

Scottsdale, AZ

The National Community Survey

Report of Results
2025

Report by:



Visit us online!
www.polco.us



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.

About The NCS™

The National Community Survey™ (The NCS™) report is about the “livability” of Scottsdale. 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 survey was developed by the experts from National Research Center at Polco.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions considering ten central facets of a community:

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



POWERED BY POLCO



The report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 330 residents of the City of Scottsdale collected from January 29, 2025 to March 12th, 2025. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 5% for all respondents and the response rate for the 2025 survey was 7%. Survey results were weighted so that the demographic profile of respondents was representative of the demographic profile of adults in Scottsdale.



How the results are reported

For the most part, the percentages presented in the following tabs represent the “percent positive.” Most commonly, the percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., 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 this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in the tab “Complete data.” However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in most of the tabs. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

Comparisons to benchmarks

NRC's database of comparative resident opinion is comprised of resident perspectives gathered in surveys from over 500 communities whose residents evaluated the same kinds of topics on The National Community Survey. The comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each community in the last five years. NRC 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, Scottsdale'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 Scottsdale residents is statistically similar to or different (greater or lesser) than the benchmark. Being rated as "higher" or "lower" than the benchmark means that Scottsdale'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 Scottsdale's average rating was more than 20 points different when compared to the benchmark.

Trends over time

Trend data for Scottsdale represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines.¹ 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 seven percentage points between the 2023 and 2025 surveys, the change is statistically significant.

1. In 2020, 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 Scottsdale were eligible to participate in the survey. A list of all households within the zip codes serving Scottsdale was purchased from Polco's mailing vendor, Go-Dog Direct, based on updated listings from the United States Postal Service. Since some of the zip codes that serve the City of Scottsdale 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 the City of Scottsdale boundaries were removed from the list of potential households to survey. Each address identified as being within city boundaries was further identified as being within one of the three areas. From that list, addresses were randomly selected as survey recipients, with multi-family housing units (defined as those with a unit number) sampled at a rate of 5:3 compared to single family housing units.

An individual within each household was randomly selected using the "birthday method". The birthday method selects a person within the household by asking the "person who most recently had a birthday" to complete the questionnaire. The underlying assumption in this method is that day of birth has no relationship to the way people respond to surveys. This instruction was contained in the introduction of the survey.

Conducting the survey

The 5,500 randomly selected households received mailings beginning on February 12th, 2025 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. The final mailing was a reminder postcard inviting the household to participate in the survey. 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. The City also offered printed surveys as requested.

About 9% of the 5,500 mailed invitations or surveys were returned because the household address was vacant or the postal service was unable to deliver the survey as addressed. Of the remaining 5,500 households that received the invitations to participate, 320 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.²

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys 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 can be any size and quantifies the sampling error or imprecision of the survey results because some residents' opinions are relied on to estimate all residents' opinions. The margin of error for the City of Scottsdale survey is no greater than plus or minus five percentage points around any given percent reported for all respondents (330 completed surveys).

In addition to the randomly selected "probability sample" of households, a link to an online open-participation survey was publicized by the City of Scottsdale. The open-participation survey was identical to the random sample survey, with two small updates; it asked a question to confirm the respondent was a resident of Scottsdale and also a question about where they heard about the survey. The open-participation survey was open to all city residents and became available on February 19th, 2025. The survey remained open for four weeks. The data presented in the following tabs exclude the open participation survey data, but a tab at the end provides the complete frequency of responses to questions by the open-participation respondents.

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 demographics of the survey respondents were compared to those found in the 2020 Census and 2023 American Community Survey estimates for adults in the City of Scottsdale. 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.³ The results of the weighting scheme for the probability sample are presented in the following table.

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

		Unweighted	Weighted	Target ⁴
Age	18-34	5%	22%	24%
	35-54	15%	28%	27%
	55+	80%	49%	49%
Area	Area 1	30%	36%	37%
	Area 2	36%	33%	32%
	Area 3	34%	32%	31%
Hispanic origin	No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin	97%	92%	91%
	Yes, I consider myself to be of Hispanic, Latino/a..	3%	8%	9%
Housing tenure	Own	87%	68%	68%
	Rent	13%	32%	32%
Housing type	Attached	37%	45%	45%
	Detached	63%	55%	55%
Race & Hispanic ori..	Not white alone	9%	19%	19%
	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	91%	81%	81%
Sex	Man	56%	49%	48%
	Woman	44%	51%	52%
Sex/age	Man 18-34	3%	12%	12%
	Man 35-54	7%	14%	13%
	Man 55+	46%	23%	23%
	Woman 18-34	2%	10%	12%
	Woman 35-54	8%	14%	14%
	Woman 55+	34%	27%	26%

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. For the most part, the percentages presented in the reports represent the “percent positive.” The percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., excellent/good, very safe/somewhat safe, essential/very important, etc.), or, in the case of resident behaviors/participation, the percent positive represents the proportion of respondents indicating “yes” or participating in an activity at least once a month.

On many of the questions in the survey respondents may answer “don’t know.” The proportion of respondents giving this reply is shown in the full set of responses included in the tab “Complete data”. However, these responses have been removed from the analyses presented in the reports. In other words, the tables and graphs display the responses from respondents who had an opinion about a specific item.

Contact

The City of Scottsdale funded this research. Please contact Joy Racine of the City of Scottsdale at JRacine@scottsdaleaz.gov if you have any questions about the survey.

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. **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 those who did respond. **Coverage error** refers to the possibility that some respondents that should have been included in the surveyed population were not (e.g., for a general resident survey, USPS mailing lists may exclude certain types of housing units, such as multi-family buildings where mail is delivered to a common area rather than to a specific unit (though this is rare), or where mail is received at a PO box instead of the at household's physical location. Finally, **recall bias** occurs when respondents may not perfectly remember their experiences in the past year (such as participation in social or civic events), and **social desirability bias** may cause respondents to answer in ways they think cast their responses in a more favorable light.

Survey Validity

See the Polco Knowledge Base article on survey validity at <https://info.polco.us/knowledge/statistical-vali>

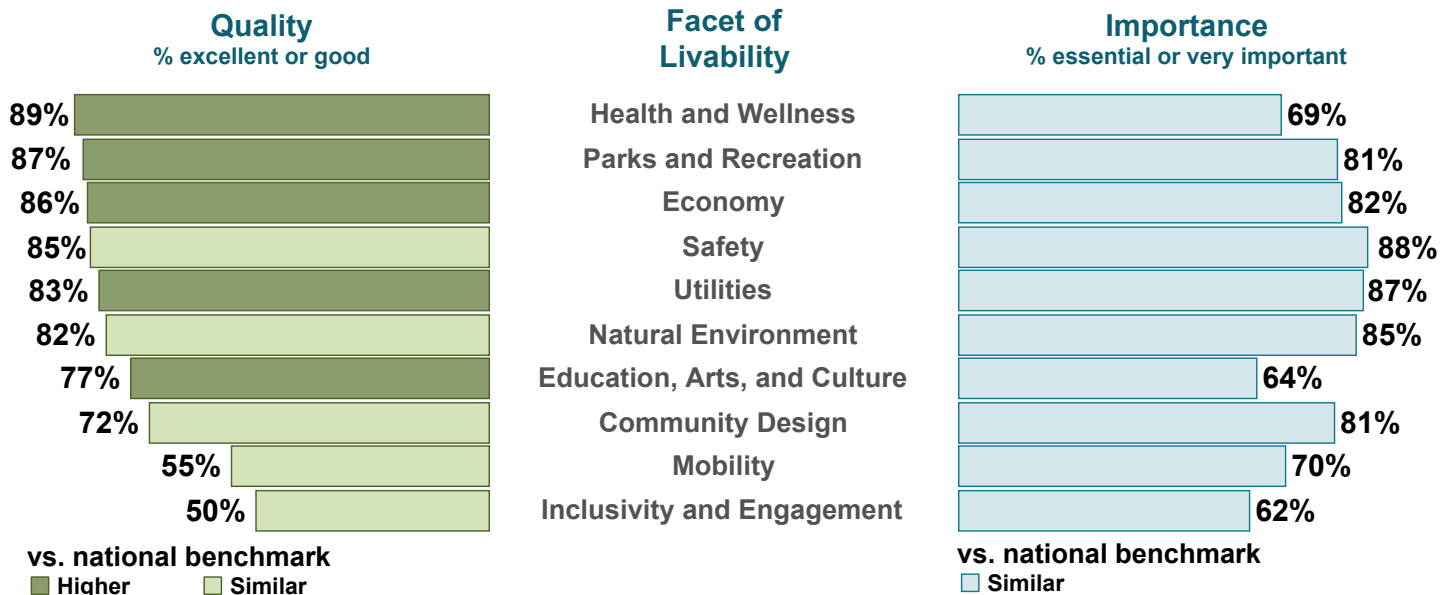
2. See AAPOR's Standard Definitions for more information at <https://aapor.org/standards-and-ethics/standard-definitions/>
3. Pasek, J. (2014). ANES Weighting Algorithm. Retrieved from <https://surveyinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Full-anesrake-paper.pdf>
4. Targets come from the 2020 Census and 2023 American Community Survey

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.

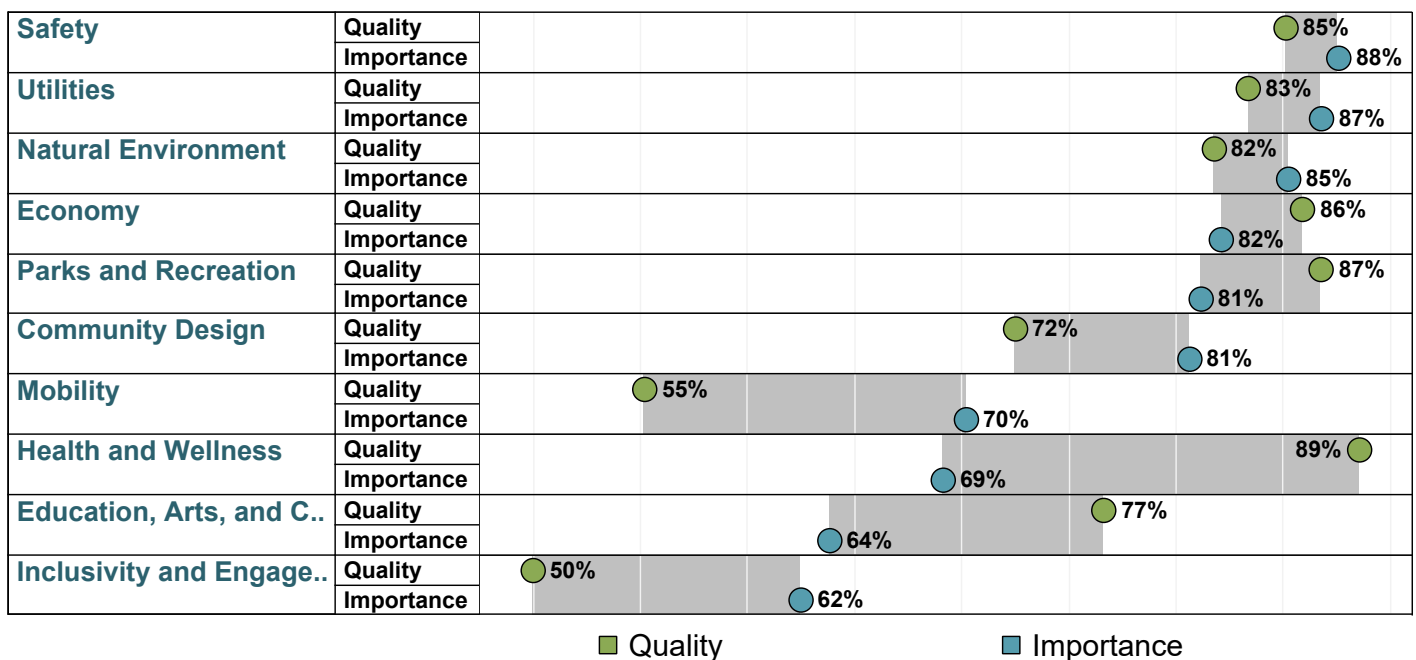
Quality and Importance by the Numbers

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.



Key Findings

Highest-performing areas:

- Scottsdale residents provided overwhelmingly positive ratings for the city's economy, with most aspects of economic life scoring higher than the national benchmark. Additionally, an increased proportion felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their family income over the next six months.
- Public safety remained a significant strength, and over 9 in 10 participants reported feeling safe in their neighborhood and in Scottsdale's downtown/commercial area during the day.
- Parks and recreation opportunities were highly praised, with most residents giving excellent or good ratings across multiple recreational and park-related services.
- In terms of Scottsdale's natural environment, respondents gave above-average ratings to the city's cleanliness, preservation of natural areas, and yard waste pick-up.

