



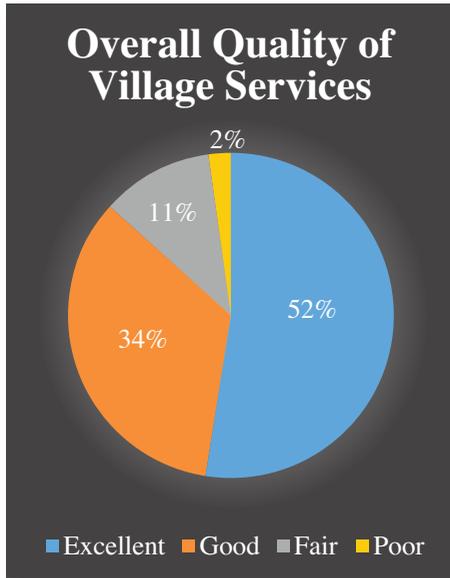
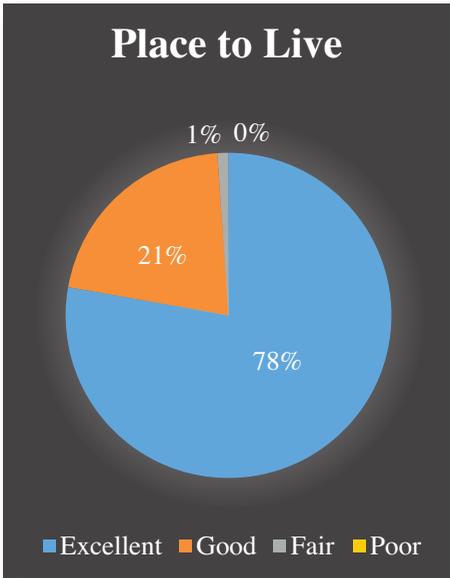
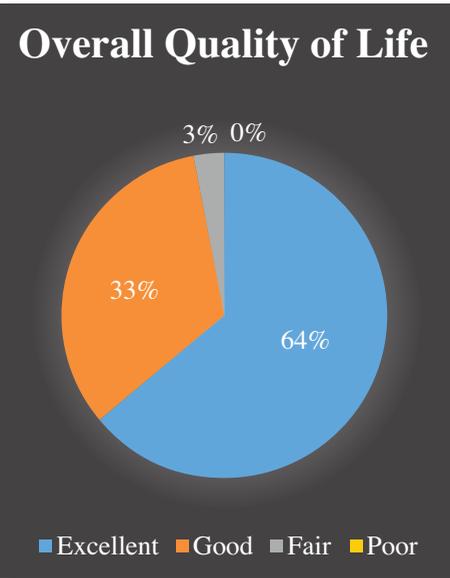
# The National Citizen Survey

The 2015 National Citizen Survey (NCS) of the Village of Western Springs was conducted by The National Research Center in Boulder, CO. This was the National Research Center’s first time surveying the Village of Western Springs in their 21 years of conducting community livability surveys for units of local government. The NCS categorizes community livability by each community’s characteristics, governance, and participation. The NCS creates questions based on safety, mobility, natural environment, built environment, economy, recreation and wellness, education and enrichment, and community engagement to determine the quality of livability for each community. The survey is also designed to help elected officials as well as Village staff understand residents’ opinions on a number of items.

This survey was sent to 3,000 randomly selected homes in the Village and 1,312 surveys were completed and returned for use as data. This 44% return rate is one of the highest NCS return rates recorded; the average return rate for these surveys typically falls in the mid 30% range. Below is a summary of the NCS findings on the subjects of community livability, areas for Village improvement, comparisons to other communities, comparisons by subdivisions within Western Springs, and special topics.

