

The National Citizen Survey™

Mountlake Terrace, WA

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 Mountlake Terrace. 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.

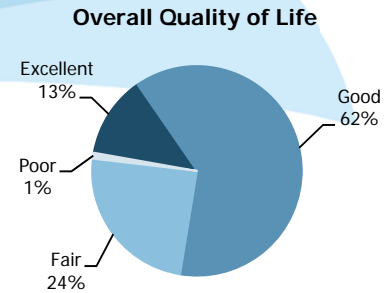
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample selected from 1,200 residents of the City of Mountlake Terrace. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for the entire sample (264 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Mountlake Terrace

Most residents rate the quality of life in Mountlake Terrace as excellent or good and this rating was similar to other benchmark communities.

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 shade between the extremes.

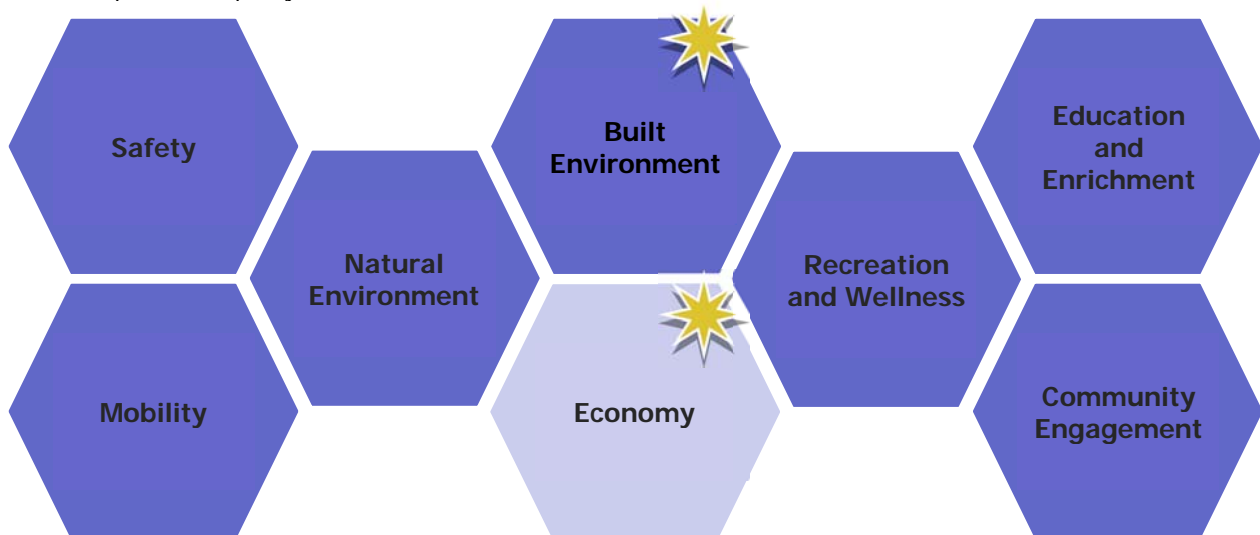


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents' overall quality of life. Residents identified Built Environment and Economy as the most central to what makes Mountlake Terrace their home. It is noteworthy that Mountlake Terrace residents gave largely favorable ratings to Built Environment, yet Economy generally had lower ratings. Ratings for Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness, 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, starting with the ratings for Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation and ending with results for Mountlake Terrace'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



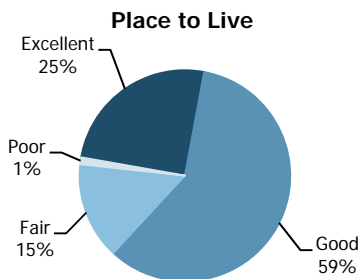
Community Characteristics

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 Mountlake Terrace, 84% of respondents rated the city as an excellent or good place to live, which was 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 Mountlake Terrace as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Mountlake Terrace and its overall appearance. Generally, these aspects of the community were similar to national averages and similar to the City's 2011 ratings, although ratings for overall appearance and neighborhood as a place to live increased between 2011 and 2013 (see *Trends over Time*, under separate cover).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. In relation to other communities in the nation, ratings in Mountlake Terrace tended to be mixed. Respondents tended to give the highest ratings to Safety, Mobility and Natural Environment, with at least 7 in 10 of respondents giving ratings of excellent or good to most items in these areas. Economy, Recreation and Wellness and, to some extent Education and Enrichment, were viewed somewhat less favorably; less than a majority of residents gave favorable ratings in many of the items in these areas.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

