

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Erie, CO

Community Livability Report

2015



NRC
National Research Center Inc

2955 Valmont Road Suite 300
Boulder, Colorado 80301
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
icma.org • 800-745-8780

Contents

- About..... 1
- Quality of Life in Erie..... 2
- Community Characteristics 3
- Governance 5
- Participation 7
- Special Topics..... 9
- Conclusions 14

The National Citizen Survey™
© 2001-2015 National Research Center, Inc.

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

NRC is a proud 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 Erie. 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.

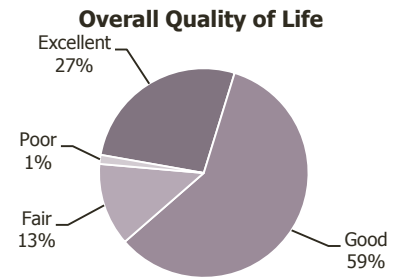
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 1,191 residents of the Town of Erie. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 3% 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 Erie

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Erie as excellent or good. This 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.

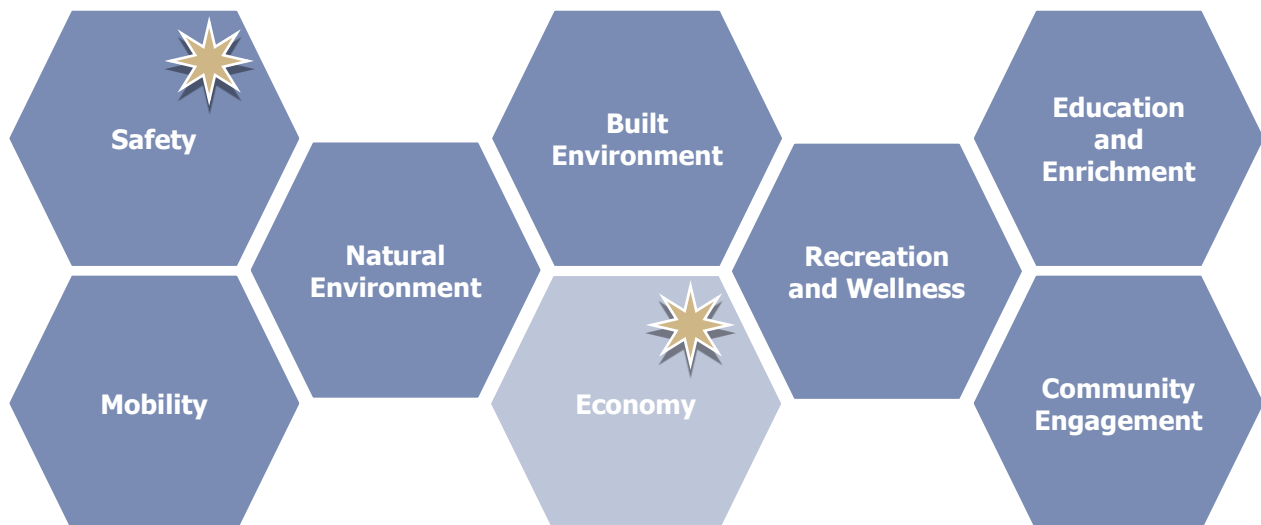
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Ratings for almost all facets were positive and similar to other communities; however Economy ratings tended to be lower. This overview 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 Erie’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



Community Characteristics

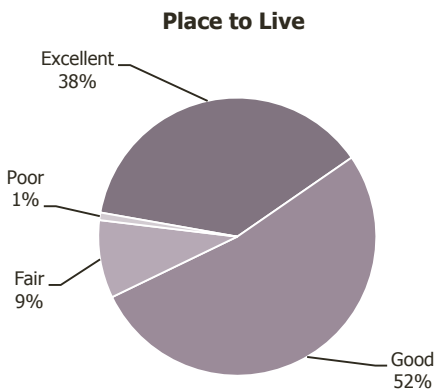
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 Erie, 90% rated the Town as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Erie as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the Town as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Erie as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Erie and its overall appearance. Almost all respondents rated their neighborhoods and Erie as a place to raise children as excellent or good. Ratings for Erie as a place to raise children were higher than in comparison communities. At least three in five respondents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall image/reputation of Erie, Erie as a place to retire and the overall appearance of Erie and ratings for these three characteristics all increased from 2013 to 2015 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 30 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Almost all residents gave high ratings to Safety in Erie and the ratings for the overall feeling of safety were higher than in comparison communities across the nation. All aspects of Mobility were rated positively by at least seven in 10 respondents, with the exception of travel by public transportation (28% excellent or good) which was lower than the national benchmark. Ratings for the availability of paths and walking trails, travel by bicycle, travel by car, public parking and traffic flow were all higher than the national benchmarks. Further, ratings for ease of walking and the availability of paths and walking trails increased from 2013 to 2015. Ratings within Natural Environment and Built Environment were mostly positive and all were similar to ratings in comparison communities. Economy ratings were mixed. About one-third of respondents or fewer gave positive ratings to vibrant downtown, overall quality of businesses and services, shopping opportunities, employment opportunities, Erie as a place to visit and Erie as a place to work. All of these items were lower than the national benchmark. About half of the respondents gave positive

ratings to Erie's overall economic health; this rating was similar to the national benchmark. Ratings of aspects of Recreation and Wellness were a mix of positive and negative; while the availability of affordable quality food (24% excellent or good) was lower than the national benchmark it did improve from 2013 to 2015.

