

THE NCS

The National Community Survey

Cedar Park, TX

Community Livability Report

DRAFT
2019



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About

The National Community Survey (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Cedar Park. 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 440 residents of the City of Cedar Park. 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.

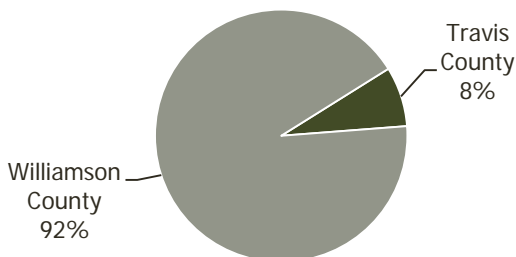
This report also includes comparisons to other communities in NRC’s database of comparative resident opinion. This database is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in surveys from over 600 communities across the nation whose residents evaluated the same kinds of topics on The National Community Survey.



Highlights:

- 440 responses
- 12% response rate
- ± 5% margin of error
- Results weighted to community demographics

Figure 1: Respondent County of Residence



Key Findings

Broadly, Cedar Park receives exceptional ratings from residents.

Ratings across most facets of community livability in Cedar Park tended to be strong when compared to other communities in NRC's national database of over 600 communities. Out of 122 items for which comparisons between Cedar Park and other communities nationwide were available, 76 were rated similar to the benchmarks, six were rated lower and 40 items were rated higher. When compared to other Texas communities, out of 122 items, 66 were similar, four were lower and 52 were higher.

Cedar Park residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Nine in ten residents gave positive ratings to the overall quality of life in Cedar Park (which was higher than the national average) and to Cedar Park as a place to live (which was similar). Almost all residents gave excellent or good ratings to Cedar Park as a place to raise children, while 8 in 10 were pleased with the overall image of the city and Cedar Park as a place to retire. These ratings were higher than those given in other communities across the nation. Two-thirds of residents gave positive ratings to the sense of community in Cedar Park, while 9 in 10 would recommend living in the city to someone who asks and planned to remain in the city for the next five years.

Safety is important to residents.

Residents indicated that Safety is an important focus area for the City in the next two years and ratings within this facet tended to be strong. Virtually all residents gave favorable marks to the overall feeling of safety in Cedar Park (which was higher than average) and feeling safe in their neighborhoods and in Cedar Park's commercial area. Further, when evaluating City services, about 8 in 10 residents awarded positive marks to crime prevention, emergency preparedness and animal control services and these evaluations were higher than the national benchmarks. When asked whether they thought the City should spend more, less, or the same amount on different services and amenities in Cedar Park, two-thirds of residents thought Cedar Park should spend the same amount on public safety, while 3 in 10 thought the City should spend more in this area.

The Economy in Cedar Park is strong.

Economy was also identified by residents as an important focus area, and ratings within this facet were especially strong: About 8 in 10 residents or more gave positive marks to the overall economic health of the city, shopping opportunities and economic development, and these ratings were higher than the national benchmarks. Evaluations for overall quality of business and service establishments (77% excellent or good), vibrant commercial area (66%) and employment opportunities (54%) were also higher than the national averages. Cedar Park residents were also more likely than those who lived elsewhere to have a positive future economic outlook.

Residents are pleased with Mobility, but more walking and biking opportunities may be needed.

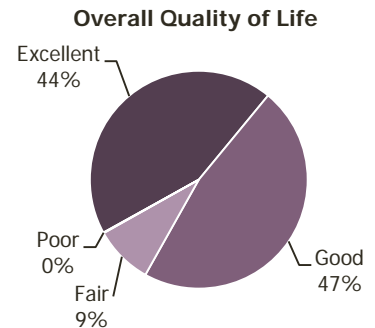
At least three-quarters of respondents gave excellent or good marks to public parking, which was higher than the benchmark, and the overall ease of travel in Cedar Park and ease of travel by car, which were similar. Ratings for four of six Mobility-related services were particularly strong: at least three-quarters of residents gave excellent or good ratings to traffic enforcement, street cleaning, street repair and sidewalk maintenance and these ratings were also above average. However, ratings for ease of walking (48% excellent or good) and ease of travel by bicycle (36%) were lower than those given elsewhere; further, residents were less likely than those who lived elsewhere to have walked or biked instead of driving. When asked whether they thought the City should spend more, less, or the same amount on different services and amenities in Cedar Park, residents were most likely to think that the City should spend more on transportation and roads (53% of residents) or parks, trails and green space (49%).

Cedar Park government performance is exceptional.

The rating for overall quality of City services, at 89% excellent or good, was higher than the national average. When asked to rate various aspects of Cedar Park's leadership and governance, residents' evaluations were exceptionally strong. More than 8 in 10 gave excellent or good marks to the customer service provided by the City, and about 7 in 10 residents or more were pleased with the overall direction of the City, the job City government does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in City government, government acting in the best interest of Cedar Park, being honest and treating all residents fairly. All of these ratings were higher than those given in other communities across the country.

Quality of Life in Cedar Park

Almost all residents (91%) rated the quality of life in Cedar Park as excellent or good. This was higher than ratings given in other communities across the nation and in other Texas communities (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.

