



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Chardon, OH

Community Livability Report

2017



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Contents

About..... 1

Quality of Life in Chardon..... 2

Community Characteristics 3

Governance 5

Participation 7

Special Topics..... 9

Conclusions 14



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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 Chardon. 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 500 residents of the City of Chardon. 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.

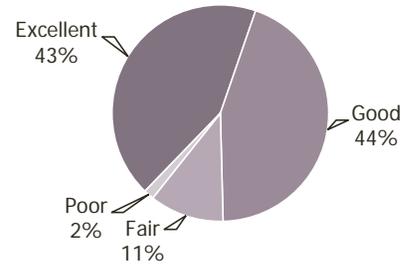


Quality of Life in Chardon

Over 8 in 10 residents rated the quality of life in Chardon as excellent or good. This rating was similar to national comparisons (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



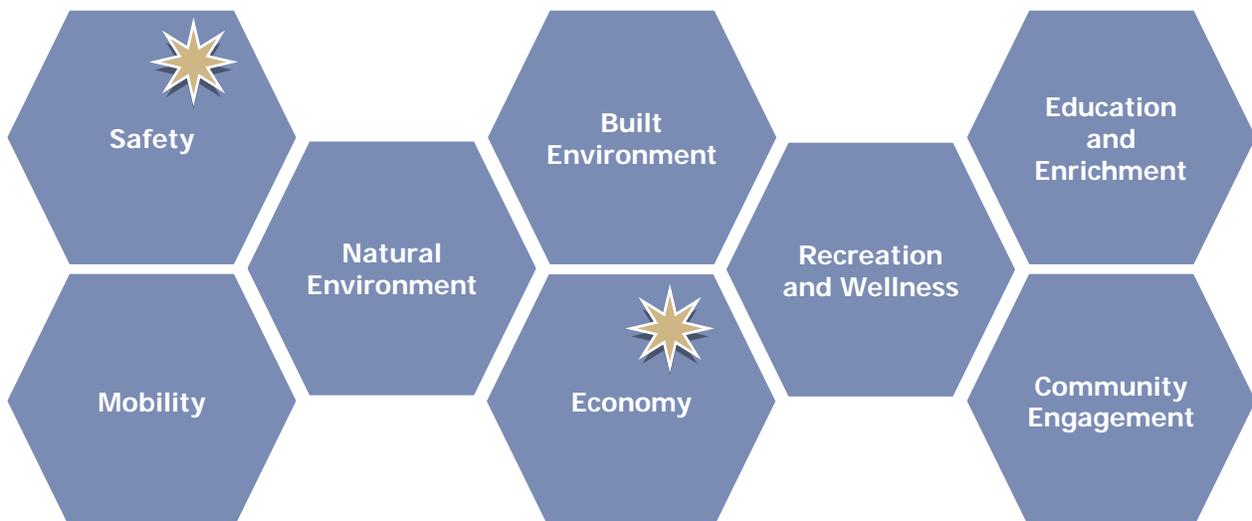
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Chardon community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets were 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 Chardon'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 Chardon, 89% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Chardon 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 Chardon as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Chardon and its overall appearance. Overall, at least 7 in 10 residents awarded high marks to these aspects of the community, yielding ratings that were either similar to or higher than national benchmarks.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, at least half of respondents positively scored most aspects of Community Characteristics and ratings tended to be similar to the national benchmark.

About 9 in 10 residents gave favorable evaluations of Safety, yielding comparisons that were either similar or higher than national comparisons. Respondents also awarded strong ratings for aspects of Natural Environment with at least 8 in 10 giving excellent or good marks to each; scores for cleanliness were higher than the national average.

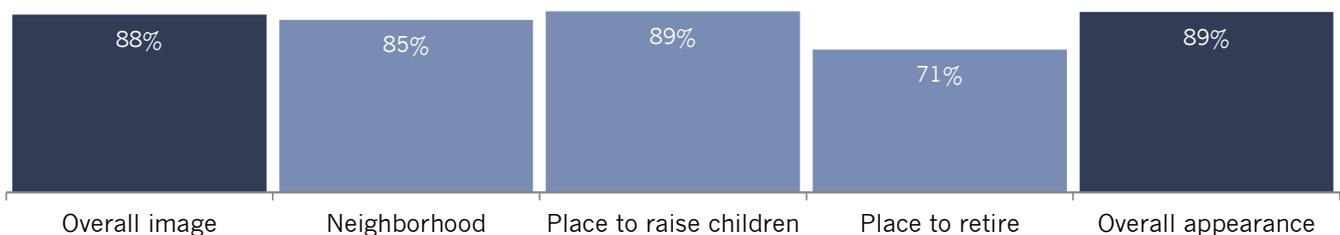


Other notable aspects of Chardon included public places where people want to spend time (82% excellent or good) and the availability of affordable quality mental health care (65%), as Chardon residents evaluated these characteristics more favorably than others across the country.

