

THE NCS™

The National Community Survey™

Hopkinton, MA

*Community Livability Report
2020*



POWERED BY POLCO

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The National Community Survey™
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The NCS™ is presented by NRC in collaboration with ICMA.

NRC 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 Hopkinton. The phrase “livable community” is used here to evoke a place that is not simply habitable, but that is desirable. It is not only where people do live, but where they want to live.

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



The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 589 residents of the Town of Hopkinton. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for all respondents and the response rate for the 2020 survey was 35%. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.

Overview of Results

Community members note economic improvements yet also see it as an area of opportunity.

Residents' assessments of the overall economic health of Hopkinton were outstanding and higher than the national average; ratings for economic development, the overall quality of business and services and those not experiencing housing cost stress increased in 2020 compared to ratings given in 2013 by 14%, 18% and 23% respectively.

However, quality ratings for shopping opportunities and employment opportunities decreased in 2020 compared to 2013; furthermore, fewer people in Hopkinton believed the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the six months following the 2020 survey compared to the 2013 survey and the national average, possibly highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis. Other economic items that were rated lower than the national average include variety of business and service establishments, vibrancy of downtown/commercial area, shopping opportunities and cost of living.

Residents are pleased with their local government and ratings increased over time.

Each aspect of local governance listed on the survey received a rating similar to national average with at least 6 in 10 residents offering excellent or good ratings; the only exception to this was the rating of overall customer service by Hopkinton employees which was rated higher in Hopkinton than other communities across the nation with 9 in 10 residents offering positive ratings. When compared to ratings given in 2013, the overall customer service by Hopkinton employees, the overall direction that Hopkinton is taking and the job Hopkinton government does at welcoming resident involvement all increased in 2020; other governance ratings remained stable over this time period.

Mobility ratings lag, specifically related to public transportation; however, residents feel more positively about several aspects.

While the overall quality of the transportation system was only rated positively by one-third of residents and was rated lower than the national average, aspects related to Mobility accounted for one-third of the increased ratings from 2013 to 2020. Of the 23 items on the survey that increased, eight were within the facet of Mobility; further, seven of the eight Mobility-related items increased by 10% or more in 2020 compared to 2013. The highest increases were street lighting, traffic flow on major streets and ease of travel by car in Hopkinton but other increases include street cleaning, snow removal, sidewalk maintenance, traffic signal timing and ease of walking in Hopkinton.

The ratings for ease of travel by public transportation and bus or transit services were both rated lower than the national average with 2 in 10 or fewer residents offering positive ratings and the quality rating for bus or transit services decreased in 2020 compared to 2013.

Facets of Livability

Ratings of importance were compared to ratings of quality to help guide Town staff and officials with decisions on future resource allocation and strategic planning areas. When competition for limited resources demands that efficiencies or cutbacks be instituted, it is wise not only to know what facets are deemed most important to residents' quality of life, but which among the most important are perceived to be of relatively lower quality in your community. It is these facets of community livability – more important facets perceived as being of lower quality – to which attention needs to be paid first.

		QUALITY		
		LOWER	SIMILAR	HIGHER
IMPORTANCE	HIGHER			
	SIMILAR		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Design • Utility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Natural Environment • Education, Arts and Culture
	LOWER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and Recreation • Health and Wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Inclusivity and Engagement

FIGURE 1: QUALITY OF FACETS OF LIVABILITY- SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall economic health of Hopkinton	↑	*	87%
Overall quality of the transportation system in Hopkinton	↓↓	*	37%
Overall design or layout of Hopkinton's residential and commercial areas	↔	*	61%
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Hopkinton	↔	*	72%
Overall feeling of safety in Hopkinton	↑↑	*	99%
Overall quality of natural environment in Hopkinton	↑	↔	94%
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities	↔	*	92%
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Hopkinton	↔	*	80%
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts	↑	*	86%
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	↑	*	77%

FIGURE 2: IMPORTANCE OF FACETS OF LIVABILITY- SUMMARY

Percent essential or very important	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall economic health of Hopkinton	↔	*	89%
Overall quality of the transportation system in Hopkinton	↓↓	*	61%
Overall design or layout of Hopkinton's residential and commercial areas	↔	*	75%
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Hopkinton	↔	*	81%
Overall feeling of safety in Hopkinton	↓	*	78%
Overall quality of natural environment in Hopkinton	↔	*	79%
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities	↓	*	71%
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Hopkinton	↓	*	64%
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts	↔	*	70%
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	↓	*	67%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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.

OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IN HOPKINTON

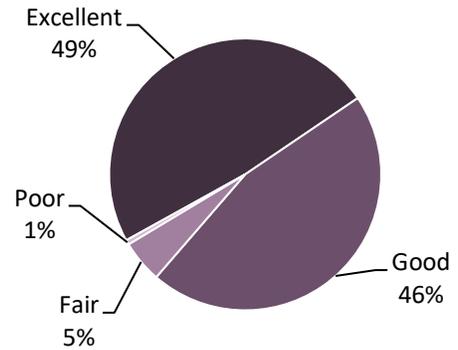


FIGURE 3: QUALITY OF LIFE IN HOPKINTON

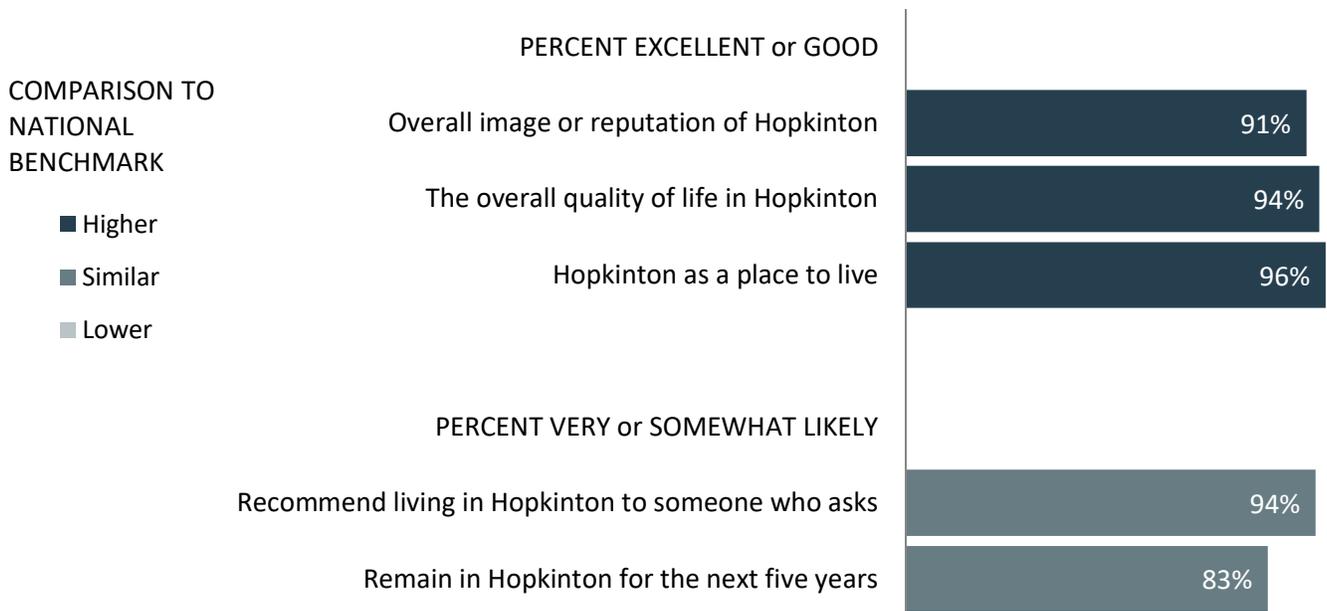


FIGURE 4: QUALITY OF LIFE IN HOPKINTON - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall image or reputation of Hopkinton	↑	↔	91%
The overall quality of life in Hopkinton	↑	↔	94%
Hopkinton as a place to live	↑	↔	96%

FIGURE 5: RECOMMEND HOPKINTON - SUMMARY

Percent very or somewhat likely	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Recommend living in Hopkinton to someone who asks	↔	↔	94%
Remain in Hopkinton for the next five years	↔	↓	83%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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.

