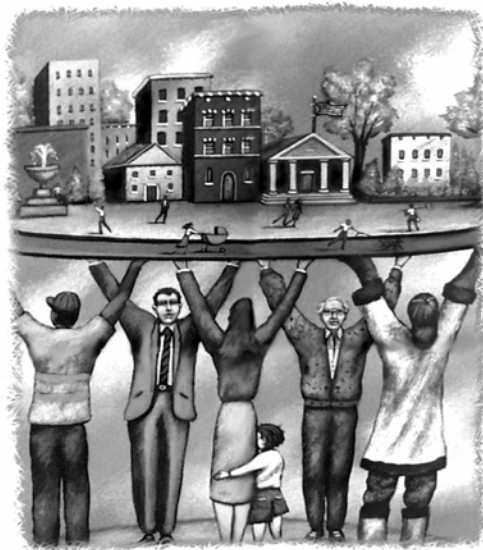


The National
CITIZEN SURVEY™

2004

**Report of Southern US Normative
Comparisons for the City of
Lynchburg, Virginia**



Submitted by:

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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 National Citizen Survey™ 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 National Citizen Survey™ 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 National Citizen Survey™ is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The National Citizen Survey™ 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.

UNDERSTANDING THE NORMATIVE COMPARISONS

Comparison Data

National Research Center, Inc. has collected citizen surveys conducted in over 300 jurisdictions in the United States. Responses to over 4,000 survey questions dealing with resident perceptions about the quality of community life and services provided by local government were recorded, analyzed and stored in an electronic database.

The jurisdictions in the database represent a wide geographic and population range as shown in the table below.

Jurisdiction Characteristic	Percent of Jurisdictions
<i>Region</i>	
West Coast ¹	25%
West ²	12%
North Central West ³	10%
North Central East ⁴	15%
South Central ⁵	9%
South ⁶	20%
Northeast West ⁷	4%
Northeast East ⁸	4%
<i>Population</i>	
less than 40,000	25%
40,000 to 74,999	26%
75,000 to 149,000	20%
150,000 or more	29%

¹Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii

²Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico

³North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota

⁴Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin

⁵Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas

⁶West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, Washington DC

⁷New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey

⁸Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine

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 is one we did not want to dismiss 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, we have 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).

Putting Evaluations Onto a 100-Point Scale

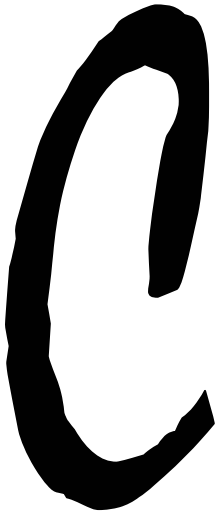
Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 4 representing the best rating and 1 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 5 points based on all respondents.

Interpreting the Results

Comparisons are provided when similar questions are included in our database, and there are at least five other jurisdictions in which the question was asked. Where comparisons are available, three numbers are provided in the table. The first is the rank assigned to your jurisdiction's rating among jurisdictions where a similar question was asked. The second is the number of jurisdictions that asked a similar question. Third, the rank is expressed as a percentile to indicate its distance from the top score. This rank (5th highest out of 25 jurisdictions' results, for example) translates to a percentile (the 80th percentile in this example). A percentile indicates the percent of jurisdictions with identical or lower ratings. Therefore, a rating at the 80th percentile would mean that your jurisdiction's rating is equal to or better than 80 percent of the ratings from other jurisdictions. Conversely, 20 percent of the jurisdictions where a similar question was asked had higher ratings.

Alongside the rank and percentile appears a comparison: "above the norm," "below the norm" or "similar to the norm." This evaluation of "above," "below" or "similar to" comes from a statistical comparison of your jurisdiction's rating to the norm (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked). Differences of 3 or more points on the 100-point scale between your jurisdiction's ratings and the average based on the appropriate comparisons from the database are considered "statistically significant," and thus are marked as "above" or "below" the norm. When differences between your jurisdiction's ratings and the national norms are less than 3 points, they are marked as "similar to" the norm.

The data are represented visually in a chart that accompanies each table. Lynchburg staff selected the follow states from which to compare jurisdictions with the City of Lynchburg: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Tennessee. Lynchburg's percentile for each compared item is marked with a black line on the chart.



COMPARISONS

Figure 1a: Quality of Life Ratings

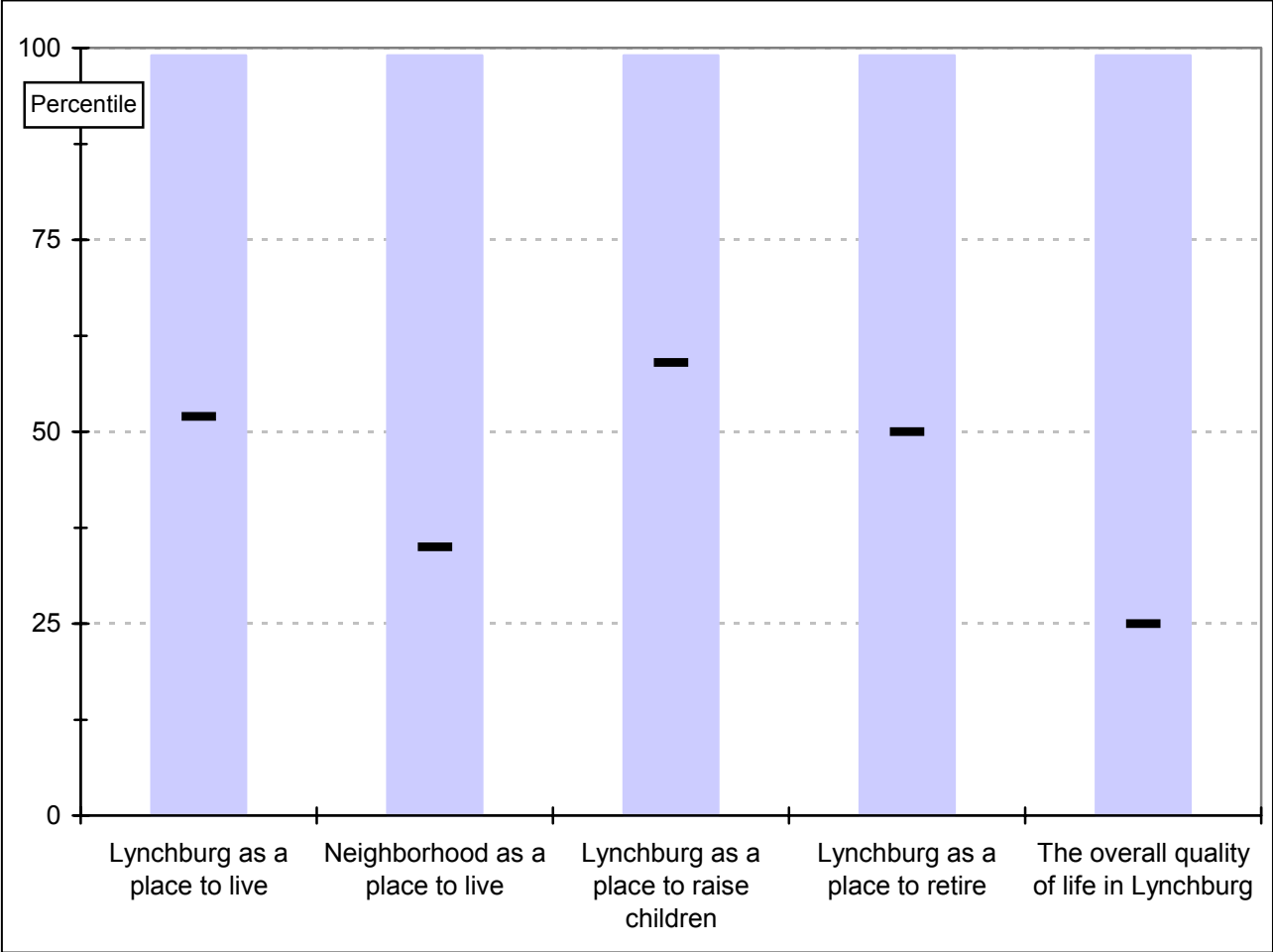


Figure 1b: Quality of Life Ratings					
	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Lynchburg as a place to live	67	24	48	52%ile	similar to the norm
Neighborhood as a place to live	66	12	17	35%ile	similar to the norm
Lynchburg as a place to raise children	67	8	17	59%ile	similar to the norm
Lynchburg as a place to retire	62	9	16	50%ile	similar to the norm
The overall quality of life in Lynchburg	61	16	20	25%ile	below the norm

