



Highlands Ranch Metro District,
CO
2009

Benchmark Report



Contents

Understanding the Benchmark Comparisons	1
Comparison Data	1
Putting Evaluations onto the 100-point Scale.....	1
Interpreting the Results	2
Front Range Benchmark Comparisons.....	3
Jurisdictions Included in Front Range Benchmark Comparisons.....	5

Understanding the Benchmark Comparisons

Comparison Data

NRC’s database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in citizen surveys from approximately 500 jurisdictions whose residents evaluated local government services and gave their opinion about the quality of community life. For Highlands Ranch Metro District, comparisons made to a custom subset of jurisdictions in Colorado’s Front Range. A benchmark comparison (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked) has been provided when a similar question on the Highlands Ranch Metro District survey was included in NRC’s database and there were at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked.

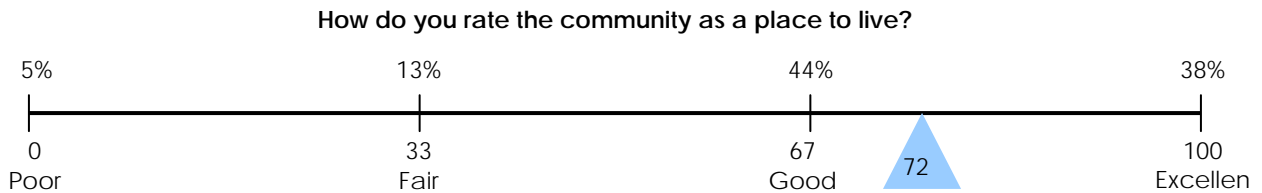
Putting Evaluations onto the 100-point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 1 representing the best rating and 4 the worst, the benchmarks are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 2 points based on all respondents.

The 100-point scale is not a percent. It is a conversion of responses to an average rating. Each response option is assigned a value that is used in calculating the average score. For example, “excellent”=100, “good”=67, “fair”=33 and “poor”=0. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the average rating would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor”, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If half the respondents gave a score of “excellent” and half gave a score of “poor,” the average would be in the middle of the scale (like the center post of a teeter totter) between “fair” and “good.” An example of how to convert survey frequencies into an average rating appears below.

Example of Converting Responses to the 100-point Scale

How do you rate the community as a place to live?						
Response option	Total with “don’t know”	Step1: Remove the percent of “don’t know” responses	Total without “don’t know”	Step 2: Assign scale values	Step 3: Multiply the percent by the scale value	Step 4: Sum to calculate the average rating
Excellent	36%	= $36 \div (100-5) =$	38%	100	= $38\% \times 100 =$	38
Good	42%	= $42 \div (100-5) =$	44%	67	= $44\% \times 67 =$	30
Fair	12%	= $12 \div (100-5) =$	13%	33	= $13\% \times 33 =$	4
Poor	5%	= $5 \div (100-5) =$	5%	0	= $5\% \times 0 =$	0
Don’t know	5%		--			
Total	100%		100%			72



Interpreting the Results

Average ratings are compared when similar questions are included in NRC's database, and there are at least five jurisdictions in which the question was asked. Where comparisons are available, three numbers are provided in the table. The first column is your jurisdiction's rating on the 100-point scale. The second column is the rank assigned to your jurisdiction's rating among jurisdictions where a similar question was asked. The third column is the number of jurisdictions that asked a similar question. The fourth column shows a comparison of your jurisdiction's average rating (column one) to the benchmark.

The comparison: "above," "below" or "similar" comes from a statistical comparison of your jurisdiction's rating to the benchmark (the average rating from all the comparison jurisdictions where a similar question was asked). Differences of more than 2 points on the 100-point scale between your jurisdiction's ratings and the average based on the appropriate comparisons from the database are considered "statistically significant," and thus are marked as "above" or "below" the benchmark. When differences between your jurisdiction's ratings and the benchmarks are 2 points or fewer, they are marked as "similar to" the benchmark.

Front Range Benchmark Comparisons

Quality of Life Benchmarks				
Circle the number that best represents your opinion:	Highlands Ranch average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Highlands Ranch as a place to live	83	3	18	Above
Overall quality of life in Highlands Ranch	82	3	23	Above

Average rating: 100=excellent, 0=poor

Metro District Services Benchmarks				
Following are services provided by the Metro District. Please rate the quality of each service.	Highlands Ranch average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Parks	83	1	13	Above
Trails	84	1	8	Above
Outdoor recreation programs	73	1	15	Above
Parkway landscaping along major roads	66	Not available	Not available	Not available
Open space management	70	2	5	Above
Web site: www.highlandsranch.org	65	2	8	Above
Newsletter: Metro District Messenger magazine	64	Not available	Not available	Not available
Storm water management	67	1	7	Above
Construction of infrastructure	66	Not available	Not available	Not available
Fire and emergency services (contracted with Littleton Fire Rescue)	78	Not available	Not available	Not available
Snow removal on trails and sidewalks along major roads	64	2	20	Above
Drinking water (provided by Centennial Water and Sanitation District)	62	4	7	Similar
Overall performance of the Highlands Ranch Metro District	70	1	5	Above
Overall quality of services provided by the Highlands Ranch Metro District	71	3	17	Above

Average rating: 100=excellent, 0=poor

Public Trust Benchmarks				
Please rate the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion.	Highlands Ranch average rating	Rank	Number of Jurisdictions for Comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Metro District elected officials generally act in the best interest of taxpayers	66	1	6	Above
Highlands Ranch Metro District employees perform quality work	75	Not available	Not available	Not available
I receive good value for the taxes I pay to the Metro District.	69	1	13	Above
I am pleased with the overall direction the Metro District is taking	70	2	17	Above
The Metro District welcomes citizen involvement	71	1	17	Above

Average rating: 100=strongly agree, 0=strongly disagree

Jurisdictions Included in Front Range Benchmark Comparisons

List below are the jurisdictions included in the Front Range benchmark comparisons provided for the Highlands Ranch Metro District followed by its 2000 population according to the U.S. Census.

Arapahoe County, CO	487,967
Arvada, CO	102,153
Aurora, CO	276,393
Boulder, CO	94,673
Broomfield, CO	38,272
Castle Rock, CO	20,224
Colorado Springs, CO	360,890
Denver (City and County), CO	554,636
Douglas County, CO	175,766
Fort Collins, CO	118,652
Golden, CO	17,159
Greenwood Village, CO	11,035
Highlands Ranch, CO	70,931
Jefferson County, CO	527,056
Lakewood, CO	144,126
Larimer County, CO	251,494
Lone Tree, CO	4,873
Longmont, CO	71,093
Louisville, CO	18,937
Loveland, CO	50,608
Northglenn, CO	31,575
Parker, CO	23,558
Thornton, CO	82,384
Westminster, CO	100,940
Wheat Ridge, CO	32,913