



**city of suwanee**

georgia

# The National Citizen Survey™

- Collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- The National Citizen Survey™ explores residents' opinions about the community and services provided by local government.
- Conducted November 2008.
- Report summarizes respondents' ratings within 8 larger categories (focus areas):
  - \* Community Quality
  - \* Community Design
  - \* Public Safety
  - \* Environmental Sustainability
  - \* Recreation and Wellness
  - \* Community Inclusiveness
  - \* Civic Engagement
  - \* Public Trust

# The National Citizen Survey™

## 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
- 351 surveys returned; 32% 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

# 8 Focus Areas

## 1. Community Quality

- **Quality of Life**, Quality of Neighborhood, Place to Live

## 2. Community Design

- **Transportation** - Ease of travel, transit services, street maintenance
- **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

## 3. Public Safety

- **Safety in neighborhood and downtown**
- **Crime victimization**
- **Police, fire, EMS services**
- **Emergency preparedness**

## 4. Environmental Sustainability

- **Cleanliness, Air quality, Preservation of natural areas**
- **Garbage and recycling services**

## Focus Areas (continued)

### 5. 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 and schools
- **Health and Wellness**
  - Availability of food, health services, social services

### 6. Community Inclusiveness

- **Sense of Community**
- **Racial and cultural acceptance**
- **Senior, youth, and low-income services**

### 7. Civic Engagement

- **Civic Activity** — Volunteerism, civic attentiveness, voting behavior
- **Social Engagement** — Neighborliness, social and religious events
- **Information and Awareness** — Public information, publications, web site

### 8. Public Trust

- **Cooperation in community**
- **Value of services**
- **Direction of community**
- **Citizen involvement**
- **Employees**

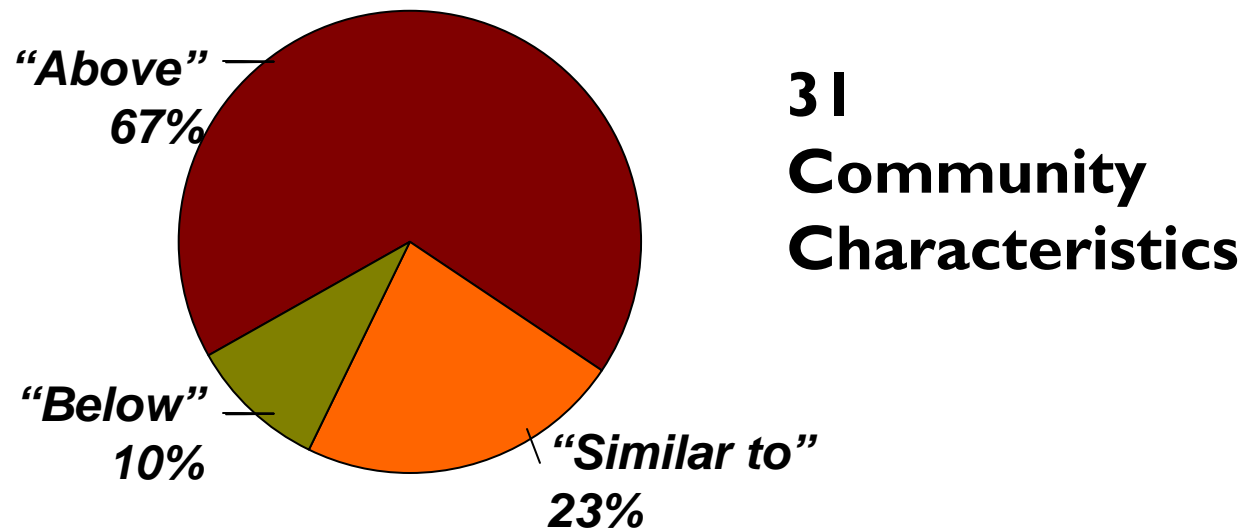
# The National Citizen Survey™

## Benchmark Comparisons

- Database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizens surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions.
- Residents evaluated local government services and gave their **opinion about the quality of community life.**
- Comparisons made to the entire database AND a subset of similar jurisdictions from the database:
  - Populations under 40,000 in the Southern region
- Evaluation of “**above,**” “**below**” or “**similar to**” comes from **a statistical comparison of the City of Suwanee’s rating to the benchmark.**

# Executive Summary

- Report provides the **opinions** of a representative sample of residents about community quality of life, service delivery, civic participation and unique issues of local interest.
- Ratings of **community characteristics** were compared to the benchmark database. Of the **31 characteristics** for which comparisons were available, **21 were “above”** the benchmark comparison, **7 were “similar to”** the benchmark comparison and **3 were “below.”**



# Executive Summary

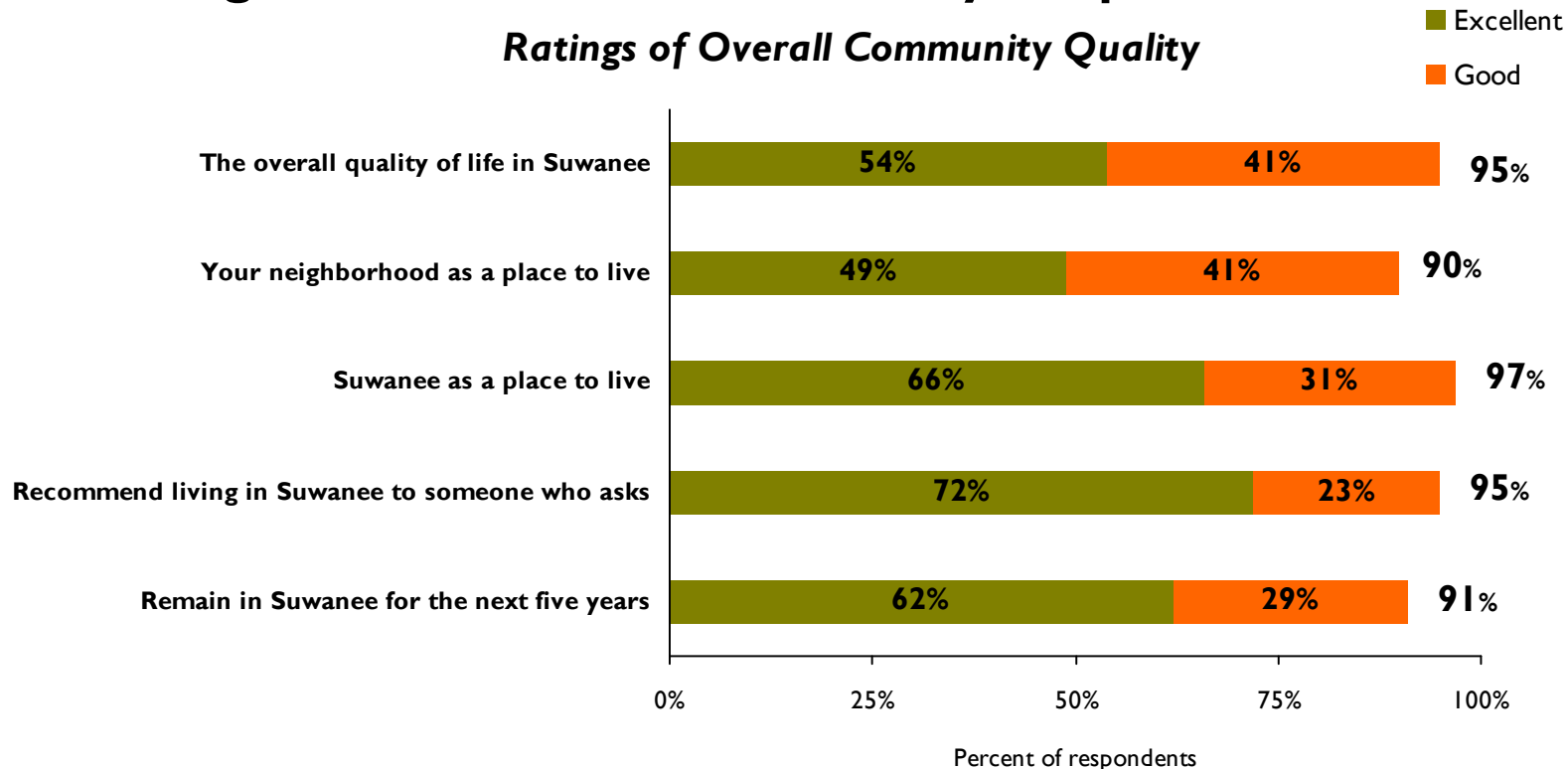
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- In general, survey respondents demonstrated **strong trust in local government.**
- **Almost all rated the overall direction being taken by the City of Suwanee as “good” or “excellent.”** This was **higher than the benchmark.**
- Those residents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



# Overall Community Quality (Category 1)

Most of the City of Suwanee's residents gave **high ratings** to their **neighborhoods** and the **community** as a **place to live**.