Figure 2a: Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities

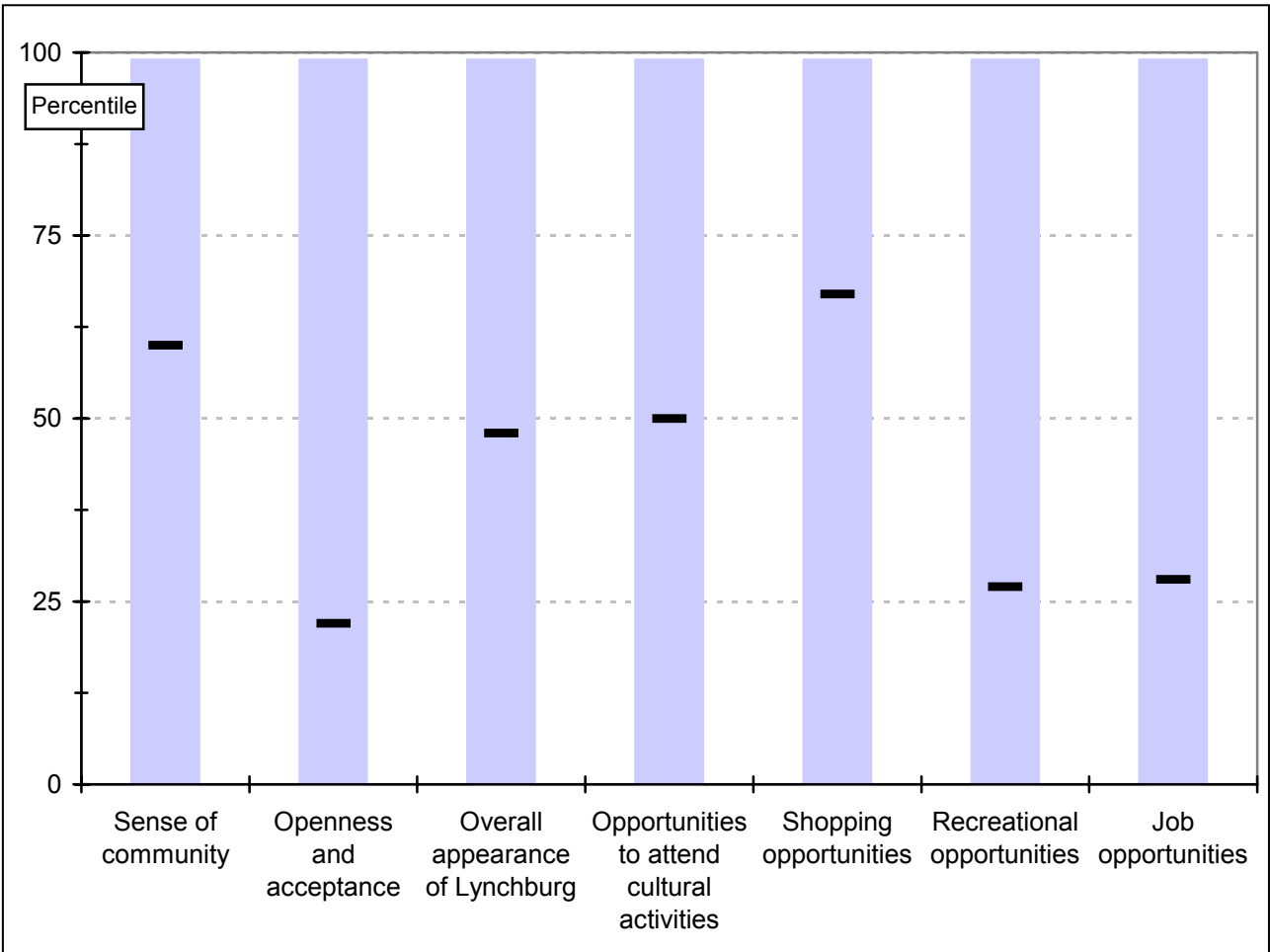


Figure 2b: Characteristics of the Community: General and Opportunities

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Sense of community	54	5	10	60%ile	similar to the norm
Openness and acceptance	45	8	9	22%ile	below the norm
Overall appearance of Lynchburg	55	12	21	48%ile	similar to the norm
Opportunities to attend cultural activities	45	9	16	50%ile	similar to the norm
Shopping opportunities	47	6	15	67%ile	similar to the norm
Recreational opportunities	43	12	15	27%ile	below the norm
Job opportunities	28	19	25	28%ile	below the norm

Report of Normative Comparisons

Figure 3a: Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility

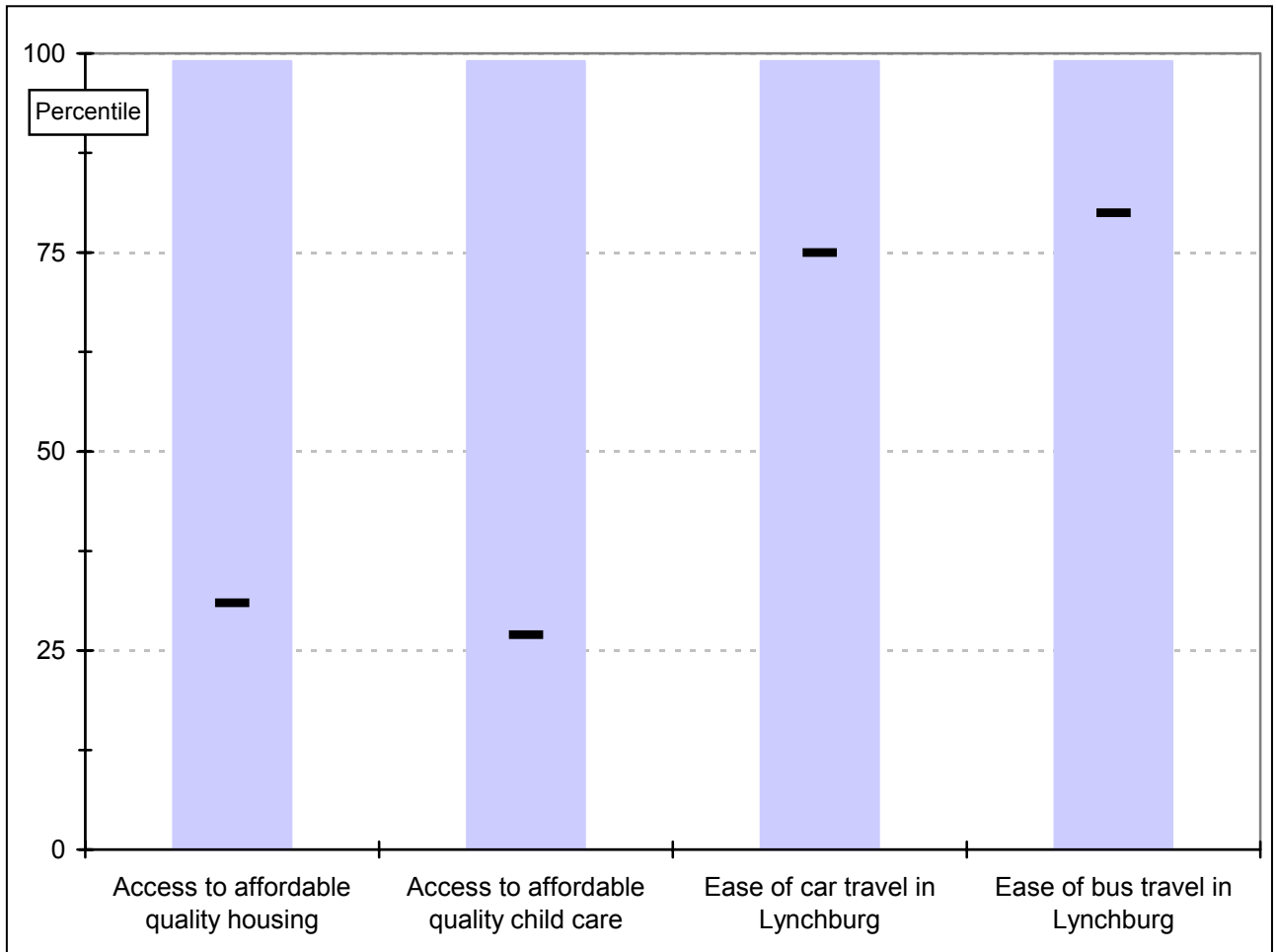


Figure 3b: Characteristics of the Community: Access and Mobility

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Access to affordable quality housing	50	19	26	31%ile	below the norm
Access to affordable quality child care	44	12	15	27%ile	below the norm
Ease of car travel in Lynchburg	54	5	16	75%ile	above the norm
Ease of bus travel in Lynchburg	44	2	5	80%ile	above the norm

