

THE NCSTM
The National Community SurveyTM

Honolulu, HI

Community Livability Report

2019



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About

The National Community Survey™ (The NCS™) report is about the “livability” of Honolulu. 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).

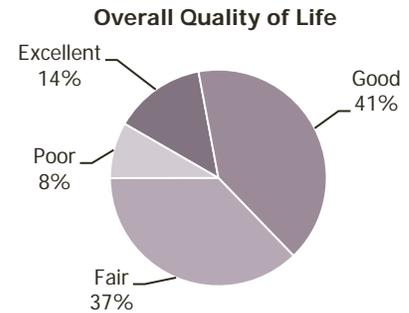
The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 376 residents of the City and County of Honolulu. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for all respondents. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices*.



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Quality of Life in Honolulu

About half of residents rated the quality of life in Honolulu as excellent or good. This rating was lower than the national benchmark (see Appendix B in the *Technical Appendices*).



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.

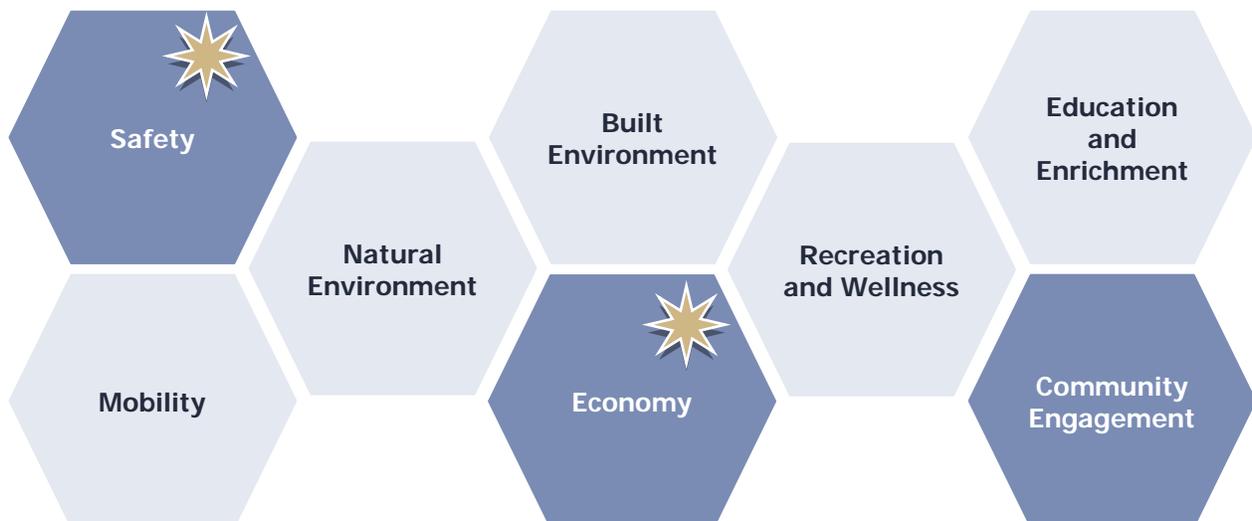
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2018, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Honolulu community in the coming two years. Aggregate ratings for a majority of community facets were lower than the benchmarks except for Safety, Economy and Community Engagement which scored similar to 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 Honolulu’s unique questions.

Legend

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

★ Most important



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Community Characteristics

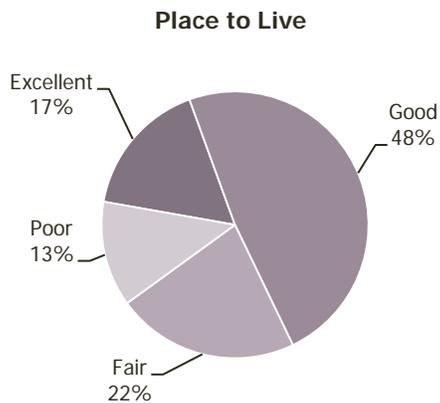
What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

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 Honolulu, 65% rated the City and County as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Honolulu as a place to live were lower than ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the City and County as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Honolulu as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Honolulu and its overall appearance. About 7 in 10 residents rated their neighborhood as excellent or good, a rating similar to the national average. Honolulu as a place to raise children, a place to retire, its overall image and its overall appearance were each rated lower than national averages.

