

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

**Sedona, AZ**  
Community Livability Report

2017



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# About

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

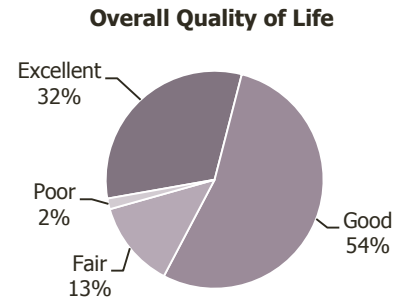
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 505 residents of the City of Sedona. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Sedona

Most residents rated the quality of life in Sedona as excellent or good. This rating was similar to 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.



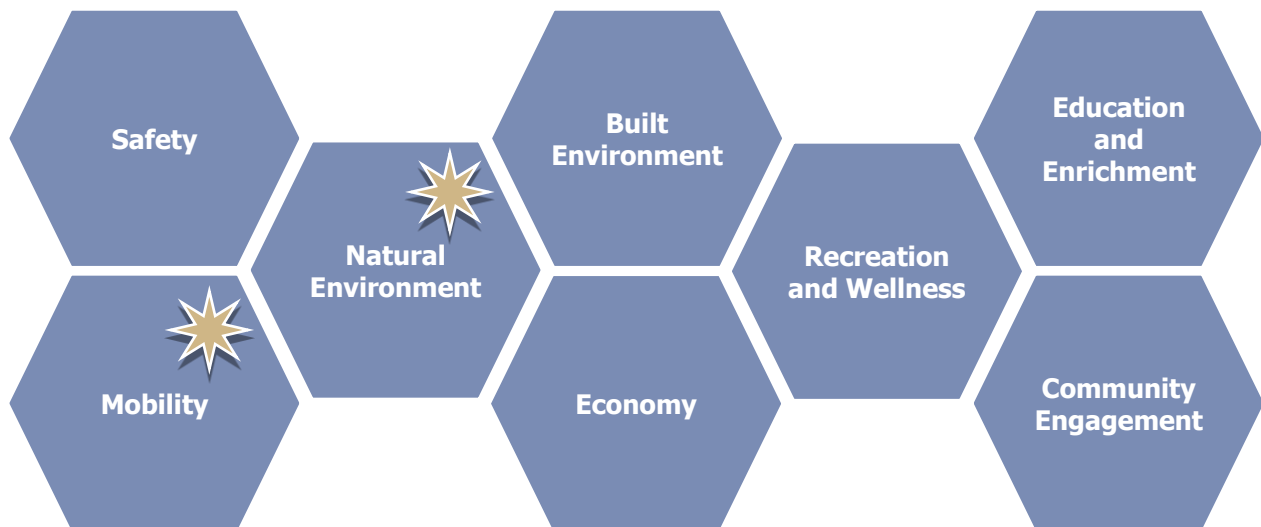
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Mobility and Natural Environment as priorities for the Sedona community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets were positive and similar to national comparisons. 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 Sedona’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?*

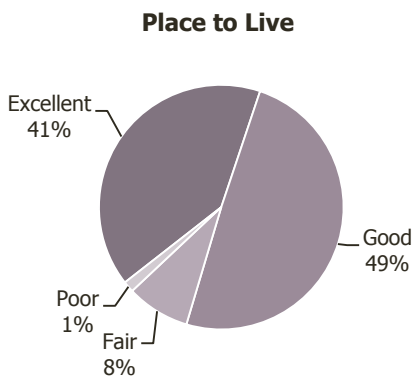
Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Sedona, 90% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Sedona as a place to live were similar to 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 Sedona as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Sedona and its overall appearance. About 8 in 10 or more residents awarded high marks to the overall image and appearance of Sedona, their neighborhoods as places to live and the city as a place to retire; these ratings were either similar to or higher than national benchmark comparisons. Additionally, evaluations of the overall appearance of the community were higher in 2017 than in 2007 (see the *Trends Over Time* Report for more details). Half of Sedona respondents gave favorable scores to the city as a place to raise children, which was lower than national averages.

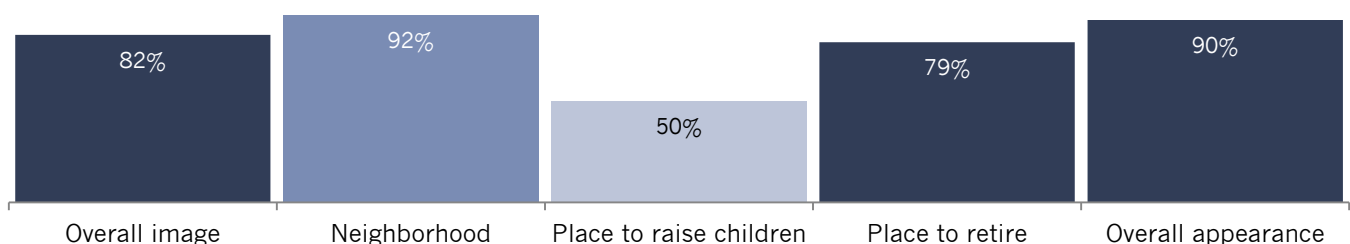
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, residents' ratings for Community Characteristics varied and tended to be similar to or lower than comparison communities.

Almost all respondents gave excellent or good scores to each aspect of Safety and Sedona respondents' ratings for the overall feeling of safety in their community was higher than the national benchmark. Sedona participants were also pleased with the Natural Environment with at least 9 in 10 awarding excellent or good marks to each aspect.

