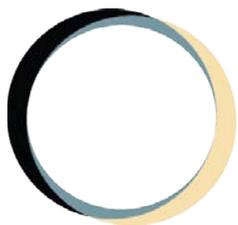


**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

**Sunnyvale, CA**  
Community Livability Report

2017



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The National Citizen Survey™  
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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 Sunnyvale. 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.

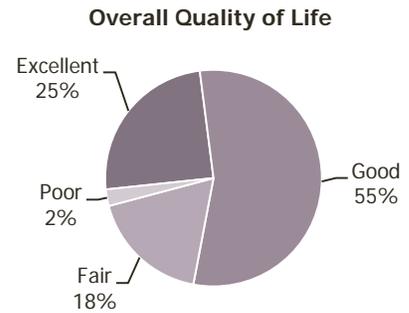
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 251 residents of the City of Sunnyvale. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% 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 Sunnyvale

Most residents (80%) rated the quality of life in Sunnyvale as excellent or good. This was similar to the rating 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.

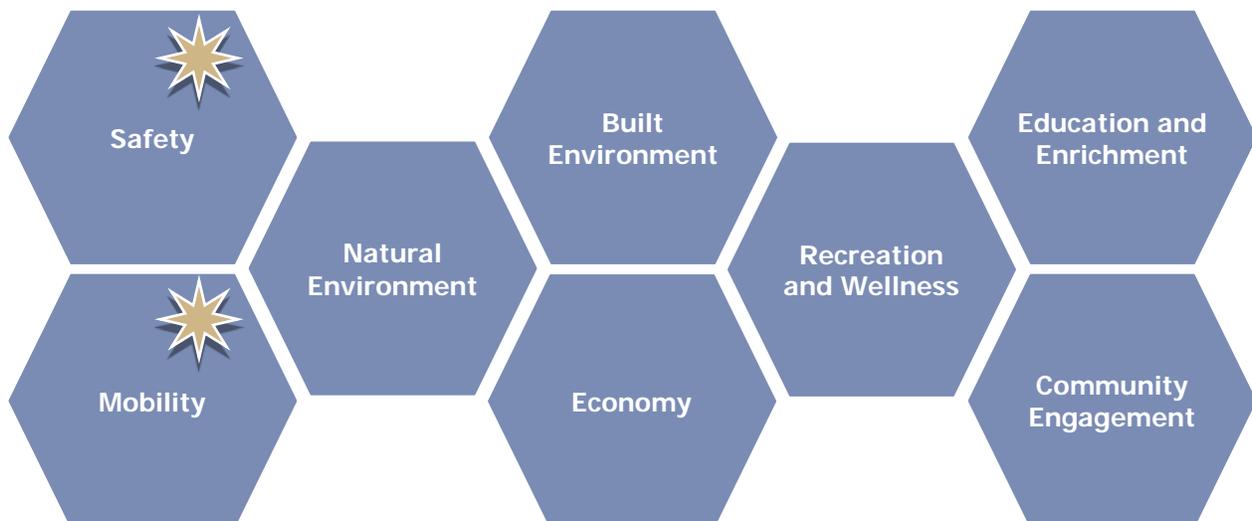
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Mobility as priorities for the Sunnyvale community in the coming two years. This overview of the key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

## Legend

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

★ Most important



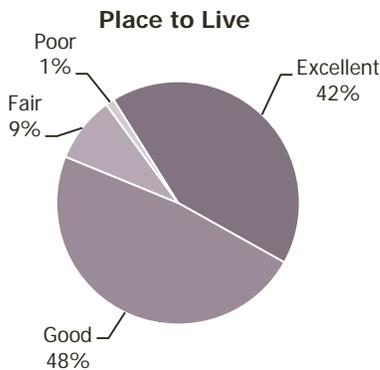
# Community Characteristics

*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 Sunnyvale, 90% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Sunnyvale 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 Sunnyvale as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Sunnyvale and its overall appearance. Roughly three-quarters of residents gave positive ratings to the overall image and overall appearance of the City, their neighborhood as a place to live and Sunnyvale as a place to raise children; these evaluations were all similar to the benchmark comparison. About 4 in 10 residents were pleased with the City as a place to retire, which was lower than ratings 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. Generally, aspects of Safety, Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement all received ratings similar to or higher than the benchmark. Within Economy, residents gave higher higher-than-average evaluations for employment opportunities and the City as a place to work, but saw some challenges around cost of living and Sunnyvale as a place to visit. Built Environment evaluations were similar to the benchmark except for items related to housing.



