

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Milford, DE
Community Livability Report

2017



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The NCS™ is presented by NRC in collaboration with ICMA.

NRC is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

About

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

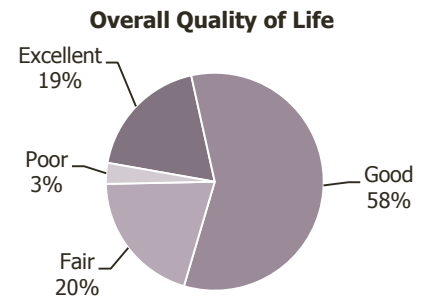
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 411 residents of the City of Milford. 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.



Quality of Life in Milford

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Milford as excellent or good. This rating was similar to the national benchmark comparison (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.

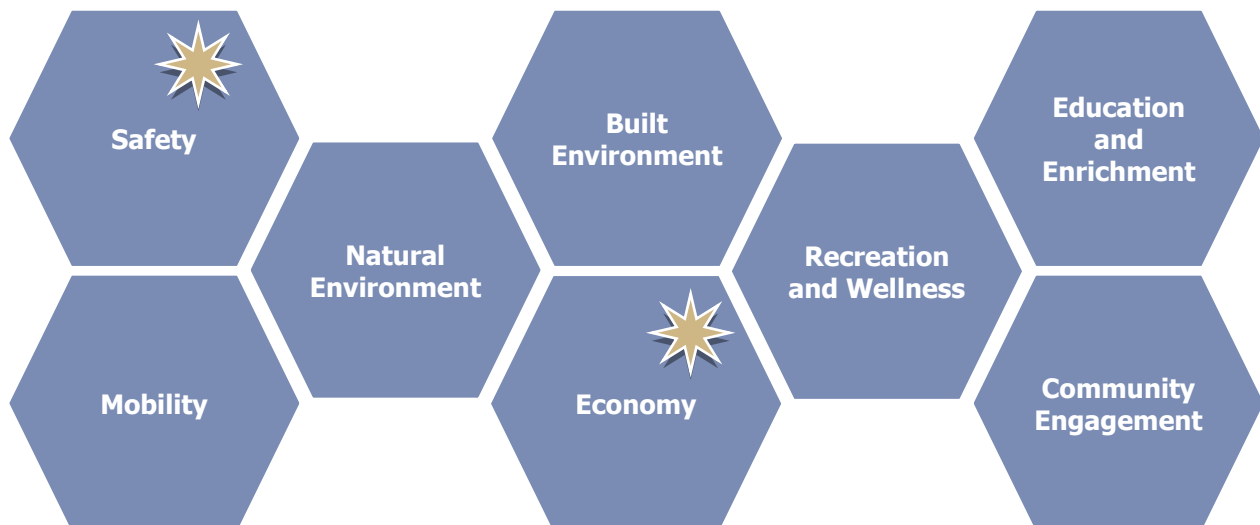
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Milford community in the coming two years. This overview of the key aspects 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 Milford’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



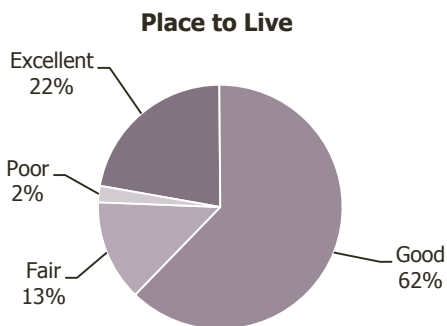
Community Characteristics

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 Milford, 84% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Milford 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 Milford as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Milford and its overall appearance. A majority of respondents gave high marks to each aspect and these ratings were similar to ratings in comparison communities.

