

# **The National Citizen Survey™**

## **Elk Grove, CA**

Community Livability Report

2013

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The National Citizen Survey™  
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# About

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

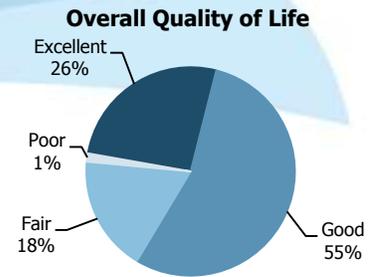
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample selected from 1,200 residents of the City of Elk Grove. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for the entire sample (269 completed surveys). The methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Elk Grove

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Elk Grove as excellent or good. The rating for the overall quality of live in Elk Grove was similar to the national benchmark.

Below are shown 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 dark purple; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest purple. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

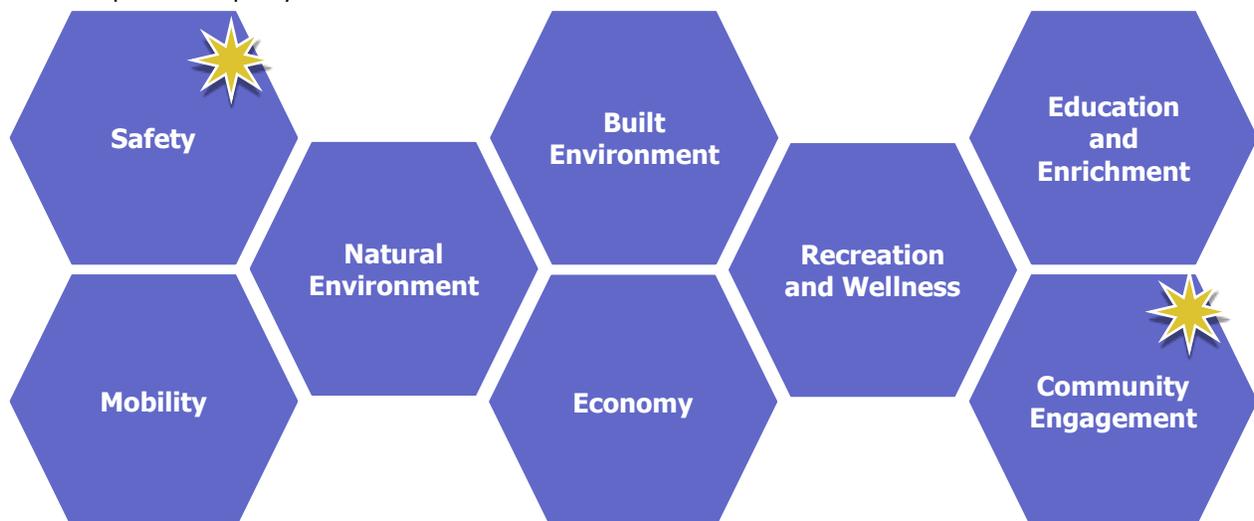


In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important to residents’ overall quality of life. Residents identified these facets of community life (Safety and Community Engagement) as the most central to what makes Elk Grove their home. Overall, the eight facets of livability received favorable ratings and were similar to other communities across the nation. 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 Elk Grove’s unique questions.

## Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark
- Benchmark comparison not available
- ★ Most important to quality of life



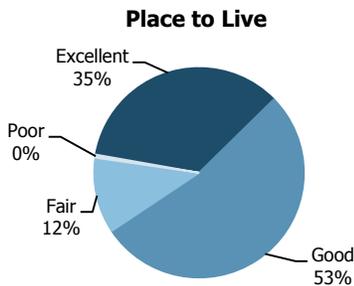
# Community Characteristics

*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. More than 8 in 10 respondents described Elk Grove as a place to live as “excellent” or “good.” Respondents’ ratings of Elk Grove as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Elk Grove as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Elk Grove and its overall appearance. These ratings were similar to ratings in other communities and were rated as “excellent” or “good” by a majority of respondents.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight dimensions of Community Livability. When benchmark comparisons were available, these ratings tended to be similar to the national benchmark. At least 8 in 10 respondents rated aspects of Safety in Elk Grove, one of the facets of the community that was identified as most important to the overall quality of life, favorably while about three-quarters felt positively about the Natural Environment. Aspects of Mobility were somewhat mixed with paths and walking trails and ease of walking being rated more positively than travel by car or public transportation. About 7 in 10 respondents rated most aspects of Recreation and Wellness positively with the availability of preventive health services and health care emerging as strengths within Elk Grove.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