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

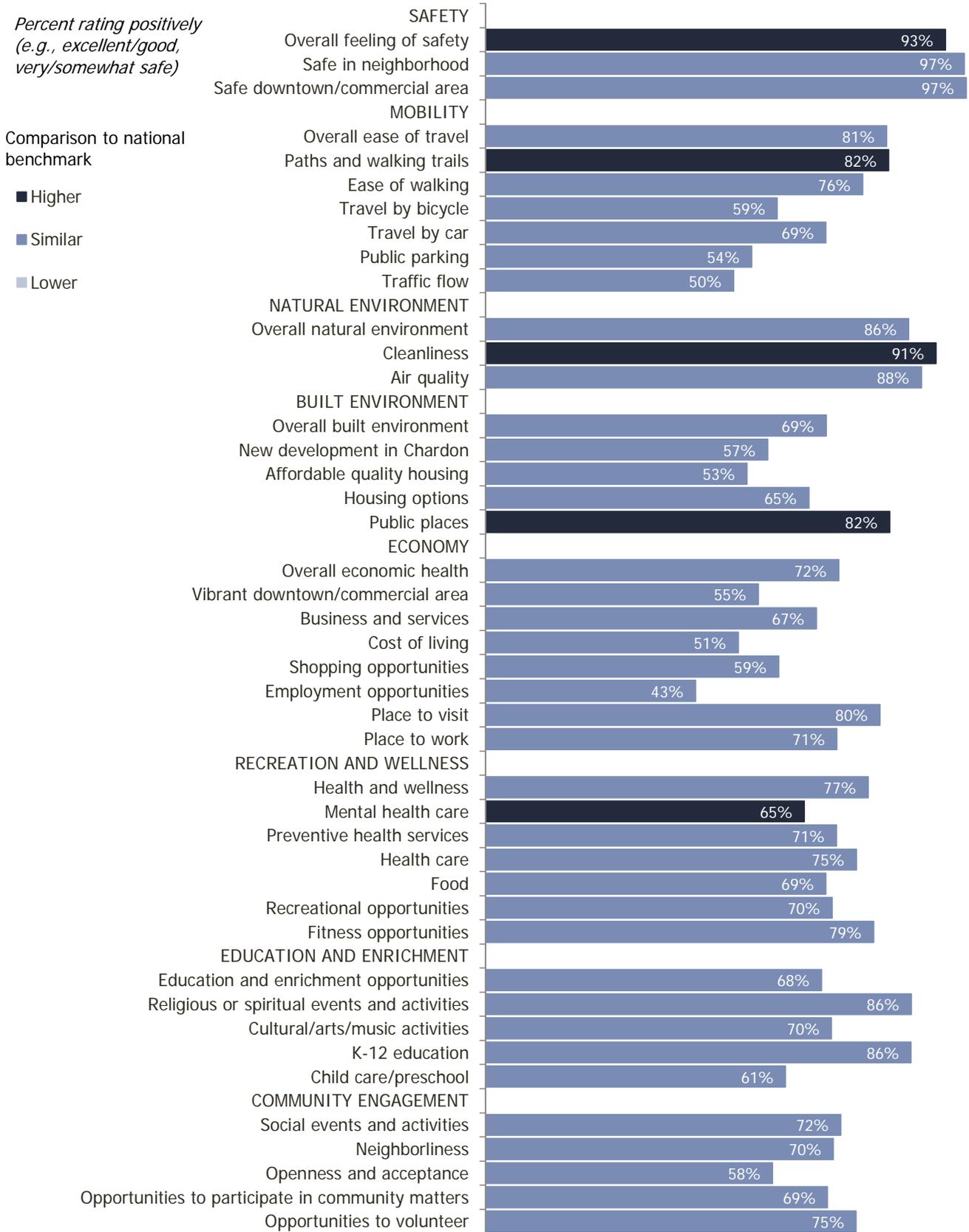
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

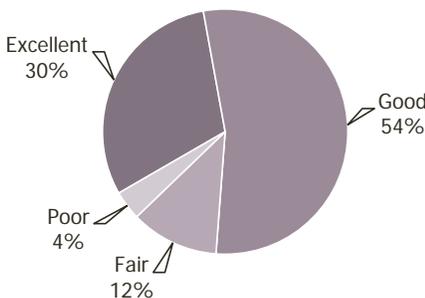
How well does the government of Chardon meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Chardon as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Over 8 in 10 residents rated the overall quality of services provided by the City of Chardon 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 Chardon’s leadership and governance. At least half of residents rated each aspect positively and were similar to those in other communities nationwide. Respondents were especially pleased with the customer service provided by City employees, as at least 8 in 10 respondents scored this service as excellent or good.

Respondents evaluated over 25 individual services and amenities available in Chardon. Broadly, at least 6 in 10 residents rated most of these services and amenities favorably and all ratings were similar to or higher than communities across the U.S. The strongest services were related to Safety and Education and Enrichment; over 8 in 10 positively scored police, fire, ambulance/EMS, crime prevention, fire prevention, public libraries and City-sponsored special events. Furthermore, residents’ ratings for police, crime prevention, street lighting, public libraries and City-sponsored special events were higher than national comparisons.

