

The National Citizen Survey™

McAllen, TX

Community Livability Report

2013

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The National Citizen Survey™
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About

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

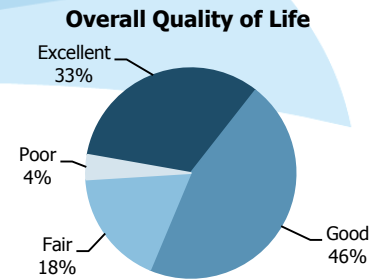
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample selected from 1,200 residents of the City of McAllen. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 7% for the entire sample (215 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in McAllen

Most residents rate the quality of life in McAllen as “excellent” or “good.” This was similar to the national 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.



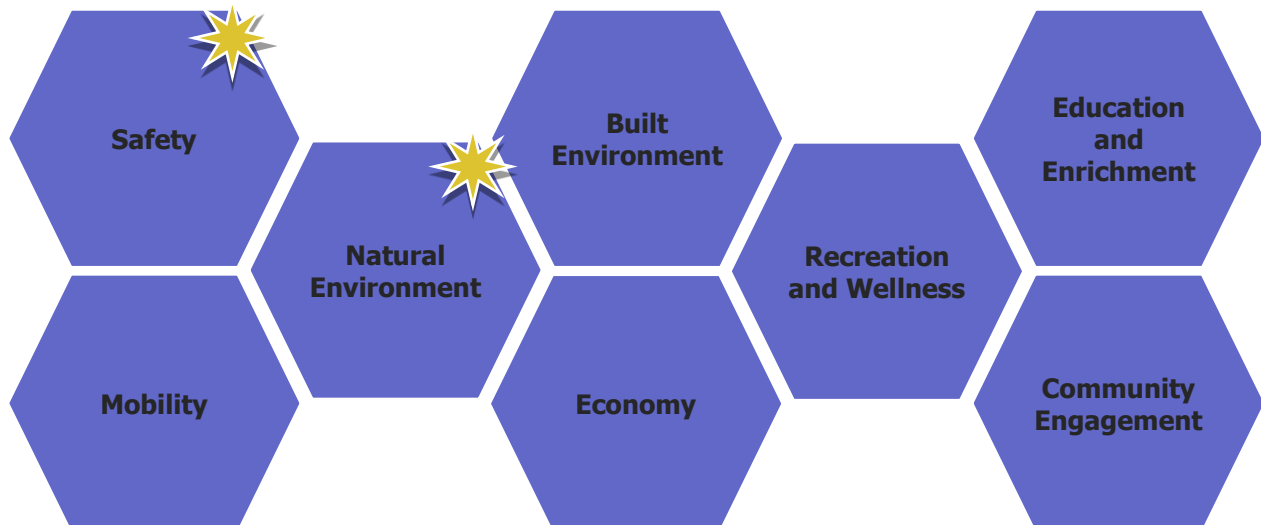
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents’ overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life (Safety and Natural Environment) as the most central to what makes McAllen their home. Ratings for all facets 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, starting with the ratings for Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation and ending with results for McAllen’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important to quality of life



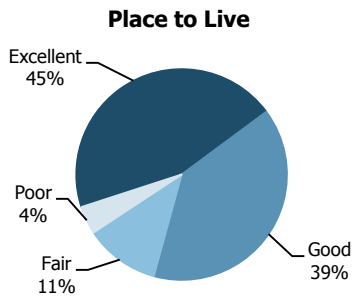
Community Characteristics

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 McAllen, 84% rated McAllen as an “excellent” or “good” place to live. Respondents’ ratings of McAllen as a place to live were similar to 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 community quality including McAllen as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of McAllen and its overall appearance. These aspects were all rated as “excellent” or “good” by at least 6 in 10 respondents and received ratings similar to other communities across the nation.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Most of these aspects were rated as “excellent” or “good” by a majority of respondents, and benchmark comparisons tended to be similar to the national benchmark. At least 7 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings to Safety in McAllen; however the rating for safety downtown/commercial area was below the benchmark. Two aspects of Economy were above the benchmark comparison; cost of living and shopping opportunities. Two aspects of Recreation and Wellness were below the benchmark; fitness opportunities and recreational opportunities.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