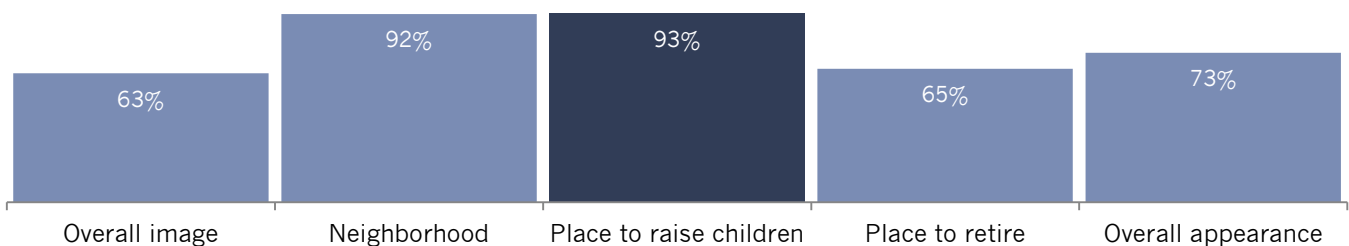


ratings to Erie's overall economic health; this rating was similar to the national benchmark. Ratings of aspects of Recreation and Wellness were a mix of positive and negative; while the availability of affordable quality food (24% excellent or good) was lower than the national benchmark it did improve from 2013 to 2015.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



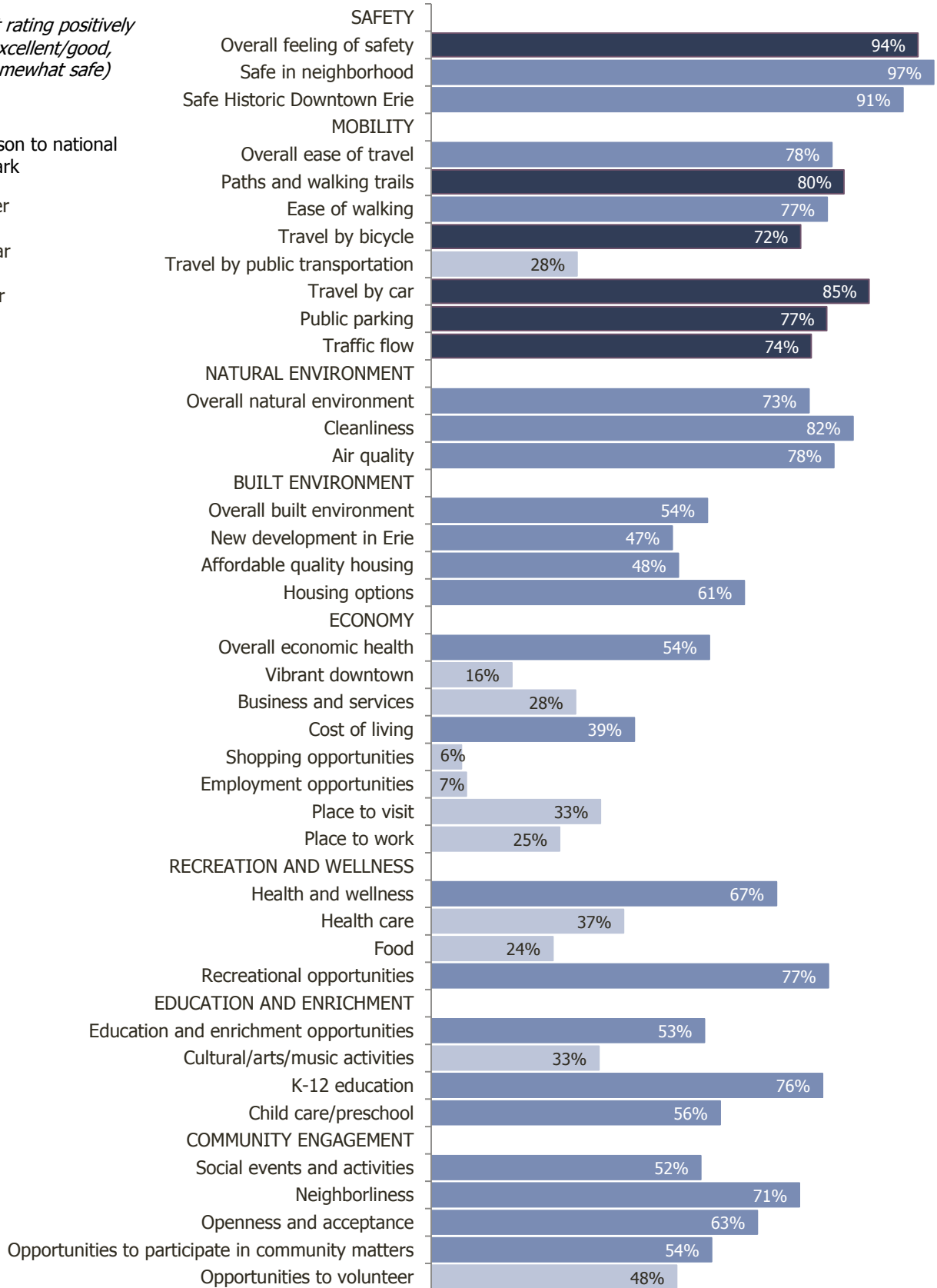
The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



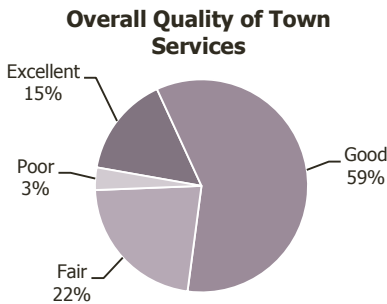
Governance

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

The overall quality of the services provided by Erie as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 74% of residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of services provided by the Town; while only 35% gave positive ratings to the Federal Government. Both of these ratings were similar to the national benchmark comparisons.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Erie’s leadership and governance. These ratings ranged from 41% to 77% excellent or good and all were similar to ratings in comparison communities. A majority of residents gave positive ratings to the value of services for taxes paid, welcoming citizen involvement, being honest, treating all residents fairly and the overall customer service provided by Town employees.