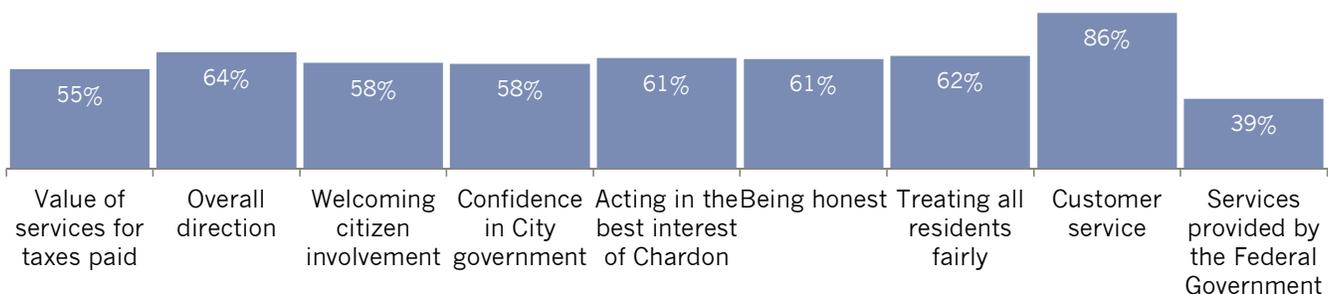
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



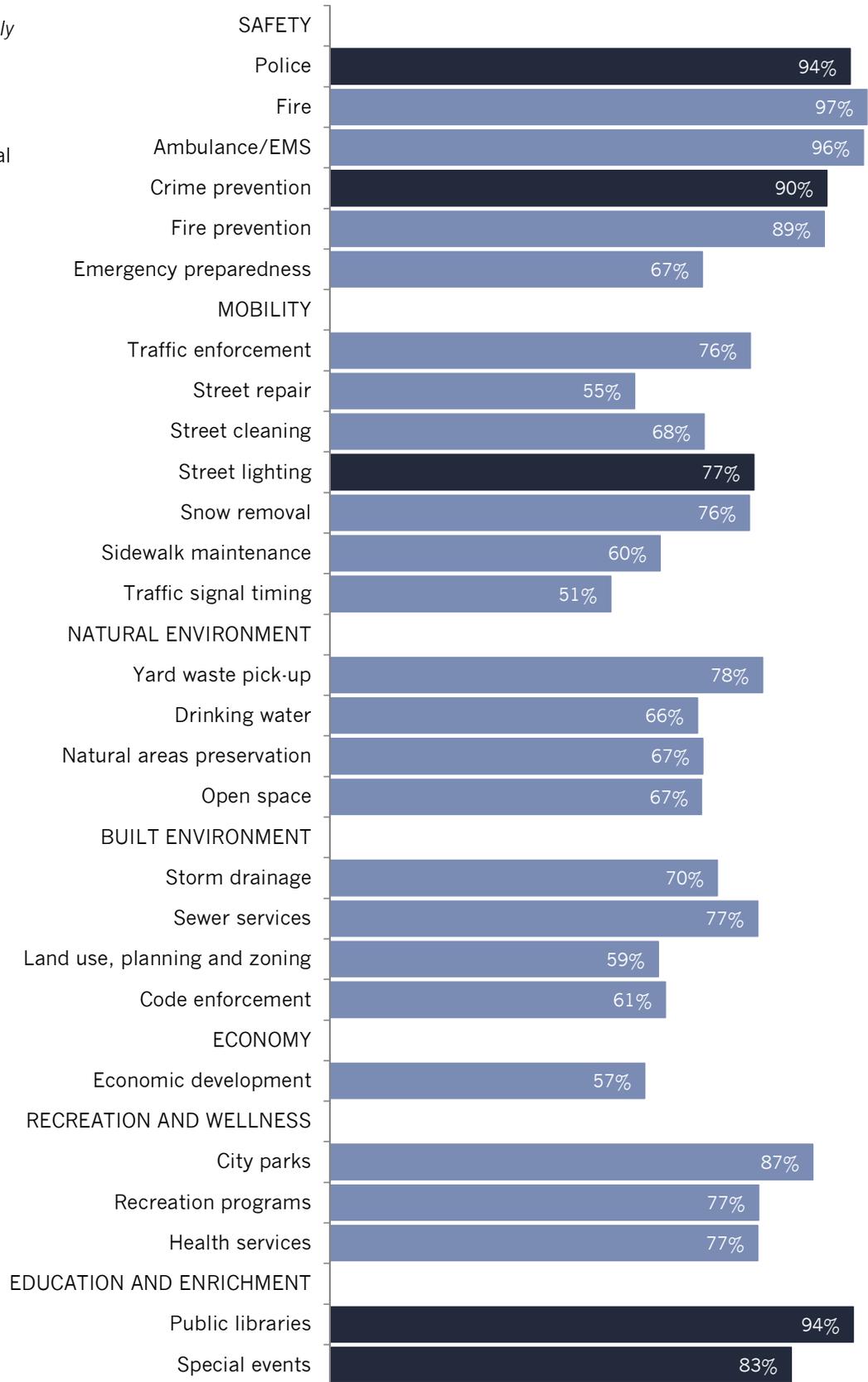
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

Are the residents of Chardon connected to the community and each other?

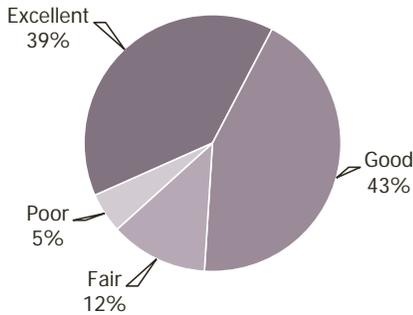
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. Chardon residents gave higher marks to sense of community than did other communities across the nation.