Evaluations of Mobility, Economy and Recreation and Wellness tended to be more mixed; at least 8 in 10 residents gave positive scores to the availability of paths and walking trails, the city as a place to visit and recreational opportunities (a rating that increased since 2007). Ratings for each of these three aspects were higher in Sedona than in communities elsewhere. However, measures for overall ease of travel, ease of travel by public transit and car, availability of affordable quality housing, variety of housing options, cost of living and shopping and employment opportunities, among others, were less favorably rated and lower than comparison communities.



Percent rating positively (eg, excellent/good)



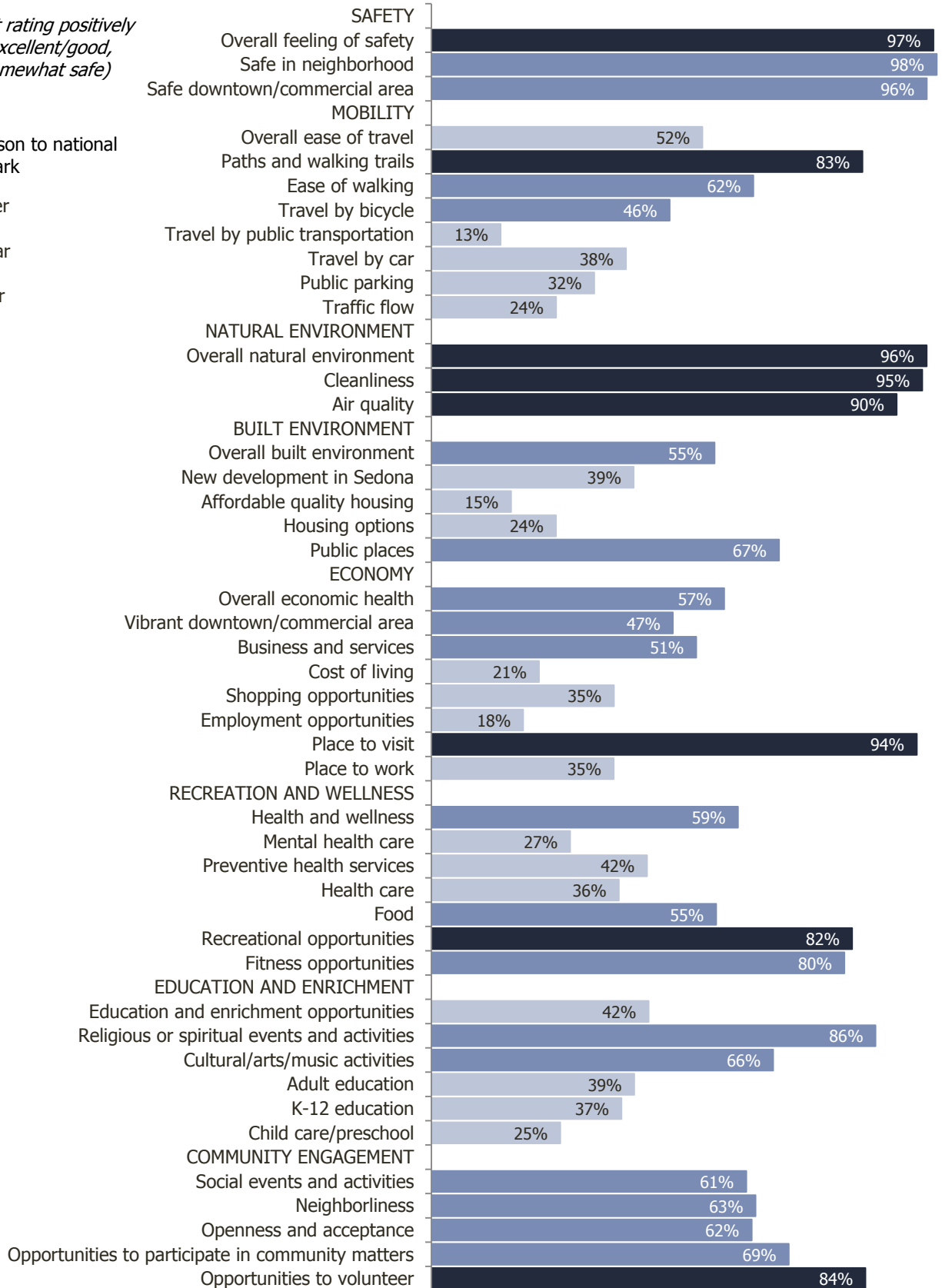
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

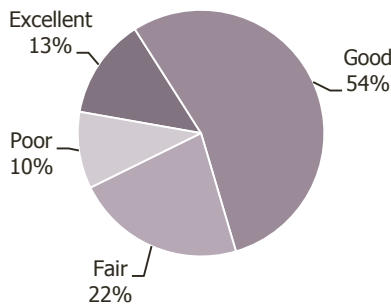
*How well does the government of Sedona meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Sedona as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of residents rated the overall quality of services provided by the City of Sedona as excellent or good, whereas only about one-third gave high marks to the services provided by Federal Government. Both ratings were similar to the national benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Sedona’s leadership and governance. About one-third or more survey participants favorably rated most of these aspects (e.g., confidence in City government, the City acting in the best interest of the community, being honest and treating all residents fairly) and each was rated either similar to or lower than national comparisons. Respondents’ evaluations of the overall direction of the City, value of services for taxes paid and welcoming citizen involvement decreased from 2007 to 2017. Over three-quarters awarded excellent or good scores to the customer service provided by Sedona employees, which was a rating similar to communities nationwide.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Sedona. Crime prevention outshined other communities across the nation, receiving excellent or good marks from at least 8 in 10 residents. Other services evaluated positively by about 9 in 10 residents or more respondents included fire, ambulance/EMS, garbage collection and public libraries, though these were all on par with comparison communities.

