

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Gahanna, OH

Community Livability Report

FINAL
2016



NRC
National Research Center Inc

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

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About

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

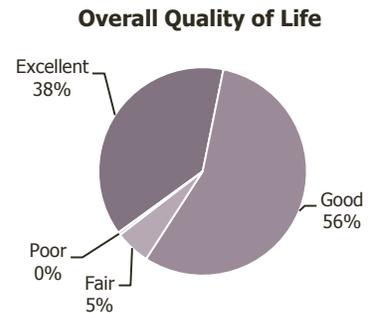
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 633 residents of the City of Gahanna. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Gahanna

Almost all residents rated the quality of life in Gahanna as excellent or good. This rating was similar to those seen in other communities across the nation (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.



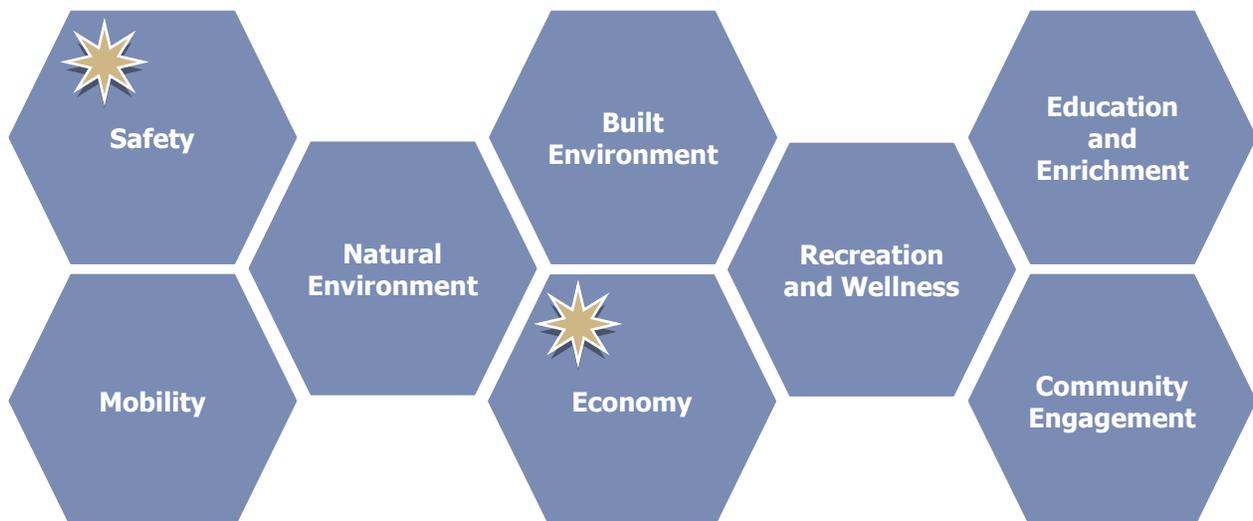
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Gahanna community in the coming two years. Gahanna residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community. Ratings for all other aspects of community 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 Gahanna’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 Gahanna, 97% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Gahanna 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 Gahanna as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Gahanna and its overall appearance. Around 9 in 10 respondents or more favorably rated their neighborhood as a place to live and Gahanna as a place to raise children, while more than 8 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to the overall image and overall appearance of Gahanna. Roughly 7 in 10 of respondents gave positive ratings to Gahanna as a place to retire. All of these aspects received ratings similar to the benchmark comparison, with the exception of Gahanna as a place to raise children which received ratings higher than in the benchmark communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Generally, ratings for aspects of Community Characteristics were strong across each of the eight facets. Almost all residents gave positive ratings to the overall feeling of safety in Gahanna (a rating higher than the national benchmark), as well as to feelings of safety in their neighborhoods and in the City's downtown/commercial area. Ratings for aspects of Built Environment were favorable; at least 3 in 5 residents gave positive ratings to all aspects, and ratings for the availability of affordable quality housing and the variety of housing options were higher than seen elsewhere. Ratings with in the facet of Economy were also strong as around 8 in 10 residents positively rated business and service establishments and Gahanna as a place to work.



