

**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

## Erie, CO

Community Livability Report

2017



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# Contents

About..... 1  
Quality of Life in Erie..... 2  
Community Characteristics ..... 3  
Governance ..... 5  
Participation ..... 7  
Special Topics..... 9  
Conclusions ..... 15



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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Erie. 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 1,100 residents of the Town of Erie. 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 Erie

Most residents rated the quality of life in Erie 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.



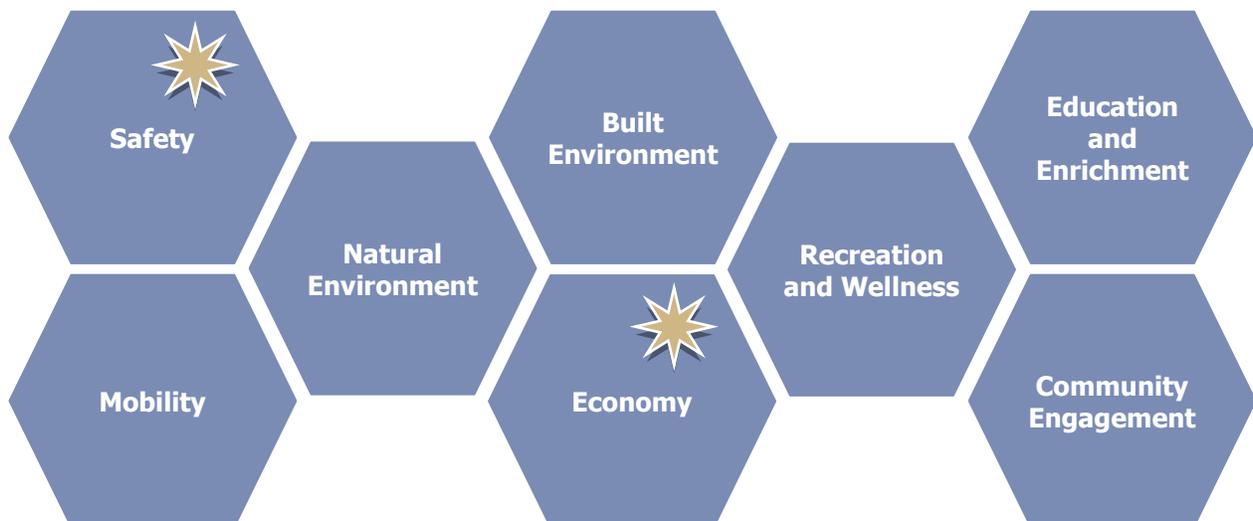
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Erie community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets were positive 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 Erie’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 Erie, 92% rated the Town as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Erie as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the Town as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Erie as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Erie and its overall appearance. Almost all respondents gave excellent or good ratings to their neighborhoods and to Erie as a place to raise children; the rating for Erie as a place to raise children was higher than ratings in comparison communities. Other aspects were rated positively by a majority of respondents and were similar to the benchmarks.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Erie's ratings tended to be similar to other communities across the U.S., with Mobility as strength; several Mobility characteristics had ratings above national averages.

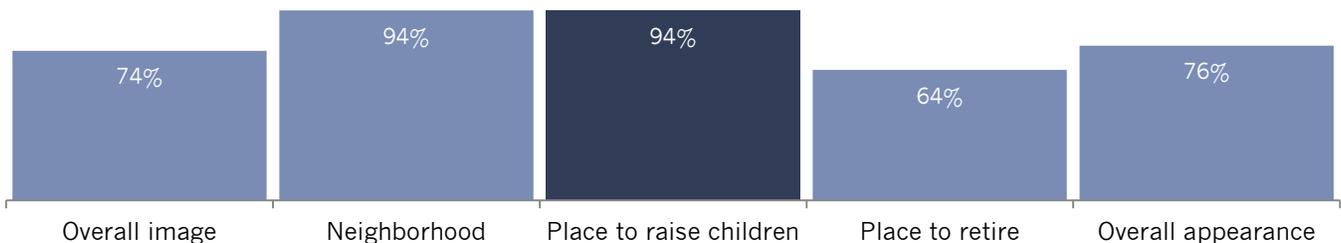
Almost all respondents rated each aspect of Safety a favorably and ratings for the overall feeling of safety in Erie were higher than the national benchmark. About half or more of respondents positively rated each aspect of Natural Environment and Community Engagement. Built Environment ratings tended to be positive and similar to the national benchmarks. Ratings within Economy were mixed. A majority of respondents gave positive ratings to the overall economic health of Erie, while fewer than half gave positive ratings to the other aspects of Economy. The overall quality of businesses and services, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, Erie as a place to visit and to Erie as a place to visit all received ratings lower than in comparison communities across the nation. However, ratings for several of these items had improved from 2015 to 2017 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