Focus areas:

- While Scottsdale has significantly improved in attracting people from diverse backgrounds since 2023, some ratings related to inclusivity have declined, including:
 - Sense of community (from 62% in 2023 to 55% in 2025)
 - Making all residents feel welcome (from 73% to 65%)
- Mobility and transportation received mixed reviews, with less than 5 in 10 residents rating traffic flow positively.
- In 2025, several ratings related to local government transparency declined, including Scottsdale's performance:
 - Being honest (from 61% in 2023 to 54% in 2025)
 - Being open and transparent to the public (from 57% to 46%)
 - Informing residents about issues facing the community (from 55% to 46%)
- Some ratings related to community design saw a notable decrease, particularly in areas like overall new development and preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community.

Other notable results:

- Word of mouth remained an important communication channel for community information, and many residents relied on traditional information sources like utility bill newsletters, and the city website for local information.
- A significant majority of residents (92%) had never served in the military.

Areas of greatest change since 2023:

Of the 122 evaluative questions included on both the 2023 and current survey iterations, 97 were statistically similar to previous results. Upward trends were seen in 2 items, while 23 ratings decreased since 2023. The most significant of those trends are listed below.

Increases

- Economic impact on family income over the next six months (+15%)
- Attracting people from diverse backgrounds (+8%)

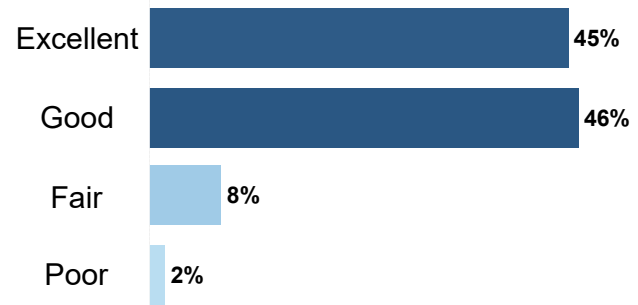
Decreases

- Employment opportunities (-14%)
- Preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community (-14%)
- Availability of affordable quality health care (-13%)
- Scottsdale as a place to raise children (-11%)
- Overall quality of new development in Scottsdale (-11%)

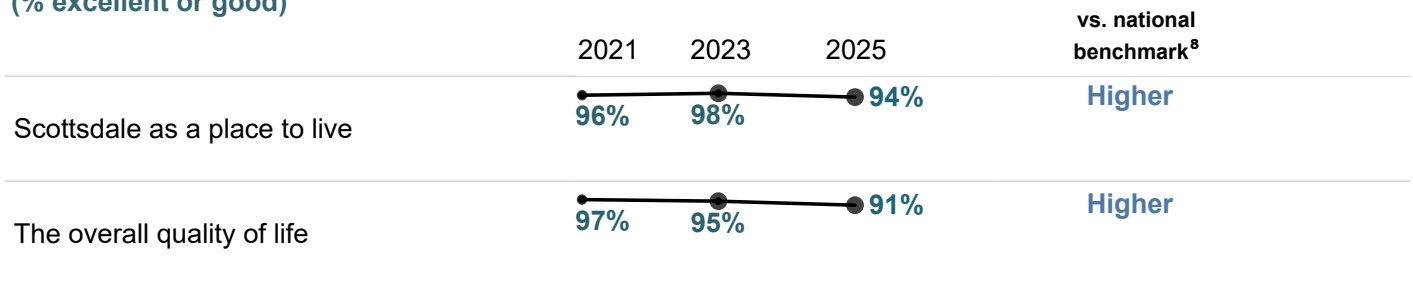
Polco
Quality of Life

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.

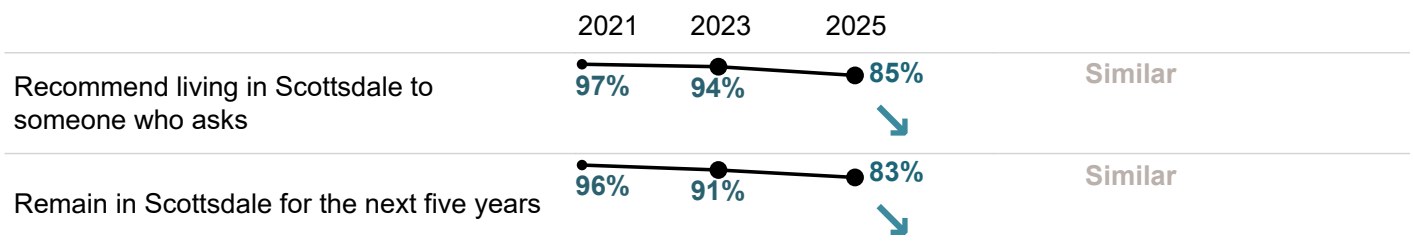
The overall quality of life in Scottsdale, 2025



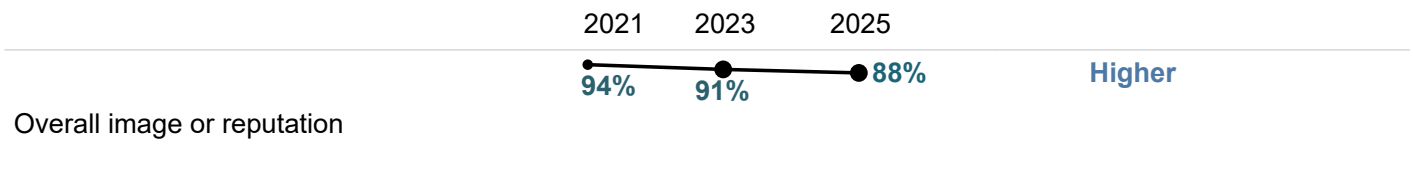
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Scottsdale.
(% excellent or good)



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 Scottsdale community.
(% excellent or good)

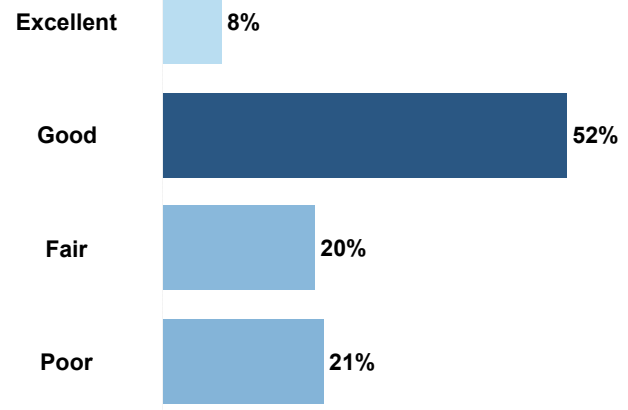


8. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

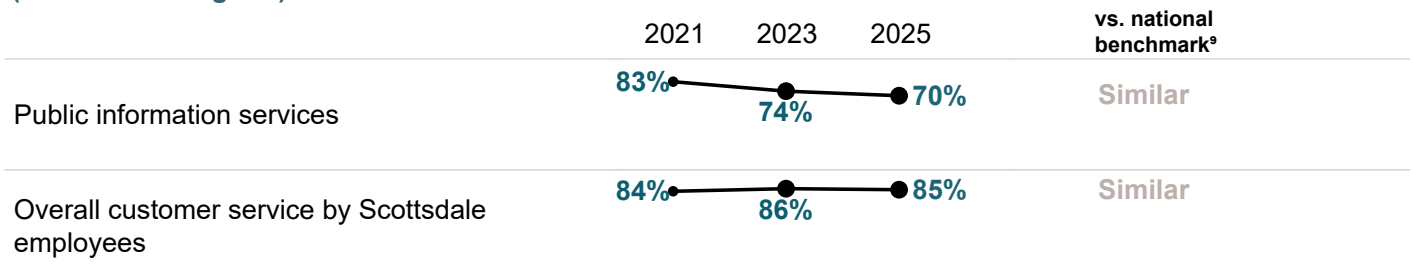
Overall confidence in Scottsdale government, 2025

Governance

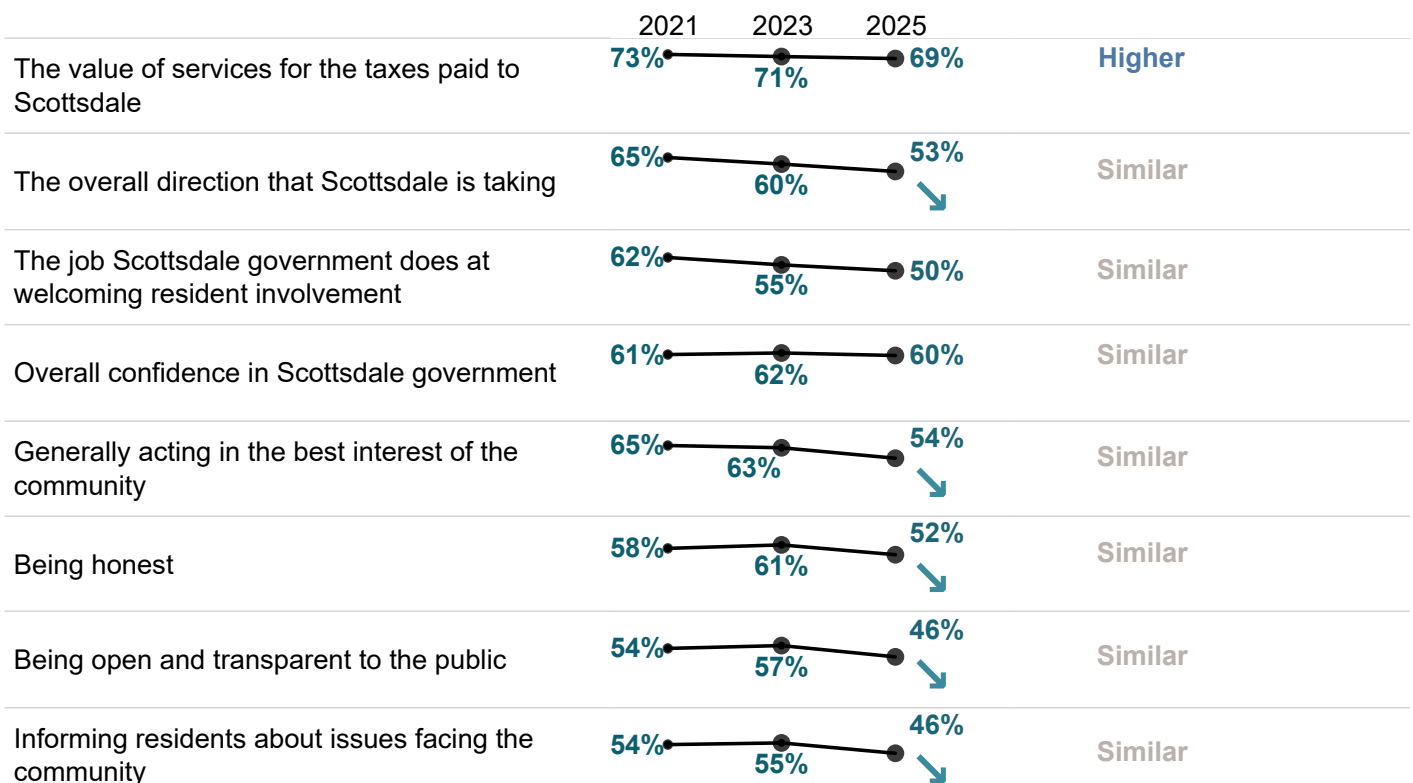
Strong local governments produce results that meet the needs of residents while making the best use of available resources, and are responsive to the present and future needs of the community as a whole.

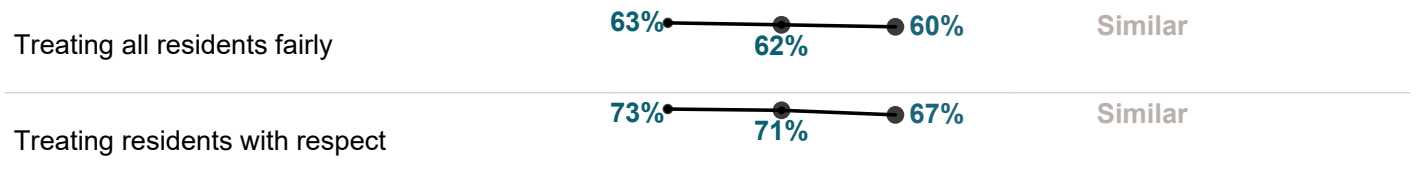


Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Scottsdale.
(% excellent or good)

