

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Cape Coral, FL
Community Livability Report

2015



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

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About

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

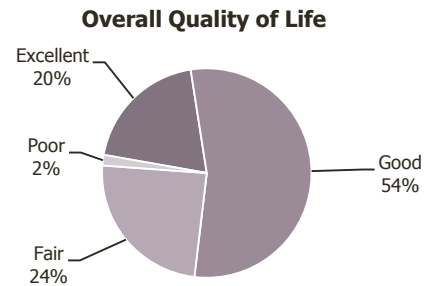
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 325 residents of the City of Cape Coral. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% 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 Cape Coral

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Cape Coral as excellent or good. This rating was similar to 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.

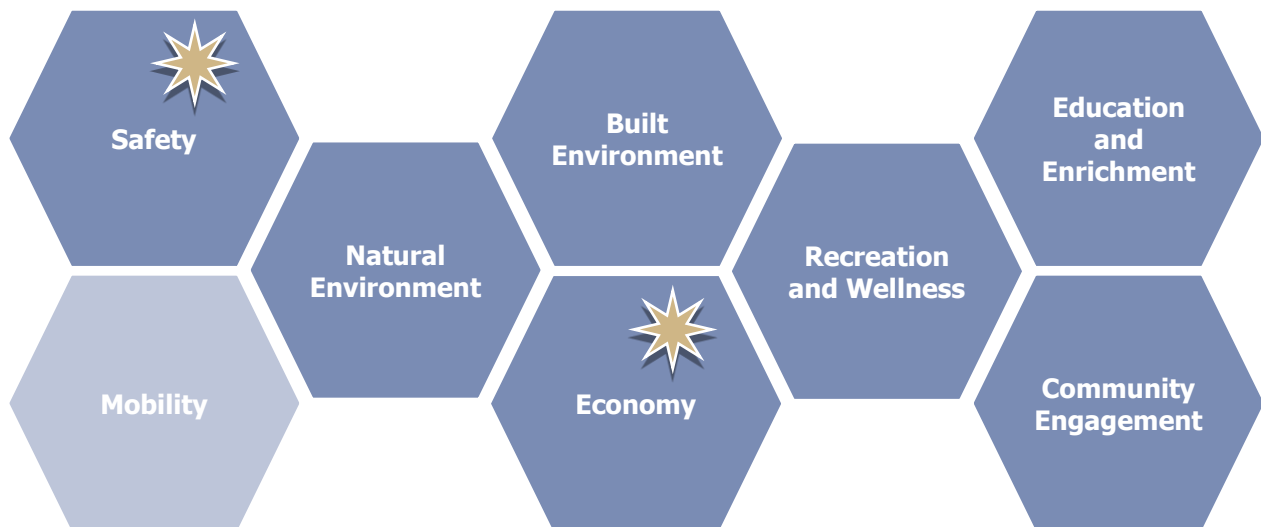
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Cape Coral community in the coming two years. Ratings for these facets as well as all others except Mobility 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 Cape Coral's unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



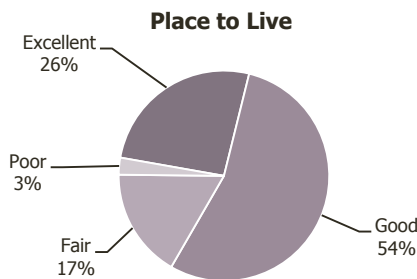
Community Characteristics

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 Cape Coral, 81% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Cape Coral 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 Cape Coral as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Cape Coral and its overall appearance. A majority rated all aspects as excellent or good, and these ratings tended to be similar to the benchmark, ratings for the overall image of Cape Coral were lower than in comparison communities. About four in five respondents rated their neighborhoods and Cape Coral as a place to retire as excellent or good.

