

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Greer, SC

Community Livability Report

2018



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Contents

About..... 1

Quality of Life in Greer 2

Community Characteristics 3

Governance 5

Participation 7

Special Topics..... 9

Conclusions 11



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About

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

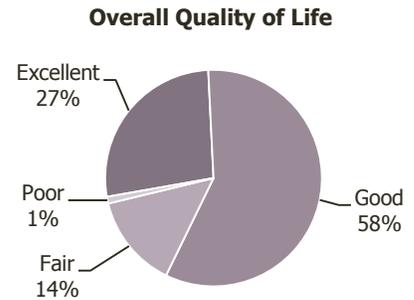
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 289 residents of the City of Greer. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Greer

About 8 in 10 residents rated the quality of life in Greer as excellent or good. This was 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.



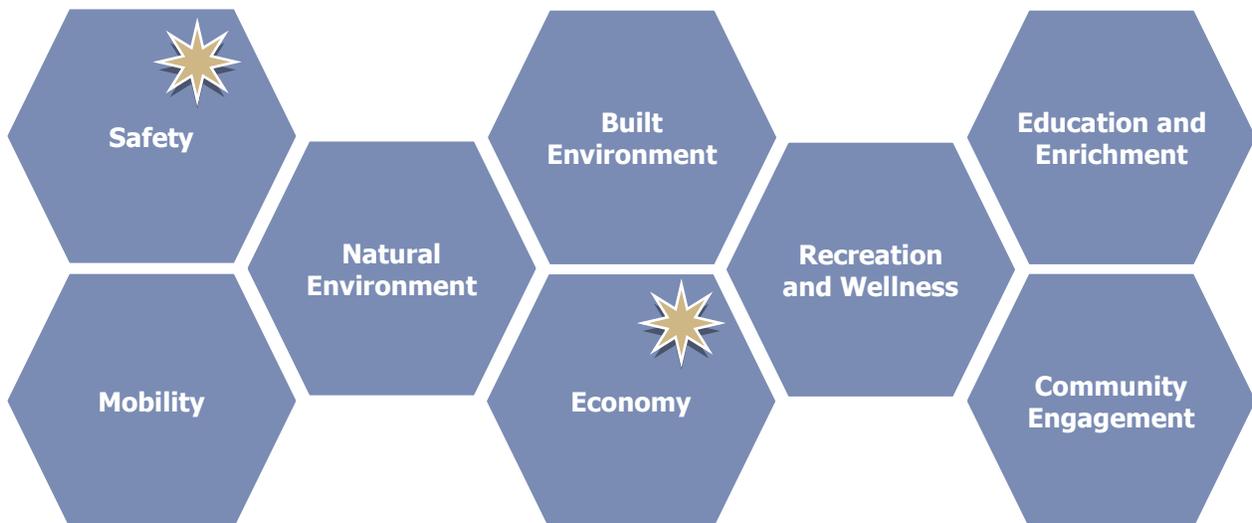
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2015, residents identified Economy and Safety as priorities for the Greer community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets were positive and similar to those in comparison 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 Greer’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



Community Characteristics

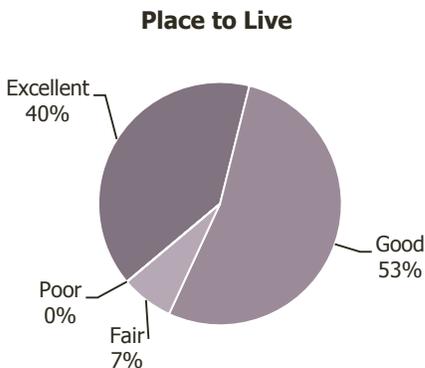
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 Greer, 93% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Greer 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 Greer as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Greer and its overall appearance. About 7 in 10 community members gave favorable scores to Greer as a place to retire and their neighborhood as a place to live, as well as the overall image and the overall. Around 8 in 10 also awarded high praise to their neighborhood as a place to live and Greer as a place to raise children. Results for these aspects of livability were similar to those in the benchmark communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, residents' ratings for most Community Characteristics were evaluated positively by at least half of respondents and tended to be on par with national averages.

