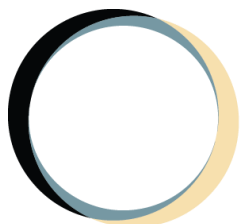


THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Yakima, WA
Community Livability Report

2014



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About

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

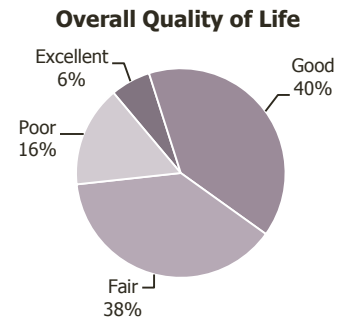
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 743 residents of the City of Yakima. 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 Yakima

About half of the survey respondents rated the quality of life in Yakima as excellent or good. This rating was lower than ratings in comparisons communities (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.

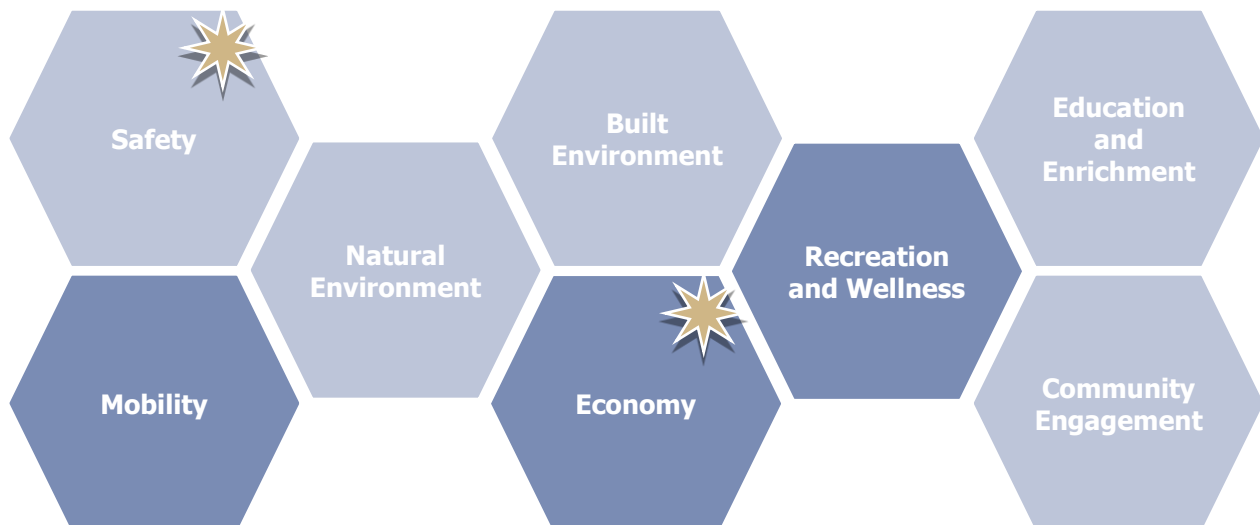
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Yakima community in the coming two years. Ratings for Mobility, Economy and Recreation and Wellness were positive and similar to other communities. Ratings for Safety, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement tended to be lower than 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 Yakima’s unique questions.

Legend

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

- Most important



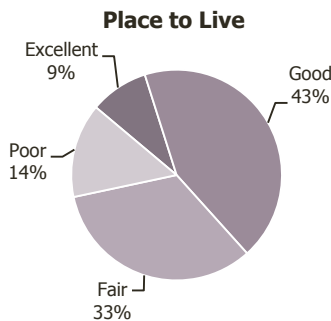
Community Characteristics

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 Yakima, 52% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Yakima 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 Yakima as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Yakima and its overall appearance. About 6 in 10 respondents rated their neighborhoods as excellent or good places to live. Close to half rated Yakima as an excellent or good place to raise children or to retire, Yakima's overall image and overall appearance received lower ratings. All of these ratings were lower than the national benchmark and tended to remain stable over time (for more details on ratings over time, see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

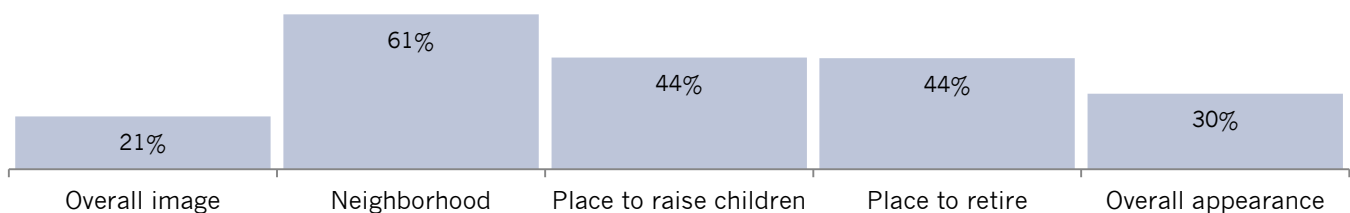
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. These ratings tended to be similar to or lower than ratings in comparison communities. While ratings for the overall feeling of safety in Yakima were lower than the benchmark, ratings increased from 2013 to 2014. Other aspects of Community Characteristics that increased from 2013 to 2014 were employment opportunities and opportunities to participate in community matters. At least 3 in 5 residents gave excellent or good ratings to safety in their neighborhood, overall ease of travel in Yakima, travel by car and religious or spiritual events or activities.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



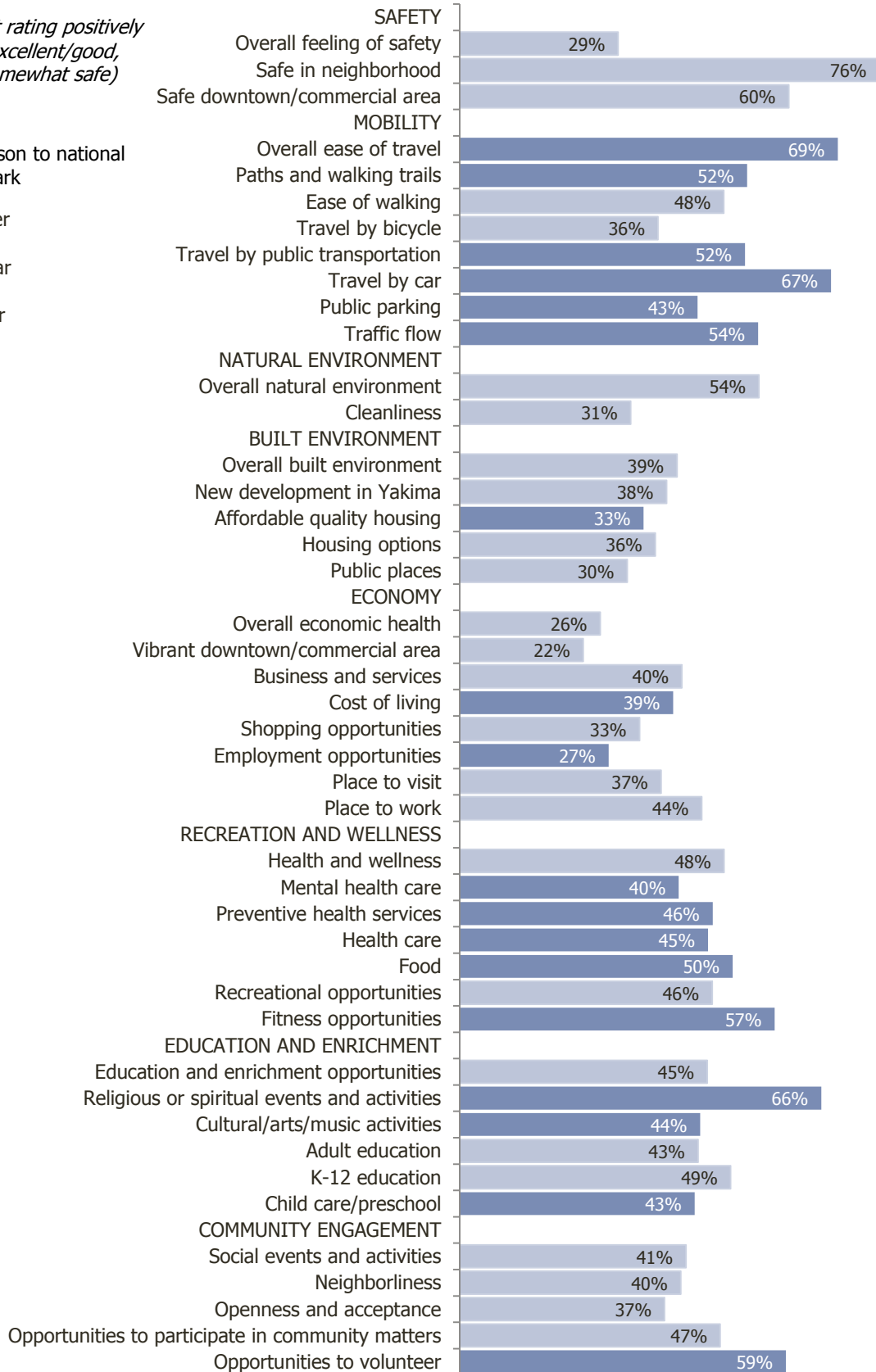
The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

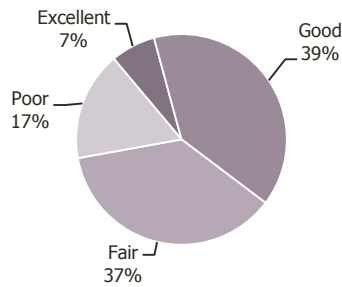
How well does the government of Yakima meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Yakima as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About half of the survey respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the City of Yakima, while only about one-third gave excellent or good ratings to the services provided by the Federal Government.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Yakima’s leadership and governance. These ratings tended to be lower than the benchmark and were rated as excellent or good by at least 30% of residents. Ratings for the overall direction of Yakima and value of services for taxes paid increased from 2013 to 2014.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Yakima. The highest rated services were fire services, ambulance/ems, bus or transit services, garbage collection, yard waste pick-up, sewer services and public libraries. Among the lowest rated aspects of Governance were crime prevention, animal control, sidewalk maintenance, open space, land use, code enforcement and economic development. There were several differences found in ratings for aspects of Governance from 2013 to 2014. Only two items decreased from 2013 to 2014: open space and natural areas preservation. Among the items that experienced increased ratings from 2013 to 2014 were: crime prevention, animal control, street repair, street cleaning, street lighting, traffic signal timing and sewer services.

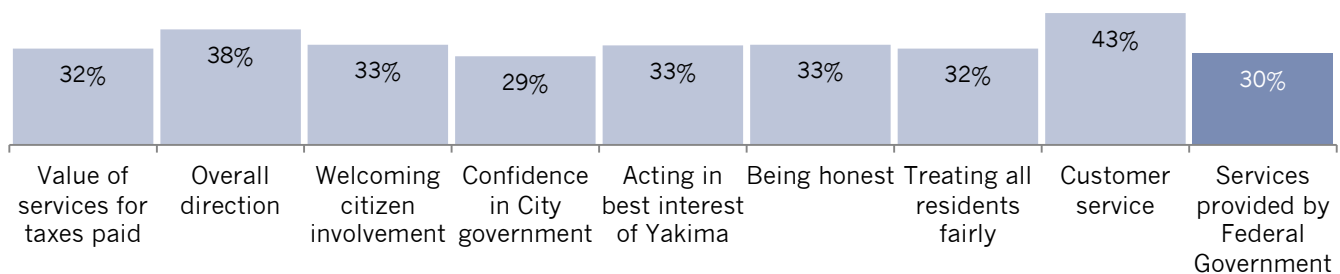
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



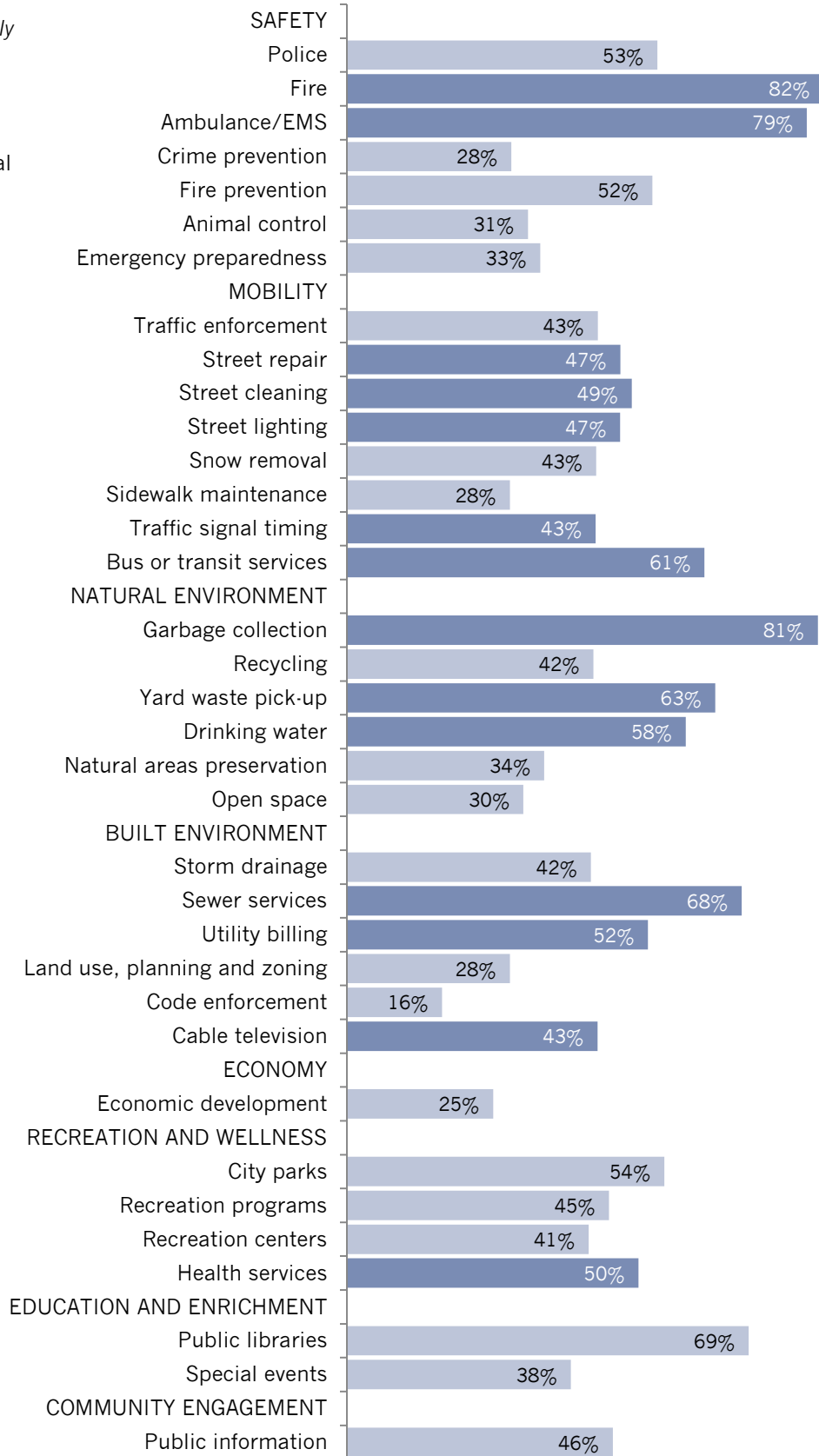
The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

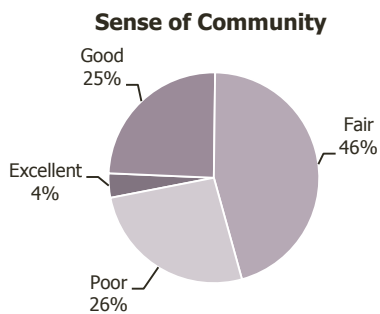


Participation

Are the residents of Yakima 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 the sense of community in Yakima were rated fair or higher by about three quarters of residents. A majority reported that they would recommend living in Yakima and planned to remain in Yakima for the next five years.

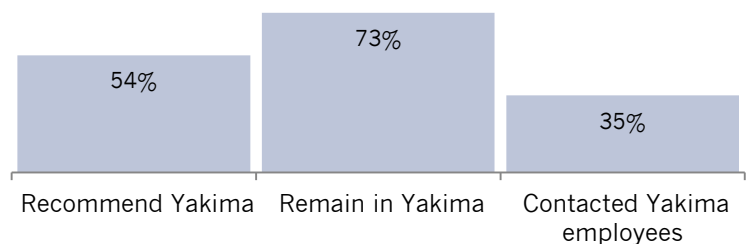
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Yakima residents tended to report similar rates of Participation when compared to other communities across the nation. The activities or behaviors with the highest reported rates of Participation were: purchased goods or services in Yakima, visited a City park, talked to or visited with neighbors, done a favor for a neighbor and read or watched local news. More residents in Yakima reported that they work within the city limits when compared to other communities across the nation. Most rates of Participation remained stable over time.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



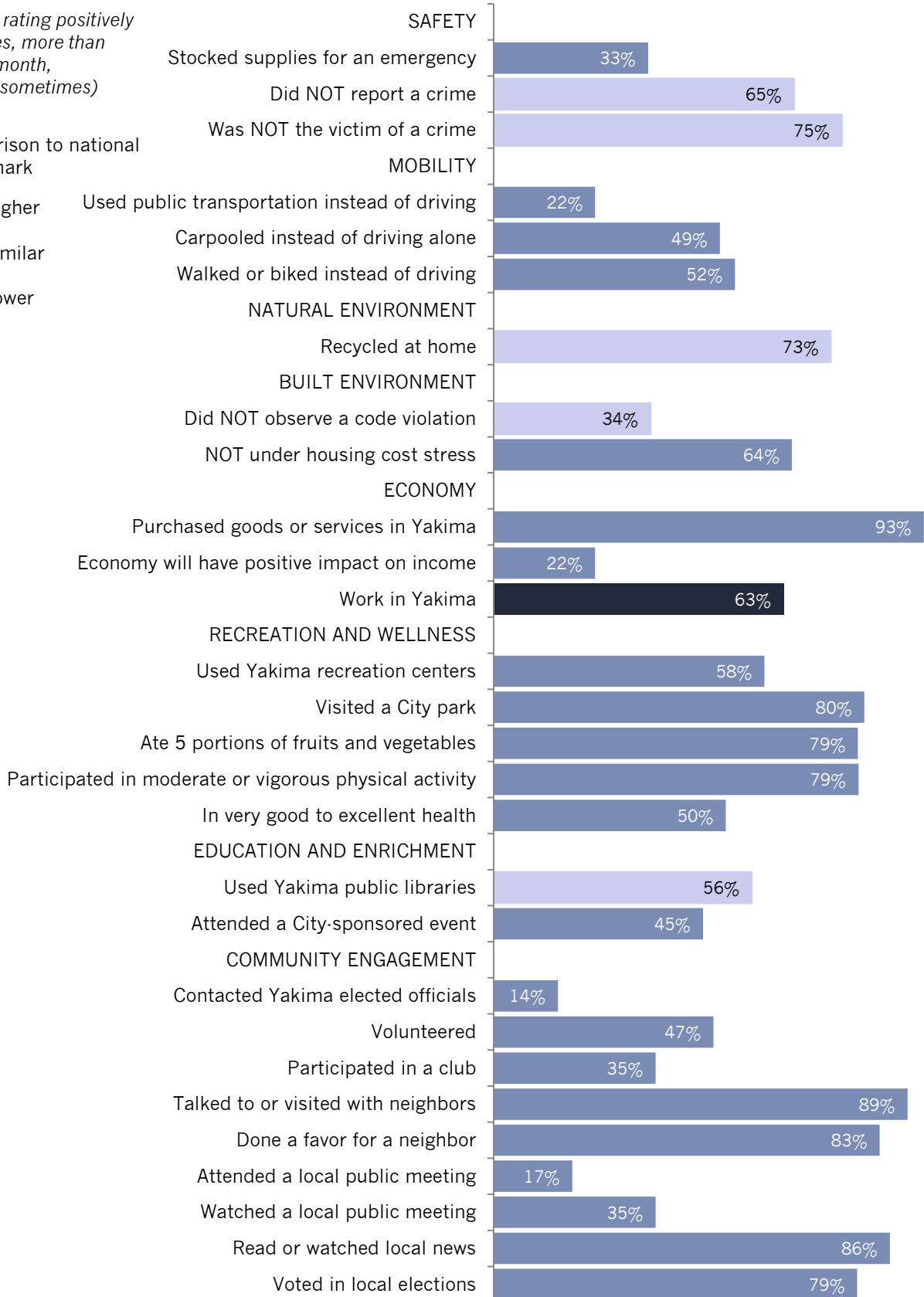
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

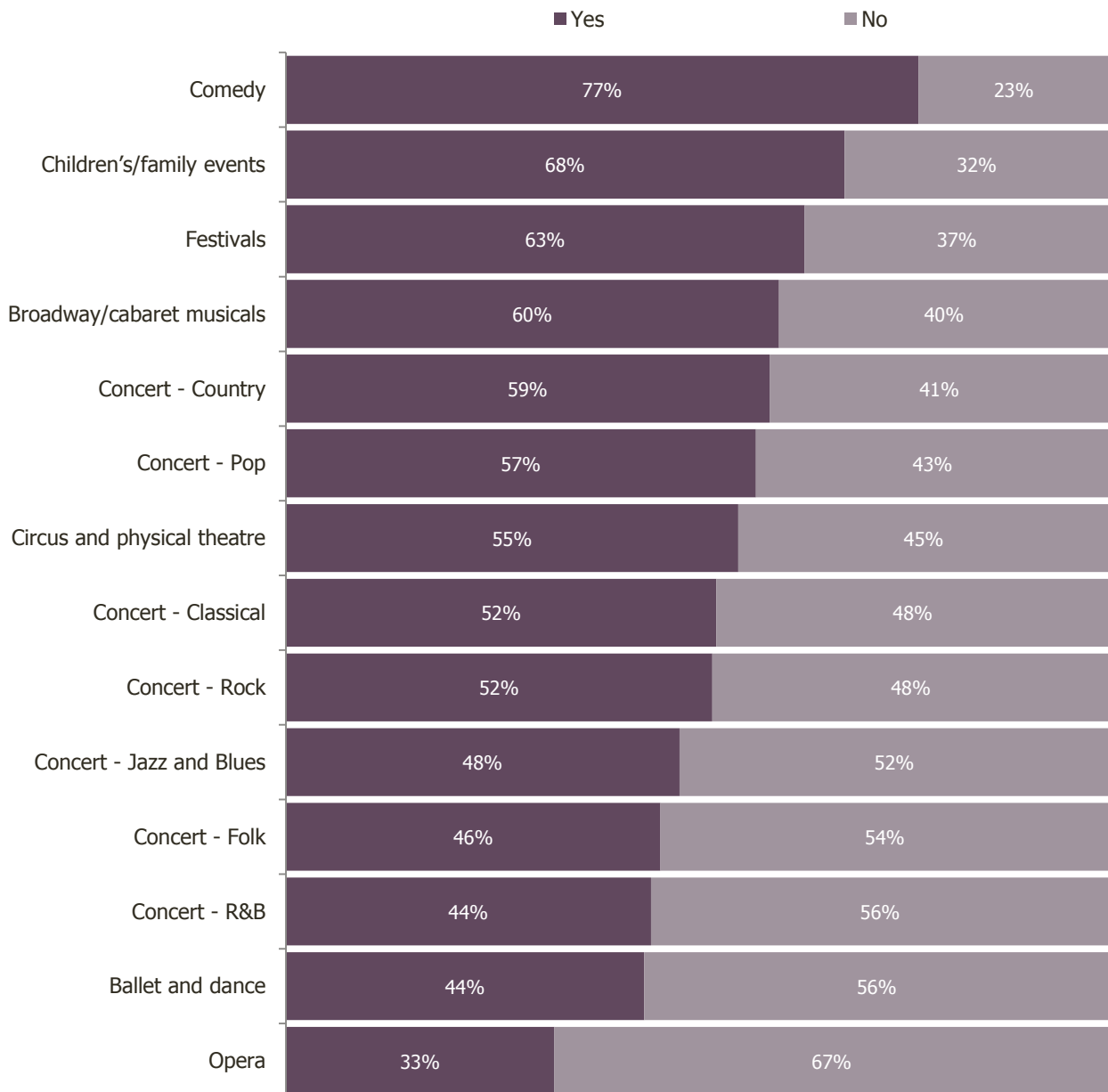
- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Special Topics

The City of Yakima included four questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked respondents to indicate if they would like to attend various different types of shows at the Capitol Theatre. The most popular types of shows residents indicated they would like to attend were comedy, children’s/family events, festivals, Broadway/cabaret musicals and country and pop concerts. Fewer than half of the survey respondents indicated they would like to attend opera, ballet and dance or R&B or folk concerts.

Figure 4: Capitol Theatre
Which of the following types of shows would you like to attend at the Capitol Theatre?

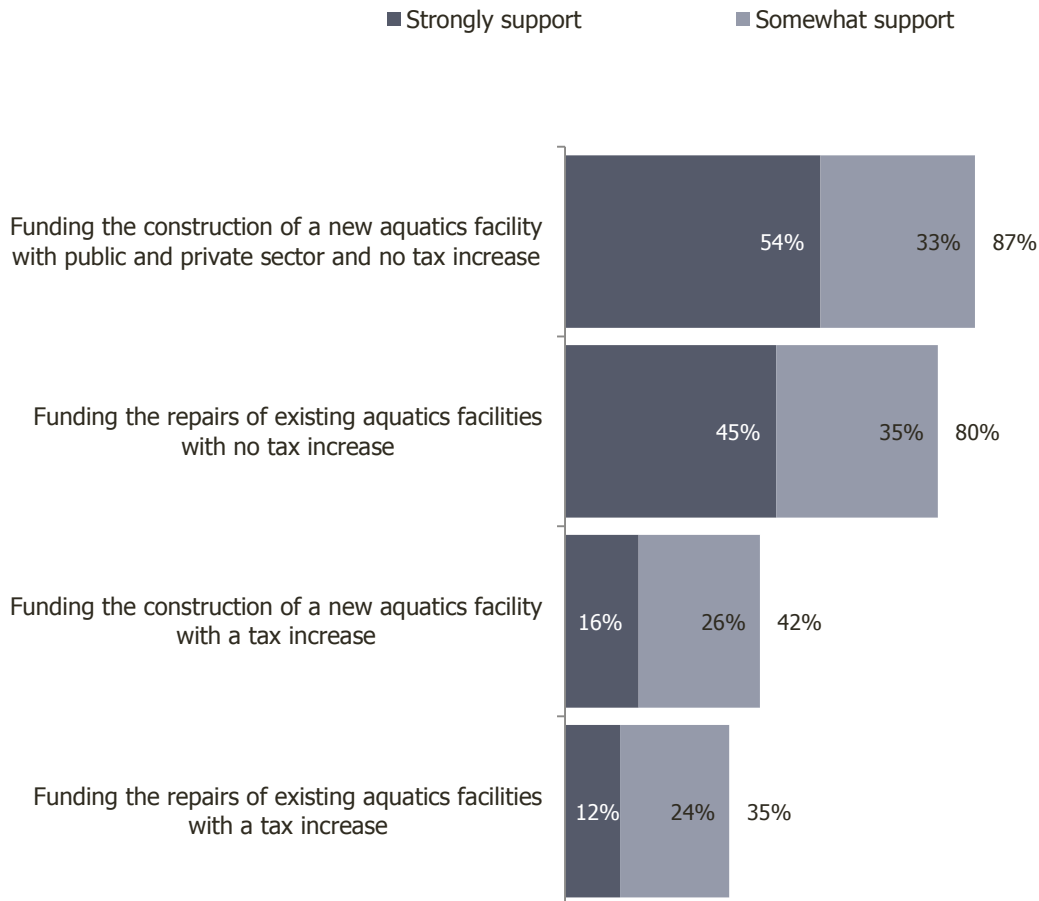


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In the second question, respondents were asked to indicate their support or opposition for different actions regarding aquatics facilities in Yakima. At least 4 in 5 residents indicated support for funding the construction of a new aquatics facility with public and private sector partners and no tax increase, as well as for funding repairs of existing aquatics facilities with no tax increase. A majority opposed funding the construction of a new aquatics facility with a tax increase or funding the repairs with a tax increase.

Figure 5: Aquatics Facilities

Please indicate how much you would support or oppose the City of Yakima taking the following actions regarding aquatics facilities

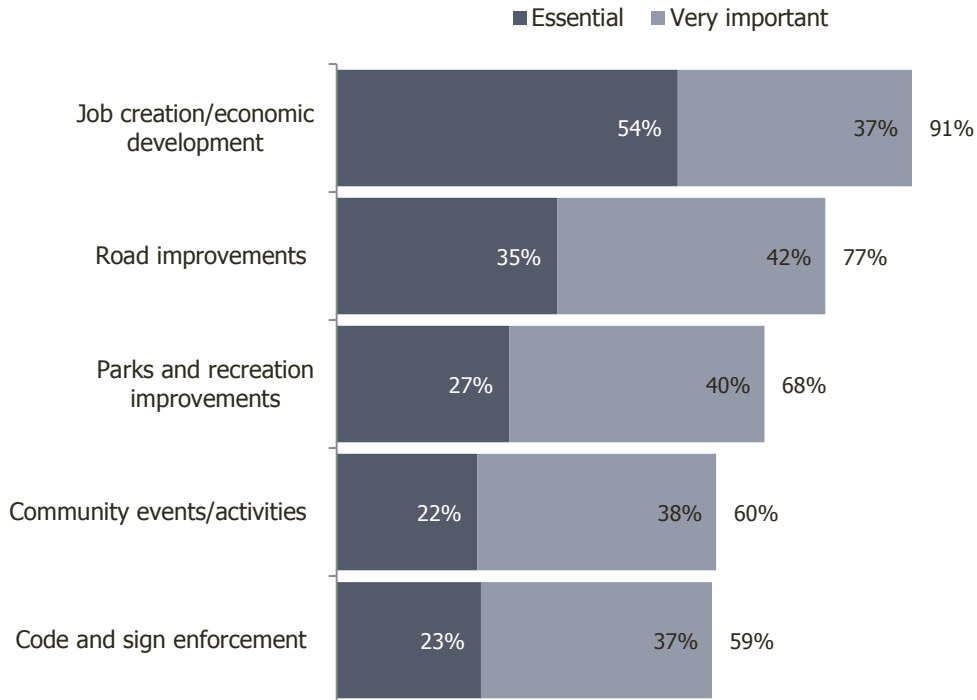


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The third custom question asked respondents to rate the importance of the City investing in several different issues over the next 12 months. While a majority of respondents rated all of the items as essential or very important, the item that was rated most important was job creation/economic development. Code and sign enforcement and community events/activities were rated as being less important.

Figure 6: City Priorities

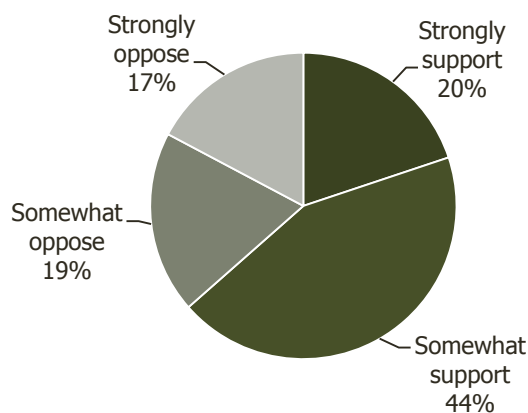
Please indicate how important, if at all, it is for the City to invest in each of the following issues in the next 12 months:



The final custom question asked residents to rate their support or opposition for the City to create a dedicated parks and recreation capital fund. About two-thirds of respondents supported this action.

Figure 7: Parks and Recreation Capital Fund

The City is considering amending the City Charter to establish a dedicated parks and recreation capital construction and rehabilitation fund of not less than \$750,000 annually, which would come from existing revenue, with no tax increase. The reallocation will require cuts to other service areas, impacting some jobs and/or service levels. To what extent do you support or oppose this action?



Conclusions

A majority of residents continue to experience good quality of life in Yakima.

The overall quality of life in Yakima was generally seen as excellent or good by about half of the survey respondents. More than one-half of respondents rated the City as a place live and their neighborhood as a place to live as excellent or good. These ratings remained stable over time. Most residents indicated that they would recommend living in Yakima and planned to remain in Yakima for the next five years.

Mobility improved from 2013 to 2014.

Yakima residents rated several aspects of Mobility higher in 2013 than in 2014. Ratings increased for street repair, street cleaning, street lighting and traffic signal timing. Most Mobility ratings were similar to the national benchmark. However, there is still room for improvement in Yakima's Mobility ratings, especially for those items that are rated lower than the benchmark. These include: traffic enforcement, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and ease of travel by bicycle and by car.

The Economy is important to residents.

Survey participants indicated that the Economy is an important facet to focus on over the next two years. Economy ratings tended to be lower than ratings seen in other communities. However, ratings for affordable housing, the percent of residents who had a positive economic outlook and those that had purchased goods or services in Yakima were similar to other communities in the nation. The percent of respondents that reported working in Yakima was higher than in comparison communities. Compared to 2013, nearly all Economy ratings remained stable; however the rating for employment opportunities increased from 2013 to 2014. Yakima included a custom question about City funding priorities, and 9 in 10 respondents indicated that job creation/economic development is a top priority for the City in the next 12 months.