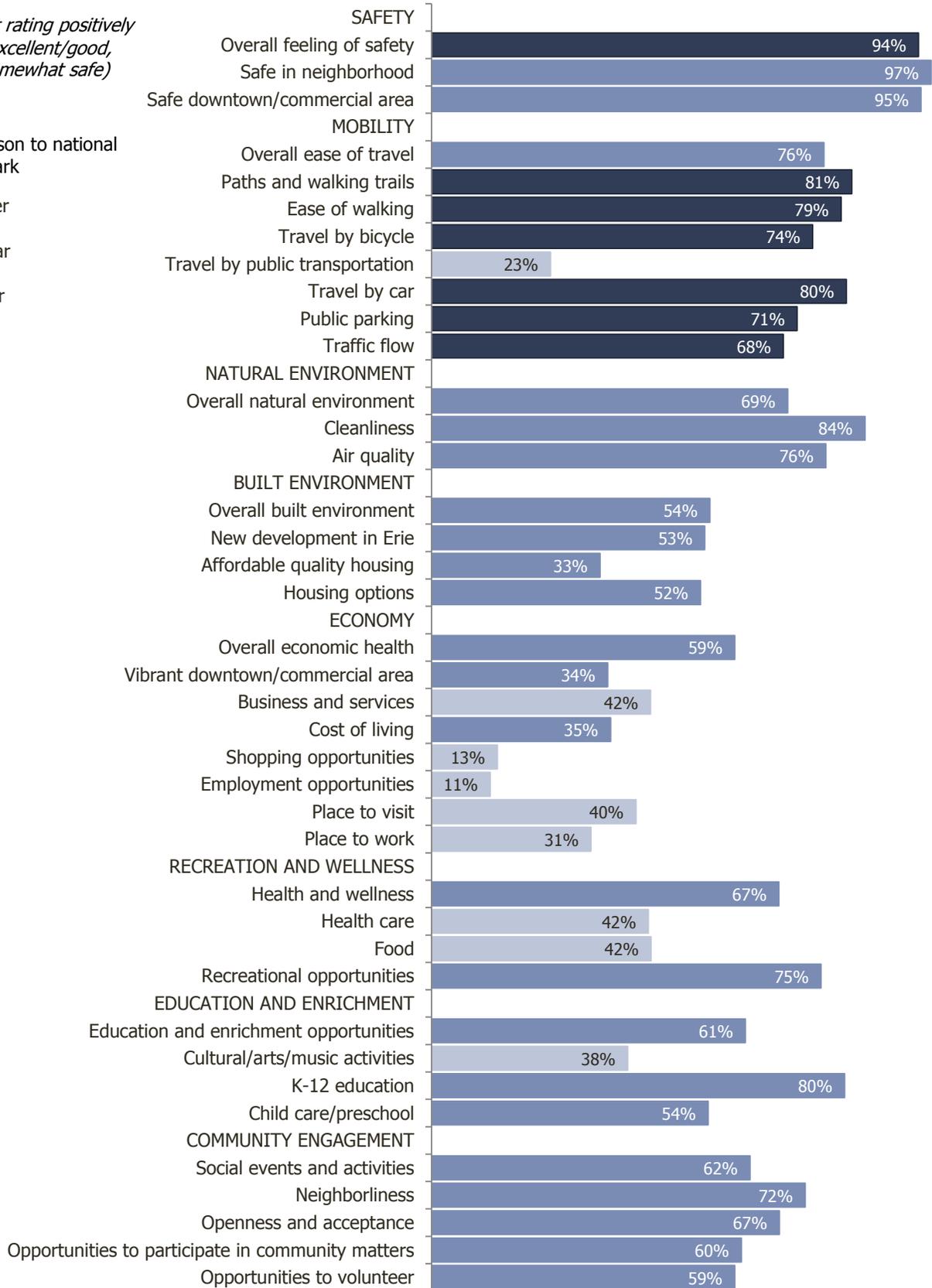
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



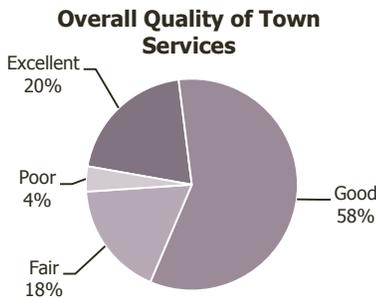
# Governance

## *How well does the government of Erie meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Erie 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 respondents gave high marks to the overall quality of Town services, while less than half gave high marks to the services provided by the Federal Government. Both of these ratings were similar to ratings in comparisons communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Erie’s leadership and governance. About half or more of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to each aspect, and these ratings were similar to the national benchmarks. Several of these ratings were trending up from 2015 to 2017.

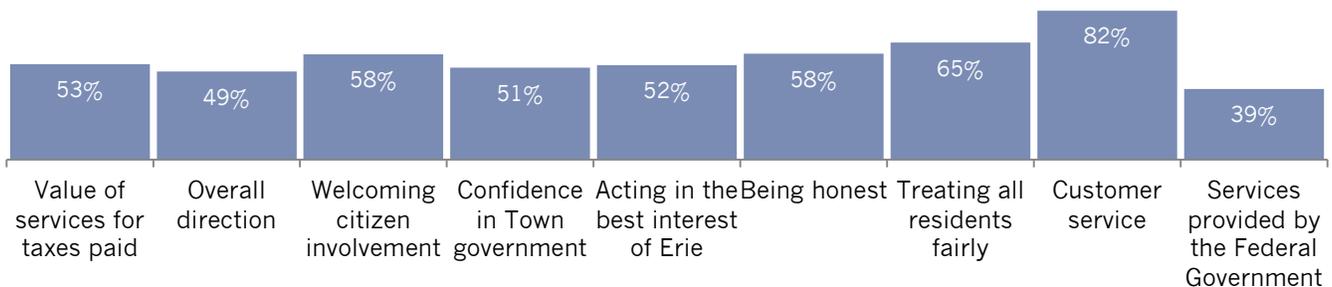
Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Erie. Overall, ratings tended to be positive and similar to the national benchmarks. However, Erie residents gave lower ratings to bus or transit services, yard waste pick-up and to health services than residents from other communities across the nation. About 4 in 5 respondents gave high marks to recreation programs and recreation centers and these ratings were higher than those seen elsewhere.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



