

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

# Pasco County, FL

Community Livability Report

DRAFT  
2016



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# 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 284 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. This rating was lower than ratings given 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.

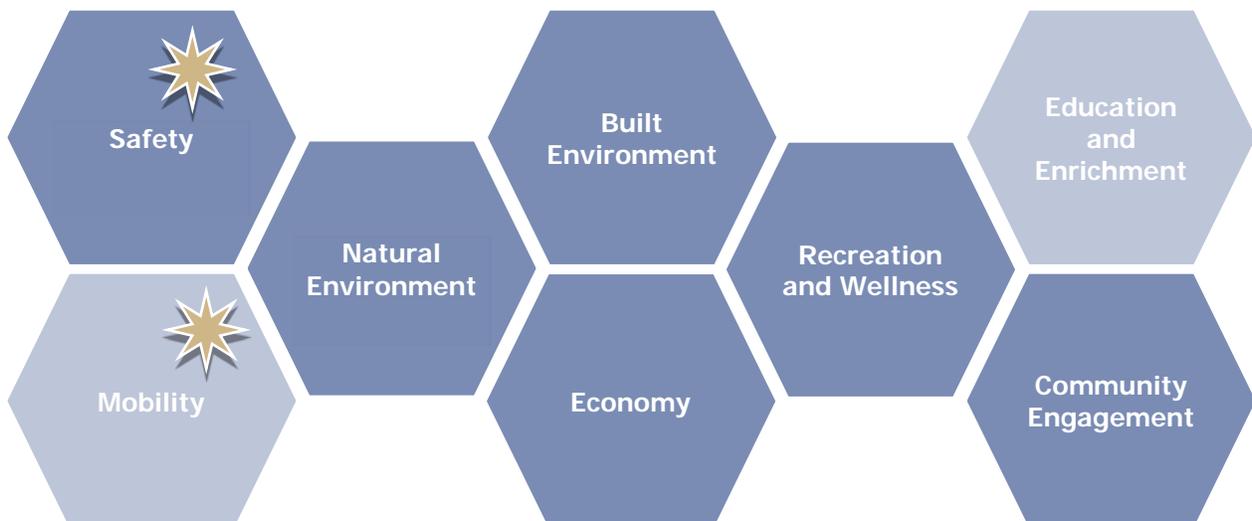
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Mobility as priorities for the Pasco County community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Pasco County residents gave favorable ratings to Safety as well as to Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement. Ratings for Mobility and Education and Enrichment were less positive than those seen in 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



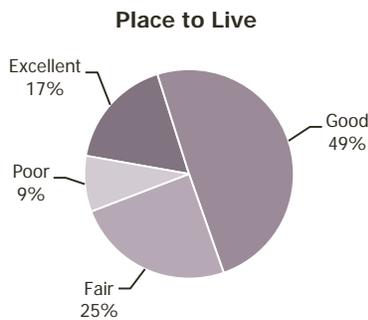
# Community Characteristics

*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. About three-quarters of respondents gave positive ratings to their neighborhood as a place to live while about 6 in 10 favorably rated Pasco County as a place to retire; both of these ratings were similar to the benchmark. Nearly 6 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the County as a place to raise children and about 4 in 10 were pleased with the overall image and overall appearance of Pasco County. These aspects received ratings lower than those given in other communities.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. In general, ratings within the pillar of Community Characteristics tended to vary. Within the facet of Safety, more than 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the feeling of safety in their neighborhood, which was similar to the benchmark, but only three-quarters of respondents reported feeling safe in the County's downtown/commercial area and about half favorably rated the overall feeling of safety in the County, which were both lower than the benchmark. In Natural Environment, about 7 in 10 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to air quality and 6 in 10 were pleased with the overall natural environment in Pasco County, which were similar to ratings given elsewhere, but only 4 in 10 positively rated the cleanliness of the County, which was rated lower. Within the facet of Economy, about half of survey participants favorably rated the overall quality of business and service establishments, cost of living and shopping opportunities in Pasco County, which were similar to the national benchmark; however, only about 4 in 10 gave positive ratings to the overall economic health of the County and Pasco County as a place to visit and about one-third positively rated Pasco County as a place to work. These aspects received ratings lower than those given in other communities. Ratings varied most widely in the facet of Mobility: while ratings for ease of travel by car (54% excellent or good), public parking (51%) and traffic flow (42%) were rated similar to the benchmark, the remaining aspects of Mobility were all rated lower.

