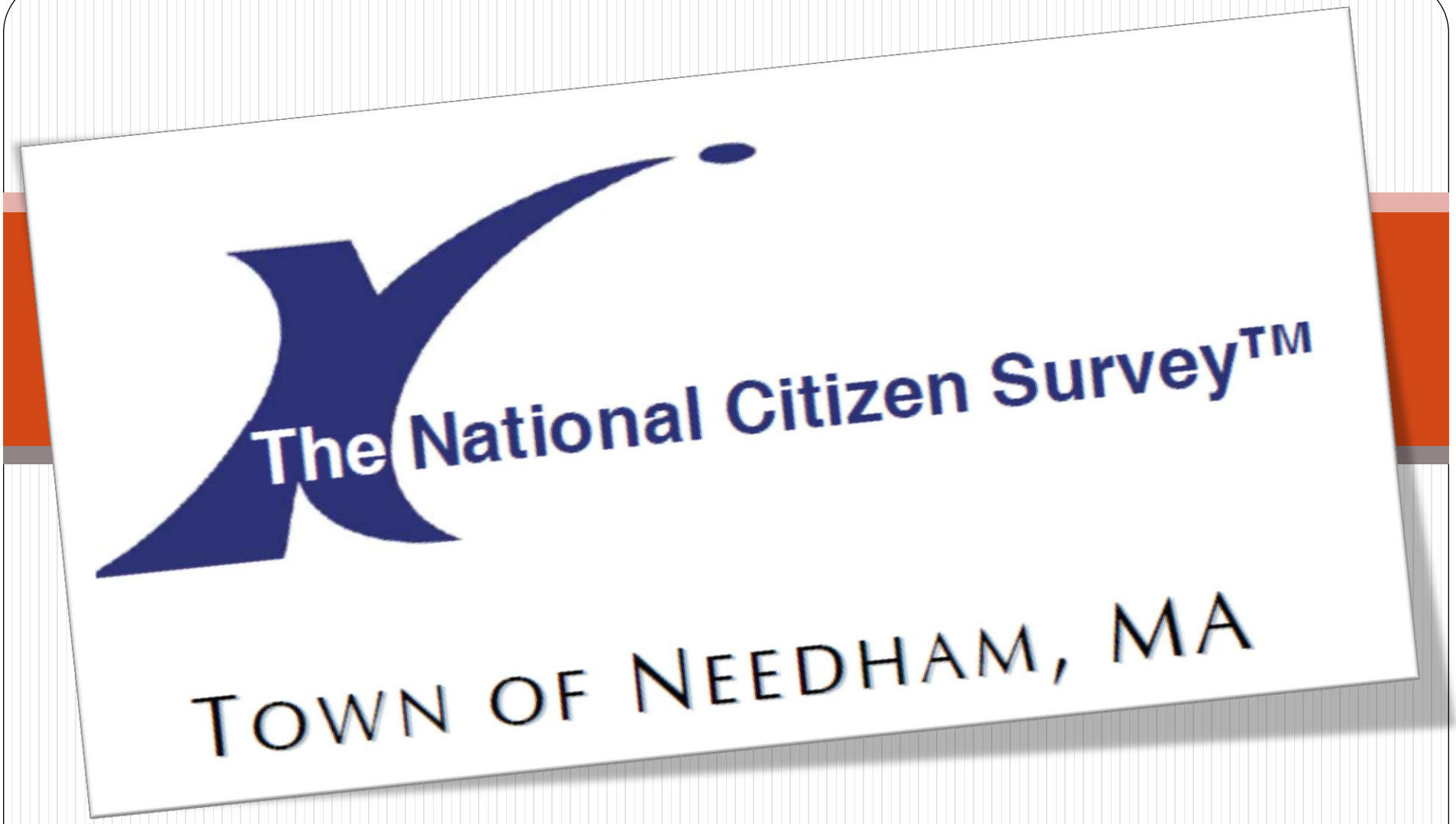


2018 Summary of Findings

The National Citizen Survey is:

- A collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- A statistically valid compilation of resident opinions about community and services provided by local government

Study Methods:

