

The National Citizen Survey™

Twin Falls, ID

Community Livability Report

2014

Contents

About.....	1
Quality of Life in Twin Falls.....	2
Community Characteristics	3
Governance	5
Participation	7
Special Topics.....	9
Conclusions	12

The National Citizen Survey™
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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.

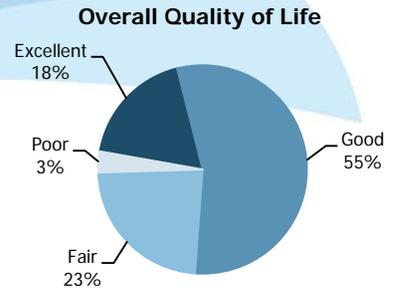
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 373 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. Quality of life ratings were similar to other communities in the nation (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).



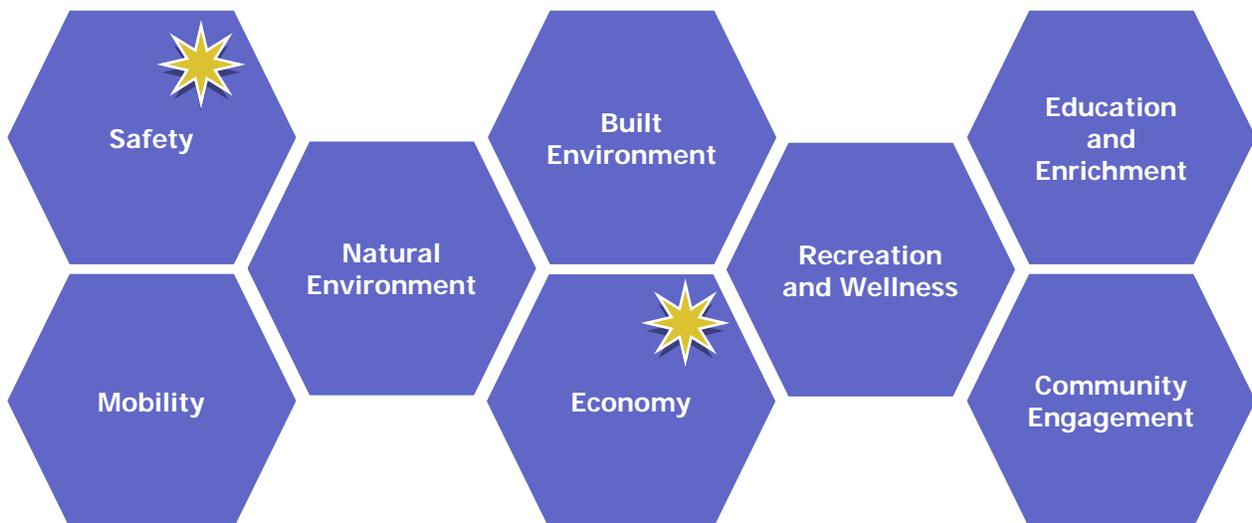
Shown below are the eight facets of community. The color of each community facet summarizes how residents rated it across the three sections of the survey that represent the pillars of a community – Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation. When most ratings across the three pillars were 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 Twin Falls community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Twin Falls residents gave favorable ratings to all eight facets; all 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
-  Benchmark comparison not available
-  Most important



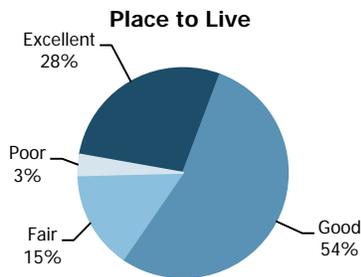
Community Characteristics

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, 82% 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. Two-thirds or more of participants rated these aspects of community quality positively; all were rated 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. A majority of participants rated Safety and the Natural Environment positively and all aspects of these facets were similar to other communities. Mobility ratings varied, with a majority of respondents rating overall ease of travel, paths and walking trails, ease of walking, travel by car and public parking positively. Ratings for travel by bicycle and travel by public transportation however were not rated as highly and were rated lower than the benchmark comparisons. All aspects of Economy, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were similar to the national benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

