



THE NCSTM
The National Community SurveyTM

La Vista, NE

Community Livability Report

2019



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The National Community Survey™
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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 Community Survey™ (The NCS™) report is about the “livability” of La Vista. 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.

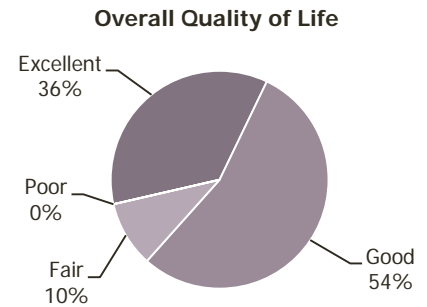
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 339 residents of the City of La Vista. 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 La Vista

About 9 in 10 residents rated the quality of life in La Vista 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.

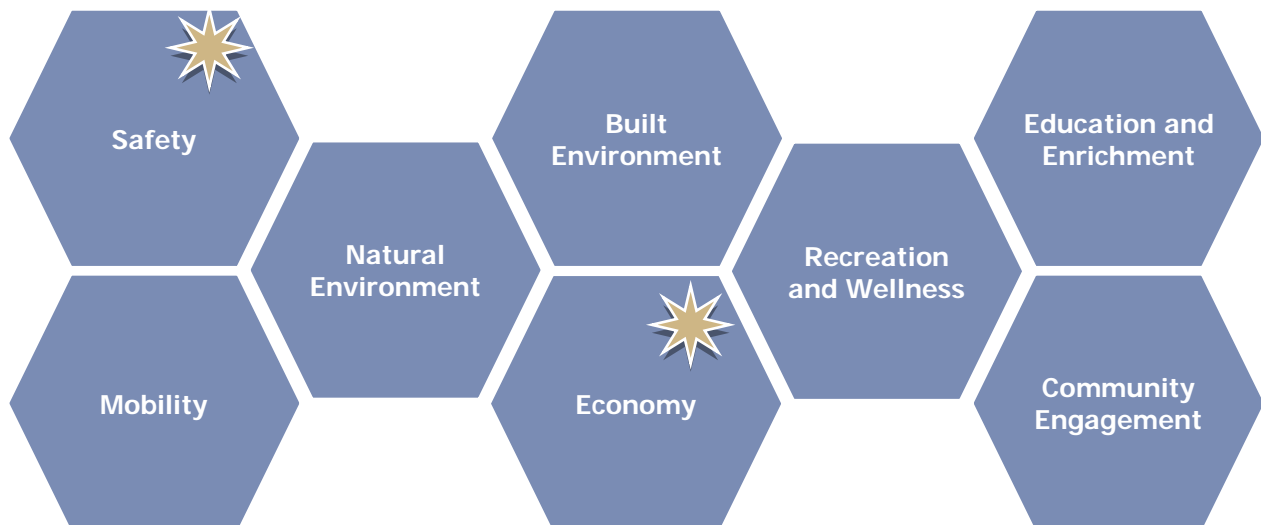
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the La Vista community in the coming two years. These facets, as well as all other facets of community livability, were positive and similar to the 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 La Vista’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 La Vista, 95% rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of La Vista 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. Rating for La Vista as a place to raise children were exceptional (95% excellent or good) and above average. About 9 in 10 residents favorably rated their neighborhood as a place to live. About 8 in 10 residents gave high marks to the overall image or reputation of the city and La Vista's overall appearance, while 7 in 10 positively assessed La Vista as a place to retire. These ratings were on par with national averages. Additionally, reviews of La Vista's overall image or reputation and its appearance improved over time (see the *Trends over Time* report provided under separate cover for more details).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, at least half of respondents reviewed most aspects of Community Characteristics positively and tended to be similar to other benchmark communities.



