

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Golden, CO

Community Livability Report

2016



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About

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

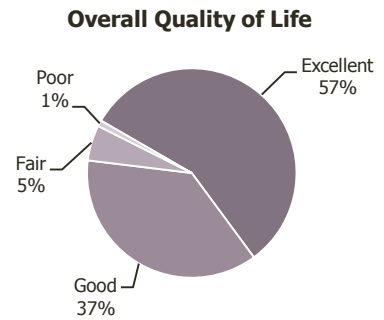
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 647 residents of the City of Golden. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Golden

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Golden as excellent or good. Residents rated overall quality of life higher than 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.



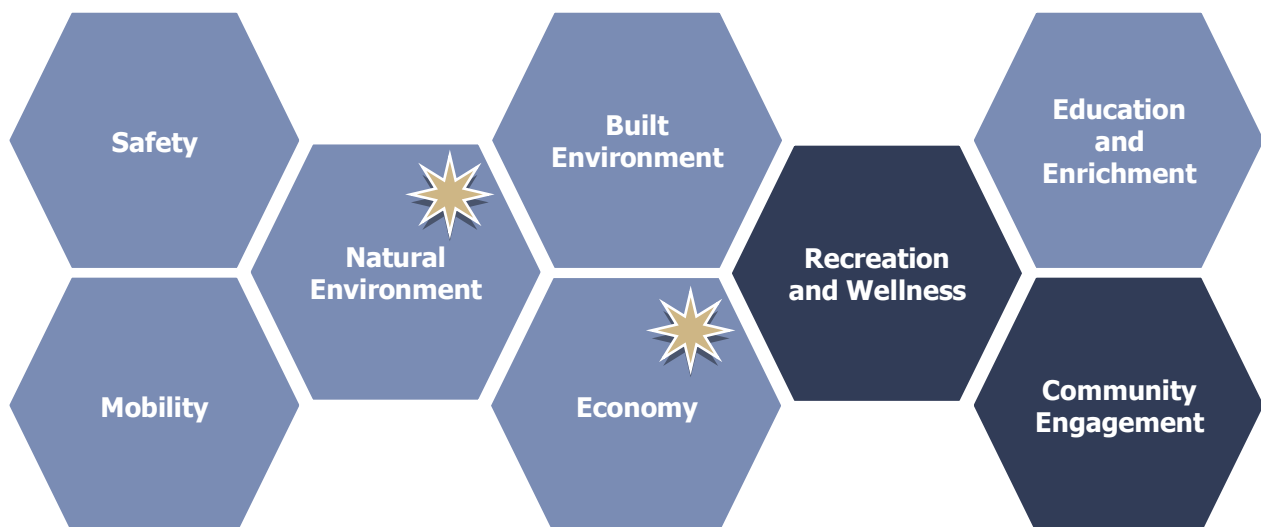
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Natural Environment and Economy as priorities for the Golden community in the coming two years. Ratings for these facets were positive and similar to other communities. It is noteworthy that Golden residents gave strong ratings to Recreation and Wellness as well as Community Engagement. 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 Golden’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



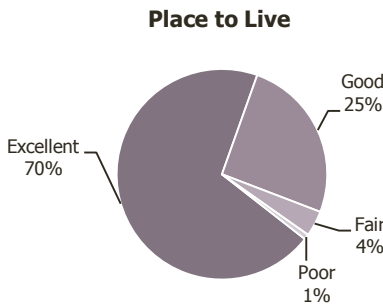
Community Characteristics

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 Golden, 95% of residents rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Golden as a place to live were higher than ratings given in other communities across the nation.

