



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

North Mankato, MN

Community Livability Report

2017



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The NCS™ is presented by NRC in collaboration with ICMA.

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About

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

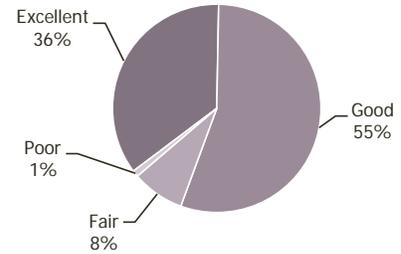
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 534 residents of the City of North Mankato. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in North Mankato

Most residents rated the quality of life in North Mankato as excellent or good. This rating was similar to the national benchmark (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

Overall Quality of Life



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.

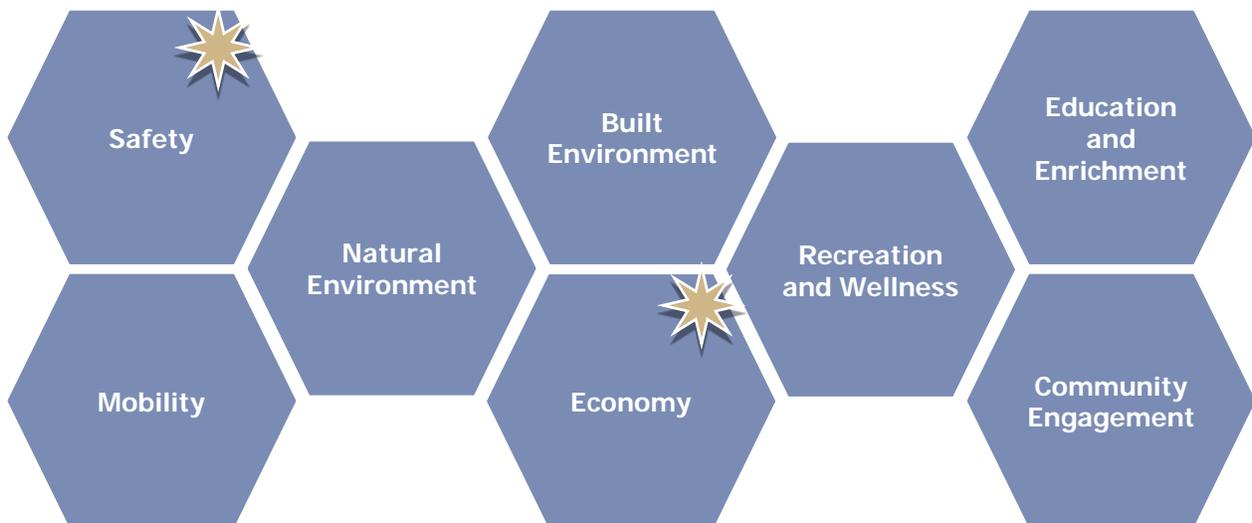
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the North Mankato community in the coming two years. North Mankato residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community as well as to the remaining six facets: Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement. Ratings for all eight facets were similar to other communities nationwide. 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 North Mankato’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 North Mankato, 95% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live and zero percent rated it poor. Respondents' ratings of North Mankato 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 North Mankato as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of North Mankato and its overall appearance. Most respondents positively assessed these aspects of the community, with the City as a place to raise children and the overall appearance of the City receiving evaluations that were higher than the national benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. North Mankato resident assessments of Community Characteristics varied by facet and tended to be similar to the benchmark; however, there were several exceptions. Respondents appreciated Mobility in North Mankato, providing exceptionally high ratings that tended to be higher than in communities across the country, including the overall ease of travel, paths and walking trails, ease of walking, travel by car and by walking and traffic flow.

The Natural Environment and Safety were viewed favorably by residents and aspects within these facets were mostly similar to national benchmark comparisons. However, North Mankato residents gave higher marks to the cleanliness of the City compared to the benchmark communities. At least half of respondents enjoyed aspects of Education and Enrichment, with more than four in five giving positive evaluations to K-12 education (a rating which was higher than the national benchmark).



Aspects of Economy tended to receive less positive reviews and while most were similar to other communities across the U.S., shopping opportunities was given evaluations that were lower.