OVERALL CONFIDENCE IN HOPKINTON GOVERNMENT

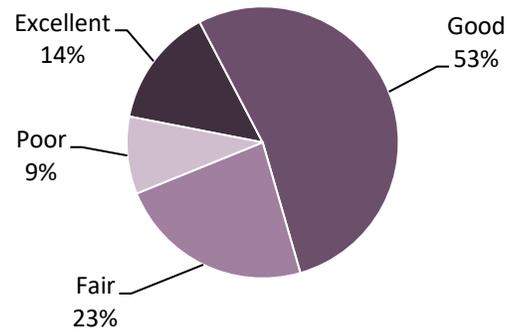


FIGURE 6: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND SERVICES

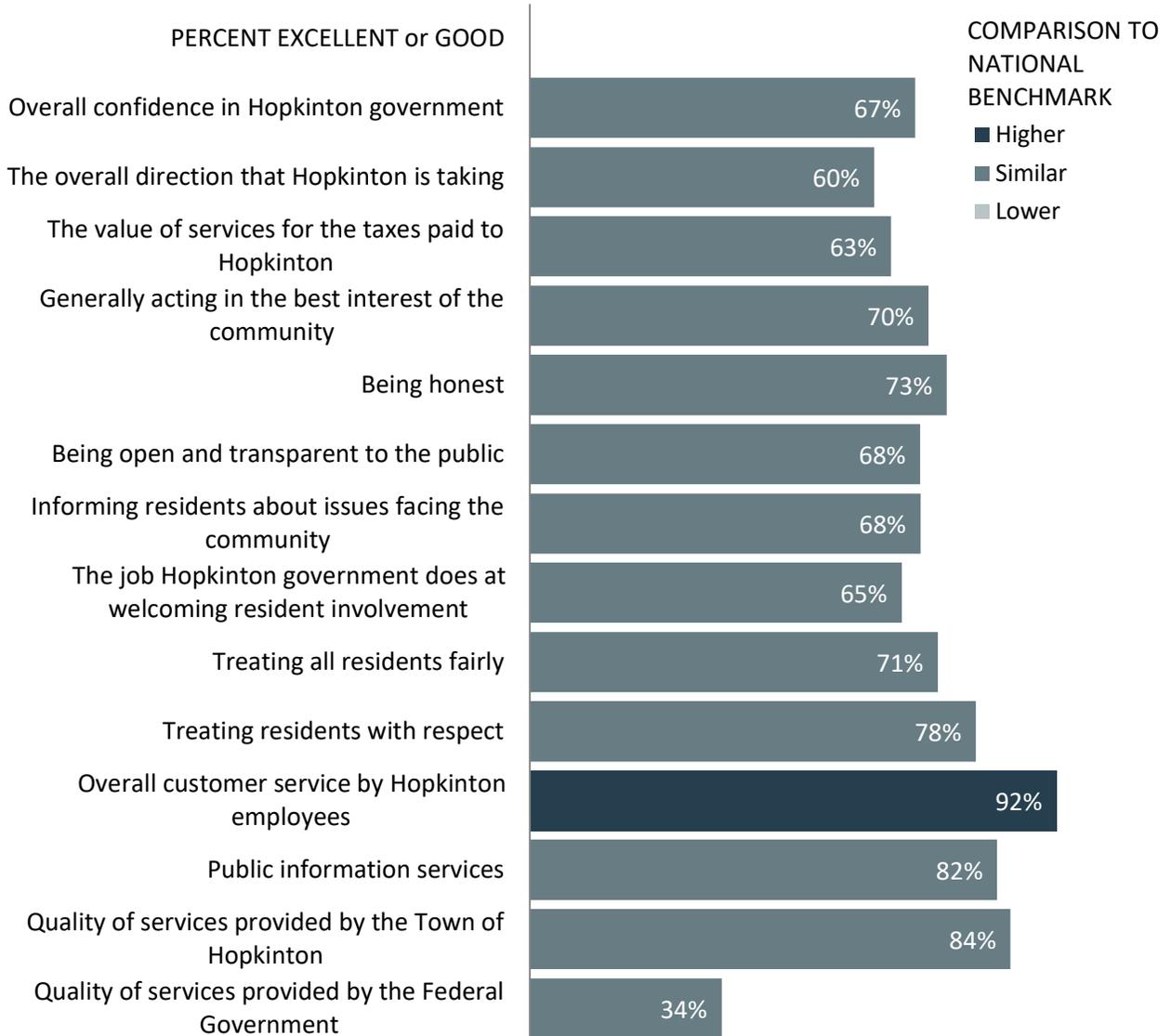


FIGURE 7: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND SERVICES - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall confidence in Hopkinton government	↔	*	67%
The overall direction that Hopkinton is taking	↔	↑	60%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Hopkinton	↔	↔	63%
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	↔	*	70%
Being honest	↔	*	73%
Being open and transparent to the public	↔	*	68%
Informing residents about issues facing the community	↔	*	68%
The job Hopkinton government does at welcoming resident involvement	↔	↑	65%
Treating all residents fairly	↔	*	71%
Treating residents with respect	↔	*	78%
Overall customer service by Hopkinton employees	↑	↑	92%
Public information services	↔	↔	82%
Quality of services provided by the Town of Hopkinton	↔	↔	84%
Quality of services provided by the Federal Government	↔	↔	34%

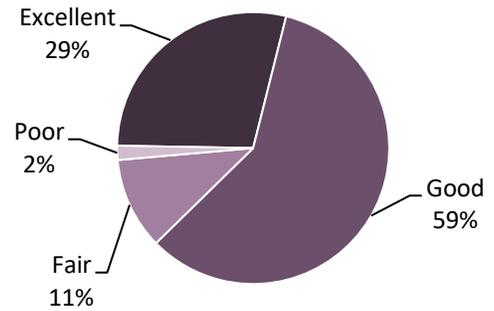
Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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 HOPKINTON



