

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Clinton, SC

Community Livability Report
2015



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

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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Clinton. 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 290 residents of the City of Clinton. 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 Clinton

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Clinton as excellent or good. This rating was lower than 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.

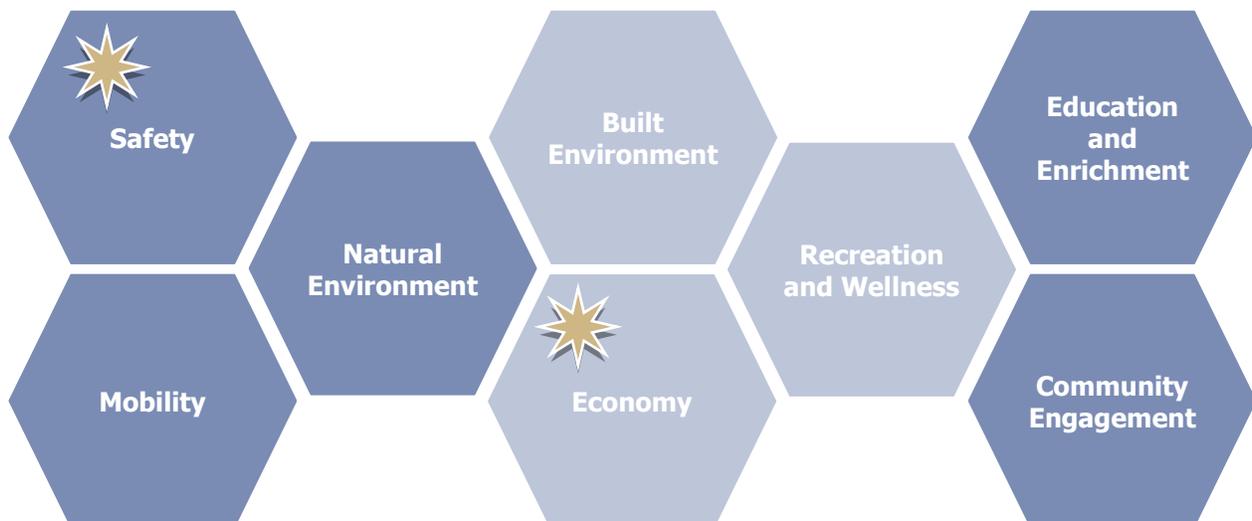
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Economy and Safety as priorities for the Clinton community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Clinton residents gave favorable ratings to Safety as well as to Natural Environment, Mobility, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement. The facets of Built Environment, Economy and Recreation and Wellness received ratings lower than communities across 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 with the ratings for Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation.

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 Clinton, 64% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Clinton as a place to live were lower than 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 Clinton as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Clinton and its overall appearance. About half of respondents gave positive ratings for their neighborhoods as places to live, Clinton as a place to raise children and to retire and the City's overall appearance. About 4 in 10 gave positive ratings to Clinton's overall image. These ratings were lower than the national benchmark.

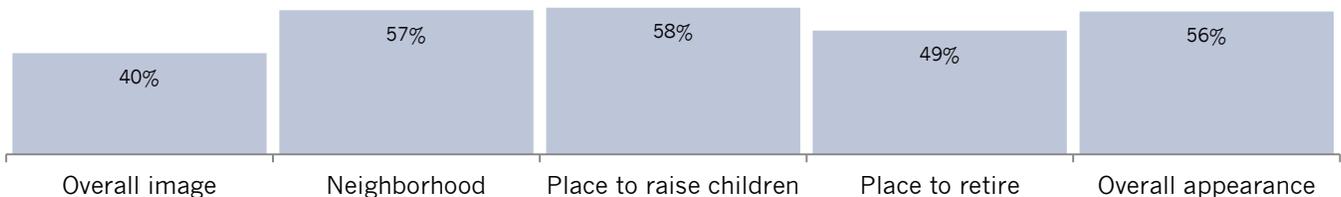
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. These ratings tended to be similar to or lower than ratings in comparison communities. In the facet of Safety, almost 9 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings for their feelings of safety in their neighborhoods and in Clinton's downtown/commercial area; these ratings were similar to the national benchmark. However, about 6 in 10 residents gave a positive rating for their overall feeling of safety, which was lower than communities across the U.S. Within the facet of Natural Environment, around 6 in 10 gave excellent or good marks for overall natural environment and cleanliness while 7 in 10 gave positive ratings to air quality. Measures for Economy and Built Environment tended to be less positive. About one-third of residents gave positive ratings to business and services, cost of living and Clinton as a place to visit, while one-quarter or less gave positive ratings to overall economic health, the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area, Clinton as a place to work, employment opportunities and shopping opportunities; these ratings tended to be lower than the national benchmark. Aspects of Built Environment ranged from 22% excellent or good (new development in Clinton) to 35% positive (public places where people want to spend time). Ratings for Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement tended to be mixed with about half giving high marks to health care, education and enrichment opportunities, adult education, K-12 education, availability of affordable quality child care/preschool and opportunities to volunteer. The facet of Mobility received some of the highest Community Characteristics ratings for Clinton. With the exception of paths and walking trails (35% excellent or good), at least two-thirds gave positive ratings to each aspect of Mobility and these ratings tended to be similar to comparison communities.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



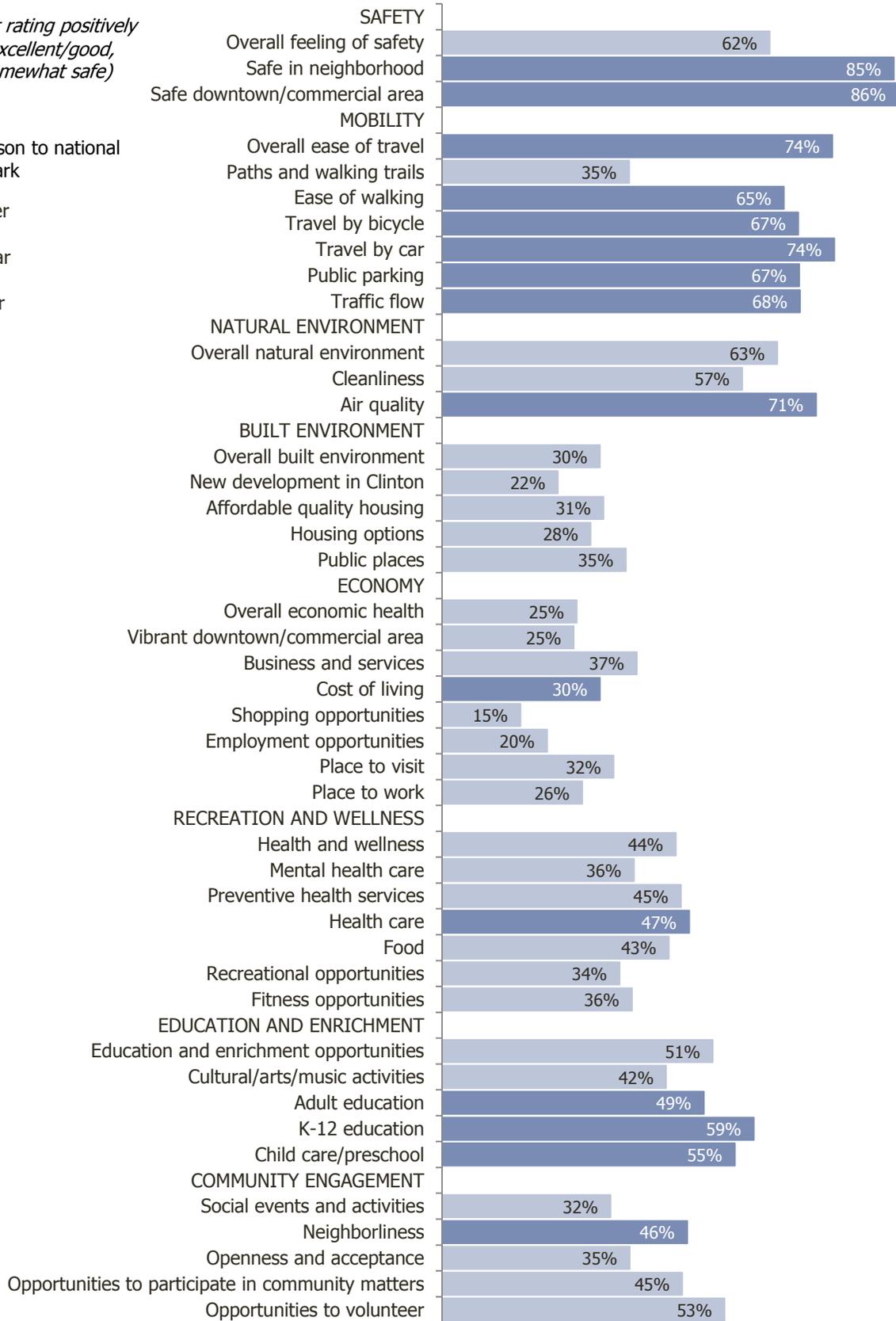
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

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

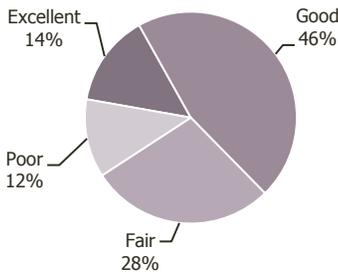
The overall quality of the services provided by Clinton as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 6 out of 10 residents gave “excellent” or “very good” ratings for overall quality of services provided by Clinton, while the Federal government received positive ratings from 41% of respondents. Ratings for Clinton and the Federal government were similar to the national benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Clinton’s leadership and governance. About 4 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, overall direction, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in city government, acting in the best interest of Clinton, being honest and treating all residents fairly. Nearly 6 in 10 respondents gave high ratings for customer service provided by Clinton employees. While customer service, treating all residents fairly and overall direction were lower than the benchmark, all other aspects of Clinton’s governance were similar to comparison communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Clinton. Safety received some of the highest ratings with 86% excellent or good ratings for fire and at least 70% for police and ambulance/EMS services. Animal Control was the only aspect to be rated lower than the benchmark in Safety services with 33% positive. Within Mobility, close to 6 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to traffic enforcement and around 5 in 10 gave positive ratings to street cleaning, street lighting, snow removal and traffic signal timing; these ratings were similar to communities across the nation. However, street repair (22% excellent or good) and sidewalk

maintenance (33%) were both lower than the benchmark. For measures of Natural Environment at least two-thirds gave high marks to garbage collection, yard waste pick-up and drinking water. Built Environment aspects tended to be rated lower than communities elsewhere; on the other hand, about 6 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to sewer services, a rating that was similar to the national benchmark. Clinton’s public libraries were rated positively by nearly 7 in 10 residents, while special events received high scores from about half of participants; these aspects were rated similar to comparison communities. Community Engagement was also similar to the benchmark with almost 5 in 10 giving positive ratings for public information.

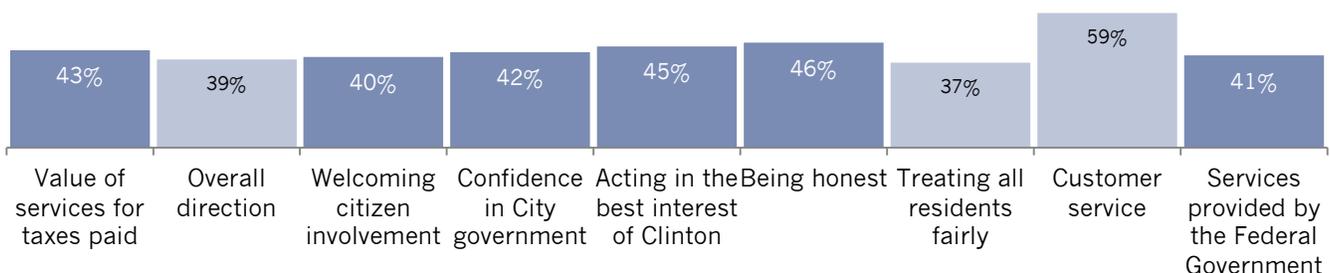
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



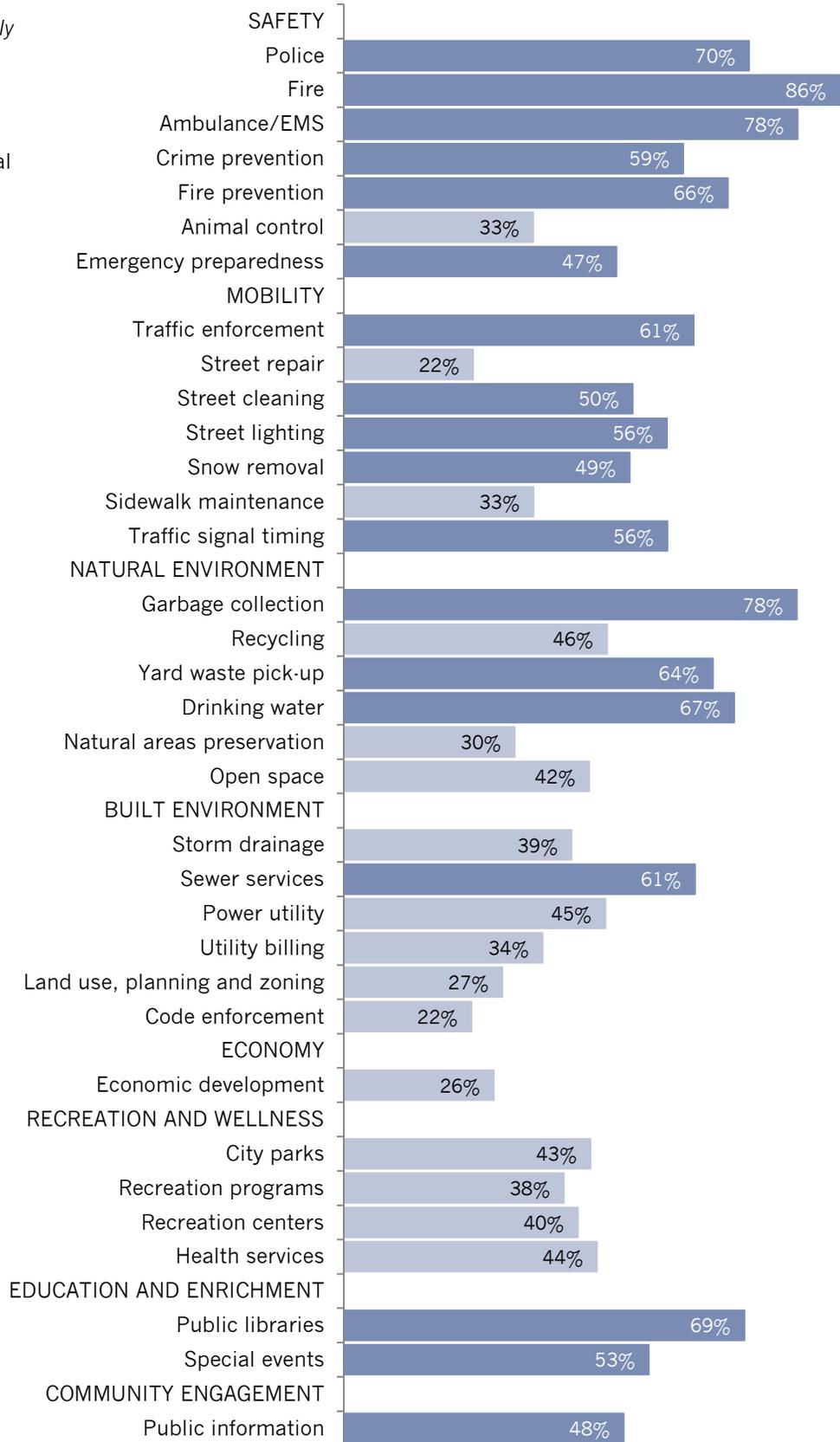
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

