

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Johnson City, TN
Community Livability Report

2018



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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Johnson 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.

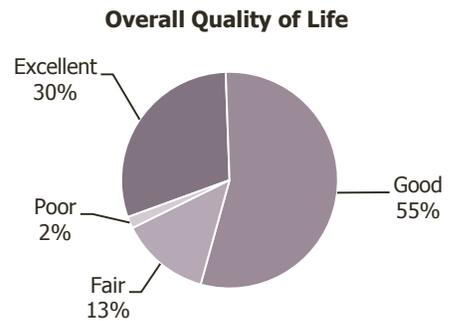
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 481 residents of the City of Johnson 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 Johnson City

Most residents rated the quality of life in Johnson City as excellent or good. This was similar to ratings given in other communities across the nation (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.

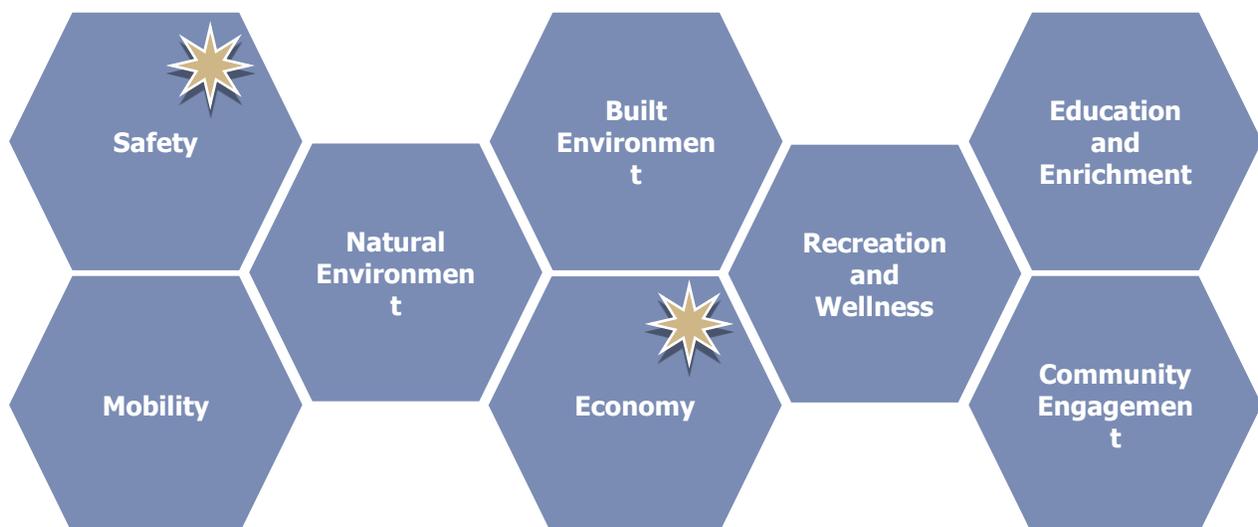
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2016, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Johnson City community in the coming two years. Johnson City residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community. Ratings for all other aspects of the community 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 Johnson City’s unique questions.

Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark

★ Most important



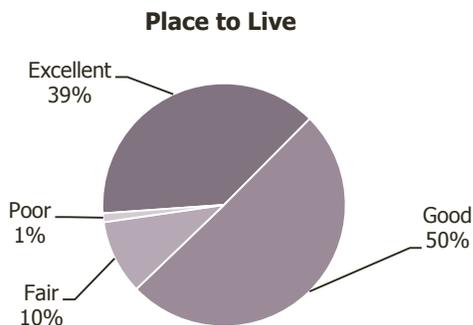
Community Characteristics

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 Johnson City, 89% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Johnson City as a place to live were similar to 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 Johnson City as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Johnson City and its overall appearance. At least 7 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to each of the aspects listed and all were similar to the national comparisons. When compared to ratings given in 2016, more residents reported positive views of Johnson City's overall image and the quality of life in their neighborhood in 2018 (please see the *Trends over Time* under separate cover).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Nearly all Community Characteristics were rated similar to the national comparisons. Cost of living was rated more positively in Johnson City than the national average. No community characteristics fell below the national benchmarks.



