The National Citizen Survey™

Town of Bedford, MA
2009

Report of Demographic Subgroup Comparisons

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Survey Background

About The National Citizen Survey™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The Town of Bedford staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries NRC used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. Town of Bedford staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

One of the add-on options that Bedford chose was to have crosstabulations of evaluative questions 1-18b by demographic questions D3 (length of residency in Bedford), D5 (rent or own home), D9 (annual household income), and D12 (age of respondent).

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Understanding the Results

"Don't Know" Responses

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer "don't know." The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in Appendix A. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the body of the report. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

Understanding the Tables

In this report, comparisons between demographic subgroups are shown. For most of the questions, we have shown only one number for each question. We have summarized responses to show only the proportion of respondents giving a certain answer; for example, the percent of respondents who rated the quality of life as "excellent" or "good", or the percent of respondents who felt the rate of growth was "about right."

ANOVA and chi-square tests of significance were applied to these comparisons of survey questions by demographic subgroups. A "p-value" of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% probability that differences observed between subgroups are due to chance; or in other words, a greater than 95% probability that the differences observed are "real." Where differences were statistically significant, they are marked in grey.

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Comparisons

Cells shaded grey indicate statistically significant differences between subgroups.

Question 1: Quality of Life (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Bedford:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Bedford as a place to live	96%	97%	96%	96%	97%	94%	97%	98%	100%	95%	96%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	85%	87%	90%	78%	90%	85%	84%	91%	84%	84%	92%
Bedford as a place to raise children	97%	94%	96%	92%	96%	92%	94%	97%	100%	95%	95%
Bedford as a place to work	78%	80%	84%	73%	83%	73%	83%	84%	84%	79%	81%
Bedford as a place to retire	66%	64%	61%	71%	61%	66%	66%	58%	79%	53%	68%
The overall quality of life in Bedford	93%	95%	94%	95%	94%	93%	93%	96%	100%	92%	95%

Question 2: Community Characteristics (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Bedford as a whole:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Sense of community	86%	87%	86%	84%	87%	87%	87%	86%	92%	84%	87%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	86%	81%	86%	84%	84%	87%	83%	86%	83%	80%	89%
Overall appearance of Bedford	83%	79%	72%	85%	76%	81%	80%	76%	92%	73%	77%
Cleanliness of Bedford	82%	88%	84%	85%	85%	86%	83%	86%	88%	82%	88%
Overall quality of new development in Bedford	76%	66%	54%	75%	62%	62%	71%	62%	78%	61%	63%
Variety of housing options	63%	57%	50%	45%	59%	47%	58%	59%	64%	52%	57%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Bedford	65%	64%	72%	69%	66%	63%	77%	64%	64%	62%	74%
Shopping opportunities	66%	65%	67%	70%	65%	62%	71%	65%	64%	64%	68%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	57%	45%	48%	60%	46%	59%	47%	45%	51%	44%	54%
Recreational opportunities	83%	73%	73%	74%	75%	73%	83%	73%	96%	73%	72%
Employment opportunities	54%	43%	49%	43%	48%	45%	44%	52%	50%	46%	48%

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Question 2: Community Characteristics (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Bedford as a whole:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Educational opportunities	83%	78%	81%	82%	81%	87%	84%	77%	100%	74%	83%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	73%	65%	71%	71%	69%	72%	73%	68%	75%	66%	70%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	88%	87%	88%	89%	87%	84%	93%	86%	86%	85%	92%
Opportunities to volunteer	86%	88%	83%	83%	86%	84%	87%	87%	88%	84%	87%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	82%	81%	82%	80%	82%	81%	83%	83%	84%	79%	85%
Ease of car travel in Bedford	50%	52%	36%	50%	45%	43%	48%	45%	65%	43%	42%
Ease of bus travel in Bedford	47%	45%	36%	57%	38%	50%	50%	34%	57%	38%	40%
Ease of bicycle travel in Bedford	65%	58%	53%	68%	56%	65%	62%	53%	77%	56%	54%
Ease of walking in Bedford	58%	57%	56%	59%	57%	63%	64%	50%	82%	48%	59%
Availability of paths and walking trails	73%	66%	65%	81%	64%	72%	76%	61%	77%	63%	69%
Traffic flow on major streets	32%	25%	15%	34%	21%	26%	24%	21%	41%	18%	24%
Availability of affordable quality housing	52%	40%	30%	45%	38%	39%	43%	39%	44%	35%	42%
Availability of affordable quality child care	60%	61%	54%	55%	60%	57%	60%	55%	76%	52%	58%
Availability of affordable quality health care	70%	64%	57%	59%	64%	53%	65%	69%	89%	60%	58%
Availability of affordable quality food	78%	71%	70%	74%	72%	66%	71%	75%	92%	67%	73%
Availability of preventive health services	60%	67%	59%	63%	62%	60%	69%	61%	64%	58%	66%
Air quality	90%	86%	80%	86%	84%	80%	85%	86%	93%	85%	82%
Quality of overall natural environment in Bedford	84%	86%	75%	78%	82%	74%	80%	86%	74%	83%	82%
Overall image or reputation of Bedford	94%	94%	88%	92%	92%	90%	92%	94%	100%	93%	88%

