

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Richmond, CA
Community Livability Report

DRAFT
2017



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

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About

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

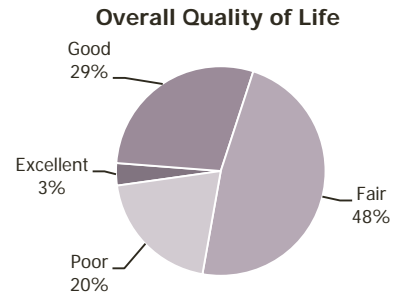
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 568 residents of the City of Richmond. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Richmond

Most residents rated the quality of life in Richmond as fair or better. This was lower than the 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.



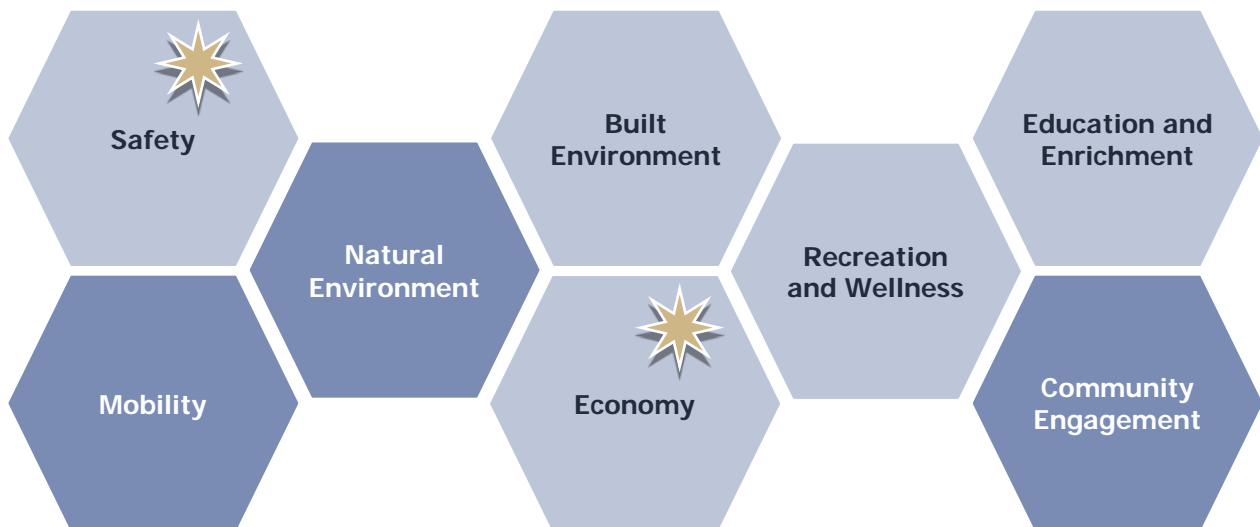
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2015, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Richmond community in the coming two years. Richmond residents gave lower than average ratings to both of these facets of community as well as to Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment. Ratings for Mobility, Natural Environment and Community Engagement 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 Richmond’s unique questions.

Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark

- * Most important



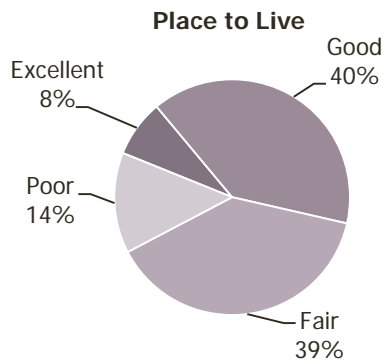
Community Characteristics

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 Richmond, about half of residents rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Richmond as a place to live were lower than ratings in other communities across the nation.

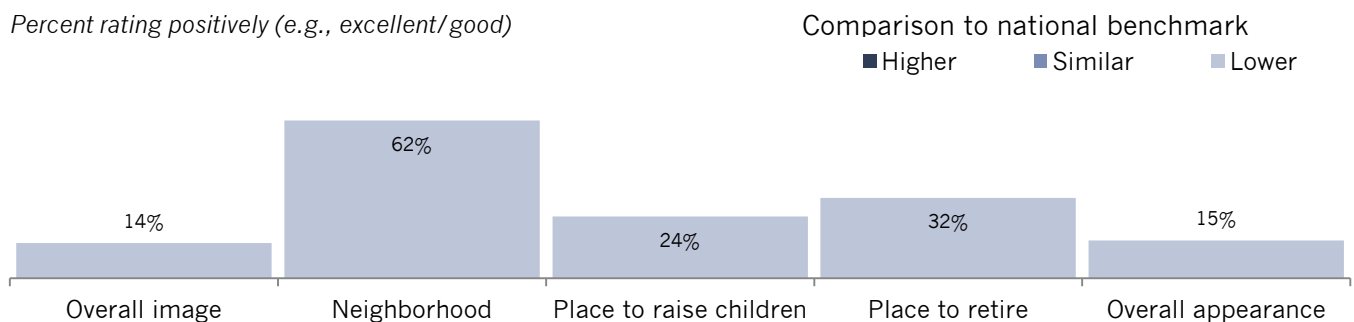
In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Richmond as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Richmond and its overall appearance. About 6 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to their neighborhood as a place to live while one-third or fewer gave favorable marks to the remaining general aspects.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Generally, ratings in Richmond tended to be lower than or similar to those given in other communities across the nation. While most facets tended to receive marks that were lower than the national benchmark, about half of mobility-related items were similar to the benchmark. These included ease of travel by car, by bicycle and by public transportation; public parking; and traffic flow. Ratings for some aspects of Mobility decreased over time, including the overall ease of travel, ease of travel by car and by public transportation and public parking; the rating for ease of travel by bicycle increased (see the report, *Trends Over Time*, provided under separate cover). Cost of living and openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds were also similar to the benchmark.



