to the benchmark. Additionally, resident evaluations of the job Village government does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in Village government and government acting in the best interest of Lake Zurich increased since 2015.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Lake Zurich. A majority of residents were pleased with Safety-related services and gave evaluations to police services and crime prevention that were higher than the rest of the nation. Respondents also are happy with Mobility in the Village, with traffic enforcement receiving higher than average ratings and evaluations of street repair, snow removal and sidewalk maintenance trending up from 2015. However, residents gave less favorable assessments to bus or transit services compared to residents in other communities across the country.

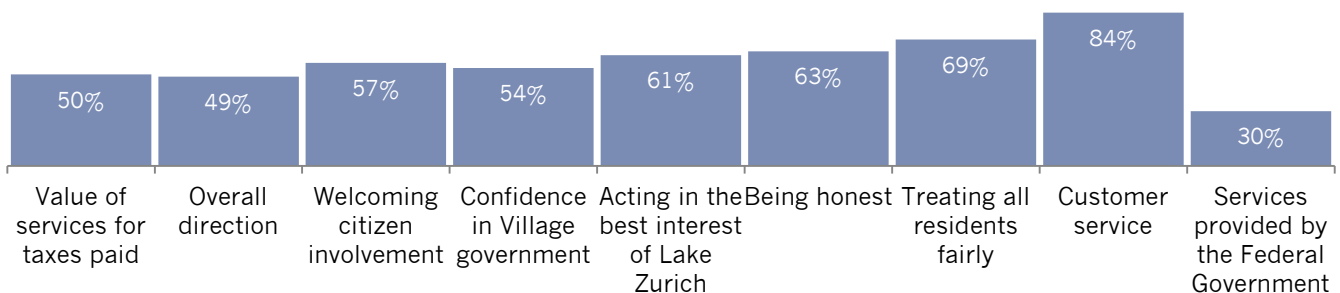
Overall Quality of Village Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



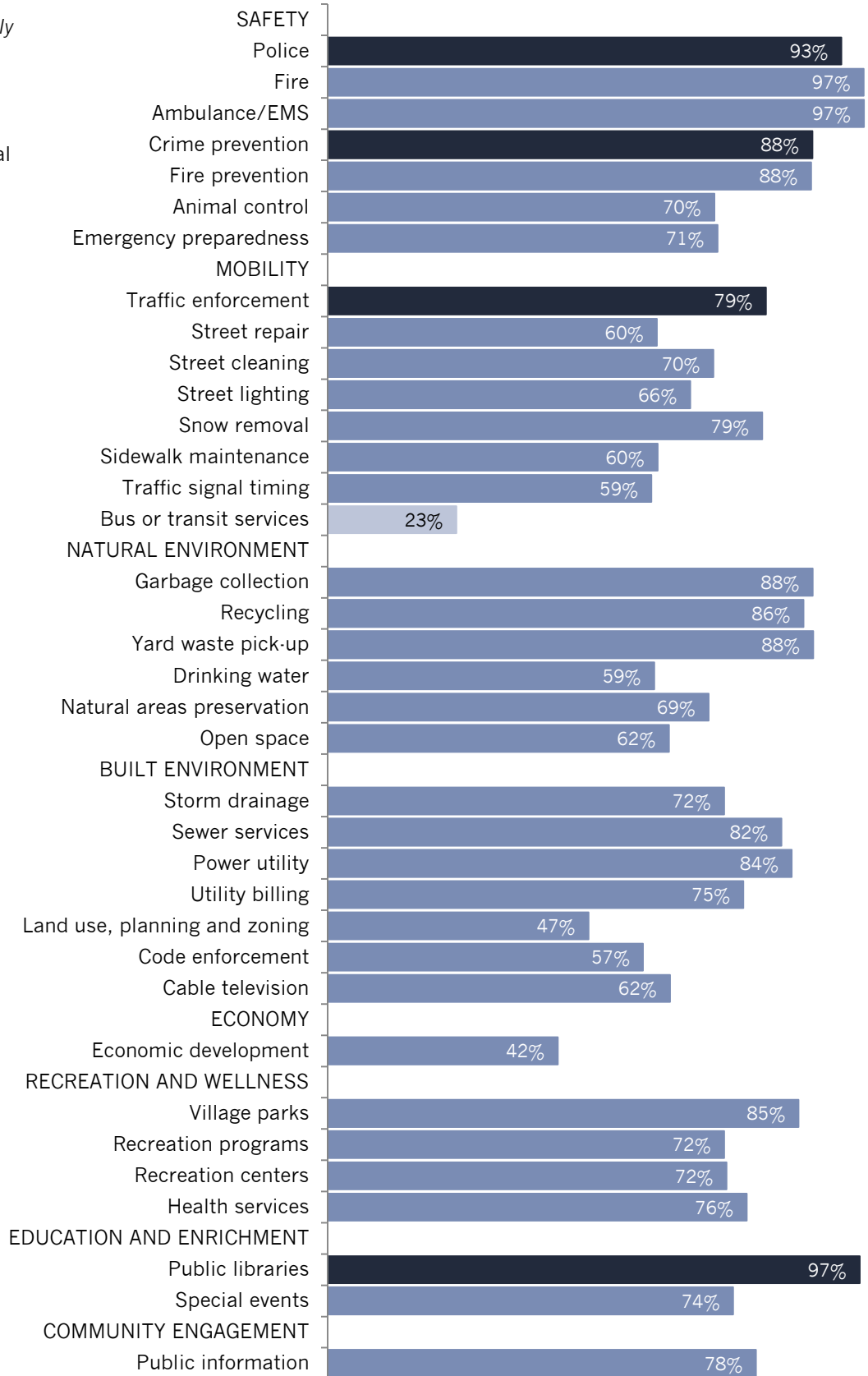
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower





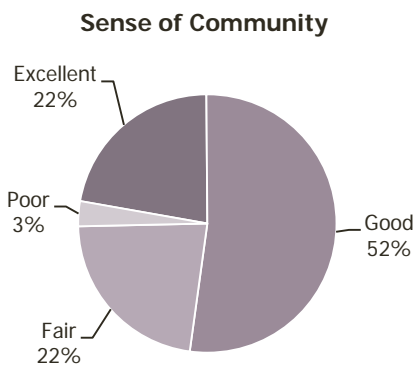
# Participation

*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. Three-quarters of Lake Zurich residents gave positive evaluations to the sense of community in the Village, which was an increase from 2015 but similar to the benchmark. More than 8 in 10 planned to remain in Lake Zurich for the next five years (similar to the benchmark) and nearly all residents would recommend living in Lake Zurich to someone who asked (higher than the benchmark).

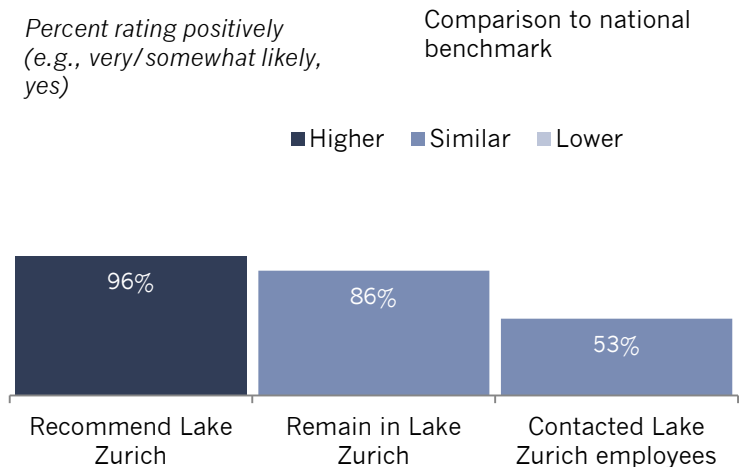
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates varied widely across the different facets, making the benchmark comparison and comparison to Lake Zurich over time helpful for understanding the results.