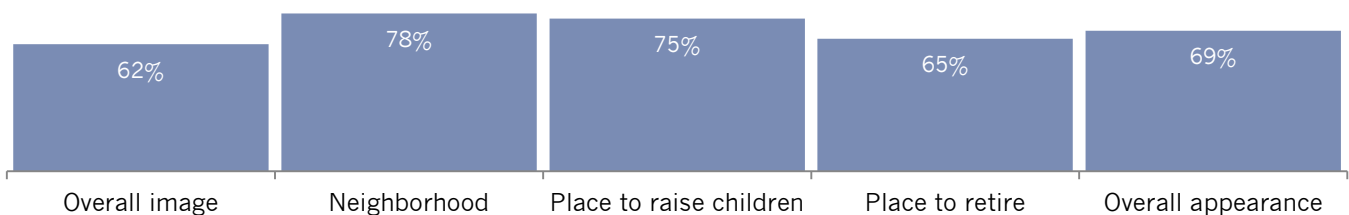
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. At least 6 in 10 respondents rated all aspects of Safety and Natural Environment positively, with comparisons similar to the benchmark. Ratings of Mobility tended to be positive and similar to the benchmark; however, ratings for traffic flow were higher than the benchmark. Fewer Milford residents gave high marks to Milford as a place to visit or recreational opportunities than residents from other communities. Within Education and Enrichment, three of the six facets were lower than the national benchmark and three were similar. Survey respondents rated education and enrichment opportunities, adult education and K-12 education lower than residents in other jurisdictions.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



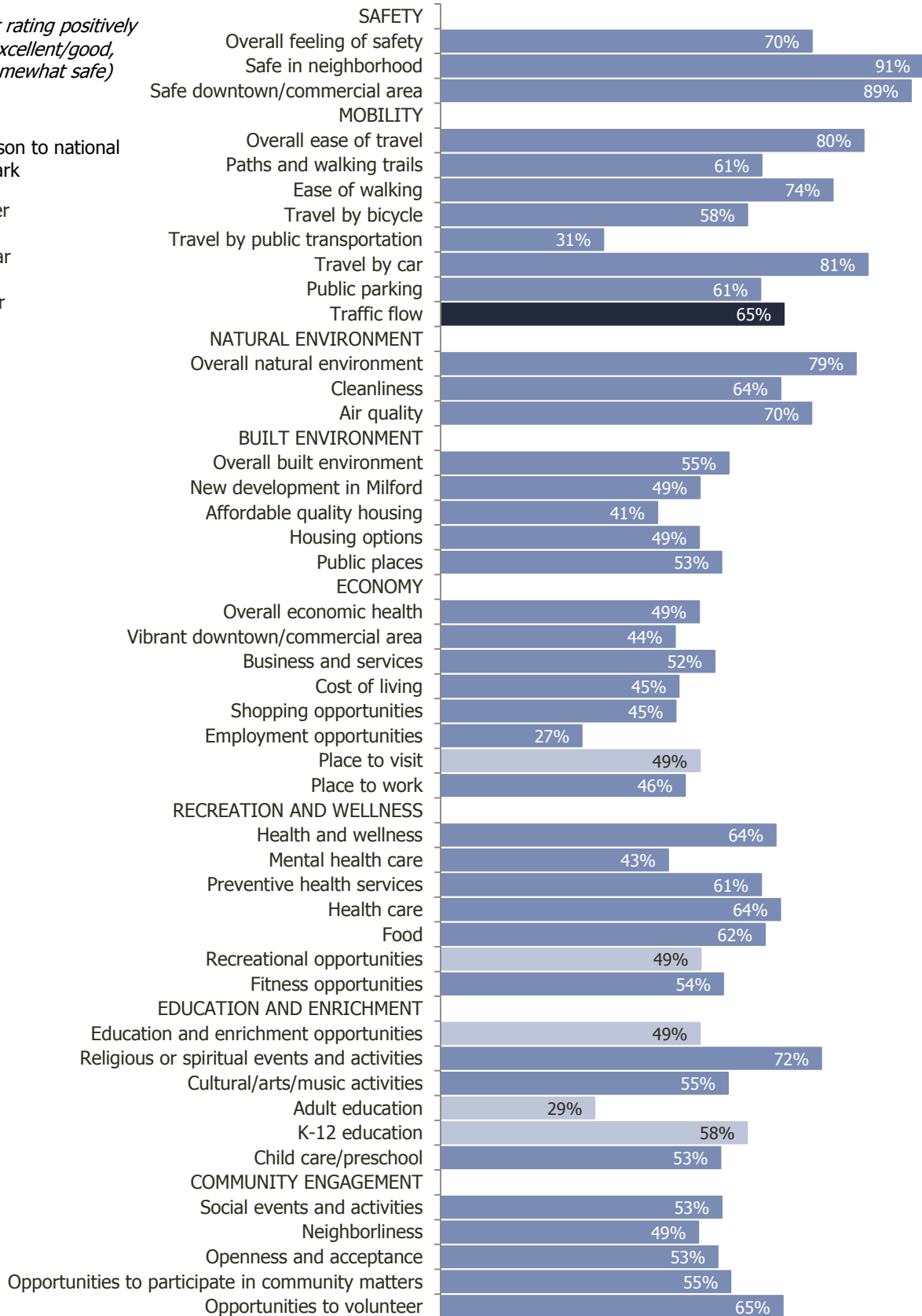
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

