

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Twin Falls, ID

Community Livability Report
2016



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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 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).

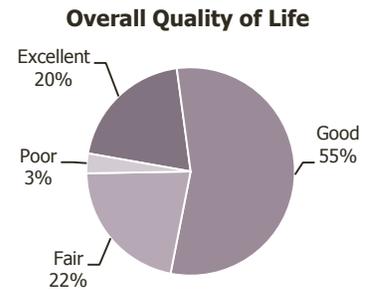
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 405 residents of the City of Twin Falls. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Twin Falls

Most residents rated the quality of life in Twin Falls as excellent or good. This rating is 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.



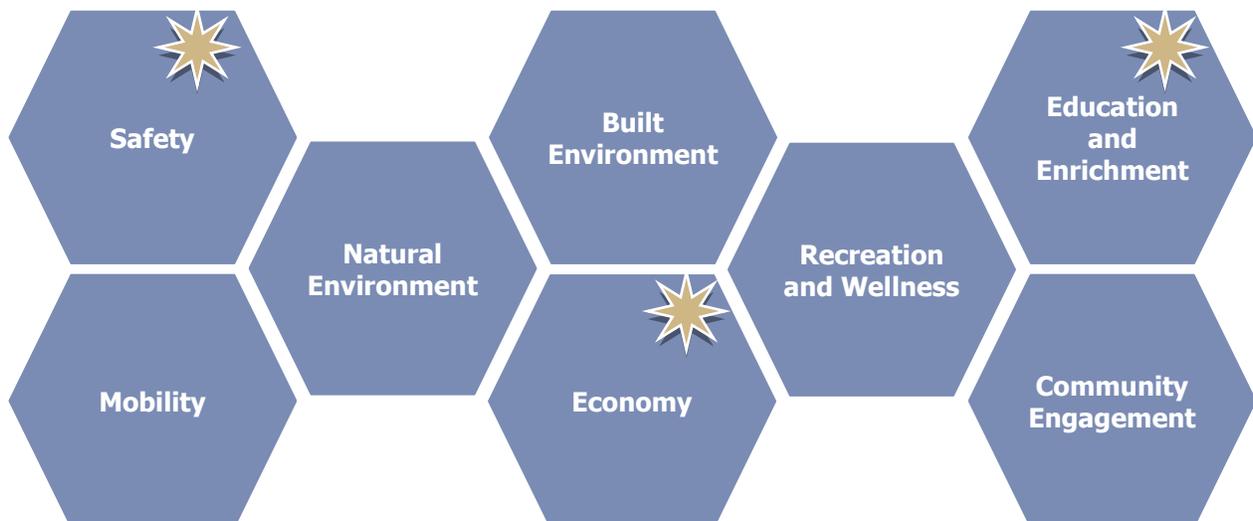
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety, Economy and Education and Enrichment as priorities for the Twin Falls community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Twin Falls residents gave favorable ratings these facets of community. 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 Twin Falls' unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



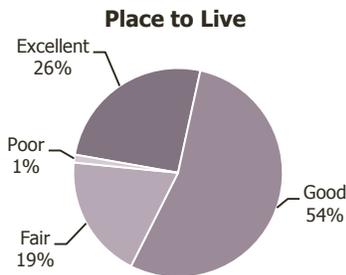
Community Characteristics

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, 80% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Twin Falls 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 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. Close to 7 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to their neighborhoods and to Twin Falls as a place to raise children. Nearly two-thirds of residents also gave favorable ratings to Twin Falls' overall image and appearance, as well as Twin Falls as a place to retire. These ratings were all similar to the national benchmark.