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Question 3: Growth (Percent "too fast")											
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Bedford over the past 2 years:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Population growth	20%	40%	50%	30%	42%	47%	37%	39%	24%	41%	44%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	6%	15%	20%	12%	15%	18%	15%	13%	4%	11%	21%
Jobs growth	0%	3%	5%	0%	4%	5%	4%	2%	0%	3%	5%

Question 4: Code Enforcement (Percent at least a "minor" problem)											
	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Bedford?	64%	69%	75%	65%	71%	62%	71%	73%	67%	70%	70%

Question 5: Community Safety (Percent "very" or "somewhat" safe)											
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Bedford:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	98%	97%	94%	96%	96%	94%	96%	98%	100%	96%	95%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	88%	89%	85%	85%	88%	87%	83%	89%	88%	87%	87%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	89%	86%	78%	87%	83%	84%	79%	86%	93%	83%	81%

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Question 6: Personal Safety (Percent "very" or "somewhat" safe)											
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
In your neighborhood during the day	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	100%	98%	98%
In your neighborhood after dark	95%	96%	93%	96%	95%	95%	94%	95%	93%	95%	95%
In Bedford's downtown area during the day	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	97%	98%	100%	100%	99%	99%
In Bedford's downtown area after dark	91%	93%	91%	86%	93%	85%	90%	96%	95%	93%	89%

Questions 7 and 8: Crime Victimization and Reporting (Percent "yes")											
	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	6%	7%	3%	4%	5%	2%	5%	7%	4%	8%	3%
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	54%	83%	64%	35%	84%	51%	58%	87%	41%	76%	68%

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Question 9: Resident Behaviors (Percent at least once in past 12 months)											
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Bedford?	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Used Bedford public libraries or their services	79%	96%	89%	76%	92%	82%	88%	93%	80%	93%	86%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	51%	75%	49%	43%	64%	42%	51%	73%	50%	77%	42%
Visited a neighborhood park, town park, or conservation area	83%	90%	78%	78%	86%	71%	86%	91%	85%	93%	74%
Ridden a local bus within Bedford	12%	8%	15%	24%	8%	25%	5%	10%	6%	12%	13%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	16%	55%	53%	25%	49%	33%	41%	49%	8%	50%	48%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	18%	44%	51%	31%	41%	39%	37%	42%	0%	45%	45%
Read Bedford Byline (Town newsletter)	63%	90%	84%	72%	83%	74%	84%	83%	53%	85%	84%
Visited the Town of Bedford Web site (at www.town.bedford.ma.us)	75%	75%	63%	57%	75%	44%	73%	83%	66%	84%	57%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	88%	96%	95%	78%	97%	84%	91%	98%	80%	96%	94%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Bedford	35%	63%	55%	35%	57%	38%	48%	63%	17%	66%	48%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Bedford	29%	49%	61%	33%	51%	43%	43%	54%	11%	53%	53%
Participated in a club or civic group in Bedford	24%	46%	49%	30%	45%	36%	37%	47%	18%	46%	43%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	93%	99%	94%	88%	98%	88%	97%	99%	95%	98%	94%

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Question 10: Neighborliness (Percent at least once per month)											
	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
About how often, if at all, do you talk to or visit with your immediate neighbors (people who live in the 10 or 20 households that are closest to you)?	75%	84%	72%	65%	80%	74%	76%	83%	69%	80%	76%

