

# City of Steamboat Springs, CO

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## 2017 Community Survey

Supplemental Benchmark Report

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Prepared by:



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## Benchmark Comparisons

### Understanding the Benchmark Comparisons

Communities use the comparative information provided by benchmarks to help interpret their own resident survey results, to create or revise community plans, to evaluate the success of policy or budget decisions and to measure local government or organizational performance. Taking the pulse of the community has little meaning without knowing what pulse rate is too high and what is too low. When surveys of service satisfaction turn up “good” resident evaluations, it is necessary to know how others rate their services to understand if “good” is good enough or if most other communities are “excellent.” Furthermore, in the absence of peer community comparisons, a community is left with comparing its police protection rating to its street maintenance rating. That comparison is unfair as street maintenance always gets lower ratings than police protection. More illuminating is how residents’ ratings of police service compare to opinions about police service in other communities and to resident ratings over time.

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 the residents in the community rate police services lower than ratings given by residents in other cities with objectively “worse” departments. Benchmark data can help that police department – or any department – to understand how well citizens think it is doing.

While benchmarks help set the basis for evaluation, resident opinion should be used in conjunction with other sources of data about budget, population demographics, personnel and politics to help administrators know how to respond to comparative results.

### Comparison Data

NRC has designed a method for quantitatively integrating the results of surveys that we have conducted with those that others have conducted. These integration methods have been described thoroughly in *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, and in NRC’s first book on conducting and using citizen surveys, *Citizen Surveys: how to do them, how to use them, what they mean*, published by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Scholars who specialize in the analysis of citizen surveys regularly have relied on NRC’s work.<sup>1,2</sup> The method described in those publications is refined regularly and statistically tested on a growing number of resident surveys in NRC’s proprietary databases.

Communities in NRC’s benchmark database are distributed geographically across the country and range from small to large in population size. Comparisons may be made to all communities in the database or to a subset. Despite the differences in characteristics across communities, all are in the business of providing services to residents. Though individual community circumstances, resources and practices vary, the objective in every community is to provide services that are so timely, tailored and effective that residents conclude the services are of the highest quality. High ratings in any community, like SAT scores in any teen household, bring pride and a sense of accomplishment.

NRC’s database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 communities whose residents evaluated local government services and

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly, J. & Swindell, D. (2002). Service quality variation across urban space: First steps towards a model of citizen satisfaction, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24, 271-288.

<sup>2</sup> Van Ryzin, G., Muzzio, D., Immerwahr, S., Gulick, L. & Martinez, E. (2004). Drivers and consequences of citizen satisfaction: An application of the American Customer Satisfaction Index Model to New York City, *Public Administration Review*, 64, 331-341.

gave their opinion about the quality of community life. The comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each jurisdiction; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. NRC adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant. The City of Steamboat Springs chose to have comparisons made to communities with populations less than 30,000 with survey data within the last three years as well as to communities that were deemed “resort” communities with populations less than 30,000 with survey data within the last three years.

## Interpreting the Results

Average ratings are compared when questions similar to those asked in the Steamboat Springs survey are included in NRC’s database, and there are at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked.

Where comparisons for quality ratings were available, the City of Steamboat Springs’ results were noted as being “higher” than the benchmark, “lower” than the benchmark or “similar” to the benchmark. In instances where ratings are considerably higher or lower than the benchmark, these ratings have been further demarcated by the attribute of “much,” (for example, “much lower” or “much higher”). These labels come from a statistical comparison of Steamboat Springs’ rating to the benchmark where a rating is considered “similar” if it is within five points of the benchmark; “higher” or “lower” if the difference between Steamboat Springs’ rating and the benchmark is greater than five points; and “much higher” or “much lower” if the difference between Steamboat Springs’ rating and the benchmark is more than 10 points.

Comparisons are provided by communities with populations less than 30,000 with survey data within the last three years as well as to resort communities with populations less than 30,000 with survey data within the last three years.

