



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Brighton, CO

Community Livability Report

2014



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About

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

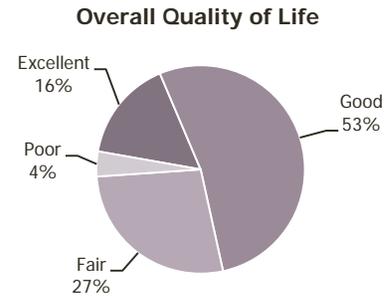
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 268 residents of the City of Brighton. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Brighton

Most residents rated the quality of life in Brighton as excellent or good. This rating 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.



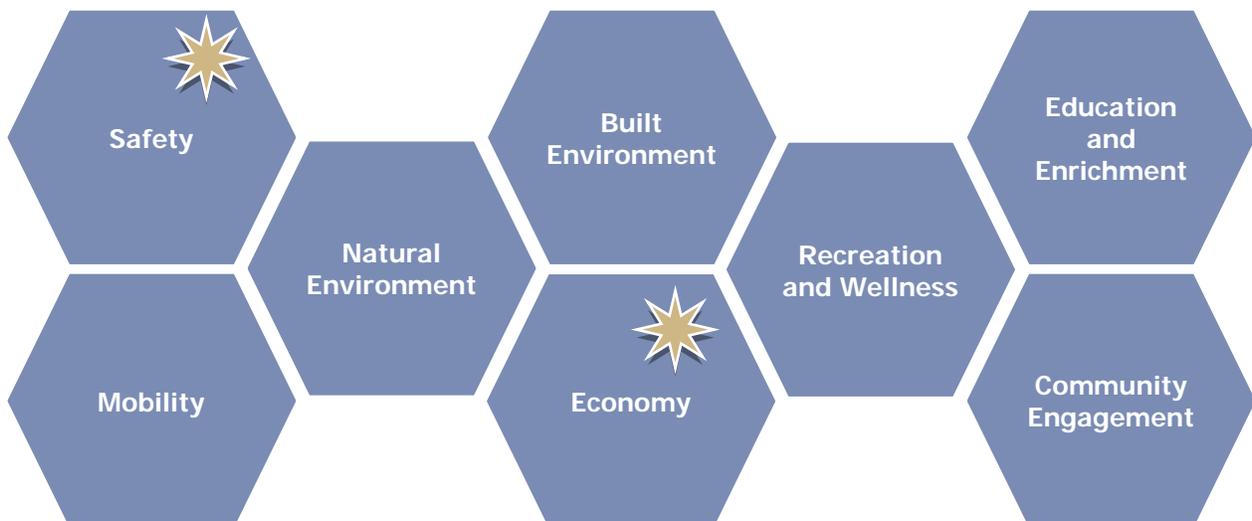
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Brighton community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Brighton residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community as well as to the other facets of community livability, all of which were rated similar to other communities in 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 Brighton’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



Community Characteristics

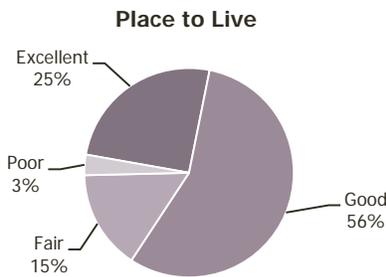
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 Brighton, 81% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Brighton 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 Brighton as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Brighton and its overall appearance. Most participants gave positive ratings for their neighborhoods and Brighton as a place to raise children and a majority of participants thought Brighton was an excellent or good place to retire. About half of participants rated the overall image and the overall appearance of Brighton positively.

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 gave positive ratings for Safety and Natural Environment. Within Mobility, ratings varied; overall ease of travel was rated positively by three-quarters of respondents and was similar to the benchmark, while travel by public transportation was rated positively by one-quarter of respondents and was lower than the benchmark. Positive ratings for Built Environment features ranged from 42-55% and four of the five features were rated similar to other communities. Within Economy, overall economic health, vibrant downtown/commercial area and Brighton as a place to visit were all rated lower than the benchmark, but businesses and services, employment and shopping opportunities, cost of living and Brighton as a place to work were all rated similar to the benchmark.