Additionally, 5 of the 8 aspects of Economy received ratings higher than the national benchmark. All aspects of Recreation and Wellness received favorable ratings and mental healthcare, preventative health services, health care and availability of affordable quality food received ratings that were higher than those given in other communities. Most of the aspects within Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were rated positively by around 7 in 10 residents or more. Cultural/arts/music activities opportunities and availability of affordable child care/preschool within Education and Enrichment and openness and acceptance towards those of diverse backgrounds within Community Engagement received ratings higher than in comparison communities.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



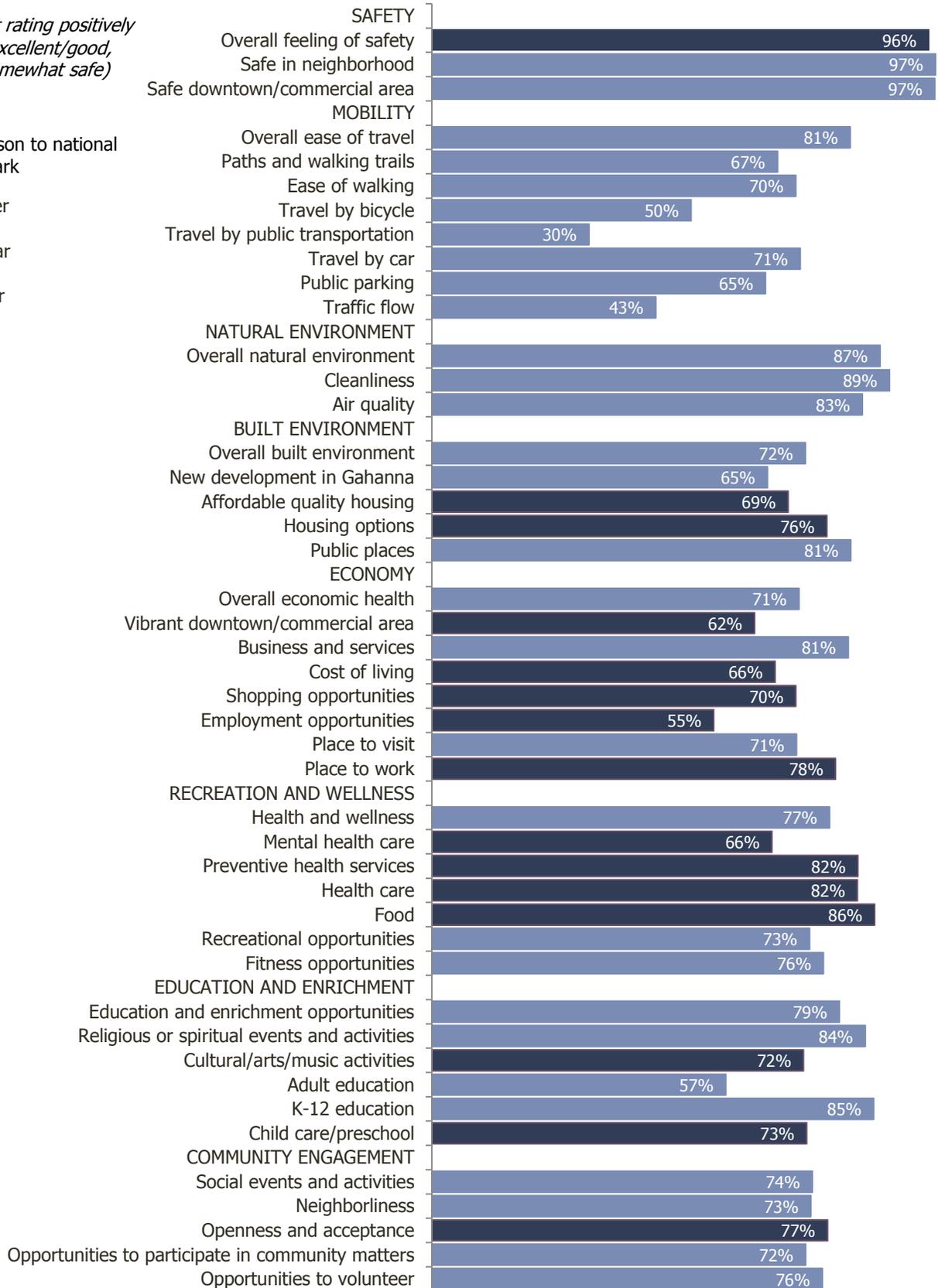
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