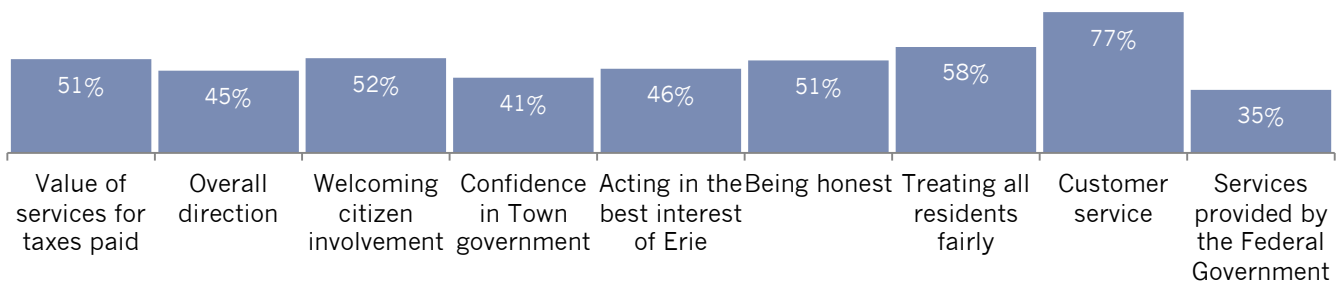
Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Erie. All aspects of Safety were rated as excellent or good by a majority of respondents and were similar to the national benchmarks. Most aspects of Mobility were rated positively and were similar to comparison communities; however ratings for bus or transit services (34% excellent or good) were lower than ratings across the nation. Further, ratings for bus or transit services decreased from 2013 to 2015. All aspects of Natural Environment were rated positively and all were similar to the national benchmark with the exception of yard waste pick-up, which was lower than ratings in comparison communities. Ratings for recycling decreased from 2013 to 2015 while ratings for drinking water increased. All aspects of Built Environment were similar to the benchmark and most were rated as excellent or good by a majority of survey respondents. Economic development services were rated as excellent or good by 29% of residents and this rating was lower than the national benchmark. Within Recreation and Wellness, ratings for Erie Community Center were particularly strong and higher than ratings in comparison communities. All aspects of Education and Enrichment and Community engagement were positive and similar to ratings across the nation.



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



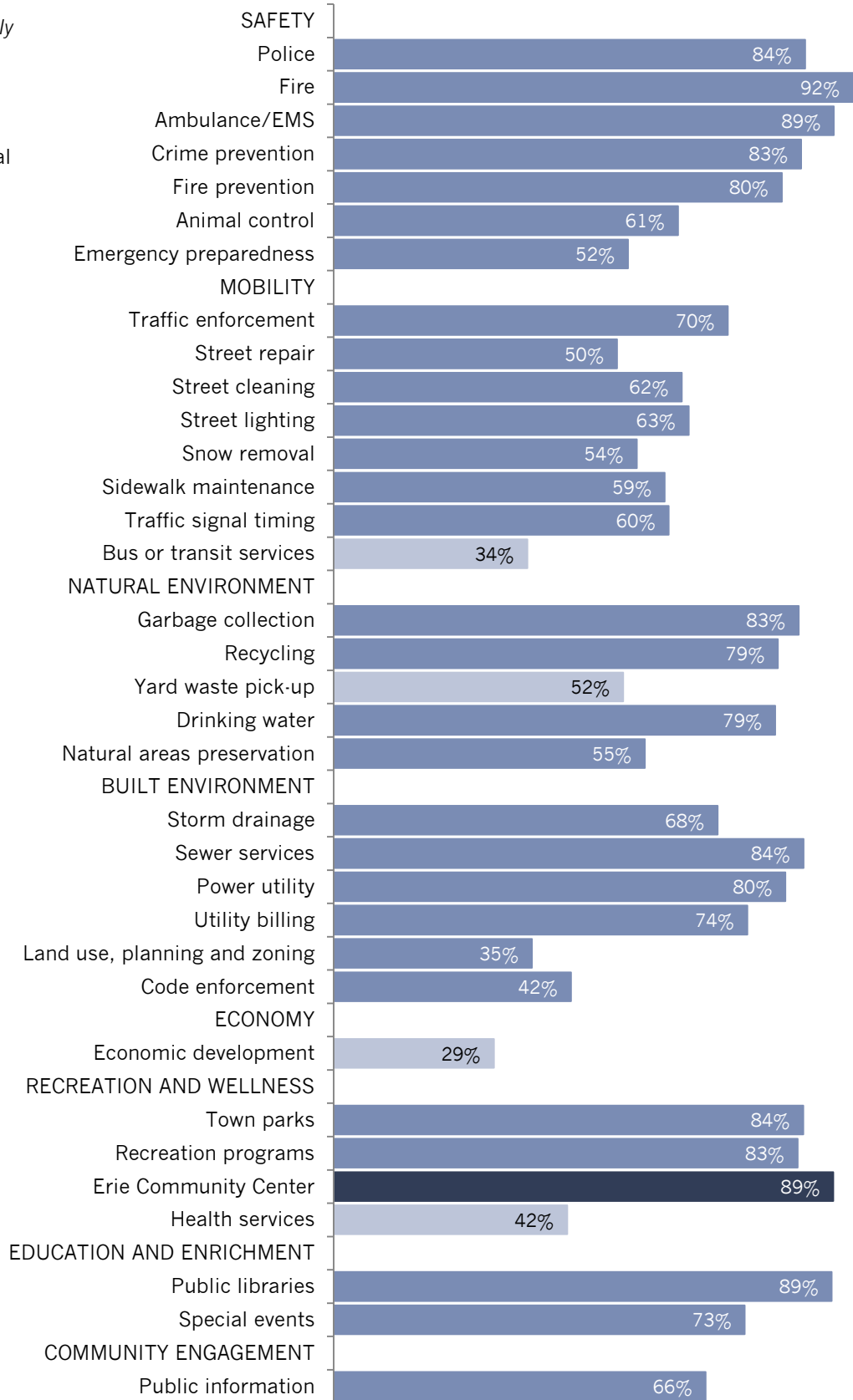
The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