Most Recreation and Wellness features were rated positively by a majority of respondents and were similar to the national benchmark. In the facet of Education and Enrichment, religious and spiritual activities were rated positively by two-thirds of respondents and cultural/music/art activities were rated positively by half of respondents, but about one-quarter of participants rated adult education opportunities positively. At least 4 in 10 respondents rated Community Engagement features positively and a majority of respondents think Brighton is open and accepting of people of diverse backgrounds.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



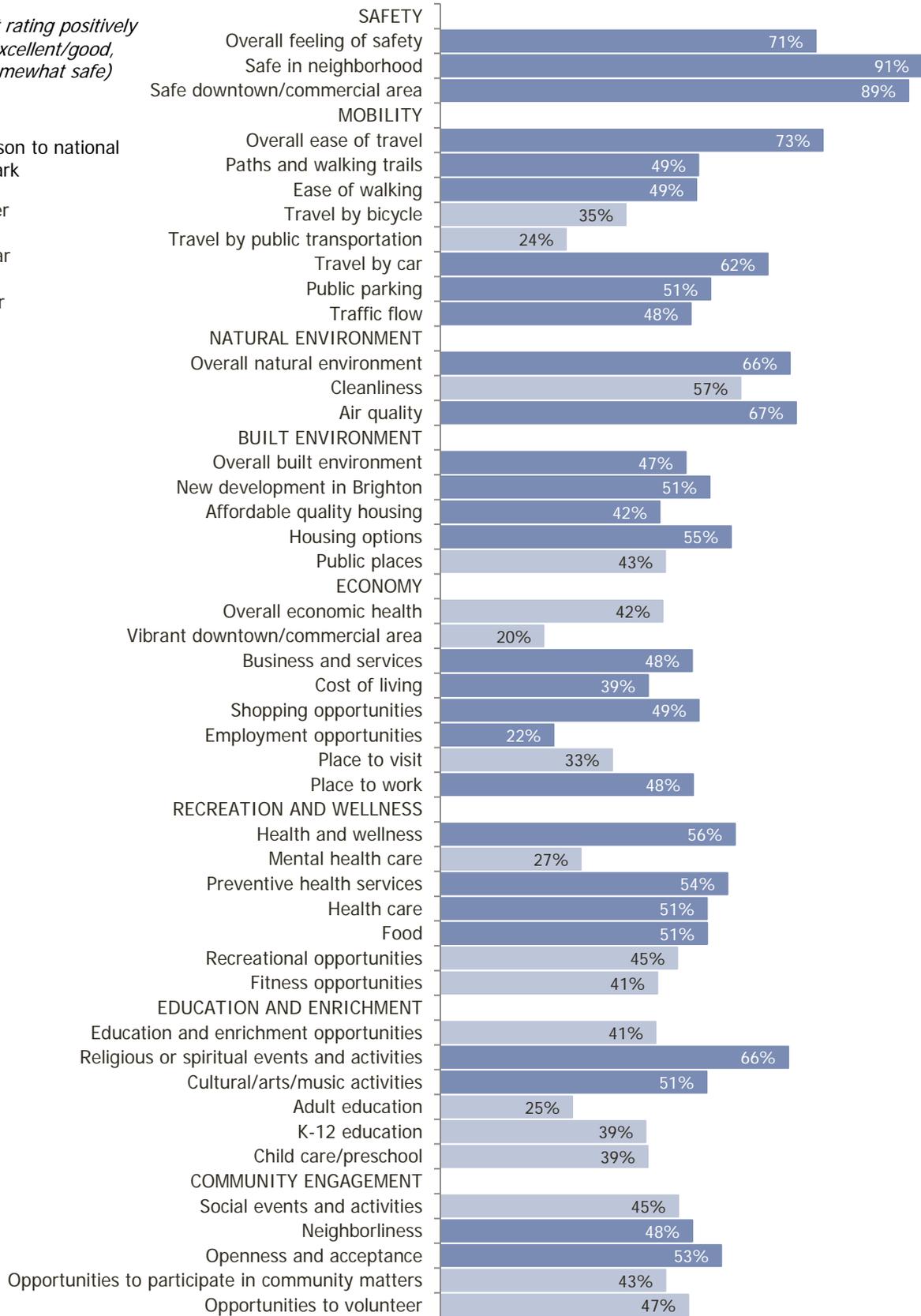
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

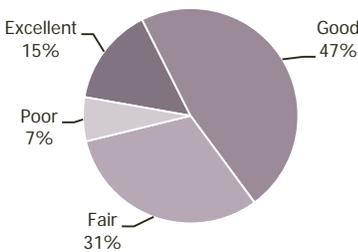
How well does the government of Brighton meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Brighton as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of participants gave positive ratings for the overall quality of City services, whereas only one-third of participants gave positive ratings for the Federal Government. Both the City of Brighton and the Federal Government’s ratings were similar to the benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Brighton’s leadership and governance. A majority of participants are pleased with the overall direction of Brighton and Brighton’s customer service. Less than half gave positive ratings for the value of services for taxes paid, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Brighton, being honest and treating all residents fairly. Most of these aspects of leadership and governance were similar to the benchmark.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Brighton. In the facets of Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement, all aspects were rated positively by a majority of participants and were similar to ratings received in other communities in the nation. Most Safety ratings were similar to the benchmark, with fire and EMS receiving the highest ratings and animal control and emergency preparedness receiving the lowest ratings. Mobility, Natural Environment and Built Environment showed the most variation between aspects. For example, in Mobility, only one-third of participants rated bus or transit services or snow removal positively, which was lower than the benchmark; while about half of participants gave positive ratings for street lighting which was similar to the benchmark. A majority of ratings for Natural Environment were lower than the benchmark, but most ratings for Built Environment were similar to the benchmark.

