

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

San José, CA

Community Livability Report

2014



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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of San José. 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 469 residents of the City of San José. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% 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.

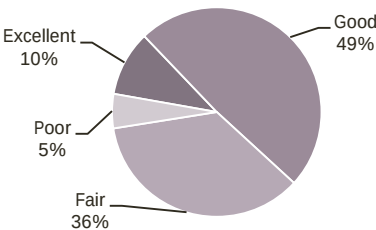


Quality of Life in San José

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in San José as excellent or good. This rating was lower when compared to jurisdictions 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.

Overall Quality of Life



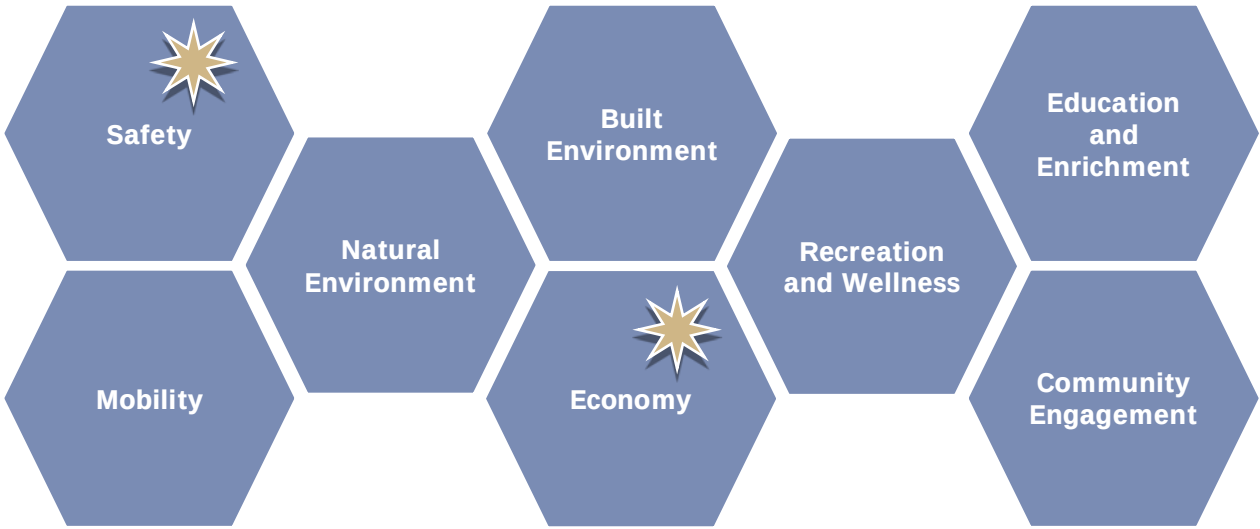
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the San José community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that San José residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community. Ratings for the remaining facets 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 C characteristics, Governance and Participation and ending with results for San José’s unique questions.

Legend

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

- Most important



Community Characteristics

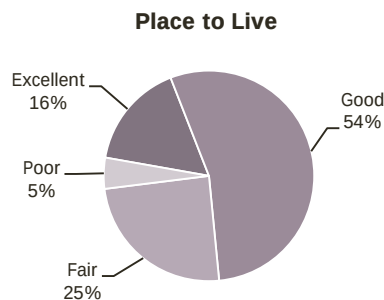
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 San José, 70% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of San José 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 San José as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of San José and its overall appearance. About two-thirds of respondents gave positive ratings for their neighborhoods and about half of respondents thought San José was an excellent or good place to raise children and that the overall image was excellent or good. Less than half of participants gave positive ratings for the overall appearance of San José and less than one-third thought San José was an excellent or good place to retire.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Most ratings were similar to the national benchmark, however 14 were lower and two were higher than the benchmark. A majority of participants gave positive ratings to most features within the facets of Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement. Most features within these three facets were also rated similar to the benchmark. Economy ratings varied widely; for example, only 11% of respondents rated cost of living positively, but 75% of respondents gave positive ratings for shopping opportunities. Shopping opportunities and employment opportunities were rated more positively in

