

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

**Edmonds, WA**  
Community Livability Report

FINAL  
2016



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



*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*

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

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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Edmonds. 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).

Benchmark comparisons are evaluations of the most recent survey completed in each community (in this case, the City of Edmonds) compared to other communities across the nation in which a similar question was asked. Edmonds’ results are statistically compared to the ratings given to other communities and are evaluated to be “similar” to or different than the benchmark (ratings that are “higher” or “lower” are at least 10 points higher or lower than ratings in the benchmark and ratings that are “much higher” or “much lower” are at least 20 points higher or lower than the benchmark).

The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 906 residents of the City of Edmonds. 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 Edmonds

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Edmonds as excellent or good. This rating was higher than those seen in comparison communities across the nation (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.

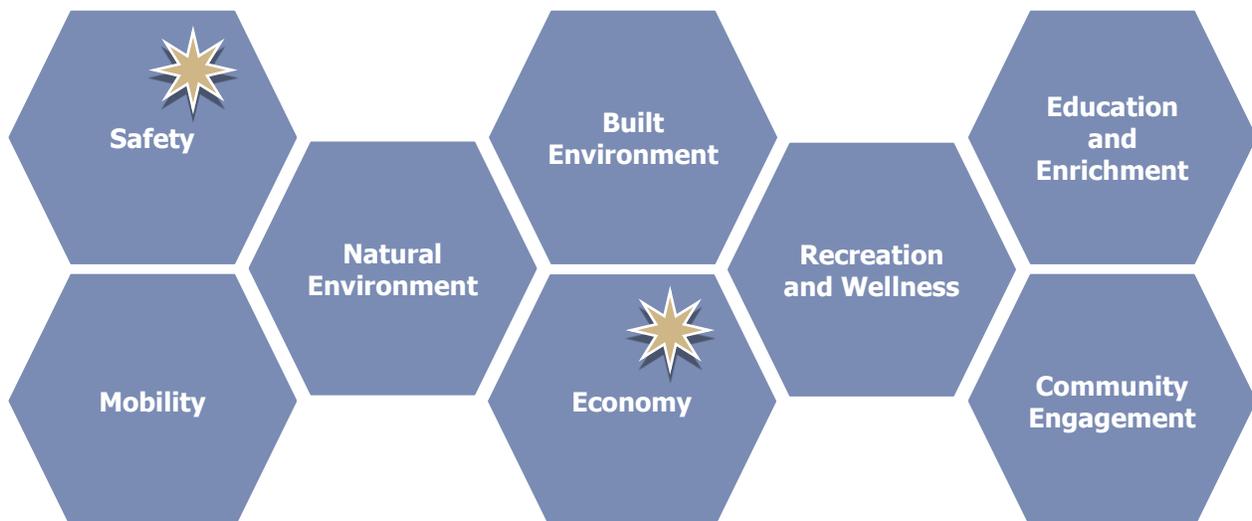
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Edmonds community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Edmonds residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community; 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 Edmonds' unique questions.

## Legend

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

- Most important



# Community Characteristics

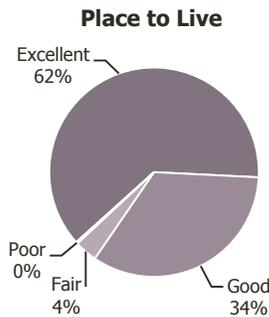
*What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?*

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 Edmonds, 96% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Edmonds as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation and in Pacific Northwest communities with populations 20,000 to 60,000.

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Edmonds as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Edmonds and its overall appearance. More than 8 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to each of these aspects of livability in Edmonds. Ratings for overall image and appearance, as well as Edmonds as a place to retire and raise children, were higher than the national and Pacific Northwest benchmark comparisons.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. When benchmark comparisons were available, Edmonds' ratings tended to be similar to or higher than other communities across the U.S. Roughly 9 in 10 residents rated all aspects of Safety and Natural Environment positively, and ratings for all aspects of Natural Environment were higher than the benchmark comparisons. Ratings within the facet of Mobility tended to vary: more than 8 in 10 residents favorably rated overall ease of travel and ease of walking, while about 4 in 10 positively rated ease of travel by public transportation. Ratings for ease of walking and traffic flow were higher than those seen across the country. Within Built Environment, about 9 in 10 residents positively rated public places where people want to spend time (a rating which was higher than the national benchmark), but only about one-quarter of residents positively rated the availability of affordable quality housing (which was lower than the benchmark). Aspects of

Economy, such as Edmonds' vibrant downtown area and the City as a place to visit, were favorably rated by at least 8 in 10 residents and were rated higher than the national benchmark comparisons. All aspects of Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement received positive ratings from at least 6 in 10 residents. Aspects rated higher than the benchmarks included the availability of affordable quality health care and mental health care, the availability of preventive health services, opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities, adult educational opportunities and opportunities to participate in social events and activities.



