

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

**Piqua, OH**  
Community Livability Report

2015



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The National Citizen Survey™  
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The NCS™ is presented by NRC in collaboration with ICMA.

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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Piqua. 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 441 residents of the City of Piqua. The margin of error around any reported percentage is five percent 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 Piqua

About half of residents rated the quality of life in Piqua as excellent or good.

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.



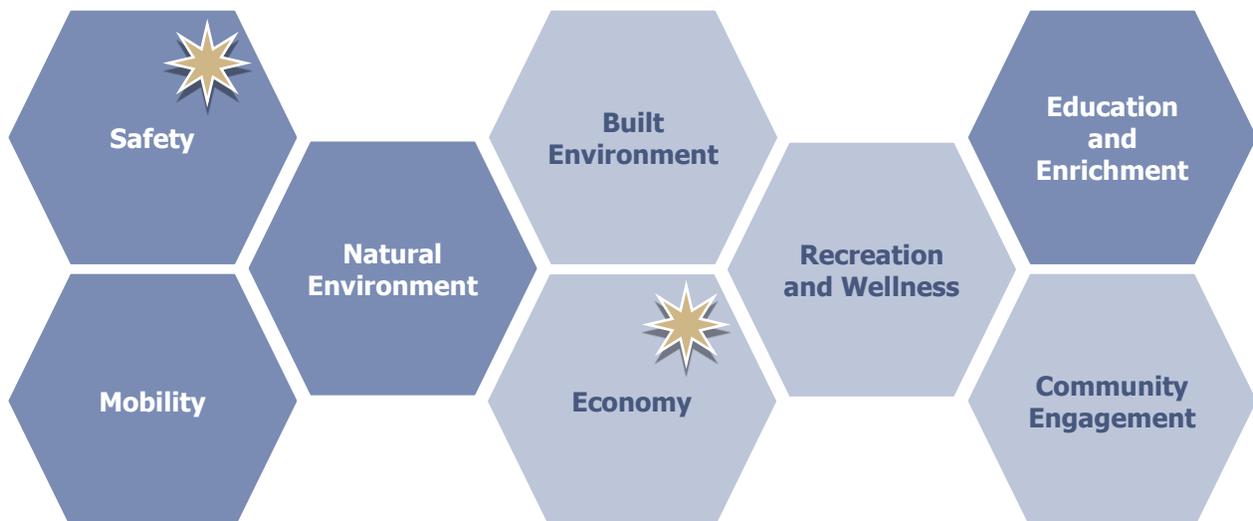
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Piqua community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Piqua residents gave favorable ratings to the Safety facet of community livability as well as to Mobility, Natural Environment and Education and Enrichment. 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 Piqua’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

★ Most important



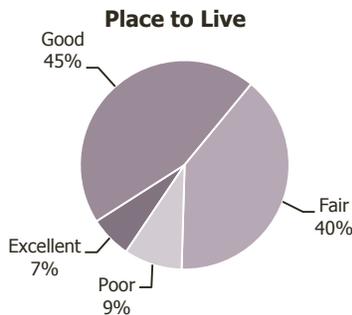
# Community Characteristics

*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 Piqua, 52% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live.

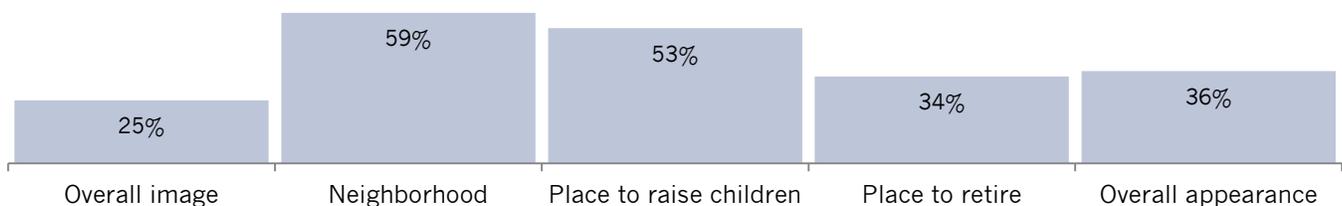
In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Piqua as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Piqua and its overall appearance. While one-quarter of residents rated the overall image of Piqua as excellent or good, one-third gave positive ratings to the city as a place to retire and to its overall appearance and a majority of residents favorably rated their neighborhoods as a place to live and Piqua as a place to raise children.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Most ratings were similar to or lower than in other communities. The highest performing areas were Mobility and Education and Enrichment. A majority of residents rated each item in the area of Mobility as excellent or good and ratings were similar to other communities or better; paths and walking trails and travel by bicycle were rated more highly than elsewhere. In Education and Enrichment, nearly all items were rated favorably by a majority of residents and/or were on par with other communities. The lowest ratings were observed under Economy, where fewer than one-third of residents gave positive ratings to the overall economic health of the city, employment opportunities, Piqua as a place to work and Piqua as a place to visit.