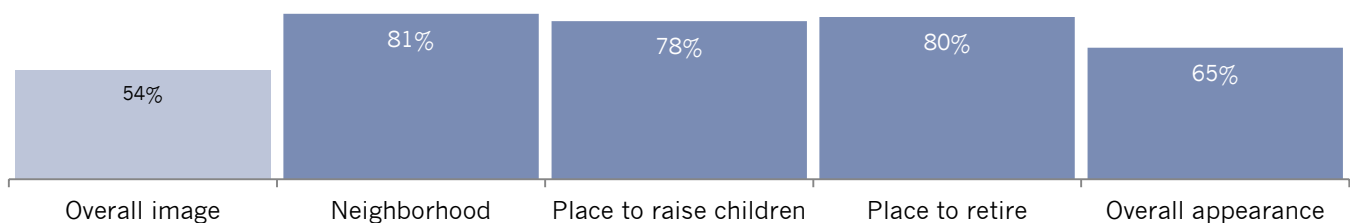
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. At least four in five residents gave positive ratings to aspects of Safety; these ratings were all similar to the national benchmarks. Mobility ratings were mixed and ranged from 22% (travel by public transportation) to 59% (overall ease of travel) excellent or good. Of the eight aspects of Mobility; four were lower than the national benchmarks and four were similar. All aspects of Cape Coral's Natural Environment were rated as excellent or good by at least 7 in 10 respondents and were similar to ratings in comparison communities. Ratings for aspects of Built Environment and Community Engagement tended to be rated positively by a majority of residents and all were similar to the national benchmarks. Economy ratings were mixed; employment opportunities received the lowest ratings (26% excellent or good) but it was similar to the national benchmark and improved from Cape Coral's 2013 survey (for detailed information on trends, please see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



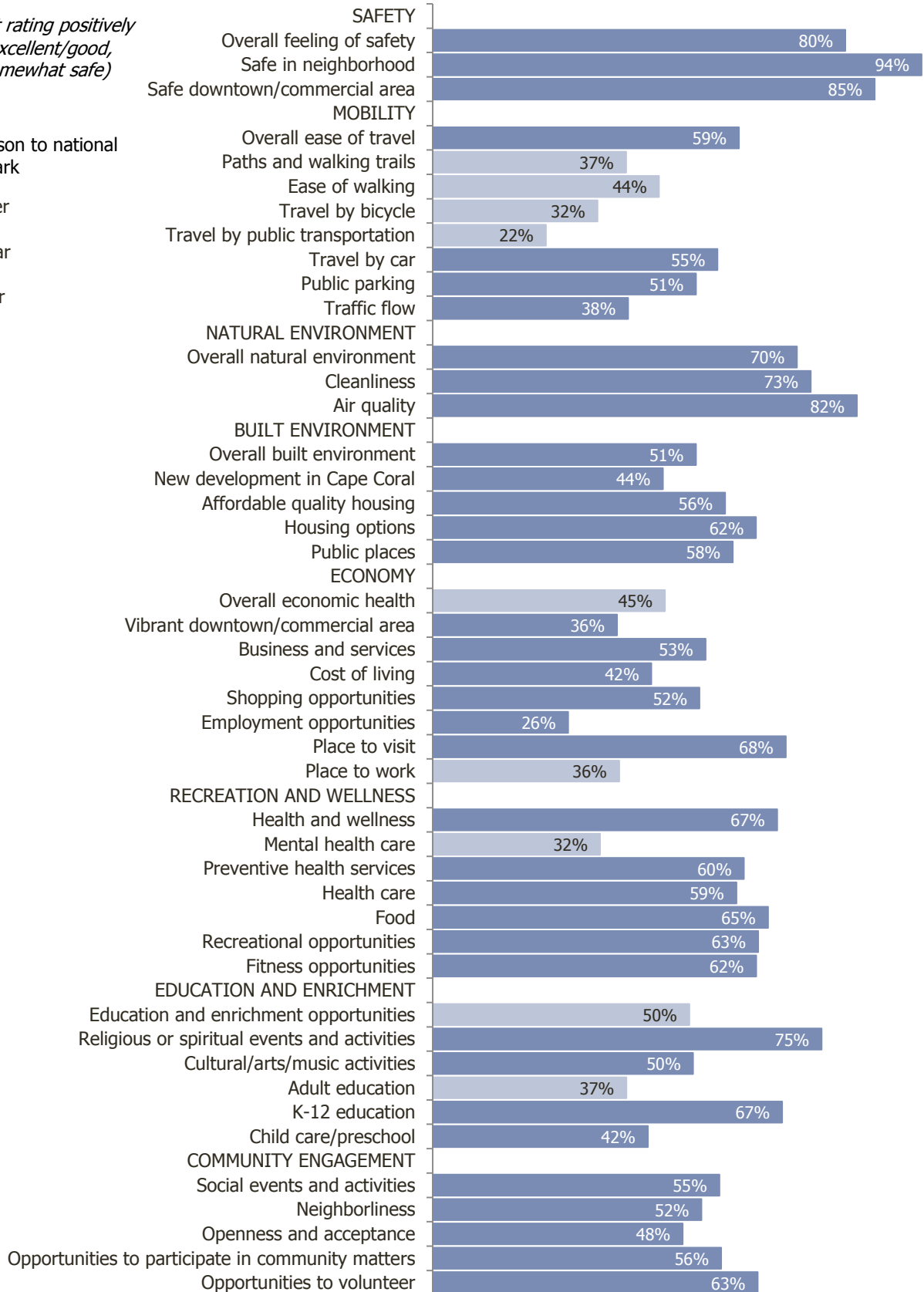
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

