



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

## Lakeville, MN

Community Livability Report

2018



**NRC**  
National Research Center Inc.

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

**ICMA**

*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*

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

# Contents

About..... 1

Quality of Life in Lakeville..... 2

Community Characteristics ..... 3

Governance ..... 5

Participation ..... 7

Special Topics..... 9

Conclusions ..... 12



The National Citizen Survey™  
© 2001-2018 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 Lakeville. 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.

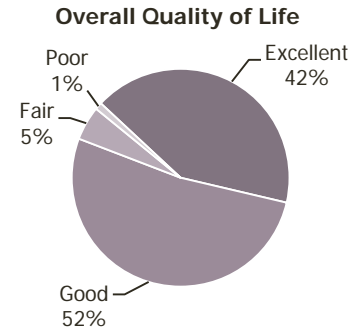
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 409 residents of the City of Lakeville. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% 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 Lakeville

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Lakeville as excellent or good. This rating was higher than 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.

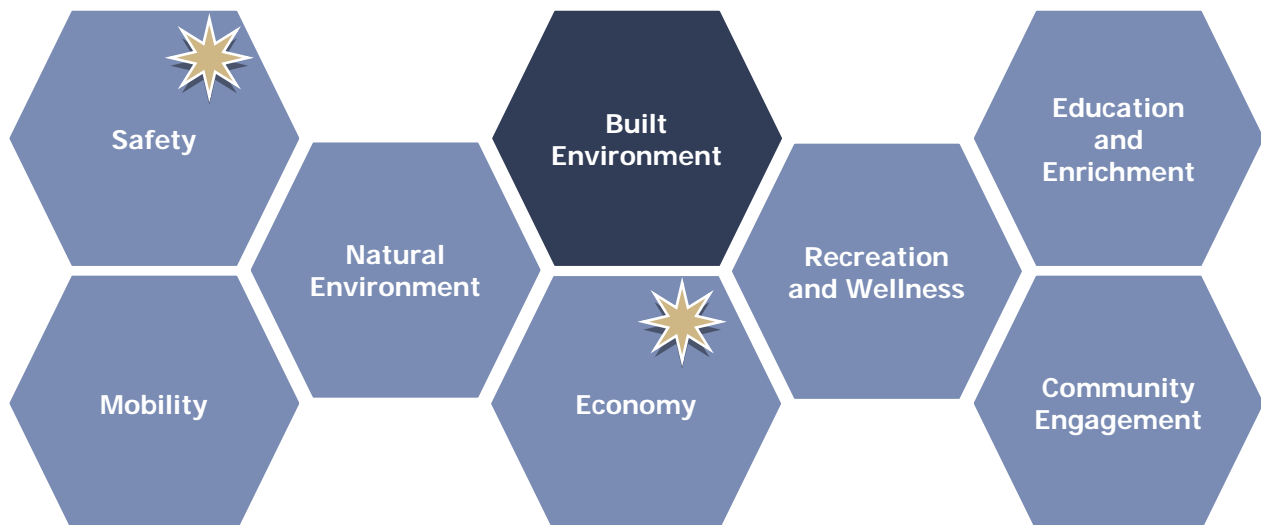
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Lakeville community in the coming two years. Ratings for most facets were positive and similar to communities nationwide, while ratings for the facet of Built Environment were exceptional and higher than the national benchmark. 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 Lakeville’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

- Most important



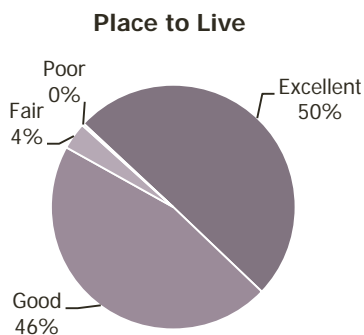
# Community Characteristics

*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 Lakeville, 96% rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Lakeville as a place to live were similar to 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 Lakeville as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Lakeville and its overall appearance. At least 8 in 10 residents assessed most of these aspects positively and ratings for the overall image of the city, Lakeville as a place to raise children and overall appearance outshined municipalities elsewhere. About two-thirds awarded excellent or good marks to the community as a place to retire, which was similar to national averages.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, ratings within the pillar of Community Characteristics were strong and similar to or higher than national benchmarks. Within the facet of Safety, all aspects were rated positively by at least 9 in 10 survey participants and evaluations of the overall feeling of safety in Lakeville was rated higher than comparison communities. Respondents also rated all aspects of Mobility strongly, assessing most measures more positively than national averages; additionally, assessments for traffic flow and ease of travel by car increased in 2018 (see the *Trends over Time* report for more details). About 9 in 10 residents rated both aspects of Natural Environment positively, particularly highlighting overall cleanliness as a strength.

