



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Bainbridge Island, WA

Community Livability Report

2017



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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 Bainbridge Island. 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).

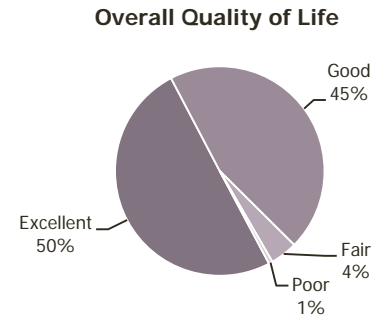
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 578 residents of the City of Bainbridge Island. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.



Quality of Life in Bainbridge Island

Nearly all residents rated the quality of life in Bainbridge Island as excellent or good. This rating was higher 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.



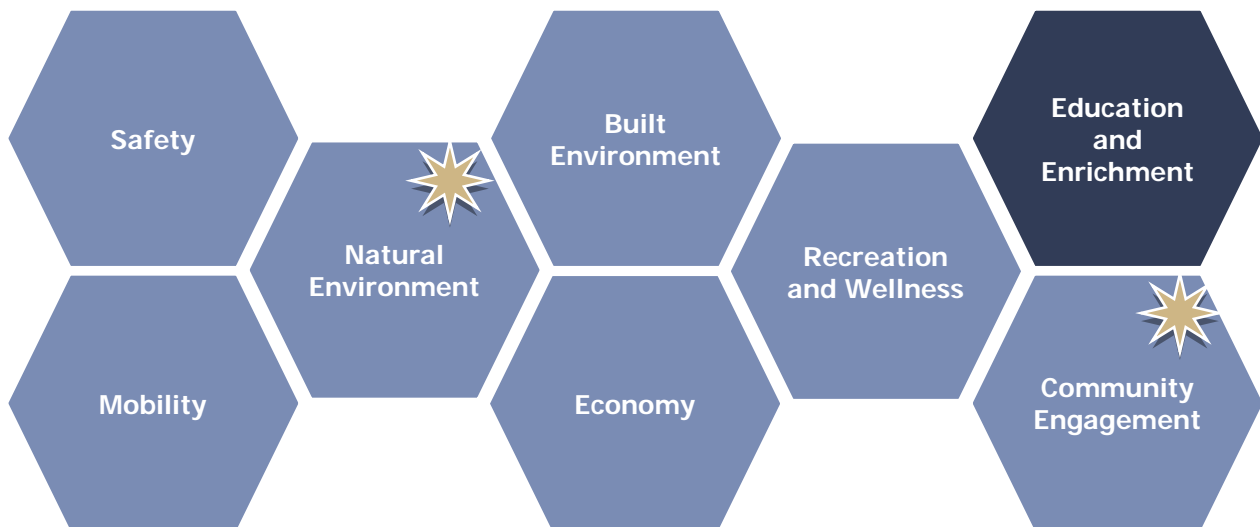
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Similar to 2015, residents identified Natural Environment as a priority for the Bainbridge Island community in the coming two years. Diverging from 2015, Community Engagement emerged as the second top priority (instead of Economy and Built Environment, which rounded out residents’ selection of three top priorities in 2015). Bainbridge Island residents gave favorable ratings to both of these facets of community as well as to all other facets, but ratings for Education and Enrichment were exceptionally high compared to 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 Bainbridge Island’s unique question.

Legend

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

- * Most important



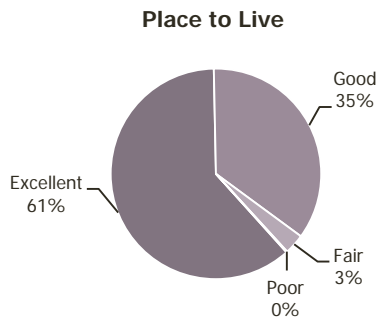
Community Characteristics

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 Bainbridge Island, 97% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Bainbridge Island as a place to live were higher than ratings in other communities across the nation.

