



TOWN OF  
**FOUNTAIN HILLS**  
*Arizona*

# 2021 COMMUNITY SURVEY

## Findings Report

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Presented To  
**TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS,**  
**ARIZONA**

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# **Section 1: Executive Summary**

# Purpose & Methodology

## Purpose

ETC Institute administered a community survey to residents of the Town of Fountain Hills, Arizona. The purpose of this survey was to gather information on residents' level of satisfaction with Town services and to gather opinions in regards to other topics. Information received will be used to help Town leaders know where they are doing well and where they can improve. Data from the survey will aide these leaders to make certain they are making decisions that align to the needs of the Town residents and prioritizing services that will positively impact the community.

## Methodology

The survey instrument, cover letter, and postage paid return envelope were mailed to a random sample of households in the Town. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and encouraged residents to either return their survey by mail or complete the survey online.

Approximately, ten days after the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent emails/text messages to the households that received the survey to encourage participation. The emails/texts contained a link to the online version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete. To prevent people who were not residents of the City from participating, everyone who completed the survey online was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered online with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed online did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the online survey was not counted.

The goal was to obtain 400 surveys and this goal was achieved by a total of 465 completed surveys. The overall response for the sample of 465 households have a precision of at least +/- 4.5% at the 95% level of confidence.

# Overview of the Findings Report

This report contains:

- An executive summary of the survey purpose, methodology, and major findings
- Charts and graphs showing the overall results
- Benchmark analysis charts and graphs showing how the Town of Fountain Hills, Arizona compares to other communities of similar size, regionally, and nationally
- Importance-satisfaction analysis tables showing priorities based on resident satisfaction and level of importance for service items
- Frequency tables that show the results for each question on the survey
- A copy of the cover letter and survey instrument

