THE NCS™
The National Community Survey™

Naperville, IL

The National Community Survey™ 2026 Results

PRESENTED BY

Nick Mastronardi, PhD CEO, Polco / National Research Center

Lily Vasquez Survey Research Project Manager

Polco | National Research Center

Helping every community govern like the best

OUR MISSION

Strengthen local democracy and government performance — helping leaders understand the priorities of their constituents, allocate resources against them, and build not only transparency, but trust.

OUR STORY

Polco unites a decade-plus of civic engagement software with the National Research Center — our in-house think tank and pioneer of the national benchmark surveys — and GPAL, the public-sector performance data platform.

Polco

The civic engagement & performance platform

NRC FROM POLCO

Our in-house think tank — pioneers of the national benchmark surveys

GPAL

Government Performance Action Lab — the data platform behind Track

THE NCS™ The National Community Survey™

THE NES™ The National Employment Survey™

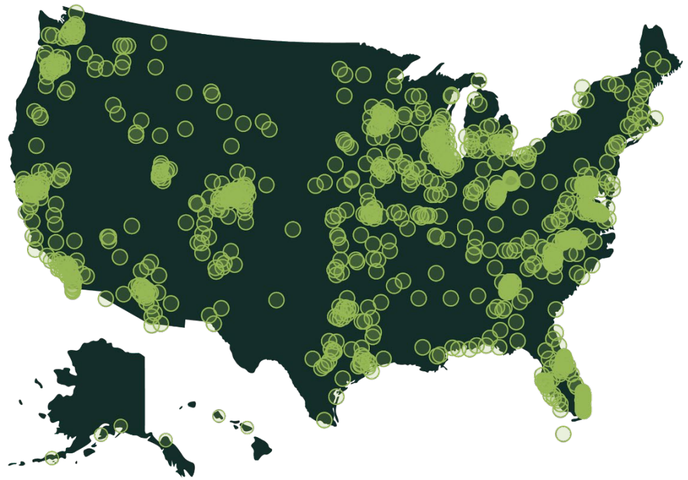
THE NBS The National Business Survey

THE NLES The National Law Enforcement Survey

CASOA Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults

Nearly 400 communities across all 50 states

POLCO'S BENCHMARKING DATABASE



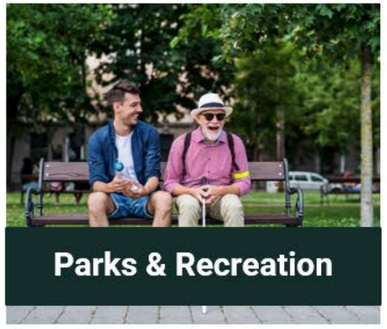
1,000+	2,000+	40K+	30 yrs
communities served	NCS administrations nationwide	jurisdictions with 500+ benchmark indicators	of benchmark survey science

400
comparison communities nationwide

50M
residents' opinions represented

Facets of Community Livability

THE NCS™
The National Community Survey™



The National Community Survey™ in Naperville

METHODOLOGY

1. Address-based random sample survey
2. Survey open April 6 - June 1, 2026
3. Invitations were sent to 5,000 randomly selected households in all districts
4. +/- 4% margin of error
5. Results weighted to reflect Naperville

RESPONSE

760 completed surveys 16% response rate
English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese

WHAT RESIDENTS RECEIVED

Postcard invitation

Mailed first, with QR codes in all three languages inviting the household to respond online

Cover letter from the Mayor

Personal appeal with the survey link and household access code, again printed in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese

Printed questionnaire

Full paper survey with a postage-paid return envelope, so respondents could answer on paper or online

Open participation survey

Publicized separately from May 11 - June 1, 2026: 213 responses are reported apart from the random sample

SECTION

Overview of Survey Results

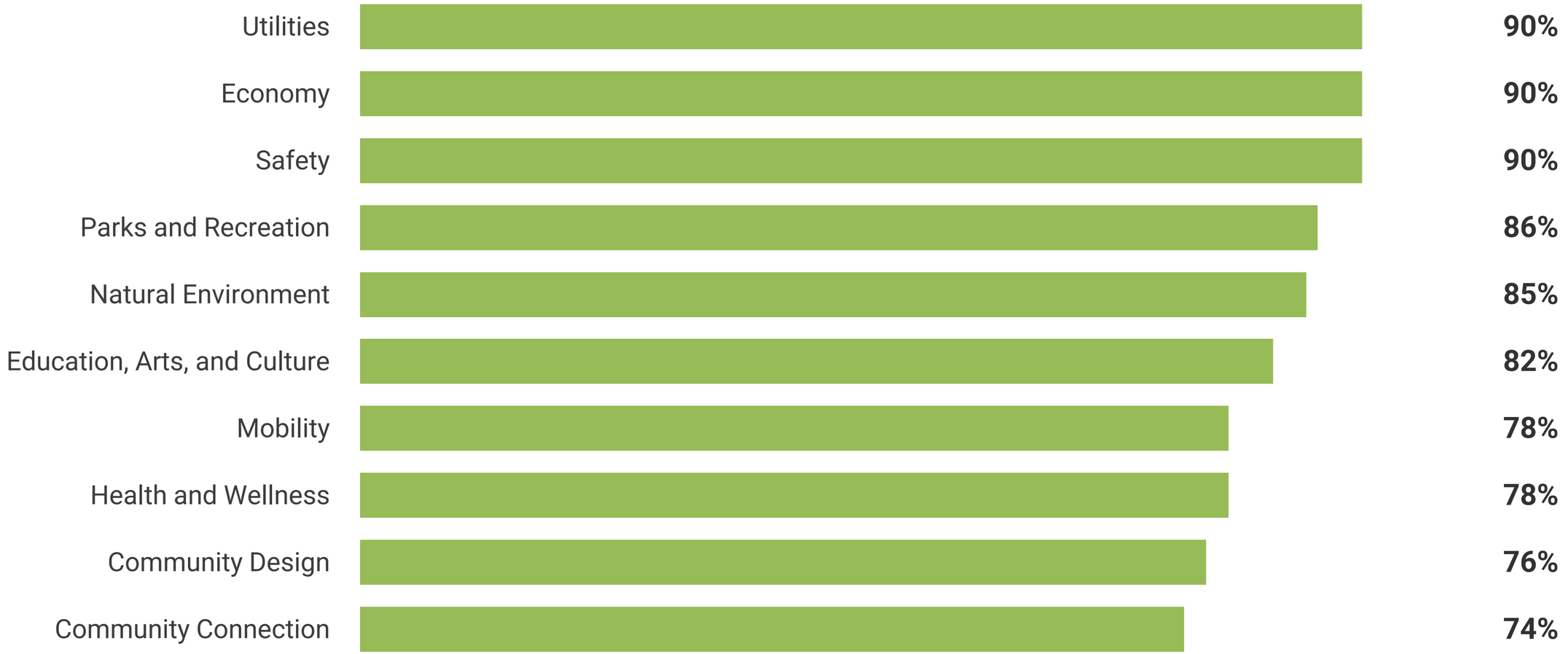
Facets of Community Livability: Quality

Please rate the quality of each of the following in the Naperville community.

NATIONAL BENCHMARK Much higher (≥ +20 pts) Higher (+10 to +19 pts)

Facets of Community Livability: Importance

Please rate how important, if at all, it is for the Naperville community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years.