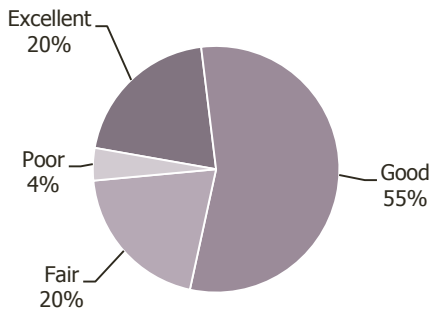
How well does the government of Milford meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Milford as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About three-quarters of respondents positively rated the overall quality of services provided by the City while only about one-third positively rated the Federal Government. Despite the disparity, both ratings were similar to the national benchmarks.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Milford’s leadership and governance. About half of Milford residents or more gave high marks to each aspect and all ratings were similar to ratings in comparison communities.

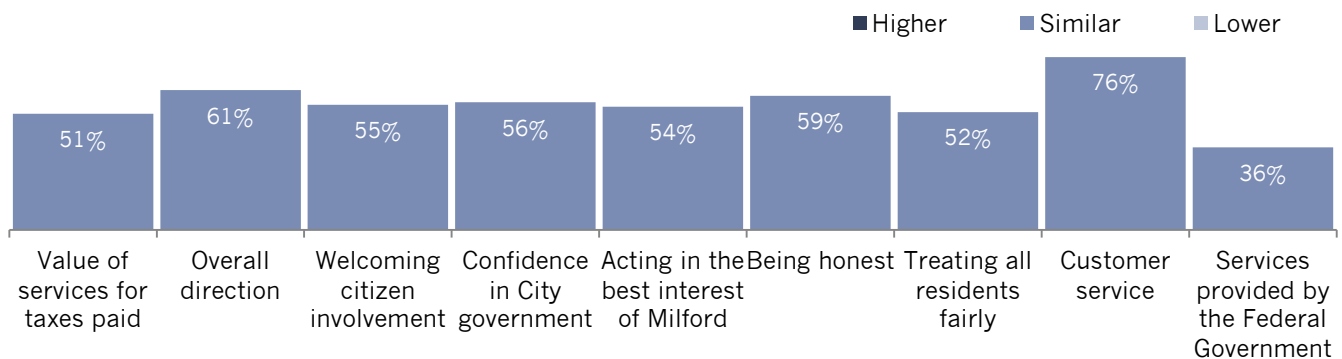
Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Milford. Residents rated all but one aspect of Governance similarly to the national benchmarks; ratings for drinking water were lower than ratings observed across the nation. Code enforcement received the lowest marks from residents (39% excellent or good); while fire services received the highest marks (96% excellent or good).

Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark



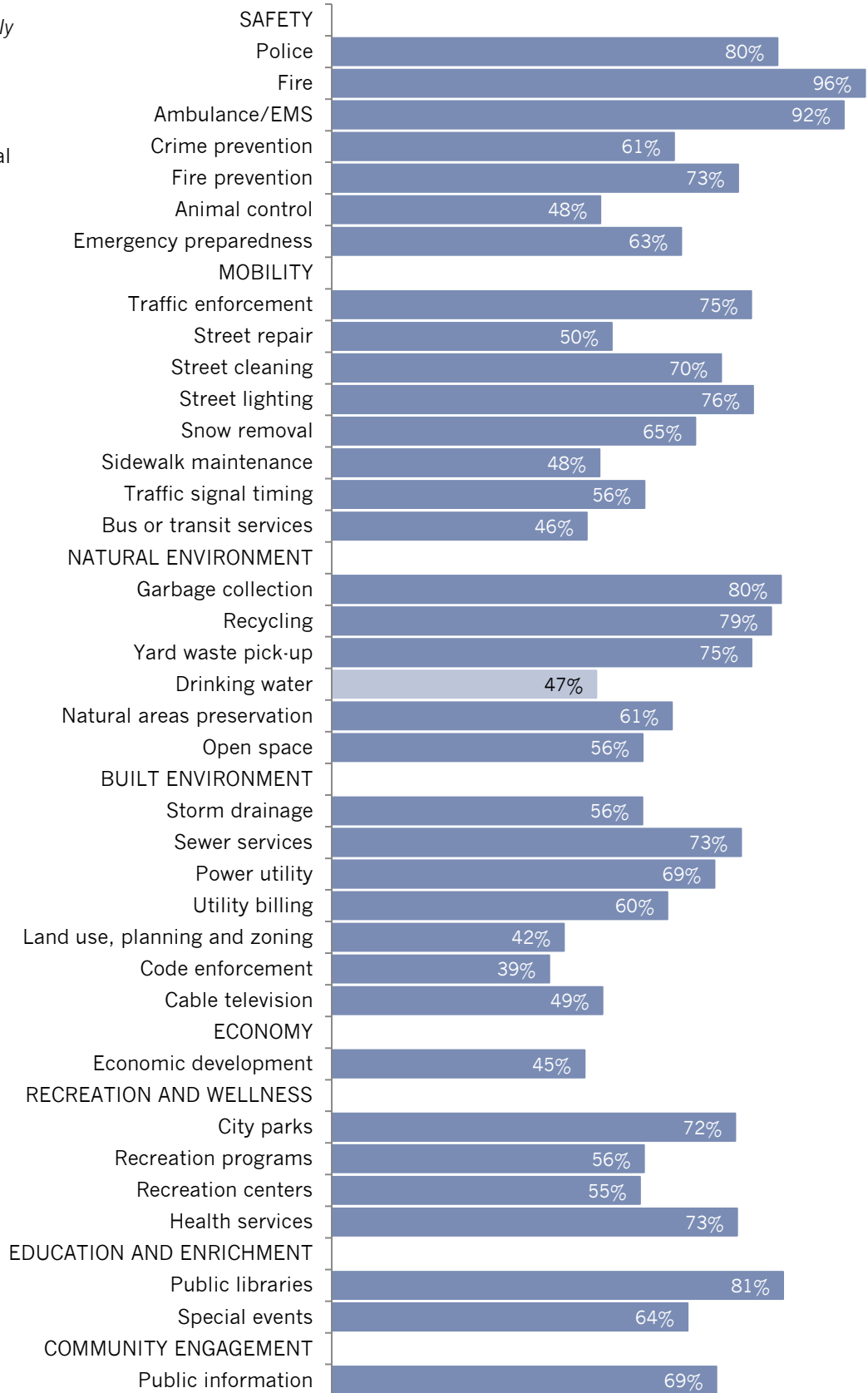
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

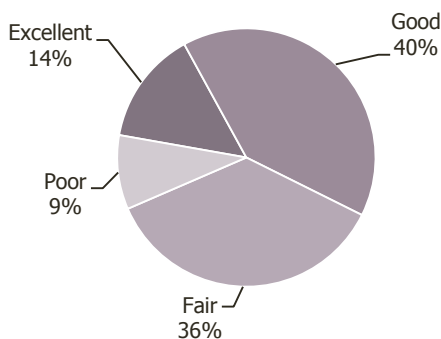
Are the residents of Milford connected to the community and each other?

