

The National Citizen Survey™

Palm Coast, FL

Community Livability Report
2013

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The National Citizen Survey™
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National Research Center, Inc.
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80301
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

About

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

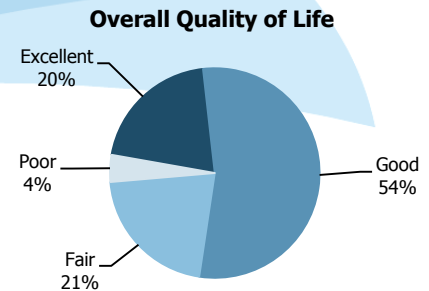
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample selected from 1,200 residents of the City of Palm Coast. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for the entire sample (379 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Palm Coast

Most residents rate the quality of life in Palm Coast as excellent or good. Three-quarters of residents rated the quality of life positively, a rating that was similar to 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.

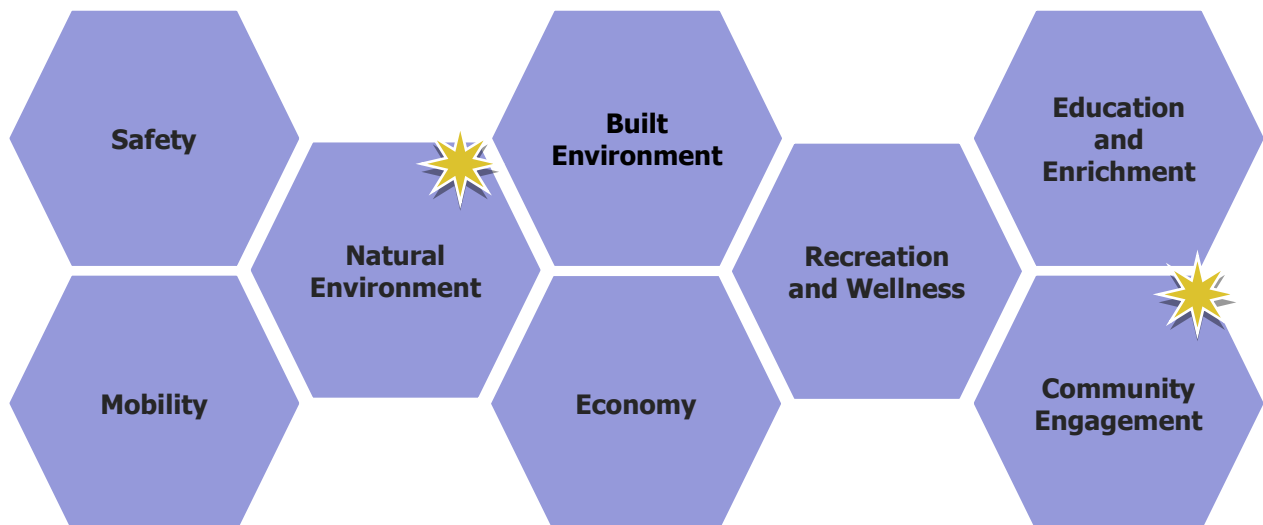


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents' overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life (Natural Environment and Community Engagement) as the most central to what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

Legend

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



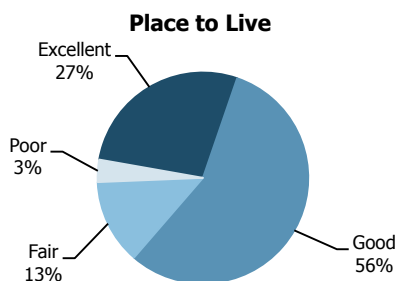
Community Characteristics

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 Palm Coast, 8 in 10 respondents rated positively Palm Coast as a place to live. Respondents' ratings of Palm Coast 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 Palm Coast as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Palm Coast and its overall appearance. The most positively rated aspects of community quality were the overall appearance of Palm Coast, neighborhoods as place to live and Palm Coast as a place to retire. Ratings for the community as a place to retire and its overall appearance were both above the benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight dimensions of Community Livability. Aspects within Safety, Mobility and the Natural Environment were all rated highly. Seven in 10 respondents felt safe in Palm Coast and almost all respondents felt safe in their neighborhood. Ratings for aspects of Mobility were mostly similar to the benchmark, with the exception of paths and walking trails, which were rated above the benchmark. About 8 in 10 respondents rated aspects within the Natural Environment positively. Facets with varied ratings included the Built Environment, Economy and Education and Enrichment. Within the Built Environment, ratings for the availability of affordable quality housing were above the benchmark, but ratings for the quality of new development in Palm Coast were below the benchmark. Four of the eight aspects of Economy were below the benchmark and four were similar to the benchmark. Employment opportunities were rated the lowest within Economy, while Palm Coast as a place to visit was rated the highest. Most aspects for Education and Enrichment were similar to the benchmarks, except for childcare/preschool which was above the benchmark and education and enrichment activities which were below the benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower ■ Not available

