



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

# Port St. Lucie, FL

Community Livability Report

2020



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

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# About

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

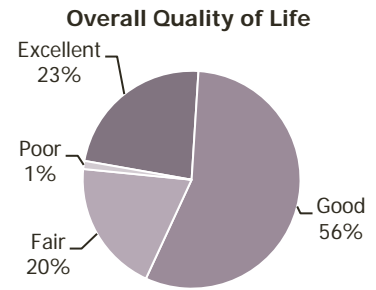
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 364 residents of the City of Port St. Lucie. 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* provided under separate cover.



# Quality of Life in Port St. Lucie

A majority of residents rated the quality of life in Port St. Lucie as excellent or good. This rating 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.

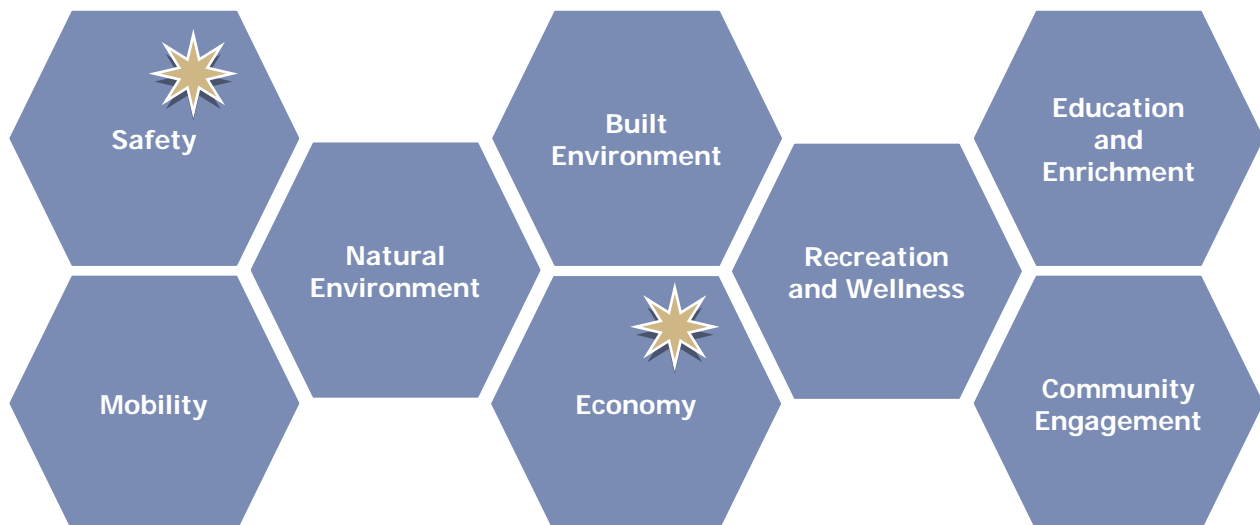
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Port St. Lucie community in the coming two years. Ratings across all facets tended to be positive and similar to the benchmarks. 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 Port St. Lucie’s unique questions.

## Legend

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

- \* Most important



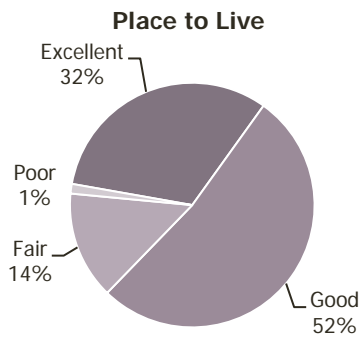
# Community Characteristics

*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 Port St. Lucie, 84% rated the City as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Port St. Lucie as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