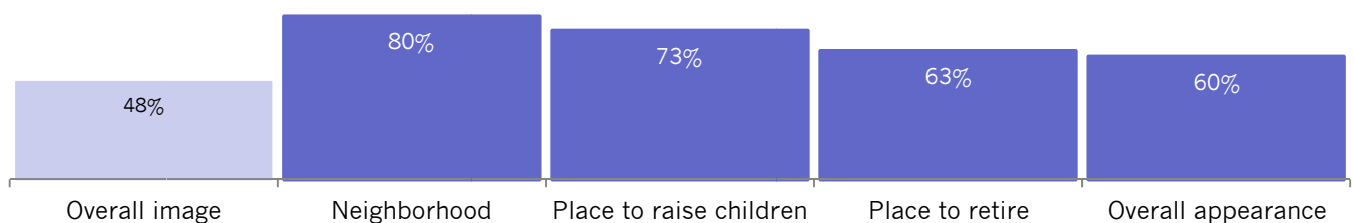
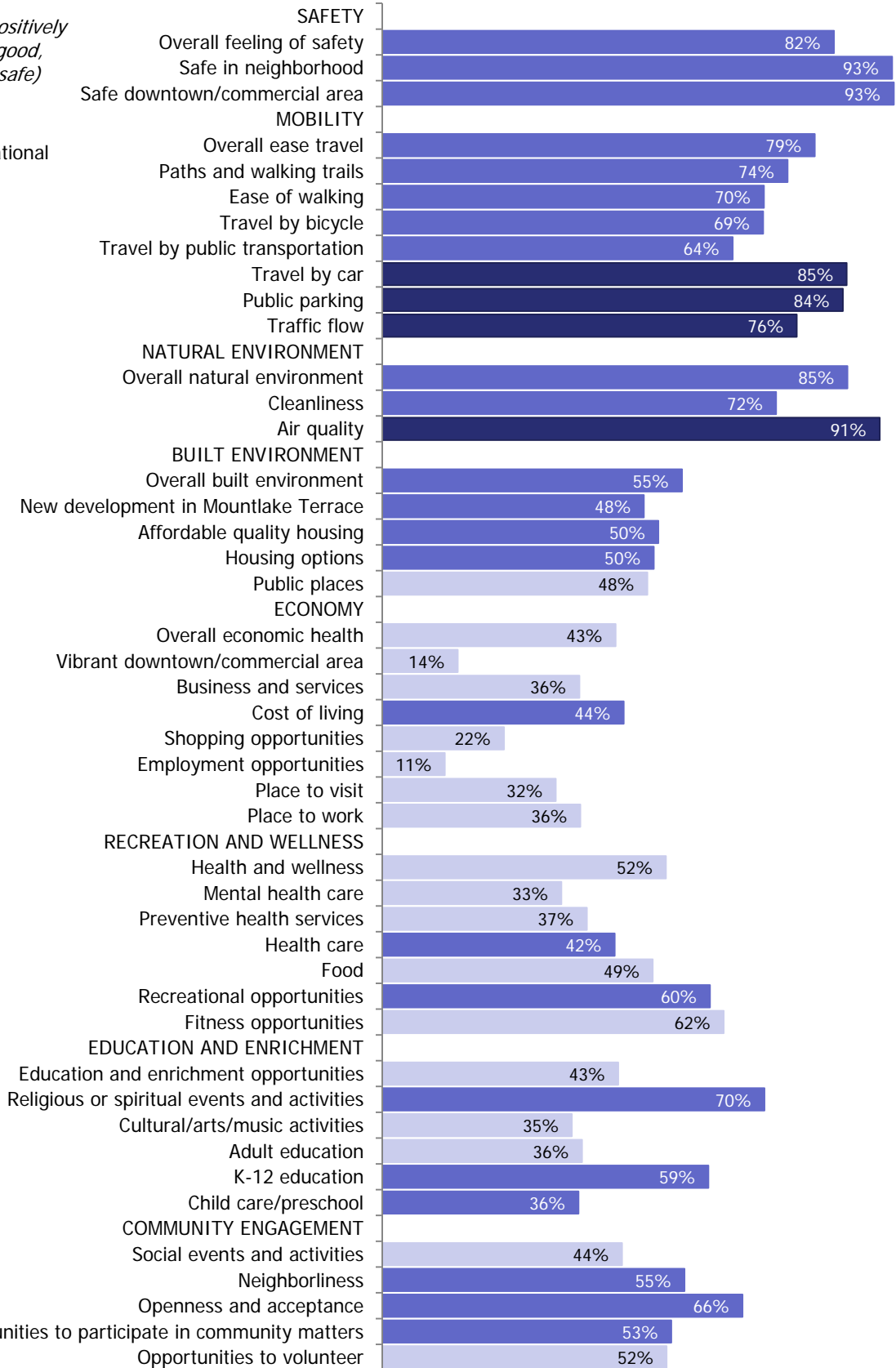


