CLOSUP
Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy

GERALD R. FORD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) and MDNR Future Initiatives

Presented to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Lansing, MI
January 24, 2017

Presentation Outline

- **Overview of the MPPS:** what it is and how it's used
- **Previous data collected on DNR:** 2014 agency evaluations, local attitudes on recreational economic development
- **Ways MPPS might inform DNR efforts in the future**
- **Other issues to consider**

The Michigan Public Policy Survey

- **Census survey** – all counties, cities, villages, and townships
- **Respondents** – chief elected and appointed officials
- **Administered** – online and via hardcopy
- **Timing** – Spring and Fall each year
- **Topics** – wide range, such as fiscal health, budget priorities, public safety, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, employee policies, labor unions, state relations, roads, environmental sustainability, citizen engagement, much more.

MPPS is not a typical opinion poll

- **70+% response rates**
- **Transparency**
  -- Questionnaires online
  -- Pre-run data tables online
  -- Sharing of (anonymized) datasets with other researchers
- **Expert advisors on questionnaire content**
- **Research partnership with Michigan local government associations**
  -- MAC, MML, & MTA
- **Borrowing from other proven sources such as NLC and ICMA**

What does the MPPS aim to do?

- **Improve understanding** of local government to help improve policymaking and quality of life
- **Inform local leaders** about peers across the state: challenges and responses
- **Inform state practitioners** and other stakeholders with data about local level challenges and responses not available from any other source
- **Build a longitudinal data archive** to allow tracking of fundamental changes (such as the economic transition, aging population, etc.)
- Foster **academic research and teaching** on state and local government issues

What does CLOSUP do with MPPS data?

- **Analyzing data and writing reports**
- **Presentations to groups statewide and free webinars**
- **Posting pre-run data tables and other information on the CLOSUP website**
- **Sharing Public-Use datasets via UM data archive**

How do policymakers use MPPS information?

- **Local level: guide planning and inform policy** (Schoolcraft Township Supervisor, Wayne County System of Funding Local Government event)

- **Stakeholder organizations: inform policy relevant efforts and educate members** (MML, MTA,& MAC, CRC)

- **State level: understanding local attitudes and challenges**

  (State Police, MSU Emergency Manager Research Forum, Snyder 21st Century Infrastructure Commission)

