

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Franklin, TN
Community Livability Report

2019



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The National Citizen Survey™
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The NCS™ is presented by NRC in collaboration with ICMA.

NRC is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

About

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

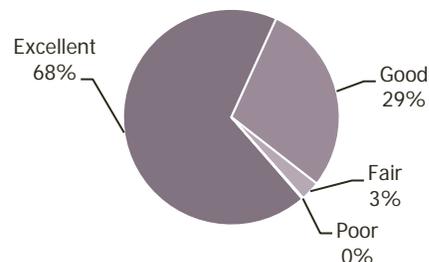
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 792 residents of the City of Franklin. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 3% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Franklin

Almost all (97%) residents rated the quality of life in Franklin as excellent or good, with about two-thirds (68%) giving a rating of excellent. This rating was much higher than the national benchmark (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

Overall Quality of Life



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.

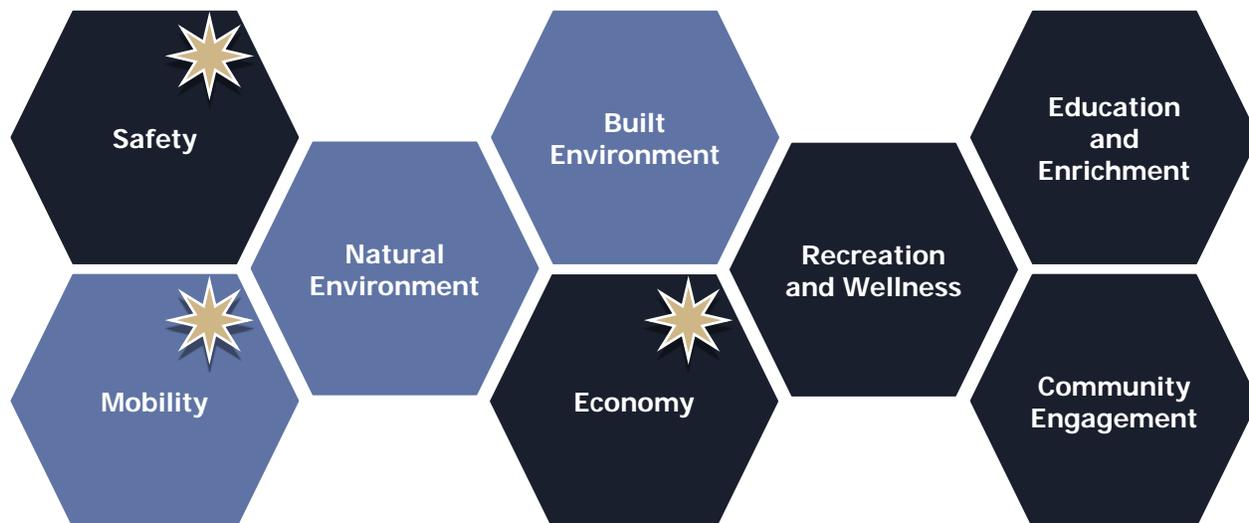
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety, Mobility and Economy as priorities for the Franklin community in the coming two years. Assessments of the facets of Safety, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were higher than the national benchmarks. 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 Franklin’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



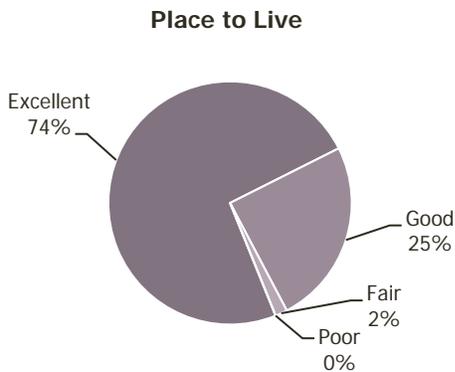
Community Characteristics

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 Franklin, 98% rated the city as an excellent or good place to live, with about three-quarters giving a rating of excellent. Respondents' scores for Franklin as a place to live were higher than scores in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the city as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality. Almost all residents gave favorable marks to the overall image or reputation of Franklin, their neighborhood as a place to live, the city as a place to raise children and its overall appearance. Roughly 8 in 10 residents positively rated Franklin as a place to retire. Assessments for the overall image or reputation of Franklin were ranked first among all comparison communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. All aspects within the facets of Safety, Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment, and Community Engagement were rated positively by at least two-thirds of residents. Ratings for all of these aspects were at least similar to comparison communities; most were higher than observed elsewhere.



