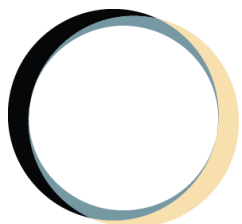


THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Chesterfield County, VA
Community Livability Report

2016



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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 Chesterfield County. 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.

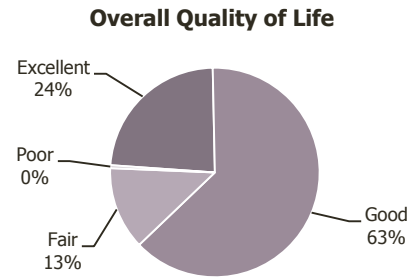
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 435 residents of Chesterfield County. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% 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 Chesterfield County

Most residents rated the quality of life in Chesterfield County as excellent or good. This rating was similar to the national and Virginia community benchmarks (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.

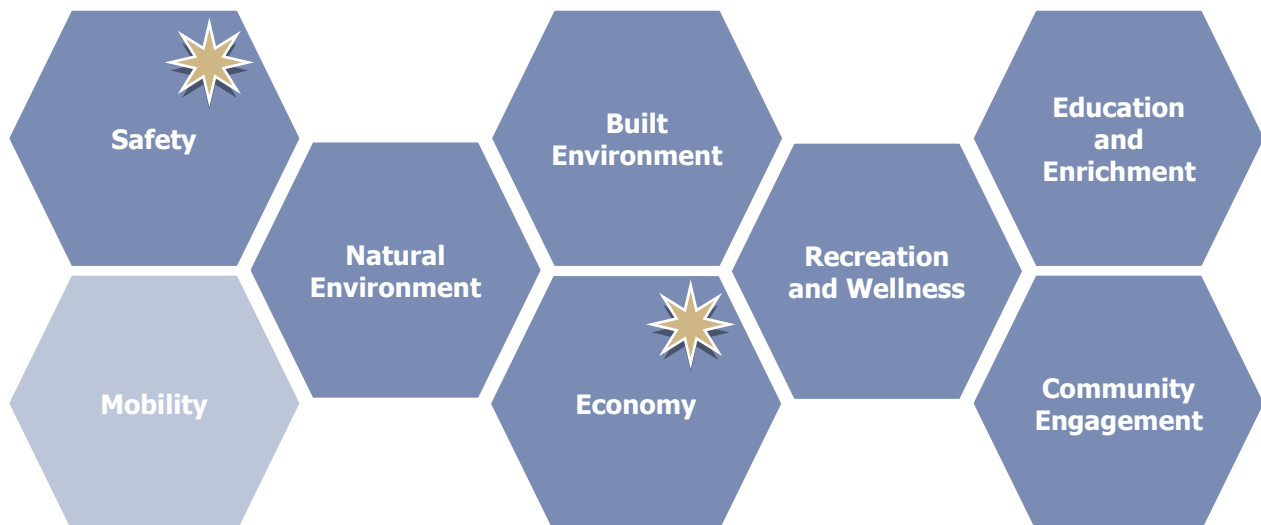
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Chesterfield County community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that County residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets. Ratings for Natural Environment, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were also positive and similar to other communities. The facet of Mobility received ratings lower than other communities across the nation. 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 Chesterfield County’s unique questions.

Legend

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

- Most important



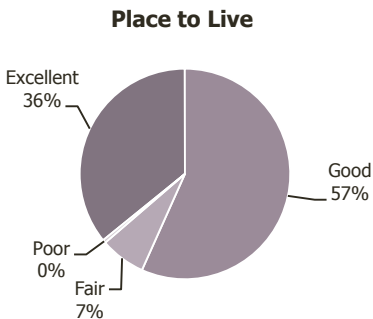
Community Characteristics

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 Chesterfield County, 93% rated the County as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Chesterfield County as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across Virginia and the nation.