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

Comparison to national benchmark  
 ■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



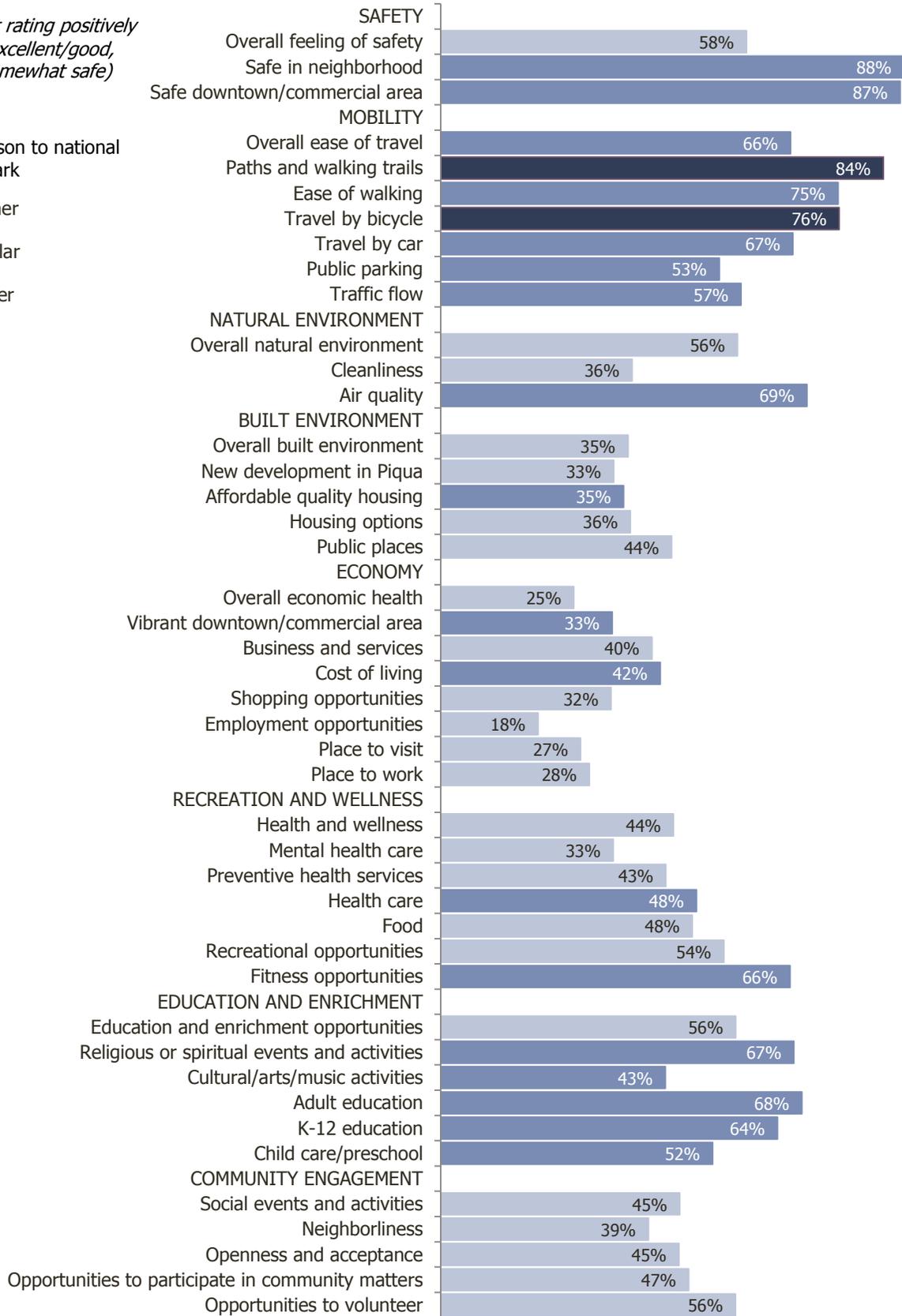
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

