The National Citizen Survey™

Town of Bedford, MA
2009

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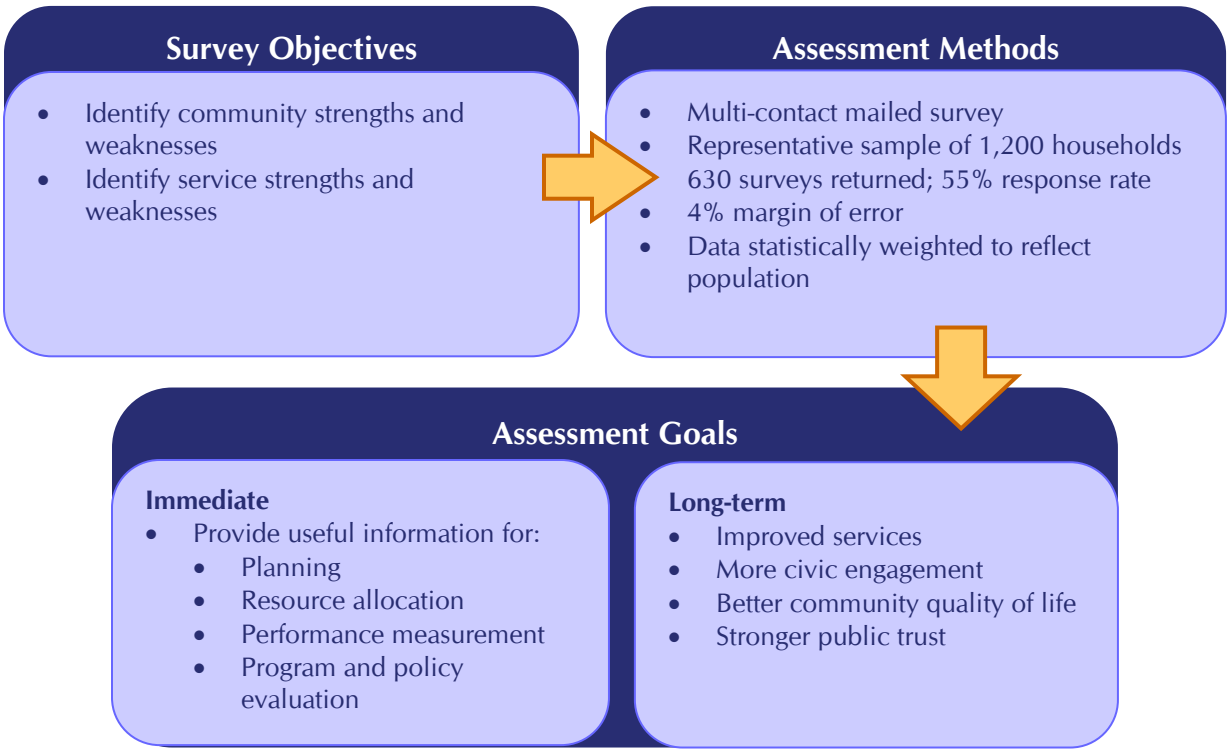
Survey Background

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 NCS was developed by NRC to provide a statistically valid survey of resident opinions about community and services provided by local government. The survey results may be used by staff, elected officials and other stakeholders for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement and policy making.

Figure 1: The National Citizen Survey™ Methods and Goals



The NCS focuses on a series of community characteristics and local government services, as well as issues of public trust. Resident behaviors related to civic engagement in the community also were measured in the survey.

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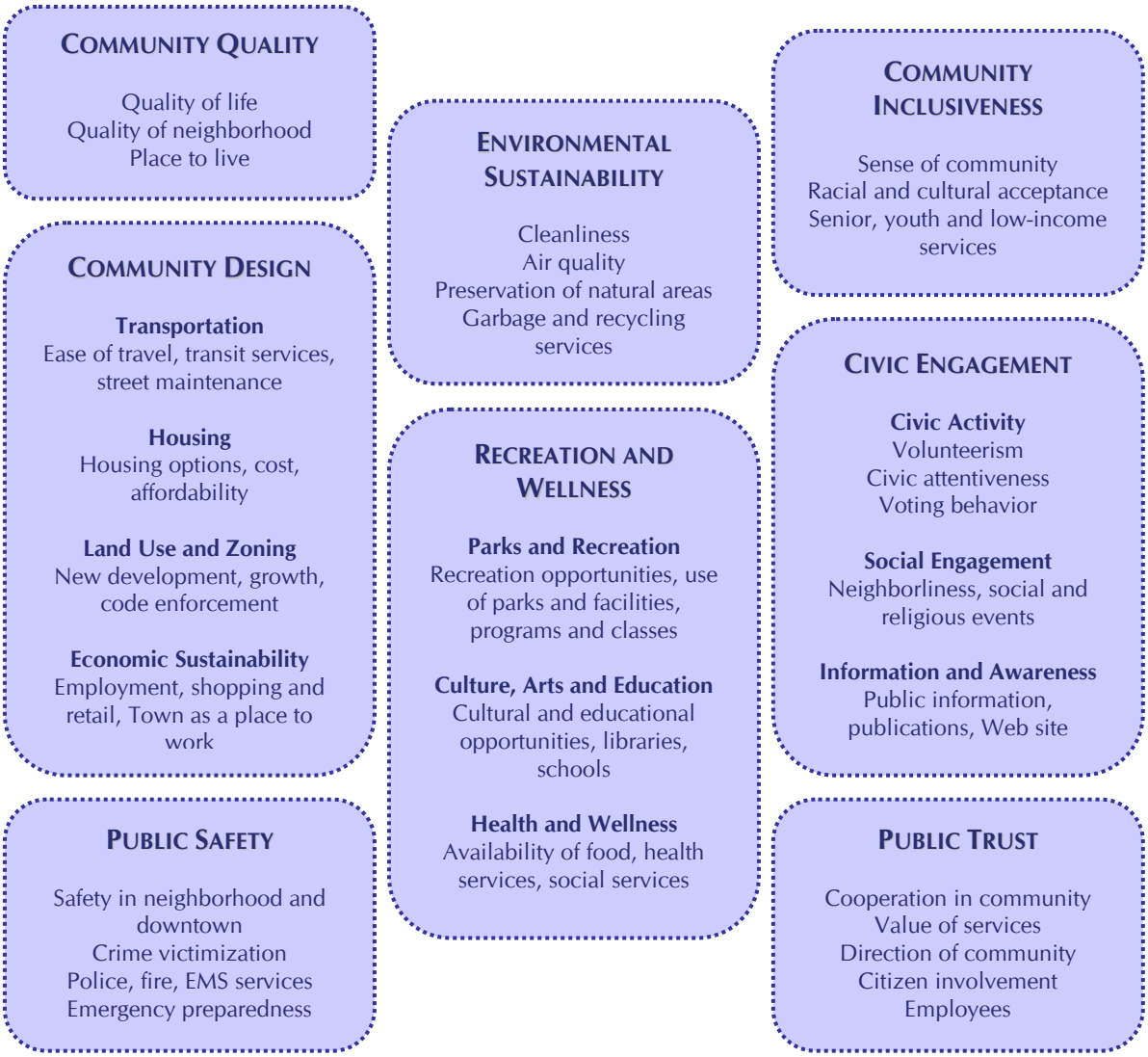
FIGURE 2: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ FOCUS AREAS



The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly 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. A total of 630 completed surveys were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 55%. Typically, response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for the Town of Bedford was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Bedford staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems and provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. Town of Bedford staff also augmented The National Citizen Survey™ basic service through a variety of options including demographic subgroup comparisons of the results as well as policy questions.

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Understanding the Results

As shown in Figure 2, this report is based around respondents' reports about eight larger categories: community quality, community design, public safety, environmental sustainability, recreation and wellness, community inclusiveness, civic engagement and public trust. Each section begins with residents' ratings of community characteristics and is followed by residents' ratings of service quality. For all evaluative questions, the percent of residents rating the service or community feature as "excellent" or "good" is presented. To see the full set of responses for each question on the survey, please see Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies.

Margin of Error

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a "level of confidence" and accompanying "confidence interval" (or margin of error). A traditional confidence level, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the estimates made from the survey results. The confidence interval for the Town of Bedford survey is no greater than plus or minus four percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (630 completed surveys). A 95% confidence interval indicates that for every 100 random samples of this many residents, the population response to that question would be within the stated interval 95 times. For example, if 75% of residents rate a service as "excellent" or "good," then the 5% margin of error (for the 95% confidence interval) indicates that the range of likely responses for the entire jurisdiction is between 70% and 80%.

Comparing Survey Results

Certain kinds of services tend to be thought better of by residents in many communities across the country. For example, public safety services tend to be received better than transportation services by residents of most American communities. Where possible, the better comparison is not from one service to another in the Town of Bedford, but from Town of Bedford services to services like them provided by other jurisdictions.

Benchmark Comparisons

NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services and gave their opinion about the quality of community life. The Town of Bedford chose to have comparisons made to the entire database. A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been provided when a similar question on the Town of Bedford Survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons were available, the Town of Bedford results were noted as being "above" the benchmark, "below" the benchmark or "similar to" the benchmark. This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of the Town of Bedford's rating to the benchmark. In some instances, the word "less" is used to describe a rating that is below the benchmark, but is from a non-evaluative question.

"Don't Know" Responses and Rounding

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.

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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.

For some questions, respondents were permitted to select more than one answer. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a multiple response question, it is because some respondents did select more than one response. When a table for a question that only permitted a single response does not total to exactly 100%, it is due to the customary practice of percentages being rounded to the nearest whole number.

For more information on understanding The NCS report, please see Appendix B: Survey Methodology.

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Executive Summary

This report of the Town of Bedford survey provides the opinions of a representative sample of residents about community quality of life, service delivery, civic participation and unique issues of local interest. A periodic sounding of resident opinion offers staff, elected officials and other stakeholders an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

Most residents experience a good quality of life in the Town of Bedford and believe the Town is a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the Town of Bedford was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 94% of respondents. Almost all report they plan on staying in the Town of Bedford for the next five years.

A variety of characteristics of the community was evaluated by those participating in the study. The characteristics receiving the most favorable ratings were the overall image or reputation of Bedford, opportunities to volunteer, sense of community, and opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events. The characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were traffic flow on major streets, ease of bus travel, and the availability of affordable quality housing.

Ratings of community characteristics were compared to the benchmark database. Of the 30 characteristics for which comparisons were available, 24 were above the benchmark comparison, three were similar to the benchmark comparison and three were below.

Residents in the Town of Bedford were very civically engaged. While 44% had attended a meeting of local elected public officials or other local public meeting in the previous 12 months, 96% had provided help to a friend or neighbor. A majority had volunteered their time to some group or activity in the Town of Bedford, which was higher than the benchmark.

In general, survey respondents demonstrated strong trust in local government. A majority rated the overall direction being taken by the Town of Bedford as "good" or "excellent." This was higher than the benchmark. Those residents who had interacted with an employee of the Town of Bedford in the previous 12 months gave high marks to those employees. Nearly all rated their overall impression of employees as "excellent" or "good."

On average, residents gave favorable ratings to all local government services. Town services rated were able to be compared to the benchmark database. Of the 35 services for which comparisons were available, 34 were above the benchmark comparison and one was similar to the benchmark.

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A Key Driver Analysis was conducted for the Town of Bedford which examined the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the Town of Bedford's services overall. Those key driver services that correlated most strongly with residents' perceptions about overall Town service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the Town of Bedford can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality. Services found to be influential in ratings of overall service quality from the Key Driver Analysis were:

- Snow removal
- Code enforcement
- Preservation of natural areas

Of these services, those deserving the most attention may be those that were below or similar to the benchmark comparisons: For each of the key driver services, the Town of Bedford is above the benchmark and should continue to ensure high quality performance.

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Community Ratings

Overall Community Quality

Overall quality of community life may be the single best indicator of success in providing the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to quality of community life in the Town of Bedford – not only direct questions about quality of life overall and in neighborhoods, but questions to measure residents' commitment to the Town of Bedford. Residents were asked whether they planned to move soon or if they would recommend the Town of Bedford to others. Intentions to stay and willingness to make recommendations provide evidence that the Town of Bedford offers services and amenities that work.

Almost all of the Town of Bedford's residents gave very high ratings to their neighborhoods and the community as a place to live. Further, most reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years.

Figure 3: Ratings of Overall Community Quality

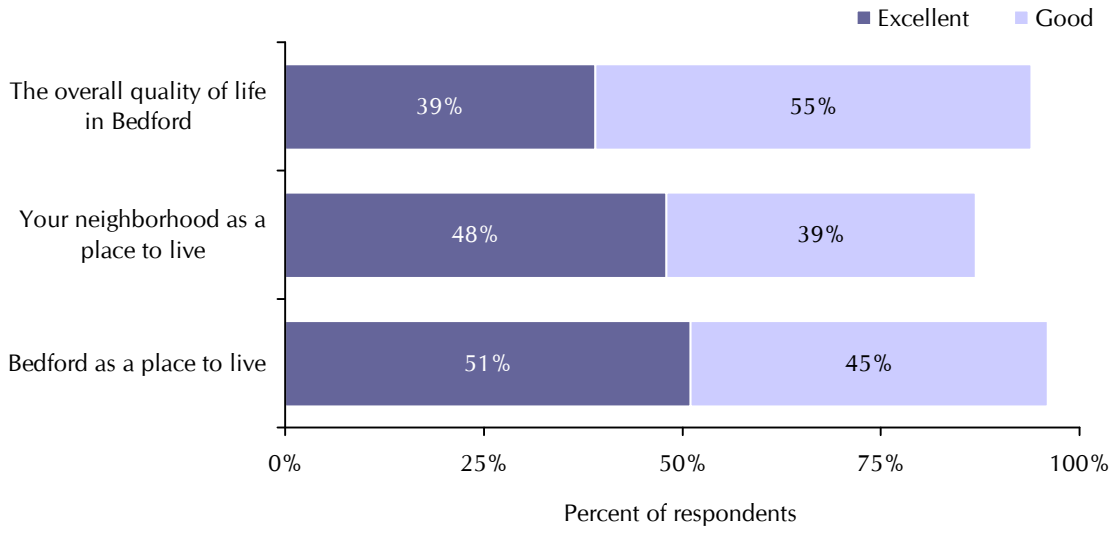

Figure 4: Likelihood of Remaining in Community and Recommending Community

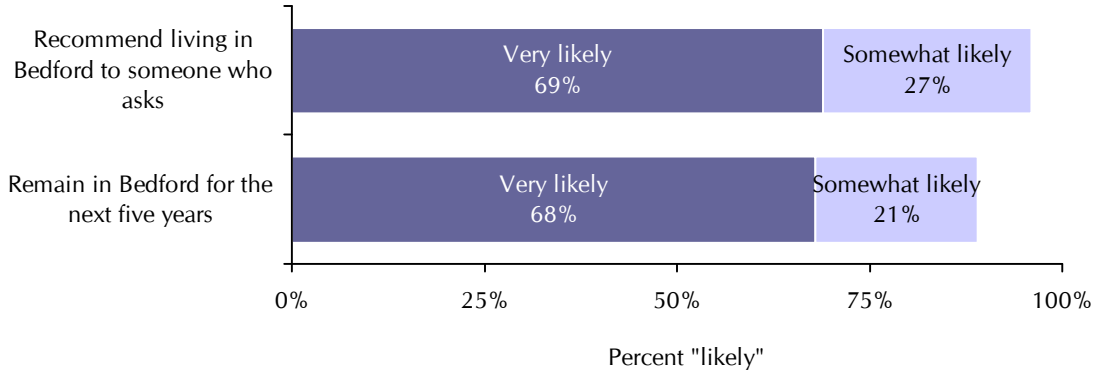

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FIGURE 5: OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Overall quality of life in Bedford	Above
Your neighborhood as place to live	Above
Bedford as a place to live	Above
Remain in Bedford for the next five years	Above
Recommend living in Bedford to someone who asks	Above

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Community Design

Transportation

The ability to move easily throughout a community can greatly affect the quality of life of residents by diminishing time wasted in traffic congestion and by providing opportunities to travel quickly and safely by modes other than the automobile. High quality options for resident mobility not only require local government to remove barriers to flow but they require government programs and policies that create quality opportunities for all modes of travel.

Residents responding to the survey were given a list of six aspects of mobility to rate on a scale of "excellent," "good," "fair" and "poor." The availability of paths and walking trails was given the most positive rating, followed by ease of bicycle travel in Bedford.

Figure 6: Ratings of Transportation in Community

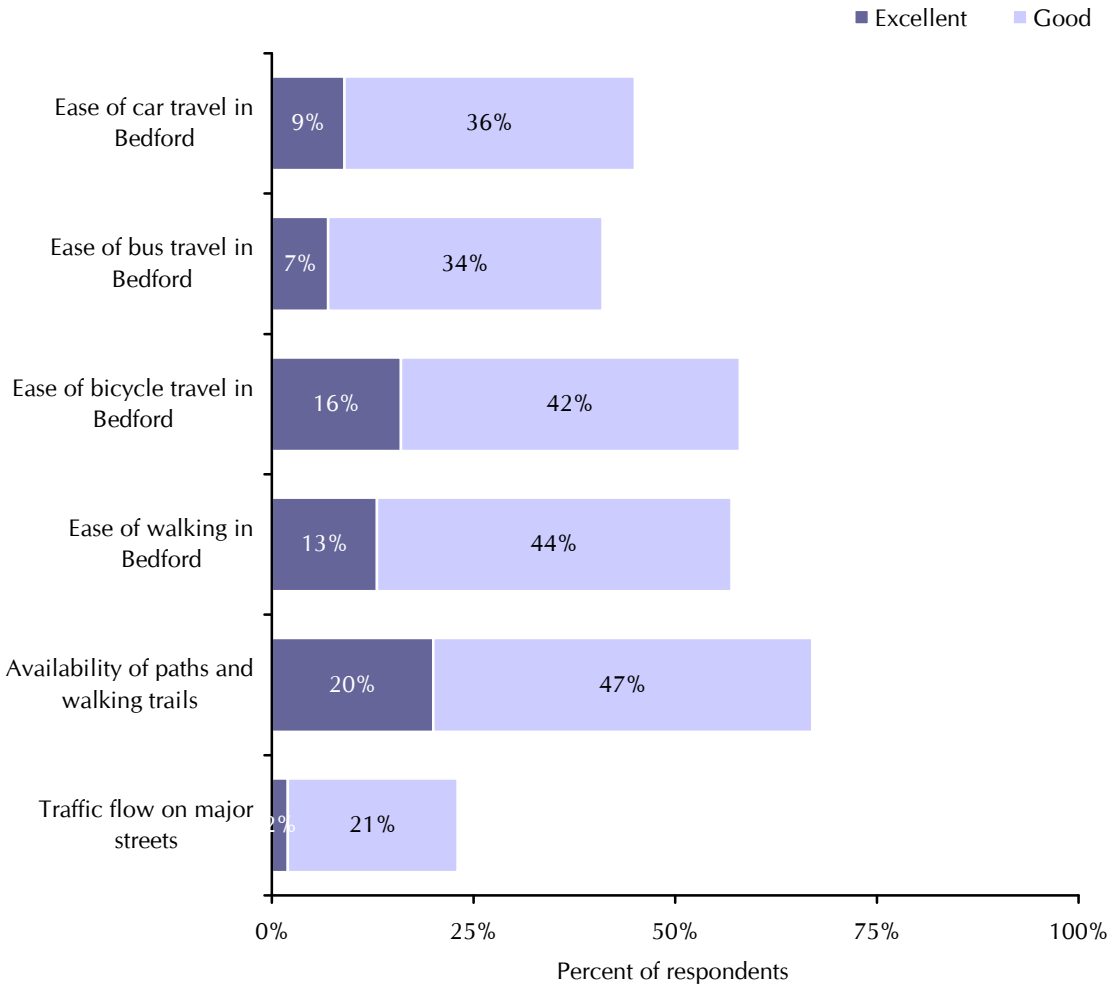

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FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Ease of bus travel in Bedford	Similar
Ease of car travel in Bedford	Below
Ease of walking in Bedford	Similar
Ease of bicycle travel in Bedford	Above
Availability of paths and walking trails	Above
Traffic flow on major streets	Below

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Seven transportation services were rated in Bedford. As compared to most communities across America, ratings tended to be very high. Six services were above the benchmark, one was similar and none were below the benchmark.

FIGURE 8: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES

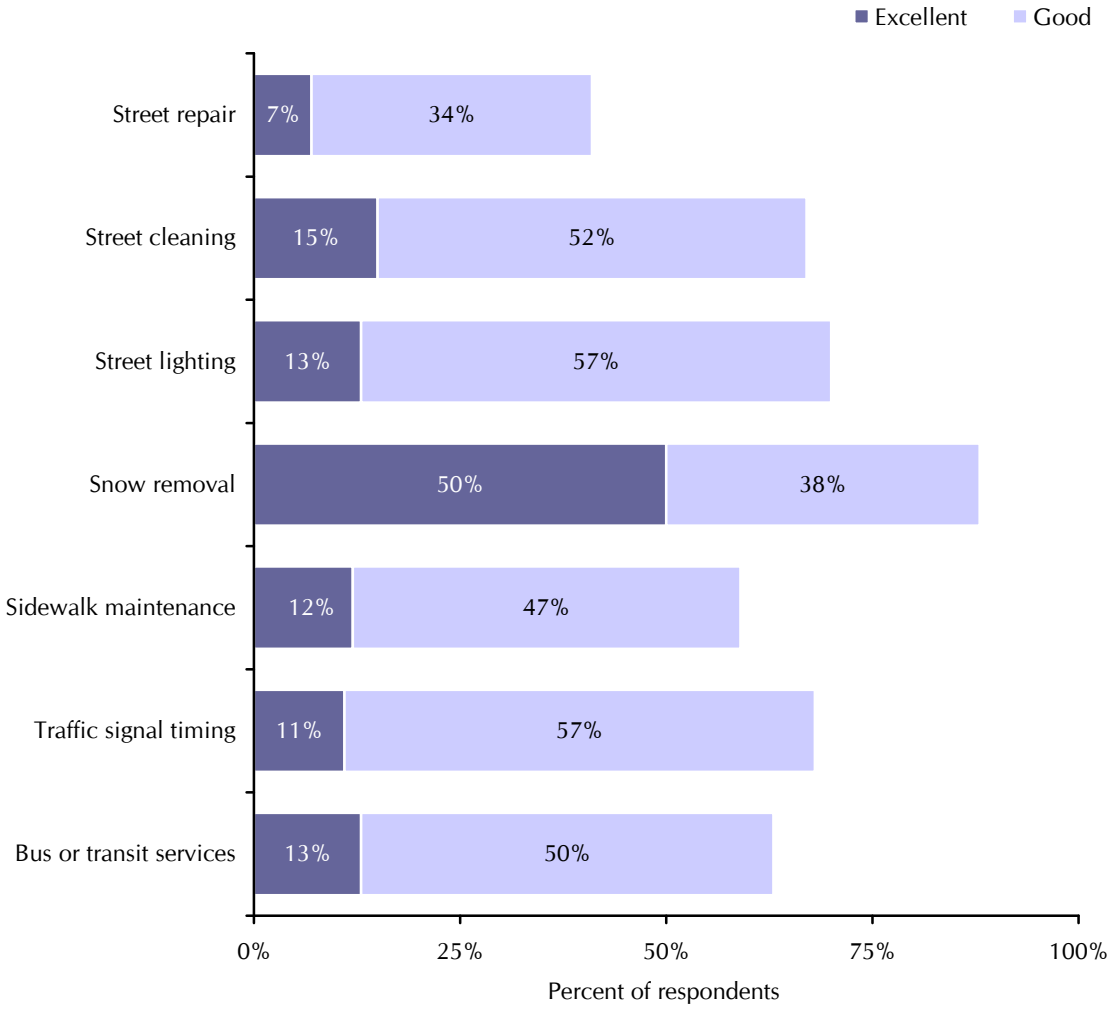

FIGURE 9: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Street repair /maintenance	Similar
Street cleaning	Above
Street lighting	Above
Snow removal	Above
Sidewalk maintenance	Above
Light timing	Above
Bus or transit services	Above

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By measuring choice of travel mode over time, communities can monitor their success in providing attractive alternatives to the traditional mode of travel, the single-occupied automobile. When asked how they typically traveled to work, single-occupancy (SOV) travel was the overwhelming mode of use. However, 2% of work commute trips were made by transit, 1% by bicycle and 1% by foot.

