

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Commerce City, CO

Community Livability Report

2017



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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Commerce City. 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 548 residents of the Commerce City. 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 Commerce City

About half of residents rated the quality of life in Commerce City as excellent or good. This rating was lower than national and custom comparisons (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.

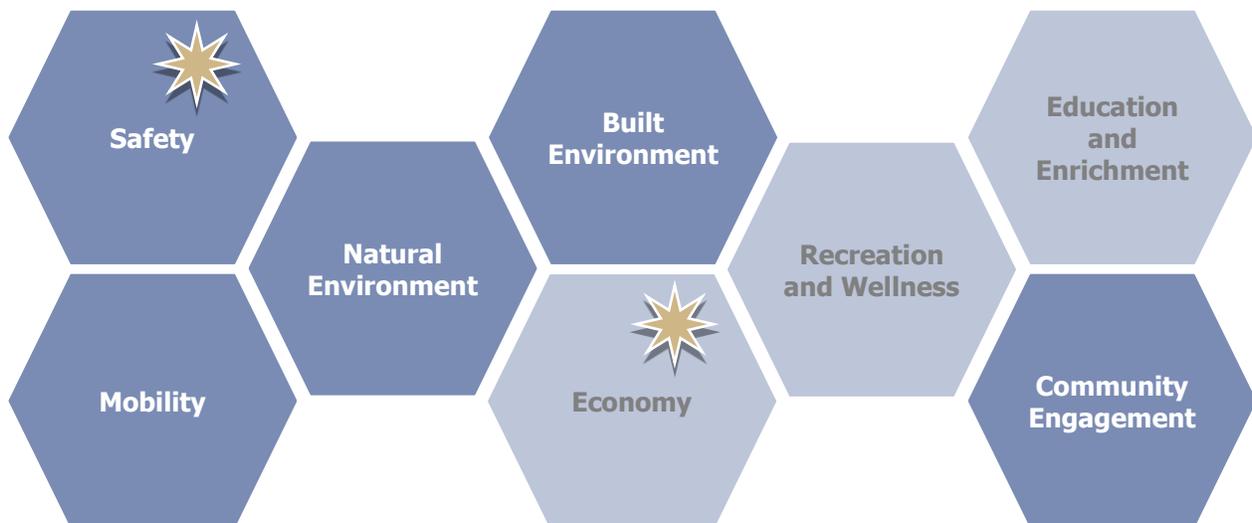
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Commerce City community in the coming two years. Ratings for Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment were lower than ratings seen elsewhere, but all other facets were similar to the national benchmark. 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 Commerce City’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. In the case of Commerce City, 60% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Commerce City as a place to live were lower than ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Commerce City as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Commerce City and its overall appearance. These aspects tended to lag behind comparisons throughout the country and Colorado, with about half or less of respondents rating each as excellent or good. However, about 7 in 10 participants thought positively of their neighborhoods, similar to national and peer communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, residents rated Commerce City characteristics as similar to or below the benchmark. About 8 in 10 residents felt very or somewhat safe in their neighborhood and at least half awarded high scores to ease of travel by car, public parking and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds; these ratings were similar to benchmark comparisons.

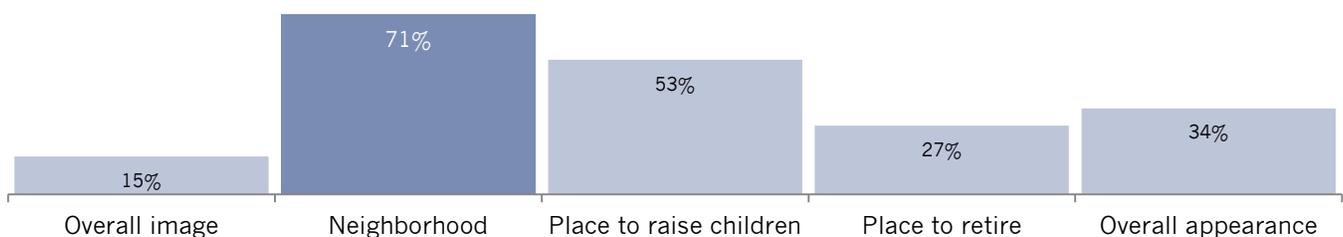
Additionally, most aspects of Built Environment were similar to national and peer communities, including new development, availability of affordable quality housing and variety of housing options.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



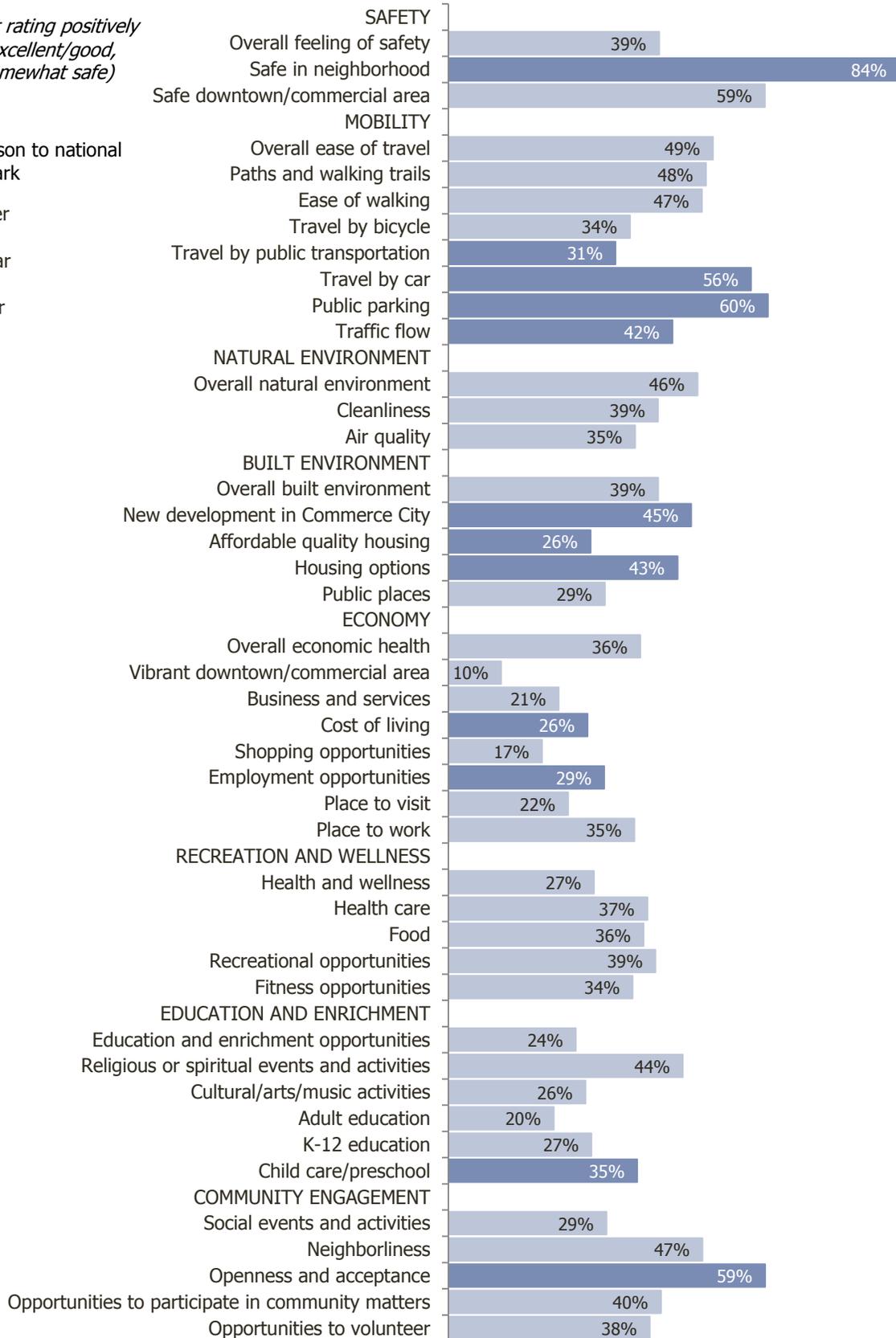
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

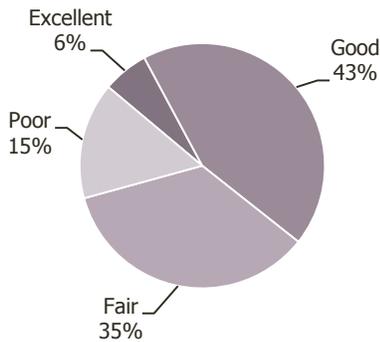
How well does the government of Commerce City meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Commerce City as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About half of residents rated the overall quality of services provided by Commerce City as excellent or good, which was lower than national and peer benchmark comparisons. In contrast, about two in five gave high marks to services provided by the Federal Government, which was similar to ratings across the country.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Commerce City’s leadership and governance. At least two in five residents rated most of these aspects as excellent or good. About 6 in 10 respondents saw overall customer service provided by Commerce City employees as good or excellent. Ratings for each of these aspects, with the exception of value of services for taxes paid, were similar to other communities nationwide.

Respondents evaluated over 25 individual services and amenities available in Commerce City. On the whole, ratings for individual services provided by the City were similar to the benchmark. Within Recreation and Wellness, three services were similar to the national benchmark, with the exception of health services, while health services rated was lower. Three-quarters of residents praised garbage collection and recycling, similar to national and Colorado peer communities.

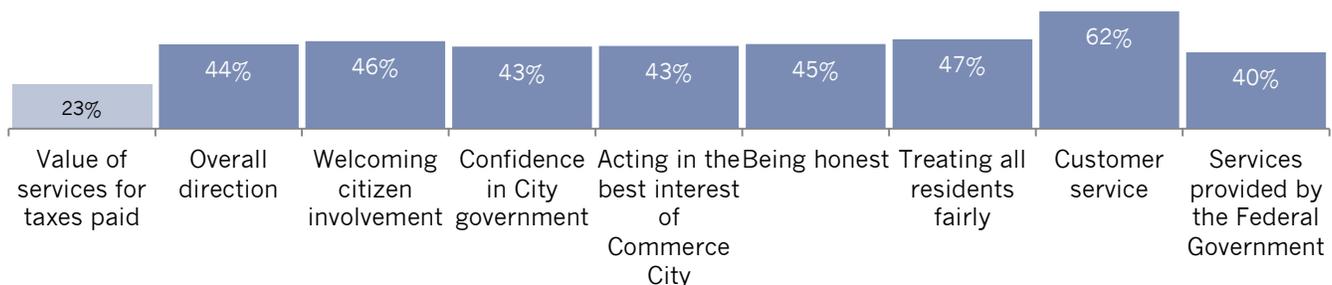
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



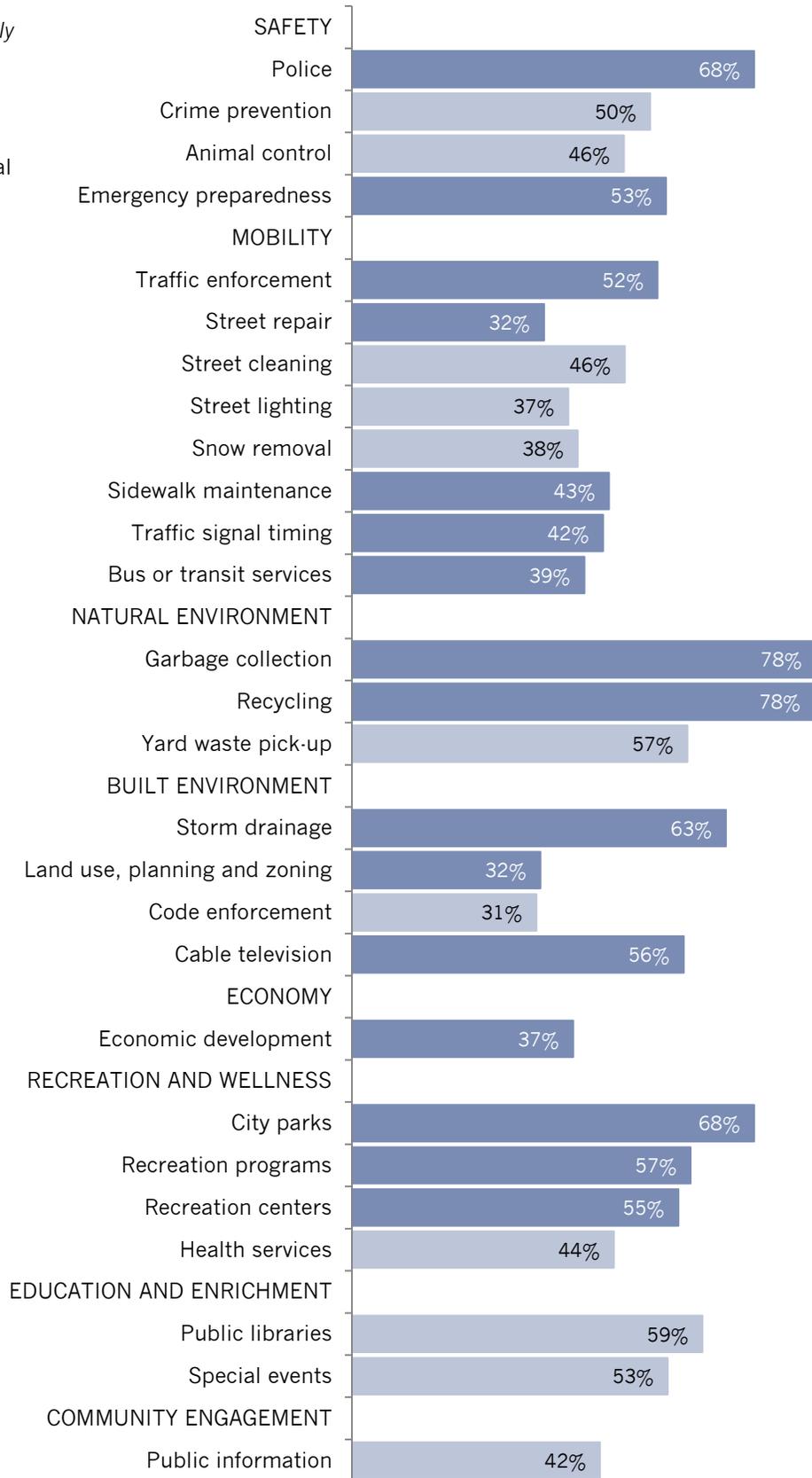
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



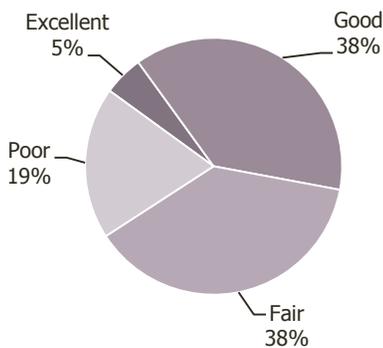
Participation

Are the residents of Commerce City 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. About two in five Commerce City residents felt a strong sense of community, which was lower than observed in other communities. Roughly two-thirds of respondents would recommend living in the city to someone who asked or planned to remain in Commerce City for the next five years (both lower than the benchmarks), while less than half had contacted Commerce City employees in the 12 months prior to the survey (similar to the benchmarks).

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Broadly, rates of Participation tended to be similar to those reported in communities elsewhere. Residents participated most in activities related to the Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement; at least 8 in 10 indicated they had recycled, visited a City park, reading and watching local news and voting in local elections. Commerce City respondents were also neighborly, often visiting with or doing favors for each other. Respondents were less likely to have participated in Education and Enrichment activities, including using public libraries, participating in religious or spiritual activities and attending City-sponsored events than residents across the nation and Colorado.

Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



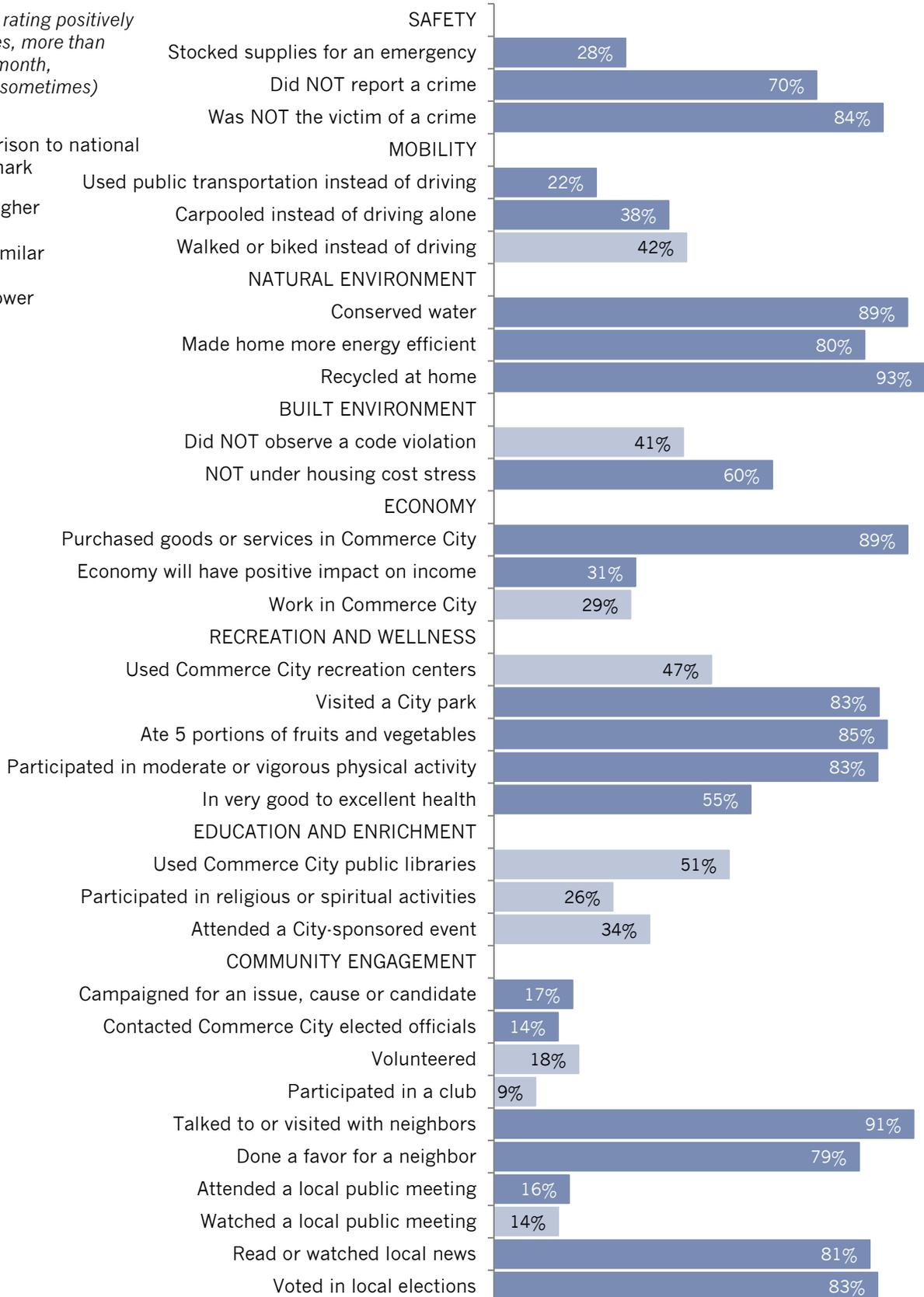
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

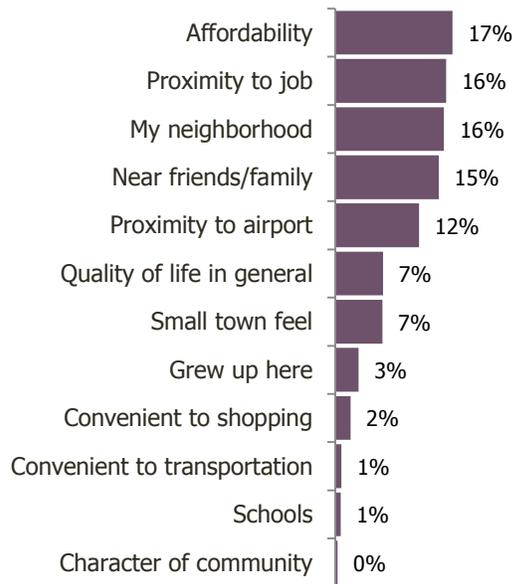


Special Topics

The City of Commerce City included six questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought to understand more about residents' reasons for living in the City, perceptions of City employees, severity of various problems, sources of information about the community and familiarity with several City services.

Survey participants were asked to indicate what aspect of living in Commerce City they enjoy most. Residents cited affordability, their neighborhoods and proximity to their jobs, family/friends and the airport as their top reasons for living in the community. The least cited reasons were convenience to transportation, schools or the character of the community.

Figure 4: Reasons to Live in Commerce City
What one thing do you like most about living in Commerce City?



The next set of questions asked participants if they had contact with a City of Commerce City employee in the last 12 months, and if so, what was their impression of that employee (see Figure 6 on the following page). Approximately half of residents had contacted a City employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of these respondents, about 7 in 10 or more gave excellent or good scores to all aspects of the encounter, including their overall impression of the Commerce City employee.

Figure 5: Contact with City Employees
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Commerce City within the last 12 months (including police, receptionists, planners or any others)?

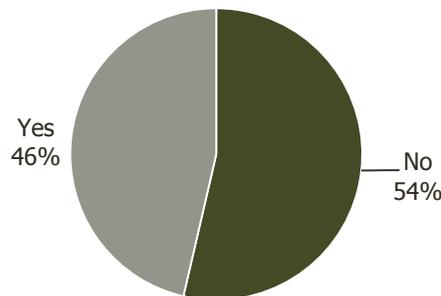
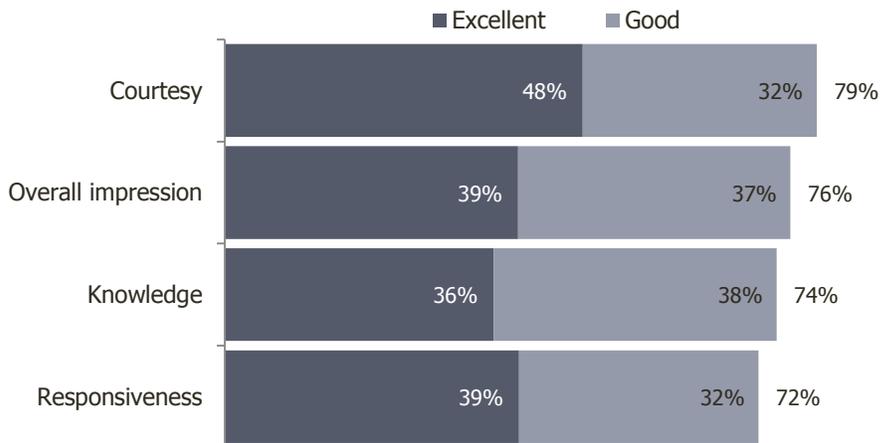


Figure 6: Performance of City Employees

What was your impression of the employee(s) of the City of Commerce City in your most recent contact?

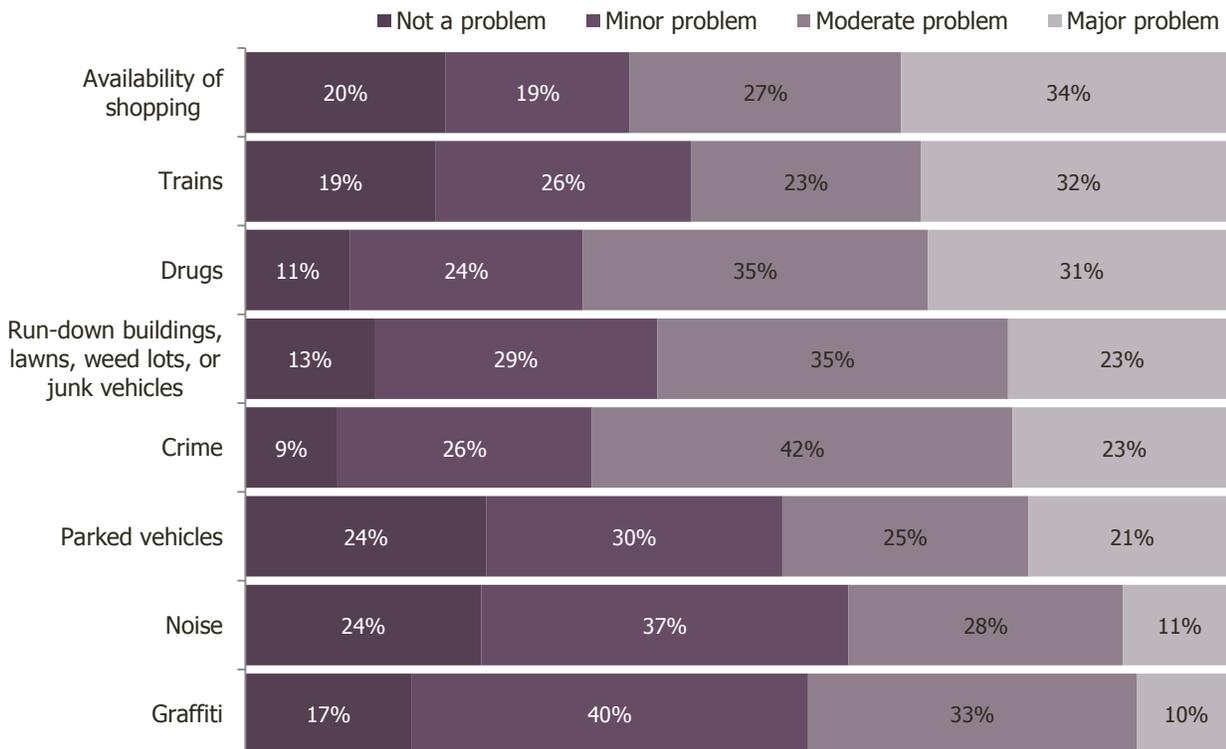


This question was only answered by respondents who indicated they had contact the City employee in the past 12 months.

In response to a list of a series of potential problems in Commerce City, respondents felt availability of shopping, trains and drugs were the biggest problems in Commerce City, with at least half of residents indicating these were major or moderate problems in the community. Participants were the least concerned with graffiti and noise, as about 1 in 10 thought each was a major problem.

Figure 7: Degree of Problems in Commerce City

To what degree, if at all, are the following problems in Commerce City:

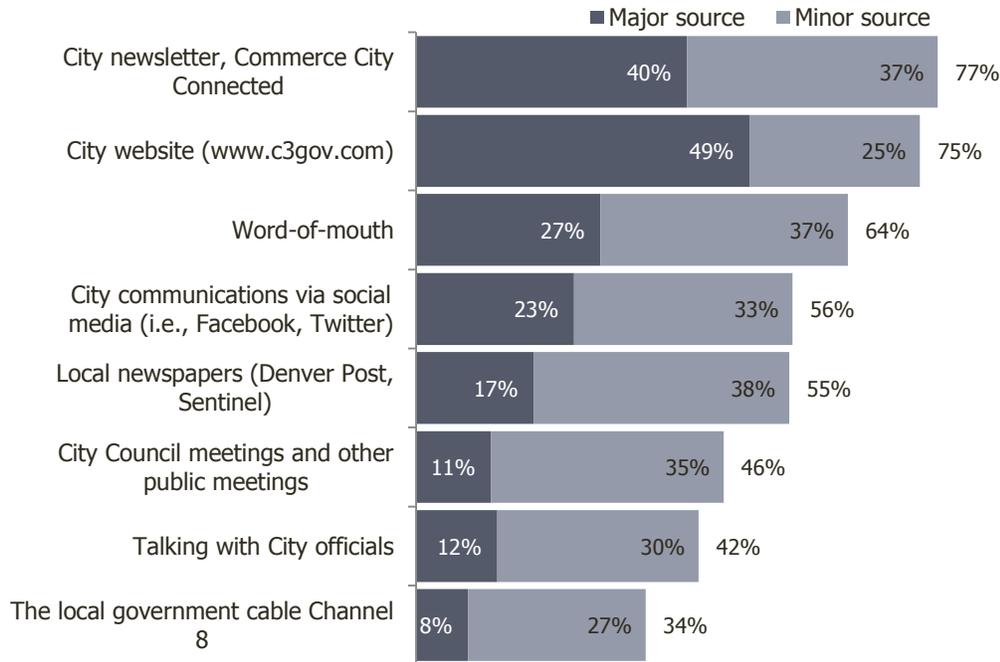


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Respondents in Commerce City indicated their level of reliance on several sources of information about the City; about three-quarters reported they used the City newsletter and the City website as sources of information. Only about one-third had utilized the local government cable channel (Channel 8).

Figure 8: Sources of Information

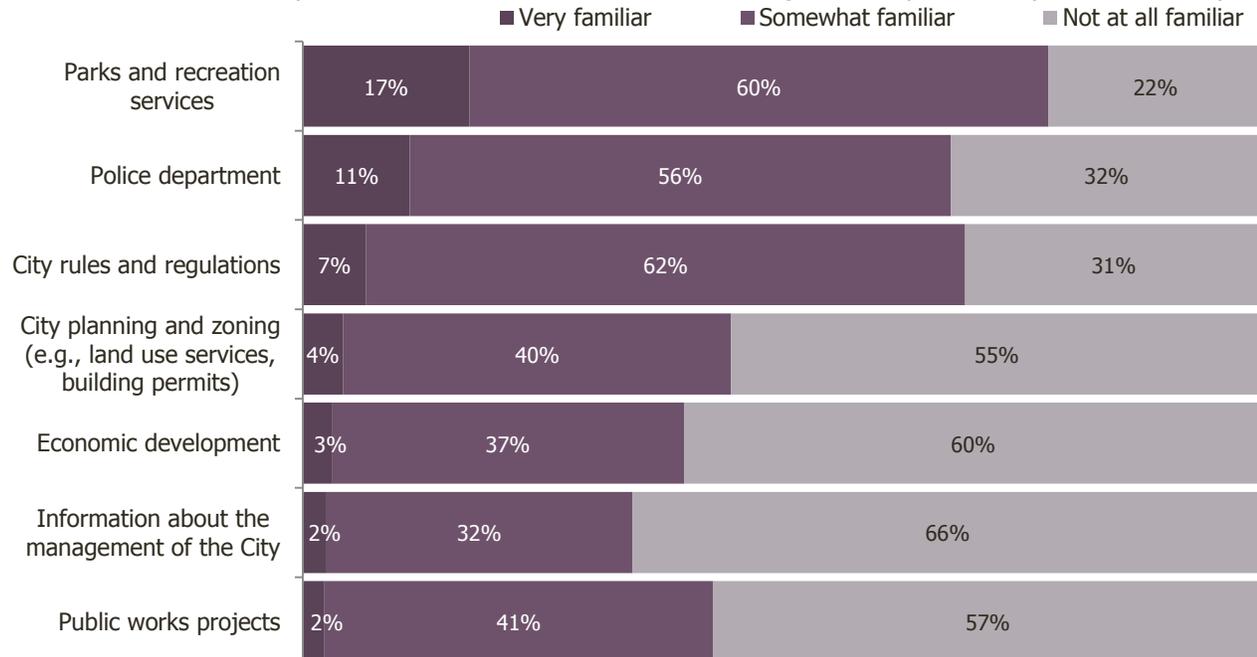
Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following for obtaining information about the City government and its activities, events and services?



Finally, the City inquired about residents' familiarity with a number of City services. Less than 2 in 10 were very familiar with parks and recreation services. Participants were least familiar with information about the City and economic development, with at least 60% reporting they were not at all familiar.

Figure 9: Familiarity with City Services

Please rate how familiar you are, if at all, with each of the following services provided by Commerce City:



Conclusions

Safety is an important focus area in Commerce City.

Safety was identified as one of the top priorities for the City to focus on in the coming two years. Evaluations of the various features of Safety tended to be mixed when compared to other communities across the country and Colorado. While most respondents felt safe in their neighborhoods during the day, feelings of safety in the downtown/commercial area and overall were lower in Commerce City than in peer communities. The police department and emergency preparedness were given positive reviews by a majority of residents, but crime prevention and animal control lagged in the City compared to Colorado and national jurisdictions. When asked about potential problems in the community, about two-thirds indicated that crime was a major or moderate problem.

Affordability of Commerce City is key and residents value a healthy economy.

Survey participants also highlighted the Economy as an area of focus for the future. Residents cited affordability most frequently among reasons for living in the community. Similar to peer and national comparison communities, about one-quarter of residents gave high marks to the cost of living and availability of affordable quality housing and two in five were pleased with the variety of housing options in Commerce City. Additionally, about 6 in 10 respondents indicated they were not under housing cost stress. Other Economy-related characteristics tended to be less positive. While close to 3 in 10 participants awarded positive ratings to employment opportunities and economic development, which were similar to those seen elsewhere, residents' reviews for overall economic health, the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area, business and service establishments, shopping opportunities and the City as a place to visit and work were scored favorably by one-third or less and were lower than comparison communities. Respondents also reported lower than average rates of working within the community. About 4 in 10 residents indicated they were very or somewhat familiar with economic development services offered by Commerce City. Since respondents reported that they relied most upon the City newsletter and website as sources of information about the City, communicating about these services via these sources could help bolster residents' awareness and feelings about Economy-related aspects.

Residents are pleased with Recreation services and may want more attention on Wellness.

Overall, ratings for aspects related to topics of Recreation tended to be on par with national comparison communities; at least half of respondents felt positively with City parks, recreation program and centers. Moreover, over half of residents indicated they were in excellent or very good health and at least 8 in 10 reported they ate five portions of fruits and vegetables and participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity regularly and these were similar to rates seen nationally and statewide. Conversely, evaluations of health and wellness characteristics and services tended to lag behind averages, including availability of affordable quality health care and food, overall health and wellness opportunities and health care.