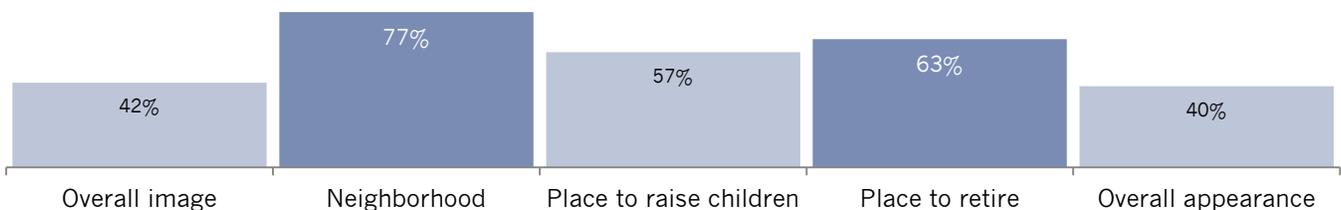


While ratings for most aspects of Community Characteristics were similar to those given in 2015, ratings increased for five aspects and decreased for three aspects (for more information on trends see the *Trends over Time* report available under separate cover).

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



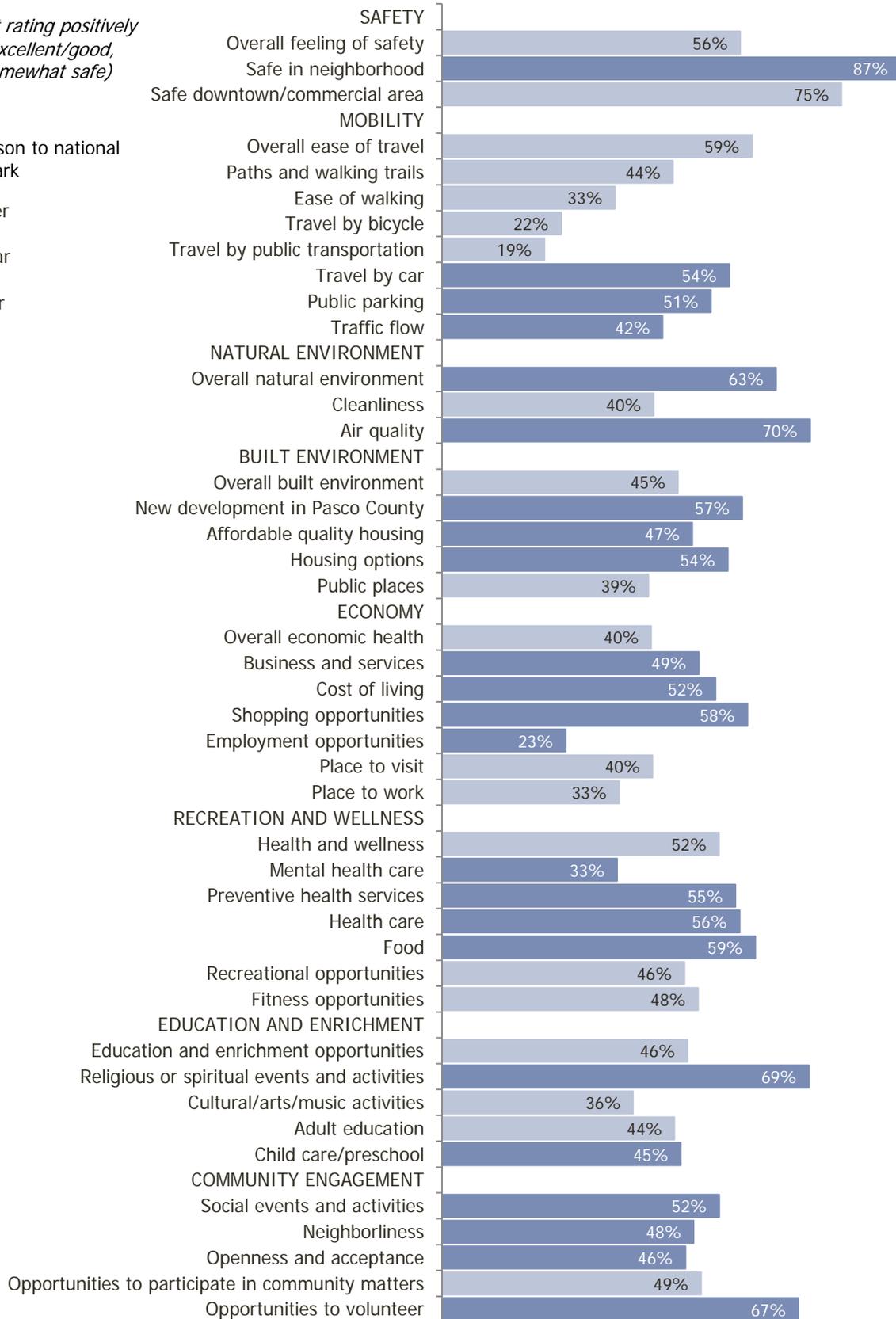
# The National Citizen Survey™

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 Pasco County meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

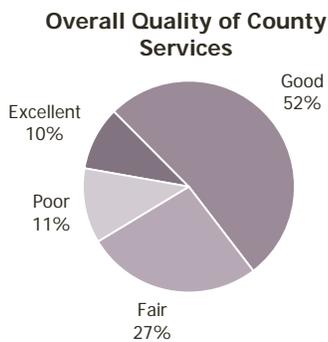
The overall quality of the services provided by Pasco County as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. In Pasco County, 62% of survey respondents rated the overall quality of County services as excellent or good and about 3 in 10 positively rated the services provided by the Federal government. These ratings were similar to the national benchmark.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Pasco County's leadership and governance. About two-thirds of Pasco County residents gave positive ratings to the overall customer service provided by Pasco County employees and about half were pleased with County government treating all residents fairly and being honest. About 4 in 10 respondents favorably rated the value of services for taxes paid, the overall direction of the County, the job County government does at welcoming citizen involvement, overall confidence in County government and government acting in the best interest of Pasco County. All of these general ratings of Governance were similar to ratings given in other communities nationwide.