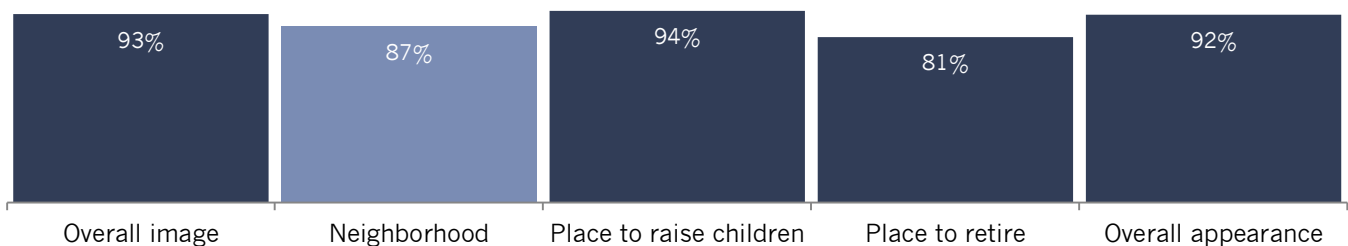
In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Golden as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Golden and its overall appearance. About 9 in 10 respondents or more gave positive ratings to Golden as a place to raise children and to the overall appearance and overall image of Golden. These ratings were higher than the national benchmark, along with the rating for Golden as a place to retire (81% excellent or good).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Almost all residents rated their overall feeling of safety in Golden positively with ratings higher than the national benchmark. Similarly, almost all residents rated their feelings of safety in their neighborhood and in downtown/commercial areas positively. Within the facet of Mobility, residents were most pleased with Golden's paths and walking trails, with about 92% of residents giving them positive ratings that were higher than the national benchmark. Residents were the least pleased with travel by public transportation but ratings were similar to those found in other communities across the nation. At least 9 in 10 residents rated the overall natural environment and cleanliness of Golden positively with ratings higher than the national benchmark. Ratings for Built Environment varied with positive ratings ranging from 19% for affordable quality housing to 89% for public places; the rating for affordable quality housing was lower than the national benchmark while the rating for public places was higher. Within Economy, residents rated half of the eight aspects higher than the national benchmark with 87% of respondents rating Golden's overall economic health as excellent or good. Residents rated aspects of Golden's Recreation and Wellness characteristics and opportunities highly with nearly 9 in 10 respondents giving a positive rating to health and wellness opportunities, recreational opportunities and fitness opportunities; each of these were rated higher than the national benchmark. Ratings within Education and Enrichment varied with 8 in 10 residents positively rating K-12 education while about 6 in 10 residents rated child care and preschool positively; each of these aspects were rated similar to the national benchmark.



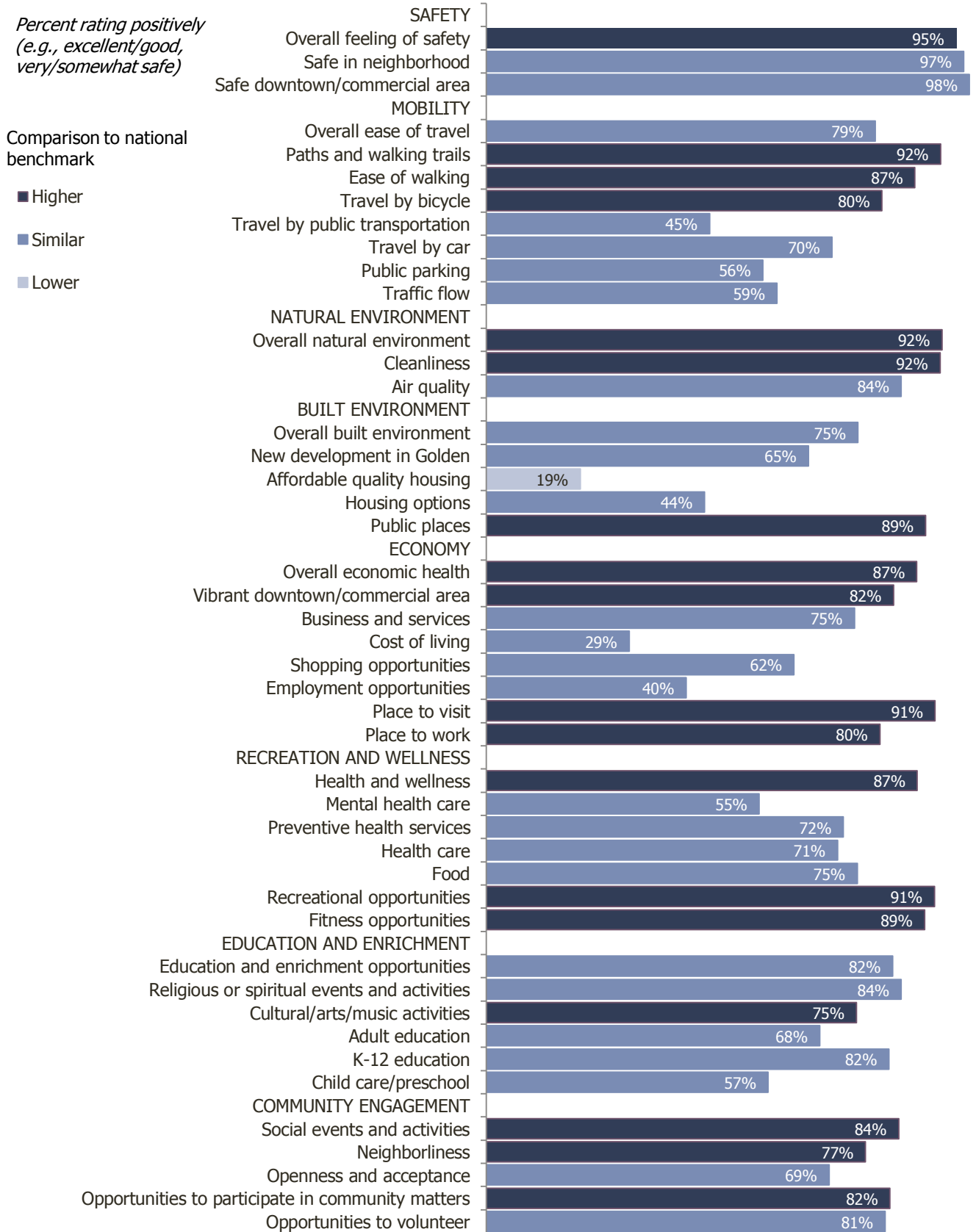
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Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)



