

THE NCS™

The National Community Survey™

San José, CA

*Community Livability Report
2020*



POWERED BY POLCO

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

NRC is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

About The NCS™

The National Community 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 considering ten central facets of a community:

- Economy
- Mobility
- Community Design
- Utilities
- Safety
- Natural Environment
- Parks and Recreation
- Health and Wellness
- Education, Arts and Culture
- Inclusivity and Engagement



The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 3,750 residents of the City of San José. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 2% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.

Overview of Results

Ratings of San José's economy continue to paint a broad picture.

Ratings within Economy varied dramatically from as few as four percent offering positive evaluations to cost of living to as many as 67% offering positive evaluations to shopping opportunities. Comparisons to other communities across the nation were also varied with San José's overall economic health receiving lower ratings than comparison communities and employment opportunities receiving higher ratings. Further, when 2020 ratings were compared to 2019 ratings three aspects of Economy declined (overall economic health of San José, shopping opportunities and employment opportunities) while one improved (overall quality of business and service establishments in San José). Aside from the mix of quality ratings, San José residents indicated that the overall facet of Economy was similar in importance and lower in quality when compared to the national benchmark deeming this as an area of focus; further, only 2 in 10 residents reported a positive economic outlook (a rating lower than the national average) which creates an area of opportunity.

Various aspects of Parks and Recreation have declined over time, but ratings of personal health are on the up.

Four aspects of Parks and Recreation received lower ratings in 2020 compared to 2019 including City parks, recreation centers or facilities, recreation programs or classes and recreational opportunities. All seven listed aspects of Parks and Recreation were lower than the national averages; however, all were also ratings positively by about half of respondents. Interestingly, residents offered higher evaluations of their personal health in 2020 compared to 2019.

Resident views of local governance and leadership remain stable over time but could be an area of focus.

While each aspect related to local governance was given ratings lower than their national comparisons, no changes were observed between 2019 and 2020, even amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Governance evaluations ranged from between about one-quarter and one-half of residents offering positive ratings. The highest rated item was overall customer service with 50% offering excellent or good ratings; the highest rating given to this aspect since 2013.

Facets of Livability

Ratings of importance were compared to ratings of quality to help guide City staff and officials with decisions on future resource allocation and strategic planning areas. When competition for limited resources demands that efficiencies or cutbacks be instituted, it is wise not only to know what facets are deemed most important to residents' quality of life, but which among the most important are perceived to be of relatively lower quality in your community. It is these facets of community livability – more important facets perceived as being of lower quality – to which attention needs to be paid first.

		QUALITY		
		LOWER	SIMILAR	HIGHER
IMPORTANCE	HIGHER			
	SIMILAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Mobility • Community Design • Utilities • Safety • Natural Environment • Parks and Recreation • Health and Wellness • Education, Arts and Culture 		
	LOWER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusivity and Engagement 		

FIGURE 1: QUALITY OF FACETS OF LIVABILITY- SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall economic health of San José	↓	↓	44%
Overall quality of the transportation system in San José	↓↓	↓	30%
Overall design or layout of San José's residential and commercial areas	↓	↑	37%
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in San José	↓	*	48%
Overall feeling of safety in San José	↓↓	↔	33%
Overall quality of natural environment in San José	↓↓	↔	41%
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities	↓↓	*	48%
Overall health and wellness opportunities in San José	↓	↔	49%
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts	↓	↓	48%
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	↓↓	*	24%

FIGURE 2: IMPORTANCE OF FACETS OF LIVABILITY- SUMMARY

Percent essential or very important	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall economic health of San José	↔	↔	87%
Overall quality of the transportation system in San José	↔	↓	75%
Overall design or layout of San José's residential and commercial areas	↔	↔	70%
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in San José	↔	*	85%
Overall feeling of safety in San José	↔	↔	92%
Overall quality of natural environment in San José	↔	↔	80%
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities	↔	*	75%
Overall health and wellness opportunities in San José	↔	↔	72%
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts	↔	↓	72%
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	↓↓	↓	62%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Quality of Life

Measuring community livability starts with assessing the quality of life of those who live there, and ensuring that the community is attractive, accessible, and welcoming to all.

OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN JOSÉ

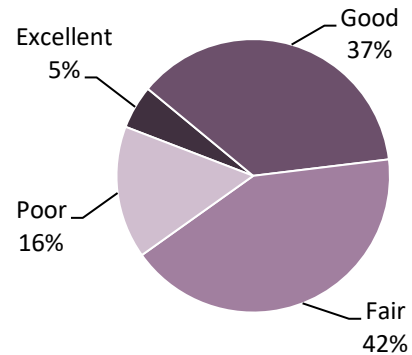


FIGURE 3: QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN JOSÉ

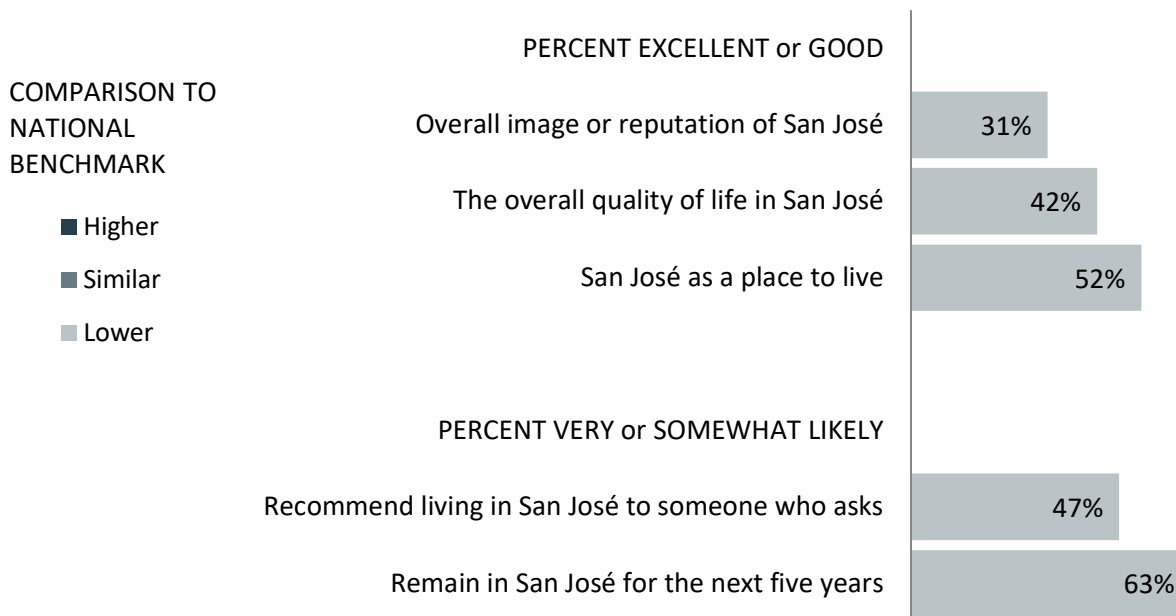


FIGURE 4: QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN JOSÉ - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall image or reputation of San José	↓↓	↔	31%
The overall quality of life in San José	↓↓	↔	42%
San José as a place to live	↓↓	↔	52%

FIGURE 5: RECOMMEND SAN JOSÉ - SUMMARY

Percent very or somewhat likely	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Recommend living in San José to someone who asks	↓↓	↔	47%
Remain in San José for the next five years	↓	↔	63%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Governance

Strong local governments produce results that meet the needs of residents while making the best use of available resources, and are responsive to the present and future needs of the community as a whole.

