



national citizen survey  
city of suwanee, georgia

2010





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## about the survey

### *what is it?*

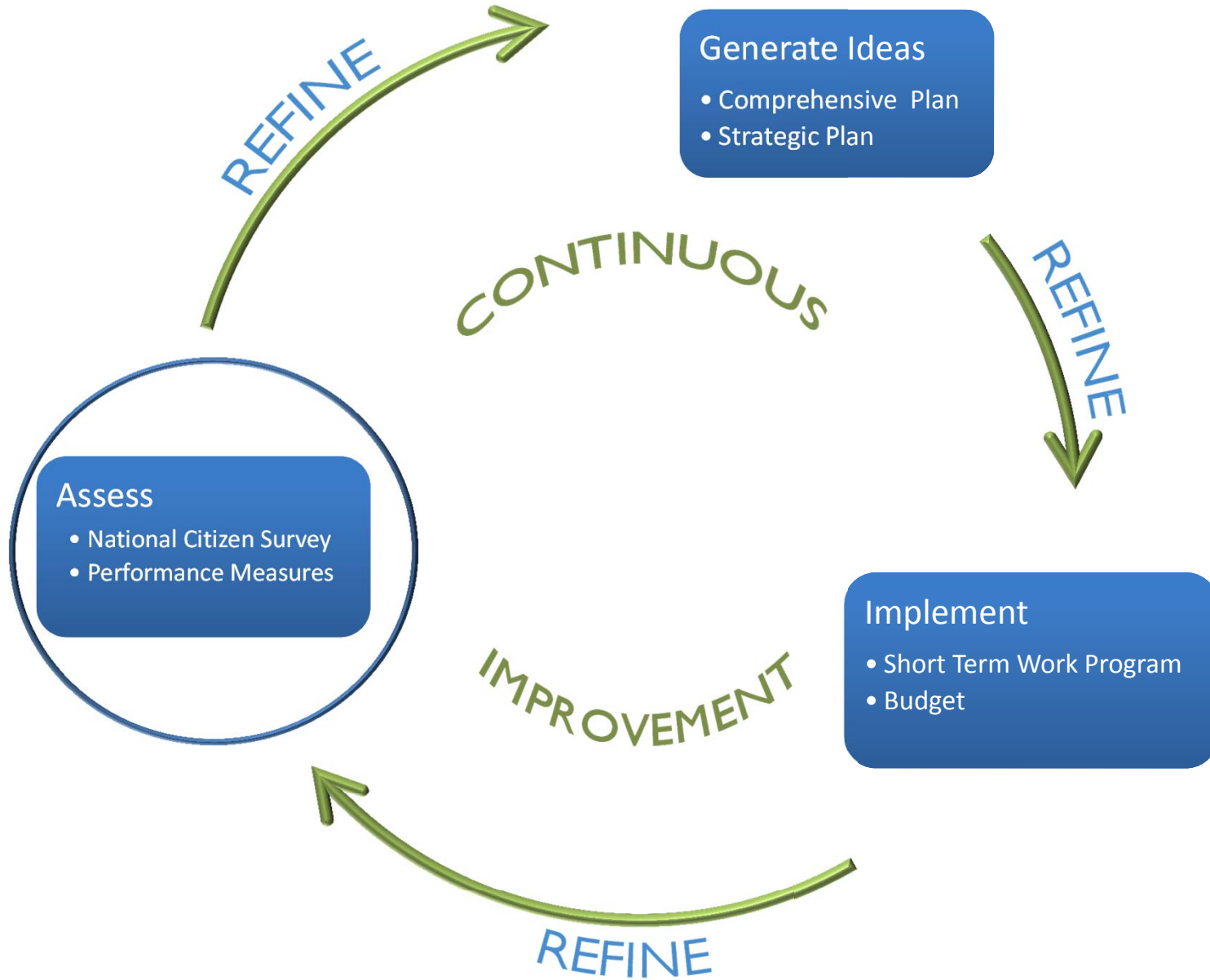
The National Citizen Survey (NCS) is an independent and statistically valid survey tool used by local governments across the United States to assess citizen satisfaction with community amenities and government services. The survey is a collaborative effort between the National Research Center, Inc. and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

### *why do it?*

Periodic sounding of resident opinion offers staff, elected officials and other stakeholders an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements. Elected officials can use the results to set priorities.

### *how was it undertaken?*

The survey was sent to 1,200 households selected at random without bias by the National Research Center. The population included all residential households in Suwanee's city limits. The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results are obtained across jurisdictions.





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## methods and goals

### Survey Objectives

- Identify community strengths and weaknesses
- Identify service strengths and weaknesses



### Assessment Methods

- Multi-contact mailed survey
- Representative sample of 1,200 households
- 334 surveys returned; 30% response rate
- 5% margin of error
- Data statistically weighted to reflect population



### Assessment Goals

#### Immediate

- Provide useful information for:
  - Planning
  - Resource allocation
  - Performance measurement
  - Program and policy evaluation

#### Long Term

- Improved Services
  - More civic engagement
  - Better Community quality of life
  - Stronger Public Trust

# eight focus areas

## community quality

*quality of life, quality of neighborhood, place to live*

## community design

### **transportation**

*ease of travel, transit services, street maintenances*

### **housing**

*housing options, cost, affordability*

### **land use and zoning**

*new development, growth, code enforcement*

### **economic sustainability**

*employment, shopping and retail, City as a place to work*

## public safety

*safety in neighborhood and downtown, crime victimization, police, fire and EMS services, emergency preparedness*

## environmental sustainability

*cleanliness, air quality, preservation of natural areas, garbage and recycling services*

## recreation and wellness

### **parks and recreation**

*recreation opportunities, use of parks and facilities, programs and classes*

### **culture, arts and education**

*cultural and educational opportunities, libraries, schools*

### **health and wellness**

*availability of food, health services, social services*

## community inclusiveness

*sense of community  
racial and cultural acceptance  
senior, youth and low-income services*

## civic engagement

### **civic activity**

*volunteerism, civic attentiveness, voting behavior*

### **social engagement**

*neighborliness, social and religious events*

### **information and awareness**

*public information, publications, web site*

## public trust

*cooperation in community, value of services, direction of community, citizen involvement, employees*



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## understanding the survey

### *measure*

Responses are analyzed and the number of “Good” and “Excellent” responses are aggregated to develop a “score”. Such as, 95% of respondents rated Suwanee’s “Overall Quality of Life” as **“Good”** or **“Excellent”**.

### *benchmark*

The “scores” are then ranked and compared among participating jurisdictions. For example, Suwanee’s “score” for “Quality of Life” ranked #10 out of 365 participating jurisdictions and thus placed Suwanee in the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile. In addition, these scores are compared to other participants and rated as “above,” “below” or “similar to” other benchmarks.

### *trend*

The percentile rank can then be tracked internally year after year to see emerging trends. Suwanee now has data for two surveys: 2008 and 2010.

# executive summary

Almost all residents surveyed believed the City was a good place to live. **The overall quality of life in the City of Suwanee was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 95% of respondents.**

## *How do we compare?*

Ratings of **31 community characteristics** were compared to the benchmark database. Of the characteristics for which comparisons were available, **29 were above the national benchmark** comparison, one was similar to the national benchmark comparison (traffic flow on major streets), and one was below (ease of bus travel).

Residents gave favorable ratings to almost all local government services. Of the **36 local government services** for which comparisons were available, **34 were above the benchmark comparison**, one was similar to the benchmark comparison (snow removal), and one was below (bus or transit services).

A **79% rated the overall direction** being taken by the City of Suwanee as **“good” or “excellent”**.



measure,  
benchmark  
and trend





## overall community quality

Almost all of the City of Suwanee's residents responding to the survey gave **high ratings** to their neighborhoods and the **community as a place to live**. Most reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years. Ratings were **much above** benchmark comparisons.



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# overall community quality

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Quality of life in Suwanee	95%	much above
Your neighborhood as a place to live	92%	much above
Suwanee as a place to live	98%	much above

very likely & somewhat likely	2010	comparison to benchmark
Remain in Suwanee for the next five years	91%	much above
Recommend living in Suwanee to someone	96%	much above



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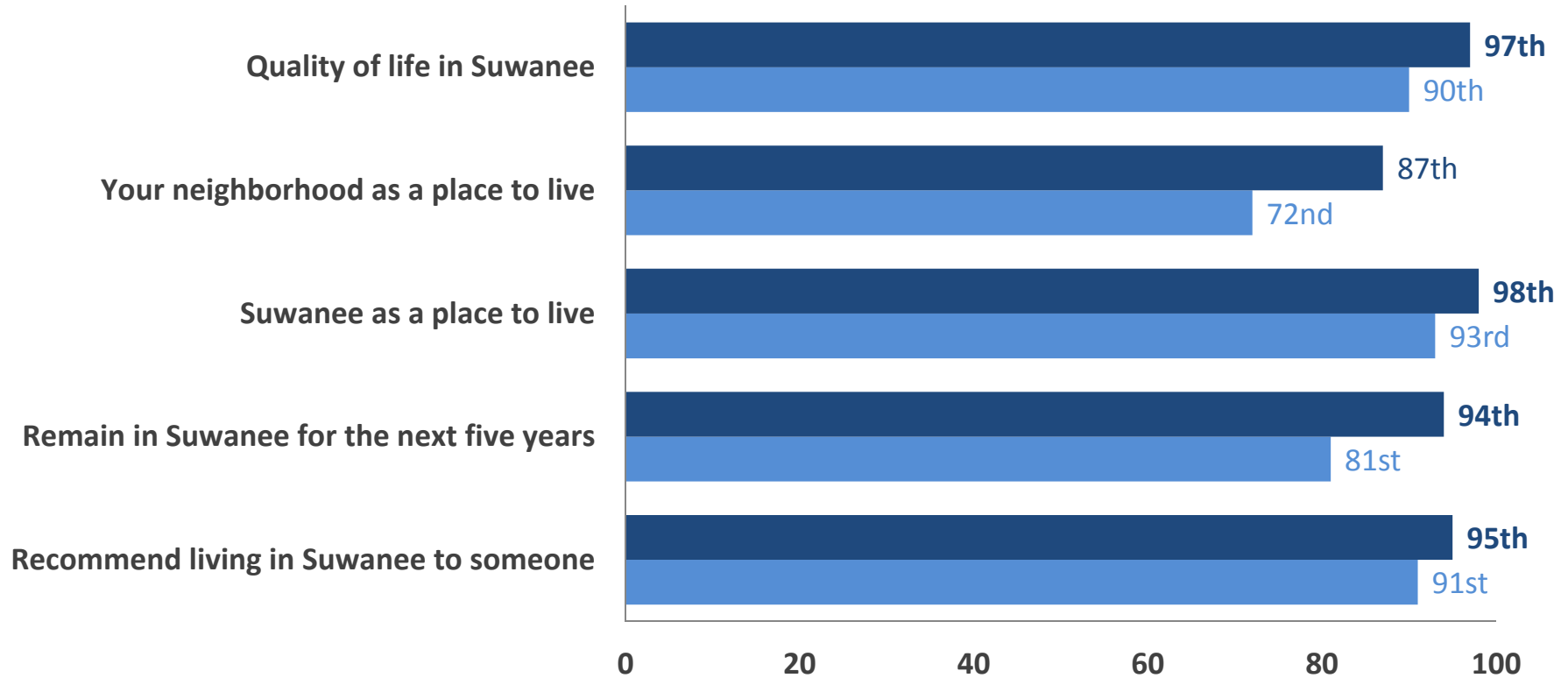
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# overall community quality