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

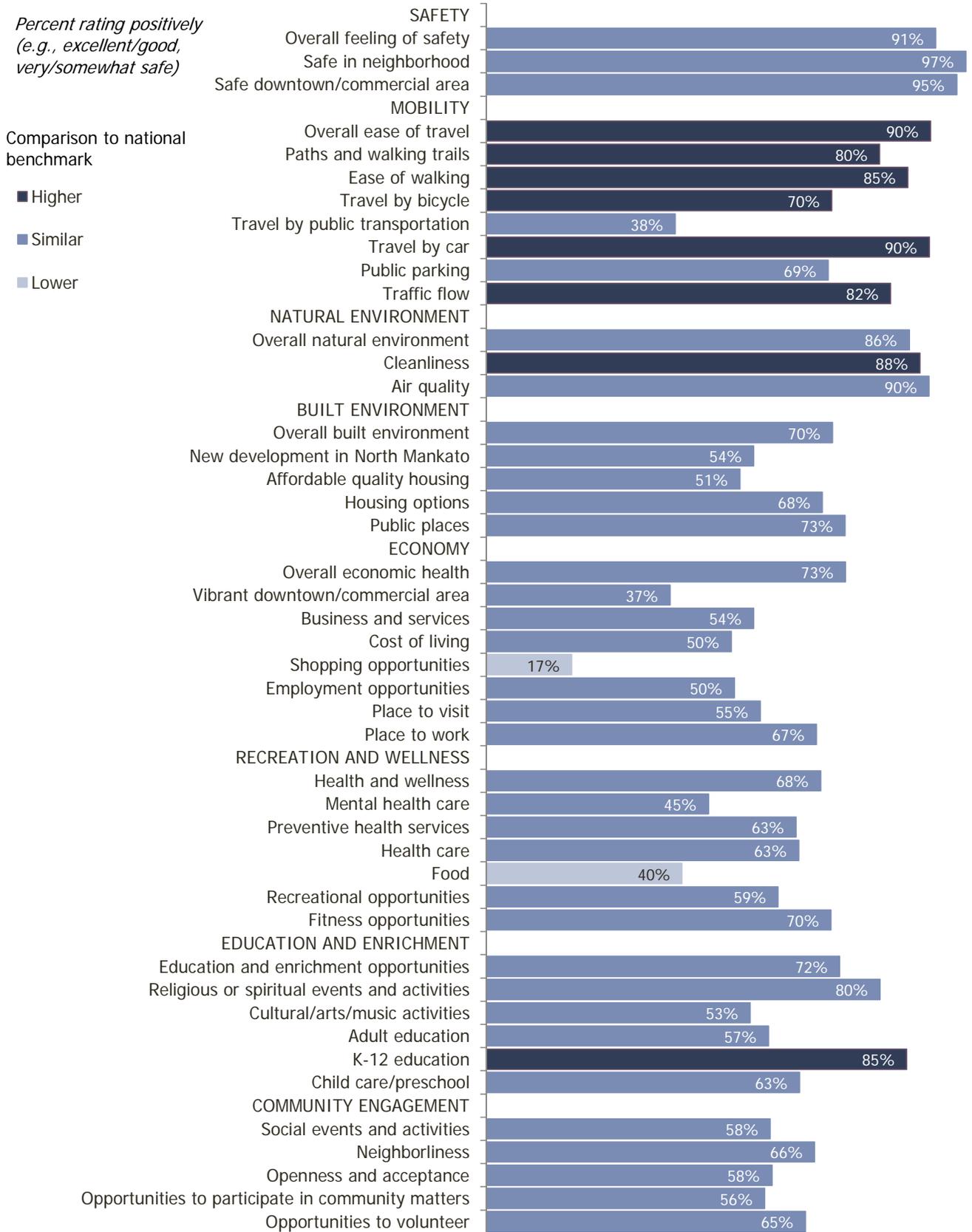
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

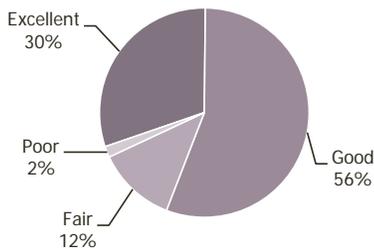
How well does the government of North Mankato meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by North Mankato as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. More than four in five participants rated the overall quality of services in North Mankato as excellent or good. Residents' ratings of the quality of services provided by the City government were significantly higher than ratings of Federal Government services and were higher than the State and County Government provided services (see Figure 4 on page 9 for additional information).