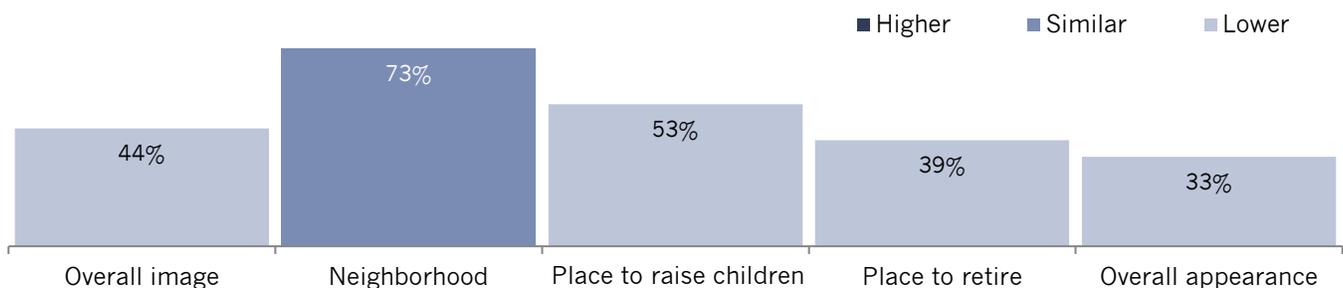
Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability and ratings tended to be lower than the national comparisons; however, each characteristic related to Community Engagement was rated similar to the national comparison (i.e., neighborliness, opportunities to participate in community matters, opportunities to volunteer, etc.). Community amenities receiving the highest ratings included neighborhood safety, Honolulu as a place to visit, air quality, shopping opportunities and opportunities to volunteer; each of these were rated favorably by at least two-thirds of residents. The characteristics receiving the lowest ratings related to affordability (cost of living and availability of affordable quality housing) with only five percent or fewer residents offering positive evaluations to these items. Two of the seven listed Recreation and Wellness characteristics were rated similarly to the national averages with 54% of residents offering excellent or good ratings for both (overall health and wellness and recreational

opportunities); however, when compared to 2018, five of the seven listed characteristics declined in 2019 (i.e., fitness opportunities, health care, etc.). For more detail on by year comparisons, please see the *Trends over Time*.



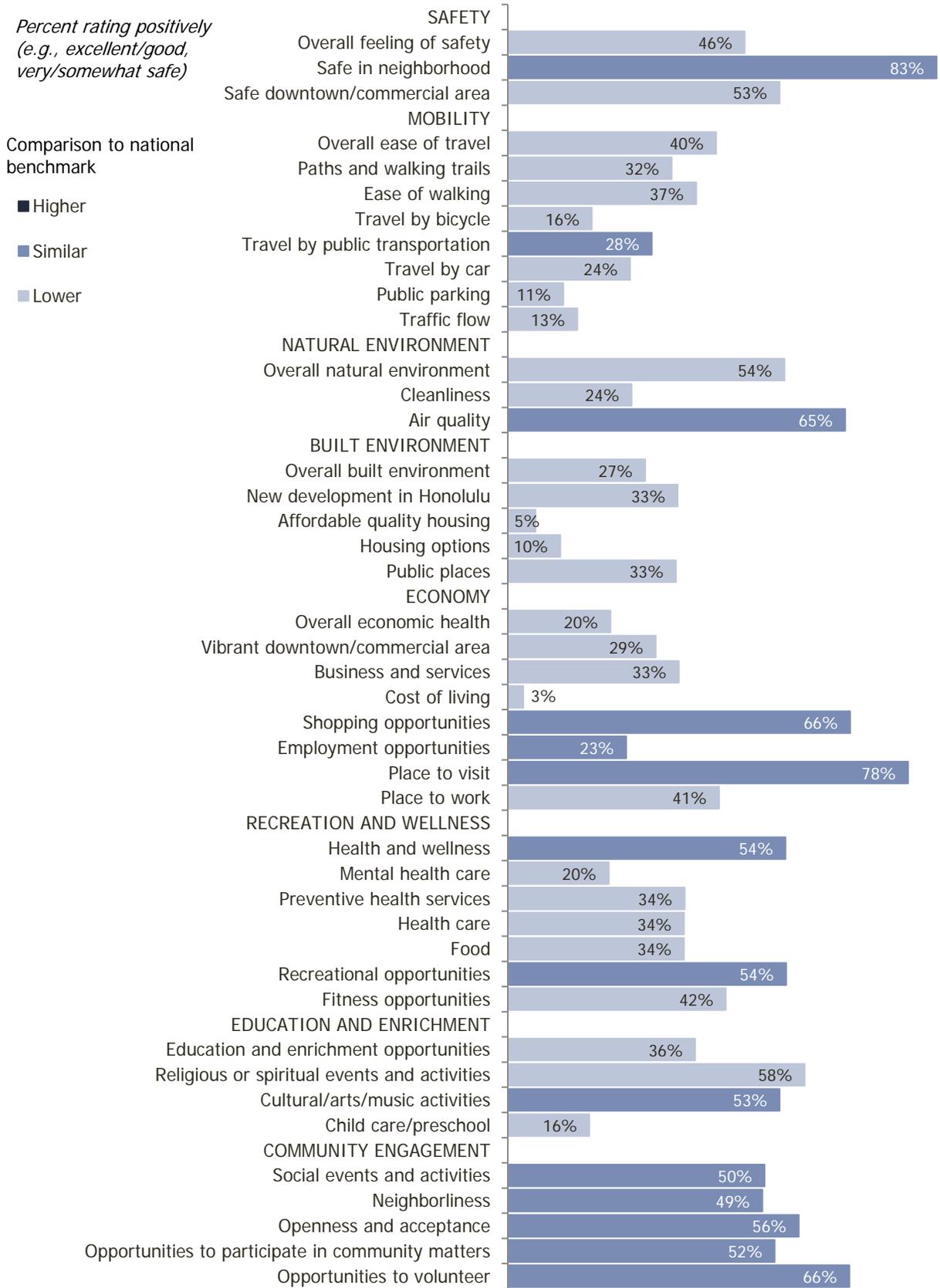
Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark



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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

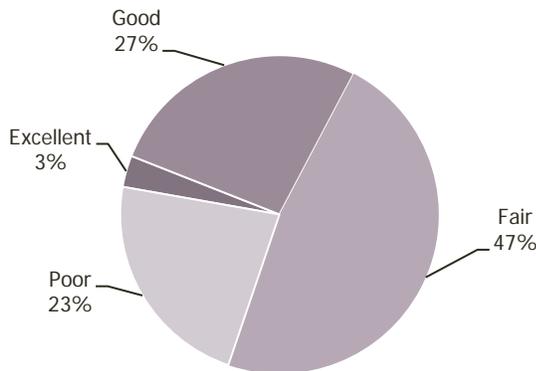
How well does the government of Honolulu meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Honolulu as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 3 in 10 residents rated the quality of services provided by both the City and County of Honolulu and the Federal Government as excellent or good; both ratings that declined in 2019 compared to 2018. The rating for the City and County was lower than the national benchmark while the Federal Government rating was on par with it.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Honolulu’s leadership and governance. These ratings were lower than those in comparison communities and generally lower than ratings given in 2018.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Honolulu, a majority of which were rated lower than the national comparisons. As reported in 2018, the highest rated services were fire, ambulance/EMS, drinking water and garbage collection each with at least two-thirds of residents offering positive ratings. While Safety housed the two highest rated services, this facet also housed four services that declined in ratings from 2018 to 2019 (police, crime prevention, ambulance/EMS and emergency preparedness). Built Environment ratings varied with as few as 1 in 10 residents offering positive evaluations to code enforcement but as many as 5 in 10 offering positive evaluations to sewer services and power utility; cable television was the only Built Environment rating similar to the national comparison with 4 in 10 residents offering positive marks.

Overall Quality of City and County Services

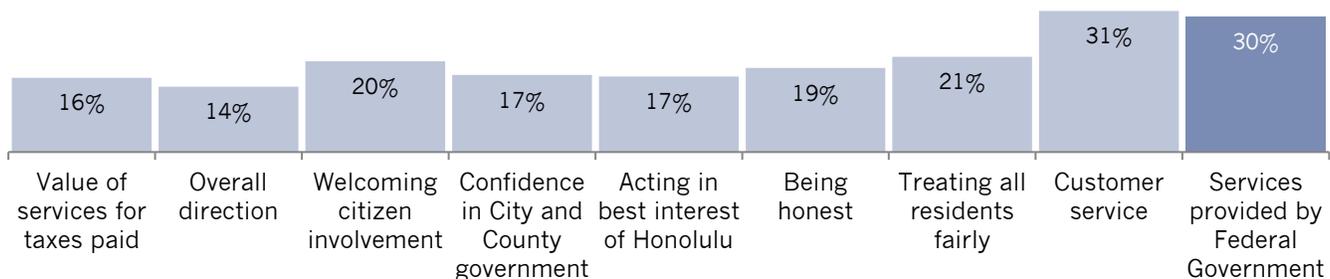


Mobility and Natural Environment each housed one item with a similar benchmark rating (bus or transit services and drinking water, respectively).

