

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

San José, CA

Community Livability Report

2015



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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.

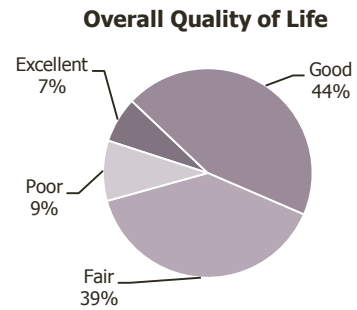
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 505 residents of the City of San José. 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 San José

About half 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.

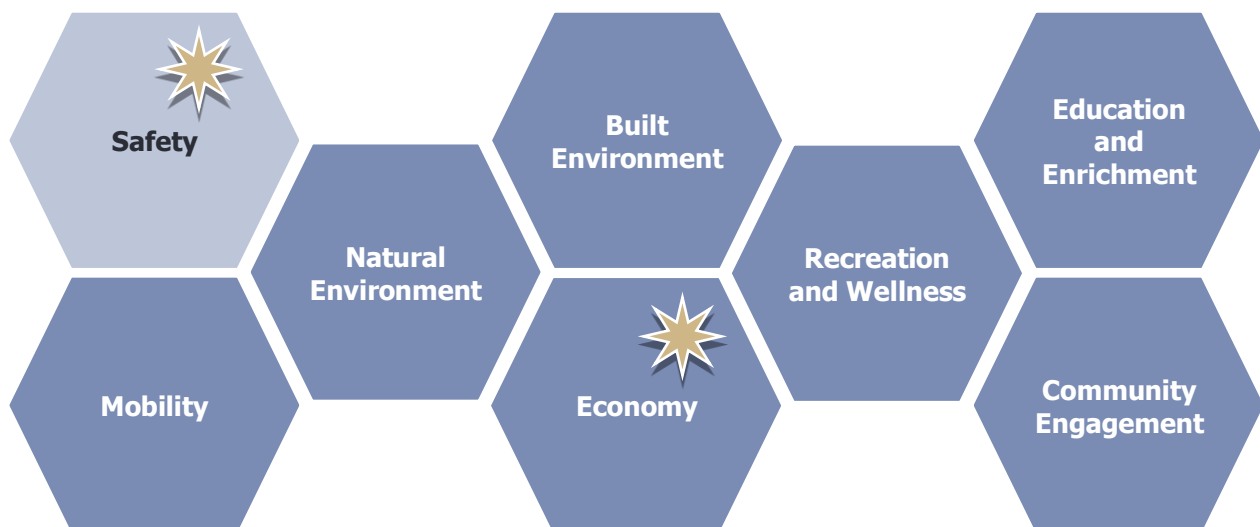
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the San José community in the coming two years. San José residents gave favorable ratings to Economy, but ratings related to Safety were generally lower than the national benchmark comparison. 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 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



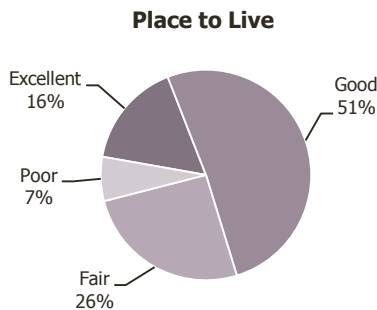
Community Characteristics

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, 67% 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. About 4 in 10 thought that the overall image was excellent or good and slightly fewer (34%) thought the overall appearance was excellent or good. About 2 in 10 thought San José was an excellent or good place to retire. Each of these ratings were lower than the national comparison.