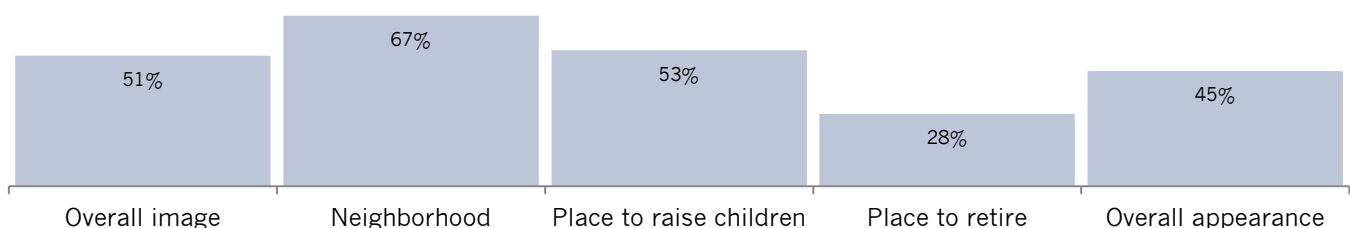
San José than in other jurisdictions. However, cost of living and San José as a place to visit were rated lower than other jurisdictions; all other features of Economy were similar to the benchmark. Mobility and Built Environment ratings varied and a majority of features within these facets were rated similar to the benchmark. Several Mobility ratings improved when compared to 2013 including traffic flow, travel by car, travel by bicycle and ease of walking (see *The NCS Trends over Time-San José 2014* report provided under separate cover). A majority of Safety ratings and all Natural Environment ratings were rated lower than the benchmark.



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

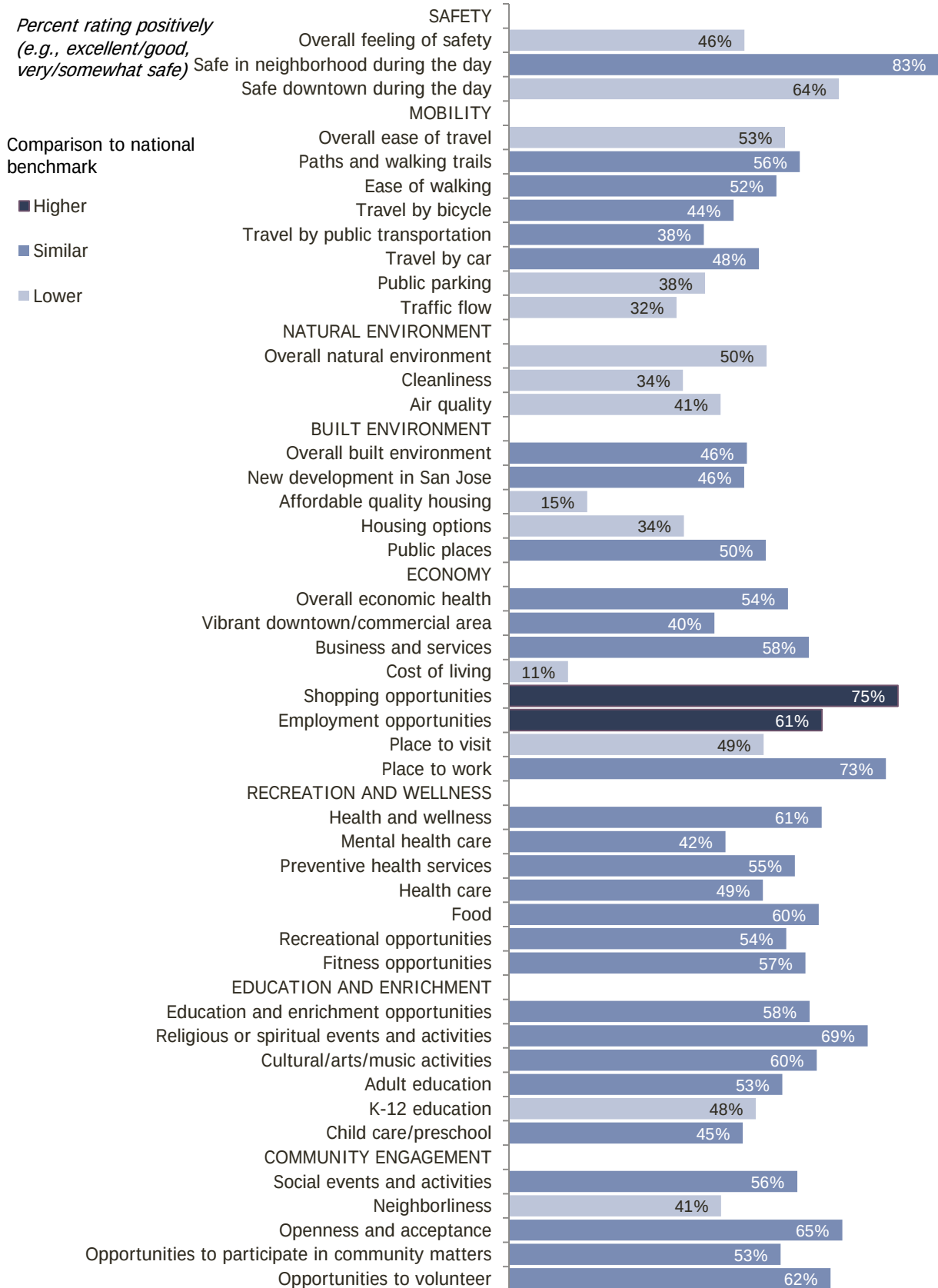
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

