

The National Citizen Survey™

Chanhassen, MN

Community Livability Report

DRAFT

2013

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The National Citizen Survey™
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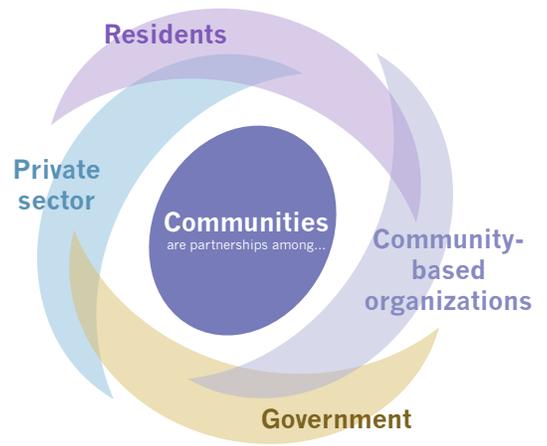
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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Chanhassen. 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 selected from 1,200 residents of the city of Chanhassen. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample (461 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.

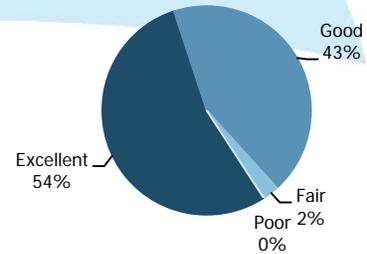


Quality of Life in Chanhassen

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Chanhassen as excellent or good, which was higher than the benchmark.

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 dark purple; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest purple. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

Overall Quality of Life

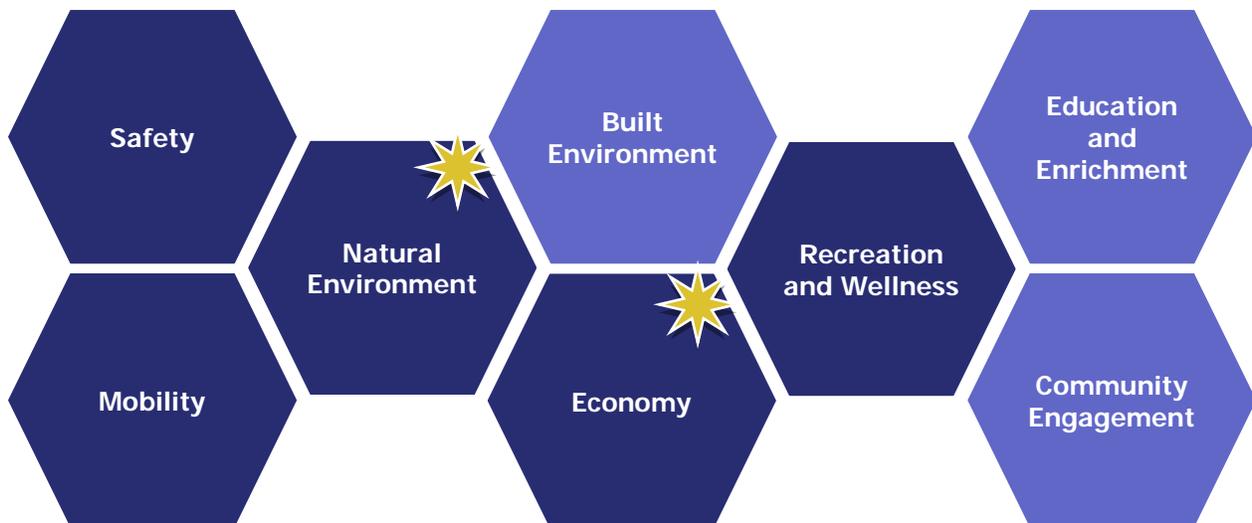


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents' overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life (Natural Environment and Economy) as the most central to what makes Chanhassen their home. It is noteworthy that Chanhassen residents gave strong ratings to both of these facets of community as well as to Recreation and Wellness, Safety and Mobility. Ratings for Built Environment, Education and Enrichment 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.

Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark
- Benchmark comparison not available
- ★ Most important to quality of life



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 Chanhassen, almost all respondents rated the city as a place to live as excellent or good. Respondents' ratings of Chanhassen as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation (see *Appendix B* of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of the community in general including Chanhassen as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Chanhassen and its overall appearance. At least 9 in 10 respondents rated the city as a place to raise children, neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation and the city's appearance as excellent or good, providing ratings that were above national benchmark comparisons. Slightly fewer respondents, but still a majority, felt positively about the city as a place to retire, which resulted in a comparison similar to other communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, all these features of the community were rated favorably by at least half of respondents, with the majority of features being rating positively by about 8 in 10 respondents. When national benchmark comparisons were available, the features of Chanhassen were either higher than or similar to those in other communities.



Respondents regarded the Natural Environment as one of the city's greatest assets; almost all respondents rated each feature favorably, providing high benchmark comparisons. Safety was another area of strength in Chanhassen; almost all respondents felt safe across the city. Economy received mixed ratings, both in terms of the proportions of respondents rating the various aspects positively and their performance when compared to national benchmarks. Roughly 7 in 10 respondents felt positively about the various aspects of Community Engagement, resulting in ratings similar to the national benchmark.

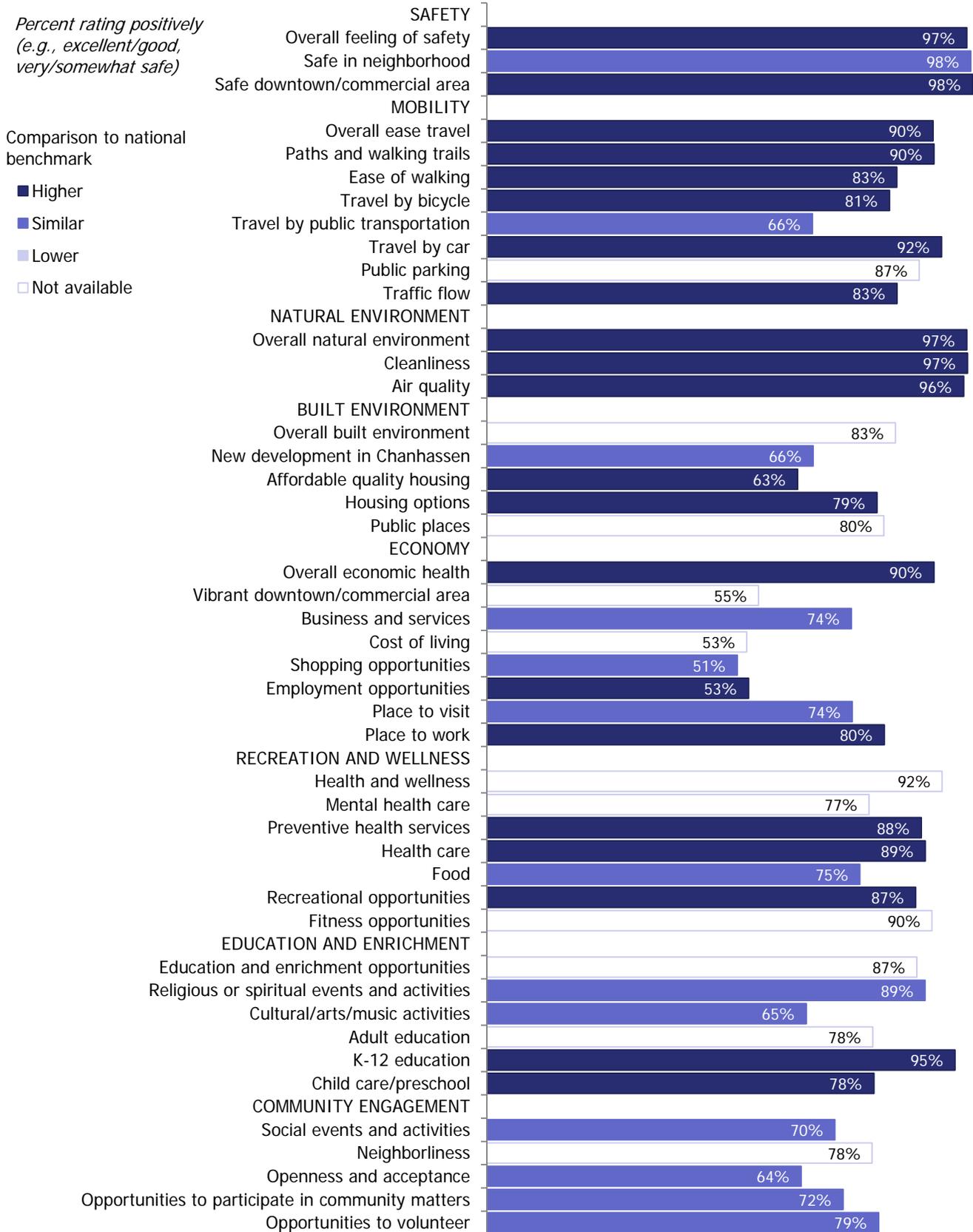
Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available