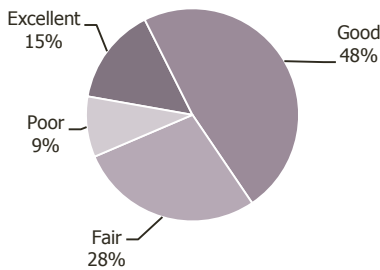
How well does the government of Cape Coral meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Cape Coral as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of residents in Cape Coral gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of City services while about one-third gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the Federal Government; both of these ratings were similar to ratings in communities across the nation.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Cape Coral’s leadership and governance. Customer service from City employees received the highest ratings (68% excellent or good) and was similar to the national benchmark, confidence in City government received the lowest ratings (33%) and was lower than the benchmark. Ratings for being honest and value of services for taxes paid were also lower than the benchmarks; while ratings for the overall direction, welcoming citizen involvement, acting in the best interest of Cape Coral and treating all residents fairly were similar to ratings seen in other communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Cape Coral. Most aspects of Governance received positive ratings from a majority of residents and were similar to the national benchmarks. All aspects of Safety received high ratings, ranging from 55% (animal control) to 91% excellent or good (fire services). Most aspects of Mobility were lower than the national benchmarks and received positive ratings from less than half of the survey respondents. All aspects of Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement were positive and similar to the benchmarks.

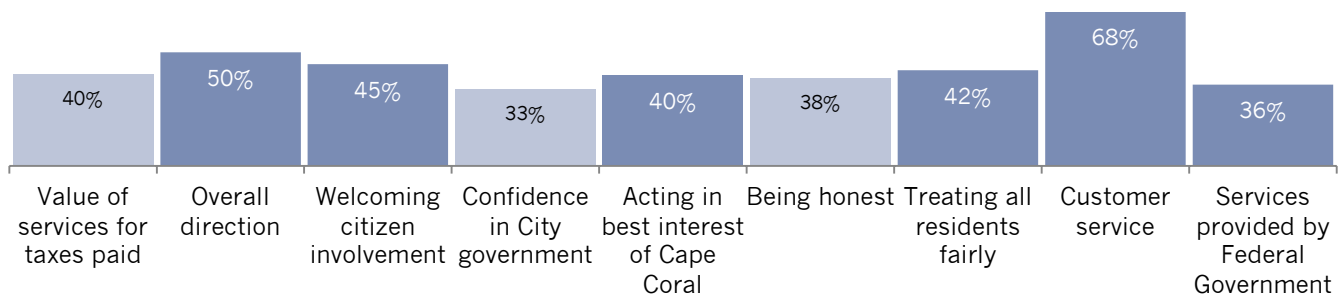
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