Overall, residents of Lake Zurich participated in most activities at rates similar to those found in other communities across the nation, with a few notable exceptions. With regards to Safety, most residents had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey, which was similar to the benchmark, and about 9 in 10 residents had not reported a crime, which was higher. However, only about 2 in 10 respondents had stocked supplies for an emergency, which was a rate lower than observed elsewhere and a decrease since 2015.



Lake Zurich residents were more likely than residents elsewhere to believe the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months, a rating that increased from 2015 to 2017. Fewer residents indicated that they worked in Lake Zurich compared to residents in other communities.

More residents in 2017 used Lake Zurich recreation centers than in 2015, which was similar to the national comparison. Lake Zurich residents used public libraries and attended Village-sponsored events at rates that were high than those in communities elsewhere.



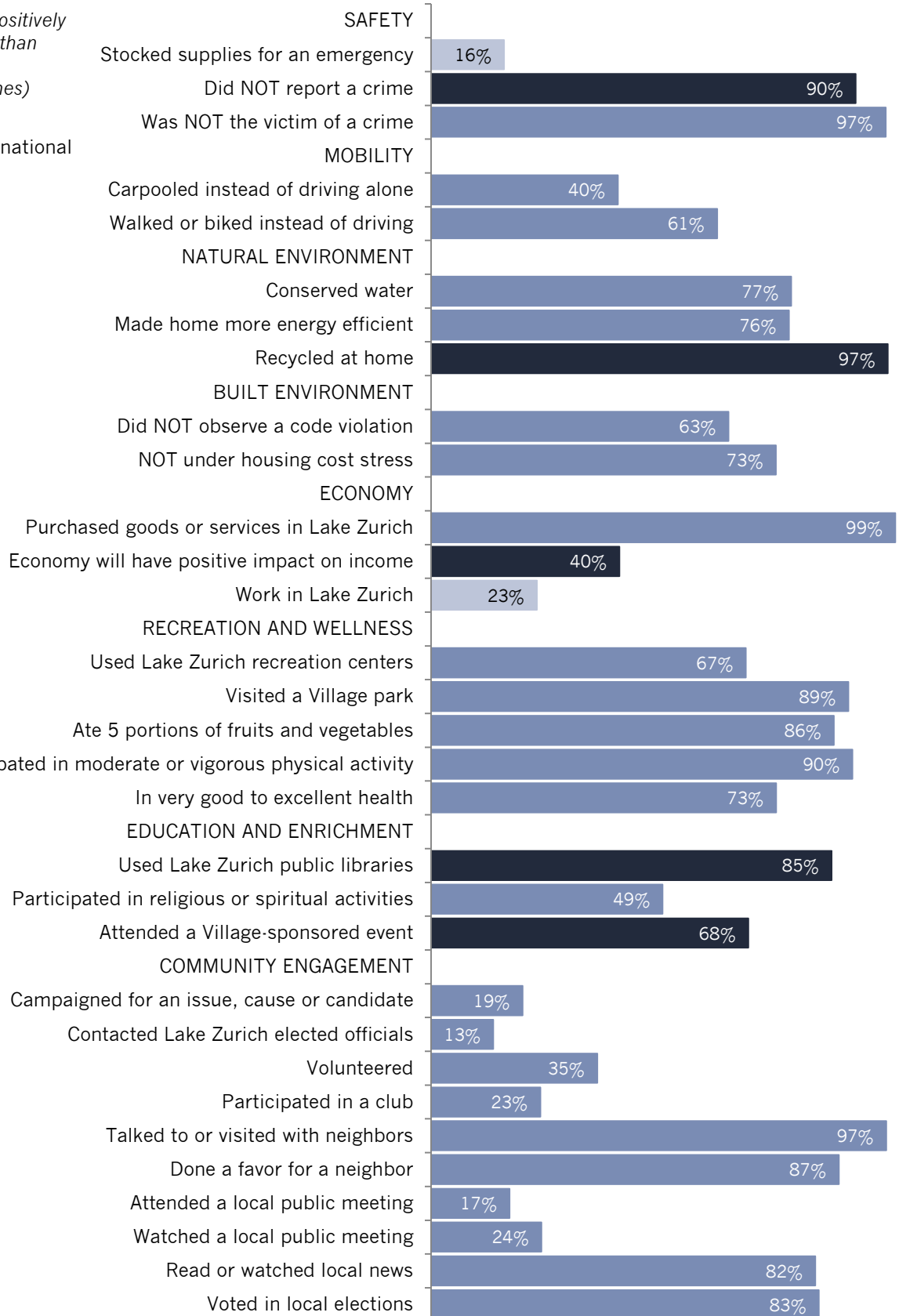
## The National Citizen Survey™

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



