

The National Citizen Survey™

Bloomington, MN

Community Livability Report

2014

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The National Citizen Survey™
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National Research Center, Inc.
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80301
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Bloomington. 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 1,171 residents of the City of Bloomington. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 3% 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.

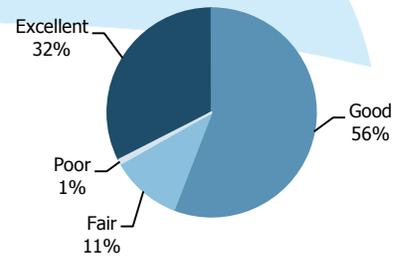


Quality of Life in Bloomington

Most residents rated the quality of life in Bloomington as excellent or good. This level was similar to other communities in 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



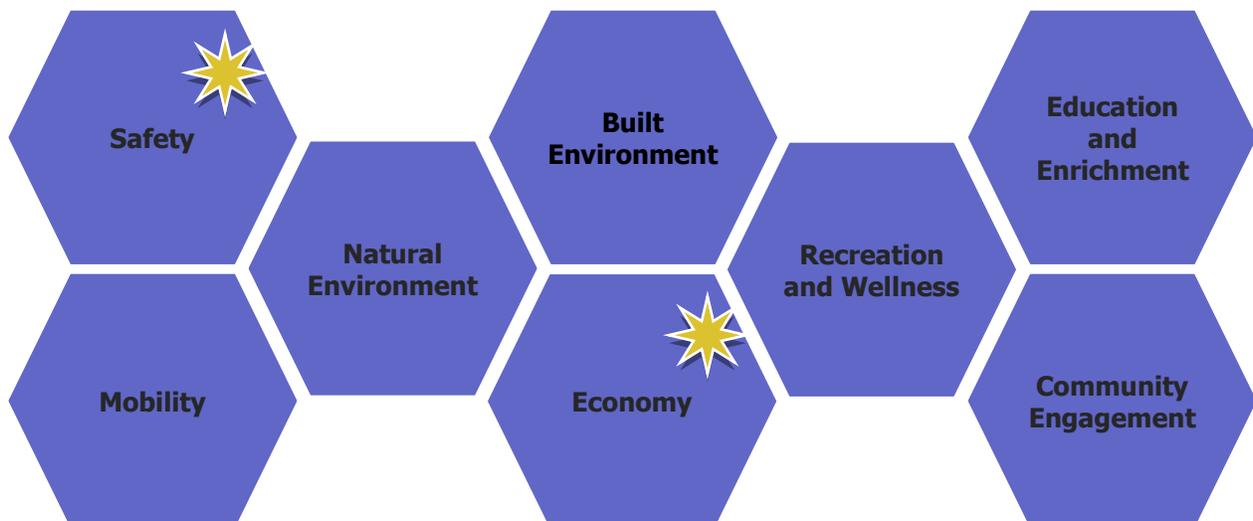
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Bloomington community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Bloomington residents gave strong ratings to both of these facets of community as well as to the other six. All eight facets received positive ratings and were 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 Bloomington’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



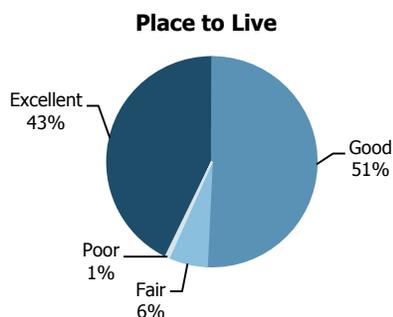
Community Characteristics

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 Bloomington, 94% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Bloomington 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 Bloomington as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Bloomington and its overall appearance. At least 4 in 5 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall image of Bloomington, their neighborhoods, Bloomington as a place to raise children and the overall appearance of Bloomington. These ratings were similar to the national benchmark and remained stable from 2013 to 2014 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover). Ratings for Bloomington as a place to retire were positive, but had decreased from 2013 to 2014.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Most aspects were rated similar to the national benchmark, 10 were higher and none were lower than the benchmark. Across all facets, ratings tended to be positive. At least 4 in 5 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to all aspects of Safety and Natural Environment. Within Economy, there were several aspects that were higher than the national benchmark: overall economic health of Bloomington, vibrant shopping areas, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities and Bloomington as a place to work. Other features of the community that received ratings higher than other communities in the nation were paths and walking trails, the availability of affordable quality health care, cultural/arts/music activities, adult education and child care/preschool.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