OVERALL CONFIDENCE IN SAN JOSÉ GOVERNMENT

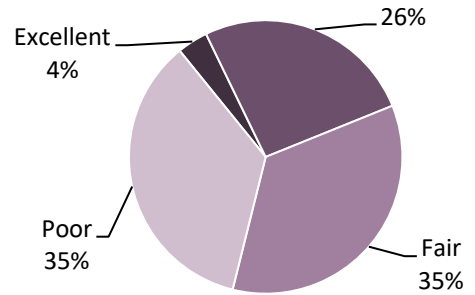


FIGURE 6: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND SERVICES

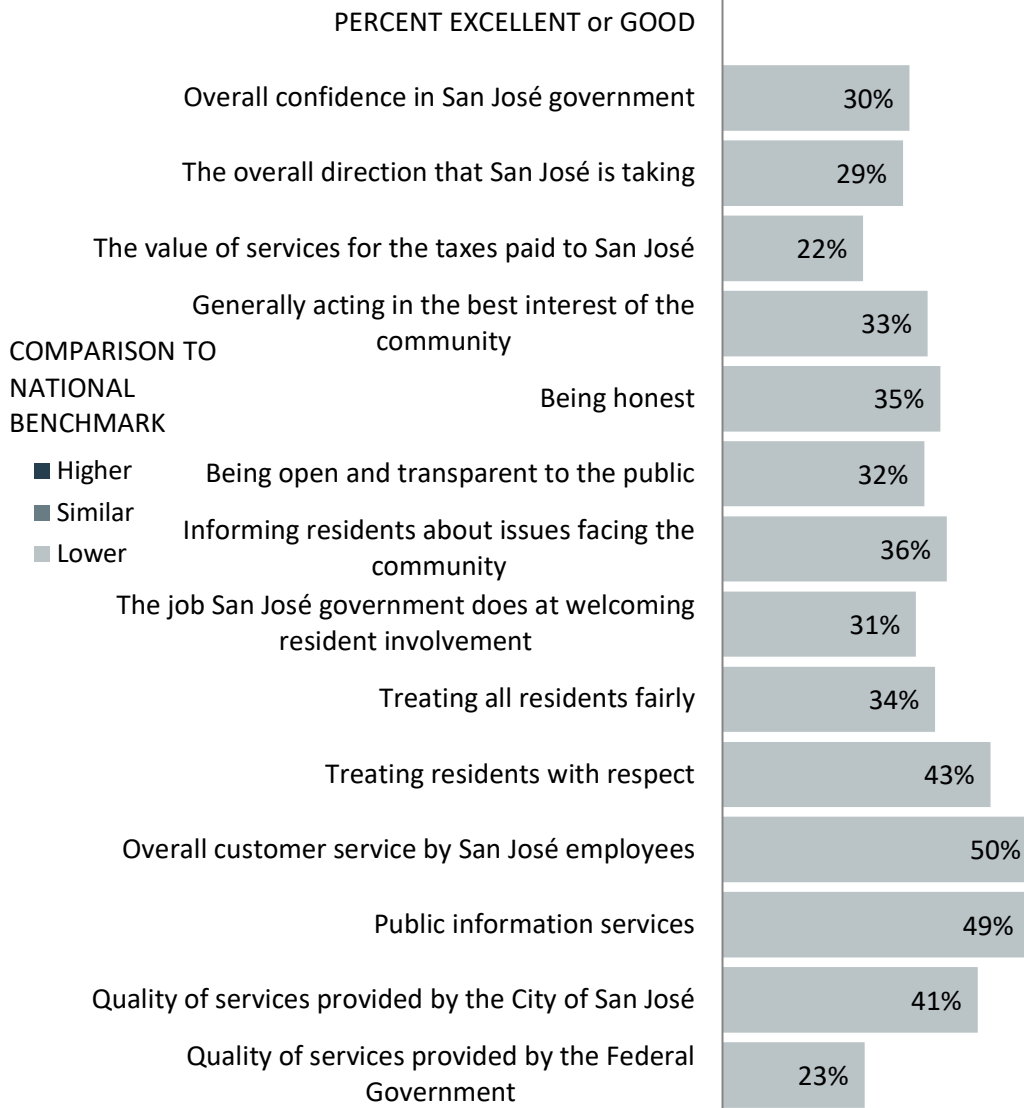


FIGURE 7: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND SERVICES - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall confidence in San José government	↓	↔	30%
The overall direction that San José is taking	↓↓	↔	29%
The value of services for the taxes paid to San José	↓↓	↔	22%
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	↓	↔	33%
Being honest	↓	↔	35%
Being open and transparent to the public	↓	*	32%
Informing residents about issues facing the community	↓	*	36%
The job San José government does at welcoming resident involvement	↓	↔	31%
Treating all residents fairly	↓	↔	34%
Treating residents with respect	↓	*	43%
Overall customer service by San José employees	↓	↔	50%
Public information services	↓	↔	49%
Quality of services provided by the City of San José	↓↓	↔	41%
Quality of services provided by the Federal Government	↓	↔	23%

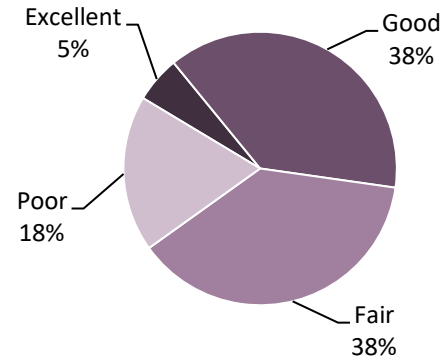
Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Economy

Local governments work together with private and nonprofit businesses, and with the community at large, to foster sustainable growth, create jobs, and promote a thriving local economy.

OVERALL ECONOMIC HEALTH OF SAN JOSÉ



What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months?

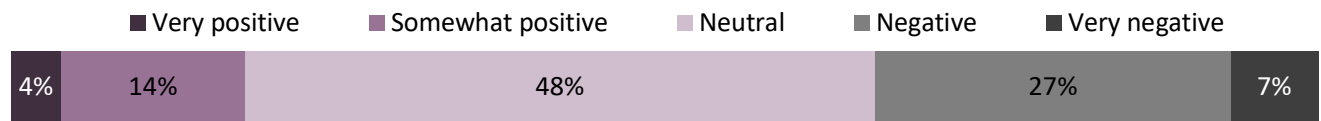


FIGURE 8: ECONOMIC HEALTH



FIGURE 9: ECONOMIC HEALTH - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall economic health of San José	↓	↓	44%
Economic development	↔	↔	41%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in San José	↔	↑	61%
Variety of business and service establishments in San José	↔	*	62%
Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area	↓	↔	30%
Shopping opportunities	↔	↓	67%
San José as a place to visit	↓↓	↔	31%
San José as a place to work	↔	↔	65%
Employment opportunities	↑	↓	57%
Cost of living in San José	↓↓	↔	4%

FIGURE 10: ECONOMIC IMPACT - SUMMARY

Percent very or somewhat positive	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Economy will have positive impact on income	↓	↔	18%

FIGURE 11: HOUSING COST - SUMMARY

Percent for whom housing costs are NOT 30% or more of household income	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
NOT experiencing housing costs stress	↔	↔	59%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available
 ||

Mobility

The ease with which residents can move about their communities, whether for commuting, leisure, or recreation, plays a major role in the quality of life for all who live, work and play in the community.