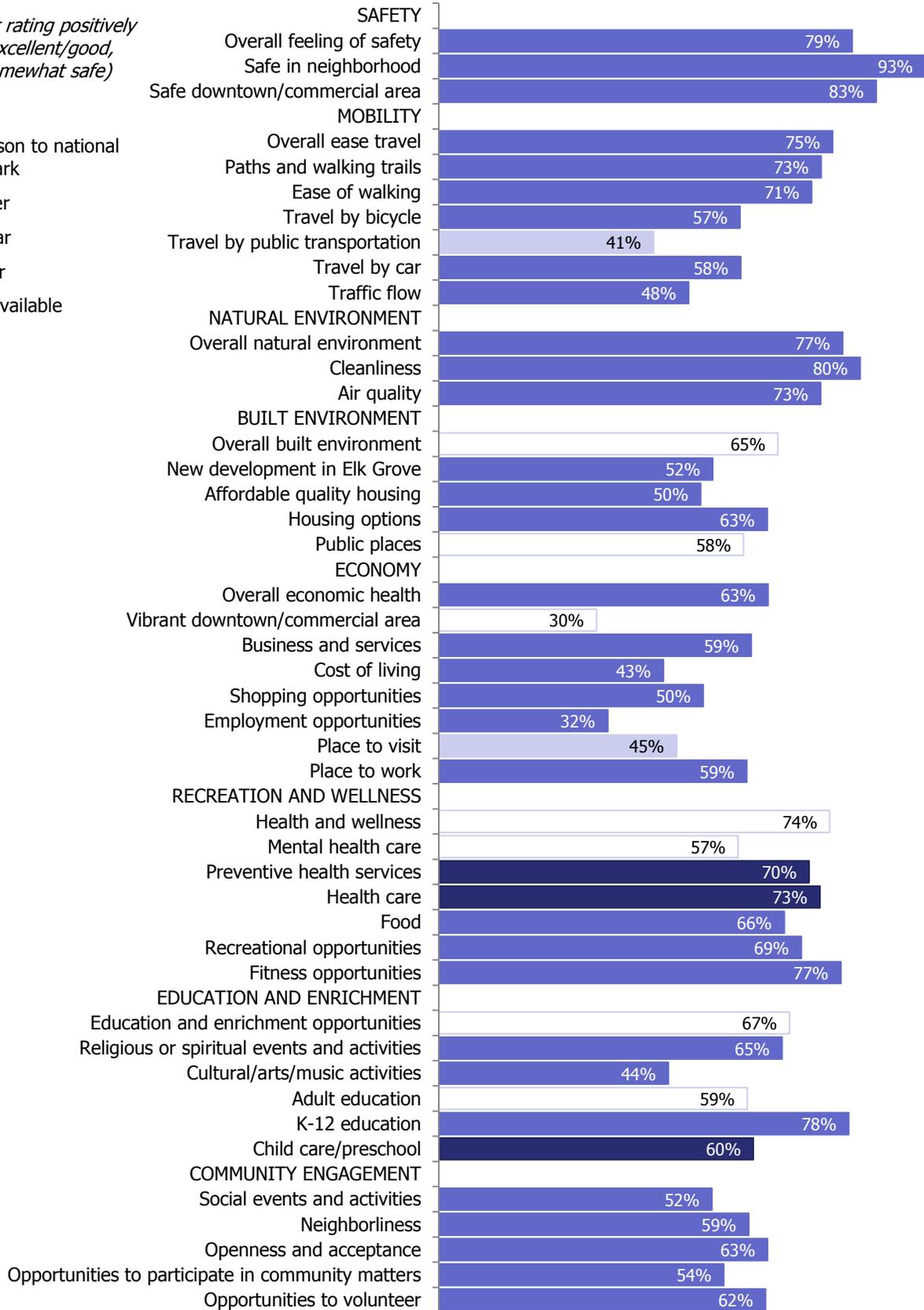


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



# Governance

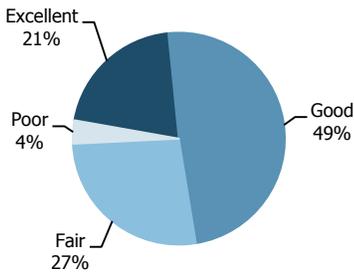
*How well does the government of Elk Grove meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Elk Grove 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 the City of Elk Grove was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 70% of respondents, while services provided by the Federal Government were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 39% of respondents. Ratings for the services provided by Elk Grove were similar to national benchmark comparisons.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Elk Grove’s leadership and governance. Most of these ratings were positive and similar to the national benchmark. About half of respondents felt the City did an excellent or good job of welcoming citizen involvement, being honest and acting in the best interest of Elk Grove. Residents were generally pleased with the overall direction of the community and had confidence in City government.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Elk Grove. These services and amenities were rated positively by at least half of respondents and tended to be similar to national benchmark comparisons. Services within the Natural Environment received some of the highest ratings, although the rating for open space was below the benchmark, while services within the Built Environment were generally lower. Roughly three in five respondents rated the Mobility services as “excellent” or “good.” Safety services, one of the two facets most important to residents, received positive ratings from a majority of residents, though emergency preparedness was rated lowest.