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Pasco County. In the facet of Safety, about 9 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to fire and ambulance/EMS services, about 8 in 10 favorably rated police/Sheriff services and about two-thirds were pleased with emergency preparedness, which were all rated similar to ratings given elsewhere. Ratings for fire prevention (63% excellent or good) crime prevention (54%) and animal control (42%) were lower than the national benchmark.

Within Natural Environment, about 8 in 10 respondents gave positive ratings to garbage collection, which was similar to the benchmark, but only about 6 in 10 favorably rated recycling and yard waste pick-up and about half were pleased with drinking water and natural areas preservation, which were rated lower. Almost all aspects of Mobility and Recreation and Wellness received positive ratings from less than half of survey respondents, and all of these aspects received ratings lower than those given in other communities.

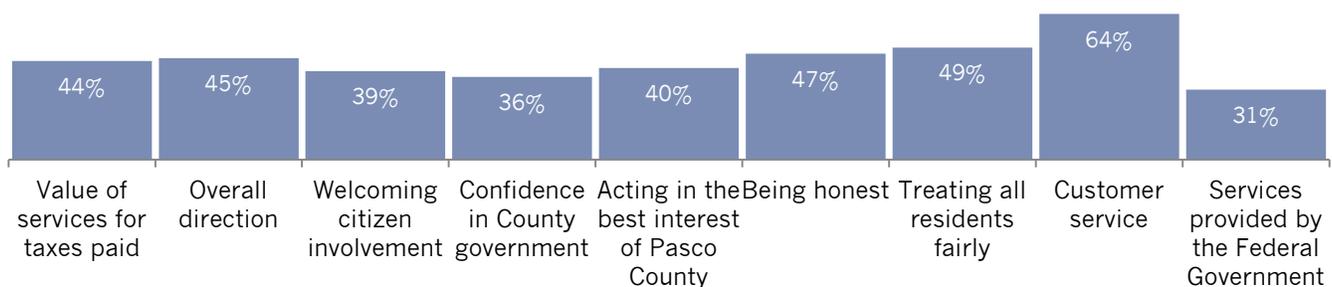
When compared to 2015 ratings, ratings for Governance in 2016 tended to be similar. Fewer residents gave positive ratings to natural areas preservation, but ratings increased for power utility, public information services and the County government being honest.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