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of North Mankato's leadership and governance. Overall, aspects of the City's leadership and governance were viewed favorably by a majority of respondents and were similar to comparison communities. Residents were pleased with the customer service provided by the City government most of all and felt less positively about the value of services for taxes paid and the City welcoming citizen involvement.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in North Mankato. Most features of Governance were positively evaluated by at least 6 in 10 respondents and were similar to or higher than the national benchmark. Though similar to the national benchmark, Safety services such as police, fire, ambulance/EMS and fire prevention were praised by about 9 in 10 residents. Within Mobility, snow removal and traffic signal timing were seen as strengths in North Mankato and were higher than the benchmark communities.

Overall Quality of City Services

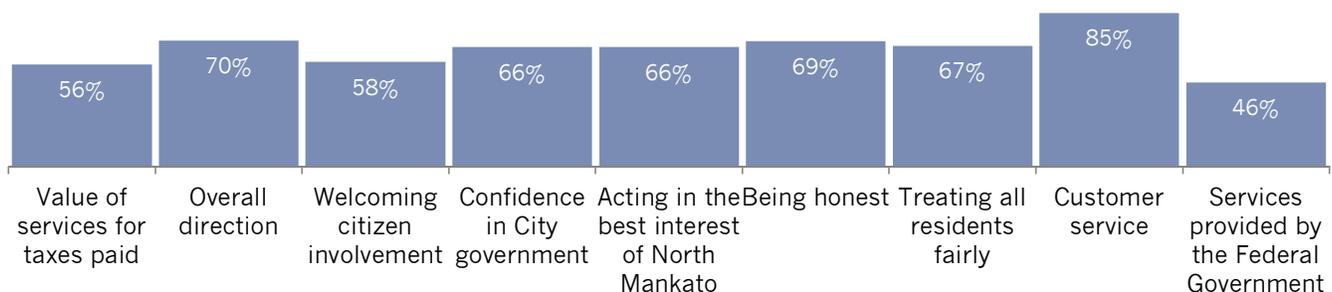


Residents also were happy with features of the Natural Environment and Built Environment, with at least three-quarters approving of the quality of garbage collection, recycling, yard waste pick-up, storm drainage, sewer services and power utility.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



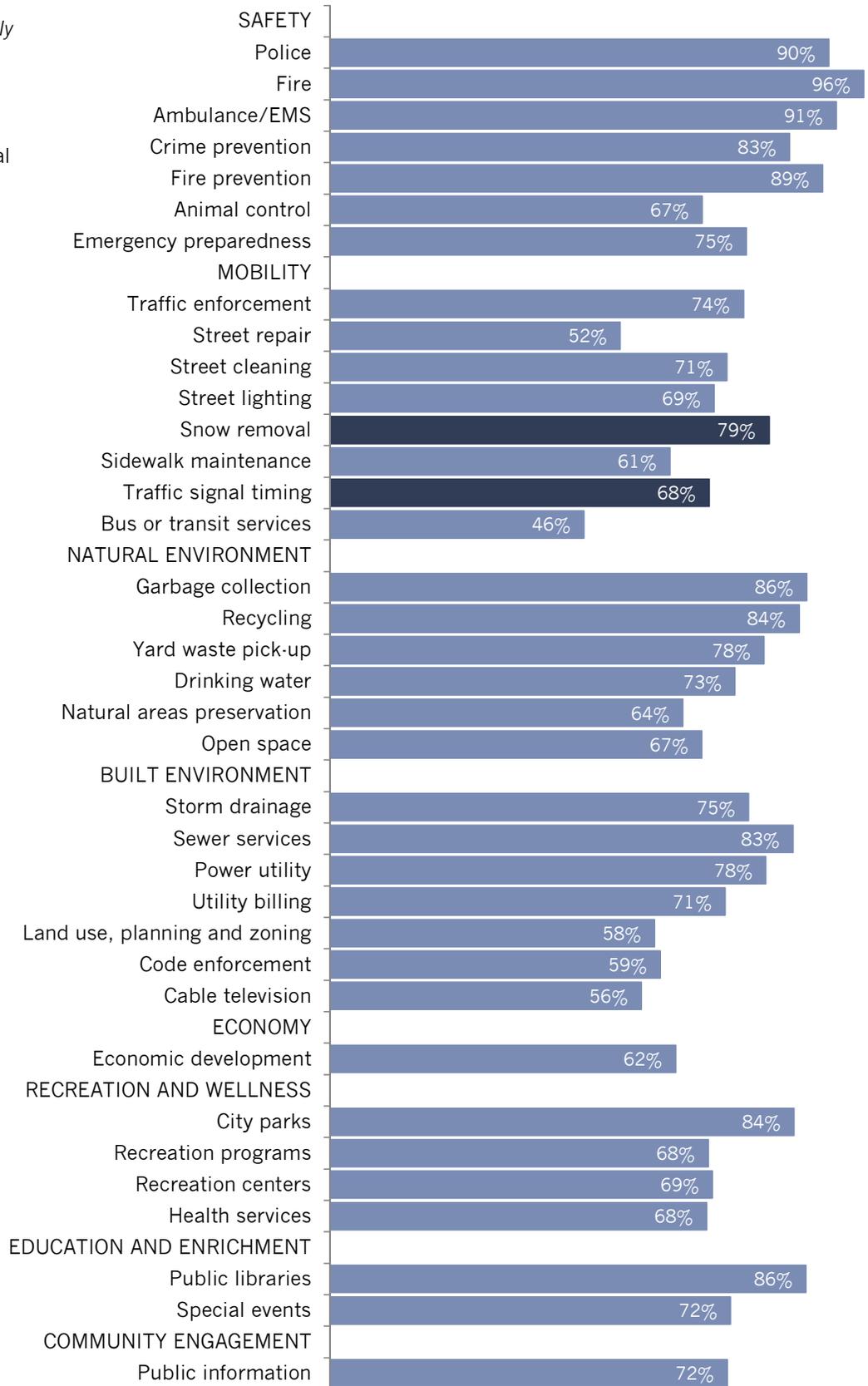
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

