



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

## Vienna, VA

Community Livability Report  
2018



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# About

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

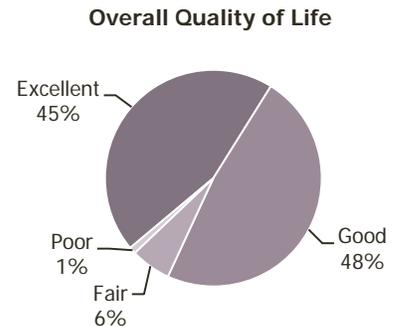
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 695 residents of the Town of Vienna. 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 Vienna

Almost all residents (94%) rated the quality of life in Vienna 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.

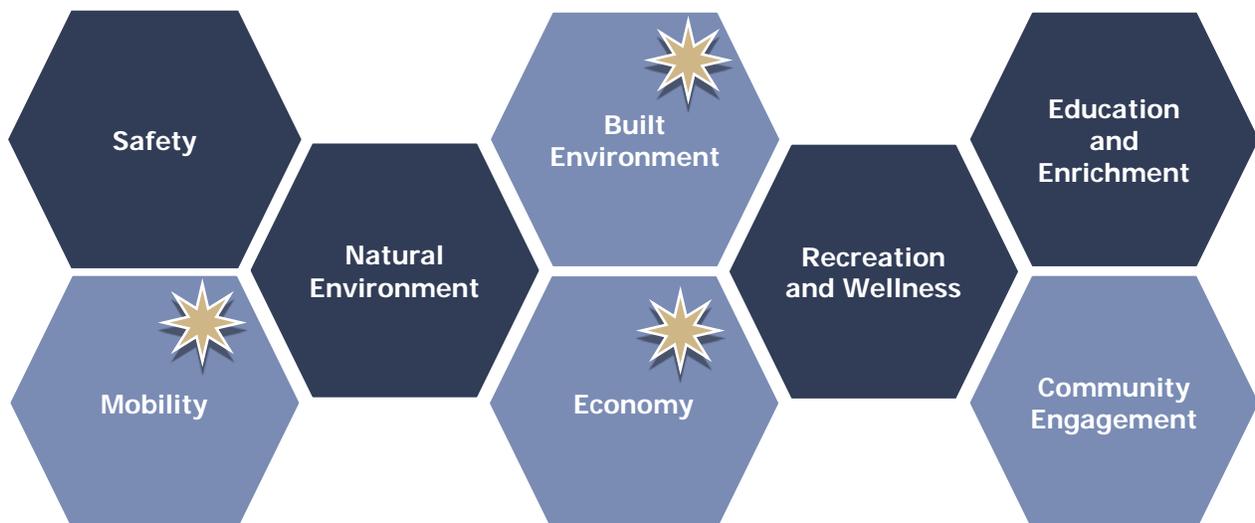
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Mobility, Built Environment and Economy as priorities for the Vienna community in the coming two years. Evaluations for Safety, Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment eclipsed other communities across the nation, while ratings for the remaining facets were on par with the benchmarks. 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 Vienna’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

- \* Most important



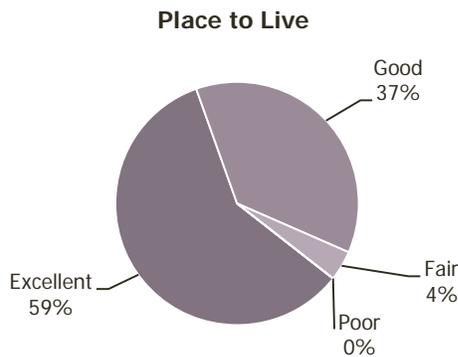
# Community Characteristics

*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 Vienna, 96% rated the town as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' reviews of Vienna as a place to live outshined other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the Town as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Vienna as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Vienna and its overall appearance. Nearly all Vienna residents rated four of the five aspects as excellent or good and each were scored higher than the national benchmark. Vienna as a place to retire was similar to the national average, with about half awarding top marks.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, ratings for most aspects of Community Characteristics were positively reviewed by at least 6 in 10 participants and were typically higher than national benchmarks. Within the facet of Safety, all aspects were rated positively by nearly all survey participants and assessments for overall feeling of safety and feelings of safety in the downtown/commercial area of Vienna exceeded national averages.



Most aspects of Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement received top marks from at least three-quarters of respondents, ratings that tended to be higher than the benchmarks.

Residents felt that Economy was a strength as well; reviews for overall economic health, the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area and shopping and employment opportunities surpassed benchmark averages. Aspects of

affordability (cost of living and availability of affordable housing) tended to be some of the lowest rated characteristics of Vienna, with about 2 in 10 assigning excellent or good scores.

Respondents' ratings for Mobility-related measures tended to vary; residents identified the availability of paths and walking trails, ease of walking and travel by bicycle as strengths, as these were rated were higher than their peers nationwide. Yet, assessments for the ease of travel by car and traffic flow lagged behind the national averages.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