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





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## community design...transportation

Respondents to the survey were given a list of six aspects of mobility to rate. The **availability of paths and walking trails** was given the **most positive rating**, followed by ease of car travel in Suwanee. These ratings tended to be **higher than** the national benchmarks.









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# community design...transportation

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Ease of car travel in Suwanee	65%	 above
Ease of bus travel in Suwanee	25%	 much below
Ease of bicycle travel in Suwanee	57%	 above
Ease of walking in Suwanee	63%	 above
Availability of paths and walking trails	84%	 much above
Traffic flow on major streets	47%	 similar



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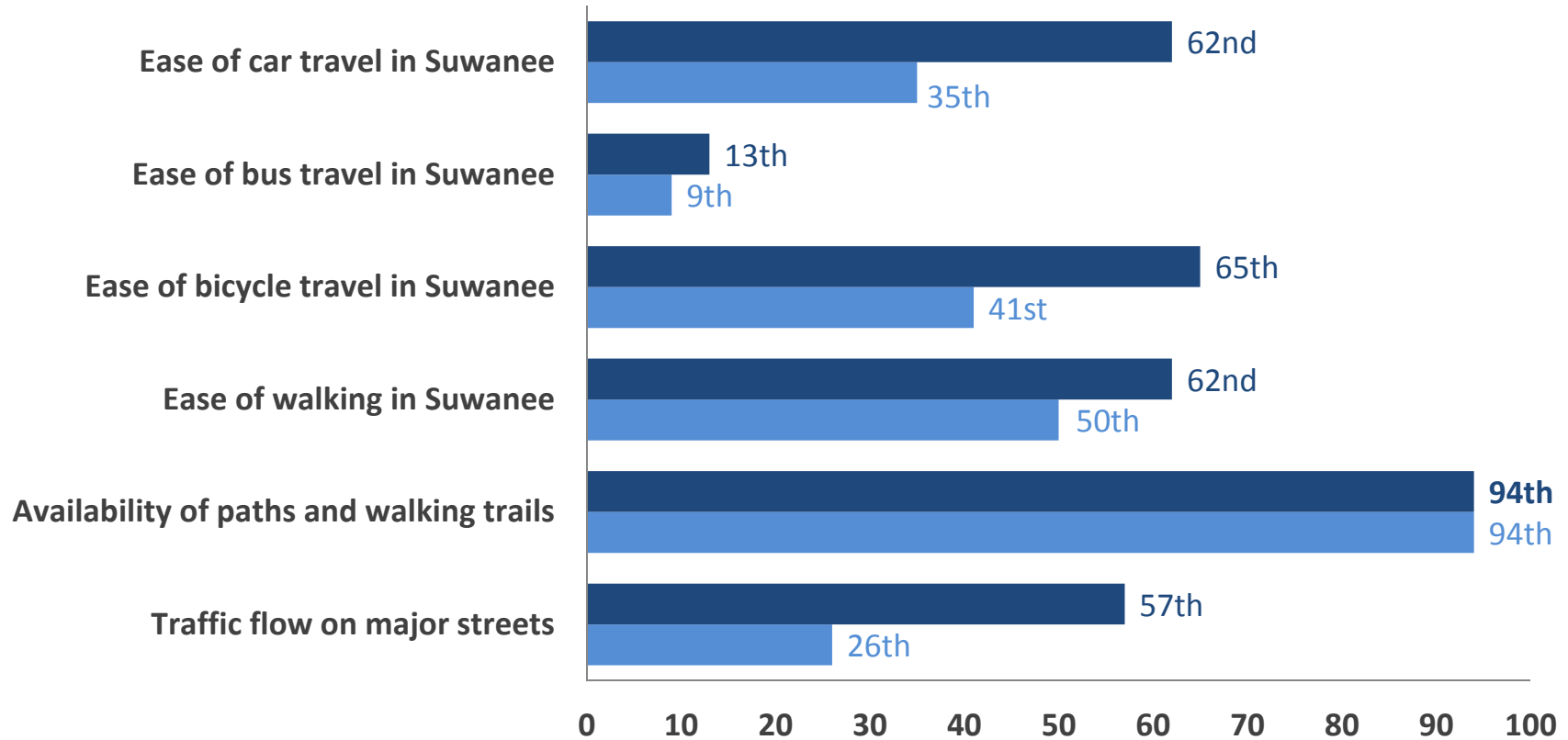
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# community design...transportation

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





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## community design...transportation services

Eight **transportation services** were rated in Suwanee. **6** were **above** the benchmark (street repair, street cleaning, street lighting, sidewalk maintenance, traffic signal, and amount of public parking), **1** was **similar** to the benchmark (snow removal), and **1** was **below** (bus or transit service).



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# community design...transportation services

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Street repair	69%	much above
Street cleaning	78%	much above
Street lighting	68%	above
Snow removal	63%	similar
Sidewalk maintenance	68%	much above
Traffic signal	54%	above
Bus or transit service	30%	much below
Amount of public parking	57%	much above





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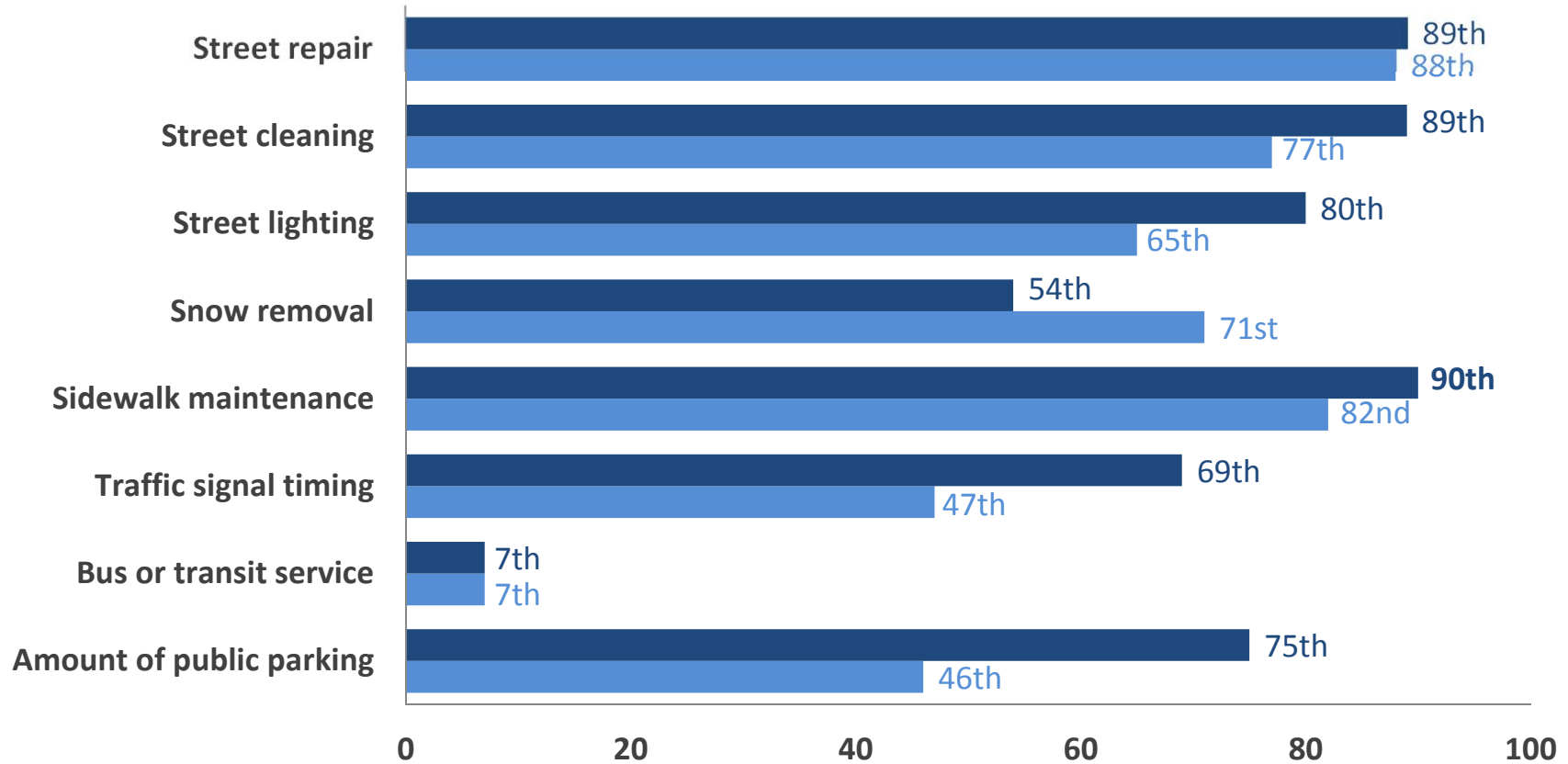
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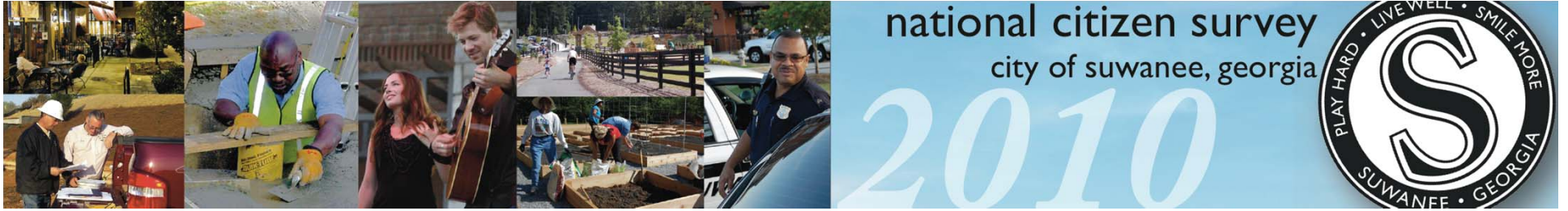


# community design...transportation services

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





## community design...housing

The **availability of affordable housing** was rated as excellent or good by 72% of respondents, while the **variety of housing options** was rated as excellent or good by 78% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was **much above** the national benchmark comparison.