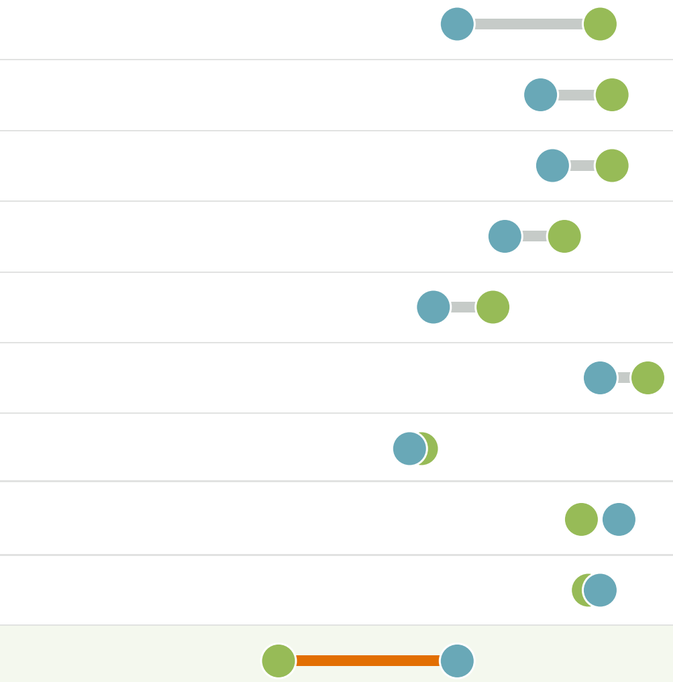


Percent essential or very important

NATIONAL BENCHMARK Similar (−9 to +9 pts)

Balancing Quality and Importance

	QUALITY	IMPORTANCE	GAP
Health and Wellness	90%	78%	+12
Natural Environment	91%	85%	+6
Parks and Recreation	91%	86%	+5
Education, Arts, and Culture	87%	82%	+5
Community Design	81%	76%	+5
Safety	94%	90%	+4
Community Connection	75%	74%	+1
Economy	90%	90%	0
Utilities	89%	90%	−1
Mobility	63%	78%	−15



Quality Importance Importance exceeds quality

How Naperville Compares

National Benchmarks

123 items rated by residents

103	20	0
higher ratings	similar ratings	lower ratings

Ratings count as similar when they fall within 10 points of the national average, and higher when they exceed it by more than 10 points.

Naperville 2023 vs. 2026 Community Surveys

123 items with trend comparisons

3	98	22
upward trends	no change	downward trends

Trends are statistically significant if the change is greater than or equal to +/-5 percentage points.

TREND BENCHMARKS

National Trend

How communities nationwide moved across the 113 items with 2023–2026 comparisons.

10 saw **upward** trends

85 saw **no change**

18 saw **downward** trends

Areas of Greatest Change

INCREASES

ITEM	NAPERVILLE TREND 2023 v 2026	NATIONAL TREND
Overall respondent health	72% → 81% **+9**	--
Feeling safe from fire, flood, or natural disaster	85% → 91% **+6**	No change
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds	75% → 81% **+6**	No change

NATIONAL CONTEXT

In many cases, the areas showing the largest declines in Naperville were part of a **national trend**, especially relating to **economic opportunity** and **infrastructure**.

DECREASES

ITEM	NAPERVILLE TREND 2023 v 2026	NATIONAL TREND
Employment opportunities	84% → 60% **−24**	**Downward**
Economic development	85% → 72% **−13**	**Downward**
Utility billing	87% → 76% **−11**	**Downward**
Naperville as a place to work	91% → 80% **−11**	--
Affordable quality childcare/preschool	72% → 61% **−11**	No change
Ease of travel by bicycle	63% → 52% **−11**	No change
Bus or train services	73% → 63% **−10**	No change
Land use, planning, and zoning	76% → 67% **−9**	**Downward**

SECTION

Key Findings

KEY FINDING 01

Community members give high ratings to Naperville as a place to live and raise children.

Overall Community Quality

Residents gave excellent or good ratings to:

96%

Naperville as a place to raise children

↑ **Much higher · 97th percentile**

95%

Naperville as a place to live

↑ **Higher · 95th percentile**

94%

Would recommend living in Naperville to someone who asked

↑ **Higher · 90th percentile**

94%

Your neighborhood as a place to live

↑ **Higher · 92nd percentile**

93%

The overall image or reputation of Naperville

↑ **Much higher · 98th percentile**

90%

Plan to remain in Naperville for the next five years

– **Similar · 87th percentile**

NATIONAL BENCHMARK Much higher (≥ +20 pts) Higher (+10 to +19 pts) Similar (−9 to +9 pts)

KEY FINDING 02

Residents continue to feel safe throughout Naperville and give high ratings to the City’s public safety services.

Safety in Naperville

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

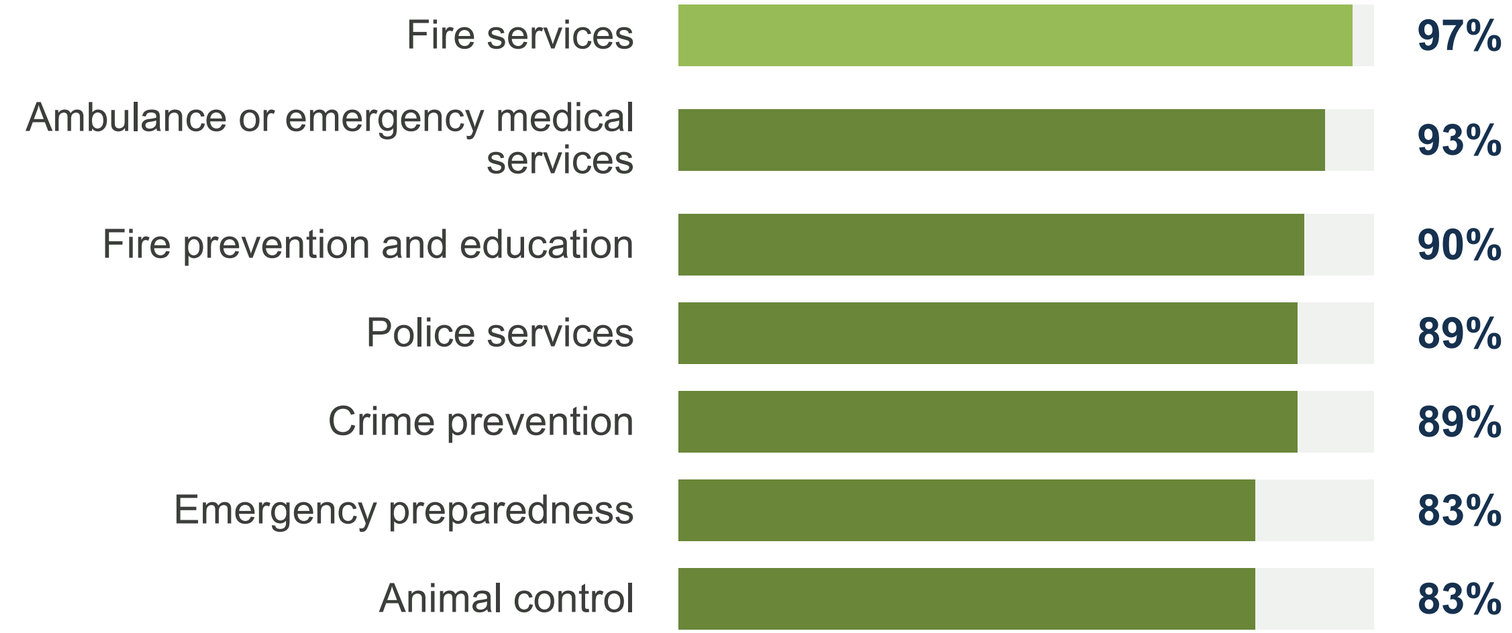
	NAPERVILLE TREND 2023 v 2026	NATIONAL TREND
In your neighborhood during the day	No change	No change
In the downtown/commercial area during the day	No change	No change
From violent crime	No change	↑
From property crime	No change	↑
From fire, flood, or natural disaster	↑	No change

Percent very or somewhat safe

NATIONAL BENCHMARK — Higher (+10 to +19 pts) — Similar (−9 to +9 pts) — 2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

Safety Services in Naperville

Please rate the quality of the following services in Naperville.