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



Governance

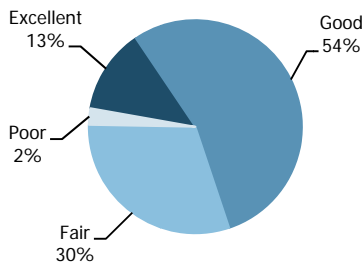
How well does the government of Mountlake Terrace meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Mountlake Terrace as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of residents rated the overall quality of services provided by the City of Mountlake Terrace as excellent or good; about one-quarter of residents felt this way about the services provided by the Federal Government. Ratings for both City and Federal services were similar to national comparisons and lower in 2013 when compared to 2011.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Mountlake Terrace's leadership and governance. Ratings for overall aspects of the City's governance were positive; most were rated as excellent or good by a majority of respondents and ratings tended to be similar to the benchmark comparison.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Mountlake Terrace. For the most part, these ratings were similar to national benchmark comparisons and were rated positively by at least 60% of respondents. The City received some of its highest ratings within Safety and Natural Environment. Mobility and Built Environment also fared well compared to other community facets. Some individual services, including emergency preparedness, snow removal and health services were rated below comparison communities; about half of respondents rated these services favorably. Drinking water scored higher than the benchmark with about 9 in 10 respondents rating this service as excellent or good.

Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

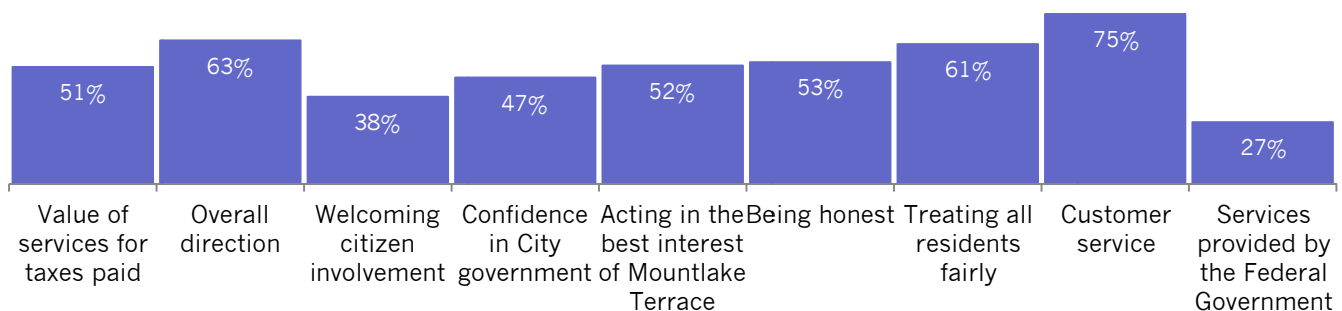
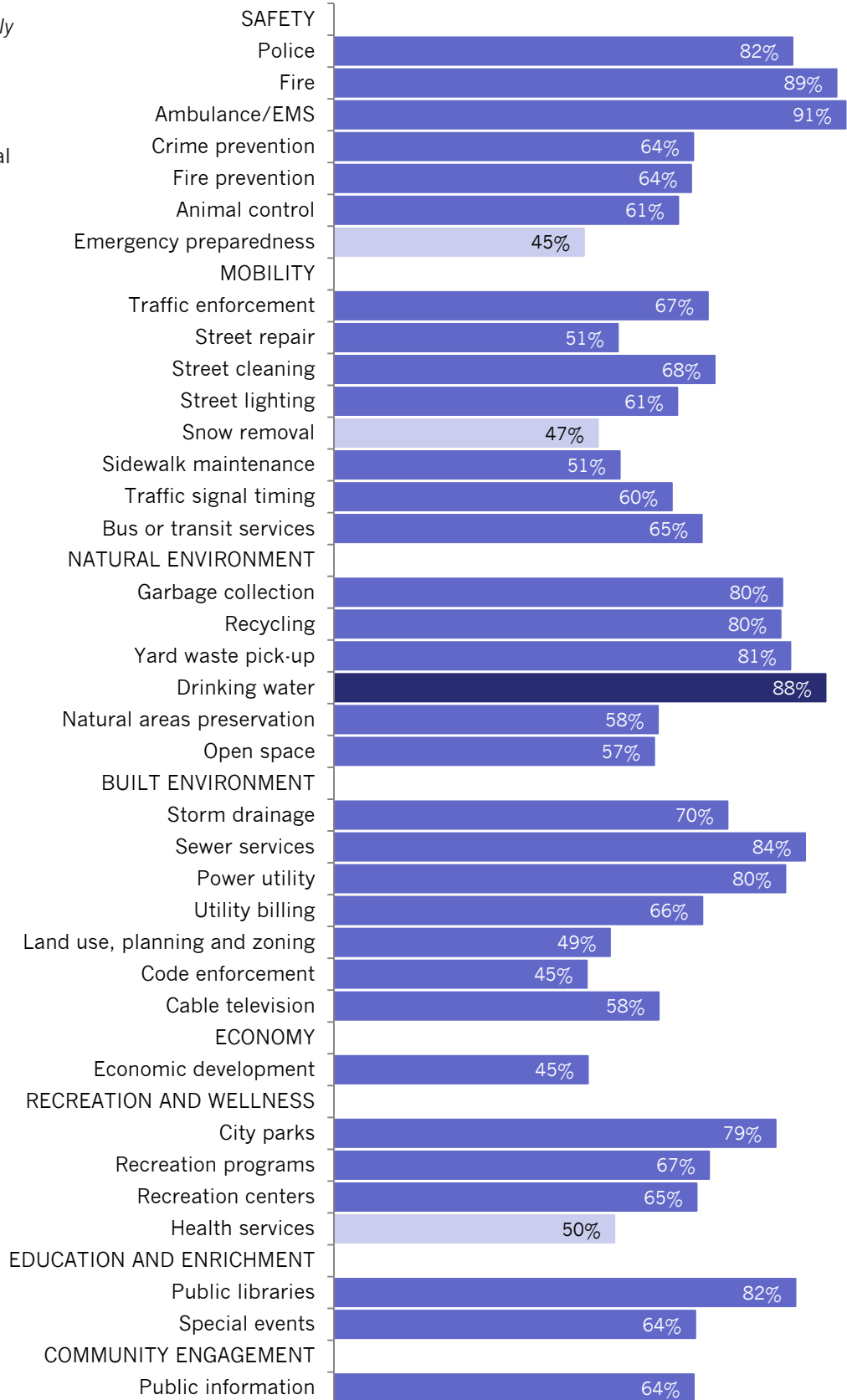


