



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

# Morrisville, NC

Community Livability Report

2017



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# About

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

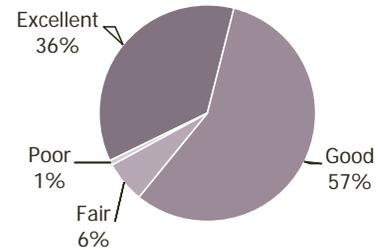
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 202 residents of the Town of Morrisville. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 7% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Morrisville

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Morrisville as excellent or good. This evaluation was similar to the national benchmark (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

Overall Quality of Life



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.

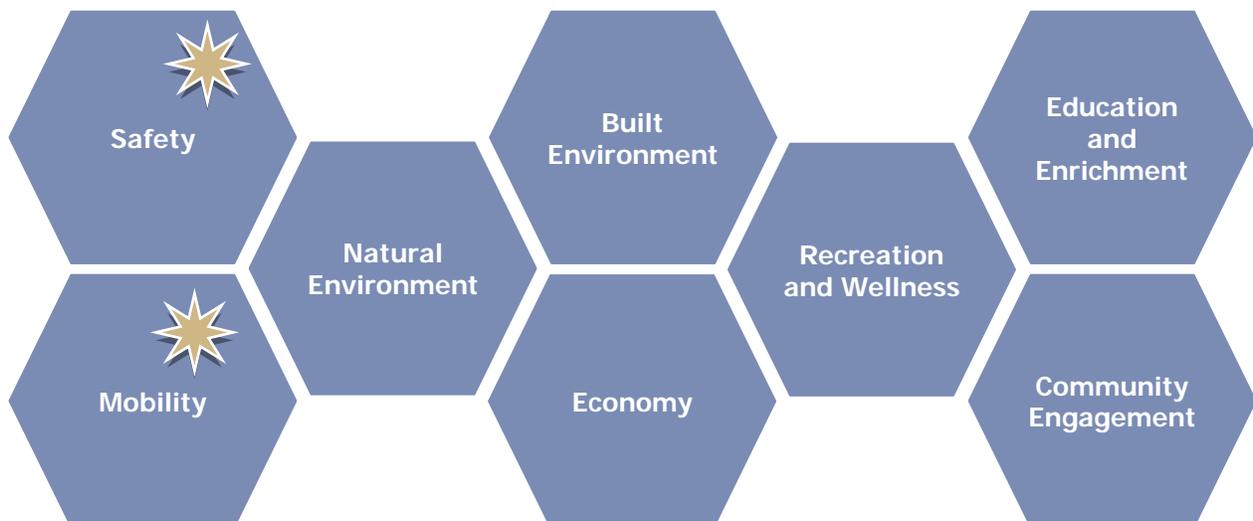
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. In 2017, residents identified Safety and Mobility as priorities for the Morrisville community in the coming two years. Ratings for 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 Morrisville’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 Morrisville, nearly all residents rated the town as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Morrisville as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

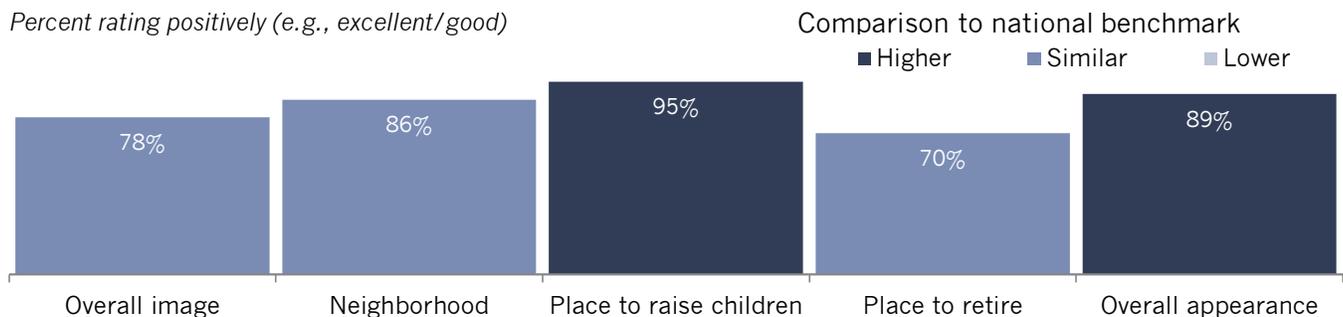
In addition to rating the town as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Morrisville as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Morrisville and its overall appearance. Overall, at least 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, most ratings for aspects of Community Characteristics were positively scored by at least half of respondents and tended to be similar to or higher than 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, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement with at least half giving excellent or good marks to each; scores for cleanliness, air quality, preventative health services, availability of affordable quality food and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds were higher than national averages.