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

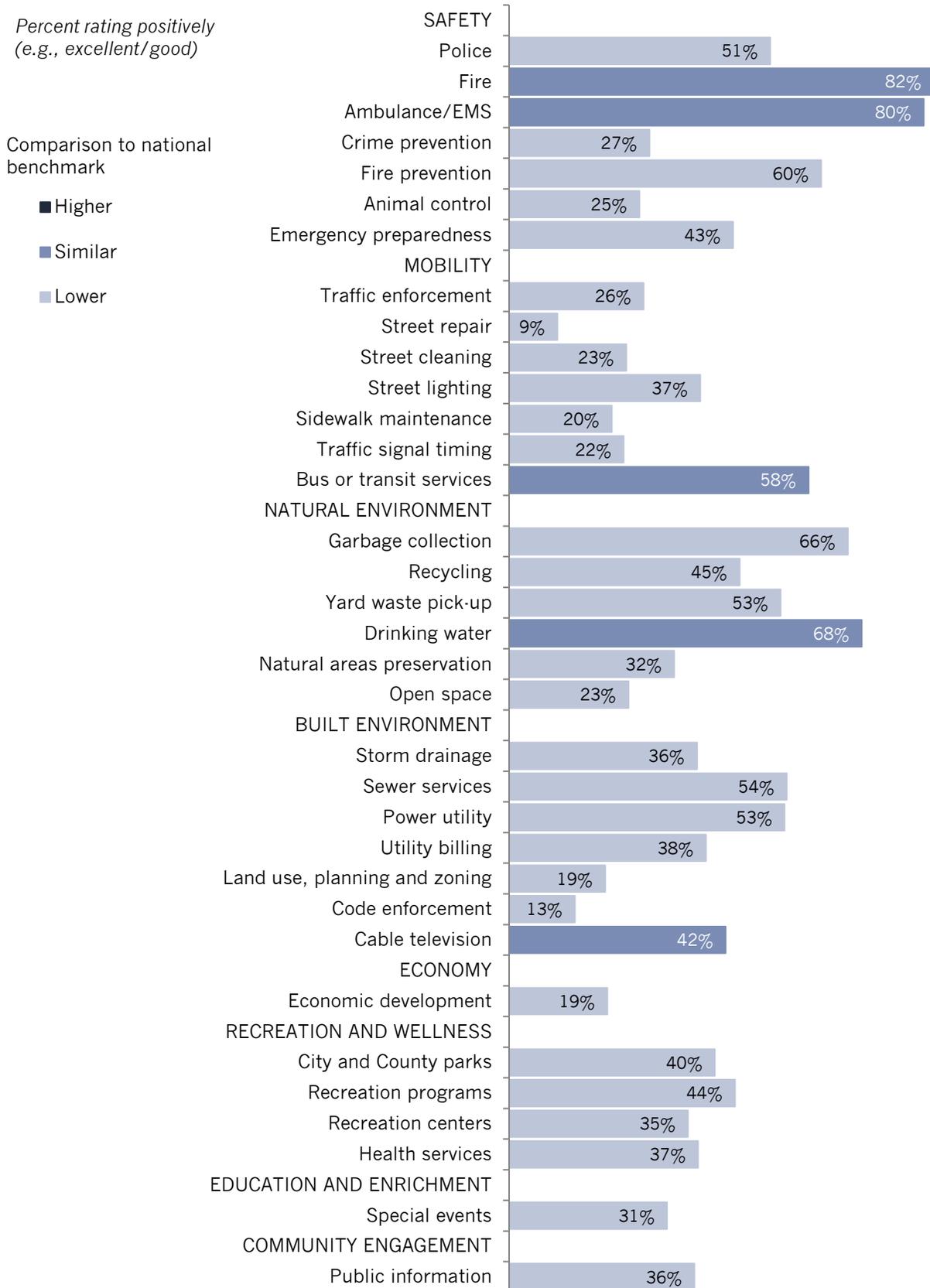
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

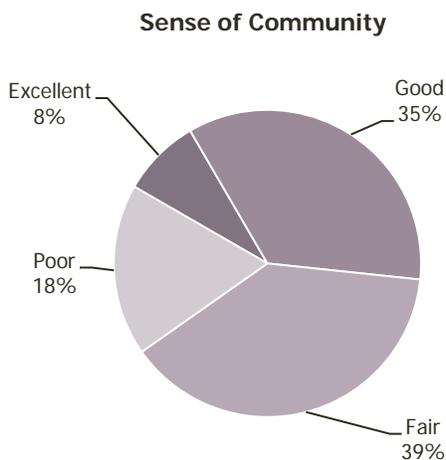


Participation

Are the residents of Honolulu 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 residents rated the sense of community in Honolulu as excellent or good which was lower than the national average and lower than the 2018 Honolulu rating.