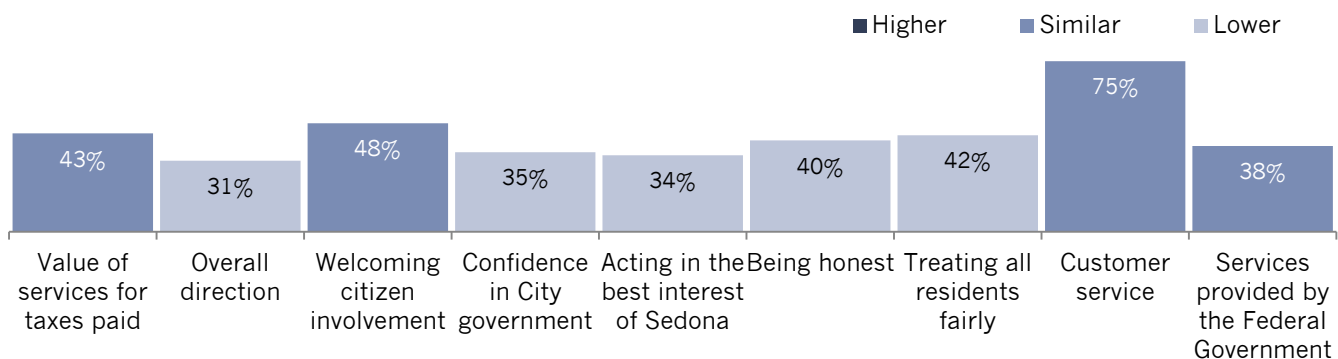
**Overall Quality of City Services**



Participants’ assessments for most other aspects of Governance were similar to comparison communities, though several ratings that lagged behind the national average could be found across aspects of livability, including Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment and Recreation and Wellness. Conversely, while Sedona residents were less pleased with recreation programs in 2017, evaluations of street cleaning; street lighting; sidewalk maintenance; recycling; land use, planning and zoning; and City parks increased since 2007.

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

*Comparison to national benchmark*



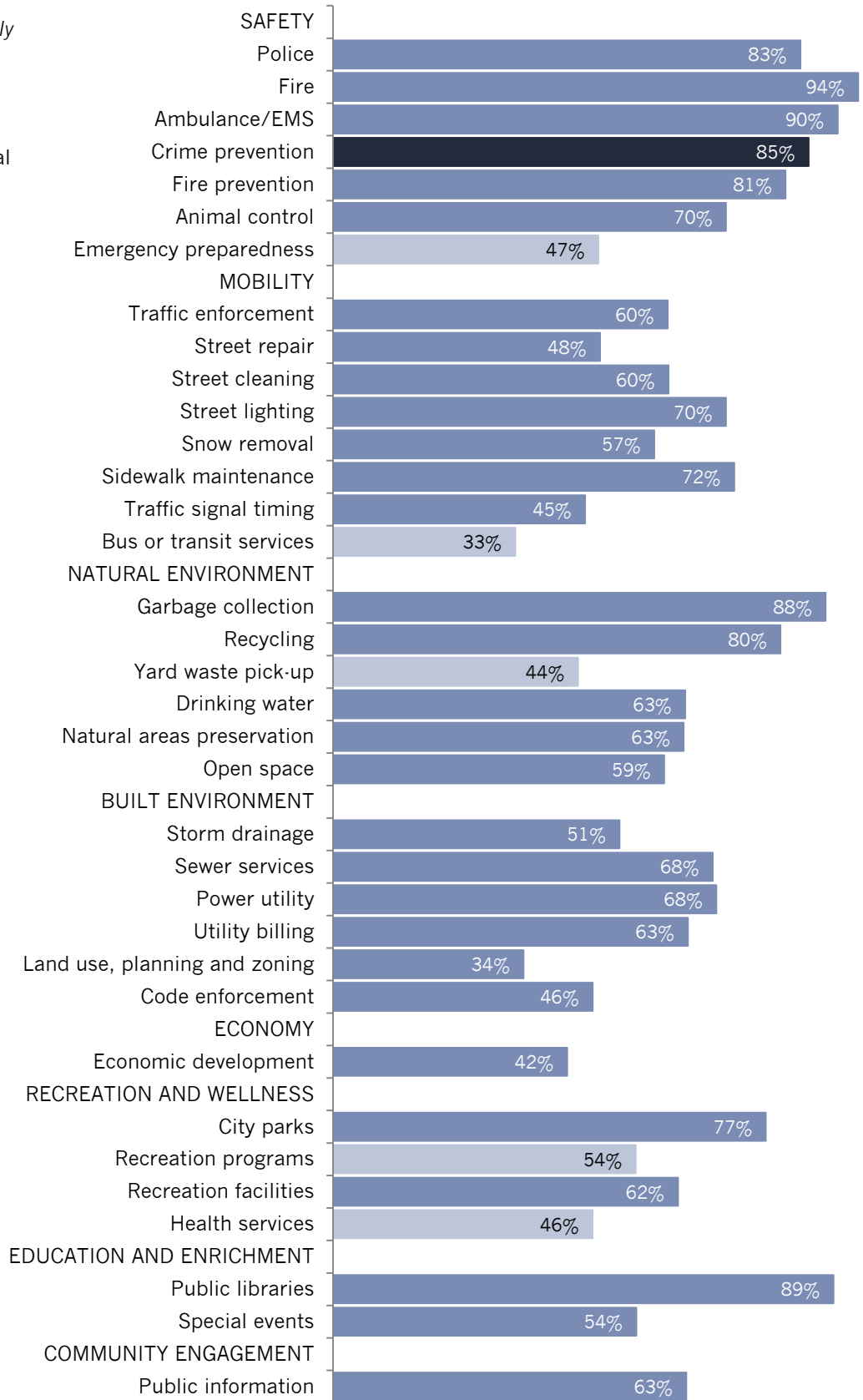
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower





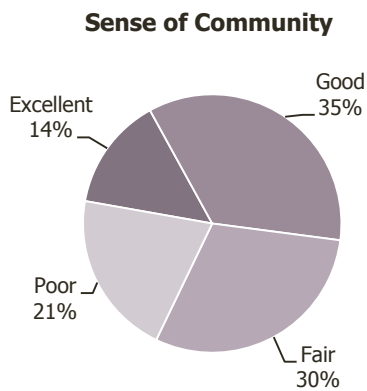
# Participation

## *Are the residents of Sedona 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 half of respondents gave excellent or good scores to the sense of community in Sedona.