## Community Livability

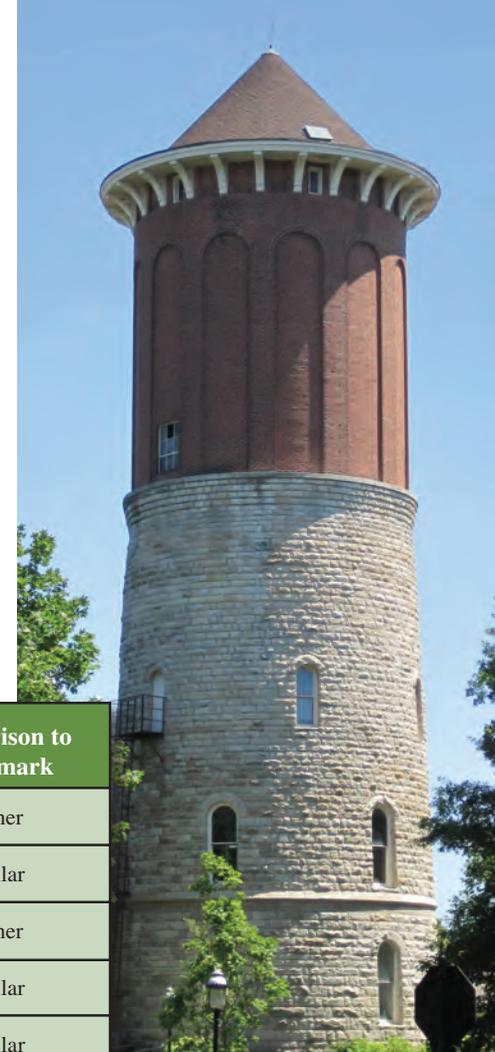
The community livability report of the NCS provides useful information on resident opinions regarding the state of their community. This more general portion of the NCS survey asked residents to rate their community in terms of overall quality of life, as a place to live, and the overall quality of Village services. Responses to the questions regarding community livability in Western Springs are represented below:



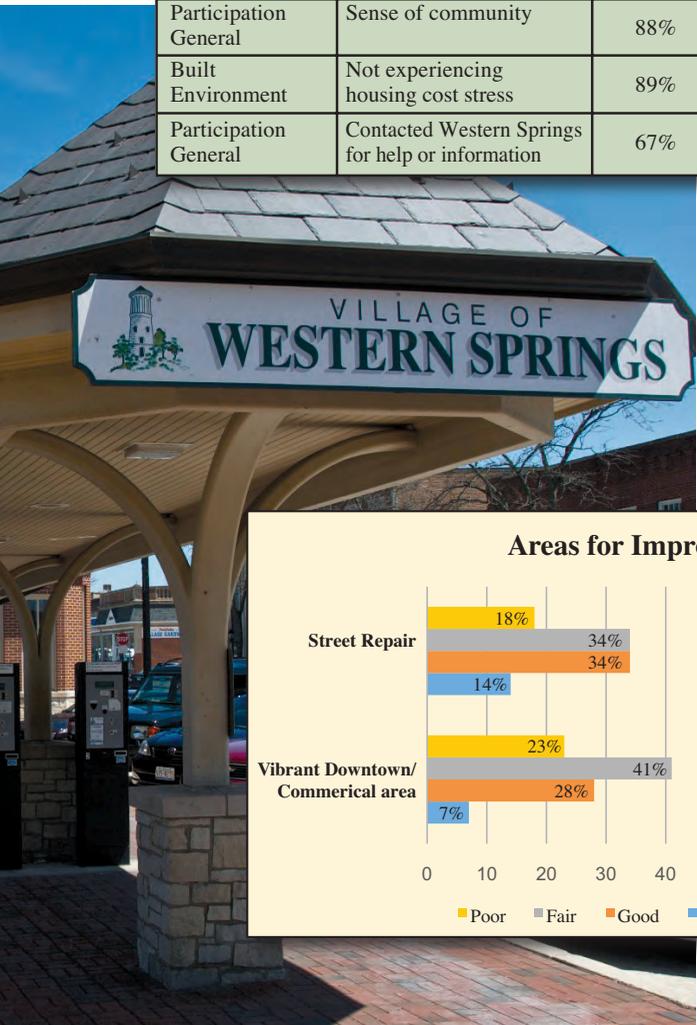
Western Springs scored much higher than other communities with respect to these questions, with residents on average reporting 97%, 99%, and 87% positive responses as demonstrated by the respective pie graphs above.