**Overall Quality of City Services**



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower □ Not available

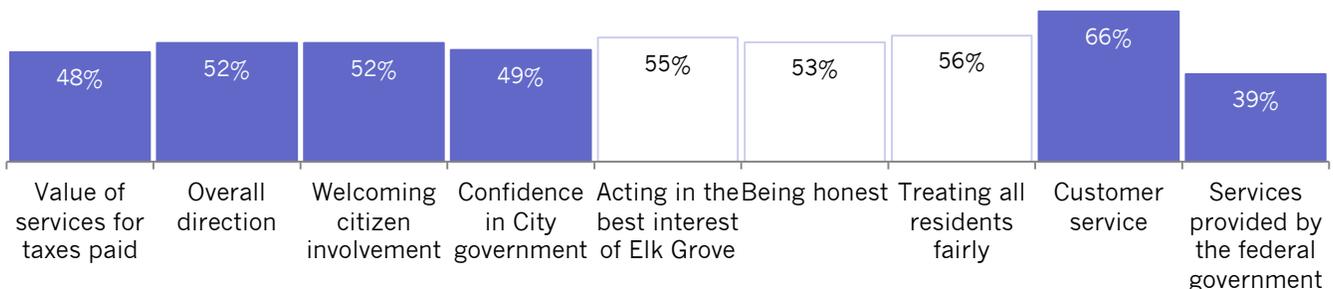
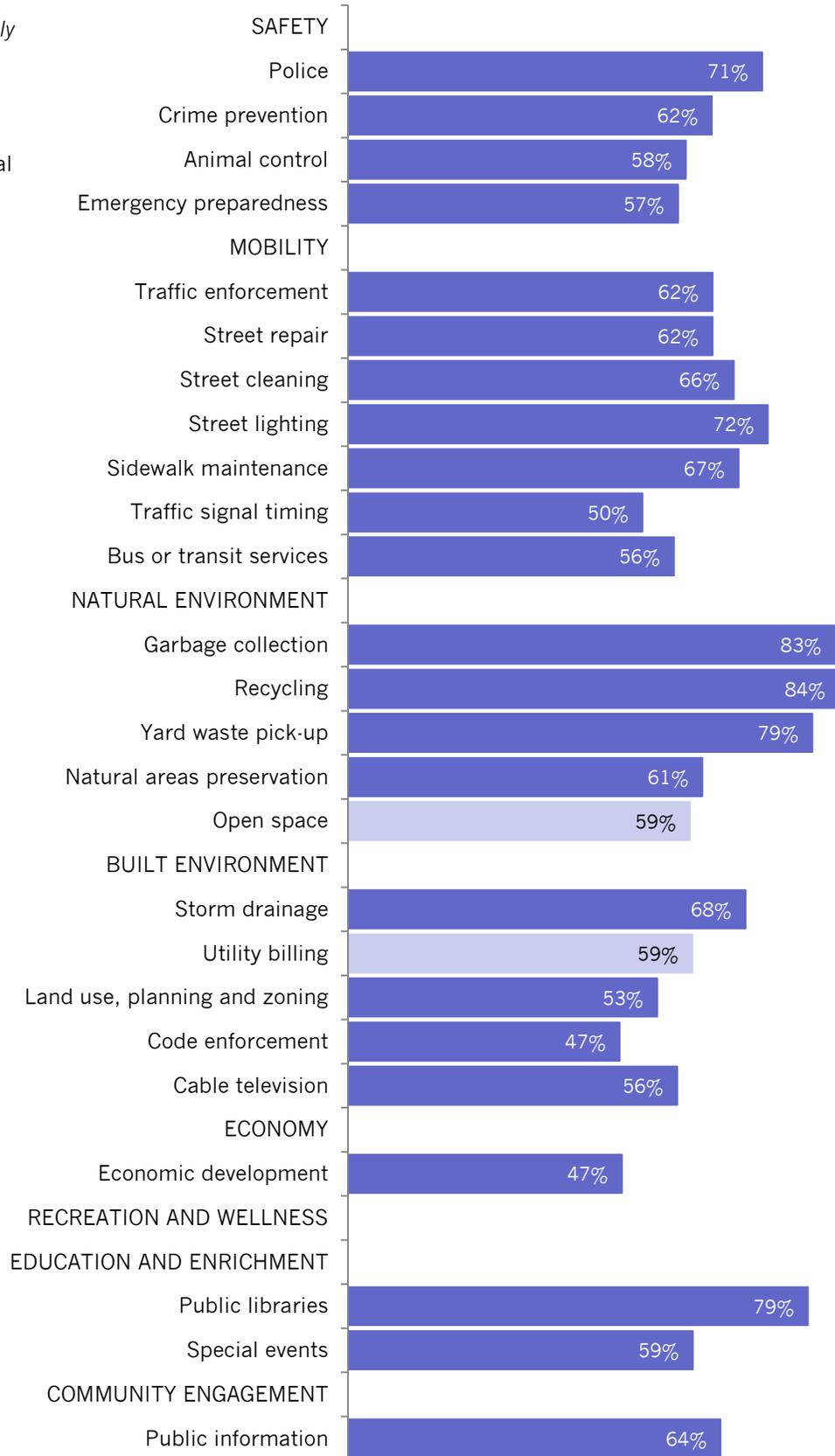


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available



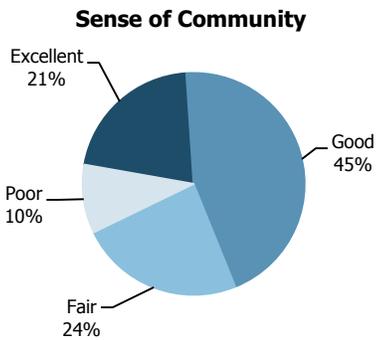
# Participation

*Are the residents of Elk Grove connected to the community and each other?*

An engaged community is harnessing 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 two-thirds of respondents rated the sense of community in Elk Grove as “excellent” or “good,” and a strong majority of residents would recommend living in Elk Grove and plan to stay in Elk Grove for the next five years. These ratings were similar to the benchmark. Less than half of the respondents reported contacting an Elk Grove employee within the last 12 months, this number was lower than the benchmark.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Overall, the extent to which respondents participated in these activities varied, but tended to be similar or lower when compared to the activity levels of residents in other communities.