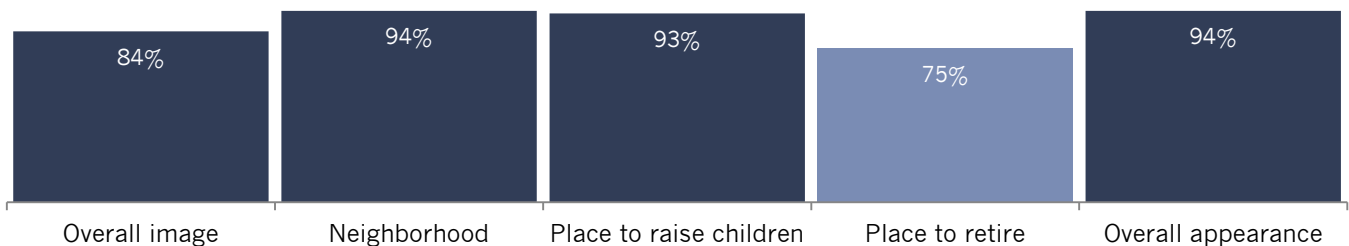
In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Bainbridge Island as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Bainbridge Island and its overall appearance. Most respondents positively assessed these aspects of the community and all but one (the City as a place to retire) were higher than the national benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Fifteen features across most of the facets received ratings that were higher in Bainbridge Island than elsewhere. Of particular note, nearly all residents applauded aspects of Natural Environment and Safety, which tended to be higher than the national benchmark. Public places where people spend their time received higher-than-average ratings within Built Environment, but new development, affordable quality housing and housing options received positive ratings from fewer than half of residents and lagged behind peer communities. Further, affordable quality housing and housing options declined between the 2015 and 2017 survey iterations. Relatedly, overall cost of living and employment opportunities were lower than national averages.



Overall, most elements within Community Characteristics remained stable over time, though several items decreased in 2017. Noteworthy examples include the decline in overall health care and preventative health services (see *Trends Over Time* report available under separate cover for more detail).

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



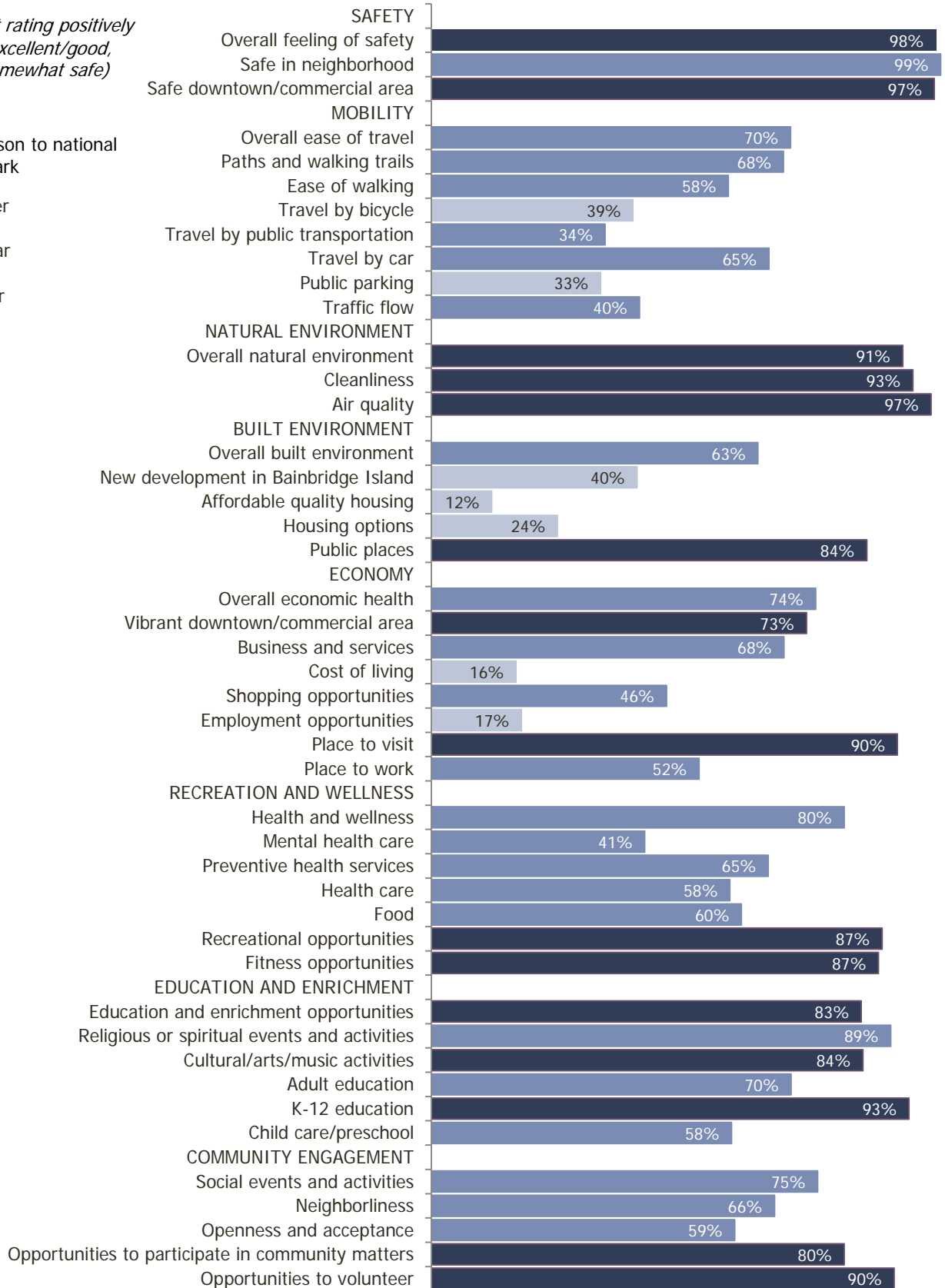
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

