



TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MA 2010



3005 30th Street
Boulder, CO 80301
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863



777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

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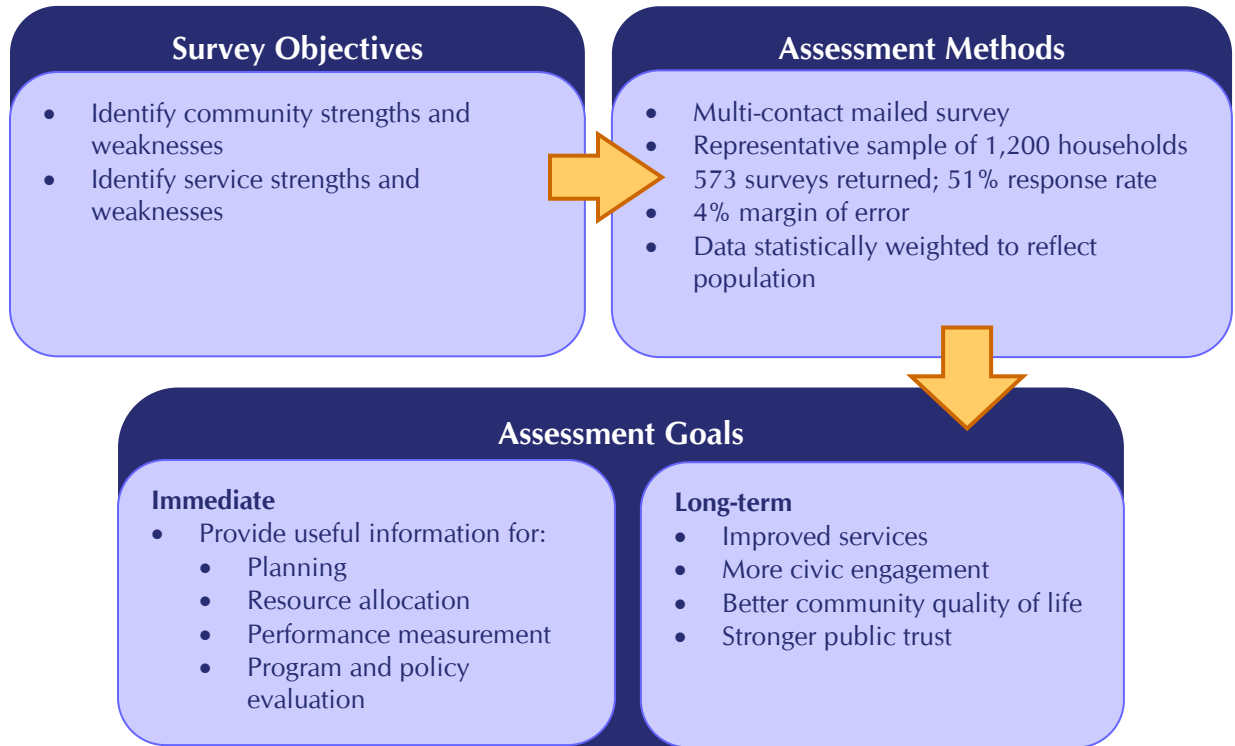
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SURVEY BACKGROUND

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.

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. Additionally, some survey recipients were given the option of completing the survey online. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community. A total of 573 completed surveys were obtained (of these 564 were received via mail and 9 were completed on the internet), providing an overall response rate of 51%. Typically, response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%. See Figure 93 for the location of survey recipients.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for the Town of Needham was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Needham staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems and provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. Town of Needham staff also augmented The National Citizen Survey™ basic service with several policy questions.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

As shown in Figure 2, this report is based around respondents' opinions about eight larger categories: community quality, community design, public safety, environmental sustainability, recreation and wellness, community inclusiveness, civic engagement and public trust. Each report 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

The margin of error around results for the Town of Needham Survey (573 completed surveys) is plus or minus four percentage points. This is a measure of the precision of your results; a larger number of completed surveys gives a smaller (more precise) margin of error, while a smaller number of surveys yields a larger margin of error. With your margin of error, you may conclude that when 60% of survey respondents report that a particular service is "excellent" or "good," somewhere between 56-64% of all residents are likely to feel that way.

Comparing Survey Results

Certain kinds of services tend to be thought better of by residents in many communities across the country. For example, public safety services tend to be received better than transportation services by residents of most American communities. Where possible, the better comparison is not from one service to another in the Town of Needham, but from Town of Needham 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 six 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 comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each jurisdiction; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. NRC adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant.

The Town of Needham chose to have comparisons made to the entire database. A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been provided when a similar question on the Town of Needham survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons for quality ratings were available, the Town of Needham results were generally noted as being “above” the benchmark, “below” the benchmark or “similar” to the benchmark. For some questions – those related to resident behavior, circumstance or to a local problem – the comparison to the benchmark is designated as “more,” “similar” or “less” (for example, the percent of crime victims, residents visiting a park or residents identifying code enforcement as a problem.) In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of “much,” (for example, “much less” or “much above”). These labels come from a statistical comparison of the Town of Needham'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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report of the Town of Needham 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.

Almost all residents experienced a good quality of life in the Town of Needham and believed the Town was a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the Town of Needham was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 96% of respondents. Almost all reported they plan on staying in the Town of Needham 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 the overall image or reputation of Needham and opportunities to attend religious or spiritual events and activities. Among the characteristics receiving the least positive ratings were the availability of affordable quality housing and employment opportunities.

Ratings of community characteristics were compared to the benchmark database. Of the 32 characteristics for which comparisons were available, 24 were above the national benchmark comparison, three were similar to the national benchmark comparison and five were below.

Residents in the Town of Needham were civically engaged. While 28% had attended a meeting of local elected public officials or other local public meeting in the previous 12 months, 94% had provided help to a friend or neighbor. A majority had volunteered their time to some group or activity in the Town of Needham, which was much higher than the benchmark.

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

On average, residents gave favorable ratings to almost all local government services. Town services rated were able to be compared to the benchmark database. Of the 33 services for which comparisons were available, 27 were above the benchmark comparison, five were similar to the benchmark comparison and only one was below.

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

- Public schools
- Police services
- Land use, planning and zoning
- Public information services
- Traffic enforcement

COMMUNITY RATINGS

OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY

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

Almost all of the Town of Needham’s residents gave high ratings to their neighborhoods and the community as a place to live. Further, most reported they would recommend the community to others and plan to stay for the next five years. Trends from 2008 to 2010 were stable.

FIGURE 3: RATINGS OF OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BY YEAR

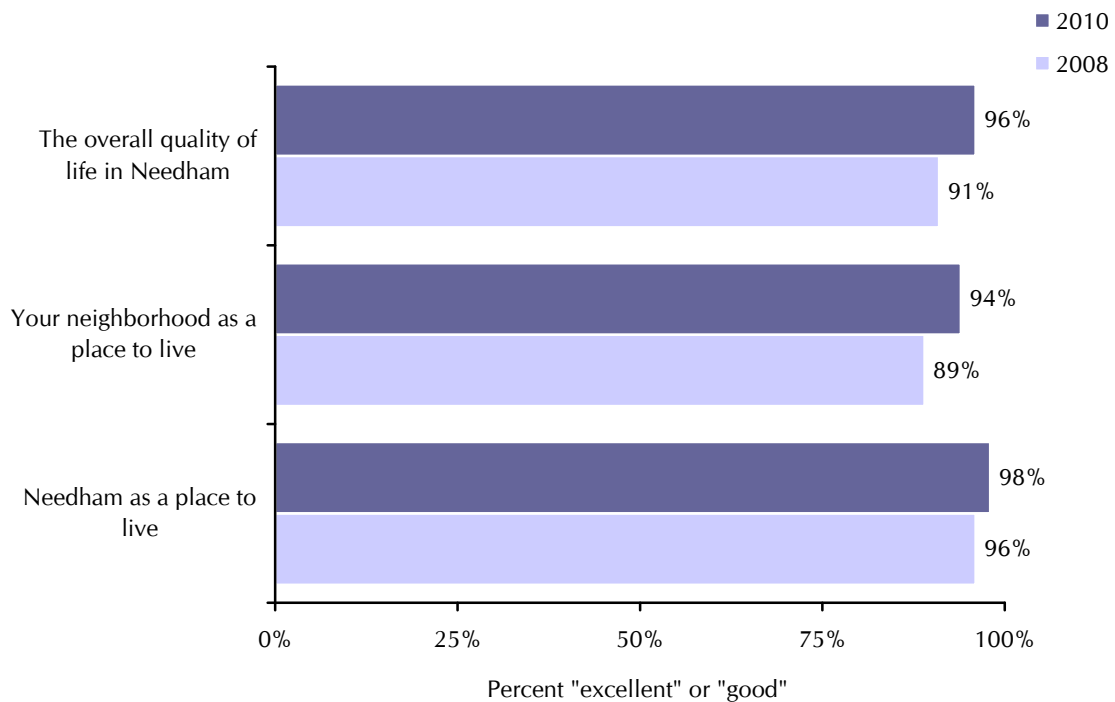


FIGURE 4: LIKELIHOOD OF REMAINING IN COMMUNITY AND RECOMMENDING COMMUNITY BY YEAR

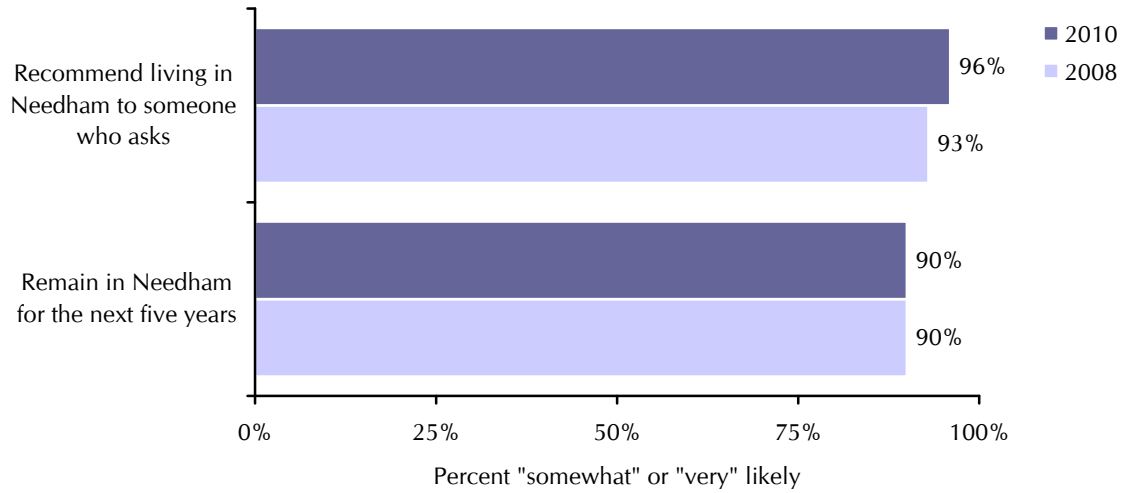


FIGURE 5: OVERALL COMMUNITY QUALITY BENCHMARKS

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

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 seven aspects of mobility to rate on a scale of "excellent," "good," "fair" and "poor." Ease of walking was given the most positive rating, followed by ease of car travel in Needham. These ratings tended to be higher than the benchmark and similar to the prior survey year. However, the rating for ease of bicycle travel in Needham had increased since 2008.

FIGURE 6: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

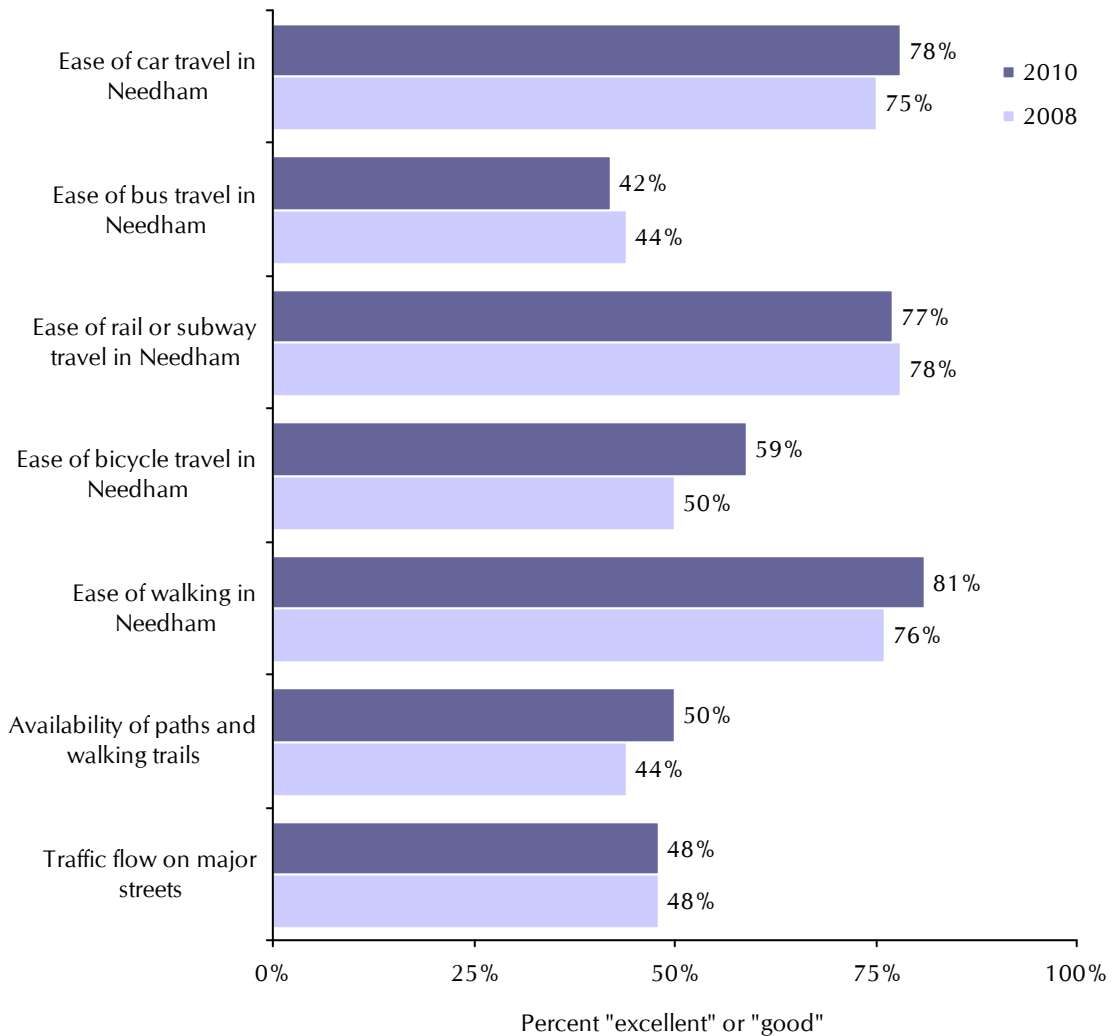


FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Ease of car travel in Needham	Much above
Ease of bus travel in Needham	Similar
Ease of rail or subway travel by in Needham	Much above
Ease of bicycle travel in Needham	Much above
Ease of walking in Needham	Much above
Availability of paths and walking trails	Below
Traffic flow on major streets	Above

Eight transportation services were rated in Needham. As compared to most communities across America, ratings tended to be favorable. Three were above the benchmark, one was below, and four were similar to the benchmark.

FIGURE 8: RATINGS OF TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BY YEAR

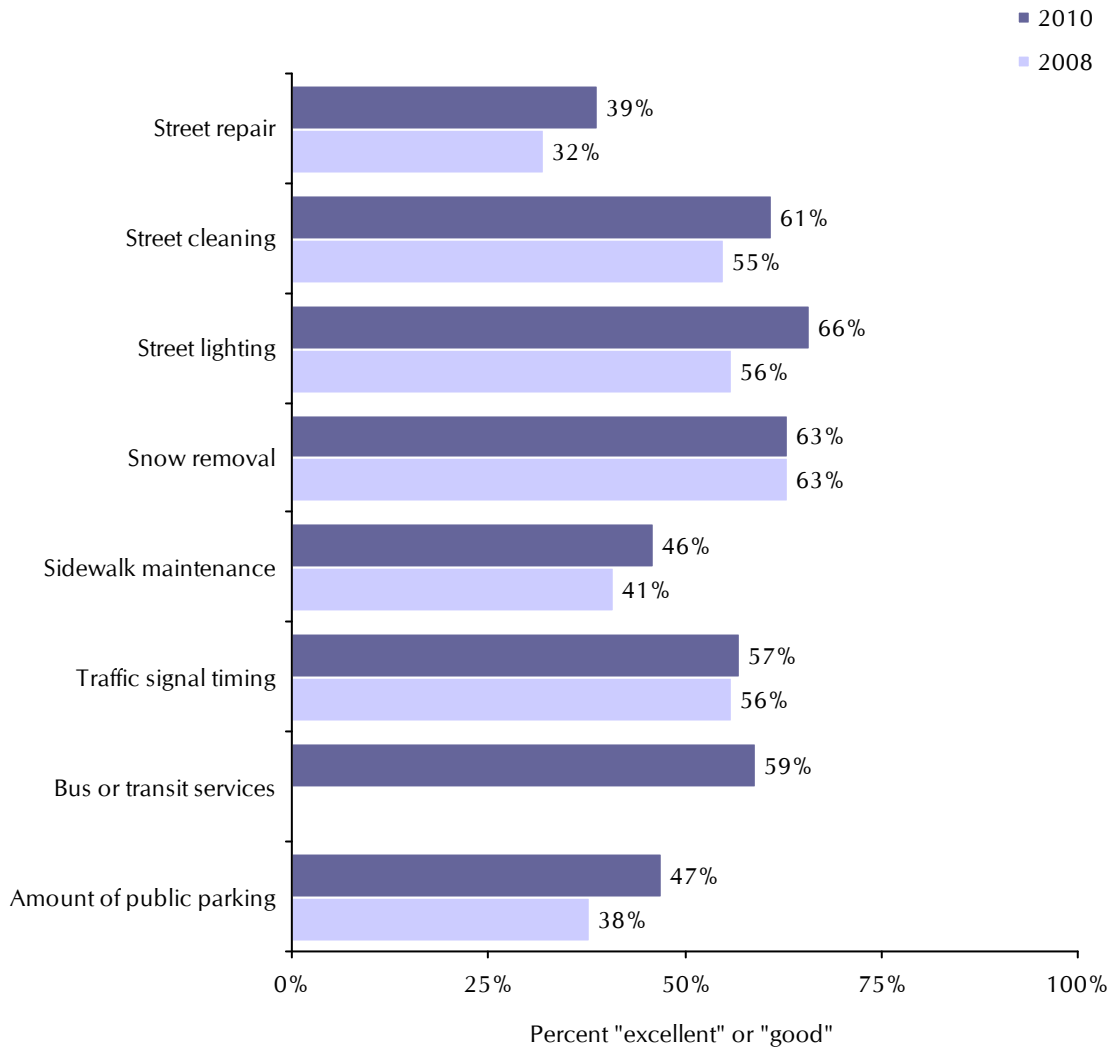


FIGURE 9: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Street repair	Similar
Street cleaning	Similar
Street lighting	Above
Snow removal	Similar
Sidewalk maintenance	Below
Traffic signal timing	Above
Bus or transit services	Much above
Amount of public parking	Similar

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, 16% of work commute trips were made by transit, 1% by bicycle and 2% by foot.