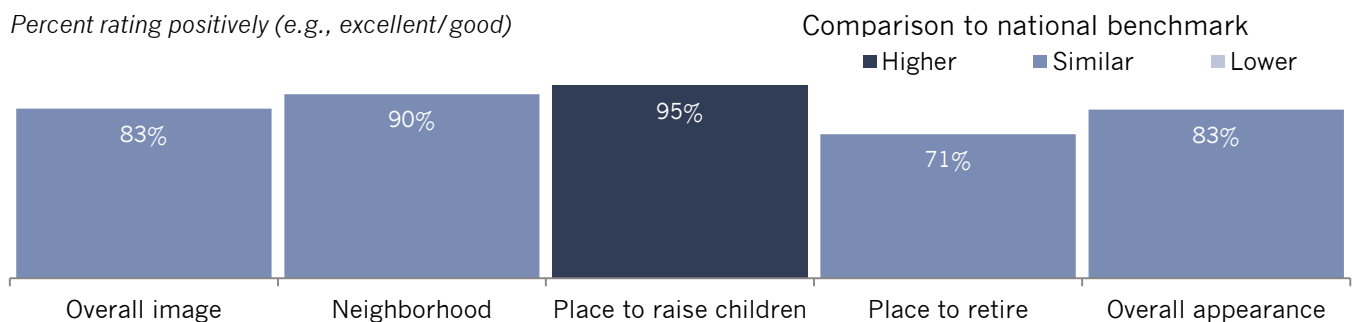
Assessments for the majority of aspects within the facets of Mobility (such as traffic flow on major streets and public parking) and Built Environment (such as variety of housing options), were outstanding and higher than the national benchmarks. Other areas where score were above average were overall feeling of safety, employment opportunities, K-12 education, and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.

Respondents' evaluations of 13 aspects of Community Characteristics improved from 2016 to 2019, with most increases occurring within the facet of Economy. Some of the largest increases in 2019 were for new development in

La Vista, employment opportunities, and opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities (with increases of 21%, 17%, and 14%, respectively).

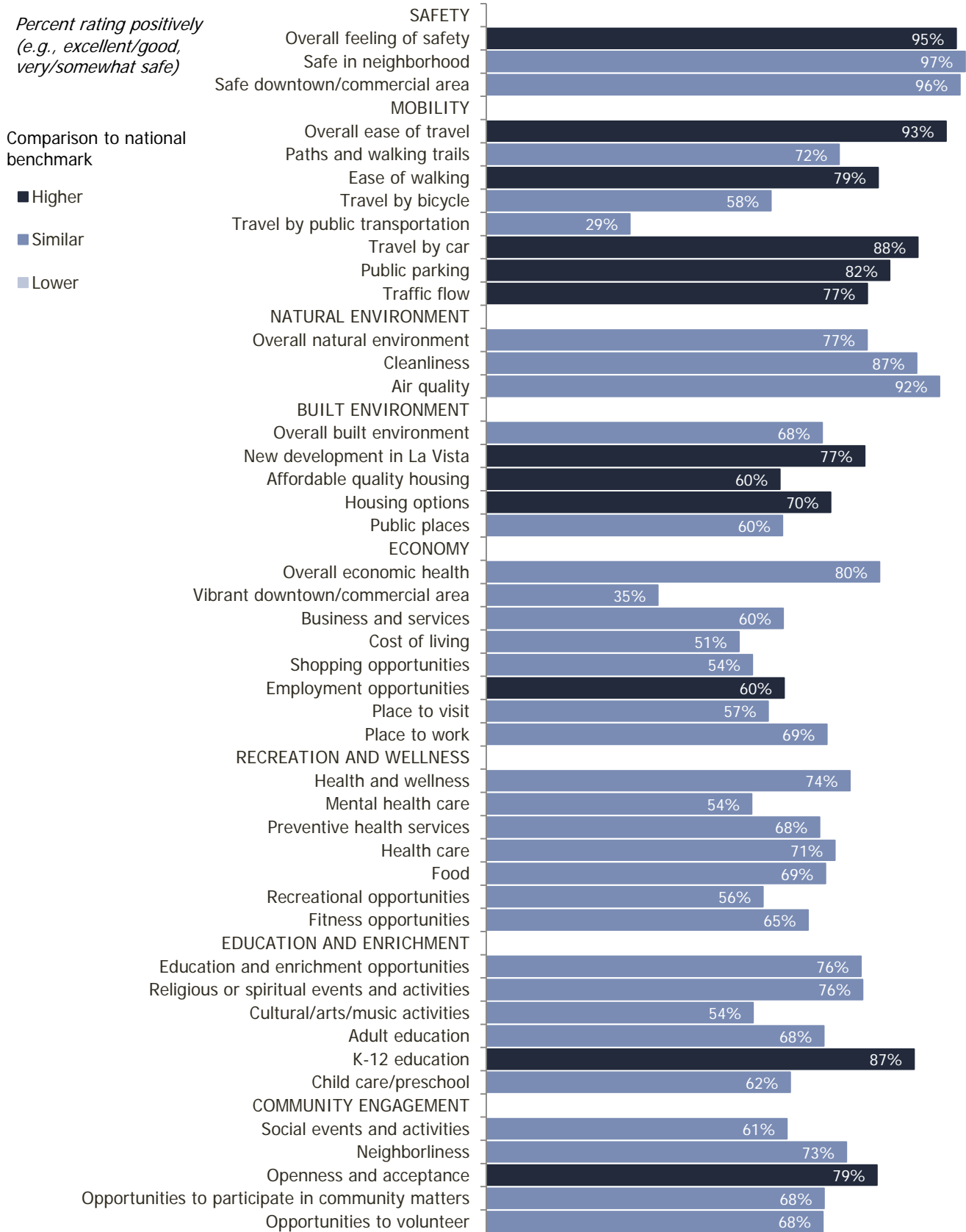
Compared to 2016, survey participants' ratings for cost of living and availability of affordable quality child care/preschool declined in 2019.