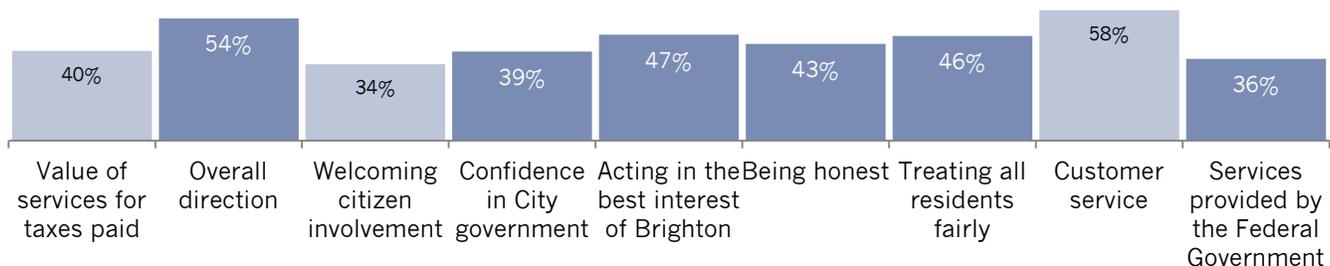
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



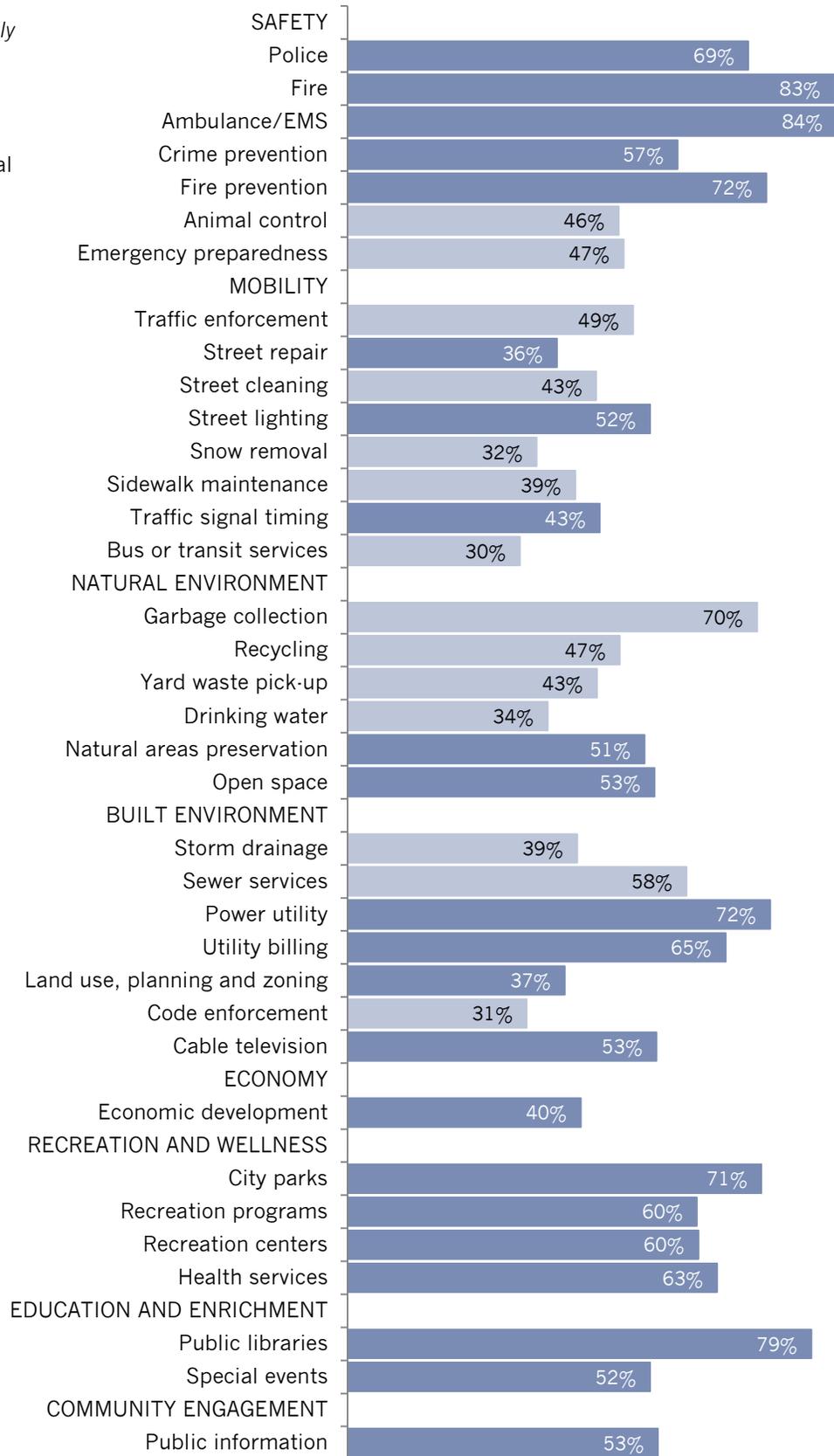
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



