

The National Citizen Survey™

Ann Arbor, MI

Community Livability Report

2013

Contents

About.....	1
Quality of Life in Ann Arbor	2
Community Characteristics	3
Governance	5
Participation	7
Special Topics.....	9
Conclusions	11

The National Citizen Survey™
© 2001-2013 National Research Center, Inc.

National Research Center, Inc.
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80301
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Ann Arbor. The phrase “livable community” is used here to evoke a place that is not simply habitable but that is desirable. It is not only where people do live, but where they want to live.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community, Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation, across eight central facets of community, Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement.

The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample selected from 3,000 residents of the City of Ann Arbor. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for the entire sample (778 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.

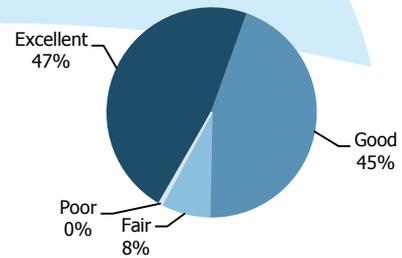


Quality of Life in Ann Arbor

Almost all residents rate the quality of life in Ann Arbor as excellent or good. Ann Arbor’s overall quality of life rating was higher than the national benchmark.

Shown below are the eight facets of community. The color of each community facet summarizes how residents rated it across the three sections of the survey that represent the pillars of a community – Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation. When most ratings across the three pillars were higher than the benchmark, the color for that facet is dark purple; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest purple. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

Overall Quality of Life

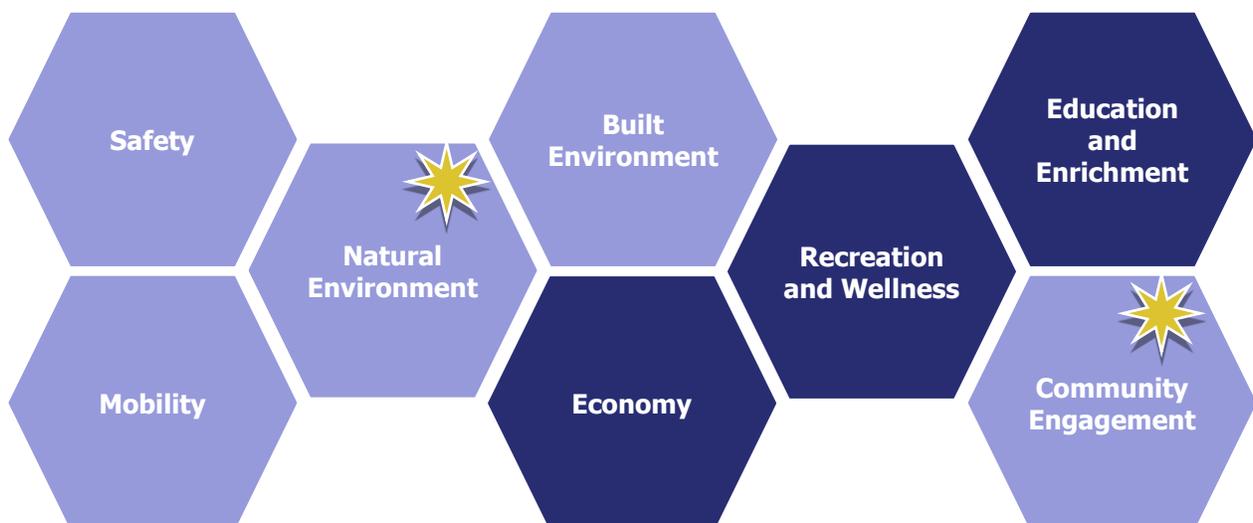


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents’ overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life (Natural Environment and Community Engagement) as the most central to what makes Ann Arbor their home and their ratings were similar to the benchmark. It is also noteworthy that Ann Arbor residents gave favorable ratings to the facets of Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment. Ratings for Safety, Mobility, and Built Environment were positive and similar to other communities. This overview of the key aspects of community quality provides a quick summary of where residents see exceptionally strong performance and where performance offers the greatest opportunity for improvement. Linking quality to importance offers community members and leaders a view into the characteristics of the community that matter most and that seem to be working best.

Details that support these findings are contained in the remainder of this Livability Report, starting with the ratings for Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation and ending with results for Ann Arbor’s unique questions.

Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark
- Benchmark comparison not available
- Most important to quality of life



Community Characteristics

What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Ann Arbor, more than 9 in 10 residents rated Ann Arbor as an “excellent” or “good” place to live. Respondents’ ratings of Ann Arbor as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Ann Arbor as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Ann Arbor and its overall appearance. Overall image, overall appearance and Ann Arbor as a place to raise children were all above the benchmark and rated highly by respondents. Ann Arbor as a place to retire and neighborhood as a place to live were rated similar to other communities across the nation.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight dimensions of Community Livability. Compared to the national benchmark, the facets of Natural Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement tended to be rated higher in Ann Arbor than in other communities. Safety ratings were similar to the benchmark, with about 9 in 10 respondents rating overall safety, safety in their neighborhood and safety in downtown/commercial areas positively. Ratings for Mobility varied, with paths and walking trails and ease of walking garnering higher ratings than public parking and traffic flow. Ratings for Economy were a particularly bright spot for Ann Arbor. A majority of respondents rated positively the overall economic health, the vibrancy of downtown/commercial areas, the quality of businesses and services, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, Ann Arbor as a place to visit and Ann Arbor as a place to work; all aspects of Economy were above the benchmark. Ratings for Education and Enrichment were all above the benchmark with roughly 9 in 10 respondents rating education and enrichment opportunities, religious or spiritual events, cultural/arts/music activities, adult education and K-12 education as “excellent” or “good.”



Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

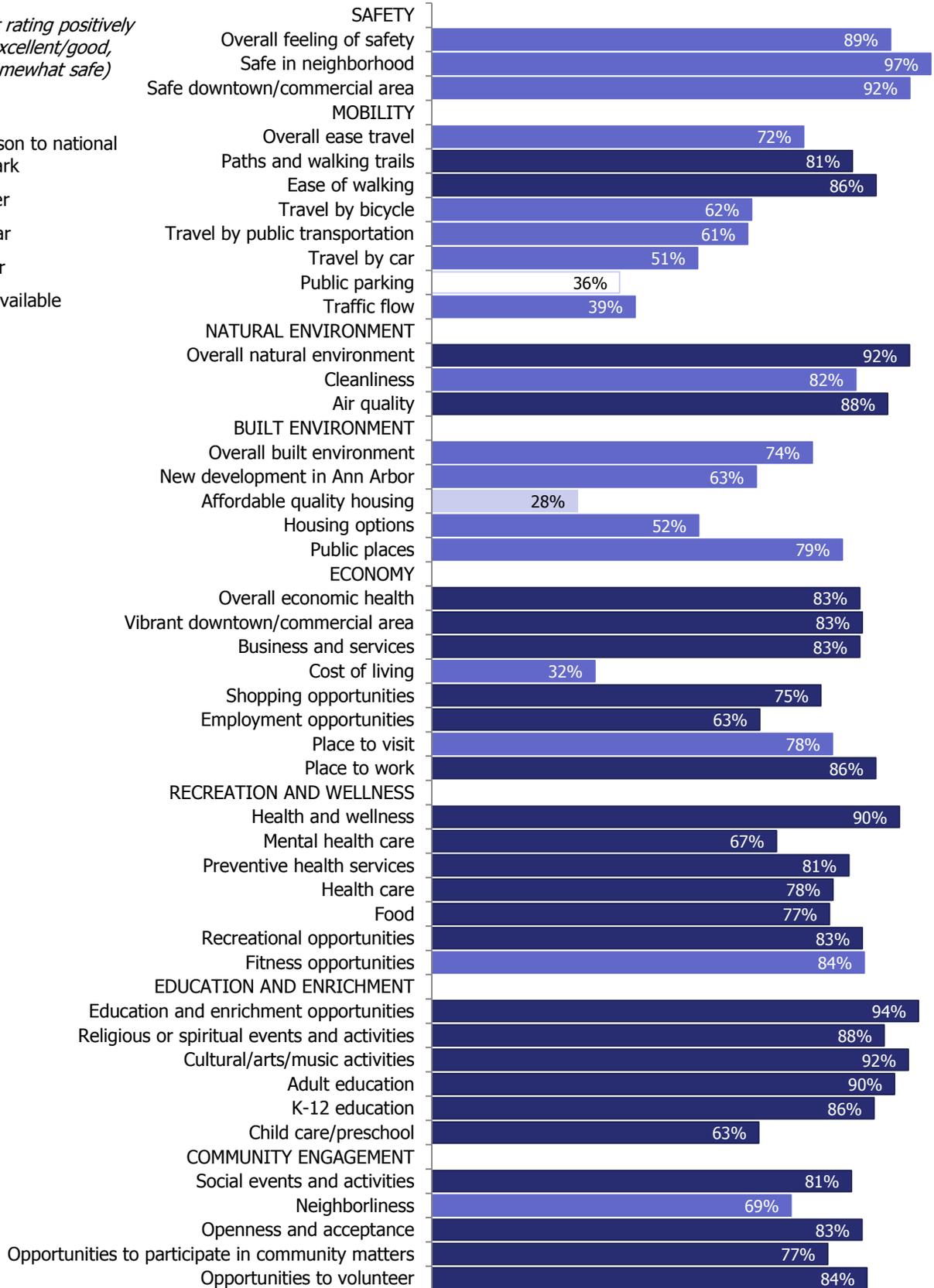


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

*Percent rating positively
(e.g., excellent/good,
very/somewhat safe)*

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



Governance

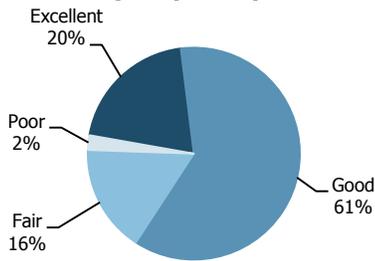
How well does the government of Ann Arbor meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Ann Arbor as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. The overall quality of City services was rated highly by 81% of respondents compared to just 49% of respondents rating the Federal Government highly. Ratings for both the services provided by Ann Arbor and the Federal Government were similar to national benchmark comparisons.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Ann Arbor’s leadership and governance. Three-quarters of residents rated Ann Arbor’s customer service highly. Six in 10 residents gave “excellent” or “good” ratings to the overall direction, welcoming of citizen involvement, confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Ann Arbor, being honest and treating all residents fairly. Most leadership and governance ratings were similar to the benchmark.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Ann Arbor. Out of the 36 services and amenities, nine were above the benchmark, 26 were similar to the benchmark and one was below the benchmark. Ratings for Recreation and Wellness were high, with almost nine in 10 respondents rating City parks, recreation programs, recreation centers and health services “excellent” or “good” and most aspects of Recreation and Wellness were rated higher than the benchmark. The majority of ratings for Mobility were favorably rated by at least half of respondents and tended to be similar to the benchmark; bus or transit services were rated higher than the benchmark. Ratings for Safety, Built Environment and Community Engagement were rated positively by a majority of respondents and were similar to the benchmark.

Overall Quality of City Services



Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

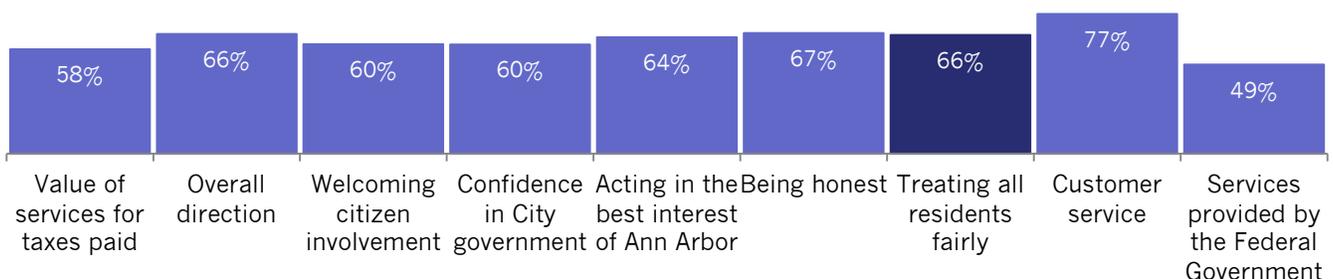
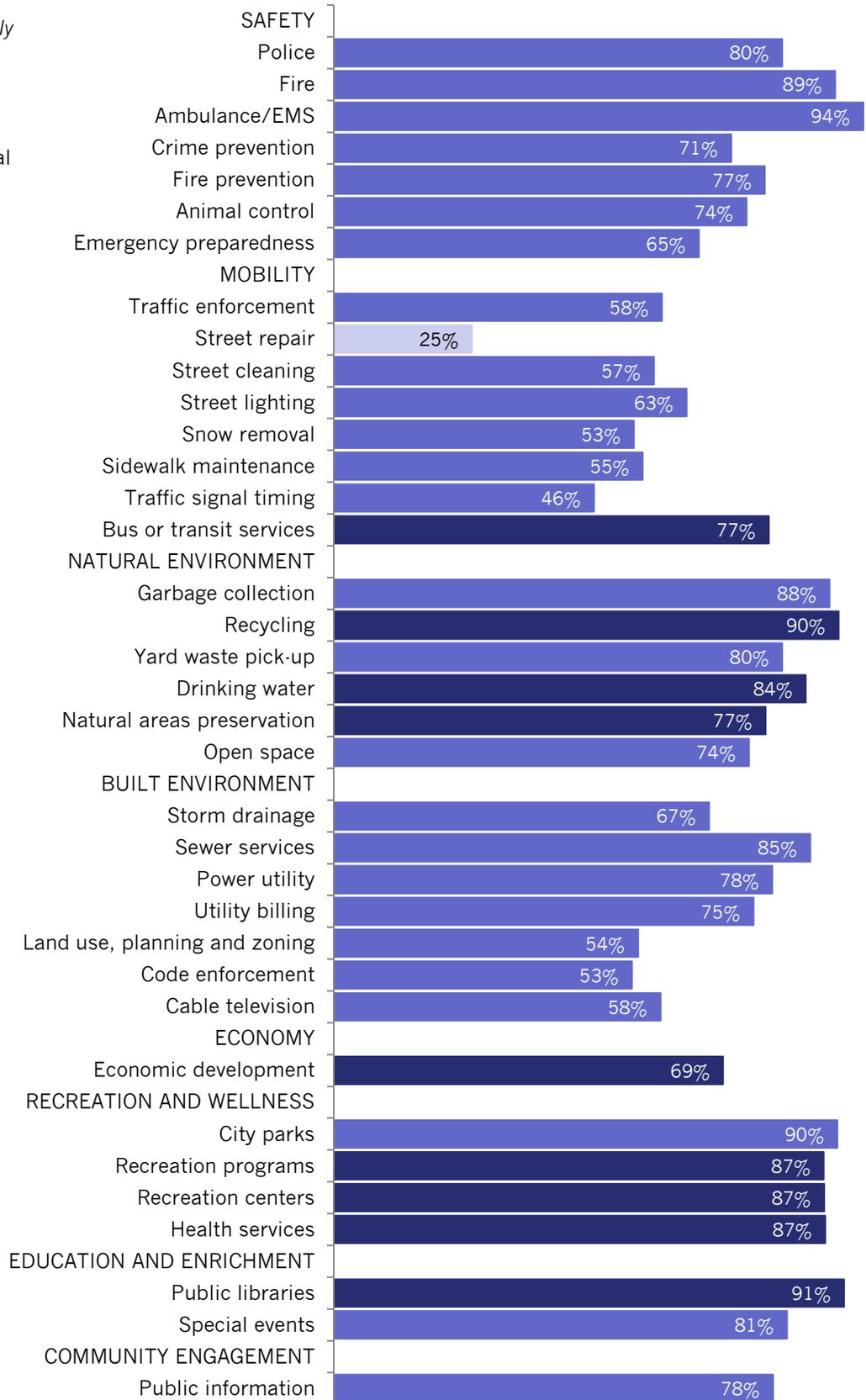


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

Percent rating positively
(e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

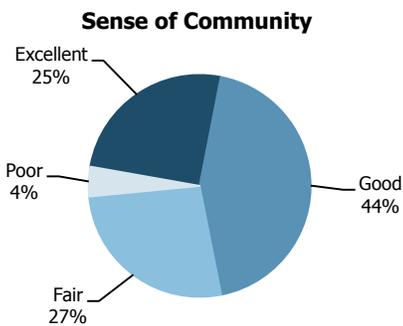


Participation

Are the residents of Ann Arbor connected to the community and each other?

An engaged community is a livable community. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community; a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. Over two-thirds of respondents rated sense of community positively. Almost all participants would recommend Ann Arbor to someone else and three-quarters of respondents plan on remaining in Ann Arbor for the next five years. All three of these aspects of Ann Arbor were similar to national benchmark comparisons.

The survey included 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. While most Participation ratings were similar to the benchmark, ratings for Mobility were higher than the benchmark (i.e., public transportation instead of driving and walked or biked instead of driving). Ratings for Natural Environment and Community Engagement were mixed; compared to other communities across the nation, more residents in Ann Arbor had recycled at home, but fewer had made efforts to conserve water, talked to neighbors, attended or watched a local meeting or read or watched the local news. While ratings for Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment were all similar to the benchmark, the majority of respondents rated the features within these facets favorably.



*Percent rating positively
(e.g., very/somewhat likely,
yes)*

Comparison to national benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

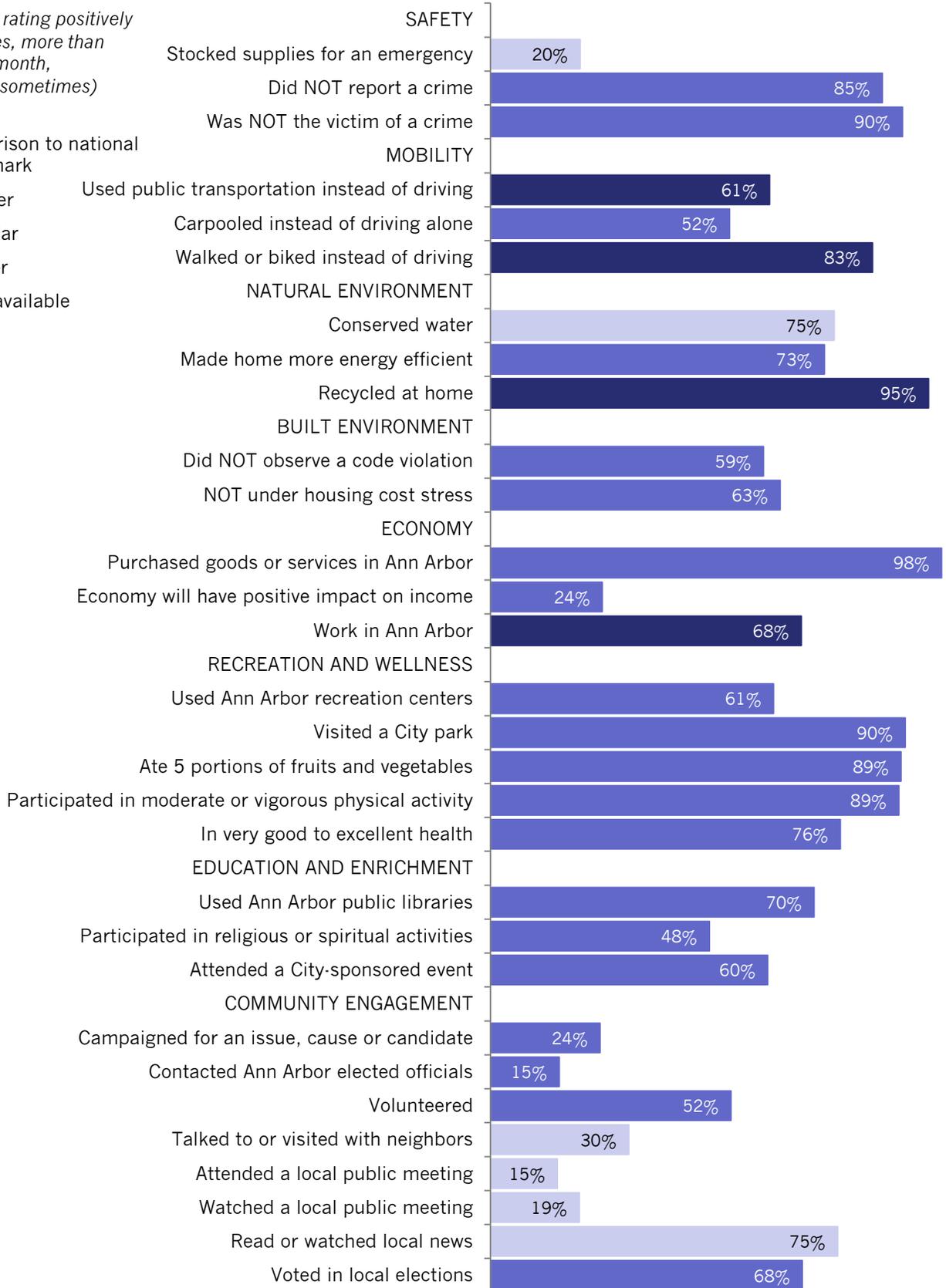


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

Percent rating positively
(e.g., yes, more than
once a month,
always/sometimes)

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

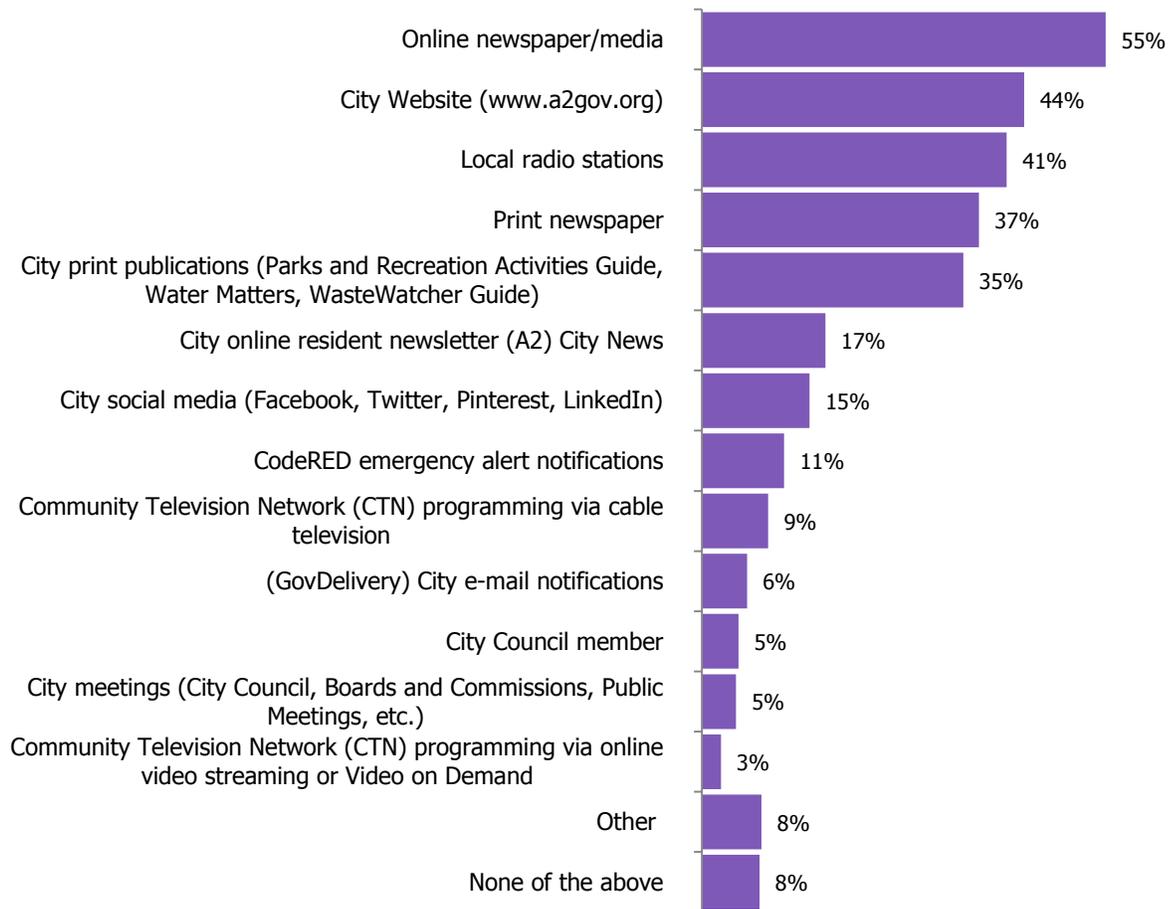


Special Topics

The City of Ann Arbor included two questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked what resources participants relied on for news and information regarding the City. The most frequently cited resource was online newspaper/media followed by the City Website, local radio stations, the print newspaper and City print publications. The City online resident newsletter (A2), social media and CodeRED notifications all were used by at least one in 10 respondents. City council members, City meetings and Community Television Network programming via online video streaming or Video on Demand were the least utilized resources for respondents.

Figure 4: Question 13a

Which resources do you rely on for news and information about the City of Ann Arbor? (Please check all that apply).

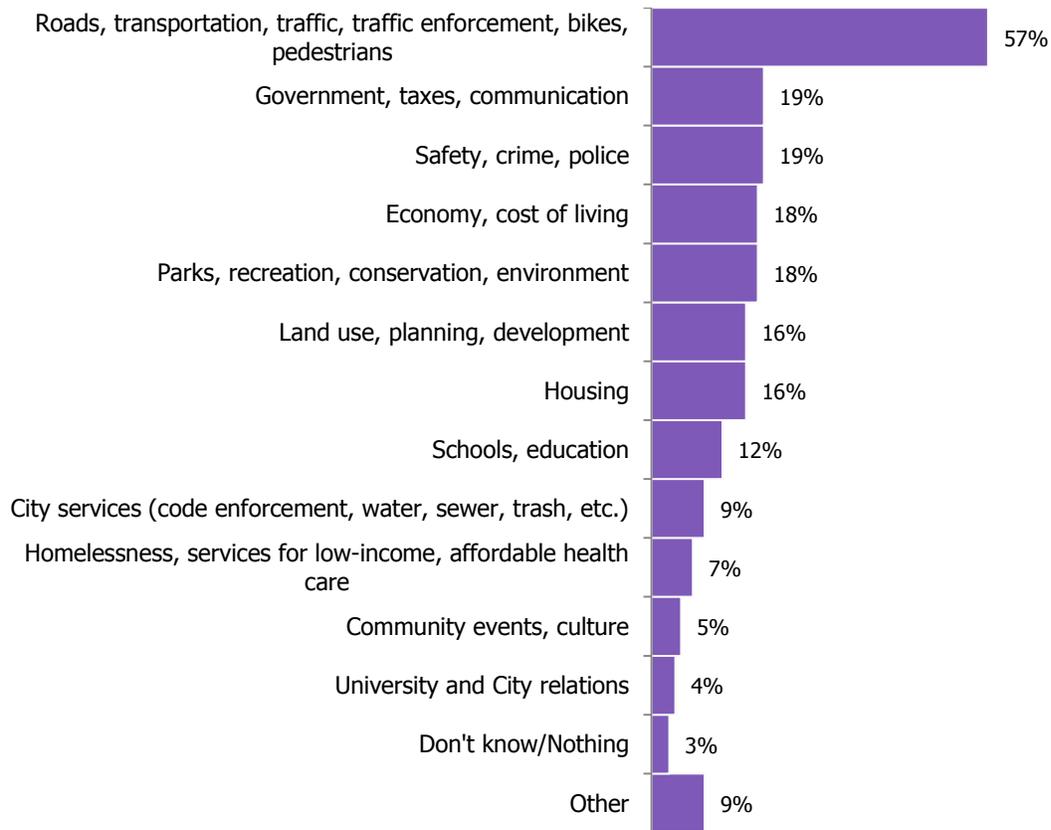


Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Respondents were asked to record in their own words what the top three priorities should be for City leaders. Of the 567 respondents who wrote in a response, most voiced concerns about roads and transportation, particularly road repair and traffic flow. Government, safety, economy and parks and recreation were other frequently cited issues. The complete set of write in responses can be found in the Open Ended Responses report, provided under separate cover.

Figure 5: Question 13b

What should be City leaders' top three priorities to maximize the quality of life in Ann Arbor?



Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Conclusions

Ann Arbor's Economy is a strong community feature.

Overall, most features of Ann Arbor's Economy are above the benchmark. About 8 in 10 respondents rated overall economic health, the vibrancy of downtown/commercial areas, businesses and services in Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor as a place to work highly. Economic development services were above the benchmark, as were shopping opportunities and employment opportunities.

The Natural Environment is appreciated by participants.

Participants gave high ratings for Ann Arbor's overall natural environment highly, with 92% rating it as "excellent" or "good," a rating that was higher than the benchmark. Eight in 10 respondents also gave high ratings to air quality and the cleanliness of Ann Arbor. When asked about government services related to Natural Environment, three-quarters of respondents gave these services positive ratings. In particular, recycling, drinking water and natural area preservation were all above the benchmark. Almost all participants recycled at home (95%), a rating that was above the benchmark.

Recreation and Wellness make Ann Arbor a strong community.

Across the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) ratings for Recreation and Wellness were overwhelmingly positive. Ninety percent of respondents rated their own health and wellness as "excellent" or "good," a rating that was higher than national benchmark comparisons. Ratings for health care, preventive health services and mental health care were also above the benchmark. About 8 in 10 respondents gave high ratings for fitness and recreation opportunities. With regards to Governance, ratings for health services, recreation centers, recreation programs and City parks were all rated positively by a strong majority of respondents. Participation in activities that enhance health was also high, with almost all respondents reporting having participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity, eating at least five portions of fruits and vegetables and visiting a City park.