Aspects within Mobility received the widest range of ratings from residents with 36% reporting excellent or good ratings for ease of travel by bicycle (the lowest rated characteristic) to 79% for the overall ease of travel. Aspects of Safety, Natural Environment, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement housed some of the top rated items with at least 80% of respondents offering positive ratings.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

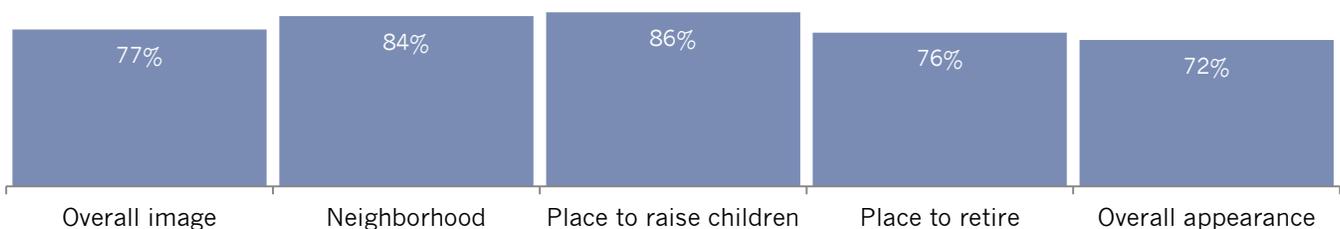
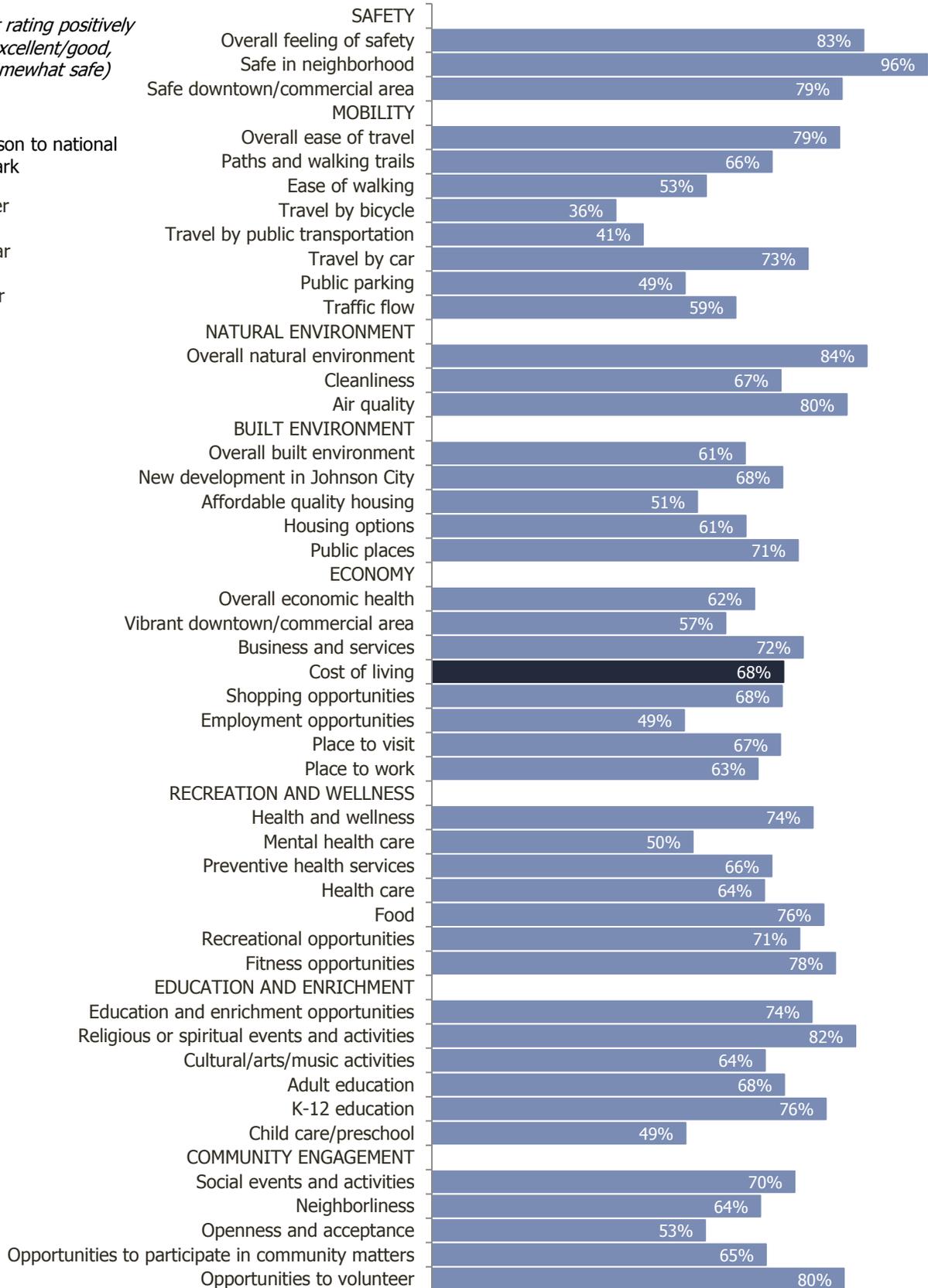