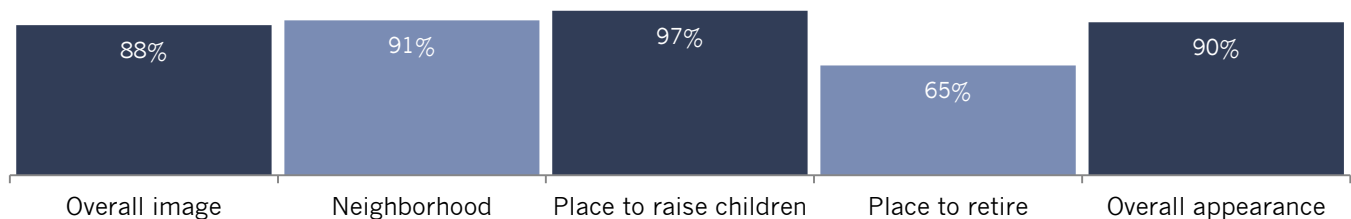


Survey respondents also provided accolades for several other areas. About 7 in 10 residents gave high marks to new development and the variety of housing options, and at least 8 in 10 were pleased with the overall economic health of Lakeville, education and enrichment opportunities and K-12 education; all of these outshined communities nationwide.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



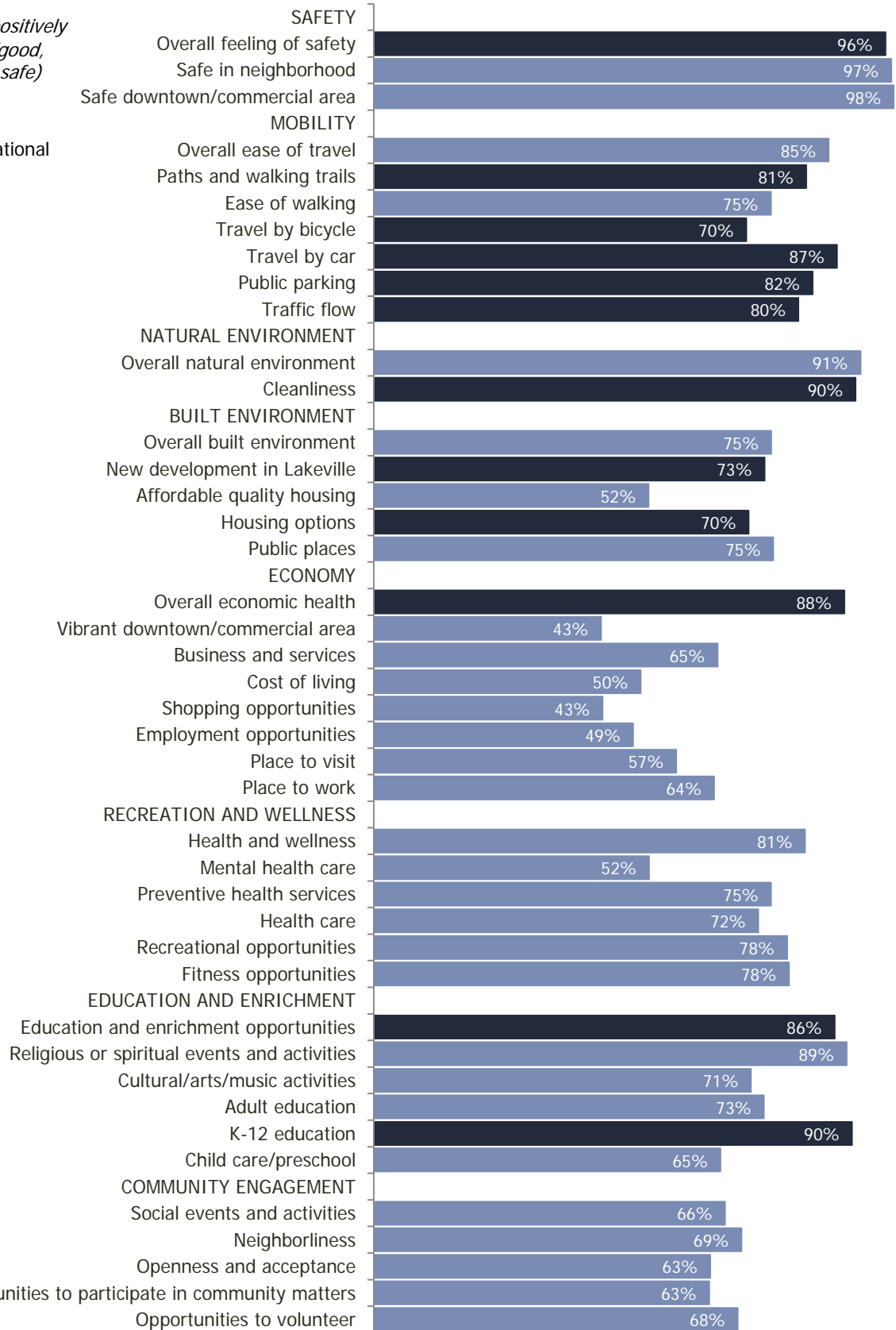
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