**For all 5 questions above, the City of Suwanee rated ABOVE the National Comparison Benchmark and ABOVE the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.**

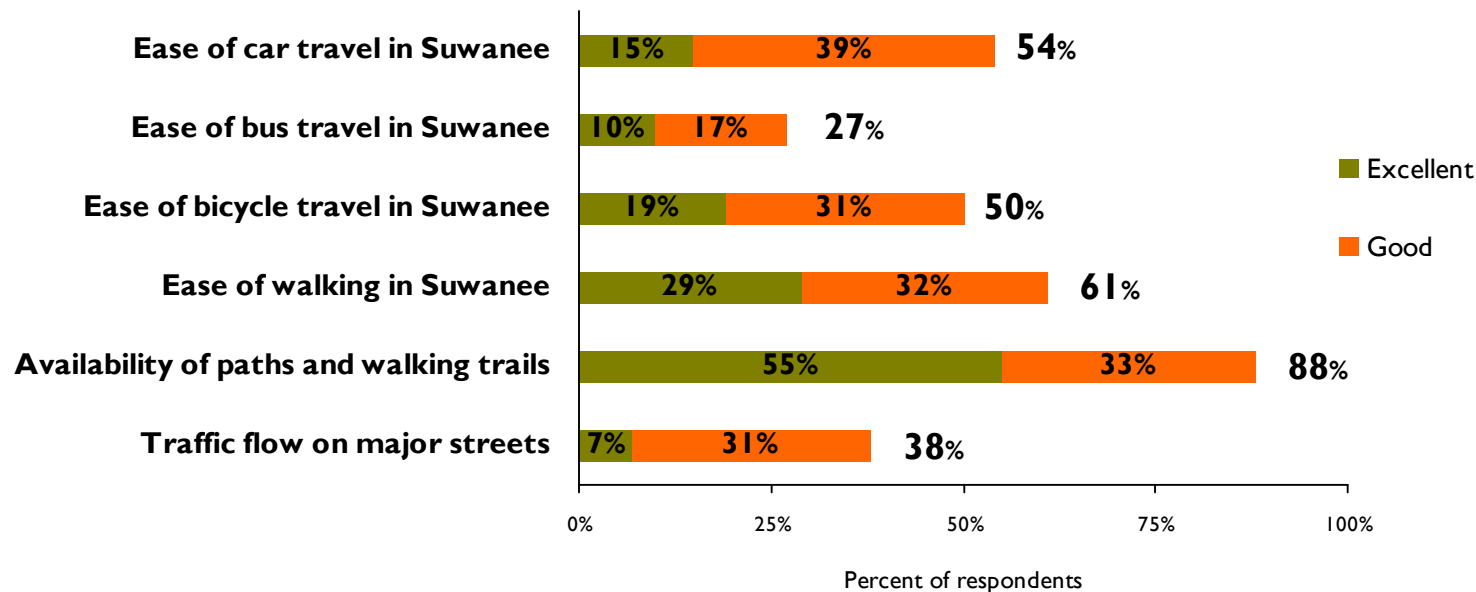
## Community Design (Category 2)

### Transportation

Residents responding to the survey were given a list of 6 aspects of mobility to rate on a scale of “excellent,” “good,” “fair” and “poor.”

**Availability of paths and walking trails was given the most positive rating**, followed by ease of bus travel in Suwanee.

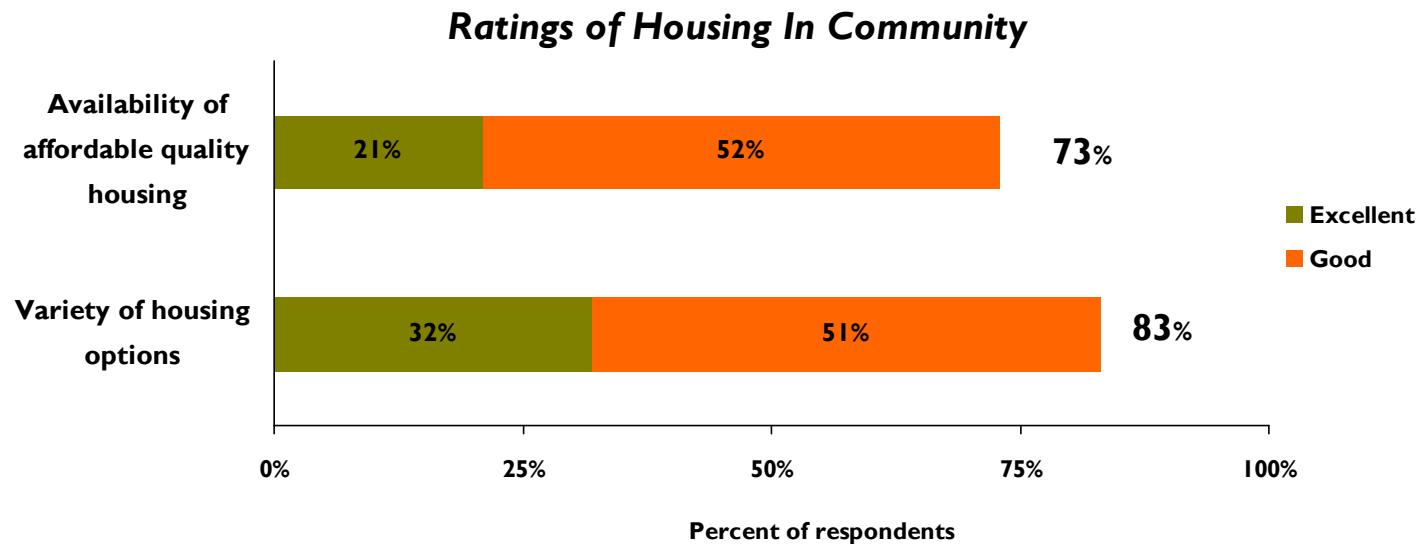
*Ratings of Transportation in Community*



The **other 5 aspects of mobility** for the City of Suwanee **rated Similar to or Below** the National Comparison Benchmark and the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.

# Community Design Housing

The survey of the City of Suwanee 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 **73%** of respondents, while the **variety** of housing options was rated as “**excellent**” or “**good**” by **83%** of the respondents.

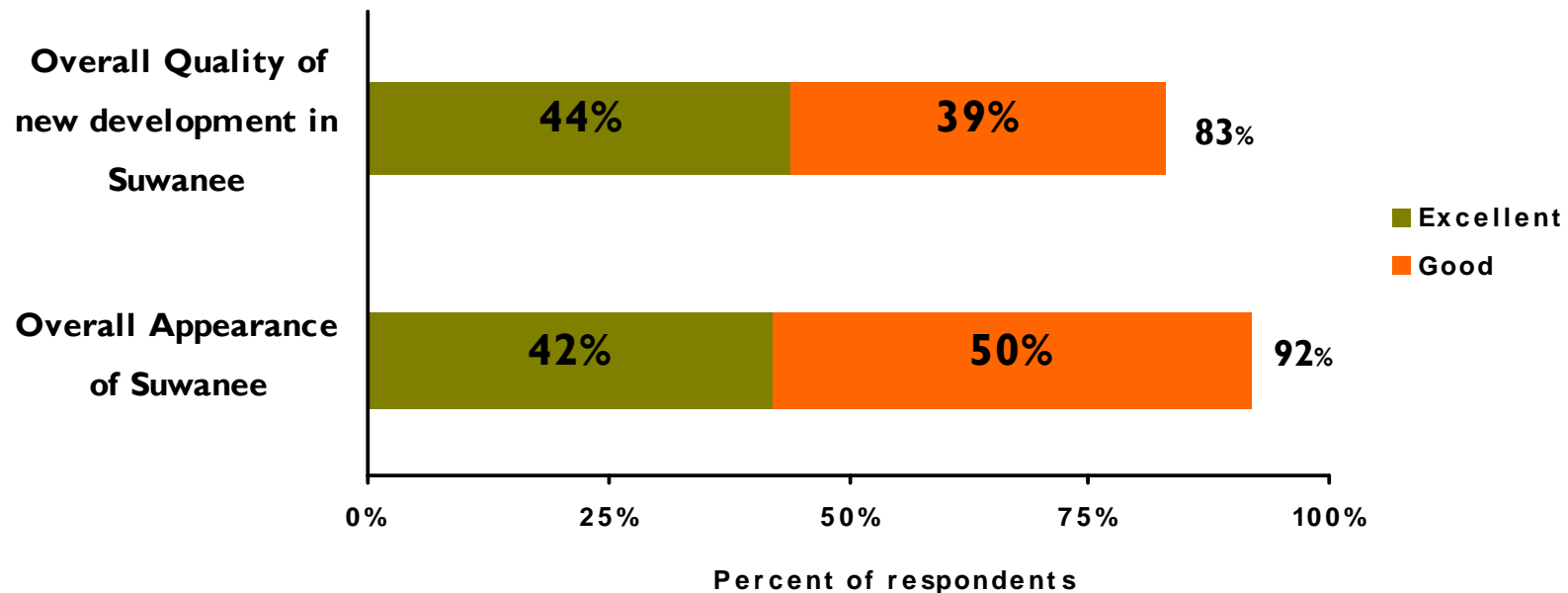


***For both questions, the City of Suwanee rated ABOVE the National Comparison Benchmark and ABOVE the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.***

# Community Design Land Use and Zoning

The overall **quality** of new development in the City of Suwanee was rated as “**excellent**” by **44%** of respondents and “**good**” by an **additional 39%**. The overall **appearance** of Suwanee was rated as “**excellent**” or “**good**” by **92%** of respondents and was higher than the benchmarks.