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

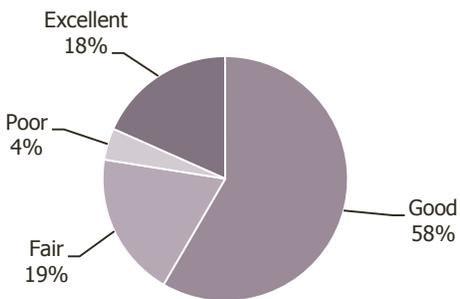
How well does the government of Johnson City meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Johnson 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 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of City services in Johnson City, while about 4 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the Federal Government. Ratings for both City services and services provided by the Federal Government were similar to the national benchmarks.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Johnson City’s leadership and governance. Ratings were similar to national comparisons with a majority of residents providing positive responses to each aspect of leadership and governance listed. The highest ratings were given to the City’s customer service and the overall direction Johnson City is taking.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Johnson City and all were rated similar to the national comparisons and most were rated positively by more than half of survey respondents. The top rated services listed on the survey were related to Safety (fire and ambulance/EMS) with about 9 in 10 residents offering positive marks. Police, city parks libraries, and garbage collection also were viewed very positively with ratings over 80%.

Overall Quality of City Services



Street repair and traffic signal timing were two of the three lowest rated items (fewer than 50% of respondents gave excellent or good ratings); the remaining Mobility-related services were given positive ratings between 55% and 68%. Code enforcement received the lowest rating of 40% excellent or good.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

