



## Office of the City Auditor (OCA)

*Richmond City Council*

**DATE:** May 22, 2026

**TO:** Mr. Odie Donald II  
Chief Administrative Officer

**FROM:** Riad Ali  
City Auditor

**SUBJECT:** Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) – Community Survey 2026

The Office of the City Auditor (OCA), working with the Department of Citizen Service and Response, oversaw the completion of Richmond, Virginia's 2026 National Community Survey. This work was scheduled as a non-audit service as part of the overall FY 2026 approved audit plan.

The National Community Survey was developed by the National Research Center at Polco in partnership with the International City/County Management Association. The survey is used by local governments across the country and allows Richmond's results to be compared with resident survey results from other communities.

The City's prior National Community Survey was conducted in late 2021, with the results issued in 2022. The 2026 report includes trend comparisons for many questions where comparable prior survey data is available. The report also includes 12 custom questions without benchmarks that were added to assist City leadership with planning and decision-making. The results reflect the opinions of a representative sample of Richmond residents collected from February 23, 2026, through April 6, 2026. The reported margin of error is 6 percent, and results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of Richmond's adult population.

This survey was not conducted as an audit under generally accepted government auditing standards. Instead, it serves as a strategic management and policy tool to help City leaders better understand resident perspectives, identify areas of strength, and consider opportunities for improvement.

City Administration has provided its official response to the community survey, and it is attached as [Appendix A](#). A presentation of the results of this survey is currently scheduled to take place on June 1, 2026, at the City of Richmond Organizational Development Standing Committee.

We appreciate the participation of Richmond residents who completed the survey and provided feedback on their experiences and perceptions of the City. We also appreciate the cooperation of City Administration and staff during this process.

cc: The Richmond City Council  
Mayor Danny Avula  
The Richmond Audit Committee

# Richmond, VA

## The National Community Survey

Report of Results  
2026

Report by:



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National Research Center at Polco is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

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## About The NCS™

The National Community Survey™ (The NCS™) report is about the “livability” of Richmond. A livable community is 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. The NCS was developed by the experts from National Research Center at Polco in partnership with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and has been administered in hundreds of communities across the United States.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations, and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS focuses on the livability of Richmond by categorizing survey questions into the ten main “facets” of community livability shown below, in addition to ratings for quality of life and local governance. These facets have been identified through years of extensive survey research as those that are most impactful to residents’ quality of life.

- Economy
- Mobility
- Community Design
- Utilities
- Safety
- Natural Environment
- Parks and Recreation
- Health and Wellness
- Education, Arts, and Culture
- Community Connection

The report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 268 residents of the City of Richmond collected from February 23, 2026 to April 6, 2026. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 6% for all respondents. Survey results were weighted so that the demographic profile of respondents was representative of the demographic profile of adults in Richmond.

### Reporting Results

For the most part, the percentages presented in this report represent the “percent positive.” Most commonly, the percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (excellent/good, very safe/somewhat safe, etc.). On many of the questions in the survey, respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving a “don’t know” response is shown in the full set of responses included in the “Complete Data” section; however, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the main body of the report. Therefore, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

### Benchmark Comparisons

Polco’s database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in surveys from over 400 communities whose residents evaluated the same kinds of topics on The NCS. The comparison evaluations include surveys from the past five years. If a jurisdiction has conducted multiple efforts in the past five years, only the most recent survey is included in the benchmark database. Polco adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant. The communities in the database represent a wide geographic and population range.

In each tab, Richmond’s results are noted as being “higher” than the benchmark, “lower” than the benchmark, or “similar” to the benchmark, meaning that the average rating given by Richmond residents. Being rated as “higher” or “lower” than the benchmark means that Richmond’s average rating for a particular item was more than 10 points different than the benchmark. If a rating was “much higher” or “much lower,” then Richmond’s average rating was more than 20 points different when compared to the benchmark.

In addition to these national benchmarks, comparisons were also made to a smaller cohort of communities that



align more closely to the demographics in Richmond. This cohort included other cities with populations between 100k - 500k. Comparisons to these communities can be found throughout the report and in the Custom Benchmarks tab.

### **Trends over time**

Trend data for Richmond represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines.<sup>1</sup> Deviations from stable trends over time represent opportunities for understanding how local policies, programs, or public information may have affected residents' opinions. Changes between survey years have been noted with an arrow and the percent difference. If the difference is greater than 7 percentage points between the 2021 and 2026 surveys, the change is statistically significant.

1. In 2020 and 2025, The NCS survey was updated to include new and refreshed items. Consequently, some of the trends may be impacted due to wording modifications that could have potentially altered the meaning of the item for the respondent.

## Methods

### Selecting Survey Recipients

All households within the City of Richmond were eligible to participate in the survey. A list of all households within the zip codes serving Richmond was purchased from Polco's mailing vendor, based on updated listings from the United States Postal Service.

Since some of the zip codes that serve Richmond households may also serve addresses that lie outside of the community, the exact geographic location of each housing unit was compared to community boundaries using the most current municipal boundary file. Addresses located outside of Richmond boundaries were removed from the list of potential households to survey. From that list, addresses were randomly selected as survey recipients, with multi-family housing units sampled at a rate of 5:3 compared to single family housing units.

### Conducting the Random Sample Survey

The 4,000 randomly selected households received mailings beginning on February 23, 2026 and data collection for the survey remained open for six weeks. The first mailing was a postcard inviting the household to participate in the survey online. The next mailing contained a cover letter with instructions, the survey questionnaire, and a postage-paid return envelope. All mailings included a web link to give residents the opportunity to respond to the survey online, as well as QR codes to further encourage participation.

About 2% of the 4,000 mailed invitations were returned because the household address was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the remaining 3,932 households that received the invitations to participate, 268 completed the survey, providing an overall response rate of 7%. The response rate was calculated using AAPOR's response rate #2 for mailed surveys of unnamed persons.<sup>1</sup>

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates by a "level of confidence" and accompanying "confidence interval" (or margin of error). A traditional level of confidence, and the one used here, is 95%. The 95% confidence interval quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the survey results based on the total number of responses received. This is because *some* residents' opinions are relied on to estimate *all* residents' opinions. The margin of error for the City of Richmond survey is no greater than plus or minus 6 percentage points around any given percent reported for all respondents (268 completed surveys).

## Analyzing the Data

Responses from mailed surveys were entered into an electronic dataset using a “key and verify” method, where all responses are entered twice and compared to each other. Any discrepancies were resolved in comparison to the original survey form. Range checks as well as other forms of quality control were also performed. Responses from surveys completed on Polco were downloaded and merged with the mailed survey responses.

The survey datasets were analyzed using all or some of a combination of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), R, Python, and Tableau.

The demographics of the survey respondents were compared to those found in the 2020 Census and 2024 American Community Survey estimates for adults in the City of Richmond. The primary objective of weighting survey data is to make the survey respondents reflective of the larger population of the community. The characteristics used for weighting were age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, housing type, housing tenure, and area. No adjustments were made for design effects. Weights were calculated using an iterative, multiplicative raking model known as the ANES Weighting Algorithm.<sup>2</sup> The results of the weighting scheme for the probability sample are presented in the following table.

Polco aligns demographic labels with those used by the U.S. Census for reporting purposes, when possible. Some categories (age, race/Hispanic origin, housing type, and length of residency) are combined into smaller subgroups.

		Unweighted	Weighted	Target <sup>4</sup>
<b>Age</b>	18-34	<b>24%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>40%</b>
	35-54	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>
	55+	<b>49%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Hispanic origin</b>	No	<b>95%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>
	Yes	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Housing tenure</b>	Own	<b>59%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>
	Rent	<b>41%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Housing type</b>	Attached	<b>50%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>
	Detached	<b>50%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Race &amp; Hispanic origin</b>	Not white alone	<b>27%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>55%</b>
	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	<b>73%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Man	<b>40%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>
	Woman	<b>60%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Sex/age</b>	Man 18-34	<b>10%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>
	Man 35-54	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>
	Man 55+	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>
	Woman 18-34	<b>13%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>22%</b>
	Woman 35-54	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>
	Woman 55+	<b>31%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>

## Study Limitations

All public opinion research is subject to unmeasured error. While the methodologies employed for this survey were designed to minimize this error as much as possible, these other sources of potential error should be acknowledged, and can include non-response error, coverage error, recall bias, and social desirability bias.

*Non-response error* arises when those who were selected to participate in the survey did not do so, and may have different opinions or experiences than survey responders. For general resident surveys, where the results are meant to be generalized to the entire adult population living in households, the mailing lists based on the Delivery Sequence File from the United States Post Office may exclude certain types of housing units, such as those in multi-family buildings where mail is addressed to a named resident at the address rather than to a specific unit or where residents only receive their mail at a post office box and the geographic location of a residence cannot be determined, there may be a *coverage error*, although for most locations, this is minimal. Respondents may not perfectly remember their experiences in the past year (such as participation in social or civic events, for example), and for some survey items, they may answer in ways they think cast their responses in a more favorable light (*recall bias* and *social desirability bias*).

## Survey Validity

See the Polco Knowledge Base article on survey validity at <https://blog.polco.us/polco-knowledgebase/margin-of-error-and-confidence-level-in-survey-results>

## Contact

The City of Richmond funded this research. Please contact Peter D. Breil of the City of Richmond at [Peter.Breil@rva.gov](mailto:Peter.Breil@rva.gov) if you have any questions about the survey.

1. See AAPOR's Standard Definitions for more information at <https://aapor.org/standards-and-ethics/standard-definitions/>
2. Pasek, J. (2014). ANES Weighting Algorithm. Retrieved from <https://surveyinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Full-anesrake-paper.pdf>
3. Targets come from the 2020 Census and 2024 American Community Survey

# Key Findings

## Community Strengths

### Resident loyalty and overall community appeal remain strong

- About 8 in 10 residents reported they are likely to remain in Richmond over the next five years and would recommend the community as a place to live.
- About 9 in 10 respondents felt very or somewhat safe in their neighborhood during the day.

### Cultural character, arts, and inclusivity show meaningful gains

- Preservation of the community's historical and cultural character increased from 54% in 2021 to 64% in 2026.
- Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities rose from 69% to 77%, while overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts improved from 62% to 72%; both exceeded custom benchmarks, with cultural activities also surpassing the national average.
- Ratings for opportunities to attend special events and festivals (76%) and community support for the arts (75%) were also above custom benchmarks.
- Attracting people from diverse backgrounds increased notably from 55% to 70%.

### Environmental quality and wellness opportunities are trending upward

- Overall quality of the natural environment improved significantly from 54% to 66%.
- Ratings for fitness opportunities increased from 65% to 76%.

## Focus Areas

### Perceptions of value and economic conditions declined

- Ratings for the value of services for taxes paid dropped from 32% to 23%, falling below both custom and national benchmarks.
- Overall economic health (41% → 25%) and economic development (43% → 28%) both declined substantially and performed below both benchmarks.

### Declines across infrastructure, development, and essential livability factors

- Ease of public parking (31% → 22%), snow removal (33% → 18%), and street repair (16% → 6%) all declined and rated below national and custom benchmarks.
- Overall quality of new development declined from 44% to 24%, and land use, planning, and zoning dropped from 36% to 17%.
- Availability of affordable quality food declined from 58% to 39%, while ratings for quality health care (48% → 40%), preventive health services (49% → 39%), and quality housing (22% → 10%) also decreased.

### Safety perceptions and related services are areas for improvement

- Overall feelings of safety (31%) and ratings for crime prevention (26%) performed well below both benchmarks.
- Animal control ratings also declined from 55% to 46%, falling below national and custom comparisons.

## Other Notable Results

- About 6 in 10 residents reported the City is very or somewhat responsive to resident problems or concerns.
- About 6 in 10 residents indicated a great deal or a moderate amount of trust in the Richmond Police Department to protect community safety, treat residents with respect, and act fairly and professionally.

## Areas of Greatest Change

Of the evaluative questions included on both the 2021 and 2026 survey iterations, 84 were statistically similar to previous results. Upward trends were in 6 items, while 33 ratings decreased since 2021. The most significant of those trends are listed below.

### *Increases*

- Attracting people from diverse backgrounds (+14%)
- Overall quality of natural environment in Richmond (+11%)
- Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.) (+11%)
- Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts (+10%)
- Preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community (+10%)

### *Decreases*

- Employment opportunities (-20%)

- Overall quality of new development in Richmond (-20%)
- Availability of affordable quality food (-19%)
- Land use, planning, and zoning (-19%)
- Overall economic health of Richmond (-17%)

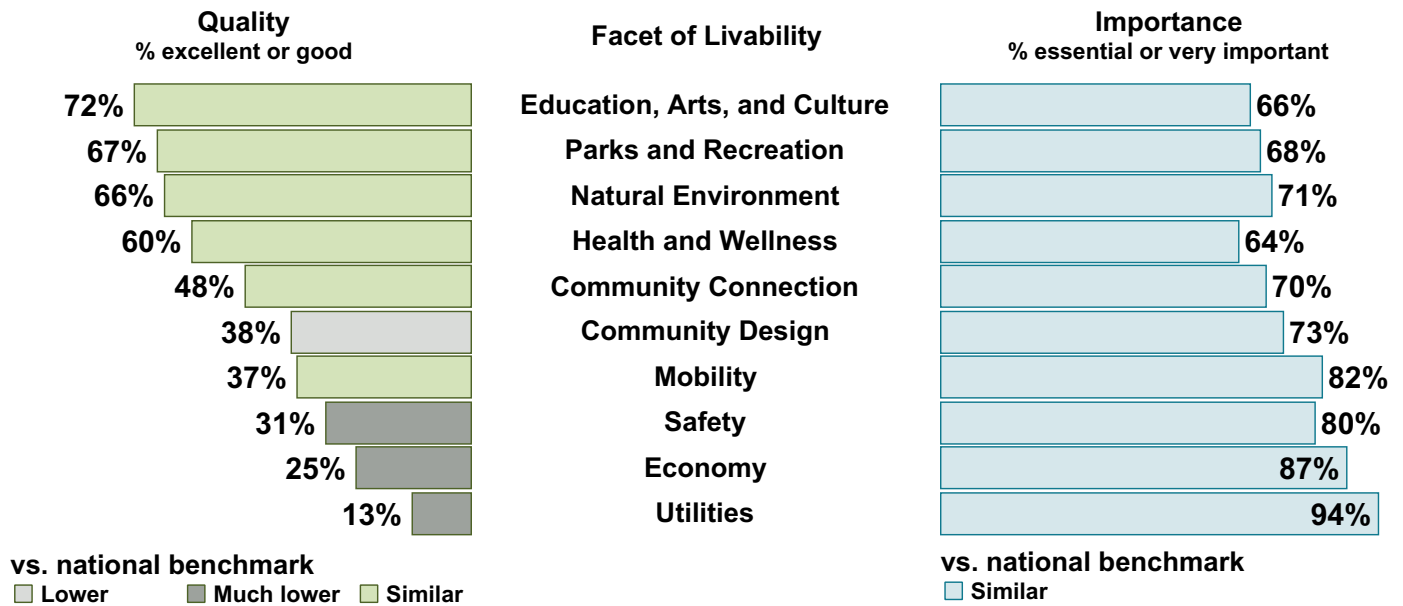
# Facets of Livability



Every jurisdiction must balance limited resources while meeting resident needs and striving to optimize community livability. To this end, it is helpful to know what aspects of the community are most important to residents and which they perceive as being of higher or lower quality. It is especially helpful to know when a facet of livability is considered of high importance but rated as lower quality, as this should be a top priority to address.