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



FIGURE 8: ECONOMIC HEALTH

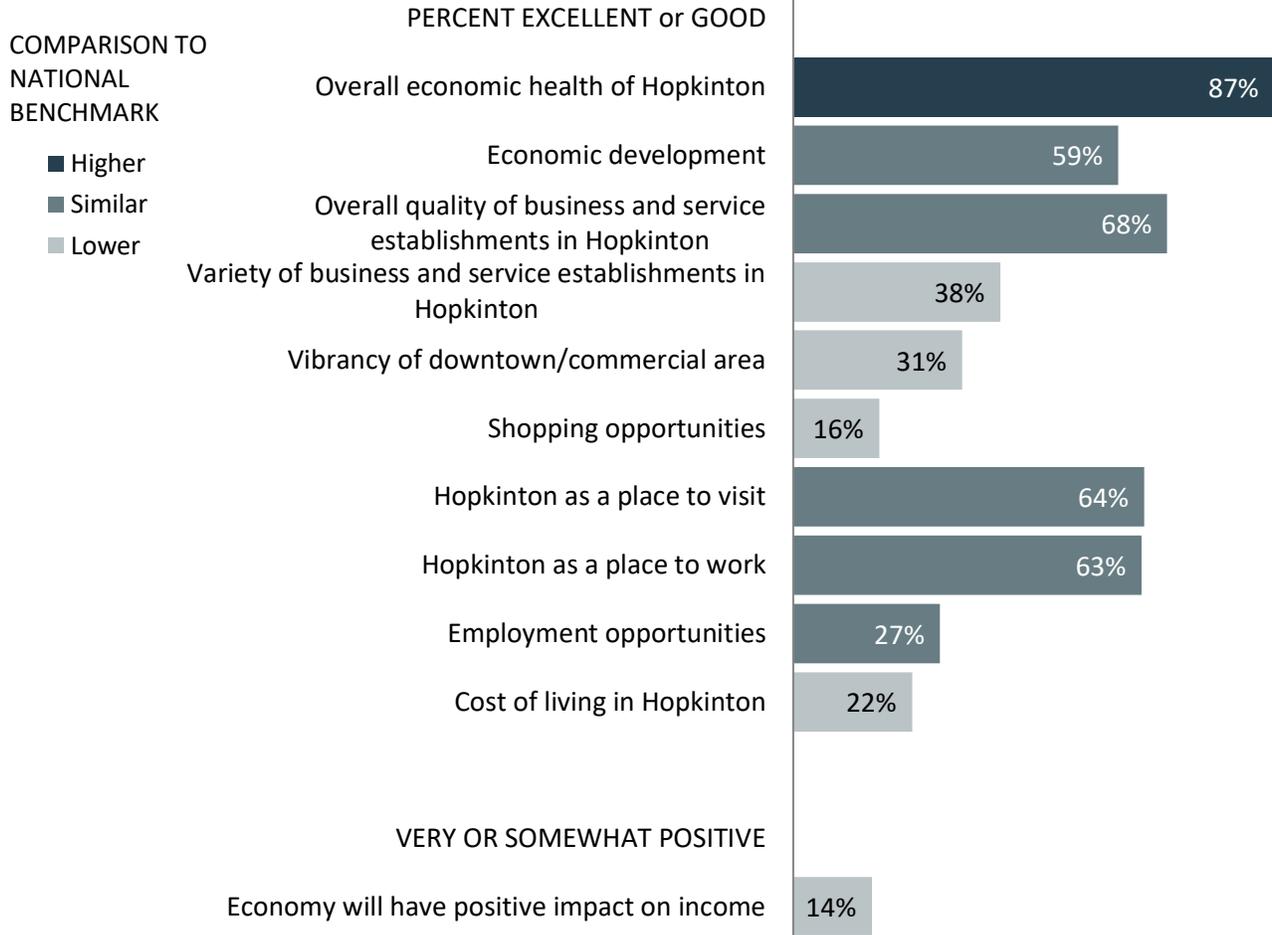


FIGURE 9: ECONOMIC HEALTH - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall economic health of Hopkinton	↑	*	87%
Economic development	↔	↑	59%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Hopkinton	↔	↑	68%
Variety of business and service establishments in Hopkinton	↓	*	38%
Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area	↓	*	31%
Shopping opportunities	↓↓	↓	16%
Hopkinton as a place to visit	↔	*	64%
Hopkinton as a place to work	↔	↔	63%
Employment opportunities	↔	↓	27%
Cost of living in Hopkinton	↓	*	22%

FIGURE 10: ECONOMIC IMPACT - SUMMARY

Percent very or somewhat positive	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Economy will have positive impact on income	↓	↓	14%

FIGURE 11: HOUSING COST - SUMMARY

Percent for whom housing costs are NOT 30% or more of household income	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
NOT experiencing housing costs stress	↑	↑	85%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available
 ||