## Indicators of Quality of Life

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



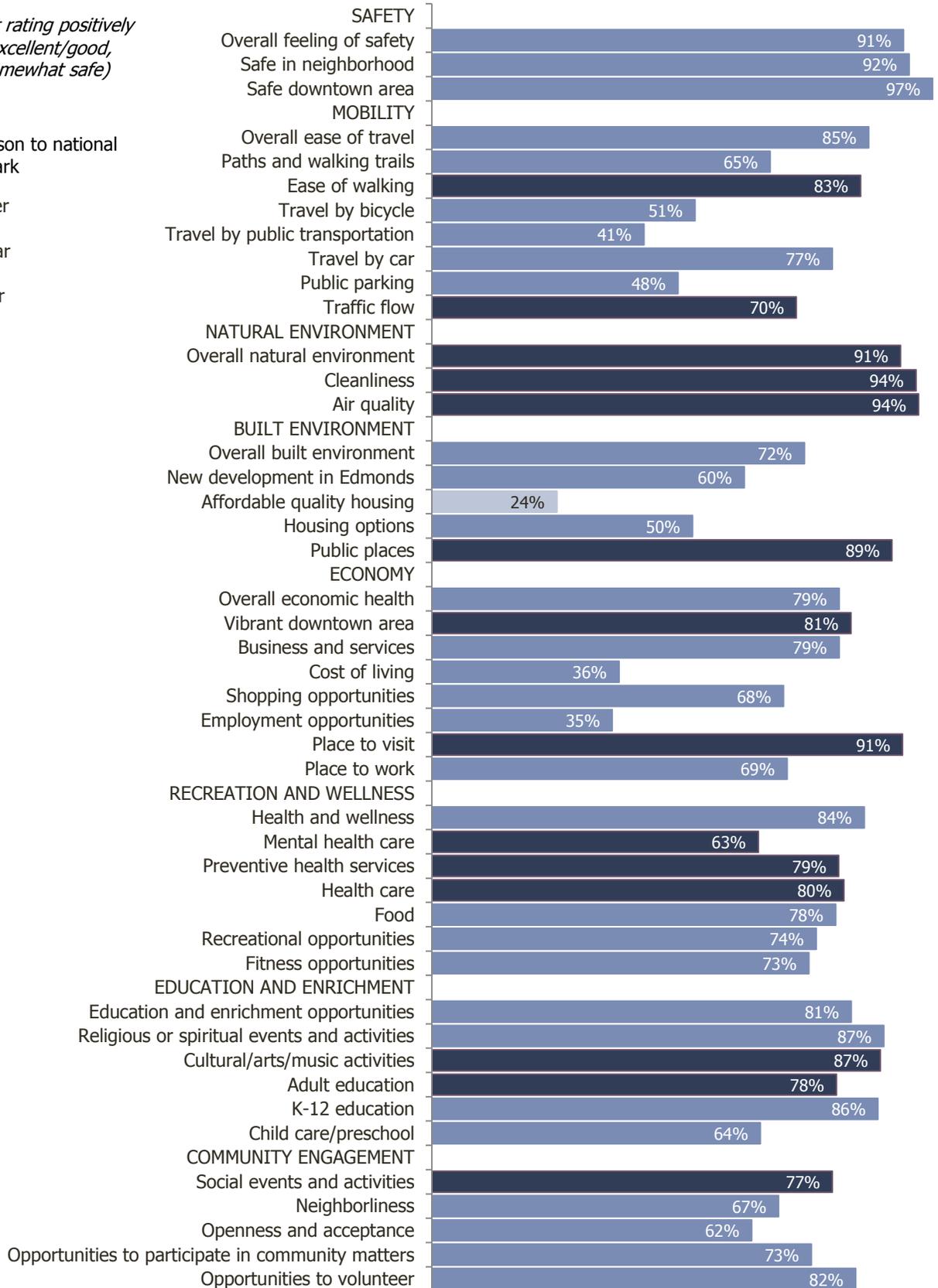
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