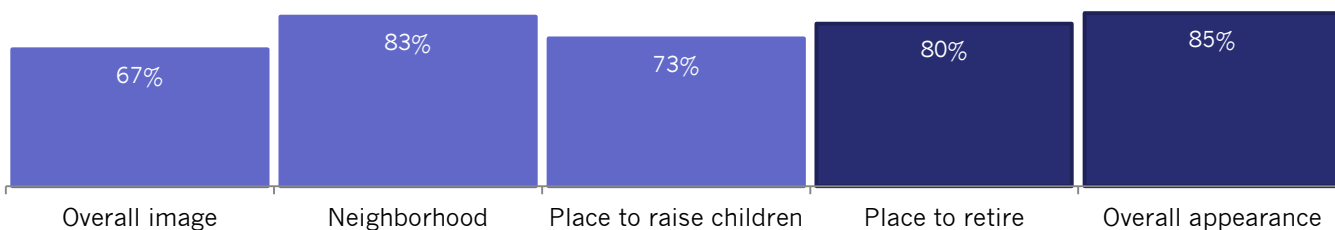


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

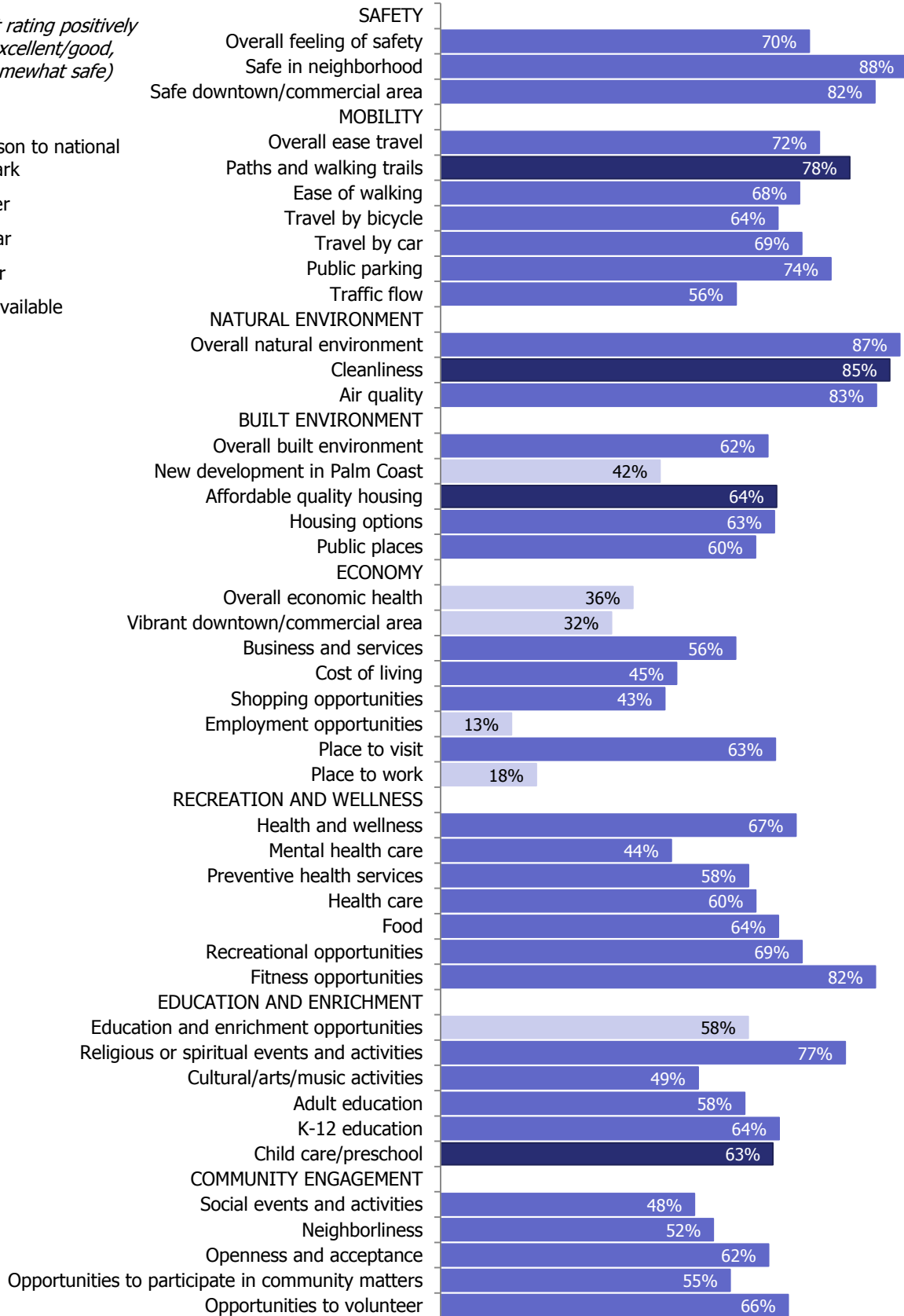
Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

