

# THE NCS™

THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY SURVEY™

## Dedham, MA

The National Community Survey™

2025 Results

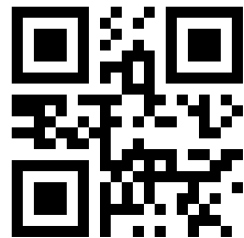




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# Resident Surveys in Local Governance



**Monitor trends  
in resident  
opinion**



**Measure  
government  
performance**



**Inform budget,  
land use,  
strategic  
planning  
decisions**



**Benchmark  
against other  
communities**

# The NCS™ Facets of Community Livability



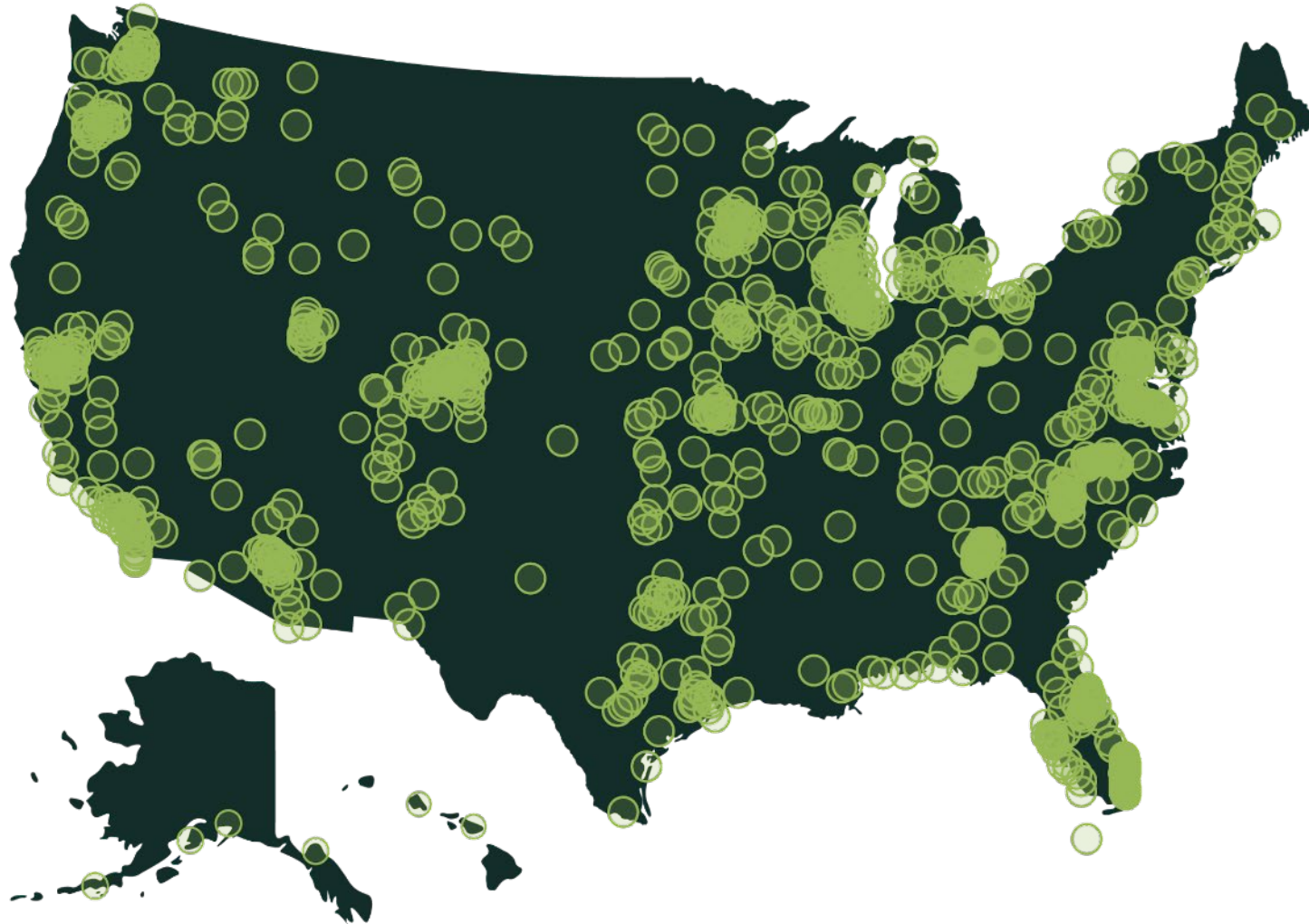
# The National Community Survey™ in Dedham



## The NCS™ for Dedham, MA

- 1<sup>st</sup> time conducting The NCS
- Survey conducted from August 28, 2025 – October 9, 2025
- Mailing approach employed:
  - Probability-based sample of 3,000 randomly selected households
  - 496 total responses received
  - 17% overall response rate (*national average: 13%*)
  - Results statistically weighted to reflect Dedham overall
  - 95% confidence interval with a +/- 4% margin of error (*industry standard: +/- 4% to +/- 7%*)
- Non-probability, open-participation survey: 467 responses

# Polco's Benchmarking Database



More than  
**400**  
comparison  
communities  
across the  
nation.

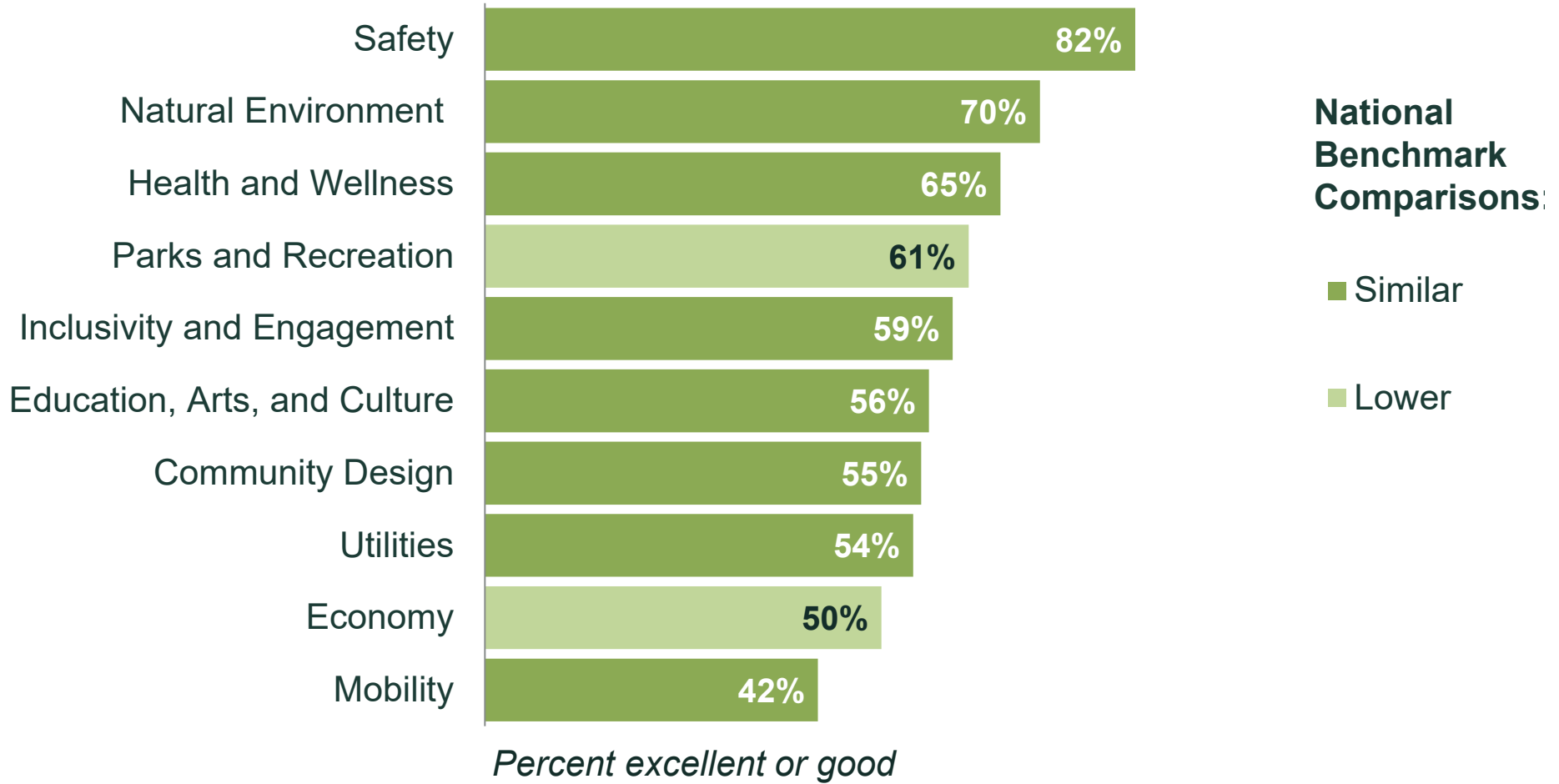
Representing  
the opinions  
of more than  
**50 million**  
residents.



