

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

**Scottsdale, AZ**  
Community Livability Report

2016



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# About

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

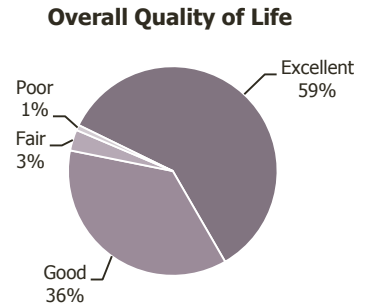
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 283 residents of the City of Scottsdale. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% 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 Scottsdale

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Scottsdale as excellent or good. This was higher than the national benchmark comparison (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.

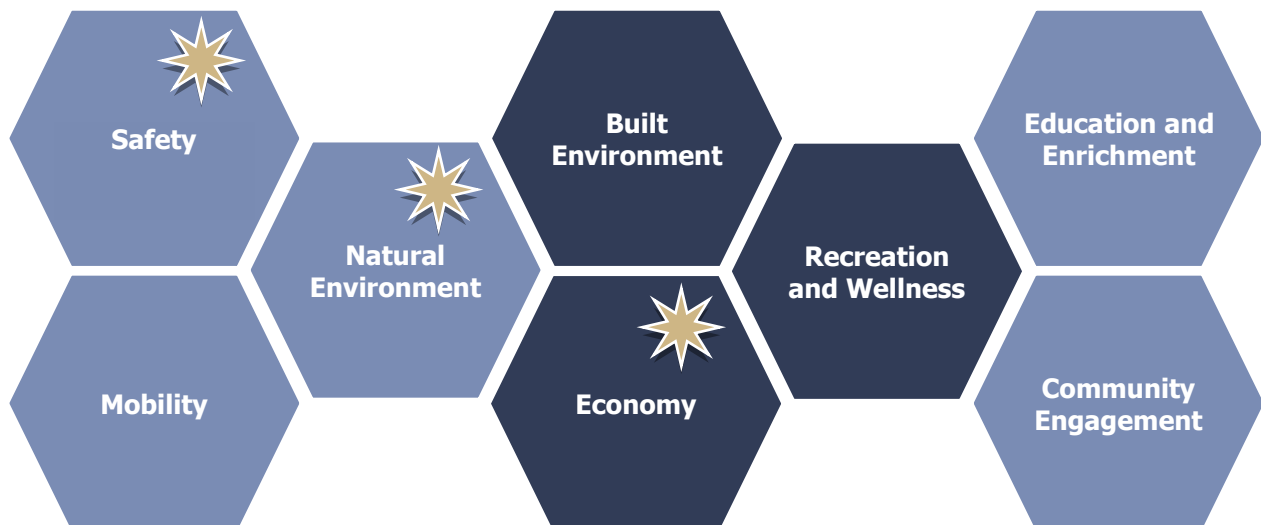
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety, Economy and Natural Environment as priorities for the Scottsdale community in the coming two years. It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

## Legend

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

- Most important



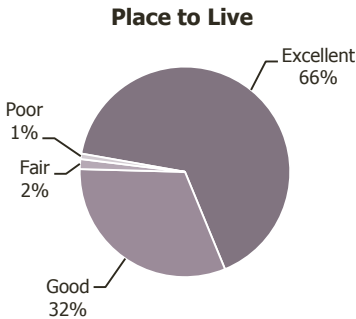
# Community Characteristics

*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 Scottsdale, 98% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Scottsdale as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Scottsdale as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Scottsdale and its overall appearance. At least 4 in 5 respondents gave positive ratings to all of these aspects of community livability, and all received ratings higher than the national comparison except for Scottsdale as a place to raise children, which was similar to the benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Broadly, ratings for most aspects within Community Characteristics were positive and similar to or higher than the benchmark comparison; none were rated lower than the benchmark. About 9 in 10 residents or more gave excellent or good ratings to all aspects of Safety, as well as to the overall cleanliness of Scottsdale, shopping opportunities, Scottsdale as a place to visit and as a place to work, health and wellness opportunities, fitness opportunities and religious or spiritual events and activities. Nearly all aspects of Built Environment, Economy and Recreation and Wellness were rated higher than seen in comparison communities.