Question 11: Service Quality (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Bedford:	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Police services	95%	92%	97%	97%	94%	98%	95%	95%	89%	93%	98%
Fire services	99%	98%	98%	100%	98%	99%	98%	98%	100%	97%	99%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	98%	97%	99%	99%	98%	97%	99%	98%	100%	97%	98%
Crime prevention	90%	92%	97%	97%	93%	96%	92%	93%	100%	91%	95%
Fire prevention and education	84%	91%	95%	90%	91%	92%	91%	90%	93%	90%	92%
Traffic enforcement	69%	76%	73%	67%	75%	67%	72%	74%	85%	68%	75%
Street repair	45%	42%	38%	37%	43%	43%	41%	42%	29%	38%	48%
Street cleaning	64%	70%	66%	64%	68%	74%	62%	65%	58%	63%	74%
Street lighting	63%	74%	72%	69%	71%	76%	66%	68%	64%	64%	80%
Snow removal	81%	88%	90%	80%	89%	86%	84%	88%	73%	87%	92%
Sidewalk maintenance	53%	63%	59%	62%	57%	63%	62%	55%	54%	55%	65%
Traffic signal timing	66%	72%	66%	73%	67%	70%	69%	65%	54%	69%	71%
Bus or transit services	62%	65%	63%	66%	63%	61%	70%	58%	72%	59%	65%
Garbage collection	88%	91%	93%	88%	92%	92%	86%	93%	82%	90%	95%
Recycling	85%	92%	96%	85%	94%	92%	91%	92%	86%	91%	94%
Storm drainage	73%	80%	71%	80%	74%	70%	78%	74%	79%	74%	73%
Drinking water	84%	93%	85%	86%	89%	86%	87%	88%	90%	87%	88%

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Question 11: Service Quality (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Bedford:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Sewer services	86%	91%	89%	87%	90%	84%	90%	91%	90%	88%	90%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	86%	89%	89%	88%	89%	87%	88%	89%	93%	87%	89%
Town parks	90%	88%	92%	93%	90%	89%	92%	91%	96%	88%	92%
Recreation programs or classes	82%	88%	91%	85%	88%	90%	91%	87%	95%	86%	88%
Land use, planning and zoning	67%	61%	66%	71%	63%	70%	66%	59%	81%	55%	70%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	67%	73%	67%	77%	68%	72%	60%	71%	68%	65%	73%
Animal control	67%	81%	76%	66%	78%	76%	73%	75%	67%	71%	83%
Economic development	67%	63%	68%	75%	64%	72%	69%	61%	69%	63%	68%
Health services	75%	86%	88%	86%	84%	89%	85%	81%	88%	81%	87%
Services to seniors	89%	90%	91%	89%	92%	88%	95%	90%	100%	84%	93%
Services to youth	85%	72%	77%	89%	75%	86%	79%	75%	86%	73%	79%
Services to low-income people	88%	66%	65%	70%	70%	67%	68%	80%	45%	77%	72%
Public library services	92%	96%	97%	97%	96%	96%	99%	95%	96%	95%	96%
Public information services	88%	83%	91%	92%	86%	92%	89%	85%	89%	85%	89%
Public schools	92%	92%	95%	93%	93%	93%	94%	93%	95%	92%	95%
Cable television	79%	73%	70%	78%	73%	73%	72%	73%	94%	68%	74%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	79%	78%	80%	87%	77%	86%	83%	74%	83%	78%	79%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	83%	74%	73%	80%	75%	76%	79%	76%	70%	75%	80%

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Question 12: Government Services Overall (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
The Town of Bedford	94%	95%	94%	93%	95%	90%	96%	96%	97%	92%	97%
The Federal Government	55%	48%	51%	60%	50%	52%	54%	47%	54%	46%	55%
The State Government	53%	43%	45%	52%	46%	47%	51%	41%	58%	43%	46%

Question 13: Contact with Town Employees (Percent "yes")											
	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Bedford within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	69%	76%	72%	62%	76%	71%	72%	76%	58%	79%	70%

Question 14: Town Employees (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the Town of Bedford in your most recent contact?	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Knowledge	90%	91%	92%	86%	92%	81%	95%	93%	82%	89%	96%
Responsiveness	82%	90%	88%	74%	90%	74%	93%	91%	71%	87%	92%
Courtesy	81%	91%	95%	77%	93%	83%	92%	93%	75%	88%	97%
Overall impression	83%	90%	92%	79%	91%	80%	94%	90%	80%	86%	95%