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



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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

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

The overall quality of the services provided by La Vista as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 9 in 10 residents gave favorable evaluations to the overall quality of services provided by the City, which was on par with national averages. About half were pleased with services provided by the Federal Government; this rating improved from 2016 to 2019.

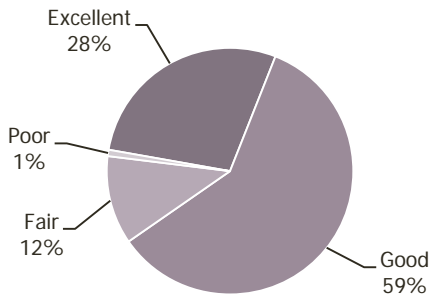
Survey respondents also rated various aspects of La Vista’s leadership and governance. Similar to comparison communities, about 6 in 10 residents assigned high marks to the value of services for taxes paid. At least two-thirds of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to all other aspects of government performance and these ratings were higher than those given in other communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in La Vista. Broadly, at least 6 in 10 respondents reviewed most government services positively and ratings tended to be similar to those observed in other communities nationwide. The highest-rated services included police, fire, ambulance or emergency medical services, crime prevention, fire prevention, garbage collection, and public libraries, with about 9 in 10 residents assigning positive scores.

Reviews for police services, crime prevention, street lighting, economic development, and land use, planning and zoning were exceptional and higher than the national benchmarks. Compared to 2016, more residents favorably reviewed emergency preparedness, open space, natural areas preservation, and land use, planning and zoning in 2019. Additionally, assessments of economic development, recreation programs, and special events increased over time.

Compared to other communities, respondents were less pleased with bus or transit services in La Vista, and these ratings declined from 2016 to 2019.

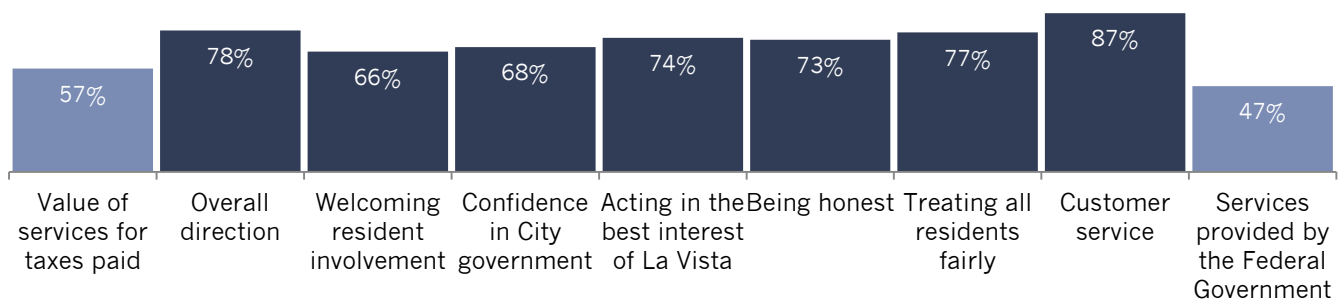
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