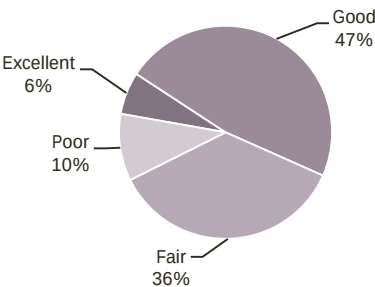
How well does the government of San José meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by San José as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About half of participants gave positive ratings for the quality of City services, while 40% gave positive ratings for the quality of services provided by the Federal Government.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of San José's leadership and governance. Welcoming citizen involvement, acting in the best interest of San José and treating all residents fairly received ratings similar to other jurisdictions in the nation. Ratings for the value of services, overall direction, confidence in City government, being honest and customer service were lower than the national benchmark.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in San José. Within Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy and Community Engagement most features were rated positively by a majority of participants and were similar to the national benchmark. Safety ratings varied; less than half of participants gave positive ratings for police services, crime prevention, animal control and emergency preparedness, while a majority of participants gave positive ratings for fire services, ambulance/EMS and fire prevention. All services within Mobility were rated positively by less than half of respondents and a majority of Mobility services were rated lower than what's seen in other communities. A majority of respondents rated Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment features positively, but these ratings were lower than the benchmark.