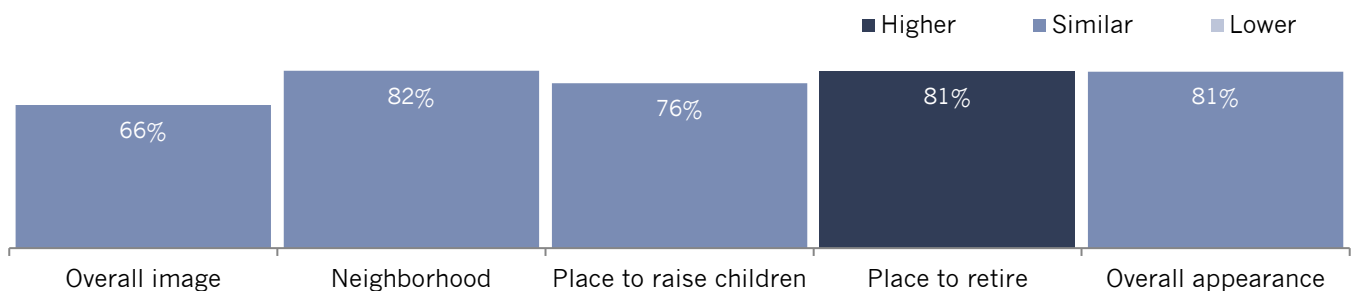
In addition to rating the City as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Port St. Lucie as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Port St. Lucie and its overall appearance. All aspects received excellent or good ratings from at least two-thirds of respondents. Ratings of Port St. Lucie as a place to retire were higher than the national average. Residents gave higher marks to the city as a place to raise children in 2020 compared to 2019 (see the *Trends over Time* report under separate cover).

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. All aspect of Safety, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Community Engagement received positive ratings from a majority of respondents and were on par with national averages. Ratings of Mobility ratings were a mix of positive and negative; 5 of the 8 aspects were lower than the benchmarks. Ratings were also mixed within Economy and Education and Enrichment.