Marks for items within Mobility, Economy and Education tended to be a bit more mixed; notable aspects within these areas included public parking, overall economic health, cost of living, shopping and employment opportunities, Morrisville as a place to work and the availability of affordable quality child care/preschool, as each was rated more favorably than others across the country. Additionally, residents gave higher ratings to shopping opportunities in 2017 than in 2015 (see *Trends over Time* report for more details). Conversely, scores for public transportation, traffic flow, the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area, the town as a place to visit and adult education opportunities lagged behind national comparisons.

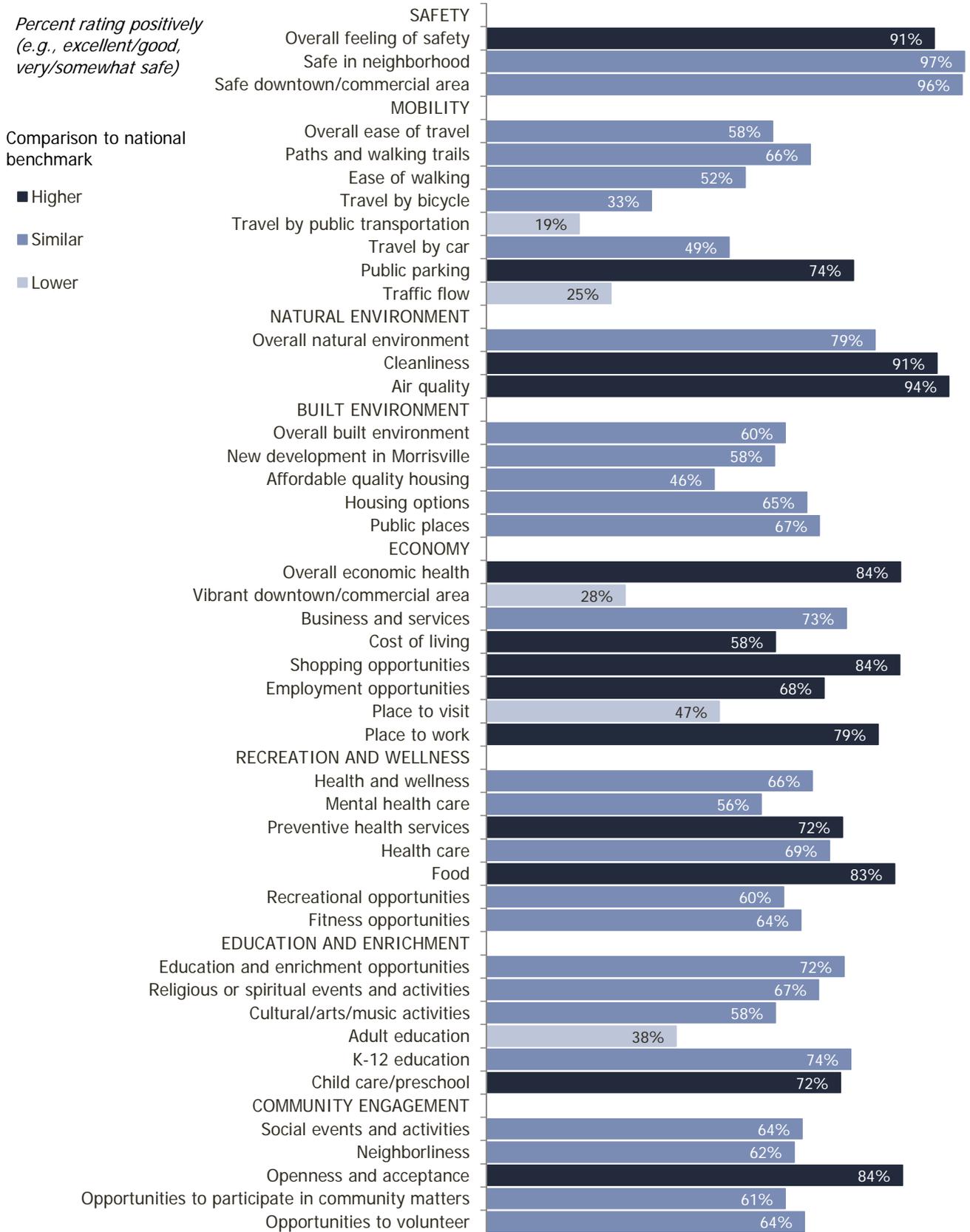


Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)



# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



# Governance

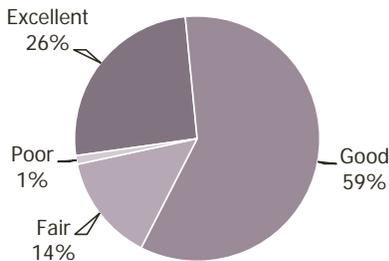
*How well does the government of Morrisville meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Morrisville as well as the manner in which these services are provided are key components of how residents rate their quality of life. Around 8 in 10 residents rated the overall quality of services provided by the Town of Morrisville as excellent or good. Marks for Town services as well as services provided by the Federal Government (which decreased since 2015) were similar to comparison communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Morrisville’s leadership and governance. About two-thirds or more of residents rated government performance as excellent or good. Many evaluations of Morrisville government were higher than national averages including, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in Town government, acting in the best interest of the community, being honest and treating all residents fairly.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Morrisville. Broadly, at least 6 in 10 residents rated most of these services and amenities favorably and nearly all ratings were similar to or higher than communities across the U.S. The strongest services were related to Built Environment and Economy; around two-thirds or more of respondents positively scored storm drainage, utility billing, code enforcement, cable television and economic development and these measures were higher than benchmark communities. Other strengths in the community included police services and sidewalk maintenance. The only item for which residents gave marks lower than other municipalities was bus or transit services.

Overall Quality of Town Services

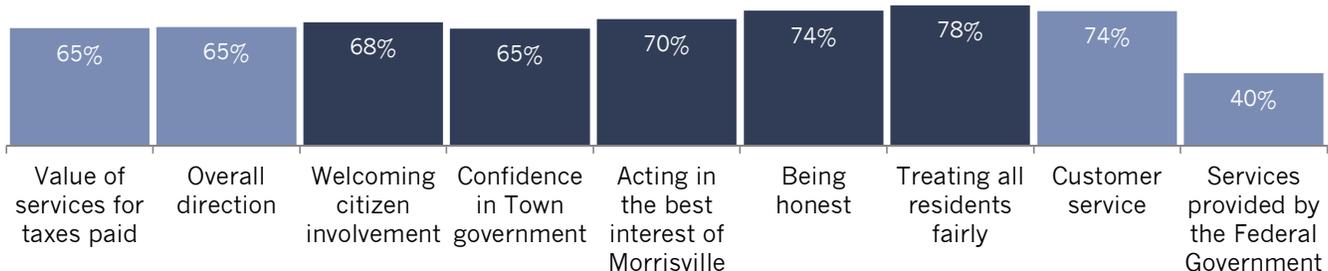


Participants’ scores for street cleaning and cable television were higher, while ratings for yard waste pick-up, sewer services and recreation centers were lower in 2017 than in 2015.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