	NAPERVILLE TREND 2023 v 2026	NATIONAL TREND
Fire services	No change	No change
Ambulance or emergency medical services	No change	No change
Fire prevention and education	No change	No change
Police services	No change	No change
Crime prevention	No change	↑
Emergency preparedness	No change	No change
Animal control	↓	No change

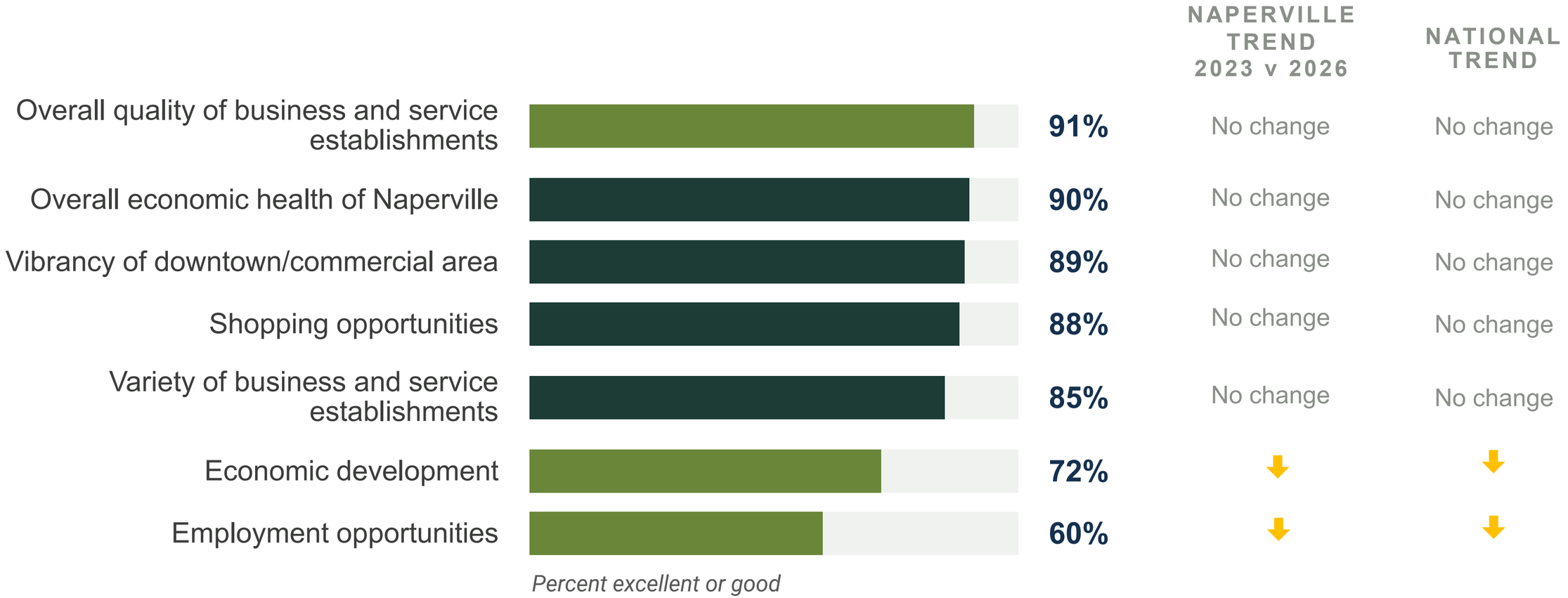
NATIONAL BENCHMARK Higher (+10 to +19 pts) Similar (−9 to +9 pts) 2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

KEY FINDING 03

Residents highly rate Naperville's economy, while affordability remains an area for improvement.

The Economy in Naperville

Please rate each of the following in the Naperville community.



NATIONAL BENCHMARK

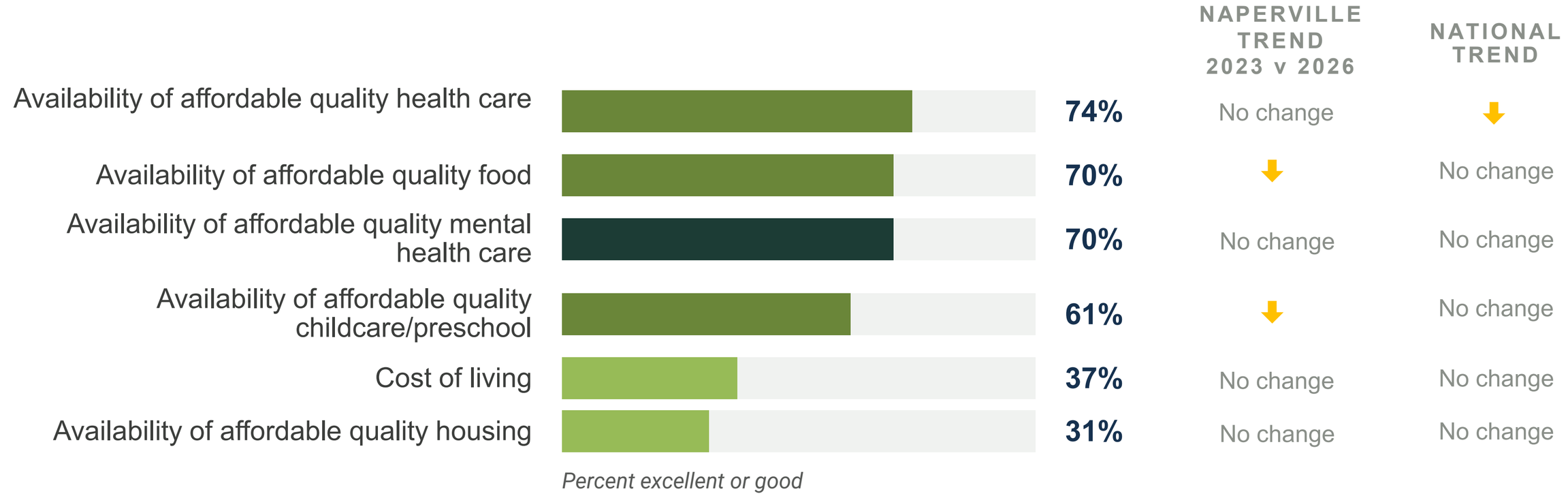
Much higher (≥ +20 pts)

Higher (+10 to +19 pts)

2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

Affordability in Naperville

Please rate each of the following in the Naperville community.

