The National Citizen Survey™

CITY OF GAITHERSBURG, MD
2009

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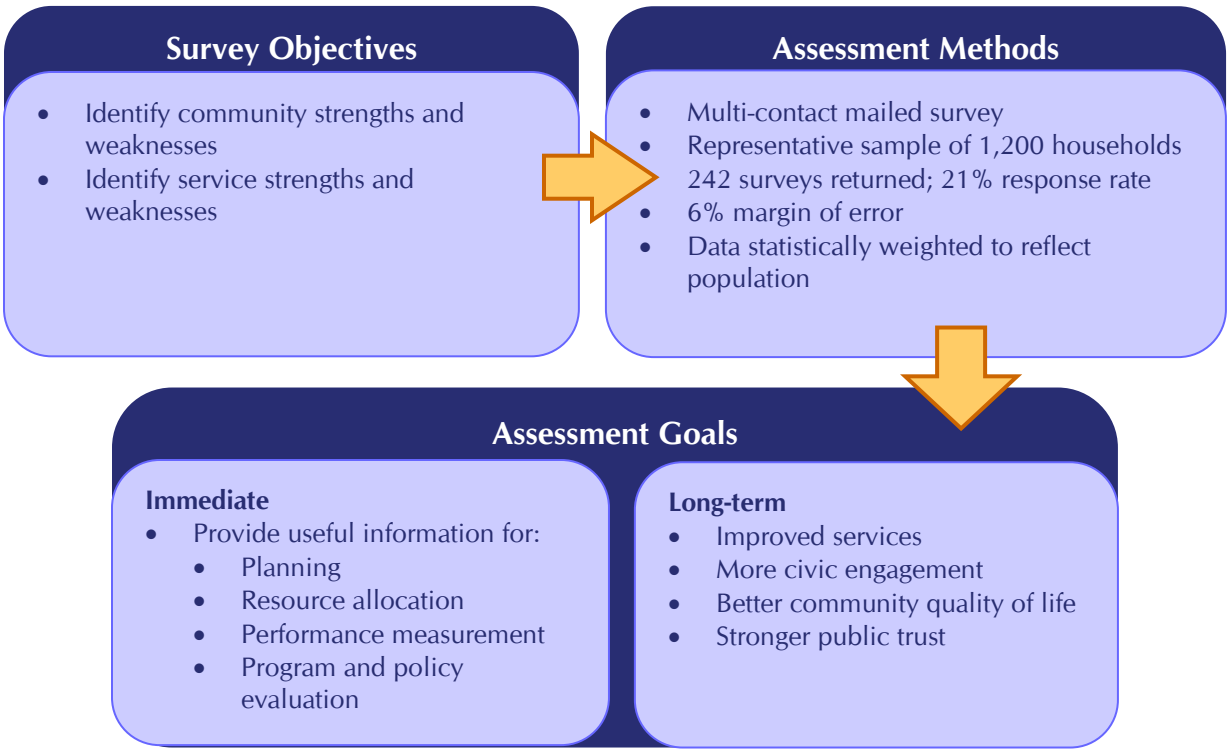
Survey Background

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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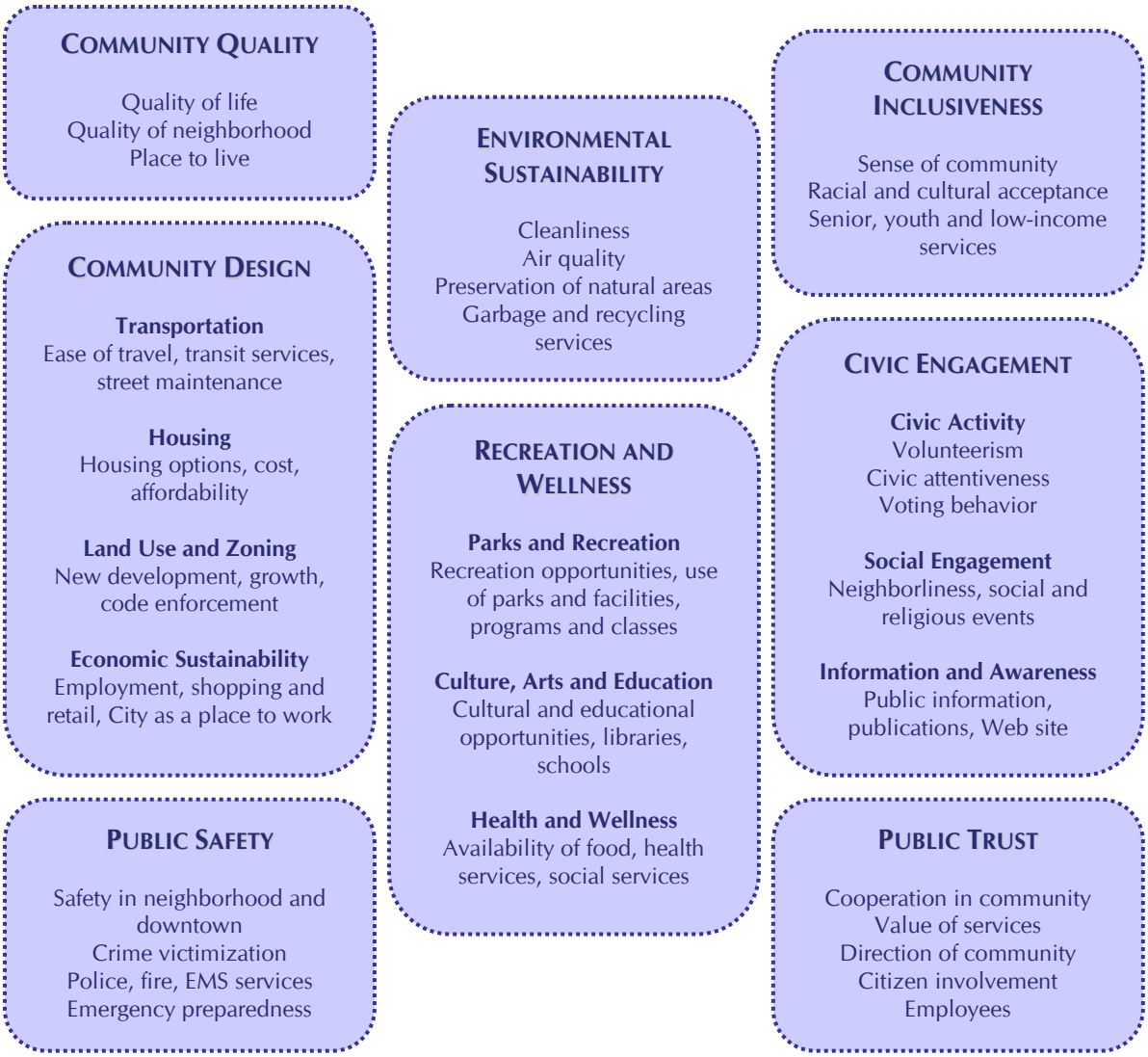
FIGURE 2: THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™ FOCUS AREAS



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 242 completed surveys were obtained, providing an overall response rate of 21%. Typically, response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 20% to 40%.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for the City of Gaithersburg was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Gaithersburg staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems and provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of Gaithersburg staff also augmented The National Citizen Survey™ basic service through a variety of options including an open-ended question, the option to complete the survey in Spanish and several 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 City of Gaithersburg survey is no greater than plus or minus six percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (242 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 City of Gaithersburg, but from City of Gaithersburg services to services like them provided by other jurisdictions.

Interpreting Comparisons to Previous Years

This report contains comparisons with prior years' results. In this report, we are comparing this year's data with existing data in the graphs. Differences between years can be considered "statistically significant" if they are greater than nine percentage points. Trend data for your jurisdiction represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines. Deviations from stable trends over time, especially represent opportunities for understanding how local policies, programs or public information may have affected residents' opinions.

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 City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg 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.

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Where comparisons were available, the City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg's rating to the benchmark.

"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. 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 City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg and believe the City is a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the City of Gaithersburg was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 73% of respondents. Almost all report they plan on staying in the City of Gaithersburg for the next five years.

A variety of characteristics of the community was evaluated by those participating in the study. Among the characteristics receiving the most favorable ratings were openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds, shopping opportunities and the overall appearance of Gaithersburg. The two characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were the availability of affordable quality housing and ease of bicycle travel in Gaithersburg.

Ratings of community characteristics were compared to the benchmark database. Of the 20 characteristics for which comparisons were available, seven were above the benchmark comparison, 11 were similar to the benchmark comparison and two were below.

Residents in the City of Gaithersburg were somewhat civically engaged. While only 23% had attended a meeting of local elected public officials or other local public meeting in the previous 12 months, 83% had visited a city park. Less than half had volunteered their time to some group or activity in the City of Gaithersburg, which lower than the benchmark.

In general, survey respondents demonstrated trust in local government. A majority rated the overall direction being taken by the City of Gaithersburg as "good" or "excellent." Those residents who had interacted with an employee of the City of Gaithersburg in the previous 12 months gave high marks to those employees. About three quarters rated their overall impression of employees as "excellent" or "good."

On average, residents gave favorable ratings to almost all local government services. City services rated were able to be compared to the benchmark database. Of the 24 services for which comparisons were available, 21 were above the benchmark comparison, three were similar to the benchmark comparison and none were below.

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A Key Driver Analysis was conducted for the City of Gaithersburg which examined the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Gaithersburg's services overall. Those key driver services that correlated most strongly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Gaithersburg 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:

- Police services
- Street repair
- Street lighting
- Cable television

Of these services, those deserving the most attention may be those that have experienced declining ratings over time or those that were below or similar to the benchmark comparisons: police services and street lighting. For street repair and cable television services, the City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg – not only direct questions about quality of life overall and in neighborhoods, but questions to measure residents' commitment to the City of Gaithersburg. Residents were asked whether they planned to move soon or if they would recommend the City of Gaithersburg to others. Intentions to stay and willingness to make recommendations provide evidence that the City of Gaithersburg offers services and amenities that work.

Most of the City of Gaithersburg's residents gave favorable ratings to their neighborhoods and the community as a place to live. Further, many reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years.

Figure 3: Ratings of Overall Community Quality by Year

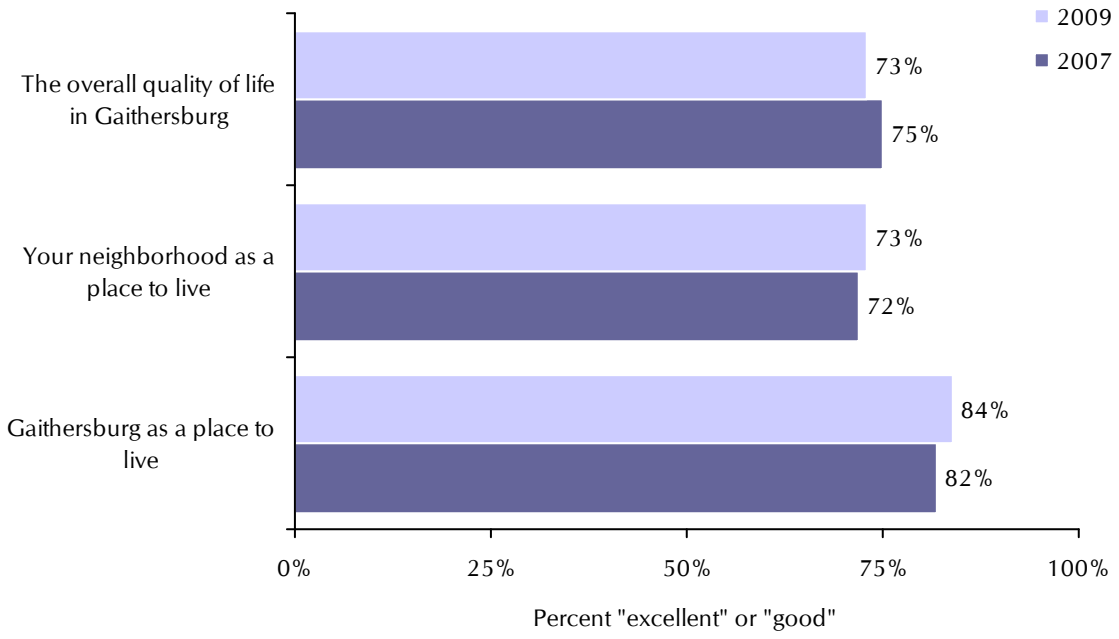

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FIGURE 4: LIKELIHOOD OF REMAINING IN COMMUNITY AND RECOMMENDING COMMUNITY

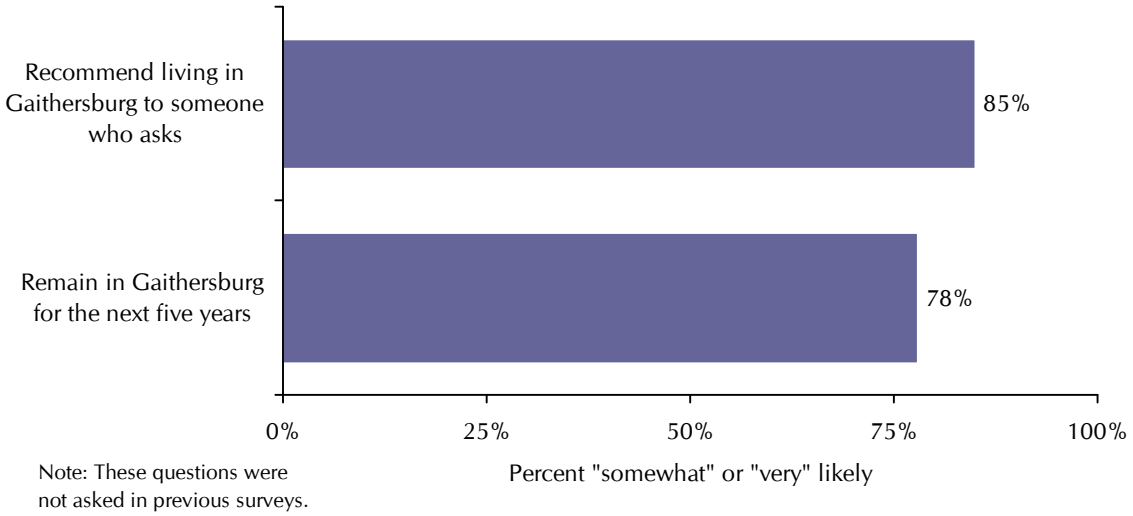

FIGURE 5: OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BENCHMARKS

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

Overall community quality was compared to survey data from previous years. Average ratings were computed for the previous years' data to make comparison easier. Trends from 2007 to 2009 were generally stable.

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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 five aspects of mobility to rate on a scale of "excellent," "good," "fair" and "poor." Ease of bus travel in Gaithersburg was given the most positive rating, followed by ease of car travel.

Figure 6: Ratings of Transportation in Community by Year

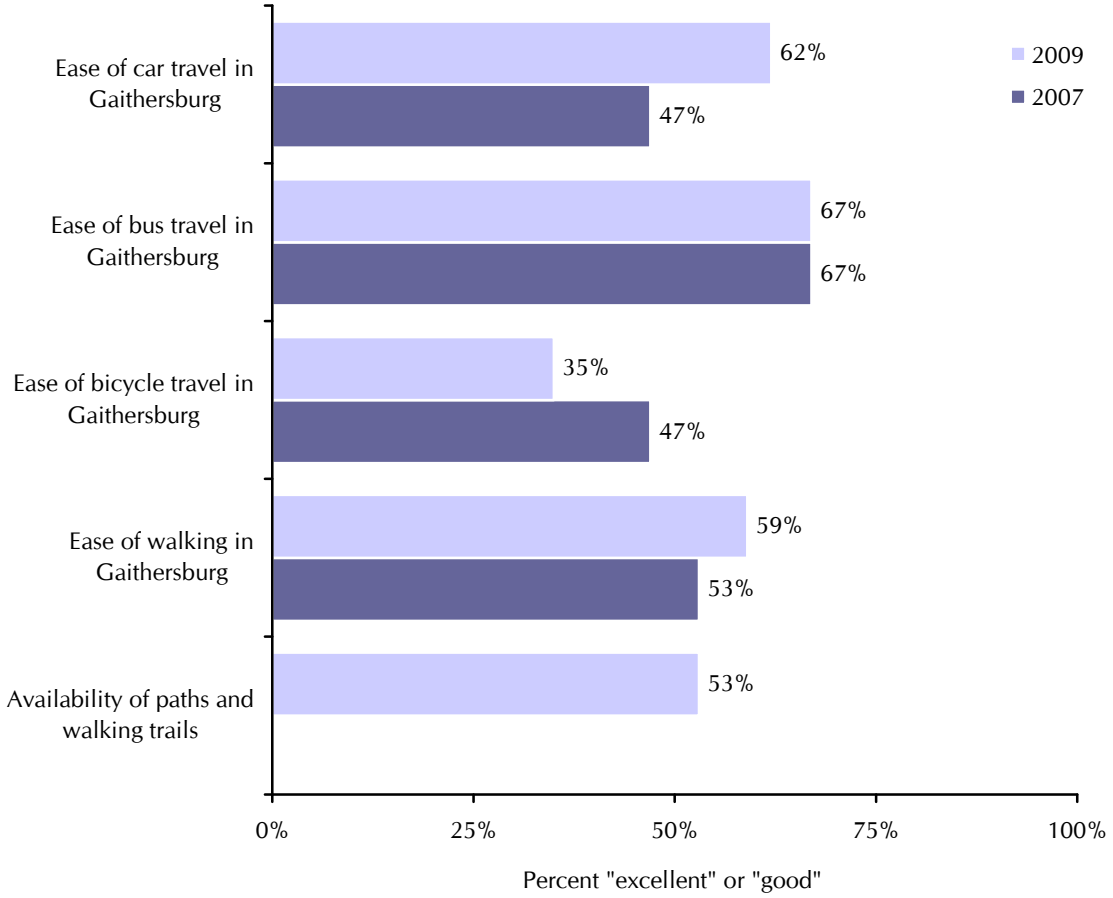

Figure 7: Community Transportation Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Ease of bus travel in Gaithersburg	Above
Ease of car travel in Gaithersburg	Similar
Ease of walking in Gaithersburg	Similar
Ease of bicycle travel in Gaithersburg	Below
Availability of paths and walking trails	Similar

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Five transportation services were rated in Gaithersburg. As compared to most communities across America, ratings tended to be favorable. Four were above the benchmark and one was similar to the benchmark.