FIGURE 10: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE IN LAST 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

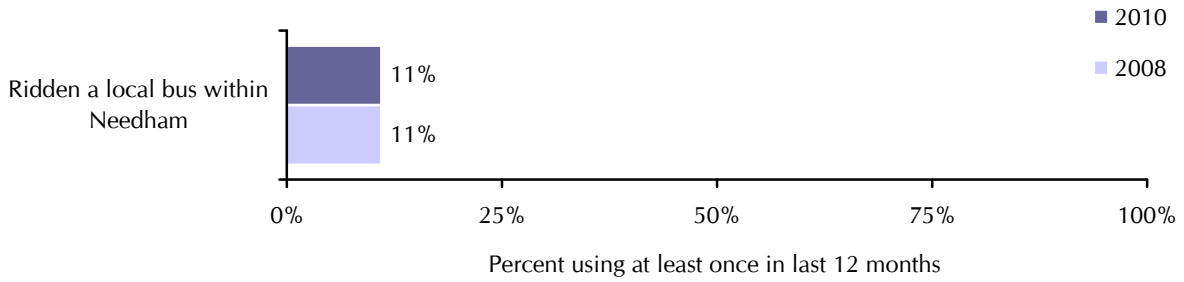


FIGURE 11: FREQUENCY OF BUS USE BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Ridden a local bus within Needham	Much less

FIGURE 12: MODE OF TRAVEL USED FOR WORK COMMUTE

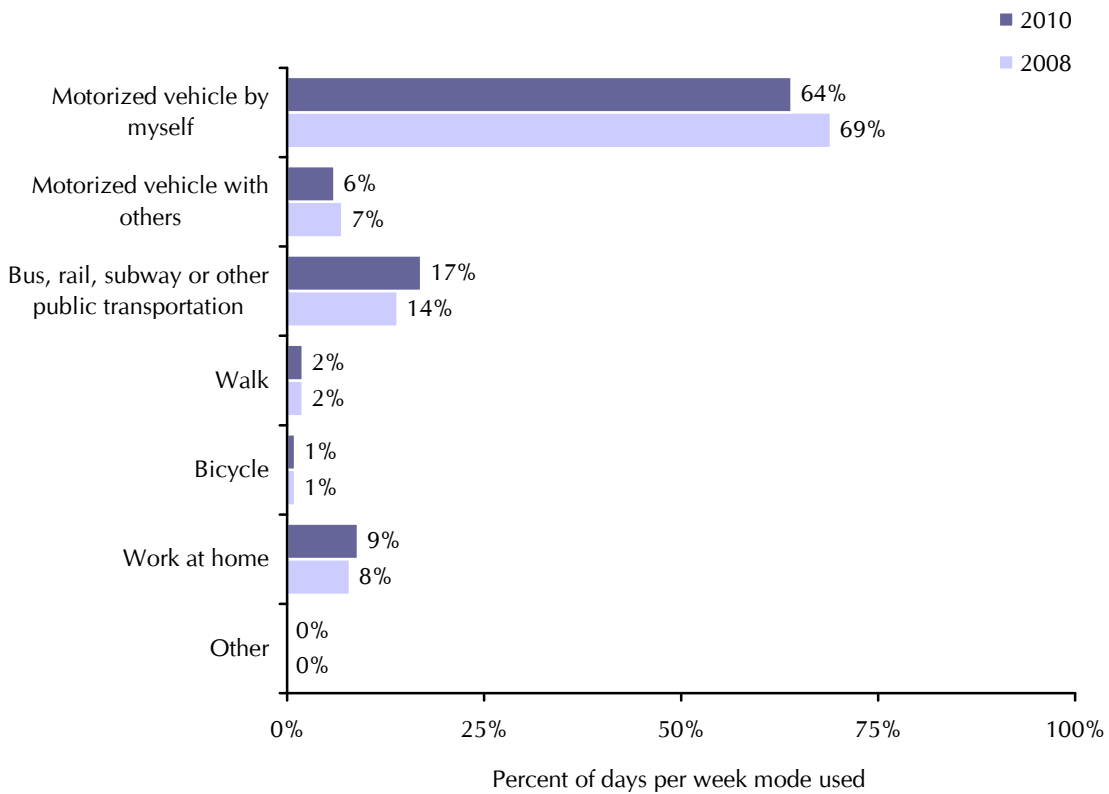


FIGURE 13: DRIVE ALONE BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Average percent of work commute trips made by driving alone	Much less

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 Town of Needham 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 29% of respondents, while the variety of housing options was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 47% of respondents. The rating of perceived affordable housing availability was worse in the Town of Needham than the ratings, on average, in comparison jurisdictions. The rating for availability of affordable quality housing had increased, while the rating for variety of housing options had remained stable over time.

FIGURE 14: RATINGS OF HOUSING IN COMMUNITY BY YEAR

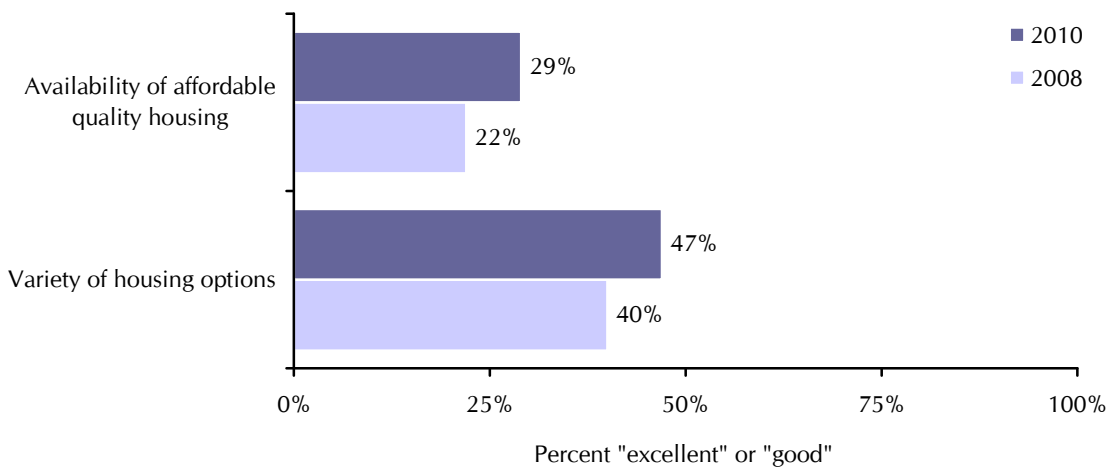


FIGURE 15: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable quality housing	Below
Variety of housing options	Much below

To augment the perceptions of affordable housing in Needham, the cost of housing as reported in the survey was compared to residents' reported monthly income to create a rough estimate of the proportion of residents of the Town of Needham experiencing housing cost stress. About 26% of survey participants were found to pay housing costs of more than 30% of their monthly household income.

FIGURE 16: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHOSE HOUSING COSTS ARE "AFFORDABLE" BY YEAR

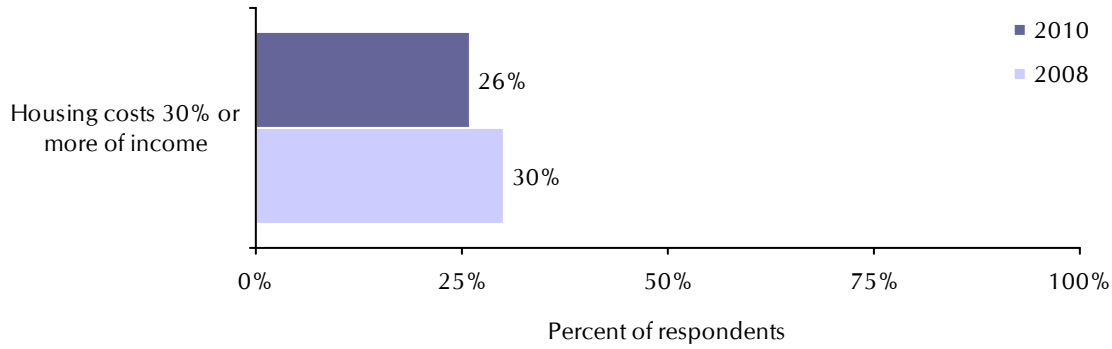


FIGURE 17: HOUSING COSTS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Experiencing housing costs stress (housing costs 30% or MORE of income)	Much less

Land Use and Zoning

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

The overall quality of new development in the Town of Needham was rated as “excellent” or ‘good” by 65% of respondents. The overall appearance of Needham was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 83% of respondents and was much higher than the benchmark. When rating to what extent run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles were a problem in the Town of Needham, 1% thought they were a “major” problem. The services of land use, planning and zoning and animal control were rated above the benchmark. 2010 ratings varied when compared to 2008.

FIGURE 18: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S "BUILT ENVIRONMENT" BY YEAR

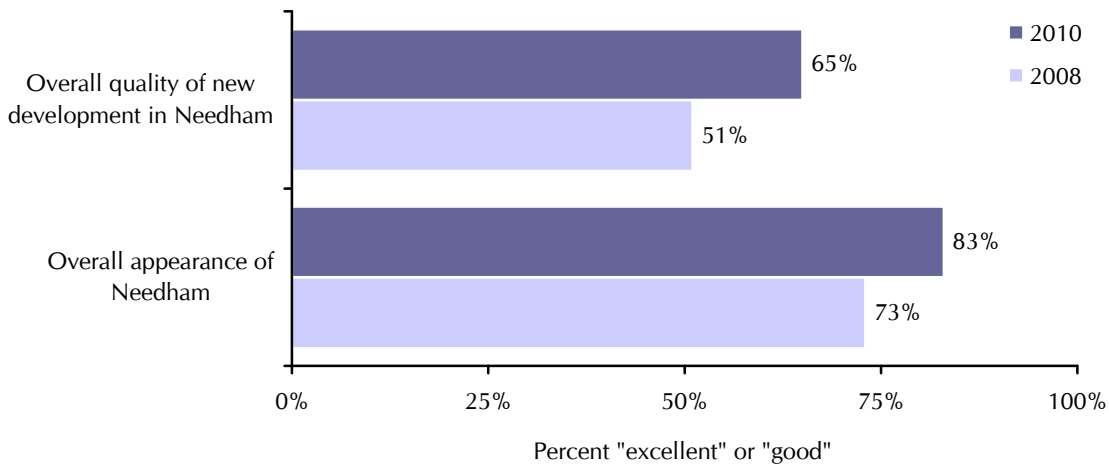


FIGURE 19: BUILT ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of new development in Needham	Above
Overall appearance of Needham	Much above

FIGURE 20: RATINGS OF POPULATION GROWTH BY YEAR

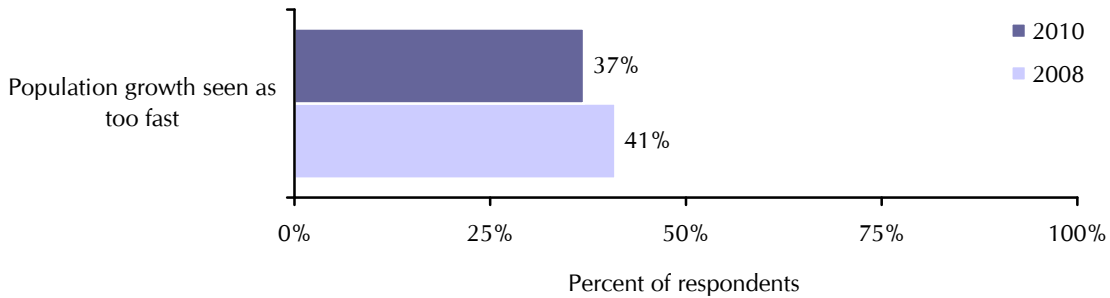


FIGURE 21: POPULATION GROWTH BENCHMARKS

Comparison to benchmark	
Population growth seen as too fast	Much less

FIGURE 22: RATINGS OF NUISANCE PROBLEMS BY YEAR

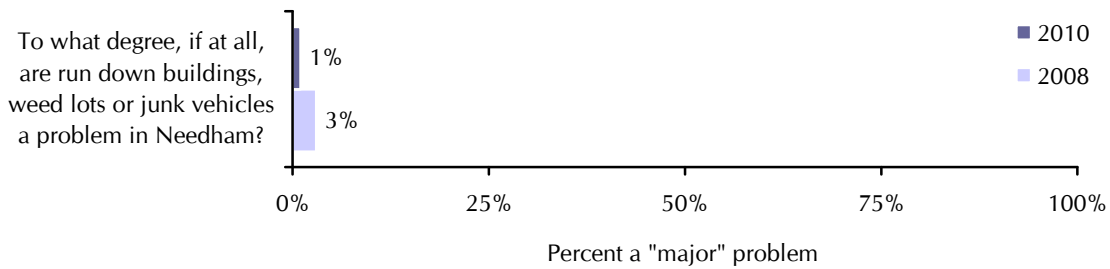


FIGURE 23: NUISANCE PROBLEMS BENCHMARKS

Comparison to benchmark	
Run down buildings, weed lots and junk vehicles seen as a "major" problem	Much less

FIGURE 24: RATINGS OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

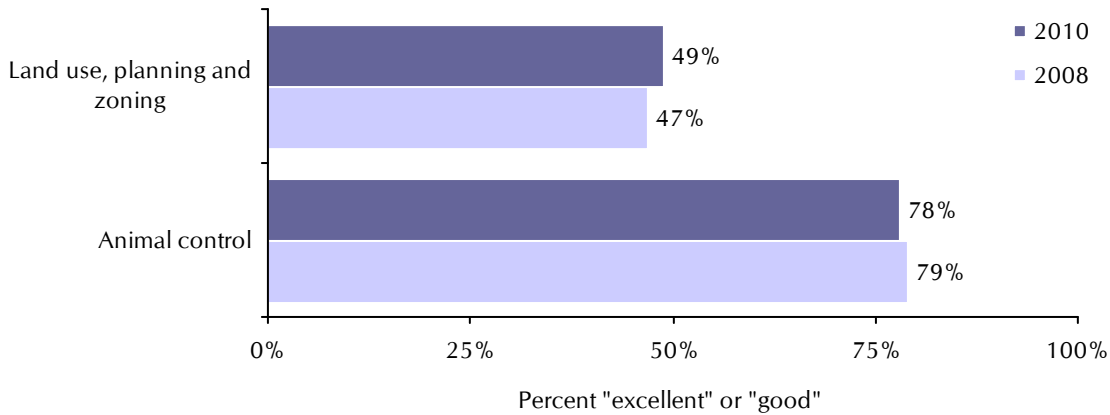


FIGURE 25: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

Comparison to benchmark	
Land use, planning and zoning	Above
Animal control	Much above

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The United States has been in recession since late 2007 with an accelerated downturn occurring in the fourth quarter of 2008. Officially we emerged from recession in the third quarter of 2009, but high unemployment lingers, keeping a lid on a strong recovery. Many readers worry that the ill health of the economy will color how residents perceive their environment and the services that local government delivers. NRC researchers have found that the economic downturn has chastened Americans' view of their own economic futures but has not colored their perspectives about community services or quality of life.

Survey respondents were asked to rate a number of community features related to economic opportunity and growth. The most positively rated features were Needham as a place to work and the overall quality of business and service establishments in Needham. Receiving the lower ratings were shopping opportunities and employment opportunities. These ratings were similar to the past survey.

FIGURE 26: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

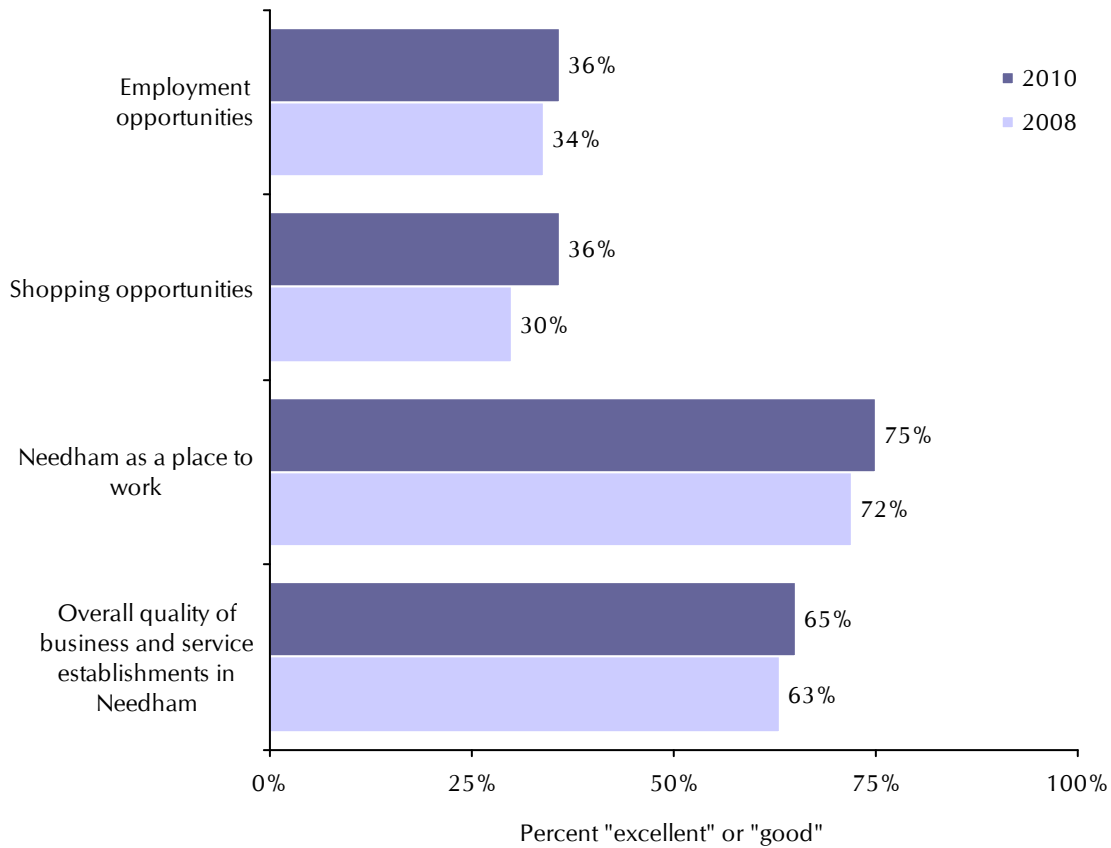


FIGURE 27: ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Employment opportunities	Above
Shopping opportunities	Much below
Needham as a place to work	Much above
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Needham	Similar

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 Needham, 66% responded that it was “too slow,” while 45% reported retail growth as “too slow.” More residents in Needham compared to other jurisdictions believed that retail growth was too slow and fewer residents believed that job growth was too slow.

FIGURE 28: RATINGS OF RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BY YEAR

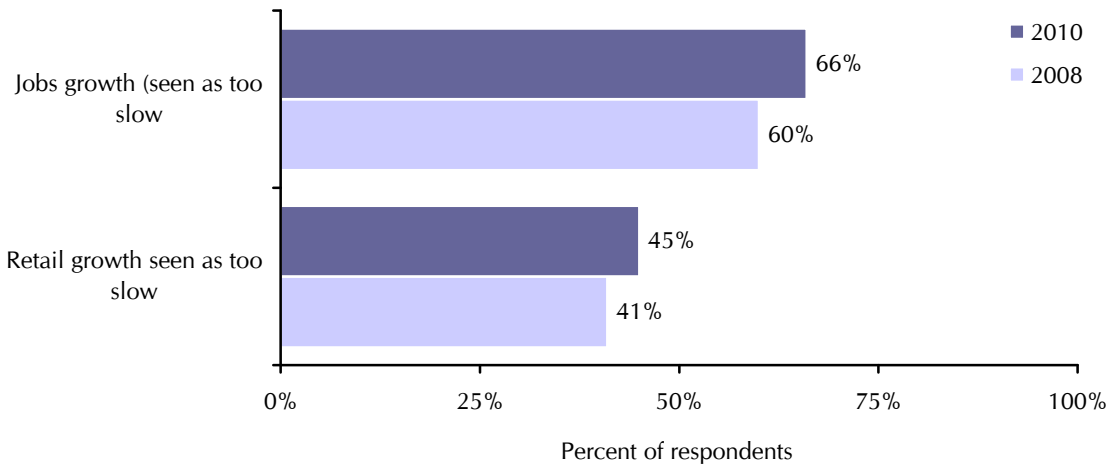


FIGURE 29: RETAIL AND JOB GROWTH BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Retail growth seen as too slow	Much more
Jobs growth seen as too slow	Much less

FIGURE 30: RATINGS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BY YEAR

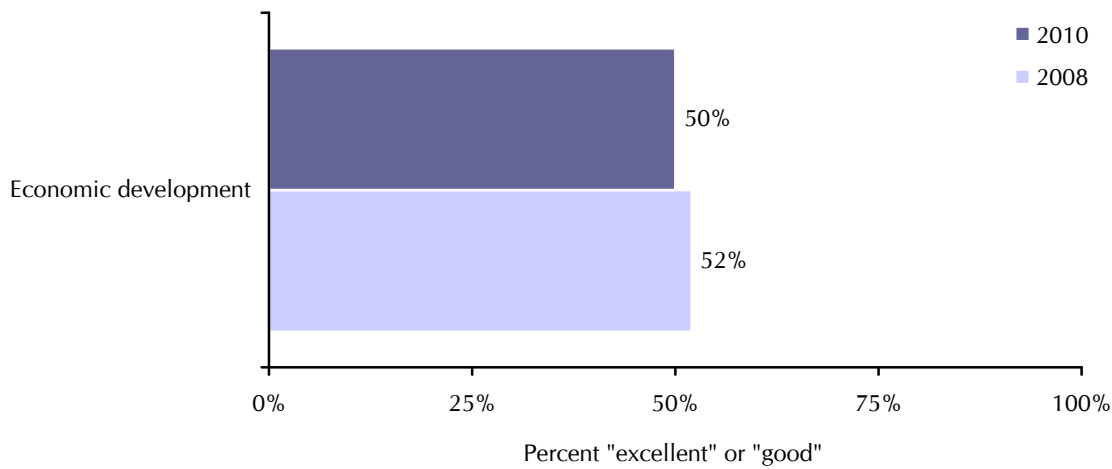


FIGURE 31: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Economic development	Above

Residents were asked to reflect on their economic prospects in the near term. Sixteen percent of the Town of Needham 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 32: RATINGS OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BY YEAR

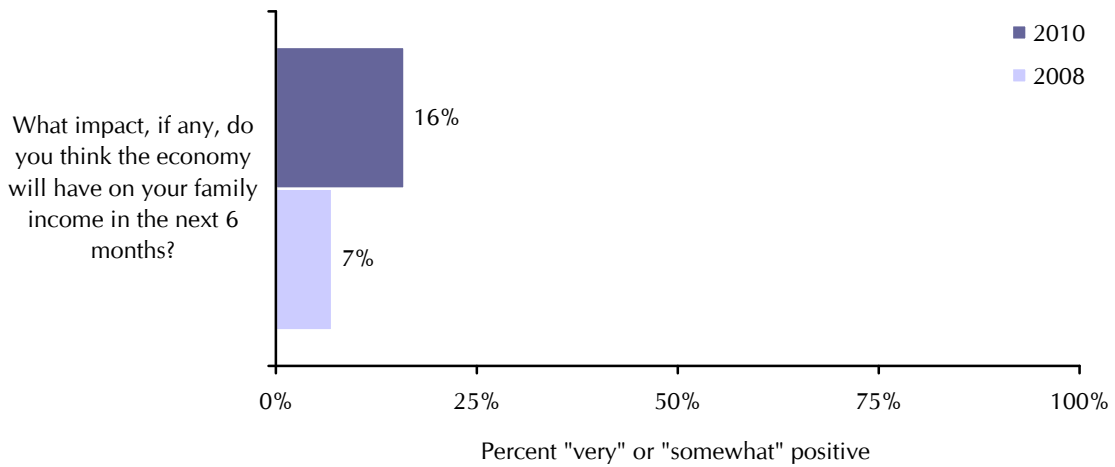


FIGURE 33: PERSONAL ECONOMIC FUTURE BENCHMARKS

Comparison to benchmark	
Positive impact of economy on household income	Similar

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. Almost all gave positive ratings of safety in the Town Needham. About 95% percent of those completing the questionnaire said they felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from violent crimes and 86% felt “very” or “somewhat” safe from environmental hazards. These ratings were stable over time.