OVERALL QUALITY OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN SAN JOSÉ

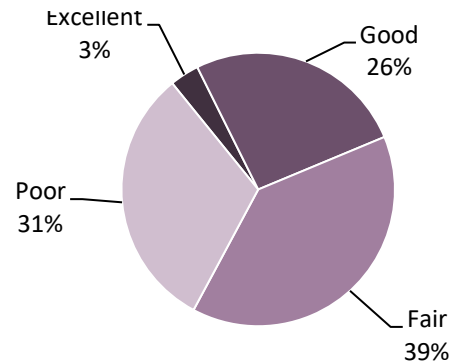


FIGURE 12: MOBILITY IN SAN JOSÉ

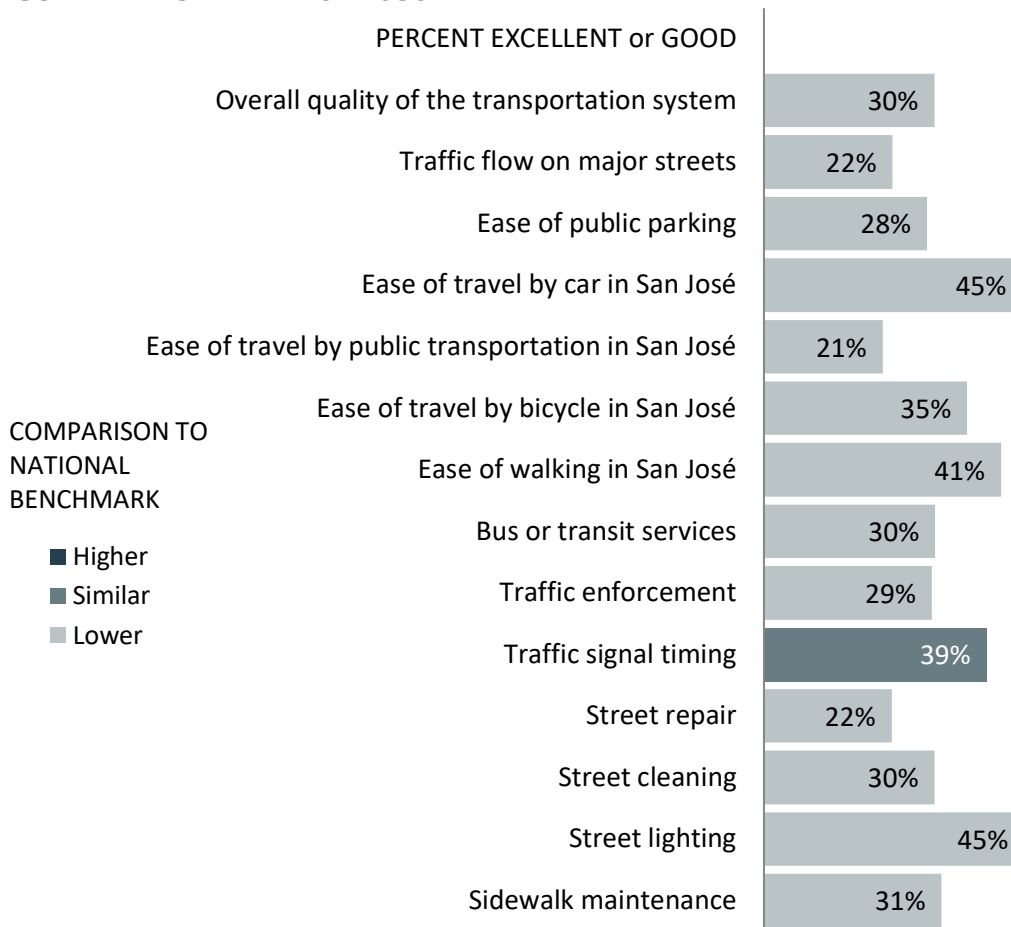


FIGURE 13: USE OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

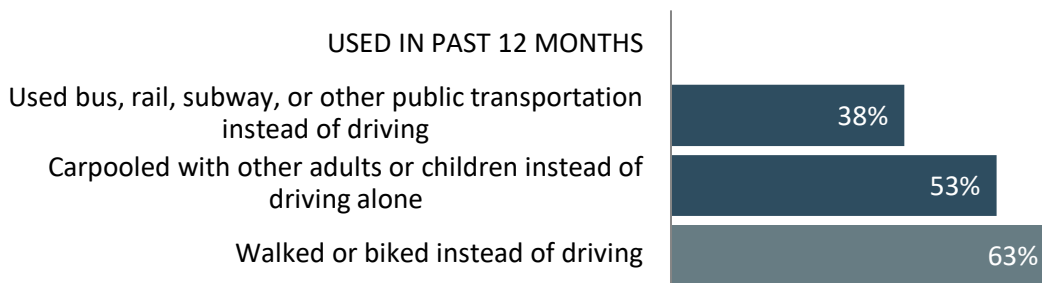


FIGURE 14: MOBILITY IN SAN JOSÉ - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of the transportation system in San José	↓↓	↓	30%
Traffic flow on major streets	↓	↑	22%
Ease of travel by car in San José	↓	↑	45%
Ease of travel by public transportation in San José	↓	↔	21%
Ease of travel by bicycle in San José	↓	↔	35%
Ease of walking in San José	↓	↔	41%
Ease of public parking	↓	↔	28%
Bus or transit services	↓	↔	30%
Traffic enforcement	↓↓	↔	29%
Traffic signal timing	↔	↔	39%
Street repair	↓	↔	22%
Street cleaning	↓↓	↔	30%
Street lighting	↓	↔	45%
Sidewalk maintenance	↓	↔	31%

FIGURE 15: USE OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES - SUMMARY

Percent who did this in past 12 months	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Used bus, rail, subway, or other public transportation instead of driving	↑	↔	38%
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	↑	↓	53%
Walked or biked instead of driving	↔	↔	63%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Community Design

A well-designed community enhances the quality of life for its residents by encouraging smart land use and zoning, ensuring that affordable housing is accessible to all, and providing access to parks and other green spaces.

OVERALL DESIGN OR LAYOUT OF SAN JOSÉ'S RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS

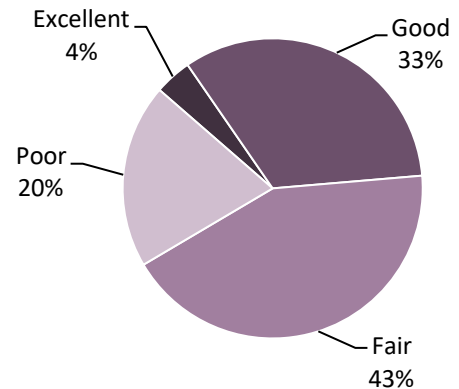


FIGURE 16: COMMUNITY DESIGN

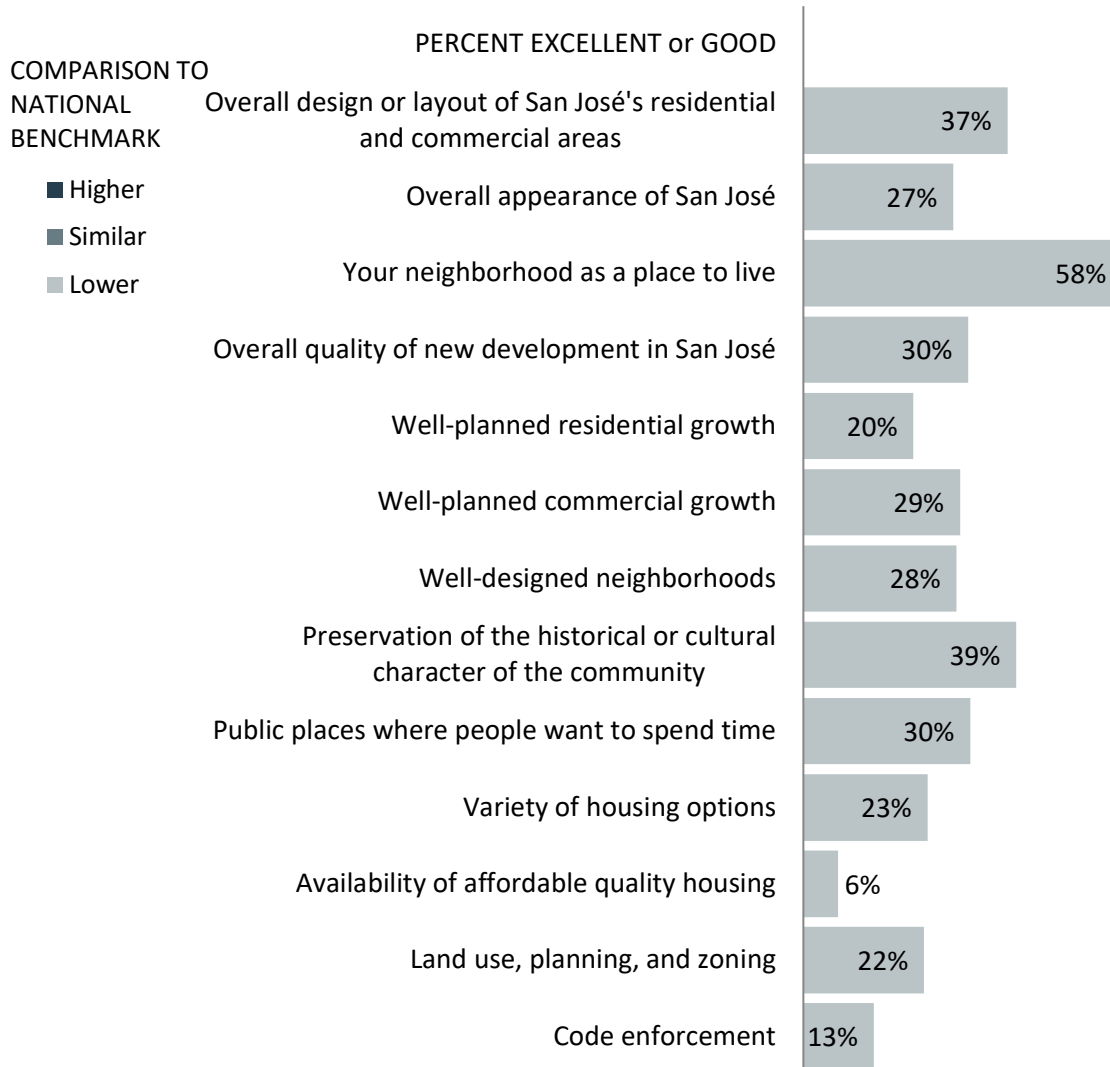


FIGURE 17: COMMUNITY DESIGN - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall design or layout of San José's residential and commercial areas	↓	↑	37%
Overall appearance of San José	↓↓	↔	27%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	↓	↔	58%
Overall quality of new development in San José	↓	↓	30%
Well-planned residential growth	↓↓	*	20%
Well-planned commercial growth	↓	*	29%
Well-designed neighborhoods	↓↓	*	28%
Preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community	↓	*	39%
Public places where people want to spend time	↓↓	↔	30%
Variety of housing options	↓↓	↔	23%
Availability of affordable quality housing	↓↓	↔	6%
Land use, planning, and zoning	↓	↔	22%
Code enforcement	↓↓	↓	13%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Utilities

Services such as water, gas, electricity, and internet access play a vital role in ensuring the physical and economic health and well-being of the communities they serve.

OVERALL QUALITY OF THE UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN SAN JOSÉ

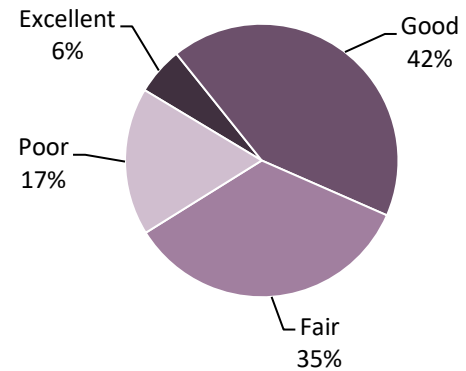


FIGURE 18: UTILITES

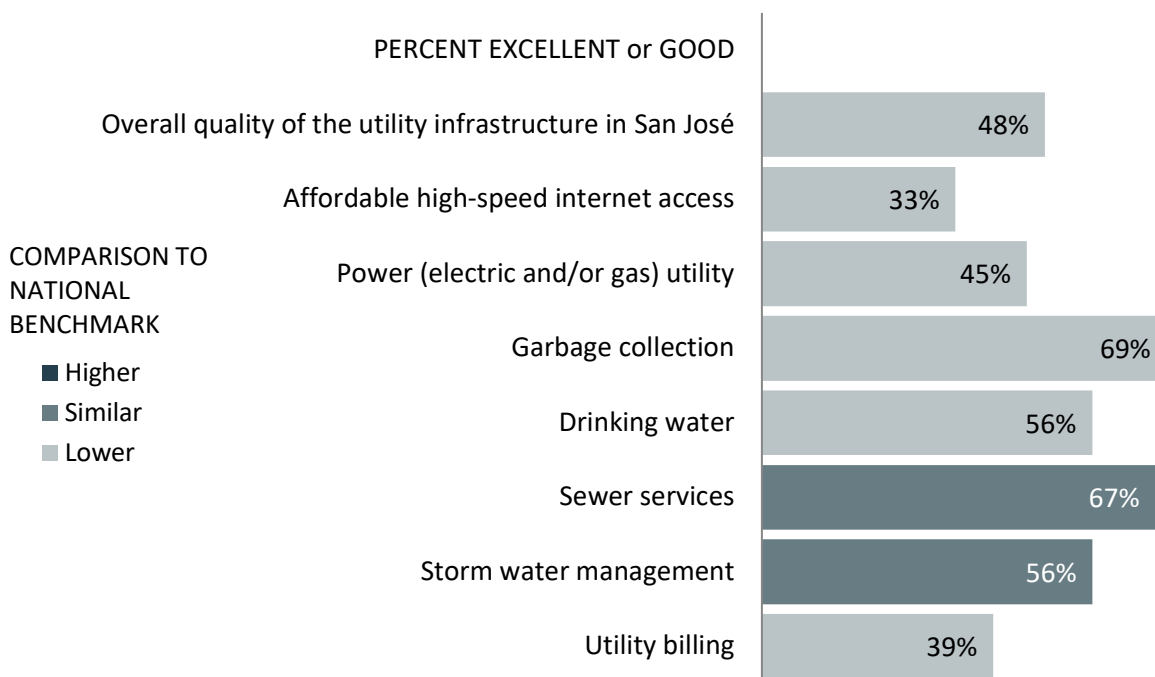


FIGURE 19: UTILITES - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in San José	↓	*	48%
Affordable high-speed internet access	↓	*	33%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	↔	↔	45%
Garbage collection	↓	↓	69%
Drinking water	↓	↔	56%
Sewer services	↔	↔	67%
Storm water management	↔	↔	56%
Utility billing	↓	↓	39%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Safety

Public safety is often the most important task facing local governments. All residents should feel safe and secure in their neighborhoods and in the greater community, and providing robust Safety-related services is essential to residents' quality of life.

