

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

# Mountlake Terrace, WA

Community Livability Report

DRAFT  
2017



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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.

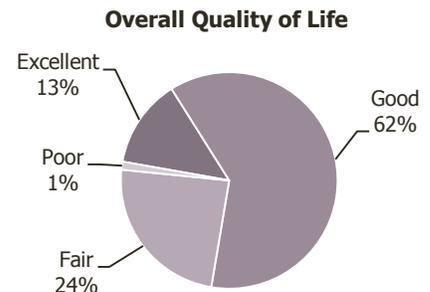
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 of 308 residents of the City of Mountlake Terrace. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% 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 Mountlake Terrace

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Mountlake Terrace 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.

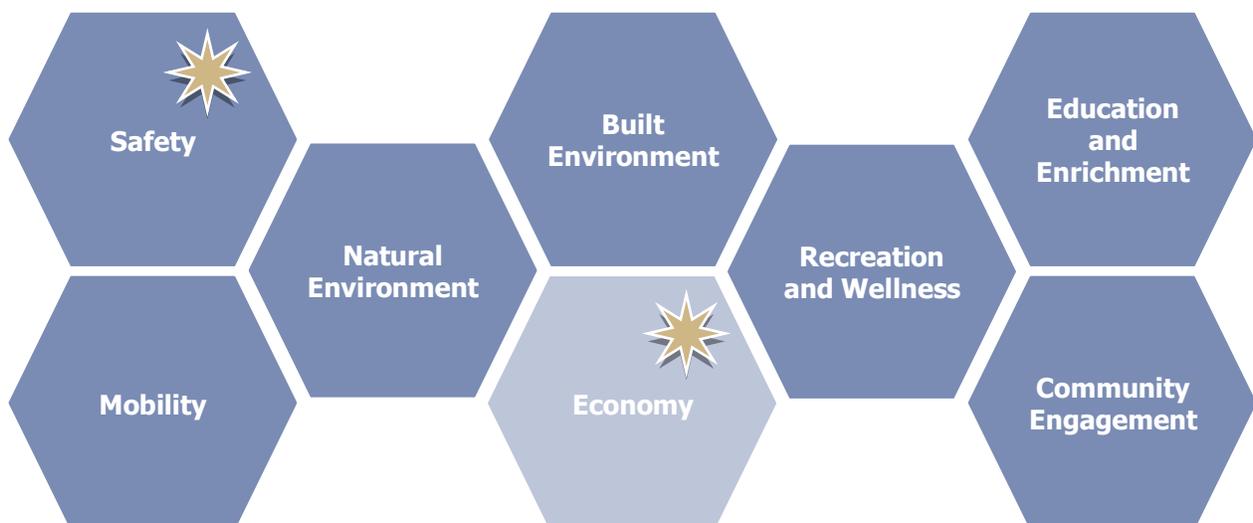
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Mountlake Terrace community in the coming two years. Ratings for Economy were lower than ratings given in other communities across the county while ratings for all other facets were 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

★ Most important



# Community Characteristics

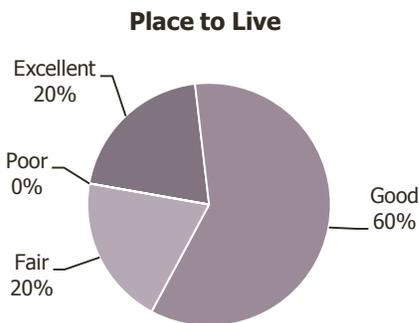
*What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?*

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 Mountlake Terrace, 80% rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Mountlake Terrace 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 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. About 8 in 10 residents offered positive ratings to their neighborhood as a place to live and 7 in 10 offered positive ratings to Mountlake Terrace as a place to raise children. Mountlake Terrace as a place to retire and the overall appearance both received positive evaluations from 6 in 10 survey respondents while about half offered positive evaluations to the overall image of the community (a rating lower than the national average).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Four characteristics received ratings that were higher than the national averages, and all were within the facet of Mobility (travel by public transportation, travel by car, public parking and traffic flow); further, Mobility ratings were strong with at least two-thirds of residents offering positive ratings to each of the eight characteristics listed within the facet. Aspects of Economy tended to be rated lower than the national comparisons with as few as 1 in 10 residents offering positive ratings to vibrant downtown/commercial area; however, the rating for employment opportunities, while lower than the benchmark, is on the rise since 2013 and the highest it has been since 2007 when surveying began (see *The NCS Trends over Time – Mountlake Terrace 2017* report under separate cover).