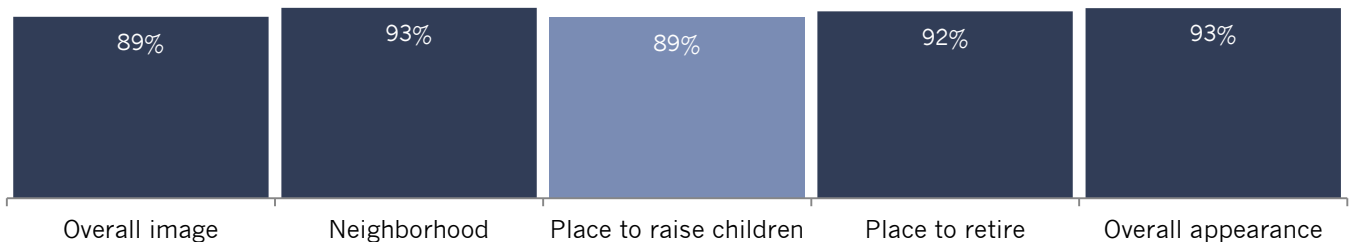


Ratings for almost all aspects of Community Characteristics remained stable over time; the only item that saw a change in ratings from 2013 to 2016 was the overall ease of travel, which declined. (For more information see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



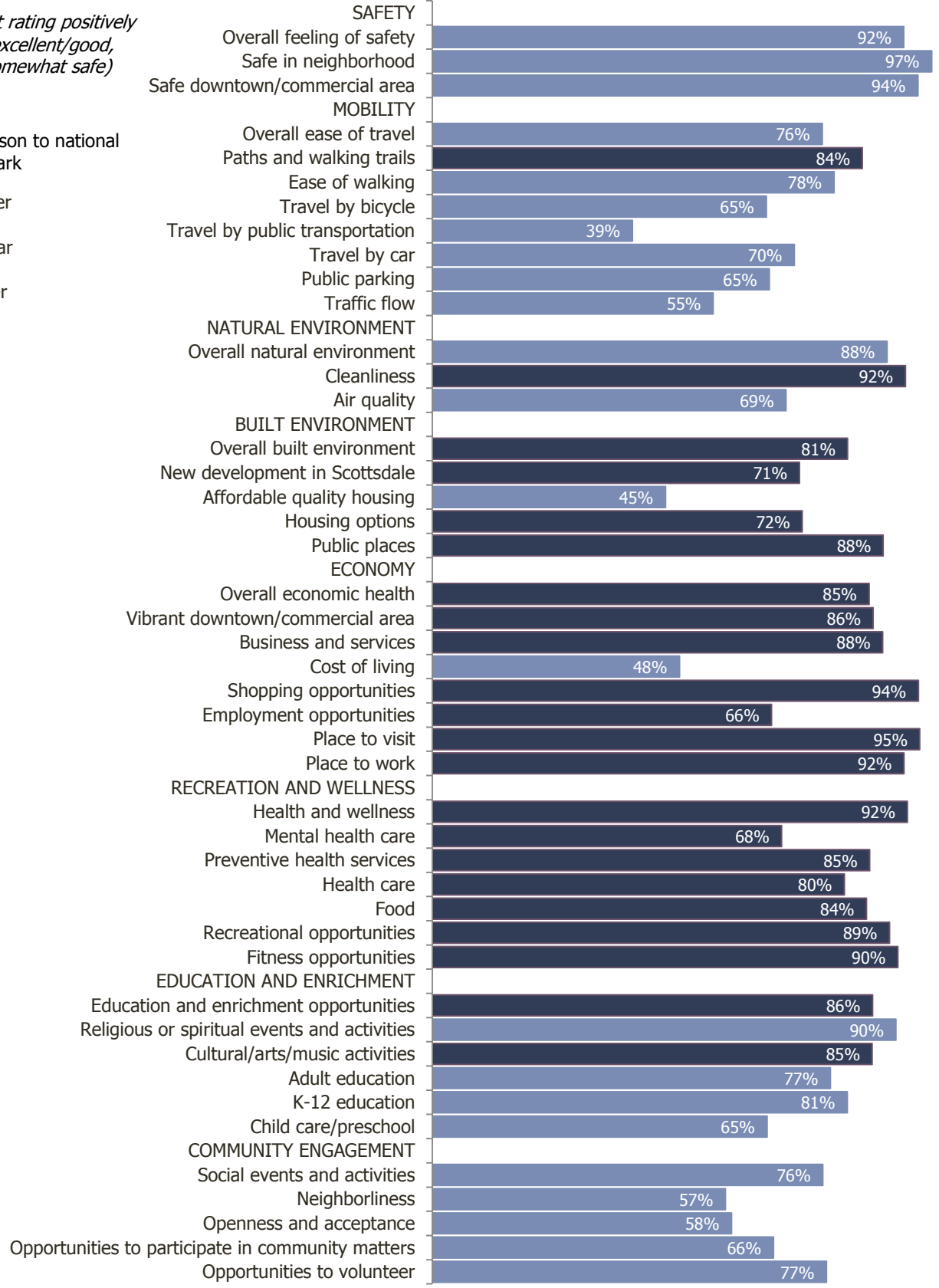
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