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# community design...housing

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable housing	72%	↑ <b>much above</b>
Variety of housing options	78%	↑ <b>much above</b>



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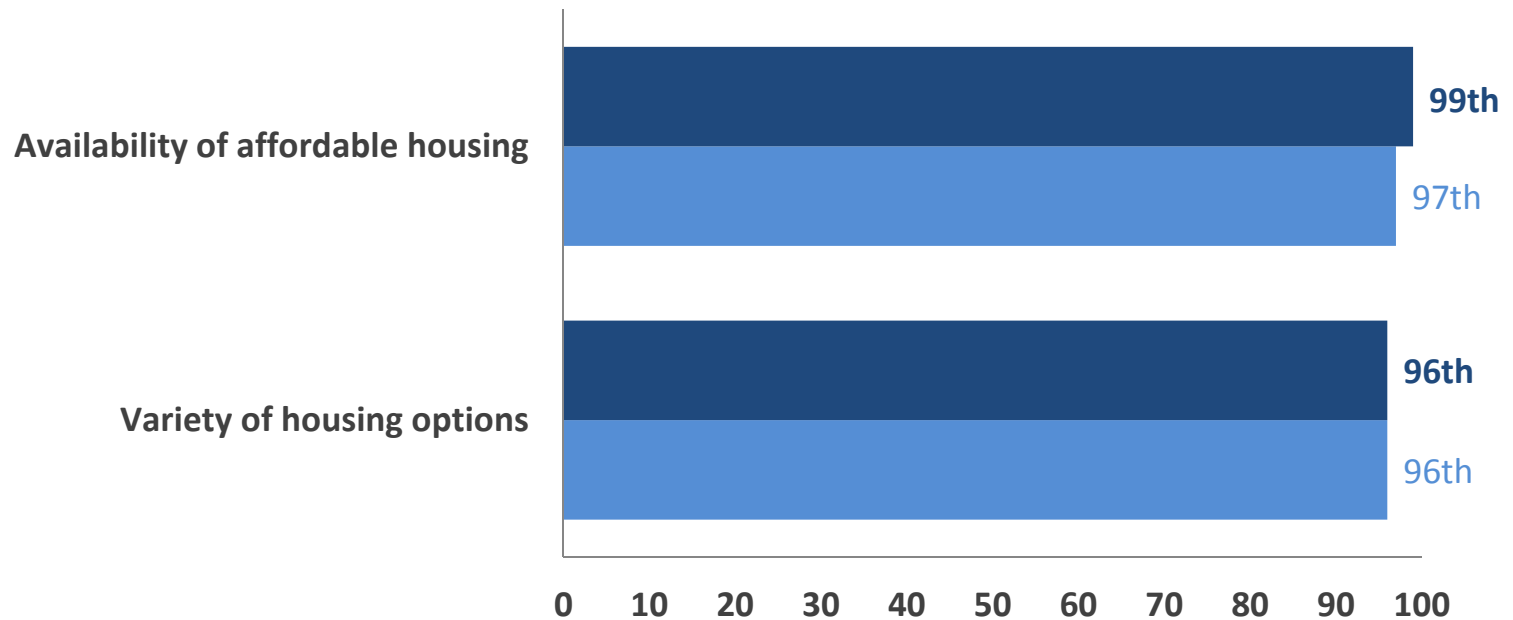
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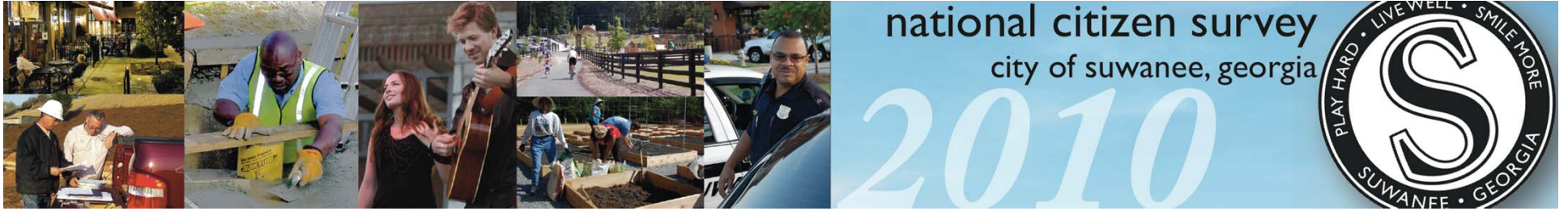


# community design...housing

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





## community design...land use and zoning

The **overall appearance of Suwanee** was rated as excellent or good by 92% of respondents and was **much above** the benchmarks. When rating to what extent run-down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles were a problem, 2% thought they were a major problem.







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# community design...land use and zoning

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Overall appearance of Suwanee	92%	 <b>much above</b>
Quality of new development in Suwanee	78%	 <b>much above</b>
Land use, planning & zoning	64%	 <b>much above</b>
Code enforcement	66%	 <b>much above</b>



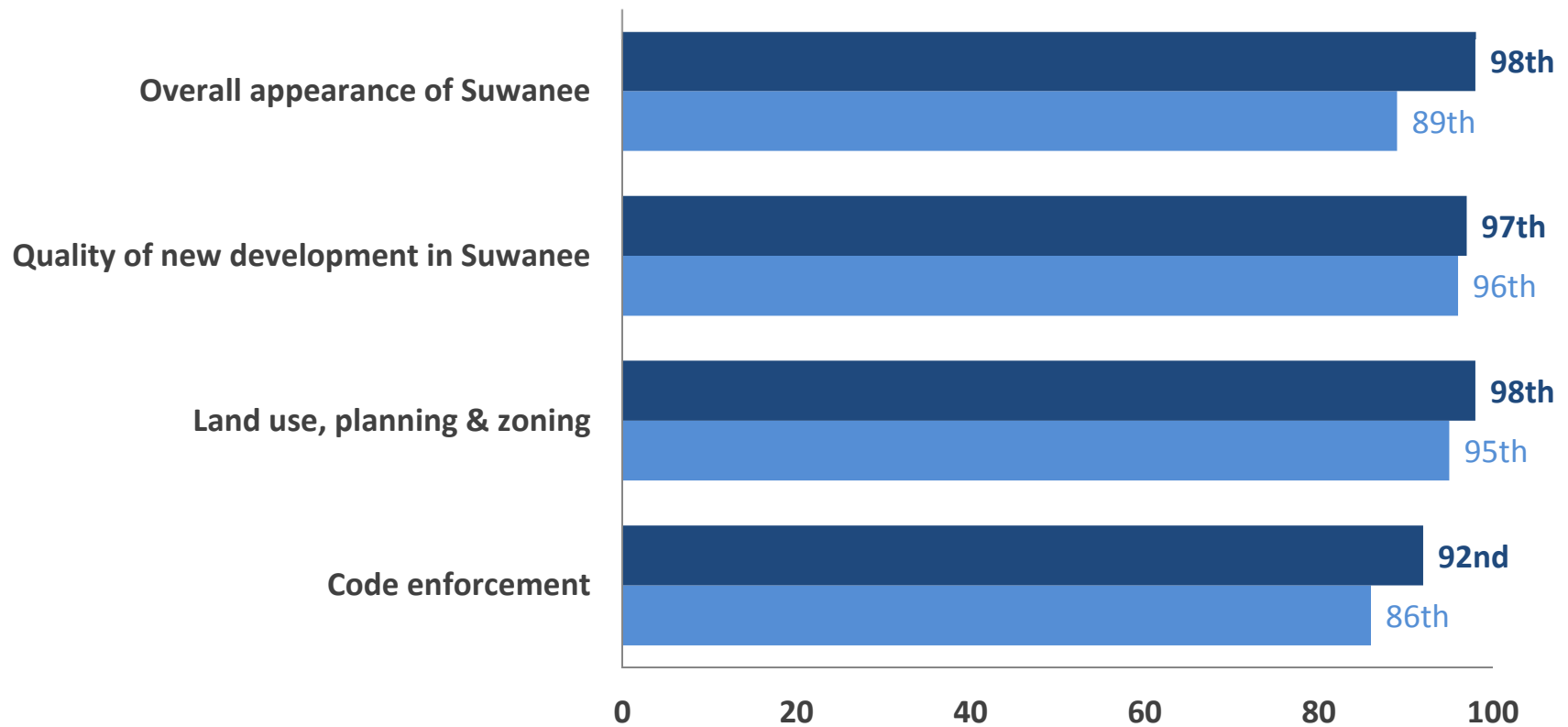
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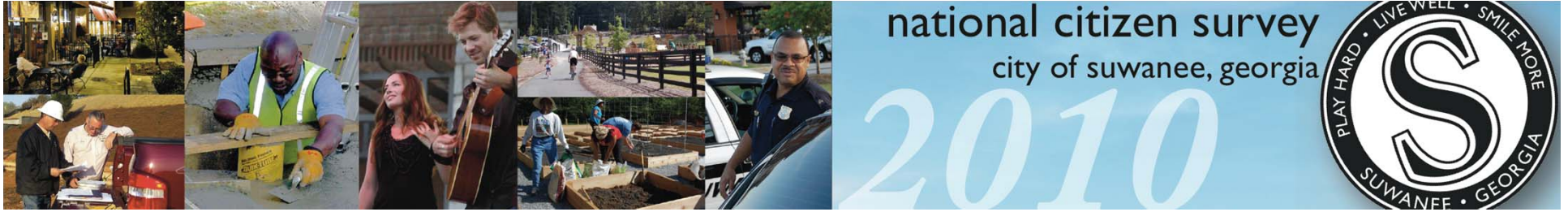
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# community design...land use and zoning (national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





## community design...economic sustainability

The most positively rated features were the **overall quality of business and service establishments** and Suwanee as a **place to work**. Receiving the lowest rating was employment opportunities. Most ratings were **stable** from 2008 to 2010; however the rating for Suwanee as a place to work had decreased since 2008.