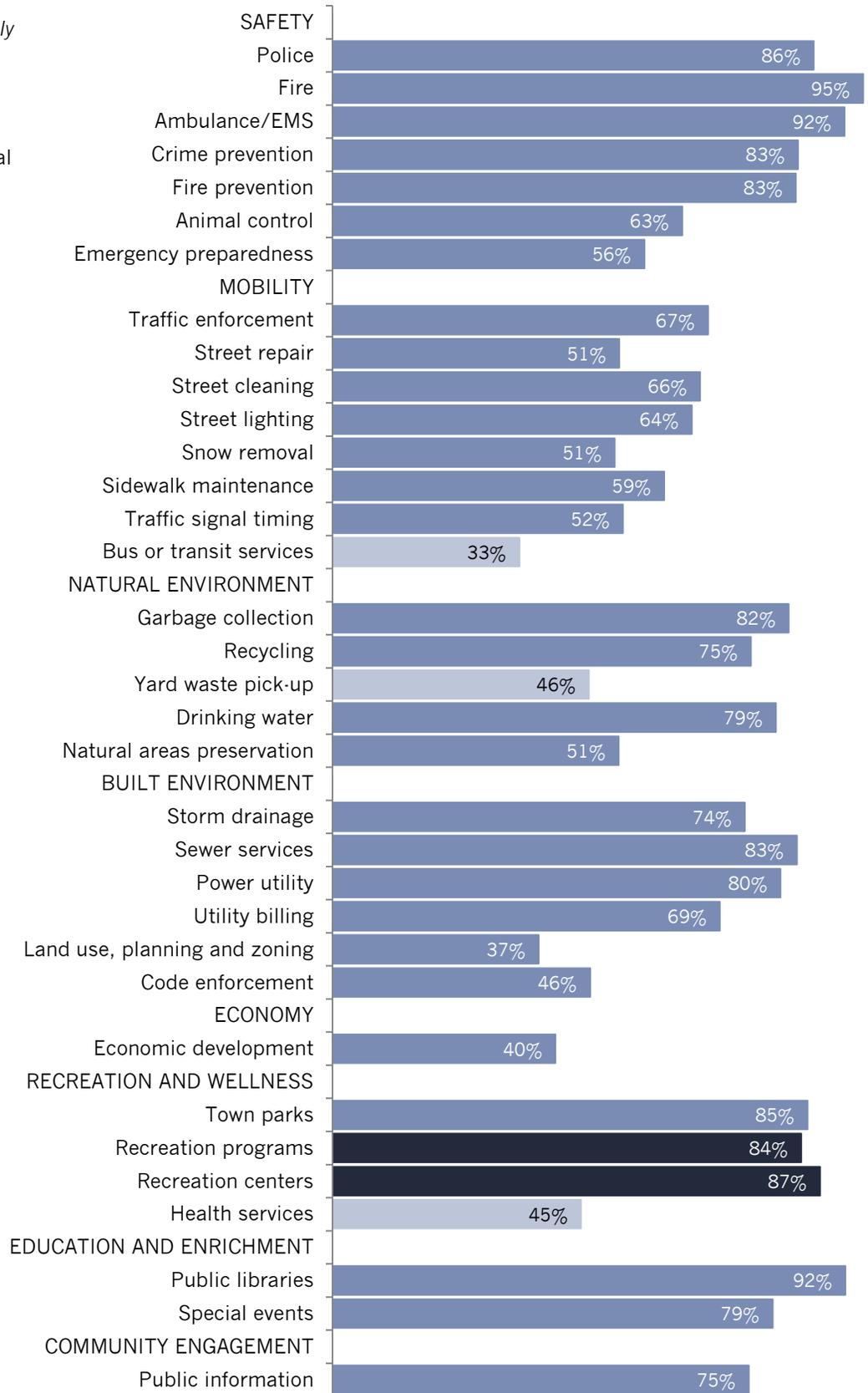
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

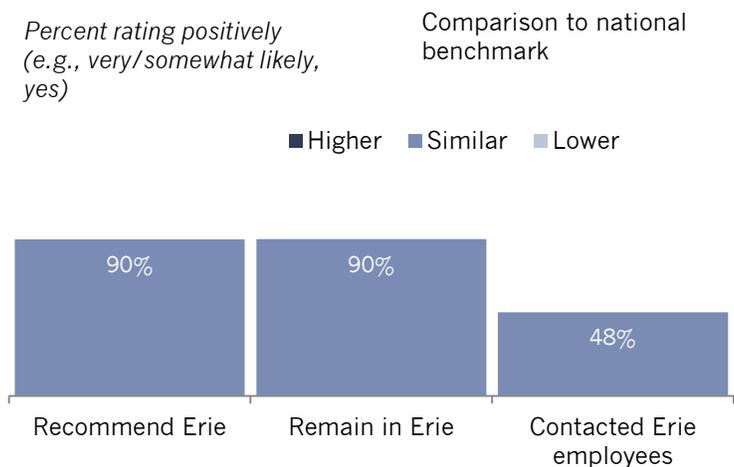
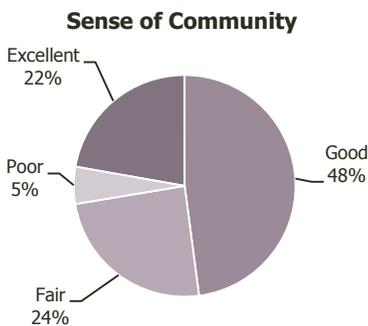


# Participation

*Are the residents of Erie 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 7 in 10 residents positively rated the overall sense of community in Erie. About 9 in 10 respondents were likely to recommend living in Erie and were likely to remain in Erie for the next five years and close to half reported that they had contacted a Town employee in the last 12 months; these rates were all similar to the national benchmarks.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Erie residents reported rates of Participation that varied in relation to the benchmark. Within Mobility, fewer Erie residents had used public transportation instead of driving, a similar proportion carpooled instead of driving alone and a higher number of residents reported that they had walked or biked instead of driving. Recycling was strong compared to the benchmark and water conservation was average. Within Economy, respondents had purchased goods or services in Erie at a rate similar to the rest of the country, fewer reported that they worked in Erie and more had a positive economic outlook when compared to the national benchmarks. Recreation and wellness items had average participation rates except for use of Erie recreation centers, which saw higher use than other centers. Community Engagement rates were generally similar to the rest of the country, though voting rates were higher.