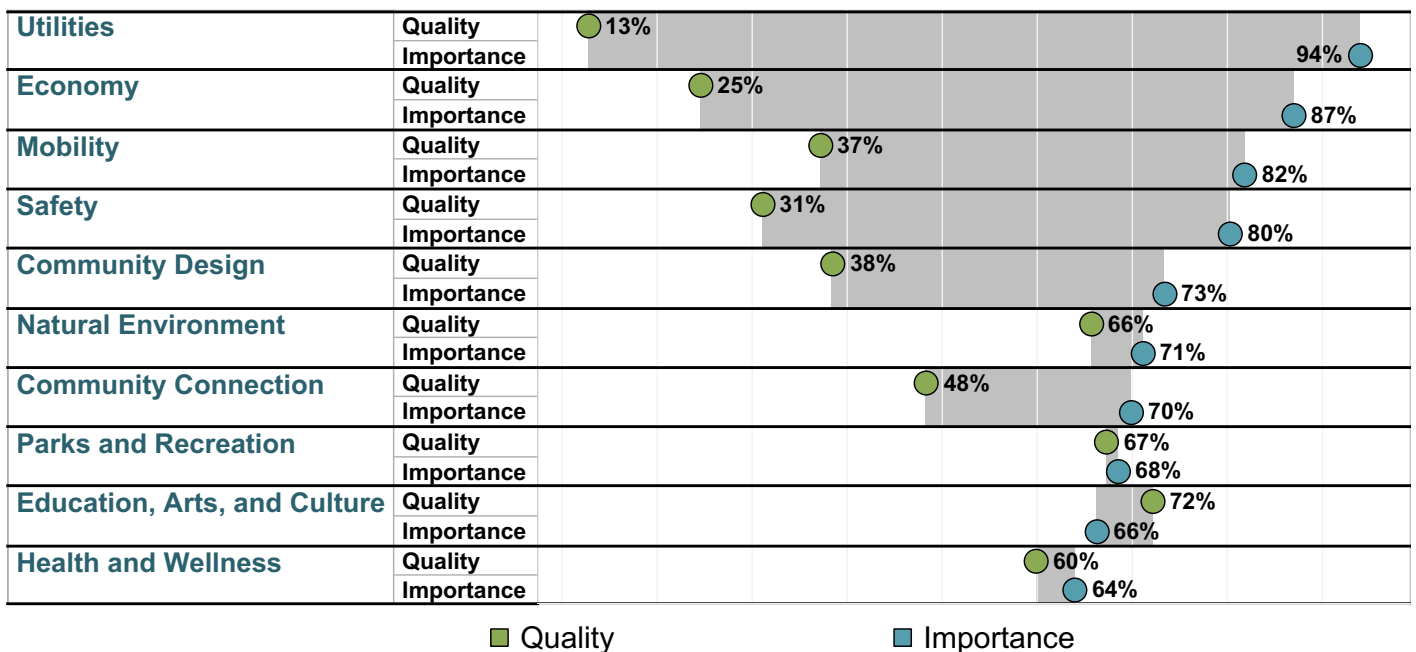
## Quality and Importance by the Numbers

The table below shows the proportion of residents who rated the community facets positively for quality and the priority (importance) placed on each. Also displayed is whether local quality ratings were lower, similar, or higher than communities across the country (the national benchmark).



## Quality/Importance Gap Analysis

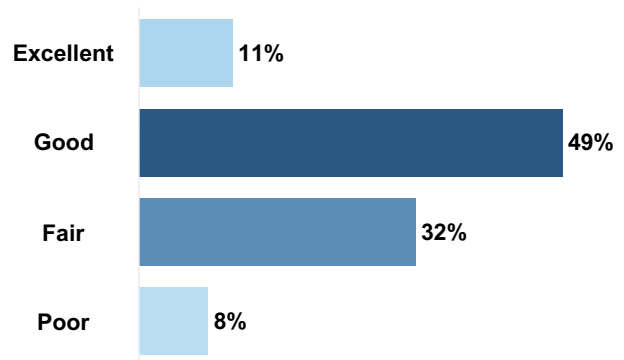
The gap analysis chart below shows the same data as above; however, this chart more clearly illustrates the comparative differences in quality and importance ratings for each facet, as well as the absolute ratings for each.



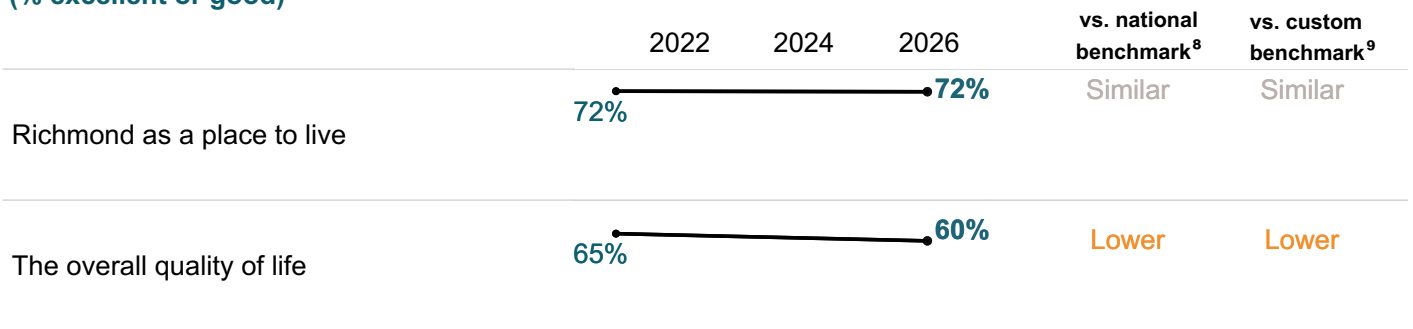
## Quality of Life

Measuring community livability starts with assessing the quality of life of those who live there, and ensuring that the community is attractive, accessible, and welcoming to all.

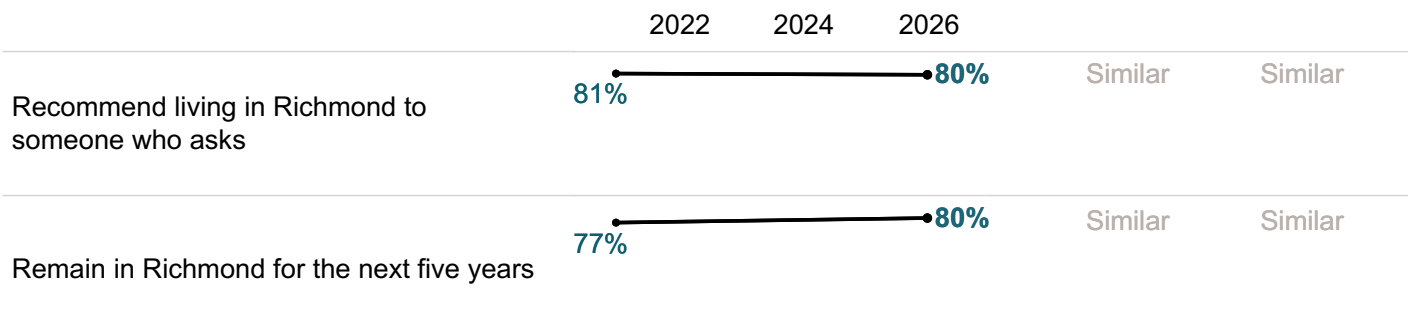
### The overall quality of life in Richmond



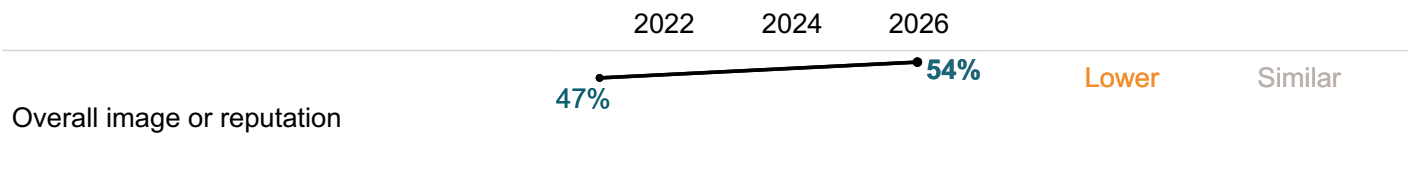
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)



Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following.  
(% very or somewhat likely)



Please rate each of the following in the Richmond community.  
(% excellent or good)



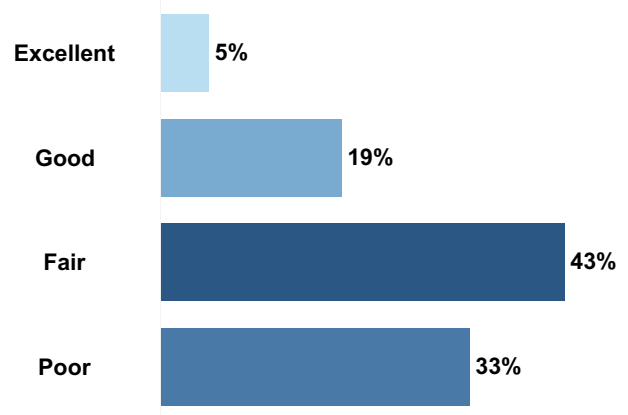
8. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

9. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

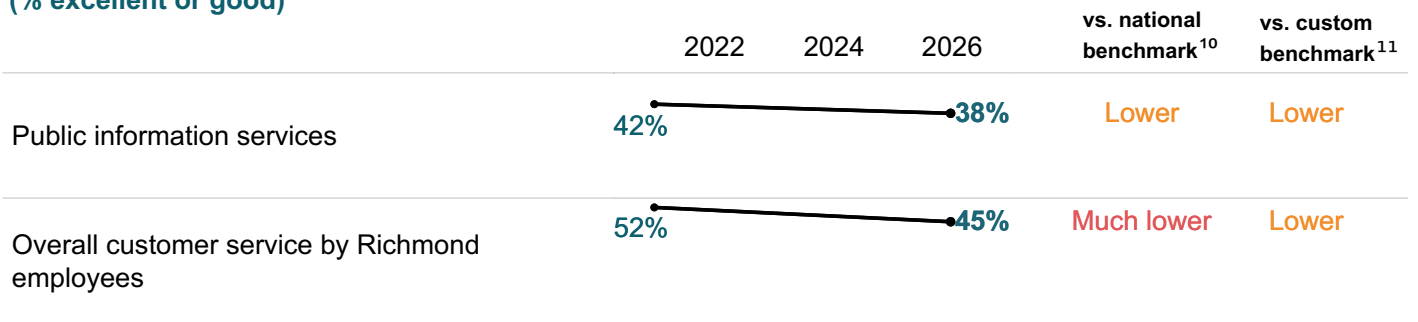
## Governance

Strong local governments deliver results that meet residents' needs, use resources effectively, and respond to both current and future community priorities.

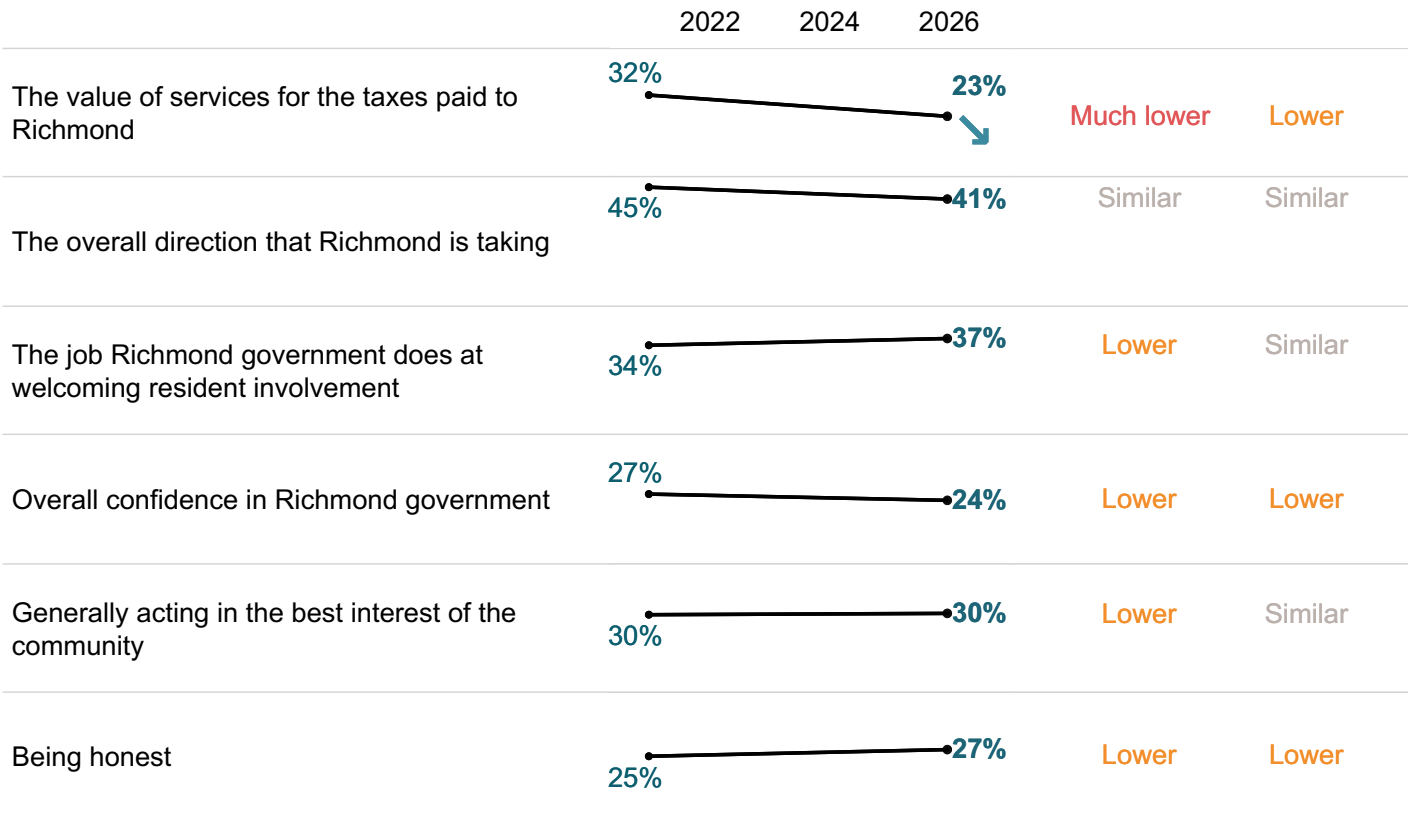
### Overall confidence in Richmond government

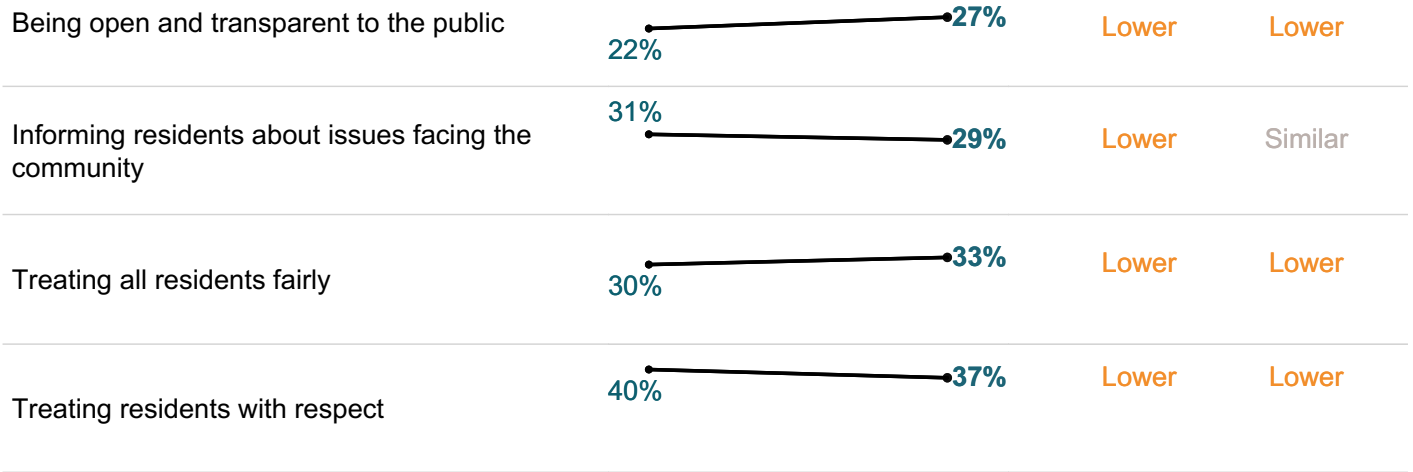


### Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond. (% excellent or good)

