Denver Tops List of Favorite Cities

For Nearly Half of America,

Grass Is Greener Somewhere Else

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Paul Taylor, Project Director
Rich Morin, Senior Editor
Kim Parker, Senior Researcher
D'Vera Cohn, Senior Writer
Wendy Wang, Research Analyst

MEDIA INQUIRIES CONTACT:
Rich Morin or Paul Taylor
Pew Research Center's
Social & Demographic Trends
202 419 4372
http://pewsocialtrends.org

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A Social & Demographic Trends Report

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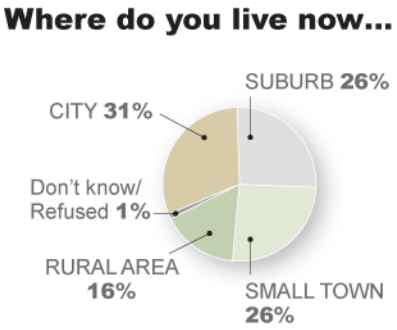
Denver Tops List of Favorite Cities

For Nearly Half of America, Grass Is Greener Somewhere Else

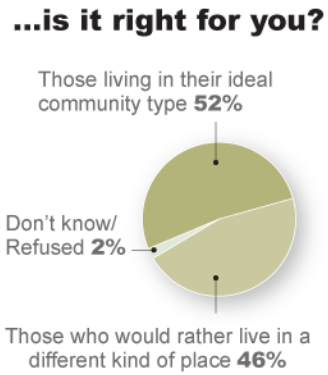
Where would Americans most like to live—and how do they feel about the place they currently call home?

A new national survey by the Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project finds that nearly half (46%) of the public would rather live in a different type of community from the one they're living in now—a sentiment that is most prevalent among city dwellers. When asked about specific metropolitan areas where they would like to live, respondents rank Denver, San Diego and Seattle at the top of a list of 30 cities, and Detroit, Cleveland and Cincinnati at the bottom.



Even though the survey shows that many Americans have a bit of wanderlust, it also finds that most are satisfied with where they live now. More than eight-in-ten rate their current communities as excellent, very good or good. People who have moved at least once (63%) and those who have lived in the same place all their lives (37%) are equally content with their current home.

These findings emerge from a wide-ranging telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,260 adults, conducted Oct. 3-19, 2008. An earlier report, based on other questions from the same survey, found that nearly one-in-four adults (23%) say the place in their heart they consider home isn't where they are living now. That report also cited Census Bureau data indicating that Americans are changing residences less often than they used to: Only 11.9% moved between 2007 and 2008, the lowest share since the government began tracking this measure in the late 1940s.



This latest report explores a range of attitudes related to where Americans live, where they would like to live and why. It finds that most city dwellers think the grass would be greener in a suburb, small town or rural area. But urbanites aren't alone in feeling mismatched with their surroundings. More than four-in-ten residents of suburbs, small towns and rural areas also report they would prefer to live in a different type of community.

Who We Are Shapes Where We Want to Live

Some notable demographic and ideological patterns emerge in the survey responses. For example, most young urbanites consider cities the place to be, while most middle-aged urbanites would like to live elsewhere. Seven-in-ten rural men are content where they are, compared with just half of rural women. Most rural conservatives feel right at home; most urban conservatives don't. But urban liberals do.

Demographics and political views also help shape people's taste for specific cities. Many more young adults than older adults are drawn to New York and Los Angeles. More men than women want to live in Las Vegas. Well-to-do adults are twice as likely as the less affluent to want to live in Boston. Republicans think Phoenix would be a great place to call home. Democrats feel the same way about San Francisco.

Geography matters, too. Seven of the public's 10 most popular big cities—Denver, San Diego, Seattle, San Francisco, Phoenix, Portland and Sacramento—are in the West, and the other three—Orlando, Tampa and San Antonio—are in the South. The five least popular big cities—Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Kansas City and Minneapolis—are all in the Midwest. These attitudes reflect what government data indicate about the nation's migration patterns: As this series of maps shows, Americans are leaving the Northeast and the Midwest in favor of the South and the West.

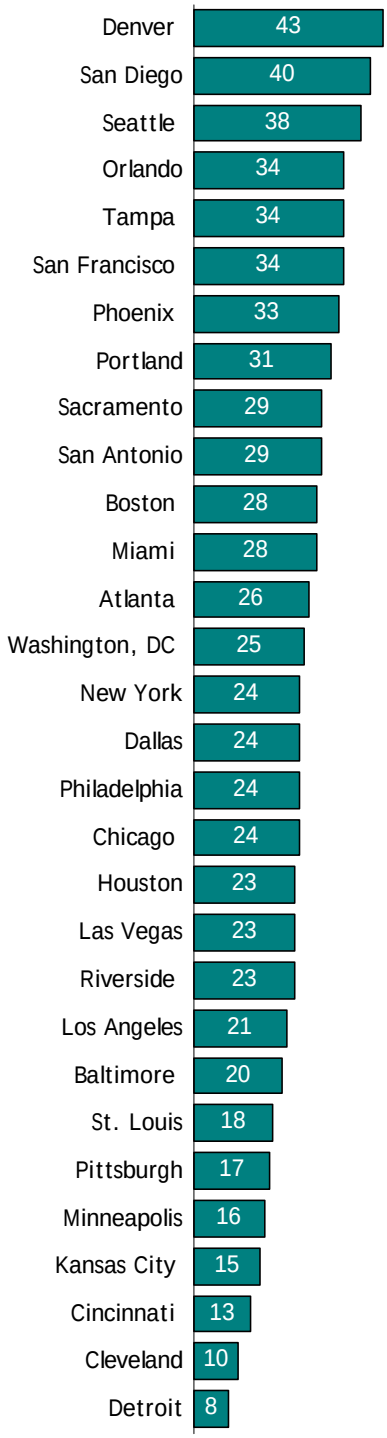
Other survey findings include:

- Americans are all over the map in their views about their ideal community type: 30% say they would most like to live in a small town, 25% in a suburb, 23% in a city and 21% in a rural area.

- By a ratio of more than three-to-one, Americans prefer living where the pace of life is slow, not fast. A similarly lopsided majority prefer a place where neighbors know each other well to one where neighbors don't generally know each other's business.

America's Most Popular Big Cities

% who say they want to live in this city or its surrounding metropolitan area



Note: For statistically significant comparisons between cities, margins of at least 4 to 6 percentage points are required depending on the city scores.

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- By about two-to-one, they prefer to live in a hot-weather place over a cold-weather place.

- On the food-and-drink front, a slight plurality would rather live in a place with more McDonald's (43%) than one with more Starbucks (35%).

- About seven-in-ten whites rate their current community as "excellent" or "very good"; only about half of Hispanics and four-in-ten blacks say the same. Rural and suburban residents rate their communities better than do residents of cities and small towns.

- People who live in a city—as well as people who *want* to live in a city—are more open than others to the idea of living with neighbors who are of different races. They are also more open to living among immigrants.

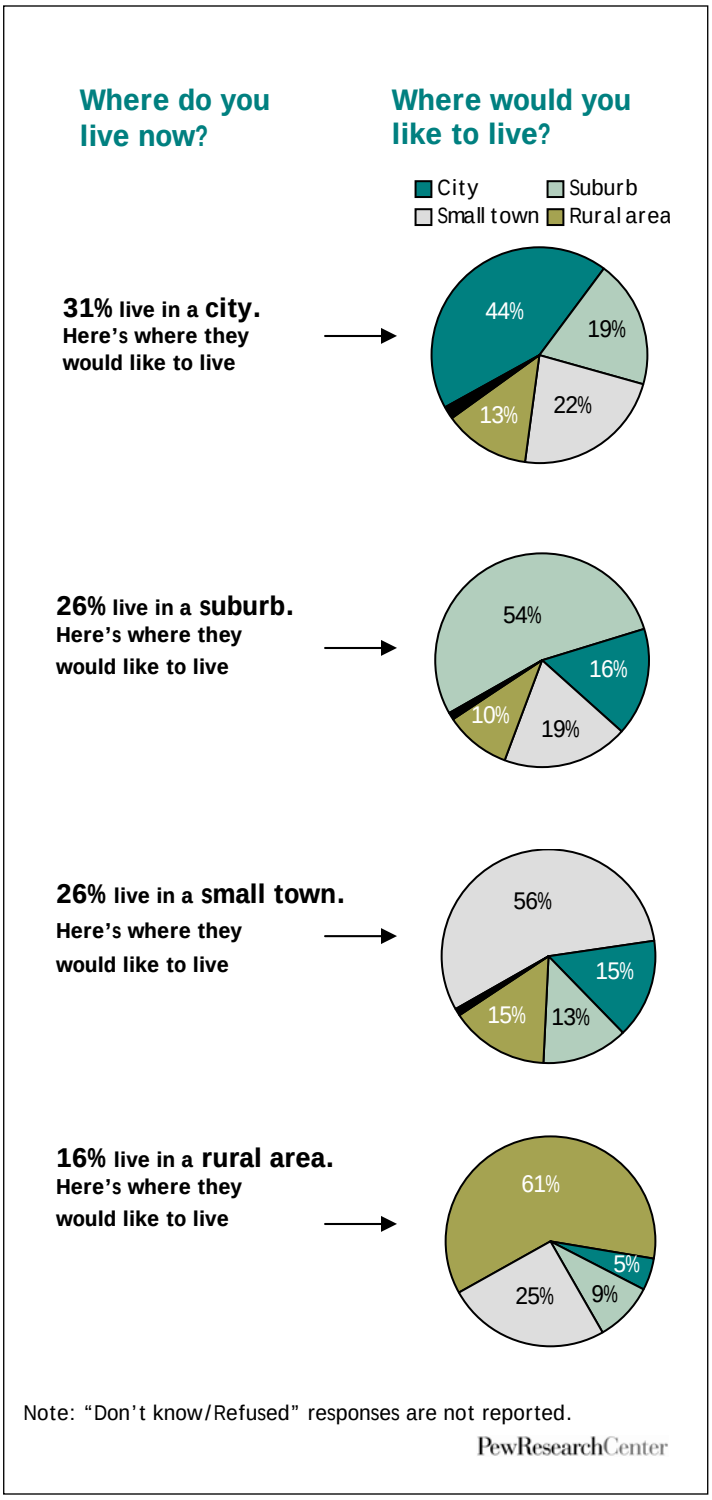
- When it comes to community involvement, there is no difference among those who live in cities, suburbs, small towns or rural areas. About half of the residents in each place say they are involved, and half say they aren't.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

Section I: America's Favorite Large Cities.

Section II: Good Fits and Misfits.

Section III: Community Satisfaction.



About the Survey

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted with a nationally representative sample of 2,260 adults living in the continental United States. A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent all adults in the continental United States who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. A total of 1,502 interviews were completed with respondents contacted by landline phone, and 758 from those contacted on their cell phone. The data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States.

- Interviews conducted Oct. 3-19, 2008
- 2,260 interviews
- Margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level.
- Note on terminology: "Whites" refer to non-Hispanic whites. "Blacks" refer to non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race.

Survey interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Interviews conducted in English or Spanish.

This report was written by Rich Morin, Paul Taylor and Wendy Wang of the Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends staff. They also drafted the survey questionnaire, assisted by senior writer D'Vera Cohn and consultant Cary Funk, and conducted the analysis of the findings. Number-checking was done by Daniel Dockterman and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. Michael Keegan assisted in preparation of graphics. Marcia Kramer copy-edited this report.

I. America's Favorite Large Cities

When it comes to the nation's 30 biggest metropolitan areas, Americans have a wide range of likes and dislikes. Denver, San Diego and Seattle top the list of favorites, while Detroit, Cleveland and Cincinnati anchor the bottom.

Overall, the advice to "Go west, young man" offered by newspaper editor Horace Greeley more than a century ago still resonates with Americans of all ages. Seven of the top 10 metropolitan areas are in the West, and the other three—San Antonio, Orlando and Tampa—are Southern cities that share the characteristics of many Western metro areas: warmer weather, a casual lifestyle and rapid growth. The absence of Heartland cities at the top of the list is striking: Chicago is the first large Midwestern metropolitan area to appear, and it finishes in the middle of the pack. Indeed, six Midwestern cities rank among the 10 least popular big cities.

To measure how the public rates the country's largest cities as places to live, three separate nationally representative samples of adults were asked whether they would or would not want to live in each of 10 large metropolitan areas taken from a list of the nation's 30 largest metro areas. The results from each of the sub-samples were analyzed together to produce a ranking of all 30 metro areas.

Notably, not a single one of the 30 metropolitan areas was judged by a majority of respondents as a place where they'd like to live. This predominance of negative reviews may be consistent with another survey finding: Less than a quarter (23%) of respondents name cities as their favorite community type.[1]

Where Americans Want to Live: The Top 10 Big Cities

	Would like to live here	Would not like
	%	%
Denver	43	55
San Diego	40	59
Seattle	38	60
Orlando	34	65
Tampa	34	64
San Francisco	34	65
Phoenix	33	64
Portland	31	66
Sacramento	29	69
San Antonio	29	68

Note: Ranked by percentage who say they would like to live in each city. For statistically significant comparisons between cities, a margin of at least 6 percentage points is required.