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Question 15: Government Performance (Percent "excellent" or "good")											
Please rate the following categories of Bedford government performance:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
The value of services for the taxes paid to Bedford	71%	84%	73%	79%	77%	72%	81%	78%	67%	77%	80%
The overall direction that Bedford is taking	84%	80%	71%	84%	77%	69%	79%	80%	93%	74%	77%
The job Bedford government does at welcoming citizen involvement	68%	76%	73%	72%	73%	73%	76%	73%	61%	69%	82%
The job Bedford government does at listening to citizens	58%	70%	66%	73%	65%	67%	72%	63%	53%	61%	76%

Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity (Percent "somewhat" or "very" likely)											
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Recommend living in Bedford to someone who asks	96%	97%	94%	96%	96%	94%	95%	97%	100%	95%	96%
Remain in Bedford for the next five years	83%	91%	92%	80%	91%	84%	87%	93%	78%	90%	92%

Question 17: Impact of the Economy (Percent "somewhat" or "very" positive)											
	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:	9%	6%	8%	12%	6%	16%	4%	6%	7%	6%	9%

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Question 18a: Policy Question 1 (Percent "somewhat" or "very" familiar)											
How familiar, if at all, are you with each of the following Bedford Police Department programs?	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Citizen's Police Academy	9%	14%	17%	14%	14%	18%	8%	16%	7%	17%	13%
Bicycle safety education	15%	28%	24%	23%	22%	24%	14%	28%	3%	34%	18%
Crime prevention programs	12%	15%	20%	17%	15%	21%	8%	18%	6%	20%	14%
Seat belt/child passenger safety education	23%	30%	32%	26%	29%	30%	28%	30%	20%	37%	22%
Bedford Police Web site	18%	16%	20%	25%	16%	21%	18%	18%	15%	23%	13%
Vacation house checks (Away Book)	4%	18%	18%	12%	15%	18%	11%	13%	5%	14%	16%
Police station tours and safety education for children	11%	32%	28%	18%	27%	24%	19%	29%	5%	35%	20%
Anti-theft property ID program and auto glass etching	6%	10%	16%	10%	11%	14%	11%	9%	5%	10%	13%

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Question 18b: Policy Question 2 (Percent "somewhat" or "strongly" support)											
Town officials are often asked to increase efforts in different program areas. To what extent would you support or oppose increased effort for each of the following areas:	Length of residency in Bedford			Rent or own		Annual household income			Age		
	Less than 5 years	6 to 20 years	More than 20 years	Rent	Own	Less than $49,999	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more	18-34	35-54	55+
Traffic calming	93%	90%	95%	95%	92%	96%	90%	93%	94%	91%	94%
Traffic enforcement	92%	80%	90%	96%	85%	91%	90%	84%	77%	83%	93%
Conservation/open space land acquisition	91%	85%	86%	95%	85%	88%	89%	86%	93%	85%	87%
Indoor recreation activity space	95%	92%	84%	93%	89%	92%	91%	89%	96%	92%	85%
Enhance recreational programs for Middle School students	94%	90%	90%	93%	90%	87%	92%	92%	100%	89%	90%
Dedicated space/facilities for teens and Middle School students (i.e. Teen Center)	95%	90%	85%	95%	88%	91%	93%	88%	100%	89%	86%
Road improvements	95%	97%	99%	98%	97%	97%	99%	96%	96%	96%	99%
Sidewalk construction	93%	93%	88%	96%	90%	94%	90%	90%	90%	93%	89%
Youth athletic fields	92%	86%	79%	86%	84%	85%	83%	86%	96%	86%	81%
Adult athletic fields	80%	77%	69%	84%	72%	82%	76%	71%	86%	74%	71%
Synthetic turf fields	62%	55%	44%	55%	52%	56%	49%	55%	69%	60%	37%
Affordable housing	73%	71%	75%	95%	68%	87%	79%	63%	82%	64%	81%
Historic preservation	90%	84%	83%	90%	84%	83%	83%	87%	77%	86%	87%
Town Web site enhancement	88%	85%	83%	89%	84%	87%	87%	85%	89%	80%	90%
Bedford local transit service	93%	88%	94%	96%	90%	99%	95%	88%	90%	87%	97%

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