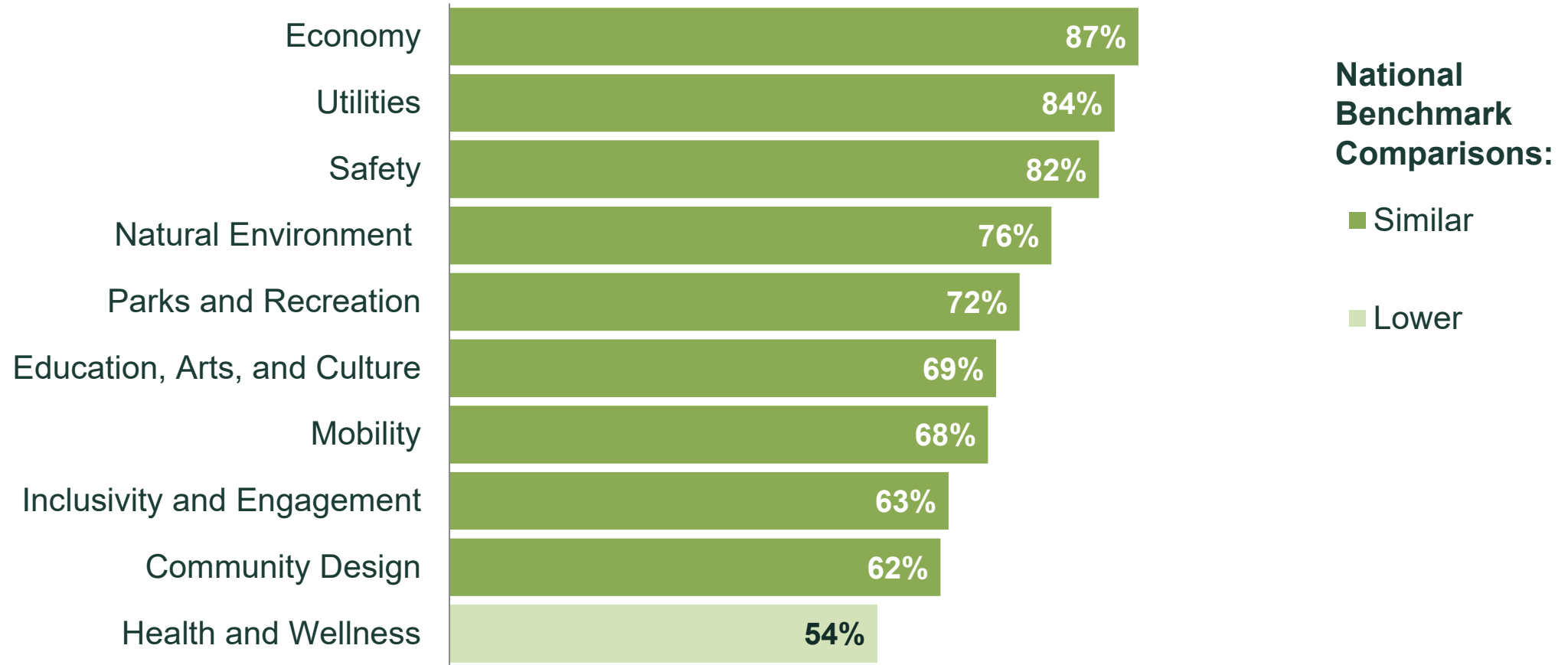
# Overview of Survey Results



# Facets of Community Livability: Quality



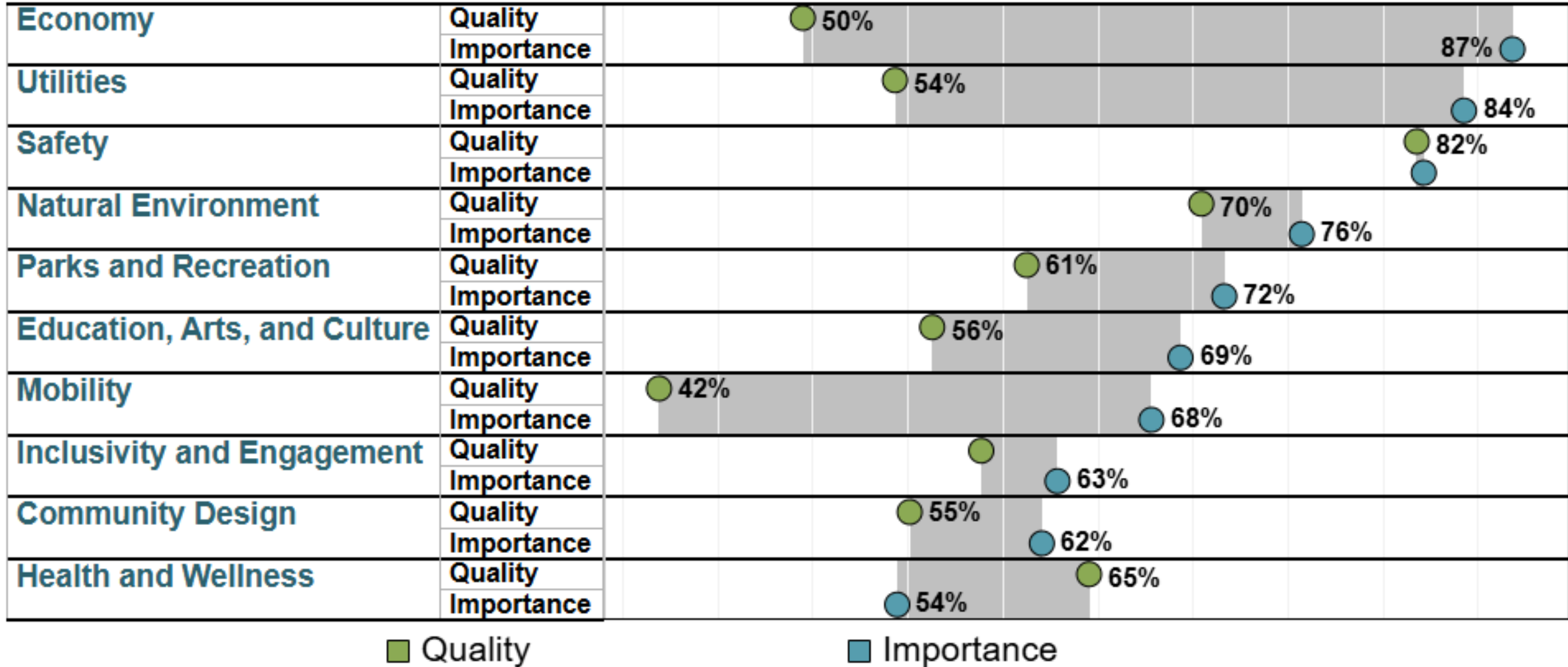
# Facets of Community Livability: Importance