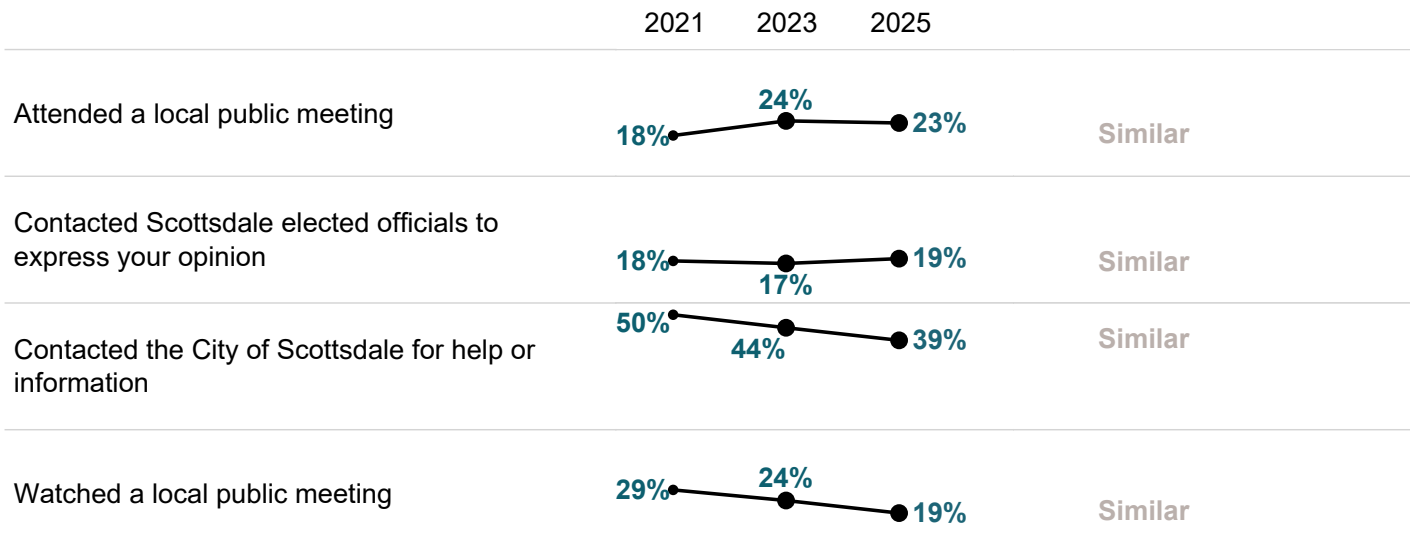


Please rate the following categories of Scottsdale government performance.
(% excellent or good)

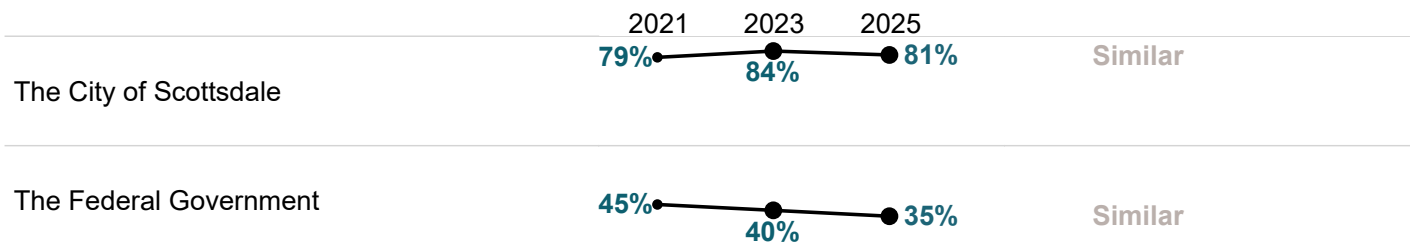




Please indicate whether or not you have done each of the following in the last 12 months.
 (% excellent or good)



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

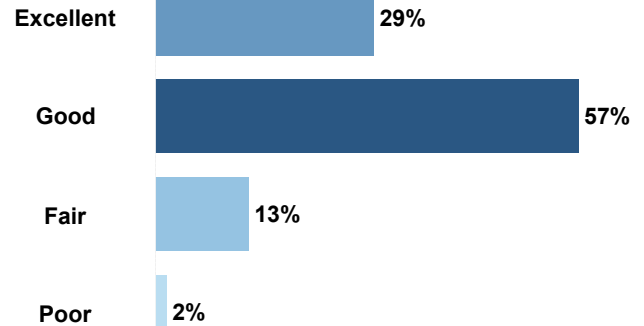


9. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

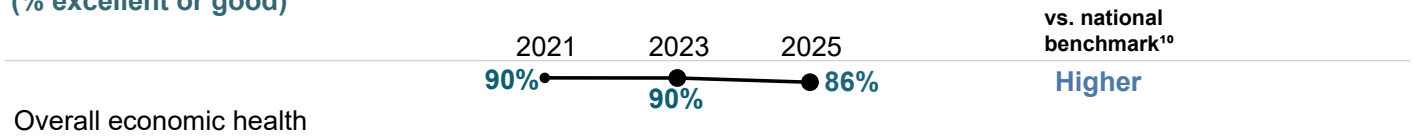
Economy

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.

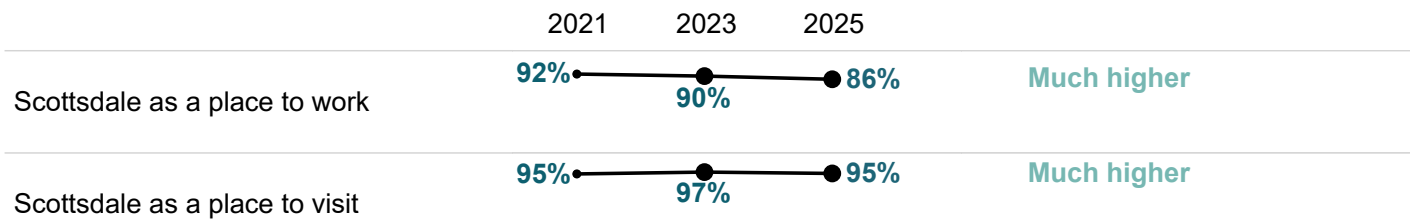
Overall economic health of Scottsdale, 2025



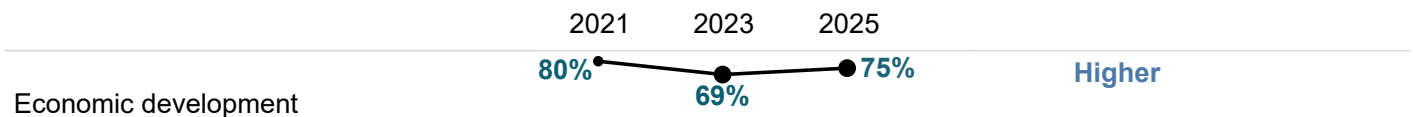
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



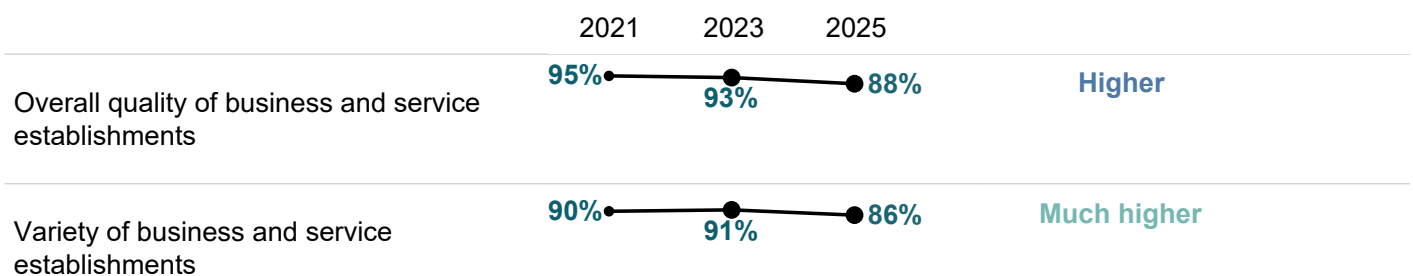
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Scottsdale.
(% excellent or good)

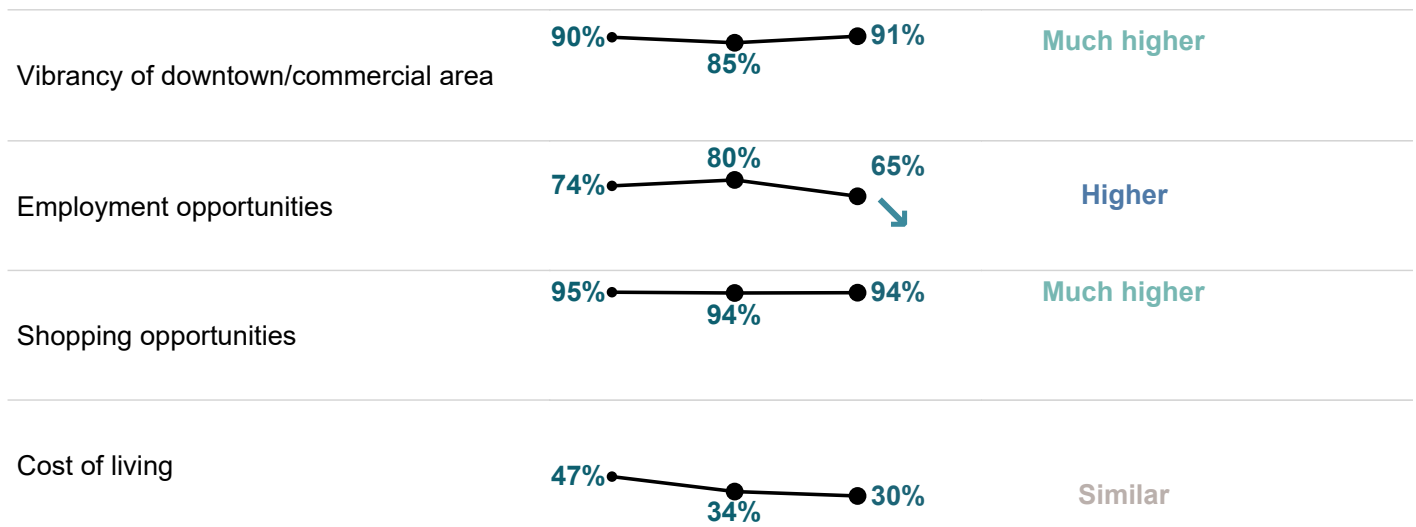


Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Scottsdale.
(% excellent or good)

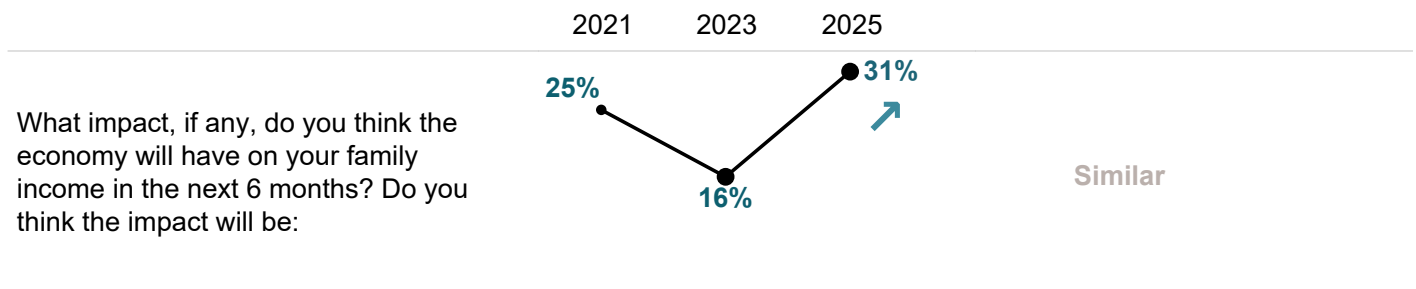


Please rate each of the following in the Scottsdale community.
(% excellent or good)





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)

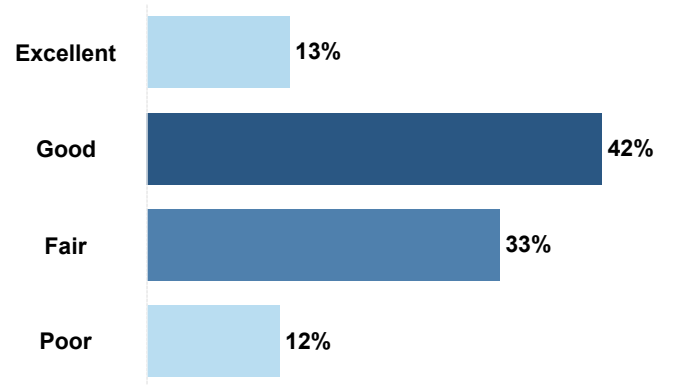


11. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

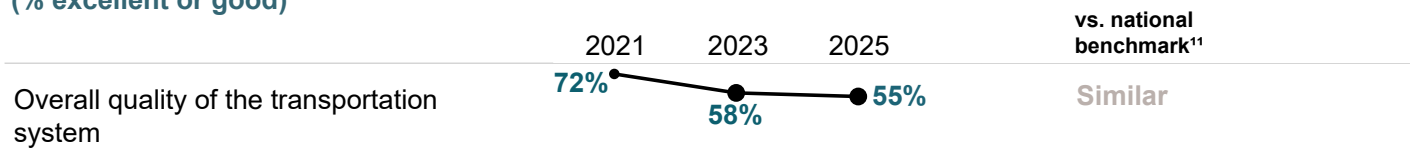
Mobility

The ease with which residents can move about their communities, whether for commuting, leisure, or recreation, plays a major role in the quality of life for all who live, work, and play in the community.