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

Comparison to national benchmark



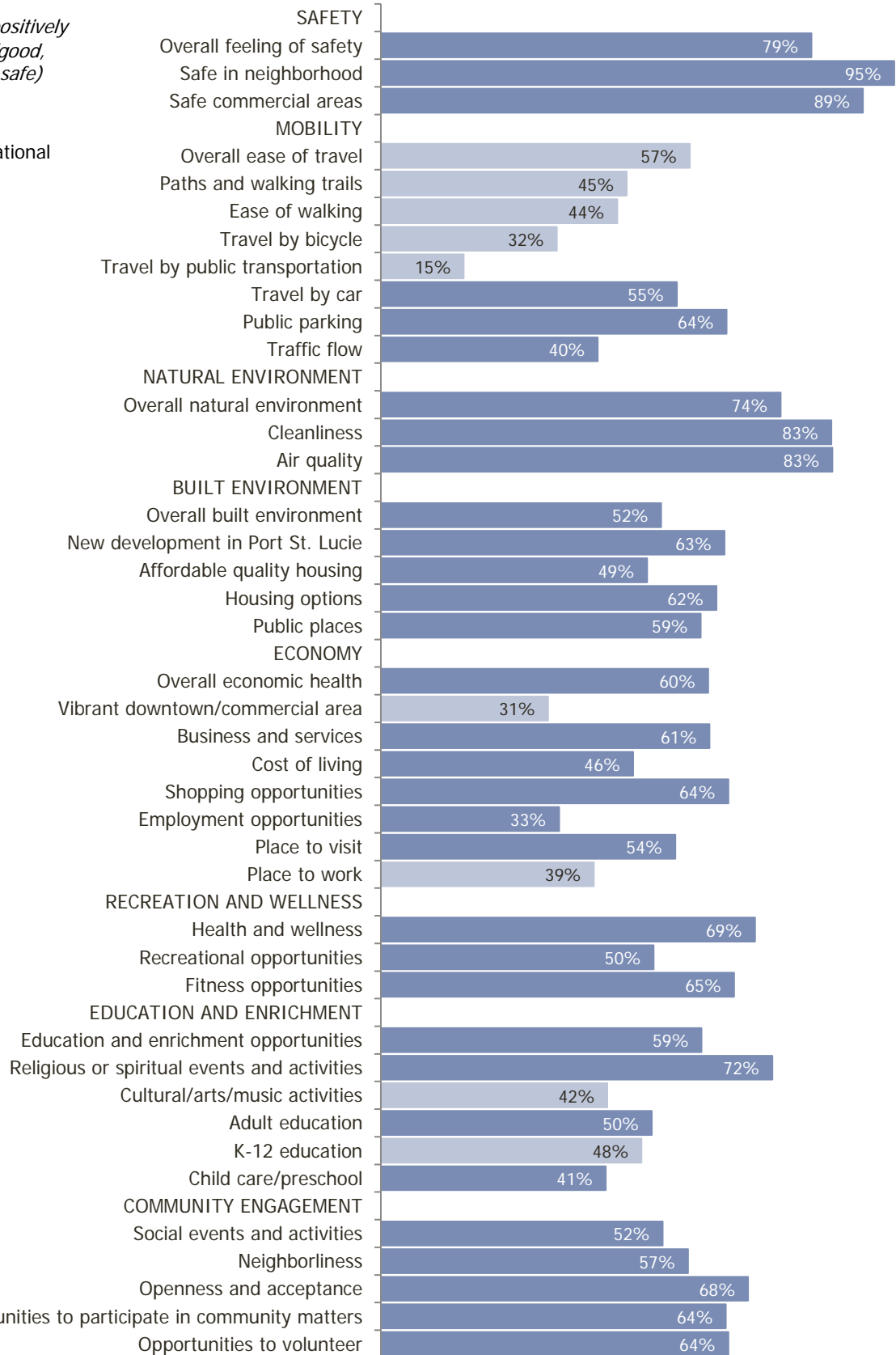
# The National Community Survey™

Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



# Governance

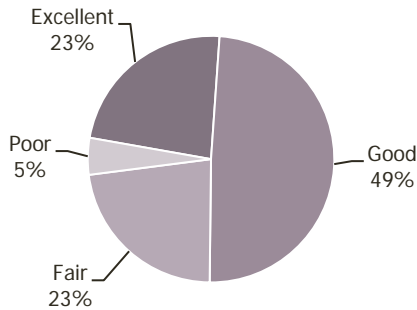
*How well does the government of Port St. Lucie meet the needs and expectations of its residents?*

The overall quality of the services provided by Port St. Lucie as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About 7 in 10 gave high marks to the overall quality of City services, while about 5 in 10 gave high marks to the U.S. Government. Both assessments were on par with national averages.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Port St. Lucie’s leadership and governance. Most aspects received positive ratings from a majority of respondents, and all were similar to ratings in comparison communities. However, residents gave lower ratings to the job the City government did at being honest, welcoming citizen involvement and treating all residents fairly in 2020 compared to 2019.

Respondents evaluated over 30 individual services and amenities available in Port St. Lucie. All aspects of Safety were rated positively by at least two-thirds of respondents, and most ratings were similar to the national benchmarks. Resident assessment of emergency preparedness was higher than in comparison communities and this rating increased in 2020 compared to 2019. Most aspects of Mobility received positive marks from a majority of respondents, and all but one were similar to the benchmarks. Bus or transit services fell below the national benchmark and this rating decreased in 2020. Ratings across all other facets were rated positively by residents and were similar to the benchmarks. Several aspects were trending up in 2020 compared to 2019, including preservation of natural areas, economic development, City parks, recreation programs and public information services.

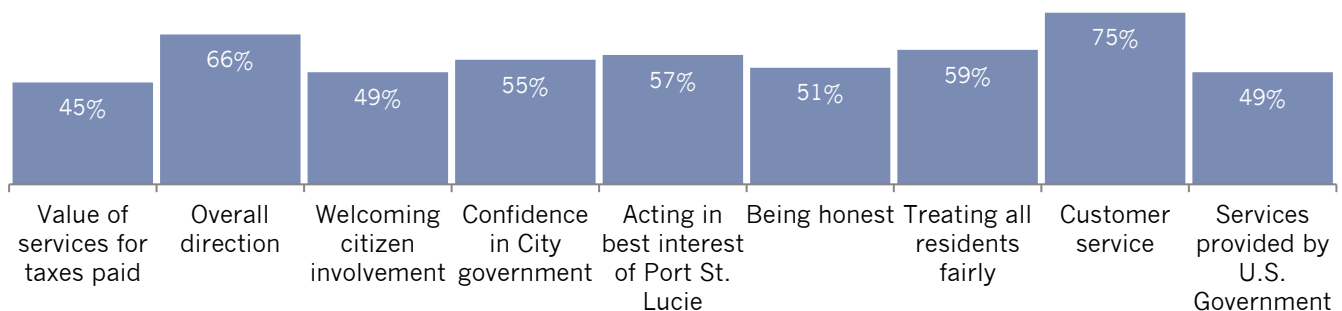
Overall Quality of City Services



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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