FIGURE 34: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BY YEAR

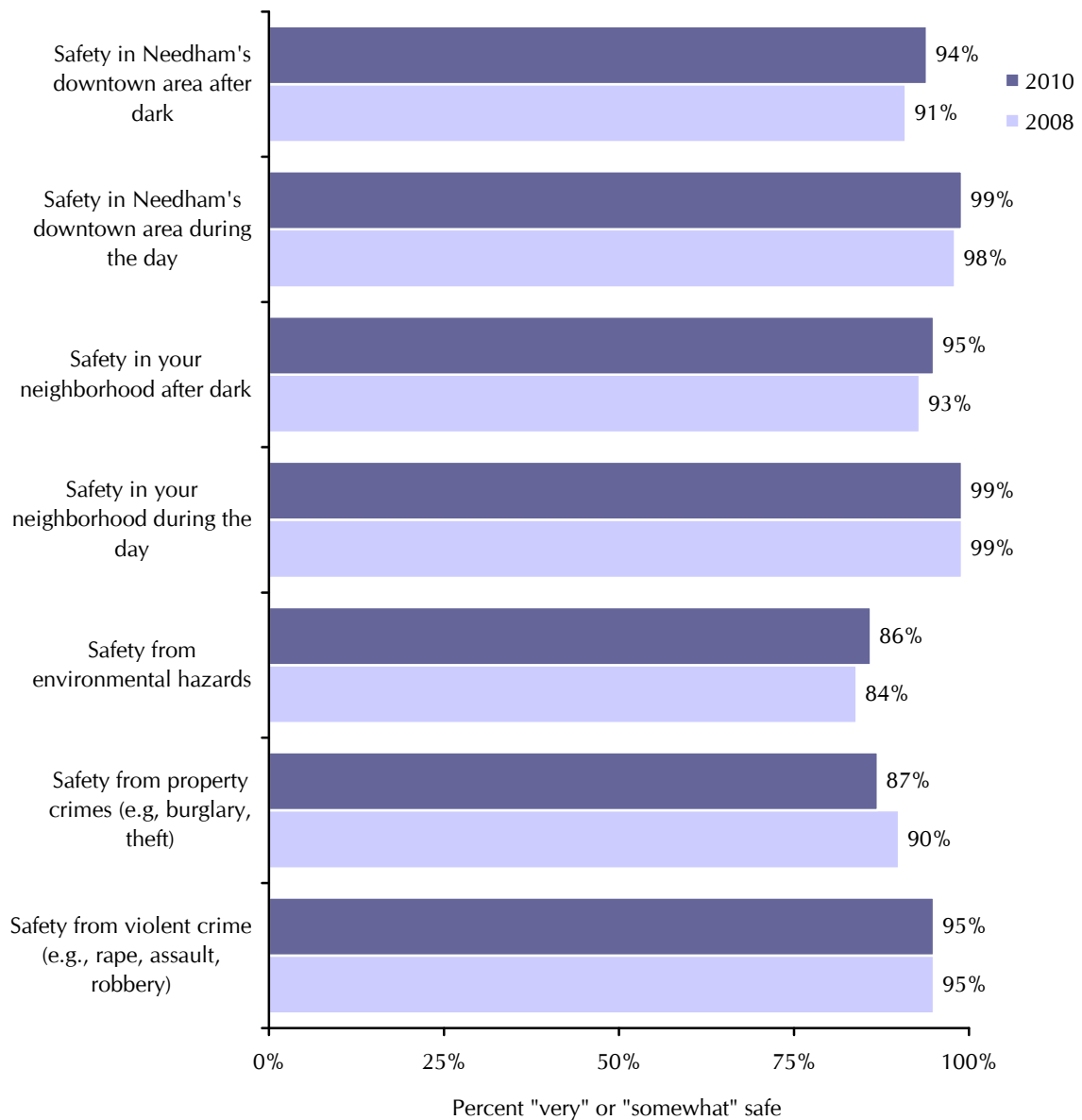


FIGURE 35: COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL PUBLIC SAFETY BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
In your neighborhood during the day	Much above
In your neighborhood after dark	Much above
In Needham's downtown area during the day	Much above
In Needham's downtown area after dark	Much above
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	Much above
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	Much above
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	Much above

As assessed by the survey, 4% 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, 93% had reported it to police. Compared to other jurisdictions fewer Needham residents had been victims of crime in the 12 months preceding the survey and more Needham residents had reported their most recent crime victimization to the police. The amount of crime reporting had increased since 2008.

FIGURE 36: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BY YEAR

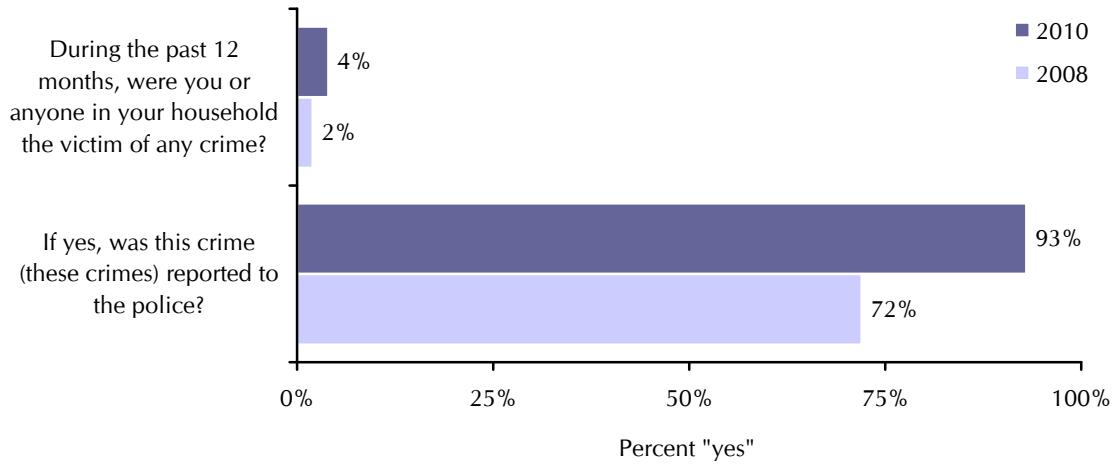


FIGURE 37: CRIME VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Victim of crime	Much less
Reported crimes	Much more

Residents rated seven Town public safety services; of these, all seven were rated much above the benchmark comparison. Fire services and ambulance or emergency medical services received the highest ratings, while emergency preparedness and traffic enforcement received the lowest ratings. All were rated similar compared to the previous survey year.

FIGURE 38: RATINGS OF PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BY YEAR

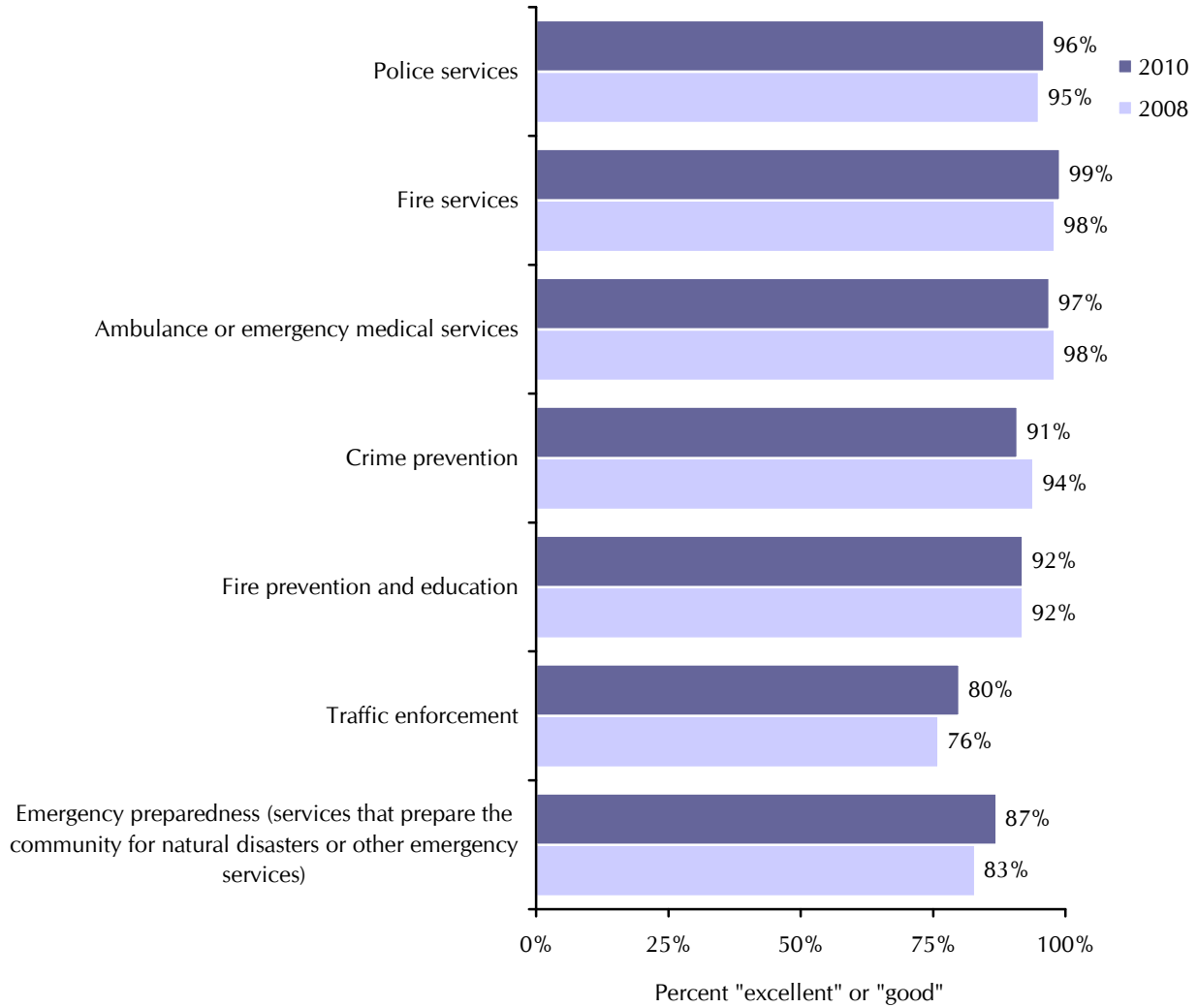


FIGURE 39: PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Police services	Much above
Fire services	Much above
Ambulance or emergency medical services	Much above
Crime prevention	Much above
Fire prevention and education	Much above
Traffic enforcement	Much above
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	Much above

FIGURE 40: CONTACT WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT

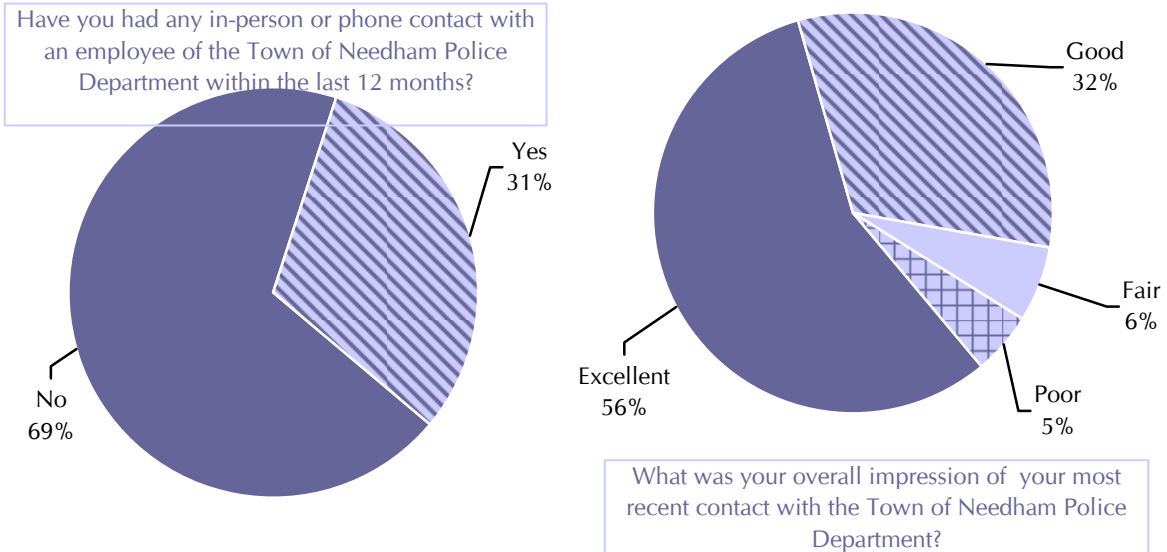


FIGURE 41: CONTACT WITH FIRE DEPARTMENT

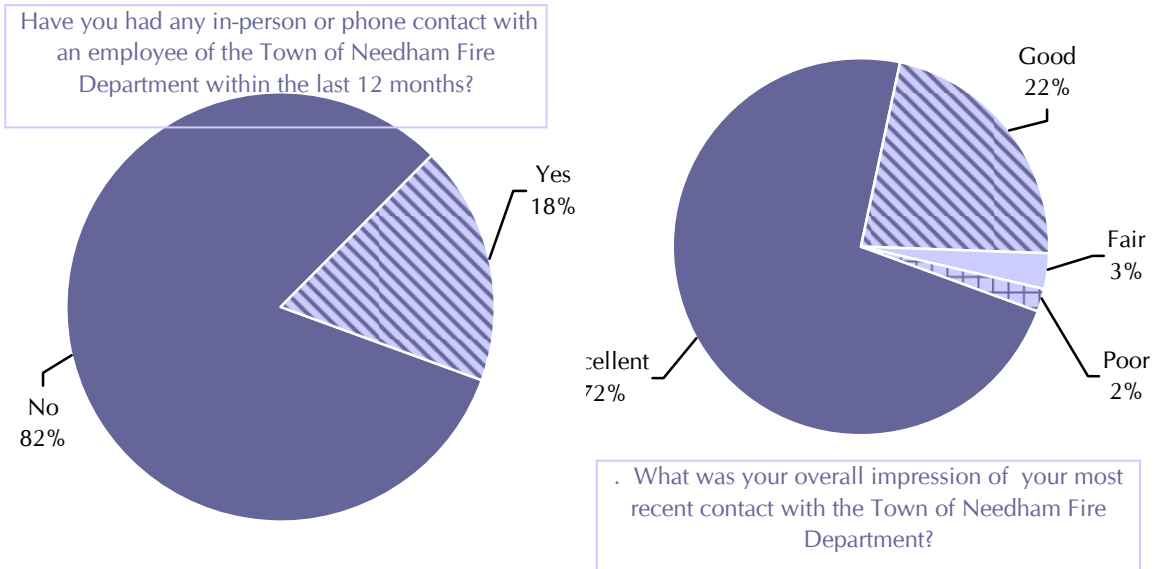


FIGURE 42: CONTACT WITH POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Had contact with the Town of Needham Police Department	Not available
Overall impression of most recent contact with the Town of Needham Police Department	Much above
Had contact with the Town of Needham Fire Department	Not available
Overall impression of most recent contact with the Town of Needham Fire Department	Much above

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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

Residents of the Town of Needham were asked to evaluate their local environment and the services provided to ensure its quality. The overall quality of the natural environment was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 81% of survey respondents. Air quality received the highest rating, and it was much above the benchmark. These ratings were similar or higher when compared to the last survey.

FIGURE 43: RATINGS OF THE COMMUNITY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BY YEAR

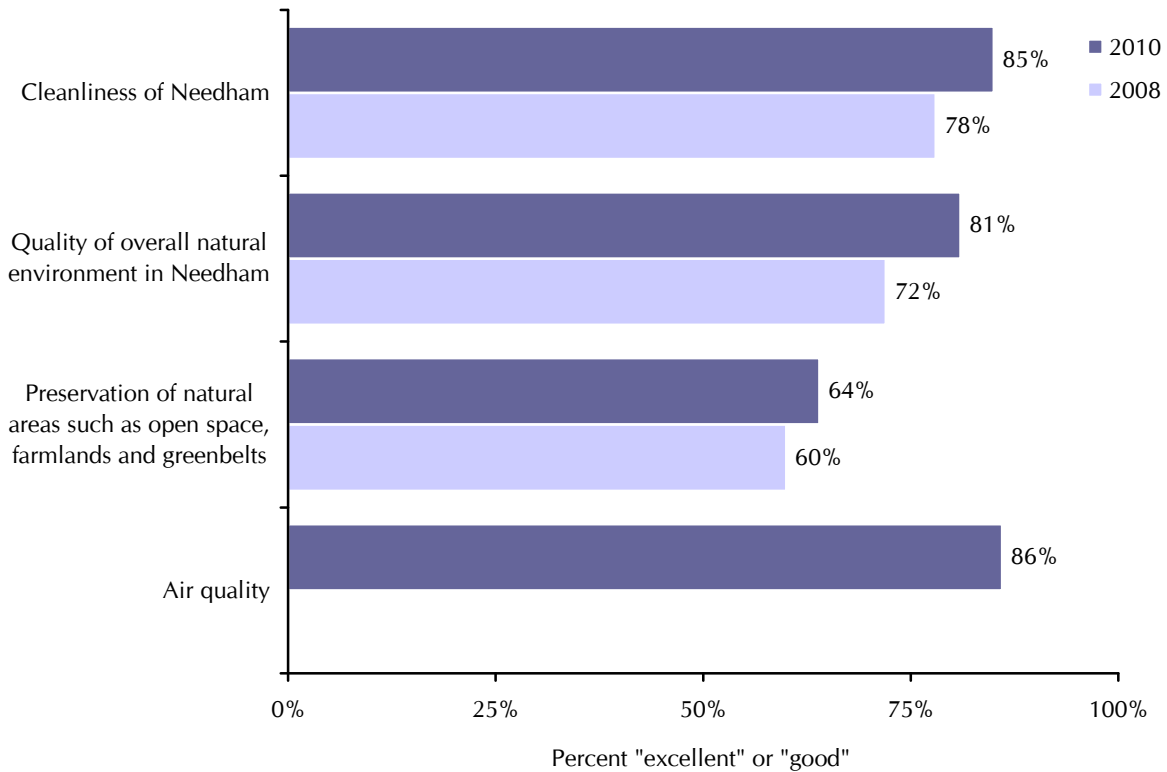


FIGURE 44: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT BENCHMARKS

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

Resident recycling was much greater than recycling reported in comparison communities and was similar to the amount of recycling reported in 2008.

FIGURE 45: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING IN LAST 12 MONTHS

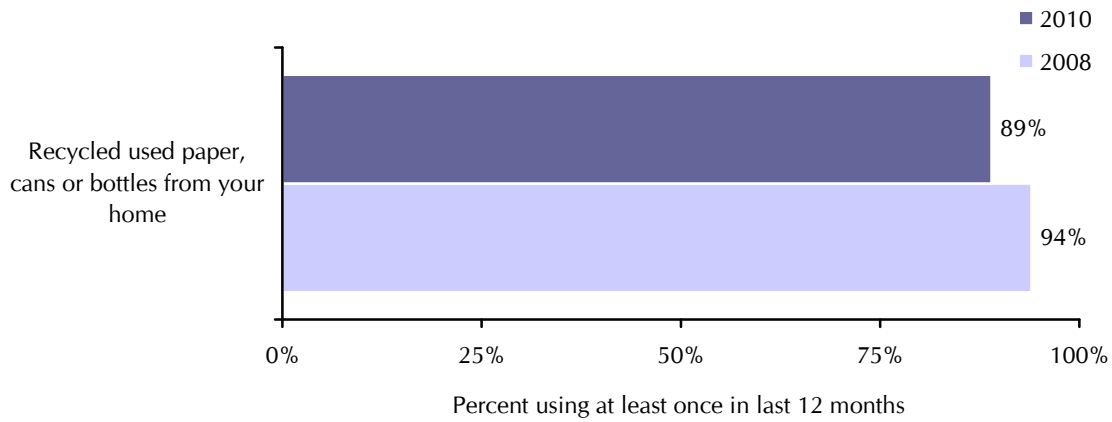


FIGURE 46: FREQUENCY OF RECYCLING BENCHMARKS

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

Of the four utility services rated by those completing the questionnaire, all were above the benchmark comparison. These service ratings trends were steady when compared to the 2008 ratings.

FIGURE 47: RATINGS OF UTILITY SERVICES BY YEAR

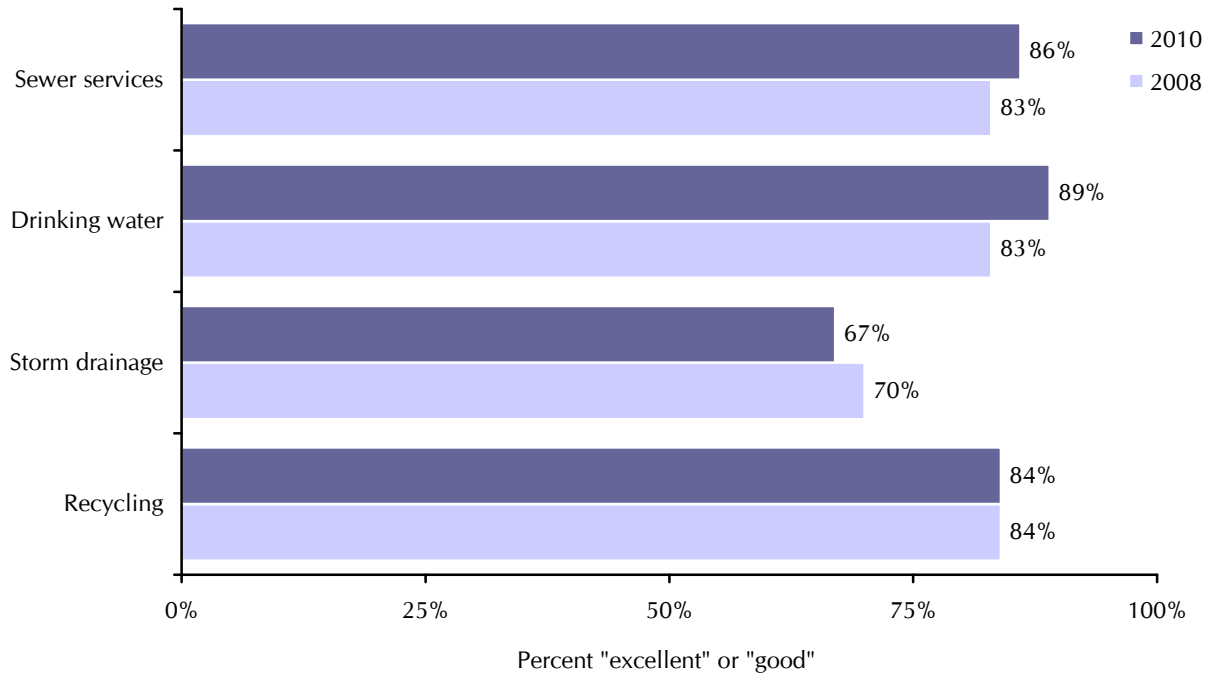


FIGURE 48: UTILITY SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Sewer services	Much above
Drinking water	Much above
Storm drainage	Above
Recycling	Much above

RECREATION AND WELLNESS

Parks and Recreation

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

Recreation opportunities in the Town of Needham were rated positively as were services related to parks and recreation. Town parks and recreation programs or classes were rated higher than the benchmark while recreation centers or facilities were similar to the benchmark. Parks and recreation ratings have varied over time.

Resident use of Needham parks and recreation facilities tells its own story about the attractiveness and accessibility of those services. The percent of residents that had visited a neighborhood or Town park was about the same as the percent of users in comparison jurisdictions. Recreation program use in Needham was much higher than use in comparison jurisdictions. The amount of recreation program use was lower than the use reported in the previous survey, though the rate of use for neighborhood or Town parks had remained the same.

FIGURE 49: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

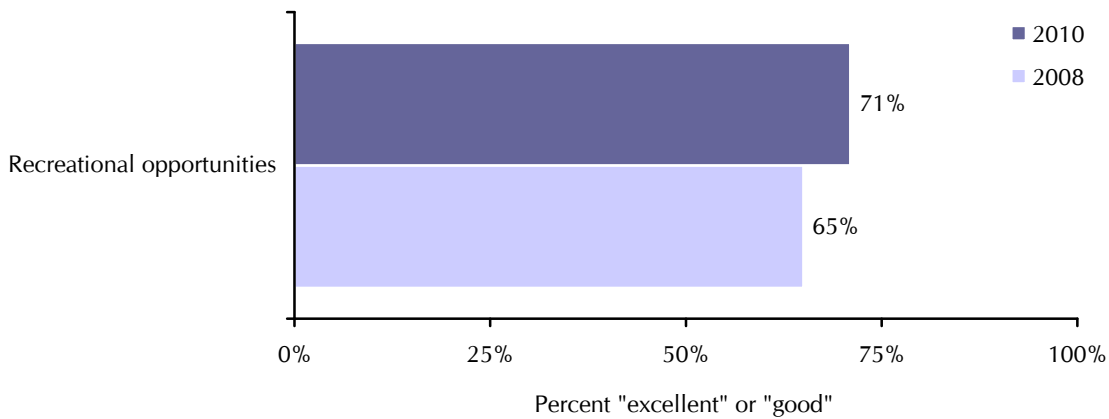


FIGURE 50: COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

Comparison to benchmark	
Recreation opportunities	Above

FIGURE 51: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

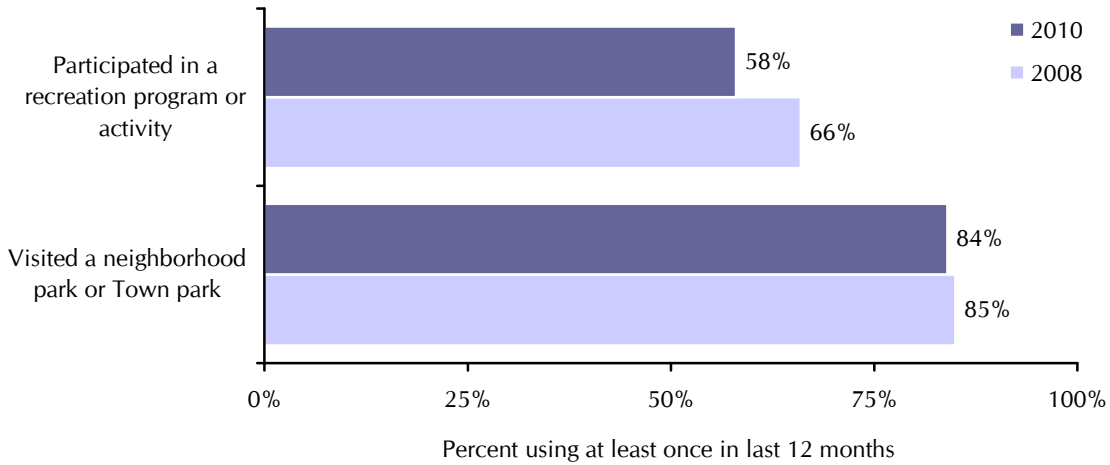


FIGURE 52: PARTICIPATION IN PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Participated in a recreation program or activity	Much more
Visited a neighborhood park or Town park	Similar

FIGURE 53: RATINGS OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BY YEAR

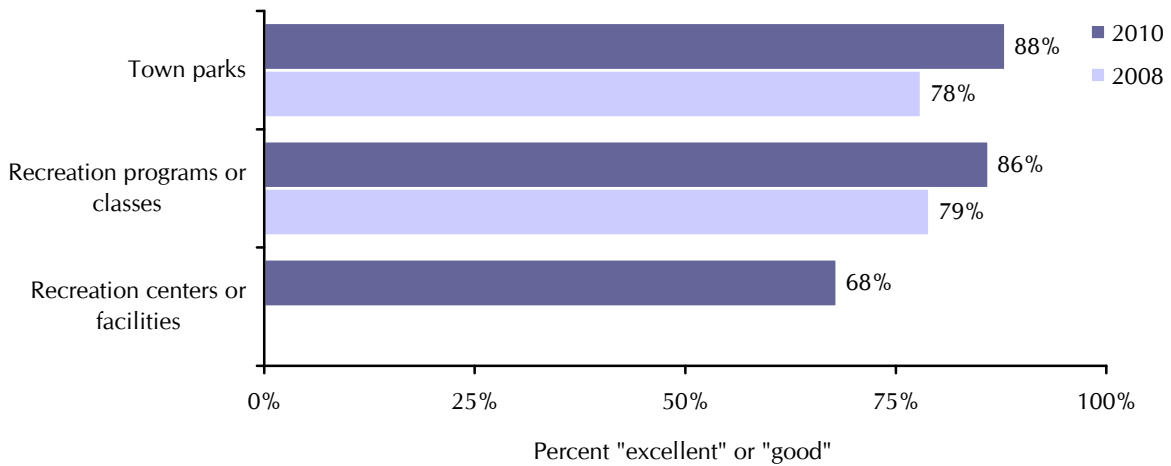


FIGURE 54: PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Town parks	Above
Recreation programs or classes	Much above
Recreation centers or facilities	Similar

Culture, Arts and Education

A full service community does not address only the life and safety of its residents. Like individuals who simply go to the office and return home, a community that pays attention only to the life sustaining basics becomes insular, dreary and uninspiring to business and themselves. 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 47% of respondents. Educational opportunities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 82% of respondents. Compared to the benchmark data, educational opportunities were much above the average of comparison jurisdictions, while cultural activity opportunities were rated below the benchmark comparison.

About 86% of Needham residents used a Town library at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. This participation rate for library use was much above comparison jurisdictions and had remained steady over time.

FIGURE 55: RATINGS OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

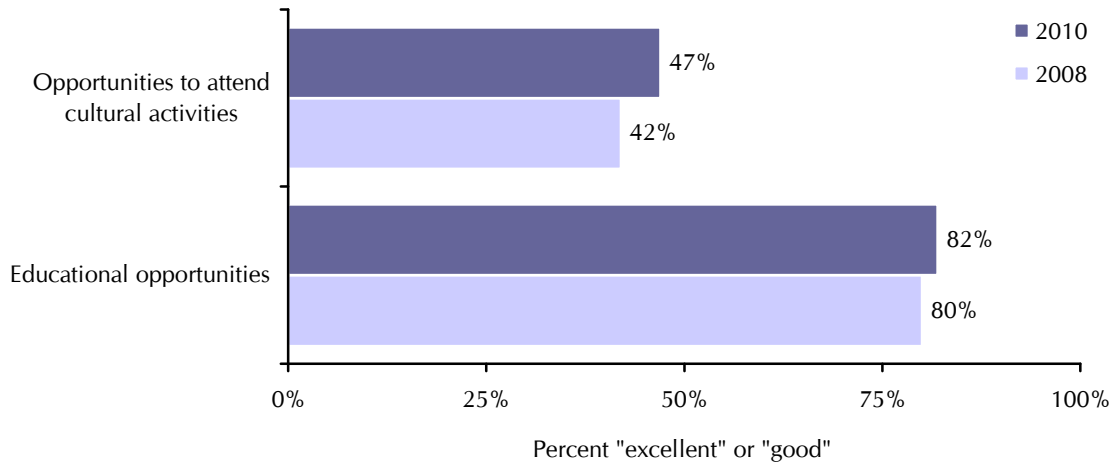


FIGURE 56: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	Below
Educational opportunities	Much above

FIGURE 57: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

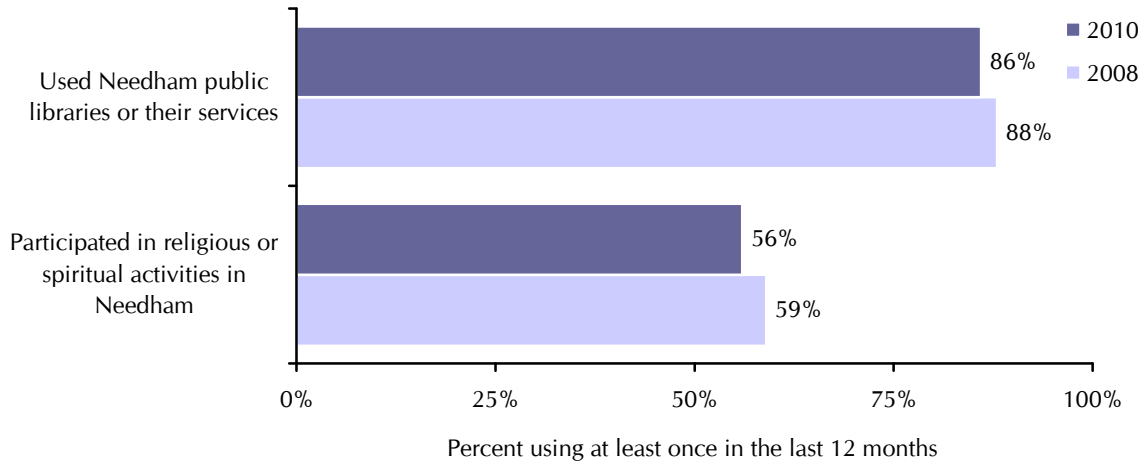


FIGURE 58: PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Used Needham public libraries or their services	Much more
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Needham	More

FIGURE 59: PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BY YEAR

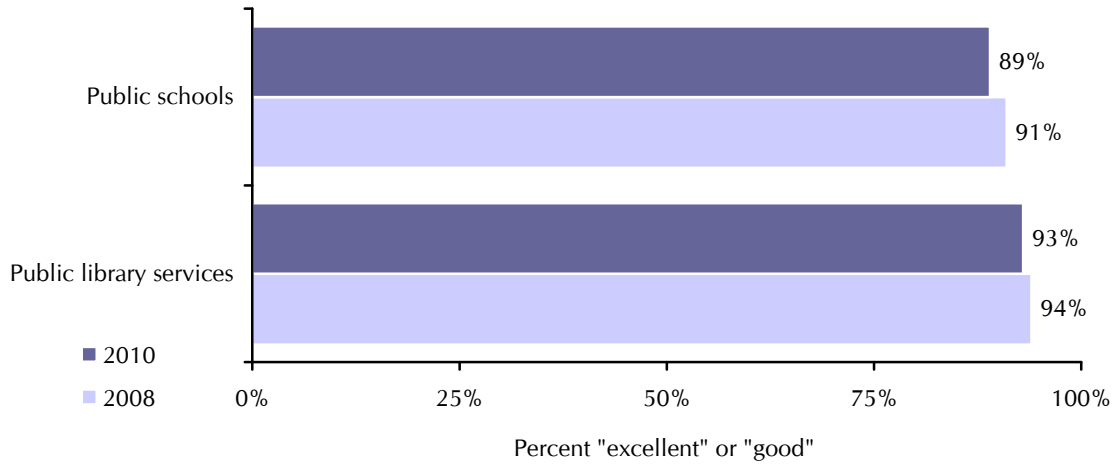


FIGURE 60: CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Public schools	Much above
Public library services	Much above

Health and Wellness

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

Residents of the Town of Needham were asked to rate the community's health services as well as the availability of health care, high quality affordable food and preventive health care services. The availability of affordable quality health care, affordable quality food and preventive health services were rated positively for the Town of Needham.

Among Needham residents, 76% rated affordable quality health care as "excellent" or "good." Those ratings were much above the ratings of comparison communities and similar to the past survey data.

FIGURE 61: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

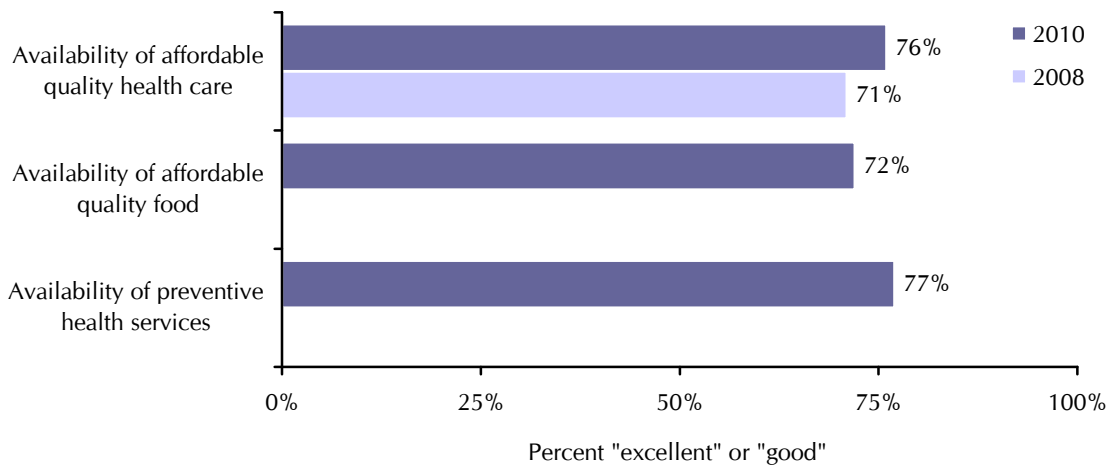


FIGURE 62: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

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

Health services offered in the Town of Needham were rated “excellent” or “good” by 85% of respondents and were much above the benchmark.

FIGURE 63: RATINGS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES BY YEAR

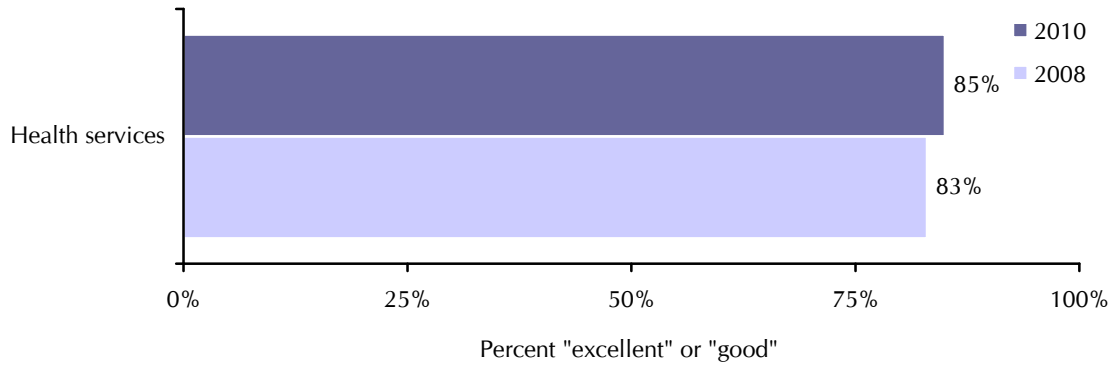


FIGURE 64: HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Health services	Much above

COMMUNITY INCLUSIVENESS

Diverse communities that include among their residents a mix of races, ages, wealth, ideas and beliefs have the raw material for the most vibrant and creative society. However, the presence of these features alone does not ensure a high quality or desirable space. Surveyed residents were asked about the success of the mix: the sense of community, the openness of residents to people of diverse backgrounds and the attractiveness of the Town of Needham 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.

Almost all residents rated the Town of Needham as an “excellent” or “good” place to raise kids and a majority rated it as an excellent or good place to retire. Almost residents felt that the local sense of community was “excellent” or “good.” About three quarters of survey respondents felt the Town of Needham was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. The availability of affordable quality child care was rated the lowest by residents but was much higher than the benchmark and had increased over time. These ratings were generally stable compared to the previous survey.

FIGURE 65: RATINGS OF COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BY YEAR

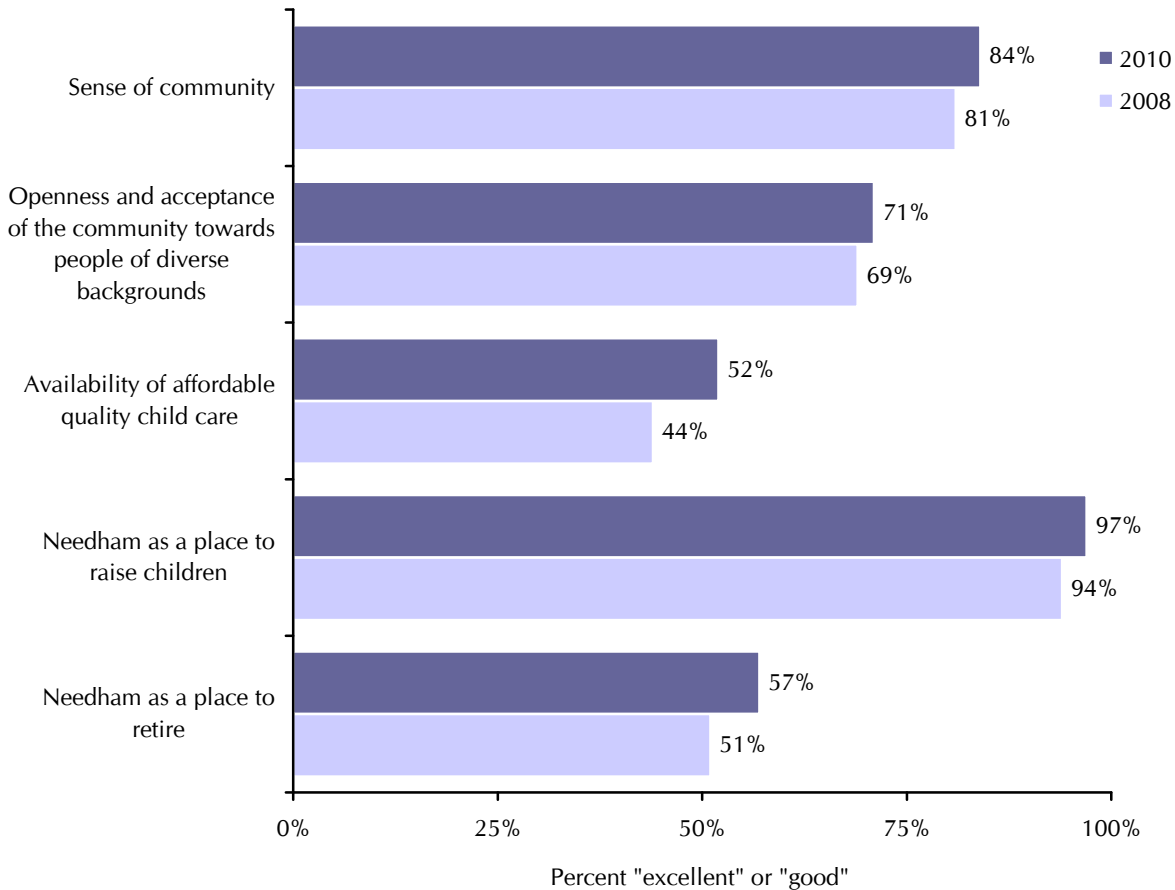


FIGURE 66: COMMUNITY QUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS BENCHMARKS

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

Services to more vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, youth or low-income residents) ranged from 61% to 83% with ratings of “excellent” or “good.” Services to youth and to low-income people were much above the benchmark while services to seniors was the same.

FIGURE 67: RATINGS OF QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BY YEAR

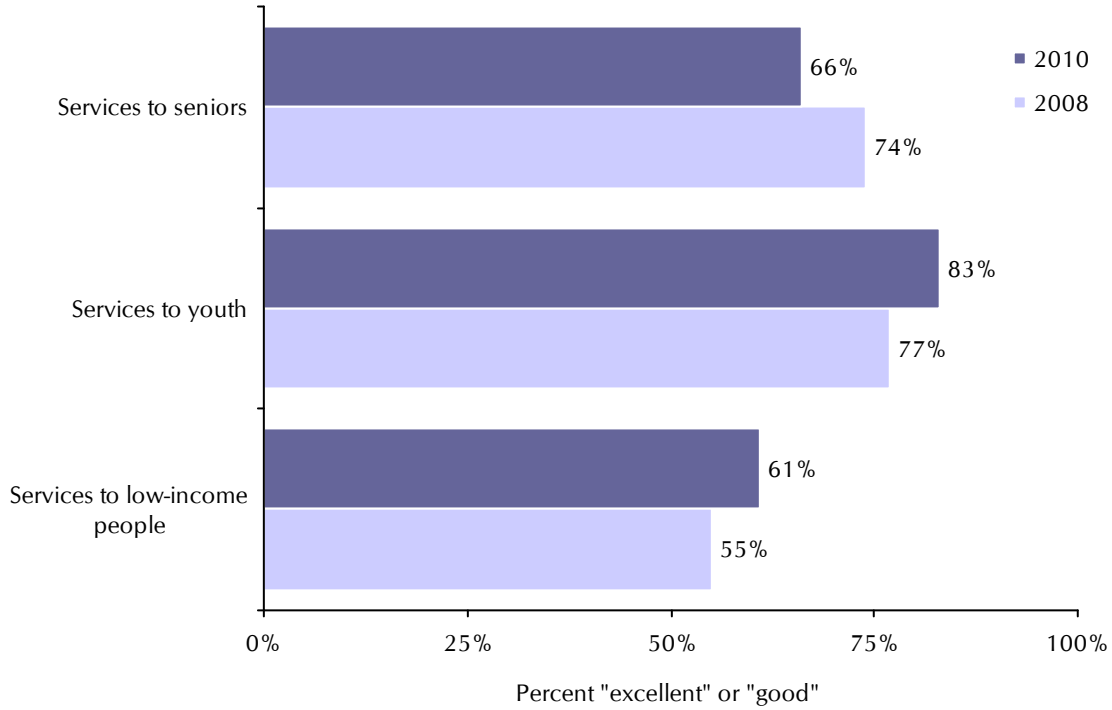


FIGURE 68: SERVICES PROVIDED FOR POPULATION SUBGROUPS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Services to seniors	Similar
Services to youth	Much above
Services to low income people	Much above

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. Furthermore, when neighbors help neighbors, the cost to the community to provide services to residents in need declines. When residents are civically engaged, they have taken the opportunity to participate in making the community more livable for all. The extent to which local government provides opportunities to become informed and engaged and the extent to which residents take those opportunities is an indicator of the connection between government and populace. By understanding your residents' level of connection to, knowledge of and participation in local government, the Town can find better opportunities to communicate and educate citizens about its mission, services, accomplishments and plans. Communities with strong civic engagement may be more likely to see the benefits of programs intended to improve the quality of life of all residents and therefore would be more likely to support those new policies or programs.

Civic Activity

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

Ratings of civic engagement opportunities were much above ratings from comparison jurisdictions where these questions were asked, and were similar to the past survey year.

FIGURE 69: RATINGS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

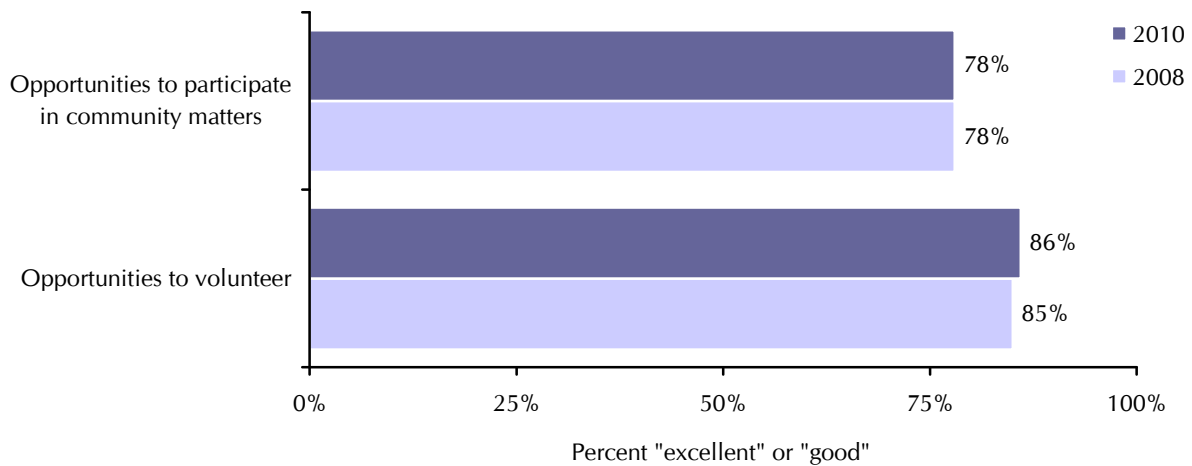


FIGURE 70: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to participate in community matters	Much above
Opportunities to volunteer	Much above

Most of the participants in this survey had not attended a public meeting or participated in a club in the 12 months prior to the survey, but the vast majority had helped a friend. The participation rates of these civic behaviors were compared to the rates in other jurisdictions. Those who had attended or watched a meeting of local elected officials or who had provided help to a friend or neighbor showed similar rates of involvement; while those who had volunteered time to some group or activity or participated in a club or civic group in Needham showed higher rates.

FIGURE 71: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR¹

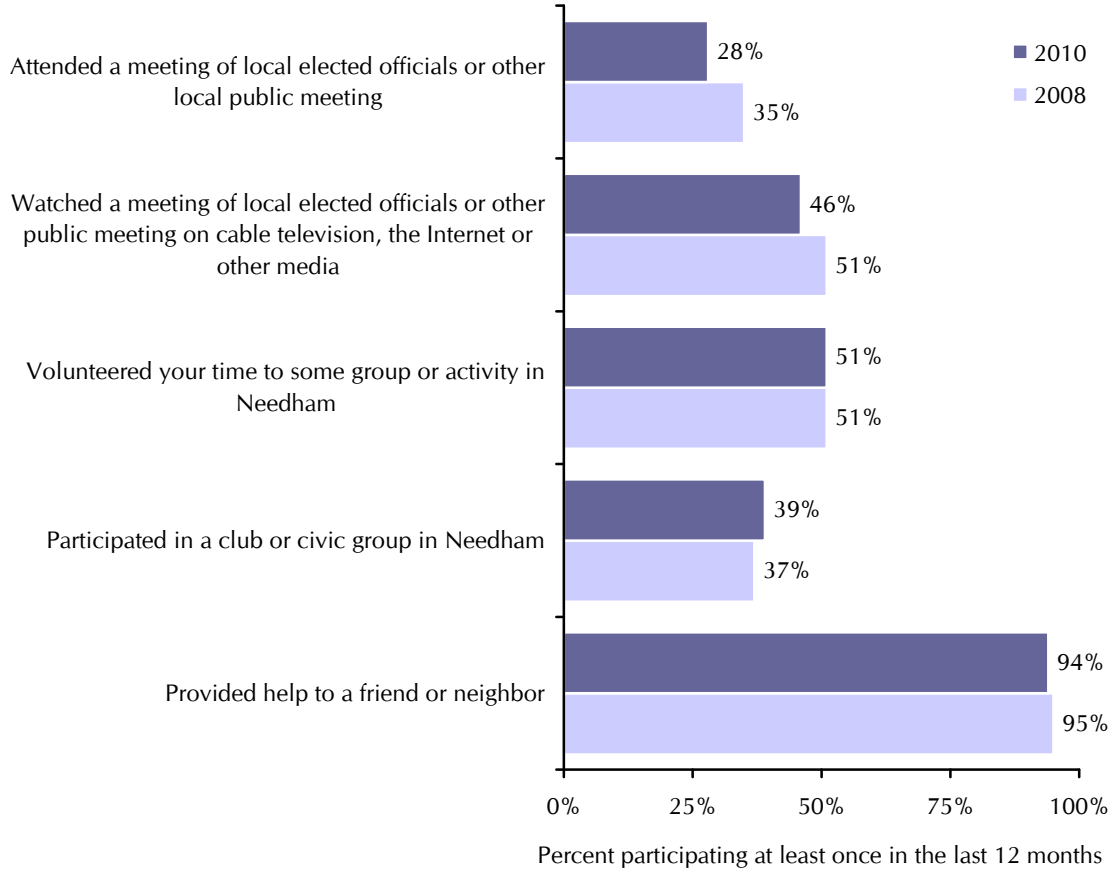


FIGURE 72: PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	Similar
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media	Similar
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Needham	Much more
Participated in a club or civic group in Needham	Much more
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	Similar

¹ Over the past few years, local governments have adopted communication strategies that embrace the Internet and new media. In 2010, the question, “Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting on cable television” was revised to include “the Internet or other media” to better reflect this trend.

Town of Needham residents showed the largest amount of civic engagement in the area of electoral participation. Ninety-five percent reported they were registered to vote and 90% indicated they had voted in the last general election. This rate of self-reported voting was much higher than that of comparison communities.

FIGURE 73: REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOR BY YEAR

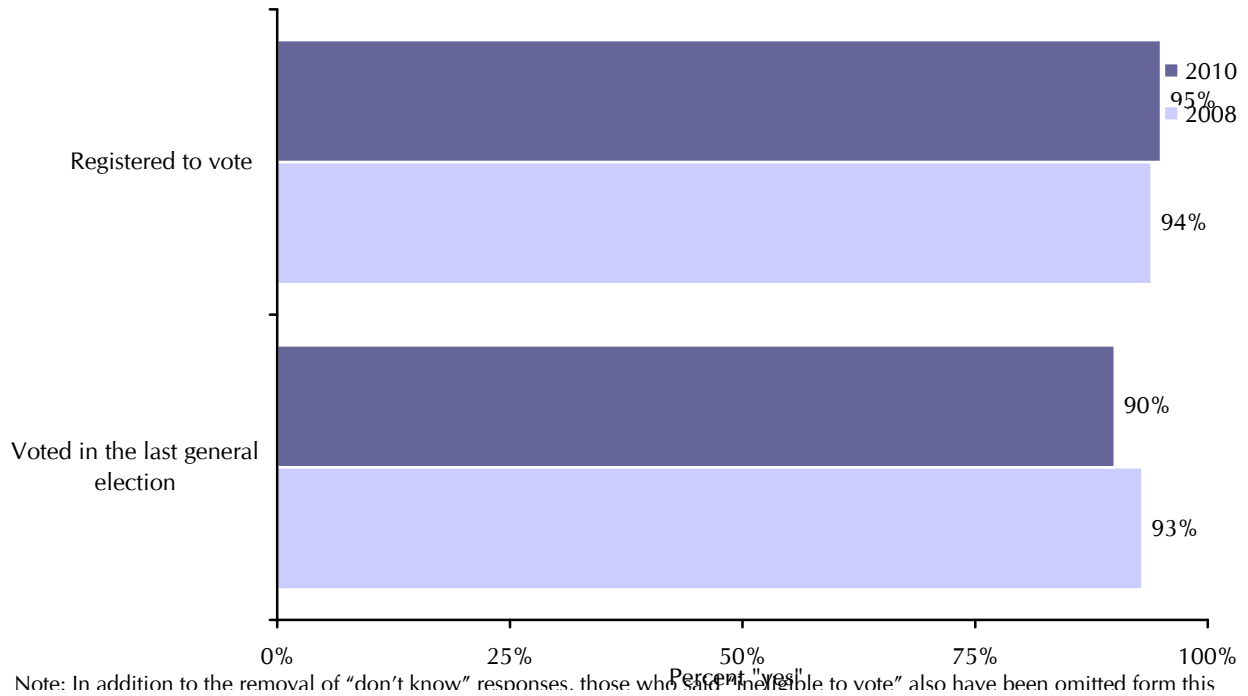


FIGURE 74: VOTING BEHAVIOR BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Registered to vote	Much more
Voted in last general election	Much more

Information and Awareness

Those completing the survey were asked about their use and perceptions of various information sources and local government media services. When asked whether they had visited the Town of Needham Web site in the previous 12 months, 71% reported they had done so at least once. Public information services were rated favorably compared to benchmark data. These ratings were similar to the previous survey data.

FIGURE 75: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BY YEAR

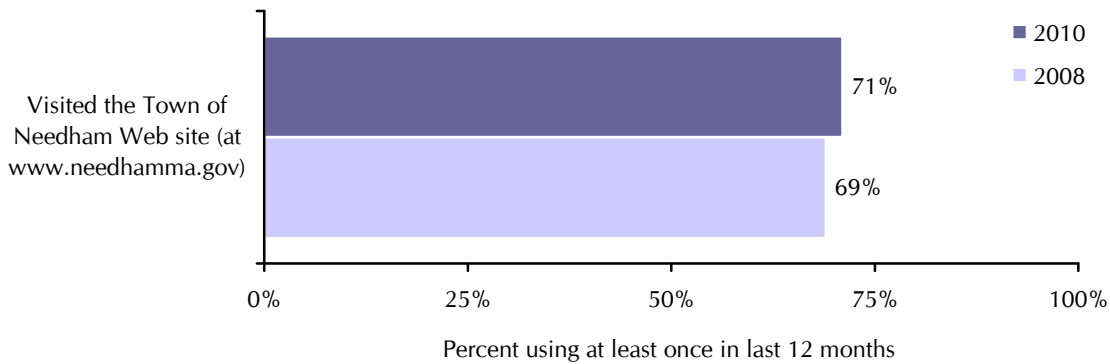


FIGURE 76: USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Visited the Town of Needham Web site (at www.needhamma.gov)	Much more

FIGURE 77: RATINGS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BY YEAR

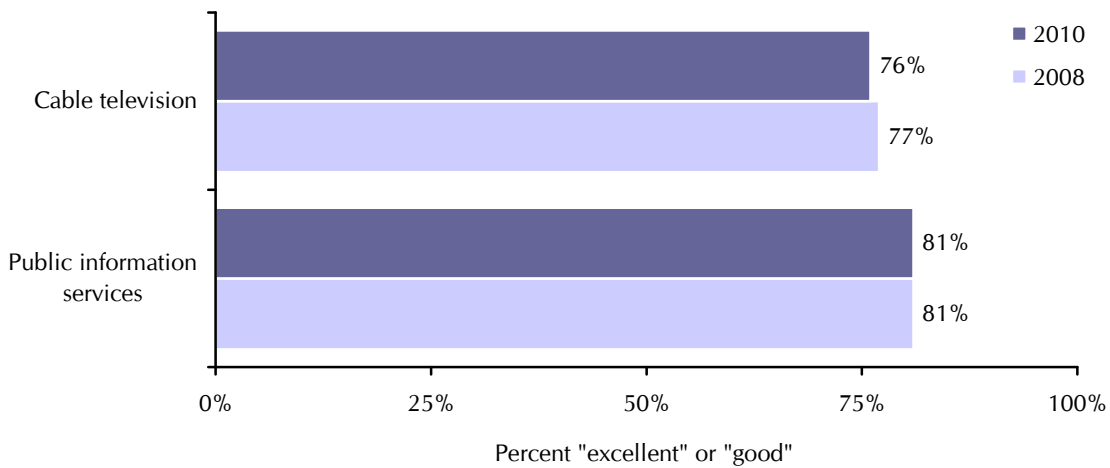


FIGURE 78: LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEDIA SERVICES AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Cable television	Much above
Public information services	Much above

Social Engagement

Opportunities to participate in social events and activities were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 73% of respondents, while even more rated opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities as “excellent” or “good.” Ratings of social engagement opportunities showed a stable trend over time.

FIGURE 79: RATINGS OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY YEAR

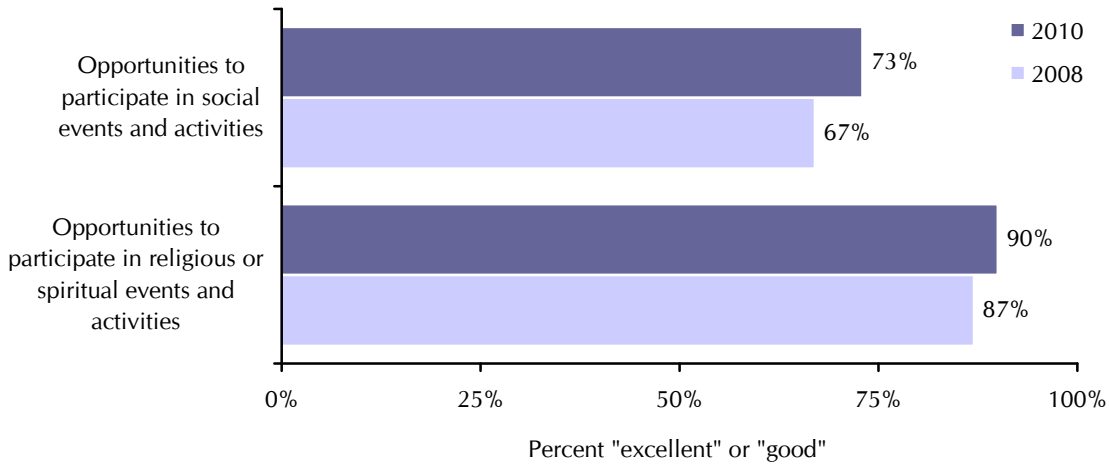


FIGURE 80: SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BENCHMARKS

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

Residents in Needham reported a strong amount of neighborliness. About half indicated talking or visiting with their neighbors at least several times a week. This amount of contact with neighbors was similar to the amount of contact reported in other communities.

FIGURE 81: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BY YEAR

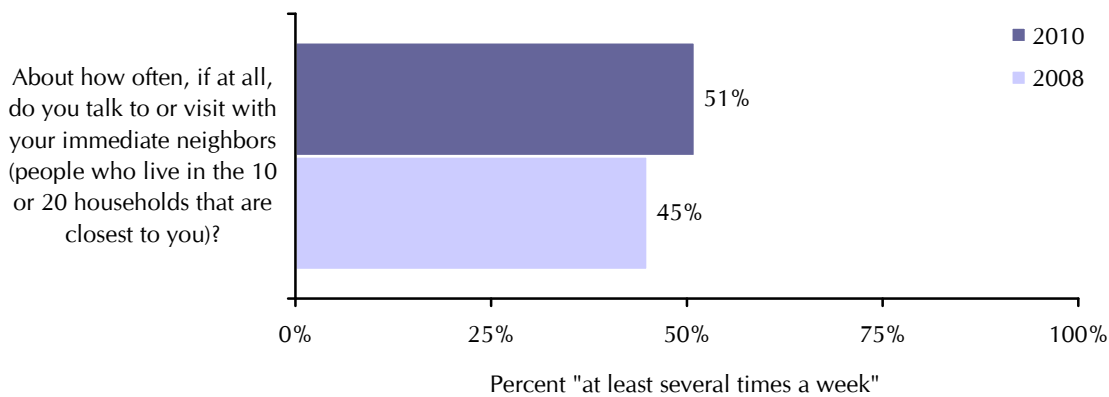


FIGURE 82: CONTACT WITH IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Has contact with neighbors at least several times per week	Similar

PUBLIC TRUST

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

A majority of respondents felt that the value of services for taxes paid was "excellent" or "good." When asked to rate the job the Town of Needham does at welcoming citizen involvement, 63% rated it as "excellent" or "good." Of these four ratings, all were much above the benchmark.

