



City Council Staff Report

Subject: 2017 National Citizen Survey Presentation
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Summary Recommendation

Staff will present the findings of the 2017 National Citizen Survey and discuss with Council the Community Livability Report, trends over time, and survey conclusions. Staff will incorporate these findings into a reference document for Council to use during Council's annual retreat in February 2018, which may be used to influence the status of Council's Critical and Top Priorities. The survey data can also be used during the upcoming Budgeting for Outcomes process for FY18 – FY19, a process designed to respond to the community's most pressing needs through added resources.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the National Citizen Survey is to rate the quality and level of satisfaction with a broad range of municipal and other government services, as well as to measure overall quality, community engagement and civic participation. This is the fourth time the City has participated in the National Citizen Survey. We began participating in the survey in 2011 with direction from Council to conduct it biennially to coincide with the budget cycle.

Overall, ratings in Park City for 2017 generally remained stable. Of the 130 items for which comparisons were available, 107 items were rated similarly in 2015 and 2017, 17 items showed a decrease in ratings and six showed an increase in ratings.

Acronyms

ICMA	International City/County Management Association
NCS	National Citizen Survey
NRC	National Research Center, Inc.
PCMC	Park City Municipal Corporation
BFO	Budgeting for Outcomes

Background

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 survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results among participating NCS communities. The NCS captures residents' opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement). Our participation provides us with local data as well as benchmark data against the more than 500 other communities across the nation that also participate in the National Citizen Survey.

The data gathered also uploads directly into the performance measurement reports and data bases used by the City. These are used as high-level measures or key indicators that help the City gauge effectiveness and allow the City to compare its performance to that of similar entities and monitor these efforts over time. This data is also tied to the City's Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) process, helping to ensure that resources are allocated to the most effective efforts related to achieving the community's vision.

Our first survey was conducted in July 2011. This survey established a baseline for community benchmarks. We repeated the survey in 2013, 2015 and most recently in fall 2017.

Analysis

The National Citizens Survey provides the opinions of a representative sample of 369 residents within the Park City municipal boundary. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for all respondents. It is a statistically valid survey. The 2017 was launched in early September and concluded on October 18, 2017. Participating households were selected at random. Multiple mailings including self-addressed and postage paid return envelopes are conducted to encourage participation. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community. Park City's response rate for the survey was 27 percent, which was slightly higher than previous participation levels.

Additionally, the City launched an opt-in online survey November 15 – December 1. The online survey provided an opportunity for residents and those who work in Park City, who were not selected for the mailed survey, to provide feedback to the same questions included on the mailed survey. Results from the online survey will be reported separately from the mailed survey.

Report Types

The National Citizen Survey consists of four reports: Community Livability, Dashboard Summary of Findings, Technical Appendices and Trends over Time.

Community Livability Report: This report is the most universal and summarizes all the results and key findings.

Dashboard Summary of Findings: This report offers a simplified ("rolled up") quantitative view of the data, as well as comparison details for each question (the relationship to the benchmark and over time).

Trends over Time: This report reveals how resident perspectives and behaviors have changed across two or more administrations of The NCS. The report offers a high level view of how rankings have changed as well as relative position to the benchmark including all administrations of The NCS.

Technical Appendices: The appendices include the details about survey methods, individual response options selected for each question – with and without the "don't know" option – and detailed benchmark results. This document speaks to the credibility of data and the most granular detail of results.

2017 Community Livability Findings

Community Characteristics

Overall quality of life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of the Park City community.

- 95% rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Park City as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation.
- Roughly 9 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall image and overall appearance of the city and their neighborhood as a place to live (higher than the benchmark) and to the city as place to raise children (similar to the benchmark).
- Three-quarters of Park City residents were pleased with the city as a place to retire and this was also higher than ratings seen elsewhere.
- Survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, ratings were strong and residents gave evaluations that were higher than the national benchmark to most aspects: out of 43 total aspects, residents gave above average marks to 22. The community amenities rated above the benchmark were predominant in the areas of Natural Environment and Mobility, although a majority of characteristics in most of the facets were rated higher than the national benchmarks.
- The few community characteristics falling below the national benchmark related to affordability in park city, such as cost of living and housing, the cost of living, as well as child care and public parking. When compared to 2015, ratings in 2017 for housing options, public parking, traffic flow and overall ease of travel declined, as did some aspects of Education and Enrichment.

Governance

The overall quality of the services provided by Park City as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life.

- 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall quality of services provided by Park City and roughly half were pleased with the services provided by the Federal Government; both of these ratings were similar to those given in other communities across the country.
- About 8 in 10 residents positively rated customer service provided by the City and most of the other aspects of government performance received favorable marks from about 6 in 10 residents. All of these assessments were similar to the benchmark comparison.
- Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Park City. Most services were rated positively by at least 7 out of 10 residents. Further, nearly all of the City services received ratings similar to or higher than the benchmark; 14 of 34 were higher. Services rated higher than the nation often related to Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment, and the Natural Environment. Only one City-provided service, drinking water, received lower than average ratings.
- Most other City service evaluations remained stable since the 2015 survey administration; ratings for street repair, street cleaning and drinking water decreased, while those for animal control and traffic signal timing improved.