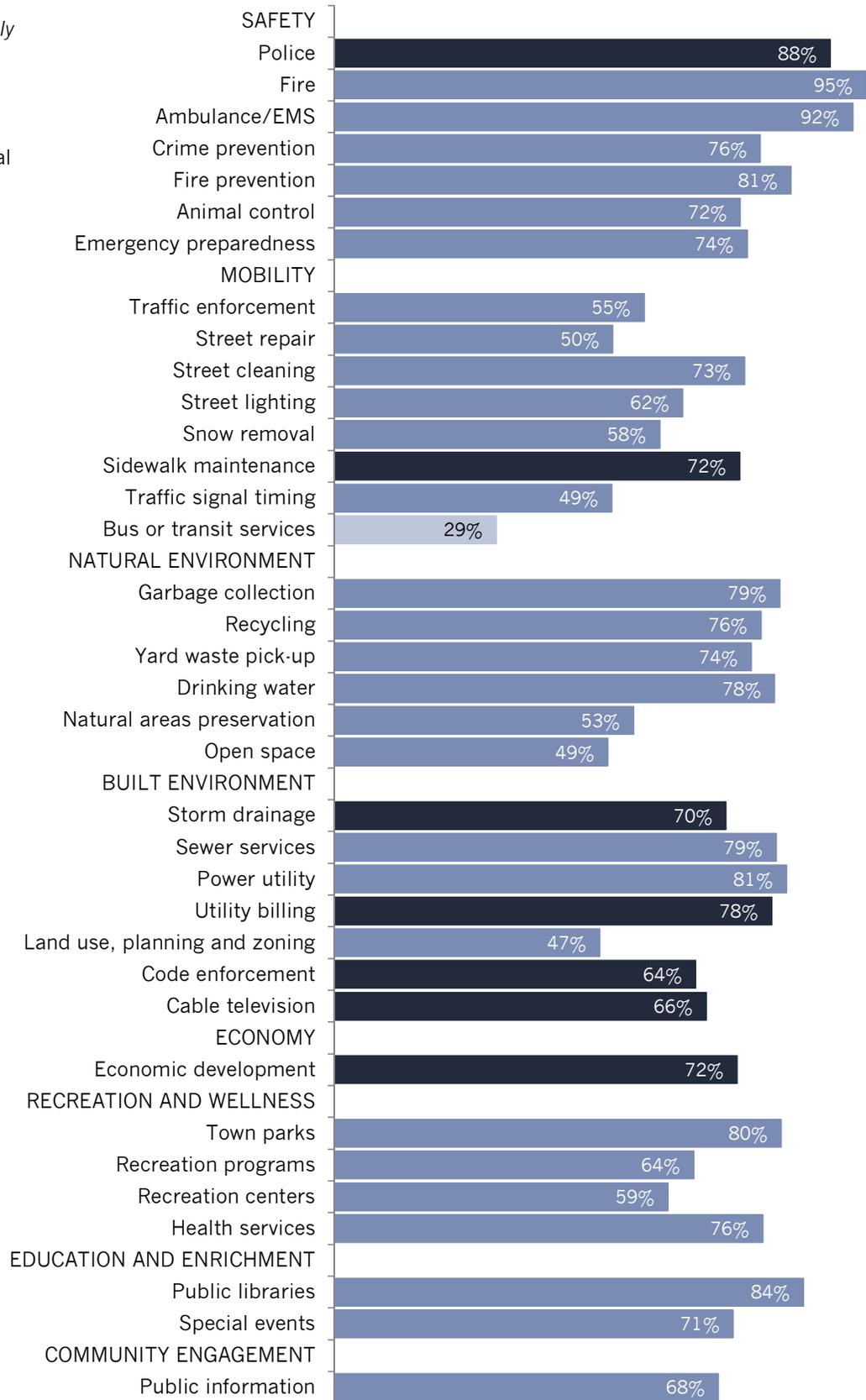
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Participation

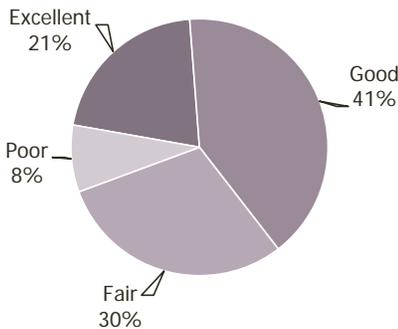
*Are the residents of Morrisville connected to the community and each other?*

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. Similar to other communities in the U.S., about 6 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good scores to the sense of community in Morrisville.

About 8 in 10 survey respondents indicated they planned to remain in the community for the next five years and around 9 in 10 would recommend living in Morrisville to someone who asked; these levels were similar to those found across the nation. About one-third of residents reported they had contacted Town employees, which was lower than rates reported elsewhere.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Residents' rates of Participation varied, but were mostly on par with national averages. Morrisville respondents were less likely to observe a code violation or be under housing cost stress and were more optimistic that the economy would have a positive impact on their income than those in comparison communities. 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 participated in healthy behaviors.

Sense of Community



Morrisville residents reported below average participation rates for using public transportation, carpooling, doing a favor for a neighbor and voting in local elections. While fewer respondents indicated they had used Morrisville recreation centers in 2017, more residents attended a Town-sponsored event or volunteered than in 2015.