While the rating for land use, planning and zoning declined since 2015, resident opinion of new development in Sunnyvale and public places improved. Ratings also increased over time for overall feeling of safety, overall natural environment, employment opportunities, Sunnyvale's downtown/commercial area, health and wellness opportunities and social events and activities, but decreased for traffic flow.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



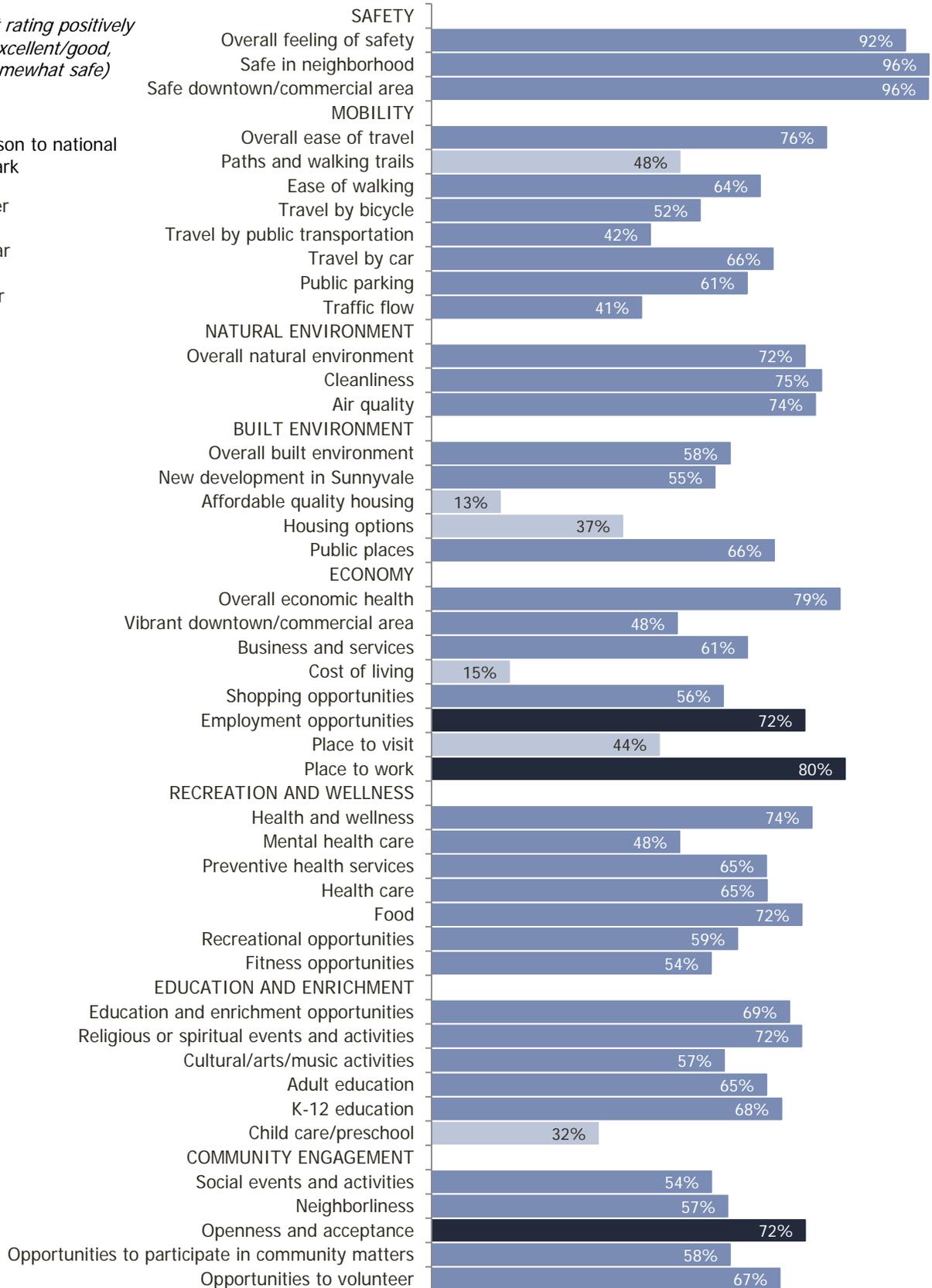
# The National Citizen Survey™

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 Sunnyvale meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

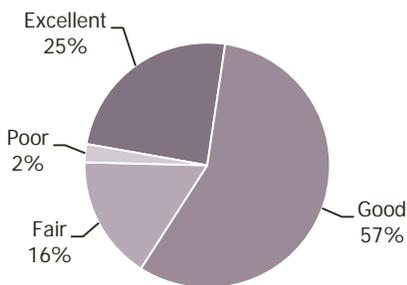
The overall quality of the services provided by Sunnyvale as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. In Sunnyvale, 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall quality of City services and 4 in 10 were pleased with the services provided by the Federal Government (both similar to the benchmark comparison).

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Sunnyvale’s leadership and governance. About 7 in 10 residents were pleased with the customer service provided by the City and treating all residents fairly, and roughly 6 in 10 residents gave excellent or good marks to the remaining aspects of government performance. All aspects were similar to the national benchmark.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Sunnyvale. Residents rated all City services but two as similar to the benchmark, with animal control and economic development standing out with higher-than-average ratings, with animal control also improving since 2015. Safety ratings were particularly strong: at least three-quarters of residents or more gave positive marks to police, fire and ambulance/EMS services as well as to crime prevention, fire prevention and animal control. Sunnyvale residents were also more likely to give favorable marks to economic development than those who lived elsewhere.

When compared to 2015, ratings in 2017 for cable television and bus or transit services increased, while those for land use, planning and zoning decreased.