*Percent essential or very important*



# Balancing Quality and Importance





# Comparisons to National Benchmarks



**5** received **higher** ratings

**109** received **similar** ratings

**9** received **lower** ratings



# Survey Items: Higher than the Benchmark



**Higher**

*Percent positive  
(excellent/good)*

## **Economy:**

- Overall quality of business and service establishments (85%)
- Variety of business and service establishments (81%)
- Vibrancy of the downtown/commercial areas (77%)
- Shopping opportunities (84%; much higher)

## **Utilities:**

- Affordable high speed internet access (69%)

# Survey Items: Lower than the Benchmark



**Lower**

*Percent positive  
(excellent/good)*

## Utilities

- Drinking water (53%)
- Utility billing (51%)

## Education, Arts, and Culture

- K-12 education (48%)

## Economy

- Overall economic health (50%)

## Mobility

- Traffic flow on major streets (31%)

## Parks and Recreation

- Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities (61%)
- Availability of walking paths and trails (51%)

## Natural Environment

- Yard waste pick-up (45%)
- Water resources (beaches, lakes, ponds, riverways, etc.) (37%)



# Key Findings





Most residents experience a high quality of life in Dedham.

1



# Overall Community Quality



Around  
**8 in 10**

residents gave **excellent** or **good** ratings to:

- Dedham as a place to live
- The overall quality of life
- Dedham as a place to raise children

**8 in 10 residents**

- Plan to remain in Dedham for the next five years
- Would recommend living in Dedham to someone who asked