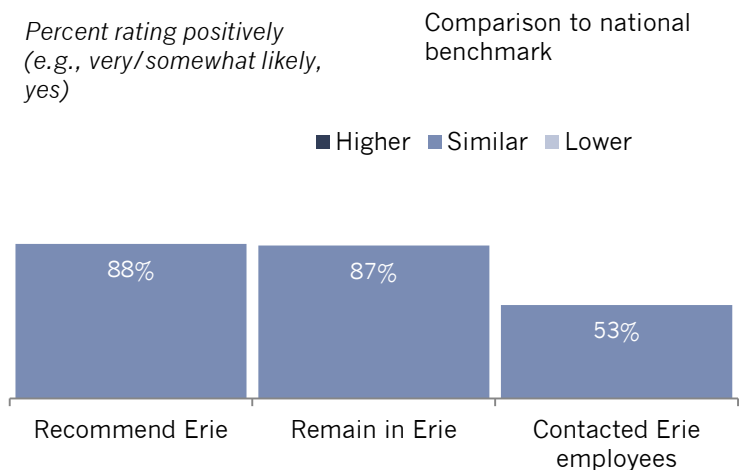
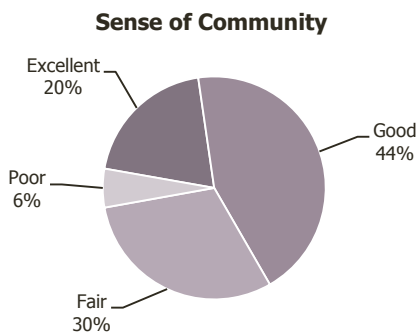


Participation

Are the residents of Erie 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 64% of respondents gave excellent or good ratings to Erie’s sense of community; this rating was similar to the national benchmark and remained stable from 2013 to 2015. More than four in five residents were likely to remain in Erie for the next five years and would recommend living in Erie. About half of the survey respondents had contacted a Town of Erie employee in the last 12 months.

The survey included 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Erie residents reported higher rates of recycling, using the Erie Community Center, attending Town-sponsored events and voting in local elections than residents in comparison communities. Further, more of Erie’s residents felt the economy would have a positive impact on their income than residents in comparison communities and this rate of optimism increased from 2013 to 2015. Fewer Erie residents reported using public transportation, purchasing goods or services in Erie, working in Erie, participating in religious or spiritual activities, volunteering, participating in a club or watching a local public meeting than residents in other communities across the nation. At least 9 in 10 respondents reported that they had NOT been the victim of a crime, recycled at home, participated in modest or vigorous physical activity, talked to or visited with neighbors and voted in local elections.