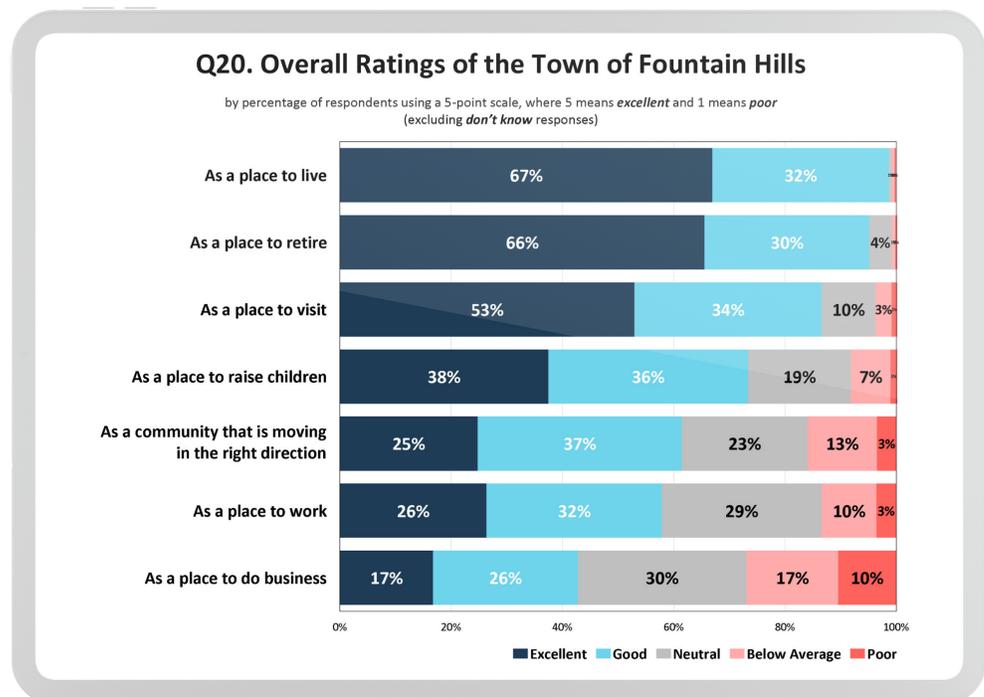
## Key Findings

- Residents think the Town is an excellent/good place to live, retire, visit, raise children, and overall quality of life is excellent/good.
- Residents are satisfied with the quality of garbage, refuse collection services, fire protection services, and parks & recreation programs/facilities.
- Residents think the maintenance of streets and infrastructure is the most important service and should have the most emphasis from Town leaders.
- Fire protection services, maintenance of streets and infrastructure, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office services, and garbage and refuse collection services are services residents would be the least willing for leaders to reduce or eliminate.
- Residents have a low positive perception of the Town's quality of retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses, the ability to participate in decision-making processes, the leadership of the Town's elected officials, and the accessibility and transparency of information provided by the Town Council.
- About half of residents currently use the Town's website to get information about the Town and about half find the usefulness of the Town's website to be excellent/good. Which could attribute to the Town's ratings of the ease of accessing various communication services, the level of satisfaction residents have with the Town's accessibility and transparency of information provided by the Town Council, availability of information about programs/services, and the Town's efforts to keep residents informed about local issues.

# Major Findings

Residents gave Fountain Hills high ratings as being an excellent/good place to live, retire, visit, and raise children. Which correlates with residents' opinion that they think, overall, the quality of life in Fountain Hills is excellent/good.

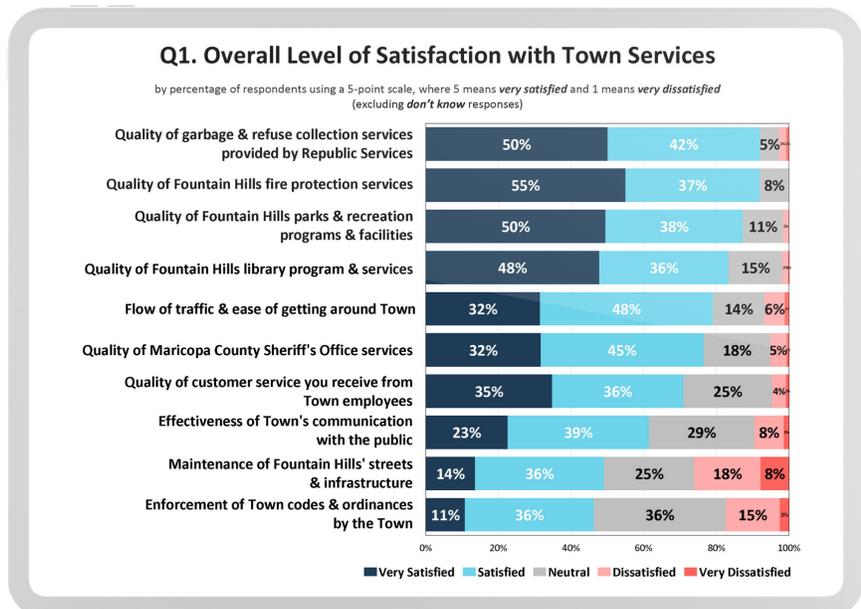
- The graph below shows how residents responded when they were asked to rate, based on their observations and experiences during the past year, Fountain Hills for various perception items. The perception items that had the highest ratings, based on the sum percentage of *excellent* and *good* responses, were:
  - Fountain Hills as a place to live (98.7%)
  - Fountain Hills as a place to retire (95.2%)
  - Fountain Hills as a place to visit (86.6%)
  - Fountain Hills as a place to raise children (73.4%)
- As shown below, Fountain Hills as a place to work (57.9%) and Fountain Hills as a place to do business (42.8%) were the bottom two items with the lowest ratings of *excellent/good*.



# Major Findings

## Residents are satisfied with the quality of garbage, refuse collection services, fire protection services, and parks & recreation programs/facilities.

- Residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with major categories of Town services and the top three services with the highest sum percentage of *very satisfied* and *satisfied* responses were: the quality of garbage and refuse collection services provided by Republic Services (92.1%), fire protection services (92.0%), and parks and recreation programs/facilities (87.3%).
- As the graph shows below, the bottom three major categories of services were: effectiveness of the Town's communication with the public, maintenance of Town streets and infrastructure, and enforcement of Town codes and ordinances by the Town.
- 61.5% of residents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the effectiveness of the Town's communication with the public; 29.0% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 9.5% were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*.
- 49.1% of residents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the maintenance of Town streets and infrastructure; 24.9% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 26.0% were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*.
- 46.3% of residents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the enforcement of Town codes and ordinances by the Town; 36.3% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 17.4% were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*.