The comparisons that follow contain the same data and information that are found in the Benchmark Comparisons appendix in the full *Report of Results* under separate cover. However, the tables on the following pages group the survey items by their comparison to the benchmark (e.g., much higher, higher, similar, lower and much lower) as opposed to survey question or topic order.

## Population Size Benchmarks

Table 1: Much Higher

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of paths and walking trails	85%	18	91	Much higher
Bus or transit services	90%	1	62	Much higher
Drinking water	91%	4	91	Much higher
Ease of travel by public transportation in Steamboat Springs	80%	4	61	Much higher
Health and wellness opportunities in Steamboat Springs	84%	7	76	Much higher
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	80%	13	84	Much higher
Overall feeling of safety	96%	13	101	Much higher
Participated in a local club	52%	1	74	Much higher
Quality of overall natural environment	96%	3	82	Much higher
Recreational opportunities and amenities	88%	6	89	Much higher
Sense of community	79%	14	93	Much higher
Sewer services	93%	2	90	Much higher
Snow removal	86%	4	96	Much higher
Used bus or other public transportation instead of driving	63%	5	54	Much higher
Used City recreation facilities or their services	91%	1	71	Much higher
Vibrant Old Town/downtown commercial area	75%	14	75	Much higher
Visited a City park	94%	6	78	Much higher
Volunteered your time to some group/activity locally	74%	1	78	Much higher
Walked or biked instead of driving	90%	3	76	Much higher

Table 2: Higher

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
City recreation programs	80%	22	90	Higher
Ease of walking	78%	29	87	Higher
Neighborliness of residents	72%	20	76	Higher
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	76%	16	77	Higher
Overall image or reputation	85%	31	97	Higher
Preservation of natural areas/open space	71%	20	77	Higher
Steamboat Springs as a place to live	91%	26	105	Higher
Storm drainage	79%	19	104	Higher
Street cleaning	79%	23	99	Higher
The overall quality of life in Steamboat Springs	90%	29	131	Higher

Table 3: Similar

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Ambulance or emergency medical services	91%	38	92	Similar
City parks	88%	38	94	Similar
City recreation facilities	68%	41	77	Similar
Cleanliness	83%	48	83	Similar
Code enforcement (weeds, signs, buildings, etc.)	51%	57	107	Similar
Crime prevention	76%	52	103	Similar
Economic development efforts	45%	49	82	Similar
Employment opportunities	33%	41	87	Similar
Fire services	93%	49	107	Similar
K-12 education	85%	31	76	Similar
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	65%	29	81	Similar
Overall "built environment" of Steamboat Springs (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	73%	28	78	Similar
Overall customer service by Steamboat Springs city employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	74%	67	106	Similar
Overall ease of getting to places you usually have to visit	84%	27	78	Similar
Overall economic health of Steamboat Springs	56%	49	78	Similar
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	72%	36	78	Similar
Overall quality of business and service establishments	62%	46	81	Similar
Overall, how would you rate the quality of services provided by the City of Steamboat Springs	84%	49	113	Similar
Shopping opportunities (local)	38%	55	88	Similar
Steamboat Springs as a place to raise children	84%	46	104	Similar
Steamboat Springs as a place to retire	65%	41	97	Similar
Steamboat Springs as a place to work	49%	58	96	Similar
Street lighting	69%	32	95	Similar
Street repair	50%	60	119	Similar
The job city government does at welcoming citizen involvement	54%	49	89	Similar
The value of services for sales taxes paid in Steamboat Springs	60%	40	108	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	51%	52	79	Similar

Table 4: Lower

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Animal control	53%	72	93	Lower
Land use, planning and zoning	39%	66	86	Lower
Overall quality of new development in Steamboat Springs	42%	63	85	Lower
Police services	76%	101	129	Lower
Public information/communication services	58%	67	86	Lower
The overall direction that the city is taking	50%	62	87	Lower