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



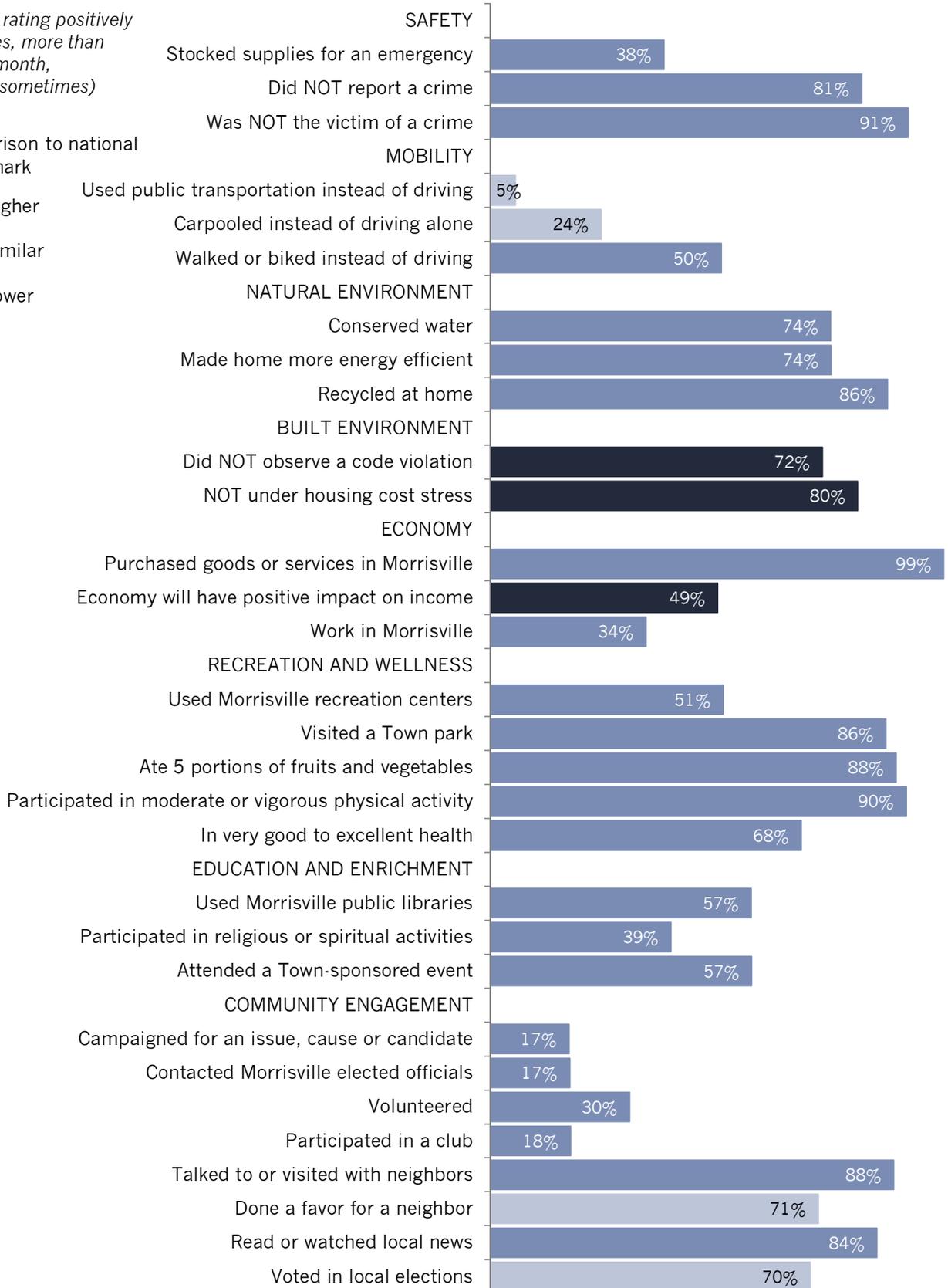
# The National Citizen Survey™

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



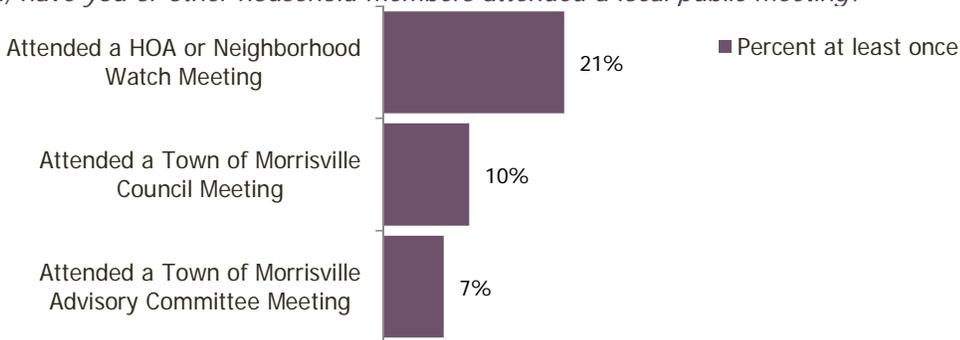
# Special Topics

The Town of Morrisville included several questions of special interest on The NCS. Town leadership sought to understand residents' attendance of various meetings, quality of County-level services, support for funding several capital investment projects, reasons for living in the community and strategic planning priorities.