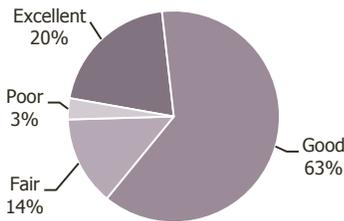
*How well does the government of Edmonds meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Edmonds as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. The overall quality of services provided by the City of Edmonds received excellent or good ratings from 8 in 10 residents, while the services provided by the Federal Government received positive ratings from about one-third of respondents. Both of these ratings were similar to ratings given in other communities nationwide and in Pacific Northwest communities with populations 20,000 to 60,000.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Edmonds' leadership and governance. More than 8 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to the overall customer service provided by Edmonds employees. About 6 in 10 respondents or more positively rated the remaining aspects of government performance, including the value of services for taxes paid, the overall direction of the City, the job Edmonds government does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in City government, government acting in the best interest of Edmonds, being honest and treating all residents fairly. All of these ratings were similar to national and Pacific Northwest benchmark comparisons.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Edmonds. Among the highest-rated services were police, fire and ambulance/EMS services, drinking water, sewer services, City parks and public libraries, with around 9 in 10 residents giving high marks to each of these aspects. Ratings for drinking water were higher than those seen in other communities across the nation. Only about half of respondents gave positive marks to street repair, sidewalk maintenance, bus or transit services, land use, planning and zoning, code enforcement and cable television, but all of these ratings were similar to the national benchmark comparisons. All of the remaining services were positively rated by about 6 in 10 or more residents and were similar to those seen in comparison communities nationwide; however, the rating for City-sponsored special events, at 84% positive, was higher than the Pacific Northwest benchmark comparison.

