THE NCS™

The National Citizen Survey™

Livermore, CA

Community Livability Report

2014

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ATTACHMENT 3

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

About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the "livability" of Livermore. 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 736 residents of the City of Livermore. 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.

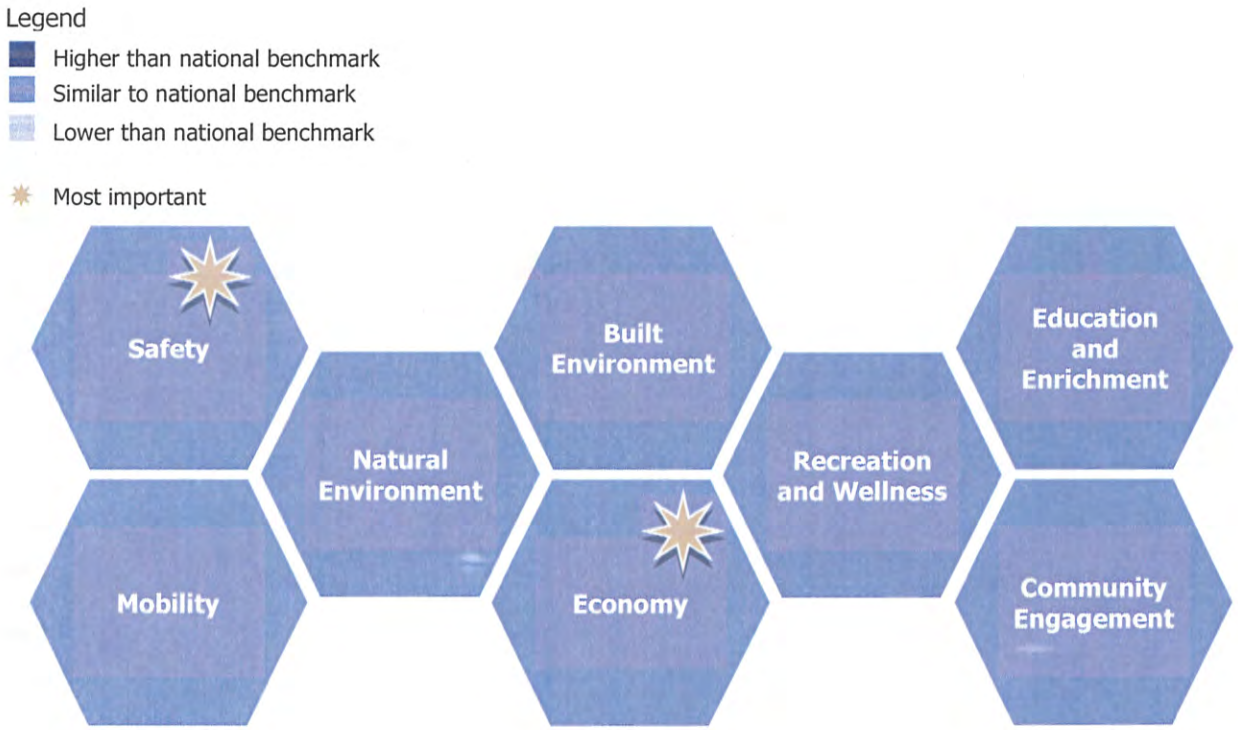
Quality of Life in Livermore

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Livermore as excellent or good. This rating was similar to 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 Livermore 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 Livermore's unique questions.



Community Characteristics

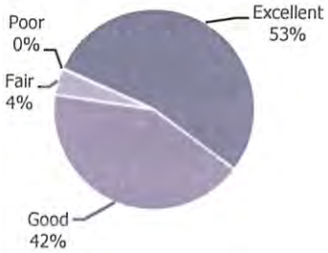
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 Livermore, 96% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Livermore 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 Livermore as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Livermore and its overall appearance. A majority of residents gave positive ratings to each of these aspects, and all were rated similar to the national benchmarks. Ratings for the overall image/reputation of Livermore increased from 2011 to 2014 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