OVERALL FEELING OF SAFETY IN SAN JOSÉ

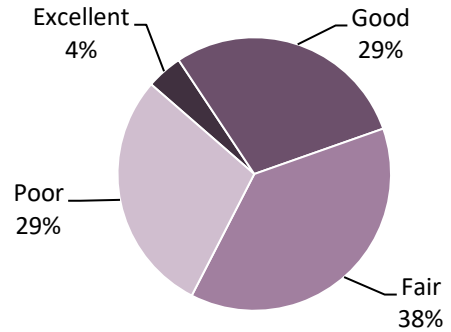


FIGURE 20: SAFETY IN SAN JOSÉ

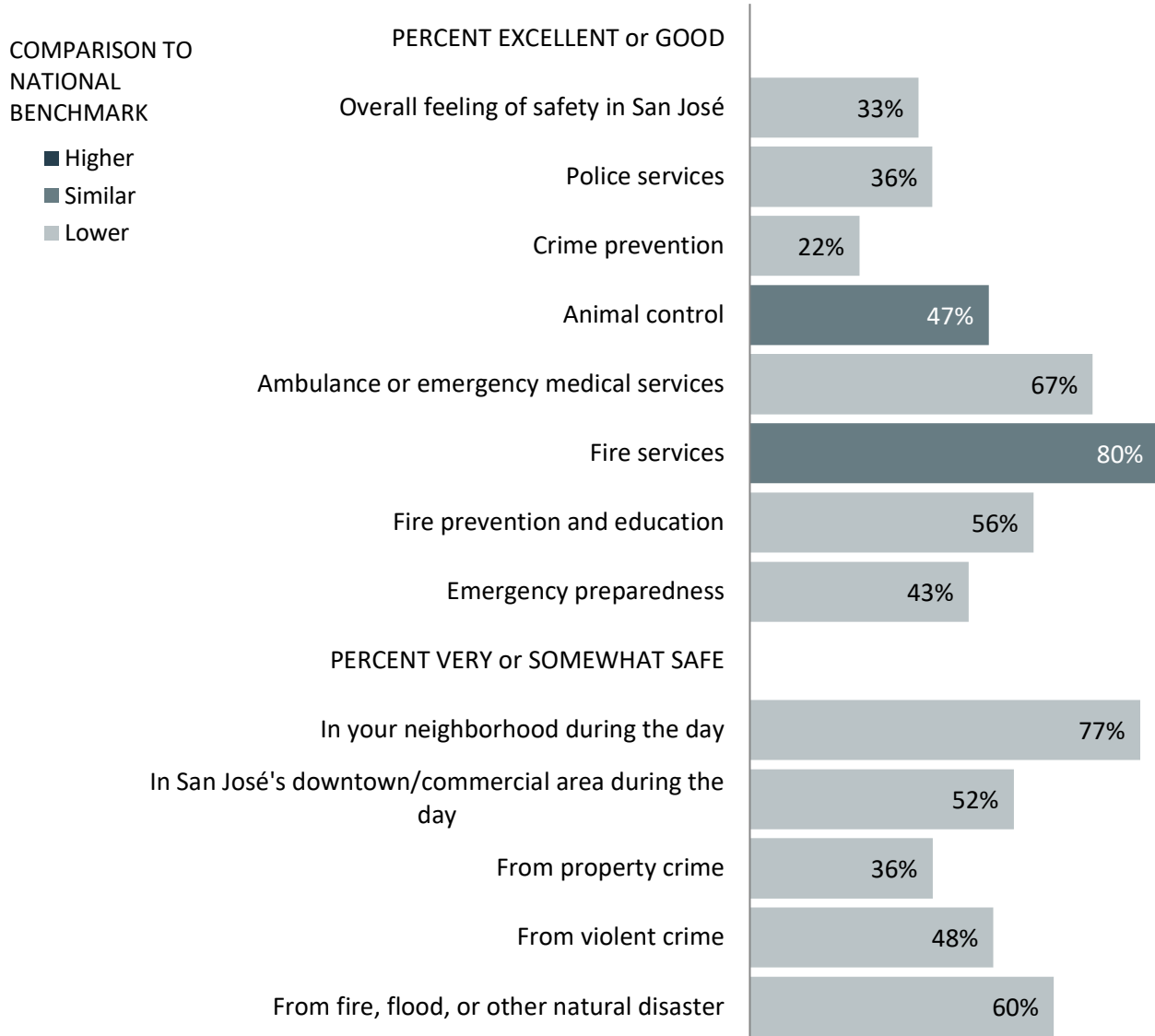


FIGURE 21: SAFETY-RELATED SERVICES - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall feeling of safety in San José	↓↓	↔	33%
Police services	↓↓	↓	36%
Crime prevention	↓↓	↔	22%
Animal control	↔	↔	47%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	↓	↓	67%
Fire services	↔	↔	80%
Fire prevention and education	↓	↔	56%
Emergency preparedness	↓	↔	43%

FIGURE 22: FEELINGS OF SAFETY- SUMMARY

Percent who feel very or somewhat safe	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
In your neighborhood during the day	↓	↔	77%
In San José's downtown/commercial area during the day	↓↓	↔	52%
From property crime	↓↓	*	36%
From violent crime	↓↓	*	48%
From fire, flood, or other natural disaster	↓	*	60%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Natural Environment

The natural environment plays a vital role in the health and well-being of residents. The natural spaces in which residents live and experience their communities has a direct and profound effect on quality of life.

OVERALL QUALITY OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAN JOSÉ

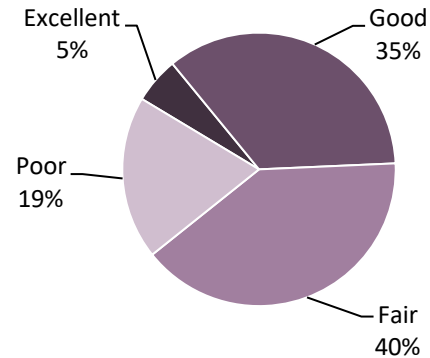


FIGURE 23: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

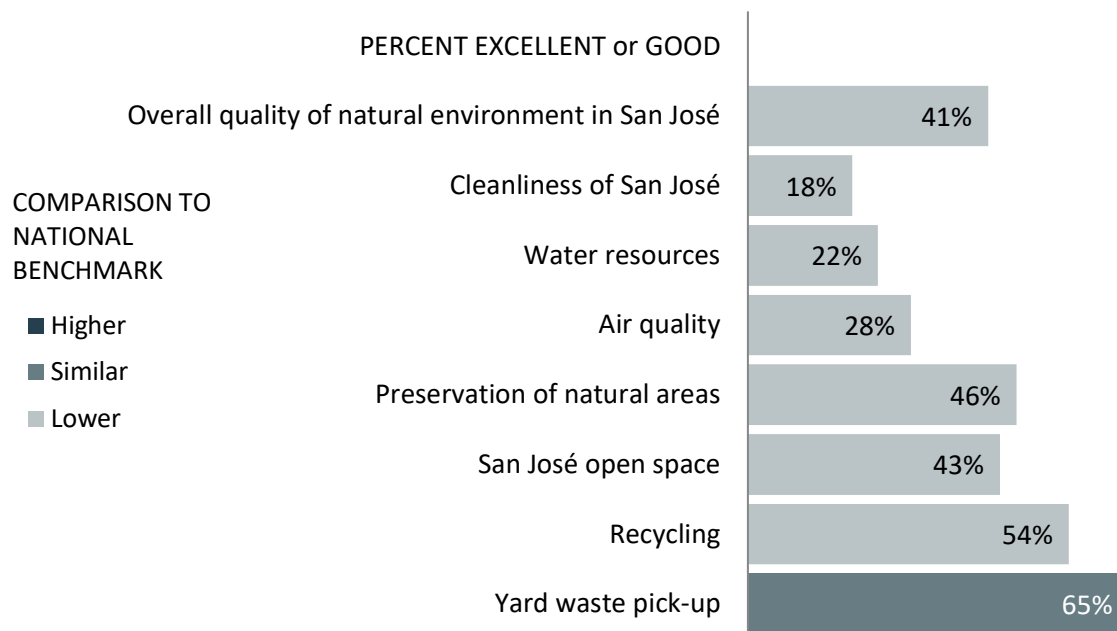


FIGURE 24: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of natural environment in San José	↓↓	↔	41%
Cleanliness of San José	↓↓	↔	18%
Water resources	↓↓	*	22%
Air quality	↓↓	↓	28%
Preservation of natural areas	↓	↔	46%
San José open space	↓	*	43%
Recycling	↓	↓	54%
Yard waste pick-up	↔	↓	65%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Parks and Recreation

"There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment."
 - National Recreation and Park Association

OVERALL QUALITY OF PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN SAN JOSÉ

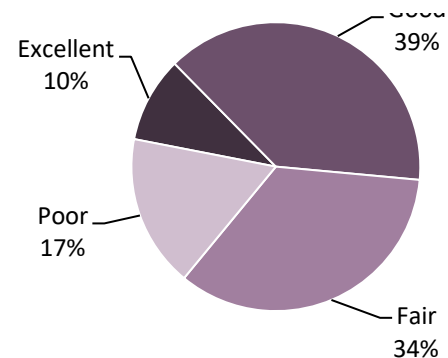


FIGURE 25: PARKS AND RECREATION



FIGURE 26: PARKS AND RECREATION - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities	↓↓	*	48%
Availability of paths and walking trails	↓	↔	45%
City parks	↓↓	↓	51%
Recreational opportunities	↓	↓	44%
Recreation programs or classes	↓	↓	48%
Recreation centers or facilities	↓	↓	48%
Fitness opportunities	↓	↔	51%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Health and Wellness

The characteristics of and amenities available in the communities in which people live has a direct impact on the health and wellness of residents, and thus, on their quality of life overall.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES IN SAN JOSÉ