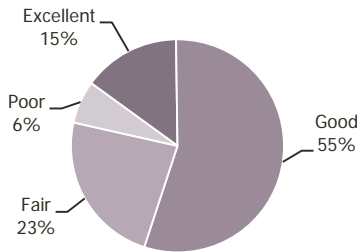
How well does the government of Bainbridge Island meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Bainbridge Island as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. Around 7 in 10 residents positively rated the overall quality of City services while about half as many approved of the services provided by the Federal Government which declined in 2017. Both of these ratings were similar to what was observed elsewhere.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Bainbridge Island's leadership and governance. The vast majority of residents were pleased with customer service provided by the City which was similar to the national benchmark. Around half of respondents or fewer gave excellent or good ratings to the remaining aspects of Bainbridge Island governance and while most were similar to the benchmark, the overall direction the City is taking and confidence in City government trailed ratings observed in comparison communities.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Bainbridge Island. Most services provided by Bainbridge Island were positively viewed by at least half of residents and all but one (land use, planning and zoning) received ratings similar to or higher than the national benchmark. Residents appreciated first responder services provided by the City with at least 9 in 10 rating these services positively. Additionally, crime prevention was highlighted, with ratings placing it above national averages. Elements of recreation such as parks, recreation program and centers were viewed as exceptional by residents.

Overall Quality of City Services

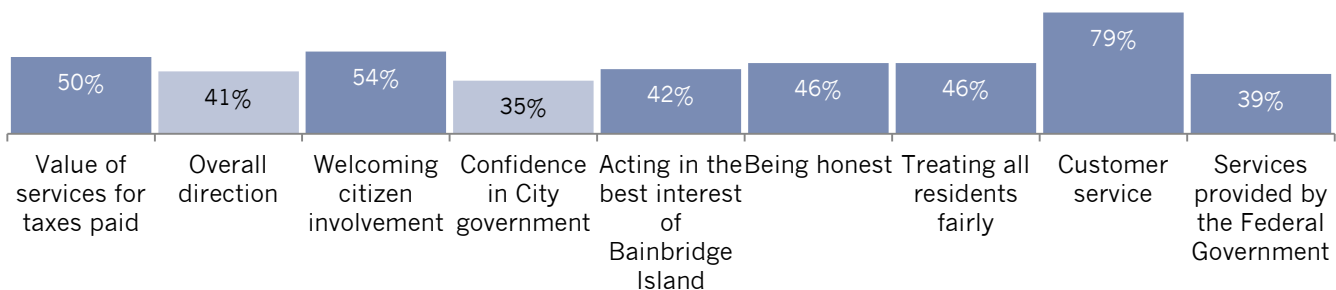


When compared to 2015, health services declined over time, while emergency preparedness, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance and cable television all increased in 2017. Additionally, residents felt more positively about the power utility service in Bainbridge Island since 2015.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