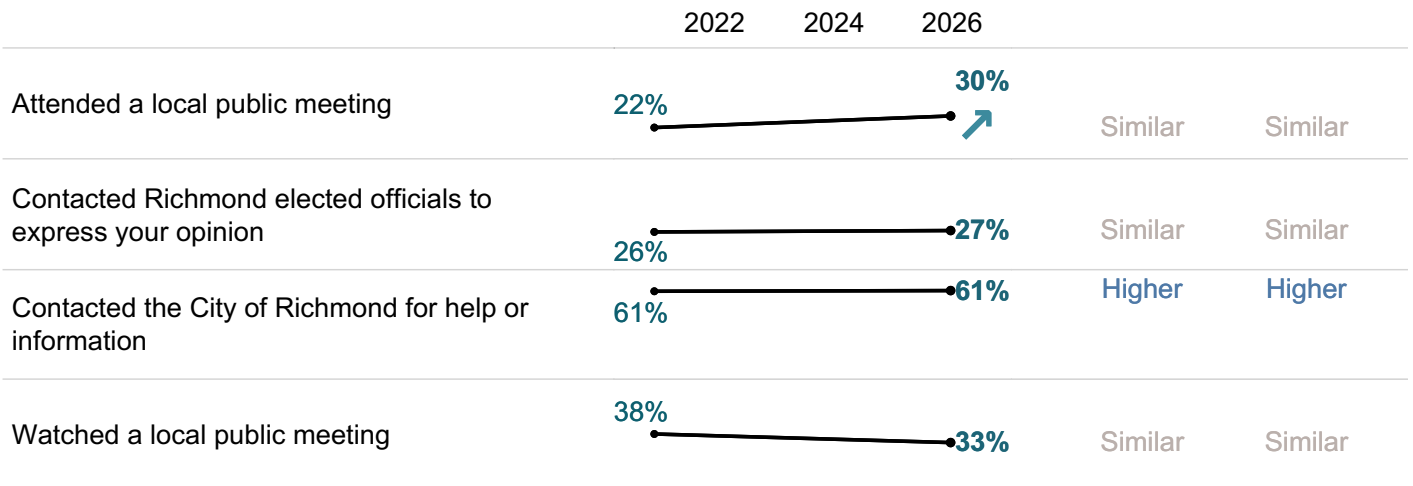


### Please rate the following categories of Richmond government performance. (% excellent or good)

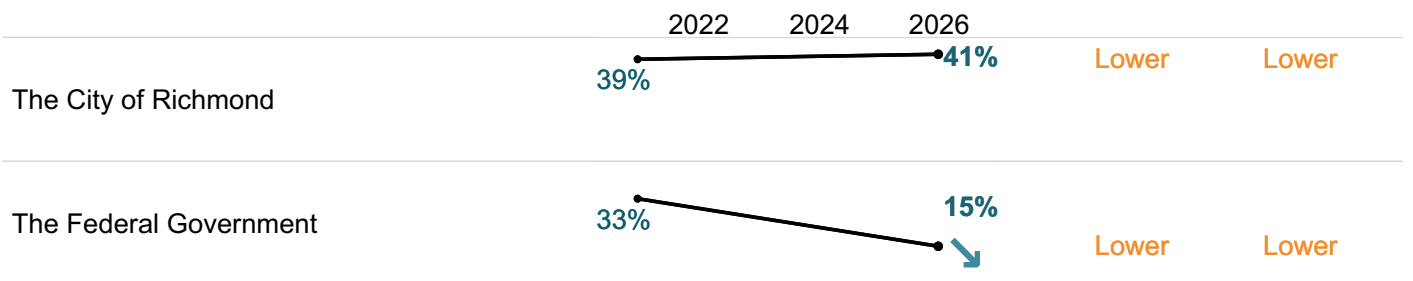




**Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.**  
(% yes)



**Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?**  
(% excellent or good)



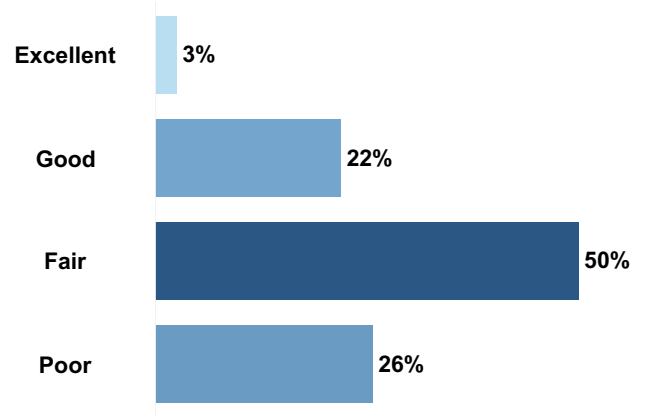
10. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

11. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

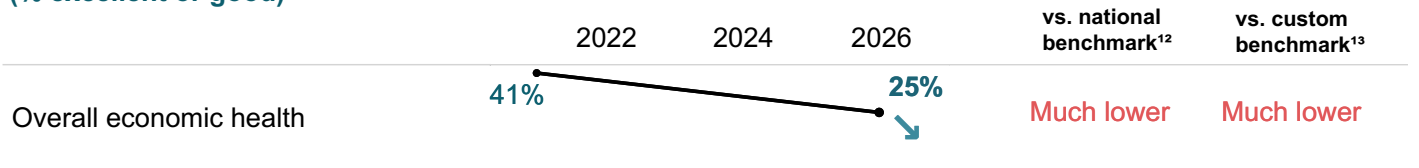
## Economy

Local governments work together with private and nonprofit businesses, and with the community at large, to foster sustainable growth, create jobs, and promote a thriving local economy.

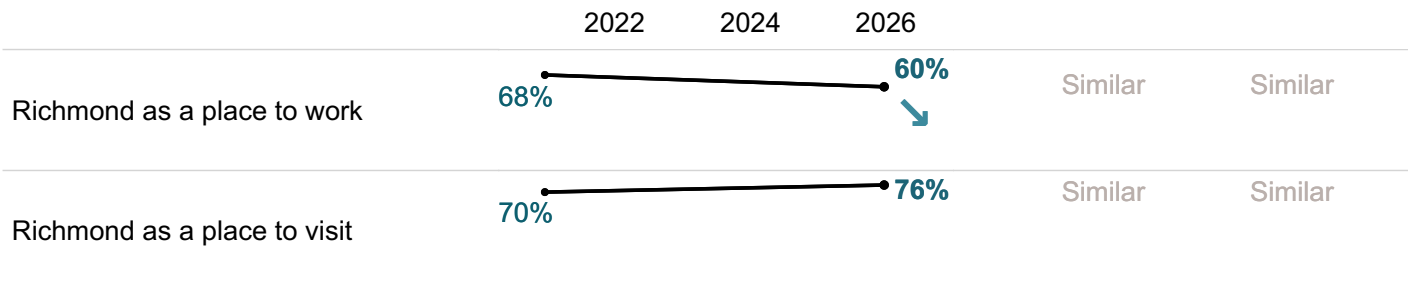
### Overall economic health of Richmond



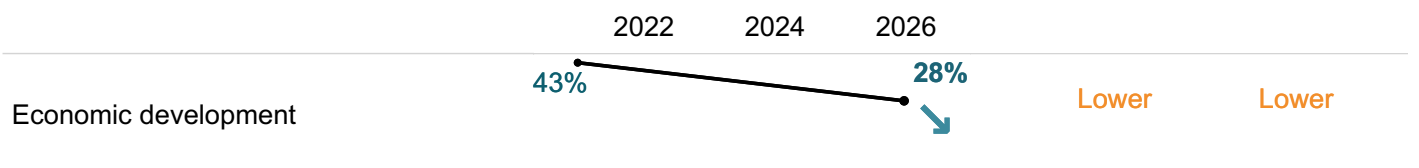
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)



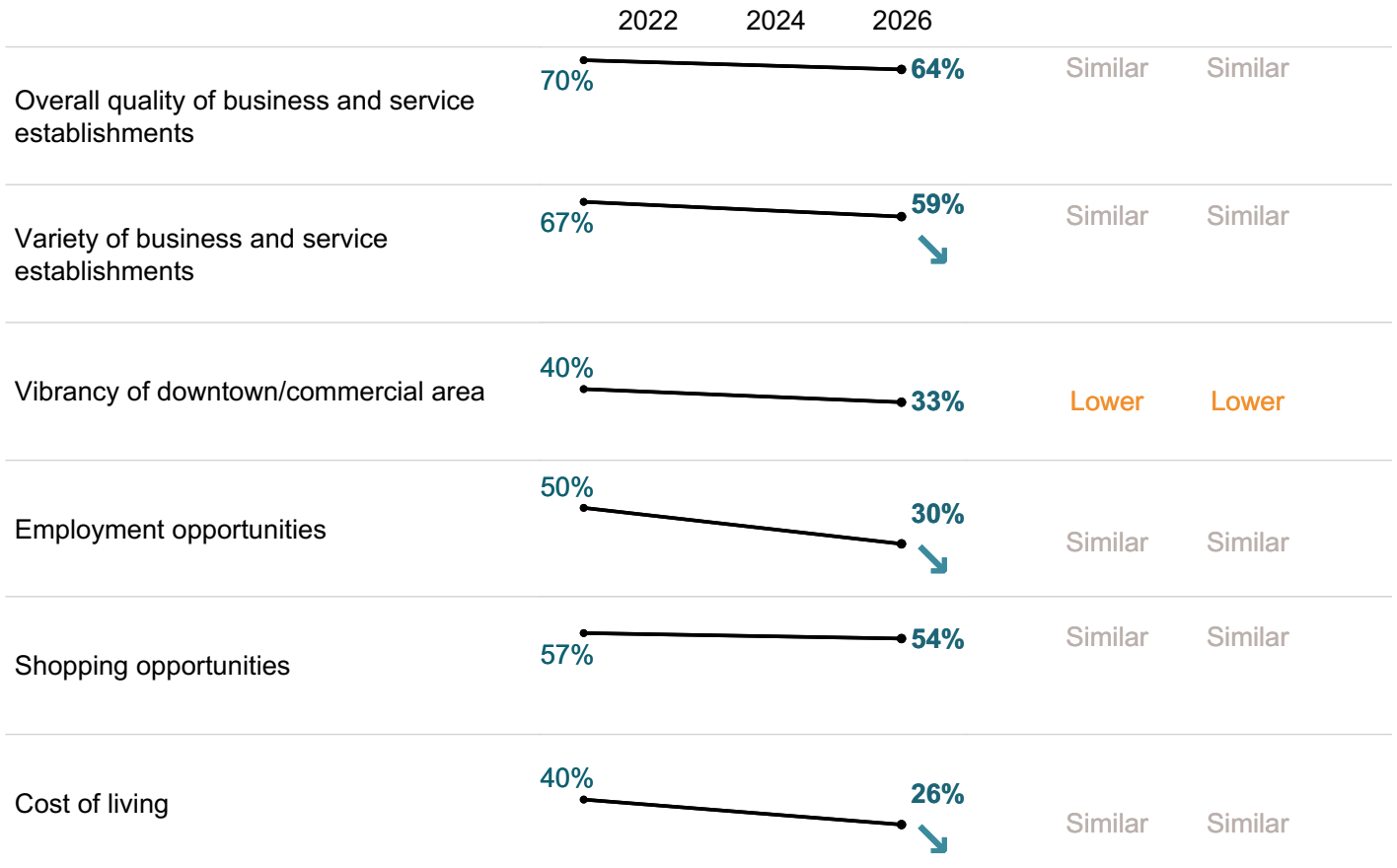
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)



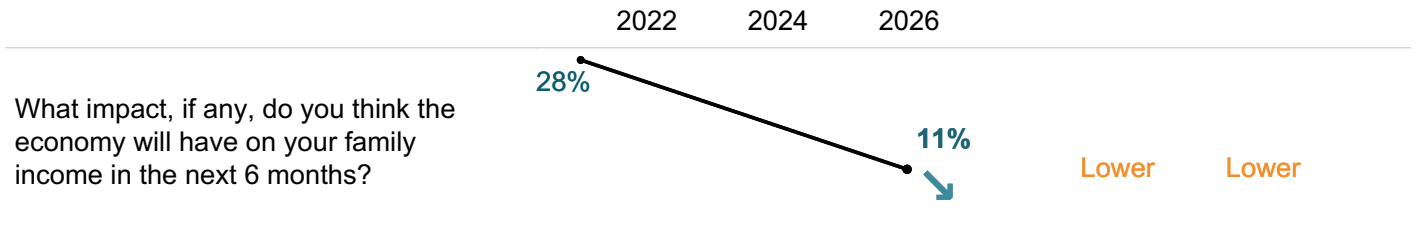
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)



**Please rate each of the following in the Richmond community.**  
 (% excellent or good)



**What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months? Do you think the impact will be:**  
 (% very or somewhat positive)

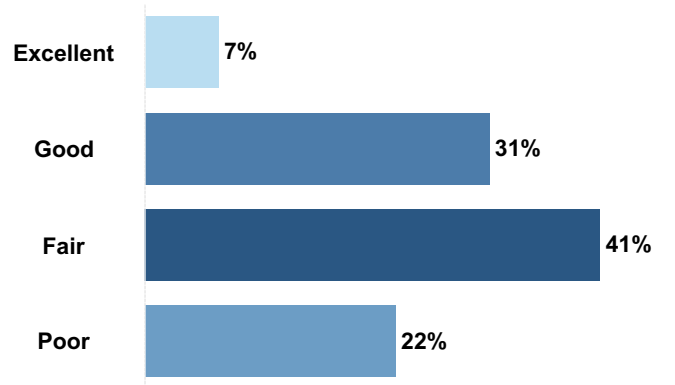


12. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.  
 13. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

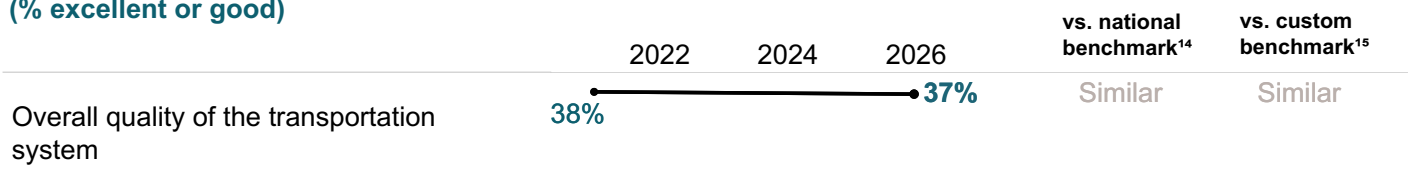
## Mobility

The ability of residents to move about their community with ease plays an important role in the overall quality of life for everyone who lives, works, and spends time there.