At least 8 in 10 Elk Grove residents reported participating in activities related to the Natural Environment, including recycling at a higher rate in Elk Grove than in other communities. Participation in Community Engagement activities, one of the two key facets of Elk Grove, was mixed. Most respondents had volunteered or done a favor for a neighbor, but few had attended or watched a local meeting.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

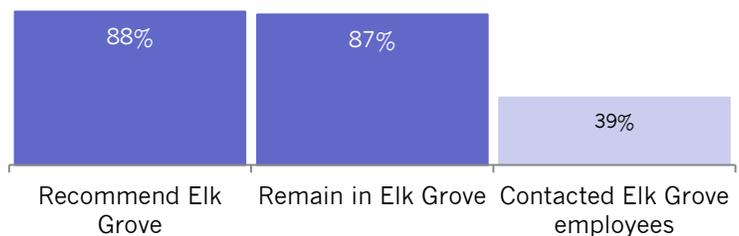
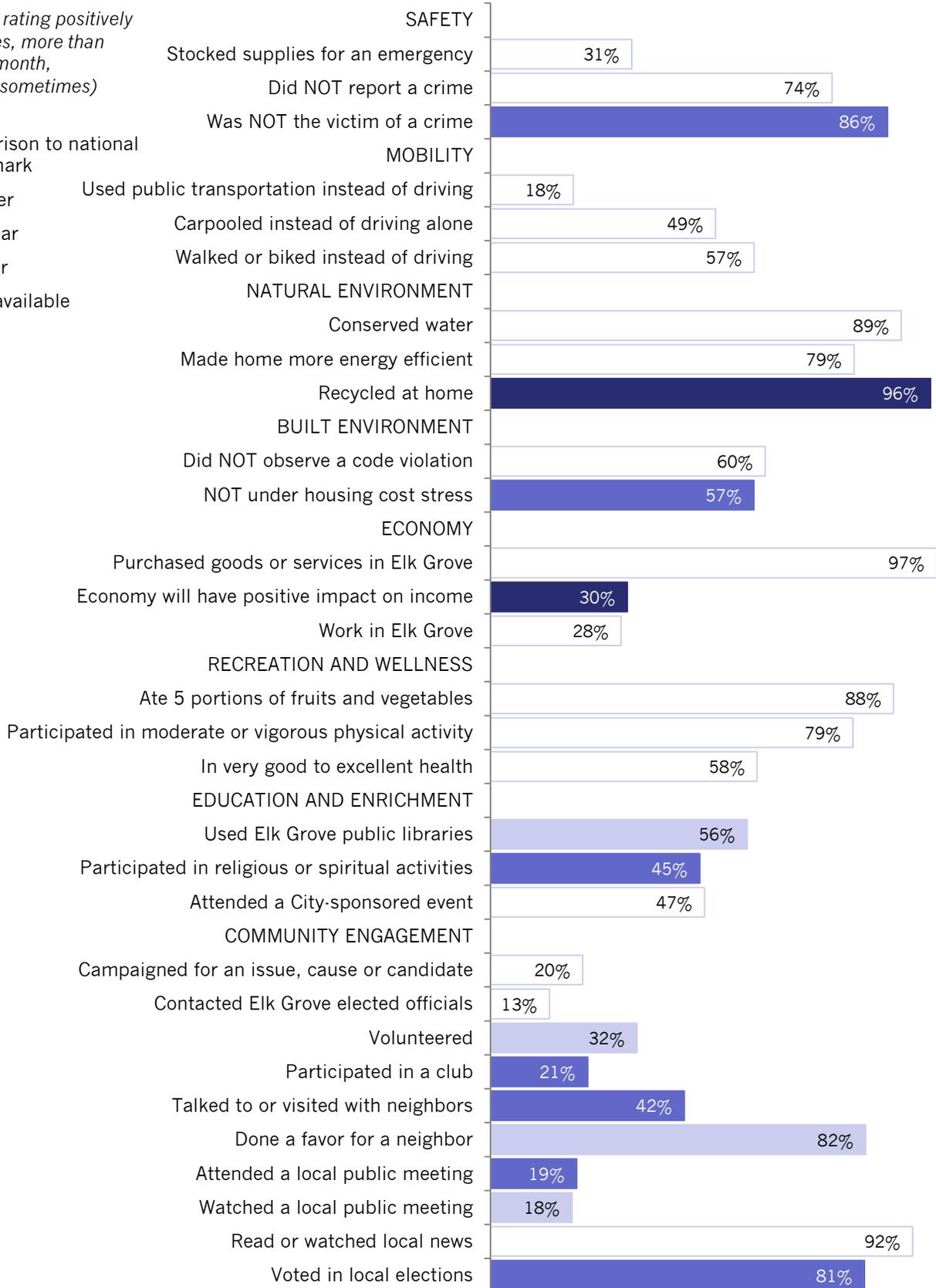