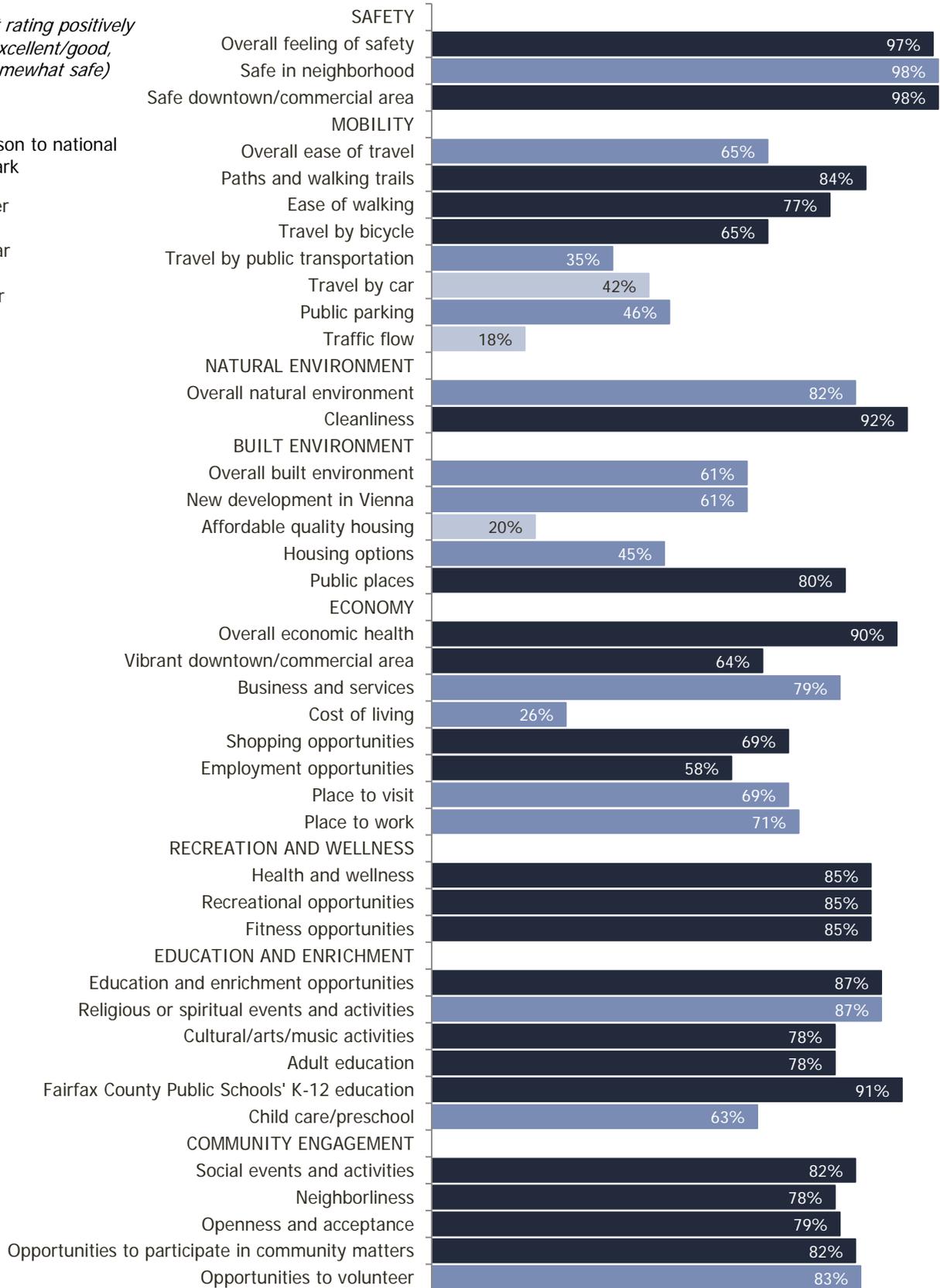
# The National Citizen Survey™

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 Vienna meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

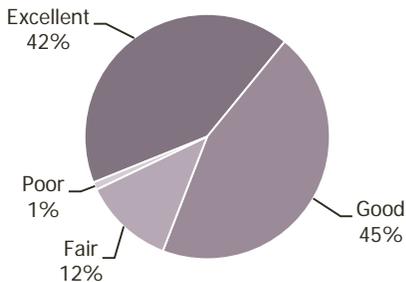
The overall quality of the services provided by Vienna as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. More than 8 in 10 survey respondents gave excellent or good marks to the overall services provided by the Town of Vienna. These ratings, as well as those given to the Federal Government, outpaced benchmark communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Vienna’s leadership and governance. Ratings for many measures of government performance were higher than in other communities. At least two-thirds of residents felt the Town did an excellent or good job of treating all residents fairly, being honest, welcoming citizen involvement, had confidence in the Town government and were pleased with the value of services provided for the taxes they paid. More than 8 in 10 residents favorably rated the customer service provided to them by Town employees.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Vienna. Ratings for all of these aspects were similar to or higher than the national benchmark.

Ratings for Safety services were exceptional, with at least three-quarters assigning high marks to each service, exceeding all national averages. In fact, assessments for Vienna fire services was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Similarly, reviews for all services related to Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement eclipsed peer averages; at least two-thirds rated each item as excellent or good.