In addition to rating the County as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Chesterfield County as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Chesterfield County and its overall appearance. Close to 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to their neighborhoods and to the overall image or reputation of Chesterfield County, while about 9 in 10 highly evaluated the County as a place to raise children. About 7 in 10 of residents also gave favorable ratings to Chesterfield County as a place to retire and to the overall appearance of the community. These ratings were all similar to national and Virginia comparison communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated close to 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. In general, ratings were similar to comparison communities and most aspects were given positive ratings by a majority of residents. Almost all residents reported that they felt safe in their neighborhoods and about 8 in 10 felt safe overall and in Chesterfield County's downtown/commercial area; these ratings were similar to communities elsewhere. All aspects in the facets of Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were rated positively by at least half of respondents and were similar to benchmark comparisons. Ratings that were especially strong included the availability of affordable quality housing (60% excellent or good), the variety of housing options (76%), employment opportunities (56%) and Chesterfield County as a place to work (78%); each of these aspects were rated higher in the County than across the nation. Ratings tended to be mixed within Mobility. Availability of paths and walking trails, ease of walking and ease of travel by bicycle were awarded positive ratings by less than one-third of residents and were rated lower than the benchmarks; however, all other aspects were favorably rated by at least 47% of respondents and were similar to comparison communities.

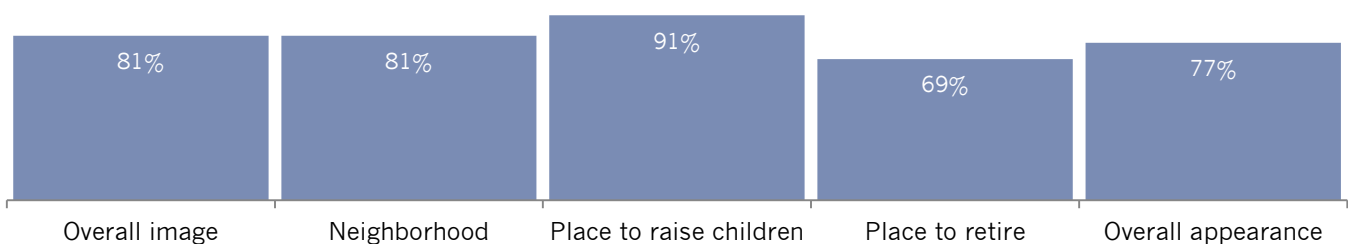


Compared to 2014, ratings for the overall image or reputation of the community, overall economic health and Chesterfield County as a place to work were rated more positively in 2016; however, ratings for ease of travel by car and ease of walking were lower than in the previous survey administration (see the *Trends over Time* report for additional details).