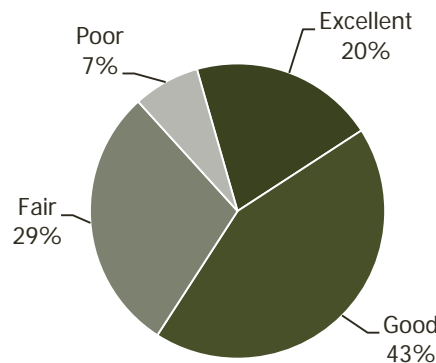
# Special Topics

The Village of Lake Zurich included four questions of special interest on The NCS as well as several line item additions to the standard questions. Topic areas related to sources of Village information, factors in residents' decisions to live in Lake Zurich and perspectives on local government and downtown redevelopment.

About 6 in 10 survey respondents rated the vibrancy of the Rand Road commercial area as excellent or good; about 3 in 10 thought it was fair and 1 in 10 thought it was poor.

Figure 4: Line Item Addition to Question 6

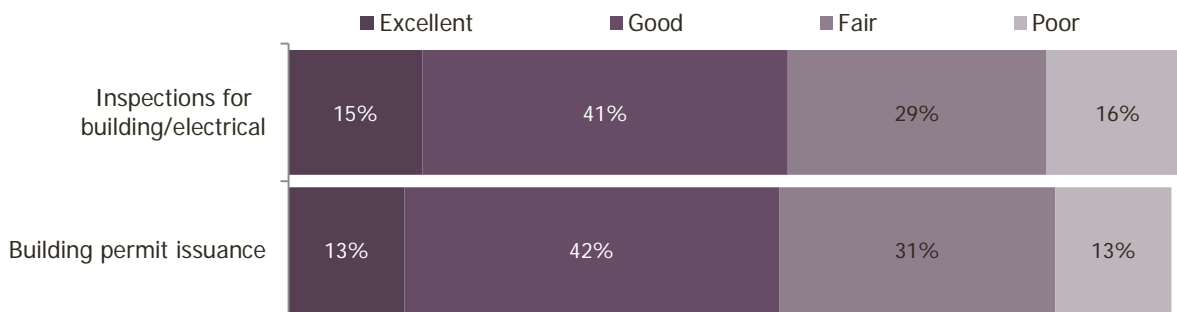
Please rate the following characteristic as it relates to Lake Zurich as a whole: vibrant Rand Road commercial district



Roughly half of Lake Zurich residents who had an opinion gave positive ratings to inspections for building/electrical and building permit issuance; about 3 in 10 thought they were fair and 1 in 10 thought they were poor. It is noteworthy that about 4 in 10 survey participants responded “don't know” to each of these items (for full frequencies of survey results please refer to the *Technical Appendices Report* under separate cover).

