



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Conshohocken, PA

Community Livability Report

2017



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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 Conshohocken. 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).

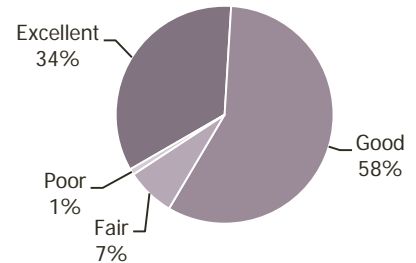
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 443 residents of the Borough of Conshohocken. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Conshohocken

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Conshohocken 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.

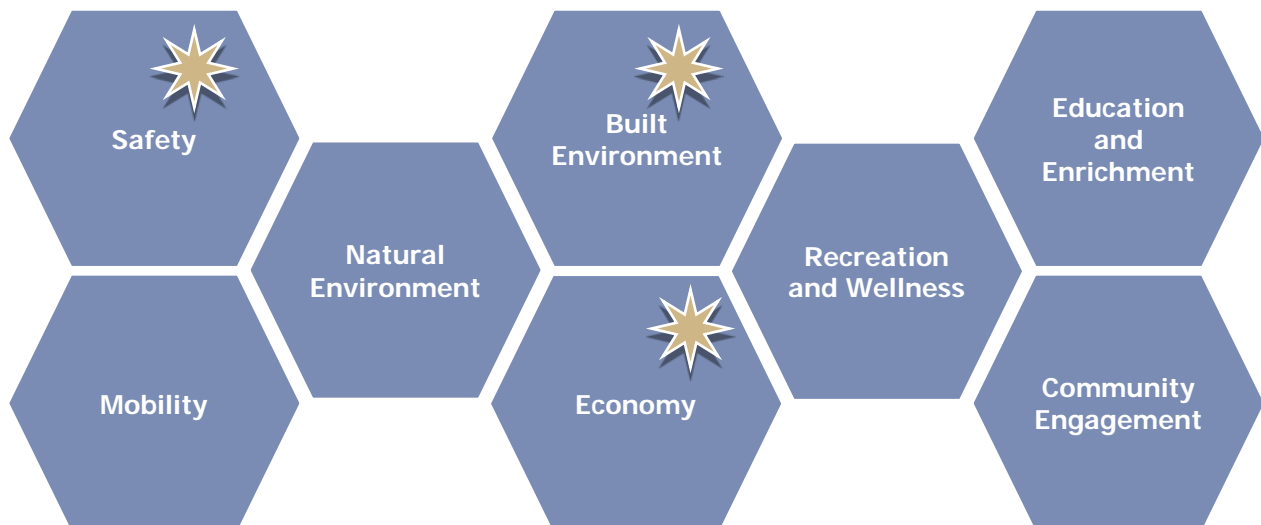
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety, Built Environment and Economy as priorities for the Conshohocken community in the coming two years. Ratings 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 Conshohocken’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?

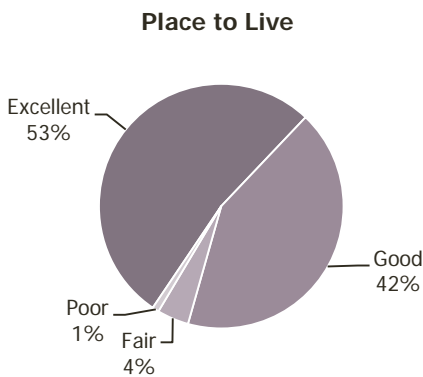
Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Conshohocken, 95% rated the Borough as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Conshohocken as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the Borough as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Conshohocken as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Conshohocken and its overall appearance. At least 7 in 10 residents felt favorably about most aspects of the community, providing ratings similar to those of other communities across the U.S.

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 the national benchmark.