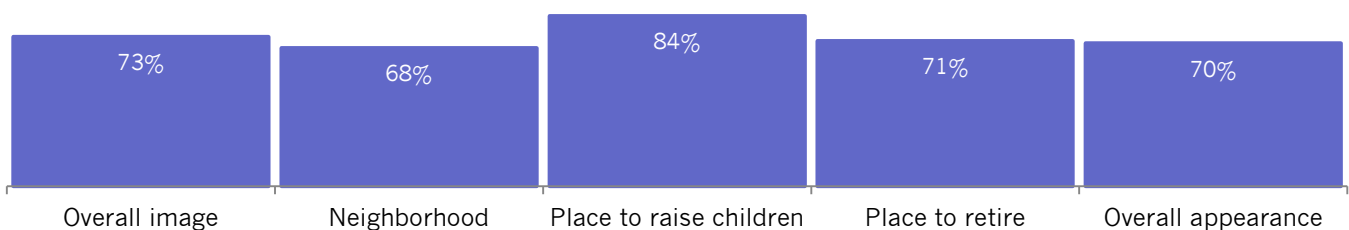


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

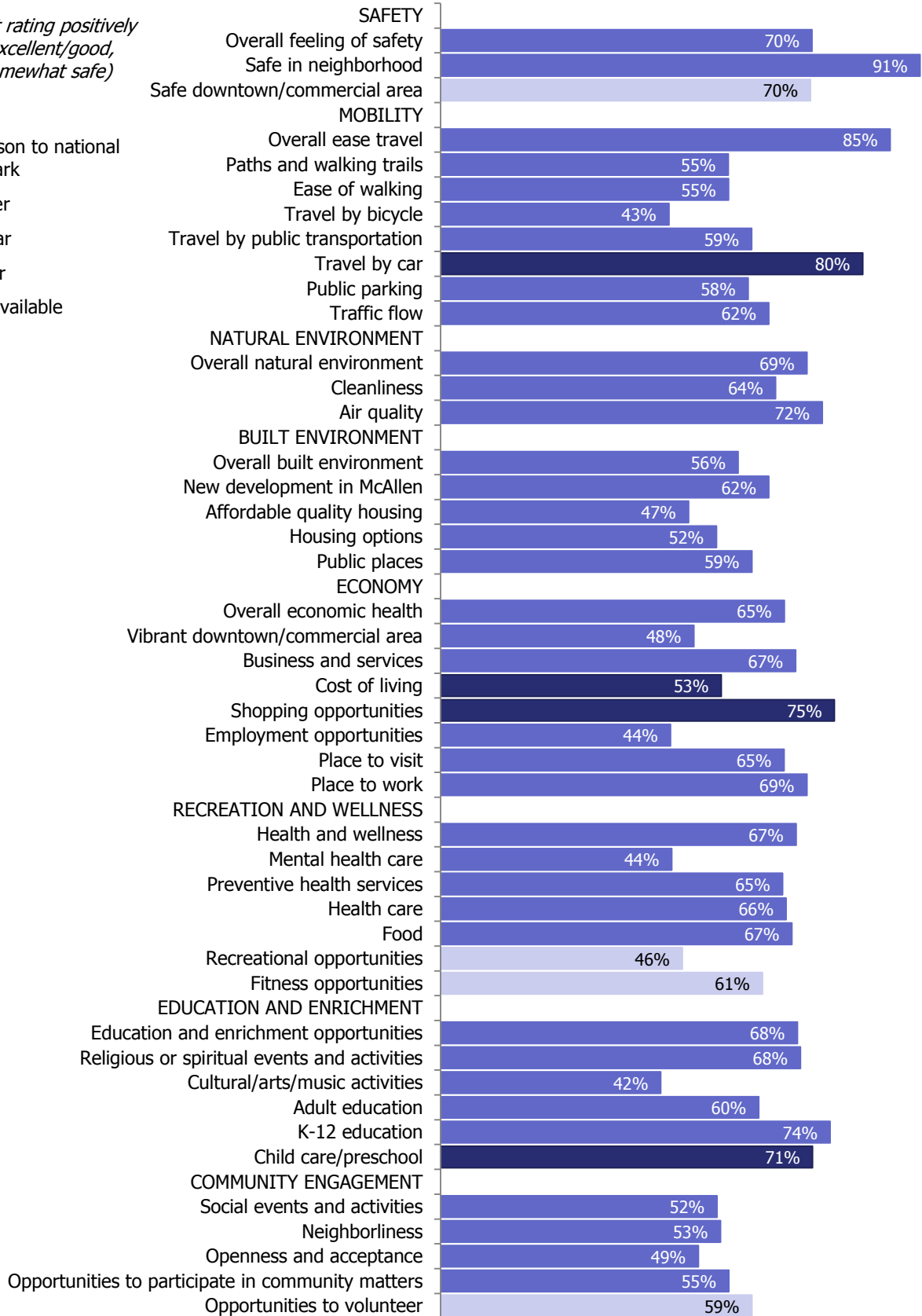
Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