- Mailed survey to approximately **1,600** households (late April); an increase of 100 households from prior survey years
- **591** surveys returned; **39%** response rate

  (1,532 eligible households)
- 4% margin of error
- 6th time survey has been conducted – last time in 2016, and before that in 2014, 2012, 2010, and the first time in 2008
- Benchmark to **500** communities nation-wide
- First year a web-based option was offered – 141 respondees

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

Results can be used for:

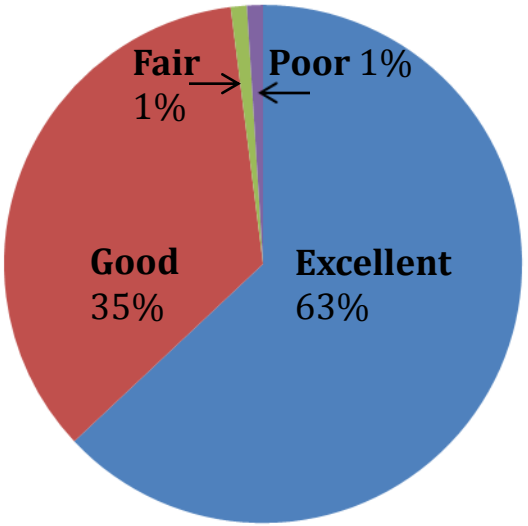
- ☑ Planning
- ☑ Resource Allocation
- ☑ Performance Measurement
- ☑ Program and Policy Evaluation
- Spending
- ☑ Monitor Trends in Resident Opinion

COMMUNITY LIVABILITY

Needham as a Place to Live

98%

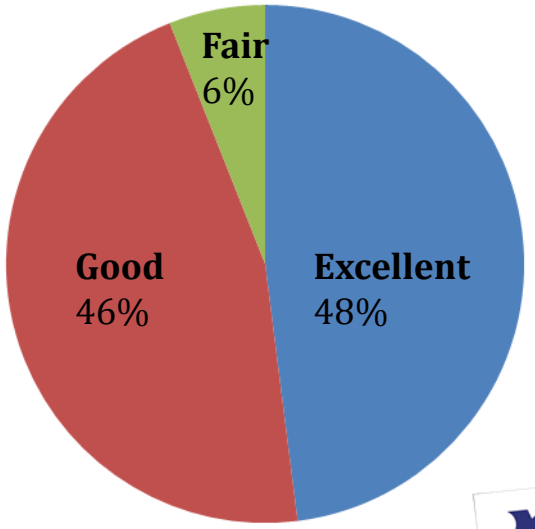
"Excellent" or "Good"



Quality of Life in Needham

94%

"Excellent" or "Good"



The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS GENERAL

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS GENERAL	Percent Positive	Ranked
The overall quality of life in Needham	94%	44 of 479
Overall image or reputation of Needham	94%	26 of 366
Needham as a place to live	98%	35 of 411
Your neighborhood as a place to live	93%	21 of 327
Needham as a place to raise children	98%	12 of 400
Overall appearance of Needham	89%	62 of 375

The National Citizen Survey™
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS BY FACET

SAFETY	Percent Positive	Ranked
Overall feeling of safety in Needham	99%	7 of 350
In Needham's downtown/commercial area during the day	98%	15 of 326

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS BY FACET

MOBILITY	Percent Positive	Ranked
Ease of Walking	83%	37 of 315
Overall ease of getting to places usually visited	89%	17 of 253
#Ease of Travel by public transportation in Needham	55%	35 of 214

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Cleanliness of Needham	90%	49 of 295
Air Quality	93%	34 of 254

 # Indicates new addition to EXCEEDS Benchmark list in 2018

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS BY FACET

ECONOMY	Percent Positive	Ranked
Overall economic health of Needham	89%	18 of 248
Employment opportunities	56%	52 of 322
Needham as a place to work	76%	52 of 377

RECREATION & WELLNESS	Percent Positive	Ranked
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	71%	4 of 214
Availability of preventive health services	88%	9 of 243
Availability of affordable quality health care	85%	10 of 270

The National Citizen Survey™
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS BY FACET

