

# THE NCS<sup>TM</sup>

The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

## Franklin, TN

### Community Livability Report

FINAL  
2016



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# Contents

About..... 1

Quality of Life in Franklin..... 2

Community Characteristics ..... 3

Governance ..... 5

Participation ..... 7

Special Topics..... 9

Conclusions ..... 11



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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Franklin. 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 1,060 residents of the City of Franklin. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 3% 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.

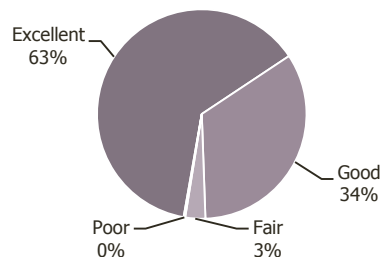


# Quality of Life in Franklin

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Franklin as excellent or good. This rating is higher than quality of life ratings seen in other 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.

Overall Quality of Life



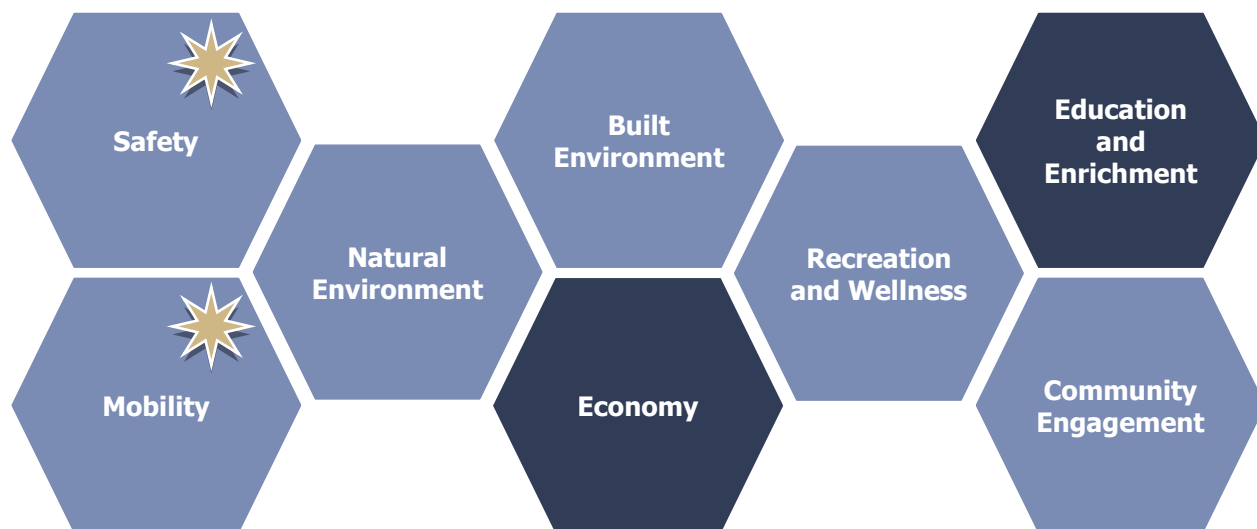
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Mobility as priorities for the Franklin community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Franklin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

## Legend

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

- ★ Most important



# Community Characteristics

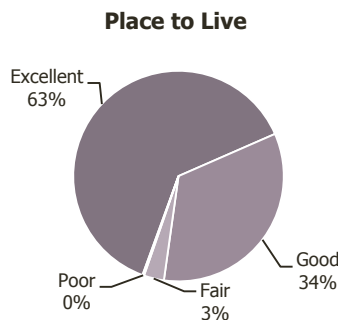
*What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?*