# Comparison to Other Communities

An important portion of the NCS provides Village staff and elected officials with results from Western Springs in comparison with the 580 communities in the National Research Center’s database. The tool used to compare these communities is called a ‘benchmark,’ or average rating when compared with the overall ratings of other communities. The goal for any community is to receive a rating that is higher than the benchmark for any given category. Of the 127 questions posed to citizens, results found that Western Springs received higher than benchmark ratings on 54 questions. The Village also received ratings similar to the benchmark for 71 questions, and only 2 questions that would be considered lower than the benchmark. In addition to this comparison, the Village also opted for a custom comparison with communities similar to Western Springs in demographics and median household income. This in-depth comparison examined Western Springs side-by-side with 24 similar communities, and Western Springs continued to receive higher than average ratings. For a highlight of some of the ratings that Western Springs received in comparison with similar communities, see the graph below.

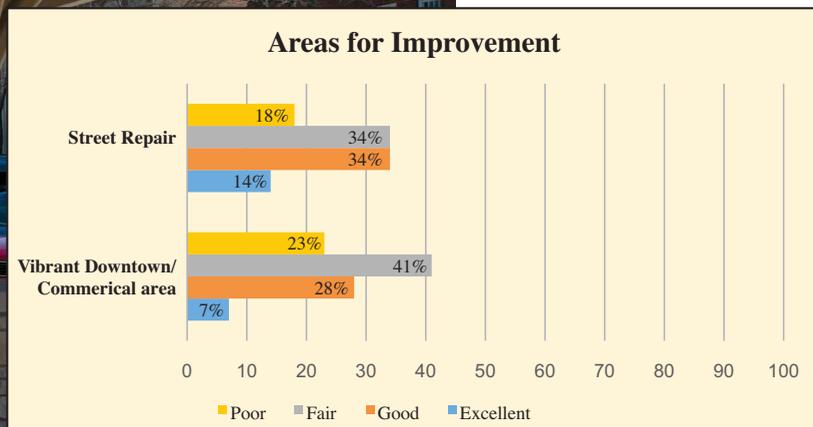


Facet	Question	Percent Positive	Rank	Number of Communities in Comparison	Comparison to Benchmark
Education and Enrichment	The overall quality of K-12 Education	98%	1	13	Higher
General	The overall quality of life in Western Springs	97%	2	20	Similar
General	Western Springs as a place to raise children	99%	1	15	Higher
Safety	Overall feeling of safety in Western Springs	98%	2	9	Similar
Natural Environment	Cleanliness of Western Springs	96%	3	14	Similar
Mobility	Ease of travel by car in Western Springs	90%	2	14	Much Higher
Participation General	Sense of community	88%	1	15	Higher
Built Environment	Not experiencing housing cost stress	89%	1	13	Much Higher
Participation General	Contacted Western Springs for help or information	67%	1	15	Higher



## Areas for Improvement

Although the majority of responses to the NCS results were positive, the survey did find areas for Village improvement. By identifying these low scores, Village staff, elected officials, and residents can work to form solutions and produce a higher level of quality service. Examples of these areas for improvement include downtown development and street repair.



Additionally, the NCS survey also provided space for open-ended questions. Details regarding these open-ended questions can be found on the Village website. These questions found that residents’ greatest concerns were economic development/business and retail, new housing development/code enforcement/zoning, and Village services (parks, recreation, recycling, events, etc.).