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



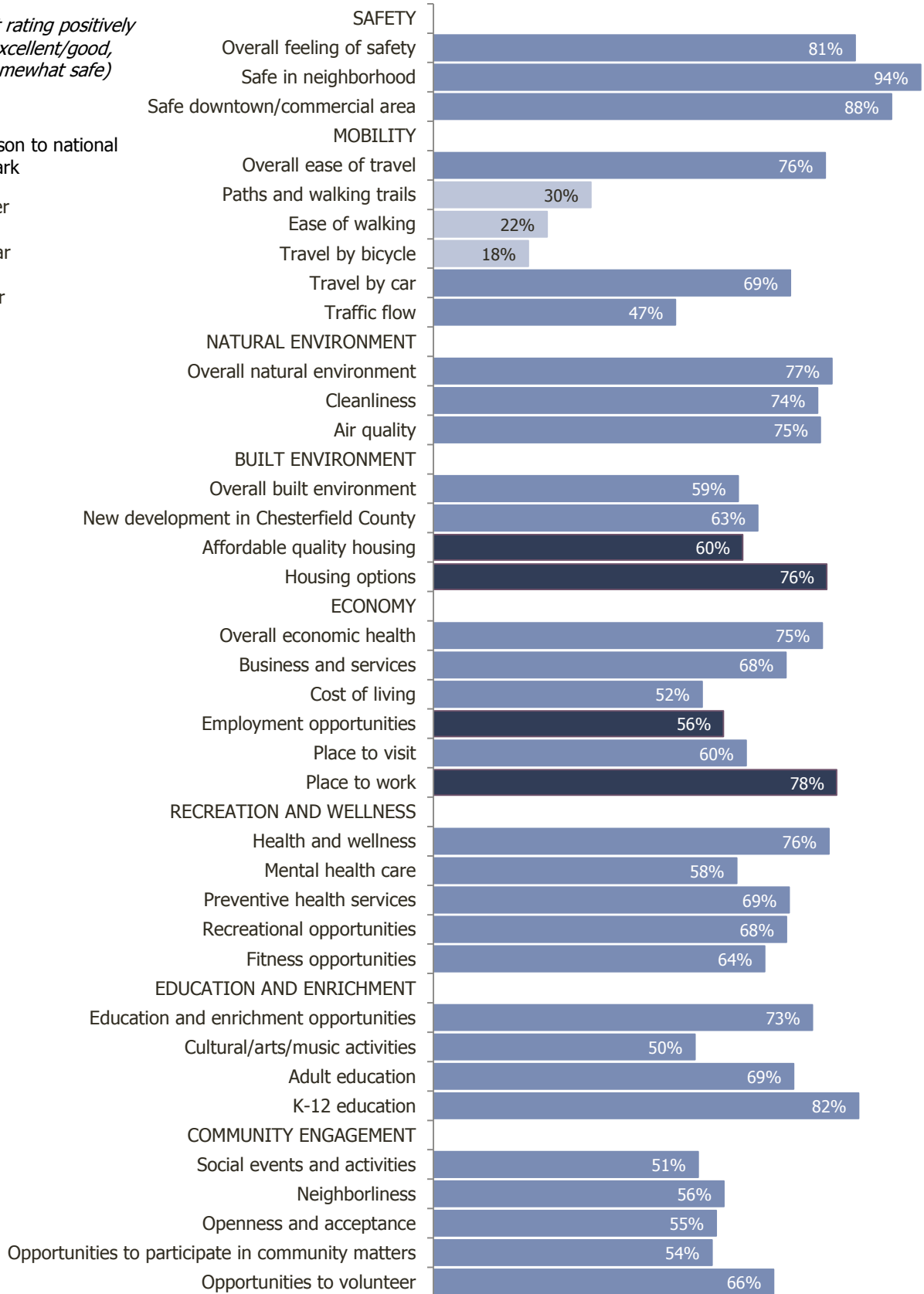
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



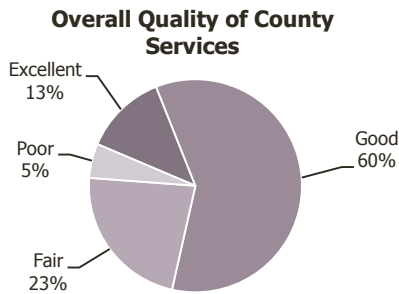
Governance

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

The overall quality of the services provided by Chesterfield County as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 7 in 10 respondents rated the overall quality of County services as excellent or good, while only 42% awarded high marks to the services provided by the Federal Government. Both of these ratings were similar to other communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Chesterfield County’s leadership and governance. About half of participants gave favorable ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, overall direction of government, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in County government, acting in the best interest of the County, being honest and treating all residents fairly. Around 7 in 10 positively evaluated the customer services provided by Chesterfield County government employees. All of these ratings were similar to the national and Virginia benchmarks.