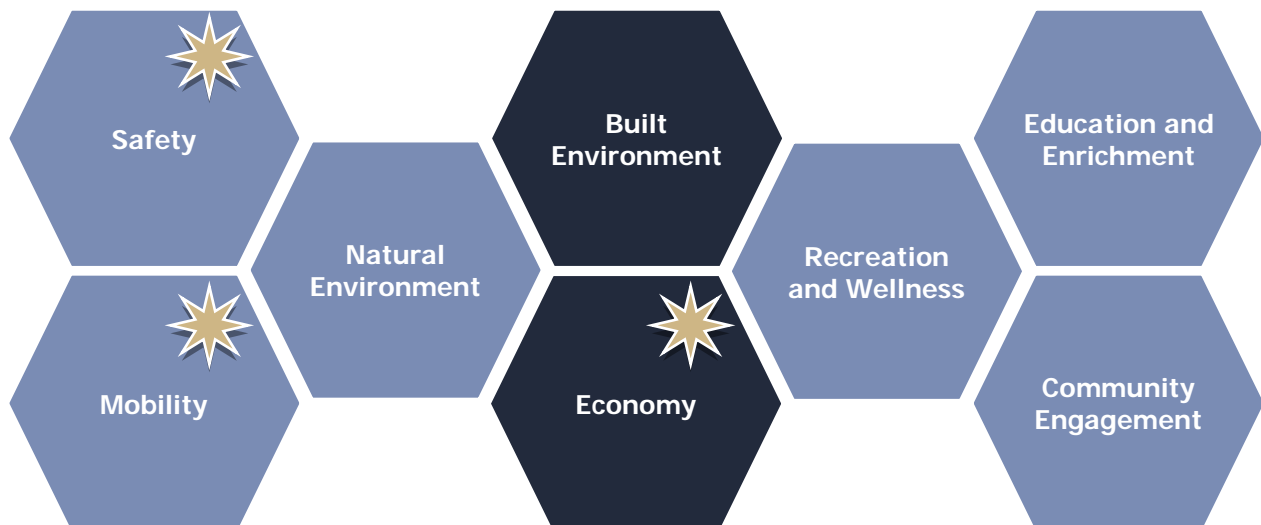
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety, Mobility and Economy as priorities for the Cedar Park community in the coming two years. All facets of community livability were rated similar to the national benchmarks except for Built Environment and Economy, which were higher. 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 Cedar Park’s unique questions.

Legend

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

- * Most important

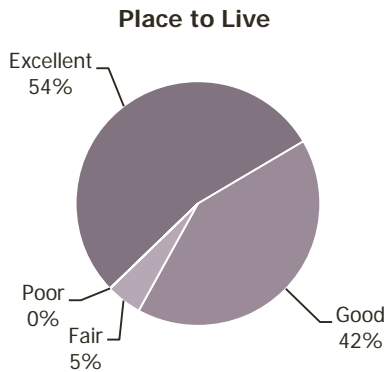


Community Characteristics

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 Cedar Park, more than 9 in 10 rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. As a general rule, across the country, residents tend to give positive marks to the communities in which they live; thus, respondents' ratings of Cedar Park as a place to live were similar to ratings given in other communities across the nation and in Texas.

In addition to rating the city as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Cedar Park as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Cedar Park and its overall appearance (see chart below at bottom of page). Virtually all residents (96%) gave excellent or good ratings to Cedar Park as a place to raise children, while 8 in 10 were pleased with the overall image of the city and Cedar Park as a place to retire. These ratings were higher than those given in other communities across the nation. Nine in ten residents gave favorable marks to their neighborhood as a place to live while 8 in 10 positively rated the overall appearance of the city, which were on par with ratings given elsewhere.



Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Broadly, almost all ratings tended to be similar to or higher than the national benchmarks. In Safety, virtually all residents positively rated the overall feeling of safety of the city (which was higher than average) and feelings of safety in their neighborhood and in Cedar Park's commercial area. Ratings for Natural Environment and Built Environment were also strong: at least 6 in 10 residents awarded positive marks to all of these aspects, and the ratings for cleanliness, new development in Cedar Park and variety of housing options were all higher than average.

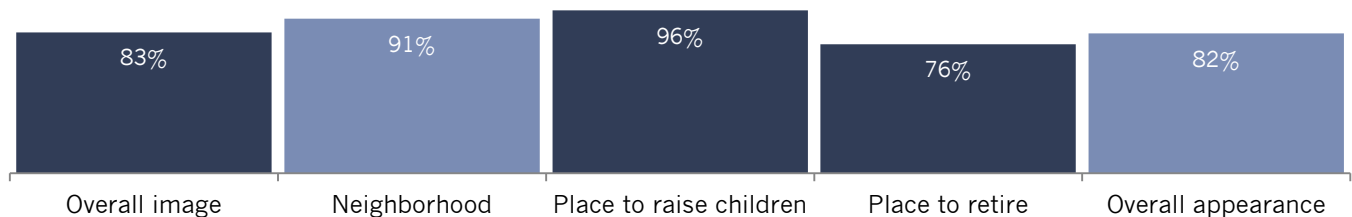
Scores within the facet of Economy were especially strong. About 8 in 10 residents or more gave positive marks to the overall economic health of the city and shopping opportunities, and these ratings were higher than the national benchmarks. Evaluations for overall quality of business and service establishments (77% excellent or good), vibrant commercial area (66%) and employment opportunities (54%) were also higher than the national averages.

Ratings for Mobility (which includes all community aspects related to travel of any kind) tended to be more mixed. At least three-quarters of respondents gave excellent or good marks to public parking (higher than the benchmark) and the overall ease of travel in Cedar Park and ease of travel by car (similar to the benchmarks). However, ratings for ease of walking (48% excellent or good) and ease of travel by bicycle (36%) were lower than those given elsewhere.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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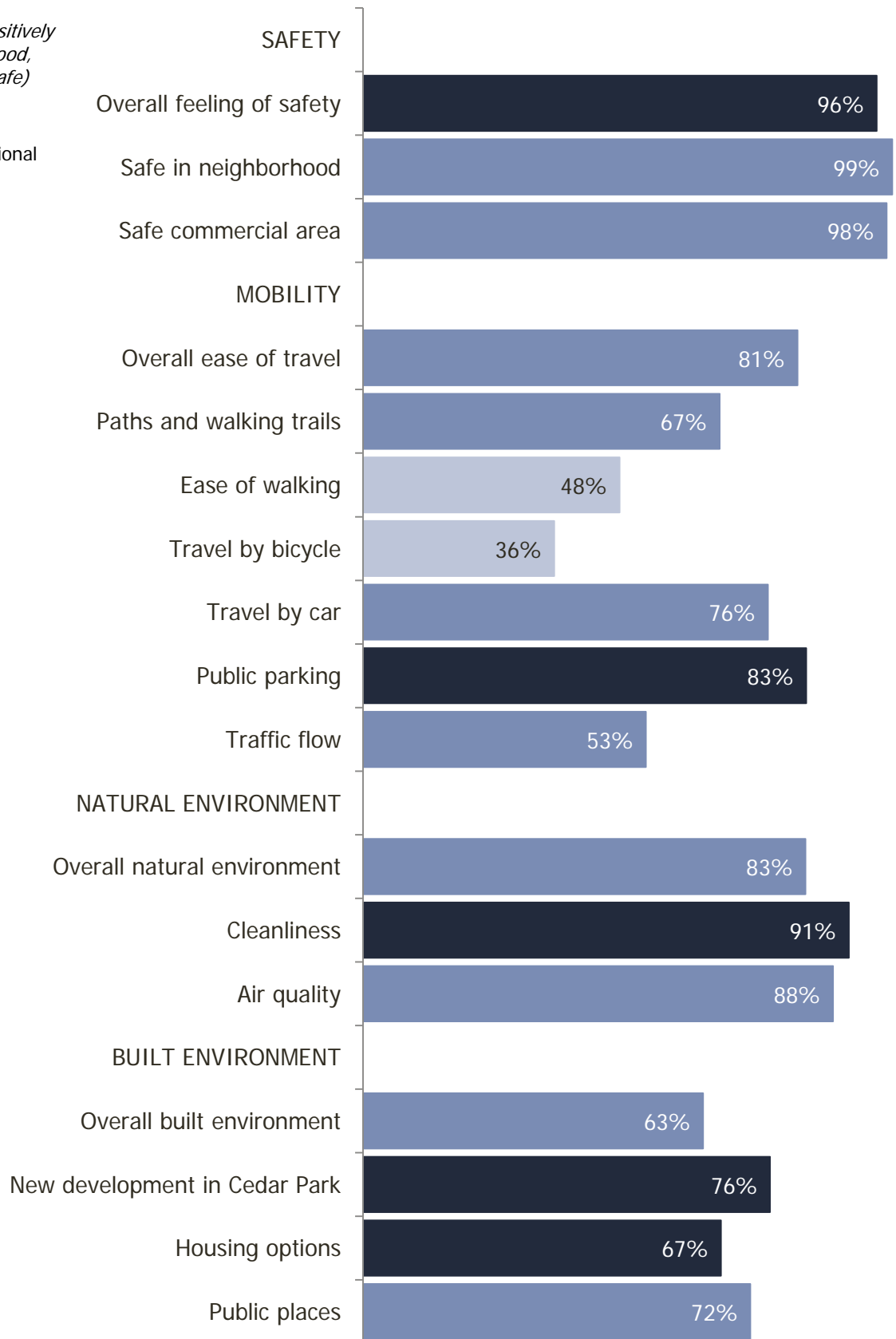
Figure 2: Aspects of Community Characteristics

A summary of how people responded to questions about Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



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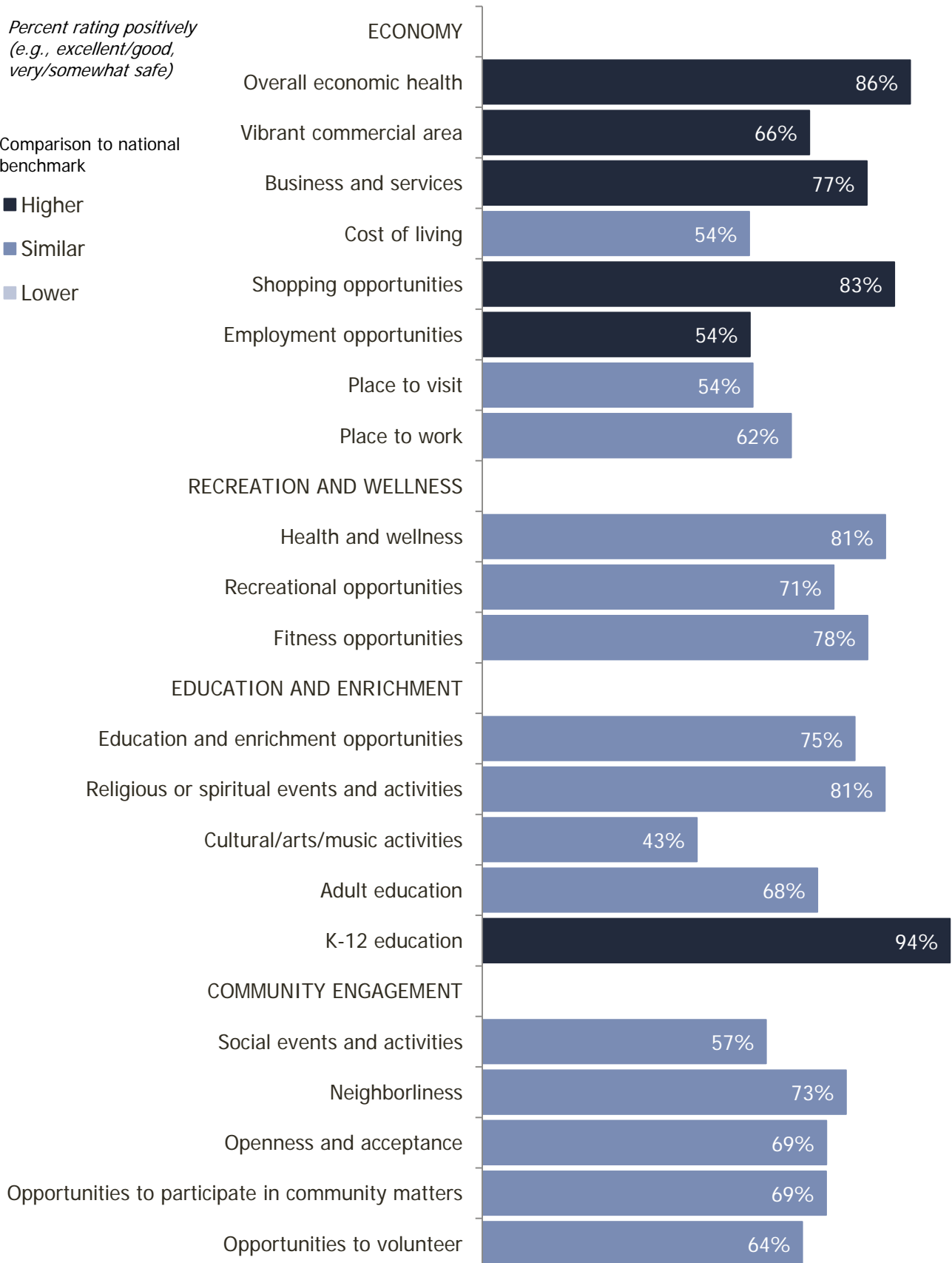
Figure 3: Aspects of Community Characteristics

A summary of how people responded to questions about Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

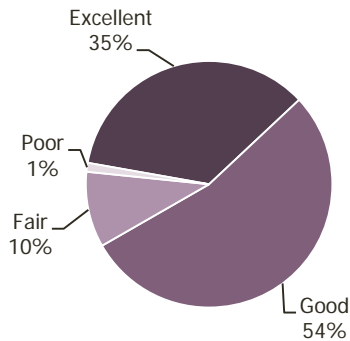
How well does the government of Cedar Park meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Cedar Park as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 9 in 10 residents gave excellent or good reviews to the overall quality of City services, which was higher than the national and Texas averages, and half were pleased with the services provided by the Federal Government, which was on par with comparison communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Cedar Park’s leadership and governance. Ratings for government performance were exceptionally strong. More than 8 in 10 gave excellent or good marks to the customer service provided by the City, and about 7 in 10 residents or more were pleased with the overall direction of the City, the job City government does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in City government, government acting in the best interest of Cedar Park, being honest and treating all residents fairly. All of these ratings were higher than those given in other communities across the country.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Cedar Park. Service ratings in Cedar Park were also quite positive: out of 32 services, 15 received ratings higher than the national benchmarks. Above-average ratings were spread across six of the eight facets of community livability and included crime prevention, traffic enforcement, street repair, economic development and City parks, among others.

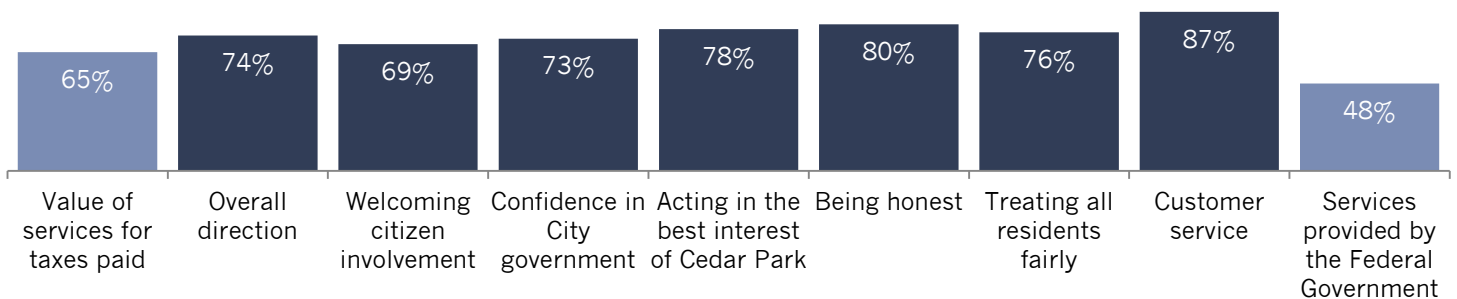
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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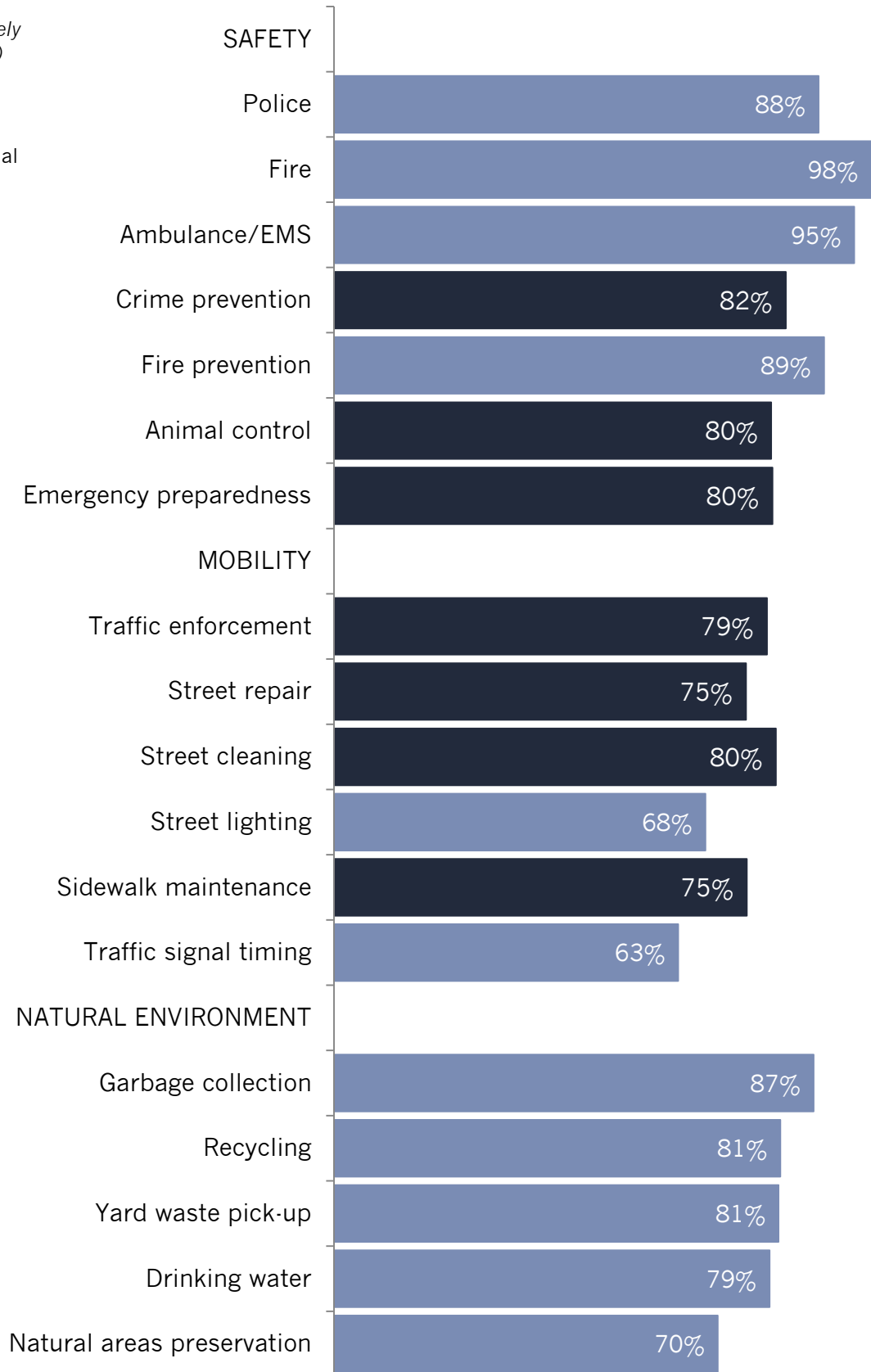
Figure 4: Aspects of Governance

A summary of how people responded to questions about Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



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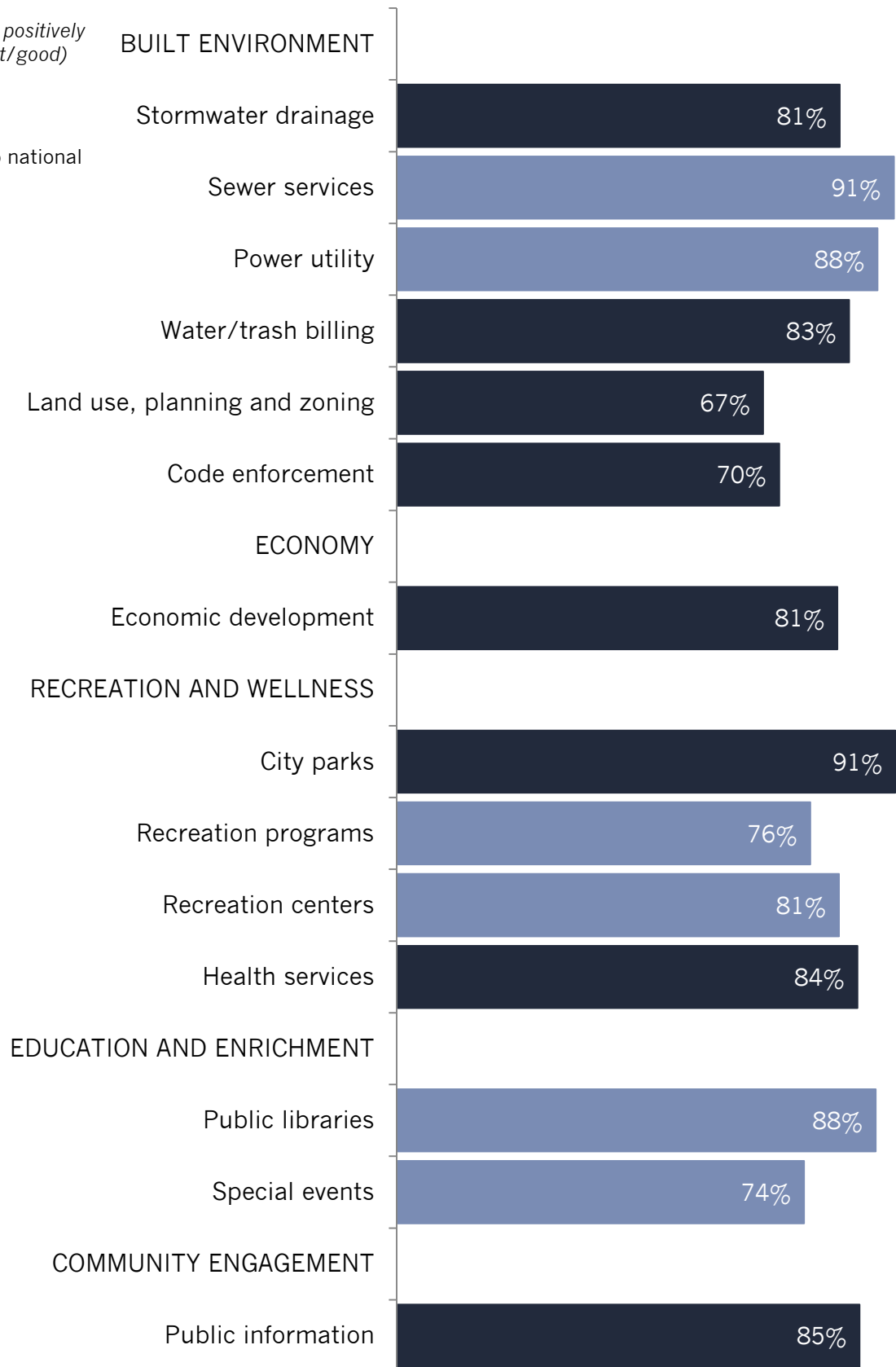
Figure 5: Aspects of Governance

A summary of how people responded to questions about Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



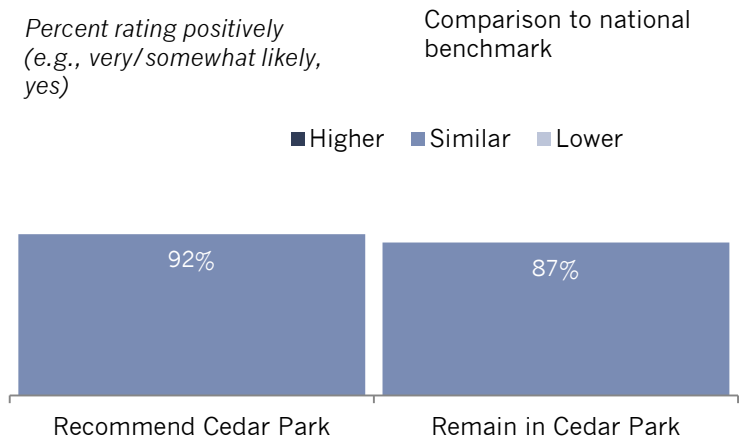
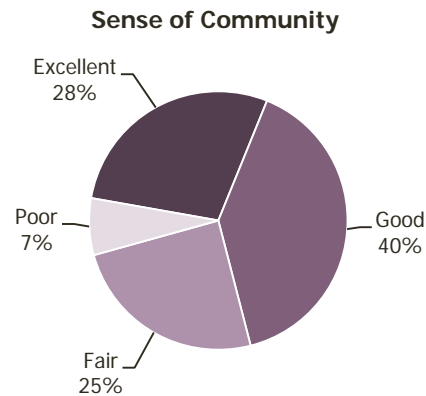
Participation

Are the residents of Cedar Park 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. Two-thirds of residents gave positive ratings to the sense of community in Cedar Park, while about 9 in 10 would recommend living in the city to someone who asks and planned to remain in the city for the next five years. These ratings were similar to the national averages.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates varied widely across the different facets of community livability, making the comparisons to the benchmarks useful for interpreting the results.

Most levels of participation were similar to those observed elsewhere. Two rates of participation were higher than the benchmarks: Cedar Park residents reported fewer crimes than those who lived elsewhere, and were also more likely to believe the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months. However, four participation rates were lower than the benchmarks: Cedar Park residents were less likely than those who lived in other communities to have walked or biked instead of driving, used the Cedar Park recreation center, attended a City-sponsored event or volunteered.



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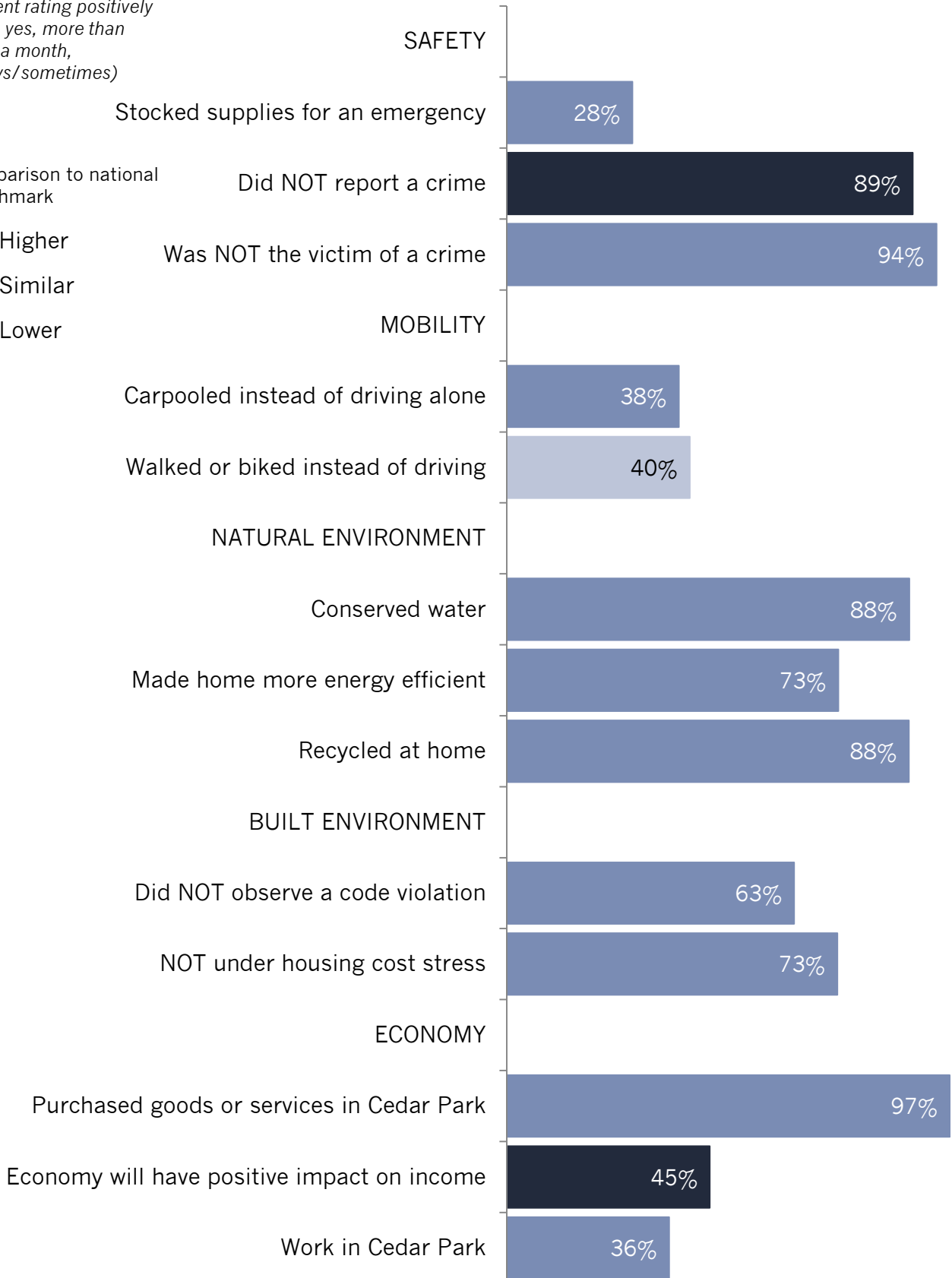
Figure 6: Aspects of Participation