■ Similar

■ Lower

□ Not available



Governance

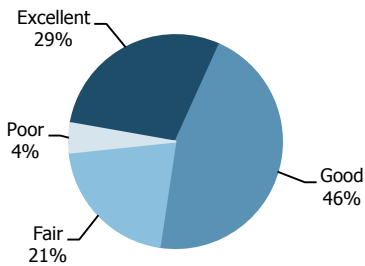
How well does the government of McAllen meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by McAllen as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About three-quarters of residents rated the overall quality of City services as “excellent” or “good,” while about half gave “excellent” or “good” ratings to the Federal Government. Ratings for the services provided by McAllen were similar to the national benchmark comparison while ratings for services provided by the Federal government were higher.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of McAllen’s leadership and governance. Most aspects were rated as “excellent” or “good” by a majority of residents and were similar to the benchmark. While 63% rated customer service as “excellent” or “good,” this rating was lower than in comparison communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in McAllen. Most of these services and amenities were rated positively by at least half of the respondents. All aspects of Mobility, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were similar to the benchmark comparison. Most aspects of Safety were similar to the benchmark comparison, however ambulance or emergency medical services was rated lower. Half of the aspects of Natural Environment were lower than the benchmark; yard waste pick-up, drinking water and open space. In Economy, economic development was the single aspect rated and was above the benchmark comparison but received a rating lower compared to 2011 ratings (see *Trends over Time* provided under separate cover).

Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

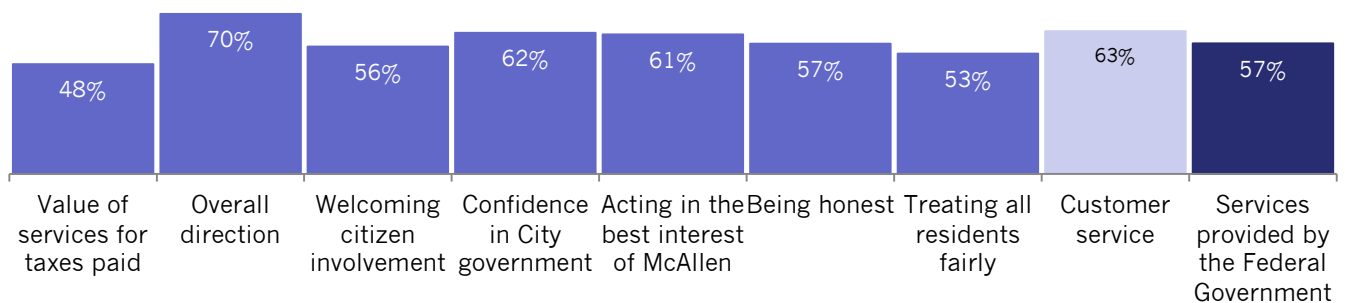


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

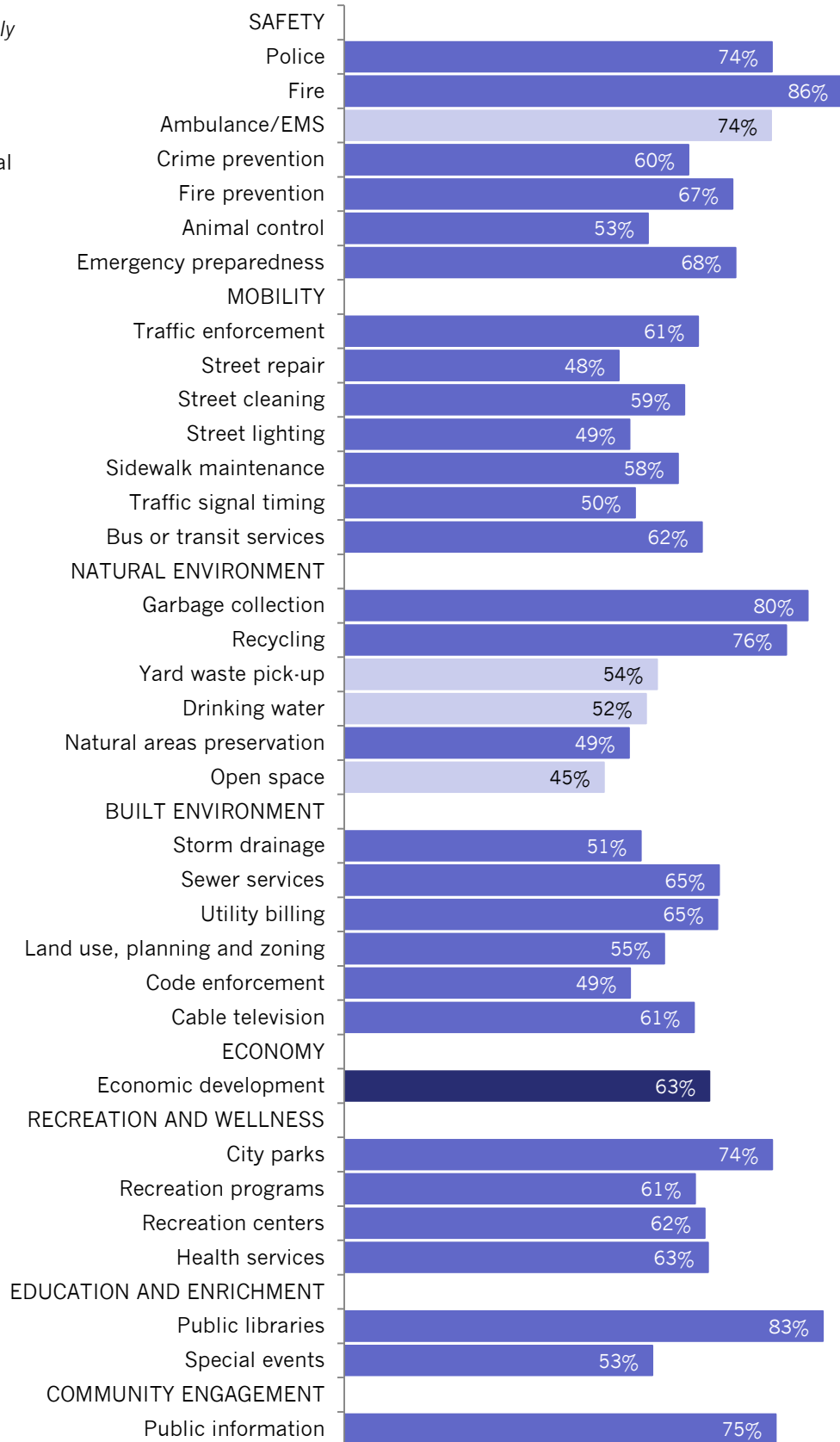
Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

■ Similar

■ Lower

□ Not available



Participation

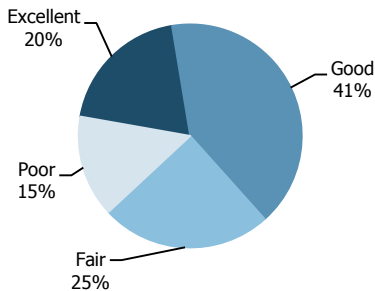
Are the residents of McAllen connected to the community and each other?