Most ratings within Community Characteristics remained stable over time. Residents gave higher marks for three aspects of Community Engagement in 2017 when compared to 2015: opportunities to participate in community matters, openness and acceptance of people of diverse backgrounds and neighborliness.

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



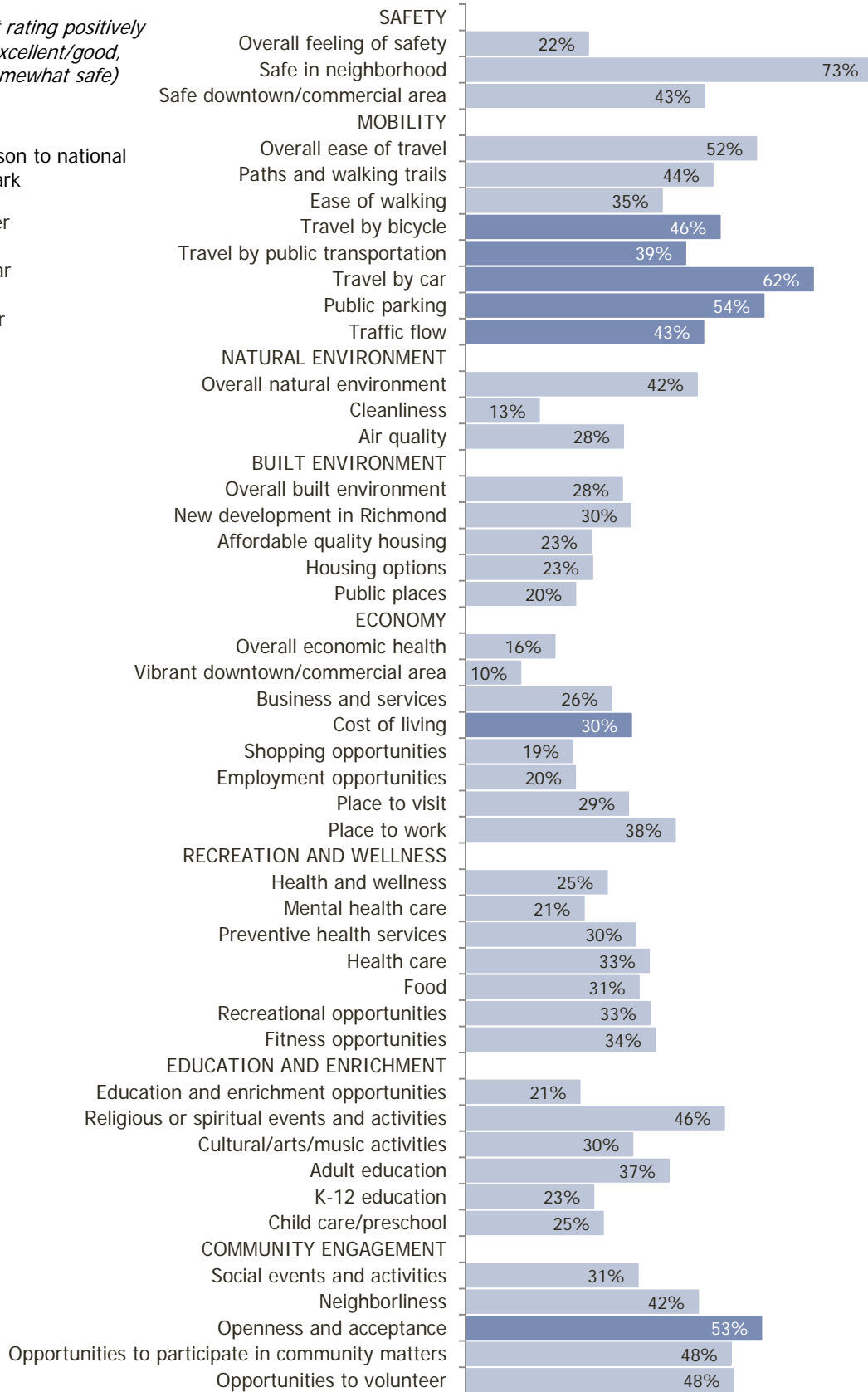
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

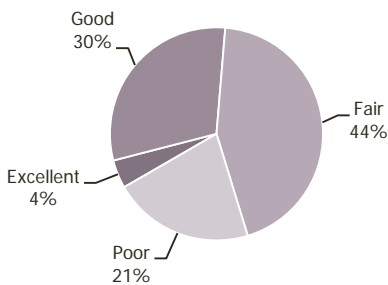
How well does the government of Richmond meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Richmond as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About one-third of residents gave positive evaluations to the overall quality of City services, which was lower than the benchmark. About one-quarter were pleased with the services provided by the Federal Government, which was similar to the benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Richmond’s leadership and governance (see chart below). About 4 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the job City government does at welcoming citizen involvement, which was similar to the national comparison. Other general aspects of Governance were rated positively by 4 in 10 residents or less and received lower ratings than those observed in other communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Richmond. Governance ratings tended to be similar to or lower than those observed in other communities. At least half of residents gave positive reviews to police, fire, ambulance/EMS, fire prevention, garbage collection, recycling, yard waste pick-up, sewer services, power utility, utility billing and public libraries. Most service ratings in 2017 were similar to those given in 2015. Evaluations increased over time for open space, special events and welcoming citizen involvement, and decreased for traffic enforcement, street cleaning, yard waste pick-up, storm drainage and public information.