At least 8 in 10 survey participants assigned excellent or good evaluations to the overall feeling of safety in Greer and felt safe in their neighborhoods and in the downtown/commercial area. Assessments for Built Environment were especially strong; more than half of residents gave high marks to several aspects, exceeding national ratings for new development in Greer (a rating that increased since 2015) and housing (availability of affordable quality housing and variety of housing options). Other strengths of the community were seen within the area of Economy: around 6 in 10 or more of respondents were pleased with the cost of living, employment opportunities and the city as a place to work. Each of these items were rated higher than national averages and scores for shopping and employment opportunities improved from 2015 to 2018.



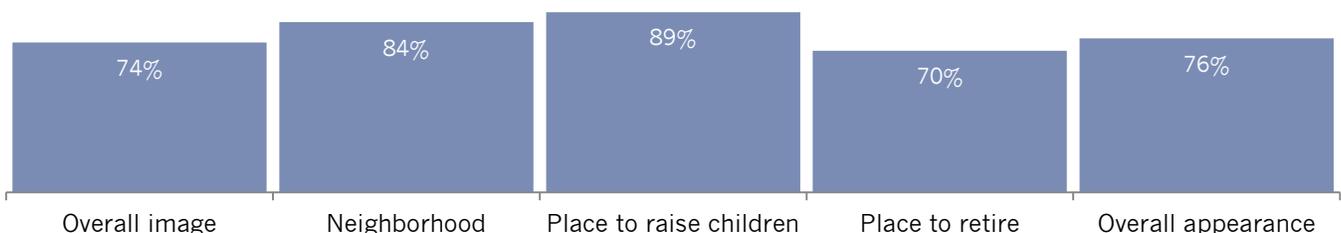
Most other aspects of the community, while viewed quite positively by respondents, were assessed at levels similar to those seen elsewhere, with a few exceptions. Aspects of alternative modes of transportation (availability of paths and walking trails, ease of travel by bicycle and by public transit) tended to be evaluated positively by one-third or less of residents and lagged behind national averages. Moreover, assessments for traffic flow, ease of travel by car, walking and public transportation all decreased in 2018. Within Recreation and Wellness, a couple of ratings for recreational and fitness opportunities were also lower than national benchmarks, with about half of respondents giving excellent