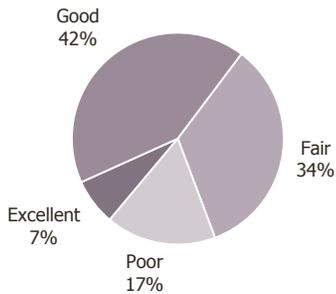
## *How well does the government of Piqua meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Piqua as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. When evaluating the overall quality of City services, 49% think the city is doing an excellent or good job.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Piqua’s leadership and governance. Around 3 in 10 residents gave ratings of excellent or good to the value of services for taxes paid, the overall direction of the City, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Piqua, being honest and treating residents fairly; 58% of respondents to the survey gave favorable marks to the City’s customer service.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Piqua. Overall, ratings in this area in comparison to the benchmark were similar to or lower than other communities. The most highly rated areas of Governance were Safety and Natural Environment. On par with other communities, the Safety services of police, fire, ambulance/EMS, crime prevention and fire prevention garnered positive ratings from between 50% and 90% of residents. In the category of Natural Environment, solid waste services, including garbage collection, recycling and yard waste pick-up all were rated as excellent or good by at least 7 in 10 residents and performed as well as elsewhere. Drinking water, natural areas preservation and open space were rated as excellent or good by about 4 in 10 residents. The areas with the lowest ratings were Economy and Mobility, namely for economic development (21% excellent or good) and street repair (13%), although Mobility had a mix of low and favorable ratings.