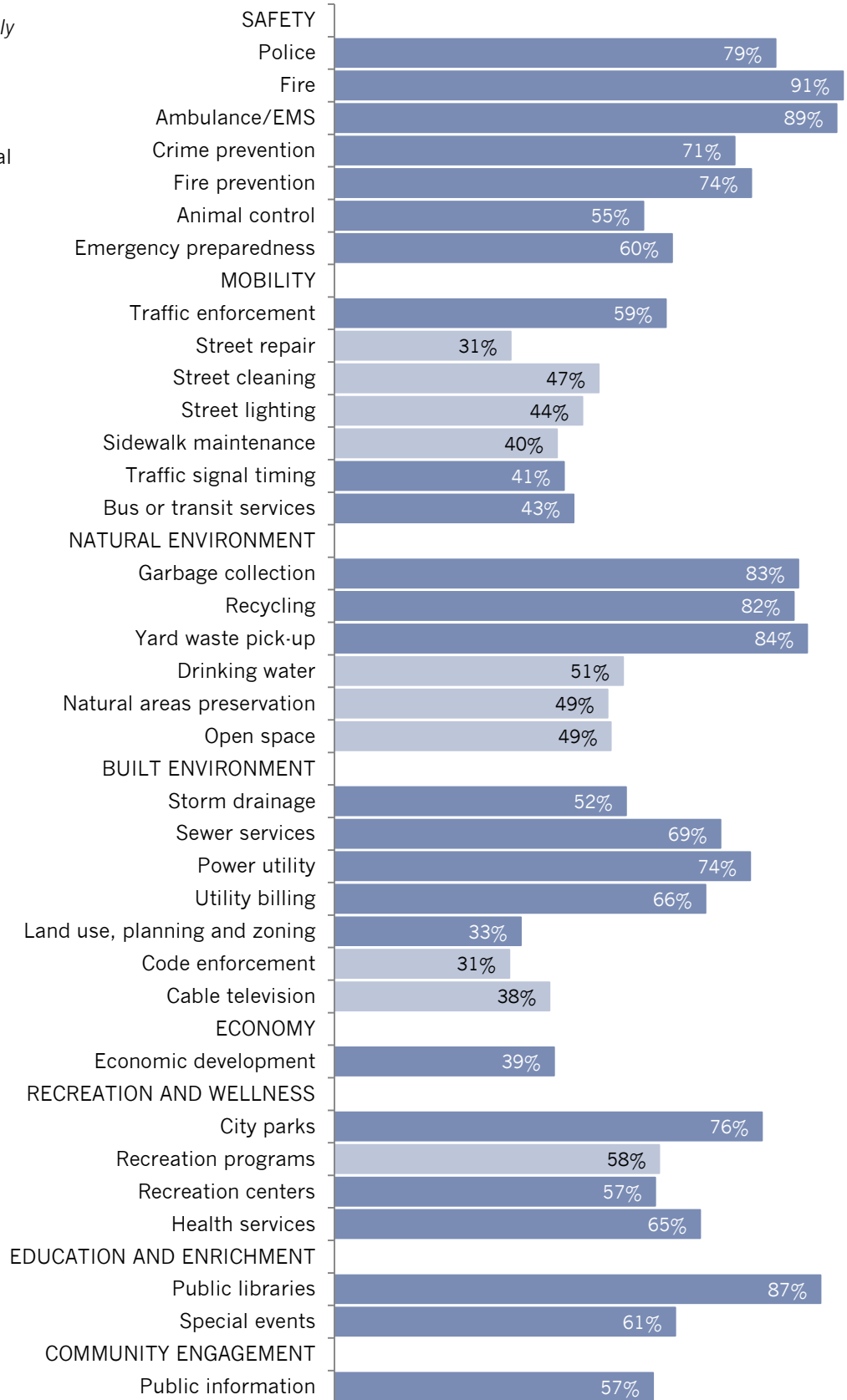
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