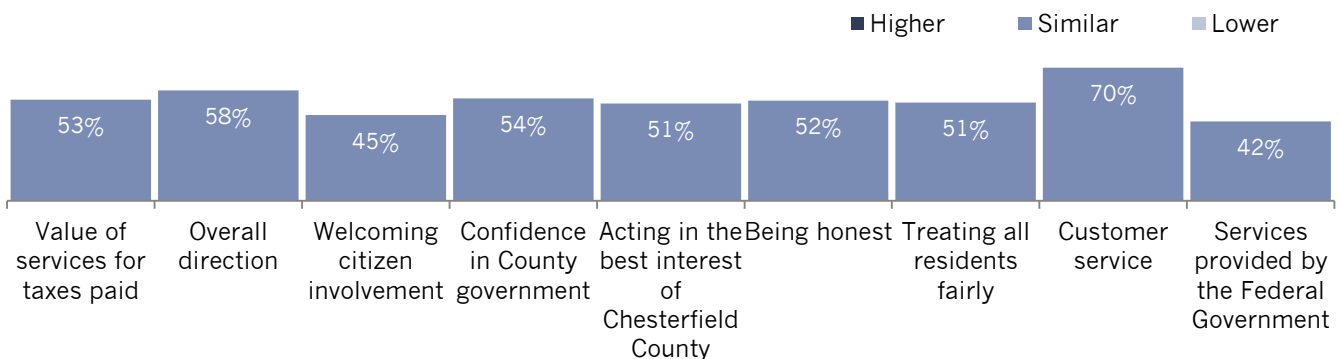
Respondents evaluated over 20 individual services and amenities available in Chesterfield County. In general, most ratings for services in Chesterfield County were rated as excellent or good by at least 6 in 10 residents and all aspects were similar to the national and Virginia benchmarks. Close to 9 in 10 gave high marks to fire and ambulance/EMS services and about 7 in 10 or more awarded positive ratings to police, crime and fire prevention, animal control and emergency preparedness. Other notably high ratings included recycling, drinking water, sewer services, County parks, recreation centers, preventative health services and public libraries, with 7 in 10 or more ranking these services as excellent or good. The lowest rated services were found within the facet of Built Environment. Land use, planning and zoning and code enforcement were rated positively by a little less than half of participants and ratings for code enforcement decreased from 2014 to 2016; however, both of these ratings were similar to both national and Virginia comparison communities.



In 2016, ratings for services remained stable over time with only one decrease since 2014.

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

Comparison to national benchmark



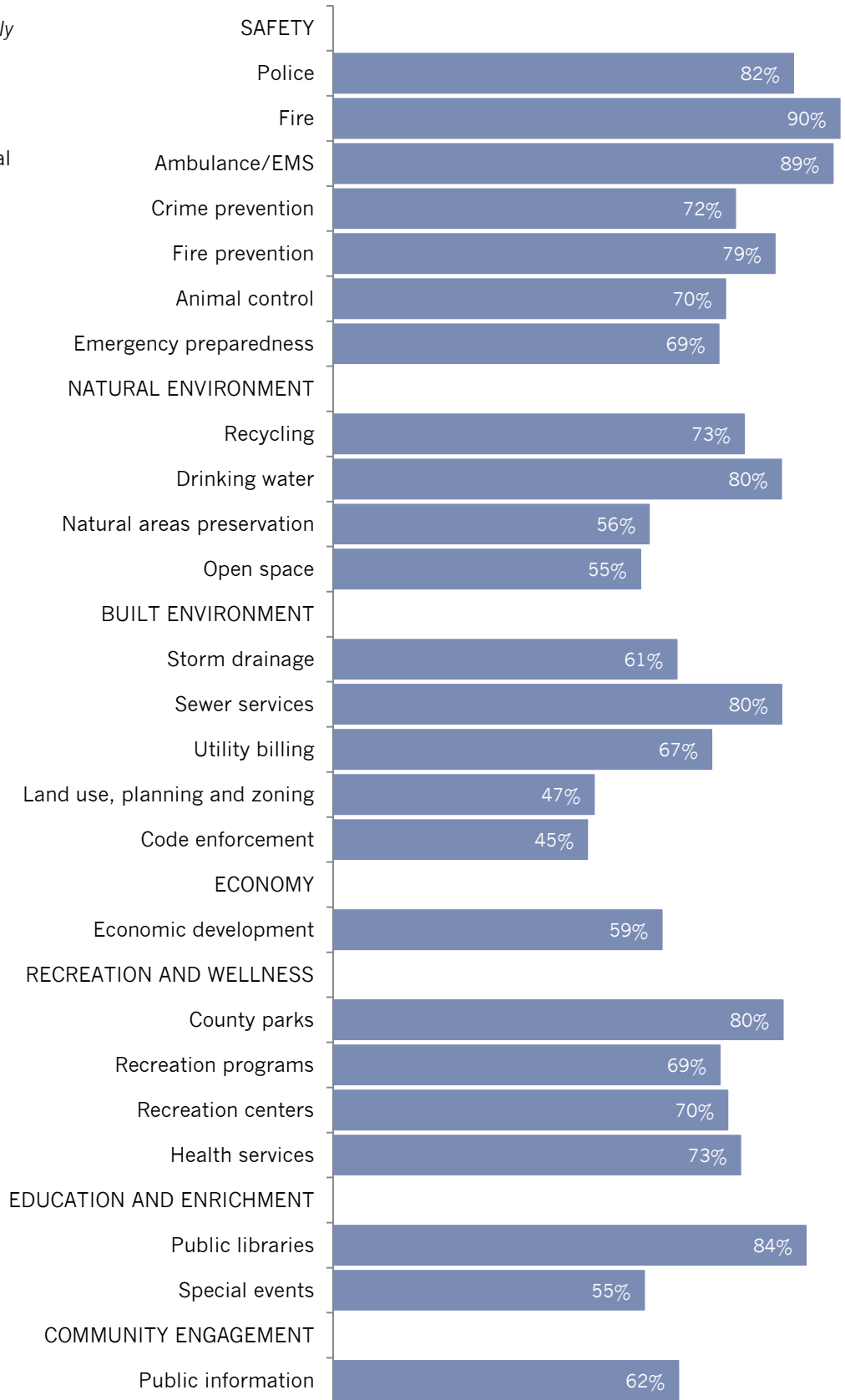
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