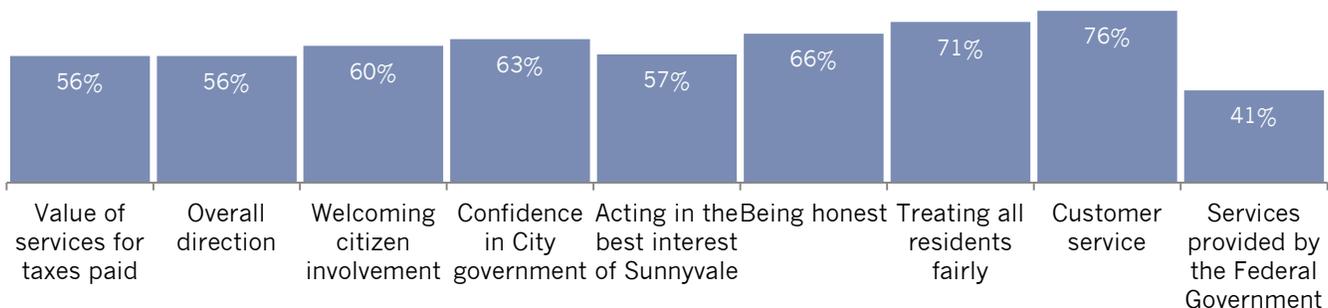
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



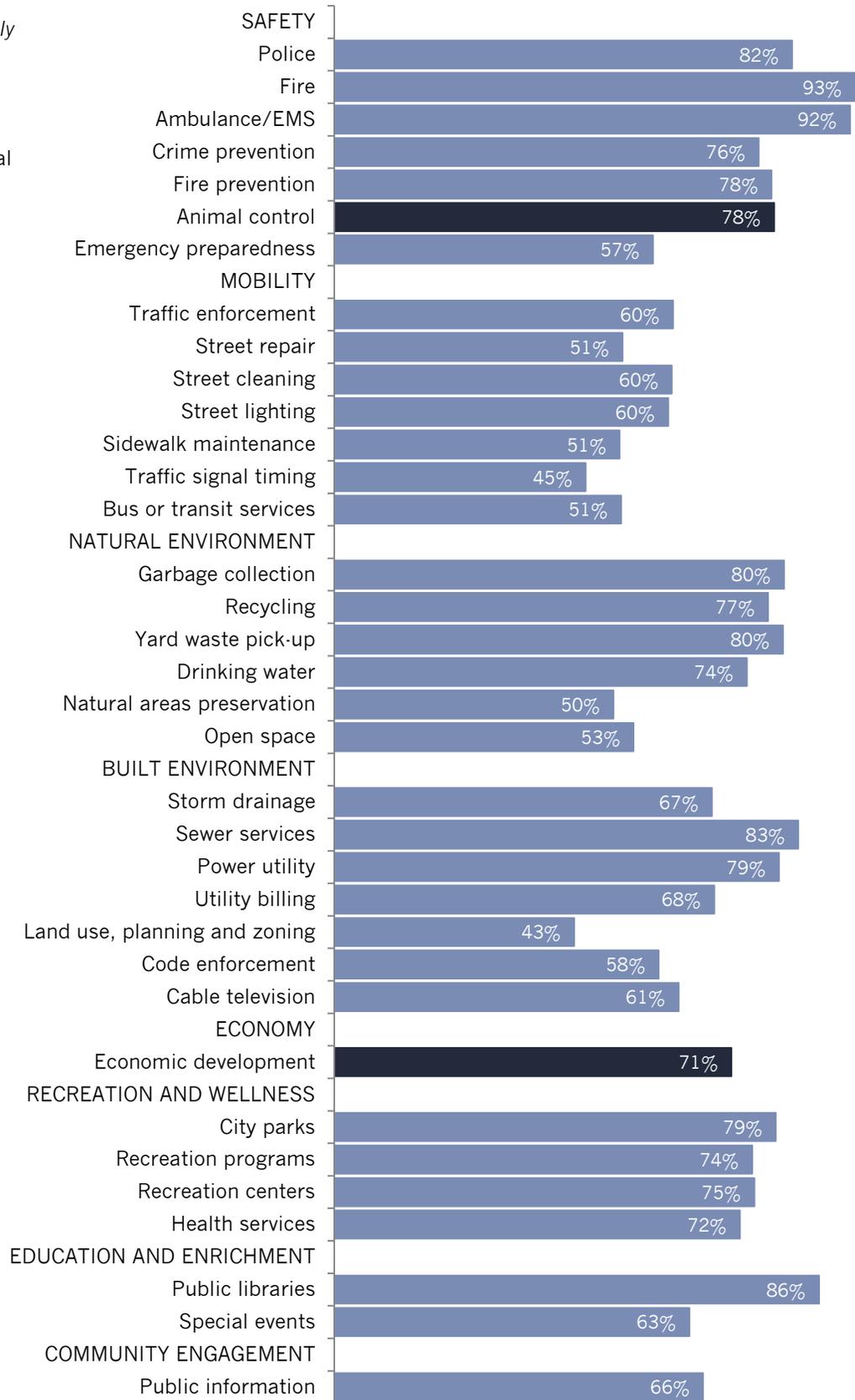
# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