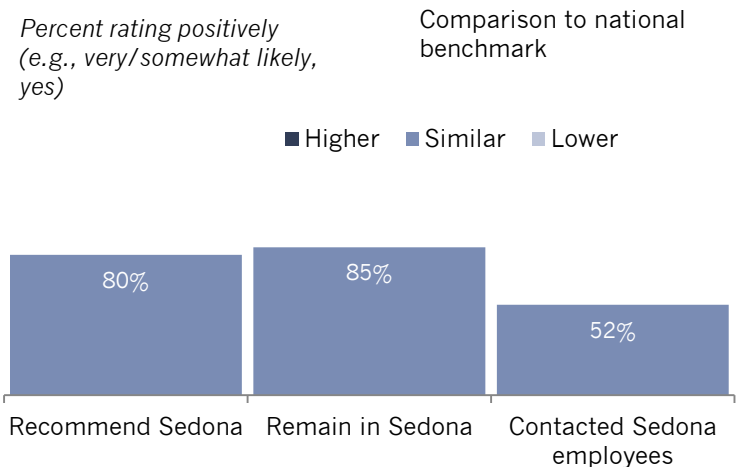
About 8 in 10 survey respondents indicated that they would recommend living in Sedona to someone who asked and planned to remain in the community for the next five years, and about half of residents reported they had contacted City employees, a rate that decreased over time. These ratings were similar 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. Although Sedona residents' levels of engagement varied, in most cases rates of Participation were similar to the national average, but there were a few exceptions. Survey respondents were engaged in their community with Sedona residents having campaigned, contacted elected officials, volunteered, participated in clubs, attended local meetings and voted in local elections at higher rates than other residents across the country. Survey participants were also more likely to report that they worked in Sedona, were optimistic about the economy and used public libraries compared to national averages.



Compared to communities across the U.S., Sedona participants were less likely to indicate they had used public transportation instead of driving and higher levels of housing cost stress.

Residents reported higher levels of recycling at home, voting and economic optimism in 2017 compared to 2007, but library visitation and local meeting attendance rates were lower.