Figure 4a: Ratings of Safety from Various Problems

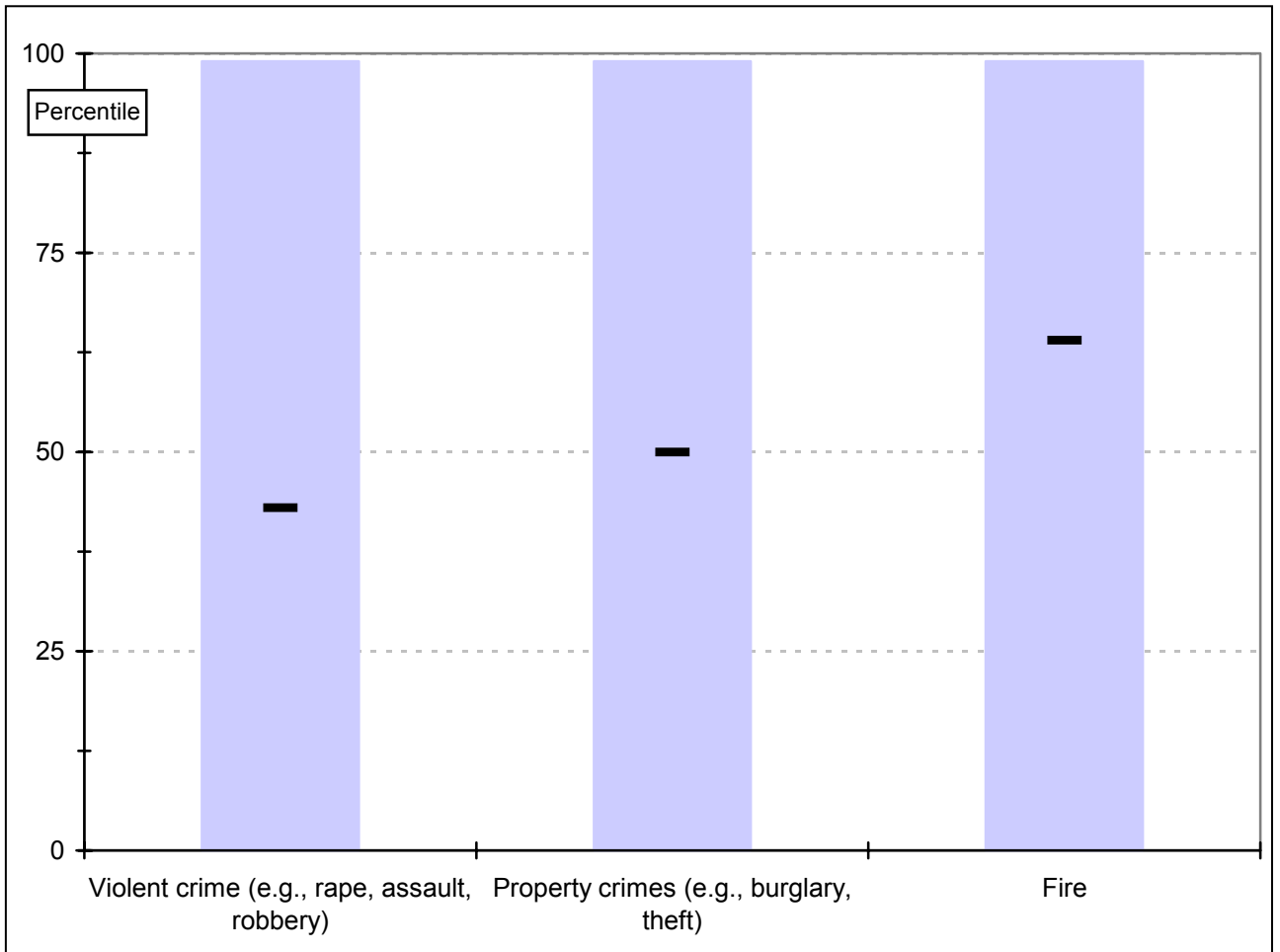


Figure 4b: Ratings of Safety From Various Problems

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Violent crime (e.g., rape, assault, robbery)	63	9	14	43%ile	similar to the norm
Property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft)	60	8	14	50%ile	similar to the norm
Fire	73	6	14	64%ile	similar to the norm

Figure 5a: Ratings of Safety in Various Areas

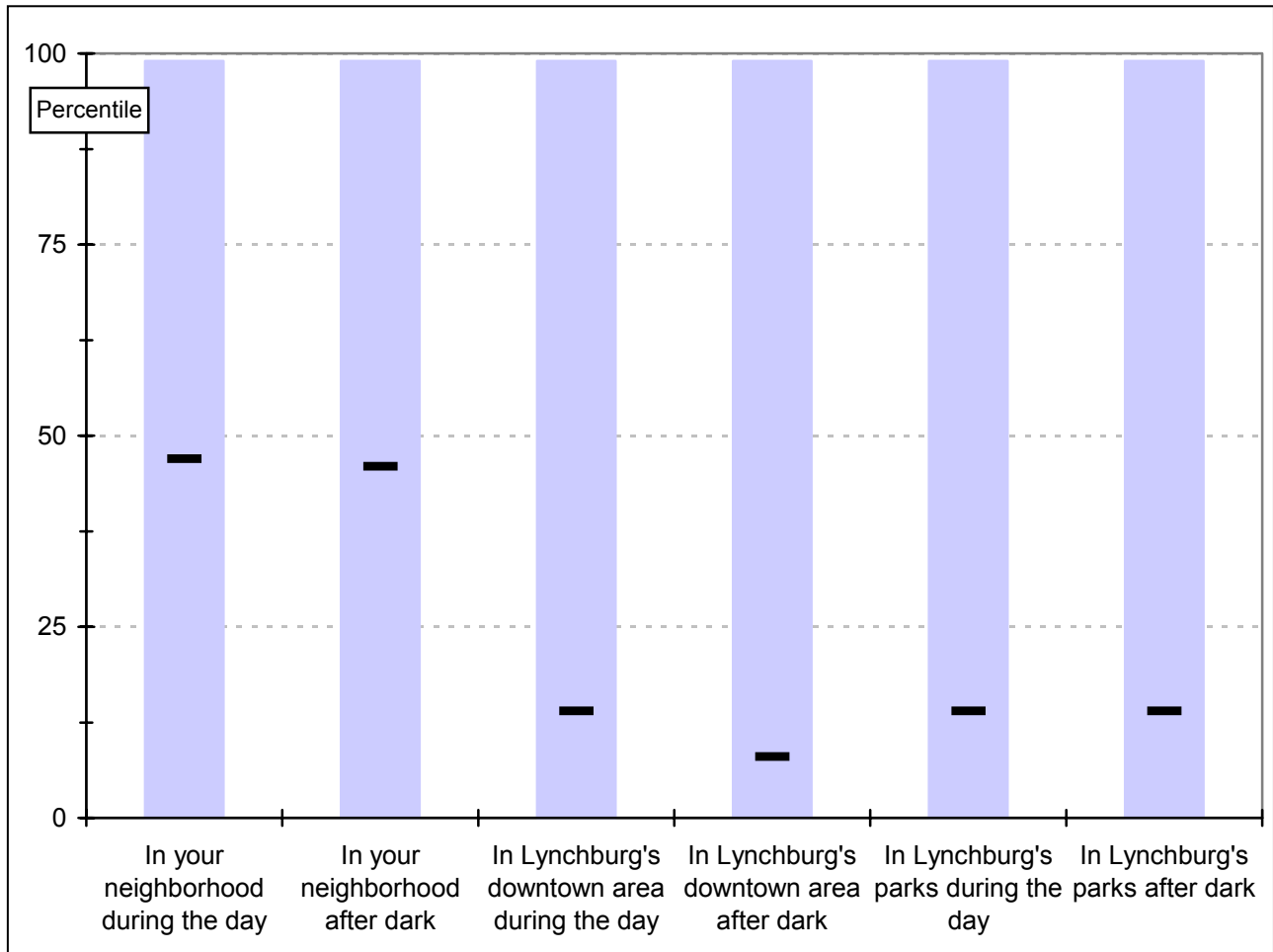
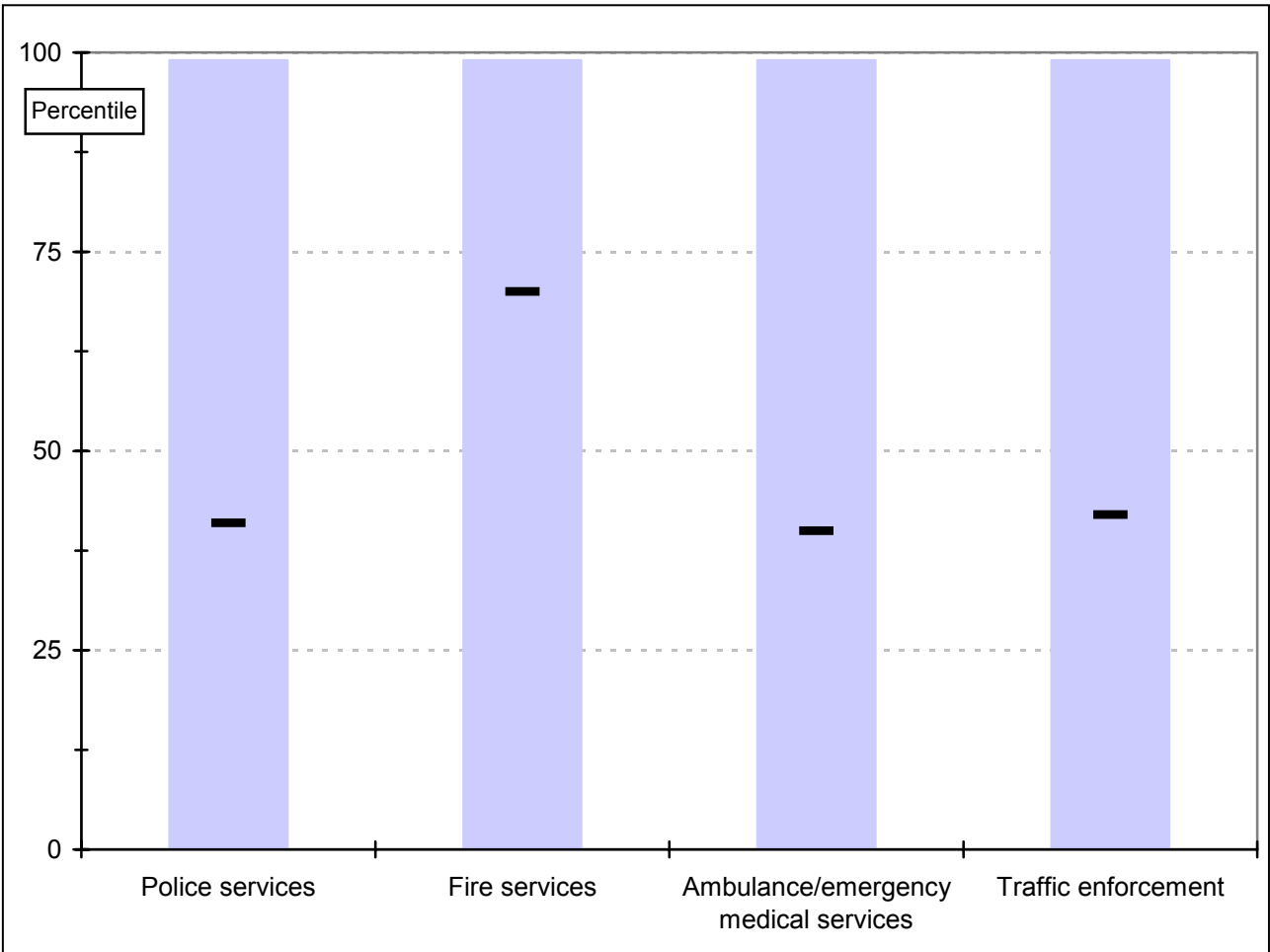