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## community design...economic sustainability

### survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Employment opportunities	45%	 <b>much above</b>
Shopping opportunities	58%	 <b>above</b>
Suwanee as a place to work	71%	 <b>much above</b>
Overall quality of business service establishments in Suwanee	77%	 <b>much above</b>
Economic development	67%	 <b>much above</b>

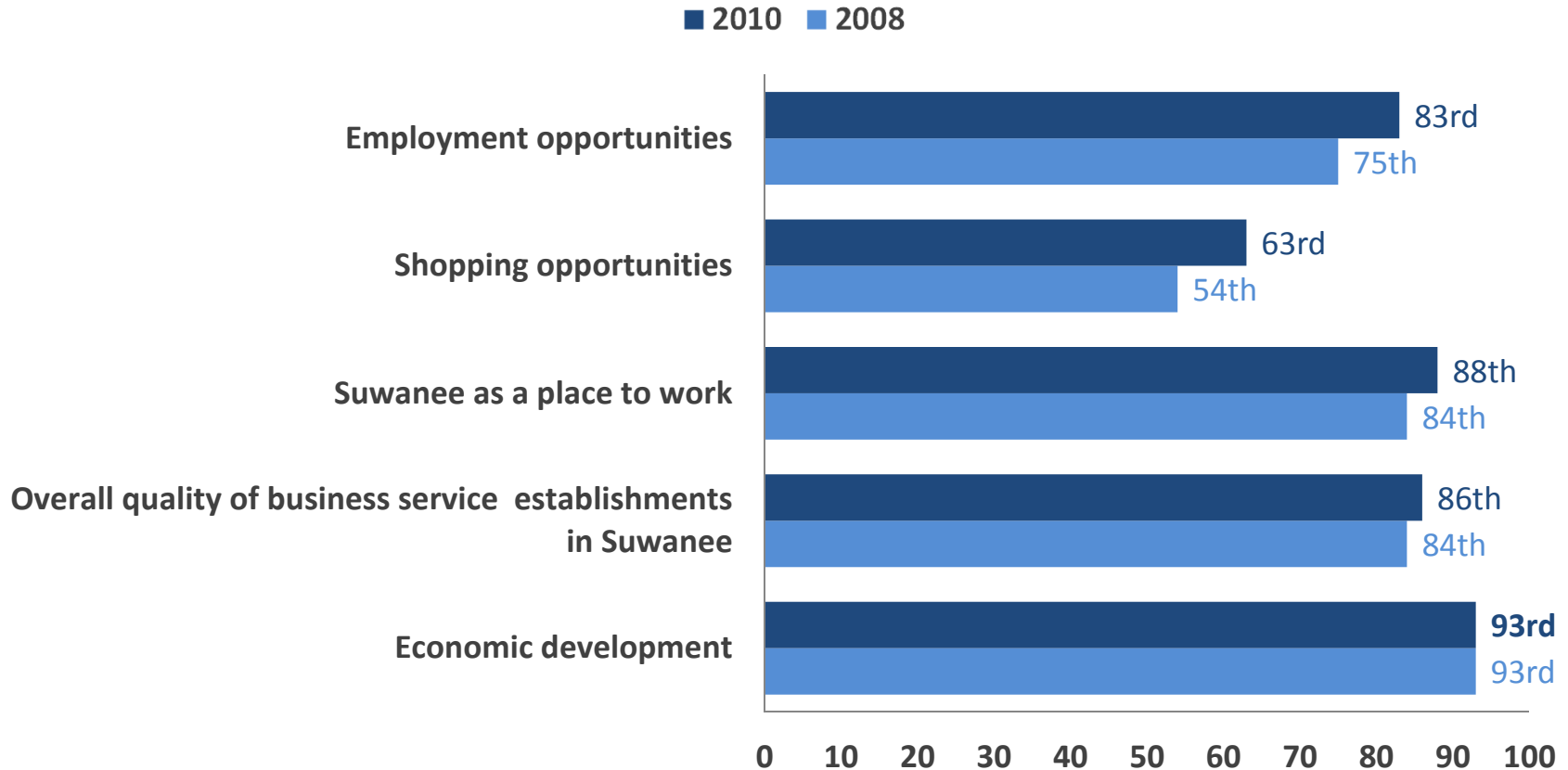


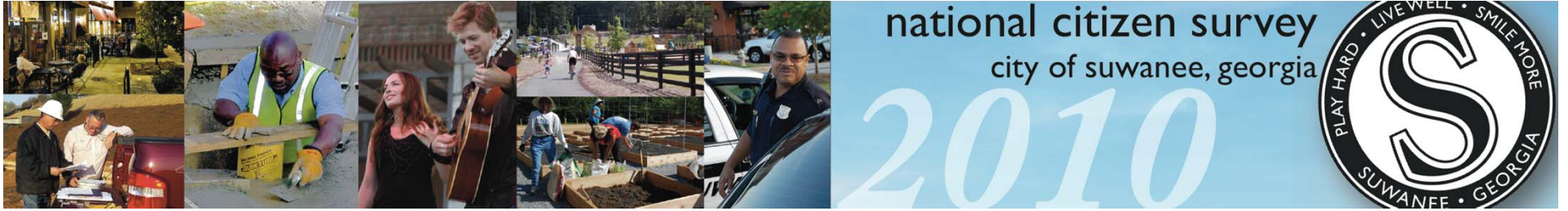
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# community design...economic sustainability (national percentile rank)





## public safety...community and personal safety

Almost all gave positive ratings of safety in the City of Suwanee. **About 93%** of those completing the questionnaire said they felt **very or somewhat safe from violent crime**. Personal safety rates were **much above** the benchmark comparisons.



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# public safety...community and personal safety

## survey response

very safe & somewhat safe	2010	comparison to benchmark
Safety in your neighborhood during the day	97%	<b>much above</b>
Safety in your neighborhood after dark	89%	<b>much above</b>
Safety in Suwanee's downtown area during the day	95%	<b>much above</b>
Safety in Suwanee's downtown area after dark	90%	<b>much above</b>
Safety from violent crimes	93%	<b>much above</b>
Safety from property crimes	84%	<b>much above</b>



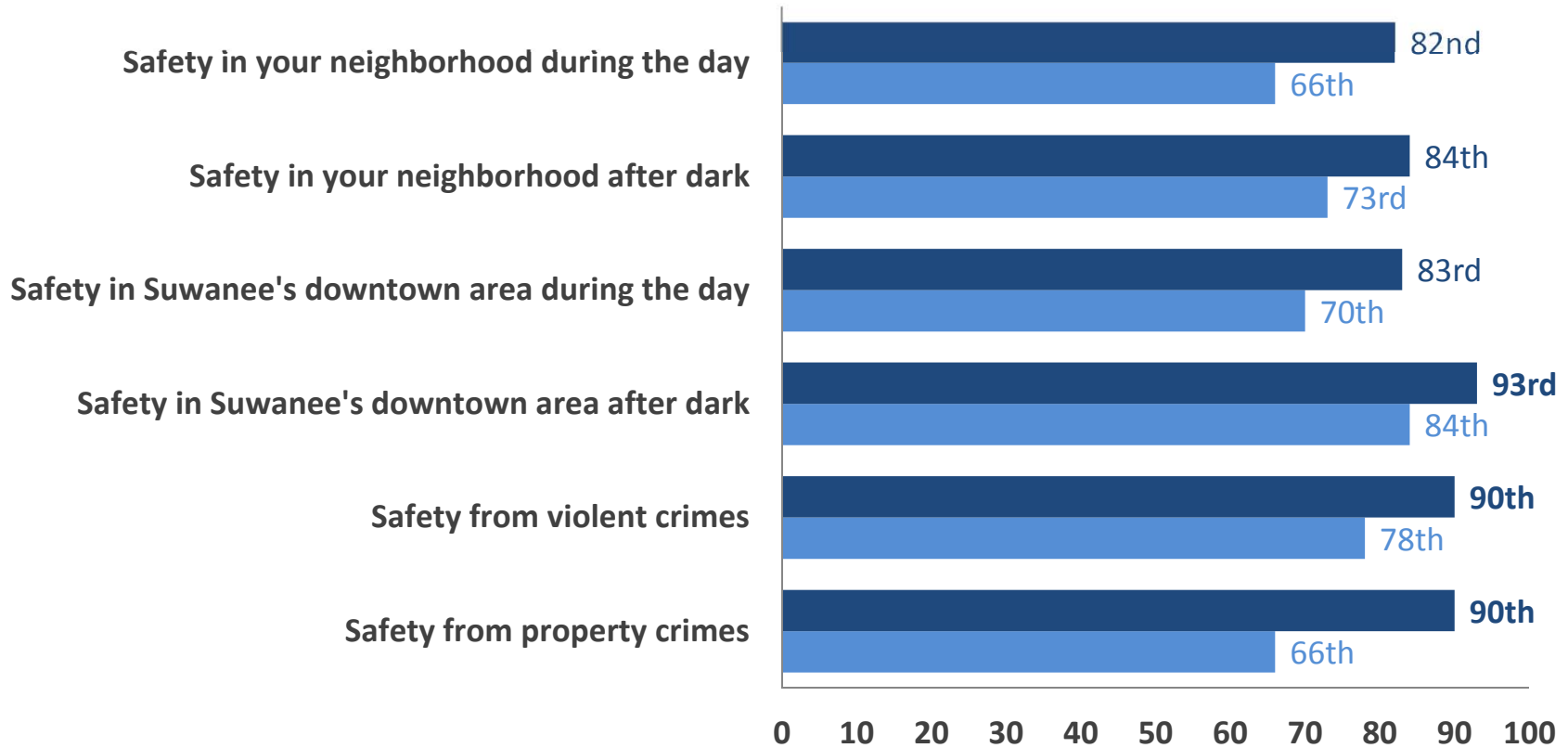
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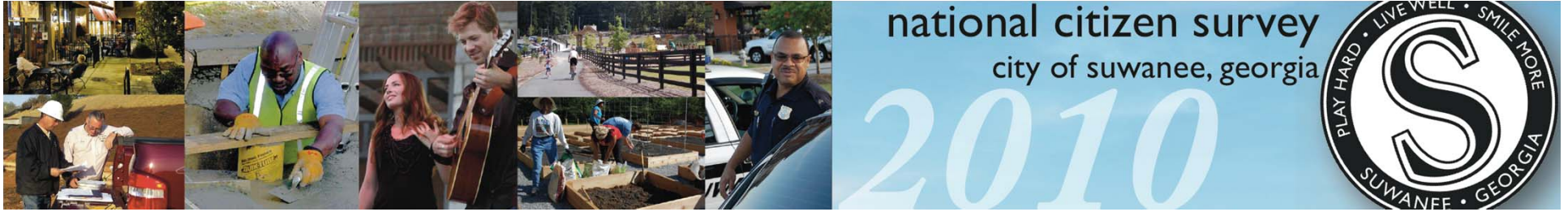
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# public safety...community and personal safety (national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