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 half of the survey respondents gave high marks to the sense of community in Milford; this rating was similar to the benchmark. About 4 in 5 residents were likely to remain in Milford and would recommend living in Milford and about half had contacted a City employee in the last 12 months.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, rates of participation tended to be similar to those observed in other communities.

Residents participated most in activities related to the Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Safety; for the most part at least half of residents reported participating in these types activities. Milford residents were neighborly, often visiting or doing favors for each other. Fewer Milford residents reported that they had used public transportation than residents in other communities across the nation. Further, fewer residents had not observed a code violation in Milford compared to national reported rates.

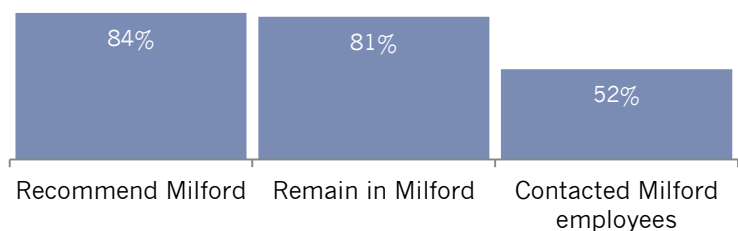
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



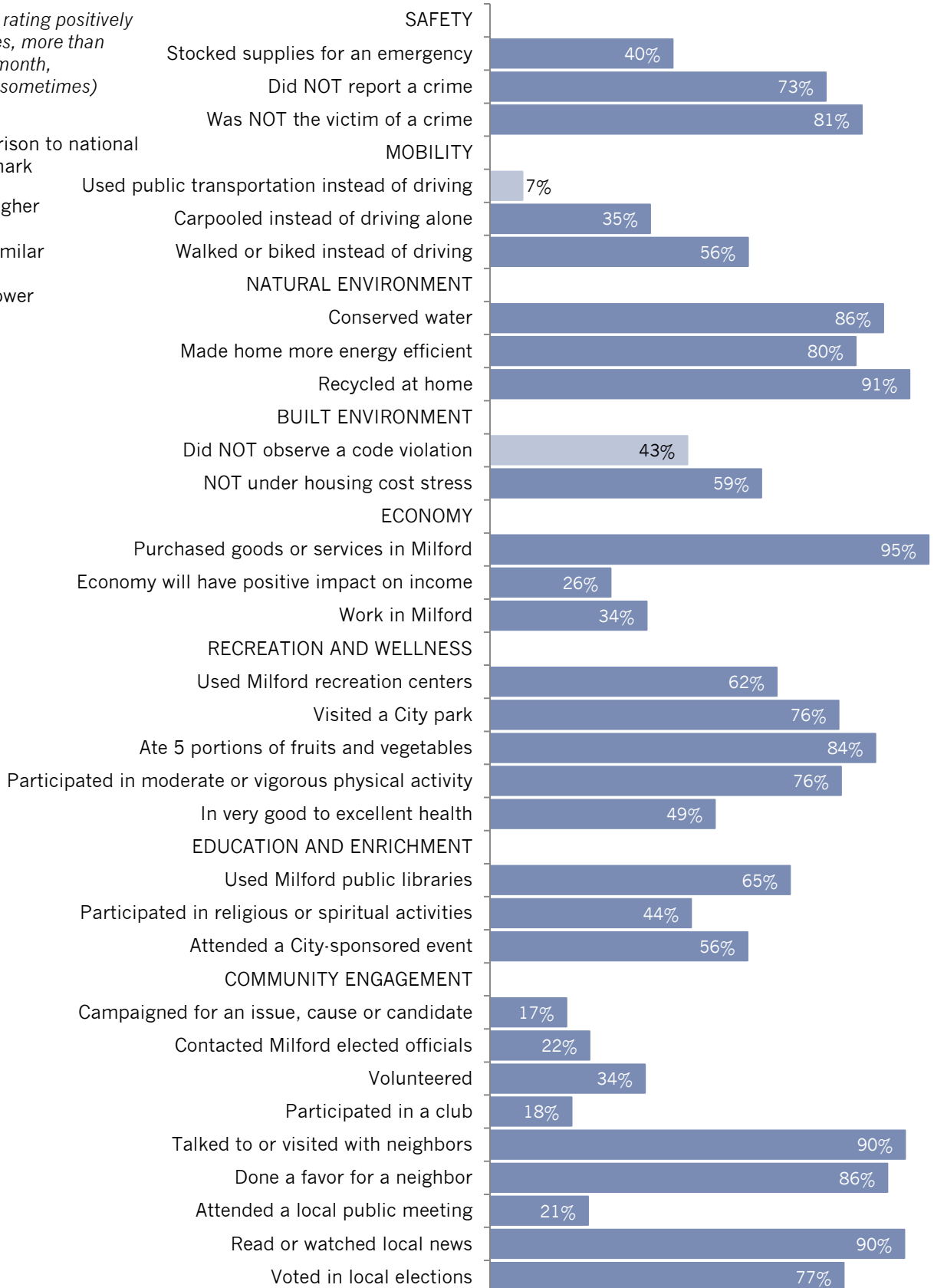
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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 Milford included four custom questions of special interest on The NCS about City focus areas and downtown businesses. The first question asked residents to rate the importance of five potential focus areas. Each focus area was rated as essential or very important by at least 4 in 5 respondents. A majority of survey respondents viewed as essential Safety (ensuring the police force is well-trained and has the necessary equipment, staff, resources and facilities) and Utilities and Environment (e.g., ensuring reliable, sufficient safe water and electric resources, efficient utility use and implementing sustainable practices) . A follow-up question sought residents’ support or opposition for additional financial resources for each of the focus areas; more than 4 in 5 residents indicated support for each area. About 7 in 10 strongly supported additional financial resources for Safety and about 6 in 10 strongly supported additional financial resources for Utilities and Environment.