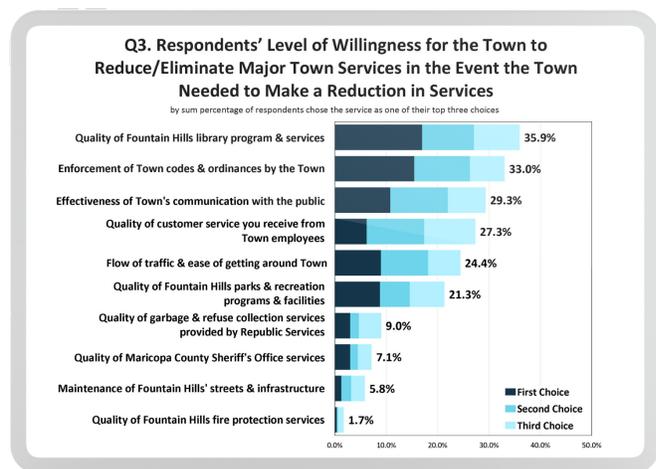


# Major Findings

**Maintenance of Fountain Hills' streets and infrastructure are not only one of the most important services residents feel should receive the most emphasis from leaders over the next two years, it is also a service that residents would not be willing to see services be reduced/eliminated.**

- Residents were asked to rate their top three major categories of Town services they think should receive the most emphasis from Town leaders over the next two years. Based on the sum of resident's top three choices, the top four services with the highest percentage of responses were:
  - Maintenance of streets and infrastructure (74.4%)
  - Quality of Maricopa County Sheriff's Office services (35.7%)
  - Quality of parks and recreation programs/facilities (30.3%)
  - Flow of traffic and ease of getting around Town (29.7%)
- Residents were asked to rate, if the Town needed to reduce or eliminate major services, which three services they would be most willing for the Town to reduce/eliminate.
  - The top three services residents would be willing for the Town to reduce or eliminate are; library program/services (35.9%), enforcement of Town codes and ordinances (33.0%), and effectiveness of the Town's communication with the public (29.3%).
- The four services that residents would be the least willing for the Town to reduce or eliminate are listed below.

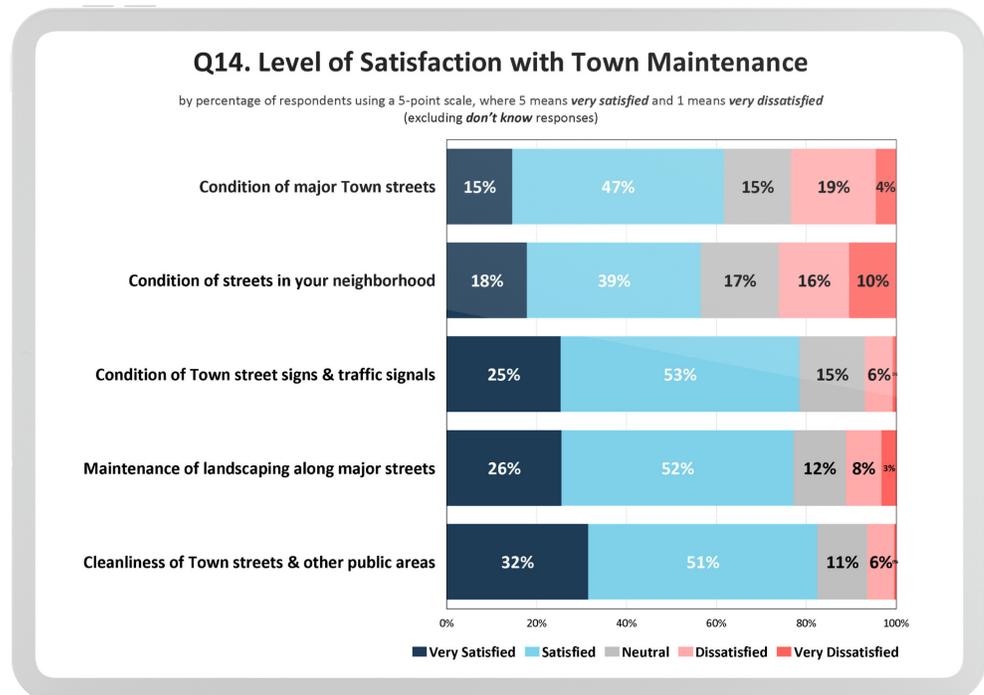
1. Garbage and refuse collection services (9.0%)
2. Maricopa County Sheriff's Office services (7.1%)
3. Maintenance of streets and infrastructure (5.8%)
4. Fire protection services (1.7%)



# Major Findings

Over three-quarters of residents are satisfied with the cleanliness and maintenance of landscaping of streets, other public areas, and the condition of street signs and traffic signals. The condition of major streets and neighborhood streets in Fountain Hills had the highest dissatisfied ratings for the Town maintenance category of services.

