

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Morristown, TN

Community Livability Report

2017



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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.

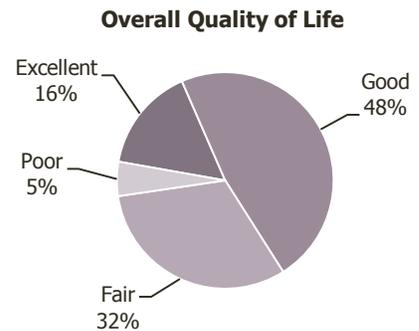
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 299 residents of the City of Morristown. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for all respondents. 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. The rating for the overall quality of life in Morristown was lower than the national benchmark (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.

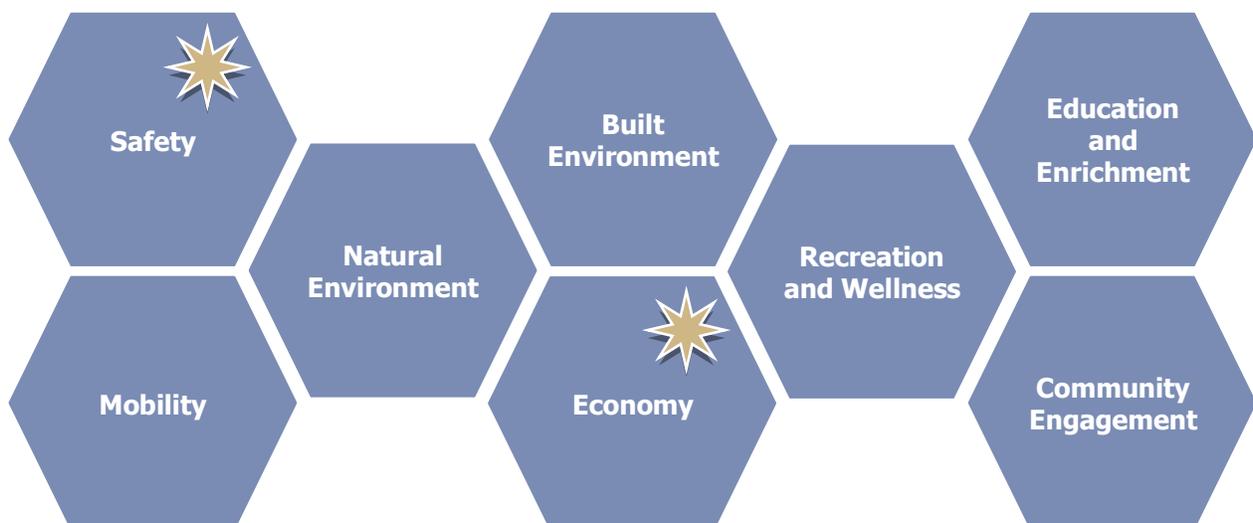
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Morristown community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets 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 Morristown’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



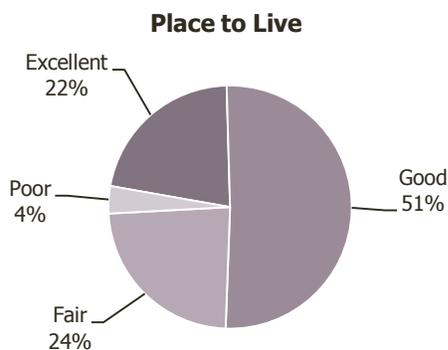
Community Characteristics

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.

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 offered positive ratings to Morristown as a place to raise children, to retire and to their neighborhood as a place to live while about half of respondents offered positive ratings to Morristown's overall image and appearance. In the cases of image, appearance and place to raise children, residents in Morristown compared to residents in other locales did not view the city as positively.

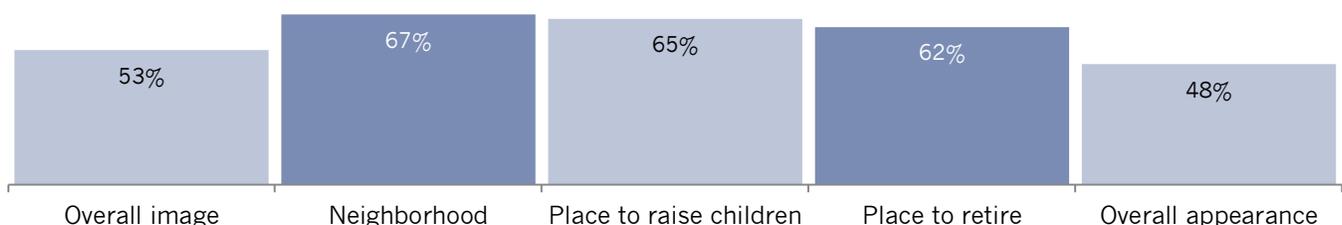
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. While most Community Characteristics were rated similar to the national comparisons, nine characteristics were rated lower than the national comparisons and were spread across most facets (i.e., overall feeling of safety, paths and walking trails, ease of walking, ease of travel by bicycle, cleanliness, public places, etc.). Mobility ratings varied with as few as 3 in 10 respondents offering positive ratings to ease of travel by bicycle and as many as 7 in 10 respondents offering positive evaluations to overall ease of travel and ease of travel by car. Between 4 in 10 and 6 in 10 residents gave positive evaluations to each aspect of Economy and Recreation and Wellness.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



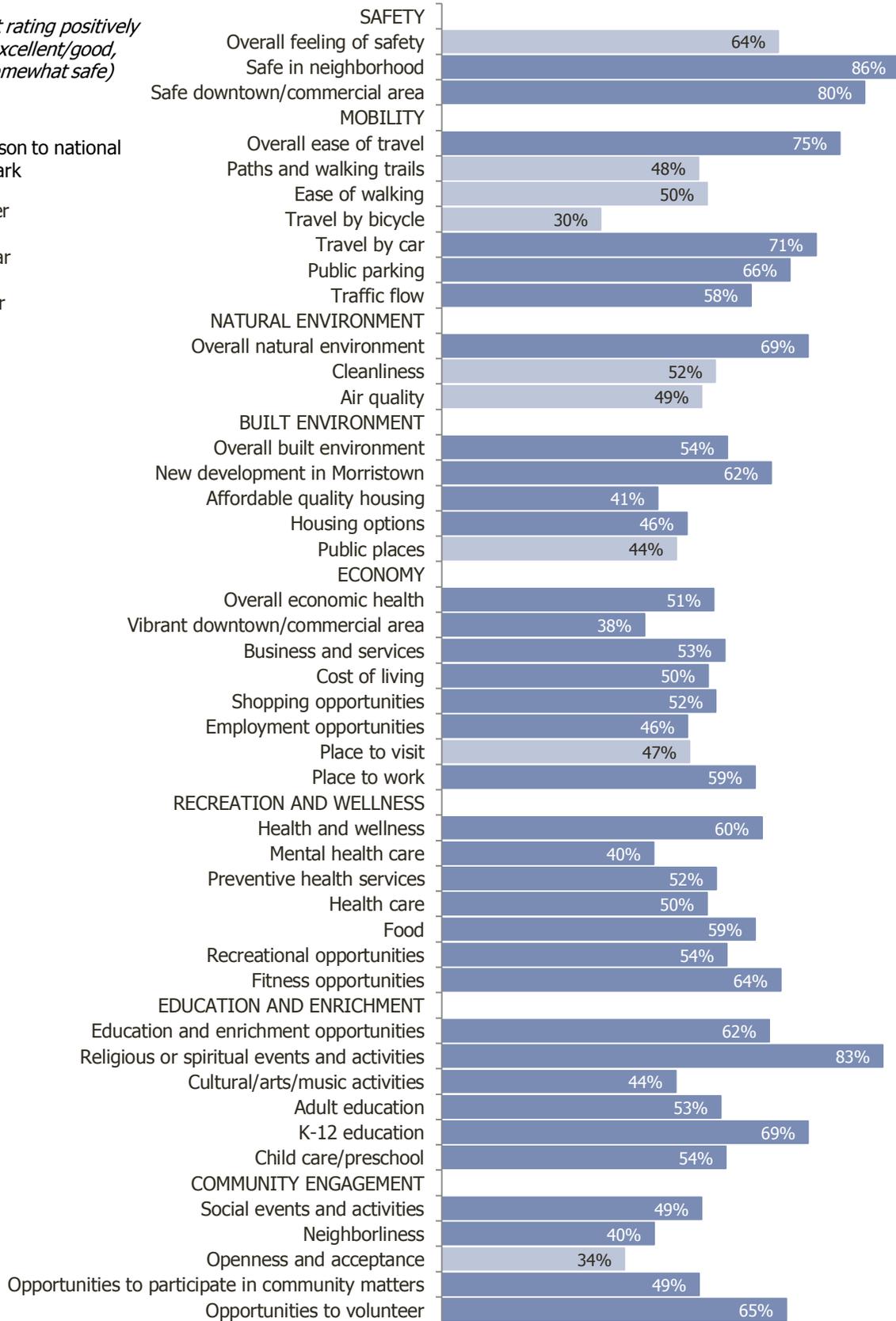
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

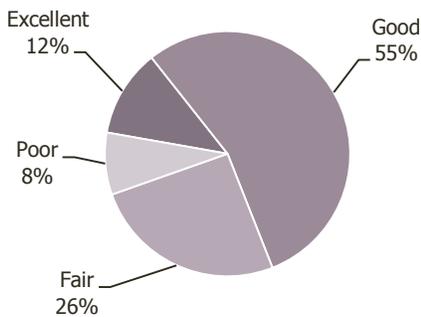
How well does the government of Morristown meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Morristown as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents think about their community. Residents' opinions about Morristown's quality of services were similar to the national benchmark with about two-thirds of respondents rating overall service quality as excellent or good.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Morristown's leadership and governance, which tended to be rated similar to the national comparisons. About 6 in 10 residents offered positive evaluations to customer service from Morristown employees while about 5 in 10 residents offered positive evaluations of Morristown's overall direction. Fewer than half of respondents offered positive evaluations to the remaining aspects of governance and leadership listed on the survey and fewer residents in Morristown than in other places felt positively about government performance related to honesty and fairness.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Morristown. Governance ratings were largely similar to the national comparisons but four services and amenities were rated lower than the national comparisons (natural areas preservation, recreation programs and centers and special events). While all safety services were similar to the national averages, about 9 in 10 residents offered positive reviews to fire services while slightly fewer offered positive reviews to ambulance/EMS. About three-quarters offered positive reviews to fire prevention and police services. Within Recreation and Wellness, about three-quarters of residents were pleased with City parks but the other three listed services and amenities received positive ratings from about half of residents (and the rating for health services declined in 2017 compared to 2016; see *The NCS Trends over Time - Morristown 2017* report under separate cover).

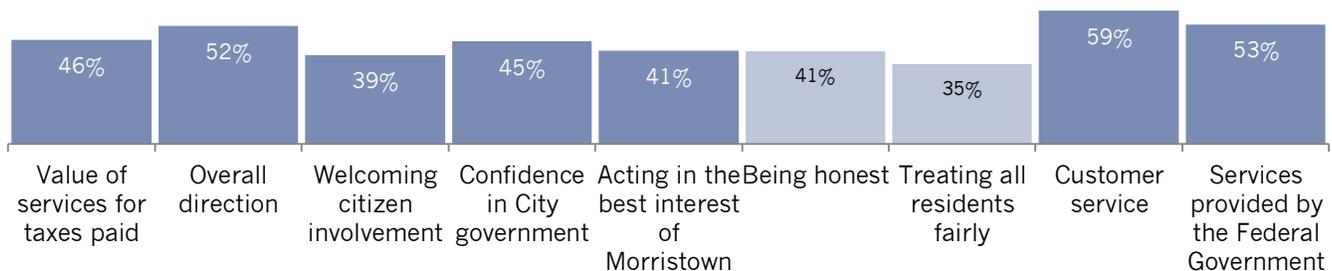
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



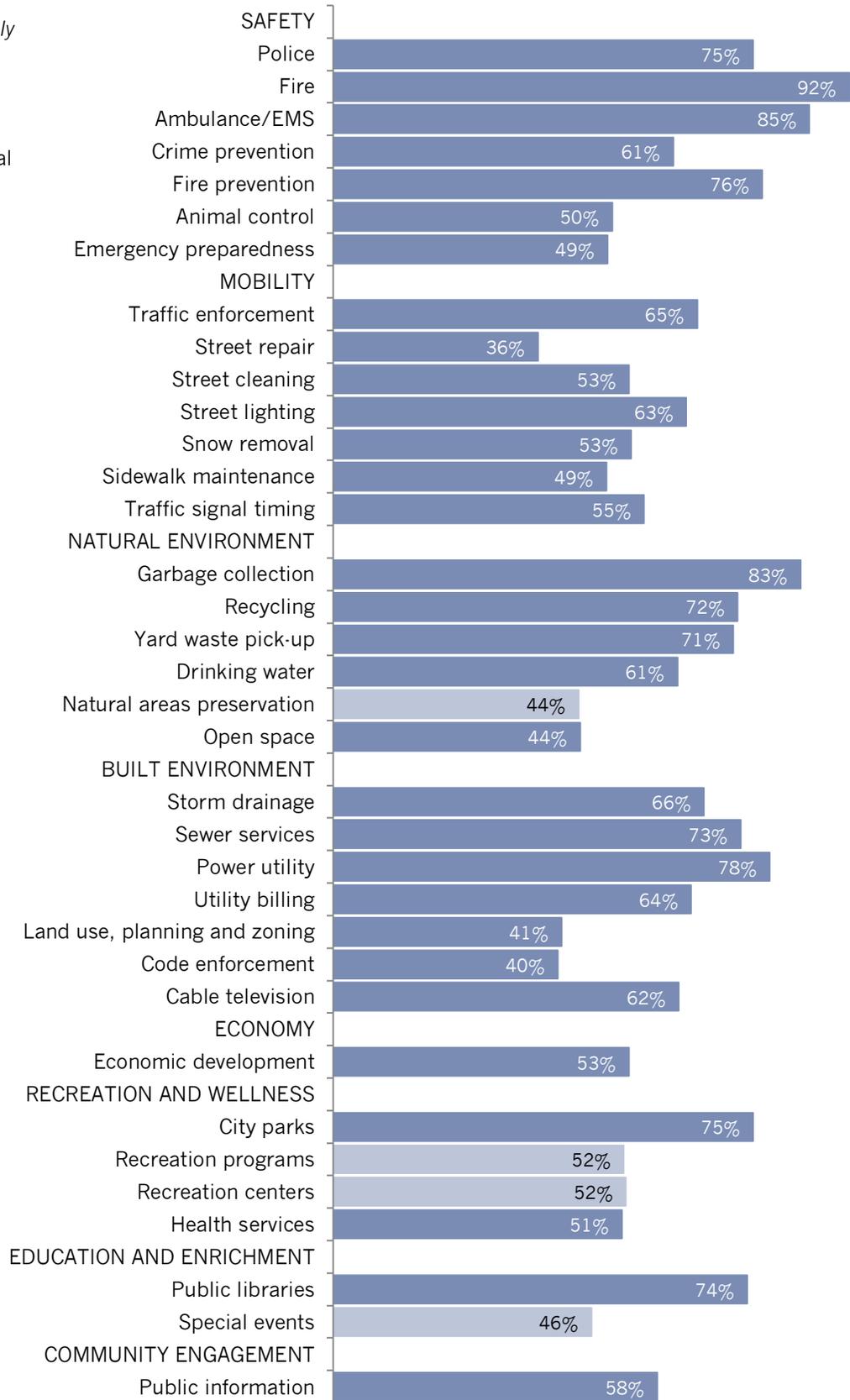
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

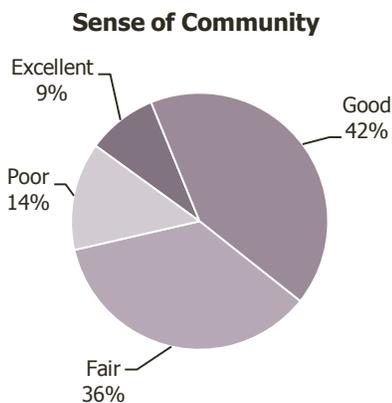


Participation

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. About half of respondents rated the sense of community in Morristown as excellent or good, a rating similar to the benchmark comparison. About 4 in 10 residents had contacted a Morristown employee; a rating similar to those given in communities across the nation.

The survey included over 20 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. When compared to the national averages, Participation rates were mixed. Morristown residents reported higher levels of working in Morristown and participating in religious or spiritual events compared to communities across the nation, but lower levels of walking or biking instead of driving, recycling at home, eating five portions of fruit or vegetables, being in very good to excellent health and attending local public meetings. When compared to 2016, more residents reported using Morristown public libraries and voting in local elections but fewer reported eating five portions of fruit or vegetables.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



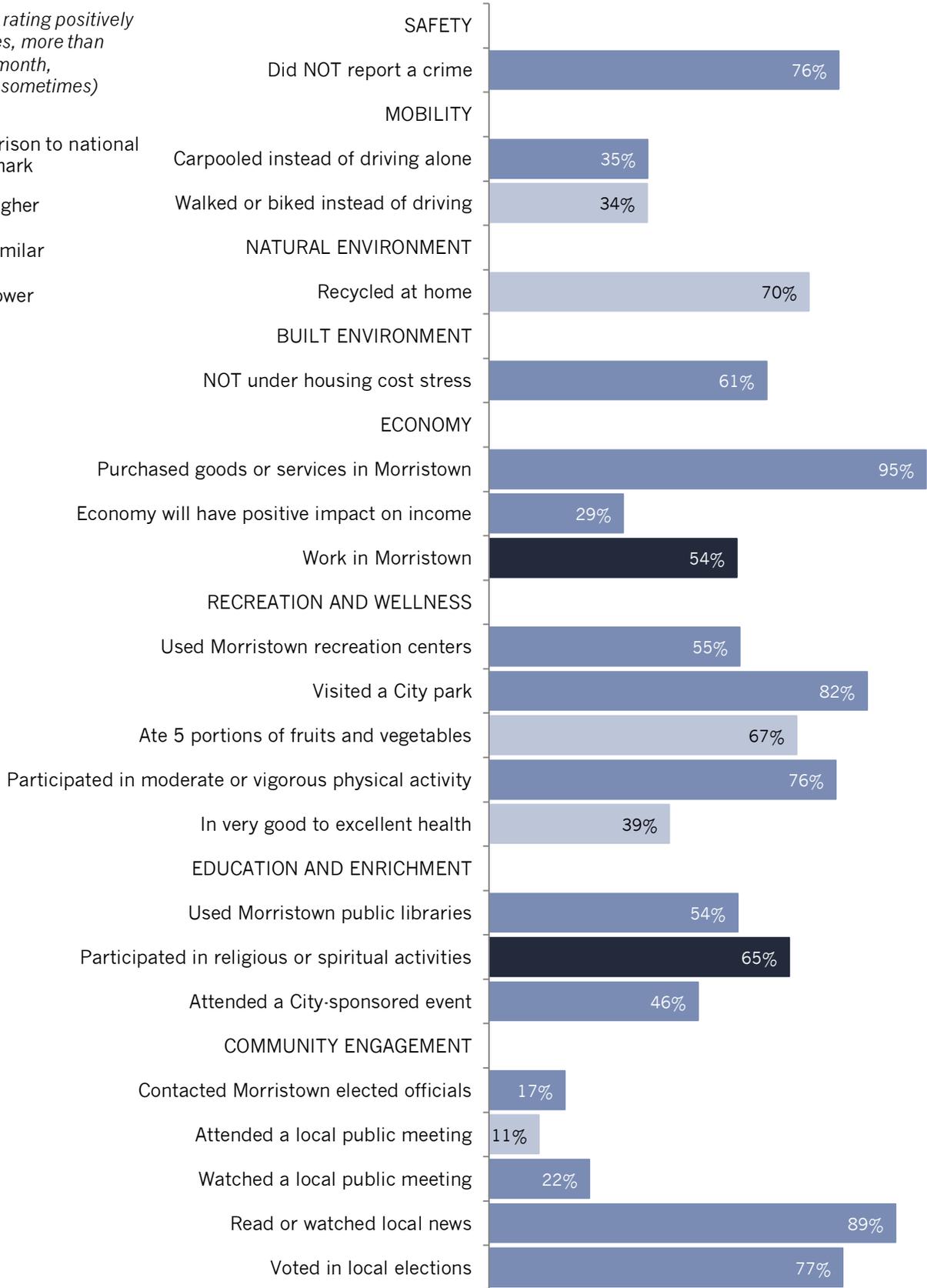
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

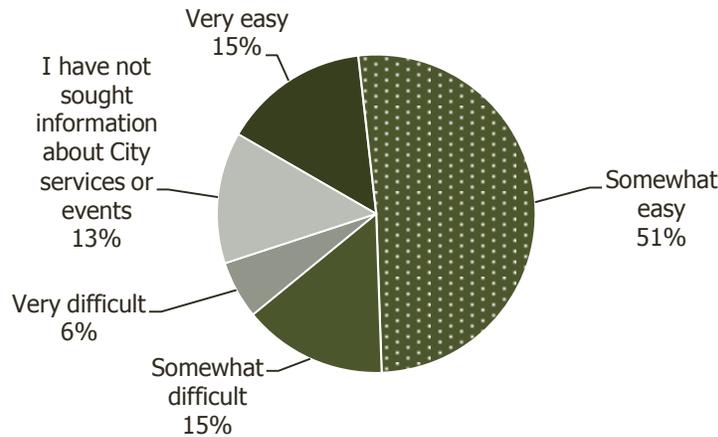


Special Topics

The City of Morristown included four questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked respondents about their ease in learning about City services or events. A majority of residents indicated that they found learning about City services or events at least somewhat easy. About 1 in 6 residents reported that they had not sought information about City services or events.

Figure 4: City Information

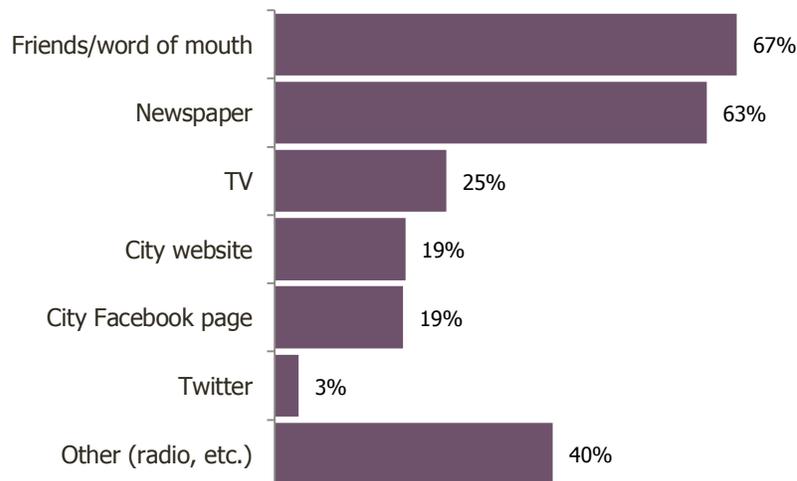
Please rate how easy or difficult it is to learn about City services or events:



The next special interest question asked how survey participants learned about community events. More than half of residents used friends/word of mouth and the newspaper. About 1 in 5 participants used TV, the City website or the City Facebook page and only three percent reported using Twitter. About 4 in 10 participants indicated they used some other source.

Figure 5: Community Event Information

How do you learn about community events?



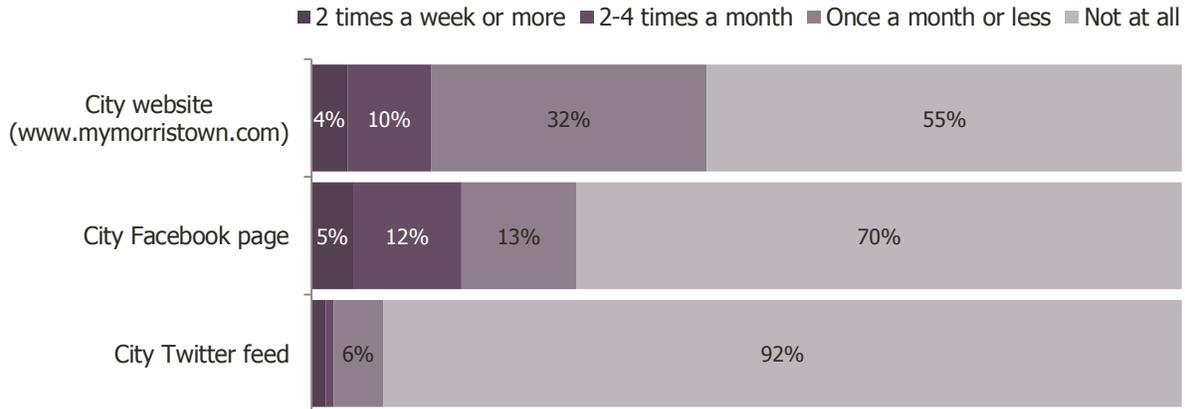
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

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Survey respondents were asked a final question about information sources, related to how frequently they visit the City website, Facebook page and Twitter feed. The City website was the most visited out of the three listed sources of information; however, about half of respondents reported not visiting the website at all. About 7 in 10 reported not visiting the City Facebook page at all and nearly all respondents had not visited the City Twitter feed.

Figure 6: City Sources of Information

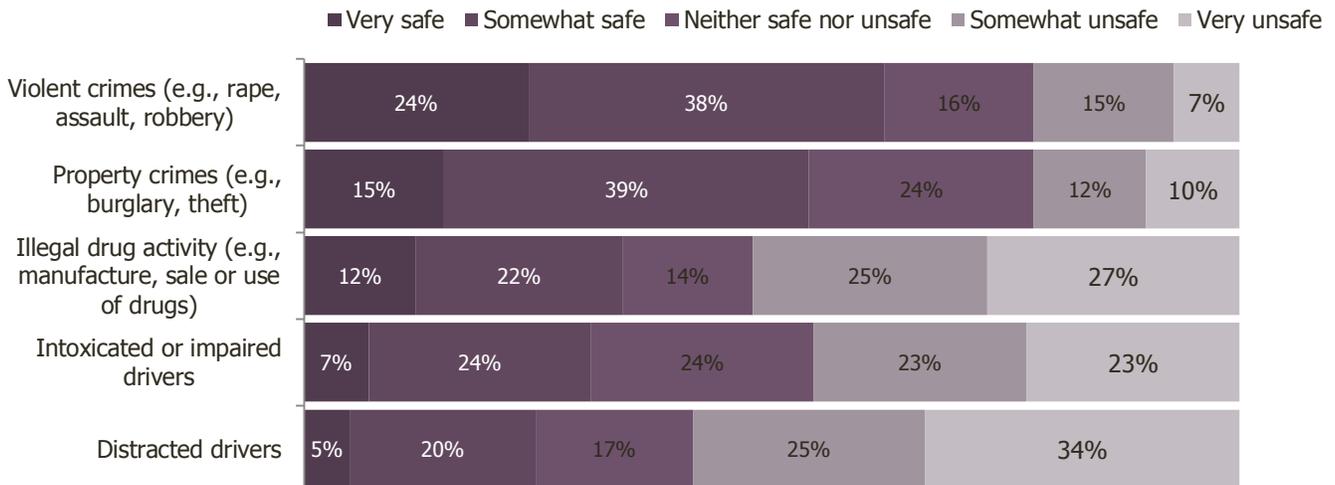
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members visited each of the following:



Residents were asked to consider how safe they feel from various crimes. Residents felt most safe from violent crimes followed by property crimes with more than half of respondents reporting feeling very or somewhat safe. Residents felt least safe from intoxicated or impaired drivers and distracted drivers with half or more of respondents indicating that they felt very or somewhat unsafe.

Figure 7: Feelings of Safety

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel from the following in Morristown.



Conclusions

Morristown residents continue to enjoy a positive quality of life and sense of community but residents have noted various areas for improvement.

As in 2016, a majority of residents gave positive ratings to the overall quality of life and Morristown as a place to live. About two-thirds of respondents offered positive ratings to Morristown as a place to raise children, to retire and to their neighborhood as a place to live while about half of respondents offered positive ratings to Morristown's overall image and appearance. However, compared to 2016, fewer residents in 2017 offered positive reviews of their neighborhood as a place to live or the overall appearance of Morristown. And their sense of their own city's appearance and image were not as strong as that sense held in other places. While about half of respondents rated the sense of community in Morristown as excellent or good (a rating similar to the 2016 ratings and the benchmark comparison) ratings for neighborliness and openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds declined in 2017 compared to 2016.

Safety is valued by residents and a majority of residents feel safe from various types of crime in Morristown.

Survey respondents indicated that safety is a priority for the City in the coming two years. At least 6 in 10 residents reported having an overall positive sense of safety, though this figure is lower than what residents in comparison locales report. Still, at least 8 in 10 reported that they felt safe in their neighborhoods as well as in the downtown/commercial area of Morristown. When asked how safe they feel from various crimes, residents felt most safe from violent crimes followed by property crimes, with more than half of respondents reporting feeling very or somewhat safe while residents felt least safe from intoxicated or impaired drivers and distracted drivers. Residents rated most safety services positively: at least 7 in 10 favorably rated police, fire, ambulance/EMS and fire prevention and education.

Services related to Mobility are strong but ease of travel by various modes could be an area for improvement.

Within Governance, each of the seven services or amenities related to Mobility were rated similar to the national averages with one-third to two-thirds of residents offering positive evaluations. Further, the rating for traffic enforcement increased in 2017 compared to 2016. While three-quarters of residents gave positive ratings to the overall ease of travel in Morristown (similar to the national average) only about 3 in 10 to 5 in 10 respondents offered positive ratings to the ease of travel by bicycle, by walking and the quality of paths and walking trails which was lower than the national average for each question. Further, about one-third of residents reported walking or biking instead of driving which is a rate lower than seen in communities across the nation.