Table 5: Much Lower

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	14%	75	76	Much lower
Availability of affordable quality health care	42%	62	73	Much lower
Availability of affordable quality housing	7%	85	87	Much lower
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	30%	57	68	Much lower
Availability of public parking	27%	60	68	Much lower
Cost of living	9%	76	77	Much lower
Opportunities to participate in City of Steamboat Springs decision-making	42%	81	83	Much lower
Traffic enforcement	62%	79	80	Much lower

## Comparison of Benchmarks and Importance Ratings

### Aspects of Community

To help guide City staff and officials with decisions on future resource allocation, resident ratings of the importance of the various aspects of community were compared to the benchmark rating for other communities with a population size of 30,000 or less for the same aspects (see the figure below). The benchmark comparisons were used to identify aspects that were rated lower than, similar to or higher than service ratings in other communities. Aspects of community were classified as relatively more important if they were rated as essential or very important by 84% or more of respondents. Aspects of community were rated as “less important” if they received a rating of less than 84%. This classification is based on the median of ratings established in 2015 for quality (excellent or good) and importance (essential or very important), which permits consistency in comparisons over time. Items rated lower or much lower than the benchmark but deemed higher in importance typically indicate areas a City might wish to investigate further for possible changes, improvements or public outreach. In 2017, there were no aspects rated as lower when compared to the benchmarks and higher in importance.

The benchmark comparison for items in red decreased from 2015 to 2017, items in green increased and items in black have stayed in the same category. The importance ratings for the various aspects of community remained the same over the two-year period.

Table 6: Comparing Benchmark and Importance Ratings for Aspects of Community

		Population Size Benchmarks				
		Much higher	Higher	Similar	Lower	Much lower
Higher importance (at least 84% rating as essential or very important)	Overall feeling of safety			Overall economic health of Steamboat Springs		
	Health and wellness opportunities in Steamboat Springs					
	Sense of community					
	Quality of overall natural environment					
Lower importance (less than 84% rating as essential or very important)			Overall image or reputation	Overall "built environment" of Steamboat Springs		
				Overall ease of getting to places you usually have to visit		
				Overall opportunities for education and enrichment		

### City Services

To help guide City staff and officials with decisions on future resource allocation, resident ratings of the importance of the various city services were compared to the benchmark rating for other communities with a population size of 30,000 or less for the same services (see the table below). The benchmark comparisons were used to identify services that were rated lower than, similar to or higher than service ratings in other communities. Services were classified as relatively more important if they were rated as essential or very important by 77% or more of respondents. Services were rated as “less important” if they received a rating of less than 77%. This classification is based on the median of ratings established in 2015 for quality (excellent or good) and importance (essential or very important), which permits consistency in comparisons over time. Items rated lower or much lower than the benchmark but deemed higher in importance (shaded in the table below) indicate areas the City might wish to investigate further for possible changes, improvements or public outreach.

The benchmark comparison for items in red decreased from 2015 to 2017, items in green increased in comparison and items in black stayed in the same benchmark category. Items with a down arrow (↓) have shifted from higher importance to lower importance. Items with an up arrow (↑) have shifted from lower importance to higher importance.

Table 7: Comparing Benchmark and Importance Ratings for City Services

		Population Size Benchmarks				
		Much higher	Higher	Similar	Lower	Much lower
Higher importance (at least 77% rating as essential or very important)	Drinking water		Preservation of natural areas/open space	Ambulance or emergency medical services	Police services	
	Snow removal			City parks	Land use, planning and zoning	
	Sewer services			Crime prevention		
				Fire services		
				Overall customer service by Steamboat Springs city employees		
Lower importance (less than 77% rating as essential or very important)	Bus or transit services ↓		City recreation programs	Street repair	Animal control	Traffic enforcement
			Storm drainage	City recreation facilities	Public information/communication services	
			Street cleaning	Code enforcement (weeds, signs, buildings, etc.)		
				Economic development efforts		
				Street lighting		



### Communities Included in the Population Size Benchmark Comparison

Listed below are the 168 communities with population sizes of less than 30,000 with survey data within the last three years that were included in the benchmark comparisons provided for the City of Steamboat Springs followed by the 2010 population for each according to the U.S. Census.