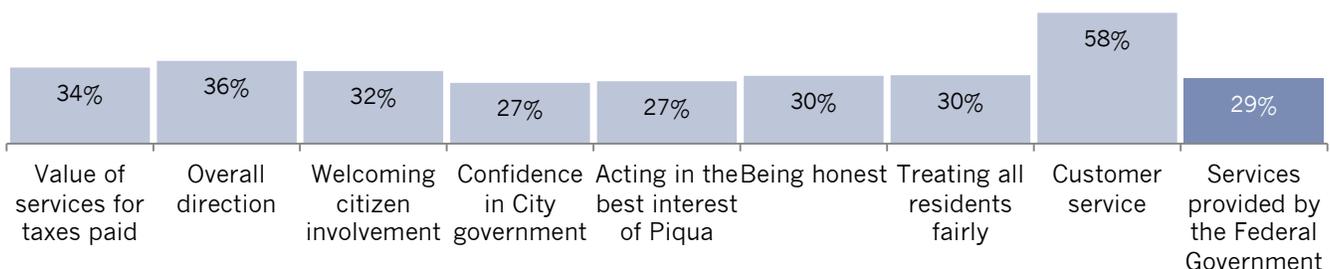
### Overall Quality of City Services



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

### Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



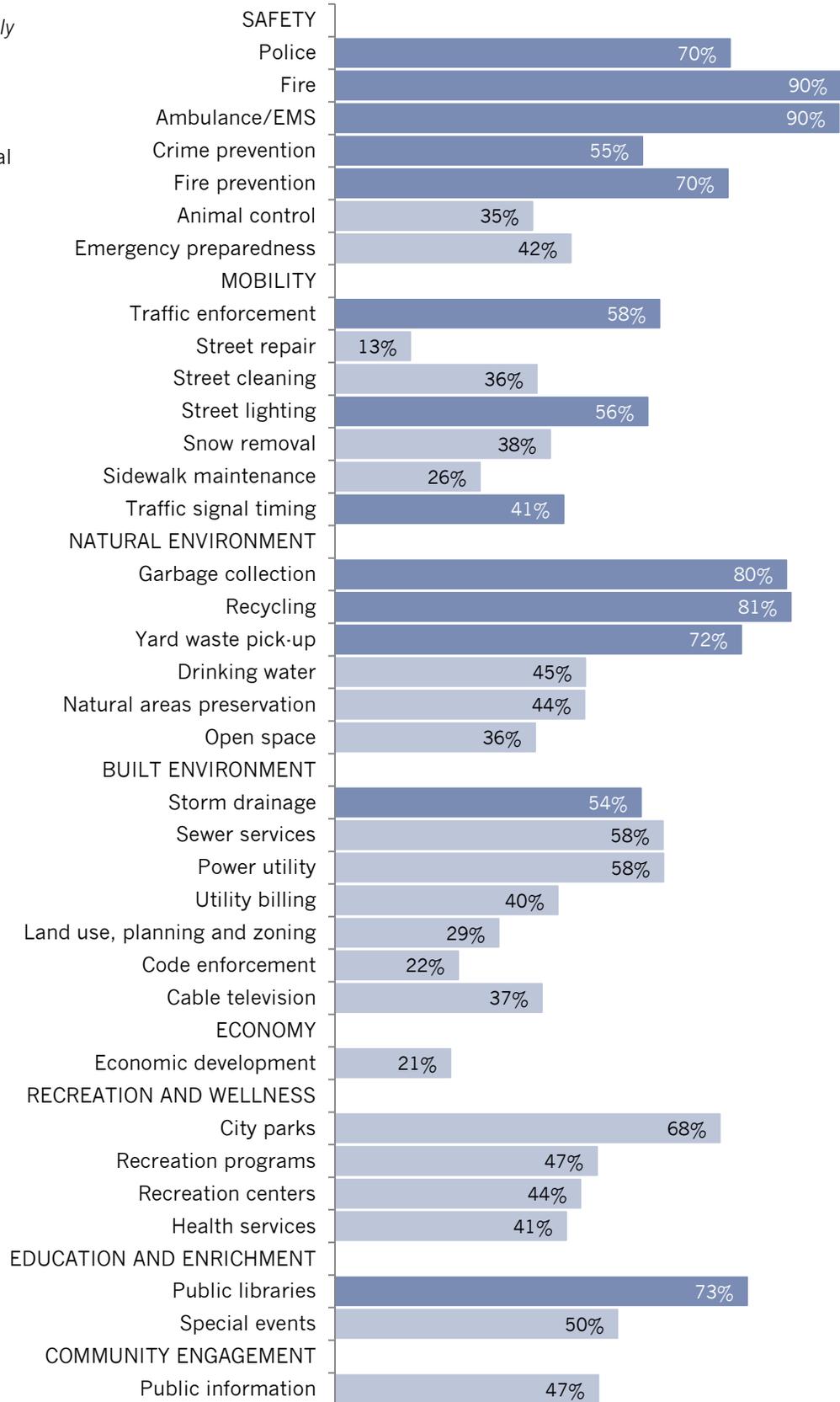
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



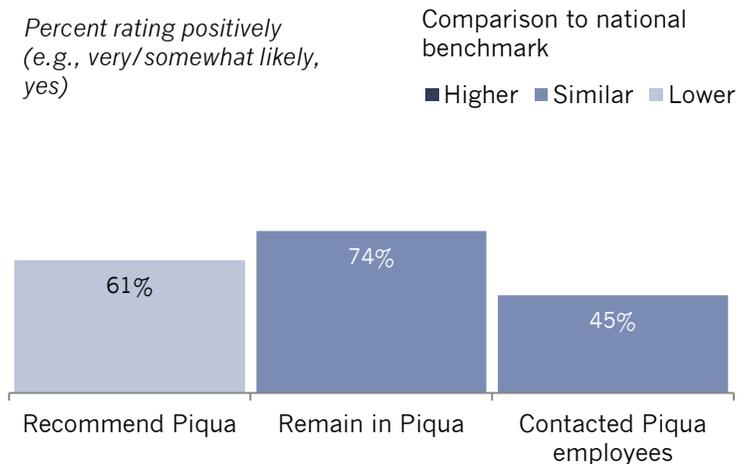
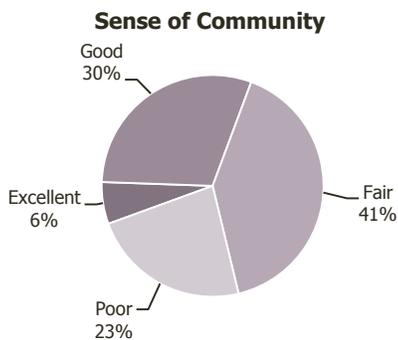
# Participation