Overall Quality of Town Services

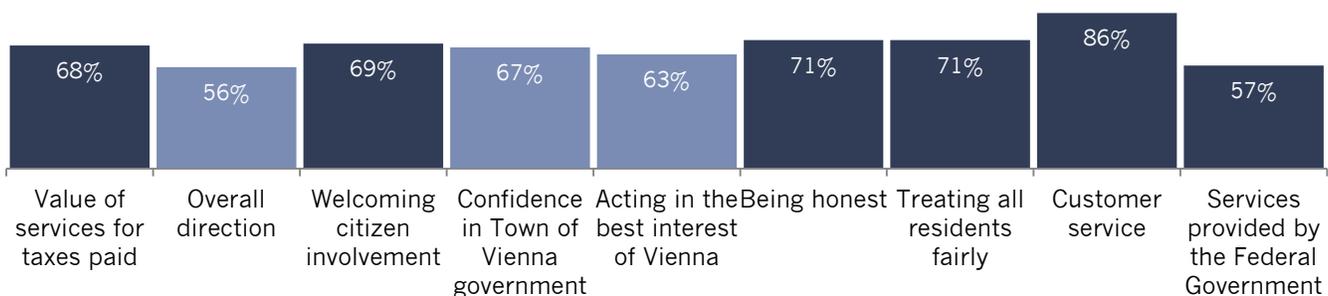


Residents tended to give a mix of solid and strong ratings within the remaining facets. Ratings for services related to Natural Environment were largely positive; this was especially true for garbage collection, yard waste pick-up, drinking water and recycling which received favorable marks from at least 87% of respondents and were rated higher than comparison communities. Other notable ratings could be found within Mobility, Built Environment and Education and Enrichment with at least three-quarters of participants indicating appreciation of street cleaning, snow removal, storm drainage, sewer services and Town-sponsored special events.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



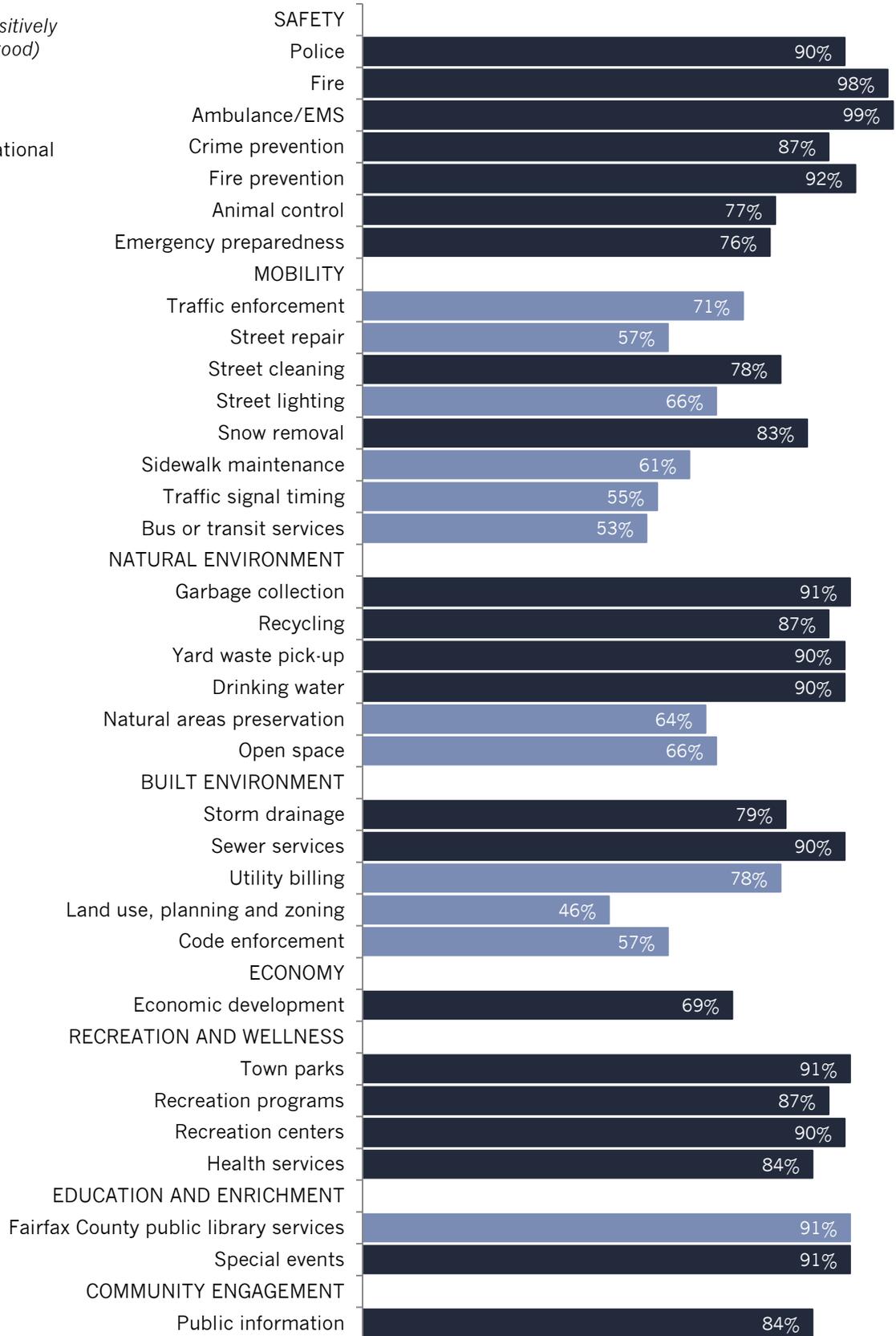
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



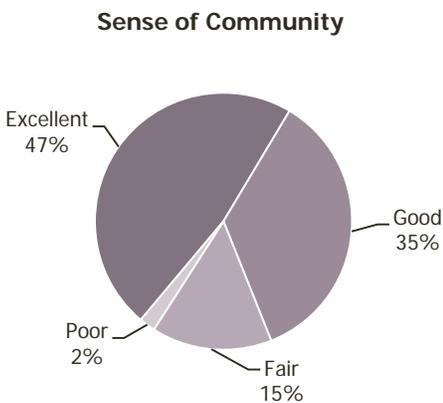
# Participation

*Are the residents of Vienna 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. Higher than other municipalities across the U.S., about 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good reviews to the sense of community in Vienna. Around 9 in 10 survey participants said they would recommend living in Vienna to someone who asked and reported that they planned to remain in the community for the next five years.