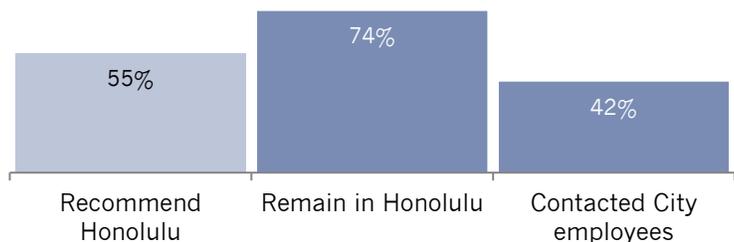
The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. Levels of participation tended to vary widely across the different facets, making the comparisons to the benchmarks useful for interpreting the results. Generally, participation rates in Honolulu tended to be similar to those observed in other communities. Honolulu residents were more likely than those who lived elsewhere to have stocked supplies for an emergency and worked in the community. They were also more likely to be under housing cost stress and to have reported a building code violation. They were less likely to feel like economy will have a positive impact on their income and less likely to have attended a City and County-sponsored event.



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

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



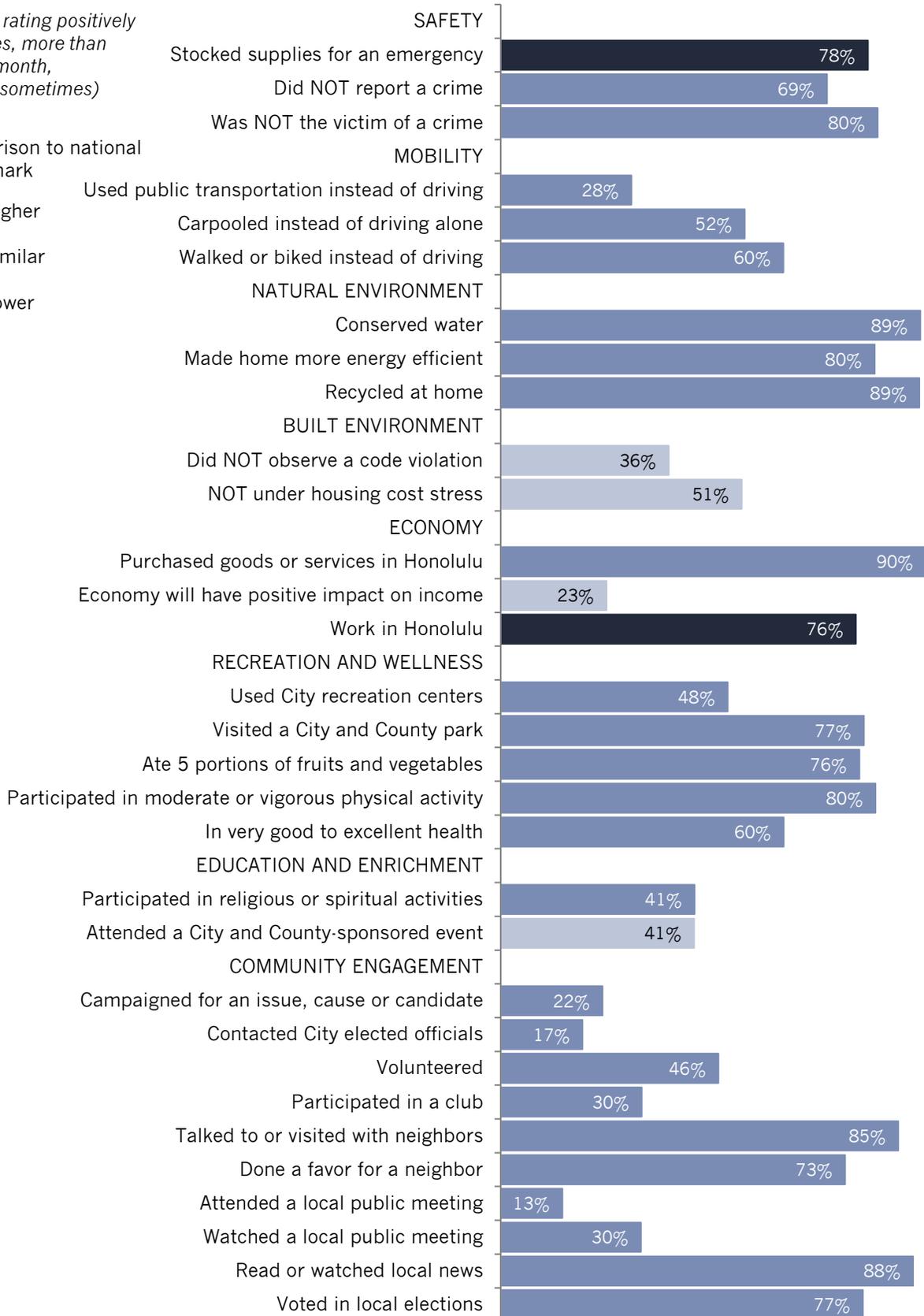
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