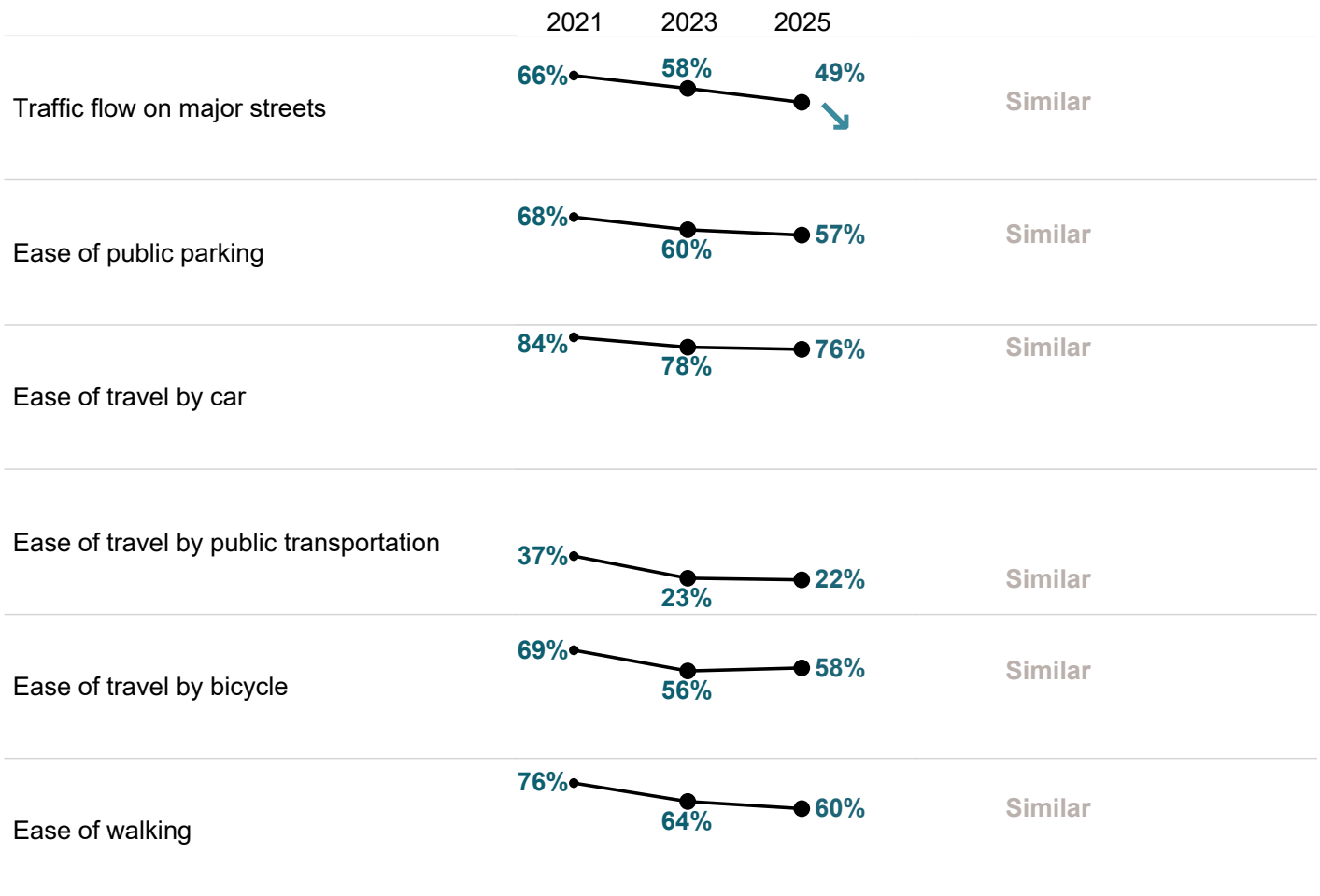
Overall quality of the transportation system in Scottsdale, 2025



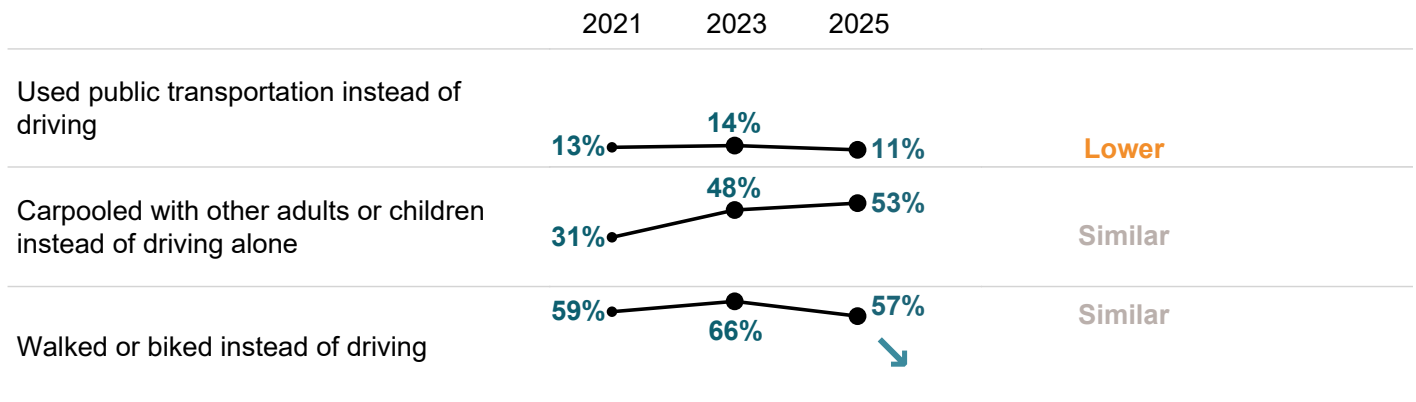
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



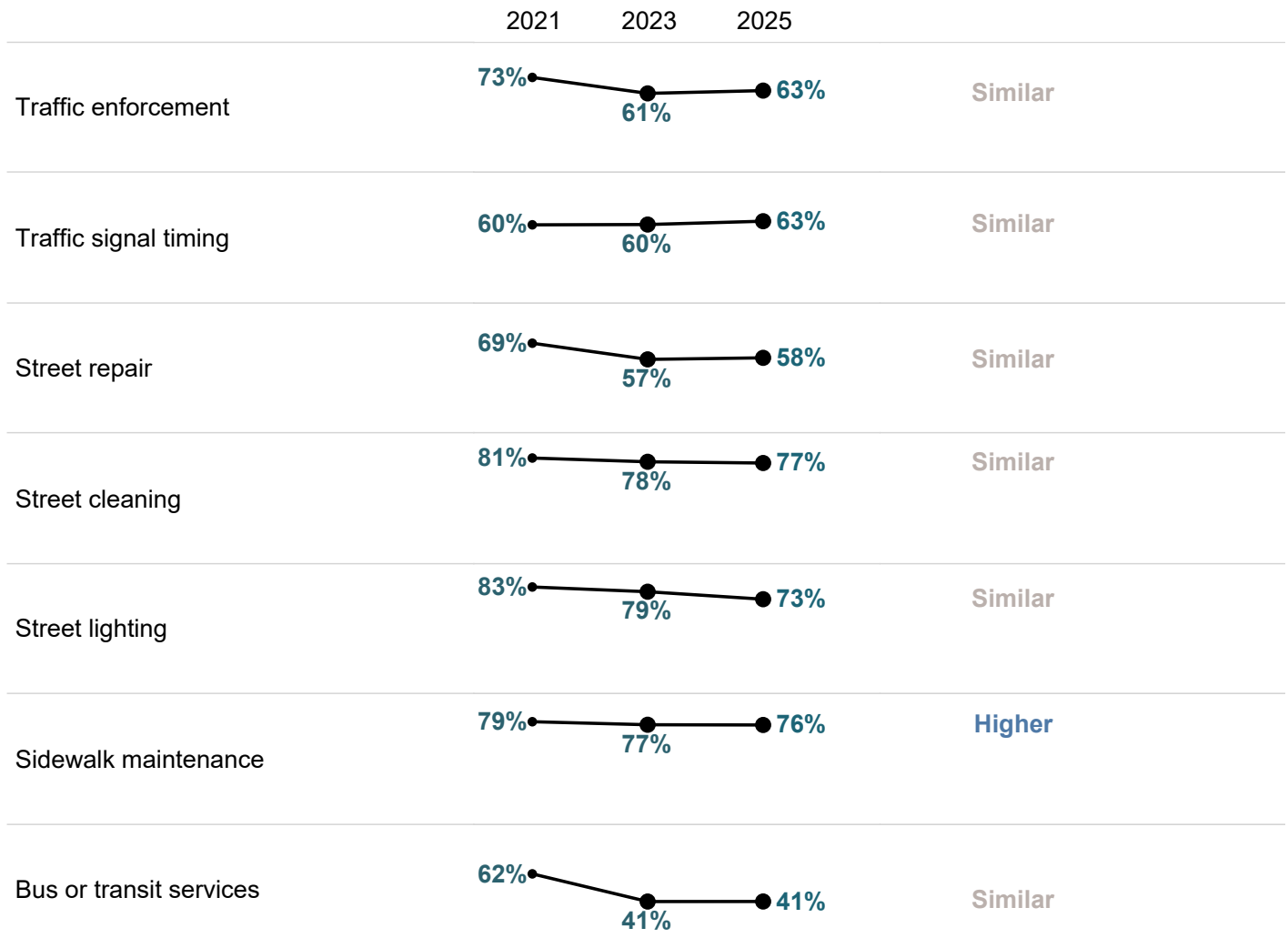
Please also rate each of the following in the Scottsdale community.
(% excellent or good)



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 Scottsdale.
(% excellent or good)

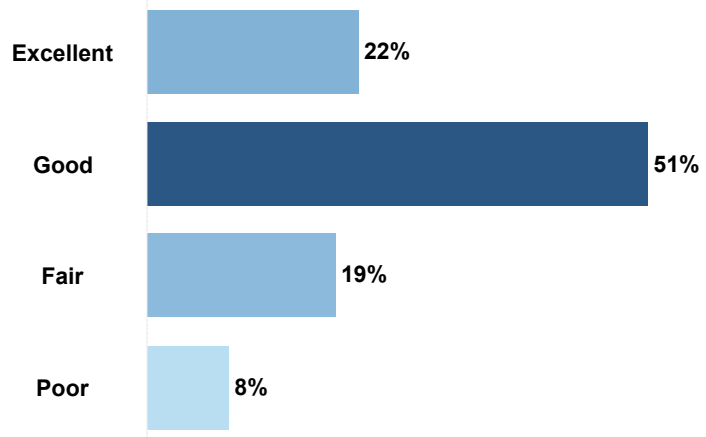


11. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

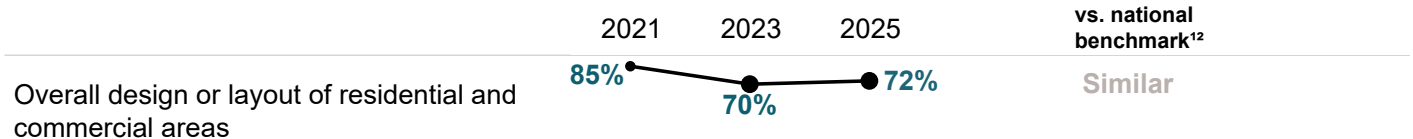
Community Design

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 providing access to parks and other green spaces.

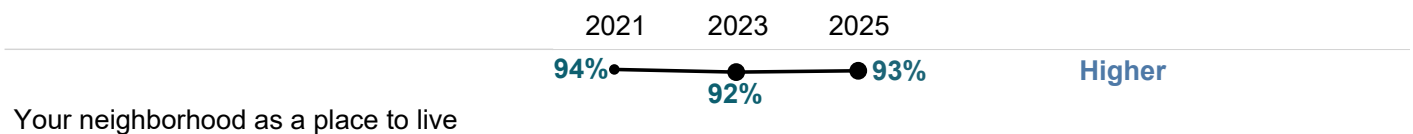
Overall design or layout of Scottsdale's residential and commercial areas, 2025



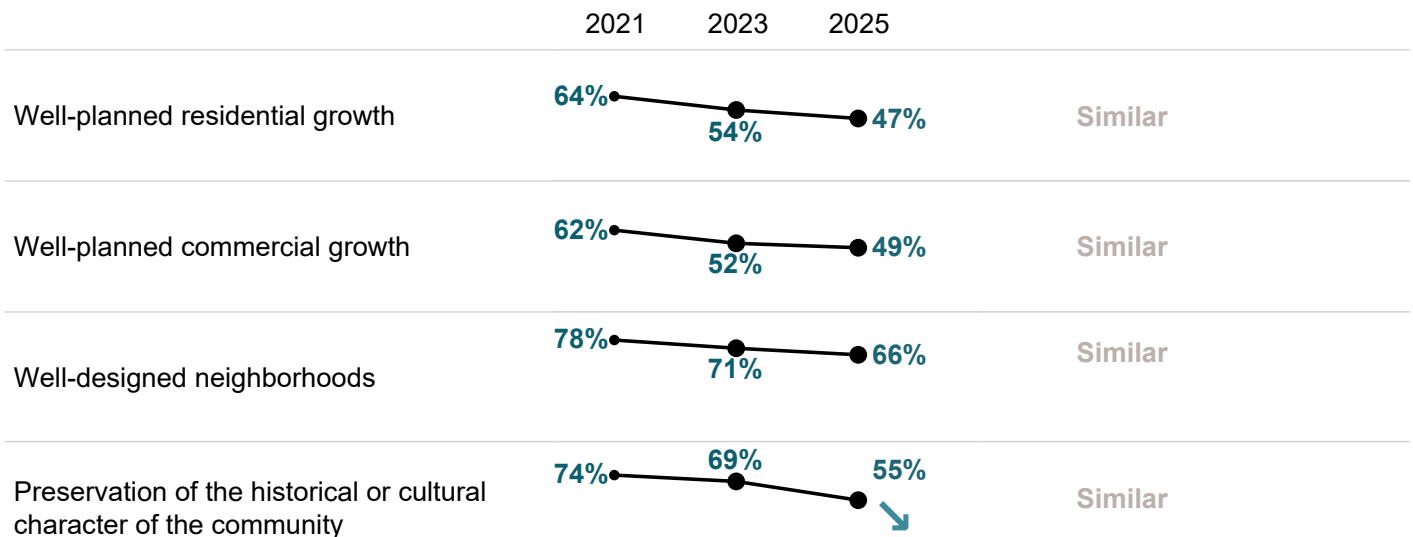
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)