At least 9 in 10 residents gave favorable evaluations of Safety characteristics, similar to national benchmarks. Residents were pleased with a number of aspects of within Mobility and Economy, rating availability of paths and walking trails, ease of walking, ease of travel by bicycle and public transportation higher than in other communities nationwide. Residents thought public parking and traffic flow were worse than elsewhere, while overall ease of travel and ease of travel by car were similar to other locations. Within Economy, the vibrancy of the downtown area, employment opportunities and the Borough as a place to work all stood above the benchmark; all other aspects were similar to the comparison communities except for shopping opportunities, which was rated lower than the national average. All aspects of Natural Environment, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness

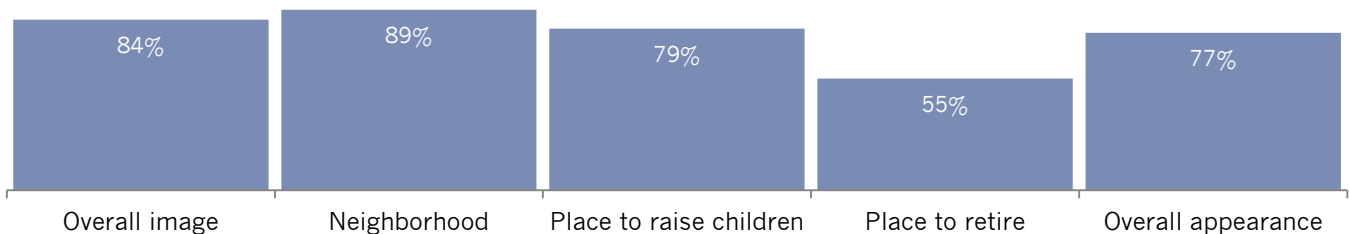
and Community Engagement were similar to other municipalities nationally. Within Education and Enrichment, all were on par with the benchmark, with the exception of two areas, opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities and adult education, which residents rated below the national averages.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



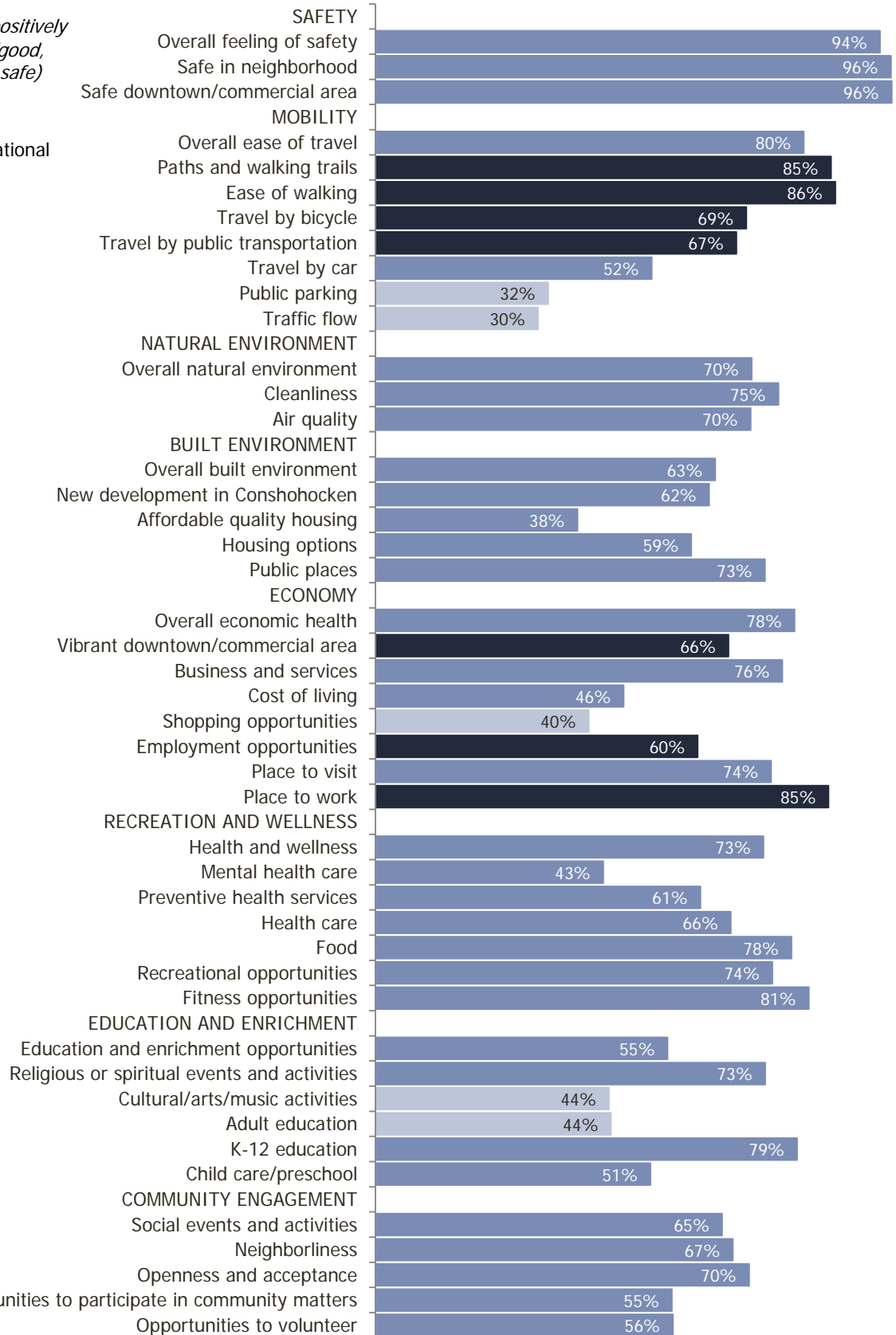
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