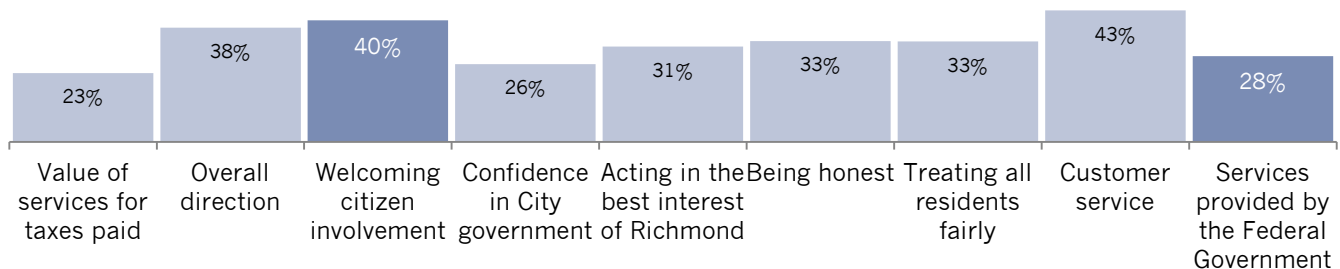
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



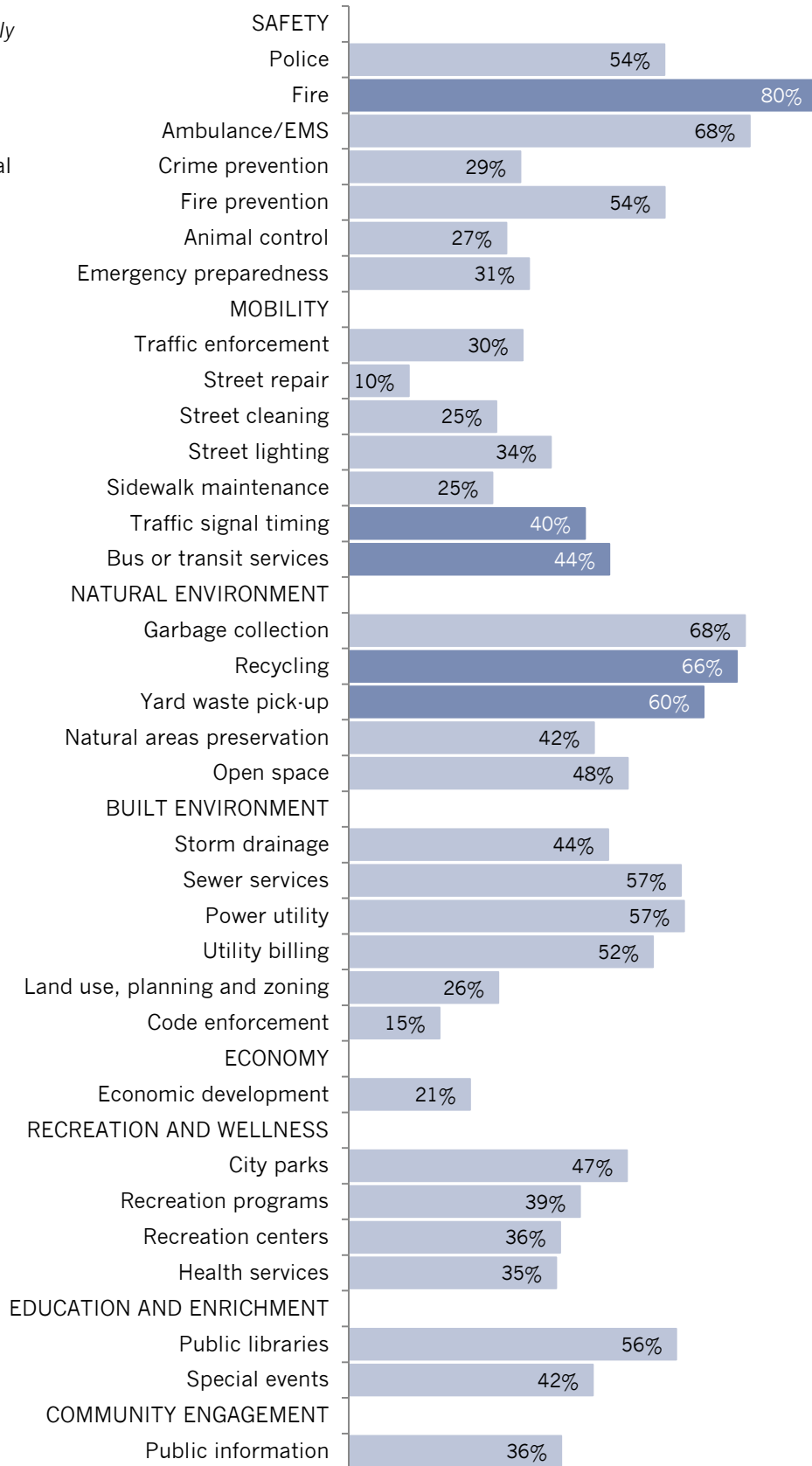
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



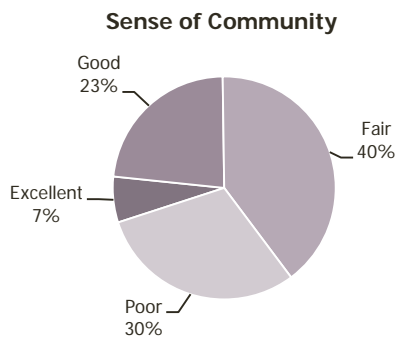
Participation

Are the residents of Richmond connected to the community and each other?