## *Are the residents of Piqua 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. Less than half the respondents provided an excellent or good rating for the overall sense of community.

Most residents said they were likely to remain in Piqua (74% very or somewhat likely) and 61% said they would recommend Piqua to others. Almost half had contacted a City employee.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. In general, Piqua residents participated in or conducted the surveyed activities at similar levels compared to other communities. The most frequent activities among residents were purchasing goods or services in the city, talking to or visiting with neighbors, recycling at home and reading or watching local news. Residents were least likely to attend a local public meeting, to have campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate or to have contacted public officials. Compared to the benchmark, fewer residents had volunteered or attended a local public meeting, and more had reported a crime or observed a code violation.



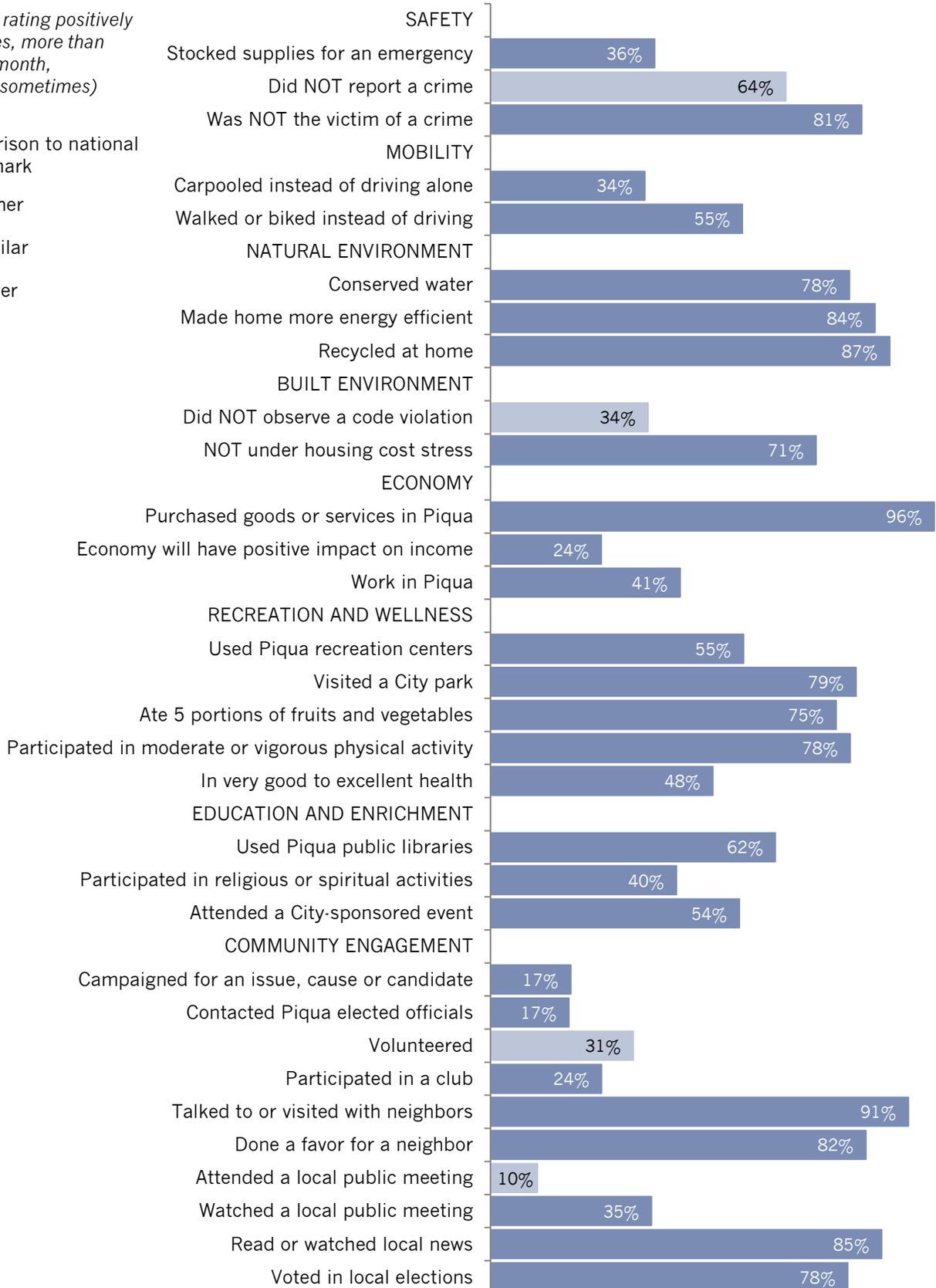
## The National Citizen Survey™

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 Piqua included one question of special interest on The NCS about priorities for future projects. A majority of residents considered each of the three listed priorities as essential or very important. About 6 in 10 residents felt that increasing downtown and riverfront special events and having a year-round indoor market were essential or very important and 51% felt this way about replacing the Great Miami River power plant dam.

Figure 4: Project priorities

*Please indicate how important, if at all, you think it is for the City to pursue each of the following projects over the next five years:*



# Conclusions

## Residents continue to experience a positive quality of life in Piqua.

Piqua residents rated their overall quality of life and the city as a place to live positively. At least half of respondents also gave high marks to their neighborhoods as a place to live and Piqua as a place to raise children. Finally, at least 6 in 10 participants planned on remaining in Piqua and would recommend Piqua to others. General quality of life ratings were similar to results in 2012 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