Most aspects of Mobility were on par with communities elsewhere, with two-thirds of community members giving high scores to the overall ease of travel, availability of paths and walking trails, and ease of walking in Franklin. Further, ratings for traffic flow, overall ease of travel, ease of travel via car, public transportation, and walking and availability of paths and walking trails increased since 2016 (for more information see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

In the facet of Economy, about 9 in 10 residents positively rated most aspects, with evaluations of overall economic health, vibrant downtown/commercial area, employment

opportunities and Franklin as a place to work ranking first among all comparison communities. Marks for employment opportunities were also above average and improved from 2016 to 2019.

Compared to 2016, ratings increased for fitness and recreational opportunities, health and wellness opportunities, and the availability of affordable child care/preschool. Evaluations of public parking declined from 2016 to 2019.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



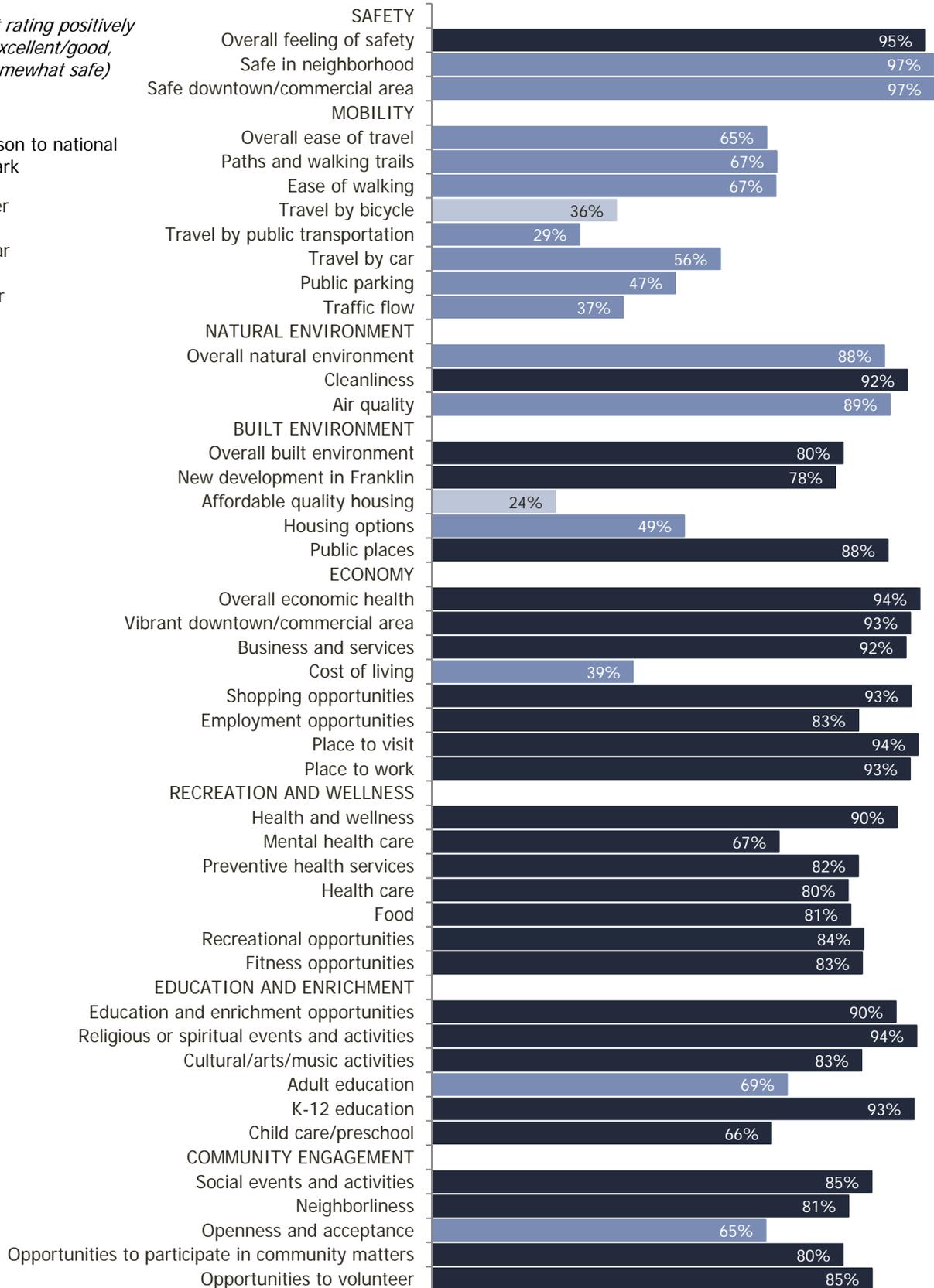
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