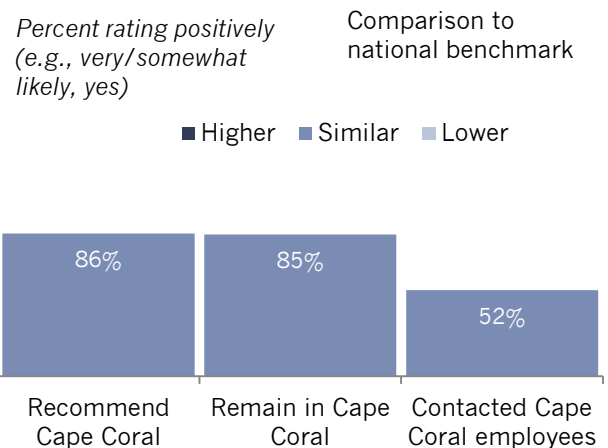
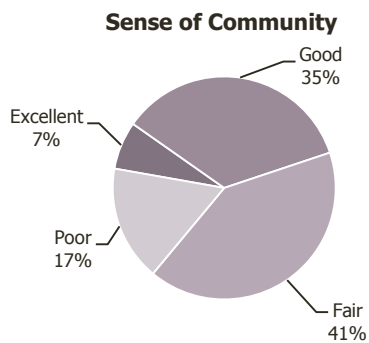


Participation

Are the residents of Cape Coral 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 4 in 10 gave positive ratings to the sense of community in Cape Coral, this rating was lower than the national benchmark and decreased from 2013 to 2015. More than four in five respondents indicated that they were likely to recommend living in Cape Coral and plan to remain in Cape Coral for the next five years. About half of the respondents had contacted a Cape Coral 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. More Cape Coral residents reported that they had stocked supplies for an emergency, recycled at home and thought the economy would have a positive impact on their income than residents in comparison communities. More Cape Coral residents were optimistic about the economy in 2015 than in 2013. Fewer Cape Coral residents than residents in other communities reported that they had used public transportation or carpooled, worked in Cape Coral or used Cape Coral libraries. Rates of Participation within Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement were all similar to rates in comparison communities.