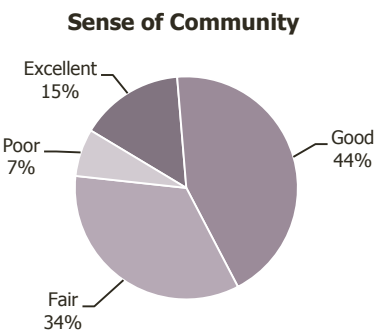


Participation

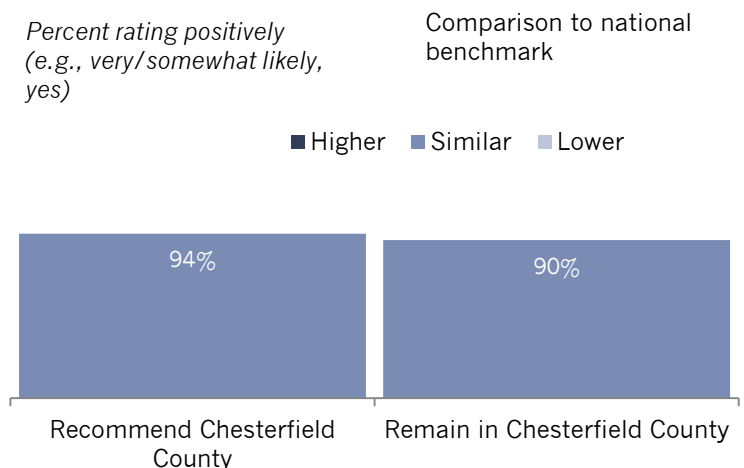
Are the residents of Chesterfield County connected to the community and each other?

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. A majority of residents gave high marks to the sense of community in Chesterfield County, a rating that was similar to communities across Virginia and the U.S. At least 9 in 10 would recommend living in Chesterfield County and planned to remain in the County for the next five years; these ratings were similar to levels seen in comparison communities.

The survey included 17 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation ratings tended to vary across facets, but most aspects were similar to communities across the nation. Nearly all residents reported that they had purchased goods or services in Chesterfield County and about 9 in 10 indicated that they had voted in local elections, a rating that was higher than levels reported elsewhere. Additionally, about 8 in 10 respondents asserted that they had visited a County park, ate five portions of fruits and vegetables daily, participated in moderate vigorous physical activity and had read or watched the local news and these ratings were similar to residents in comparison communities. Chesterfield County survey participants reported the lowest levels of Participation in activities within Economy and Community Engagement; less than one-quarter of Chesterfield County respondents were optimistic that the economy would have a positive impact on their income or had attended or watched a local public meeting. Additionally, fewer County residents reported that they had walked or biked instead of driving and had recycled at home compared to respondents in Virginia or across the nation.



One aspect of Participation increased and one decreased from 2014 to 2016. More residents indicated they had voted in local elections in 2016 while fewer Chesterfield County participants reported that they had used the public libraries than in 2014.