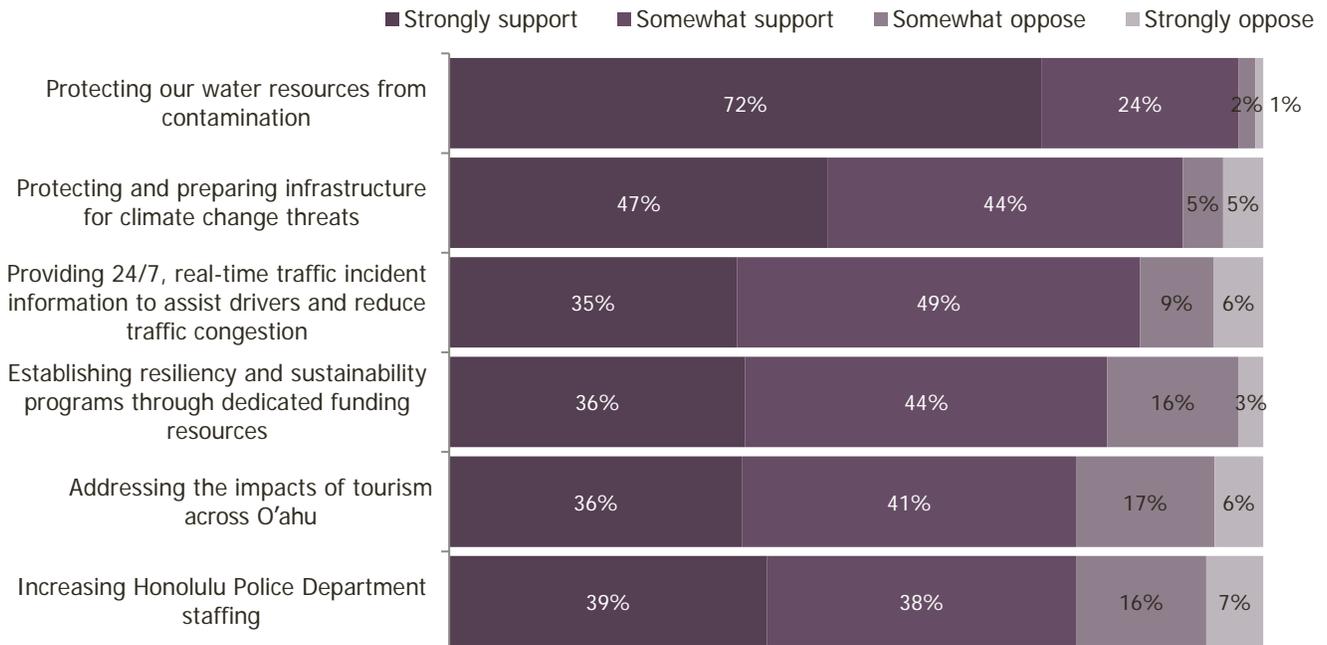


Special Topics

The City and County of Honolulu included five questions of special interest on The NCS ranging from assessing problems in the community, importance of issues, rate of experiencing various hardships as well as prioritizing a variety of improvements in Honolulu.

Residents were presented with a list of six potential projects and asked their level of support for each, even if it involved raising taxes or fees. While all projects were at least somewhat supported by a majority of respondents, the projects receiving the strongest support were protecting water resources from contamination and protecting and preparing infrastructure for climate change threats with about 9 in 10 residents offering support. The projects that received the lowest levels of support were addressing the impacts of tourism and increasing Honolulu Police Department staffing; about 8 in 10 respondents supported these initiatives.

Figure 4: Support for Proposed City and County Projects
How much would you support or oppose the City and County funding each of the following items, even if it involved raising taxes or fees?