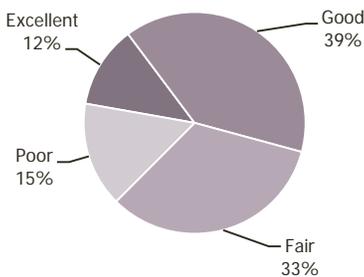
Participation

Are the residents of Brighton 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, about half of participants rated the sense of community positively. About 8 in 10 participants plan on remaining in Brighton and would recommend Brighton to others.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. A majority of respondents participated in all aspects of Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment. Most aspects within these three facets were similar to the benchmark, with the exceptions of recycling which was lower than the benchmark and recreation center use, which was higher than the benchmark. Fewer residents in Brighton than elsewhere across the nation use public transportation instead of driving, while a similar number carpool or walk or bike instead of driving. Economy ratings varied; when compared to the benchmark a lower number of participants work in Brighton, while a higher number of participants feel the economy will have a positive impact on their income. Community Engagement ratings were also varied. Less than one-fifth of respondents reported contacting elected officials, attending local meetings or watching local meetings. While over 8 in 10 respondents had talked to or visited with a neighbor, done a favor for a neighbor, read or watched local news and voted in local elections. More participants in Brighton than elsewhere across the nation reported voting in local elections.

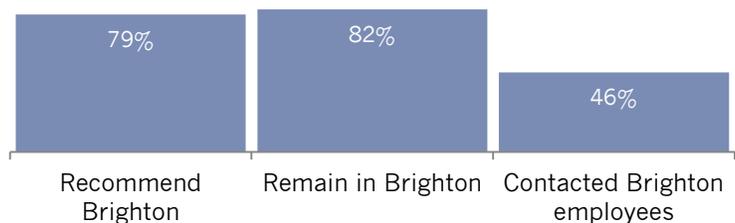
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