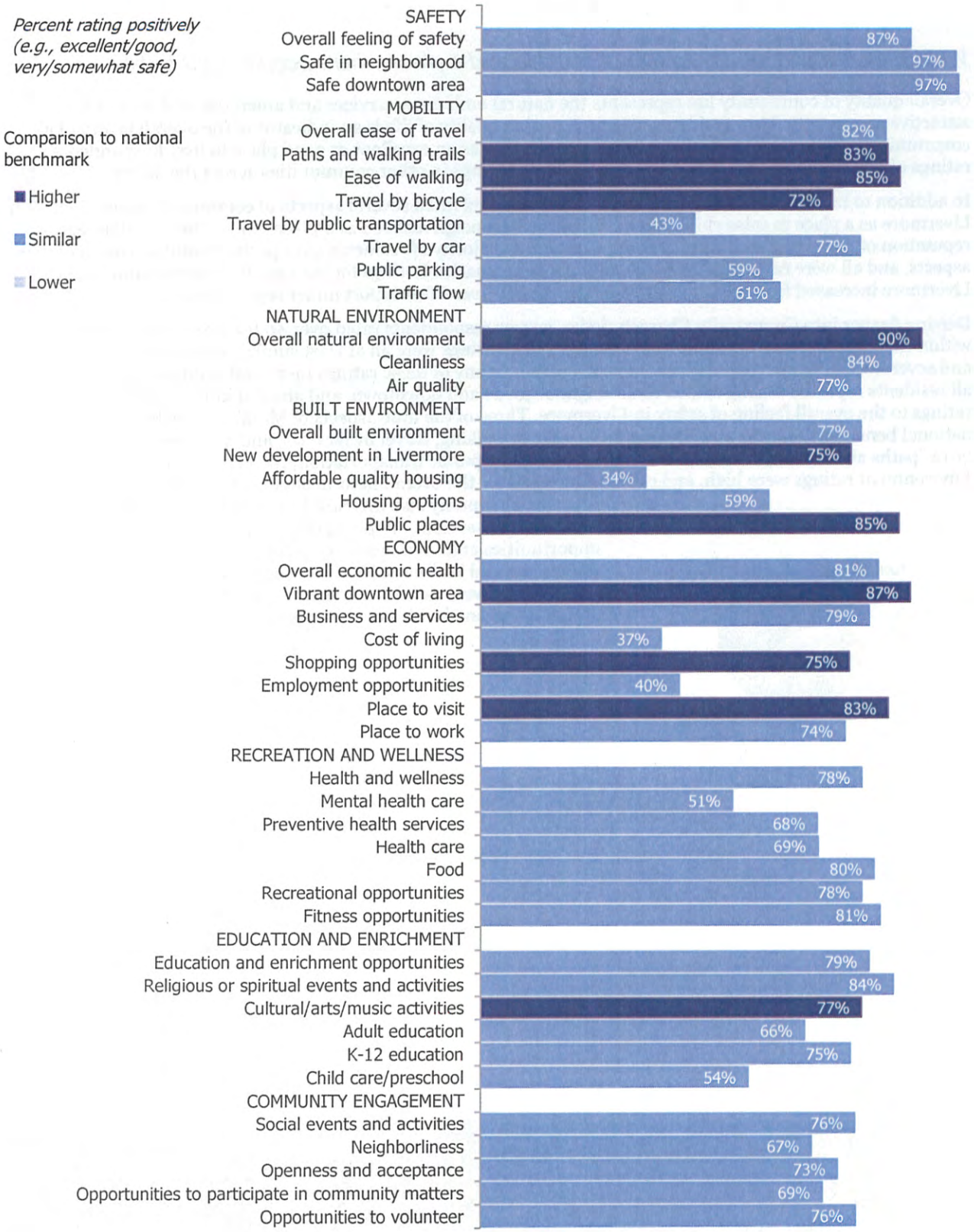
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. These ratings were all at least similar to the national benchmark; and several were higher than the benchmark. Further, many of these ratings increased from 2011 to 2014. Almost all residents reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods and downtown, and about 9 in 10 residents gave high ratings to the overall feeling of safety in Livermore. Three of the nine aspects of Mobility were higher than the national benchmark (paths and walking trails, ease of walking, travel by bicycle), and 5 in 9 increased from 2011 to 2014 (paths and walking trails, ease of walking, travel by public transportation, travel by car, traffic flow). Natural Environment ratings were high, and ratings increased for the overall natural environment and air quality. Several aspects of Economy also increased from 2011 to 2014 including business and services, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities and Livermore as a place to work. All aspects of Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were rated as excellent or good by a majority of residents and had remained stable or improved since 2011.