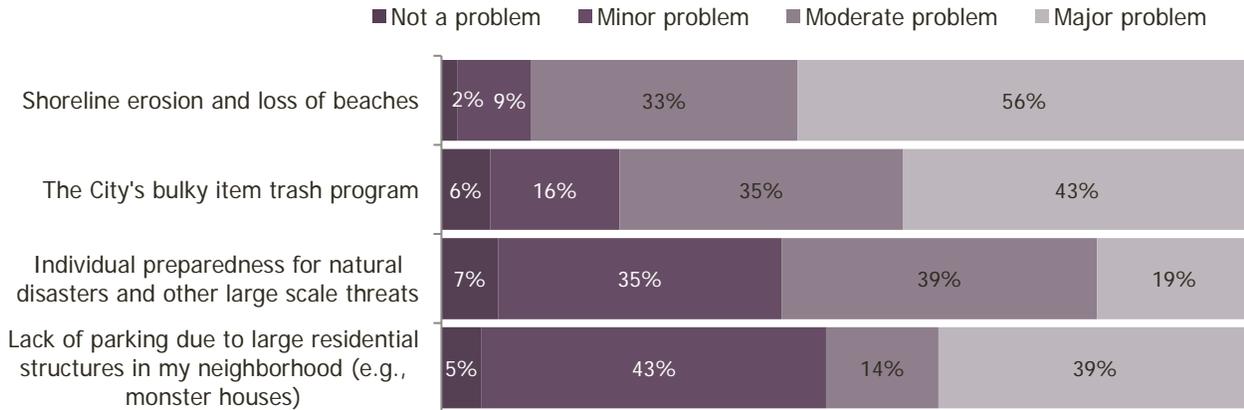


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When asked to rate to what extent a list of four potential problems were in Honolulu, shoreline erosion and loss of beaches was given the highest rating with half of residents indicating it was a major problem and an additional one-third indicating it as a moderate problem. Least problematic was lack of parking due to large residential structures and individual preparedness for natural disasters with about half of residents indicating each of these were moderate or major problems.

Figure 5: Extent of Problems

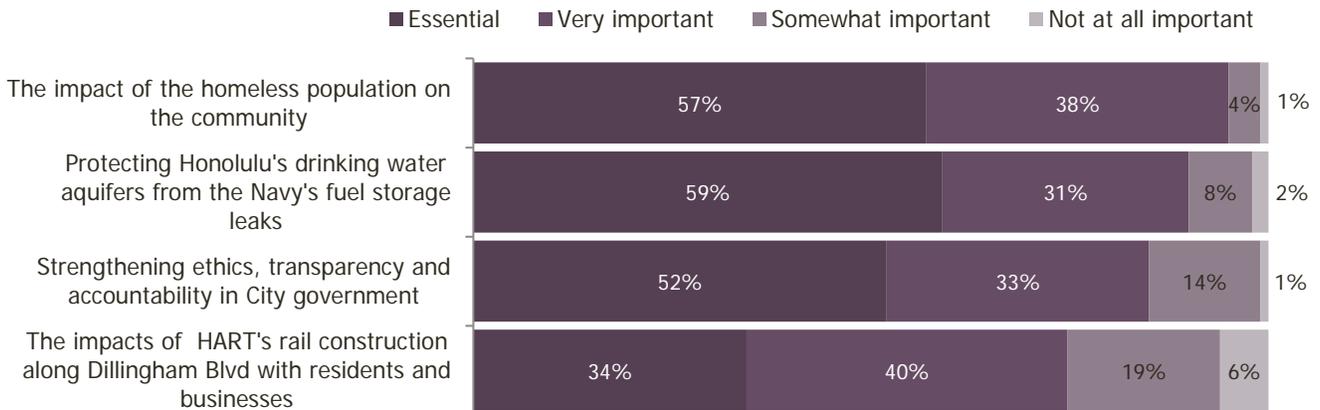
Please indicate the extent to which you think the following are a problem in the City and County of Honolulu:



The four listed issues that residents were asked to consider the importance of addressing were each considered at least very important by three-quarters of residents. At the top of the list was the impact of the homeless population on the community with the impact of HART's rail construction along Dillingham Boulevard at the bottom of the list.

Figure 6: Importance of Issues

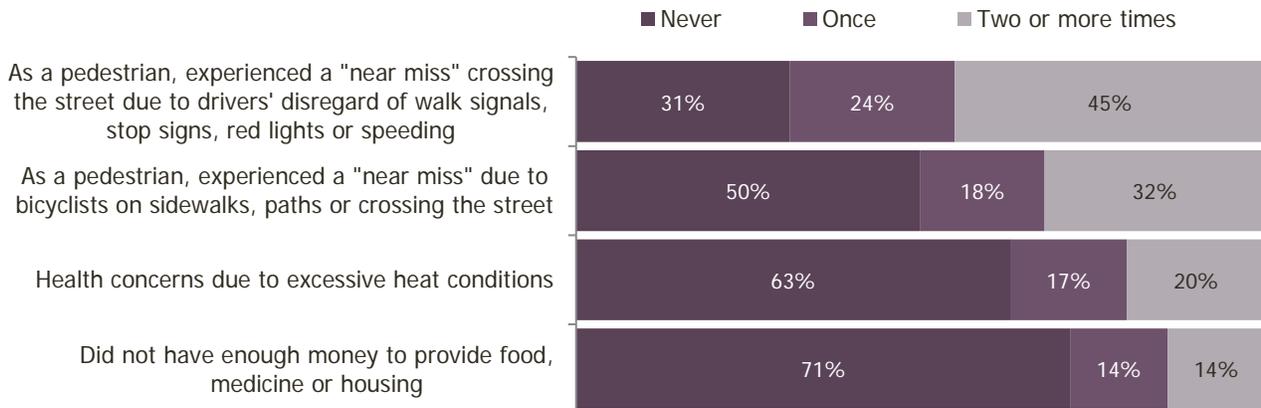
How important, if at all, are the following issues for the City to address in the next 2 years?