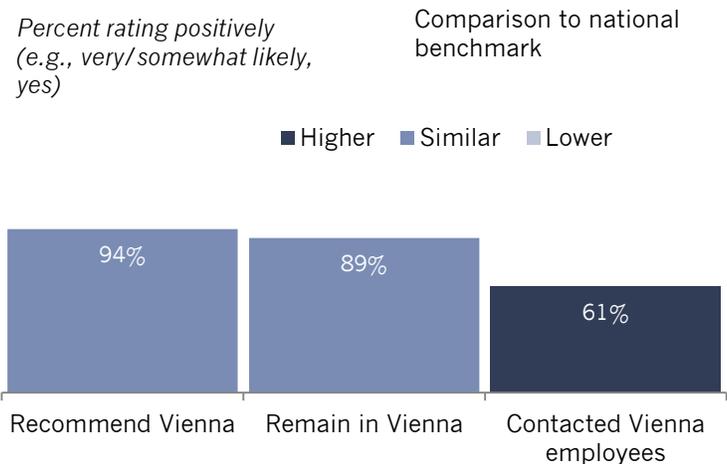
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates within Vienna varied and tended to be commensurate with peer municipalities.

More than 8 in 10 respondents reported they had recycled at home, purchased goods or services in the community and participated in healthy behaviors (visiting parks and maintaining healthy diet and exercise regimens). A similar proportion reported they had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey. Residents demonstrated a dedication to alternative modes of transportation, as at least 4 in 10 indicated they had used public transit, carpooled, walked or biked instead of driving; rates for using public transportation use and walking or biking instead of driving outpaced levels seen nationwide.



Survey respondents also reported elevated levels of using public libraries and attending Town-sponsored events and at least 8 in 10 had talked to or done a favor for a neighbor, read or watched local news or voted in local election.

Vienna residents were also more optimistic about the impact of their local economy on their income than peers living across the nation and very few reported being under housing cost stress. However, respondents tended to work inside the Town at lower rates than residents in other comparison communities.



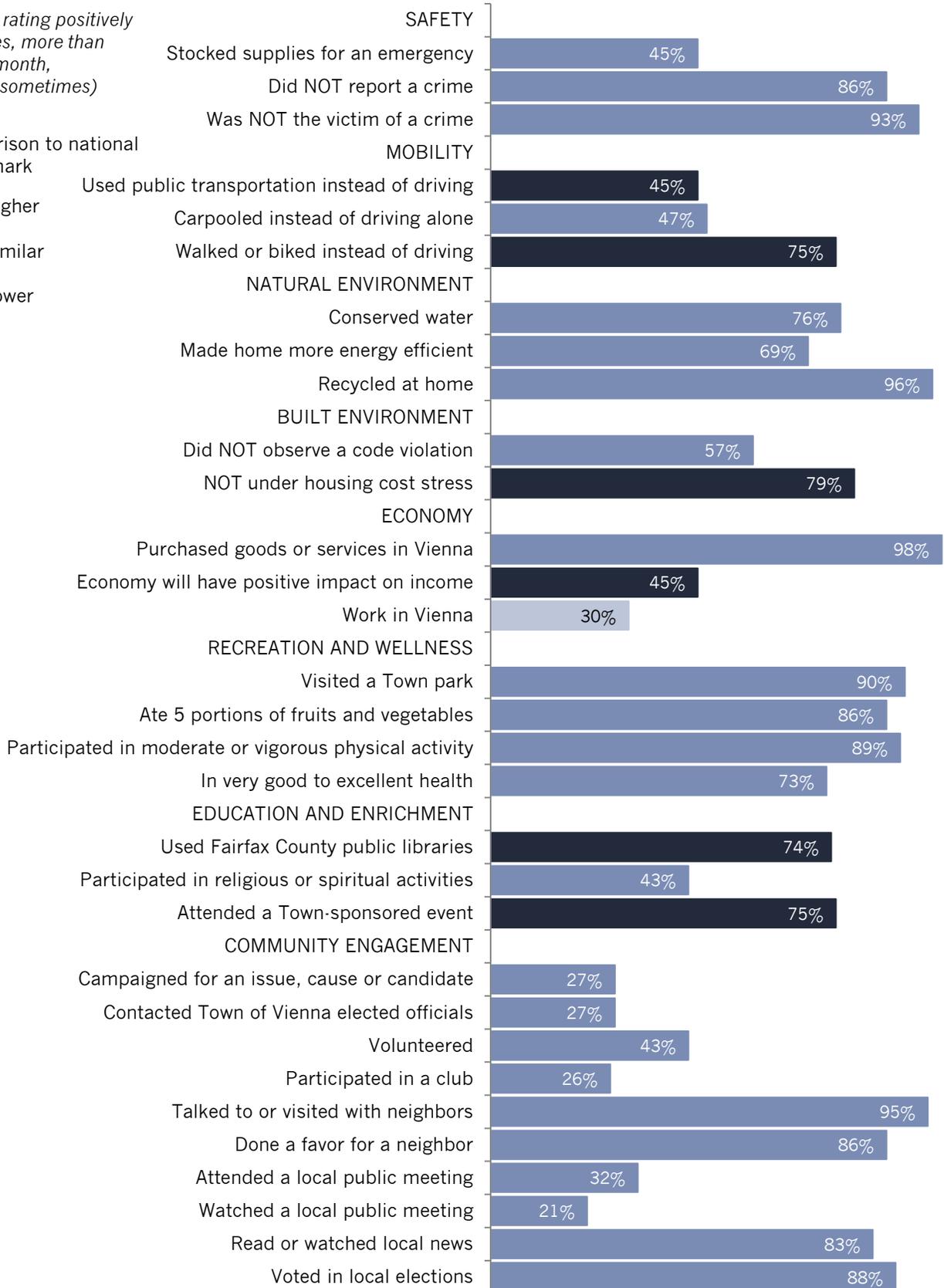
## The National Citizen Survey™

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 Vienna included several questions of special interest on The NCS. Town leadership sought feedback regarding safety in other areas of Vienna, Town priorities, the value of sources of information, Maple Avenue projects and improvements and to gauge resident interactions with Town employees.