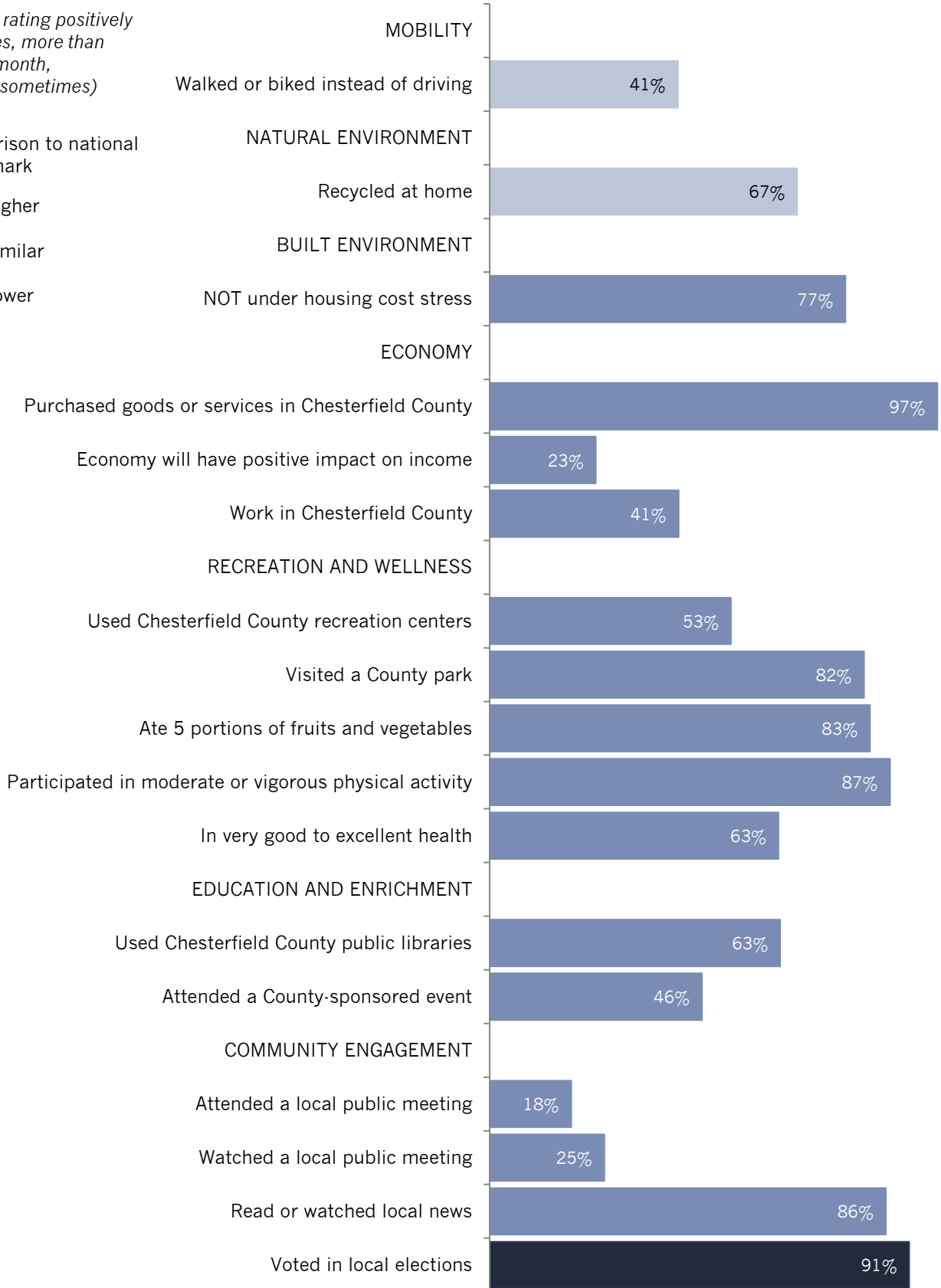
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Special Topics

Chesterfield County included several questions of special interest on The NCS. In the first set of questions, respondents were asked if they had contacted emergency services in Chesterfield County in the 12 months prior to survey and if they had they were asked to rate their impressions of the contact. Only about 2 in 10 indicated that they had contacted 9-1-1. Of those who had contact, at least 9 in 10 awarded high marks to the competence, attitudes and behaviors of employees and to the service overall.