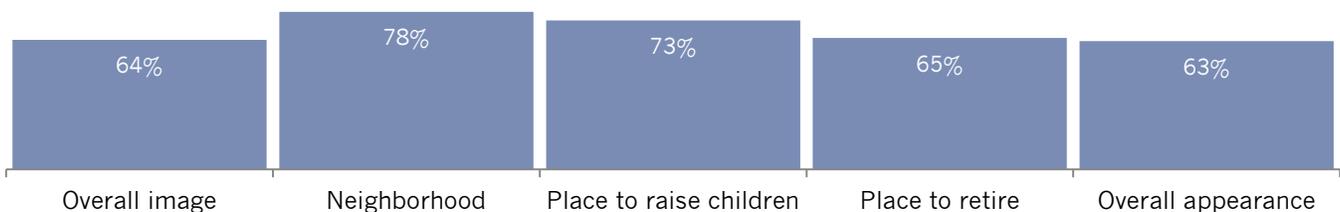
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. In general, Twin Falls' ratings tended to be similar to other communities across the U.S. Nearly 9 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to feelings of safety in their neighborhoods and in the City's downtown/commercial area and about two-thirds gave high marks to the overall feeling of Safety in Twin Falls. Measures of Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement tended to be rated positively by at least half of residents. The highest rated aspects within these facets were overall natural environment, cleanliness, air quality, business and services, shopping opportunities, Twin Falls as a place to work and visit, fitness opportunities, availability of affordable quality food and opportunities to volunteer, with about 6 in 10 or more ratings these aspects as excellent or good. Ratings within the facet of Mobility were more varied, ranging from overall ease of walking, rated positively by 75% of respondents, to travel by public transportation, rated positively by 16% of residents.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



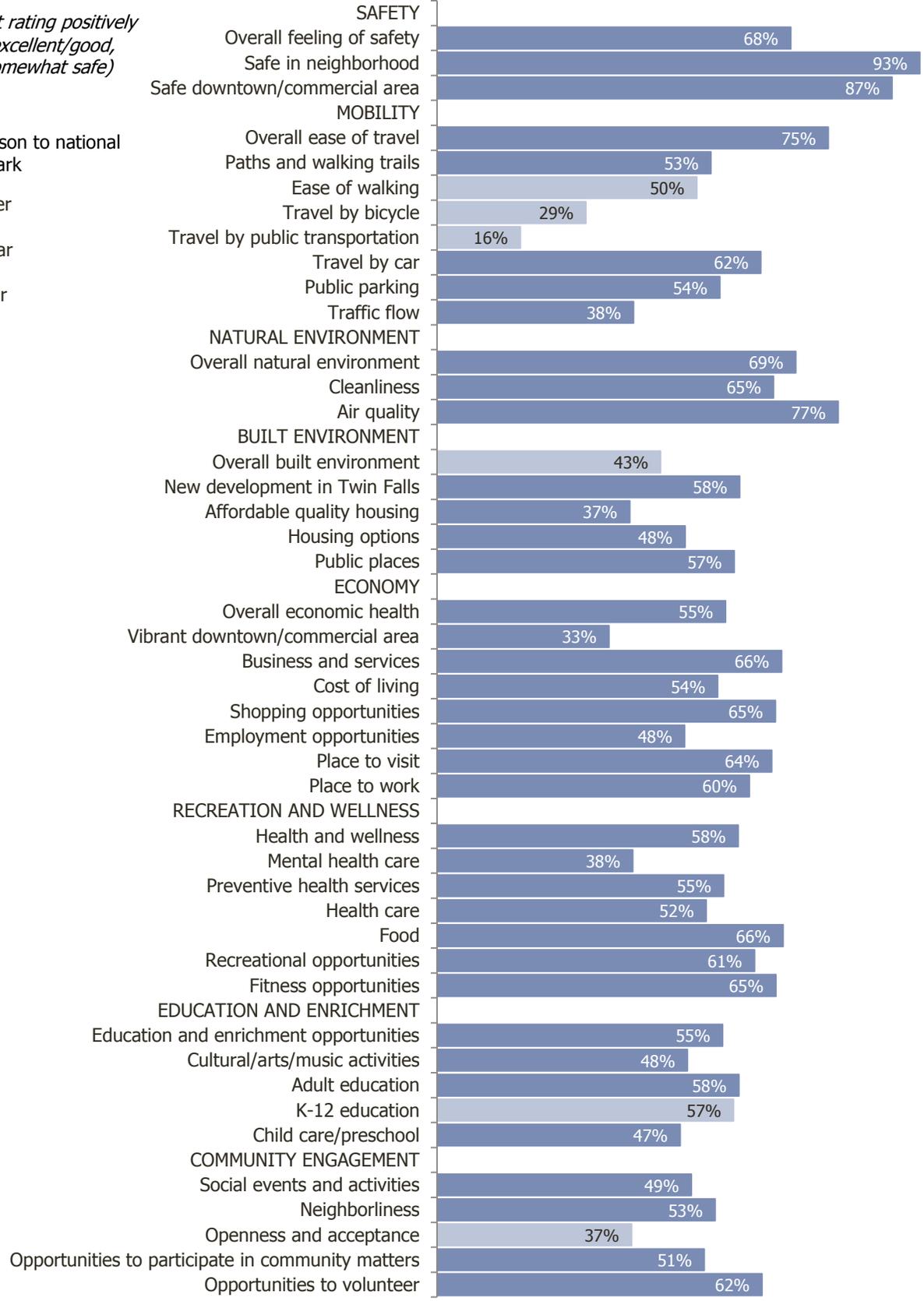
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

