

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

## Tracy, CA

### Community Livability Report

DRAFT  
2015



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# About

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

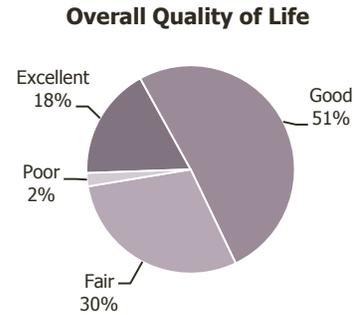
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 251 residents of the City of Tracy. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% 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 Tracy

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Tracy as excellent or good. This was similar in comparison 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.

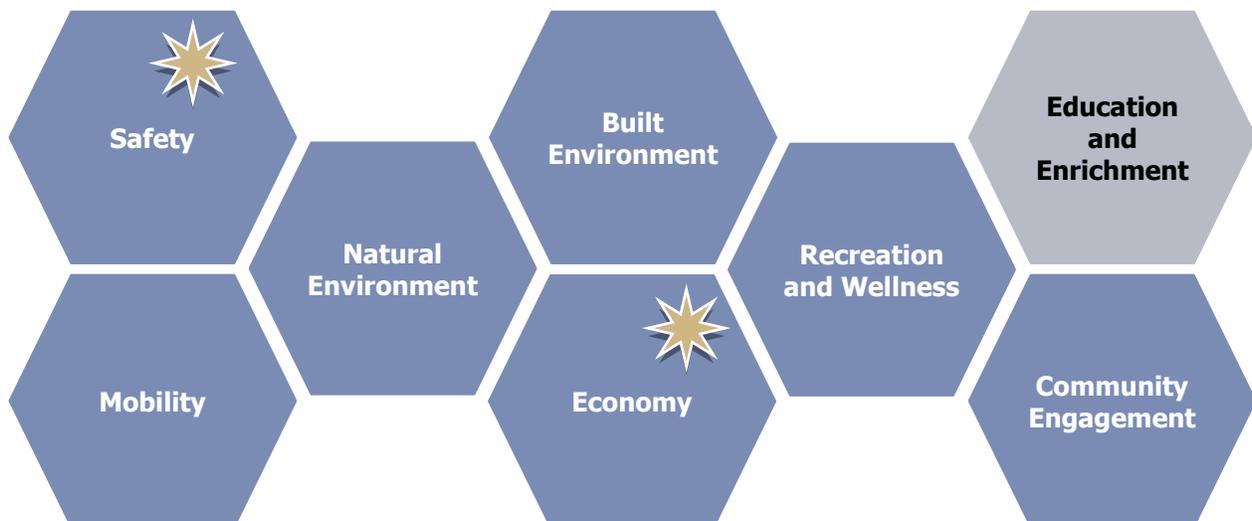
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Tracy community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Tracy residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community. In fact, ratings for most facets, including Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness 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 Tracy’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

- Most important



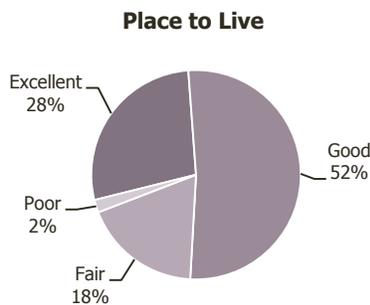
# Community Characteristics

*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 Tracy, 80% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Tracy 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 Tracy as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Tracy and its overall appearance. A majority of residents gave positive ratings to their neighborhoods, the overall appearance of Tracy and Tracy as a place to retire and to raise children. These ratings were all similar to ratings in other communities. Ratings for the overall image of Tracy were less positive and were lower than the benchmark comparison.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Ratings within the facet of Mobility tended to be rated positively by a majority of residents and were similar to the benchmark comparisons. All facets of Economy and Education and Enrichment received positive ratings by fewer than half of the survey respondents. These ratings were lower than or similar to ratings in comparison communities. Ratings were a mix of negative and positive for Built Environment, Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