Figure 5b: Ratings of Safety in Various Areas

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
In your neighborhood during the day	89	9	15	47%ile	similar to the norm
In your neighborhood after dark	73	23	41	46%ile	similar to the norm
In Lynchburg's downtown area during the day	74	13	14	14%ile	below the norm
In Lynchburg's downtown area after dark	38	23	24	8%ile	below the norm
In Lynchburg's parks during the day	74	13	14	14%ile	below the norm
In Lynchburg's parks after dark	32	13	14	14%ile	below the norm

Figure 6a: Quality of Public Safety Services



	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Police services	63	39	64	41%ile	similar to the norm
Fire services	77	17	53	70%ile	similar to the norm
Ambulance/emergency medical services	73	16	25	40%ile	similar to the norm
Traffic enforcement	54	12	19	42%ile	similar to the norm

Figure 7a: Quality of Transportation Services

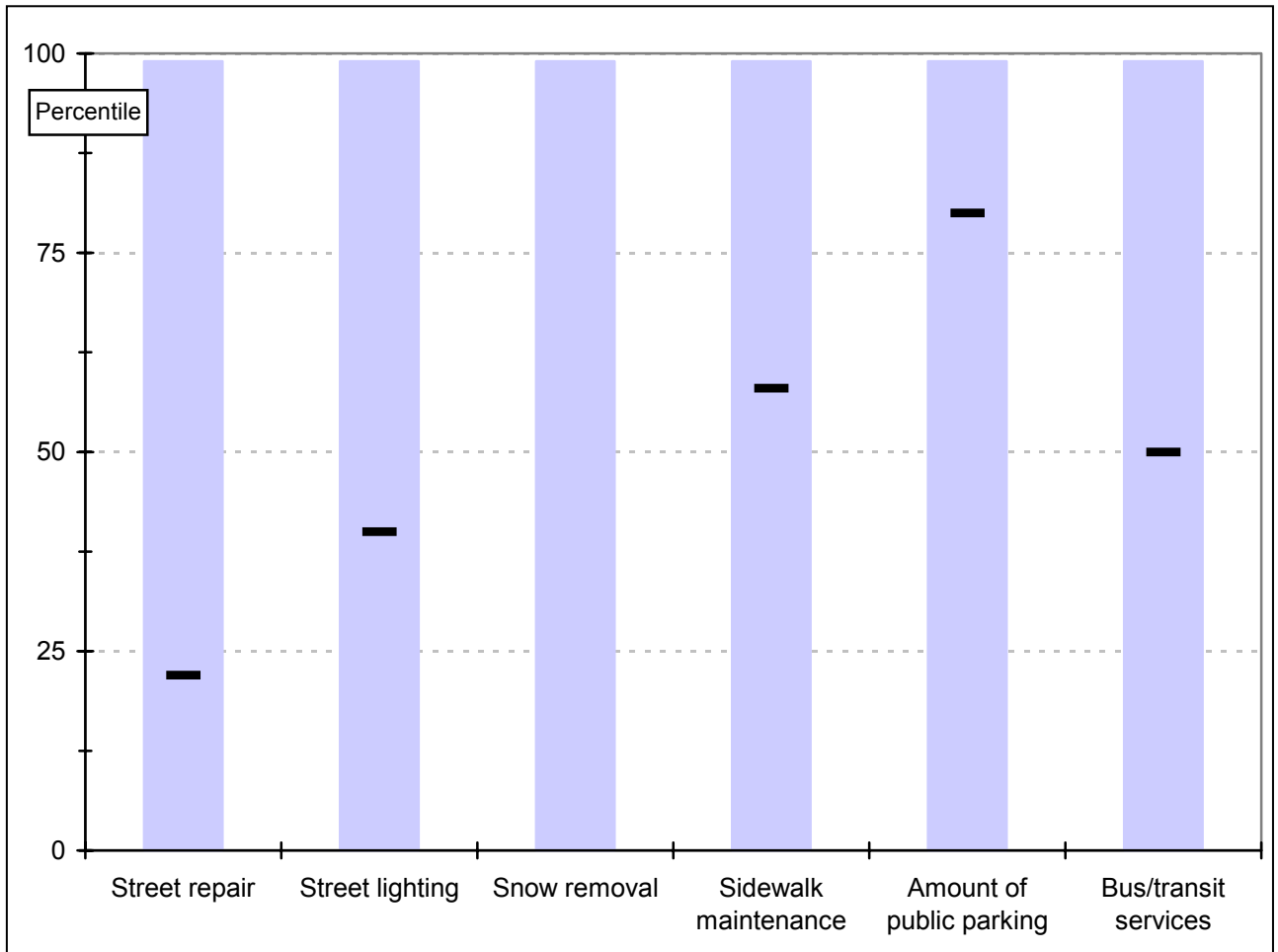


Figure 7b: Quality of Transportation Services

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Street repair	38	29	36	22%ile	below the norm
Street lighting	48	13	20	40%ile	similar to the norm
Snow removal	47
Sidewalk maintenance	44	6	12	58%ile	similar to the norm
Amount of public parking	39	2	5	80%ile	above the norm
Bus/transit services	47	6	10	50%ile	below the norm