Where Americans Don't Want to Live: The Bottom 10

	Would like to live here	Would not like
	%	%
Detroit	8	90
Cleveland	10	88
Cincinnati	13	84
Minneapolis	16	82
Kansas City	15	81
Pittsburgh	17	80
St. Louis	18	79
Los Angeles	21	78
Baltimore	20	77
New York	24	75

Note: Ranked by percentage who say they would not like to live in each city. In each column, For statistically significant comparisons between cities, margins of at least 3 to 5 percentage points are required depending on the city scores.

[1] The wording of the question about each of the 30 metropolitan areas was as follows: "Would you want to live in this city or its surrounding metropolitan area or not want to live there?" Despite this wording, it is possible that some respondents offered judgments just about the named city, rather than about the city and its surrounding area.

However, despite these skeptical attitudes toward cities in general, the public makes some fairly sharp distinctions among specific cities. For starters, there's that strong regional tilt in the lists of favorite and least-liked cities. But there are also clear variances in people's assessments by income, age, gender, education levels and ideology.

Some 43% of all Americans say they would like to live in Denver, placing it with San Diego (40%) and Seattle (38%) at the top of the rankings of America's most desirable major metropolitan areas. Next on the list: Orlando (34%), Tampa (34%), San Francisco (34%), Phoenix (33%) and Portland, Ore. (31%).[2]

The survey suggests that Americans favor the big cities of the West and South. Seven of the 10 most preferred big cities are in the West; two—Orlando and Tampa—are in Florida; and one, San Antonio, is in Texas.

At the same time, Rust Belt cities of the Midwest and East receive the lowest ratings. Overwhelming majorities of Americans would prefer not to live in Detroit (90%), Cleveland (88%) or Cincinnati (84%). Nearly as many give a thumbs down to Minneapolis (82%), Kansas City (81%) and Pittsburgh (80%); fewer than one-in-five would like to make their home in any of these cities.

Not all Western and Southern cities rated highly. Los Angeles finished well down the list, with 78% of the public saying they would not want to live there. Houston and Las Vegas fared nearly as poorly: Three-in-four Americans say they don't want to live in either city.

Preferred Cities, by Income

Percentage that would like to live in…

$100k or more	%	LT $30k	%
San Diego	52	Seattle	41
Denver	52	Orlando	38
San Francisco	48	Denver	35
Boston	45	San Diego	34
Seattle	45	Miami	34
San Antonio	43	Los Angeles	33
Portland	43	Washington, DC	31
Tampa	37	Sacramento	29
New York	35	San Francisco	29
Chicago	35	Tampa	29

Note: For statistically significant comparisons between cities among those with family incomes of $100,000 or more a year, a margin of at least 13 percentage points is required. Among those with incomes under $30,000, a margin of at least 12 points is required.

Rich Towns, Poor Towns

Largest differences in city preferences by income

	$100k or more %	LT $30k %	Diff.* %
Boston	45	23	22
Los Angeles	14	33	-19
San Antonio	43	25	18
San Francisco	48	30	18
San Diego	52	34	18

*Percentage of those with family incomes of $100,000 or more minus those with family incomes of $30,000 or less who said they would like to live in each city.

Income and City Preferences

The rich are different—not just in how much money they have, but in where they'd like to live. Americans whose income is $100,000 or more disproportionately would like to live in Boston, San Francisco and San Diego. But the poor are different, too: Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Orlando rank higher on the list of desirable cities among Americans with family incomes below $30,000 than they do with more affluent Americans.

[2] The difference between two estimates in a random sample (e.g., ratings of two cities) is said to be statistically significant if the size of difference in the sample is larger than would be expected to occur by chance, assuming that we would find no difference in the ratings if we could interview everyone in the population. For any comparison of the ratings of two cities, the statistical test to determine whether they are significantly different from one another depends on the number of respondents rating each city as well as the ratings themselves. Ratings near 50% are subject to a higher sampling error than ratings closer to 0% or 100%. For example, the 5 point difference in the ratings of Kansas City (15%) and Baltimore (20%) is statistically significant, while the same 5 point difference in the ratings of Seattle (38%) and Denver (43%) is not significant.

Overall, San Diego and Denver rate well with higher-earning adults, with slightly more than half (52%) saying they wanted to live in each city. Nearly half would like to live in San Francisco (48%), while almost as many find Boston, Seattle, San Antonio and Portland to be desirable metropolitan areas.

Among adults with family incomes below $30,000, fully 41% say they would like to live in Seattle. Orlando—a city that isn't among the top 10 among wealthier Americans—also finishes high on this list, at 38%. About a third of all less-affluent Americans say they would like to live in Denver, San Diego, Miami or Los Angeles.

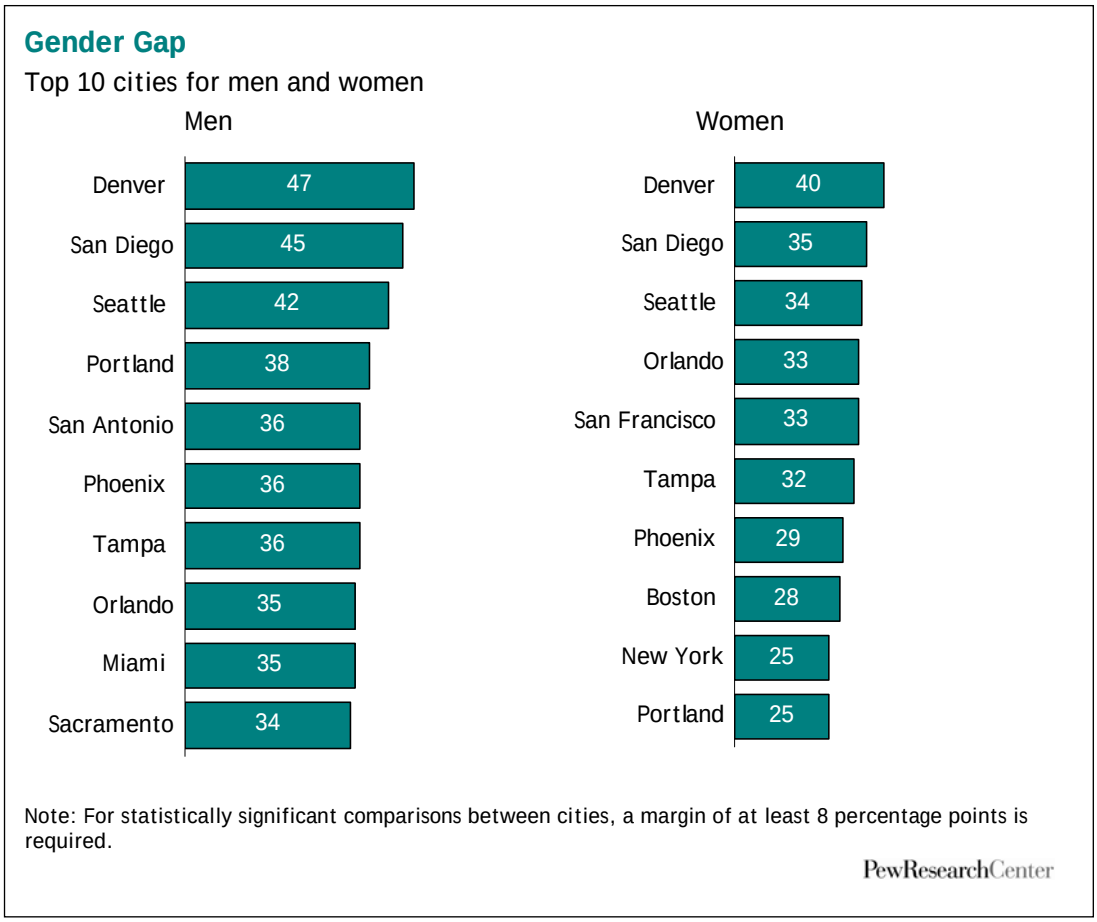
Significantly, six of the top 10 cities among adults earning less than $30,000 don't rank among the 10 favorite cities of more affluent adults. They include Orlando, Miami, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and Las Vegas.

At the same time, Boston, San Antonio and New York rank among the top 10 places to live among more affluent Americans but rank much lower with the less affluent. Judgments of Boston as a place to live are particularly striking: Nearly half of all high-income Americans say they would like live there, double the proportion of those earning less than $30,000 (45% vs. 23%).

Overall, wealthier Americans on average are about 9 percentage points more likely to say they would like to live in each of the 30 cities tested in the survey. This result echoes the findings of an earlier Pew Research Center analysis that showed affluent people were more likely than the less affluent to have lived in more than one state.

Mars and Venus Cities

The proportion of men who view each city favorably as a place to live is, on average, about 5 percentage points larger than the share of women who say they want to live in that city. For none of the 30 cities tested does a significantly larger share of women than men say that metro area is a place where they want to live. By contrast,



men are significantly more likely than women to say they want to live in 13 of the cities in the survey. But when the cities are ranked in order of preference by each gender, the lists look similar, with some notable exceptions.

Men and women agree that Denver, San Diego and Seattle are places where they would like to live; each finishes in the top three on each gender's list of desirable large metropolitan areas. More than a third of men (36%) say they would like to live in San Antonio, placing it squarely among the top 10 on their list. About as many men see Miami as a desirable locale. But both cities finish in the bottom half of the rankings among women; barely two-in-ten (22%) say they would like to live in either city.

The survey finds that men are about twice as likely as women to gamble on Las Vegas as a place to live (30% vs. 16%, a 14 percentage point gender gap). The sexes also disagree about San

Mars-Venus Cities

Largest differences in city preferences by gender

	Men %	Women %	Diff.* %
Las Vegas	30	16	14
San Antonio	36	22	14
Portland	38	25	13
Miami	35	22	13
Houston	29	18	11

*Percentage of men minus percentage of women who said they would like to live in each city.

Antonio (also a 14-point gap), Portland (13 points), Miami (13 points) and Houston (11 points).

San Francisco and New York break into the top 10 list of women's favorite cities but finish lower in the rankings among men. In both instances, the percentage of men and women who would like to live in each city are roughly comparable; the difference in rankings occurs because a smaller proportion of women, on average, express the desire to live in the nation's 30 largest cities.

Education

College graduates seemingly can't wait to move to Denver, San Diego or Boston. More than half of adults with a college degree or more say they would like to live in these cities. But Detroit, Cleveland and Cincinnati hold no such attraction, ranking at the bottom of desirable places to live for better educated Americans—and for less well educated adults as well.

At the same time, Orlando, Denver and Tampa top the list of desirable cities among Americans with no more than a high school diploma, reflecting, in part, the preferences of older Americans who are disproportionately represented in this group.

Preferred Cities, by Education

Percentage who would like to live in…

	College grads %		High school grads or less %
Denver	59	Orlando	35
San Diego	54	Denver	34
Seattle	51	Tampa	34
San Francisco	46	Seattle	32
Boston	43	Phoenix	31
Portland	41	Miami	30
Philadelphia	38	San Diego	30
Washington, DC	38	Miami	30
Tampa	35	Sacramento	28
Phoenix	33	Las Vegas	26
Chicago	33	San Francisco	26

Note: For statistically significant comparisons between cities, a margin of at least 9 percentage points is required.

Overall, those with a college degree are more likely than those who did not go beyond high school to say they would like to live in the 30 largest metro areas. In 13 of the cities tested, better educated adults are significantly more likely than others to say they wanted to live there. Less well-educated adults express a greater desire to live in only one city. On the remaining 16 cities, the difference between the two groups is statistically insignificant.

Among the bigger differences in city preferences by education: Denver, where 59% of all college graduates say they'd like to live, compared with 34% of those with a high school education or less, a gap of 25 percentage points. Similar gaps of more than 20 percentage points exist in ratings of San Diego, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

Differences in City Preferences by Education

Largest differences in city preferences by education

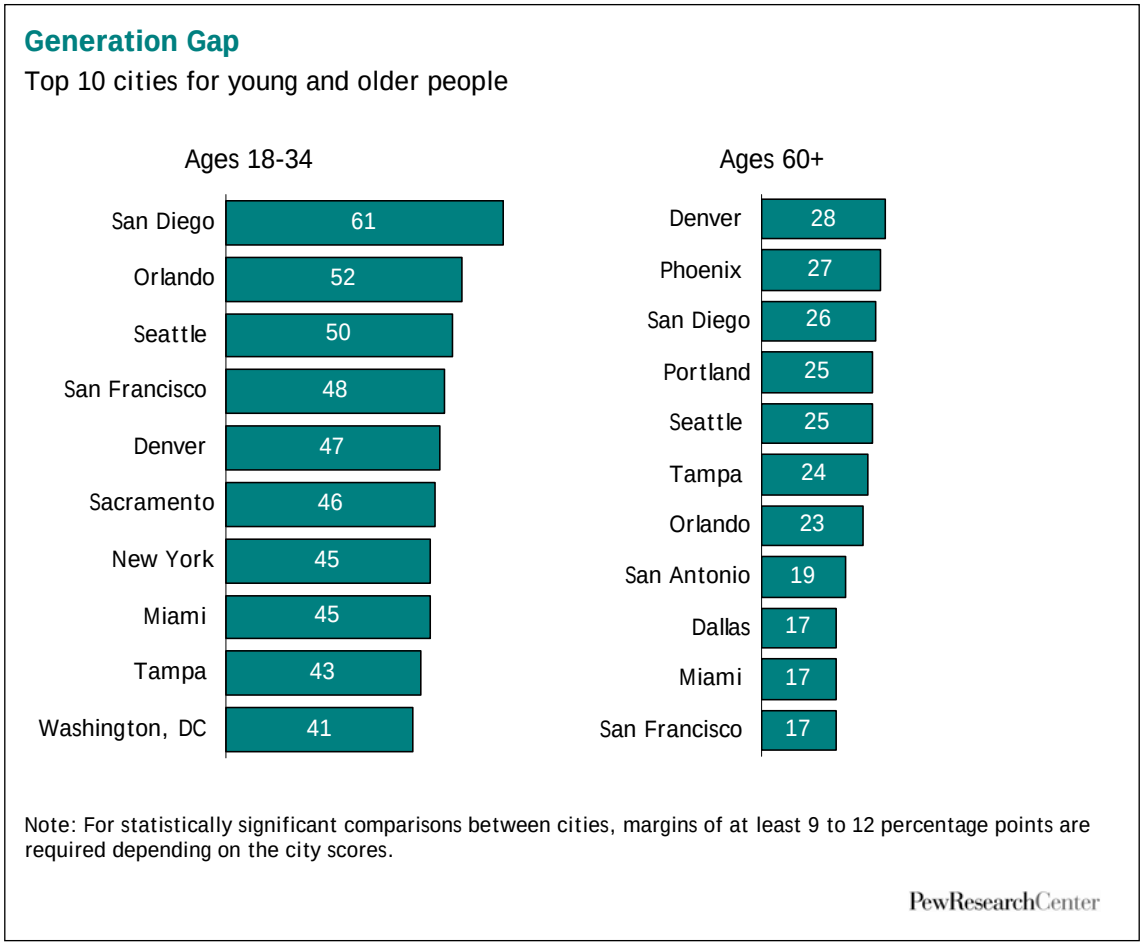
	College grads %	High school or less %	Diff.*
Denver	59	34	25
San Diego	54	30	24
Boston	43	20	23
Philadelphia	38	16	22
Washington, DC	38	17	21

*Percentage of those with a college degree minus the percentage with a high school diploma or less who said they would like to live in each city.