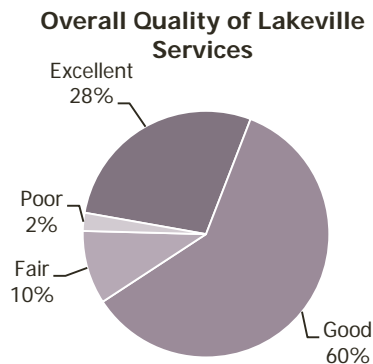
# Governance

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

The overall quality of the services provided by Lakeville as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. At least 8 in 10 residents rated the overall quality of services provided by the City of Lakeville as excellent or good. Marks for City services as well as services provided by the Federal Government were similar to national averages.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Lakeville’s leadership and governance. About 7 in 10 or more of residents evaluated most aspects positively and similarly to comparisons to jurisdictions across the country. Lakeville survey participants were particularly pleased with the City’s efforts to be honest and treat all residents fairly, as these levels were higher than other ratings awarded nationwide.

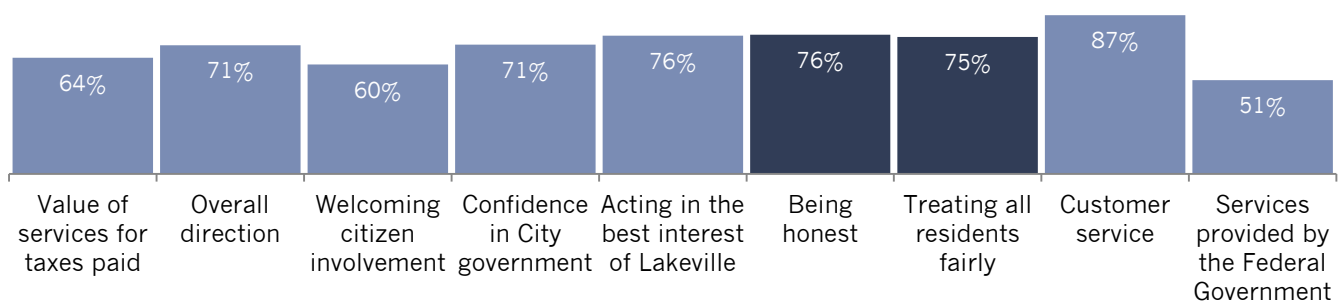
Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Lakeville. Ratings for all services provided were rated similarly to or higher than comparisons to other communities across the U.S. Services that were especially appreciated were concentrated within the facets of Safety, Mobility and Built Environment, including police, crime prevention, traffic enforcement, sidewalk maintenance, sewer and code enforcement services, among others. Furthermore, while some aspects declined since 2013 (e.g. recycling, yard waste pick-up, recreation centers), residents’ evaluations for street repair, economic development and health services increased in 2018.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



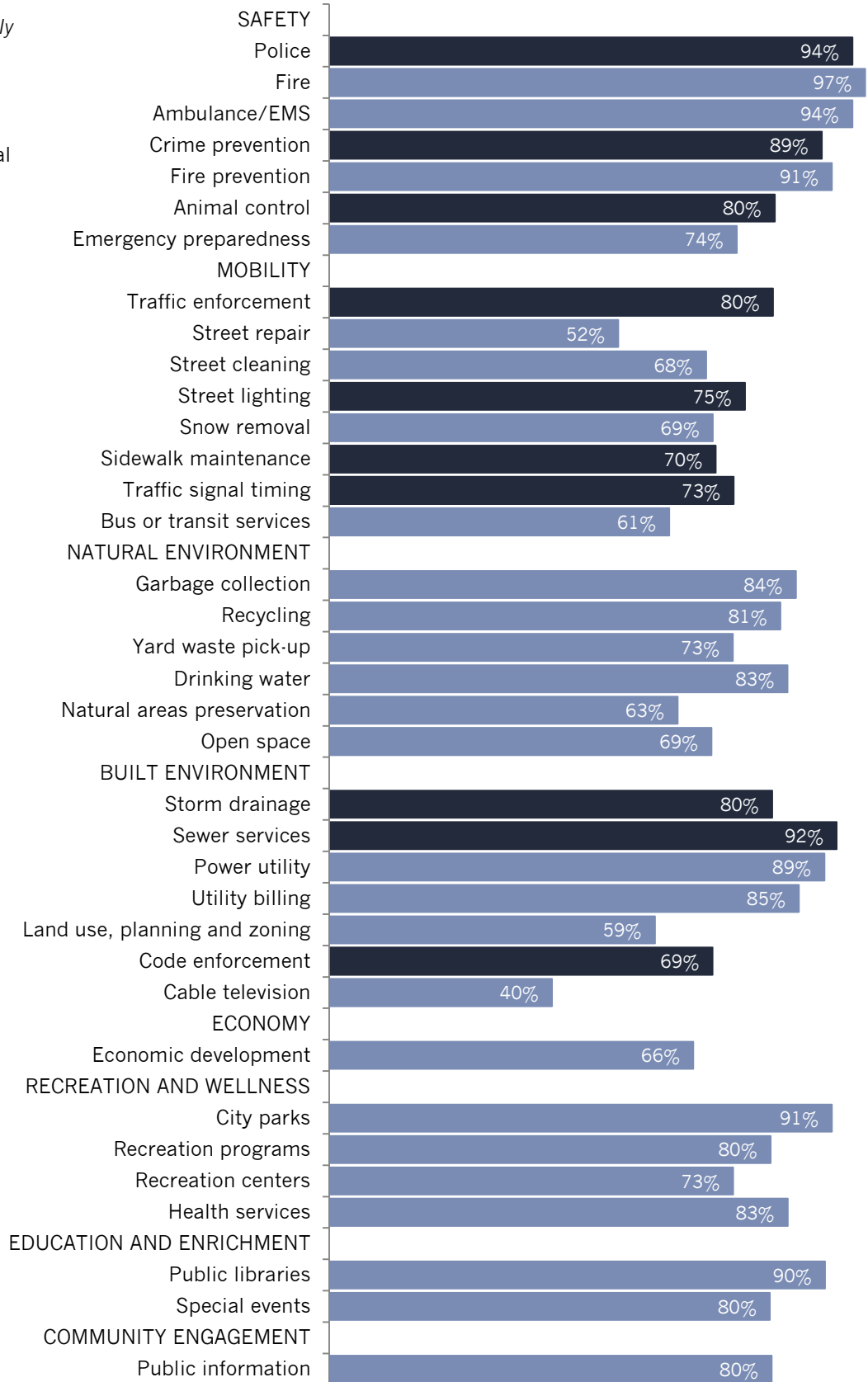
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Participation