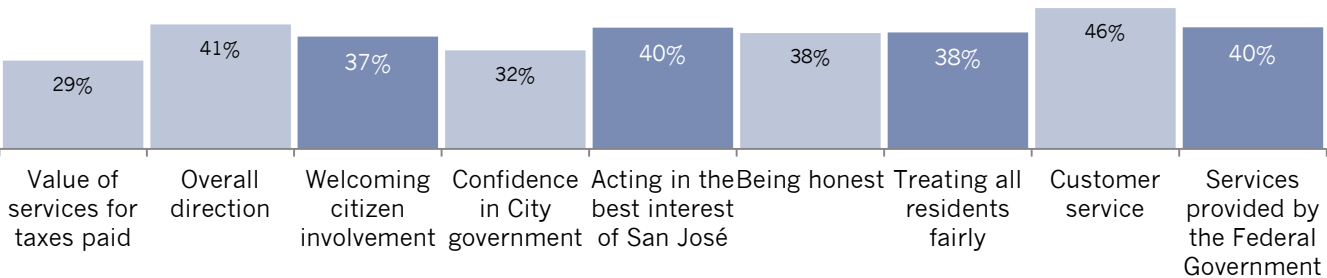
Overall Quality of City Services



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

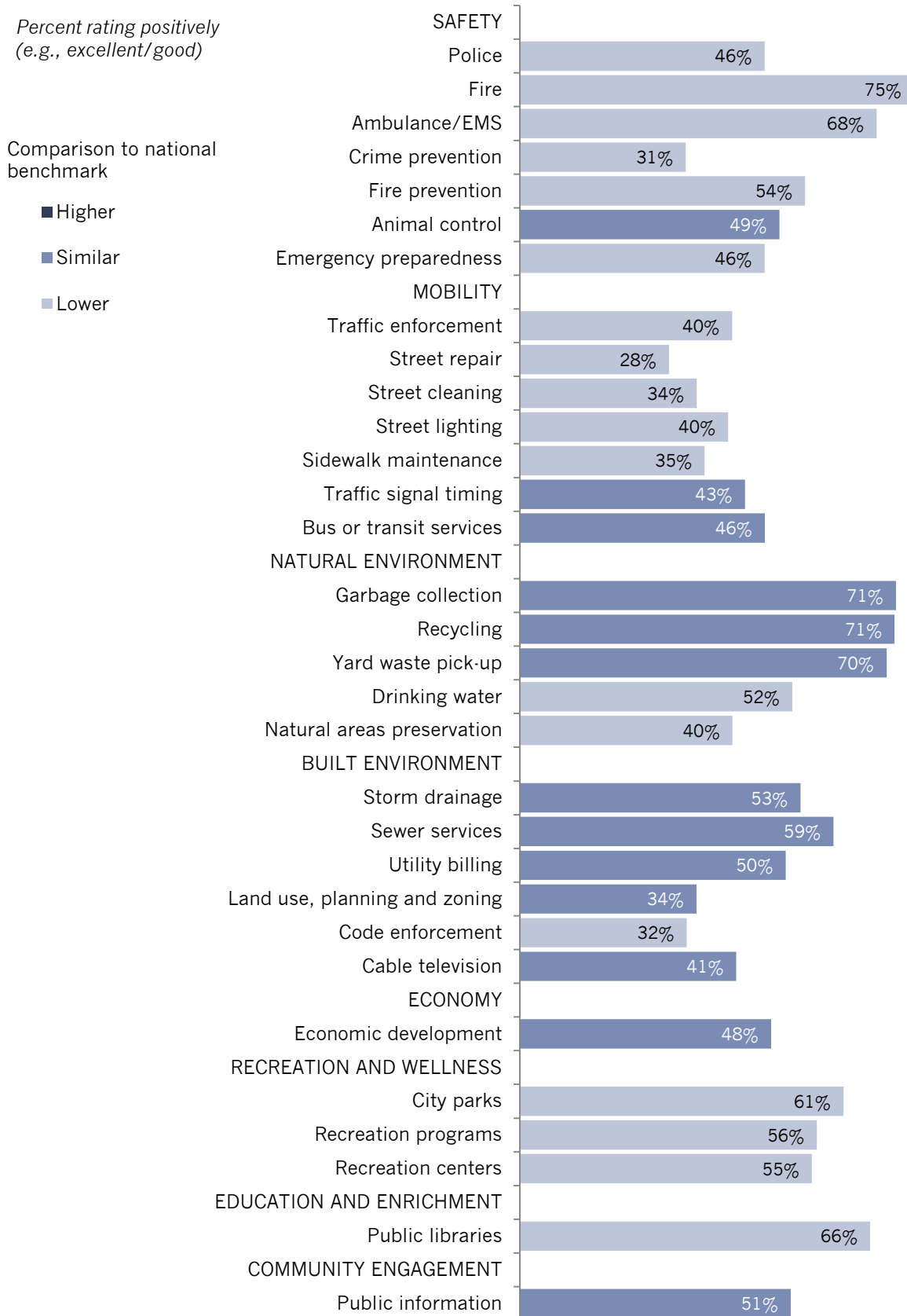
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