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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

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

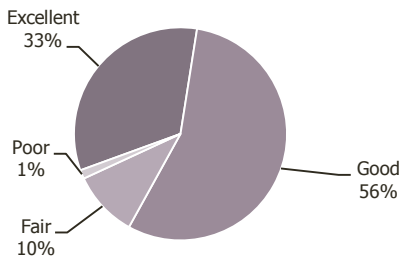
The overall quality of the services provided by Golden as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Residents' ratings for Golden's quality of services were higher than the national benchmark with 89% of respondents rating them as excellent or good.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Golden's leadership and governance. Nearly three-quarters of residents gave high ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Golden, being honest and treating all residents fairly; each of these ratings were higher than ratings seen in comparison communities. Even more (86%) rated the customer service of Golden employees highly, while only about half of residents positively rated the services provided by the Federal Government; both of these ratings were similar to the national benchmarks.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Golden. These services and amenities were rated positively by at least half of respondents and all were similar to or higher than the national benchmark comparisons. Respondents rated Golden's crime prevention efforts higher than the national benchmark within the facet of Safety, and ratings for the remaining six Safety services were similar to the national benchmark. Ratings within Natural Environment were favorable with about 7 in 10 or more residents rating each of the six services positively. Natural areas preservation and open space in Golden received ratings that were higher than the national benchmark. Residents were pleased with the economic development in Golden; 73% of respondents rated this aspect of Economy positively and higher than the national benchmark. Almost all (94%)

residents rated City parks as excellent or good, and more than 8 in 10 residents positively rated recreation programs and centers, all rating that were higher than the national benchmark. Within Education and Enrichment, more than 8 in 10 respondents positively rated the City's public libraries and special events. More than 80% of residents rated Golden's public information services positively and higher than the national benchmark.

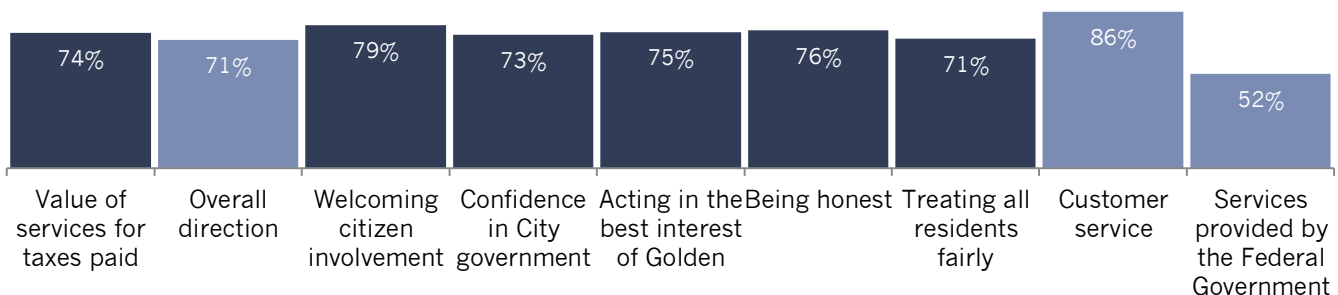
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