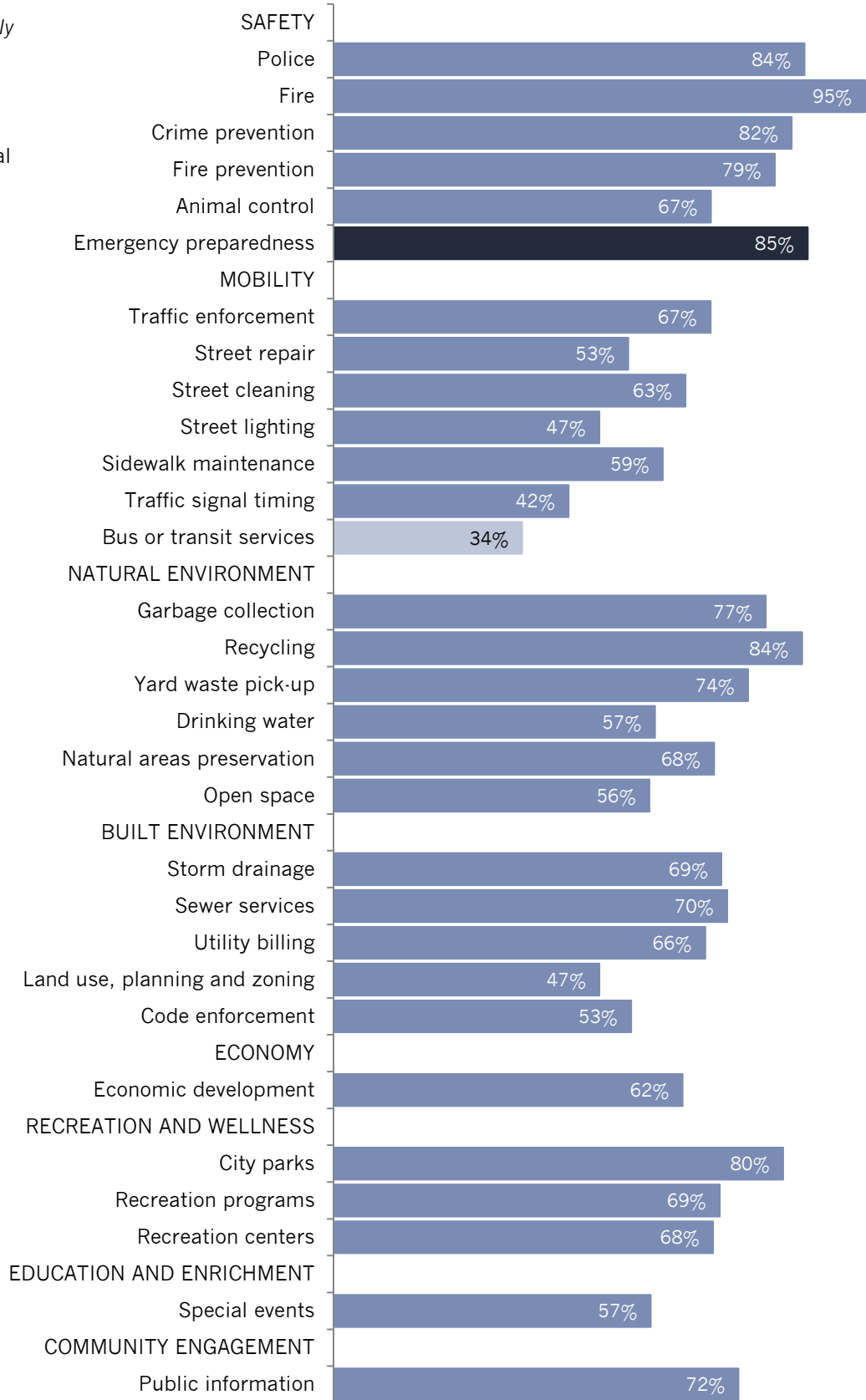
# The National Community Survey™

Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

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

Comparison to national  
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower





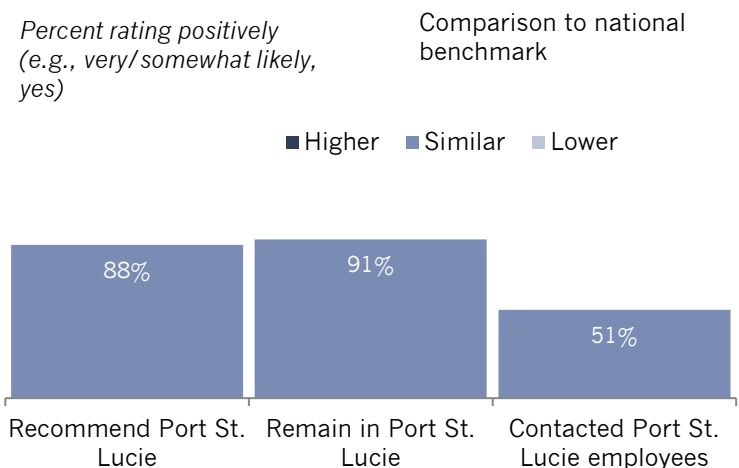
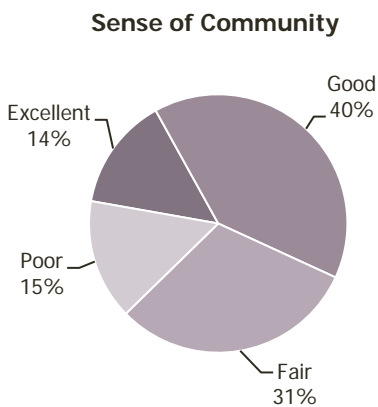
# Participation

*Are the residents of Port St. Lucie 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 half of respondents gave excellent or good marks to the sense of community in Port St. Lucie and this rating was similar to the benchmark. About 4 in 5 respondents were likely to recommend living in the city and were likely to remain in Port St. Lucie for the next five years, these rates were also on par with comparison communities. About half of residents reported that they had contacted a city employee in the last 12 months, this rate was similar to comparison communities and increased in 2020 compared to 2019.

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 within Port St. Lucie varied widely, making comparisons to the benchmarks useful for interpreting the results.

Port St. Lucie residents reported higher levels of stocking supplies for emergencies and recycling at home than their counterparts. Survey respondents also had a more positive personal economic outlook than respondents in comparison communities across the U.S. Fewer Port St. Lucie residents reported that they had used public transportation or walked or biked instead of driving, and more residents were under housing cost stress than their counterparts. Most reported rates of Participation remained stable over time. However, fewer survey respondents reported that they had made their homes more energy efficient, participated in religious or spiritual activities, watched a local public meeting or had campaigned for an issues, cause or candidate in 2020 compared to 2019.



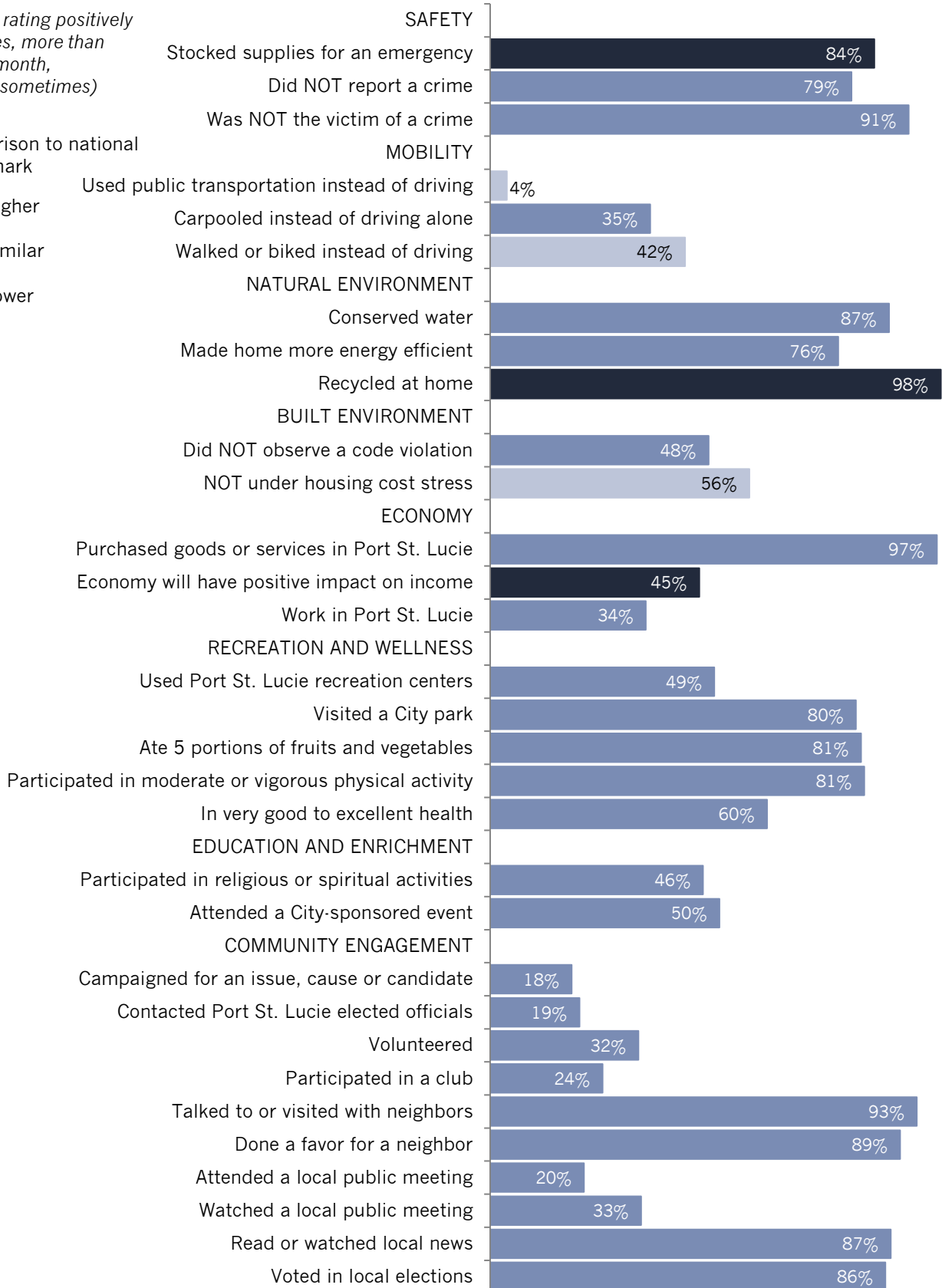
# The National Community Survey™

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



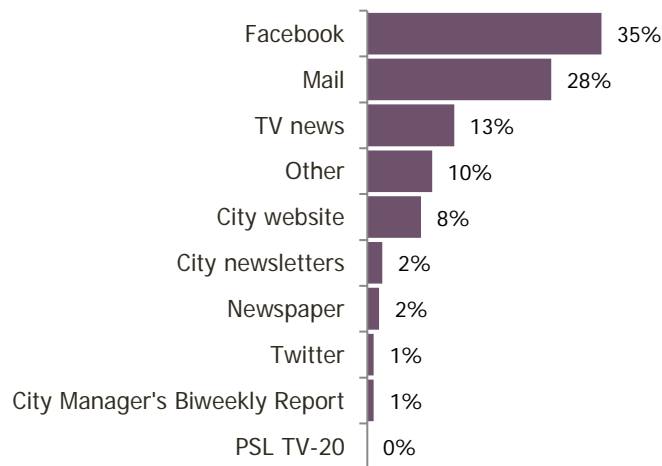
# Special Topics

The City of Port St. Lucie included several questions of special interest on The NCS, with topics including communications from the City of Port St. Lucie, wireless internet service and City priorities.

Residents were asked their preferences receiving news about the City of Port St. Lucie. About 3 in 10 reported they preferred receiving news through Facebook or mail, and around 1 in 10 residents preferred TV news or the City website.

Figure 4: Preference for Receiving News

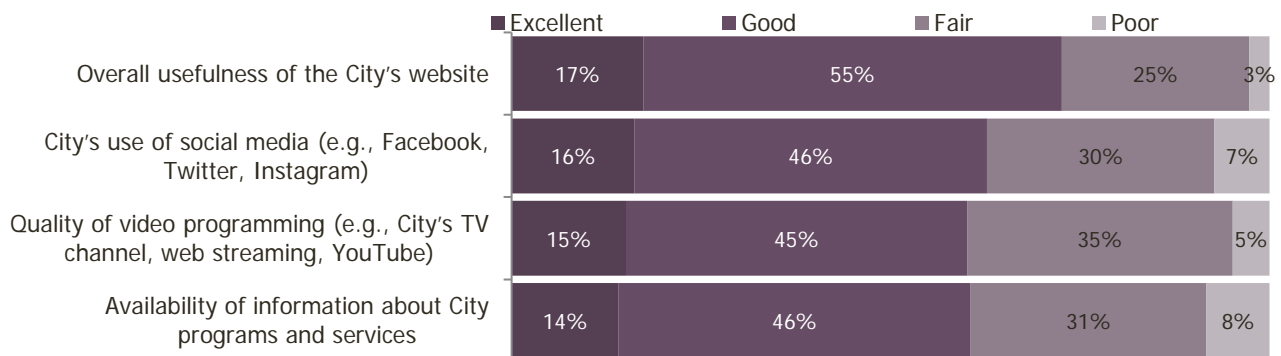
Please indicate which of the following methods, if any, you prefer as a way to receive news about the City of Port St. Lucie: (Please select one.)



Community members rated several aspects of City communications. Overall usefulness of the City's website received the highest marks, with about 7 in 10 rating it as excellent or good. A majority of residents gave high marks to the availability of information about City programs and services, the City's use of social media and the quality of video programming.

Figure 5: Port St. Lucie Communications

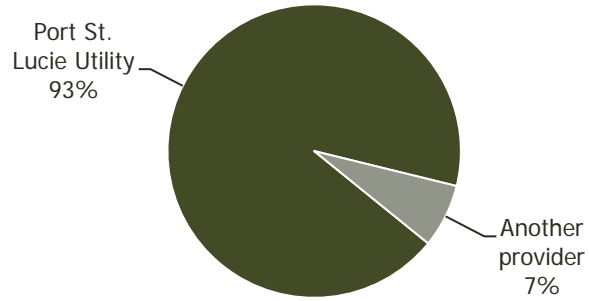
Please rate each of the following aspects of Port St. Lucie communications:



When asked about who provides their water or wastewater services, about 9 in 10 residents reported receiving services from the Port St. Lucie Utility Systems, while about 1 in 10 residents reported receiving services from another provider.

Figure 6: Provider of Water or Wastewater Services

*Do you receive water or wastewater services from the City Port St. Lucie Utility Systems or from another provider, such as St. Lucie West Services District?*



Leadership also wanted to gauge if residents had access to wireless internet and the quality of their services. About 9 in 10 residents reported they did have access to wireless internet. Of those that did have access, three-quarters of respondents were pleased with the quality, while only 4% of respondents rated their wireless internet as poor.

Figure 7: Access to Wireless Internet  
*Do you have access to wireless internet?*

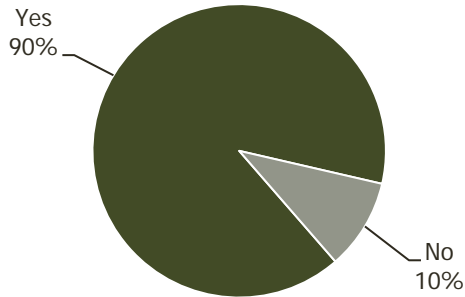
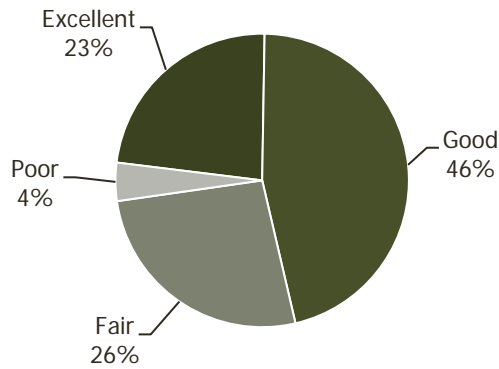


Figure 8: Quality of Wireless Internet  
*Rate the quality of your wireless internet:*