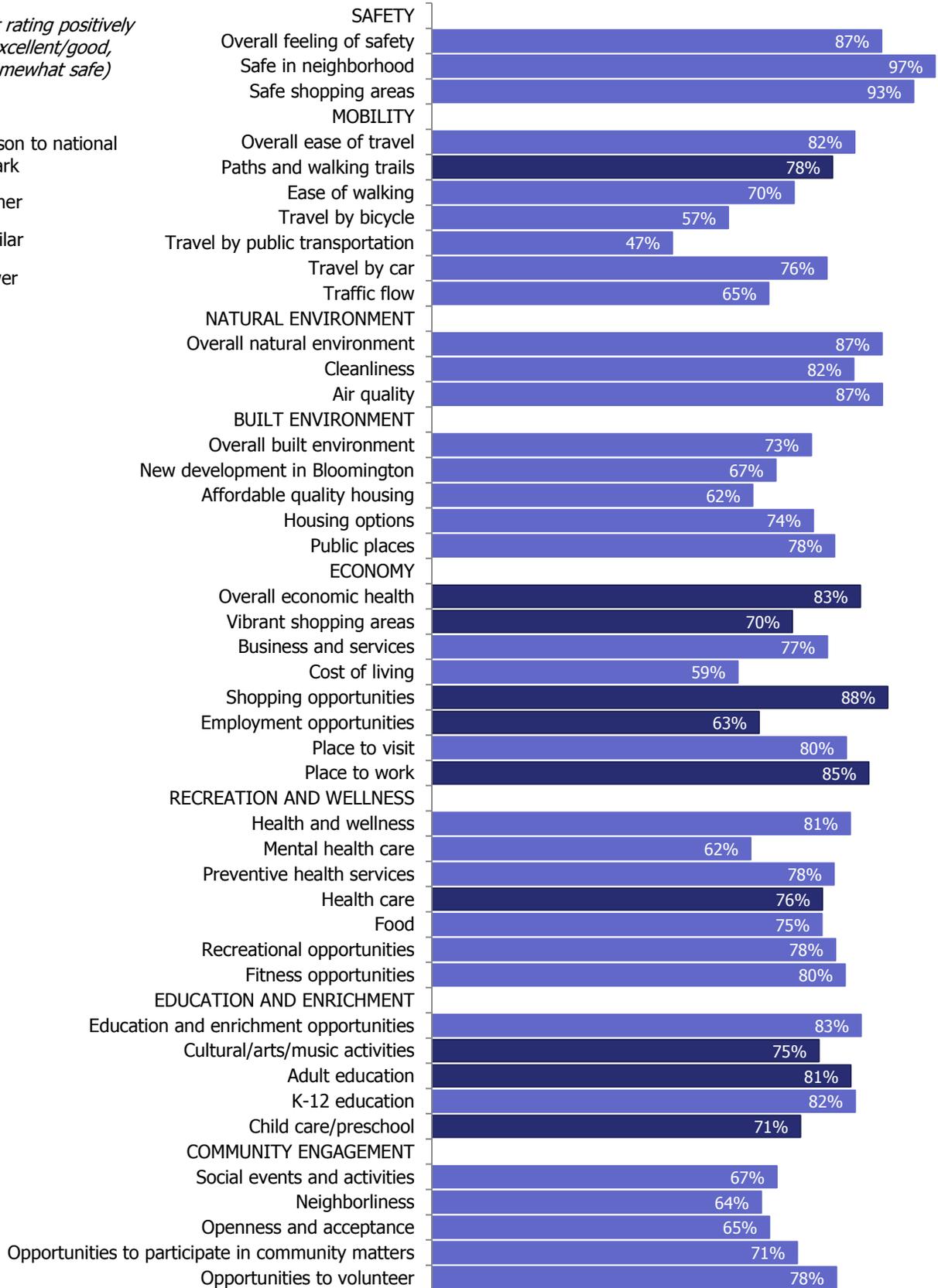


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

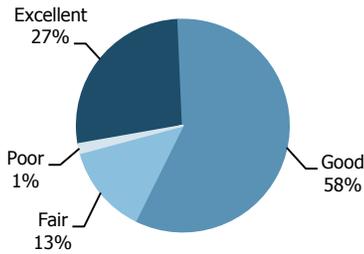
How well does the government of Bloomington meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Bloomington as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Similar to other communities, most residents (85%) described the overall quality of City services in Bloomington as excellent or good. Only 41% of residents rated services provided by the Federal Government favorably, and this rating declined from 2013 to 2014.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Bloomington’s leadership and governance. Ratings for value of services for taxes paid, the overall direction of Bloomington, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Bloomington and customer service by City employees were positive and similar to the national benchmark. Bloomington’s ratings for being honest (74% excellent or good) and treating all residents fairly (70% excellent or good) were higher than the national benchmark comparison.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Bloomington. Almost all ratings were similar to the national benchmark, five were higher and none were below. All aspects of Governance received ratings of excellent or good by a majority of respondents, with the exception of street repair. Ratings for street repair decreased from 2013 to 2014; however ratings for sidewalk maintenance increased. Snow removal, drinking water, natural areas preservation, land use, planning and zoning and economic development all received ratings higher than the national average. Further, ratings for land use, planning and zoning increased from 2013 to 2014.

Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

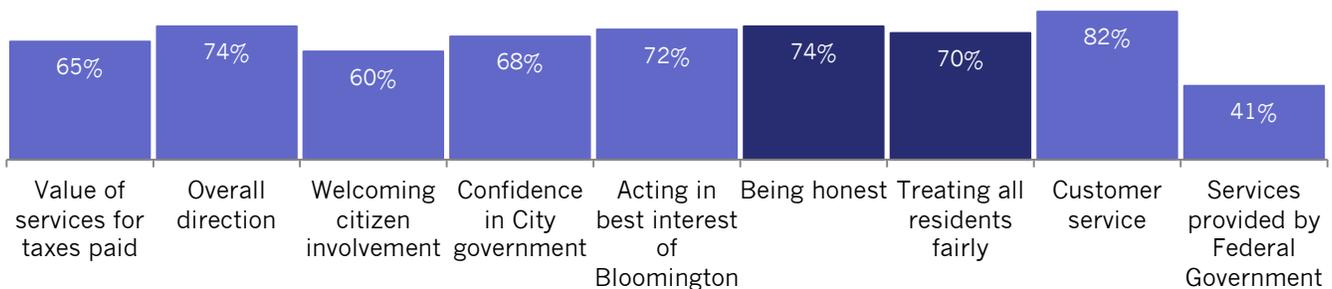
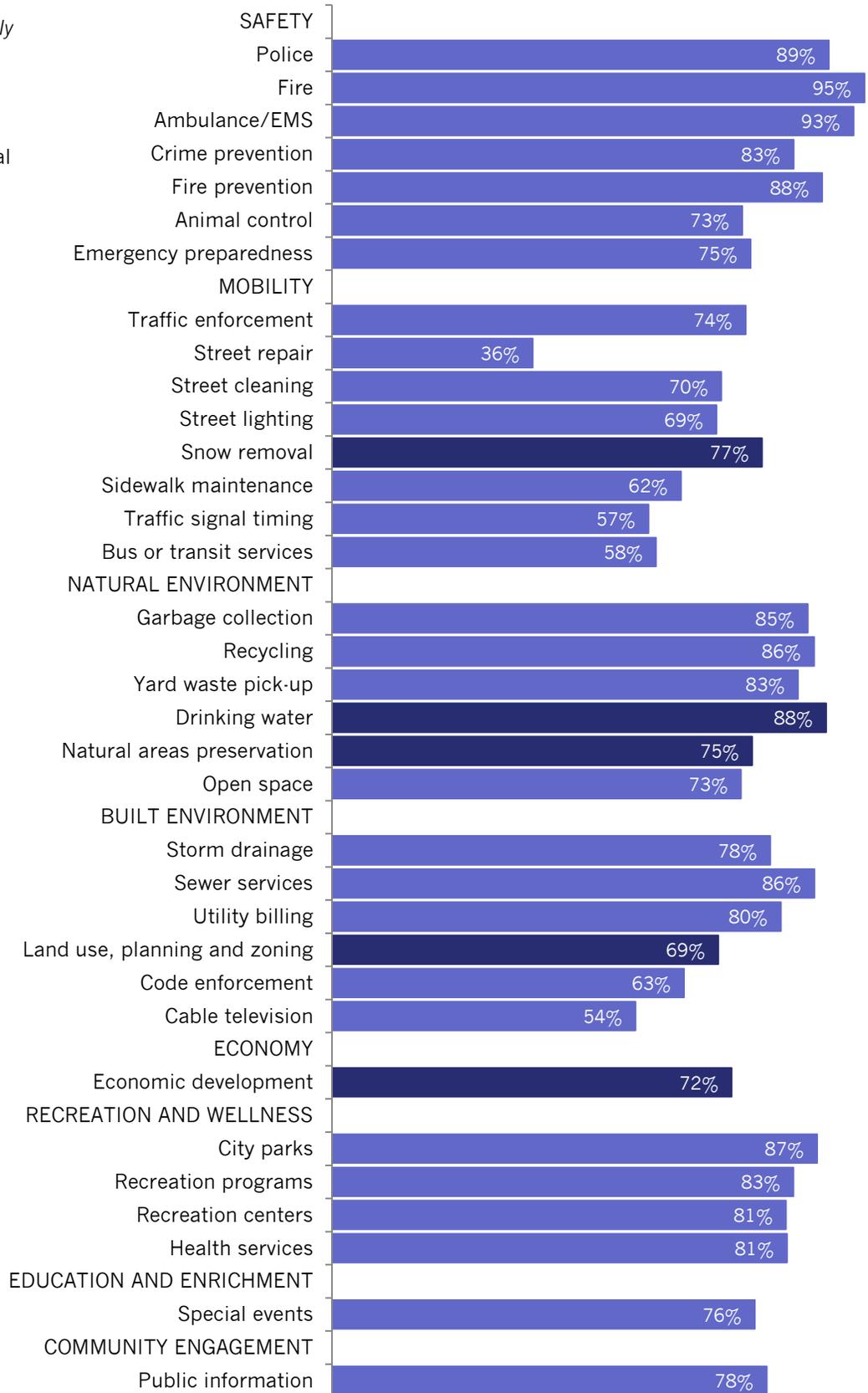


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

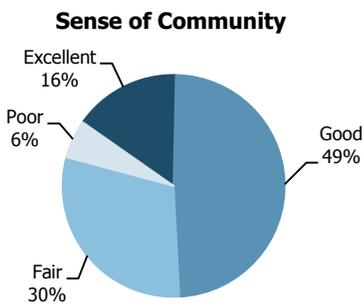


Participation

Are the residents of Bloomington 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 two-thirds of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall sense of community in Bloomington, this rating was similar to the national benchmark. Almost all residents (93%) would recommend living in Bloomington, this was a higher number in 2014 than in 2013.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Most rates of participation were similar to those in other communities across the nation. Fewer Bloomington residents reported having stocked supplies for an emergency, working in Bloomington, attending a local public meeting or watching a local public meeting in the last 12 months. More Bloomington residents reported that they used public transportation instead of driving and that they did NOT observe a code violation. Most aspects of community engagement remained stable from 2013 to 2014. At least 9 in 10 respondents reported that they had recycled at home, purchased goods or services in Bloomington, talked to or visited with neighbors and read or watched the local news.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

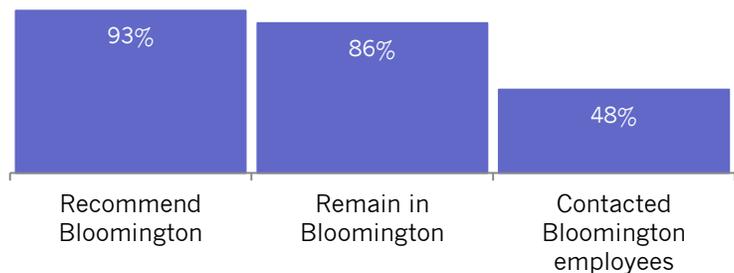
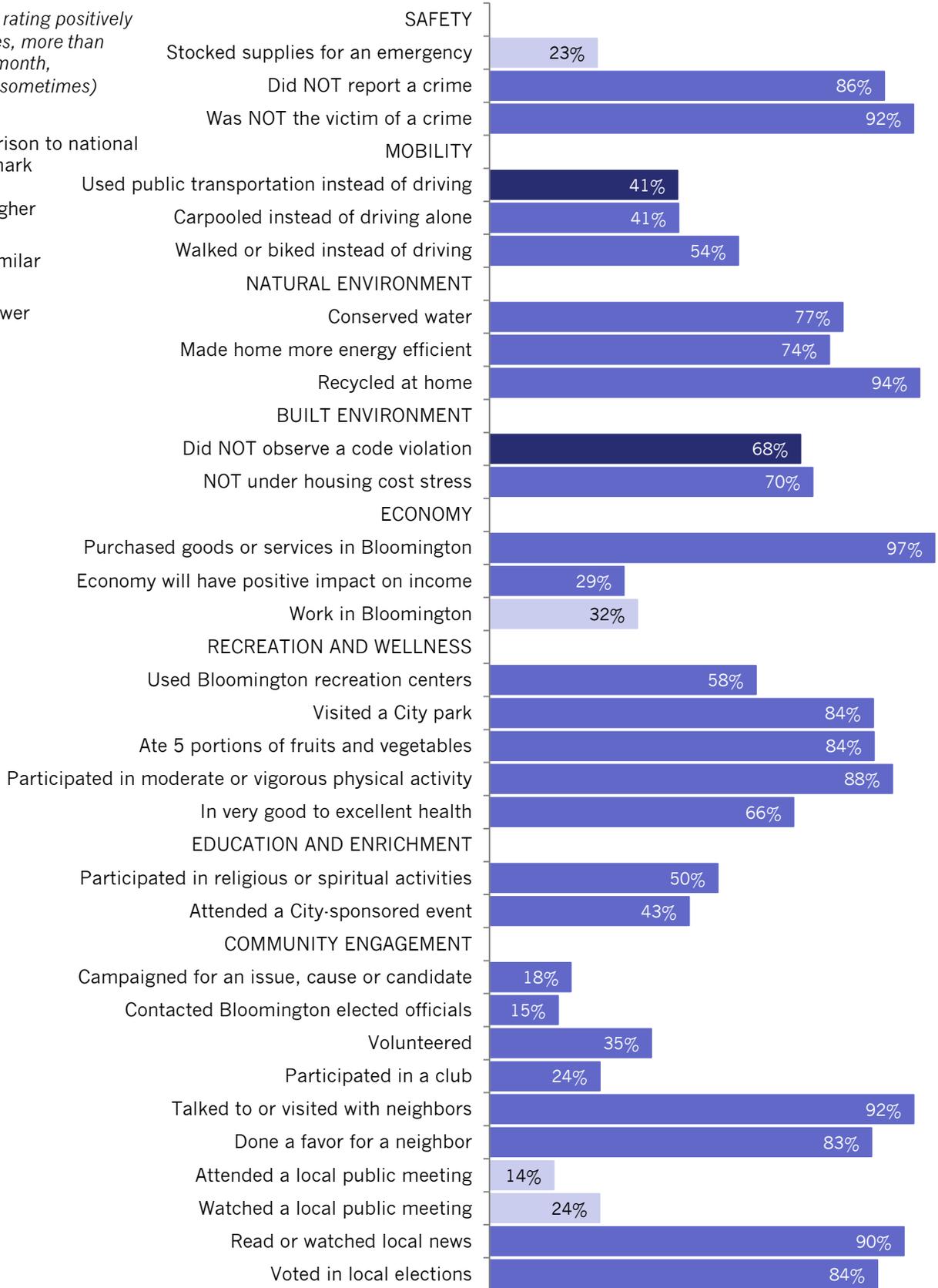


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

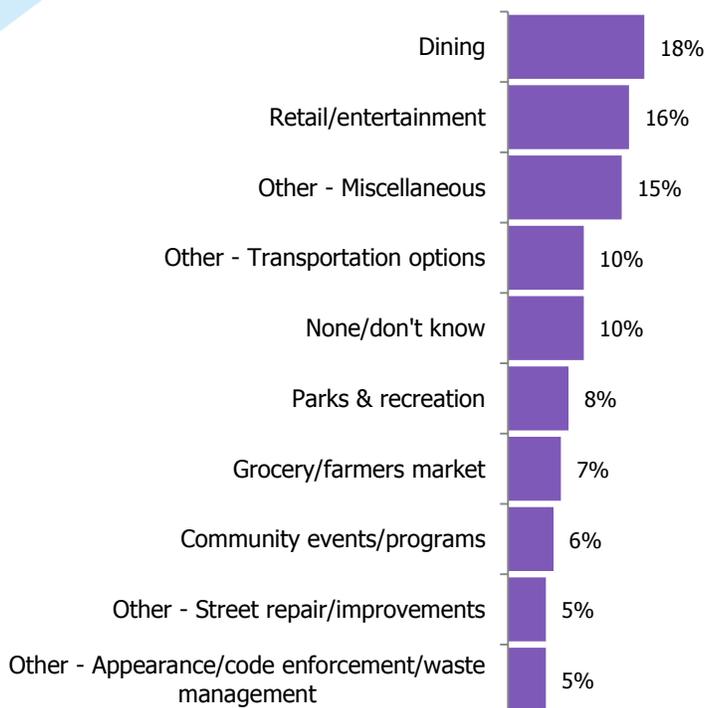


Special Topics

The City of Bloomington included one question of special interest on The NCS. The question was an open ended question and the respondents were asked to record their opinions about services and other amenities they would like in Bloomington in their own words (for the full verbatim responses, see *The Open End Report* under separate cover). The most commonly cited theme was the desire for additional restaurants; some residents would like to see more locally owned restaurant options, while others cited specific chain restaurants that they would like to see in Bloomington. The next most commonly mentioned category was that of retail/entertainment opportunities.

Figure 4: Services, Activities or Shopping Opportunities Desired in Bloomington

What types of services, activities or shopping opportunities not located in Bloomington would you like to see in Bloomington?



Conclusions

Bloomington residents continue to enjoy an exceptional quality of life.

Most residents rate their overall quality of life as excellent or good and at least 9 in 10 would be likely to recommend Bloomington as a place to live to someone who asks. The number of residents that would recommend Bloomington increased from 2013 to 2014. Almost all gave excellent or good ratings to the City as a place to live. Bloomington's overall appearance and overall image, neighborhoods as a place to live and to raise children received high ratings by about 8 in 10 residents. Most of the aspects that aid in community livability were rated positively and remained stable from 2013 to 2014.

Residents feel safe in Bloomington.

Safety was an important feature of the community for residents and most residents want the City to continue to provide excellent safety services and amenities. About 9 in 10 respondents feel safe overall, in their neighborhoods and in shopping areas. Residents rated safety services highly and most participants were not a victim of a crime or did not report a crime. Ratings for all aspects of Safety remained stable from 2013 to 2014.

The Economy is important to the community.

Residents believed that the economy is an important community feature to focus on over the next two years. Several aspects of Economy were higher than the national benchmarks, including: Bloomington as a place to work, employment opportunities, shopping opportunities, vibrant shopping areas, overall economic health and economic development services. Ratings for Economy were positive and remained stable from 2013 to 2014. When asked what services, activities or shopping opportunities participants would like to see more of, respondents indicated that more dining and retail/entertainment options were desired.