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

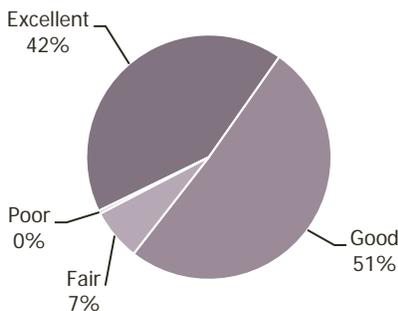
The overall quality of the services provided by Franklin as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 9 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of City services, while about half of respondents gave positive reviews to the Federal Government. Ratings for the overall quality of City services were higher than observed in comparison communities while ratings for the Federal Government were on par with those observed elsewhere.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Franklin’s leadership and governance. The overall customer service provided by Franklin employees received the highest marks, with 91% of respondents rating this aspect as excellent or good. About three-quarters of residents gave high marks to the remaining aspects of government performance, and all of these were higher than the national averages.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Franklin. At least three-quarters of residents positively assessed all aspects for the facets of Safety, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment, and Community Engagement.

In Mobility, all aspects were given favorable marks by at least half of residents. Evaluations of street cleaning, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance were strong and higher than the national benchmarks. Although assessments of street repair decreased from 2016 to 2019, reviews of snow removal, sidewalk maintenance, traffic signal timing, and bus or transit services increased.

Overall Quality of City Services



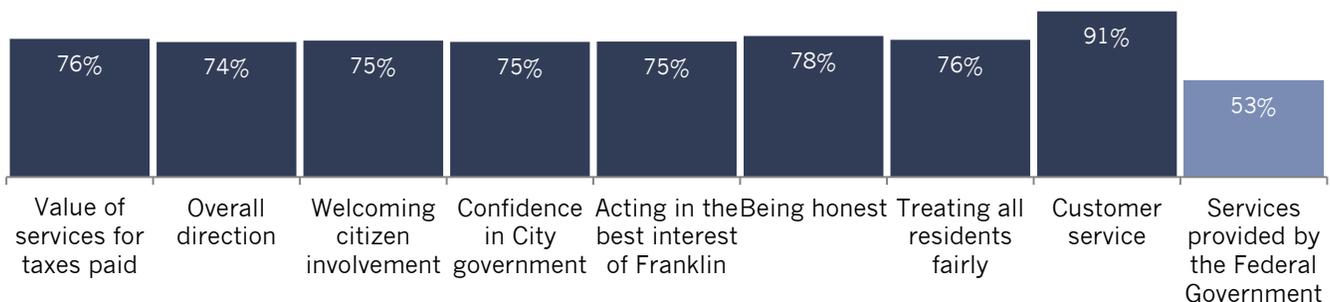
Within the facet of Natural Environment, roughly 9 in 10 respondents gave high scores to garbage collection and yard waste pick-up; ratings for yard waste pick-up were above the national average. Assessments of recycling services improved since 2016.