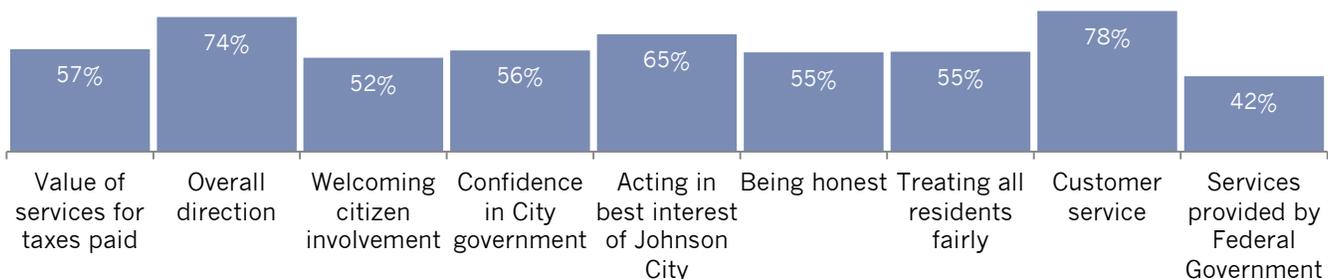
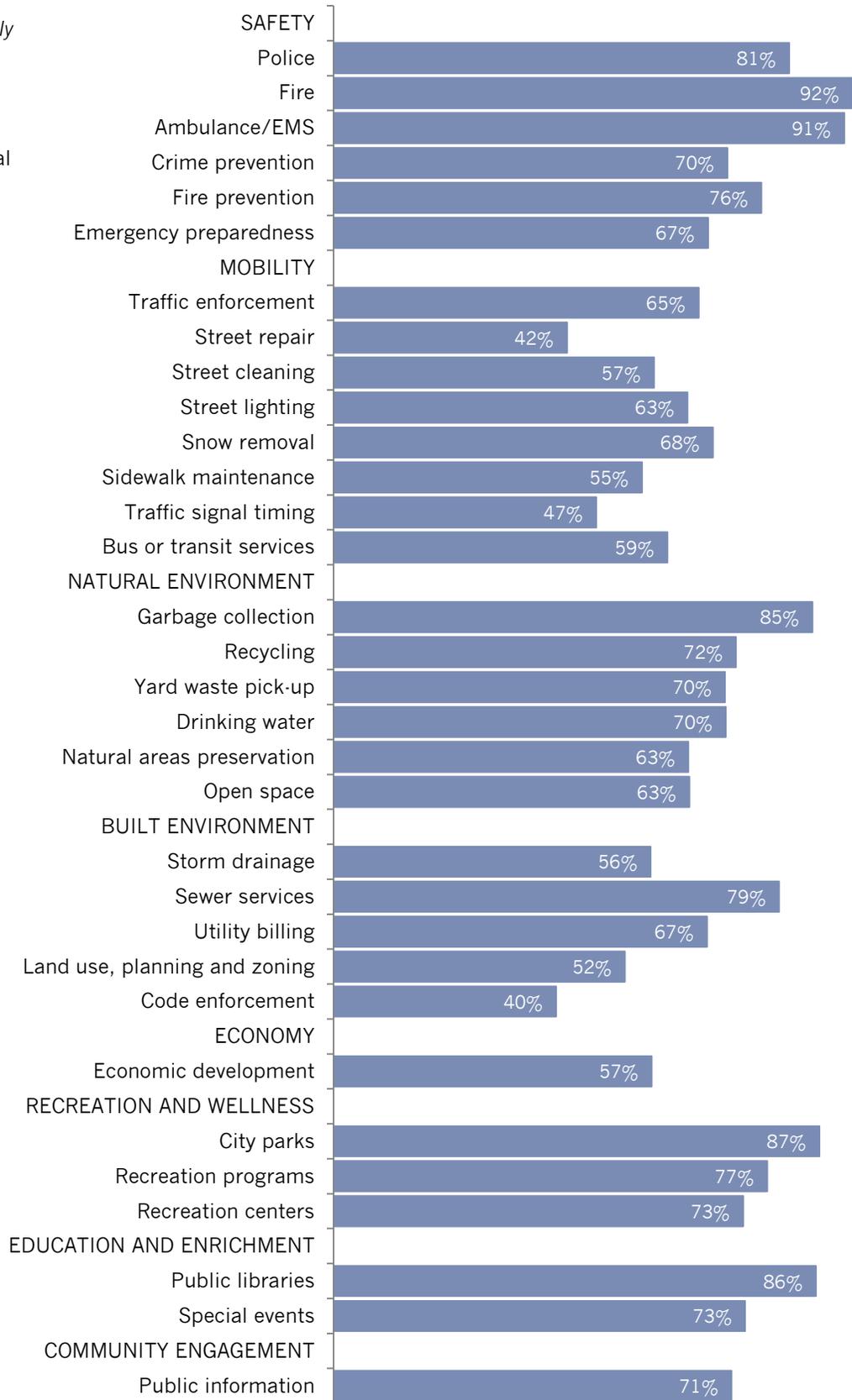


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

Are the residents of Johnson 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 6 in 10 respondents gave high marks to the sense of community in Johnson City; a rating that was similar to the national average. About 4 in 5 respondents were likely to remain in the community and recommend living in the community to someone who asks.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Levels of Participation varied widely across the different facets, making the comparison to the benchmarks useful for understanding the results. Generally, rates of Participation among Johnson City residents were on par with rates reported in other communities across the country, with some exceptions. Residents in Johnson City were more likely to report that they worked in the community when compared to their national peers. Johnson City residents reported lower levels of public transportation use and walking or biking instead of driving, recycling at home and City public library use.