or good reviews to each.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



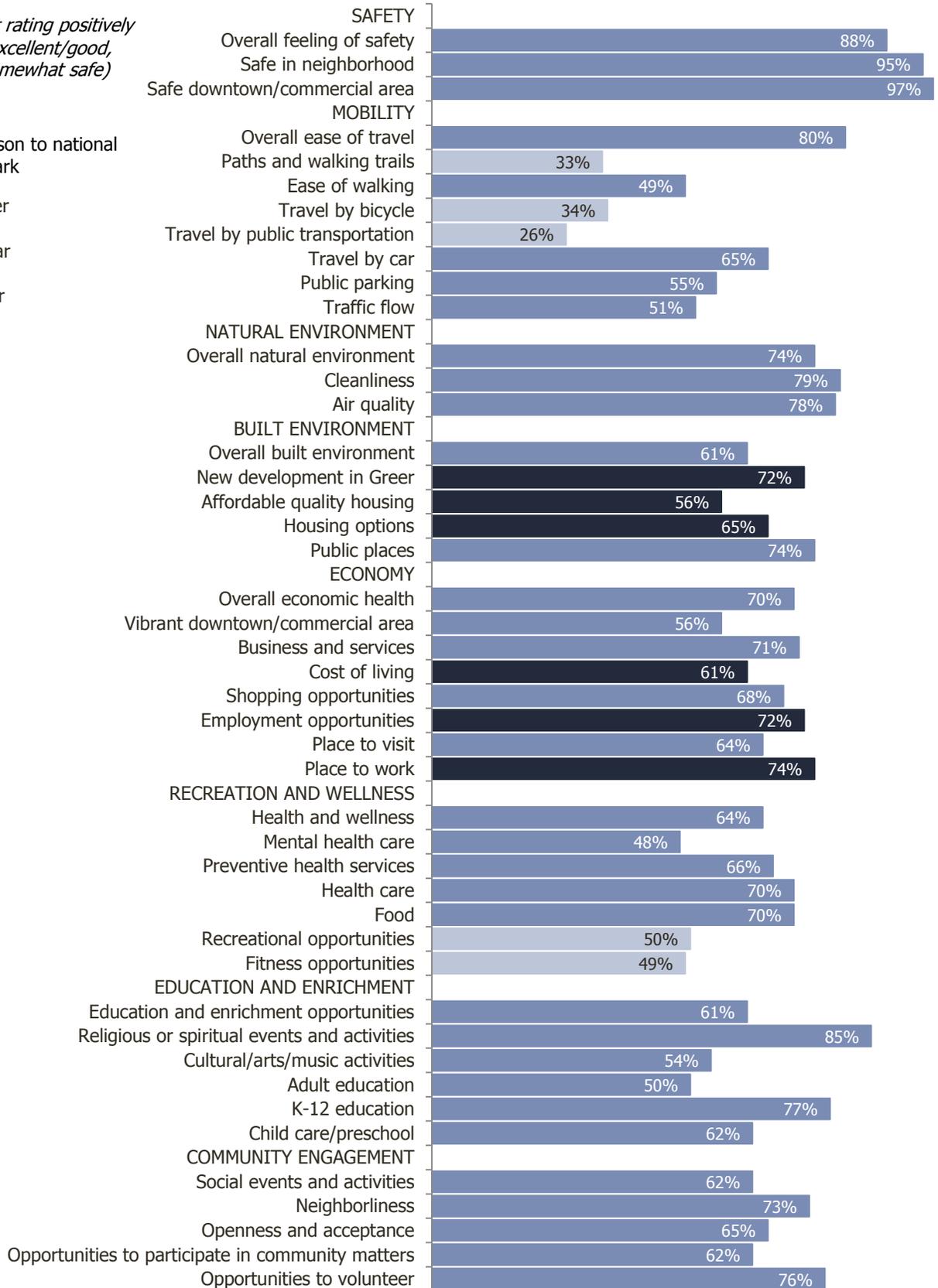
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

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

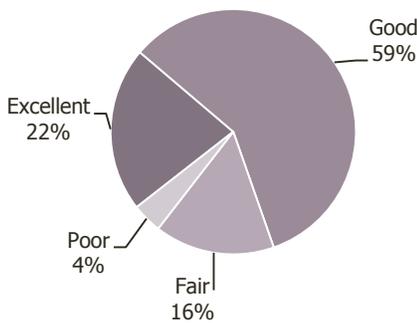
The overall quality of the services provided by Greer as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 8 in 10 respondents positively rated the overall quality of services provided by the City of Greer, while around half felt positively about services provided by the Federal Government; both of these ratings similar to the national benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Greer’s leadership and governance. All local efforts were rated positively by at least half of survey respondents and were similar to comparison communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Greer. Services and amenities provided by the City were rated positively and were similar to national benchmarks. Reviews for economic development outshined other communities, receiving excellent or good scores from three-quarters of residents. Other positive highlights included police, fire, ambulance/EMS, sewer, power utility, City parks, health services and public libraries, with at least 8 in 10 respondents applauding those services.

Conversely, within the facet of Mobility, street repair and bus or transit services were given excellent or good assessments by around one-third of community members and were below national averages. Ratings for recycling service also lagged behind comparison communities. Greer residents were less pleased with crime and fire prevention, traffic enforcement, land use, planning and zoning; cable television and recreation programs in 2018 than in 2015, but were more appreciative of snow removal over the same time period.