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

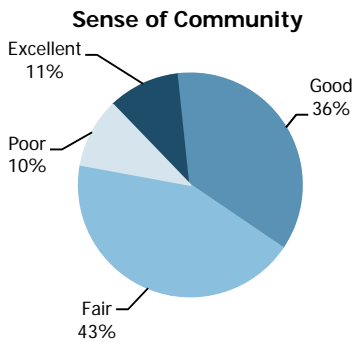


Participation

Are the residents of Mountlake Terrace 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 half of respondents rated the overall sense of community in Mountlake Terrace as excellent or good, a rating similar to other communities in the U.S. and lower than past ratings. Most residents would recommend living in Mountlake Terrace and planned to remain in in the community.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Rates of participation in Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment and Recreation and Wellness were similar to or higher than the benchmark. Built Environment, Economy, Education and Enrichment were similar to or lower than ratings in comparison communities, while Community Engagement saw mixed results.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

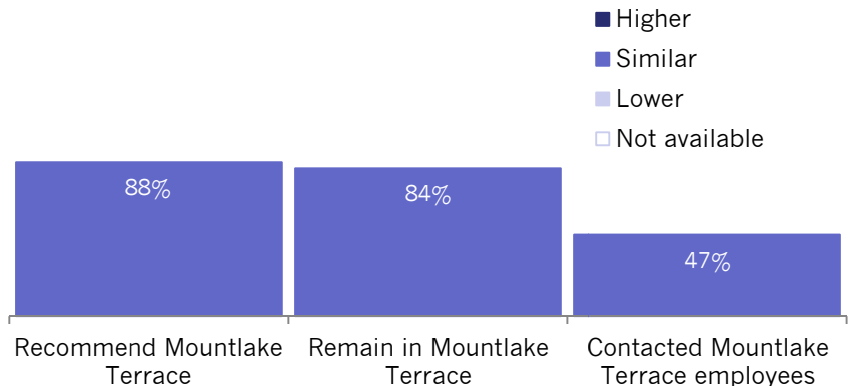
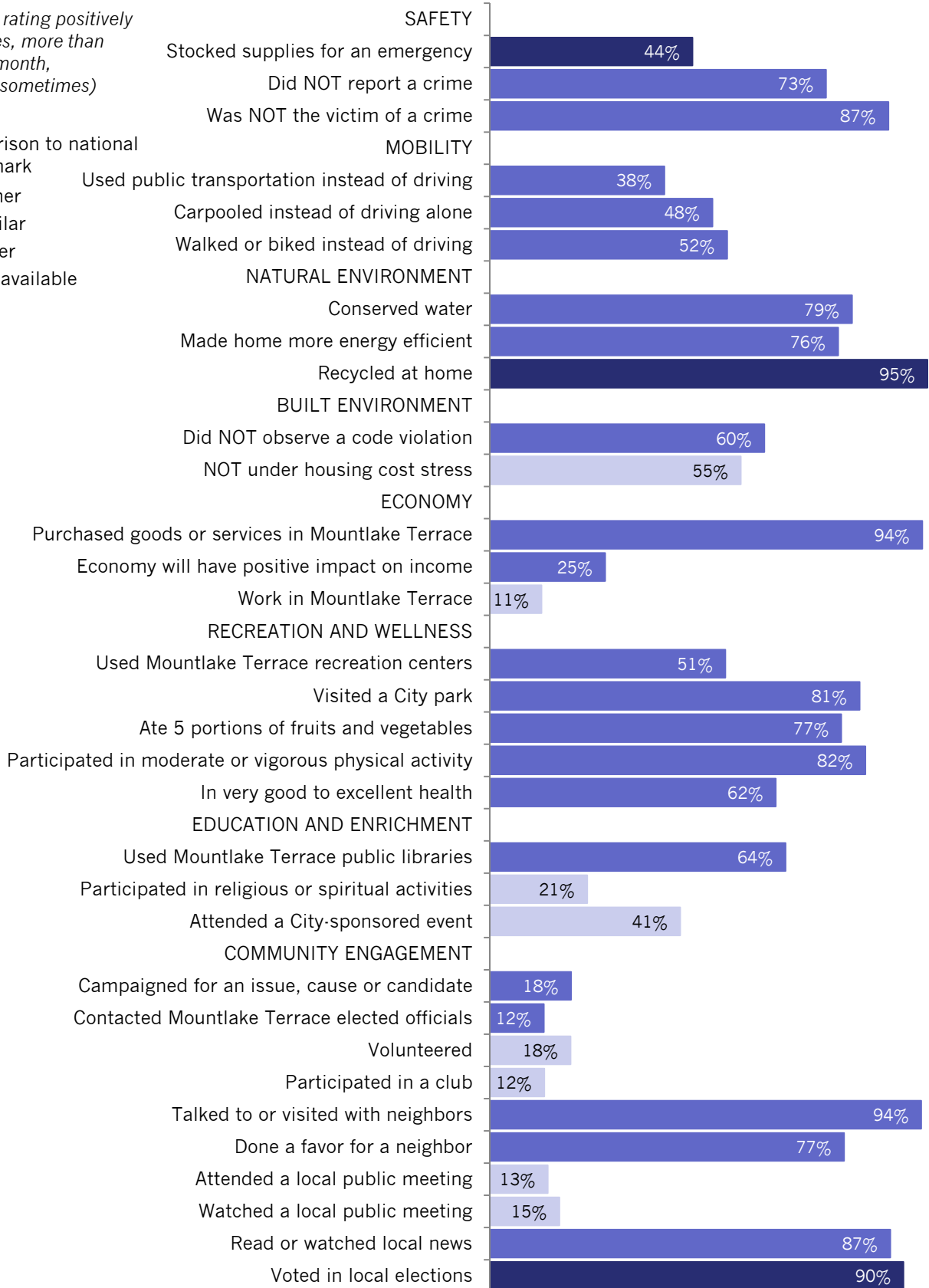


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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 Mountlake Terrace included three questions of special interest on The NCS. These three questions aimed to gauge information sources used by residents, the level of importance of various City priorities and support for funding various potential programs and services. The most widely used sources of information about the City government were its newsletter (City Happenings) and web site, which were considered a major source of information by more than 4 in 10 residents. When prioritizing City projects, street maintenance and improvements, preservation of open space and economic development initiatives were most commonly considered essential or very important (by two-thirds or more of respondents). Sidewalks and emergency preparedness/disaster recovery emerged as clear candidates for funding, with about half of respondents “definitely” wanting these services to be funded. Economic development and greenways/trails had high levels of support as well; two in five respondents indicated these should definitely be funded.

Figure 4: Question 13a

Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for information about the City government and its activities, events and services:

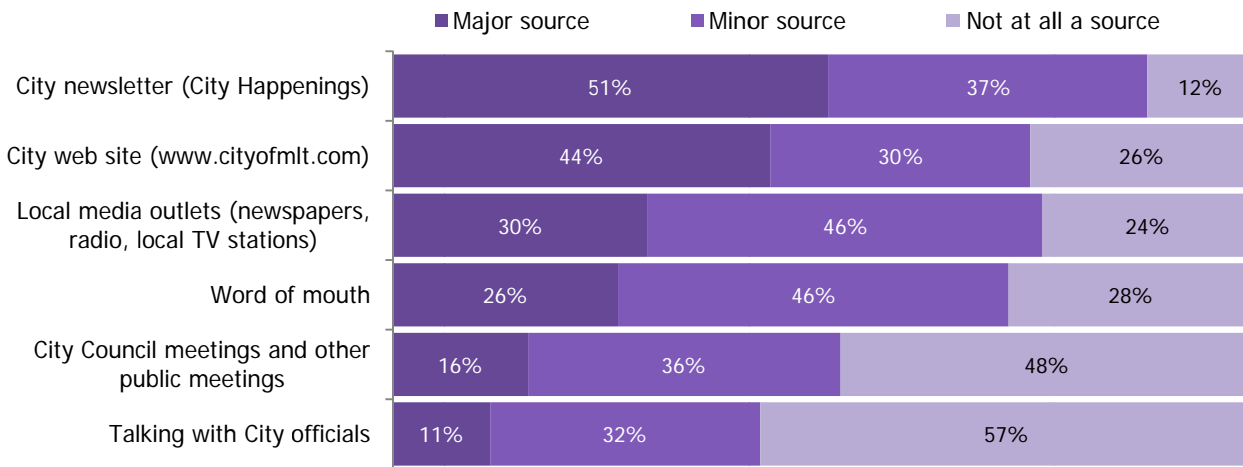


Figure 5: Question 13b

Please indicate how important, if at all, each of the following projects and issues is for the City to address:

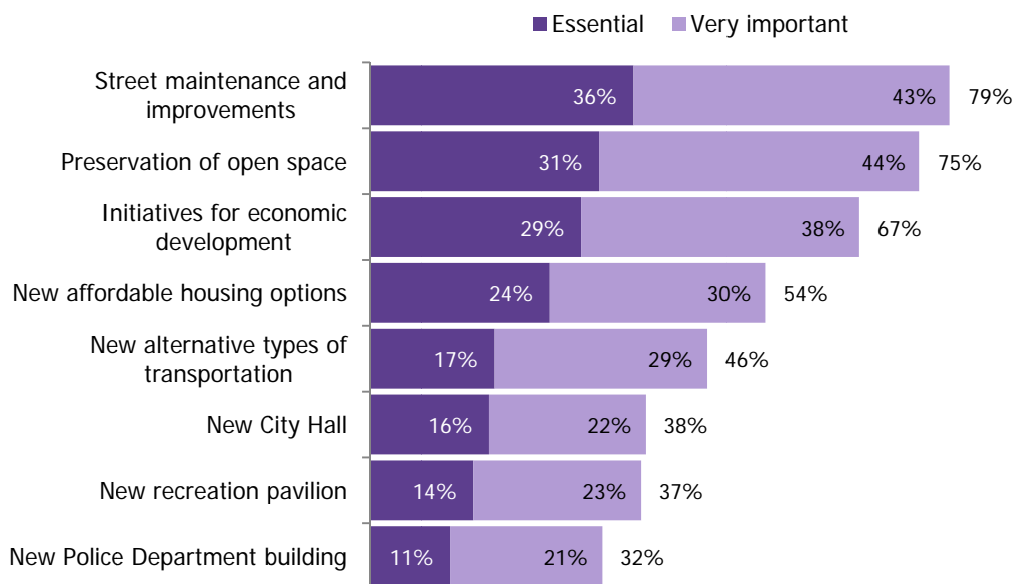
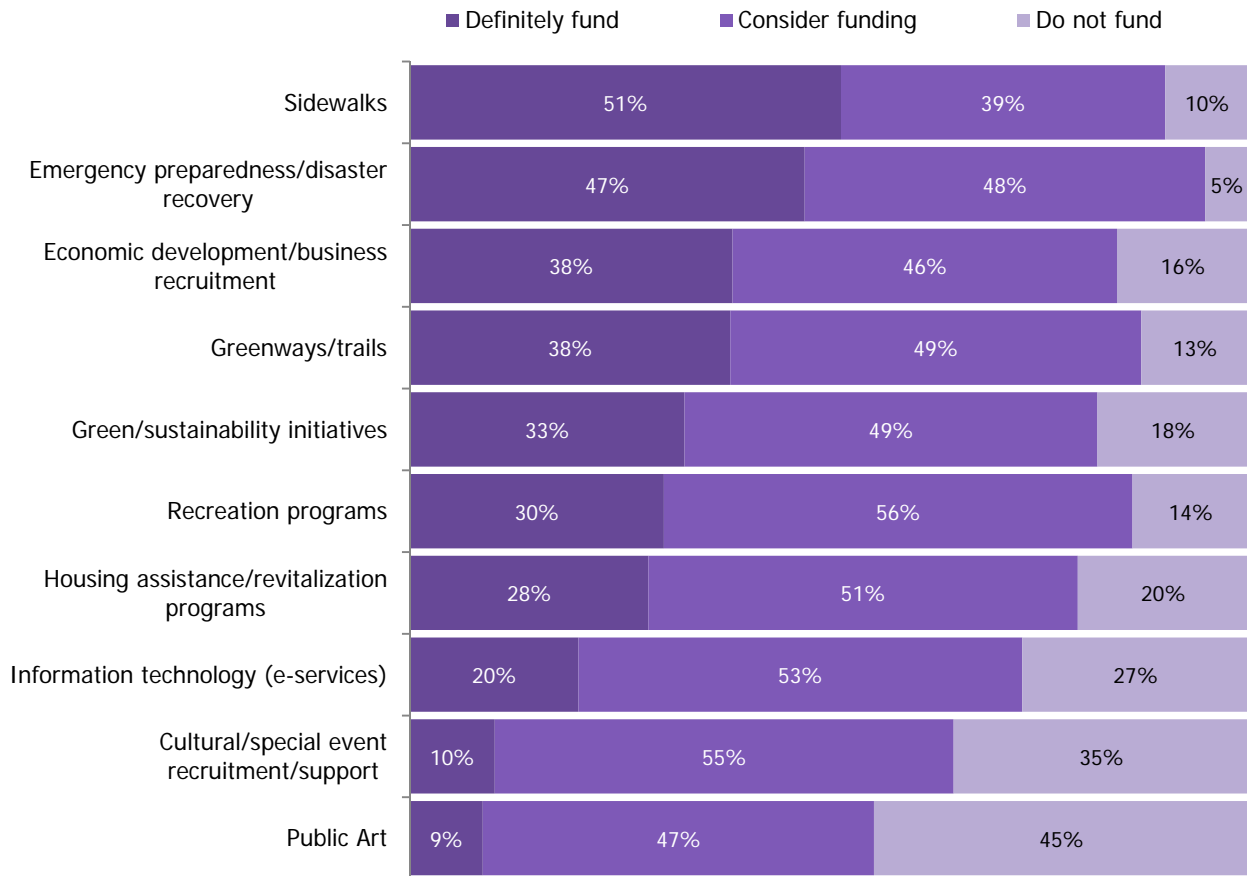


