

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Palm Coast, FL
Community Livability Report

2017



NRC
National Research Center Inc

2955 Valmont Road Suite 300
Boulder, Colorado 80301
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
icma.org • 800-745-8780

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

NRC is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

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.

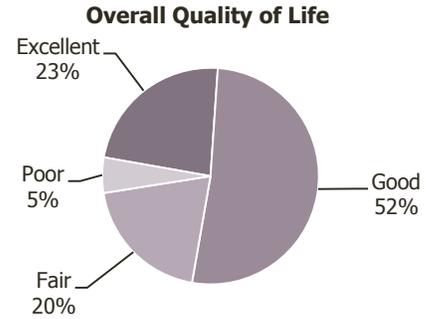
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 of 444 residents of the City of Palm Coast. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% 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 Palm Coast

About three-quarters of residents rated the quality of life in Palm Coast as excellent or good. This rating was similar to the national benchmark comparison (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.

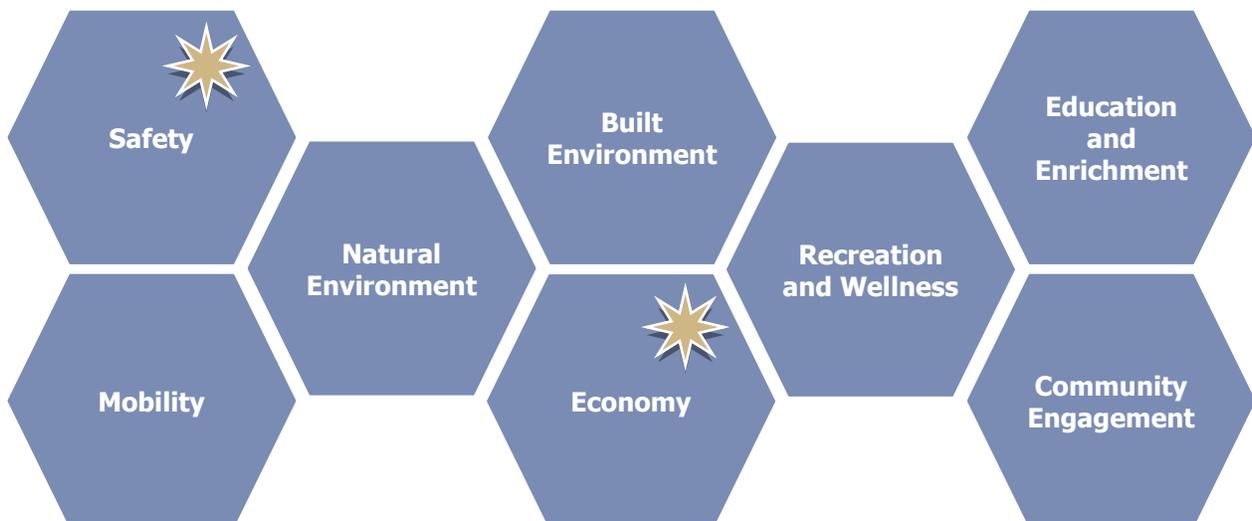
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Palm Coast community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets tended to be positive and similar to the national benchmark comparisons. 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

- Most important



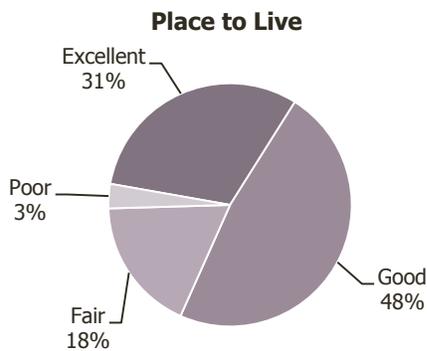
Community Characteristics

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 Palm Coast, 79% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Palm Coast as a place to live were similar to 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 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. A majority of residents rated each aspect positively. About 4 in 5 residents gave high marks to Palm Coast as a place to retire and to the overall appearance of the City; these ratings were higher than ratings observed elsewhere.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Broadly, most aspects tended to be similar to the benchmark and rated positively by about half or more of respondents. Within Mobility, ratings for travel by public transportation were lower than the national average, while evaluations for public parking were higher those seen across the nation. Respondents reviews of Economy-related aspects were also a mix of positive and negative— while most measures were similar to the benchmarks, ratings for vibrant downtown/commercial area, employment opportunities and Palm Coast as a place to work were lower than in comparison communities.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