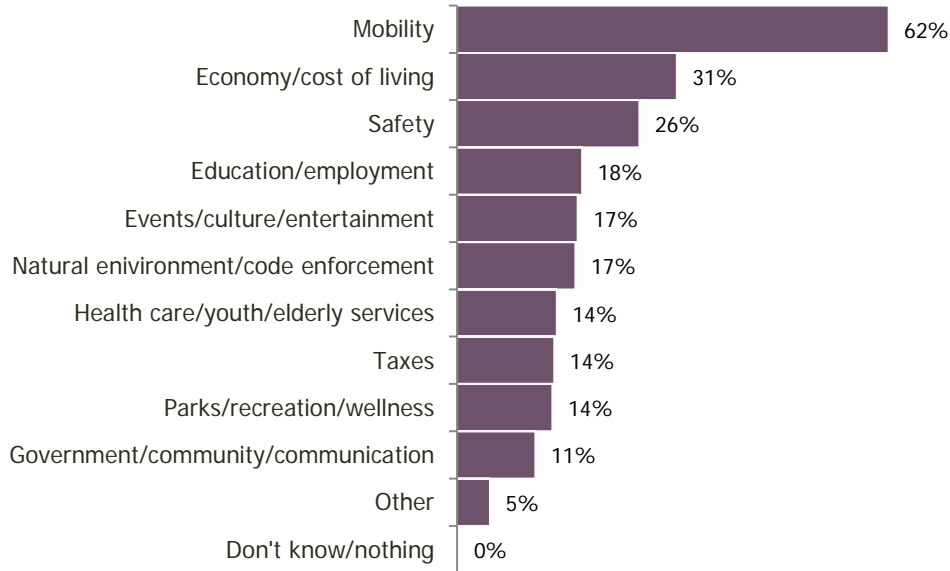


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The City gave residents the opportunities to write in their own words what top three priorities they wanted the City to focus on in the next year. A total of 314 respondents wrote in responses for the open-ended question. Survey respondents most commonly cited issues that had to do with mobility (traffic, road conditions, traffic lights, sidewalks, etc.). The other most commonly cited topics had to do with economy/cost of living and safety.

Figure 9: Top City Priorities

*What are the top three priorities you would like the City to focus on in the next year?*



Total exceeds 100% as respondents could write in more than one option.

# Conclusions

## As in previous years, Port St. Lucie residents report a positive quality of life.

About 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to the overall quality of life in Port St. Lucie and to the city as a place to live. Further, 8 in 10 residents gave excellent or good ratings to Port St. Lucie as a place to retire, as a place to raise children and the overall appearance of the city. Ratings of Port St. Lucie as a place to retire exceeded national averages, and ratings for Port St. Lucie as a place to raise children improved from 2019 to 2020. About half gave positive scores to the sense of community in Port St. Lucie, while 4 in 5 planned to remain in the community for the next five years and would recommend living in Port St. Lucie to someone who asked. These ratings were similar to those given in other jurisdictions across the country.

## Mobility continues to be a challenge.

The overall ease of travel in Port St. Lucie received ratings lower than national averages. Further, several other aspects of Mobility in Port St. Lucie continued to be lower than the national averages, including evaluations for most modes of travel (by foot, public transit and bicycle). Ratings for the ease of travel by public transportation and the quality of bus or transit services decreased in 2020 compared to 2019. While assessments of the City's paths and walking trails were lower than average, residents had more positive perceptions of paths and walking trails in 2020. Compared to other communities, fewer residents reported they had walked or biked or used public transportation in place of driving along.

When asked, in their own words, to identify the top three priorities the City should focus on, topics relating to Mobility were by far cited the most often.

## Safety and Economy continue to be resident priorities.

As in past years, residents identified Safety and Economy as two important areas of focus for the next two years. Ratings for Safety tended to be strong and similar to the national benchmarks. Roughly 9 in 10 respondents reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods and in Port St. Lucie's downtown/commercial area, while about 8 in 10 gave positive marks to the overall feeling of safety in the city. Ratings for emergency preparedness were higher than national averages, and improved from 2019 to 2020. Ratings for crime prevention also increased since the last survey. More Port St. Lucie residents reported that they stocked supplies for an emergency than those in comparison communities.

Many ratings for Economy were similarly positive and similar to those given in other communities. About 6 in 10 residents gave positive reviews to economic development services, the overall economic health of the city, the quality of Port St. Lucie's business and service establishments and to shopping opportunities. Most Economy ratings were similar to the national benchmarks except for vibrant downtown/commercial area and the city as a place to work, which were lower. Port St. Lucie residents gave higher ratings to economic development services, the overall economic health of the city, shopping opportunities and to employment opportunities in 2020 compared to 2019.