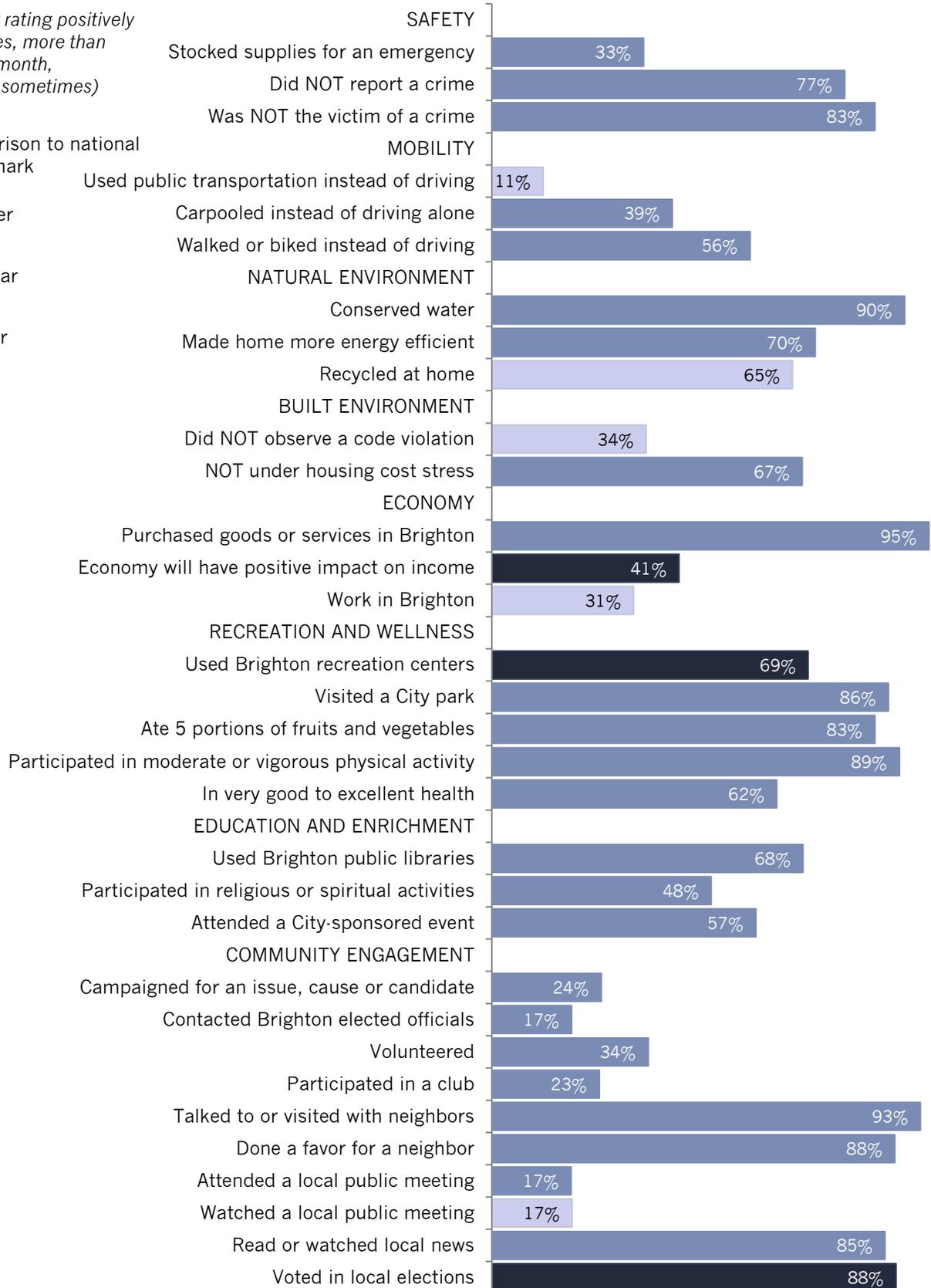
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

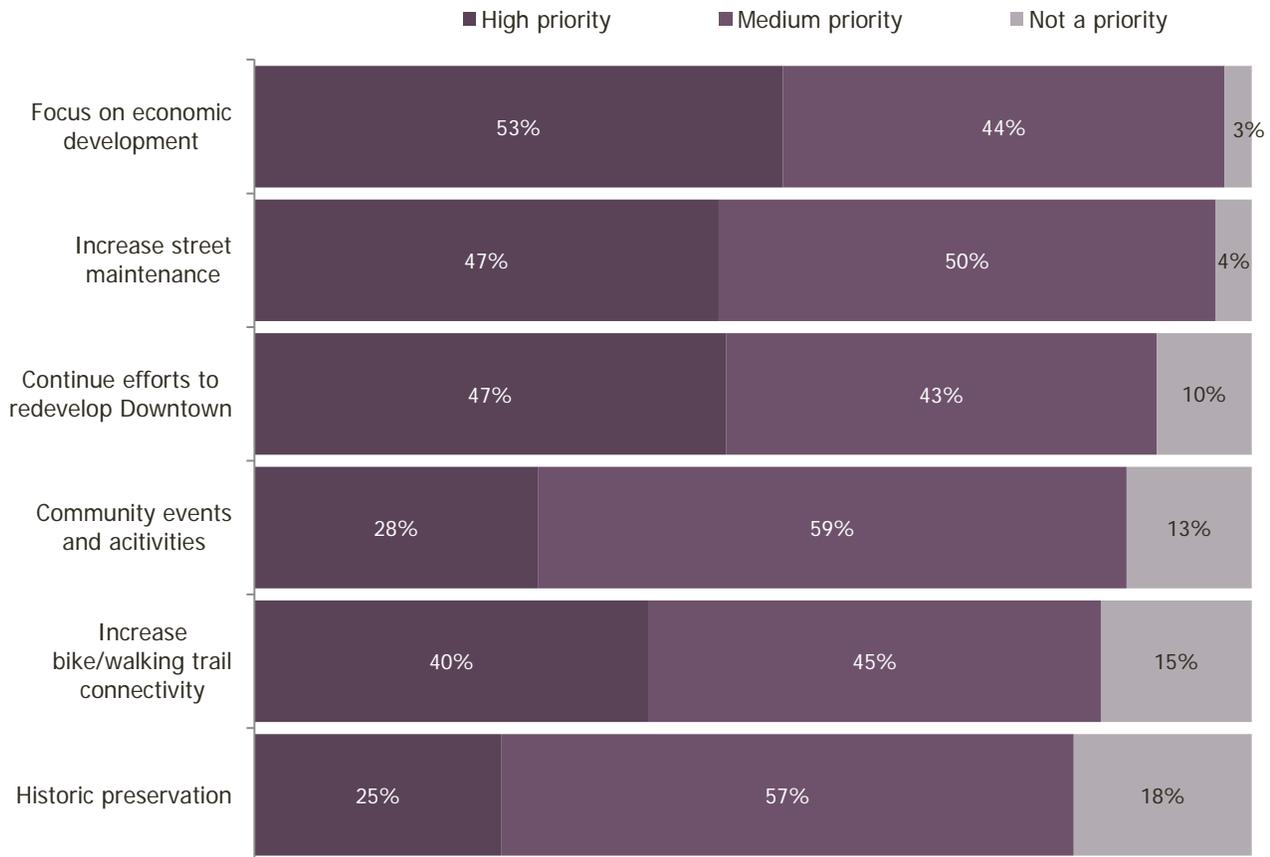
- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Special Topics

