

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Cañon City, CO
Community Livability Report

DRAFT
2016



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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Cañon City. 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.

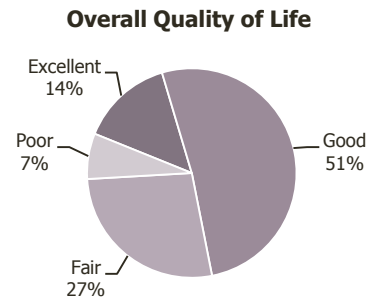
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 559 residents of the City of Cañon City. 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 Cañon City

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Cañon City as excellent or good. This rating was lower when compared to other communities 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.

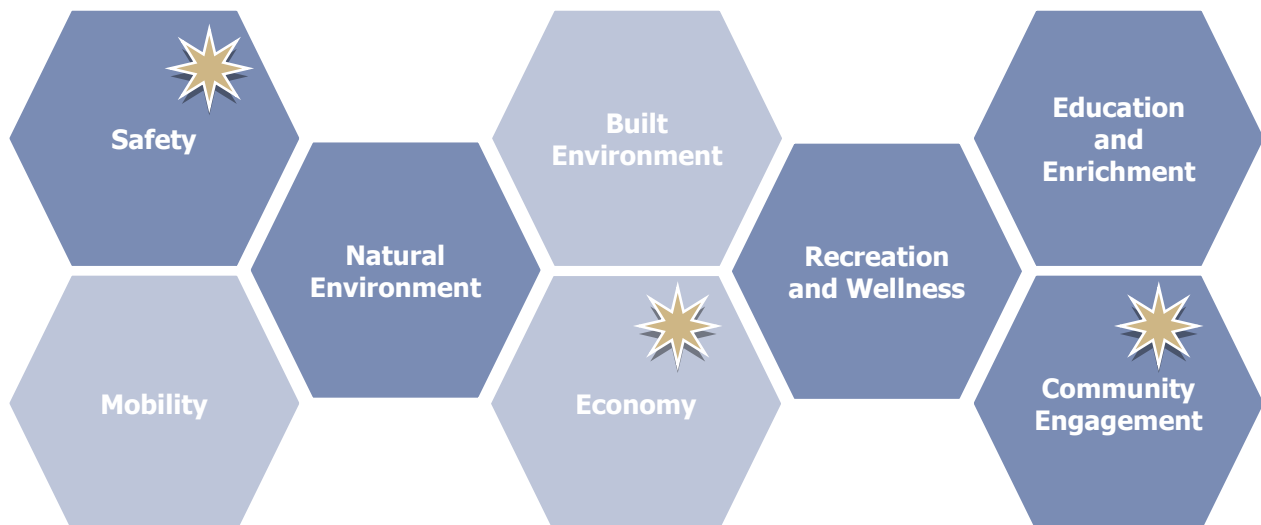
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety, Economy and Community Engagement as priorities for the Cañon City community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Cañon City residents gave favorable ratings to Safety and Community Engagement. Ratings for Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment were also 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 Cañon City’s unique questions.

Legend

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

- * Most important



Community Characteristics

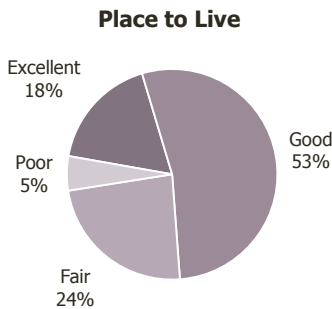
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 Cañon City, 71% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Cañon City as a place to live were lower than ratings in other communities across the nation.