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

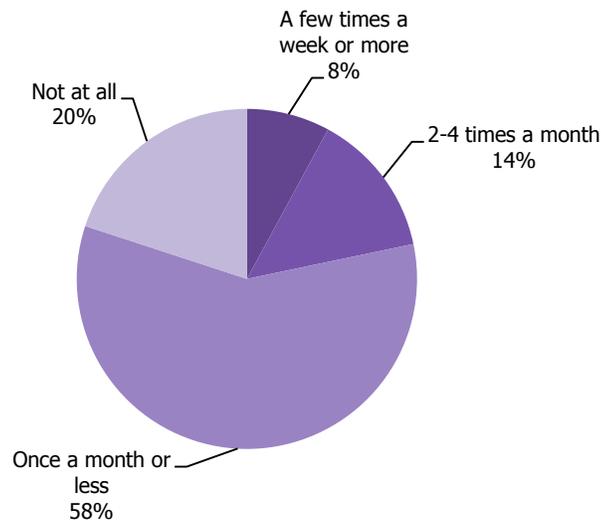


# Special Topics

The City of Elk Grove included three questions of special interest on The NCS. The topics focused on residents' use of and preferences for Old Town Elk Grove.

About 22% of respondents reported visiting Old Town Elk Grove two to four times a month or more frequently. A similar percentage reported not at all visiting Old Town Elk Grove. Most respondents visited Old Town once a month or less.