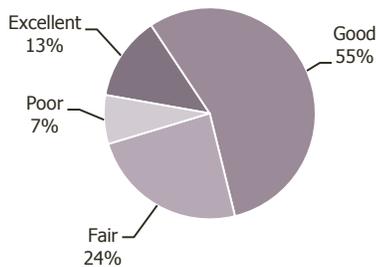
How well does the government of Twin Falls meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Twin Falls as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. The overall quality of services provided by the City of Twin Falls received excellent or good ratings by about 7 in 10 residents, a rating similar to the national benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Twin Falls' leadership and governance. A majority gave positive ratings to the overall direction of the City, the City acting in the best interest of Twin Falls and being honest. Nearly 7 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the City's customer service. All of these ratings were similar to other communities across the nation.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Twin Falls. These ratings were all similar to or lower than the national benchmarks. The most positively rated aspects of Governance were within the facets of Safety and Education and Enrichment; at least three-quarters of respondents rated police [services](#) [as](#) excellent or good, while at least 8 in 10 respondents rated ambulance/EMS and fire [services](#) [as](#) well as public libraries favorably. Within the pillar of Economy, about two-thirds of survey respondents positively rated economic development. With regard to Recreation and Wellness, about 7 in 10 residents gave high marks to City parks and health services. Measures within the facet of Mobility were among the lowest rated aspects. About 3 in 10 or fewer respondents gave favorable ratings to street repair, street cleaning, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and bus or transit services, all ratings lower than in other communities.

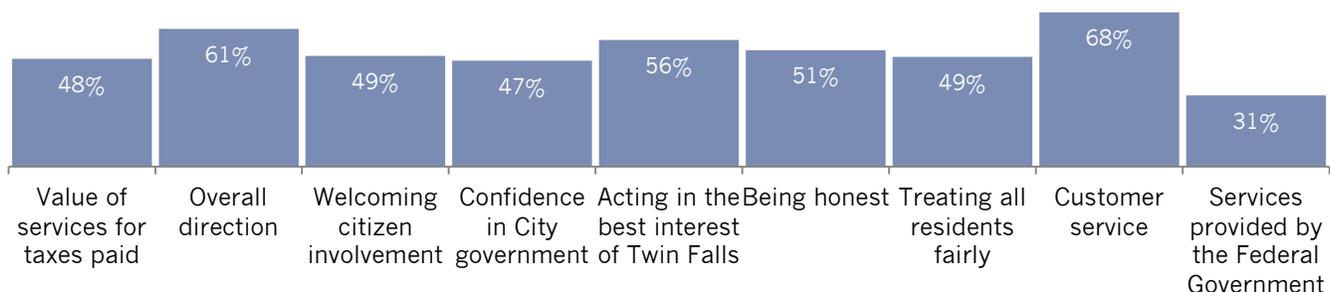
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