Nearly 9 in 10 survey respondents indicated they would recommend living in Chardon to someone who asked and planned to remain in the community for the next five years. Less than half of residents reported they had contacted City employees. These ratings were similar to those reported across the nation.

The survey included over 25 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Residents' rates of Participation tended to vary, but were mostly on par with national averages. Chardon respondents were especially engaged in activities related to Education and Enrichment; about 7 in 10 indicated they had used the public libraries and attended a City-sponsored event in the 12 months preceding the survey and these rates were higher than those reported across the U.S. Similar to other parts of the country, nearly all residents had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months preceding the survey, had purchased local goods or services and had interacted with their neighbors.

Chardon respondents reported below average participation rates for recycling at home and working within in the City.

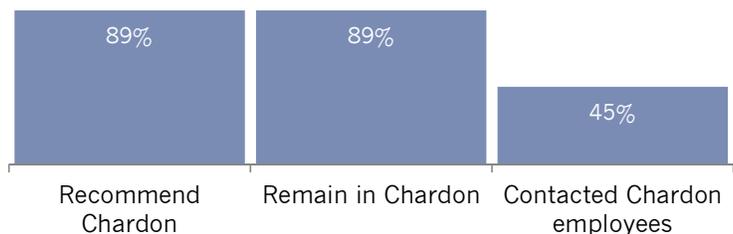
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



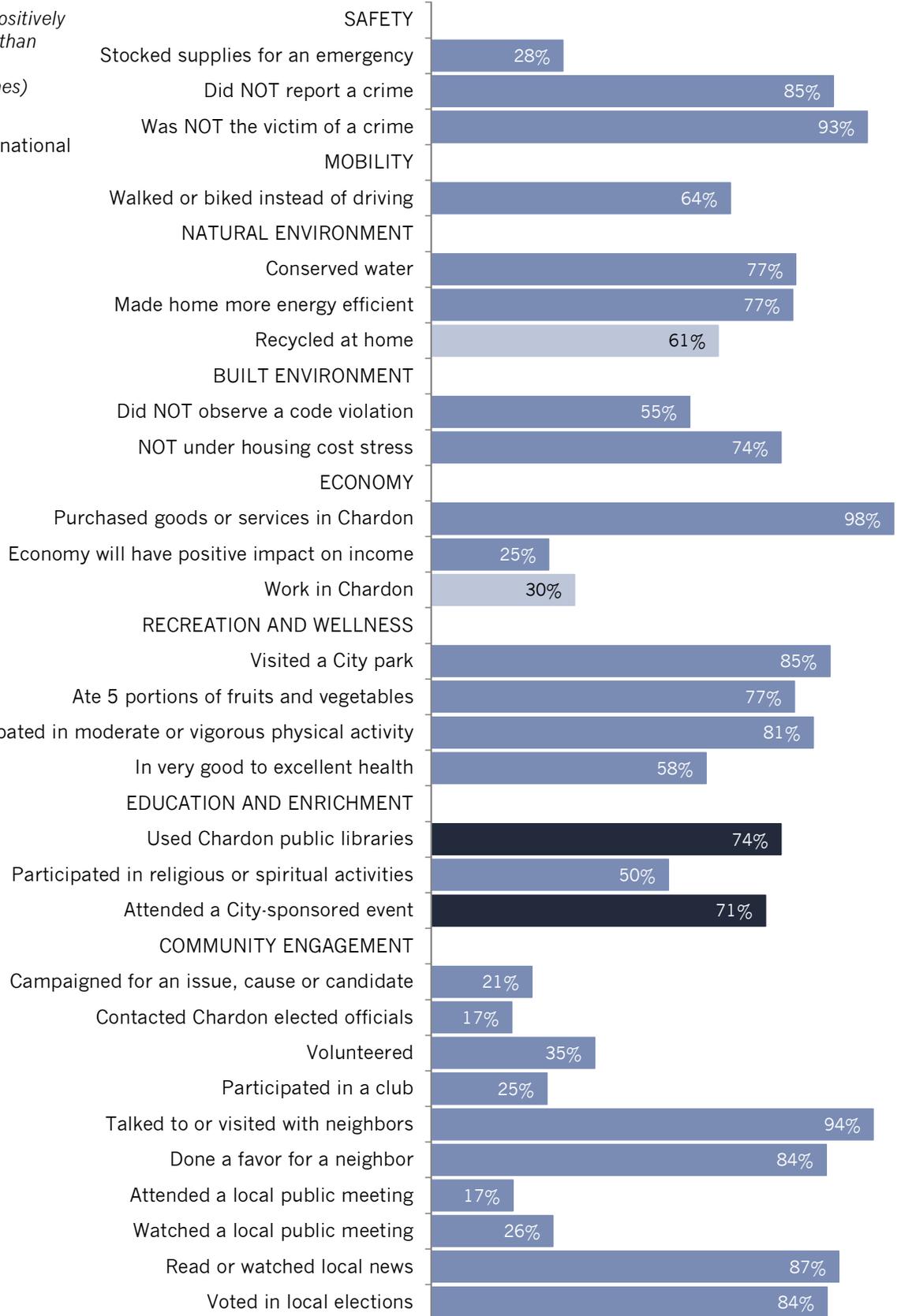
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



