

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

# Lake Zurich, IL

Community Livability Report

2019



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# Contents

About..... 1

Quality of Life in Lake Zurich ..... 2

Community Characteristics ..... 3

Governance ..... 5

Participation ..... 7

Special Topics..... 9

Conclusions ..... 12



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# About

The National Community 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.

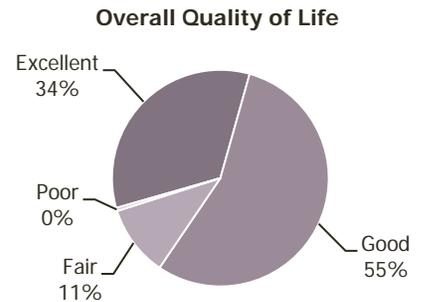
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 549 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 (89%) rated the quality of life in Lake Zurich 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.

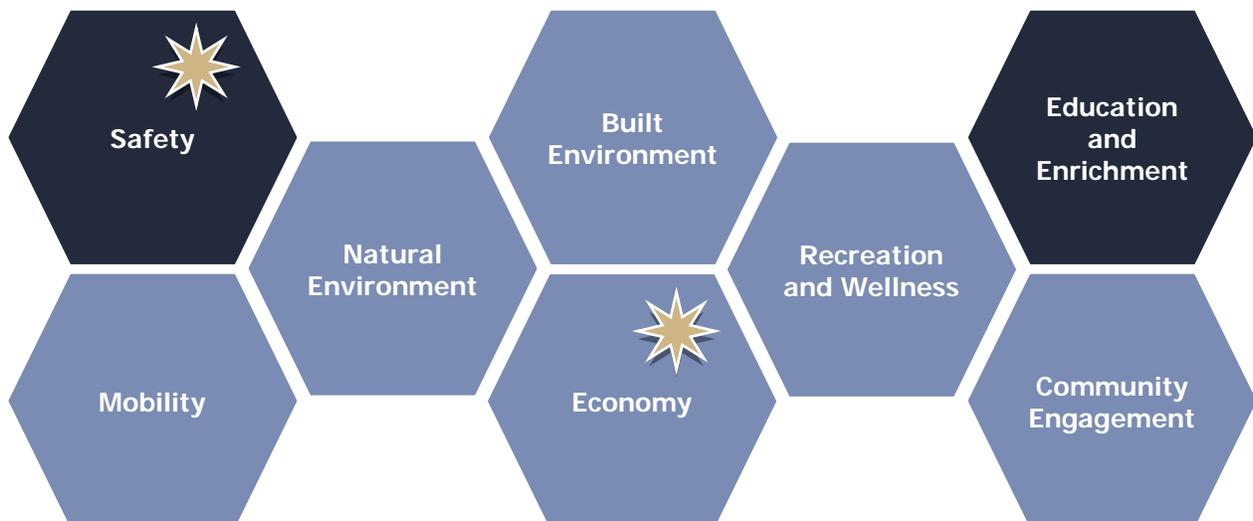
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2015 and 2017, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Lake Zurich community in the coming two years. Further, residents gave higher than average marks to Safety and Education and Enrichment, though Education and Enrichment was not felt to be an important area of focus. 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



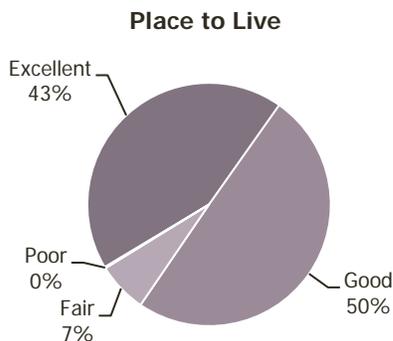
# Community Characteristics

*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, 93% 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.

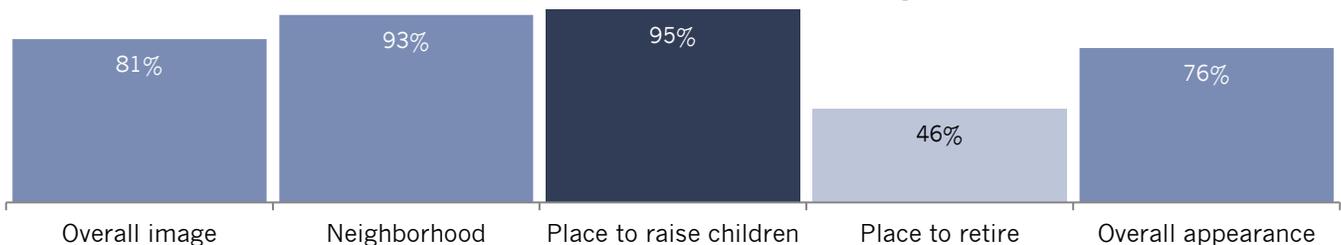
In addition to rating the village as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Lake Zurich as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Lake Zurich and its overall appearance. While Lake Zurich as a place to retire was rated positively by fewer than 50% of respondents (and was lower than the national comparison), the remaining characteristics received positive ratings from at least three-quarters of respondents. Further, a greater-than-average proportion of residents awarded high marks to Lake Zurich as a place to raise children.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Ratings across each facet tended to be similar to the benchmarks. Safety ratings were strong with nearly all residents offering positive evaluations to each characteristic listed; further, overall feeling of safety and feeling of safety in the downtown area both rated higher than the national norms. Characteristics related to Natural Environment were also strong, with at least 85% of residents offering positive ratings to each item listed, and cleanliness rated positively by about 9 in 10 residents and rated higher than the national norm. Each item within Recreation and Wellness was rated similar to the national benchmarks and were generally consistent with no fewer than 59% and no more than 77% of respondents offering positive evaluations to each item listed.