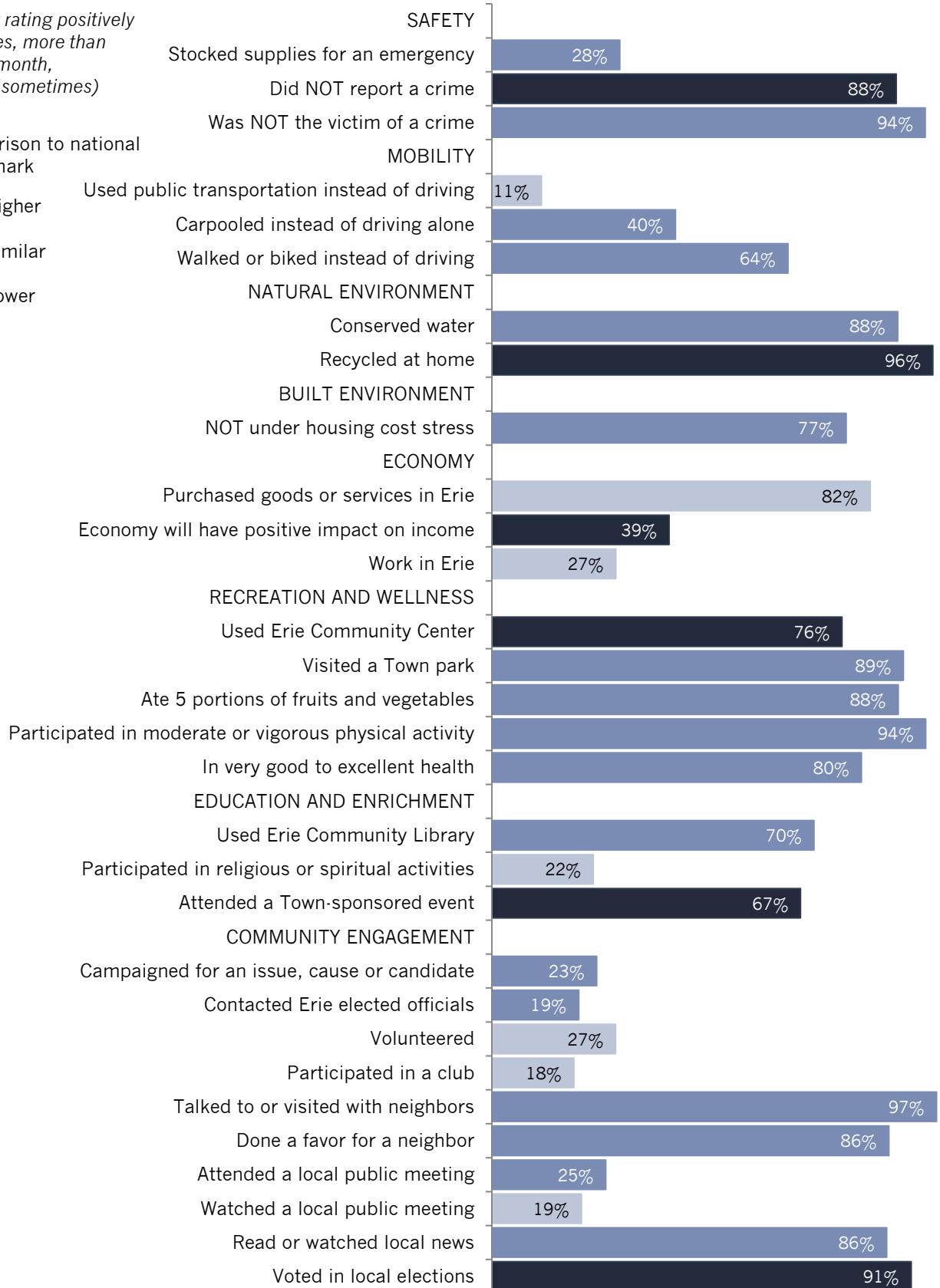
The National Citizen Survey™

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

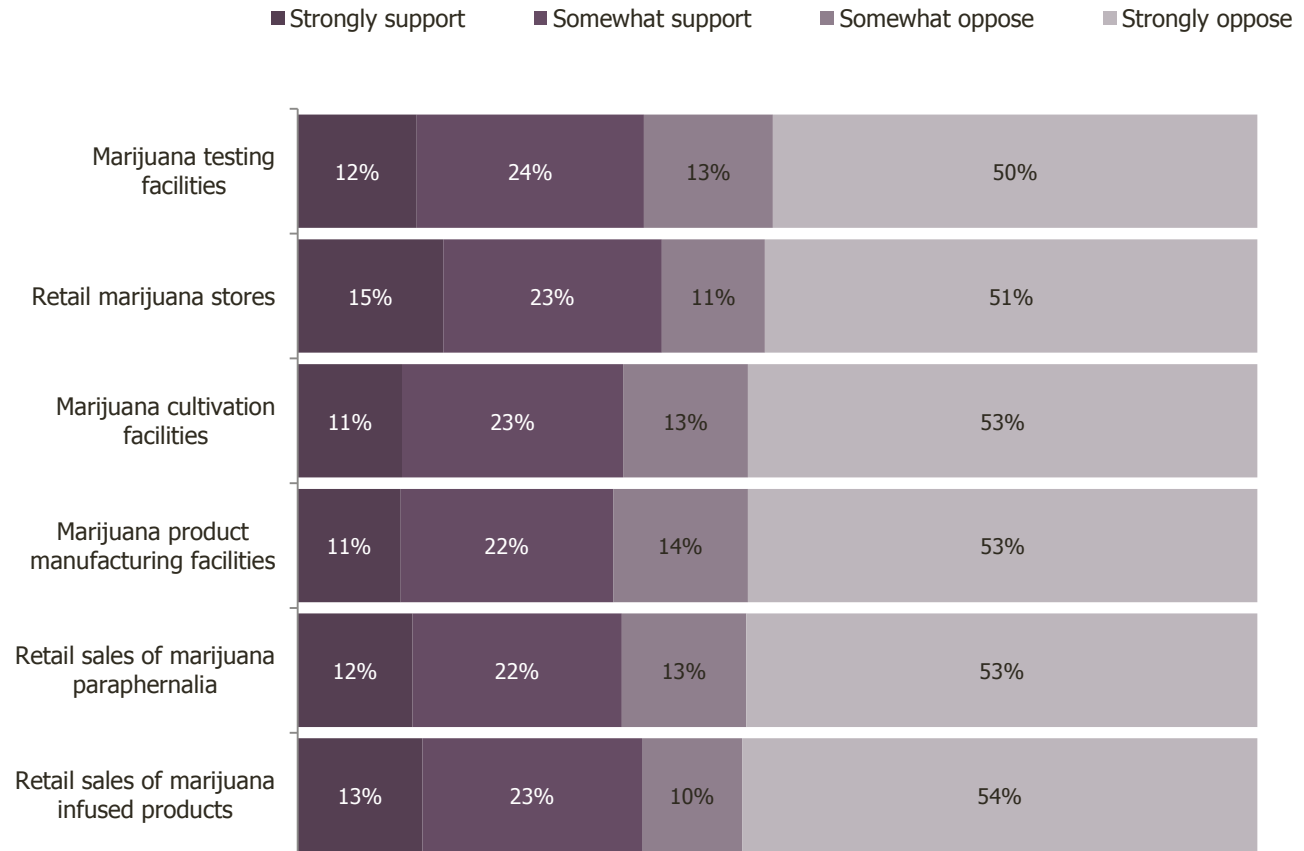


Special Topics

The Town of Erie included five questions of special interest on The NCS. The first question asked residents to indicate their support or opposition for potential future types of retail marijuana businesses. A majority of respondents strongly opposed all type of retail marijuana businesses listed.

Figure 4: Retail Marijuana Businesses

The current moratorium on retail marijuana businesses in Erie is set to expire on December 31, 