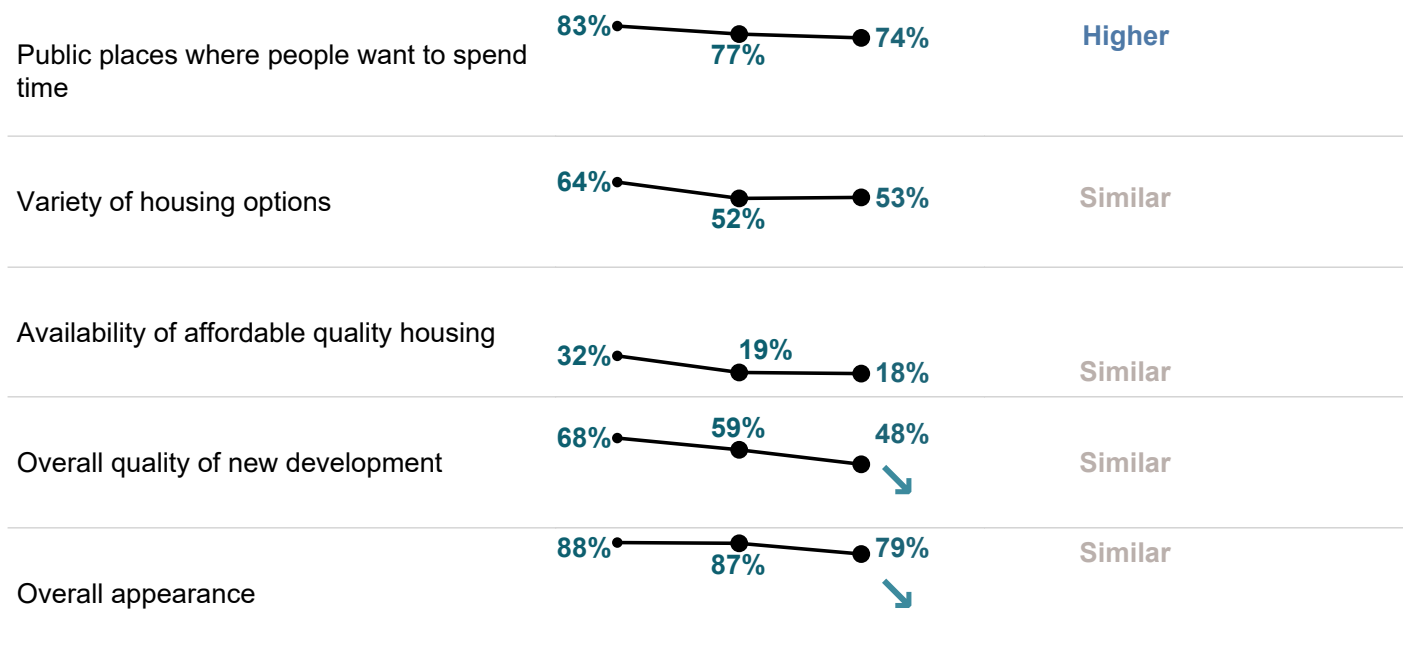


Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Scottsdale.
(% excellent or good)

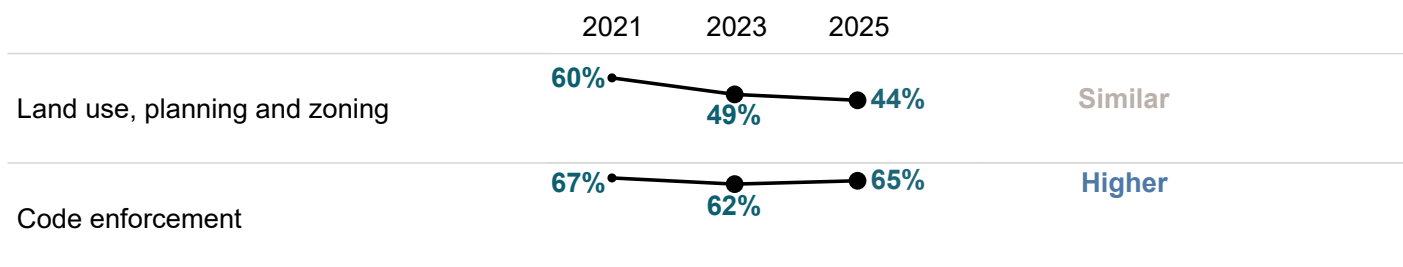


Please also rate each of the following in the Scottsdale community.
(% excellent or good)





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

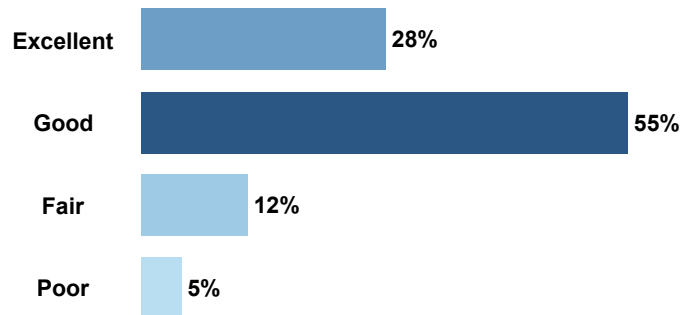


12. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

Utilities

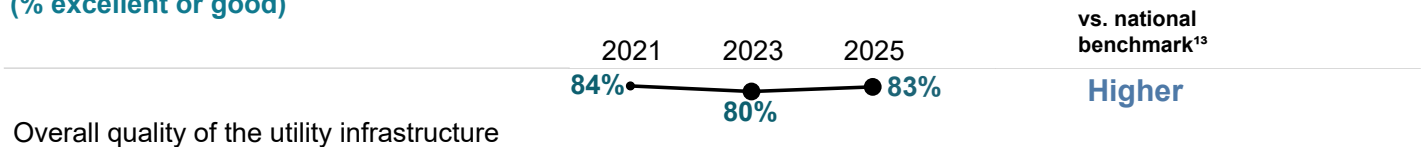
Services such as water, gas, electricity, and internet access play a vital role in ensuring the physical and economic health and well-being of the communities they serve.

Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Scottsdale, 2025



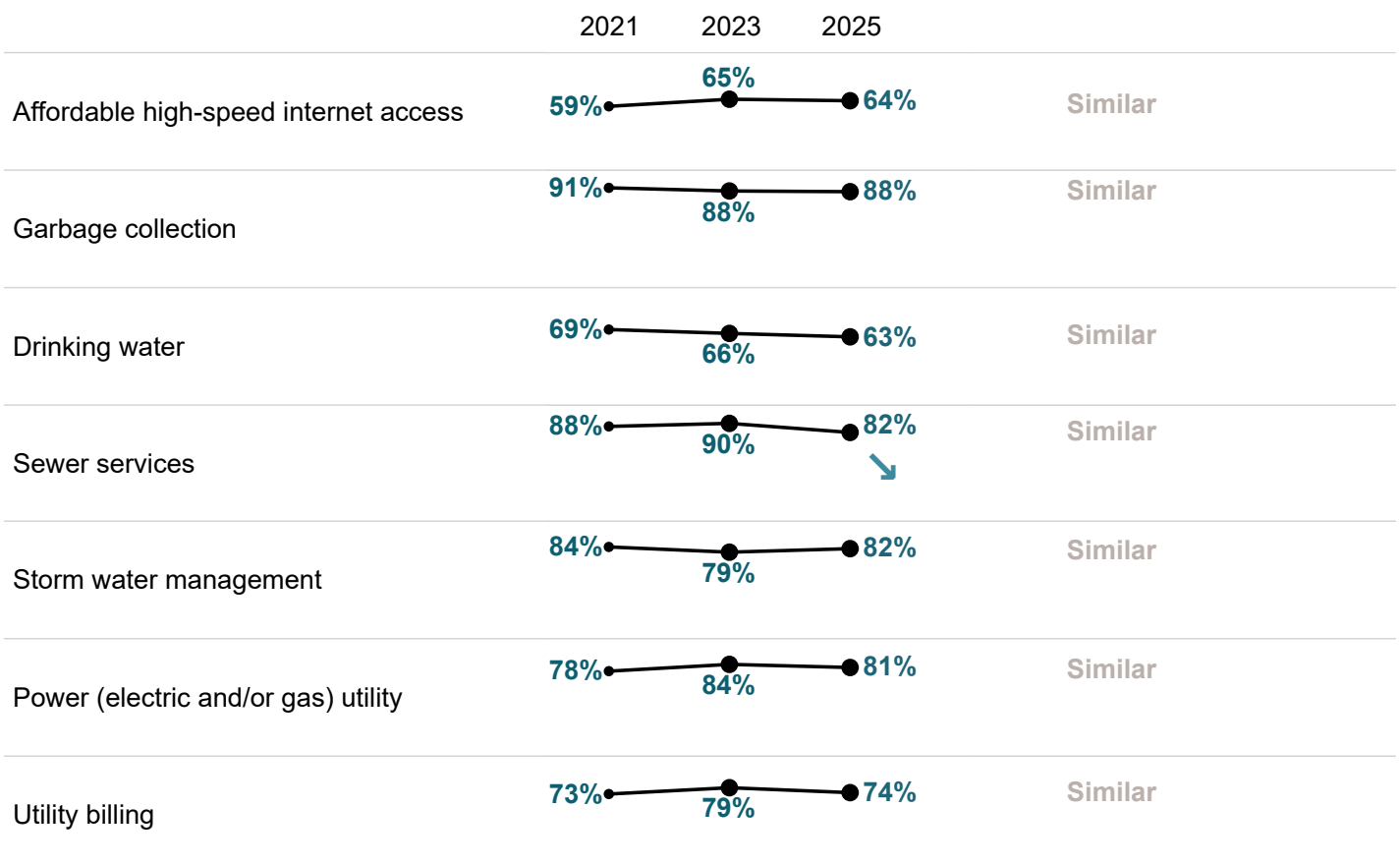
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.

(% excellent or good)



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

(% excellent or good)

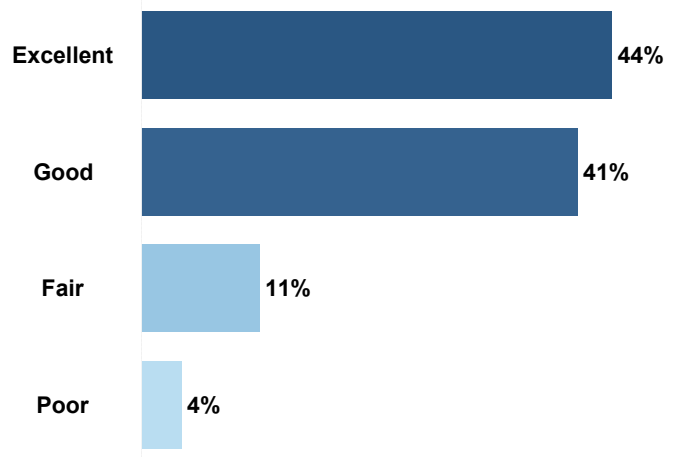


13. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

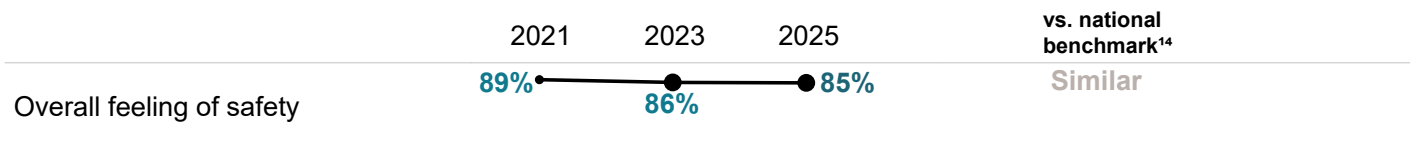
Safety

Public safety is often the most important task facing local governments. All residents should feel safe and secure in their neighborhoods and in the greater community, and providing robust safety-related services is essential to residents' quality of life.