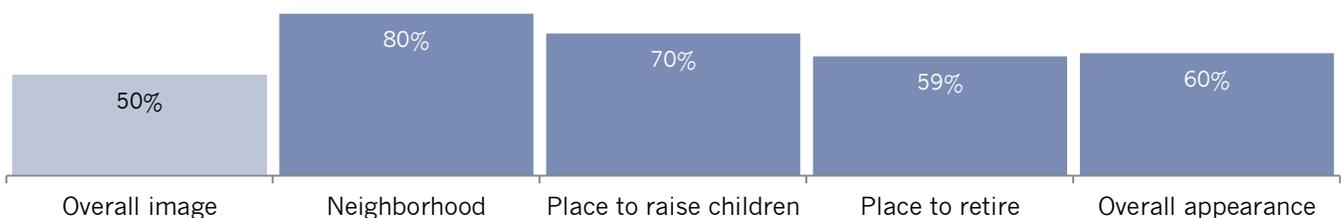
About 9 in 10 residents felt safe in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area but fewer (7 in 10) offered positive ratings to their overall feeling of safety (a rating that declined in 2017 compared to 2013).



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



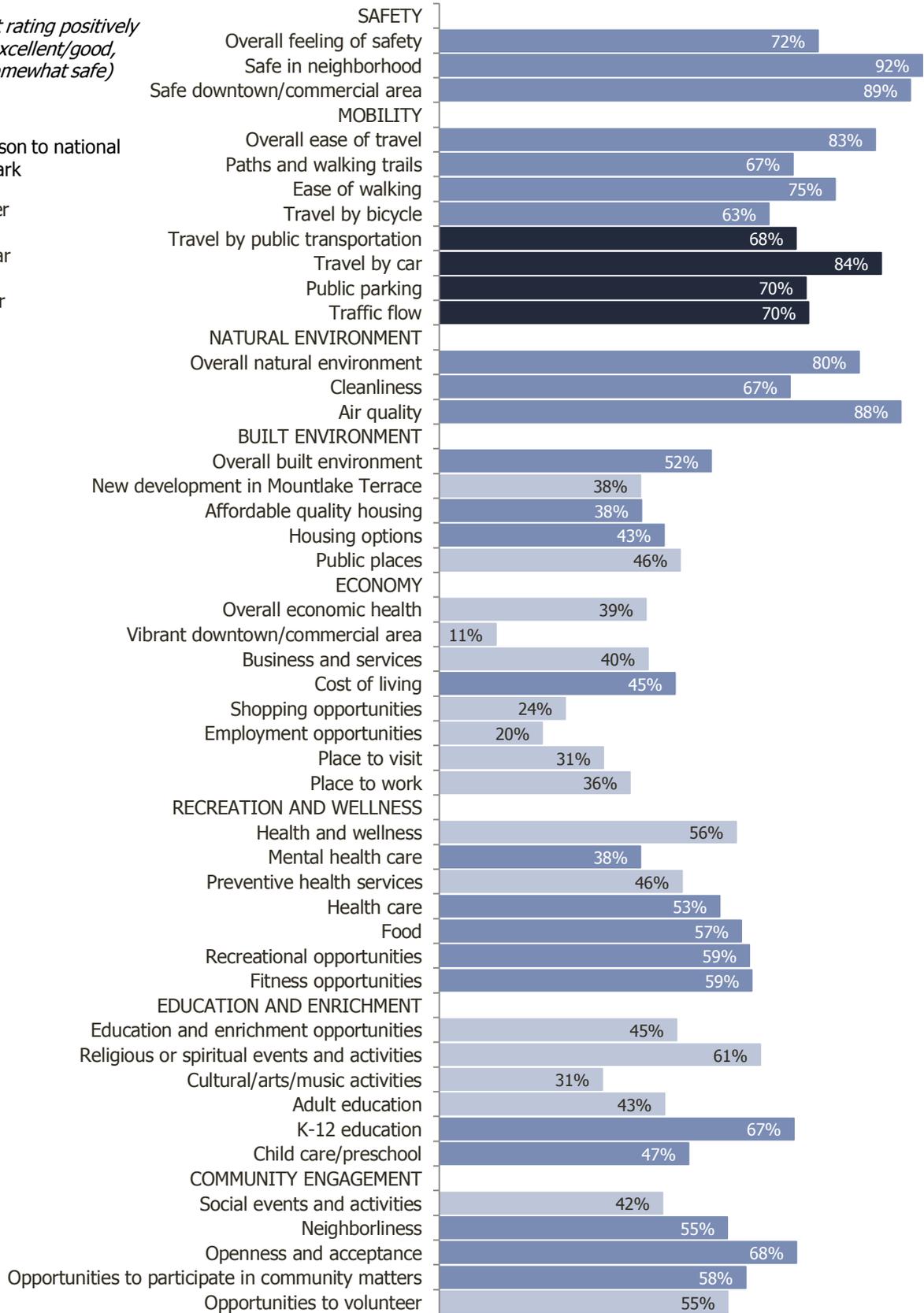
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