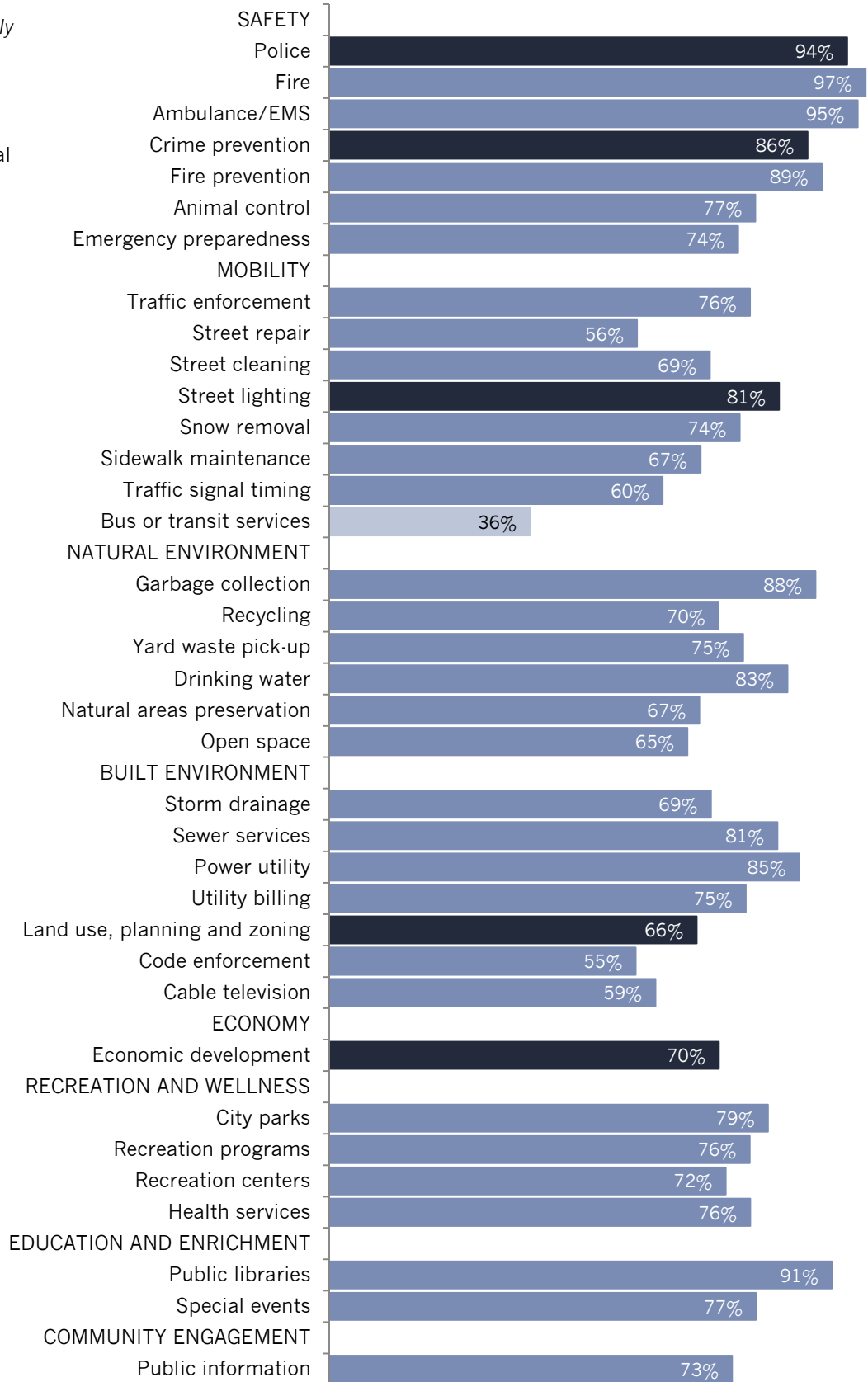
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



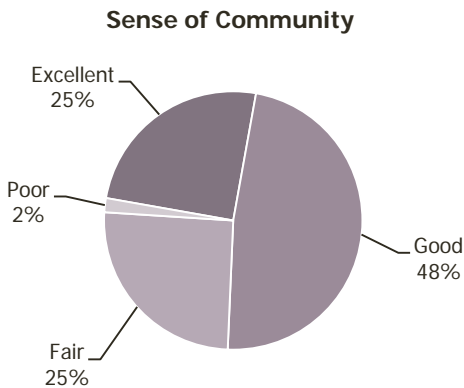
Participation

Are the residents of La Vista 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. Similar to other communities in the U.S., about three-quarters of respondents gave excellent or good scores to the sense of community in La Vista; this rating improved from 2016 to 2019.