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 Franklin, 97% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Franklin as a place to live were higher than 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 Franklin as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Franklin and its overall appearance. About 9 in 10 respondents or more gave positive ratings to the overall appearance and overall image of Franklin, their neighborhood as a place to live and Franklin as a place to raise children. These ratings were higher than the national benchmark, along with the rating for Franklin as a place to retire (86% excellent or good).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Almost all residents rated their overall feeling of safety in Franklin positively, and many of these ratings were higher than the national benchmarks. Similarly, almost all residents rated their feelings of safety in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area positively. Within the facet of Mobility, residents were most pleased with Franklin's overall ease of travel, availability of paths and walking trails, ease of walking in Franklin and public parking, with about half of residents giving the aforementioned aspects positive ratings that were similar to the national benchmark. Residents were the least pleased with travel by bicycle, travel by public transportation, travel by car and traffic flow, and these ratings were lower than seen elsewhere. At least 9 in 10 residents rated the cleanliness of Franklin positively with ratings higher than the national benchmark. Ratings for Built Environment varied, with ratings ranging from 29% for availability of affordable quality housing to 88% for public places where people want to spend time; the rating for affordable quality housing was lower than the national benchmark while the rating for public places was higher. Within Economy, residents rated 7 of the 8 aspects higher than the national benchmark with 94% of respondents rating Franklin's overall economic health as excellent or good. Residents also rated aspects of Franklin's Recreation and Wellness characteristics and opportunities highly, with two-thirds of respondents giving a positive rating to health and wellness opportunities, mental health care services, preventive health services, and

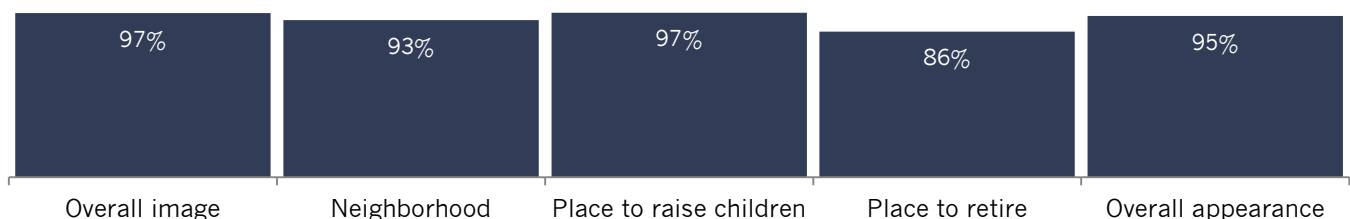
availability of affordable quality health care; each of these were rated higher than the national benchmark. Ratings within Education and Enrichment were strong with at least three-quarters of residents positively rating overall opportunities for education and enrichment, opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events or activities, and opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities higher than seen in other communities across the nation. Residents rated 3 of the 5 Community Engagement measures higher than in comparison communities, including opportunities to participate in social events and activities, neighborliness of residents in Franklin and opportunities to volunteer.