The City of Brighton included five questions of special interest on The NCS. Almost all participants wanted City Council to make focusing on economic development at least a medium priority; a similar number of respondents also wanted the Council to make increasing street maintenance a medium or high priority. Most participants also thought the other listed initiatives should be at least a medium priority.

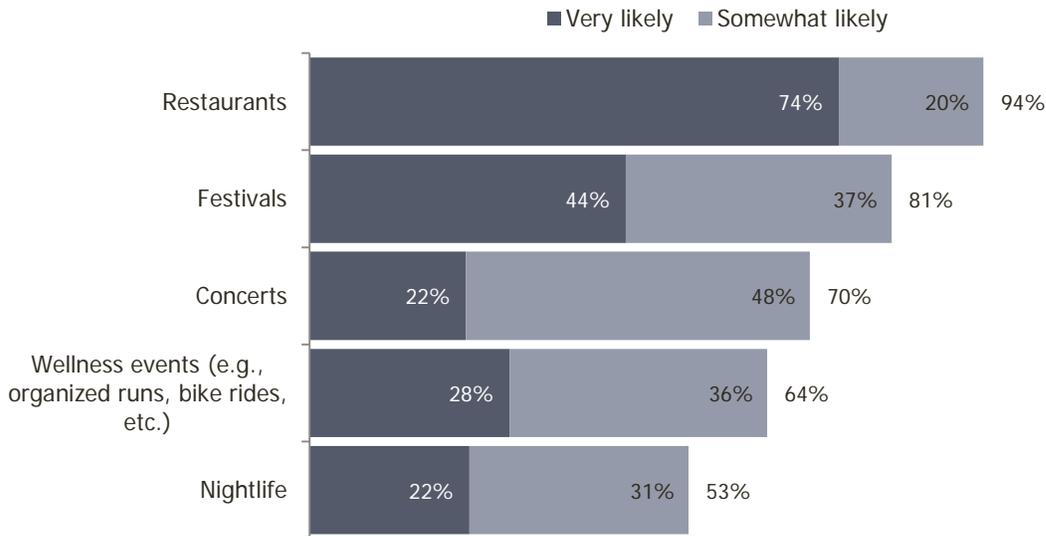
Figure 4: City Council Priorities
How much of a priority, if any, should it be for City Council to do each of the following?



