

**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

**Morristown, TN**  
Community Livability Report

2015



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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Morristown. 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 298 residents of the City of Morristown. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% 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 Morristown

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Morristown as excellent or good.

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.



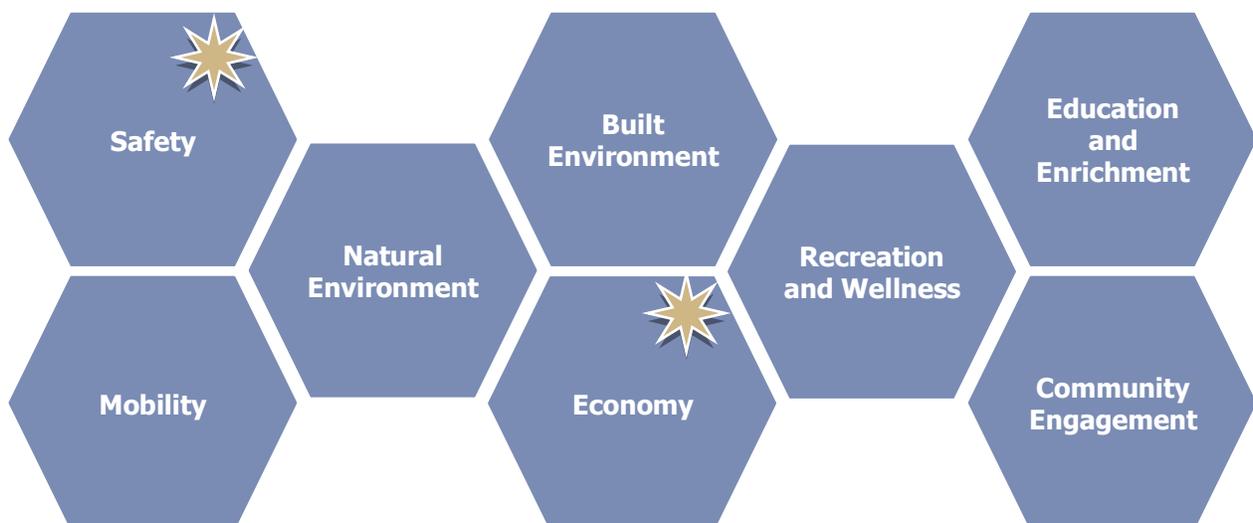
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Morristown community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Morristown residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community as they did to all eight facets of community livability; all tended to have ratings that were similar to the benchmark. 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 Morristown’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

★ Most important



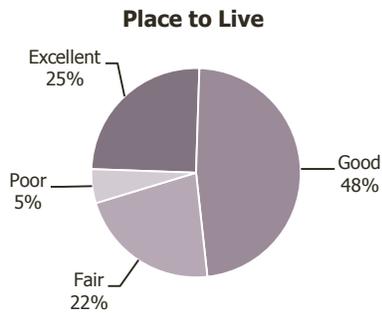
# Community Characteristics

*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 Morristown, 73% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Morristown as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Morristown as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Morristown and its overall appearance. About two-thirds of respondents rated their neighborhood as a place to live and Morristown as a place to raise children positively. Slightly fewer respondents rated Morristown's overall image and Morristown as a place to retire favorably, while a majority of participants rated Morristown's overall appearance as excellent or good.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, results were similar to other communities and many aspects as positive ratings from a majority of respondents. At least 7 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to safety in their neighborhoods, safety in the downtown/commercial area, overall ease of travel in Morristown, overall natural environment, opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities and K-12 education.

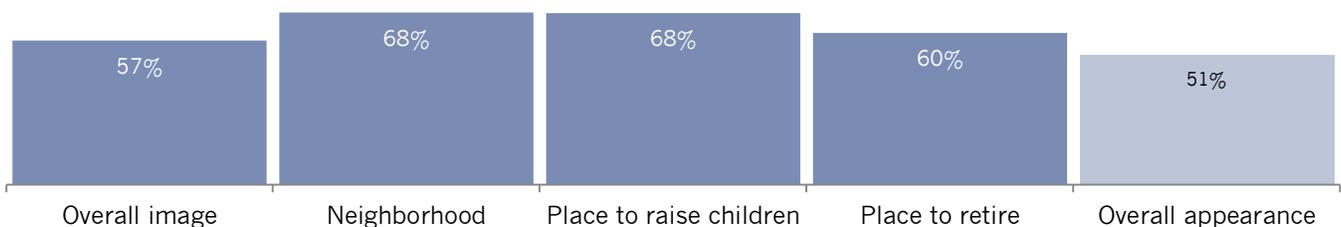


Trends between 2014 and 2015 tended to be stable within the pillar of Community Characteristics (see *Trends over Time* report, provided under separate cover).

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



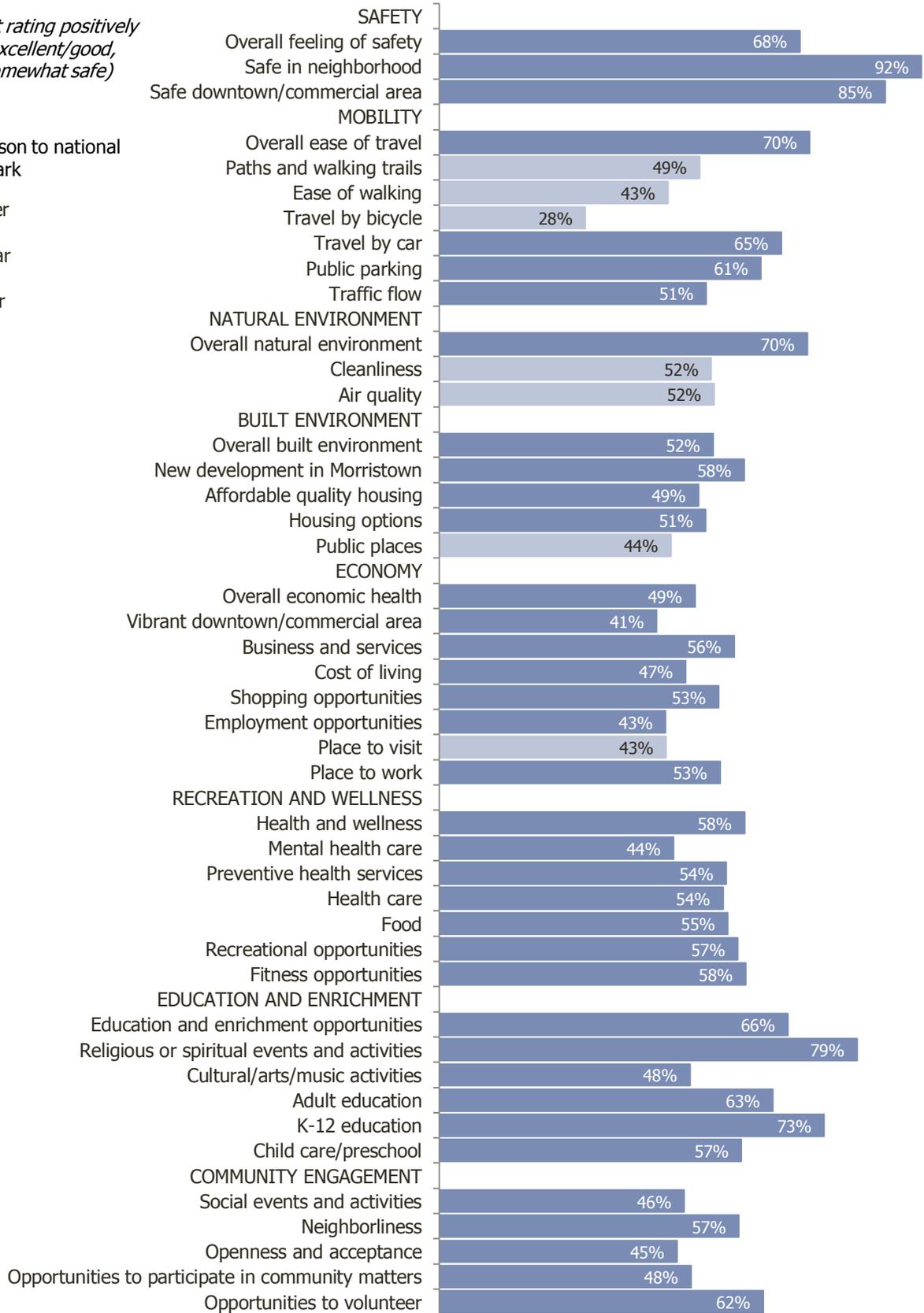
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

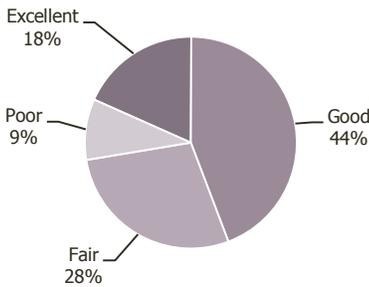
*How well does the government of Morristown meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Morristown as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. A majority of residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the City of Morristown, which was on par with other communities nationally. By comparison only about 4 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to the services provided by the Federal Government.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Morristown’s leadership and governance. Most ratings tended to be similar to the benchmark. Two-thirds of residents positively rated overall customer service provided by City employees and slightly fewer rated the overall direction of the City as excellent or good. All other ratings were rated as excellent or good by about 2 in 5 residents.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Morristown. The highest rated services within the pillar of Governance were fire, ambulance/emergency medical services, garbage collection and City parks which all rated similarly in other communities. Among the lowest rated aspects of Governance were street repair and code enforcement; street repair was rated less highly than the benchmark. While special events were rated positively by half of respondents, this rating was lower than the national benchmark. Similarly, animal control and special events were rated lower than the benchmark.

**Overall Quality of City Services**

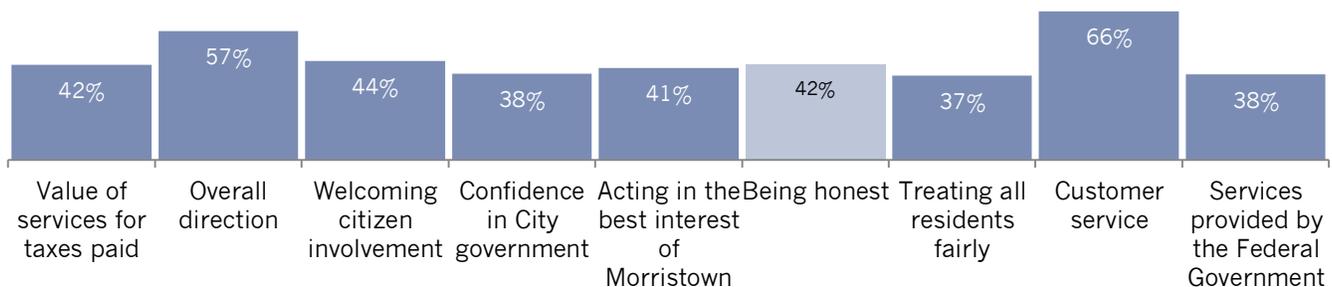


Most aspects within Governance remained stable between 2014 and 2015 though several increased and none declined.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



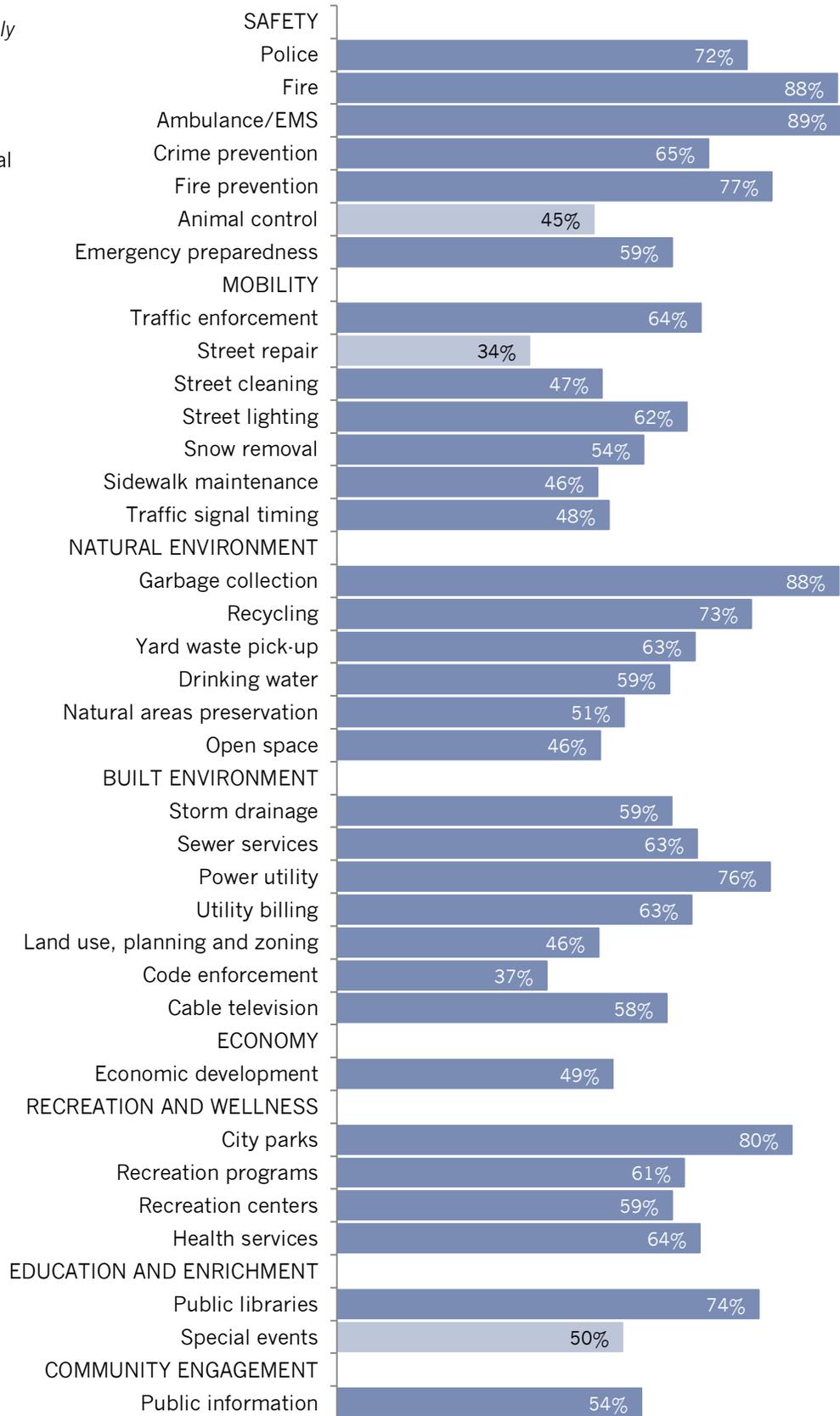
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



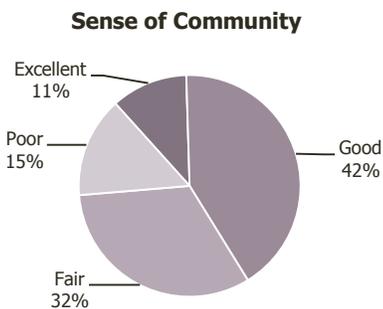
# Participation

## *Are the residents of Morristown 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. Ratings for sense of community in Morristown were excellent or good according to 5 in 10 residents, similar to other communities in the nation. A majority reported that they would recommend living in Morristown and planned to remain there for the next five years.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Levels of participation measured in the survey varied widely in Morristown; most aspects of Participation were similar to other communities in the benchmark. Among the activities or behaviors with the highest reported rates of participation were purchasing goods or services in Morristown, reading or watching local news, doing a favor for a neighbor and talking to or visiting with neighbors. More residents reported that they worked in Morristown and had participated in religious or spiritual activities compared to other communities across the nation.

There were few differences in rates of participation between 2014 and 2015.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



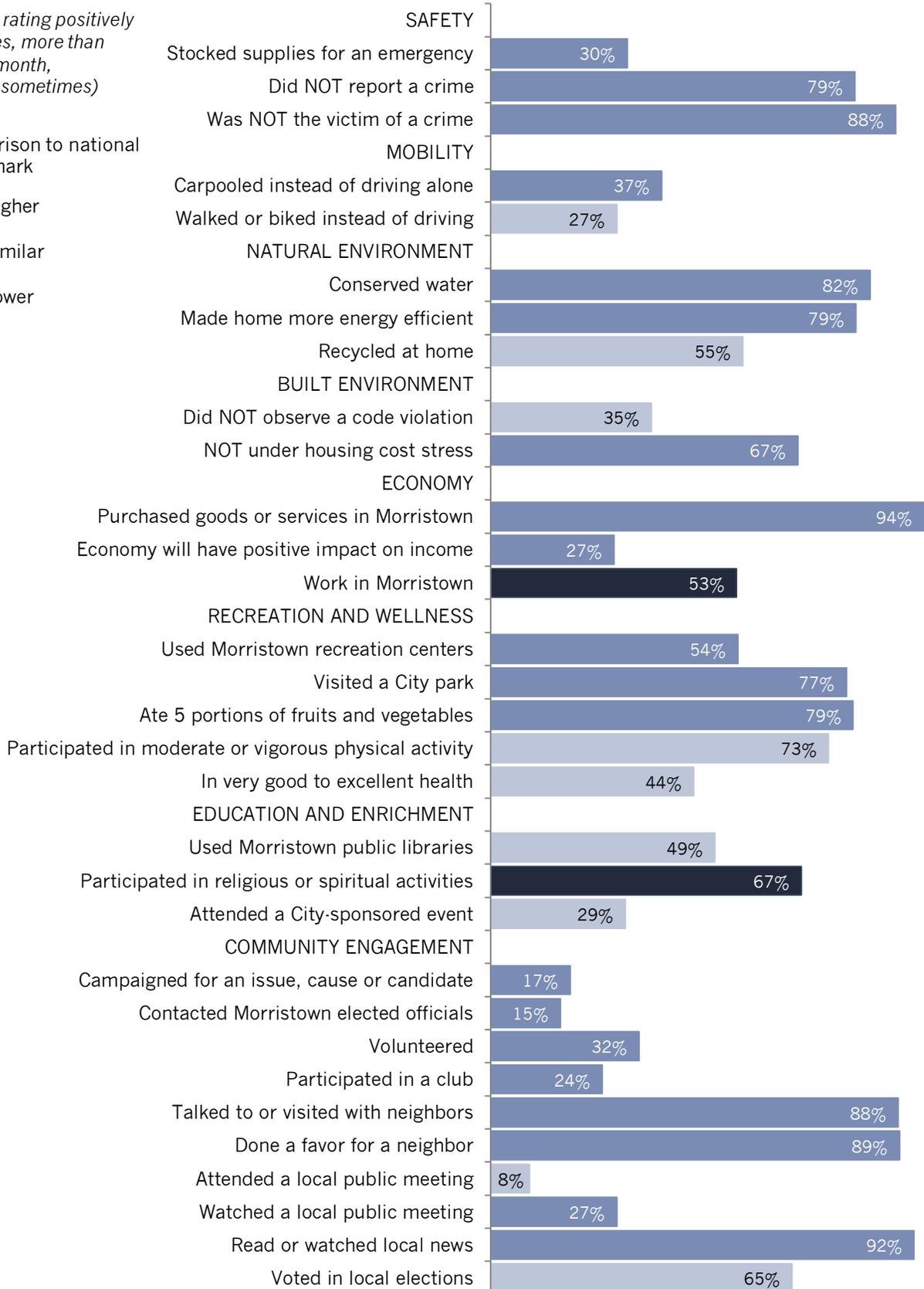
# The National Citizen Survey™

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

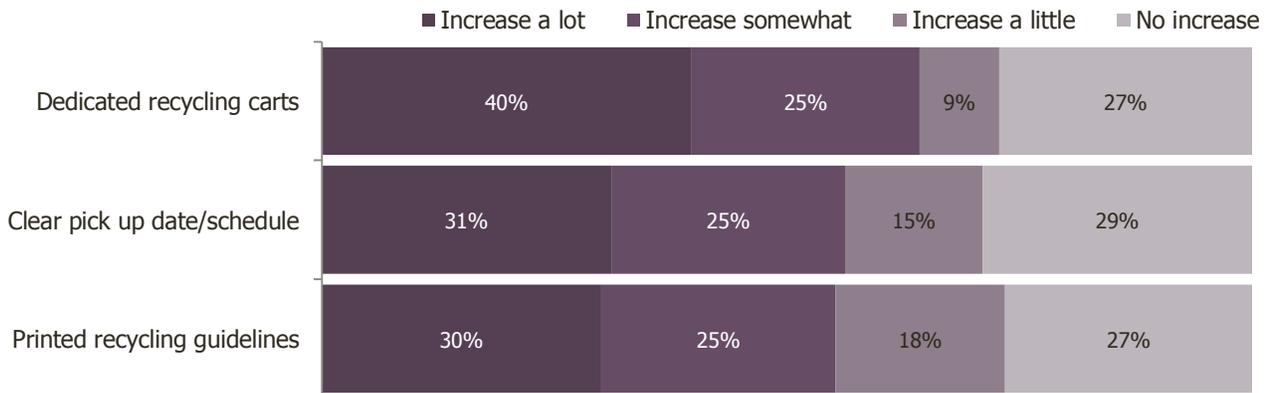


# Special Topics

The City of Morristown included three questions of special interest on The NCS. The first asked residents to rate to what extent certain items would increase their recycling habits. Most residents reported that all three approaches, dedicated recycling carts, clear pick up date/schedule and printed recycling guidelines would lead to an increase in their recycling habits. Most residents were inclined to increase their recycling habits with the inclusion of dedicated recycling carts.

Figure 4: Recycling Habits

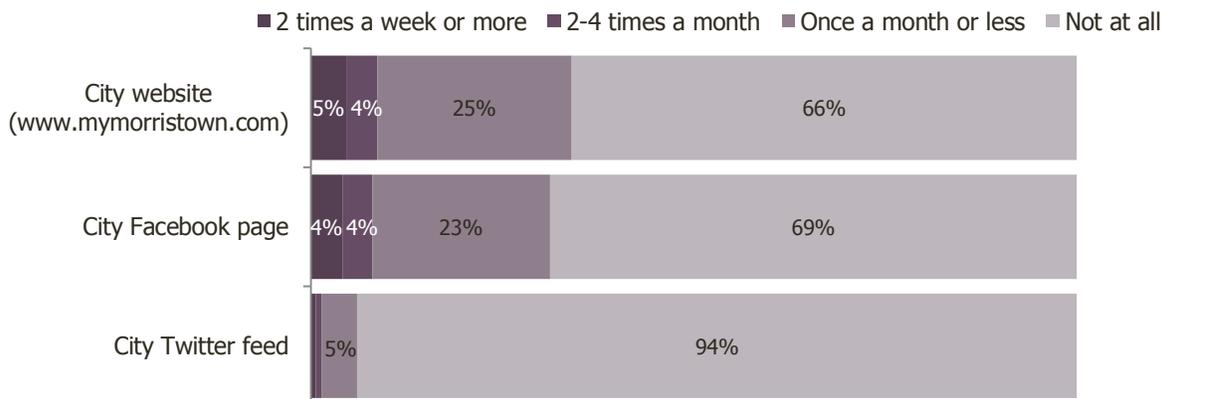
*Thinking about your current recycling habits at home, please indicate the extent to which each of the following would make you increase your recycling, if at all.*



The second special interest question Morristown asked its residents was how often they were visiting City websites including the main City website, its Facebook page and Twitter feed. Few residents reported visiting any of the three websites, though the City website [www.mymorristown.com](http://www.mymorristown.com) received the most frequent visitations. About 1 in 10 residents reported visiting the website at least two times a month. The City Twitter feed received the fewest visitations, still about seven percent of residents visited it at a rate of at least once a month.

Figure 5: City Website Visitation

*In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members visited each of the following:*

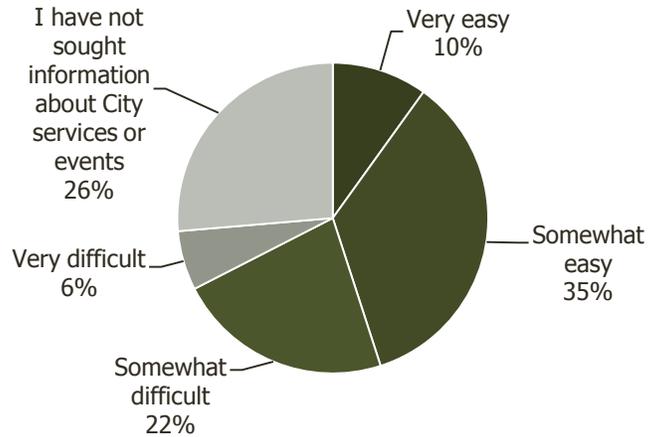


## The National Citizen Survey™

The last special interest question asked residents to rate how easy or difficult it was to learn about City services or events. At least 4 in 10 residents reported that it was either somewhat or very easy to learn about City services or events. About one-quarter said it was somewhat or very difficult and a similar amount said they had never sought information about City services or events.

Figure 4: Knowledge of City Services or Events

*Please rate how easy or difficult it is to learn about City services or events:*



# Conclusions

## **Economy continues to be a top priority for residents**

Economy was identified as top community focus area by Morristown residents in 2015 as it was in 2014. Overall, resident opinions on the economy in Morristown were on par with those in other communities and the number of residents reporting that they worked in Morristown was higher than in comparison communities. Additionally, aspects of Economy that increased between 2014 and 2015 included: overall economic health, vibrant downtown/commercial area, and shopping opportunities in Morristown.

## **Residents value the Natural Environment**

Overall, ratings within Natural Environment were favorable and tended to be similar to the national benchmark, though there were a few exceptions. Both cleanliness of Morristown and its air quality were rated positively by about half of respondents and both ratings were lower than the benchmark. Additionally, recycling habits in Morristown had declined between 2014 and 2015 and have been below the benchmark for several years. However, a majority of residents reported that the inclusion of dedicated recycling carts, having a clear pick up date/schedule or printed recycling guidelines would increase their recycling habits at home.

## **Education and Enrichment is solid in the city, while special events present an opportunity for improvement**

Adult education continues to trend upwards within Education and Enrichment and Morristown residents reported that they participated in religious or spiritual activities more than those in communities across the nation. While fewer residents reported that they had attended City-sponsored events and rated them less positively than in other communities, most who had sought information found it somewhat or very easy to learn about City services or events. Additionally, 1 in 10 reported visiting the Morristown City websites where they may be able to find more information about City-sponsored and special events or City services. Most other ratings within Education and Enrichment were strong and similar to comparison communities.