Are the residents of North Mankato connected to the community and each other?

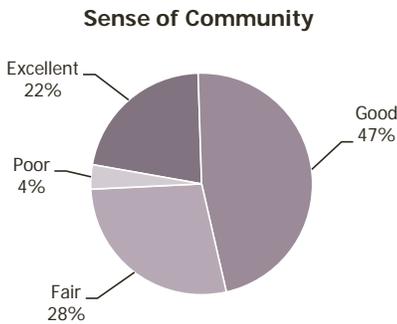
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. Nearly all residents reported they would recommend living in North Mankato to someone who asks and that they planned to remain in the City for the next five years, which were levels higher than in comparison communities across the U.S.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Generally, levels of participation varied in North Mankato as did the comparisons to the national benchmark.

Within Built Environment, more North Mankato residents had not observed a code violation and were not under housing cost stress compared to comparison communities. Levels of Participation within Safety varied with more North Mankato residents reporting they did not report a crime and fewer indicating they had stocked supplies for an emergency.

Residents were engaged with the Natural Environment and Recreation and Wellness, with at least 6 in 10 participating in each activity within those two facets. Respondents were most passionate about recycling at home and visiting City parks. Additionally, enthusiasm was shown for Community Engagement with at least 8 in 10 residents talking to or visiting with neighbors, doing a favor for a neighbor, reading or watching local news and voting in local elections.

Within Mobility fewer North Mankato residents than elsewhere used public transportation instead of driving.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