FIGURE 10: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE IN LAST 12 MONTHS

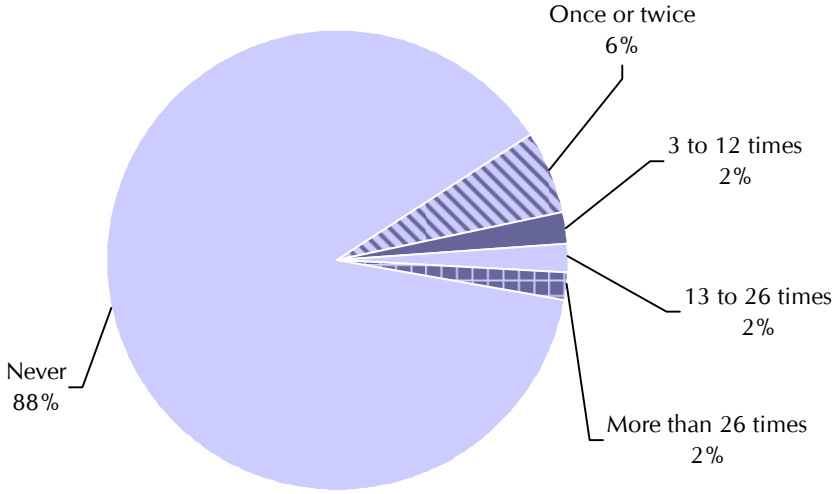
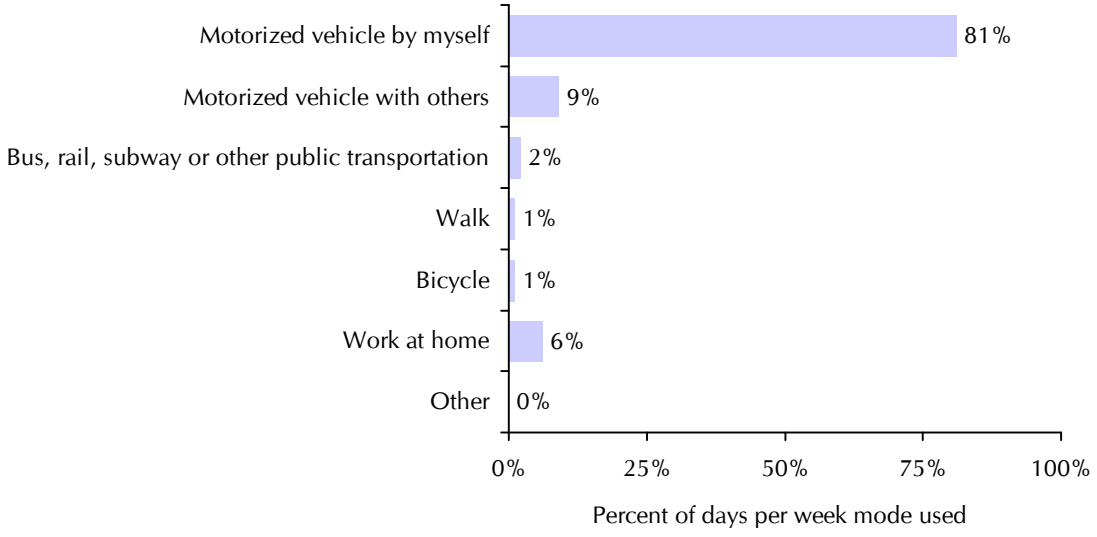


FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Ridden a local bus within Bedford	Below

FIGURE 12: MODE OF TRAVEL USED FOR WORK COMMUTE



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Housing

Housing variety and affordability are not luxuries for any community. When there are too few options for housing style and affordability, the characteristics of a community tilt heavily to a homogeneous palette, often of well-off residents. While this may seem attractive to a community, the absence of affordable townhomes, condominiums, mobile homes, single family detached homes and apartments means that in addition to losing the vibrancy of diverse thoughts and lifestyles, the community loses the service workers that sustain all communities – police officers, school teachers, house painters and electricians. These workers must live elsewhere and commute in at great personal cost and to the detriment of traffic flow and air quality. Furthermore, lower income residents who can sustain in a community with mostly high cost housing pay so much of their income to rent or mortgage that little remains to bolster their own quality of life or local business.

The survey of the Town of Bedford residents asked respondents to reflect on the availability of affordable housing as well as the variety of housing options. The availability of affordable housing was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 39% of respondents, while the variety of housing options was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 56% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was better in the Town of Bedford than the ratings, on average, in comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 13: RATINGS OF HOUSING IN COMMUNITY

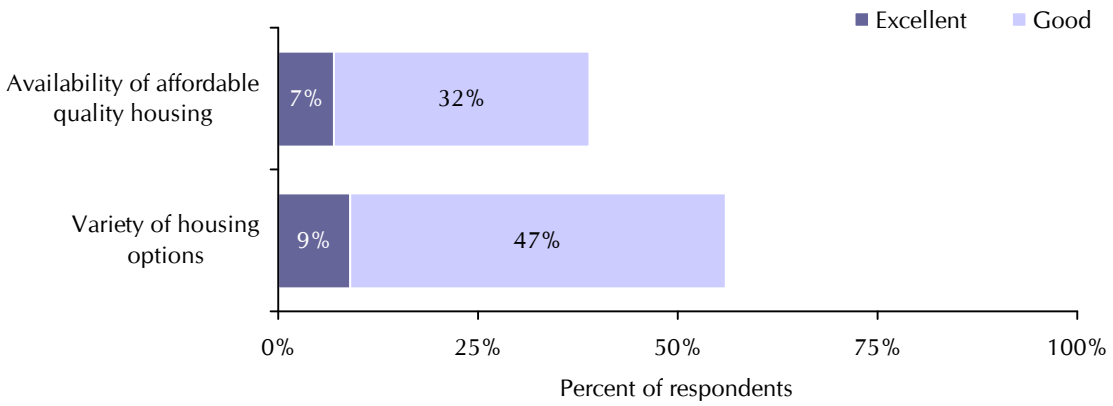

FIGURE 14: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable quality housing	Above
Variety of housing options	Similar

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To augment the perceptions of affordable housing in Bedford, the cost of housing as reported in the survey was compared to residents' reported monthly income to create a rough estimate of the proportion of residents of the Town of Bedford experiencing housing cost stress. About one third of survey participants were found to pay housing costs of more than 30% of their monthly household income.

FIGURE 15: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHOSE HOUSING COSTS ARE "AFFORDABLE"

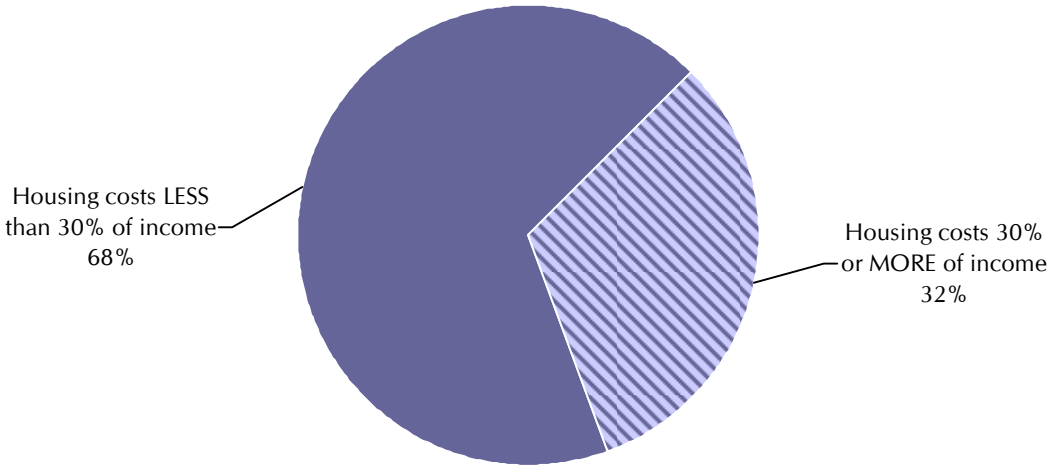

FIGURE 16: HOUSING COSTS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Experiencing housing costs stress (housing costs 30% or more of income)	Below

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Land Use and Zoning

Community development contributes to a feeling among residents and even visitors of the attention given to the speed of growth, the location of residences and businesses, the kind of housing that is appropriate for the community and the ease of access to commerce, green space and residences. Even the community's overall appearance often is attributed to the planning and enforcement functions of the local jurisdiction. Residents will appreciate an attractive, well-planned community. The NCS questionnaire asked residents to evaluate the quality of new development, the appearance of the Town of Bedford and the speed of population growth. Problems with the appearance of property were rated, and the quality of land use planning, zoning and code enforcement services were evaluated.

The overall quality of new development in the Town of Bedford was rated as "excellent" by 12% of respondents and as "good" by an additional 51%. The overall appearance of Bedford was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 77% of respondents and was higher than the benchmark. When rating to what extent run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles were a problem in the Town of Bedford, 21% thought they were a "major" or "moderate" problem.

FIGURE 17: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S "BUILT ENVIRONMENT"

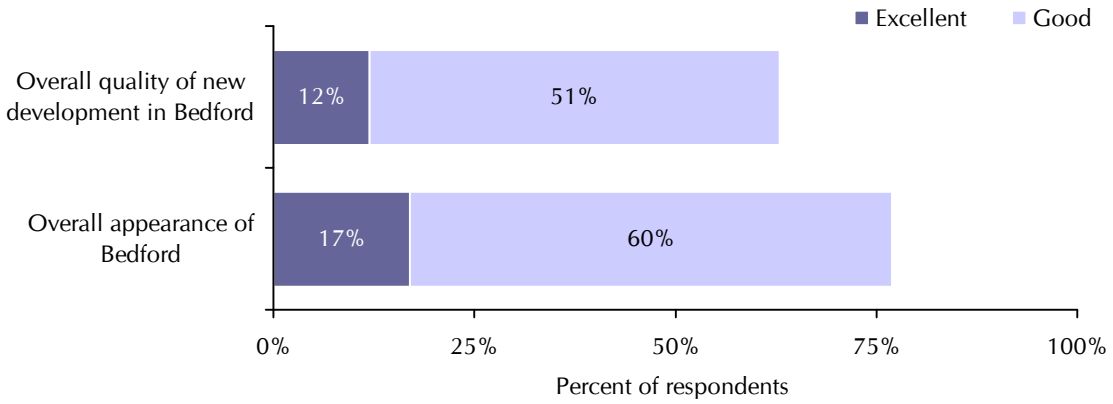

FIGURE 18: BUILT ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of new development in town	Above
Overall appearance of Bedford	Above

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FIGURE 19: RATINGS OF POPULATION GROWTH

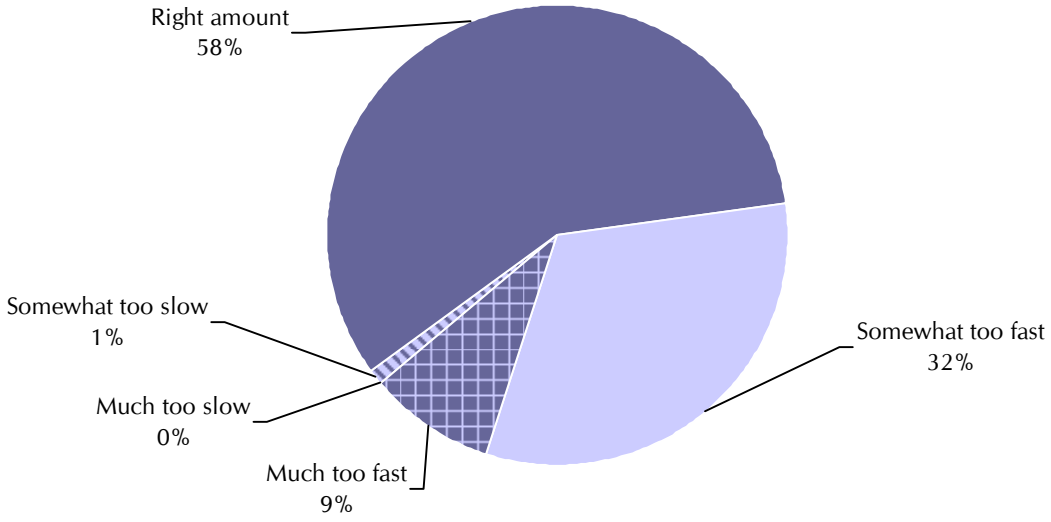

FIGURE 20: POPULATION GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Population growth seen as too fast	Below

FIGURE 21: RATINGS OF NUISANCE PROBLEMS

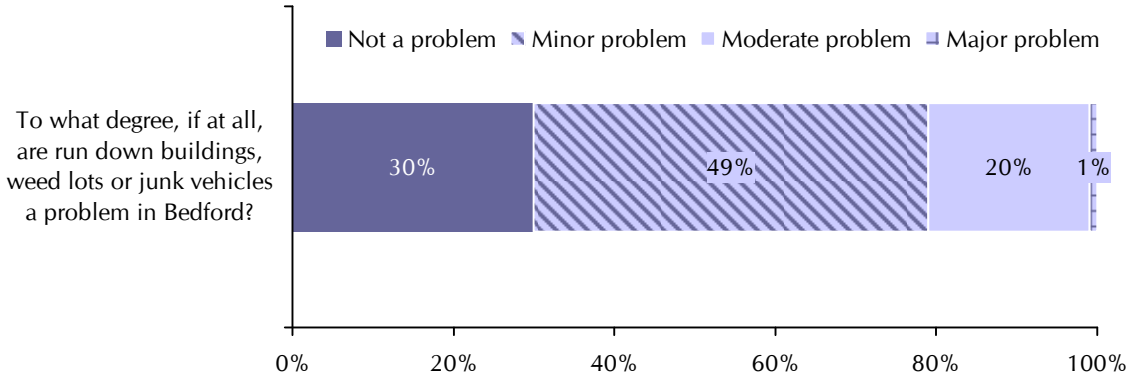

FIGURE 22: NUISANCE PROBLEMS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Run down buildings, weed lots and junk vehicles are a "major" problem	Below

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FIGURE 23: RATINGS OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

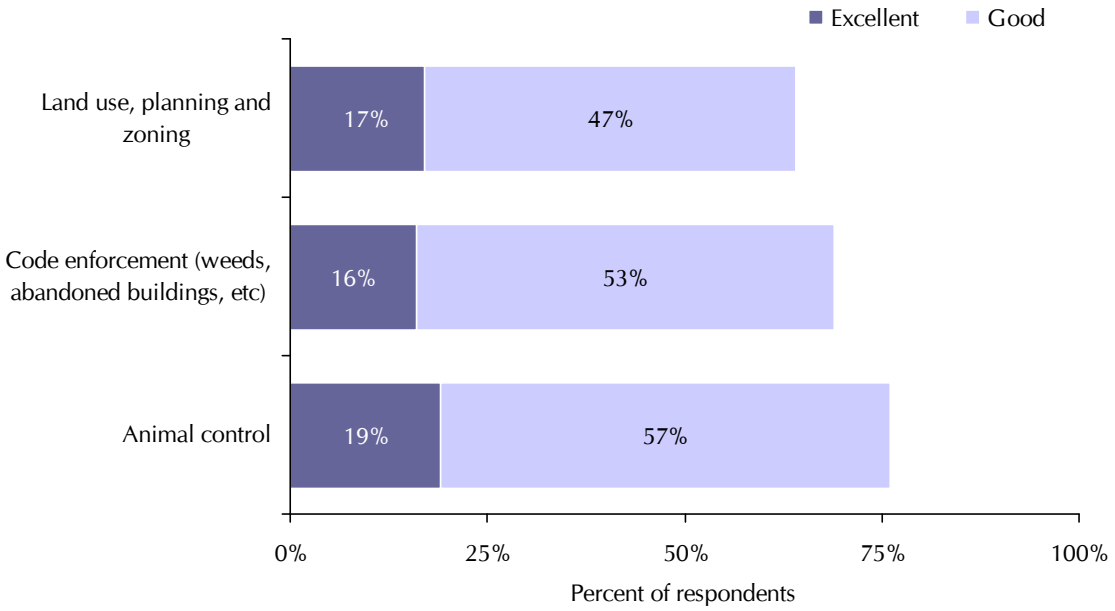

FIGURE 24: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Land use, planning and zoning	Above
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	Above
Animal control	Above

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Economic Sustainability

The health of the economy may color how residents perceive their environment and all the services that local government delivers. In particular, a strong or weak local economy will shape what residents think about job and shopping opportunities. Just as residents have an idea about the speed of local population growth, they have a sense of how fast job and shopping opportunities are growing.

Survey respondents were asked to rate a number of community features related to economic opportunity and growth. The most positively rated features were Bedford as a place to work and shopping opportunities. Receiving the lowest rating was employment opportunities.

Figure 25: Ratings of Economic Sustainability and Opportunities

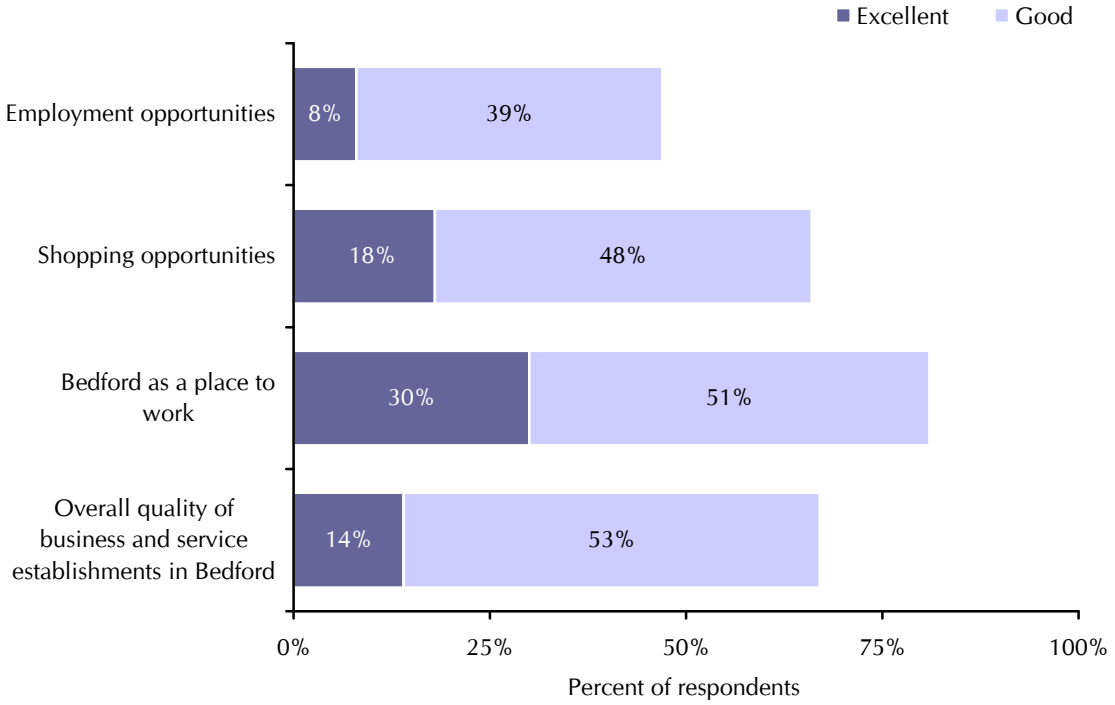

Figure 26: Economic Sustainability and Opportunities Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Employment opportunities	Above
Shopping opportunities	Above
Place to work	Above
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Bedford	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Residents were asked to evaluate the speed of jobs growth and retail growth on scale from "much too slow" to "much too fast." When asked about the rate of job growth in Bedford, 60% responded that it was "too slow," while 27% reported retail growth as "too slow." Fewer residents in Bedford compared to other jurisdictions believed that retail growth was too slow and fewer residents believed that job growth was too slow.