Other scores that were higher than observed in comparison communities included police and fire services, storm drainage, economic development, recreation programs or services, City-sponsored special events and public information services; ratings for public information services increased from 2016 to 2019.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



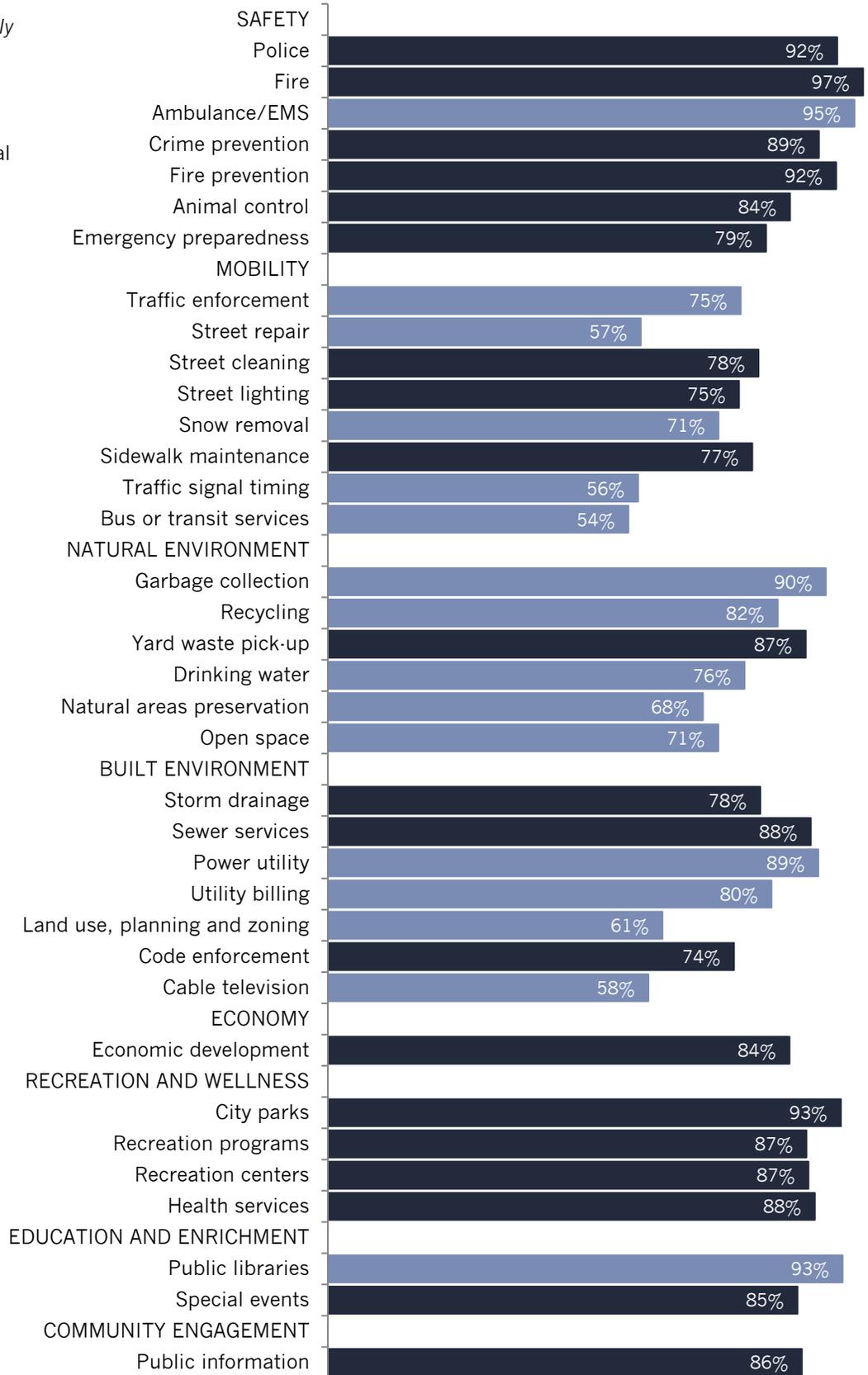
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

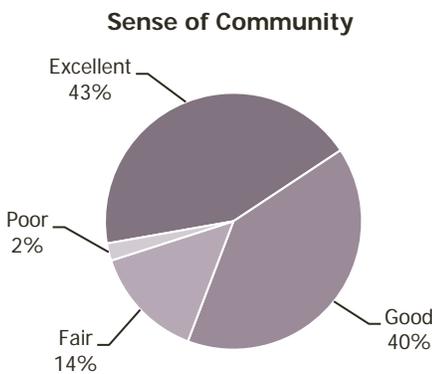
Are the residents of Franklin connected to the community and each other?