*Ratings of the Community's "Built Environment"*



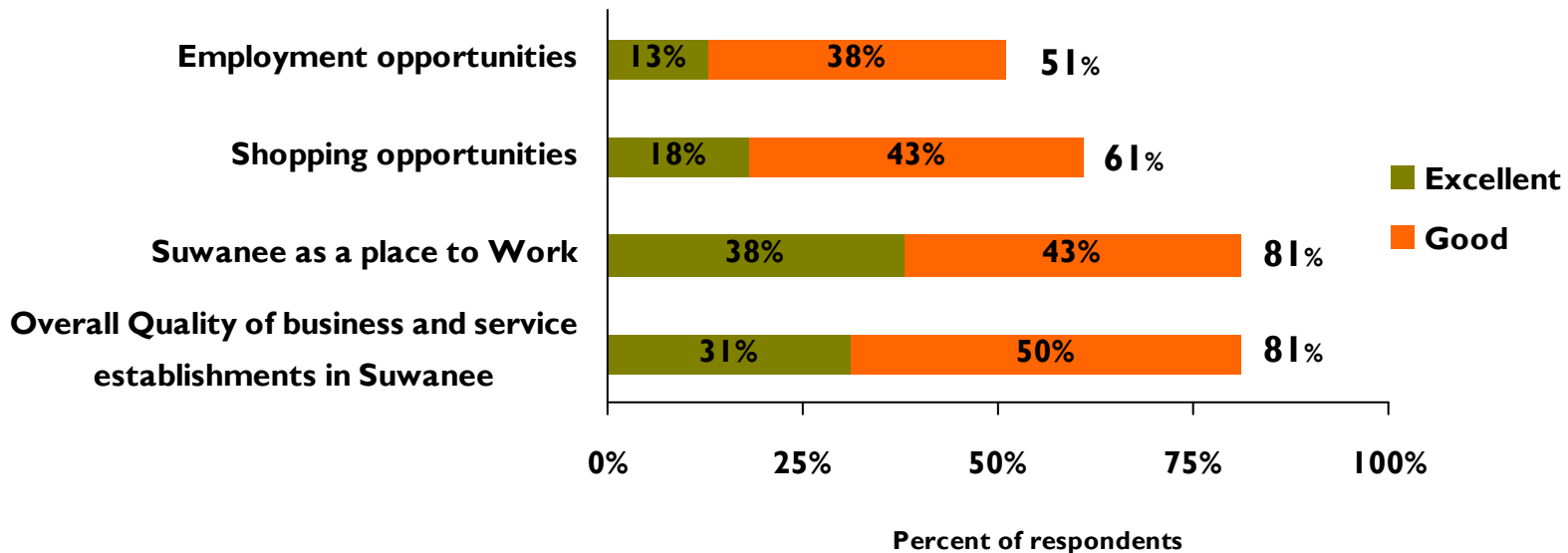
***For both questions, the City of Suwanee rated ABOVE the National Comparison Benchmark and ABOVE the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.***

# Community Design

## Economic Sustainability

Survey respondents were asked to rate a number of community features related to economic opportunity and growth. The most **positively** rated features were **Suwanee as a place to work** and overall **quality of business** and service establishments in Suwanee.

*Ratings of Economic Sustainability and Opportunities*



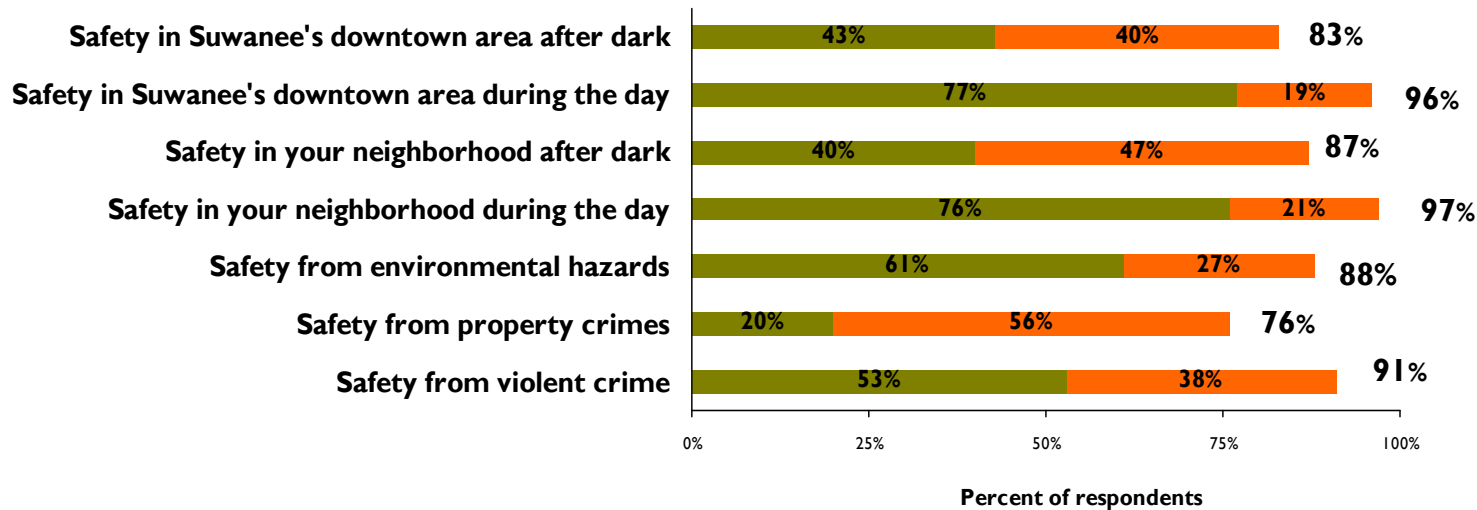
*The shopping opportunities were similar to the National Comparison, but for all other questions, the City of Suwanee rated **ABOVE** the National Comparison Benchmark and **ABOVE** the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.*

# Public Safety

## (Category 3)

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. About **91%** of those completing the questionnaire said they felt **“very” or “somewhat” safe from violent crimes** and **88%** felt **“very or “somewhat” safe from environmental hazards**.

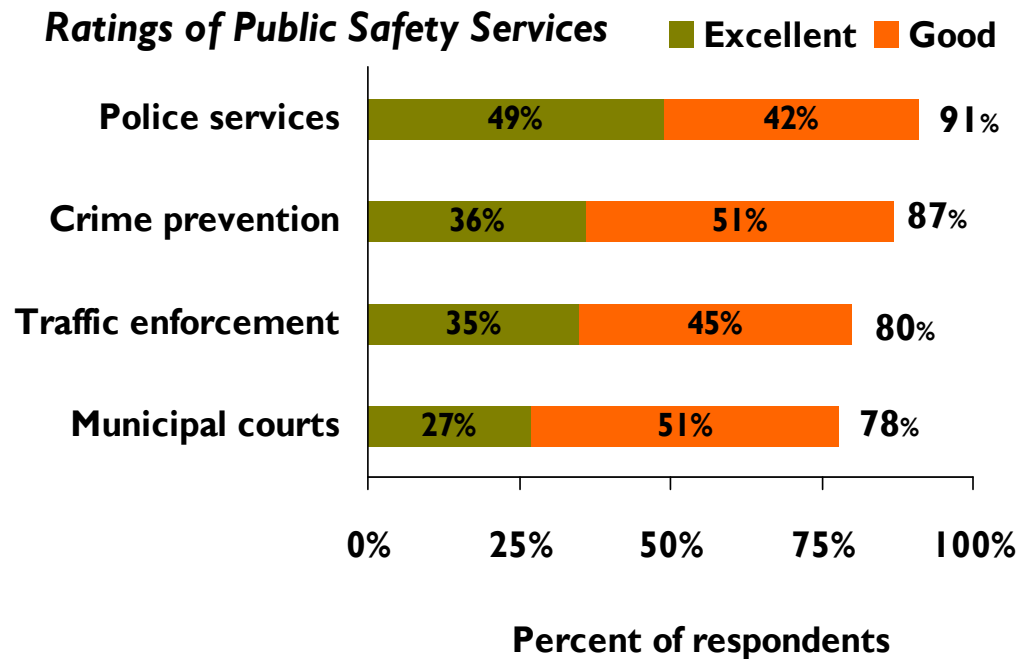
Ratings of Community and Personal Public Safety ■ Very Safe ■ Somewhat Safe



***For all 7 questions, the City of Suwanee rated ABOVE the National Comparison Benchmark and ABOVE the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.***

# Public Safety Services

Residents rated 4 City **public safety services** as follows:

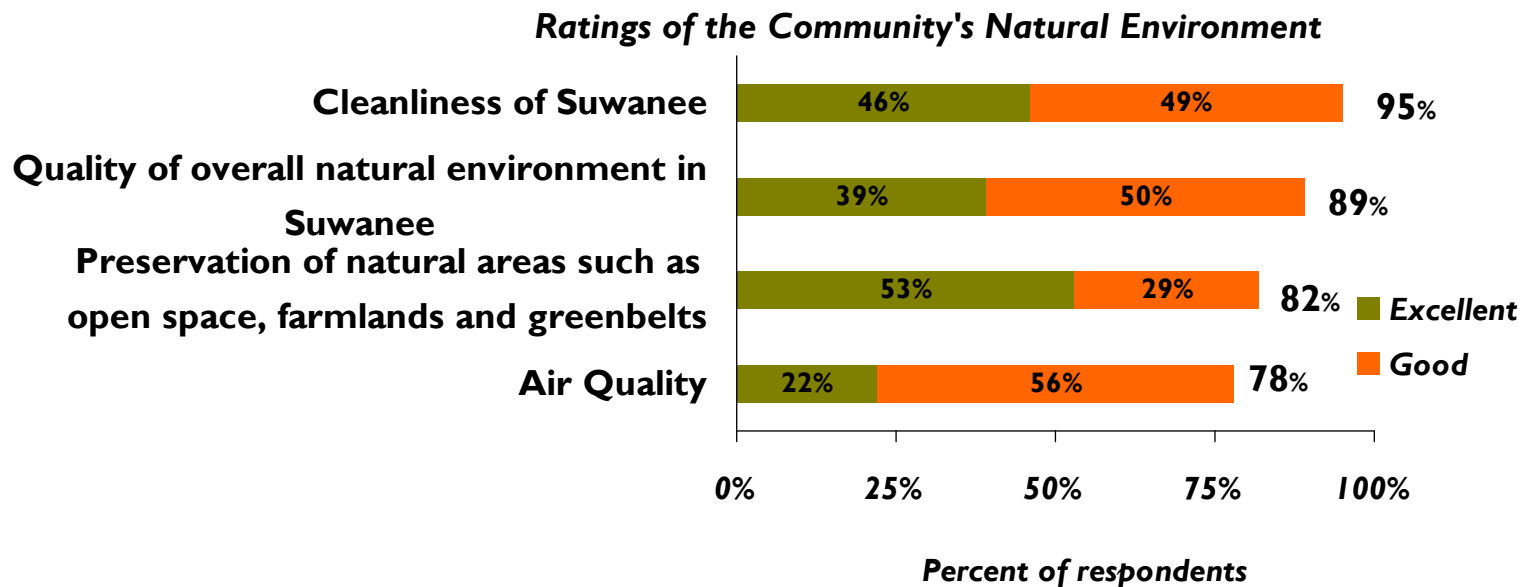


***For all 4 questions, the City of Suwanee rated ABOVE the National Comparison Benchmark and ABOVE the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.***

# Environmental Sustainability

(Category 4)

Residents of the City of Suwanee 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 89% of survey respondents.



For 3 questions, the City of Suwanee rated **ABOVE** the National Comparison Benchmark **and ABOVE** the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark. Only “Air Quality” was rated as Similar.

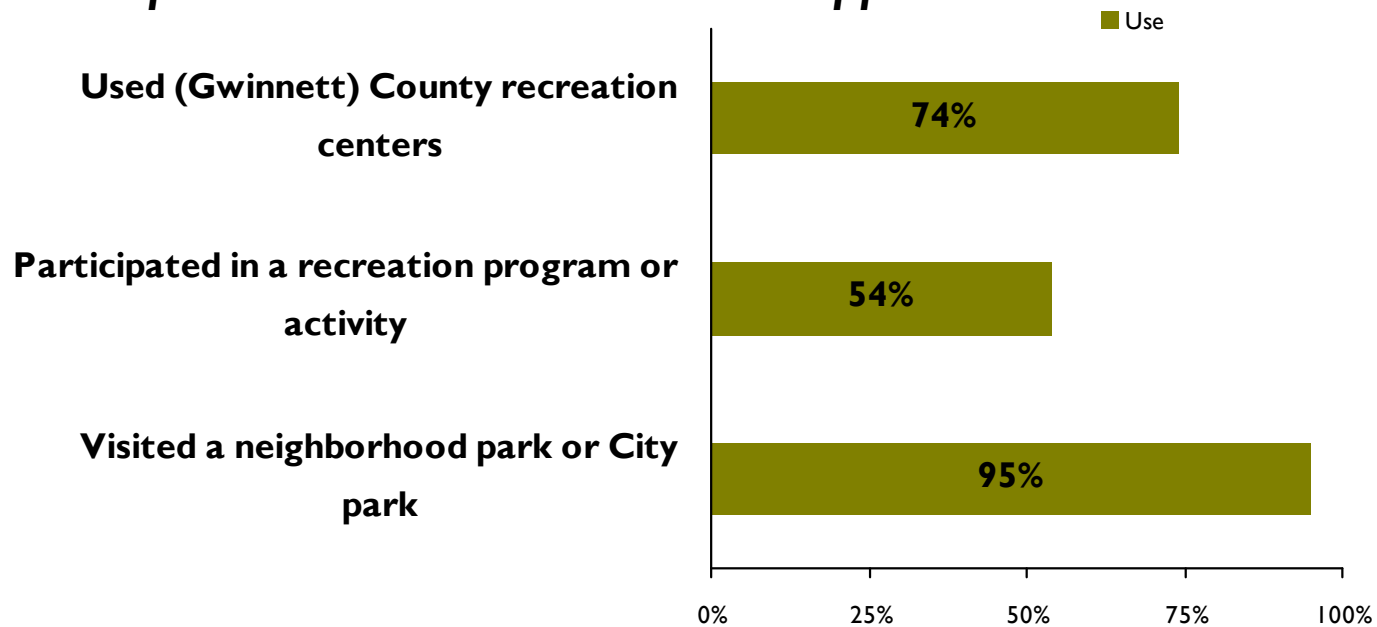


# Recreation and Wellness

(Category 5)

Residents use of **Suwanee parks and recreation facilities** tells its own story about the **attractiveness** and **accessibility** of those services. The percent of **residents that used Suwanee recreation centers** was **greater than** the percent of users in comparison jurisdictions.

## Participants in Parks and Recreation Opportunities



Percent of respondents who participated in each at least once in last 12 months

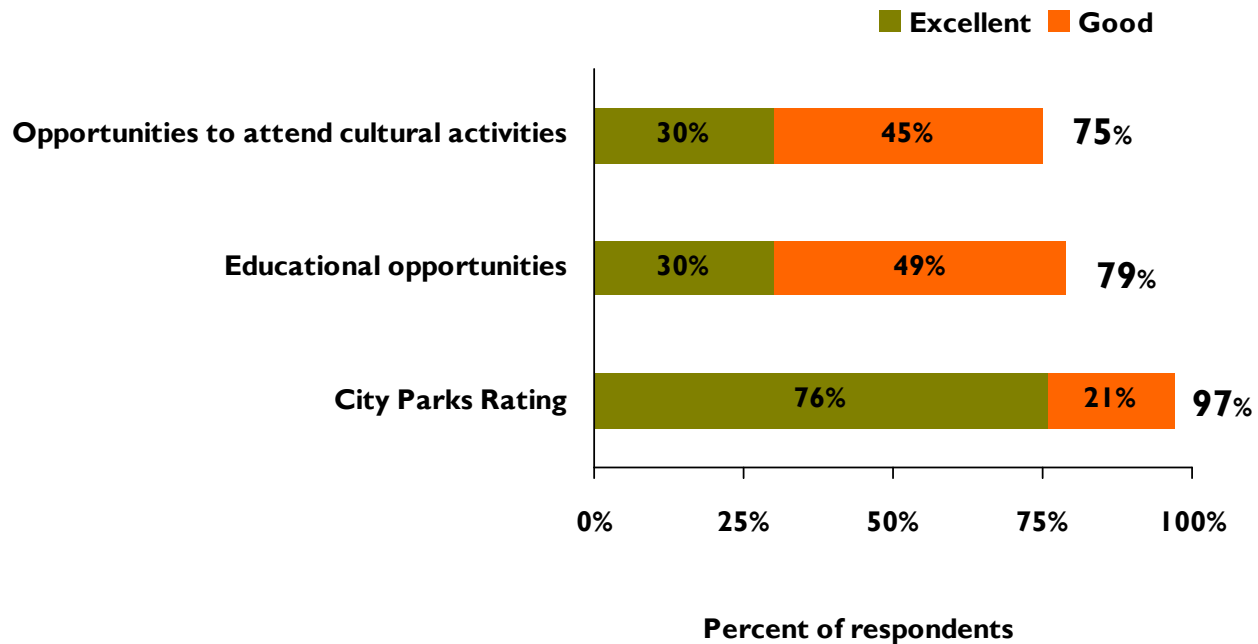
## Recreation and Wellness

# Ratings of Parks, Educational, and Cultural Opportunities

- In the survey, residents were asked about the quality of City Parks. Their response **rated City Parks as “excellent” or “good” by 97%** of respondents.
- In addition, opportunities to attend **educational opportunities** were rated as “excellent” or “good” by **79%** of respondents.
- **Cultural activities** were rated as “excellent” or “good” by **75%** of respondents.
- **All responses were ABOVE the comparison benchmarks.**