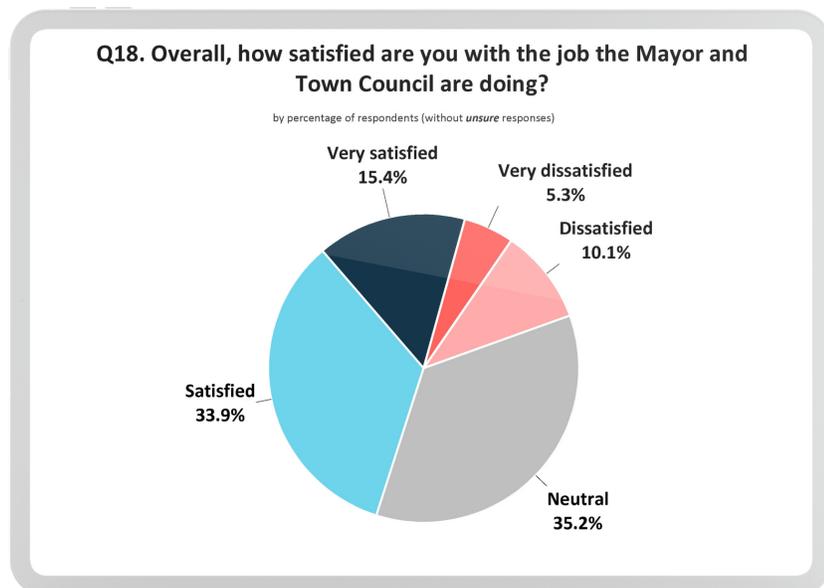
- The Town maintenance services that had the highest ratings of satisfaction were; the cleanliness of streets and other public areas (82.5%), condition of street signs and traffic signals (78.5%), and the maintenance of landscaping along major streets (77.2%).
- Residents were the least satisfied with the condition of major streets (61.7%) and neighborhood streets (56.6%).
  - The graph below shows the maintenance services with the highest dissatisfaction ratings were the condition of major streets (23.2%) and neighborhood streets (26.1%).
- The top two Town maintenance services that resident's think should receive the most emphasis from Town leaders over the next two years, based on the sum of their top two choices, are listed below.
  - Condition of major streets (62.8%)
  - Condition of neighborhood streets (40.9%)



## Major Findings

Items that influence perception of the Town that had the highest ratings of below average and poor were the quality of retail/restaurant/entertainment businesses, the ability to participate in decision-making processes, the leadership of the Town's elected officials, and the accessibility and transparency of information provided by the Town Council.

- 51.3% of residents rated the quality of retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses in the Town as *excellent* or *good*; 21.3% gave a rating of neutral and 27.3% of residents rated the quality as *below average* or *poor*.
- 47.6% of residents rated the leadership of the Town's elected officials as *excellent* or *good*; 32.6% gave a *neutral* rating and 19.8% gave a rating of *below average* or *poor*.
- 47.3% of residents rated the accessibility and transparency of information provided by the Town Council as *excellent* or *good*; 33.4% gave a *neutral* rating and 19.3% gave a rating of *below average* or *poor*.
- 33.1% of residents rated the ability to participate in the Town's decision-making process as *excellent* or *good*; 44.2% gave a *neutral* rating and 22.7% gave a rating of either *below average* or *poor*.
- The chart below shows that 49.3% of residents indicated they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the job the Mayor and Town Council are doing; 35.2% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 15.4% were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*.