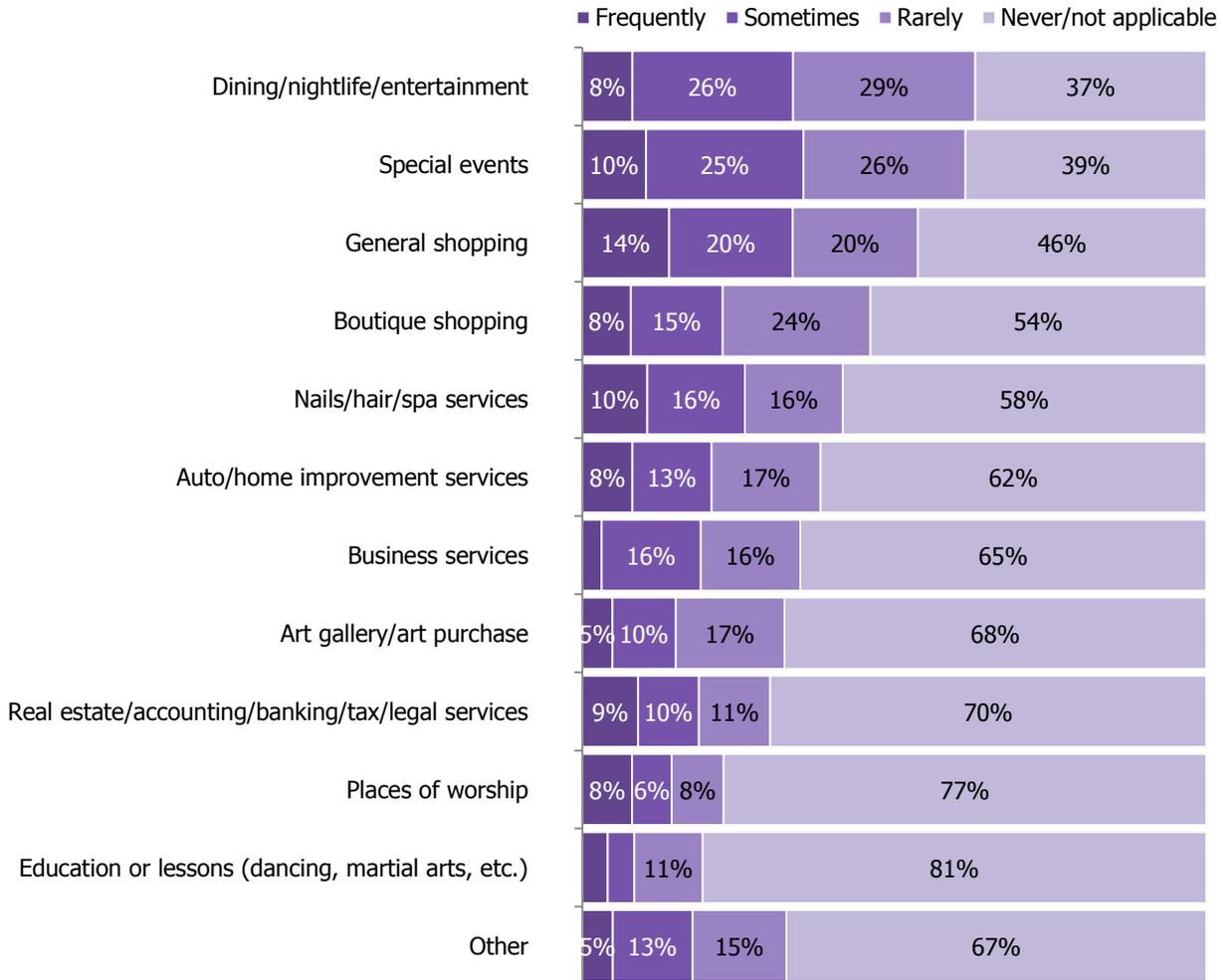
Figure 4: Question 13  
*How often do you visit Old Town Elk Grove?*



When asked how often respondents visited Old Town Elk Grove for a variety of services, more than one-third of respondents went for special events, dining/nightlife/entertainment