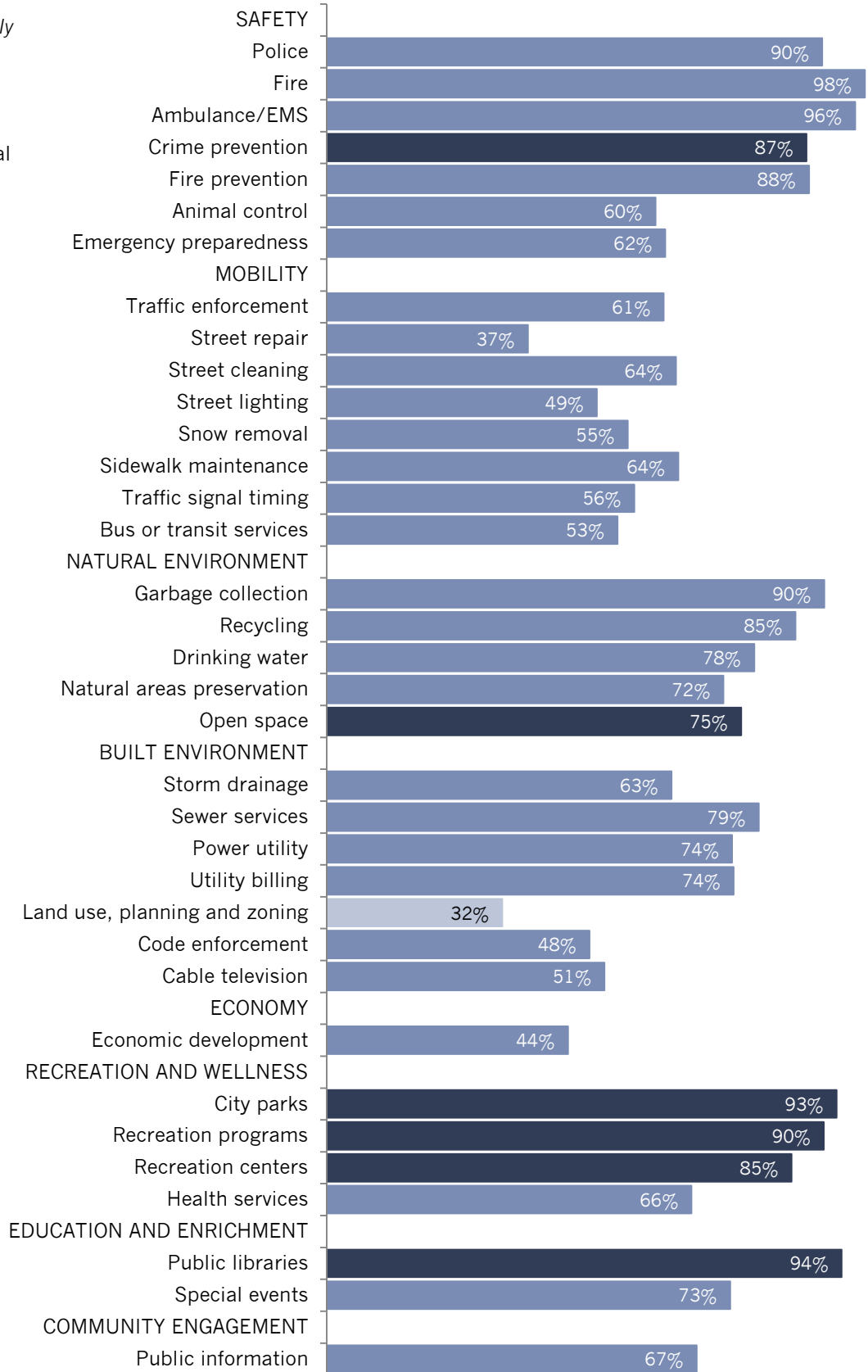
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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Participation

Are the residents of Bainbridge Island connected to the community and each other?

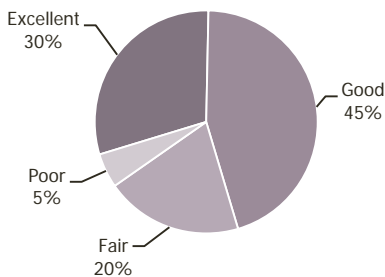
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. About three-quarters evaluated the sense of community in Bainbridge Island positively which was similar to what was observed in comparison communities. Resident loyalty remained stable with around 9 in 10 saying they planned to remain on Bainbridge Island for the next five years and that they would recommend living on the island to someone who asked. Fewer than half of residents reported contacting Bainbridge Island employees.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Engagement among Bainbridge Island residents varied across the different facets, but was similar or greater to engagement recorded in national comparisons.