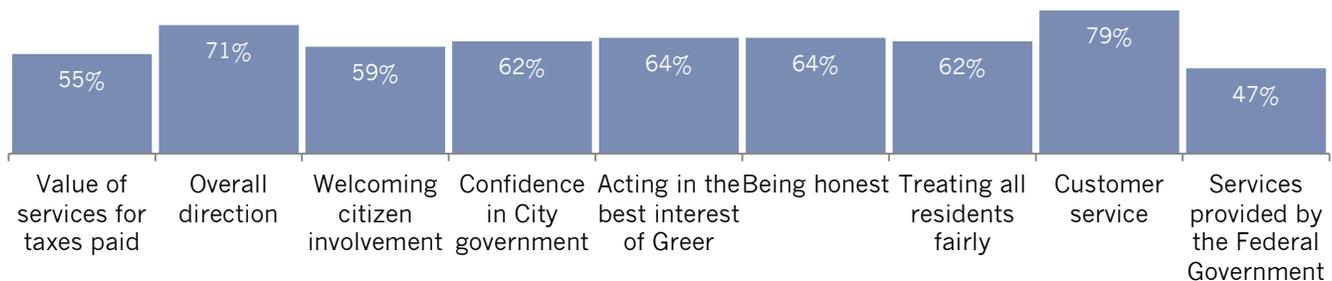
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



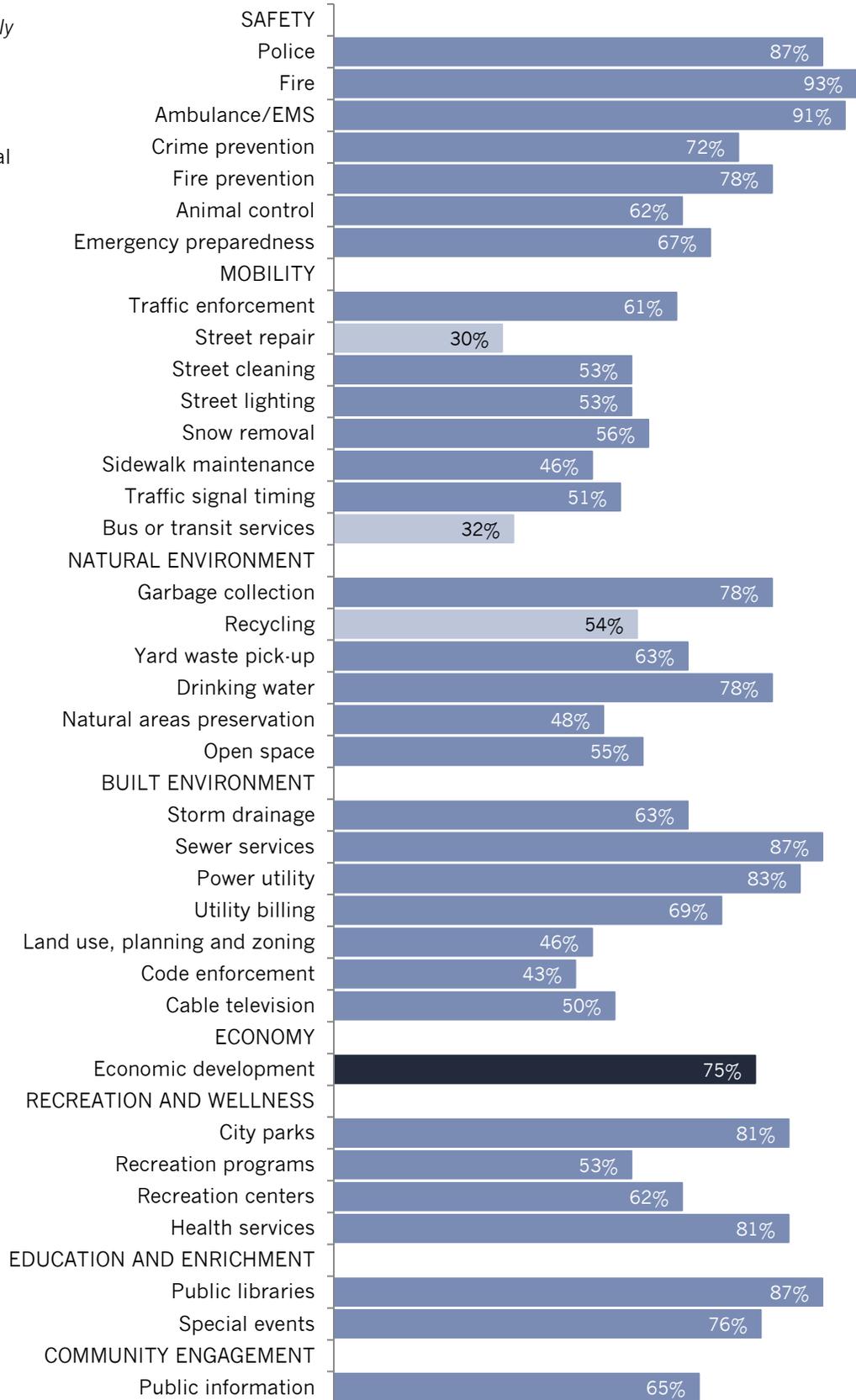
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