EDUCATION & ENRICHMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Overall opportunities for education & enrichment	91%	25 of 245
Adult educational opportunities	83%	13 of 222
K-12 education	96%*	14 of 282

** Indicates MUCH HIGHER than National Benchmark*

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

GOVERNANCE GENERAL

GOVERNANCE GENERAL	Percent Positive	Ranked
# Services provided by the Town of Needham	91%	38 of 452
# Generally acting in the best interest of the community	73%	28 of 248
Being honest	73%	24 of 240
#Treating all residents fairly	73%	25 of 245

 # Indicates new addition to EXCEEDS Benchmark list in 2018

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

GOVERNANCE BY FACET

SAFETY	Percent Positive	Ranked
Police services	96%	10 of 490
Fire services	99%	8 of 410
Ambulance or emergency medical services	97%	14 of 370
Crime prevention	97%*	6 of 379
Fire prevention & education	94%	12 of 299
Animal control	81%	36 of 360

MOBILITY	Percent Positive	Ranked
#Snow Removal	78%	47 of 307

 # Indicates new addition to EXCEEDS Benchmark list in 2018

** Indicates MUCH HIGHER than National Benchmark*

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

GOVERNANCE BY FACET

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Drinking water	86%	38 of 335

BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Cable television	76%	4 of 209
#Sewer Services	91%	23 of 339

ECONOMY	Percent Positive	Ranked
#Economic Development	70%	45 of 298

 # Indicates new addition to EXCEEDS Benchmark list in 2018

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

GOVERNANCE BY FACET

RECREATION & WELLNESS	Percent Positive	Ranked
Health services	91%	3 of 223

EDUCATION & ENRICHMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Public library services	96%	13 of 361

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

PARTICIPATION BY FACET

PARTICIPATION GENERAL	Percent Positive	Ranked
Sense of community	79%	29 of 324
Recommend living in Needham to someone who asks	95%	39 of 296
Contacted Needham (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	57%	33 of 334

SAFETY	Percent Positive	Ranked
Did NOT report a crime to police	91%	1 of 240

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM EXCEEDED NATIONAL BENCHMARK

PARTICIPATION BY FACET

MOBILITY	Percent Positive	Ranked
Used bus, rail, subway or other public transportation instead of driving	56%*	25 of 195
Walked or biked instead of driving	71%	43 of 236

BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Did NOT observe a code violation or other hazard in Needham	73%	15 of 229

EDUCATION & ENRICHMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Used Needham public library or its services	82%	8 of 252

The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

AREAS WHERE NEEDHAM FELL BELOW NATIONAL BENCHMARK

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS BY FACET

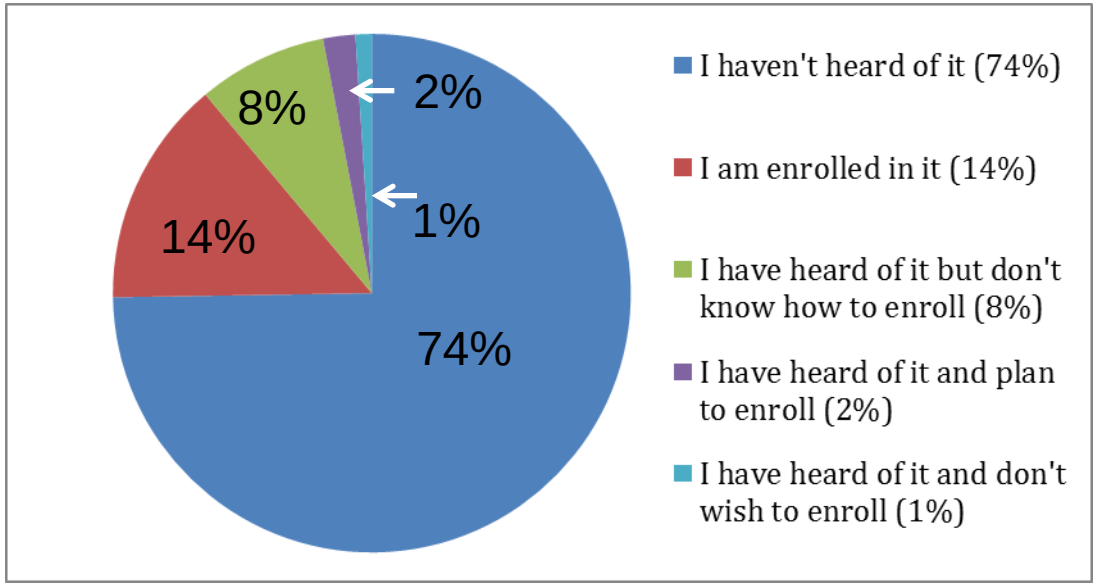
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Percent Positive	Ranked
Availability of affordable quality housing	19%	271 of 313
Variety of housing options	33%	252 of 291

PARTICIPATION BY FACET

ECONOMY	Percent Positive	Ranked
Work inside boundaries of Needham	30%	168 of 234

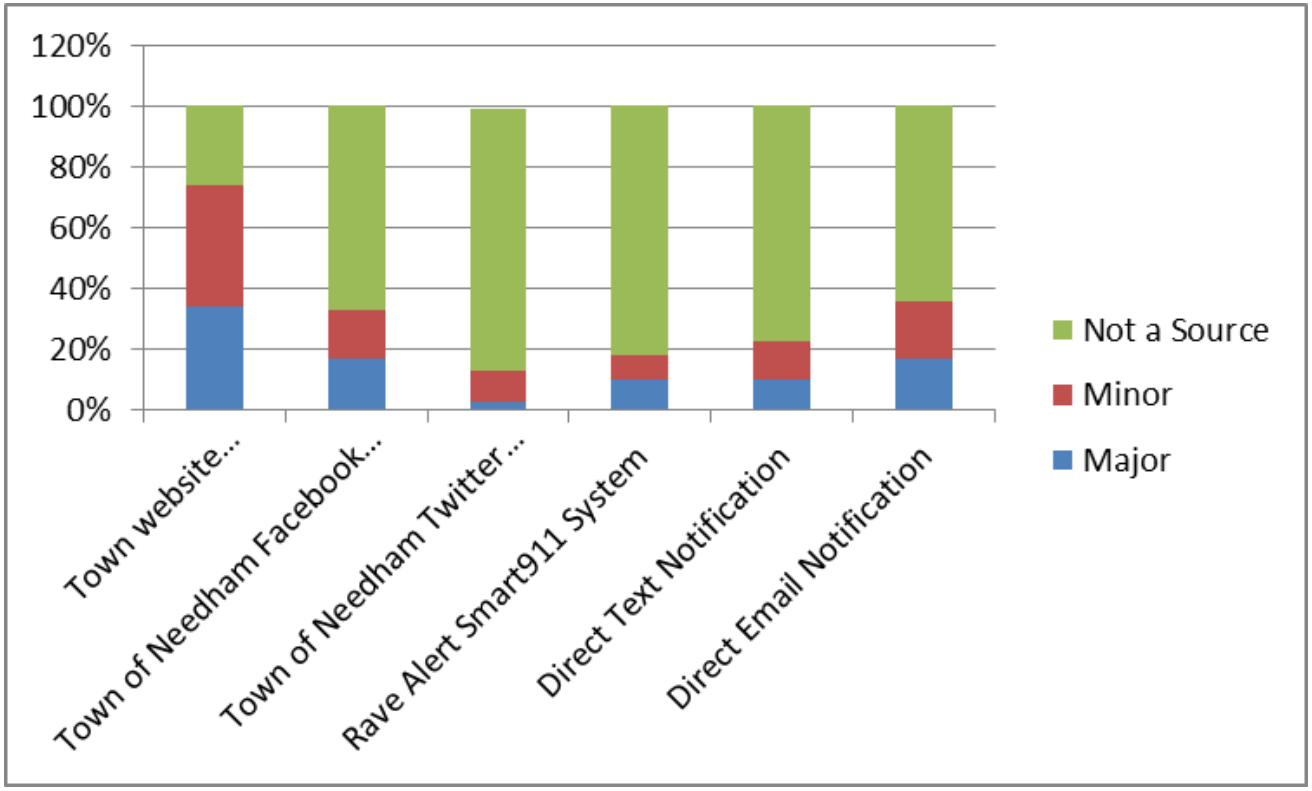
SPECIALTY QUESTIONS: RAVE ALERT SMART911