When asked how safe or unsafe they felt in Vienna, around 9 in 10 residents reported they felt safe in their neighborhoods as night and only 1% indicated they felt very unsafe or somewhat unsafe. About 4 in 10 respondents felt very safe in the parks and trails within the community and a similar proportion felt somewhat safe.

Figure 4: Safety in Neighborhood at Night

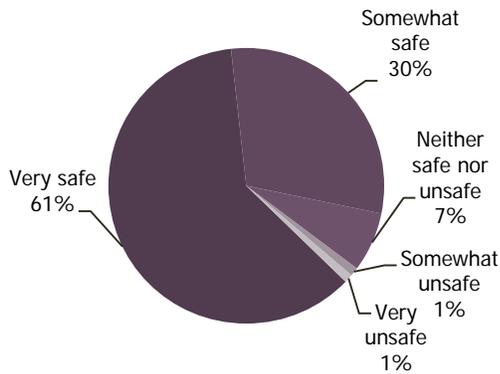
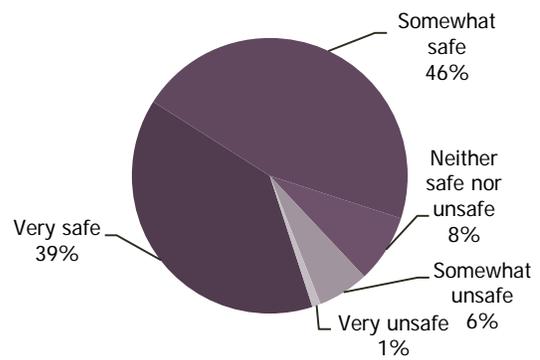


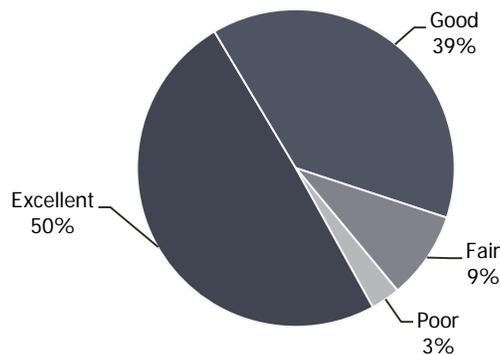
Figure 5: Safety in Parks and Trails within Vienna



As an additional item added to the standard question regarding Vienna services, half of residents felt that leaf collection services provided by the Town were excellent and about 4 in 10 rated this service as good.

Figure 6: Leaf Collection

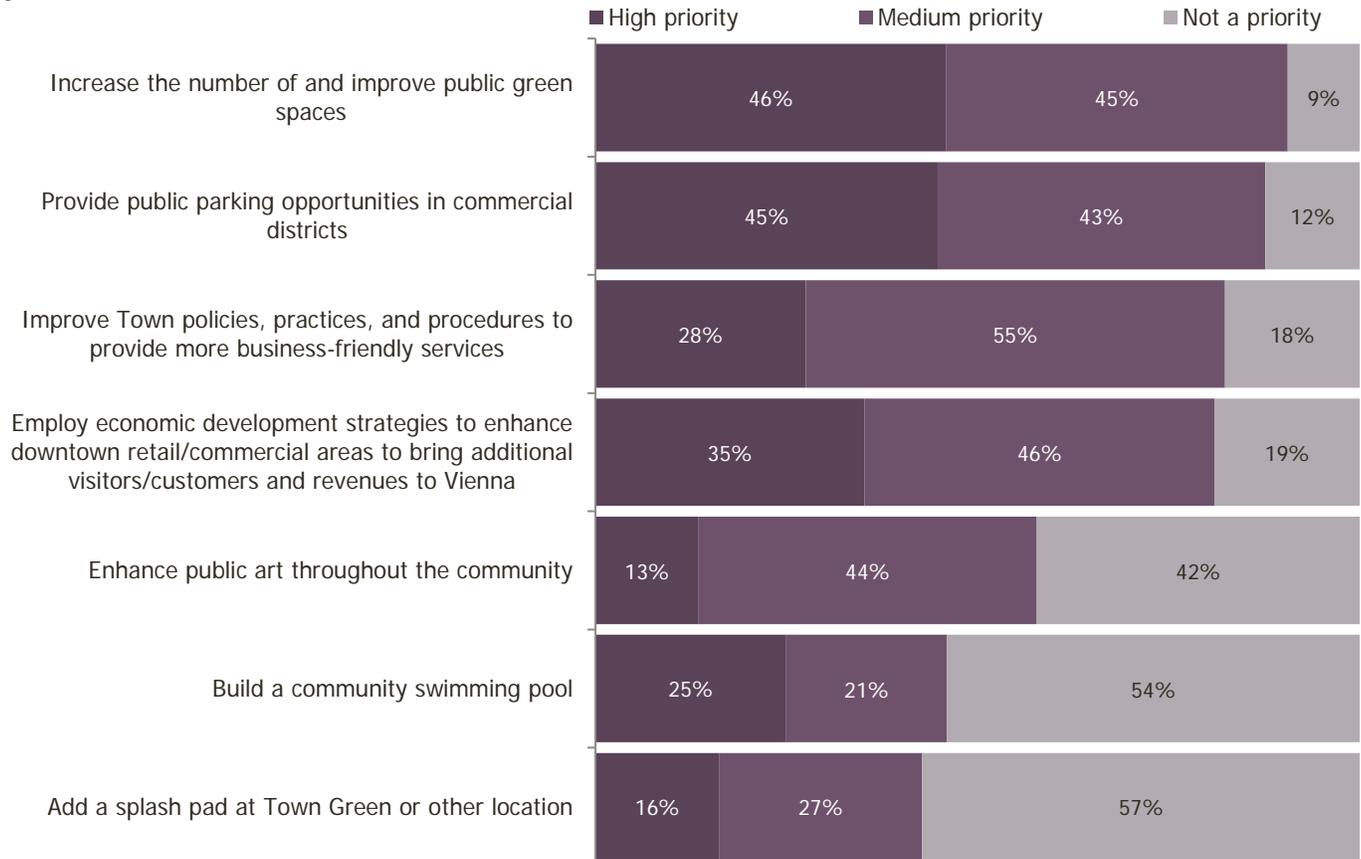
*Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Vienna: Leaf collection*



