

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Ann Arbor, MI
Community Livability Report

2018



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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.

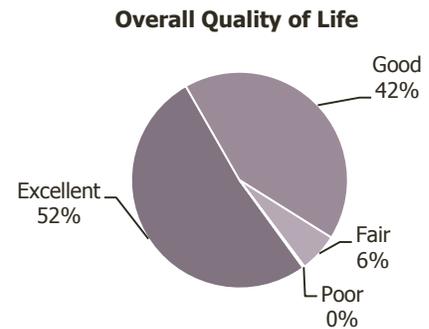
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 of 706 residents of the City of Ann Arbor. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Ann Arbor

Nearly all residents (94%) rated the quality of life in Ann Arbor as excellent or good. This rating was higher than the national benchmark (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).



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 the darkest shade; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest shade. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

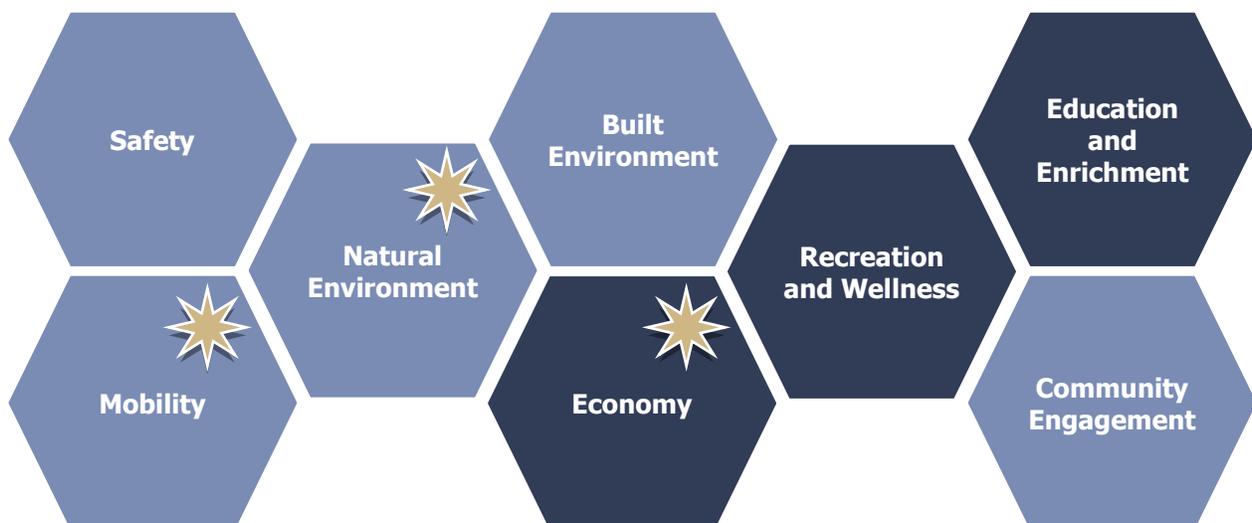
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2015, residents identified Economy as a priority for the Ann Arbor community in the coming two years; the Natural Environment and Mobility were also selected as top focus areas for the future. Evaluations for Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment eclipsed other communities across the nation, while ratings for the remaining facets were on par with the benchmarks. 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

- Most important



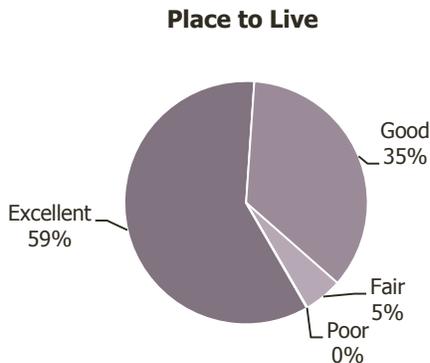
Community Characteristics

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. More than 9 in 10 rated the City of Ann Arbor as an excellent or good place to live. Survey respondents' reviews of Ann Arbor as a place to live outshined other communities across the nation.

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. Most Ann Arbor residents rated these five aspects as excellent or good and ratings for four aspects were higher than the national benchmark, while the fifth, neighborhood as a place to live, was similar to the national average. Participants' evaluations for Ann Arbor as a place to retire and as a place to raise children increased in 2018 (see the *Trends over Time* Report for more details).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, ratings for almost all aspects of Community Characteristics were positively reviewed by at least 6 in 10 participants and were typically higher than national benchmarks. Within the facet of Safety, all aspects were rated positively by at least 9 in 10 survey participants and assessments for overall feeling of safety in Ann Arbor exceeded national averages.



Respondents also rated all aspects of Mobility strongly; at least two-thirds favorably assessed ease of travel by public transit, availability of paths and walking trails and ease of walking and these ratings higher than their peers nationwide. Further, residents awarded higher scores in 2018 to the overall ease of travel in Ann Arbor, as well as paths and walking trails and ease of walking than in 2015.

At least 8 in 10 residents rated each aspect of Natural Environment positively, particularly highlighting overall natural environment as a strength. Survey respondents also had accolades for Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment, evaluating all aspects higher than the national benchmark.

Residents felt that Economy was a strength as well, with all but one aspect receiving ratings higher than the national benchmark; further, reviews for employment opportunities and business and service establishments exceeded 2015 levels. Aspects of affordability (cost of living and availability of affordable housing) tended to fall below national averages and these ratings, as well as the variety of housing options, decreased since the last survey administration.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



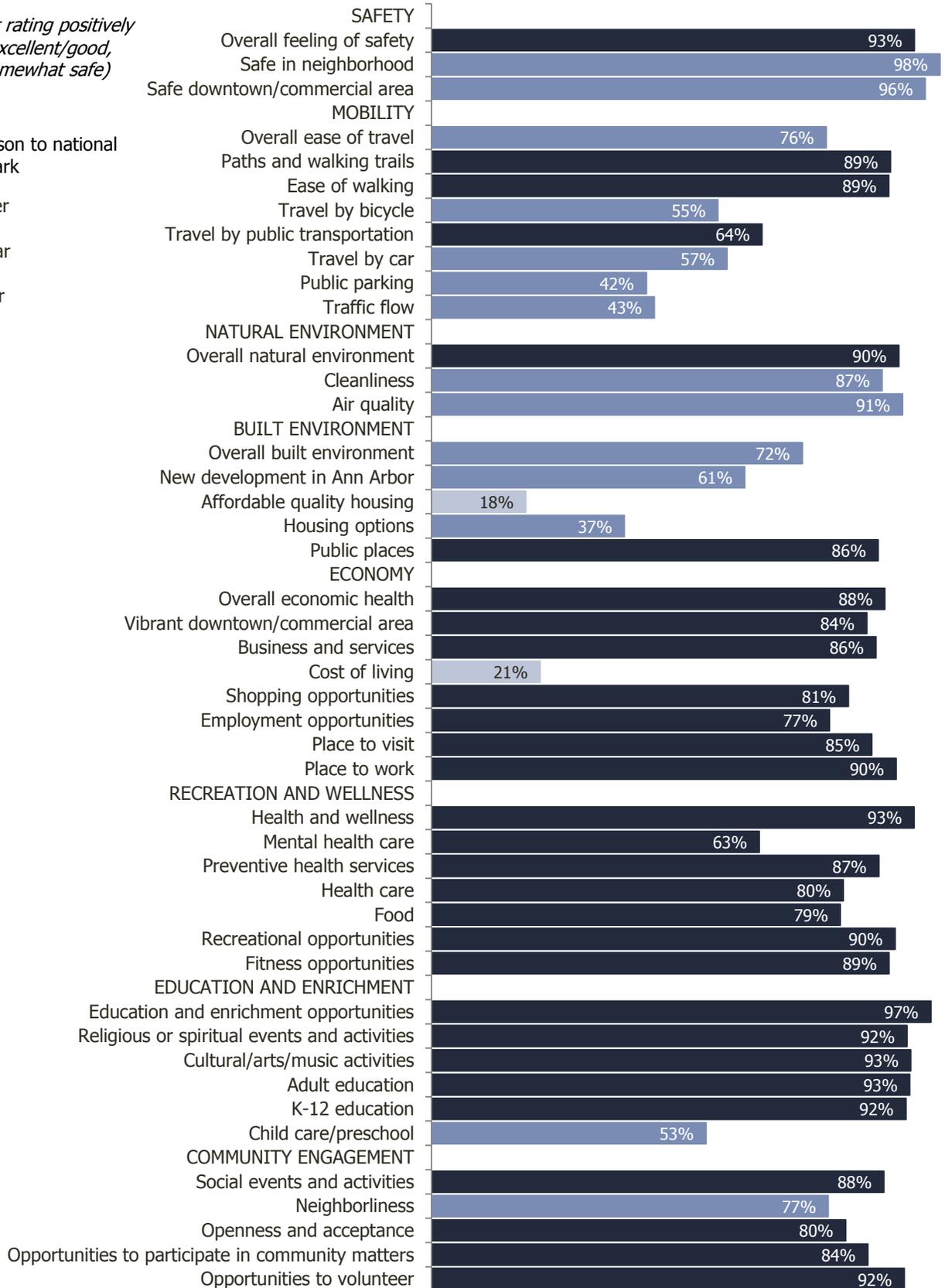
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

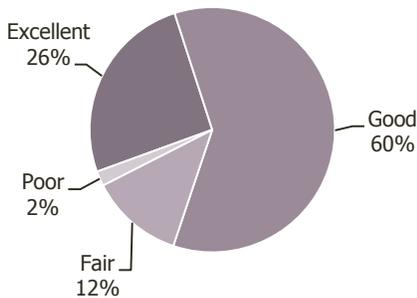
How well does the government of Ann Arbor meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Ann Arbor as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. More than 8 in 10 survey respondents gave excellent or good marks to the overall services provided by the City of Ann Arbor. These ratings, as well as those given to the Federal Government, were similar to benchmark communities (though the rating for Federal Government was lower in 2018 than in 2015).

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Ann Arbor’s leadership and governance. At least 6 in 10 community members assigned positive ratings to all aspects of government leadership and over 8 in 10 thought highly of the customer services provided by City employees, a rating that was higher in 2018 than in 2015. Moreover, respondents’ gave more positive ratings to the City welcoming citizen involvement compared to 2015.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Ann Arbor. In general, at least 6 in 10 residents rated these services and amenities as excellent or good and were either similar to or higher than ratings given in other communities across the nation; only the evaluation for street repair was lower than the national average. Services that stood out with above-average ratings included bus or transit services, drinking water, natural areas preservation and open space, with at least three-quarters awarding high marks to each. All respondents’ assessments of services within Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement eclipsed peer communities. Further, individuals’ gave higher reviews to recreation programs and special events in 2018 than in 2015.

Overall Quality of City Services

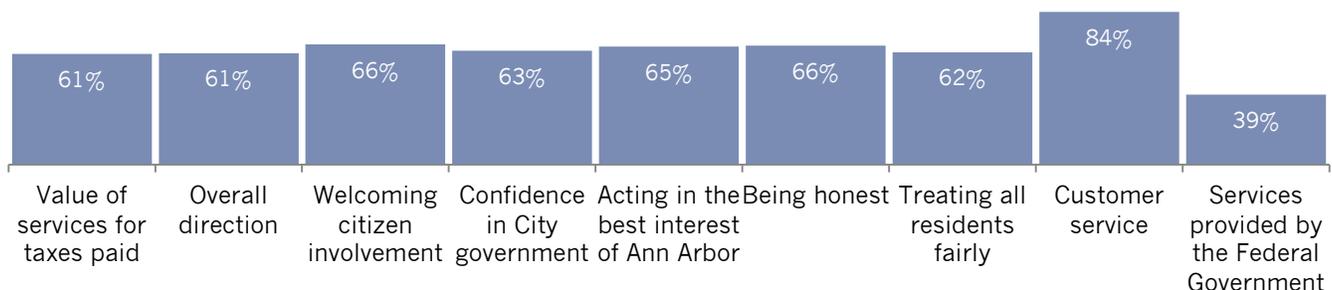


Residents felt that Built Environment services generally were on par with other parts of the country, except code enforcement, which was higher than average and increased in 2018. Trends for Safety services were a bit mixed, with ratings for crime prevention increasing to the highest levels seen since the City started gathering resident feedback in 2008, but evaluations for emergency preparedness decreasing to levels last seen in 2013.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



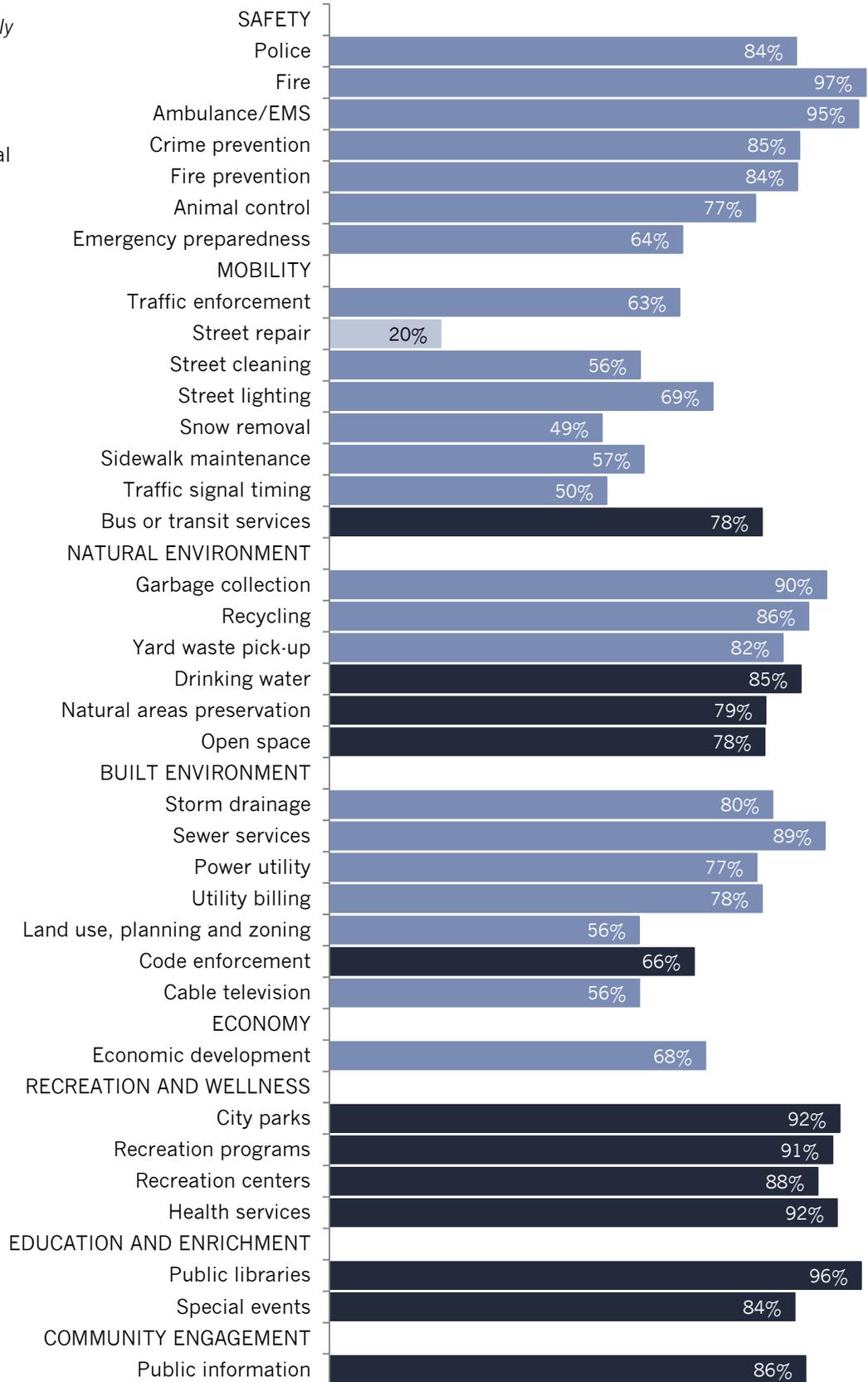
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

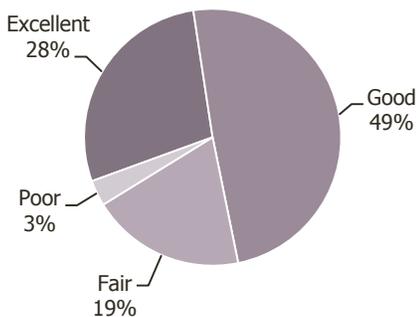
Are the residents of Ann Arbor connected to the community and each other?

An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. 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. Higher than other municipalities across the U.S., about three-quarters of residents gave excellent or good reviews to the sense of community in Ann Arbor. At least 9 in 10 survey participants said they would recommend Ann Arbor to someone who asked and 8 in 10 reported that they planned to remain in the community for the next five years.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates within Ann Arbor varied widely and tended to be commensurate with peer municipalities.

Over 9 in 10 respondents reported they had recycled at home, purchased goods or services in the community and participated in healthy behaviors (visiting parks and maintaining healthy diet and exercise regimens) and a similar proportion reported they had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey. Residents demonstrated a dedication to alternative modes of transportation, as at least half indicated they had used public transit (a level that increased since 2015), carpooled, walked or biked instead of driving and each of these rates outpaced levels seen nationwide.

Sense of Community



Ann Arbor residents also reported elevated levels of using public libraries and attending City-sponsored events and were particularly involved in their community; participation rates for campaigning, volunteering and participating in clubs were higher than national averages. Further, more survey respondents had campaigned, attended City events and voted in local elections in 2018 than in 2015.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



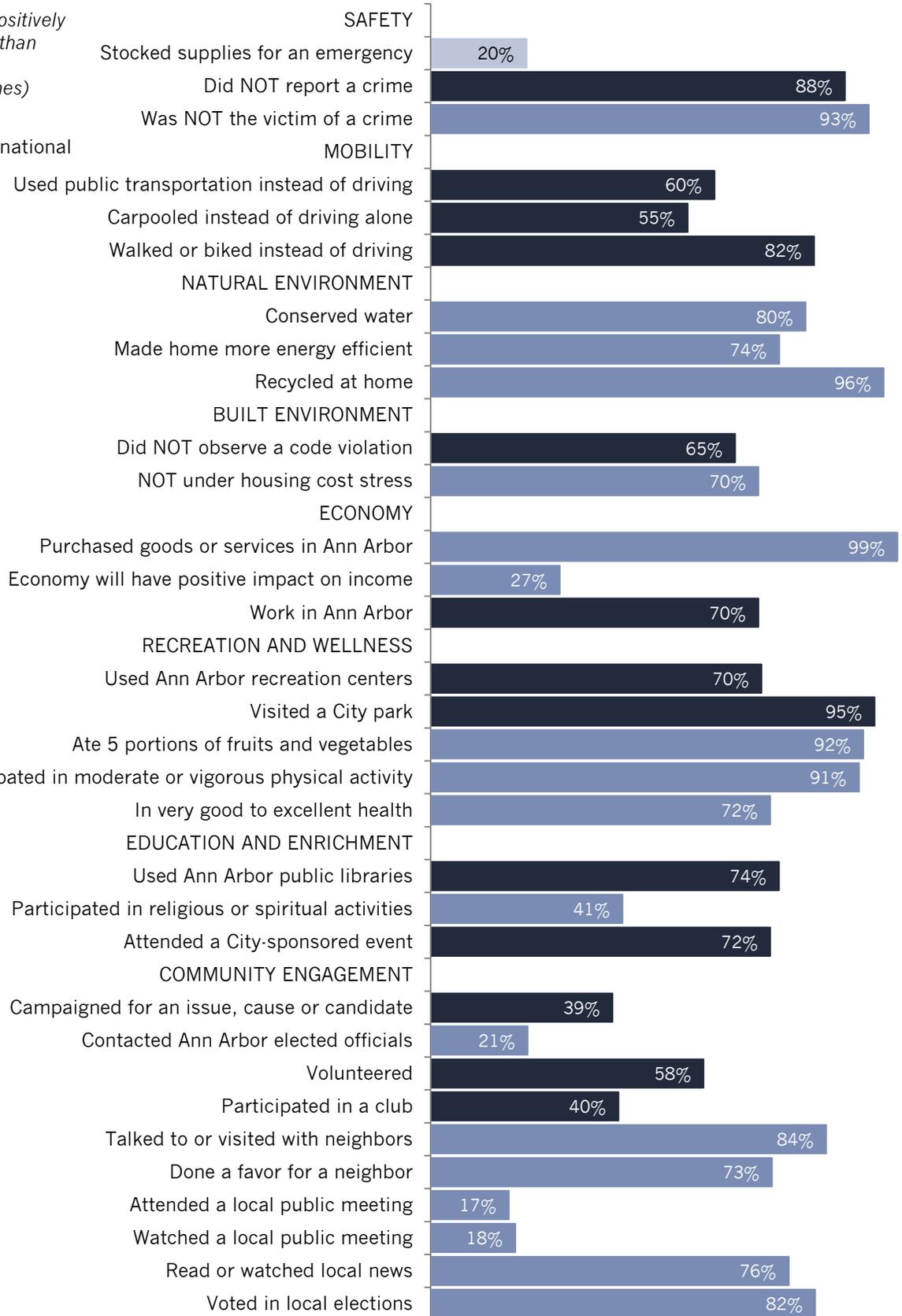
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



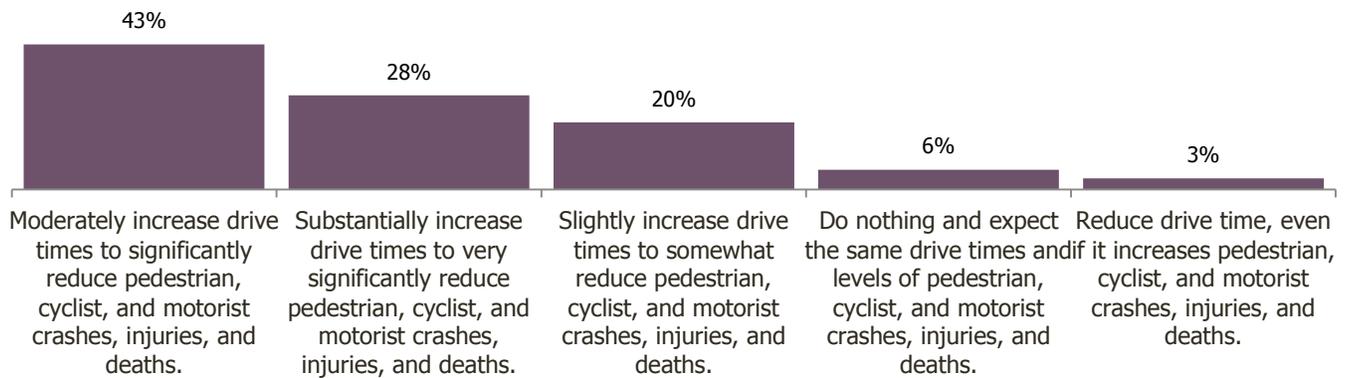
Special Topics

The City of Ann Arbor included three questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought feedback regarding support for improvements to pedestrian safety and to gauge resident interactions with the Ann Arbor Police Department.

Residents were asked to indicate their support for several possible options designed to reduce pedestrian, cyclist and motorist crashes, injuries and deaths and were generally in favor of taking measures to protect their fellow citizens. Close to 4 in 10 residents supported introducing safety measures that would moderately increase drive times (for example, making a 10 minute drive a 13 minute trip) to significantly reduce injuries and about one-quarter would agree to substantially increase drive times to very significantly decrease impacts on pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Only 6% of respondents stated they would advise the City to do nothing and even fewer would decrease drive times if it meant that injuries and deaths would increase.

Figure 4: Support for Pedestrian Safety Improvements

The City of Ann Arbor is considering introducing new road designs that have been shown in other cities to reduce pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crashes, injuries and deaths. For example, roundabouts have reduced injuries for all users while decreasing motorist drive times (by creating more steady traffic flow). Other road redesign options reduce injuries but have different effects on motorist drive times. Which of the following statements is closest to the advice you would like to give the City as they make these decisions?



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The City also wanted to understand how many residents had contact with the police department and their impressions of the officer's conduct. Only about one-quarter of survey participants had interacted with a member of the police department in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of those who did, at least 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good assessments to the officer's professionalism and fairness, and felt they were treated in a respectful manner. At least 7 in 10 respondents were also pleased with the police officer's responsiveness to questions or needs, resolutions of concerns and to their overall impression of the police department staff member. One in ten or fewer gave poor marks to each aspect of the staff member's conduct.

Figure 5: Contact with Police Department

Have you had contact with a member of the City of Ann Arbor police department within the last 12 months?

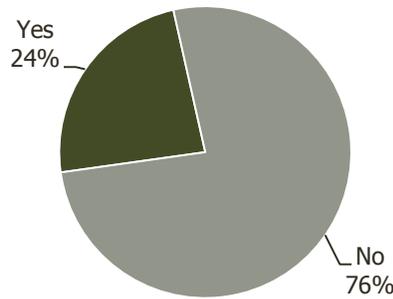
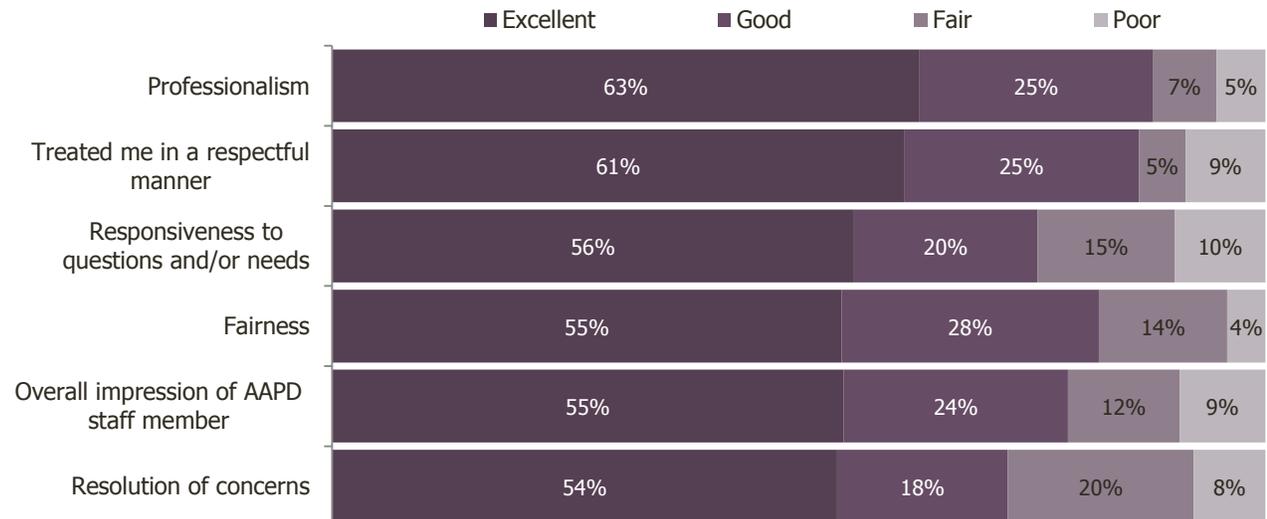


Figure 6: Police Officer Conduct

Based on your most recent contact with a member of the City of Ann Arbor Police Department, please rate each of the following aspects of the employee with whom you personally had contact:



This question only asked of residents who had contact with the Police Department in the previous 12 months.

Conclusions

Ann Arbor is a desirable place to live, especially for families.

Nearly all residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good in Ann Arbor and about 8 in 10 reported they are likely to remain in the community for the next five years. Additionally, more than 9 in 10 of respondents awarded high marks to the City as a place to live and would be likely to recommend the community to others. Almost all survey participants (97%) rated Ann Arbor as an excellent or good place to raise children, which outshined national comparisons.

Residents feel safe in general, as well as in their neighborhoods and in the downtown/commercial area. Ratings for Safety-related services were strong and at least 8 in 10 residents indicated they had not reported a crime or been the victim of a crime. Further, respondents who had contact with a member of the Ann Arbor police department in the 12 months prior to the survey felt positively about their interaction, with at least three-quarters rating the various aspects related to the conduct of that individual as excellent or good.

The Economy in Ann Arbor is an asset and a priority.

As in previous years, Ann Arbor residents identified Economy as one of the top community focus areas for the coming two years. Ratings for Economy-related aspects were exceptionally strong and tended to be higher or much higher than those in peer communities. In 2018, survey respondents gave higher marks to employment opportunities and business and service establishments than in 2015. Further, residents' ratings for the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area, employment opportunities and the City as a place to work were among the top ten in the nation. Moreover, about 7 in 10 reported they worked in Ann Arbor, which was also higher than peer averages. Conversely, as with many attractive communities, the affordability of Ann Arbor was seen as an issue. The cost of living and availability of affordable housing were rated favorably by less than one-fourth of residents. These ratings lagged behind other communities across the nation and decreased since 2015.

Residents are engaged in their community.

Residents in Ann Arbor frequently exhibited above-average rates of participation within their community, especially in the areas of Education and Enrichment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement. Residents thought highly of the overall natural environment, which was one of the three most important community focus areas identified by residents. They also praised services, including drinking water, natural areas preservation and open space (ratings for which increased since 2015).

A majority of residents gave exceptional scores to all aspects and services related to Recreation and Wellness that outshined other communities across the U.S. About 7 in 10 respondents also reported they used recreation centers and 95% had visited a City park, which were higher than national averages. Similar proportions of survey participants maintained healthy diets and exercise regimens and these levels were on par with those seen elsewhere.

Ann Arbor residents were also pleased with their opportunities to be involved in the community and participated with vigor. Eight in ten or more awarded high marks to social events, the openness and acceptance of the community toward diverse people and opportunities to participate in community matters (which were higher in 2018) and to volunteer; all of which outdid comparisons to municipalities elsewhere. Respondents felt the City was welcoming to citizen involvement to the highest degree since 2007. Therefore, it's not surprising that residents participated in campaigns, volunteering and clubs at higher than national levels.

Ease of Mobility contributes to quality of life in Ann Arbor.

Across the board, Mobility-related ratings in Ann Arbor were high and frequently exceeded ratings in comparison communities. Residents were particularly satisfied with alternate modes of transportation and demonstrated this by using public transit and carpooling, walking or biking instead of driving at higher rates than other communities across the nation. In 2018, more respondents were appreciative of the overall ease of travel and ease of walking (which eclipsed ratings awarded nationwide). Bus or transit services were also rated higher in Ann Arbor than elsewhere. Staying connected via paths and walking trails also was appreciated by residents, with nearly 9 in 10 awarding high marks and providing ratings higher than peers in other communities across the country. Most residents indicated they would increase their driving times to reduce pedestrian, cyclist and motorist crashes, injuries and deaths, with about one-quarter reporting they would substantially increase their driving time to prevent incidents and another 4 in 10 supporting moderately increases to their drive times to cut down on pedestrian safety issues. However, reviews for street repair were lower than national averages. Therefore, this area might be a good place to focus improvements to maintain the high standards of Mobility in Ann Arbor.