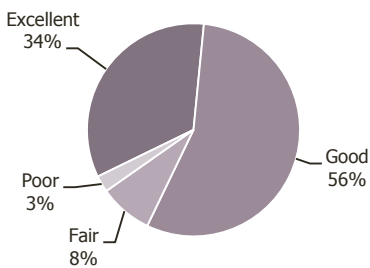
## How well does the government of Scottsdale meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Scottsdale as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. In Scottsdale, about 9 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the City and about 4 in 10 positively rated the services provided by the Federal Government. The rating for City services was higher than the benchmark comparison while the Federal Government rating was similar to the benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Scottsdale’s leadership and governance. About 9 in 10 survey participants gave positive ratings to customer service provided by the City and about 7 in 10 were pleased with the value of services for taxes paid; both of these ratings were higher than the national benchmarks. About 6 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to the job Scottsdale government does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in City government, the government acting in the best interest of Scottsdale, being honest and treating all residents fairly. These items were all rated similarly to comparison communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Scottsdale. Generally, service ratings tended to be strong and similar to or higher than the benchmarks across all eight facets of community livability. A majority of residents gave positive ratings for all services, and 16 of the 33 items received ratings higher than the national benchmark comparison. Only one service, drinking water, was rated lower than the benchmark.

**Overall Quality of City Services**

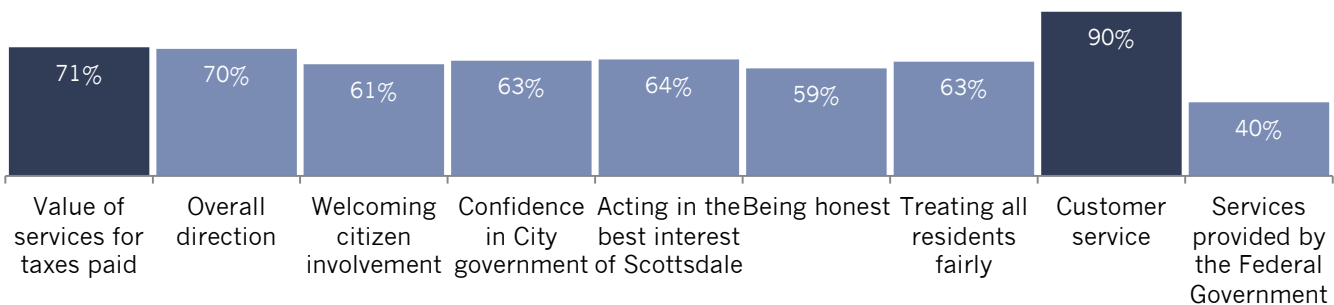


When comparing ratings over time, the proportion of respondents who positively rated street cleaning, the job Scottsdale government does at welcoming citizen involvement, and customer service provided by Scottsdale employees increased from 2013 to 2016. However, ratings for utility billing and land use, planning and zoning declined over time.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



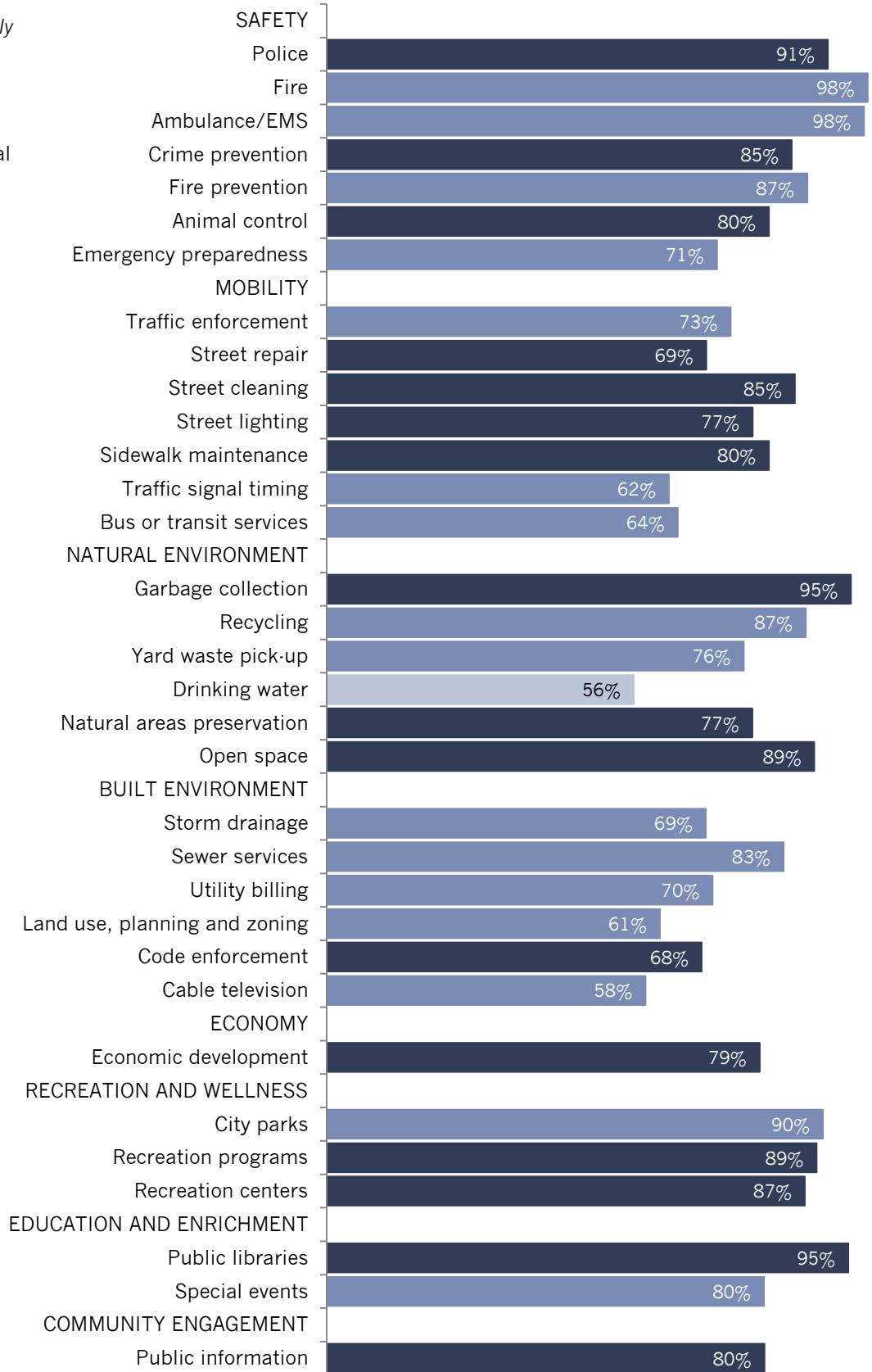
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower





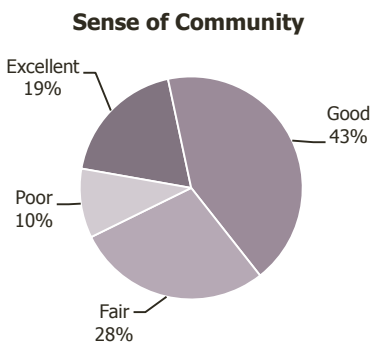
# Participation

*Are the residents of Scottsdale 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. In Scottsdale, about 6 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the sense of community in the city, which was a rating similar to those given elsewhere. About 9 in 10 would recommend living in Scottsdale to someone who asked (a rate similar to the benchmark) and planned to remain in Scottsdale for the next five years (a rate higher than the benchmark).

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 across the eight facets of livability tended to vary, but almost all were similar to the national comparison. Within Built Environment, about two-thirds of residents reported that they had NOT observed a code violation in the 12 months prior to the survey, which was a higher rate than observed elsewhere. A higher proportion of Scottsdale residents believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months. Within the facet of Safety, more than 8 in 10 residents had NOT reported a crime or been the victim of a crime, but only about one-quarter had stocked supplies for an emergency, which was lower than the benchmark. Within the facet of Mobility, while about half of respondents had carpooled instead of driving alone and about 6 in 10 had walked or biked instead of driving, only 13% had used public transportation instead of driving, a rate lower than the national comparison.

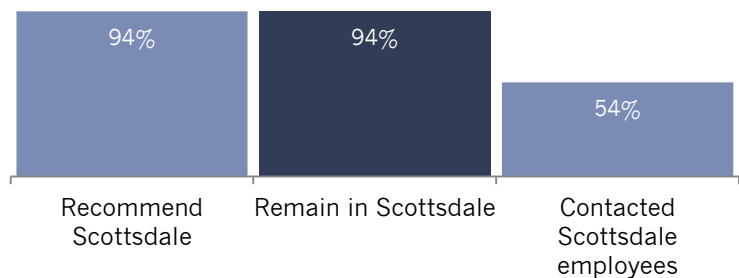
Most Participation rates remained similar from 2013 to 2016; the only item to change over time was the proportion of residents who had contacted Scottsdale employees, which increased.