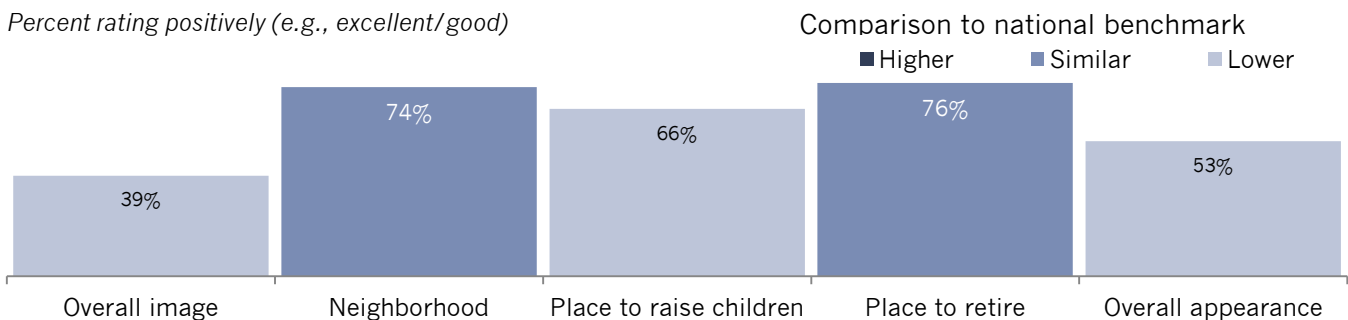
In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Cañon City as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Cañon City and its overall appearance. About three-quarters of residents gave high marks to their neighborhoods as places to live and to Cañon City as a place to retire, ratings which were similar to the national benchmark comparisons. About two-thirds rated the City as an excellent or good place to raise children, roughly one-half of participants gave positive ratings to Cañon City's overall appearance and about 4 in 10 favorably rated the overall image of the City. These ratings were lower than seen elsewhere.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Where benchmark comparisons were available, Cañon City's ratings tended to be similar to or lower than other communities across the U.S. Roughly 9 in 10 residents rated the feeling of safety in their neighborhoods positively, while about three-quarters or more gave high marks to the feeling of safety in the City's downtown/commercial area and overall. Within the facet of Mobility, about two-thirds of residents positively rated the overall ease of travel and the availability of paths and walking trails in Cañon City. About 3 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to ease of travel by bicycle and traffic flow; these ratings were lower than in comparison communities. Ratings for Natural Environment were generally positive, with about three-quarters of respondents or more giving positive marks to Cañon City's overall natural environment and the

City's air quality. Within Built Environment, about half of the survey participants highly rated the overall built environment and public places where people want to spend time, while about one-quarter gave excellent or good ratings to new development in the City, the availability of affordable quality housing and the variety of housing options. Most aspects of Economy received positive ratings from about one-third of residents or fewer, and these ratings were lower than the national benchmark comparison. Of the remaining facets, ratings continued to be mixed, with the highest rating for opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities (78%) and the lowest for the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds (31%).



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



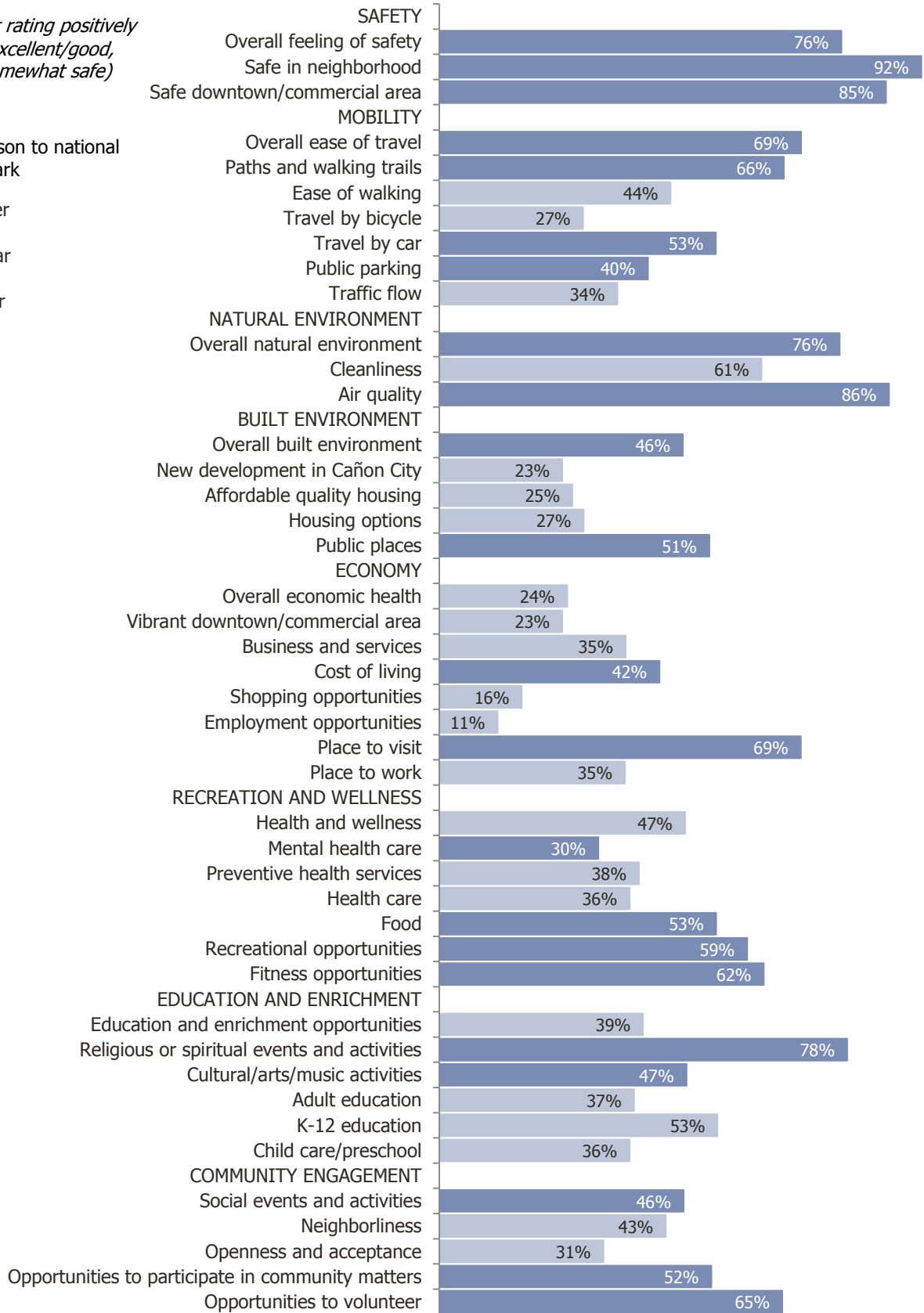
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