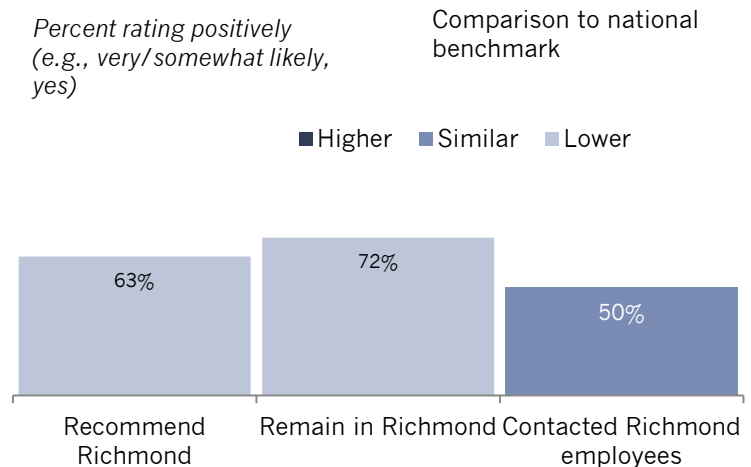
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. In Richmond, about 3 in 10 residents gave positive reviews to the sense of community in the city, which was lower than observed in other communities. Roughly two-thirds of residents would recommend living in the city to someone who asked or planned to remain in Richmond for the next five years (both lower than the benchmark), while about half had contacted Richmond employees in the 12 months prior to the survey (similar to the benchmark).

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates varied widely across the different facets, making the benchmark comparison (and comparison to Richmond over time) helpful for understanding the results. Richmond residents were more likely than residents elsewhere across the nation to have stocked supplies for an emergency, used public transportation instead of driving, conserved water and recycled at home. Levels of Community Engagement (e.g., campaigning for an issue, watching a local public meeting, reading local news) were also higher than the benchmark and increased over time.

Respondents in Richmond were more likely than those in other communities to have reported a crime or have been the victim of a crime, and less likely to have used recreation centers or used public libraries. Richmond residents were also more likely to have observed a code violation or to be under housing cost stress compared to residents of other communities in the U.S.



Most rates of Participation remained stable or increased over time. More residents in 2017 than in 2015 had stocked supplies for an emergency or attended a City-sponsored event, and they were also more likely to recommend living in Richmond or to have contacted Richmond employees.



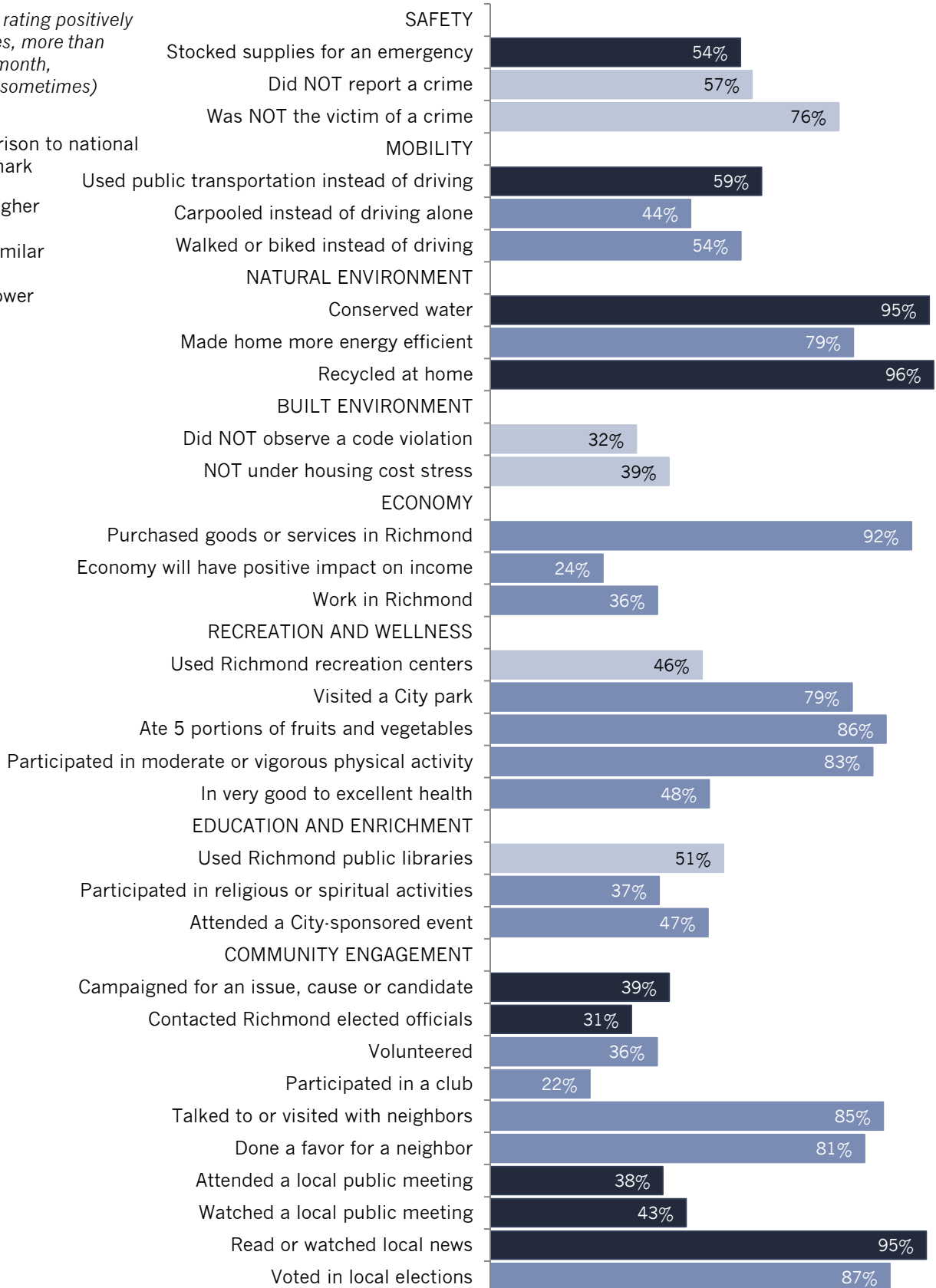
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