FIGURE 27: RATINGS OF RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH

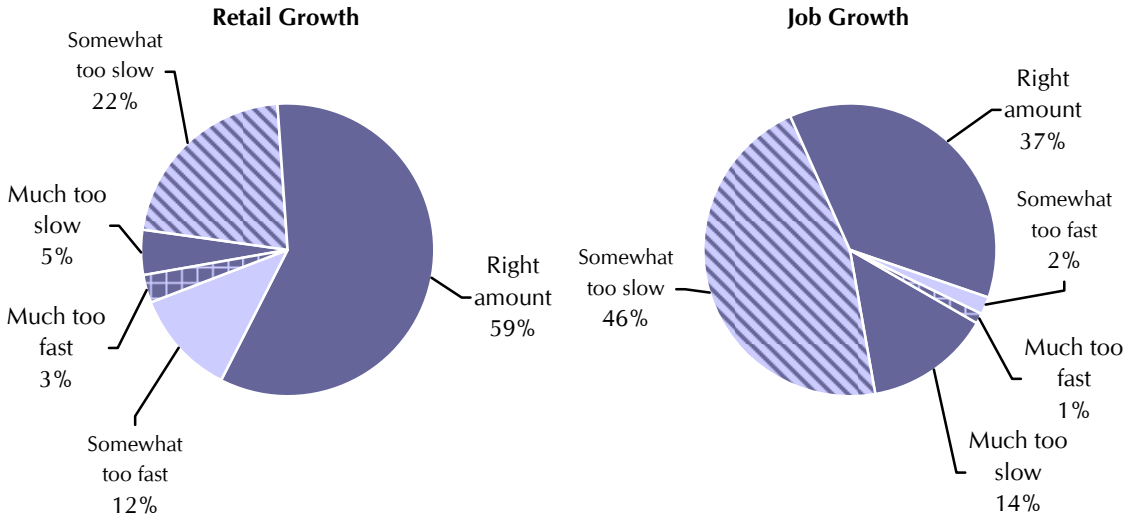

FIGURE 28: RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Retail growth seen as too slow	Below
Jobs growth seen as too slow	Below

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FIGURE 29: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

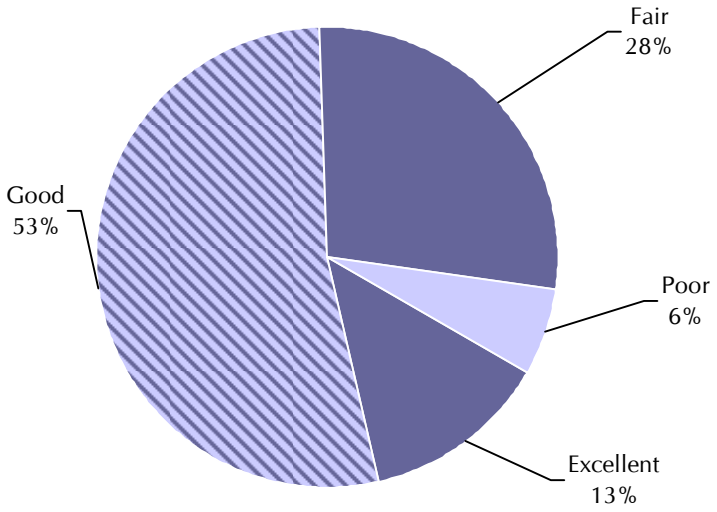

FIGURE 30: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Economic development	Above

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Residents were asked to reflect on their economic prospects in the near term. Seven percent of the Town of Bedford residents expected that the coming six months would have a "somewhat" or "very" positive impact on their family, while 58% felt that the economic future would be "somewhat" or "very" negative. The percent of residents with an optimistic outlook on their household income was less than in comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 31: RATINGS OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE

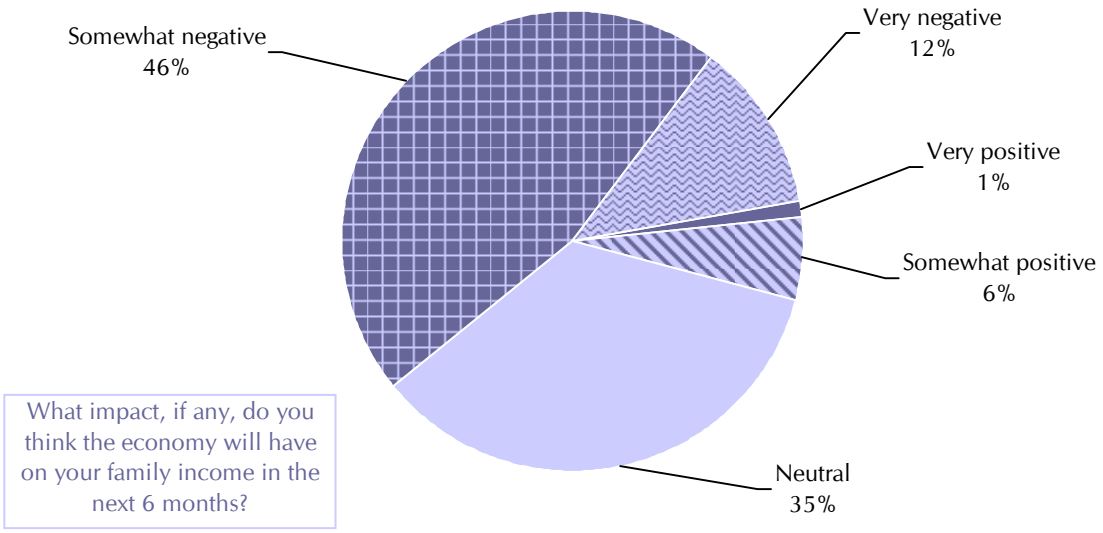

FIGURE 32: PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Positive impact of economy on household income	Below

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Public Safety

Safety from violent or property crimes creates the cornerstone of an attractive community. No one wants to live in fear of crime, fire or natural hazards, and communities in which residents feel protected or unthreatened are communities that are more likely to show growth in population, commerce and property value.

Residents were asked to rate their feelings of safety from violent crimes, property crimes, fire and environmental dangers and to evaluate the local agencies whose main charge is to provide protection from these dangers. Most gave positive ratings of safety in the Town Bedford. About 86% percent of those completing the questionnaire said they felt "very" or "somewhat" safe from violent crimes and 83% felt "very" or "somewhat" safe from environmental hazards.

Figure 33: Ratings of Community and Personal Public Safety

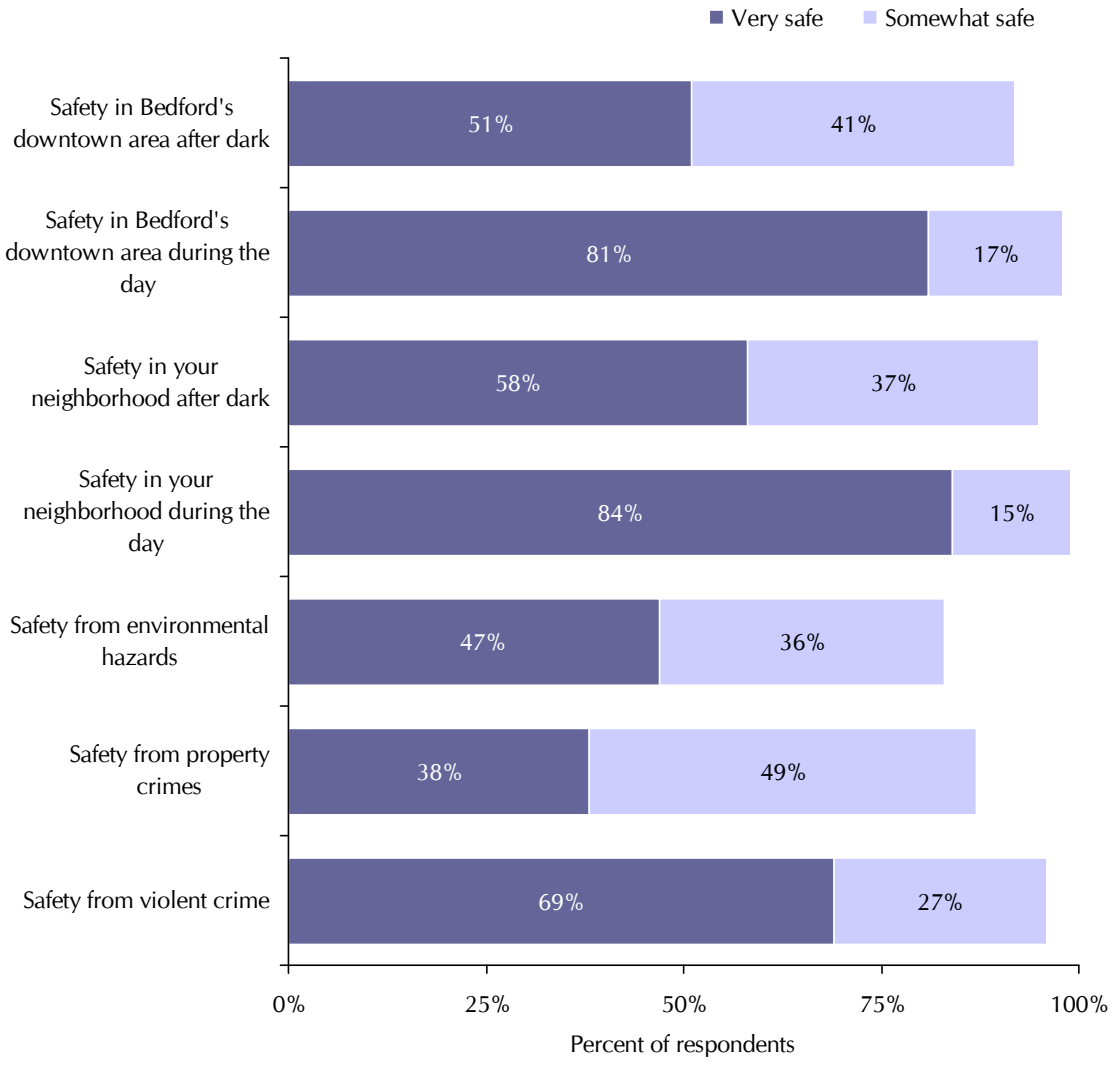

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FIGURE 34: COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Safety in your neighborhood during the day	Above
Safety in your neighborhood after dark	Above
Safety in Bedford's downtown area during the day	Above
Safety in Bedford's downtown area after dark	Above
Safety from violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	Above
Safety from property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	Above
Toxic waste or other environmental hazard(s)	Above

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As assessed by the survey, 5% of respondents reported that someone in the household had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 68% had reported it to police. Compared to other jurisdictions fewer Bedford residents had been victims of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey and fewer Bedford residents had reported their most recent crime victimization to the police.

FIGURE 35: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING

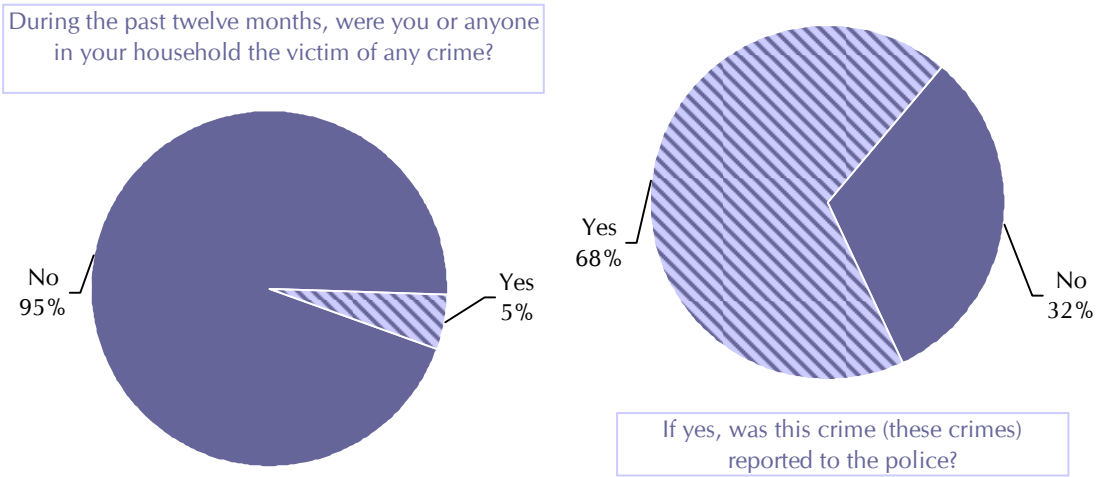


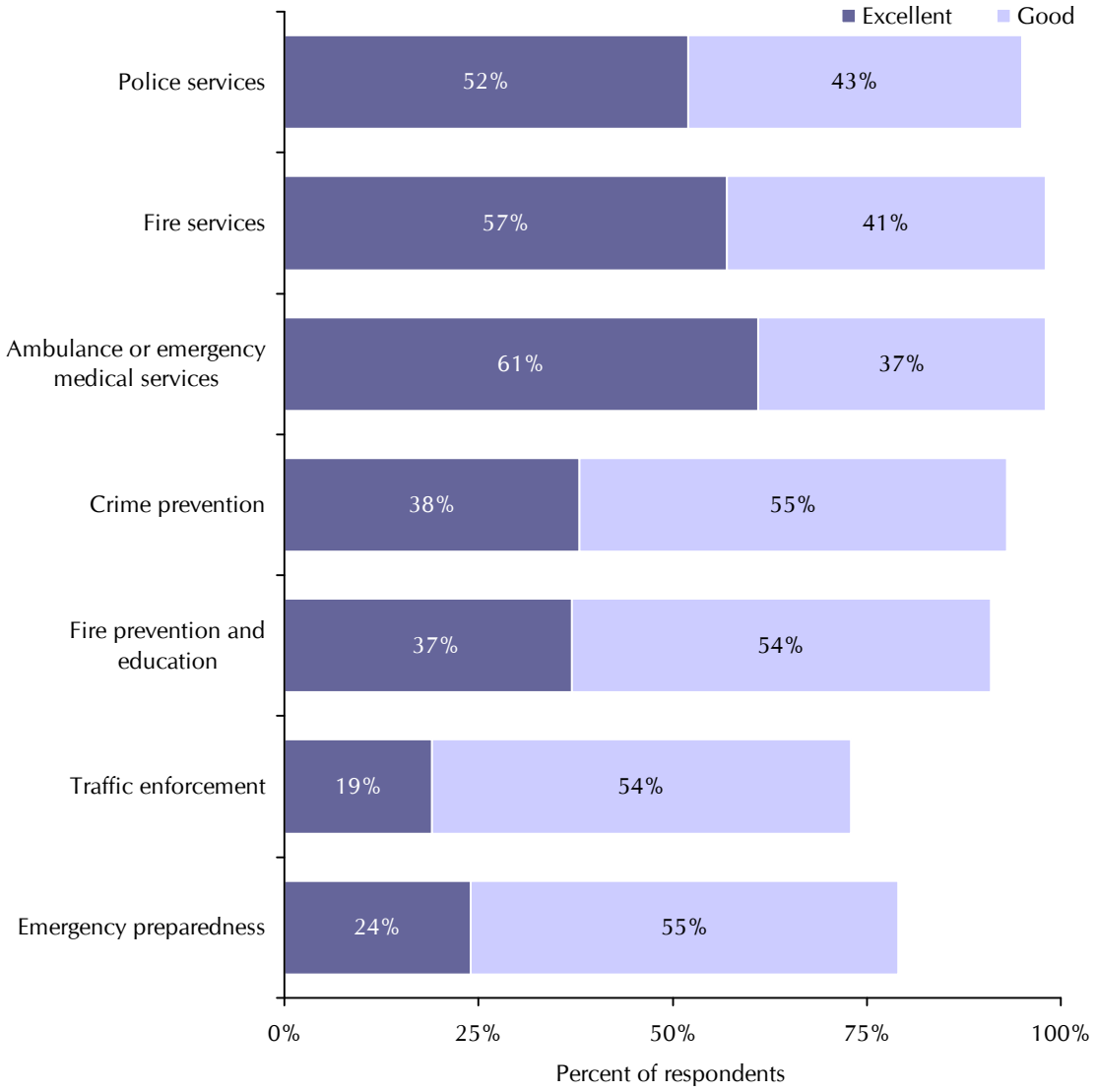
FIGURE 36: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Victim of crime	Less
Reported crimes	Less

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Residents rated seven Town public safety services; of these, all were rated above the benchmark comparison. Fire and Ambulance or emergency medical services received the highest ratings, while traffic enforcement and emergency preparedness received the lowest ratings.

FIGURE 37: RATINGS OF PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 38: PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Police services	Above
Fire services	Above
EMS/ambulance	Above
Crime prevention	Above
Fire prevention and education	Above
Traffic enforcement	Above
Emergency preparedness	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Environmental Sustainability

Residents value the aesthetic qualities of their hometowns and appreciate features such as overall cleanliness and landscaping. In addition, the appearance and smell or taste of the air and water do not go unnoticed. These days, increasing attention is paid to proper treatment of the environment. At the same time that they are attending to community appearance and cleanliness, cities, counties, states and the nation are going "Green". These strengthening environmental concerns extend to trash haul, recycling, sewer services, the delivery of power and water and preservation of open spaces. Treatment of the environment affects air and water quality and, generally, how habitable and inviting a place appears

Residents of the Town of Bedford were asked to evaluate their local environment and the services provided to ensure its quality. The overall quality of the natural environment was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 81% of survey respondents. Air quality and the cleanliness off Bedford received the highest ratings, and all service were above the benchmark.

Figure 39: Ratings of the Community's Natural Environment

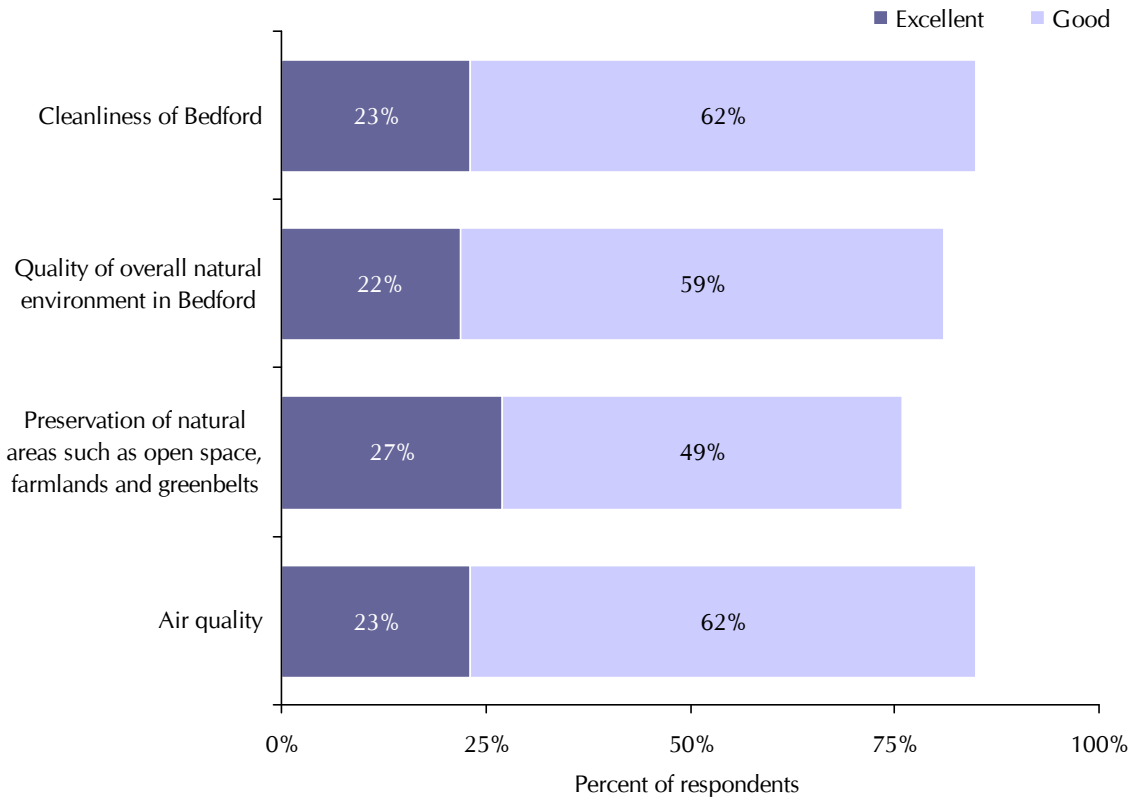


Figure 40: Community Environment Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Cleanliness of Bedford	Above
Quality of overall natural environment in Bedford	Above
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	Above
Air quality	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Resident recycling was greater than recycling reported in comparison communities.

FIGURE 41: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS

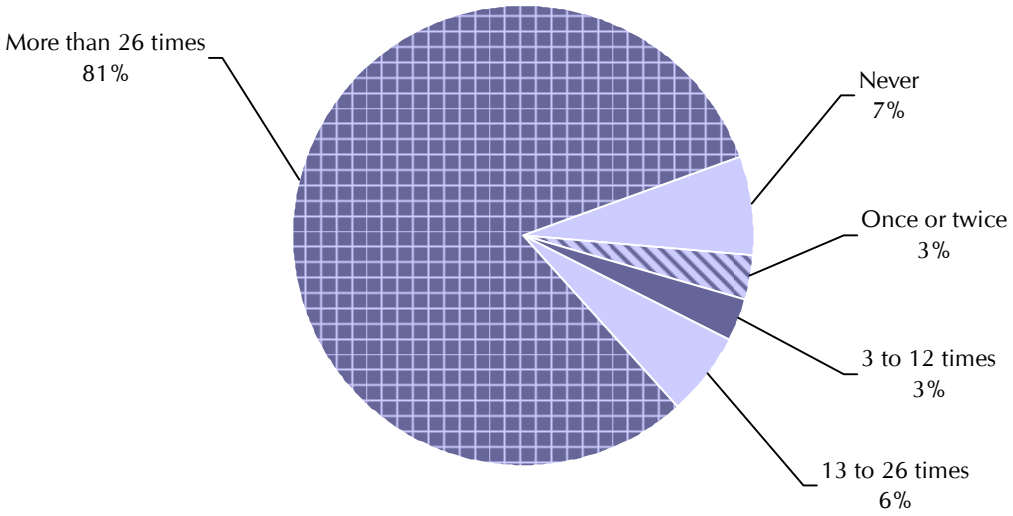


FIGURE 42: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

All of the seven utility services rated by those completing the questionnaire were higher than the benchmark comparison.