Figure 6: Question 13c

As part of its annual budget process, the City considers potential programs and services. To what extent, if at all, do you think the City should fund through increased fees or taxes each of the following new or expanded programs?



Conclusions

Life is good in Mountlake Terrace.

Most survey respondents felt positively about the overall quality of life in Mountlake Terrace. They also valued their neighborhoods; the city as a place to live, raise children and retire; and its overall appearance. Ratings in each of these areas were similar to other communities in the U.S. and similar to or higher than ratings in 2011. While residents of the community appreciated the city, they felt that outside opinion lagged; the overall image or reputation of the city was not perceived as positively as other aspects of the community. The vast majority of residents would recommend living in the community and planned on staying.

Economic health contributes to quality of life in the city.

Residents identified Economy as one of the facets most important to their overall quality of life. Measures in this area generally received mixed ratings. Community Characteristics, including the overall economic health of the city, were most likely to have ratings below the benchmark. Under Governance, about half of residents rated the City's economic development services well. The modest number of respondents who felt that Mountlake Terrace was a good place to work (36%) was reflected in the number of residents who reported working there (11%). Despite few respondents expressing satisfaction with the shopping opportunities, available businesses, services and commercial areas in the city, nearly all respondents had purchased goods or services in the city. Residents' conveyed their concern for the overall economic health of the community through strong support for funding programs related to economic development and business recruitment.

Residents experience good mobility and support transportation improvements.

Mobility was a strong positive Community Characteristic in Mountlake Terrace. Respondents experienced good overall ease of travel with smooth traffic, easy driving and plenty of parking. A majority of respondents found walking and biking through the community to be good and about half had reduced single-occupancy vehicle trips through carpooling, walking or biking. Many Mobility-related services were rated lower in 2013 than in 2011 (e.g., street repair and cleaning) and residents voiced support for improvements in this area. The vast majority of respondents felt it was essential or very important for the City to address street maintenance and improvement projects. Furthermore, most residents felt that increased taxes or fees were definitely warranted to fund new or expanded sidewalks programs.