Figure 5: Line Item Additions to Question 10

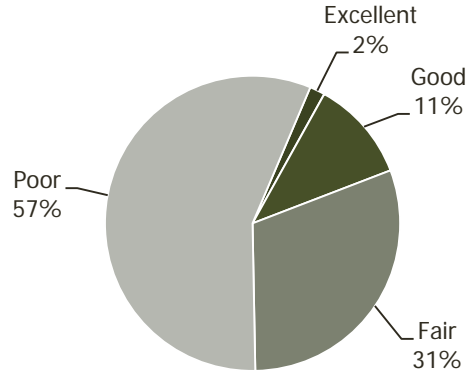
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Lake Zurich:



Lake Zurich residents were far less likely to give positive ratings to the quality of services provided by the State of Illinois than they were to the services provided by Lake Zurich; a majority of residents rated State-provided services as poor.

Figure 6: Line Item Addition to Question 11

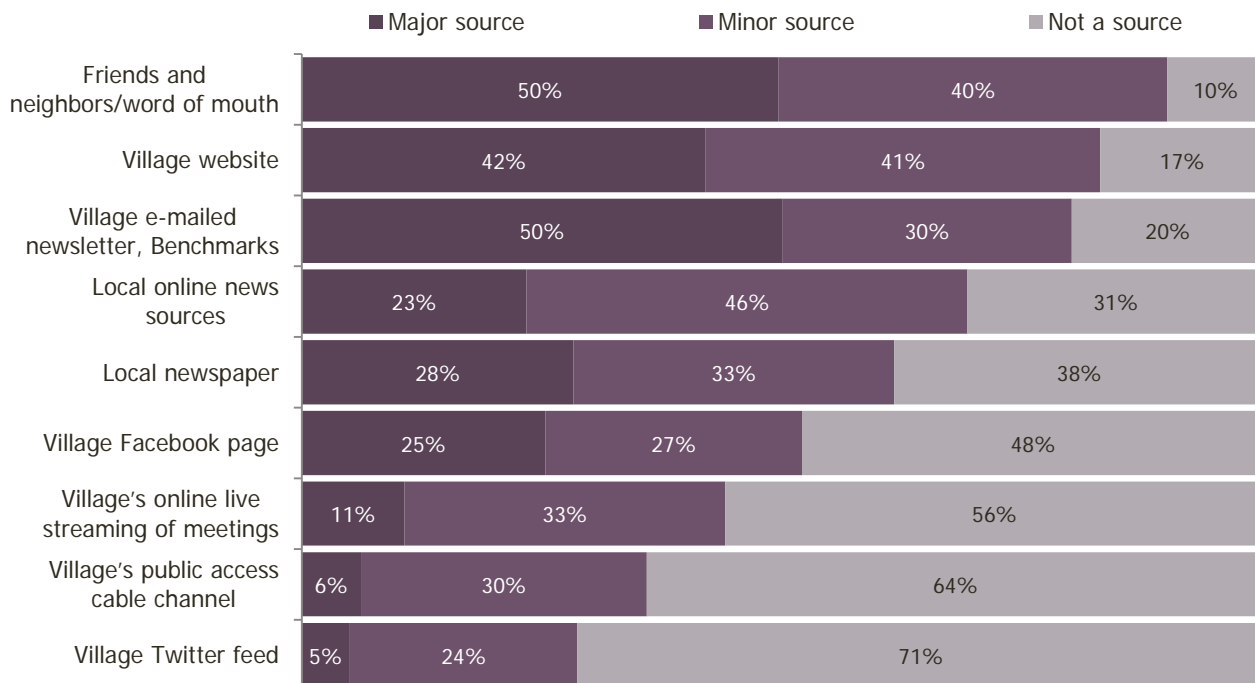
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by the State of Illinois?



Reflecting next on their reliance on different sources for City information, the most popular were friends and neighbors and word of mouth, with almost all residents indicating that these were major or minor sources. About 8 in 10 used the Village website and the Village emailed newsletter *Benchmarks* as a major or minor source of information while about two-thirds utilized local online news sources and the local newspaper. Although residents were least likely to use the Village Twitter feed as a major or minor source, it is worth noting that 3 in 10 residents did so.