Mobility housed the most varied ratings, with as few as 2 in 10 offering positive marks to ease of travel by public transportation (lower than average) and as many as 8 in 10 offering positive marks to overall ease of travel, travel by car and public parking. Economy ratings painted a similarly varied picture, with as few as 2 in 10 offering positive marks to the vibrant downtown area but three-quarters offering positive marks to shopping opportunities. While vibrant downtown area was among the lowest-rated items and lower than the national norm, it did increase in 2019 compared to 2017 (please see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

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



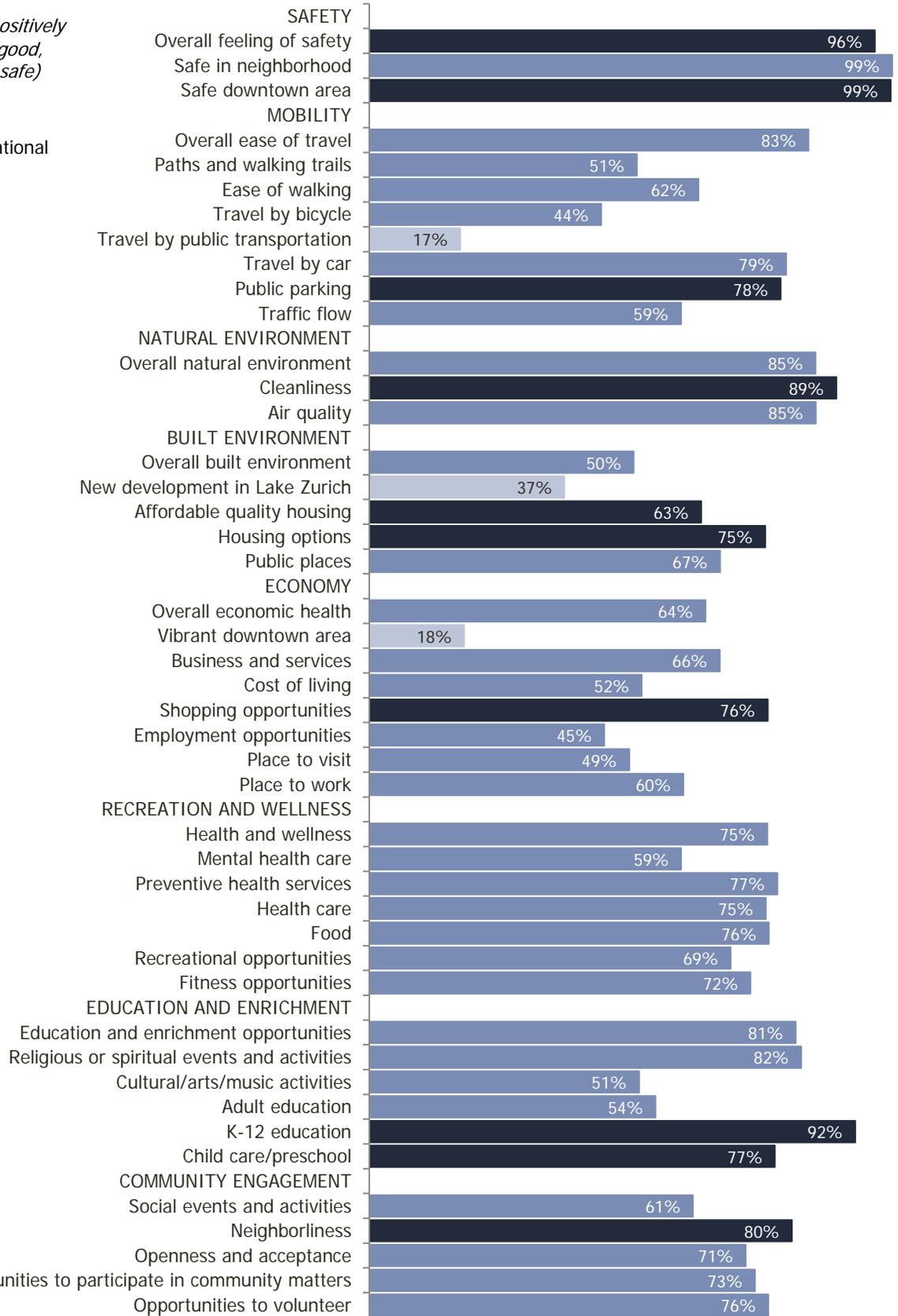
# The National Community Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