The first question asked residents about their attendance for three types of local meetings. Around 2 in 10 reported they had attended a homeowner's association or neighborhood watch meeting at least once in the 12 months prior to the survey and about 1 in 10 had attended a Town Council meeting. Slightly fewer indicated they had attended an advisory committee meeting.

Figure 4: Attendance of Morrisville Meetings

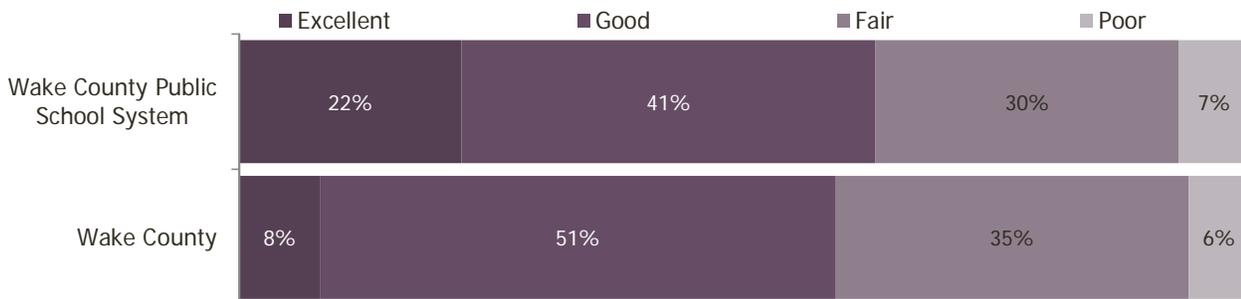
*Thinking about local public meetings (of local elected officials like Town Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards, town halls, HOA, neighborhood watch, etc.), in the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members attended a local public meeting?*



Respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of services provided at the County-level. Close to 6 in 10 awarded high marks to services provided by the public school system and Wake County.

Figure 5: Quality of Wake County Government and School System

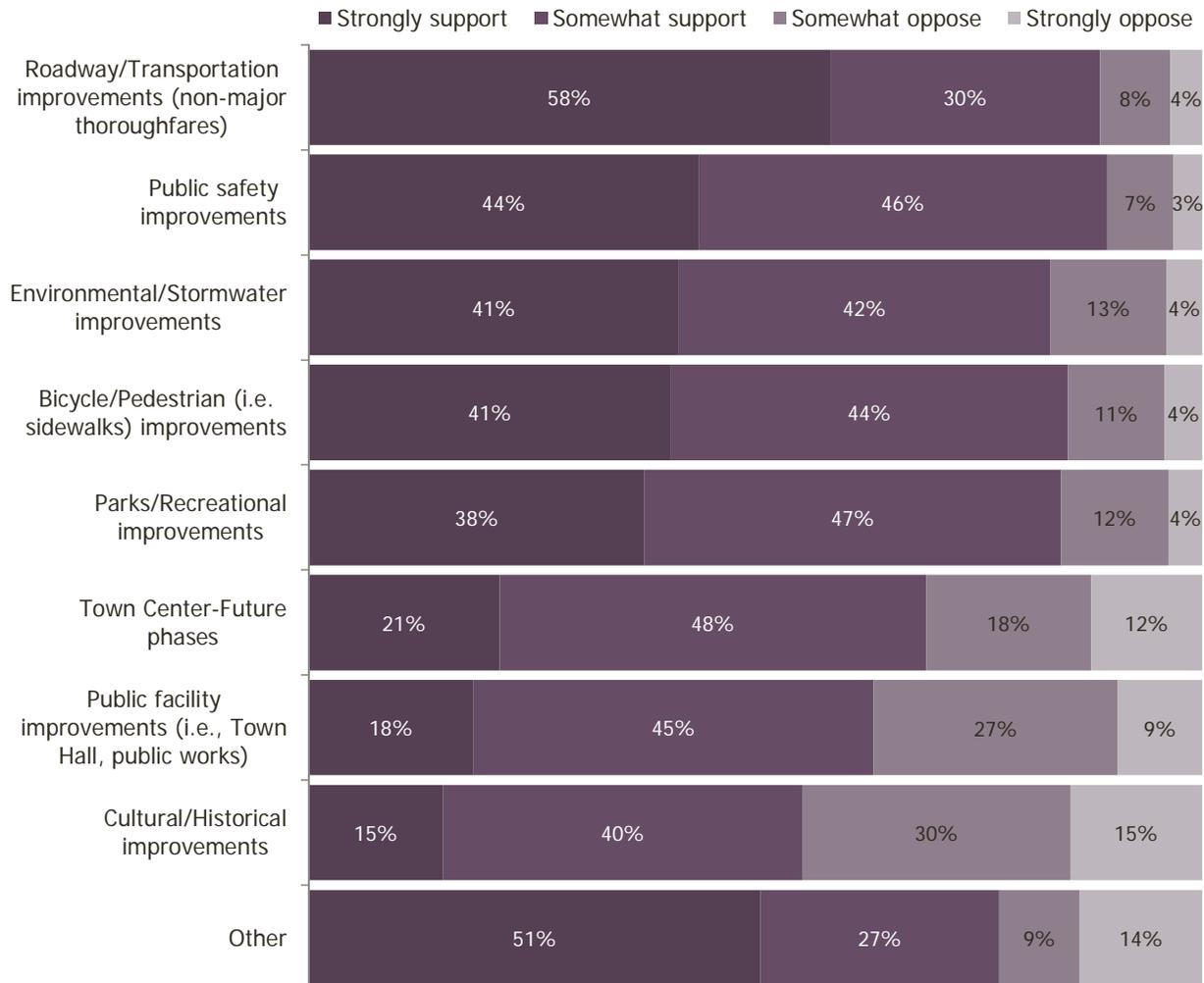
*Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?*



Morrisville survey respondents were asked to rate their level of support for funding a list of eight possible capital investment projects and were given space to identify an alternative project in their own words. At least 8 in 10 residents were at least somewhat supportive of funding roadway/transportation and public safety improvements, and slightly fewer were at least somewhat supportive of environmental/stormwater, bicycle/pedestrian and parks/recreational improvements. About 2 in 10 or fewer residents would strongly support using tax funds for Town Center-Future phases, public facility or cultural/historical improvements. For the full verbatim responses to the other category, please see the *Open End Report* under separate cover.

Figure 6: Support for Capital Investment Funding

*The town operating budget does not have the capacity to pay for significant capital improvements without additional funding resources for debt service payments. Please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose the use of tax dollars to fund each of the following capital investment projects:*

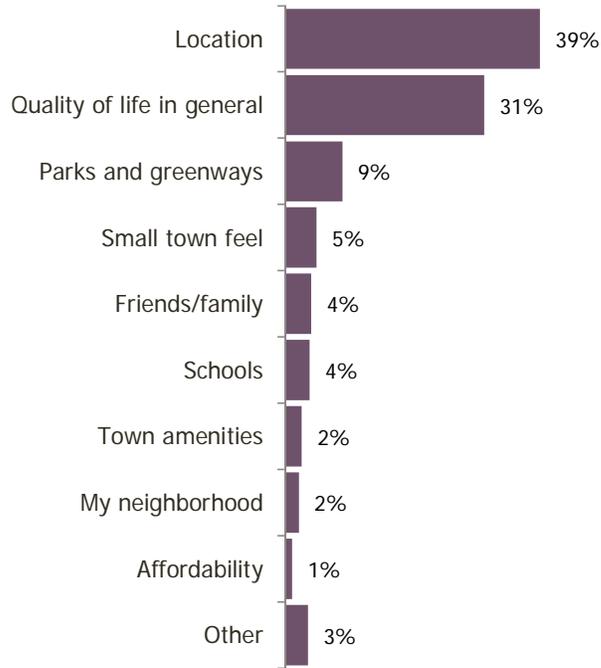


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In another question, unique to Morrisville’s survey, residents were asked to identify which one thing they liked most about living in the community. Nearly 4 in 10 residents identified the location, and about 3 in 10 cited the quality of life in Morrisville, while less than 1 in 10 reported parks and greenways as the one thing they liked most about residing in the Town. Five percent or fewer of respondents chose the remaining characteristics.