FIGURE 8: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BY YEAR

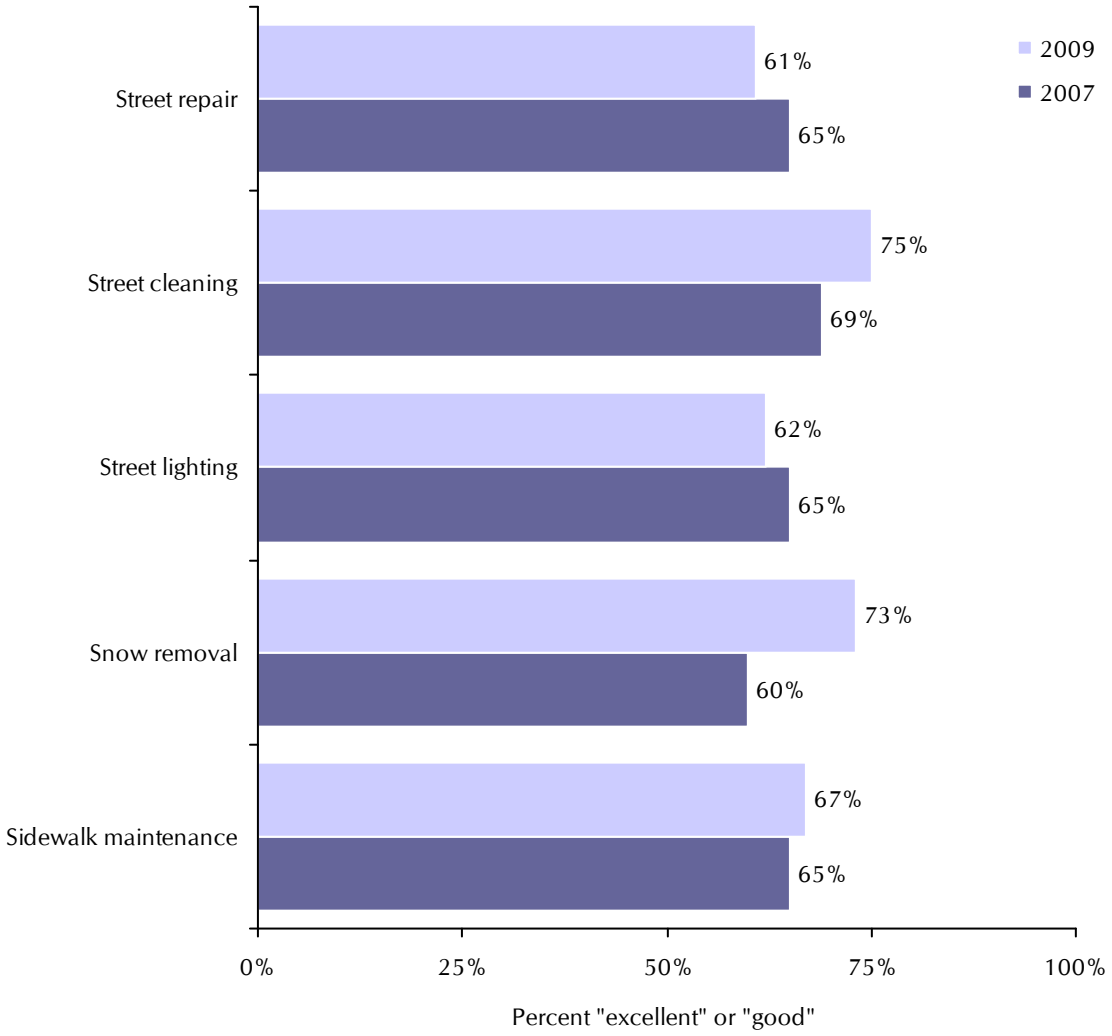


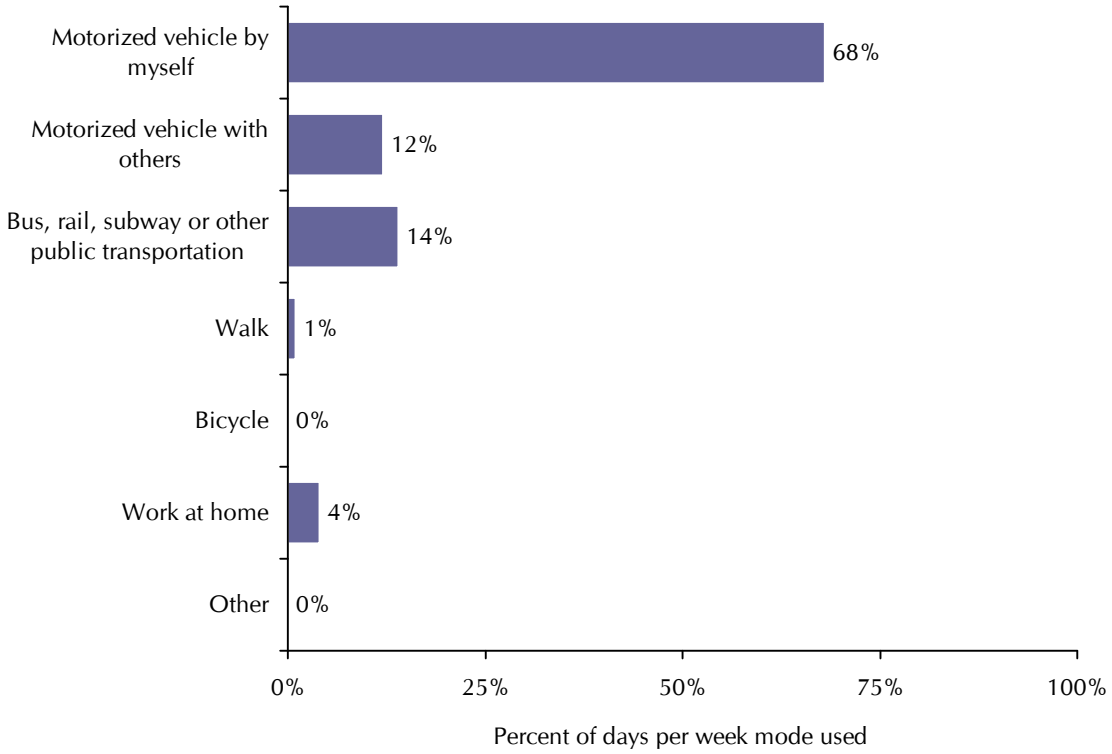
FIGURE 9: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Street repair /maintenance	Above
Street cleaning	Above
Street lighting	Similar
Snow removal	Above
Sidewalk maintenance	Above

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

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, 14% of work commute trips were made by transit and 1% by foot.

FIGURE 10: 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 toward a single group, 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 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 City of Gaithersburg 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 33% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was similar in the City of Gaithersburg than the ratings, on average, in comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 11: RATINGS OF HOUSING IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

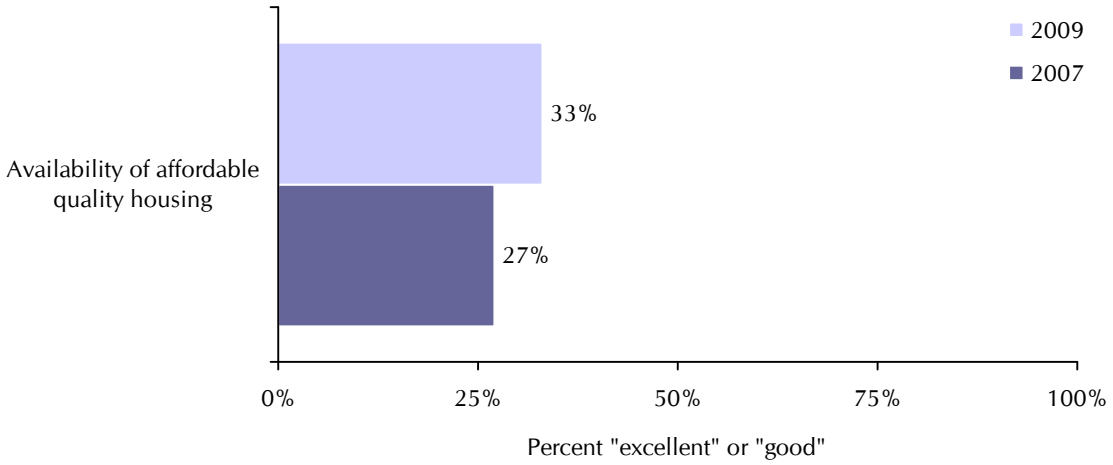

FIGURE 12: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable quality housing	Similar

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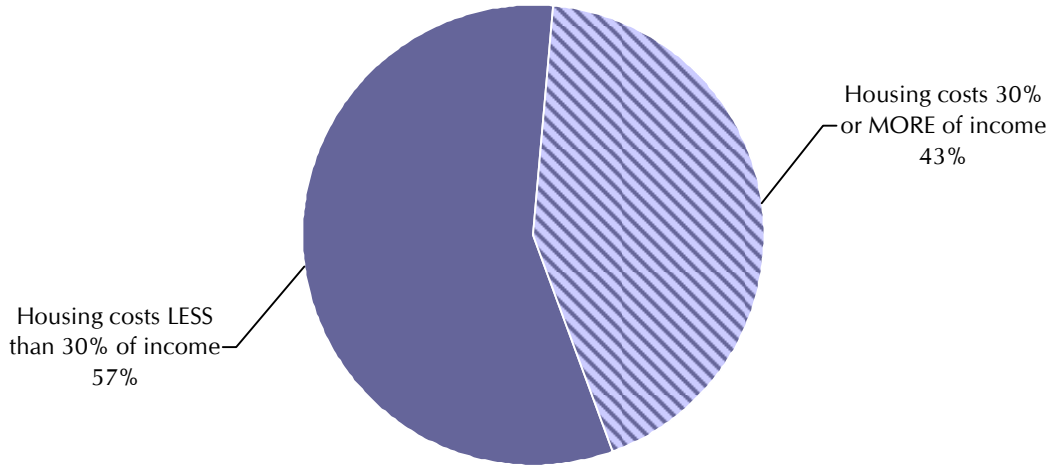
To augment the perceptions of affordable housing in Gaithersburg, the cost of housing as reported in the survey was compared to residents' reported monthly income to create a rough estimate of the proportion of residents of the City of Gaithersburg experiencing housing cost stress. About 43% of survey participants were found to pay housing costs of more than 30% of their monthly household income.

FIGURE 13: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHOSE HOUSING COSTS ARE "AFFORDABLE"



Note: This question was not asked in previous surveys.

FIGURE 14: HOUSING COSTS BENCHMARKS

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

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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 City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 71% of respondents. The overall appearance of Gaithersburg was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 72% of respondents and was similar to the benchmark. When rating to what extent run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles were a problem in the City of Gaithersburg, 5% thought they were a "major" problem. The services of land use, planning and zoning, code enforcement, and animal control were rated above the benchmark.

FIGURE 15: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S "BUILT ENVIRONMENT" BY YEAR

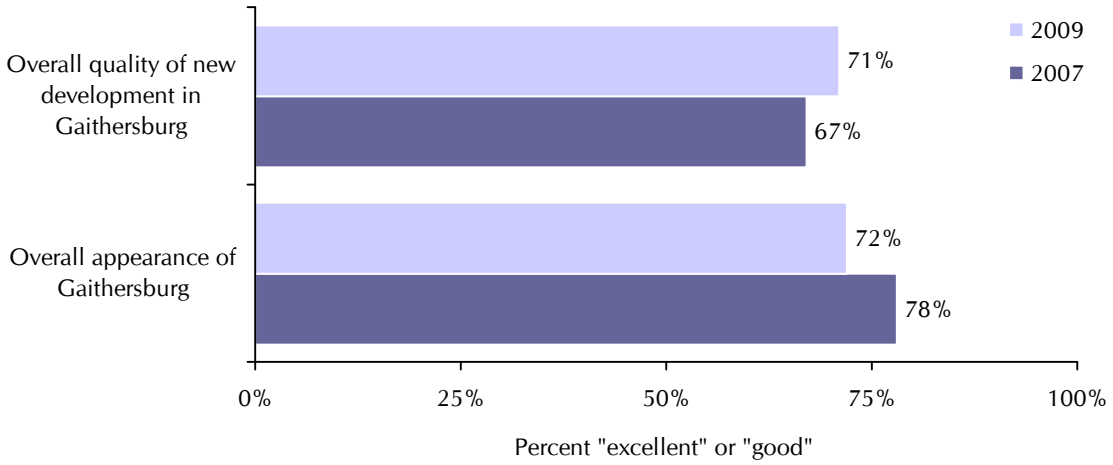

FIGURE 16: BUILT ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of new development in City	Above
Overall appearance of Gaithersburg	Similar

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FIGURE 17: RATINGS OF POPULATION GROWTH BY YEAR

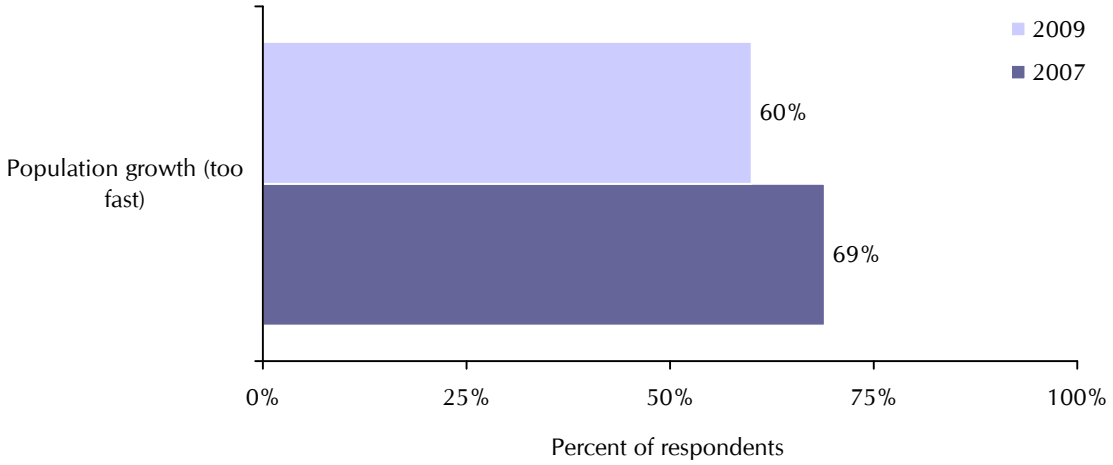

FIGURE 18: POPULATION GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Population growth seen as too fast	More

FIGURE 19: RATINGS OF NUISANCE PROBLEMS BY YEAR

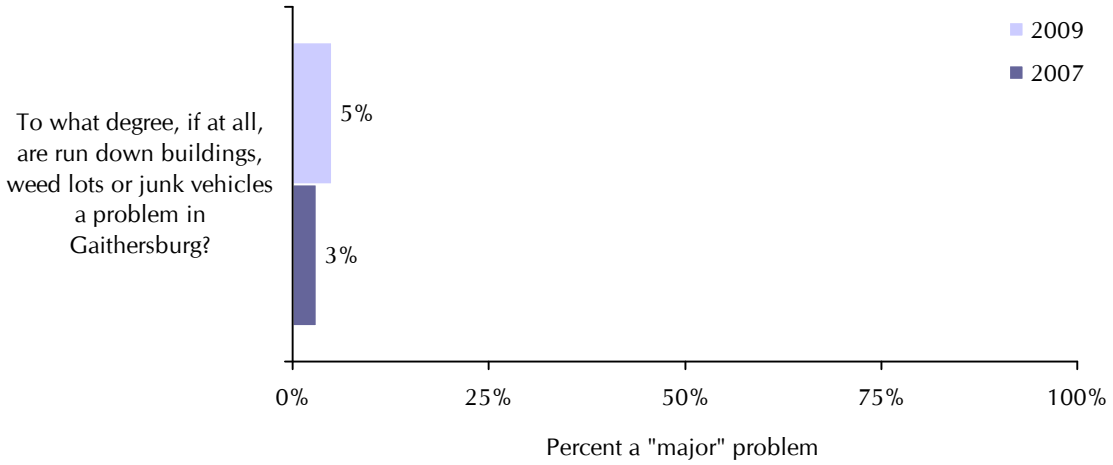

FIGURE 20: NUISANCE PROBLEMS BENCHMARKS

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

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FIGURE 21: RATINGS OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

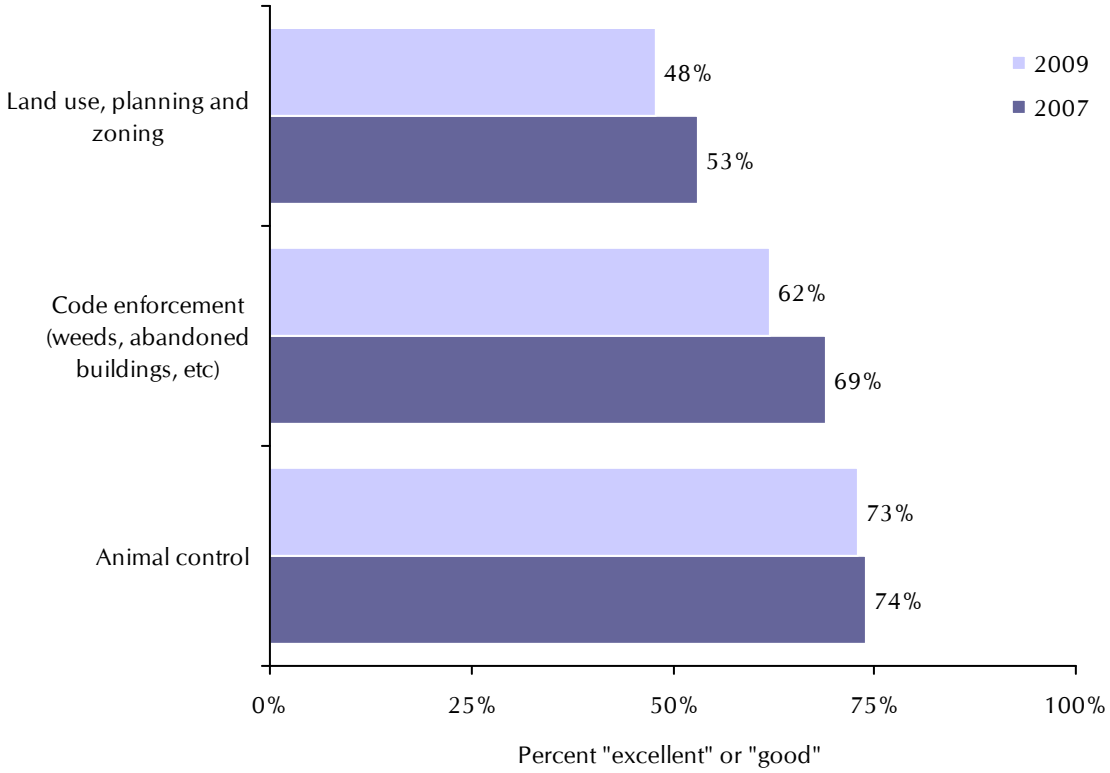

FIGURE 22: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	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 feature was shopping opportunities. Receiving the lowest rating was employment opportunities.