## public safety...crime victimization & reporting

6% 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, 91% had reported it to the police. Compared to other jurisdictions, **fewer Suwanee residents had been victims of crime** in the 12 months preceding the survey and many more Suwanee residents had reported their most recent crime victimization to the police. Crime reporting was **much more** than the benchmark comparisons.





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# public safety...crime victimization & reporting

## survey response

yes	2010	comparison to benchmark
Victim of crime	6%	 <b>much less</b>
Reported crimes	91%	 <b>much more</b>

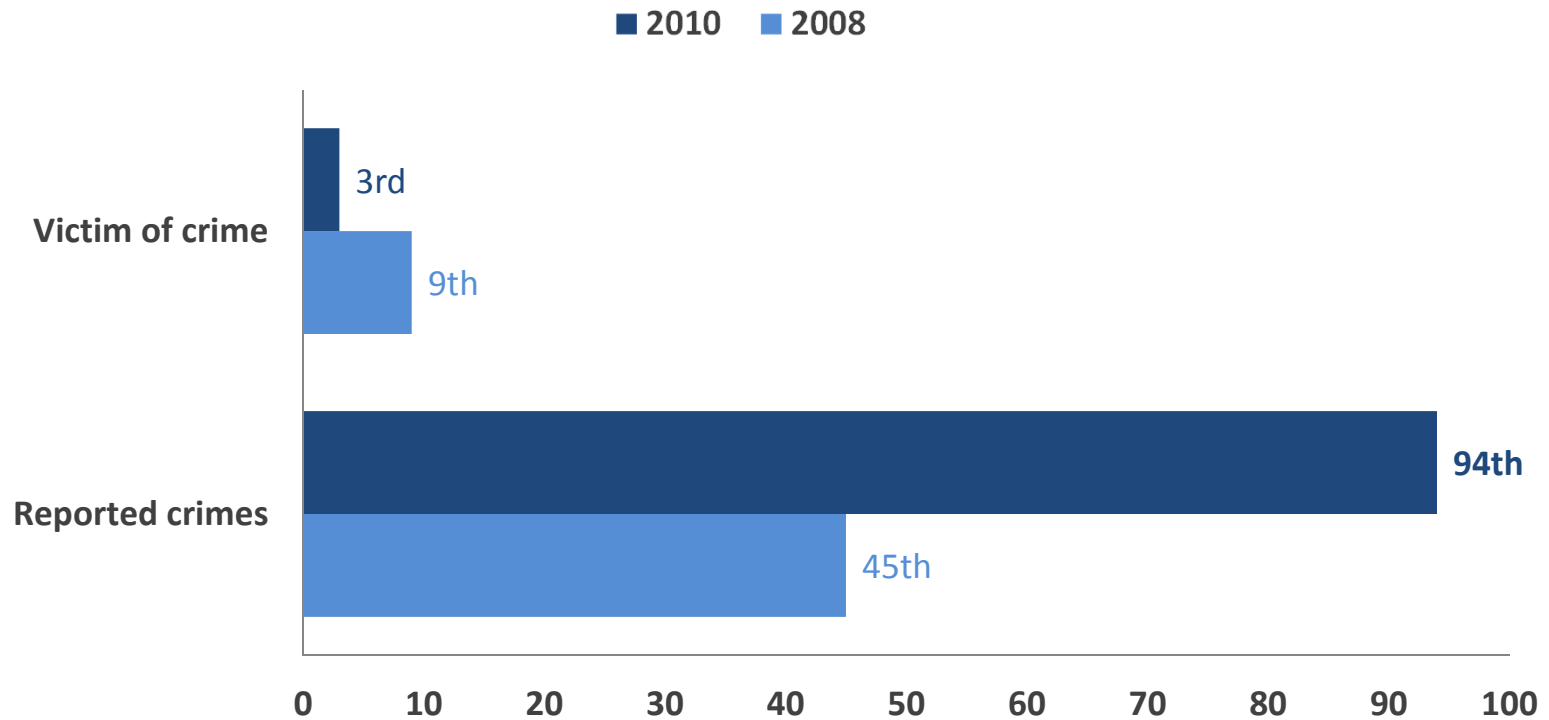


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## public safety...crime victimization & reporting (national percentile rank)







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## public safety...services

Residents rated seven City **public safety services**. Of these services, **all seven were rated much above** the benchmark comparisons. Fire services and ambulance or emergency medical services received the highest ratings, while municipal courts and traffic enforcement received the lowest ratings. Most were rated similar to the prior 2008 survey.



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# public safety...services

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark	
Police services	86%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Fire services	95%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Ambulance or EMS	94%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Crime prevention	88%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Fire prevention and education	85%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Traffic enforcement	73%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Courts	69%	↑	<b>much above</b>



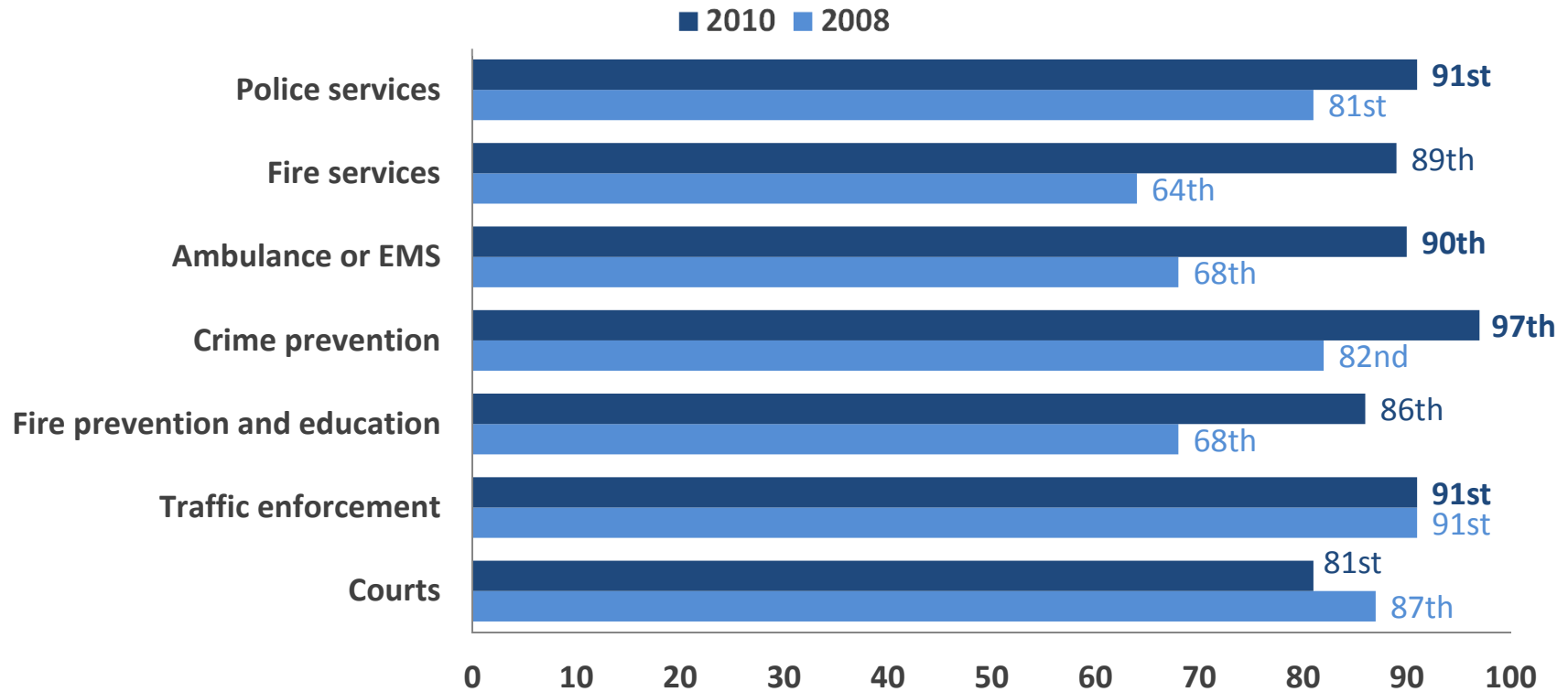
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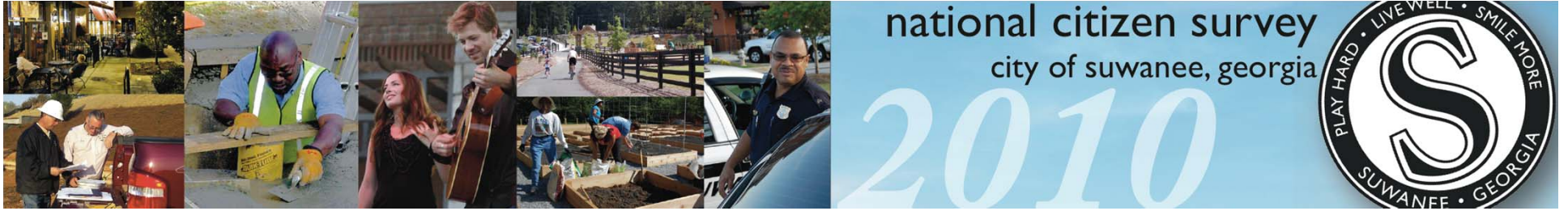
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# public safety...services

(national percentile rank)





## environmental sustainability

Residents 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 90% of survey respondents. The **cleanliness** of Suwanee received the highest rating, and it was **much above** the benchmark comparisons.