The Generation Gap

The survey also finds that cities are most attractive to the young. On average, adults younger than 35 are about twice as likely as those 60 or older to say any of the cities tested in the survey is a place they would like to live.

For example, 61% of young people say they would like to live in San Diego, compared with 26% of older adults. It's not because seniors don't like sunny weather, sandy beaches and the laid-back California lifestyle. In fact, San Diego ranks with Denver and Phoenix at the top of the ratings among older adults. It's just that the overwhelming majority of older people appear content with where they currently live.



But some cities have a very different appeal to different generations. Nearly half of all young people rate New York as a desirable place to live—three times the proportion of older adults who say they would want to live in the Big Apple (45% vs. 14%). Los Angeles, too, is a youthful taste lost with age: LA finishes near the bottom among older Americans (8%) but ranks in the upper half among young adults (38%) as a place where they would like to live. Conversely, Phoenix ranks near the top among older adults (27%) while finishing in the bottom half of desirable cities among younger adults.

Politics and City Preferences

Republicans and Democrats may not agree on much, but they do concur that Orlando is a nice place to live. Mickey Mouse's Florida home finishes near the top of the rankings among both Republicans and Democrats. (Perhaps predictably, political independents offered an independent view: Orlando finishes lower among unaligned adults.) Denver and San Diego also finish at or near the top among Democrats and Republicans and score well among independents, too.

Republicans say Phoenix is a great place to call home, and San Francisco is equally attractive to Democrats. But don't ask a conservative Republican to move to San Francisco or a liberal Democrat to settle in Phoenix, these data suggest. Fully half of all liberals would like to live in San Francisco, more than double the proportion of conservatives (53% vs. 22%). Phoenix, meanwhile, is the second-rated city among right-leaning Americans but finishes in the middle of the pack among liberals.

In the following sections, we analyze these preferences, first by party, then by ideology.

Party Towns

Republicans	%	Democrats	%	Independents	%
Denver	48	San Diego	45	Denver	50
Phoenix	38	San Francisco	41	Seattle	49
Orlando	34	Denver	39	San Diego	44
San Antonio	34	Orlando	38	Tampa	36
San Diego	33	Tampa	38	Phoenix	35
Portland	33	Seattle	37	Portland	34
Dallas	29	Boston	34	San Francisco	33
Seattle	29	Portland	31	Sacramento	32
Tampa	28	Sacramento	31	Orlando	31
San Francisco	28	Atlanta	31	Miami	31

Note: For statistically significant comparisons between cities among Republicans, a margin of at least 12 percentage points is required. For liberals, differences of 10 to 12 percentage points or more are required, depending on the city scores.

Party Differences

Biggest differences in city preference by political partisanship

...among Democrats

	Dem. %	Rep. %	Diff.* %
New York	30	14	16
San Francisco	41	28	13
San Diego	45	33	12
Philadelphia	28	17	11
Washington, DC	30	20	10
Tampa	38	28	10
Las Vegas	26	16	10
Atlanta	31	21	10

*Percentage of Democrats minus percentage of Republicans

...among Republicans

	Rep.	Dem.	Diff.**
Phoenix	38	28	10
San Antonio	34	25	9
Denver	48	39	9
St. Louis	24	17	7
Kansas City	21	14	7

**Percentage of Republicans minus percentage of Democrats

Preferences by Party

Denver is easily the favorite big city among Republicans. Nearly half (48%) of all GOP partisans say they would like to live there. Another Western city, Phoenix, ranked second; 38% of Republicans say they could see themselves living quite nicely in Arizona's capital. About a third of all Republicans say they would enjoy living in Orlando, San Antonio, San Diego or Portland.

Cities of the West and South also dominate the preferences of Democrats. San Diego, San Francisco, Denver and Orlando lead the list, closely followed by Tampa, Seattle and Boston—the only Eastern city to finish on any group's top 10 among list. Echoing the pattern found repeatedly in these data, no Midwestern city cracks either party's list of top 10 cities or is in the listing of independent voters' favorite cities in which to live.

While Republicans and Democrats generally place the same cities at or near the top of their respective rankings, some notable differences emerge. Democrats, for example, have a far more favorable view of New York: 30% say they would like to live in the Big Apple compared with 14% of Republicans, a 16-point gap. San Francisco also is more attractive to Democrats (41%) than Republicans (28%). On the other hand, significantly more Republicans (38%) than Democrats (28%) would like to call Phoenix home.

Preferences by Ideology

Liberals and conservatives differ even more than Republicans or Democrats when it comes to their assessments of desirable places to live.

A narrow majority of liberals say they would be pleased to call San Francisco home. But the City by the Bay doesn't make the list of conservatives' top 10 metro areas in which to live.

At the same time, Denver has the right stuff for conservatives and also tops the list of preferred big cities for political moderates. Nearly half of both groups (46%) say they would like to make Denver their home.

City Preferences, by Ideology

Conservatives	%	Liberals	%	Moderates	%
Denver	46	San Francisco	53	Denver	46
Phoenix	36	San Diego	49	San Diego	43
San Diego	34	Seattle	46	Seattle	42
San Antonio	34	Boston	41	Tampa	39
Seattle	32	New York	39	San Francisco	37
Orlando	31	Orlando	39	Orlando	33
Tampa	31	Portland	38	Phoenix	32
Sacramento	29	Washington, DC	38	Portland	32
Portland	28	Denver	38	Chicago	31
Dallas	27	Miami	36	Miami	31

Note: For statistically significant comparisons between cities among conservatives and moderates, a margin of at least 10 percentage points is required. For liberals, a difference of 13 percentage points or more between two cities is required.

But among liberals, the Mile-High City doesn't stand quite so tall: 38% of all liberals would like to live in Denver, tied with Portland and Washington, D.C., but significantly behind San Francisco.

Liberals and conservative also diverge in their views of other cities. Liberals are more than twice as likely as conservatives to say they'd like to live in the Washington, D.C. (38% vs. 17%) or New York (39% vs. 19%) metropolitan areas. Boston, too, ranks higher with liberals (41%) than conservatives (21%). On the other side of the ideological divide, conservatives are more likely than liberals to prefer San Antonio (34% vs. 23%), Dallas (27% vs. 17%) and Denver (46% vs. 38%).

Ideological Differences

Biggest differences in city preference by political ideology

...for liberals

	Liberal %	Conserv. %	Diff.* %
San Francisco	53	22	31
Washington, D.C.	38	17	21
Boston	41	21	20
New York	39	19	20
Riverside, Calif.	34	19	15
San Diego	49	34	15

*Percentage of liberals minus percentage of conservatives

...for conservatives

	Conserv.	Liberal	Diff.**
San Antonio	34	23	11
Dallas	27	17	10
Denver	46	38	8
Cincinnati	16	9	7
Houston	26	20	6

**Percentage of conservatives minus percentage of liberals

Most Prefer a Politically Diverse Town

Do Americans want to live in communities with people who share their political beliefs? These results provide some evidence that partisans and those with a similar political philosophy are attracted to certain metropolitan areas but not others. Another question in

the survey attempts to answer this question more directly. Respondents were asked whether they would prefer to live in a community where most people share their political beliefs or one in which there are different political views.

Home Town Politics

Percentage of each group who prefer to live in a place where…

	Most share my political views	There is a mix of views	Neither/ Both/DK
	%	%	%
Total	24	63	13
Party ID			
Republican	35	54	11
Democrat	24	65	11
Independent	17	74	9
Ideology			
Conservative	33	57	10
Moderate	17	73	10
Liberal	27	63	10

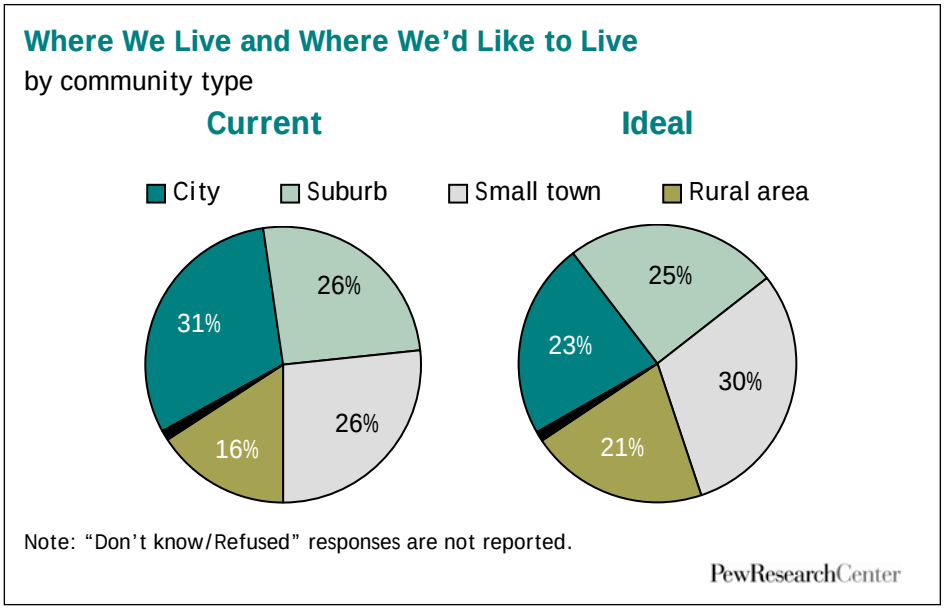
Regardless of political party or ideology, more than six-in-ten Americans say they would prefer to live in a politically diverse community. But some differences do emerge. More than a third (35%) of all Republicans say they would prefer a community where most residents share their political views, compared with just 24% of Democrats and 17% of self-described independents. Similarly, about a third (33%) of all conservatives want to live in a community where most share their political views, compared with 27% of liberals and 17% of political moderates. But again, clear majorities of conservatives (66%), liberals (70%) and moderates (83%) prefer political diversity or say it doesn't matter. For an analysis of the public's preference for diverse communities, click here

II. Good Fits and Misfits

If you ask Americans to describe the type of community in which they live, they serve up a range of responses: 31% say city, 26% say a suburb, another 26% say a small town and 16% say a rural area.[3]

If you ask them to describe the type of community they'd *like* to live in, the size of these response categories shifts around a bit: city falls to 23%, suburb holds nearly even at 25%, small town rises to 30% and rural area rises to 21%.

But when you tote up all these small shifts, you come up with a pretty big finding: fully 46% of Americans are, by their own reckoning, geographic mismatches. They live in one type of community but would prefer to live in another.



Who are these mismatched Americans – and who fits in best with the type of community they currently call home?

Overall, these data show that men living in the country are among the most likely group to say they are living in their ideal locale. Fully seven-in-ten rural men can't imagine being happier in a city, small town or suburb than in the country. Rural women are somewhat less satisfied: Only about half say the country is their ideal place to live. In contrast, similarly sized majorities of men and women living in the city agree that someplace else would be their ideal place to call home, while roughly similar proportions of the sexes who live in small towns or suburbs agree that these community types are the best place for them.

While most city dwellers say they are not living in their ideal surroundings, one group is right at home in the city: young people. A 57% majority of urbanites under the age of 30 say the city is the perfect place for them, while majorities of every other age group that lives in the city would ideally prefer to live somewhere else.

[3] The categories used in the Pew Research Center survey differ from those used by the Census Bureau, which divides community types into urban and rural or into metropolitan and non-metropolitan. The bureau does not recognize a "suburb" or a "small town" as a community type—even though these categories are commonly used by many Americans. For more explanation on how the Census Bureau defines community types, see Appendix B.

Conversely, most young people who live in small towns (61%) and rural areas (53%)would rather be somewhere else. But other age groups find small towns and rural locales a good fit: About six-in-ten adults older than 30 in either type of area say there's no better place for them than where they currently live.