**Overall Quality of City Services**

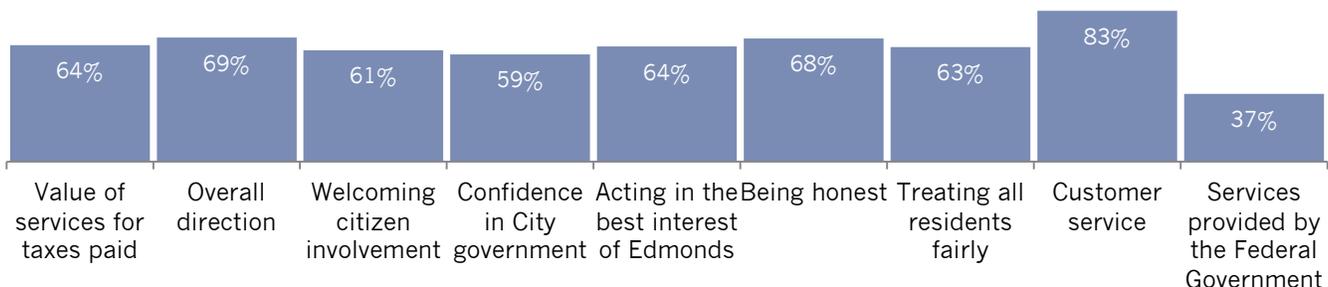


## Indicators of Government Performance

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



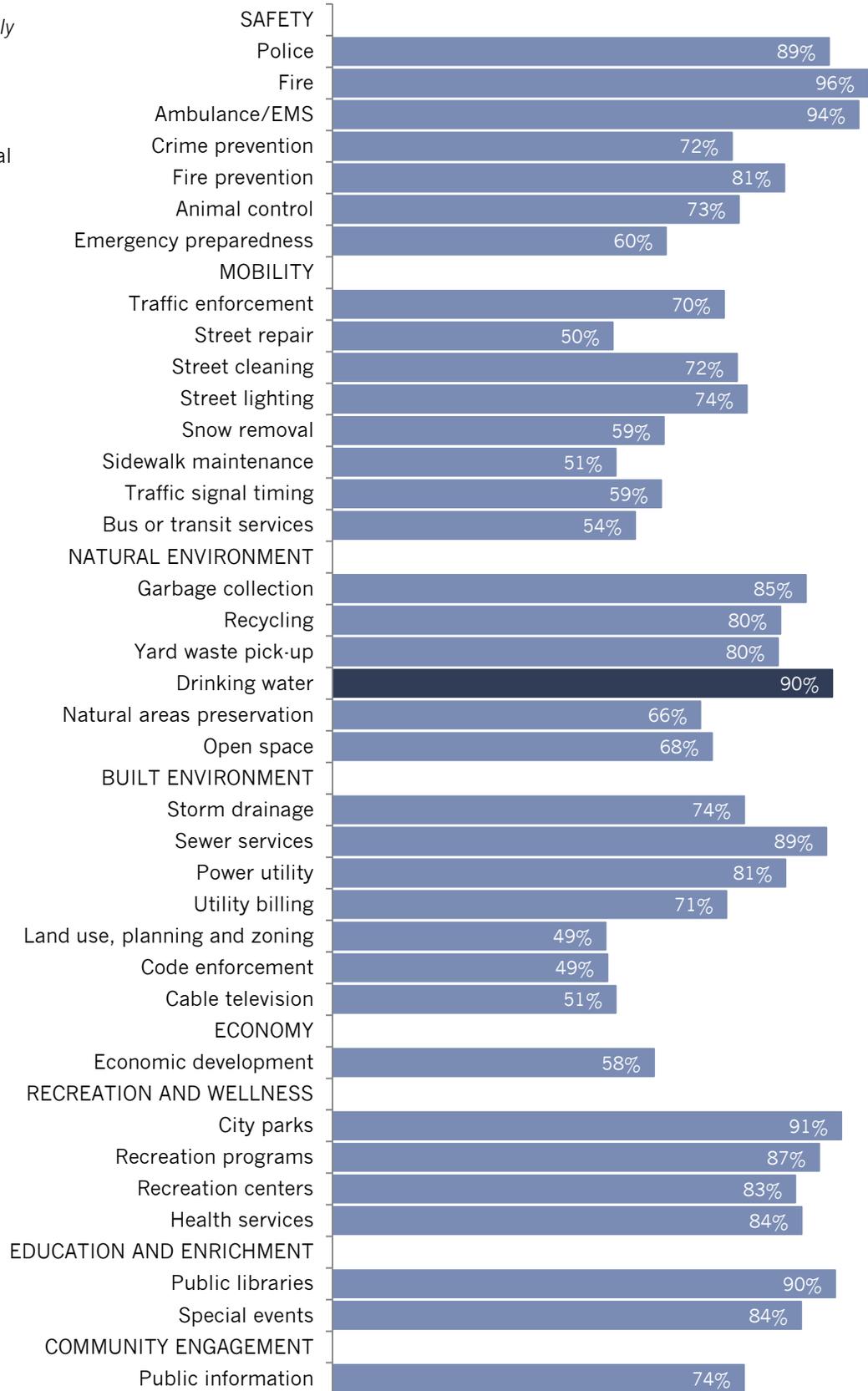
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



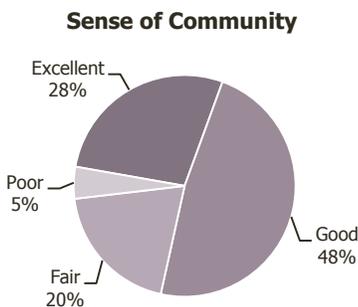
# Participation

## *Are the residents of Edmonds 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 respondents rated the sense of community in Edmonds as excellent or good, and nearly all residents would recommend living in Edmonds to someone who asks (95% somewhat or very likely). About 9 in 10 residents reported they were somewhat or very likely to remain in the City for the next five years. Around 4 in 10 residents reported contacting an Edmonds employee within the last 12 months. All of these ratings were similar to other communities across the nation.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, the extent to which respondents participated in these activities varied, but tended to be similar to participation levels of residents in other communities across the nation.

Compared to residents in other communities across the country, more Edmonds residents reported stocking supplies for an emergency, walking or biking instead of driving, recycling at home, attending a City-sponsored event and voting in local elections, and fewer residents reported that they had observed a code violation. Participation in Economy-related activities was mixed; nearly all respondents had purchased goods or services in Edmonds while about 3 in 10 reported working in Edmonds, a rate lower than the national and Pacific Northwest benchmark comparisons. A similar proportion (36%) indicated that they had participated in religious or spiritual activities, which was lower than the national benchmark but similar to other Pacific Northwest communities with populations similar to Edmonds. Participation in Community Engagement activities was also mixed. For example, most respondents had read or watched the local news and talked to or visited with neighbors, but fewer than 2 in 10 had contacted Edmonds elected officials. These rates, however, were all similar to those seen in other communities nationwide and regionally.