**Most residents  
feel a strong  
sense of safety  
in Dedham.**

2

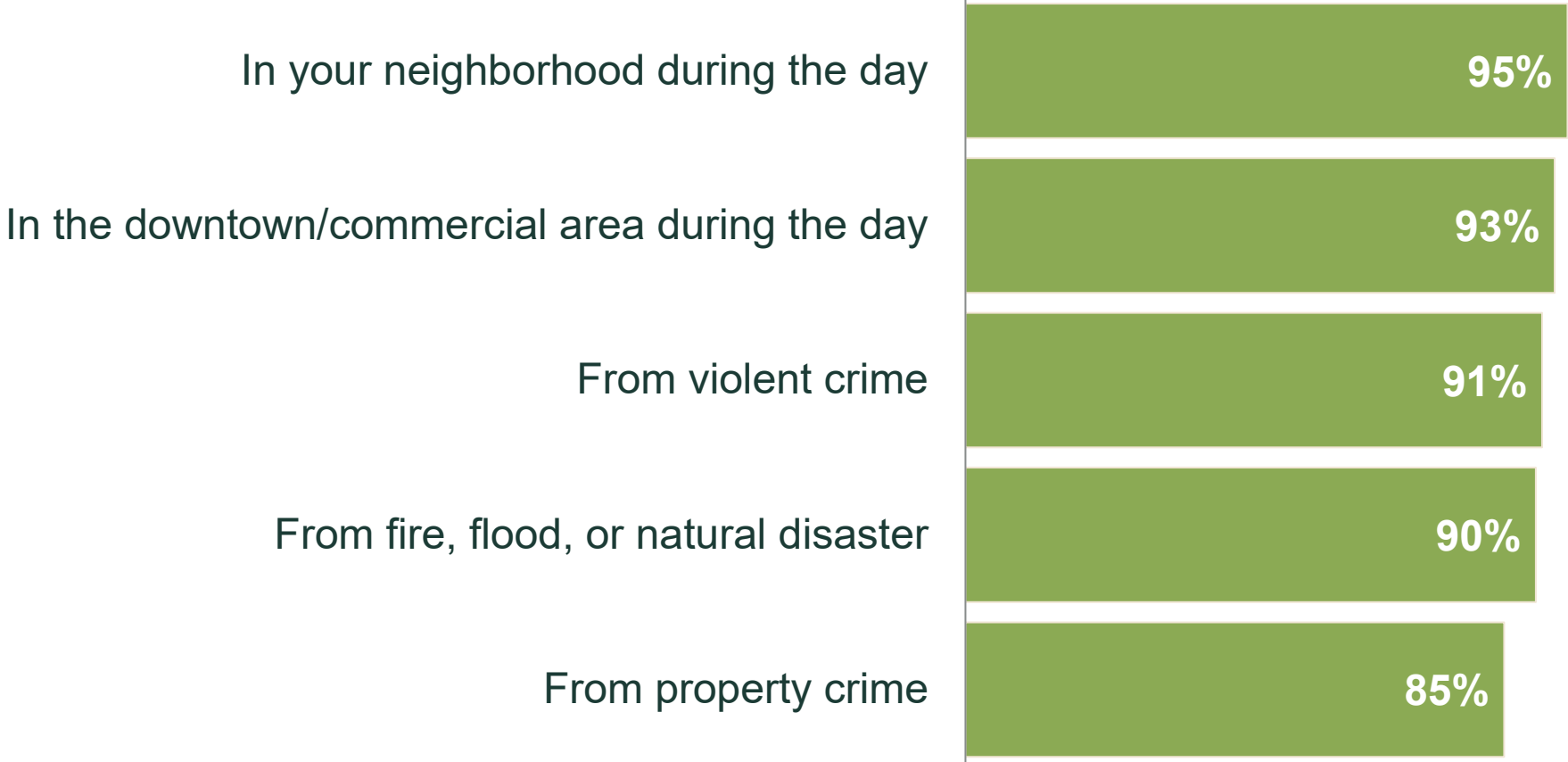


# Safety in Dedham



Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

**National Benchmark Comparison**  
■ Similar



*Percent very or somewhat safe*

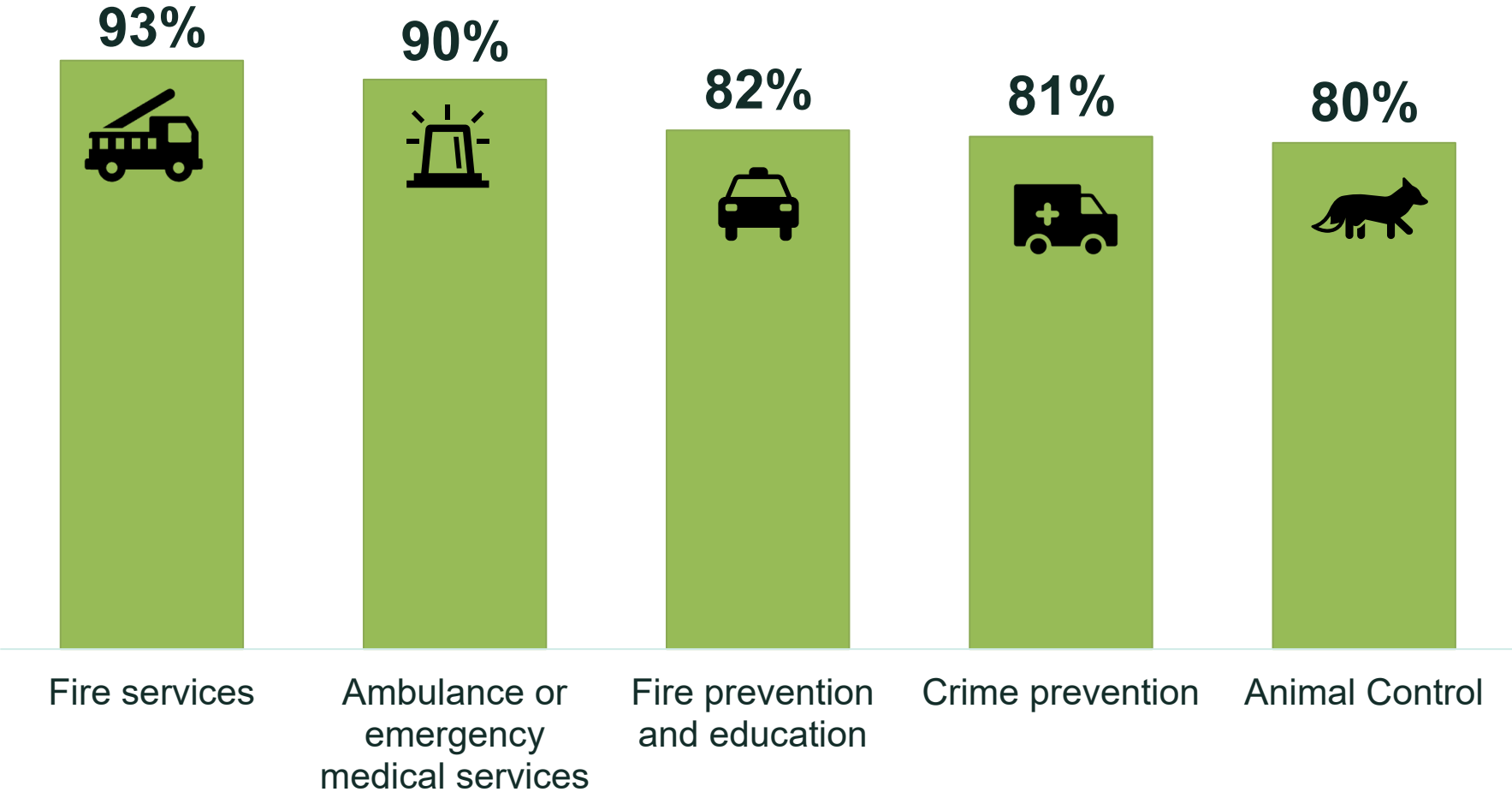
# Safety Services in Dedham



Please rate the quality of the following services in Dedham.

National Benchmark Comparison

■ Similar



*Percent excellent or good*






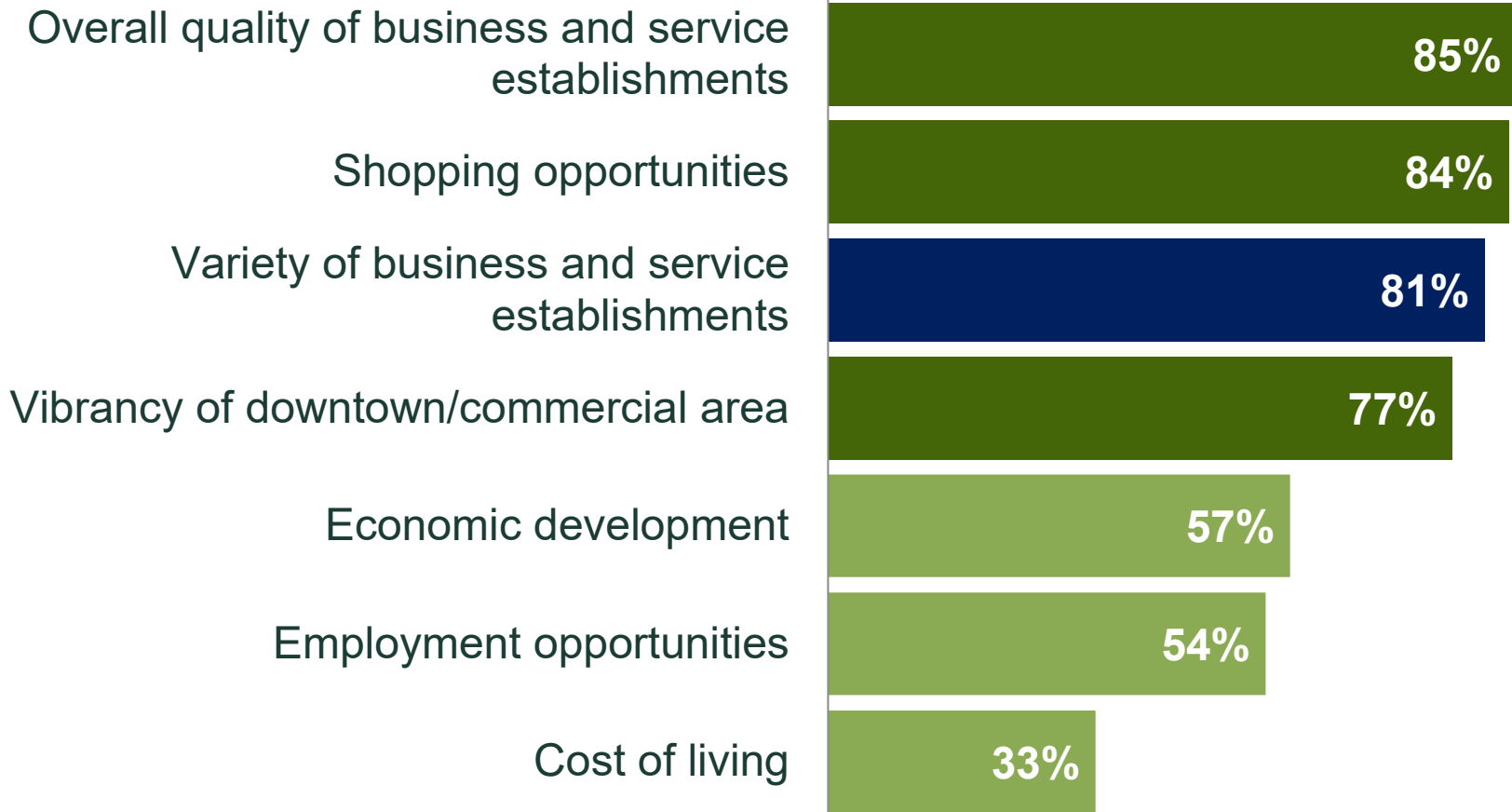
# The Economy in Dedham



Please rate each of the following in the Dedham community:

## National Benchmark Comparison

-  Much Higher
-  Higher
-  Similar

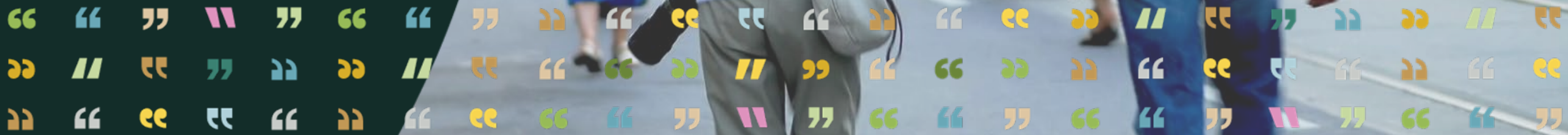


*Percent excellent or good*



Dedham earns solid marks for arts and cultural offerings, but residents express more modest satisfaction with educational opportunities and childcare access.