# Comparing Neighborhoods

The National Citizen Survey also sought to discover unique information for each neighborhood within the Village of Western Springs. The neighborhoods included in the NCS survey were Field Park, Forest Hills, Old Town North, Old Town South, Ridge Acres, Springdale, and Ridgewood/Timber Trails. With respect to participation by neighborhood, Springdale ranked highest in participation by completing 211 of the 401 surveys sent to the neighborhood, resulting in a 53% response rate. The table below reflects the response of each unique neighborhood to questions regarding the overall health of Western Springs as a community. This information varies little by neighborhood, which relays a positive message that residents, regardless of their neighborhood, have similar feelings and levels of satisfaction regarding the services provided and the Village of Western Springs as a whole.

Questions (data based off of a good/excellent response)	Field Park	Forest Hills	Old Town North	Old Town South	Ridge Acres	Springdale	Ridgewood/ Timber Trails	Overall
The Overall Quality of Life in Western Springs	98%	96%	95%	99%	97%	98%	99%	97%
Traffic Flow on Major Streets	77%	78%	73%	81%	71%	79%	82%	77%
Availability of Paths & Walking Trails	71%	61%	69%	74%	64%	69%	55%	66%
Overall "Built Environment" of Western Springs (overall design, buildings, parks)	83%	83%	79%	85%	76%	83%	86%	82%
Recycling	89%	93%	89%	88%	93%	93%	90%	91%
Drinking Water	76%	66%	68%	73%	64%	73%	60%	69%
Power (electric and/or gas) Utility	77%	74%	73%	81%	79%	87%	81%	78%
Sense of Community	94%	88%	87%	90%	81%	86%	90%	88%
Vote in Local Elections	93%	90%	96%	94%	86%	89%	83%	91%
Health and Wellness Opportunities in Western Springs	84%	78%	70%	82%	68%	80%	77%	76%
Recreational Opportunities	81%	73%	74%	77%	72%	77%	79%	76%

## Questions & Additional Information

Additional information about the Western Springs 2015 National Citizen Survey results can be found at [www.wsprings.com/citizensurvey](http://www.wsprings.com/citizensurvey). On this page of the Village's website, residents can find useful links relating to the NCS survey as well as a video presentation hosted for the Village Board by the National Research Center.

## Special Topics

The Village of Western Springs also included a number of questions specific to the community. These questions included topics such as communication, flooding, garbage disposal, water, and a referendum. The first question included on the NCS asked residents to please indicate which of the following is considered to be the most reliable source for obtaining information about the Village of Western Springs government: Tower Topics, phone calls to Village Hall, or phone calls to a specific department. Participants provided the following results:

- 95% utilize Tower Topics as their primary source of information
- 84% obtain information by calling Village Hall
  - 80% obtain information by calling a specific department

Residents were also asked about their preference between two different types of recycling collections. Participants provided the following results:

- Over 50% of participants prefer or somewhat prefer blue bag (existing service)
- Nearly 40% strongly prefer a 65 gallon cart

The next question asked residents if they would support or oppose a property tax increase of an average of \$70 per year to support the roadway construction program over the next ten years. Participants provided the following results:

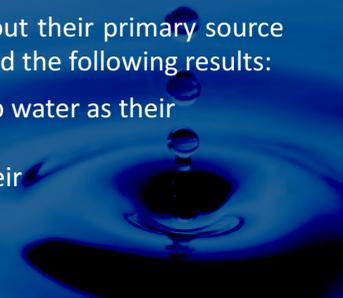
- 23% would strongly support
- 43% would somewhat support
- 18% would somewhat oppose
- 17% would strongly oppose

Residents were then asked if they had experienced various drainage problems over the last six months. Participants provided the following results:

- More than 6 in 10 residents reported never experiencing flooding in their basement
- 4 in 10 residents had never experienced street flooding on their block or yard flooding
- Of those residents, 25% reported yard flooding

The last question asked residents about their primary source of drinking water. Participants provided the following results:

- 76% reported Western Springs tap water as their primary source of drinking water
- 24% reported bottled water as their primary source of drinking water



**TOWER TOPICS**  
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