

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Sioux Falls, SD
Community Livability Report

2017



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About

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

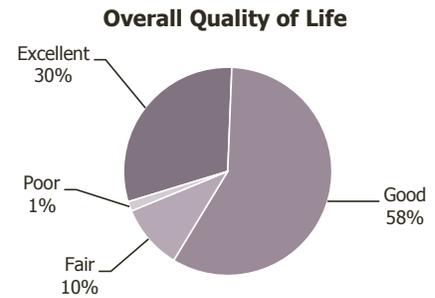
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 814 residents of the City of Sioux Falls. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 3% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Sioux Falls

Most residents rated the quality of life in Sioux Falls as excellent or good. This was similar to quality of life ratings seen in other communities across the country (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.



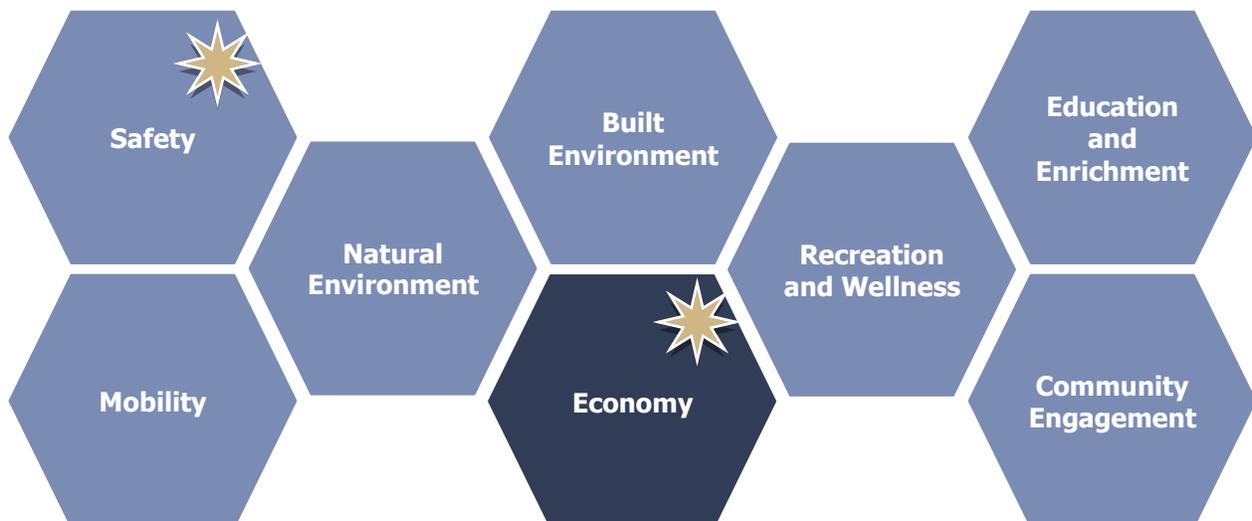
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2015, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Sioux Falls community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Sioux Falls residents gave ratings that tended to be higher than the national benchmark comparisons to Economy. Ratings for all other facets were positive and 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 Sioux Falls' unique questions.

Legend

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

- * Most important



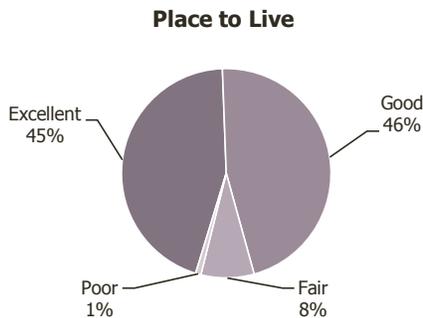
Community Characteristics

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 Sioux Falls, 91% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Sioux Falls 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 Sioux Falls as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Sioux Falls and its overall appearance. Nearly 9 in 10 survey participants positively rated the City as a place to raise children, while about 8 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to their neighborhoods as places to live, the overall image of the City and its overall appearance. Sioux Falls as a place to retire received favorable ratings from about two-thirds of residents. Ratings for all of these aspects of community quality were strong and similar to the national benchmark comparisons.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Residents' ratings within the pillar of Community Characteristics were either similar to or higher than the national benchmarks. More than 8 in 10 respondents reported feeling safe in their neighborhood and in Sioux Falls' downtown/commercial area during the day, and about three-quarters gave excellent or good ratings to the overall feeling of safety in the City. Within Mobility, about 7 in 10 residents awarded high marks to the overall ease of travel in the City, the ease of travel by car, and the availability of paths and walking trails in Sioux Falls; residents' rating for this aspect was higher than ratings seen in comparison communities. Additionally, ratings for the ease of travel by bicycle (59% excellent or good) increased since the 2015 survey iteration (see the *Trends over Time* report under a separate cover). About two-thirds of participants gave excellent or good ratings to the overall built environment and variety of housing options, while about 8 in 10 favorably rated public places where people like to spend time. The overall quality of new development was positively rated by about three-quarters of residents, and was higher than the national comparisons. Ratings within Economy were especially strong: about 8 in 10 or more survey participants positively rated the overall economic health of Sioux Falls, the quality of business and service establishments, shopping opportunities and Sioux Falls as a place to work. All aspects of Economy were higher than the national benchmark comparisons, except for Sioux Falls as a place to visit, which received a rating that was similar to those reported in comparison communities (71% excellent or good). Additionally, the evaluations for cost of living in Sioux Falls increased in 2017 from 2015. Ratings for Recreation and Wellness were also strong: about four in five respondents or more positively rated overall health and wellness opportunities, preventive health services and fitness opportunities, and a majority of ratings within this facet were higher than the national benchmark comparisons. All aspects of Education and Enrichment received favorable ratings from at least half of residents and were similar to the ratings given in communities across the nation. It is noteworthy that ratings for opportunities to attend social events and activities increased from 2015 to 2017.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