Residents identified increasing the number of and improving green spaces as the top priority for the Town in the next three-to-five years (91% high or medium priority) and at least 8 in 10 felt that providing public parking in commercial districts and improving Town policies, practices and procedures to provide more business-friendly services were a priority for Vienna. Less than half of respondents felt that building a swimming pool or adding a splash pad should be a short-term goal for the community.

Figure 7: Town Priorities

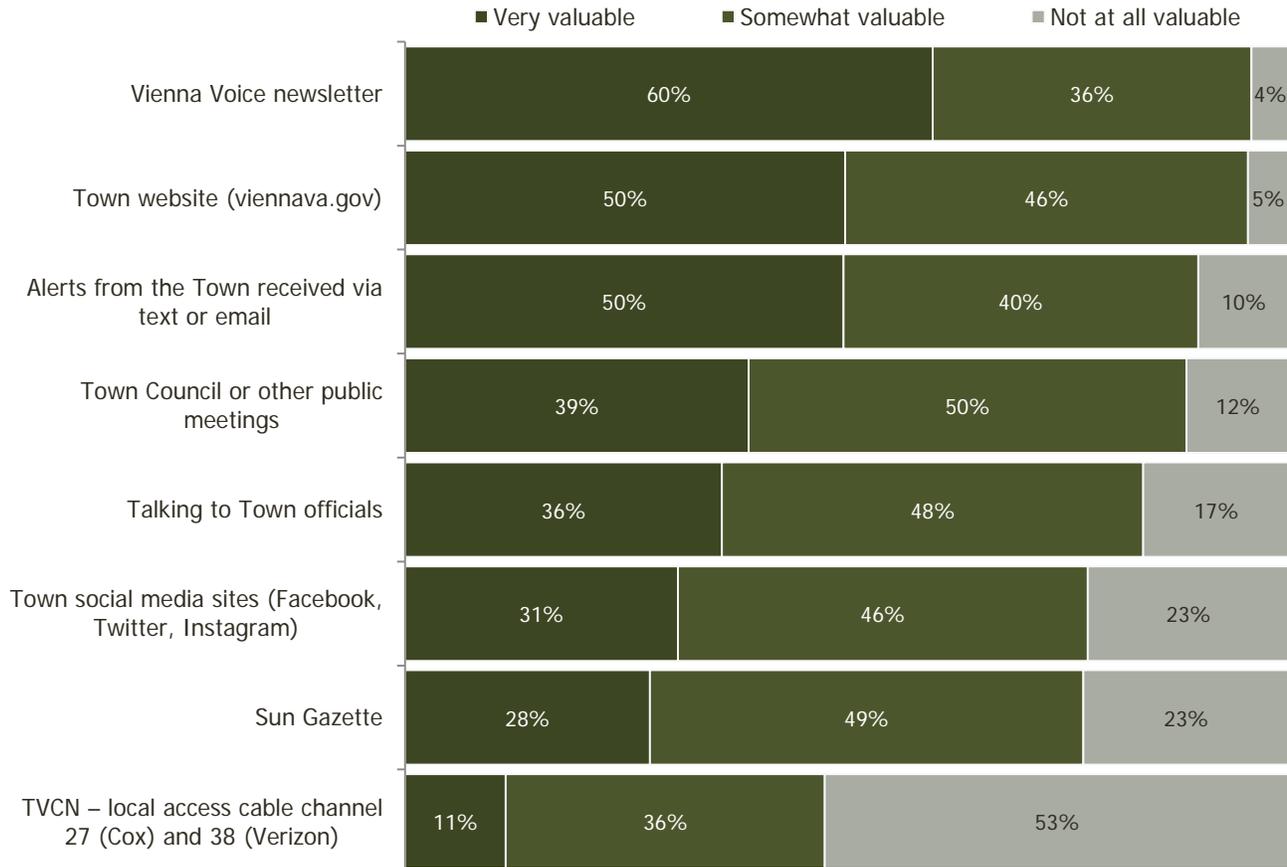
*How much of a priority, if at all, should it be for the Town to address each of the following over the next 3-5 years?*



Respondents provided their feedback on the sources of information they find valuable to obtain information about the Town of Vienna and its activities, events and services. Almost all residents stated that the *Vienna Voice* newsletter and the Town website were very or somewhat valuable and around 9 in 10 valued alerts via text or email and Town Council and other public meetings. The TVCN local access cable channel was cited as the least valuable source of information.