One striking finding emerges from the age data: Adults living in the city who are in their mid-to-late middle age (50 to 64 years old) are the least likely of any age group to say the city is their ideal place to live. Just 29% of these adults say the city is their ideal place to live. These data do not explain why these adults are more attracted to another locale—whether it might be because they are anticipating a retirement relocation, or perhaps because this group is disproportionately dissatisfied with the challenges of living in a big city. Conversely, members of this group who live in the country couldn't imagine living anywhere else: Two-thirds say they are living in their ideal locale, the largest proportion of any age group to feel so well-suited to rural living.

Good Fits

Percentage of residents in each type of area who say it is their "ideal" place to live

	Total* %	City %	Suburb %	Small town %	Rural area %
All	52	44	54	56	61
Gender					
Men	53	44	52	54	70
Women	52	44	55	58	51
Age					
18-29	50	57	50	39	47
30-49	56	43	62	60	61
50-64	51	29	48	62	67
65+	51	41	47	57	61
Education					
College grad	58	52	62	58	58
Some college	52	45	48	56	65
High school or less	49	38	47	55	59
Family income					
$100k+	56	53	55	59	65
$50-100k	54	40	60	60	60
LT $50k	49	41	46	55	60

*Overall percentage of group
Note: Percentage with no opinion not shown.

Education also shapes people's notion of whether they are living in their ideal type of area. Among city dwellers, 62% of adults with no more than a high school education say their perfect home would be somewhere other than a city.

Among college graduates living in a city, slightly more than half (52%) say there's no better place to be. But even larger proportions of these well-educated Americans who live in the suburbs, small towns or rural areas can imagine no better place for them to be than their current community type. College-educated adults in the suburbs are particularly happy: more than six-in-ten (62%) say there's nothing better than suburban life for them, and a similar share are content to be living in small towns or rural areas (58%).

Cities are particularly inhospitable homes to middle-income Americans and those on the lower rungs of the income ladder. Six-in-ten city dwellers with household incomes between $50,000 and $100,000 say they would rather be living in some other kind of place. An equally large share of these middle-class wage earners who live in other community types say they feel right at home where they are, including 60% of those in the suburbs, 60% of those in small towns and 61% of those in rural areas.

Among those earning less than $50,000, majorities who live in cities (59%) and the suburbs (54%) are not in their ideal place, while majorities in small towns (55%) and rural areas (60%) say there is no place better for them to live. High-income city-dwelling adults deliver a split verdict on city life: a 53% majority of those earning $100,000 or more say urban life is the perfect fit for them, while 47% disagree.

The Politics of Mismatches

Apparently middle-income families find it hard to fit into city life. But it may be even harder for a Republican to fit in. Nearly two-thirds of all Republicans (65%) who live in cities say they are not living in their ideal place. In fact, these data suggest that anywhere else is a better fit for GOP partisans: About six-in-ten Republicans living in suburbs, small towns and rural areas say nowhere else would be better to live than their current type of community.

Many Democrats, on the other hand, appear to be less-than-ideal fits wherever they call home. Slightly fewer than half (46%) of city-dwelling Democrats say there's no other place they would rather live, while a slight majority believe they would fit in better somewhere else. At the same time, Democrats in the suburbs (52%), small towns (50%) and rural areas (51%) say their respective locales are the right fit for them, while nearly as many disagree.

The city-country divide opens even wider among political conservatives. Fully two-thirds of all self-described conservatives living in the city say they are not living in their ideal place. And the farther you move from the urban core, the happier political conservatives seem to be: 51% of suburban conservatives, 54% of small-town conservatives and 62% of rural conservatives say they are living in their ideal kind of place. Locale seems to matter little to liberals: Small majorities living in the city (54%), suburbs (57%) or in a small town or rural area (54%) say they are living in their ideal locale. Majorities of moderates in the suburbs, small towns and rural areas say no place would suit them better. But a 58% majority of city-dwelling moderates say they are not living in their ideal place.

Political Fits and Misfits

Percentage of residents in each area who say it is their "ideal' place to live

	Total %	City %	Suburb %	Small town %	Rural areas %
Party ID					
Republican	54	35	58	61	60
Democrat	49	46	52	50	51
Independent	53	44	52	60	63
Ideology					
Conservative	49	34	51	54	62
Moderate	52	42	56	56	57
Liberal	55	54	57	57	*

*Too few in subsample to reliably characterize
Note: Percentage with no opinion not shown.

Lifestyle Preferences

The survey also explored certain lifestyle preferences—including pace of life, neighborliness and tolerance for diversity—to see if they are linked to where people live, where they'd like to live and whether or not they feel mismatched with their surroundings.

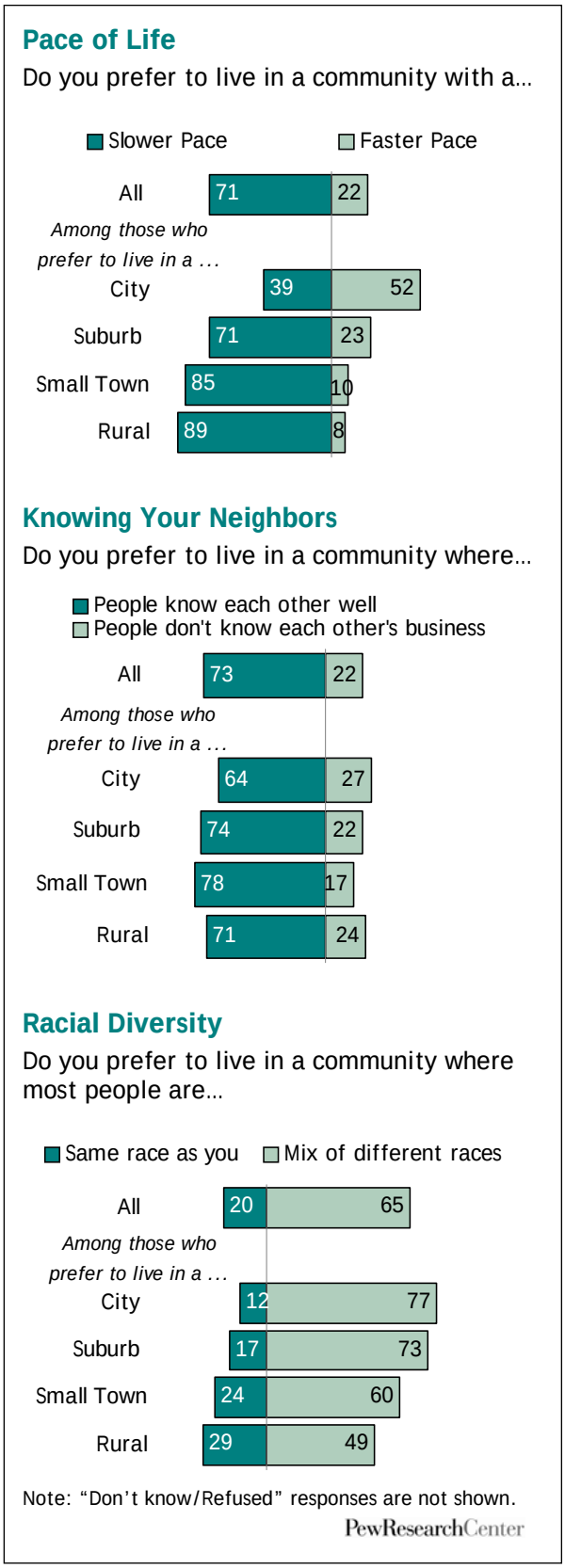
For example, it finds that by a lopsided 71%-22% margin, Americans prefer a slower pace of life over a faster pace. A majority of city dwellers subscribe to this consensus. But among those who say they would *like* to live in a city, a majority chooses the fast pace of life.

The survey also finds that more than seven-in-ten city residents who prefer a faster pace of life say the city is perfect for them. But among city residents who favor a slower lifestyle, exactly the same percentage say they are not living in their ideal place.

In rural areas and small towns, the opposite pattern emerges. Here, more than eight-in-ten overall prefer a slow pace. And among this group, more than six-in-ten say they are living in their ideal locale. But substantial majorities of those who prefer a faster-paced life and live in small towns or the country say they are not living in their ideal place. In the suburbs, modest majorities say they are living in their ideal place irrespective of whether they prefer to live in an area with a faster-paced (53%) or slower-paced (54%) lifestyle.

Attitudes toward social distance also shape judgments about where people want to live. Overall, Americans are neighborly folks—some 73% say they want to live in a place where people know each other well, compared with just 22% who say they would rather live where most people don't know each other's business. But there are some differences by community preference. Among those who consider small towns the ideal place to live, 78% say they prefer to be in a place where neighbors know each other well; among those drawn to cities, just 64% express that sentiment.

These attitudes, too, are associated with contentment with one's current community type. For example, six-in-ten (61%) urban dwellers who prefer to live in a place where people know each other well say the city isn't their ideal place to live. By contrast, among city residents who favor a place where neighbors don't know each other's business, slightly more than half (52%) say they're living in their ideal place.



The pattern is different in small-town America. About six-in-ten residents of small towns and rural areas who want lots of social interaction with neighbors say their areas are the best possible place for them to live. But among residents in small towns who prefer to be left alone, a big majority say they are living in their ideal place.

On the question of tolerance for diversity, Americans by a lopsided margin say they prefer living in a place where there are difference races (65%) over one where most people are the same race as they are (20%). But, here again, there are differences by community preference. Fully 77% of people who think of cities as their ideal place say they prefer racial diversity in their surroundings, while just 49% of people who would like to live in rural areas say they prefer to live in a racially mixed place. Response patterns are similar with regard to separate questions about attitudes toward living among immigrants and living among people of different religions.

Not surprisingly, an analysis of all "mismatched "Americans shows they are significantly less satisfied with their current community than are those who say their ideal community type is the one in which they're living now. Overall, fully 31% of those who say they are living in their ideal locale rate the overall quality of live in their present community as "excellent," compared with just 18% who would prefer to live in some other kind of place.

Community Ratings

	Living in ideal community	Not living in ideal community
	%	%
Excellent	31	17
Very good	35	37
Good	24	29
Only fair	8	13
Poor	2	3

Note: Percentage with no opinion not shown.

Who Lives Where; Who'd *Like* to Live Where?

Each of America's four major community types presents a somewhat different profile—with notable variances by age, race, ethnicity, income and political affiliation.

On the age front, cities are more tilted than the other communities toward a young adult population, while suburbs have their biggest age bulge among residents ages 30-49, and small towns and rural areas are more skewed toward an older population than are the other community types.

On the socioeconomic front, suburbs have higher shares of affluent adults and college graduates than do the other three community types. Rural areas and small towns lag behind the others in college graduates.

The racial and ethnic patterns are also notable. Blacks and Hispanics are much more prevalent in cities than in rural areas. Meantime, the racial and ethnic makeup of small towns closely resembles that of the nation as a whole, while in the suburbs, blacks and Hispanics are slightly underrepresented—but not by as much as they are in rural areas.

Who Lives Where?

Demographics by current community type

	All	City	Suburb	Small town	Rural area
	%	%	%	%	%
Age					
18-29	22	28	22	19	14
30-49	36	34	40	34	34
50-64	24	21	22	25	30
65+	15	14	11	19	18
Gender					
Men	48	48	49	46	50
Women	52	52	51	54	50
Family Income					
$75,000+	26	21	39	20	24
$50-75k	15	17	15	12	17
$30-50k	18	17	13	20	22
LT $30,000	25	27	17	32	22
Race/Ethnicity					
White	69	58	73	71	83
Black	11	15	10	11	5
Hispanic	13	19	9	13	6
Education					
College grad+	27	25	43	21	17
Some college	23	26	23	19	25
HS grad/less	49	48	34	60	58
Party ID					
Republican	25	19	25	27	31
Democrat	35	42	35	33	27
Independent	31	29	35	30	29

Note: Percentage with no opinion not shown.

On the marital front, married couples are overrepresented in the suburbs. And when it comes to political affiliation, the cities skew heavily Democratic, the rural areas skew Republican and the partisan affiliation of suburban and small-town residents resembles that of the nation as a whole.

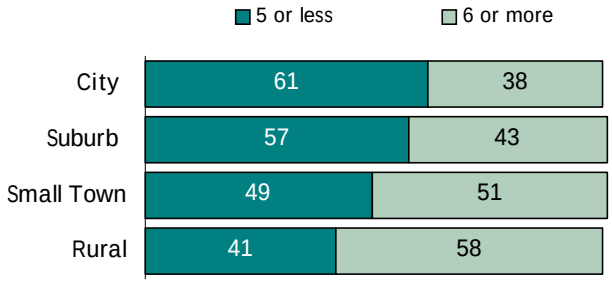
These four community types also differ by the share of residents who have large extended families living nearby. In rural areas, 58% of residents say that six or more members of their family live within an hour's drive. In cities, just 38% of residents say they have that many relatives nearly. The other two community

types fall in between: about half of small-town residents (51%) say they have that many family members nearby, as do 43% of suburbanites.

These patterns are similar but less pronounced when it comes to having friends who live nearby. Some 28% of city residents say they have fewer than the average number of friends living nearby, while just 18% of rural residents, 20% of suburbanites and 23% of people living in small towns say the same.

Family Nearby?

How many members of your extended family live within an hour's drive?



Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

PewResearchCenter

Looking next at where people say they *want* to live, the demographic patterns are broadly similar—but, in a few cases, the variances are more pronounced. Age is the most striking example. Twice as many young adults as those 65 or older currently live in the city. But more than three times as many young adults say they *want* to live in a city. There is also a sharp difference by gender – with men disproportionately inclined to say they would like to live in a rural area, and women disproportionately inclined to prefer the other three community types.

Who Wants to Live Where?

Demographics by preferred community type

	All	City	Suburb	Small town	Rural area
	%	%	%	%	%
Age					
18-29	22	40	22	14	13
30-49	36	32	42	34	35
50-64	24	14	20	30	32
65+	15	12	14	18	17
Gender					
Men	48	46	45	44	60
Women	52	54	55	56	40
Family Income					
$75,000+	26	26	34	24	22
$50-75k	15	13	15	15	17
$30-50k	18	16	15	19	21
LT $30,000	25	28	19	26	28
Race/Ethnicity					
White	69	55	67	74	81
Black	11	15	15	9	6
Hispanic	13	20	9	14	7
Education					
College grad+	27	29	39	23	18
Some college	23	26	22	21	25
HS grad/less	49	44	39	56	57
Party ID					
Republican	25	17	27	26	29
Democrat	35	44	36	33	27
Independent	31	30	31	32	30

Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses are not shown.

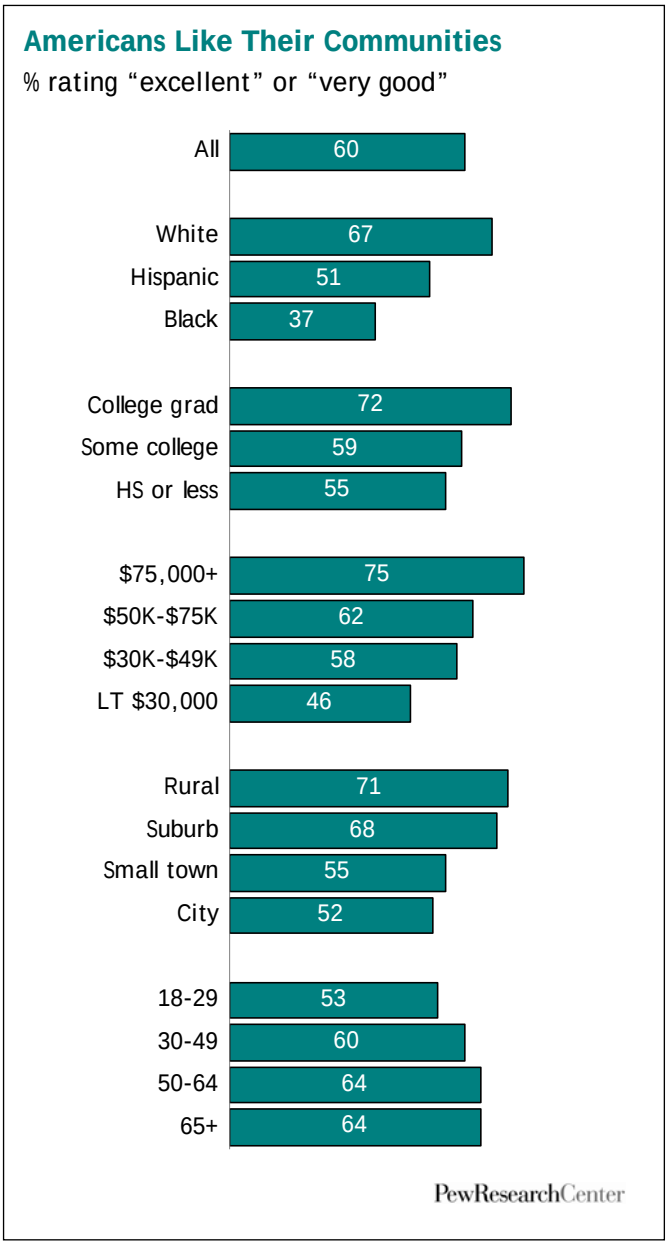
III. Community Satisfaction

Most Americans give high marks to the community where they currently live. Six-in-ten adults describe their current community as an "excellent" or "very good" place to live, and another quarter rate it as "good." Just 12% say their community is only a fair or poor place to live.

There are some notable demographic differences in these ratings. For example, whites are nearly twice as likely as blacks to rate their community as excellent or very good—67% of whites do so, compared with just 37% of blacks. Hispanics fall in between; 51% give their community one of the top two ratings.

Greater educational attainment and higher family income are both associated with a higher community rating. And there are differences in community ratings by community type. Residents of rural areas are most likely to give their community a rating of excellent or very good (71%), followed by suburbanites (68%), small-town residents (55%) and city dwellers (52%).

Older residents tend to give higher ratings to their communities than younger ones. More than 60% of residents who are ages 30 or older rate their communities as excellent or very good, compared with 53% of those who are younger.

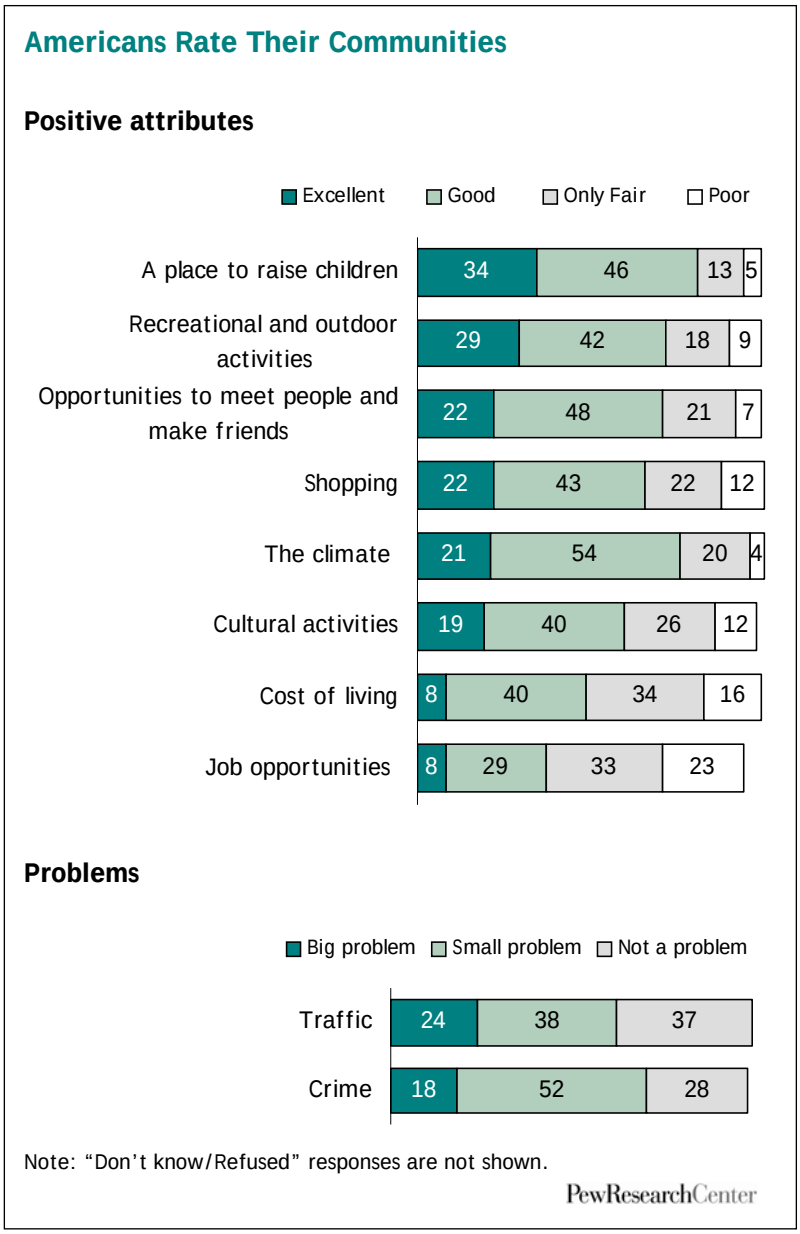


Rate Your Community

Survey respondents were asked to judge their community on 10 familiar criteria, eight of which focused on positive attributes and two of which focused on problems.

On the positive side, more survey respondents have good things to say about their community as "a place to raise children" than about any other qualities tested in the survey. Eight-in-ten describe their local community as an excellent (34%) or good (46%) place to raise children. Having access to recreational and outdoor activities, and having opportunities to meet people and make friends also are highly rated by most Americans. A majority of Americans give good or excellent ratings to local shopping, climate and cultural activities.

In contrast, job opportunities and cost of living received lower ratings: only 37% of survey respondents think the job opportunities in their local communities are excellent or good, and only 48% think positively of the cost of living in their local area.



Asked to assess problems, about one-quarter (24%) of respondents say traffic is a big problem in their community, while equal shares of the rest say it is a small problem (38%) or not a problem (37%). And on the subject of crime, 18% say it is a big problem in their area, 52% say it is a small problem and 28% think it is not a problem.

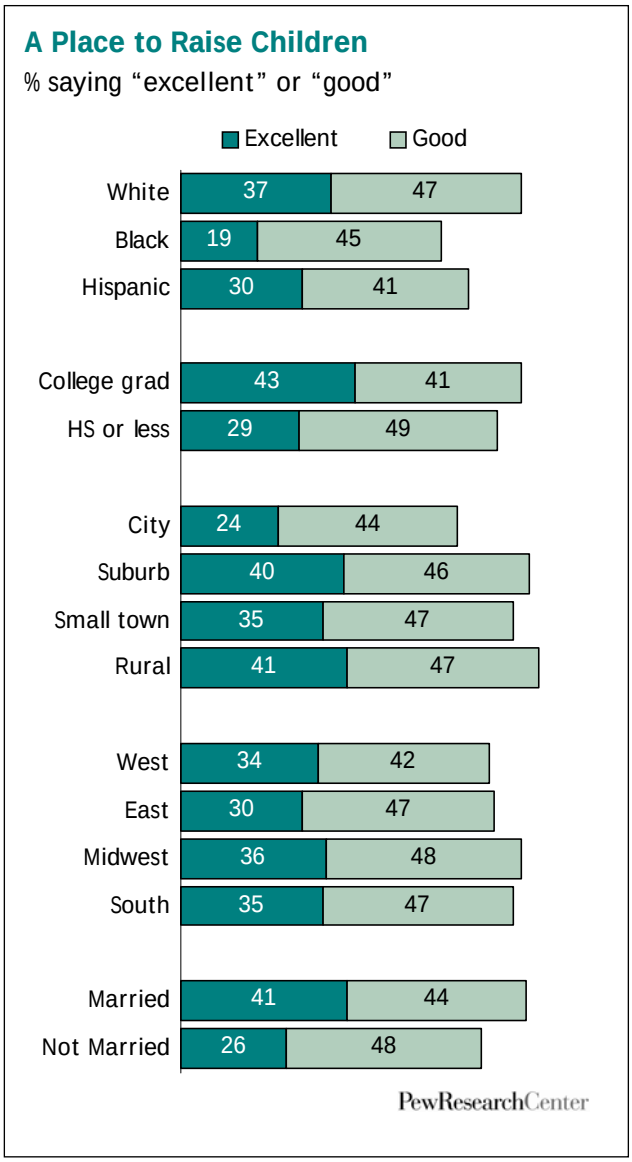
The following sections explore the community ratings in greater detail and analyze responses by different demographic groups.

A Place to Raise Children

The vast majority of whites (84%) give excellent or good ratings to their community as a place to raise children. In contrast, about six-in-ten black respondents think the same. Hispanics are in between: About seven-in-ten Hispanics give positive ratings to their community as a place to raise children. Americans who have earned at least a college degree are more likely than those who are less educated to have positive ratings about their community's child-rearing environment.

While nearly seven-in-ten city dwellers rate their communities as excellent or good for raising children, those living in other communities offer even better marks on this question. Indeed, close to nine-in-ten rural (88%) and suburban (86%) residents give positive ratings to the child-rearing aspect of their communities. On the regional front, more than eight-in-ten adults living in the Midwest and the South think their local community is an excellent or good place to raise children, compared with 76% of residents who live in the West and 77% of those living in the East.

The survey also finds that married couples and homeowners give higher ratings to their communities' child-rearing environment than do unmarried respondents and those who rent a home, respectively.

