



Commerce City, CO

Community Livability Report

2019



2955 Valmont Road Suite 300
Boulder, Colorado 80301
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
icma.org • 800-745-8780

Contents

About..... 1

Quality of Life in Commerce City 2

Community Characteristics 3

Governance 5

Participation 7

Special Topics..... 9

Conclusions 11



The National Community Survey™
© 2001-2019 National Research Center, Inc.

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 Commerce City. 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 294 residents of the Commerce City. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for all respondents.

This report summarizes the survey results from the mail-based, statistically valid component of The NCS, which represent the most robust estimate of residents’ opinions. An online, community-wide survey was also conducted, and the results of that survey have been reported separately in the *Supplemental Online Report*.

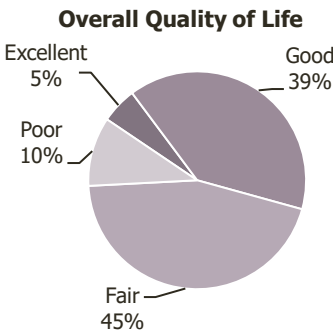
The full description of methods used to garner opinions from both survey efforts can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Commerce City

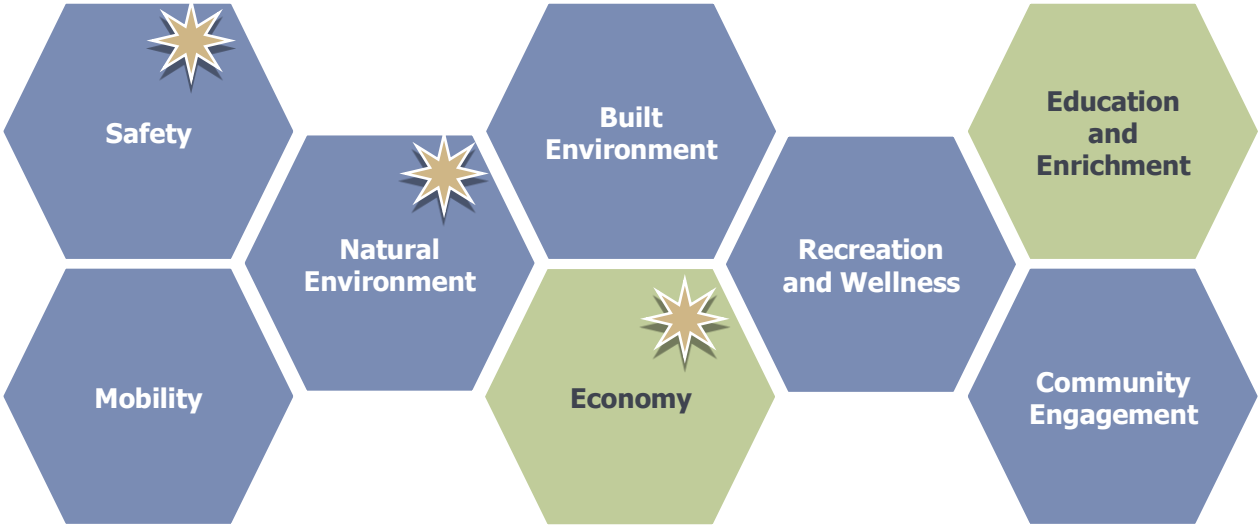
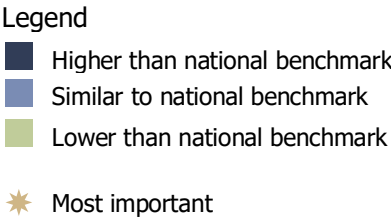
Around 4 in 10 survey participants rated the quality of life in Commerce City as excellent or good, which was lower than national and Colorado comparison benchmark communities (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover) and had declined since 2018.

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 previous years, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Commerce City community in the coming two years; in 2019, they also indicated that Natural Environment was a top focus area. Ratings for most facets were on par with national comparisons, while evaluations for Economy and Education and Enrichment were below average. Several ratings for these broad overall facets improved from 2018 to 2019. 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 Commerce City's unique questions.



Community Characteristics

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

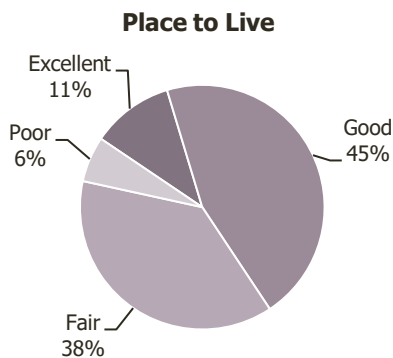
Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Commerce City, at least half rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Commerce City 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 Commerce City as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Commerce City and its overall appearance. About three-quarters of respondents felt positively about their neighborhoods as places to live, which was similar to national and peer Colorado communities. Around half or fewer of residents gave excellent or good assessments to the remaining aspects of community livability.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Overall, evaluations for Community Characteristics were similar or lower than national and peer benchmarks. While most facets tended to receive marks from residents that were lower than the national benchmark, many Mobility-related items were similar to the benchmark, including ease of travel by various modes (by car, bike, and public transit), availability of paths and walking trails, public parking, and traffic flow. Moreover, survey participants' assessments for the ease of travel by walking and availability of

paths and walking trails increased since 2018 (see the report, *Trends over Time*, provided under separate cover). Aspects related to the affordability of Commerce City were also evaluated by residents to be on par with national averages, including availability of affordable housing, variety of housing options, new development in the city, and cost of living. Additionally, respondents' scores for affordable housing increased since the last survey administration.

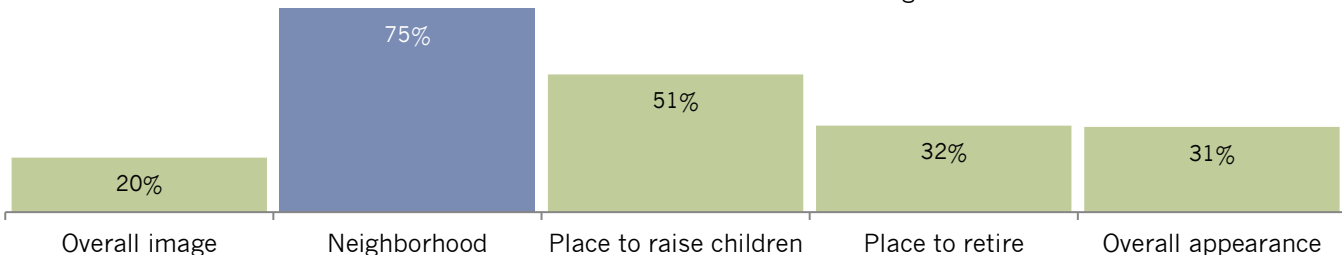
In 2019, Commerce City residents gave more positive reviews to their feelings of safety in their neighborhoods, and to health care, the availability of affordable quality childcare/preschool, and overall education and enrichment opportunities.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



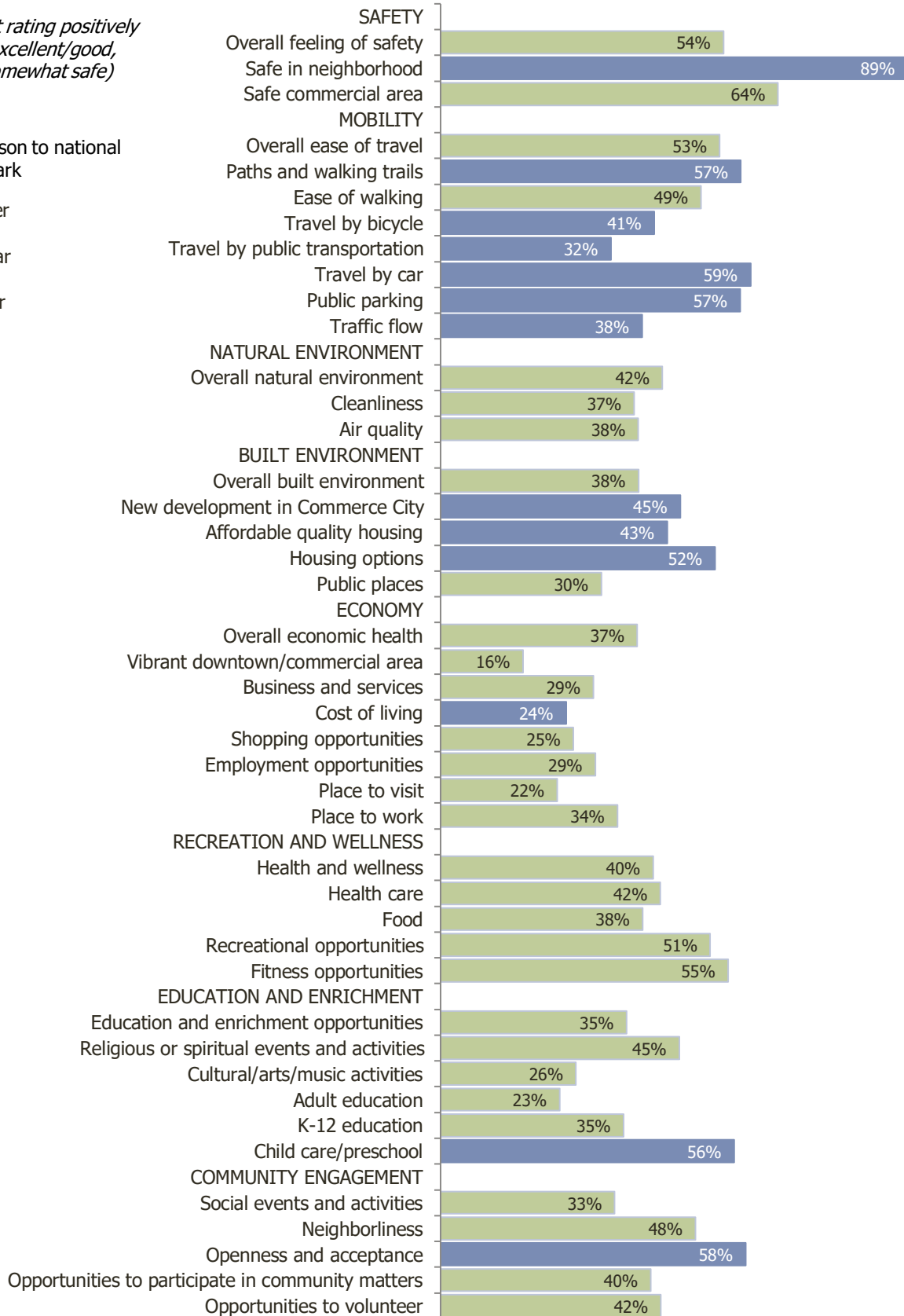
The National Community Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

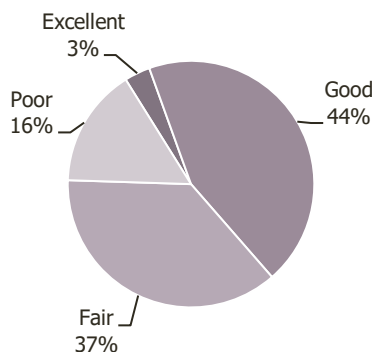
How well does the government of Commerce City meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Commerce City as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 4 in 10 residents gave favorable evaluations to the overall quality of City services, which was lower than the benchmark averages, but rated higher than services provided by the Federal Government (33% excellent or good).

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Commerce City's leadership and governance. About half of residents awarded positive reviews to the customer service provided by Commerce City employees; this aspect was rated lower compared to other municipalities nationwide and declined by 8% since 2018. Around 4 in 10 or fewer community members were pleased with the remaining aspects of government performance. Residents assigned more favorable assessments to the value of services for taxes paid in 2019.

Respondents evaluated over 25 individual services and amenities available in Commerce City. Ratings for services and amenities provided by the City were similar to or lower than those observed in other communities. A majority of residents gave positive reviews to emergency preparedness, street cleaning, garbage collection, recycling, storm drainage, City parks, and recreation programs and centers and each of these were similar to national comparisons. Additionally, residents' marks for a number of assessments for Commerce City services increased over time, such as emergency preparedness, street repair, traffic signal timing, bus or transit services, economic development, City parks, recreation centers and programs, and health services. None of the Commerce City government services were rated lower in 2019 compared to 2018.

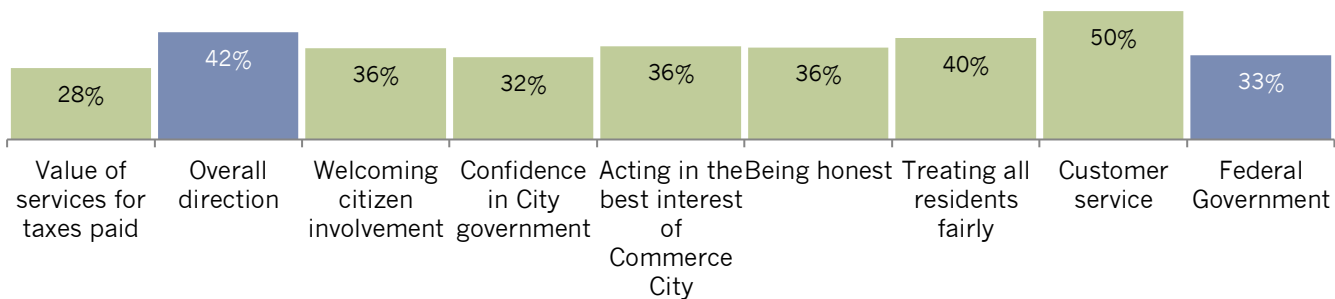
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



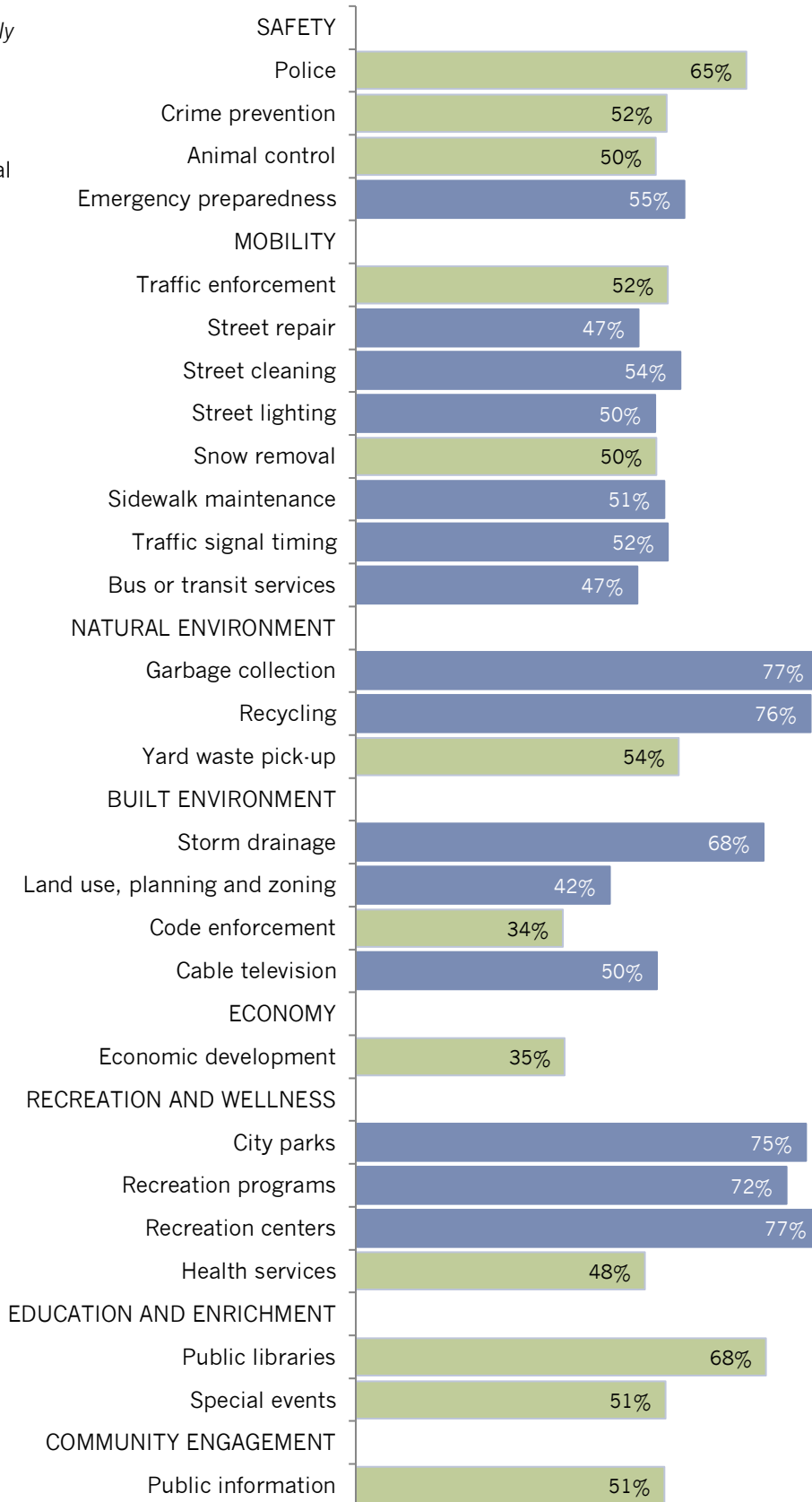
The National Community Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



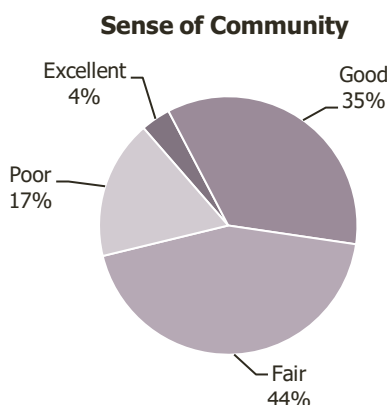
Participation

Are the residents of Commerce City 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 Commerce City, about 4 in 10 residents felt positively about the sense of community in the city, which was lower than observed in other communities. Around two-thirds of residents planned to remain in Commerce City for the next five years and would be likely to recommend living in the city to someone who asked; these levels were lower than those seen across the nation and Colorado.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Broadly, rates of Participation tended to be similar to those reported in communities elsewhere. Residents participated most in activities related to the Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness, and Community Engagement; at least three-quarters indicated they had conserved water, recycled at home, visited a City park, ate a healthy diet, exercised regularly, paid attention to local news, and voted in local elections. Commerce City respondents were also neighborly, often visiting with or doing favors for each other. Additionally, more Commerce City participants reported they worked within the community and were optimistic about the impact of the local economy on their incomes in the next six months in 2019 than in 2018.

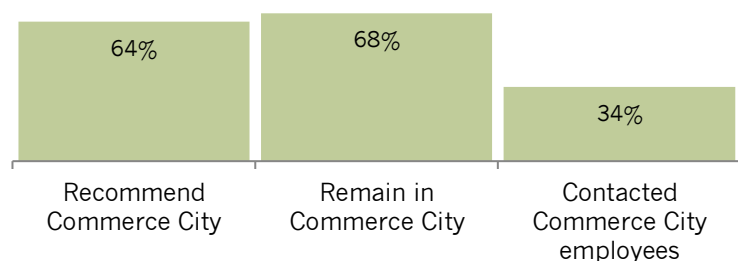
Respondents' rates for Mobility activities tended to be more mixed. About 2 in 10 used public transportation instead of driving and one-third had carpoolled at least once in the 12 months prior to the survey, rates that were similar to those seen elsewhere. However, residents were less likely to have walked or biked instead of driving alone than their national and Colorado peers.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



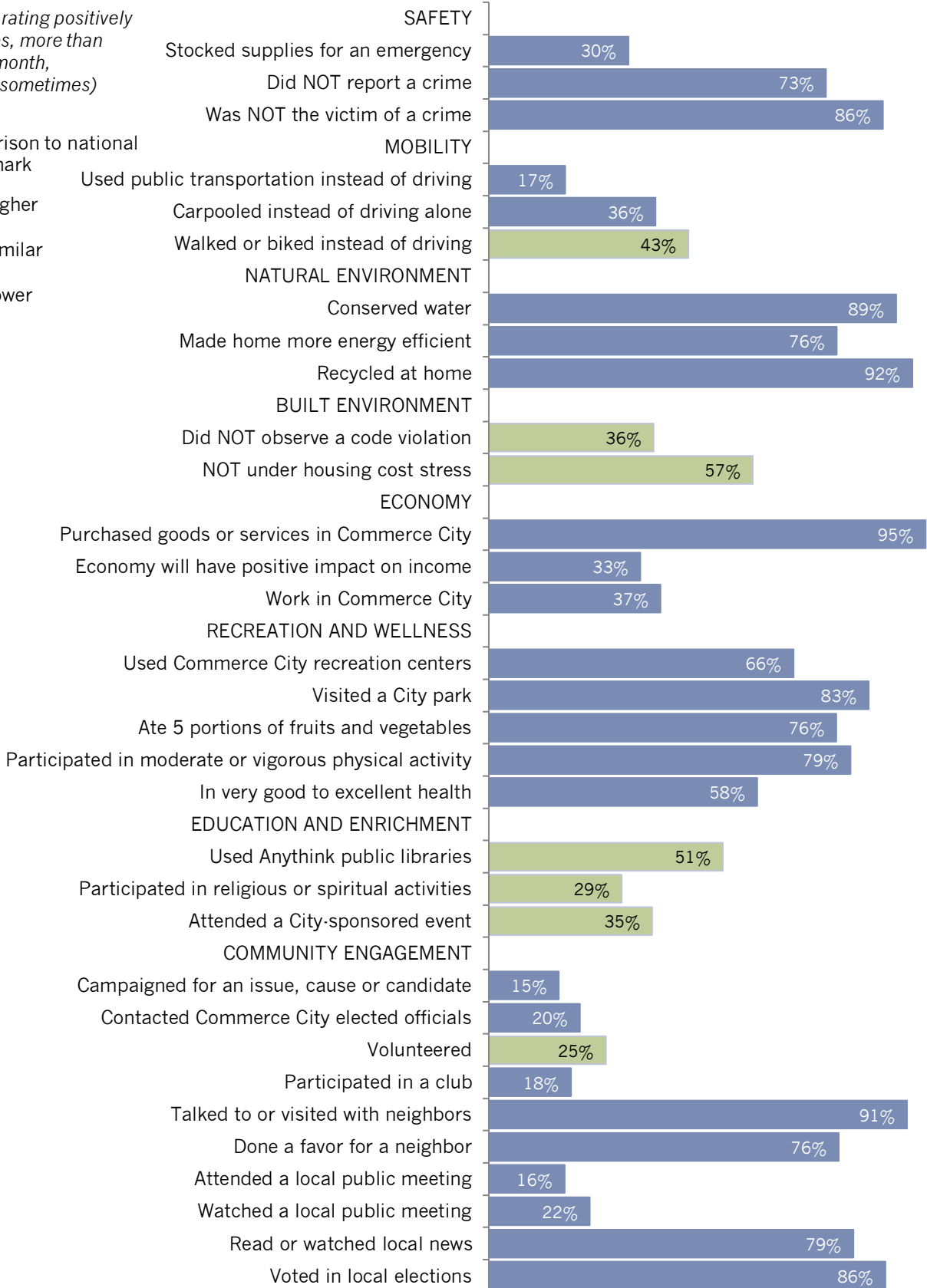
The National Community Survey™

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

Commerce City sought feedback concerning public information services, townhall meetings, and barriers to participation in programs in 2019. When asked about their reliance on several sources of information about the City government, at least 8 in 10 residents revealed that they use the monthly City newsletter, direct mail, and the City website as a major or minor source. Similarly, these sources were selected as the single most preferred method of contact by at least 4 in 10 residents. Finally, survey respondents indicated they would most likely choose to provide feedback to the City regarding decision-making via email, but less likely to prefer speaking to City staff or elected officials on the phone or in-person.

Figure 4: Sources of City Information

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.

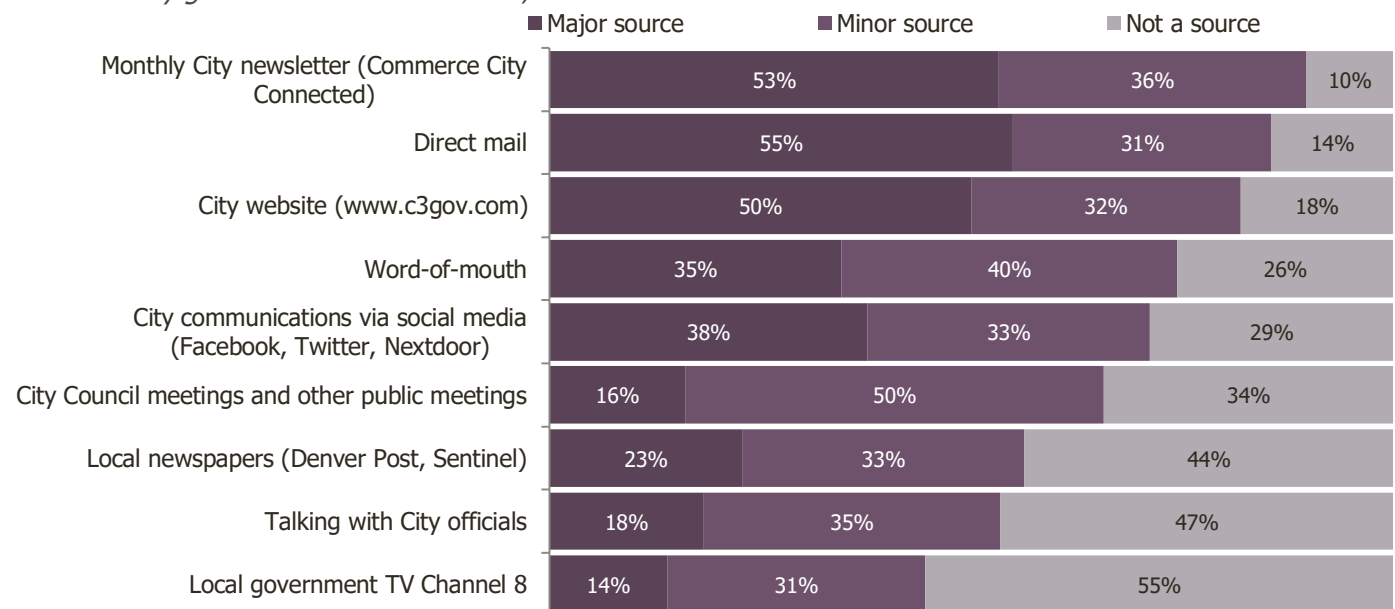
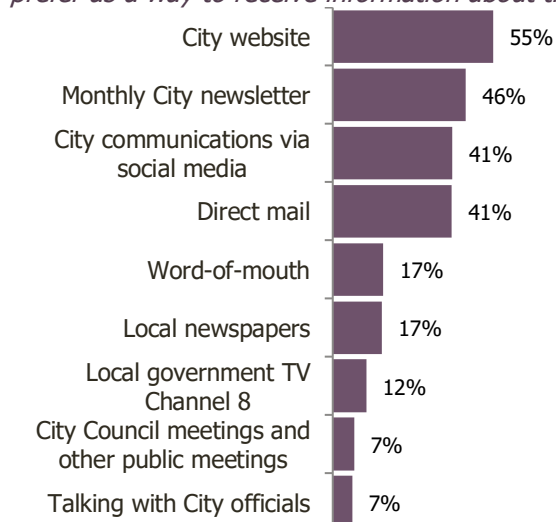


Figure 5: Most Preferred Sources of City Information

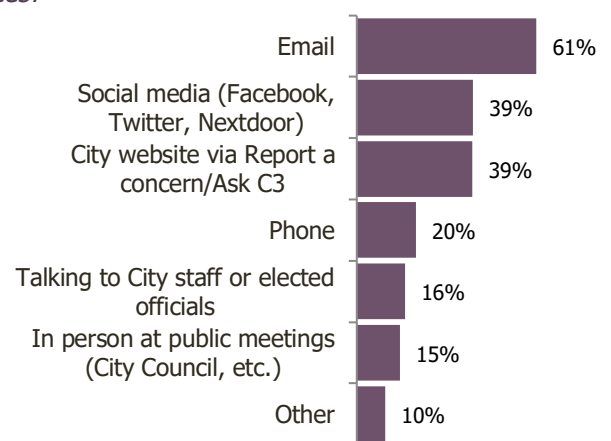
Please indicate which of these methods you would prefer as a way to receive information about the City.



Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Figure 6: Preferred Method of Providing Feedback

How would you prefer to provide feedback to the City regarding decisions, City activities, events and services?

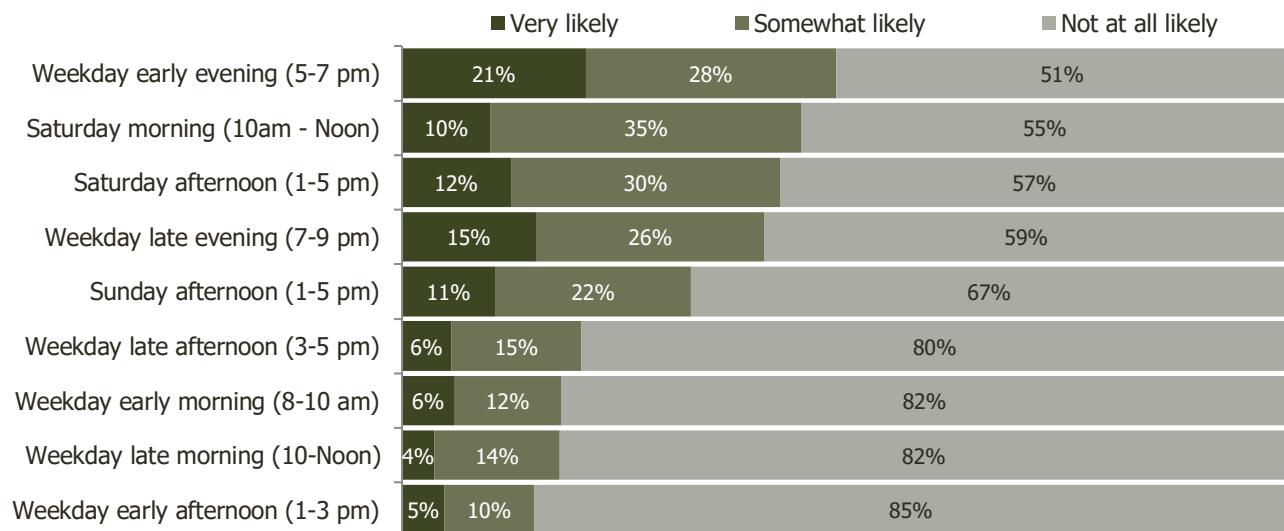


Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

City leadership chose to include a question on the survey asking residents to indicate which day and time community members would be most likely to attend a town hall with elected officials. About half of respondents would be very or somewhat likely to attend a meeting in the early evening during a weekday, and approximately 4 in 10 indicated they would attend on Saturdays in the morning or afternoon and during a weekday after 7 p.m. Residents were least likely to attend a meeting that took place during normal business hours.

Figure 7: Likelihood of Attending Town Hall

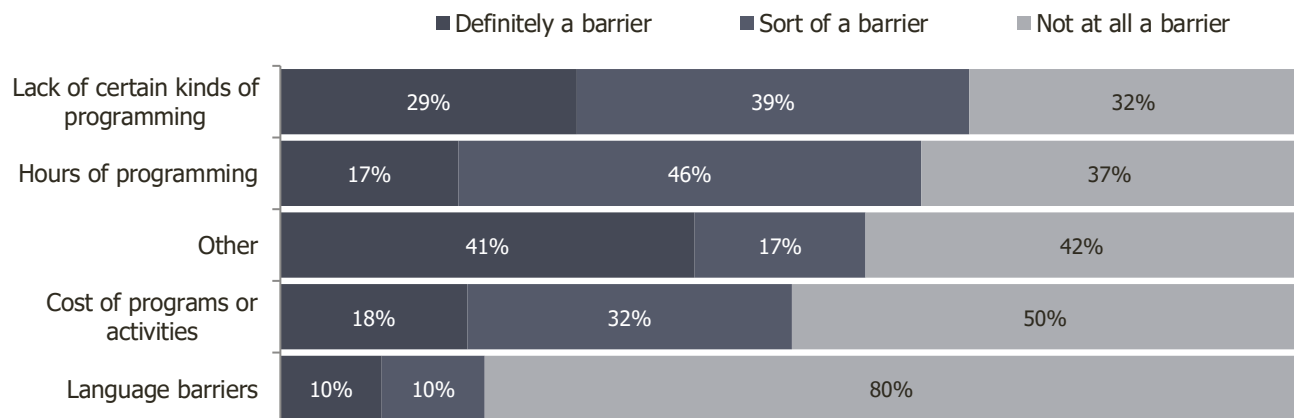
Generally speaking, how likely are you to attend a town hall with elected officials or other community meeting that is of interest to you during these days and times?



About two-thirds of survey participants felt that a lack of certain kinds of programming and hours of programming were a barrier and around half felt that the cost of programs and activities were preventing them from utilizing parks, recreation, and golf services. Only 2 in 10 residents indicated that language barriers were a barrier to these programs.

Figure 8: Barriers to Participation in Programs and Services

To what degree, if at all, do the following barriers exist to prevent you and your family from participating in programs and services offered by Commerce City Parks, Recreation and Golf?



Conclusions

Safety contributes to residents' quality of life in Commerce City and merits continued focus.

Safety continues to be identified as one of the top priorities for the City to focus on in the coming two years. Evaluations of the various features of Safety in 2019 tended to be similar when compared to 2018, but were mixed when compared to other communities across the country. Residents on average felt less safe in Commerce City when compared to residents in other communities in the nation. While most respondents felt safe in their neighborhoods (a rating that improved since 2018), feelings of safety in the commercial area and overall were lower in Commerce City than both sets of benchmark communities. Safety services such as police, crime prevention, and animal control were given favorable reviews by a majority of residents, but lagged in the City compared to the national and peer Colorado communities. Alternatively, perceptions of emergency preparedness by the City improved between 2018 and 2019 and were similar to other municipalities.

Getting around town is getting easier.

In previous years, Commerce City residents expressed some dissatisfaction with Mobility-related aspects in the community. The City listened and residents noticed, as many Mobility-related ratings increased since the previous survey iteration. Residents' positive assessments of ease of travel by walking, access to paths and walking trails, street repair, traffic signal timing, and bus or transit services have all increased since 2018.

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 previous years, many ratings within this facet were lower than those observed in other communities. Less than 4 in 10 respondents gave favorable evaluations to the overall economic health of the city, vibrant downtown/commercial area, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, the city as a place to visit and as a place to work, and economic development. However, residents provided higher marks to economic development in 2019, and while stable between 2018 and 2019, shopping opportunities evaluations have increased in quality since 2017. Additionally, more residents reported they work in the community and were optimistic regarding the local economy in 2019 than in 2018.

Commerce City residents take steps to stay healthy, but would like more Recreation and Wellness opportunities.

At least half of residents indicated they were in very good or excellent health and most respondents reported they ate five portions of fruits and vegetables and participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity regularly. More than two-thirds of community members had used the recreation centers and visited a City park and scores for parks and recreation programs and centers improved since 2018. However, while residents gave higher assessments to health services in 2019, their ratings were lower than average for health and wellness opportunities, recreational and fitness opportunities, and the availability of affordable quality health care and food. Residents also gave less positive evaluations to City parks. Finally, about two-thirds of survey respondents reported that a lack of certain kinds of programming and hours were a barrier to participating in Commerce City Parks, Recreation, and Golf programs and services, while half felt that the cost of these programs prevented them from enjoying all that the City has to offer.