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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



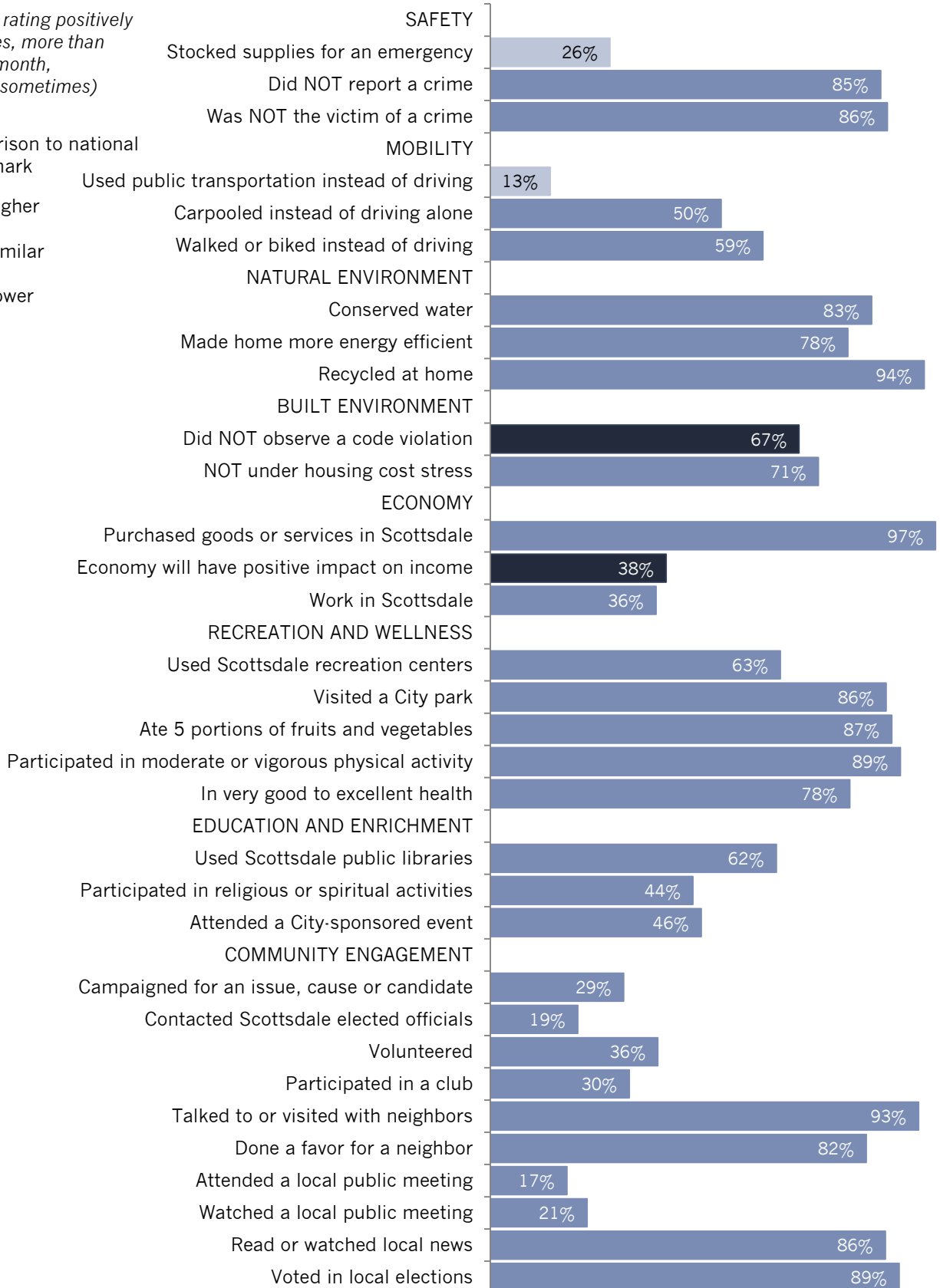
# The National Citizen Survey™

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

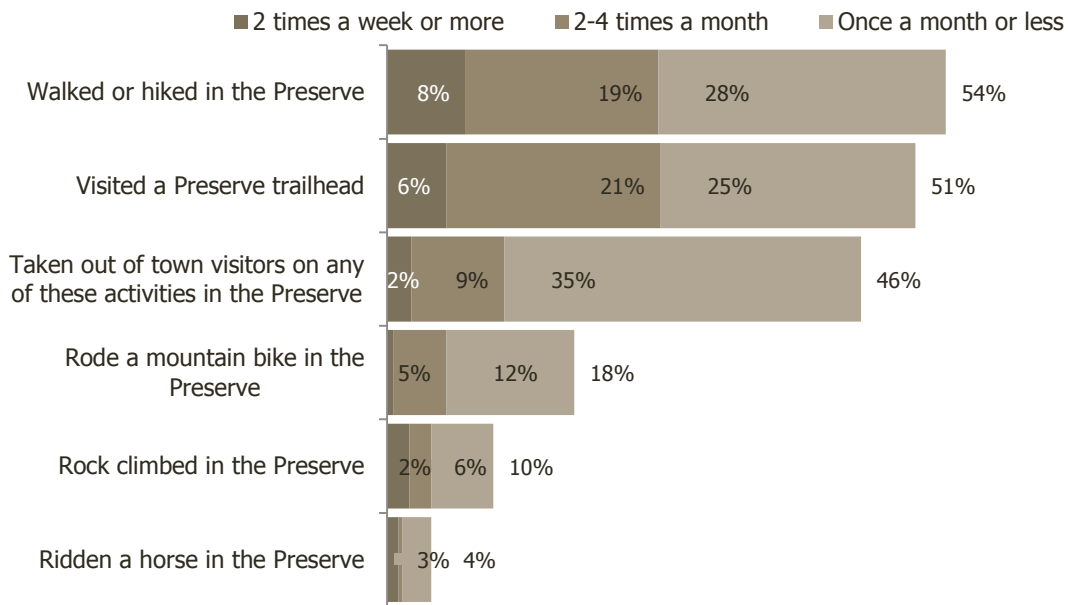


# Special Topics

The City of Scottsdale included five questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked residents how many times they had participated in a variety of activities in Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve. About half of residents had walked or hiked in the Preserve or visited a Preserve trailhead in the 12 months prior to the survey; slightly fewer had taken out of town visitors to do activities at the Preserve. About 2 in 10 or fewer residents had ridden a mountain bike, rock climbed or ridden a horse in the Preserve.

