

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

**American Canyon, CA**  
Community Livability Report

2015



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# Contents

- About..... 1
- Quality of Life in American Canyon ..... 2
- Community Characteristics ..... 3
- Governance ..... 5
- Participation ..... 7
- Special Topics..... 9
- Conclusions ..... 12

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# About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of American Canyon. 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 494 residents of the City of American Canyon. The margin of error around any reported percentage is four percent 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.

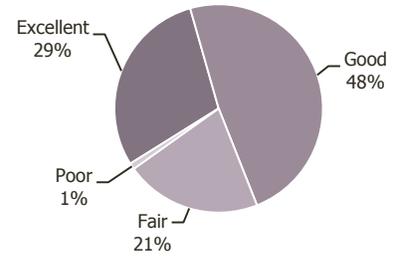


# Quality of Life in American Canyon

Most residents rated the quality of life in American Canyon as excellent or good. This rating is similar to quality of life ratings in other communities nationally (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.

Overall Quality of Life



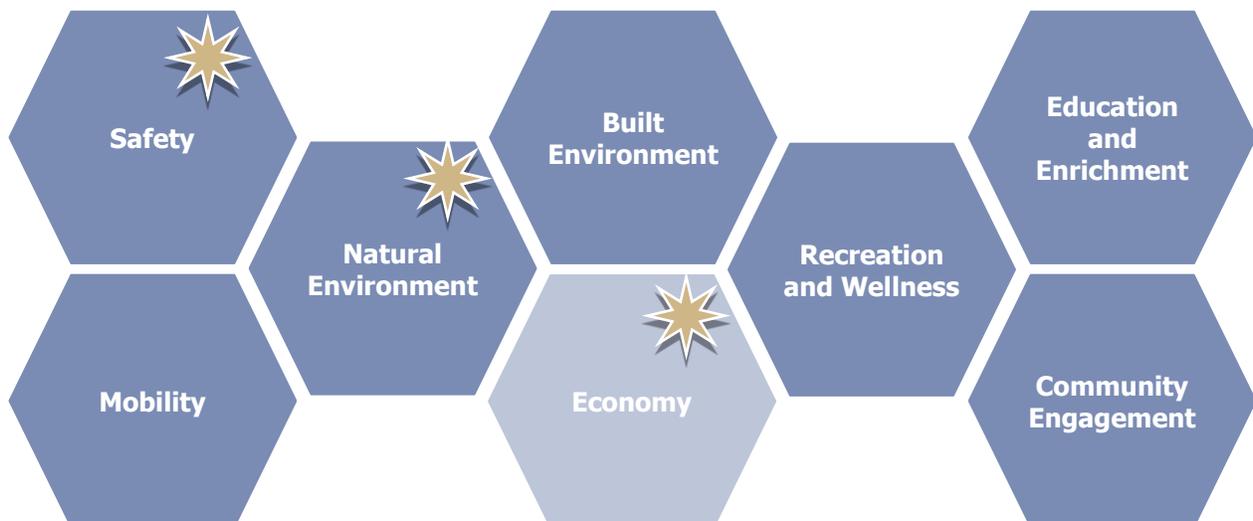
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Natural Environment, Safety and Economy as priorities for the American Canyon community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that American Canyon residents’ ratings were positive and similar to other communities’ ratings within all facets with the exception of Economy; the facet of Economy received ratings below the national benchmark. 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 American Canyon’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 American Canyon, 87% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of American Canyon 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 as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of American Canyon and its overall appearance. At least 2 in 3 residents rated American Canyon positively as a place to retire and to the overall image and appearance of American Canyon. When speaking to their individual neighborhood and as a place to raise children, more than 4 in 5 residents provided excellent or good ratings.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 35 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Ratings within Community Characteristics are mixed and range from 17% positive (employment opportunities) to 95% positive (safe in neighborhood). Safety received the highest ratings overall, with 9 in 10 residents providing excellent or good ratings to American Canyon's safe downtown/commercial area and over 8 in 10 residents rating the overall feeling of safety within the City positively. Natural Environment is the second facet where most residents (approximately 7 in 10) provided positive ratings. More than half of residents rated the overall built environment and public places in the City

within Built Environment; less than half of residents provided positive ratings for new development, affordable quality housing and housing options in American Canyon. Most Mobility ratings within Community Characteristics were rated positively, with between 5 and 7 in 10 residents providing excellent or good ratings for travel by bicycle, paths and walking trails, overall ease of travel and ease of walking. While over half of residents rated the overall economic health of American Canyon as excellent or good, the remaining Economy items were rated positively by less than half of the residents. Education and Enrichment, Mobility, Recreation and Wellness, Economy and Community Engagement all contain items below the national benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



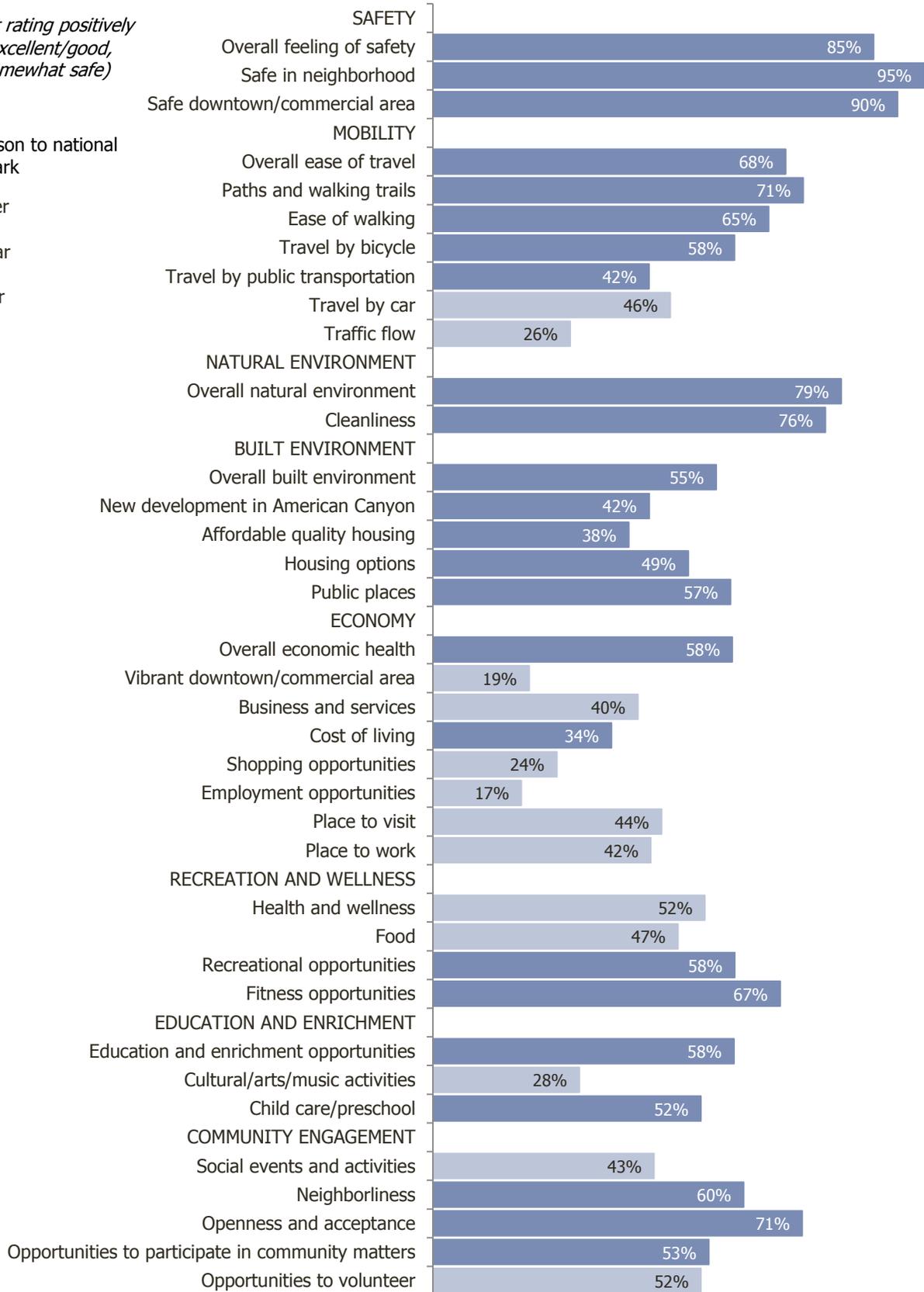
# The National Citizen Survey™

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 American Canyon meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

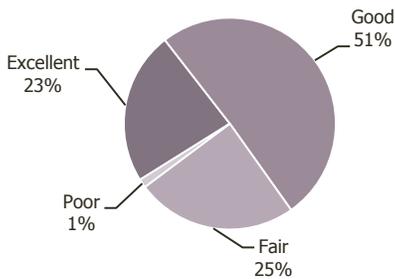
The overall quality of the services provided by American Canyon as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. When evaluating the overall quality of City services, 74% think the City is doing an excellent or good job. This rating is similar to the national benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of American Canyon’s leadership and governance. Ratings for value of services for taxes paid, confidence in City government, welcoming citizen involvement, treating all residents fairly, overall direction, being honest and acting in the best interest of American Canyon were rated positively by at least half of residents. Customer service provided by American Canyon was rated excellent or good by 3 in 4 residents.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in American Canyon. Ratings across all eight facets within Governance were mostly strong, and all were similar to the national benchmark. Services within Safety received some of the highest ratings, as seen in the pillar of Community Characteristics below. Almost all residents rated fire and ambulance/EMS services excellent or good in American Canyon (over 9 in 10 residents). Police services and fire prevention were rated positively by over 4 in 5 residents. Mobility services were rated positively by at least approximately half of residents. Further, traffic enforcement and street cleaning were rated positively by approximately 2 in 3 residents. Storm drainage, sewer services and utility billing within Built Environment were rated positively by at least 7 in 10 residents; just under half of residents rated code enforcement and land use planning and zoning positively. Services provided by American Canyon within Natural Environment were rated positively, with over 4 in 5 residents rating garbage collection, recycling, and yard waste pick-up as excellent or good.

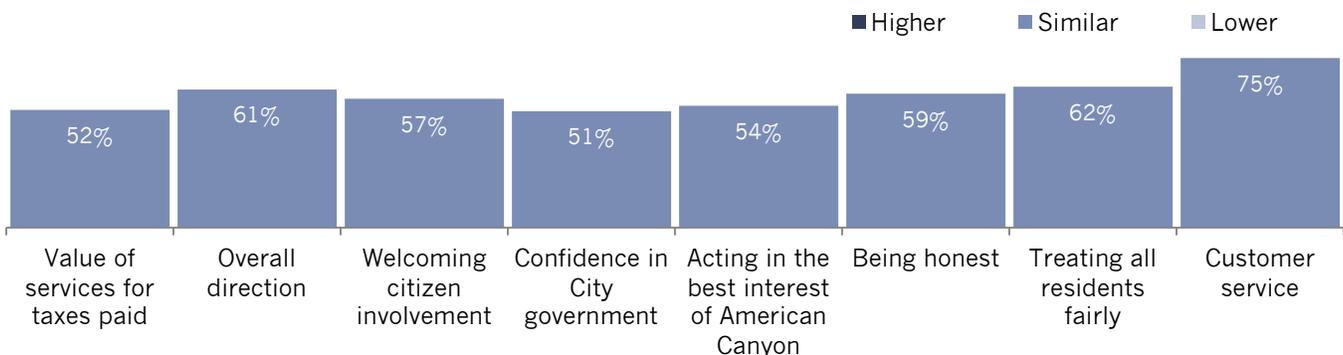
Approximately 2 in 3 residents provided positive ratings to drinking water, natural areas preservation and open space. Recreation and Wellness services received positive ratings from between 7 in 10 and 8 in 10 residents. Further, approximately 3 in 4 residents rated the public library services as excellent or good.

**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

Comparison to national benchmark



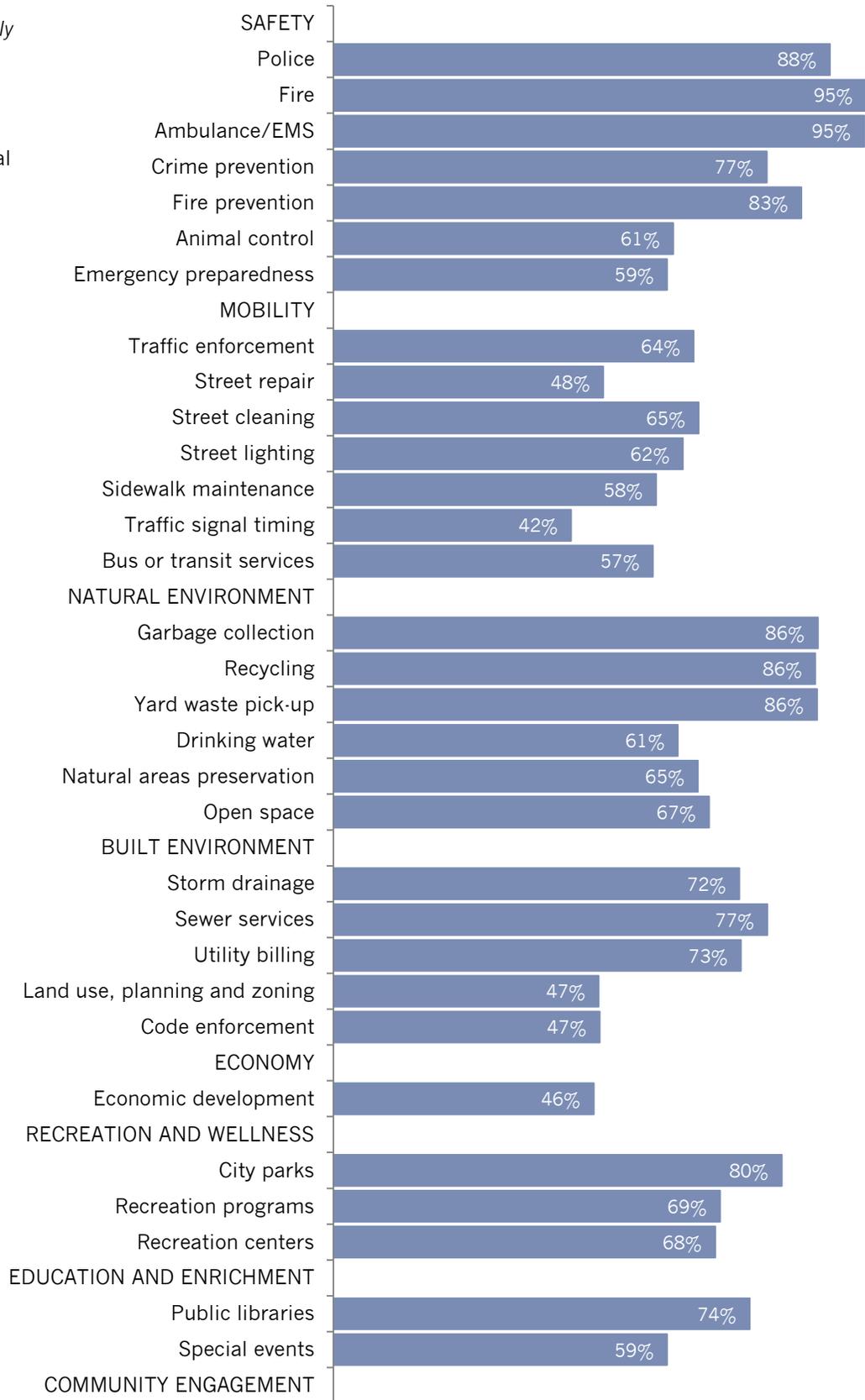
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Participation

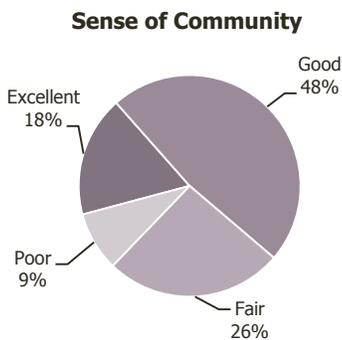
*Are the residents of American Canyon connected to the community and each other?*

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. Most the respondents provided an excellent or good rating for the overall sense of community; this is similar to other communities nationally.

When residents were asked how likely they were to recommend American Canyon and remain in the City, 9 in 10 residents responded that they were very or somewhat likely to do so.

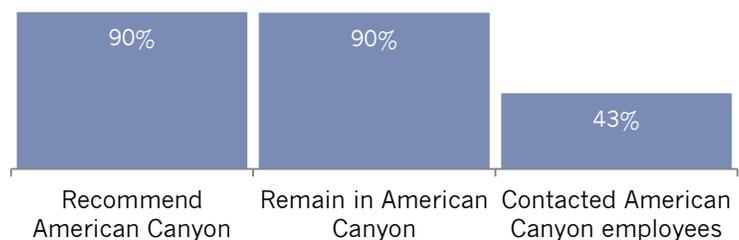
The survey included 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Almost all residents of American Canyon took steps to conserve water and recycle at home (98%) as indicated in Natural Environment ratings; these two ratings were above the national benchmark. Community Engagement items within Participation received mixed ratings. Less than 1 in 3 residents provided positive ratings for campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate, contacted city elected officials, volunteered, participated in a club, attended a local public meeting and watched a local public meeting—which received a rating below the national benchmark. Almost all residents spoke to their neighbor at least once in the last 12 months (90%), while approximately 7 in 10 residents had done a favor for a neighbor during the same time-frame. Almost 9 in 10 residents reported not being the victim of a crime and just over half of residents had stocked supplies for an emergency in the last 12 months, the latter receiving ratings higher than other communities nationally.

Education and Enrichment ratings within Participation were similar to or lower than the benchmark; 3 in 5 residents reported using the American Canyon public library while 2 in 5 residents attended a City-sponsored event—which is fewer attendees to a City-sponsored event than in other communities across the nation. Less than half of residents were not under housing cost stress, which is also lower than the national benchmark.



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

Comparison to national  
benchmark  
■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



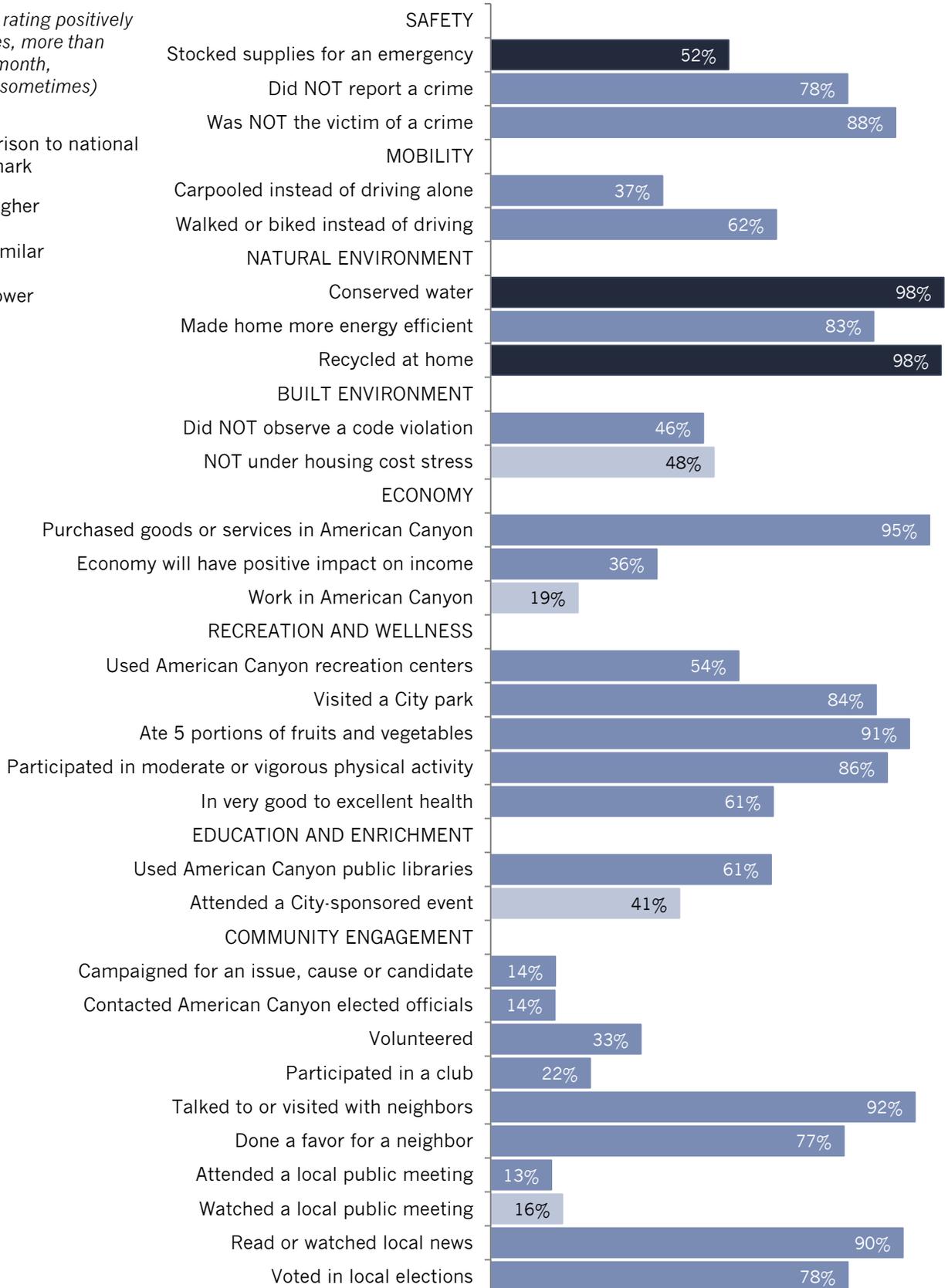
## The National Citizen Survey™

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

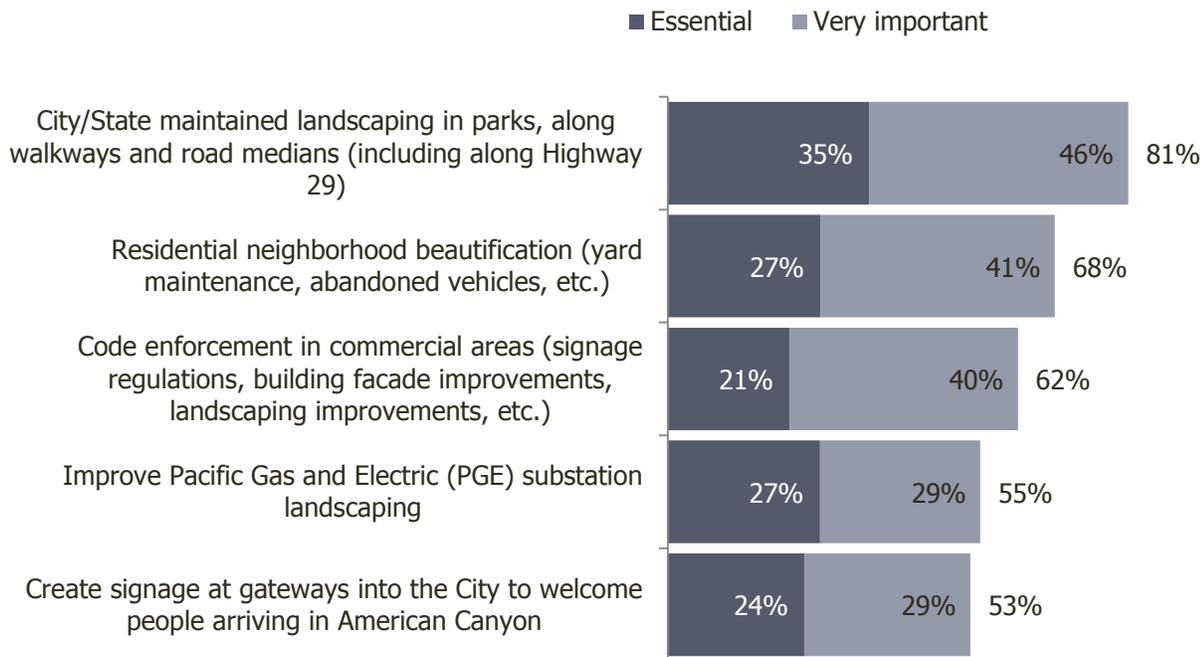


# Special Topics

The City of American Canyon included three questions of special interest on The NCS. The first special interest question revolved around determining citizen importance on a variety of projects and issues. City/State maintained landscaping in parks, along walkways and road medians was rated essential or very important by 4 in 5 residents. Residential neighborhood beautification received the second most positive rating, with almost 7 in 10 residents providing essential or very important ratings.

Figure 4: Important City Focal Points

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

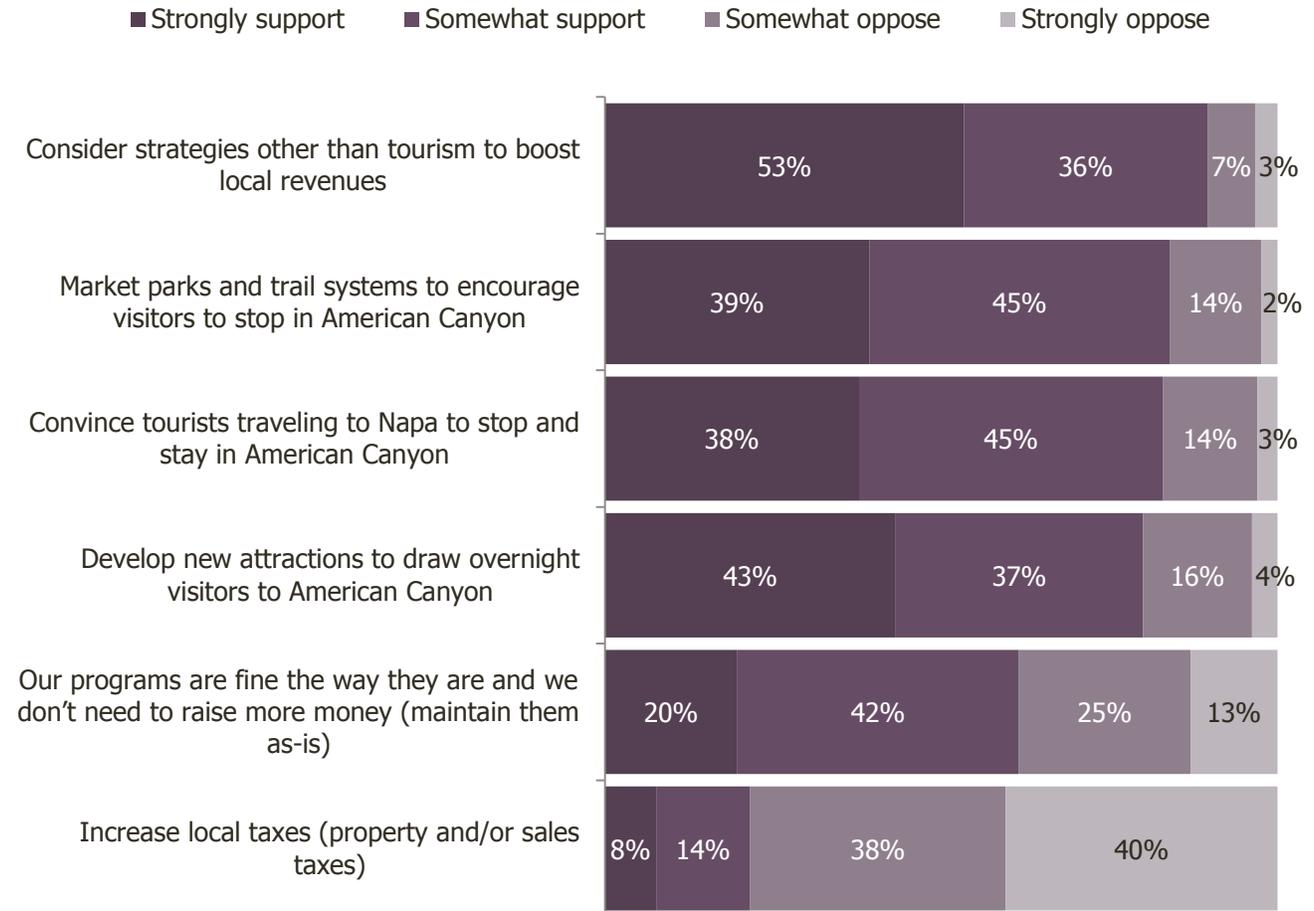


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The second special interest question sought to seek new funding avenues for improving parks and recreation amenities. The full spectrum of responses have been provided as well as sorted by percent strongly or somewhat support. Almost 9 in 10 residents strongly or somewhat support American Canyon considering other, non-tourism related strategies while approximately 8 in 10 residents strongly or somewhat support marketing parks and trail systems to encourage visitors to stop in American Canyon.

Figure 5: Funds to Improve Parks

Please indicate to what extent you support or oppose each of the following initiatives to fund improved parks and recreation amenities in American Canyon:

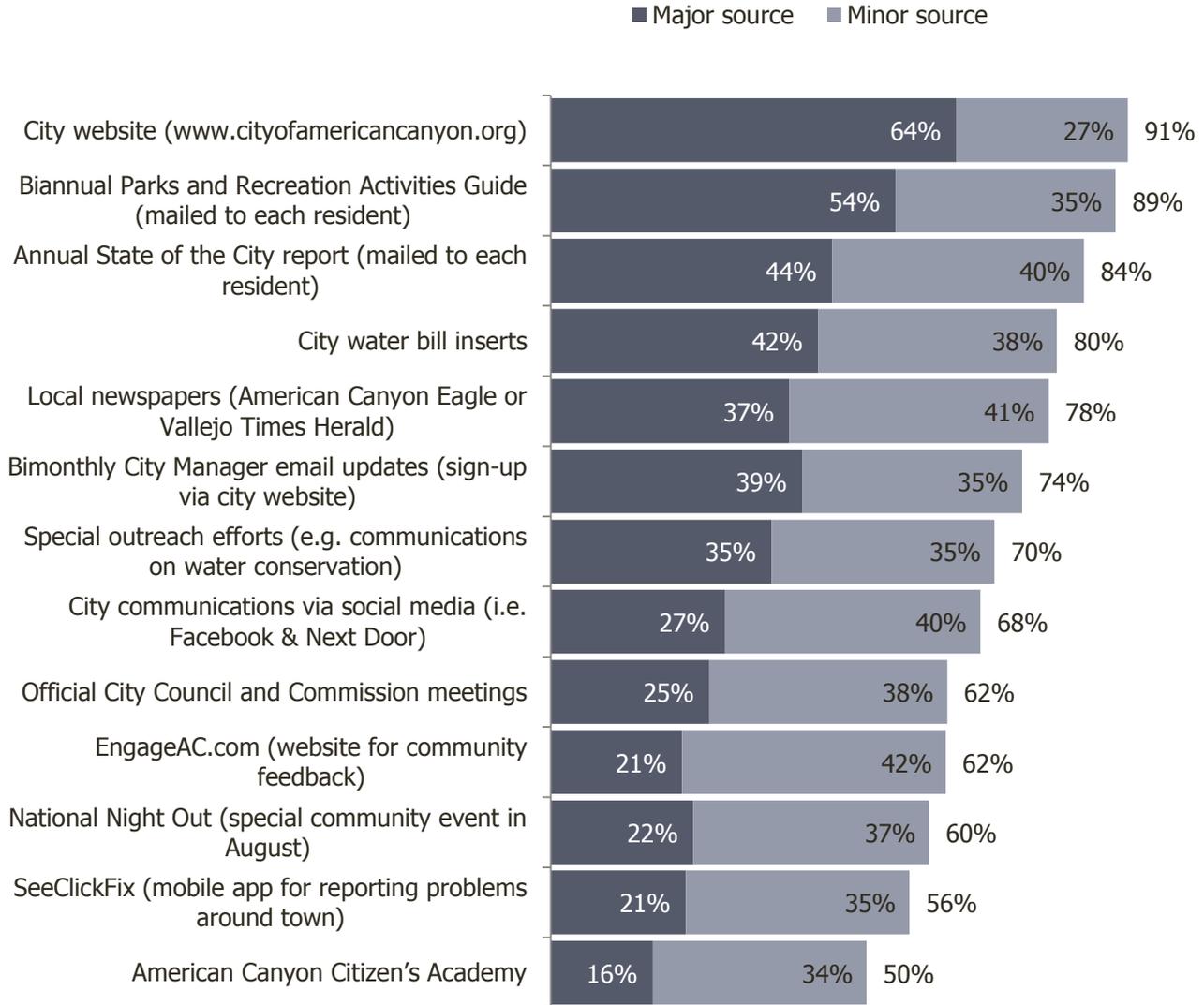


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The final special interest question asked residents how much of a source for obtaining information about the City each publication below was to them. Approximately 9 in 10 residents reported the City website and the biannual Parks and Recreation Activities Guide as major or minor sources.

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:



# Conclusions

## **Economy is an important focal point for action.**

Economy is the only facet to have received overall ratings below the national benchmark and was also nominated by residents as an important area for American Canyon's focus. Almost 6 in 10 residents rated the City's overall economic health as excellent or good and slightly more than 2 in 5 residents rated economic development positively. Further, the facet of Economy within Community Characteristics and Participation received seven ratings lower than other communities nationally: vibrant downtown/commercial area (19% positive), business and services (40% positive), shopping opportunities (24% positive), employment opportunities (17% positive), place to visit (44% positive), work within American Canyon's boundaries (19% positive) and place to work (42% positive). Additionally, almost everyone purchased goods or services in the City (95% positive). Approximately 1 in 3 residents think the economy will have a positive impact on their income.

## **Natural Environment is important to residents and well rated.**

Residents are pleased with most characteristics, government services and participation items within Natural Environment and think it is important to continue maintaining and improving in this area. Approximately 4 in 5 residents rated the overall natural environment and cleanliness of the natural environment as excellent or good. Additionally, garbage collection services, recycling services and yard waste pick-up services were rated positively by almost 9 in 10 residents. However, drinking water (61%), natural areas preservation (65%) and open space (67%) received slightly lower ratings. Residents in American Canyon lead earth friendly lives, with almost everyone reporting making efforts to conserve water and recycle at home (98% and higher than other communities nationally), while 4 in 5 residents made efforts to make their home more energy efficient.

## **Residents rate Built Environment as average.**

Approximately half of residents in American Canyon rated the overall built environment positively; similar ratings are seen for ratings on public places and housing options as well. Approximately 2 in 5 residents provided positive ratings for new development in American Canyon and affordable quality housing. The highest ratings for Built Environment were seen in Governance: storm drainage, sewer services and utility billing were rated as excellent or good by approximately 7 in 10 residents. Almost half of residents rated land use, planning and zoning and code enforcement as excellent or good (47%). The City of American Canyon has fewer people not under housing cost stress than other nationally benchmarked communities, with 48% not under housing cost stress. Further, 46% of residents did not observe a code violation.