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 HOPKINTON

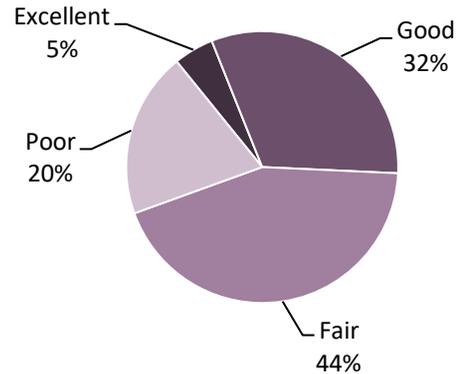


FIGURE 12: MOBILITY IN HOPKINTON

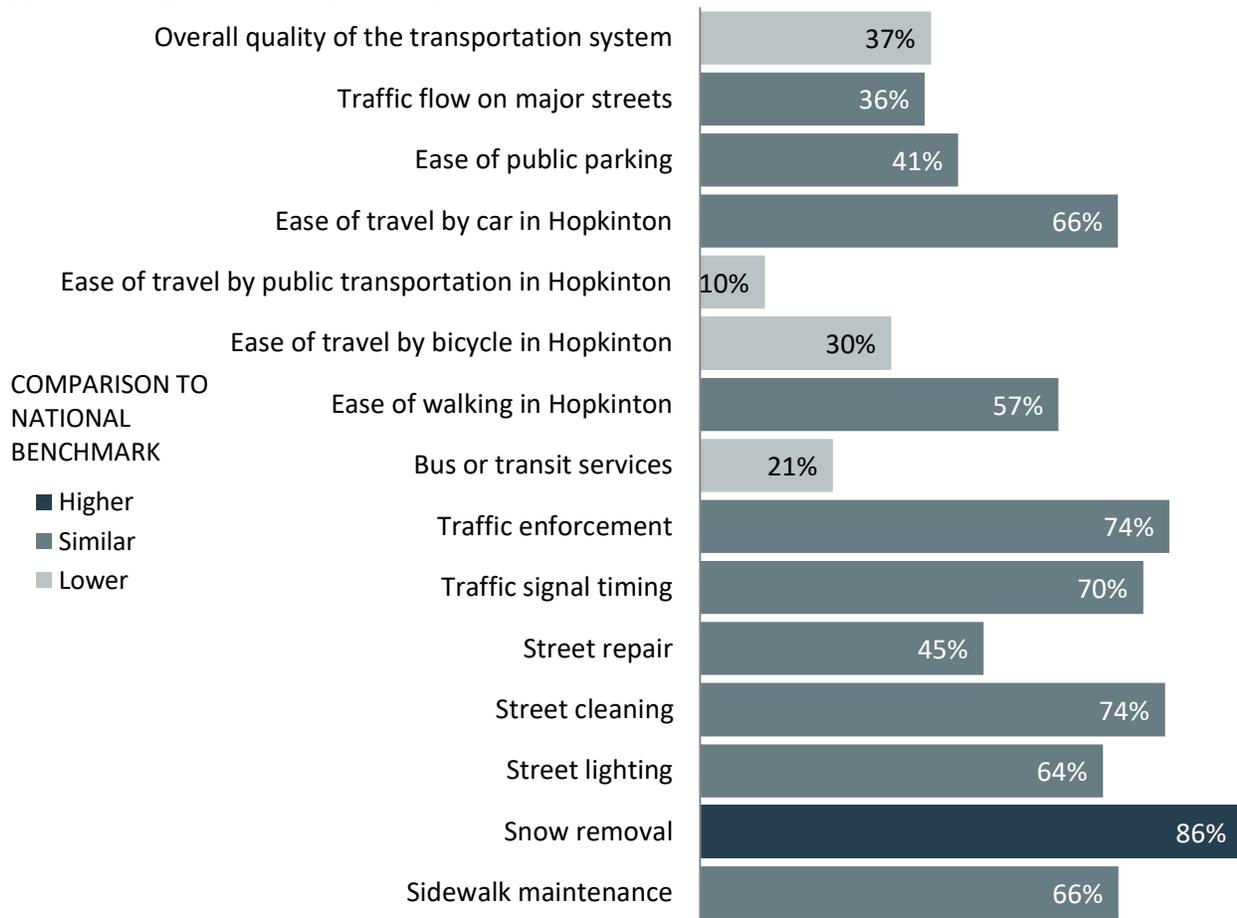


FIGURE 13: USE OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

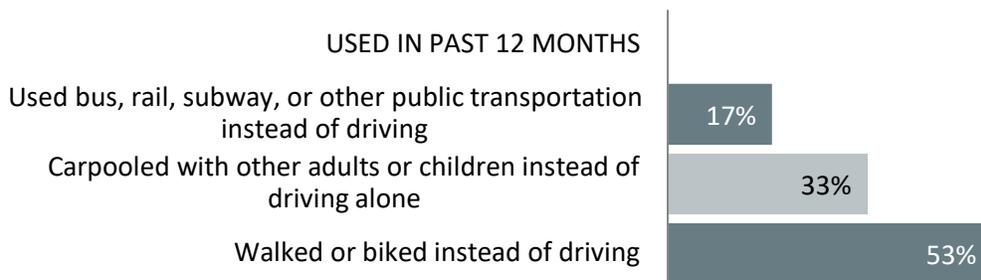


FIGURE 14: MOBILITY IN HOPKINTON - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of the transportation system in Hopkinton	↓↓	*	37%
Traffic flow on major streets	↔	↑	36%
Ease of travel by car in Hopkinton	↔	↑	66%
Ease of travel by public transportation in Hopkinton	↓↓	*	10%
Ease of travel by bicycle in Hopkinton	↓	↔	30%
Ease of walking in Hopkinton	↔	↑	57%
Ease of public parking	↔	*	41%
Bus or transit services	↓↓	↓	21%
Traffic enforcement	↔	↔	74%
Traffic signal timing	↔	↑	70%
Street repair	↔	↔	45%
Street cleaning	↔	↑	74%
Street lighting	↔	↑	64%
Snow removal	↑	↑	86%
Sidewalk maintenance	↔	↑	66%

FIGURE 15: USE OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES - SUMMARY

Percent who did this in past 12 months	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Used bus, rail, subway, or other public transportation instead of driving	↔	*	17%
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	↓	*	33%
Walked or biked instead of driving	↔	*	53%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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 Hopkinton'S RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS

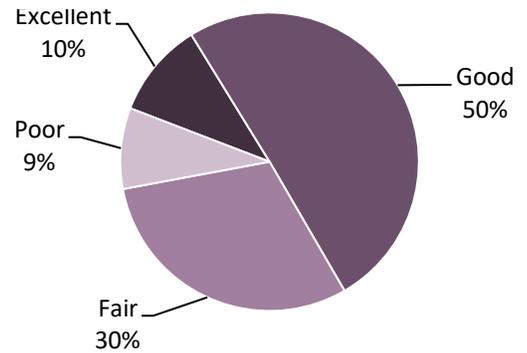


FIGURE 16: COMMUNITY DESIGN

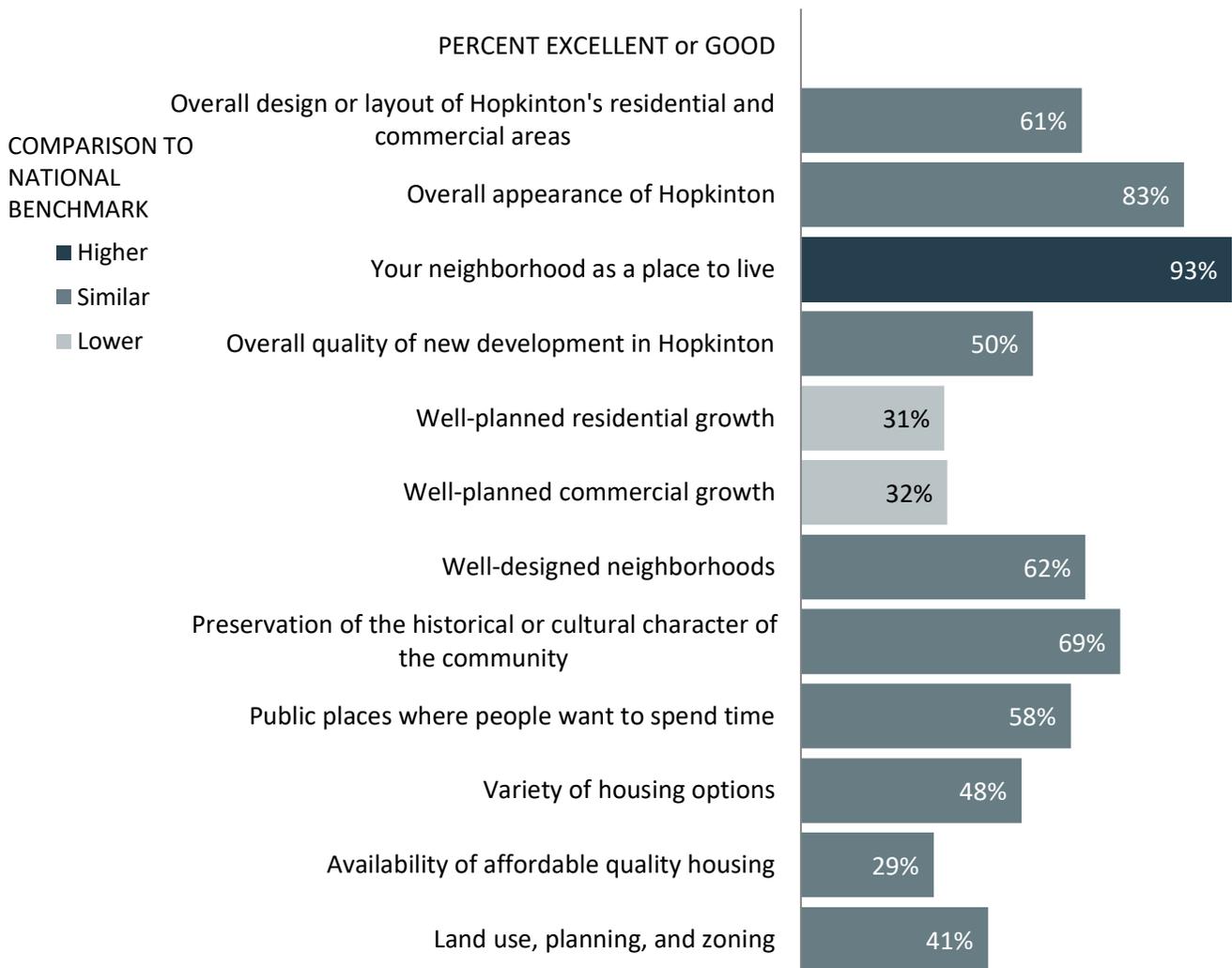


FIGURE 17: COMMUNITY DESIGN - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall design or layout of Hopkinton's residential and commercial areas	↔	*	61%
Overall appearance of Hopkinton	↔	↔	83%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	↑	↔	93%
Overall quality of new development in Hopkinton	↔	↓	50%
Well-planned residential growth	↓	*	31%
Well-planned commercial growth	↓	*	32%
Well-designed neighborhoods	↔	*	62%
Preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community	↔	*	69%
Public places where people want to spend time	↔	*	58%
Variety of housing options	↔	↔	48%
Availability of affordable quality housing	↔	↔	29%
Land use, planning, and zoning	↔	↓	41%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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 HOPKINTON

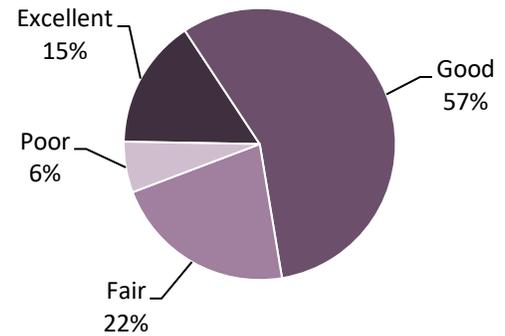


FIGURE 18: UTILITES

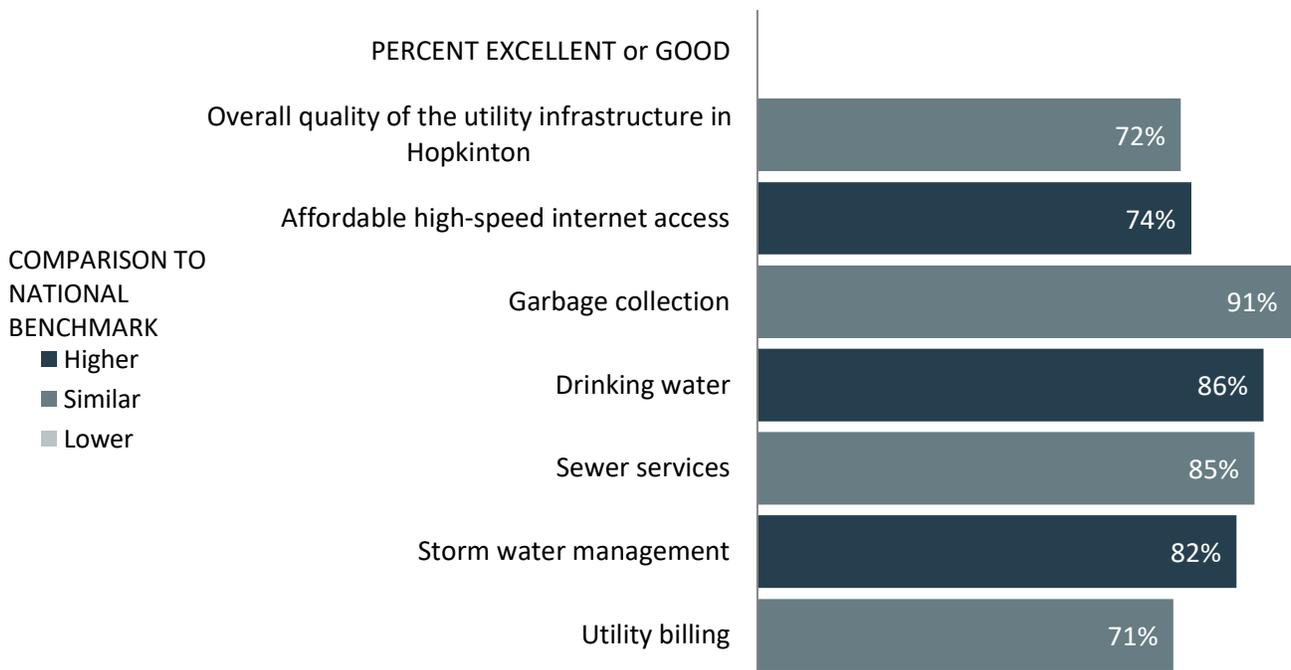


FIGURE 19: UTILITES - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure in Hopkinton	↔	*	72%
Affordable high-speed internet access	↑	*	74%
Garbage collection	↔	↔	91%
Drinking water	↑	↔	86%
Sewer services	↔	↔	85%
Storm water management	↑	↑	82%
Utility billing	↔	*	71%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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 HOPKINTON

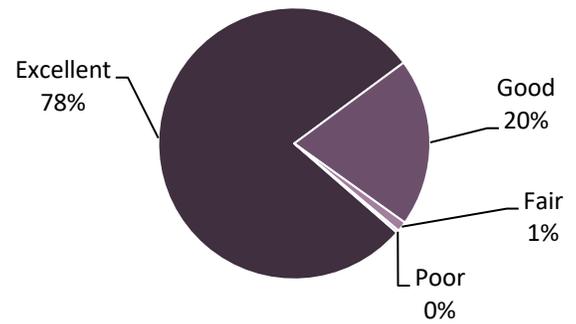


FIGURE 20: SAFETY IN HOPKINTON

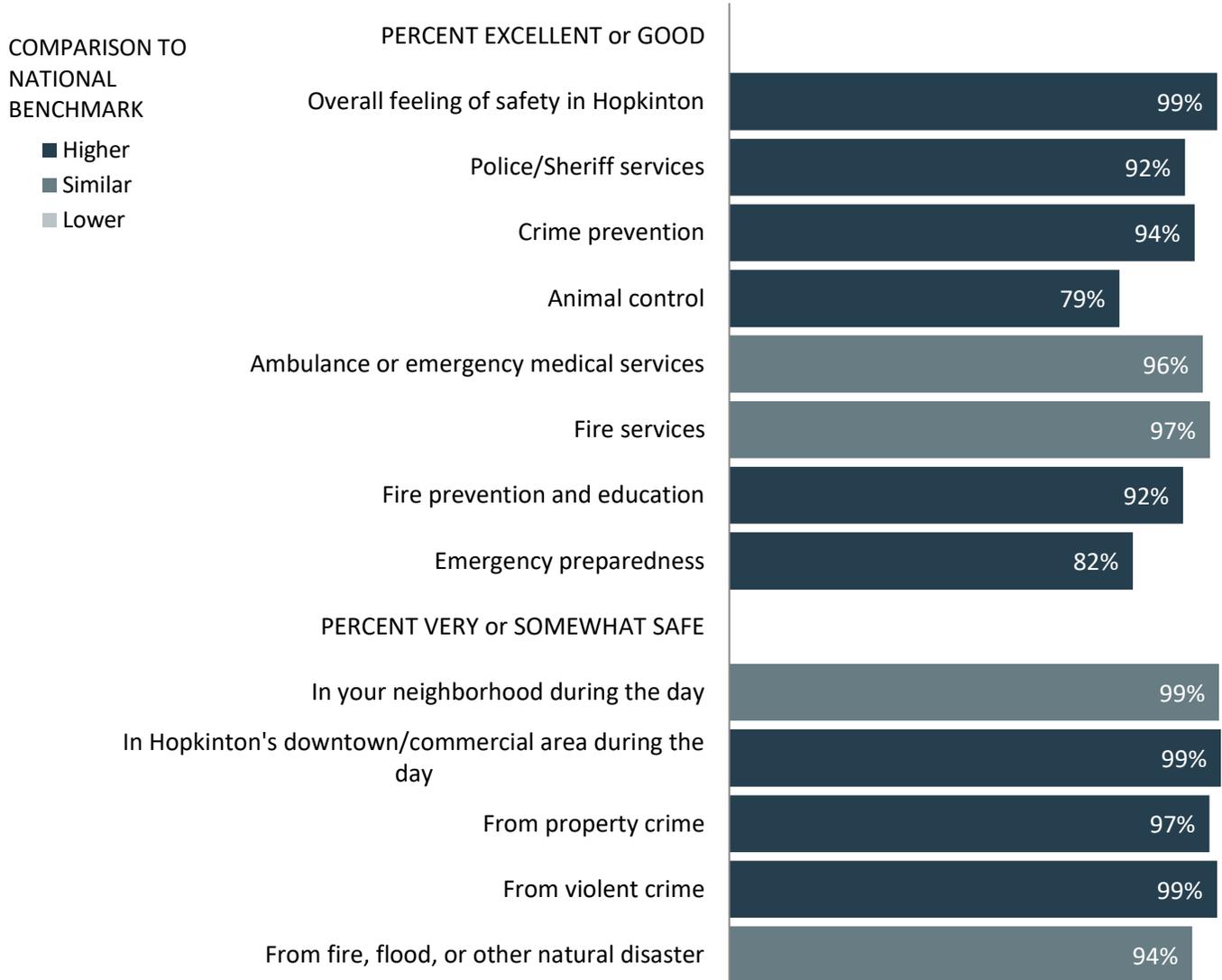


FIGURE 21: SAFETY-RELATED SERVICES - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall feeling of safety in Hopkinton	↑↑	*	99%
Police/Sheriff services	↑	↔	92%
Crime prevention	↑↑	↔	94%
Animal control	↑	↔	79%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	↔	↔	96%
Fire services	↔	↔	97%
Fire prevention and education	↑	↔	92%
Emergency preparedness	↑	↔	82%