# Recreation and Wellness Ratings of Parks, Educational, and Cultural Opportunities (continued)

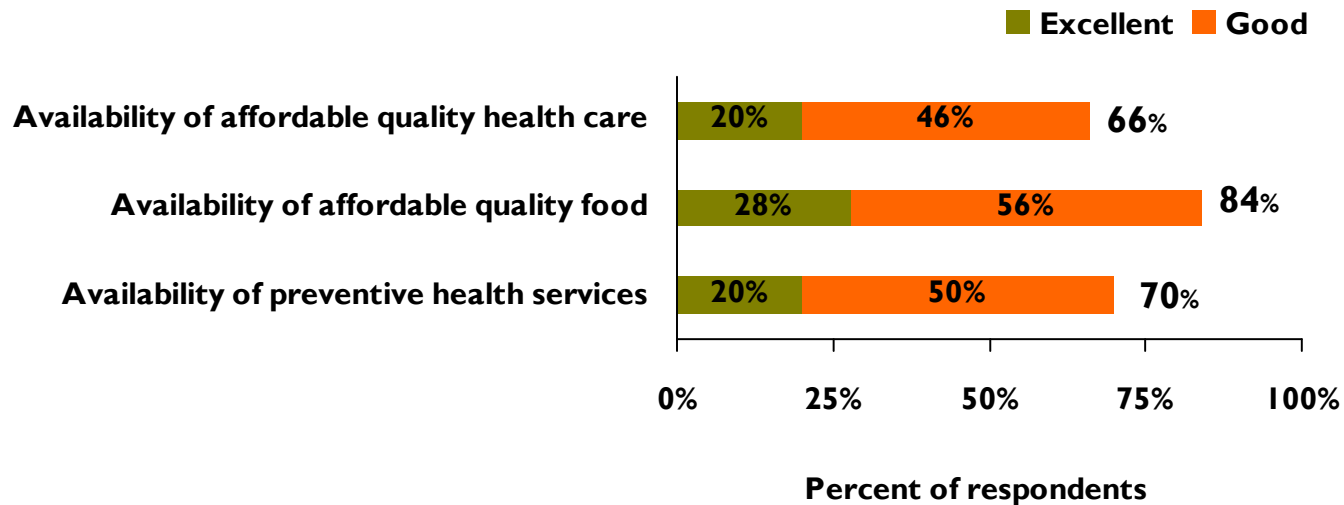
*Ratings of Parks, Educational and Cultural Opportunities*



## Recreation and Wellness Health and Wellness

Among Suwanee residents, **20%** rated affordable quality health care as “**excellent**” while **46%** rated it as “**good.**” Those ratings were **ABOVE** the ratings of **comparison communities.**

### *Ratings of Community Health and Wellness Access and Opportunities*

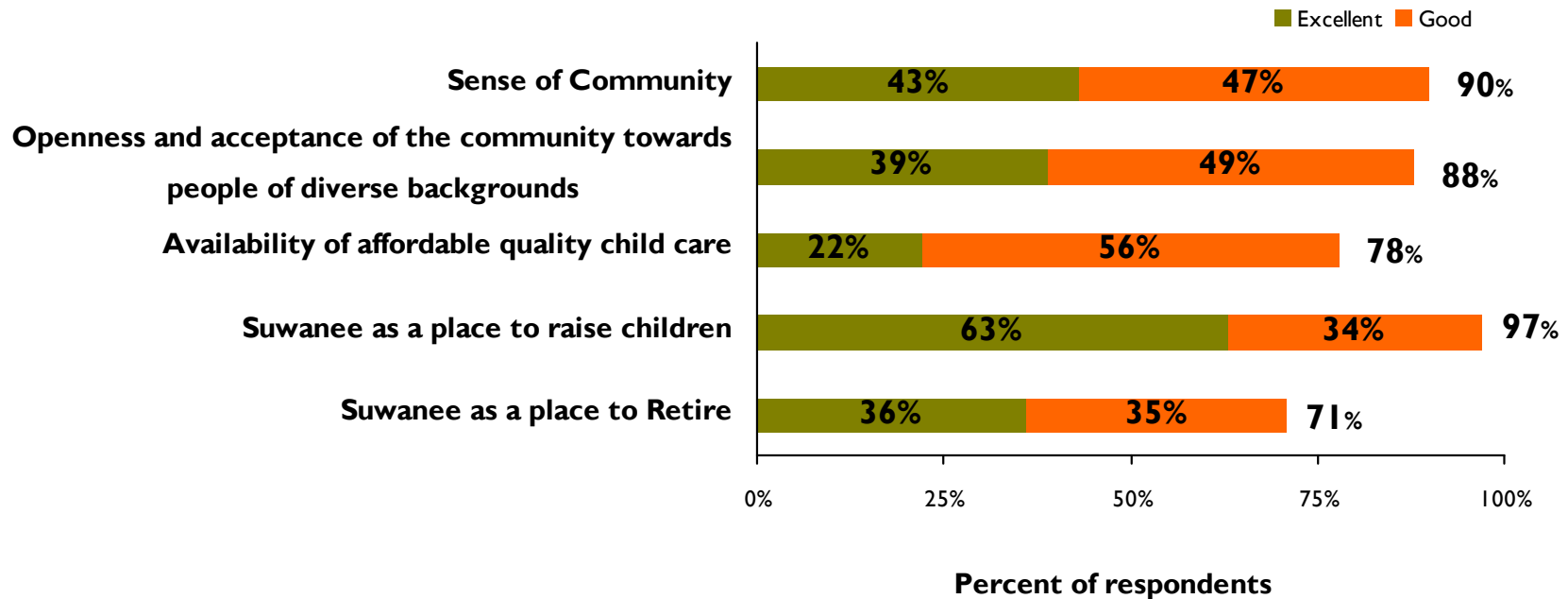


# Community Inclusiveness

(Category 6)

A high percentage of residents rated the City of Suwanee as an “excellent” or “good” place to raise kids and a moderate percentage rated it as an excellent or good place to retire. Most residents felt that the local sense of community was “excellent” or “good.”

*Ratings of Community Quality and Inclusiveness*

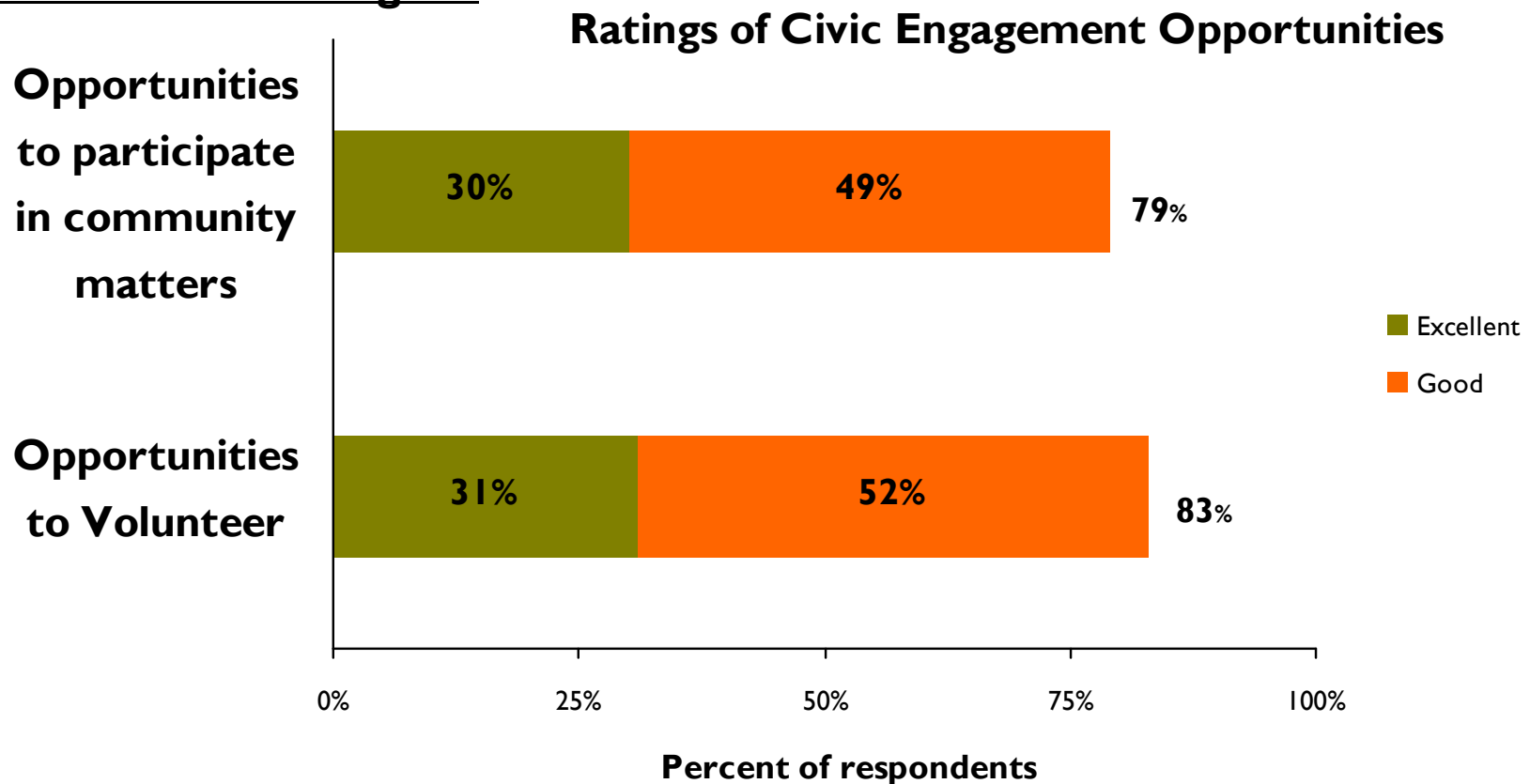


***For all 5 questions, the City of Suwanee rated ABOVE the National Comparison Benchmark and ABOVE the Populations under 40,000 in the Southern Region Comparison Benchmark.***