Figure 23: Ratings of Economic Sustainability and Opportunities by Year

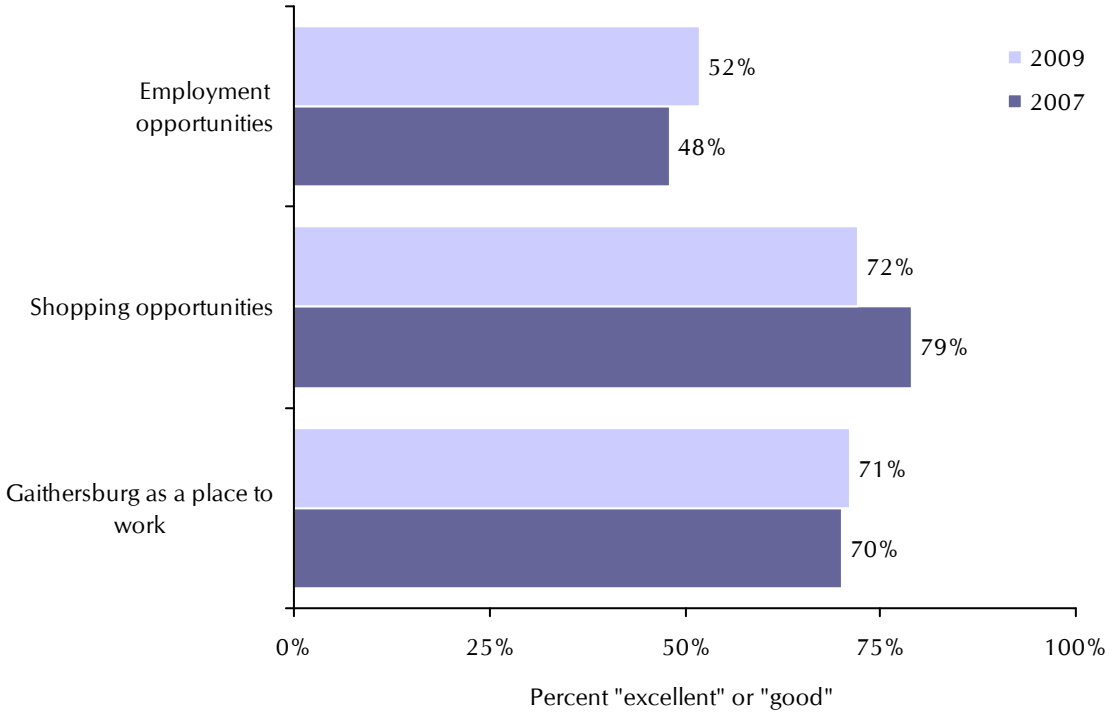

Figure 24: Economic Sustainability and Opportunities Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Employment opportunities	Above
Shopping opportunities	Above
Place to work	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 Gaithersburg, 68% responded that it was "too slow," while 35% reported retail growth as "too slow." About the same number of residents in Gaithersburg compared to other jurisdictions believed that retail growth was too slow and about the same number of residents believed that job growth was too slow.

FIGURE 25: RATINGS OF RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BY YEAR

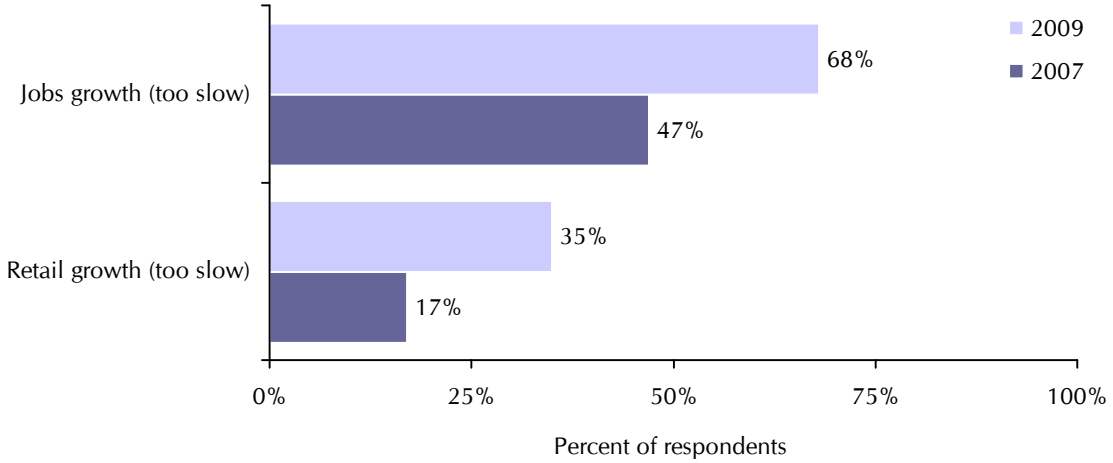

FIGURE 26: RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BENCHMARKS

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

FIGURE 27: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

FIGURE 28: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Economic development	Above

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

Residents were asked to reflect on their economic prospects in the near term. Sixteen percent of the City of Gaithersburg residents expected that the coming six months would have a "somewhat" or "very" positive impact on their family. The percent of residents with an optimistic outlook on their household income was the same as comparison jurisdictions.

FIGURE 29: RATINGS OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BY YEAR

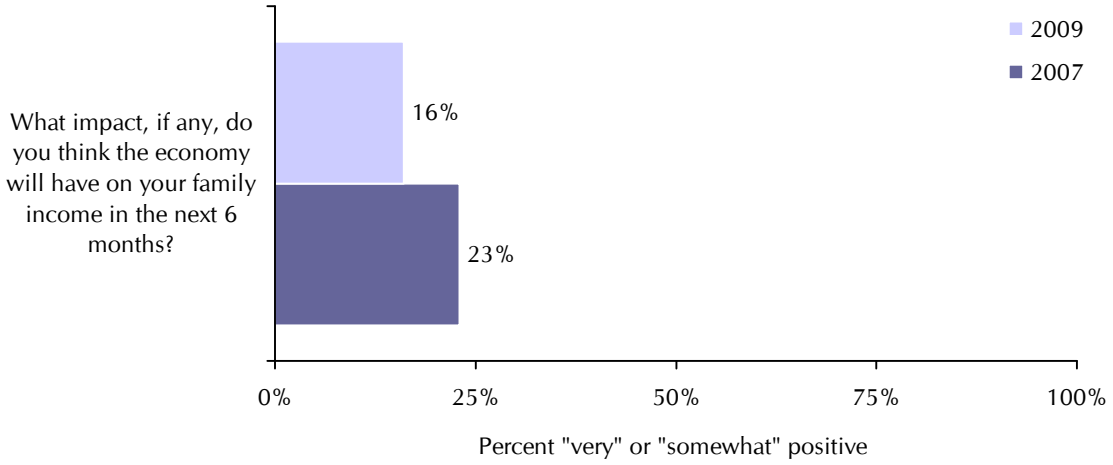

FIGURE 30: PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Positive impact of economy on household income	Similar

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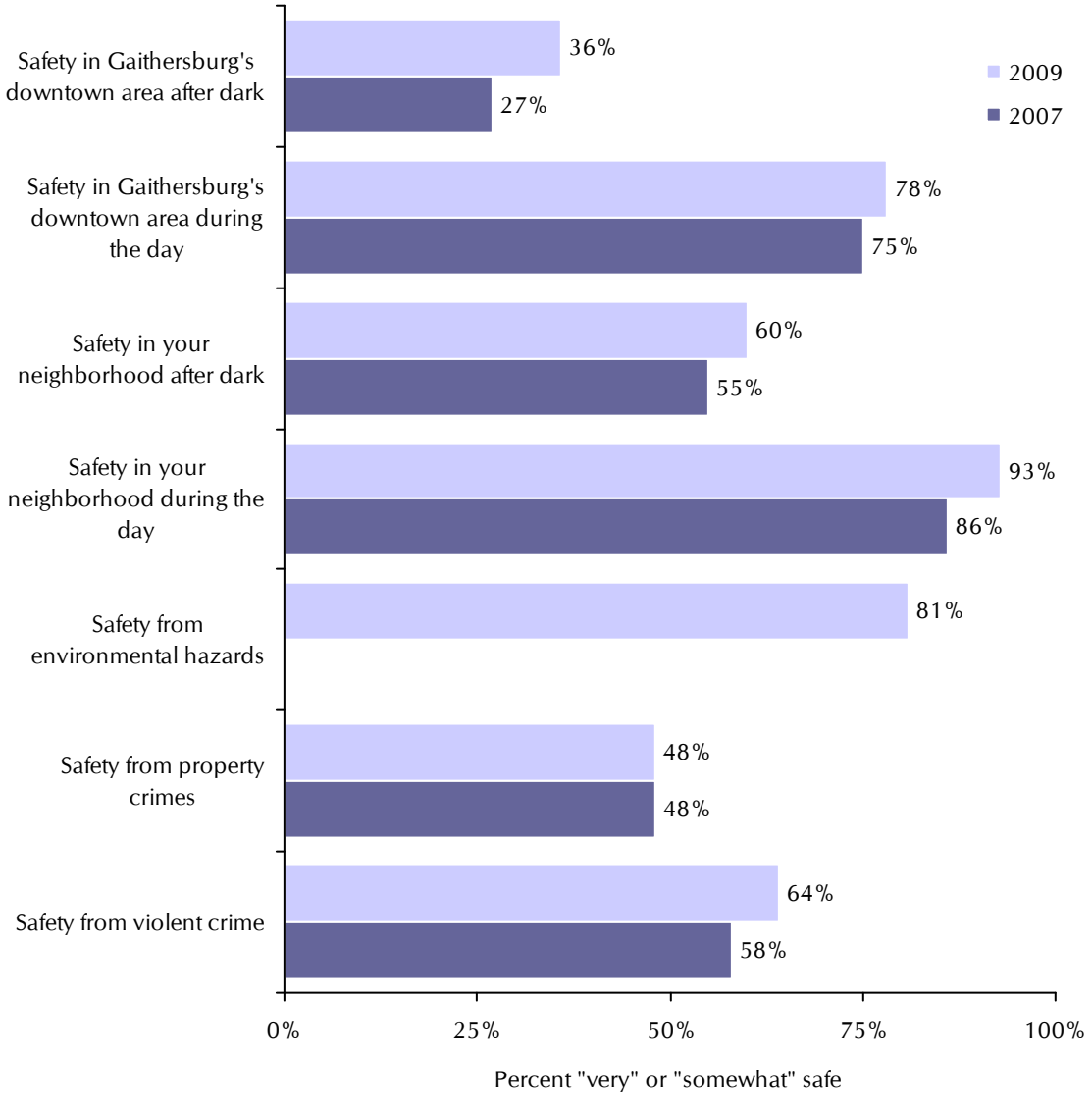
Public Safety

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. Many gave positive ratings of safety in the City Gaithersburg. About 64% percent of those completing the questionnaire said they felt "very" or "somewhat" safe from violent crimes and 81% felt "very" or "somewhat" safe from environmental hazards. Daytime sense of safety was better than nighttime safety and neighborhoods felt safer than downtown.

Figure 31: Ratings of Community and Personal Public Safety by Year



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

FIGURE 32: COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BENCHMARKS

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

As assessed by the survey, 12% 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, 69% had reported it to police. Compared to other jurisdictions about the same percent of Gaithersburg residents had been victims of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey and fewer Gaithersburg residents had reported their most recent crime victimization to the police.

FIGURE 33: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BY YEAR

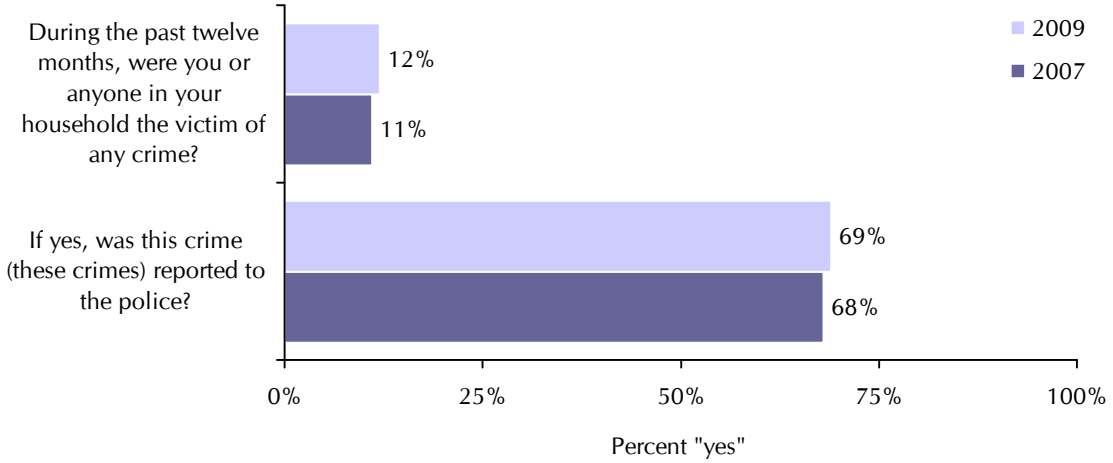


FIGURE 34: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Victim of crime	Similar
Reported crimes	Less

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Residents rated three City public safety services; of these, one was rated above the benchmark comparison and two were rated similar to the benchmark comparison. Police services received the highest rating, while crime prevention received the lowest ratings. The rating for traffic enforcement was higher than the previous survey.

FIGURE 35: RATINGS OF PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BY YEAR

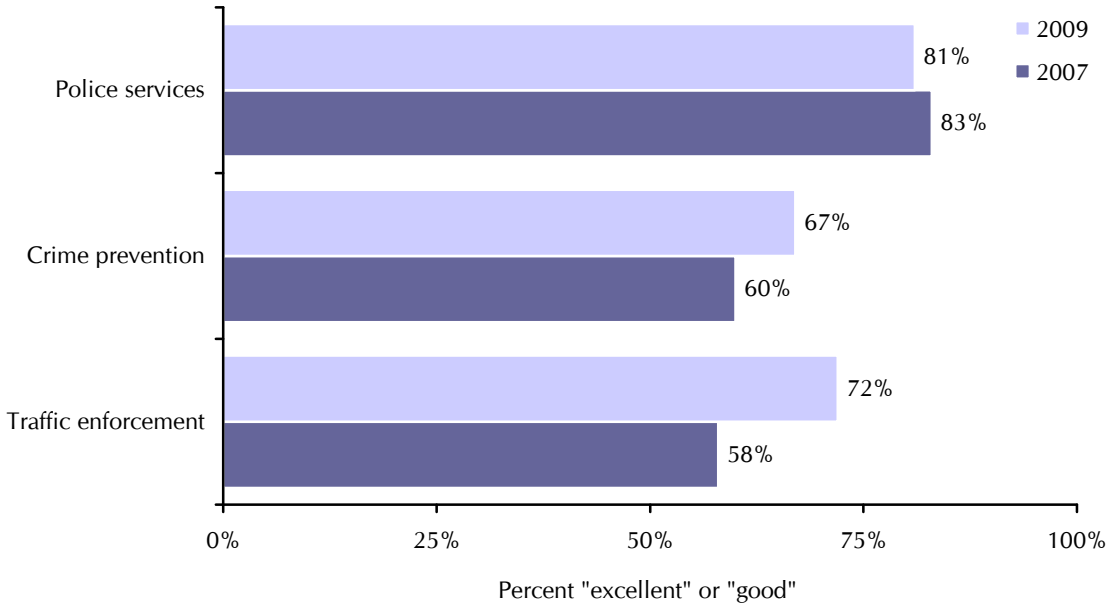


FIGURE 36: PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Police services	Similar
Crime prevention	Similar
Traffic enforcement	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 City of Gaithersburg 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 68% of survey respondents and it was below the benchmark.

Figure 37: Ratings of the Community's Natural Environment by Year

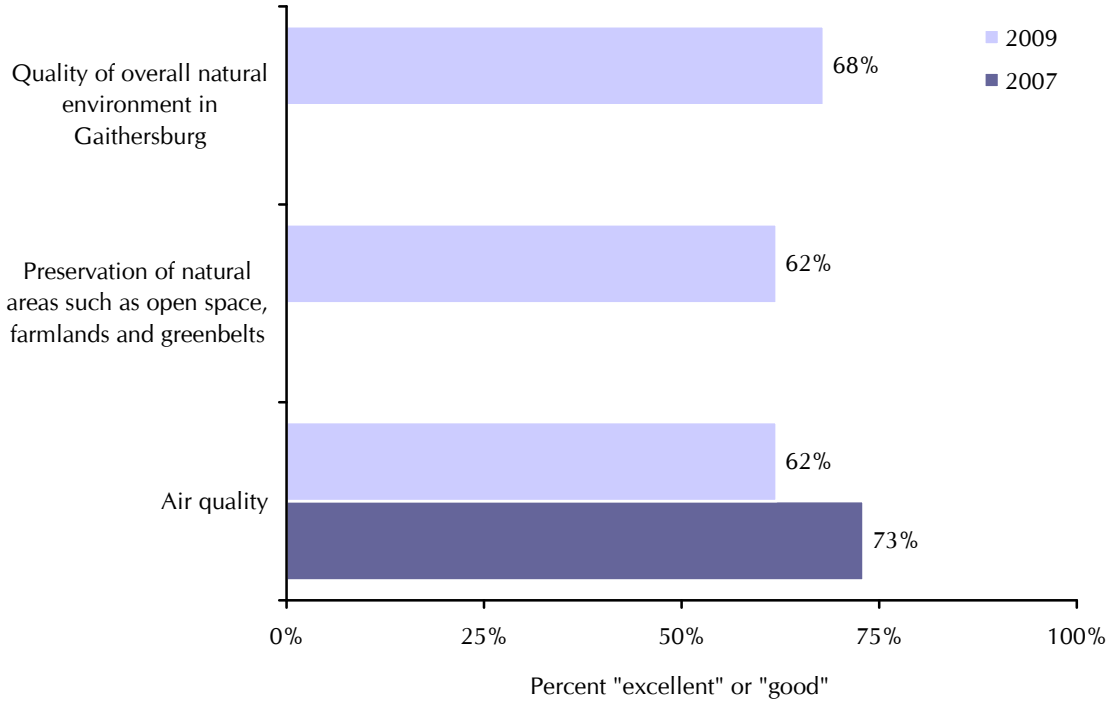


Figure 38: Community Environment Benchmarks

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

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

Resident recycling was greater than recycling reported in comparison communities.

FIGURE 39: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS

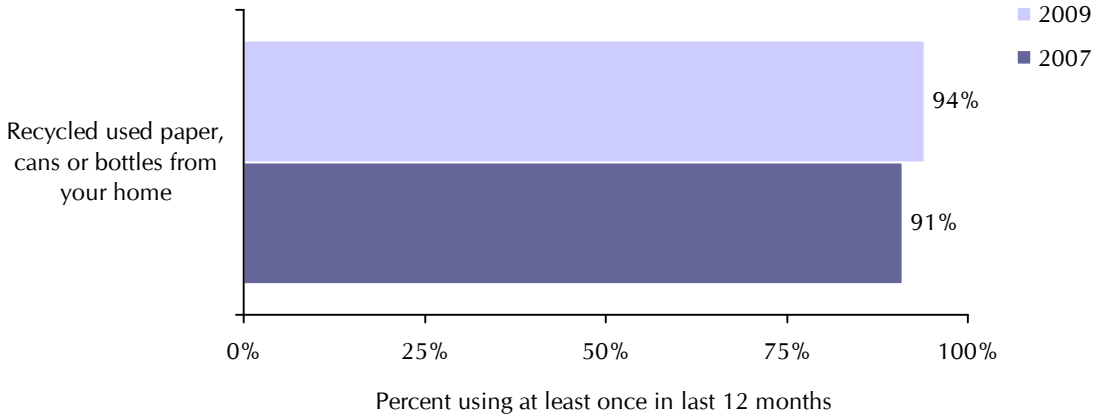


FIGURE 40: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING BENCHMARKS

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

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

Of the three utility services rated by those completing the questionnaire, all were higher than the benchmark comparison.