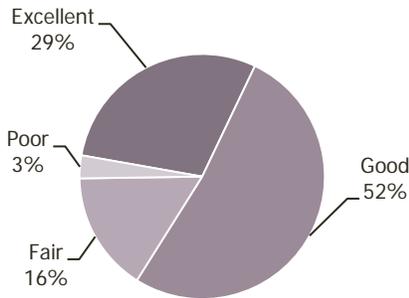
*How well does the government of Lake Zurich meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Lake Zurich as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 8 in 10 respondents rated the overall quality of services provided by the Village as excellent or good, while only about one-third gave positive ratings to the Federal Government; both of these evaluations were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Lake Zurich's leadership and governance. About 8 in 10 residents gave high marks to the overall quality of customer service provided by Village employees and 7 in 10 offered positive scores to the local government treating all residents fairly. The remaining aspects of Lake Zurich's leadership and governance tended to be rated positively by 5 in 10 to 6 in 10 residents and were similar to the national averages.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Lake Zurich. Aspects of Governance across most facets tended to be similar to the national benchmarks; however, aspects related to Safety were generally higher than average. The lowest-rated item and only item lower than the national norm was bus or transit services, with one-quarter of residents offering a positive evaluation. While the top-rated items were generally related to Safety, a few top-rated items fell within other facets; garbage collection, recycling and yard waste pick-up within Natural Environment and public libraries within Education and Enrichment were each rated positively by at least 90% of residents and were higher than ratings given elsewhere across the country.

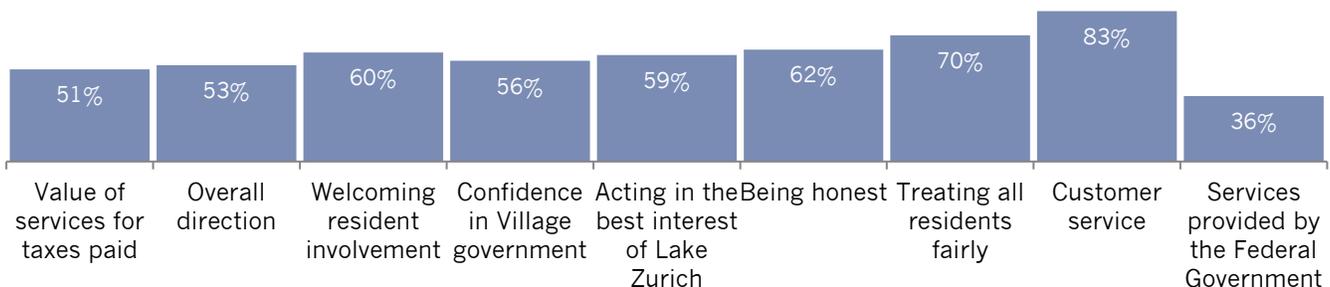
Overall Quality of Village Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