# Civic Engagement

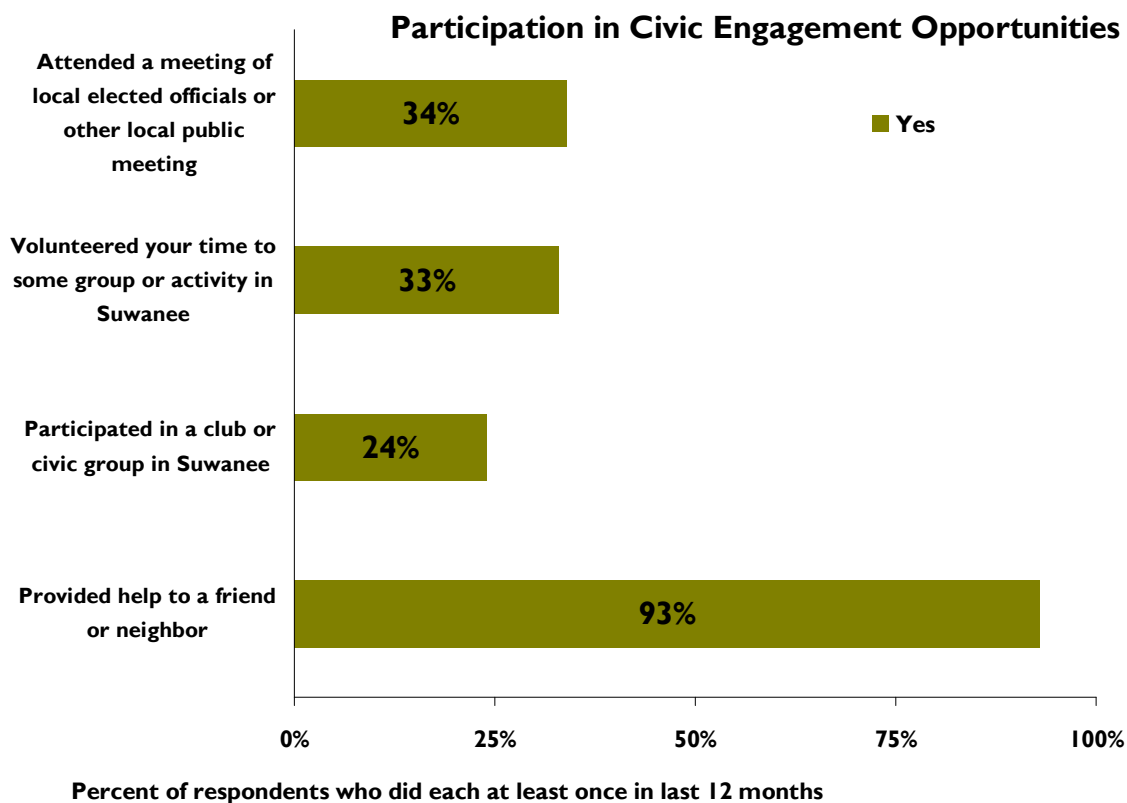
(Category 7)

- Respondents were asked about the perceived **community volunteering opportunities** and their **participation** as citizens of the City of Suwanee. Survey participants rated the volunteer opportunities in the City of Suwanee favorably.
- However, the **rating for opportunities to volunteer** was **similar** to the national comparison, but **lower when compared to population under 40,000 in the Southern region.**



# Civic Engagement

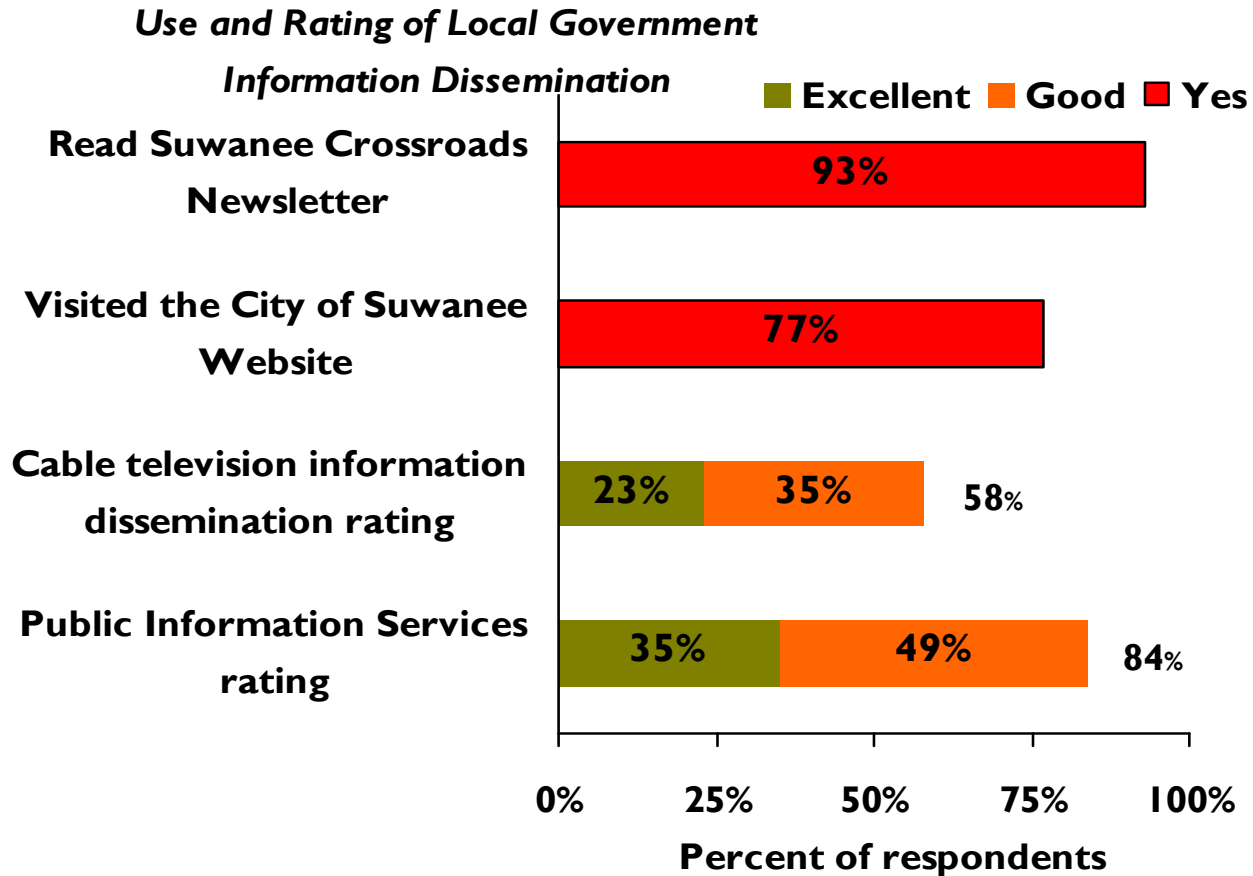
- Most participants in this survey **had not attended a public meeting**, volunteered time to a group or participated in a club in the 12 months prior, but the vast majority had helped a friend.
- **Volunteerism** in Suwanee and participation in a club or civic group in Suwanee showed **lower rates of community engagement** when compared to National and Southern region benchmarks.



# Civic Engagement

## Information and Awareness

- When asked whether they had **visited** the City of Suwanee **Website** in the previous 12 months, **77%** reported they had done so at least once.
- **Public information services** were rated **similar to or above** benchmark data.