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. About 8 in 10 residents gave high marks to the overall sense of community, which was higher than the national benchmark.

Almost all residents (96%) were likely to recommend living in Franklin to someone who asked, a proportion which is higher than in communities across the nation. About 9 in 10 residents were likely to remain in Franklin for the next five years. Roughly one-third of respondents surveyed had contacted City employees in the 12 months prior to the survey.

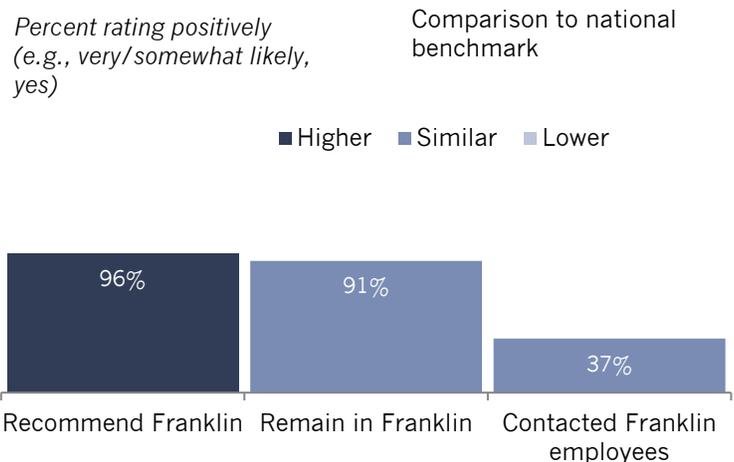
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates within Franklin varied widely, making the comparison to the benchmarks, as well as to Franklin over time, useful for interpreting the results. A majority of residents reported participation in all aspects of Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, and Education and Enrichment.

Within the facet of Economy, about half of respondents reported working in Franklin and believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income; the latter rating was higher than the national average and improved from 2016 to 2019. Virtually all residents had purchased good or services in the city.



Additionally, compared to national averages, more residents in Franklin reported they had NOT been the victim of a crime and had NOT observed a code violation. Further, more Franklin residents reported that they had participated in religious or spiritual activities or attended a City-sponsored event. Franklin residents were less likely than those who lived elsewhere to have stocked supplies for an emergency, used public transportation, walked or biked instead of driving or made efforts to conserve water.

More residents had voted in local elections or campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate in 2019 compared to 2016.