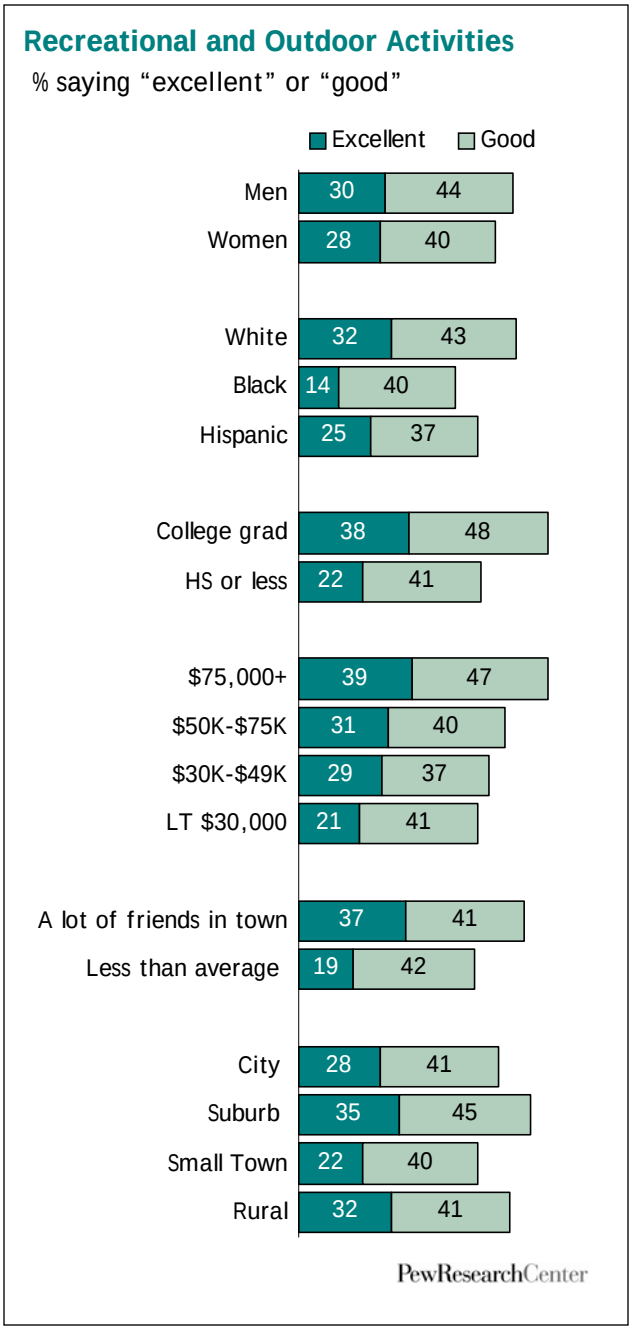


Recreational and Outdoor Activities

About three-quarters (74%) of men rate their communities' recreational and outdoor activities as excellent or good, compared with a slightly smaller share of women (68%). Whites (75%) are more positive about the recreational activities in their community than are blacks (54%) or Hispanics (62%).College graduates are more likely than those who have less education to give positive ratings to the recreational activities in their local communities.

Family income is also associated with Americans' ratings on local recreational and outdoor activities. The vast majority (86%) of those with a family income of $75,000 or more a year give positive ratings to this aspect, while only a bit more than six-in-ten of those who make less than $30,000 feel the same way. Further, respondents who say they have "a lot of friends in town" are much more likely to rate the local recreational and outdoor activities as good or excellent than those who say that that their number of friends locally is below average.

Also, Westerners are more likely than those in other sections of the county to give positive ratings to recreational and outdoor activities available in their communities. Compared with those who rent, homeowners are happier about the recreational activities in their communities.

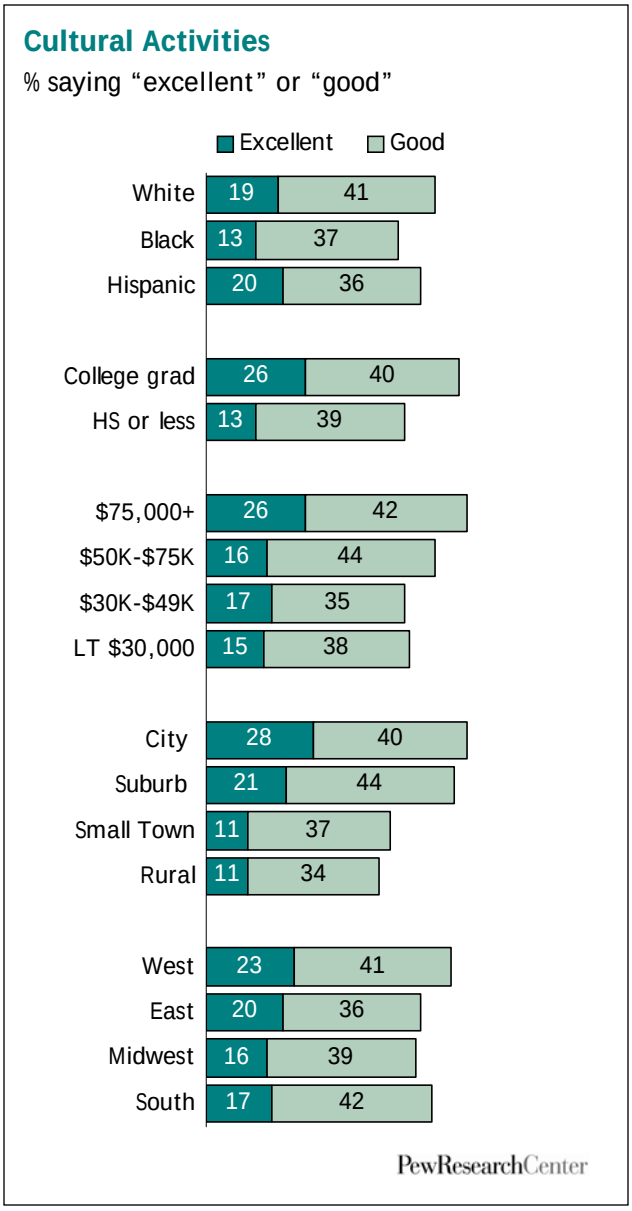


Cultural Activities

City dwellers and suburban residents have better feelings about the cultural activities in their area than do those who live elsewhere. Nearly seven-in-ten residents of cities or suburbs rate the cultural activities as "excellent" or "good," compared with about half of those live in a small town or rural area.

People with college degrees and higher incomes give better ratings than others to the cultural activities in their communities, and whites register slightly higher levels of satisfaction on this front than do blacks or Hispanics.

Westerners are a little more likely than people who live in other regions of the country to say that the cultural activities in their local communities are excellent or good.



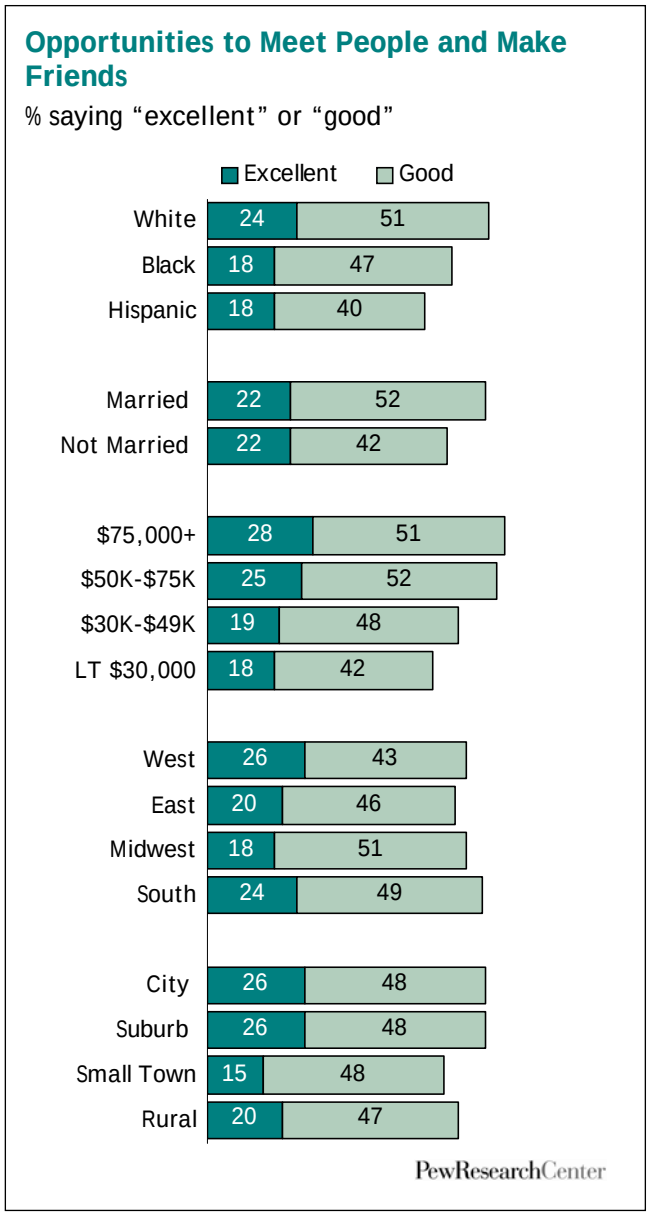
Opportunities to Meet People and Make Friends

City dwellers and suburbanites are more likely than those in small towns or rural areas to describe their local communities as an "excellent" or "good" place to meet people and make friends. There is a difference on this front by race and ethnicity as well. About three-quarters of whites think that opportunities to meet people and make friends are excellent or good in their community, compared with just two-thirds of blacks and 58% of Hispanics who feel the same way.

Married respondents (74%) are more likely than those who are not married (64%) to rate their social opportunities high within the local community.

Family income is positively associated with how people view the social opportunities in their community. More than three-quarters of respondents whose family income is $50,000 or higher think their chances of meeting people and making friends in their community are excellent or good, compared with about 67% of respondents with income less than $50,000 and 60% with income below $30,000.

There are slight regional differences regarding this question. Southerners are a bit more likely than those living in the East to say that their chances of meeting people and making friends in their local community are excellent or good. Americans who live in the Midwest and West fall in between.

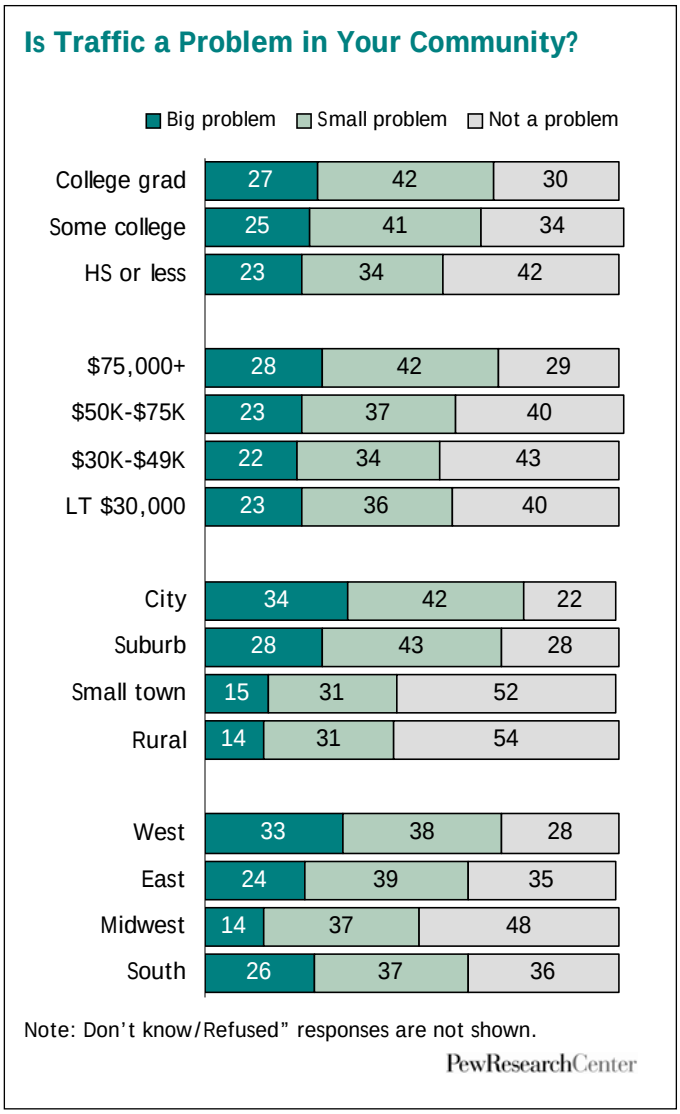


Traffic, Crime as Community Problems

City dwellers have the worst traffic situation locally: More than one-third of them say that traffic is a big problem in their local community. Residents in the suburbs come second; nearly three-in-ten rate traffic as a big problem. By contrast, in small towns and rural areas, the percentage of people who consider traffic as a big problem is 15% or below.

Analyzing responses by regions, Westerners are the most troubled by traffic. One-third of them rate it as a big problem, compared with one-quarter of those who live in the East and the South, and just 14% of Midwesterners.

There are no other notable variations by demographic group.

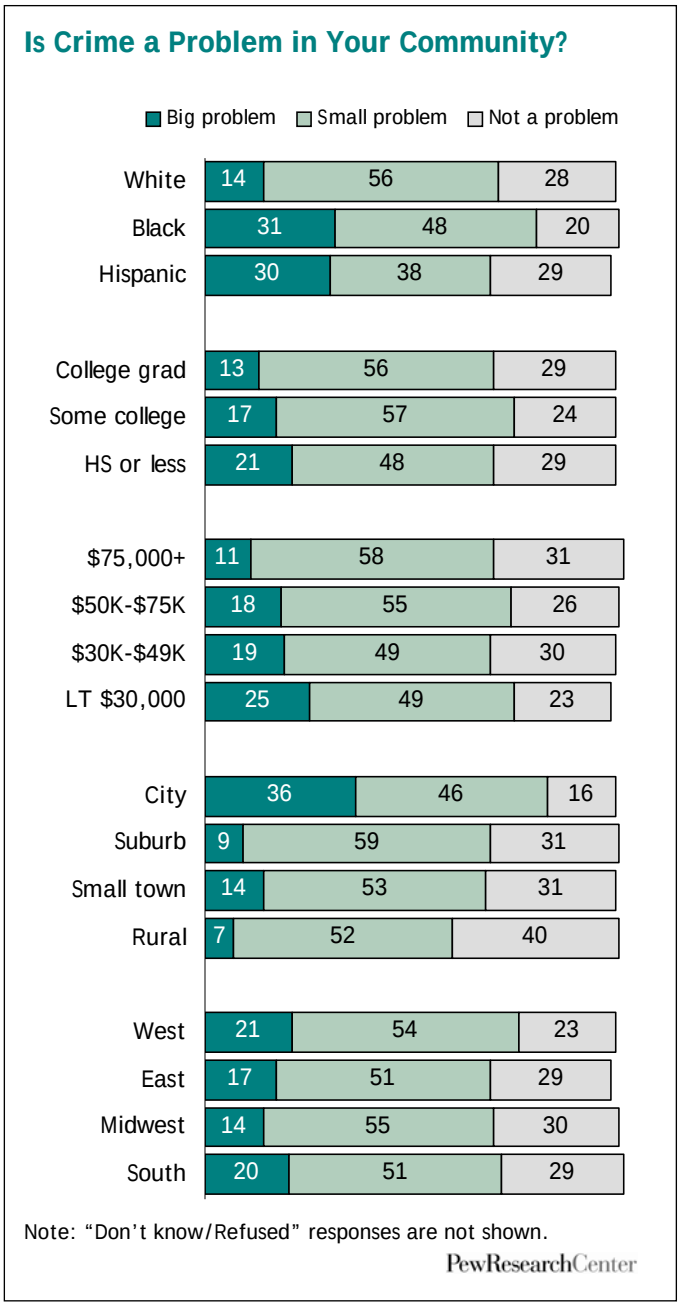


As with traffic, city residents are the most likely to consider crime a big problem. More than one-third of city dwellers think crime is a big problem in their community, compared with fewer than one-in-ten residents of suburbs and rural areas who feel that way and about one-in-seven residents of small towns.