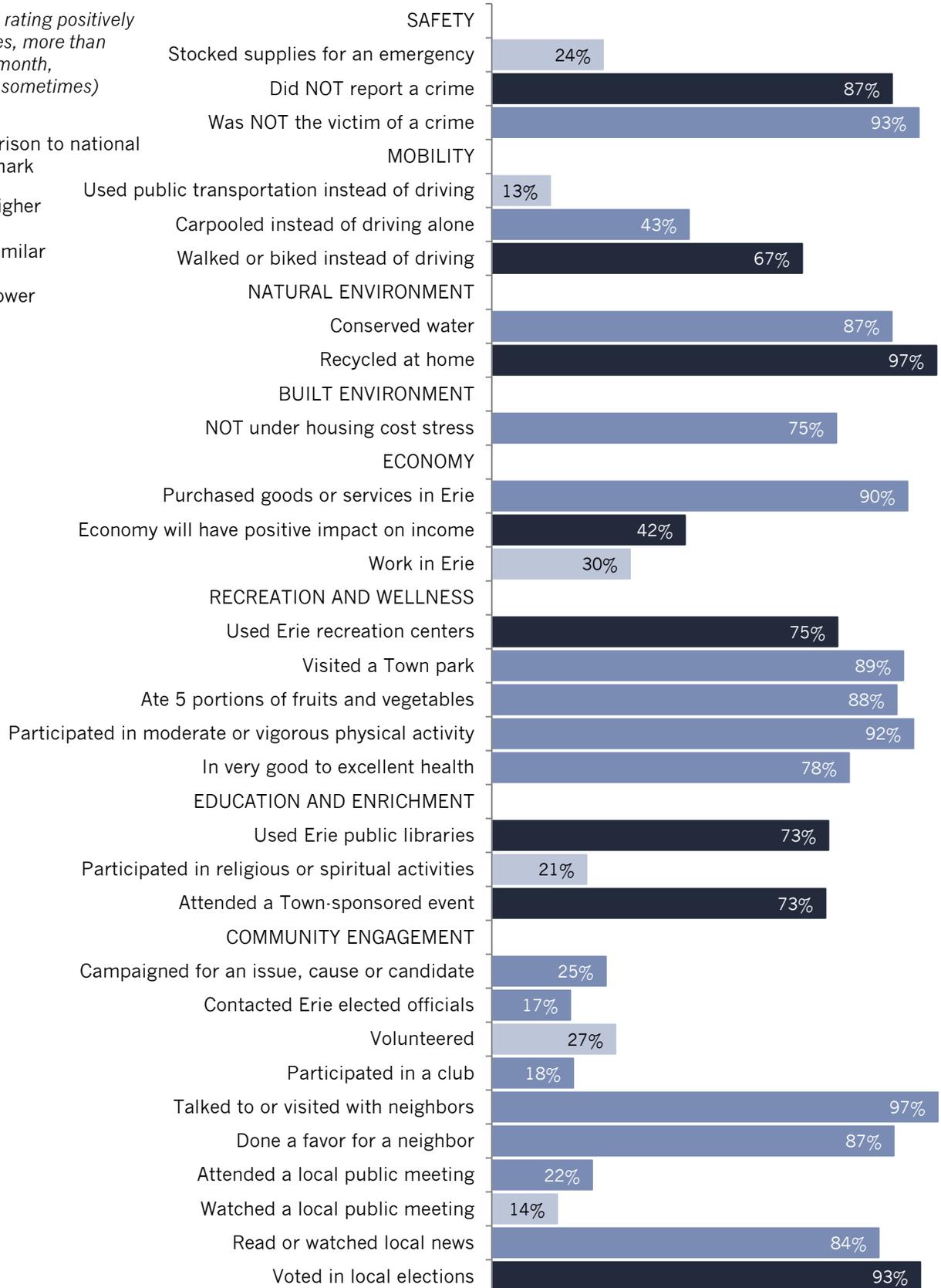
## The National Citizen Survey™

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



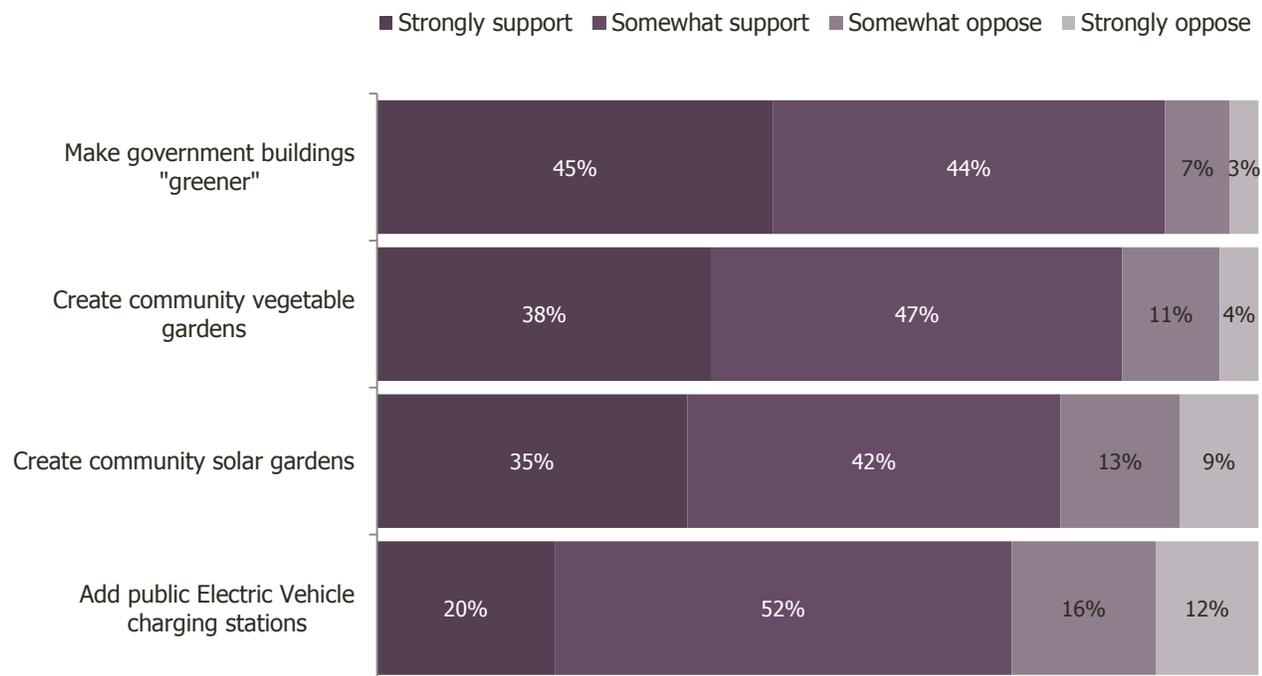
# Special Topics

The Town of Erie included seven questions of special interest on The NCS. Topics included sustainability and other initiatives, potential transportation projects, Comcast service quality, perceptions of contact with Town employees and use of various source of information, as well as a place to respond in one’s own words to a final write-in question.

The first question asked residents to indicate their level of support or opposition for potential sustainability initiatives. A majority of residents indicated that they at least somewhat supported each potential initiative. About 4 in 5 respondents supported making government buildings “greener” and creating community vegetable gardens.