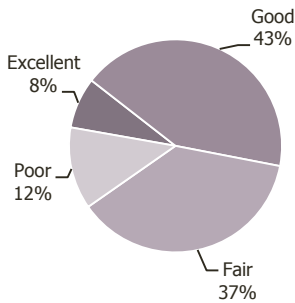
How well does the government of Cañon City meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Cañon City as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. The overall quality of services provided by the Cañon City government received excellent or good ratings from about half of residents, a rating lower than seen in comparison communities, while the Federal Government received positive ratings from about one-third of participants.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Cañon City’s leadership and governance. Roughly 6 in 10 respondents gave an excellent or good rating to the customer service provided by City employees and nearly 4 in 10 gave high marks to the City being honest. About 3 in 10 participants positively rated the value of services for taxes paid, the overall direction of Cañon City, the job the City does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in City government and the City acting in the best interest of the community. These ratings tended to be lower than the benchmark.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Cañon City. Among the highest-rated services were: police, fire and ambulance/EMS services, garbage collection, sewer services and City parks; these aspects were given high marks by about 7 in 10 or more residents and had ratings similar to those given in comparison communities. About two-thirds of participants or more gave high marks to fire prevention, drinking water, power utility and public libraries, and about 6 in 10 positively rated utility billing. Among the lower-rated services were street repair, sidewalk maintenance, traffic signal timing, code enforcement and economic development. These services received positive ratings from about 2 in 10 or fewer respondents and were lower than the national benchmark comparison.

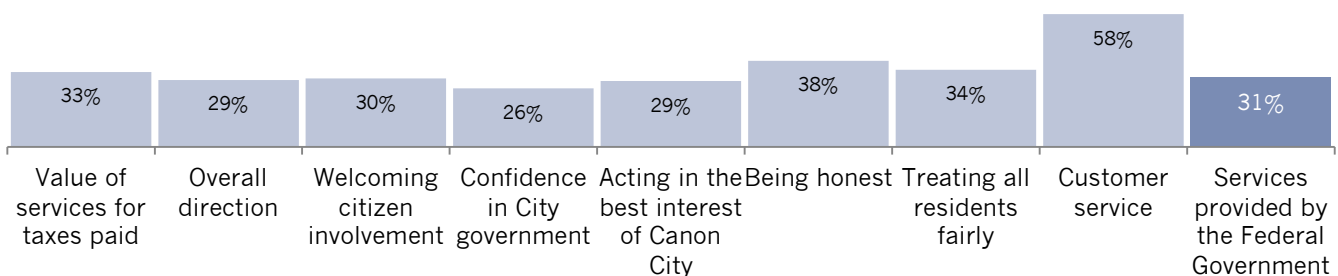
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