Figure 8a: Quality of Leisure Services

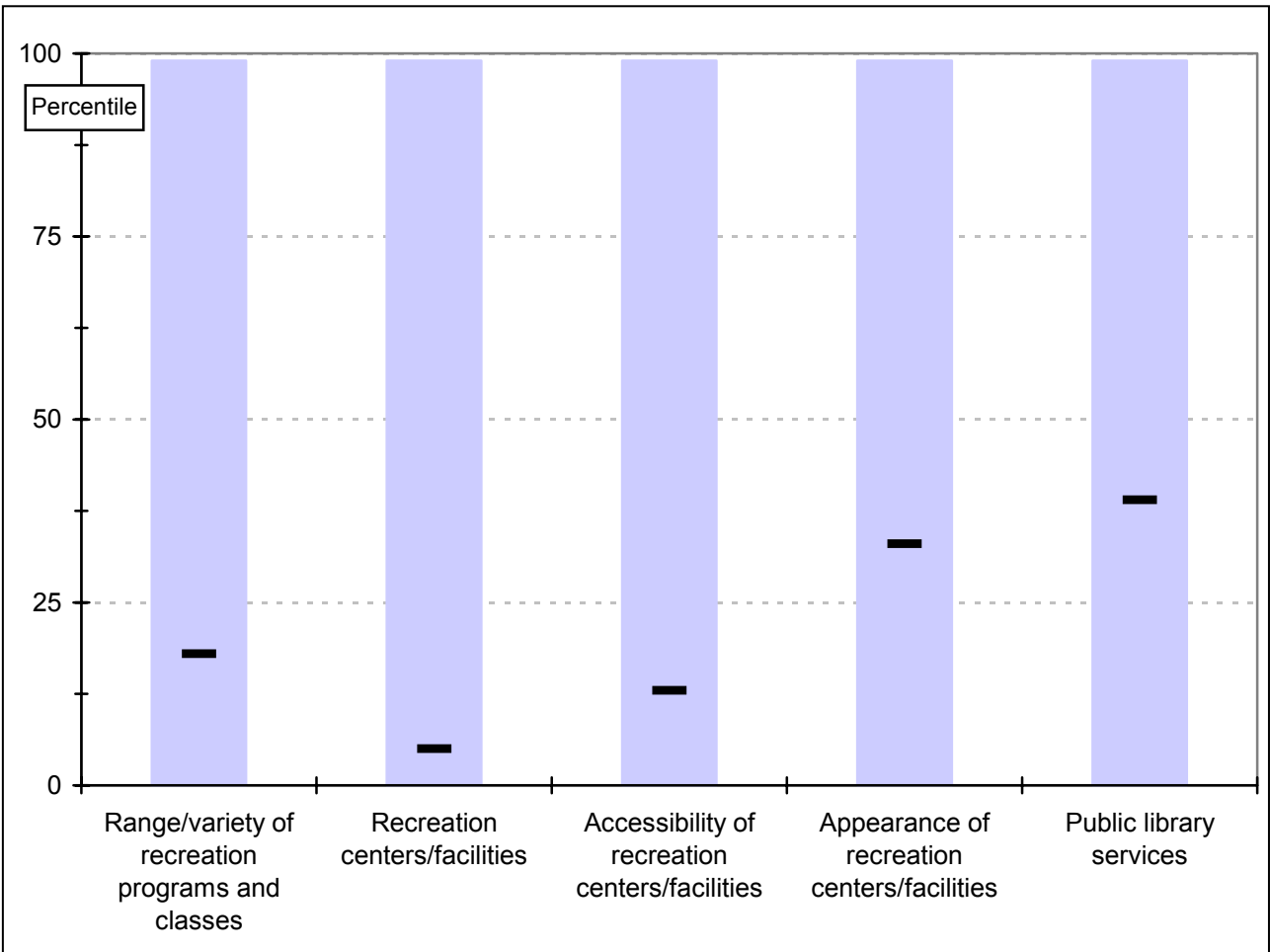


Figure 8b: Quality of Leisure Services

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Range/variety of recreation programs and classes	51	10	11	18%ile	similar to the norm
Recreation centers/facilities	47	21	21	5%ile	below the norm
Accessibility of recreation centers/facilities	49	8	8	13%ile	below the norm
Appearance of recreation centers/facilities	52	7	9	33%ile	below the norm
Public library services	68	24	38	39%ile	similar to the norm

COMPARISONS

Figure 9a: Quality of Utility Services

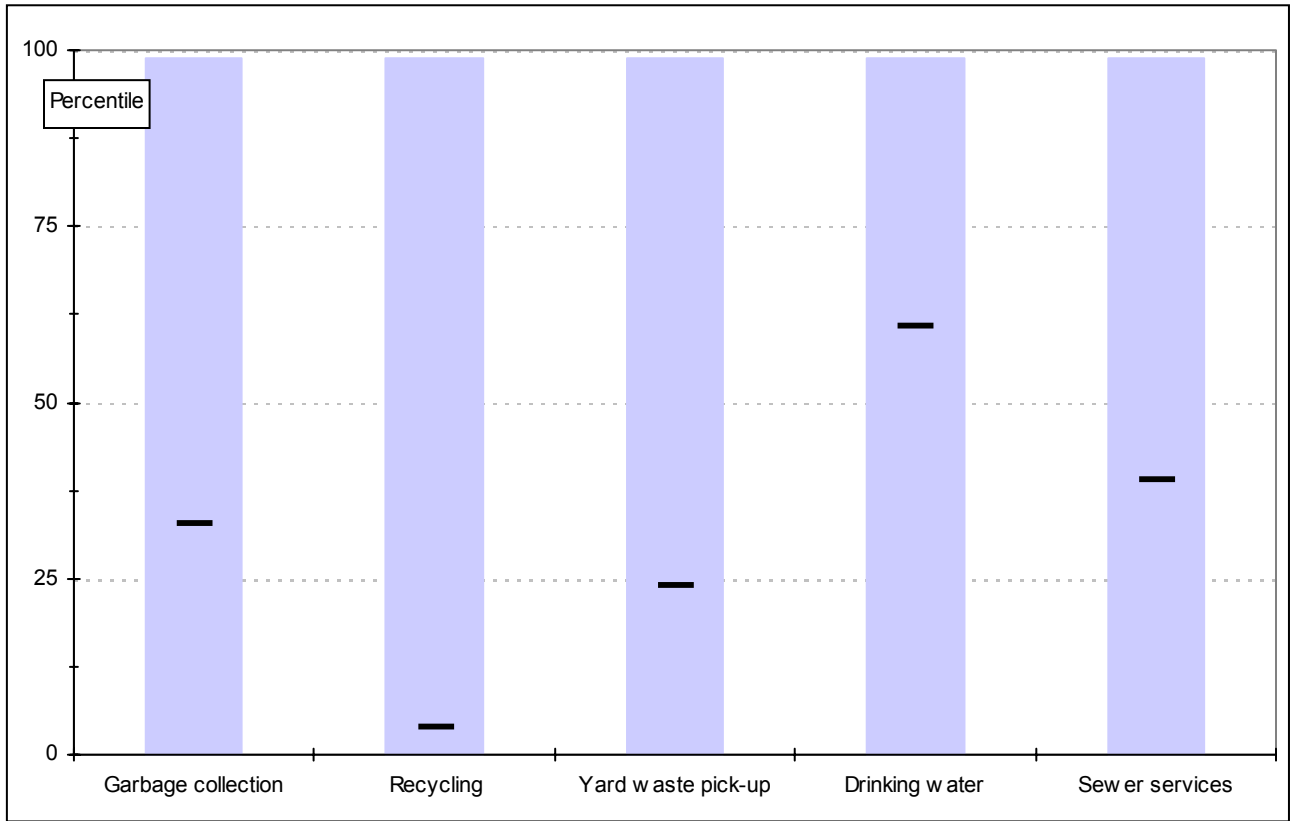


Figure 9b: Quality of Utility Services

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Garbage collection	66	25	36	33%ile	similar to the norm
Recycling	54	26	26	4%ile	below the norm
Yard waste pick-up	57	14	17	24%ile	similar to the norm
Drinking water	56	8	18	61%ile	similar to the norm
Sewer services	56	12	18	39%ile	similar to the norm