or general shopping at least sometimes. Respondents were least likely to visit Old Town for education, lessons or for places of worship.

Figure 5: Question 14

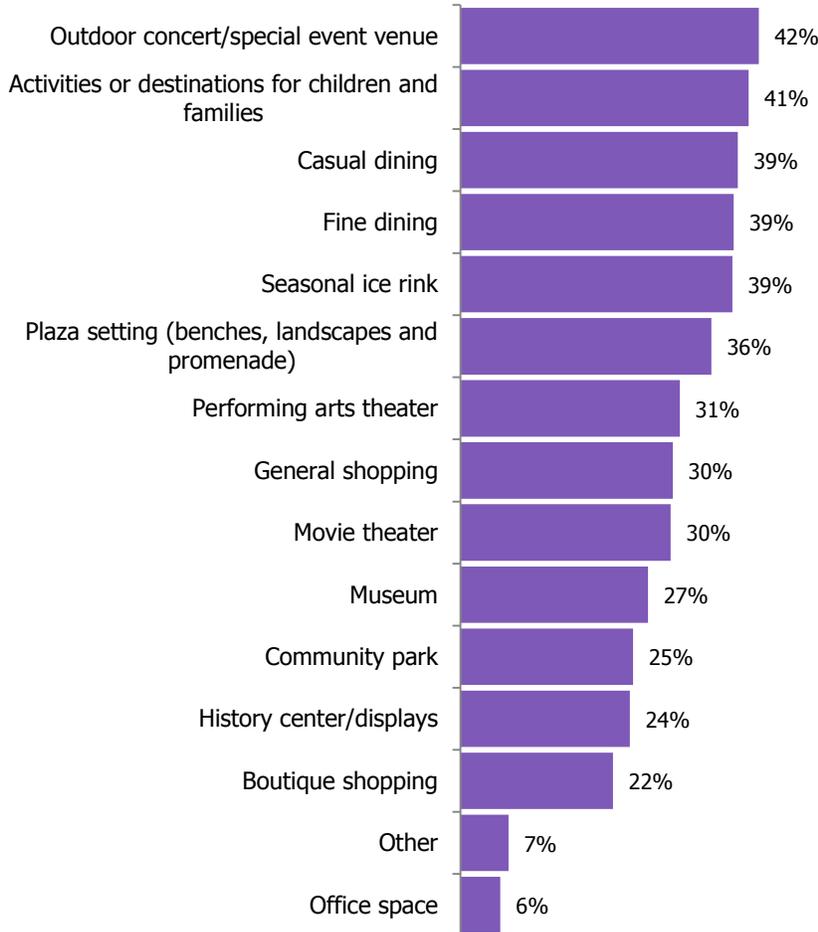
*How often, if at all, do you visit Old Town Elk Grove for each of the following?*