FIGURE 83: PUBLIC TRUST RATINGS BY YEAR²

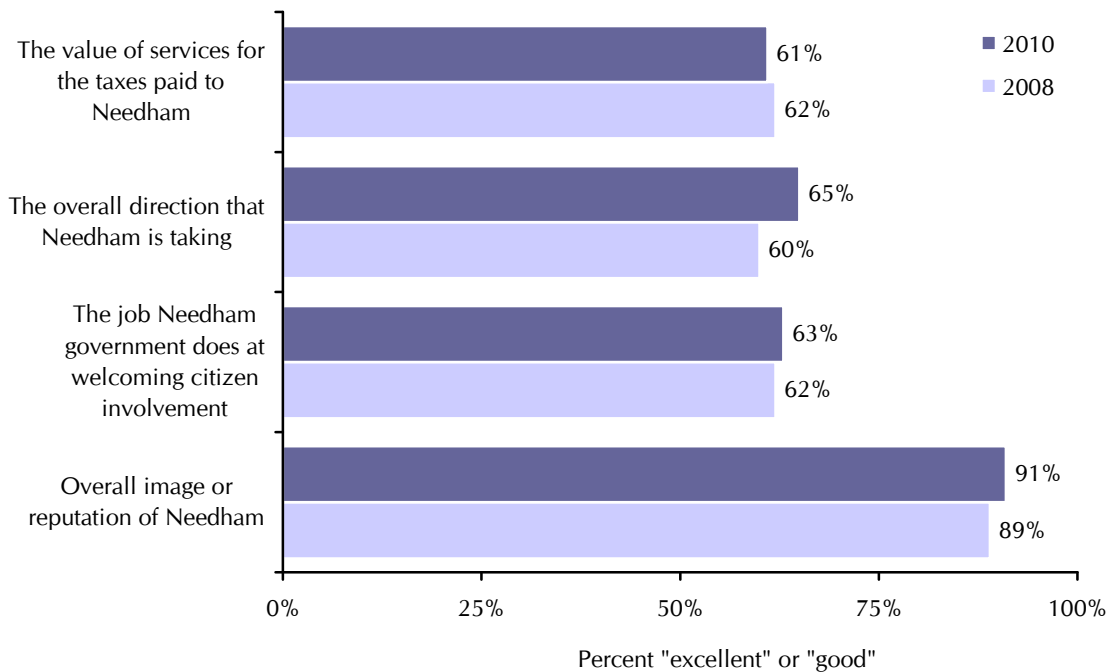


FIGURE 84: PUBLIC TRUST BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Value of services for the taxes paid to Needham	Much above
The overall direction that Needham is taking	Much above
Job Needham government does at welcoming citizen involvement	Much above
Overall image or reputation of Needham	Much above

² For jurisdictions that have conducted The NCS prior to 2008, this change in the wording of response options may cause a decline in the percent of residents who offer a positive perspective on public trust. It is well to factor in the possible change due to question wording this way: if you show an increase, you may have found even more improvement with the same question wording; if you show no change, you may have shown a slight increase with the same question wording; if you show a decrease, community sentiment is probably about stable.

On average, residents of the Town of Needham gave the highest evaluations to their own local government and the lowest average rating to state government. The overall quality of services delivered by the Town of Needham was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 89% of survey participants. The Town of Needham’s rating was much above the benchmark when compared to other communities. Ratings of overall Town services have remained stable over the last two years.

FIGURE 85: RATINGS OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BY YEAR

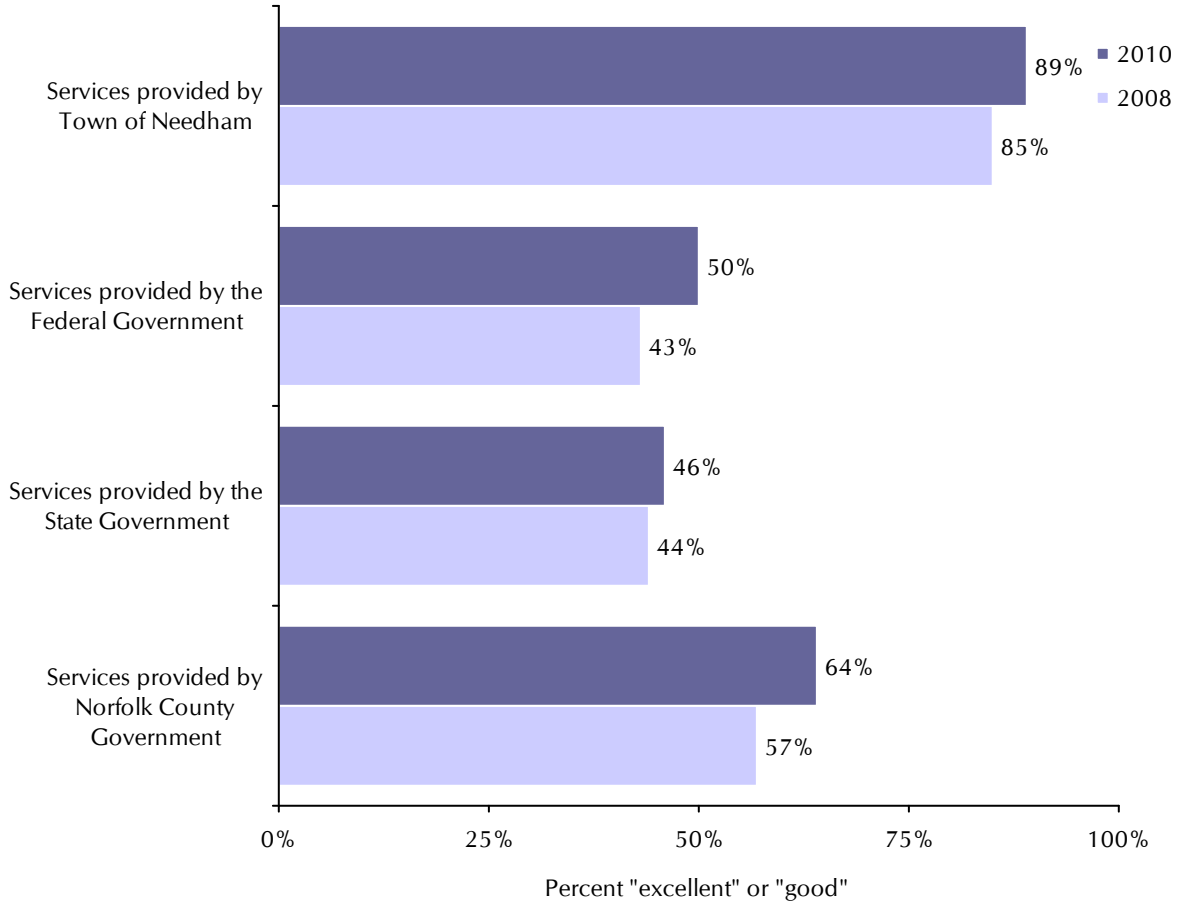


FIGURE 86: SERVICES PROVIDED BY LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Services provided by the Town of Needham	Much above
Services provided by the Federal Government	Much above
Services provided by the State Government	Above
Services provided by Norfolk County Government	Much above

Town of Needham Employees

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

Those completing the survey were asked if they had been in contact with a Town employee either in-person or over the phone in the last 12 months; the 60% who reported that they had been in contact (a percent that is above the benchmark comparison) were then asked to indicate overall how satisfied they were with the employee in their most recent contact. Town employees were rated highly; 84% of respondents rated their overall impression as "excellent" or "good." Employee ratings were much higher than the benchmark and were similar to the past survey year.

FIGURE 87: PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAD CONTACT WITH TOWN EMPLOYEES IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS BY YEAR

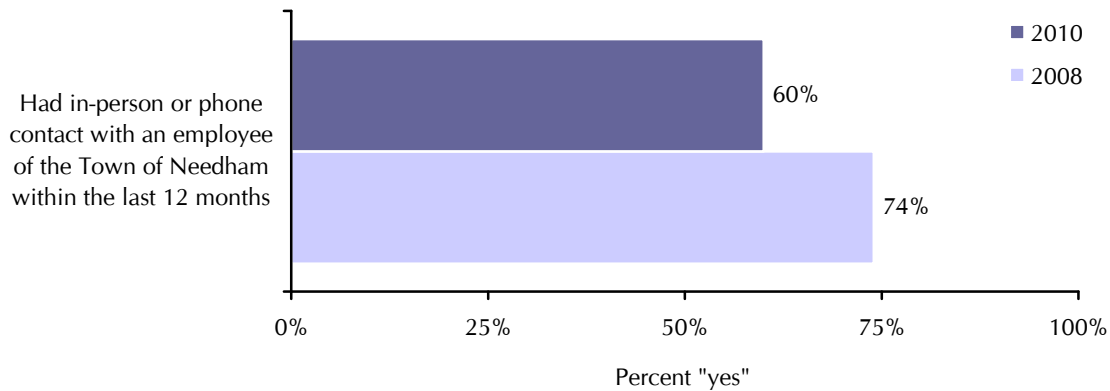


FIGURE 88: CONTACT WITH TOWN EMPLOYEES BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Had contact with Town employee(s) in last 12 months	More

FIGURE 89: RATINGS OF TOWN EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BY YEAR

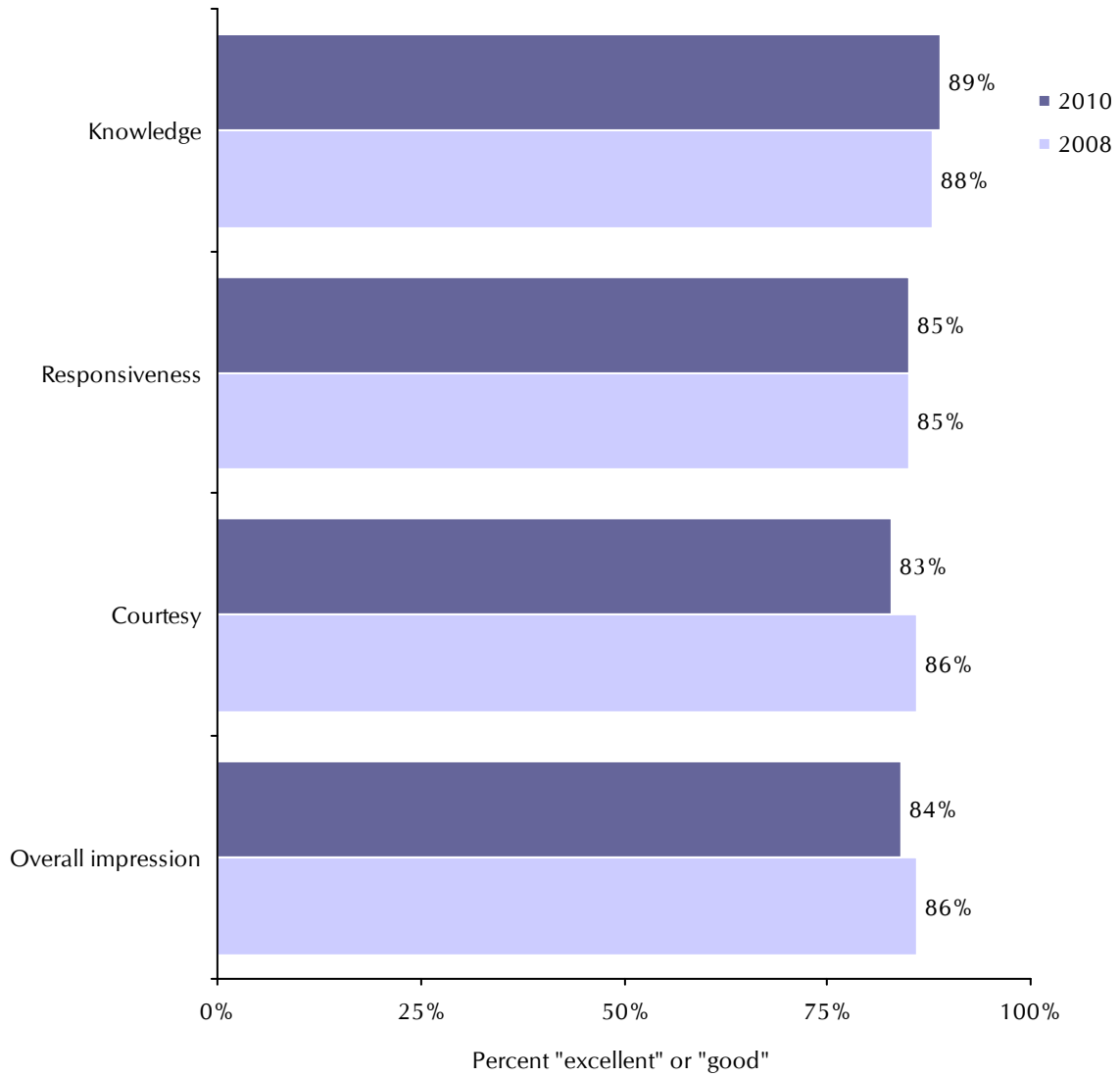


FIGURE 90: RATINGS OF TOWN EMPLOYEES (AMONG THOSE WHO HAD CONTACT) BENCHMARKS

	Comparison to benchmark
Knowledge	Much above
Responsiveness	Much above
Courteousness	Much above
Overall impression	Much above

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 (KDA). 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 KDA, 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 KDA was conducted for the Town of Needham by examining the relationships between ratings of each service and ratings of the Town of Needham's overall services. Those Key Driver services that correlated most highly with residents' perceptions about overall Town service quality have been identified. By targeting improvements in key services, the Town of Needham can focus on the services that have the greatest likelihood of influencing residents' opinions about overall service quality. Because a strong correlation is not the same as a cause, there is no guarantee that improving ratings on key drivers necessarily will improve ratings. What is certain from these analyses is that key drivers are good predictors of overall resident opinion and that the key drivers presented may be useful focus areas to consider for enhancement of overall service ratings.

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

- Public schools
- Police services
- Land use, planning and zoning
- Public information services
- Traffic enforcement

TOWN OF NEEDHAM ACTION CHART

The 2010 Town of Needham Action Chart™ on the following page combines three dimensions of performance:

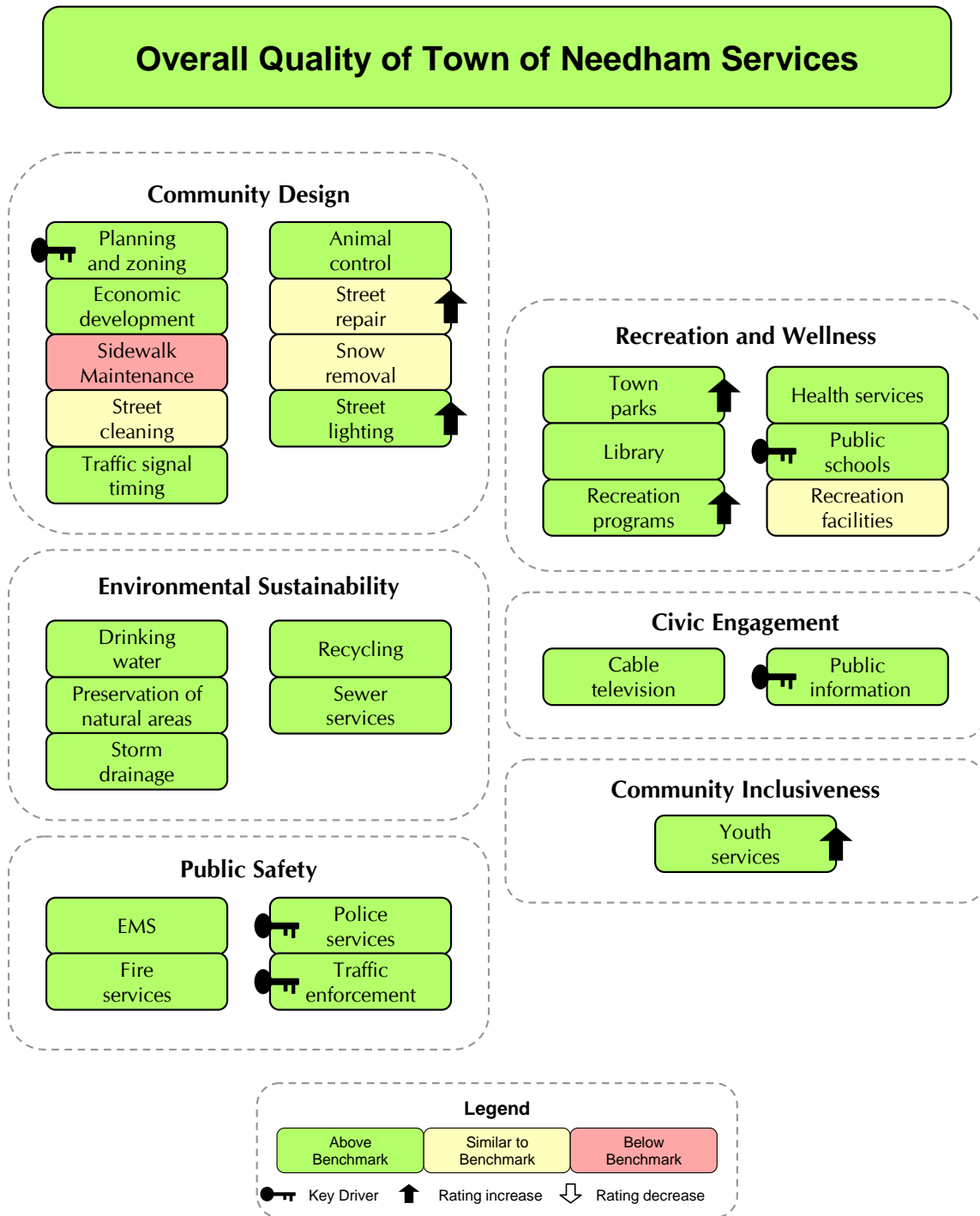
- Comparison to resident evaluations from other communities. When a comparison is available, the background color of each service box indicates whether the service is above the national benchmark (green), similar to the benchmark (yellow) or below the benchmark (red).
- Identification of key services. A black key icon (🔑) next to a service box indicates it as a key driver for the Town.
- Trendline icons (up and down arrows), indicating whether the current ratings are higher or lower than the previous survey.

Twenty-seven services were included in the KDA for the Town of Needham. Of these, 22 were above the benchmark, one was below the benchmark and four were similar to the benchmark.

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

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

FIGURE 91: TOWN OF NEEDHAM ACTION CHART™



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

Using Your Action Chart™

The key drivers derived for the Town of Needham provide a list of those services that are uniquely related to overall service quality. Those key drivers are marked with the symbol of a key in the action chart. Because key driver results are based on a relatively small number of responses, the relationships or correlations that define the key drivers are subject to more variability than is seen when key drivers are derived from a large national dataset of resident responses. To benefit the Town of Needham, 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 dataset. 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.

As staff review key drivers, not all drivers may resonate as likely links to residents' perspectives about overall service quality. For example, in Needham, planning and zoning and police services may be obvious links to overall service delivery (and each is a key driver from our national database), since it could be easy for staff to see how residents' view of overall service delivery could be colored by how well they perceive police and land use planning to be delivered. But animal control could be a surprise. Before rejecting a key driver that does not pass the first test of conventional wisdom, consider whether residents' opinions about overall service quality could reasonably be influenced by this unexpected driver. For example, in the case of animal control, was there a visible case of violation prior to the survey data collection? Do Needham residents have different expectations for animal control than what current policy provides? Are the rare instances of violation serious enough to cause a word of mouth campaign about service delivery?

If, after deeper review, the "suspect" driver still does not square with your understanding of the services that could influence residents' perspectives about overall service quality (and if that driver is not a core service or a key driver from NRC's national research), put action in that area on hold and wait to see if it appears as a key driver the next time the survey is conducted.

In the following table, we have listed your key drivers, core services and the national key drivers and we have indicated (in **bold** typeface and with the symbol "•"), the Town of Needham key drivers that overlap core services or the nationally derived keys. In general, key drivers below the benchmark may be targeted for improvement. Additionally, we have indicated (with the symbol "◦") those services that neither are local nor national key drivers nor are they core services. It is these services that could be considered first for resource reductions.

FIGURE 92: KEY DRIVERS COMPARED

Service	Town of Needham Key Drivers	National Key Drivers	Core Services
• Police services	✓	✓	✓
Fire services			✓
Ambulance and emergency medical services			✓
Traffic enforcement	✓		
Street repair			✓
◦ Street cleaning			
◦ Street lighting			
◦ Snow removal			
◦ Sidewalk maintenance			
◦ Traffic signal timing			
Garbage collection			✓
◦ Recycling			
Storm drainage			✓
Drinking water			✓
Sewer services			✓
◦ Town parks			
◦ Recreation programs or classes			
◦ Recreation centers or facilities			
• Land use planning and zoning	✓	✓	
Code enforcement			✓
◦ Animal control			
Economic development		✓	
◦ Health services			
◦ Services to youth			
◦ Public library			
• Public information services	✓	✓	
• Public schools	✓	✓	
◦ Cable television			
◦ Preservation of natural areas			

- Key driver overlaps with national and or core services
- Service may be targeted for reductions it is not a key driver or core service

POLICY QUESTION

“Don’t know” responses have been removed from the following question.

Policy Question	
Please rate how useful, if at all, the Town of Needham Web site (www.needhamma.gov) is for conducting business with the Town:	Percent of respondents
Very useful	22%
Somewhat useful	68%
Not very useful	9%
Not at all useful	1%
Total	100%

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 Needham:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Needham as a place to live	57%	40%	2%	0%	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	56%	38%	5%	0%	100%
Needham as a place to raise children	62%	35%	3%	0%	100%
Needham as a place to work	27%	49%	21%	3%	100%
Needham as a place to retire	23%	34%	29%	15%	100%
The overall quality of life in Needham	48%	48%	4%	0%	100%

Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Needham as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Sense of community	28%	56%	14%	2%	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	18%	53%	22%	7%	100%
Overall appearance of Needham	22%	60%	15%	2%	100%
Cleanliness of Needham	26%	59%	13%	2%	100%
Overall quality of new development in Needham	12%	53%	26%	9%	100%
Variety of housing options	7%	40%	40%	14%	100%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Needham	13%	52%	29%	5%	100%
Shopping opportunities	6%	30%	43%	21%	100%
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	7%	40%	44%	9%	100%
Recreational opportunities	15%	56%	25%	3%	100%
Employment opportunities	4%	31%	46%	19%	100%
Educational opportunities	29%	54%	15%	3%	100%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	13%	59%	25%	3%	100%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	33%	56%	10%	1%	100%
Opportunities to volunteer	31%	55%	13%	1%	100%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	24%	54%	20%	2%	100%
Ease of car travel in Needham	26%	53%	17%	5%	100%
Ease of bus travel in Needham	10%	33%	29%	29%	100%
Ease of rail or subway travel in Needham	33%	44%	17%	6%	100%
Ease of bicycle travel in Needham	12%	47%	29%	13%	100%
Ease of walking in Needham	28%	53%	16%	3%	100%
Availability of paths and walking trails	12%	38%	36%	15%	100%
Traffic flow on major streets	6%	43%	39%	12%	100%

Question 2: Community Characteristics					
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Needham as a whole:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Amount of public parking	7%	39%	39%	15%	100%
Availability of affordable quality housing	4%	25%	43%	28%	100%
Availability of affordable quality child care	11%	41%	34%	14%	100%
Availability of affordable quality health care	18%	58%	20%	3%	100%
Availability of affordable quality food	24%	48%	22%	6%	100%
Availability of preventive health services	20%	57%	21%	2%	100%
Air quality	25%	61%	13%	1%	100%
Quality of overall natural environment in Needham	19%	62%	18%	1%	100%
Overall image or reputation of Needham	35%	56%	8%	1%	100%

Question 3: Growth						
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Needham over the past 2 years:	Much too slow	Somewhat too slow	Right amount	Somewhat too fast	Much too fast	Total
Population growth	0%	2%	61%	32%	6%	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	7%	39%	48%	6%	1%	100%
Jobs growth	16%	50%	30%	2%	3%	100%

Question 4: Code Enforcement	
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Needham?	Percent of respondents
Not a problem	30%
Minor problem	54%
Moderate problem	15%
Major problem	1%
Total	100%

Question 5: Community Safety						
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Needham:	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Total
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	72%	23%	4%	0%	0%	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	35%	52%	8%	4%	1%	100%
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	49%	36%	12%	2%	0%	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	89%	10%	1%	0%	0%	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	63%	32%	3%	2%	0%	100%
In Needham's downtown area during the day	88%	12%	1%	0%	0%	100%
In Needham's downtown area after dark	55%	39%	4%	2%	0%	100%

Question 7: Contact with Police Department		
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Police Department within the last 12 months?	No	Yes
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Police Department within the last 12 months?	69%	31%

Question 8: Ratings of Contact with Police Department				
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Police Department?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Police Department?	56%	32%	6%	5%

Question 9: Crime Victim	
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents
No	96%
Yes	4%
Total	100%

Question 10: Crime Reporting	
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents
No	7%
Yes	93%
Total	100%

Question 11: 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 Needham?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Used Needham public libraries or their services	14%	17%	26%	21%	22%	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	42%	24%	21%	6%	7%	100%

Question 11: 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 Needham?	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times	Total
Visited a neighborhood park or Town park	16%	23%	24%	21%	15%	100%
Ridden a local bus within Needham	89%	5%	2%	1%	3%	100%
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	72%	18%	9%	1%	1%	100%
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other Town-sponsored public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media	54%	25%	14%	5%	1%	100%
Visited the Town of Needham Web site (at www.needhamma.gov)	29%	20%	37%	10%	3%	100%
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	11%	3%	7%	7%	72%	100%
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Needham	49%	15%	18%	6%	13%	100%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Needham	44%	13%	16%	9%	19%	100%
Participated in a club or civic group in Needham	61%	16%	11%	5%	7%	100%
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	6%	21%	43%	16%	14%	100%

Question 12: 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	22%
Several times a week	29%
Several times a month	27%
Less than several times a month	22%
Total	100%

Question 13: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Needham:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Police services	53%	43%	3%	1%	100%
Fire services	62%	37%	1%	0%	100%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	61%	36%	3%	0%	100%
Crime prevention	37%	54%	8%	2%	100%
Fire prevention and education	40%	52%	8%	1%	100%
Traffic enforcement	26%	55%	16%	4%	100%
Street repair	7%	32%	42%	19%	100%
Street cleaning	10%	51%	31%	8%	100%
Street lighting	12%	54%	26%	9%	100%

Question 13: Service Quality					
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Needham:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Snow removal	14%	50%	27%	10%	100%
Sidewalk maintenance	9%	38%	35%	19%	100%
Traffic signal timing	9%	48%	30%	13%	100%
Bus or transit services	19%	40%	30%	10%	100%
Recycling	38%	46%	12%	4%	100%
Storm drainage	10%	57%	24%	8%	100%
Drinking water	38%	51%	9%	2%	100%
Sewer services	28%	58%	12%	3%	100%
Town parks	26%	63%	11%	1%	100%
Recreation programs or classes	19%	66%	13%	2%	100%
Recreation centers or facilities	15%	53%	24%	8%	100%
Land use, planning and zoning	8%	41%	35%	16%	100%
Animal control	15%	64%	17%	5%	100%
Economic development	7%	43%	41%	9%	100%
Health services	21%	64%	14%	1%	100%
Services to seniors	19%	47%	25%	9%	100%
Services to youth	21%	62%	15%	2%	100%
Services to low-income people	13%	49%	24%	15%	100%
Public library services	49%	44%	6%	0%	100%
Public information services	23%	57%	16%	3%	100%
Public schools	42%	48%	8%	2%	100%
Cable television	24%	52%	19%	5%	100%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	31%	57%	11%	2%	100%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	14%	50%	28%	8%	100%
Building Department inspection services	13%	41%	28%	18%	100%

Question 14: Government Services Overall					
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The Town of Needham	22%	67%	9%	2%	100%
The Federal Government	5%	45%	39%	11%	100%
The State Government	5%	41%	43%	11%	100%
Norfolk County Government	11%	54%	30%	6%	100%

Question 15: 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 Needham to someone who asks	72%	23%	2%	2%	100%
Remain in Needham for the next five years	70%	20%	6%	4%	100%

Question 16: 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	2%
Somewhat positive	13%
Neutral	53%
Somewhat negative	25%
Very negative	8%
Total	100%

Question 17: Contact with Fire Department		
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Fire Department within the last 12 months?	No	Yes
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Fire Department within the last 12 months?	82%	18%

Question 18: Ratings of Contact with Fire Department				
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Fire Department?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Fire Department?	72%	22%	3%	2%

Question 19: Contact with Town Employees	
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents
No	40%
Yes	60%
Total	100%

Question 20: Town Employees					
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the Town of Needham in your most recent contact?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Knowledge	41%	49%	8%	3%	100%
Responsiveness	44%	41%	10%	4%	100%
Courtesy	49%	34%	9%	8%	100%
Overall impression	43%	41%	10%	6%	100%

Question 21: Government Performance					
Please rate the following categories of Needham government performance:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
The value of services for the taxes paid to Needham	12%	49%	29%	10%	100%
The overall direction that Needham is taking	11%	54%	29%	7%	100%
The job Needham government does at welcoming citizen involvement	14%	49%	31%	6%	100%

Question 22: Policy Question	
Please rate how useful, if at all, the Town of Needham Web site (www.needhamma.gov) is for conducting business with the Town:	Percent of respondents
Very useful	22%
Somewhat useful	68%
Not very useful	9%
Not at all useful	1%
Total	100%

Question D1: Employment Status	
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents
No	29%
Yes, full-time	55%
Yes, part-time	16%
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	64%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	6%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	17%
Walk	2%
Bicycle	1%
Work at home	9%
Other	0%

Question D3: Length of Residency	
How many years have you lived in Needham?	Percent of respondents
Less than 2 years	10%
2 to 5 years	15%
6 to 10 years	15%
11 to 20 years	17%
More than 20 years	43%
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	77%
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	4%
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	17%
Mobile home	0%
Other	2%
Total	100%

Question D5: Housing Tenure (Rent/Own)	
Is this house, apartment or mobile home...	Percent of respondents
Rented for cash or occupied without cash payment	14%
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	86%
Total	100%

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost	
About how much is the total monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents
Less than \$300 per month	2%
\$300 to \$599 per month	7%
\$600 to \$999 per month	10%
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	12%
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	29%
\$2,500 or more per month	40%
Total	100%

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household	
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents
No	58%
Yes	42%
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	70%
Yes	30%
Total	100%

Question D9: Household Income	
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents
Less than \$24,999	7%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	10%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	19%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	20%
\$150,000 or more	43%
Total	100%

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

Question D11: Race	
What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.)	Percent of respondents
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	6%
Black or African American	2%
White	91%
Other	1%
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	1%
25 to 34 years	13%
35 to 44 years	18%
45 to 54 years	28%
55 to 64 years	14%
65 to 74 years	10%
75 years or older	16%
Total	100%

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

Question D14: Registered to Vote	
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents
No	5%
Yes	93%
Ineligible to vote	3%
Total	100%

Question D15: Voted in Last General Election	
Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?	Percent of respondents
No	10%
Yes	90%
Ineligible to vote	0%
Total	100%

Question D16: Has Cell Phone	
Do you have a cell phone?	Percent of respondents
No	7%
Yes	93%
Total	100%

Question D17: Has Land Line	
Do you have a land line at home?	Percent of respondents
No	11%
Yes	89%
Total	100%

Question D18: Primary Phone	
If you have both a cell phone and a land line, which do you consider your primary telephone number?	Percent of respondents
Cell	16%
Land line	70%
Both	14%
Total	100%

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 Needham:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Needham as a place to live	57%	325	40%	230	2%	12	0%	1	0%	0	100%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	56%	316	38%	216	5%	29	0%	2	0%	1	100%	564
Needham as a place to raise children	57%	316	33%	182	3%	16	0%	0	8%	42	100%	555
Needham as a place to work	14%	79	26%	144	11%	64	2%	10	47%	258	100%	555
Needham as a place to retire	15%	82	22%	121	18%	102	9%	53	36%	201	100%	558
The overall quality of life in Needham	48%	272	48%	271	4%	20	0%	1	0%	2	100%	566

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Needham as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Sense of community	27%	150	54%	301	13%	73	2%	13	3%	17	100%
Openness and acceptance of the community towards people of diverse backgrounds	16%	91	48%	266	20%	111	6%	33	10%	55	100%	555
Overall appearance of Needham	22%	126	60%	341	15%	84	2%	14	0%	0	100%	564
Cleanliness of Needham	26%	143	59%	329	13%	71	2%	11	1%	4	100%	558
Overall quality of new development in Needham	11%	60	46%	258	23%	129	8%	43	12%	66	100%	555
Variety of housing options	6%	34	36%	199	36%	199	12%	68	9%	52	100%	552
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Needham	13%	70	51%	284	29%	160	5%	29	2%	13	100%	557
Shopping opportunities	6%	32	30%	169	43%	242	20%	114	1%	6	100%	563
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	6%	36	36%	202	40%	223	8%	46	9%	47	100%	555
Recreational opportunities	14%	77	52%	286	24%	129	3%	18	7%	39	100%	549
Employment opportunities	2%	12	16%	84	23%	123	9%	51	50%	271	100%	540
Educational opportunities	25%	136	46%	255	13%	72	2%	13	14%	74	100%	550
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	12%	68	55%	305	23%	127	2%	13	8%	46	100%	558

Question 2: Community Characteristics												
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Needham as a whole:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	28%	157	48%	268	8%	47	0%	3	15%	86	100%
Opportunities to volunteer	26%	146	47%	258	11%	58	1%	6	16%	86	100%	554
Opportunities to participate in community matters	21%	114	47%	257	18%	97	2%	9	13%	74	100%	551
Ease of car travel in Needham	25%	141	52%	290	17%	94	5%	26	2%	9	100%	560
Ease of bus travel in Needham	5%	30	18%	99	16%	87	16%	88	44%	243	100%	546
Ease of rail or subway travel in Needham	29%	161	38%	211	15%	81	5%	28	12%	69	100%	551
Ease of bicycle travel in Needham	9%	50	35%	193	22%	118	10%	53	24%	133	100%	547
Ease of walking in Needham	28%	154	52%	289	15%	86	3%	17	3%	14	100%	560
Availability of paths and walking trails	10%	56	33%	183	31%	171	13%	70	13%	73	100%	553
Traffic flow on major streets	6%	31	43%	238	39%	219	12%	69	0%	3	100%	560
Amount of public parking	7%	41	39%	217	38%	214	15%	83	1%	5	100%	560
Availability of affordable quality housing	3%	15	18%	100	31%	170	20%	110	29%	160	100%	555
Availability of affordable quality child care	5%	29	20%	110	17%	91	7%	37	52%	283	100%	550
Availability of affordable quality health care	15%	80	48%	260	17%	91	3%	15	18%	100	100%	547
Availability of affordable quality food	23%	131	46%	260	21%	119	6%	32	3%	17	100%	559
Availability of preventive health services	15%	81	42%	233	16%	88	1%	8	25%	139	100%	548
Air quality	24%	132	57%	317	13%	71	1%	4	6%	36	100%	560
Quality of overall natural environment in Needham	19%	107	61%	342	18%	99	1%	4	2%	9	100%	560
Overall image or reputation of Needham	35%	195	55%	310	8%	47	1%	3	1%	7	100%	561

Question 3: Growth														
Please rate the speed of growth in the following categories in Needham over the past 2 years:	Much too slow		Somewhat too slow		Right amount		Somewhat too fast		Much too fast		Don't know		Total	
	Population growth	0%	0	1%	7	42%	233	22%	121	4%	22	31%	174	100%
Retail growth (stores, restaurants, etc.)	6%	32	34%	187	42%	231	5%	28	1%	3	13%	70	100%	551
Jobs growth	6%	31	18%	97	10%	58	1%	3	1%	5	65%	358	100%	553

Question 4: Code Enforcement		
To what degree, if at all, are run down buildings, weed lots or junk vehicles a problem in Needham?	Percent of respondents	Count
Not a problem	29%	162
Minor problem	51%	287
Moderate problem	14%	80
Major problem	1%	6
Don't know	5%	30
Total	100%	564

Question 5: Community Safety														
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Needham:	Very safe		Somewhat safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Somewhat unsafe		Very unsafe		Don't know		Total	
	Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	71%	401	23%	128	4%	23	0%	3	0%	2	2%	9	100%
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	34%	194	51%	290	8%	46	4%	25	0%	3	1%	8	100%	565
Environmental hazards, including toxic waste	45%	249	33%	184	11%	59	2%	12	0%	1	10%	54	100%	559

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	89%	502	10%	56	1%	7	0%	2	0%	0	0%	0	100%
In your neighborhood after dark	62%	351	32%	181	3%	15	2%	11	0%	1	1%	6	100%	565
In Needham's downtown area during the day	87%	488	12%	65	1%	4	0%	1	0%	0	1%	5	100%	562
In Needham's downtown area after dark	52%	292	38%	211	4%	23	2%	9	0%	0	5%	26	100%	561

Question 7: Contact with Police Department								
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Police Department within the last 12 months?	No		Yes		Don't know		Total	
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Police Department within the last 12 months?	68%	376	31%	173	1%	5	100%	554

Question 8: Ratings of Contact with Police Department												
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Police Department?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Police Department?	56%	95	32%	55	6%	11	5%	9	0%	0	100%	170

Question 9: Crime Victim		
During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	96%	537
Yes	4%	20
Don't know	0%	2
Total	100%	559

Question 10: Crime Reporting		
If yes, was this crime (these crimes) reported to the police?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	7%	1
Yes	93%	19
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100%	20

Question 11: 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 Needham?	Never		Once or twice		3 to 12 times		13 to 26 times		More than 26 times		Total	
	Used Needham public libraries or their services	14%	78	17%	96	26%	149	21%	116	22%	124	100%
Participated in a recreation program or activity	42%	229	24%	134	21%	116	6%	33	7%	37	100%	549
Visited a neighborhood park or Town park	16%	86	23%	129	24%	132	21%	117	15%	85	100%	550
Ridden a local bus within Needham	89%	491	5%	25	2%	12	1%	7	3%	17	100%	553
Attended a meeting of local elected officials or other local public meeting	72%	401	18%	98	9%	48	1%	3	1%	6	100%	556
Watched a meeting of local elected officials or other Town-sponsored public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media	54%	305	25%	142	14%	79	5%	28	1%	6	100%	560
Visited the Town of Needham Web site (at www.needhamma.gov)	29%	159	20%	111	37%	204	10%	56	3%	18	100%	548
Recycled used paper, cans or bottles from your home	11%	59	3%	19	7%	38	7%	38	72%	403	100%	557
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Needham	49%	275	15%	84	18%	98	6%	32	13%	70	100%	559
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Needham	44%	242	13%	69	16%	89	9%	48	19%	106	100%	554
Participated in a club or civic group in Needham	61%	339	16%	88	11%	61	5%	30	7%	37	100%	555
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	6%	33	21%	120	43%	241	16%	89	14%	78	100%	562

Question 12: 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	22%	126
Several times a week	29%	161
Several times a month	27%	154
Less than several times a month	22%	122
Total	100%	562

Question 13: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Needham:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Police services	46%	258	38%	210	3%	16	1%	5	12%	68	100%
Fire services	50%	278	30%	165	1%	6	0%	0	20%	109	100%	558
Ambulance or emergency medical services	43%	240	26%	144	2%	10	0%	0	29%	163	100%	557
Crime prevention	28%	155	41%	225	6%	32	1%	8	24%	134	100%	553
Fire prevention and education	26%	141	33%	182	5%	27	1%	3	36%	201	100%	554
Traffic enforcement	22%	123	47%	260	13%	74	3%	19	14%	75	100%	550
Street repair	6%	36	32%	176	41%	229	18%	101	2%	13	100%	555
Street cleaning	10%	54	50%	275	30%	164	8%	43	3%	17	100%	553
Street lighting	12%	67	53%	293	25%	140	8%	47	1%	4	100%	552
Snow removal	14%	76	49%	275	27%	149	10%	55	1%	5	100%	559
Sidewalk maintenance	9%	48	36%	201	33%	185	18%	102	3%	18	100%	554
Traffic signal timing	9%	47	47%	259	30%	163	12%	69	3%	14	100%	552
Bus or transit services	9%	50	19%	105	15%	80	5%	27	52%	284	100%	546
Recycling	35%	190	42%	233	11%	60	4%	22	8%	44	100%	550
Storm drainage	9%	48	49%	269	21%	114	7%	40	15%	82	100%	552
Drinking water	37%	204	50%	278	9%	51	2%	9	2%	10	100%	552
Sewer services	23%	129	48%	267	10%	53	2%	12	16%	90	100%	552
Town parks	24%	132	59%	320	10%	56	1%	3	6%	35	100%	547
Recreation programs or classes	13%	73	46%	256	9%	49	1%	6	30%	167	100%	552
Recreation centers or facilities	11%	58	39%	211	18%	95	6%	33	27%	144	100%	542
Land use, planning and zoning	5%	30	29%	160	25%	138	11%	62	29%	159	100%	549
Animal control	9%	51	40%	219	11%	58	3%	16	37%	204	100%	547
Economic development	4%	24	28%	153	27%	146	6%	31	36%	195	100%	548
Health services	15%	83	48%	259	11%	57	0%	3	26%	142	100%	544
Services to seniors	10%	56	25%	137	14%	74	5%	26	47%	257	100%	551
Services to youth	14%	78	42%	228	10%	57	1%	6	32%	177	100%	546
Services to low-income people	4%	23	16%	89	8%	44	5%	27	66%	359	100%	542

Question 13: Service Quality												
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Needham:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Public library services	46%	246	41%	221	6%	32	0%	2	7%	38	100%
Public information services	18%	99	45%	244	13%	69	2%	12	21%	114	100%	538
Public schools	36%	191	41%	218	7%	37	2%	11	15%	80	100%	537
Cable television	18%	101	40%	218	14%	78	4%	21	24%	133	100%	551
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	18%	101	34%	186	7%	36	1%	5	40%	222	100%	551
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	11%	61	40%	219	22%	120	6%	34	21%	112	100%	547
Building Department inspection services	7%	40	23%	128	16%	87	10%	57	43%	236	100%	547

Question 14: Government Services Overall												
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	The Town of Needham	21%	115	64%	354	8%	47	2%	9	5%	28	100%
The Federal Government	4%	24	38%	209	32%	179	10%	53	16%	89	100%	552
The State Government	4%	22	34%	187	35%	195	9%	52	17%	95	100%	551
Norfolk County Government	5%	28	26%	143	14%	79	3%	16	52%	287	100%	554

Question 15: 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 Needham to someone who asks	71%	402	23%	130	2%	14	2%	10	1%	8	100%
Remain in Needham for the next five years	67%	380	20%	111	5%	31	4%	25	3%	18	100%	566

