

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Elk Grove, CA
Community Livability Report

2017



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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Elk Grove. 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.

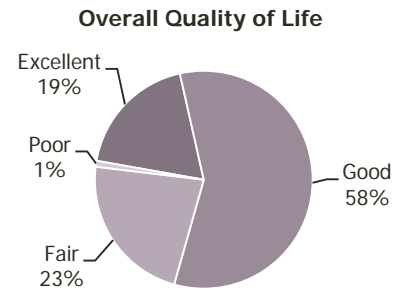
Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central 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 515 residents of the City of Elk Grove. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% 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 Elk Grove

Most residents (77%) rated the quality of life in Elk Grove as excellent or good. This was similar to 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.

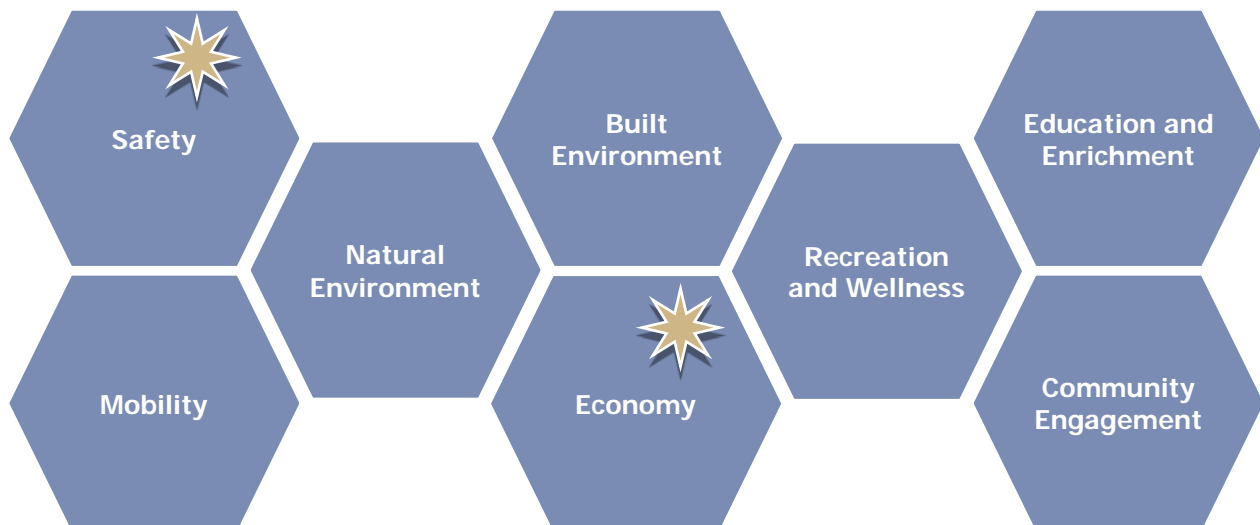
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. As in 2015, residents identified Safety and Economy as priorities for the Elk Grove community in the coming two years. Ratings for all facets were favorable and similar to other communities. 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 Elk Grove’s unique questions.

Legend

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

- * Most important



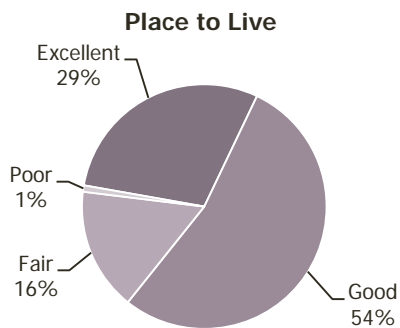
Community Characteristics

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 Elk Grove, 83% rated the city as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Elk Grove 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 Elk Grove as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Elk Grove and its overall appearance. At least 7 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall image and overall appearance of the city, their neighborhood as a place to live and the city as a place to raise children, and about half favorably rated Elk Grove as a place to retire. These ratings were all similar to the national benchmark.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. Generally, most ratings across the facets tended to be similar to those given elsewhere. At least 7 in 10 Elk Grove residents gave positive evaluations to feelings of safety in their neighborhood and in the downtown/commercial area, overall natural environment, cleanliness, preventive health services, opportunities to attend religious or spiritual events or activities, K-12 education and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds; these ratings were similar to national averages. Conversely, respondents' ratings for the overall feeling of safety in the city, overall ease of travel, air quality, vibrant downtown/commercial area and Elk Grove as a place to visit were lower than ratings given in other communities.