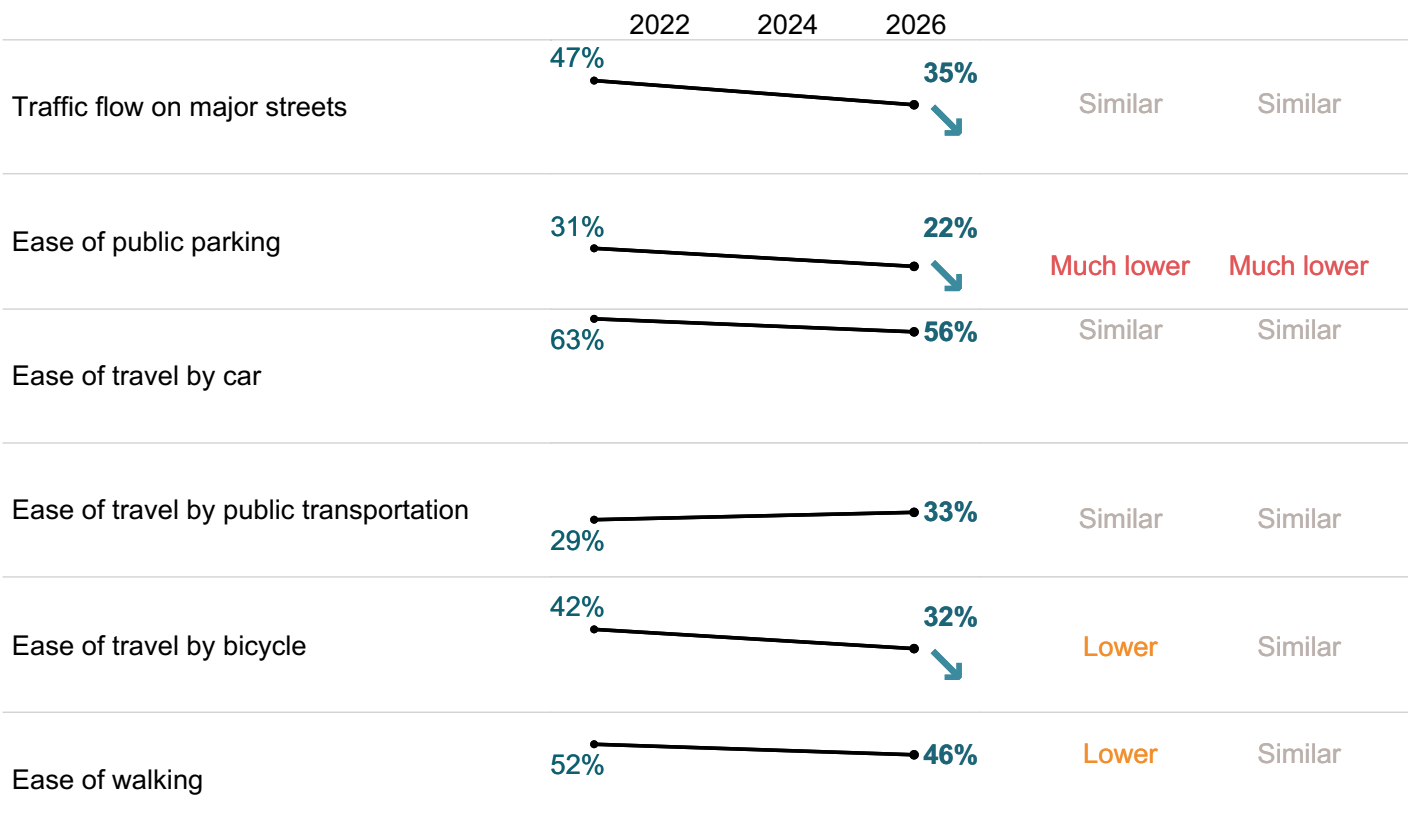
### Overall quality of the transportation system in Richmond



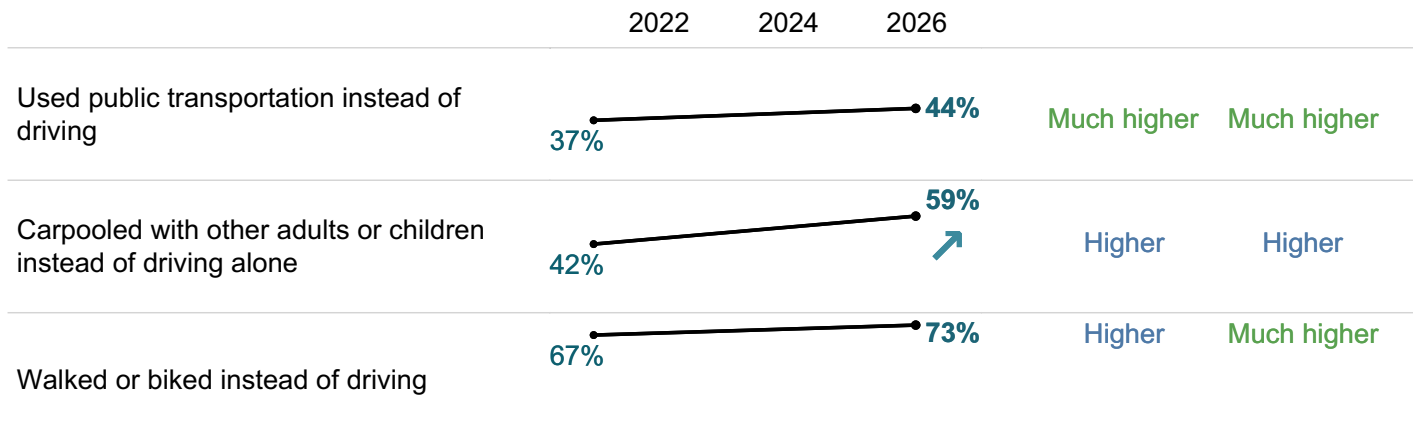
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)



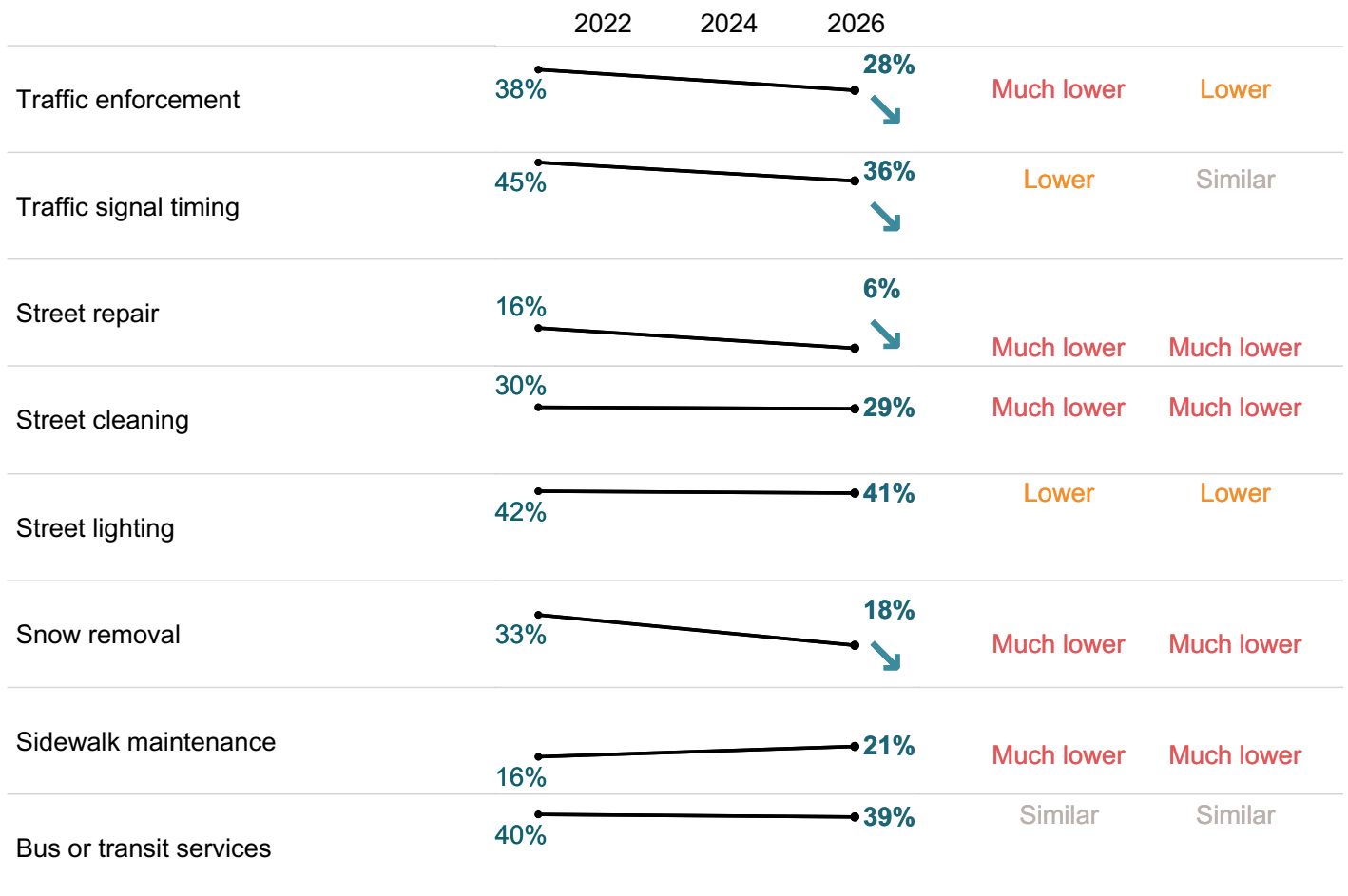
Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community.  
(% excellent or good)



**Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.**  
 (% yes)



**Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.**  
 (% excellent or good)



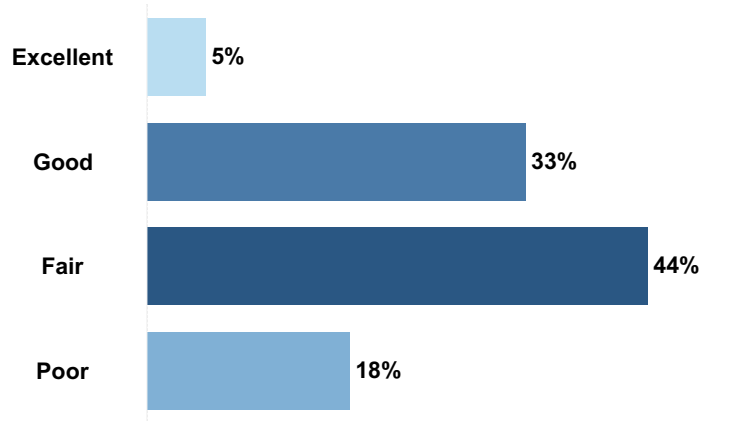
14. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

15. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

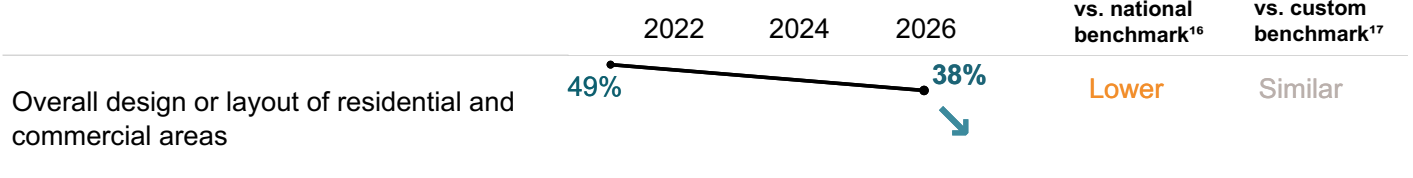
## Overall design or layout of Richmond's residential and commercial areas

### Community Design

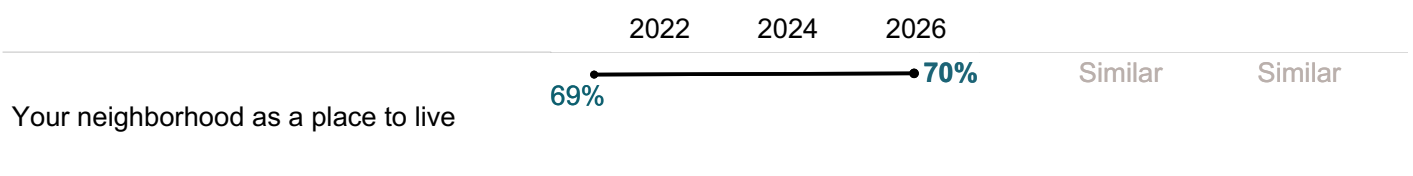
A well-designed community enhances the quality of life for its residents by encouraging smart land use and zoning, ensuring that affordable housing is accessible to all, and supporting development that suits residents' needs.



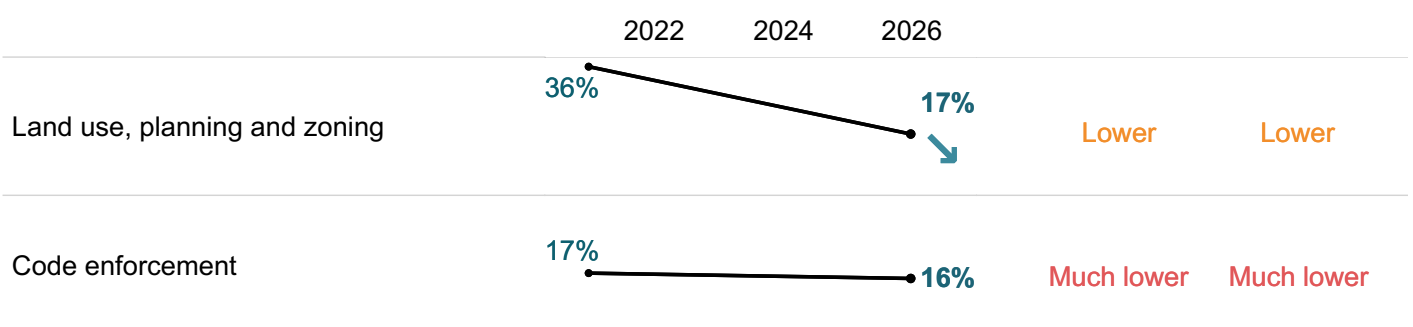
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)



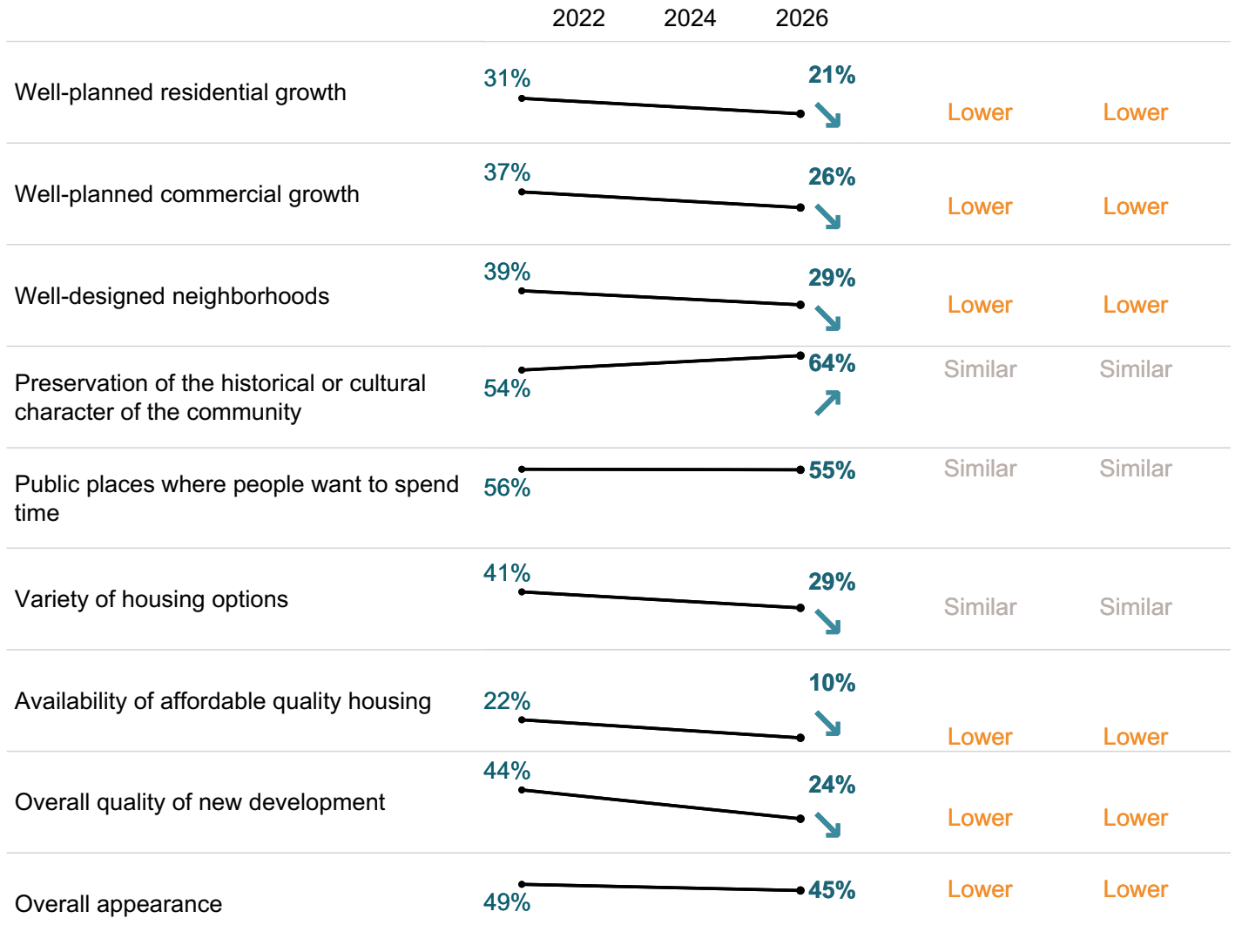
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)



**Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community.**  
 (% excellent or good)



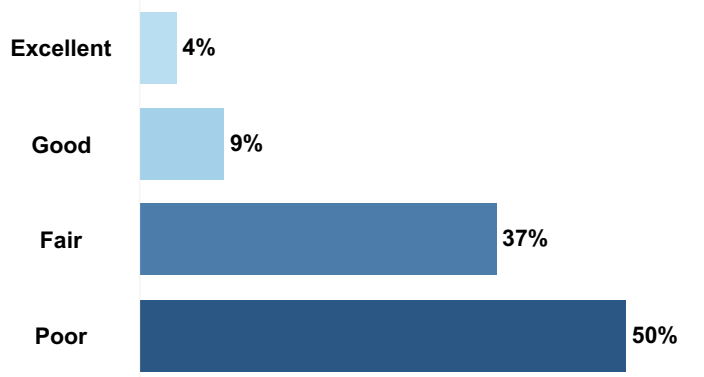
16. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

17. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

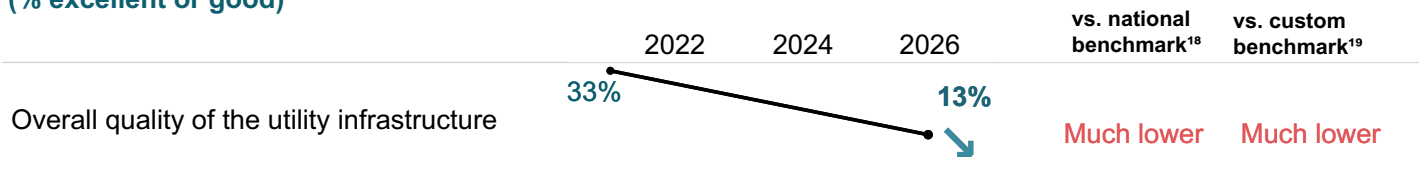
## Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Richmond

### Utilities

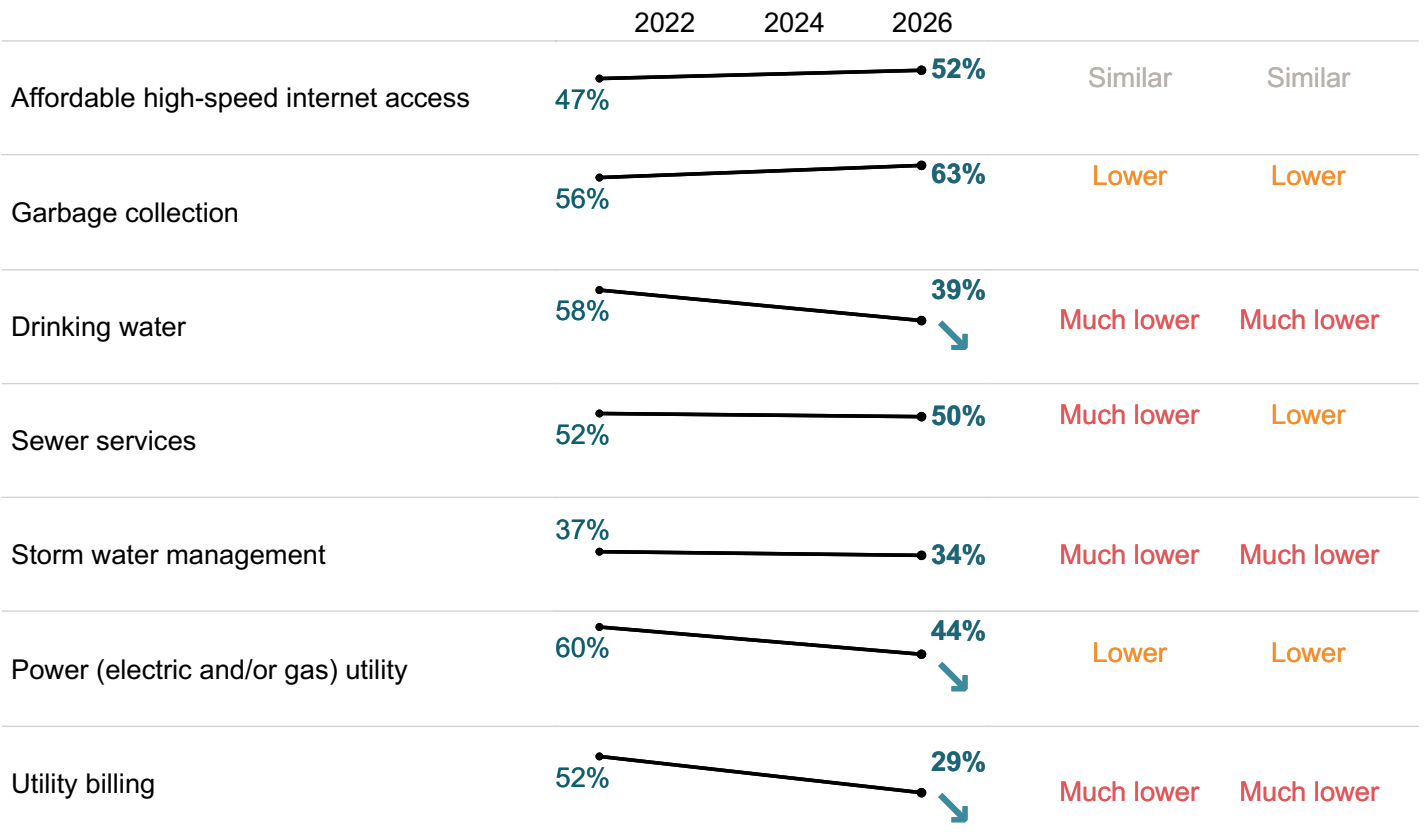
Access to essential services like water, gas, electricity, and internet is crucial for safeguarding the physical health, economic stability, and overall well-being of the communities they support.



Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)



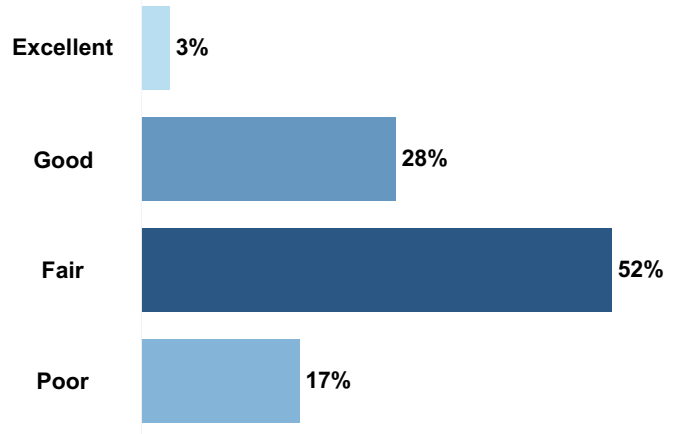
<sup>18</sup>. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

<sup>19</sup>. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

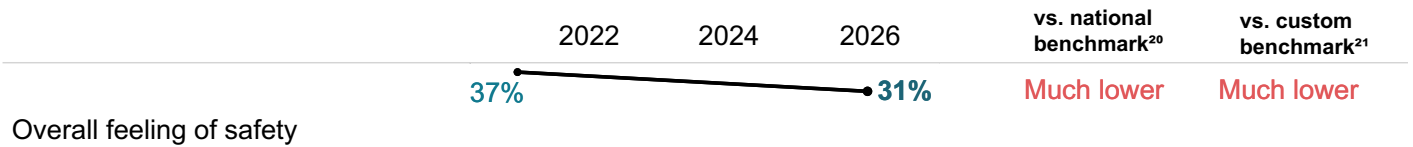
## Safety

Public safety is one of the most important responsibilities of local governments, as every resident deserves to feel safe and secure both in their neighborhoods and across the wider community. The provision of strong, reliable safety services is essential to ensuring a high quality of life.

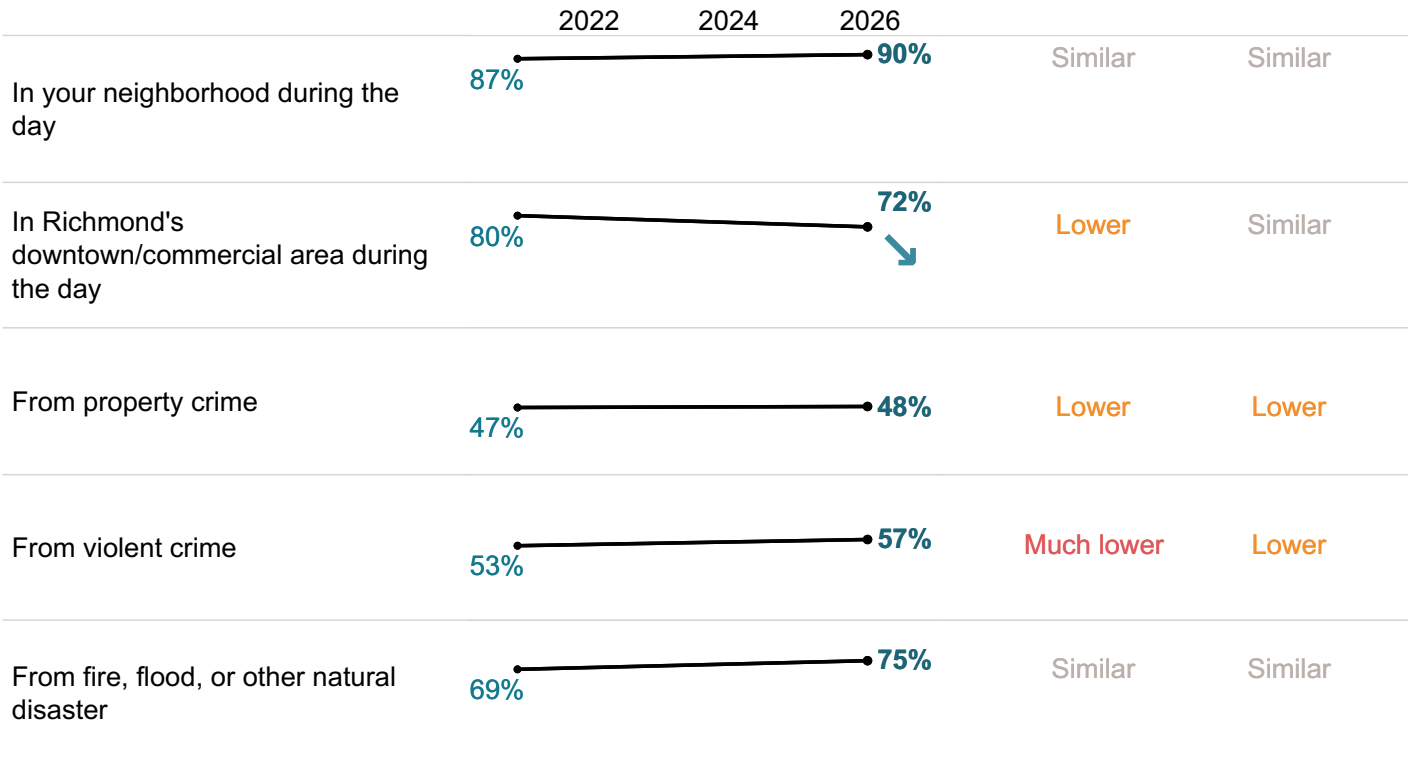
### Overall feeling of safety in Richmond



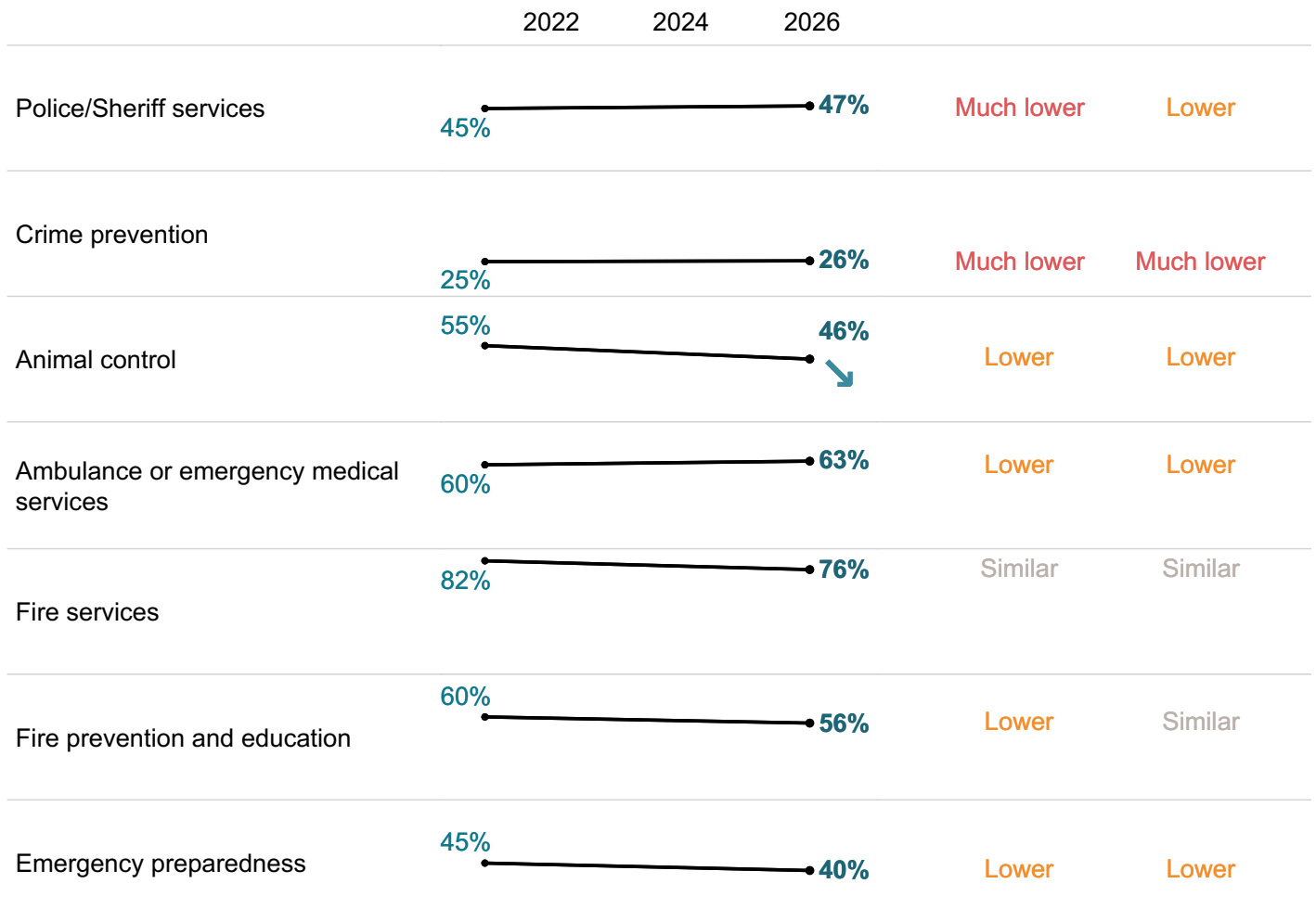
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)



Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:  
(% very or somewhat safe)



**Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)**



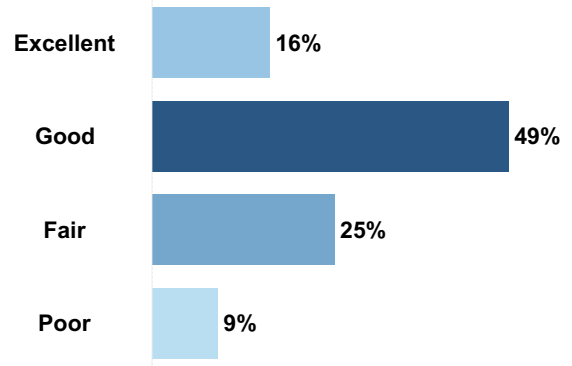
20. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

21. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

## Overall quality of natural environment in Richmond

### Natural Environment

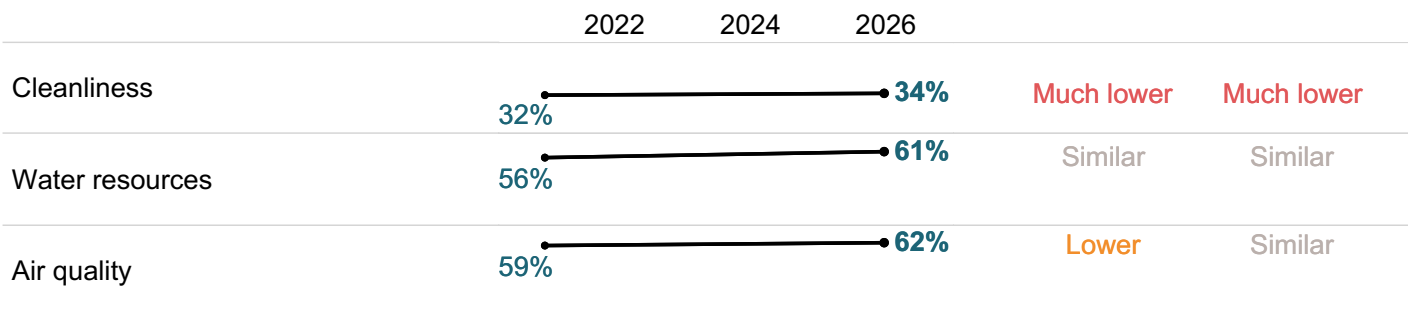
The natural spaces in which residents live and experience their communities has a direct and profound effect on quality of life. The natural environment plays a vital role in the health and well-being of residents.