Figure 4: Contact with Emergency Services

Thinking back over the past twelve months, have you dialed 9-1-1 to call the county's emergency services?

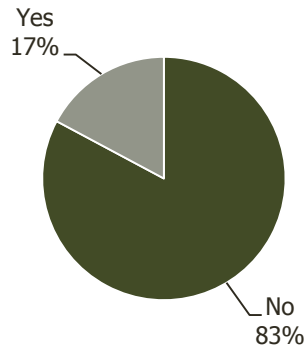


Figure 5: Impression of Emergency Services

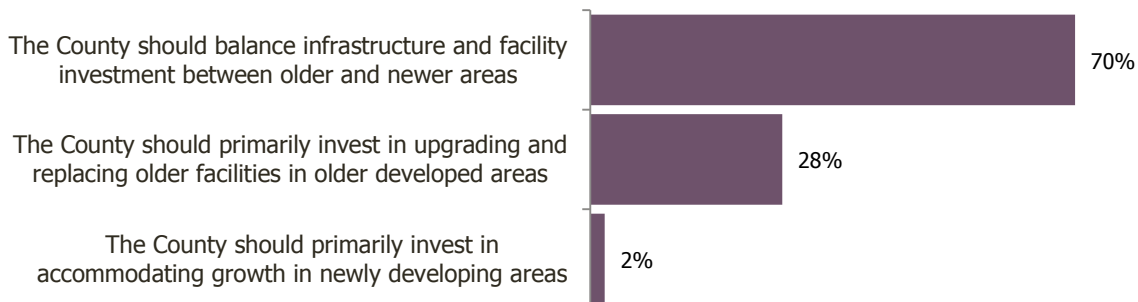
What was your impression of each of the following in your most recent contact?



When asked about County infrastructure, 70% of residents thought that the County should balance the infrastructure and facility investment between older and newer areas, while about one-quarter indicated that they preferred to concentrate on upgrading and replacing older facilities in older developed areas.

Figure 6: County Infrastructure

Thinking about infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, street lights, etc.) and public facilities throughout the county, please select which one of the following best represents your view:



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The survey also asked respondents several questions regarding Chesterfield County schools. About one-quarter of survey participants had children that were currently enrolled in public school in the County. When asked about the performance of public schools, close to three-quarters gave excellent or good scores and more than 8 in 10 reported that they would be very or somewhat likely to recommend County public schools to families considering living in Chesterfield County.

Figure 7: Children in School

Are there any children in your household currently enrolled in a public school in Chesterfield County?

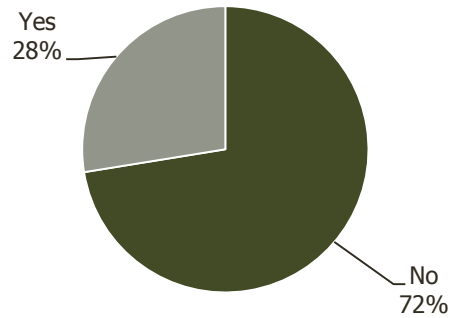


Figure 9: School Performance Ratings

How would you rate the performance of local public schools in preparing students for success beyond high school?

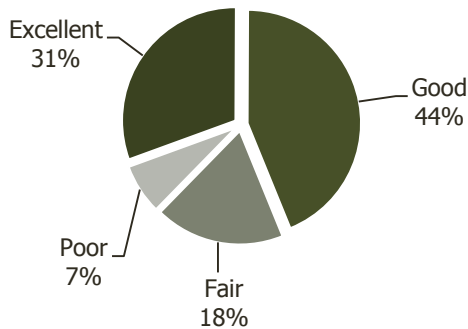
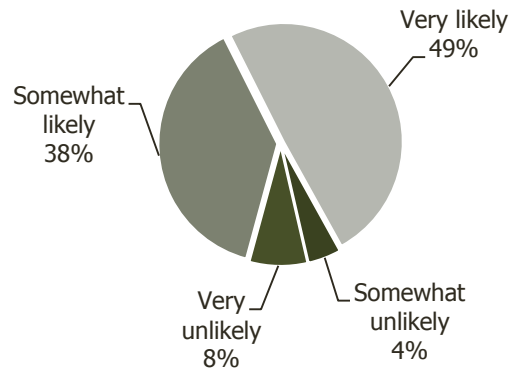