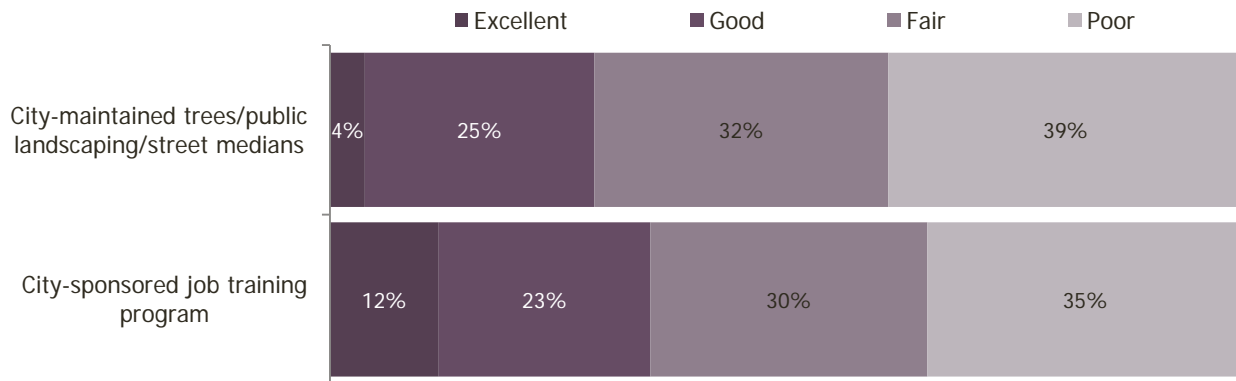


Special Topics

The City of Richmond included five questions of special interest on The NCS as well as two line item additions to a standard question. Topic areas included resident health and well-being, City priorities, discrimination against residents and City funding for children and youth programs.

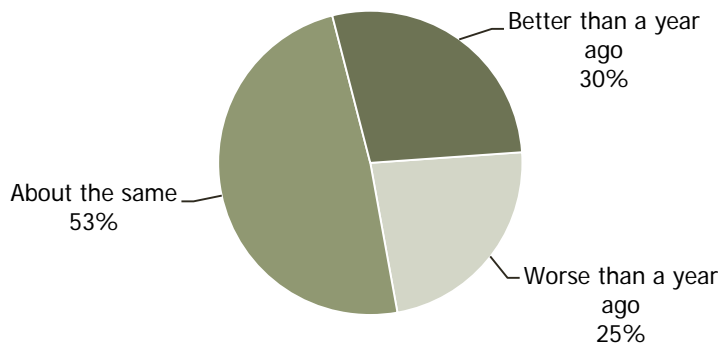
Residents evaluated the City-sponsored job training program and City-maintained trees, public landscaping and street medians. Roughly 4 in 10 respondents gave positive marks to job training and under one-third were pleased with City landscaping.

Figure 4: Custom Additions to Question 10
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond:



Thinking about their current state of health in comparison to one year prior, roughly half of residents felt their health was about the same. About 3 in 10 thought it was better, and about 2 in 10 thought it was worse.