## Piqua's Economy is a key focus area.

Residents identified Economy as a key focus area for the Piqua community. Residents identified Economy as a priority for the Piqua community in the coming two years. About one-quarter of residents rated the overall economic health of Piqua as excellent or good. The cost of living, quality of businesses and services and the downtown/commercial area were rated most positively and employment opportunities, Piqua as a place to work and the City's economic development services were rated less highly. Nearly all respondents had purchased goods or services in the city and the number who felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their household income was similar to other communities and higher in 2015 compared to 2012.

A majority of residents felt that increasing downtown and riverfront special events, establishing a year-round indoor market and replacing the power plant dam were essential or very important projects to pursue.

## Residents find it easy to get around.

Mobility was a positive characteristic of Piqua. Respondents experienced good overall ease of travel with smooth traffic flow, easy driving and plenty of parking. The ease of travel by bicycle and the quality of paths and walking trails received particularly strong ratings (that were higher than in other communities). Mobility-related services received mixed ratings: residents viewed traffic enforcement, traffic signal timing and street lighting relatively favorably, but few residents felt that way about the maintenance of City streets and sidewalks, including street repair, street cleaning, sidewalk maintenance or snow removal. A third of respondents had reduced single-occupancy vehicle trips through carpooling and about half through walking or biking. Mobility ratings in 2015 were similar to ratings in 2012, with the exception of paths and walking trails, travel by car and traffic enforcement, which had higher ratings in 2015.

## Residents emphasize the importance of Safety.

Residents identified Safety as a priority for the Piqua community in the coming two years. Most residents felt safe in their neighborhoods and downtown and a majority felt that the overall feeling of safety was excellent or good. The vast majority of residents had not been the victim of a crime. The Safety services of police, fire, ambulance/EMS, crime prevention and fire prevention garnered positive ratings from between 50% and 90% of residents, on par with other benchmark communities. Ratings for emergency preparedness were lower in 2015 compared to 2012; otherwise, ratings in the area of Safety remained stable.