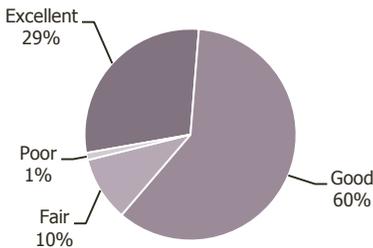
How well does the government of Gahanna meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Gahanna as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Nearly 9 in 10 residents rated the overall quality of services provided by Gahanna as excellent or good while about 4 in 10 positively rated the services provided by the Federal Government; both of these ratings were similar to those given in other communities across the nation.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Gahanna’s leadership and governance. Roughly 7 in 10 or more residents were pleased with the overall direction the City was taking, City government acting in the best interest of Gahanna, treating all residents fairly and the customer service provided by Gahanna employees. At least 6 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to the value of services for the taxes paid, welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government and the government being honest. All of these ratings were similar to other communities across the nation with the exception of the City treating all residents fairly, which was rated higher than the national benchmark.

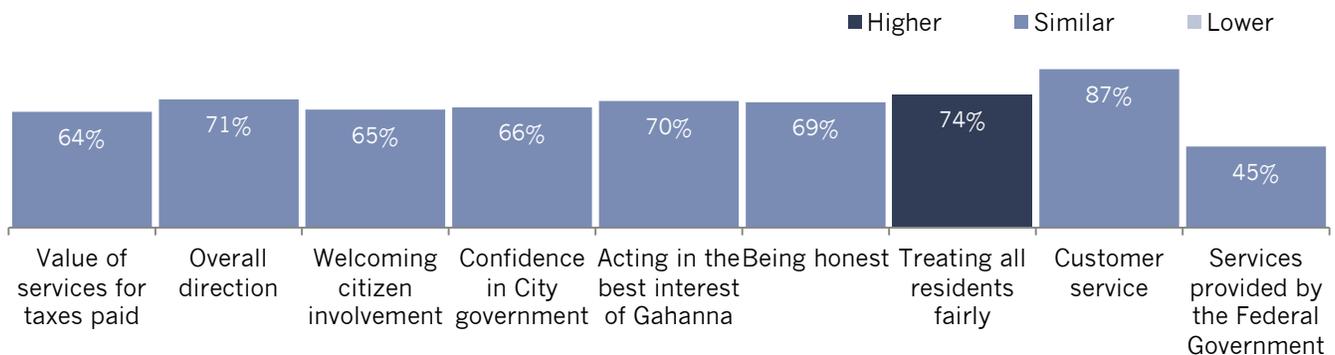
Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Gahanna. A majority of residents gave positive ratings to all aspects of Governance, ratings which were similar to or higher than ratings in comparison communities. Respondents rated Gahanna’s police and crime prevention efforts higher than the national benchmark within the facet of Safety, with around 9 in 10 awarding high marks. Ratings for the remaining four Safety services were similar to the national benchmark and given positive scores by around 7 in 10 or more residents. Within Natural Environment, about 8 in 10 residents positively rated garbage collection, recycling, drinking water and yard waste pick-up, and the latter received ratings higher than those given in other communities. Three-quarters of survey respondents or more were pleased with all aspects of Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement.

Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark



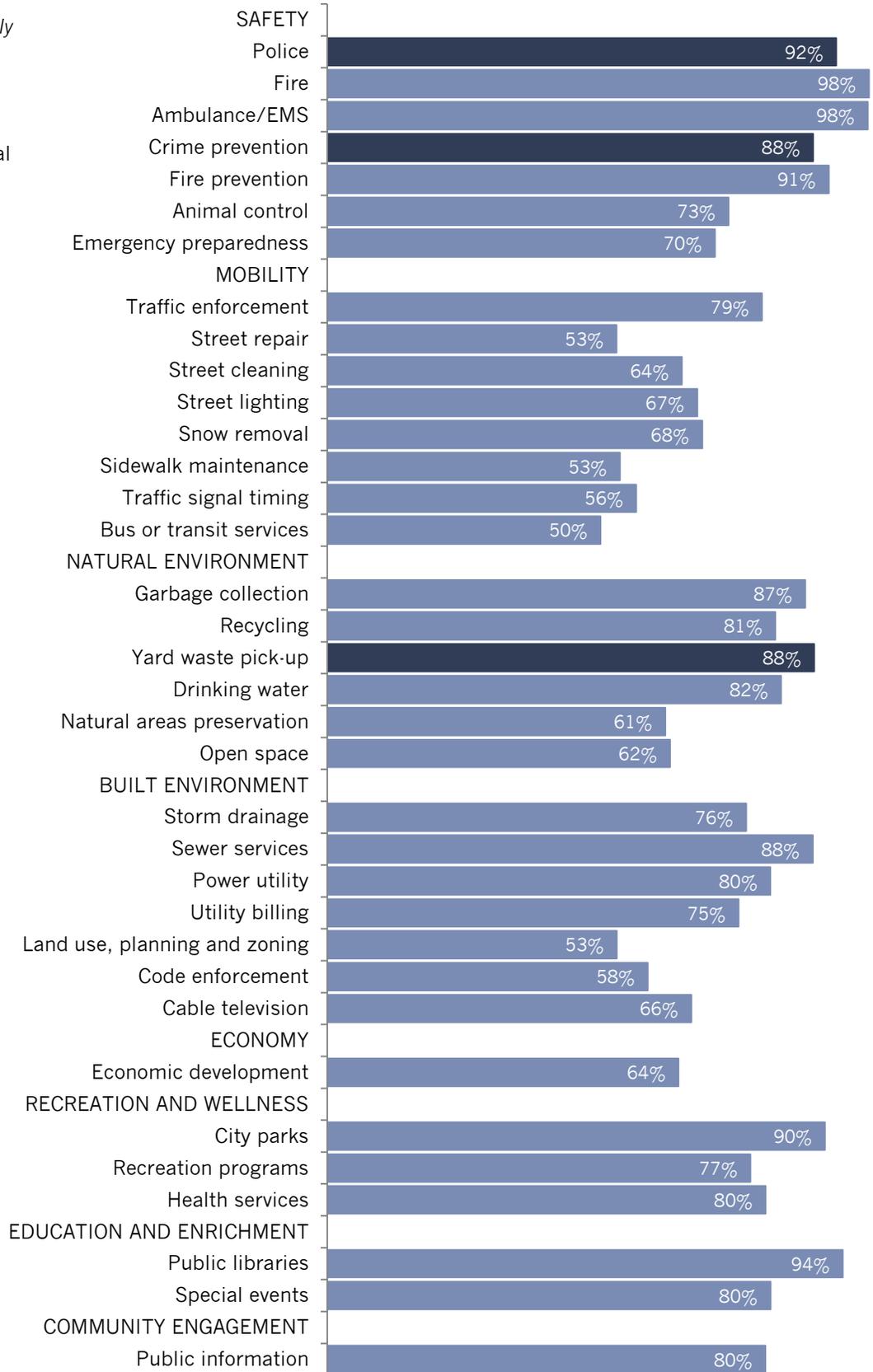
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

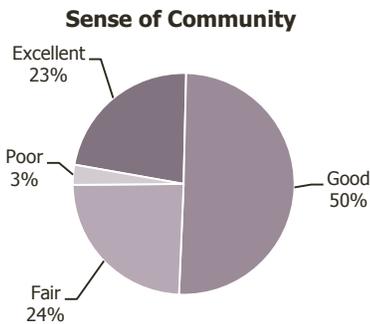


Participation

Are the residents of Gahanna 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 Gahanna, 73% of survey respondents described the sense of community as excellent or good. Almost all residents would recommend living in Gahanna to others and around 9 in 10 planned to remain in Gahanna for the next five years. Nearly half of participants reported that they had contacted a Gahanna employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. The number of residents reporting they would recommend living in the City was greater in Gahanna than what was seen in comparisons communities.