FIGURE 41: RATINGS OF UTILITY SERVICES BY YEAR

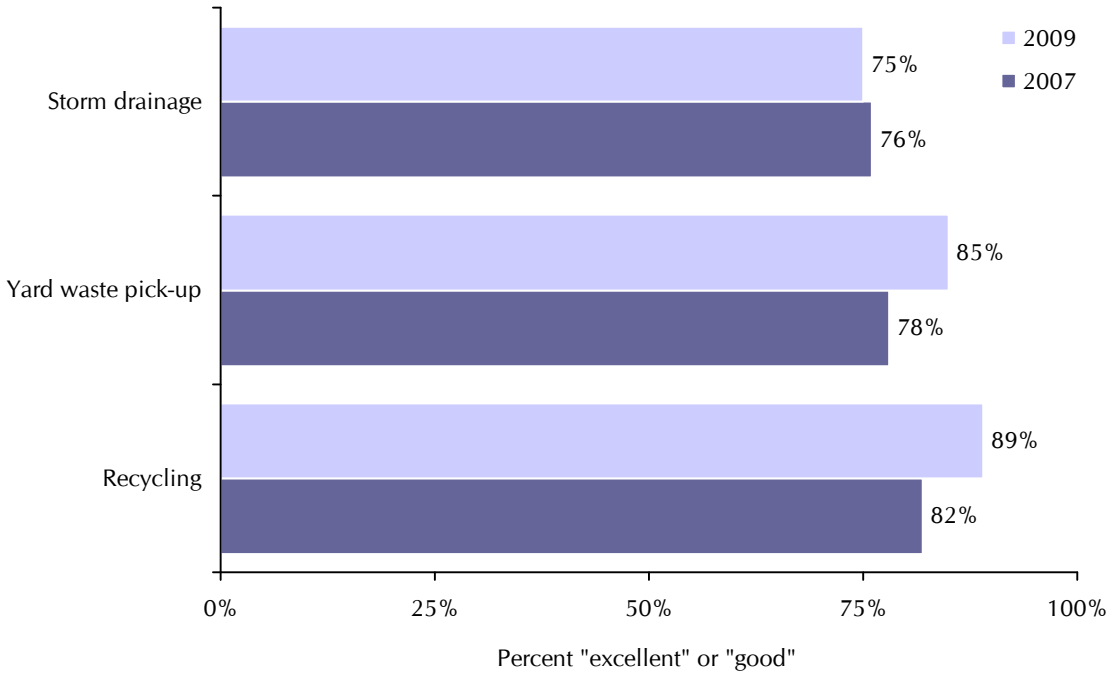


FIGURE 42: UTILITY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Storm drainage	Above
Yard waste pick-up	Above
Recycling	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 City of Gaithersburg were rated positively as were services related to parks and recreation. City parks , recreation programs or classes and recreation centers or facilities were rated higher than the benchmark. Recreation opportunities received the lowest rating and was similar to the national benchmark. Parks and recreation ratings have varied over time.

Resident use of Gaithersburg parks and recreation facilities tells its own story about the attractiveness and accessibility of those services. The percent of residents that used Gaithersburg recreation centers was about the same as the percent of users in comparison jurisdictions. However, recreation program use in Gaithersburg was lower than use in comparison jurisdictions.

Figure 43: Ratings of Community Recreational Opportunities by Year

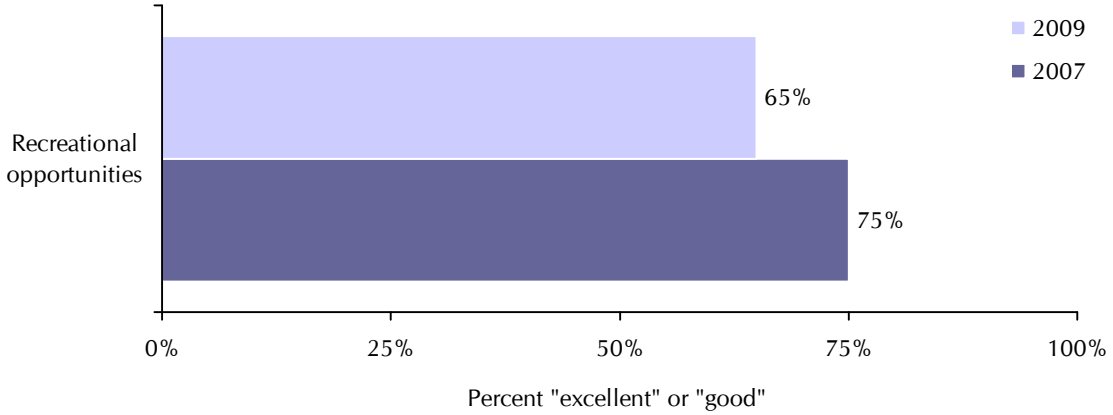


Figure 44: Community Recreational Opportunities Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Recreation opportunities	Similar

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

FIGURE 45: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

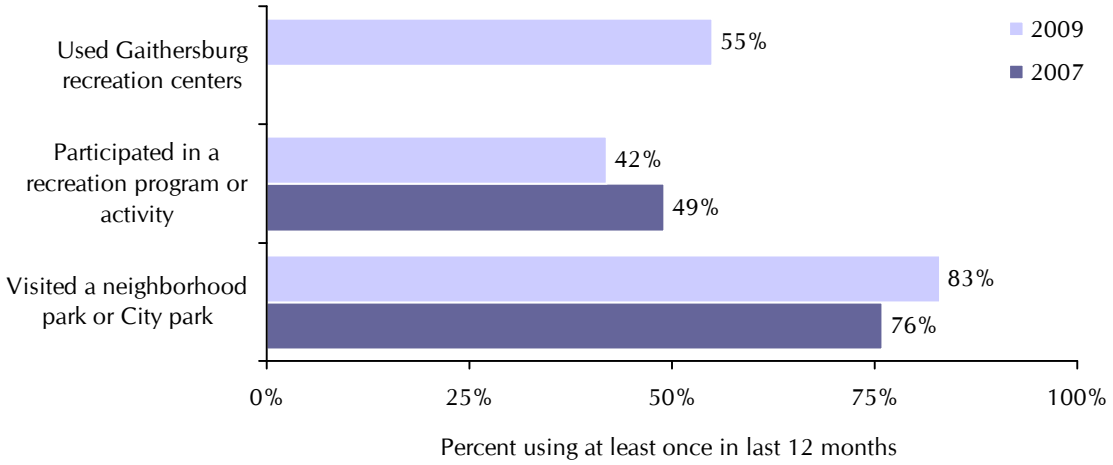


FIGURE 46: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Used Gaithersburg recreation centers	Similar
Participated in a recreation program or activity	Less
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	Similar

FIGURE 47: RATINGS OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BY YEAR

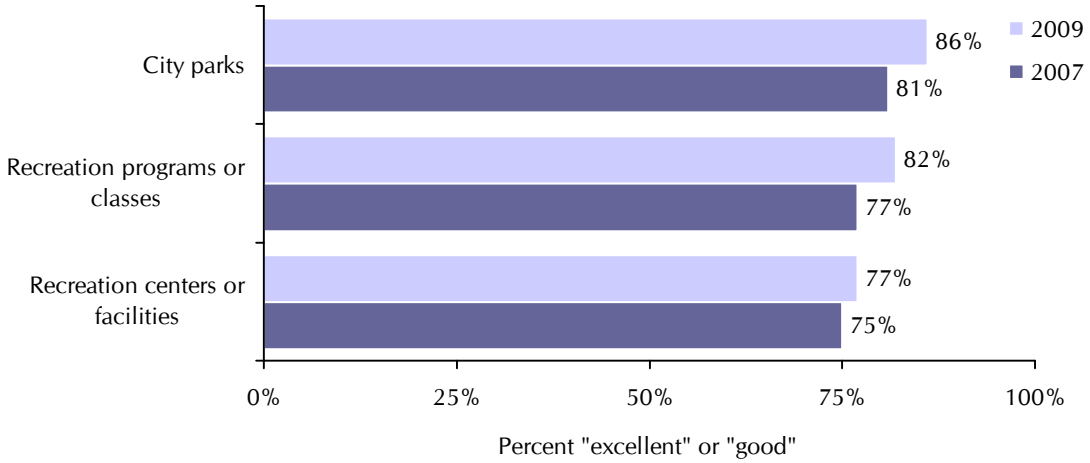


FIGURE 48: PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
City parks	Above
Recreation programs or classes	Above
Recreation centers or facilities	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 simply goes 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 was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 64% of respondents. Educational opportunities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 67% of respondents. Compared to the benchmark data, educational opportunities were similar to the average of comparison jurisdictions, while cultural activity opportunities were rated above the benchmark comparison.

FIGURE 49: RATINGS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

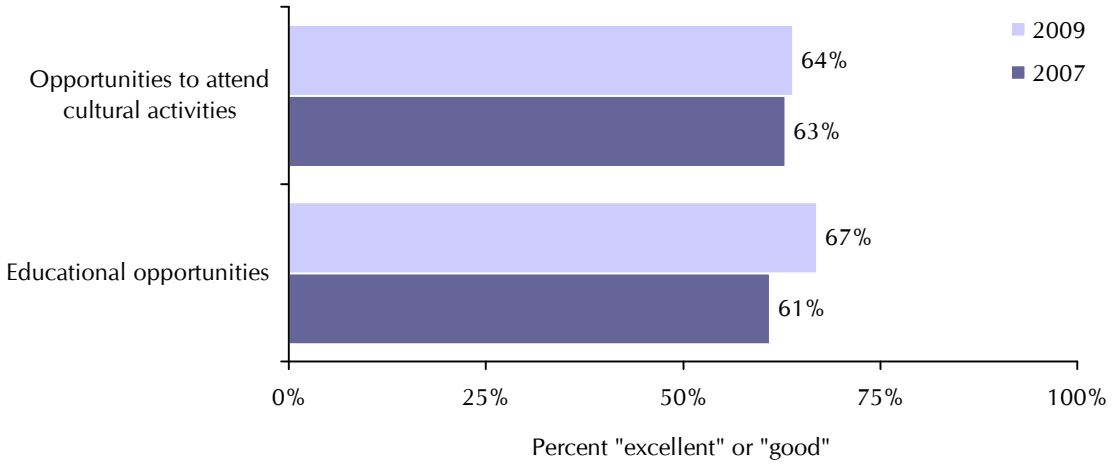


FIGURE 50: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

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

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 City of Gaithersburg were asked to rate the community's availability of affordable quality health care. Among Gaithersburg residents, 52% rated affordable quality health care as "excellent" or "good." Those ratings were similar to the ratings of comparison communities.

FIGURE 51: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

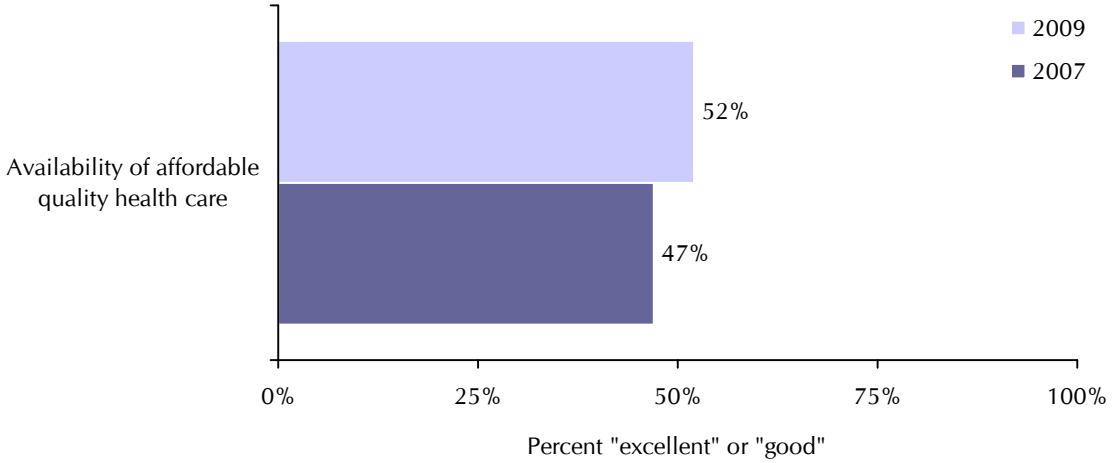


FIGURE 52: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable quality health care	Similar

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 City of Gaithersburg 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.

About two thirds of residents rated the City of Gaithersburg as an "excellent" or "good" place to raise kids and a majority rated it as an excellent or good place to retire. Most residents felt that the local sense of community was "excellent" or "good." More survey respondents felt the City of Gaithersburg was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. Gaithersburg as a place to retire was rated the lowest by residents and was lower than the benchmark.

Figure 53: Ratings of Community Quality and Inclusiveness by Year

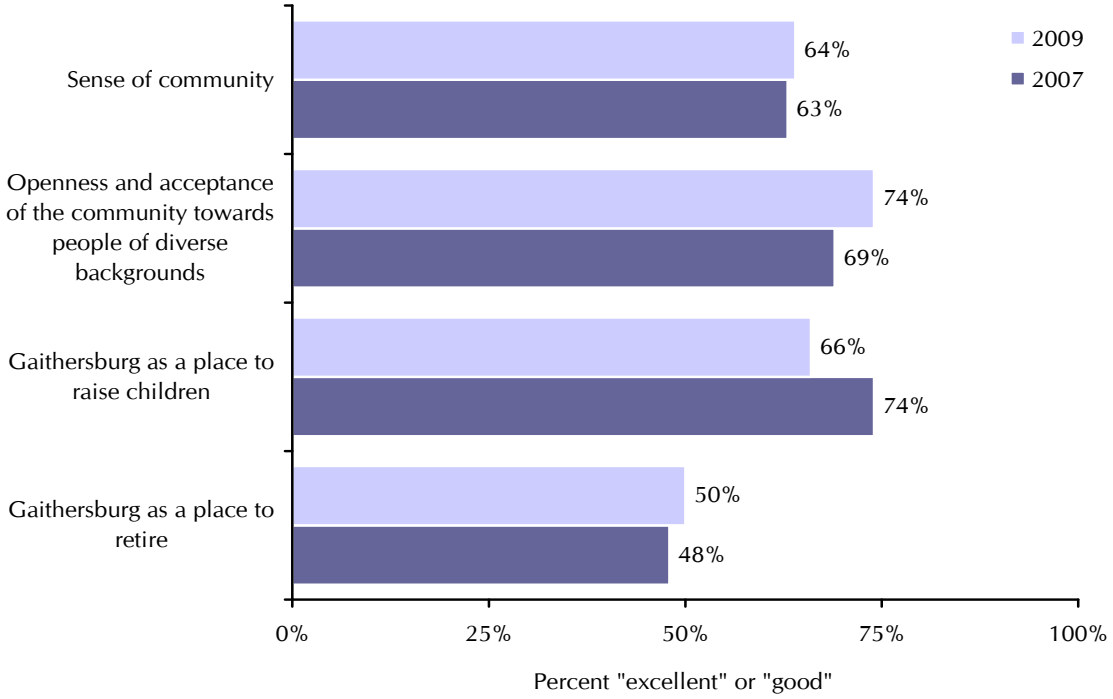


Figure 54: Community Quality and Inclusiveness Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Sense of community	Similar
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	Above
Gaithersburg as a place to raise kids	Below
Gaithersburg as a place to retire	Below

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

Services to more vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, youth or low-income residents) ranged from 66% to 78% with ratings of "excellent" or "good." These services were all rated above the benchmark when compared to other communities.

FIGURE 55: RATINGS OF QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BY YEAR

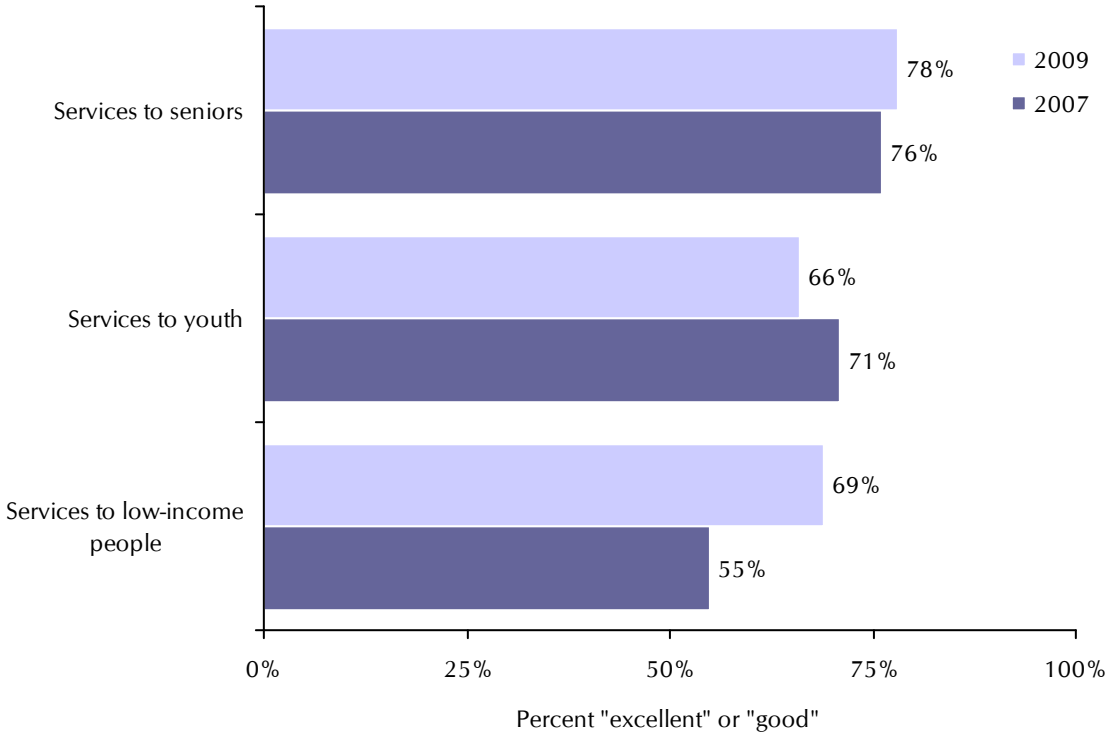


FIGURE 56: SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BENCHMARKS

	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. Elected officials and staff 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. 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 City 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

Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting, watched a meeting of local elected officials or other public meeting on cable television or volunteered time to a group in the 12 months prior to the survey. The participation rates of these civic behaviors were compared to the rates in other jurisdictions and showed lower rates of community engagement.