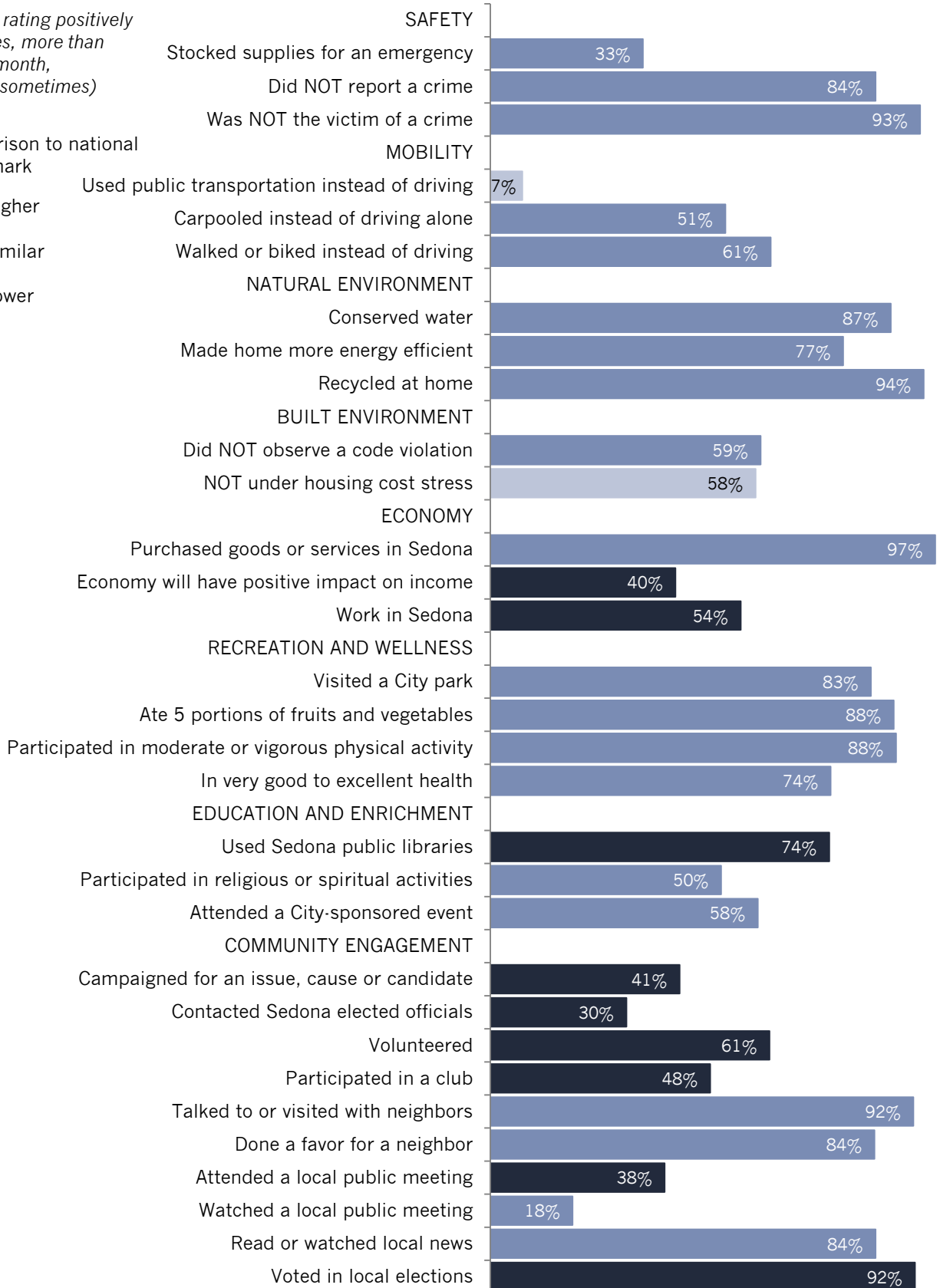
# The National Citizen Survey™

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



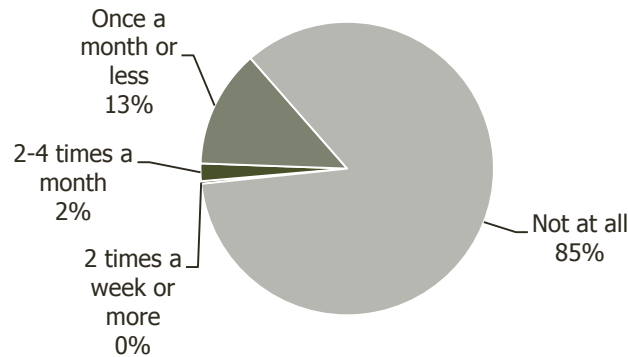
# Special Topics

The City of Sedona included several questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought residents' feedback on topics such as utilization of the Hub, funding priorities and economic growth, sources for City information, increasing use of alternative transportation and support for sustainability actions.

The first question asked residents about their utilization of the Sedona Hub. At least 1 in 10 had used it at least once in the past 12 months while more than 8 in 10 had not.

Figure 4: Utilization of the Sedona Hub

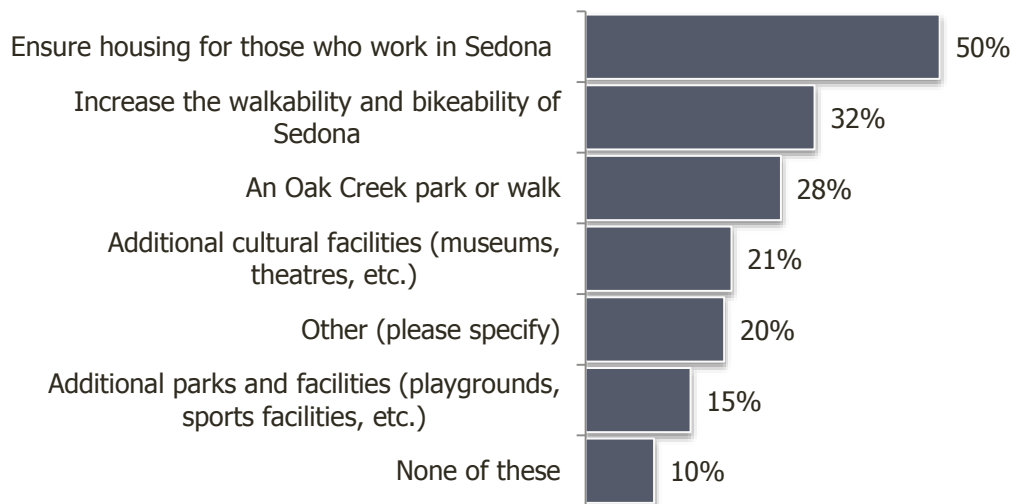
*In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following in Sedona?*



Residents were asked to indicate which two investment priorities they would like Sedona to fund over the next few years. Half of respondents would like to ensure housing for those who work in Sedona and about one-third would fund increasing the walkability and bikeability of the community. Less than 2 in 10 would prioritize additional parks and facilities as investments.

Figure 5: City Investment Priorities

*Cities are faced with difficult choices with limited budgets. While the City is currently working on solutions to reduce traffic, please select up to two (2) additional priorities you would want the City to invest in over the next few years:*



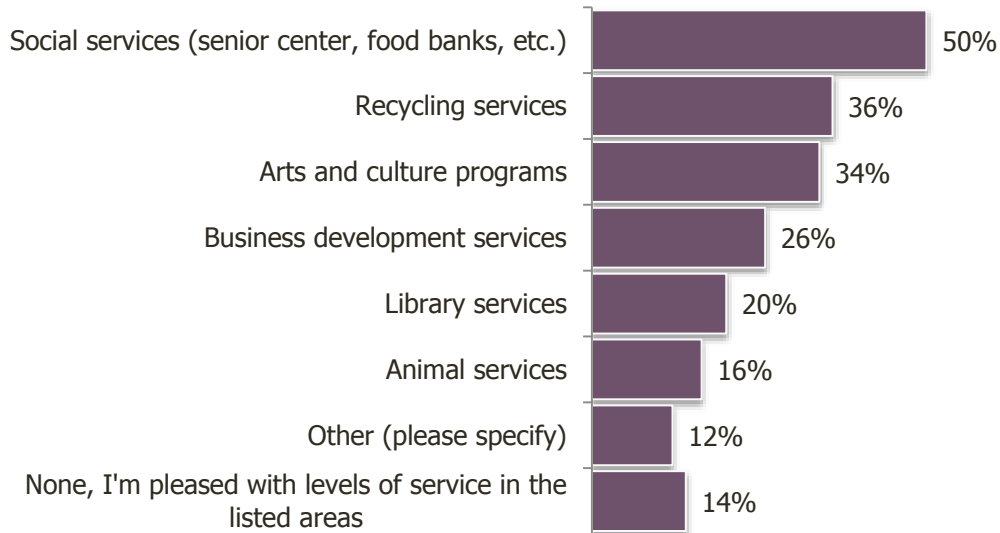
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