# Public Trust

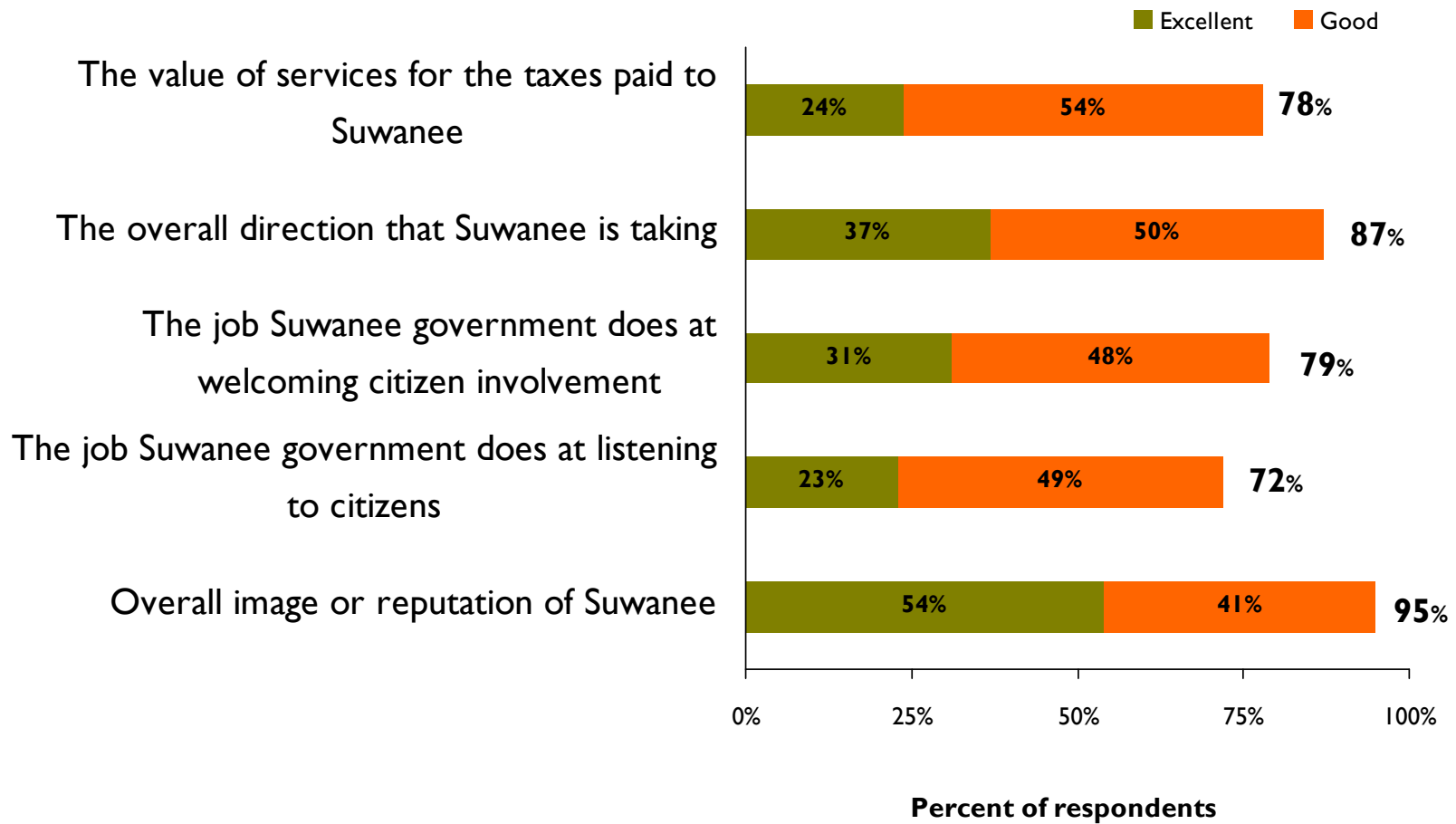
(Category 8)

- 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 Suwanee does at **listening to citizens**, **72%** rated it as **“excellent” or “good.”**
- For all 5 questions, the **ratings were ABOVE the benchmarks.**

# Public Trust

(continued)

## Public Trust Ratings



# Public Trust

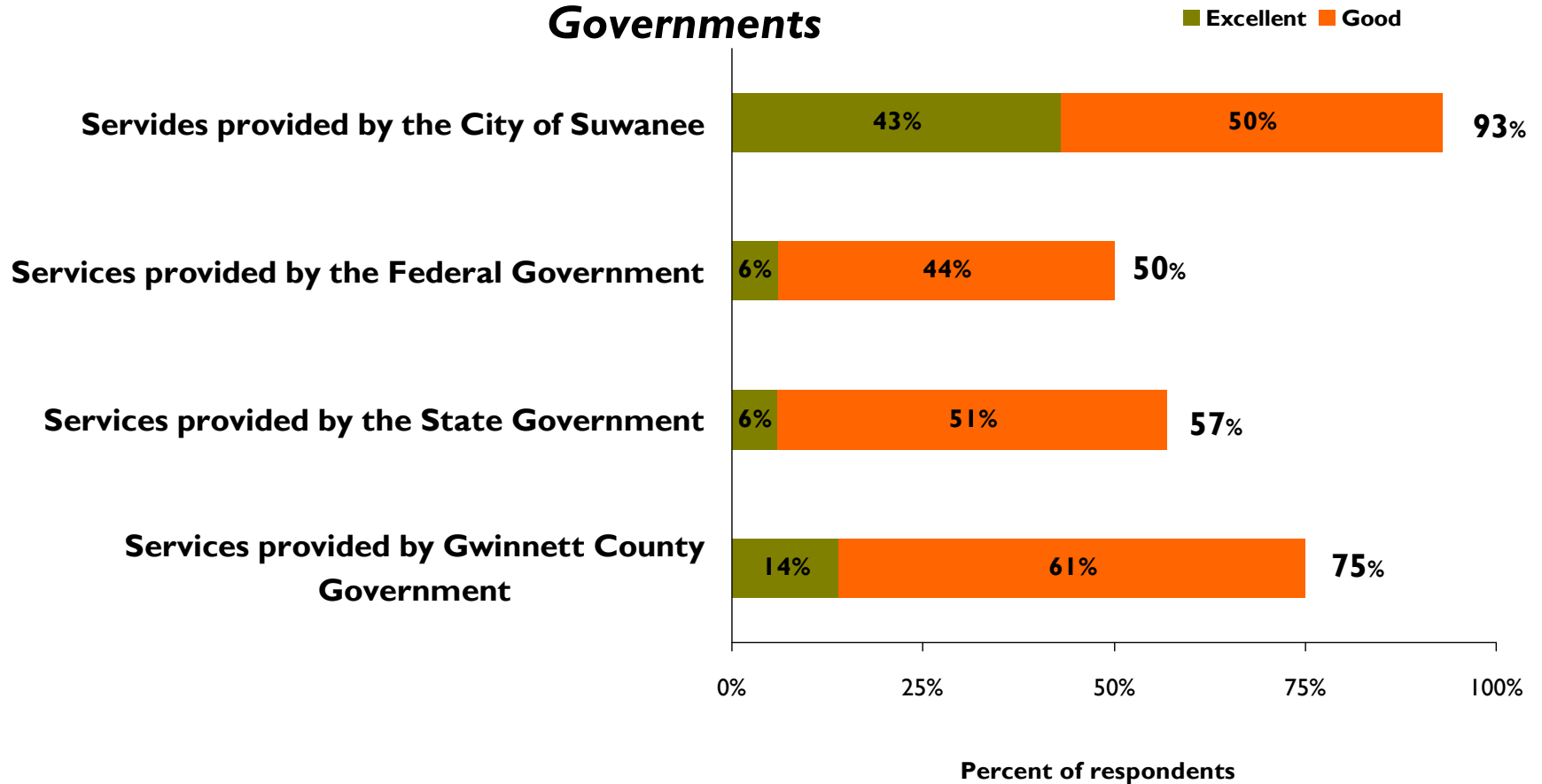
## Rating of Government

- On average, residents of the City 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 of Suwanee** was rated as “**excellent**” or “**good**” by **93%** of survey participants.
- The **City of Suwanee’s rating** was **above the benchmark** when compared to other communities.