Figure 57: Participation in Civic Engagement Opportunities by Year

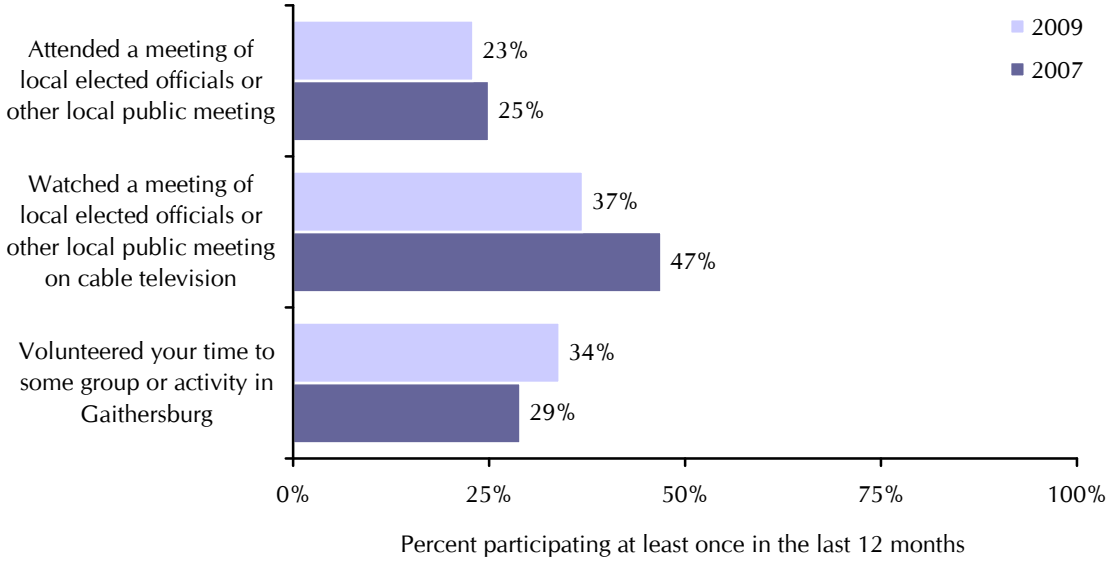


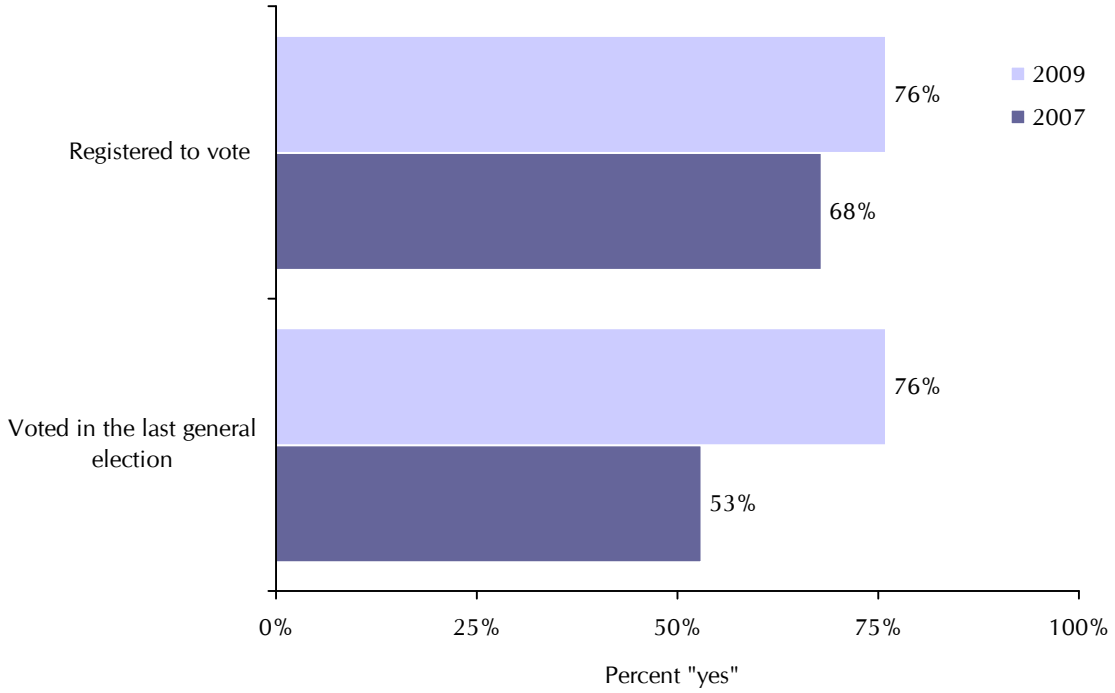
Figure 58: Participation in Civic Engagement Opportunities Benchmarks

	Comparison to benchmark
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	Less
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	Less
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Gaithersburg	Less

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

City of Gaithersburg residents showed the largest amount of civic engagement in the area of electoral participation. Seventy-six percent reported they were registered to vote and 76% indicated they had voted in the last general election. This rate of self-reported voting was lower than that of comparison communities.

FIGURE 59: REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOR BY YEAR



Note: In addition to the removal of "don't know" responses, those who said "ineligible to vote" also have been omitted form this calculation. The full frequencies appear in Appendix A.

FIGURE 60: VOTING BEHAVIOR BENCHMARKS

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

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 City of Gaithersburg Web site in the previous 12 months, 64% reported they had done so at least once. Public information services were rated favorably compared to benchmark data.

FIGURE 61: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BY YEAR

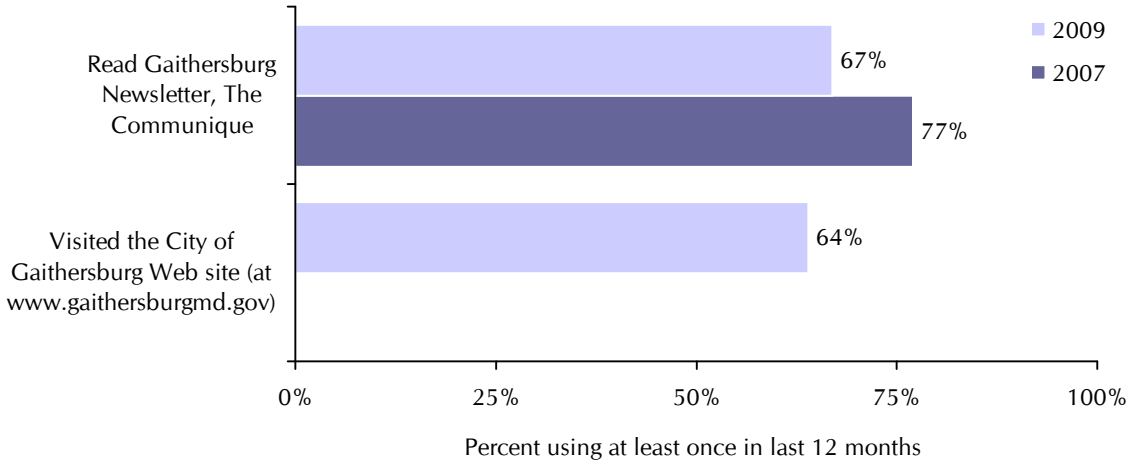


FIGURE 62: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Read Gaithersburg Newsletter	Less
Visited the City of Gaithersburg Web site	More

FIGURE 63: RATINGS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BY YEAR

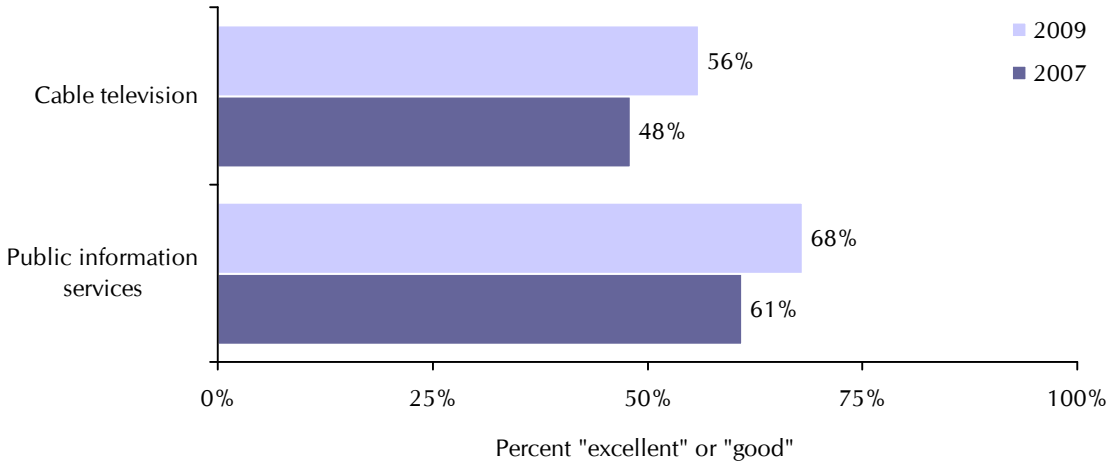


FIGURE 64: LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BENCHMARKS

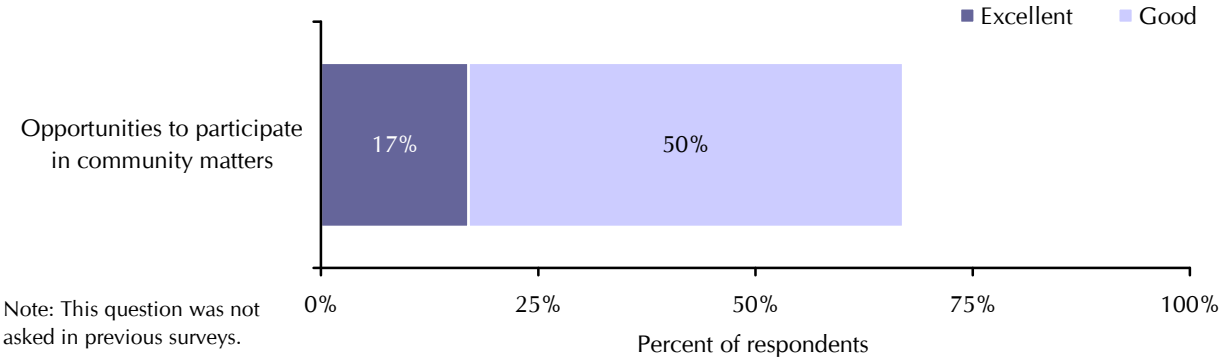
	Comparison to benchmark
Cable television	Above
Public information services	Above

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

Social Engagement

Opportunities to participate in community matters were rated as "excellent" or "good" by 67% of respondents and were above the benchmark.

FIGURE 65: RATINGS OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Note: This question was not asked in previous surveys.

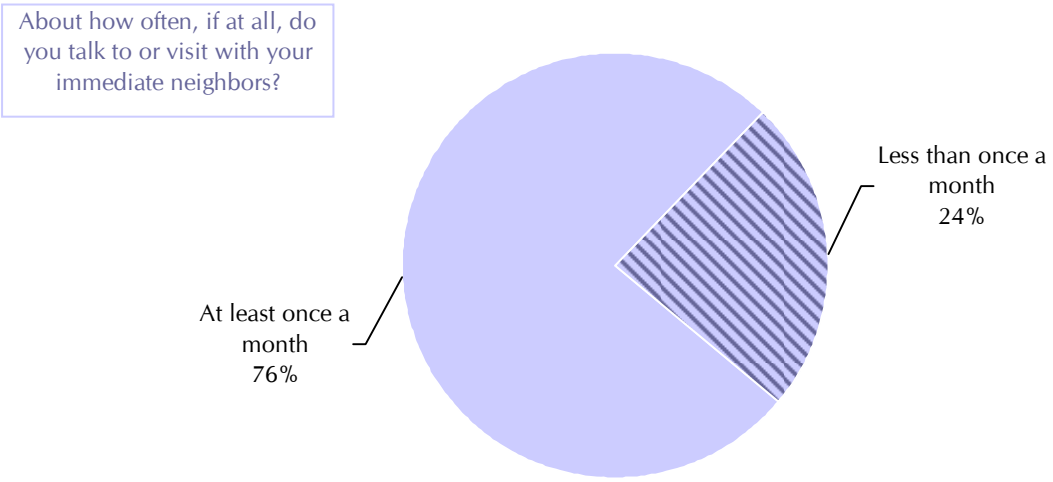
FIGURE 66: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to participate in community matters	Above

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

Residents in Gaithersburg reported a fair amount of neighborliness. More than 76% indicated talking or visiting with their neighbors once a month or more frequently. This amount of contact with neighbors was less than the amount of contact reported in other communities.

FIGURE 67: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS



Note: This question was not asked in previous surveys.

FIGURE 68: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BENCHMARKS

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

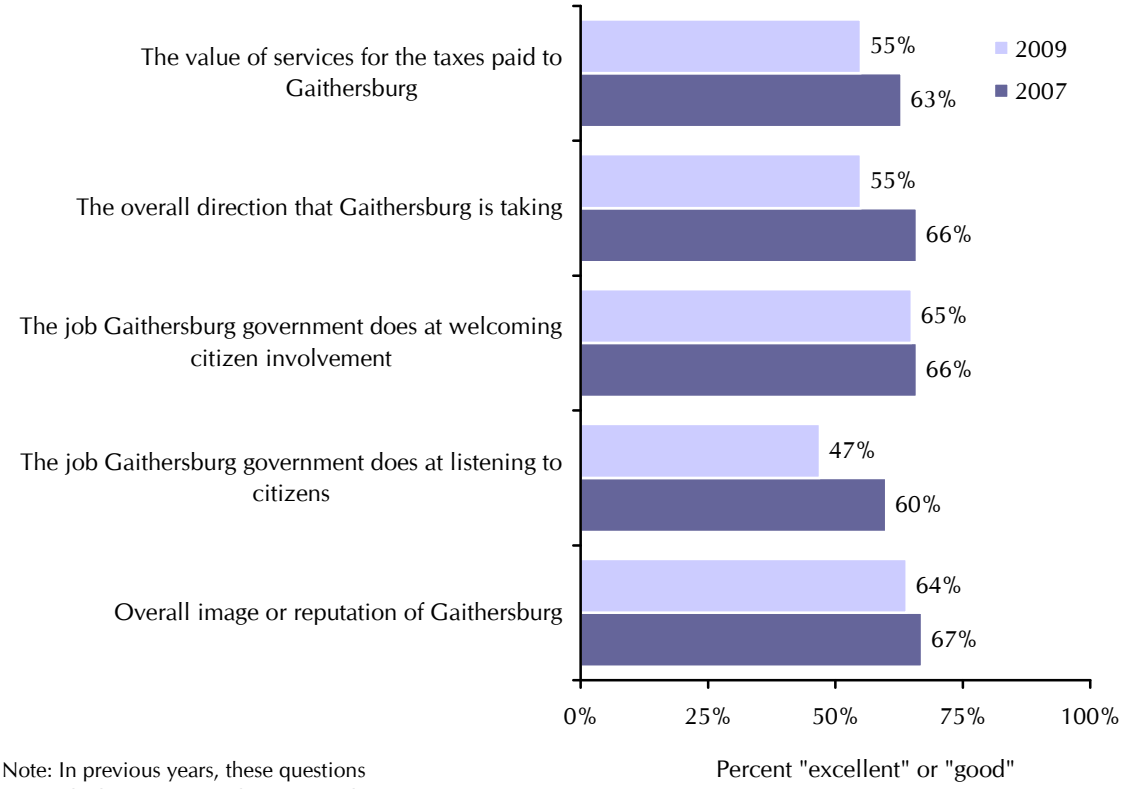
The National Citizen Survey™ by National Research Center, Inc.

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 City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg does at listening to citizens, 47% rated it as "excellent" or "good." [1]

Figure 69: Public Trust Ratings by Year



Note: In previous years, these questions were asked on an "agree/disagree" scale.

[1] In 2008, NRC converted the public trust questions from an agree-disagree scale to the excellent-poor scale to remove the positive bias that agreement wording injects into the question. As a result of this modification the ratings (% positive) decline some simply because the excellent, good, fair, poor scale garners fewer respondents reporting excellent or good than report strongly agree or agree on an agree-disagree scale.

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

FIGURE 70: PUBLIC TRUST BENCHMARKS

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

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

On average, residents of the City of Gaithersburg gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to federal government. The overall quality of services delivered by the City of Gaithersburg was rated as "excellent" or "good" by 78% of survey participants. The City of Gaithersburg's rating was above the benchmark when compared to other communities.

FIGURE 71: RATINGS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BY YEAR

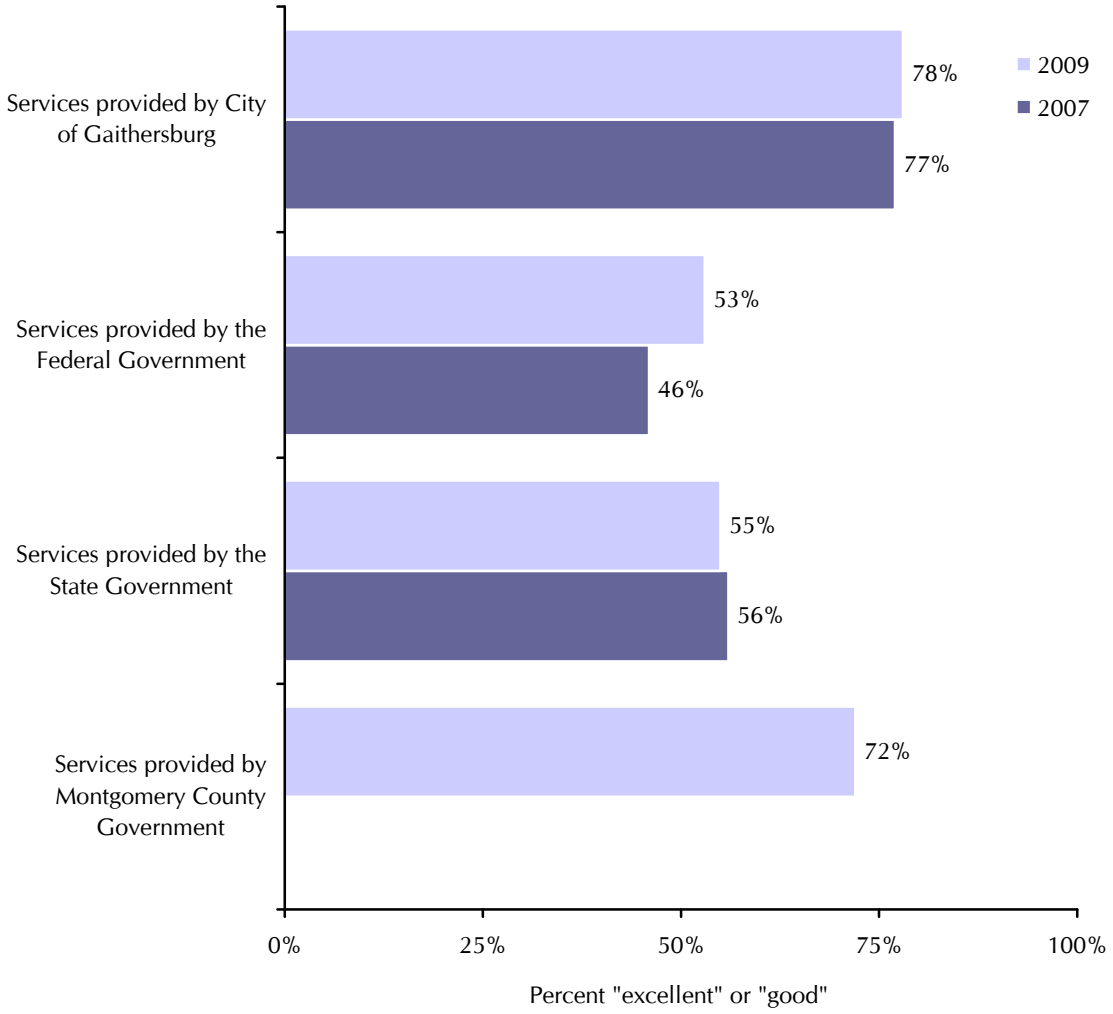


FIGURE 72: SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Services provided by the City of Gaithersburg	Above
Services provided by the Federal Government	Above
Services provided by the State Government	Above
Services provided by Montgomery County Government	Above

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

City of Gaithersburg Employees

The employees of the City of Gaithersburg who interact with the public create the first impression that most residents have of the City of Gaithersburg. 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 City of Gaithersburg. 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 City of Gaithersburg staff.