Participation

An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history.

- In Park City, about three-quarters of residents gave positive marks to the sense of community in the city, which was higher than ratings given elsewhere. More than 8 in 10 residents would recommend living in the city to someone who asked and planned to remain in Park City for the next five years. Approximately one-half of the participants surveyed had contacted the City in the 12 months prior to the survey. These participation levels were similar to the national benchmark.
- Of 32 total Participation aspects, residents participated in 16 of them at rates higher than the benchmark. Levels of participation within the facets of Mobility, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment, and Community Engagement were especially strong.
- When compared to 2015, Park City residents were more likely in 2017 to have stocked supplies for an emergency, campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate or contacted City elected officials, but less likely to have not been a crime victim, used City recreation centers, interacted with their neighbors or participated in a club. They also were less likely to recommend living in Park City to someone who asked in 2017 compared to 2015.

Special Topics

Residents were asked to rate City performance related to City Council's Critical and Top Priorities.

- At least 7 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to arts and culture, historic preservation, community wellbeing, open space acquisition, energy, conservation of natural resources, community engagement and regional collaboration.
- Park City residents were least likely to give positive ratings to transportation, housing and the overall affordability of the city; fewer than 50% of respondents rated City performance as excellent or good in these priority areas.

Trends over Time

Trend data for Park City - comparing the 2017 ratings to previous survey results in 2015, 2013 and 2011 - represents 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.

Notable trends over time included the following:

- Ratings declined in 2017 for several aspects of Mobility. These included traffic flow, overall ease of travel, public parking, street repair and street cleaning. However, the rating for traffic signal timing improved.
- Resident sentiment toward several aspects of Education and Enrichment also declined over time, including K-12 education, cultural/arts/music activities and child care/preschool. Ratings of social events and activities also showed a decrease in positive ratings over time.

- Levels of Participation within Community Engagement changed over time, but to varying degrees. Residents were less likely in 2017 than in 2015 to have interacted with their neighbors or participated in a club, but more likely to have campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate or to have contacted Park City elected officials.

Conclusions

Park City remains a great place to live.

Almost all residents gave positive ratings to Park City as a place to live, the overall quality of life in the city, the overall image and overall appearance of the city and their neighborhood as a place to live; these ratings were higher than those given in other communities across the country. About three-quarters of residents gave positive marks to the sense of community in the city and Park City as a place to retire, which also were higher than opinions given elsewhere. More than 8 in 10 residents would recommend living in the city to someone who asked and planned to remain in Park City for the next five years.

The Natural Environment is an asset.

As in 2015, residents felt the Natural Environment was an important City priority, and ratings within this facet tended to be strong. About 9 in 10 gave positive evaluations to the overall natural environment, cleanliness and air quality; these levels were all higher than observed in other communities across the nation. About three-quarters of respondents were pleased with natural areas preservation and open space and these ratings were also above average. Nearly all Park City residents reported recycling at home. Only one aspect of Natural Environment, drinking water, was rated lower than elsewhere, which was a decrease from 2015.

Residents continue to prioritize Mobility.

The ratings provided by Park City residents in the survey indicated that Mobility would be an important focus area for the City in the coming years. Many aspects of Mobility received above-average ratings, including paths and walking trails, ease of travel by walking, by bicycle and by public transportation, street lighting, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and bus or transit services. Further, residents were more likely than those who lived elsewhere to have used public transportation instead of driving, carpoled instead of driving alone or walked or biked instead of driving. However, several Mobility-related items received less positive evaluations in 2017 than in 2015, including traffic flow, overall ease of travel and public parking (this rating was also lower than the national average). When asked about City performance regarding decision-making priorities, about 4 in 10 rated the City's performance on transportation (congestion reduction, local/regional transit projects and partnerships) as excellent or good, 4 in 10 thought it was fair and 2 in 10 felt it was poor.

Housing and affordability are areas of opportunity for the City.

Residents also felt that the Built Environment would be important for the City to focus on in the next two years. While a majority of residents gave positive marks to many aspects of Built Environment and the public places where people want to spend time, fewer than 2 in 10 residents gave positive marks to affordable quality housing or variety of housing options. These ratings were lower than those given elsewhere. Further, while many aspects of Economy received above-average ratings (including the overall economic health of Park City, vibrant downtown area, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities and the City as a place to visit), Park City residents were less likely than others to favorably evaluate its cost of living. While housing and the cost of living are City Council priorities, fewer than half of residents gave the City a positive rating in these two areas. Thus, a continued focus from the City on these priorities was demonstrated through this sounding of public opinion.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Council review and discuss the attached survey reports, and consider referencing this data during the 2018 Council Retreat.

Department Review

Budget, Community Engagement, Executive and Legal Departments have reviewed this report.

Attachment

2017 National Citizen Survey Reports