# Public Trust

## Rating of Government (continued)

### Ratings of Services Provided by Local, State and Federal Governments



# Public Trust

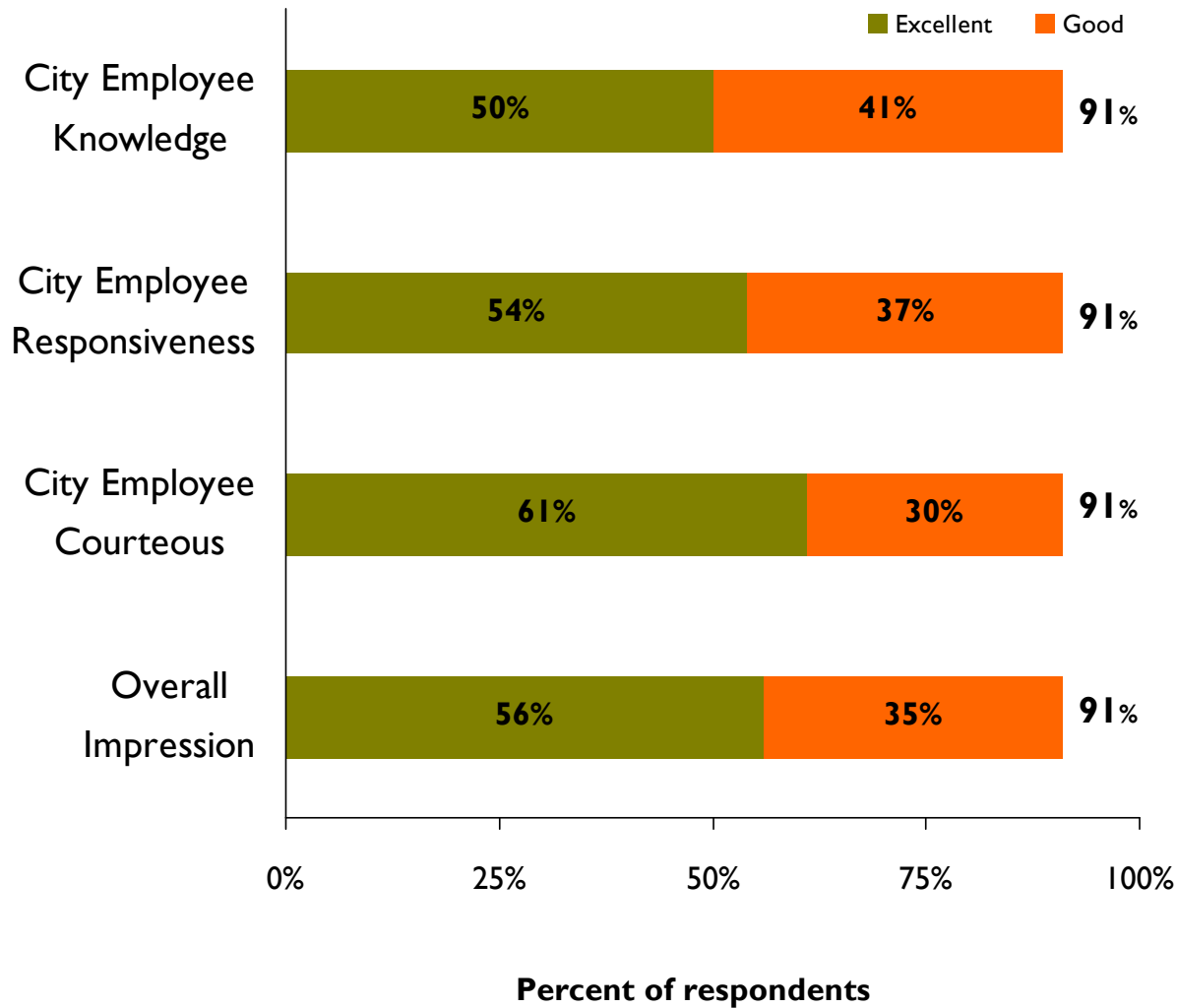
## City of Suwanee Employees

- 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 **52% who reported contact** were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact.
- **City employees were rated highly; 91%** of respondents rated their overall impression as **“excellent” or “good.”**
- **All 4 responses were ABOVE** the benchmarks for the **National comparison and the Southern region comparison.**

# Public Trust

## City of Suwanee Employees

### Proportion of Respondents who had Contact with City Employees in previous 12 months



# From Data to Action

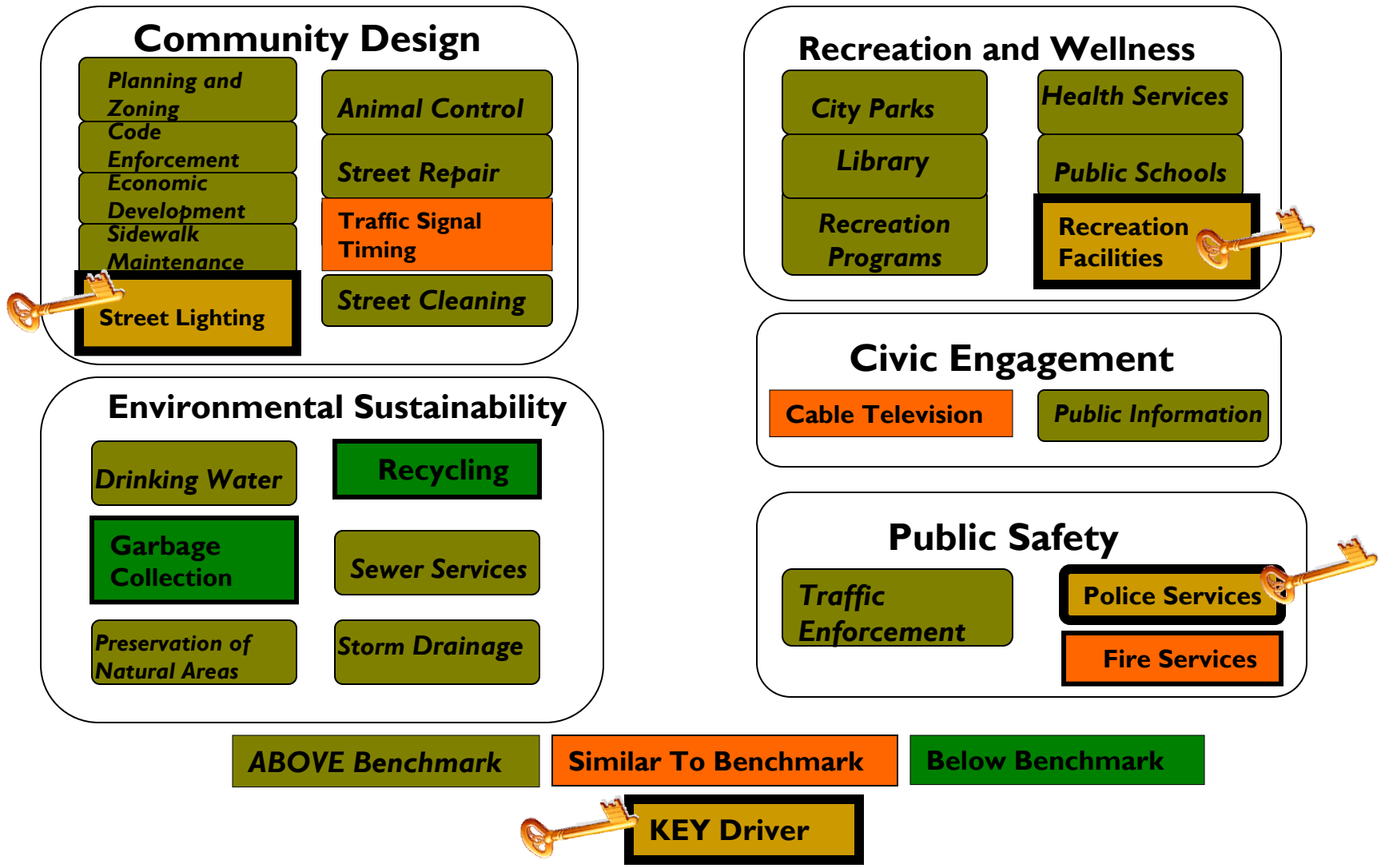
## Resident Priorities

- The **key drivers** that are **identified** from an 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**.
- A **Key Driver Analysis (KDA)** was conducted for the City of Suwanee by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the City of Suwanee's overall services.
- Those key driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall City service quality have been identified.
- Chart on following slide:

# From Data to Action

## Resident Priorities

### Overall Quality of City of Suwanee Services - ABOVE





### Policy Question 1:

**Over the past 12 months, how many *total* events have you or another household member *attended at Town Center Park?***

	Percent of Respondents
0 events	13%
1-2 events	27%
<b>3-5 events</b>	<b>37%</b>
6-10 events	15%
More than 10 events	9%
Total	100%

## Policy Question 2:

Please indicate how often, if ever, you or another household member *attended each* of the following events at Town Center Park in the last 12 months:

	Never	Once or Twice	3 or more times	Total
<b>Farmers Market</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>	16%	100%
<b>Movie(s)</b>	<b>69%</b>	25%	6%	100%
<b>Suwanee Day</b>	26%	<b>60%</b>	14%	100%
<b>Concert(s)</b>	31%	<b>38%</b>	31%	100%
<b>Other (Petapalooza, Life is good Festival, Plays, etc.)</b>	37%	<b>42%</b>	21%	100%

### Policy Question 3:

**If Suwanee were more pedestrian-friendly, how much more likely would you be to *walk to destinations* in the City?**

<b>Much more likely</b>	<b>54%</b>
Somewhat more likely	31%
Not at all more likely	15%
Total	100%

### Policy Question 4:

In an effort to reduce the number of trucks on City streets, consolidate pick-up days, increase recycling and offer yard waste pick-up, the City could consider contracting with a single hauler to provide City-wide residential trash and recycling services.

Would you:

<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>39%</b>
Somewhat support	32%
Somewhat oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	16%
Total	100%

### Policy Question 5:

**To what extent would you support or oppose the City considering contracting with a single hauler if it reduced the price you pay for trash collection?**

<b>Strongly support</b>	<b>58%</b>
Somewhat support	27%
Somewhat oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	8%
Total	100%



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