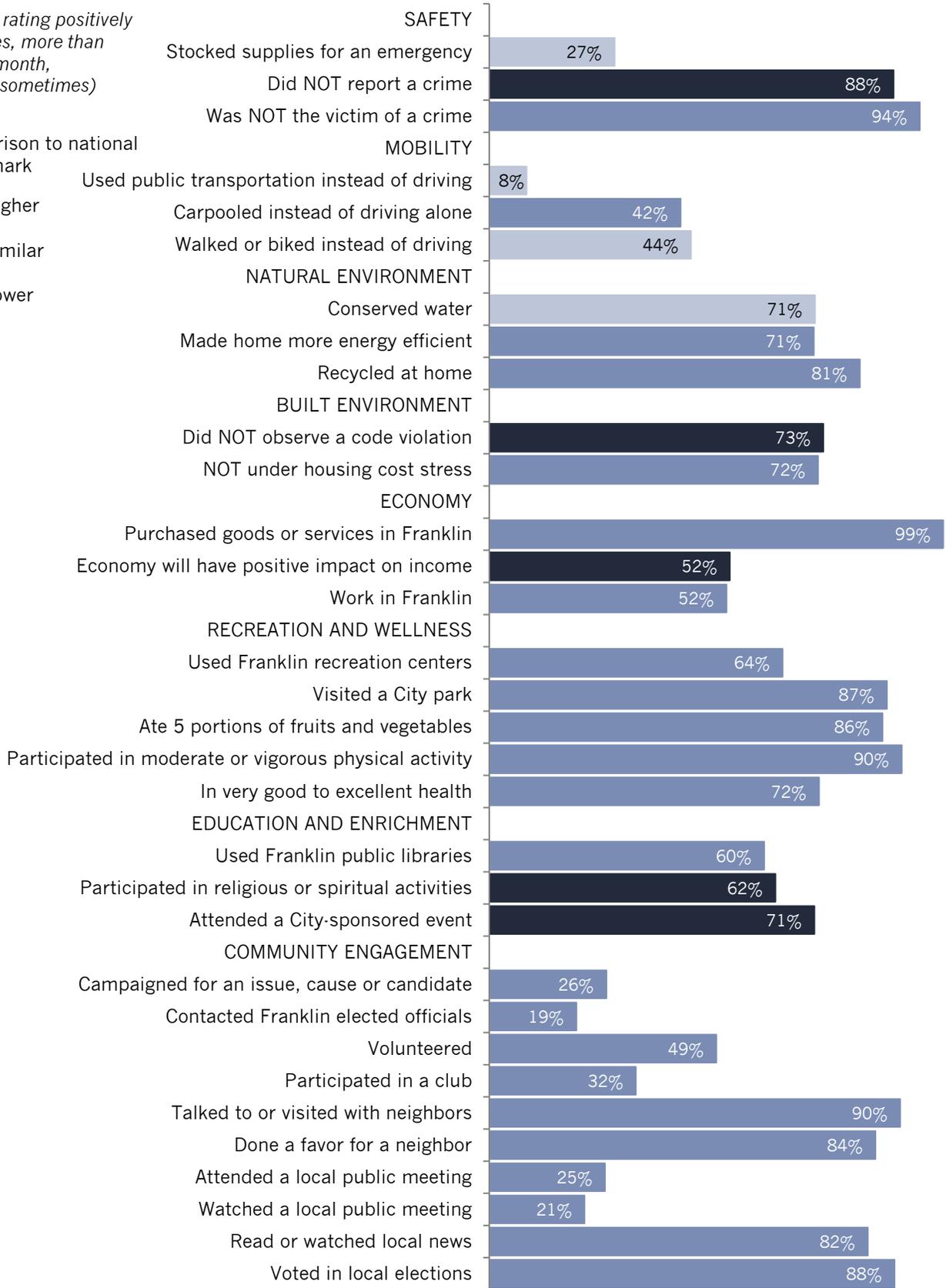
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

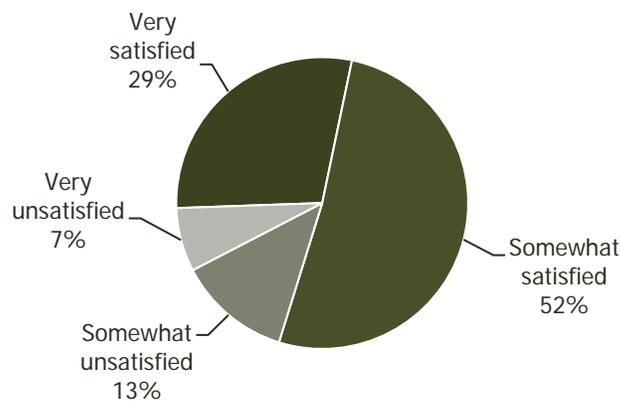


Special Topics

The City of Franklin included three questions of special interest on The NCS related to their level of satisfaction with the City of Franklin's management of growth; their likelihood of communicating with the City via varying methods; and the most important challenge facing Franklin today (for more information see the *Open-end Report* under separate cover).

Community members rated how satisfied they were with the City's management of growth in Franklin. About 3 in 10 respondents said they were very satisfied and about half of respondents said they were somewhat satisfied. Less than 2 in 10 community members said they were somewhat unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