Place to Live



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

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

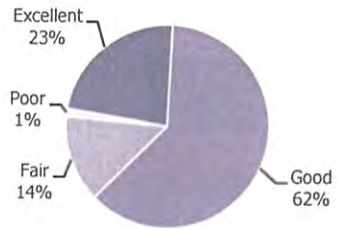
How well does the government of Livermore meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Livermore as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 85% of respondents rated the overall quality of City services as excellent or good, while only about 35% gave positive ratings to the Federal Government. Ratings for the overall quality of City services increased from 2011 to 2014.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Livermore's leadership and governance. At least 6 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to each of these items (value of services for taxed paid, overall direction, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Livermore, being honest, treating all residents fairly and customer service). These ratings tended to be similar to those in comparison communities; however ratings for treating all residents fairly were higher than the national benchmark. Ratings for the overall direction of Livermore and welcoming citizen involvement increased from 2011 to 2014.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Livermore. These ratings tended to be similar to the benchmark comparison, however ratings for natural areas preservation, land use, planning and zoning and economic development were higher than in comparison communities. Ratings for several aspects of Governance were trending up from 2011 to 2014 including: crime prevention, land use, planning and zoning, economic development, health services and public libraries. Ratings for bus or transit services and cable television decreased from 2011 to 2014. The highest rated services were fire services, ambulance/EMS, recycling, City parks, recreation centers and public libraries.

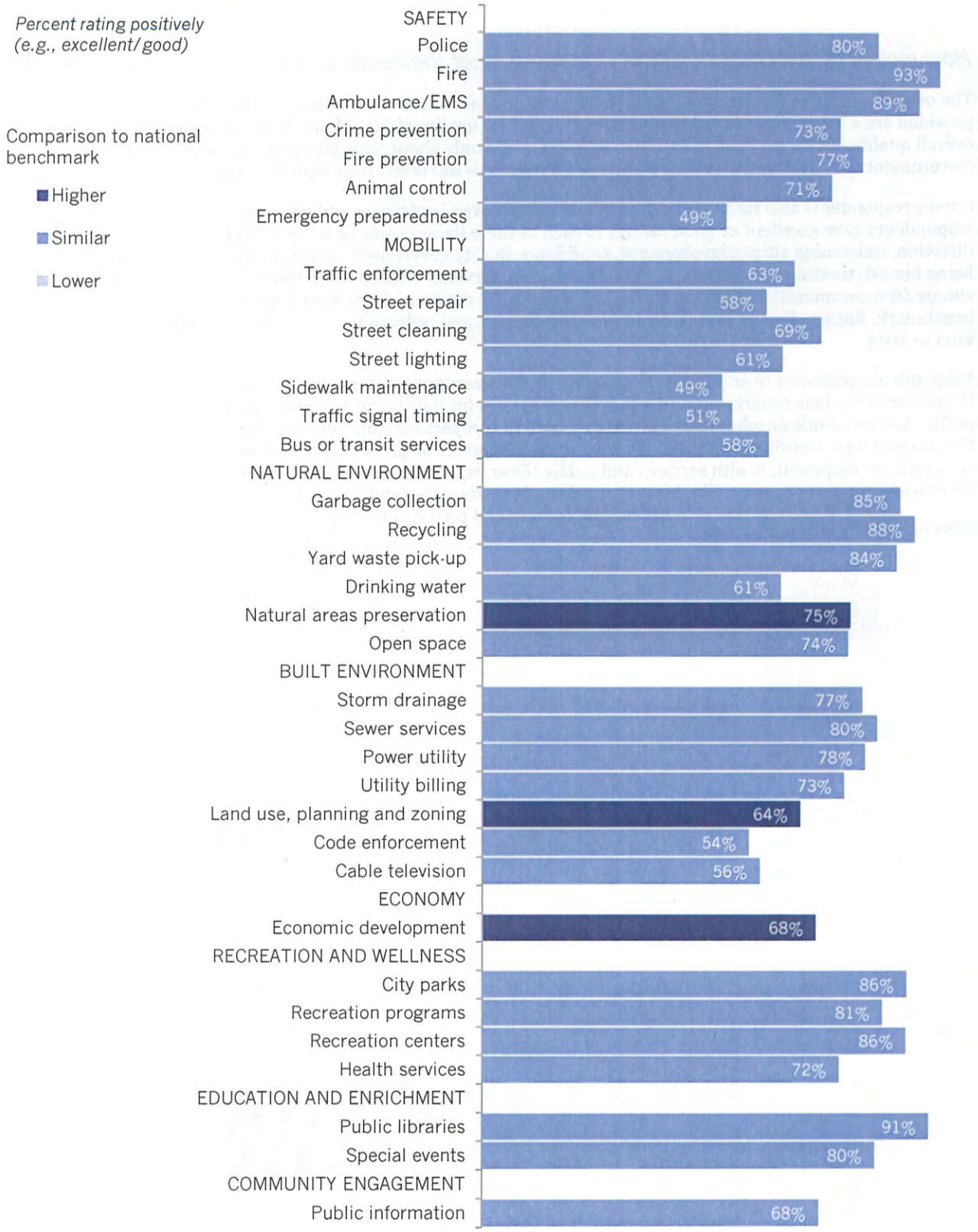
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