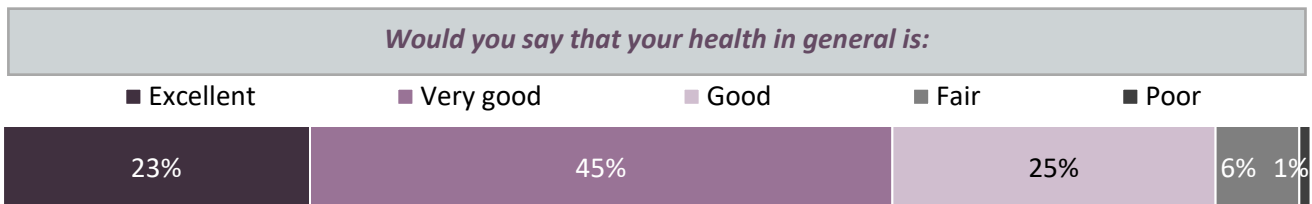
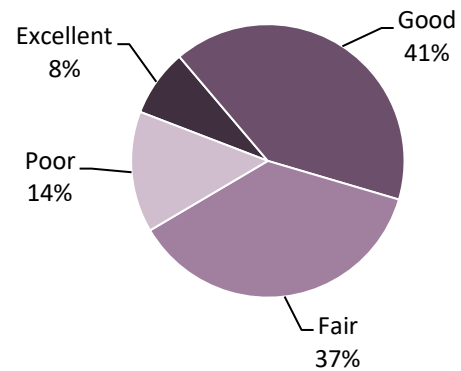


FIGURE 27: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

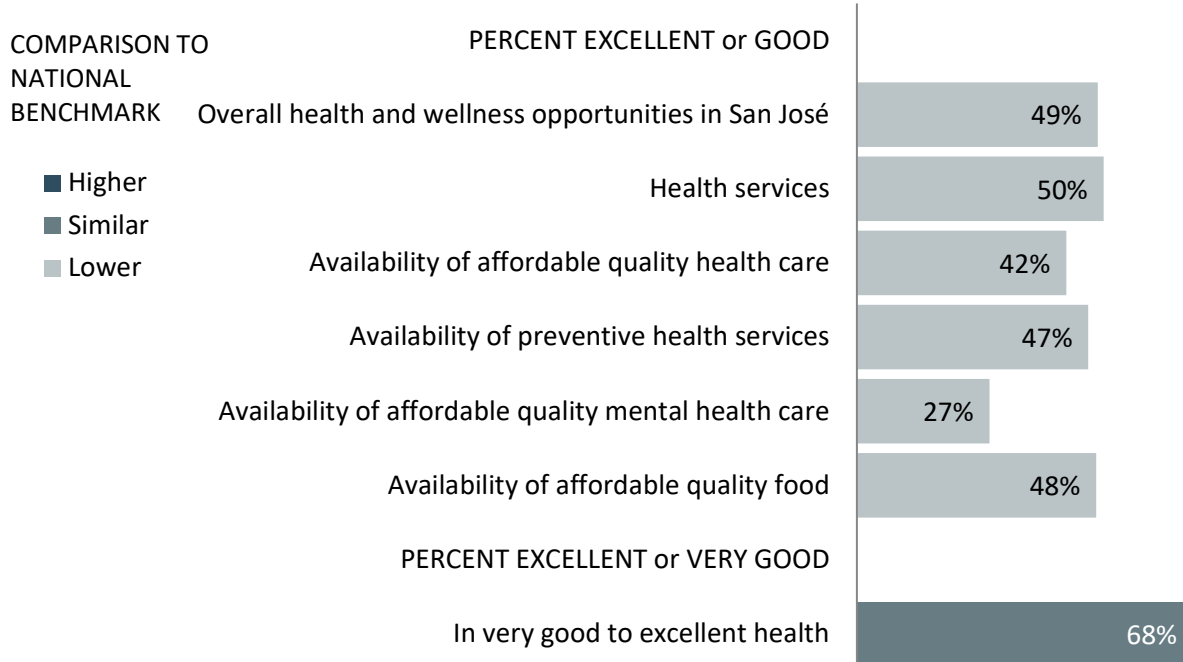


FIGURE 28: HEALTH AND WELLNESS - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall health and wellness opportunities in San José	↓	↔	49%
Health services	↓	*	50%
Availability of affordable quality health care	↓	↔	42%
Availability of preventive health services	↓	↔	47%
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	↓	↔	27%
Availability of affordable quality food	↓	↔	48%

FIGURE 29: PERSONAL HEALTH - SUMMARY

	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
In very good to excellent health	↔	↑	68%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Education, Arts, and Culture

Participation in the arts, in educational opportunities, and in cultural activities is linked to increased civic engagement, greater social tolerance, and enhanced enjoyment of the local community.

OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND THE ARTS IN SAN JOSÉ

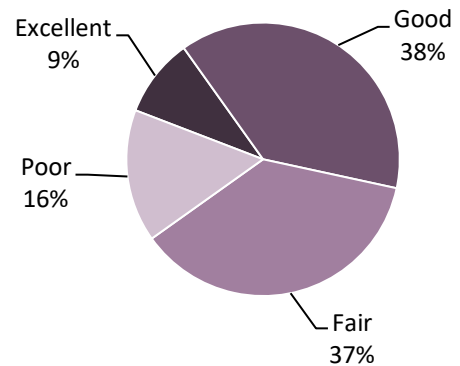


FIGURE 30: EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

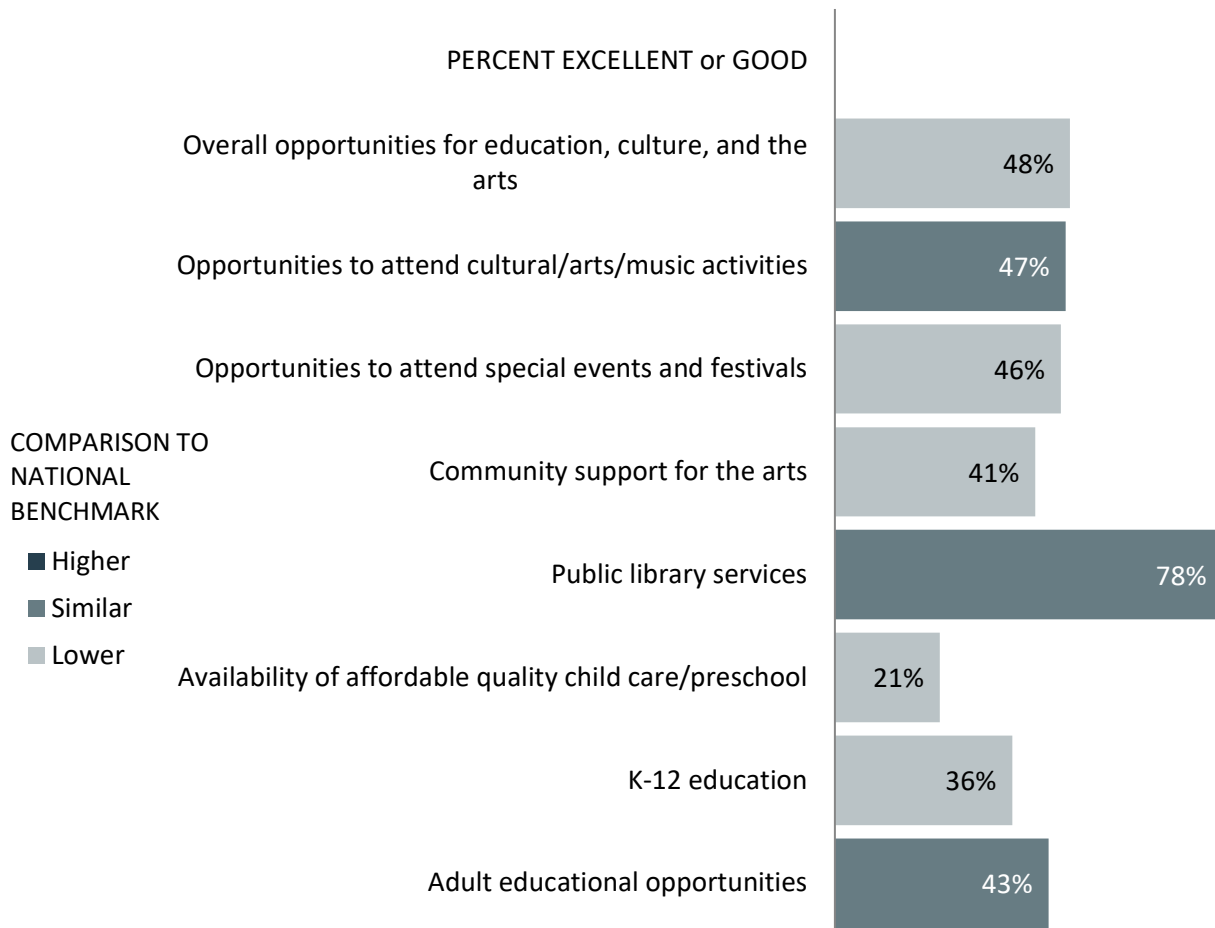


FIGURE 31: EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts	↓	↓	48%
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	↔	↓	47%
Opportunities to attend special events and festivals	↓	*	46%
Community support for the arts	↓	*	41%
Public library services	↔	↔	78%
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	↓↓	↔	21%
K-12 education	↓↓	↔	36%
Adult educational opportunities	↔	↔	43%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Inclusivity and Engagement

Inclusivity refers to a cultural and environmental feeling of belonging; residents who feel invited to participate within their communities feel more included, involved, and engaged than those who do not.