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Survey participants were also asked to choose three service areas to receive additional funding to expand existing services offered by the City of Sedona. The most frequently chosen area was related to social services (50% selected as one of their top three service areas), while about one-third of respondents selected recycling services or arts and culture programs.

Figure 6: Additional Funding for Services

*Please select up to three (3) service areas for the City to contribute additional funding in order to expand existing services over the next few years:*



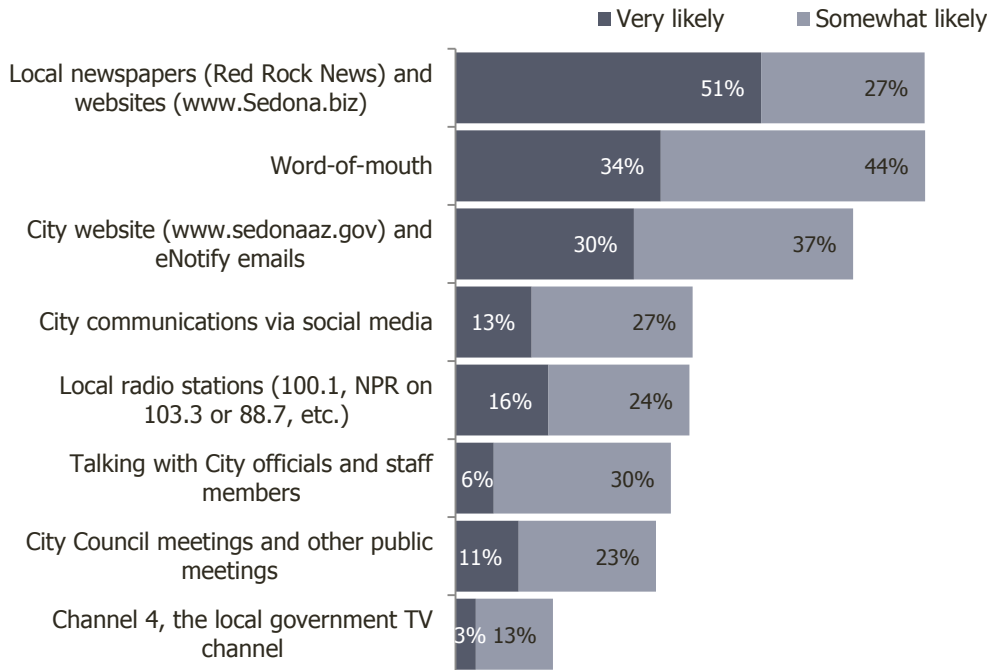
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

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Sedona residents indicated how likely they would be to use several sources of information about the City. Nearly 8 in 10 respondents reported they were likely to use local newspapers and word-of-mouth as sources of City information. About two-thirds utilized the City website and eNotify emails. The local government channel (Channel 4) was less likely to be used to find City information.

Figure 7: Sources of Information

*Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to use each of the following sources to learn about City issues, activities, events and services:*

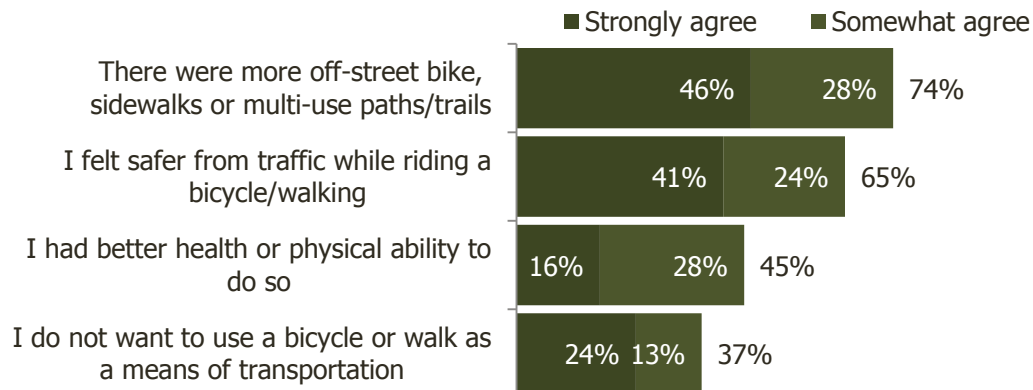


About three-quarters of survey respondents reported they would ride a bicycle or walk more often if there were more off-street bike, sidewalks or multi-use paths and roughly two-thirds would use alternative transportation if they felt safer from traffic. Four in five residents agreed that they would bike or walk more if they were in better health or physically able. About one-third of participants indicated they did not want to ride a bike or walk as a means of transportation.