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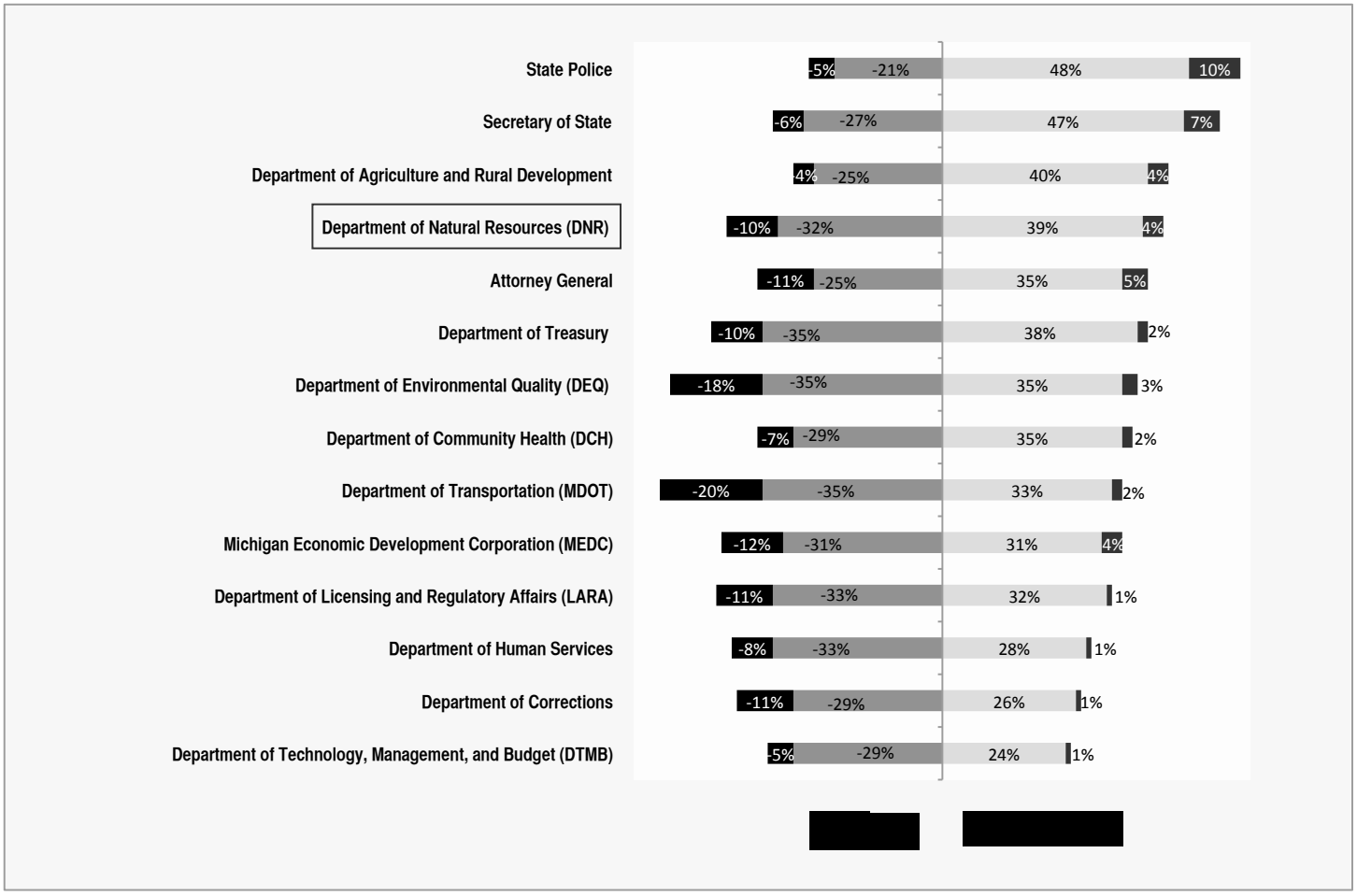
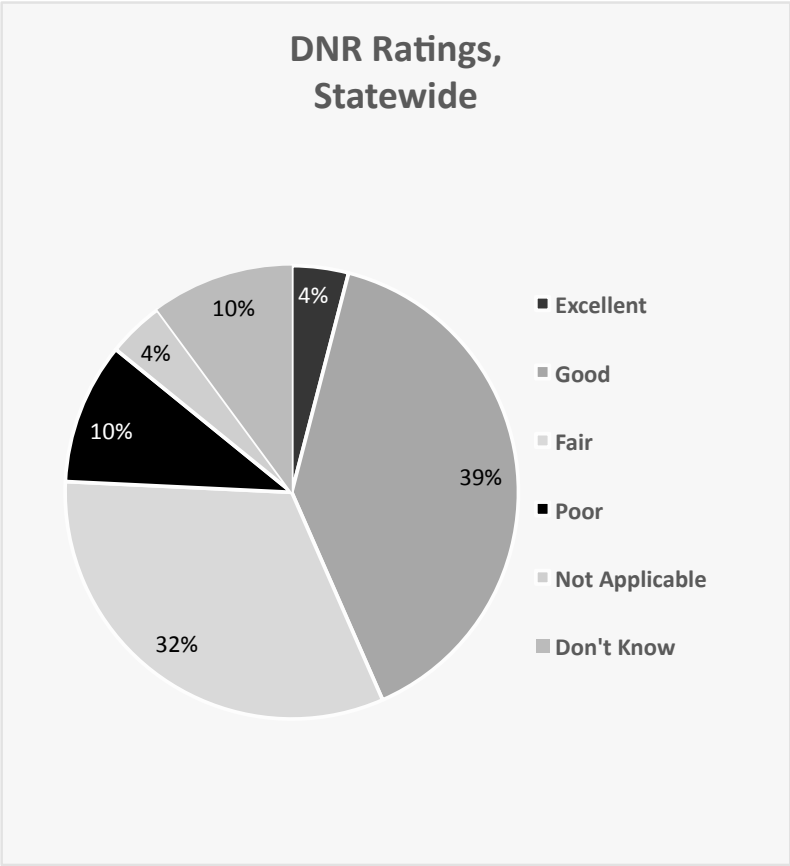
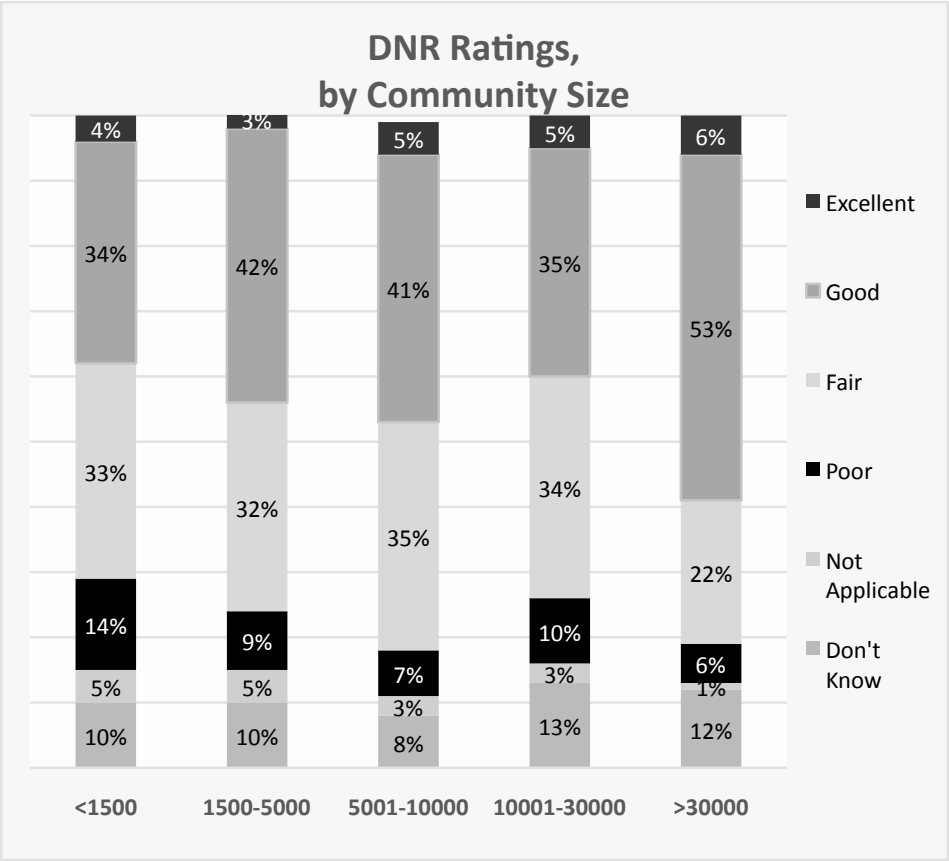
Local Officials' Ratings of State Agencies, Spring 2014

Q: Now thinking about how the state government relates to your jurisdiction in particular, how would you, in your role as a local official, rate the way [Department/Agency name] is performing its job overall?



Local Officials' Ratings by size, Spring 2014





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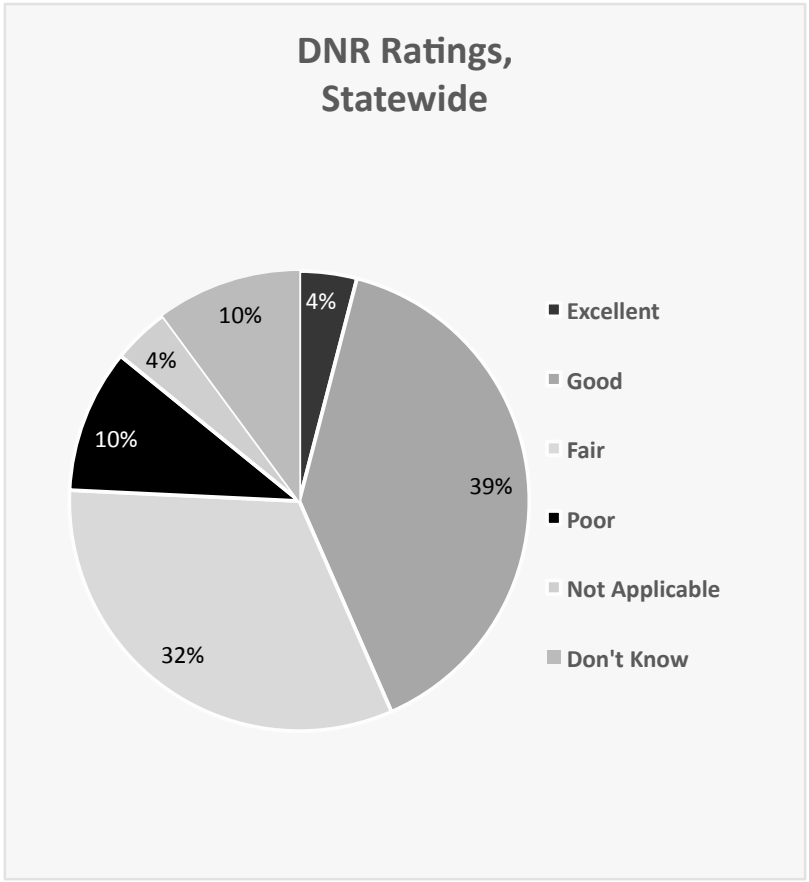
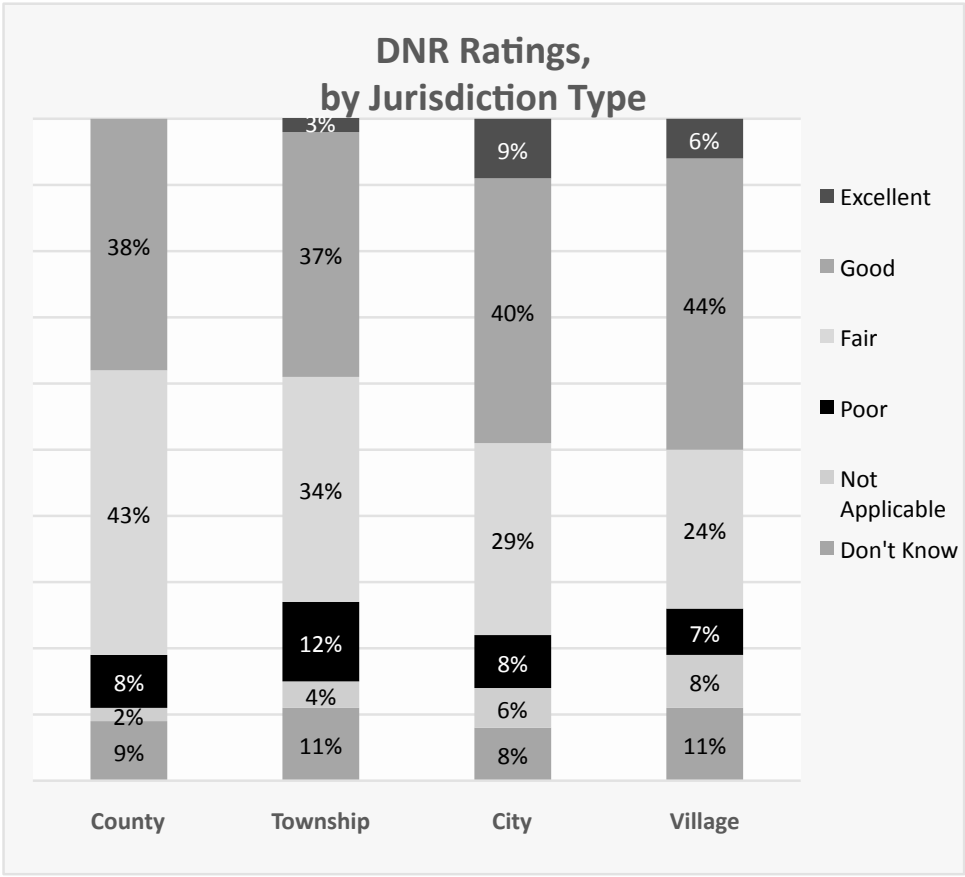
Local Officials' Ratings by jurisdiction type, Spring 2014





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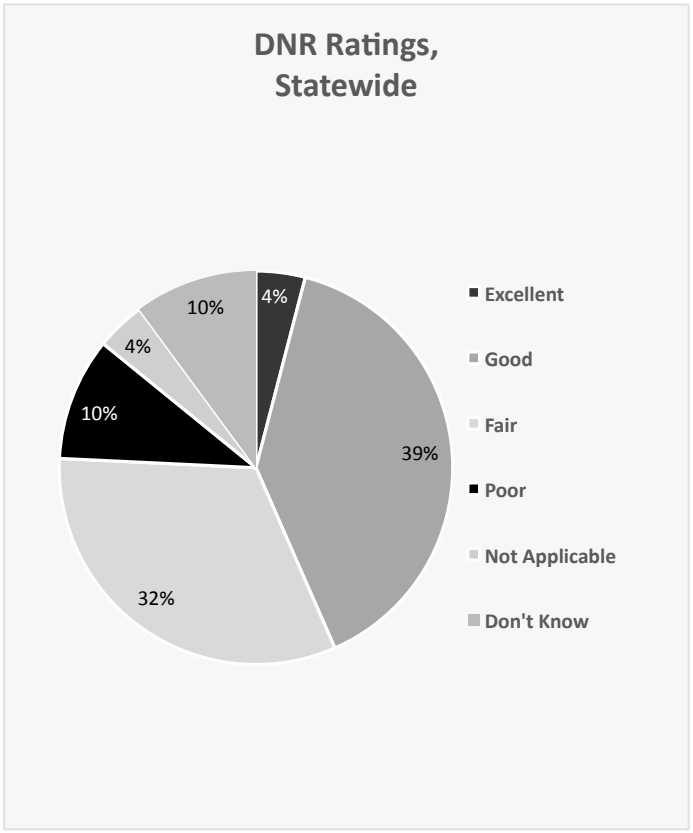
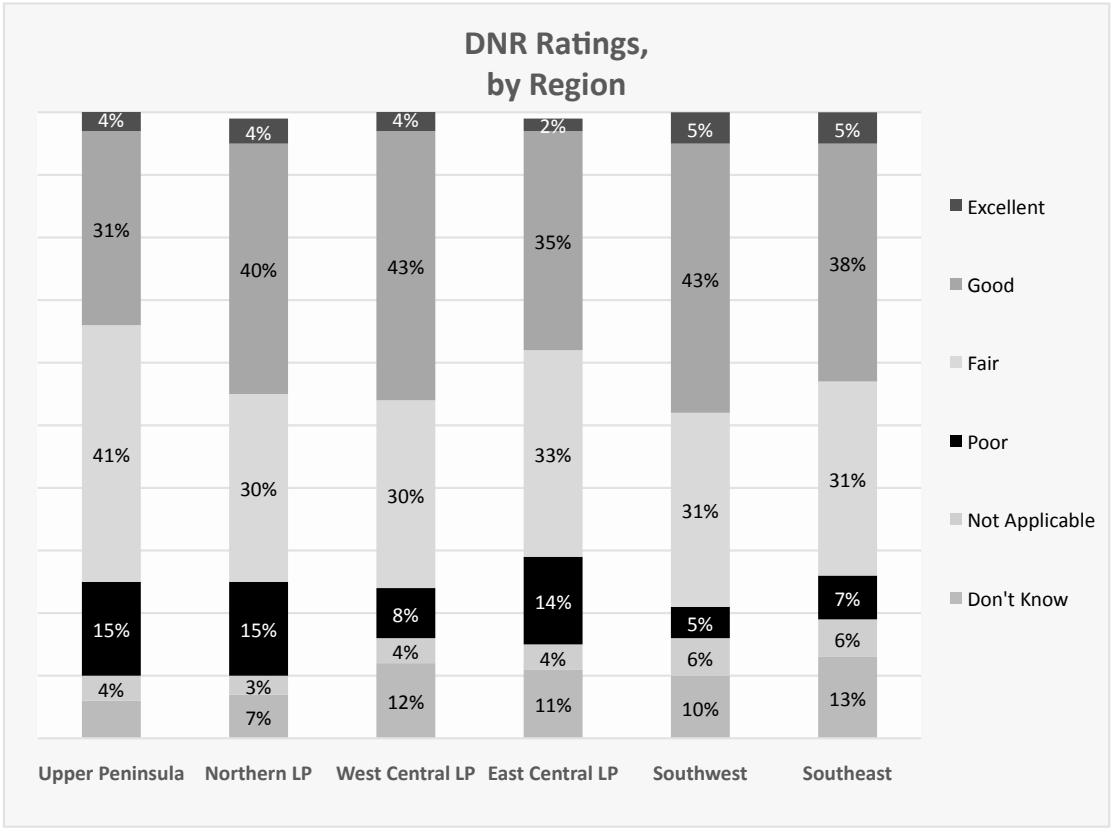
Local Officials' Ratings by region, Spring 2014





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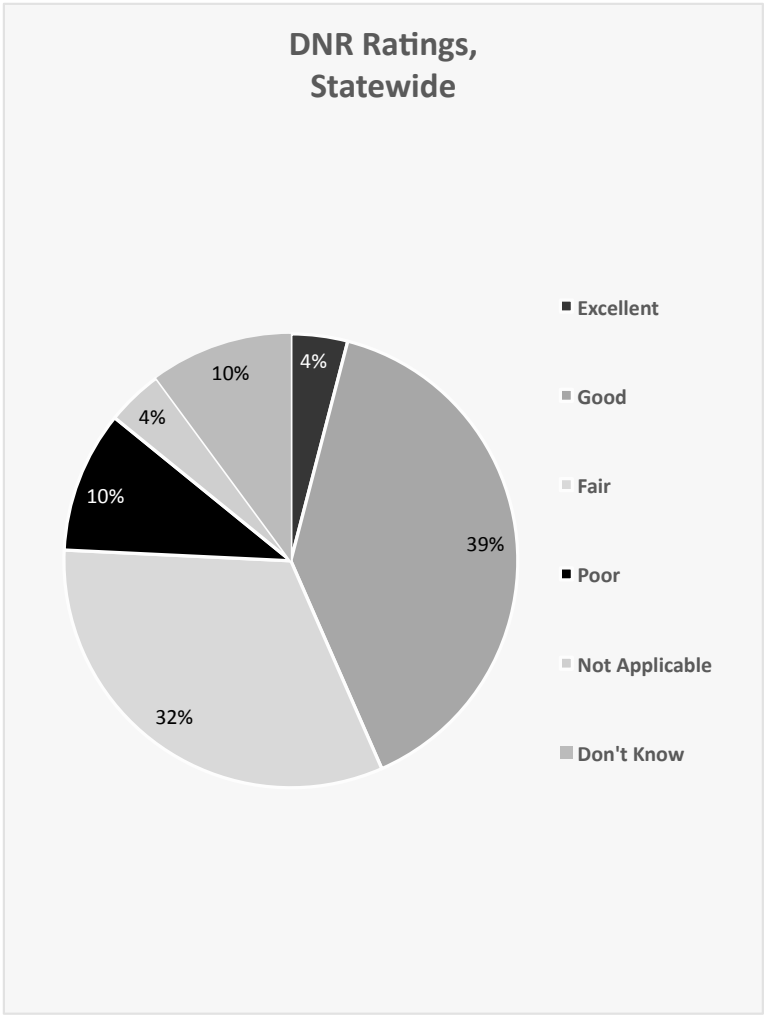
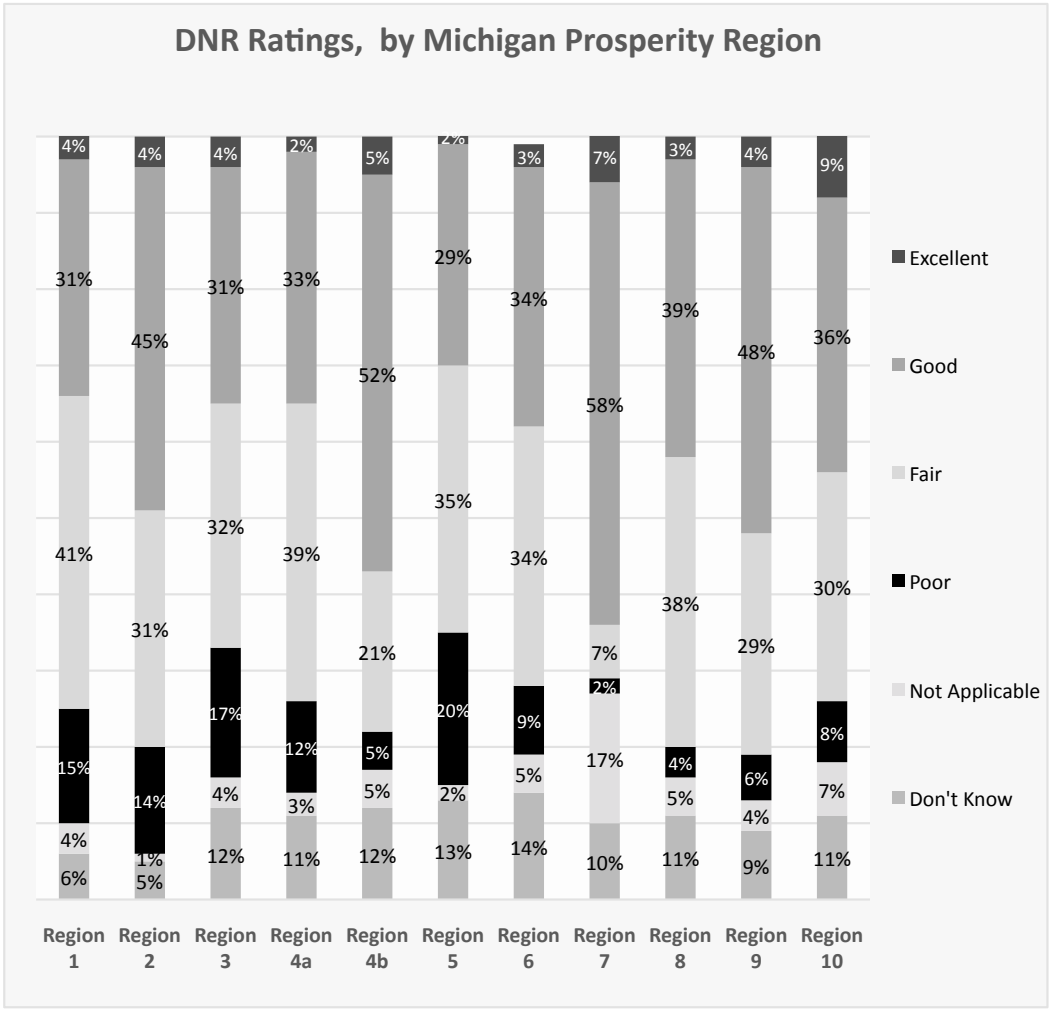
Local Officials' Ratings by Prosperity Region, Spring 2014





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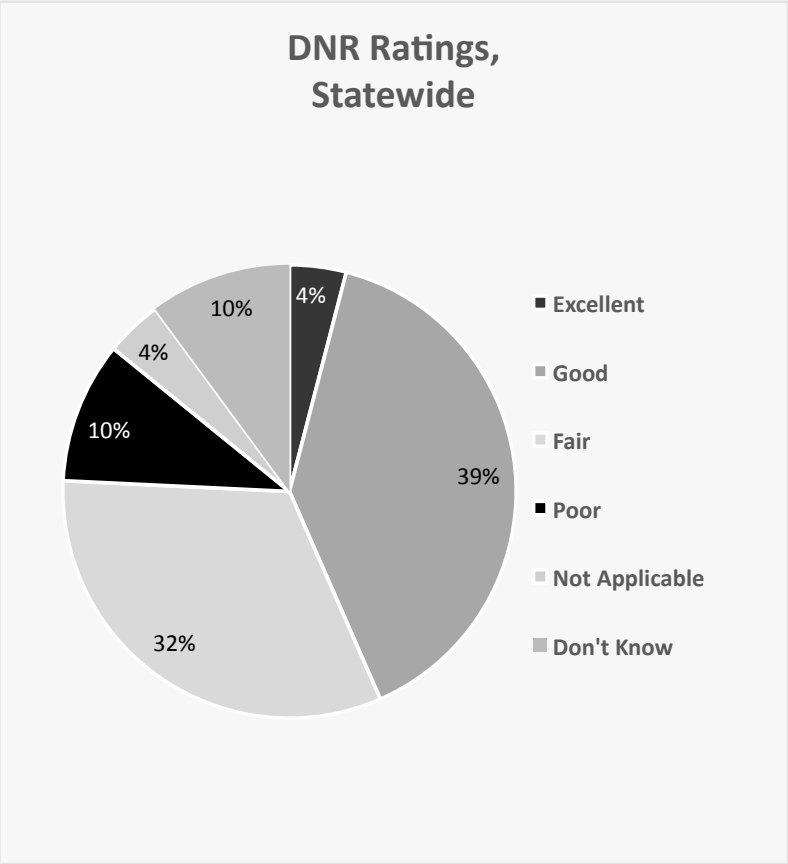
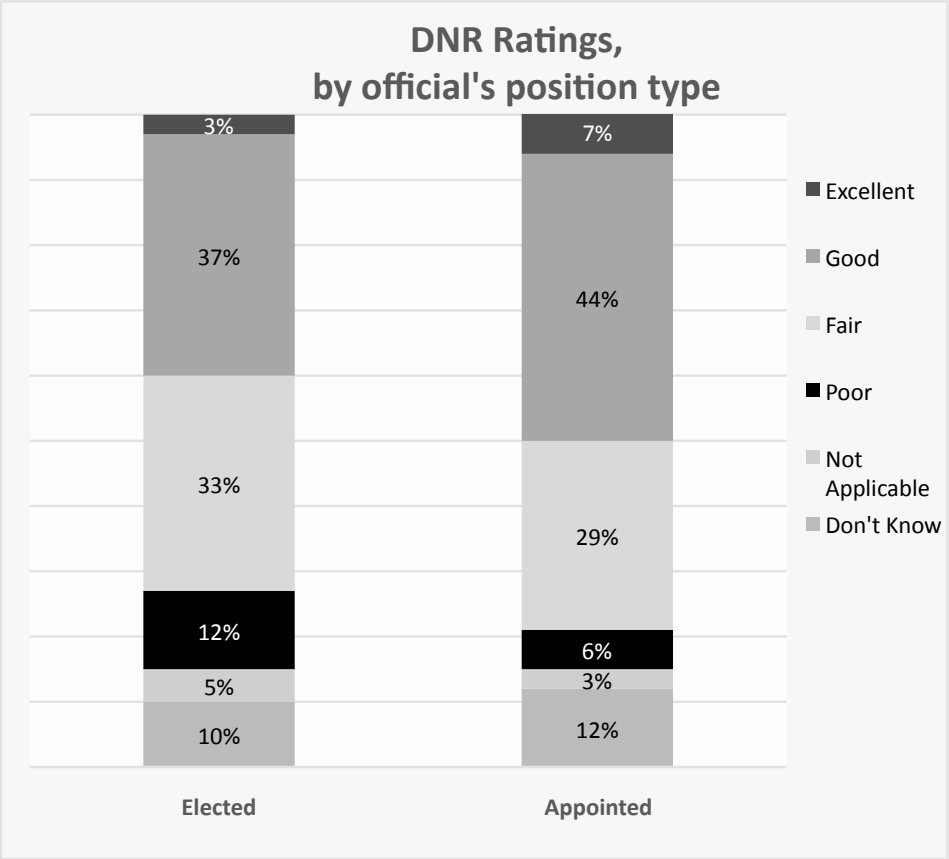
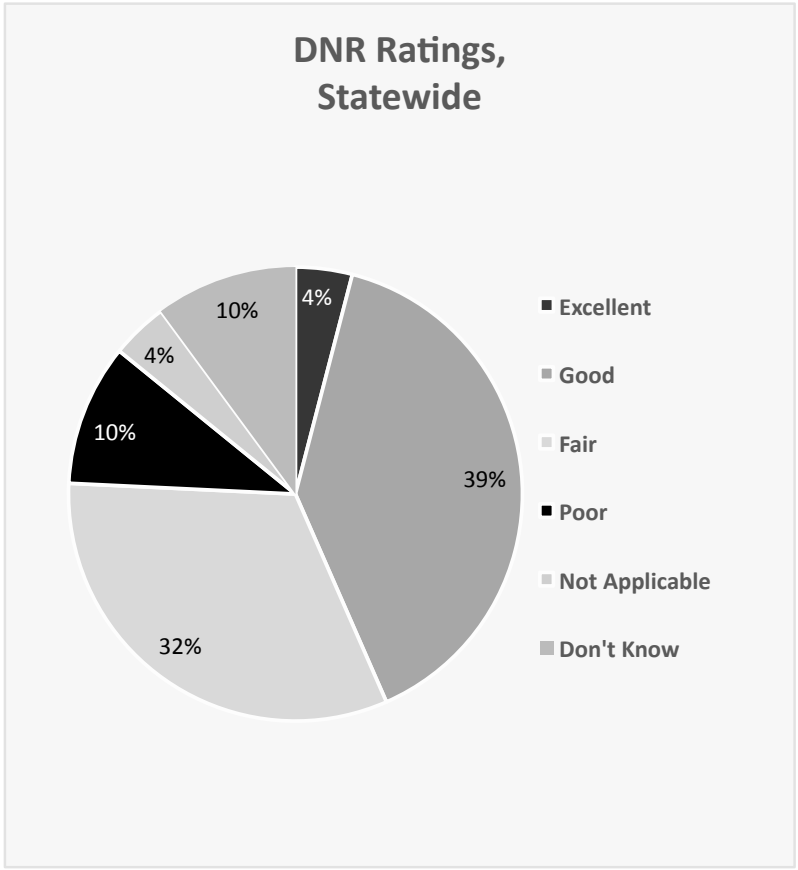
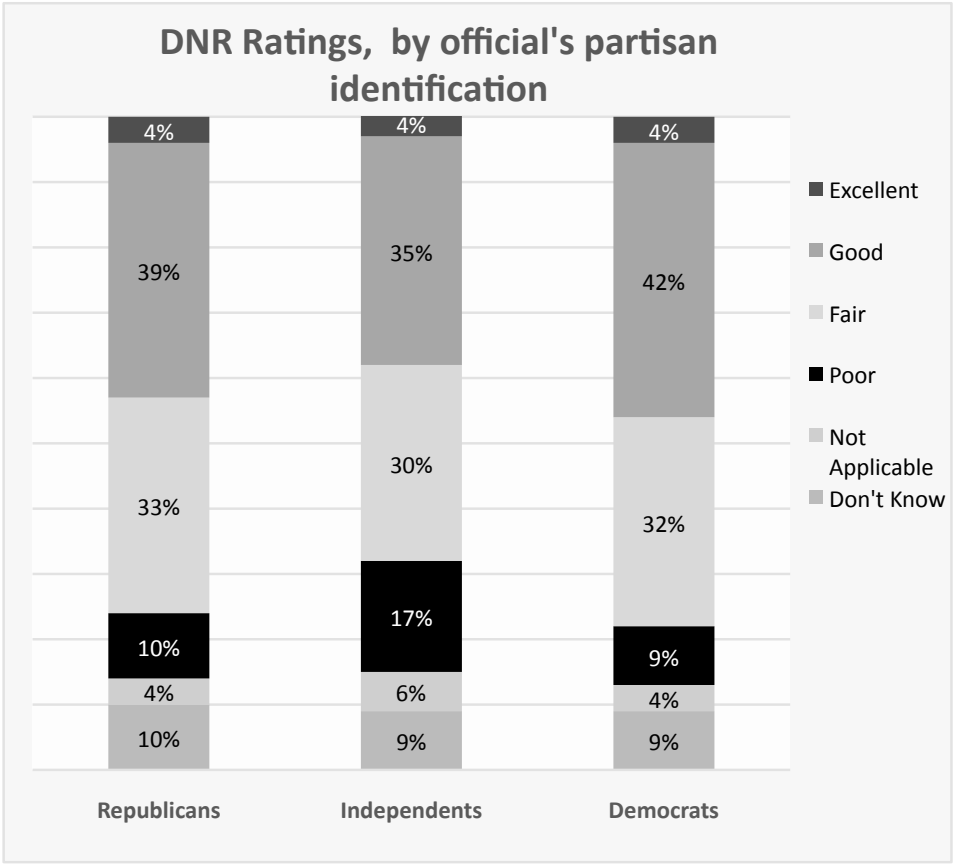
Local Officials' Ratings by position, Spring 2014





Local Officials' Ratings by partisanship, Spring 2014





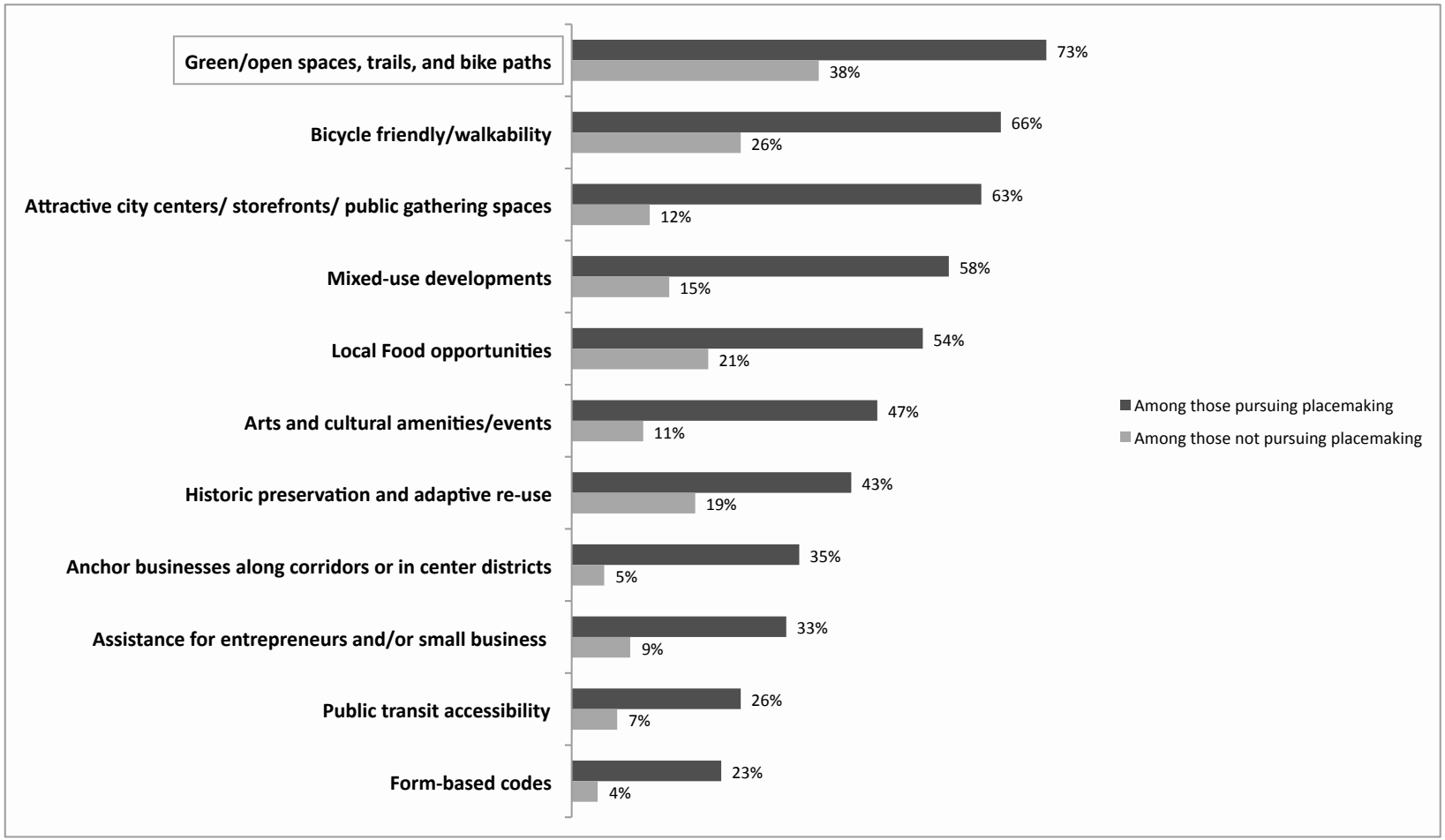
Local Officials' comments on DNR, Spring 2014

Q: If you would like to provide more information or explanations about your ratings on any of the Michigan state departments above, or would like to discuss a state agency, department, or office not listed above, please do so in the space below.

- **I understand why the DNR needed to raise their rates for hunting licenses, but feel that the timing is very poor. Our state has a very high unemployment rate coupled with pay cuts and increased insurance premiums for the working class. Now, when people have less to give, the DNR decides to ask for more money. I feel they should operate like everyone else. When times are tight you make cuts and tighten your belt. And this is not just for the DNR, but for all governmental agencies....**
- **DNR specifically has a lower rating because of DNR owned lands and the values set tend to come out after assessment rolls have been certified and then requires a lot more work on the end of the local unit in order to set them correctly.**
- **DNR very responsive to our trail and rec needs.**
- **As a small farming community we don't have a direct contact with these departments, maybe the Dept of Ag , DEQ, & DNR who are actually in more contact with the residents more than the Township Office.**

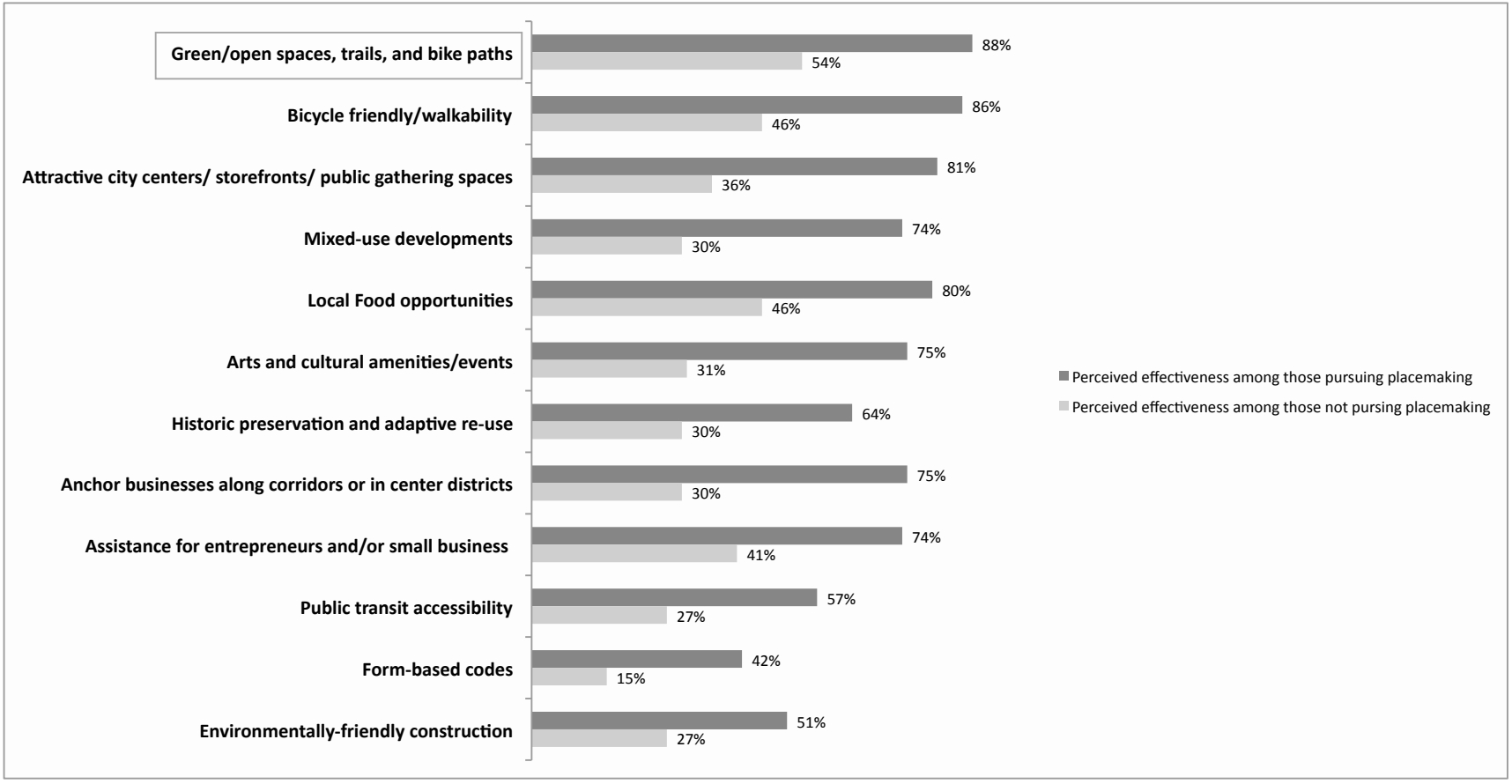
Recreation as Economic Development, Spring 2013

Q: Some people consider the elements in the following list to be placemaking efforts, others may not. Whether or not you consider them placemaking, which of the following, if any, are your jurisdiction pursuing for economic development or any other purpose?



Recreation as Economic Development, Spring 2013

Q: Regardless of whether you have any placemaking efforts underway, please indicate, in your opinion, how effective or ineffective the following are, or could be, in your jurisdiction for economic development purposes.



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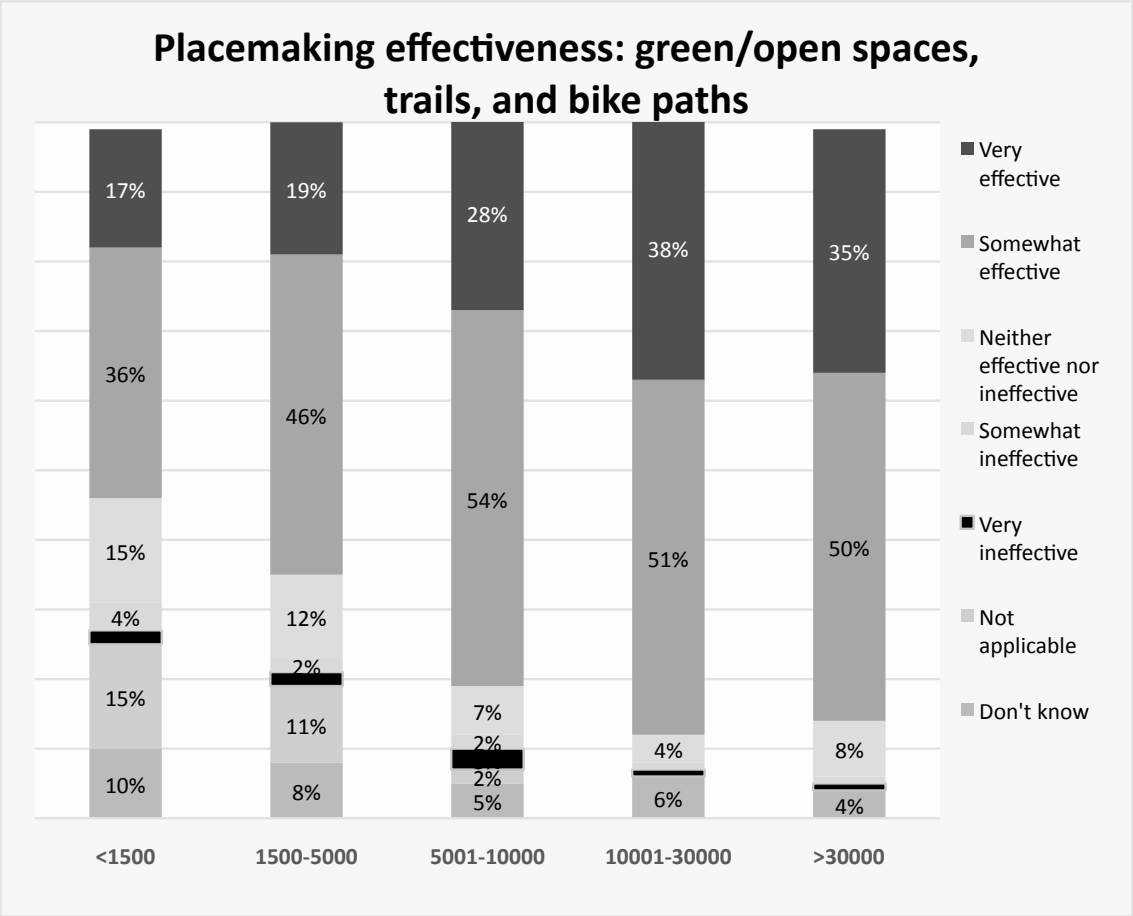

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Possible MPPS survey data collection on MDNR Issues

Baseline option:

- **Regular MPPS performance evaluation tracking questions**

Additional options:

- **Field short battery on regular MPPS vs. full survey**
- **Ask questions of standard respondents (local unit leaders) vs. separate survey of other respondents (department heads)**

  If other respondents, we could field contemporaneous survey (run at same time as MPPS) vs. separate wave (winter or summer)
- **Explore possibility of coordination with SOSS and MPIP**

  combining opinion data from local officials with that of Michigan citizens and state-level stakeholders

Examples of how full MPPS survey could support…

- **DNR Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan goals**

  "Improve the collaboration and cooperation between outdoor recreation providers"

  "Integrate the provision of outdoor recreation with economic development plans and activities to advance economic prosperity"

- **DNR Managed Public Land Strategy goals**

  "Gain an understanding of the data needs of local units of government, regional planning organizations and the private sector regarding natural and cultural resources and recreation. Supply the data in a useful format to help drive local initiatives."

  "Improve communications and relationships with local units of government."

  "Develop a toolbox to help local units of governments and regional planning organizations better collaborate, cooperate and form partnerships with the DNR."

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MPPS program issues to keep in mind

- **Respondent confidentiality/anonymity on standard MPPS waves**
- **Question item design/wording**
- **Data analysis/reporting/sharing**
- **Survey wave timing (planning takes place in Spring for Fall surveys; special stand-alone surveys would need to be in the field in either summer or winter)**

Question design issues associated with MPPS

The questions typically carried on the MPPS are targeted to officials' knowledge and opinions.

Yes:

- Does your jurisdiction formally track recreational facilities use?
- In your opinion, is there sufficient public access to waterways in your jurisdiction (or for your jurisdiction's residents)?
- Would your jurisdiction support increased regional planning to promote outdoor recreation events?
- What would be the most valuable technical expertise or resources the MDNR could provide to your jurisdiction to help you manage your natural and recreational assets?

No:

- Do the restroom facilities at your jurisdiction's public parks have sufficient handicapped access?
- How much does you jurisdiction spend on maintaining snow mobile trails?

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