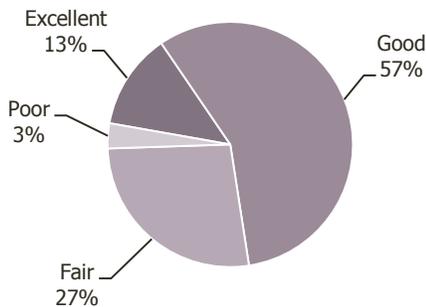
*How well does the government of Mountlake Terrace meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Mountlake Terrace as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Residents' ratings for Mountlake Terrace's quality of services were similar to the national benchmark with 7 in 10 respondents rating them as excellent or good.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Mountlake Terrace's leadership and governance, which were all rated similar to the national comparisons. Three-quarters of residents offered positive evaluations to the customer service of City employees while about 6 in 10 offered positive evaluations to the City treating all residents fairly, being honest, acting in the best interest of the community and the overall direction of Mountlake Terrace.

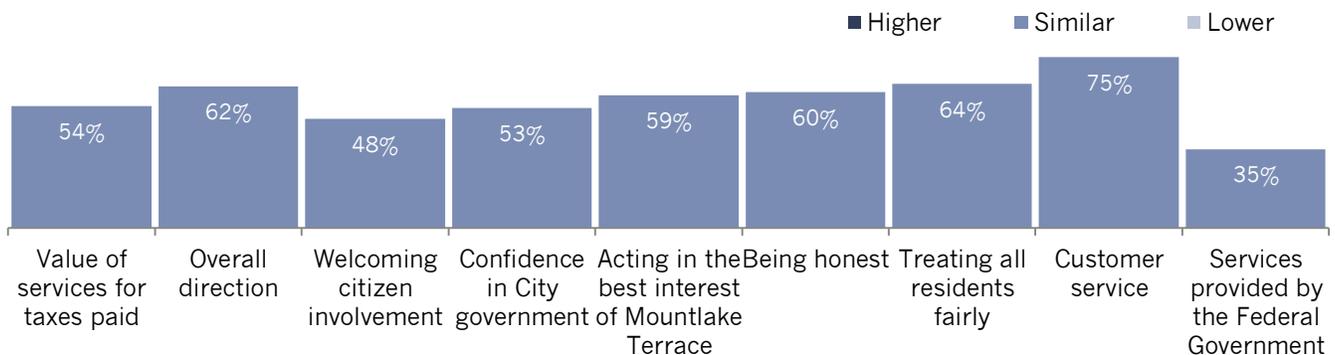
Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Mountlake Terrace. Governance ratings were largely similar to the national comparisons but two services and amenities were rated higher than the national comparisons: bus or transit services and quality of drinking water. Safety ratings were strong with about 9 in 10 survey respondents rating police, fire and ambulance/EMS services as excellent or good; further, ratings for the quality of fire prevention and emergency preparedness increased from 2013 to 2017. Built Environment houses a mix of ratings from about 4 in 10 residents offering positive evaluations to land use, planning and zoning and code enforcement to nearly 9 in 10 offering positive evaluations to sewer services; all Built Environment ratings were similar to the national averages.

## Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark



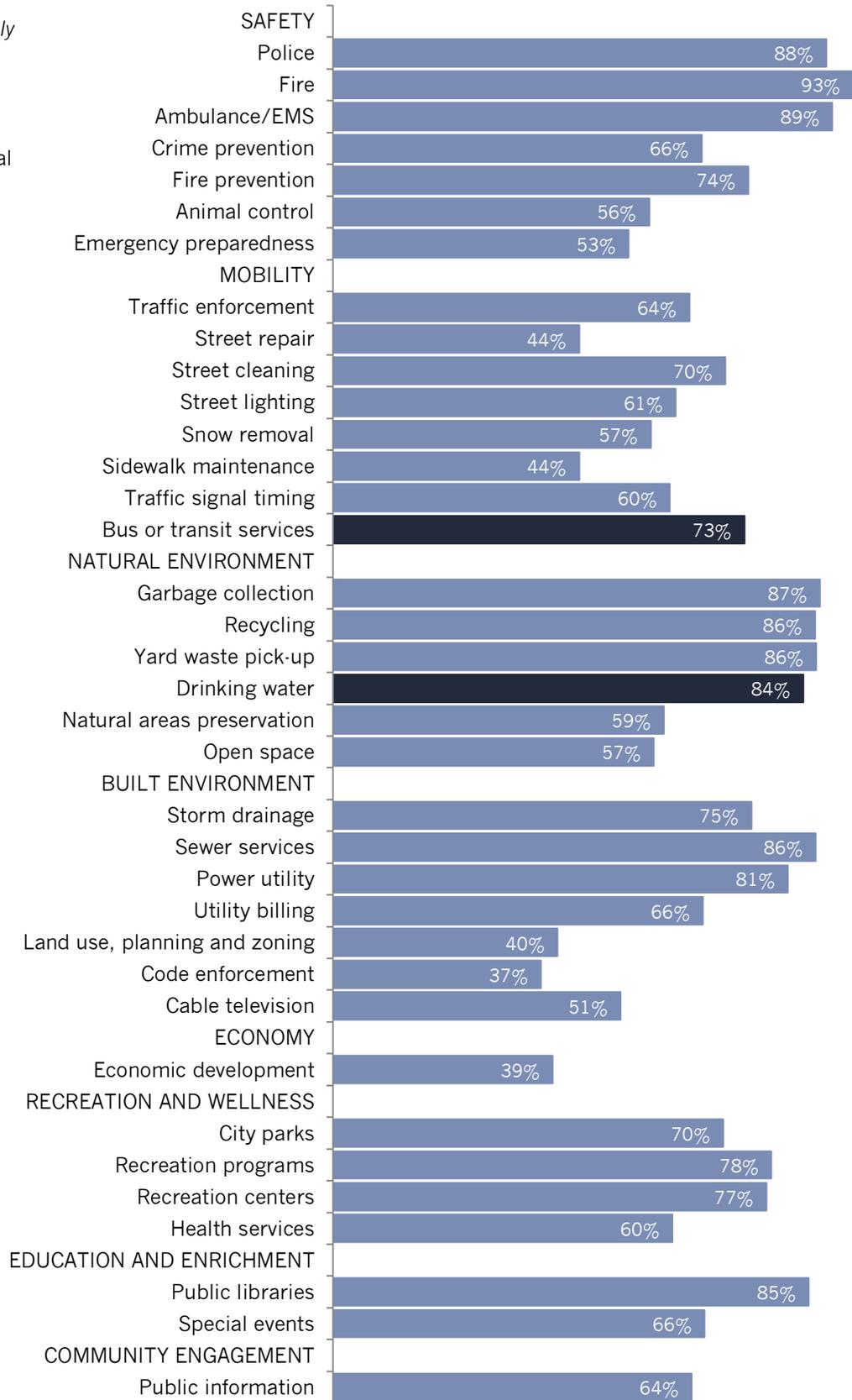
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