Figure 10a: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services

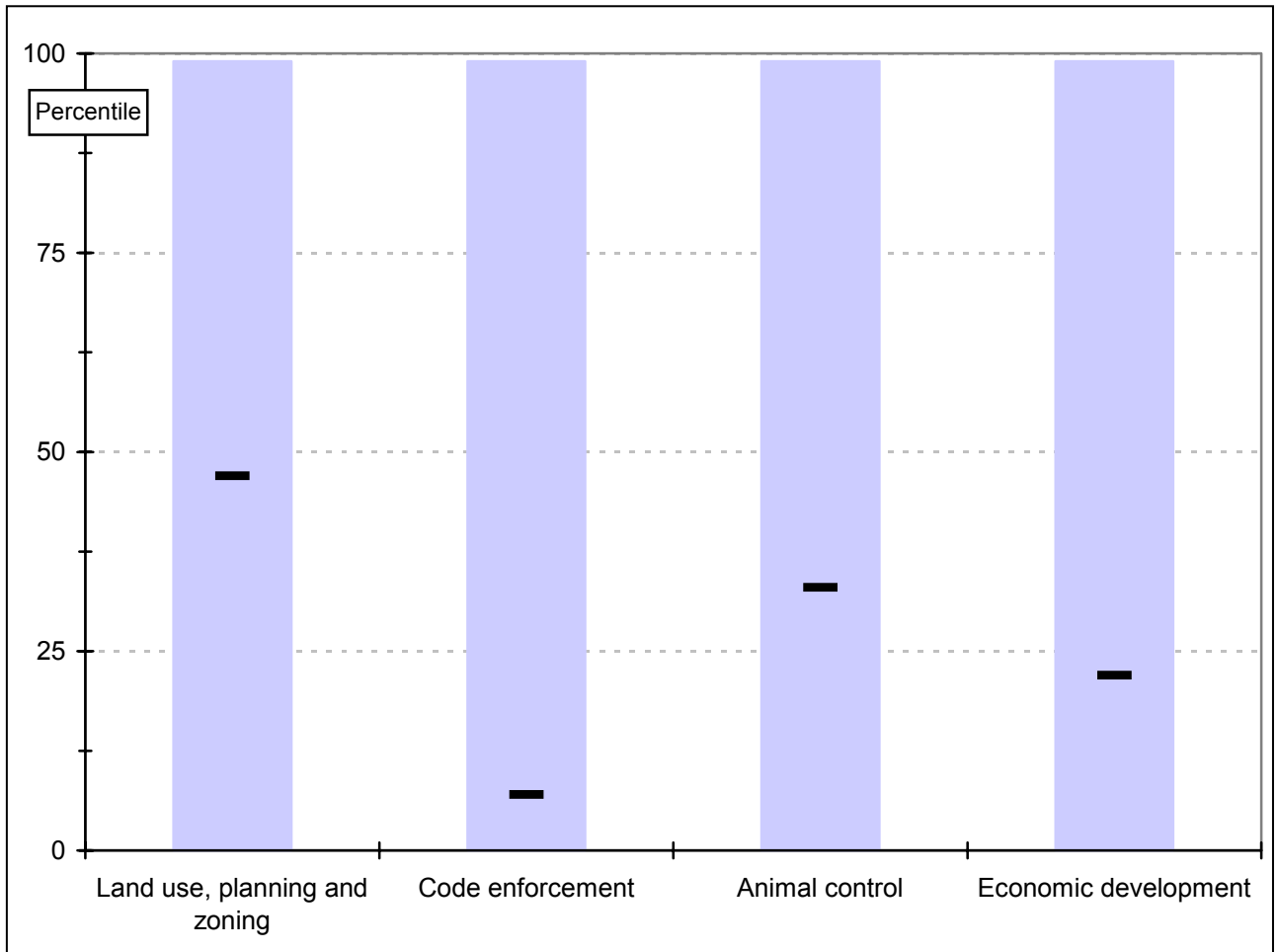


Figure 10b: Quality of Planning and Code Enforcement Services

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Land use, planning and zoning	37	11	19	47%ile	similar to the norm
Code enforcement	32	29	30	7%ile	below the norm
Animal control	47	11	15	33%ile	below the norm
Economic development	39	15	18	22%ile	below the norm

Figure 11a: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services

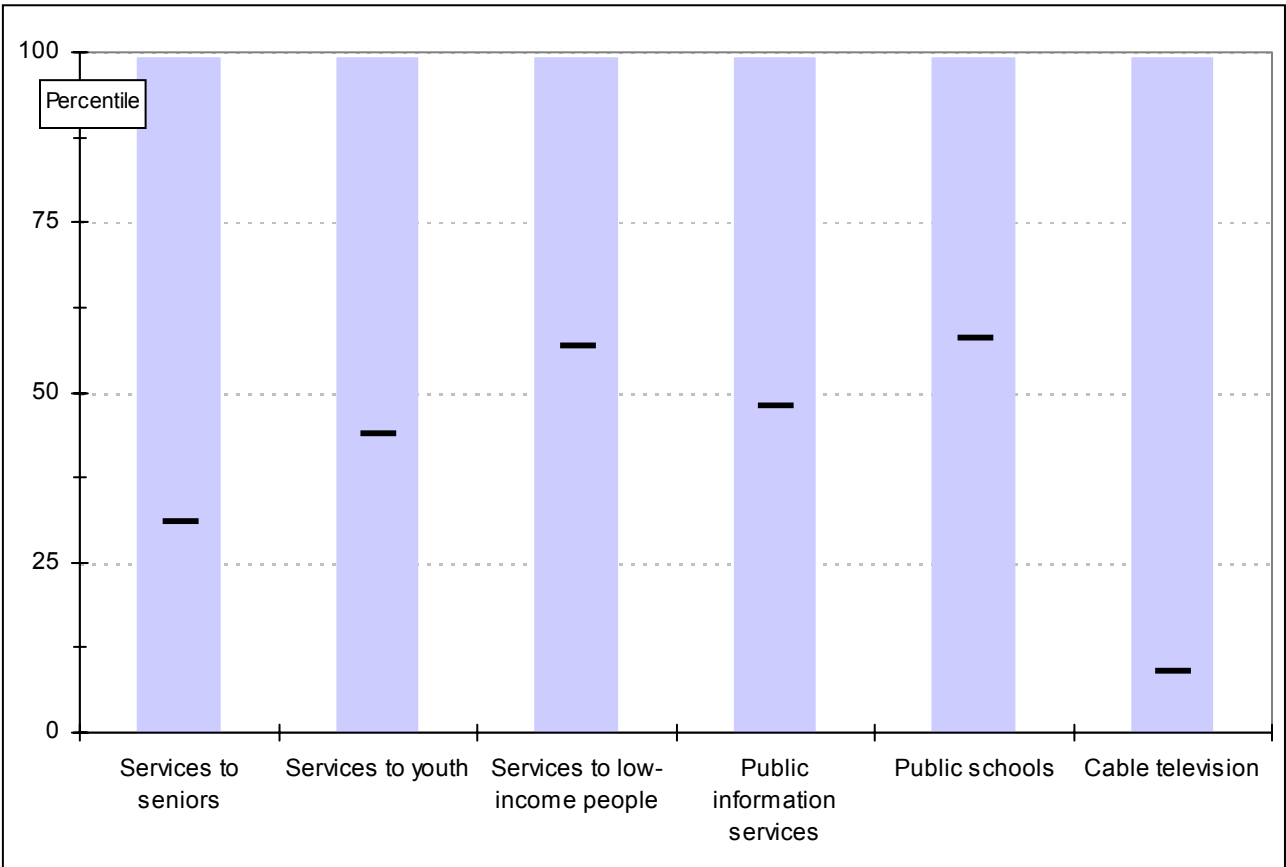


Figure 11b: Quality of Services to Special Populations and Other Services

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Services to seniors	47	12	16	31%ile	below the norm
Services to youth	40	10	16	44%ile	below the norm
Services to low-income people	40	4	7	57%ile	similar to the norm
Public information services	56	15	27	48%ile	similar to the norm
Public schools	56	23	52	58%ile	similar to the norm
Cable television	28	11	11	9%ile	below the norm