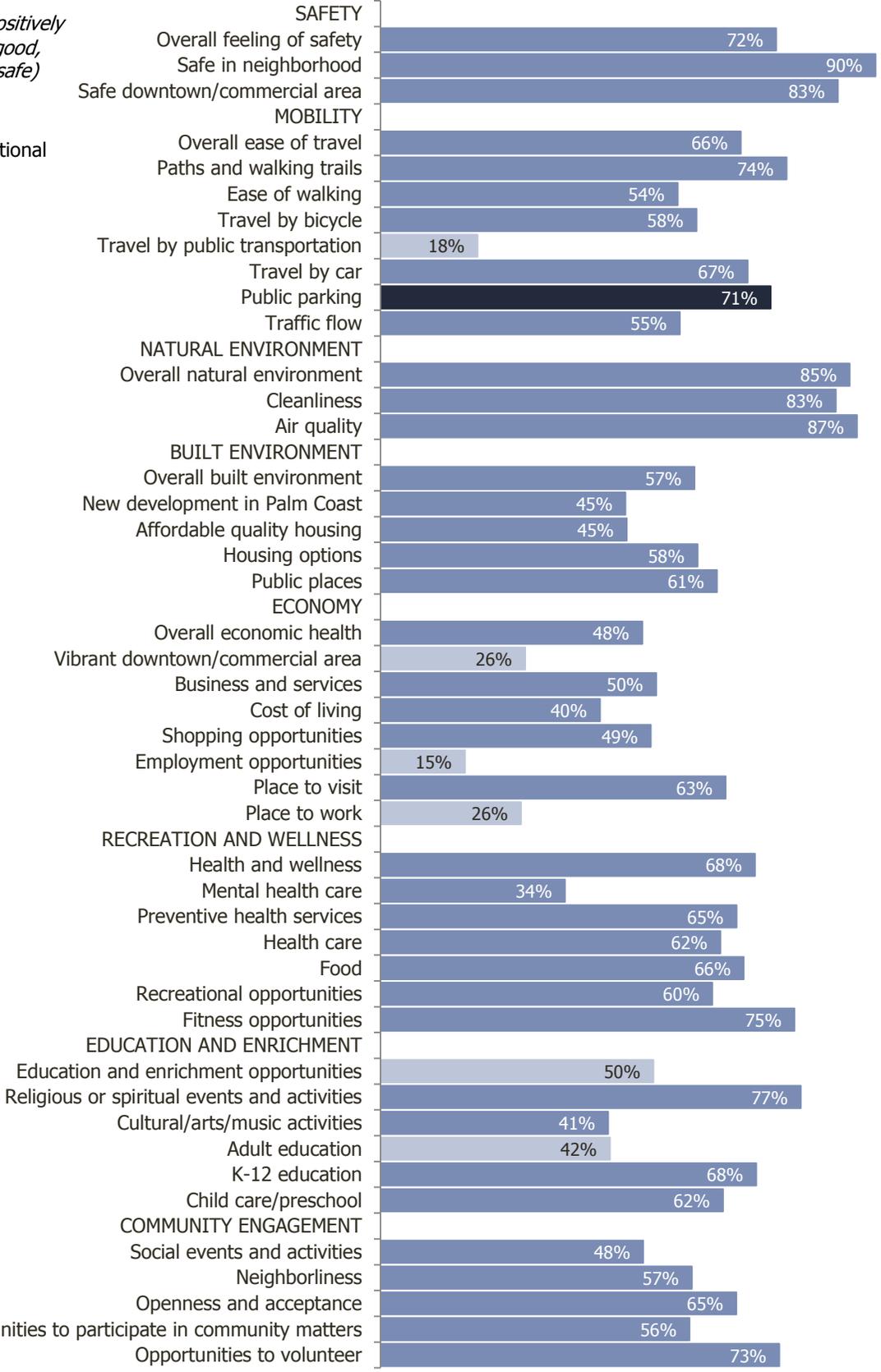
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