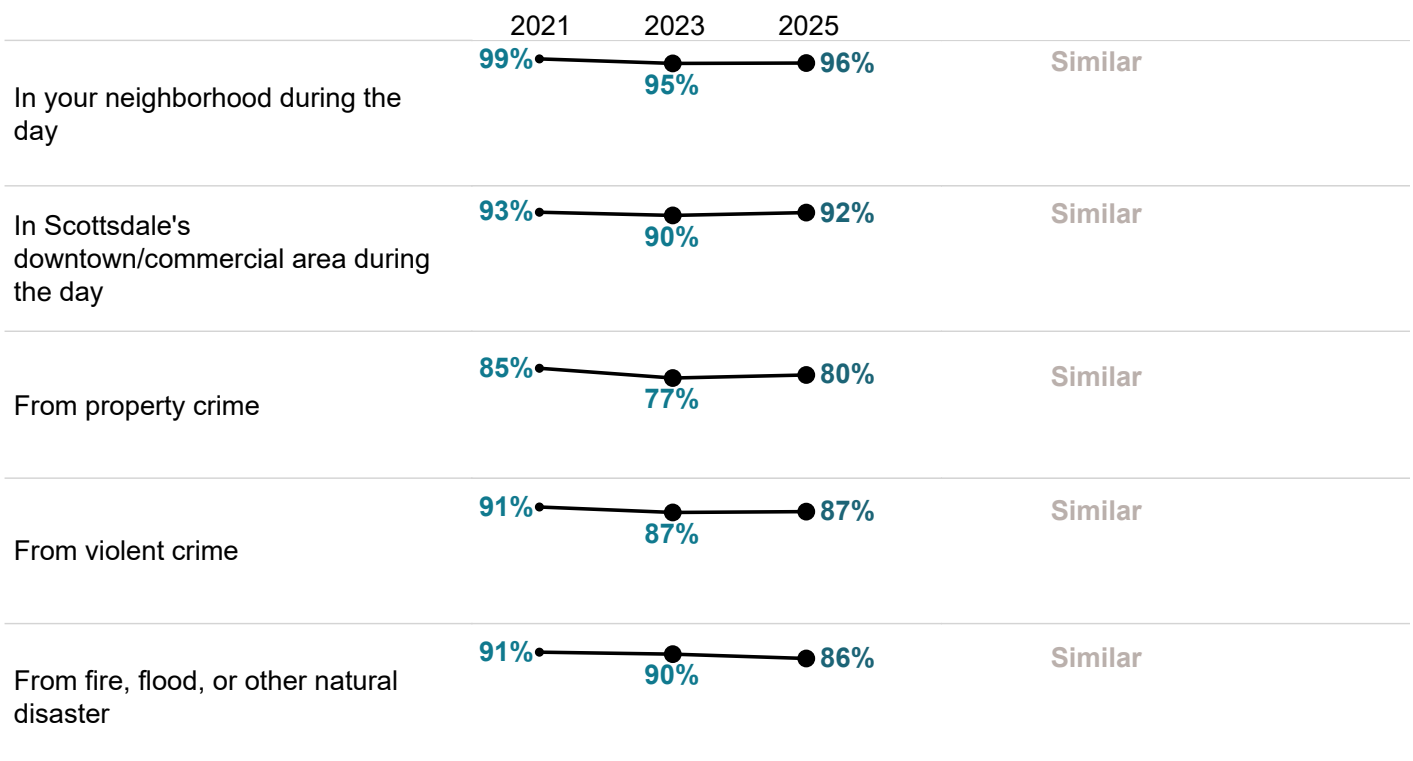
Overall feeling of safety in Scottsdale, 2025



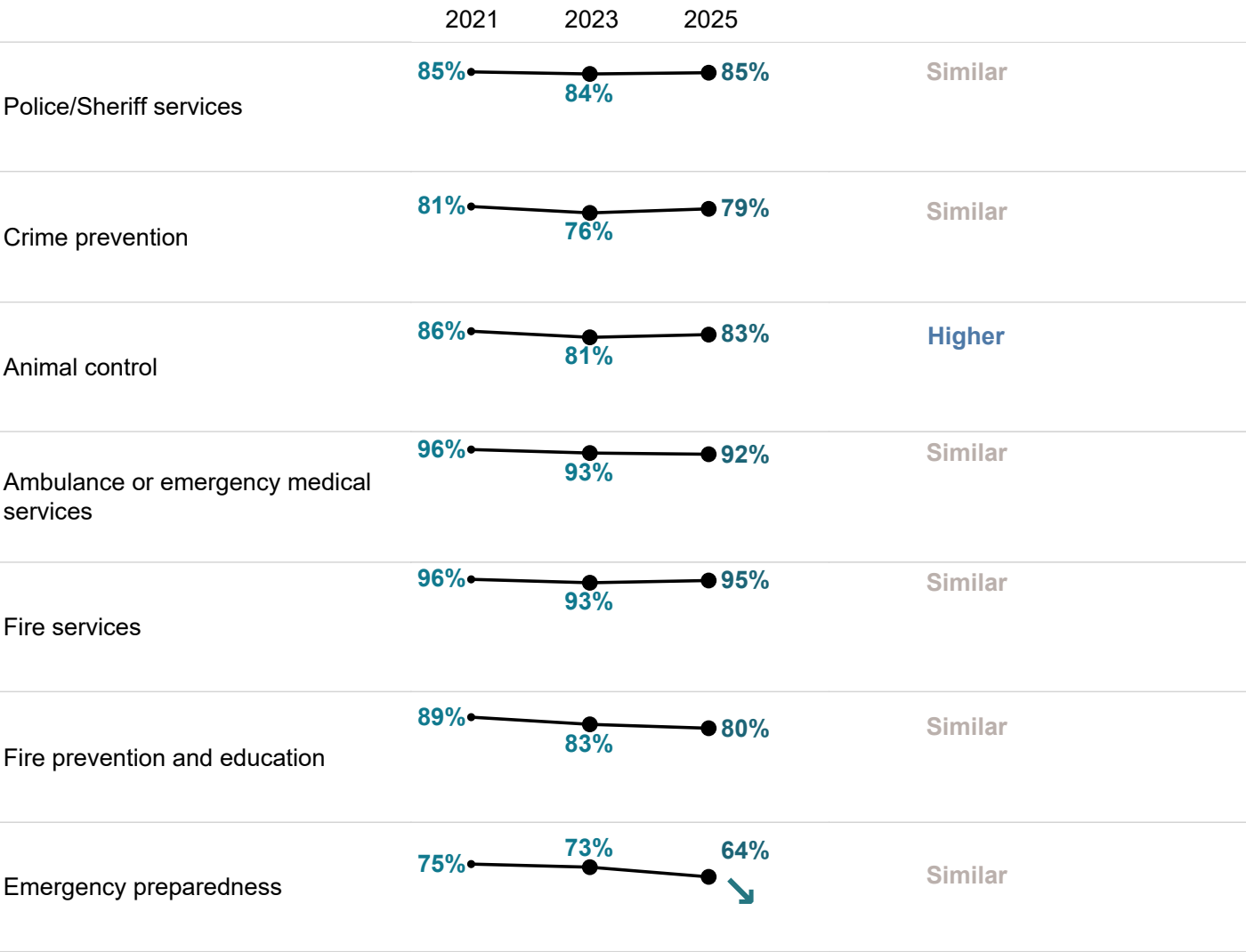
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



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



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

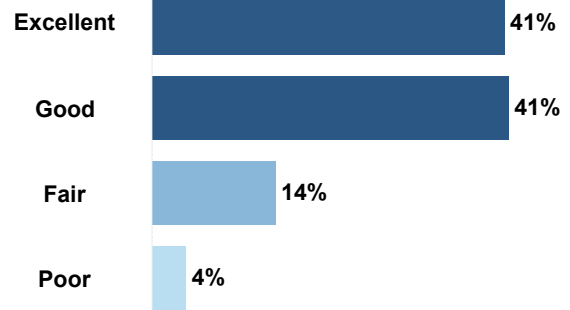


14. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

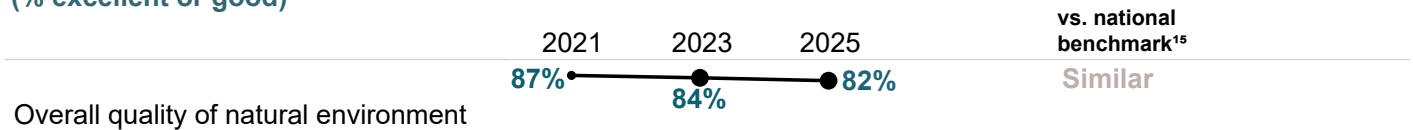
Natural Environment

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

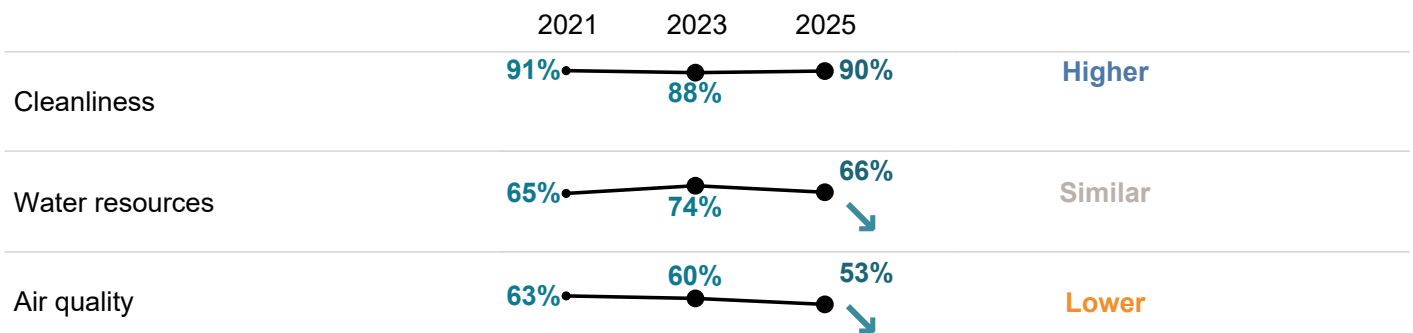
Overall quality of natural environment in Scottsdale, 2025



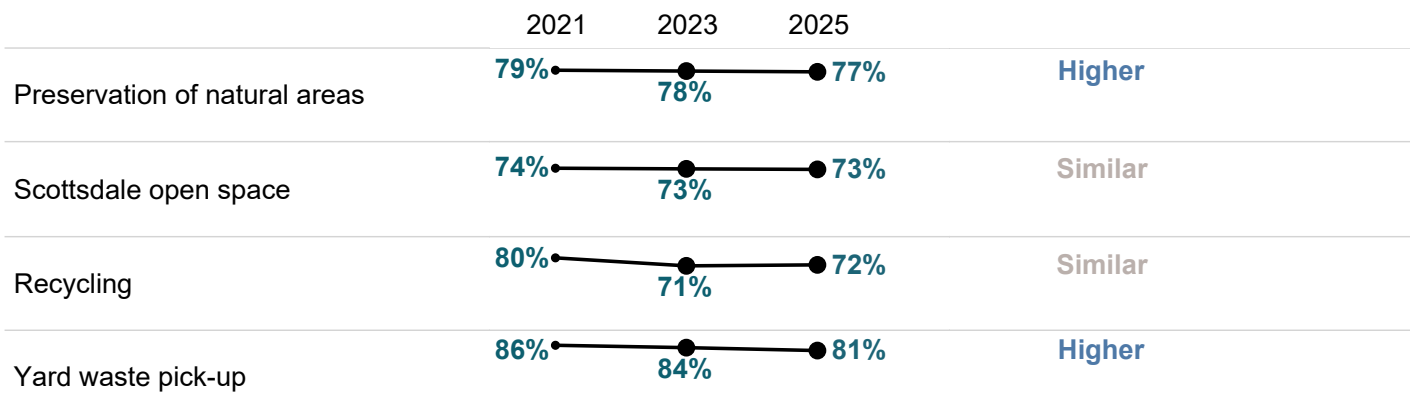
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



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



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



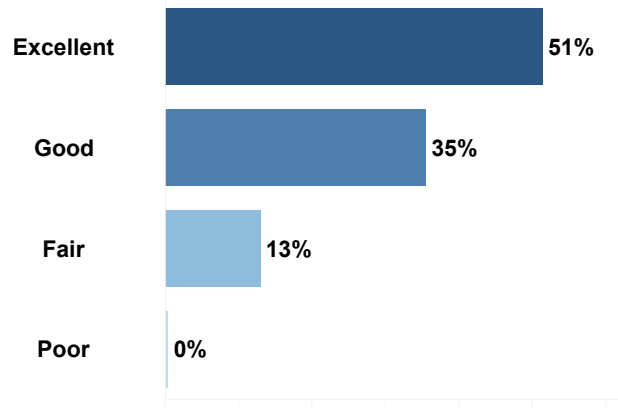
¹⁵. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