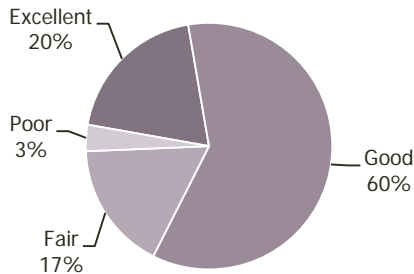
How well does the government of Conshohocken meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Conshohocken as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Close to 8 in 10 residents rated the overall quality of services provided by the Borough of Conshohocken as excellent or good. Marks for City services as well as services provided by the Federal Government were similar to national averages.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Conshohocken’s leadership and governance. At least half of residents rated each aspect positively, similar to those in other communities nationwide. About three-quarters of respondents scored the customer service provided by Borough employees as excellent or good.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Conshohocken. Broadly, residents gave ratings to all but two government services that were similar to or higher than communities across the U.S. Respondents evaluated at least one service above the benchmark in Safety (crime prevention), Mobility (bus/transit services), Natural Environment (recycling and yard waste pick-up) and Built Environment (cable television). The only services below the benchmark were natural areas preservation and open space.

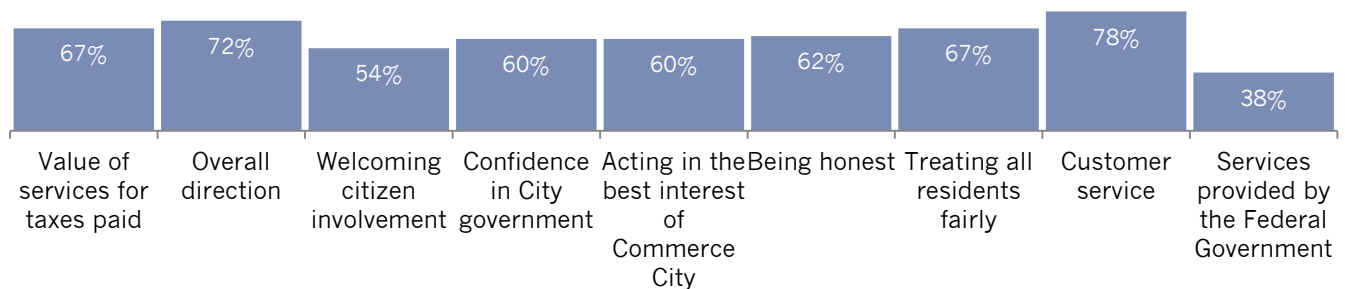
Overall Quality of Borough Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