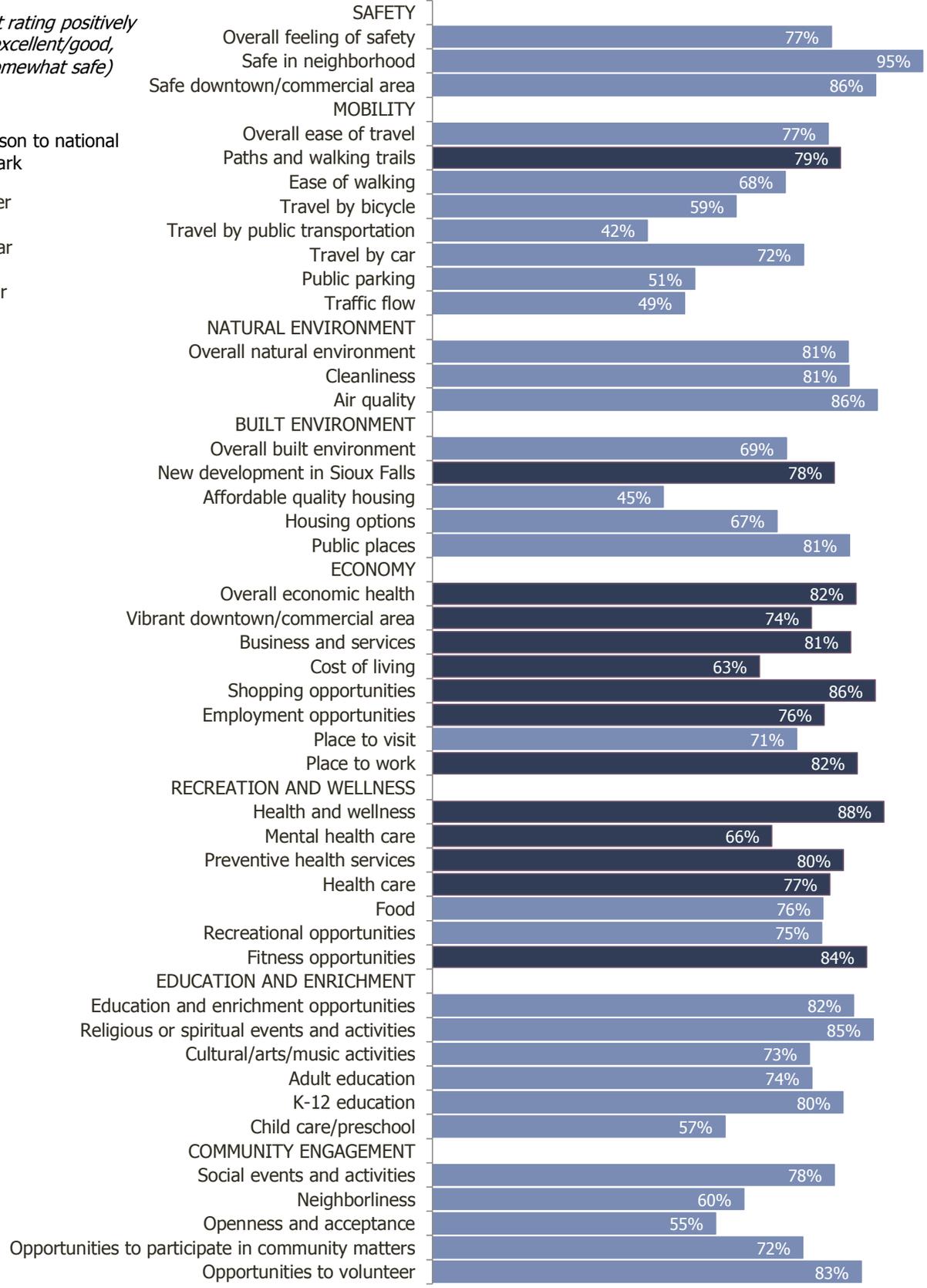
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

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

The overall quality of the services provided by Sioux Falls as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Nearly 8 in 10 residents positively rated the overall quality of services provided by the City of Sioux Falls; in comparison, about half of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the services provided by the Federal Government. Ratings for both of these measures were similar to the national benchmark.

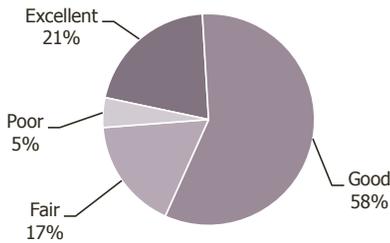
Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Sioux Falls' leadership and governance. Ratings for aspects of Sioux Falls' leadership and governance were all strong and similar to ratings seen in other communities nationwide. About 8 in 10 participants gave high marks to the overall customer service provided by City employees (a rating which increased over time), and only slightly fewer positively rated the overall direction the City is taking. About 6 in 10 respondents favorably rated the value of services for taxes paid, the job the City does at welcoming citizen involvement and acting in the best interest of Sioux Falls, while slightly fewer gave excellent or good scores to the City being honest and treating all residents fairly.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Sioux Falls. Residents' ratings of Sioux Falls' services and amenities tended to be similar to ratings seen in other jurisdictions nationwide; however, there were three noteworthy exceptions. Respondents' ratings for economic development (77% excellent or good)

and health services (84%) were higher than the national benchmark, but their ratings for street repair (28%) were lower than those seen in other communities. Top-rated Sioux Falls services included police, fire, ambulance/EMS, fire prevention, garbage collection, recycling, drinking water, sewer services, the power utility, City parks, recreation programs, recreation centers, health services and public libraries; all of these services received excellent or good ratings from about 8 in 10 respondents or more.