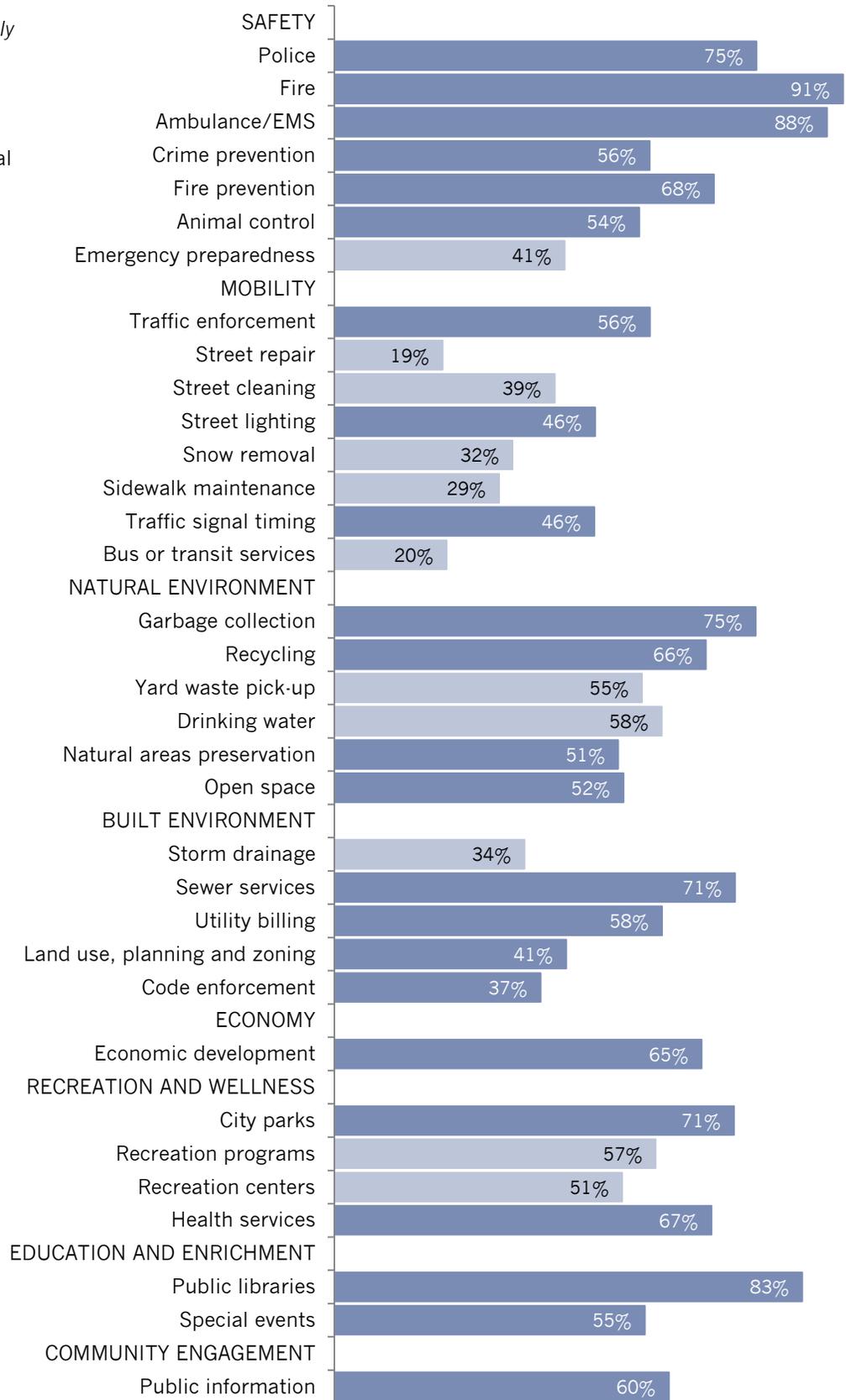
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