2015. Please indicate how much you would support or oppose each of the following in the future within Town limits:

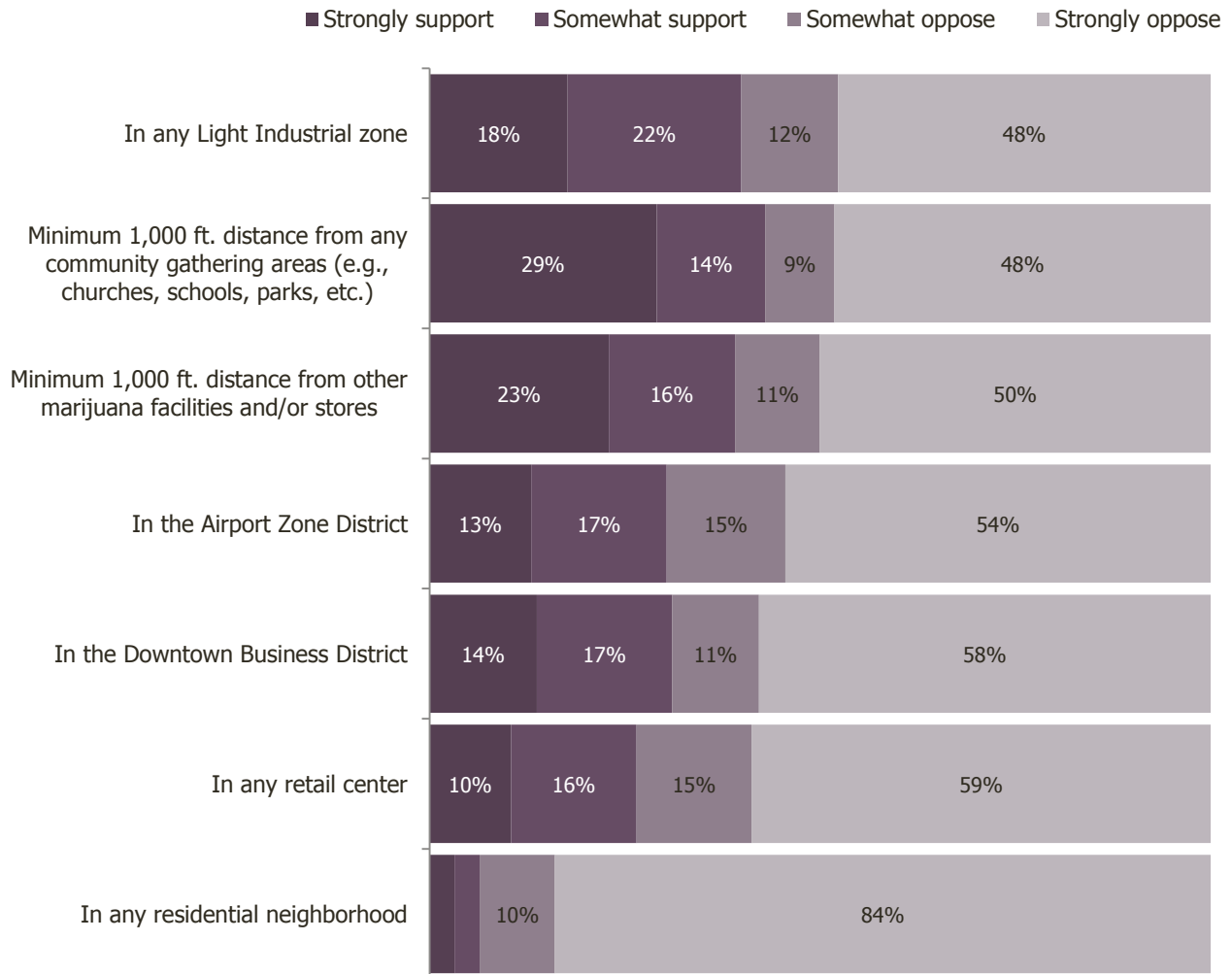


The National Citizen Survey™

The second question asked residents to rate their support or opposition of potential locations for retail marijuana facilities in Erie. A majority opposed all locations; almost all respondents opposed marijuana businesses in any residential neighborhood.

Figure 5: Retail Marijuana Locations

Please indicate how much you would support or oppose the following potential locations for retail marijuana facilities within the Town of Erie.