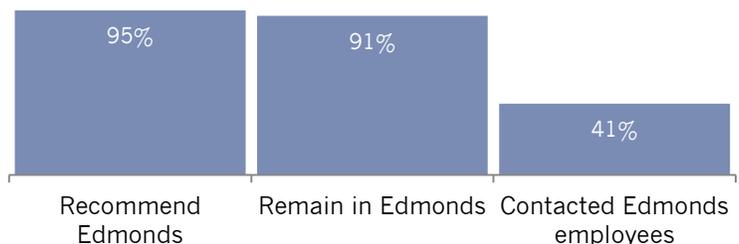


## Indicators of Community Participation

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



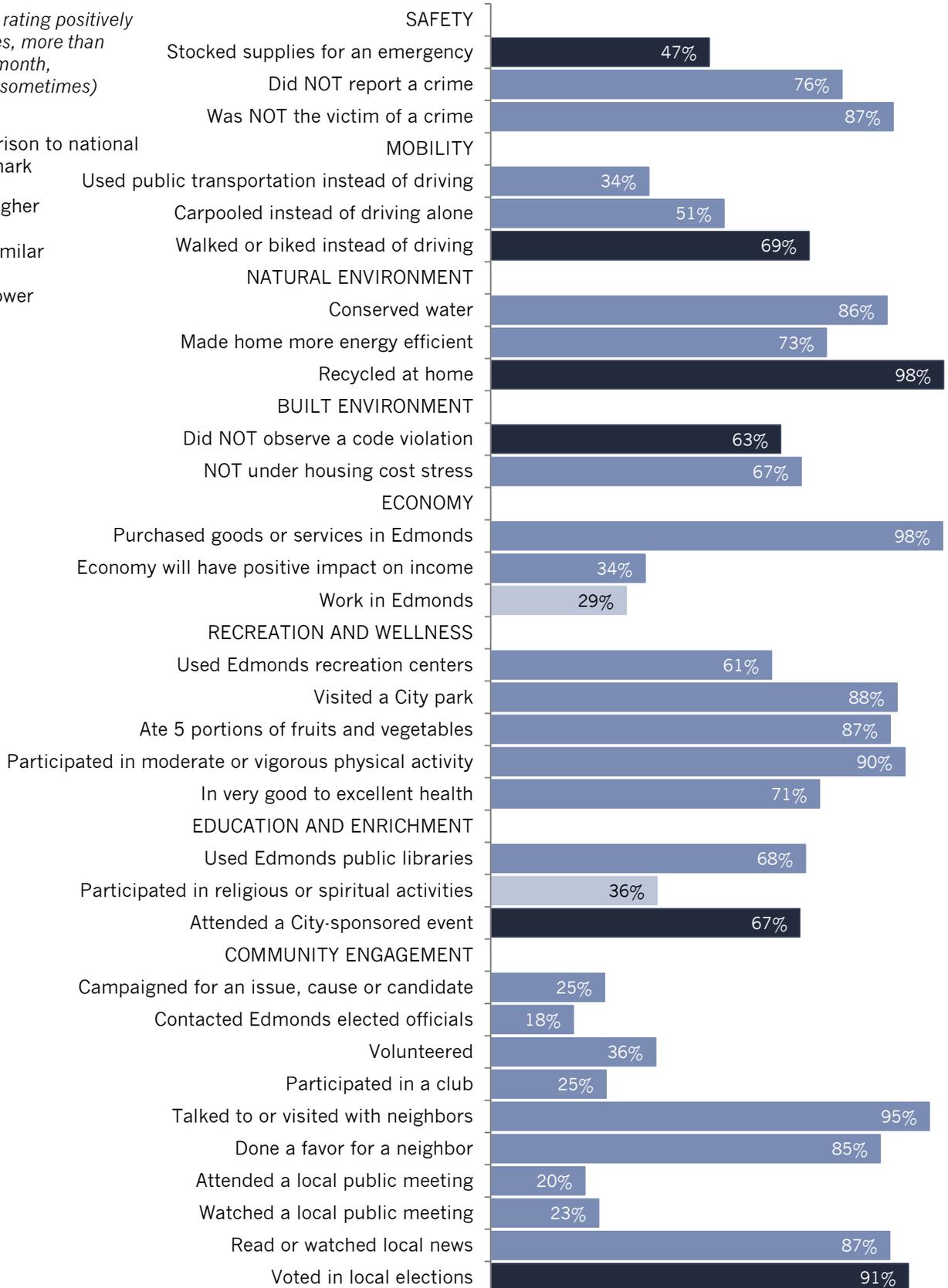
## The National Citizen Survey™

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

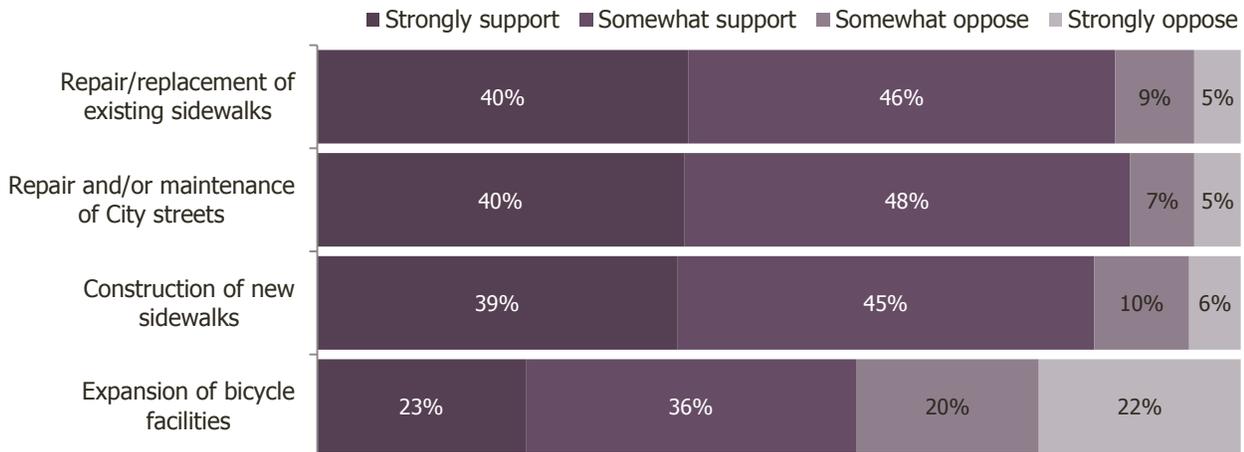


# Special Topics

The City of Edmonds included five questions of special interest on The NCS. When asked for their opinion on increased local public funding for transportation-related services, more than 8 in 10 residents indicated that they strongly or somewhat support increased funding for the repair and replacement of existing sidewalks, repair and/or maintenance of City streets and the construction of new sidewalks. Fewer residents (about 6 in 10) indicated their support for increased funding for the expansion of bicycle facilities.

Figure 4: Funding for Transportation

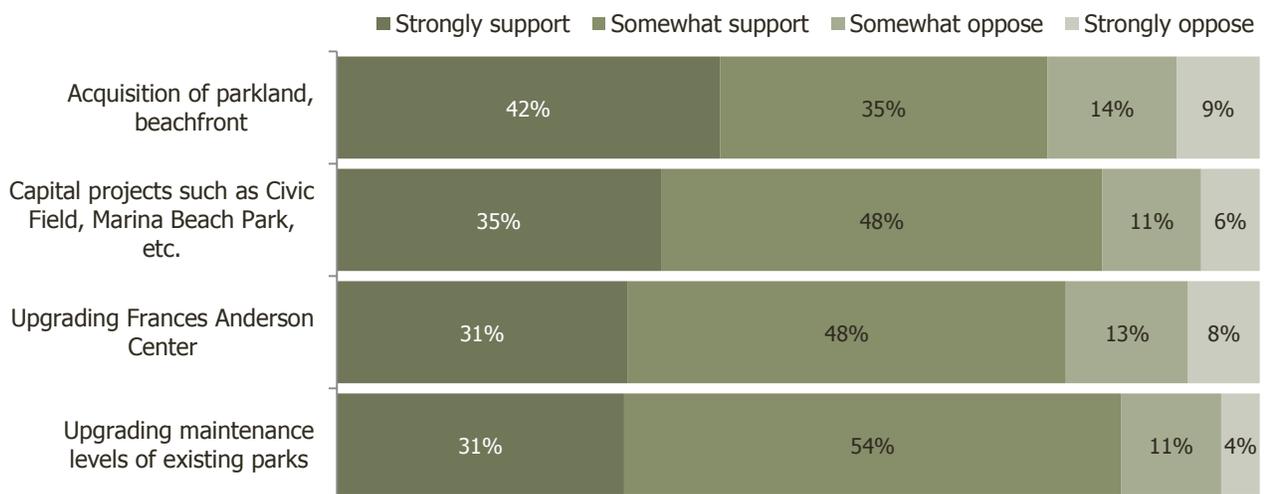
*How likely or unlikely would you be to support increased local public funding for the following transportation-related services in Edmonds:*



When asked about their potential support for increased local public funding for parks and recreation-related services, around 8 in 10 residents indicated that they strongly or somewhat support increased public funding for capital projects such as Civic Field and Marina Beach Park, as well as upgrading maintenance levels of existing parks. About three-quarters of respondents supported funding for the acquisition of parkland and beachfront and upgrading the Frances Anderson Center.