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 3 in 5 residents rated the sense of community as “excellent” or “good,” this rating was similar to the benchmark comparison and similar to 2011 ratings (see *Trends over Time* provided under separate cover).

Most residents would recommend living in McAllen (87% “somewhat” or “very” likely). About 8 in 10 residents reported they were “somewhat” or “very” likely to remain in the city. These ratings were similar to other communities across the nation. Nearly half of residents reported contacting a McAllen employee within the last 12 months, which was a similar contact rate compared to other communities.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. The facets with higher rates of Participation were Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment. Participation in Economy-related activities was mixed; nearly all respondents had purchased goods or services in McAllen while one-third believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income (a rating higher than the benchmark comparison). All aspects of Mobility were lower than the benchmark and rated positively by less than 40% of respondents. Community Engagement ratings were also rated less positively, however these ratings were similar to the benchmark comparisons when available.

Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

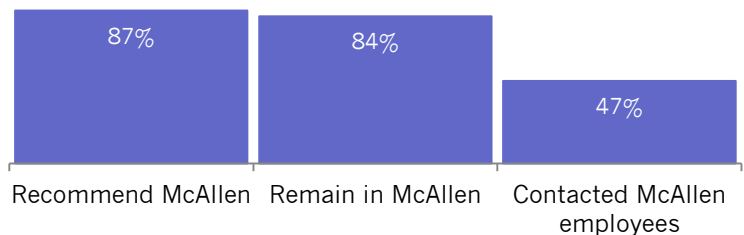
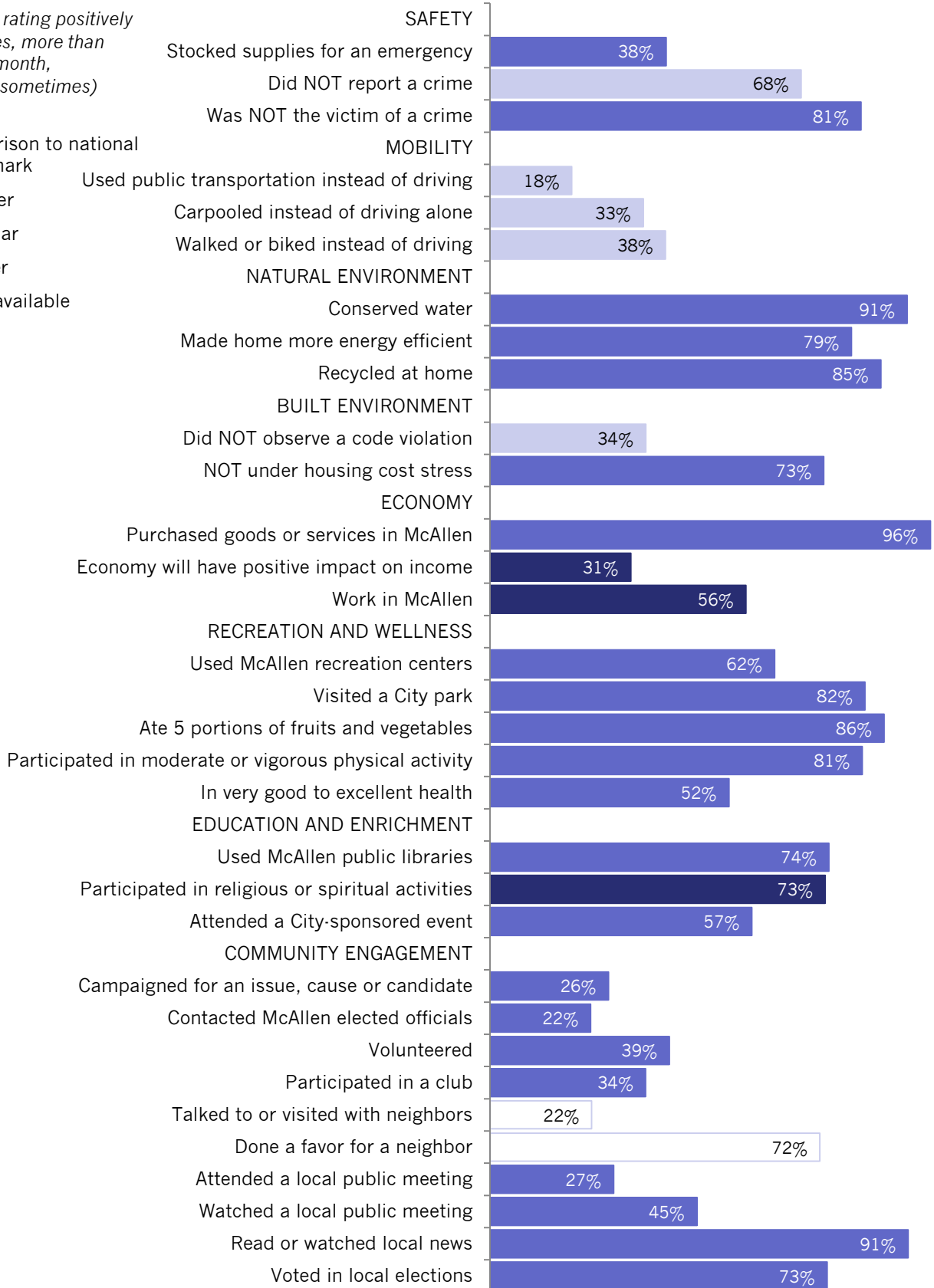


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

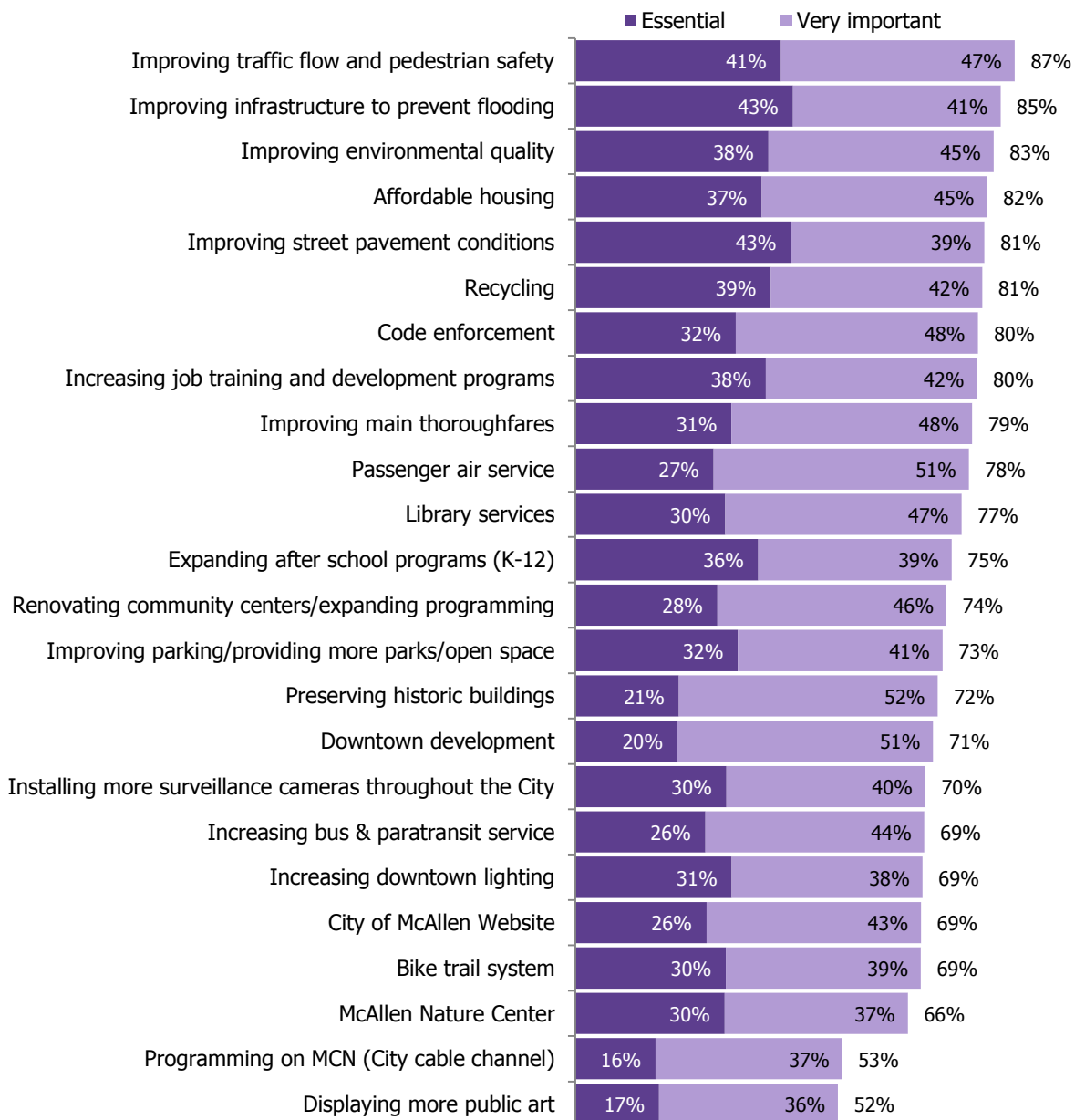


Special Topics

The City of McAllen included three questions of special interest on The NCS. These questions asked residents for their opinions about City priorities as well as about how information is received regarding McAllen City Government.

At least 4 in 5 residents indicated that it was at least “very important” for McAllen to address: improving traffic flow and pedestrian safety, improving infrastructure to prevent flooding, improving environmental quality, affordable housing, improving street conditions, recycling, code enforcement and increasing job training and development programs. While a majority of residents rated all items in question 13a as “essential” or “very important,” the items that received the lowest ratings were displaying more public art and programming on MCN (City cable channel).

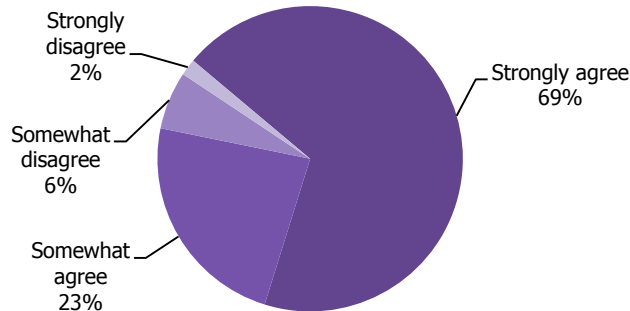
Figure 4: Question 13a
How important, if at all, are the following issues for the City to Address?



Almost all residents “somewhat” or “strongly” agreed that McAllen should place a higher priority on the health of its citizens; only 2% “strongly” disagreed with this statement and 6% “somewhat” disagreed.

Figure 5: Question 13b

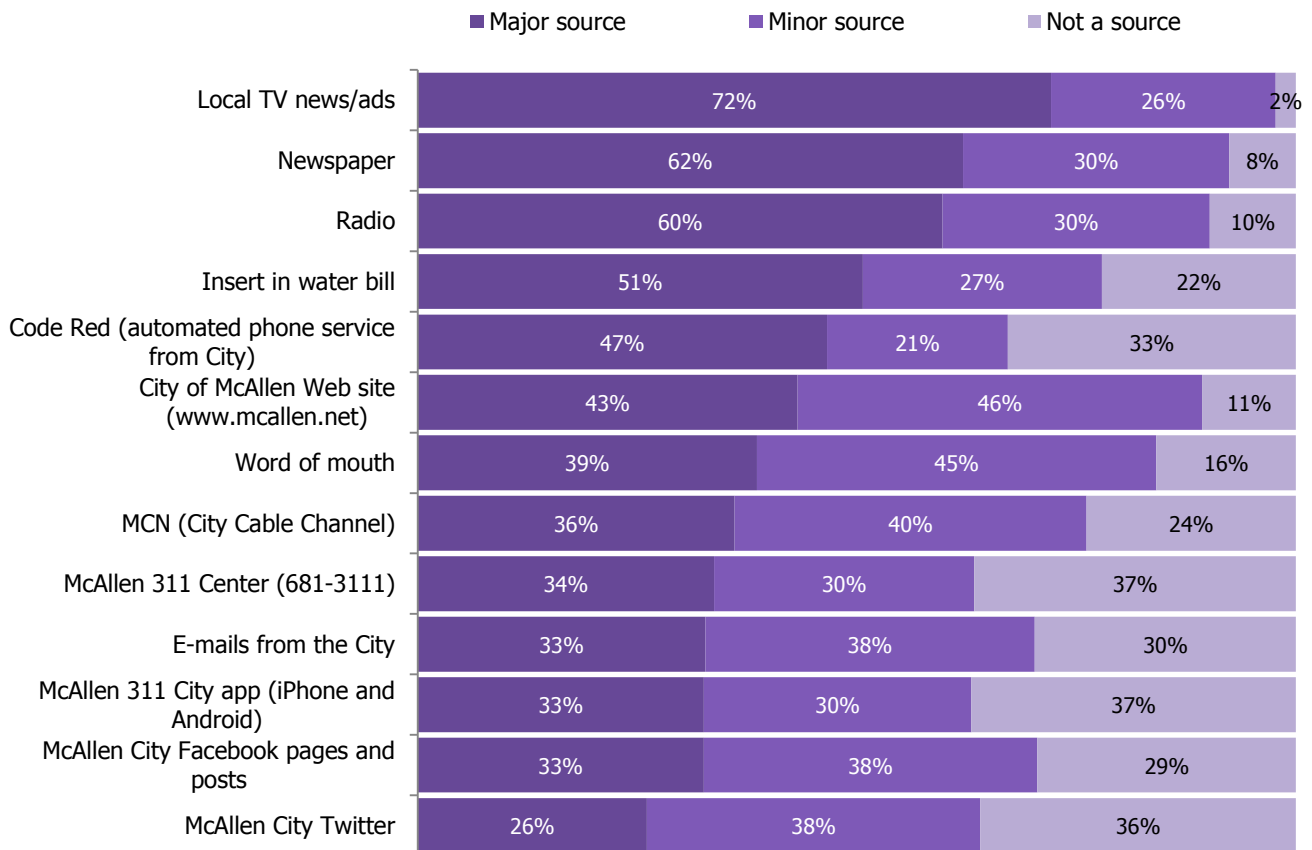
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The City of McAllen should place a higher priority on the health of its citizens."



A majority of residents indicated that local TV news/ads, newspaper, radio and insert in water bill were “major” sources of information about the City Government. Least likely to be viewed as a “major” source of information were McAllen City Twitter, McAllen City Facebook pages and posts, McAllen 311 City app and emails from the City.

Figure 6: Question 13c

Please indicate whether each of the following is a major source, minor source, or not a source of information regarding McAllen City Government.



Conclusions

McAllen residents enjoy a positive quality of life.

About 4 in 5 residents rated their overall quality of life and McAllen as a place to live as “excellent” or “good.” The 2013 ratings were similar to those in 2011. Overall, many facets that make a community livable were rated positively by a majority of respondents and were similar to other communities across the nation. These positive ratings translated to a majority of residents being likely to recommend McAllen and remain in the city for the next five years.

Safety is a feature that makes McAllen a livable community.

Safety was identified as one of the facets most important to residents’ quality of life, and, overall, McAllen performed solidly within this facet. Most aspects of safety were rated positively by a majority of respondents and most McAllen ratings were similar to those in other communities across the nation. Aspects of Safety saw some decreases compared to 2011 ratings; the aspects that declined were: safe downtown/commercial area, fire prevention, emergency preparedness, police services and crime prevention.

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

A majority of respondents viewed the overall economic health of McAllen positively and appreciated the City’s economic development efforts. Most residents worked in McAllen and appreciated the work-friendly atmosphere of the community, although less than half rated the employment opportunities as “excellent” or “good.” 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.