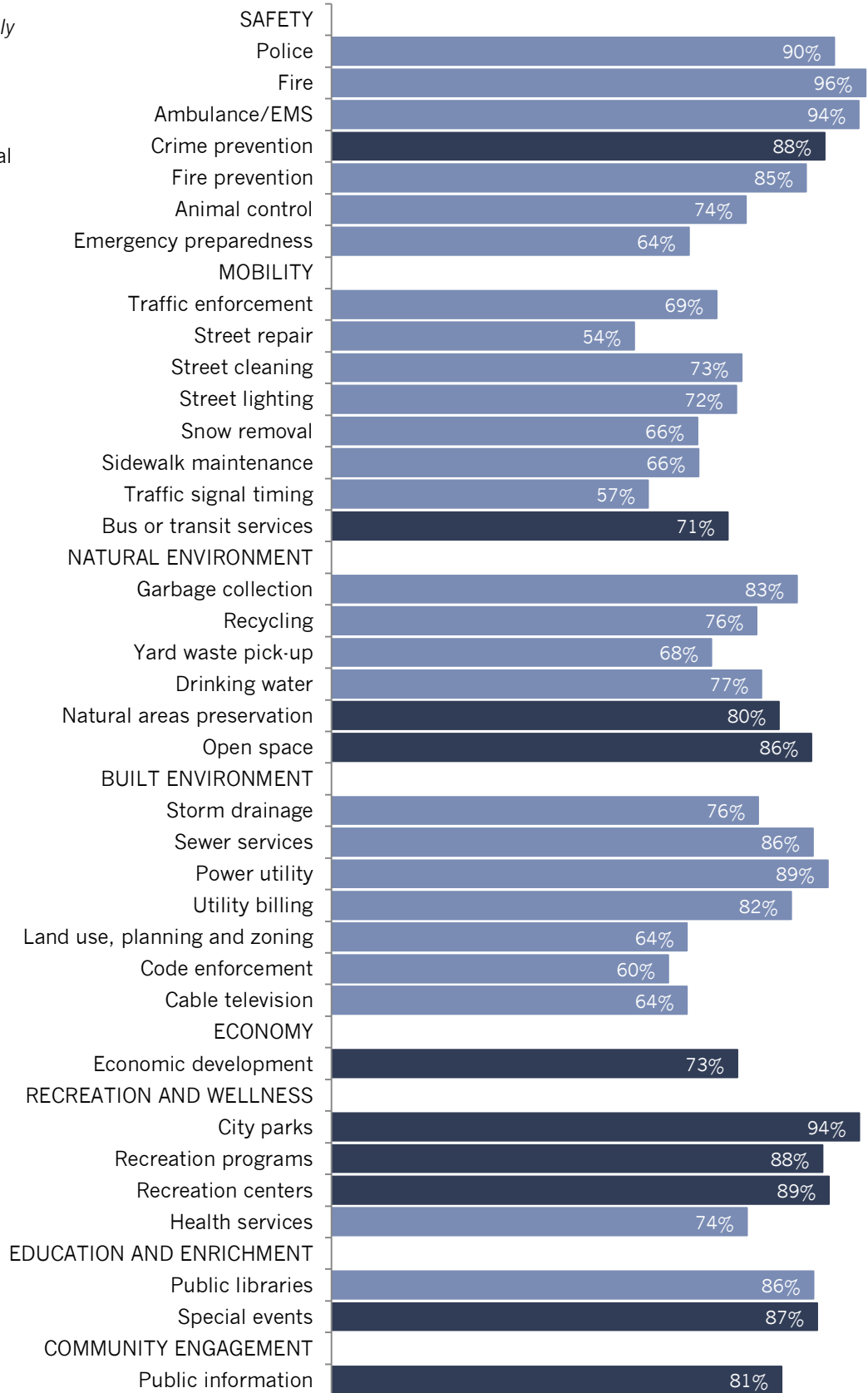
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



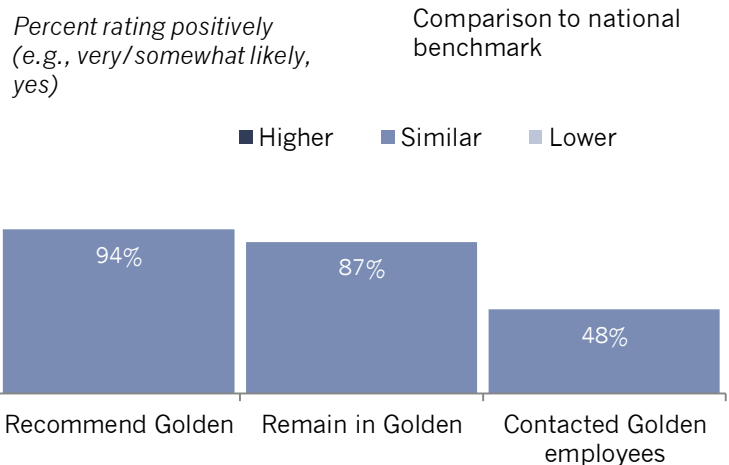
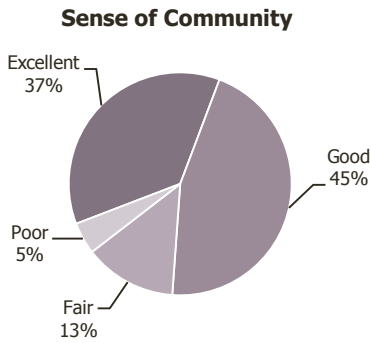
Participation

Are the residents of Golden 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. A majority of respondents rated the sense of community in Golden as excellent or good, a rating higher than benchmark comparisons. Nearly all residents would recommend living in Golden (94%) and more than 8 in 10 residents reported they were somewhat or very likely to remain in the city. These ratings were similar to the national benchmark.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Within the facet of Safety, about 82% of residents indicated they had not reported a crime and 90% had not been the victim of a crime; ratings which were similar to the national benchmark. Only 24% of respondents reported that they had stocked supplies for an emergency, a rating lower than the national comparison. Ratings within the facet of Mobility were all higher than the national benchmark, with roughly 6 in 10 residents who reported they had used public transportation or carpooled instead of driving alone and about 8 in 10 who reported they had walked or biked instead of driving. At least 6 in 10 residents indicated they had participated in each aspect of Natural Environment and Built Environment, these rates of participation were similar when compared to participation rates given across the nation. Ratings varied within Economy, with almost all residents purchasing goods or services in Golden, nearly half feeling that the economy will have a positive impact on their income, and only one-third of residents working in Golden; all rates of participation were similar to the national benchmarks.

Within the facet of Recreation and Wellness, 71% of respondents reported using Golden’s recreation centers and 96% said they had visited a City park, both of which were higher rates of use than the national benchmark. About 80% of residents said they had attended a City-sponsored event (higher than the benchmark comparison), while only 35% reported participating in religious or spiritual activities (lower than the benchmark comparison). Within Community Engagement, all Participation aspects were rated similar to the national benchmark.