## Major Findings

**About half of residents currently use the Town's website to get information about the Town and about half find the usefulness of the Town's website to be *excellent/good*. Which could attribute to the Town's ratings of the ease of accessing various communication services, the level of satisfaction residents have with the Town's accessibility and transparency of information provided by the Town Council, availability of information about programs/services, and the Town's efforts to keep residents informed about local issues.**

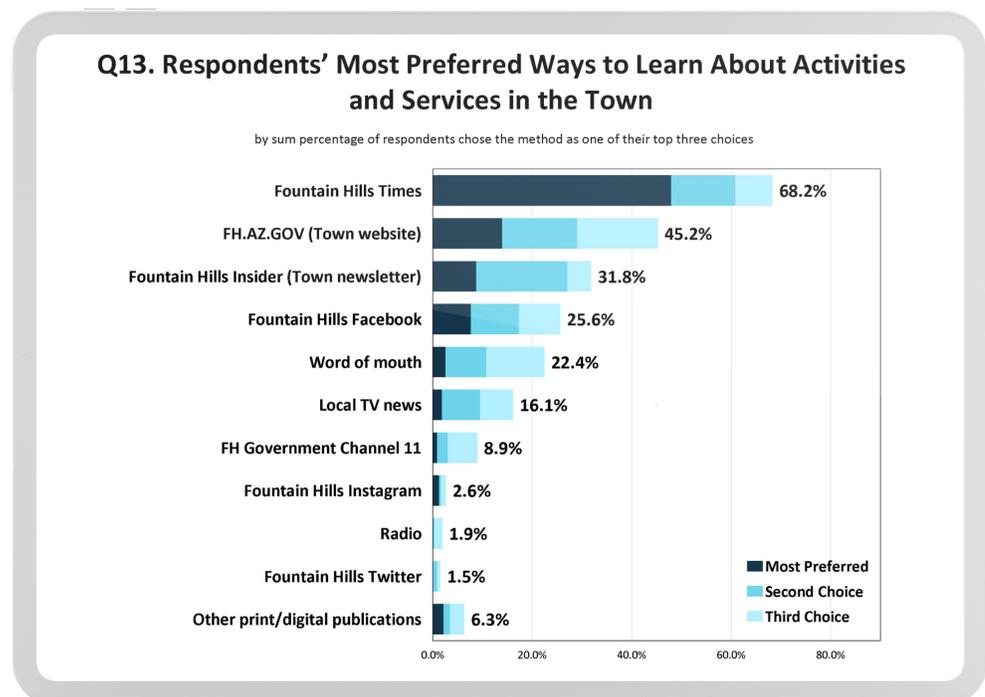
- 52.3% of residents rated the usefulness of the Town's website as *excellent/good*; 36.3% rated the usefulness of the website as neither good or poor (neutral) and 10.9% rated the usefulness of the website as *below average/poor*.
  - Residents were asked which communication sources they currently use to get information about the Town and 49.2% indicated they currently use the Town's website (in the top three sources used by residents for information). When asked what the three sources of information are resident's most preferred, 45.2% indicated the Town website is their most preferred way to learn about activities and Town services (in the top three most preferred sources).
- 68.5% of residents are either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the availability of information about programs/services provided by the Town; 25.8% are neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 5.7% are *dissatisfied/very dissatisfied*.
- 58.6% of residents are either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the Town's efforts to keep residents informed about local issues; 29.7% are neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and 11.7% are *dissatisfied/very dissatisfied*.
- The three communication items that had the lowest ratings of satisfaction were; how easy it is to access information about Town Board and Commission meetings (44.3%), how easy it is to access the Town's financial information (33.6%), and how easy it is to access campaigning finance and lobbyist disclosures (26.5%).

## Additional Findings

- Overall, resident's perception of safety in Fountain Hills is positive.
  - 97.6% of residents indicated they feel *very safe* or *safe* in their neighborhood during the day and 91.3% feel *very safe* or *safe* in their neighborhood at night.
  - 79.2% of residents indicated they feel *very safe* or *safe* in Town parks; 16.7% feel neither safe or unsafe and 4.1% feel *unsafe* or *very unsafe*.
- Public safety services that had the highest ratings of satisfaction were the overall quality of the local fire protection by Rural Metro (91.7%), overall quality of EMS services (87.9%), and the overall quality of police protection provided by the Sheriff's Office (78.8%).
  - 66.9% of residents indicated they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the Town's efforts to prevent crime; 25.9% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 7.2% were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*.
- When residents were asked to rate the public safety services that they think should receive the most emphasis from Town leaders, the top response, based on the sum of resident's top two choices, was the Town's efforts to prevent crime (50.5%). Followed by the overall quality of police protection (39.8%).
- Overall residents seem to be satisfied with parks and recreation services provided by the Town. At least 80.0% of residents are either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with:
  - The location of the parks (93.5%)
  - Maintenance of the parks (89.0%)
  - Hiking/walking/biking trails (89.0%)
  - Number of parks (84.4%)
  - Variety of parks (84.1%)
- The top three parks and recreation services that residents indicated they think should receive the most emphasis, based on the sum of their top three choices, from Town leaders over the next two years are listed below.
  - Maintenance of the parks (62.0%)
  - Hiking/walking/biking trails (44.9%)
  - Quality of recreation programs offered (40.8%)
    - 77.5% of residents were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the quality of recreation programs offered; 20.3% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 2.2% were either *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*.