Figure 8: Recommending Schools

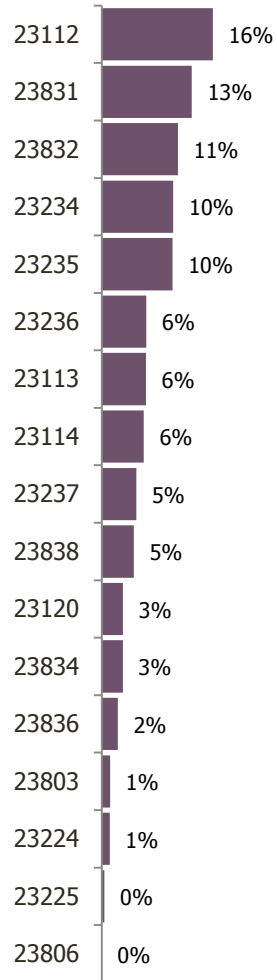
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to recommend Chesterfield County Public Schools to families considering living in our county.



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The last custom question asked respondents to choose which zip code within Chesterfield County they resided in. At least 1 in 10 indicated that they lived in 23112, 23831, 23832, 23234 or 23235. None of the participants lived within the zip code of 23806.

Figure 10: Zip Code
What is your zip code?



Conclusions

Chesterfield County residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

At least four in five residents rated their overall quality of life positively and more than 9 in 10 reported that the County is an excellent or good place to live. At least 8 in 10 respondents felt positively about Chesterfield County as a place to raise children, their neighborhoods as places to live and the overall image or reputation of the County, a rating that increased from 2014 to 2016. About 7 in 10 gave high marks to Chesterfield County as a place to retire and to the overall appearance of the community. Not only did Chesterfield County citizens appreciate living in the County, 9 in 10 reported that they would recommend living in the community to others and planned to remain in the County in the future. Overall, these ratings tended to be similar or higher compared to the 2014 iteration of this survey, which suggests that residents continue to enjoy living in Chesterfield County.

Residents value Economy and ratings have improved over time.

Participants indicated that the Economy was an important focus area and economic ratings tended to be similar or higher when compared to other communities. Almost all measures of Economy were rated as excellent or good by a majority of respondents. Ratings improved from 2014 to 2016 for a couple of Economic measures in Chesterfield County, including overall economic health and the County as a place to work (which was rated higher than the national benchmark). Employment opportunities was also positively evaluated by over half of residents and was rated higher than comparison communities.

Ratings for Mobility vary.

Aspects of Mobility were a mix of similar and lower than national and Virginia comparisons. Overall ease of travel was given excellent or good marks by about three-quarters of participants and almost 7 in 10 awarded high marks to ease of travel by car (a rating that decreased from 2014 to 2016); these ratings were similar to communities elsewhere. On the other hand, less than one-third gave favorable ratings to the availability of paths and walking trails, ease of walking (another rating that decreased since 2014) and ease of travel by bicycle, ratings that were lower than national and Virginia municipalities. Additionally, only about 4 in 10 survey participants indicated that they walked or biked instead of driving, which was a level lower than those reported in comparison communities.

Safety is a priority for Chesterfield County.

Respondents also indicated that Safety is an essential or very important facet to prioritize in the next two years. In general, ratings for aspects of Safety were stable and similar to comparison communities. The highest ratings across all pillars were within the facet of Safety; about 9 in 10 participants reported that they felt safe in their neighborhoods and close to 8 in 10 felt safe in Chesterfield County's downtown/commercial area and in the community overall. Strong ratings were also awarded to police, fire and ambulance/EMS services, with at least 8 in 10 evaluating these as excellent or good. Other highly rated services included fire prevention, crime prevention, animal control and Chesterfield County's emergency preparedness. When asked if survey respondents had contacted emergency services in the 12 months prior to the survey, only about 2 in 10 indicated that they had and of those individuals, over 9 in 10 awarded high marks to the competency, attitudes and behaviors of the employees as well as to 9-1-1 services overall.