Figure 7: Residents’ Reasons for Living in Morrisville

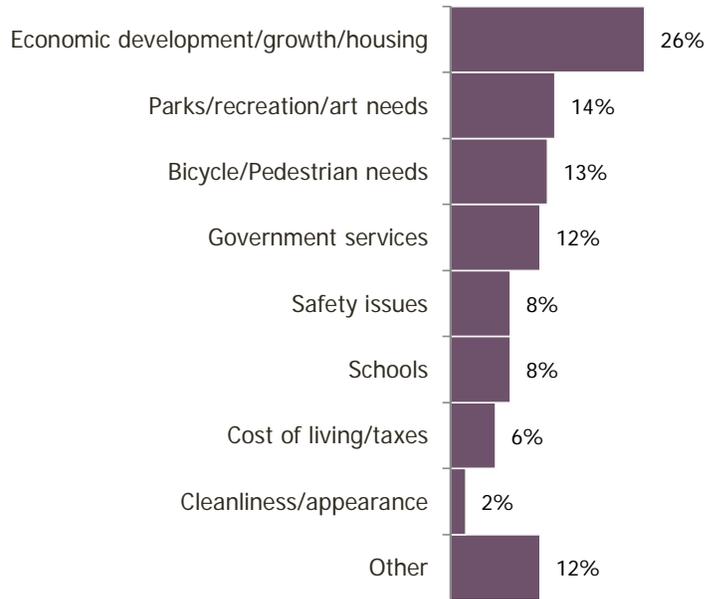
*Morrisville’s new brand is all about ‘Live Connected. Live Well.’ What one thing do you like most about living in Morrisville?*



The Town also asked residents to identify in their own words a community need or issue to address in the Town strategic planning process in the next five years that was not traffic or transportation related. A total of 202 surveys were completed by Morrisville residents; of these 123 respondents provided a response for this open-ended question that was not related to traffic or transportation. Close to one-quarter of these 123 respondents replied with a response related to economic development, growth and housing issues. About 1 in 10 residents cited issues related to parks, recreation and art; bicycle and pedestrian; and government services as needs they would like to have addressed in the strategic planning process in the next five years (see the *Open End Report* for more details).

Figure 8: Strategic Planning Priorities

*The Town is currently working on solutions related to traffic and transportation. What other single community need or issue would you like Morrisville to address in their strategic planning process in the next five years besides issues related to traffic/transportation?*



# Conclusions

## Morrisville residents feel positively about their community and are engaged.

Almost all residents evaluated their quality of life in Morrisville favorably and thought the town was an excellent or good place to live. Around 9 in 10 respondents gave positive reviews to the town as a place to raise children and to the overall appearance of the community, ratings that were both higher than the national average. At least 8 in 10 survey participants gave high marks to their neighborhoods as places to live and indicated they were likely to remain in Morrisville and would recommend living in the town to others.

Given residents' positive views of the quality of life in Morrisville, it makes sense that participants would be engaged in their community. Respondents praised the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds at levels higher than those seen across the country. Further, respondents were more pleased with opportunities to attend social events and activities and cultural/arts/music activities and reported higher levels of attendance for Town-sponsored events and volunteerism in 2017, compared to the 2015 survey administration.

## Mobility received mixed reviews and appears to be an area in which residents would like to see improvements.

The facet of Mobility received evaluations on both ends of the spectrum. Overall ease of travel was positively scored by about half of residents and at least 6 in 10 gave favorable reviews to the availability of paths and walking trails, public parking, street cleaning, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance. Moreover, participants gave higher scores to street cleaning in 2017 than in 2015 and ratings for public parking and sidewalk maintenance were higher than comparison communities. Alternatively, less than one-third of respondents awarded excellent or good marks to ease of travel by public transportation, traffic flow and bus or transit services, which were rated lower than in communities elsewhere. Additionally, only about one-quarter of residents reported they had participated in carpooling efforts and less than 1 in 10 had used alternative transportation instead of driving, which was lower than the national averages. Finally, when asked if they would support funding roadway/transportation improvements with an increase in taxes, nearly 9 in 10 indicated they would support this capital investment (about 6 in 10 would strongly support it).

## Safety is an asset Morrisville residents appreciate and want to maintain.

All evaluations of the various features of Safety were rated positively by a large majority of respondents, and Safety was still identified as one of the top priorities for the community to focus on in the coming two years. Almost all residents felt safe in Morrisville's downtown/commercial area and in their neighborhoods, and residents' ratings for the overall feeling of safety in Morrisville were higher than those across the nation. All Safety-related services were given favorable reviews by at least 7 in 10 survey participants, and ratings for police services were especially strong. A majority of respondents had neither been the victim of a crime nor needed to report a crime to police. Additionally, when respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for a tax increase to fund capital investment projects, public safety improvements topped the list (90% of respondents supported this measure).