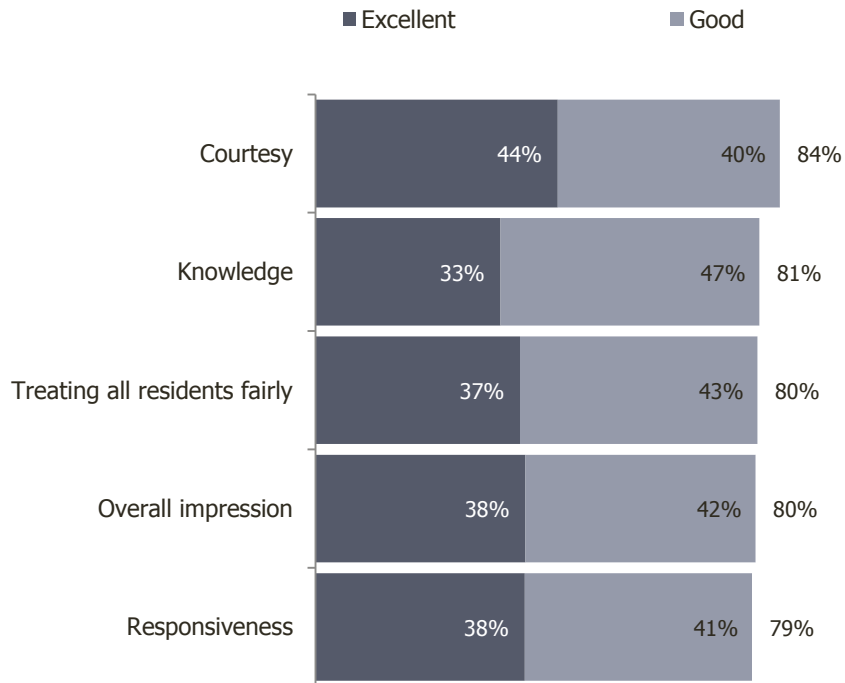


The National Citizen Survey™

The third custom question asked residents to rate the quality of their most recent contact with Town employees. About four in five rated all aspects of their contact with Town employees as excellent or good.

Figure 6: Quality of Contact with Town Employees

If you have had contact with a Town of Erie employee in the last 12 months, please rate your impression of the employee(s) in your most recent contact.

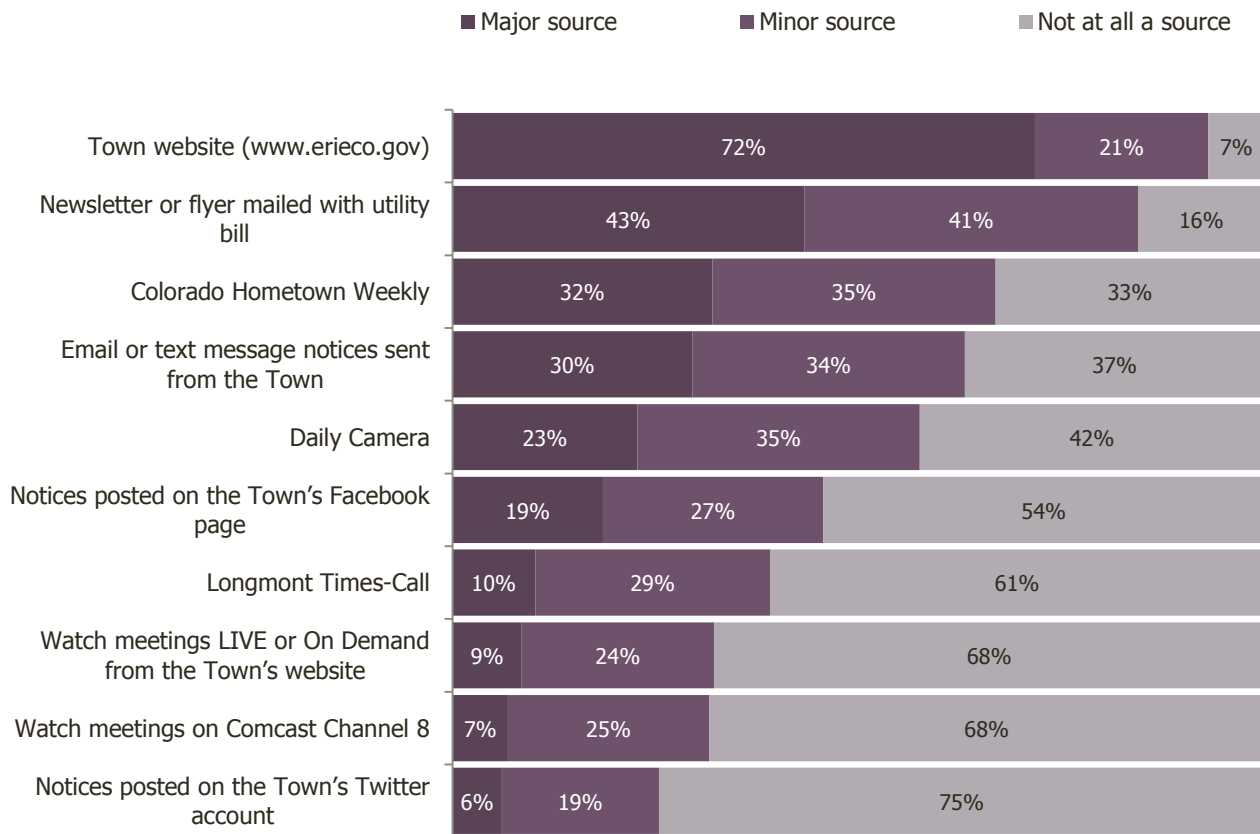


The National Citizen Survey™

Survey respondents were then asked to indicate how much they used various sources of information to obtain information about the Town of Erie. These questions were also asked on Erie’s 2013 survey (see the Report or Results, 2013). The most popular source of information was the Town website, followed by newsletters or flyers mailed with the utility bill, the Colorado Hometown Weekly and email or text message notices sent from the Town. In 2015, more residents indicated that the Town’s Facebook page was a source of information for them and fewer residents reported that the Daily Camera or Colorado Hometown Weekly were information sources. A majority of respondents do not consider the Town’s Facebook page, the Longmont Times-Call, watching Town meetings or the Town’s Twitter account to be sources of information.