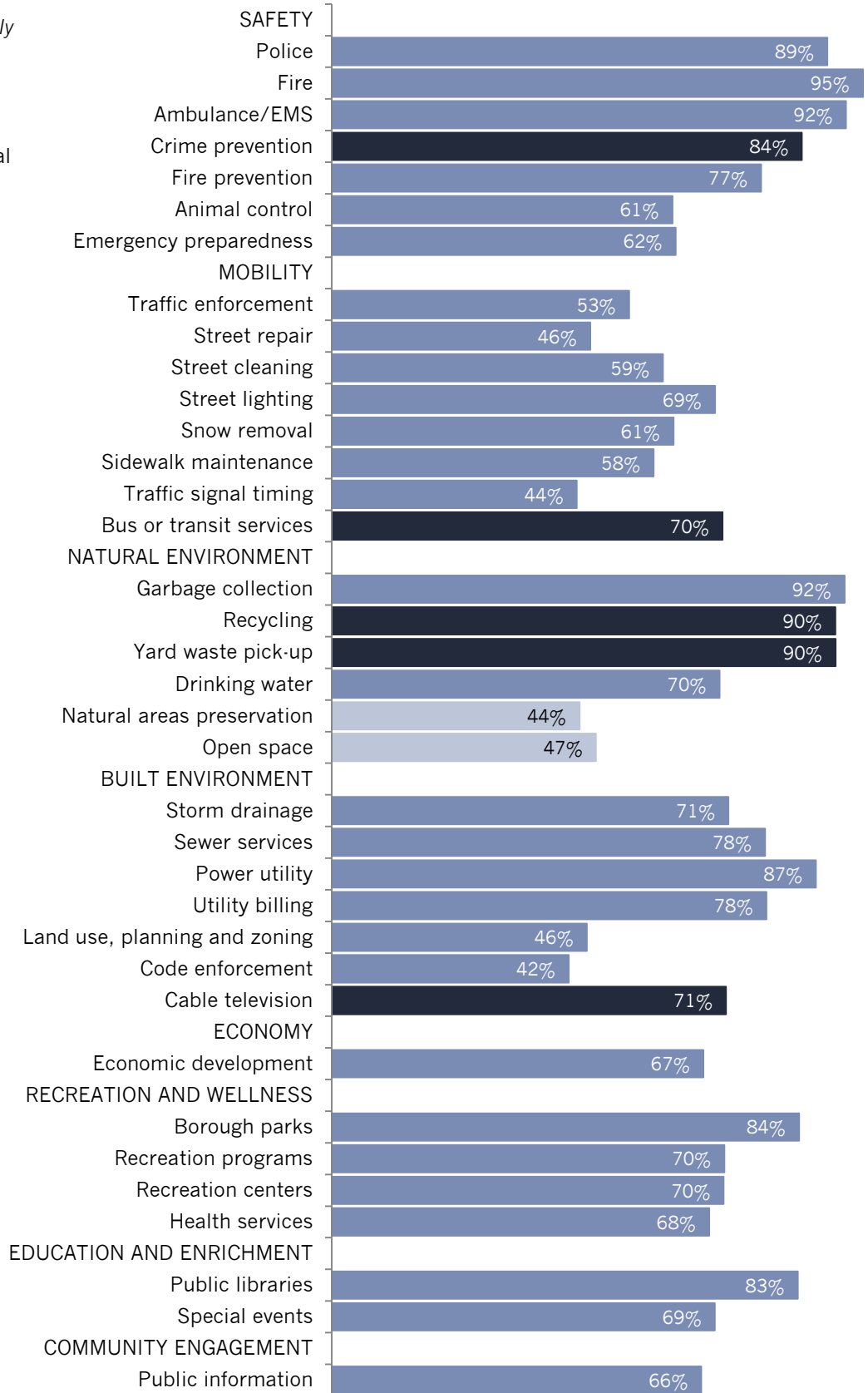
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

Are the residents of Conshohocken connected to the community and each other?

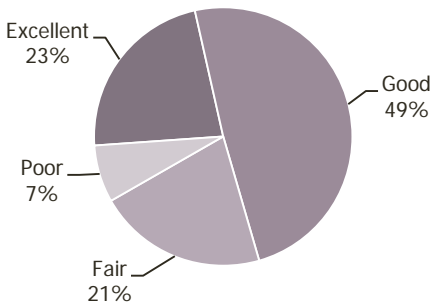
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. Similar to other communities in the U.S., about 7 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good scores to the sense of community in Conshohocken.

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 Conshohocken to someone who asked. Less than half of residents reported they had contacted City employees. These ratings were similar to those reported across the nation.

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 Conshohocken tended to be on par with national averages. Borough respondents were especially engaged in activities related to Mobility; about two-thirds indicated they had used public transportation instead of driving and about 8 in 10 had walked or biked instead of driving and these rates were higher than those reported across the U.S. Additionally, more survey participants reported they had recycled at home than rates across the country.

Conshohocken residents reported below average participation rates for working within the Borough, using public libraries, volunteering and watching a local public meeting.