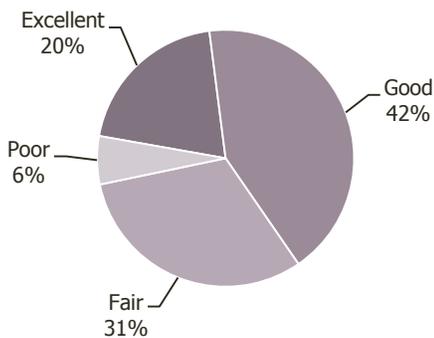
Are the residents of Greer connected to the community and each other?

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 two-thirds awarded positive ratings to the sense of community in Greer.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Rates of Participation reported by Greer residents was similar to levels in comparison communities, and have been stable over time. Survey participants were especially engaged in visiting local parks and maintaining healthy diet and exercise regimens. At least 8 in 10 respondents also reported high levels of neighborliness and had purchased goods or services within the community. More residents reported they had stocked supplies for an emergency or worked in Greer in 2018 than in 2015.

Greer residents used public transportation or carpools (instead of driving) at rates lower than the national average. Respondents were also less likely to have recycled at home, volunteered, participated in a club or read or watched local news (a rating that decreased over time) than their peers.

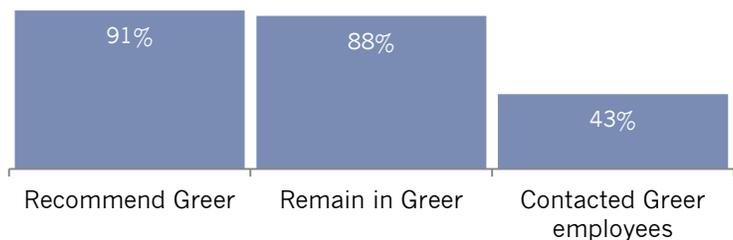
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