Figure 8: Sources of Information

*How valuable are each of the following for obtaining information about the Town of Vienna government and its activities, events, and services:*



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About two-thirds of survey participants indicated they had contact with a Town employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of those who did have contact, at least 8 in 10 residents praised the employee’s courtesy and professionalism, the ease of contacting someone who could help and their overall impression of the employee. At least 7 in 10 respondents were also pleased with the accuracy of the information that was provided and the employee’s responsiveness to questions and needs.

Figure 9: Contact with a Town Employee  
*Have you had contact with a Town of Vienna employee(s) in the past 12 months?*

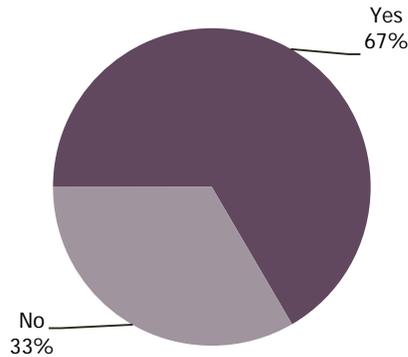
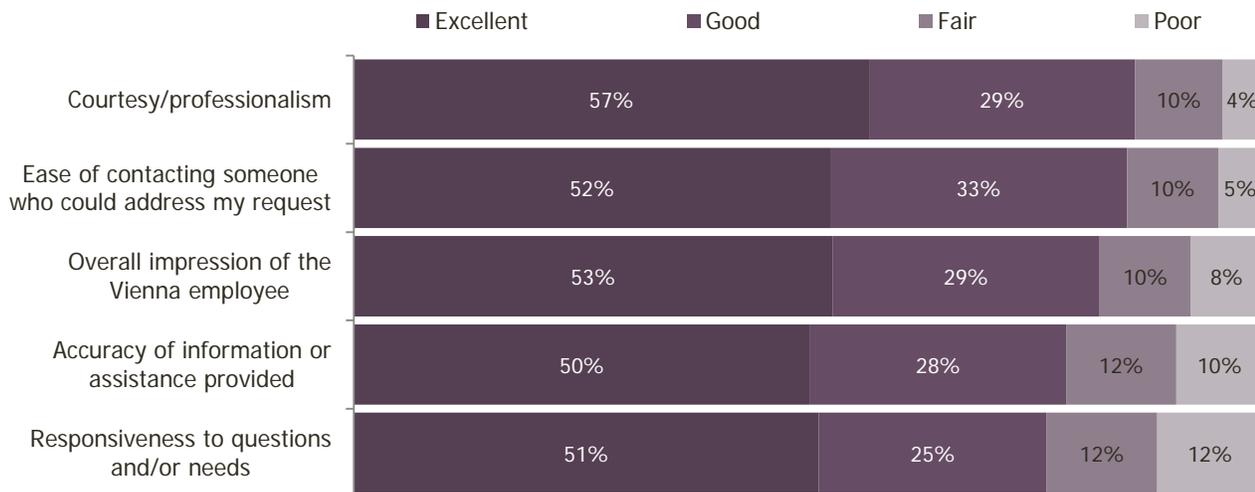


Figure 10: Impressions of the Employee  
*Based on your most recent contact with an employee(s) of the Town of Vienna, please rate each of the following aspects of the employee with whom you personally had contact:*