Parks and Recreation

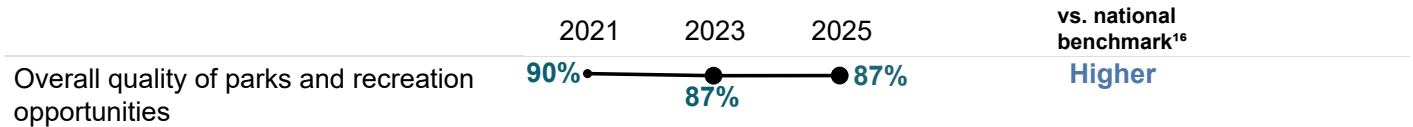
"There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation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

- National Recreation and Park Association

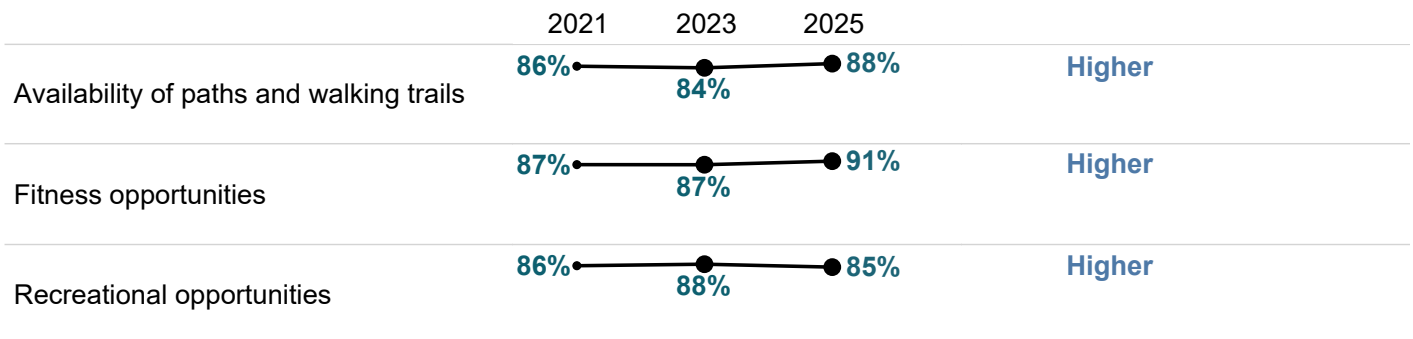
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities, 2025



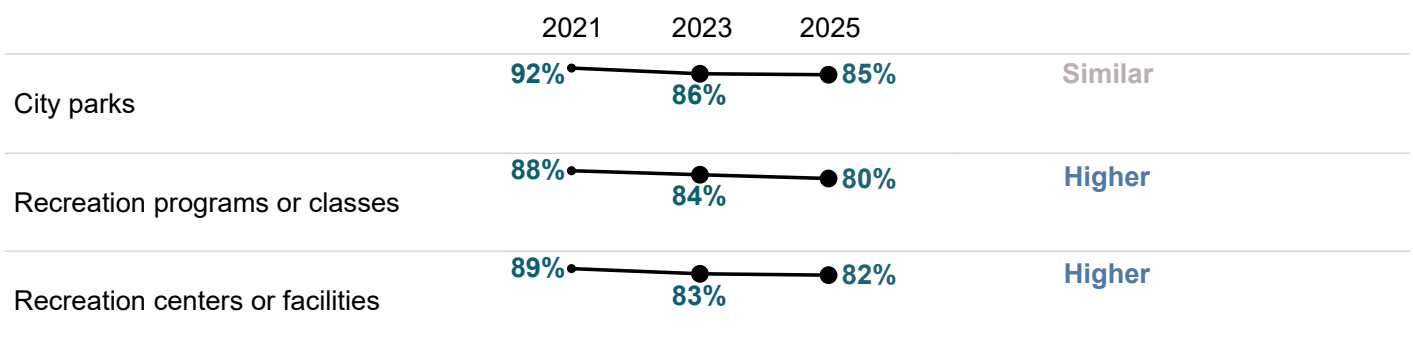
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



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



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

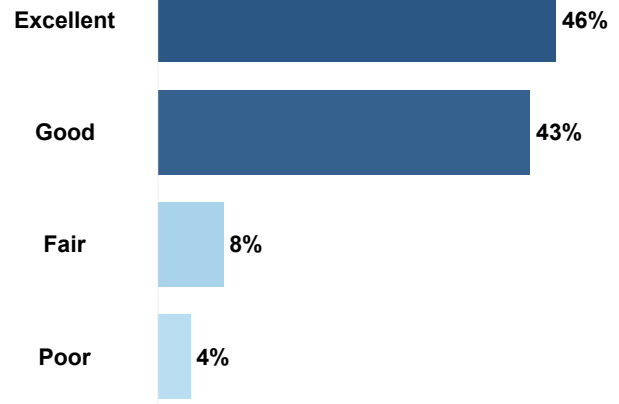


16. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

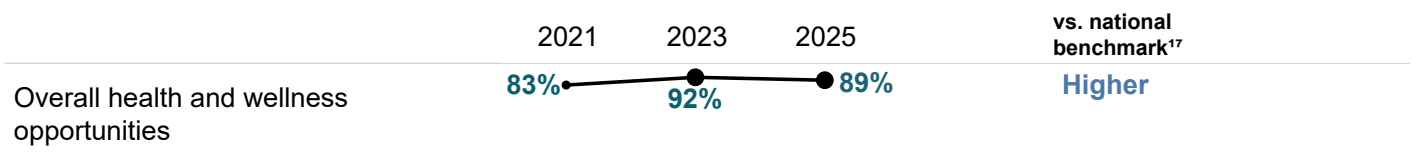
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Scottsdale, 2025

Health and Wellness

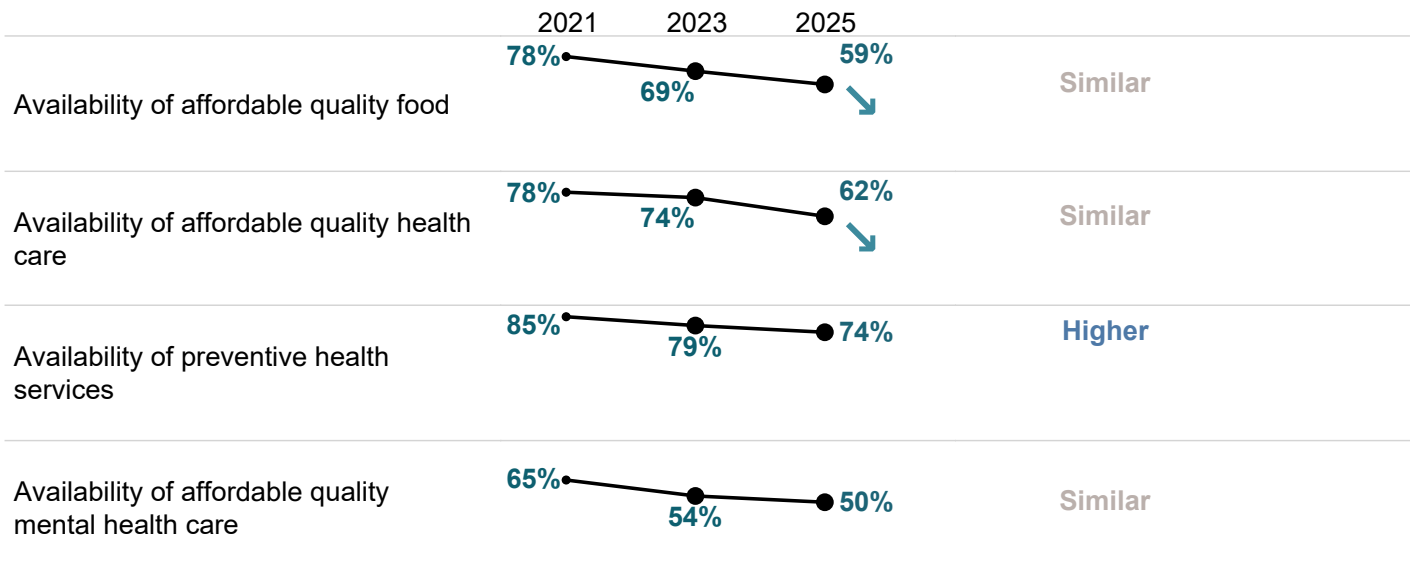
The characteristics of and amenities available in the communities in which people live has a direct impact on the health and wellness of residents, and thus, on their quality of life overall.



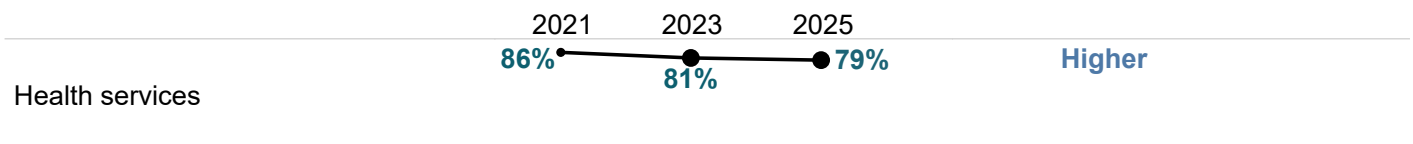
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



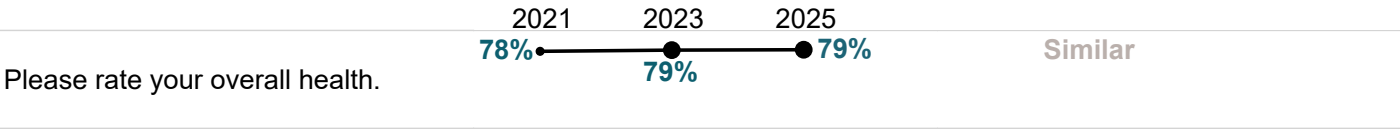
Please also rate each of the following in the Scottsdale community.
(% excellent or good)



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



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

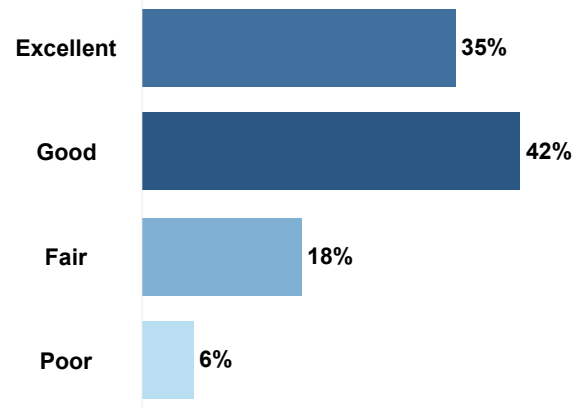


17. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.

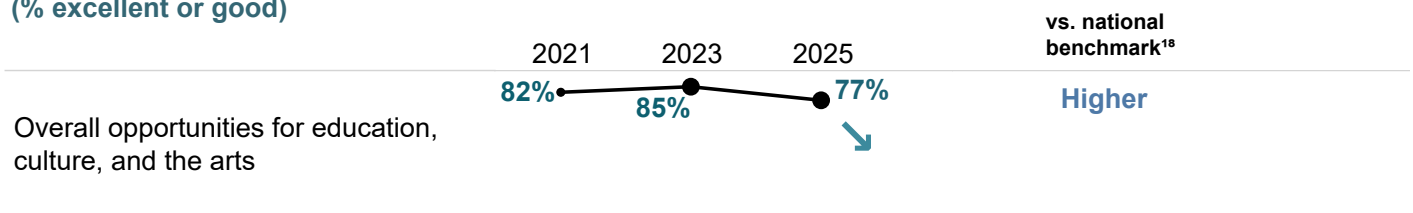
Education, Arts, and Culture

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.