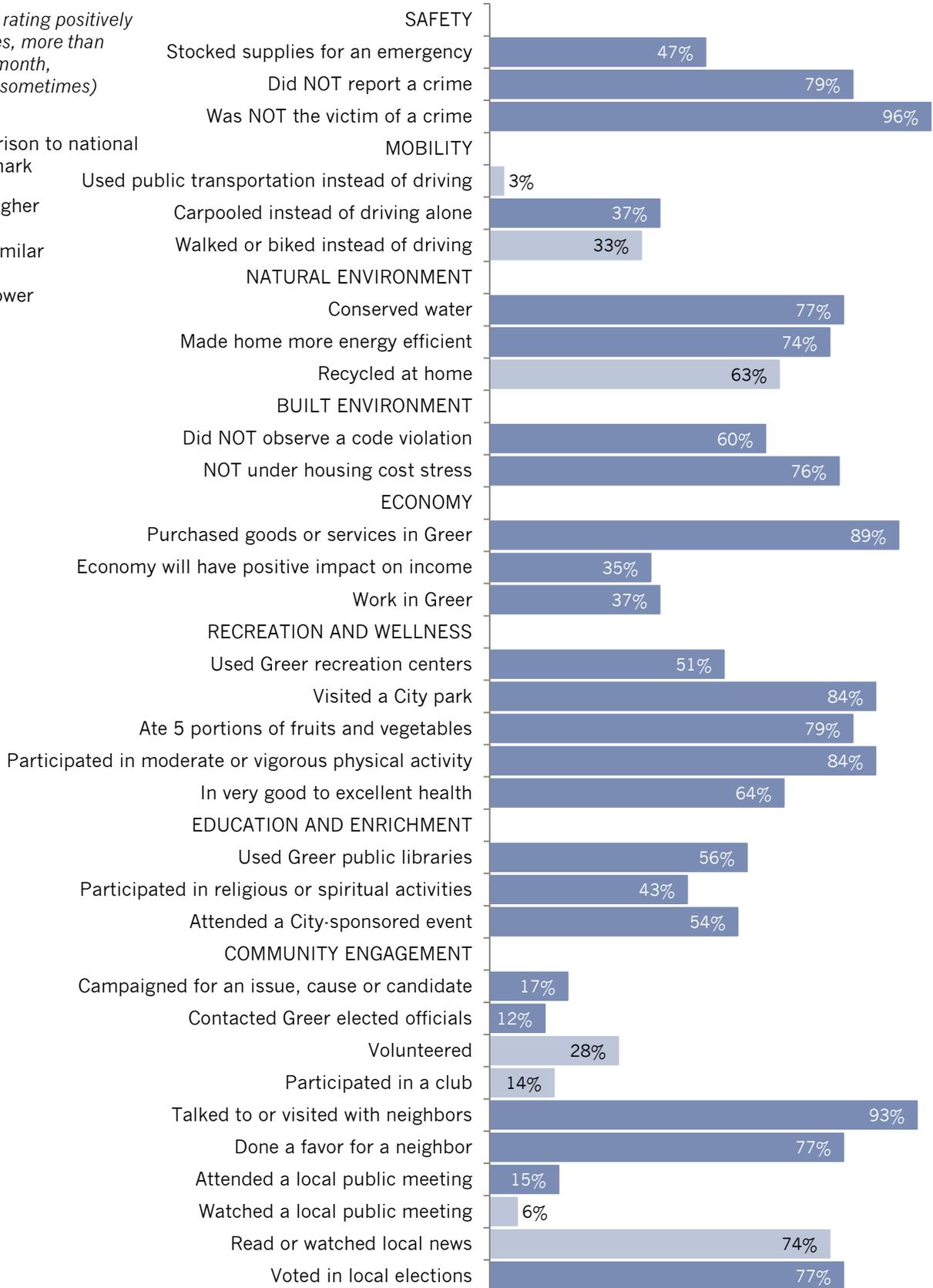
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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 Greer included several questions of special interest on The NCS. City leadership sought feedback regarding residents' downtown visitation and their experiences, the importance of walking and bicycle trails and familiarity with the Downtown Streetscape Improvement project.

The first question asked residents how often they visited Downtown Greer for various different reasons. About one-third of residents had never shopped in Downtown Greer or attended an event in the 12 months prior to the survey, while a similar proportion had visited the area for these reasons once or twice. Nearly half of residents had dined in the downtown area three or more times, while about one in five had not dined downtown in the past year. However, around 9 in 10 survey participants awarded high marks to their overall experience while visiting Downtown Greer (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 4: Question 14a

In the last 12 months, how many times, if ever, have you or another household member visited Downtown Greer to do the following?