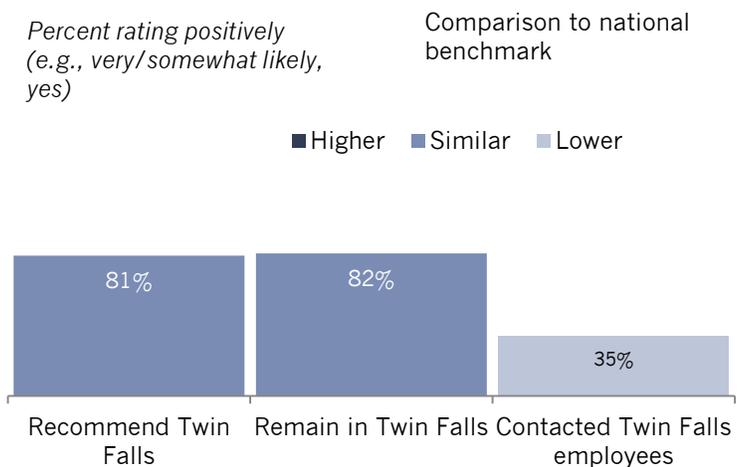
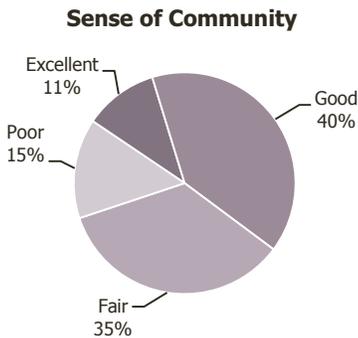


Participation

Are the residents of 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. Around half of residents gave a positive rating to the overall sense of community in Twin Falls and this level was similar to what was seen in benchmark communities. More than 8 in 10 residents planned to remain in Twin Falls and would recommend it to others; about one-third had contacted City employees in the past year, a rate lower to those 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. Overall, the extent to which respondents participated in these activities tended to vary, but in general, these rates were to similar to participation levels of residents in other communities across the nation. Compared to residents in other communities, more Twin Falls residents reported they had volunteered, participated in religious or spiritual activities and worked in Twin Falls, while fewer reported that they had not observed a code violation or that they used public transportation instead of driving and voted in local elections than participants in comparison communities. N all respondents had purchased goods or services in Twin Falls and about one-third believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income; these measures were similar to the benchmarks. Participation in Community Engagement activities was mixed. For example, most respondents indicated they had read or watched local news, talked or visited with neighbors and done a favor for a neighbor, but fewer than 2 in 10 had campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate, contacted elected officials or attended or watched a local public meeting.



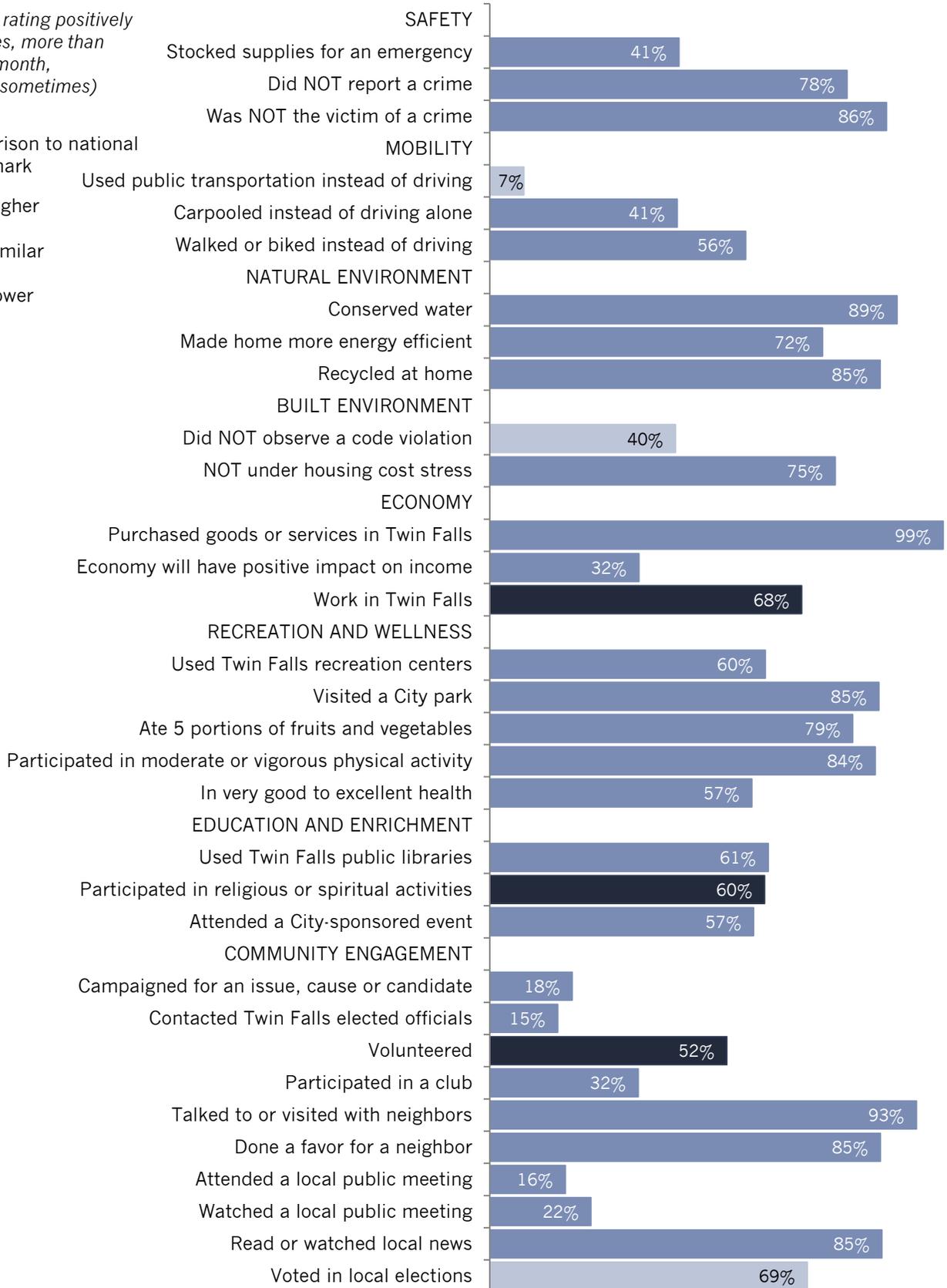
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