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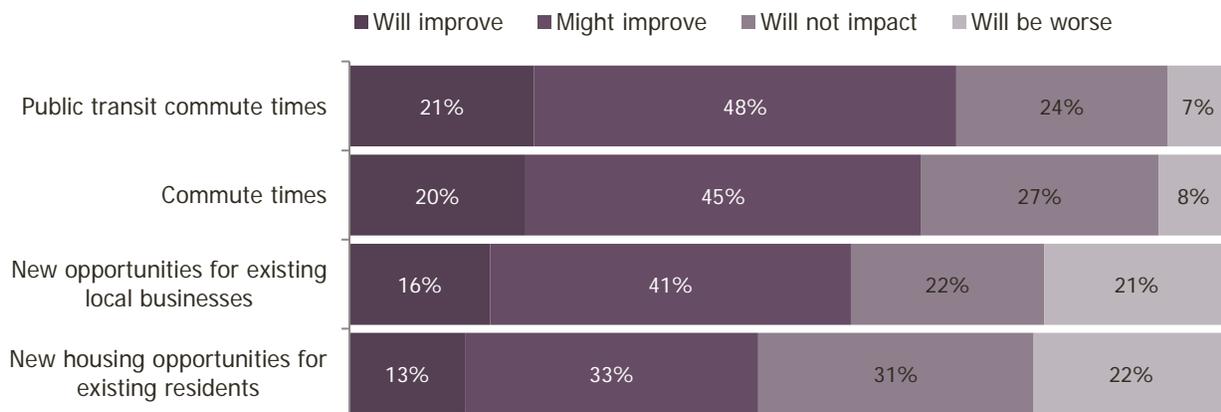
Survey respondents assessed how often they, or their family had experienced four various hardships; a majority had never experiences health concerns due to excessive heat conditions or not having enough money to provide food, medicine or housing. About half had never experienced a “near miss” as a pedestrian due to bicyclists of sidewalks, paths or crossing the street; however, a similar percentage had experienced a “near miss” two or more times as a pedestrian crossing the street due to drivers’ disregard of walk signals, stop signs, red lights or speeding.

Figure 7: Rate of Experiencing Various Hardships
In the last 12 months, how often, if ever, have you or your family experienced the following?



When asked about the impact of the Honolulu Rail Transit project on aspects of commuting and opportunities for business and residents, a majority felt there would either be no impact on each listed aspect or they might improve and 2 in 10 or fewer felt each aspect would be worse.

Figure 8: Impact of Honolulu Rail Transit Project
What impact, if any, do you think the Honolulu Rail Transit project will have on each of the following once rail service begins:



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Conclusions

Residents appreciate their neighborhood and aspects of Community Engagement.

About three-quarters of residents gave positive evaluations to their neighborhood as a place to live and 8 in 10 gave high marks to feelings of safety in their neighborhood; both ratings that were on par with other communities across the nation. Each characteristic related to Community Engagement was rated similar to the national comparison with half to two-thirds of residents offering excellent or good ratings to each, including openness and acceptance, opportunities to participate in community matters and neighborliness; further, about 8 in 10 residents had talked to or visited with neighbors and 7 in 10 had done a favor for a neighbor. However, the rating for sense of community declined in 2019 compared to 2018 and was lower than the national average, other Participation ratings were similar to national averages but decreased from 2018 to 2019.

Local leadership and governance may be an area of focus as ratings are declining.

About 3 in 10 residents rated the quality of services provided by the City and County of Honolulu as excellent or good; a rating that declined in 2019 compared to 2018 and lower than the national comparison. Five of the eight various aspects of Honolulu's leadership and governance listed on the survey were rated lower in 2019 compared to 2018 and lower than the national comparisons (i.e., overall direction, value of services for taxes paid, confidence in City and County government, acting in the best interest of Honolulu and customer service); the remaining three were lower than the national comparisons but similar to ratings given in 2018.

While the proportion of residents experiencing housing cost stress is declining, affordability continues to be an area of focus.

As with many attractive communities, the cost of living and lack of affordable housing continue to pose serious challenges to community livability. Within Community Characteristics, cost of living and the availability of affordable quality housing received the lowest ratings with only five percent or fewer of residents offering positive evaluations to these items. About half of respondents were experiencing housing cost stress due to mortgage and rental costs disproportionate to household income; a rate that has declined since 2018, but continues to be lower than the national average. Only 1 in 5 felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their family income in the 6 months following the survey, a rating lower than the national average.

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