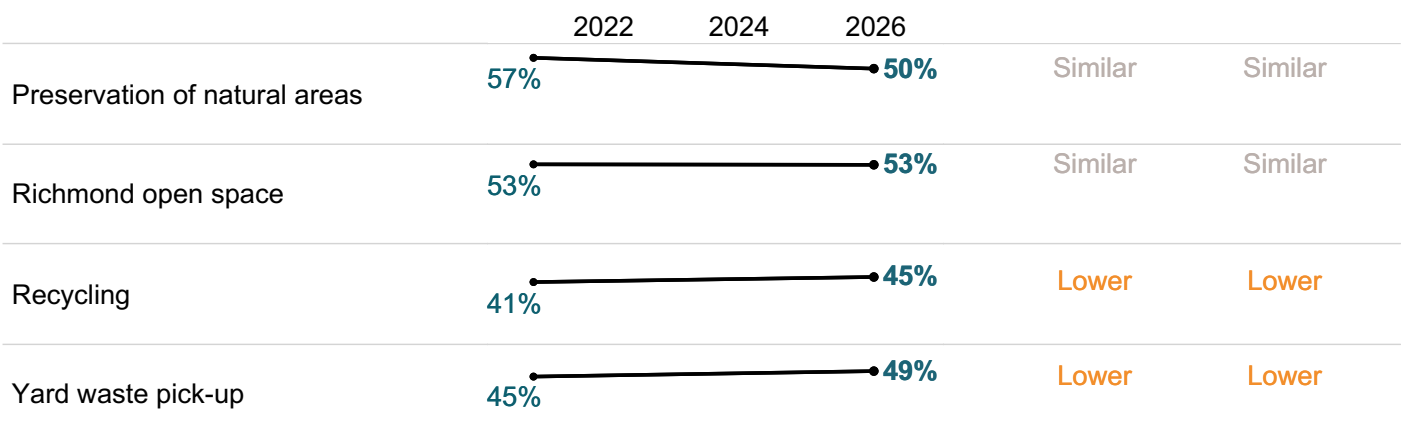
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community.  
(% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)



22. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

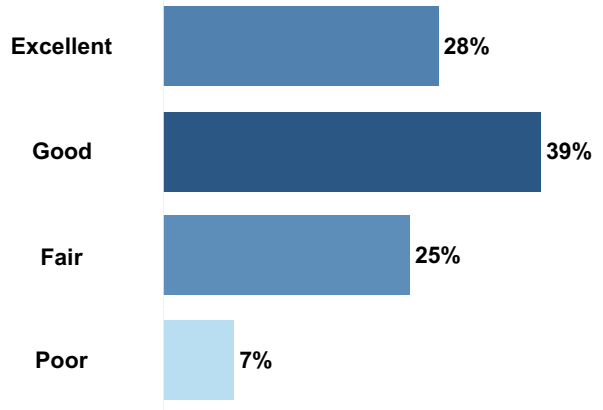
23. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report.

## Parks and Recreation

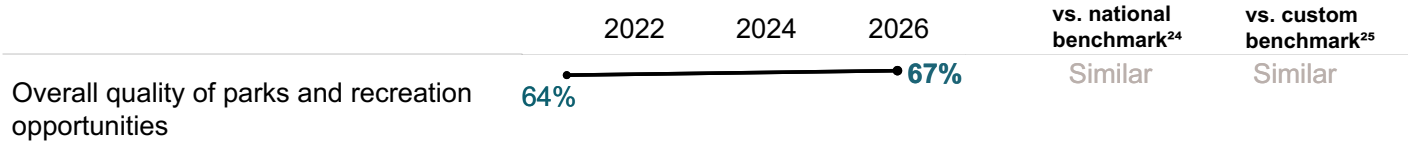
"There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment."

- National Recreation and Park Association

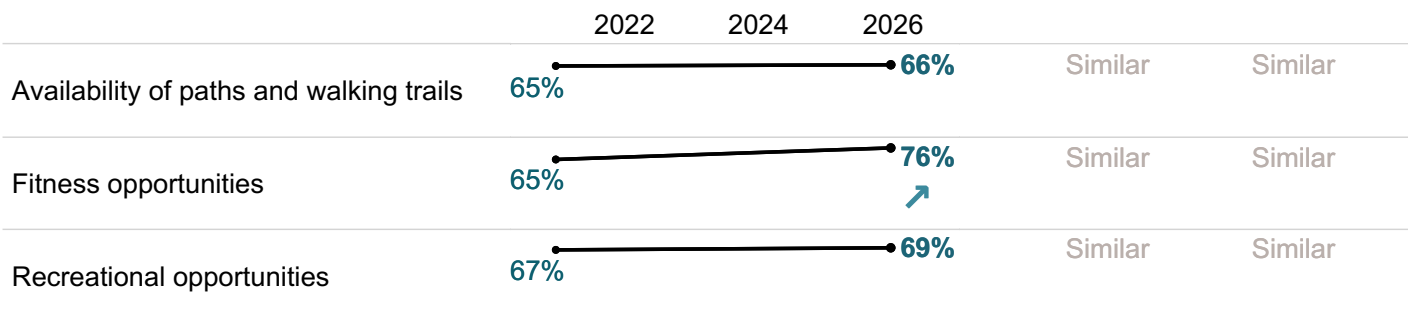
### Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities



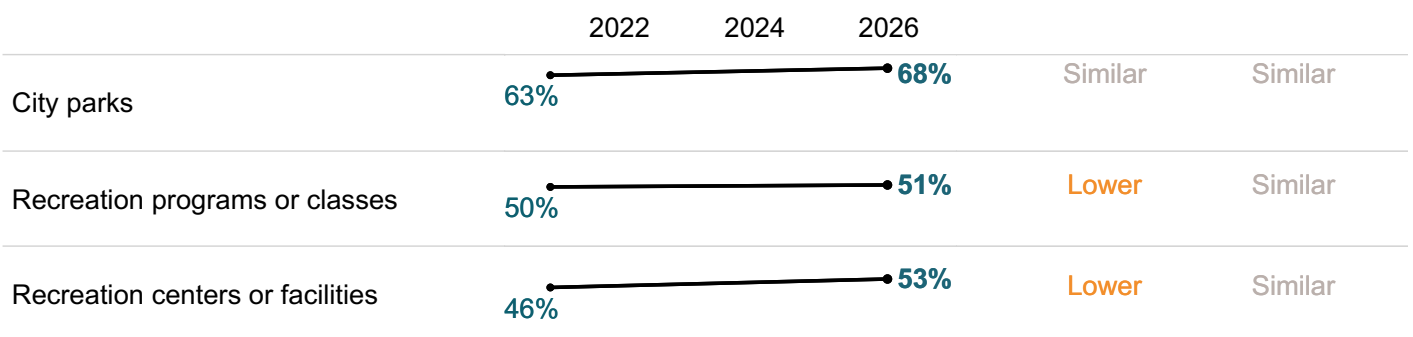
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole. (% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community. (% excellent or good)



Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond. (% excellent or good)



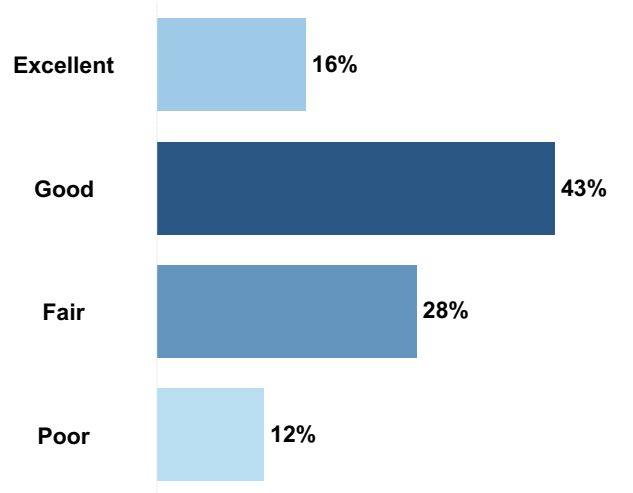
24. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

25. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report.

## Health and Wellness

The features and amenities of a community directly influence residents' health and well-being, shaping their overall quality of life.

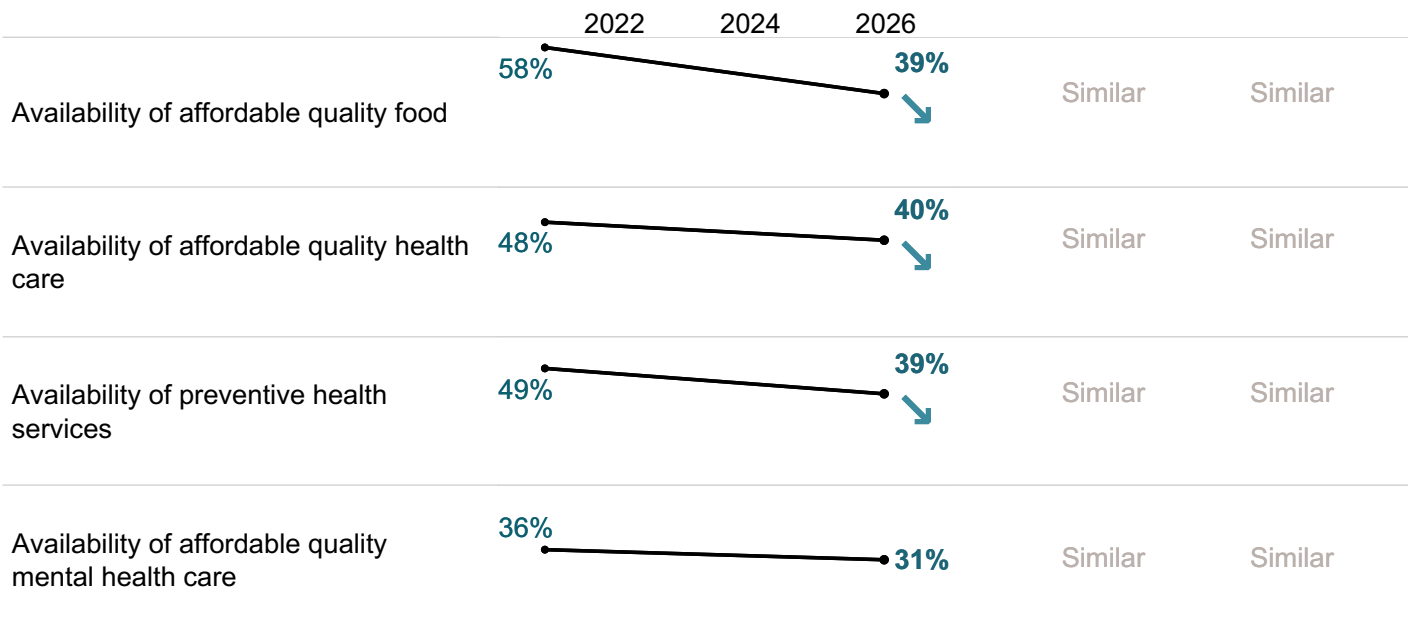
### Overall health and wellness opportunities in Richmond



Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)



Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community.  
(% excellent or good)



**Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.**  
(% excellent or good)



**Please rate your overall health.**  
(% excellent or very good)

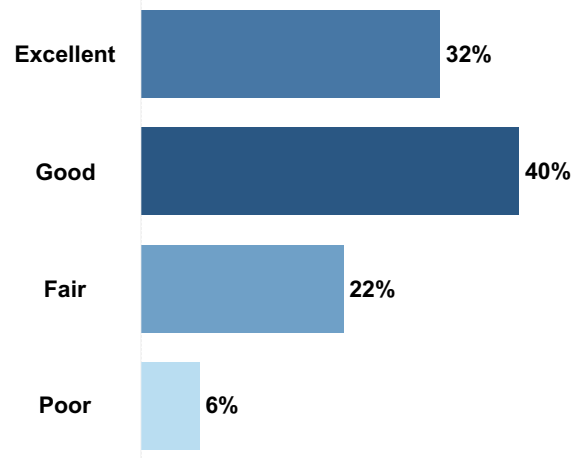


26. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.  
27. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

## Education, Arts, and Culture

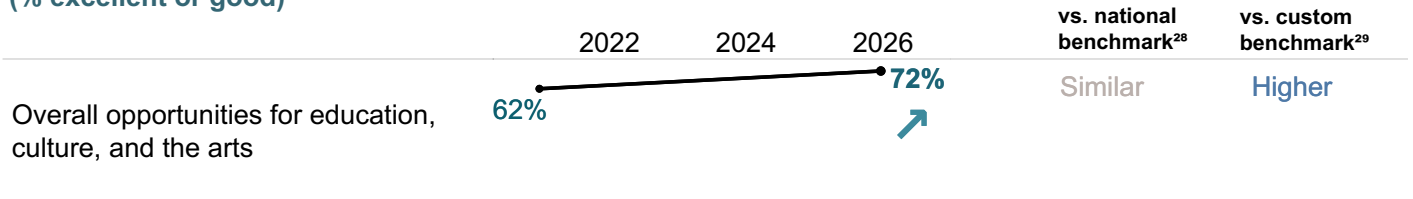
Participation in the arts, in educational opportunities, and in cultural activities is linked to increased civic engagement, greater social tolerance, and enhanced enjoyment of the local community.