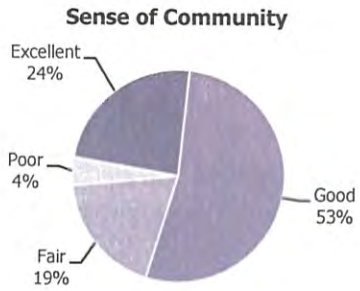


Participation

Are the residents of Livermore 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 three-quarters of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the sense of community in Livermore. Almost all reported that they were likely to remain in Livermore and would recommend living in Livermore.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates tended to vary when compared to other communities across the nation. More Livermore residents reported that they had walked or biked instead of driving, conserved water, recycled at home or attended a City-sponsored event in the last 12 months than residents in other communities. Further, more Livermore residents were optimistic about the impact of the economy on their own personal incomes. The number of residents who were optimistic about the economy also increased from 2011 to 2014. Fewer survey respondents reported that they had attended a local public meeting, watched a local public meeting, or volunteered in 2014 than in 2011. When compared to the national benchmark, fewer Livermore residents had watched a local public meeting and fewer were NOT under housing cost stress.



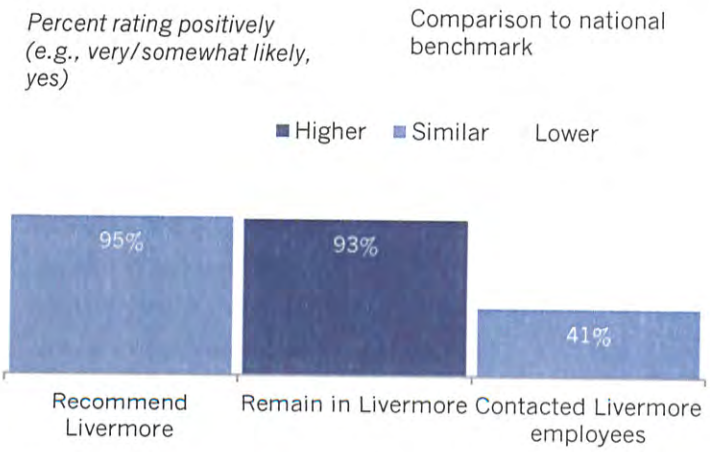
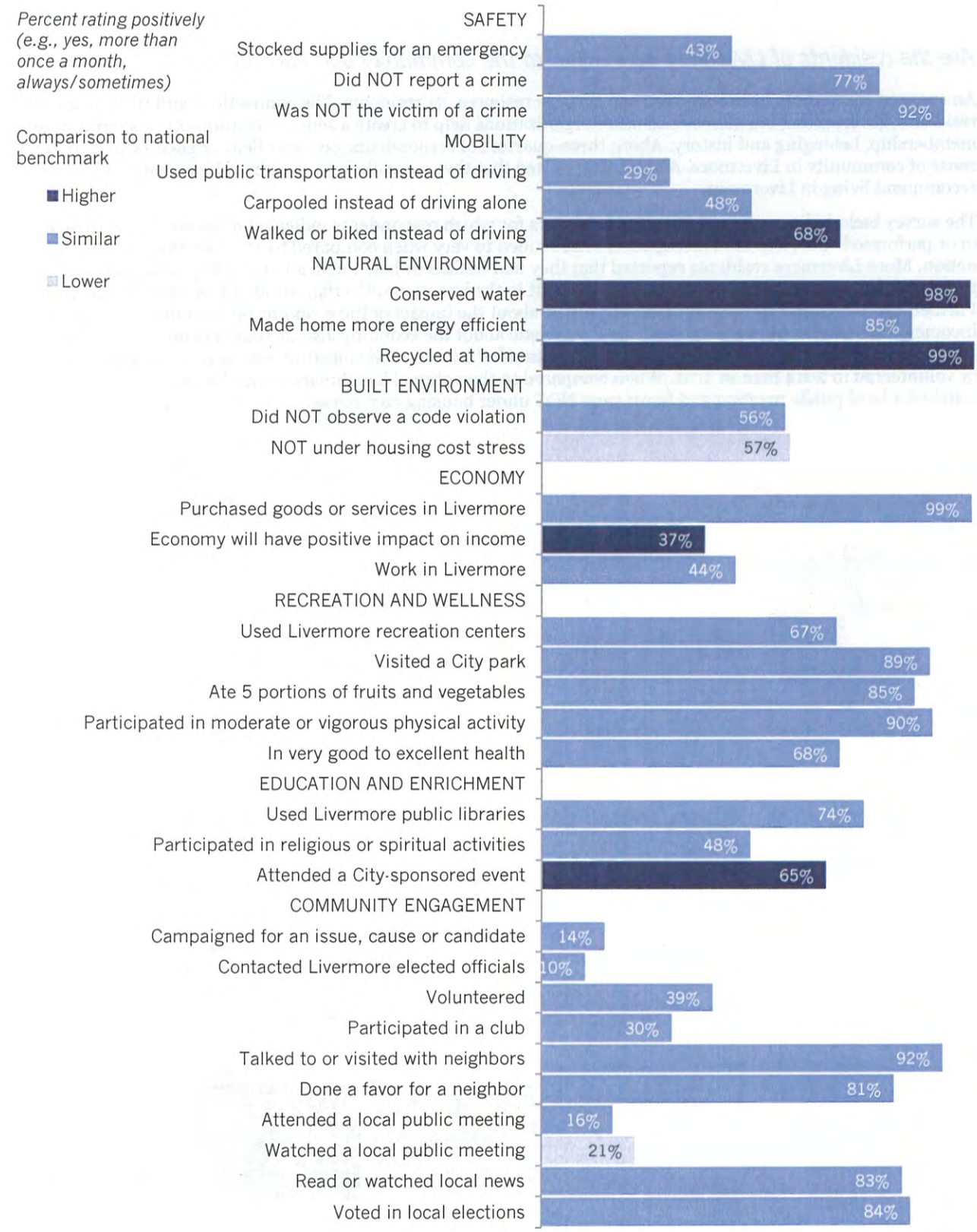