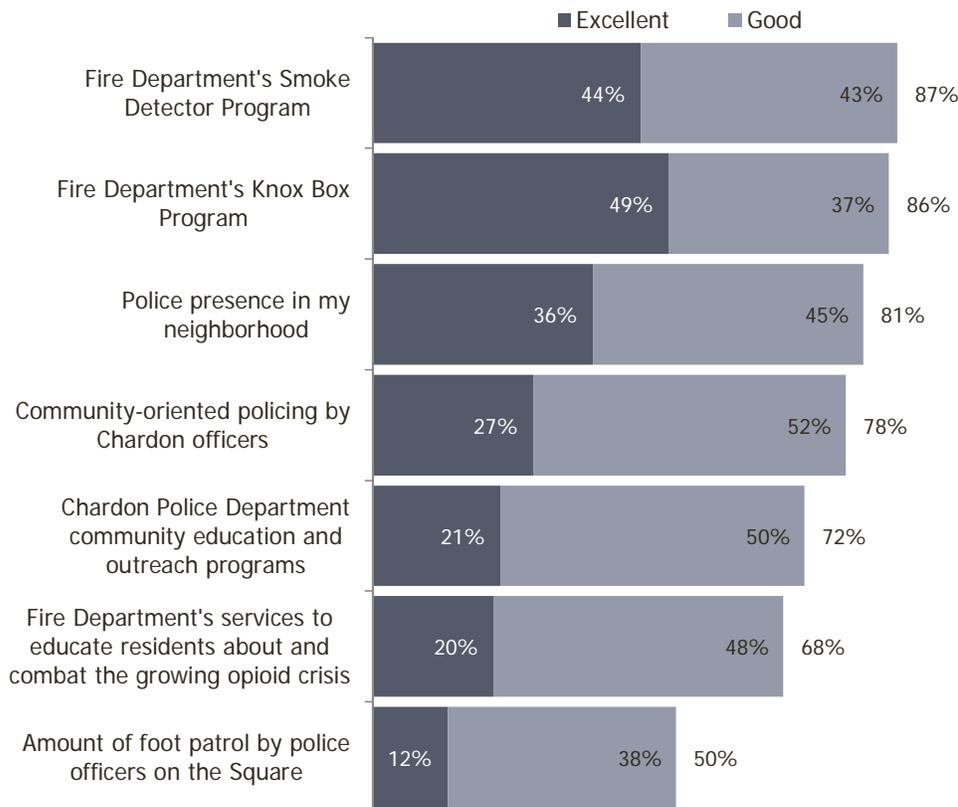
Special Topics

The City of Chardon included five questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought feedback from survey respondents regarding the quality of safety services and programs, severity of potential problems in the community, sources of information about the City, priorities for the City to consider in the next few years and support for allocating additional funds to maintain service levels for various programs.

The first question asked residents about the quality of seven safety services and programs provided by the City of Chardon. About 8 in 10 respondents were pleased with the Fire Departments Smoke Detector and Knox Box programs and with the police presence in their neighborhoods. The lowest rated safety aspect was the amount of foot patrol by police officers on the Square with half of residents awarding excellent or good marks.

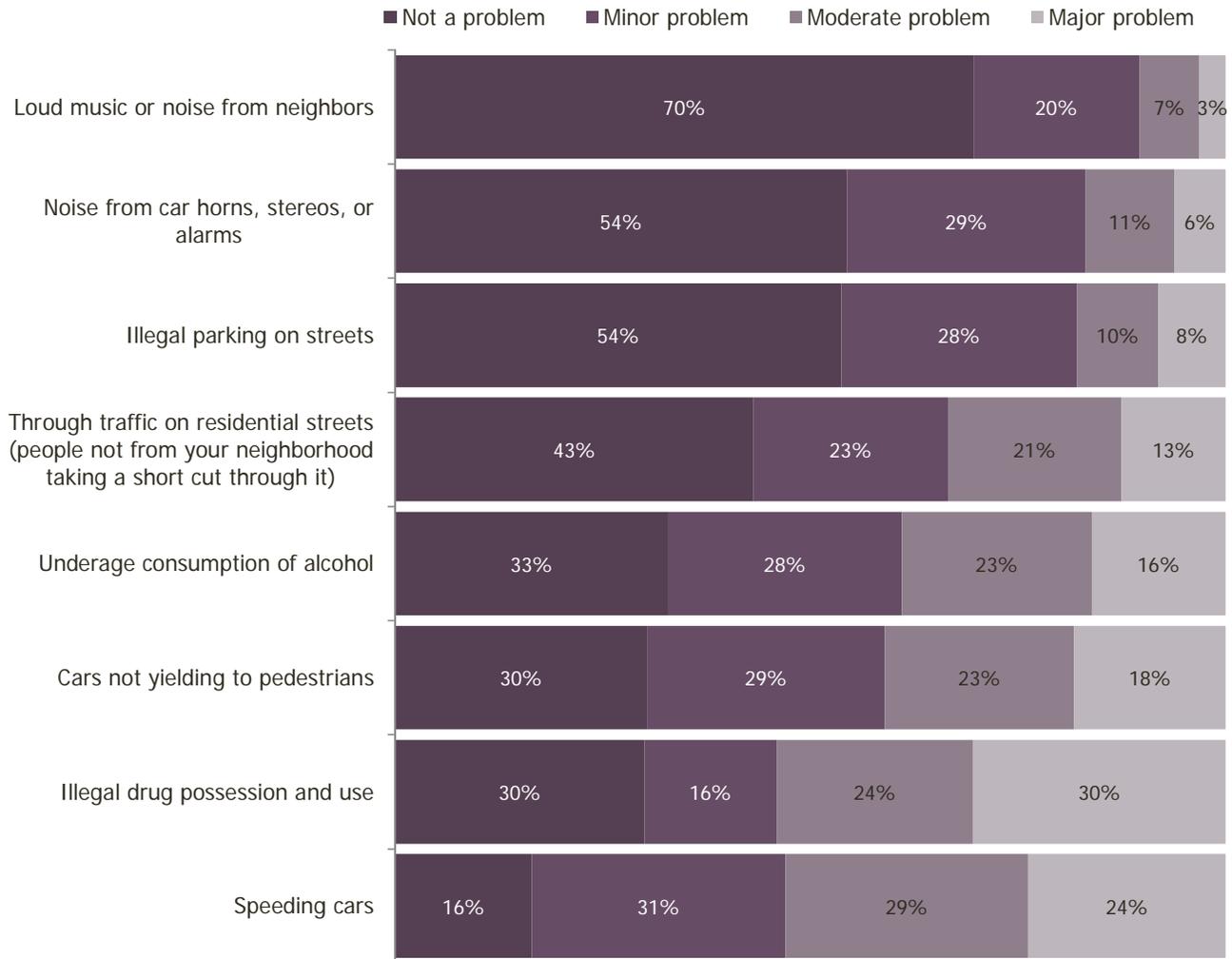
Figure 4: Quality of Safety Services and Programs