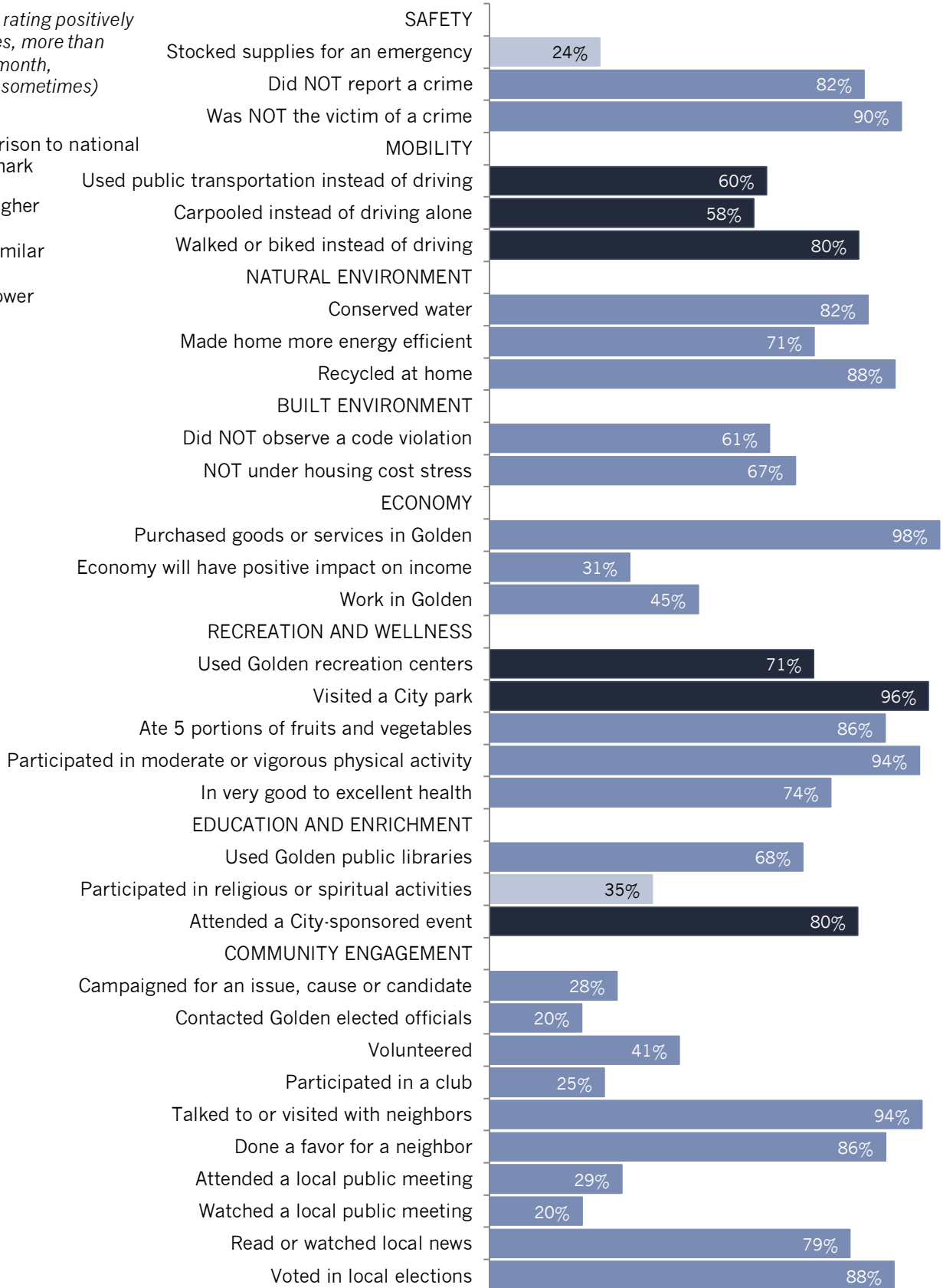
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



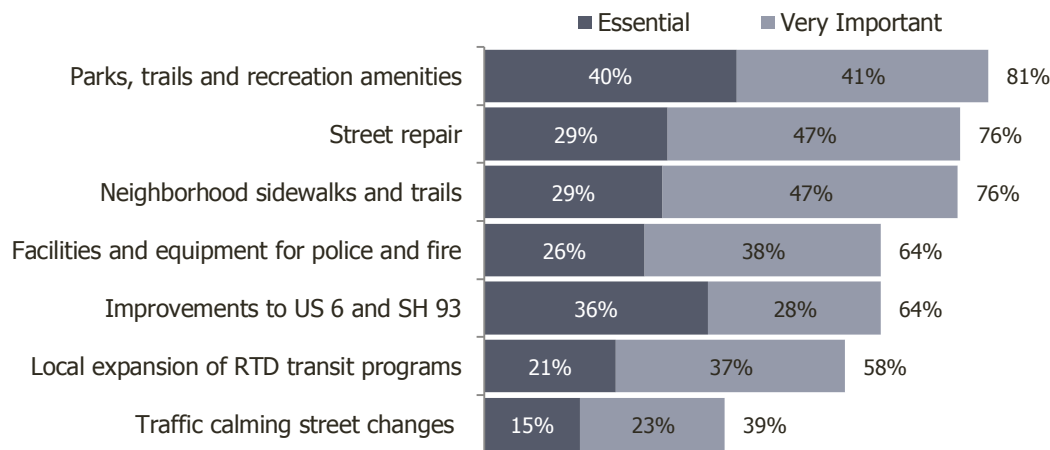
Special Topics

The City of Golden included four questions of special interest on The NCS.

When asked to rate the importance of a number of investments in the coming four years, more than 8 in 10 rated parks, trails and recreation amenities as essential or very important. More than three quarters of respondents indicated street repair and neighborhood sidewalks and trails as investment priorities, and more than 6 in 10 prioritized improvements to US 6 and SH 93 and facilities and equipment for police and fire. Less than half of respondents rated traffic calming street changes, such as street narrowing, curb extensions and raised crosswalks, essential or very important.

Figure 4: Important Investments

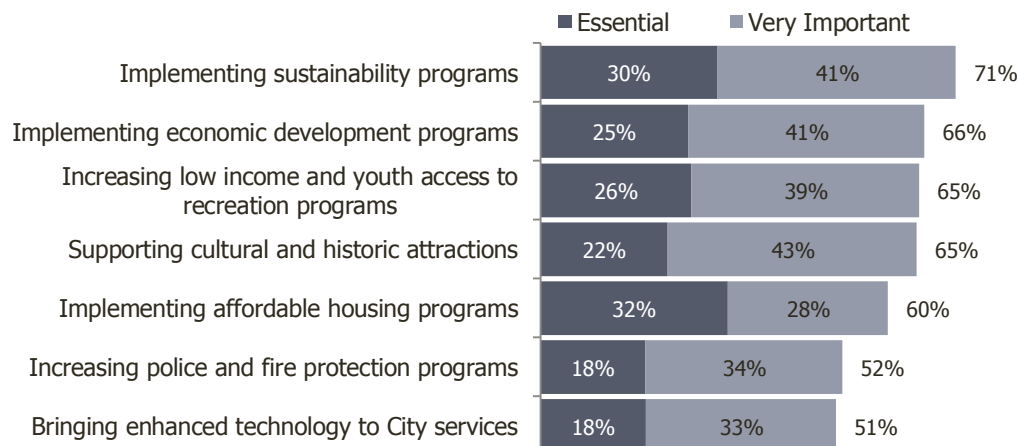
Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the City of Golden to focus on each of the following in the coming four years. Investing in...



When asked to indicate the importance of potential focus areas for the City of Golden in the coming four years, about 7 in 10 rated implementing sustainability programs as essential or very important. About two-thirds of residents indicated that implementing economic development programs, increasing low income and youth access to recreation programs and supporting cultural and historic attractions were essential or very important focus areas.

Figure 5: Important Focus Areas

Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for the City of Golden to focus on each of the following in the coming four years:

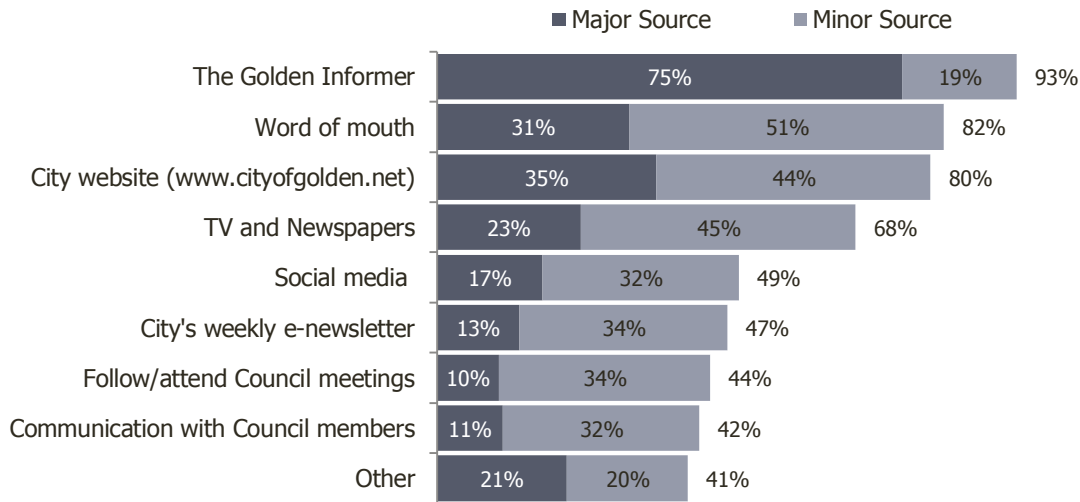


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When asked about sources of information about the City government and its activities, events and services, more than 9 in 10 Golden residents rated *The Golden Informer* as a major or minor source. More than 8 in 10 indicated that they received information by word of mouth and the City website. Less than half of residents indicated social media, the City's weekly e-newsletter and Council meetings or communication with Council members as major or minor sources of information. Respondents had the opportunity to write-in a response for "other." Please see *The NCS Open End Report* under separate cover the review these responses.

Figure 6: Information Sources

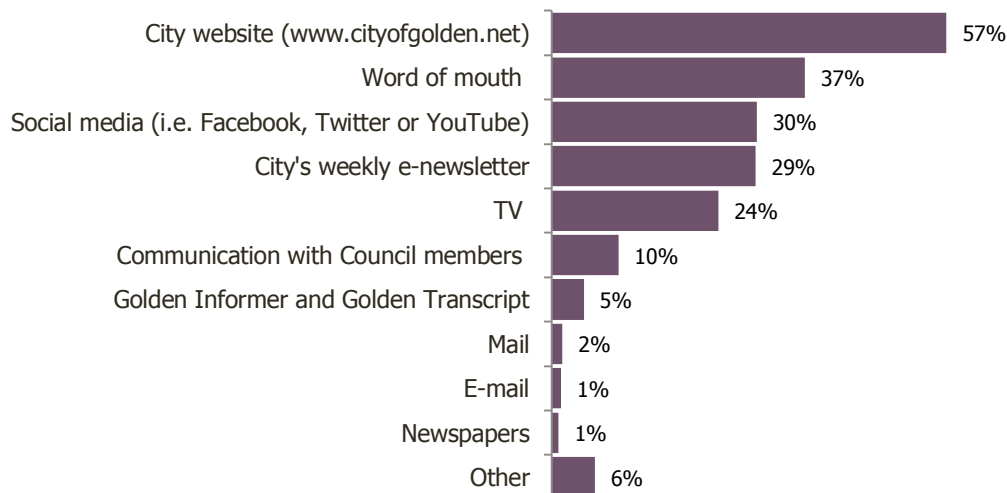
Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the City government and its activities, events and services:



When asked which tools residents would rely on for time sensitive information, more than half indicated that they would use the City website. Roughly 37% indicated that they would rely on word of mouth, while around 30% would use either social media or the City's weekly e-newsletter. Respondents also had the opportunity to write-in a response for "other." Please see *The NCS Open End Report* under separate cover the review these responses.

Figure 7: Time Sensitive Information Sources

Which of the following communication tools would you rely upon for time sensitive information about City projects or news? (Please select all that apply.)



Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option. Respondents' written responses for "other" were reviewed and grouped into categories by theme when applicable. The percentages above for mail, e-mail, newspapers and Golden Informer and Golden Transcript represent themes identified in the "other" responses and have been pulled from the "other" category.

Conclusions

Residents of Golden enjoy a high quality of life.

Almost all residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good and 94% of residents would be very or somewhat likely to recommend Golden as a place to live to someone who asks while 87% of respondents would be very or somewhat likely to remain in Golden. Golden as a place to raise children, as well as the City's overall image and appearance received high ratings by at least 9 in 10 residents. Most of the aspects that aid in community livability were rated positively and were at least similar to national benchmark comparisons.

Economy was rated positively and is important to residents.

Survey participants indicated that Economy is an important facet for Golden to focus on in the coming years. A majority of residents rated Golden's overall economic health as excellent or good and more than 80% of respondents identified the City as an excellent or good place to work and visit. Almost all respondents had purchased goods or services in Golden and about 31% of respondents believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income. Nearly three-quarters of residents positively rated Golden's economic development under the pillar of Governance.

Golden's Natural Environment is a valued community asset.

Natural Environment was identified as one of the facets most important to residents' quality of life. Residents gave positive ratings to the overall natural environment in Golden, as well as its cleanliness and air quality. More than 80% of respondents rated Golden's natural areas preservation and open space as excellent or good; ratings that were higher than ratings given in other communities across the nation. Within the pillar of Participation, more than 8 in 10 residents reported that they had conserved water and recycled at home.

Residents use Recreation and Wellness amenities and services and think highly of their quality.

Ratings for Recreation and Wellness in Golden were consistently found to be higher than the national benchmark comparisons. The health and wellness opportunities in Golden were rated as excellent or good by a majority of residents, which was higher than ratings given in other communities. Additionally, high ratings from about 9 in 10 residents were noted in recreational opportunities and fitness opportunities. Almost all respondents reported visiting a City park and more than 70% said they used Golden recreation centers. When asked in a special interest question to rate the importance of a number of investments in the coming four years, more than 8 in 10 residents rated parks, trails and recreation amenities as essential or very important.