Figure 8: Improving Alternative Transportation Use

*To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following would increase your use of a bicycle or walking as a means of alternative transportation:*

***I would ride a bicycle or walk more often if...***

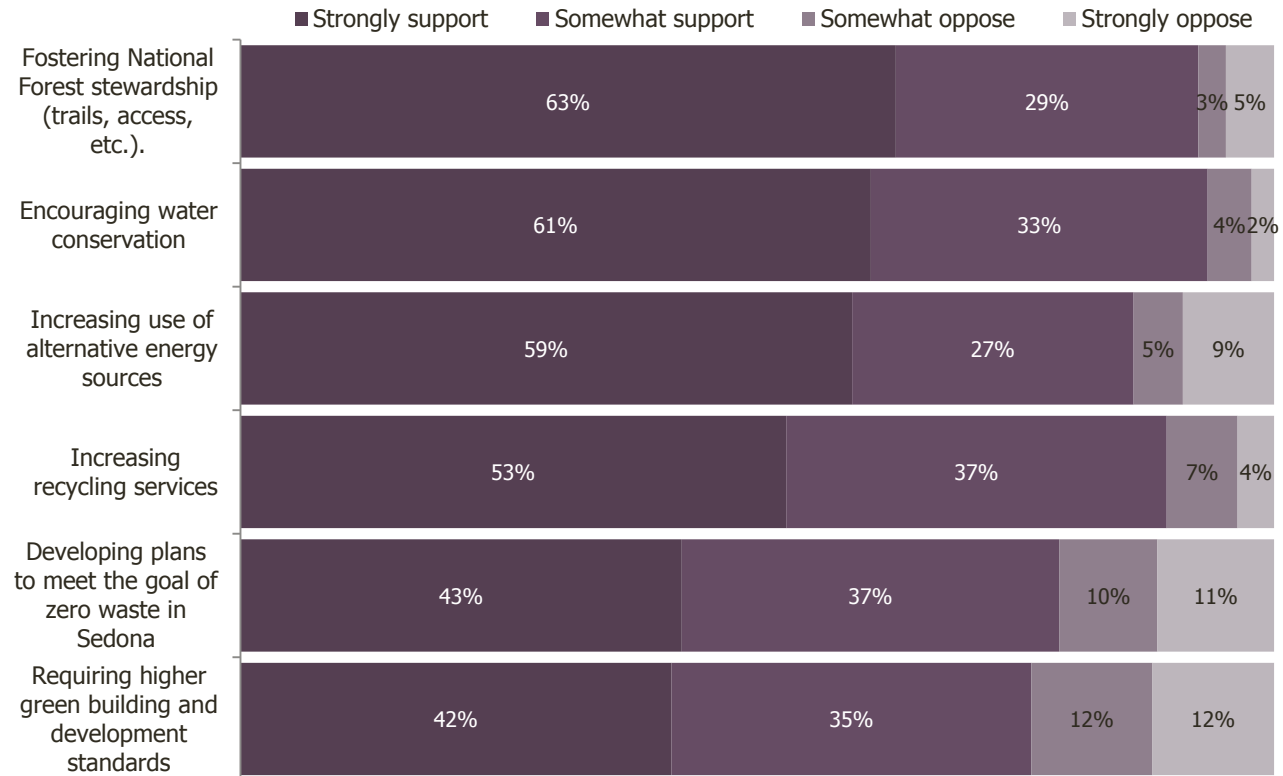


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The City also asked residents about their support for investing in sustainability policies and programs. Overall, a majority of respondents supported each measure, with about 4 in 10 strongly supporting each. Around 6 in 10 respondents strongly supported fostering National Forest stewardship, encouraging water conservation and increasing the use of alternative energy sources, while less than 1 in 10 strongly opposed these measures.

Figure 9: Support for Sustainability Policies and Programs

*To what extent do you support or oppose the City investing in creating sustainability policies and programs in the following areas:*