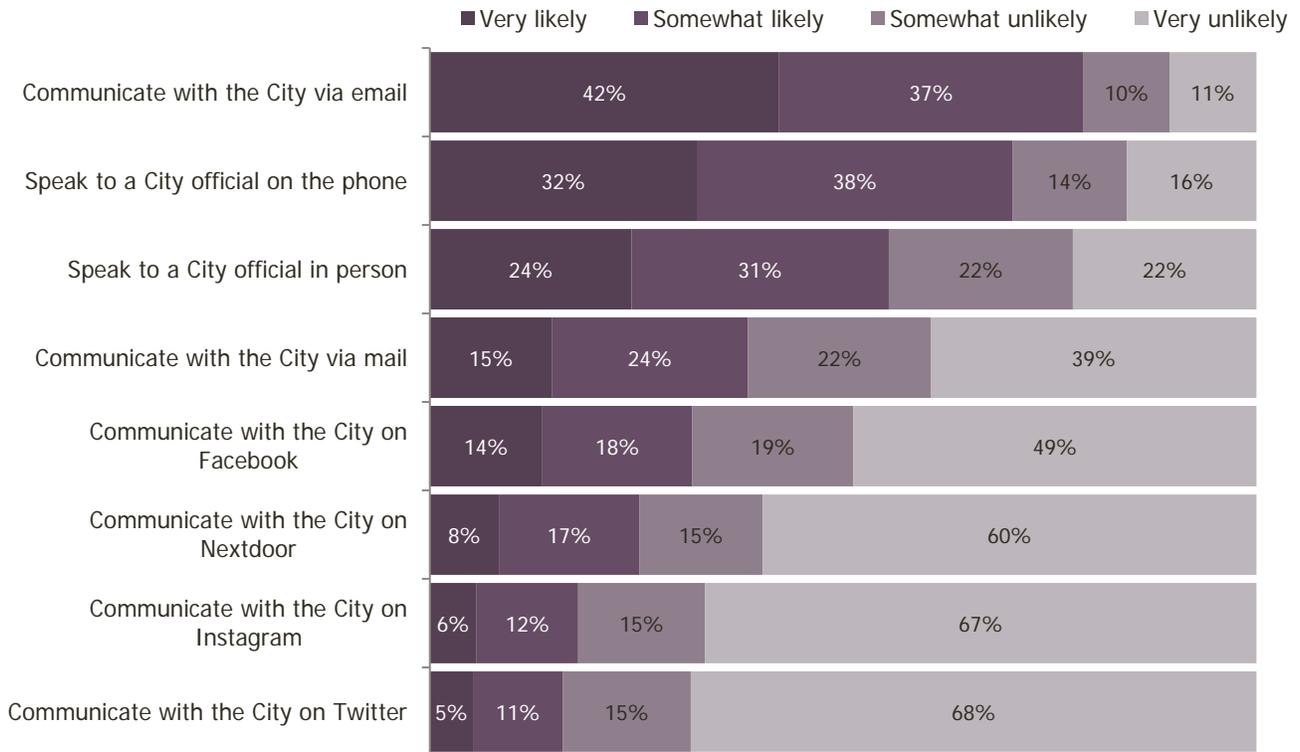
Figure 4: Satisfaction with City of Franklin's Management of Growth
Please rate your level of satisfaction with the City of Franklin's management of growth:



Residents were asked how likely it was that they would use different methods to communicate with the City. Residents were most likely to communicate with the City via email, phone or in person; at least half of respondents selected one of these three options. About one-third of respondents were likely to communicate via mail and Facebook. Less than one-quarter of residents were likely to communicate with the City via Nextdoor, Instagram and Twitter.

Figure 5: Methods of Communicating with the City of Franklin

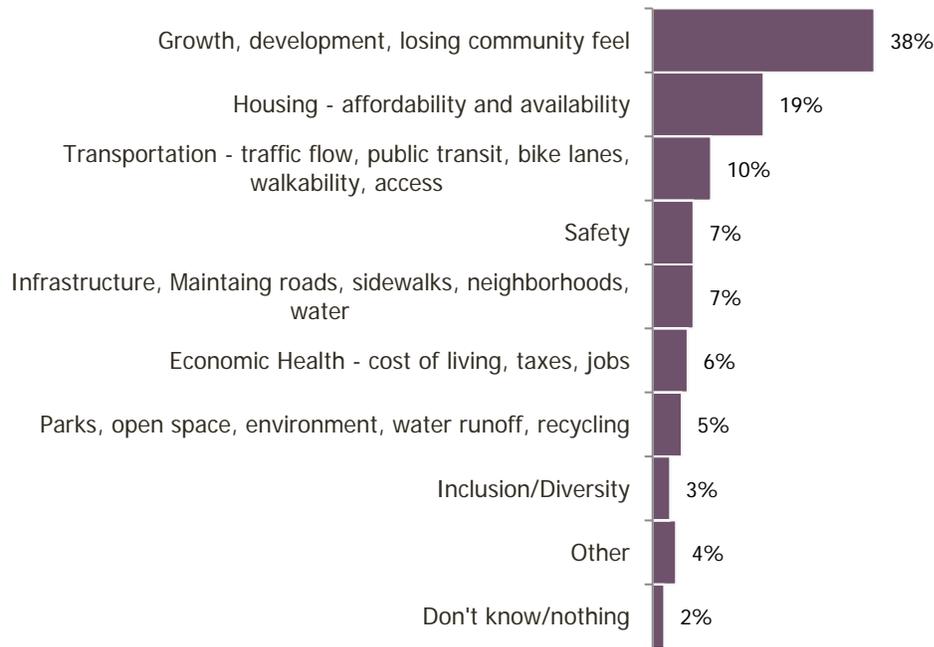
How likely would you be, if at all, to use each of the following methods when communicating directly with the City of Franklin to ask a question or share information?