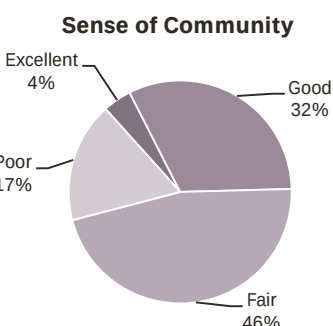


Participation

Are the residents of San José 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 one-third of participants rated the overall sense of community positively, a rating that was lower than the benchmark. Most participants plan on staying in San José and almost three-quarters would recommend San José to others. Less than half of participants had contacted San José employees, which is similar to what's experienced elsewhere in the nation.

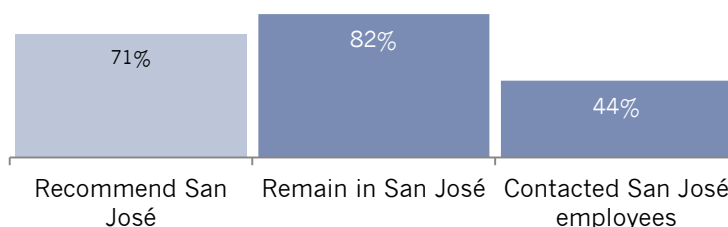
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Out of these 32 activities, rates of participation when compared to other communities were higher for seven activities, similar for 21 and lower for four. The highest rates of participation were found for Natural Environment, where almost all respondents participated in these activities. Recycling and water conservation were higher in San José than in other communities. Within Safety, more participants than elsewhere in the nation stocked supplies for emergencies and a similar number of participants compared to other communities were victims of crime or had reported a crime. Two of the three features within Mobility and Economy had higher rates of participation when compared to other communities. Ratings for Recreation and Wellness were similar to the benchmark; a majority of participants had used a recreation center and reported being in good health and almost all participants reported visiting a park, eating at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables and exercising. Ratings within Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement varied, but most features within these facets were rated positively by a majority of participants and were similar to the benchmark.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