Please rate the quality of each of the following public safety services and programs in Chardon:



Another question unique to Chardon included a list of eight potential problems in Chardon and asked residents to indicate the degree to which each was a current problem. Respondents were least concerned with loud music or noise from their neighbors, car horns, stereos or alarms and illegal parking on the streets; at least half of respondents felt each of these was not a problem. Participants identified speeding cars and illegal drug possession and use as the biggest problems in Chardon, with about half of respondents identifying these as major or moderate problems in the community.

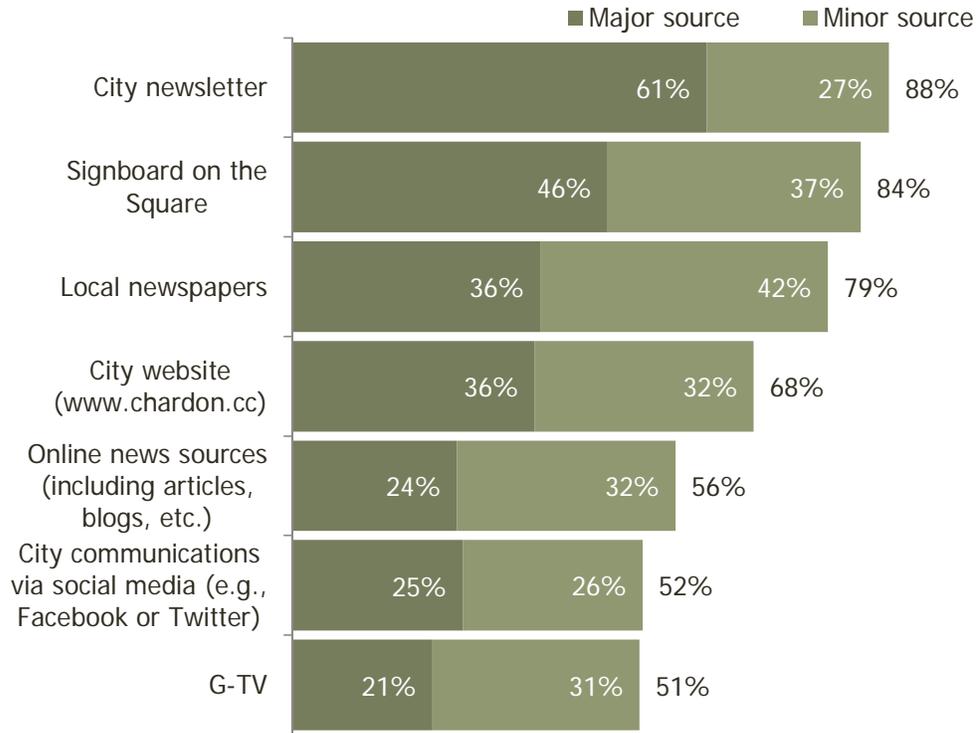
Figure 5: Degree of Problems in Chardon
To what degree, if at all, are the following currently problems in Chardon:



Chardon respondents indicated their level of reliance on several sources of information about the City; about 8 in 10 or more reported they used the City newsletter, the signboard on the Square and local newspapers as sources of information. Close to half had used online news sources, City communications via social media and G-TV as a source.