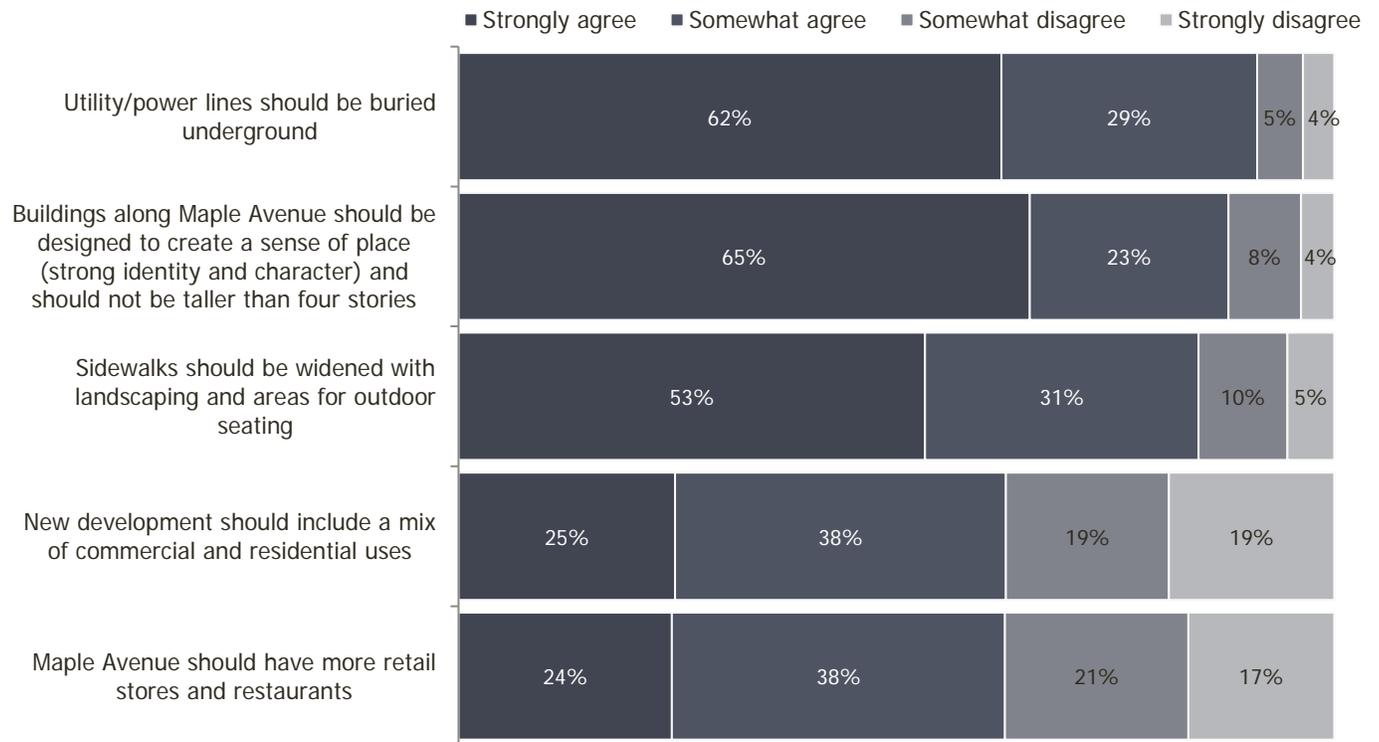


This question was only asked of respondents who indicated they had contact.

The Town also wanted to understand residents' opinions regarding Vienna's primary commercial corridor, Maple Avenue. Around 9 in 10 survey respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that utility and power lines should be buried underground. At least 8 in 10 agreed that buildings should be designed to create a sense of place and not be taller than four stories and that sidewalks should be widened to accommodate landscaping and outdoor seating. About two-thirds of participants supported more retail and restaurants and agreed that new development should include both commercial and residential uses; however, around 2 in 10 also strongly disagreed with these statements.

Figure 11: Maple Avenue Projects and Improvements

*Maple Avenue is the Town's primary commercial corridor. When thinking about Maple Avenue, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?*



# Conclusions

## Vienna is a great place to live and residents enjoy a strong sense of safety.

Nearly all residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good in Vienna and around 9 in 10 reported they are likely to remain in the community for the next five years. Additionally, about 9 in 10 respondents awarded high marks to the Town and their neighborhoods as a place to live, the overall image and overall appearance and would be likely to recommend the community to others. Almost all survey participants (98%) rated Vienna as an excellent or good place to raise children, which outshined peer averages with a ranking of 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation.

Residents also feel safe overall, as well as in their neighborhoods and in the downtown/commercial area. Ratings for Safety-related services were exceptional, exceeding all national benchmarks, and at least 8 in 10 survey participants indicated they had not reported a crime or been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey.

## Vienna's Economy is both a valued asset and a challenge.

Residents viewed the Economy as an important measure of their quality of life and identified it as a focus area for the Town of Vienna in the next two years. Respondents praised Economy-related aspects and many ratings frequently surpassed communities nationwide. About 9 in 10 survey participants awarded top marks to the overall economic health of Vienna and around 6 in 10 positively scored the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area, economic development, employment and shopping opportunities (all of which were evaluated at levels higher than comparison communities). Further, more residents were optimistic about the impact of the local economy on their income in the next six months than peers nationwide. When asked about Town priorities in the next three-to-five years, approximately 8 in 10 individuals felt that employing economic development strategies to bring additional visitors and revenue to Vienna and improving Town policies and practices to be more business-friendly would be high or medium priorities.

As with many attractive and economically healthy communities, affordability can be an issue. The availability of affordable quality housing was rated positively by less than one-quarter of community members, which was lower than national averages. The cost of living was similar to the national average, but only rated highly by 2 in 10 residents. Around half of respondents felt that Vienna was an excellent or good place to retire, indicating that housing and cost of living may keep some from enjoying all that the Town has to offer.

## Alternative transportation is a highlight of the community.

Vienna residents also indicated Mobility would be an important priority for the Town in the future. Many Mobility-related ratings were evaluated favorably by at least half of respondents and were either on par with their peers or above-average. Residents were particularly appreciative of alternate modes of transportation and demonstrated this by using public transit and walking or biking instead of driving at higher rates than other communities across the nation. About 8 in 10 survey participants identified widening the sidewalks as a priority for the Town over the next three-to-five years. Street cleaning services and snow removal were praised by more than three-quarters of community members and outshined nationwide benchmarks. Conversely, measures related to car travel were viewed less positively, with ease of travel by car, traffic flow and public parking awarded high reviews by less than half of residents; evaluations for ease of travel by car and traffic flow also lagged behind communities across the nation. Regarding improvements in this area, more than 8 in 10 respondents felt that providing public parking in commercial districts should be a priority for Town leadership.

## Residents appreciate recreation, wellness and enrichment offerings in the community.

Residents in Vienna frequently exhibited above-average rates of participation within their community, especially in the areas of Education and Enrichment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement. At least 8 in 10 applauded the overall health and wellness, recreational, fitness and education and enrichment opportunities, among others. They also praised social events, opportunities to participate in community matters and the openness and accepting nature of the community. Offerings such as recreation programs and centers, health services and Town-sponsored special events were assessed higher than comparison communities. Residents also praised public information services and indicated that the *Vienna Voice* newsletter, Town website and alerts from the Town via email or text were valuable, with about 9 in 10 stating these avenues of communication were very or somewhat valuable.