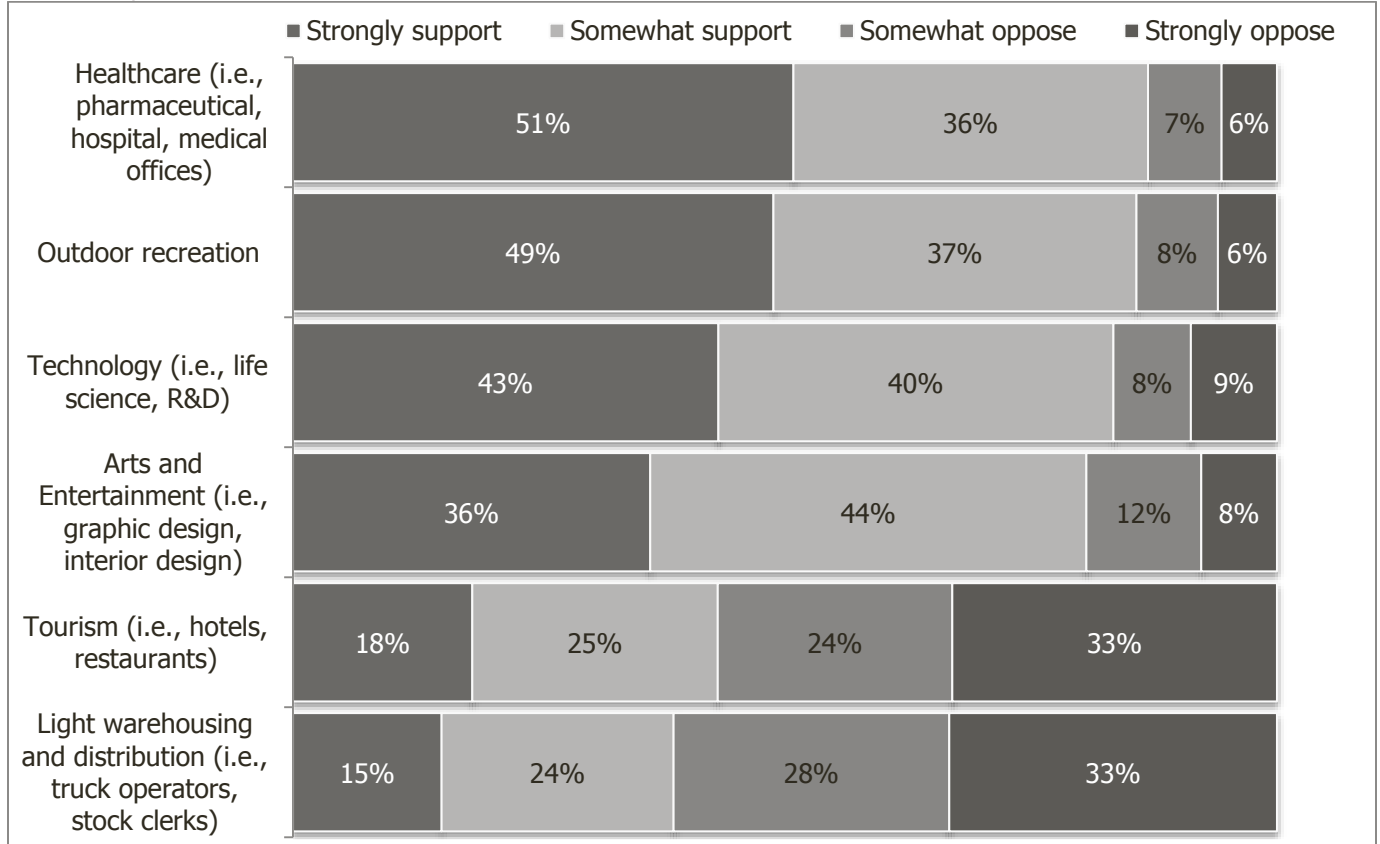


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Finally, the City sought to understand residents' levels of support for Sedona encouraging economic growth in six possible industries. At least 8 in 10 respondents supported growth in the healthcare, outdoor recreation, technology and arts and entertainment industries. Survey participants were less supportive of increasing tourism or warehouse and distribution businesses, with about 4 in 10 supporting growth in each of these areas.

Figure 10: Support for Growth Industries

*To what extent would you support or oppose the City of Sedona encouraging growth in the following types of businesses/industries?*



# Conclusions

## **The Natural Environment is a key part of Sedona's identity residents want to protect.**

Survey participants not only prioritized Natural Environment as a key focus area for Sedona in the coming years, but also rated aspects of this facet positively and generally higher than or similar to the national averages. Within Community Characteristics, about 9 in 10 respondents felt positively about the City's overall natural environment, cleanliness and air quality. Garbage collection and recycling received strong ratings within Governance and at least three-quarters of residents reported recycling at home, conserving water and making efforts to make their homes more energy efficient. Additionally, respondents' scores for recycling services as well as participation in this area increased from 2007 to 2017. Further, when asked to select up to three service areas for the City to contribute additional funding to expand services, one-third of respondents selected recycling services.

The survey also sought input from residents on different types of businesses or industries the City should encourage in Sedona. A majority of survey participants (86%) supported encouraging growth in the outdoor recreation industry. Finally, when asked about investing in sustainability policies and programs in Sedona, around 6 in 10 respondents strongly supported fostering National Forest stewardship, encouraging water conservation and increasing the use of alternative energy sources, while less than 1 in 10 strongly opposed these measures.

## **Residents are engaged in their community but have concerns about local government performance.**

Sedona residents reported higher rates of volunteering, participating in a club, attending local public meetings, voting in local elections, campaigning and contacting local elected officials than other residents around the country. Respondents were also particularly pleased with opportunities to volunteer compared to the national average and many gave high marks to the opportunity to participate in community matters (similar to the nation). Around 4 in 10 felt that the City government did an excellent or good job welcoming citizen involvement and that the value of services they received for the taxes paid was excellent or good, but both of these aspects decreased since the last survey administration. While residents engaged in community activities, they gave lower evaluations than those seen elsewhere to the overall direction of Sedona, confidence in government, the City acting in the best interest of the community, confidence in the City, being honest and treating all residents fairly. The City might consider additional efforts to communicate its willingness to involve residents in local government to build trust. Since respondents indicated they were likely to use local newspapers, word-of-mouth and the City website for information about the City of Sedona, communicating about the decision-making process via these avenues could help bolster residents' feelings about the civic process and government actions.

## **Housing and affordability are areas of opportunity for the City.**

Residents were pleased with the overall built environment of Sedona and their neighborhoods as places to live; however, respondents' evaluations of new development, the availability of affordable quality housing and variety of housing options lagged behind national comparisons. While the City as a place to visit and resident optimism about the economy received above-average ratings, Sedona participants were less pleased with the cost of living, the city as a place to work and employment or shopping opportunities compared to other communities. Residents also reported higher levels of housing cost stress than elsewhere. When asked about city investment priorities, about half of respondents would like to ensure housing for those who work in Sedona, which may be particularly important in Sedona since more residents reported working in the city compared to communities nationwide.

## **Mobility still presents opportunities for improvement.**

Sedona residents also indicated that Mobility is an important focus area for the City in the future. Survey respondents felt more positively about the availability of paths and walking trails than residents from comparison communities, but evaluations for overall ease of travel, travel by public transit and car, public parking, traffic flow and bus or transit services were lower than those seen across the nation. Sedona residents were also less likely to have taken public transportation instead of driving than residents elsewhere. However, ratings increased from 2007 to 2017 for ease of travel by bicycle and walking, street cleaning and lighting and sidewalk maintenance. When asked about investment priorities, about one-third of respondents would like the City to increase the walkability and bikeability of the community. About three-quarters indicated they would use alternative transportation modes more often if there were more off-street bike, sidewalks or multi-use paths or trails.