• Airway Heights city, WA.....	6,114	• Erie town, CO.....	18,135
• Albert Lea city, MN.....	18,016	• Estes Park town, CO.....	5,858
• American Canyon city, CA.....	19,454	• Fairview town, TX.....	7,248
• Ashland city, OR.....	20,078	• Farmersville city, TX.....	3,301
• Ashland town, MA.....	16,593	• Gardner city, KS.....	19,123
• Ashland town, VA.....	7,225	• Gillette city, WY.....	29,087
• Aspen city, CO.....	6,658	• Golden city, CO.....	18,867
• Avon town, CO.....	6,447	• Golden Valley city, MN.....	20,371
• Avon town, IN.....	12,446	• Grafton village, WI.....	11,459
• Bainbridge Island city, WA.....	23,025	• Grand Blanc city, MI.....	8,276
• Bedford town, MA.....	13,320	• Grass Valley city, CA.....	12,860
• Bonner Springs city, KS.....	7,314	• Greenwood Village city, CO.....	13,925
• Brownsburg town, IN.....	21,285	• Greer city, SC.....	25,515
• Burlingame city, CA.....	28,806	• Gunnison County, CO.....	15,324
• Cannon Beach city, OR.....	1,690	• Hamilton town, MA.....	7,764
• Cañon City city, CO.....	16,400	• Harrisburg city, SD.....	4,089
• Canton city, SD.....	3,057	• Harrisonville city, MO.....	10,019
• Carroll city, IA.....	10,103	• Herndon town, VA.....	23,292
• Cartersville city, GA.....	19,731	• Highland Park city, IL.....	29,763
• Celina city, TX.....	6,028	• Hoquiam city, WA.....	8,726
• Chandler city, TX.....	2,734	• Hudson town, CO.....	2,356
• Chanhassen city, MN.....	22,952	• Huntley village, IL.....	24,291
• Clinton city, SC.....	8,490	• Hutchinson city, MN.....	14,178
• Clive city, IA.....	15,447	• Hutto city, TX.....	14,698
• Columbia Falls city, MT.....	4,688	• Johnston city, IA.....	17,278
• Concord town, MA.....	17,668	• Kerrville city, TX.....	22,347
• Coronado city, CA.....	18,912	• Key West city, FL.....	24,649
• Creve Coeur city, MO.....	17,833	• King City city, CA.....	12,874
• Dacono city, CO.....	4,152	• Kirkwood city, MO.....	27,540
• Dallas city, OR.....	14,583	• Knoxville city, IA.....	7,313
• Danville city, KY.....	16,218	• La Plata town, MD.....	8,753
• Darien city, IL.....	22,086	• La Vista city, NE.....	15,758
• Davenport city, FL.....	2,888	• Lake Forest city, IL.....	19,375
• Davidson town, NC.....	10,944	• Lake Zurich village, IL.....	19,631
• Dayton town, WY.....	757	• Lawrenceville city, GA.....	28,546
• Decatur city, GA.....	19,335	• Lewisville town, NC.....	12,639
• Del Mar city, CA.....	4,161	• Libertyville village, IL.....	20,315
• DeLand city, FL.....	27,031	• Lindsborg city, KS.....	3,458
• Denison city, TX.....	22,682	• Little Chute village, WI.....	10,449
• Des Peres city, MO.....	8,373	• Lone Tree city, CO.....	10,218
• Destin city, FL.....	12,305	• Long Grove village, IL.....	8,043
• Dover city, NH.....	29,987	• Lonsdale city, MN.....	3,674
• Eagle Mountain city, UT.....	21,415	• Los Alamos County, NM.....	17,950
• Edgewater city, CO.....	5,170	• Los Altos Hills town, CA.....	7,922
• El Cerrito city, CA.....	23,549	• Louisville city, CO.....	18,376