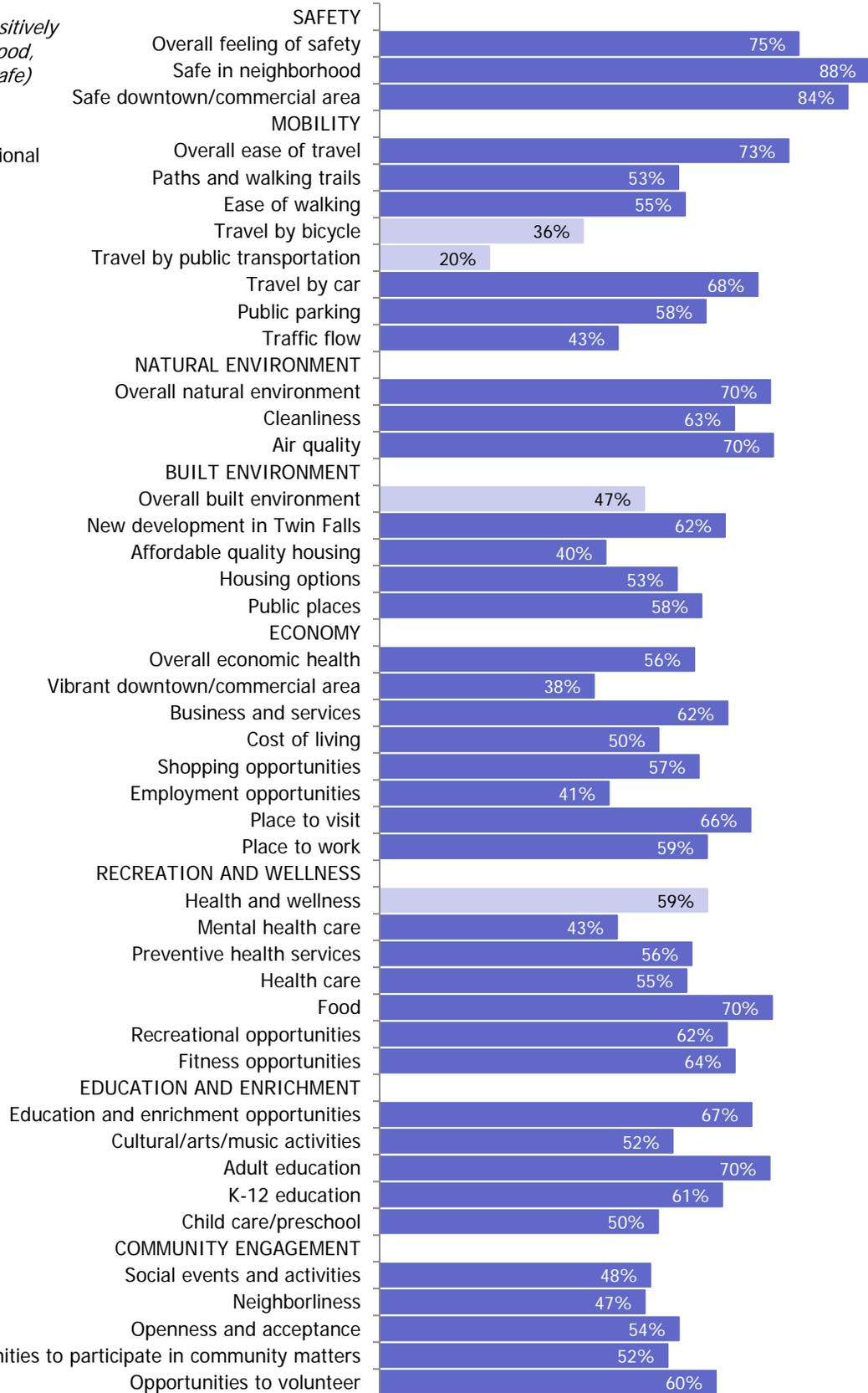


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



Governance

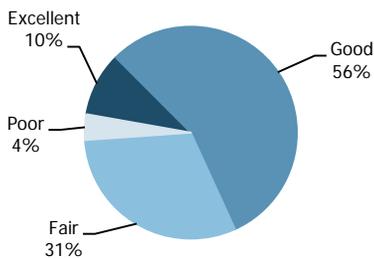
How well does the government of Twin Falls meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