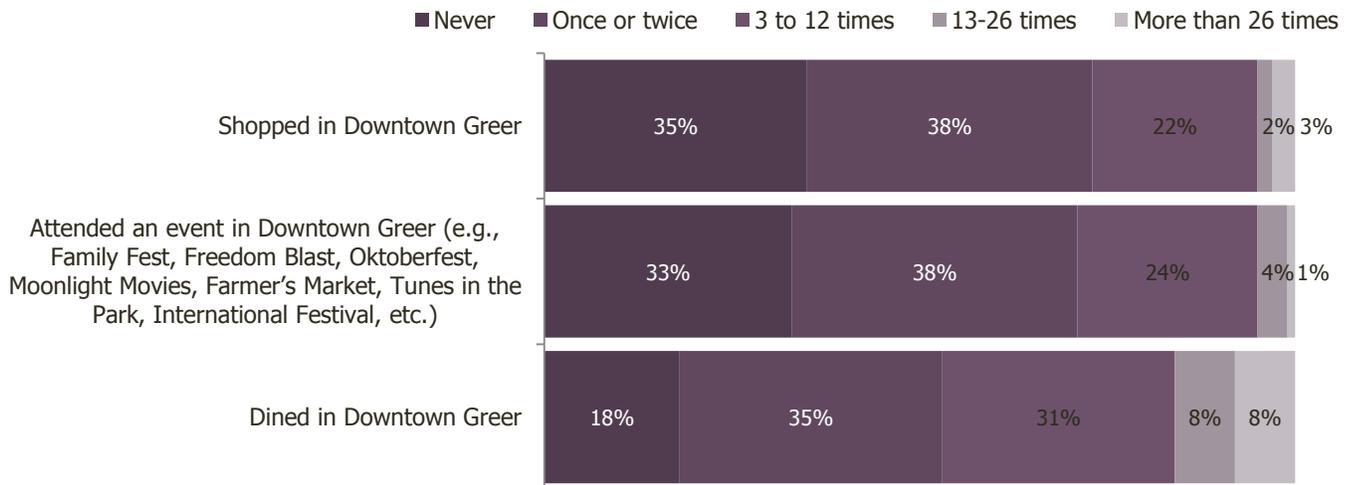
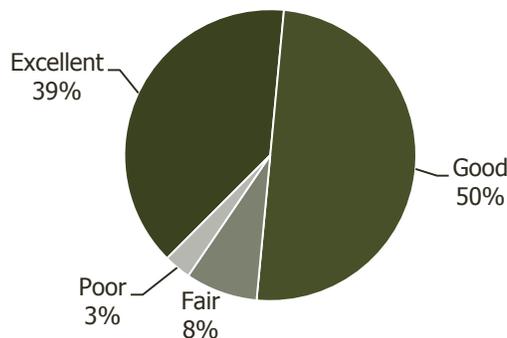


Figure 5: Question 14b

Please rate your overall experience while visiting Downtown Greer:



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When asked to rate the importance of constructing of a new walking and biking trail system, about three-quarters of respondents felt a new trail system was essential or very important, while less than 1 in 10 felt the project was not at all important for the City to consider. Further, when asked if they would support constructing the system even if it meant implementing a temporary property tax increase, around one-quarter of residents were strongly in support of the project and another 45% somewhat supported the measure. Less than 2 in 10 community member strongly opposed or somewhat opposed the new trail system.

Figure 6: Question 15a

The City is considering constructing a walking and bicycle trail system for the community. Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the City of Greer to construct a trail system:

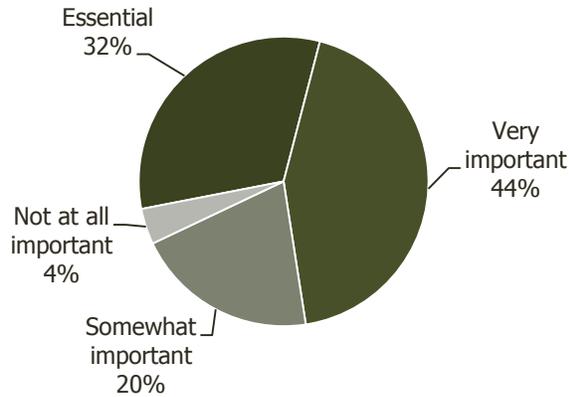
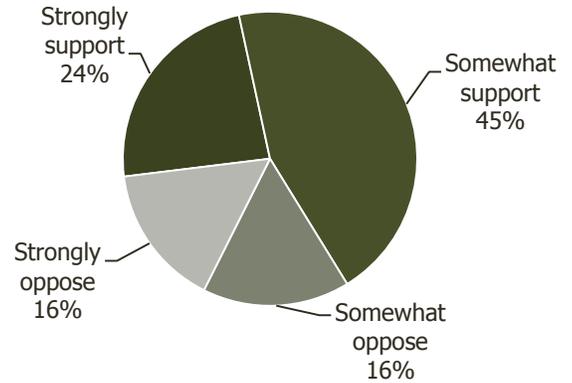