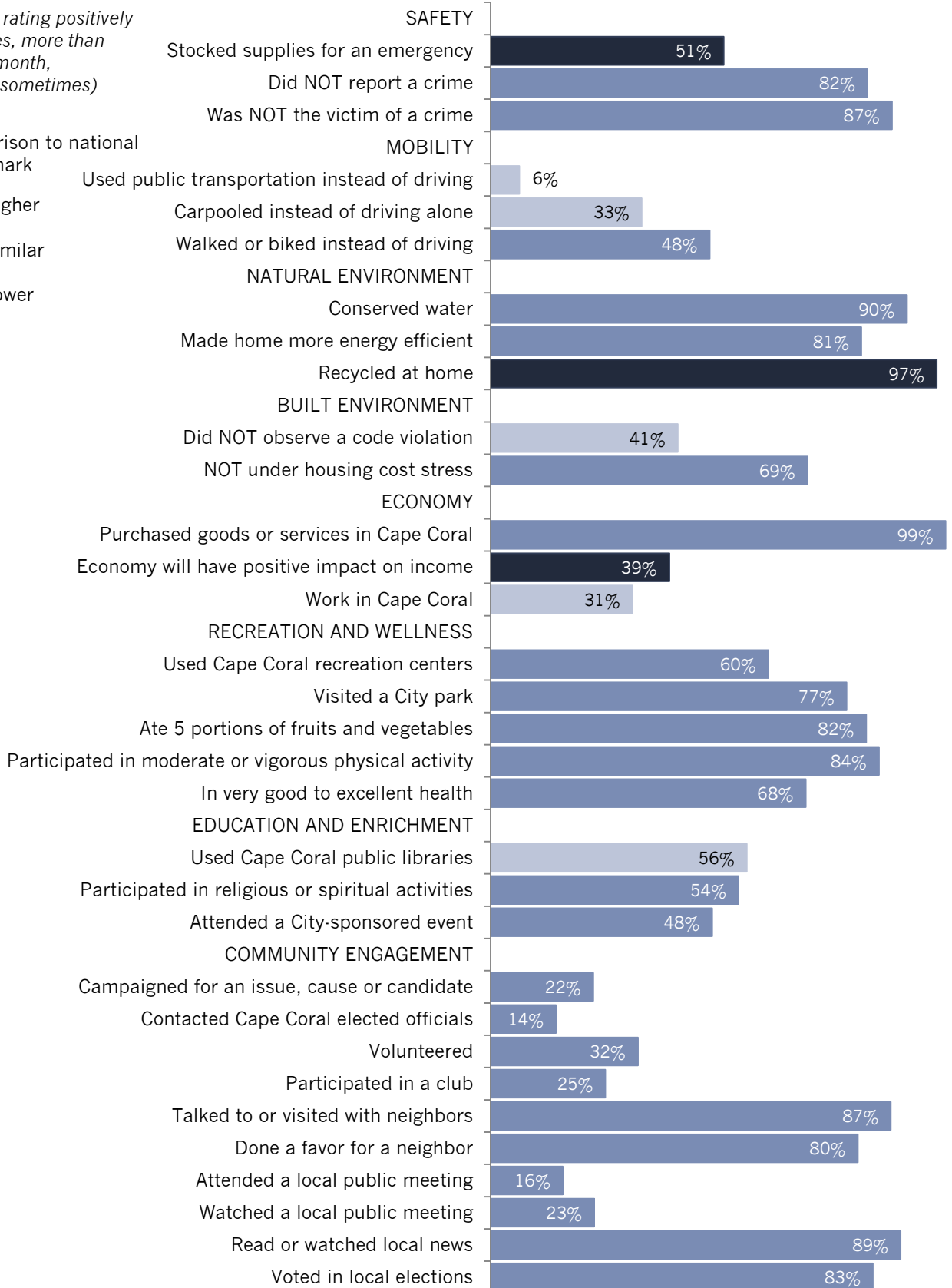
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

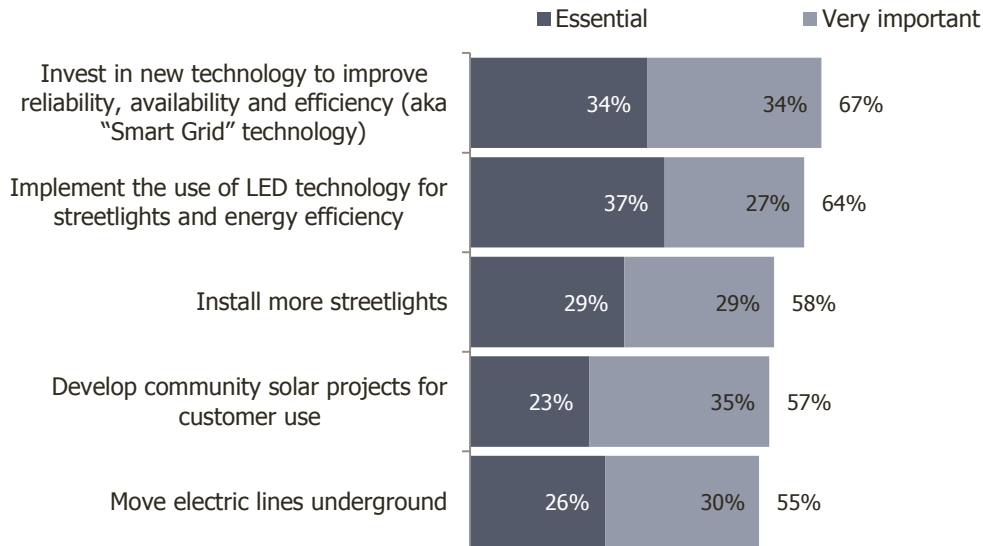


Special Topics

The City of Cape Coral included four questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked residents to rate the importance of potential electric service enhancements. While all options were rated as essential or very important by 55% or more of respondents, investing in new technology and implementing the use of LED technology were rated as important by the highest percentage of residents.