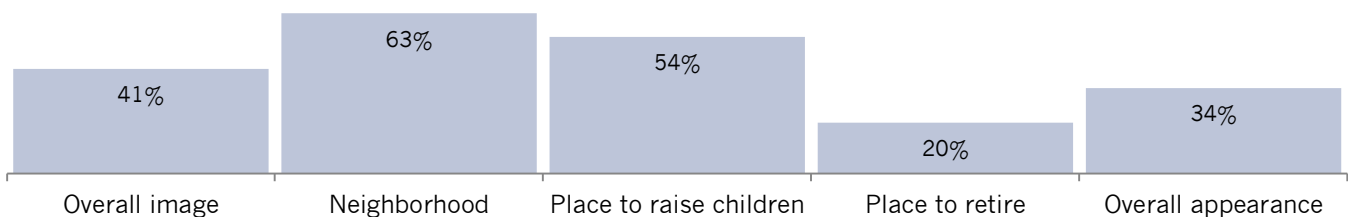
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Ratings were mixed and generally lower than or similar to the national comparisons. While about 8 in 10 residents felt safe in their neighborhood, only 6 in 10 felt safe in San José's downtown and only 4 in 10 gave a positive rating to their overall feeling of safety. All Safety ratings and all Natural Environment ratings were rated lower than the benchmark. Within Economy, ratings varied from 1 in 10 giving excellent or good ratings to the cost of living in the community to about 7 in 10 giving excellent or good ratings to shopping opportunities and San José as a place to work. The rating for employment opportunities was higher than the national comparison with about half of residents giving a positive rating. Ratings also varied within the facet of Built Environment with 1 in 10 giving a positive rating to affordable quality housing to about 4 in 10 giving positive ratings to the overall built environment, new developing in San José and public places where people want to spend time. Several Recreation and Wellness ratings decreased in 2015 compared to 2014. These included fitness opportunities, recreational opportunities, healthcare, availability of affordable quality food, mental healthcare and preventative health services (see *The NCS Trends over Time-San José 2015* report provided under separate cover).



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



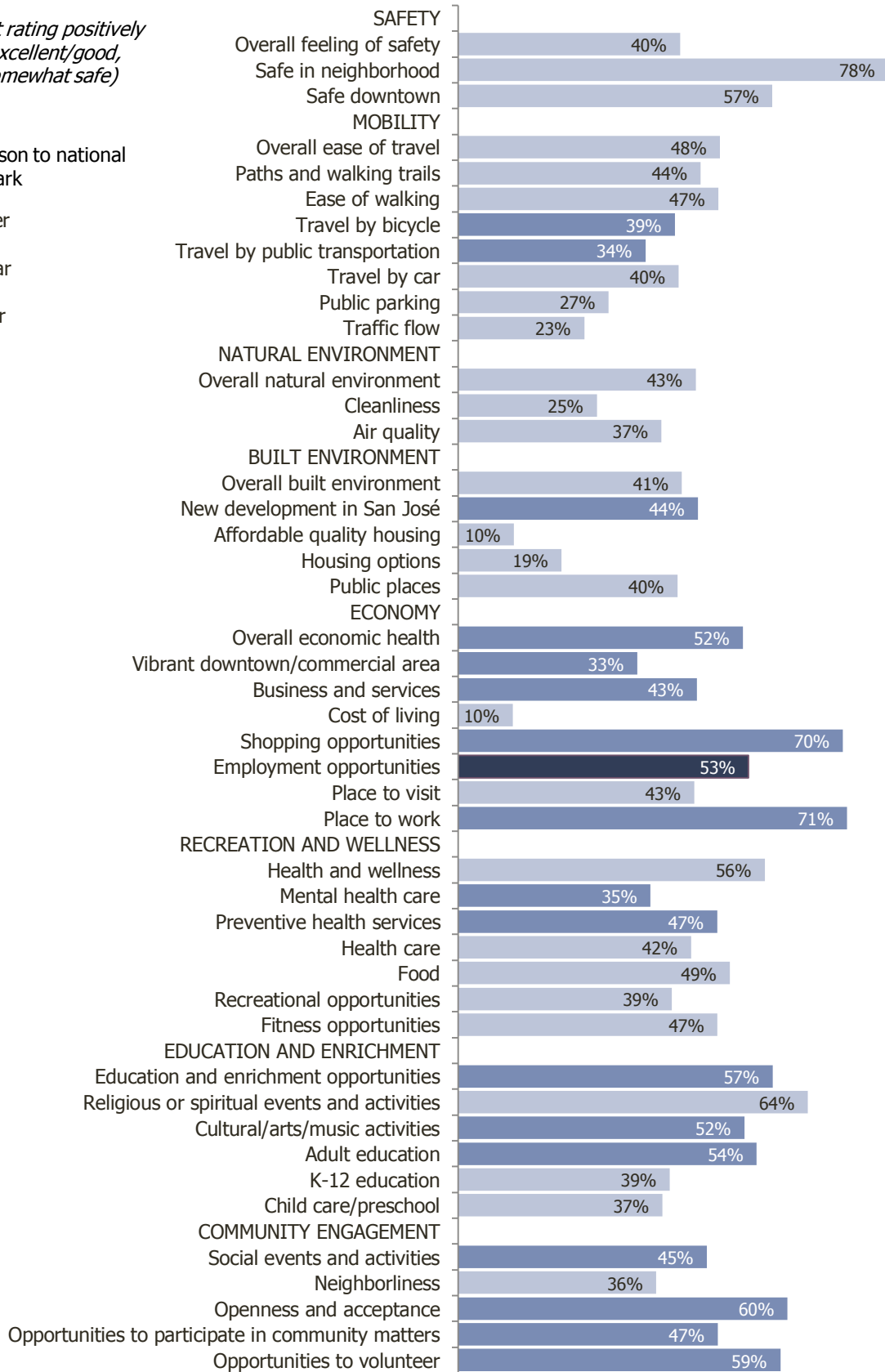
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