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

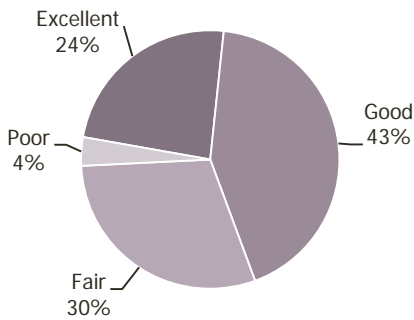
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. About two-thirds of survey respondents felt the sense of community in Lakeville was excellent or good, which was similar to levels across the country.

Almost all survey participants indicated that they would recommend Lakeville to someone who asked and planned on staying in Lakeville for the next five years, ratings that were higher than national benchmarks. About 4 in 10 residents reported having contacted a City employee in the last 12 months, a level of engagement similar to those seen in other communities.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, levels of Participation were similar to national averages. Residents reported high levels of engagement with the Natural Environment, generally on par with the benchmarks, plus a recycling rate that was higher than in other communities. Moreover, Lakeville survey participants reported code violations and being under housing cost stress at rates lower than residents in comparison communities. Levels of housing cost stress improved since 2013, as did respondents' optimism regarding the local economy in the future (and this rate was also higher than the national average).

Conversely, Lakeville residents indicated they were less likely to engage within their community than other residents: levels of campaigning for an issue, cause or candidate, volunteering and attending local meetings were lower than benchmark comparisons. Further, rates for participating in religious or spiritual activities or clubs, as well as attending or watching local meetings and volunteering decreased from 2013 to 2018.

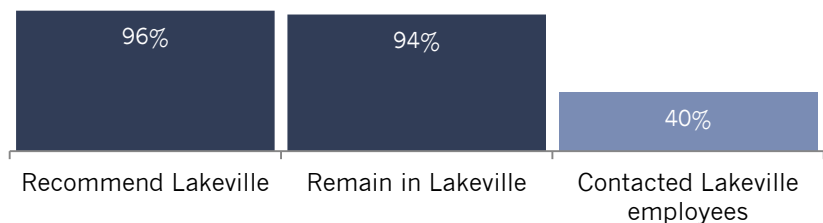
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