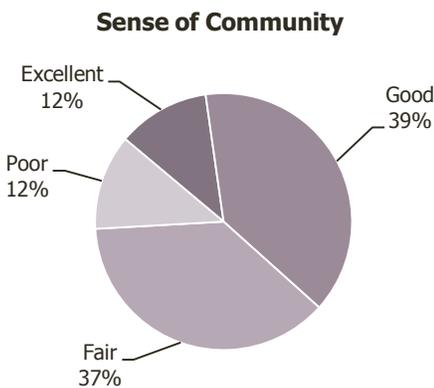


# Participation

*Are the residents of Mountlake Terrace 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 respondents rated the sense of community in Mountlake Terrace as excellent or good, a rating similar to the benchmark comparison. About 4 in 5 residents recommended living in Mountlake Terrace and reported they were somewhat or very likely to remain in the city. Recommending the community and the likelihood of remaining in the community were both similar to ratings given in communities across the nation.

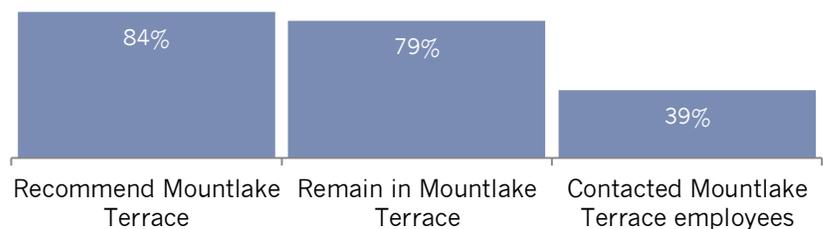
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. The majority of aspects of Participation were rated similar to the national averages however higher and lower ratings were spread across all eight facets. Within Economy, ratings varied with 9 in 10 residents indicating they had purchases goods or services in Mountlake Terrace to 1 in 10 reporting they worked in Mountlake Terrace; about one-third felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their income, a rating that increased in 2017 compared to 2013. Ratings of Natural Environment were strong with nearly all residents reporting they recycled at home (a rating higher than the national average) and at least three-quarters reporting they had conserved water or made their home more energy efficient. Mobility items showed strong participation rates with between 4 in 10 and 6 in 10 residents reporting they walked or biked instead of driving, carpooled instead of driving alone or used public transportation instead of driving more than once a month.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