Figure 4: City Focus Areas

Please rate how important, if at all, it is for the City of Milford to prioritize each of the following potential focus areas over the next five years:

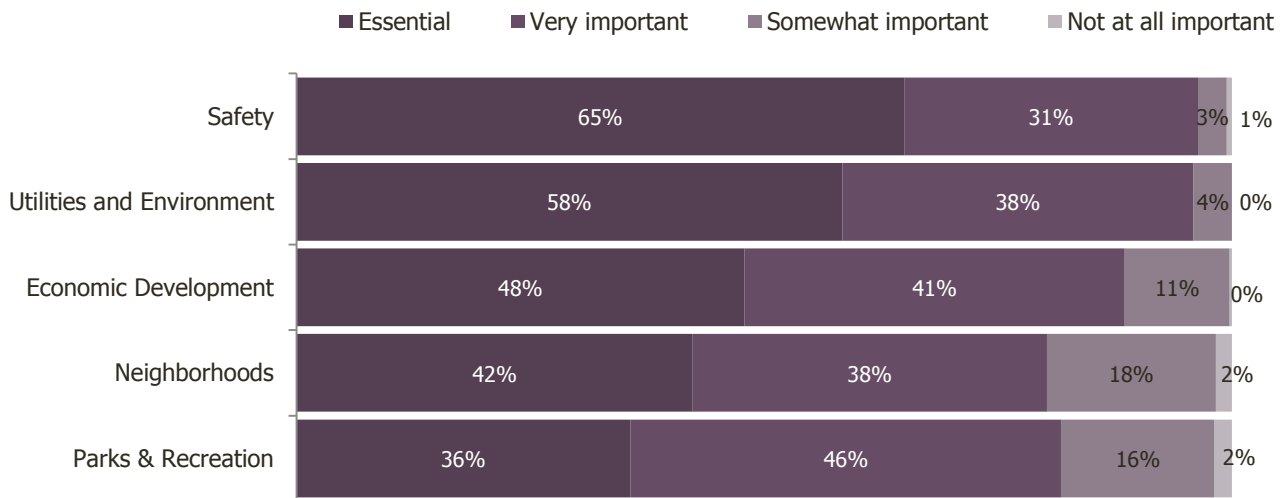
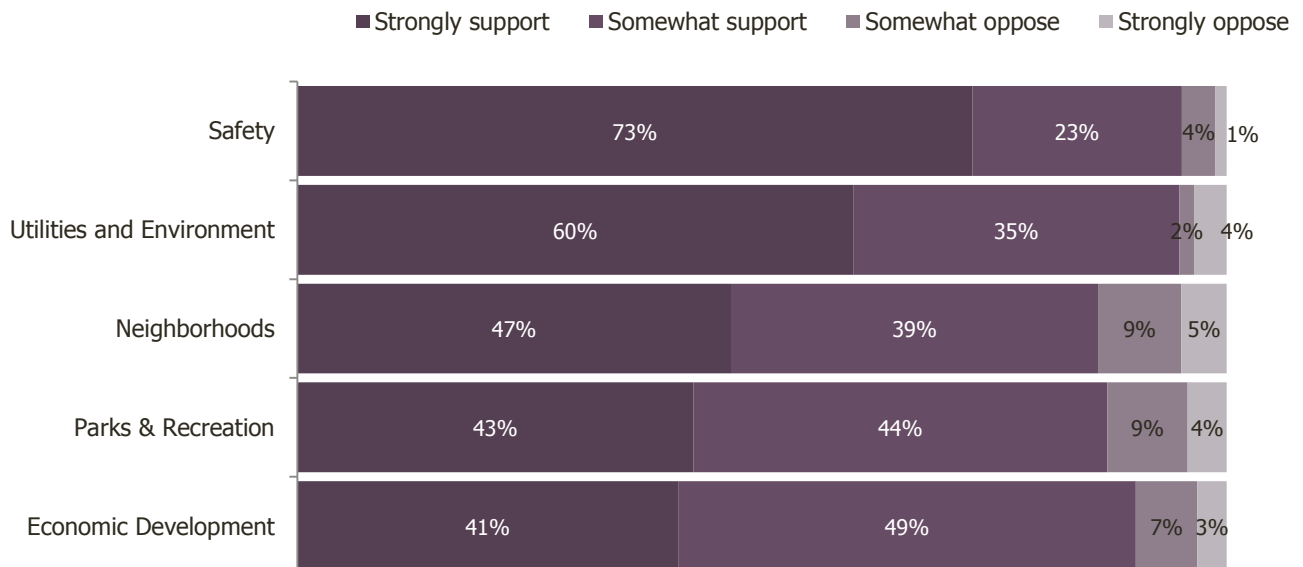


Figure 5: Additional Financial Resources for Focus Areas

How much do you support or oppose additional financial resources for each of the following areas?



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The next questions had to do with Downtown Milford businesses. Residents were asked about their level of participation in “3rd Thursday” events and activities. About half of the respondents were not aware of 3rd Thursday. About 3 in 10 were aware of 3rd Thursday, but had not attended. The remaining 2 in 10 had attended 3rd Thursday at least once in the last 12 months. One final question asked respondents how likely they would be to frequent Downtown Milford businesses on different weekend days or evenings if hours were to be expanded. About half indicated that they would be at least somewhat likely to frequent Downtown businesses if hours were expanded on any of the days/times listed. Residents were most likely to frequent businesses if hours were extended on Saturday afternoons or evenings (with 77% saying they were likely) followed by Friday evenings (68% likely).

Figure 6: 3rd Thursday Awareness and Attendance

Many Milford businesses stay open for extended hours on the 3^d Thursday of each month. Please select the option that comes closest to your level of 3^d Thursday events and activities in Downtown Milford in the last 12 months.