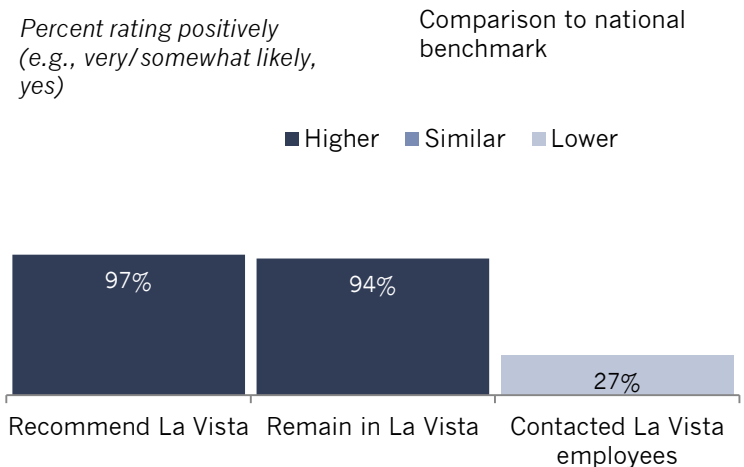
About 9 in 10 survey respondents indicated they would recommend living in La Vista to someone who asked and planned to remain in the community for the next five years, both of which were higher than the national averages. Fewer residents in La Vista had contacted City employees (27%) compared to residents in 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. Levels of Participation varied widely across the different facets, making the benchmark comparisons, as well as comparisons to La Vista over time, useful for interpreting the results. About 9 in 10 respondents had purchased goods or services in La Vista or talked to or visited with neighbors, while only 3 in 10 had stocked supplies in preparation for an emergency or believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income; these ratings were all on par with communities nationwide.



Compared to municipalities across the country, fewer La Vista residents reported engaging in 15 activities, including walking or biking instead of driving, conserving water, attending a City-sponsored event, and volunteering, among others.

In 2019, fewer residents reported carpooling instead of driving alone, conserving water, making efforts to make their home more energy efficient, and participating in physical activity. Additionally, more residents were under housing cost stress in 2019.



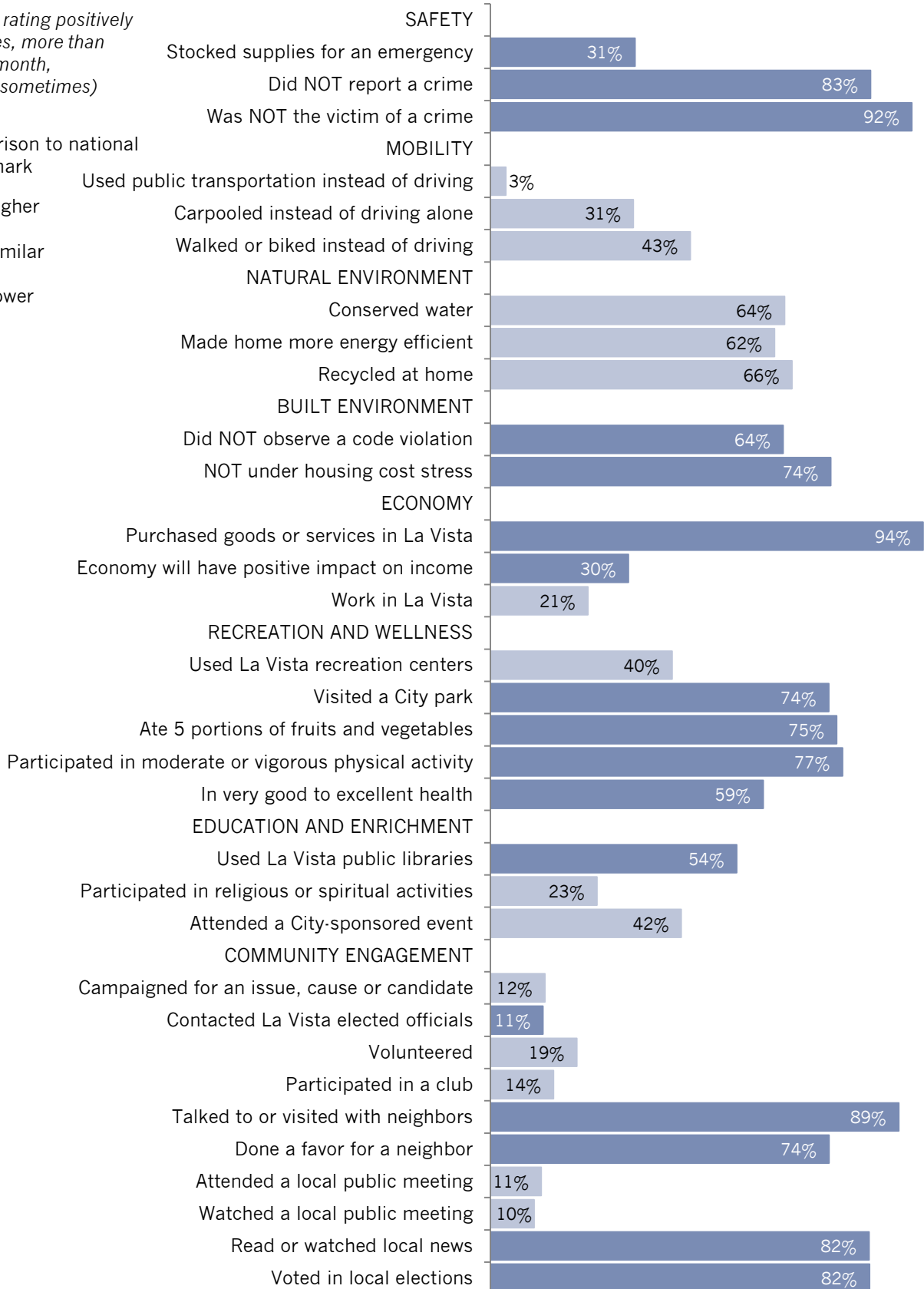
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Conclusions

La Vista continues to be a desirable and safe place to live.

About 9 in 10 community members gave high marks to the overall quality of life in La Vista, and the city and their neighborhoods as places to live. Assessments of La Vista as a place to raise children were exceptional and higher than the national averages. About 8 in 10 residents assigned positive scores to La Vista's overall image or reputation and its overall appearance; these evaluations also improved from 2016 to 2019. About three-quarters of residents favorably rated the sense of community in the city, a rating that rebounded to levels seen in 2013. About 9 in 10 residents were likely to recommend living in La Vista to someone who asked and planned to remain in La Vista for the next five years, ratings that were above the national averages.

As in 2016, residents indicated that Safety was an important focus area for the City to address in the coming two years. About 9 in 10 residents assigned positive scores to the overall feeling of safety in La Vista (higher than the nation). Additionally, almost all residents felt safe in their neighborhoods (97%) and in the downtown/commercial area (96%). Out of all City services, police, fire, crime prevention, fire prevention and ambulance or emergency medical services were given some of the most positive reviews, and police and crime prevention fared better than the national averages. Compared to 2016, more people positively rated emergency preparedness in 2019.

Residents praise the Economy in La Vista.

Economic development ratings in La Vista have been trending up since 2013, from 51% excellent or good to 70% in 2019; evaluations also exceeded the national benchmark. Assessments of employment opportunities in La Vista were outstanding, with ratings increasing from 2016 to 2019 and higher than the national average. Residents' evaluations of overall economic health, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, and the vibrancy of the downtown/commercial area also improved from 2016 to 2019. Similar to other comparison communities, at least 6 in 10 assigned favorable reviews to La Vista as a place to visit and work, and to the overall quality of business and service establishments. Survey participants also highlighted the Economy as a continued focus area for the City in the next two years.

Residents note it is easier to get around the City by foot in 2019 but struggle with public transportation.

At least three-quarters of residents gave high scores to the overall ease of travel in La Vista, traffic flow on major streets, ease of travel by car and by walking, public parking and street lighting; these ratings were strong and above average. At least two-thirds of respondents assigned positive reviews to availability of paths and walking trails, traffic enforcement, street cleaning, snow removal and sidewalk maintenance. Compared to 2016, evaluations of ease of travel by walking and availability of paths and walking trails improved in 2019.

However, only about one-third of residents positively rated bus or transit services in La Vista and this rating decreased from 2016 to 2019. About 4 in 10 residents reported walking or biking instead of driving, while 3 in 10 had carpooled instead of driving alone (which decreased from 2016 to 2019); these levels were below the national averages. Additionally, reported rates of respondents using public transportation instead of driving were much lower than the national benchmarks, with only 3% reporting they had done so in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Residents voice confidence in their local government.

When rating various aspects of La Vista's leadership and governance, about 9 in 10 community members awarded high marks to the overall quality of services provided by the City. About 9 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall customer service provided by the City and this rating was higher than the national averages. At least two-thirds of residents gave positive reviews to the overall direction of the City, welcoming resident involvement, overall confidence in the City, the City acting in the best interest of La Vista, being honest, and treating all residents fairly; these assessments were higher than the national benchmark comparison communities.