■ Similar

■ Lower

□ Not available



Governance

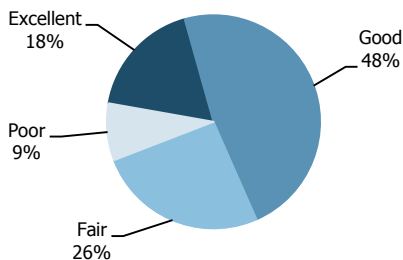
How well does the government of Palm Coast meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Palm Coast as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. The majority of respondents rate the quality of City services highly. Ratings provided for the quality of City services were higher than ratings for services provided by the Federal Government. Ratings for Palm Coast's City services were similar to the benchmark, while ratings for the Federal Government's services were below the benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Palm Coast's leadership and governance. Palm Coast received the highest ratings for customer service followed by the overall value of services for taxes paid. Almost 5 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings for Palm Coast welcoming citizen involvement and Palm Coast treating all residents fairly. The eight aspects of Palm Coast's leadership and governance were all similar to the benchmark.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Palm Coast. The facets of Safety and Recreation and Wellness both received high ratings, with all aspects within these facets being rated similar to the benchmark. While ratings for aspects within Mobility varied, ratings for street repair and sidewalk maintenance were rated highly and were above the benchmark. However, ratings for street lighting and traffic signal timing were rated positively by less than half of respondents and were below the benchmark. Most ratings within the Natural Environment were positive. Over 8 in 10 respondents rated garbage collection, recycling, and yard waste pick-up positively. Natural areas preservation and Palm Coast open space were also rated positively, while drinking water received the lowest ratings and was below the benchmark. For the facets of Built Environment, Economy, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement, ratings varied. Out of the six aspects rated in the Built Environment, five were above the benchmark and one was below the benchmark. Ratings for Economy, particularly economic development, were below the benchmark with about one-third of respondents rating economic development positively. Within Education and Enrichment, public libraries received high ratings. Ratings for Community Engagement were also positive and rated similar to the benchmark.

Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower ■ Not available

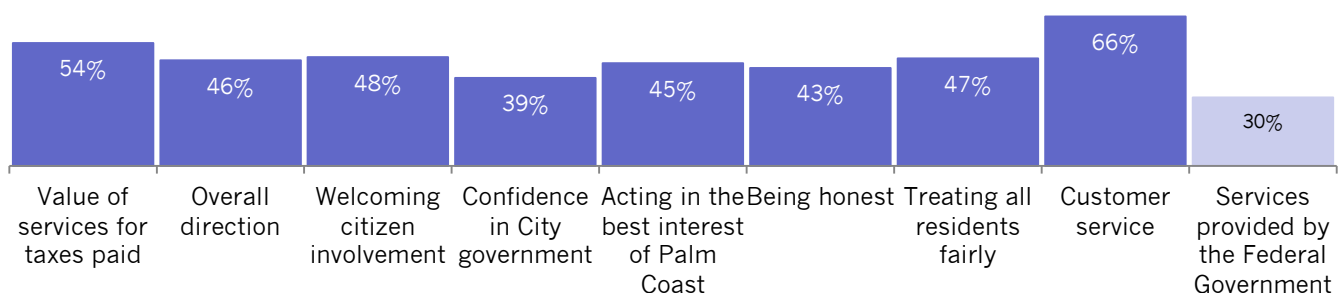


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

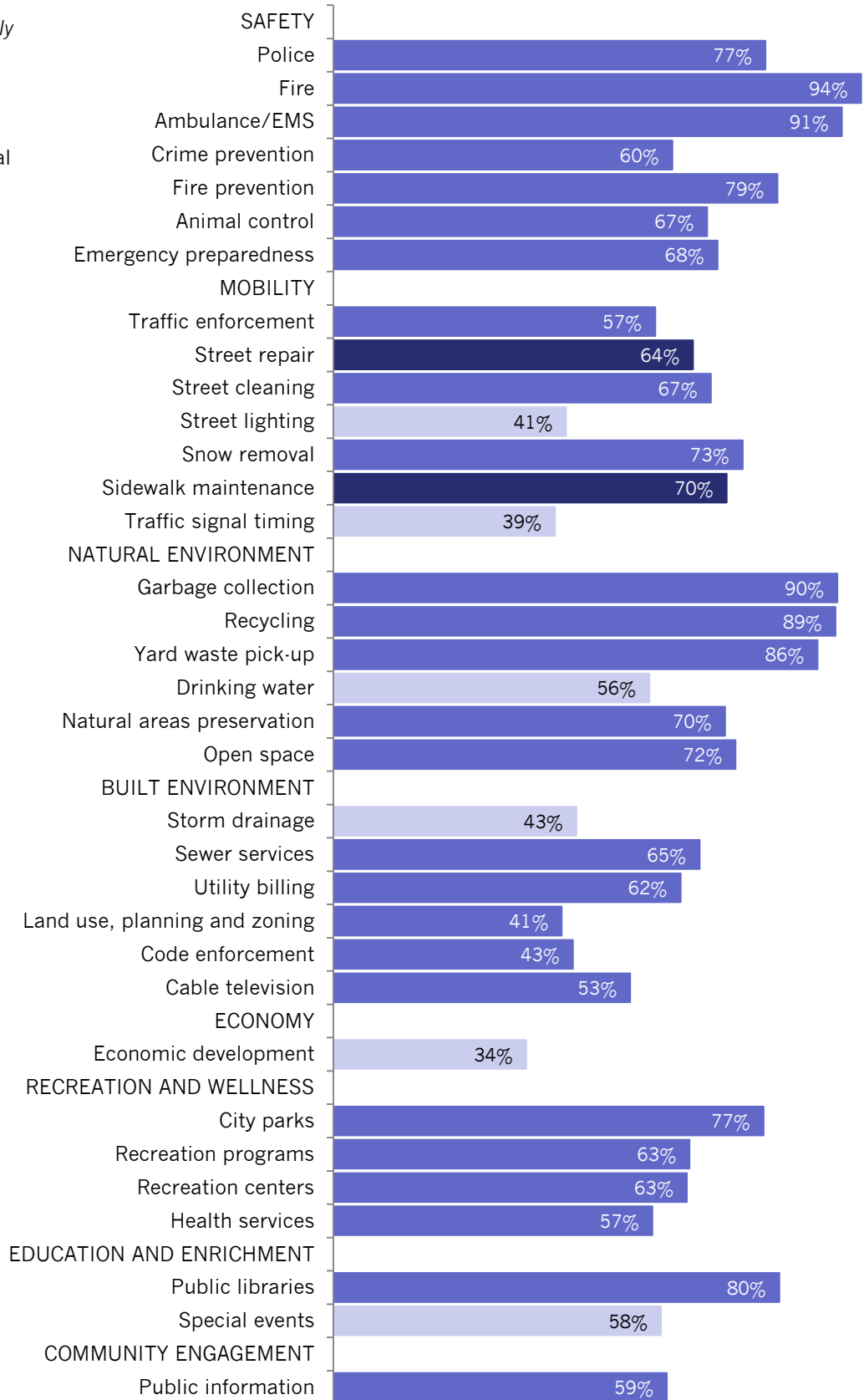
Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

■ Similar

■ Lower

□ Not available

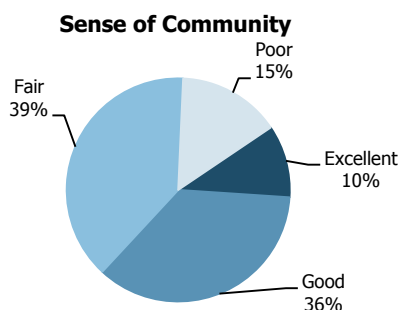


Participation

Are the residents of Palm Coast 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. Forty-six percent of respondents rated the sense of community positively, a rating that was below the benchmark. But, over 80% of residents would recommend Palm Coast to others and plan on remaining in Palm Coast, ratings that were similar to the benchmark and trending upward compared to the 2012 survey (see *Palm Coast Trends over Time Report* provided under a separate cover) .

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation ratings were highest for Safety, the Natural Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment. Participants indicated they were prepared for emergencies, with over half of respondents having stocked supplies for an emergency; these ratings were above the benchmark. Most participants cared about the Natural Environment; nearly all participants had made efforts to conserve water and recycled and about 8 in 10 participants had made efforts to make their home more energy efficient. All aspects of Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment were similar to the benchmark and were rated positively by a majority of respondents. Out of the eight facets of Participation, aspects within Mobility received the lowest rates of participation and were below the benchmark