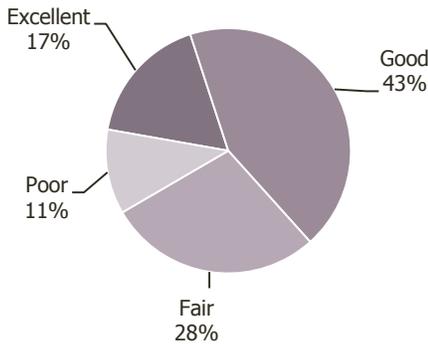
How well does the government of Palm Coast meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Palm Coast as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 6 in 10 residents gave high marks to the overall quality of City services, while about 4 in 10 were pleased with the quality of services provided by the Federal Government. Both ratings were similar to the national benchmarks.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Palm Coast’s leadership and governance. Aspects of government performance tended to receive ratings that were similar to the benchmarks, and most were rated positively by at least 4 in 10 residents. Scores for the overall confidence in City government and being honest were lower than ratings observed elsewhere.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Palm Coast. All aspects of Safety, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement received excellent or good reviews from a majority of residents and these ratings were all similar to ratings in comparison communities. Most aspects of Mobility were on par with other communities; however ratings for street lighting and bus or transit services were lower than the national benchmarks. While a majority of respondents positively rated each aspect of Natural Environment, ratings for garbage collection, yard waste pick-up and drinking water were lower than the benchmarks.

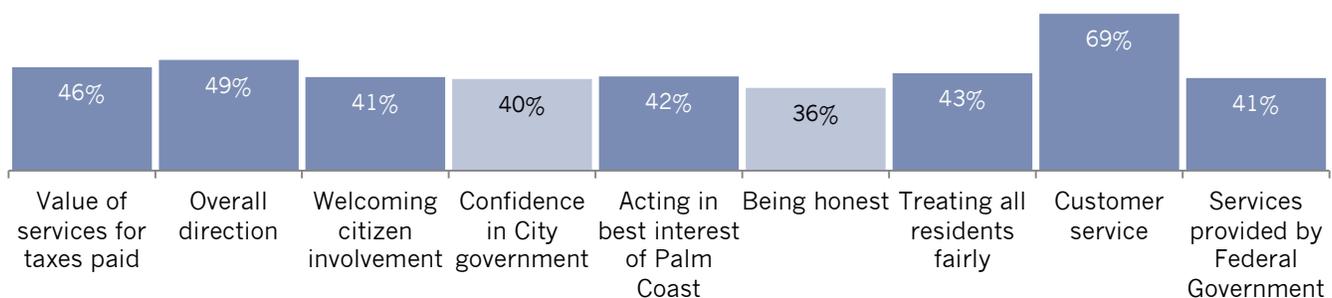
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