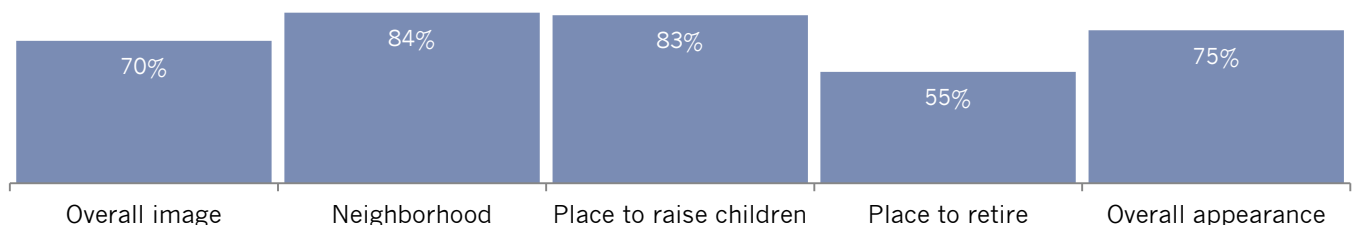


When compared to 2015, survey participants' ratings for several aspects of Community Characteristics decreased (including overall feeling of safety, overall ease of travel and Elk Grove as a place to retire) while evaluations for neighborliness increased. For more information on trends, please see the *Trends Over Time* report under separate cover.

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

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



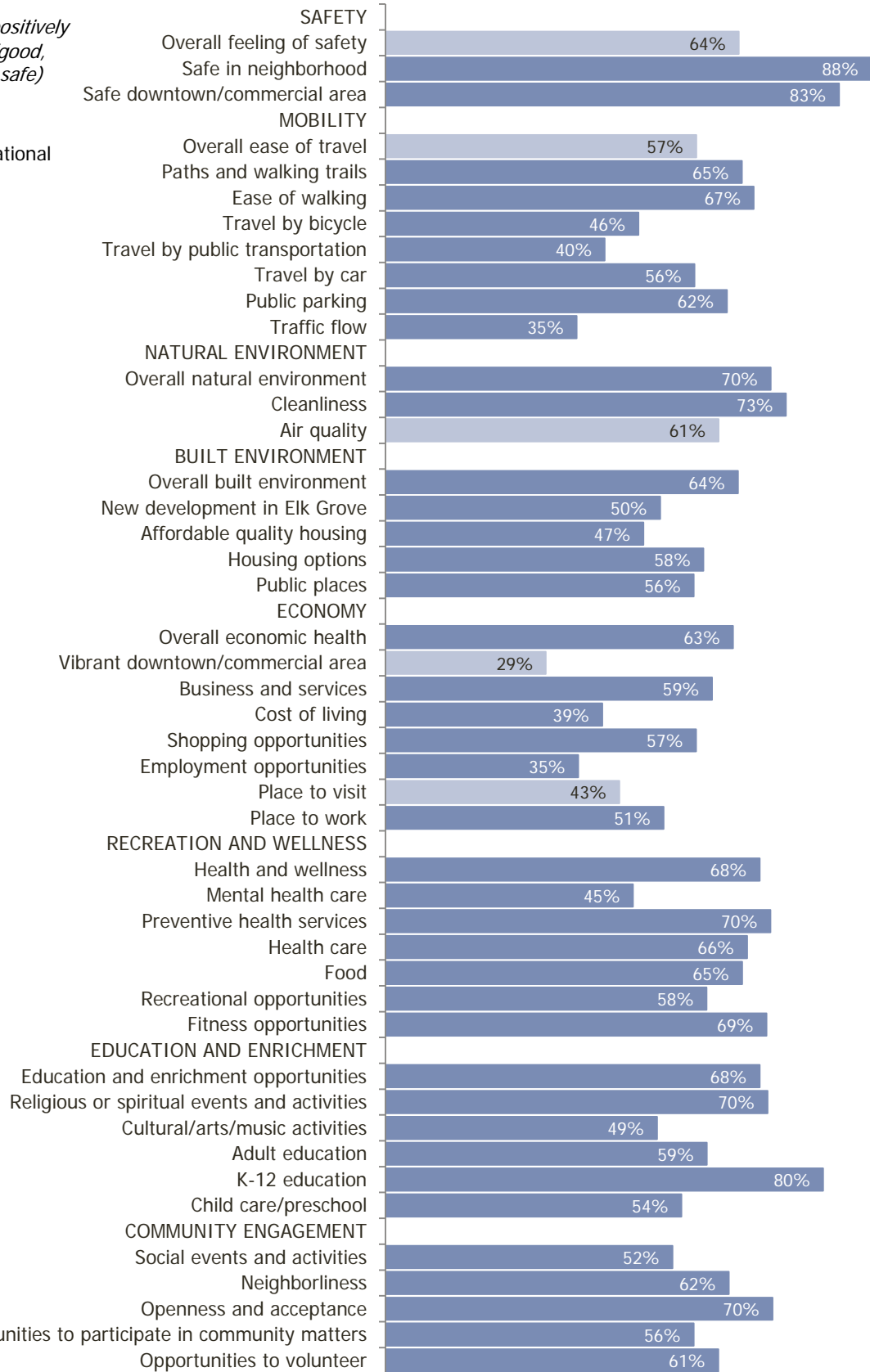
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Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