Rave Alert Smart911 is the official emergency notification system used by the Town of Needham to communicate with residents during emergencies. Please select the statement the best represents your enrollment status:



SPECIALTY QUESTIONS: NEWS SOURCE

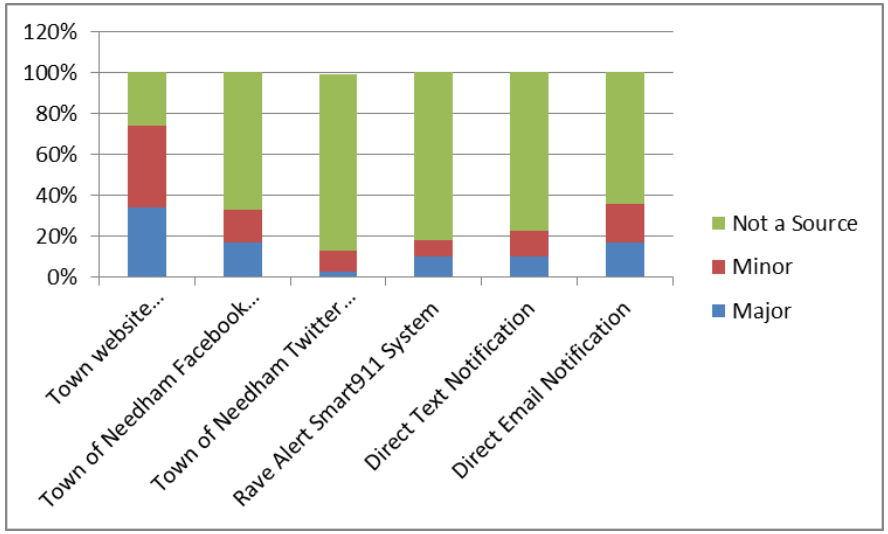
Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, each of the following is for you to obtain news from the Town of Needham?



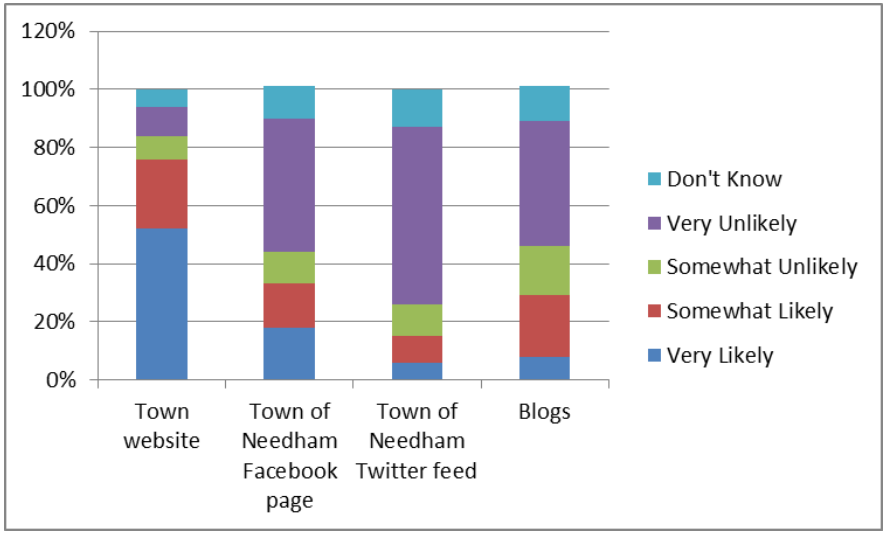
SPECIALTY QUESTIONS: NEEDHAM NEWS SOURCE

Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, each of the following is for you to obtain news from the Town of Needham?