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The City gave residents the opportunity to write in their own words the most important challenge or problem facing Franklin. A total of 586 residents wrote in responses for the open-ended question. About 4 in 10 respondents described the most important challenge as growth, development and losing the community feel of Franklin. About 2 in 10 mentioned the affordability and availability of housing, and 1 in 10 discussed transportation issues related to traffic flow, public transit, bike lanes, walkability and access. (For the comments listed by respondents see the *Open-end Report* under separate cover).

Figure 6: Most Important Challenge Facing Franklin
Aside from transportation (traffic) related issues, what is the most important challenge or problem facing Franklin today?



Conclusions

Residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life and strong sense of safety

Nearly all community members gave high marks to the overall quality of life in Franklin, as well as Franklin as a place to live and raise children, their neighborhood as a place to live and the overall appearance of the city. Evaluations of the overall image or reputation of Franklin were exceptional and ranked first among comparison communities across the country. Roughly 9 in 10 residents were likely to recommend living in Franklin to someone who asked and planned to remain in the city for the next five years. About 8 in 10 residents favorably assessed Franklin as a place to retire and the overall sense of community in the city.

Residents identified Safety as a priority for the Franklin community. Almost all residents gave high scores to their overall feeling of safety, their feeling of safety in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area. About 9 in 10 residents reported being crime-free for the 12 months prior to the survey. Evaluations of safety-related City services were positive, with most aspects receiving scores higher than comparison communities nationwide.

Aspects of automobile travel shine but alternative mode transportation is an important focus area

Community members reported the facet of Mobility as an important focus for Franklin in the coming two years. At least three-quarters of community members favorably rated traffic enforcement, street cleaning, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance. About two-thirds of residents positively assessed the overall ease of travel in Franklin, ease of walking and availability of paths and walking trails. At least half of residents gave high marks to ease of travel by car, street repair, snow removal, traffic signal timing and bus or transit services. Additionally, ratings for traffic flow, overall ease of travel, ease of travel via car, public transportation, and walking, and availability of paths and walking trails increased from 2016 to 2019. Roughly 4 in 10 reported they had walked or biked instead of driving.

Assessments of ease of travel by bicycle, as well as rates of using public transportation instead of driving and walking or biking instead of driving, were lower than the national benchmarks. While still on par with comparison communities nationally, marks for public parking and street repair declined from 2016 to 2019. About 1 in 10 residents reported transportation issues (traffic flow, public transit, bike lanes, walkability and access) as the most important challenge facing Franklin today.

Economy is a priority and residents applaud the economic health of Franklin, but affordability may become a challenge

The Economy was also identified as a priority for the city of Franklin by 93% of residents. Assessments of overall economic health, vibrant downtown/commercial area, overall quality of business and services establishments, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, Franklin as a place to work and economic development were among the highest ever recorded in NRC's benchmarking database. Evaluations of employment opportunities increased since 2016. However, like many attractive communities, affordability can become a problem. Just less than one-quarter of respondents rated the availability of affordable quality housing as excellent or good, a proportion that is lower than in comparison communities. Additionally, the cost of living was positively scored by nearly 4 in 10 residents. About half of residents believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income; this rate was also much higher than almost all other comparison communities national and increased by 18% from 2016 to 2019.