Figure 5: Funding for Parks and Recreation

*How likely or unlikely would you be to support increased local public funding for the following parks and recreation-related services in Edmonds:*



## The National Citizen Survey™

The third question asked Edmonds' residents whether or not they had experienced discrimination in the City based on a number of demographic factors. For each demographic, more than 9 in 10 residents indicated that they had not experienced discrimination. More residents, however, tended to experience discrimination based on age and race.

Figure 6: Discrimination in Edmonds

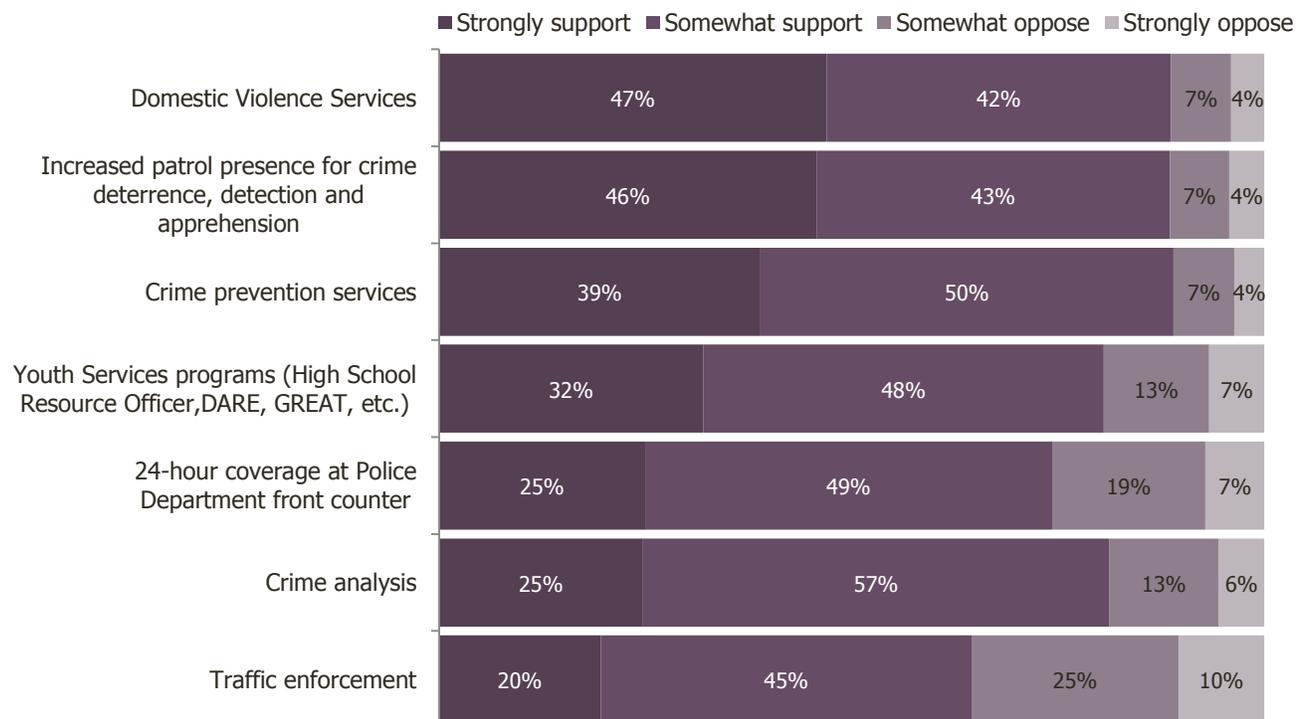
*Please indicate whether or not you currently experience discrimination in Edmonds based on your:*



When asked about their support for increased funding for police-related services, more than 8 in 10 residents strongly or somewhat supported increased funding for domestic violence services, increased patrol presence for crime deterrence, detection and apprehension and crime prevention services. Increased funding for all services were at least somewhat supported by a majority of residents.