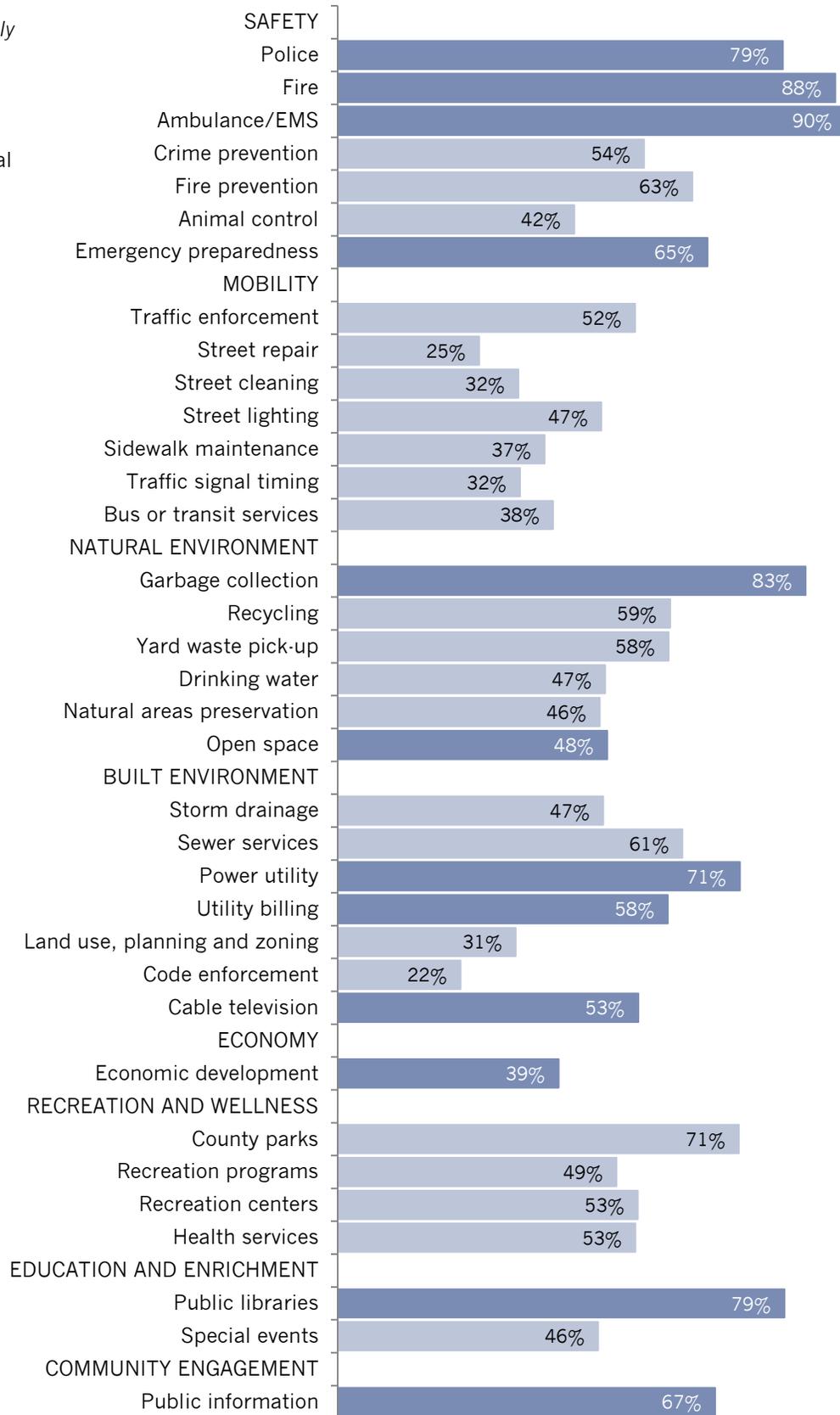
## The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