FIGURE 43: RATINGS OF UTILITY SERVICES

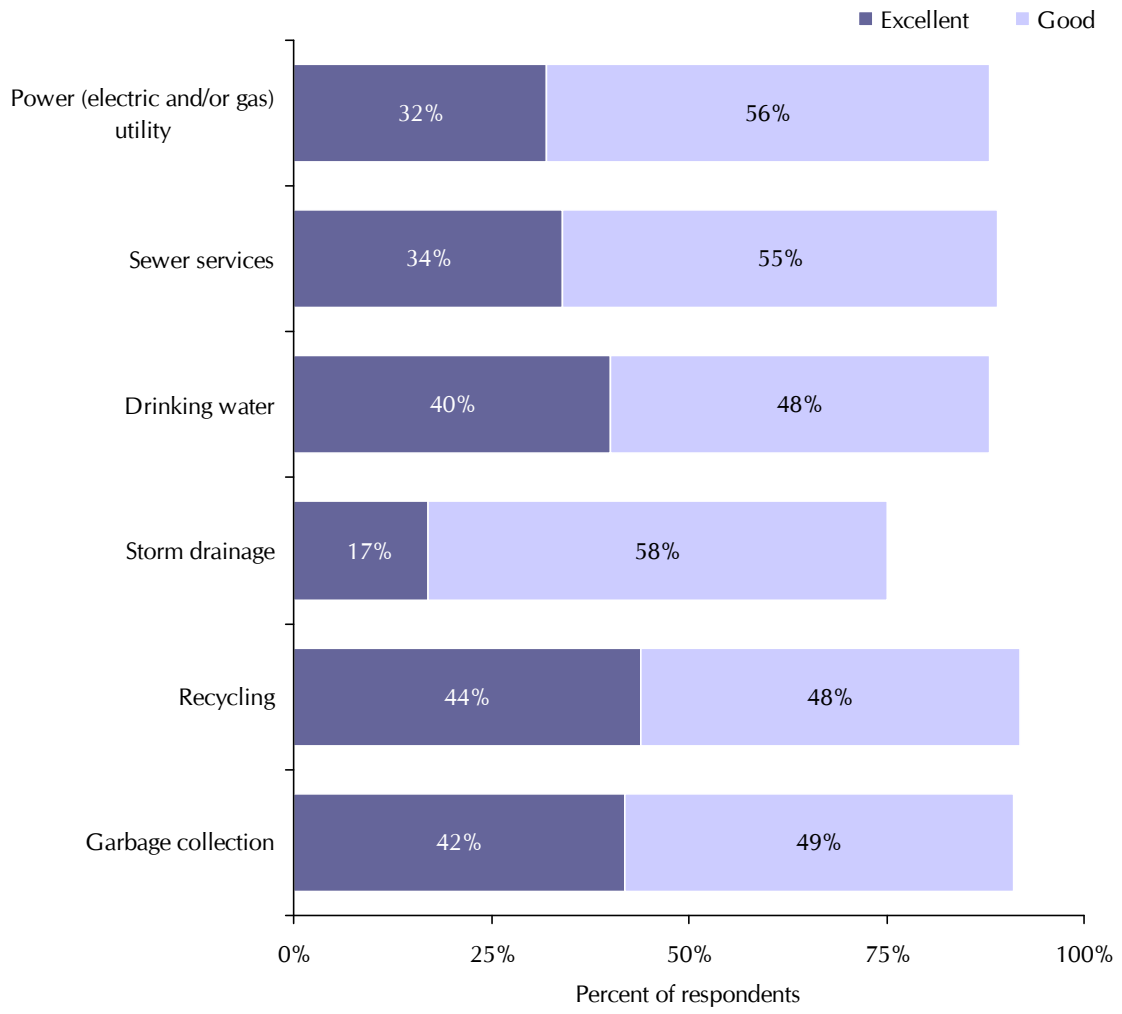


FIGURE 44: UTILITY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	Above
Sewer services	Above
Drinking water	Above
Storm drainage	Above
Recycling	Above
Garbage collection	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Recreation and Wellness

Parks and Recreation

Quality parks and recreation opportunities help to define a community as more than the grind of its business, traffic and hard work. Leisure activities vastly can improve the quality of life of residents, serving both to entertain and mobilize good health. The survey contained questions seeking residents' perspectives about opportunities and services related to the community's parks and recreation services.

Recreation opportunities in the Town of Bedford were rated positively as were services related to parks and recreation.

Resident use of Bedford parks and recreation facilities tells its own story about the attractiveness and accessibility of those services. The percent of residents that reported recreation program use in Bedford was higher than use in comparison jurisdictions.

Figure 45: Ratings of Community Recreational Opportunities

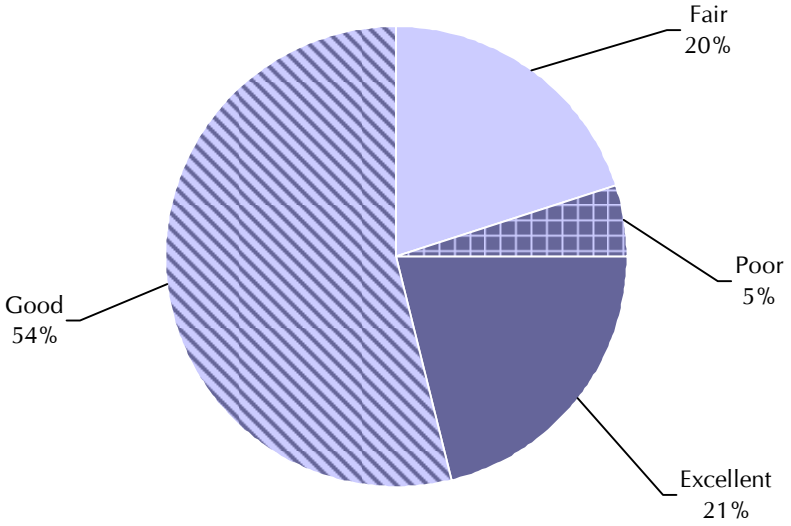


Figure 46: Community Recreational Opportunities Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Recreation opportunities	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 47: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

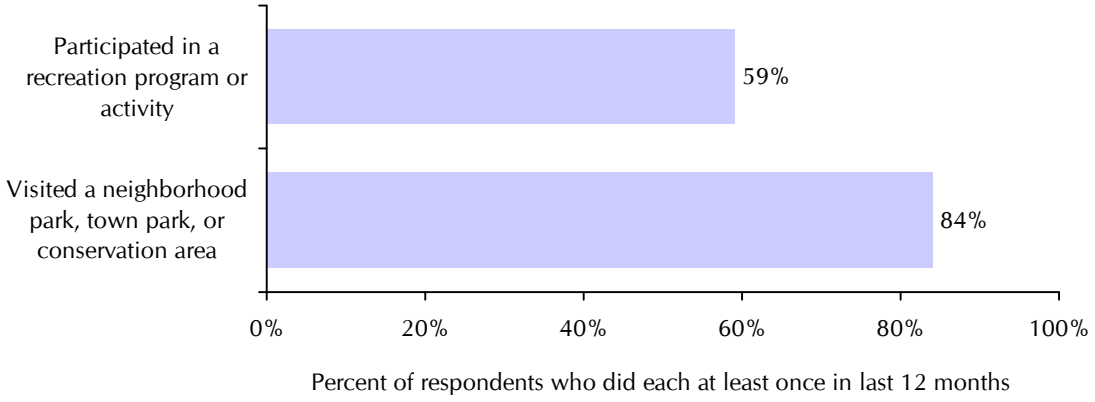


FIGURE 48: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Participated in a recreation program or activity	Above
Visited a neighborhood park, town park, or conservation area	Similar

FIGURE 49: RATINGS OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

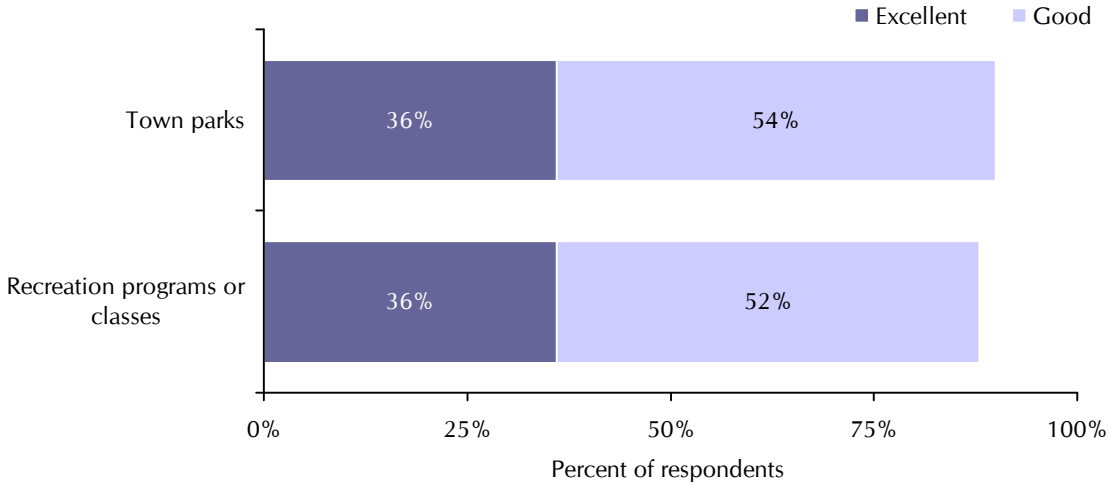


FIGURE 50: PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Town parks	Above
Recreation programs or classes	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Culture, Arts and Education

A full service community does not address only the life and safety of its residents. Like an individual who drudges to the office and returns home, a community that pays attention only to the life sustaining basics becomes insular, dreary and uninspiring to business and individuals. In the case of communities without thriving culture, arts and education opportunities, the magnet that attracts those who might consider relocating there is vastly weakened. Cultural, artistic, social and educational services elevate the opportunities for personal growth among residents. In the survey, residents were asked about the quality of opportunities to participate in cultural and educational activities.

Opportunities to attend cultural activities were rated as "excellent" or "good" by 49% of respondents. Educational opportunities were rated as "excellent" or "good" by 60% of respondents. Compared to the benchmark data, educational opportunities were above the average of comparison jurisdictions, while cultural activity opportunities were rated below the benchmark comparison.

About 89% of Bedford residents used a Town library at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. This participation rate for library use was above that of comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 51: RATINGS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

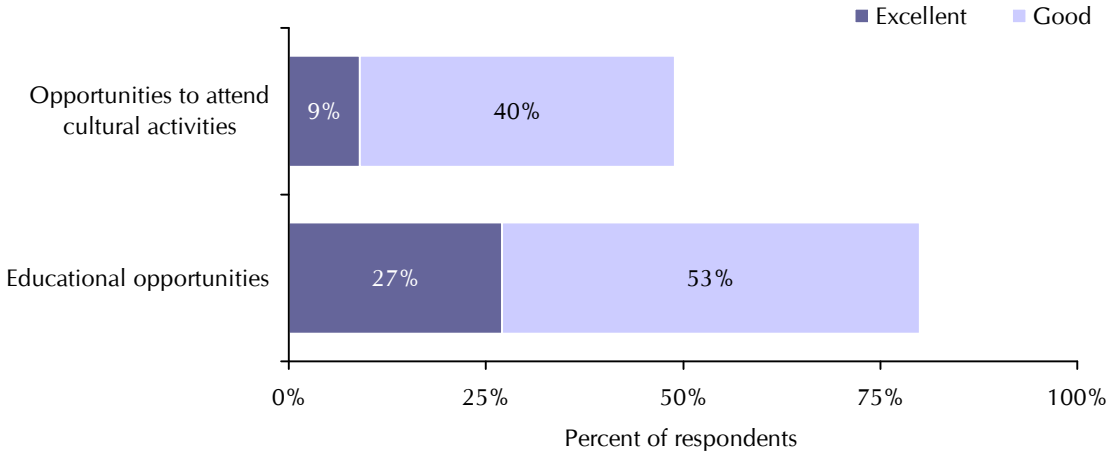


FIGURE 52: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	Below
Educational opportunities	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 53: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

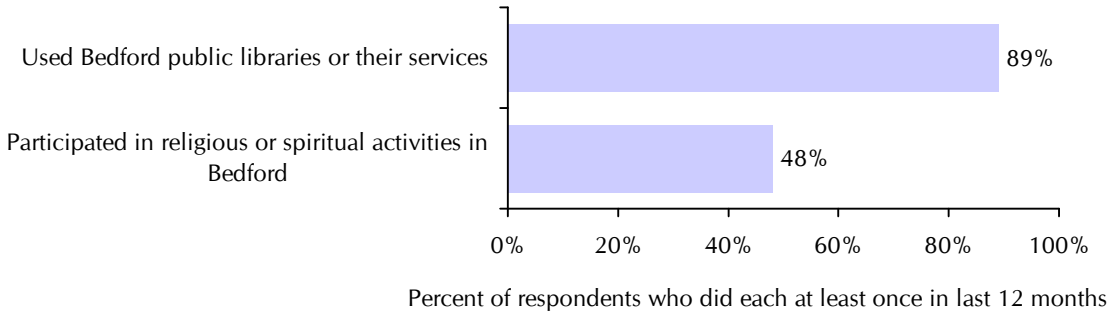


FIGURE 54: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Used Bedford public libraries or their services	Above
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Bedford	Below

FIGURE 55: PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

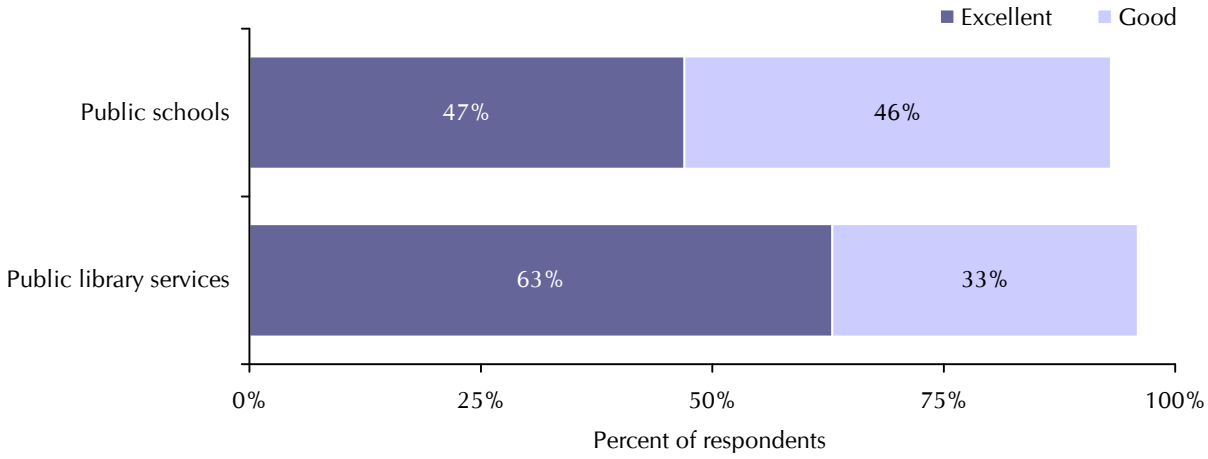


FIGURE 56: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Public schools	Above
Public library services	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Health and Wellness

Healthy residents have the wherewithal to contribute to the economy as volunteers or employees and they do not present a burden in cost and time to others. Although residents bear the primary responsibility for their good health, local government provides services that can foster that well being and that provide care when residents are ill.

Residents of the Town of Bedford were asked to rate the community's health services as well as the availability of health care, high quality affordable food and preventive health care services. The availability of affordable quality food was rated most positively for the Town of Bedford, while the availability of affordable quality health care and preventative health services were rated slightly less favorably by residents.

Among Bedford residents, 52% rated affordable quality health care as "excellent" while 11% rated it as "good." Those ratings were above the ratings of comparison communities.

FIGURE 57: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

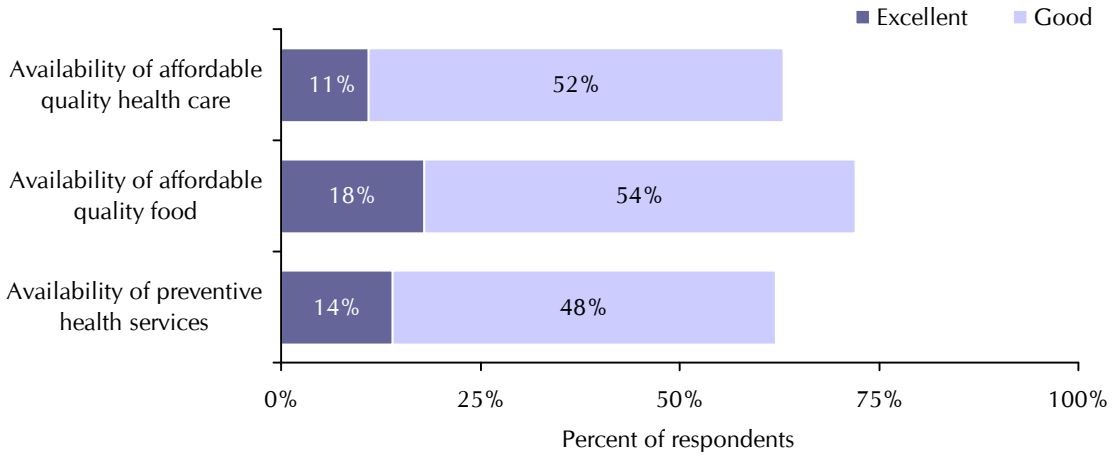


FIGURE 58: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable quality health care	Above
Availability of affordable quality food	Above
Availability of preventive health services	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 59: RATINGS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

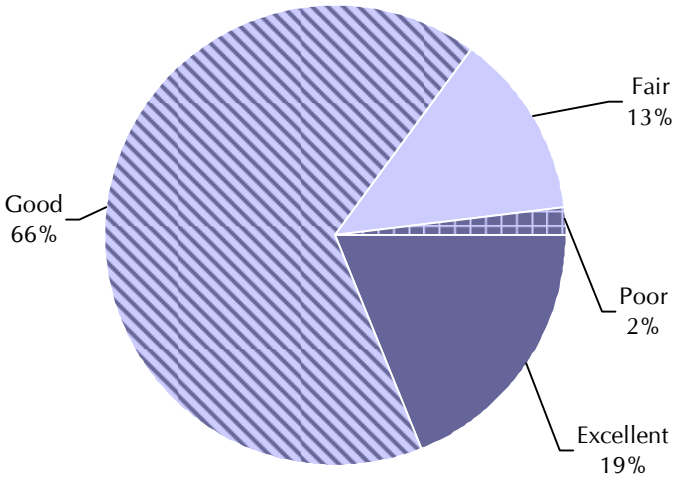


FIGURE 60: HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Health services	Above

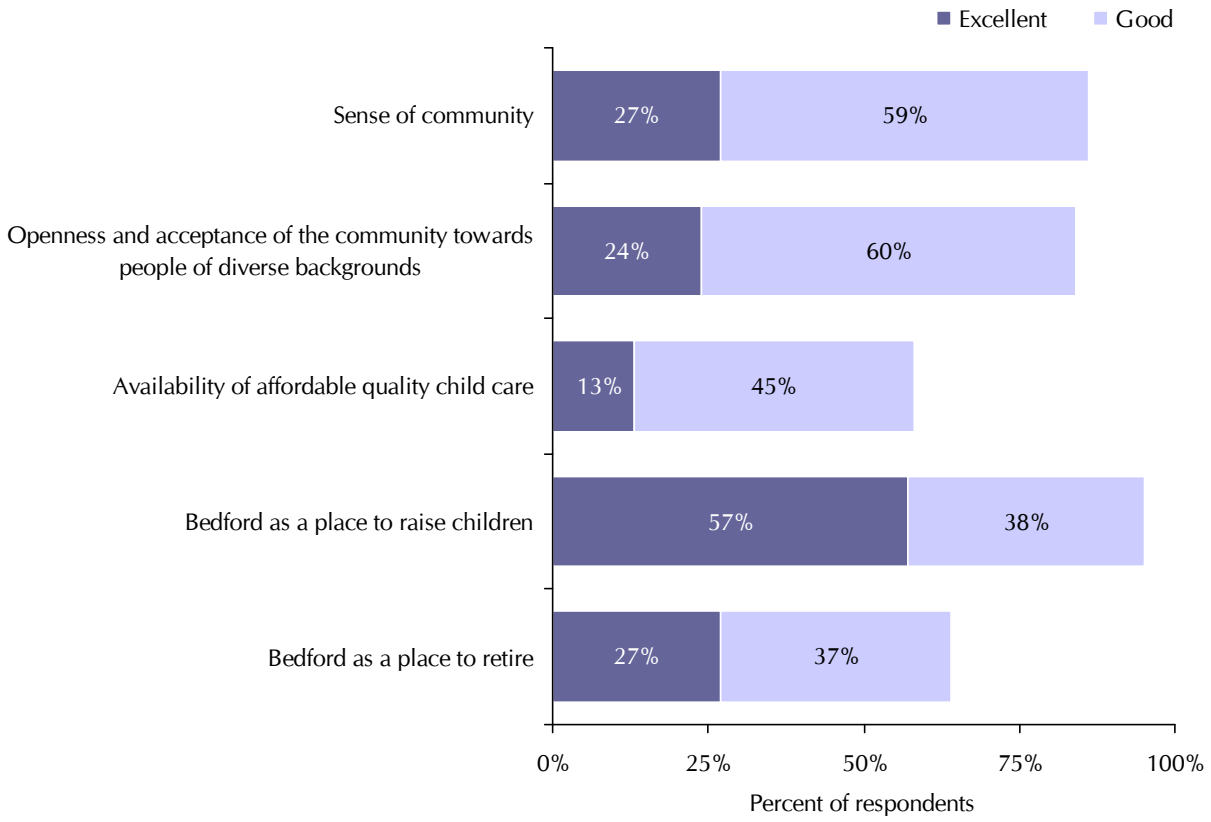
The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Community Inclusiveness

Diverse communities that include among their residents a mix of races, ages, wealth, ideas and beliefs have the raw material for the most vibrant and creative society. However, the presence of these features alone does not ensure a high quality or desirable space. Surveyed residents were asked about the success of the mix: the sense of community, the openness of residents to people of diverse backgrounds and the attractiveness of the Town of Bedford as a place to raise children or to retire. They were also questioned about the quality of services delivered to various population subgroups, including older adults, youth and residents with few resources. A community that succeeds in creating an inclusive environment for a variety of residents is a community that offers more to many.

A very high percentage of residents rated the Town of Bedford as an "excellent" or "good" place to raise kids and a moderate percentage rated it as an excellent or good place to retire. Most residents felt that the local sense of community was "excellent" or "good." Most survey respondents also felt the Town of Bedford was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. The availability of affordable quality child care was rated the lowest by residents but was higher than the benchmark.

Figure 61: Ratings of Community Quality and Inclusiveness



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 62: COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Sense of community	Above
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	Above
Availability of affordable quality child care	Above
Bedford as a place to raise kids	Above
Bedford as a place to retire	Above

Services to more vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, youth and low-income residents) ranged from 70% to 91% with ratings of "excellent" or "good." All were above the benchmark.