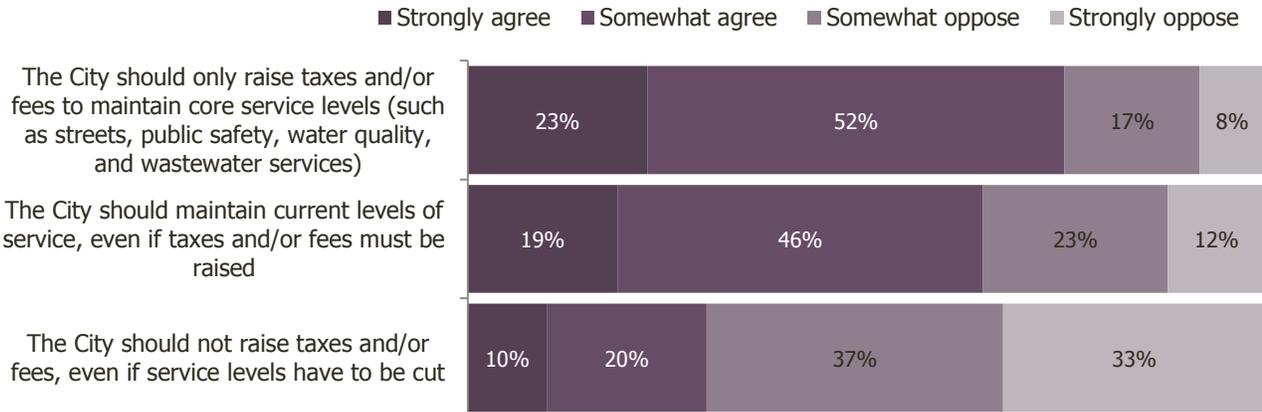


Special Topics

The City of Twin Falls included several questions of special interest on The NCS. When asked the extent to which they agreed with or opposed statements about relative tax and/or service increases, a majority of residents strongly or somewhat agreed that the City should only raise taxes to maintain core service levels or that the City should maintain current levels of service, even if it meant raising taxes. Less than one-third of survey respondents agreed that the City should not raise taxes, even if it meant cutting services.