• Marshfield city, WI.....	19,118	• Shoreview city, MN .....	25,043
• Mercer Island city, WA .....	22,699	• Shorewood village, IL.....	15,615
• Merriam city, KS.....	11,003	• Southlake city, TX.....	26,575
• Middleton city, WI.....	17,442	• St. Augustine city, FL .....	12,975
• Monticello city, UT.....	1,972	• Suisun City city, CA.....	28,111
• Montrose city, CO.....	19,132	• Suwanee city, GA .....	15,355
• Moraga town, CA.....	16,016	• Takoma Park city, MD.....	16,715
• Morristown city, TN .....	29,137	• Trinidad CCD, CO.....	12,017
• Morrisville town, NC.....	18,576	• Tualatin city, OR .....	26,054
• Morro Bay city, CA.....	10,234	• University Heights city, OH.....	13,539
• Murphy city, TX.....	17,708	• University Park city, TX.....	23,068
• Napoleon city, OH .....	8,749	• Vail town, CO .....	5,305
• Needham CDP, MA .....	28,886	• Vernon Hills village, IL.....	25,113
• Nevada City city, CA .....	3,068	• Victoria city, MN .....	7,345
• New Brighton city, MN .....	21,456	• Vienna town, VA .....	15,687
• New Ulm city, MN.....	13,522	• Washougal city, WA.....	14,095
• Newport city, RI .....	24,672	• Wentzville city, MO.....	29,070
• Newton city, IA.....	15,254	• West Carrollton city, OH.....	13,143
• Norcross city, GA .....	9,116	• Western Springs village, IL .....	12,975
• North Mankato city, MN.....	13,394	• Westlake town, TX.....	992
• O'Fallon city, IL .....	28,281	• White House city, TN.....	10,255
• Paducah city, KY .....	25,024	• Williamsburg city, VA.....	14,068
• Palos Verdes Estates city, CA.....	13,438	• Willowbrook village, IL .....	8,540
• Paradise Valley town, AZ.....	12,820	• Wilsonville city, OR.....	19,509
• Park City city, UT.....	7,558	• Windsor town, CT .....	29,044
• Parkland city, FL.....	23,962	• Winnetka village, IL.....	12,187
• Payette city, ID.....	7,433	• Yorktown town, IN .....	9,405
• Pinehurst village, NC.....	13,124	• Yountville city, CA.....	2,933
• Piqua city, OH .....	20,522		
• Pitkin County, CO.....	17,148		
• Platte City city, MO .....	4,691		
• Powell city, OH.....	11,500		
• Prior Lake city, MN.....	22,796		
• Purcellville town, VA.....	7,727		
• Queen Creek town, AZ .....	26,361		
• Ramsey city, MN .....	23,668		
• Raymond town, ME.....	4,436		
• Redmond city, OR .....	26,215		
• Richmond Heights city, MO .....	8,603		
• River Falls city, WI .....	15,000		
• Roeland Park city, KS .....	6,731		
• Rolla city, MO .....	19,559		
• Rosemount city, MN.....	21,874		
• Sahuarita town, AZ.....	25,259		
• San Carlos city, CA .....	28,406		
• Savage city, MN.....	26,911		
• Sevierville city, TN .....	14,807		
• Sharonville city, OH.....	13,560		
• Shawnee city, OK .....	29,857		
• Sherborn town, MA .....	4,119		

## Resort Community Benchmarks

Table 8: Much Higher

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of paths and walking trails	85%	4	14	Much higher
Bus or transit services	90%	1	14	Much higher
Drinking water	91%	3	15	Much higher
Ease of travel by public transportation in Steamboat Springs	80%	2	14	Much higher
Health and wellness opportunities in Steamboat Springs	84%	3	14	Much higher
Participated in a local club	52%	1	14	Much higher
Recreational opportunities and amenities	88%	4	15	Much higher
Snow removal	86%	1	12	Much higher
Used bus or other public transportation instead of driving	63%	2	13	Much higher
Used City recreation facilities or their services	91%	1	11	Much higher
Volunteered your time to some group/activity locally	74%	1	14	Much higher
Walked or biked instead of driving	90%	3	14	Much higher