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

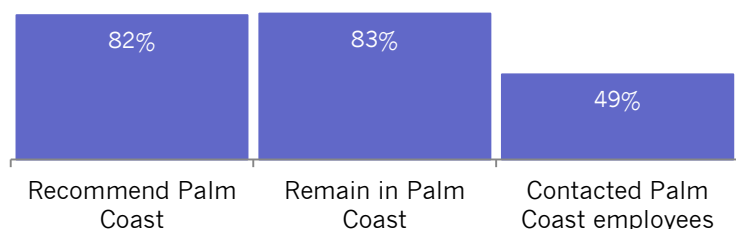


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

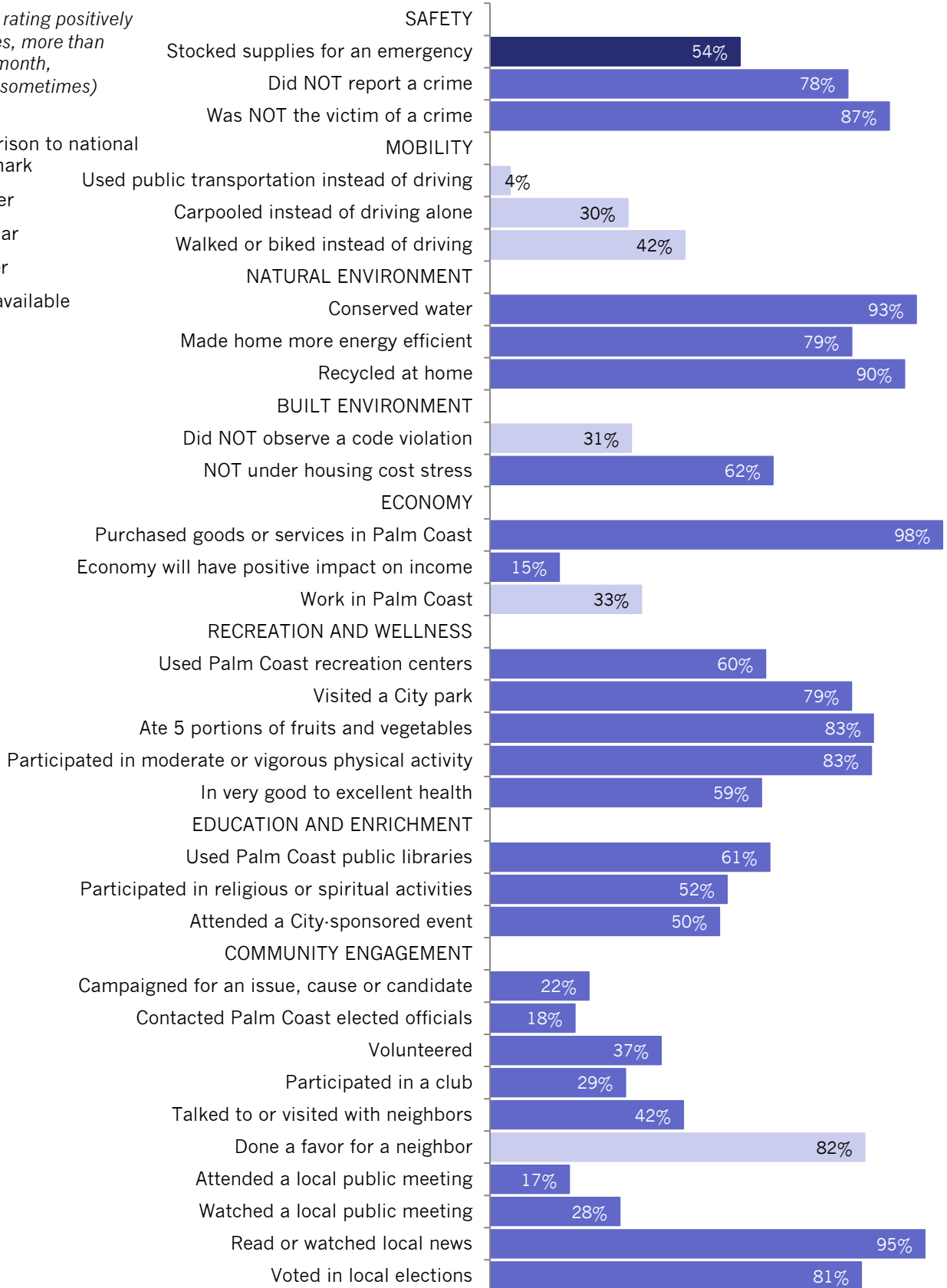
Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher

■ Similar

■ Lower

□ Not available

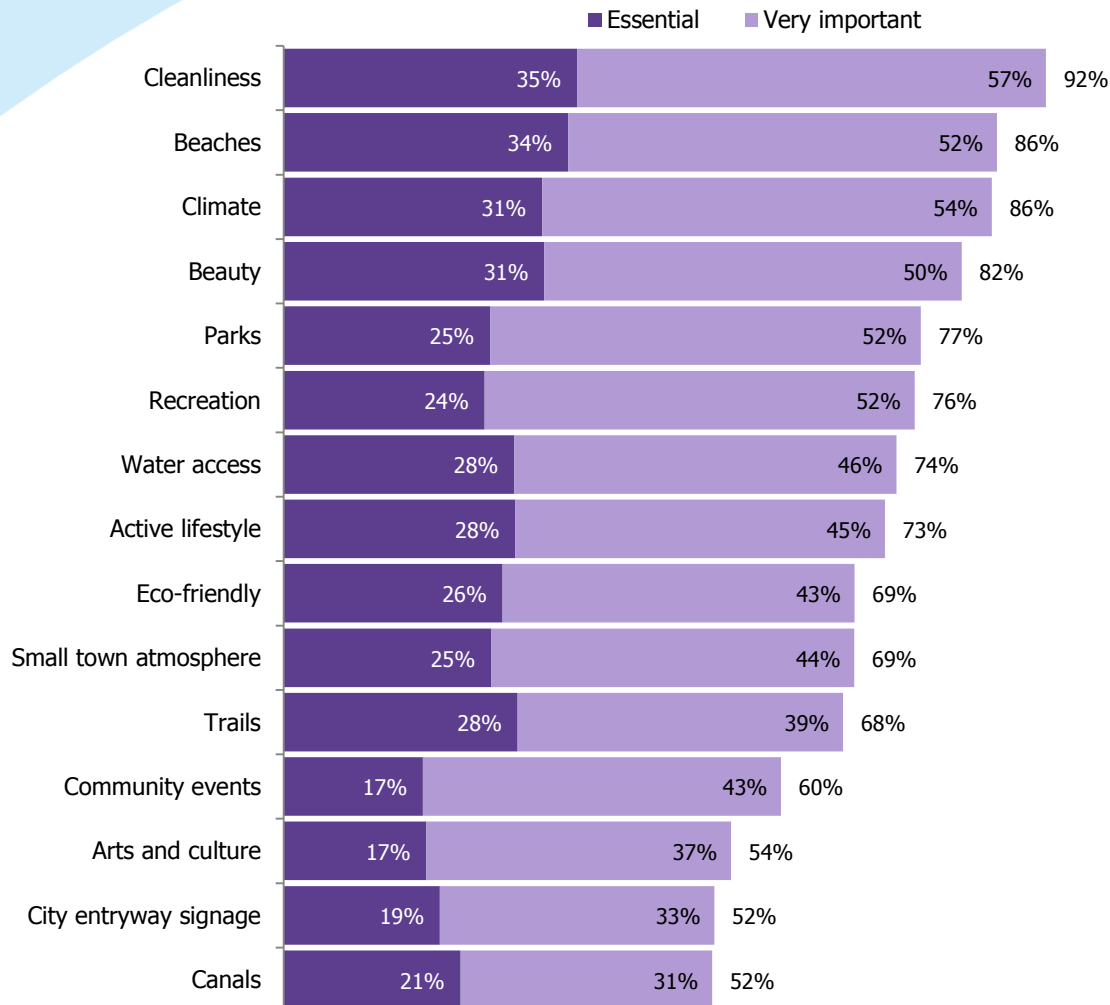


Special Topics

The City of Palm Coast included four questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question focused on attributes that participants found most important to promoting Palm Coast. Participants indicated that cleanliness, beaches, the climate and the beauty of Palm Coast were most important attributes in promoting Palm Coast. The least important attributes included arts and culture, City entryway signage and canals.

Figure 4: Question 13

If you were telling a friend about Palm Coast, how important would the following attributes be in promoting Palm Coast?



Almost all participants had lived outside of Palm Coast at some point. When asked how Palm Coast compared to their previous place of residency, climate was overwhelmingly rated the most positively. Other positively rated factors included cleanliness, beauty and trails. Participants rated community events and shopping the least positively.

Figure 5: Question 14

Have you ever lived anywhere outside of Palm Coast?

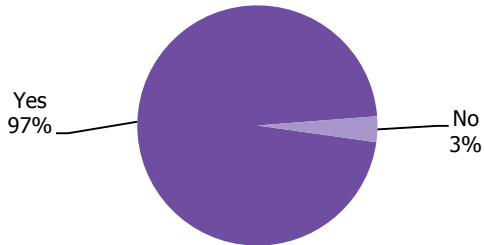
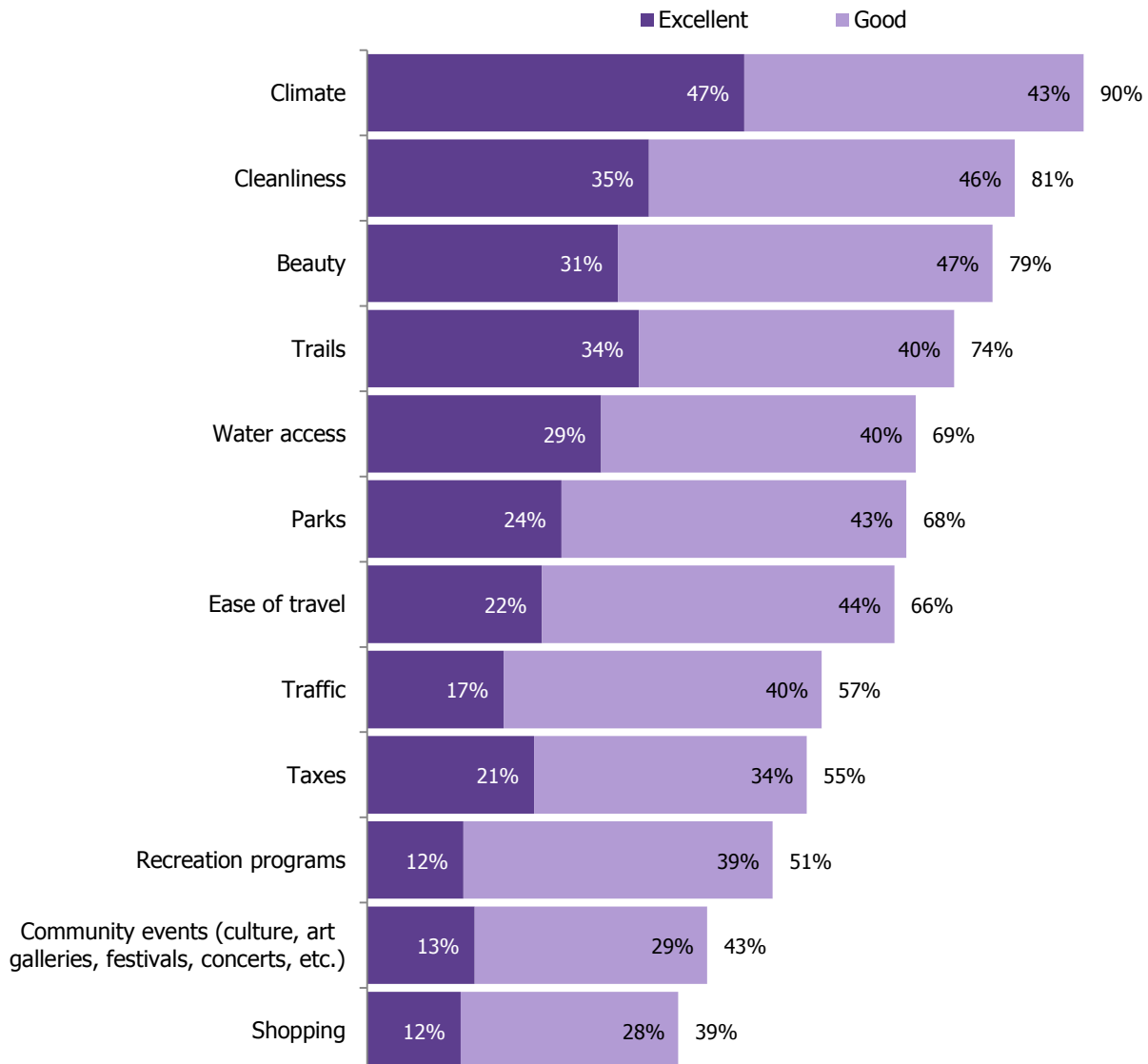


Figure 6: Question 15

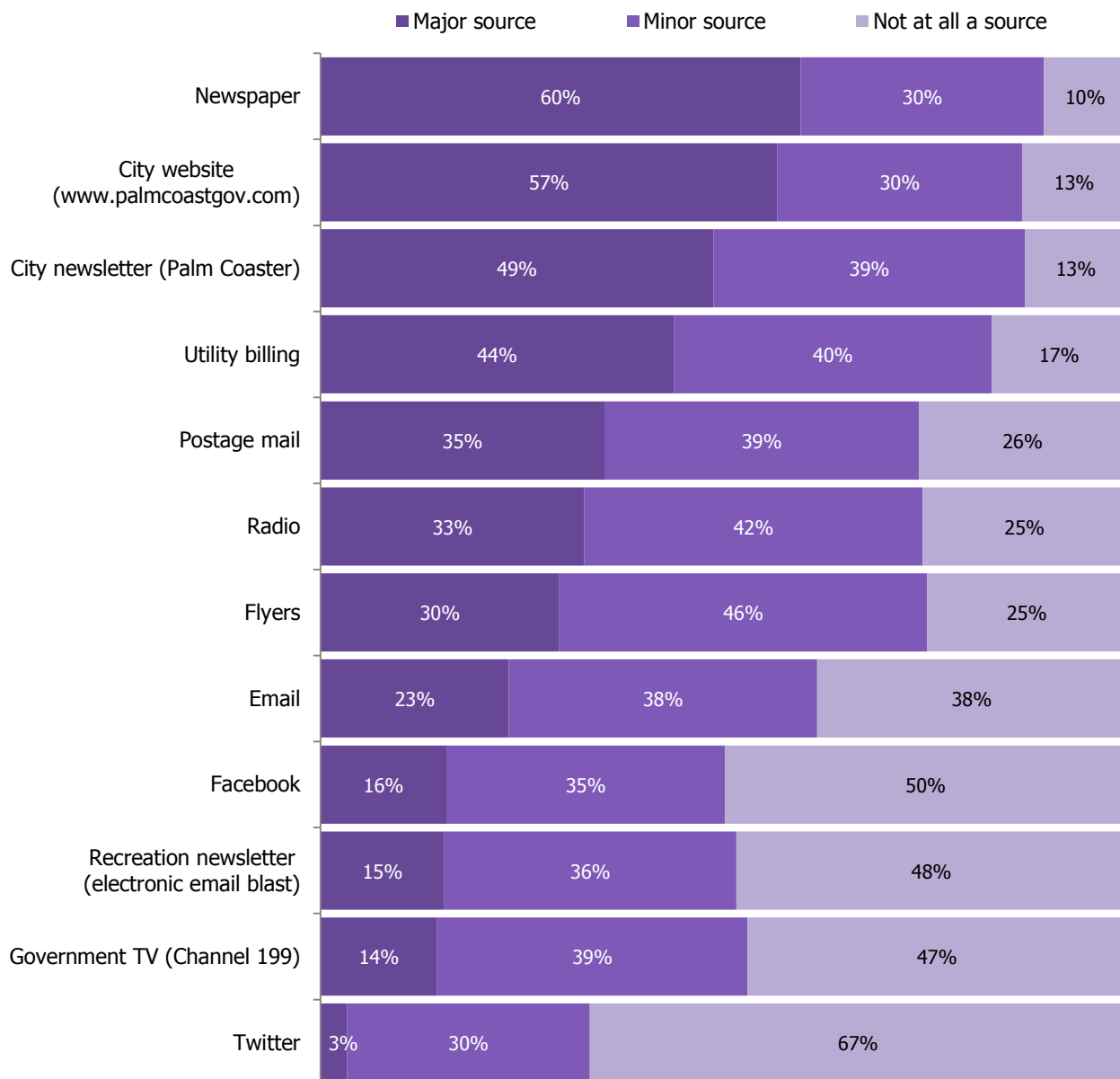
Considering where you lived previously, how does Palm Coast compare on the following factors?



Participants were also asked what sources of information they used for community events, important information critical meetings and more. Most participants indicated that newspapers and the City website were major sources of information for them. Other sources that were at least a major or minor source of information included the City newsletter, utility billing, postage mail, the radio and flyers.

Figure 7: Question 16

Which of the following sources of information do you consider a major, minor or not a source of information for community events, important information, critical meetings, etc.?



Conclusions

The Natural Environment makes Palm Coast a very desirable community in which to live.

Across Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation, ratings for the Natural Environment were high. Many aspects of the Natural Environment were similar to the benchmark and Palm Coast's cleanliness was above the benchmark. Ratings were high for services such as garbage collection, recycling, and yard waste pick-up and participants frequently participated in conserving water, recycling, and making their homes energy efficient. When asked what were the most important attributes in promoting Palm Coast were and how Palm Coast compared to previous communities they had lived in, cleanliness, beaches, climate, beauty and trails were the most frequently cited answers.

Participants value their Safety.

About 7 in 10 respondents feel safe overall and almost all participants feel safe in their neighborhood. Safety aspects of Governance were rated highly by a majority of participants and were similar to the benchmarks. More participants in Palm Coast are prepared for emergencies with stocked supplies than in jurisdictions across the nation. Most participants had not been a victim of a crime or had reported a crime to police in Palm Coast; both were these ratings were similar to the benchmark.

Recreation and Wellness are important to participants.

A majority of participants gave high ratings for Community Characteristics surrounding Recreation and Wellness (such as fitness opportunities, recreation opportunities and health and wellness). Ratings for recreation opportunities were also trending upward compared to the 2012 survey (see *Palm Coast Trends over Time Report* provided under a separate cover). While City parks, recreation programs and health services were trending lower compared to 2012, they were still rated highly by a majority of participants and were similar to the benchmarks. Participation in Recreation and Wellness is high in Palm Coast. About 8 in 10 participants have visited a City park, eaten at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day and participated in moderate to vigorous physical activity. About three-quarters of respondents cited recreation and an active lifestyle as an "essential" or "very important" attribute in promoting Palm Coast.

The Economy still has room for improvement.

While many ratings for the Economy were stable over time and similar to the benchmark, there were still aspects that could see improvement. Aspects such as overall economic health, employment opportunities and Palm Coast as a place to work were below the benchmark and rated positively by less than half of participants. Ratings for economic development were also below the benchmark and about one-third of participants rated it positively. But, some economic ratings were positive. Particularly, ratings for businesses and services in Palm Coast were rated highly by over half of participants, a rating that was higher than in 2012. Most participants rated Palm Coast as a place to visit highly and almost all participants (98%) purchased goods or services in Palm Coast.