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# environmental sustainability

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark	
Cleanliness of Suwanee	94%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Quality of overall natural environment	90%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	86%	↑	<b>much above</b>
Storm drainage services	74%	↑	<b>much above</b>



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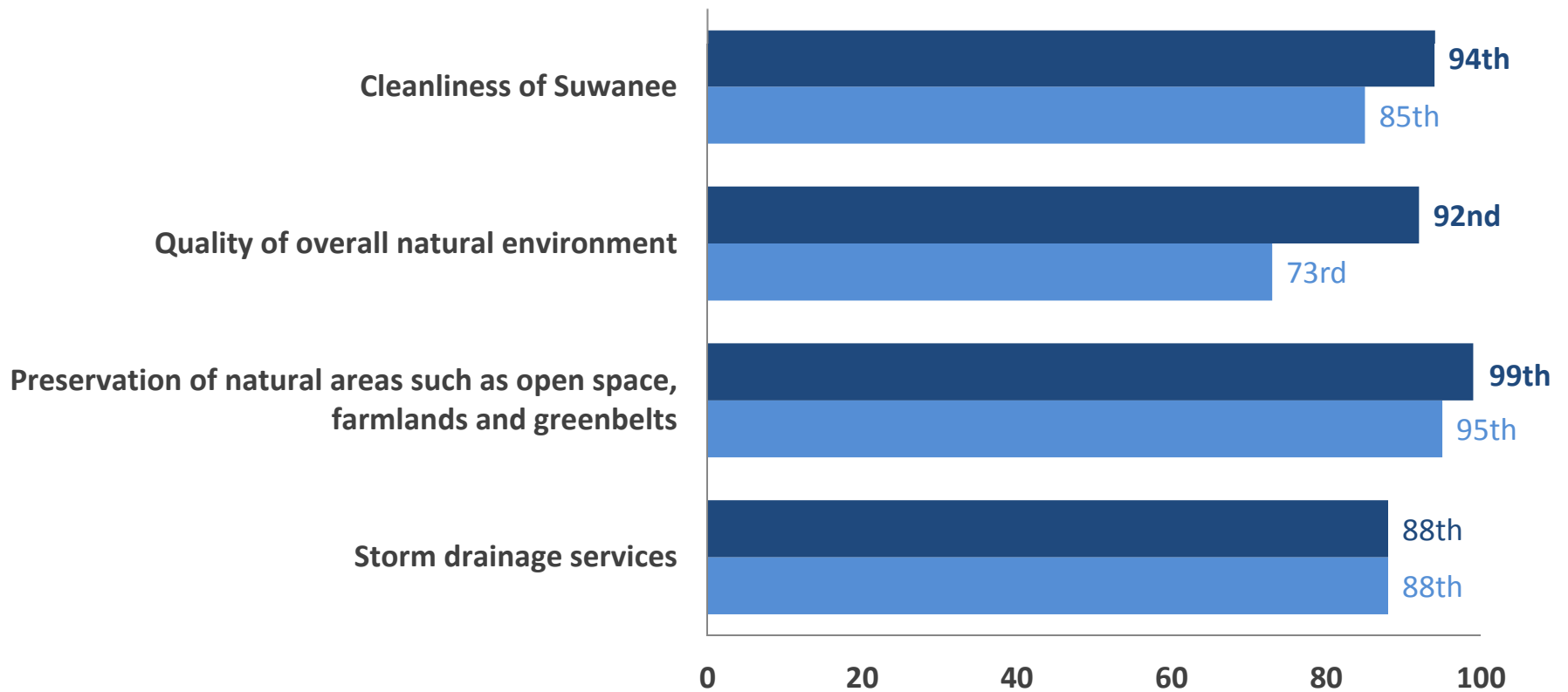
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# environmental sustainability

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





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## recreation...parks & recreation

**Recreation opportunities** in Suwanee were rated positively as were **services related to parks and recreation**. All were rated **much above** the benchmarks. The percent of residents that used Suwanee recreation centers was greater than the percentage of users in comparison jurisdictions. Similarly, recreation program use in Suwanee was higher than use in comparison jurisdictions.



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# recreation...parks & recreation

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Recreation opportunities	90%	↑ much above
City parks	95%	↑ much above
Recreation centers or facilities	86%	↑ much above
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	74%	↑ much above

participated or visited	2010	comparison to benchmark
Used Suwanee recreation centers	73%	↑ much more
Participated in a recreation program or activity	64%	↑ much more
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	94%	↑ much more





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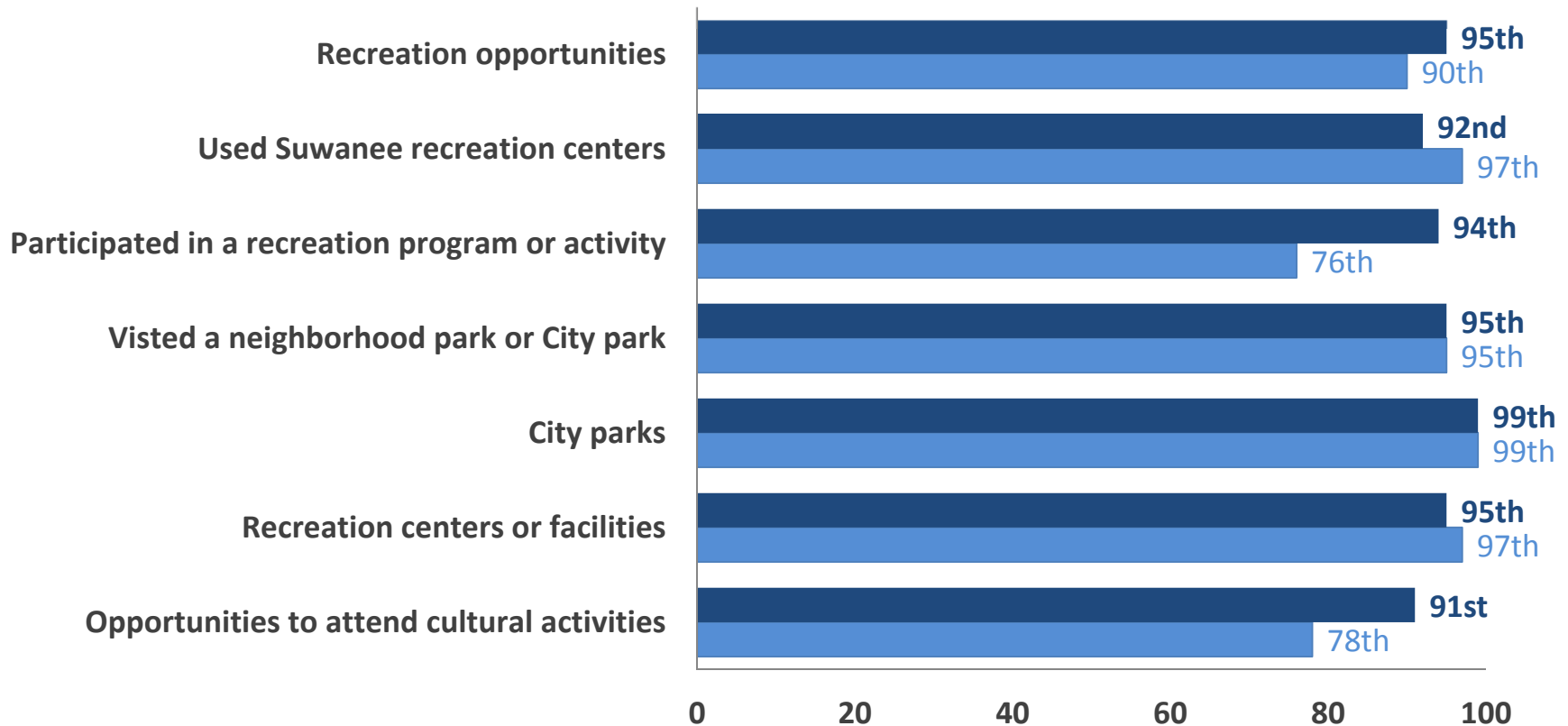
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# recreation...parks & recreation

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





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## community inclusiveness

Almost all residents rated Suwanee 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. Additionally, most respondents felt the City was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. Rates were **much above** the benchmark comparisons.