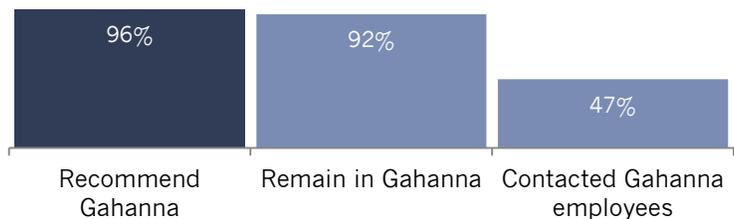
The survey included 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Rates of Participation were mixed across the different facets; however, most aspects of Participation were similar to other benchmark communities. Almost all residents had purchased goods or services in Gahanna or talked to or visited with neighbors. At least 8 in 10 residents respondents indicated that they had recycled at home, visited a City park, ate five portions of fruits or vegetables a day, participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity, read or watched the local news, voted in local elections and that they had not been the victim of a crime. These levels of participation were similar to the national benchmark. Meanwhile, Gahanna residents were less likely to report that they stocked supplies for an emergency, used public transportation, worked in Gahanna or volunteered compared to those in comparison communities. However, the proportion of respondents who reported that they were not under housing cost stress and had attended a City-sponsored event in the 12 months prior to the survey was higher than the national benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



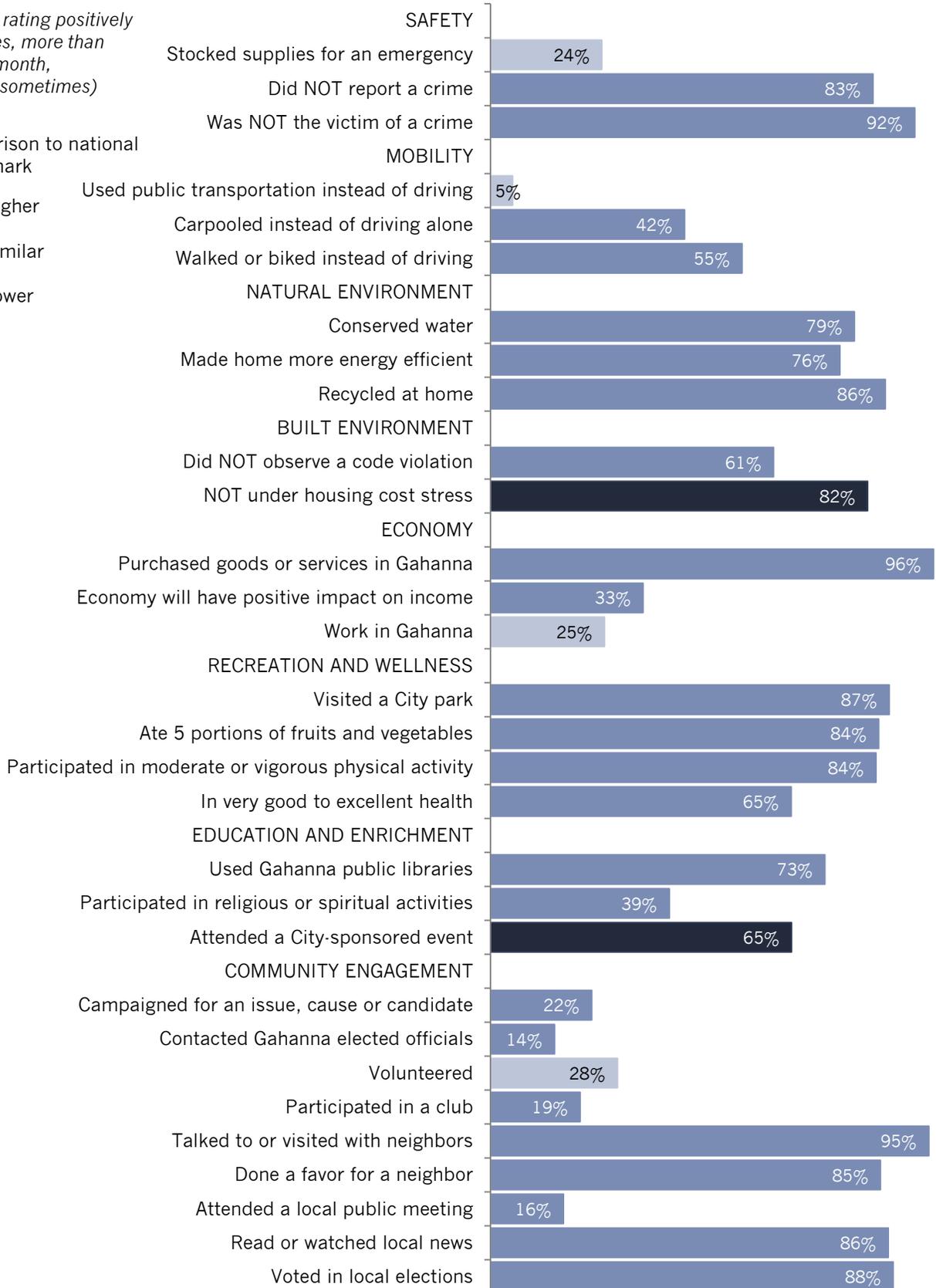
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