FIGURE 63: RATINGS OF QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS

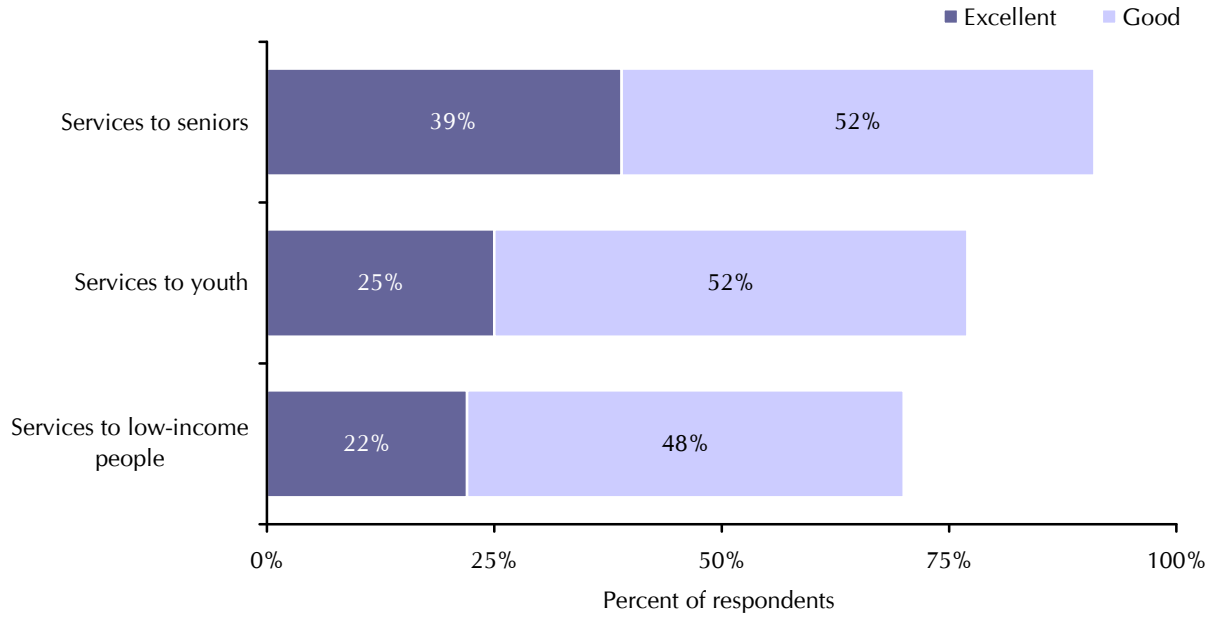


FIGURE 64: SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Services to seniors	Above
Services to youth	Above
Services to low income residents	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Civic Engagement

Government leaders, elected or hired, cannot run a jurisdiction alone and a jurisdiction cannot run effectively if residents remain strangers with little to connect them. Staff and elected officials require the assistance of local residents whether that assistance comes in tacit approval or eager help; and commonality of purpose among the electorate facilitates policies and programs that appeal to most and causes discord among few. Furthermore, when neighbors help neighbors, the cost to the community to provide services to residents in need declines. When residents are civically engaged, they have taken the opportunity to participate in making the community more livable for all. The extent to which local government provides opportunities to become informed and engaged and the extent to which residents take those opportunities is an indicator of the connection between government and populace. By understanding your residents' level of connection to, knowledge of and participation in local government, the Town can find better opportunities to communicate and educate citizens about its mission, services, accomplishments and plans. Communities with strong civic engagement may be more likely to see the benefits of programs intended to improve the quality of life of all residents and therefore would be more likely to support those new policies or programs.

Civic Activity

Respondents were asked about the perceived community volunteering opportunities and their participation as citizens of the Town of Bedford. Survey participants rated the volunteer opportunities in the Town of Bedford favorably. Opportunities to attend or participate in community matters were rated also rated favorably.

Ratings of civic engagement opportunities were above ratings from comparison jurisdictions where these questions were asked.

Figure 65: Ratings of Civic Engagement Opportunities

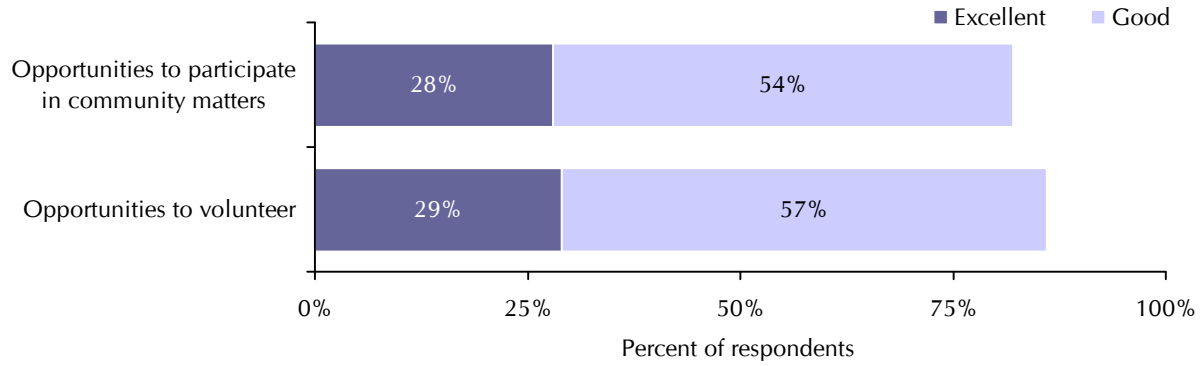


Figure 66: Civic Engagement Opportunities Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to participate in community matters	Above
Opportunities to volunteer	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting, watched a meeting of local elected officials, or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend. The participation rates of these civic behaviors were compared to the rates in other jurisdictions.

FIGURE 67: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

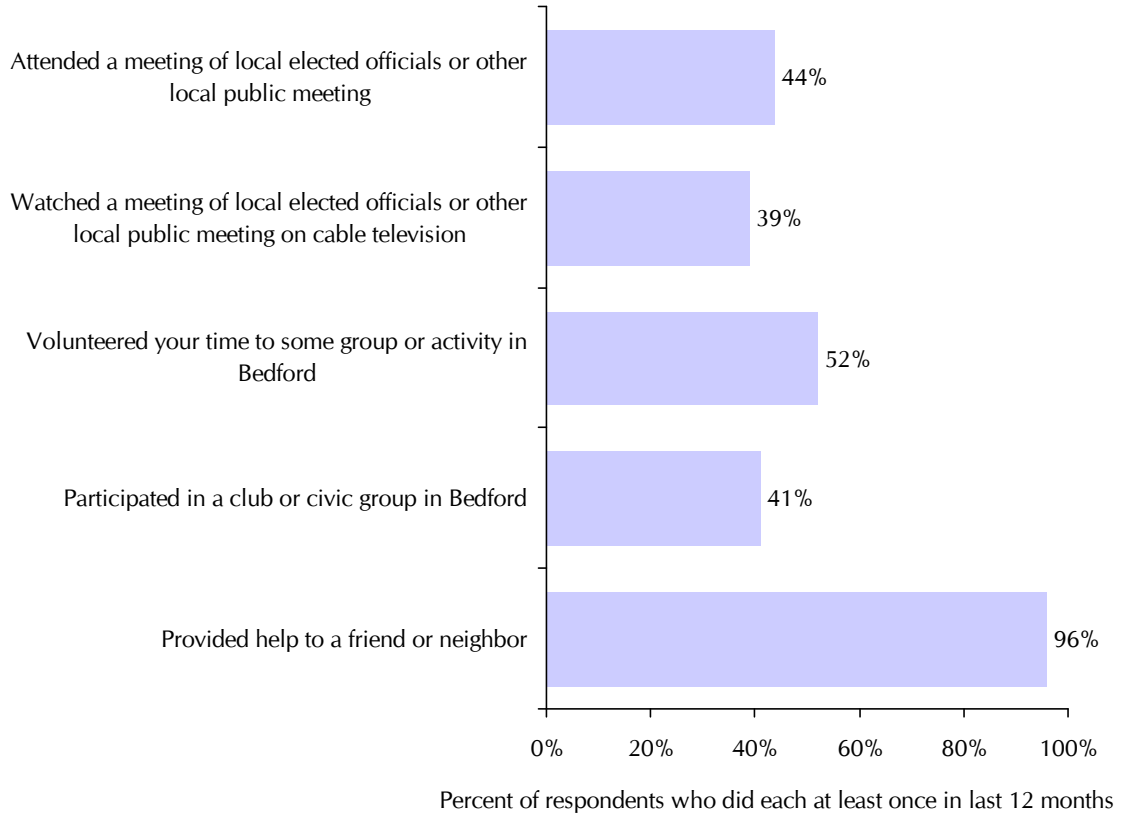


FIGURE 68: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	Above
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	Below
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Bedford	Above
Participated in a club or civic group in Bedford	Above
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	Similar

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Town of Bedford residents showed the largest amount of civic engagement in the area of electoral participation. Eighty-nine percent reported they were registered to vote and 84% indicated they had voted in the last general election. This rate of self-reported voting was higher than comparison communities.

FIGURE 69: REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOR

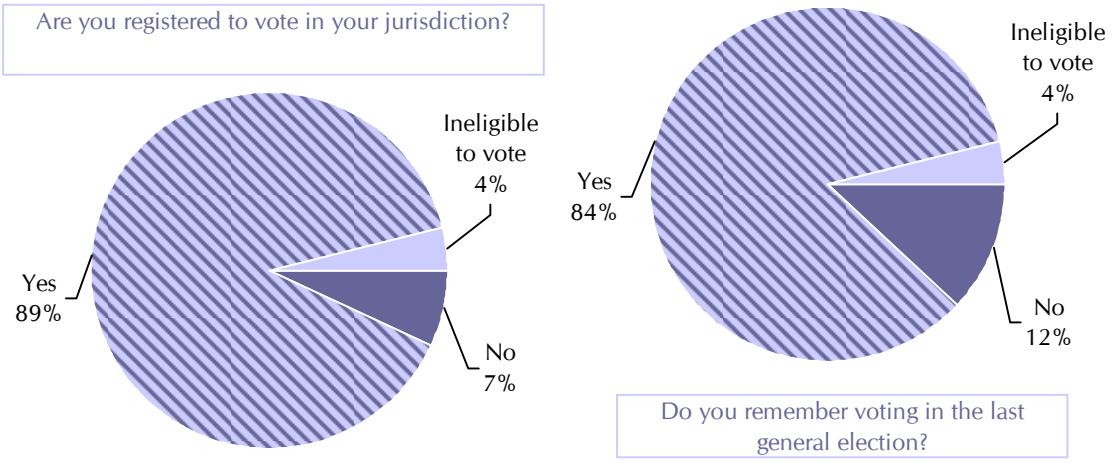


FIGURE 70: VOTING BEHAVIOR BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Registered to vote	Above
Voted in last general election	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Information and Awareness

Those completing the survey were asked about their use and perceptions of various information sources and local government media services. When asked whether they had visited the Town of Bedford Web site in the previous 12 months, 70% reported they had done so at least once. Public information services were rated favorably compared to benchmark data.

FIGURE 71: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES

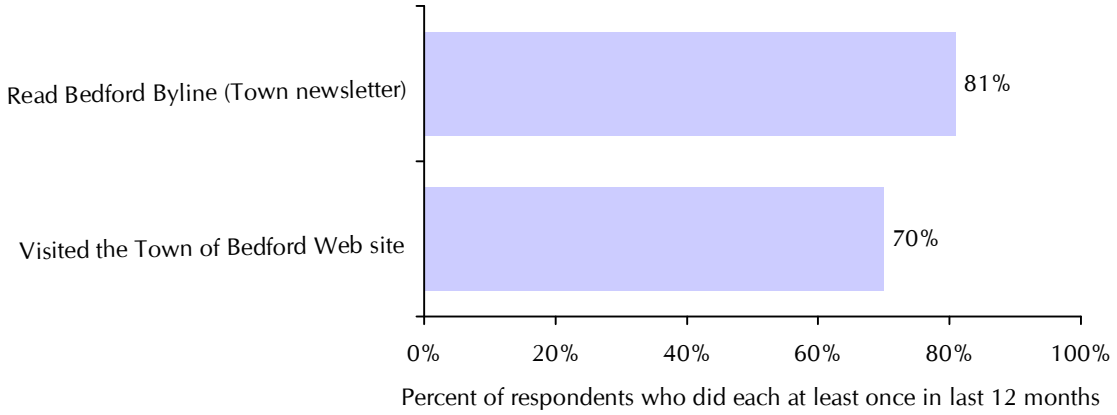


FIGURE 72: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Read Bedford Newsletter	Similar
Visited the Town of Bedford Web site	Above

FIGURE 73: RATINGS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

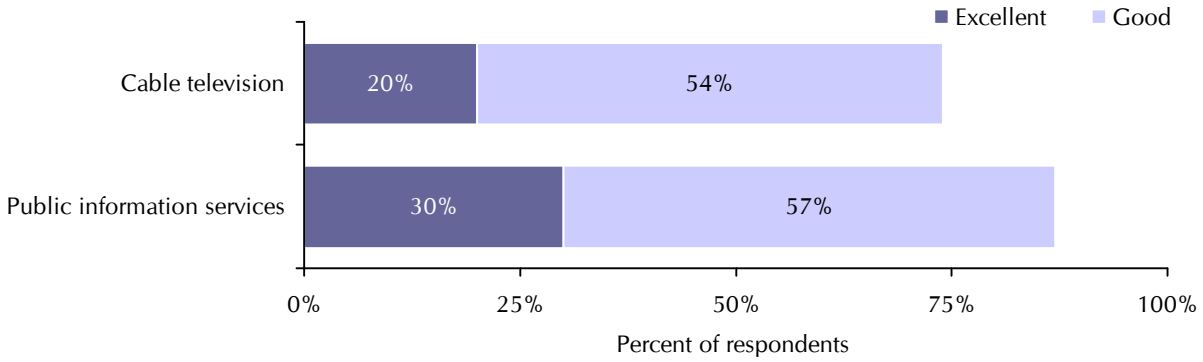


FIGURE 74: LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Cable television	Above
Public information services	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Social Engagement

Opportunities to participate in social events and activities were rated as "excellent" or "good" by 69% of respondents, while even more rated opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities as "excellent" or "good."

FIGURE 75: RATINGS OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

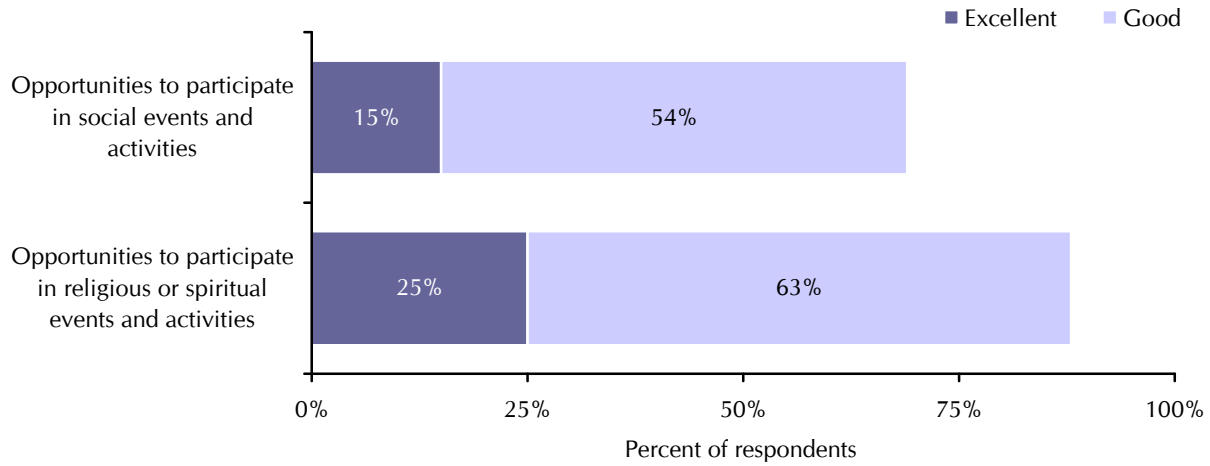


FIGURE 76: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	Above
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Residents in Bedford reported a fair amount of neighborliness. More than 77% indicated talking or visiting with their neighbors at least once per month. This amount of contact with neighbors was less than the amount of contact reported in other communities.

FIGURE 77: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS

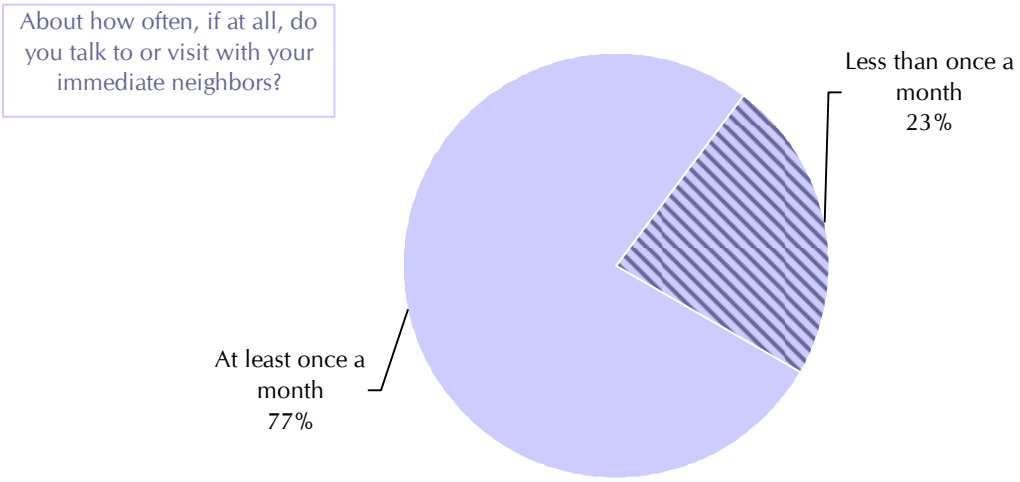


FIGURE 78: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Has contact with neighbors at least once per month	Below

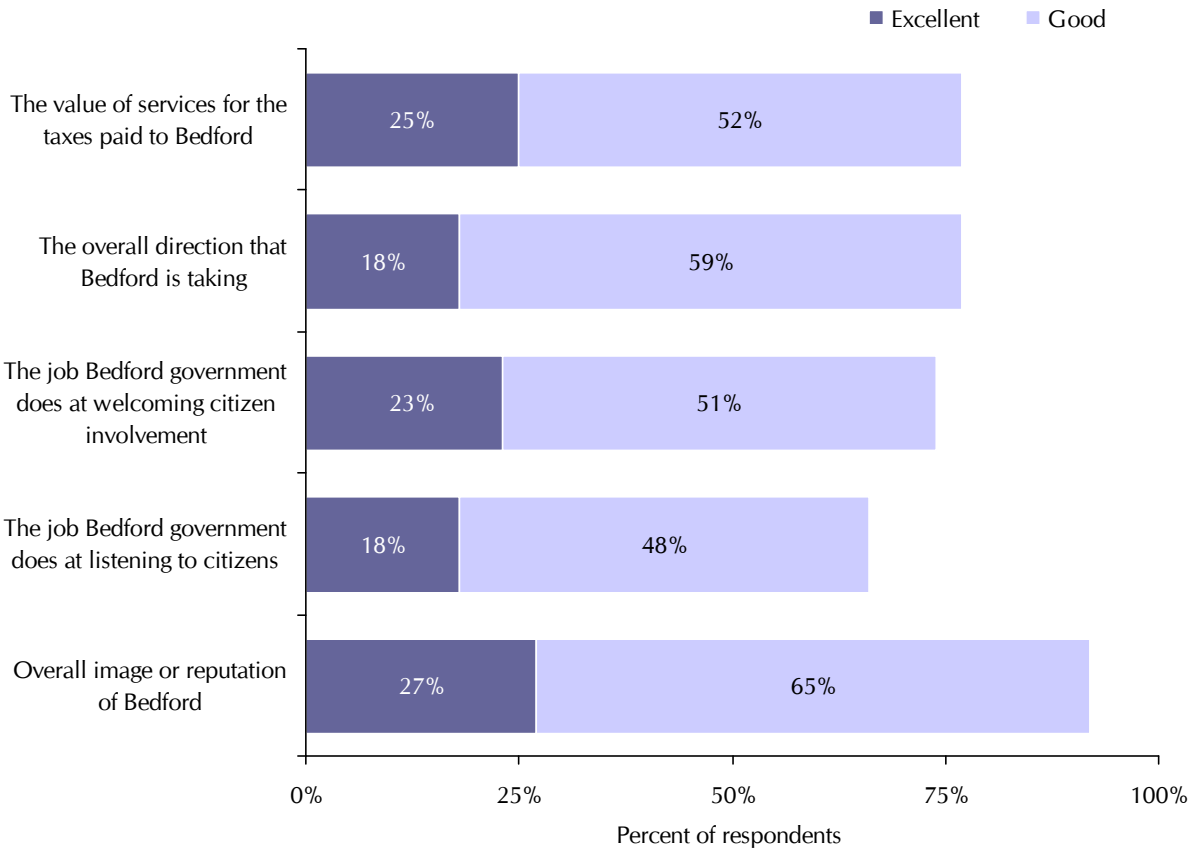
The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Public Trust

When local government leaders are trusted, an environment of cooperation is more likely to surround all decisions they make. Cooperation leads to easier communication between leaders and residents and increases the likelihood that high value policies and programs will be implemented to improve the quality of life of the entire community. Trust can be measured in residents' opinions about the overall direction the Town of Bedford is taking, their perspectives about the service value their taxes purchase and the openness of government to citizen participation. In addition, resident opinion about services provided by the Town of Bedford could be compared to their opinion about services provided by the state and federal governments. If residents find nothing to admire in the services delivered by any level of government, their opinions about the Town of Bedford may be colored by their dislike of what all levels of government provide.

A majority of respondents felt that the value of services for taxes paid was "excellent" or "good." When asked to rate the job the Town of Bedford does at listening to citizens, 66% rated it as "excellent" or "good." Of these five ratings, all were above the benchmark.

Figure 79: Public Trust Ratings



The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 80: PUBLIC TRUST BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Value of services for the taxes paid to Bedford	Above
The overall direction that Bedford is taking	Above
Job Bedford government does at welcoming citizen involvement	Above
Job Bedford government does at listening to citizens	Above
Overall image or reputation of Bedford	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

On average, residents of the Town of Bedford gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to the state government. The overall quality of services delivered by the Town of Bedford was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 94% of survey participants. The Town of Bedford's rating was above the benchmark when compared to other communities.