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

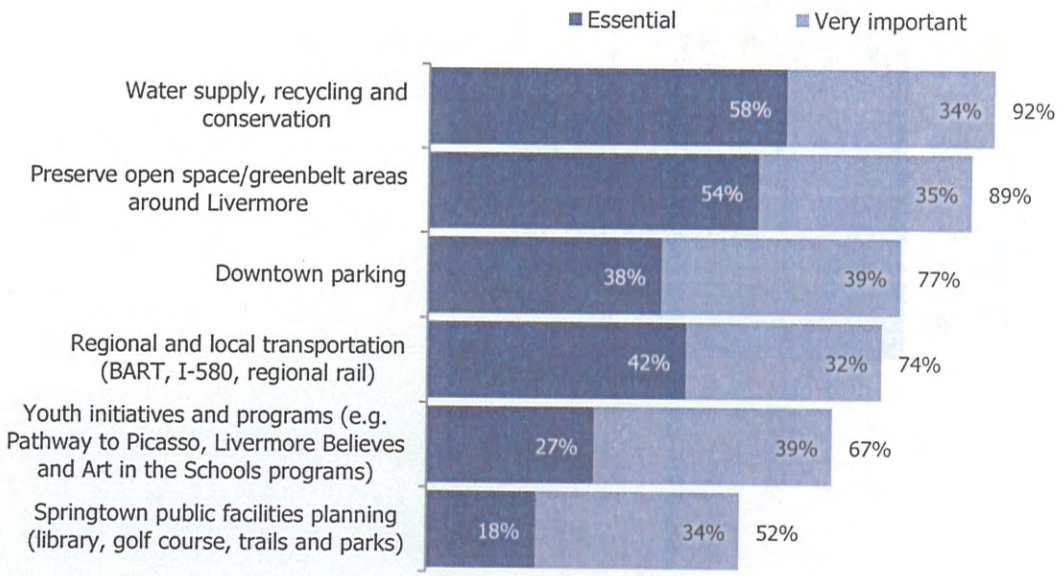


Special Topics

The City of Livermore included two questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked residents to rate the importance of several areas in relation to the overall quality of life in Livermore. Almost all rated water supply, recycling and conservation as essential or very important. While a majority rated all items as essential or very important, Springtown public facilities planning was the least important of the items rated.

Figure 4: Custom Question 1: Areas of Emphasis

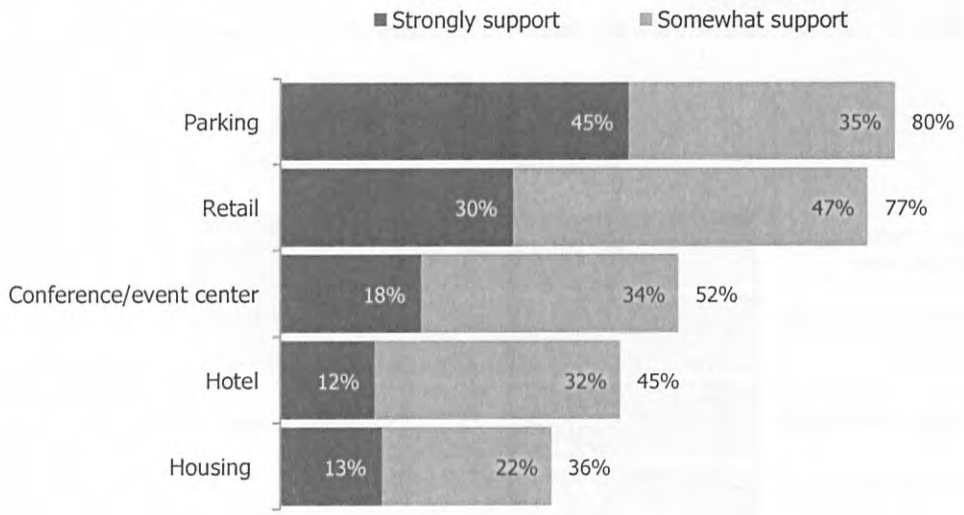
Please rate how important, if at all, each of the following areas of emphasis are to the overall quality of life in Livermore:



When asked about potential uses for the former Livermore City site, at least three-quarters of respondents supported parking or retail. A majority indicated they would support a conference/event center. A hotel and housing received lower rates of support.

Figure 5: Custom Question 2: Former Livermore City Site

The former Livermore City site, commonly referred to as the old Lucky's site, (located between First St. and Railroad Ave. and S. Livermore and South "L" St.) is slated for redevelopment. How much do you support or oppose each of the following potential uses for that site?



Conclusions

Livermore residents continue to enjoy an exceptional quality of life.

About 9 in 10 residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good and almost all were likely to recommend Livermore as a place to live. Almost all gave excellent or good ratings to the City as a place to live. Livermore's overall appearance and overall image, neighborhoods as a place to live and to raise children received high ratings by at least 4 in 5 residents. Ratings for the overall quality of life in Livermore as well as for the overall image or reputation of Livermore increased from 2011 to 2014. Most of the aspects that aid in community livability were rated positively and remained stable or increased from 2011 to 2014.

Residents feel safe in Livermore.

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 felt safe overall, in their neighborhoods and downtown. Residents rated most safety services highly and most participants were not a victim of a crime or did not report a crime. Ratings for crime prevention increased from 2011 to 2014.

The Economy is important to the community and residents are optimistic.

Residents believe that the economy is an important community feature to focus on over the next two years. Participants felt very positive about the overall economic health of the community and also gave high ratings to several other aspects of Economy. Ratings increased from 2011 to 2014 for shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, Livermore as a place to work, businesses and services and economic development. Further, more residents felt the economy would have a positive impact on their own personal incomes in 2014 than in 2011.