2018



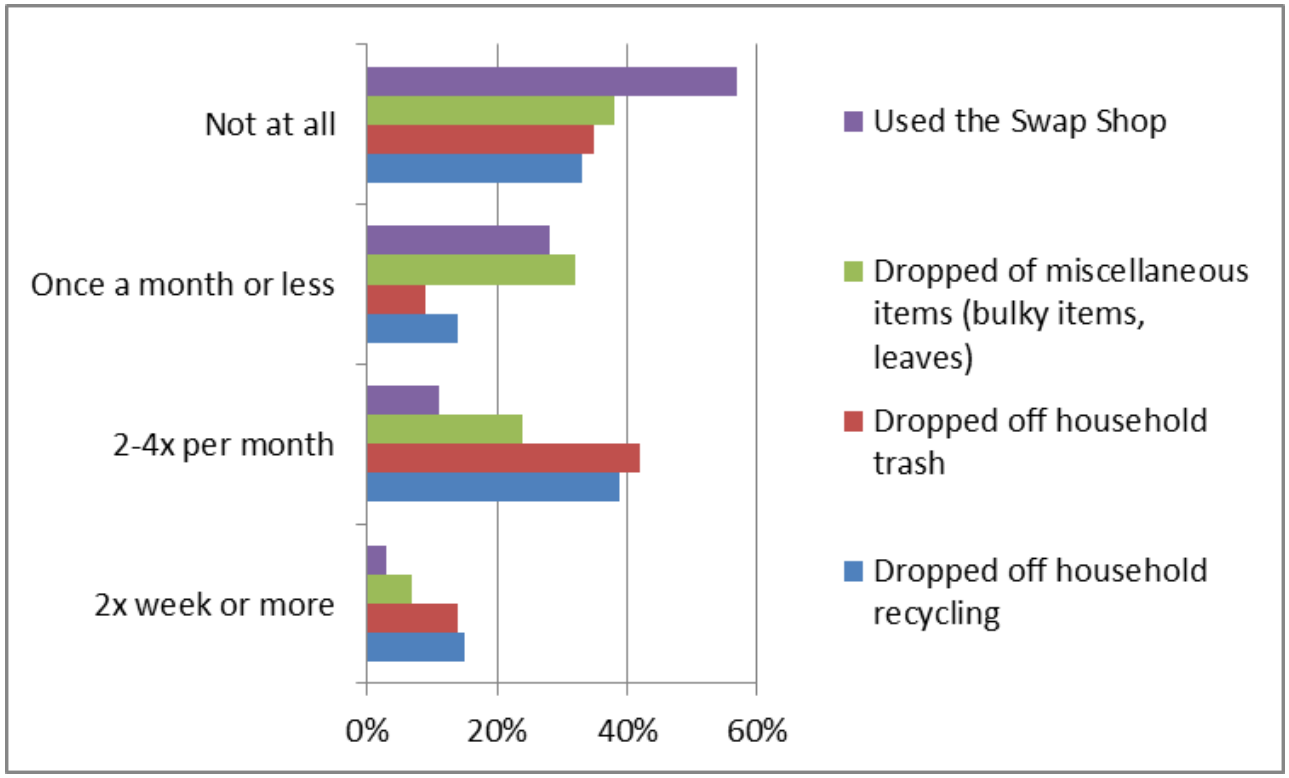
2014



The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

SPECIALTY QUESTIONS: USE OF RECYCLING & TRANSFER STATION

In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following at the Needham Recycling and Transfer Station?



The National Citizen Survey™
Town of Needham, MA

TRENDS COMPARISON: 2008 to 2018

Percent rating positively: Ratings of "Excellent/Good"
Characteristics with a change of 6% or greater

Category	Characteristic	2008 Rating	2018 Rating	Percent change
Economy	Believe economy will have positive impact on income	7%	35%	400%
Economy	Employment opportunities	34%	56%	65%
Education & Enrichment	Cultural / arts / music activities	42%	68%	62%
Education & Enrichment	Childcare / preschool	44%	66%	50%
Mobility	Paths and walking trails	44%	66%	50%
Economy	Shopping opportunities	30%	44%	47%
Mobility	Street repair	32%	45%	41%
Economy	Economic development	52%	70%	35%
Mobility	Street cleaning	55%	72%	31%
Mobility	Sidewalk maintenance	41%	52%	27%