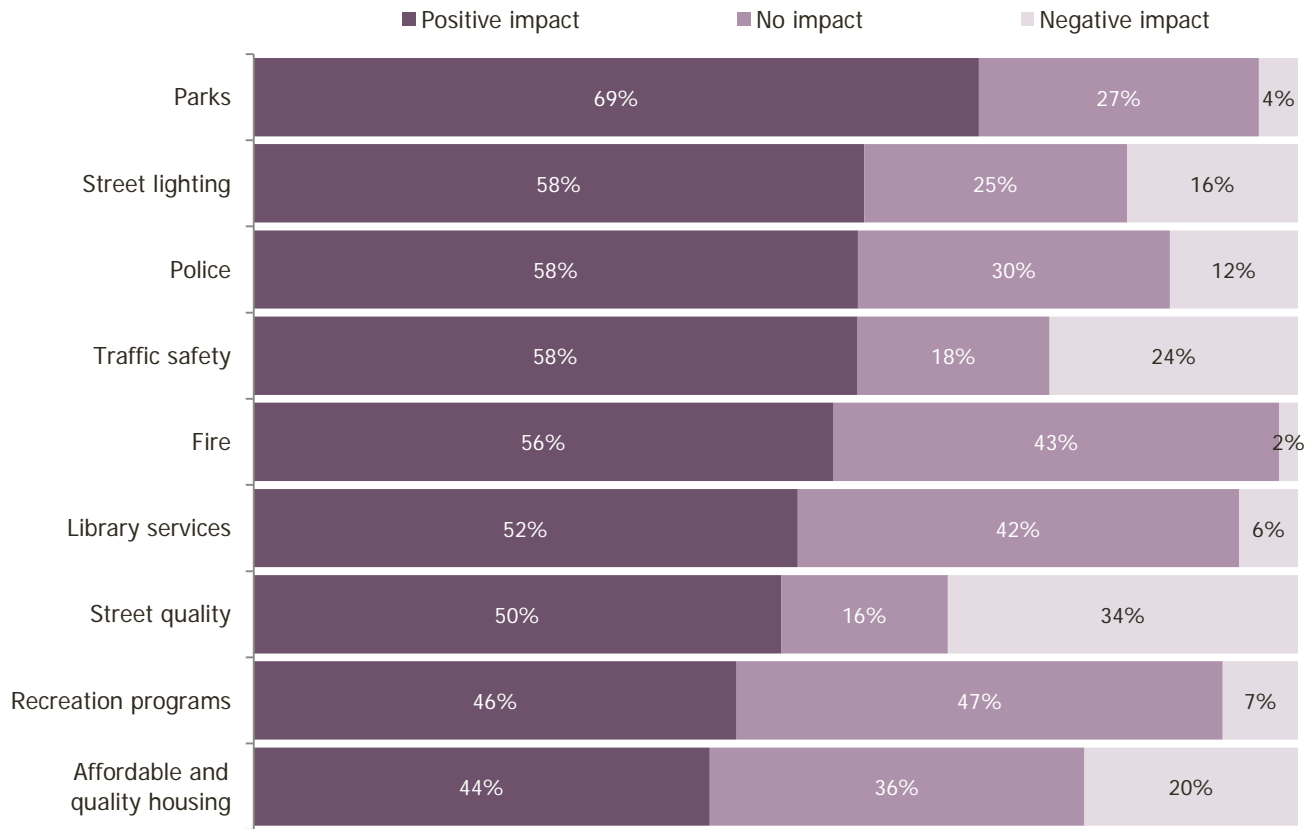
Figure 5: Resident Health
Compared to one year ago, how would you rate your health in general now?



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Residents assessed the impact of a variety of City services on their health and well-being. About 7 in 10 residents indicated parks had a positive impact on their lives and about 6 in 10 felt this way about street lighting, police and traffic safety. While about half of respondents felt street quality positively affected their health and well-being, about one-third felt its effect to be negative.

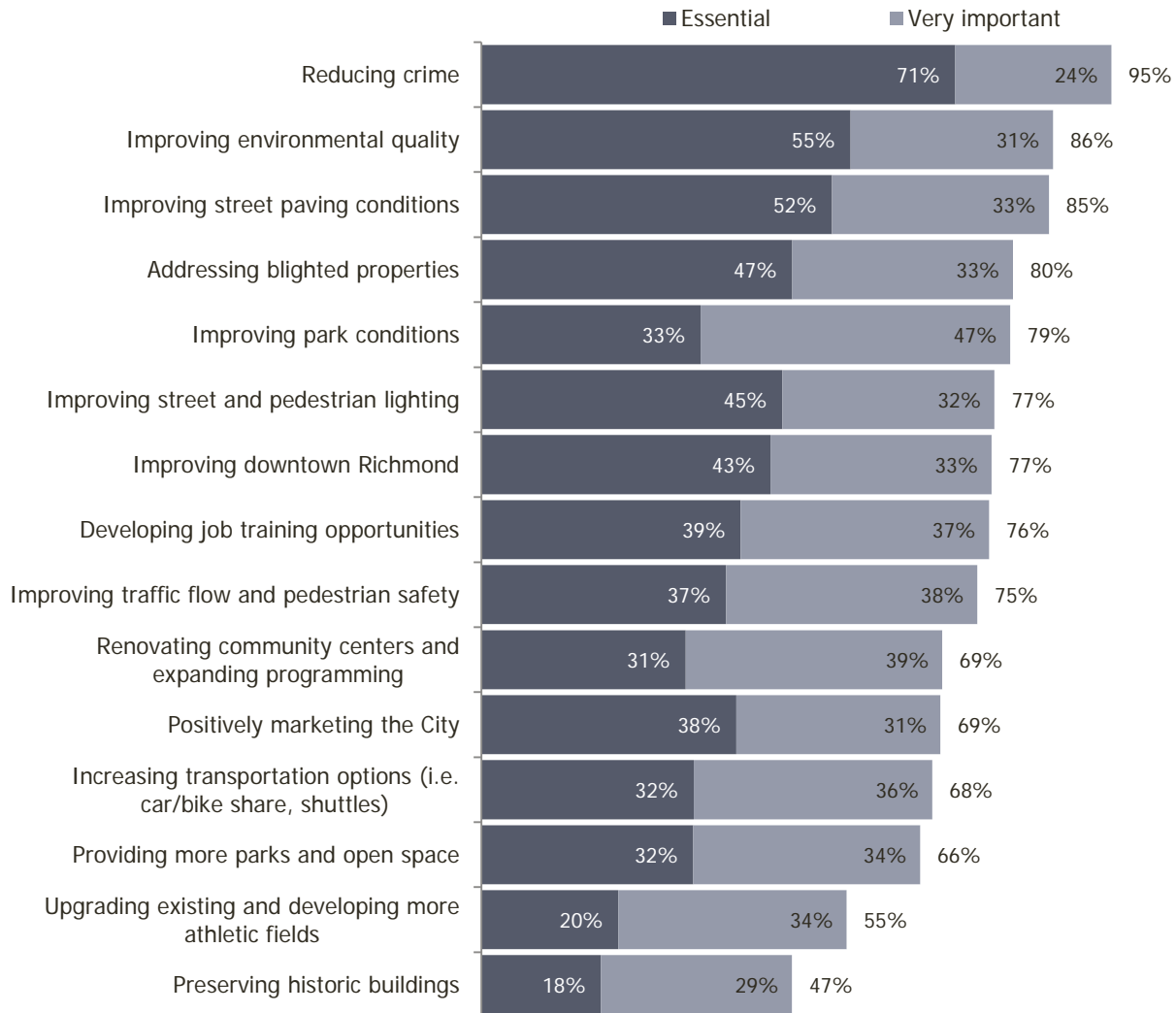
Figure 6: Impact of City Services on Resident Well-Being
 Please rate the impact of the following City services on your health and well-being:



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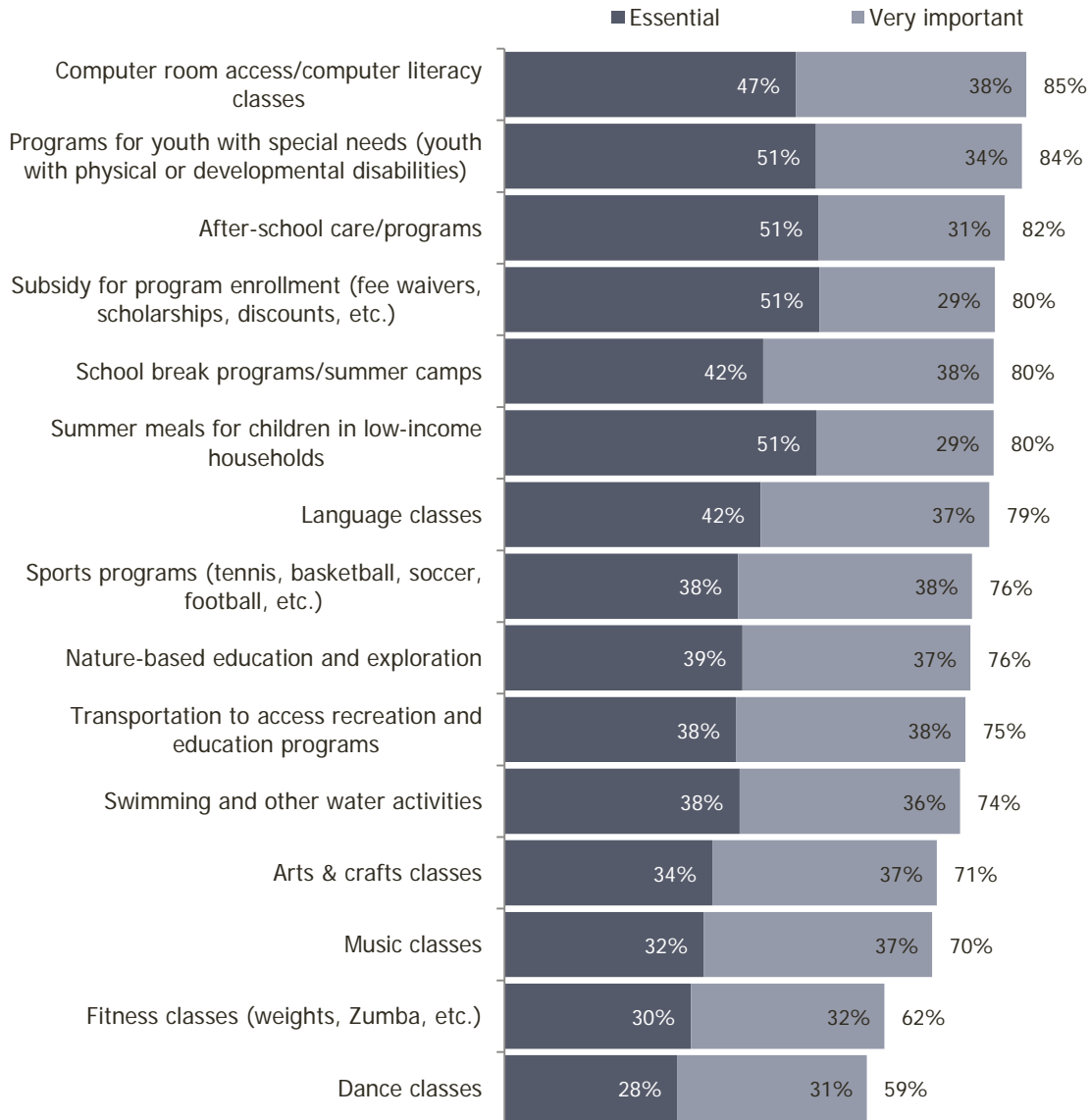
Almost all residents felt that reducing crime was an essential or very important issue to address in the next two years, and about 8 in 10 wanted the city to focus on improving environmental quality, improving street paving conditions, addressing blighted properties and improving parking conditions. Residents placed less importance on upgrading/developing athletic fields or preserving historic buildings. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of residents felt that the remaining issues were important for the city to address.