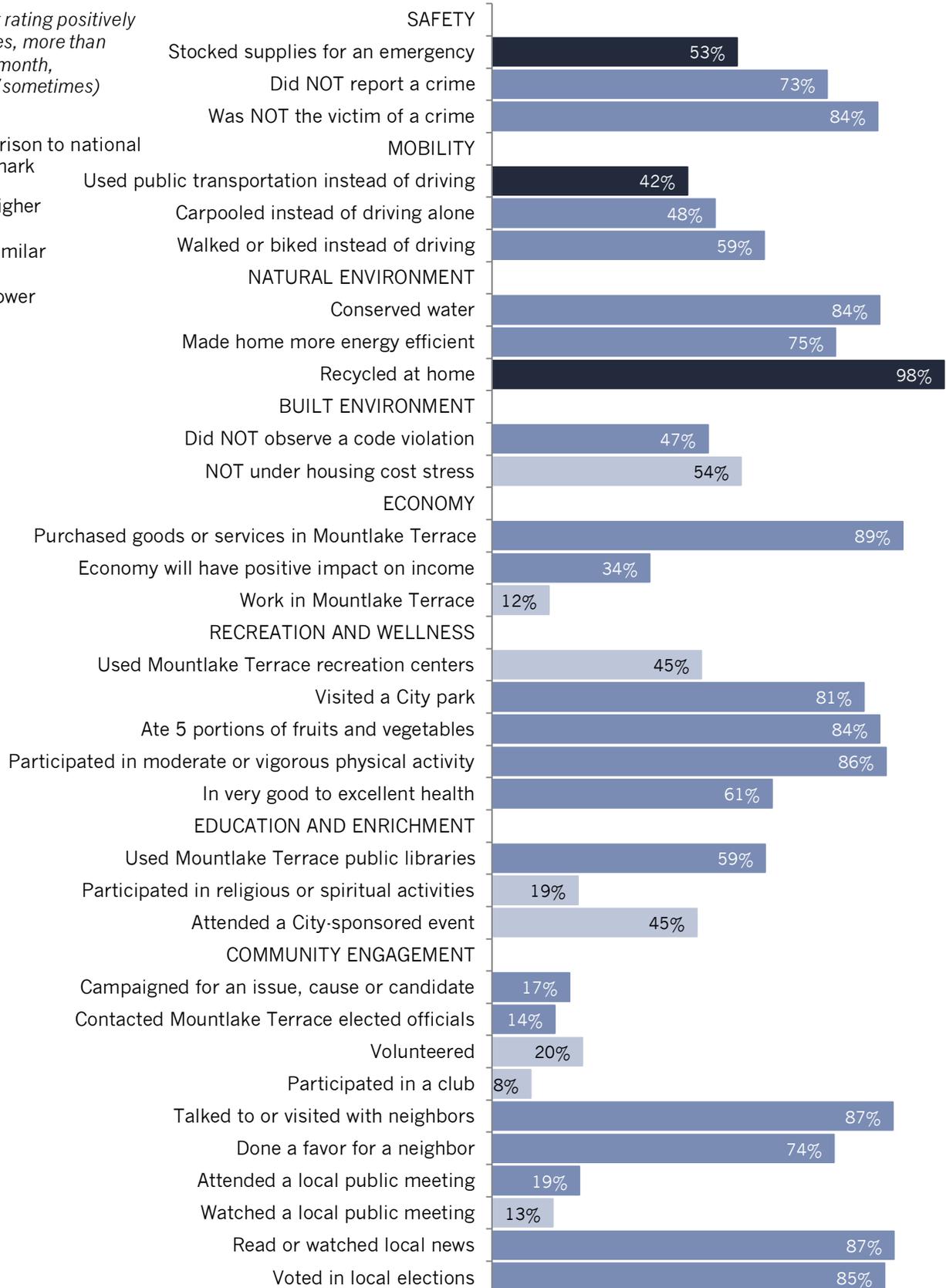
## The National Citizen Survey™

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 City of Mountlake Terrace included two questions of special interest on The NCS, both related to economic development. The first question asked residents to indicate what they felt the City's number one priority should be for Economic Development. About one-third felt encouraging businesses to relocate and/or expand their business within the City limits should be the highest priority while about 2 in 10 felt helping existing businesses should be the highest priority. About 1 in 10 felt that each of the following should be the highest priority: encouraging more jobs, improving infrastructure and improving the City's image. The second economic development question asked residents to assess the job the City has done at being proactive about economic development. About half felt the City was doing an excellent or good job; only 1 in 10 indicated poor.

Figure 4: Economic Development Priorities

*Economic Development involves creating and/or retaining jobs, services and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base. What one of the following should be the City's number one highest Economic Development priority?*