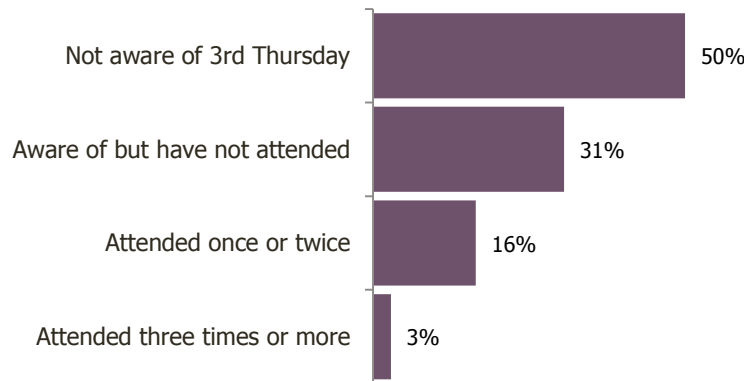
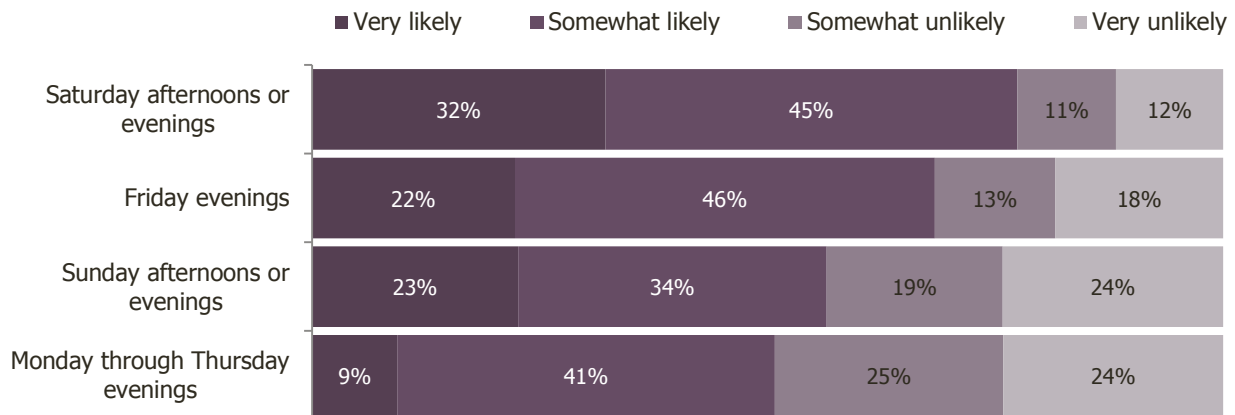


Figure 7: Expanding Business Hours in Downtown Milford

Downtown Milford businesses could consider expanding their normal hours (most businesses are currently open on weekdays with limited evening and/or weekend hours). How likely, if at all, would you be to frequent Downtown Milford businesses at the following times?



Conclusions

Residents in Milford enjoy a high quality of life.

About three-quarters of residents rated their quality of life as excellent or good and even more would recommend living in Milford to someone who asks and remain in the community themselves in the coming five years. About 7 in 10 respondents gave high marks to Milford as a place to live, their neighborhood as a place to live and Milford as a place to raise children. Almost all aspects of community quality were positive and similar to the benchmark.

Safety is a priority for the community.

Residents identified Safety as an important facet on which the City to focus in the coming two years. In response to an additional question about community priorities, almost all (96%) indicated that it was essential or very important for the community to focus on Safety (ensuring the police force is well-trained and has the necessary equipment, staff, resources and facilities) in the coming five years. A similar proportion also supported additional financial resources being given to Safety. About one half or more of respondents tended to assess Safety services positively, providing ratings that were similar to the benchmark.

Residents value Economy and emphasize its importance.

In addition to Safety, residents would like the City to focus on aspects of the Economy in the coming two years. Overall, Milford's economic ratings were similar to those in other communities across the U.S., though ratings for Milford as a place to visit were lower than the national benchmark. About half of respondents felt the overall economic health in Milford was excellent or good and almost all residents supported the local economy by making purchases within the City. At least 4 in 5 respondents thought it was essential or very important for Economic Development (e.g., support for retaining/expanding businesses, attracting new businesses, workforce development, etc.) to be priorities for the City and supported additional financial resources for this support.