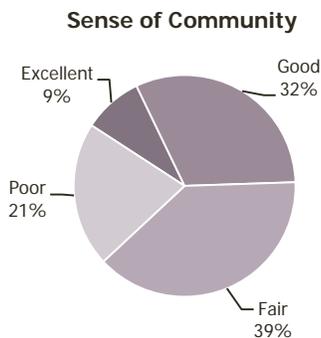


# Participation

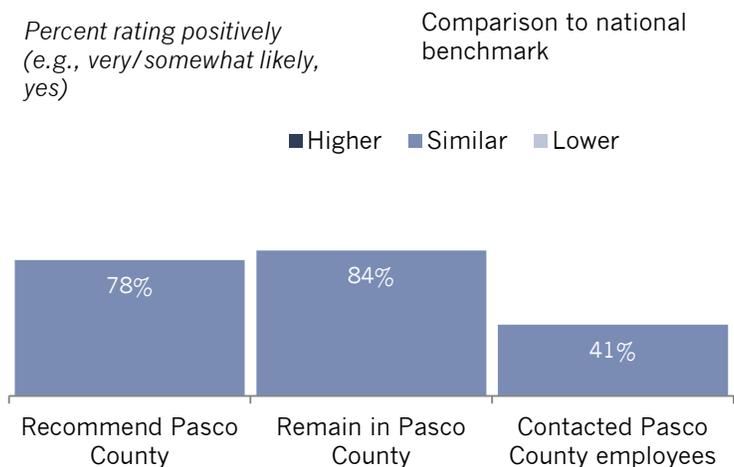
*Are the residents of Pasco County connected to the community and each other?*

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. In 2016, most Pasco County residents rated the sense of community in the County as fair or better; additionally, about 8 in 10 residents indicated that they planned to remain in Pasco County for the next five years and about three-quarters would recommend living in the County to someone who asked.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Generally, most rates of Participation across the eight facets tended to be rated similarly to the benchmark. In Safety, about 8 in 10 residents indicated that they had not been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months and about 7 in 10 had not reported a crime to the police; also, about half of residents had stocked supplies for an emergency, which was a higher rate than seen in communities elsewhere. All participation rates for aspects of Natural Environment, Economy and Recreation and Wellness were similar to rates seen in other communities with the exception of recycling at home, which was lower. Within Education and Enrichment, the proportion of residents who participated in religious or spiritual activities and events was similar to the benchmark (50%), but fewer residents used County public libraries (45%) or attended a County-sponsored event (43%) than elsewhere. While rates of participation within the facet of Community Engagement varied widely, all of these rates were similar to the benchmark except for the proportion of residents who had volunteered in the past 12 months, which was lower.



In 2016, residents tended to vote in local elections, attend a local public meeting, volunteer or contact Pasco County elected officials less frequently than in 2015. However, more residents reported that they had not observed a code violation in 2016 than in 2015.



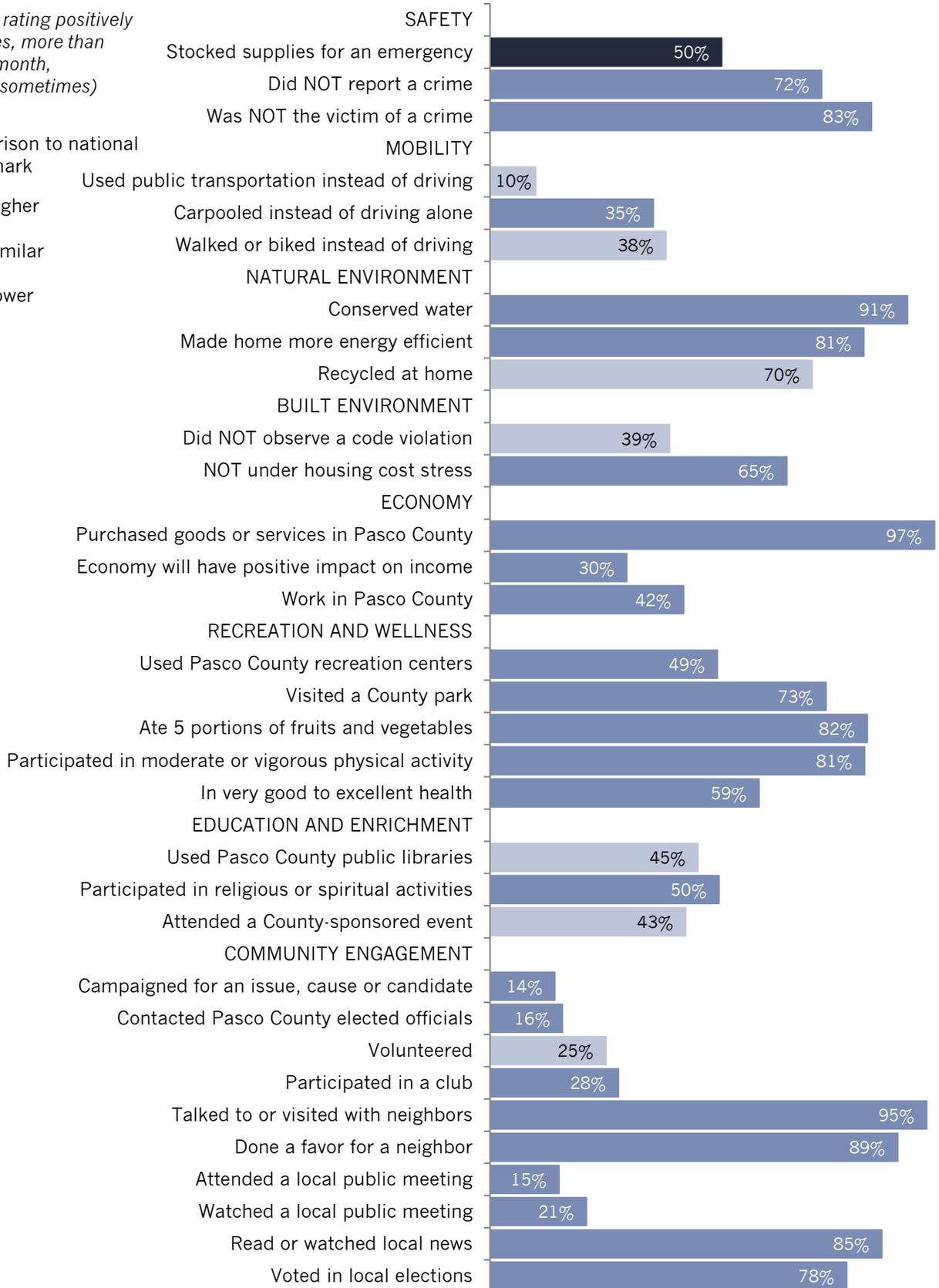
## The National Citizen Survey™

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

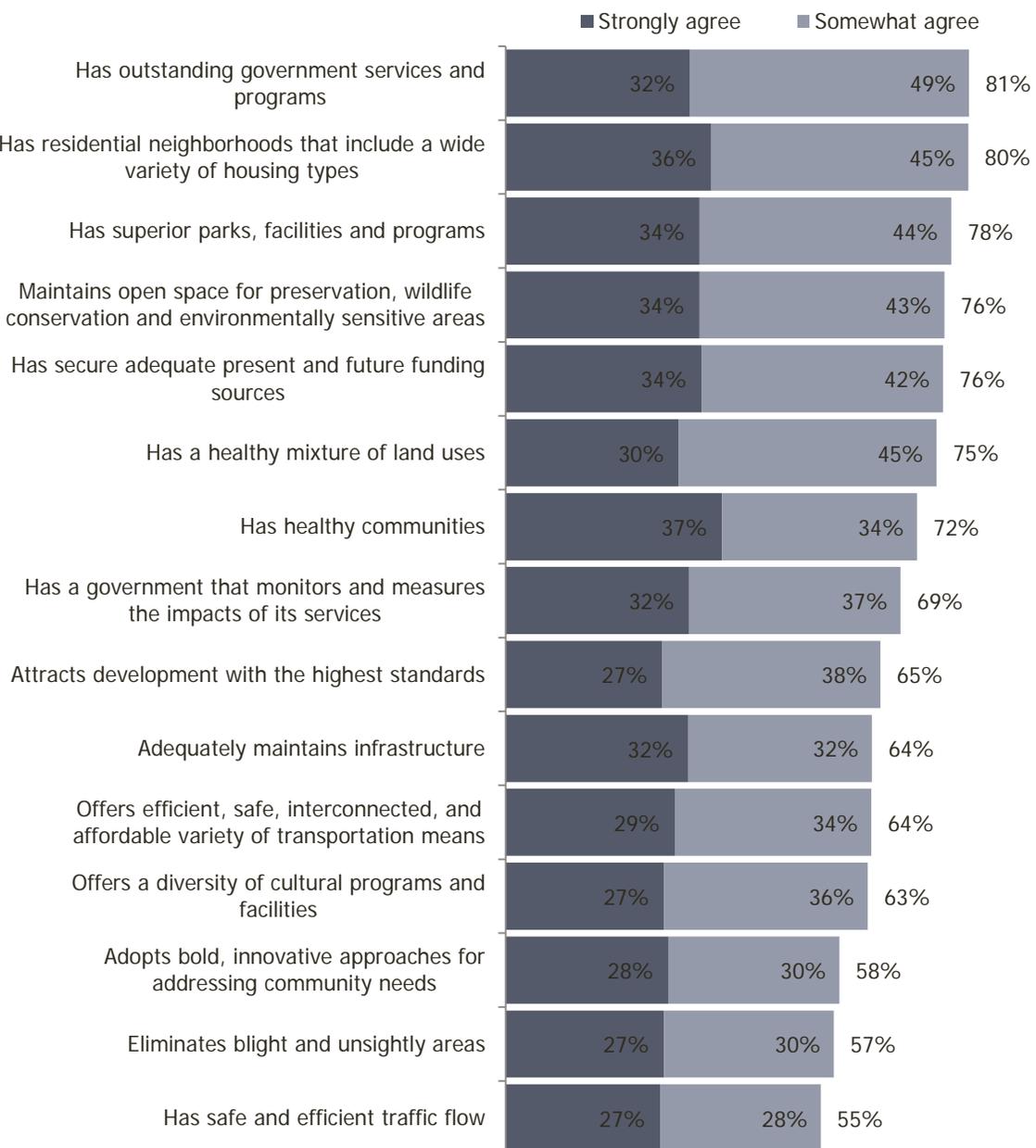


# Special Topics

Pasco County included one question of special interest on The NCS. This question asked residents to indicate to what extent they agreed that a number of items were a part of being a Premier County in Florida. About 8 in 10 residents agreed that a Premier County has outstanding government services and programs and residential neighborhoods with a wide variety of housing types. About three-quarters of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that a Premier County has superior parks, facilities and programs, maintains open space for preservation, wildlife conservation and environmentally sensitive areas, secure funding sources and a healthy mixture of land uses. Fewer residents agreed that the remaining items were part of a Premier County, although at least a majority of residents somewhat or strongly agreed with all items listed.

Figure 4: Aspects of a Premier County

*The Vision for Pasco County is to become Premier among Florida counties. To what extent would you agree or disagree with each of the following? A Premier County:*



# Conclusions

## Pasco County residents continue to enjoy a positive quality of life.

About two-thirds of Pasco County residents positively rated the County as a place to live and the overall quality of life in Pasco County as excellent or good; these ratings were similar to those given by County residents in 2015. About three-quarters of survey respondents gave excellent or good ratings to their neighborhood as a place to live, which was a higher proportion than in 2015, and two-thirds were pleased with Pasco County as a place to retire. Furthermore, about 8 in 10 residents planned to remain in the County for the next five years and would recommend living in Pasco County to someone who asked.

## Safety remains an important focus area in the community.

As in 2015, residents indicated that Safety would be an important area for the community to focus on in the coming years. Ratings within the facet of Safety across the three pillars were mixed: while more than 8 in 10 respondents positively rated the feeling of safety in their neighborhoods, a rating similar to comparison communities, only about three-quarters of respondents reported feeling safe in the County's downtown/commercial area and about half favorably rated the overall feeling of safety in the County, which were both lower than municipalities elsewhere. Additionally, while police/Sheriff services, fire services, ambulance/EMS services and emergency preparedness all received ratings similar to those given in other communities, ratings for fire prevention, crime prevention and animal control were lower than national averages. When asked about aspects of a Premier County, 81% of survey participants agreed that a Premier County would have outstanding government services and programs (such as police and fire services).

## Mobility is also an important focus area for residents and presents an opportunity for improvement.

Residents also indicated that Mobility would be an important area of focus in the next two years. Several ratings within this facet received ratings similar to those given in communities elsewhere, such as ease of travel by car, public parking and traffic flow; however, many Mobility ratings were lower than other communities in the U.S. These included overall ease of travel, ease of travel by public transportation, by bicycle and by walking, availability of paths and walking trails, traffic signal timing, sidewalk maintenance and street repair, among others. Ratings for Mobility remained stable since 2015 with the exception of traffic flow, which was rated higher this year. When asked about aspects of a Premier County, about two-thirds of survey participants agreed that a Premier County offers an efficient, safe, interconnected, and affordable variety of transportation means.