4



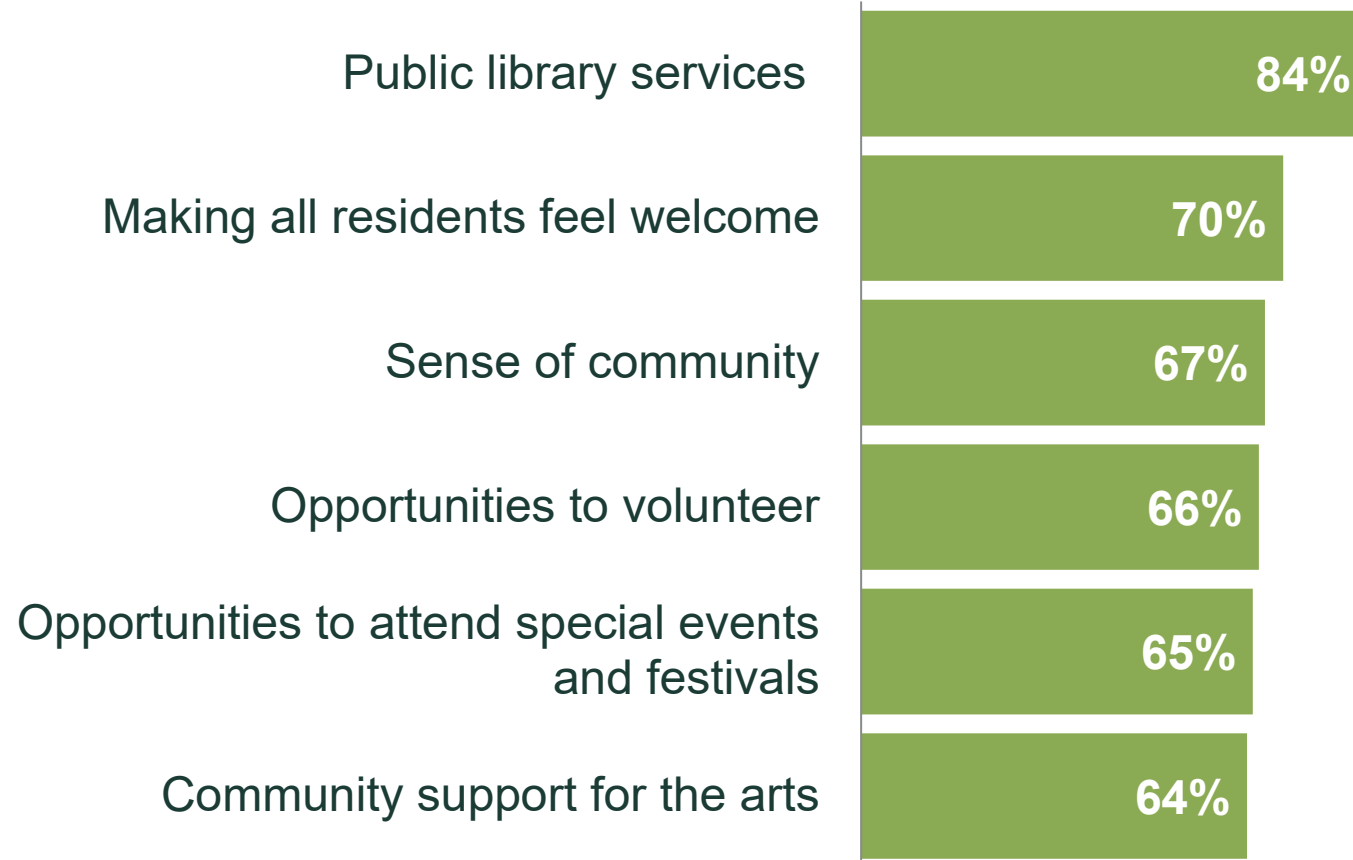
# Community Enrichment in Dedham



Please rate each of the following in the Dedham community:

## National Benchmark Comparison

■ Similar



*Percent excellent or good*

# Education and Enrichment in Dedham



Please rate each of the following in the Dedham community:

## National Benchmark Comparison

- Similar
- Lower

Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts

56%

K-12 education

48%

Adult educational opportunities

41%

Availability of affordable quality childcare/preschool

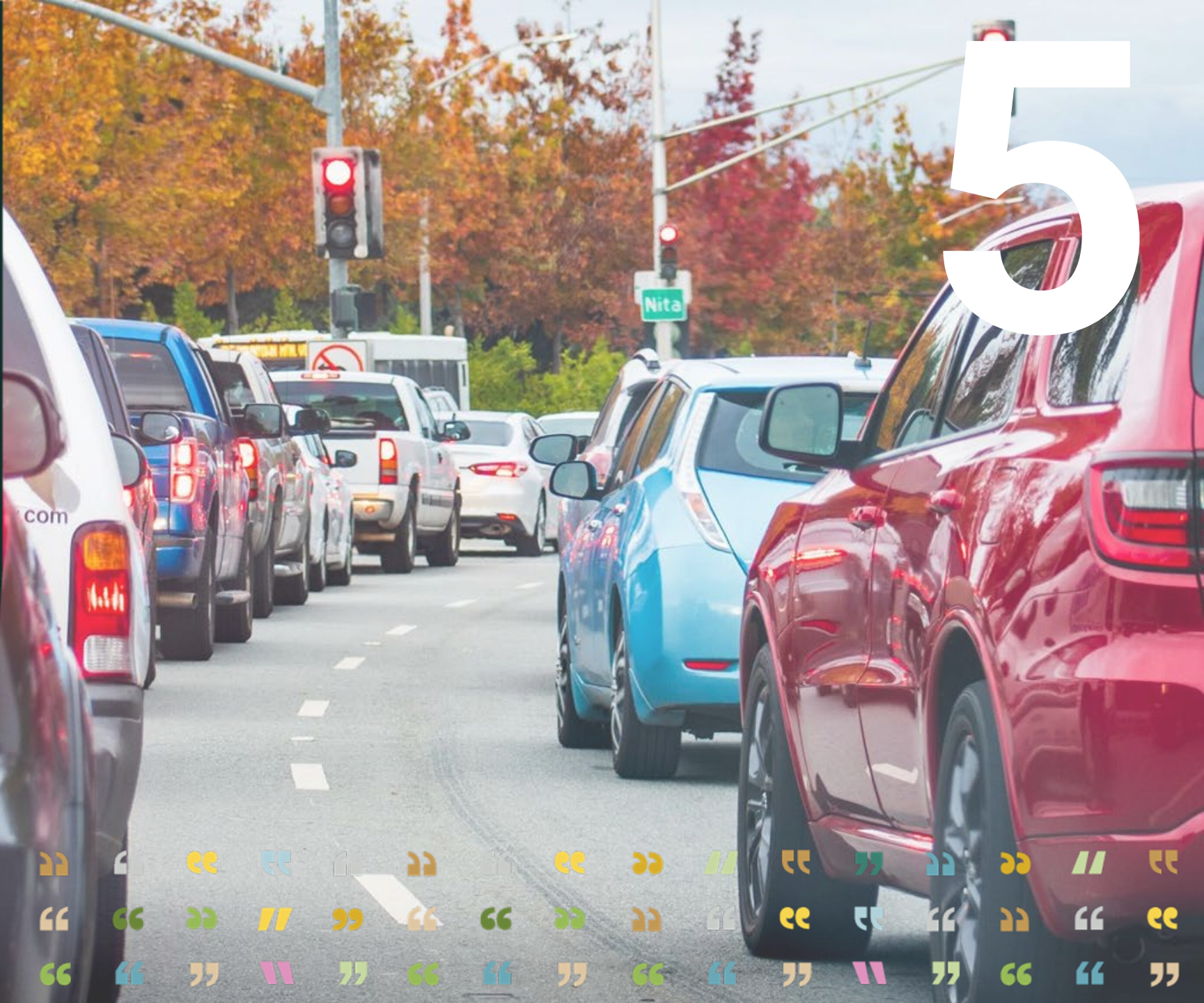
31%

*Percent excellent or good*



Residents gave mixed ratings to mobility and maintenance services.

5



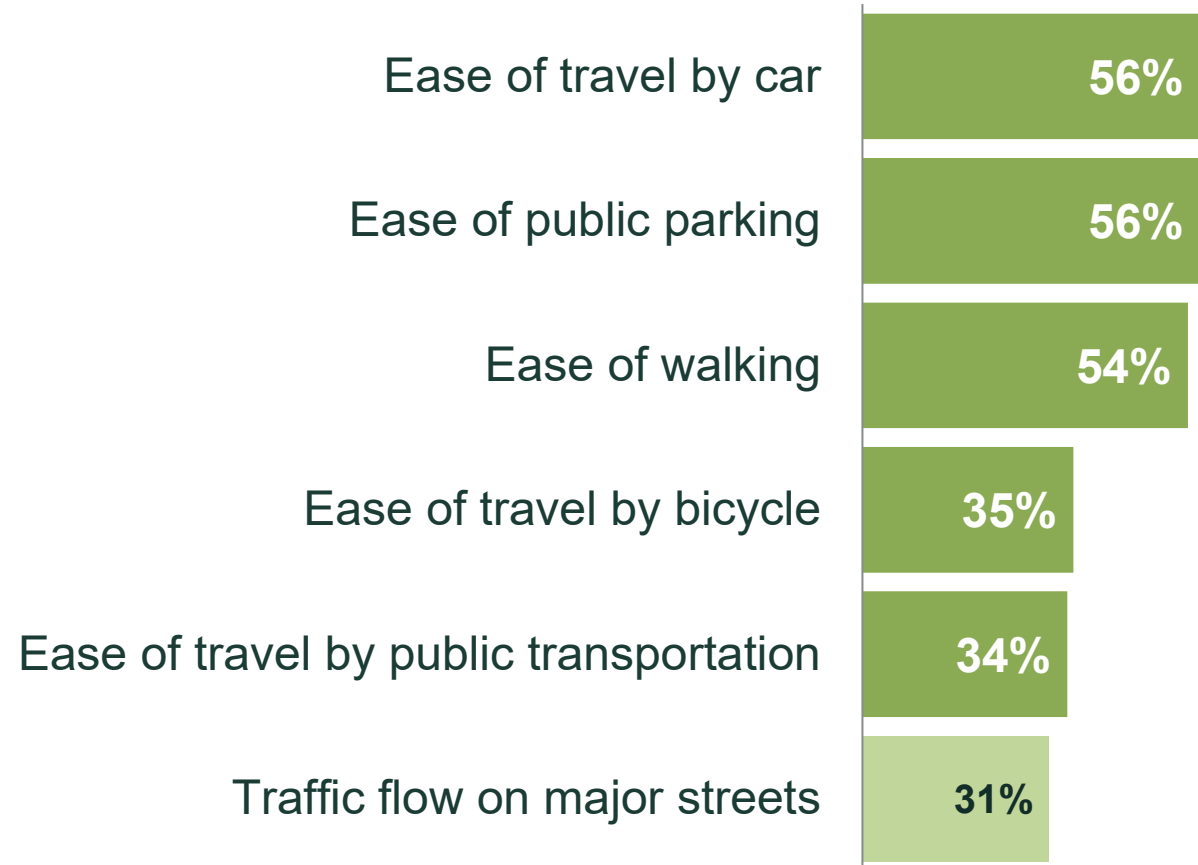
# Mobility in Dedham



Please rate each of the following in the Dedham community:

## National Benchmark Comparison

- Similar
- Lower



*Percent excellent or good*

# Mobility Services in Dedham



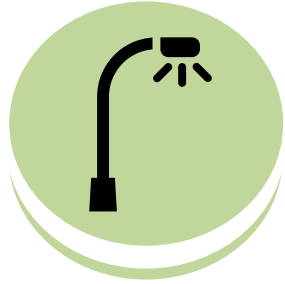
## National Benchmark Comparison

● Similar



**72%**

Snow  
removal



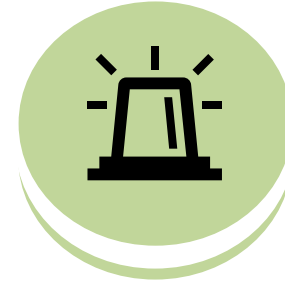
**67%**

Street  
lighting



**59%**

Street  
cleaning



**56%**

Traffic  
enforcement



**49%**

Traffic signal  
timing

*Percent excellent or good*



Residents appreciate local recreation programs but see room to enhance parks and trail access.