Figure 7: Funding for Police

*How likely or unlikely would you be to support increased funding to enhance the following Edmonds Police-related services:*

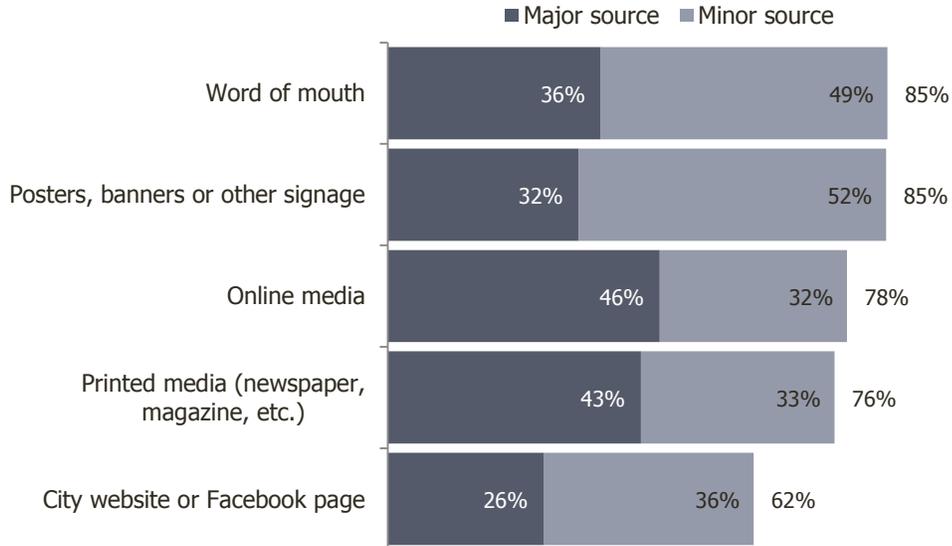


## The National Citizen Survey™

The final question asked residents about their sources of information about the City of Edmonds. More than 8 in 10 residents considered word of mouth and posters, banners or other signage a major or minor source of information. About three-quarters of residents indicated that online media and printed media were also sources.

Figure 8: Sources of Information

*Rate how much the following are regular sources of information for you about City functions, activities, programs and events through the following channels:*



# Conclusions

## **Edmonds is a great place to live.**

Almost all residents gave positive ratings for the overall quality of life in Edmonds and Edmonds as a place to live; these ratings were higher than those seen in comparison communities across the nation and in Pacific Northwest communities with similar populations. About 9 in 10 residents positively rated the overall image and overall appearance of Edmonds as well as the City as a place to raise children, ratings which were also higher than in comparison communities nationwide and regionally. Similar proportions would recommend Edmonds to someone who asked and plan to remain in the City for the next five years.

## **Safety is an asset and top priority.**

Safety was identified as an important area of focus in the coming years and nearly all aspects of Safety were rated positively by a majority of residents. Almost all residents reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods and in Edmonds' downtown area, and about 9 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to the overall feeling of safety in Edmonds. Further, almost all respondents gave high ratings to police, fire and ambulance/EMS services. When asked about their support for funding increases for various police-related services, at least half of residents somewhat or strongly supported all of the various proposed services. All aspects of Safety received ratings similar to those given in other communities nationwide and in the Pacific Northwest with the exception of the proportion of respondents who had stocked supplies for an emergency (47%), which was higher than the national comparison.

## **Economy is important to residents and highly rated in Edmonds.**

Residents also identified Economy as a top priority of the Edmonds community. Ratings for Edmonds' vibrant downtown area and the City as a place to visit were higher than those seen in the national and Pacific Northwest comparisons. Around 8 in 10 residents positively rated the City's overall economic health as well as the variety of the City's business and service establishments. While only about 3 in 10 residents indicated that they work in Edmonds, more than two-thirds of respondents rated the City as an excellent or good place to work.

## **The City supports a culture of diversity and opportunities for citizen engagement.**

At least three-quarters of residents gave excellent or good ratings to opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities, opportunities to participate in social events and activities and adult educational opportunities, and about two-thirds had attended a City-sponsored event in the past year. These ratings were generally higher than seen elsewhere. Furthermore, at least 6 in 10 survey participants gave favorable ratings to opportunities to participate in community matters and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds. When asked whether they currently experience discrimination in Edmonds based on a variety of factors such as age, gender and race, virtually all residents reported that they had not been discriminated against.