TRENDS COMPARISON: 2008 to 2018

Percent rating positively: Ratings of "Excellent/Good"
Characteristics with a change of 6% or greater

Category	Characteristic	2008 Rating	2018 Rating	Percent change
Mobility	Snow removal	63%	78%	24%
General	Needham's overall appearance	73%	89%	22%
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	72%	87%	21%
Recreation & Wellness	Health care	71%	85%	20%
General Governance	Services provided by the Federal Government	43%	51%	19%
Governance General	Overall direction	60%	70%	17%
Natural Environment	Cleanliness of Needham	78%	90%	15%
Recreation & Wellness	Town Parks	78%	89%	14%
Recreation & Wellness	Recreational opportunities	65%	74%	14%

TRENDS COMPARISON: 2008 to 2018

Percent rating positively: Ratings of "Excellent/Good"
Characteristics with a change of 6% or greater

Category	Characteristic	2008 Rating	2018 Rating	Percent change
Built Environment	Land use, planning and zoning	47%	52%	11%
Recreation & Wellness	Recreation programs	79%	87%	10%
Recreation & Wellness	Health services	83%	91%	10%
Built Environment	Storm drainage	70%	77%	10%
Built Environment	Sewer services	83%	91%	10%
Mobility	Traffic flow	48%	53%	10%
Built Environment	NOT under housing stress	70%	77%	10%
Mobility	Ease of walking	76%	83%	9%
Mobility	Travel by bicycle	50%	54%	8%

TRENDS COMPARISON: 2008 to 2018

Percent rating positively: Ratings of "Excellent/Good"
Characteristics with a change of 6% or greater

Category	Characteristic	2008 Rating	2018 Rating	Percent change
Economy	Business and services	63%	68%	8%
Built Environment	New development in Needham	51%	55%	8%
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	67%	72%	7%
Governance General	Services provided by Needham	85%	91%	7%
Governance General	Welcoming citizen involvement	62%	66%	6%
Governance General	Value of services for taxes paid	62%	66%	6%
General	Needham's overall image	89%	94%	6%
Economy	Place to work	72%	76%	6%

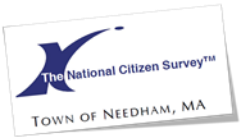
TRENDS COMPARISON: 2008 to 2018

Percent rating positively: Ratings of "Excellent/Good"
Characteristics with a change of 6% or greater

Category	Characteristic	2008 Rating	2018 Rating	Percent change
Community Engagement	Watched a local public meeting	51%	20%	-61%
Community Engagement	Attended a local public meeting	35%	23%	-34%
Mobility	Travel by public transportation	78%	55%	-29%
General Participation	Contacted Needham employees	74%	57%	-23%
Community Engagement	Participated in a club	37%	29%	-22%
Education & Enrichment	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	59%	46%	-22%

TRENDS COMPARISON: 2008 to 2018

Percent rating positively: Ratings of "Excellent/Good"
Characteristics with a change of 6% or greater

Category	Characteristic	2008 Rating	2018 Rating	Percent change
Built Environment	Housing options	40%	33%	-18%
Community Engagement	Volunteered	51%	42%	-18%
Built Environment	Affordable quality housing	22%	19%	-14%
Recreation & Wellness	Visited a Town park	85%	77%	-9%
Education & Enrichment	Used Needham public libraries	88%	82%	-7%
Community Engagement	Voted in local elections	89%	83%	-7%

“Residents identified Safety as one of the most important focus areas for the community and the survey results showed that the Town is meeting resident expectations. Nearly all Needham residents felt safe in their neighborhoods and in downtown and gave high marks to the overall feeling of safety. Safety-related services also received high marks from the vast majority of respondents. Ratings for Safety services such as police, fire, ambulance/EMS, crime prevention, fire prevention and animal control were all higher than the national benchmarks. Not only were most ratings higher than the benchmarks, but some of the ratings were among the highest ever recorded in NRC’s benchmarking database. Needham ranked in the top 10 out of over 400 jurisdictions nationwide for the overall feeling of safety, police services, crime prevention and fire services.”