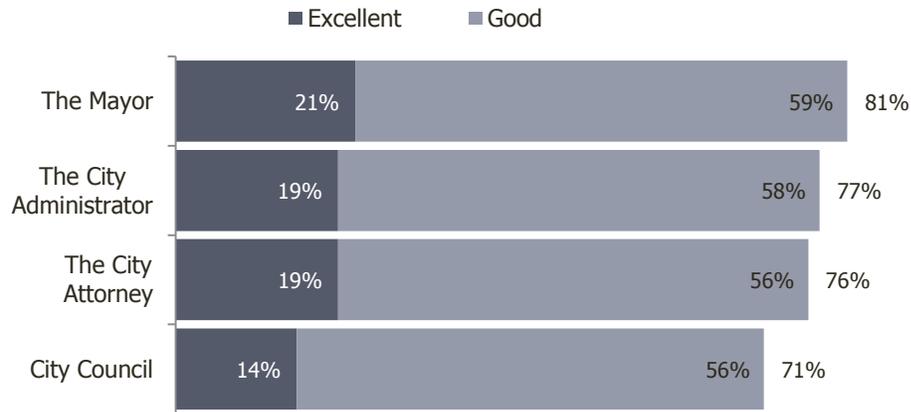
- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Special Topics

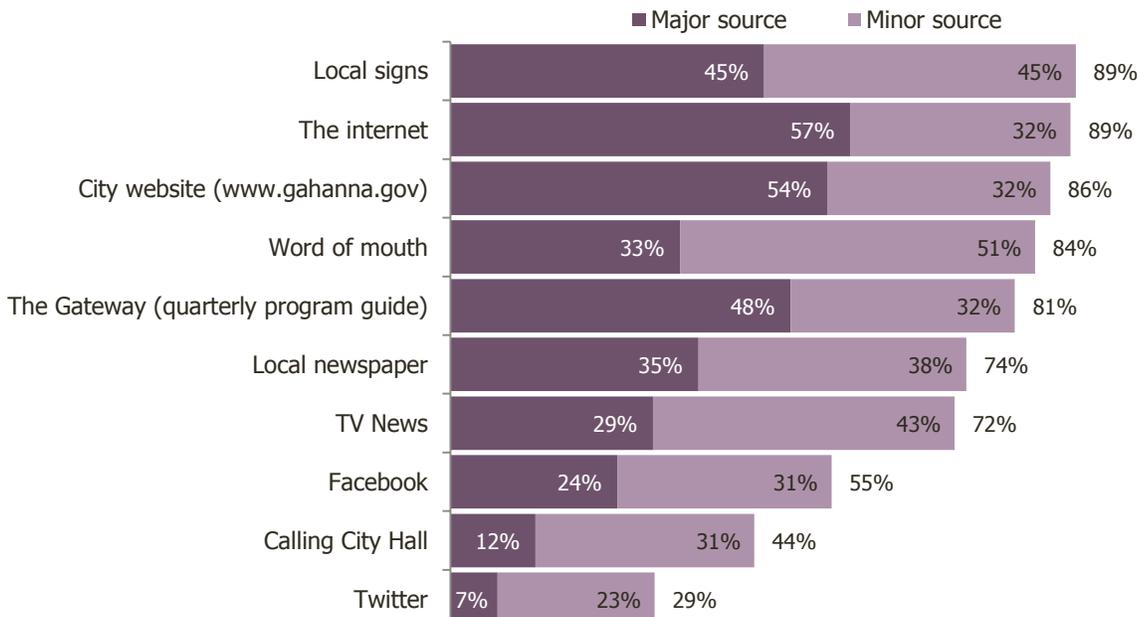
The City of Gahanna included four questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked residents to rate the job performance of various Gahanna officials. Around 7 in 10 residents or more rated these officials performance as excellent or good. Eight in 10 respondents rated the Mayor’s job performance as excellent or good which was the highest rated. City Council performance received the lowest ratings when compared to other Gahanna officials with 7 in 10 participants selecting excellent or good.