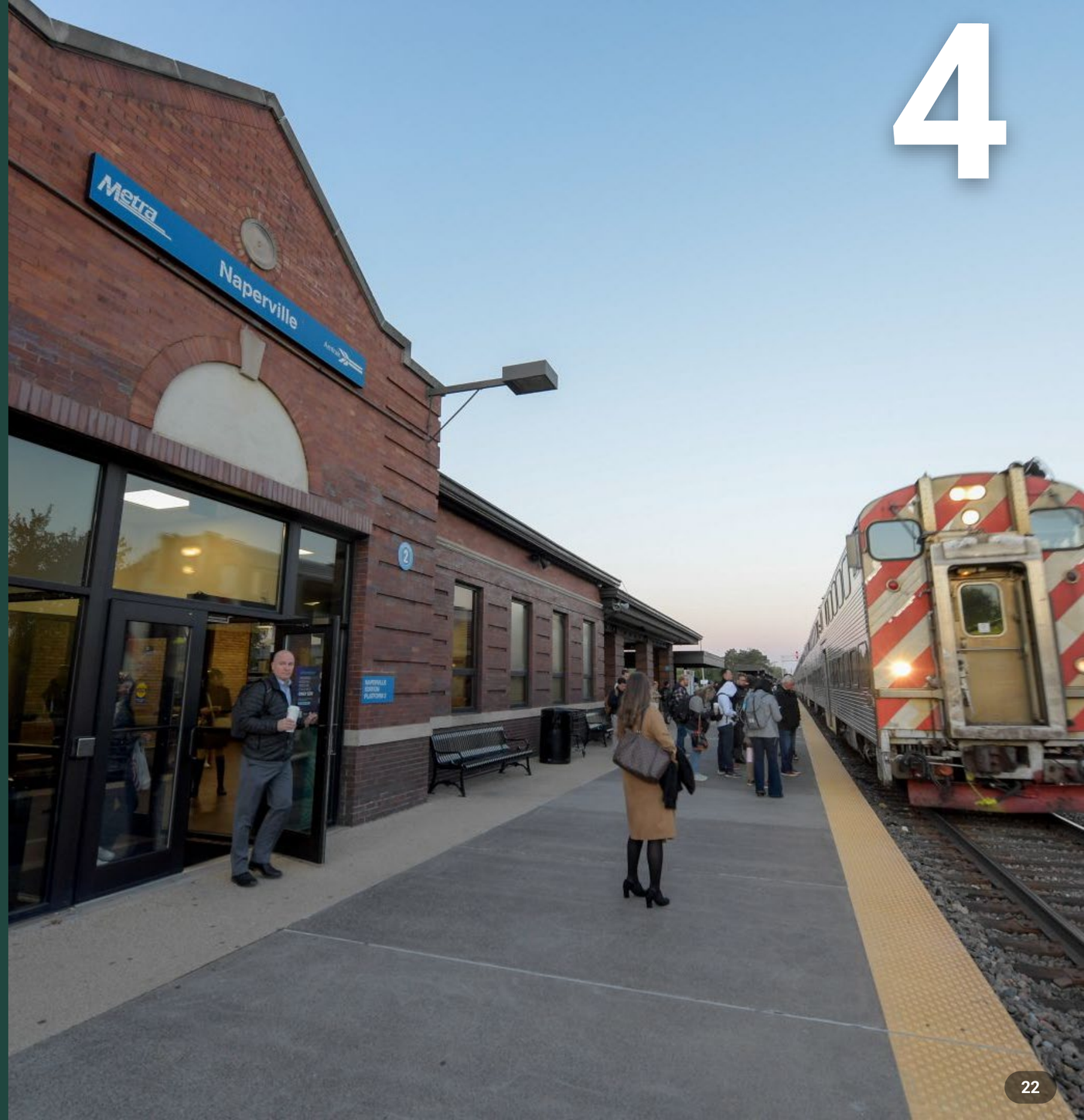


Affordability is Naperville's lowest-scoring cluster in absolute terms, yet four of the six items still land above the national benchmark.

NATIONAL BENCHMARK — Much higher (≥ +20 pts) — Higher (+10 to +19 pts) — Similar (−9 to +9 pts) — 2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

KEY FINDING 04

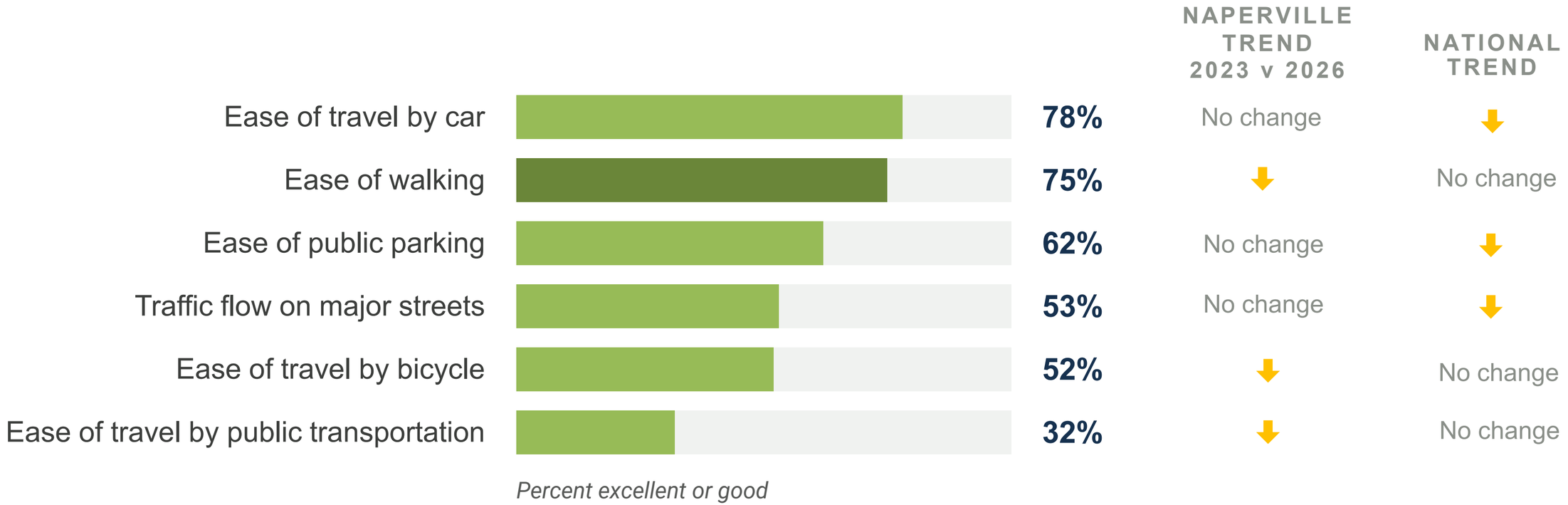
Residents rated mobility services highly, while ease of travel varied by transportation mode.



4

Mobility in Naperville

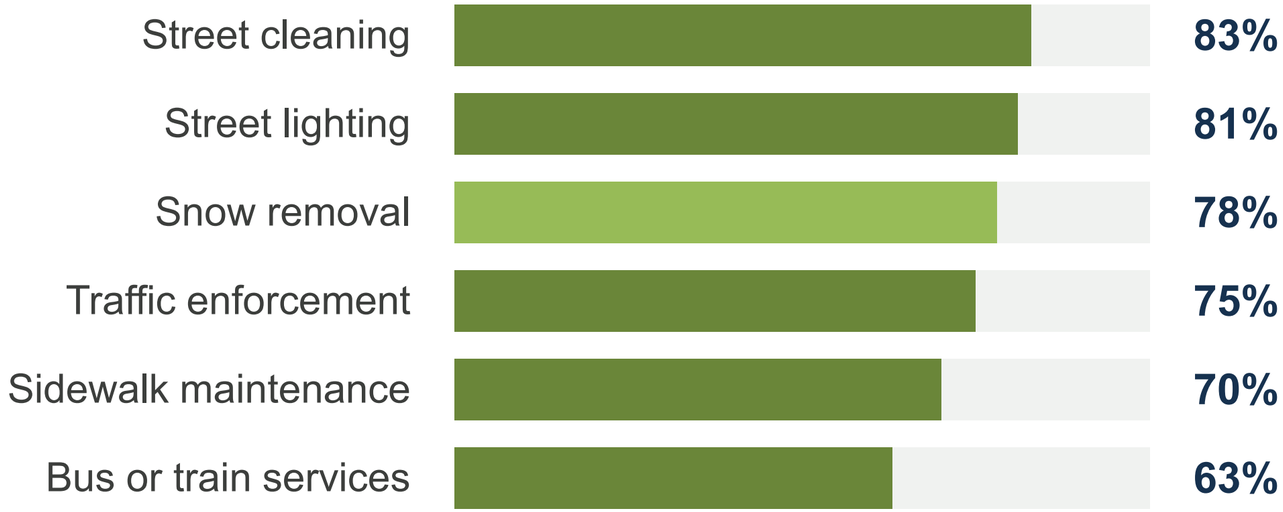
Please rate each of the following in the Naperville community.