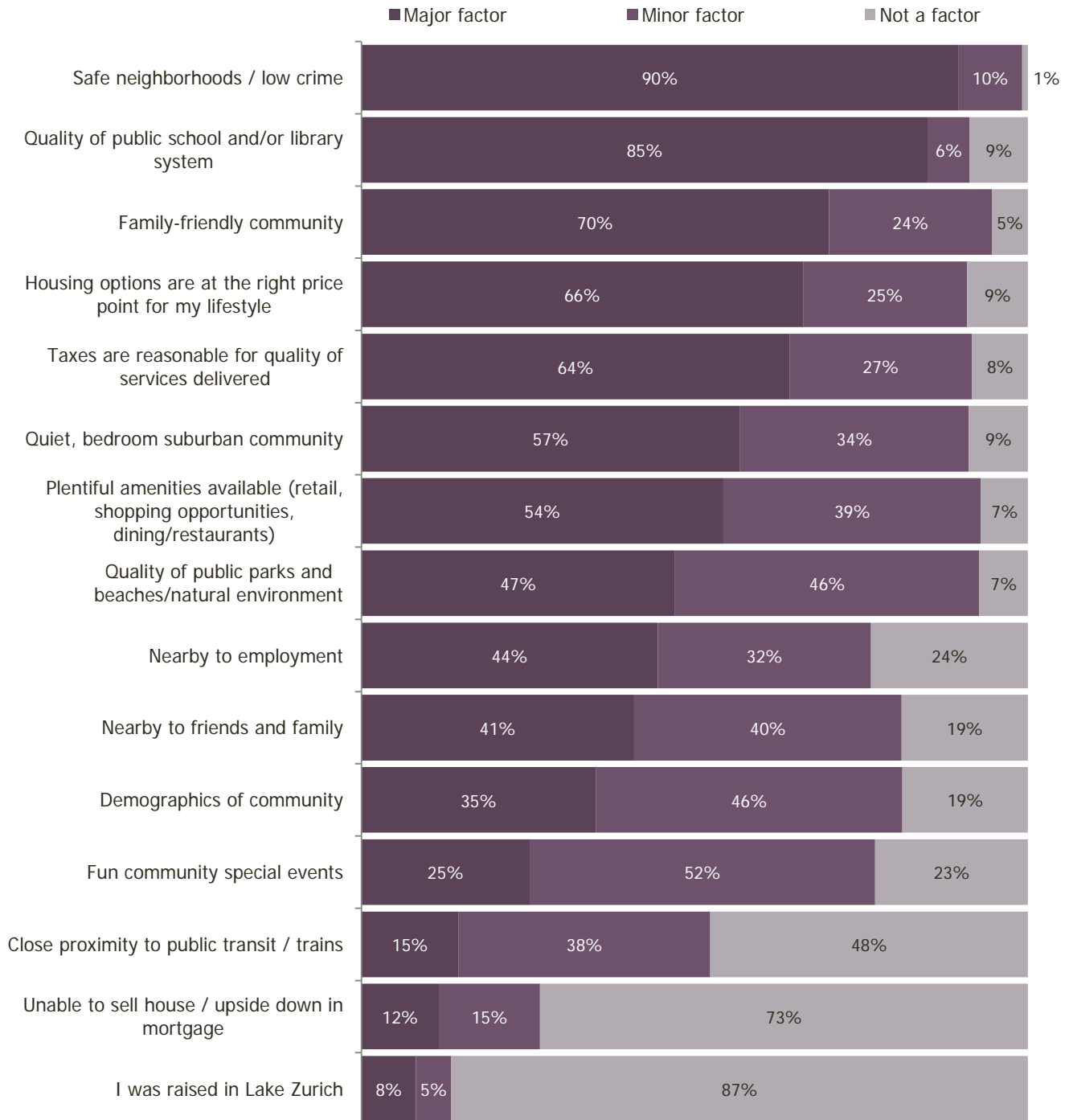
Figure 7: Sources of Village Information

How much of a source, if at all, do you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the Village government and its activities, events and services?