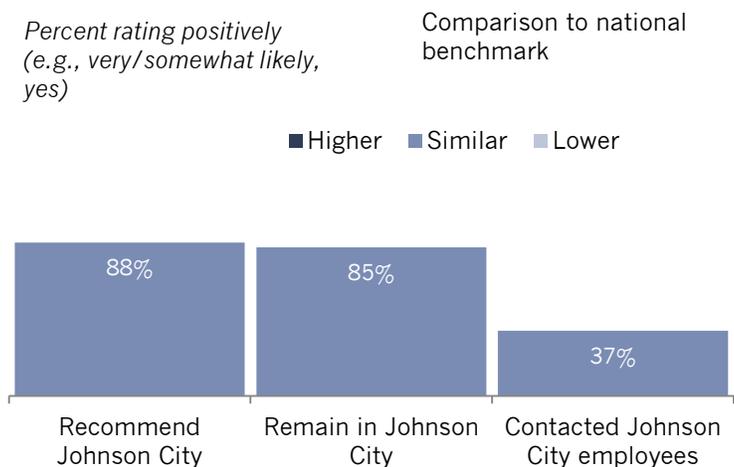
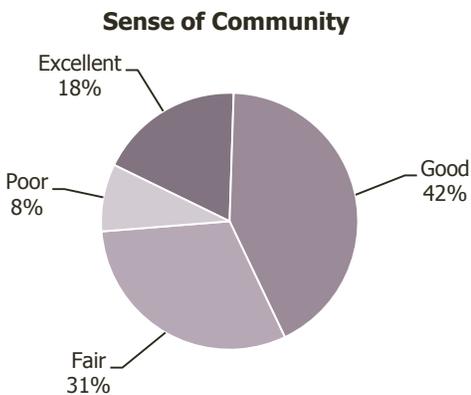
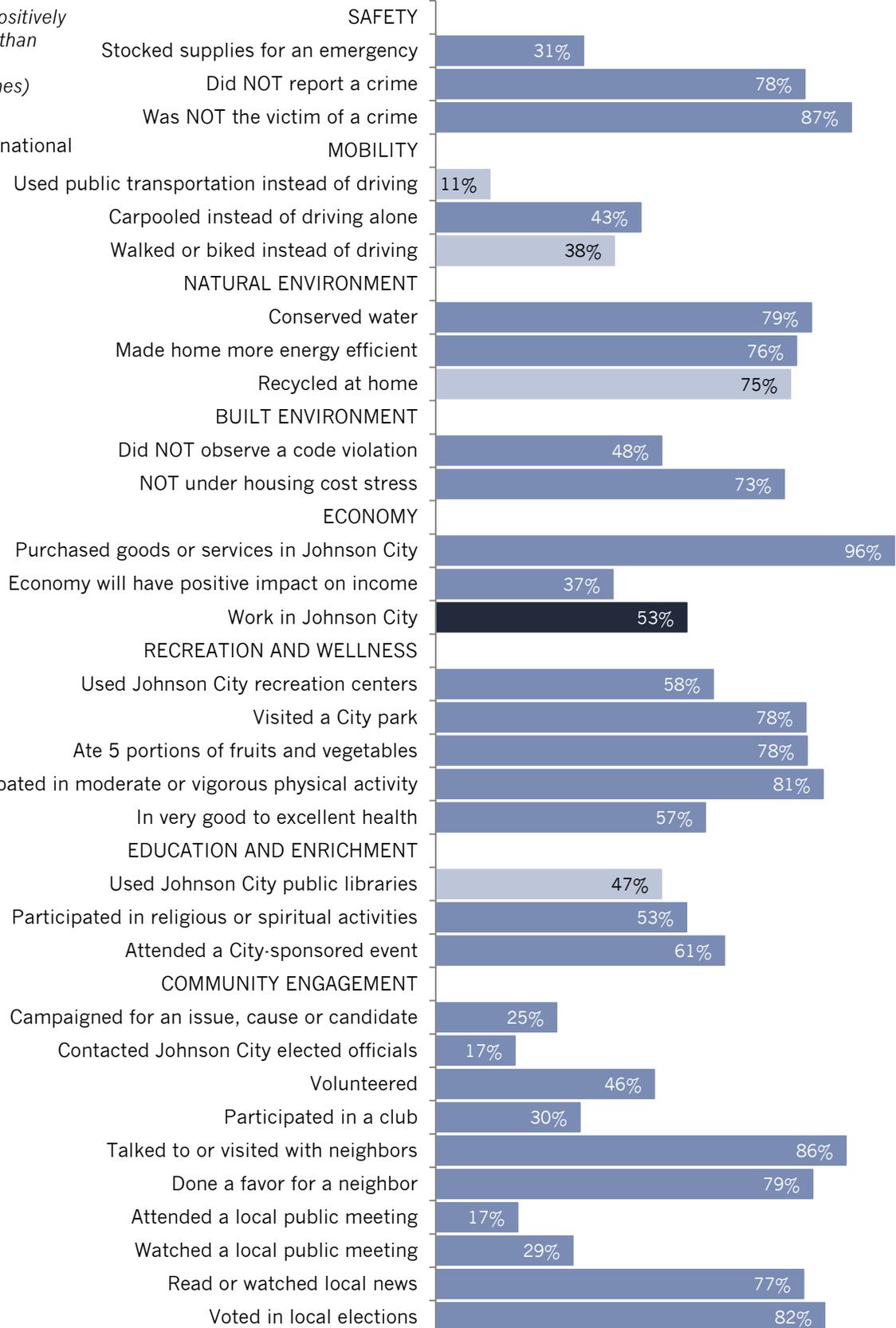