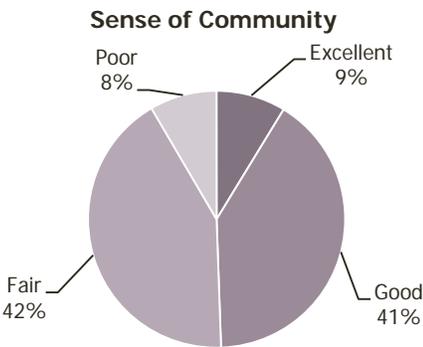
# Participation

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

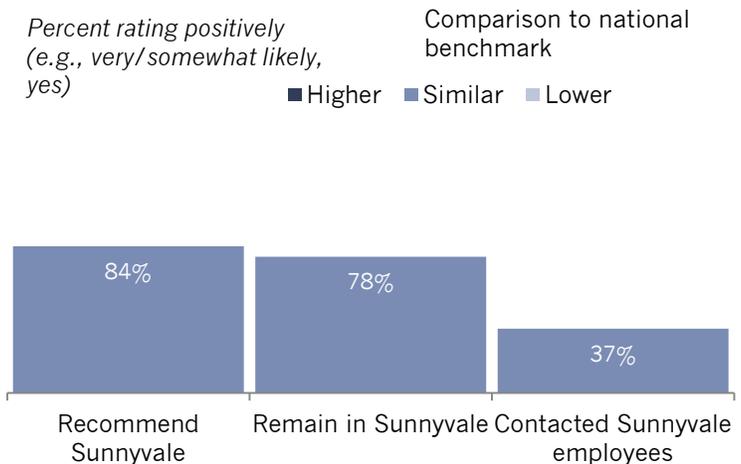
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. Half of residents gave favorable reviews to the sense of community in Sunnyvale; further, about 8 in 10 would recommend living in the City to someone who asked and planned to remain in Sunnyvale for the next five years. About 4 in 10 residents had contacted Sunnyvale in the 12 months prior to the survey. These ratings were similar to the ratings seen in other communities across the U.S.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Participation rates varied widely across the different facets, making the benchmark comparison (and comparison to Sunnyvale over time) helpful for understanding the results.

Overall, residents of Sunnyvale participated in most activities at rates similar to those found in other communities across the nation. About 9 in 10 residents had not reported a crime or been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey, and about one-third of respondents had stocked supplies for an emergency; these levels were on par with the rest of the country. Sunnyvale residents were less likely than residents elsewhere to have used City recreation centers, participated in religious or spiritual activities, attended a City-sponsored event, volunteered, done a favor for a neighbor or voted in local elections. Sunnyvale residents were more likely than residents in other communities to have used alternative transportation modes.



More residents in 2017 reported attending a City-sponsored event or campaigning for an issue, cause or candidate than in 2015; other participation rates remained stable since the previous survey iteration.