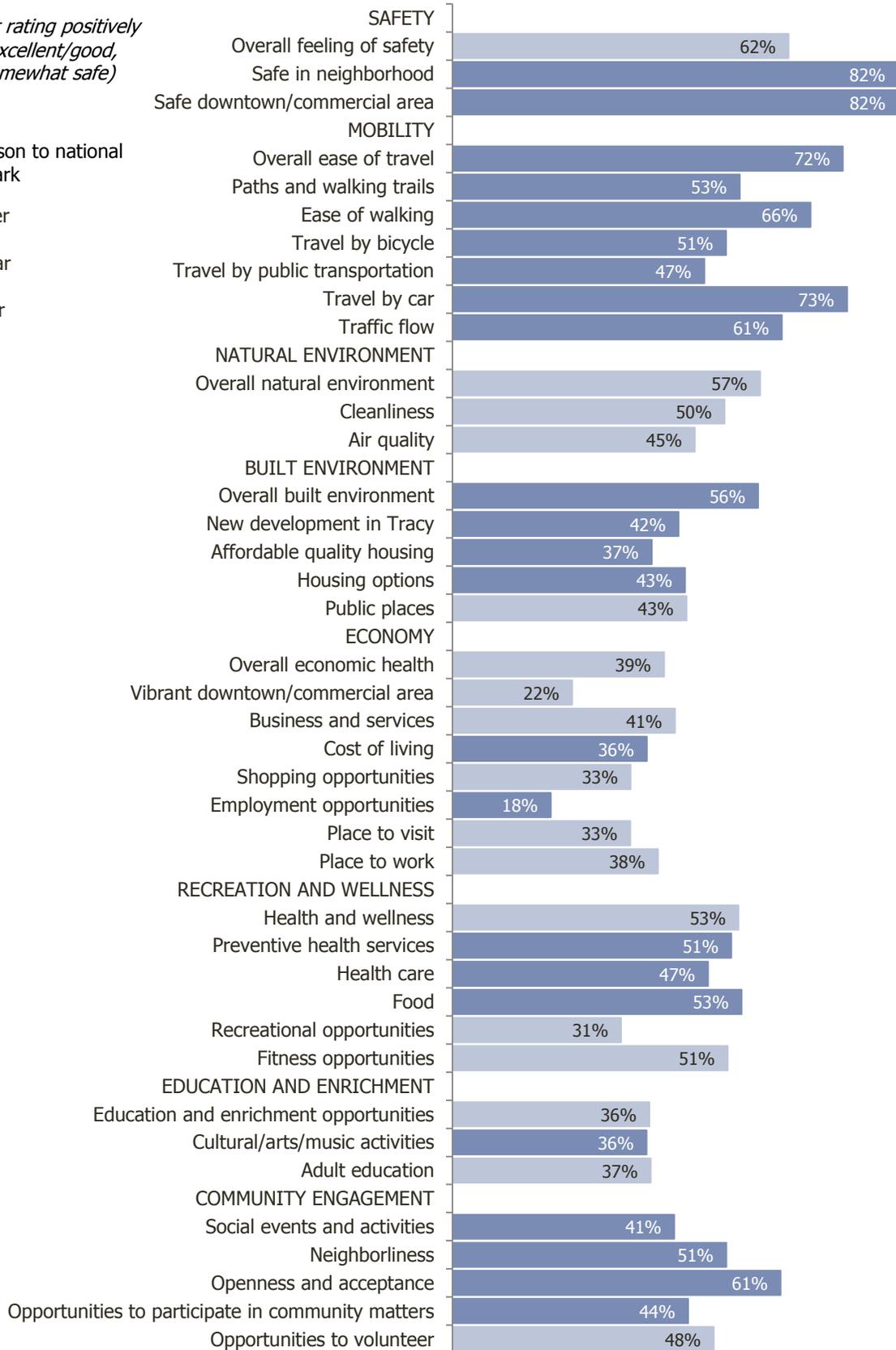
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

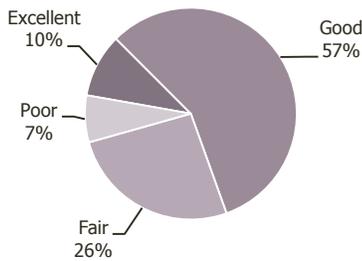
## *How well does the government of Tracy meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Tracy as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About three quarters of respondents rated the quality of city services as excellent or good. This was much higher than the proportion of positive ratings received for services provided by the Federal Government (46% excellent or good). Both of these ratings were similar to ratings in communities across the nation.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Tracy’s leadership and governance. All of these ratings were similar to comparison communities except customer service, which was lower than other communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Tracy. Services with the highest ratings were concentrated in the facets of Safety (fire services, ambulance/EMS and police) and Natural Environment (recycling, yard waste pick-up and garbage collection) and were similar to benchmark communities. The lowest rated services were code enforcement, emergency preparedness, natural areas preservation and open space.