Governance

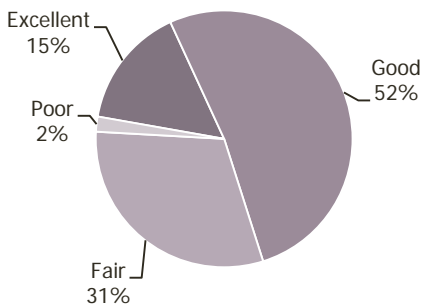
How well does the government of Elk Grove meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Elk Grove as well as the manner in which these services are provided is a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. About two-thirds of Elk Grove residents gave positive reviews to the overall quality of City services and one-third favorably rated the quality of services provided by the Federal Government. These ratings were both similar to those given in other communities.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Elk Grove’s leadership and governance. About two-thirds of residents gave favorable marks to the customer service provided by the City and roughly 4 in 10 rated the remaining aspects of government performance as excellent or good; these ratings were all similar to the national benchmarks.

Respondents evaluated over 20 individual services and amenities available in Elk Grove. Nearly all City services were rated positively by at least half of survey respondents and were similar to the national comparison. About three-quarters or more of Elk Grove residents gave excellent or good ratings to police, street lighting, garbage collection, recycling, yard waste pick-up, storm drainage and public libraries. Only one aspect, emergency preparedness, was rated lower than the benchmark.

Overall Quality of City Services

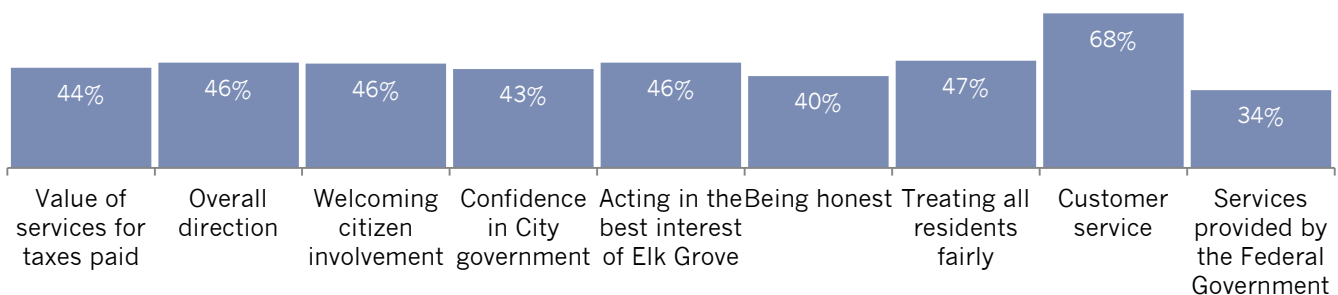


When compared to 2015, participants’ ratings in 2017 improved for aspects related to Mobility (street cleaning, traffic signal timing), Natural Environment (open space) and Education and Enrichment (special events). On the other hand, declines were seen for residents’ evaluations for crime prevention, animal control, natural areas preservation and code enforcement in 2017.