Figure 4: Activities in Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve

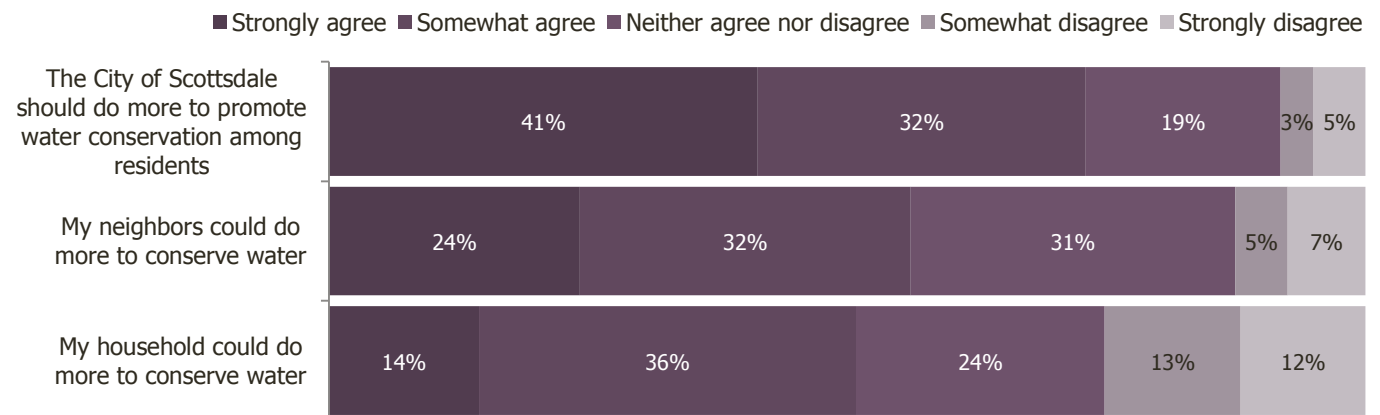
Please indicate how often, if at all, you have done each of the following in the last 12 months in the Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve.



The next question asked residents to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements related to water conservation. About half or more of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with all three statements. Most residents agreed that the City should do more to promote water conservation; meanwhile, about one-quarter somewhat or strongly disagreed that their household could do more to conserve water.

Figure 5: Resident Opinion of Water Conservation Efforts

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

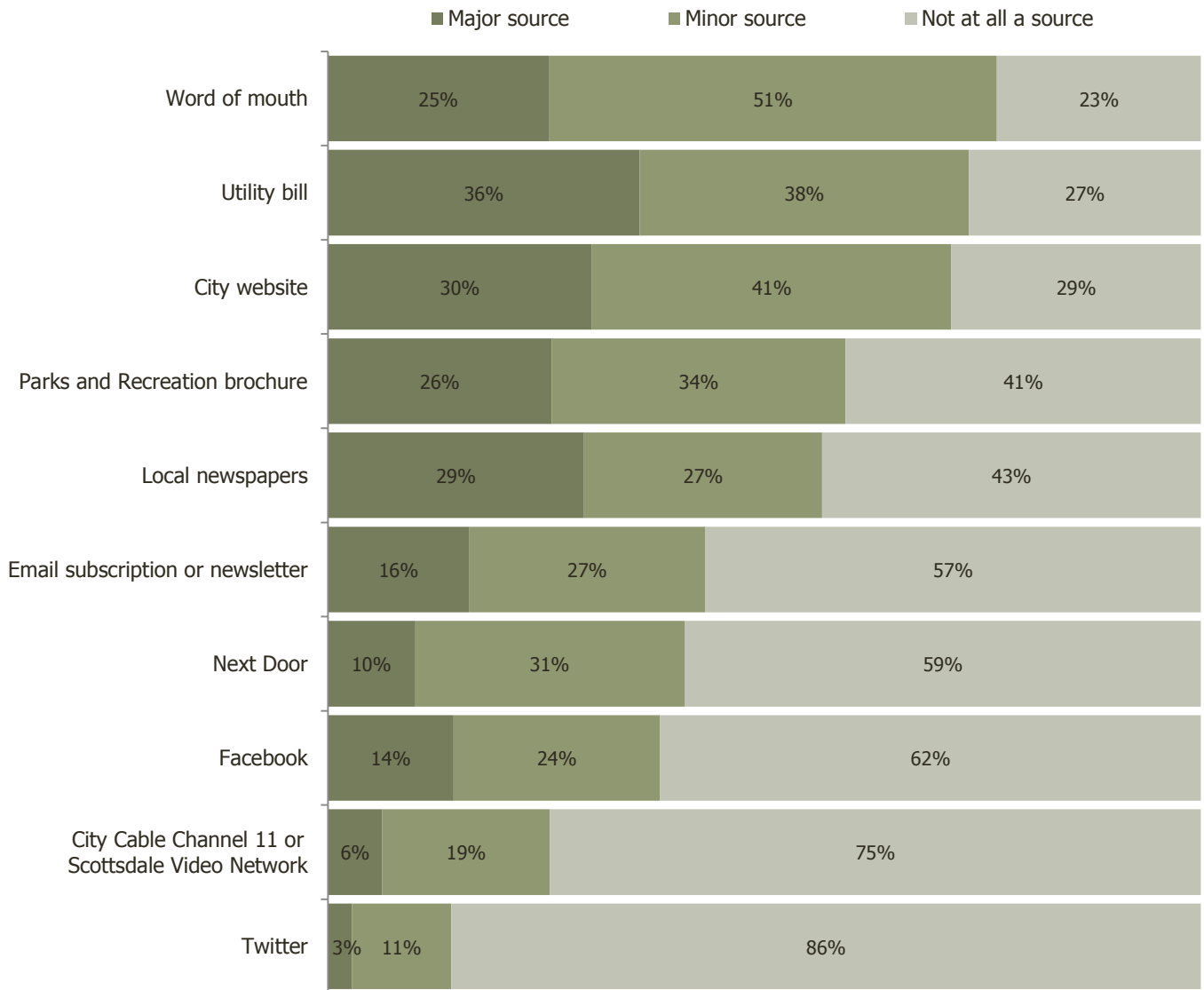


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The following question asked residents about various sources of information about the City and how much of a source of information, if any, they felt each item was. About 7 in 10 residents rated word of mouth, their utility bill and the City website as major or minor sources of information, while about 6 in 10 thought that the Parks and Recreation brochure and local newspapers were at least minor sources. About one-quarter of residents thought City Cable Channel 11 was a source of City information and only about 1 in 10 used Twitter as a source.

Figure 6: Sources of City Information

*Please indicate if each of the following is a major source, minor source or not a source of information for you about the City of Scottsdale and its activities:*

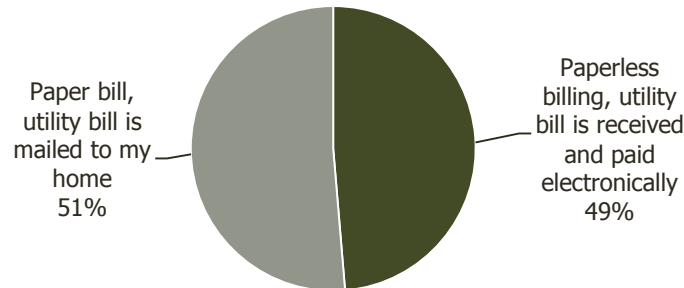


## The National Citizen Survey™

Residents were next asked how they received their City utility bill. About half of residents received a paper bill and the other half received their bill electronically.

Figure 7: Method of Receiving Utility Bill

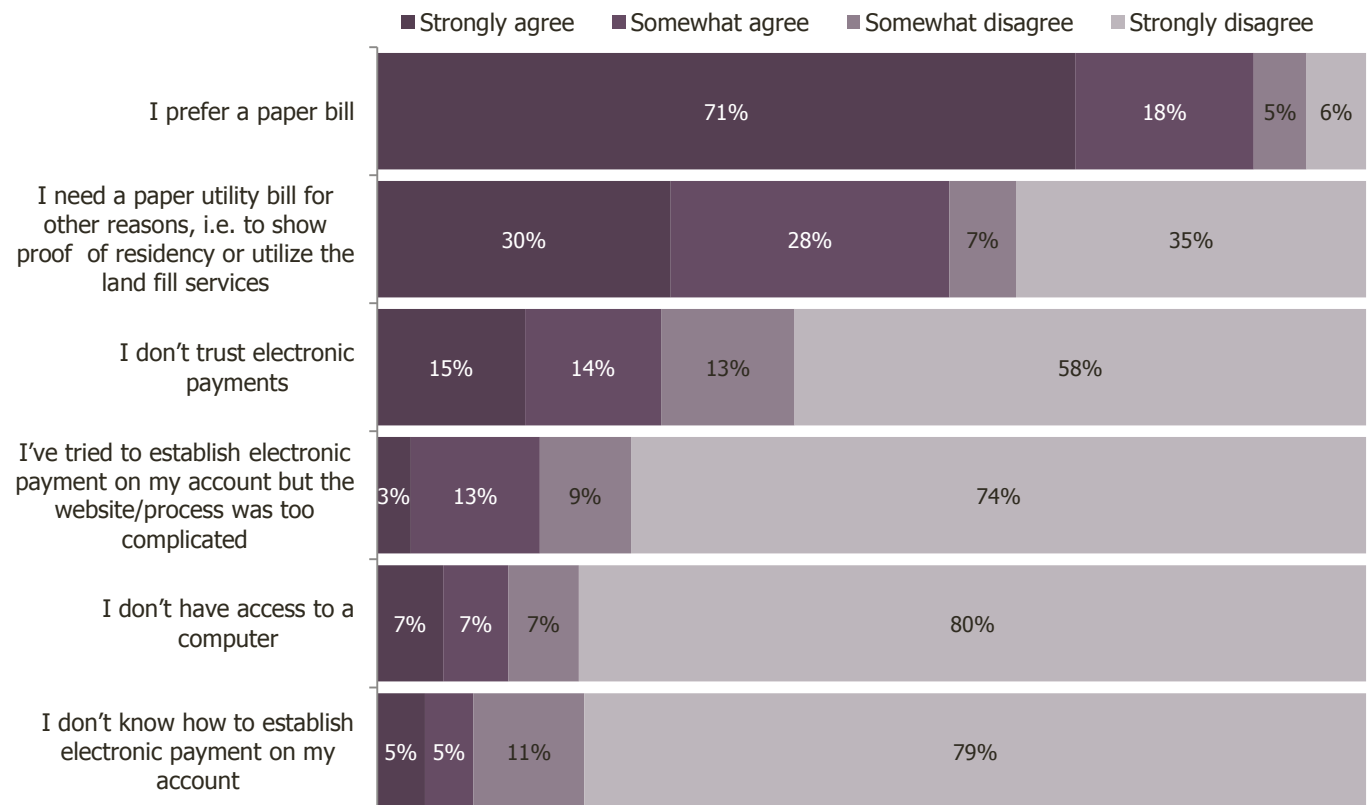
*Which method does your household currently use to receive its City of Scottsdale utility bill?*



The final special-interest question asked residents who did not currently utilize paperless billing for their utility bill about their level of agreement with a series of related statements. Almost all residents who received a paper bill did so because they preferred it; about half indicated that they needed a paper bill for other reasons. A majority of residents who received a paper bill strongly disagreed that they didn't trust electronic payments, had tried to establish electronic payment but found the process too complicated, didn't have computer access or didn't know how to establish electronic payment.

Figure 8: Utility Billing Preferences

*If you do not currently use paperless billing for your City utility bill, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:*



# Conclusions

## **Scottsdale residents continue to rate their quality of life positively.**

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Scottsdale, and Scottsdale as a place to live, as excellent or good. About 9 in 10 residents positively rated the overall image and overall appearance of Scottsdale, their neighborhood as a place to live and Scottsdale as a place to retire, and all of these aspects received ratings higher than those given in other communities nationwide. About 9 in 10 would recommend living in Scottsdale to someone who asked and planned to remain in the city for the next 5 years. These ratings have remained stable over time.

## **Economy continues to be an area of focus and a strength of the community.**

Residents identified Economy as a top priority of the Scottsdale community. More than 8 in 10 residents were pleased with the overall economic health of Scottsdale, and this rating was higher than seen in communities elsewhere. Many other aspects of Economy were rated higher than the national comparison, including shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, Scottsdale as a place to visit, vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area, overall quality of business and service establishments and economic development. Further, a higher-than-average proportion of Scottsdale residents believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months. Ratings within Economy remained stable from 2013 to 2016.

## **The Natural Environment is also important to residents.**

Residents also indicated that Natural Environment was an important area of focus in the coming years. More than 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall natural environment in Scottsdale, and ratings for air quality, garbage collection, open space (Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve) and preservation of natural areas were all higher than the benchmark. When asked how many times they had participated in a variety of activities in Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve, about half of residents had walked or hiked in the Preserve or visited a Preserve trailhead in the 12 months prior to the survey; slightly fewer had taken out of town visitors to do activities at the Preserve. Finally, when asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements related to water conservation, about half or more of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with all three statements, and most residents agreed that the City should do more to promote water conservation.