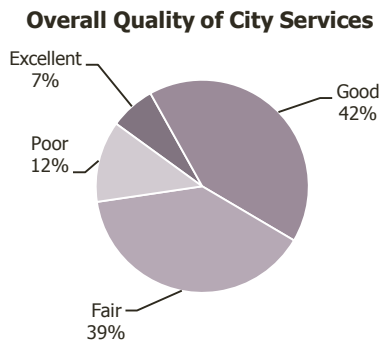
Governance

How well does the government of 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 34% 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. Between 25% and 39% of residents gave positive ratings to each aspect of San José’s leadership and governance and each rating was lower than the national benchmark.

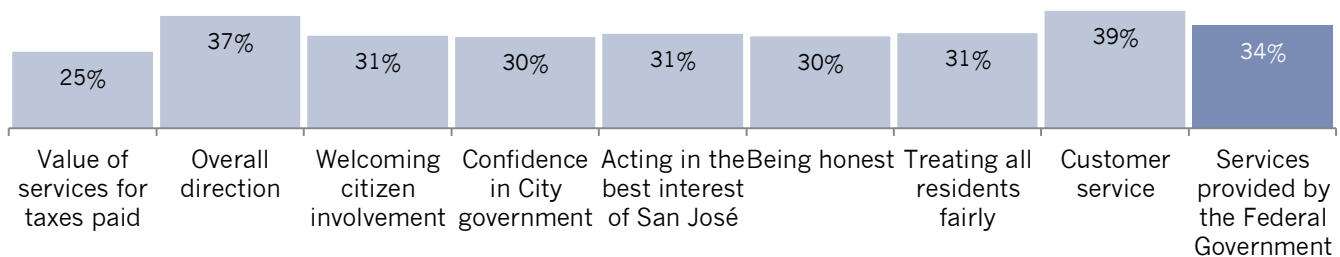
Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in San José. Safety ratings varied with about one-quarter of residents giving positive ratings to crime prevention and three-quarters giving positive ratings to fire services and ambulance/EMS services. When compared to 2014 ratings, the rating for ambulance/EMS services increased in 2015. About half of residents or fewer gave positive ratings to aspects of Mobility however the ratings for street lighting, traffic signal timing and bus or transit services were similar to the national benchmarks. Ratings within Natural Environment tended to be strong with about 7 in 10 giving positive ratings to garbage collection, recycling and yard waste pick-up, however only 4 in 10 gave positive ratings to natural areas preservation. About half of residents gave positive ratings to each of the three services related to Recreation and Wellness and each rating was lower than the benchmark comparison. Aspects of Built Environment tended to be similar to the national benchmarks; however code enforcement was rated positively by 22% of residents and was lower than the benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



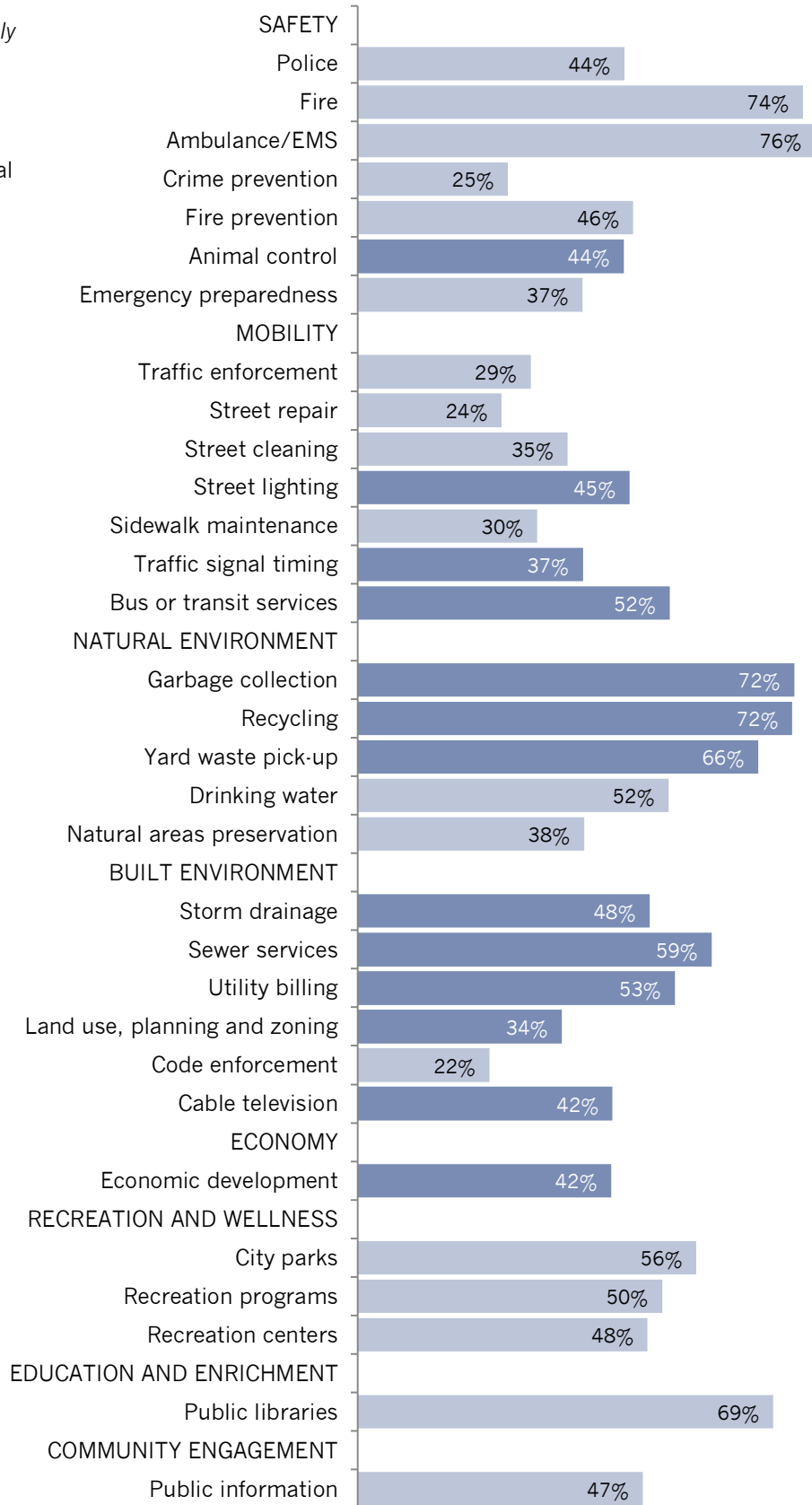
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

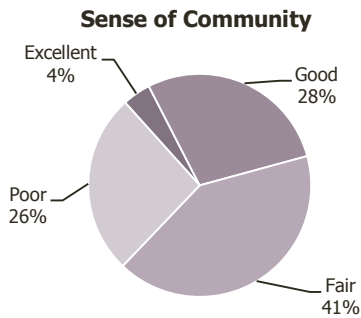


Participation

Are the residents of 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 much lower than the benchmark. Most participants plan on staying in San José and about two-thirds 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.

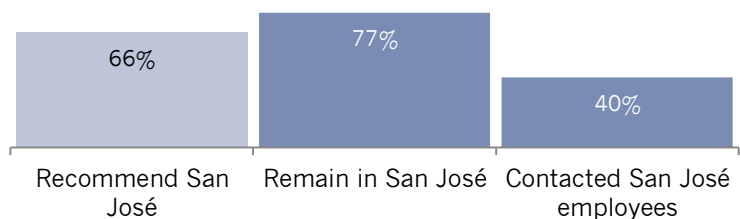
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Out of these 32 activities, rates of participation when compared to other communities were higher for four activities, similar for 23 and lower for five. The highest rates of participation were found for Natural Environment, where almost all respondents had conserved water and recycled at home and 8 in 10 had made their home more energy efficient. Water conservation was higher in San José than in other communities while the other two activities were similar. Within Safety, more participants than elsewhere in the nation stocked supplies for emergencies, a similar number of participants compared to other communities were not victims of crime and fewer had not reported a crime. Two of the three features within Mobility had higher rates of participation when compared to other communities (rate of using public transportation instead of driving and having carpooled instead of driving alone). Ratings for Recreation and Wellness were similar to the benchmark and at least 8 in 10 residents 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 were rated similar to the benchmark.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



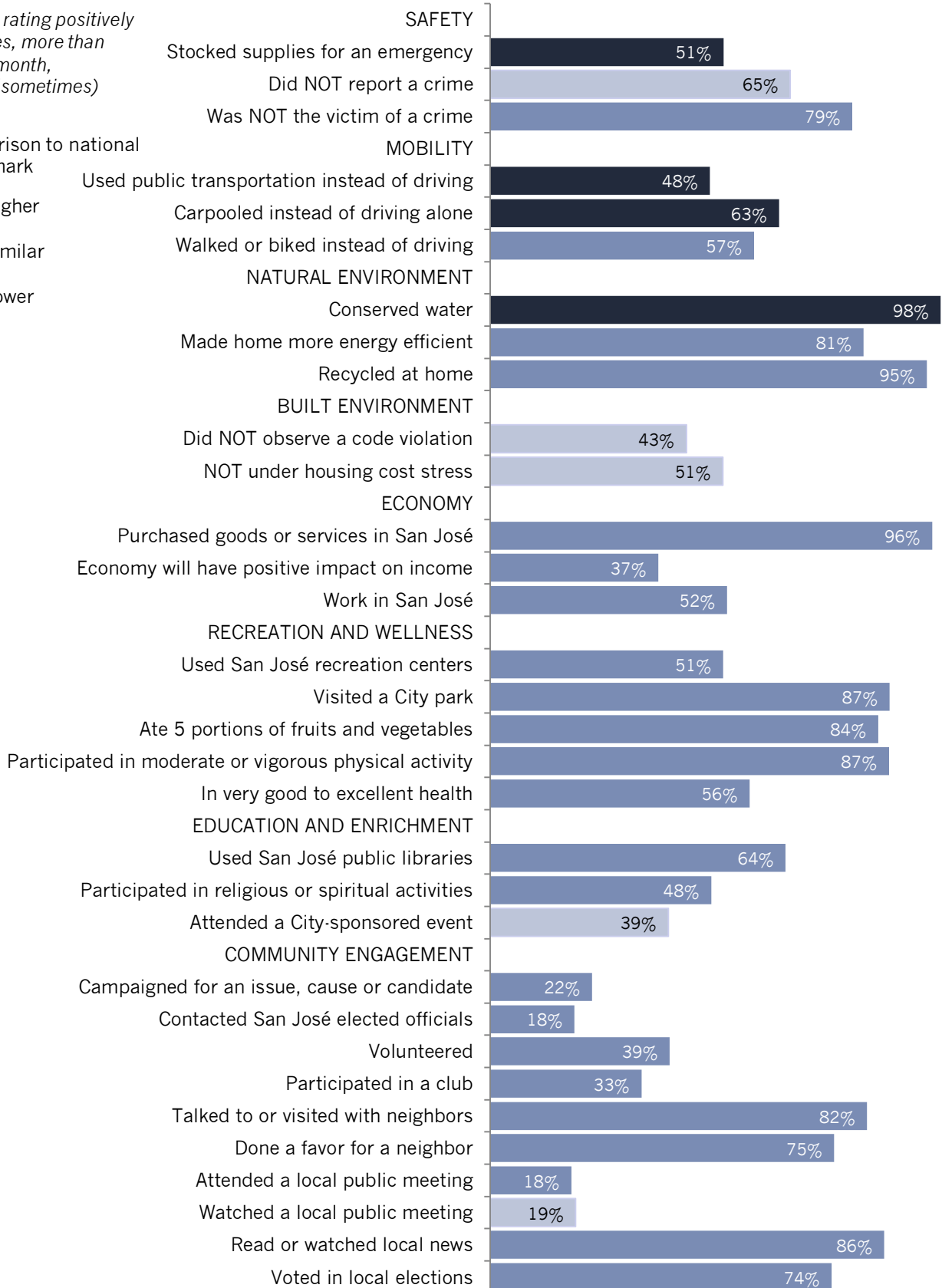
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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 55% of respondents felt very or somewhat safe in their neighborhood after dark, while about 2 in 10 felt safe in San José's downtown after dark. About half of participants felt very or somewhat safe from violent crime. About 35% of participants felt safe from property crimes.

Figure 4: Safety after Dark
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

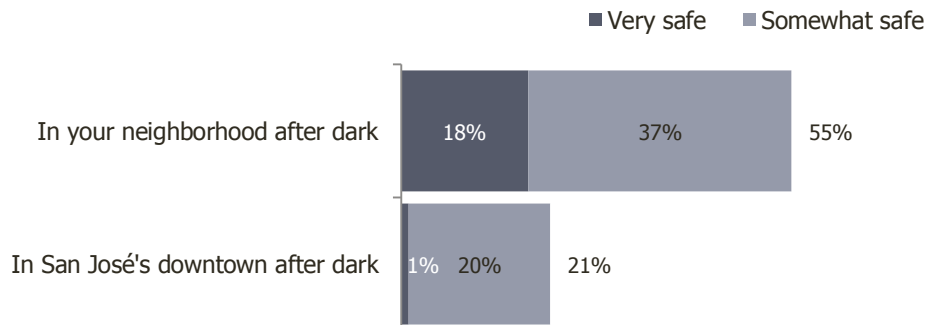
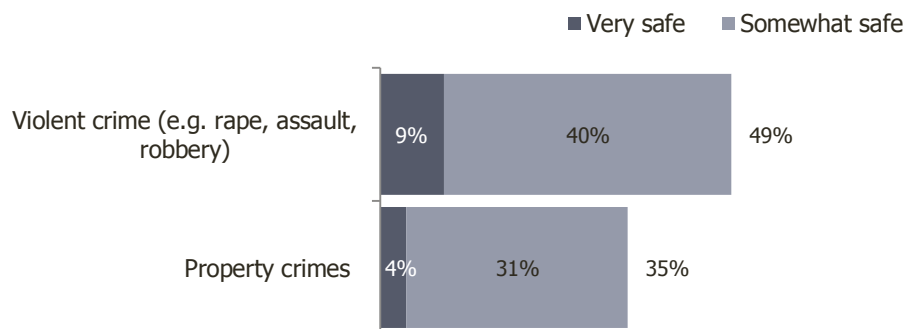


Figure 5: Safe from Violent or Property Crimes
Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following:

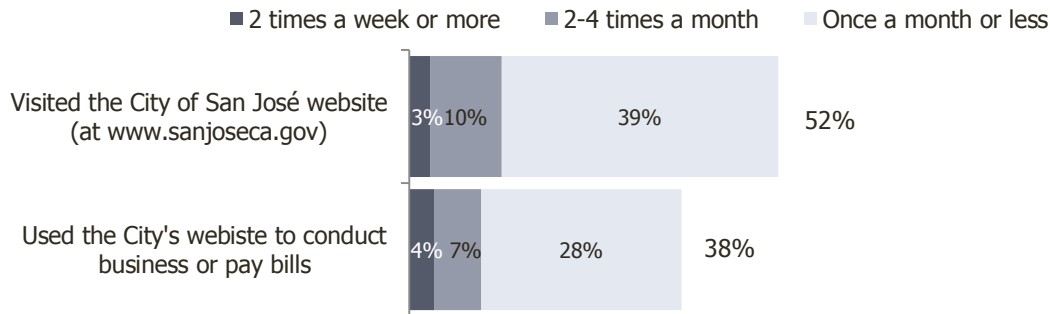


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When asked about using the City’s website, half of the participants reported that they had visited the City of San José website at least once a month. Around 4 in 10 participants had used the City’s website to conduct business or pay bills.

Figure 6: City Website Use

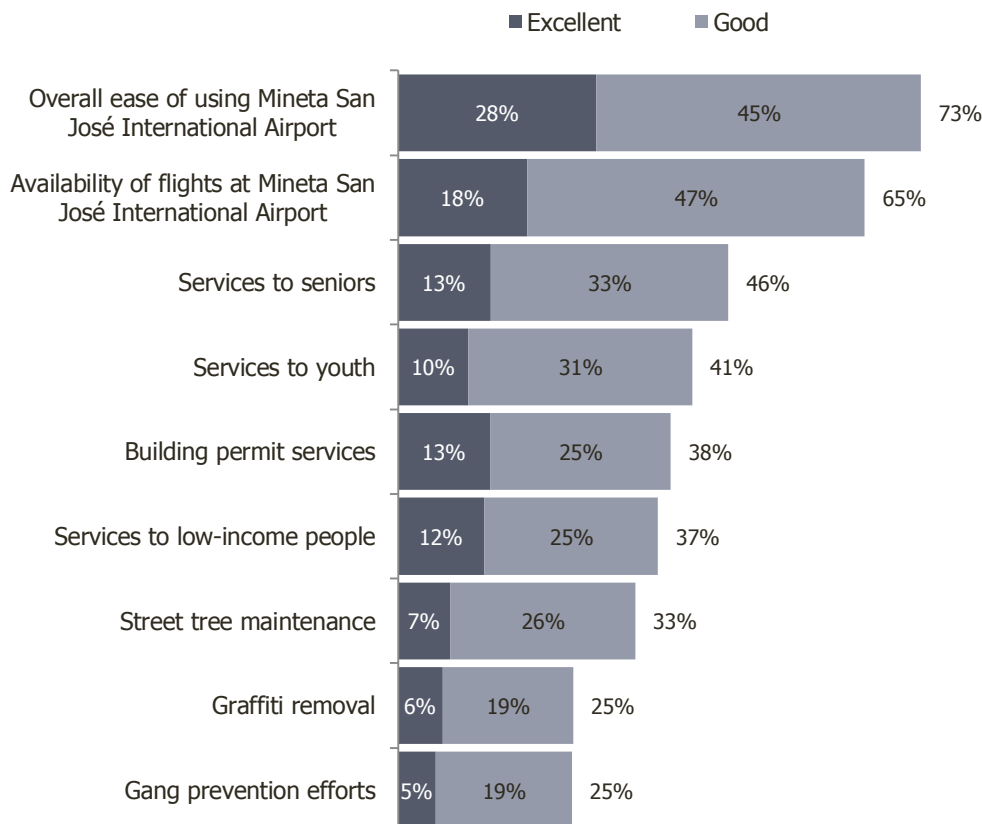
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done each of the following in San José:



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 and services to youth positively. About one-third of participants positively rated the remaining services of building permit services, 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:

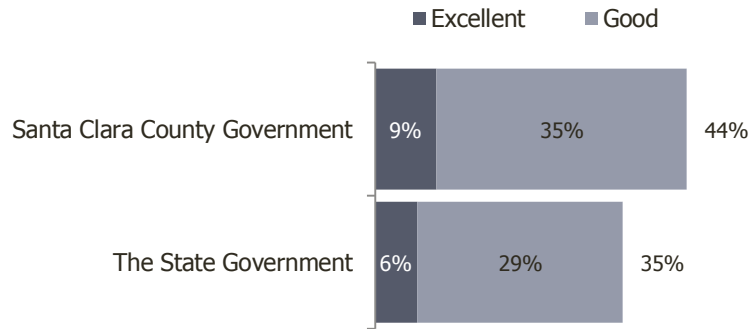


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A little less than half of participants gave positive ratings for the Santa Clara County Government, whereas about half of participants rated the City of San José government positively. Over one-third gave positive ratings for the State Government.

Figure 8: State and County Government

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



Conclusions

Safety continues to be a priority for the community.

As in 2014, survey participants indicated that Safety is an essential or very important focus area for San José over the next two years. While about 8 in 10 residents felt safe in their neighborhood, only 6 in 10 felt safe in San José's downtown and only 4 in 10 gave a positive rating to their overall feeling of safety. When asked about feelings of safety after dark, about 55% of respondents felt very or somewhat safe in their neighborhood after dark, while about 2 in 10 felt safe in San José's downtown after dark. All Safety ratings within Community Characteristics were rated lower than the benchmark. Ratings for Safety services (such as police, fire, etc.) varied with about one-quarter of residents giving positive ratings to crime prevention and three-quarters giving positive ratings to fire services and ambulance/EMS services. When compared to 2014 ratings, the rating for ambulance/EMS services increased in 2015. Within Participation, more residents than elsewhere in the nation stocked supplies for emergencies, a similar number of participants compared to other communities were not victims of crime and fewer had not reported a crime.

Residents value Economy and related ratings varied.

Participants indicated that the Economy was an important focus area and economic ratings tended to be similar compared to other communities. Within Community Characteristics, ratings varied from 1 in 10 giving excellent or good ratings to the cost of living in the community to about 7 in 10 giving excellent or good ratings to shopping opportunities and San José as a place to work. The rating for employment opportunities was higher than the national comparison with about half of residents giving a positive rating. Within Governance, economic development was rated positively by 4 in 10 residents and was similar to ratings given in communities across the nation.

Residents participate in Recreation and Wellness activities, but quality ratings have decreased over time.

Rates of participation related to Recreation and Wellness were all similar to the benchmark and at least 8 in 10 residents reported visiting a park, eating at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables and exercising. Several Community Characteristics related to Recreation and Wellness decreased in 2015 compared to 2014. These included fitness opportunities, recreational opportunities, healthcare, availability of affordable quality food, mental healthcare and preventative health services. Within Governance, the rating for recreation centers has also decreased over time with about half of residents giving a positive rating.