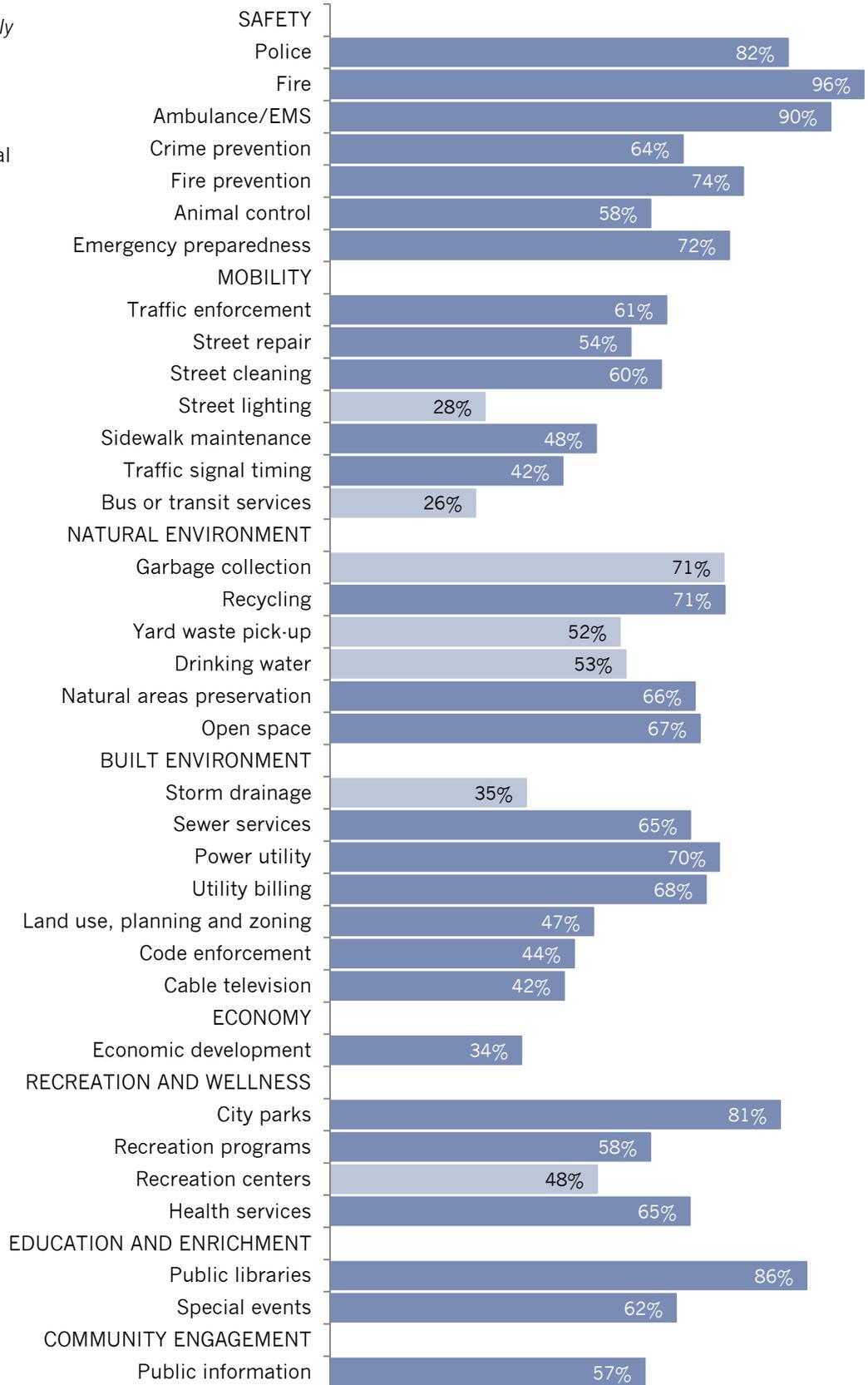
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

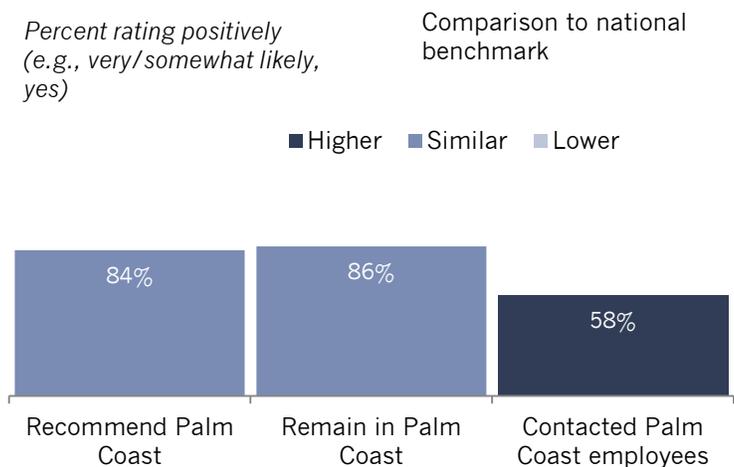
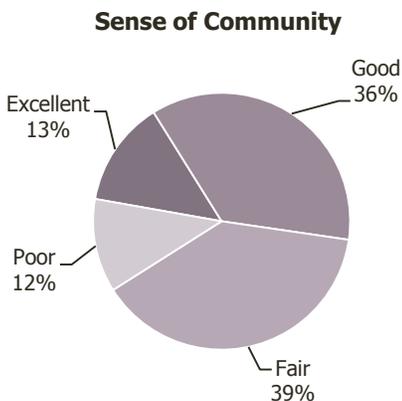


Participation

Are the residents of Palm Coast 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 half of the survey respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall sense of community in Palm Coast and this rating was similar to national averages. About four in five residents reported that they were likely to recommend living in Palm Coast and that they planned to remain in the community; these rates were similar to the benchmarks. A majority had contacted Palm Coast employees in the last 12 months; this rate of contact was higher than reported rates in comparison communities.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Most reported rates of Participation were similar to the national benchmarks. Palm Coast residents reported the highest rates of stocking emergency supplies when compare to all other communities in NRC’s database. Respondents’ use of alternative modes of travel, such as using public transit, carpooling and walking or biking, were lower than in comparison communities. More Palm Coast residents had observed a code violation compared to residents across the nation and was higher than levels reported in 2015. Almost all residents indicated they had conserved water, recycled, purchased goods or services, been neighborly, read or watched local news and voted in local elections. Compared to 2015, more survey participants were optimistic about the local economy in 2017.



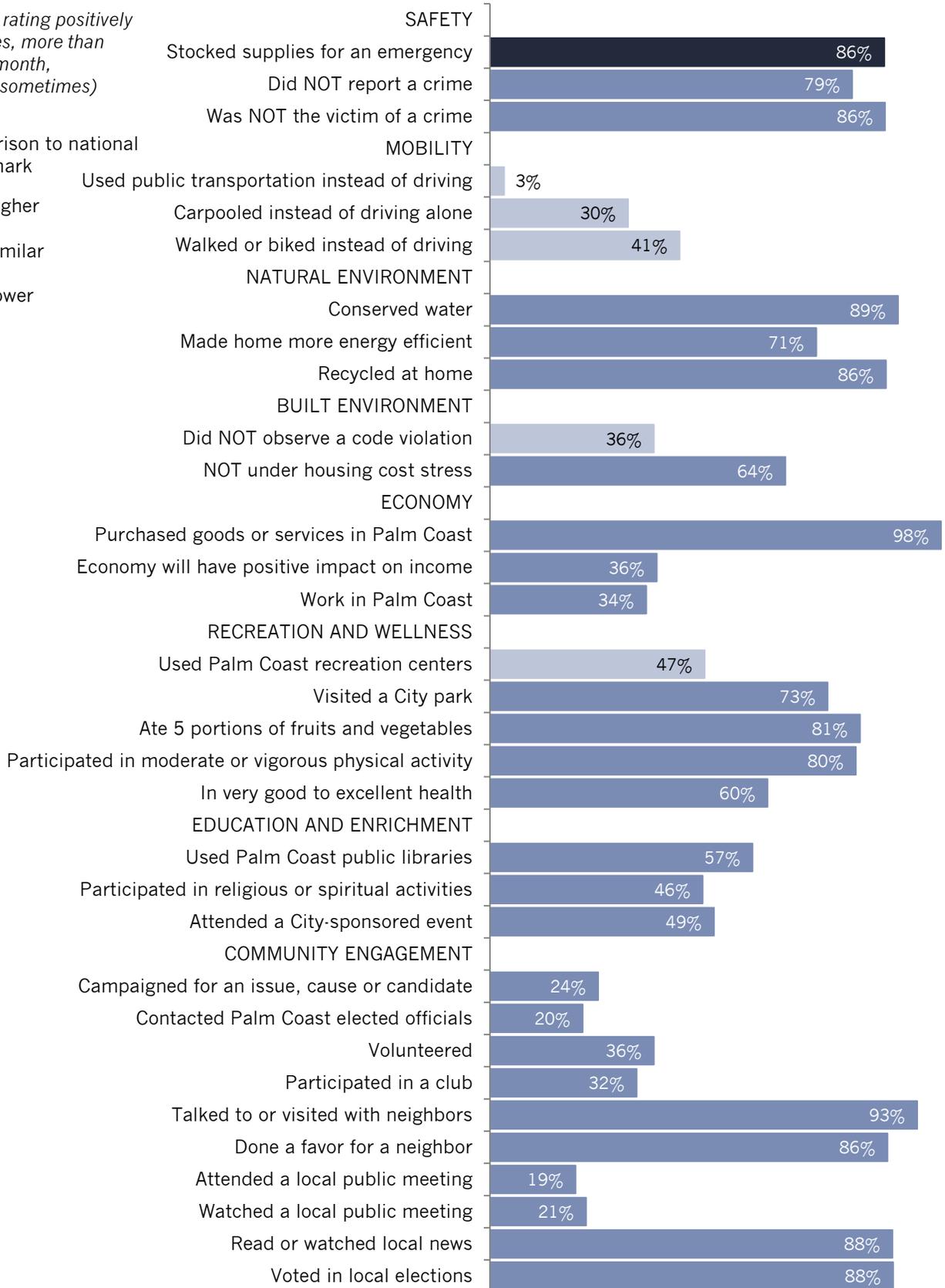
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Special Topics

The City of Palm Coast included four questions of special interest on The NCS, all related to Hurricane Irma. The first question was a two-part question, first inquiring about the sources of information respondents used during Hurricane Irma, then asking them to rate the helpfulness of the sources used. About 7 in 10 respondents said they had used local television, and about half used the Flagler County website, Facebook and Flagler Broadcasting Radio during Hurricane Irma. With the exception of Twitter, a majority of residents rated all sources as very or somewhat helpful during the hurricane. Local television was viewed as the most helpful, followed by Flagler Broadcasting Radio and the Flagler County and City of Palm Coast websites.

Figure 4: Information Sources Used During Hurricane Irma
Please indicate which, if any, of the following sources of information you used during Hurricane Irma:

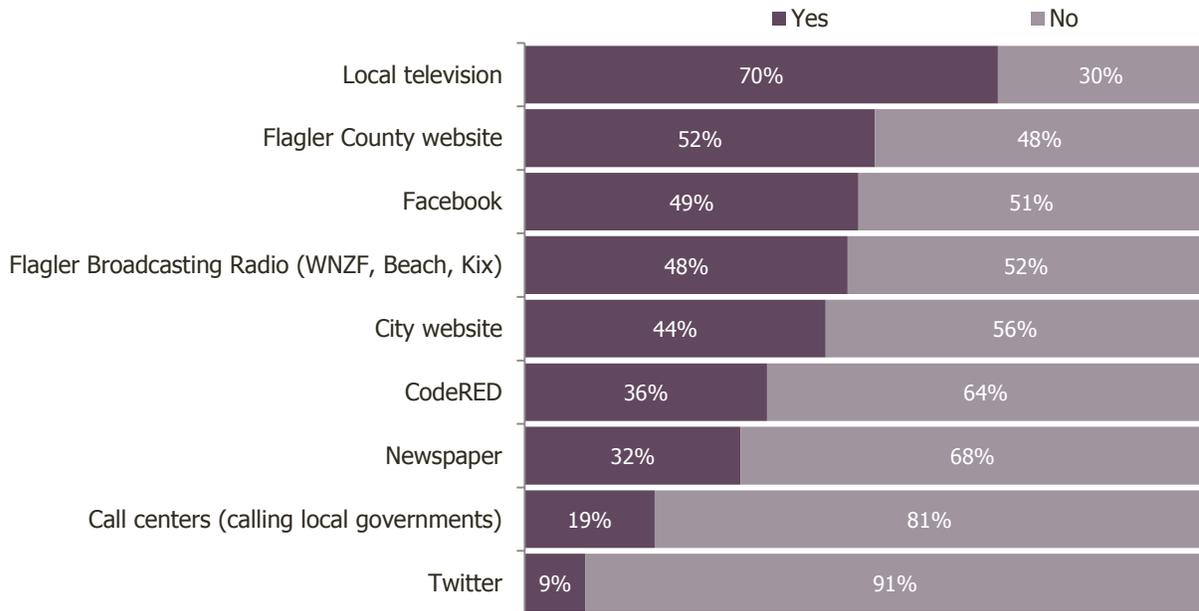
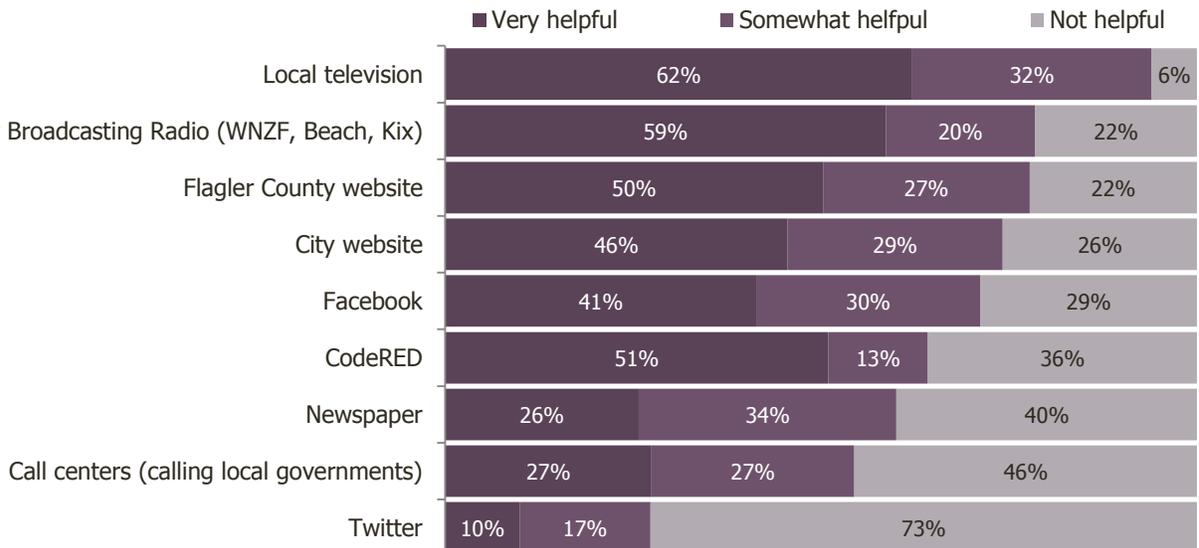


Figure 5: Helpfulness of Information Sources During Hurricane Irma
Please indicate how helpful, if at all, each of the following sources were for learning about public safety and City response:



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Respondents were also asked if they had contacted City of Palm Cast Customer Service Call Center regarding the hurricane (whether before, during or after) and about one-quarter of respondents replied in the affirmative. The respondents that had contacted the Call Center were then asked to select all of their reasons for contact. About half contacted the Call Center regarding garbage/debris, and roughly 4 in 10 reached out regarding power outages.

Figure 6: Contact with City of Palm Coast Customer Service Call Center Regarding Hurricane Irma
Did you contact City of Palm Coast Customer Service Call Center regarding Hurricane Irma, whether before, during or after?

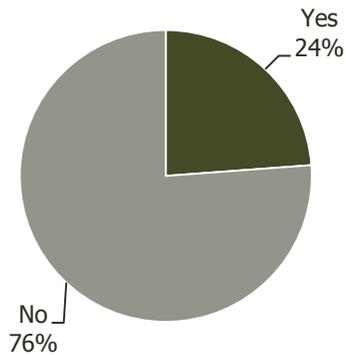
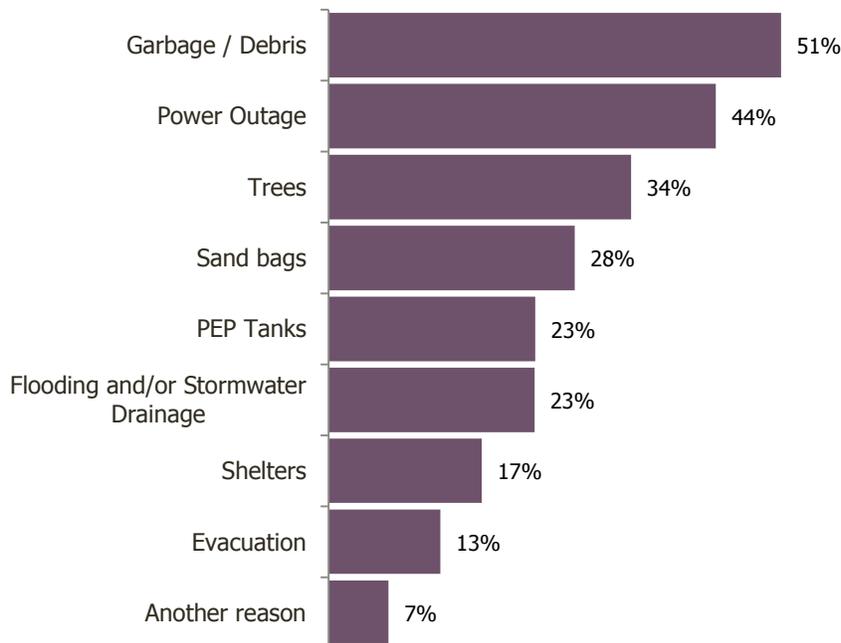


Figure 7: Reason for Contact
Why did you contact City of Palm Coast Customer Service? (Check all that apply)



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

Conclusions

Hurricane Irma impacted some 2017 ratings.

The 2017 iteration of The NCS for Palm Coast was conducted shortly after Hurricane Irma impacted Palm Coast and its surrounding communities. NRC's research has shown that major weather events can and do impact residents' perceptions of services that directly related to the event. While most of Palm Coast's ratings remained stable from 2015 to 2017, some of the increases and decreases observed are likely directly related to the impact of Hurricane Irma. For instance, Palm Coast residents gave lower ratings to sidewalk maintenance, yard waste pick-up, sewer services and storm drainage in the wake of the hurricane. During this same time period, residents also gave increased quality ratings to police services, fire services and ambulance/EMS. At the time the data was collected, Palm Coast residents reported the highest level of stocking supplies for an emergency out of all other jurisdictions in NRC's database. It's likely that the most dramatic changes in ratings will level back out over time.

Economy has room for improvement, but residents are optimistic about their own future.

Residents continued to view the Economy as one of the most important community focus areas. While most ratings within the facet of Economy were similar to the national benchmarks, ratings for Palm Coast as a place to work, employment opportunities and vibrant downtown/commercial area were lower than national averages. Almost all Economy ratings remained stable from 2015 to 2017; however, more Palm Coast residents gave high marks to their own personal economic future and employment opportunities in 2017.

Residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life in Palm Coast.

As in previous years, a high proportion of Palm Coast residents positively rated many aspects of community quality in 2017. Residents' scores for the overall appearance of the city and the city as a place to retire were higher than ratings given in other communities. Additionally, about four in five residents planned to remain in Palm Coast and were likely to recommend living in the community.