Figure 4: Importance of Electric Service Enhancements

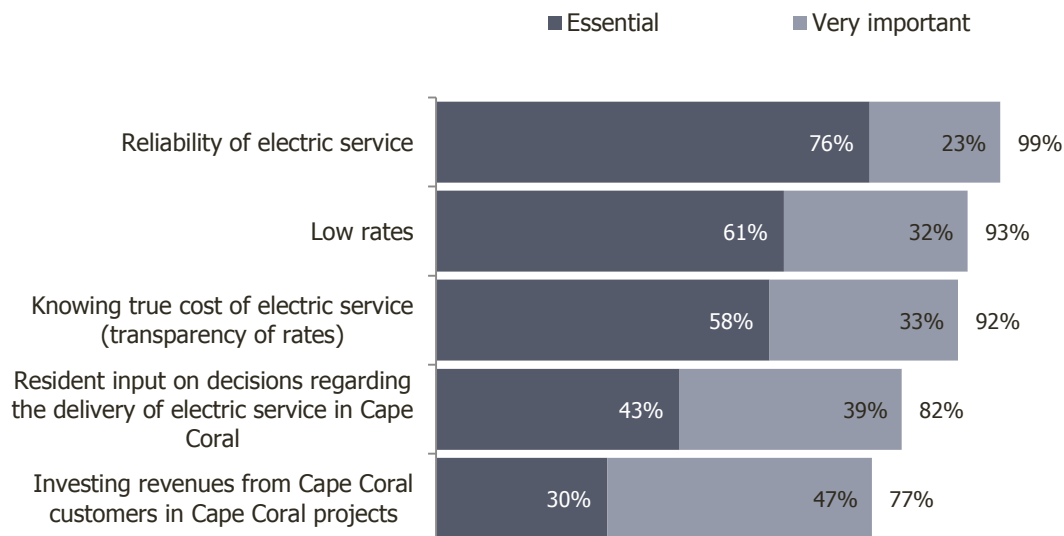
Please indicate how important, if at all, the following electric service enhancements are to you (if they would not change electric rates):



The next question asked about the importance of different aspects of electric service, 77% or more rated all aspects as important, with reliability, low rates and transparency of rates being rated as important by almost all respondents.

Figure 5: Importance of Aspects of Electric Service

Please indicate how important, if at all, each of the following is to your electric service:

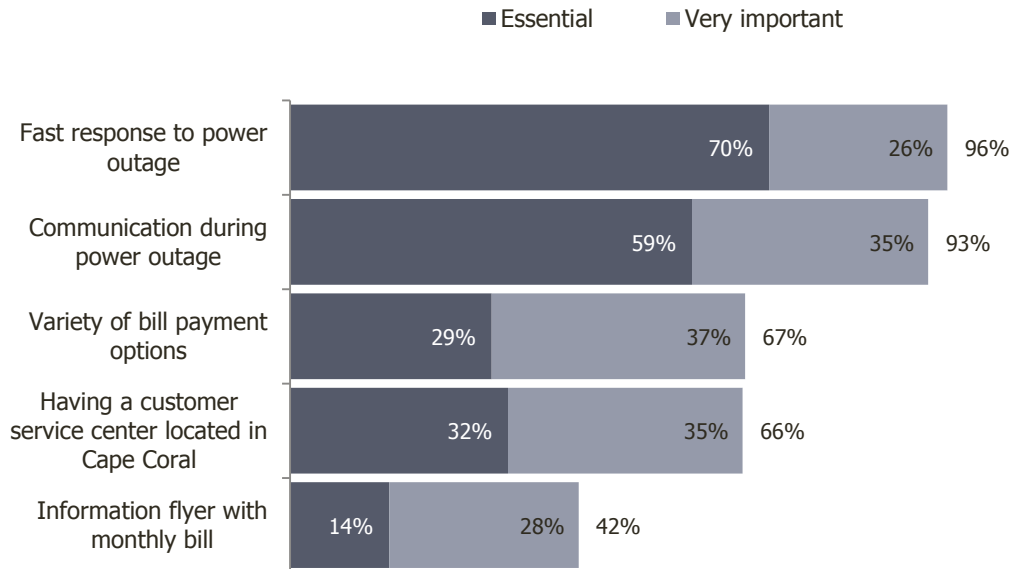


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The third question asked residents to rate the importance of different aspects of customer service provided by the electric service. Almost all respondents rated fast response to power outage and communication during power outage as important. Less than half thought the information flyer with monthly bill was essential or very important.