Those completing the survey were asked if they had been in contact with a City employee either in-person or over the phone in the last 12 months; the 41% who reported that they had been in contact (a percent that is lower than the benchmark comparison) were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. City employees were rated highly; 77% of respondents rated their overall impression as "excellent" or "good."

FIGURE 73: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

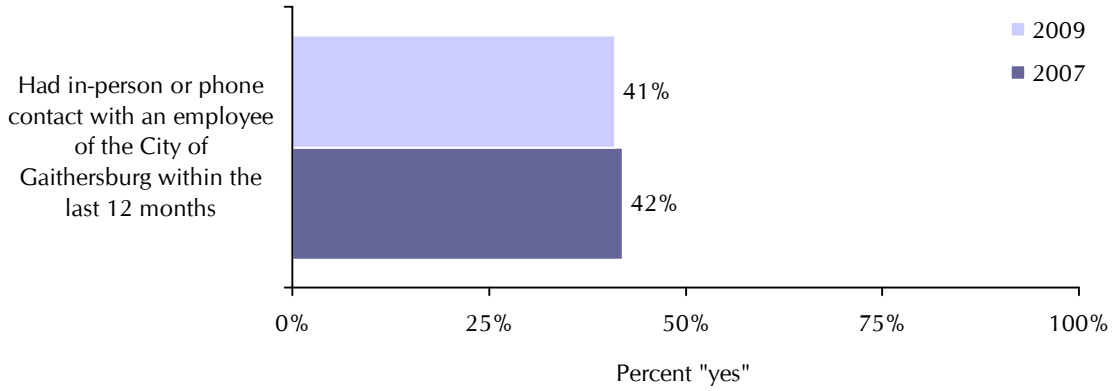


FIGURE 74: CONTACT WITH CITY EMPLOYEES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Had contact with City employee(s) in last 12 months	Less

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

FIGURE 75: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BY YEAR

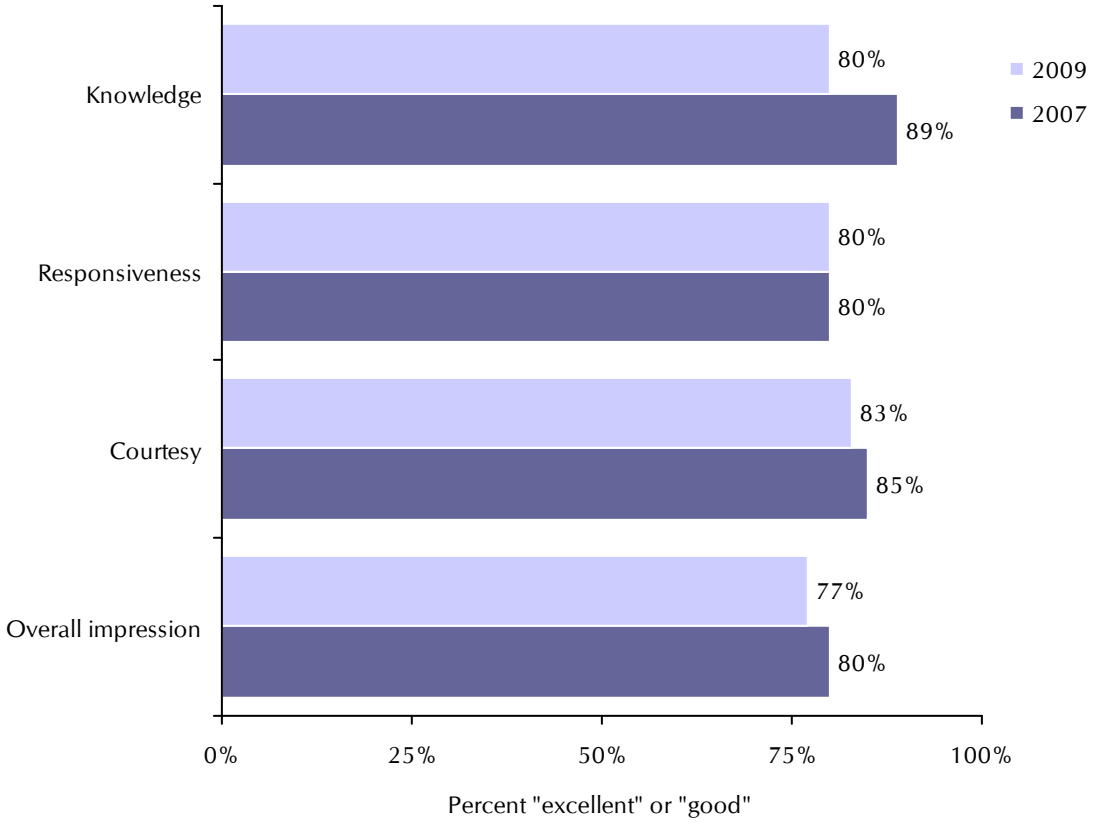


FIGURE 76: RATINGS OF CITY EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
City employee knowledge	Similar
City employee responsiveness	Above
City employee courteousness	Similar
Overall impression	Above

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

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 City of Gaithersburg by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Gaithersburg's overall services. Those key driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the City of Gaithersburg 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 Gaithersburg Key Driver Analysis were:

- Police services
- Street repair
- Street lighting
- Cable television

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

City of Gaithersburg Action Chart

The 2009 City of Gaithersburg Action Chart™ on the following page combines three 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)
- Trendline icons (up and down arrows), indicating whether the current ratings are higher or lower than the previous survey.

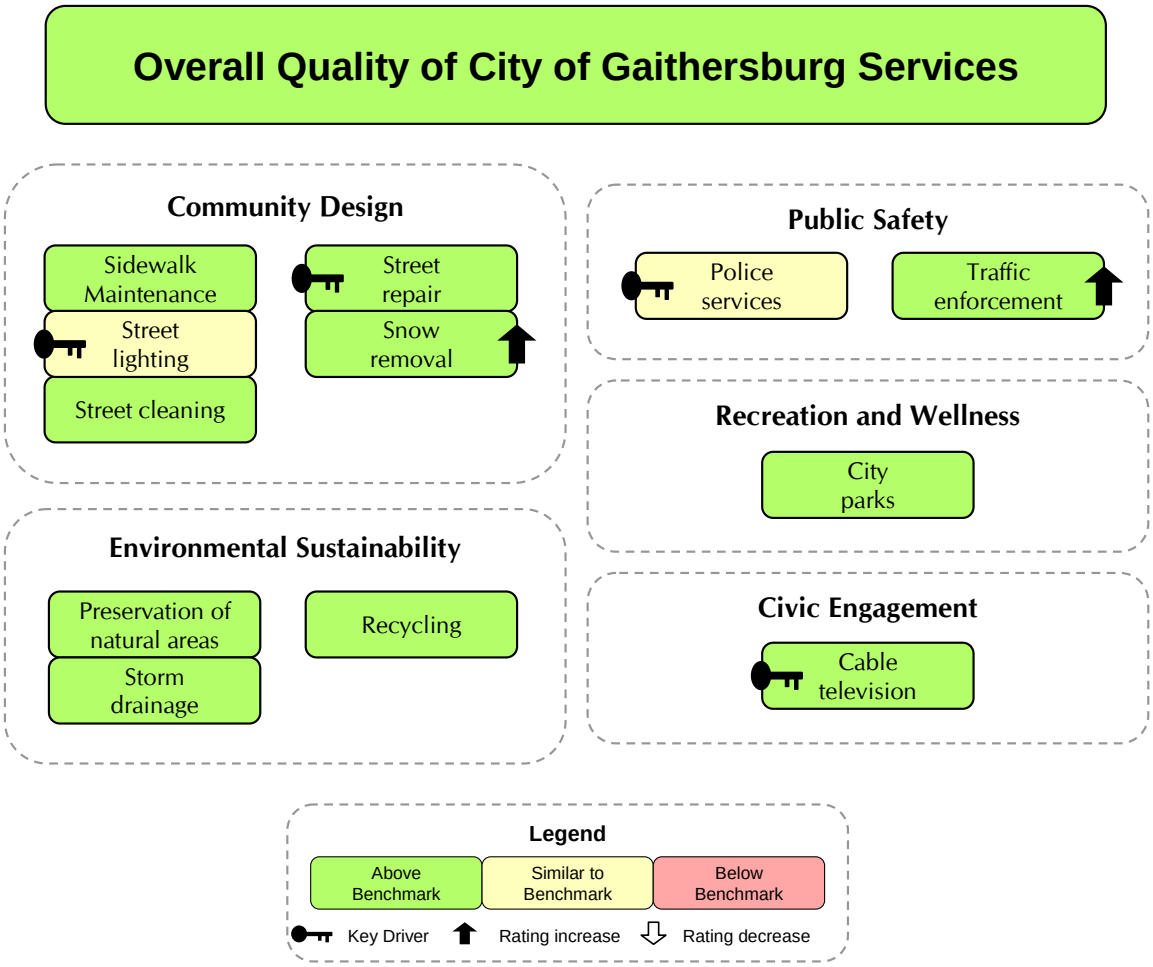
Twelve services were included in the KDA for the City of Gaithersburg. Of these, ten were above the benchmark and two were similar to the benchmark. Ratings for two services were trending up, while ten remained similar to the previous survey. A key icon (🔑) indicates the four key drivers.

Considering all performance data included in the Action Chart, a jurisdiction typically will want to consider improvements to any key driver services that are trending down or that are not at least similar to the benchmark. In the case of Gaithersburg, no key drivers were below the benchmark or trending lower in the current survey Therefore, Gaithersburg may wish to seek improvements to police services and street lighting, as these key drivers received ratings similar to other benchmark jurisdictions. 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.

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

FIGURE 77: CITY OF GAITHERSBURG ACTION CHART™



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

Using Your Action Chart™

The key drivers derived for the City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg, 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 City of Gaithersburg key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys.

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

FIGURE 78: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	City of Gaithersburg Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
Animal control			
Code enforcement			✓
Economic development		✓	
Land use planning and zoning		✓	
Sidewalk maintenance			
Snow removal			
Street cleaning			
Street lighting	✓		
Street repair	✓		✓
Garbage collection			✓
Preservation of natural areas			
Recycling			
Sewer			✓
Storm drainage			✓
Water			✓
EMS			✓
Fire			✓
Police services	✓	✓	✓
Traffic enforcement			
City parks			
Public schools		✓	
Recreation centers or facilities			
Recreation programs or classes			
Cable television	✓		
Public information services		✓	
Services to low income residents			
Services to seniors			
Services to youth			

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Policy Questions

Policy Question 1	
To what extent do you support or oppose the City partnering with Montgomery County to construct a new, indoor aquatic and recreation center in Gaithersburg (with a total construction cost of $22 million and a projected $450,000 expenditure per year to operate the facility)?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	29%
Somewhat support	38%
Somewhat oppose	20%
Strongly oppose	13%
Total	100%

Policy Question 2	
To what extent do you support or oppose the City borrowing money to fund large capital projects (e.g., roads, recreation centers, etc.) in the future?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	18%
Somewhat support	48%
Somewhat oppose	23%
Strongly oppose	11%
Total	100%

Policy Question 3	
The economic downturn is likely to result in reduced revenue and loss of funding from the state and the county. To what extent do you support or oppose a City property tax rate increase to maintain existing services?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	6%
Somewhat support	26%
Somewhat oppose	37%
Strongly oppose	31%
Total	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 Gaithersburg:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Gaithersburg as a place to live	26%	58%	16%	0%	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	29%	44%	22%	5%	100%
Gaithersburg as a place to raise children	25%	42%	26%	8%	100%
Gaithersburg as a place to work	18%	53%	23%	6%	100%
Gaithersburg as a place to retire	16%	34%	23%	27%	100%
The overall quality of life in Gaithersburg	20%	54%	25%	2%	100%

Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Gaithersburg as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Sense of community	17%	47%	28%	8%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	21%	54%	20%	6%	100%
Overall appearance of Gaithersburg	15%	57%	21%	6%	100%
Overall quality of new development in Gaithersburg	16%	55%	23%	6%	100%
Shopping opportunities	28%	45%	23%	5%	100%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	18%	45%	30%	6%	100%
Recreational opportunities	21%	44%	30%	5%	100%
Employment opportunities	7%	45%	37%	11%	100%
Educational opportunities	18%	49%	24%	9%	100%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	17%	50%	30%	3%	100%
Ease of car travel in Gaithersburg	14%	48%	30%	8%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Gaithersburg	21%	46%	22%	11%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Gaithersburg	6%	29%	36%	29%	100%
Ease of walking in Gaithersburg	17%	43%	29%	12%	100%
Availability of paths and walking trails	14%	38%	33%	15%	100%
Availability of affordable quality housing	10%	23%	41%	25%	100%
Availability of affordable quality health care	12%	39%	31%	17%	100%
Air quality	11%	51%	35%	3%	100%
Quality of overall natural environment in Gaithersburg	11%	56%	27%	5%	100%
Overall image or reputation of Gaithersburg	12%	52%	28%	8%	100%

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Question 3: Growth						
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Gaithersburg over the past 2 years:	Much too slow	Somewhat too slow	Right amount	Somewhat too fast	Much too fast	Total
Population growth	1%	1%	37%	36%	24%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	8%	27%	50%	11%	5%	100%
Jobs growth	27%	41%	27%	3%	2%	100%

Question 4: Code Enforcement	
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Gaithersburg?	Percent of respondents
Not a problem	19%
Minor problem	40%
Moderate problem	36%
Major problem	5%
Total	100%

Question 5: Community Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Gaithersburg:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	14%	50%	14%	15%	6%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	14%	35%	22%	22%	8%	100%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	39%	42%	14%	4%	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	60%	33%	3%	2%	2%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	20%	40%	11%	18%	12%	100%
In Gaithersburg's downtown area during the day	37%	41%	11%	7%	4%	100%
In Gaithersburg's downtown area after dark	5%	31%	18%	24%	22%	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	88%
Yes	12%
Total	100%

Question 8: Crime Reporting	
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents
No	31%
Yes	69%
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 Gaithersburg?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Used Gaithersburg recreation centers	45%	28%	19%	6%	3%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	58%	24%	13%	2%	3%	100%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	17%	23%	36%	11%	14%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	77%	18%	4%	0%	1%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	63%	24%	8%	5%	0%	100%
Read Gaithersburg Newsletter, The Communique	33%	29%	26%	7%	6%	100%
Visited the City of Gaithersburg Web site (at www.gaithersburgmd.gov)	36%	25%	28%	6%	5%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	6%	3%	13%	10%	68%	100%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Gaithersburg	66%	18%	8%	2%	6%	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	18%
Several times a week	23%
Several times a month	23%
Once a month	12%
Several times a year	9%
Once a year or less	5%
Never	10%
Total	100%

Question 11: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Gaithersburg:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Police services	30%	51%	14%	5%	100%
Crime prevention	16%	51%	23%	10%	100%
Traffic enforcement	23%	49%	21%	7%	100%
Street repair	15%	47%	31%	8%	100%
Street cleaning	23%	52%	21%	5%	100%
Street lighting	17%	45%	27%	11%	100%
Snow removal	28%	45%	21%	6%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	21%	47%	25%	8%	100%
Recycling	43%	46%	8%	3%	100%
Yard waste pick-up	36%	49%	10%	5%	100%
Storm drainage	25%	49%	19%	6%	100%
City parks	31%	55%	14%	0%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	35%	47%	17%	1%	100%
Recreation centers or facilities	31%	46%	23%	1%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	16%	32%	43%	9%	100%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	17%	46%	24%	13%	100%
Animal control	22%	51%	18%	9%	100%
Economic development	10%	43%	38%	8%	100%
Services to seniors	24%	54%	20%	3%	100%
Services to youth	21%	45%	27%	7%	100%
Services to low-income people	20%	50%	19%	11%	100%
Public information services	18%	50%	31%	1%	100%
Cable television	17%	38%	32%	12%	100%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	20%	42%	27%	11%	100%

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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	Total
The City of Gaithersburg	19%	58%	20%	2%	100%
The Federal Government	14%	39%	41%	7%	100%
The State Government	13%	42%	40%	5%	100%
Montgomery County Government	13%	58%	24%	4%	100%

Question 13: Contact with City Employees	
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Gaithersburg within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents
No	59%
Yes	41%
Total	100%

Question 14: City Employees					
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Gaithersburg in your most recent contact?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Knowledge	37%	43%	18%	2%	100%
Responsiveness	41%	39%	14%	7%	100%
Courtesy	45%	37%	6%	11%	100%
Overall impression	37%	40%	19%	4%	100%

Question 15: Government Performance					
Please rate the following categories of Gaithersburg government performance:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The value of services for the taxes paid to Gaithersburg	13%	43%	38%	7%	100%
The overall direction that Gaithersburg is taking	9%	47%	37%	8%	100%
The job Gaithersburg government does at welcoming citizen involvement	13%	53%	28%	7%	100%
The job Gaithersburg government does at listening to citizens	9%	38%	44%	9%	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 Gaithersburg to someone who asks	42%	43%	10%	5%	100%
Remain in Gaithersburg for the next five years	41%	36%	8%	14%	100%

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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	3%
Somewhat positive	12%
Neutral	52%
Somewhat negative	27%
Very negative	6%
Total	100%

Question 18a: Policy Question 1	
To what extent do you support or oppose the City partnering with Montgomery County to construct a new, indoor aquatic and recreation center in Gaithersburg (with a total construction cost of $22 million and a projected $450,000 expenditure per year to operate the facility)?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	29%
Somewhat support	38%
Somewhat oppose	20%
Strongly oppose	13%
Total	100%

Question 18b: Policy Question 2	
To what extent do you support or oppose the City borrowing money to fund large capital projects (e.g., roads, recreation centers, etc.) in the future?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	18%
Somewhat support	48%
Somewhat oppose	23%
Strongly oppose	11%
Total	100%

Question 18c: Policy Question 3	
The economic downturn is likely to result in reduced revenue and loss of funding from the state and the county. To what extent do you support or oppose a City property tax rate increase to maintain existing services?	Percent of respondents
Strongly support	6%
Somewhat support	26%
Somewhat oppose	37%
Strongly oppose	31%
Total	100%

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Question D1: Employment Status	
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents
No	24%
Yes, full-time	71%
Yes, part-time	5%
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	68%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	12%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	14%
Walk	1%
Bicycle	0%
Work at home	4%
Other	0%

Question D3: Length of Residency	
How many years have you lived in Gaithersburg?	Percent of respondents
Less than 2 years	13%
2 to 5 years	29%
6 to 10 years	21%
11 to 20 years	22%
More than 20 years	16%
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	17%
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	28%
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	54%
Mobile home	0%
Other	1%
Total	100%