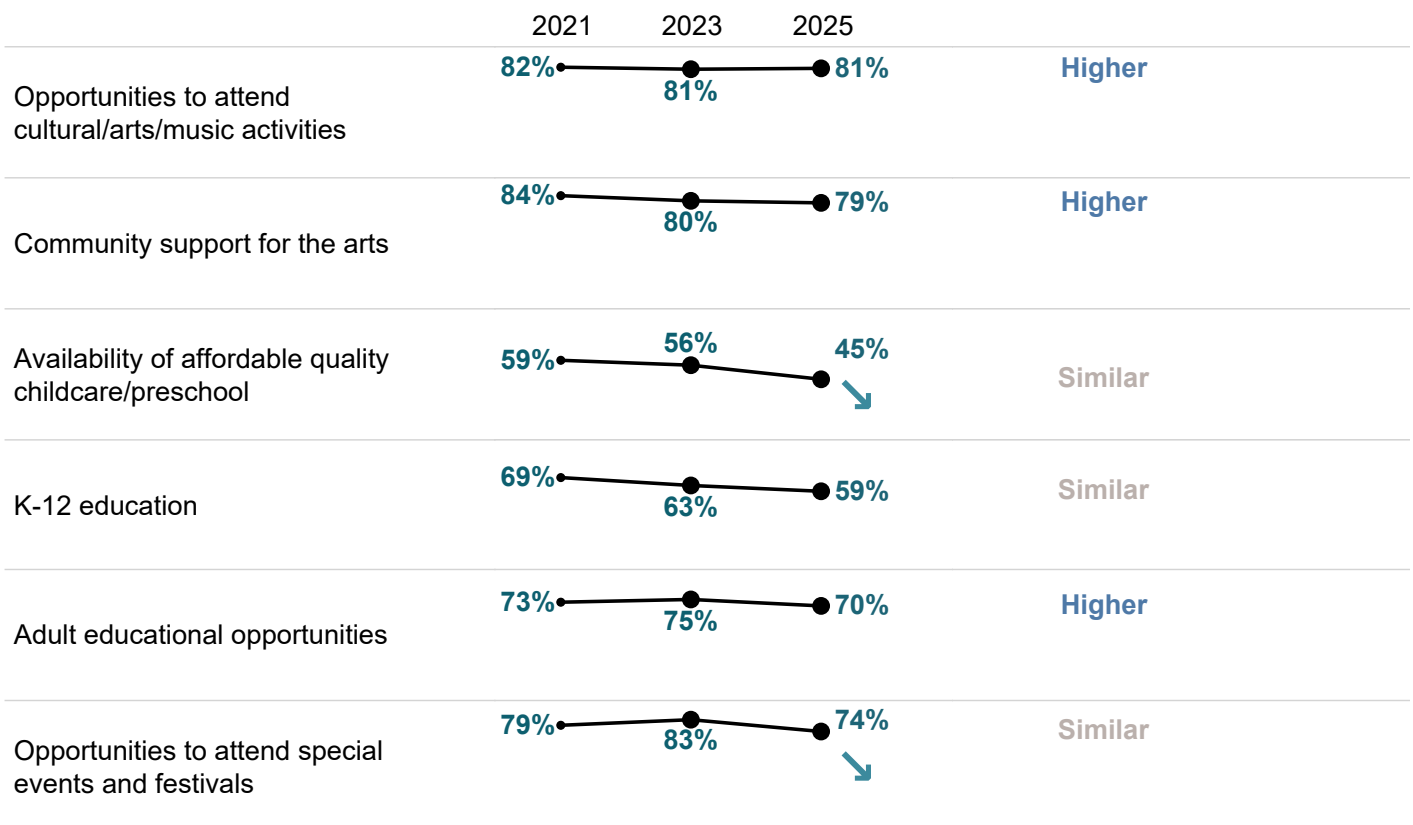
Overall opportunities for education, culture and the arts, 2025



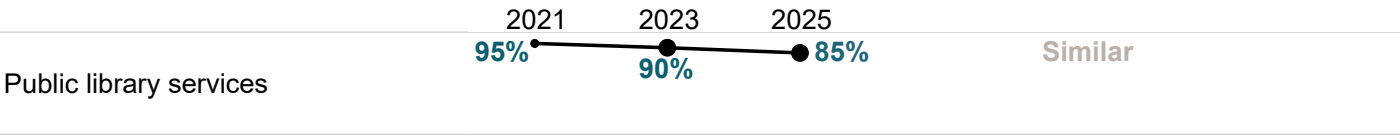
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



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



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



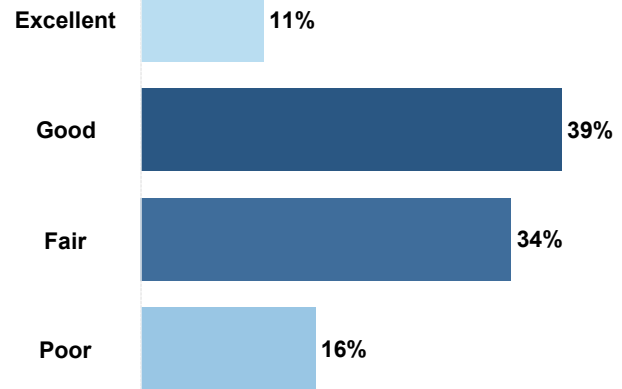
18. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. If no comparison is available, this is left blank.



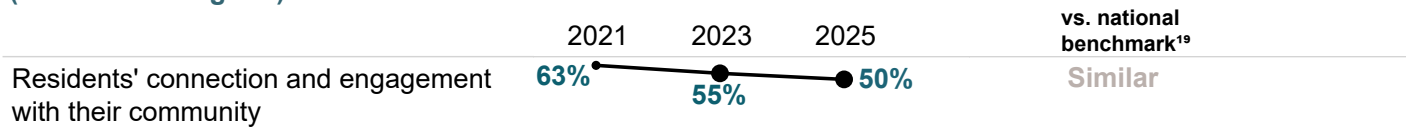
Inclusivity and Engagement

Inclusivity refers to a cultural and environmental feeling of belonging; residents who feel invited to participate within their communities feel more included, involved, and engaged than those who do not.

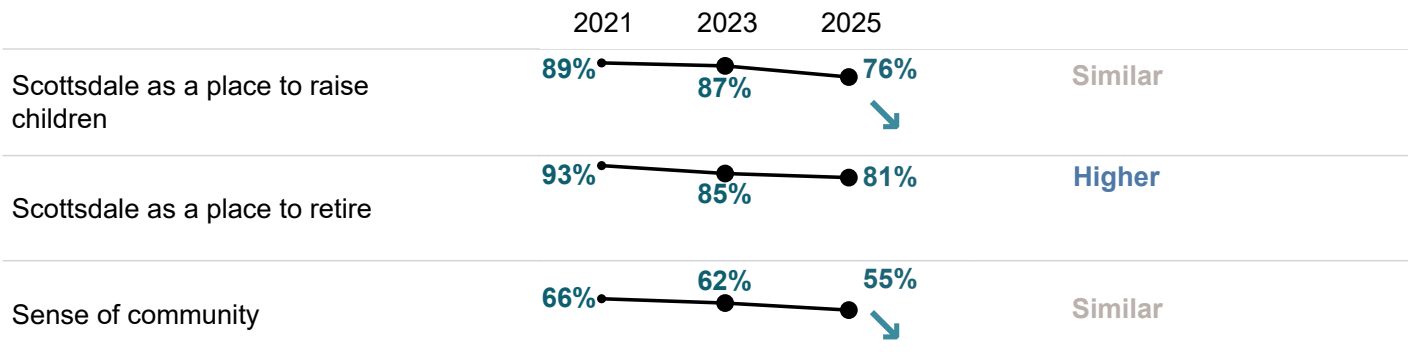
Residents' connection and engagement with their community, 2025



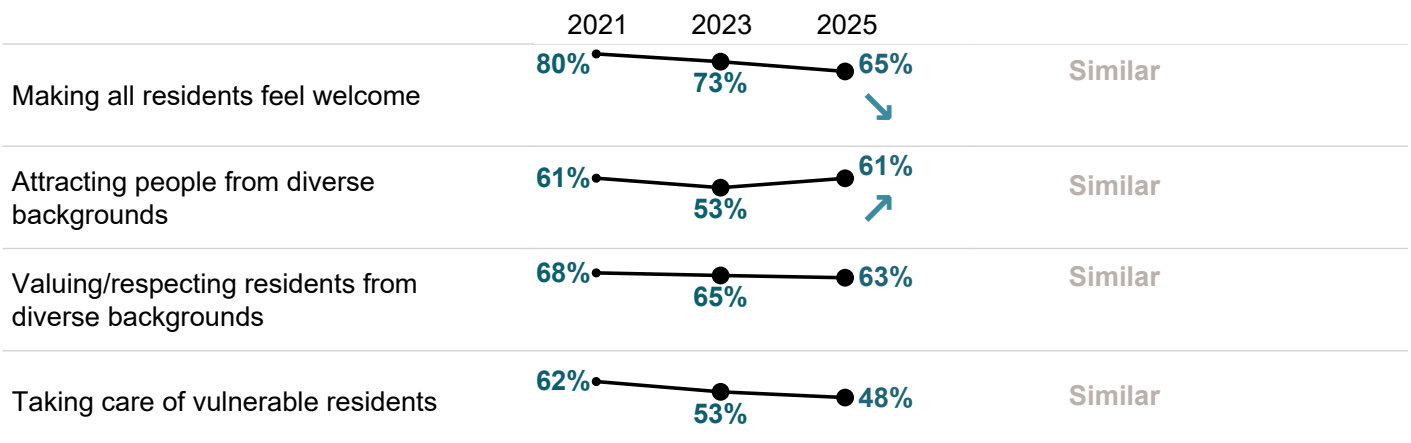
Please rate each of the following characteristics as they relate to Scottsdale as a whole.
(% excellent or good)



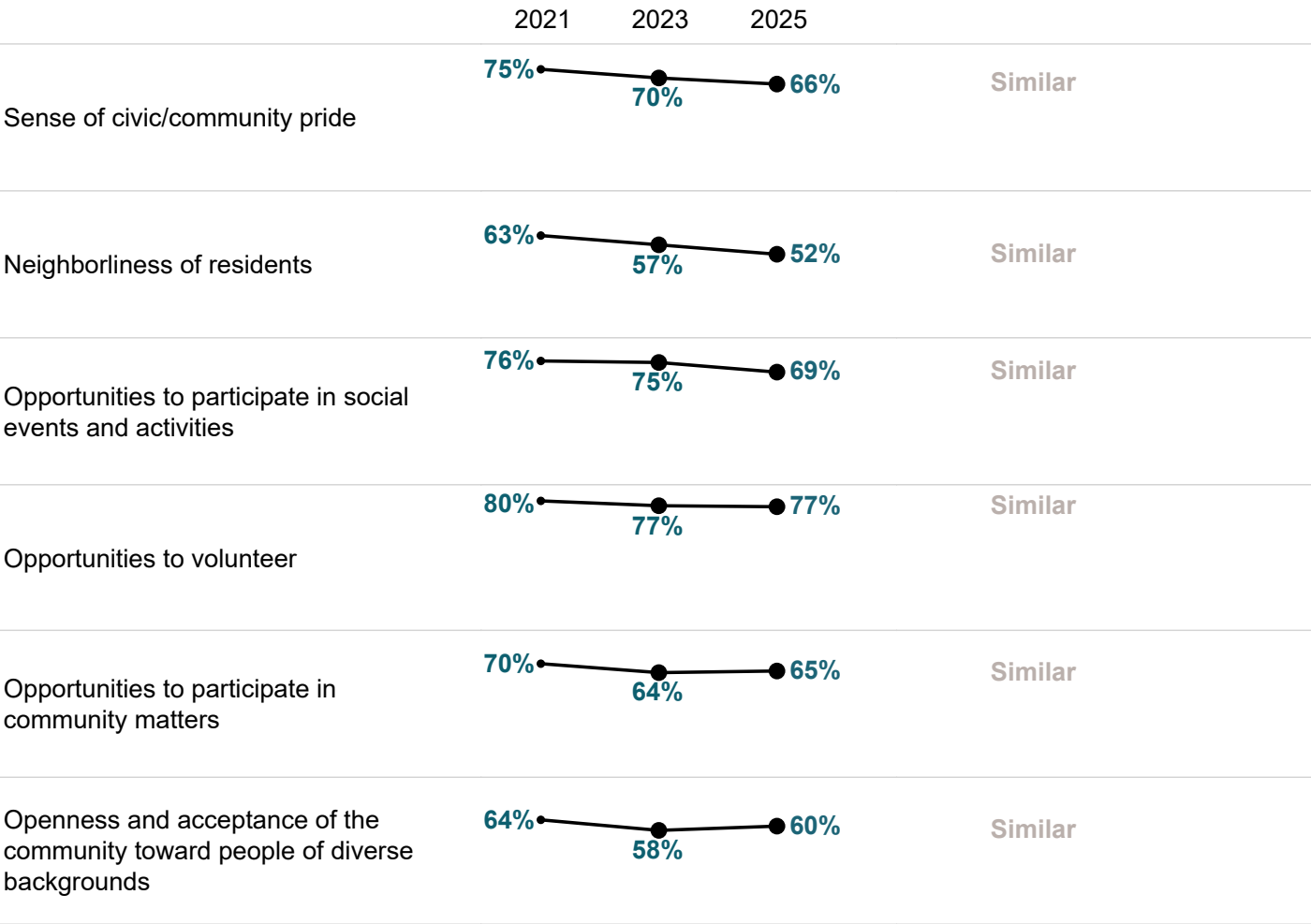
Please rate each of the following aspects of quality of life in Scottsdale.
(% excellent or good)



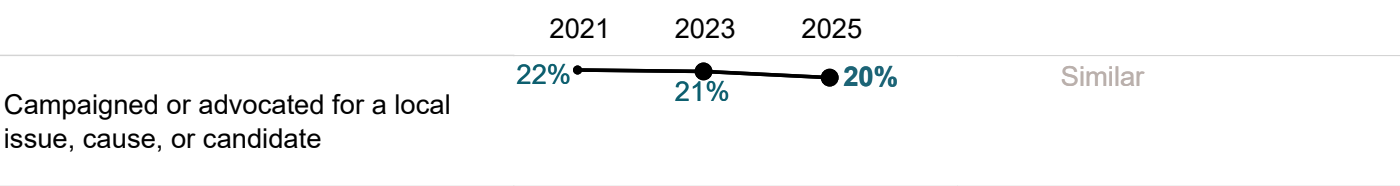
Please rate the job you feel the Scottsdale community does at each of the following.
(% excellent or good)



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



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



19. Comparison to the national benchmark is shown. 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.