Respondents were given a list of potential new development options for Old Town Elk Grove. About two in five respondents would like to see an outdoor concert/special event venue, activities or destinations for children or families, casual and fine dining and a seasonal ice rink. About one-quarter of respondents would like to see a museum, a community park and history center/display. Few respondents would like to see office space.

Figure 6: Question

*What type of new development, if any, would you like to see in Old Town Elk Grove?*

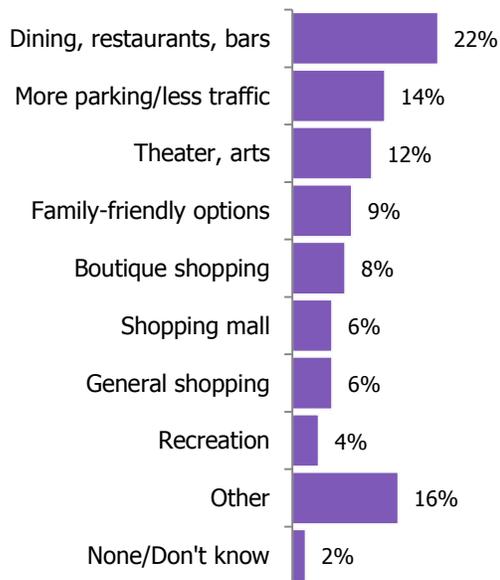


Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

Respondents were asked to record in their own words what types of activities, amenities, shops or services would encourage them to visit Old Town Elk Grove more often. Of the 132 respondents who wrote in a response, most respondents were interested in having more dining, restaurant and bar options or having more parking available to make visiting Old Town Elk Grove easier. Others showed interest in having more theater, art and family-friendly options as well as more places to shop. The complete set of write-in responses can be found in the *Open Ended Responses* report, provided under separate cover.

Figure 7: Question 16

*What types of activities, amenities, shops or services would encourage you to visit Old Town Elk Grove more often?*



# Conclusions

## **Elk Grove residents enjoy a positive quality of life.**

Most residents rated their quality of life as “excellent” or “good;” Elk Grove as a place to live was rated very favorably by residents as well. Overall, many of the facets that make a community livable were rated positively by a majority of respondents and were similar to other communities across the nation. These positive ratings were reflected again in residents’ willingness to recommend Elk Grove to others and to live there for the next five years.

## **Safety helps make Elk Grove a livable community.**

Safety was identified as one of the facets most important to residents’ quality of life, and, overall, Elk Grove residents gave positive ratings to most items that this facet comprised. Many ratings in Elk Grove were at least similar to other communities across the nation. At least four in five respondents felt safe in the different areas of Elk Grove and safety services, including police, crime prevention and emergency preparedness were rated positively by about three in five respondents. The majority of respondents had neither been the victim of a crime nor needed to report a crime.

## **Residents view Old Town Elk Grove as a destination for special events.**

Most residents visited Old Town once a month or less while a minority visited more than twice a month. Most often, residents made these trips to Old Town for special events, dining/nightlife or general shopping. Residents would like to see new development that supports these preferences including spaces for outdoor concerts and special events, activities or events for families and dining options. Engaging residents with these kind of options would help the important community facet of Citizen Engagement.