Figure 1: Facets of Community Characteristics



Governance

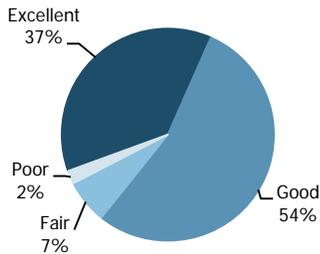
How well does the government of Chanhassen meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Chanhassen as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. More than twice as many respondents felt the City provided excellent or good services when compared to those who felt similarly about the services provided by the Federal Government. The rating for City services was higher than the benchmark while the rating for the Federal services was similar.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Chanhassen’s leadership and governance. About 8 in 10 respondents were pleased with the overall direction the City was taking and about three-quarters of respondents had at least good levels of confidence in the City. About three quarters of respondents felt the City did a good or excellent job of acting in the best interest of Chanhassen, being honest and treating all residents fairly. Overall, ratings for Chanhassen’s leadership and governance were similar to or higher than national benchmark comparisons when available.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Chanhassen within the eight facets of livability. Overall, individual services were higher than or similar to national benchmark comparisons; none were lower than the benchmark. The majority of services and amenities received excellent or good ratings from at least 8 in 10 respondents and only one service was rated positively by less than one-half of respondents.

Overall Quality of City Services



Mobility and Safety tended to perform better when compared to other communities across the U.S., while Natural Environment and Built Environment were generally on par with these communities.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

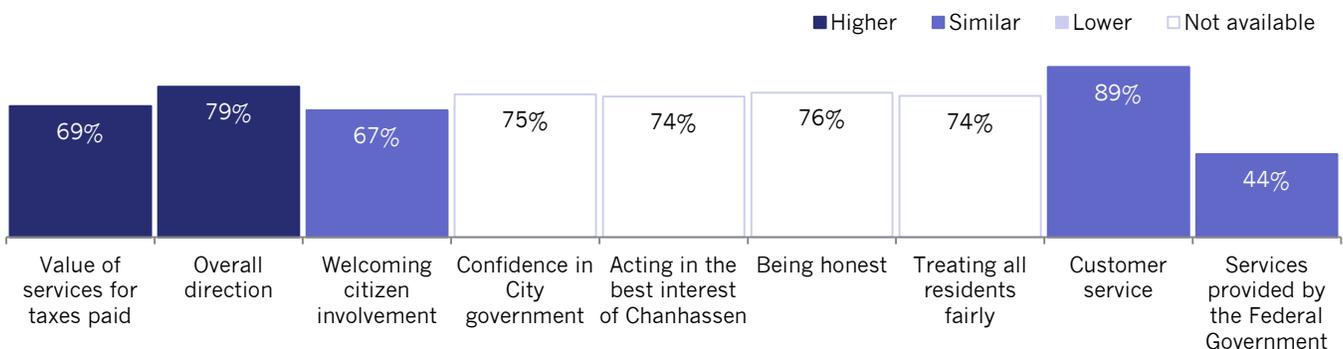
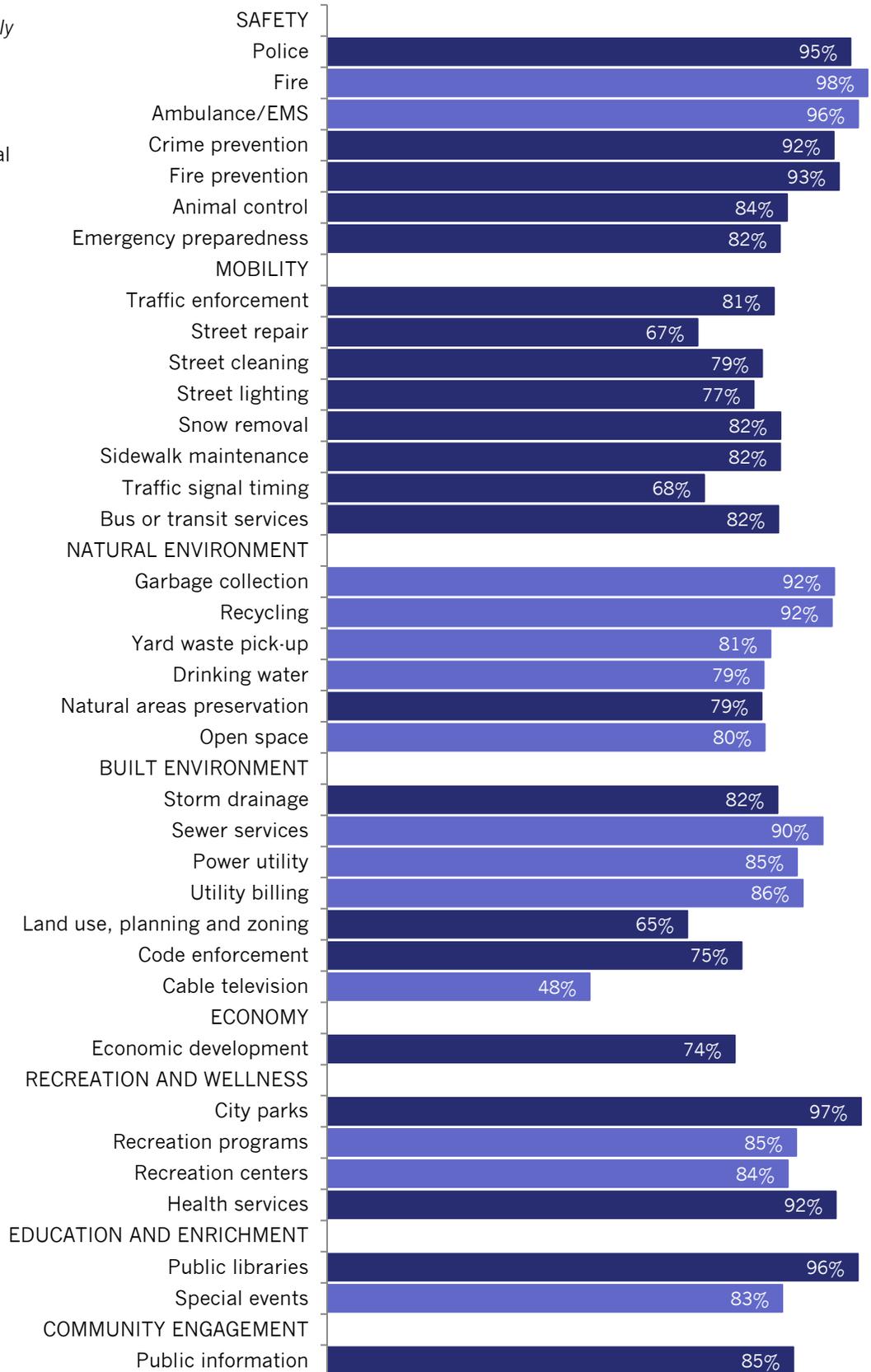


Figure 2: Facets of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



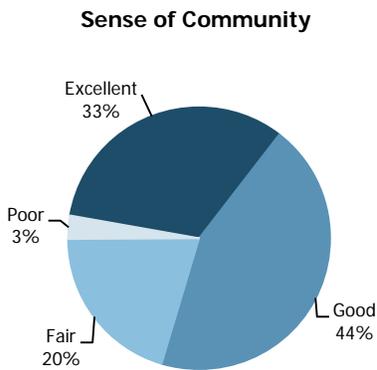
Participation

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

An engaged community is a livable community. 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 three-quarters of respondents felt Chanhassen had an excellent or good sense of community, which was higher when compared to national peers. Almost all respondents would recommend living in Chanhassen to someone who asked and plan to stay within the community for the next five years.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors within the eight facets of livability for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, the extent to which respondents participated in these activities varied, but tended to be similar when compared to the activity levels of residents in other communities.

Recreation and Wellness tended to have higher levels of participation overall; a majority of respondents had participated in some kind of Recreation and Wellness activity. The levels of participation in Community Engagement activities fluctuated; while most respondents had voted few had watched or attended a local public meeting.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

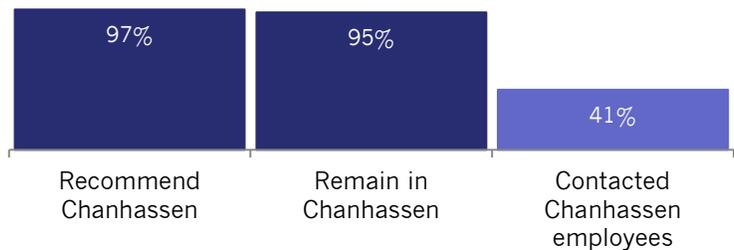
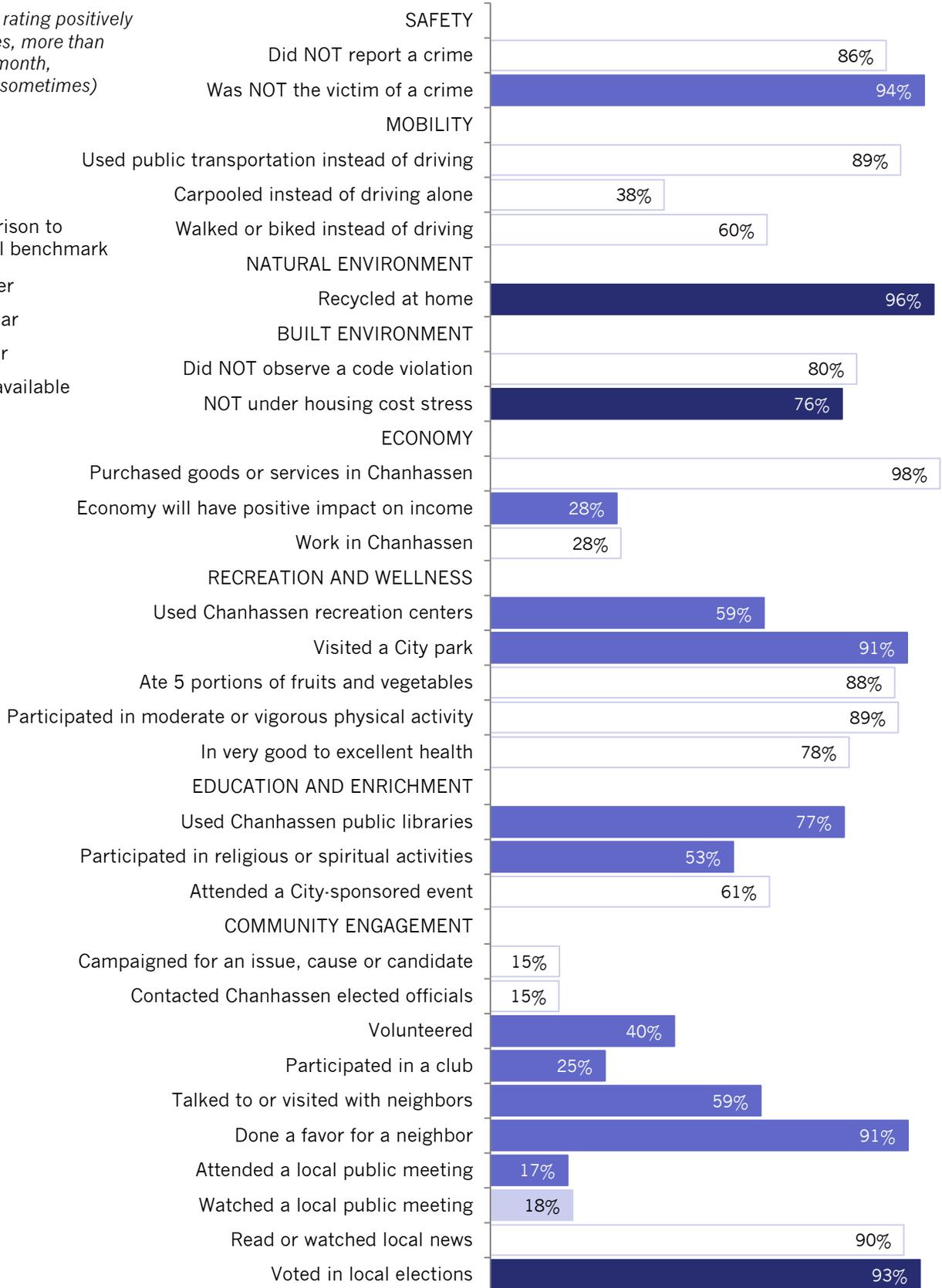


Figure 3: Facets of Participation

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

Comparison to
national benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



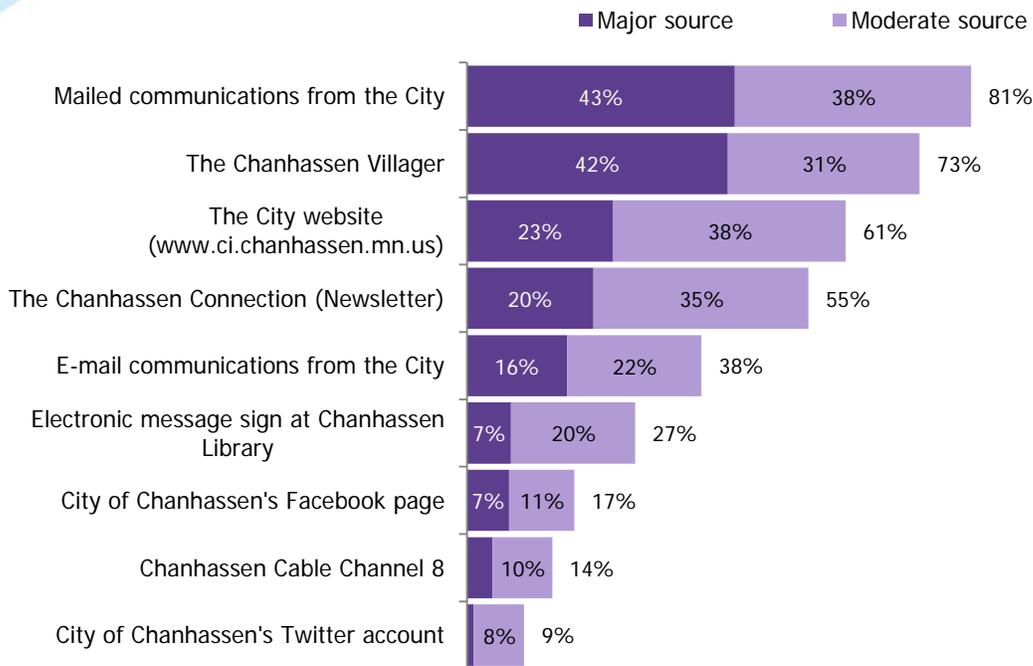
Special Topics

The city of Chanhassen included four questions of special interest on The NCS. The topics covered included information sources, priorities for the City and aspects of living in the City.

When it came to the method of communication, respondents strongly preferred mailed communications from the City, The Chanhassen Villager and the City’s website over the City’s Facebook page, Twitter account or Cable Channel 8.

Figure 4: Question 13a

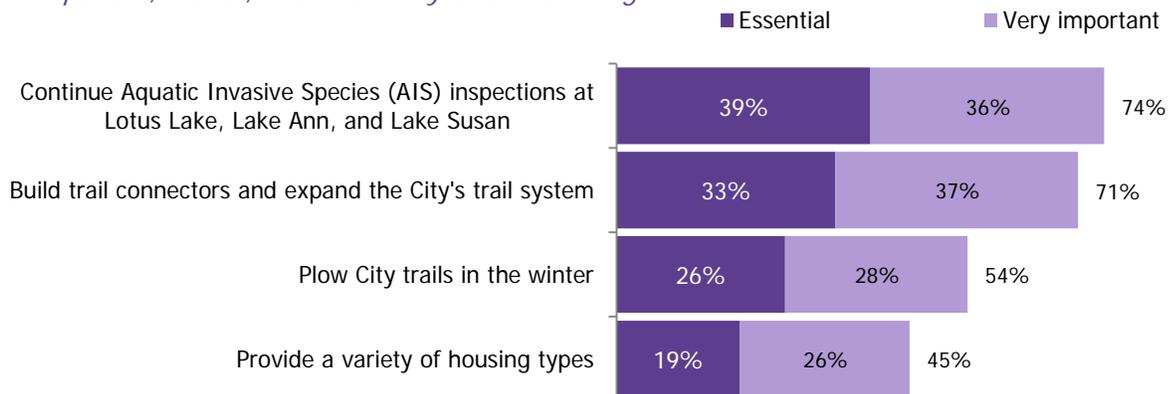
How major of a source of information, if at all, do you consider each of the following methods of communication used by the City?



About 7 in 10 respondents felt it was essential or very important for the City to continue Aquatic Invasive Species inspections at the various lakes in the city and to build trail connectors and expand the trail system. Less than half of respondents felt it was important for the City to provide a variety of housing types.

Figure 5: Question 13b

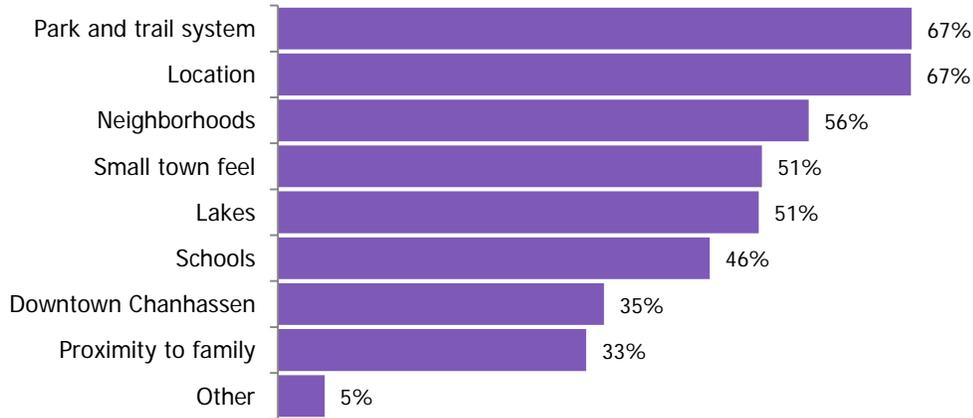
How important, if at all, is it for the City do the following?



Respondents were asked to identify that which they enjoyed most about living in Chanhasen. Respondents most enjoyed the park and trail system and the city’s location. About half enjoyed the lakes, small town feel and the neighborhoods.

Figure 6: Question 13c

What do you enjoy most about living in Chanhasen?

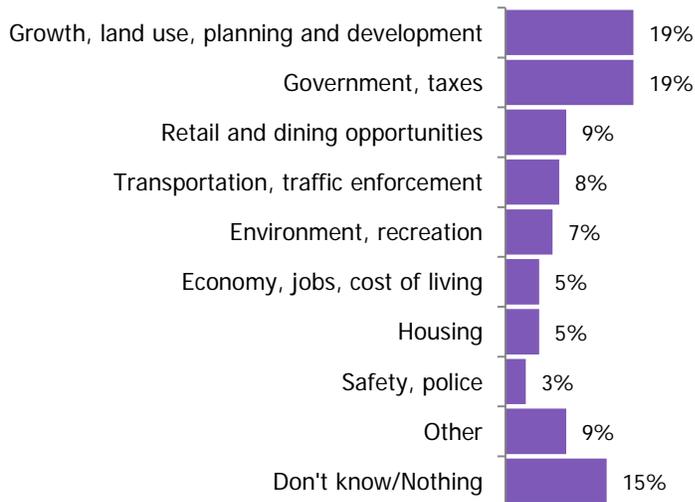


Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Respondents were asked to record in their own words what they would do to help solve the single biggest issue facing Chanhasen. Of the 217 respondents who wrote in a response, most provided solutions related to growth, land use, planning and development or government and taxes. Others were concerned about the amount and type of retail and dining opportunities, the environment and the variety and affordability of housing. The complete set of write in responses can be found in the *Open Ended Responses* report, provided under separate cover.

Figure 7: Question 13d

What would you do to help solve the single biggest issue facing Chanhasen over the next several years?



Conclusions

Chanhassen residents enjoy an exceptional quality of life.

Not only did almost all respondents feel they had high quality of life, but almost all residents felt that Chanhassen was a great place to live as well. Many of the facets that make a community livable were rated highly by residents and were higher in Chanhassen than in other communities in the country.

The Natural Environment is a key feature and asset of Chanhassen that residents appreciate and want to protect.

Residents were overwhelmingly positive when evaluating the Natural Environment of Chanhassen; almost all residents enjoyed the cleanliness and fresh air and many felt the City did a good job of preserving natural areas. The natural setting as well as the lakes and trails that allow residents to enjoy these features of the community play a large role in why residents choose to live in Chanhassen. Residents support the City's efforts to control the invasive species that could harm the Natural Environment and they also would like more opportunities to explore the beauty of the community through expansion of the existing trail system.

A strong Economy is another feature that makes Chanhassen a desirable community.

The majority of respondents viewed the overall economic health of Chanhassen positively and appreciated the City's economic development efforts. Most residents were pleased with the employment opportunities and work-friendly atmosphere of the community, although a minority of respondents were able to actually work in the City. Residents supported the local economy by making purchases from a good variety of local businesses and indicated they had sufficient shopping opportunities available to them.