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Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)	
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	44%
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	56%
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	5%
$300 to $599 per month	4%
$600 to $999 per month	11%
$1,000 to $1,499 per month	32%
$1,500 to $2,499 per month	26%
$2,500 or more per month	22%
Total	100%

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household	
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents
No	70%
Yes	30%
Total	100%

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	82%
Yes	18%
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	13%
$25,000 to $49,999	20%
$50,000 to $99,999	34%
$100,000 to $149,000	16%
$150,000 or more	17%
Total	100%

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Question D10: Ethnicity	
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	85%
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	15%
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	2%
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	19%
Black or African American	17%
White	57%
Other	8%
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option	

Question D12: Age	
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents
18 to 24 years	3%
25 to 34 years	31%
35 to 44 years	17%
45 to 54 years	24%
55 to 64 years	12%
65 to 74 years	5%
75 years or older	7%
Total	100%

Question D13: Gender	
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents
Female	50%
Male	50%
Total	100%

Question D14: Registered to Vote	
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents
No	23%
Yes	71%
Ineligible to vote	7%
Total	100%

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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
No	22%
Yes	69%
Ineligible to vote	8%
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 Gaithersburg:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Gaithersburg as a place to live	26%	62	58%	140	16%	38	0%	1	0%	0	100%	242
Your neighborhood as a place to live	29%	69	44%	107	22%	52	5%	13	0%	0	100%	241
Gaithersburg as a place to raise children	20%	48	34%	81	21%	50	6%	15	18%	43	100%	237
Gaithersburg as a place to work	13%	31	39%	92	17%	40	4%	10	27%	65	100%	238
Gaithersburg as a place to retire	12%	29	26%	62	18%	42	20%	49	24%	58	100%	241
The overall quality of life in Gaithersburg	19%	47	53%	128	25%	60	2%	4	0%	1	100%	240

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

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Gaithersburg as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Sense of community	16%	38	45%	106	26%	61	8%	18	4%	10	100%	232
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	20%	47	51%	120	19%	45	5%	12	6%	13	100%	238
Overall appearance of Gaithersburg	15%	36	57%	135	21%	50	6%	15	1%	1	100%	238
Overall quality of new development in Gaithersburg	14%	33	49%	116	21%	49	5%	12	11%	26	100%	236
Shopping opportunities	27%	65	45%	106	23%	54	5%	11	0%	1	100%	236
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	16%	39	40%	96	27%	64	6%	14	11%	26	100%	239
Recreational opportunities	20%	46	41%	97	28%	66	5%	11	7%	18	100%	238
Employment opportunities	5%	12	33%	77	26%	63	8%	19	28%	66	100%	237
Educational opportunities	14%	34	39%	93	19%	45	7%	16	21%	50	100%	239
Opportunities to participate in community matters	14%	32	40%	93	24%	57	3%	6	20%	46	100%	234
Ease of car travel in Gaithersburg	13%	31	46%	111	29%	69	8%	18	4%	9	100%	238
Ease of bus travel in Gaithersburg	15%	35	32%	76	16%	37	8%	18	29%	69	100%	235
Ease of bicycle travel in Gaithersburg	4%	9	19%	46	24%	56	19%	46	34%	82	100%	238
Ease of walking in Gaithersburg	16%	36	40%	93	27%	63	11%	27	6%	15	100%	234
Availability of paths and walking trails	13%	29	33%	78	29%	67	13%	30	12%	29	100%	233
Availability of affordable quality housing	8%	20	20%	47	35%	83	22%	51	15%	35	100%	236
Availability of affordable quality health care	9%	22	31%	73	24%	57	14%	32	22%	53	100%	238
Air quality	10%	23	45%	106	30%	72	2%	6	13%	30	100%	236
Quality of overall natural environment in Gaithersburg	11%	26	55%	129	27%	63	5%	11	3%	7	100%	236
Overall image or reputation of Gaithersburg	12%	28	50%	118	28%	65	8%	18	3%	7	100%	236

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Question 3: Growth														
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Gaithersburg 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	1%	2	1%	2	27%	65	26%	63	18%	42	27%	64	100%	238
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	7%	16	23%	55	43%	102	10%	23	4%	9	13%	30	100%	236
Jobs growth	14%	32	21%	49	14%	33	2%	4	1%	2	50%	118	100%	237

Question 4: Code Enforcement		
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Gaithersburg?	Percent of respondents	Count
Not a problem	16%	37
Minor problem	33%	76
Moderate problem	30%	69
Major problem	4%	10
Don't know	18%	41
Total	100%	233

Question 5: Community Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Gaithersburg:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	14%	33	49%	116	14%	34	15%	35	6%	15	2%	4	100%	237
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	13%	31	33%	79	21%	50	21%	50	8%	18	4%	9	100%	236
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	33%	78	36%	85	12%	28	3%	8	1%	1	14%	34	100%	235

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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	60%	142	33%	79	3%	8	2%	5	2%	5	0%	0	100%	239
In your neighborhood after dark	20%	46	40%	94	11%	25	17%	41	11%	27	2%	4	100%	237
In Gaithersburg's downtown area during the day	32%	76	35%	83	10%	23	6%	14	3%	8	14%	33	100%	236
In Gaithersburg's downtown area after dark	4%	9	24%	58	15%	34	20%	46	17%	41	20%	47	100%	236

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	88%	202
Yes	12%	27
Don't know	1%	2
Total	100%	230

Question 8: Crime Reporting		
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	31%	11
Yes	69%	24
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100%	35

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

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 Gaithersburg?	Never		Once or twice		3 to 12 times		13 to 26 times		More than 26 times		Total	
Used Gaithersburg recreation centers	45%	106	28%	66	19%	45	6%	13	3%	6	100%	237
Participated in a recreation program or activity	58%	136	24%	56	13%	30	2%	6	3%	8	100%	236
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	17%	41	23%	55	36%	85	11%	26	14%	32	100%	238
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	77%	180	18%	42	4%	9	0%	0	1%	2	100%	233
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television	63%	146	24%	56	8%	19	5%	11	0%	1	100%	232
Read Gaithersburg Newsletter, The Communique	33%	76	29%	67	26%	60	7%	16	6%	14	100%	232
Visited the City of Gaithersburg Web site (at www.gaithersburgmd.gov)	36%	82	25%	57	28%	64	6%	13	5%	12	100%	228
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	6%	14	3%	7	13%	31	10%	23	68%	160	100%	235
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Gaithersburg	66%	156	18%	42	8%	19	2%	4	6%	15	100%	236

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	18%	44
Several times a week	23%	55
Several times a month	23%	56
Once a month	12%	28
Several times a year	9%	22
Once a year or less	5%	12
Never	10%	23
Total	100%	240

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

Question 11: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Gaithersburg:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Police services	25%	58	41%	97	12%	27	4%	9	19%	44	100%	235
Crime prevention	13%	30	41%	97	18%	43	8%	20	19%	45	100%	236
Traffic enforcement	20%	47	43%	100	19%	43	6%	15	12%	27	100%	232
Street repair	14%	33	44%	103	29%	67	8%	18	6%	13	100%	234
Street cleaning	21%	51	49%	117	19%	46	4%	11	5%	13	100%	237
Street lighting	16%	39	43%	102	26%	62	11%	25	3%	8	100%	236
Snow removal	26%	61	42%	98	20%	47	5%	13	7%	17	100%	235
Sidewalk maintenance	19%	45	43%	102	23%	55	7%	17	7%	17	100%	235
Recycling	41%	96	43%	102	8%	18	2%	6	6%	15	100%	237
Yard waste pick-up	28%	65	37%	88	8%	18	4%	9	23%	55	100%	235
Storm drainage	19%	45	37%	87	15%	34	5%	11	25%	58	100%	235
City parks	27%	64	48%	113	13%	29	0%	0	12%	28	100%	234
Recreation programs or classes	21%	50	29%	68	10%	25	0%	1	38%	90	100%	234
Recreation centers or facilities	21%	49	31%	74	15%	36	0%	1	32%	75	100%	236
Land use, planning and zoning	10%	24	21%	48	28%	65	6%	14	36%	84	100%	234
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc)	9%	22	26%	60	14%	32	8%	18	43%	100	100%	231
Animal control	15%	36	35%	83	12%	29	6%	14	31%	73	100%	235
Economic development	7%	16	30%	68	26%	60	6%	13	31%	71	100%	227
Services to seniors	12%	29	28%	65	10%	24	2%	4	49%	115	100%	236
Services to youth	12%	28	26%	61	16%	36	4%	9	42%	98	100%	233
Services to low-income people	8%	19	21%	49	8%	19	5%	11	58%	137	100%	235
Public information services	13%	29	35%	80	22%	51	1%	2	30%	69	100%	231
Cable television	13%	31	28%	68	24%	57	9%	21	25%	60	100%	237
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	16%	35	32%	72	21%	47	9%	19	23%	52	100%	225

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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 City of Gaithersburg	18%	43	55%	130	19%	45	2%	5	6%	13	100%	236
The Federal Government	12%	29	33%	78	35%	82	6%	14	14%	34	100%	237
The State Government	11%	27	36%	86	34%	82	5%	11	13%	31	100%	237
Montgomery County Government	12%	28	52%	124	22%	52	4%	9	10%	24	100%	237

Question 13: Contact with City Employees		
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Gaithersburg within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	59%	142
Yes	41%	97
Total	100%	238

Question 14: City Employees												
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Gaithersburg in your most recent contact?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
Knowledge	34%	39	41%	46	17%	20	2%	2	6%	7	100%	114
Responsiveness	38%	43	35%	40	13%	14	6%	7	9%	10	100%	114
Courtesy	42%	49	35%	40	6%	7	10%	12	6%	7	100%	114
Overall impression	34%	39	37%	43	17%	20	4%	4	7%	8	100%	114

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Question 15: Government Performance												
Please rate the following categories of Gaithersburg government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
The value of services for the taxes paid to Gaithersburg	11%	26	37%	88	33%	78	6%	14	14%	33	100%	239
The overall direction that Gaithersburg is taking	7%	17	40%	94	31%	74	7%	16	15%	37	100%	238
The job Gaithersburg government does at welcoming citizen involvement	9%	22	39%	92	21%	49	5%	12	26%	62	100%	238
The job Gaithersburg government does at listening to citizens	5%	12	23%	54	26%	63	5%	13	40%	96	100%	237

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 Gaithersburg to someone who asks	41%	99	42%	101	10%	24	5%	12	2%	5	100%	241
Remain in Gaithersburg for the next five years	39%	93	34%	81	8%	18	13%	32	6%	14	100%	239

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	3%	7
Somewhat positive	12%	29
Neutral	52%	124
Somewhat negative	27%	64
Very negative	6%	15
Total	100%	239

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Question 18a: Policy Question 1		
To what extent do you support or oppose the City partnering with Montgomery County to construct a new, indoor aquatic and recreation center in Gaithersburg (with a total construction cost of $22 million and a projected $450,000 expenditure per year to operate the facility)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	29%	68
Somewhat support	38%	88
Somewhat oppose	20%	47
Strongly oppose	13%	30
Total	100%	233

Question 18b: Policy Question 2		
To what extent do you support or oppose the City borrowing money to fund large capital projects (e.g., roads, recreation centers, etc.) in the future?	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	18%	43
Somewhat support	48%	114
Somewhat oppose	23%	54
Strongly oppose	11%	25
Total	100%	236

Question 18c: Policy Question 3		
The economic downturn is likely to result in reduced revenue and loss of funding from the state and the county. To what extent do you support or oppose a City property tax rate increase to maintain existing services?	Percent of respondents	Count
Strongly support	6%	14
Somewhat support	26%	62
Somewhat oppose	37%	87
Strongly oppose	31%	73
Total	100%	236

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Question D1: Employment Status		
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	24%	57
Yes, full-time	71%	168
Yes, part-time	5%	12
Total	100%	237

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	68%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	12%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	14%
Walk	1%
Bicycle	0%
Work at home	4%
Other	0%

Question D3: Length of Residency		
How many years have you lived in Gaithersburg?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than 2 years	13%	31
2 to 5 years	29%	69
6 to 10 years	21%	51
11 to 20 years	22%	52
More than 20 years	16%	38
Total	100%	240

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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	17%	40
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	28%	68
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	54%	129
Mobile home	0%	0
Other	1%	3
Total	100%	240

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	44%	102
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	56%	127
Total	100%	228

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	5%	12
$300 to $599 per month	4%	8
$600 to $999 per month	11%	27
$1,000 to $1,499 per month	32%	77
$1,500 to $2,499 per month	26%	61
$2,500 or more per month	22%	52
Total	100%	238

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Question D7: Presence of Children in Household		
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	70%	169
Yes	30%	72
Total	100%	240

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	82%	196
Yes	18%	42
Total	100%	238

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	13%	30
$25,000 to $49,999	20%	47
$50,000 to $99,999	34%	80
$100,000 to $149,000	16%	36
$150,000 or more	17%	40
Total	100%	233

Question D10: Ethnicity		
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents	Count
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	85%	199
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	15%	36
Total	100%	235

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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	2%	5
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	19%	43
Black or African American	17%	39
White	57%	134
Other	8%	18
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option		

Question D12: Age		
In which category is your age?	Percent of respondents	Count
18 to 24 years	3%	8
25 to 34 years	31%	73
35 to 44 years	17%	42
45 to 54 years	24%	58
55 to 64 years	12%	29
65 to 74 years	5%	11
75 years or older	7%	17
Total	100%	238

Question D13: Gender		
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents	Count
Female	50%	117
Male	50%	119
Total	100%	237

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Question D14: Registered to Vote		
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	22%	54
Yes	69%	165
Ineligible to vote	6%	16
Don't know	2%	5
Total	100%	239

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	22%	54
Yes	69%	166
Ineligible to vote	8%	20
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100%	239

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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 City 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 City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg boundaries. The basis of the list of all housing units was a United States Postal Service listing of housing units within zip codes. Since some of the zip codes that serve the City of Gaithersburg households may also serve addresses that lie outside of the jurisdiction, the exact geographic location of each housing unit was compared to jurisdiction boundaries, using the most current municipal boundary file (updated on a quarterly basis), and addresses located outside of the City of Gaithersburg boundaries were removed from consideration.

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To choose the 1,200 survey recipients, a systematic sampling method was applied to the list of households known to be within the City of Gaithersburg. 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.

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 October, 13 2009. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey. The next mailing contained a letter from the mayor inviting the household to participate, a questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. The letter included a paragraph written in Spanish, which invited the household to participate and provided instructions for requesting the survey in Spanish. 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, and also included a paragraph written in Spanish, for those who would like to request the survey in Spanish. Completed surveys were collected over the following seven weeks.

Survey Response Rate and Confidence Intervals

Of the 1,200 surveys mailed, 68 were returned because the housing unit was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the 1,132 households receiving the survey mailings, 242 completed the survey, providing a response rate of 21%. In general, response rates obtained on local government resident surveys range from 20% 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 six percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained had responses been collected from all City of Gaithersburg 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

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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.

Survey Data Weighting

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample were compared to those found in the 2005-2007 American Community Survey Census estimates for adults in the City of Gaithersburg. 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, race/ethnicity 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 importance to the community of correct ethnic representation
- The historical use of the variables and the desirability of consistently representing different groups over the years

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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Gaithersburg Citizen Survey Weighting Table			
Characteristic	Population Norm[2]	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
Housing			
Rent home	43%	34%	44%
Own home	57%	66%	56%
Detached unit	23%	26%	17%
Attached unit	77%	74%	83%
Race and Ethnicity			
White alone, not Hispanic	47%	68%	47%
Hispanic and/or other race	53%	32%	53%
Sex and Age			
Female	50%	54%	50%
Male	50%	46%	50%
18-34 years of age	34%	16%	34%
35-54 years of age	42%	41%	42%
55+ years of age	24%	43%	24%
Females 18-34	15%	9%	16%
Females 35-54	21%	20%	20%
Females 55+	13%	25%	13%
Males 18-34	19%	8%	18%
Males 35-54	20%	21%	22%
Males 55+	11%	17%	11%

[2] Source: 2005-2007 ACS

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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 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

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specialize in the analysis of citizen surveys regularly have relied on 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 Gaithersburg to the Benchmark Database

The City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg Survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For

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

Where comparisons are available, Gaithersburg 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 Gaithersburg'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 City of Gaithersburg.

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Dear City of Gaithersburg Resident,

Your household has been randomly selected to participate in a citizen survey about the City of Gaithersburg. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Please be assured that your answers will be kept anonymous. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,

Sidney A. Katz
Mayor/Alcalde
The City of Gaithersburg

Estimado residente de la ciudad de Gaithersburg,

Su hogar ha sido selecciónado para participar en una encuesta anónima de ciudadanos sobre la Ciudad de Gaithersburg. Usted recibira una copia de la encuesta la próxima semana por correo con instrucciones en completar y regresar la encuesta. Gracias de antemano por su ayuda con este proyecto importante!

Atentamente,

Dear City of Gaithersburg Resident,

Your household has been randomly selected to participate in a citizen survey about the City of Gaithersburg. You will receive a copy of the survey next week in the mail with instructions for completing and returning it. Please be assured that your answers will be kept anonymous. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project!

Sincerely,

Sidney A. Katz
Mayor/Alcalde
The City of Gaithersburg

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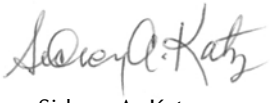

Sidney A. Katz
Mayor/Alcalde
The City of Gaithersburg

Gaithersburg
A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

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Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2038

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Gaithersburg
A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

October 2009

Dear Gaithersburg Resident:

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

En este documento la Ciudad le de a usted una oportunidad importante para decirnos lo que piensa de los servicios de la Ciudad, y su opinión de la calidad de vida aquí en Gaithersburg. Se seleccionó su hogar al azar para participar en esta encuesta. Si usted no puede hacer la encuesta incluida en inglés por favor llámenos al número 301-258-6310 para pedir una cópia de la encuesta en español. Todos sus respuestas se quedarán completamente anónimos. ¡Deseamos sus opiniones! Favor de entregar la encuesta en el sobre adjunto, lo cuál está con franqueo pagado. Muchas gracias.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your answers will help the Gaithersburg City Council 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 Gaithersburg 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 the 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 301-258-6310.

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

Sincerely,

Sidney A. Katz
Mayor

City of Gaithersburg • 31 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-2038
301-258-6300 • FAX 301-948-6149 • TTY 301-258-6430 • cityhall@gaithersburgmd.gov • www.gaithersburgmd.gov

Gaithersburg
A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

October 2009

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

En este documento la Ciudad le de a usted una oportunidad importante para decirnos lo que piensa de los servicios de la Ciudad, y su opinión de la calidad de vida aquí en Gaithersburg. Se seleccionó su hogar al azar para participar en esta encuesta. Si usted no puede hacer la encuesta incluida en inglés, por favor llámenos al número 301-258-6310 para pedir una cópia de la encuesta en español. Todos sus respuestas se quedarán completamente anónimos. ¡Deseamos sus opiniones! Favor de entregar la encuesta en el sobre adjunto, lo cuál está con franqueo pagado. Muchas gracias.