Figure 4: City Services and Taxes

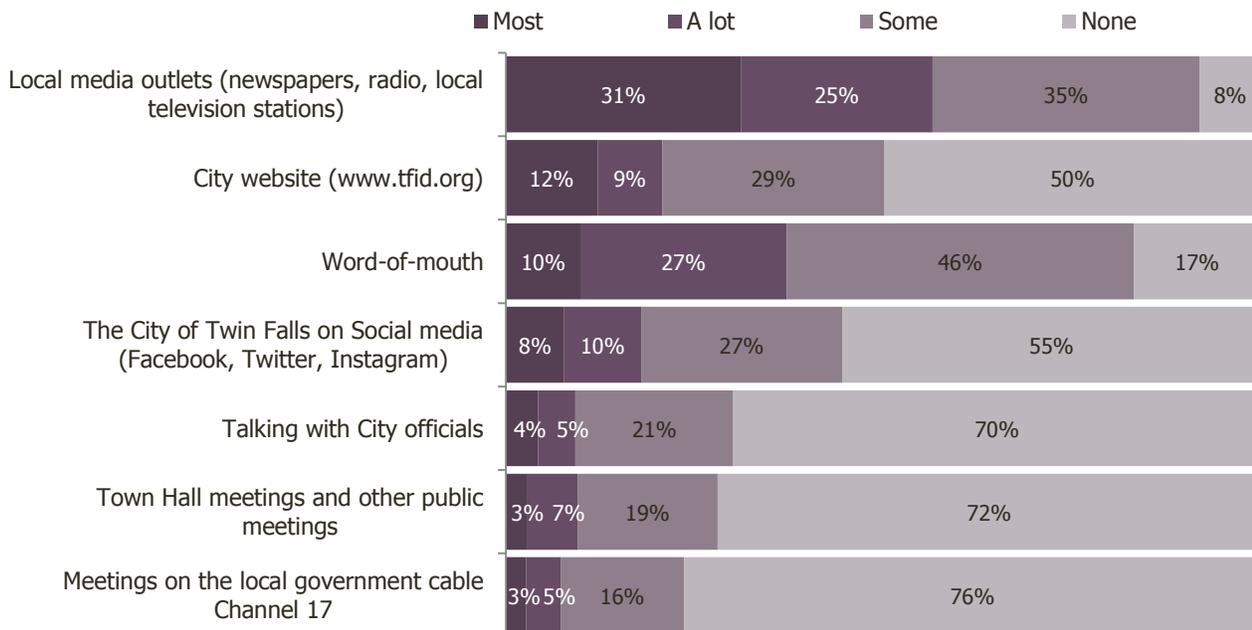
Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



The second 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. A vast majority of residents agreed that they received at least some of their information about the City from local media outlets or word-of-mouth. About half indicated that they receive most or a lot of their information from the City website and the City of Twin Falls on social media.

Figure 5: Sources of Information

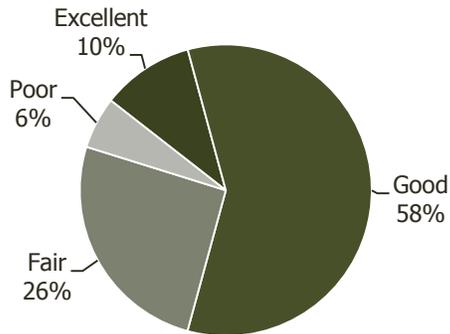
How much information, if any, do you get about the Twin Falls government and its activities, events and services from each of the following sources?



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When asked to rate the overall performance of the City of Twin Falls, about two-thirds of residents gave excellent or good ratings. Less than 1 out of 10 residents rated Twin Falls' performance as poor.

Figure 6: Overall Government Performance
How would you rate the overall performance of the City of Twin Falls government?



The next set of questions asked residents if they had contact with a City of Twin Falls police officer in the 12 months before the survey and to rate the officer if contact was made. About 4 in 10 residents indicated that they had made contact with a City police officer within the last year and, of those who had been in contact, about three-quarters of residents gave an excellent or good rating to the police officer.

Figure 4: Contact with Twin Falls Police
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?