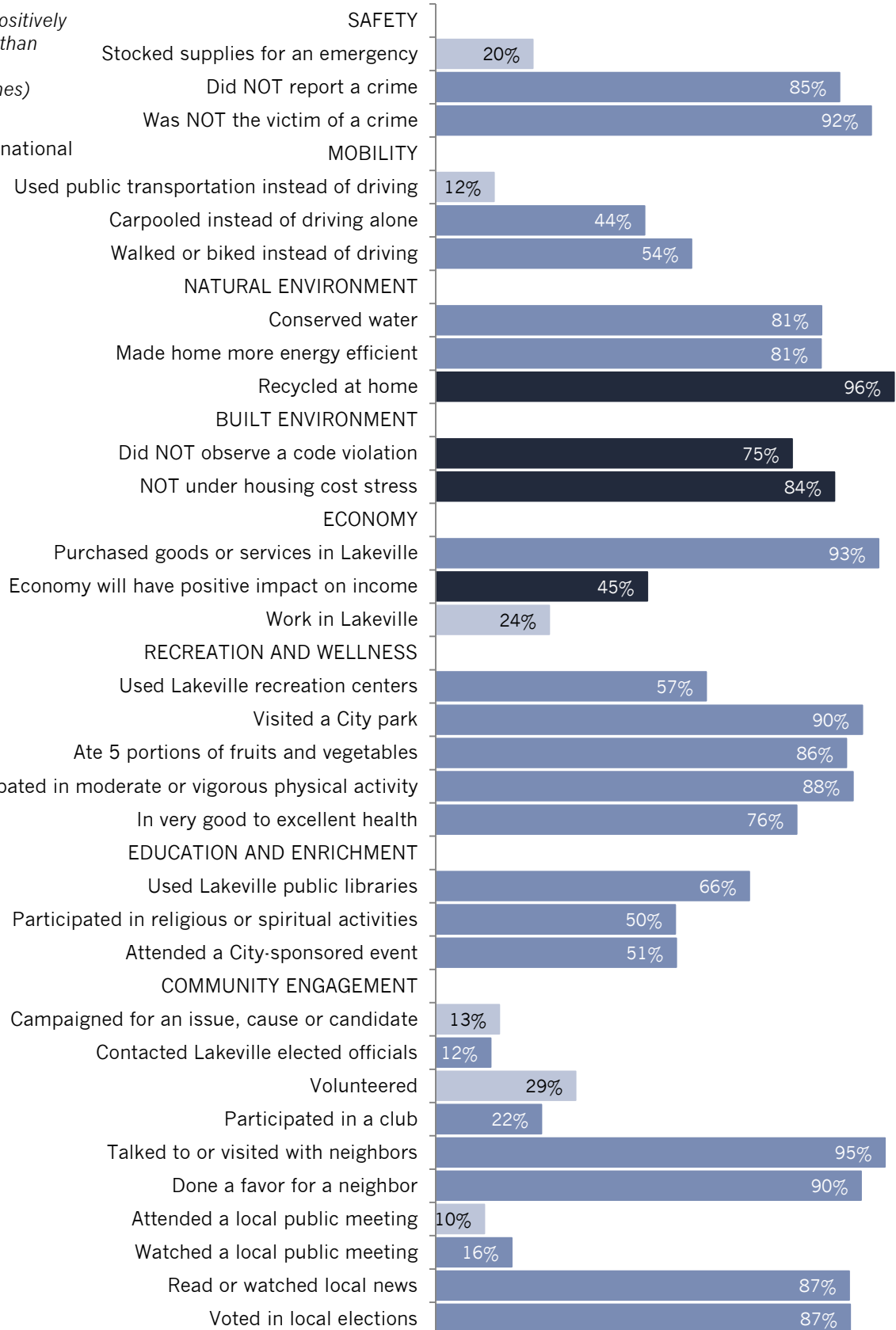
# The National Citizen Survey™

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



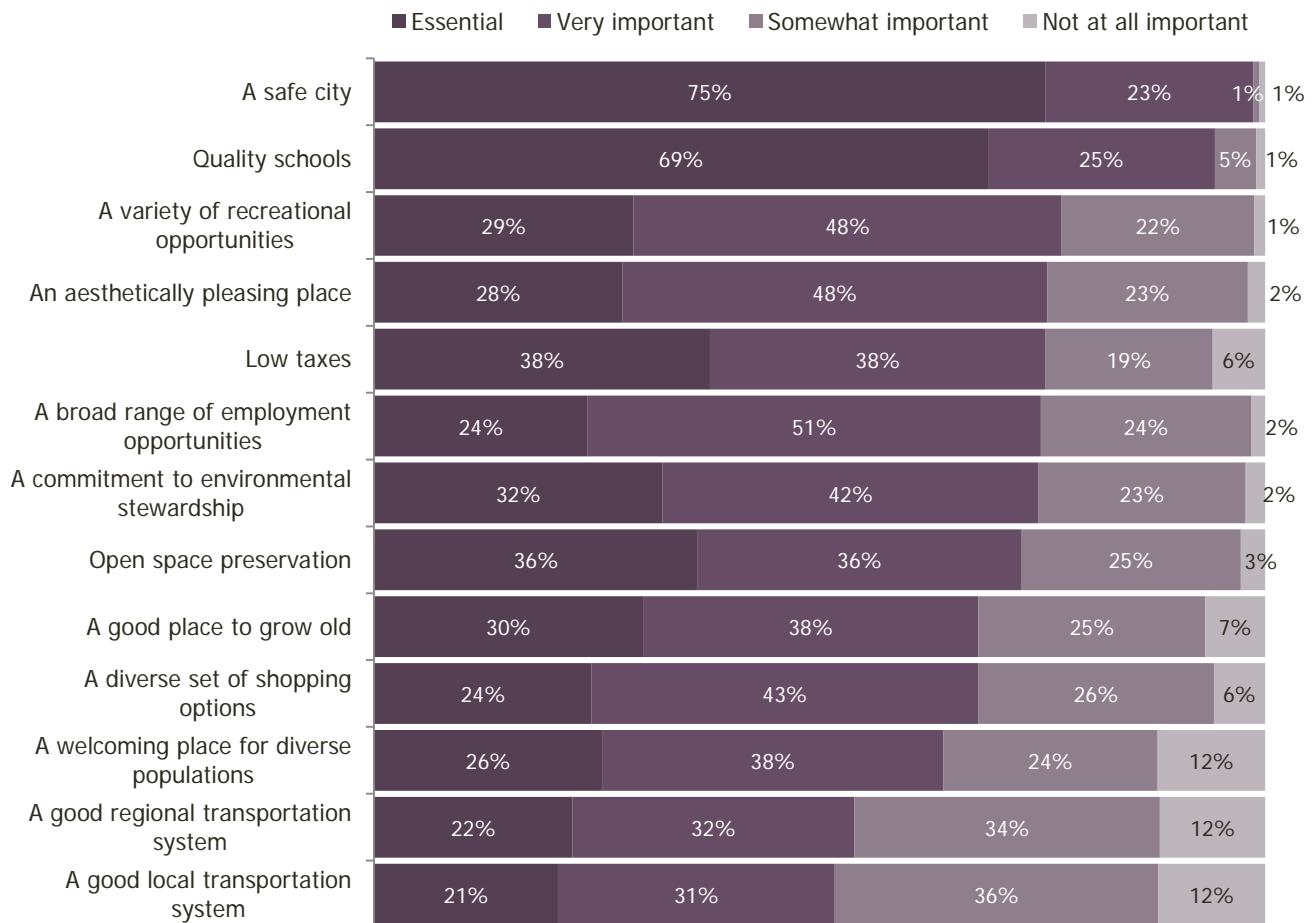
# Special Topics

The City of Lakeville included three questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought feedback from survey respondents regarding aspects that are important to the quality of life in Lakeville, future planning priorities and preferences for funding park and recreation projects.

Almost all Lakeville residents identified safety and the quality of local schools as the most essential or very important aspects to the quality of life in the community. Other aspects that ranked highly on respondents' priority list included a variety of recreational opportunities, appearance, low taxes and employment opportunities, among others. Regional or local transportation systems were identified as lower priorities, with about half of respondents reporting these were at least very important.

Figure 4: Aspects Important to the Quality of Life

Please rate how important, if at all, each of the following are to the future of Lakeville:

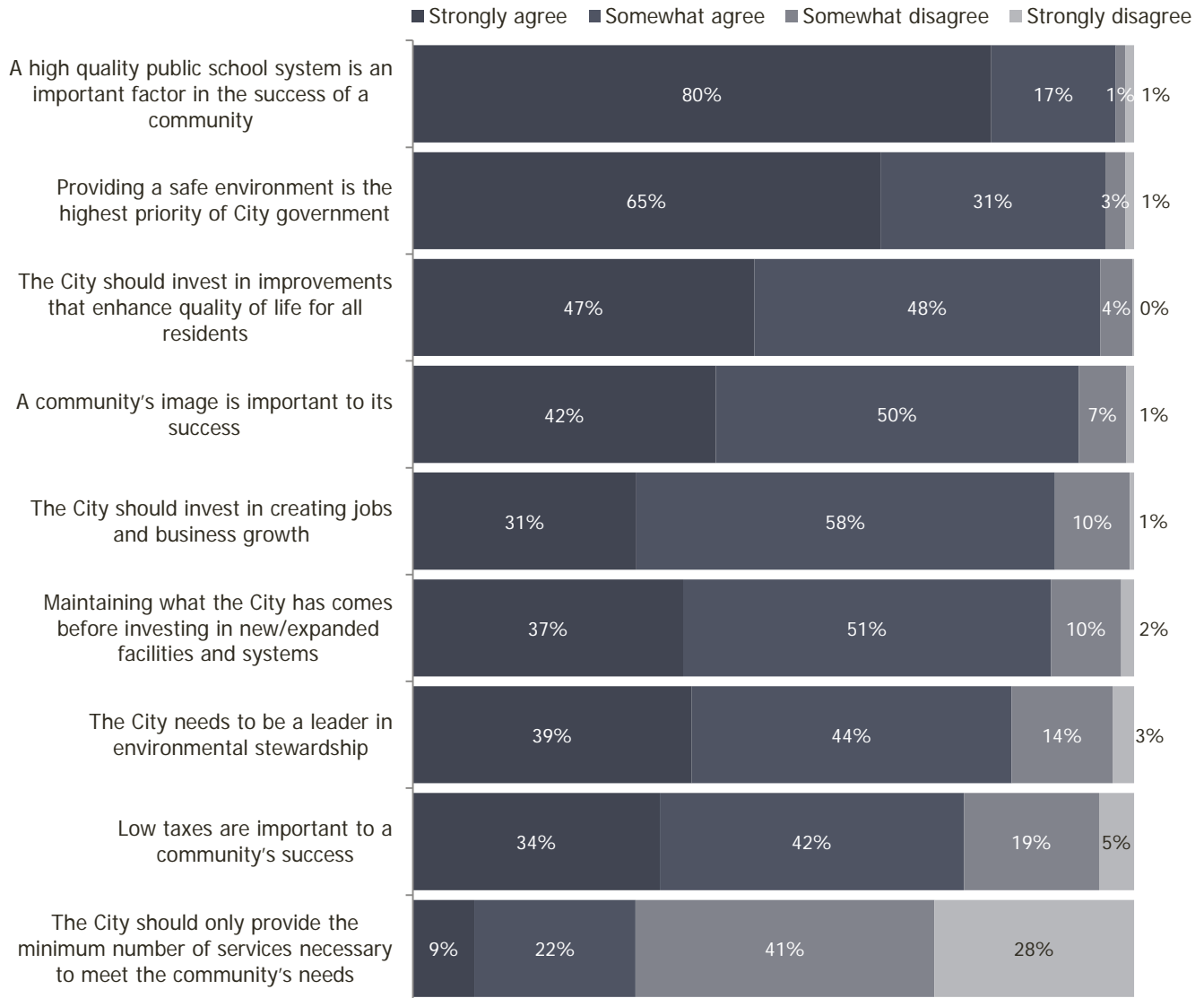


The National Citizen Survey™

Similarly to aspects that are important to quality of life, Lakeville residents agreed that a high quality public school system and a safe environment should be the top two areas that the City should focus on for the next two years. At least 9 in 10 survey participants also strongly or somewhat agreed that Lakeville leadership should invest in improvements that enhance quality of life and that the community’s image is important to the City’s success. While a majority of residents agreed with almost all priorities listed, most residents disagreed that the City should only provide the minimum number of services necessary to meet the community’s needs.

Figure 5: Resident Planning Priorities

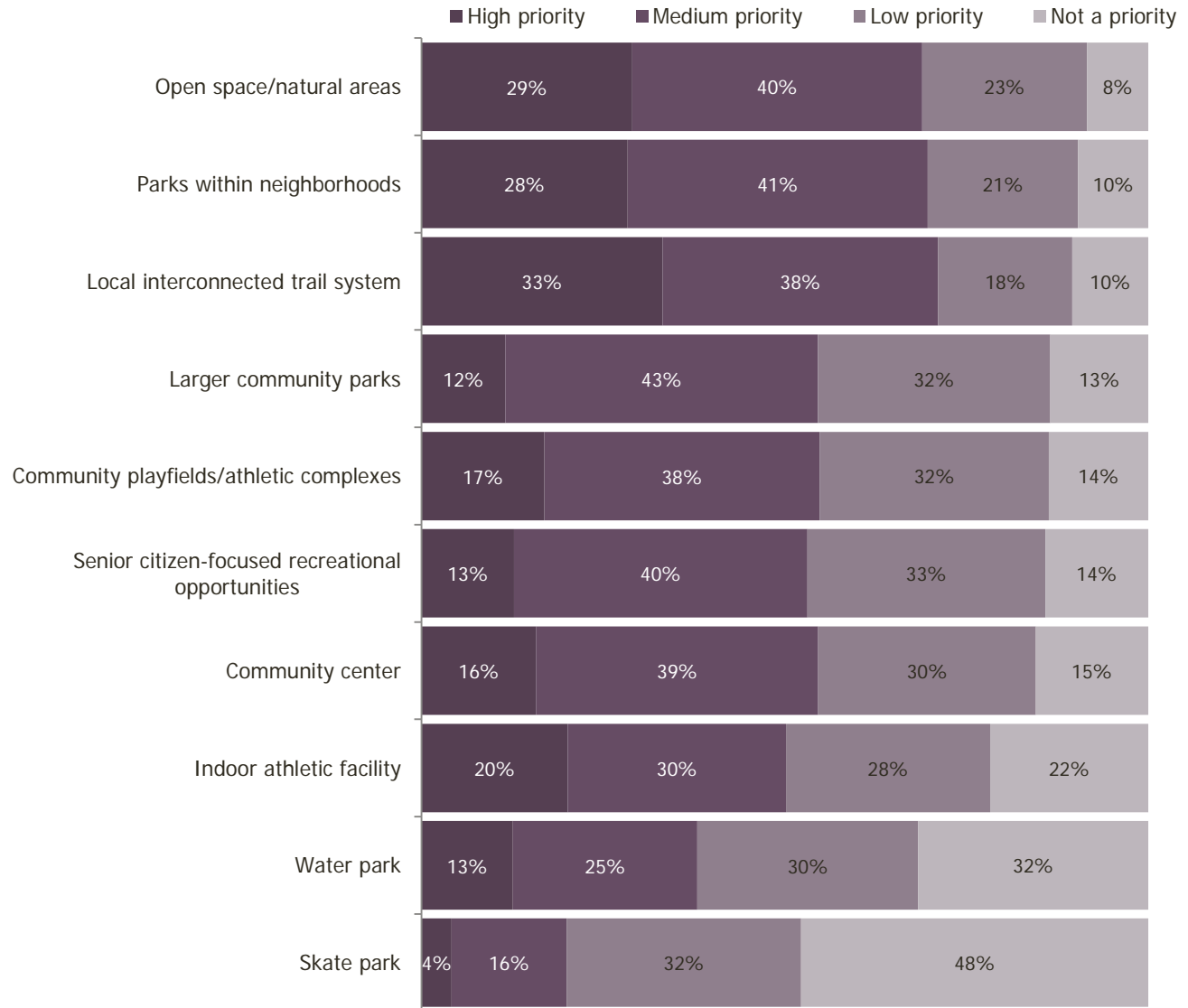
Please indicate if you agree or disagree that the Lakeville community should focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



When asked to identify priorities parks and recreation improvements that would be funded by a possible property tax ballot measure, open space/natural areas, neighborhood parks and a local interconnected trail system were the highest priorities for most residents. Fewer Lakeville respondents felt that a water or skate park would be a priority for potential funding.

Figure 6: Residents' Priorities for Funding

*If a vote were held to increase the amount of property taxes to fund the following parks and recreation improvements, please indicate which projects or services, if any, would be a priority:*



# Conclusions

## Lakeville is a desirable place to live and raise a family.

Almost all Lakeville residents awarded excellent or good reviews to the city as a place to live and to the overall quality of life; ratings for the quality of life in the community outshined the national average. For aspects that enhance livability, about 9 in 10 survey respondents were pleased with their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation and overall appearance of Lakeville. Lakeville residents' loyalty ratings were reflective of these high marks, as at least 9 in 10 indicated they would recommend living in the community and planned to remain in the city for the next five years, which were levels higher than those seen in comparison communities.

Residents also reported that Lakeville is a great place to raise a family. Nearly all residents positively assessed the city as a place to raise children and 9 in 10 praised the quality of K-12 education; both of these evaluations were higher than seen in other communities across the nation. Furthermore, survey participants' ratings for the availability of affordable quality child care/preschool increased from 2013 to 2018. Finally, about 9 in 10 respondents felt that quality schools is at least very important for the future quality of life in Lakeville and almost all agreed that a high quality public school system is an important factor in the success of a community.

## Lakeville's Economy is going strong, but affordable housing may be a consideration.

Lakeville residents see the Economy as an important focus area for the City in the next two years and related ratings tended to be positive. At least 8 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good marks to the overall economic health of Lakeville, which was higher than other municipalities across the U.S., and assessments of employment opportunities and the economic development of the community increased since the last administration of the survey. Additionally, over 4 in 10 participants were optimistic about the potential impact of the local economy on their income in the future, which was higher than in 2013 and eclipsed national averages. About three-quarters of respondents indicated that a broad range of employment opportunities was essential or very important to the quality of life in Lakeville and nearly 9 in 10 agreed that the City should invest in creating jobs and business growth. Similarly, residents praised new development and the variety of housing options in Lakeville, and fewer survey respondents reported they were under housing cost stress in 2018 compared to 2013; all of these ratings were evaluated higher than the benchmarks. Conversely, while participants awarded marks that were similar to their peers for the availability of affordable quality housing in the community, this rating decreased since 2013.

## Lakeville is a well-designed and navigable community and residents might use transportation improvements.

Residents see Mobility as a strength, with at least 8 in 10 residents indicating the overall ease of travel in Lakeville was excellent or good. Respondents' reviews for the availability of paths and walking trails, ease of travel by walking and by car and public parking were all rated higher than comparison communities. Residents also assessed all traffic-related aspects and services, including traffic flow, traffic enforcement and traffic signal timing, as higher than national averages. Lakeville participants walked, biked or carpooled instead of driving at rates similar to the rest of the country, but were less likely than residents elsewhere to use public transportation. Respondents reflected on the importance of local and regional transportation systems to their quality of life, with about half concluding that they would be essential or very important and another one-third saying they would be somewhat important for the future.

## The City has an opportunity to engage residents.

Around two-thirds of residents were pleased with opportunities to attend social events and activities, opportunities to participate in community matters and to volunteer and nearly 9 in 10 gave positive reviews to opportunities to attend religious or spiritual events, levels which were all similar to those seen elsewhere. However, fewer Lakeville respondents had engaged in religious or spiritual activities, attended or watched local meetings, volunteered or participated in clubs in 2018 compared to 2013. Moreover, residents' rates of campaigning for an issue, cause or candidate; volunteering and attending local public meetings were lower than national levels.