Figure 12a: Overall Quality of Services

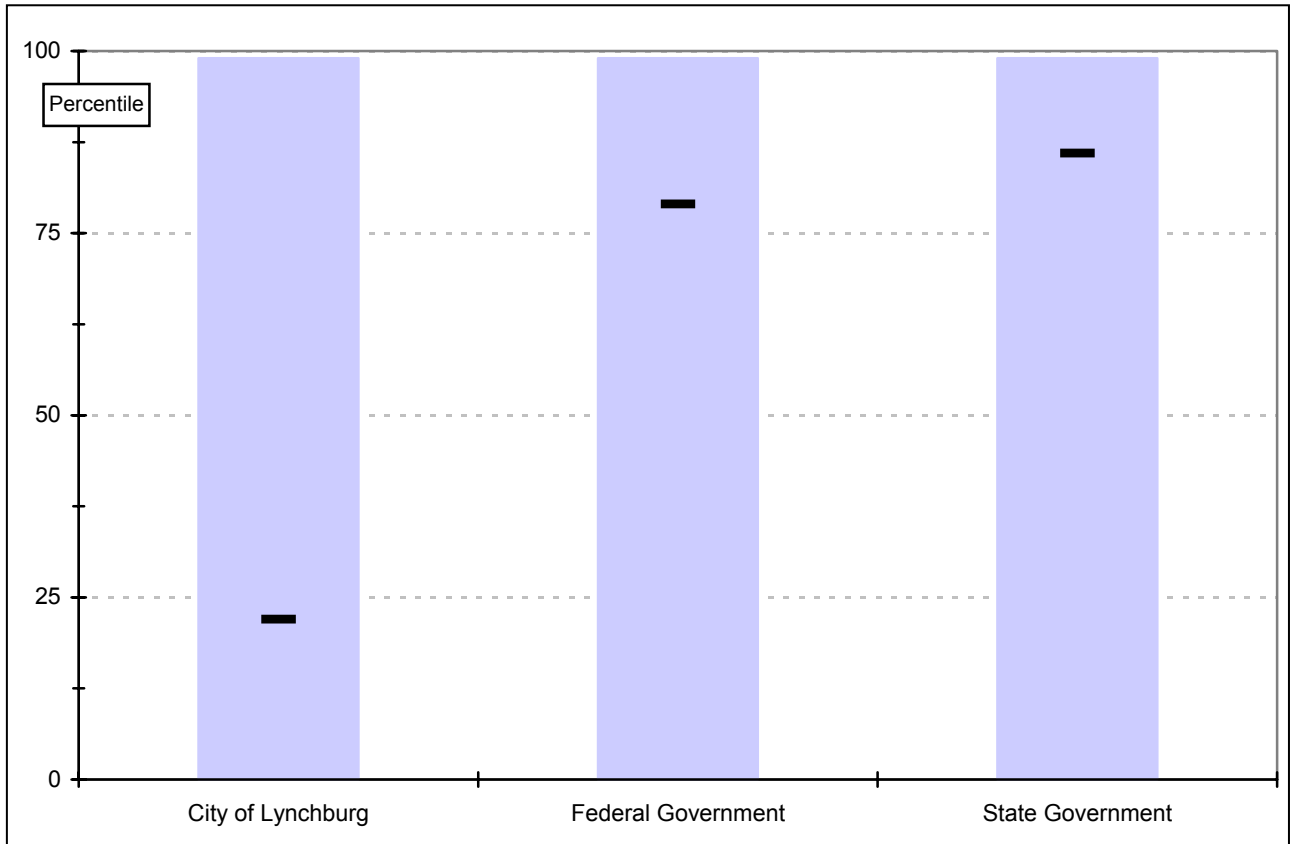


Figure 12b: Overall Quality of Services

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Services provided by the City of Lynchburg	54	30	37	22%ile	below the norm
Services provided by the Federal Government	49	4	14	79%ile	similar to the norm
Services provided by the State Government	49	3	14	86%ile	similar to the norm

Figure 13a: Ratings of Contact with City Employees

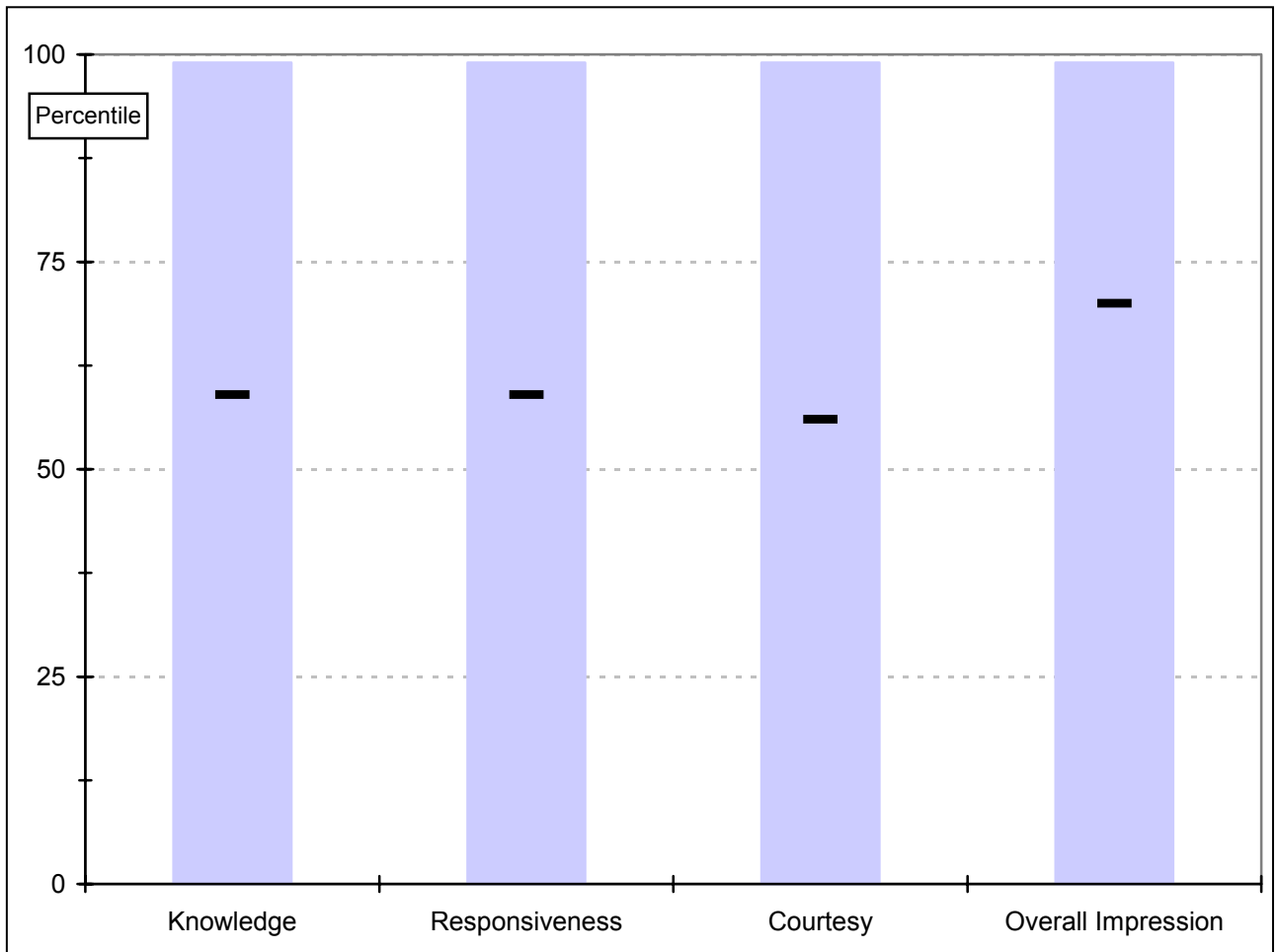


Figure 13b: Ratings of Contact with the City Employees

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
Knowledge	68	8	17	59%ile	similar to the norm
Responsiveness	65	8	17	59%ile	similar to the norm
Courtesy	69	8	16	56%ile	similar to the norm
Overall Impression	66	8	23	70%ile	similar to the norm