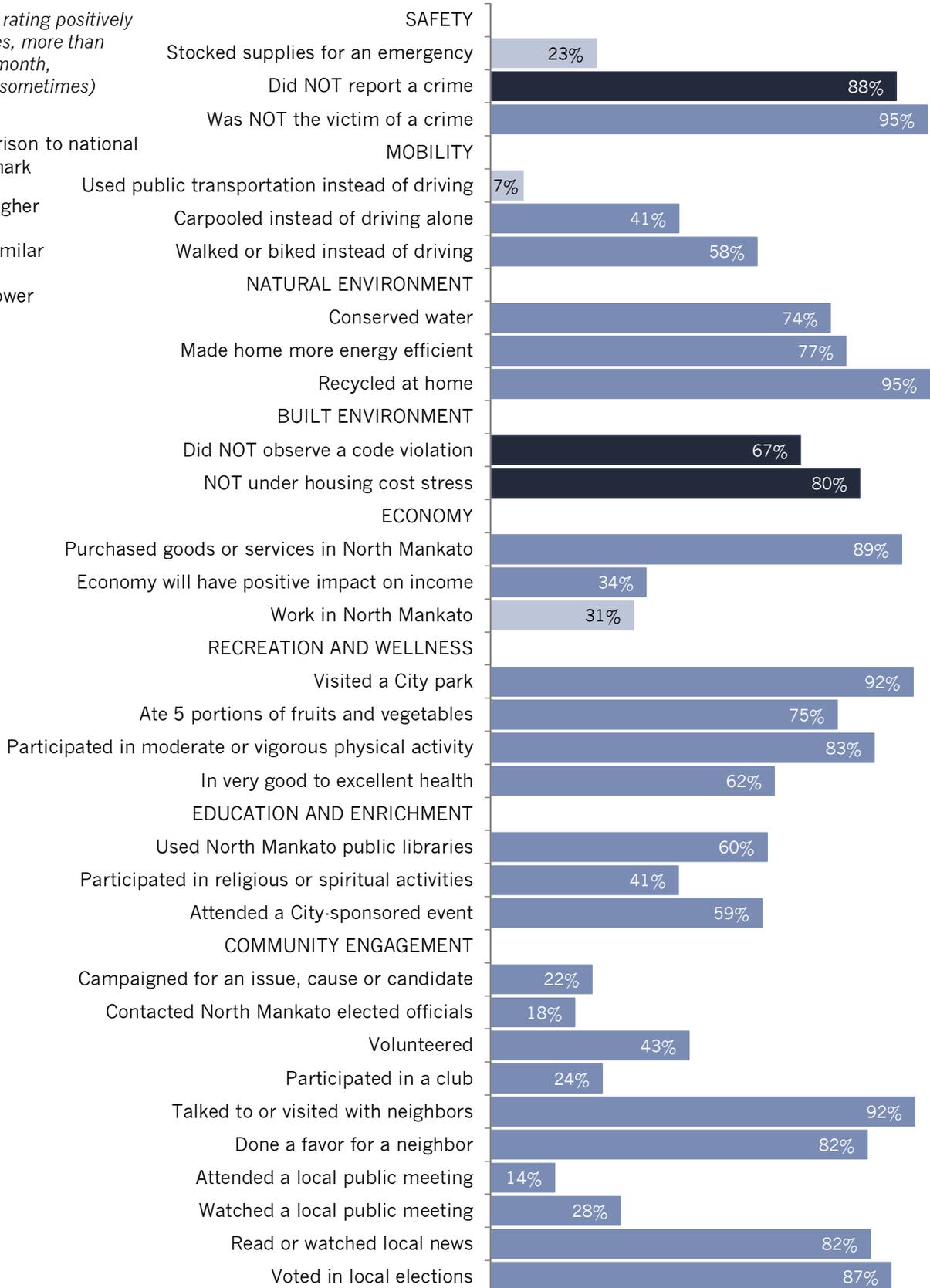
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



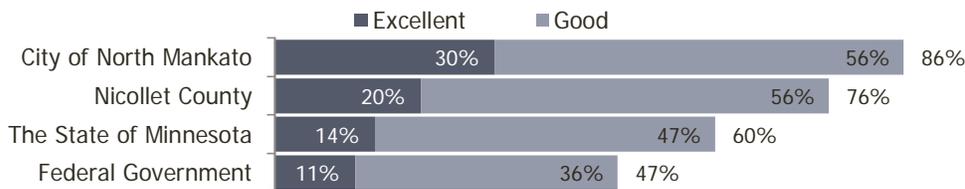
Special Topics

The City of North Mankato included several questions of special interest on The NCS. Topics investigated on the survey included the quality of services delivered by Nicollet County and the State of Minnesota and sources of information about the City government.

County provided services were rated more favorably by residents than were state provided services; however, both rated less positively than city provided services.