Figure 4: Job Performance of Gahanna Officials
How would you rate the job performance of the following Gahanna officials?



Gahanna residents were asked to indicate which methods they prefer to receive information about City government, its activities, events and services. Roughly 80% or more of respondents indicated that local signs, the internet, the City website, word-of-mouth and The Gateway were at least a minor source of information. Close to three-quarters of survey participants relied on the local newspaper and TV News as their source of information. Twitter communication was only considered a major or minor source by 29% of residents and was rated the least likely source of information for obtaining information about the City government.

Figure 5: Sources of 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.

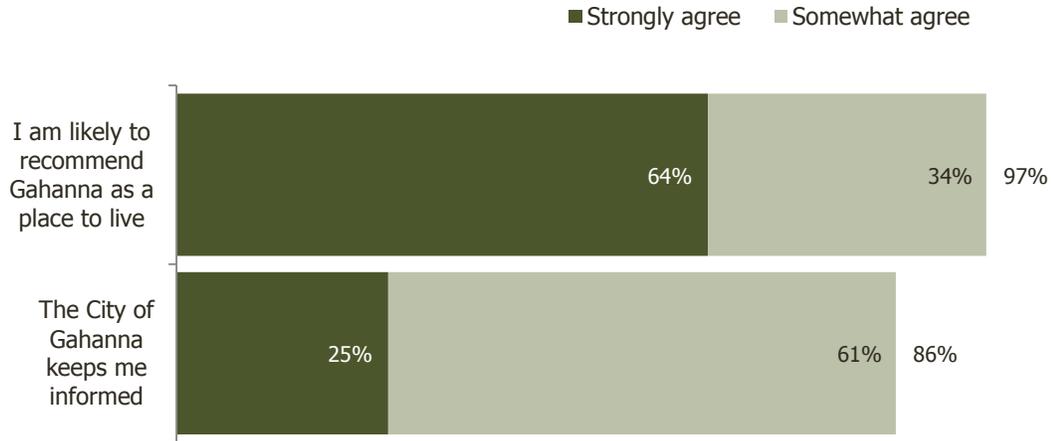


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Residents were also asked to specify their level of support for two statements. Almost all residents at least somewhat agreed that they were likely to recommend Gahanna as a place to live. More than 8 in 10 survey participants at least somewhat agreed that the City of Gahanna kept them informed.