Thinking about factors affecting their decision to live in Lake Zurich, most residents listed safe neighborhoods and the quality of the public school and/or library system as a major factor affecting their decision to live in the Village. Roughly two-thirds indicated that the family-friendly community, price point of housing options and value of taxes for service delivery were a major factor for them. Residents were least likely to indicate that close proximity to public transit/trains, inability to sell their house or being raised in Lake Zurich were major or minor factors in their decision to live in Lake Zurich.

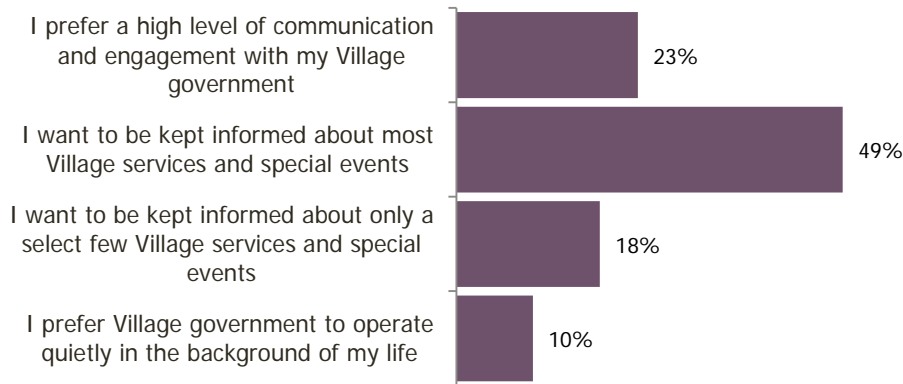
Figure 8: Factors for Living in Lake Zurich  
 How much of a factor, if at all, are each of the following regarding your decision to live in Lake Zurich?



Residents were asked about their preferred level of communication from the Village. Residents were most likely to prefer either a high level of communication with Village government or to be kept informed about most Village services and special events. About 2 in 10 residents wanted to be kept informed of select few services and events and 1 in 10 preferred that the Village government operate quietly without disturbing their lives.

Figure 9: Perspective on Local Government

*Which statement below best describes your perspective on local government? (Please choose only one.)*