FIGURE 81: RATINGS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS

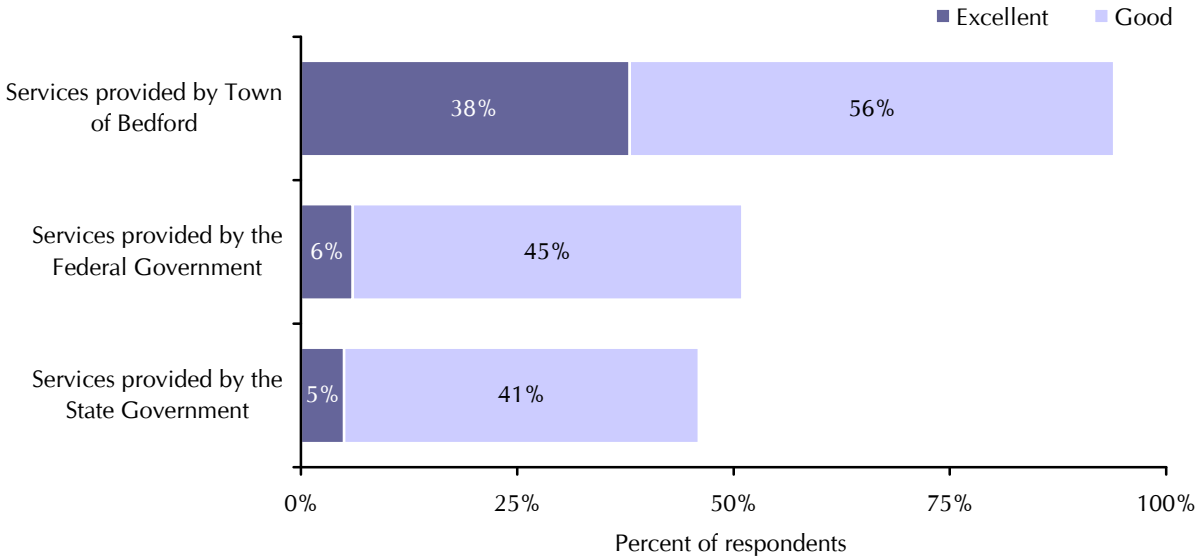


FIGURE 82: SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Services provided by the Town of Bedford	Above
Services provided by the Federal Government	Above
Services provided by the State Government	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

Town of Bedford Employees

The employees of the Town of Bedford who interact with the public create the first impression that most residents have of the Town of Bedford. Front line staff who provide information, assist with bill paying, collect trash, create service schedules, fight fires and crime and even give traffic tickets are the collective face of the Town of Bedford. As such, it is important to know about residents' experience talking with that "face." When employees appear to be knowledgeable, responsive and courteous, residents are more likely to feel that any needs or problems may be solved through positive and productive interactions with the Town of Bedford staff.

Those completing the survey were asked if they had been in contact with a Town employee either in-person or over the phone in the last 12 months; the 73% who reported that they had been in contact (a percent that is above the benchmark comparison) were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. Town employees were rated highly; 89% of respondents rated their overall impression as "excellent" or "good."

FIGURE 83: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD CONTACT WITH TOWN EMPLOYEES IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of Bedford within the last 12 months

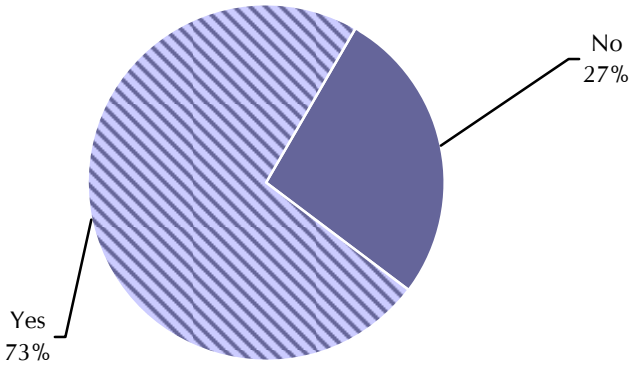


FIGURE 84: CONTACT WITH TOWN EMPLOYEES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Had contact with town employee(s) in last 12 months	Above

The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

FIGURE 85: RATINGS OF TOWN EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT)

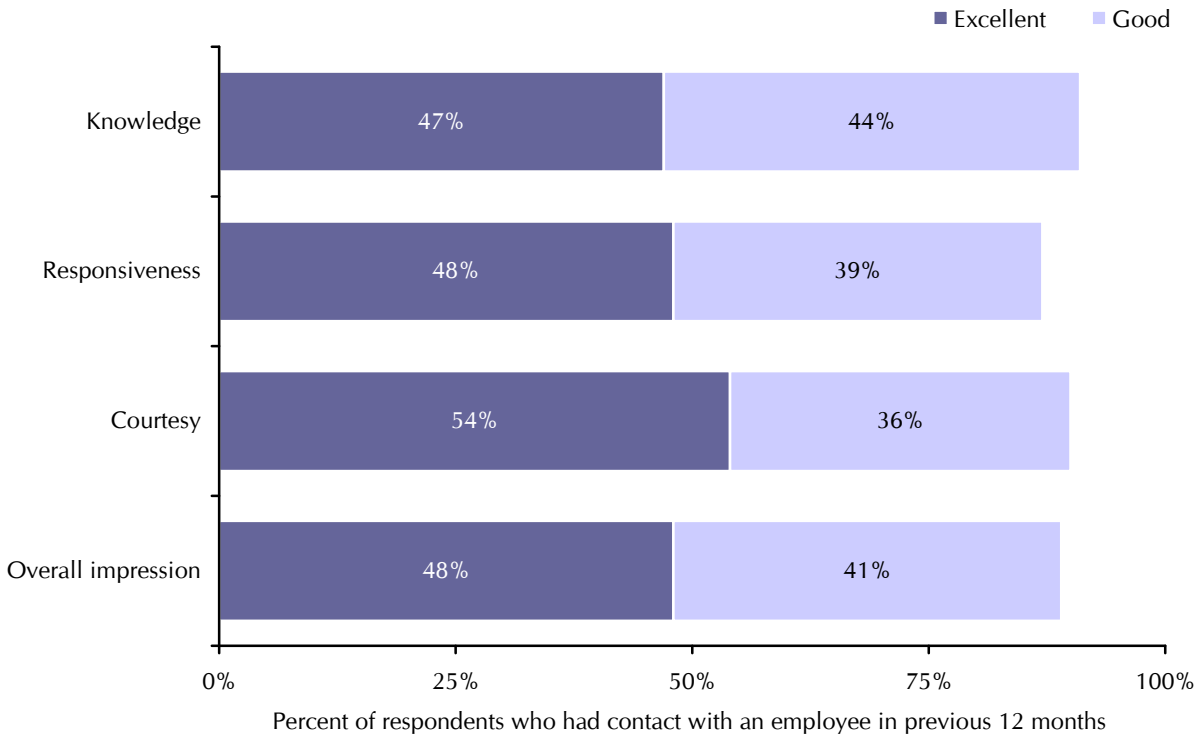


FIGURE 86: RATINGS OF TOWN EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Knowledge	Above
Responsiveness	Above
Courteousness	Above
Overall impression	Above

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From Data to Action

Resident Priorities

Knowing where to focus limited resources to improve residents' opinions of local government requires information that targets the services that are most important to residents. However, when residents are asked what services are most important, they rarely stray beyond core services – those directed to save lives and improve safety.

In market research, identifying the most important characteristics of a transaction or product is called Key Driver Analysis. The key drivers that are identified from that analysis do not come from asking customers to self-report which service or product characteristic most influenced their decision to buy or return, but rather from statistical analyses of the predictors of their behavior. When customers are asked to name the most important characteristics of a good or service, responses often are expected or misleading – just as they can be in the context of a citizen survey. For example, air travelers often claim that safety is the primary consideration in their choice of an airline, yet key driver analysis reveals that frequent flier perks or in-flight entertainment predicts their buying decisions.

In local government core services – like fire protection – invariably land at the top of the list created when residents are asked about the most important local government services. And core services are important. But by using Key Driver Analysis, our approach digs deeper to identify the less obvious, but more influential services that are most related to residents' ratings of overall quality of local government services. Because services focused directly on life and safety remain essential to quality government, it is suggested that core services should remain the focus of continuous monitoring and improvement where necessary – but monitoring core services or asking residents to identify important services is not enough.

A Key Driver Analysis (KDA) was conducted for the Town of Bedford by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the Town of Bedford's overall services. Those key driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall Town service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the Town of Bedford can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality.

Services found to be most strongly correlated with ratings of overall service quality from the Bedford Key Driver Analysis were:

- Snow removal
- Code enforcement
- Preservation of natural areas

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Town of Bedford Action Chart™

The 2009 Town of Bedford Action Chart™ on the following page combines two dimensions of performance:

- Comparison to resident evaluations from other communities. When a comparison is available, the background color of each service box indicates whether the service is above the benchmark (green), similar to the benchmark (yellow) or below the benchmark (red).
- Identification of key services. A black key icon (🔑) next to a service box indicates that service is key (either core or key driver)

Twenty –seven services were included in the KDA for the Town of Bedford. Of these, 26 were above the benchmark, none were below the benchmark and one was similar to the benchmark. A key icon (🔑) indicates the three key drivers.

Considering all performance data included in the Action Chart, a jurisdiction typically will want to consider improvements to any key driver services that are not at least similar to the benchmark. In the case of Bedford, no key drivers were below the benchmark. More detail about interpreting results can be found in the next section.

Services with a high percent of respondents answering "don't know" were excluded from the analysis and were considered services that would be less influential. See Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies, Frequencies Including "Don't Know" Responses for the percent "don't know" for each service.

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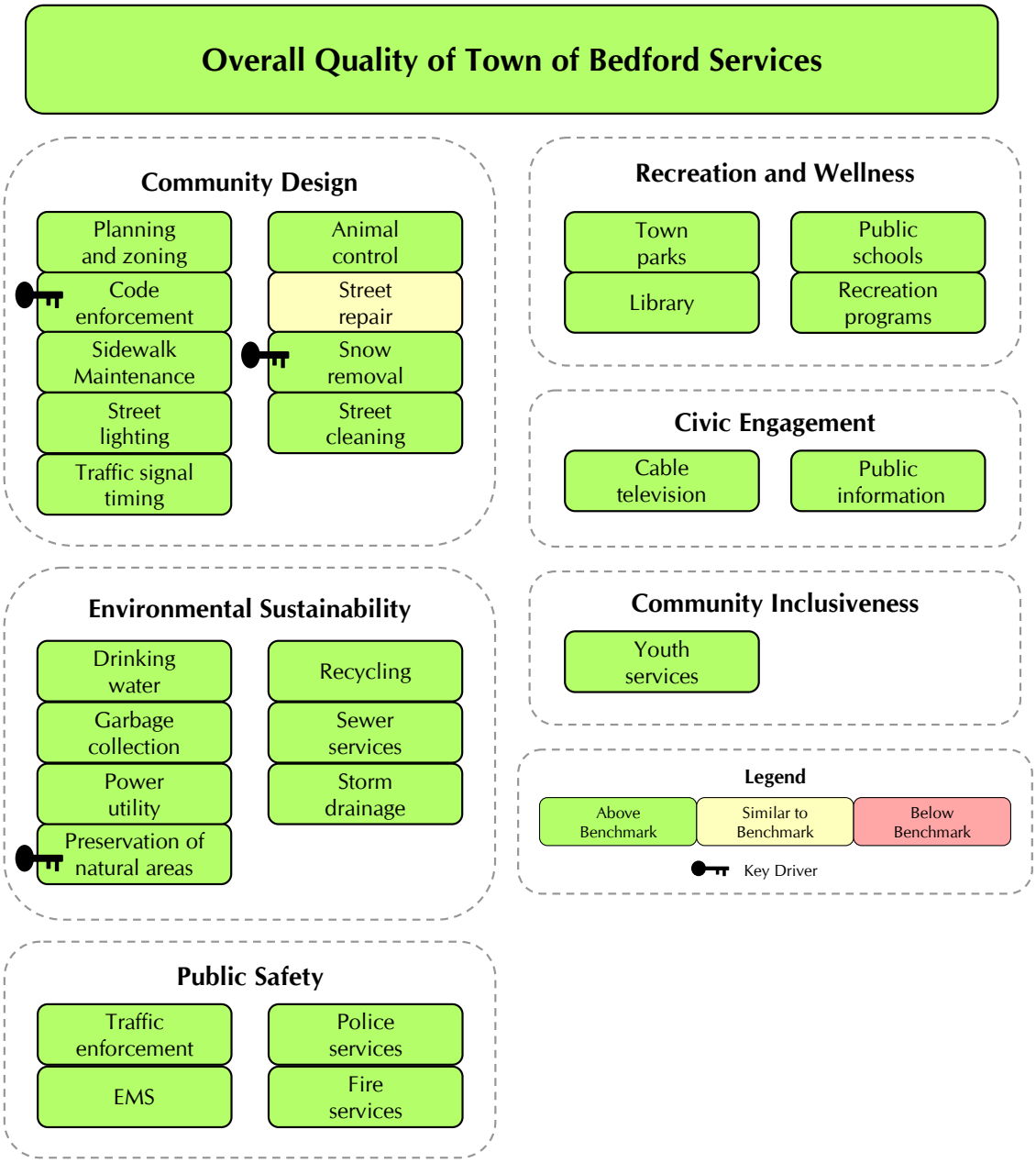
FIGURE 87: TOWN OF BEDFORD ACTION CHART



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Using Your Action Chart™

The key drivers derived for the Town of Bedford provide a list of those services that are uniquely related to overall service quality. Those key drivers are marked with the symbol of a key in the action chart. Because key driver results are based on a relatively small number of responses, the relationships or correlations that define the key drivers are subject to more variability than is seen when key drivers are derived from a large national dataset of resident responses. To benefit the Town of Bedford, NRC lists the key drivers derived from tens of thousands of resident responses from across the country. This national list is updated periodically so that you can compare your key drivers to the key drivers from the entire NRC data set. Where your locally derived key drivers overlap national key drivers, it makes sense to focus even more strongly on your keys. Similarly, when your local key drivers overlap your core services, there is stronger argument to make for attending to your key drivers that overlap with core services. In the following table, we have listed your key drivers, core services and the national key drivers and we have indicated, with shaded rows, the Town of Bedford key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys.

FIGURE 88: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	Town of Bedford Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
Code enforcement	✓		✓
Economic development		✓	
EMS			✓
Fire			✓
Garbage collection			✓
Land use planning and zoning		✓	
Police services		✓	✓
Preservation of natural areas	✓		
Public information services		✓	
Public schools		✓	
Sewer			✓
Storm drainage			✓
Snow removal	✓		
Street repair			✓
Water			✓

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Policy Questions

"Don't know" responses have been removed from the following questions, when applicable.

Policy Question 1					
How familiar, if at all, are you with each of the following Bedford Police Department programs?	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Total
Citizen's Police Academy	4%	10%	11%	75%	100%
Bicycle safety education	6%	17%	20%	58%	100%
Crime prevention programs	3%	12%	19%	66%	100%
Seat belt/child passenger safety education	12%	17%	20%	52%	100%
Bedford Police Web site	6%	12%	14%	68%	100%
Vacation house checks (Away Book)	5%	9%	12%	74%	100%
Police station tours and safety education for children	8%	16%	19%	56%	100%
Anti-theft property ID program and auto glass etching	3%	7%	13%	76%	100%

Policy Question 2					
Town officials are often asked to increase efforts in different program areas. To what extent would you support or oppose increased efforts for each of the following areas:	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total
Traffic calming	51%	41%	6%	2%	100%
Traffic enforcement	40%	47%	10%	3%	100%
Conservation/open space land acquisition	48%	39%	9%	4%	100%
Indoor recreation activity space	44%	46%	7%	3%	100%
Enhance recreational programs for Middle School students	45%	46%	8%	1%	100%
Dedicated space/facilities for teens and Middle School students (i.e. Teen Center)	44%	45%	7%	4%	100%
Road improvements	58%	40%	2%	0%	100%
Sidewalk construction	54%	37%	8%	1%	100%
Youth athletic fields	37%	48%	12%	3%	100%
Adult athletic fields	27%	48%	20%	5%	100%
Synthetic turf fields	19%	33%	20%	27%	100%
Affordable housing	31%	41%	18%	9%	100%
Historic preservation	39%	46%	12%	3%	100%
Town Web site enhancement	26%	60%	13%	2%	100%
Bedford local transit service	37%	54%	6%	2%	100%

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Appendix A: Complete Survey Frequencies

Frequencies Excluding "Don't Know" Responses

Question 1: Quality of Life					
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Bedford:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Bedford as a place to live	51%	45%	3%	0%	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	48%	39%	11%	1%	100%
Bedford as a place to raise children	57%	38%	4%	0%	100%
Bedford as a place to work	30%	51%	15%	4%	100%
Bedford as a place to retire	27%	37%	25%	11%	100%
The overall quality of life in Bedford	39%	55%	5%	0%	100%

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Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Bedford as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Sense of community	27%	59%	12%	2%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	24%	60%	15%	1%	100%
Overall appearance of Bedford	17%	60%	20%	2%	100%
Cleanliness of Bedford	23%	62%	14%	1%	100%
Overall quality of new development in Bedford	12%	51%	30%	6%	100%
Variety of housing options	9%	47%	37%	7%	100%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Bedford	14%	53%	29%	4%	100%
Shopping opportunities	18%	48%	30%	4%	100%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	9%	40%	39%	12%	100%
Recreational opportunities	21%	54%	20%	5%	100%
Employment opportunities	8%	39%	39%	14%	100%
Educational opportunities	27%	53%	17%	2%	100%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	15%	54%	27%	3%	100%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	25%	63%	10%	2%	100%
Opportunities to volunteer	29%	57%	13%	1%	100%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	28%	54%	16%	3%	100%
Ease of car travel in Bedford	9%	36%	36%	19%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Bedford	7%	34%	34%	24%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Bedford	16%	42%	31%	11%	100%
Ease of walking in Bedford	13%	44%	30%	13%	100%
Availability of paths and walking trails	20%	47%	28%	5%	100%
Traffic flow on major streets	2%	21%	41%	36%	100%
Availability of affordable quality housing	7%	32%	41%	20%	100%
Availability of affordable quality child care	13%	45%	30%	12%	100%
Availability of affordable quality health care	11%	52%	28%	9%	100%
Availability of affordable quality food	18%	54%	21%	6%	100%
Availability of preventive health services	14%	48%	32%	5%	100%
Air quality	23%	62%	13%	2%	100%
Quality of overall natural environment in Bedford	22%	59%	17%	2%	100%
Overall image or reputation of Bedford	27%	65%	7%	1%	100%

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Question 3: Growth						
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Bedford over the past 2 years:	Much too slow	Somewhat too slow	Right amount	Somewhat too fast	Much too fast	Total
Population growth	0%	1%	58%	32%	9%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	5%	22%	59%	12%	3%	100%
Jobs growth	14%	46%	37%	2%	1%	100%

Question 4: Code Enforcement	
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Bedford?	Percent of respondents
Not a problem	30%
Minor problem	49%
Moderate problem	20%
Major problem	1%
Total	100%

Question 5: Community Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Bedford:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	69%	27%	3%	1%	0%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	38%	49%	8%	5%	0%	100%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	47%	36%	10%	6%	1%	100%

Question 6: Personal Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
In your neighborhood during the day	84%	15%	1%	0%	0%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	58%	37%	3%	2%	0%	100%
In Bedford's downtown area during the day	81%	17%	1%	1%	0%	100%
In Bedford's downtown area after dark	51%	41%	7%	1%	0%	100%

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Question 7: Crime Victim	
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents
No	95%
Yes	5%
Total	100%

Question 8: Crime Reporting	
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents
No	32%
Yes	68%
Total	100%

Question 9: Resident Behaviors						
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Bedford?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Used Bedford public libraries or their services	11%	15%	31%	19%	23%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	41%	22%	17%	9%	10%	100%
Visited a neighborhood park, town park, or conservation area	16%	23%	32%	17%	12%	100%
Ridden a local bus within Bedford	88%	6%	2%	2%	2%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	56%	30%	10%	3%	2%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	61%	26%	10%	2%	1%	100%
Read Bedford Byline (Town newsletter)	19%	29%	38%	9%	4%	100%
Visited the Town of Bedford Web site (at www.town.bedford.ma.us)	30%	20%	31%	12%	8%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	7%	3%	3%	6%	81%	100%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Bedford	48%	20%	14%	7%	11%	100%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Bedford	52%	12%	13%	6%	17%	100%
Participated in a club or civic group in Bedford	59%	16%	13%	4%	8%	100%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	4%	21%	46%	19%	10%	100%

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Question 10: Neighborliness	
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)?	Percent of respondents
Just about everyday	13%
Several times a week	26%
Several times a month	30%
Once a month	8%
Several times a year	15%
Once a year or less	3%
Never	4%
Total	100%

Question 11: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Bedford:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Police services	52%	43%	4%	1%	100%
Fire services	57%	41%	2%	0%	100%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	61%	37%	1%	1%	100%
Crime prevention	38%	55%	6%	0%	100%
Fire prevention and education	37%	54%	8%	1%	100%
Traffic enforcement	19%	54%	23%	4%	100%
Street repair	7%	34%	40%	19%	100%
Street cleaning	15%	52%	27%	6%	100%
Street lighting	13%	57%	25%	5%	100%
Snow removal	50%	38%	10%	3%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	12%	47%	32%	9%	100%
Traffic signal timing	11%	57%	27%	5%	100%
Bus or transit services	13%	50%	25%	12%	100%
Garbage collection	42%	49%	8%	1%	100%
Recycling	44%	48%	7%	1%	100%
Storm drainage	17%	58%	20%	6%	100%
Drinking water	40%	48%	10%	2%	100%
Sewer services	34%	55%	9%	2%	100%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	32%	56%	10%	1%	100%
Town parks	36%	54%	9%	1%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	36%	52%	10%	2%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	17%	47%	26%	10%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	16%	53%	24%	7%	100%
Animal control	19%	57%	18%	6%	100%
Economic development	13%	53%	28%	6%	100%
Health services	19%	66%	13%	2%	100%

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Question 11: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Bedford:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Services to seniors	39%	52%	8%	2%	100%
Services to youth	25%	52%	17%	5%	100%
Services to low-income people	22%	48%	22%	8%	100%
Public library services	63%	33%	4%	1%	100%
Public information services	30%	57%	12%	1%	100%
Public schools	47%	46%	6%	1%	100%
Cable television	20%	54%	23%	4%	100%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	24%	55%	16%	5%	100%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	27%	49%	21%	3%	100%

Question 12: Government Services Overall					
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The Town of Bedford	38%	56%	5%	1%	100%
The Federal Government	6%	45%	37%	12%	100%
The State Government	5%	41%	41%	13%	100%

Question 13: Contact with Town Employees	
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)?	Percent of respondents
No	27%
Yes	73%
Total	100%

Question 14: Town Employees					
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the Town of Bedford in your most recent contact?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Knowledge	47%	44%	8%	1%	100%
Responsiveness	48%	39%	10%	2%	100%
Courtesy	54%	36%	8%	2%	100%
Overall impression	48%	41%	9%	2%	100%

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Question 15: Government Performance					
Please rate the following categories of Bedford government performance:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The value of services for the taxes paid to Bedford	25%	52%	19%	4%	100%
The overall direction that Bedford is taking	18%	59%	20%	3%	100%
The job Bedford government does at welcoming citizen involvement	23%	51%	23%	4%	100%
The job Bedford government does at listening to citizens	18%	48%	28%	5%	100%

Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity					
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	Total
Recommend living in Bedford to someone who asks	69%	27%	3%	2%	100%
Remain in Bedford for the next five years	68%	21%	5%	5%	100%

Question 17: Impact of the Economy	
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:	Percent of respondents
Very positive	1%
Somewhat positive	6%
Neutral	35%
Somewhat negative	46%
Very negative	12%
Total	100%

Question 18a: Policy Question 1					
How familiar, if at all, are you with each of the following Bedford Police Department programs?	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar	Total
Citizen's Police Academy	4%	10%	11%	75%	100%
Bicycle safety education	6%	17%	20%	58%	100%
Crime prevention programs	3%	12%	19%	66%	100%
Seat belt/child passenger safety education	12%	17%	20%	52%	100%
Bedford Police Web site	6%	12%	14%	68%	100%
Vacation house checks (Away Book)	5%	9%	12%	74%	100%
Police station tours and safety education for children	8%	16%	19%	56%	100%
Anti-theft property ID program and auto glass etching	3%	7%	13%	76%	100%

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Question 18b: Policy Question 2					
Town officials are often asked to increase efforts in different program areas. To what extent would you support or oppose increased efforts for each of the following areas:	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total
Traffic calming	51%	41%	6%	2%	100%
Traffic enforcement	40%	47%	10%	3%	100%
Conservation/open space land acquisition	48%	39%	9%	4%	100%
Indoor recreation activity space	44%	46%	7%	3%	100%
Enhance recreational programs for Middle School students	45%	46%	8%	1%	100%
Dedicated space/facilities for teens and Middle School students (i.e. Teen Center)	44%	45%	7%	4%	100%
Road improvements	58%	40%	2%	0%	100%
Sidewalk construction	54%	37%	8%	1%	100%
Youth athletic fields	37%	48%	12%	3%	100%
Adult athletic fields	27%	48%	20%	5%	100%
Synthetic turf fields	19%	33%	20%	27%	100%
Affordable housing	31%	41%	18%	9%	100%
Historic preservation	39%	46%	12%	3%	100%
Town Web site enhancement	26%	60%	13%	2%	100%
Bedford local transit service	37%	54%	6%	2%	100%

Question D1: Employment Status	
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents
No	32%
Yes, full-time	53%
Yes, part-time	15%
Total	100%

Question D2: Mode of Transportation Used for Commute	
During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below?	Percent of days mode used
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself	81%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	9%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	2%
Walk	1%
Bicycle	1%
Work at home	6%
Other	0%

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Question D3: Length of Residency	
How many years have you lived in Bedford?	Percent of respondents
Less than 2 years	9%
2 to 5 years	18%
6 to 10 years	12%
11 to 20 years	24%
More than 20 years	37%
Total	100%

Question D4: Housing Unit Type	
Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent of respondents
One family house detached from any other houses	72%
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	13%
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	14%
Mobile home	0%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)	
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	21%
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	79%
Total	100%

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost	
About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners" association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents
Less than $300 per month	2%
$300 to $599 per month	7%
$600 to $999 per month	17%
$1,000 to $1,499 per month	19%
$1,500 to $2,499 per month	27%
$2,500 or more per month	28%
Total	100%

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household	
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents
No	60%
Yes	40%
Total	100%

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Question D8: Presence of Older Adults in Household	
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent of respondents
No	67%
Yes	33%
Total	100%

Question D9: Household Income	
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents
Less than $24,999	7%
$25,000 to $49,999	17%
$50,000 to $99,999	25%
$100,000 to $149,000	24%
$150,000 or more	28%
Total	100%

Question D10: Ethnicity	
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	98%
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	2%
Total	100%

Question D11: Race	
What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	9%
Black or African American	1%
White	88%
Other	2%
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option	

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Question D12: Age	
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents
18 to 24 years	2%
25 to 34 years	10%
35 to 44 years	15%
45 to 54 years	29%
55 to 64 years	13%
65 to 74 years	16%
75 years or older	13%
Total	100%

Question D13: Gender	
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents
Female	55%
Male	45%
Total	100%

Question D14: Registered to Vote	
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents
No	7%
Yes	89%
Ineligible to vote	4%
Total	100%

Question D15: Voted in Last General Election	
Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?	Percent of respondents
No	12%
Yes	84%
Ineligible to vote	4%
Total	100%

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Frequencies Including "Don't Know" Responses

These tables contain the percentage of respondents for each response category as well as the "n" or total number of respondents for each category, next to the percentage.

Question 1: Quality of Life												
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Bedford:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Bedford as a place to live	51%	306	45%	268	3%	20	0%	1	0%	3	100%	597
Your neighborhood as a place to live	48%	284	39%	233	11%	66	1%	7	1%	5	100%	595
Bedford as a place to raise children	50%	298	34%	201	4%	22	0%	2	12%	70	100%	593
Bedford as a place to work	17%	101	30%	175	9%	50	3%	15	42%	244	100%	584
Bedford as a place to retire	19%	114	27%	158	18%	107	8%	49	27%	160	100%	588
The overall quality of life in Bedford	39%	230	55%	326	5%	32	0%	2	1%	6	100%	595

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Bedford as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Sense of community	25%	149	56%	327	12%	68	2%	9	5%	31	100%	584
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	21%	121	53%	308	13%	75	1%	7	13%	74	100%	586
Overall appearance of Bedford	17%	100	60%	357	20%	119	2%	14	1%	3	100%	593
Cleanliness of Bedford	23%	134	62%	365	14%	82	1%	6	1%	5	100%	592
Overall quality of new development in Bedford	10%	60	43%	251	25%	148	5%	29	17%	97	100%	586
Variety of housing options	7%	43	41%	240	32%	189	6%	35	13%	78	100%	586
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Bedford	14%	81	52%	308	29%	170	4%	21	2%	11	100%	591
Shopping opportunities	17%	104	48%	283	30%	177	4%	26	1%	5	100%	594
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	8%	48	34%	203	34%	202	10%	62	13%	78	100%	592
Recreational opportunities	20%	116	50%	298	18%	107	5%	27	7%	42	100%	590
Employment opportunities	5%	27	22%	127	22%	125	7%	43	45%	259	100%	581
Educational opportunities	23%	134	45%	261	15%	85	2%	9	16%	92	100%	582

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Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Bedford as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	13%	79	47%	277	24%	141	3%	18	12%	69	100%	584
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	20%	116	50%	297	8%	48	2%	10	20%	116	100%	588
Opportunities to volunteer	23%	139	47%	277	11%	64	1%	7	18%	104	100%	590
Opportunities to participate in community matters	24%	140	47%	272	14%	79	2%	14	13%	75	100%	581
Ease of car travel in Bedford	9%	53	36%	209	35%	206	18%	108	2%	12	100%	587
Ease of bus travel in Bedford	5%	28	22%	130	22%	129	16%	93	35%	201	100%	582
Ease of bicycle travel in Bedford	13%	79	36%	207	26%	152	9%	53	16%	92	100%	583
Ease of walking in Bedford	12%	72	42%	248	29%	171	12%	72	4%	21	100%	584
Availability of paths and walking trails	19%	113	45%	263	27%	155	5%	27	4%	25	100%	583
Traffic flow on major streets	2%	12	21%	122	40%	233	35%	202	2%	13	100%	583
Availability of affordable quality housing	5%	27	22%	130	28%	167	14%	82	31%	180	100%	586
Availability of affordable quality child care	6%	35	21%	125	14%	84	6%	34	53%	307	100%	584
Availability of affordable quality health care	7%	38	32%	185	17%	101	6%	33	38%	223	100%	580
Availability of affordable quality food	18%	103	52%	302	20%	119	6%	36	4%	21	100%	580
Availability of preventive health services	9%	52	31%	182	21%	121	4%	20	36%	208	100%	584
Air quality	21%	123	58%	339	12%	71	2%	12	7%	44	100%	589
Quality of overall natural environment in Bedford	22%	129	58%	345	16%	97	2%	10	2%	13	100%	594
Overall image or reputation of Bedford	27%	160	64%	380	7%	44	1%	4	2%	9	100%	597

Question 3: Growth														
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Bedford over the past 2 years:	Much too slow		Somewhat too slow		Right amount		Somewhat too fast		Much too fast		Don't know		Total	
Population growth	0%	1	1%	4	41%	246	23%	135	6%	37	29%	174	100%	597
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	4%	23	18%	109	50%	300	10%	60	2%	14	15%	88	100%	595
Jobs growth	5%	31	18%	104	14%	82	1%	5	0%	2	62%	367	100%	592

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Question 4: Code Enforcement		
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Bedford?	Percent of respondents	Count
Not a problem	27%	162
Minor problem	44%	259
Moderate problem	18%	105
Major problem	1%	7
Don't know	9%	55
Total	100%	588

Question 5: Community Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Bedford:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	67%	400	26%	156	3%	18	1%	4	0%	0	3%	17	100%	595
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	37%	220	48%	283	7%	43	5%	28	0%	2	3%	18	100%	595
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	42%	252	33%	194	9%	52	5%	31	1%	4	10%	60	100%	593

Question 6: Personal Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
In your neighborhood during the day	84%	499	15%	87	1%	5	0%	3	0%	1	0%	1	100%	595
In your neighborhood after dark	57%	341	36%	216	3%	17	2%	12	0%	1	1%	8	100%	595
In Bedford's downtown area during the day	80%	473	17%	101	1%	3	1%	3	0%	0	2%	13	100%	594
In Bedford's downtown area after dark	47%	280	38%	224	7%	41	1%	5	0%	0	7%	44	100%	594

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Question 7: Crime Victim		
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	94%	555
Yes	5%	30
Don't know	1%	3
Total	100%	589

Question 8: Crime Reporting		
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	32%	13
Yes	68%	28
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100%	40

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Question 9: Resident Behaviors												
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Bedford?	Never		Once or twice		3 to 12 times		13 to 26 times		More than 26 times		Total	
Used Bedford public libraries or their services	11%	68	15%	90	31%	183	19%	113	23%	137	100%	592
Participated in a recreation program or activity	41%	236	22%	126	17%	100	9%	55	10%	60	100%	576
Visited a neighborhood park, town park, or conservation area	16%	92	23%	134	32%	187	17%	96	12%	69	100%	577
Ridden a local bus within Bedford	88%	518	6%	35	2%	13	2%	9	2%	11	100%	586
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	56%	325	30%	171	10%	57	3%	16	2%	10	100%	579
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	61%	354	26%	149	10%	60	2%	11	1%	8	100%	582
Read Bedford Byline (Town newsletter)	19%	112	29%	171	38%	217	9%	52	4%	26	100%	579
Visited the Town of Bedford Web site (at www.town.bedford.ma.us)	30%	174	20%	115	31%	182	12%	70	8%	45	100%	586
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	7%	40	3%	18	3%	16	6%	34	81%	474	100%	583
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Bedford	48%	275	20%	115	14%	82	7%	42	11%	64	100%	577
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Bedford	52%	304	12%	72	13%	74	6%	33	17%	97	100%	580
Participated in a club or civic group in Bedford	59%	340	16%	92	13%	78	4%	26	8%	45	100%	581
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	4%	26	21%	120	46%	268	19%	109	10%	60	100%	582

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Question 10: Neighborliness		
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)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Just about everyday	13%	79
Several times a week	26%	156
Several times a month	30%	175
Once a month	8%	47
Several times a year	15%	91
Once a year or less	3%	19
Never	4%	25
Total	100%	591

Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Bedford:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Police services	48%	277	39%	226	4%	23	1%	5	8%	48	100%	580
Fire services	48%	280	35%	202	1%	8	0%	1	15%	87	100%	578
Ambulance or emergency medical services	44%	254	27%	156	1%	6	1%	3	28%	161	100%	580
Crime prevention	28%	158	40%	229	4%	26	0%	1	28%	161	100%	574
Fire prevention and education	24%	139	35%	199	5%	31	1%	3	35%	204	100%	576
Traffic enforcement	17%	96	48%	277	20%	115	4%	21	12%	66	100%	575
Street repair	7%	40	34%	195	39%	226	19%	109	2%	10	100%	579
Street cleaning	15%	85	50%	291	27%	154	6%	32	3%	17	100%	578
Street lighting	13%	75	56%	325	24%	139	5%	29	2%	11	100%	580
Snow removal	49%	284	37%	215	10%	58	3%	15	2%	9	100%	582
Sidewalk maintenance	11%	63	42%	244	29%	170	8%	47	10%	55	100%	579
Traffic signal timing	10%	58	54%	309	25%	143	5%	28	7%	38	100%	575
Bus or transit services	7%	37	25%	140	12%	69	6%	34	51%	292	100%	572
Garbage collection	40%	226	47%	267	8%	44	1%	4	5%	30	100%	571
Recycling	42%	243	45%	263	7%	38	1%	8	5%	27	100%	579

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Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Bedford:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Storm drainage	14%	81	48%	277	17%	95	5%	27	16%	94	100%	574
Drinking water	39%	225	46%	269	10%	59	2%	10	3%	18	100%	582
Sewer services	28%	161	46%	264	8%	44	1%	7	17%	100	100%	577
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	30%	174	53%	309	10%	57	1%	8	6%	33	100%	581
Town parks	33%	193	50%	288	8%	46	1%	5	7%	43	100%	576
Recreation programs or classes	27%	152	39%	221	8%	44	1%	7	25%	141	100%	567
Land use, planning and zoning	12%	68	32%	183	18%	101	7%	41	31%	180	100%	573
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	10%	59	35%	197	15%	88	5%	27	35%	199	100%	570
Animal control	12%	71	38%	217	12%	70	4%	22	34%	196	100%	577
Economic development	8%	45	31%	178	17%	94	4%	21	40%	230	100%	568
Health services	11%	62	39%	222	8%	44	1%	8	41%	235	100%	571
Services to seniors	23%	131	30%	176	5%	27	1%	5	41%	239	100%	578
Services to youth	16%	92	34%	195	11%	64	4%	20	35%	202	100%	574
Services to low-income people	8%	44	17%	96	8%	45	3%	15	65%	369	100%	569
Public library services	58%	333	31%	175	4%	20	1%	4	7%	39	100%	571
Public information services	24%	139	47%	268	10%	57	1%	3	18%	105	100%	573
Public schools	39%	221	37%	215	5%	27	1%	5	18%	106	100%	574
Cable television	15%	85	40%	229	17%	98	3%	16	25%	143	100%	570
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	13%	73	29%	163	8%	48	2%	14	48%	273	100%	570
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	23%	133	41%	235	18%	103	2%	13	15%	88	100%	572

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Question 12: Government Services Overall												
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
The Town of Bedford	37%	215	54%	316	5%	27	1%	6	3%	20	100%	584
The Federal Government	5%	28	36%	207	30%	172	9%	54	21%	119	100%	580
The State Government	5%	27	34%	198	34%	196	11%	63	17%	97	100%	580

Question 13: Contact with Town Employees		
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)?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	27%	153
Yes	73%	406
Total	100%	558

Question 14: Town Employees												
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the Town of Bedford in your most recent contact?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Knowledge	46%	206	42%	190	8%	36	1%	3	3%	12	100%	448
Responsiveness	47%	211	38%	171	10%	45	2%	11	3%	12	100%	449
Courtesy	53%	237	35%	156	7%	33	2%	10	3%	12	100%	449
Overall impression	47%	211	40%	177	9%	39	2%	9	3%	12	100%	448

Question 15: Government Performance												
Please rate the following categories of Bedford government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
The value of services for the taxes paid to Bedford	22%	130	46%	273	17%	102	3%	20	11%	64	100%	589
The overall direction that Bedford is taking	15%	90	51%	298	17%	98	3%	16	14%	84	100%	587
The job Bedford government does at welcoming citizen involvement	16%	95	37%	214	17%	97	3%	15	28%	163	100%	584
The job Bedford government does at listening to citizens	12%	72	33%	191	19%	113	3%	20	33%	192	100%	588

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Question 16: Recommendation and Longevity												
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:	Very likely		Somewhat likely		Somewhat unlikely		Very unlikely		Don't know		Total	
Recommend living in Bedford to someone who asks	69%	410	26%	157	2%	15	2%	10	1%	5	100%	597
Remain in Bedford for the next five years	67%	397	21%	123	5%	32	5%	31	2%	12	100%	594

Question 17: Impact of the Economy		
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:	Percent of respondents	Count
Very positive	1%	7
Somewhat positive	6%	33
Neutral	35%	205
Somewhat negative	46%	267
Very negative	12%	68
Total	100%	581

Question 18a: Policy Question 1										
How familiar, if at all, are you with each of the following Bedford Police department programs?	Very familiar		Somewhat familiar		Slightly familiar		Not at all familiar		Total	
Citizen's Police Academy	4%	21	10%	61	11%	68	75%	442	100%	593
Bicycle safety education	6%	35	17%	99	20%	117	58%	342	100%	594
Crime prevention programs	3%	19	12%	74	19%	112	66%	389	100%	594
Seat belt/child passenger safety education	12%	70	17%	99	20%	116	52%	308	100%	593
Bedford Police Web site	6%	33	12%	72	14%	85	68%	402	100%	592
Vacation house checks (Away Book)	5%	27	9%	55	12%	70	74%	442	100%	594
Police station tours and safety education for children	8%	50	16%	96	19%	116	56%	332	100%	593
Anti-theft property ID program and auto glass etching	3%	21	7%	44	13%	77	76%	450	100%	593

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Question 18b: Policy Question 2												
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:	Strongly support		Somewhat support		Somewhat oppose		Strongly oppose		Don't know		Total	
Traffic calming	44%	258	36%	207	5%	29	1%	8	14%	79	100%	580
Traffic enforcement	36%	207	42%	246	9%	54	3%	15	10%	59	100%	581
Conservation/open space land acquisition	43%	253	34%	202	8%	50	3%	20	11%	62	100%	587
Indoor recreation activity space	38%	219	40%	230	6%	36	2%	14	14%	80	100%	580
Enhance recreational programs for Middle School students	35%	205	36%	211	6%	36	1%	7	22%	126	100%	584
Dedicated space/facilities for teens and Middle School students (i.e. Teen Center)	38%	223	39%	228	6%	33	4%	21	14%	82	100%	586
Road improvements	56%	328	38%	225	2%	13	0%	2	3%	19	100%	588
Sidewalk construction	51%	299	34%	202	7%	42	1%	7	7%	40	100%	589
Youth athletic fields	32%	184	40%	234	10%	59	3%	15	15%	89	100%	581
Adult athletic fields	22%	127	39%	227	16%	94	4%	26	18%	103	100%	576
Synthetic turf fields	15%	87	26%	149	16%	92	21%	122	21%	122	100%	573
Affordable housing	28%	164	37%	216	16%	94	8%	47	10%	58	100%	579
Historic preservation	36%	208	43%	247	11%	63	3%	15	8%	44	100%	577
Town Web site enhancement	20%	118	47%	275	11%	61	1%	7	20%	117	100%	579
Bedford local transit service	31%	183	45%	267	5%	32	2%	9	17%	98	100%	589

Question D1: Employment Status		
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	32%	188
Yes, full-time	53%	314
Yes, part-time	15%	90
Total	100%	591

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Question D2: Mode of Transportation Used for Commute	
During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below?	Percent of days mode used
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself	81%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	9%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	2%
Walk	1%
Bicycle	1%
Work at home	6%
Other	0%

Question D3: Length of Residency		
How many years have you lived in Bedford?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than 2 years	9%	56
2 to 5 years	18%	105
6 to 10 years	12%	72
11 to 20 years	24%	146
More than 20 years	37%	219
Total	100%	598

Question D4: Housing Unit Type		
Which best describes the building you live in?	Percent of respondents	Count
One family house detached from any other houses	72%	427
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	13%	77
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	14%	84
Mobile home	0%	0
Other	1%	8
Total	100%	596

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Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)		
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents	Count
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	21%	118
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	79%	457
Total	100%	576

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost		
About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners" association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than $300 per month	2%	12
$300 to $599 per month	7%	38
$600 to $999 per month	17%	94
$1,000 to $1,499 per month	19%	108
$1,500 to $2,499 per month	27%	149
$2,500 or more per month	28%	156
Total	100%	557

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household		
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	60%	359
Yes	40%	238
Total	100%	597

Question D8: Presence of Older Adults in Household		
Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	67%	402
Yes	33%	196
Total	100%	597

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Question D9: Household Income		
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than $24,999	7%	36
$25,000 to $49,999	17%	91
$50,000 to $99,999	25%	137
$100,000 to $149,000	24%	132
$150,000 or more	28%	151
Total	100%	548

Question D10: Ethnicity		
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents	Count
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	98%	581
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	2%	10
Total	100%	591

Question D11: Race		
What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents	Count
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%	3
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	9%	52
Black or African American	1%	8
White	88%	525
Other	2%	13
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option		

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Question D12: Age		
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents	Count
18 to 24 years	2%	15
25 to 34 years	10%	62
35 to 44 years	15%	91
45 to 54 years	29%	175
55 to 64 years	13%	78
65 to 74 years	16%	98
75 years or older	13%	78
Total	100%	596

Question D13: Gender		
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents	Count
Female	55%	324
Male	45%	266
Total	100%	590

Question D14: Registered to Vote		
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	7%	44
Yes	88%	527
Ineligible to vote	4%	22
Don't know	1%	7
Total	100%	600

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Question D15: Voted in Last General Election		
Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	12%	70
Yes	84%	500
Ineligible to vote	4%	24
Don't know	1%	3
Total	100%	598

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Appendix B: Survey Methodology

The National Citizen Survey™ was developed to provide local jurisdictions an accurate, affordable and easy way to assess and interpret resident opinion about important community issues. While standardization of question wording and survey methods provide the rigor to assure valid results, each jurisdiction has enough flexibility to construct a customized version of The National Citizen Survey™ that asks residents about key local services and important local issues.

Results offer insight into residents' perspectives about local government performance and as such provide important benchmarks for jurisdictions working on performance measurement. The National Citizen Survey™ is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The National Citizen Survey™ permits questions to test support for local policies and answers to its questions also speak to community trust and involvement in community-building activities as well as to resident demographic characteristics.

Survey Validity

The question of survey validity has two parts: 1) how can a jurisdiction be confident that the results from those who completed the questionnaire are representative of the results that would have been obtained had the survey been administered to the entire population? and 2) how closely do the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do?

