

**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

**Twin Falls, ID**  
Community Livability Report

2018



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# About

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

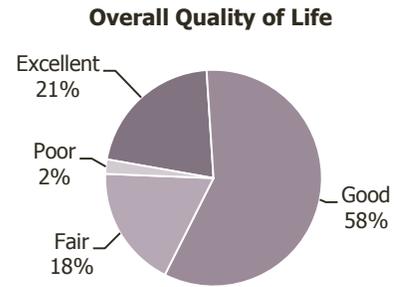
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 444 residents of the City of Twin Falls. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Twin Falls

Most residents rated the quality of life in Twin Falls as excellent or good. This rating was similar to national comparisons (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.



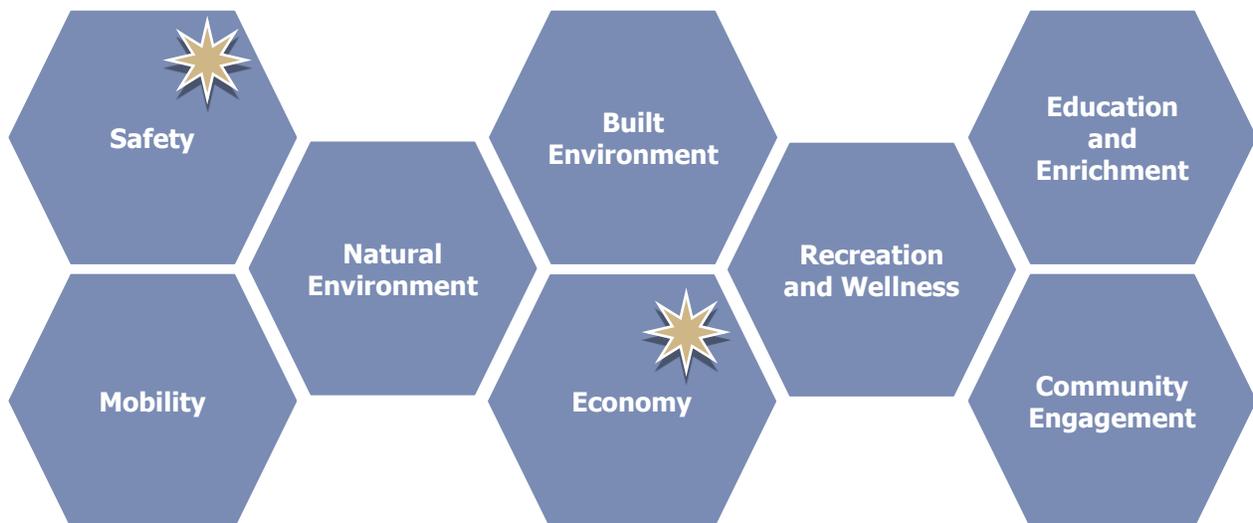
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Similar to 2016, residents identified Economy and Safety as priorities for the Twin Falls community in the coming two years. Residents gave favorable ratings to all facets, similar to other communities across the nation. 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 Twin Falls' unique questions.

## Legend

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

★ Most important



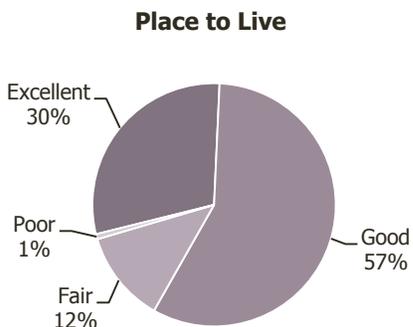
# Community Characteristics

*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 Twin Falls, over 8 in 10 rated the city as an excellent or good place to live, a rating which improved over time (see *Trends over Time* report provided under separate cover). Respondents' ratings of Twin Falls as a place to live were similar to ratings in benchmark communities.

In addition to rating the city as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Twin Falls as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Twin Falls and its overall appearance. At least 7 in 10 residents gave favorable reviews to most of these aspects and around 6 in 10 positively assessed the overall image of Twin Falls. Additionally, respondents gave more positive ratings to the community as a place to raise children and to retire and to the overall appearance of Twin Falls in 2018.

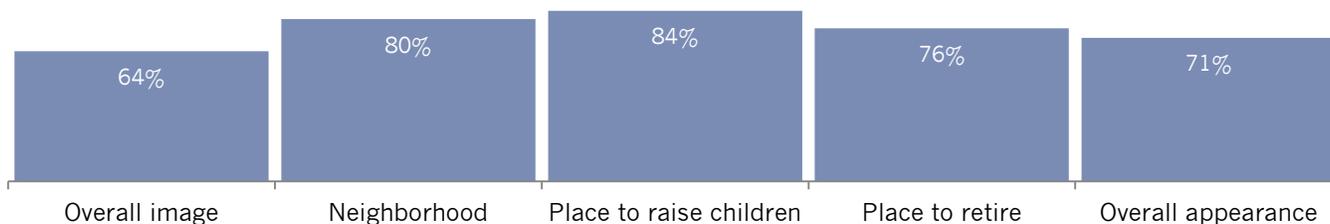
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Evaluations of Safety were similar to comparison communities with about 9 in 10 residents indicating they felt safe in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area; further, about three-quarters awarded excellent or good marks for overall feeling of safety, which increased since 2016. Within Mobility, ratings were more mixed as less than half gave favorable scores to ease of travel by bicycle and by public transportation and traffic flow; these ratings were either similar to or lower than those seen elsewhere. However, respondents were more pleased with ease of walking and the availability of paths and walking trails in 2018. Reviews for measures within Built Environment also varied, with overall built environment and variety of housing options trailing behind ratings awarded in comparison communities. Further, assessments for the variety of housing options as well as the availability of affordable housing decreased since 2016.



Strengths were seen within the facet of Economy with about 6 in 10 respondents awarding excellent or good evaluations to employment opportunities, which outshined other communities nationwide and increased since 2016. Marks for overall economic health and the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area also improved in 2018.

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

Comparison to national benchmark  
 ■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



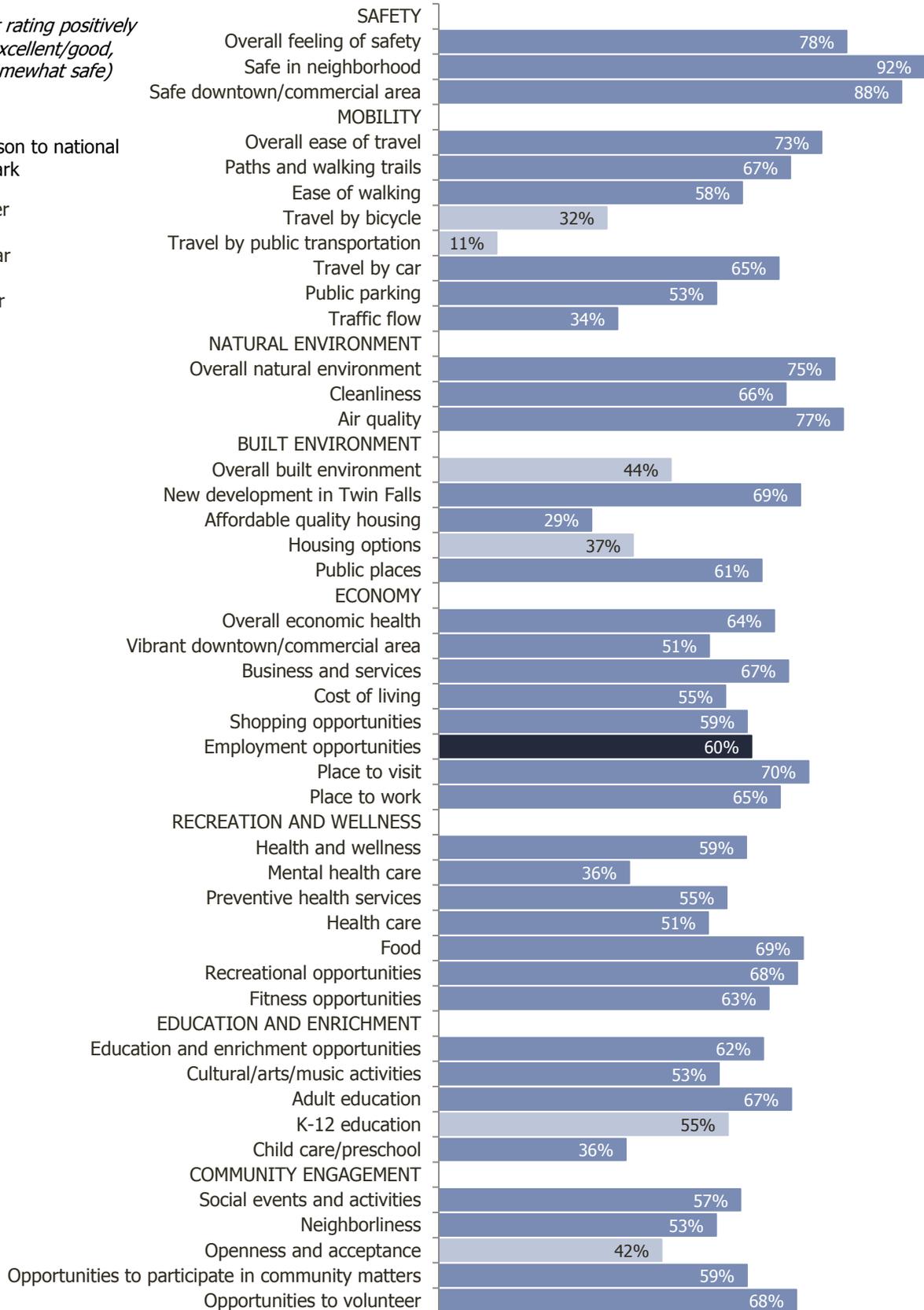
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

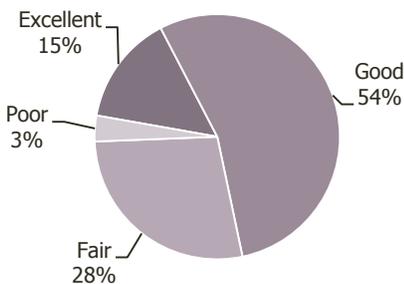
## *How well does the government of Twin Falls meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Twin Falls as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of survey respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall services provided by the City. Marks for Twin Falls' services as well as services provided by the Federal Government (which increased since the last survey administration) were similar to national averages.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Twin Falls' leadership and governance. At least half of Twin Falls residents assigned excellent or good ratings to most measures of City leadership. About 7 in 10 respondents felt positively about the customer services provided to them by City employees. All ratings were on par with national levels.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Twin Falls. On the whole, ratings for individual services provided by Twin Falls were positive, tended to be similar to the benchmarks and generally demonstrated stability over time. The services that lagged behind national averages were related to Mobility (e.g., street repair, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and bus or transit services) and Natural Environment (e.g., recycling and yard waste pick-up), as well as storm drainage and recreation centers. On the other hand, several ratings increased for Mobility services in 2018, including street repair, street cleaning, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance. Participants' scores for emergency preparedness, storm drainage, City parks and recreation programs also increased since 2016.

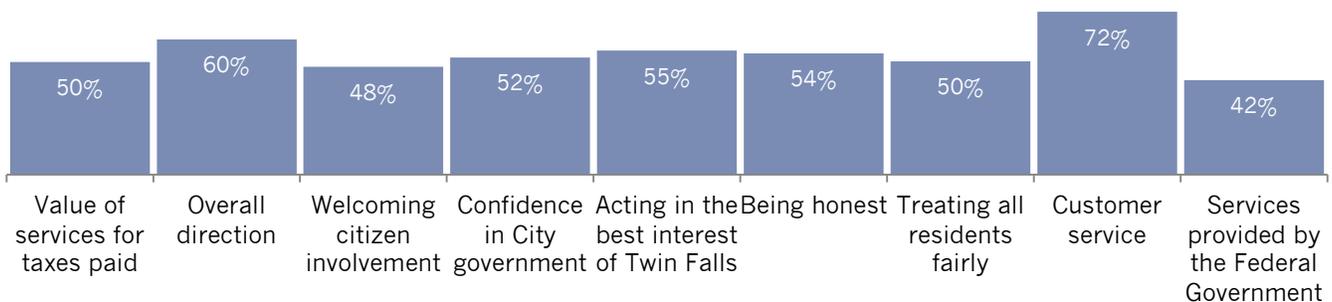
### Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



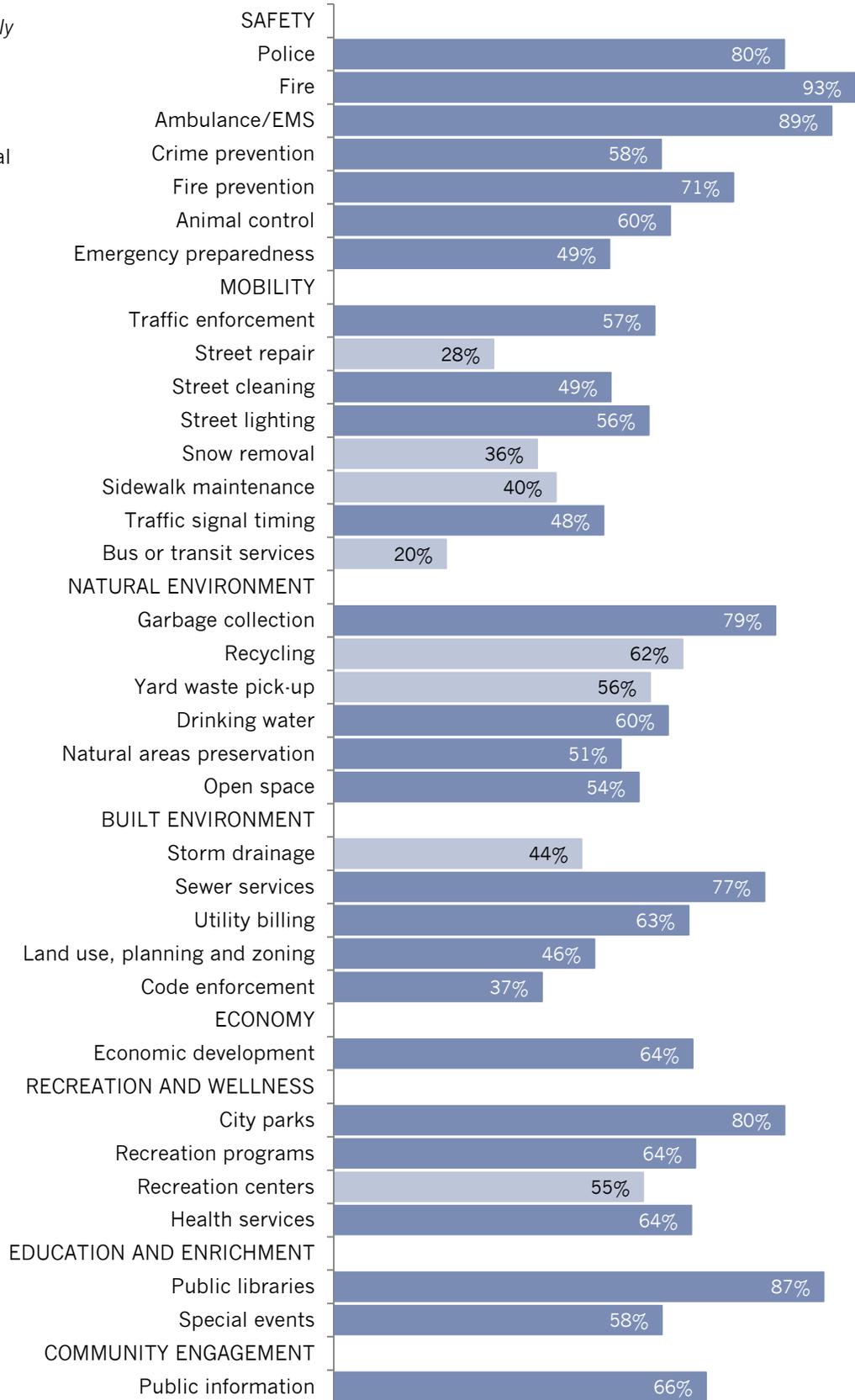
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Participation

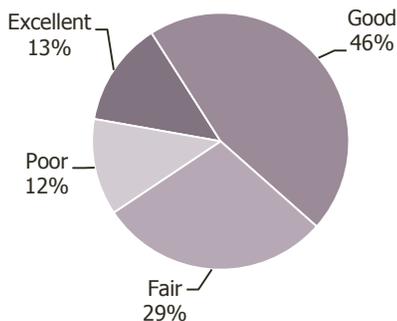
*Are the residents of Twin Falls connected to the community and each other?*

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. Similar to other communities in the U.S., about 6 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good scores to the sense of community in Twin Falls, which increased since 2016.

Around 8 in 10 survey respondents indicated they would recommend living in Twin Falls to someone who asked and planned to remain in the community for the next five years and about 4 in 10 reported they had contacted Twin Falls employees. These ratings were similar to those reported across the nation.

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 within Twin Falls varied widely and tended to be on par with Twin Falls' national peers. At least 8 in 10 participants indicated they had engaged in green behaviors (e.g., conserving water and recycling at home), purchasing goods or services in the community, visiting a City park and healthy diet and exercise regimes. As for Community Engagement, most residents reported high levels of interacting with their neighbors and attention to local news. More residents exhibited interest in voting in local elections in 2018. Twin Falls residents also exhibited higher than national average rates of working in the community, and participating in religious or spiritual activities.

**Sense of Community**

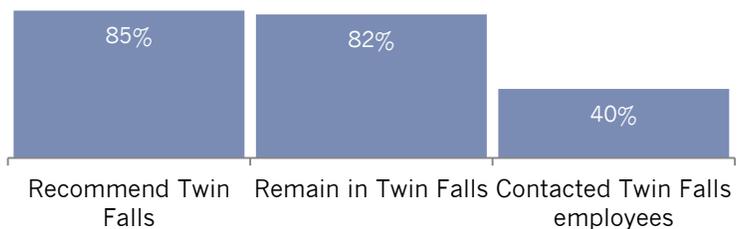


Compared to municipalities across the country, fewer Twin Falls residents reported they had used public transportation instead of driving and reported higher rates of code violations.

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



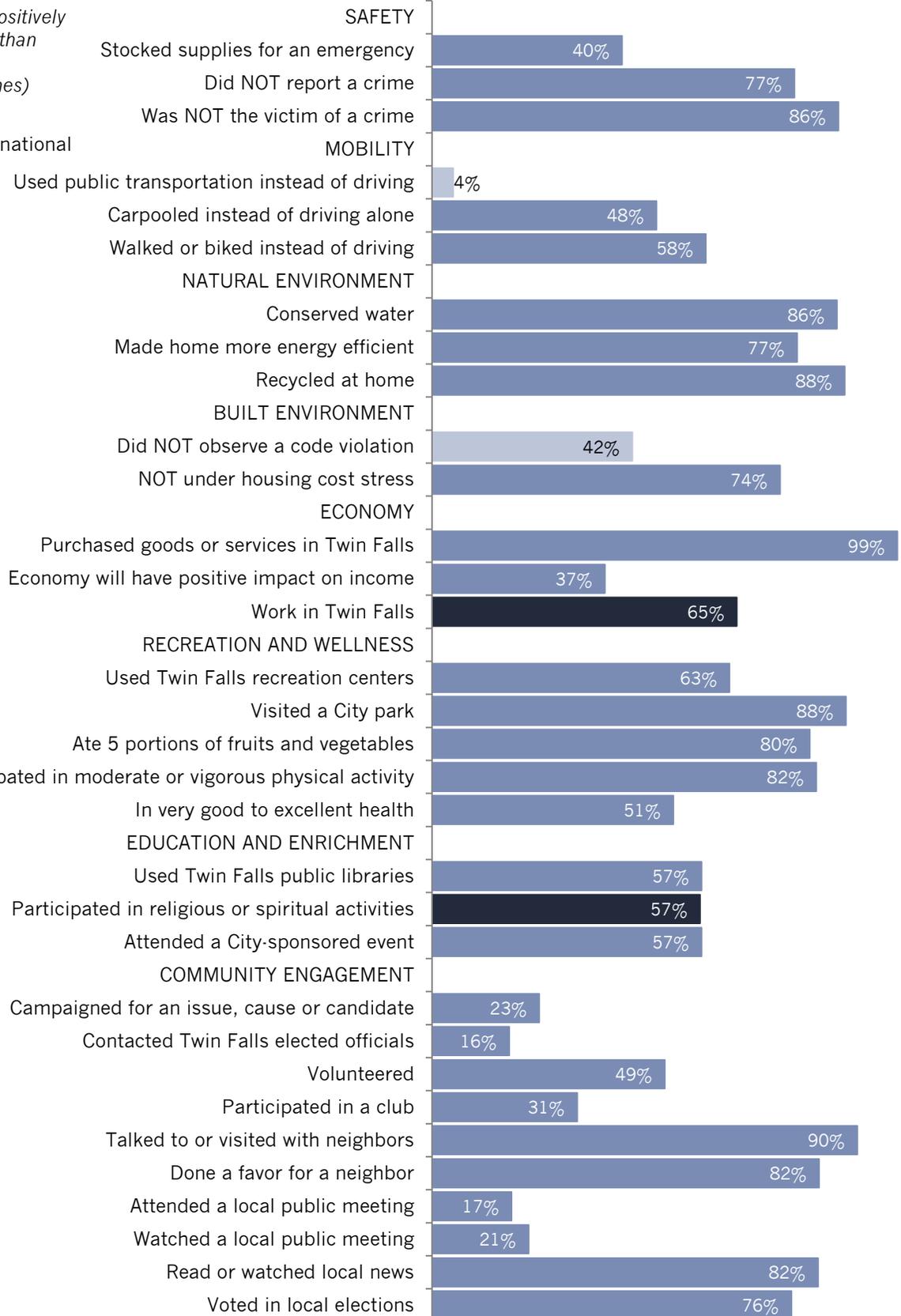
# The National Citizen Survey™

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



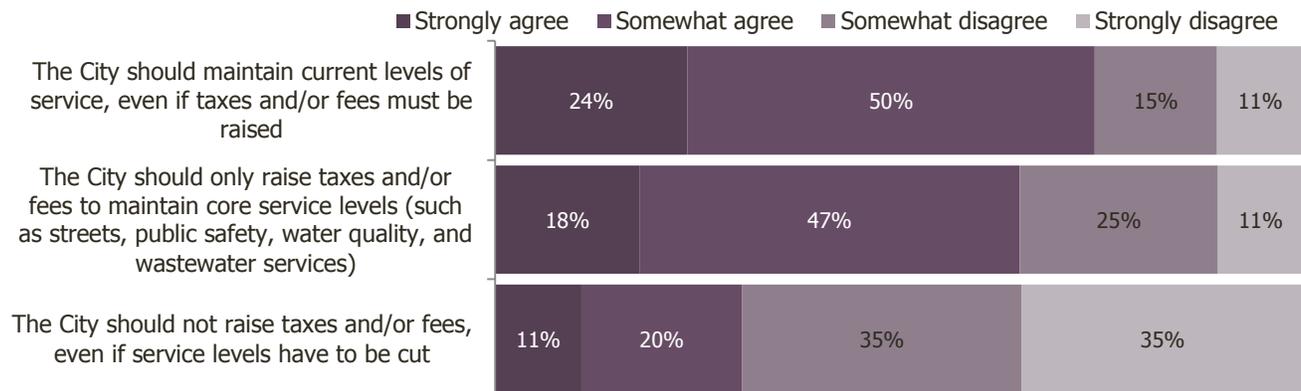
# Special Topics

The City of Twin Falls included several questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought feedback concerning residents' views on providing and funding services, sources of information, City government performance and contact with both the police and fire departments and their impressions of those interactions.

Overall, survey respondents tended to support raising taxes to keep their City services. About three-quarters of residents felt that the City should maintain the current level of service provided to them, even if the City needs to raise taxes or increase funding. Only about 1 in 10 strongly disagreed with this statement. More residents disagreed that the City should only raise taxes to maintain core services, while about 7 in 10 disagreed that taxes should remain the same even in service levels must be eliminated.

Figure 4: City Service Funding

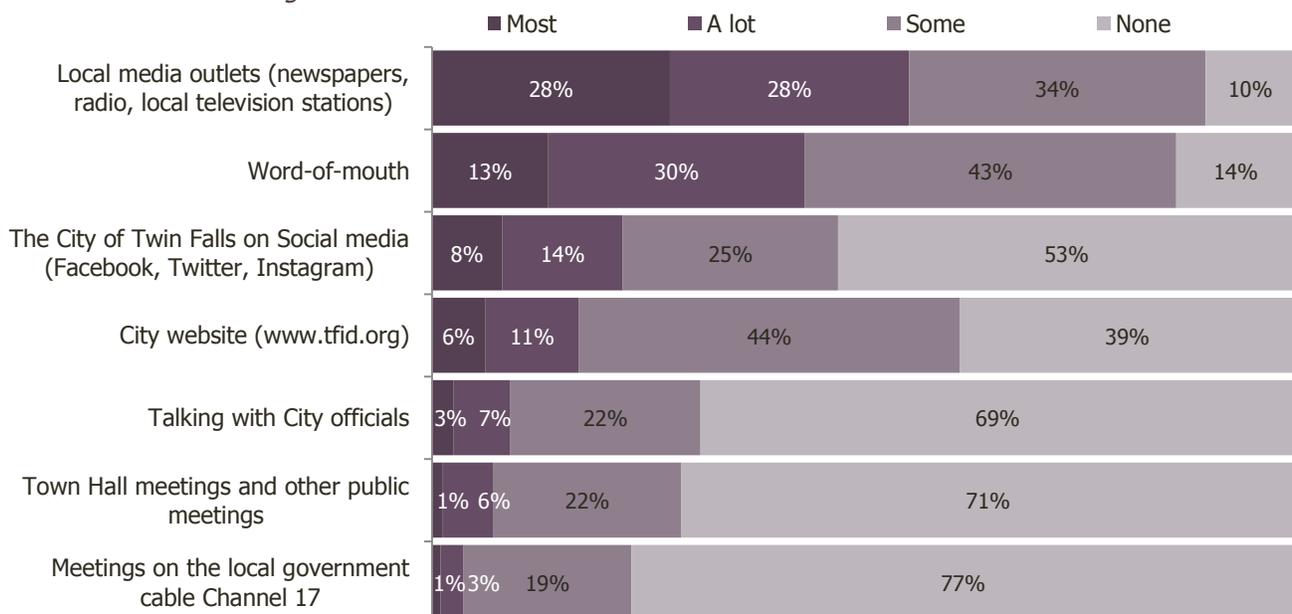
Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



Residents reported that they utilized local media outlets (56% most or a lot) and word-of-mouth (43%) the most often as sources for information about the City of Twin Falls. One in ten or fewer indicated they had used conversation with City officials, Town Hall and other public meetings or meetings on the local government cable channel for their most frequently used sources of information.

Figure 5: Information Services

How much information, if any, do you get about the Twin Falls government and its activities, events and services from each of the following sources?

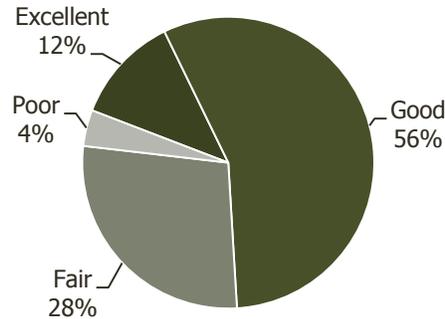


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Around two-thirds of survey participants awarded excellent or good reviews to the overall performance of City government. Only four percent rated their government poorly.

Figure 6: Overall Government Performance

*How would you rate the overall performance of the City of Twin Falls government?*



The City also wanted to understand more about residents' interactions with employees of safety-related services. About 4 in 10 respondents indicated that they had contact with a police department employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of these individuals, around 8 in 10 had a favorable impression of that experience.

Figure 7: Contact with Police Department

*Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Twin Falls Police Department within the last 12 months?*

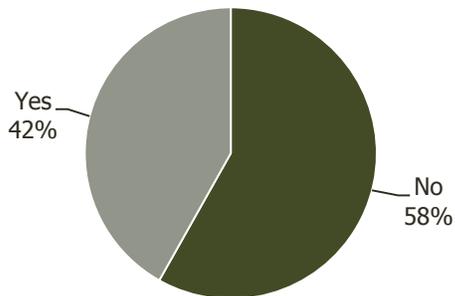
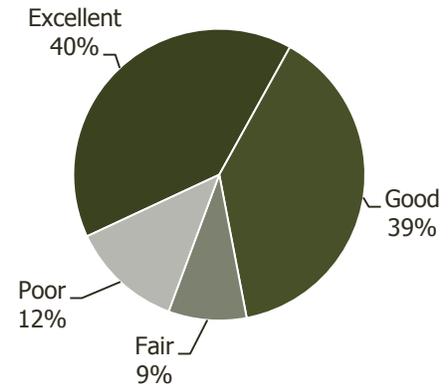


Figure 8: Impression of Police Department

*What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the City of Twin Falls Police Department?*



## The National Citizen Survey™

When asked about their experiences with the Twin Falls' Fire Department, only about 2 in 10 residents had interacted with a department employee. These community members praised their interactions, with nearly all awarding high marks to fire staff and no one reported their impression was poor.

Figure 9: Contact with Fire Department  
*Have you had any in-person or phone contact with an employee of the City of Twin Falls Fire Department within the last 12 months?*

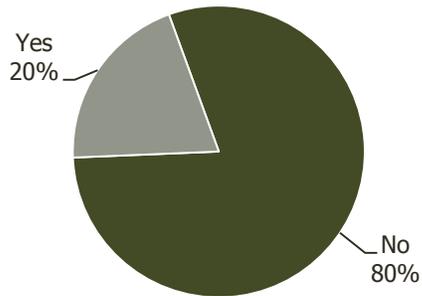
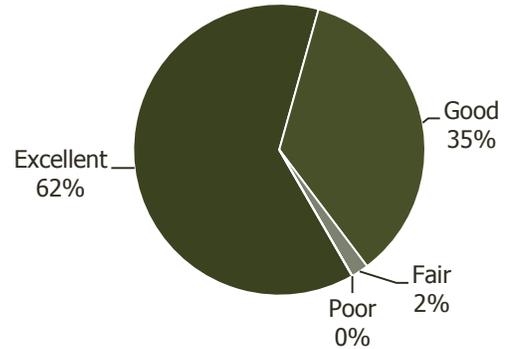


Figure 10: Impression of Fire Department  
*What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the City of Twin Falls Fire Department?*



# Conclusions

## Residents are pleased to live in Twin Falls and feel safe.

Most residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good in Twin Falls and would be likely to remain in the community for the next five years. Additionally, at least 8 in 10 respondents awarded high marks to the City as a place to live, which increased since 2016, and a similar proportion would be likely to recommend the community to others. More than 7 in 10 survey participants rated Twin Falls as a place to raise children, as a place to retire and its overall appearance positively; all of these aspects of community livability were higher in 2018.

Residents feel safe in general, as well as in their neighborhoods and in Twin Falls' downtown/commercial area; in fact, participants reported higher levels of feeling safe overall in the City in 2018 compared to previous years. Safety service ratings were strong and similar to communities across the country and at least three-quarters of residents indicated they had not reported a crime or been the victim of a crime. Further, respondents who had contact with a Twin Falls police or fire department employee(s) in the 12 months prior to the survey felt positively about their interaction, with most rating their experience as excellent or good.

## Economy ratings are on the rise, reflecting successes and challenges.

As in previous years, residents saw the Economy as an important aspect of their quality of life and focus area for the next two years. Economy-related ratings tended to be positive and were typically similar to communities nationwide. About two-thirds of residents gave positive scores to the overall economic health of Twin Falls, which was higher than ratings awarded in 2014 or 2016. A similar proportion also lauded economic development services and business and service establishments, Twin Falls as a place to visit and as a place to work. Additionally, about 6 in 10 residents were pleased with employment opportunities, which increased to its highest level since the City started gathering resident feedback in 2009, and eclipsed national averages.

As with many attractive communities, affordability is an issue. The variety and affordability of housing were rated positively by less than 4 in 10 community members and decreased since 2016. Further, the rating for the variety of housing options was lower than the national benchmark.

## Getting around the City is easier, but residents would like to see further improvements in Mobility.

As in previous years, residents expressed some dissatisfaction with travel and transportation within the community. The City listened and residents noticed. Many Mobility-related services increased since the last administration: respondents' assessments of ease of travel by car, the availability of paths and walking trails, street repair, street cleaning, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance were all more positive in 2018 than in 2016. While the City has made progress, survey participants identified areas in need of further improvement. Specifically, ratings for travel by bicycle and public transportation, street repair, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and bus or transit services were lower than national averages. Further, less than 1 in 10 community members reported they used public transit in favor of driving. In response to a question gauging respondent agreement for funding City services, about three-quarters agreed that the City could raise taxes to maintain current levels of services provided by Twin Falls.

## Residents are healthy and may want more recreational opportunities.

Recreation and Wellness dimensions were generally average, with only reviews for recreation centers in Twin Falls trailing behind national comparisons. When compared to 2016, assessments for recreational opportunities, City parks and recreation programs increased in 2018, all of which were similar to national averages. Respondents reported using recreation centers and City parks, participating in diet and regular exercise and being in very good or excellent health at rates similar to municipalities nationwide.