Figure 4: Potential Sustainability Initiatives

*Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose the Town of Erie implementing each of the following sustainability initiatives:*

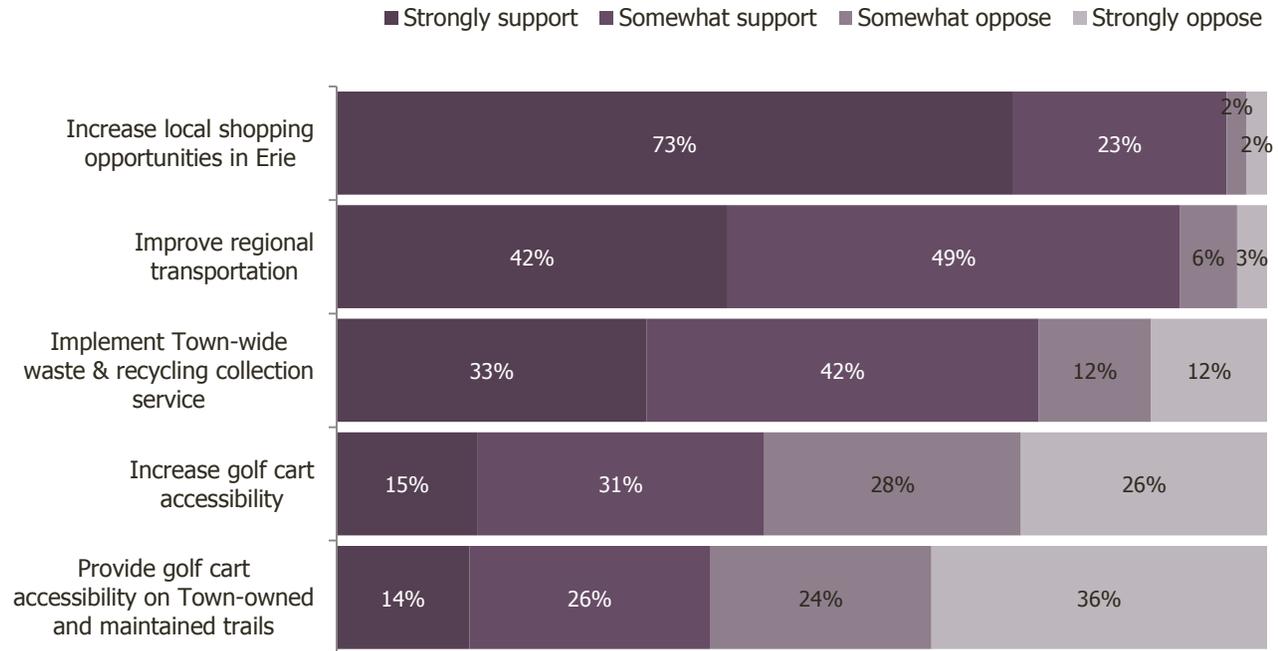


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The second question asked residents to indicate their level of support or opposition for potential Town initiatives. About 7 in 10 respondents strongly supported increasing local shopping opportunities in Erie, and a majority at least somewhat supported improving regional transportation and implementing Town-wide waste and recycling collection. Less than half were in support of increasing golf cart accessibility or providing golf cart accessibility on Town-owned and maintained trails, and notably, about one-third strongly opposed the prospective initiative.