There are notable racial differences as well. Blacks and Hispanics are more than twice as likely as whites to say crime is a big problem in their community.

People with a high school diploma or less are more likely than college graduates to say they live in a community where crime is a big problem.

Higher family income is associated with perceptions of a safer community: One-quarter of people whose family income is under $30,000 say crime is a big problem in their communities, while only about one-in-ten whose family income is $75,000 or more say so.



Other Community Ratings

The survey also asked about ratings regarding shopping, cost of living, job opportunities and the climate in local communities.

People with different demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds all rate the shopping in their area about the same—with the exception that college graduates are more likely to rate shopping in their community as excellent or good (72%) than are those with a high school education or less (60%).

People with higher family incomes do not think they live in an area where the cost of living is excessive. Nearly six- in-ten among those with a family income of $75,000 or higher rated their cost of living as excellent or good, compared with those whose family income is $30,000 to $50,000 (49%) and those whose income is below $30,000 (38%). Other surveys show that people with higher incomes tend to live in communities with a higher

cost of living.[4] Thus, it would appear that assessments of local cost of living are, at least in part, a subjective measure in which positive ratings rise as income rises. Likewise, higher educational attainment is associated with a better rating of the cost of living in local communities.

Compared with city dwellers, residents of suburbs and small towns give a slightly better rating to the cost of living in their communities. People living in the South and the Midwest give better ratings to the cost of living in their local communities than do those who live in other parts of the country.

City dwellers and suburbanites give higher ratings than people who live in small towns or rural areas to job opportunities in their communities. Southerners think more highly of their local job opportunities than do residents of other regions. More than four-in-ten residents in the South rate their local communities as having excellent or good job opportunities, compared with 39% of residents in the West and about one-third of people living in the East or Midwest.

Residents of the South (80%) and the West (79%) are more likely to be happy with their weather than are those who live in the East (72%) or Midwest (65%).

Ratings and Mobility

Overall, people's ratings of their community are not influenced in any significant way by whether they spent their whole life in their community or moved there from somewhere else. Both groups have similar ratings about their community.

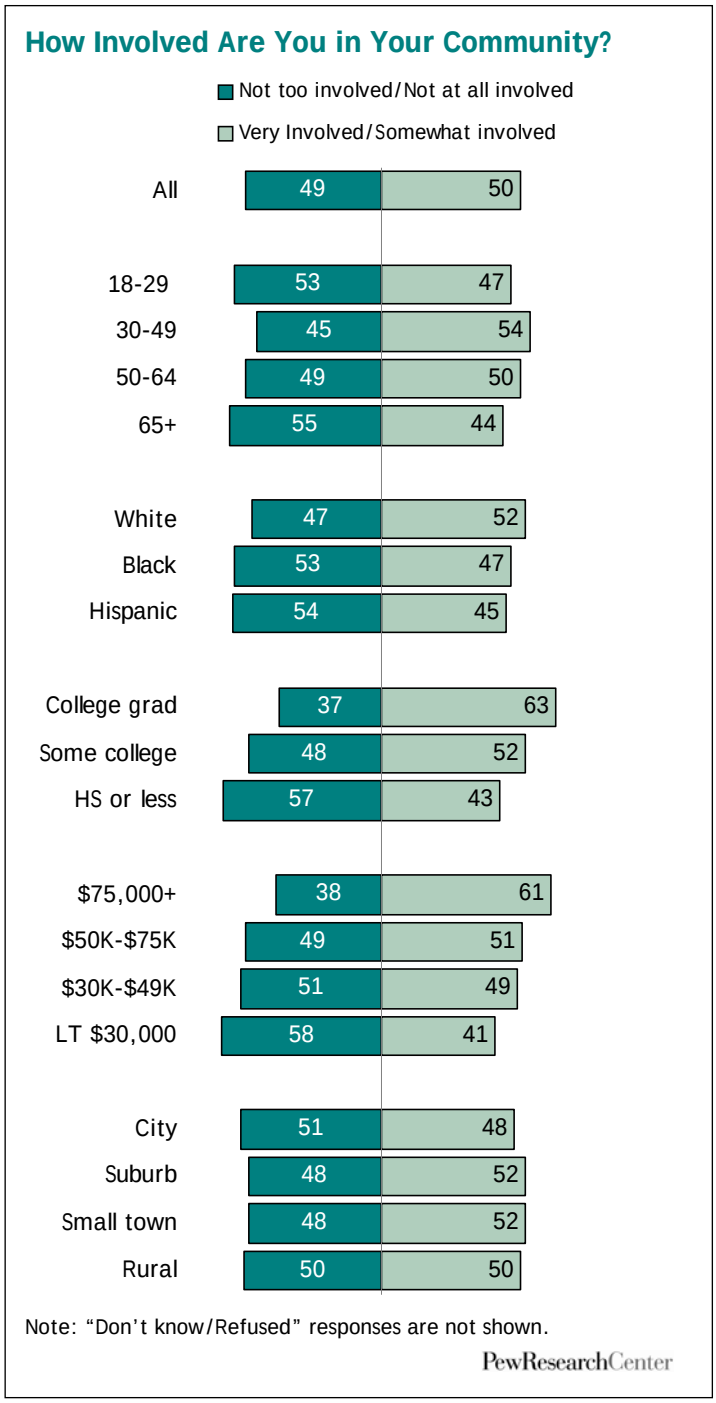
However, community ratings *are* linked to whether someone plans to stay in a community or move. Among people who say that they are very likely or somewhat likely to move away from their current community within five years, 50% give an "excellent" or "very good" rating to their community. Among those who say they are not likely to move in the near future, 67% give one of these top ratings to their community. The survey also finds that when people give lower ratings to where they live regarding the child-rearing environment, the climate,

Community Ratings by Likelihood to Move
Looking ahead five years from now, how likely is that you will move away from the local community where you are living now?

	Likely to move	Not likely to move	% Difference
% who give "excellent" or "very good" ratings			
Overall rating	50	67	17
A place to raise children	73	85	12
The climate	68	80	12
Opportunities to meet people and make friends	65	74	9
Recreational and outdoor activities	68	74	6
Cost of living	46	50	4
Shopping	64	66	2
Cultural activities	58	59	1
Job opportunities	37	38	1

[4] See the Pew Research Center report "Inside the Middle Class: Bad Times Hit the Good Life," released April 9, 2008. (http://pewsocialtrends.org/pubs/706/middle-class-poll)

opportunities to meet people and make friends, and recreational and outdoor activities, they are more likely to say they plan to move from the community. In contrast, job opportunities, cost of living, shopping and cultural activities are not critical factors related to the intention to relocate.



Community Involvement

Americans are evenly split in terms of community involvement: Half of the population is either very or somewhat involved in community and neighborhood activities, and the other half is either not too involved or not at all involved.

People ages 30-49 are the group most involved in community activities. About 54% of this age group say that they are either "very" or "somewhat" involved in their local communities, compared with 47% of younger adults 18-29 and 44% of those ages 65 and older.

Higher income and attainment of higher education are generally associated with a higher level of community involvement. More than six-in-ten people with family income of $75,000 or higher are involved in community activities, compared with about four-in-ten of those who make less than $30,000.

Also, more than six-in-ten Americans with college or postgraduate education are either very or somewhat involved in their local communities. In contrast, 52% of people with some college education and 43% of those with a high school education or less fall into this category.

There are only minor differences in community involvement by race and ethnic groups and by community type. About half of all blacks, whites and Hispanics say they are involved in their community, as do about half of the residents of cities, suburbs, small towns and rural areas.

Surprisingly, residents who are not originally from the community where they live now are somewhat more involved in community and neighborhood activities than are those who have lived in the same place their whole lives. Among the "movers," 52% say they are very or somewhat involved in community activities, compared with 47% of "stayers." The likely explanation is that movers tend to have more income and education—and both of these characteristics are linked to greater community involvement.[5]

[5] See the Pew Research Center report "American Mobility: Who Moves? Who Stays Put? Where's Home?" released December, 17, 2008. (http://pewsocialtrends.org/pubs/721/movers-and-stayers)

PEW SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS
TOPLINE FOR SELECTED QUESTIONS
Oct. 3-19, 2008, MOBILITY SURVEY
N=2,260

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). COLUMNS/ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING. ALL TRENDS REFERENCE SURVEYS FROM THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS AND SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Q.1 Which of the following BEST describes the place where you now live? (READ)

31	A city
26	A suburban area
26	A small town
16	A rural area
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Q.2 Overall, how would you rate your [INSERT RESPONSE FROM Q1--IF Q1=1: city; IF Q1=2: suburb; IF Q1=3 town; IF Q1=4,9: area] as a place to live? Would you say it is (READ)?

Oct 2008		Oct 2006	May 1999	Feb 1997
24	Excellent	27	28	25
36	Very good	29	38	31
26	Good	31	24	28
10	Only fair	9	8	11
2	Poor	3	2	4
*	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	1	*	1

Q.3 How would you rate each of the following in your local community? First, … [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? READ, IF NECESSARY: Is this excellent, good, only fair or poor in your local community?

	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	DK/Ref (VOL.)
a. Job opportunities	8	29	33	23	6
b. Cost of living	8	40	34	16	1
c. A place to raise children	34	46	13	5	2
d. Recreational and outdoor activities	29	42	18	9	2
e. Shopping	22	43	22	12	1
g. The climate	21	54	20	4	1
h. Cultural activities	19	40	26	12	3
j. Opportunities to meet people and make friends	22	48	21	7	1

RANDOMIZE Q4 and Q5
Q4/Q5 COMBINED

Q.4 How about traffic? Is this a big problem, a small problem or not a problem in your local community?
Q.5 How about crime? Is this a big problem, a small problem or not a problem in your local community?

	Traffic	Crime
Big problem	24	18
Small problem	38	52
Not a problem	37	28
Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	1	1

Q.6 How involved are you in community and neighborhood activities where you live? (READ)

50	Involved **(NET)**
11	Very involved
39	Somewhat involved
49	Not involved **(NET)**
28	Not too involved
22	Not at all involved
*	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Q.7 About how many members of your extended family live within an hour's drive of where you live now? (READ CHOICE CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY) IF ASKED WHAT IS MEANT BY "EXTENDED FAMILY": By extended family, I mean children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles.

54	Five or less **(NET)**
19	None
35	One up to five
46	Six or more **(NET)**
19	Six up to 10
13	11 up to 20
14	More than 20
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK ALL:
On a related topic.

Q37 If you could live anywhere in the United States that you wanted to, would you prefer a city, a suburban area, small town or rural area?

23	City
25	Suburban area
30	Small town
21	Rural area
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Q38 If you could live anywhere in the United States that you wanted to, which STATE would you MOST prefer to live in? [OPEN-END; ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE ONLY; ACCEPT CURRENT STATE]

IF REGION OR MORE THAN ONE STATE IS GIVEN, PROBE: Which ONE state would you MOST prefer?

By State

13	California
8	Florida
5	New York
5	North Carolina
5	Texas
4	Colorado
3	Arizona
3	Hawaii
47	Total other states, each less than 3%
7	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

By Region

12	Northeast
12	Midwest
36	South
33	West
7	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

ASK FORM A ONLY, n=725:

Q39FA As I read through the following places, just tell me your first reaction: Would you want to live in this city or its surrounding metropolitan area or NOT want to live there?

First, …[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

READ IF NECESSARY: What's your first reaction? Would you want to live in [INSERT ITEM] or not want to live there?

IF RESPONDENT SAYS THEY CURRENTLY LIVE IN THIS AREA, PROBE ONCE: "If you had a choice, would you want to live there, or not want to live there?"

	Yes	No	No Opinion/ DK/Ref (VOL.)
a. The New York City area	24	75	1
b. The Cleveland, Ohio, area	10	88	2
c. The Dallas, Texas, area	24	74	1
d. The Minneapolis, Minnesota, area	16	82	2
e. The Orlando, Florida, area	34	65	1
f. The Portland, Oregon, area	31	66	3
g. The Sacramento, California, area	29	69	2
h. The St. Louis, Missouri, area	18	79	3
i. The Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, area	17	80	3
j. The San Diego, California, area	40	59	1

ASK FORM B ONLY, n=763:

Q40FB As I read through the following places, just tell me your first reaction: Would you want to live in this city or its surrounding metropolitan area or NOT want to live there?