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

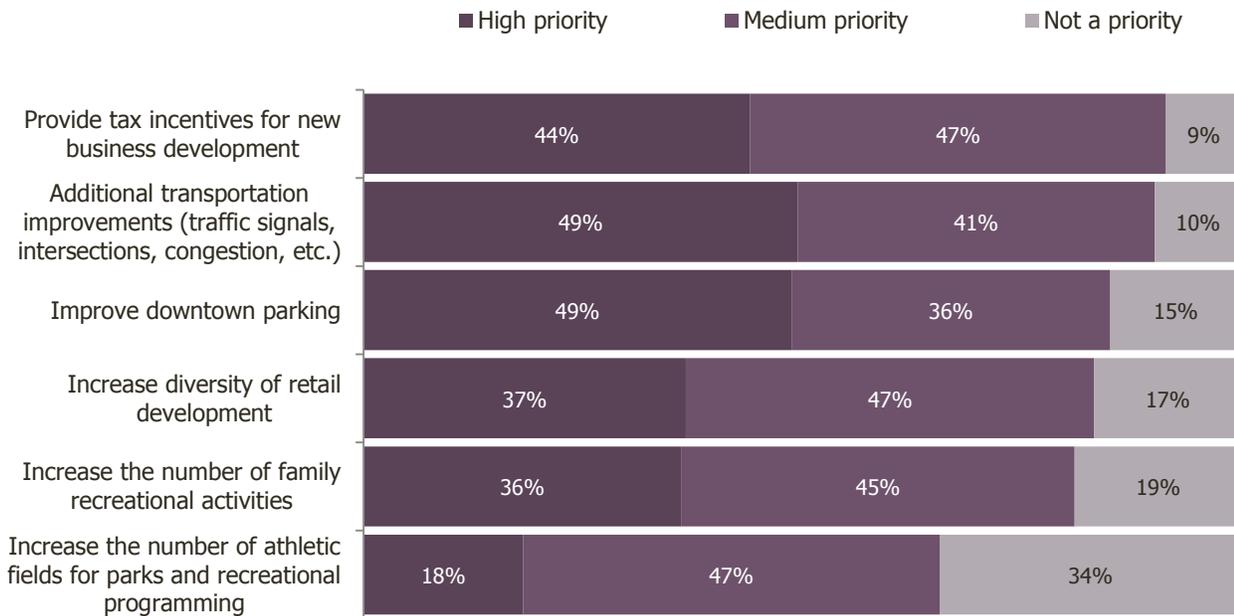


Special Topics

The City of Johnson City included three questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question had to do with City priorities. All of the new or enhanced services were felt to be at least a medium priority by a majority of respondents. About 9 in 10 survey participants indicated that tax incentives for new business development and additional transportation improvements (traffic signals, intersections, congestion, etc.) were at least a medium priority for the City. Increasing the number of athletic fields for parks and recreational programming was the lowest scoring item, selected as a high or medium priority by about two-thirds of participants.

Figure 4: City Priorities

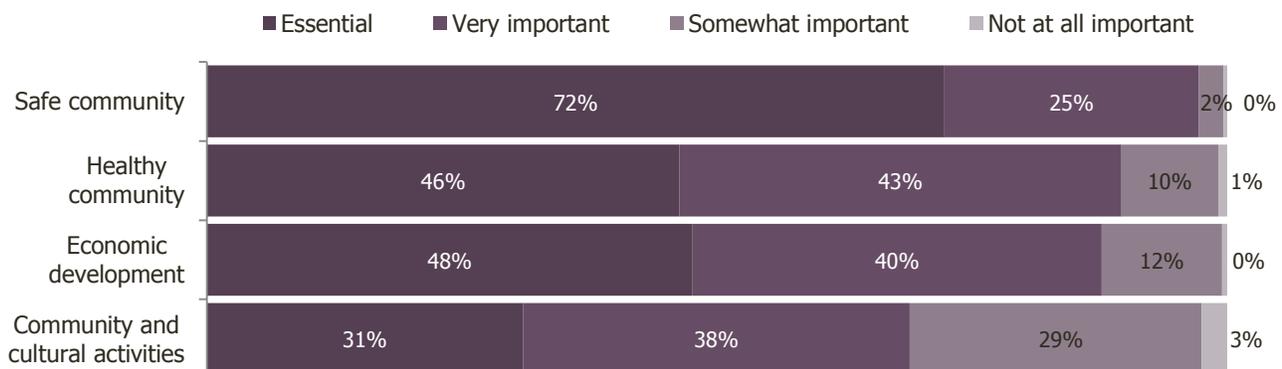
Please rate how much of a priority, if at all, each of the following should be for the City for the next five years:



Survey respondents were then asked to rate the importance of various community characteristics as they related to the overall quality of life in the City. Almost all residents rated a safe community as at least very important and about 9 in 10 residents rated a healthy community and economic development as very important or essential. Community and cultural activities, while still rated as very important to almost 70% of residents, received the lowest importance rating of the set.