## Additional Findings

- Residents were asked, from a list of eleven various communication sources, which they currently use to get information about the Town. The top (6) responses were:
  - Fountain Hills Times (75.9%)
  - Word of mouth (61.7%)
  - Town website (49.2%)
  - Fountain Hills Insider (37.6%)
  - Local television news (29.5%)
  - Fountain Hills Facebook (29.0%)
  
- Shown in the chart below are the sum percentage of resident's top three choices for their most preferred way to learn about Town activities and services. The top four sources that resident's most prefer to use to learn about activities and services in the Town are listed below.
  - Fountain Hills Times (68.2%)
  - Town website (45.2%)
  - Fountain Hills Insider (31.8%)
  - Fountain Hills Facebook (25.6%)



## Benchmark Analysis

- ETC Institute compared the 2021 results of Fountain Hills Community Survey with the average of communities with a population of 30,000 or less, in the mountain region, and nationally. More information can be found in Section 3 of the report.
- Overall, when compared to the other communities, Fountain Hills' results exceeded theirs in a multitude of services.
- Differences of +/-4.5% are considered significant. Compared to the national average, there were 23 positive differences and four (4) significant negative differences of the 41 services analyzed. The top four significant positive differences were;
  - As a place to retire (+32.5%)
  - Flow of traffic and ease of getting around the Town/City (+29.7%)
  - Overall appearance of the Town/City (+24.6%)
  - Hiking/walking/biking trails (+23.1%)
- The four significant negative differences were;
  - Enforcement of Town/City codes and ordinances (-5.4%)
  - As a place to work (-6.2%)
  - Ability to participate in the Town/City's decision-making process (-7.5%)
  - Leadership of the Town/City's elected officials (-8.9%)
- Differences between Fountain Hills' results and regional averages, there were significant positive differences in 22 services and significant negative differences in four (4) of the 41 services analyzed.
- Differences between Fountain Hills' results and average for communities with a population of 30,000 or less, there were significant positive differences in 19 services and significant negative differences in five (5) of the 41 services analyzed.

# Conclusion

## (Importance-Satisfaction Analysis)

To ensure the Town continues to deliver high quality services to its residents, ETC Institute recommends the Town emphasize the following areas.

### Overall Priorities for the Town by Major Categories of Services:

The first level of analysis reviewed the importance of and satisfaction with major Town services. This analysis was conducted to help set the overall priorities for the Town. The table below shows the Importance-Satisfaction Analysis for three (3) of the ten (10) major services analyzed. Based on the results of this analysis, the major service that is recommended as the top opportunity for improvement over the next two years, in order to raise the Town's overall satisfaction rating, is the maintenance of Fountain Hills' streets and infrastructure (IS Rating=0.3787)

Importance-Satisfaction Analysis & Ratings						
Major Categories of Town Services						
Town of Fountain Hills Community Survey (2021)						
Fountain Hills, Arizona						
Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
<b>Very High Priority (I-S &gt; 0.20)</b>						
Maintenance of Fountain Hills' streets & infrastructure	74.4%	1	49.1%	9	0.3787	1
<b>High Priority (I-S = 0.10-0.20)</b>						
Enforcement of Town codes & ordinances by Town	24.7%	6	46.3%	10	0.1326	2
Effectiveness of Town's communication with the public	28.0%	5	61.5%	8	0.1078	3

### Priorities for Specific Areas:

The second level of analysis reviewed the importance of and satisfaction with specific areas of services. This analysis was conducted to help departmental managers set priorities for their department. Based on the results of this analysis, the services that are recommended as the top priorities within each department over the next two years are listed below:

- Public Safety: the Town's efforts to prevent crime (IS Rating=0.1672)
- Parks & Recreation: quality of recreation programs offered (IS Rating=0.0918)
- Maintenance: condition of major streets (IS Rating=0.2405) and condition of neighborhood streets (IS Rating=0.1775)