Figure 6: Sources of Information

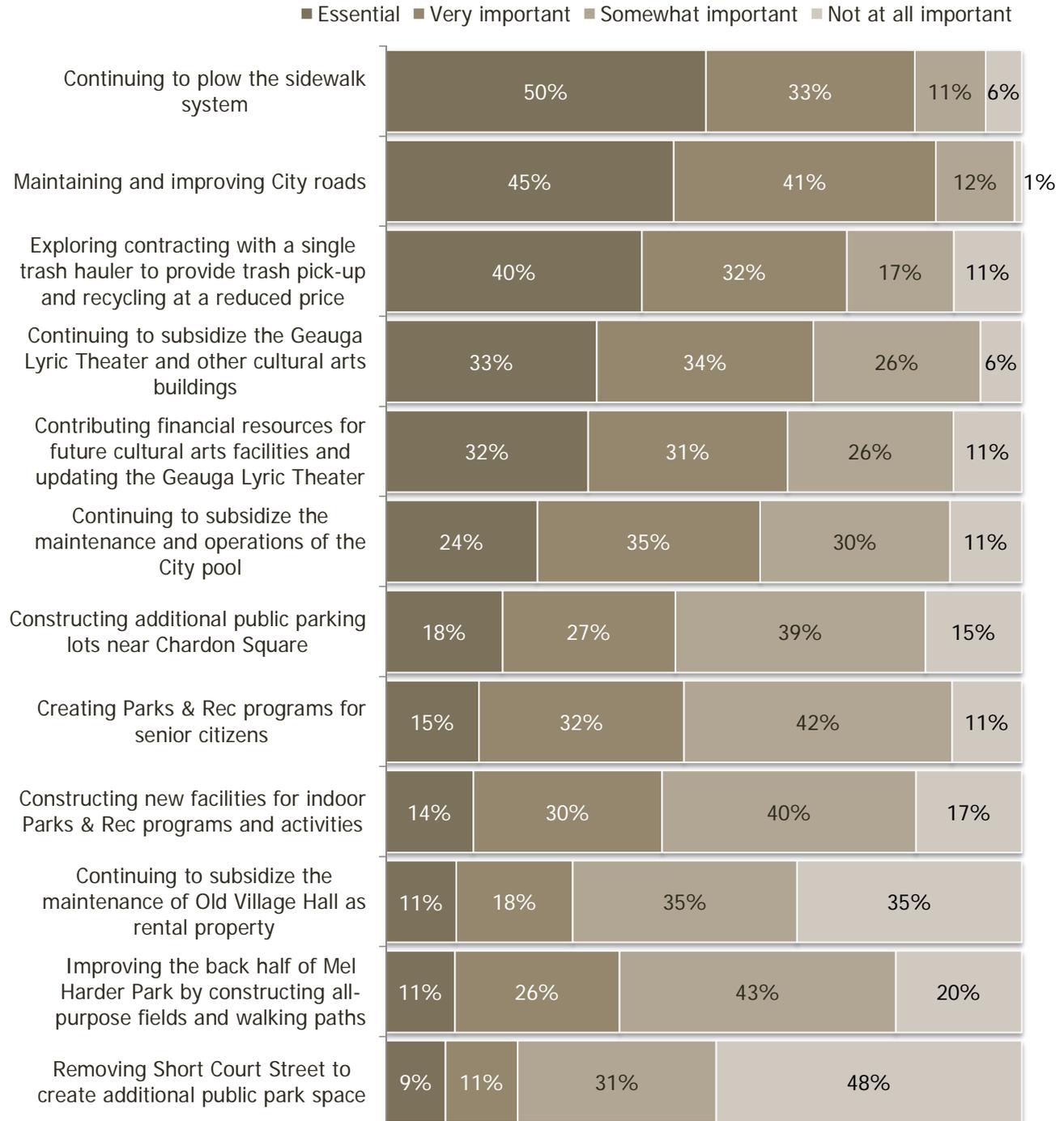
Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the City government and its activities, events and services:



The City identified 12 prospective priorities for the coming few years. Survey participants rated the importance of each issue and identified maintaining and improving City roads and continuing to plow the sidewalk system as top priorities, with at least 8 in 10 respondents rating these as essential or very important issues. Less than two in five placed high importance on continuing to subsidize the maintenance of Old Village Hall as a rental property, improving the back half of Mel Harder Park or removing Short Court Street.