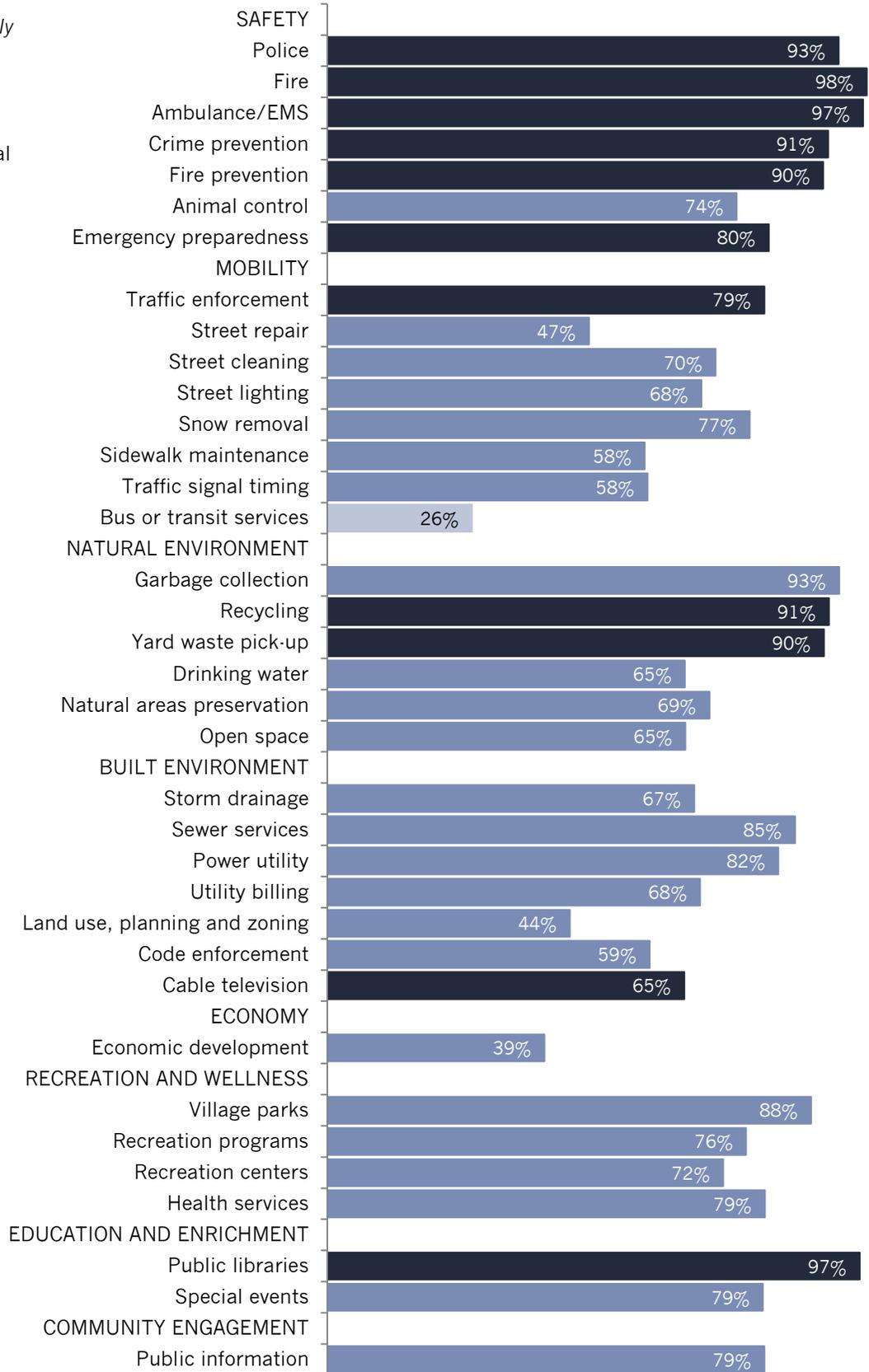
# The National Community Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

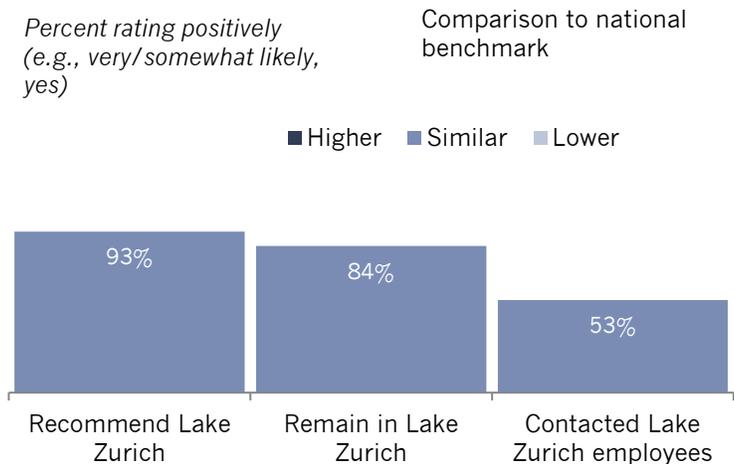
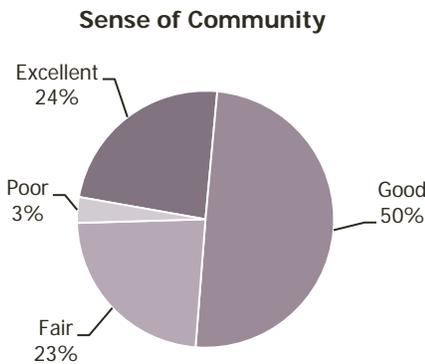


# Participation

*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 three-quarters of residents gave positive ratings to the sense of community in Lake Zurich, which was on par with ratings given elsewhere. At least 4 in 5 respondents were likely to recommend living in Lake Zurich and planned to remain in the Village for the next five years; these evaluations were similar to comparison communities.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Levels of participation tended to vary widely across the different facets, making the comparisons to the benchmarks, as well as to Lake Zurich over time, useful for interpreting the results. Most reported rates were similar to rates in comparison communities. Survey respondents reported higher rates of using public libraries, attending a Village-sponsored event and watching a local public meeting; further, local public meeting viewership increased in 2019 compared to 2017. Respondents reported lower rates of volunteering (a rate that declined in 2019 compared to 2017), working in the community (increased in 2019) and stocking supplies for an emergency (increased in 2019).