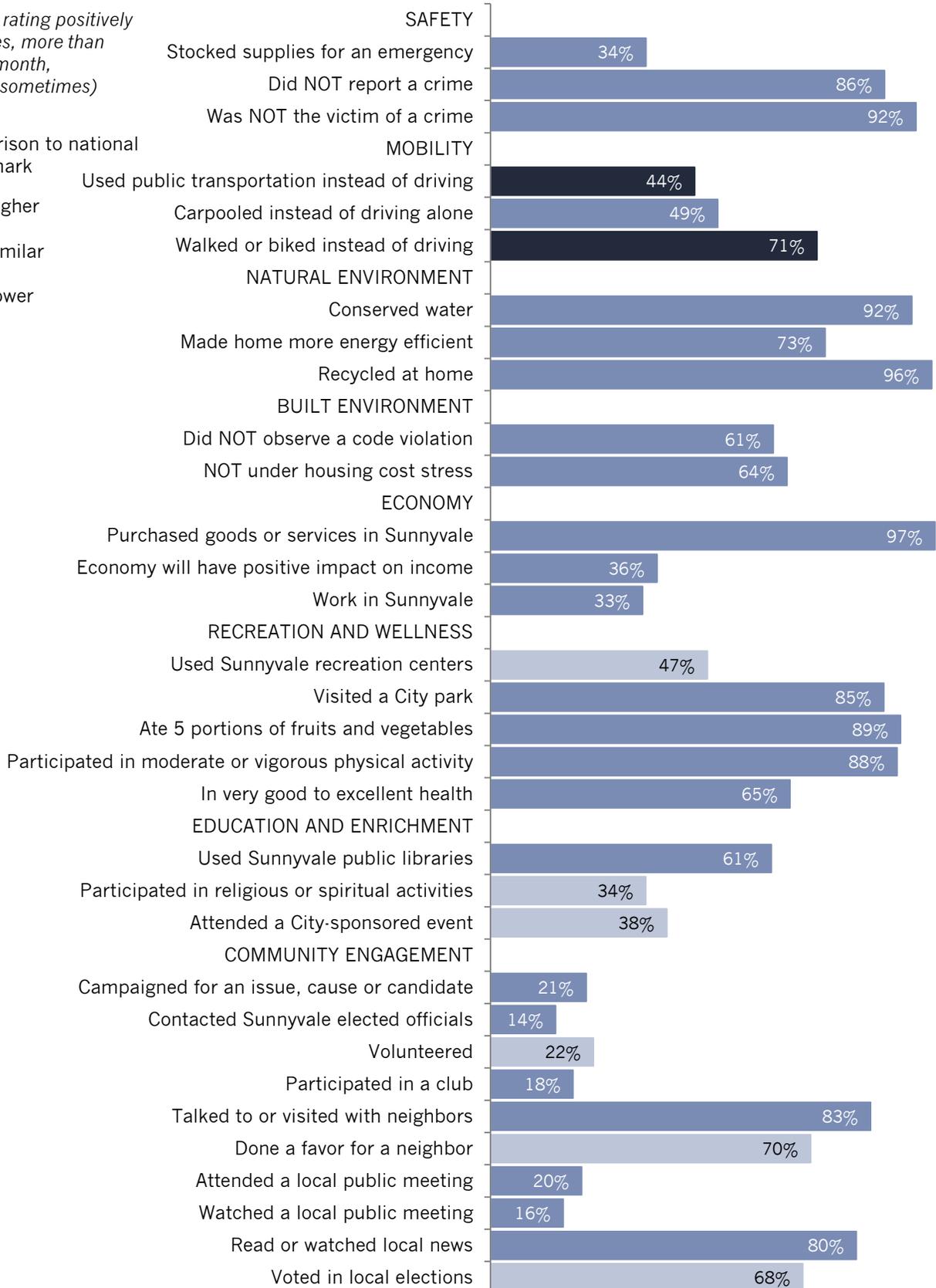
## The National Citizen Survey™

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



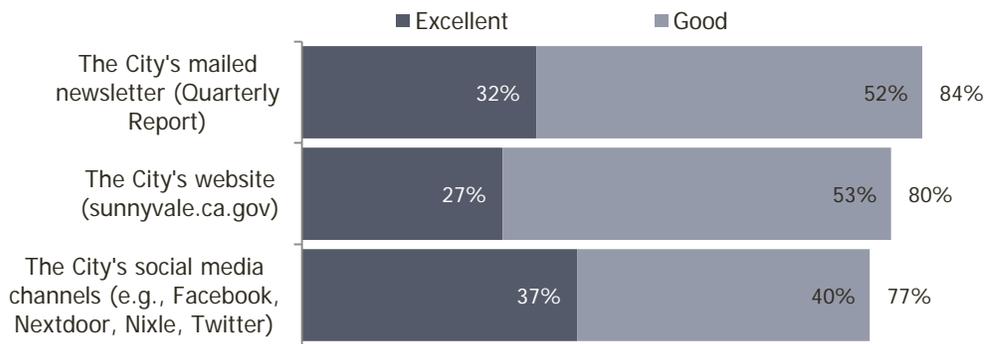
# Special Topics

The City of Sunnyvale included six questions of special interest on The NCS. Topics included City information sources, social media use, volunteerism and visits to the downtown area. Additionally, residents were asked to write in their own words what they felt the top community issues and City services were for the City of Sunnyvale to address in the coming year; verbatim responses to these questions can be found in the *Open End Report* under separate cover.

When asked to rate the overall quality of three different sources of City information, roughly 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to all listed sources (the City’s mailed newsletter, the City website and City social media channels).

Figure 4: Quality of City Information

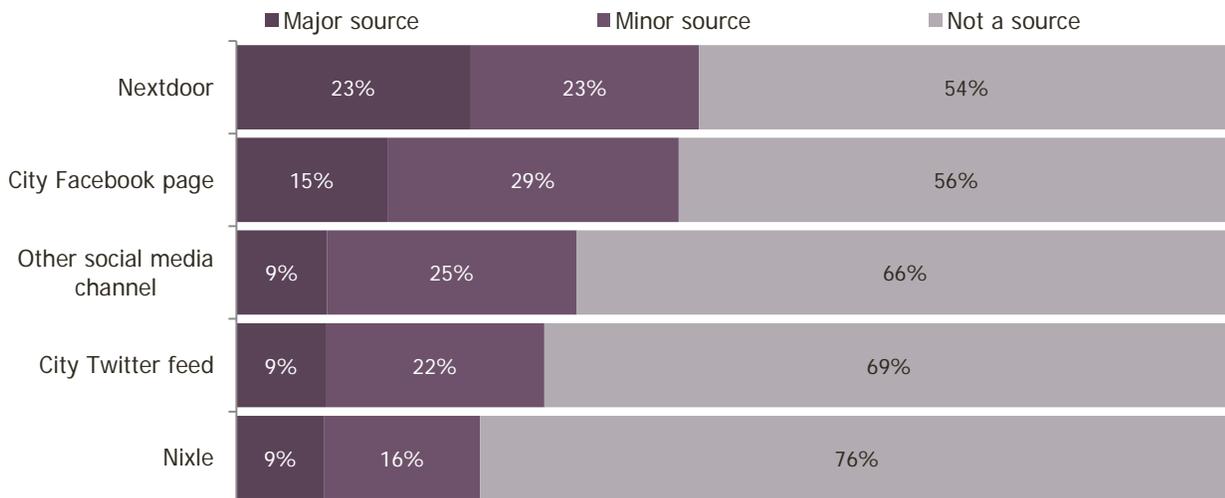
Please rate the overall quality of information available in each of the following City information sources:



Reflecting next on their reliance on different social media sources for City information, residents indicated how much they relied on each source. The most popular social media sources of information were Nextdoor and the City Facebook page; slightly less than half of residents rated each of these as a major or minor source. About one-third utilized another social media channel or the City Twitter feed as an information source and about one-quarter used Nixle.