To answer the first question, the best survey research practices were used for the resources spent to ensure that the results from the survey respondents reflect the opinions of residents in the entire jurisdiction. These practices include:

- Using a mail-out/mail-back methodology, which typically gets a higher response rate than phone for the same dollars spent. A higher response rate lessens the worry that those who did not respond are different than those who did respond.
- Selecting households at random within the jurisdiction to receive the survey. A random selection ensures that the households selected to receive the survey are similar to the entire population. A non-random sample may only include households from one geographic area, or from households of only one type.
- Over-sampling multi-family housing units to improve response from hard-to-reach, lower income, or younger apartment dwellers.
- Selecting the respondent within the household using an unbiased sampling procedure; in this case, the "birthday method." The cover letter included an instruction requesting that the respondent in the household be the adult (18 years old or older) who most recently had a birthday, irrespective of year of birth.
- Contacting potential respondents three times to encourage response from people who may have different opinions or habits than those who would respond with only a single prompt.
- Soliciting response on jurisdiction letterhead signed by the highest ranking elected official or staff member, thus appealing to the recipients' sense of civic responsibility.
- Providing a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope.
- Offering the survey in Spanish when appropriate and requested by Town officials.
- Using the most recent available information about the characteristics of jurisdiction residents to weight the data to reflect the demographics of the population.

The answer to the second question about how closely the perspectives recorded on the survey reflect what residents really believe or do is more complex. Resident responses to surveys are influenced by a variety of factors. For questions about service quality, residents' expectations for

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service quality play a role as well as the "objective" quality of the service provided, the way the resident perceives the entire community (that is, the context in which the service is provided), the scale on which the resident is asked to record his or her opinion and, of course, the opinion, itself, that a resident holds about the service. Similarly a resident's report of certain behaviors is colored by what he or she believes is the socially desirable response (e.g., reporting tolerant behaviors toward "oppressed groups," likelihood of voting a tax increase for services to poor people, use of alternative modes of travel to work besides the single occupancy vehicle), his or her memory of the actual behavior (if it is not a question speculating about future actions, like a vote), his or her confidence that he or she can be honest without suffering any negative consequences (thus the need for anonymity) as well as the actual behavior itself.

How closely survey results come to recording the way a person really feels or behaves often is measured by the coincidence of reported behavior with observed current behavior (e.g., driving habits), reported intentions to behave with observed future behavior (e.g., voting choices) or reported opinions about current community quality with objective characteristics of the community (e.g., feelings of safety correlated with rates of crime). There is a body of scientific literature that has investigated the relationship between reported behaviors and actual behaviors. Well-conducted surveys, by and large, do capture true respondent behaviors or intentions to act with great accuracy. Predictions of voting outcomes tend to be quite accurate using survey research, as do reported behaviors that are not about highly sensitive issues (e.g., family abuse or other illegal or morally sanctioned activities). For self-reports about highly sensitive issues, statistical adjustments can be made to correct for the respondents' tendency to report what they think the "correct" response should be.

Research on the correlation of resident opinion about service quality and "objective" ratings of service quality tend to be ambiguous, some showing stronger relationships than others. NRC's own research has demonstrated that residents who report the lowest ratings of street repair live in communities with objectively worse street conditions than those who report high ratings of street repair (based on road quality, delay in street repair, number of road repair employees). Similarly, the lowest rated fire services appear to be "objectively" worse than the highest rated fire services (expenditures per capita, response time, "professional" status of firefighters, breadth of services and training provided). Whether or not some research confirms the relationship between what residents think about a community and what can be seen "objectively" in a community, NRC has argued that resident opinion is a perspective that cannot be ignored by government administrators. NRC principals have written, "If you collect trash three times a day but residents think that your trash haul is lousy, you still have a problem."

Survey Sampling

"Sampling" refers to the method by which survey recipients were chosen. All households within the Town of Bedford were eligible to participate in the survey; 1,200 were selected to receive the survey. These 1,200 households were randomly selected from a comprehensive list of all housing units within the Town of Bedford boundaries. The basis of the list of all housing units was a United States Postal Service listing of housing units within zip codes. To choose the 1,200 survey recipients, a systematic sampling method was applied to the list of households known to be within the Town of Bedford. Systematic sampling is a procedure whereby a complete list of all possible items is culled, selecting every Nth one until the appropriate amount of items is selected. Multi-family housing units were over sampled as residents of this type of housing typically respond at lower rates to surveys than do those in single-family housing units.

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An individual within each household was selected using the birthday method. The birthday method selects a person within the household by asking the "person whose birthday has most recently passed" to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys. This instruction was contained in the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire.

Survey Administration

Selected households received three mailings, one week apart, beginning March 4, 2009. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey. The next mailing contained a letter from the 1,200 inviting the household to participate, a questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. The final mailing contained a reminder letter, another survey and a postage-paid return envelope. The second cover letter asked those who had not completed the survey to do so and those who have already done so to refrain from turning in another survey. Completed surveys were collected over the following five weeks.

Survey Response Rate and Confidence Intervals

Of the 1,200 surveys mailed, 48 were returned because the housing unit was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the 1,152 households receiving the survey mailings, 630 completed the survey, providing a response rate of 55%. In general, response rates obtained on local government resident surveys range from 25% to 40%.

In theory, in 95 cases out of 100, the results based on the number of responses obtained will differ by no more than four percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained had responses been collected from all Town of Bedford adults. This difference from the presumed population finding is referred to as the sampling error (or the "margin of error" or 95% confidence interval"). For subgroups of responses, the margin of sampling error is larger. In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of the public may introduce other sources of error. For example, the failure of some of the selected adults to participate in the sample or the difficulty of including all sectors of the population, such as residents of some institutions or group residences, may lead to somewhat different results.

In addition to sampling error, other sources of error may affect any survey, including the non-response of residents with opinions different from survey responders that may affect sample findings. Though standardized on The NCS, on other surveys, differences in question wording, order, translation and data entry, as examples, can lead to somewhat varying results.

Survey Processing (Data Entry)

Completed surveys received by NRC were assigned a unique identification number. Additionally, each survey was reviewed and "cleaned" as necessary. For example, a question may have asked a respondent to pick two items out of a list of five, but the respondent checked three; NRC staff would choose randomly two of the three selected items to be coded in the dataset.

Once all surveys were assigned a unique identification number, they were entered into an electronic dataset. This dataset was subject to a data entry protocol of "key and verify," in which survey data were entered twice into an electronic dataset and then compared. Discrepancies were evaluated against the original survey form and corrected. Range checks as well as other forms of quality control were also performed.

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Survey Data Weighting

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample were compared to those found in the 2000 Census estimates for adults in the Town of Bedford. Sample results were weighted using the population norms to reflect the appropriate percent of those residents. Other discrepancies between the whole population and the sample were also aided by the weighting due to the intercorrelation of many socioeconomic characteristics.

The variables used for weighting were housing tenure and gender/age. This decision was based on:

- The disparity between the survey respondent characteristics and the population norms for these variables
- The saliency of these variables in detecting differences of opinion among subgroups

The primary objective of weighting survey data is to make the survey sample reflective of the larger population of the community. This is done by: 1) reviewing the sample demographics and comparing them to the population norms from the most recent Census or other sources and 2) comparing the responses to different questions for demographic subgroups. The demographic characteristics that are least similar to the Census and yield the most different results are the best candidates for data weighting. A third criterion sometimes used is the importance that the community places on a specific variable. For example, if a jurisdiction feels that accurate race representation is key to staff and public acceptance of the study results, additional consideration will be given in the weighting process to adjusting the race variable.

A special software program using mathematical algorithms is used to calculate the appropriate weights. A limitation of data weighting is that only 2-3 demographic variables can be adjusted in a single study. Several different weighting "schemes" are tested to ensure the best fit for the data.

The process actually begins at the point of sampling. Knowing that residents in single family dwellings are more likely to respond to a mail survey, NRC oversamples residents of multi-family dwellings to ensure their proper representation in the sample data. Rather than giving all residents an equal chance of receiving the survey, this is systematic, stratified sampling, which gives each resident of the jurisdiction a known chance of receiving the survey (and apartment dwellers, for example, a greater chance than single family home dwellers). As a consequence, results must be weighted to recapture the proper representation of apartment dwellers.

The results of the weighting scheme are presented in the table on the following page.

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Bedford Citizen Survey Weighting Table			
Characteristic	Population Norm1	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
Housing			
Rent home	20%	15%	20%
Own home	80%	85%	80%
Detached unit	76%	77%	72%
Attached unit	24%	23%	28%
Race and Ethnicity			
White alone, not Hispanic	91%	88%	87%
Hispanic and/or other race	9%	12%	13%
Sex and Age			
Female	51%	60%	55%
Male	49%	40%	45%
18-34 years of age	18%	5%	13%
35-54 years of age	44%	46%	45%
55+ years of age	38%	49%	43%
Females 18-34	9%	4%	9%
Females 35-54	22%	29%	23%
Females 55+	20%	28%	23%
Males 18-34	8%	1%	4%
Males 35-54	22%	18%	22%
Males 55+	18%	21%	19%

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Survey Data Analysis and Reporting

The survey dataset was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency distributions were presented in the body of the report.

Use of the "Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor" Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is "excellent," "good," "fair" or "poor" (EGFP). This scale has important advantages over other scale possibilities (very good to very bad; very satisfied to very dissatisfied; strongly agree to strongly disagree, as examples). EGFP is used by the plurality of jurisdictions conducting citizen surveys across the U.S. The advantage of familiarity was one that NRC did not want to dismiss when crafting The National Citizen Survey™ questionnaire, because elected officials, staff and residents already are acquainted with opinion surveys measured this way. EGFP also has the advantage of offering three positive options, rather than only two, over which a resident can offer an opinion. While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, NRC has found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents' perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

"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.

Benchmark Comparisons

NRC has been leading the strategic use of surveys for local governments since 1991, when the principals of the company wrote the first edition of what became the classic text on citizen surveying. In *Citizen Surveys: how to do them, how to use them, what they mean*, published by ICMA, not only were the principles for quality survey methods articulated, but both the idea of benchmark data for citizen opinion and the method for gathering benchmark data were pioneered. The argument for benchmarks was called "In Search of Standards." "What has been missing from a local government's analysis of its survey results is the context that school administrators can supply when they tell parents how an 80 percent score on the social studies test compares to test results from other school systems..."

NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services. Conducted with typically no fewer than 400 residents in each jurisdiction, opinions are intended to represent over 30 million Americans. NRC has innovated a method for quantitatively integrating the results of surveys that were conducted by NRC with those that others have conducted. The integration methods have been thoroughly described not only in the Citizen Surveys book, but also in *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Policy Analysis* and *Management*. Scholars who specialize in the analysis of citizen surveys regularly have relied on

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this work (e.g., Kelly, J. & Swindell, D. (2002). Service quality variation across urban space: First steps towards a model of citizen satisfaction. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24, 271-288.; Van Ryzin, G., Muzzio, D., Immerwahr, S., Gulick, L. & Martinez, E. (2004). Drivers and consequences of citizen satisfaction: An application of the American Customer Satisfaction Index Model to New York City, *Public Administration Review*, 64, 331- 341). The method described in those publications is refined regularly and statistically tested on a growing number of citizen surveys in NRC's proprietary databases. NRC's work on calculating national benchmarks for resident opinions about service delivery and quality of life won the Samuel C. May award for research excellence from the Western Governmental Research Association.

The Role of Comparisons

Benchmark comparisons are used for performance measurement. Jurisdictions use the comparative information to help interpret their own citizen survey results, to create or revise community plans, to evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions, to measure local government performance. Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. When surveys of service satisfaction turn up "good" citizen evaluations, jurisdictions need to know how others rate their services to understand if "good" is good enough. Furthermore, in the absence of national or peer community comparisons, a jurisdiction is left with comparing its fire protection rating to its street maintenance rating. That comparison is unfair. Streets always lose to fire. More important and harder questions need to be asked; for example, how do residents' ratings of fire service compare to opinions about fire service in other communities?

A police department that provides the fastest and most efficient service—one that closes most of its cases, solves most of its crimes and keeps the crime rate low—still has a problem to fix if the residents in the community it intends to protect believe services are not very good compared to ratings given by residents to their own objectively "worse" departments. The benchmark data can help that police department – or any department – to understand how well citizens think it is doing. Without the comparative data, it would be like bowling in a tournament without knowing what the other teams are scoring. NRC recommends that citizen opinion be used in conjunction with other sources of data about budget, personnel and politics to help managers know how to respond to comparative results.

Jurisdictions in the benchmark database are distributed geographically across the country and range from small to large in population size. Most commonly, comparisons are made to the entire database. Comparisons may also be made to subsets of jurisdictions (for example, within a given region or population category). Despite the differences in jurisdiction characteristics, all are in the business of providing local government services to residents. Though individual jurisdiction circumstances, resources and practices vary, the objective in every community is to provide services that are so timely, tailored and effective that residents conclude the services are of the highest quality. High ratings in any jurisdiction, like SAT scores in any teen household, bring pride and a sense of accomplishment.

Comparison of Bedford to the Benchmark Database

The Town of Bedford chose to have comparisons made to the entire database. A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been provided when a similar question on the Town of Bedford Survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most

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questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons are available, Bedford results are noted as being “above” the benchmark, “below” the benchmark or “similar to” the benchmark. This evaluation of “above,” “below” or “similar to” comes from a statistical comparison of Bedford's rating to the benchmark (the rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked).

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Appendix C: Survey Materials

The following pages contain copies of the survey materials sent to randomly selected households within the Town of Bedford.

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Town of Bedford
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit NO. 94

Town of Bedford
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit NO. 94

Town of Bedford
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit NO. 94

Town of Bedford
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage
PAID
Boulder, CO
Permit NO. 94

Dear Bedford Resident,

Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the Town of Bedford. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,

Catherine B. Cordes
Selectmen Chair

Dear Bedford Resident,

Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the Town of Bedford. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,

Catherine B. Cordes
Selectmen Chair

Dear Bedford Resident,

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Sincerely,

Catherine B. Cordes
Selectmen Chair

Dear Bedford Resident,

Your household has been selected at random to participate in an anonymous citizen survey about the Town of Bedford. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,

Catherine B. Cordes
Selectmen Chair

March 2009

Dear Bedford Resident:

The Town of Bedford wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in Bedford's 2009 Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your feedback will help the Town set benchmarks for tracking the quality of services provided to residents. Your answers will help the Town government make decisions that affect our community. You should find the questions interesting and we will definitely find your answers useful. Please participate!

To get a representative sample of Bedford residents, the adult (anyone 18 years or older) in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey. Year of birth of the adult does not matter.

Please have the appropriate member of the household spend a few minutes to answer all the questions and return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Your responses will remain completely anonymous.**

Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey please call (781) 275-1111.

Please help us shape the future of Bedford. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Catherine B. Cordes

Catherine B. Cordes
Selectmen Chair

March 2009

Dear Bedford Resident:

About one week ago, you should have received a copy of the enclosed survey. **If you completed it and sent it back, we thank you for your time and ask you to discard this survey. Please do not respond twice.** If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, we would appreciate your response. The Town of Bedford wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in the Town of Bedford's Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your feedback will help the Town set benchmarks for tracking the quality of services provided to residents. Your answers will help the Town government make decisions that affect our community. You should find the questions interesting and we will definitely find your answers useful. Please participate!

To get a representative sample of Bedford residents, the adult (anyone 18 years or older) in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey. Year of birth of the adult does not matter.

Please have the appropriate member of the household spend a few minutes to answer all the questions and return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Your responses will remain completely anonymous.**

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Please help us shape the future of Bedford. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Catherine B. Cordes

Catherine B. Cordes
Selectmen Chair

The Town of Bedford 2009 Citizen Survey

Please complete this questionnaire if you are the adult (age 18 or older) in the household who most recently had a birthday. The adult's year of birth does not matter. Please select the response (by circling the number or checking the box) that most closely represents your opinion for each question. Your responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Bedford:

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
Bedford as a place to live	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live	1	2	3	4	5
Bedford as a place to raise children	1	2	3	4	5
Bedford as a place to work	1	2	3	4	5
Bedford as a place to retire	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5

2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Bedford as a whole:

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
Sense of community	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Educational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of car travel in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bus travel in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bicycle travel in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic flow on major streets	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality child care	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventative health services	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Bedford	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Bedford over the past 2 years:

	Much too slow	*Somewhat too slow*	*Right amount*	*Somewhat too fast*	*Much too fast*	*Don't know*
Population growth	1	2	3	4	5	6
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Jobs growth	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Bedford?
❍ Not a problem ❍ Minor problem ❍ Moderate problem ❍ Major problem ❍ Don't know

5. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Bedford:

	Very safe	*Somewhat safe*	*Neither safe nor unsafe*	*Somewhat unsafe*	*Very unsafe*	*Don't know*
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

	Very safe	*Somewhat safe*	*Neither safe nor unsafe*	*Somewhat unsafe*	*Very unsafe*	*Don't know*
In your neighborhood during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
In your neighborhood after dark	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Bedford's downtown area during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Bedford's downtown area after dark	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?
❍ No ➔ Go to Question 9 ❍ Yes ➔ Go to Question 8 ❍ Don't know ➔ Go to Question 9

8. If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?
❍ No ❍ Yes ❍ Don't know

9. In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Bedford?

	Never	*Once or twice*	*3 to 12 times*	*13 to 26 times*	*More than 26 times*
Used Bedford public libraries or their services	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a recreation program or activity	1	2	3	4	5
Visited a neighborhood park, town park, or conservation area	1	2	3	4	5
Ridden a local bus within Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	1	2	3	4	5
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	1	2	3	4	5
Read the Bedford Byline (Town newsletter)	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the Town of Bedford Web site (at www.town.bedford.ma.us)	1	2	3	4	5
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a club or civic group in Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	1	2	3	4	5

10. 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)?
❍ Just about every day
❍ Several times a week
❍ Several times a month
❍ Once a month
❍ Several times a year
❍ Once a year or less
❍ Never

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The Town of Bedford 2009 Citizen Survey

11. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Bedford:

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
Police services	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance or emergency medical services	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services	1	2	3	4	5
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	1	2	3	4	5
Town parks	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning and zoning	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development	1	2	3	4	5
Health services	1	2	3	4	5
Services to seniors	1	2	3	4	5
Services to youth	1	2	3	4	5
Services to low-income people	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services	1	2	3	4	5
Public schools	1	2	3	4	5
Cable television	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	1	2	3	4	5

12. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
The Town of Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government	1	2	3	4	5
The State Government	1	2	3	4	5

13. 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)?

❍ No ➔ Go to Question 15 ❍ Yes ➔ Go to Question 14

14. What was your impression of the employee(s) of the Town of Bedford in your most recent contact? (Rate each characteristic below.)

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy	1	2	3	4	5
Overall impression	1	2	3	4	5

15. Please rate the following categories of Bedford government performance:

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
The value of services for the taxes paid to Bedford	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Bedford is taking	1	2	3	4	5
The job Bedford government does at welcoming citizen involvement	1	2	3	4	5
The job Bedford government does at listening to citizens	1	2	3	4	5

16. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following:

	Very likely	*Somewhat likely*	*Somewhat unlikely*	*Very unlikely*	*Don't know*
Recommend living in Bedford to someone who asks	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Bedford for the next five years	1	2	3	4	5

17. 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:

❍ Very positive ❍ Somewhat positive ❍ Neutral ❍ Somewhat negative ❍ Very negative

18. Please check the response that comes closest to your opinion for each of the following questions:

a. How familiar, if at all, are you with each of the following Bedford Police Department programs?

	Very familiar	*Somewhat familiar*	*Slightly familiar*	*Not at all familiar*
Citizen's Police Academy	1	2	3	4
Bicycle safety education	1	2	3	4
Crime prevention programs	1	2	3	4
Seat belt/child passenger safety education	1	2	3	4
Bedford Police Web site	1	2	3	4
Vacation house checks (Away Book)	1	2	3	4
Police station tours and safety education for children	1	2	3	4
Anti-theft property ID program and auto glass etching	1	2	3	4

b. 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:

	Strongly support	*Somewhat support*	*Somewhat oppose*	*Strongly oppose*	*Don't know*
Traffic calming	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement	1	2	3	4	5
Conservation/open space land acquisition	1	2	3	4	5
Indoor recreation activity space	1	2	3	4	5
Enhanced recreational programs for Middle School students	1	2	3	4	5
Dedicated space/facilities for teens and Middle School students (i.e. Teen Center)	1	2	3	4	5
Road improvements	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk construction	1	2	3	4	5
Youth athletic fields	1	2	3	4	5
Adult athletic fields	1	2	3	4	5
Synthetic turf fields	1	2	3	4	5
Affordable housing	1	2	3	4	5
Historic preservation	1	2	3	4	5
Town Web site enhancement	1	2	3	4	5
Bedford local transit service	1	2	3	4	5

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Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, all of your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

D1. Are you currently employed for pay?
- ❍ No ➔ Go to Question D3
- ❍ Yes, full time ➔ Go to Question D2
- ❍ Yes, part time ➔ Go to Question D2

D2. During a typical week, how many days do you commute to work (for the longest distance of your commute) in each of the ways listed below? (Enter the total number of days, using whole numbers.)

Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) by myself	_____	days
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	_____	days
Bus, Rail, Subway or other public transportation	_____	days
Walk	_____	days
Bicycle	_____	days
Work at home	_____	days
Other	_____	days

D3. How many years have you lived in Bedford?
- ❍ Less than 2 years
- ❍ 2-5 years
- ❍ 6-10 years
- ❍ 11-20 years
- ❍ More than 20 years

D4. Which best describes the building you live in?
- ❍ One family house detached from any other houses
- ❍ House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)
- ❍ Building with two or more apartments or condominiums
- ❍ Mobile home
- ❍ Other

D5. Is this house, apartment or mobile home...
- ❍ Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment?
- ❍ Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear?

D6. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?
- ❍ Less than $300 per month
- ❍ $300 to $599 per month
- ❍ $600 to $999 per month
- ❍ $1,000 to $1,499 per month
- ❍ $1,500 to $2,499 per month
- ❍ $2,500 or more per month

D7. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?
- ❍ No ❍ Yes

D8. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?
- ❍ No ❍ Yes

D9. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)
- ❍ Less than $24,999
- ❍ $25,000 to $49,999
- ❍ $50,000 to $99,999
- ❍ $100,000 to $149,999
- ❍ $150,000 or more

Please respond to both question D10 and D11:

D10. Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?
- ❍ No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino
- ❍ Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino

D11. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be)
- ❍ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ❍ Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
- ❍ Black or African American
- ❍ White
- ❍ Other

D12. In which category is your age?
- ❍ 18-24 years
- ❍ 25-34 years
- ❍ 35-44 years
- ❍ 45-54 years
- ❍ 55-64 years
- ❍ 65-74 years
- ❍ 75 years or older

D13. What is your sex?
- ❍ Female
- ❍ Male

D14. Are you registered to vote in the Town of Bedford?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Ineligible to vote
- ❍ Don't know

D15. Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Ineligible to vote
- ❍ Don't know

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return the completed survey in the postage paid envelope to: National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 549, Belle Mead, NJ 08502

Town of Bedford
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

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