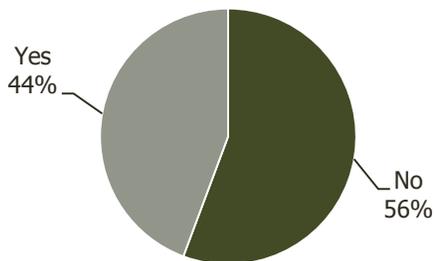
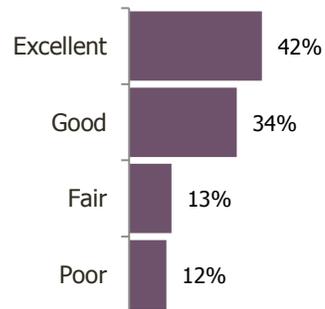


Figure 8: Twin Falls Police Officer Rating
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the City of Twin Falls Police Department?



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The final set of questions asked residents if they had contact with a member of the City of Twin Falls Fire Department in the 12 months before the survey and to rate the department member if contact was made. Only 1 in 10 respondents reported that they had made contact with a member of the City of Twin Falls Fire Department within the last year. Of those respondents who had been in contact, more than 8 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings and no one gave the Twin Falls Fire Department a poor rating.

Figure 9: Contact with Twin Falls 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?

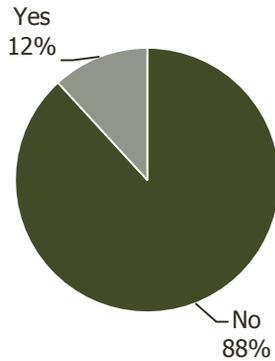
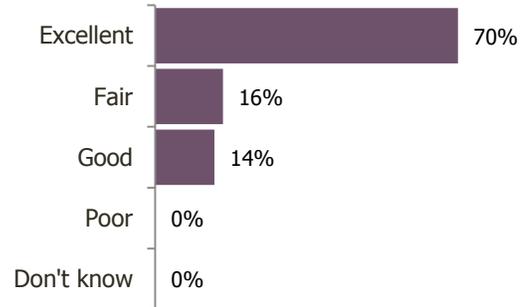


Figure 10: Twin Falls Fire Department Rating
What was your overall impression of your most recent contact with the City of Twin Falls Fire Department?



Conclusions

Twin Falls is a great place to live.

A vast majority of residents gave positive ratings for the overall quality of life and Twin Falls as a place to live. About 7 in 10 residents positively rated their neighborhoods as a places to live and Twin Falls as a place to raise children, with most respondents reporting that they planned to remain in the City and would recommend the community to others. Twin Falls' overall appearance received high ratings by about 6 in 10 residents. Most of these ratings are on par with other communities across the nation.

Residents value Economy as economic development improves.

Economy was identified by residents as being a top focus area for Twin Falls in the coming two years. More residents in Twin Falls reported working in the City compared to communities nationally and nearly all residents reported that they purchased good or services. More than 6 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to Twin Falls as a place to work and visit, as well as shopping opportunities (a rating that increased since the last survey iteration) and business and services. Nearly two-thirds of residents positively rated Twin Falls' economic development, a rating that increased from the 2014 survey. Additionally, assessments of economic development in the City rated higher in 2016 and more residents reported they were optimistic that the economy would have a positive impact on their income than in 2014.

Mobility could be an area of improvement for the community.

Within Mobility, about three-quarters gave high marks to the overall ease of travel in Twin Falls and at least half gave excellent or good ratings to the availability of paths and walking trails, ease of travel by car, public parking and traffic enforcement. Additionally, a majority of respondents indicated that they had walked or biked instead of driving. However, ratings for ease of travel by bicycle and public transportation, ease of walking, street repair, street cleaning, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and bus or transit services were give scores that were lower than comparison communities and many of these measure have decreased since 2014, so this might be an area of consideration for the City of Twin Falls.

Safety is important to residents.

Survey respondents also indicated that Safety is an essential or very important focus area for the City in the future. Nearly all aspects for this area were rated positively by a majority of residents and were similar to ratings given by residents in comparison communities. Ratings for police (which increased since 2014), fire and ambulance/EMS were marked excellent or good by a vast majority of residents. Almost all citizens reported they felt safe in their neighborhoods and in Twin Falls' downtown/commercial area and at least two-thirds gave high marks to the overall feeling of safety in the City of Twin Falls. Moreover, over 8 in 10 residents indicated they had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey.