

THE NCSTM
The National Community SurveyTM

Jerome, ID

Community Livability Report

2019



NRC
National Research Center Inc.

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

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

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

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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 Jerome. 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).

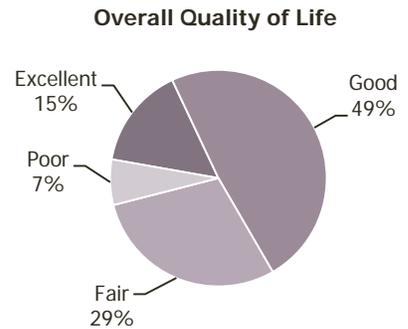
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 415 residents of the City of Jerome. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Jerome

About 6 in 10 residents rated the quality of life in Jerome as excellent or good. This rating was lower 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.



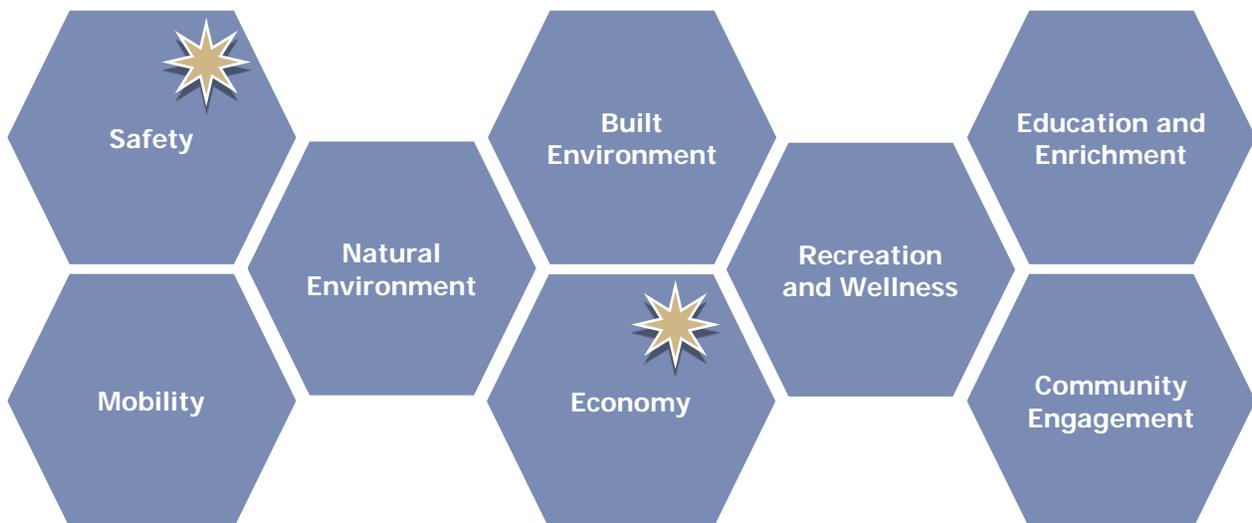
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as a priority for the Jerome community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets were positive and similar to national 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 Jerome’s unique questions.

Legend

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

- Most important



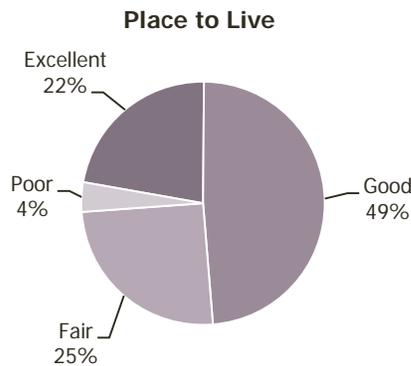
Community Characteristics

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 Jerome, 71% rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Jerome 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. At least two-thirds of residents positively rated their neighborhood as a place to live and Jerome as a place to raise children, while about half gave high marks to Jerome as a place to retire; these ratings were similar to those given elsewhere. Residents' reviews for the overall image or reputation of Jerome (42% excellent or good) and its overall appearance (47%) were lower than the national benchmarks.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Generally, ratings across the different facets tended to be similar to or lower than the national comparisons. The facets of Safety and Mobility were particularly strong: areas where Jerome had ratings that were higher than the national comparisons were ease of travel by car (82% excellent or good) and traffic flow (71%). About 9 in 10 residents reported feeling safe in their neighborhood and the downtown/commercial area while two-thirds positively rated the overall feeling of safety in the city, and these ratings were on par with those given elsewhere.

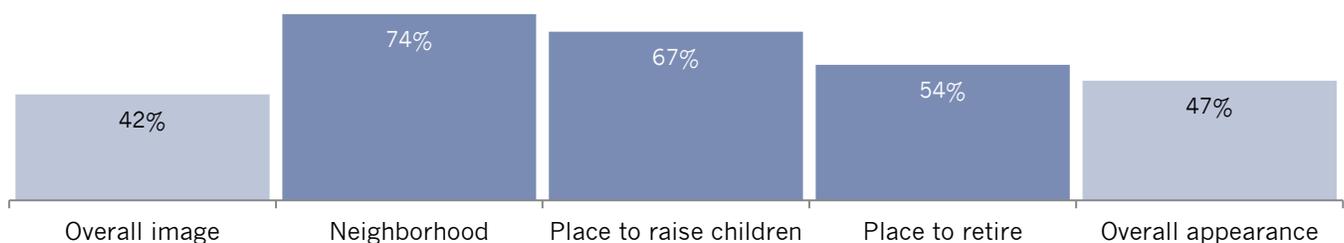


Most aspects related to Natural Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were lower than averages across the country. Evaluations of shopping opportunities, vibrant downtown/commercial area, opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities and adult education opportunities were much lower than the national benchmarks, with 2 in 10 residents rating these positively.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



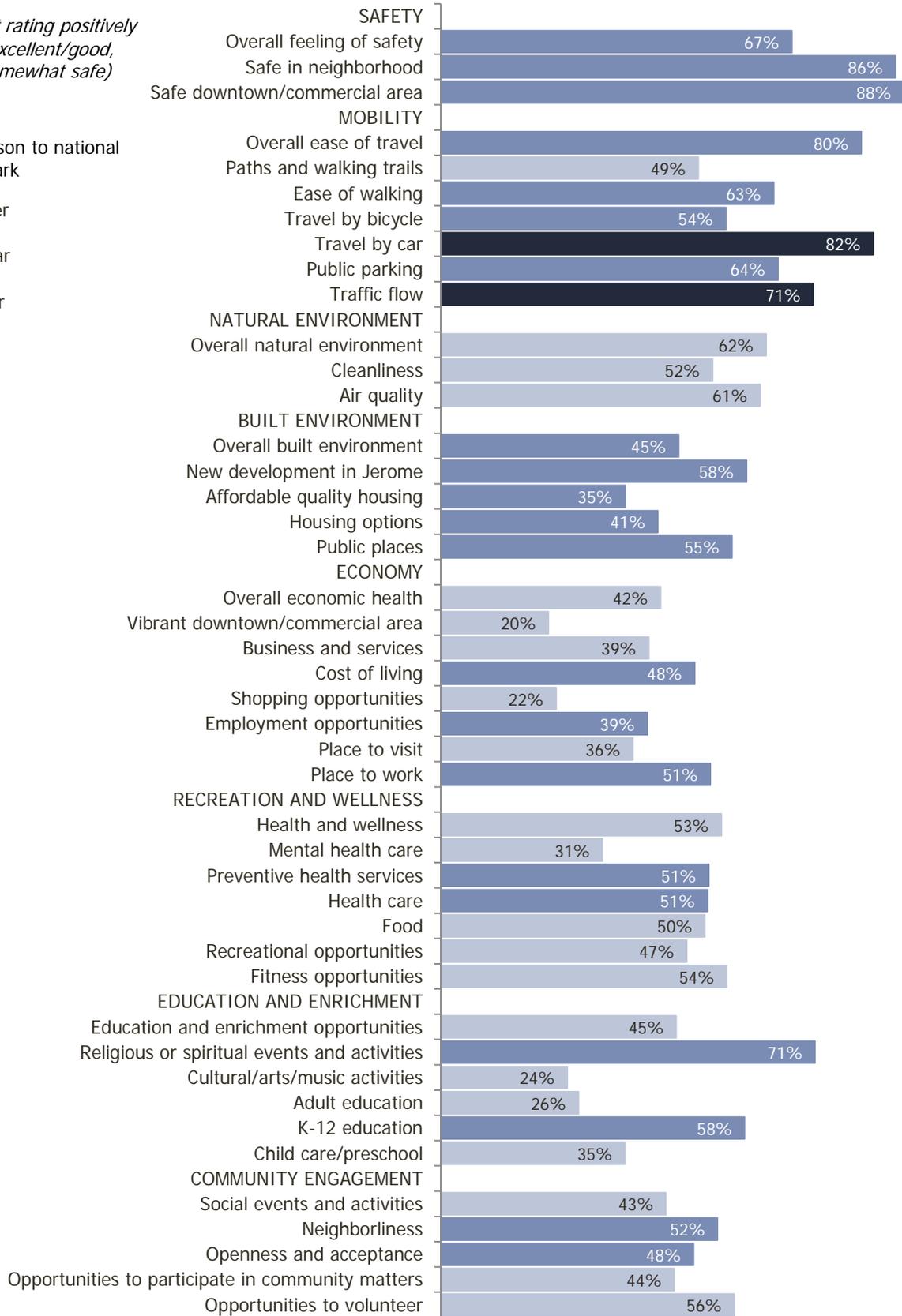
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

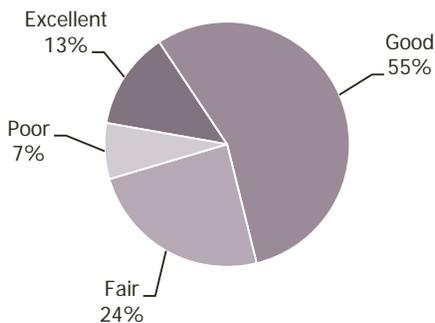
How well does the government of Jerome meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Jerome as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of residents gave favorable assessments to the overall quality of Jerome services. In comparison, about 4 in 10 respondents were pleased with the services provided by the Federal Government. Both of these quality ratings were similar to the national benchmarks.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Jerome’s leadership and governance. Roughly 7 in 10 residents were pleased with the customer service provided by City employees and 6 in 10 gave favorable ratings to the overall direction the City is taking, while half gave high marks to the City acting in the best interest of Jerome, being honest and treating all residents fairly. Less than half of respondents gave excellent or good reviews to the remaining aspects of government performance. All government performance ratings were on par with national averages.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Jerome. Most services that were rated on par with the national benchmarks were clustered in the areas of Safety, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment, and Community Engagement. The highest-rated services included fire services, ambulance or emergency services, garbage collection, utility billing, City parks and public libraries, with about 8 in 10 residents awarding excellent or good ratings to each service.

Overall Quality of City Services

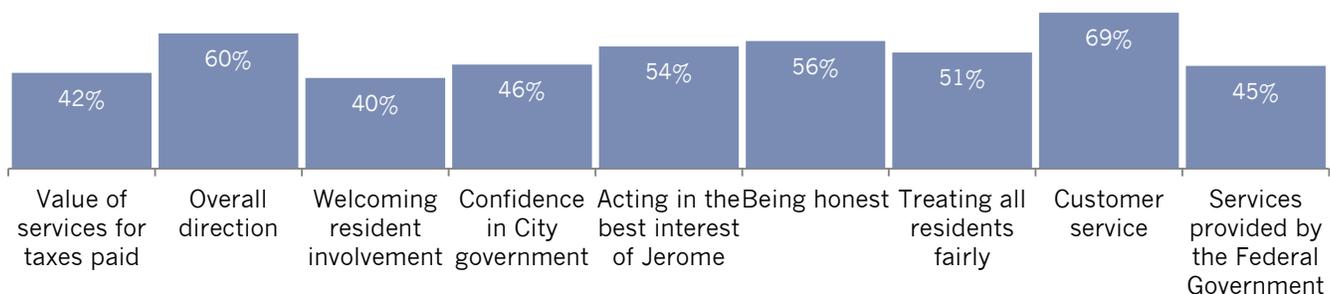


Services that had reviews below the national averages, with about half of residents or fewer awarding positive ratings, included animal control, emergency preparedness, street repair, street cleaning, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and code enforcement.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



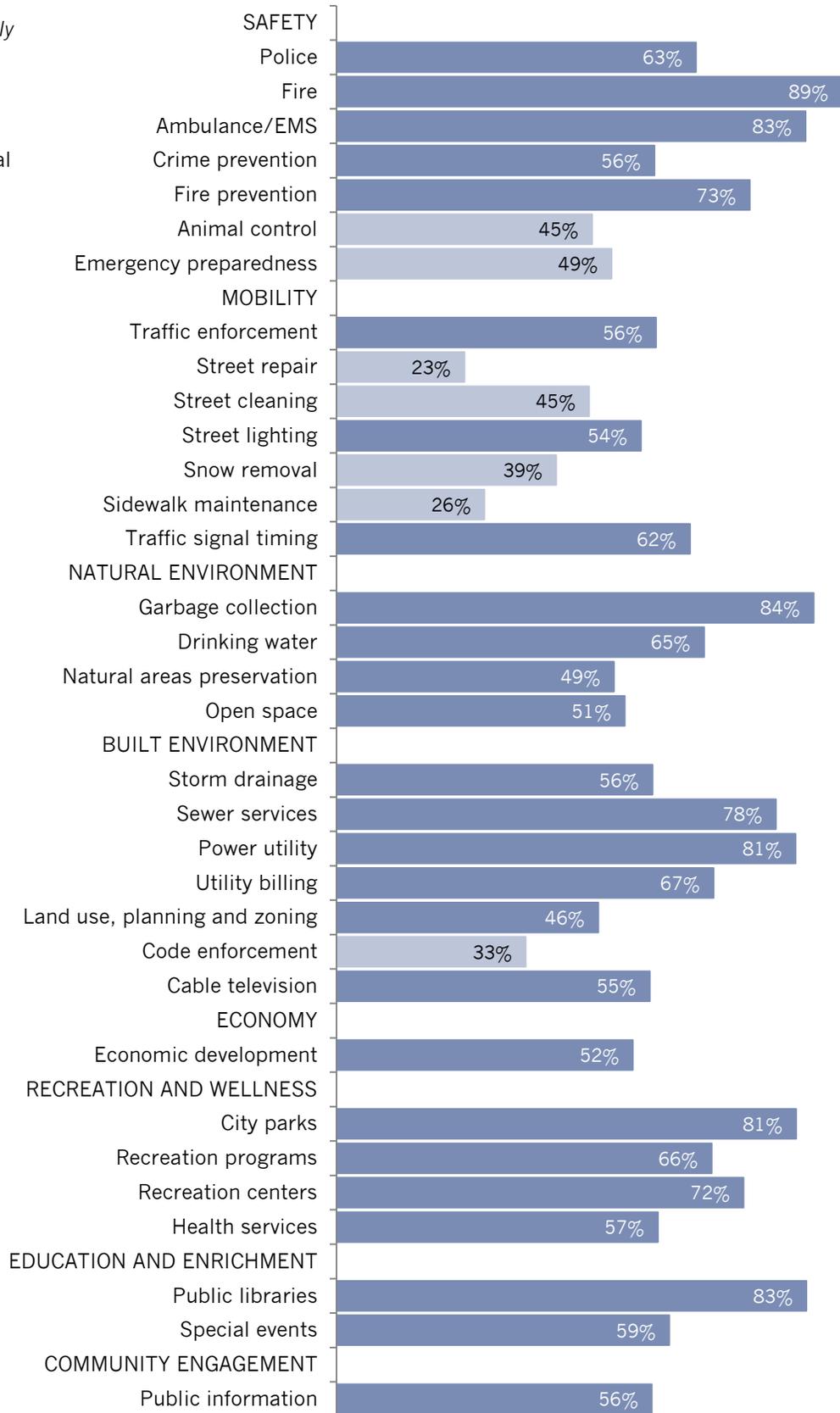
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



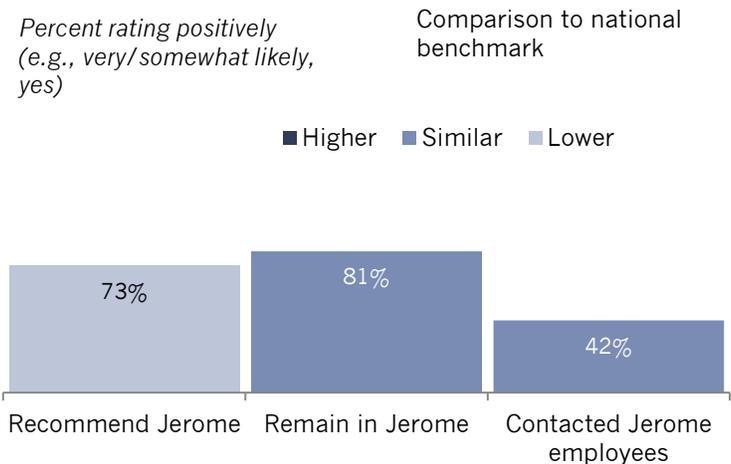
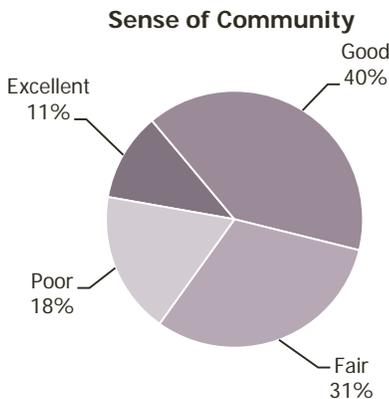
Participation

Are the residents of Jerome 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 residents assessed the sense of community in Jerome as excellent or good, which was on par with the national average.

Similar to comparison communities, about 8 in 10 residents planned to remain in Jerome for the next five years. About 7 in 10 respondents would recommend living in Jerome to someone who asked; this rating was below the national average. About 4 in 10 residents had contacted a City employee in the 12 months prior to the survey.

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, but most rates of resident engagement were on par with those reported in peer communities. Survey participants in Jerome were less likely to have recycled at home, not observed a code violation, eat five portions of fruits and vegetables a day or campaign for an issue, cause or candidate compared to residents living in other municipalities.



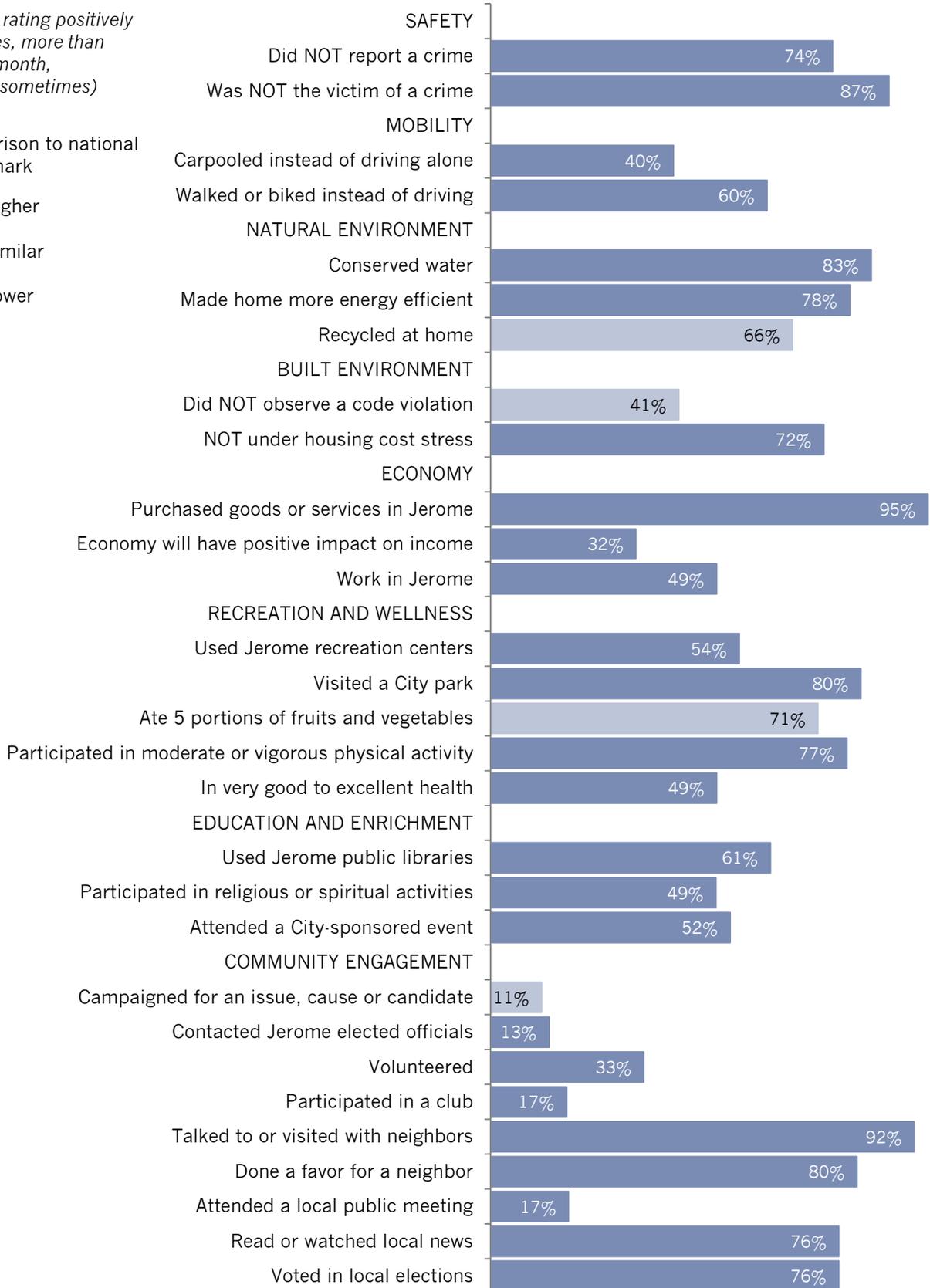
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



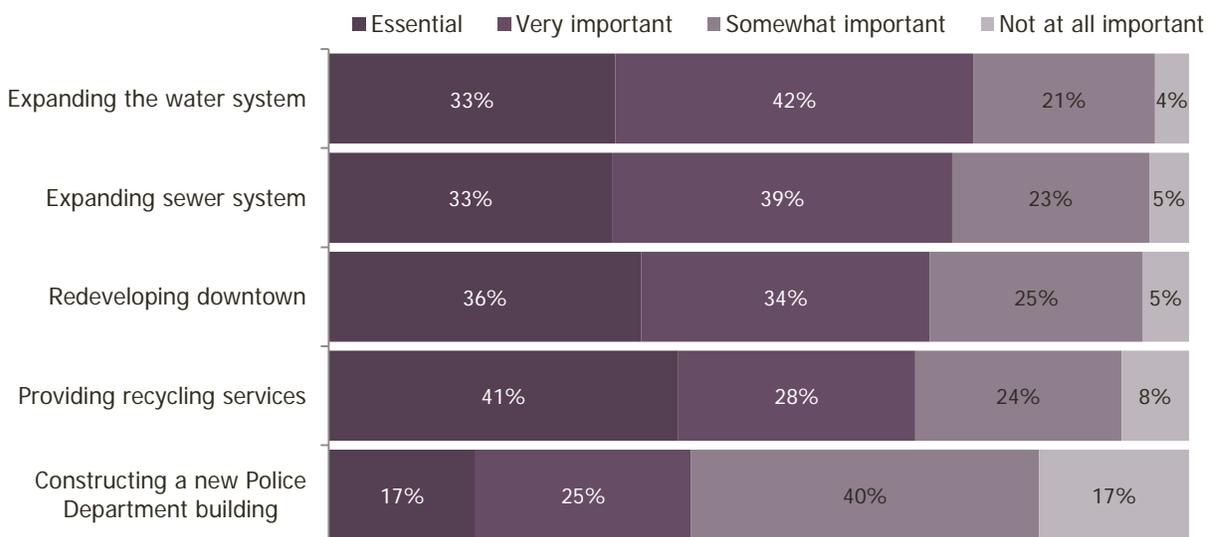
Special Topics

The City of Jerome included two questions of special interest on The NCS, with topics related to City projects, issues and strategic planning areas.

When asked about the importance of City projects and issues, about 7 in 10 residents indicated that expanding the water and sewer system, redeveloping the downtown and providing recycling services was essential or very important. About 4 in 10 survey respondents said constructing a new Police Department building was essential or very important, with about 4 in 10 rating it as somewhat important and 2 in 10 reporting it was not at all important.

Figure 4: Importance of City Projects and Issues

Please indicate how important, if at all, each of the following projects and issues will be for the City to address over the next five years:

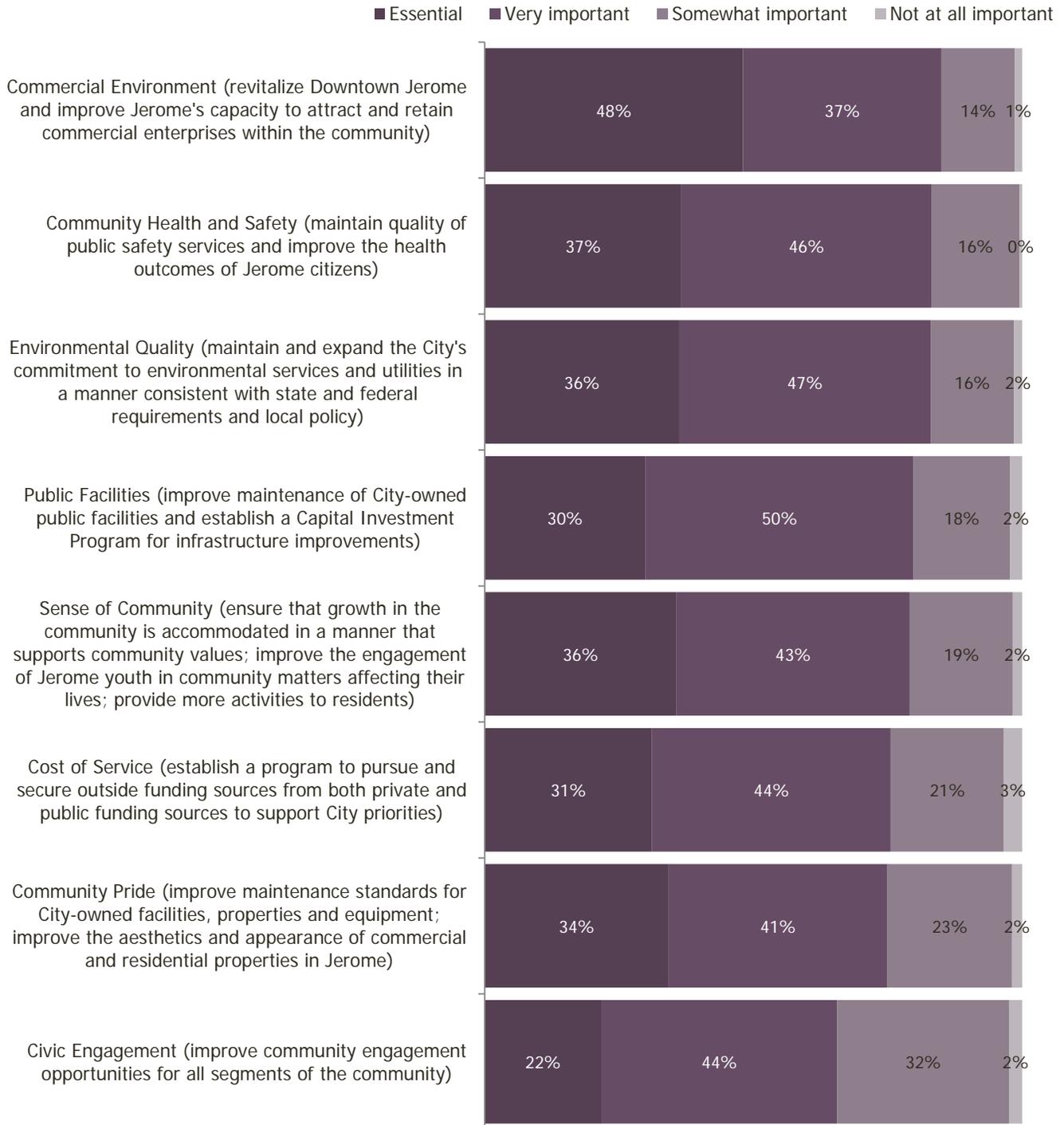


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At least 8 in 10 respondents indicated that the commercial environment, community health and safety, environmental quality, public facilities and sense of community were essential or very important to the overall quality of life in the city. Three-quarters of residents rated cost of service and community pride as important, while two-thirds rated civic engagement as important.

Figure 5: Importance of Strategic Planning Areas

Please rate how important, if at all, each of the following strategic planning areas are to the overall quality of life in the City:



Conclusions

Jerome residents value Safety and emphasize its importance.

Safety was a top priority for residents. About 9 in 10 residents reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods and in the downtown/commercial area. Among the highest-rated City services were fire services and ambulance or emergency services, with about 8 in 10 residents awarding excellent or good ratings to each service. Evaluations of police services, crime prevention and fire prevention were on par with comparison communities. About 4 in 10 residents felt it was essential or very important for the City to construct a new Police Department building in the next five years. About 8 in 10 community members indicated that community health and safety were essential or very important to the overall quality of life in Jerome. This included maintaining the quality of public safety services and improving the health outcomes of Jerome citizens.

Economy is a challenge and residents seek improvements.

Survey respondents also indicated that the Economy of Jerome should be a top priority, with 9 in 10 reporting this area would be essential or very important to the quality of life in the community over the next two years. However, many ratings related to the local economy tended to be less positive. Roughly 4 in 10 residents favorably rated the overall economic health of Jerome, the city as a place to visit and the overall quality of business and service establishments. These ratings were lower than those given in other communities nationwide. Evaluations of shopping opportunities and vibrant downtown/commercial area were much lower than the national averages, with 2 in 10 residents giving these high marks. However, assessments of employment opportunities, cost of living, Jerome as a place to work and economic development were on par with the rest of the nation.

About 7 in 10 community members felt it was essential or very important to redevelop the downtown area in the next five years. Furthermore, about 8 in 10 residents indicated that the commercial environment was important to the overall quality of life in Jerome, specifically related to the revitalization of Downtown Jerome and improving Jerome's capacity to attract and retain commercial enterprises within the community.

Residents are pleased with Mobility, but see opportunities for growth.

About 8 in 10 residents gave positive reviews to the overall ease of travel in Jerome and ease of travel by car, while 7 in 10 positively rated traffic flow. Assessments of ease of travel by car and traffic flow were strong and higher than the national benchmarks. Evaluations that were on par with comparison communities included ease of travel by bicycle and walking, public parking, traffic enforcement, street lighting and traffic signal timing. Rates of residents carpooling instead of driving alone or walking or biking instead of driving were also in line with scores observed across the country. However, marks for the availability of paths and walking trails, street cleaning, snow removal and sidewalk maintenance were lower than the national averages, with about half of residents or less awarding positive ratings.