Figure 4: County and State Government Performance

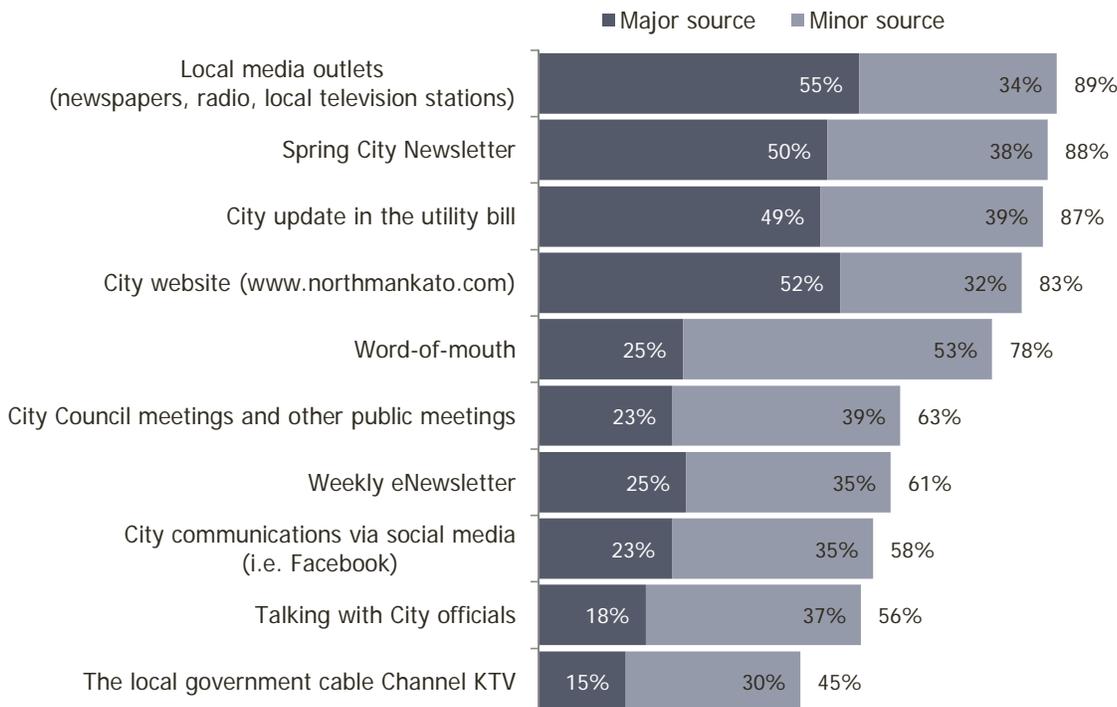
Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?



The City of North Mankato wanted to learn about the sources residents used most to obtain information about City activities, events and services. Roughly 9 in 10 reported using local media outlets, the Spring City Newsletter and the City update in the utility bill as minor or major sources of information about the City. A majority of residents reported using all other sources of information as at least a minor source, with the exception of the local government cable channel KTV which not a source of information for 55% of respondents.

Figure 5: Sources of Information

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



Conclusions

Residents are happy in North Mankato and appreciate aspects of the community.

Nine in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of life in North Mankato and the City as a place to live. A strong majority also felt positively about the City as a place to raise children, K-12 education, the overall appearance and the cleanliness of North Mankato, all of which were rated higher when compared to communities across the nation. Resident loyalty was high, with nearly all residents reporting that they would recommend living in the City and that they planned to remain in North Mankato for the next five years, ratings that were higher than the national benchmark.

Safety is a key contributor to residents' quality of life in North Mankato and merits continued focus.

Safety was identified as one of the top priorities for the City to focus on in the coming two years and evaluations of the various features of Safety were exceptionally positive. Overall feelings of safety, safety in neighborhoods and safety in the downtown/commercial area were given favorable assessments from nearly all residents. Safety-related services were also identified as strengths for the City, with 9 in 10 participants awarding excellent or good ratings to police, fire, ambulance/EMS and fire prevention. Most respondents were satisfied with crime prevention efforts in the city and the vast majority reported they had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey and had not reported a crime (which was a level higher than seen elsewhere across the U.S.).

While residents applaud Mobility in the City, they do not use public transit in lieu of driving.

Mobility ratings across the survey received exceptional ratings that were frequently higher in North Mankato than in the national benchmark communities. Generally, most residents found it easy to get around the city by various modes (car, bike, walking) and a majority voiced appreciation for paths and walking trails and the flow of traffic. Mobility-related services such as snow removal and traffic signal timing also were appreciated by respondents and were evaluated higher than the national benchmark. However, features of Mobility related to public transportation were viewed less favorably. Less than half of residents were pleased with the quality of travel by public transportation and bus or transit services, and less than 1 in 10 reported using public transportation instead of driving (which was lower use than what was seen elsewhere).