Figure 5: Potential Town Initiatives

*The Town of Erie is considering the following initiatives. Please indicate the extent to which you support or oppose each of the following:*

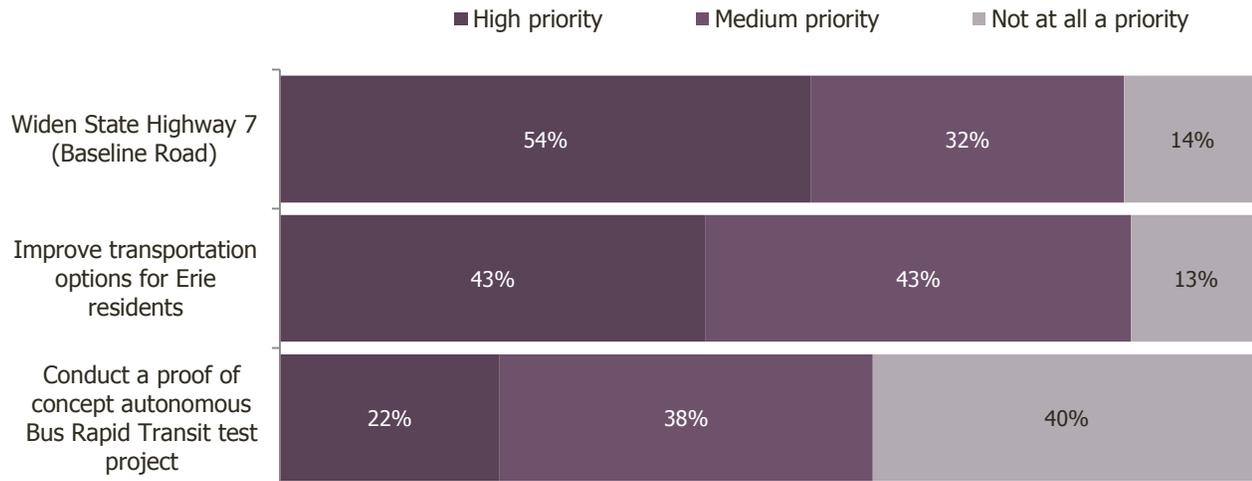


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The next question asked Erie residents to rate transportation project priorities. Eight in ten indicated that widening State Highway 7 (Baseline Road) and improving transportation options was were priorities. About 6 in 10 residents felt that conducting a proof of concept autonomous Bus Rapid Transit test project was a high or medium priority.

Figure 6: Transportation Project Priorities

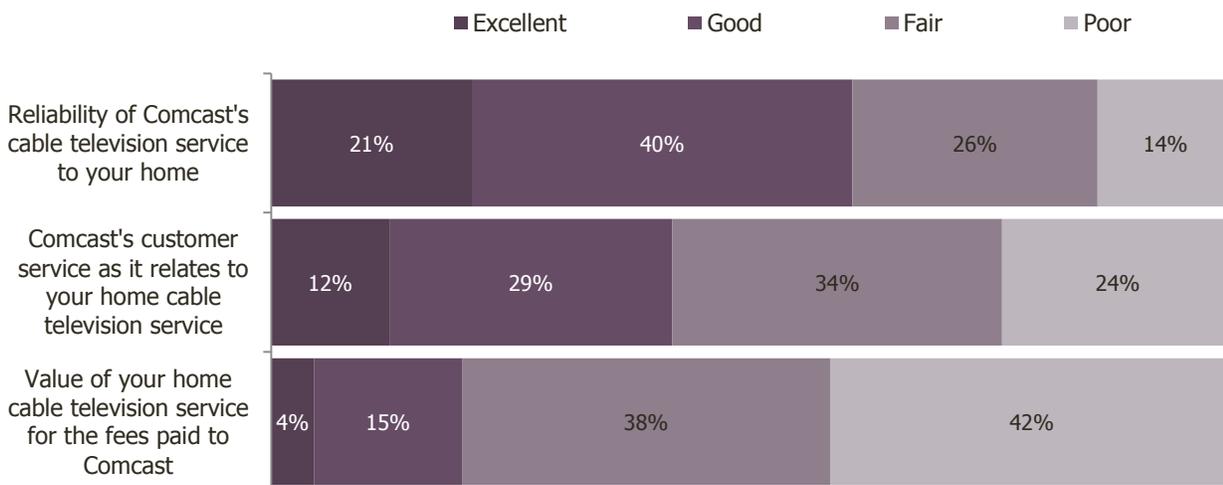
*How much of a priority, if at all, should it be for the Town of Erie to participate in funding regional transportation projects to address each of the following categories?*



Survey respondents were then asked to rate the reliability, customer service and value of their home cable television service provided by Comcast (if applicable). About 6 in 10 respondents with Comcast service rated the reliability of Comcast's cable television service in their home as excellent or good while about 4 in 10 rated Comcast's customer service favorably. Less than one-quarter of respondents positively rated the value of their home cable television service for the fees paid to Comcast.

Figure 7: Comcast/Xfinity Cable Television Service

*If you subscribe to Comcast/Xfinity for cable television, we are interested in your feedback related to their provision of services. Please rate the quality of each of the following:*

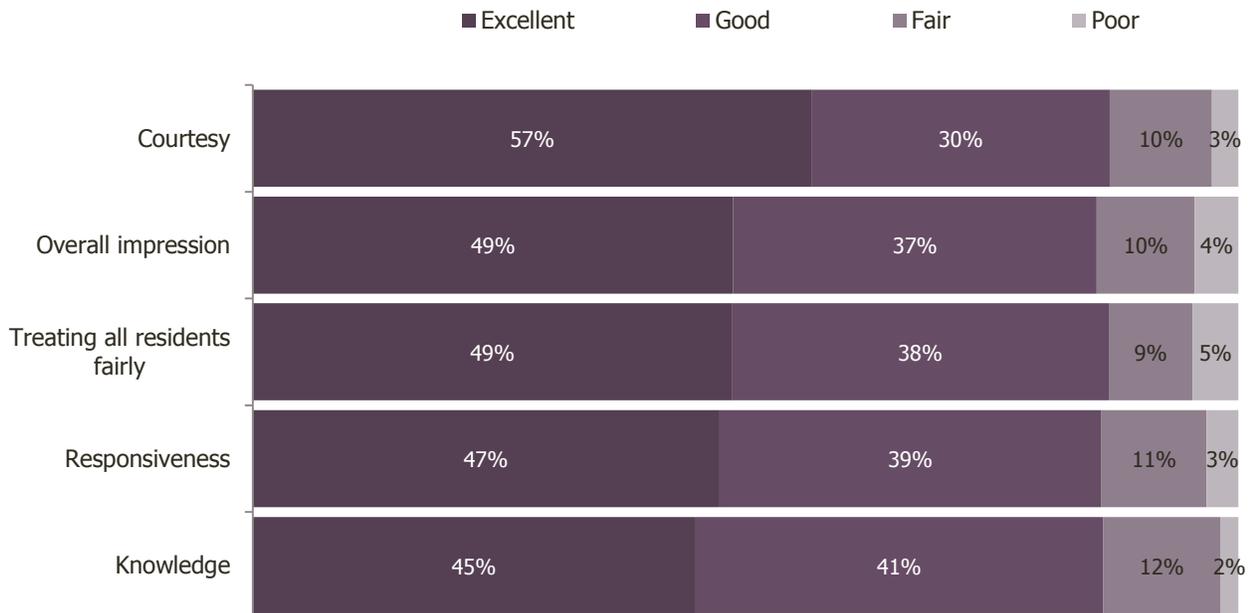


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The next custom question asked respondents to rate their most recent contact with Town of Erie staff. Ratings of contact with Town staff were very positive, and at least 4 in 5 residents rated each aspect as excellent or good.

Figure 8: Impression of Contact with Town Employees

*If you have had contact with a Town of Erie employee in the last 12 months, please rate your impression of the employee(s) in your most recent contact:*

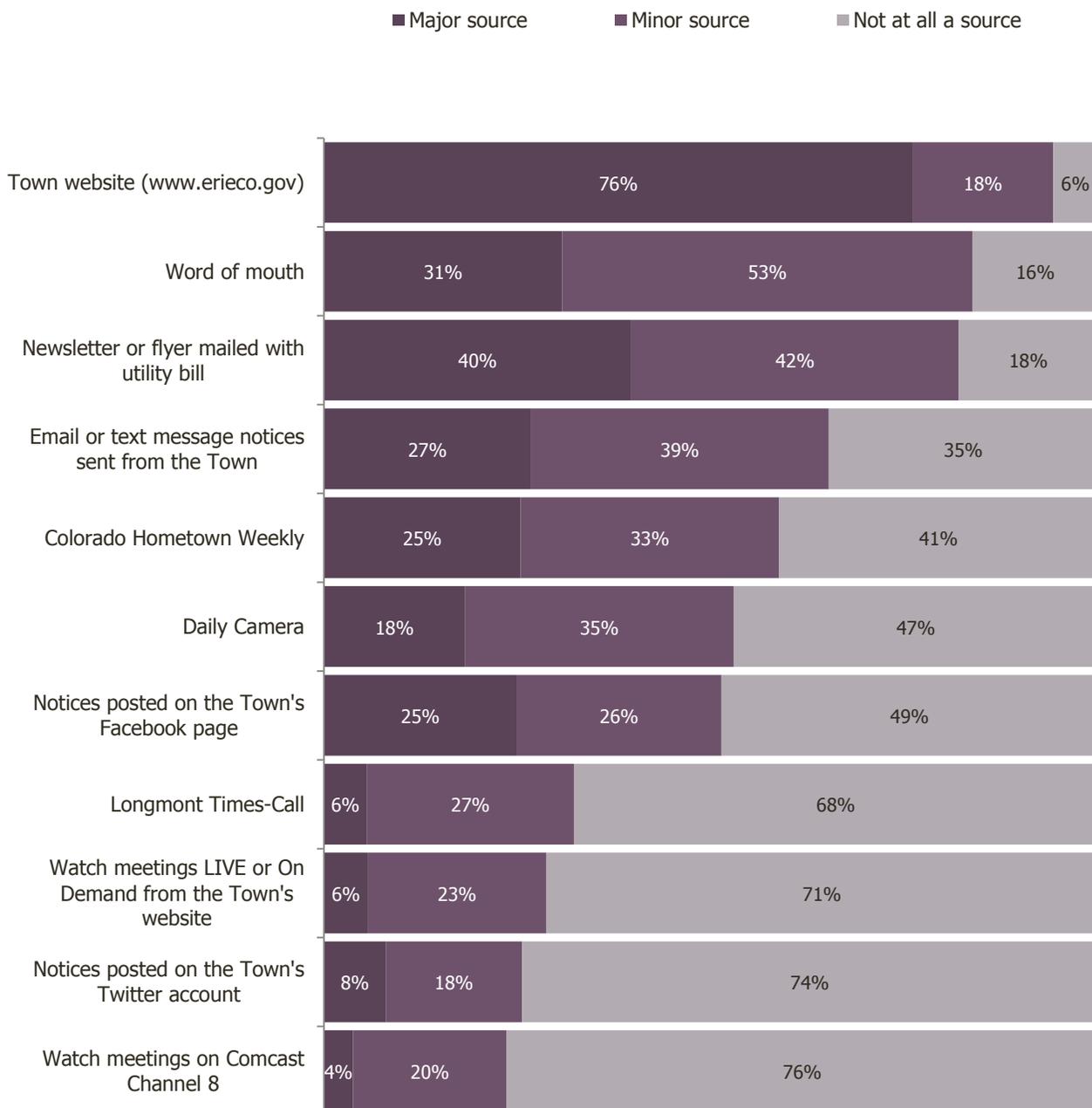


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Survey respondents were then asked about several different information sources for obtaining information about the Town of Erie. About three-quarters of respondents considered the Town website to be a major source of information. A majority of respondents also indicated that word of mouth, newsletters or flyers mailed with utility bill and email or text messages from the Town were at a major or minor source of information. About half also considered the Colorado Hometown Weekly, the Daily Camera and notices posted on the Town’s Facebook page to be major or minor sources of information. Less than one-third of residents considered the Longmont Times-Call, watching meetings on the Town’s website, notices posted on the Town’s Twitter account or watching meetings on Comcast Channel 8 to be major or minor information sources.