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# community inclusiveness

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Sense of community	86%	↑ much above
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	87%	↑ much above
Suwanee as a place to raise kids	96%	↑ much above
Suwanee as a place to retire	72%	↑ much above
Services to seniors	73%	↑ above
Services to youths	78%	↑ much above
Services to low income people	56%	↑ much above



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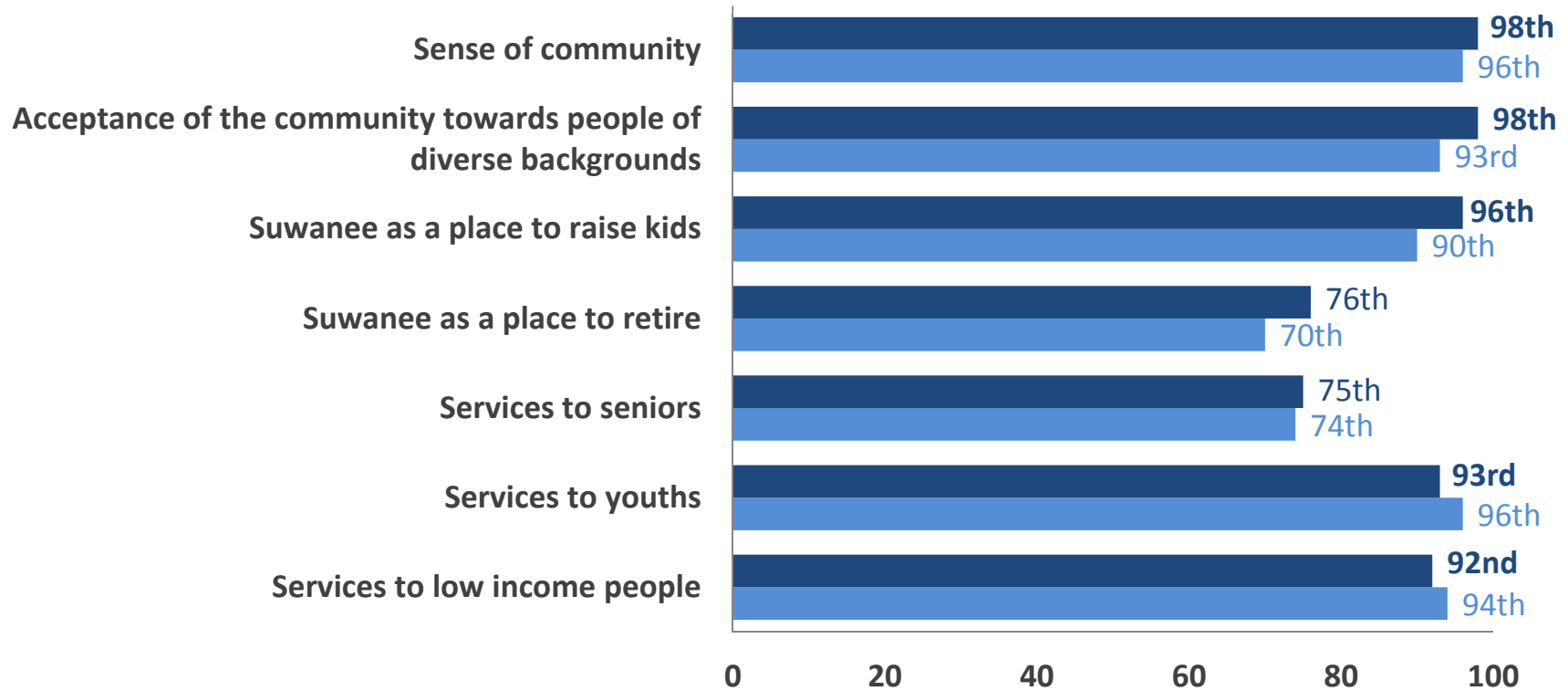
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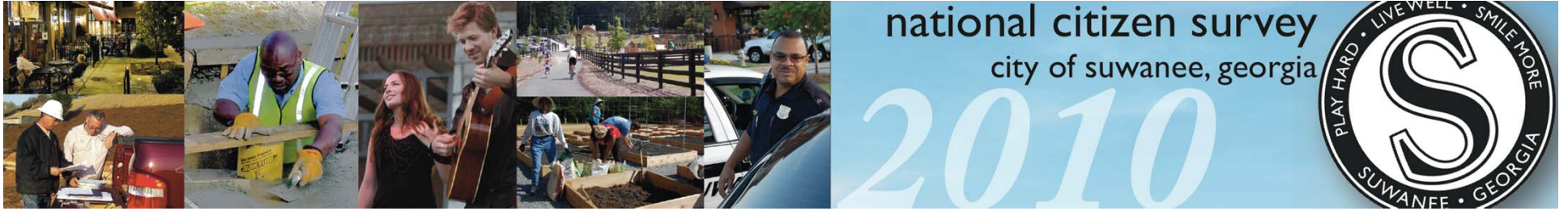


# community inclusiveness

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





## civic engagement

Survey participants rated the **volunteer opportunities** in the City **favorably**. Most of the participants had not attended a public meeting, volunteered time to a group or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend. Opportunities to participate and volunteer were **much above** the benchmark.



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# civic engagement

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to participate in community matters	79%	↑ much above
Opportunities to volunteer	81%	↑ much above
Attend a meeting of local elected or other local public meeting	28%	↔ similar
Read Suwanee Crossroads Newsletter	92%	↑ much more
Visited Suwanee's web site	78%	↑ much more



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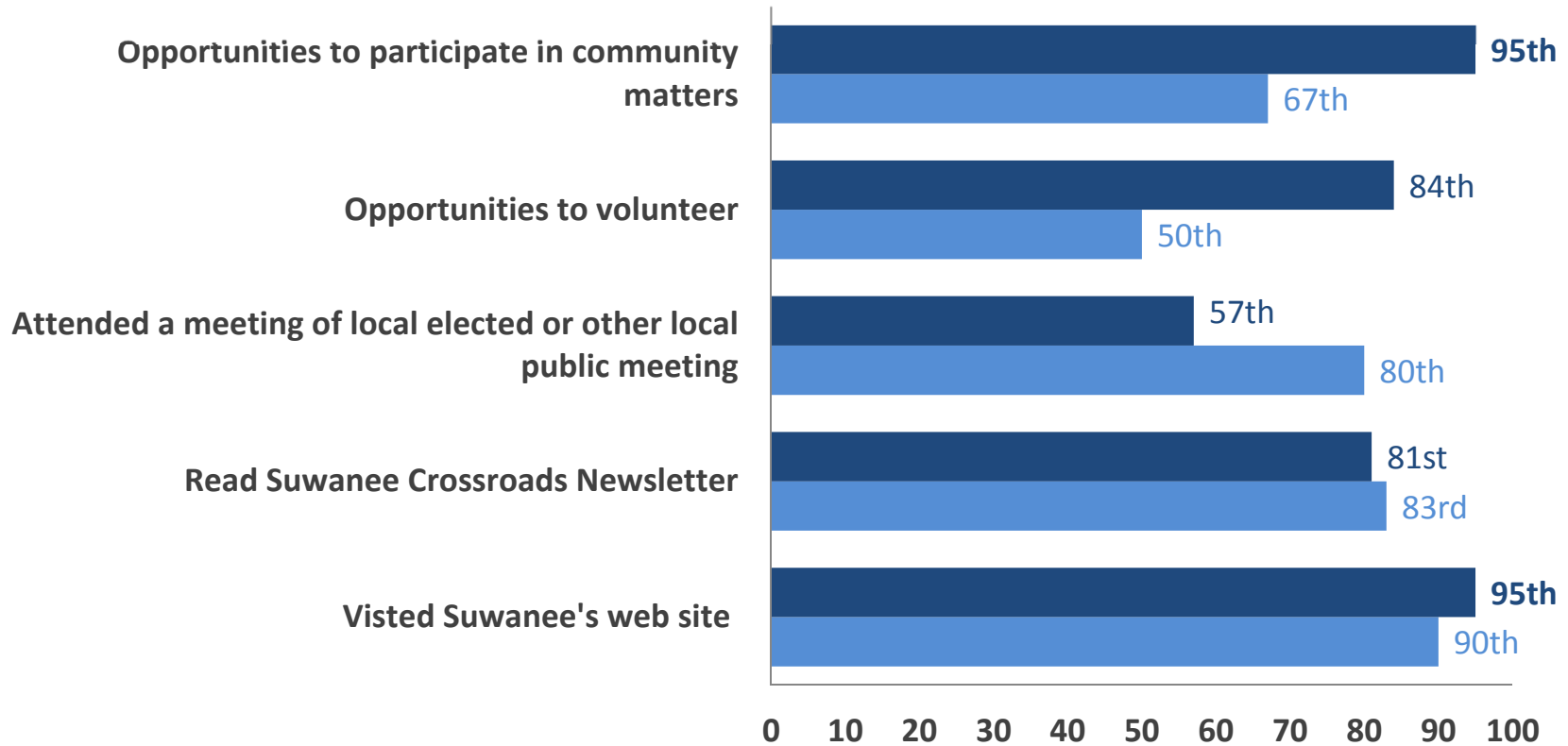
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# civic engagement

(national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





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## public trust

A majority of respondents felt that the **value of services for taxes** paid was excellent or good. On average, residents of Suwanee gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to the Federal Government. The **overall quality** of services delivered by the City was rated as **excellent or good by 87%** of survey participants. The City's rating was **much above** the benchmark comparisons.