Virtually all residents reported recycling, visiting a City park and voting in local elections, all at greater levels than seen elsewhere. Bainbridge Island residents reported greater use of alternate modes of travel than residents in other parts of the country. Residents participated least in watching a local public meeting and contacting a Bainbridge Island elected official, though these were still similar to participation levels observed across the country.

Levels of Participation by Bainbridge Island residents remained relatively unchanged between 2015 and 2017 with one exception; more residents reported campaigning for an issue cause or candidate in 2017.

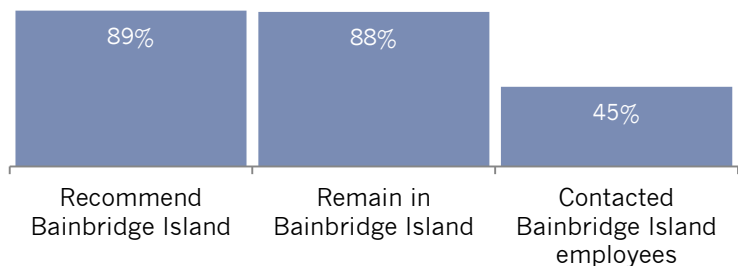
Sense of Community



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



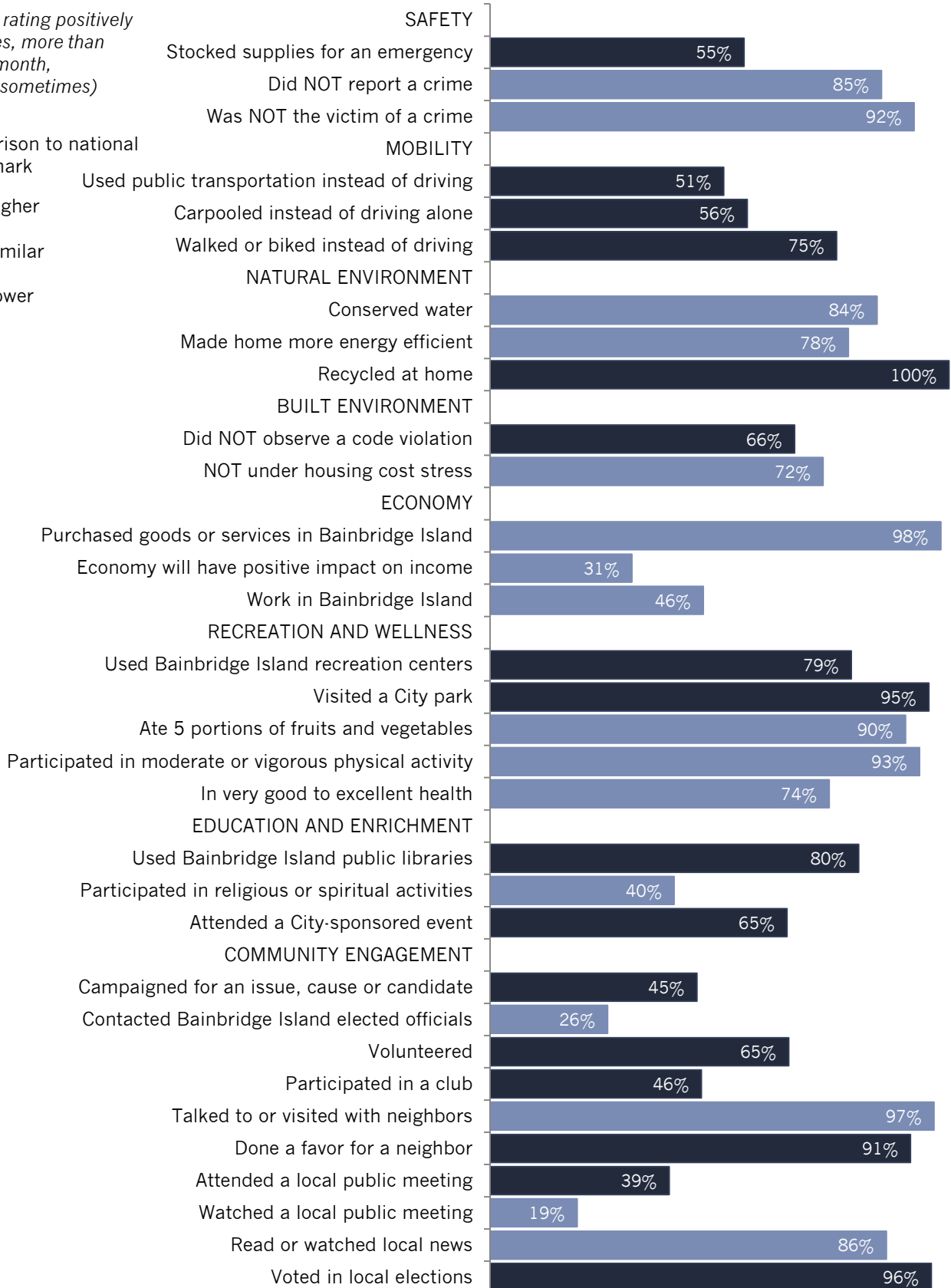
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