Figure 9: Information Sources

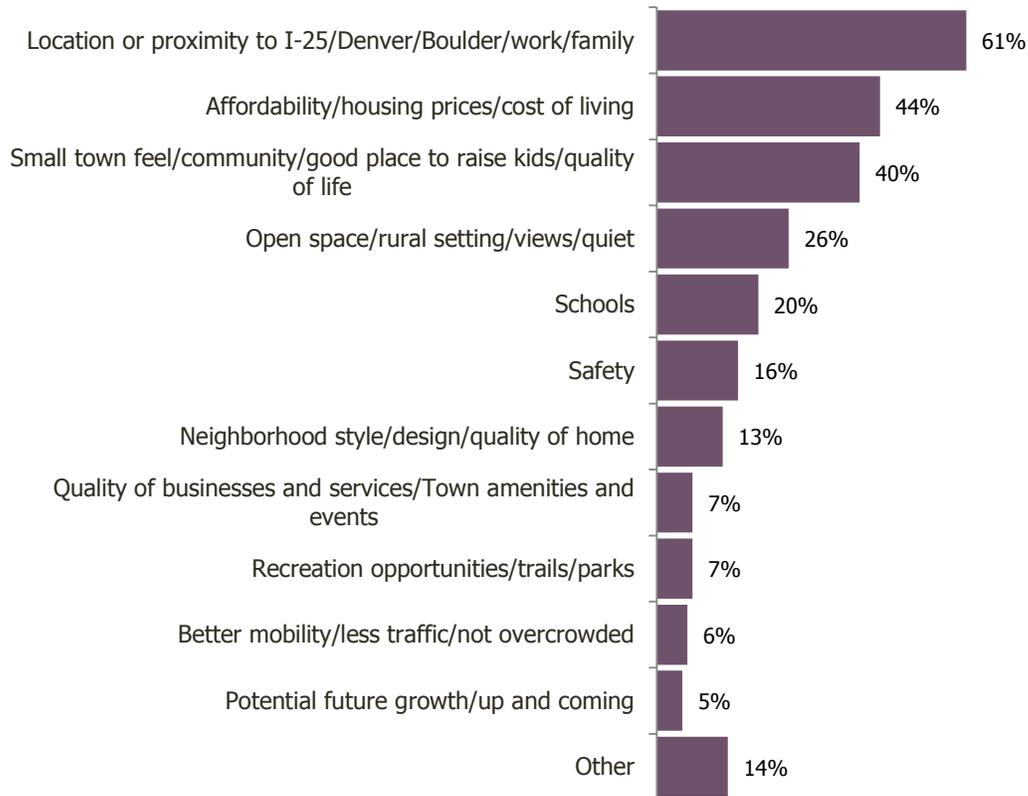
*Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the Town of Erie:*



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The final special interest question included on Erie's survey was an open-ended question (see the *Open-Ended Question Report* under separate cover). About 6 in 10 residents cited Erie's location and its proximity to I-25, Boulder, Denver, work and/or family as a top reason to live in Erie. The cost of housing and the small town feel and sense of community were also commonly cited reasons why residents chose to live in Erie.

Figure 10: Open-Ended Question  
*What are your three top reasons for choosing Erie as your home?*



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

# Conclusions

## **Erie residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life.**

Most residents rated their quality of life as excellent or good; and almost all favorably rated Erie as a place to live. Ratings for Erie as a place to raise children were higher than ratings in comparison communities. Overall, the 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 were reflected again in residents' willingness to recommend Erie to others and to live there for the next five years. These positive ratings tended to remain stable from 2015 to 2017.

## **Economy ratings are on the rise, reflecting successes and challenges.**

Erie residents identified Economy as one of the top two community focus areas in the coming two years. Ratings of aspects of Economy were mixed when compared to the national benchmarks. While several aspects of Economy were lower than ratings in comparison communities, ratings for several aspects increased from 2015 to 2017. One aspect of Economy (cost of living) was trending down from 2015 to 2017 while ratings increased for the overall economic health of Erie, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, Erie as a place to visit, vibrant downtown, place to work, the overall quality of businesses and services and economic development. More respondents reported that they had purchased goods or services in Erie in 2017 compared to 2015. Further, more Erie residents had a positive economic outlook than residents in comparison communities. When asked about potential Town initiatives, about three-quarters of respondents strongly supported increasing local shopping opportunities in Erie.

## **Safety is a top priority for the community.**

Safety was also identified as a key community focus area, and Erie residents tended to give positive ratings to each aspect of this facet. Most Safety ratings were similar to the national benchmarks. About 4 in 5 residents positively rated the overall feeling of safety in the Town almost all felt safe in their neighborhoods and downtown. Ratings for the overall feeling of safety in Erie were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation. The vast majority of respondents had neither been the victim of a crime nor needed to report a crime. Safety ratings remained stable from 2015 to 2017.

## **Residents have increased trust in Town Government.**

While there were several ratings across Pillars and Facets that increased from 2015 to 2017, one stand-out was ratings within General Governance. Erie residents have higher marks to welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in Town government, acting in the best interest of Erie, being honest and to treating all residents fairly in 2017 compared to 2015. Further, ratings for the overall image or reputation of Erie continued to rise in 2017.