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

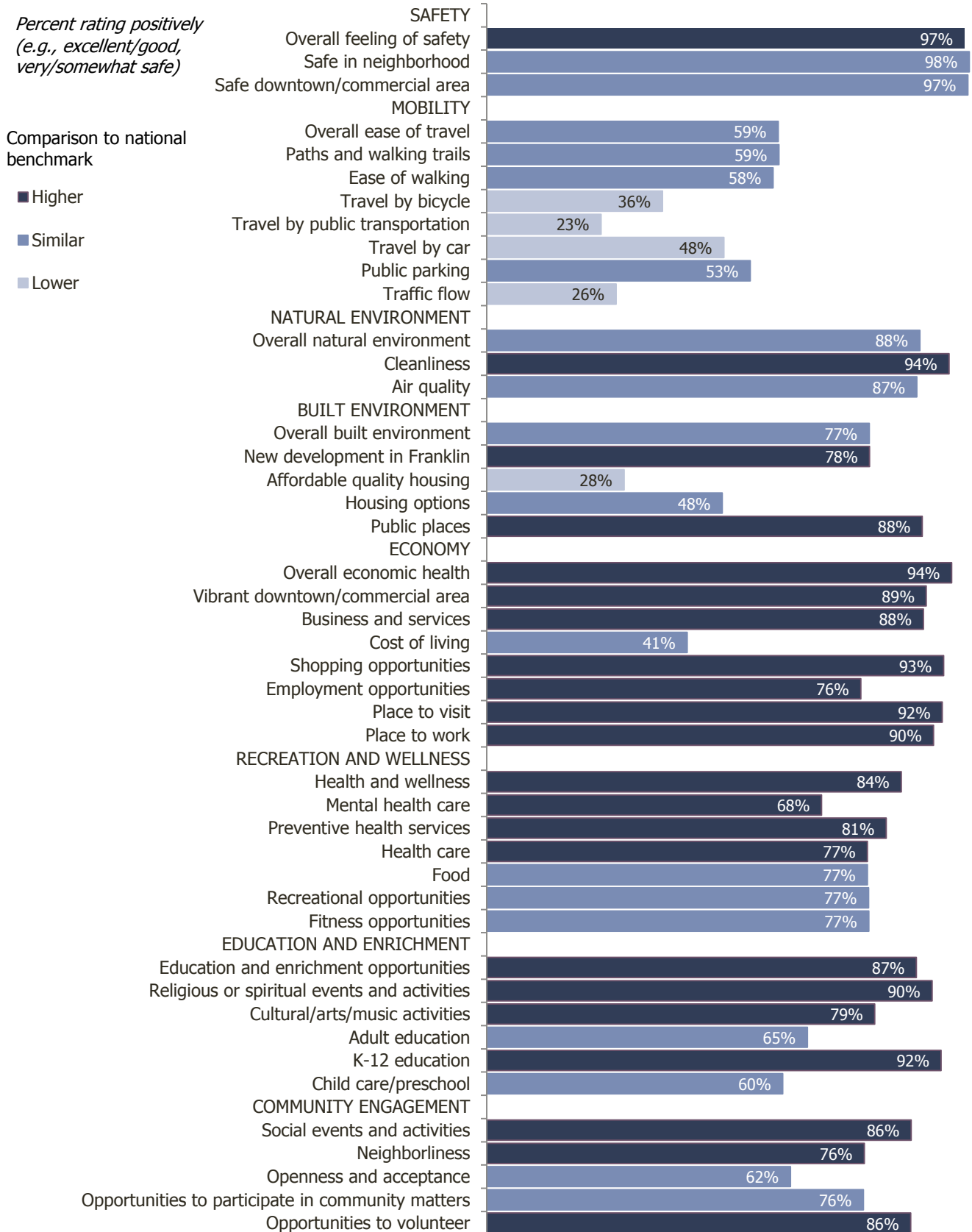
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



# Governance

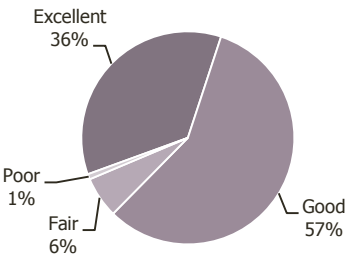
## *How well does the government of Franklin meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Franklin as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Almost all residents rated the overall quality of services provided by Franklin as excellent or good, a rating that was higher than the national benchmark. About 4 in 10 positively rated the services provided by the Federal Government, which was similar to the benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Franklin's leadership and governance. About 7 in 10 residents gave high ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, the job Franklin government does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in City government, the government acting in the best interest of Franklin, being honest and treating all residents fairly; each of these ratings were higher than ratings seen in comparison communities. Even more (90%) rated the customer service of Franklin employees highly, a rating similar to the national benchmark.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Franklin. Most services and amenities were rated positively by at least half of respondents and all were similar to or higher than the national benchmark comparisons. Respondents rated police services and Franklin's crime prevention and fire prevention efforts higher than the national benchmarks within the facet of Safety, and ratings for the remaining four Safety services were similar to the national comparisons. Ratings within Mobility were strong, with at least two-thirds of residents positively rating street repair, street cleaning, street lighting, and sidewalk maintenance; all of these ratings were higher than the national benchmark. Within Built Environment, ratings were favorable with about 7 in 10 or more residents rating each of the six services positively. Residents were pleased with economic development in Franklin; 82% of respondents rated this aspect of Economy positively, which was higher than the national benchmark. Around 4 in 5 residents rated recreation services, health services and City-sponsored special events as excellent or good and higher than seen elsewhere.

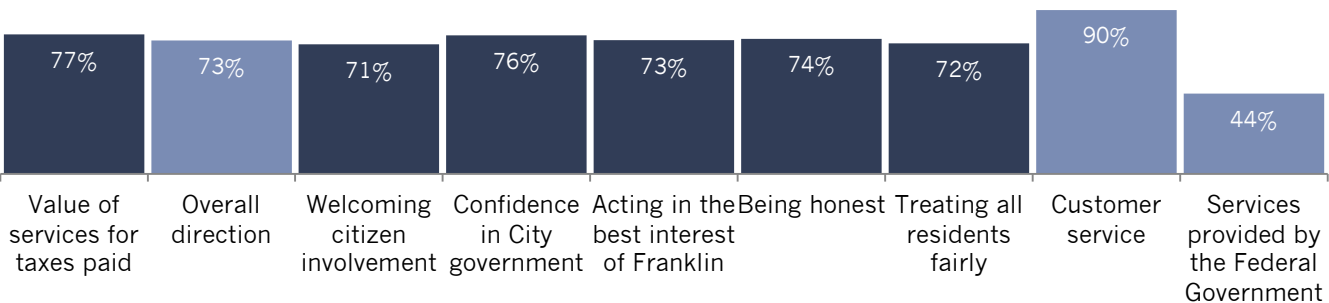
**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

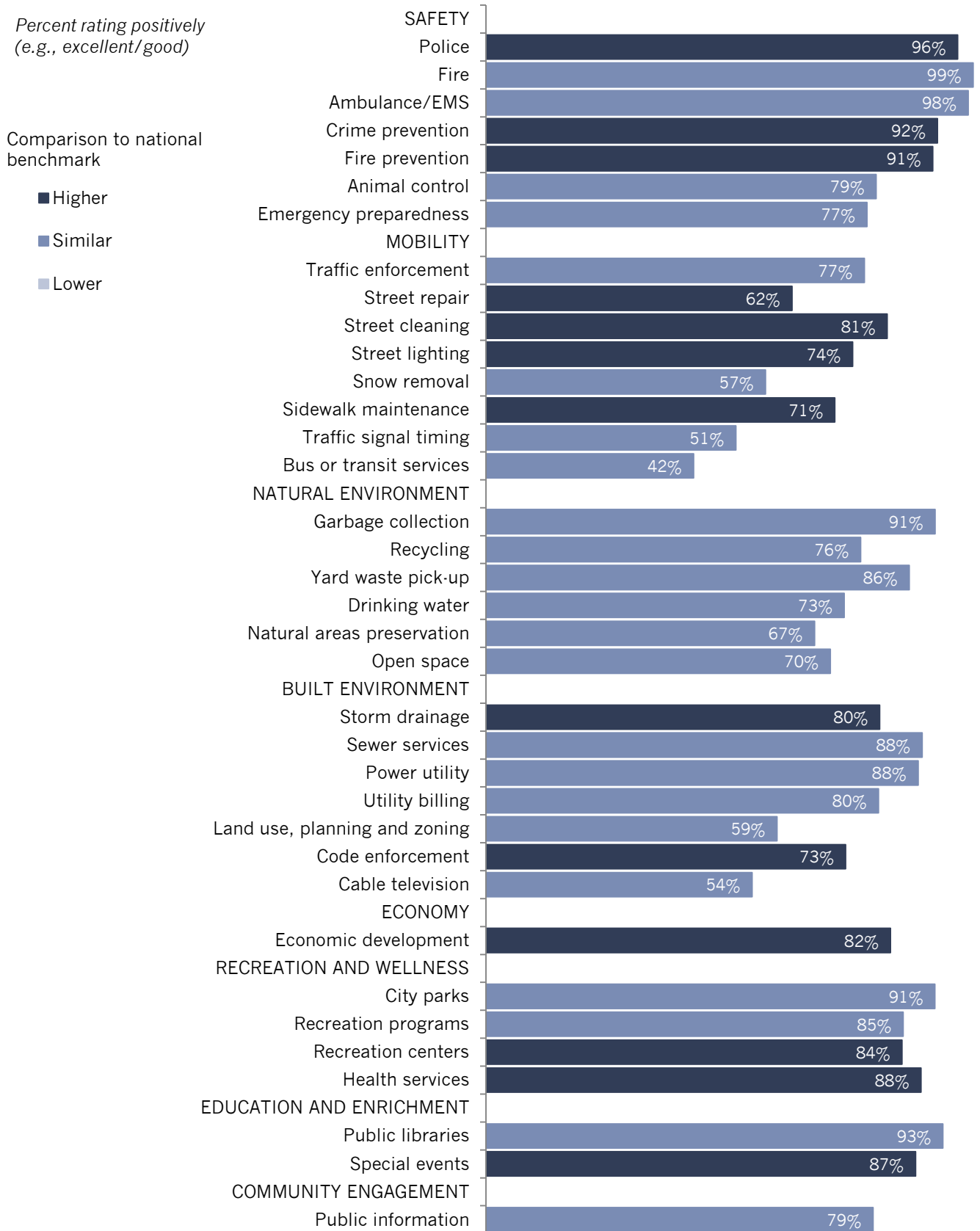
**Comparison to national benchmark**

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance



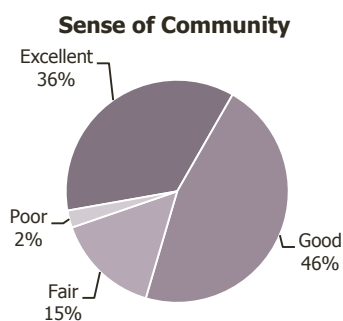


# Participation

## *Are the residents of Franklin 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. The overall sense of community in Franklin received positive ratings from 82% of residents, a rating that was higher than seen in other communities in the U.S. Nearly all residents would recommend living in Franklin (93%) and about 9 in 10 residents reported they were somewhat or very likely to remain in the City. These ratings were similar to the national benchmark.

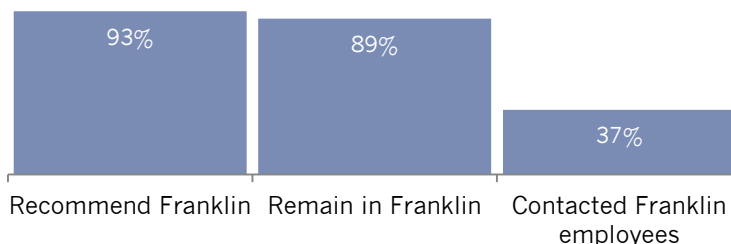
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Within the facet of Safety, about 87% of residents indicated they had not reported a crime (a level higher than the national benchmark) and 95% had not been the victim of a crime. Less than 1 in 10 residents reported they had used public transportation instead of driving and about 4 in 10 residents reported they had walked or biked instead of driving. Both of these participation levels were lower than seen elsewhere in the nation. About 7 in 10 residents indicated they had participated in each aspect of Natural Environment and Built Environment. Within Economy, almost all residents reported purchasing good or services in Franklin, about one-third reported feeling that the economy will have a positive impact on their income, and about half of residents reported working in Franklin; all of these rates of participation were similar to the national benchmark. About two-thirds of residents said they had attended a City-sponsored event or participated in religious or spiritual activities, and both of these levels were higher than the benchmark comparison. Within Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement, all Participation rates were similar to comparison communities.



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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



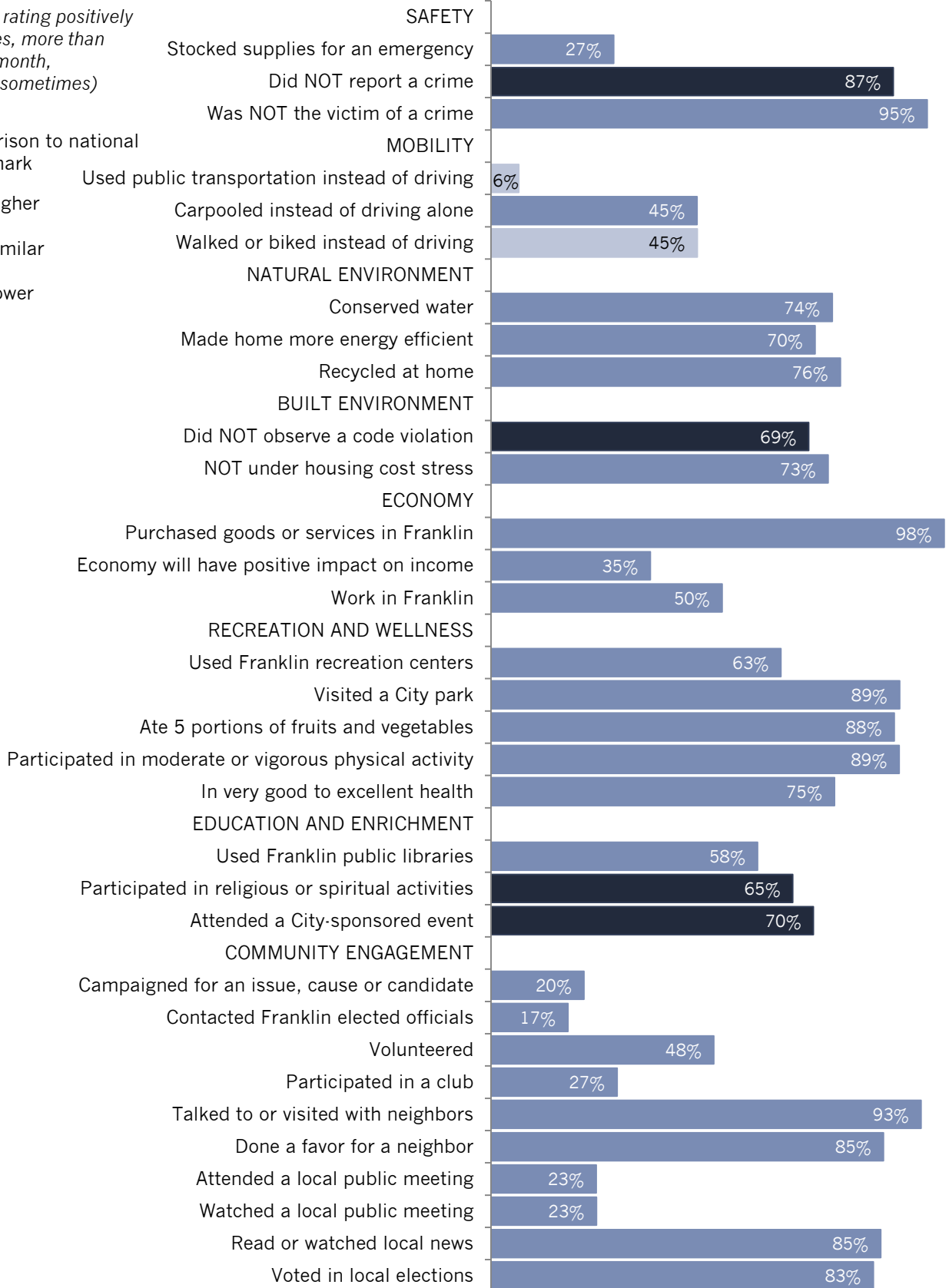
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

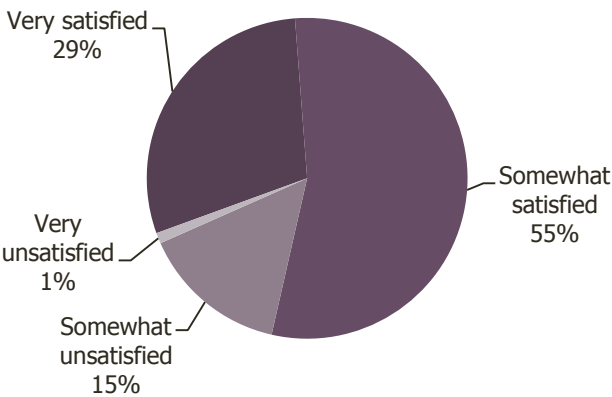
- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Special Topics

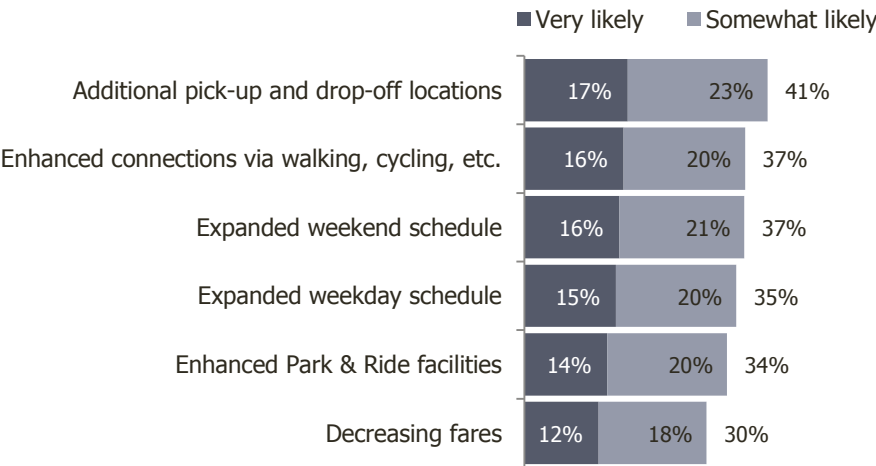
The City of Franklin included several questions of special interest on The NCS. When asked to rate their levels of satisfaction with the City’s management of growth, about 8 in 10 residents were at least somewhat satisfied. Less than 1 in 5 residents were somewhat or very unsatisfied with the management of growth in Franklin.

Figure 4: Growth Management  
*Please rate your level of satisfaction with the City of Franklin’s management of growth:*



The second special topics question asked residents how likely they would be to use the mass transit route from Spring Hill through the City of Nashville if certain improvements were made. Around 4 in 10 residents were at least somewhat likely to use the transit route if additional pick-up and drop-off locations were made available. About 3 in 10 residents said they were very likely or somewhat likely to use the transit route if the remaining improvements were made including enhanced connections, an expanded weekend and weekday schedule, enhanced Park & Ride facilities or a decrease in fares.

Figure 5: Mass Transit Usage  
*Presently the City of Franklin and Williamson County subsidize a limited mass transit route from Spring Hill through the City to Nashville. How likely, if at all, would you be to use this transit route if the following improvements were made?*

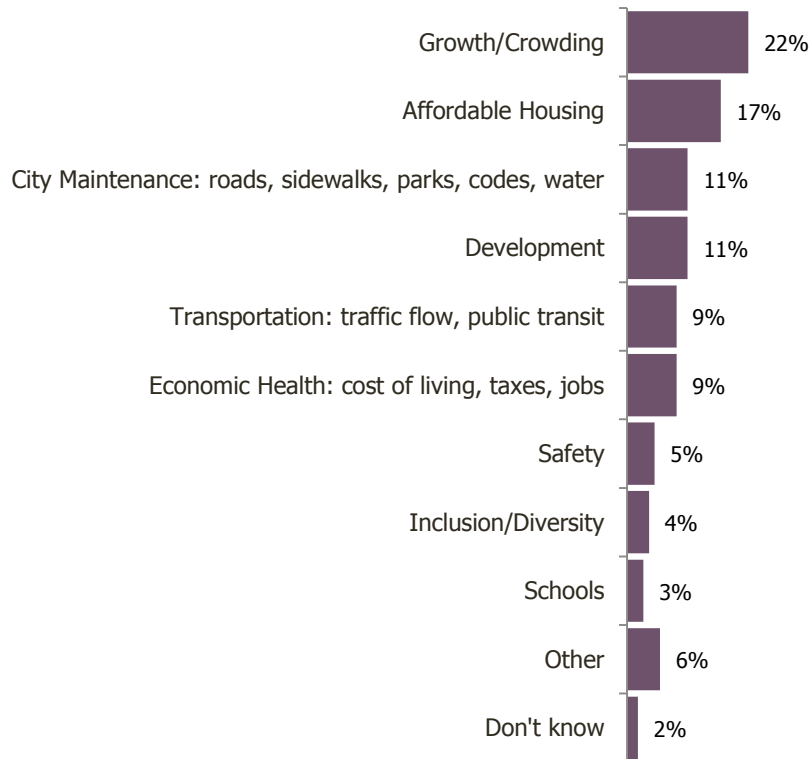


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Survey recipients were also asked to write in their own words what they thought was the most important challenge or problem facing Franklin. About 22% indicated that growth and crowding was the most important challenge facing Franklin and 17% reported that affordable housing was the most important challenge. About 1 in 10 indicated that city maintenance and development were also problems challenging the City.

Figure 6: Most Important Challenge Facing Franklin

*Aside from transportation (traffic) related issues, what is the most important challenge or problem facing Franklin today?*



# Conclusions

## **Residents of Franklin enjoy a high quality of life.**

Almost all residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good. About 9 in 10 residents would be very or somewhat likely to recommend Franklin as a place to live to someone who asks or planned to remain in Franklin for the next five years. Franklin as a place to raise children and Franklin neighborhoods as a place to live, as well as the City's overall image and appearance, 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 the national comparisons.

## **Residents feel safe in Franklin and believe safety should be a priority for the City.**

Franklin residents indicated that Safety is a priority for the next two years and also gave strong, favorable ratings to Safety. The overall feeling of safety was rated positively by almost all participants and almost all residents cited feeling safe in Franklin's downtown or commercial area and in their neighborhoods. Over 9 in 10 residents also gave favorable ratings to police services, fire, ambulance/EMS, crime prevention and fire prevention efforts. Around 4 in 5 residents had not reported a crime while 9 in 10 residents had not been the victim of a crime.

## **Mobility ratings are strong, but there are still opportunities for improvement.**

Mobility was identified as an important feature of the community for residents in the future. Overall, most measures for Mobility tended to be positively rated by at least a majority of residents. Franklin performed exceptionally well in evaluations for street repair services, street cleaning, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance with all of these aspects being scored as excellent or good by at least 3 in 5 residents; further, each of these received higher ratings than those given in other communities across the nation. Potential areas for improvement were the aspects of traffic flow and ease of travel by car, by public transportation and by bicycle. Finally, within the pillar of Participation the proportion of residents reporting that they walked or biked instead of driving or used public transportation instead of driving was lower than the national comparisons.