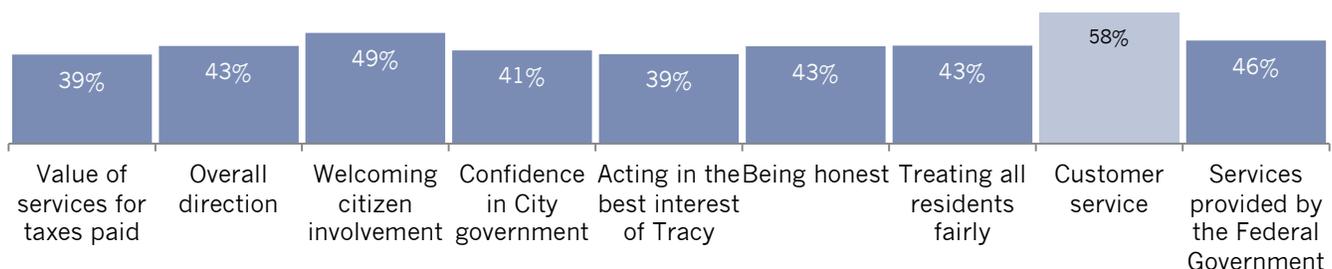
### Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



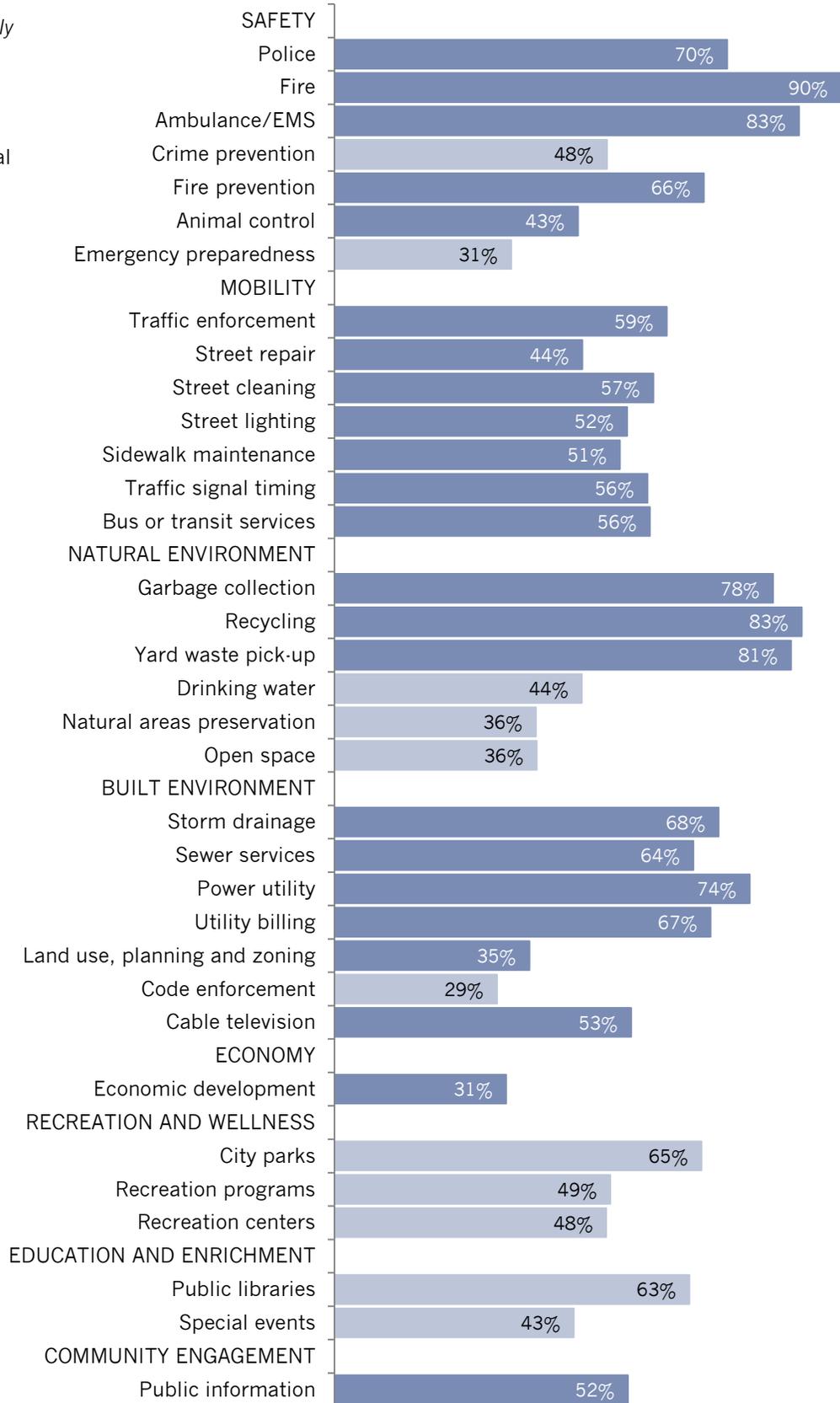
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

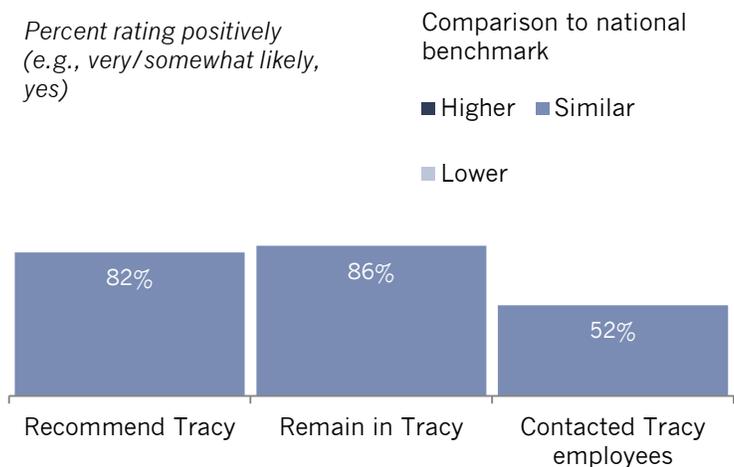
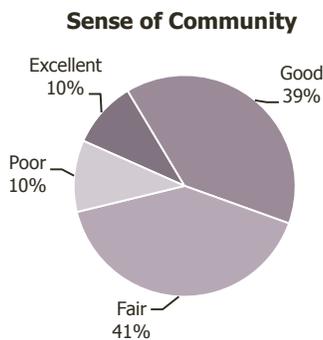


# Participation

*Are the residents of Tracy 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. Nearly half of residents gave a positive rating to the sense of community in Tracy and this level was similar to ratings in other communities. About 8 in 10 residents were likely to remain in Tracy for the next five years and were likely to recommend living in Tracy.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. In Natural Environment, almost all resident reported that they had conserved water, made efforts to make their homes more energy efficient and recycled at home. These reported rates of participation were higher than in comparison communities. . Participation rates within the facet of Economy were mixed, almost all residents reported that they had purchased goods or services in Tracy, but only 32% worked in the City. Participation within Community Engagement measurements were also very diverse, 8 in 10 residents reported they voted in local elections, talked to or visited with neighbors and that they had done a favor for their neighbor. However, only 1 in 10 residents reported that they had campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate or attended a local public meeting in Tracy.



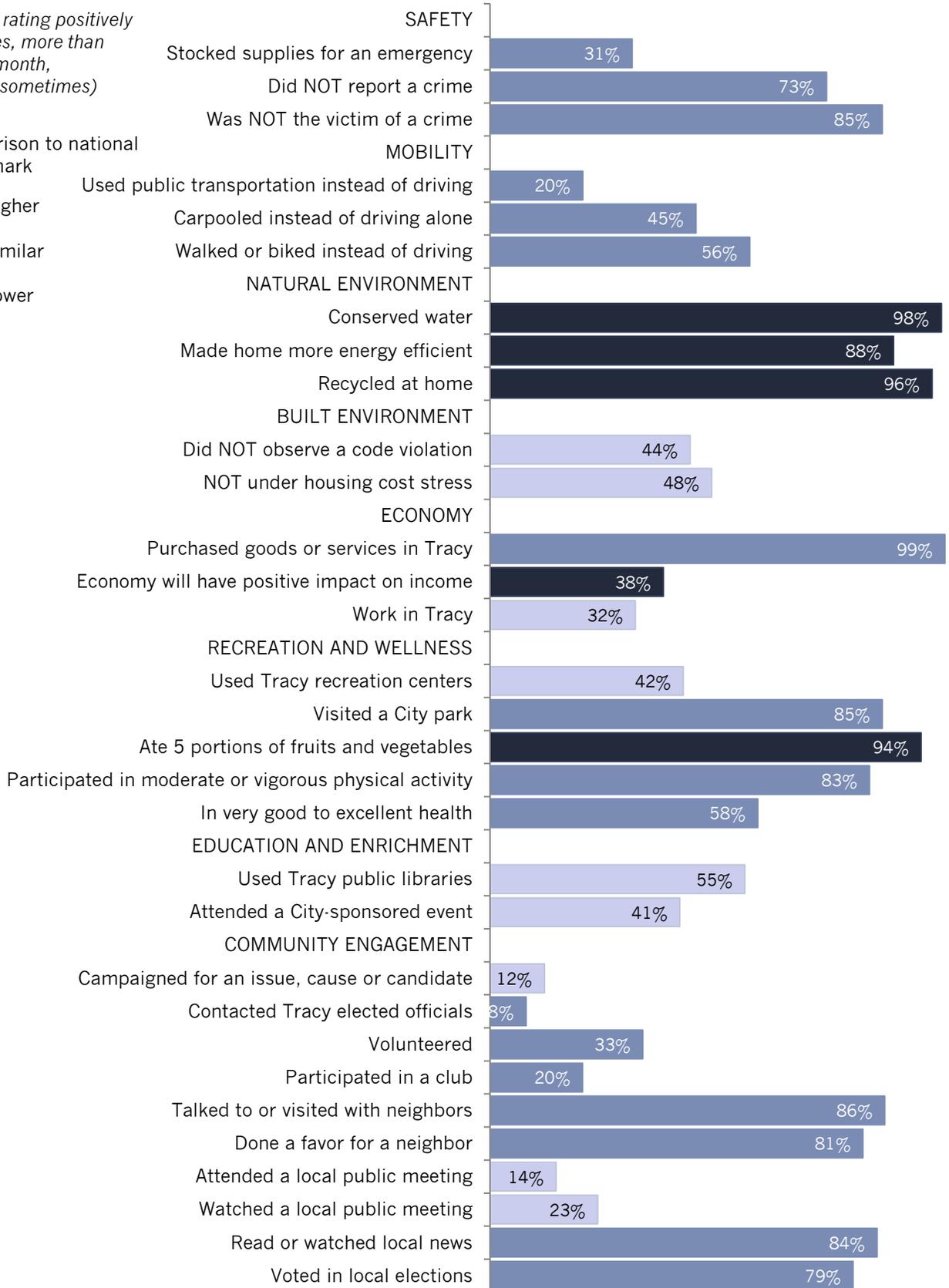
# The National Citizen Survey™

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



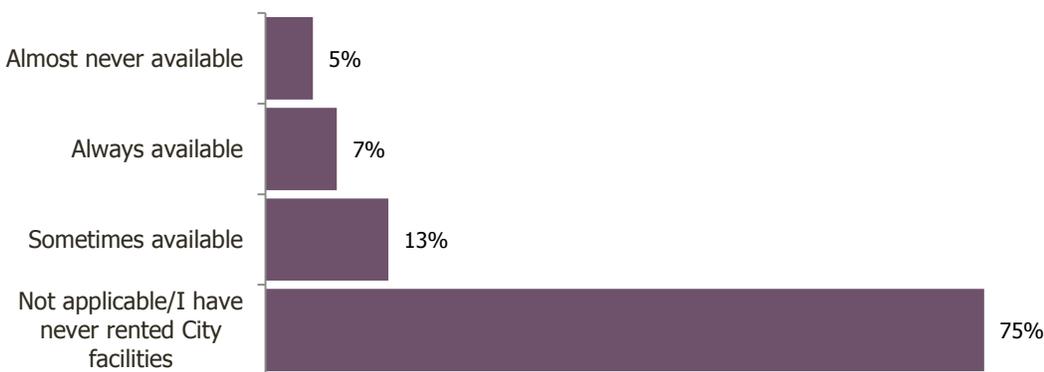
# Special Topics

The City of Tracy included three questions of special interest on The NCS, related to availability of City facilities and priorities for the City of Tracy for project funding and areas of focus for the future.

The first question asked residents to rate the availabilities of City facilities for their rental needs. A large majority of resident responded that they had not ever rented the facilities or that they felt the question was not applicable to them. Of the 25% of residents that had used the rental facilities available, only 5% indicated that the facilities were almost never available.

Figure 4: Availability of City Rental Facilities

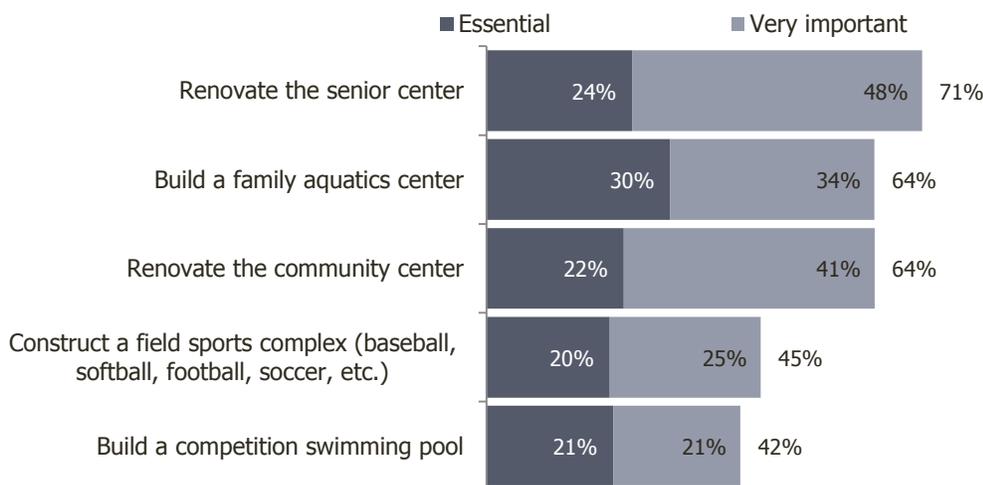
*The City of Tracy has several facilities available to rent for special events such as meetings, parties and weddings. City rental facilities include parks and picnic areas, sports fields, the Civic Center, Community Center, Transit Station and the Aquatic Center. Please rate the availability of these City facilities for your rental needs:*



The second question inquired about the importance of funding for City projects. Renovating the senior center was chosen as the highest priority, with 71% of respondents deeming the project essential or very important. At least 6 in 10 residents indicated that it was important for the City to fund building a family aquatics center and renovating the community center. The lowest levels of importance were given to building a competition swimming pool (42%) and constructing a field sports complex (45%).

Figure 5: Funding Priorities

*Please indicate how important, if at all, each of the following projects will be for the City to fund:*

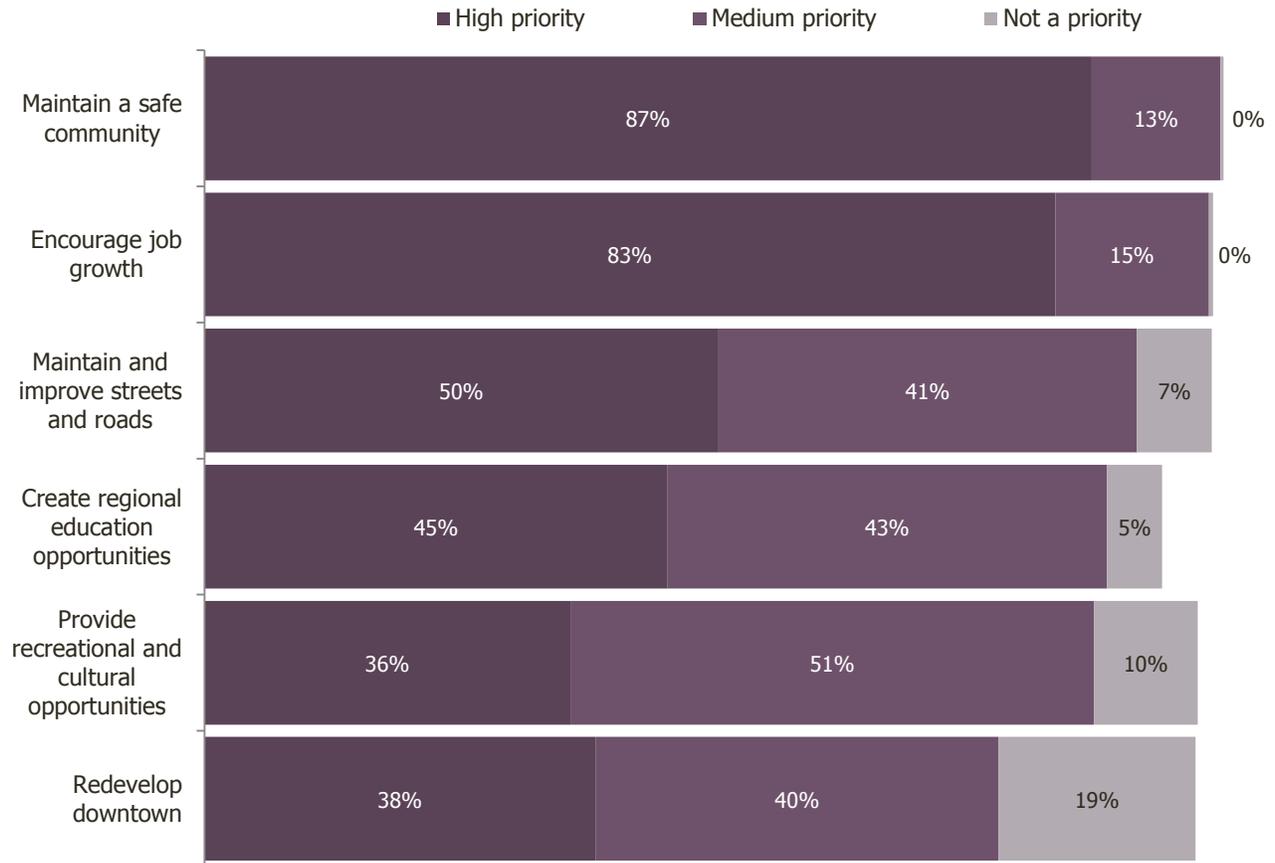


## The National Citizen Survey™

The final special interest questions asked residents for their opinions about overall funding priorities from a list of different potential areas of focus. All residents (100%) responded that it was a high or medium priority for the City of Tracy to maintain a safe community and encourage job growth. All of the listed items were deemed a priority by at least 3 out of 4 residents, with the item “redevelop downtown” receiving the lowest ratings at 78%.

Figure 6: Future City Priorities

*How much of a priority, if any, should each of the following be for the City to address in the next two to three years?*



# Conclusions

## **A majority of residents experience a positive quality of life in Tracy.**

The overall quality of life in Tracy was generally seen as excellent or good by about three-quarters of the survey respondents. A majority rated the City as a place to live, to raise children, to retire, the overall appearance and their neighborhood as a place to live as excellent or good. Most residents indicated that they would recommend living in Tracy and planned to remain in Tracy for the next five years.

## **Residents identified Economy and Safety as main focus areas.**

Survey participants indicated that Economy and Safety are important areas for the City to focus on over the next two years. Many of the Economy ratings tended to be either similar to or lower than ratings seen in other communities. However, close to four in ten residents reported that the economy will have a positive impact on income, which was higher than communities across the nation.

Nearly all residents reported that maintaining a safe community was a priority in the future. Most Safety ratings were similar to ratings in comparison communities. However, ratings for the overall feeling of safety, crime prevention and emergency preparedness were lower than those in communities across the nation. All residents identified this as a high or medium priority for the City of Tracy in the next two to three years.

## **Participation in conservation is high, but ratings for Natural Environment show room for improvement.**

Nearly all residents indicated that they had conserved water, made their home more energy efficient and recycled at home. These ratings were higher than ratings given in comparison communities. However, within the pillars of Governance and Community Characteristics, Natural Environment measures were less favorably rated, including overall natural environment, cleanliness, air quality, drinking water, natural areas preservation and open space, all of which were lower than the benchmarks.