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

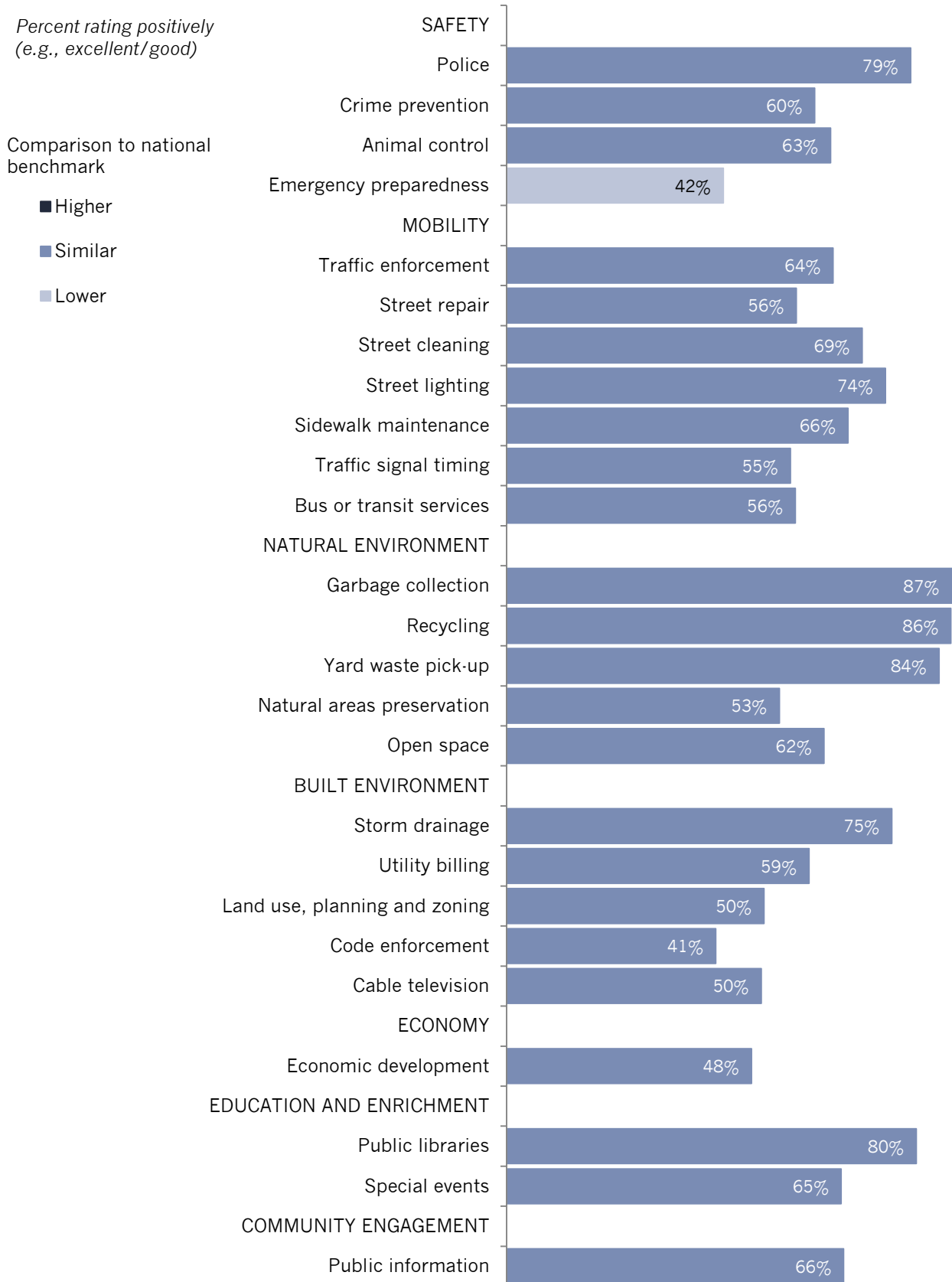
Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower



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Figure 2: Aspects of Governance



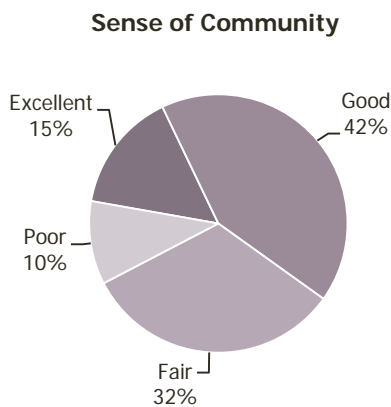
Participation

Are the residents of Elk Grove connected to the community and each other?

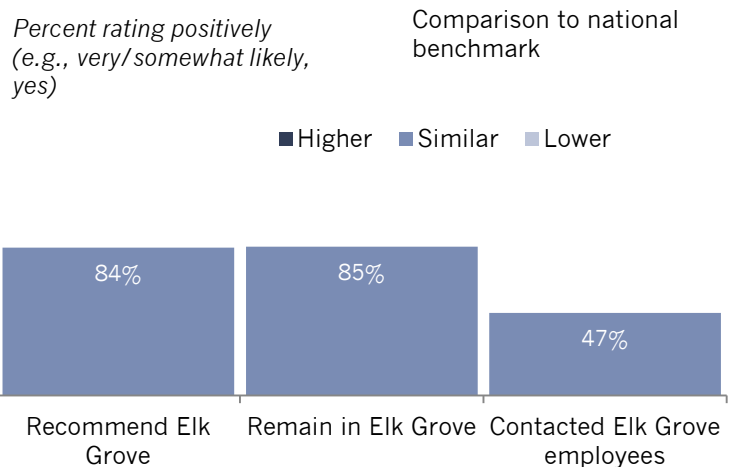
An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community, a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. In Elk Grove, over half of residents rated the sense of community in the city as excellent or good. Most residents would recommend living in Elk Grove to someone who asked and planned to remain in the city for the next five years and 47% had contacted City employees in the 12 months prior to a survey, which was higher in 2017 than in 2015. These ratings were similar to those given elsewhere.

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 Elk Grove over time) helpful for understanding the results.

Overall, Elk Grove residents participated in most activities at rates similar to those found in other communities across the country. For example, about 7 in 10 residents had not reported a crime and 8 in 10 had not been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey, on par with the rest of the country. Virtually all residents had conserved water and more than half had carpooled instead of driving alone and both of these levels were higher than those seen elsewhere. Just one item was lower than the benchmark: the proportion of residents using public transportation instead of driving.



Most levels of Participation remained stable from 2015 to 2017. Residents were less likely to have stocked supplies for an emergency in 2017, but more likely to have campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate, contacted Elk Grove elected officials and to believe that the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months.



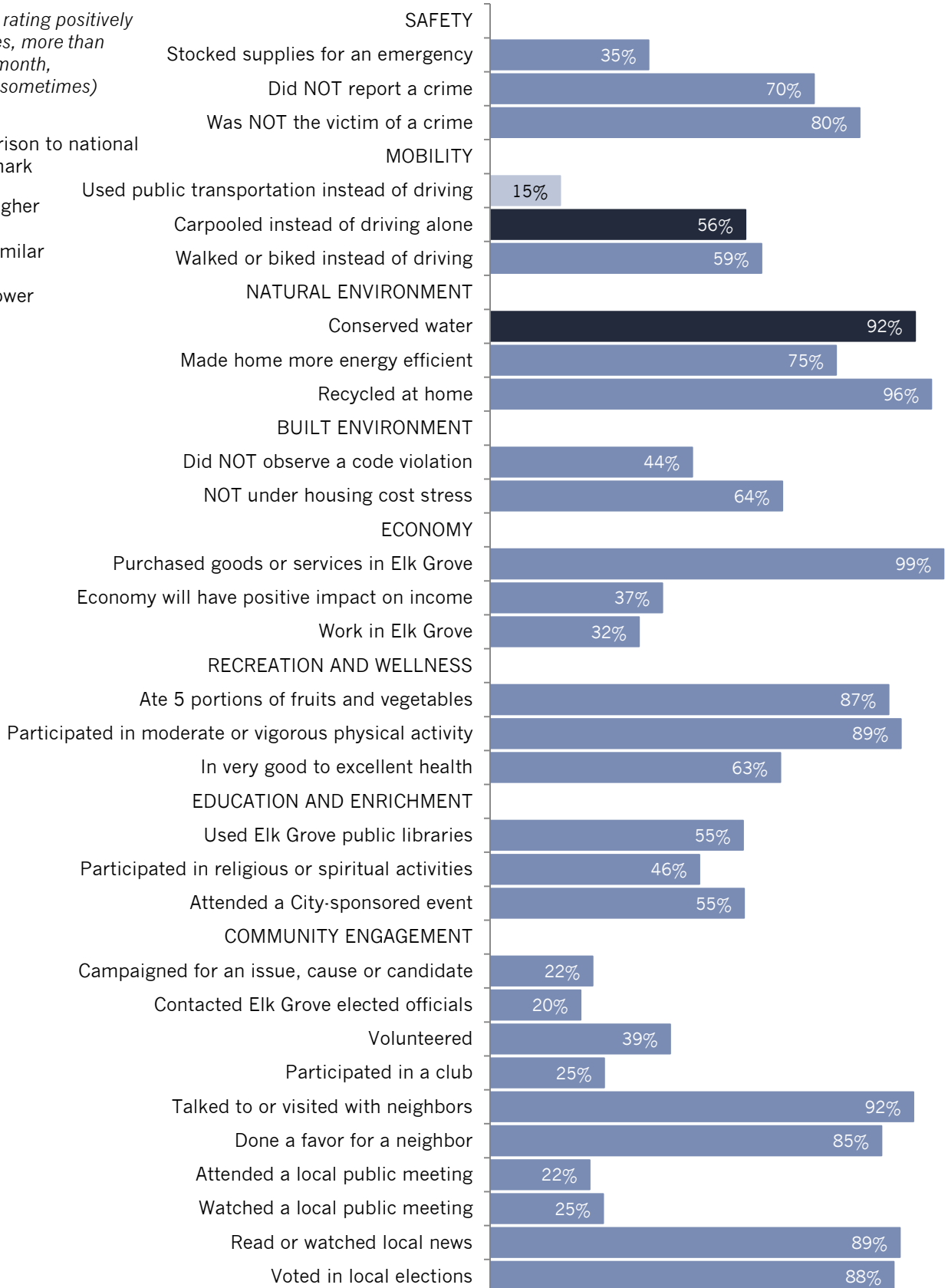
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Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

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

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

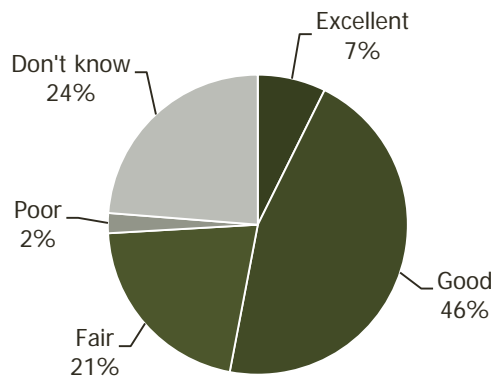


Special Topics

The City of Elk Grove included six questions of special interest on The NCS. Topic areas included management of public funds, sources of City information, citizen engagement and City services.

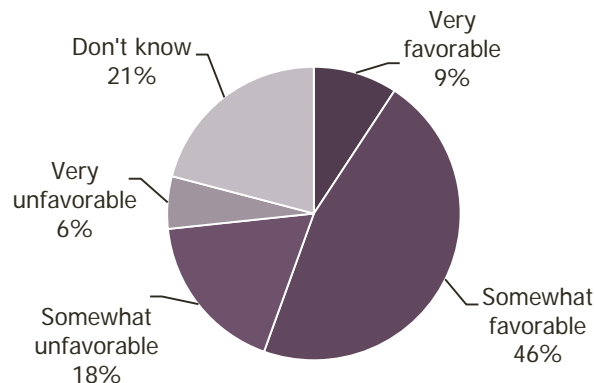
The first question asked residents to rate the financial condition of the City. About half gave this an excellent or good rating, about 2 in 10 rated it as fair and very few gave it a poor rating. About one-quarter of residents answered “don’t know” to this question.

Figure 4: Financial Condition of Elk Grove
How would you rate the financial condition of the City of Elk Grove?



When asked how they felt about the effectiveness of City management regarding public funds, more than half had a favorable opinion and about one-quarter had an unfavorable opinion. Another 2 in 10 residents responded “don’t know” to this question.

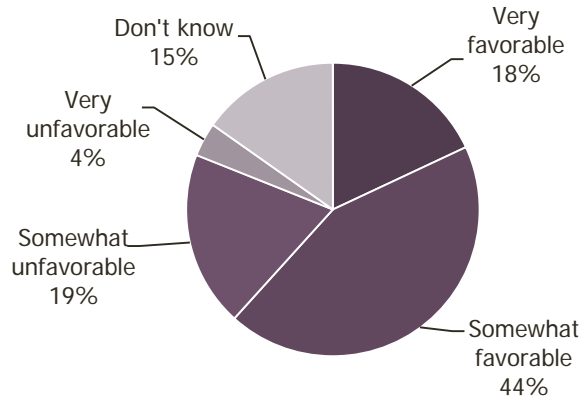
Figure 5: Management of Taxpayer Dollars and Public Funds
Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the job the City of Elk Grove is doing to effectively manage and spend taxpayer dollars and public funds?



About 6 in 10 residents had a favorable opinion of the job the City is doing to provide services and amenities; about one-quarter had an unfavorable opinion and less than 2 in 10 answered “don’t know”.

Figure 6: Opinion of Elk Grove City Services and Amenities

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the job the City of Elk Grove is doing to provide city services and amenities?