Figure 14a: Ratings of Public Trust

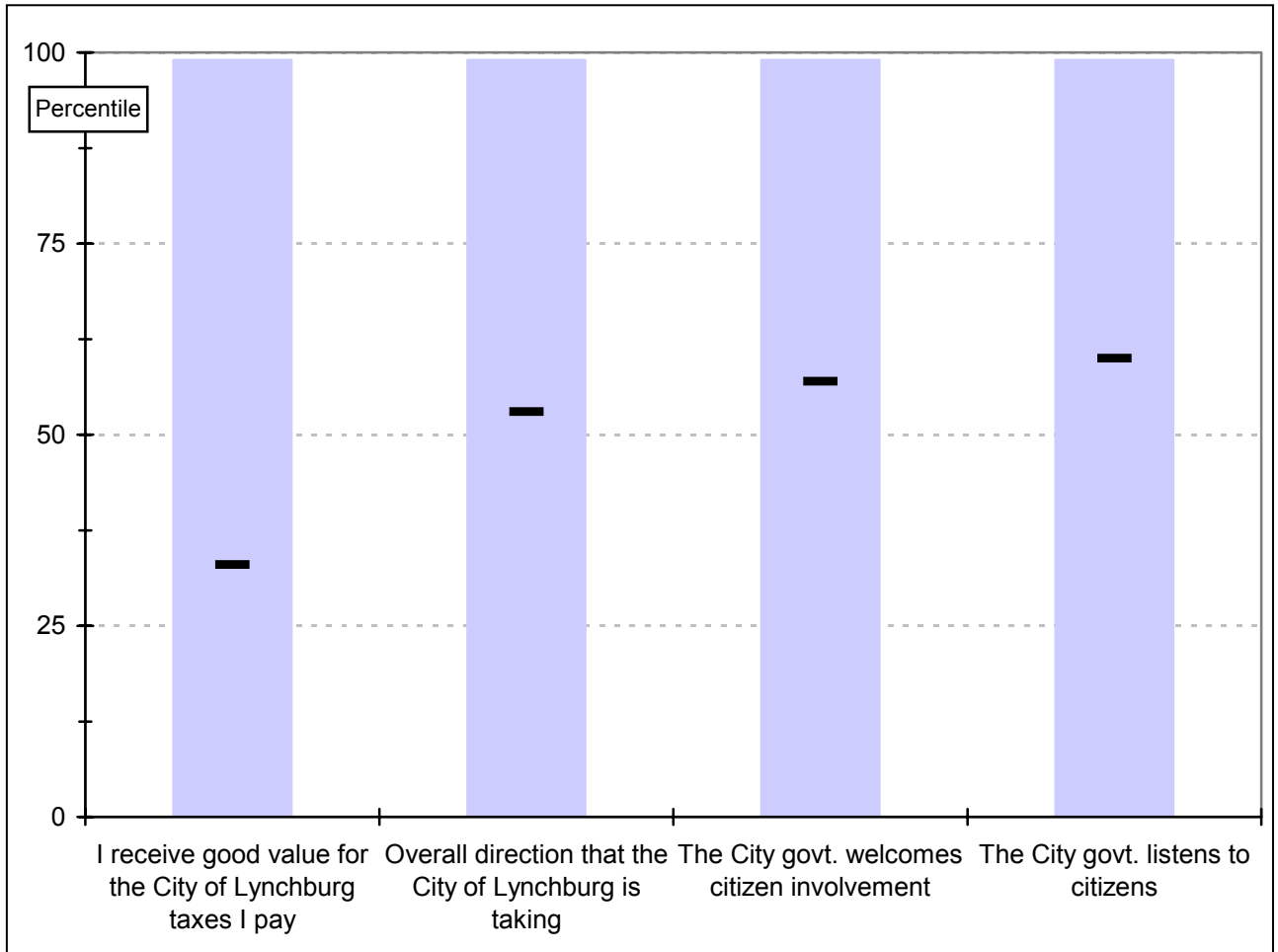


Figure 14b: Ratings of Public Trust

	City of Lynchburg Rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	City of Lynchburg Percentile	Comparison of Lynchburg Rating to Norm
I receive good value for the City of Lynchburg taxes I pay	56	7	9	33%ile	below the norm
Overall direction that the City of Lynchburg is taking	57	8	15	53%ile	similar to the norm
The City govt. welcomes citizen involvement	62	7	14	57%ile	similar to the norm
The City govt. listens to citizens	52	7	15	60%ile	similar to the norm

APPENDIX I: LIST OF JURISDICTIONS INCLUDED IN NORMATIVE COMPARISONS

Jurisdictions in Custom Norms	State	Population
Auburn	AL	42,987
Huntsville	AL	158,216
Altamonte Springs	FL	41,200
Boca Raton	FL	74,764
Bradenton	FL	49,504
Broward County	FL	1,623,018
Cape Coral	FL	102,286
Collier County	FL	251,377
Cooper City	FL	27,939
Coral Springs	FL	117,549
Deerfield Beach	FL	64,583
Delray Beach	FL	60,020
Fort Lauderdale	FL	152,397
Jacksonville	FL	735,617
Kissimmee	FL	47,814
Lee County	FL	454,918
Miami	FL	362,470
Miami-Dade County	FL	2,253,362
Ocoee	FL	24,391
Orange County	FL	896,344
Orlando	FL	185,951
Palm Bay	FL	79,413
Palm Beach County	FL	1,131,184
Palm Coast	FL	32,732
Pinellas County	FL	921,482
Pinellas Park	FL	45,658
Port Orange	FL	45,823
Port St. Lucie	FL	88,769
St. Petersburg	FL	248,232
Tallahassee	FL	150,624
Walton County	FL	40,601
Atlanta	GA	416,474
Cartersville	GA	15,925
Columbus	GA	185,781
Douglas County	GA	92,174
Macon	GA	97,255
Milledgeville	GA	18,757
Savannah	GA	131,510
Cary	NC	94,536
Charlotte	NC	540,828
Greensboro	NC	223,891
Hickory	NC	37,222

Report of Normative Comparisons

Jurisdictions in Custom Norms	State	Population
Rocky Mount	NC	55,893
Wilmington	NC	90,400
Wilson	NC	44,405
Columbia	SC	116,278
Mauldin	SC	15,224
Myrtle Beach	SC	22,759
Pickens County	SC	110,757
Rock Hill	SC	49,765
York County	SC	164,614
Franklin	TN	41,842
Knoxville	TN	173,890
Memphis	TN	650,100
Oak Ridge	TN	27,387
Albemarle County	VA	79,236
Blacksburg	VA	39,357
Chesapeake	VA	199,184
Chesterfield County	VA	259,903
Hampton	VA	146,437
Hopewell	VA	22,354
James City County	VA	48,102
Norfolk	VA	234,403
Prince William County	VA	280,813
Richmond	VA	197,790
Roanoke County	VA	85,778
Stafford County	VA	92,446
Virginia Beach	VA	425,257

APPENDIX II: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CITIZEN SURVEY DATABASE

Q: What is in the citizen survey database?

A: National Research Center's database includes the results from citizen surveys conducted in over 300 jurisdictions in the United States. These are public opinion polls answered by more than 250,000 residents around the country. We have recorded, analyzed and stored responses to over 6,000 survey questions dealing with resident perceptions about the quality of community life and public trust and residents' report of their use of public facilities. Respondents to these surveys are intended to represent over 40 million Americans.

Q: What kinds of questions are included?

A: Residents' ratings of the quality of virtually every kind of local government service are included – from police, fire and trash haul to animal control, planning and cemeteries. Many dimensions of quality of life are included such as feeling of safety and opportunities for dining, recreation and shopping as well as ratings of the overall quality of community life and community as a place to raise children and retire.

Q: What is so unique about National Research Center's Citizen Survey database?

A: It is the only database of its size that contains the people's perceptions about government service delivery and quality of life. For example, others use government statistics about crime to deduce the quality of police services or speed of pot hole repair to draw conclusions about the quality of street maintenance. Only National Research Center's database adds the opinion of service recipients themselves to the service quality equation. We believe that conclusions about service or community quality are made prematurely if opinions of the community's residents themselves are missing.

Q: What is the database used for?

A: Benchmarking. Our clients use the comparative information in the database to help interpret their own citizen survey results, to create or revise community plans, to evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions, to measure local government performance. We don't know what is small or tall without comparing. Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. So many surveys of service satisfaction turn up at least "good" citizen evaluations that we 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. We need to ask more important and harder questions. We need to know how our residents' ratings of fire service compare to opinions about fire service in other communities.

Report of Normative Comparisons

The National CITIZEN SURVEY™

Q: So what if we find that our public opinions are better or – for that matter – worse than opinions in other communities? What does it mean?

A: 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 its clients believe services are not very good compared to ratings received by objectively “worse” departments.

National Research Center’s database can help that police department – or any city department – to understand how well citizens think it is doing. Without the comparative data from National Research Center’s database, it would be like bowling in a tournament without knowing what the other teams are scoring. We recommend that citizen opinion be used in conjunction with other sources of data to help managers know how to respond to comparative results.

Q: Aren’t comparisons of questions from different surveys like comparing apples and oranges?

A: It is true that you can’t simply take a given result from one survey and compare it to the result from a different survey. National Research Center, Inc. principals have pioneered and reported their methods for converting all survey responses to the same scale. Because scales responses will differ among types of survey questions, National Research Center, Inc. statisticians have developed statistical algorithms, which adjust question results based on many characteristics of the question, its scale and the survey methods. All results are then converted to the PTM (percent to maximum) scale with a minimum score of 0 (equaling the lowest possible rating) to a maximum score of 100 (equaling the highest possible rating). We then can provide a norm that not only controls for question differences, but also controls for differences in types of survey methods. This way we put all questions on the same scale and a norm can be offered for communities of given sizes or in various regions.

Q: How can managers trust the comparability of results?

A: Principals of National Research Center, Inc. have submitted their work to peer reviewed scholarly journals where its publication fully describes the rigor of our methods and the quality of our findings. We have published articles in *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* and *Governing*, and we wrote a book, *Citizen Surveys: How to do them, how to use them, what they mean*, that describes in detail how survey responses can be adjusted to provide fair comparisons for ratings among many jurisdictions. Our work on calculating national norms 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.