Figure 7: Information Sources

Please indicate how often, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the Town of Erie:

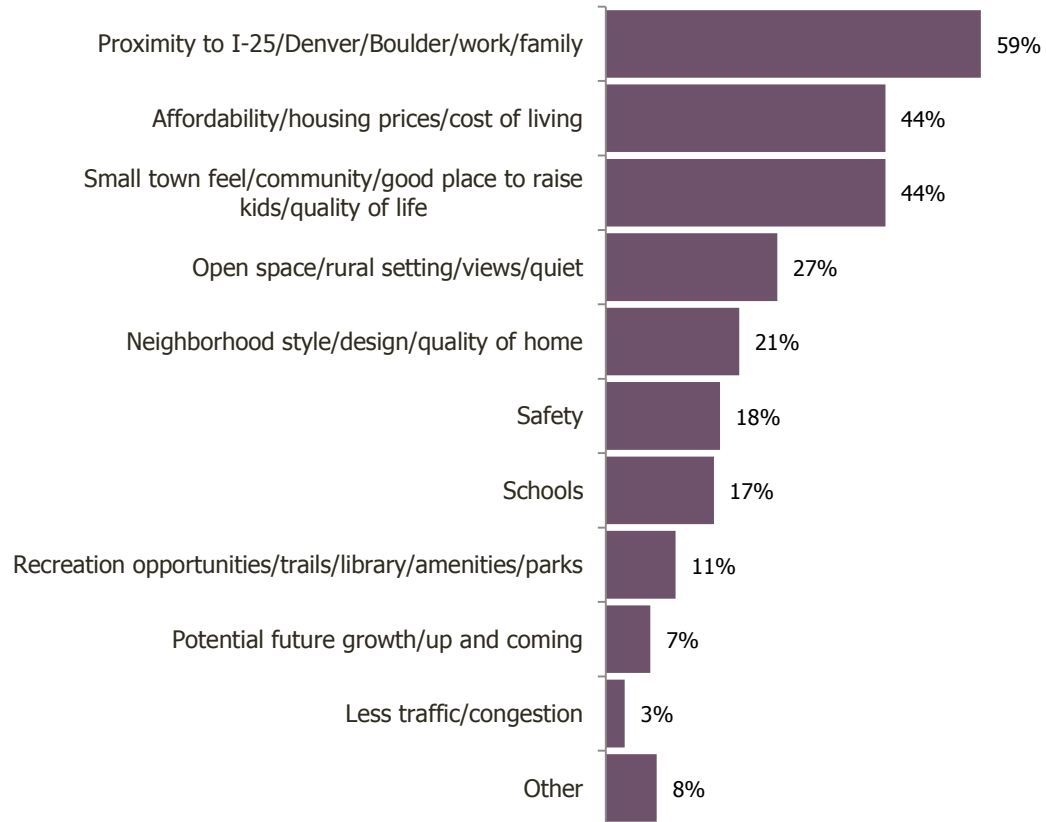


The National Citizen Survey™

The final custom question was open-ended (see the Open-End Report under separate cover).

Figure 8: Reasons for Living in Erie

What are your top three reasons for choosing Erie as your home?



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

Conclusions

Erie residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

More than four in five residents rated their overall quality of life and Erie as a place to live as excellent or good. Further, about four in five were likely to recommend Erie as a place to live to someone who asks and planned to remain in Erie for the next five years. Almost all residents gave excellent or good ratings to Erie as a place to raise children and to their neighborhoods. Most of the aspects that aid in community livability were rated positively and remained stable from 2013 to 2015. Ratings for Erie as a place to retire, the overall appearance of Erie and Erie's image/reputation increased over time.

Erie's Economy is a top priority.

Economy was rated as a top priority for the community. Ratings within the facet of Economy tended to be lower than ratings in comparison communities. The highest rated aspect of Economy was the overall economic health of Erie (54% excellent or good) and the cost of living in Erie (39% excellent or good); these ratings were similar to the national benchmarks. Ratings for shopping opportunities (6%), employment opportunities (7%), vibrant downtown (16%), Erie as a place to work (25%), the overall quality of businesses and services (28%) and Erie as a place to visit were lower than the national benchmarks. Most Economy ratings remained stable from 2013 to 2015; however ratings did increase for the overall quality of businesses and services and for personal economic future.

Safety is a top priority to Erie residents.

Safety was also identified as one of the facets most important to residents and, overall, Erie performed solidly within this facet. Almost all respondents felt safe downtown and in their neighborhoods and gave high ratings to the overall feeling of safety in Erie. More residents gave positive ratings to the overall feeling of safety in Erie than in comparison communities. 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. Ratings for animal control increased from 2013 to 2015; all other Safety ratings remained stable over time.