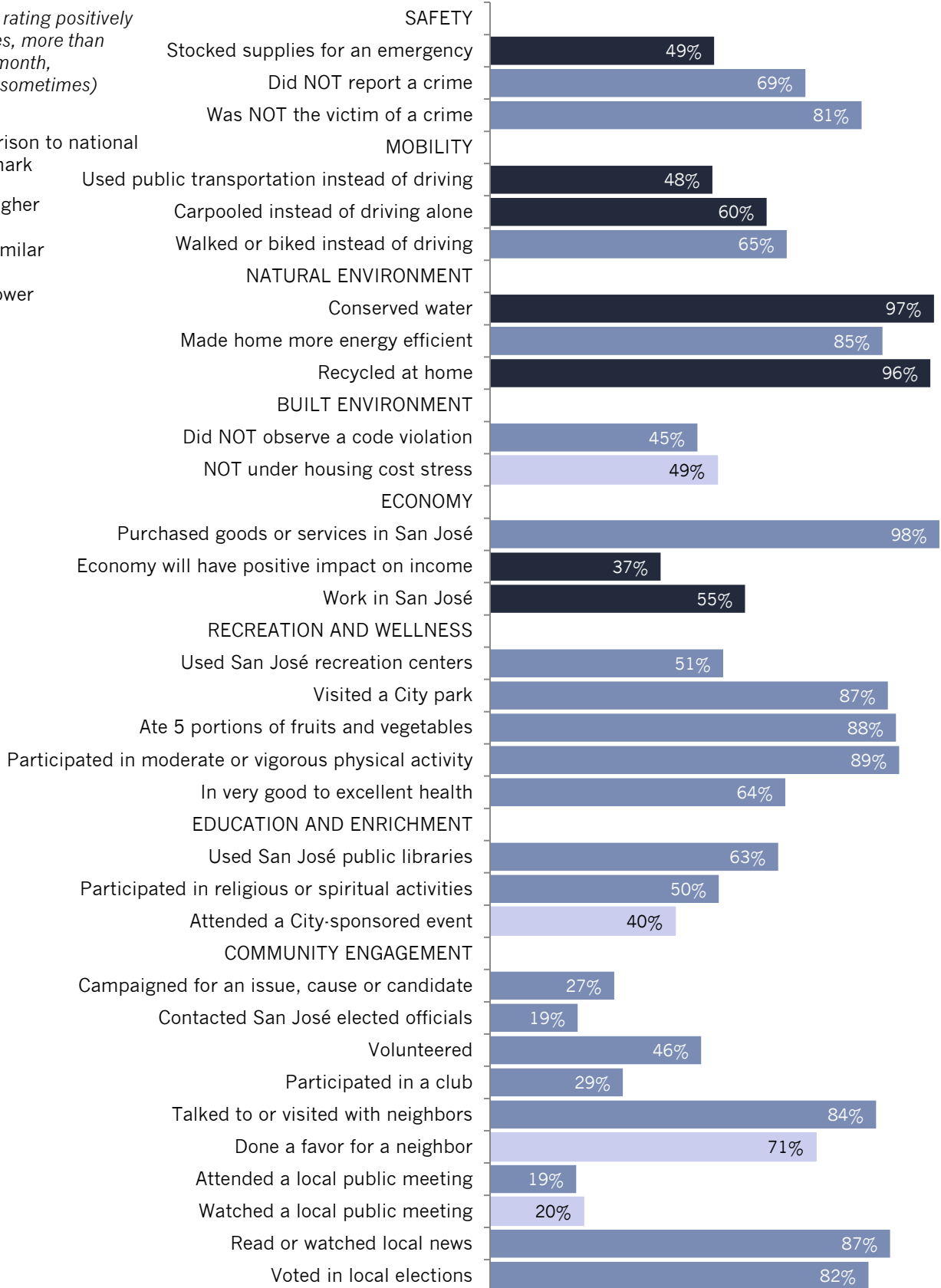
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Additional Questions

The City of San José included several questions of special interest on The NCS. Participants were asked to rate how safe they felt after dark as well as from violent and property crimes. About two-thirds of respondents felt very or somewhat safe in their neighborhood after dark, while less than one-third felt safe in San José's downtown after dark. A majority of participants felt very or somewhat safe from violent crime. About 4 in 10 participants felt safe from property crimes.

Figure 4: Safety after Dark

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

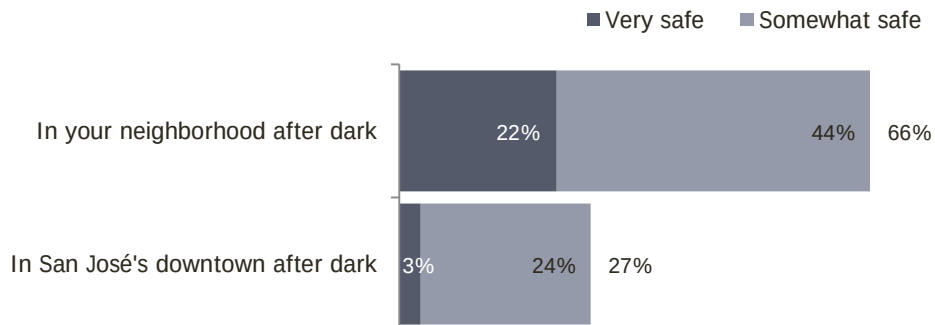
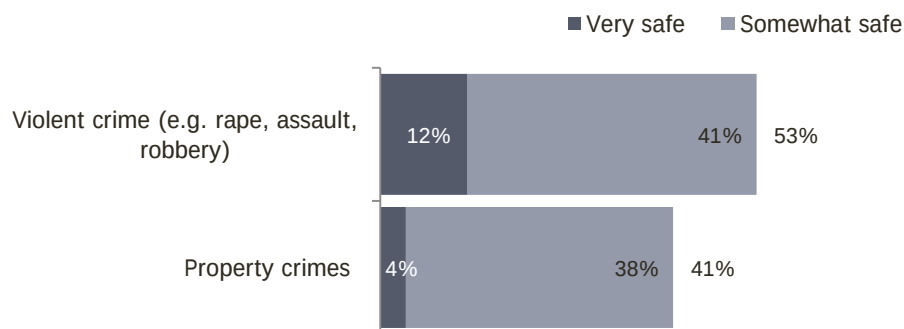