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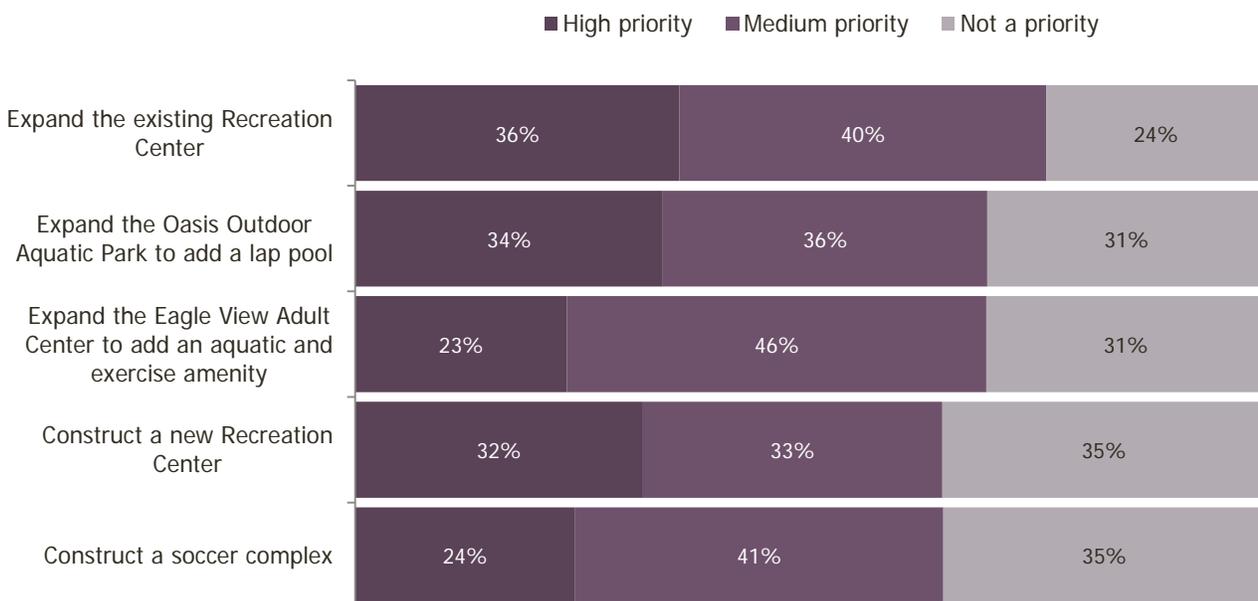
Participants were next asked about their likeliness of participating in certain activities in Brighton. Almost all participants were at least somewhat likely to attend restaurants and about 8 in 10 participants would attend a festival. At least two-thirds of respondents were somewhat or very likely to attend concerts and wellness events, while a little over half of respondents would attend nightlife related activities.

Figure 5: Likelihood of Participating in City-sponsored Activities
How likely or unlikely would you or members of your household be to attend/participate in the following types of activities in Brighton?



When asked about Parks and Recreation amenities, participants indicated that expanding the existing Recreation Center would be the highest priority, while expanding the Oasis Outdoor Aquatic Park to add a lap pool would be the next highest priority. A majority of participants also believed the remaining amenities should be at least a medium priority.

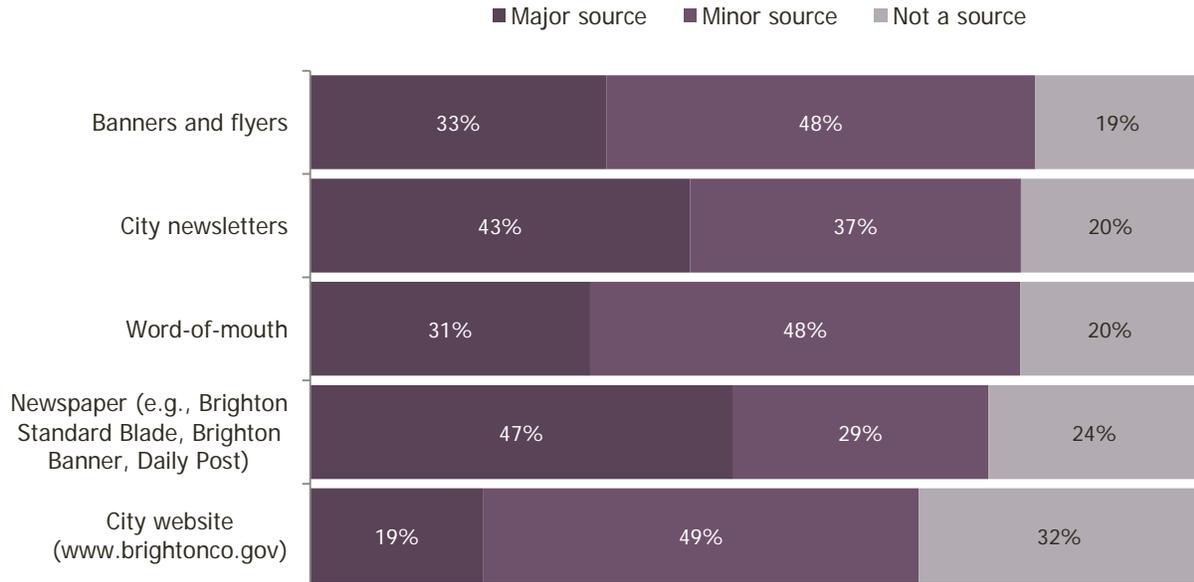
Figure 6: Parks and Recreation Priorities
The City is considering the need for additional Parks and Recreation amenities. Please indicate how much of a priority, if any, each of the following should be:



At least 8 in 10 respondents indicated that banners and flyers, City newsletters and word-of-mouth were at least a minor source of information about activities in the community. Many participants also indicated that the newspaper and City website were also sources of information about City activities. Newspapers and City newsletters were major sources of information for at least 4 in 10 respondents.