Table 9: Higher

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
K-12 education	85%	4	12	Higher
Overall ease of getting to places you usually have to visit	84%	5	14	Higher
Overall feeling of safety	96%	4	17	Higher
Quality of overall natural environment	96%	2	14	Higher
Sense of community	79%	2	16	Higher
Sewer services	93%	1	14	Higher
Steamboat Springs as a place to raise children	84%	7	17	Higher
Storm drainage	79%	3	16	Higher

Table 10: Similar

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Ambulance or emergency medical services	91%	9	15	Similar
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	30%	9	13	Similar
Availability of public parking	27%	7	13	Similar
City parks	88%	9	15	Similar
City recreation facilities	68%	10	15	Similar
City recreation programs	80%	6	14	Similar
Code enforcement (weeds, signs, buildings, etc.)	51%	10	16	Similar
Crime prevention	76%	10	19	Similar
Ease of walking	78%	7	14	Similar
Economic development efforts	45%	6	12	Similar
Employment opportunities	33%	5	15	Similar
Fire services	93%	10	15	Similar
Land use, planning and zoning	39%	11	16	Similar
Neighborliness of residents	72%	5	14	Similar
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	65%	5	14	Similar
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	80%	5	14	Similar
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	76%	7	14	Similar
Overall "built environment" of Steamboat Springs (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	73%	8	14	Similar
Overall customer service by Steamboat Springs employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	74%	12	17	Similar
Overall image or reputation	85%	12	16	Similar
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	72%	8	14	Similar
Overall quality of business and service establishments	62%	12	15	Similar
Overall, how would you rate the quality of services provided by the City of Steamboat Springs	84%	7	17	Similar
Preservation of natural areas/open space	71%	8	13	Similar
Steamboat Springs as a place to live	91%	6	17	Similar
Steamboat Springs as a place to work	49%	10	17	Similar
Street cleaning	79%	7	14	Similar
Street lighting	69%	5	14	Similar
Street repair	50%	10	18	Similar
The job city government does at welcoming citizen involvement	54%	9	15	Similar
The overall direction that the city is taking	50%	10	16	Similar
The overall quality of life in Steamboat Springs	90%	9	20	Similar
The value of services for sales taxes paid in Steamboat Springs	60%	8	17	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	51%	6	14	Similar
Vibrant Old Town/downtown commercial area	75%	6	13	Similar
Visited a City park	94%	4	13	Similar

Table 11: Lower

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Animal control	53%	13	14	Lower
Availability of affordable quality health care	42%	10	14	Lower
Cleanliness	83%	12	14	Lower
Overall economic health of Steamboat Springs	56%	10	14	Lower
Overall quality of new development in Steamboat Springs	42%	11	15	Lower
Police services	76%	15	19	Lower
Public information/communication services	58%	14	15	Lower
Shopping opportunities (local)	38%	11	15	Lower
Steamboat Springs as a place to retire	65%	13	17	Lower

Table 12: Much Lower

	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	14%	13	14	Much lower
Availability of affordable quality housing	7%	13	15	Much lower
Cost of living	9%	13	14	Much lower
Opportunities to participate in community matters	42%	14	14	Much lower
Traffic enforcement	62%	17	17	Much lower

## Comparison of Benchmarks and Importance Ratings

### Aspects of Community

To help guide City staff and officials with decisions on future resource allocation, resident ratings of the importance of the various aspects of community were compared to the benchmark rating for other communities with a population size of 30,000 or less that also consider itself a resort community for the same aspects (see the table below). The benchmark comparisons were used to identify aspects that were rated lower than, similar to or higher than service ratings in other communities. Aspects of community were classified as relatively more important if they were rated as essential or very important by 84% or more of respondents. Aspects of community were rated as “less important” if they received a rating of less than 84%. This classification is based on the median of ratings established in 2015 for quality (excellent or good) and importance (essential or very important), which permits consistency in comparisons over time. Items rated lower or much lower than the benchmark but deemed higher in importance (shaded in the table below) indicate areas the City might wish to investigate further for possible changes, improvements or public outreach.

The benchmark comparison for items in red decreased from 2015 to 2017, items in green increased in comparison and items in black stayed in the same benchmark category. The importance ratings for the various aspects of community remained the same over the two-year period.

Table 13: Comparing Benchmark and Importance Ratings for Aspects of Community

		Resort Community Benchmarks				
		Much higher	Higher	Similar	Lower	Much lower
Higher importance (at least 84% rating as essential or very important)	Health and wellness opportunities in Steamboat Springs		Overall feeling of safety		Overall economic health of Steamboat Springs	
			Quality of overall natural environment			
			Sense of community			
Lower Importance (less than 84% rating as essential or very important)			Overall ease of getting to places you usually have to visit	Overall "built environment" of Steamboat Springs		
				Overall image or reputation		
				Overall opportunities for education and enrichment		

### City Services

To help guide City staff and officials with decisions on future resource allocation, resident ratings of the importance of the various city services were compared to the benchmark rating for other communities with a population size of 30,000 or less that also consider itself a resort community for the same services (see the table below). The benchmark comparisons were used to identify services that were rated lower than, similar to or higher than service ratings in other communities. Services were classified as relatively more important if they were rated as essential or very important by 77% or more of respondents. Services were rated as “less important” if they received a rating of less than 77%. This classification is based on the median of ratings established in 2015 for quality (excellent or good) and importance (essential or very important), which permits consistency in comparisons over time. Items rated lower or much lower than the benchmark but deemed higher in importance (shaded in the table below) indicate areas the City might wish to investigate further for possible changes, improvements or public outreach.

The benchmark comparison for items in red decreased from 2015 to 2017, items in green increased in comparison and items in black stayed in the same benchmark category. Items with a down arrow (↓) have shifted from higher importance to lower importance. Items with an up arrow (↑) have shifted from lower importance to higher importance.

Table 14: Comparing Benchmark and Importance Ratings for City Services

		Resort Community Benchmarks				
		Much higher	Higher	Similar	Lower	Much lower
Higher importance (at least 77% rating as essential or very important)	Drinking water		Sewer services	Ambulance or emergency medical services	Police services	
	Snow removal			City parks		
				Crime prevention		
				Fire services		
				Land use, planning and zoning		
				Overall customer service by Steamboat Springs employees		
				Preservation of natural areas/open space		
Lower Importance (less than 77% rating as essential or very important)	Bus or transit services ↓		Storm drainage	City recreation facilities	Animal control	Traffic enforcement
				City recreation programs	Public information/communication services	
				Code enforcement (weeds, signs, buildings, etc.)		
				Economic development efforts		
				Street cleaning		
				Street lighting		

**Communities Included in the Resort Community Benchmark Comparison**

Listed below are the 21 communities with population sizes of less than 30,000 and deemed a “resort” community with survey data within the last three years that were included in the benchmark comparisons provided for the City of Steamboat Springs followed by the 2010 population for each according to the U.S. Census.

- Ashland city, OR ..... 20,078
- Aspen city, CO..... 6,658
- Avon town, CO ..... 6,447
- Bainbridge Island city, WA ..... 23,025
- Cannon Beach city, OR ..... 1,690
- Coronado city, CA ..... 18,912
- Del Mar city, CA ..... 4,161
- Destin city, FL..... 12,305
- Estes Park town, CO..... 5,858
- Gunnison County, CO ..... 15,324
- Key West city, FL ..... 24,649
- Newport city, RI ..... 24,672
- Paradise Valley town, AZ ..... 12,820
- Park City city, UT ..... 7,558
- Pinehurst village, NC..... 13,124
- Pitkin County, CO ..... 17,148
- Queen Creek town, AZ ..... 26,361
- St. Augustine city, FL ..... 12,975
- Vail town, CO ..... 5,305
- Williamsburg city, VA..... 14,068
- Yountville city, CA..... 2,933