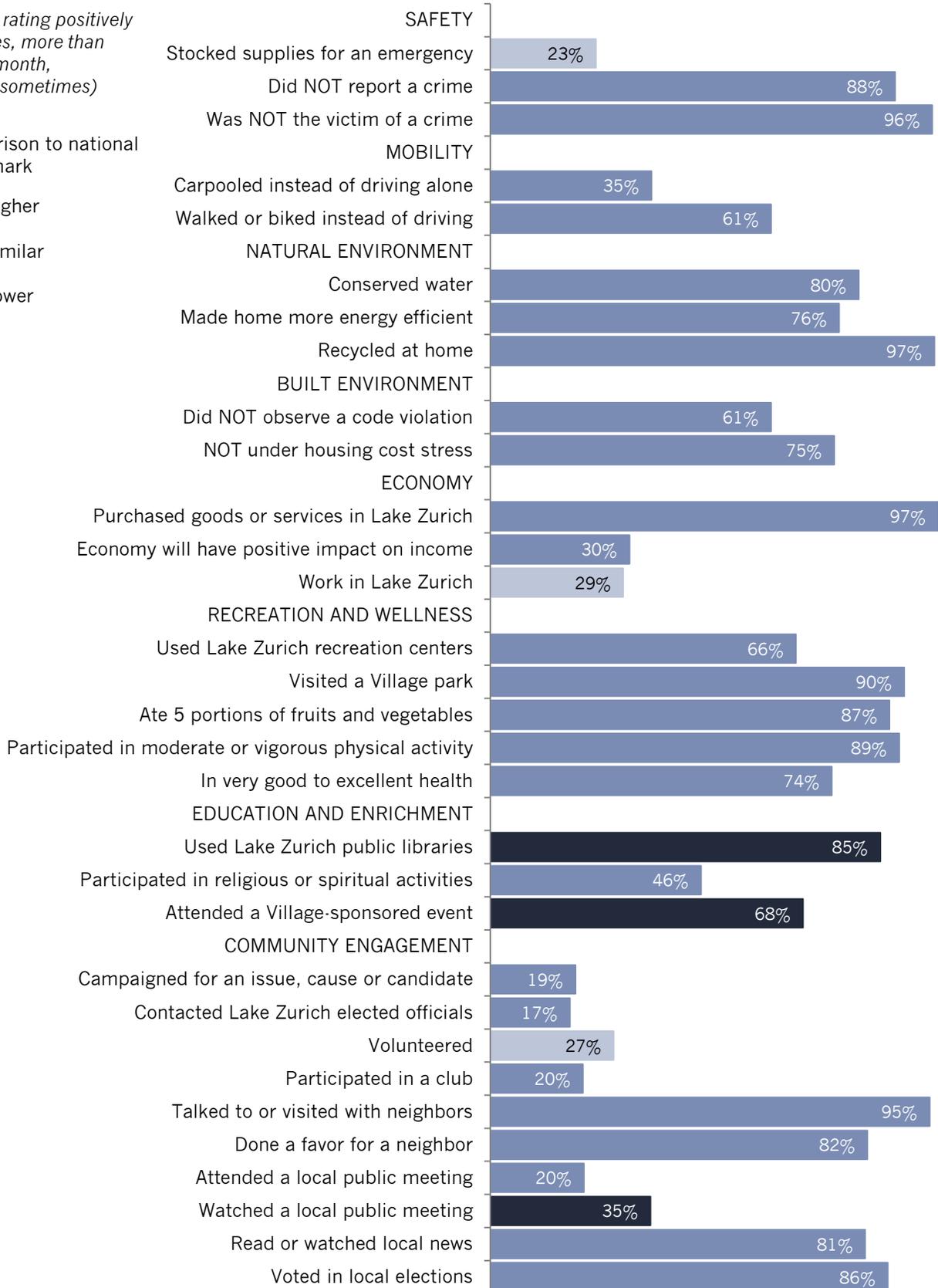
## The National Community Survey™

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



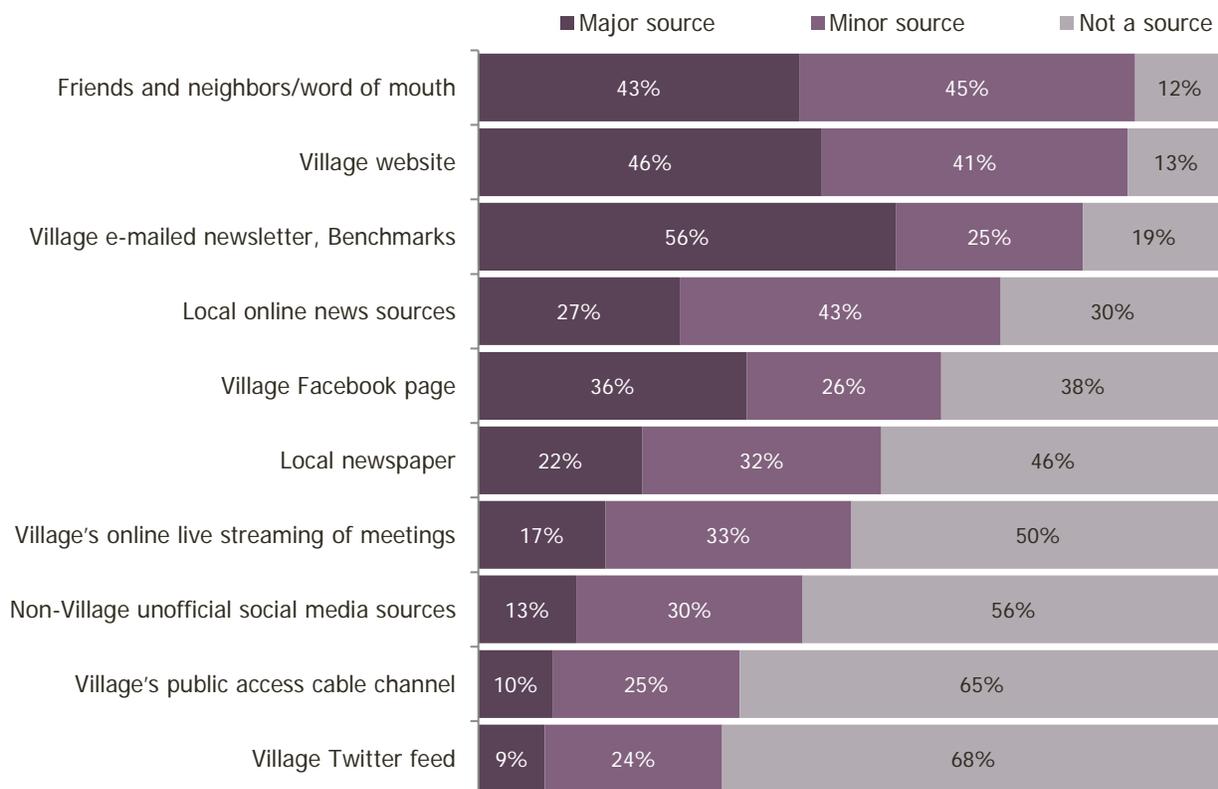
# Special Topics

The Village of Lake Zurich included four questions of special interest on The NCS, including reliance on various sources of information about the community, reasons for living in the community, awareness of events and the location of Lake Zurich’s “Heart of Community.”

When asked about sources of information used for obtaining information about the Village government and its activities, events and services, residents were most likely to indicate word of mouth and the Village website as sources of information. The Village’s public access cable channel and the Village Twitter feed were at the bottom of the list with about one-third indicating each of these as a major or minor source.

Figure 4: Information Sources

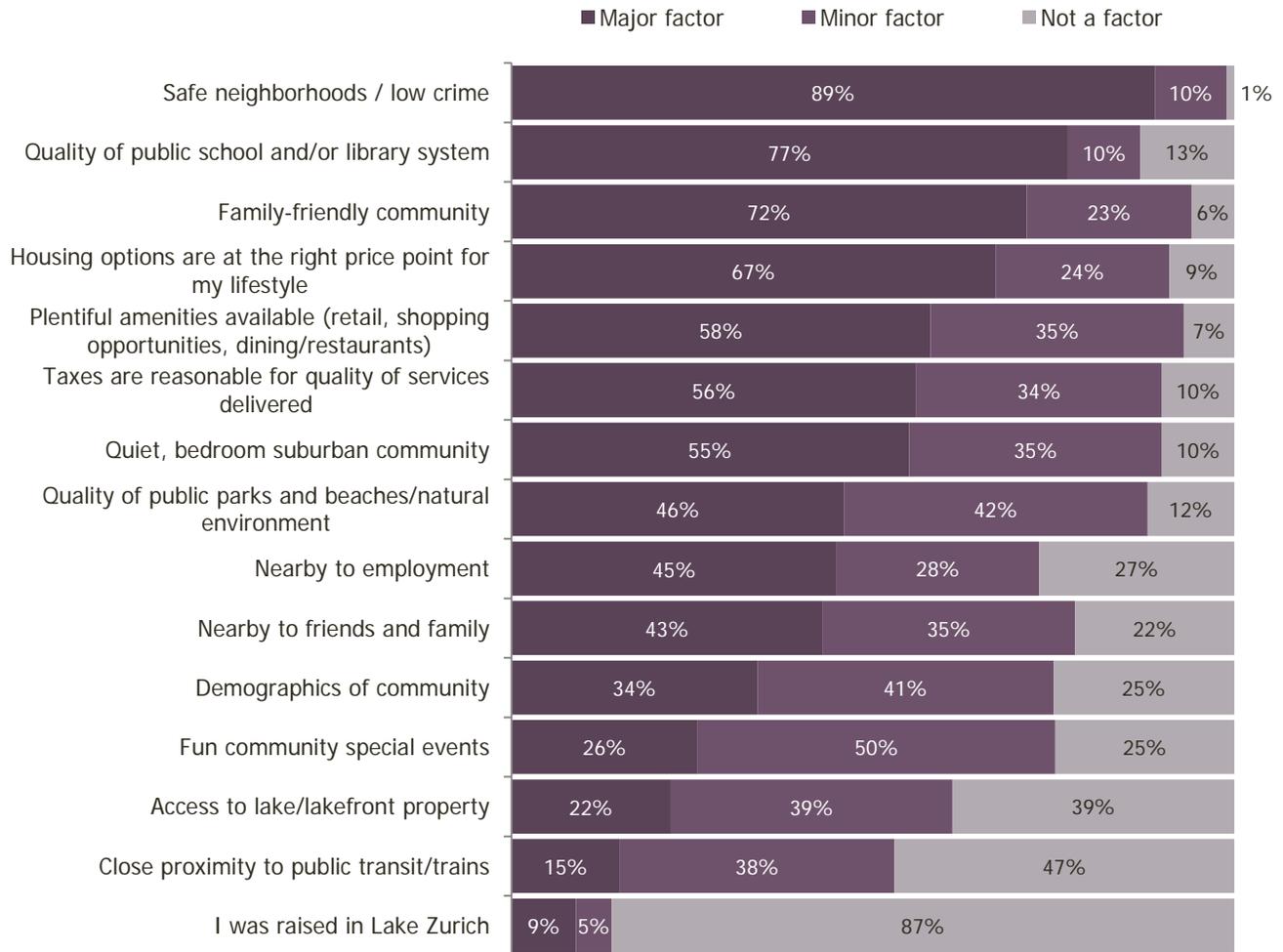
*How much of a source, if at all, do you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the Village government and its activities, events and services?*



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Safe neighborhoods/low crime was selected as the number one factor in residents' decision to live in Lake Zurich; 9 in 10 residents indicated that this was a major factor and an additional 1 in 10 noted this as a minor factor. About three-quarters indicated that the quality of public schools and/or library system and Lake Zurich being a family-friendly community were major factors in their decision. At the bottom of the list of factors was residents' being raised in Lake Zurich with only 1 in 10 indicating this was a major factor in their decision-making process.

Figure 5: Reasons 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?

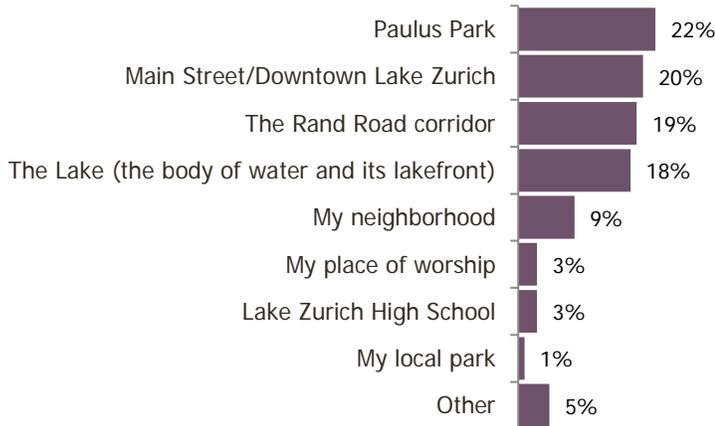


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Opinions were mixed when residents were asked about the location of Lake Zurich's core, or "Heart of Community." About one-fifth of respondents indicated each of the following as the core of the community: Paulus Park, Main Street/Downtown Lake Zurich, the Rand Road corridor and the Lake. Each of the remaining listed options were selected by 1 in 10 or fewer residents.

Figure 6: Lake Zurich Core Location

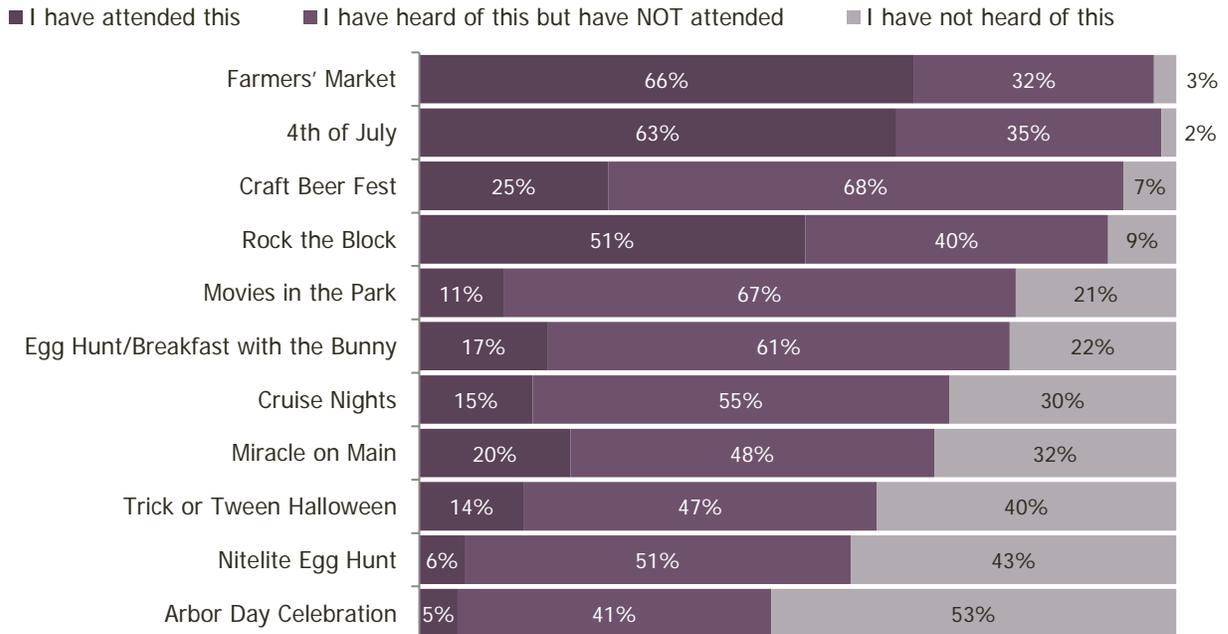
*In your opinion, where is Lake Zurich's core for community activity and life? Where is our "Heart of Community" located?*



Residents were most aware of the Farmers' Market and 4<sup>th</sup> of July, with two-thirds indicating they had attended each and an additional one-third indicating they had heard of it but not attended. Fewer than 1 in 10 residents had attended the Nitelite Egg Hunt and the Arbor Day Celebration.

Figure 7: Awareness of Lake Zurich Events

*Please tell us if you have heard of, or attended, each of the following Lake Zurich events within the last two years:*



# Conclusions

## Safety ratings continue to shine in Lake Zurich, and residents consider safety the main factor in their decision to call Lake Zurich home.

As in previous survey years, residents identified Safety as an important focus area for the Village. Nearly all residents offered positive evaluations to the overall feeling of safety in Lake Zurich and in the downtown area (items rated higher than the national norm) and in their neighborhood. When it came to aspects of Governance, Safety services were the spotlight with six of the seven listed rated higher than the national norm and five rated positively by at least 9 in 10 residents (ambulance/EMS, Fire, police, among others). Further, nearly all Village residents reported that they had not been the victim of a crime in the previous 12 months. When asked about factors affecting their decision to live in Lake Zurich, safe neighborhoods/low crime topped the list of 15 potential factors with 9 in 10 residents indicating that this was a major factor and an additional 1 in 10 noting this as a minor factor.

## While the Economy remains a priority, residents have noted improvements with the local economy.

As in 2017, the Economy also was identified as an important focus area in the coming years. However, Village residents' outlook on their economic future declined in 2019 compared to 2017, with 10% fewer residents indicating they believe the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months. When compared to the national norms, shopping opportunities was rated higher and the vibrancy of Lake Zurich's downtown area received lower marks, but trend data indicates possible improvements downtown with more residents offering positive marks to the vibrancy of the downtown area in 2019 compared to 2017. Further, the rating for the quality of business and service establishments also increased in 2019 compared to 2017.

## Community Engagement ratings are generally on par with the national norm; however, changes over time have been noted.

A majority of residents offered positive evaluations to each characteristic listed related to Community Engagement; further, more residents in 2019 compared to 2017 felt that opportunities to participate in community matters and opportunities to volunteer were excellent or good. However, an interesting parallel emerged when rates of Participation were gauged; fewer residents in 2019 compared to 2017 reported that they had volunteered (lower than the national norm) or watched a local public meeting (higher than the national norm).