Ratings within the pillar of Governance were generally stable over time; however, ratings declined from 2015 to 2017 for ambulance/EMS, street repair, street cleaning, snow removal, yard waste pick-up and land use, planning and zoning. More residents gave excellent or good ratings to police services in 2017 than in 2015.

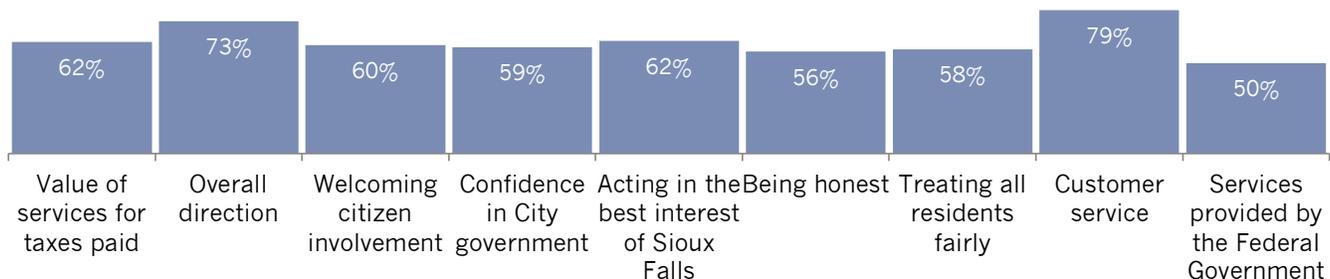
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



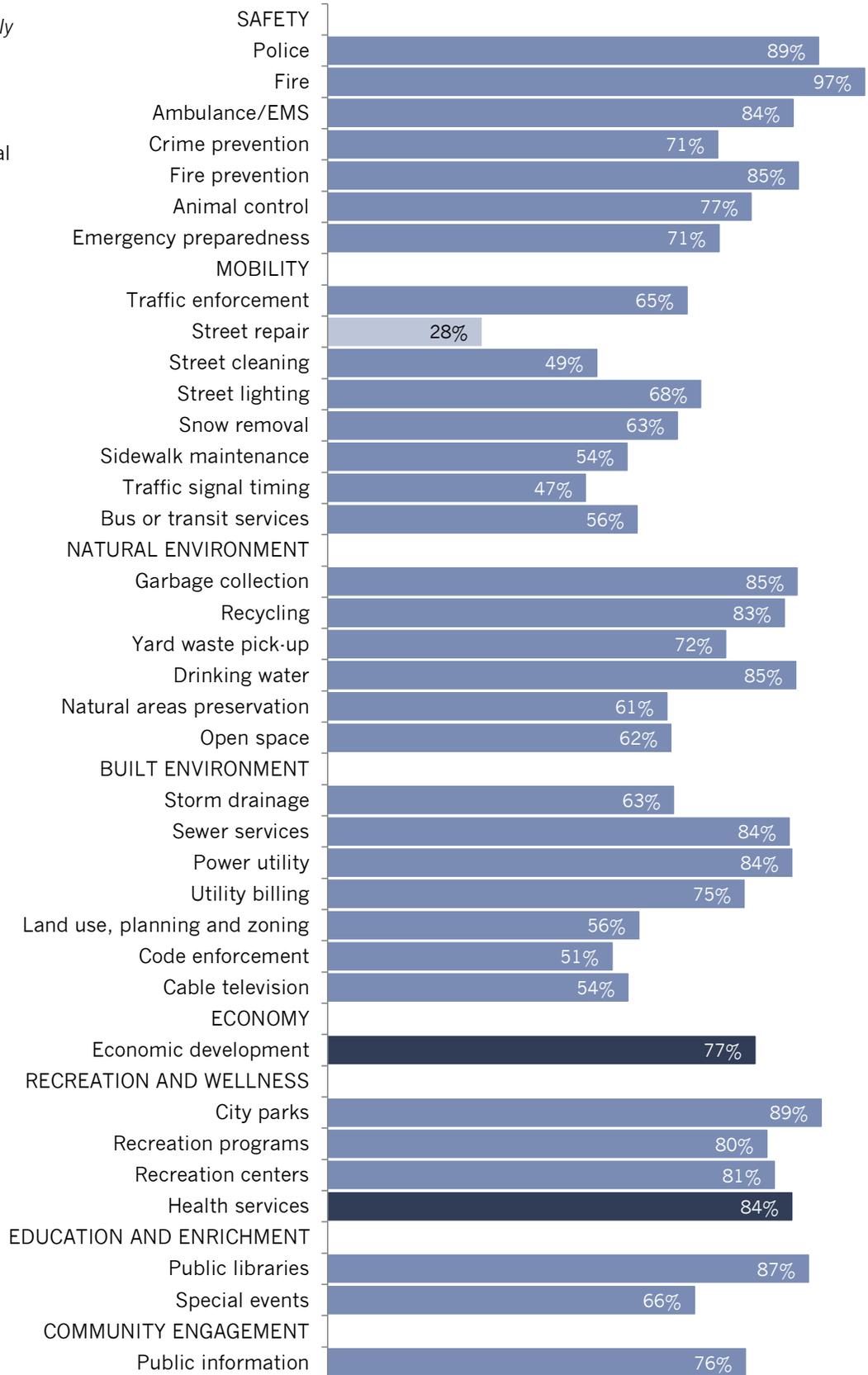
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



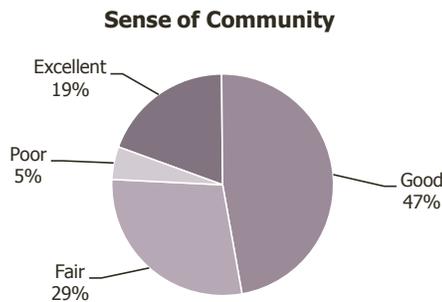
Participation

Are the residents of Sioux Falls 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 two-thirds of respondents awarded excellent or good ratings to the sense of community in Sioux Falls, which was similar to ratings seen in other jurisdictions across the country. About 9 in 10 survey respondents reported that they would recommend living in Sioux Falls to someone who asked and planned to remain in Sioux Falls for the coming five years; both of these measures were similar to the national benchmark comparisons. Additionally, 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. Residents' reported levels of Participation varied across the different facets, but were generally similar to the national comparisons. About 8 in 10 respondents had not reported a crime, and nearly 9 in 10 were not the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey. Within the facet of Mobility, more than 4 in 10 residents had carpooled instead of driving alone and walked or biked instead of driving; however, only about 1 in 10 participants had used public transportation instead of driving, which was lower than rates seen elsewhere. About 9 in 10 survey participants had recycled at home and nearly 8 in 10 had made efforts to conserve water in the 12 months prior to the survey. Within Built Environment, more than half of residents did not observe a code violation in the past year, and close to 8 in 10 were not under housing cost stress (a level that was higher than the national benchmark). Almost all residents had purchased goods or services in Sioux Falls, and the proportion of respondents who worked in Sioux Falls and the percent that felt the economy would have a

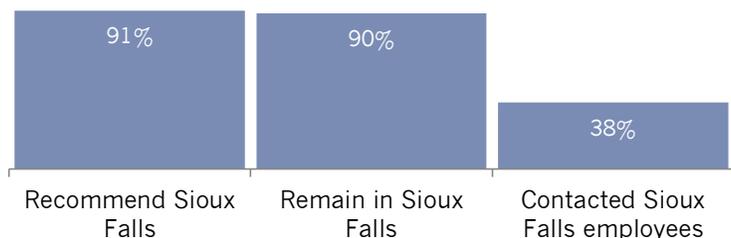
positive impact on their income in the coming six months were both higher or much higher than the national benchmark. About 6 in 10 or more respondents reported participating in all aspects of Recreation and Wellness, and the proportion of respondents who had used Sioux Falls recreation centers increased from 2015 to 2017. At least half of residents reported participating in all aspects of Education and Enrichment, and the proportion of residents who had participated in religious or spiritual activities was higher than levels seen in comparison communities. Within Community Engagement, about four in five survey participants or more had talked to or visited with neighbors, done a favor for a neighbor, read or watched local news and voted in local elections; additionally, Sioux Falls residents reported higher levels of volunteering than respondents from other communities.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



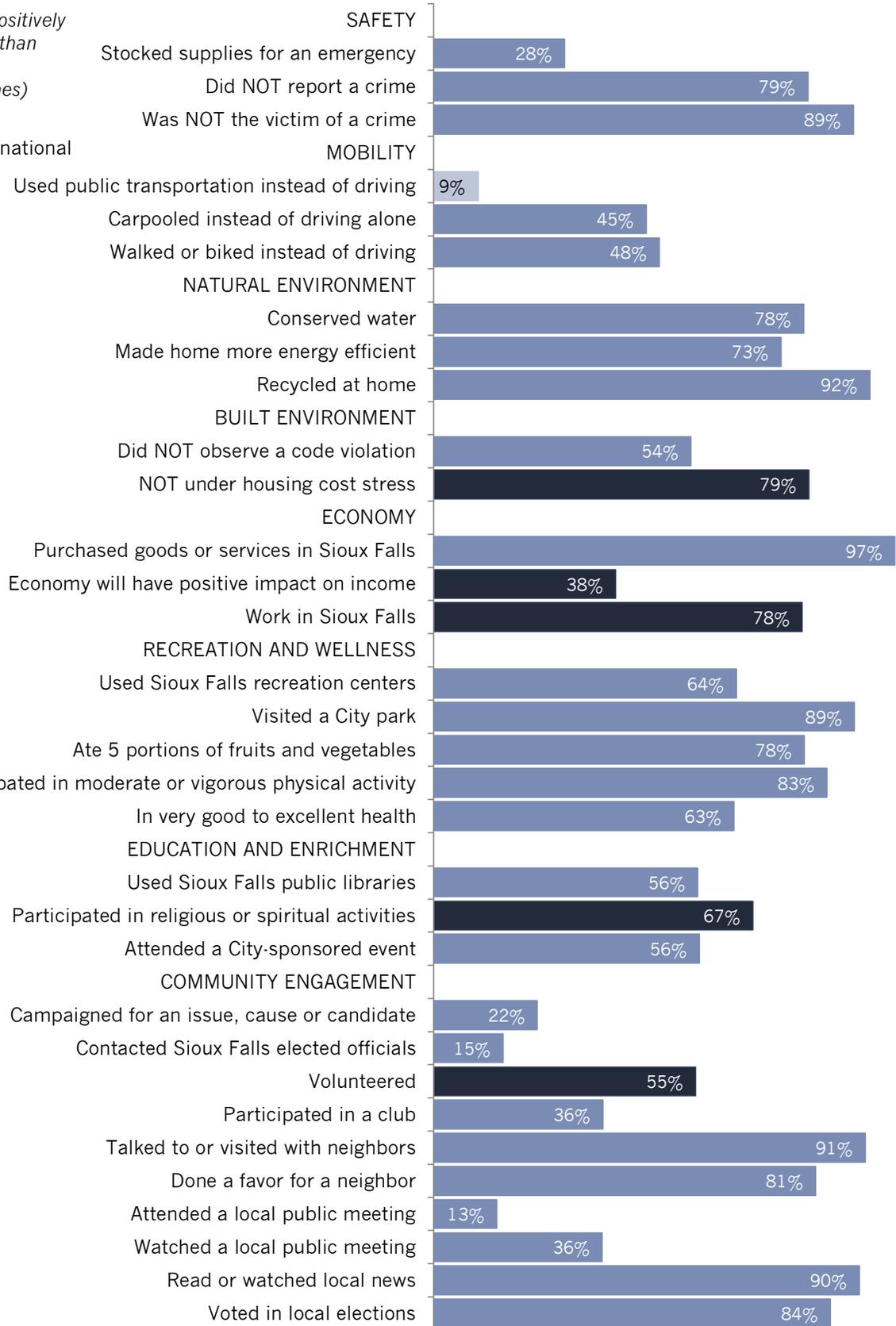
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

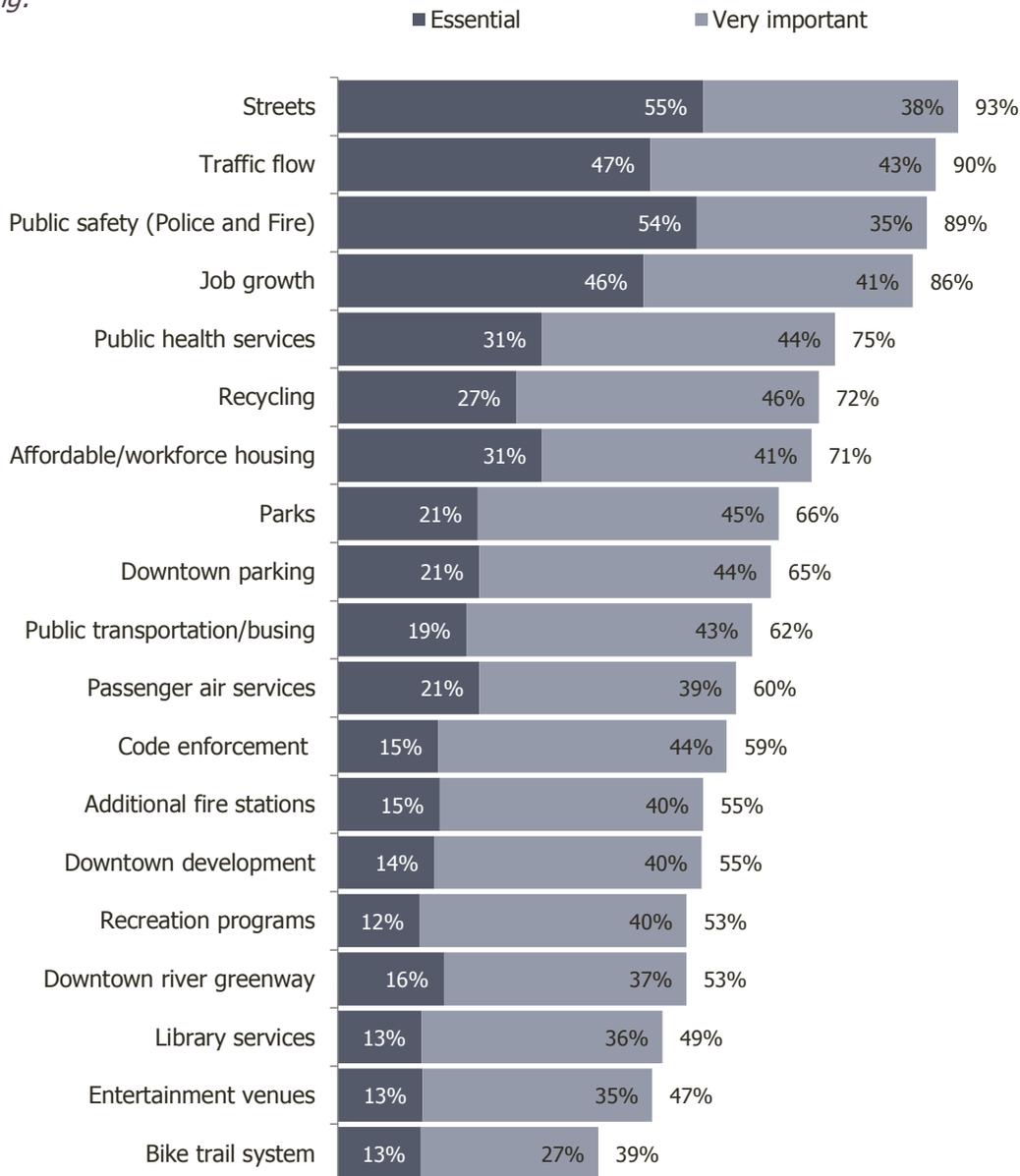


Special Topics

The City of Sioux Falls included four questions of special interest on The NCS, as well as an open-ended question where residents could write down a response in their own words. The first special-interest question asked respondents to rate how important it should be to invest tax dollars into various initiatives over the next two years. The issues that were seen as most important by respondents were streets, traffic flow and public safety (police and fire); about 9 in 10 residents indicated that it was at least very important for the City to invest tax dollars into these issues. Most other priorities were seen as very important by a majority of residents; however, less than half of respondents indicated that library services, entertainment venues and the bike trail system were essential or very important.

Figure 4: Priority Areas for City Tax Dollars

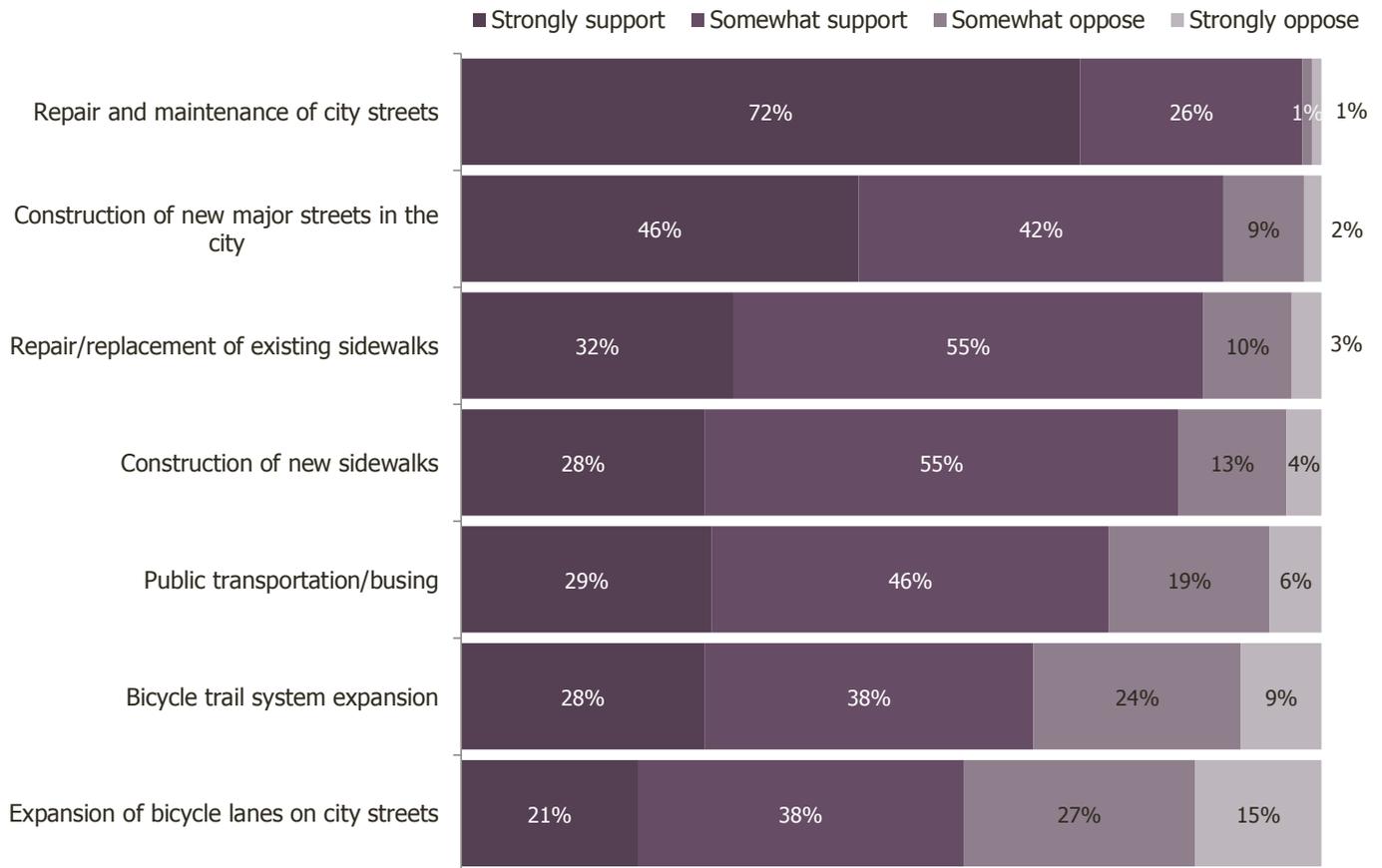
Please rate the importance of the City of Sioux Falls investing existing tax dollars over the next two years in the following:



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The next question asked participants to indicate the extent to which they would support or oppose increasing public funding for various transportation-related services. Almost all residents would support increased funding for the repair and maintenance of city streets. At least 8 in 10 would at least somewhat support increased funding for the construction of new major streets in the city, the repair/replacement of existing sidewalks and the construction of new sidewalks.

Figure 5: Support for Increased Public Funding for Transportation-Related Services
 Please rate to what extent you would support or oppose increased local public funding for the following transportation-related services in Sioux Falls:

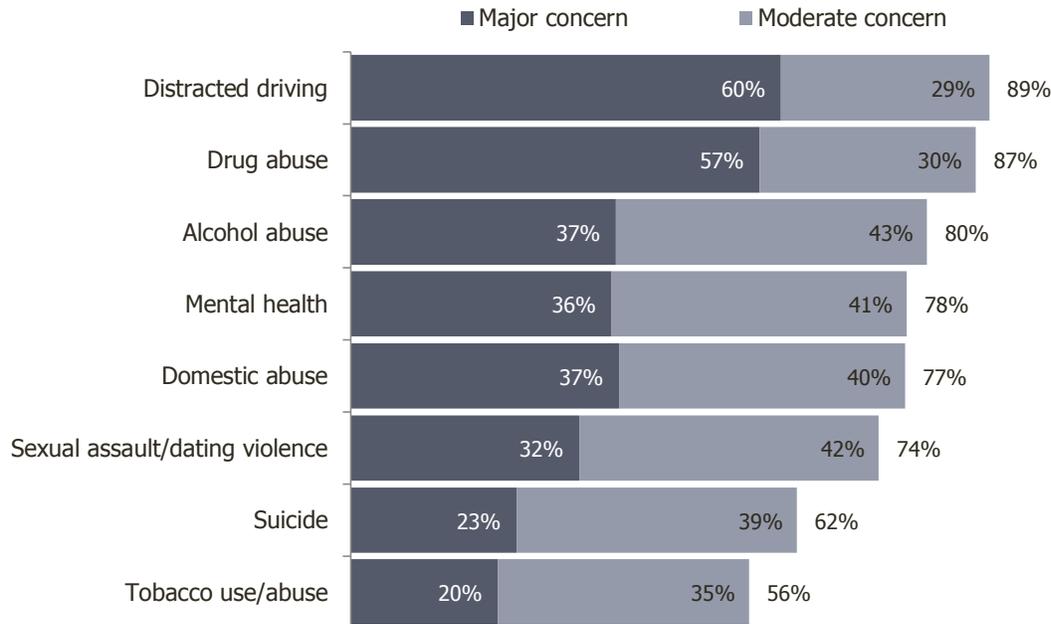


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The third special-interest question sought to gauge to what extent residents were concerned about various health behaviors and issues in Sioux Falls. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents indicated that distracted driving was a major or moderate concern, and slightly fewer indicated that drug abuse was at least a moderate concern. Other concerning health issues and behaviors included alcohol abuse, mental health, domestic abuse and sexual assault/dating violence; all of these issues were seen as being at least a moderate concern for the community by about three-quarters of respondents or more.

Figure 6: Health Issues in Sioux Falls

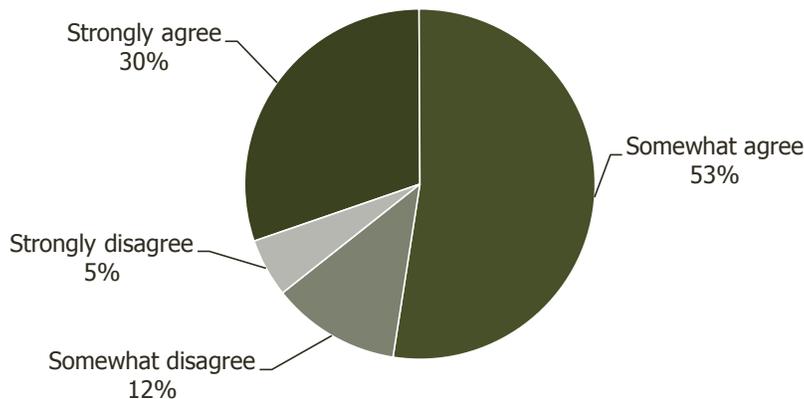
To what extent, if at all, do you think each of these health behaviors and issues is a current concern in Sioux Falls?



Respondents were next asked if they agreed or disagreed with a statement that suggested that the City of Sioux Falls should place a higher priority on investing taxpayer resources to promote job growth and workforce development. About four in five survey participants indicated that they strongly or somewhat agreed with this statement.

Figure 7: The City's Role in Job Growth and Workforce Development

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The City of Sioux Falls should place a higher priority on investing taxpayer resources to promote job growth and workforce development."

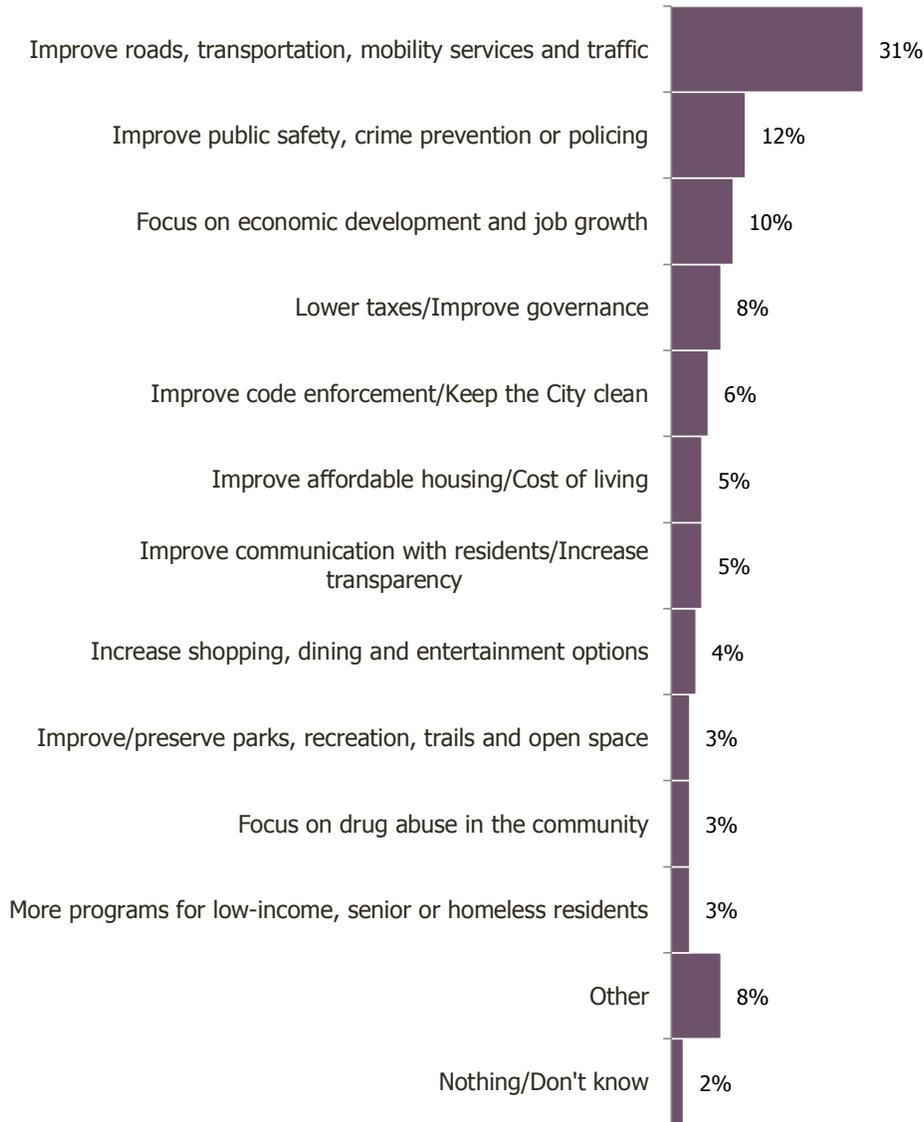


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Sioux Falls' open-ended question asked residents to write down one thing that they City could do to improve Sioux Falls. The verbatim responses were categorized by topic area and those topics are reported in the chart below with the percent of responses given in each category. Of the respondents who wrote in a response, the most frequently cited improvements were related to road, traffic and transportation services (for the full verbatim responses, see the *Open End Report* under separate cover).

Figure 8: Top City Improvement

What one thing can City government do to improve Sioux Falls?



Conclusions

Sioux Falls is a great place to live.

More than four in five respondents rated the overall quality of life in Sioux Falls and the city as a place to live as excellent or good; these ratings remained stable over time and were similar to ratings in comparison communities. About 9 in 10 respondents would recommend living in Sioux Falls someone who asked, and a similar proportion reported that they planned to remain in the community for the next five years. Ratings for features that enhance quality of life, such as Sioux Falls as a place to raise children, the overall image of the city and the overall appearance were given positive ratings by at least 8 in 10 respondents.

Sioux Falls is easy to get around in, but there is still room for improvement in Mobility.

Ratings within the facet of Mobility tended to be similar to ratings seen in other communities nationwide. At least 7 in 10 respondents positively rated the overall ease of travel in Sioux Falls and the ease of travel by car, as well as the availability of paths and walking trails; residents' ratings for the availability of paths and walking trails were higher than those seen in other communities. Most Mobility services and amenities, including traffic enforcement and bus or transit services, were positively rated by a majority of respondents and were similar to the national comparisons. Despite these stronger ratings, residents did indicate some areas where the City could make improvements. Only about one-quarter of respondents positively rated street repair in the City, and ratings for street repair, street cleaning and snow removal decreased over time. When respondents were asked to rate the importance of the City investing tax dollars into different initiatives, about 9 in 10 respondent indicated that investing in streets and in traffic flow were essential or very important. Furthermore, when asked to name one thing the City could do to improve Sioux Falls, roughly 3 in 10 respondents referenced an improvement related to roads, traffic and mobility services.

Safety and Economy are top community priorities.

This year, as in 2015, residents indicated that Economy and Safety are the most important areas for the Sioux Falls community to focus on in the coming two years. Residents' ratings for Safety tended to be similar to ratings seen in comparison communities. About three-quarters of respondents awarded excellent or good ratings to the overall feeling of Safety in the City, and about 7 in 10 respondents or more favorably rated all Safety services, including police, fire and crime prevention services. Ratings for Safety related measures generally remained stable from 2015 to 2017; however, ratings increased over time for police services and decreased for ambulance or emergency medical services.

In 2017, Sioux Falls once again received exceptionally strong ratings in the facet of Economy. About four in five respondents positively rated the overall economic health of Sioux Falls, the quality of business and service establishments, shopping opportunities and Sioux Falls as a place to work (which were all higher than ratings seen elsewhere); additionally, ratings for the cost of living in the City improved from 2015 to 2017. Almost all residents had purchased goods or services in the City in the 12 months prior to the survey, and Sioux Falls residents reported a higher rate of working in the City limits than respondents from comparison communities. In a special interest question, more than four in five residents indicated that they agreed with the statement "The City of Sioux falls should place a higher priority on investing taxpayer resources to promote job growth and workforce development".

Recreation and Wellness is a positive feature of the community.

Measures related to Recreation and Wellness tended to be rated positively by at least 6 in 10 residents, and all ratings were similar to or higher than the national comparisons. Nearly 9 in 10 respondents positively rated overall health and wellness opportunities in Sioux Falls, and ratings for the availability of affordable quality health care, mental health care, preventive health services and fitness opportunities were higher in Sioux Falls than in other communities across the nation. About 8 in 10 respondents or more positively rated all Recreation and Wellness services, including City parks and recreation programs; additionally, ratings for health services in Sioux Falls were higher than the national comparisons. In 2017, more respondents reported using Sioux Falls recreation centers than in 2015.