### Overall opportunities for education, culture and the arts



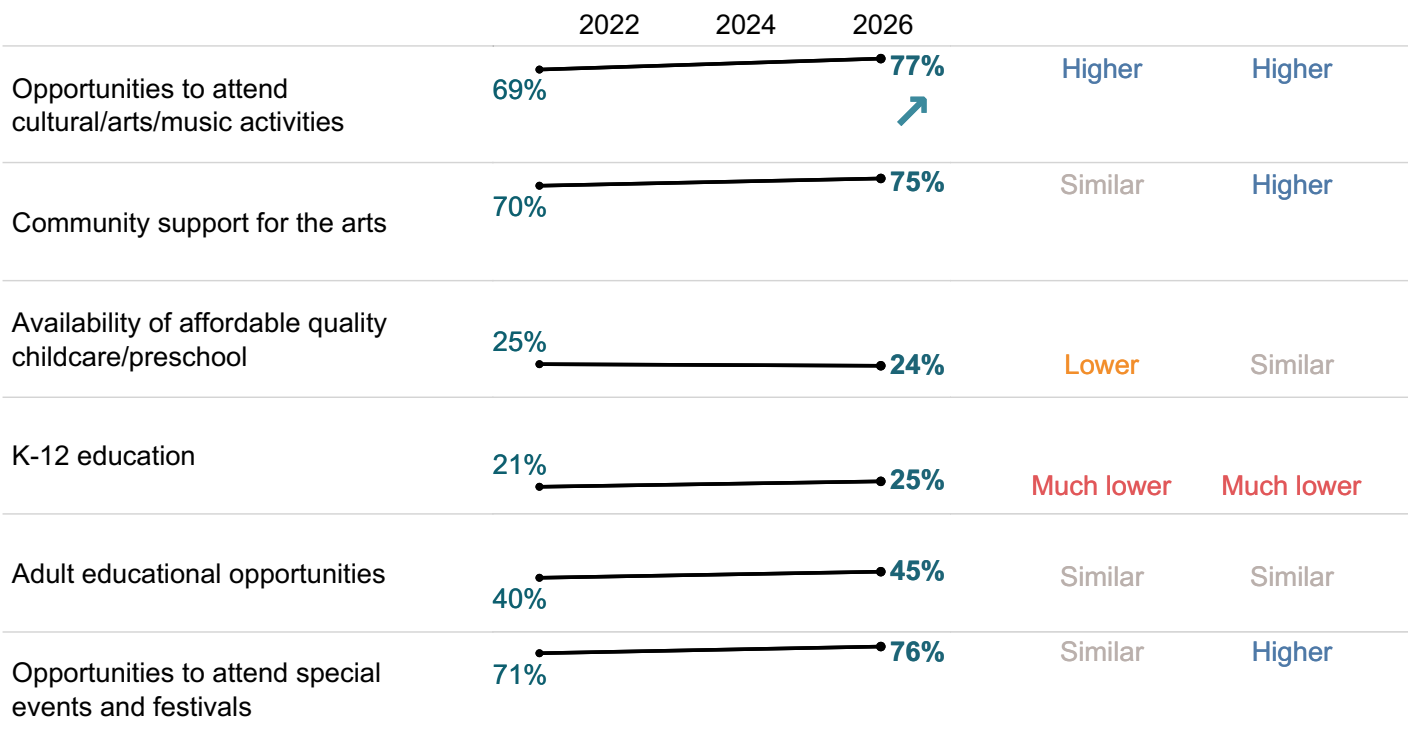
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.

(% excellent or good)

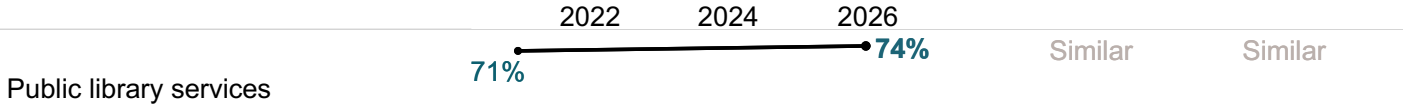


Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community.

(% excellent or good)



**Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.**  
**(% excellent or good)**

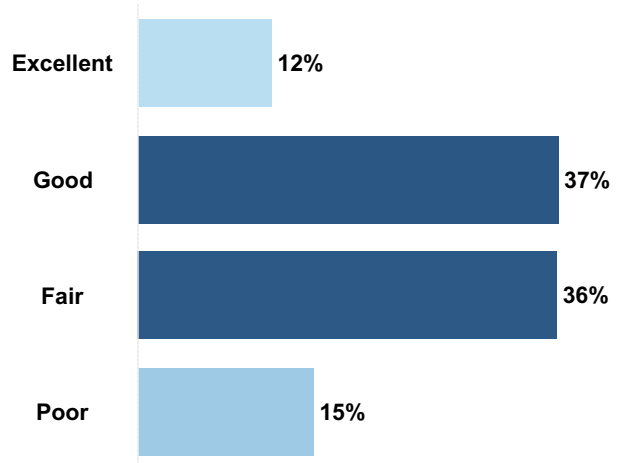


28. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.  
29. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

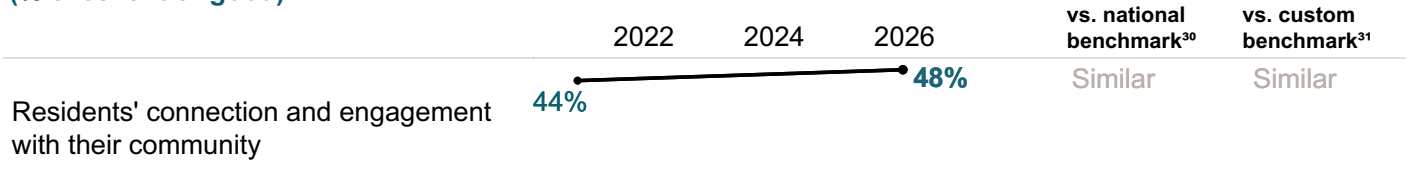
## Community Connection

Community connection reflects residents' sense of belonging. When residents feel welcomed and encouraged to participate, they are more likely to feel engaged and connected to their community.

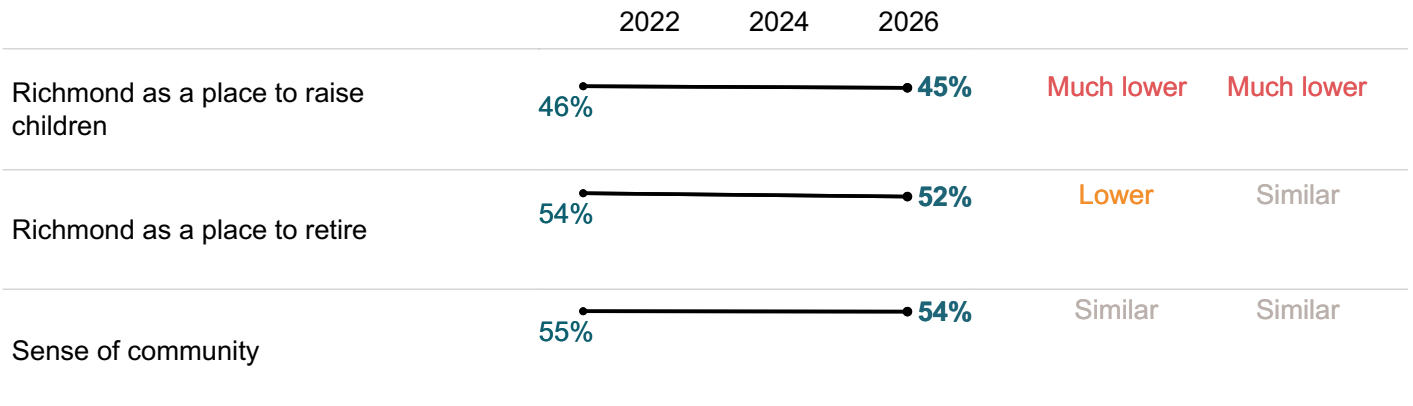
### Residents' connection and engagement with their community



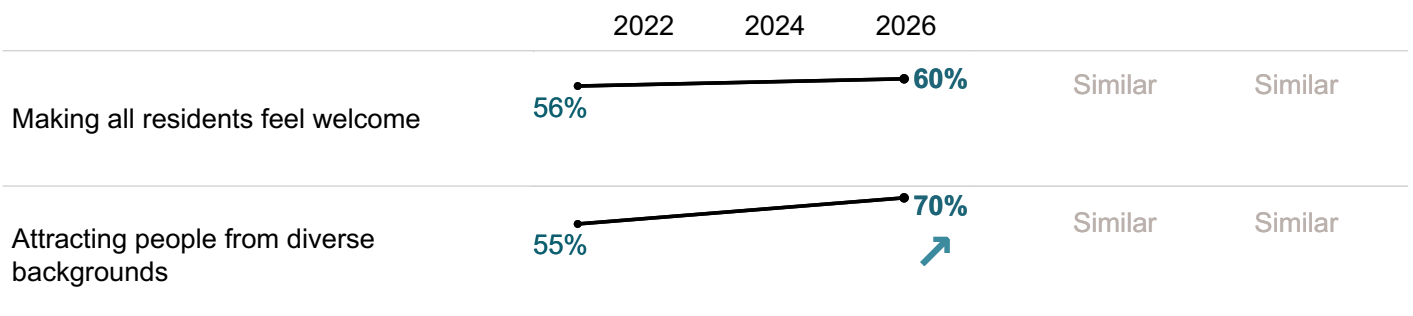
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.  
(% excellent or good)

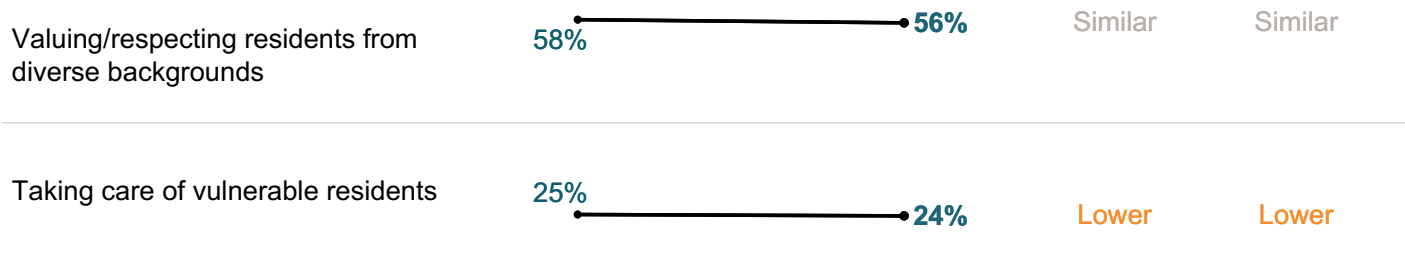


Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Richmond.  
(% excellent or good)

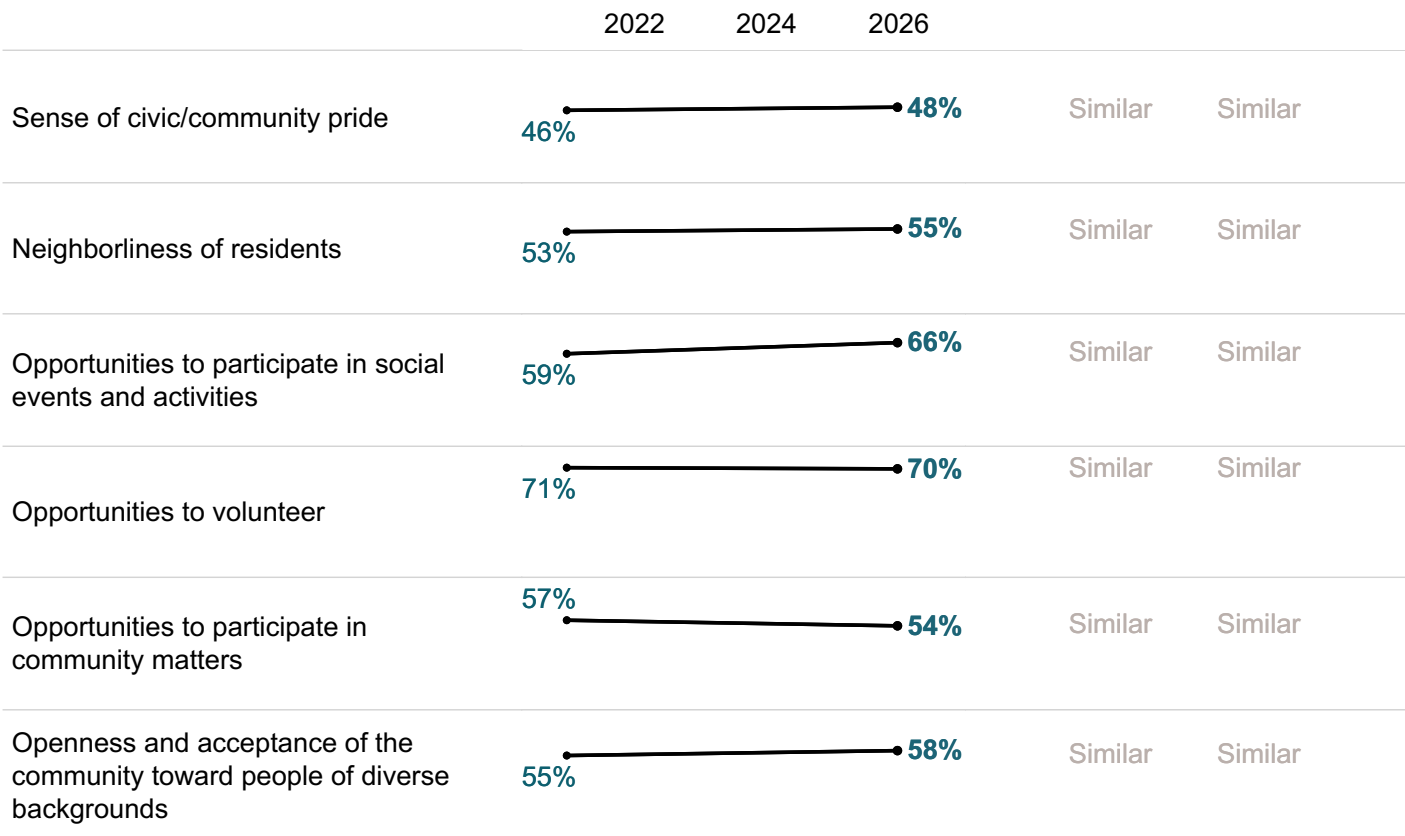


Please rate the job you feel the Richmond community does at each of the following.  
(% excellent or good)