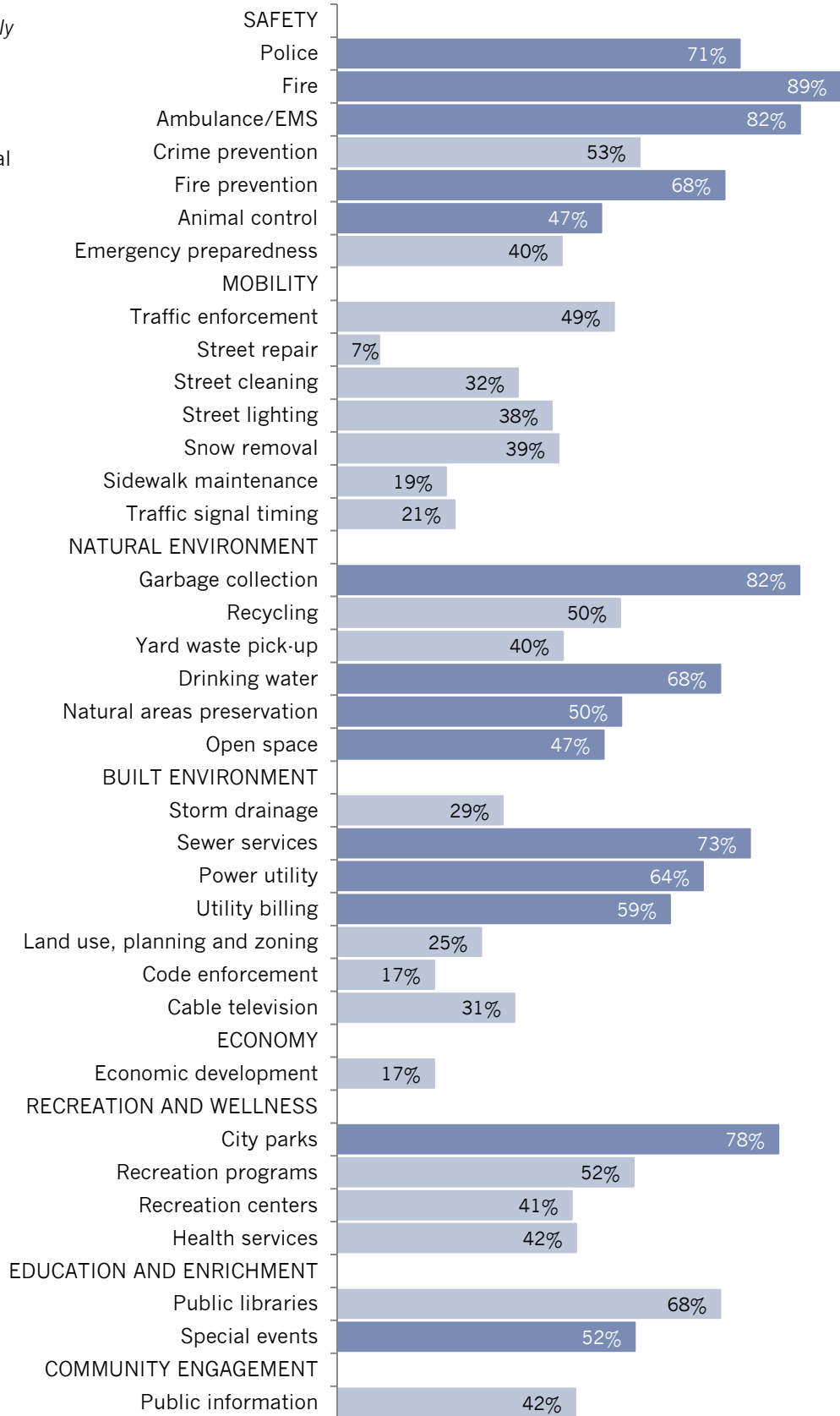
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

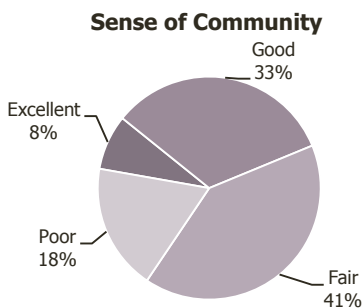


Participation

Are the residents of Cañon City 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. While a majority of residents rated the sense of community in Cañon City as excellent or good, the rating was lower than the benchmark comparison. However, around 8 in 10 residents reported that they would recommend the City to someone who asks and plan to remain in Cañon City for the next five years, and these ratings were similar to those seen in communities elsewhere. Roughly 4 in 10 residents reported contacting a Cañon City employee within the last 12 months, which was a similar contact rate as seen in other communities.

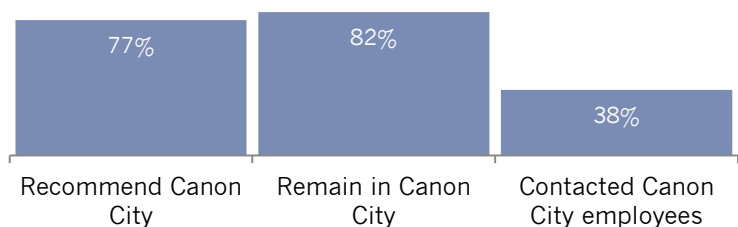
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Compared to residents in other communities across the country, more Cañon City residents had attended a City-sponsored event, while fewer respondents had recycled at home, used Cañon City public libraries or reported that they had not observed a code violation. All other rates of Participation were similar when compared to communities across the country. Participation in Economy-related activities was mixed; nearly all participants had purchased goods or services in Cañon City, while about half worked in the City and about 2 in 10 felt the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months. Participation within the facet of Community Engagement was also mixed. For example, most residents had read or watched local news, talked or visited with neighbors and had done a favor for a neighbor, but only about 2 in 10 had contacted Cañon City elected officials or attended or watched a local public meeting.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