First, …[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

READ IF NECESSARY: What's your first reaction? Would you want to live in [INSERT ITEM] or not want to live there?

IF RESPONDENT SAYS THEY CURRENTLY LIVE IN THIS AREA, PROBE ONCE: "If you had a choice, would you want to live there, or not want to live there?"

	Yes	No	No Opinion/ DK/Ref (VOL.)
a. The Detroit, Michigan, area	8	90	1
b. The Houston, Texas, area	23	75	2
c. The Las Vegas, Nevada, area	23	75	2
d. The Los Angeles area	21	78	1
e. The San Antonio, Texas, area	29	68	3
f. The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, area	24	73	3
g. The Phoenix, Arizona, area	33	64	3
h. The Seattle, Washington, area	38	60	2
i. The Tampa, Florida, area	34	64	2
j. The Washington, DC, area	25	74	1

ASK FORM C ONLY, n=772:

Q41FC As I read through the following places, just tell me your first reaction: Would you want to live in this city or its surrounding metropolitan area or NOT want to live there?

First, …[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]

READ IF NECESSARY: What's your first reaction? Would you want to live in [INSERT ITEM] or not want to live there?

IF RESPONDENT SAYS THEY CURRENTLY LIVE IN THIS AREA, PROBE ONCE: "If you had a choice, would you want to live there, or not want to live there?"

Q.41FC CONTINUED…

	Yes	No	No Opinion/ DK/Ref (VOL.)
a. The Atlanta, Georgia, area	26	72	2
b. The Baltimore, Maryland, area	20	77	3
c. The Boston, Massachusetts, area	28	69	2
d. The Cincinnati, Ohio, area	13	84	3
e. The Chicago area	24	74	1
f. The Denver, Colorado, area	43	55	1
g. The Kansas City area	15	81	3
h. The Miami, Florida, area	28	70	2
i. The Riverside, California, area	23	72	5
j. The San Francisco area	34	65	2

ASK ALL:

Q42 For each of these pairs of statements, tell me which kind of community comes closer to where you would prefer to live, even if neither is exactly right. First…[INSERT ITEMS; RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS FOR EACH ITEM PAIR]

READ IF NECESSARY: Which of these kinds of places would you prefer to live in?

a.

20	A place where most people are of the same race as you
65	A place where there are many different racial and ethnic groups
13	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
2	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

b.

24	A place with a large immigrant population
56	A place where there is only a small immigrant population
16	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
5	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

c.

71	A place with a slower pace of life
22	A place with a faster pace of life
5	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
2	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

d.

29	A colder weather climate
57	A hotter weather climate
12	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

e.

73	A place where people know each other well
22	A place where neighbors usually don't know each other's business
4	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

f.

25	A place where many people are of the same religion that you are
59	A place where there are many different religious groups
14	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
2	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Q.42 CONTINUED…

g.

24	A place where most people share your political views
63	A place where there is a mix of different political views
10	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
3	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

h.

32	A place where most people are the same social and economic class as you
61	A place where there are a mix of the upper, middle and lower classes
6	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Q43 The next question is just for fun: Would you prefer to live in a place with more Starbucks or more McDonald's?

35	Starbucks
43	McDonald's
20	Neither/Both/Doesn't matter **(VOL.)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Q44 Looking ahead FIVE YEARS from now, how likely is that you will move away from the local community where you are living now? Would you say it is very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?

20	Very likely to move
20	Somewhat likely
24	Not too likely
34	Not at all likely to move
1	Will not move **(VOL)**
1	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

Appendix A: City Preferences

Shown: Percentage of group that said they would like to live in that city

By Age

City	18-34	35-59	60+
Atlanta	35	26	11
Baltimore	23	20	14
Boston	36	29	15
Chicago	41	21	12
Cincinnati	14	14	10
Cleveland	19	7	7
Dallas	32	24	17
Denver	47	49	28
Detroit	17	4	5
Houston	36	23	11
Kansas City	16	19	9
Las Vegas	30	22	14
Los Angeles	38	17	8
Miami	45	24	17
Minneapolis	25	14	12
New York	45	14	14
Orlando	52	30	23
Philadelphia	35	23	12
Phoenix	34	35	27
Pittsburgh	29	14	11
Portland	38	29	25
Riverside	33	22	14
Sacramento	46	25	15
St. Louis	26	16	12
San Antonio	36	30	19
San Diego	61	33	26
San Francisco	48	32	17
Seattle	50	38	25
Tampa	43	34	24
Washington, DC	41	21	14

By Gender

City	Men	Women
Atlanta	26	25
Baltimore	18	22
Boston	28	28
Chicago	26	23
Cincinnati	14	12
Cleveland	11	9
Dallas	26	23
Denver	47	40
Detroit	8	8
Houston	29	18
Kansas City	16	15
Las Vegas	30	16
Los Angeles	24	18
Miami	35	22
Minneapolis	20	13
New York	22	25
Orlando	35	33
Philadelphia	23	24
Phoenix	36	29
Pittsburgh	18	16
Portland	38	25
Riverside	27	20
Sacramento	34	24
St. Louis	20	16
San Antonio	36	22
San Diego	45	35
San Francisco	33	33
Seattle	42	34
Tampa	36	32
Washington, DC	26	23

By Income

City	<$30k	$30-50k	$50-100k	$100k+
Atlanta	24	28	30	26
Baltimore	19	18	20	26
Boston	23	25	30	45
Chicago	23	20	24	35
Cincinnati	11	19	10	18
Cleveland	18	7	7	7
Dallas	26	29	27	22
Denver	35	50	50	52
Detroit	13	6	6	7
Houston	27	20	27	23
Kansas City	16	17	15	15
Las Vegas	29	15	29	18
Los Angeles	33	12	22	14
Miami	34	29	22	29
Minneapolis	17	20	15	15
New York	21	22	23	35
Orlando	38	39	34	30
Philadelphia	24	17	28	27
Phoenix	29	29	43	31
Pittsburgh	20	17	18	15
Portland	26	35	31	43
Riverside	26	22	20	26
Sacramento	29	36	27	31
St. Louis	18	20	20	11
San Antonio	25	25	33	43
San Diego	34	46	41	52
San Francisco	30	31	35	48
Seattle	41	32	42	45
Tampa	30	30	39	37
Washington, DC	31	13	29	28

By Education

City	HS or less	Some college	College grad+
Atlanta	21	33	28
Baltimore	15	21	27
Boston	20	27	43
Chicago	19	26	33
Cincinnati	11	16	15
Cleveland	10	10	10
Dallas	25	24	24
Denver	34	44	59
Detroit	9	7	8
Houston	22	28	22
Kansas City	15	20	12
Las Vegas	26	20	20
Los Angeles	21	23	19
Miami	30	31	24
Minneapolis	14	19	19
New York	18	32	28
Orlando	35	37	30
Philadelphia	16	21	38
Phoenix	31	35	33
Pittsburgh	17	20	16
Portland	25	34	41
Riverside	25	26	18
Sacramento	28	34	26
St. Louis	18	18	17
San Antonio	25	33	32
San Diego	30	44	54
San Francisco	26	34	46
Seattle	32	35	51
Tampa	34	34	35
Washington, DC	17	24	38

By Party Identification and Ideology

City	Rep	Dem	Ind
Atlanta	21	31	27
Baltimore	14	23	22
Boston	26	34	25
Chicago	23	29	20
Cincinnati	14	14	14
Cleveland	10	10	10
Dallas	29	25	23
Denver	48	39	50
Detroit	8	7	6
Houston	21	25	23
Kansas City	21	14	15
Las Vegas	16	26	23
Los Angeles	14	22	23
Miami	27	30	31
Minneapolis	17	17	18
New York	14	30	26
Orlando	34	38	31
Philadelphia	17	28	26
Phoenix	38	28	35
Pittsburgh	19	18	17
Portland	33	31	34
Riverside	23	27	21
Sacramento	27	31	32
St. Louis	24	17	17
San Antonio	34	25	30
San Diego	33	45	44
San Francisco	28	41	33
Seattle	29	37	49
Tampa	28	38	36
Washington, DC	20	30	24

City	Conserv	Moderate	Liberal
Atlanta	26	26	32
Baltimore	18	24	18
Boston	21	29	41
Chicago	18	31	25
Cincinnati	16	15	9
Cleveland	8	13	11
Dallas	27	26	17
Denver	46	46	38
Detroit	9	7	9
Houston	26	25	20
Kansas City	16	16	15
Las Vegas	22	22	23
Los Angeles	16	18	30
Miami	22	31	36
Minneapolis	14	16	21
New York	19	19	39
Orlando	31	33	39
Philadelphia	17	28	29
Phoenix	36	32	31
Pittsburgh	15	16	20
Portland	28	32	38
Riverside	19	22	34
Sacramento	29	27	34
St. Louis	19	19	17
San Antonio	34	30	23
San Diego	34	43	49
San Francisco	22	37	53
Seattle	32	42	46
Tampa	31	39	33
Washington, DC	17	25	38

State Preferences

Shown: Percentage who said they would like to live in this state or the District of Columbia if they could live anywhere in the country

California	13
Florida	8
Don't know/Refused	7
Texas	5
New York	5
North Carolina	5
Colorado	4
Hawaii	3
Arizona	3
Georgia	3
Pennsylvania	3
Tennessee	3
Virginia	2
Washington	2
South Carolina	2
Oregon	2
Illinois	2
Ohio	2
Kentucky	2
Indiana	1
Missouri	1
Montana	1
Massachusetts	1
Minnesota	1
Michigan	1
Alabama	1
Wisconsin	1
Nevada	1
Oklahoma	1
Alaska	1
New Jersey	1
Maryland	1
Maine	1
Louisiana	1
Arkansas	1
New Mexico	1
Utah	1
Kansas	1
Delaware	1
West Virginia	1
Mississippi	1
Iowa	1
Connecticut	1
Wyoming	*
Nebraska	*
Idaho	*
New Hampshire	*
Vermont	*
South Dakota	*
District of Columbia	*
North Dakota	*
Rhode Island	*

*** less than 0.5%**

Appendix B. Census Bureau Data and Community Types

A metropolitan area consists of at least one densely populated urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000, as well as adjacent counties linked to it economically and socially. Although they once were defined as communities revolving around a core city, metropolitan regions now often include several nodes of activity and may sprawl over several states.

More than eight-in-ten Americans live in metropolitan areas, a share that has inched up in recent decades. Boundaries of these metropolitan areas can change based on new census data, or on revisions to the government's definition of what constitutes a metropolitan area.

	Metropolitan Population	Total U.S. Population	Percent Metro
1960	140,753,110	179,323,175	78.5
1970	164,272,878	203,302,031	80.8
1980	182,645,007	226,545,805	80.6
1990	203,987,166	248,709,873	82.0
2000	232,703,964	281,421,906	82.7
2007	251,786,911	301,290,332	83.6

Source: Census Bureau statistics analyzed by William H. Frey

The Census Bureau first produced data for metropolitan areas in 1950, using a county-based definition that replaced an older concept of "metropolitan district." The federal Office of Management and Budget, which is responsible for defining what constitutes a metropolitan area, has revised that definition repeatedly, reflecting changes in population distribution and interaction around urban centers, as well as the changing needs of data users.

The most recent major revision, in 2003, reduced the focus on a central city. For an outlying county to be included in a metropolitan area, the new definition simplified the rules: Now, it is based on the share of employed workers who commute in or out. The old definition also included some population density and growth thresholds for those outlying counties. The most recent change introduced the concept of a "micropolitan" area, with an urban cluster of at least 10,000 people.

Because the modern concept of metropolitan areas was not standardized until six decades ago, it is not possible to track metropolitan population trends for longer than that. The Census Bureau publishes data comparing the number of Americans living in "urban" and "rural" areas, which are defined by their population density and concentration. Until the 1920 Census, most Americans lived in rural areas. That balance shifted in 1920, when just over half (51%) of Americans were counted in urban areas.

The most current definition of urban and rural areas, which took effect for 2000 Census data, is based on census blocks or block groups. Unlike earlier definitions, it ignores boundaries of places, so one jurisdiction can include both urban and rural areas.

An urbanized area (or urban cluster) consists of core census block groups or blocks with a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile, and surrounding census blocks with an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile. Under some conditions, according to the Census Bureau, "less densely settled territory may be part of" urban areas.

"Rural" consists of all territory, population and housing units not in an urbanized area or urban cluster.

Many people who think of themselves as living in small towns in fact reside in metropolitan areas under the Census Bureau's classification. That is because many lightly populated places are part of

metropolitan regions. In fact, 51% of the rural population of the United States lives within metropolitan areas. During the 2008 presidential campaign, Brookings Institution analysts pointed out that even Wasilla, Alaska, where Sarah Palin had served as mayor, is part of the Anchorage metropolitan area.

Census numbers on urban-rural population shares

	% Urban	% Rural
1900	39.6	60.4
1910	45.6	54.4
1920	51.2	48.8
1930	56.1	43.9
1940	56.5	43.5
1950	64.0	36.0
1960	69.9	30.1
1970	73.6	26.4
1980	73.7	26.3
1990	75.2	24.8
2000	79.0	21.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau