

The National Citizen Survey™

Pasco County, FL

Community Livability Report

2014

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The National Citizen Survey™
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National Research Center, Inc.
2955 Valmont Road, Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80301
www.n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
www.icma.org • 202-289-ICMA

About

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

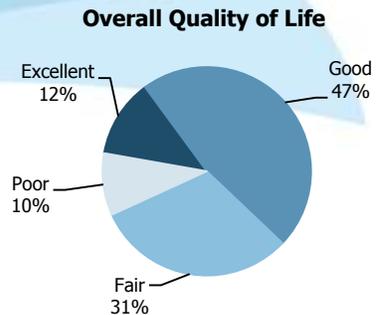
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 241 residents of Pasco County. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% 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 Pasco County

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Pasco County as excellent or good. The rating for the overall quality of life in Pasco County 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.

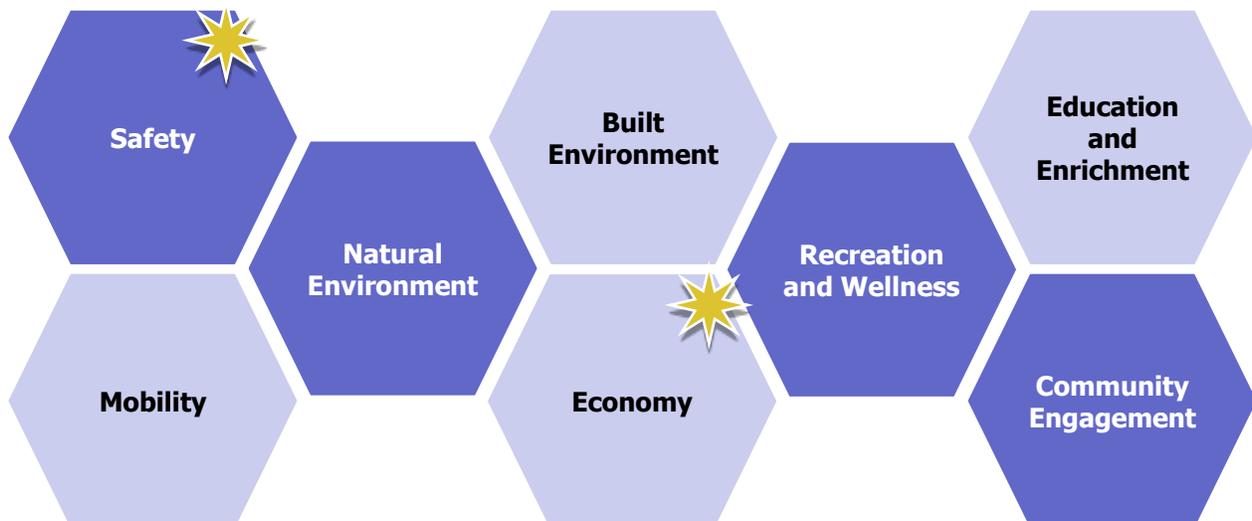
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Pasco County community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Pasco County residents gave favorable ratings to the Safety facet of community as well as to Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement, all of which were 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 Pasco County’s unique questions.

Legend

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

 Most important



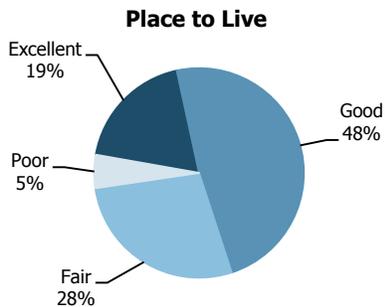
Community Characteristics

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 Pasco County, 67% rated the County as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Pasco County as a place to live were lower than ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the County as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Pasco County as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Pasco County and its overall appearance. The ratings for their neighborhood as a place to live and Pasco County as a place to retire were similar to the benchmark, while overall image of Pasco County, overall appearance of Pasco County and the County as a place to raise children all received ratings lower than in other communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. When benchmark comparisons were available, these ratings tended to be similar to or lower than the national benchmark. A majority of residents gave favorable marks to Safety, one of the facets of the community that residents identified as an important focus area for the next two years, with three-quarters or more rating safety in their neighborhood and safety in the downtown/commercial area as excellent or good. Similarly, two-thirds of respondents felt the overall natural environment and air quality in Pasco County were excellent or good. Some aspects of Mobility were rated less favorably; overall ease of travel, paths and walking trails, ease of walking, travel by bicycle, travel by car and travel by public transportation were all rated lower than the national benchmark.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

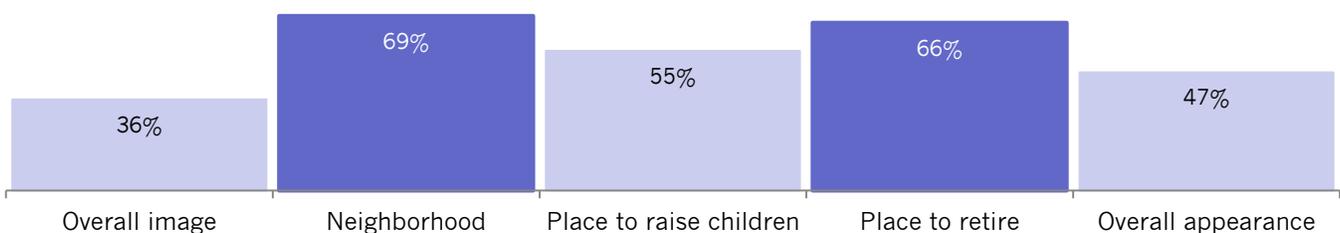
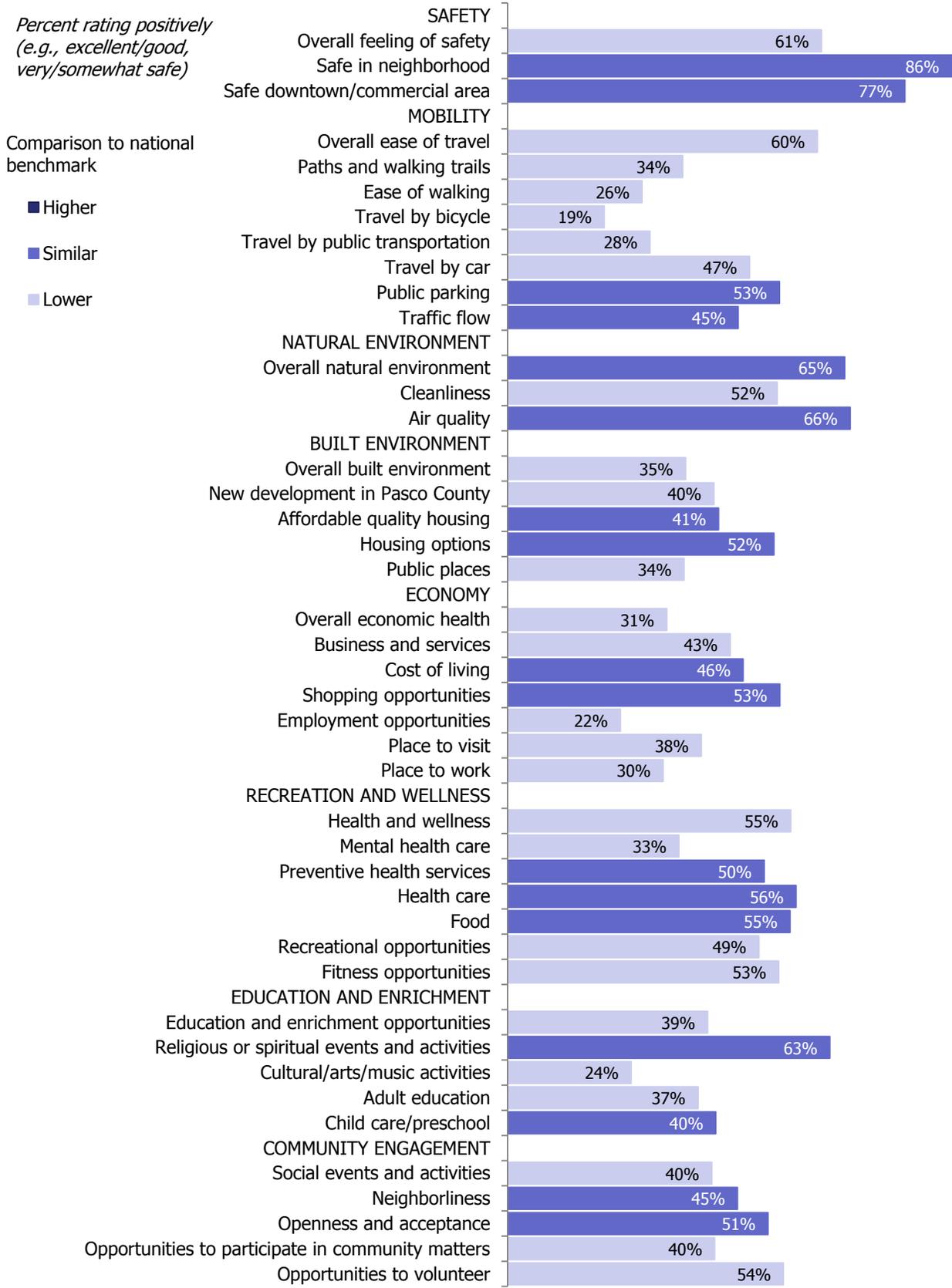


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

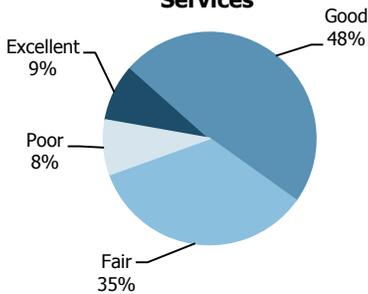
How well does the government of Pasco County meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Pasco County as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. The overall quality of services provided by Pasco County were rated as excellent or good by 57% of respondents, while services provided by the Federal Government were rated as excellent or good by 34% of respondents. Ratings for the overall quality of services provided by Pasco County were similar to national benchmark comparisons.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Pasco County’s leadership and governance. These ratings were all similar to or lower than the national benchmark. About one-third of respondents felt the County did an excellent or good job of being honest and acting in the best interest of Pasco County. Close to 4 in 10 felt the value of services for taxes paid and treating all residents fairly were excellent or good. Six in ten residents rated customer service favorably.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Pasco County. Governance ratings across the eight areas of Community Livability were a mix of ratings of similar to and lower than the benchmark. Safety services, a facet most important to Pasco County residents, received positive marks across most aspects including police, fire, ambulance/EMS, fire prevention and crime prevention, all of which were similar to the national benchmark. Ratings in the facets of Community Engagement, Education and Enrichment and Natural Environment (with the exception of garbage collection) tended to have less favorable ratings than other facets and aspects of service in these areas were mostly lower than the national benchmark.

Overall Quality of County Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

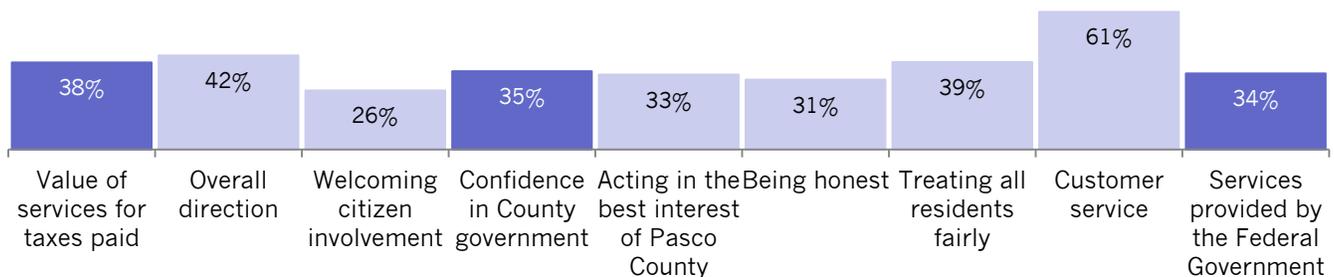
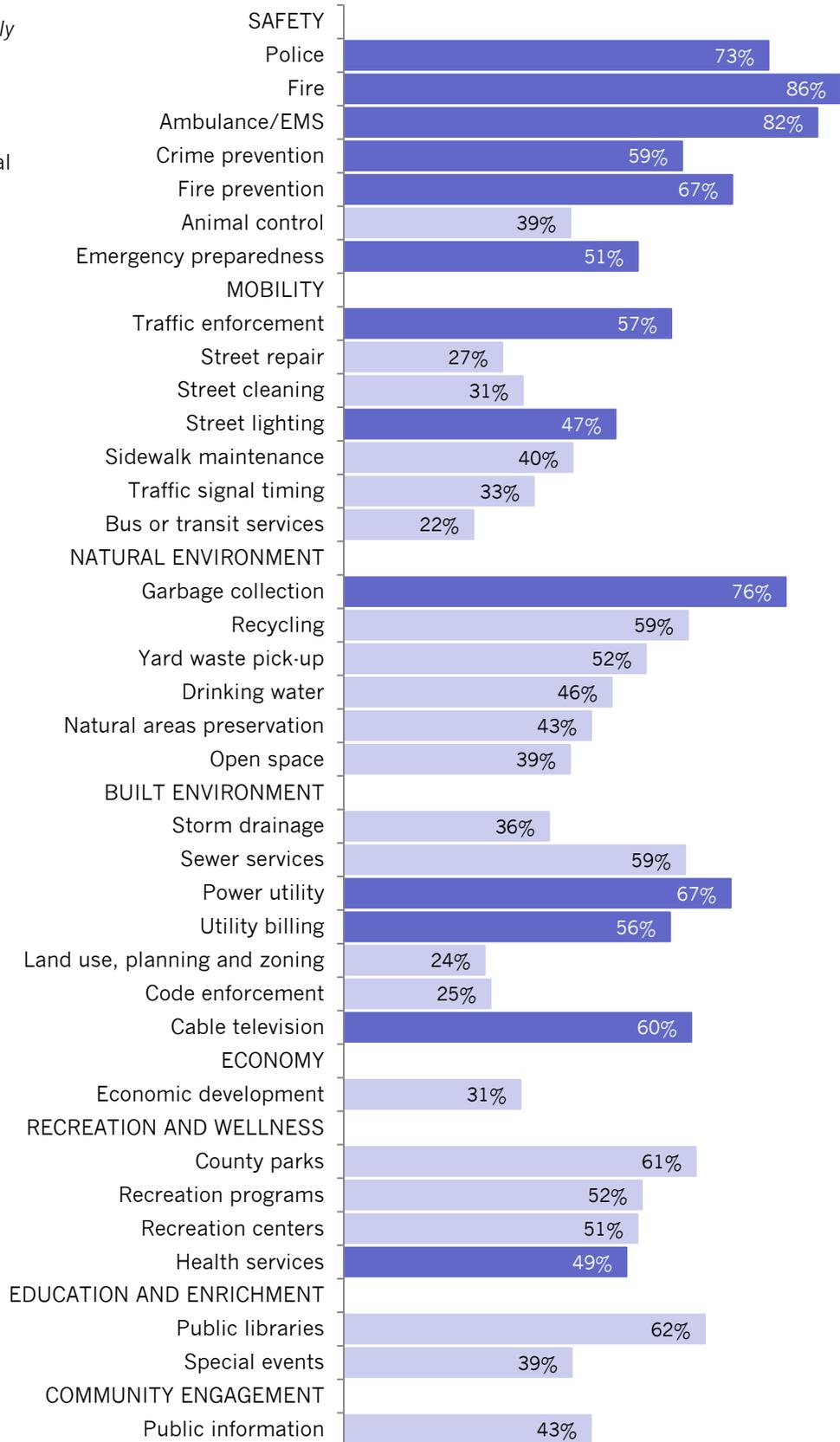


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

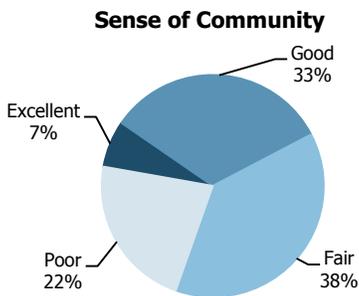


Participation

Are the residents of Pasco County 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. The sense of community in Pasco County received positive ratings from 40% of respondents, which was lower than in other communities. Three-quarters of Pasco County residents reported they would be very likely or somewhat likely to recommend Pasco County to others and to remain in Pasco County. ~~xx~~Don't forget to describe chart at bottom (and correct the legend formatting, also it looks like the value labels differ in font size)

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Although rates differed across the range of items; many of the participation levels of Pasco County residents were similar to other communities. At least half of Pasco County residents participated in each of the activities related to Recreation and Wellness and this was on par with other communities. Aspects of Natural Environment participation were also rated highly, with almost all residents saying they practiced conserving water in Pasco County.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

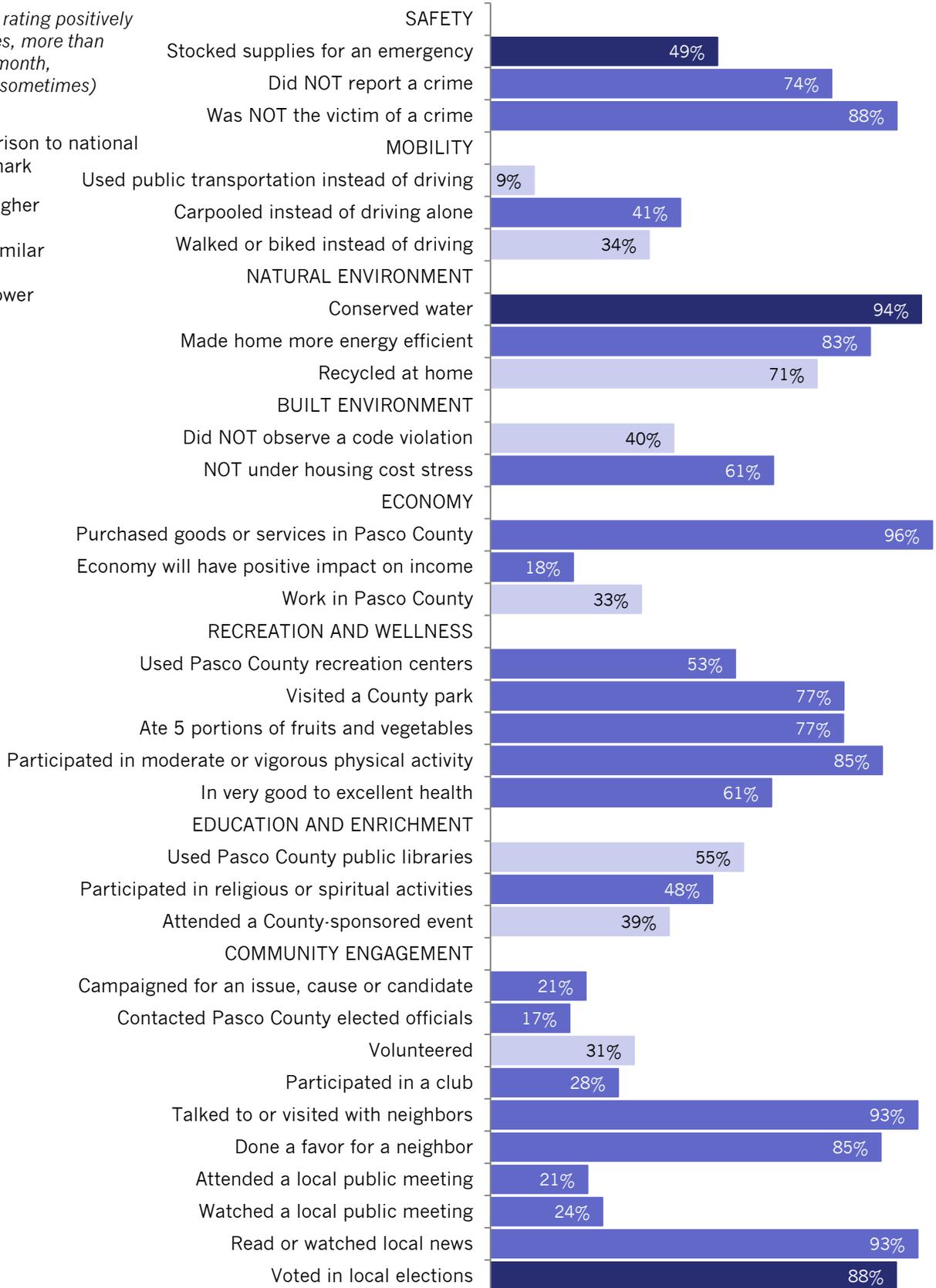


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



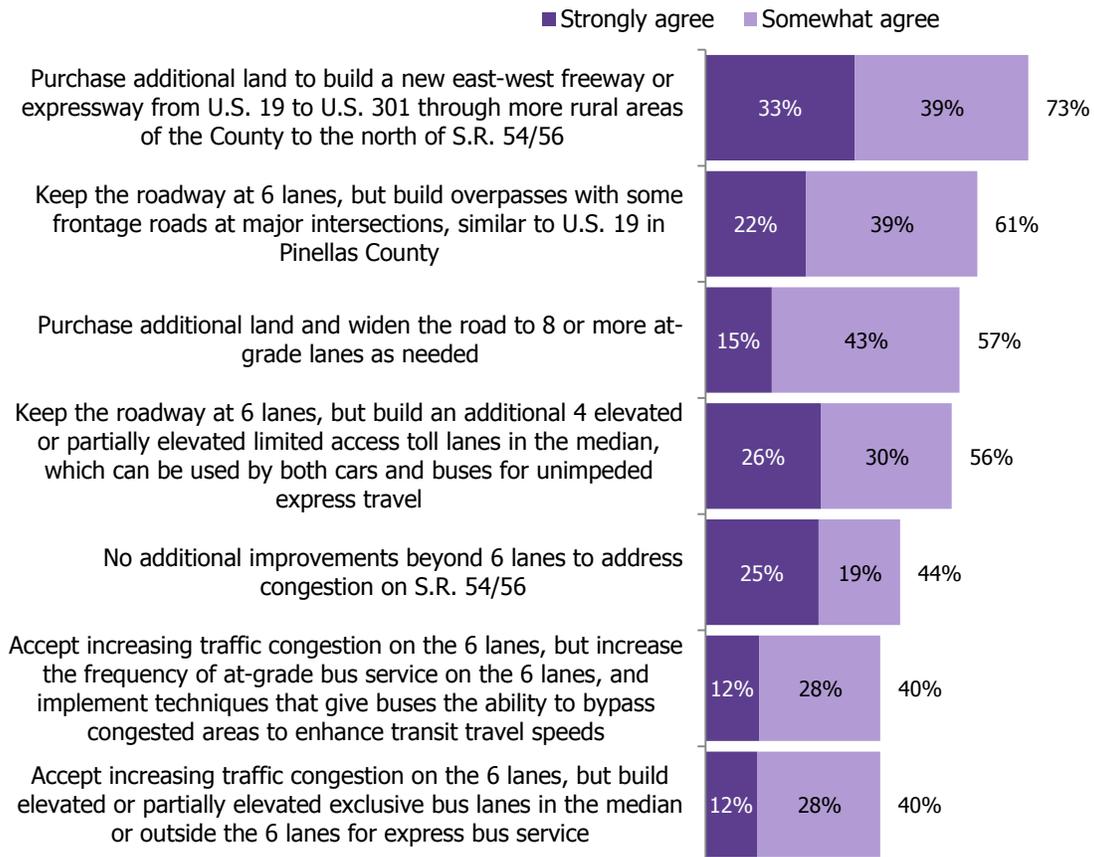
Special Topics

The Pasco County included two questions of special interest on The NCS. The questions gauged potential road improvements to the S.R. Corridor and transportation funding needs for Pasco County.

Residents rated a variety of improvement plans for the S.R. Corridor. Three-quarters strongly or somewhat agreed with the plan to purchase additional land to build a new east-west freeway or expressway from U.S. 19 to U.S. 301 through more rural areas of the County. Six in ten favored keeping the roadway at six lanes, but building overpasses with some frontage roads at major intersections, similar to U.S. 19 in Pinellas County.

Figure 4: S.R. Corridor Road Improvements

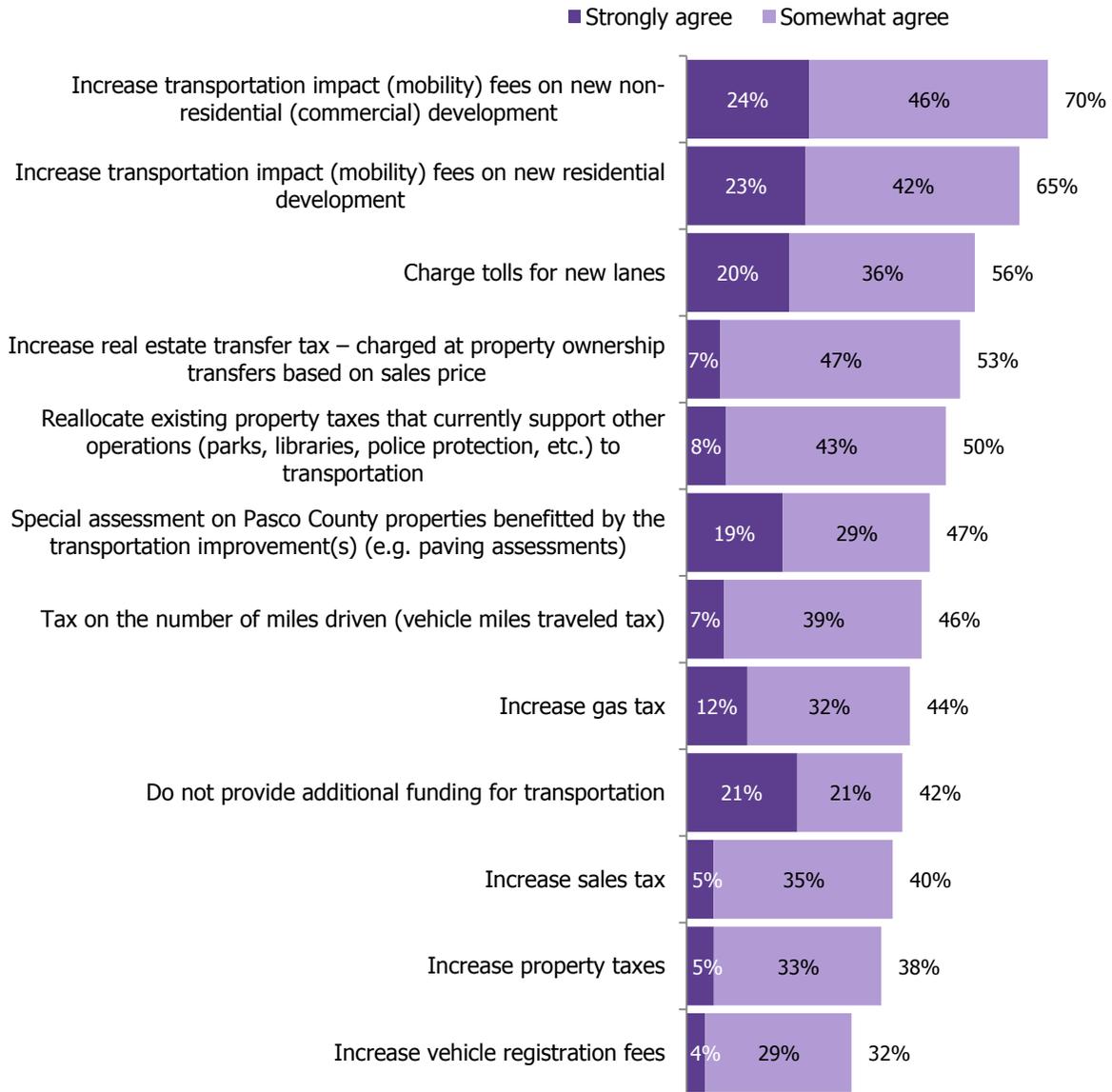
By the year 2035 most of S.R. 54/56 is projected to need additional lanes beyond 6 lanes based on travel demand forecasts conducted in 2010. Widening or construction of parallel roadways such as Ridge Road Extension (from Moon Lake to US 41) (4 lanes), S.R. 52 (4-6 lanes), Hillsborough/Pasco County line Road (mostly 4 lanes) and Tower Road (mostly 4 lanes) is not projected to eliminate the need for additional improvements to address congestion on S.R. 54/56. In addition, Pasco County is not projected to have the density or intensity of land uses to support passenger rail along the S.R. 54/56 corridor. To what extent would you agree or disagree with each of the following potential improvement options for the S.R. 54/56 corridor in Pasco County:



When asked about options for funding transportation improvements, most residents agreed with the option to increase transportation impact fees on new non-residential (commercial) development. Overall, 70% of residents said they strongly or somewhat agreed with the idea. One-third of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the option to increase transportation impact fees on new residential development.

Figure 5: Transportation Funding Options

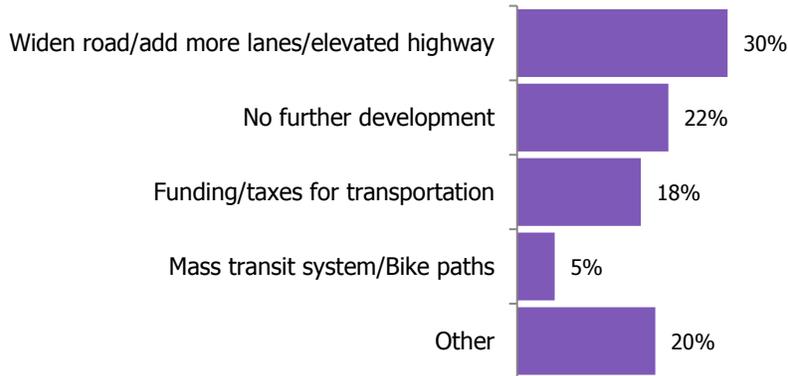
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following options to pay for unfunded transportation needs in Pasco County:



For respondents who selected “other” when indicating their preference for funding transportation improvements to the S.R. Corridor, the survey invited them to write in their preferences in their own words (for further details see *Open End Report*, under separate cover). The responses were categorized by topic area and reported in the chart below. Three in ten write-in responses cited widening the road/adding more lanes/elevating the highway as the top option, followed by no further development (22% of responses).

Figure 6: Preferred options or funding sources for S.R. 54/56

Please provide your preferred option(s) for S.R. 54/56 improvements if not listed above, and/or any other preferred funding sources for transportation not listed above.



Conclusions

Pasco County residents enjoy a good quality of life.

Most survey respondents felt positively about the overall quality of life in Pasco County and the County as a place to live. They also valued the quality of life in their neighborhoods and the County as a place to retire; ratings in these areas were similar to other communities in the U.S. Most ratings were similar in 2014 compared to 2013, but some were lower, including Pasco County as a place to live. While residents of the community appreciated life in Pasco County, the overall image or reputation of the County and its overall appearance were not perceived as positively as other aspects of life in the community. Overall, most residents would recommend living in Pasco County and planned on staying.

Economy and Safety are important focus areas for Pasco County.

Both Safety and Economy were rated as the most important areas for the community to focus on in the next two years. Measures in the area of Pasco County's Economy generally received mixed ratings. On average, residents did not rate the overall economic health, employment opportunities and businesses and services as highly in Pasco County as residents did in other communities. At the same time, Pasco County residents gave solid ratings to the County's cost of living and shopping opportunities. Although ratings of the County's economic development services lagged, the number of residents who felt that the economy would have a positive effect on their income was similar to other communities. Ratings of Pasco County's economy were unchanged in 2014 compared to 2013.

Residents felt safe in Pasco County overall and in their neighborhoods and downtown. Similar to residents of other communities, most had not been the victim of a crime or reported a crime. Residents gave positive ratings to safety services, including police, fire, emergency medical services, crime prevention and fire prevention. Pasco County residents had stocked supplies for an emergency more so than those in other communities.

Residents value Community Engagement.

Pasco County residents gave the community good marks for participation in Community Engagement, with almost all residents having voted in local elections, read or watched local news, talked to or visited with neighbors and done a favor for a neighbor. Community characteristics ratings within this facet were not as strong, for opportunities to volunteer and opportunities to participate in community matters and social events and activities were not rated as favorably. Close to half of respondents rated neighborliness and openness and acceptance highly, and both garnered similar marks to other communities.