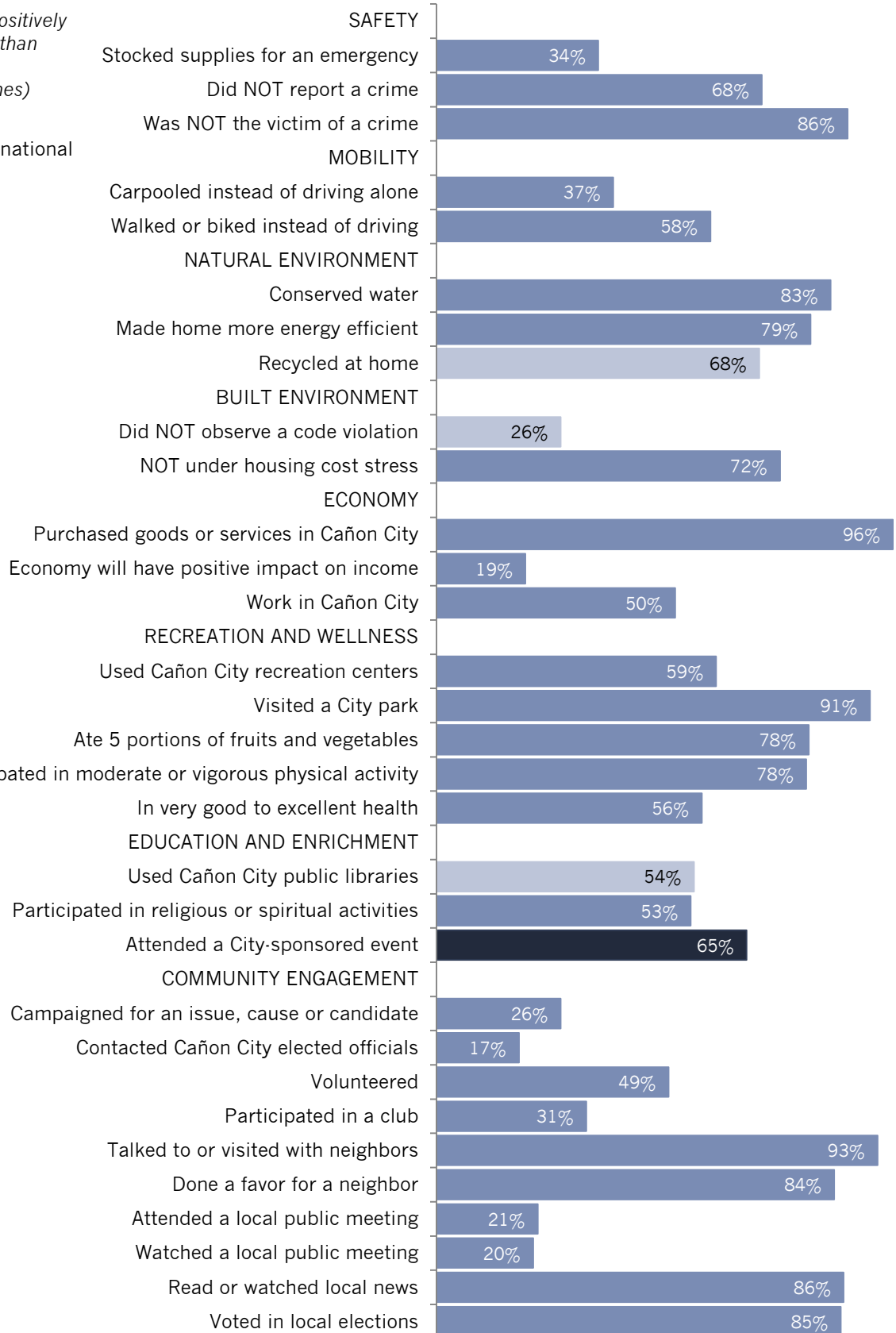
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

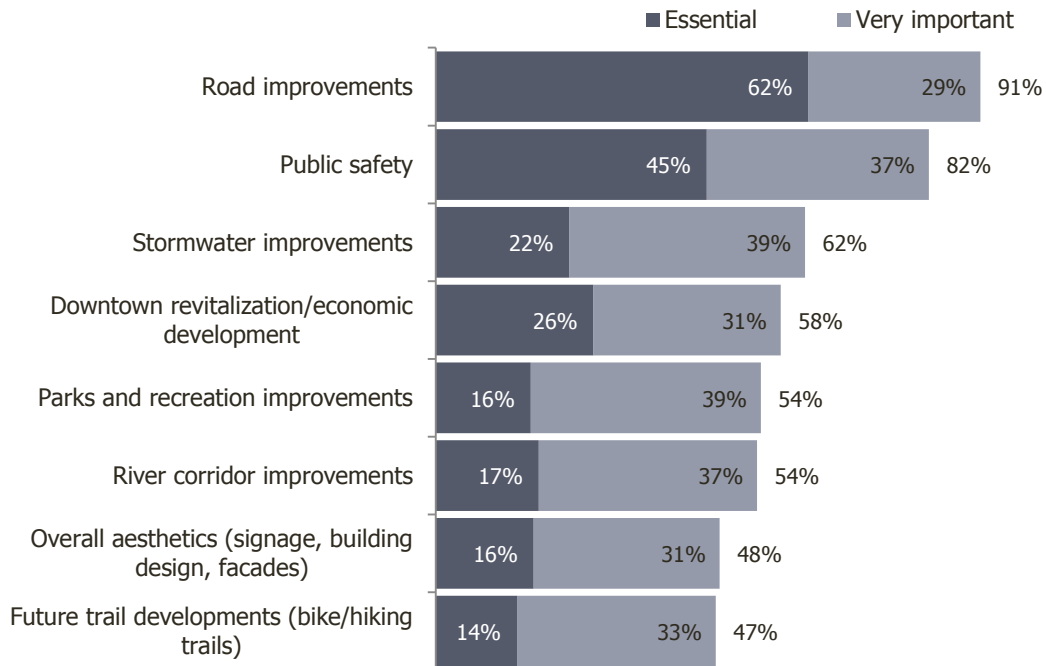


Special Topics

The City of Cañon City included six questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked respondents to rate the importance of a number of potential City investments. Almost all rated road improvements (91%) and public safety (82%) as essential or very important investments. About 6 in 10 highly rated the importance of investing in stormwater improvements and downtown revitalization/economic development.

Figure 4: City Investments

Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is that the City invest in each of the following in the next 12 months.

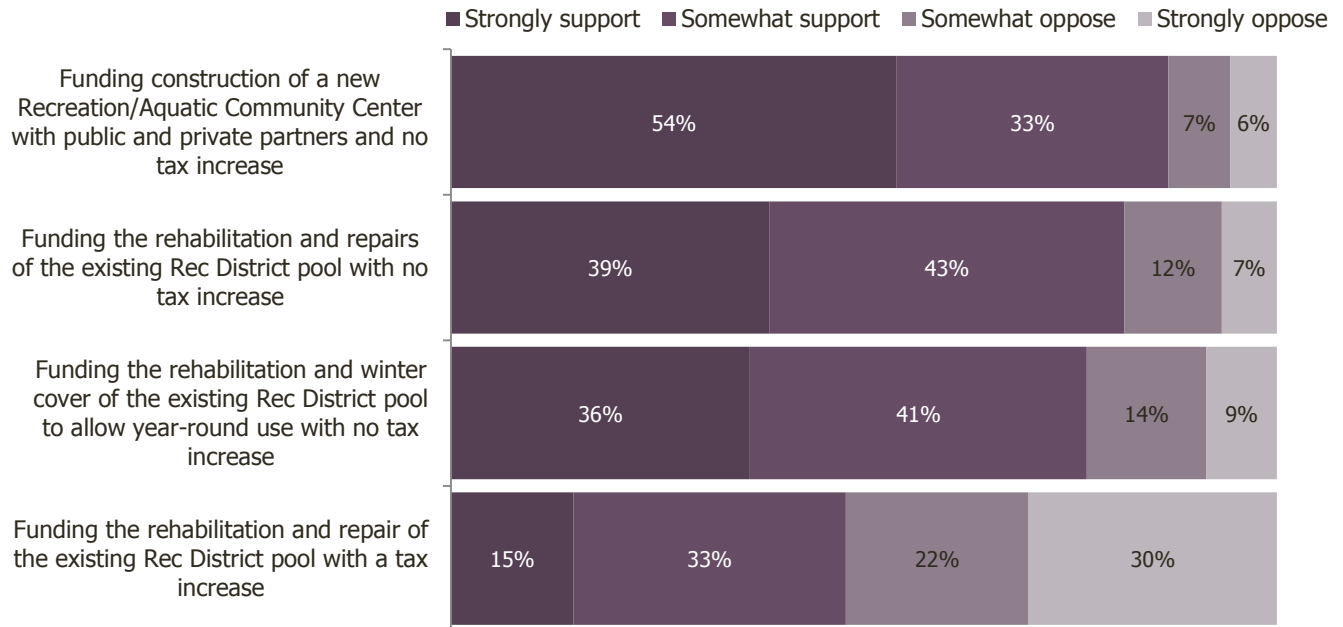


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The second question prompted residents to indicate their level of support for a number of actions regarding a new Recreation/Aquatic Community Center. Most participants (87%) indicated they strongly or somewhat supported funding construction of a new center with public and private partners and no tax increase. Similar proportions (about 8 in 10) indicated they would strongly or somewhat support funding the rehabilitation and repairs of the existing Rec District pool, as well as the addition of a winter cover, with no tax increase.

Figure 5: Support for Recreation/Aquatic Community Center

Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the City taking the following actions regarding a Recreation/Aquatic Community Center.

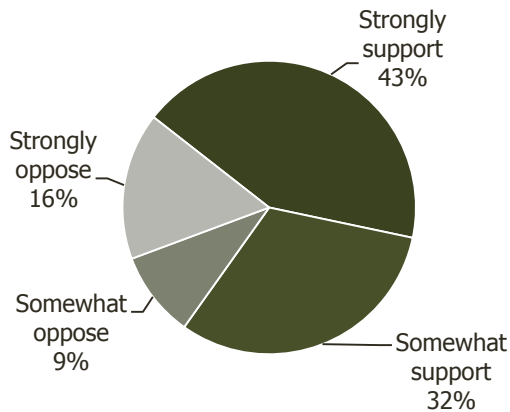


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When asked the extent to which they support or oppose sales tax increases of 1% for the next 10 years to fund street improvements, about three-quarters of residents strongly or somewhat supported the proposal. Only about 16% strongly opposed the increase.

Figure 6: Sales Tax Increase

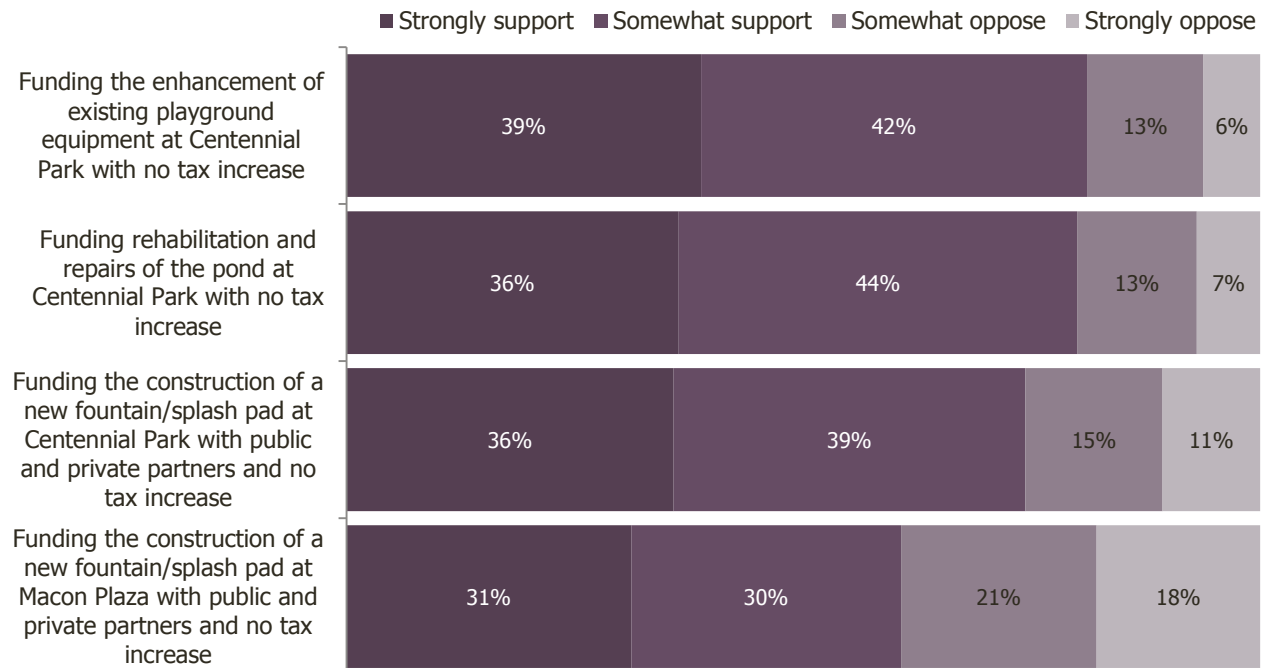
The City is proposing to increase the sales tax by 1% for 10 years to generate \$3.5 million annually to fund only street improvements and repairs, with such expenditures subject to an annual independent audit for public review. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose this proposal.



The next question asked residents about their support for recreation improvements. About 8 in 10 residents supported funding the enhancement of existing playground equipment at Centennial Park with no tax increase, as well as funding the rehabilitation and repairs of the pond at Centennial Park with no tax increase. About three-quarters of residents strongly or somewhat supported funding the construction of a new fountain/splash pad.

Figure 7: Support for Recreation Improvements

Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the City taking the following actions.



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The final two special-interest questions asked residents about their support or opposition for marijuana cultivation permits in industrial and commercial zones. About half of respondents supported cultivation permits in industrial zones of Cañon City and about 4 in 10 supported cultivation permits in commercial zones. Roughly 4 in 10 residents strongly oppose cultivation permits in both industrial and commercial zones.

Figure 8: Marijuana in Industrial Zones

The City is attempting to reduce cultivation of marijuana in residential homes and areas. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the adoption of zoning and special review conditions to permit the cultivation, but not the sale, of marijuana in industrial zones in the city.

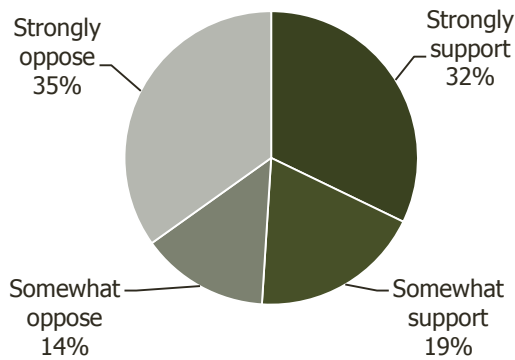
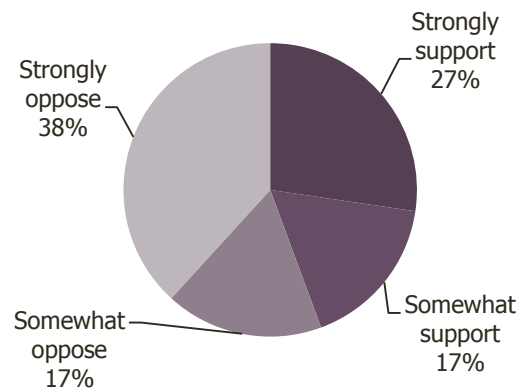


Figure 9: Marijuana in Commercial Zones
Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the adoption of zoning and special review conditions to permit the cultivation, but not the sale, of marijuana in commercial zones in the city.



Conclusions

Cañon City residents enjoy a positive quality of life.

A majority of survey respondents, nearly 7 in 10, felt positively about the overall quality of life in Cañon City and the City as a place to live. They also valued their neighborhoods as places to live and the City as a place to retire, with about three-quarters of residents giving high marks to these aspects of community. Not only did participants appreciate living in Cañon City, but about half positively rated the City's overall appearance. Notably, around 8 in 10 respondents reported that they planned to remain in Cañon City and would recommend it to someone who asked.

Safety and Economy are main focus areas for the community.

Residents indicated that Safety is an important facet for Cañon City to focus on in the coming years. About three-quarters of residents rated the overall feeling of safety in Cañon City as favorable, and around 9 in 10 positively rated safety in their neighborhoods. Safety services including police, fire and ambulance/EMS received positive ratings from about 7 in 10 or more residents and were all rated similarly to comparison communities. However, about one-half of participants gave high marks to crime prevention, and this rating was lower than seen in other communities. Additionally, more than 8 in 10 reported that they had not been the victim of a crime and close to two-thirds of respondents had not reported a crime.

Nearly 9 in 10 respondents indicated that the Economy should be a priority for the community in the next two years, and ratings within this facet were mixed. The ratings for overall economic health were lower than the national comparison, with about one-quarter of residents giving it positive marks. However, the cost of living and Cañon City as a place to visit were both rated similarly to comparison communities. Almost all residents reported that they had purchased goods or services in the City and about half of residents indicated that they work in the City. However, several measures tended to be rated lower than other communities across the nation, including economic development, employment opportunities, shopping opportunities, the overall quality of business and service establishments and the vibrancy of Cañon City's downtown/commercial area. The Economy may be an area of potential focus and improvement for the City.

Cañon City residents are engaged in their community.

Cañon City residents tended to report similar or higher levels of Participation within their community when compared to residents elsewhere. Most residents had talked or visited with neighbors in the last 12 months prior to the survey and a similar proportion had read or watched the local news, voted in local elections or done a favor for a neighbor. More than 9 in 10 respondents had purchased goods or services in Cañon City and visited a City park. These levels of participation were similar to levels seen in comparison communities. More than 6 in 10 participants had attended a City-sponsored event, a participation level higher than rates reported in other communities across the nation.