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# public trust

## survey response

excellent & good	2010	comparison to benchmark
Value of services for the taxes paid to Suwanee	71%	↑ much above
The overall direction that Suwanee is taking	79%	↑ much above
Job Suwanee government does at welcoming citizen involvement	80%	↑ much above
Overall image or reputation of Suwanee	93%	↑ much above
Services provided by Suwanee	87%	↑ much above



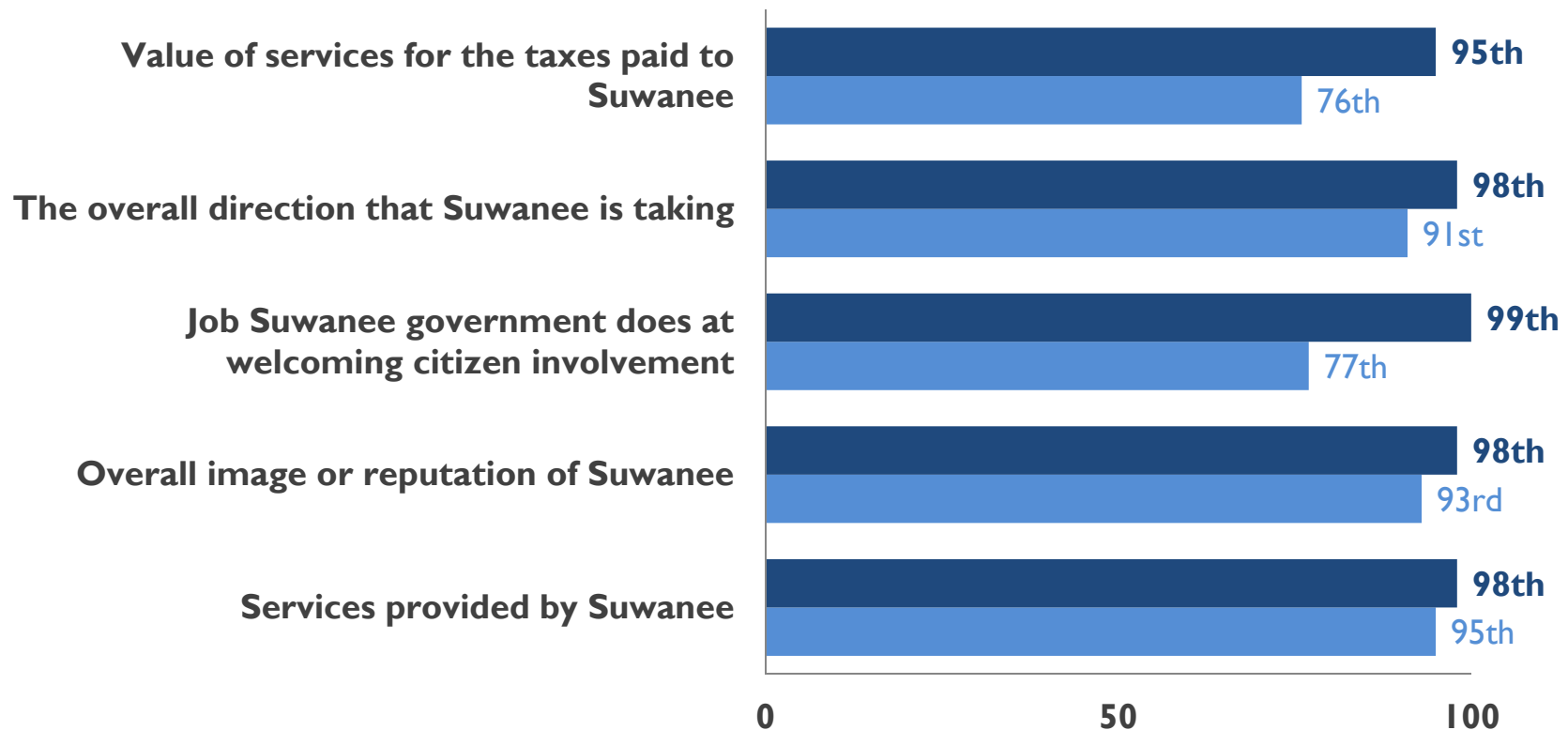
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## public trust (national percentile rank)

■ 2010 ■ 2008





from data to  
action...resident  
priorities

# Overall Quality of Services

## Community Design

Planning and zoning	Animal control
Code enforcement	Street repair
★ Economic development	Street cleaning
Sidewalk maintenance	Street lighting
Traffic signal timing	

## Public Safety

Fire Services	★ Police Services
Traffic Enforcement	

## Recreation and Wellness

★ City parks	Health services
Library	Public Schools
Recreation programs	Recreation facilities

## Environmental Sustainability

Drinking water	Recycling
Garbage collection	Sewer Services
Preservation of natural areas	Storm drainage

## Civic Engagement

Cable television	Public information
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## Legend

Above Benchmark

Similar to Benchmark

Below Benchmark

★ Key Driver



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## policy questions

Residents were asked to answer 5 questions unique to the City of Suwanee. The information obtained could be useful for planning resource allocation.



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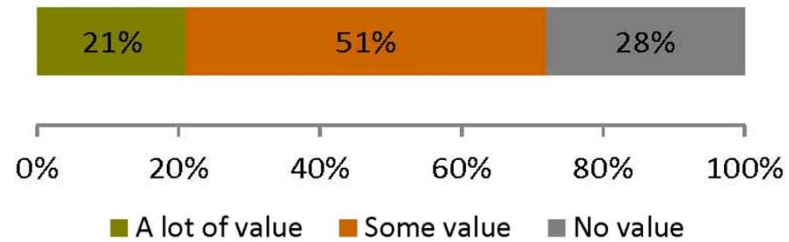
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# policy questions

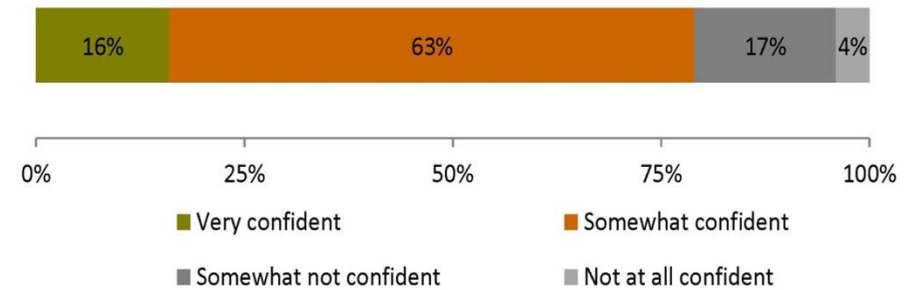
1.

How much value, if any, would providing art in public spaces (i.e.-public art) add to the quality of life in Suwanee?



2.

How confident or not confident do you feel about the long-term economic viability of the City's I-85/Lawrenceville-Suwanee business district (i.e.-Suwanee Gateway area)?





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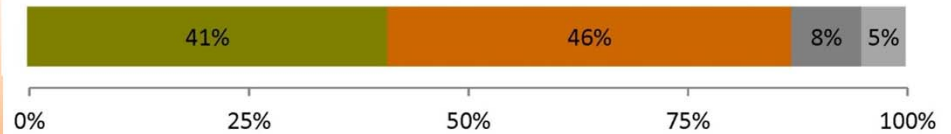
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## policy questions

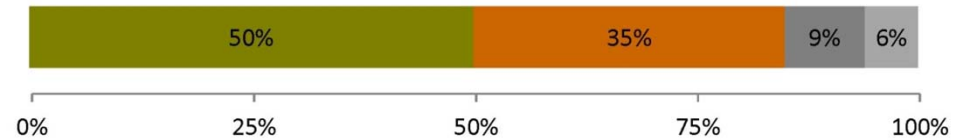
3.

Please indicate the extent to which you would support or oppose a permanent police presence in the I-85 Business District area:



4.

Please indicate the degree to which you would support or oppose the use of video camera systems for safety purposes in outdoor areas of public parks:



■ Strongly support  
 ■ Somewhat support  
 ■ Somewhat oppose  
 ■ Strongly oppose



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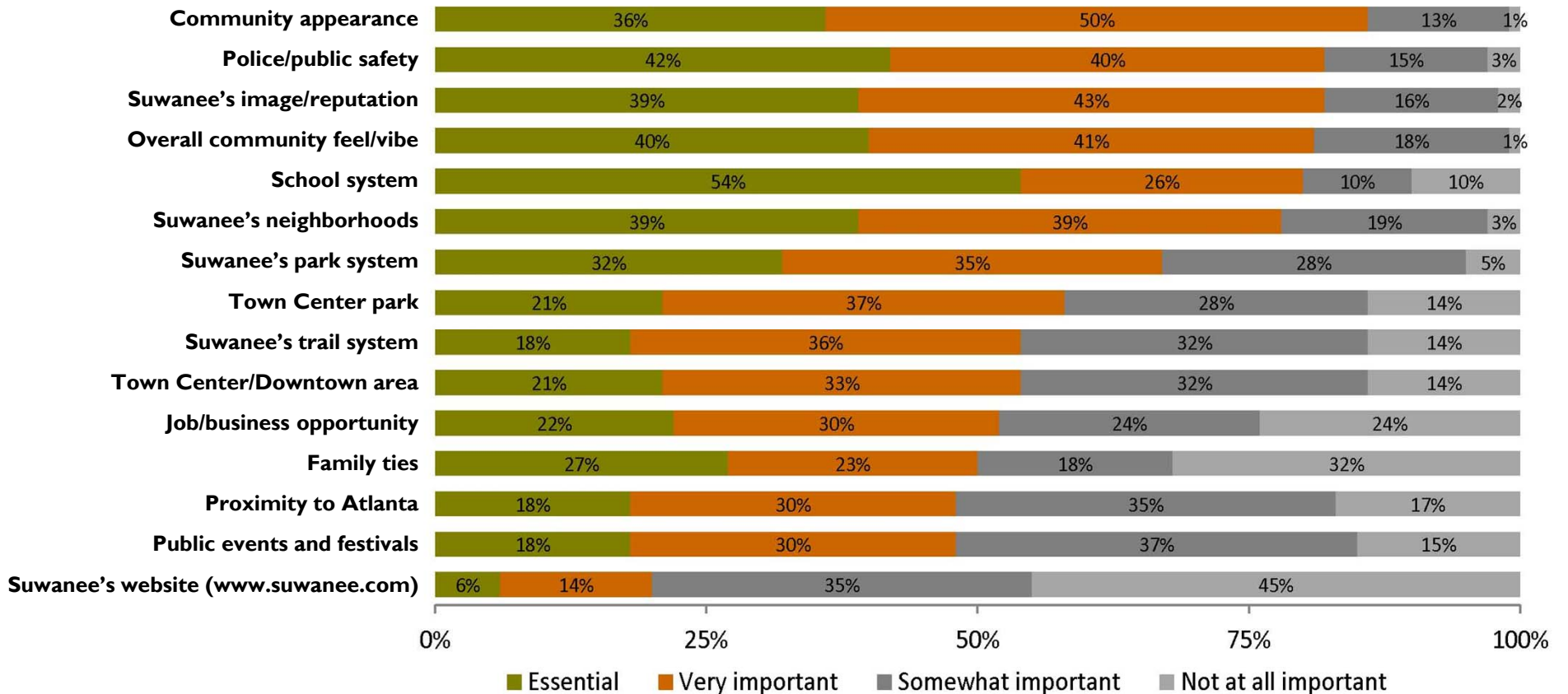
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# policy questions

5.

If you have moved to Suwanee since 2005, please rate how important, if at all, each of the following items were in your decision to select Suwanee as a place to live:







**questions?**