Figure 6: Perspectives about Gahanna

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

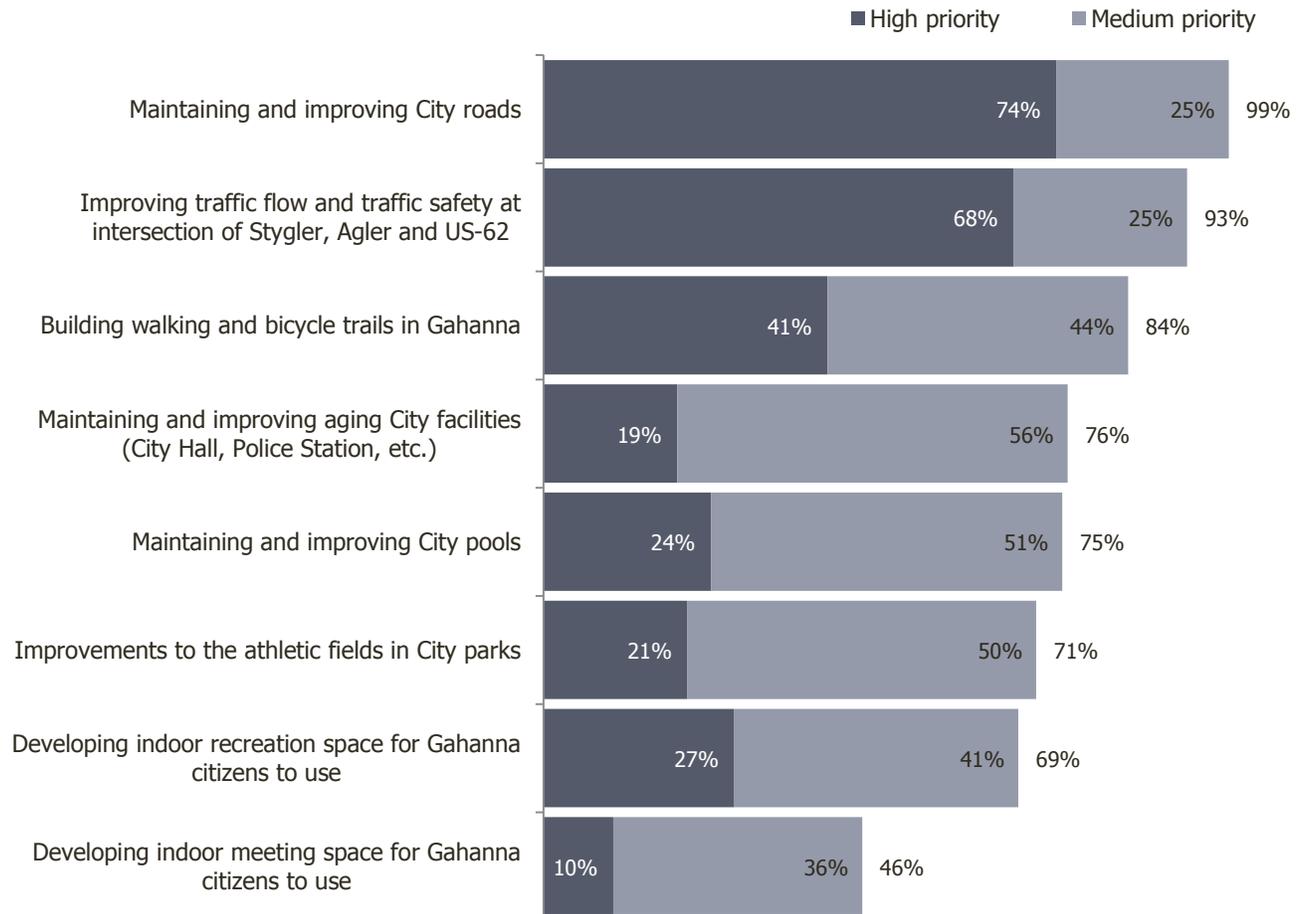


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The final question asked residents to indicate whether various projects were a priority to be addressed by Gahanna in the coming two years. Maintaining and improving City roads, improving traffic flow and safety at the intersection of Stygler, Agler and US-62 were rated as a high or medium priority by almost all survey participants. The lowest priority project was developing an indoor meeting space for Gahanna citizens to use, identified as at least a medium priority by almost half of residents.

Figure 7: City Priorities

How much of a priority, if any, should it be for the City to address each of the following in the next two years?



Conclusions

Gahanna residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Almost all respondents rated the overall quality of life in Gahanna and the City as a place to live as excellent or good. More than 9 in 10 residents said they would recommend Gahanna as a place to live and planned to remain living in Gahanna for the next five years. Ratings for features that enhance quality of life, such as Gahanna as a place to raise children, the overall image of the City, overall appearance and their neighborhoods as places to live were given positive ratings by at least 4 in 5 respondents. Additionally, nearly three-quarters of residents rated Gahanna's sense of community as excellent or good.

Economy and Safety are the main focus areas for the community.

Residents indicated that Economy and Safety are important areas for the Gahanna community to focus on in the next two years. Many aspects of Economy were rated positively by a majority of residents and higher than the national benchmark such as the shopping and employment opportunities, the vibrant downtown/commercial area, cost of living and Gahanna as a place to work. However, a quarter of residents reported working within the boundaries of Gahanna, a level that was lower than seen elsewhere.

Almost all residents indicated that maintaining a safe community was a priority in the future. Most ratings for Safety across all three pillars were positive and similar to the national benchmark. Nearly all residents reported that they felt safe in their neighborhood and in Gahanna's downtown/commercial area. Further, more than 9 in 10 gave excellent or good ratings to the overall feeling of safety in Gahanna, a measure higher than levels seen in communities across the nation. Residents also valued safety services provided by the City of Gahanna such as police services and crime prevention which were rated higher than in comparison communities.

Recreation and Wellness make Gahanna a strong community.

Most survey respondents rated Gahanna's Recreation and Wellness measures as excellent or good with about two-thirds or more having given positive marks to every aspect. Most residents reported that they had visited a City park, ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables and participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity. Ratings for mental health care, preventative health services, health care and availability of quality food were higher than seen elsewhere.