Figure 5: Sources of City Information

Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following social media channels for obtaining information about the City government and its activities, events and services:

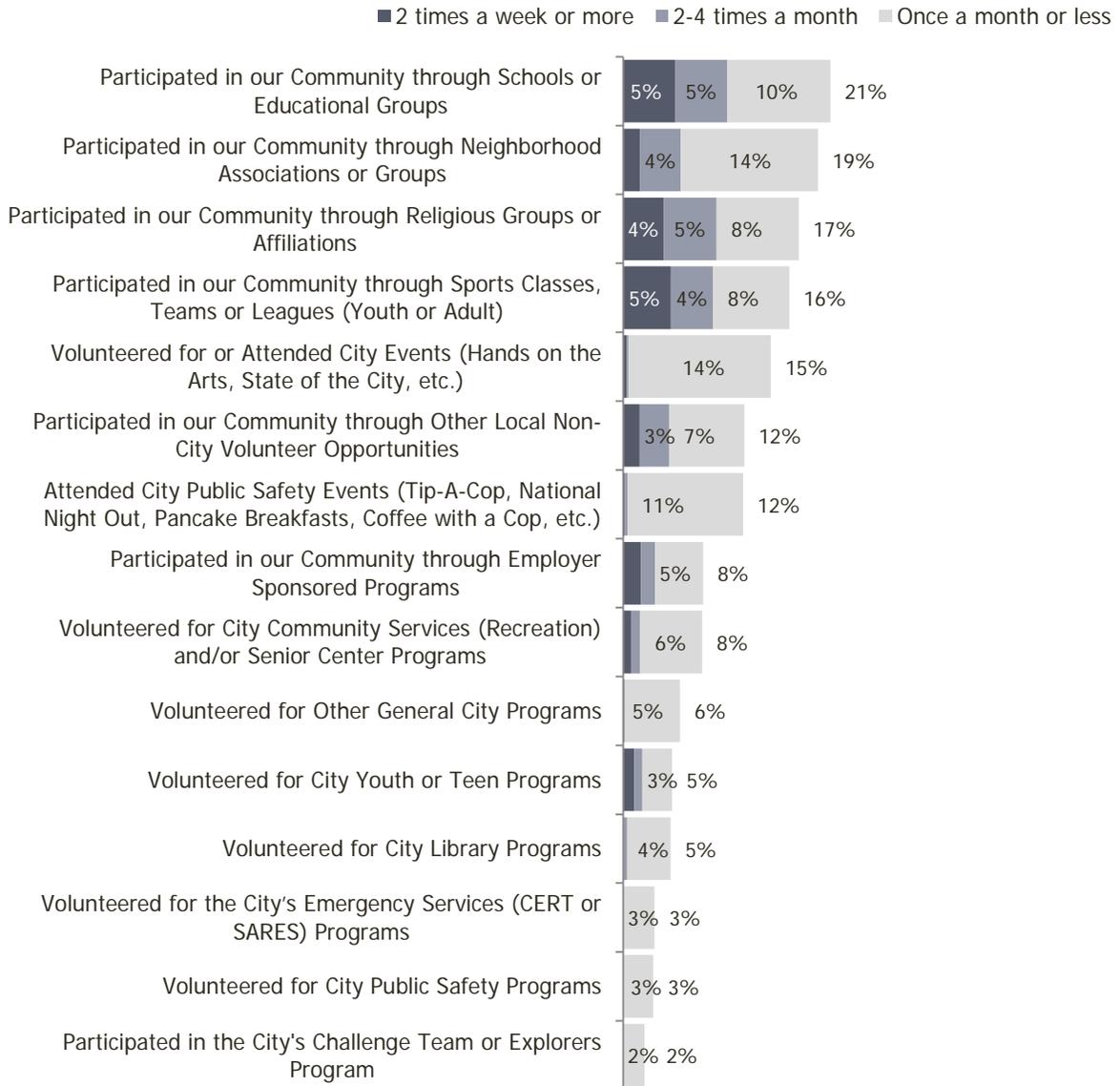


The National Citizen Survey™

Survey respondents reviewed a list of volunteer and participation opportunities in the community and indicated how often, if at all, they had done each. The highest levels of participation occurred within schools or educational groups (with 21% saying they had participated at least once in the previous 12 months), neighborhood associations or groups (19%), religious groups or affiliations (17%) sports classes, teams or leagues (16%) and City events (15%). About 1 in 10 had been involved in other local non-City volunteer opportunities or attended City public safety events. Fewer residents had participated in or volunteered for other listed opportunities.