Figure 6: Importance of Electric Service Customer Service

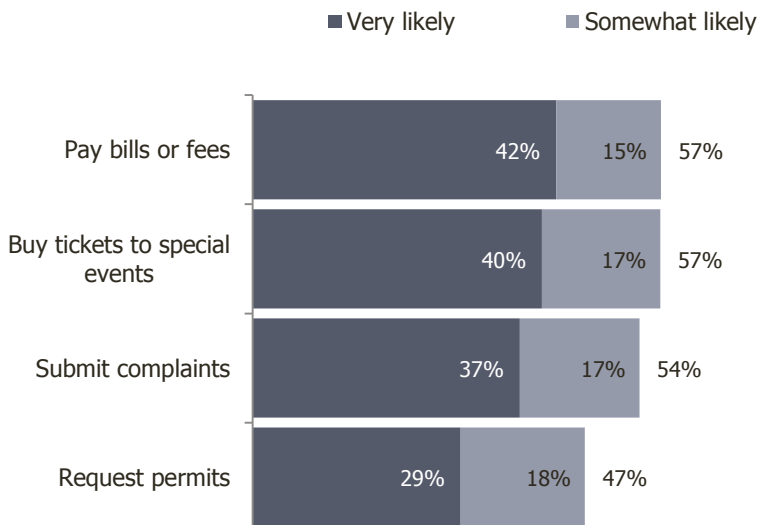
Please indicate how important, if at all, each of the following aspects of customer service provided by the electric service is to you:



The final question asked residents to indicate how likely they would be to use a smart phone to conduct business with the City of Cape Coral. About 57% indicated that they were likely to pay bills or fees or buy tickets to special events with smart phones; slightly fewer indicated they were likely to use their smart phones to submit complaints.

Figure 7: Likelihood of Using a Smart Phone to Conduct Business with the City of Cape Coral

How likely, if at all, would you be to use a smart phone to conduct the following types of business with the City of Cape Coral?



Conclusions

Life is good in Cape Coral.

Most residents gave positive ratings for their overall quality of life and for Cape Coral as a place to raise children. About four in five respondents gave excellent or good ratings to Cape Coral as a place to live, to retire and to their neighborhoods. These ratings remained stable from 2013 to 2015 and were similar to national benchmark comparisons. Most residents (63%) are pleased with the overall quality of City services. About 85% of residents plan on remaining in Cape Coral and would recommend Cape Coral to others.

Economy is important to residents.

Respondents indicated that the Economy should be a top focus area over the next two years. Overall, Economy ratings were similar to the national benchmark; however ratings for Cape Coral as a place to work and overall economic health were lower than in other communities. Fewer Cape Coral residents reported working in the city than residents in comparison communities. Most aspects of Economy remained stable from 2013 to 2015; however, ratings for employment opportunities improved as did ratings for personal economic future. Further, more residents in Cape Coral than elsewhere think the economy will have a positive impact on their income.

Safety is a top priority to Cape Coral residents.

Safety was also identified as one of the facets most important to residents, and, overall, Cape Coral performed solidly within this facet. About 85% of respondents felt safe downtown and almost all felt safe in their neighborhoods. All Safety services, including police, fire, ambulance and emergency preparedness were rated positively by a majority of respondents. Most respondents had neither been the victim of a crime nor needed to report a crime. A higher percentage of Cape Coral residents reported that they had stocked supplies for an emergency than residents in comparison communities. Safety ratings remained stable from 2013 to 2015.