NATIONAL BENCHMARK — Higher (+10 to +19 pts) — Similar (−9 to +9 pts) — 2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

Mobility Services in Naperville

Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Naperville.



	NAPERVILLE TREND 2023 v 2026	NATIONAL TREND
Street cleaning	No change	No change
Street lighting	No change	No change
Snow removal	↓	No change
Traffic enforcement	No change	No change
Sidewalk maintenance	No change	No change
Bus or train services	↓	No change

NATIONAL BENCHMARK — Higher (+10 to +19 pts) — Similar (−9 to +9 pts) — 2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

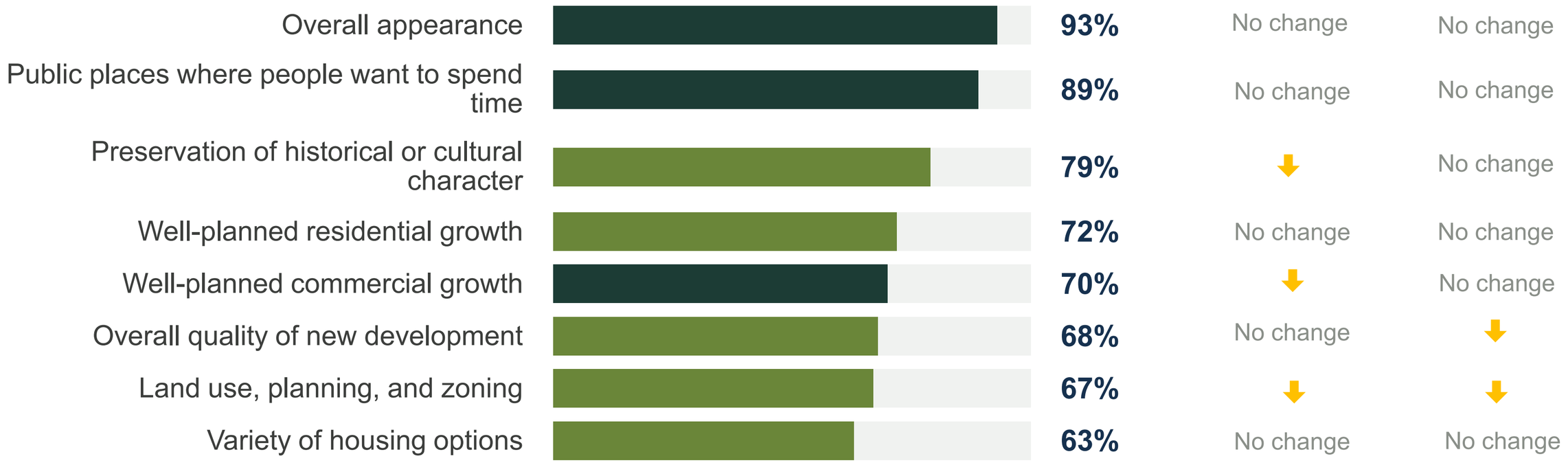
KEY FINDING 05

Naperville's appearance and community design received great marks.

5

Community Design in Naperville

Please rate each of the following in the Naperville community.



NATIONAL BENCHMARK — Much higher (≥ +20 pts) — Higher (+10 to +19 pts) — 2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

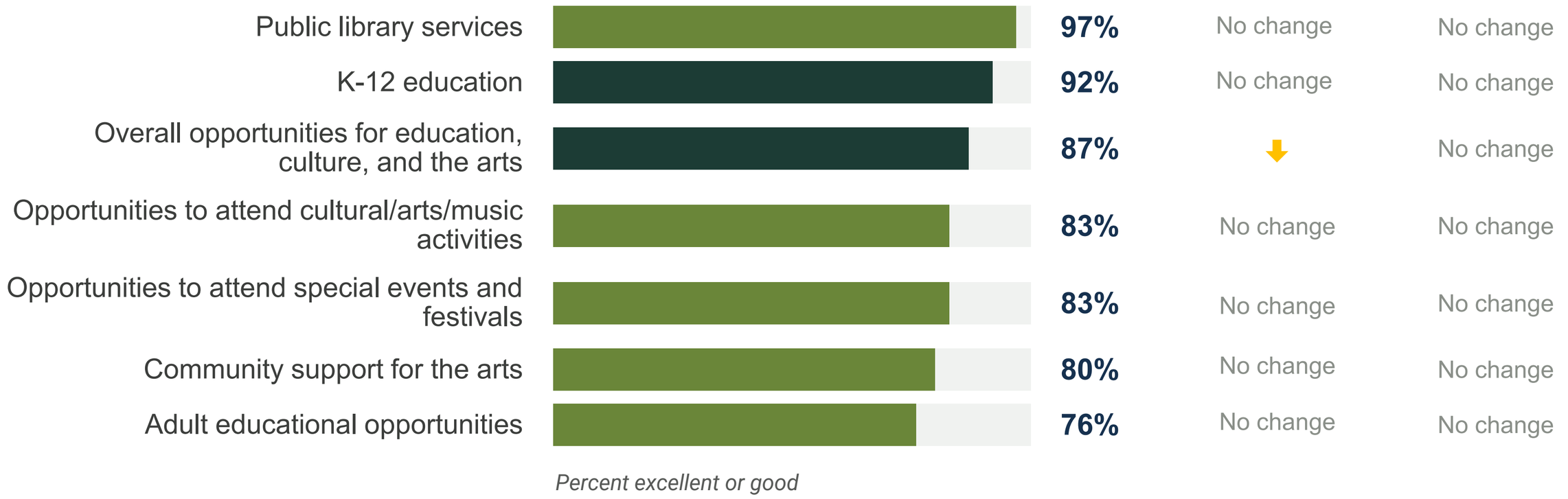
KEY FINDING 06

Naperville’s educational and cultural offerings were well received.

6

Education, Arts, and Culture in Naperville

Please rate the following in the Naperville community.