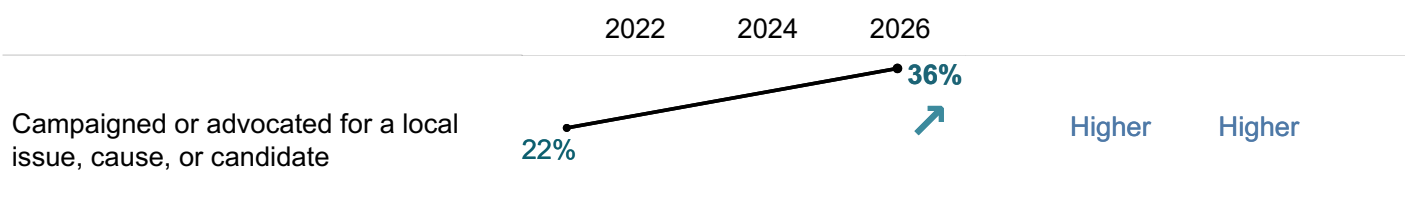




**Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community.  
(% excellent or good)**



**Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.  
(% yes)**



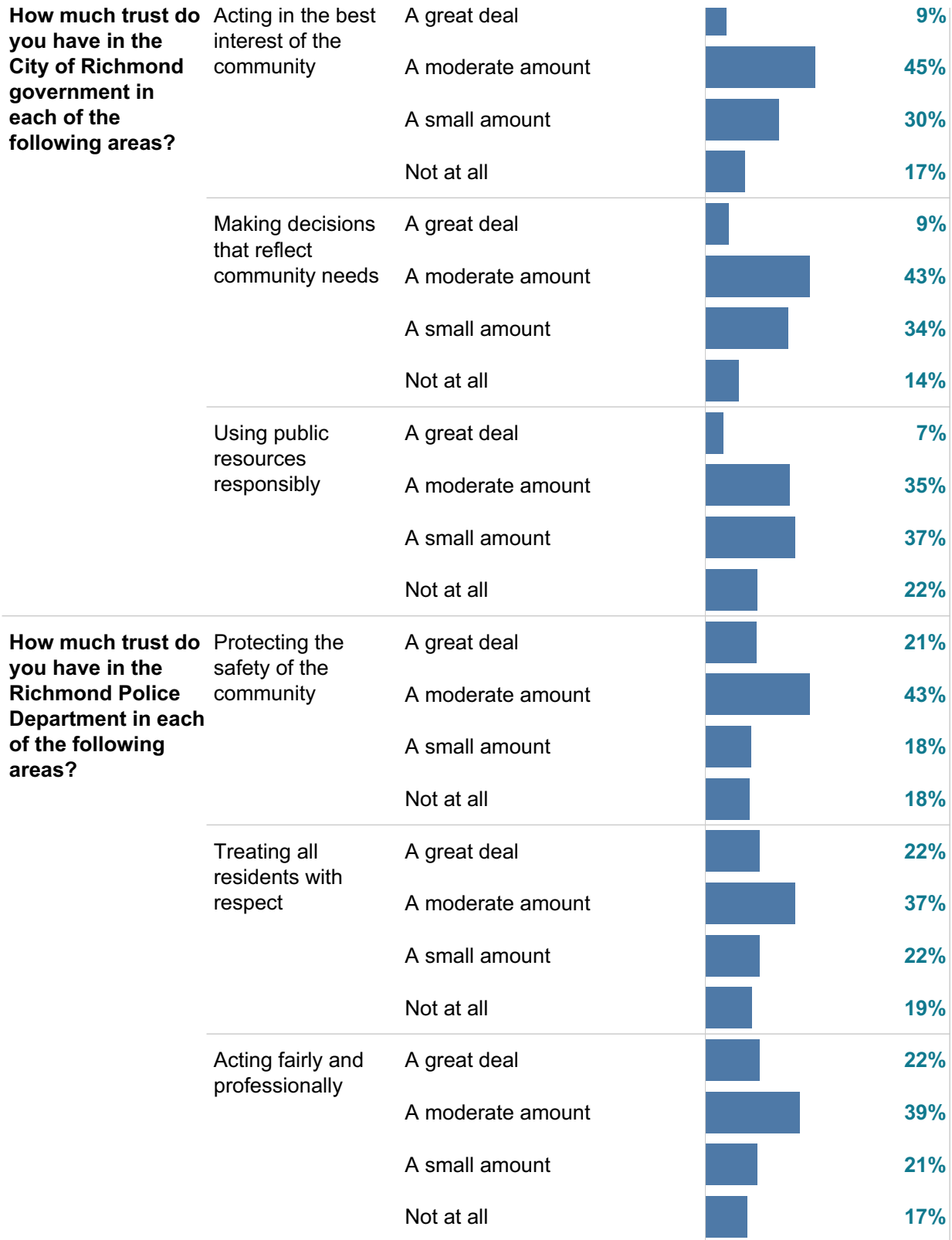
30. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

31. Comparison to the custom benchmark is shown. A description of the custom benchmark cohort can be found in the About section of the report. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

## Custom Questions

Below are the complete set of responses to each custom question on the survey. By default, “don’t know” responses are excluded.

			Include "don't know" No
<b>Based on your personal experience, how responsive do you feel the City of Richmond is in each of the following areas?</b>	Responding to resident problems or concerns	Very responsive	9%
		Somewhat responsive	46%
		Not very responsive	33%
		Not at all	13%
	Addressing issues in a timely manner	Very responsive	8%
		Somewhat responsive	37%
		Not very responsive	38%
		Not at all	17%
	Following up on reported concerns	Very responsive	6%
		Somewhat responsive	43%
		Not very responsive	34%
		Not at all	17%
<b>How well do you feel you understand each of the following related to City Hall and local government?</b>	How City Hall decides how tax dollars are spent	Very well	10%
		Somewhat well	32%
		Not very well	35%
		Not at all	23%
	Why certain projects or services are prioritized over others	Very well	9%
		Somewhat well	27%
		Not very well	36%
		Not at all	29%
	How the City communicates information about its budget and spending	Very well	5%
		Somewhat well	28%
		Not very well	38%
		Not at all	28%



# The City of Richmond 2026 Community Survey

Please complete this survey if you are an adult (age 18 or older). Your responses are confidential and no identifying information will be shared.

## 1. Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Richmond.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Richmond as a place to live .....	1	2	3	4	5
Your neighborhood as a place to live .....	1	2	3	4	5
Richmond as a place to raise children .....	1	2	3	4	5
Richmond as a place to work.....	1	2	3	4	5
Richmond as a place to visit.....	1	2	3	4	5
Richmond as a place to retire .....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall quality of life in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of community.....	1	2	3	4	5

## 2. Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Richmond as a whole.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Overall economic health of Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus) in Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall design or layout of Richmond's residential and commercial areas (e.g., homes, buildings, streets, parks, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Richmond..... (water, sewer, storm water, electric/gas, broadband) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall feeling of safety in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of natural environment in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts.....	1	2	3	4	5
Residents' connection and engagement with their community .....	1	2	3	4	5

## 3. Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to do each of the following.

	<u>Very likely</u>	<u>Somewhat likely</u>	<u>Somewhat unlikely</u>	<u>Very unlikely</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Recommend living in Richmond to someone who asks .....	1	2	3	4	5
Remain in Richmond for the next five years .....	1	2	3	4	5

## 4. Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

	<u>Very safe</u>	<u>Somewhat safe</u>	<u>Neither safe nor unsafe</u>	<u>Somewhat unsafe</u>	<u>Very unsafe</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
In your neighborhood during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
In Richmond's downtown/commercial area during the day.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
From property crime.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
From violent crime.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
From fire, flood, or other natural disaster .....	1	2	3	4	5	6

## 5. Please rate the job you feel the Richmond community does at each of the following.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Making all residents feel welcome .....	1	2	3	4	5
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Valuing/respecting residents from diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5
Taking care of vulnerable residents (elderly, disabled, homeless, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5

## 6. Please rate each of the following in the Richmond community.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of business and service establishments in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area .....	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Cost of living in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall image or reputation of Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5

**7. Please also rate each of the following in the Richmond community.**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Traffic flow on major streets.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of public parking.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by car in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by public transportation in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of travel by bicycle in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of walking in Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
Well-planned residential growth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Well-planned commercial growth.....	1	2	3	4	5
Well-designed neighborhoods .....	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Public places where people want to spend time .....	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of housing options.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality housing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of new development in Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall appearance of Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
Cleanliness of Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
Water resources (beaches, lakes, ponds, riverways, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4	5
Air quality.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of paths and walking trails.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.) ...	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality food .....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality health care.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of preventive health services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality mental health care .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Community support for the arts.....	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of affordable quality childcare/preschool.....	1	2	3	4	5
K-12 education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Adult educational opportunities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of civic/community pride.....	1	2	3	4	5
Neighborliness of residents in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to attend special events and festivals .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to volunteer .....	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities to participate in community matters .....	1	2	3	4	5
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.....	1	2	3	4	5

**8. Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.**

	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Contacted the City of Richmond (in-person, phone, email, or web) for help or information .....	1	2
Contacted Richmond elected officials (in-person, phone, email, or web) to express your opinion.....	1	2
Attended a local public meeting (of local elected officials like City Council or County Commissioners, advisory boards, town halls, HOA, neighborhood watch, etc.) .....	1	2
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting.....	1	2
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Richmond .....	1	2
Campaigned or advocated for a local issue, cause, or candidate.....	1	2
Voted in your most recent local election .....	1	2
Used bus, rail, subway, or other public transportation instead of driving.....	1	2
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone .....	1	2
Walked or biked instead of driving.....	1	2

# The City of Richmond 2026 Community Survey

## 9. Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Richmond.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Public information services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Economic development.....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic enforcement.....	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic signal timing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street repair.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street cleaning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Street lighting.....	1	2	3	4	5
Snow removal.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sidewalk maintenance.....	1	2	3	4	5
Bus or transit services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Land use, planning, and zoning.....	1	2	3	4	5
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5
Affordable high-speed internet access.....	1	2	3	4	5
Garbage collection.....	1	2	3	4	5
Drinking water.....	1	2	3	4	5
Sewer services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Storm water management (storm drainage, dams, levees, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5
Power (electric and/or gas) utility.....	1	2	3	4	5
Utility billing.....	1	2	3	4	5
Police/Sheriff services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Crime prevention.....	1	2	3	4	5
Animal control.....	1	2	3	4	5
Ambulance or emergency medical services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Fire prevention and education.....	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations).....	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of natural areas (open space, farmlands, and greenbelts).....	1	2	3	4	5
Richmond open space.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recycling.....	1	2	3	4	5
Yard waste pick-up.....	1	2	3	4	5
City parks.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation programs or classes.....	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation centers or facilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
Health services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Public library services.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall customer service by Richmond employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5

## 10. Please rate the following categories of Richmond government performance.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The value of services for the taxes paid to Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
The overall direction that Richmond is taking.....	1	2	3	4	5
The job Richmond government does at welcoming resident involvement.....	1	2	3	4	5
Overall confidence in Richmond government.....	1	2	3	4	5
Generally acting in the best interest of the community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Being honest.....	1	2	3	4	5
Being open and transparent to the public.....	1	2	3	4	5
Informing residents about issues facing the community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Treating all residents fairly.....	1	2	3	4	5
Treating residents with respect.....	1	2	3	4	5

## 11. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the services provided by each of the following?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The City of Richmond.....	1	2	3	4	5
The Federal Government.....	1	2	3	4	5

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

	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>
Overall economic health of Richmond.....	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus) in Richmond.....	1	2	3	4
Overall design or layout of Richmond’s residential and commercial areas (e.g., homes, buildings, streets, parks, etc.) .....	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Richmond (water, sewer, storm water, electric/gas, broadband) .....	1	2	3	4
Overall feeling of safety in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of natural environment in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities.....	1	2	3	4
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Richmond .....	1	2	3	4
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts.....	1	2	3	4
Residents’ connection and engagement with their community .....	1	2	3	4

**13. Based on your personal experience, how responsive do you feel the City of Richmond is in each of the following areas?**

	<u>Very responsive</u>	<u>Somewhat responsive</u>	<u>Not very responsive</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don’t know</u>
Responding to resident problems or concerns.....	1	2	3	4	5
Addressing issues in a timely manner .....	1	2	3	4	5
Following up on reported concerns.....	1	2	3	4	5

**14. How well do you feel you understand each of the following related to City Hall and local government?**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not very well</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don’t know</u>
How City Hall decides how tax dollars are spent.....	1	2	3	4	5
Why certain projects or services are prioritized over others.....	1	2	3	4	5
How the City communicates information about its budget and spending.....	1	2	3	4	5

**15. How much trust do you have in the City of Richmond government in each of the following areas?**

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>A moderate amount</u>	<u>A small amount</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don’t know</u>
Acting in the best interest of the community.....	1	2	3	4	5
Making decisions that reflect community needs.....	1	2	3	4	5
Using public resources responsibly.....	1	2	3	4	5

**16. How much trust do you have in the Richmond Police Department in each of the following areas?**

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>A moderate amount</u>	<u>A small amount</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don’t know</u>
Protecting the safety of the community .....	1	2	3	4	5
Treating all residents with respect .....	1	2	3	4	5
Acting fairly and professionally .....	1	2	3	4	5

# The City of Richmond 2026 Community Survey

Our last questions are about you and your household.  
Again, all of your responses to this survey are confidential and no identifying information will be shared.

<b>D1. In general, how many times do you:</b>	Several <u>times a day</u>	Once <u>a day</u>	A few times <u>a week</u>	Every <u>few weeks</u>	Less often <u>or never</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
Access the internet from your home using a computer, laptop, or tablet computer.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Access the internet from your cell phone.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Visit social media sites such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Nextdoor, etc. ....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Use or check email.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Share your opinions online.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
Shop online.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

**D2. Please rate your overall health.**

- Excellent     Very good     Good     Fair     Poor

**D3. What impact, if any, do you think the economy will have on your family income in the next 6 months?**

**Do you think the impact will be:**

- Very positive     Somewhat positive     Neutral     Somewhat negative     Very negative

**D4. How many years have you lived in Richmond?**

- Less than 2 years  
 2-5 years  
 6-10 years  
 11-20 years  
 More than 20 years

**D5. Which best describes the building you live in?**

- Single-family detached home  
 Townhouse or duplex (may share walls but no units above or below you)  
 Condominium or apartment (have units above or below you)  
 Mobile home  
 Other

**D6. Do you rent or own your home?**

- Rent  
 Own

**D7. About how much is your monthly housing cost for the place you live (including rent, mortgage payment, property tax, property insurance, and homeowners' association (HOA) fees)?**

- Less than \$300                       \$2,500 to \$3,999  
 \$300 to \$599                         \$4,000 to \$6,999  
 \$600 to \$999                         \$7,000 to \$9,999  
 \$1,000 to \$1,499                     \$10,000 or more  
 \$1,500 to \$2,499

**D8. Do any children 17 or under live in your household?**

- No     Yes

**D9. Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?**

- No     Yes

**D10. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? (Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household.)**

- Less than \$25,000                       \$100,000 to \$149,999  
 \$25,000 to \$49,999                     \$150,000 to \$199,999  
 \$50,000 to \$74,999                     \$200,000 to \$299,999  
 \$75,000 to \$99,999                     \$300,000 or more

**D11. Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin?**

- No     Yes

**D12. What is your race? (Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.)**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Asian  
 Black or African American  
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
 White  
 A race not listed

**D13. In which category is your age?**

- 18-24 years                               55-64 years  
 25-34 years                               65-74 years  
 35-44 years                               75 years or older  
 45-54 years

**D14. What is your gender?**

- Woman  
 Man  
 Identify in another way → go to D14a

**D14a. If you identify in another way, how would you describe your gender?**

- Agender/I don't identify with any gender  
 Genderqueer/gender fluid  
 Non-binary  
 Transgender man  
 Transgender woman  
 Two-spirit  
 Identify in another way

**Thank you!** Please return the completed survey in the postage-paid envelope to:  
**National Research Center, Inc., PO Box 14050, Houston, TX 77221-9904**

# City of Richmond



May 22, 2026

Honorable Members of Richmond City Council:

I appreciate the work of POLCO, the City Auditor, and the Department of Citizen Response on the 2026 National Community Survey, as well as the residents who took time to respond to this year's survey.

This survey provides estimates of Richmond residents' views on a range of questions, drawing on a standardized set of questions asked in communities across the United States. It also asks several additional questions derived from the Mayoral Action Plan focused on trust and confidence in the work of city government.

These survey results highlight both existing strengths of the City of Richmond and opportunities for improvement. In numerous cases, such as affordability and public utilities, priority areas of concern voiced by the public in this survey match top-level priorities of both my administration and City Council.

The work of strengthening confidence in local government is ongoing. While perception often lags behind actual improvements in performance and service delivery, it is also shaped by the current moment—seen most clearly in resident responses around affordability and public utilities. Regardless, we all understand that we have significant work ahead to improve the performance of city government and to deliver better outcomes for city residents.

Already, we have several examples of tangible improvements on issues of deep concern to residents. Since the January 2025 water crisis, the Department of Public Utilities has made significant improvements to their infrastructure and personnel which helped us maintain continuity of utility service in this year's historic winter storms. We have made strong progress in closing out a record number of audit findings over the past year. Crime rates to date show encouraging improvements over previous years, with homicides down 56% and commercial robberies down 65%, directly a result of the City's effective enforcement efforts with vape shops.

We also have made improvements in communicating our vision to residents, through the publication of the Mayoral Action Plan, through more proactive communication on matters of concern to residents, and through greater collaboration and public engagement in the budget process.

Even when it is difficult to hear, feedback from residents is a critical tool to inform this ongoing work. We remain committed to acknowledging challenges and issues—and to tackling them head-on. These results will help us to guide investments and prioritize process improvements in areas where our community still struggles to enjoy the quality of life that is important to all of us.

As Mayor, building a high-functioning City Hall that supports positive outcomes across our community remains my focus and the focus of my administration. I look forward to continuing to work with our administration, with City Council, and with residents to strengthen our community.

Sincerely,

Danny Avula, MD, MPH  
Mayor