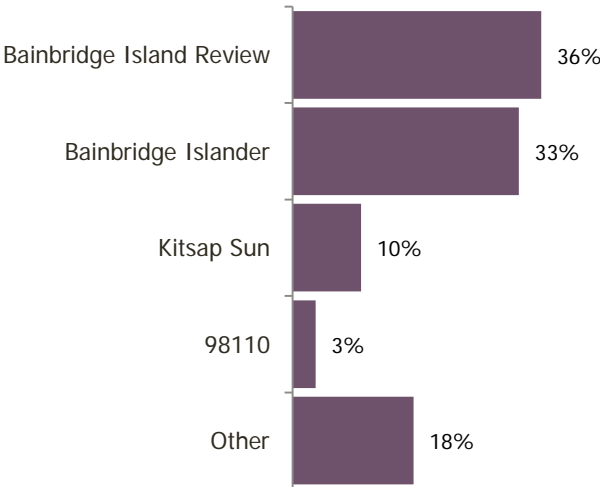
- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Special Topics

The City of Bainbridge Island included a question of special interest on The NCS. Bainbridge Island leadership wanted to learn which primary source of information residents were using to get their news about the City. Almost equally, residents reported using the Bainbridge Island Review and Bainbridge Islander as their primary news source while the Kitsap Sun and 98110 were used by about 1 in 10 or fewer. Nearly 2 in 10 reported using an “other” source than those listed in the question.

Figure 4: Sources of Information
Which of the following is your primary source for news about Bainbridge Island? (Please check only one.)



Conclusions

The Natural Environment is a Bainbridge Island asset and priority.

Residents identified Natural Environment as an important area of focus for the coming two years. Nearly all residents applauded the overall natural environment, cleanliness and air quality of Bainbridge Island all of which received higher than average ratings. Further, around three-quarters or more were pleased with the Natural Environment-related services and were particularly appreciative of the open space. Bainbridge Island residents demonstrated their dedication to the Natural Environment with virtually all reporting they recycled at home, and a vast majority saying they conserved water and made efforts to make their home more energy efficient.

Bainbridge Island residents praise Recreation and may want more attention on Wellness.

Overall, ratings for aspects related to topics of Recreation were on par or were higher in Bainbridge Island than in peer communities. Residents provided outstanding ratings for recreational and fitness opportunities, City parks, recreation programs and centers. Also, resident use of the City's recreation centers and visitation of the parks was higher on Bainbridge Island than what was observed elsewhere. Conversely, availability of affordable quality health care and preventative health services both declined between the two survey iterations. Moreover, quality ratings for health services waned between 2015 and 2017.

Housing and cost of living may keep some from all that Bainbridge Island offers.

Bainbridge Island residents feel that the quality of life on Bainbridge Island is good, from an exceptional quality of life rating to above-average ratings for the community as a place to live, among others. However, residents show concern regarding the availability of affordable quality housing and housing options on Bainbridge Island, both of which were below the national benchmark and declined between 2015 and 2017. Additionally, cost of living and employment opportunities, though stable between survey administrations, lagged behind comparison communities. Thinking about the future, about one-third were optimistic that the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the coming six months.