Figure 7: Importance of City Issues
How important, if at all, are the following issues for the City to address within the next two years?



Residents evaluated the importance of City-provided children, youth and young adults programming. At least 6 in 10 residents thought each of the listed programs were essential or very important for the City to fund. About half of residents felt it was essential for the City to provide computer room access/computer literacy classes, programs for youth with special needs, afterschool care/programs, subsidies for program enrollments and summer meals for children in low-income households.

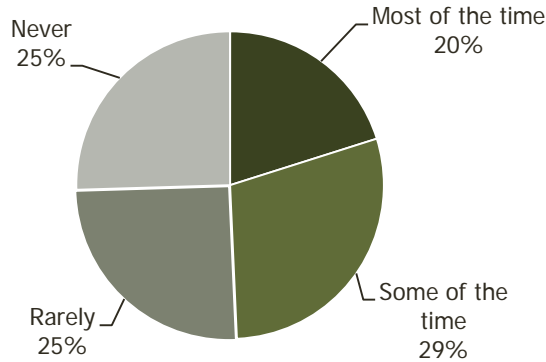
Figure 8: Importance of City Programs
 Please rate how important it is for the City to provide the following programs for children, youth and young adults within its annual operating budget:



Residents reflected on experiencing unfair treatment due to their race, ethnicity or color at various levels: one-quarter of residents reported experiencing unfair treatment either never or rarely, about 3 in 10 experienced it some of the time, and 2 in 10 experienced unfair treatment most of the time.

Figure 9: Experience of Unfair Treatment

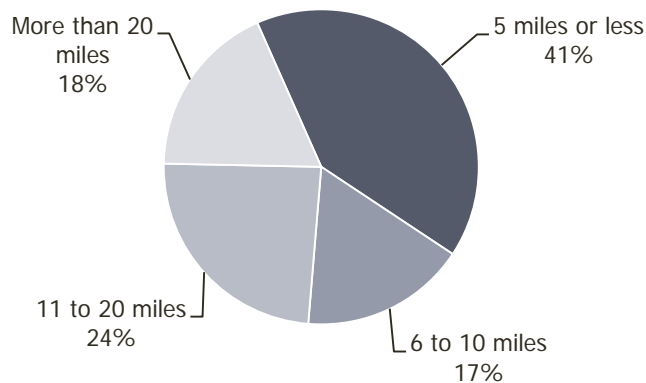
In the last year, how often, if at all, did you worry about you, someone in your family or any other person of your same race, ethnicity or nationality experiencing unfair treatment because of your race, ethnicity, or color?



The final special-interest question asked residents to indicate the distance in miles from their home to their place of work. The largest proportion of respondents (4 in 10) worked five miles or less from home; about 2 in 10 worked 6 to 10 miles from home; about one-quarter worked 11 to 20 miles from home; and about 2 in 10 worked more than 20 miles from home.

Figure 10: Distance from Work to Home

About how far is your home from work?



Conclusions

Safety has improved over the past decade.

As in 2015, residents indicated that Safety was an important focus area for the City to address in the coming years. While less than half of residents rated positively many aspects of Safety, including the overall feeling of safety in Richmond, feeling safe in the downtown/commercial area, crime prevention and animal control, most safety-related ratings have improved considerably since the baseline survey of 2007. For example, in that baseline survey, about two-thirds of residents felt safe in their neighborhoods compared to three-quarters in 2017; safety in downtown/commercial areas showed similar gains (from 25% safe in 2007 to 43% safe in 2017). Ratings for police services, crime prevention, fire services, fire prevention and animal control have steadily increased over the past 10 years, as well. While Richmond residents were also more likely than those in other communities to have reported a crime or been the victim of a crime, the rate of crime victimization has remained stable over time. Residents wanted the City to continue to focus on safety in the community as virtually all residents (95%) felt that reducing crime was an essential or very important issue for the City to address in the next two years and about 7 in 10 felt police and traffic safety had a positive impact on their health and well-being.

There have been small gains in the local economy and it remains an area of opportunity.

Residents also rated Economy as a priority for the City in the next two years, and similar to 2015, many ratings within this facet were lower than those observed in other communities. Less than one-quarter of respondents gave favorable evaluations to the overall economic health of the city, vibrant downtown/commercial area, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities and economic development. The rating for shopping opportunities decreased between 2015 and 2017, returning to a level last seen in 2007. While stable between 2015 and 2017, employment opportunities and Richmond as a place to work have increased in quality since 2007. About one-third of residents rated the City-sponsored job training program as excellent or good and a strong majority of residents identified computer room access/computer literacy classes as important City offerings for children and youth. Over the next two years, about three-quarters of respondents would like to see a focus on improving downtown Richmond and developing job training opportunities.

Mobility may be an area to monitor in the coming years.

A majority of residents indicated street lighting or traffic safety had a positive impact on their health and well-being and about half felt this way about street quality. While several mobility-related aspects of the community received ratings similar to those observed elsewhere across the country (ease of travel by car, bicycle and public transportation, public parking, traffic flow, traffic signal timing and bus or transit services), ratings decreased from 2015 to 2017 for the overall ease of travel, ease of travel by car and by public transportation and public parking. When asked about important issues to address in the next two years, a strong majority of residents identified improving street paving conditions, improving street and pedestrian lighting and improving traffic flow and pedestrian safety as important.