A summary of how people responded to questions about Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



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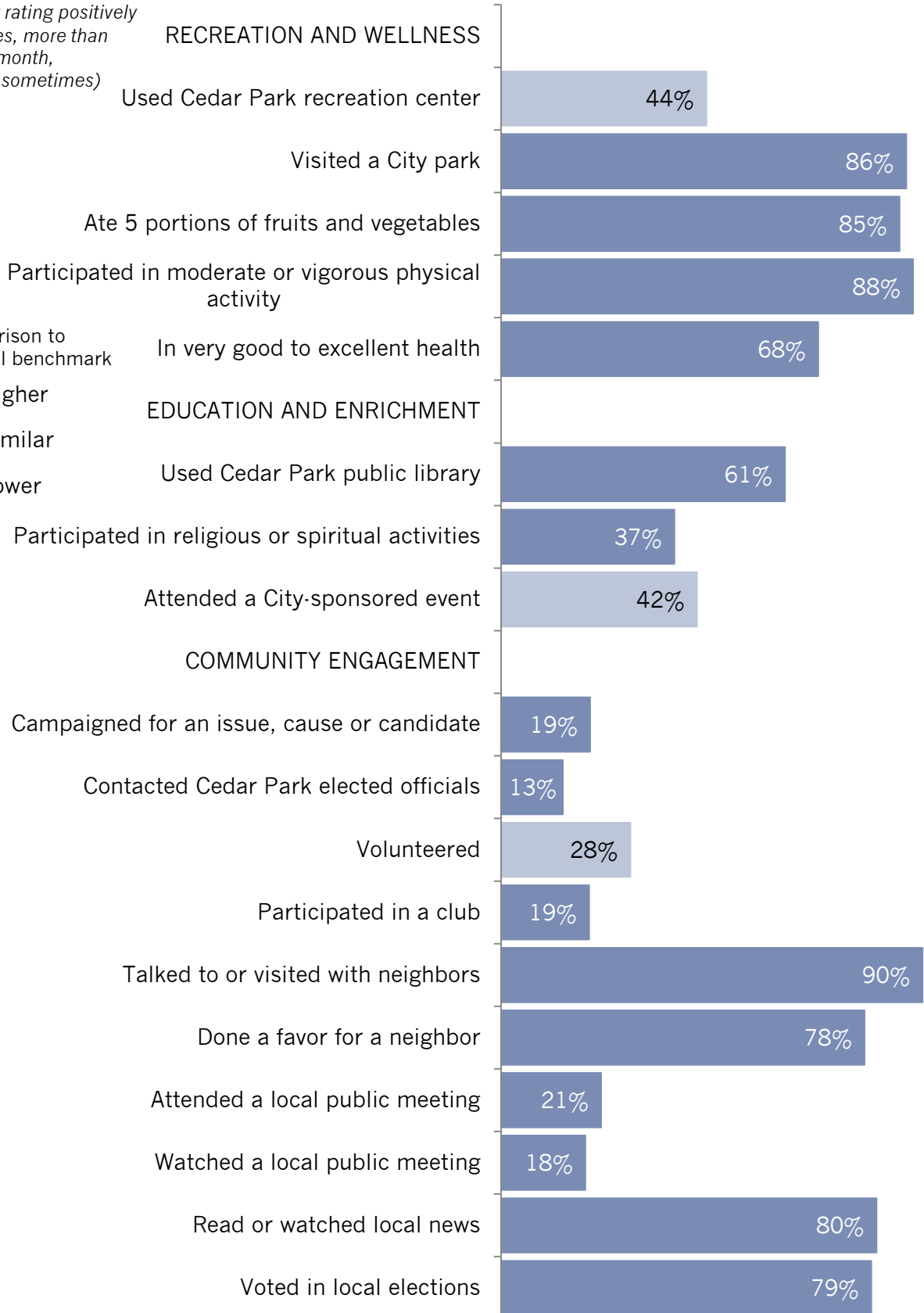
Figure 7: Aspects of Participation

A summary of how people responded to questions about Participation

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

Comparison to
national benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



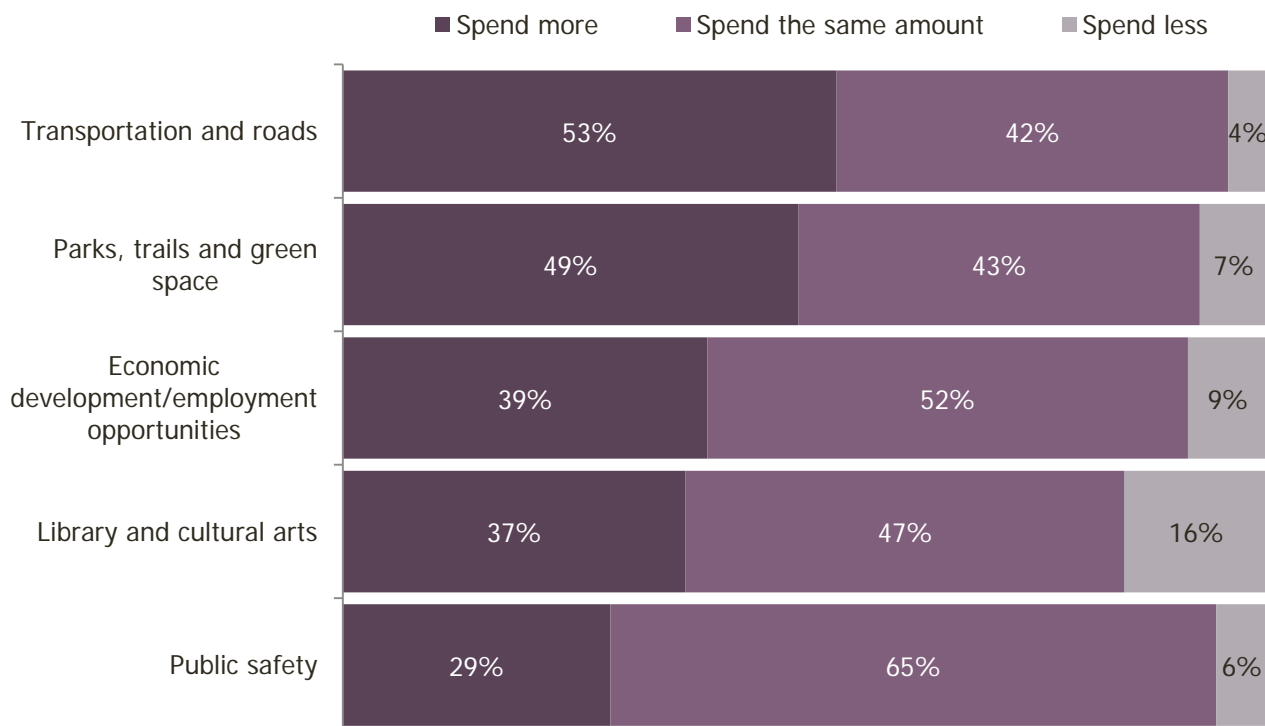
Special Topics

The City of Cedar Park included three questions of special interest on The NCS. Topic areas included budget prioritization, sources of City information and preferences on City communication.

When asked whether they thought the City should spend more, less, or the same amount on different services and amenities in Cedar Park, residents were most likely to think that the City should spend more on transportation and roads or parks, trails and green space; about half of residents did so. Four in ten thought the City should spend more on economic development/employment opportunities or library/cultural arts, and half thought Cedar Park should spend the same amount in these areas. Two-thirds of residents thought Cedar Park should spend the same amount on public safety, while 3 in 10 thought the City should spend more in this area.

Figure 8: Budget Prioritization

Do you believe Cedar Park should spend more, the same amount, or less on the following areas in the future?

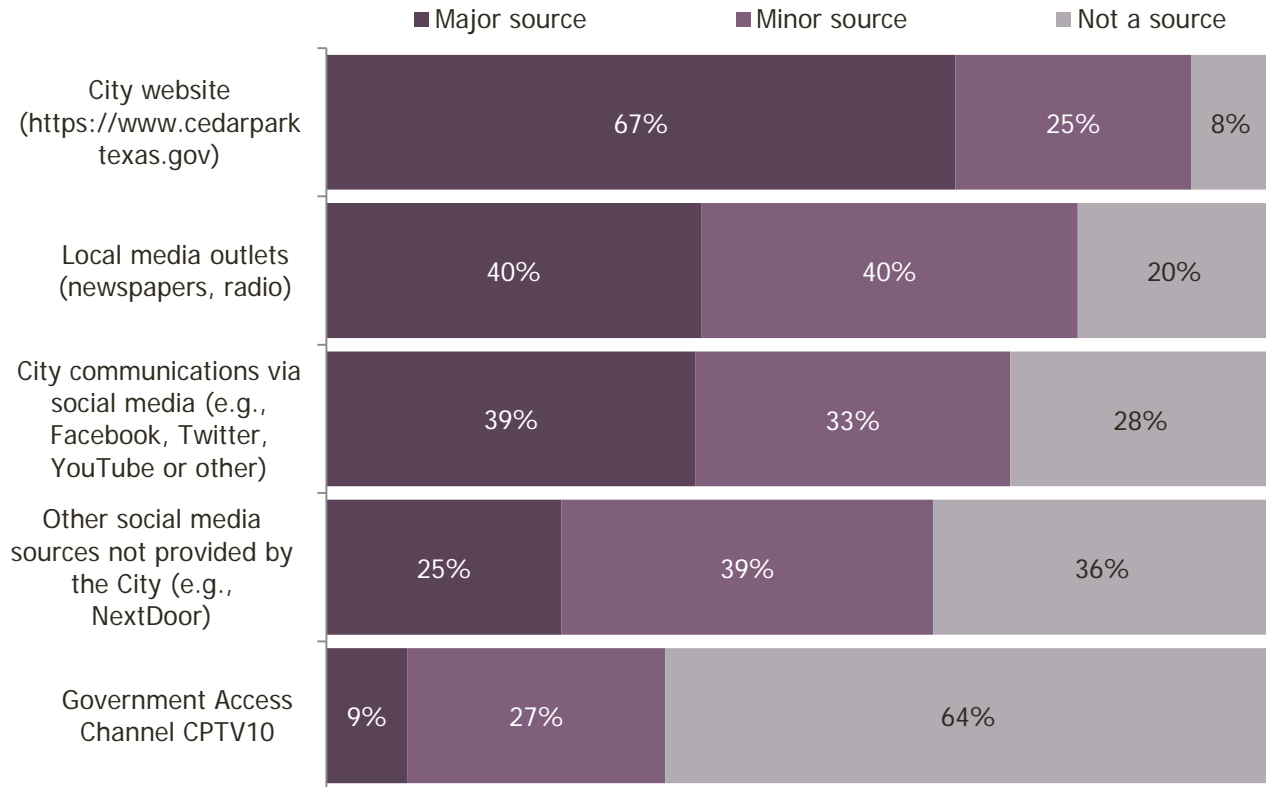


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Residents were most likely to indicate that they used the City website as a major or minor source of information about the City; about 9 in 10 did so. About 8 in 10 residents used local media outlets and 7 in 10 used City communications via social media as sources of information. Respondents were least likely to use the Government Access Channel CPTV10 as an information source, with only one-third indicating that they considered it a major or minor source of City information.

Figure 9: 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:



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Thinking about their preferences for communicating with the City, about 8 in 10 residents strongly or somewhat preferred to communicate with the City by email, and two-thirds preferred communicating via a phone call. Six in ten residents preferred communicating via social media. About half of residents or fewer preferred a different method of communicating with Cedar Park.

Figure 10: Preferences on City Communication
How do you prefer to communicate with the City of Cedar Park?