Figure 5: Key Factors for Quality of Life in Johnson City

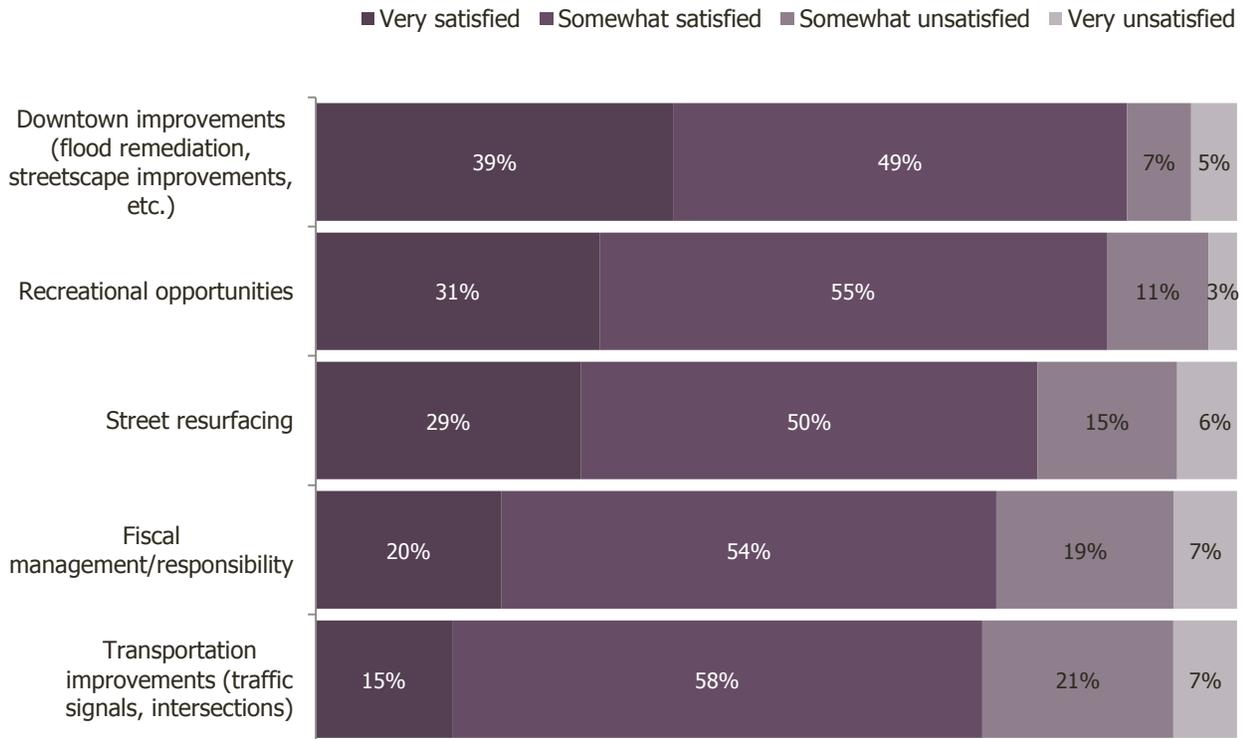
Please rate how important, if at all, each of the following are to the overall quality of life in the City:



In the final custom question, residents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with several efforts made by the City in the past two years. About three-quarters of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with all of the efforts listed. The highest satisfaction levels were found for downtown improvements (flood remediation, streetscape improvements, etc.) and recreational opportunities.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with City Improvement Efforts

When thinking about efforts made by the City in the last two years to improve each of the following, please indicate how satisfied, if at all, are you with:



Conclusions

Residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life and strong sense of safety.

As in past years, most residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good and would be likely to recommend living in Johnson City to someone who asks. About 85% of respondents planned to remain in the community for the next five years. Further, at least 7 in 10 residents rated Johnson City as a place to retire, to raise children and their neighborhood as a place to live positively. When compared to ratings given in 2016, more residents reported positive views of Johnson City's overall image and reputation and the quality of life in their neighborhood in 2018.

Survey participants not only rated safety as an essential component of quality of life, but also prioritized the facet of Safety for Johnson City to focus on in the coming years. Ratings for the facet of Safety were positive. At least 8 in 10 residents reported feeling safe in general, as well as in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area. Safety service ratings were very strong; fire, ambulance/EMS and police received some of the highest ratings on the survey. About 8 in 10 or more residents indicated they had not reported a crime or been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Alternate modes of mobility may be an area of opportunity, specifically related to public transportation.

Across the sets of ratings of both Community Characteristics and Governance, items related to Mobility were generally strong; however, Johnson City residents reported lower rates of public transportation use as well as walking or biking instead of driving when compared to their national peers. Further, differences emerged when comparing 2018 ratings to 2016 ratings; fewer residents reported positive ratings to ease of travel by public transportation and bus or transit services in 2018 compared to 2016 (ratings that, while lower, were still similar to the national average).

Residents continue to appreciate Johnson City's Economy.

Ratings of Economy were generally similar to national averages with higher than average ratings given to cost of living in Johnson City and the proportion of residents who work within the community. Ratings of Community Characteristics and Governance as well as rates of Participation were all similar to ratings given in 2016 with a majority of items given positive ratings from at least 6 in 10 residents. The lowest rated Economy-related items included employment opportunities (49% excellent or good) and resident perceptions of the impact of the economy on their income (37% very or somewhat positive); however both items were similar to national averages.