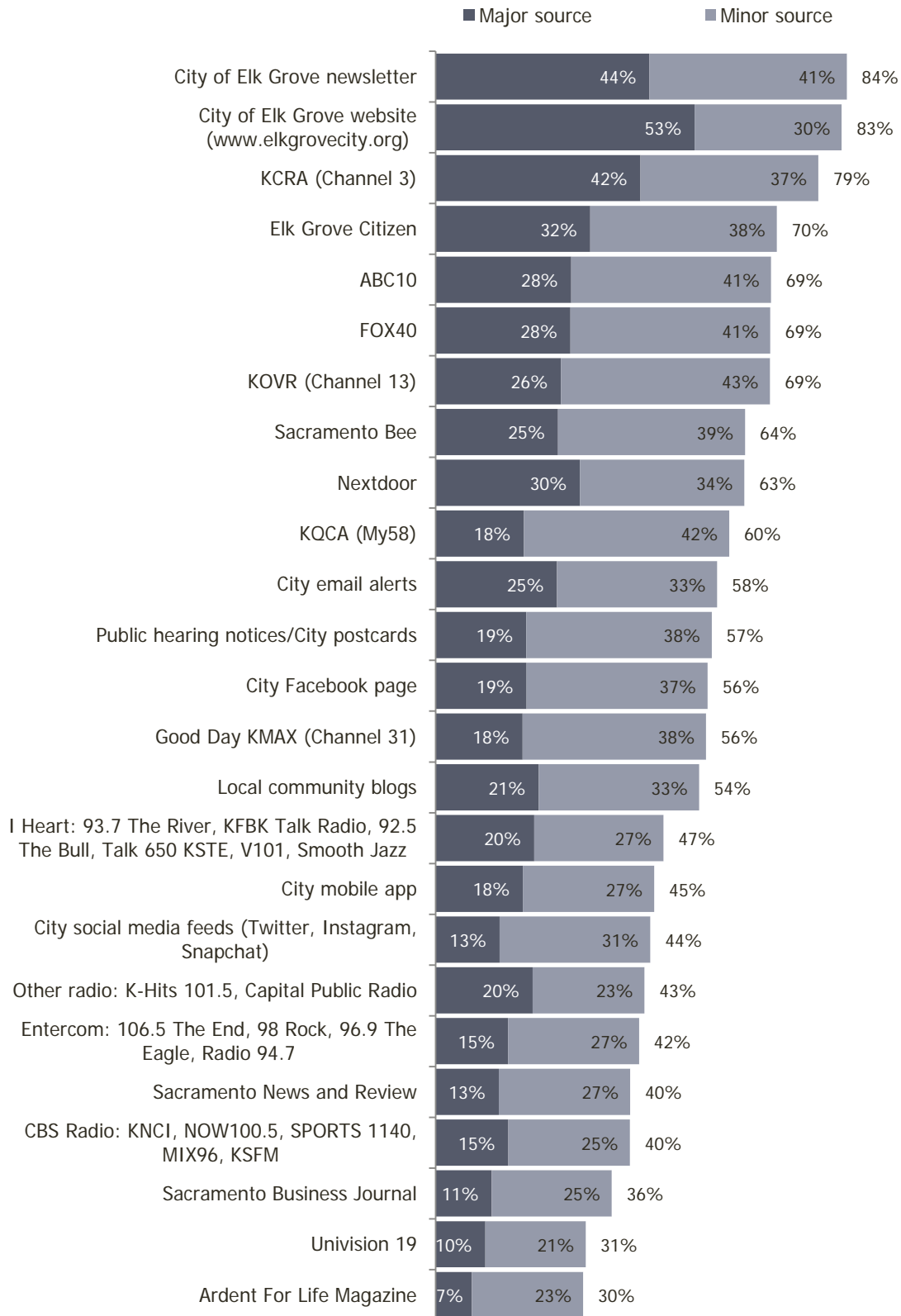


Residents were asked to consider a list of information sources about the City of Elk Grove and to indicate whether they considered each a major source, minor source, or not a source of City information (see Figure 7 on the following page). The most commonly utilized sources of City information were: the Elk Grove newsletter (84% major or minor source of information), the Elk Grove website (83%), KRCA Channel 3 (79%), the Elk Grove Citizen (70%), and ABC10, FOX40 and KOVR (69%). Less than 4 in 10 respondents cited the Sacramento Business Journal, Univision 19 or Ardent for Life Magazine as a major or minor source of information about the city.

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Figure 7: Sources of City Information

How much of a source, if at all, do you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the local community, local events, and the City government?

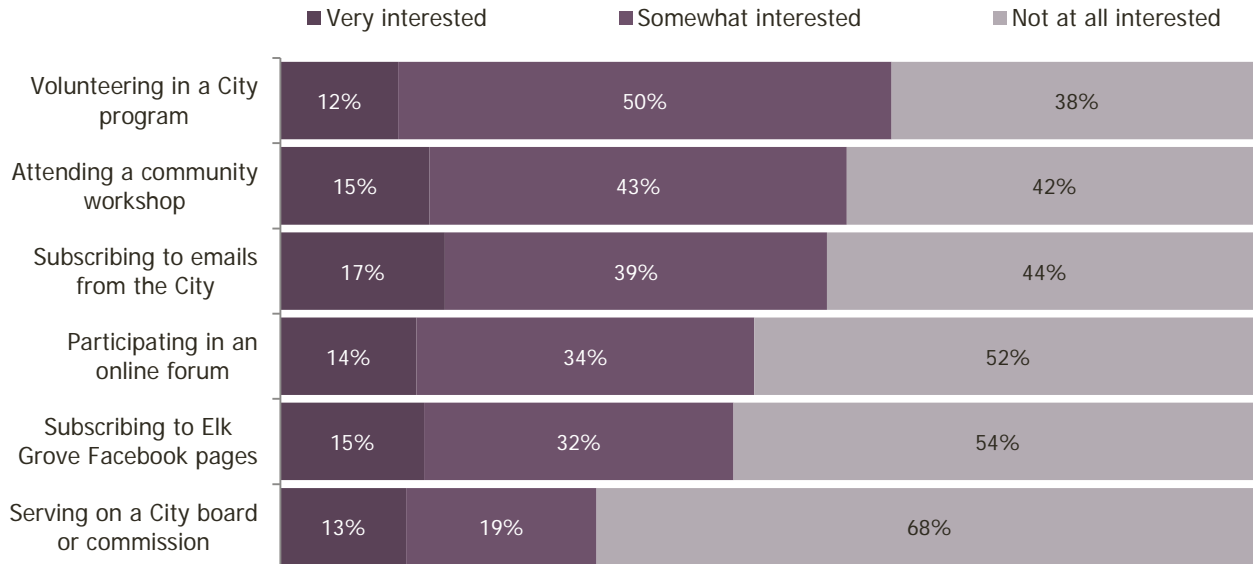


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Thinking about different ways to engage with the City, about 6 in 10 residents indicated that they were very or somewhat interested in volunteering in a City program, attending a community workshop or subscribing to emails from the City. Only about one-third were interested in serving on a City board or commission.

Figure 8: Interest in Community Engagement

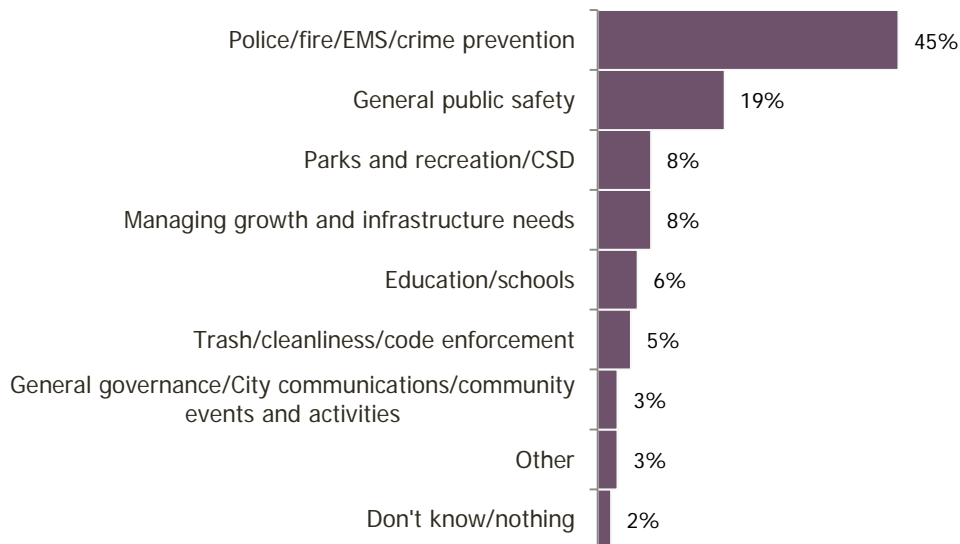
Please indicate how interested, if at all, you are in engaging with the City of Elk Grove in the following ways:



Finally, residents were asked in an open-ended question to write in their own words what they thought was the single most important service provided by the City. About half of residents made a safety-related comment specifically about police, fire, EMS or crime prevention services, and another 2 in 10 made a general comment on public safety. About 1 in 10 felt that parks and recreation/CSD or services related to managing growth and infrastructure needs were the most important (for more information and a complete list of verbatim responses please see the *Open End Report* under separate cover).

Figure 9: Most Important City Service

What would you say is the ONE most important service provided by the City of Elk Grove?



Conclusions

Safety continues to be a priority for Elk Grove residents.

Elk Grove residents indicated that Safety would be an important focus area for the City in the coming years. Generally, ratings within this facet tended to be positive: about 8 in 10 respondents reported feeling safe in their neighborhood and in Elk Grove's downtown/commercial area, and the same proportion gave favorable ratings to police services. These ratings were similar to those given in other communities across the nation. Crime prevention and animal control were positively rated by about 6 in 10 residents, and at least 7 in 10 had not reported a crime or been the victim of a crime in the 12 months prior to the survey, which were also similar to national averages. However, ratings for the overall feeling of safety in Elk Grove and emergency preparedness were lower than those given elsewhere, and evaluations of several aspects of Safety, including overall feeling of safety in the city, feeling safe in Elk Grove's downtown/commercial area, crime prevention and animal control, declined since 2015. When asked to write in their own words what they thought was the most important service provided by the City, about half mentioned police, fire, EMS and/or crime prevention and another 2 in 10 made a comment related to general safety.

Economy is also a focus area for the City.

Residents also indicated that Economy was a priority for the City in the next two years. Many aspects of Economy were positively rated by at least half of residents and were similar to ratings given elsewhere, including the overall economic health of the city, overall quality of business and service establishments, shopping opportunities, Elk Grove as a place to work and economic development. Virtually all survey respondents had purchased goods or services in the city, and a greater proportion of residents in 2017 than in 2015 thought that the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the next six months. Conversely, only about 3 in 10 residents gave favorable ratings to Elk Grove's vibrant downtown/commercial area and 4 in 10 gave high marks to the city as a place to visit; these ratings were lower than those awarded elsewhere across the country. Residents tended to have a favorable view toward the City's finances; about half of respondents gave positive ratings to the financial condition of Elk Grove and to the City's management of taxpayer dollars and public funds, and very few gave either of these a poor rating.

Civic engagement is on the rise.

Ratings for several aspects of Community Engagement improved since the last survey administration. Residents gave higher marks to the neighborliness of the community and the job City government does at welcoming citizen involvement in 2017 than in 2015. Respondents were also more likely to have campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate or contacted Elk Grove elected officials in 2017. When asked about a variety of different opportunities to engage with the City, about 6 in 10 residents indicated that they were very or somewhat interested in volunteering in a City program, attending a community workshop or subscribing to emails from the City, while about half were interested in participating in an online forum or subscribing to the City's Facebook pages.