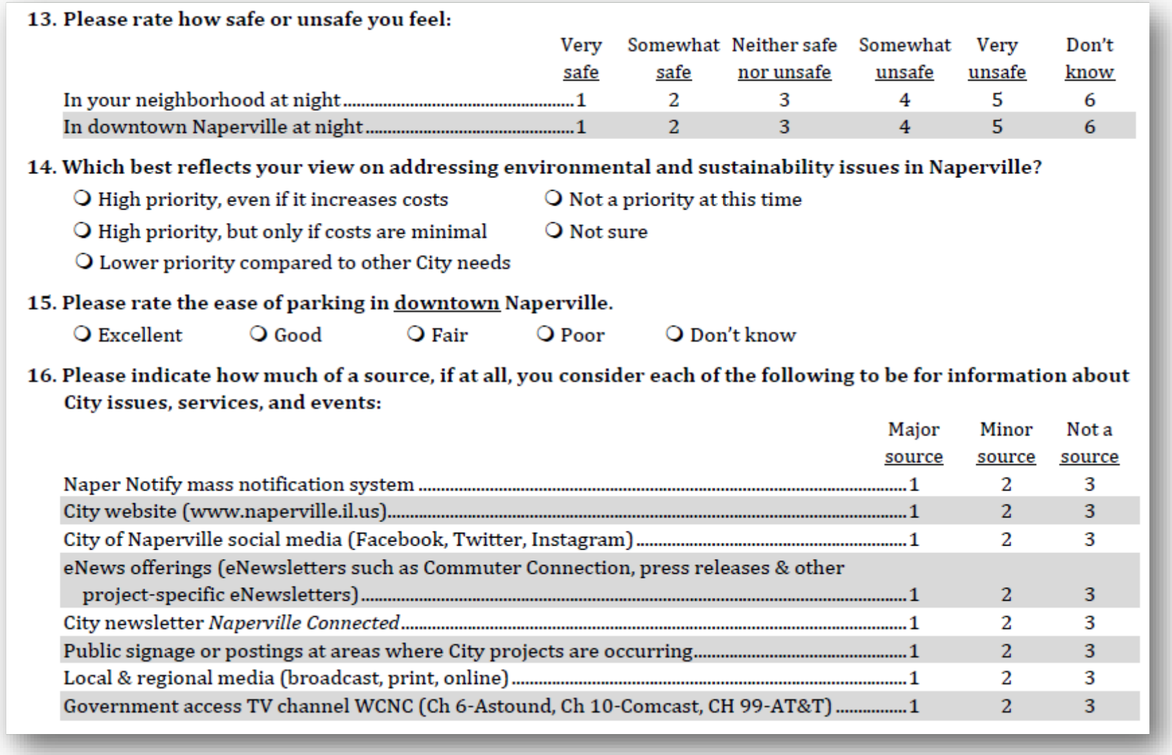


NATIONAL BENCHMARK — Much higher (≥ +20 pts) — Higher (+10 to +19 pts) — 2023 vs 2026 (±5 pts)

SECTION

Additional Special Topics

Custom questions added to Naperville's NCS questionnaire.



13. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Neither safe nor unsafe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
In your neighborhood at night	1	2	3	4	5	6
In downtown Naperville at night	1	2	3	4	5	6

14. Which best reflects your view on addressing environmental and sustainability issues in Naperville?

❍ High priority, even if it increases costs
❍ High priority, but only if costs are minimal
❍ Lower priority compared to other City needs
❍ Not a priority at this time
❍ Not sure

15. Please rate the ease of parking in downtown Naperville.

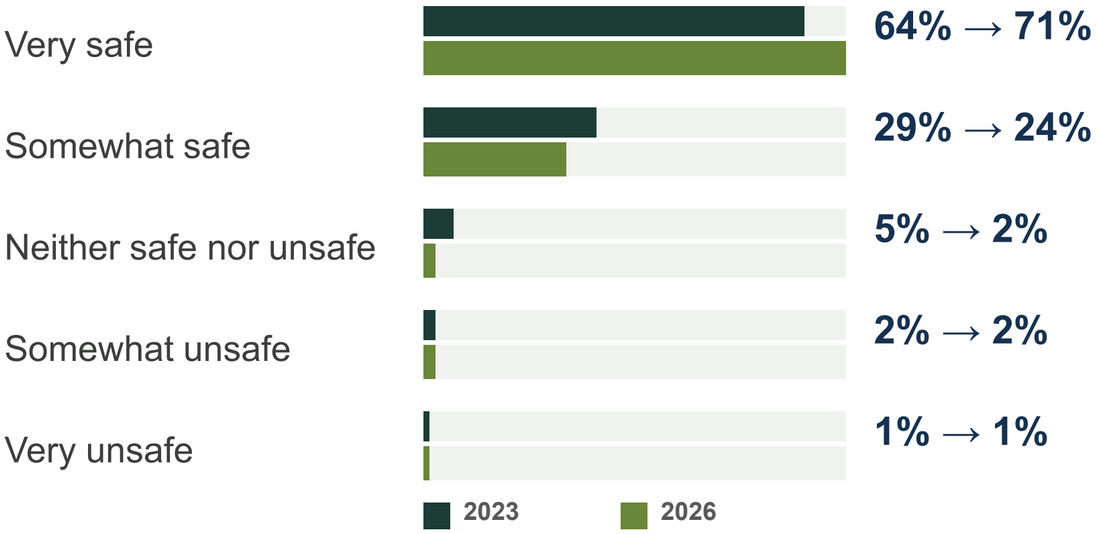
❍ Excellent ❍ Good ❍ Fair ❍ Poor ❍ Don't know

16. Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for information about City issues, services, and events:

	Major source	Minor source	Not a source
Naper Notify mass notification system	1	2	3
City website (www.naperville.il.us)	1	2	3
City of Naperville social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	1	2	3
eNews offerings (eNewsletters such as Commuter Connection, press releases & other project-specific eNewsletters)	1	2	3
City newsletter *Naperville Connected*	1	2	3
Public signage or postings at areas where City projects are occurring	1	2	3
Local & regional media (broadcast, print, online)	1	2	3
Government access TV channel WCNC (Ch 6-Astound, Ch 10-Comcast, CH 99-AT&T)	1	2	3

CUSTOM QUESTION · 2023–2026 TREND

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in your neighborhood at night.



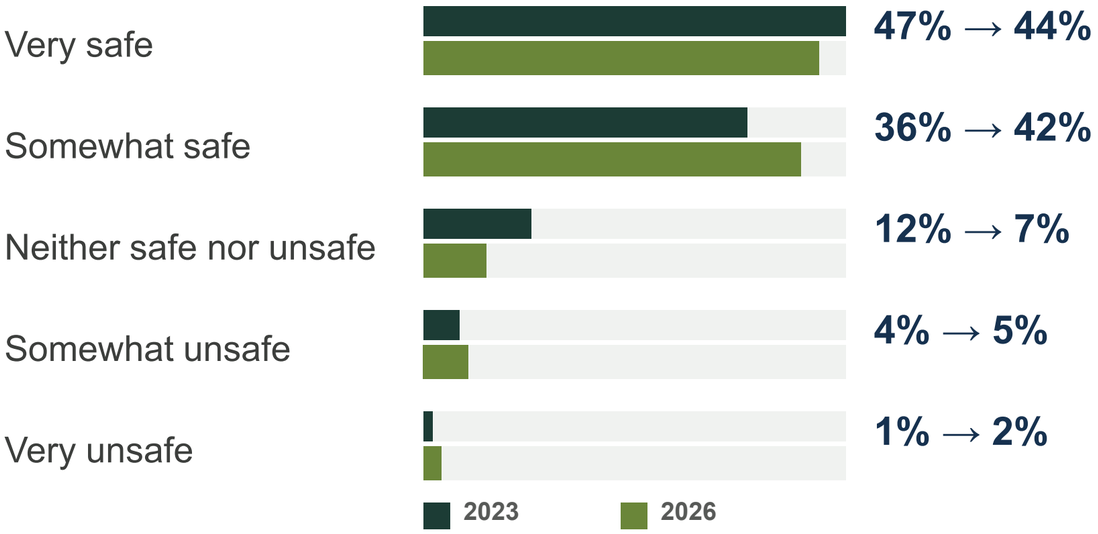
95%

feel safe in their neighborhood at night

↑ Up from 93% in 2023

CUSTOM QUESTION · 2023–2026 TREND

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel in downtown Naperville at night.



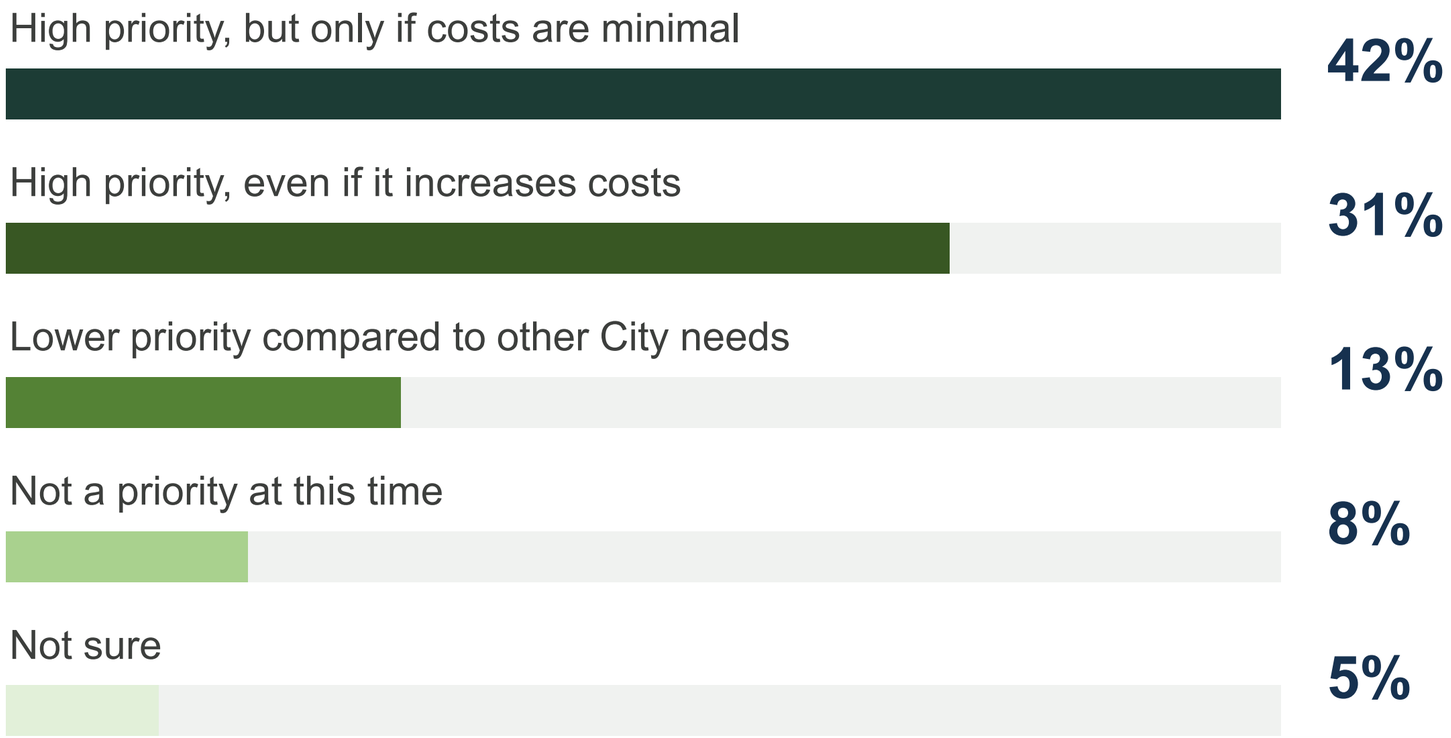
86%

feel safe in downtown Naperville at night

↑ Up from 83% in 2023

Custom Question — Environmental Sustainability

Which best reflects your view on addressing environmental and sustainability issues in Naperville?

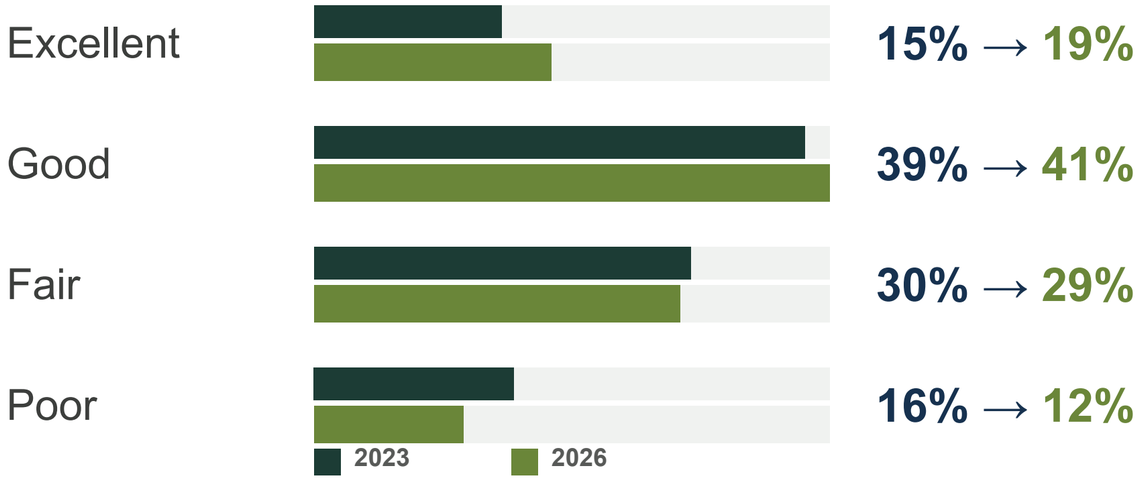


73%

call environmental and sustainability work a high priority

CUSTOM QUESTION · 2023–2026 TREND

Please rate the ease of parking in downtown Naperville.



15% → 19%

39% → 41%

30% → 29%

16% → 12%

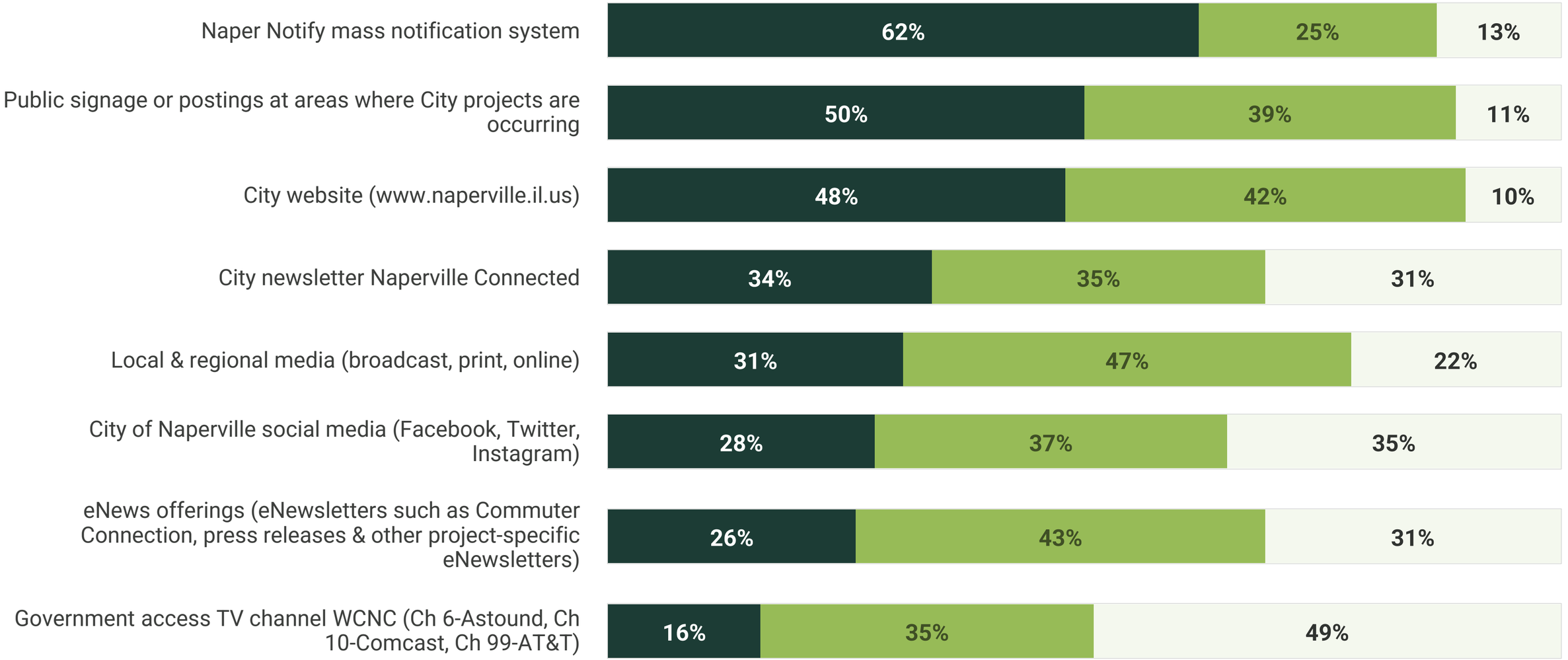
6 in 10

rate downtown parking as excellent or good

↑ Up from 5 in 10 in 2023

Custom Question — Sources of Information

Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for information about City issues, services, and events:



2026 NCS

Summary of Findings

- Naperville earns high praise as a place to live and raise children.
- Residents feel safe and give public safety services good marks.
- The economy scored very well, though affordability remains an area to improve.
- Mobility services scored well, though ratings for ease of travel varied by transportation mode.
- Appearance and community design were highly rated, despite modest declines in some planning measures.
- Residents voiced strong support for educational and cultural offerings, with the library topping the ratings.

Next Steps: Continue to Engage Residents and Track Outcomes

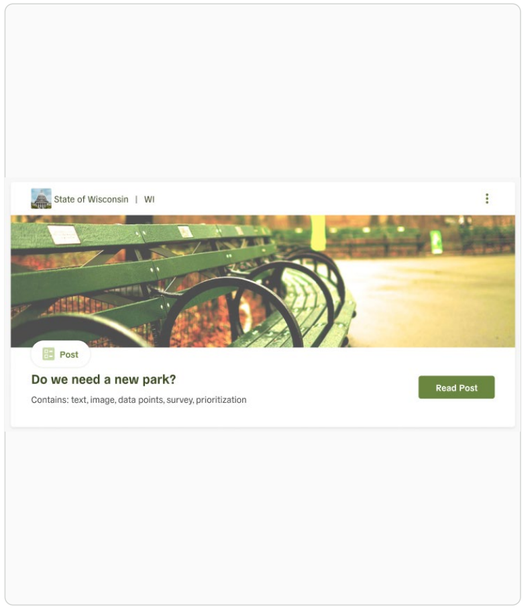
Engage

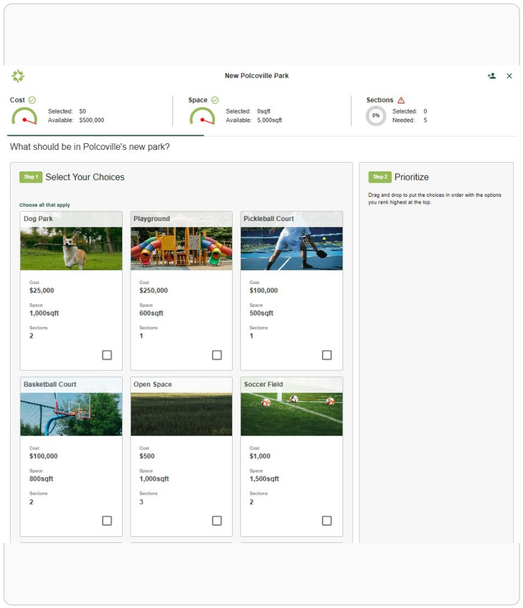
INCLUDED IN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

1,475

City of Naperville subscribers on Polco today

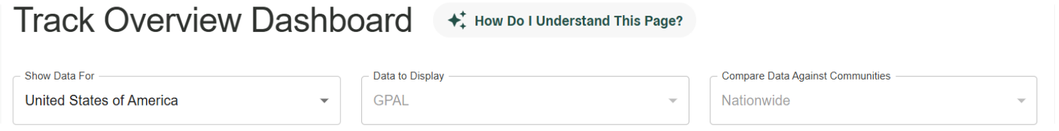
Quick polls, surveys, and live events — with maps, images, videos, and links to better inform respondents. The Polco Library adds curated content built by Polco's survey scientists.



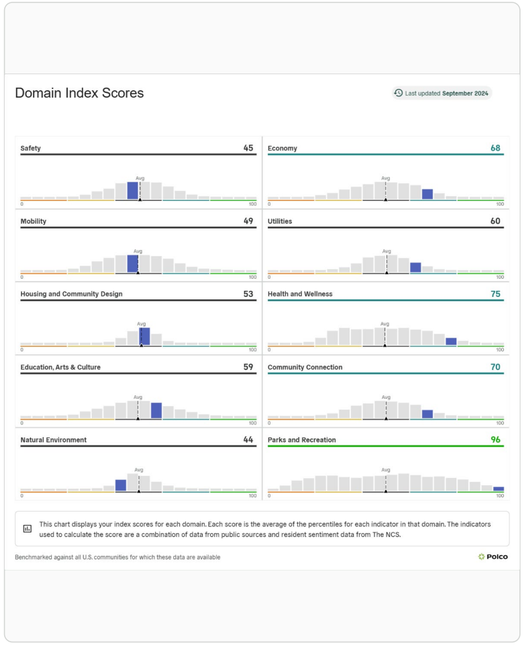


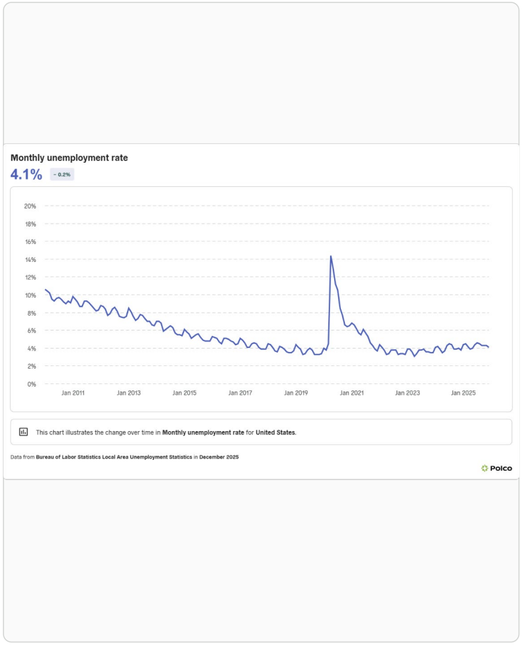
Track

ADDS CONTEXT TO YOUR NCS



Polco's Track dashboard surfaces insights from publicly available data sources — pairing domain index scores and trends with what residents told you.





Questions?

Thank you!

Check out the full report!

Nick Mastronardi, PhD
CEO, Polco / National Research Center
nick@polco.us

Lily Vasquez
Survey Research Project Manager

THE NCS™ The National Community Survey™

The National Community Survey™ — the benchmark survey behind these results.

National Research Center

Polco's survey research department — three decades of benchmark survey science.

Polco

The civic engagement & performance platform behind Engage and Track.