6



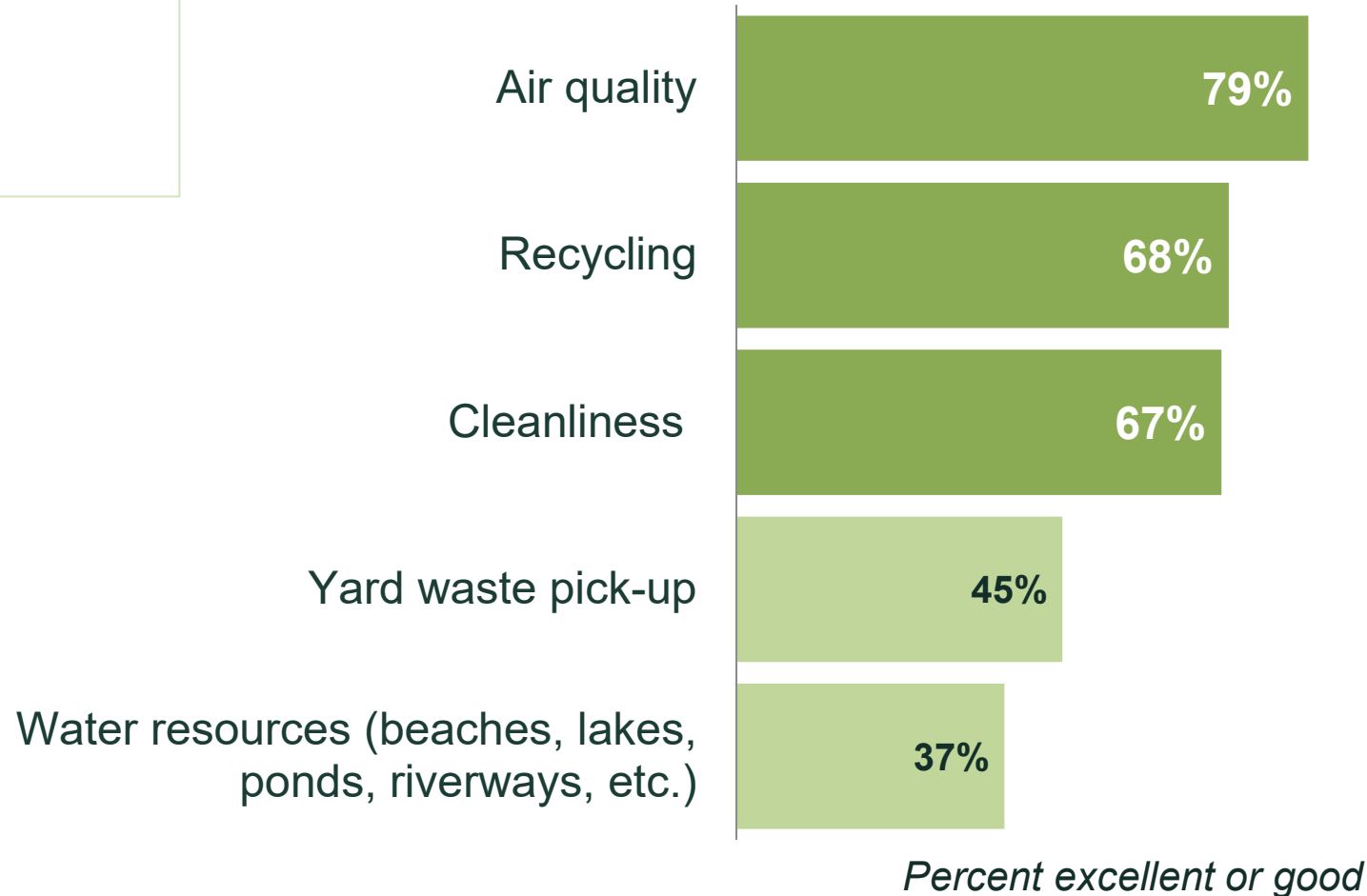
# Natural Environment in Dedham



Please rate each of the following in the Dedham community:

## National Benchmark Comparison

- Similar
- Lower



# Parks and Recreation in Dedham



Please rate each of the following in the Dedham community:

## National Benchmark Comparison

- Similar
- Lower



*Percent excellent or good*



# Additional Special Topics

13. Please indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statements about taxes in Dedham.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I am satisfied with the current level of taxes and services.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am willing to pay more taxes to get more services .....	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I pay too much for the services I receive.....	1	2	3	4	5
I am willing to accept service reductions if it means lower taxes .....	1	2	3	4	5

14. Without additional revenue, services provided by the Town may have to be reduced in the future. For each of the following list of municipal services, please indicate if you would prefer a service reduction or a tax increase.

	Reduce service	Increase taxes	No opinion
Police Department services.....	1	2	3
Fire Department services.....	1	2	3
Road maintenance.....	1	2	3
Streets and sidewalks construction.....	1	2	3
Sewer and stormwater systems .....	1	2	3
Youth services .....	1	2	3
Senior services .....	1	2	3
Veteran's services.....	1	2	3
Library services.....	1	2	3
Parks and recreation.....	1	2	3
Trash and recycling collection.....	1	2	3
School services.....	1	2	3
Maintenance of town and school facilities.....	1	2	3
Construction of town facilities.....	1	2	3
Construction of school facilities .....	1	2	3

15. Property taxes are the Town's primary way to fund essential services like police, fire, road maintenance, schools, and other public services. However, property tax increases are capped at 2.5% per year (plus new growth), while the cost of providing these services is increasing at a faster rate than 2.5%. This creates a budget deficit. To close this deficit, the Town may need to ask voters to approve a property tax override that would allow taxes to increase beyond the 2.5% limit. Which of the following best describes how you think the Town should balance its budget (revenues and expenditures):

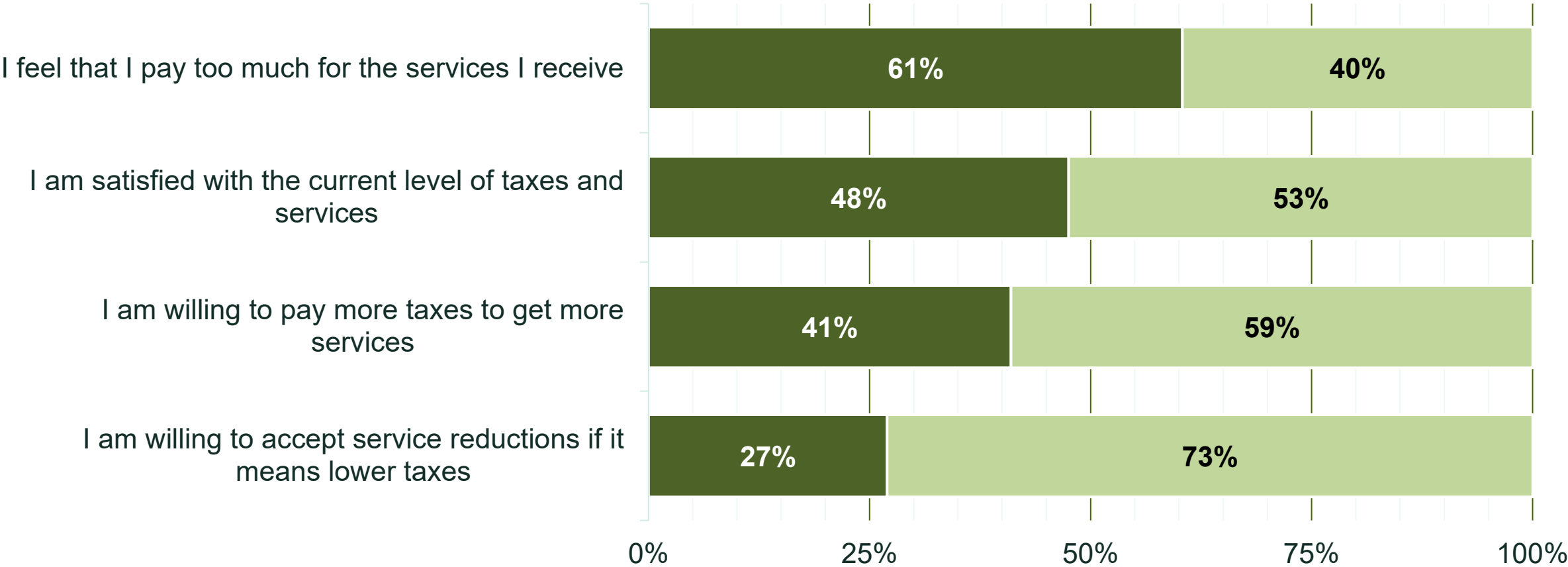
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know
The Town should propose a property tax override to maintain <u>Town services</u> (non-School related) at current levels.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Town should propose a property tax override to maintain <u>School Department services</u> at current levels.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Town should maintain current property tax levels and reduce services.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Town should use a combination of property tax increases and reduced service delivery.....	1	2	3	4	5

# Statements About Taxes in Dedham



Please indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statements about taxes in Dedham.

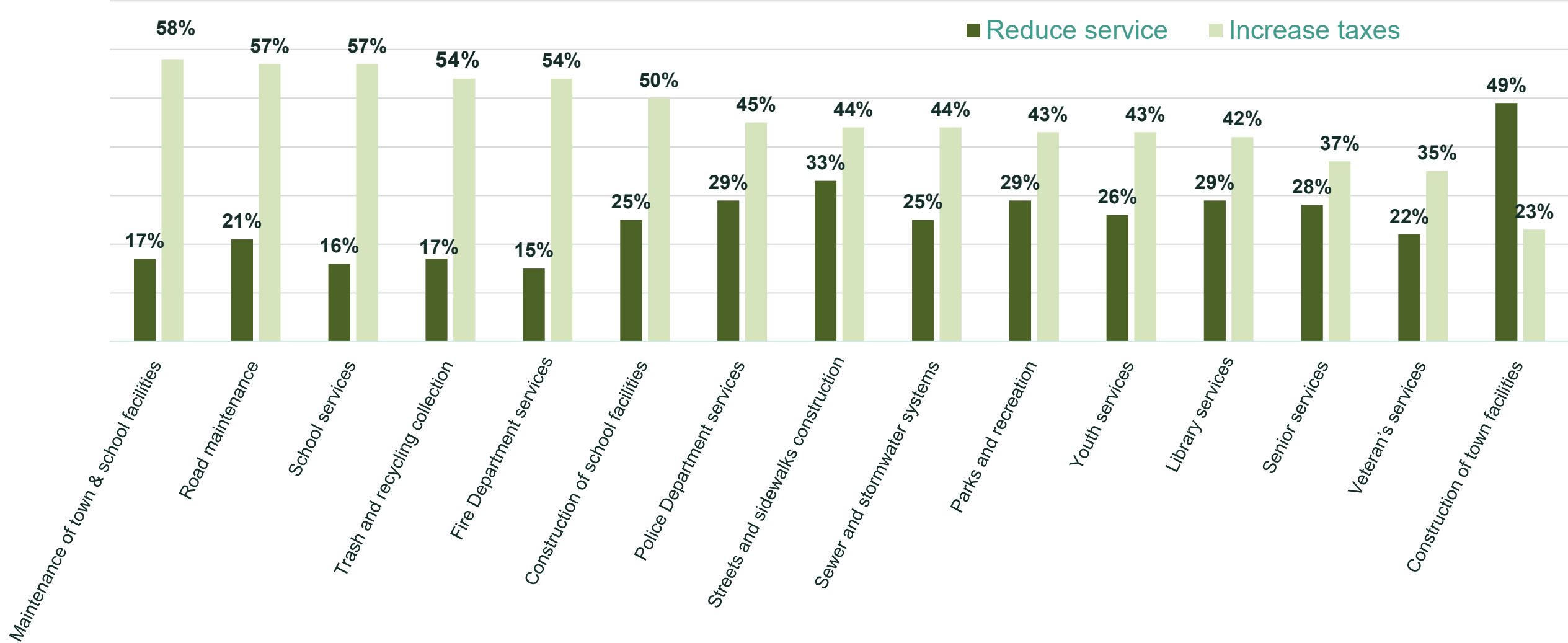
■ Strongly or somewhat agree      ■ Strongly or somewhat disagree



# Reduction of Services or Increase in Taxes



Without additional revenue, services provided by the Town may have to be reduced in the future. For each of the following list of municipal services, please indicate if you would prefer a service reduction or a tax increase.

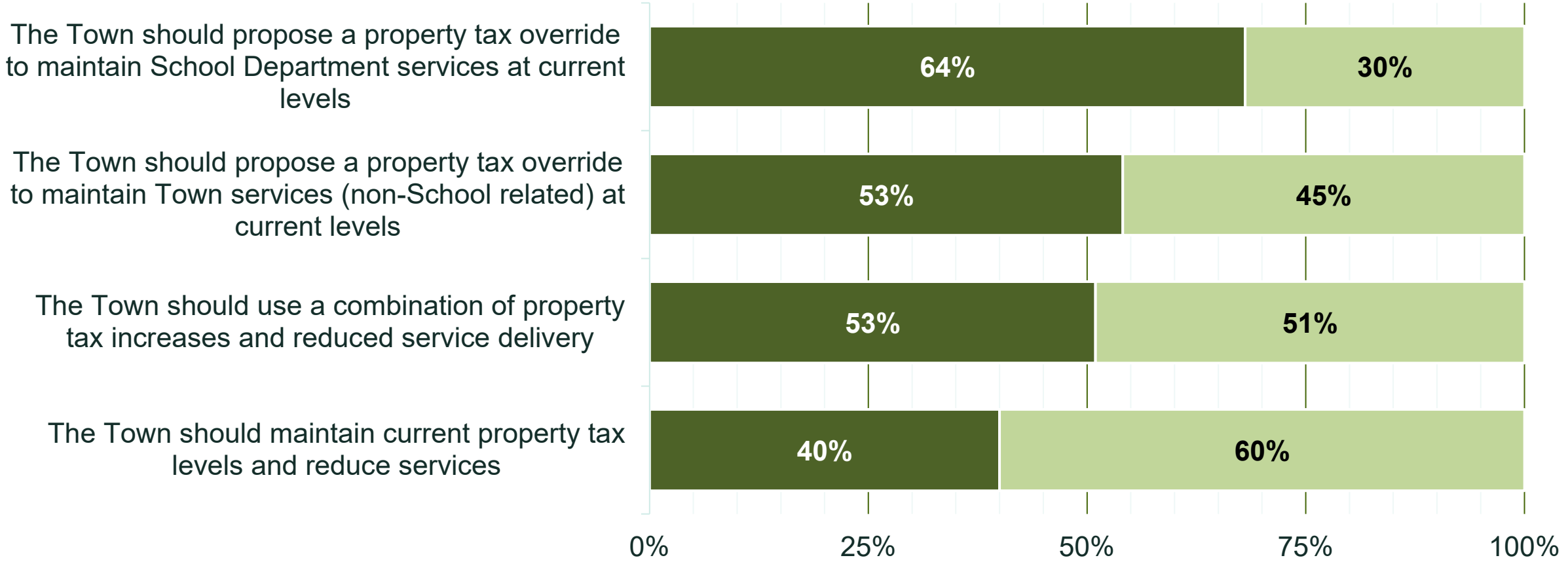


# Property Tax



Which of the following best describes how you think the Town should balance its budget (revenues and expenditures):

■ Strongly or somewhat agree      ■ Strongly or somewhat disagree





# Summary of Conclusions

- ✓ Most residents experience a high quality of life in Dedham.
- ✓ Most residents feel a strong sense of safety in Dedham.
- ✓ Dedham's economy and business environment stand out as community strengths.
- ✓ Community enrichment and engagement is strong in Dedham.
- ✓ Residents gave mixed ratings to mobility and maintenance services.
- ✓ Residents appreciate local recreation programs but see room to enhance parks and trail access.



# Questions?

# Thank you!

Jason Neumeyer  
Director of Survey Research  
Polco/National Research Center  
[jason.neumeyer@polco.us](mailto:jason.neumeyer@polco.us)