Figure 7: Question 15b

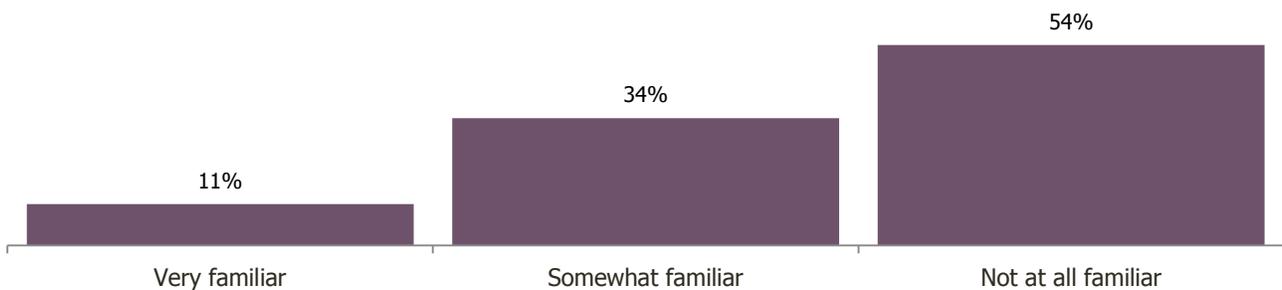
To what extent would you support or oppose the City building this trail system if paying for it required a temporary property tax increase?



The City also inquired if residents were familiar with the Downtown Streetscape Improvement Project. Only 1 in 10 respondents were very familiar with the project and another one-third was somewhat familiar with the planned improvements.

Figure 8: Question 16

Please rate how familiar you are, if at all, with the City of Greer's Downtown Streetscape Improvement Project:



Conclusions

Economy ratings are on the rise.

As in 2015, Greer residents identified Economy as one of the top two community focus areas in the coming two years. Overall, ratings for aspects of Economy were similar to or higher than national comparisons. The overall economic health was viewed as excellent or good by about 7 in 10 respondents, similar to municipalities nationwide. A similar proportion of community members applauded employment opportunities and the City as a place to work, both of which eclipsed national averages. Residents also praised economic development services and new development in Greer, and felt the community was affordable; scores for the cost of living, the availability of affordable quality housing and variety of housing options also outshined levels across the U.S. Moreover, accolades for shopping and employment opportunities increased from 2015 to 2018. In the 12 months prior to the survey, close to two-thirds of respondents indicated they had shopped in Downtown Greer and about 8 in 10 had dined in the area. Nearly all residents lauded their overall experience visiting the downtown area.

Residents have mixed feelings about Mobility.

Many aspects of Mobility were positively rated and were similar to those in other communities; about 8 in 10 residents positively assessed the overall ease of travel in the community, while about 6 in 10 were pleased with traffic enforcement and ease of travel by car. Additionally, around half of survey respondents praised most City services, such as street cleaning, street lighting and traffic signal timing. Moreover, ratings for snow removal improved since 2015.

However, challenges related to Mobility were also identified. Scores for traffic flow, ease of travel by car and by public transit and traffic enforcement decreased in 2018. Residents also gave below-average marks to the availability of paths and walking trails, ease of travel by bicycle and by public transportation, street repair and bus or transit services. Greer respondents also participated in alternative modes of transit (public transportation and walking or biking) instead of driving at lower rates than those seen nationally. When asked about the possibility of constructing a walking and bicycle trail, around three-quarters of survey participants stated that a new trail system is essential or very important. Further, nearly 7 in 10 residents strongly or somewhat supported the City building a new trail system even if it meant a temporary increase in property taxes.

The City has an opportunity to engage residents.

About 6 in 10 residents were pleased with opportunities to attend social events and activities and participate in community matters, and about three-quarters were pleased with opportunities; each of these aspects were reviewed at similar levels to those seen elsewhere. Additionally, more residents were pleased with opportunities to attend religious or spiritual events in 2018 compared to the previous survey iteration. However, Greer respondents' reported lower levels of volunteerism and participation in clubs or activities than national averages.