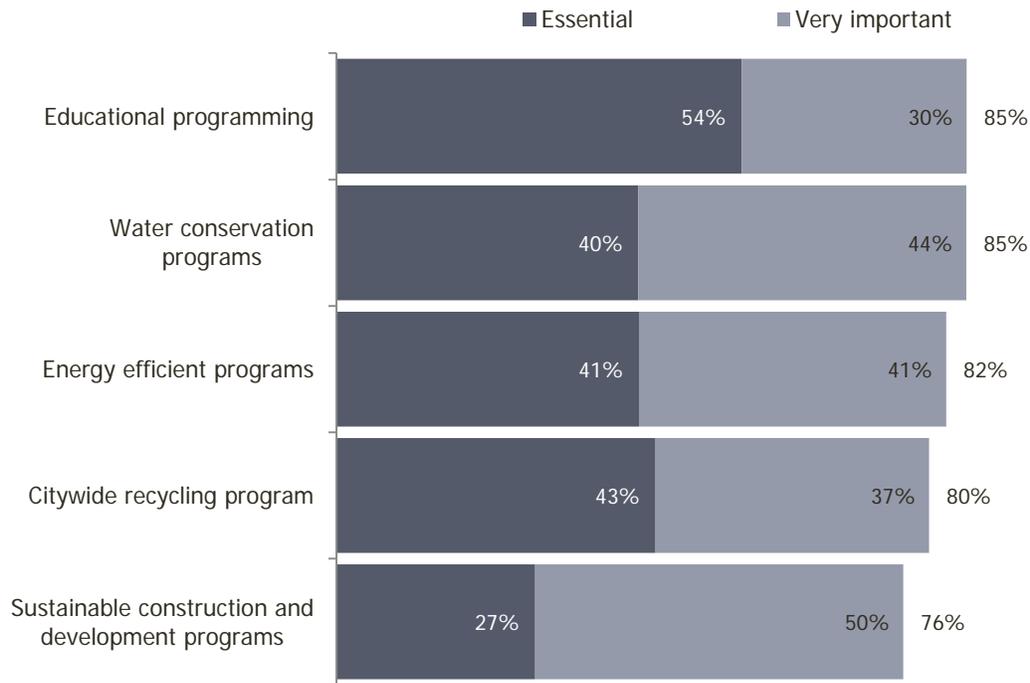
Figure 6: Information Sources

How much of a source, if at all, are each of the following for you to receive information about what's going on in the community?



Finally, participants were asked to rate how important certain sustainability efforts were for the City to implement. All listed sustainability efforts were seen as very important or essential by at least three-quarters of respondents. Over half of participants indicated that educational programming was an essential sustainability effort, while 4 in 10 participants expressed that water conservation programs, energy efficient programs and Citywide recycling programs were essential.

Figure 7: Importance of Sustainability Efforts
How important, if at all, is it for the City to implement each of the following sustainability efforts?



Conclusions

Brighton residents enjoy a positive quality of life.

Most residents rated their quality of life positively and think Brighton is an excellent or good place to live. Participants gave positive ratings for their neighborhoods and also think Brighton is a good place to raise children. About 8 in 10 participants plan on remaining in Brighton and would recommend Brighton to others.

Economic health contributes to quality of life in Brighton.

Participants indicated that the Economy would be an important focus area over the next two years and Economy ratings varied. Compared to other communities across the nation, overall economic health, vibrancy of downtown/commercial areas and Brighton as a place to visit were all lower than the benchmark, whereas businesses and services, cost of living, employment and shopping opportunities and Brighton as a place to work were all rated similar to other communities. Participants are optimistic about their economic prospects; for example, more participants in Brighton than elsewhere believe the economy will have a positive impact on their income. But almost all residents think the City Council should make economic development a medium or high priority and a high number of residents also think City Council should prioritize efforts to develop downtown.

Recreation and Wellness is appreciated by participants.

A majority of participants gave positive ratings for Recreation and Wellness related services, such as parks, recreation centers, recreation programs and health services. Community Characteristics related to Recreation and Wellness received more varied ratings, with mental health care receiving the lowest ratings and overall health and wellness opportunities receiving the highest ratings. More participants in Brighton than in other cities use recreation centers and most residents report participating in a variety of Recreation and Wellness activities. A majority of respondents support prioritizing a variety of Parks and Recreation amenities, with expansion of the existing recreation center and the addition of a lap pool to the Oasis Outdoor Aquatic Park being rated as the highest priorities.