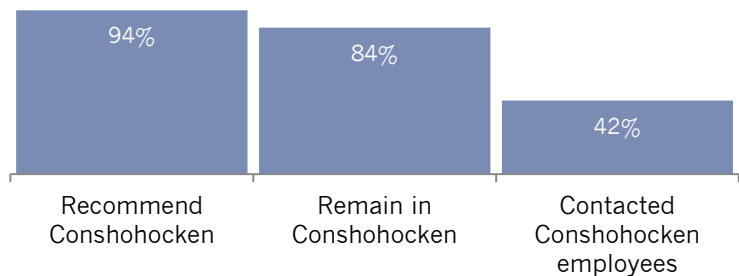
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



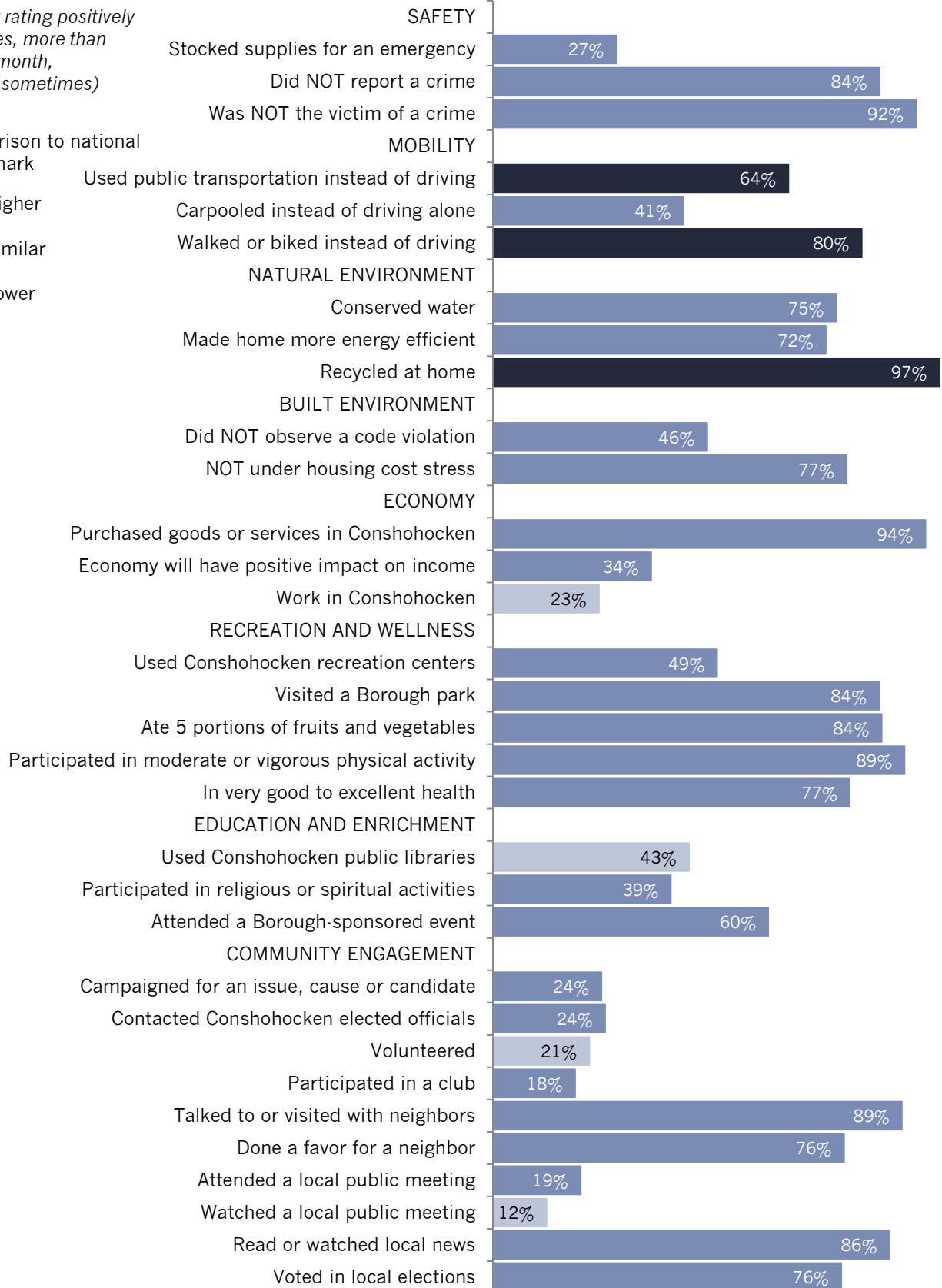
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



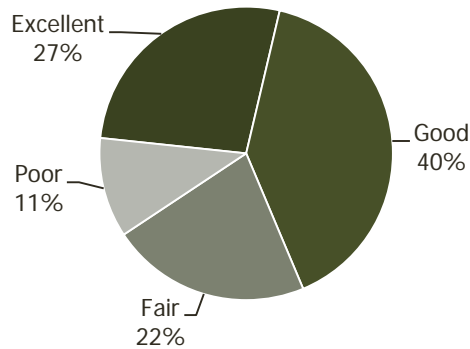
Special Topics

The Borough of Conshohocken included four questions of special interest on The NCS. Borough leadership sought feedback regarding residents' opinions on the value of K-12 services, relocation rates, residential housing needs and community priorities.

Respondents were asked to rate the value of K-12 services that they received for the taxes they paid. About two-thirds were pleased with services while only 1 in 10 thought the value was poor.

Figure 4: Value of K-12 Services for Taxes Paid

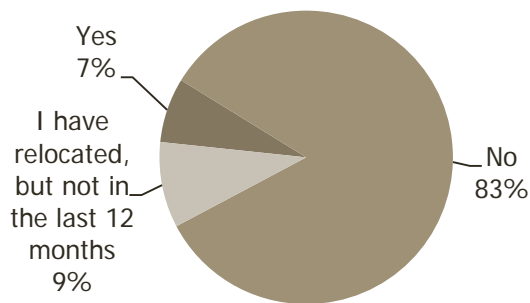
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Conshohocken as a whole:



When asked if they had relocated back to Conshohocken in the past 12 months after living elsewhere, less than 1 in 10 indicated they had done so and a similar proportion had relocated, but not in the last year.

Figure 5: Resident Relocation

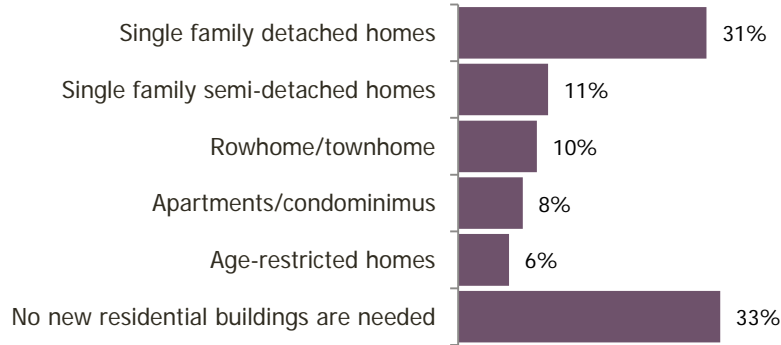
In the past 12 months, have you relocated back to the Borough of Conshohocken after having lived elsewhere?



The Borough also inquired about the types of residential housing units participants would prioritize. Roughly 3 in 10 residents reported that single family detached homes are needed and close to 1 in 10 indicated single family detached homes and rowhome/townhomes would be important. About one-third of respondents felt no new buildings were needed.

Figure 6: Residential Housing Needs

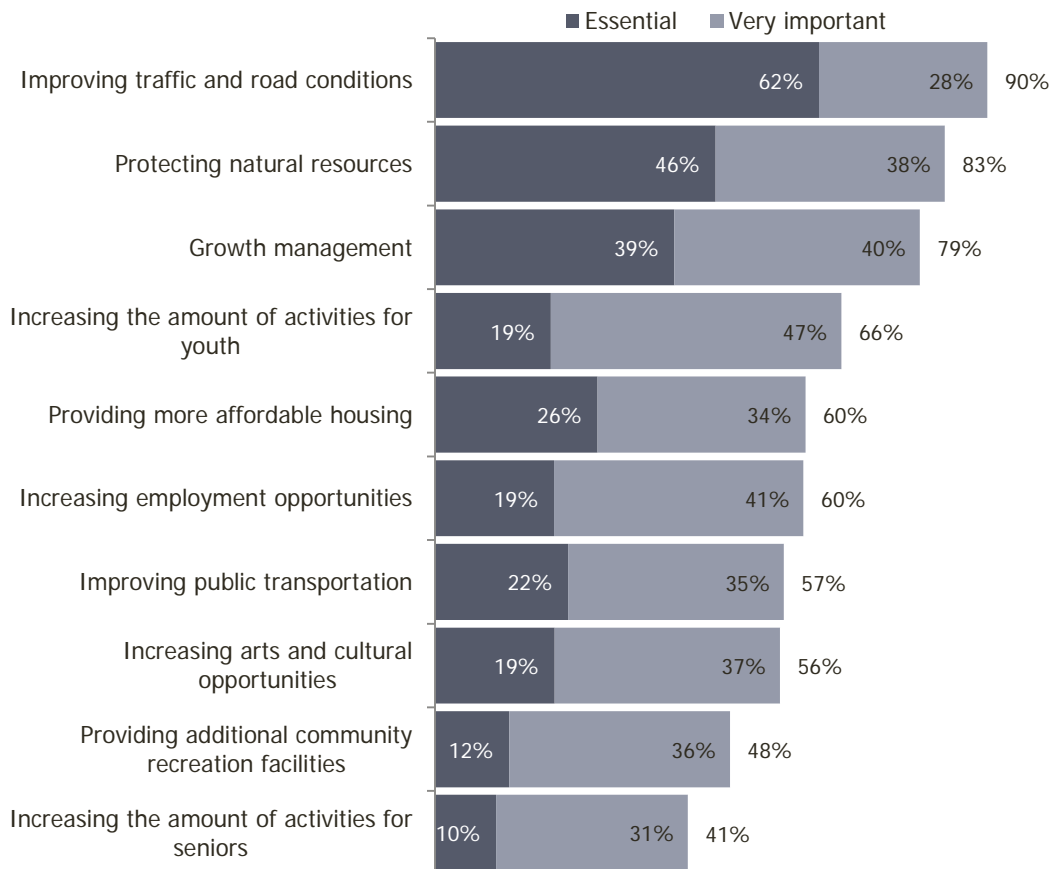
What is the single most important type of residential unit needed in Conshohocken?



In response to a list of potential issues for the Borough to prioritize in the next five years, approximately 9 in 10 survey respondents identified improving traffic and road conditions and close to 8 in 10 reported that protecting natural resources and growth management were priorities. Less than half of participants thought providing additional community recreation facilities or increasing the amount of activities for seniors was essential or very important.

Figure 7: Resident Priorities

Please rate how important, if at all, each of the following issues are for the Borough of Conshohocken in the next five years:



Conclusions

Participants are pleased with Mobility, but traffic and parking remains a concern.

Residents tended to rate aspects of Mobility as similar to or higher than national averages, and at least half of respondents awarded favorable scores to most measures. About 8 in 10 gave high marks to the availability of paths and walking trails and ease of walking and close to two-thirds or more positively reviewed ease of travel by bicycle and public transportation and bus or transit services; ratings for each of these characteristics and services were higher than comparisons across the nation. Additionally, residents reported higher participation in alternative modes. However, residents were less pleased with public parking and traffic flow and these ratings were lower than communities elsewhere. When asked about priorities for the Conshohocken government for the next five years, roughly 9 in 10 identified improving traffic and road conditions to be essential or very important and at least half placed high importance on improving public transportation.

Conshohocken residents value the Economy, but identified some challenges.

Survey respondents indicated that Economy was an important priority for the Borough to focus on in the coming years. Close to three-quarters of participants were pleased with the overall economic health, business and service establishments and Conshohocken as a place to visit, which were similar to ratings elsewhere. At least 8 in 10 residents awarded excellent or good evaluations to the Borough as a place to work and around 6 in 10 thought highly of the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area and employment opportunities; ratings for all of these aspects were higher than national comparisons. Fewer residents indicated working in Conshohocken than in communities across the country and about 6 in 10 residents indicated it was essential or very important for the Borough to prioritize increasing employment opportunities.

Residents praise green services and want to protect the environment.

Conshohocken residents gave average or above average ratings to aspects of Natural Environment. About 7 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good reviews to the overall natural environment, cleanliness, air quality and drinking water. Further, close to 9 in 10 participants favorably evaluated recycling and yard waste pick-up services, yielding ratings that were higher than national comparisons. Additionally, nearly all Borough residents reported they had recycled at home, which was higher than national averages. Residents felt less positively about natural areas preservation and open space, which lagged behind other communities. In response to a custom survey question about priorities in the coming five years, Conshohocken residents identified protecting natural resources as the second highest priority, with about 8 in 10 indicating this was at least very important.