Figure 7: City Priorities

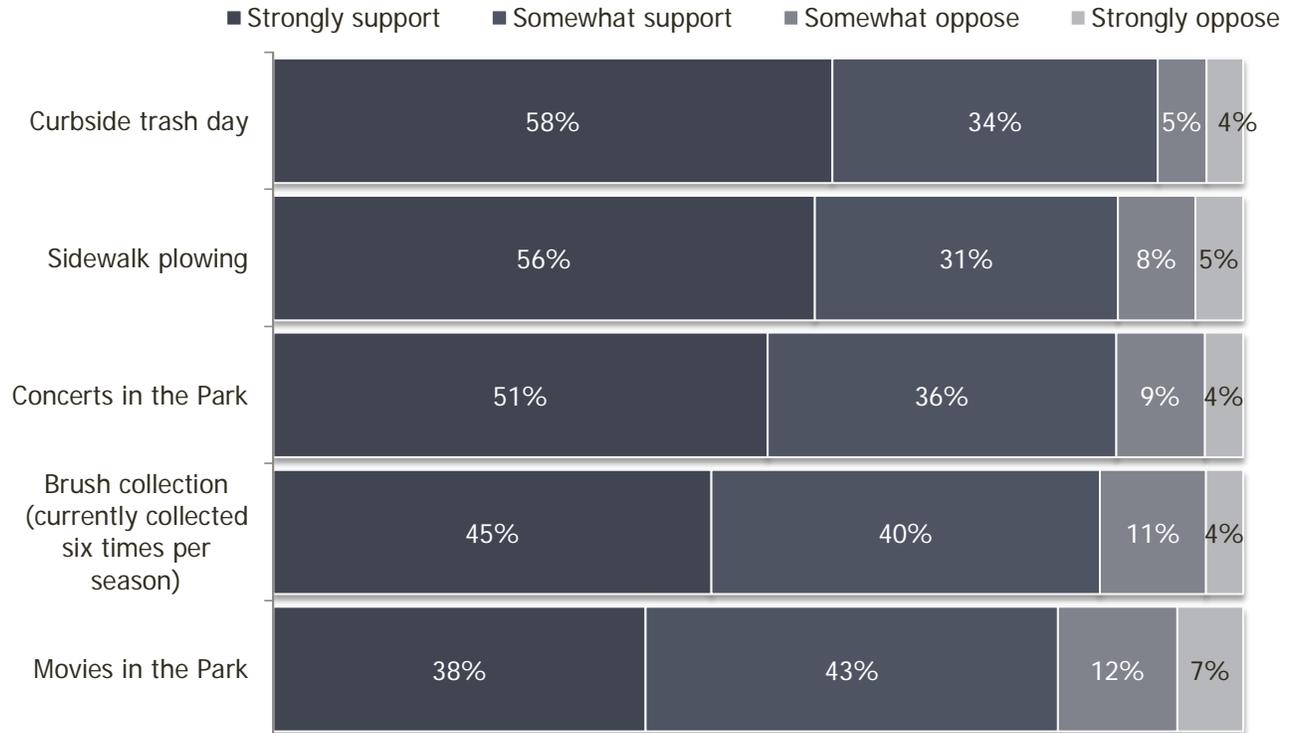
Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the City to address the following issues in the next few years:



The final question asked by the City inquired about residents' support for devoting additional funds from the City budget to maintain current service levels for five City services. At least 8 in 10 participants strongly or somewhat supported funding each service.

Figure 8: Residents Support for Service Funding

To what extent would you support or oppose devoting additional funds from the annual City budget to maintain the following services at their current level:



Conclusions

Chardon residents enjoy a positive quality of life and feel connected to their community.

At least 8 in 10 residents appreciated the overall quality of life in Chardon and thought it was an excellent or good place to live. A similar proportion of respondents also gave high marks to the overall image of Chardon, its overall appearance, their neighborhoods as places to live and to the City as a place to raise children; moreover, participants' ratings for the overall image and appearance of Chardon were higher than national comparisons. Nearly 9 in 10 residents indicated that they would recommend Chardon to someone who asked and planned to remain in the community for the next five years, which is reflected in strong ratings for sense of community; about 8 in 10 stated this aspect was excellent or good, making it higher than levels reported across the nation.

Safety is important in Chardon and residents value services provided to them.

Most Chardon residents awarded high scores to aspects of Safety and tended to be similar to or higher than national averages. About 9 in 10 gave excellent or good reviews to the overall feeling of safety in the community (which was higher than comparison communities) and almost all residents indicated they felt safe in their neighborhoods and in the downtown/commercial area. Respondents were especially pleased with services provided to them, as at least 9 in 10 thought highly of police, fire and ambulance/EMS services. Additionally, roughly 8 in 10 were pleased with the Fire Department's Smoke Detector and Knox Box programs, as well as with the level of police presence in their neighborhoods. One aspect that lagged behind other safety-related services was the amount of foot patrol by police in the Square, with only about half assigning positive ratings. About 9 in 10 survey participants thought safety was essential or very important for the City in the next two years.

Residents find it easy to get around in Chardon.

In general, a majority of residents gave favorably scores to mobility-related characteristics and services. About 8 in 10 were pleased with the overall ease of travel, as well as the availability of paths and walking trails (which was higher than national comparisons). Further, about three-quarters assigned excellent or good reviews to the ease of walking in the City, traffic enforcement, street lighting and snow removal. For the future, residents identified maintaining and improving City roads and continuing to plow the sidewalk system as top priorities, with at least 8 in 10 respondents rating these as essential or very important issues. Likewise, over 8 in 10 respondents supported devoting additional funds to maintain current levels of sidewalk plowing.

In response to a question unique to Chardon, residents expressed some concern about neighborhood through traffic, cars not yielding to pedestrians and speeding cars. To better understand the magnitude of these issues and residents' concerns, the City may wish to explore those topics in-depth.

Enrichment activities offered by the City are a highlight of living in Chardon.

Survey participants were especially pleased with public libraries and special events offered by the city, with at least 8 in 10 rating these services and amenities as excellent or good, yielding evaluations that were higher than national averages. The high visitation of these services reflects this quality as about 7 in 10 reported they had used Chardon public libraries or attended a City-sponsored event in the 12 months prior to the survey and these rates were higher than rates of use nationwide. Regarding the annual budget, about 8 in 10 would strongly or somewhat support allocating additional funding to Concerts in the Park and Movies in the Park to maintain current levels.