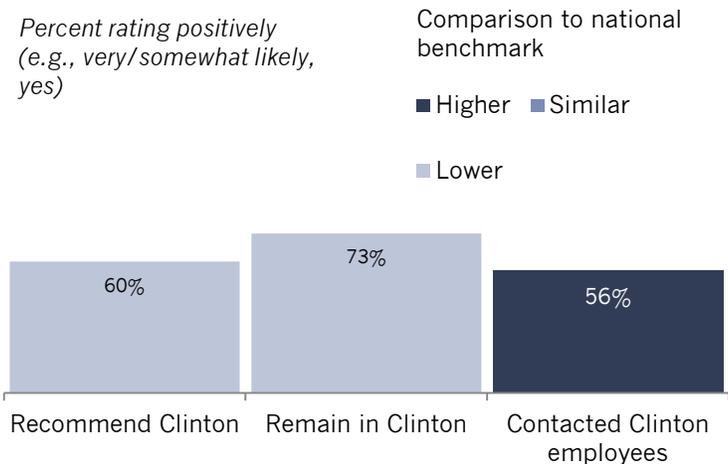
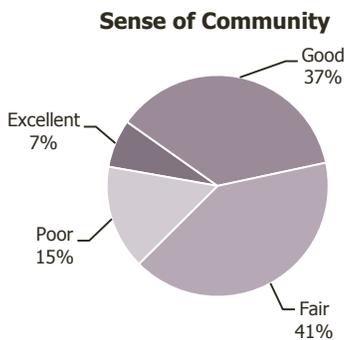


Participation

Are the residents of Clinton 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. Sense of community in Clinton was rated as fair or better by at least 9 in 10 residents. About 6 in 10 reported they would recommend Clinton to others and nearly three-quarters indicated they intended to remain in Clinton. Over half of respondents reported that they had contacted Clinton employees, which is a level higher than in comparison communities.

The survey included close to 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, ratings for Participation in Clinton tended to be similar to the benchmark. Measures for Safety were strong with over 8 in 10 residents who reported that they had not been the victim of a crime and 7 in 10 had not reported a crime. Similarly, ratings for Economy, Mobility and Education and Enrichment were also positive and similar to other communities: almost all residents had purchased goods or services in Clinton, about half of participants indicated that they had carpooled or walked or biked instead of driving and at least 6 in 10 residents reported that they had used Clinton’s public libraries and attended a City-sponsored event. Participation ratings for Community Engagement were particularly strong with about 4 in 10 respondents indicating that they had contacted Clinton elected officials and over half had volunteered in a club or activity; these rates were higher than levels seen in communities elsewhere. Natural Environment facets were more mixed with about 6 in 10 who reported that they had recycled at home (a rating lower than the national benchmark) while over 8 in 10 residents who indicated that they had made their home more energy efficient (similar to comparison communities). For Recreation and Wellness, ratings tended to be not as strong with almost 7 in 10 residents reporting they had visited a city park and participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity.



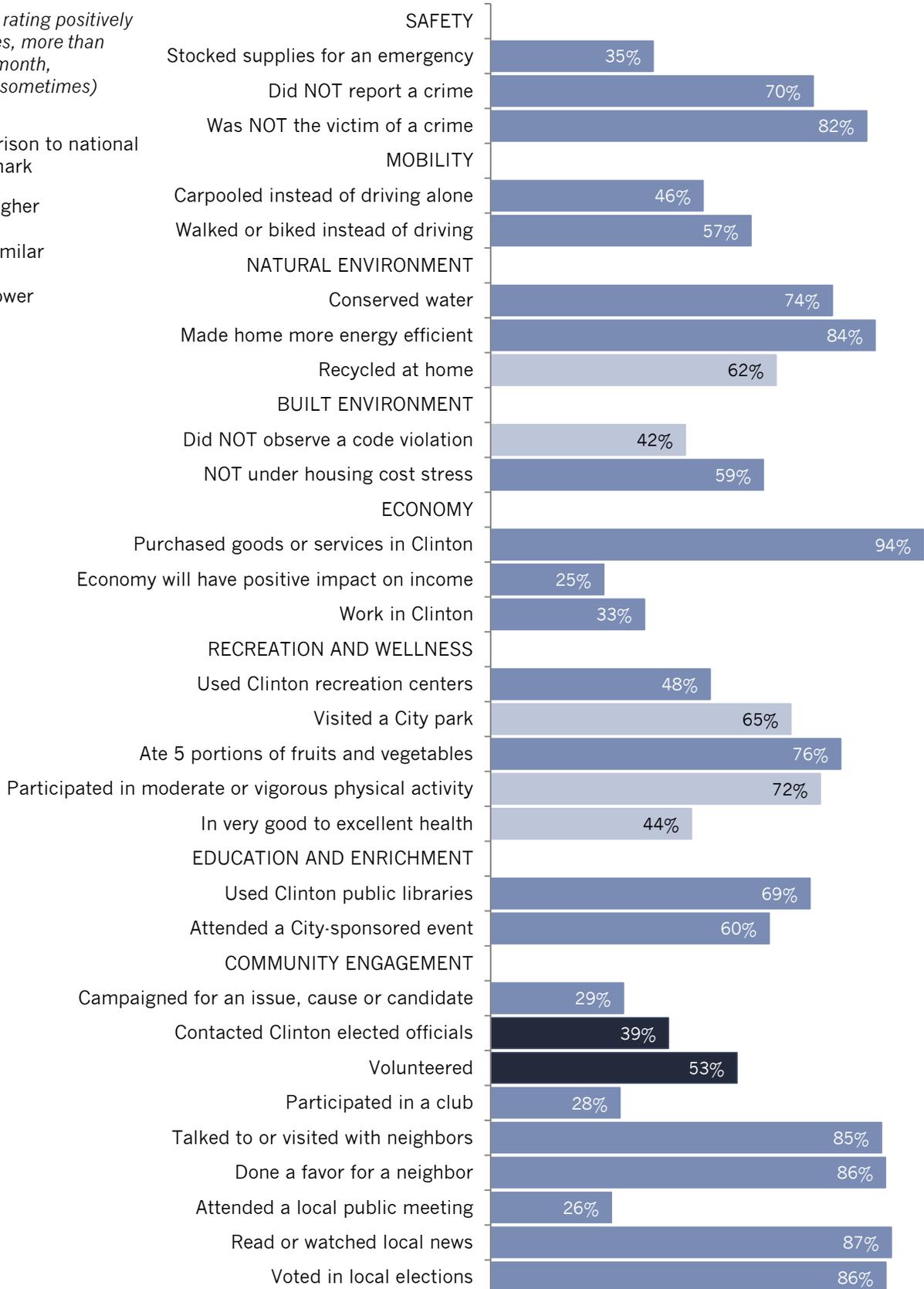
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Conclusions

Clinton residents rate quality of life positively.

The overall quality of life in Clinton was seen as “excellent” or “good” by a majority of survey respondents and about two-thirds rated Clinton as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents also valued the quality of life in their neighborhoods, the overall appearance of the City and Clinton as a place to raise children; about 6 in 10 rated these aspects of community livability as excellent or good. Overall, most citizens would recommend living in Clinton and planned to remain for the next five years.

Safety is an important and positive feature of the community.

Safety was rated as an important area to focus on in Clinton for the next two years. Nearly 9 in 10 reported that they felt safe in their neighborhoods and in Clinton’s downtown/commercial area. At least 6 in 10 gave high marks to police, fire and ambulance/EMS services, as well as to crime and fire prevention. Additionally, 7 in 10 indicated that they had not reported a crime and 8 in 10 had not been the victim of a crime in the previous 12 months. However, only about 6 in 10 residents rated their overall feeling of safety positively and less than half gave excellent or good ratings to animal control and the City’s emergency preparedness; these ratings tended to be lower than comparison communities.

The Economy is a priority for residents.

The Economy was also indicated to be an important priority for Clinton. Ratings for Economy in the City tended to be similar or lower than other communities across the U.S. Nearly all residents reported that they had purchased goods in Clinton and about one-third worked within City limits; these rates were similar to comparison communities. Cost of living was rated positively by 3 in 10 respondents, a rating similar to ratings elsewhere; however, less than one-third of participants gave high marks to the overall economic health of Clinton, the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area, business and services, shopping and employment opportunities and Clinton as an excellent or good place to work or visit. Similarly, economic development was rated positively by one-quarter of residents. These ratings were lower than communities across the nation.

Community Engagement is strong in Clinton.

Clinton residents are active in their community and reported high rates of participation. At least 8 in 10 indicated they had talked to or visited with their neighbors, done a favor for a neighbor, read or watched local news and voted in local elections. A majority of residents in Clinton volunteered, almost 4 out of 10 contacted their elected officials and over half had contacted Clinton employees; these ratings that were higher than comparison communities. Nearly 5 in 10 residents gave positive scores to public information; however, about half or less gave excellent or good ratings to opportunities to volunteer and participate in community matters, neighborliness of Clinton residents, social activities and events and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds. These aspects tended to be rated lower compared to other communities, which indicates this could be an area of opportunity for the City of Clinton.