Figure 6: Community Involvement and Volunteerism

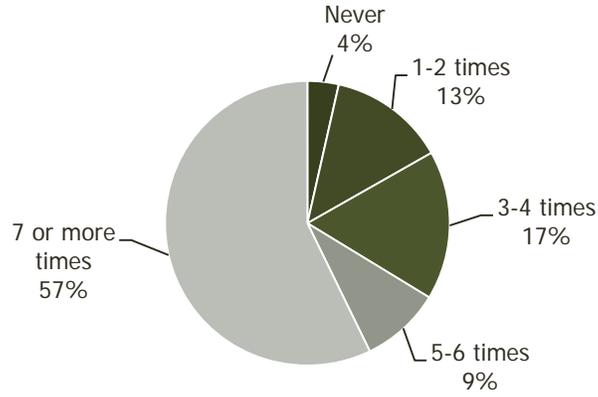
*Thinking about ways that you or your household get involved in the community, in the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members done or participated in each of the following?*



Just over half of residents reported visiting downtown Sunnyvale seven or more times in the 21 months prior to the survey for shopping, dining or entertainment, and about 4 in 10 had visited 1-6 times. Very few residents had never visited downtown in the last 12 months.

Figure 7: Frequency of Visiting Downtown Sunnyvale

*In the past 12 months, how many times, if at all, have you or another household member visited downtown Sunnyvale for shopping, dining or entertainment?*

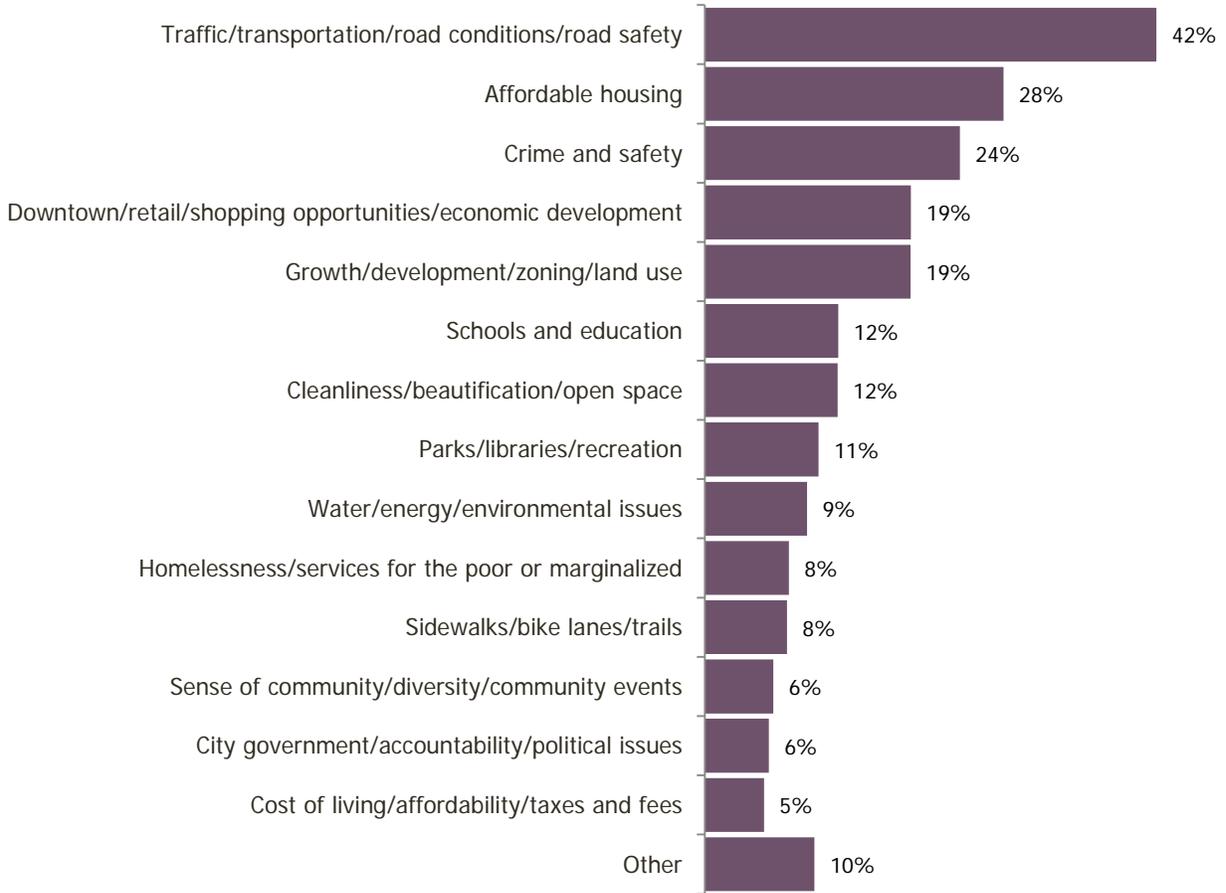


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The first of two open-ended questions asked residents to write in what they considered to be the top three community issues for the City to focus on in the coming year. The most frequently-mentioned community issues included those related to traffic and road safety, affordable housing and crime and safety (please see the *Open End Report* under separate cover for a full list of verbatim responses).

Figure 8: Top Community Issues

*What are the top three community issues you would like to see the City focus on in the coming year?*

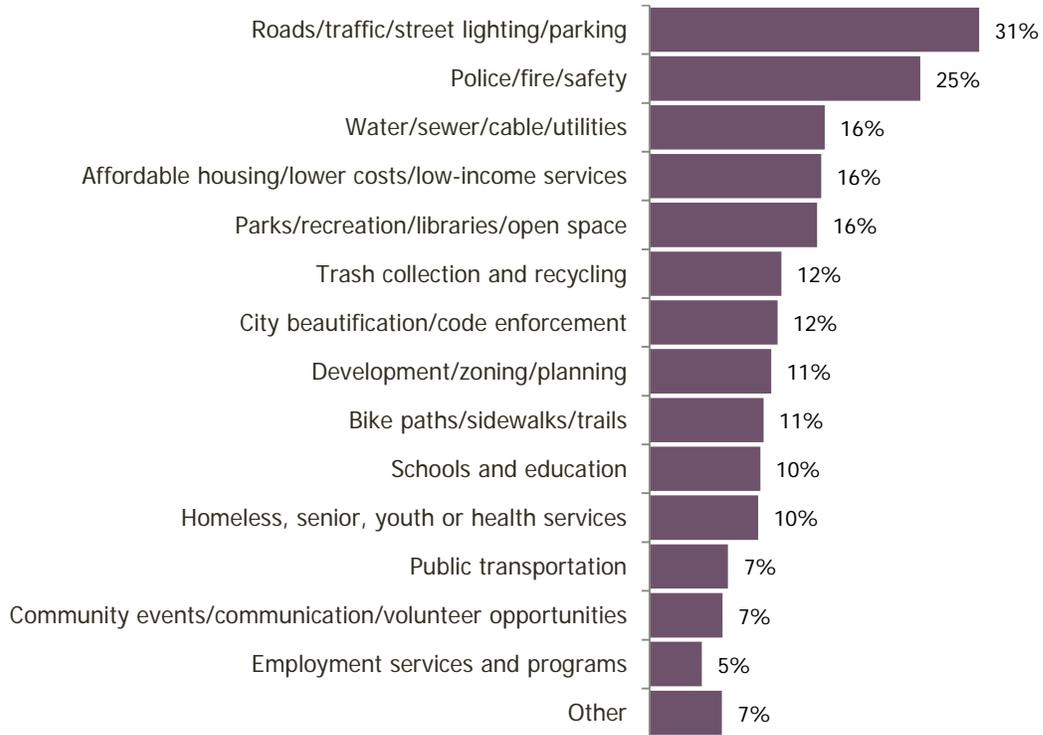


Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one option.

The second open-ended question asked residents to name the top three City services that they wanted the City of Sunnyvale to focus on in the coming year. Of residents who responded to this question, about one-third wanted the City to focus on services related to roads, traffic, street lighting or parking, and one-quarter mentioned police, fire, or safety-related services (for more information refer to the *Open End Report*).

Figure 9: Top City Services

*What are the top three City services you would like to see the City focus on in the coming year?*



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

# Conclusions

## Sunnyvale continues to be a great place to live.

As in 2015, most Sunnyvale residents rated their quality of life as excellent or good and gave positive reviews to the City as a place to live. Around three-quarters of residents favorably rated the overall image and overall appearance of the City, their neighborhood as a place to live and Sunnyvale as a place to raise children. Eight in 10 would recommend living in Sunnyvale to someone who asked and planned to remain in the City for the next five years.

## Resident perception of Safety has improved.

Residents identified Safety as an important focus area for the City in the next two years. Almost all residents gave positive reviews to the overall feeling of safety in Sunnyvale (an improvement since 2015) as well as feelings of safety in their neighborhoods and in Sunnyvale's downtown area. Ratings for safety-related services were also positive: at least three-quarters of residents gave positive marks to police, fire and ambulance/EMS services as well as to crime prevention, fire prevention and animal control. Further, the rating for animal control increased since 2015 and was higher than average. About 9 in 10 residents had not reported a crime or been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey. While top-of-mind issues can shift in any community from year to year, it may be noteworthy that fewer residents in 2017 wrote in comments related to crime and safety (23% in 2017 versus 34% in 2015) when asked what they felt the top community issues were for the City of Sunnyvale to address in the coming year.

## Residents have mixed feelings about Mobility.

Residents also identified Mobility as a priority in the coming years. Generally, Mobility-related items received ratings similar to the national average; about three-quarters of residents positively rated the overall ease of travel in the community, while about two-thirds were pleased with ease of travel by walking and by car. Sunnyvale residents were more likely than residents elsewhere to have walked or biked instead of driving or to have used public transportation, and the rating for bus or transit services increased since 2015.

However, challenges related to Mobility were also identified. The rating for traffic flow declined since the previous survey iteration, and residents gave below-average marks to the overall quality of paths and walking trails. In an open-ended question on top community issues to address in the next year, about 4 in 10 respondents made a comment related to traffic, transportation, road conditions or road safety (up from 3 in 10 in 2015) and about 1 in 10 mentioned sidewalks, bike lanes or trails. When asked about top City services to focus on, about 3 in 10 residents wrote in comments related to roads, traffic, street lighting or parking and 1 in 10 commented on bike paths, sidewalks or trails.

## Affordable housing and growth are areas of concern for residents.

Sunnyvale residents gave below-average ratings to the availability of affordable quality housing, variety of housing options and cost of living in the City. Further, the rating for land use, planning and zoning decreased since 2015. When asked to write in their thoughts on top community issues, one-quarter of respondents commented on affordable housing and about 2 in 10 were concerned with growth, development, zoning or land use. When thinking about City services to focus on in the next year, 16% made a comment related to affordable housing or lower costs and 11% mentioned development, zoning or planning.