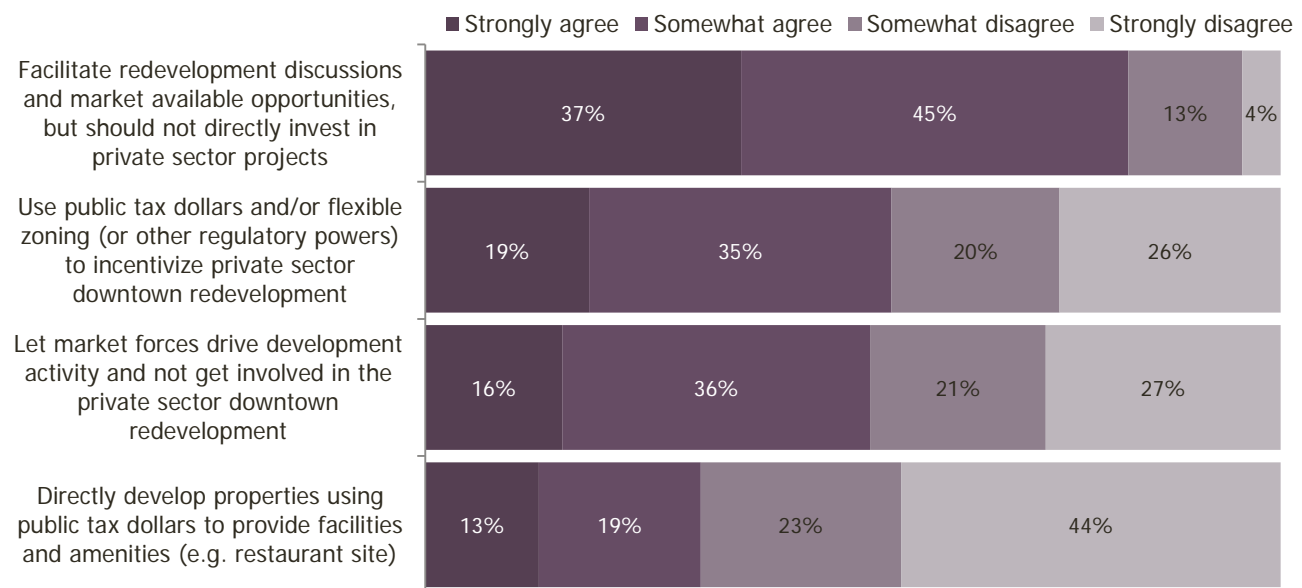


The final special-interest question asked residents about their level of agreement with a series of statements related to downtown development. Eight in 10 residents strongly or somewhat agreed that the Village should facilitate discussions around redevelopment opportunities, but refrain from investing directly in private sector projects. Similar proportions of respondents agreed and disagreed with both using public tax dollars or other regulatory powers to incentivize development and not getting involved in private sector downtown redevelopment. A majority of residents disagreed that the Village should directly develop properties using public tax dollars.

Figure 10: Downtown Development

*Several downtown properties acquired about 15 years ago by the Village for redevelopment remain undeveloped. Despite some progress on initiating development, most proposals have not resulted in actual redevelopment due to private sector financial limitations. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about what the Village should do regarding development of these downtown properties.*

*The Village should...*



# Conclusions

## Sense of community is on the rise in Lake Zurich and loyalty remains high.

Three-quarters of Lake Zurich residents gave favorable evaluations to the sense of community in the Village, which was an increase from 2015 to 2017, and more than 8 in 10 planned to remain in Lake Zurich for the next five years. Nearly all residents (96%) would recommend living in Lake Zurich to someone who asked and this proportion was higher than seen elsewhere. Residents continued to give positive evaluations to the overall quality of life in Lake Zurich and the Village as place to live. About 9 in 10 Lake Zurich residents were pleased with their neighborhood as a place to live and the Village as a place to raise children, which were similar to and higher than average, respectively.

## Although residents feel safe, Safety remains a community priority.

As in 2015, residents identified Safety as an important focus area for the Village. Nearly all residents rated the overall feeling of safety in Lake Zurich as excellent or good, which was higher than seen in other communities, and almost all felt safe in their neighborhoods and in Lake Zurich's downtown area. Most residents were pleased with police, fire, ambulance/EMS, crime prevention and fire prevention; police services and crime prevention received higher than average ratings. The proportion of Village residents who had not reported a crime in the previous 12 months was also higher than observed elsewhere. However, Lake Zurich residents were less likely than those in other communities to have stocked supplies for an emergency, and this rating decreased since 2015. When asked about factors affecting their decision to live in Lake Zurich, almost all residents listed safe neighborhoods and low crime as a major or minor factor affecting their decision to live in the Village.

## Residents are optimistic about their economic future and many support discussions about redevelopment downtown.

The Economy also was identified as an important focus area in the coming years. Village residents were more likely than residents elsewhere to believe the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months. Respondents in 2017 gave higher evaluations to the overall economic health of Lake Zurich and employment opportunities than in 2015. Although ratings for most aspects of Economy tended to be similar to the national comparison, shopping opportunities was rated higher and the vibrancy of Lake Zurich's downtown area received lower marks. When asked about their level of agreement with a series of statements related to downtown redevelopment, residents were most likely to agree that the Village should facilitate discussions around redevelopment opportunities, but avoid direct investment in private sector projects.

## Survey respondents appreciate recent transportation improvements.

A number of evaluations for Mobility-related services increased from 2015 to 2017, including traffic flow, overall ease of travel, street repair, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and travel by public transportation. However, Lake Zurich residents were less likely to have walked or biked instead of driving over the two year period. While most evaluations tended to be similar to national averages, public parking and traffic enforcement received ratings higher than those given elsewhere, while ease of travel by public transportation and bus or transit services were rated lower.