Figure 5: Safe from Violent or Property Crimes

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following:

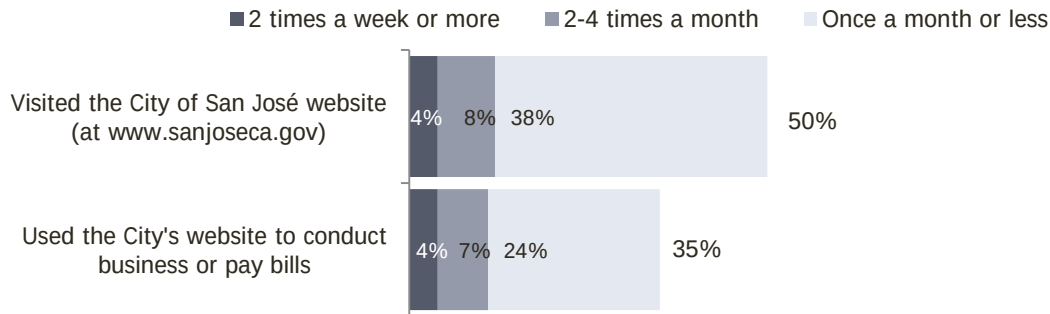


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When asked about using the City's website, half of the participants reported that they had visited the City of San José website at least once a month. Around a third of participants had used the City's website to conduct business or pay bills.

Figure 6: City Website Use

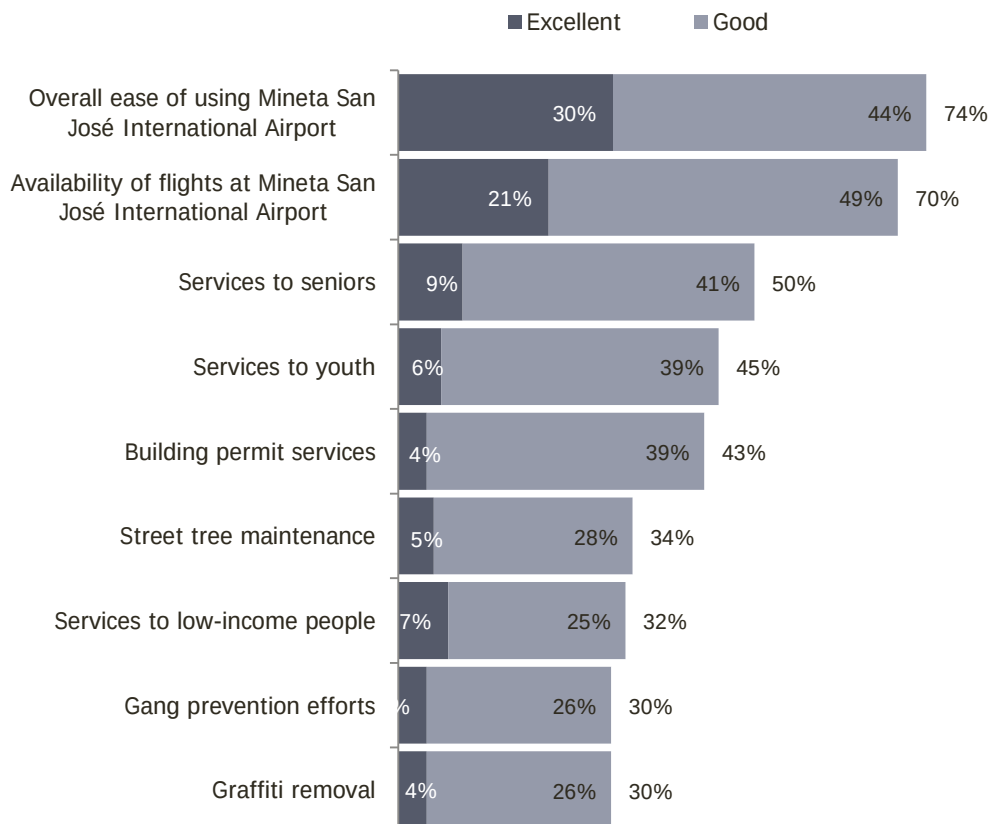
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following in San José:



Participants were asked to rate a variety of City services unique to San José. The most highly rated unique service was the Mineta San José International Airport; both ease of using and the availability of flights at the Mineta San José airport were rated positively by a majority of respondents. At least 4 in 10 respondents rated services to seniors, services to youth and building permit services positively. About one-third of participants positively rated the remaining services of street tree maintenance, services to low-income people, gang prevention efforts and graffiti removal.

Figure 7: Additional City Services

Please rate the quality of each of the following services in San José:

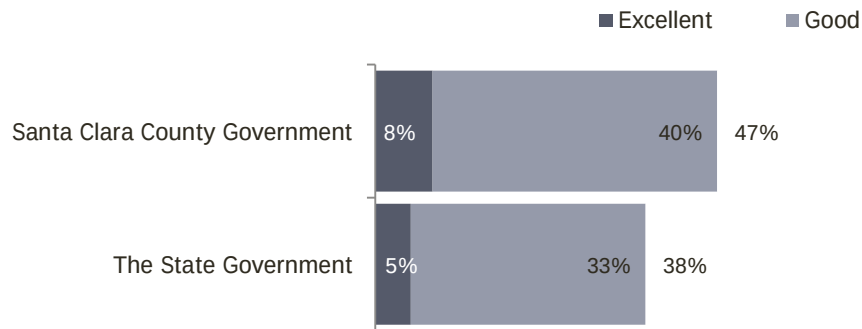


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A little less than half of participants gave positive ratings for the Santa Clara County Government, whereas a majority of participants rated the City of San José government positively. Over one-third gave positive ratings for the State Government.

Figure 8: State and County Government

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



Conclusions

Safety is a priority for the community.

Participants indicated that Safety is an essential or very important focus area for San José over the next two years. Almost all participants feel safe in their neighborhood, but only about two-thirds felt safe downtown and less than half felt safe overall in San José. A majority of participants felt safe from violent crime, but less than half felt safe from property crimes. Safety services (such as police, fire, etc.) tended to be rated lower in comparison to other communities across the nation. The number of participants reporting crimes or being a victim of a crime is similar to other communities and more respondents in San José than elsewhere stocked supplies for an emergency.

Residents value Economy and emphasize its importance.

Participants indicated that the Economy was an important focus area and economic ratings tended to be similar compared to other communities. Ratings have improved for several Economic features in San José such as employment opportunities (which was rated higher than the benchmark) and economic development and the number of participants who believe the economy will have a positive impact on their income has risen. While cost of living and San José as a place to visit were rated lower than other communities, shopping opportunities was rated higher and a variety of other Economy ratings were similar to other communities.

Residents are traveling easier, but room for improvement in Mobility remains.

Participants ratings for community characteristics related to Mobility (such as traffic flow, travel by car or bicycle and ease of walking) have increased compared to the previous survey, but these features still tend to be rated positively by less than half of participants. More participants in San José than elsewhere carpool and use public transportation. Less than half of participants gave positive ratings for Mobility services and the ratings for the mobility services of street cleaning and bus or transit services declined compared to 2013.