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. City services were rated highly by two-thirds of respondents (a rating similar to the benchmark); whereas ratings for the Federal Government were only rated positively by 2 in 10 respondents and were lower than the benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Twin Falls' leadership and governance. Most participants were pleased with the overall direction of Twin Falls and Twin Falls' customer service. About 4 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings for the value of services for taxes paid, Twin Falls welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Twin Falls, being honest and treating residents fairly.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Twin Falls. Ratings within Safety varied widely, with only 37% rating emergency preparedness positively but 92% rating fire services positively. Ratings for fire services, emergency medical services, fire prevention and animal control were similar to ratings across the nation, while ratings for police services, crime prevention and emergency preparedness were below the benchmark. Mobility ratings also varied somewhat. A majority of respondents gave positive ratings for traffic enforcement and street lighting. Only one-quarter of respondents rated street repair, sidewalk maintenance and bus or transit services highly. Most Natural Environment ratings were positive, but garbage collection and recycling were rated more highly than other items and were similar to the benchmark. Ratings for Built Environment and were varied, while Economy was rated positively by 57% of respondents. Within Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment, City parks and the public libraries were rated positively by at least 8 in 10 respondents. At least 50% of respondents also rated recreation programs, recreation facilities, health services and special events positively.

Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

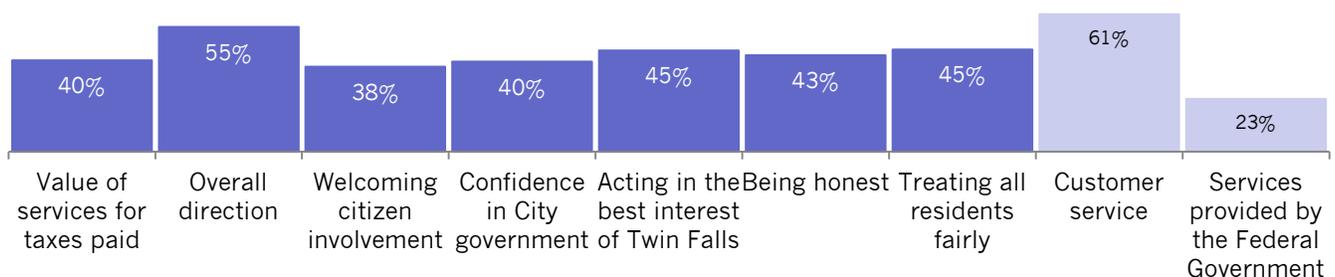


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

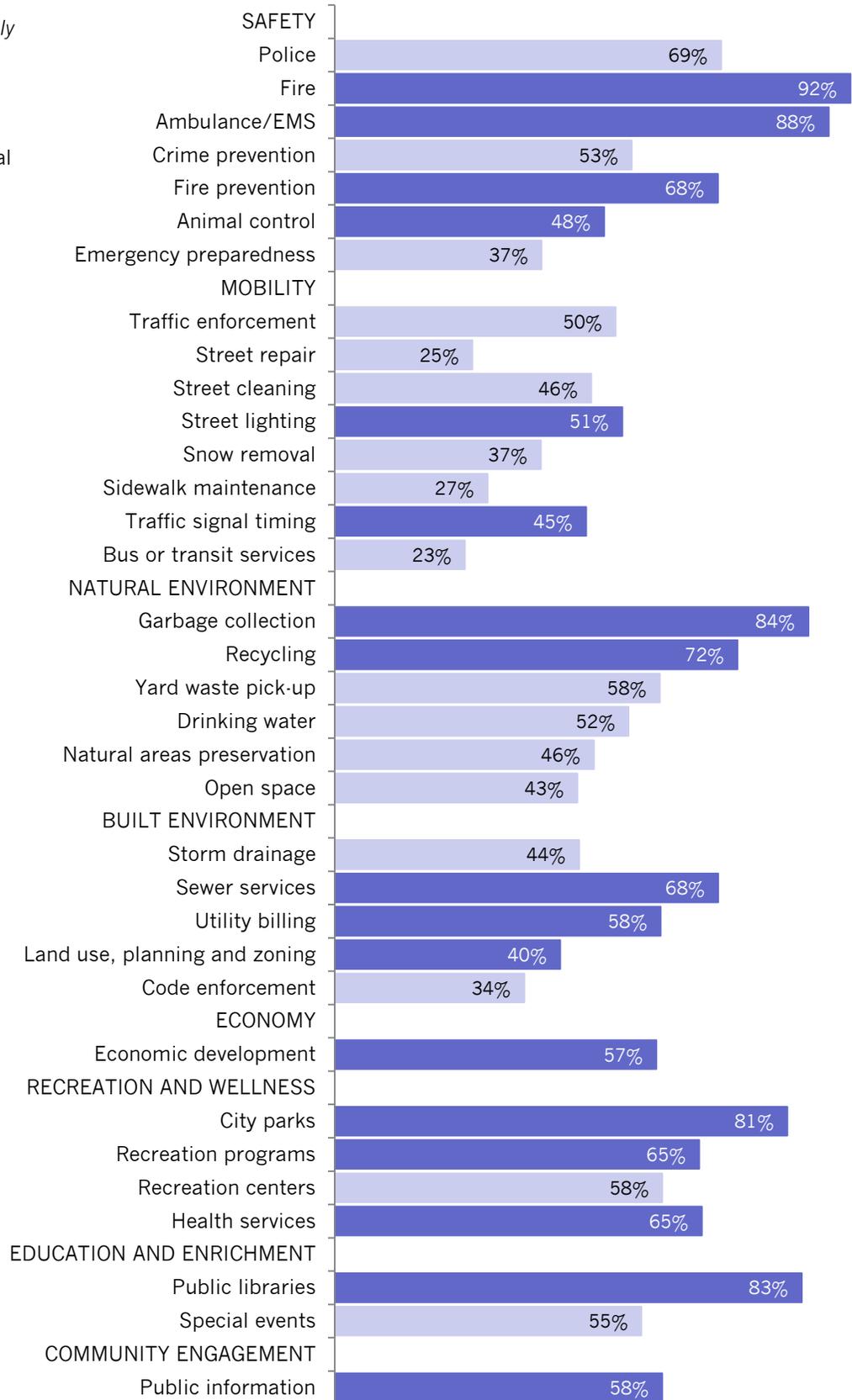
Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

■ Similar

■ Lower

□ Not available



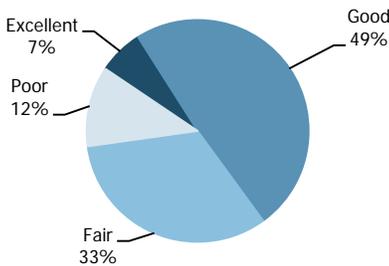
Participation

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. A majority of respondents rated the sense of community as excellent or good, a rating that was similar to the benchmark. Most participants would recommend Twin Falls to others and plan on staying in Twin Falls.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Most participants had not been the victim of a crime or had reported a crime, ratings that were similar to other communities. Natural Environment ratings were high, with at least three-quarters of respondents making their homes more energy efficient, conserving water and recycling. A majority of residents enjoyed participating in healthy activities, with all aspects of Recreation and Wellness being similar to the benchmark. Residents also commonly participated in Education and Enrichment activities, with most participants using public libraries, attending religious or spiritual activities and attending a City-sponsored event. Community Engagement ratings varied from 13% to 85%; almost all Community Engagement ratings were similar to the national benchmark.

Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

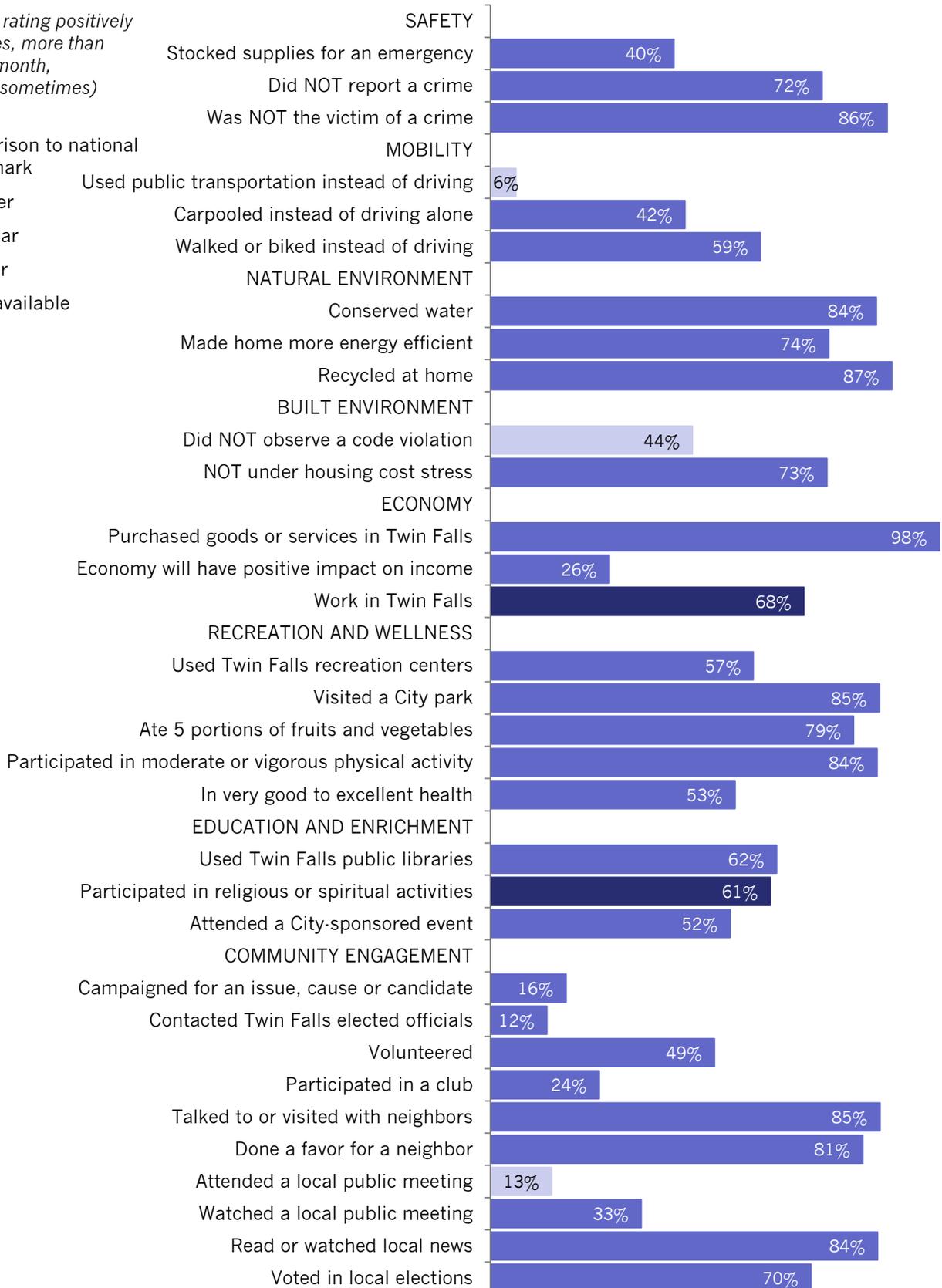


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



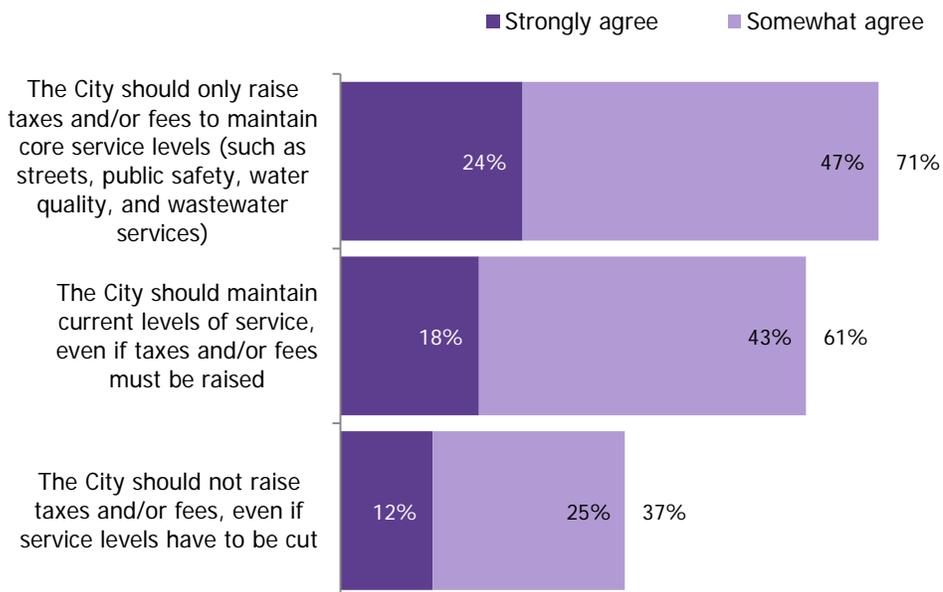
Special Topics

The City of Twin Falls included seven questions of special interest on The NCS. Question topics ranged from what levels of City services should be available to impressions of police and fire departments.

Almost three-quarters of respondents indicated that the City should only raise taxes and/or fees to maintain core services. A majority of residents also agreed that the City should maintain current levels of services. Few residents (37%) thought that the City should not raise taxes and/or fees, even if service levels had to be cut.

Figure 4: City Service Levels

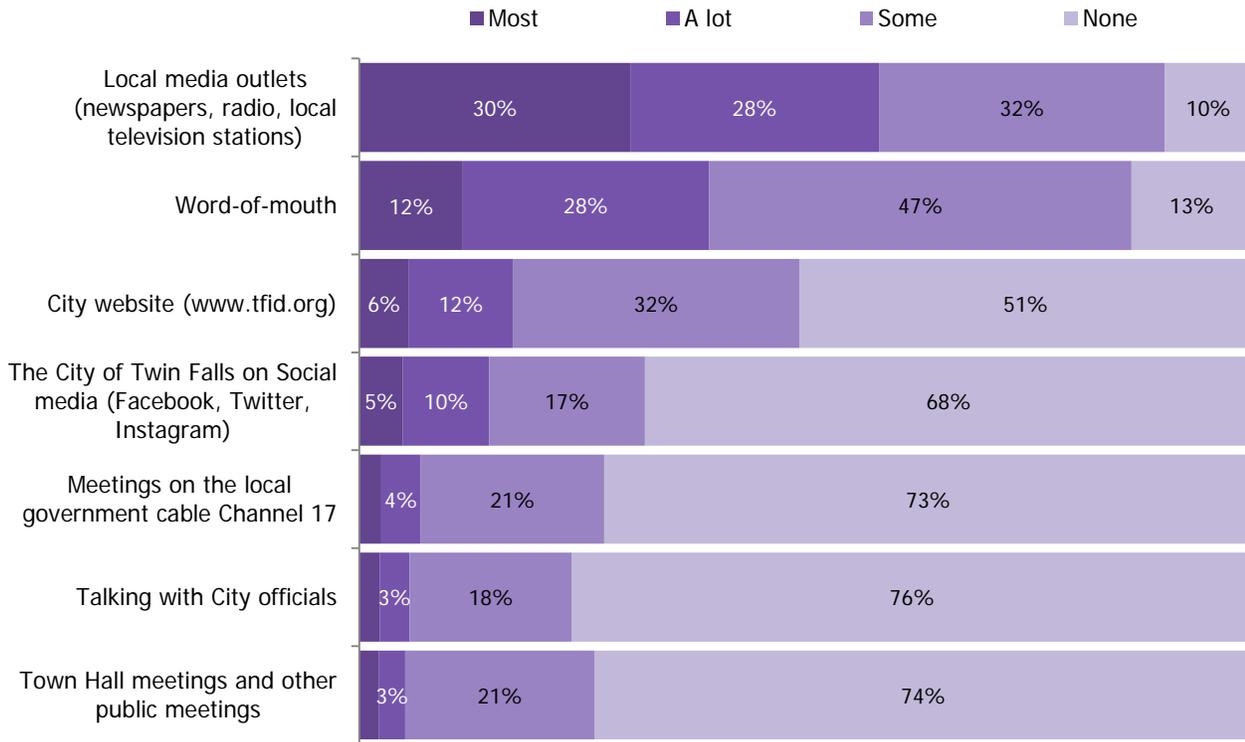
Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



Most participants relied on local media outlets for information about the Twin Falls government and its activities. Word of mouth and the City website were also sources that half or more residents used at least some of the time. Only one-third of participants used social media or the government cable Channel 17 or talked with City officials or attended Town Hall meetings.

Figure 5: Information Sources

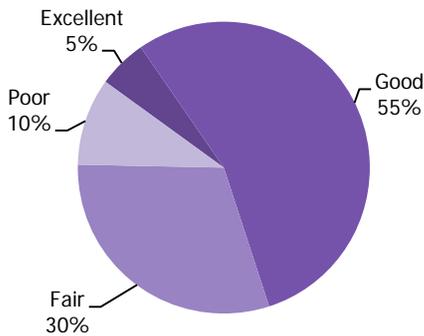
How much information, if any, do you get about the Twin Falls government and its activities, events and services from each of the following sources?



At least 60% of participants rated the overall performance of Twin Falls government as excellent or good.

Figure 6: Overall Government Performance

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



About half of participants had contact with the police department and only 17% had contact with the fire department. Both departments were rated highly; about 70% of participants rated the police department highly and about 90% rated the fire department positively.

Figure 7: Contact with Police Department and Fire 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? 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?

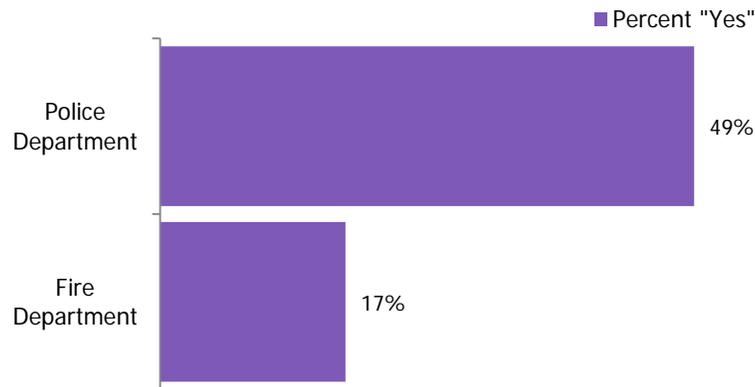
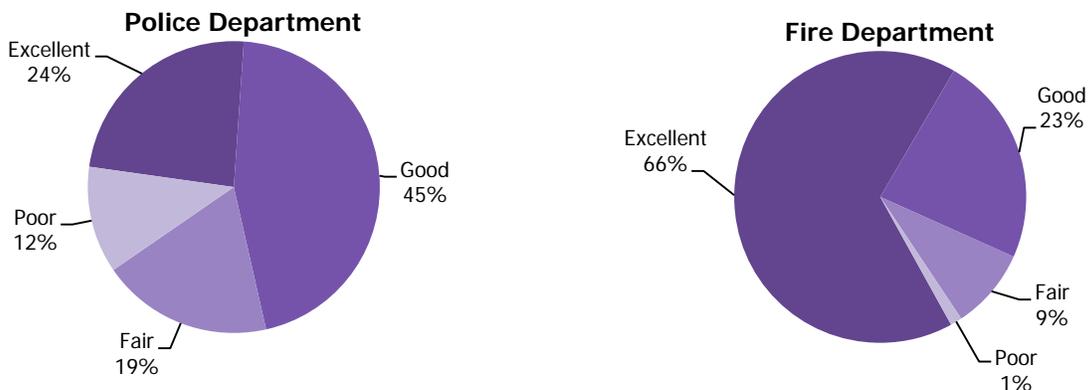


Figure 8: Impressions of Police Department and Fire Department

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



Conclusions

Residents feel safe in Twin Falls

Residents felt safe in their neighborhoods, in downtown/commercial areas and overall in Twin Falls. While residents felt safe in Twin Falls and their neighborhoods and a majority had not been victims of crime, they would like to see improvements to some safety services. Police services, crime prevention and emergency preparedness were all below the benchmark and could be possible areas to focus on in the future. Residents believe that Safety is an important facet to focus on over the next two years.

The Economy is important to residents

Residents indicated that the economy should be an area for Twin Falls to concentrate on over the next few years. While economy ratings varied widely, all features of Economy were at least similar to the benchmark. A majority of participants gave high ratings for the overall economic health of Twin Falls, economic development services, business and services in Twin Falls, the cost of living, shopping opportunities and Twin Falls as a place to work.

Participants value the Natural Environment

Residents rated the overall natural environment of Twin Falls highly and also gave high ratings for air quality and the cleanliness of Twin Falls. While ratings varied for Natural Environment services (such as garbage collection, drinking water, etc.), participation ratings for the Natural Environment were high with most participants conserving water, making their homes energy efficient and recycling.