RESIDENTS' CONNECTION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THEIR COMMUNITY

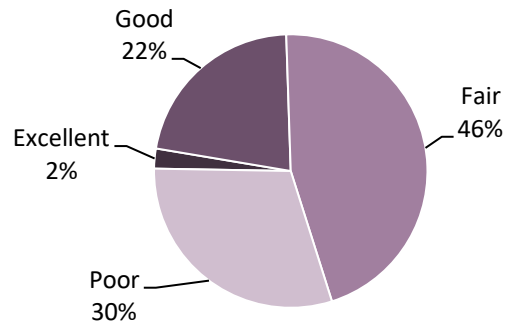


FIGURE 32: INCLUSIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT

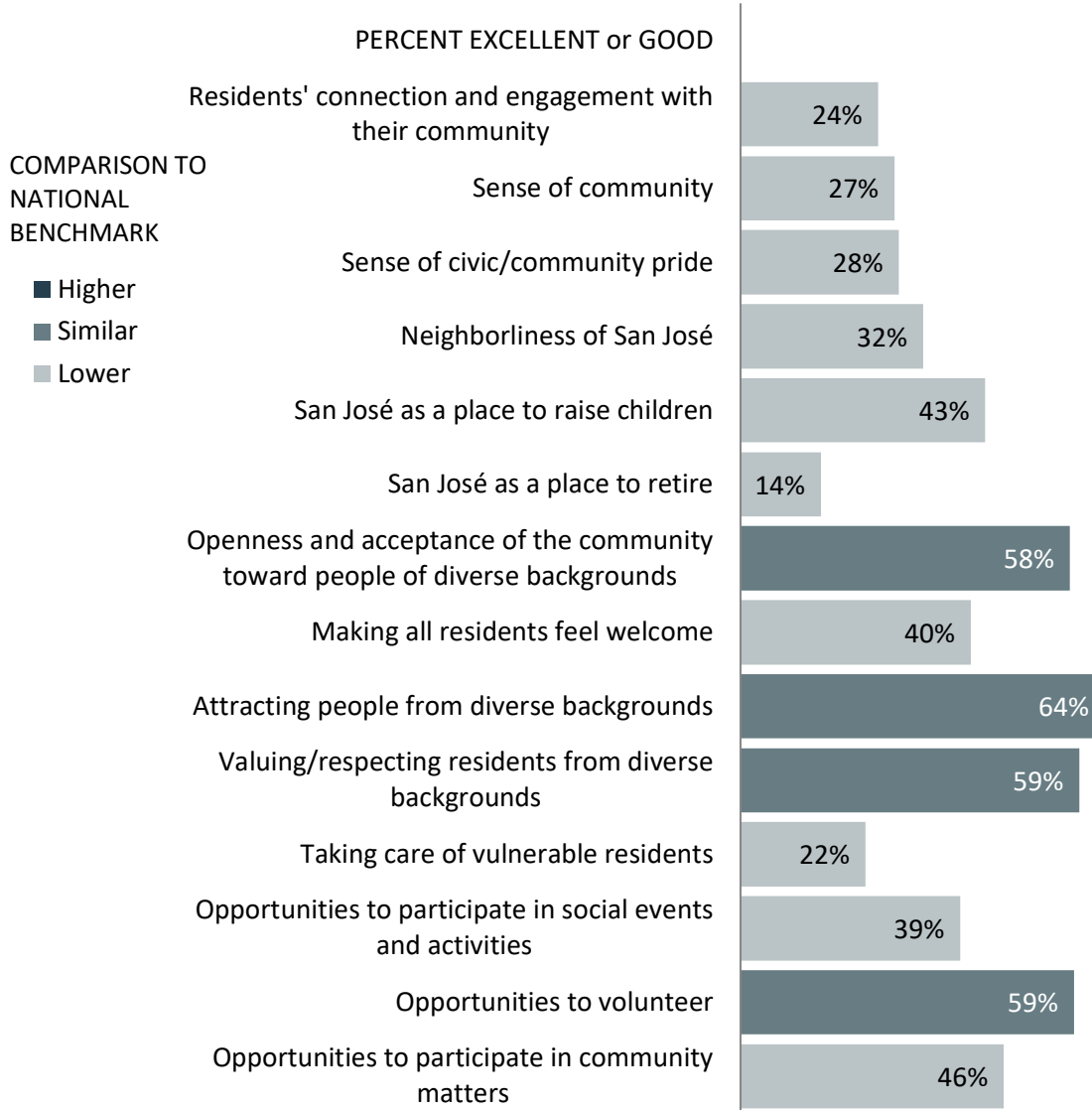


FIGURE 33: INCLUSIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	↓↓	*	24%
Sense of community	↓↓	↔	27%
Sense of civic/community pride	↓↓	*	28%
Neighborliness of San José	↓	↔	32%
San José as a place to raise children	↓↓	↔	43%
San José as a place to retire	↓↓	↔	14%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	↔	↔	58%
Making all residents feel welcome	↓↓	*	40%
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds	↔	*	64%
Valuing/respecting residents from diverse backgrounds	↔	*	59%
Taking care of vulnerable residents	↓↓	*	22%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	↓	↓	39%
Opportunities to volunteer	↔	↓	59%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	↓	↓	46%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

FIGURE 34: RESIDENTS' PARTICIPATION LEVELS

COMPARISON TO
NATIONAL
BENCHMARK

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

PERCENT YES IN LAST 12 MONTHS

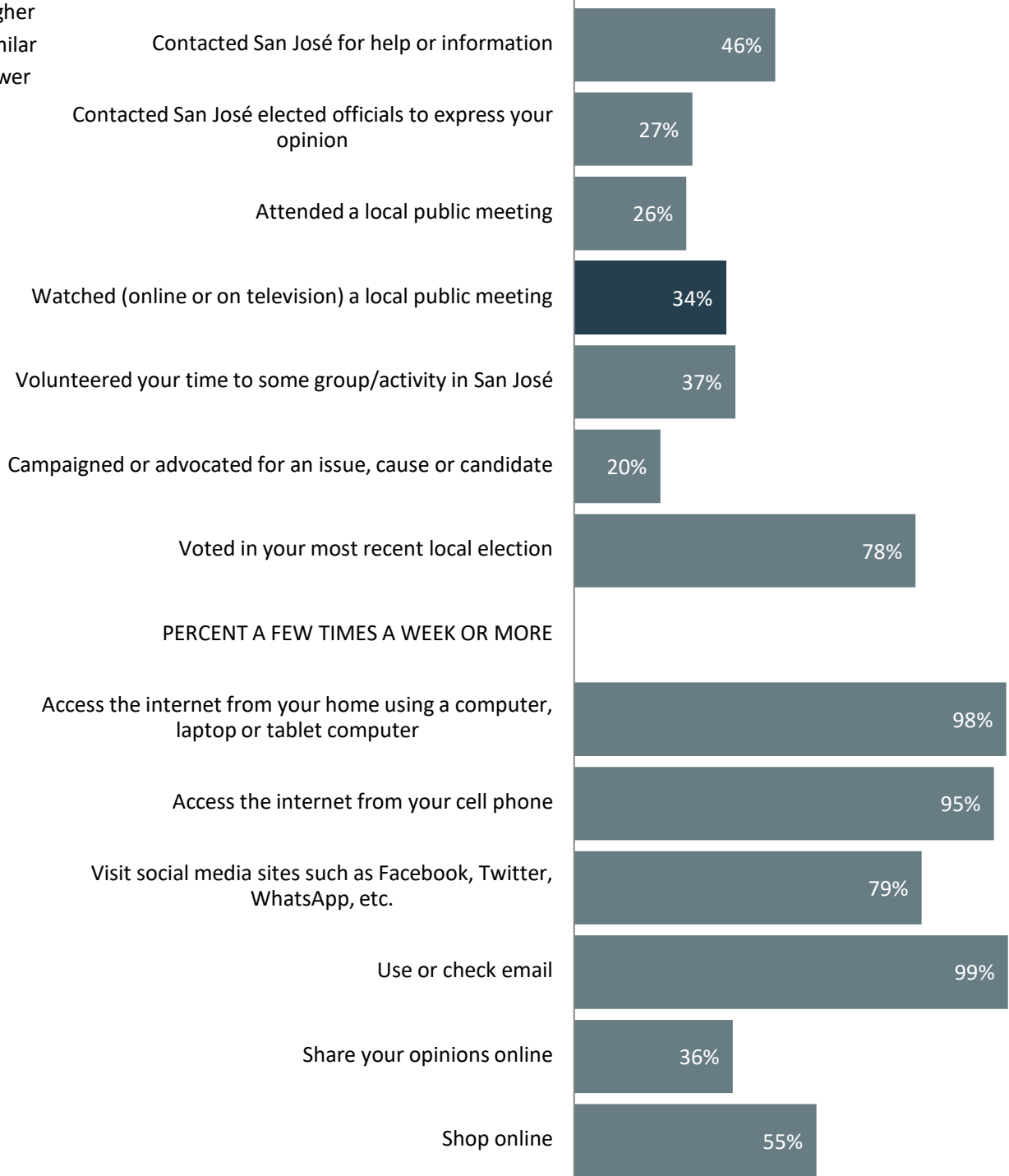


FIGURE 35: RESIDENTS’ PARTICIPATION IN LAST 12 MONTHS- SUMMARY

Percent who had done each in last 12 months	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Contacted San José for help or information	↔	↔	46%
Contacted San José elected officials to express your opinion	↔	↔	27%
Attended a local public meeting	↔	↔	26%
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	↑	↑	34%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in San José	↔	↓	37%
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	↔	↓	20%
Voted in your most recent local election	↔	*	78%

FIGURE 36: RESIDENTS’ GENERAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY- SUMMARY

Percent who report doing each at least a few times a week	Comparison to benchmark	2019 to 2020	2020 rating
Access the internet from your home using a computer, laptop or tablet computer	↔	*	98%
Access the internet from your cell phone	↔	*	95%
Visit social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.	↔	*	79%
Use or check email	↔	*	99%
Share your opinions online	↔	*	36%
Shop online	↔	*	55%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Special Topics

FIGURE 37: CITY SERVICE QUALITY

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

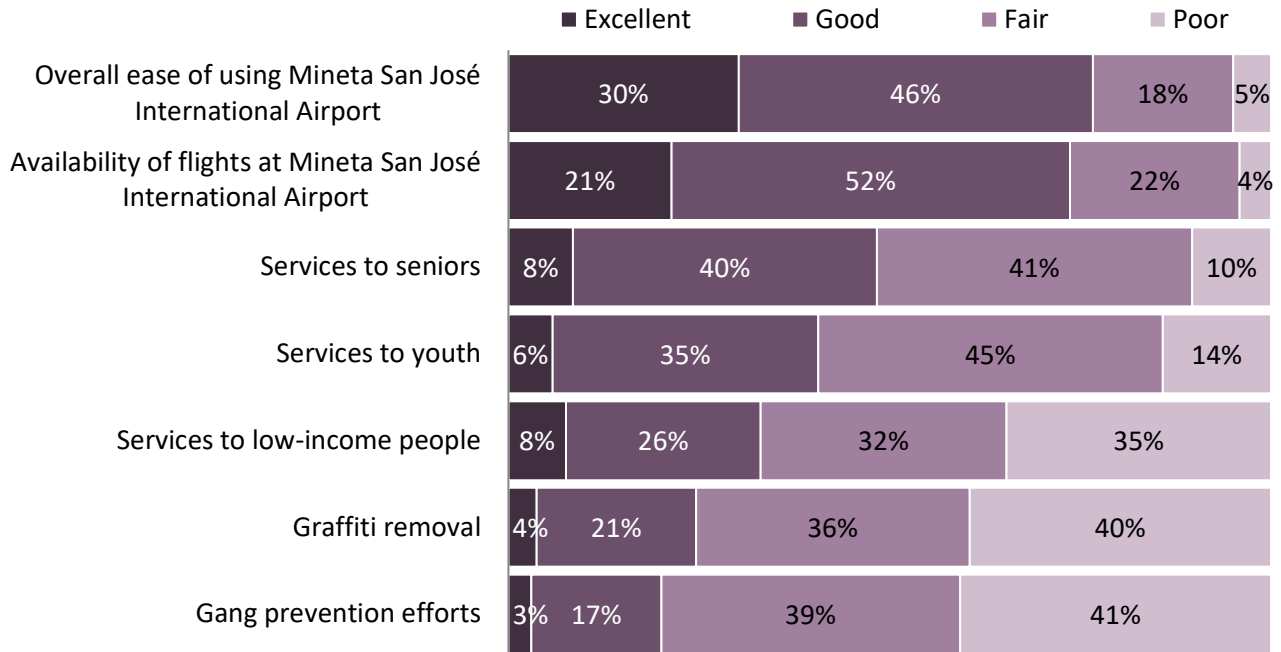


FIGURE 38: PARTICIPATION LEVELS

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?

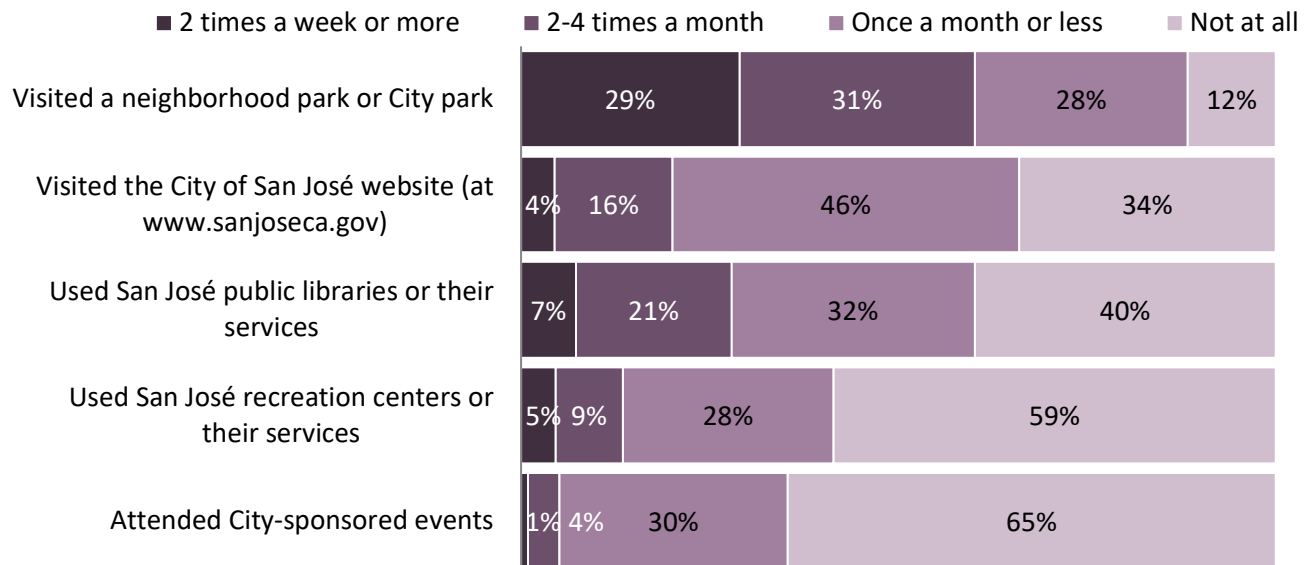


FIGURE 39: WORK INSIDE CITY BOUNDARIES

Do you work inside the boundaries of San José?