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The City of Gaithersburg 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 Gaithersburg:

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

2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Gaithersburg 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 Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Gaithersburg	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 community matters	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of car travel in Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bus travel in Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bicycle travel in Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Gaithersburg 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 Gaithersburg?
❍ 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 Gaithersburg:

	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 Gaithersburg's downtown area during the day	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Gaithersburg'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 Gaithersburg?

	Never	*Once or twice*	*3 to 12 times*	*13 to 26 times*	*More than 26 times*
Used Gaithersburg recreation centers	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a recreation program or activity	1	2	3	4	5
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	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 Gaithersburg Newsletter, *The Communique*	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the City of Gaithersburg Web site (at www.gaithersburgmd.gov)	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 Gaithersburg	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 City of Gaithersburg 2009 Citizen Survey

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

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
Police services	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention	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
Recycling	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage	1	2	3	4	5
City parks	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities	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
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 information services	1	2	3	4	5
Cable television	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 City of Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government	1	2	3	4	5
The State Government	1	2	3	4	5
Montgomery County Government	1	2	3	4	5

13. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Gaithersburg 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 City of Gaithersburg 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 Gaithersburg government performance:

	Excellent	*Good*	*Fair*	*Poor*	*Don't know*
The value of services for the taxes paid to Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Gaithersburg is taking	1	2	3	4	5
The job Gaithersburg government does at welcoming citizen involvement	1	2	3	4	5
The job Gaithersburg 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 Gaithersburg to someone who asks	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Gaithersburg 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. To what extent do you support or oppose the City partnering with Montgomery County to construct a new, indoor aquatic and recreation center in Gaithersburg (with a total construction cost of about $22 million and a projected $450,000 expenditure per year to operate the facility)?

❍ Strongly support
❍ Somewhat support
❍ Somewhat oppose
❍ Strongly oppose

b. To what extent do you support or oppose the City borrowing money to fund large capital projects (e.g., roads, recreation centers, etc.) in the future?

❍ Strongly support
❍ Somewhat support
❍ Somewhat oppose
❍ Strongly oppose

c. The economic downturn is likely to result in reduced revenue and loss of funding from the state and the county. To what extent do you support or oppose a City property tax rate increase to maintain existing services?

❍ Strongly support
❍ Somewhat support
❍ Somewhat oppose
❍ Strongly oppose

d. The economic downturn is likely to result in reduced revenue and loss of funding from the state and the county. What City services should be eliminated or curtailed to generate savings in annual operating costs?

_____

_____

_____

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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 Gaithersburg?
- ❍ 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 your jurisdiction?
- ❍ 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

Gaithersburg
A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

Octubre 2009

Estimado residente de Gaithersburg:

La Ciudad de Gaithersburg desea saber qué piensa usted sobre la comunidad y el gobierno municipal. **Su hogar es uno de entre de algunos hogares seleccionados al azar para participar en la Ciudad de Gaithersburg 2009 Encuesta de los Ciudadanos.**

Por favor tome unos pocos minutos para llenar la Encuesta de Ciudadanos adjunta. Sus respuestas ayudarán a que el Concejo de la Ciudad tome decisiones para mejorar la entrega de los servicios a nuestra comunidad. Encontrará que las preguntas son interesantes y nosotros definitivamente encontraremos que sus respuestas son útiles. ¡Por favor participe!

Para obtener una verdadera muestra representativa de los residentes de Gaithersburg, solicitamos que llene la encuesta el adulto que haya tenido su cumpleaños más recientemente. La edad del adulto no importa siempre que tenga 18 años de edad o más. Al seleccionar de ésta forma a la persona que debe llenar la encuesta, se asegura que la encuesta en los hogares de la ciudad mejorara la exactitud de los resultados. Por favor tenga usted la seguridad de que sus respuestas se mantendrán anónimas.

Por favor, haga que el adecuado miembro del hogar pase unos minutos contestando todas las preguntas y devuelva la encuesta en el sobre adjunto con el franqueo pagado. Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de la Encuesta de los Ciudadanos por favor llamenos al 301-258-6310.

Su participación en esta encuesta es muy importante especialmente puesto que su hogar es uno del pequeño numero que está siendo encuestado. Por favor, ayúdenos a darle forma al futuro de Gaithersburg. Gracias por su tiempo y participacion.

Sinceramente,

Sidney A. Katz
Alcalde

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Encuesta Cuidadana del 2009 de la Cuidad de Gaithersburg

Por favor complete este cuestionario si usted es el adulto (18 años o más) de su casa que más recientemente haya celebrado su cumpleaños. El año de nacimiento del adulto no importa. Por favor encierre en un círculo la respuesta que mejor represente su opinión en cada pregunta. Sus respuestas son anónimas y solo serán reportadas en forma general.

1. Por favor clasifique cada uno de los siguientes aspectos de la calidad de vida en Gaithersburg:

	Excelente	*Bueno*	*Pasable*	*Bajo*	*No sé*
Gaithersburg como lugar en donde vivir	1	2	3	4	5
Su vecindario como lugar en donde vivir	1	2	3	4	5
Gaithersburg como lugar para criar niños	1	2	3	4	5
Gaithersburg como lugar para trabajar	1	2	3	4	5
Gaithersburg como lugar para jubilarse/retirarse	1	2	3	4	5
La calidad general de vida en Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5

2. Por favor evalúe la forma en que cada una de las siguientes características se relaciona en general con la Cuidad de Gaithersburg:

	Excelente	*Bueno*	*Pasable*	*Bajo*	*No sé*
Sentido de cooperación comunitaria	1	2	3	4	5
Aceptación de la comunidad a gente de diferentes antecedentes	1	2	3	4	5
Aspecto general de la Cuidad de Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Calidad general de desarrollo nuevo en Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Suficientes lugares de compra	1	2	3	4	5
Oportunidades para asistir a actividades culturales	1	2	3	4	5
Oportunidades de recreación	1	2	3	4	5
Oportunidades para empleo	1	2	3	4	5
Oportunidades educativas	1	2	3	4	5
Oportunidades para participar en asuntos de comunidad	1	2	3	4	5
Facilidad para andar en carro	1	2	3	4	5
Facilidad para andar en autobús	1	2	3	4	5
Facilidad para andar en bicicleta	1	2	3	4	5
Facilidad para caminar	1	2	3	4	5
Disponibilidad de caminos y senderos para caminar	1	2	3	4	5
Disponibilidad de viviendas a precios accesibles	1	2	3	4	5
Asistencia médica a precios accesibles	1	2	3	4	5
Calidad del medio ambiente (aire)	1	2	3	4	5
Calidad del ambiente natural general en Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Imagen/reputación general de Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5

3. Por favor evalúe la rapidez de crecimiento durante los últimos 2 años en las siguientes categorías:

	demasiado lento	*un poco lento*	*cantidad apropiada*	*un poco rápido*	*muy rápido*	*no sé*
Crecimiento de la población	1	2	3	4	5	6
Crecimiento del comercio (tiendas, restaurantes, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Aumento de oportunidad de empleo	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. ¿Hasta qué grado son problema los edificios en ruinas, lotes de hierba mala o vehículos chatarra en Gaithersburg?
❍ No son problema ❍ Problema menor ❍ Problema moderado ❍ Problema mayor ❍ No sé

5. Por favor clasifique qué tan seguro o inseguro se siente usted de lo siguiente en Gaithersburg:

	muy seguro	*más o menos seguro*	*ni seguro ni inseguro*	*más o menos inseguro*	*muy inseguro*	*no sé*
Crimen violento (Ej. violación, ataque, robo)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Crímenes de propiedad (Ej. robo, asalto)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Peligros ambientales, incluyendo desecho tóxico	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. Por favor clasifique qué tan seguro o inseguro se siente usted:

	muy seguro	*más o menos seguro*	*ni seguro ni inseguro*	*más o menos inseguro*	*muy inseguro*	*no sé*
En su vecindario durante el día	1	2	3	4	5	6
En su vecindario durante la noche	1	2	3	4	5	6
En el centro de la Cuidad durante el día	1	2	3	4	5	6
En el centro de la Cuidad durante la noche	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. Durante los últimos 12 meses, ¿usted o alguno de los miembros de su familia fue víctima de algún crimen?
❍ No ➔ Vaya a la pregunta #9 ❍ Sí ➔ Vaya a la pregunta #8 ❍ No sé ➔ Vaya a la pregunta #9

8. ¿Si usted marcó sí, denunció esos crímenes a la policía?
❍ No ❍ Sí ❍ No sé

9. Durante los últimos 12 meses, ¿cuántas veces (usted o algún miembro de su familia) participó en las siguientes actividades en la Cuidad de Gaithersburg?

	Nunca	*1 ó 2 veces*	*3 a 12 veces*	*13 a 26 veces*	*más de 26 veces*
Utilizó los centros de recreación de Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
Participó en programas o actividades recreativas	1	2	3	4	5
Visitó un parque del vecindario o de la Cuidad	1	2	3	4	5
Asistió a una reunión de autoridades locales u otra reunión pública	1	2	3	4	5
Vio por cable (TV) una reunión de autoridades locales u otra reunión pública	1	2	3	4	5
Leyó el boletín de la Cuidad, *The Communique*	1	2	3	4	5
Visitó la Cuidad del sitio en red Gaithersburg (en www.gaithersburgmd.gov)	1	2	3	4	5
Recicló papel, latas o botellas en su casa	1	2	3	4	5
Trabajó de voluntario en algún grupo o actividad	1	2	3	4	5

10. ¿Qué tan a menudo habla con / o visita a sus vecinos inmediatos (personas que viven en los 10 o 20 hogares que están más cerca de usted)?
❍ Casi todos los días
❍ Varias veces por semana
❍ Varias veces al mes
❍ Una vez al mes
❍ Varias veces al año
❍ Una vez al año o menos
❍ Nunca

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Encuesta Cuidadana del 2009 de la Cuidad de Gaithersburg

11. Por favor clasifique la calidad de cada uno de los siguientes servicios en Gaithersburg:

	Excelente	*Bueno*	*Pasable*	*Bajo*	*No sé*
Servicios de la Policía	1	2	3	4	5
Prevención de Crímenes	1	2	3	4	5
Imposición de las Leyes de Tránsito	1	2	3	4	5
Reparación de Calles	1	2	3	4	5
Limpieza de Calles	1	2	3	4	5
Iluminación de Calles	1	2	3	4	5
Removimiento de Nieve	1	2	3	4	5
Mantenimiento de Aceras / Veredas	1	2	3	4	5
Reciclaje	1	2	3	4	5
Recolección de Desechos del Patio (jardín)	1	2	3	4	5
Drenajes	1	2	3	4	5
Parques de Cuidad	1	2	3	4	5
Clases o Programas Recreativos	1	2	3	4	5
Centros de Recreación	1	2	3	4	5
Uso, Planificación y Zonificación de Terreno	1	2	3	4	5
Imposición de las Ordenanzas (mala hierba, maleza, edificios abandonados, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Control de Animales	1	2	3	4	5
Desarrollo Económico	1	2	3	4	5
Servicios para Personas Mayores (de la tercera edad, Cuidadanos de oro, "seniors")	1	2	3	4	5
Servicios para la juventud	1	2	3	4	5
Servicios para Personas de Bajos Recursos	1	2	3	4	5
Servicios de Información Pública	1	2	3	4	5
Televisión por Cable	1	2	3	4	5
Preservación de áreas naturales tales como espacio abierto, tierra de cultivo y áreas verdes	1	2	3	4	5

12. En general, ¿cómo evalúa usted los servicios suministrados por…

	Excelente	*Bueno*	*Pasable*	*Bajo*	*No sé*
la Cuidad de Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
el Gobierno Federal	1	2	3	4	5
el Gobierno Estatal	1	2	3	4	5
Gobierno del Condado de Montgomery	1	2	3	4	5

13. ¿Ha tenido contacto personal o por teléfono con algún empleado de la Cuidad de Gaithersburg durante los últimos 12 meses (incluyendo policías, recepcionistas, planificadores u otros)?

❍ No ➔ Vaya a la pregunta #15 ❍ Sí ➔ Vaya a la pregunta #14

14. ¿Cuál fue su impresión de los empleados de la Cuidad de Gaithersburg en su más reciente contacto? (Evalúe cada característica abajo.)

	Excelente	*Bueno*	*Pasable*	*Bajo*	*No sé*
Conocimiento	1	2	3	4	5
Simpatía	1	2	3	4	5
Cortesía	1	2	3	4	5
Impresión General	1	2	3	4	5

15. Por favor clasifique las siguientes categorías del desempeño gubernamental en Gaithersburg:

	Excelente	*Bueno*	*Pasable*	*Bajo*	*No sé*
El valor de servicios para los impuestos pagados a Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
La dirección general que está tomando Gaithersburg	1	2	3	4	5
La labor del gobierno de Gaithersburg para incluir la participación ciudadana	1	2	3	4	5
La labor del gobierno de Gaithersburg para escuchar a los ciudadanos	1	2	3	4	5

16. Por favor indique qué tan probable o improbable es usted para hacer cada uno de los siguientes:

	Muy Probable	*Algo probable*	*Algo improbable*	*Muy Improbable*	*No sé*
Recomendarle vivir en Gaithersburg a alguien que pregunta	1	2	3	4	5
Permanecer en Gaithersburg para los próximos cinco años	1	2	3	4	5

17. ¿Qué impacto, si existe, piensa usted que la economía tendrá en los ingresos de su familia en los próximos 6 meses? Usted piensa que el impacto será:

❍ Muy positivo ❍ Más o menos positivo ❍ Neutral ❍ Más o menos negativo ❍ Muy negativo

18. Por favor marque la respuesta que represente mejor su opinión en cada una de las siguientes preguntas:

a. ¿Hasta qué punto apoya o se opone usted a la asociación de la Ciudad con el Condado de Montgomery para construir un centro nuevo, acuático interno y de recreación en Gaithersburg (con un costo total de construcción como de $22 millones y un gasto estimado de $450,000 al año para operar el servicio)?

❍ Fuertemente apoyo
❍ Algo apoyo
❍ Algo me opongo
❍ Fuertemente me opongo

b. ¿Hasta qué punto apoya o se opone usted a que la Ciudad tome prestado dinero para financiar proyectos capitales grandes (e.g., carreteras, centros de recreación, etc.) en el futuro?

❍ Fuertemente apoyo
❍ Algo apoyo
❍ Algo me opongo
❍ Fuertemente me opongo

c. Es probable que la caída económica resulte en ingresos reducidos y pérdida de financiación de parte del estado y el condado. ¿Hasta qué grado apoya o se opone usted a un aumento en la tasa de impuestos de propiedad de la Ciudad para mantener servicios existentes?

❍ Fuertemente apoyo
❍ Algo apoyo
❍ Algo me opongo
❍ Fuertemente me opongo

d. Es probable que la caída económica resulte en ingresos reducidos y pérdida de financiación de parte del estado y el condado. ¿Cuáles servicios de la Ciudad deben ser eliminados o reducidos para generar ahorros en los costos anuales de operación?

_____

_____

_____

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Encuesta Cuidadana del 2009 de la Cuidad de Gaithersburg

Nuestras últimas preguntas son acerca de usted y su hogar. De nuevo, todas las respuestas son anónimas y serán reportadas en forma general.

D1. ¿Actualmente está empleado con sueldo?
- ❍ No ➔ Vaya a la Pregunta D3
- ❍ Sí, tiempo completo ➔ Vaya a la Pregunta D2
- ❍ Sí, medio tiempo ➔ Vaya a la Pregunta D2

D2. Durante una semana típica, ¿cuántos días hace un recorrido hasta el trabajo (para la mayor distancia que recorre) de cada manera en la lista de abajo? (Ponga el número total de días, usando números enteros.)

Vehículo motorizado (Ej. carro, camión, motocicleta, etc...) solo	_____ días
Vehículo motorizado (Ej. carro, camión, motocicleta, etc...) con otros niños o adultos	_____ días
Autobús, Vía férrea, Metro u otro transporte público	_____ días
Caminar	_____ días
Bicicleta	_____ días
Trabajar en el hogar	_____ días
Otro	_____ días

D3. ¿Cuántos años tiene usted viviendo en Gaithersburg?
- ❍ Menos de 2 años
- ❍ 2-5 años
- ❍ 6-10 años
- ❍ 11-20 años
- ❍ Más de 20 años

D4. ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones describe mejor la vivienda (edificio) en la que reside?
- ❍ Casa familiar separada de cualquier otra casa
- ❍ Casa unida a una o más casas (Ej. duplex, townhome)
- ❍ Edificio con 2 o más apartamentos o condominios
- ❍ Casa rodante / trailer
- ❍ Otro

D5. ¿Es esta casa, apartamento o casa rodante / trailer es...
- ❍ Alquilada o la ocupa sin pago?
- ❍ Propia, o alguno de su familia la paga con hipoteca o ya está paga?

D6. ¿Como cuánto es su costo mensual de vivienda para el lugar donde vive? (incluyendo renta, pago de hipoteca, impuesto de propiedad, seguro de propiedad y cuotas de asociación de propietarios (HOA))?
- ❍ Menos de $300 por mes
- ❍ $300 a $599 por mes
- ❍ $600 a $999 por mes
- ❍ $1,000 a $1,499 por mes
- ❍ $1,500 a $2,499 por mes
- ❍ $2,500 o más por mes

D7. ¿Algún niño de 17 años o menos vive en su hogar?
❍ No ❍ Sí

D8. ¿Tiene usted o cualquiera de los miembros de su familia 65 años o más?
❍ No ❍ Sí

D9. ¿Cuánto cree usted que será el ingreso de su familia antes de impuestos para el año actual? (Por favor incluya en su ingreso total todo ingreso de todas las personas de su casa.)
- ❍ Menos de $24,999
- ❍ $25,000 a $49,999
- ❍ $50,000 a $99,999
- ❍ $100,000 a $149,999
- ❍ $150,000 o más

Por favor responda a ambas preguntas D10 y D11:

D10. ¿Es usted Español, Hispano o Latino?
- ❍ No, no soy Español, Hispano o Latino
- ❍ Sí, me considero Español, Hispano o Latino

D11. ¿Cuál es su raza? (Marque uno o más grupos que indiquen lo que usted se considera.)
- ❍ Indio Americano o nativo de Alaska
- ❍ Asiático o de las Islas del Pacífico
- ❍ Negro, Afro-americano
- ❍ Blanco / Caucásico
- ❍ Otro

D12. ¿En que categoría está su edad?
- ❍ 18-24 años
- ❍ 25-34 años
- ❍ 35-44 años
- ❍ 45-54 años
- ❍ 55-64 años
- ❍ 65-74 años
- ❍ 75 años o más

D13. ¿Cuál es su sexo?
- ❍ Femenino
- ❍ Masculino

D14. ¿Está registrado para votar en su jurisdicción?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Sí
- ❍ No tengo derecho a votar
- ❍ No sé

D15. Muchas personas no tienen tiempo para votar en las elecciones. ¿Recuerda usted haber votado en la última elección general?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Sí
- ❍ No tengo derecho a votar
- ❍ No sé

Gracias por completar esta encuesta. Por favor regrese la encuesta en el sobre prepagado a:
National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 549, Belle Mead, NJ 08502

Gaithersburg
A CHARACTER COUNTS! CITY

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