Question 16: 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	2%	12
Somewhat positive	13%	70
Neutral	53%	297
Somewhat negative	25%	137
Very negative	8%	42
Total	100%	559

Question 17: Contact with Fire Department								
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Fire Department within the last 12 months?	No		Yes		Don't know		Total	
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Fire Department within the last 12 months?	81%	452	18%	102	1%	3	100%	558

Question 18: Ratings of Contact with Fire Department												
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Fire Department?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Fire Department?	72%	72	22%	22	3%	3	2%	2	0%	0	100%	100

Question 19: Contact with Town Employees		
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	40%	219
Yes	60%	334
Total	100%	553

Question 20: Town Employees												
What was your impression of the employee(s) of the Town of Needham in your most recent contact?	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	Knowledge	40%	134	48%	161	7%	25	3%	10	1%	4	100%
Responsiveness	44%	145	41%	137	10%	35	4%	15	0%	0	100%	332
Courtesy	49%	162	34%	115	9%	28	8%	27	0%	0	100%	333
Overall impression	43%	143	41%	136	10%	34	6%	18	0%	0	100%	332

Question 21: Government Performance												
Please rate the following categories of Needham government performance:	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Don't know		Total	
	The value of services for the taxes paid to Needham	11%	60	45%	251	27%	151	9%	50	8%	44	100%
The overall direction that Needham is taking	10%	54	47%	261	25%	139	6%	32	13%	72	100%	557
The job Needham government does at welcoming citizen involvement	10%	55	36%	200	22%	125	5%	26	27%	150	100%	556

Question 22: Policy Question		
Please rate how useful, if at all, the Town of Needham Web site (www.needhamma.gov) is for conducting business with the Town:	Percent of respondents	Count
Very useful	13%	75
Somewhat useful	42%	235
Not very useful	6%	32
Not at all useful	0%	3
Don't know	39%	219
Total	100%	563

Question D1: Employment Status		
Are you currently employed for pay?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	29%	162
Yes, full-time	55%	306
Yes, part-time	16%	86
Total	100%	554

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	64%
Motorized vehicle (e.g., car, truck, van, motorcycle, etc...) with other children or adults	6%
Bus, rail, subway or other public transportation	17%
Walk	2%
Bicycle	1%
Work at home	9%
Other	0%

Question D3: Length of Residency		
How many years have you lived in Needham?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than 2 years	10%	55
2 to 5 years	15%	82
6 to 10 years	15%	81
11 to 20 years	17%	95
More than 20 years	43%	236
Total	100%	550

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	77%	426
House attached to one or more houses (e.g., a duplex or townhome)	4%	23
Building with two or more apartments or condominiums	17%	94
Mobile home	0%	1
Other	2%	9
Total	100%	553

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	14%	77
Owned by you or someone in this house with a mortgage or free and clear	86%	456
Total	100%	532

Question D6: Monthly Housing Cost		
About how much is the total monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance and homeowners" association (HOA) fees)?	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than \$300 per month	2%	12
\$300 to \$599 per month	7%	36
\$600 to \$999 per month	10%	53
\$1,000 to \$1,499 per month	12%	63
\$1,500 to \$2,499 per month	29%	149
\$2,500 or more per month	40%	209
Total	100%	522

Question D7: Presence of Children in Household		
Do any children 17 or under live in your household?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	58%	322
Yes	42%	236
Total	100%	558

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	70%	387
Yes	30%	168
Total	100%	555

Question D9: Household Income		
How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)	Percent of respondents	Count
Less than \$24,999	7%	37
\$25,000 to \$49,999	10%	52
\$50,000 to \$99,999	19%	97
\$100,000 to \$149,000	20%	99
\$150,000 or more	43%	213
Total	100%	499

Question D10: Ethnicity		
Are you Spanish, Hispanic or Latino?	Percent of respondents	Count
No, not Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	98%	543
Yes, I consider myself to be Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	2%	12
Total	100%	555

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%	13
Asian, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander	6%	32
Black or African American	2%	12
White	91%	509
Other	1%	3
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	1%	8
25 to 34 years	13%	73
35 to 44 years	18%	98
45 to 54 years	28%	150
55 to 64 years	14%	77
65 to 74 years	10%	55
75 years or older	16%	85
Total	100%	546

Question D13: Gender		
What is your sex?	Percent of respondents	Count
Female	55%	304
Male	45%	251
Total	100%	555

Question D14: Registered to Vote		
Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	4%	25
Yes	91%	504
Ineligible to vote	3%	14
Don't know	2%	9
Total	100%	552

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	10%	54
Yes	90%	481
Ineligible to vote	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
Total	100%	535

Question D16: Has Cell Phone		
Do you have a cell phone?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	7%	41
Yes	93%	519
Total	100%	560

Question D17: Has Land Line		
Do you have a land line at home?	Percent of respondents	Count
No	11%	60
Yes	89%	497
Total	100%	558

Question D18: Primary Phone		
If you have both a cell phone and a land line, which do you consider your primary telephone number?	Percent of respondents	Count
Cell	16%	73
Land line	70%	326
Both	14%	64
Total	100%	463

APPENDIX B: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) 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 NCS 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 NCS is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The NCS permits questions to test support for local policies and answers to its questions also speak to community trust and involvement in community-building activities as well as to resident demographic characteristics.

SURVEY VALIDITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

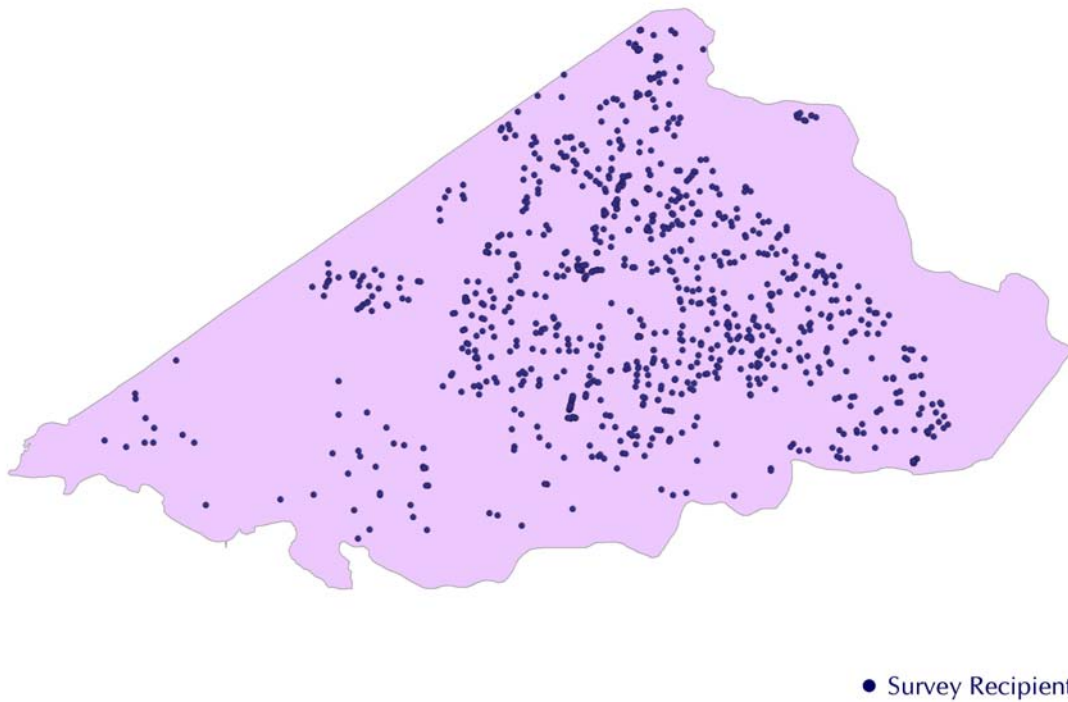
SURVEY SAMPLING

“Sampling” refers to the method by which survey recipients were chosen. All households within the Town of Needham were eligible to participate in the survey; 1,200 were selected to receive the survey. These 1,200 households were randomly selected from a comprehensive list of all housing units within the Town of Needham 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 Town of Needham 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 Town of Needham boundaries were removed from consideration.

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

FIGURE 93: LOCATION OF SURVEY RECIPIENTS

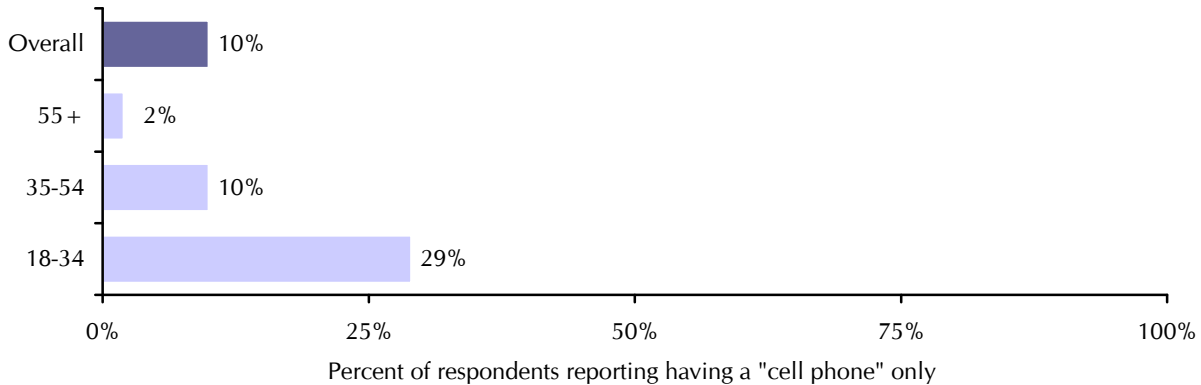
The National Citizen Survey™ Town of Needham, MA 2010



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.

In response to the growing number of the cell-phone population (so-called “cord cutters”), which includes a large proportion of young adults, questions about cell phones and land lines were added to The NCS™ questionnaire. According to recent estimates, about 12 percent of all U.S. households have a cell phone but no landline. By the end of 2010, researchers predict that 40 percent of Americans 18 to 30 years old will have only a cell phone and no landline.³

FIGURE 94: PREVALENCE OF CELL-PHONE ONLY RESPONDENTS IN NEEDHAM



SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Selected households received three mailings, one week apart, beginning April 21, 2010. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey. The next mailing contained a letter from the town manager inviting the household to participate, a questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope. A portion of those receiving the survey received an invitation in the letter to complete the survey online. 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. Nine surveys were completed online. Completed surveys were collected over the following five weeks.

SURVEY RESPONSE RATE AND CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

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 level of confidence, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the survey results because some residents' opinions are relied on to estimate all residents' opinions. The confidence interval for the Town of Needham survey is no greater than plus or minus four percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample (573 completed surveys).

A 95% confidence interval indicates that for every 100 random samples of this many residents, 95 of the confidence intervals created will include the “true” population response. This theory is applied in practice to mean that the “true” perspective of the target population lies within the confidence interval created for a single survey. For example, if 75% of residents rate a service as “excellent” or “good,” then the 4% margin of error (for the 95% confidence interval) indicates that the range of likely responses for the entire jurisdiction is between 71% and 79%. This source of error is called sampling error. In addition to sampling error, other sources of error may affect any

³ . Paul J. Lavrakas, Charles D. Shuttles, Charlotte Steeh, and Howard Fienberg, “The State of Surveying Cell Phone Numbers in the United States: 2007 and Beyond,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71, no. 5 (2007), 840-854.

survey, including the non-response of residents with opinions different from survey responders. 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.

For subgroups of responses, the margin of error increases because the sample size for the subgroup is smaller. For subgroups of approximately 100 respondents, the margin of error is plus or minus 10 percentage points

SURVEY PROCESSING (DATA ENTRY)

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

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

SURVEY DATA WEIGHTING

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample were compared to those found in the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (ACS) Census estimates for adults in the Town of Needham. 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 unit type and sex and 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 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. Data weighting can adjust up to 5 demographic variables. Several different weighting “schemes” may be 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.

Needham Citizen Survey Weighting Table			
Characteristic	Population Norm ⁴	Unweighted Data	Weighted Data
Housing			
Rent home	17%	21%	14%
Own home	83%	79%	86%
Detached unit	78%	63%	77%
Attached unit	22%	37%	23%
Race and Ethnicity			
White alone, not Hispanic	91%	91%	89%
Hispanic and/or other race	9%	9%	11%
Sex and Age			
Female	54%	59%	55%
Male	46%	41%	45%
18-34 years of age	14%	5%	15%
35-54 years of age	46%	31%	46%
55+ years of age	40%	64%	40%
Females 18-34	7%	3%	7%
Females 35-54	25%	20%	25%
Females 55+	22%	37%	22%
Males 18-34	8%	3%	8%
Males 35-54	21%	12%	21%
Males 55+	17%	27%	17%

⁴ Source: 2006-2008 ACS

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 are conducted by NRC with those that others have conducted. The integration methods have been thoroughly described not only in the Citizen Surveys book, but also in *Public Administration Review, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Scholars who specialize in the analysis of citizen surveys regularly have relied on 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 comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each jurisdiction; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. NRC adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant.

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 and 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 Needham to the Benchmark Database

The Town of Needham chose to have comparisons made to the entire database. A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was

asked) has been provided when a similar question on the Town of Needham Survey was included in NRC's database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. For most questions compared to the entire dataset, there were more than 100 jurisdictions included in the benchmark comparison.

Where comparisons for quality ratings were available, the Town of Needham results were generally noted as being "above" the benchmark, "below" the benchmark or "similar" to the benchmark. For some questions – those related to resident behavior, circumstance or to a local problem – the comparison to the benchmark is designated as "more," "similar" or "less" (for example, the percent of crime victims, residents visiting a park or residents identifying code enforcement as a problem.) In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of "much," (for example, "much less" or "much above"). These labels come from a statistical comparison of the Town of Needham's rating to the benchmark where a rating is considered "similar" if it is within the margin of error; "above," "below," "more" or "less" if the difference between your jurisdiction's rating and the benchmark is greater the margin of error; and "much above," "much below," "much more" or "much less" if the difference between your jurisdiction's rating and the benchmark is more than twice the margin of error.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY MATERIALS

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

Dear Needham Resident,

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

Sincerely,



Kate Fitzpatrick
Town Manager

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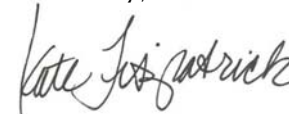


Kate Fitzpatrick
Town Manager

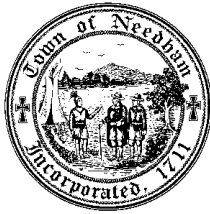
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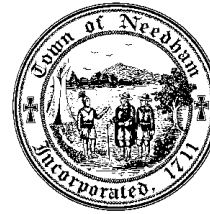


Kate Fitzpatrick
Town Manager



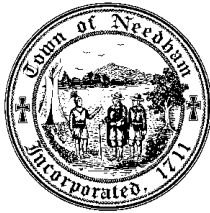
Town of Needham
Town Hall
1471 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02492

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



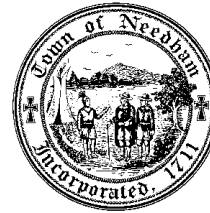
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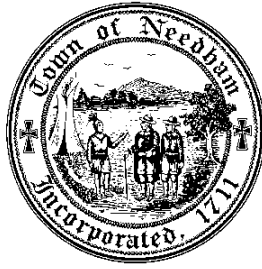
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April 2010

Dear Needham Resident:

The Town of Needham wants to know what you think about our community and municipal government. You have been randomly selected to participate in Needham's 2010 Citizen Survey.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed Citizen Survey. Your feedback will help the Town set benchmarks for tracking the quality of services provided to residents. Your answers will help the Town 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 Needham residents, the adult (anyone 18 years or older) in your household who most recently had a birthday should complete this survey. Year of birth of the adult does not matter.

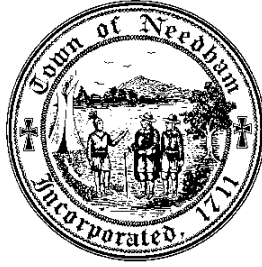
Please have the appropriate member of the household spend a few minutes to answer all the questions and return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. **Your responses will remain completely anonymous.**

Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey please call 781-455-7500 ext 201.

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

Sincerely,

Kate Fitzpatrick
Town Manager



May 2010

Dear Needham Resident:

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

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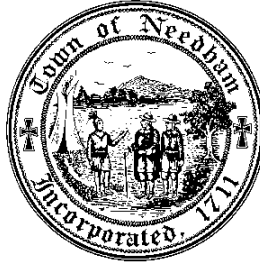
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You may complete the survey online if you would prefer, at:

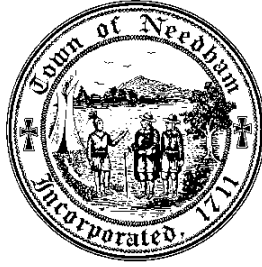
<http://www.n-r-c.com/survey/needham.htm>.

Your participation in this survey is very important – especially since your household is one of only a small number of households being surveyed. If you have any questions about the Citizen Survey please call 781-455-7500 ext 201.

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Kate Fitzpatrick
Town Manager

The Town of Needham 2010 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 Needham:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Needham as a place to live	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live	1	2	3	4	5
Needham as a place to raise children	1	2	3	4	5
Needham as a place to work	1	2	3	4	5
Needham as a place to retire.....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Needham	1	2	3	4	5

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

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
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 Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Needham.....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Needham.....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Educational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer.....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of car travel in Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bus travel in Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of rail or subway travel in Needham.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of bicycle travel in Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic flow on major streets.....	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of public parking	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality child care	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventative health services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality.....	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of overall natural environment in Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Needham.....	1	2	3	4	5

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

	<i>Much too slow</i>	<i>Somewhat too slow</i>	<i>Right amount</i>	<i>Somewhat too fast</i>	<i>Much too fast</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
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 Needham?
 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 Needham:

	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 Needham's downtown area during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Needham's downtown area after dark.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Police Department within the last 12 months?
 No → Go to Question 9 Yes → Go to Question 8 Don't know → Go to Question 9

8. What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Police Department?
 Excellent Good Fair Poor Don't know

9. During the past twelve months, were you or anyone in your household the victim of any crime?
 No → Go to Question 11 Yes → Go to Question 10 Don't know → Go to Question 11

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

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

	Never	Once or twice	3 to 12 times	13 to 26 times	More than 26 times
Used Needham public libraries or their services	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a recreation program or activity	1	2	3	4	5
Visited a neighborhood park or Town park	1	2	3	4	5
Ridden a local bus within Needham	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 Town-sponsored public meeting on cable television, the Internet or other media.....	1	2	3	4	5
Visited the Town of Needham Web site (at www.needhamma.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 Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Needham	1	2	3	4	5
Participated in a club or civic group in Needham.....	1	2	3	4	5
Provided help to a friend or neighbor	1	2	3	4	5

12. 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
 Less than several times a month

The Town of Needham 2010 Citizen Survey

13. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Needham:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Police services	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance or emergency medical services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling.....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm drainage.....	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services	1	2	3	4	5
Town 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
Animal control	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development	1	2	3	4	5
Health services	1	2	3	4	5
Services to seniors.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to youth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Services to low-income people	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services	1	2	3	4	5
Public information services	1	2	3	4	5
Public schools.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cable television	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts.....	1	2	3	4	5
Building Department inspection services	1	2	3	4	5

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

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The Town of Needham	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government	1	2	3	4	5
The State Government	1	2	3	4	5
Norfolk County Government	1	2	3	4	5

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

	<i>Very likely</i>	<i>Somewhat likely</i>	<i>Somewhat unlikely</i>	<i>Very unlikely</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Recommend living in Needham to someone who asks	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Needham for the next five years.....	1	2	3	4	5

16. 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

17. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham Fire Department within the last 12 months?

- No → Go to Question 19
 Yes → Go to Question 18
 Don't know → Go to Question 19

18. What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the Town of Needham Fire Department?

- Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor
 Don't know

19. Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the Town of Needham within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?

- No → Go to Question 21
 Yes → Go to Question 20

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

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
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

21. Please rate the following categories of Needham government performance:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
The value of services for the taxes paid to Needham	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Needham is taking	1	2	3	4	5
The job Needham government does at welcoming citizen involvement	1	2	3	4	5

22. Please rate how useful, if at all, the Town of Needham Web site (www.needhamma.gov) is for conducting business with the Town:

- Very useful
 Somewhat useful
 Not very useful
 Not at all useful
 Don't know

The Town of Needham 2010 Citizen Survey

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 Needham?

- Less than 2 years 11-20 years
- 2-5 years More than 20 years
- 6-10 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 questions 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 55-64 years
- 25-34 years 65-74 years
- 35-44 years 75 years or older
- 45-54 years

D13. What is your sex?

- Female Male

D14. Are you registered to vote in your jurisdiction?

- No Ineligible to vote
- Yes Don't know

D15. Many people don't have time to vote in elections. Did you vote in the last general election?

- No Ineligible to vote
- Yes Don't know

D16. Do you have a cell phone?

- No Yes

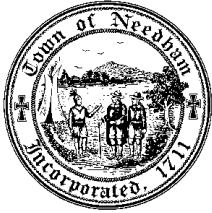
D17. Do you have a land line at home?

- No Yes

D18. If you have both a cell phone and a land line, which do you consider your primary telephone number?

- Cell Land line Both

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



Town of Needham
Town Hall
1471 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02492

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