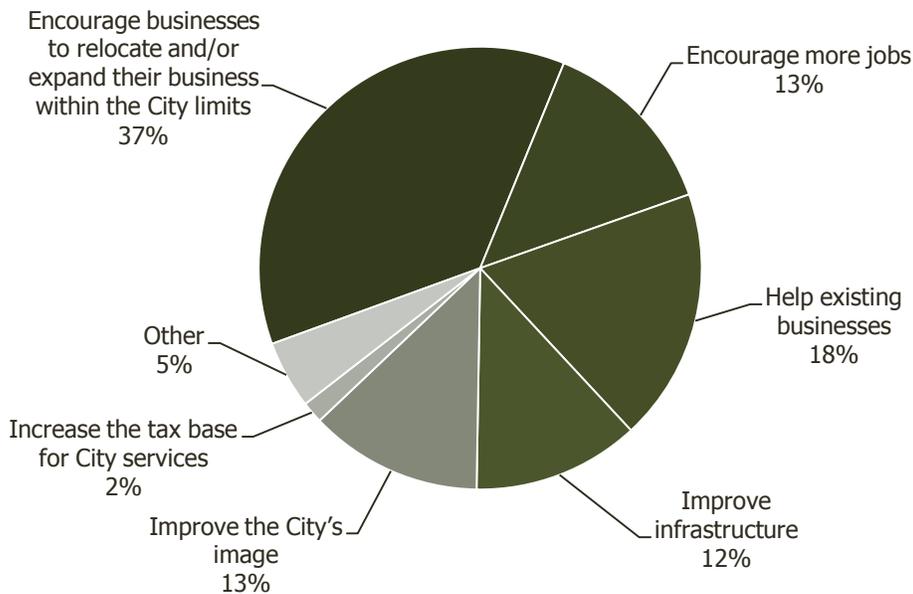
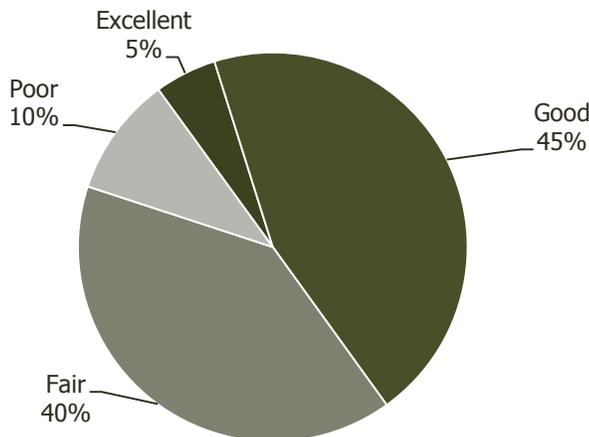


Figure 5: Job City Does at Being Proactive about Economic Development

*Please rate the job the City has done at being proactive about Economic Development.*



# Conclusions

## **Mountlake Terrace residents continue to enjoy a positive quality of life.**

As in 2015 and since surveying began in 2007, a majority of residents gave positive ratings for the overall quality of life and Mountlake Terrace as a place to live; both ratings that were similar to the national averages. About 8 in 10 residents offered positive ratings to their neighborhood as a place to live and 7 in 10 offered positive ratings to Mountlake Terrace as a place to raise children. About 4 in 5 residents recommended living in Mountlake Terrace and reported they were somewhat or very likely to remain in the city. Recommending the community and the likelihood of remaining in the community were both similar to ratings given in communities across the nation.

## **Economy continues to be a main focus area and residents noted improvements to employment opportunities but continuing improvements is a priority.**

Survey respondents indicated that Economy is a priority for the City in the coming two years. Within Community Characteristics, aspects of Economy tended to be rated lower than the national comparisons; however, the rating for employment opportunities, while lower than the benchmark, is on the rise since 2013 and the highest it has been since 2007 when surveying began. Also on the rise was residents' economic outlook; more residents in 2017 compared to 2013 felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their income. When asked about priorities for economic development about one-third felt encouraging businesses to relocate and/or expand their business within the City limits should be the highest priority while about 2 in 10 felt helping existing businesses should be the highest priority. Most residents felt the job the City does at being proactive about economic development was either fair or good; only five percent offered an excellent rating and ten percent offered a poor rating.

## **Mobility ratings are strong with public transportation leading the pack.**

Characteristics related to Mobility were strong with at least two-thirds of residents offering positive ratings to each of the eight characteristics listed within the facet, four of which were rated higher than the national averages (travel by public transportation, travel by car, public parking and traffic flow). Bus or transit services was the one service within Mobility that was rated higher than the national comparison, all others were rated similarly. Additionally, about 4 in 10 respondents reported using public transportation instead of driving more than once a month, a rate that was higher than the national average.