

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Bainbridge Island, WA

Community Livability Report

2015



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

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About

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

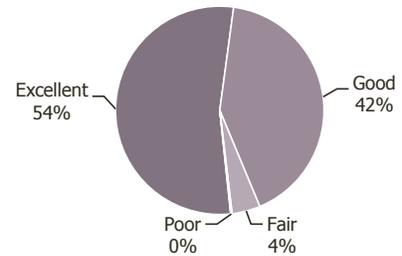
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 584 residents of the City of Bainbridge Island. The margin of error around any reported percentage is four percent for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life on Bainbridge Island

Almost all residents rated the quality of life on Bainbridge Island as excellent or good. This rating is higher than quality of life ratings seen in other communities nationally (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

Overall Quality of Life



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.

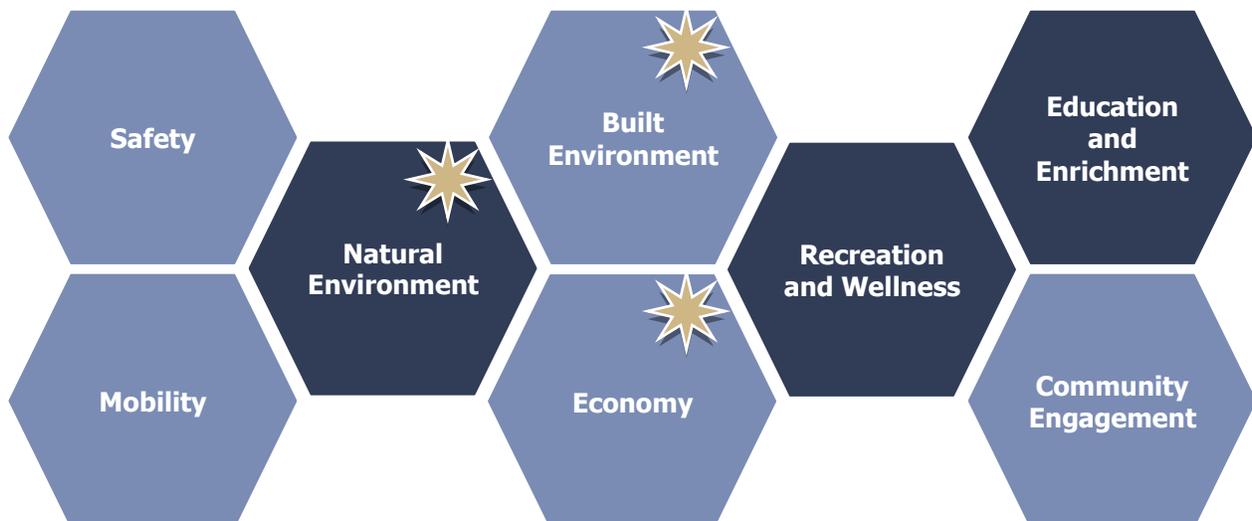
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Natural Environment, Built Environment and Economy as priorities for the Bainbridge Island community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Bainbridge Island residents gave favorable ratings to each facet of community, particularly to Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness, and Education and Enrichment. Ratings for Safety, Mobility, Built Environment, Economy and Community Engagement 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 Bainbridge Island’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 Bainbridge Island, 97% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Bainbridge Island as a place to live were higher 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 Bainbridge Island as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Bainbridge Island and its overall appearance. Around 9 in 10 residents positively rated Bainbridge Island's overall image, their neighborhood, Bainbridge Island as a place to raise children, and Bainbridge Island's overall appearance. Meanwhile, more than 7 in 10 residents rated Bainbridge Island favorably as a place to retire. All of these ratings were higher than those seen in comparison communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Generally, most ratings within Community Characteristics received ratings that were similar to or better than the benchmark. The most positive ratings were seen in the categories of Safety and Natural Environment, with most items receiving favorable ratings from nearly all residents; all items within Natural Environment received ratings higher than the benchmark as did two of the three items within Safety. Several aspects within Education and Enrichment received ratings that were higher than the benchmark including education and enrichment opportunities, cultural/arts/music activities, K-12 education and child care/preschool. Similar to other communities, 9 in 10 residents rated religious or spiritual events and activities in the community positively. Ratings were mixed within the facet of Economy, with positive ratings that were higher than the benchmark for vibrant downtown/commercial area and Bainbridge Island as a place to visit; ratings for cost of living on Bainbridge Island and employment opportunities were less positive and lower than in other communities.

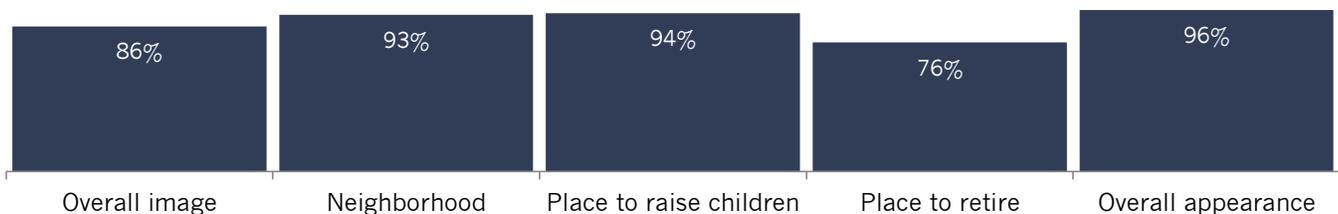


Trends between 2014 and 2015 tended to be stable within the pillar of Community Characteristics (see *Trends over Time* report, provided under separate cover).

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



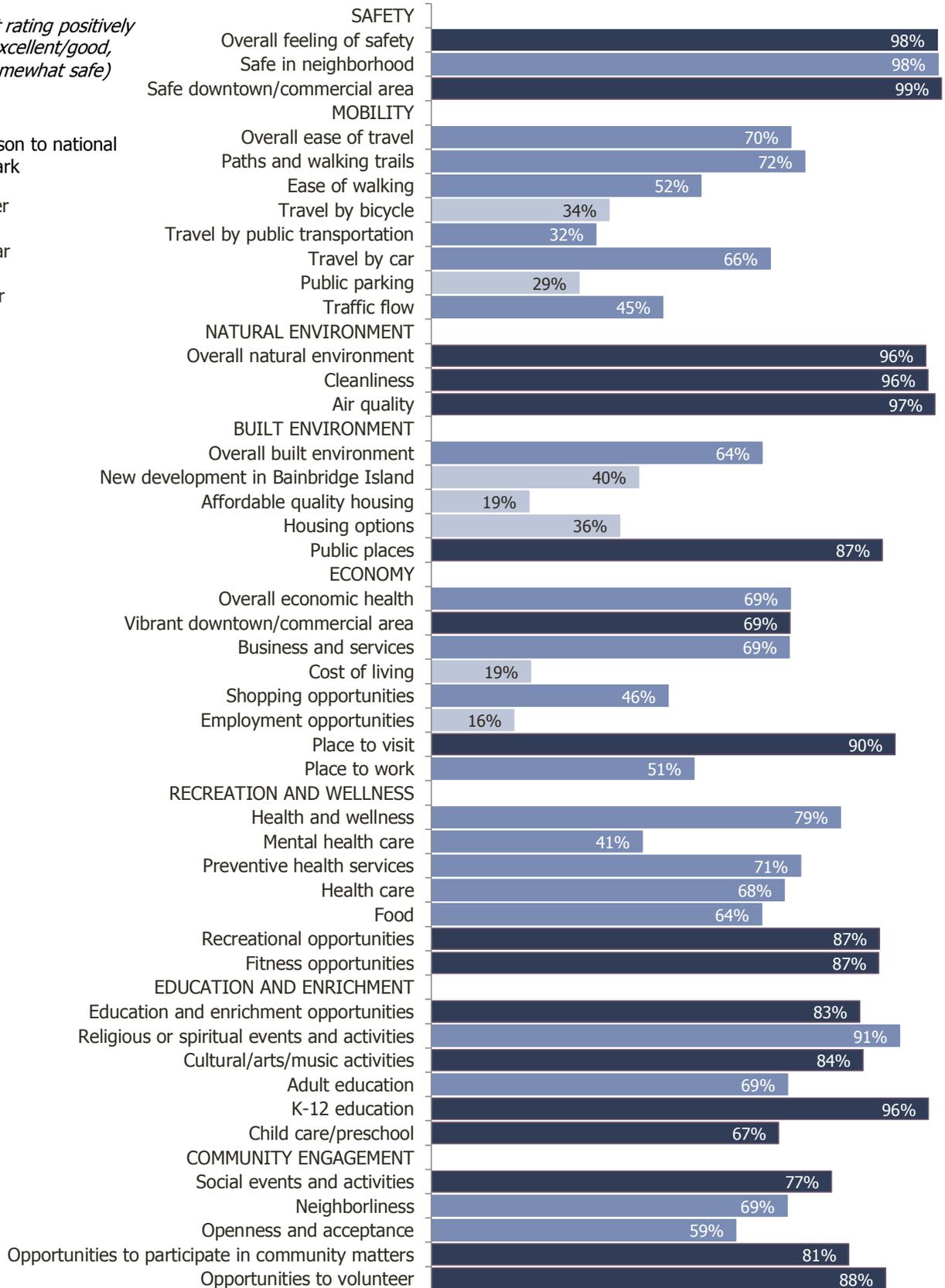
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



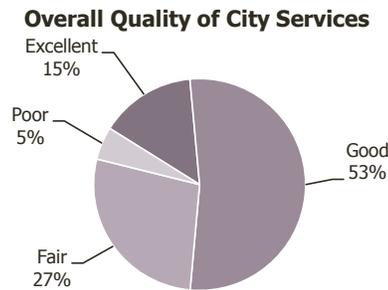
Governance

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

The overall quality of the services provided by Bainbridge Island 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 rated the overall quality of services provided by Bainbridge Island as excellent or good while about 4 in 10 positively rated the services provided by the Federal Government; both of these ratings were similar to those given in other communities across the nation.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Bainbridge Island’s leadership and governance. Around 8 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to overall customer service provided by Bainbridge Island employees, a rating that was similar to the benchmark. At least 4 in 10 residents rated the government acting in the best interest of the community, being honest and treating residents fairly, welcoming citizen involvement and the value of services for taxes paid favorably and all were similar to the benchmark. Two items (overall direction of Bainbridge Island and confidence in City government) received less favorable ratings.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available on Bainbridge Island. Overall, most aspects of Governance received positive ratings, though a few received ratings that were lower than the benchmark. Within the facet of Safety, both fire and ambulance/EMS services received complimentary ratings (97% and 96% respectively) and 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to crime prevention, a rating that was higher than the national benchmark. Most aspects of Built Environment were not rated as favorably. This category had ratings for storm drainage (66%), sewer services (75%), utility billing (71%), code enforcement (48%) and cable television (42%) that were on par with other communities. However, ratings for power utility (48%) and land use planning and zoning (29%) received less favorable ratings and were the only services rated lower than those seen in other communities. Ratings within the facet of Recreation and Wellness were positive and several aspects were rated higher than the benchmark including city parks and recreation programs and centers. Services in other categories that rated more highly than the benchmark were natural areas preservation, open space and public libraries.

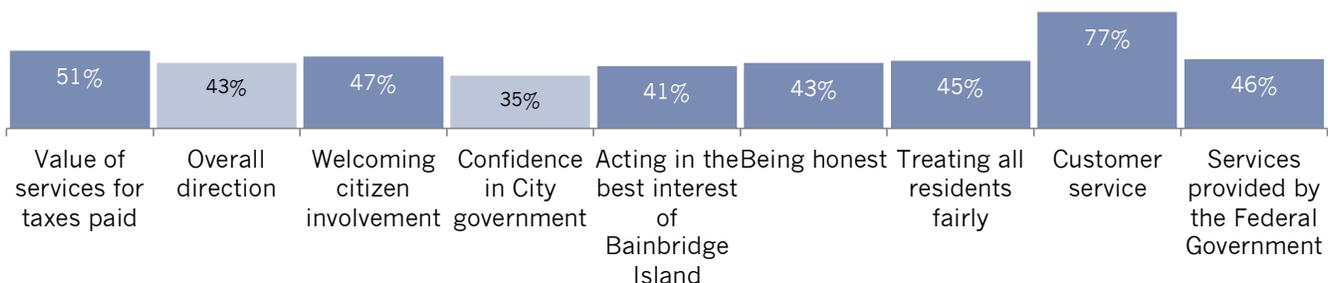


When compared to ratings in 2014, ratings in 2015 tended to be similar to or higher than those in 2014.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



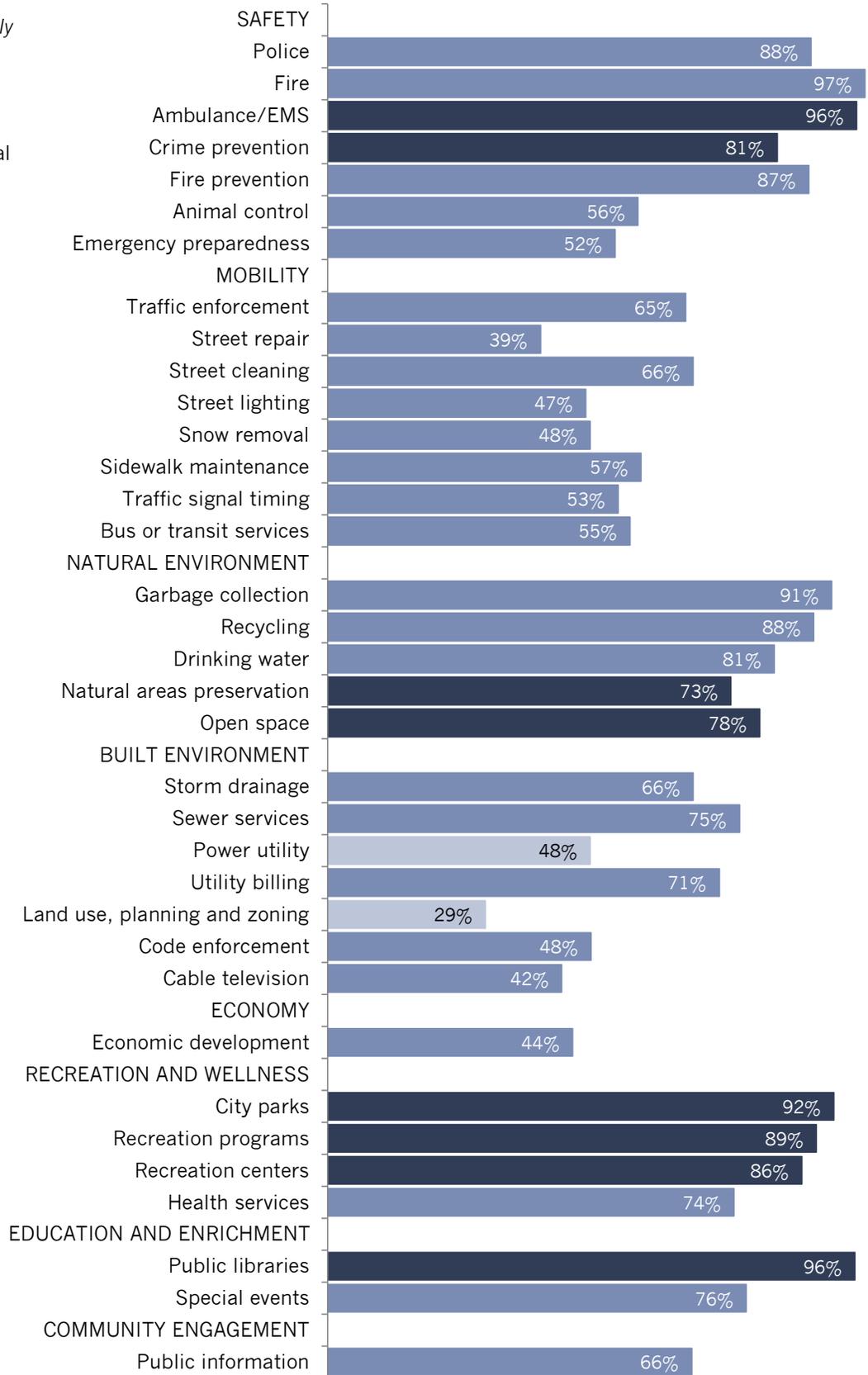
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

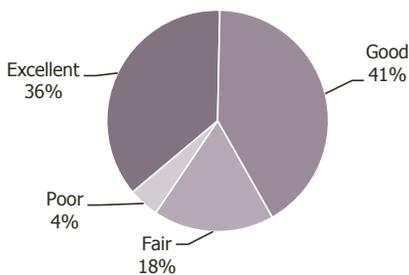
Are the residents of Bainbridge Island connected to the community and each other?

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. Three-quarters of respondents rated their overall sense of community favorably and these ratings are higher than those seen in communities nationally. Additionally, 9 in 10 residents stated that they would both recommend Bainbridge Island to others and would remain on Bainbridge Island.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. The most common reported behaviors were recycling at home, purchasing goods or services on Bainbridge Island, visiting a City park, participating in moderate or vigorous activity and talking to or visiting neighbors, which was performed by at nearly all participants (95% or higher). Additionally, about 9 in 10 residents had not been the victim of a crime nor did they report a crime. More residents on Bainbridge Island tended to engage in a majority of the listed activities and behaviors, notably recycling at home (99%), visiting a City park (96%), participating in moderate or vigorous physical activity and voting in local elections. Alternatively, fewer residents on Bainbridge Island reported that they participated in religious or spiritual activities. Additionally, fewer reported that they watched a local public meeting than did residents in other communities, though 3 in 10 residents reported that they had attended a local public meeting which was higher than the national benchmark. At least 5 in 10 residents reported participating in all aspects of Mobility, all of which were at a higher rate than the benchmark.

Most measures in the pillar of Participation were similar between 2013 and 2014 surveys; however changes were concentrated in the facet of Community Engagement.

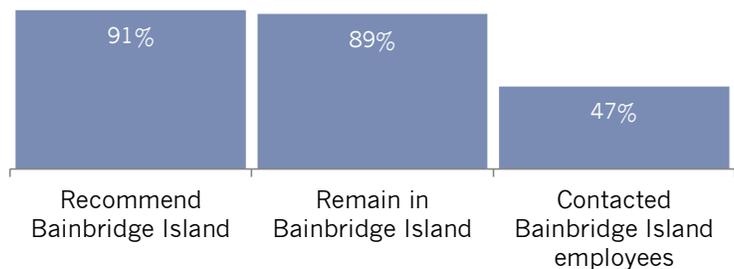
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



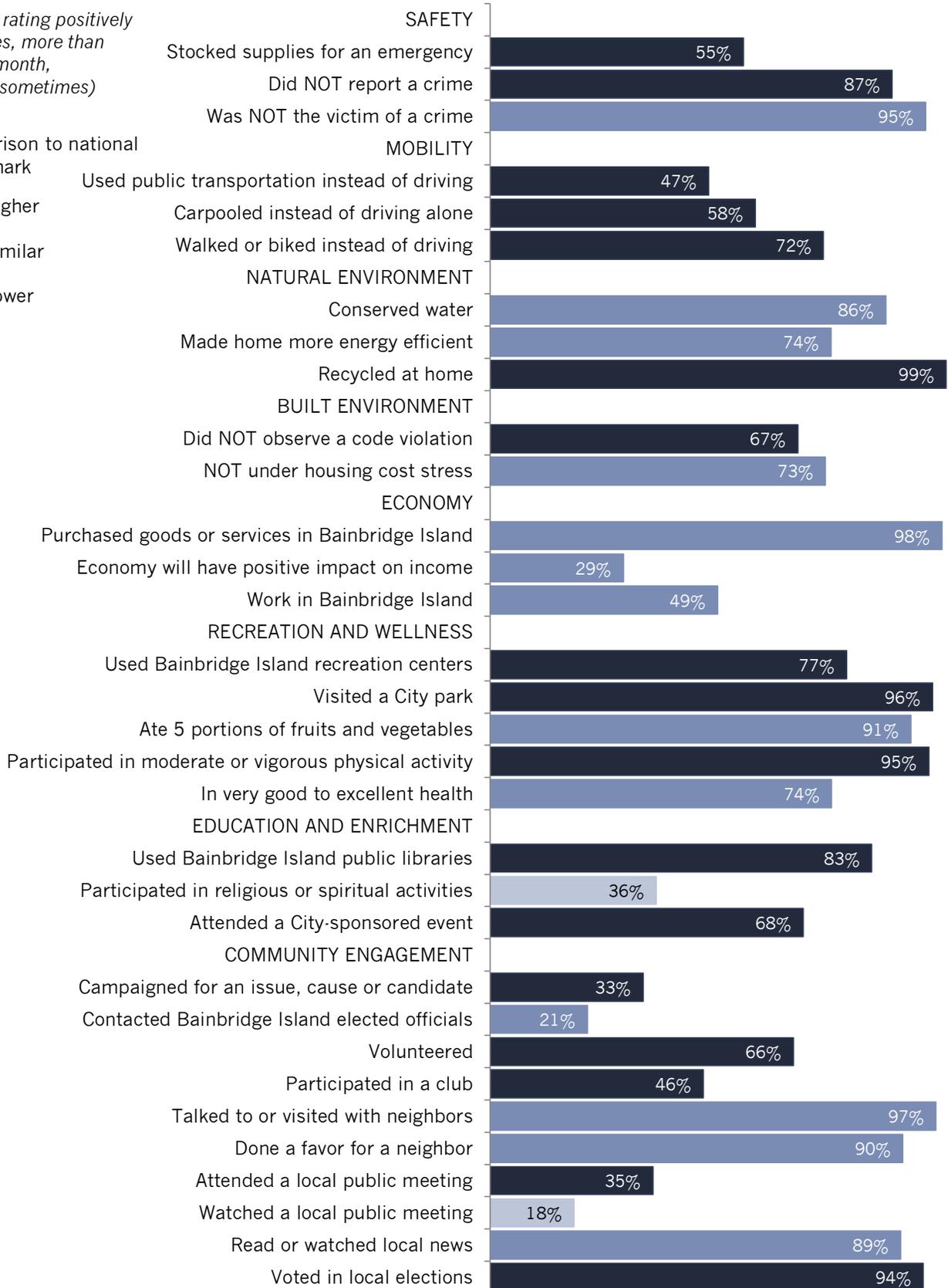
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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 Bainbridge Island included three questions of special interest on The NCS. The first two questions were related to contact with the City of Bainbridge Planning & Community Development Department.

About one-quarter of respondents said they had had contact with City employees within the last twelve months. The majority of these respondents rated their overall impression as excellent or good. About 2 in 10 respondents rated the contact as fair and about 1 in 10 rated their contact less favorably.

Figure 4: Contact with City of Bainbridge Planning and Community Development Department
Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Bainbridge Planning & Community Development Department within the last 12 months?

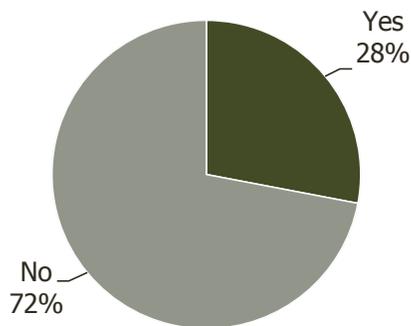
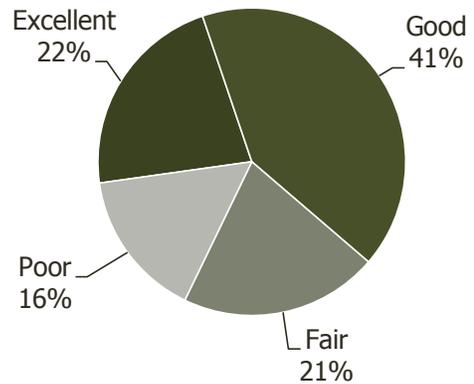


Figure 4: Impression of Contact with the City of Bainbridge Planning & Community Development Department
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the City of Bainbridge Planning & Community Development Department?

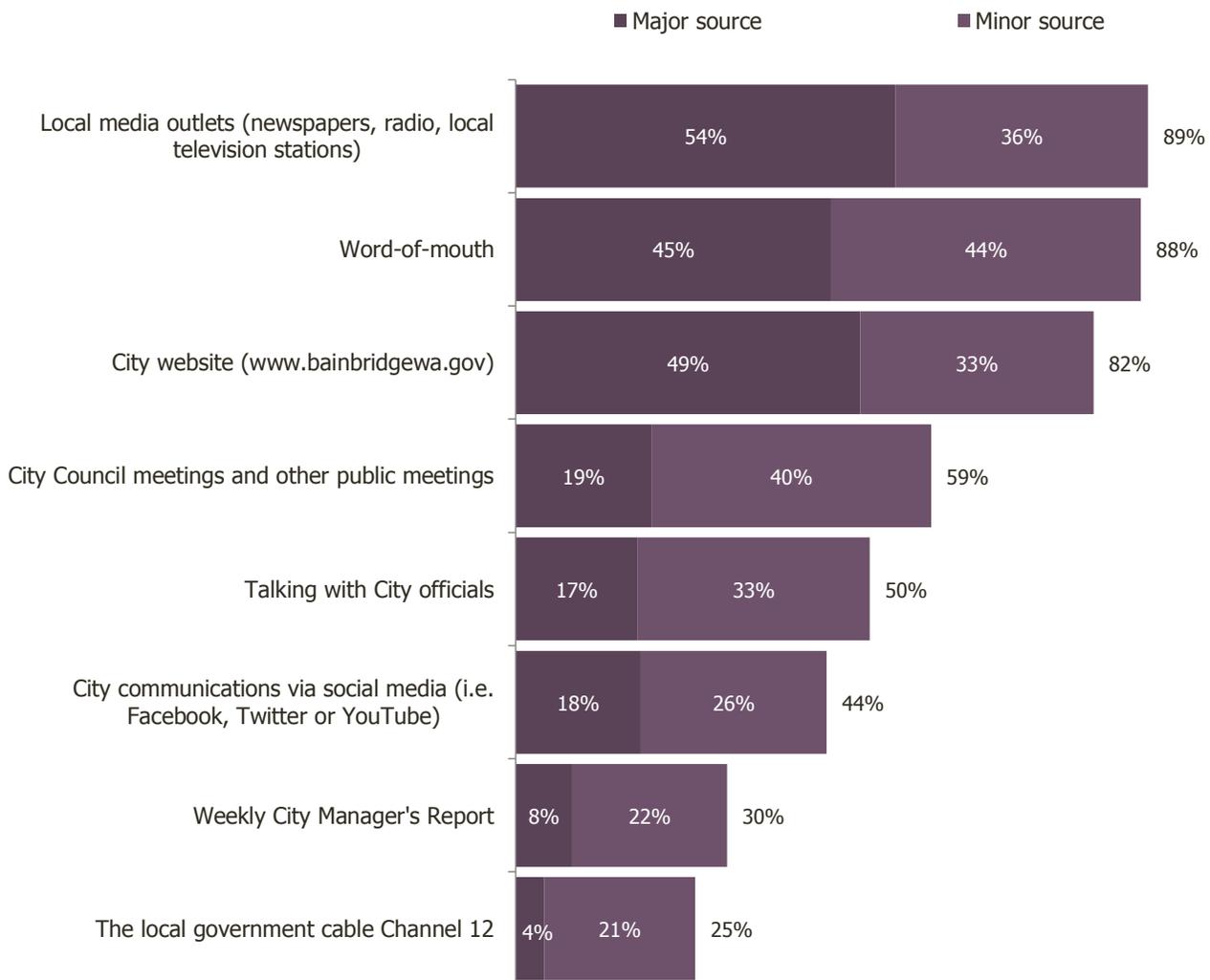


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The final special interest question asked respondents to rate how much, if at all, they considered various modes of City communication to be a source of information. Eight in ten residents agreed that local media outlets (newspapers, radio and local television stations), the city website, and word-of-mouth were either a minor or major source of information. Meanwhile, around half of respondents found talking with City officials and city communication via social media to be a major or minor source of information. The City Manager's Report and Channel 12 were less frequently cited as sources for information about the City, however around one-quarter of residents used these modes of communication.

Figure 6: Information Sources

Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the City government and its activities, events and services:



Conclusions

Built Environment continues to be an important focus area for the community

Residents identified Bainbridge Island's Built Environment as an important priority for the community again in 2015 and rated the overall built environment of Bainbridge Island favorably. The quality of public spaces on Bainbridge Island stood out as particularly high. Ratings for new development, housing options and the availability of affordable quality housing on Bainbridge Island lagged behind other communities. However, fewer residents continued to report housing cost stress. Services in this area were on par with other communities, only land use planning and zoning and the power utility rated less highly than elsewhere (for the power utility, this was new in 2015). Even so, most of the residents who reported that they had contact with the City of Bainbridge Planning and Community Development department were pleased with their interaction.

Bainbridge Island residents are engaged in their community

Overall, Bainbridge Island residents felt that the sense of community is strong and that they have the opportunity to participate in community matters. Nearly all residents said they voted in local elections. Additionally, the bulk of residents agreed that opportunities to volunteer were excellent or good and more than half of Bainbridge Island residents said they volunteered. Other points of excellence included opportunities to participate in social events and activities and the number of residents who had campaigned for an issue or candidate, attended a local meeting, or participated in a club. Lastly, several aspects of Community Engagement trended upwards when comparing results from 2014 to 2015, particularly for measures of public trust.

Residents are healthy and especially value recreation

Citizens of Bainbridge Island reported being in excellent health and having access to health care similar to other communities, while praising and participating in recreation aspects in particular. Residents favorably rated both recreational opportunities and fitness opportunities, which were also rated higher than the national benchmark. Residents reported that they enjoyed City parks, recreation programs and centers again with all three ratings coming in higher than what was reported in other communities. Between 8 in 10 and 9 in 10 residents reported that they used Bainbridge Island recreation centers, visited City Parks and participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity, which they did more so than residents compared to other communities in the nation. Lastly, when comparing results from 2014 to 2015 Bainbridge Island residents rated health care more favorably this year than last.