FIGURE 22: FEELINGS OF SAFETY- SUMMARY

Percent who feel very or somewhat safe	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
In your neighborhood during the day	↔	↔	99%
In Hopkinton's downtown/commercial area during the day	↑	↔	99%
From property crime	↑↑	*	97%
From violent crime	↑	*	99%
From fire, flood, or other natural disaster	↔	*	94%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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 HOPKINTON

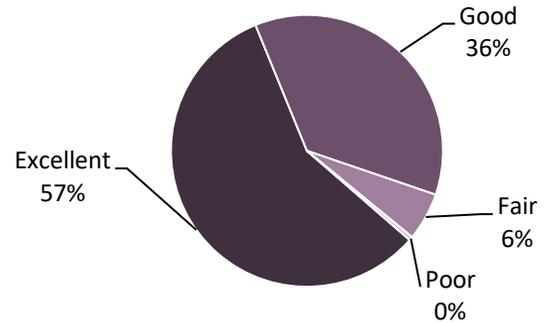


FIGURE 23: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

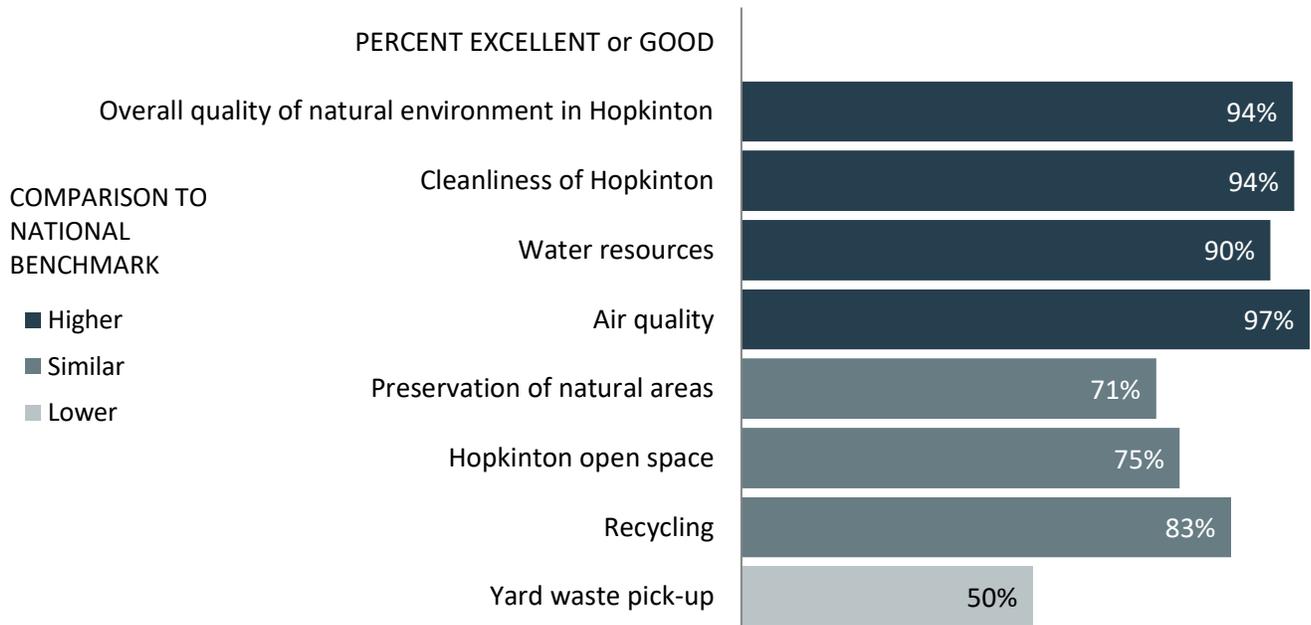


FIGURE 24: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of natural environment in Hopkinton	↑	↔	94%
Cleanliness of Hopkinton	↑	↔	94%
Water resources	↑	*	90%
Air quality	↑	↔	97%
Preservation of natural areas	↔	↔	71%
Hopkinton open space	↔	*	75%
Recycling	↔	↔	83%
Yard waste pick-up	↓	*	50%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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 IN HOPKINTON

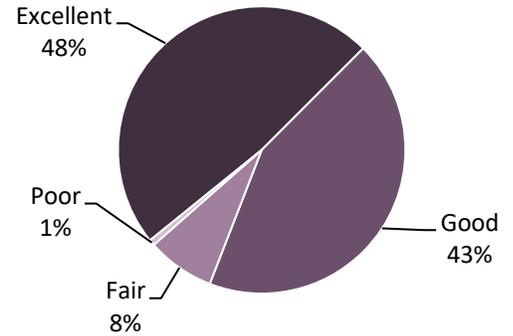


FIGURE 25: PARKS AND RECREATION



FIGURE 26: PARKS AND RECREATION - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities	↔	*	92%
Availability of paths and walking trails	↑	↑	87%
Town parks	↔	↔	86%
Recreational opportunities	↔	↑	81%
Recreation programs or classes	↔	↔	78%
Recreation centers or facilities	↔	↔	66%
Fitness opportunities	↔	*	77%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES IN HOPKINTON

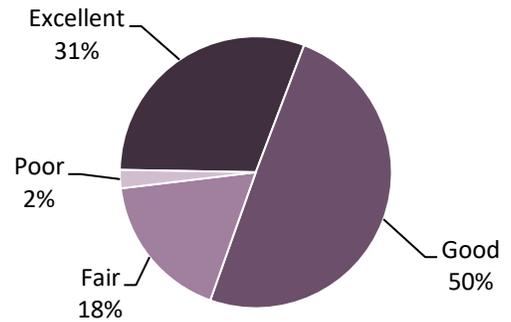


FIGURE 27: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

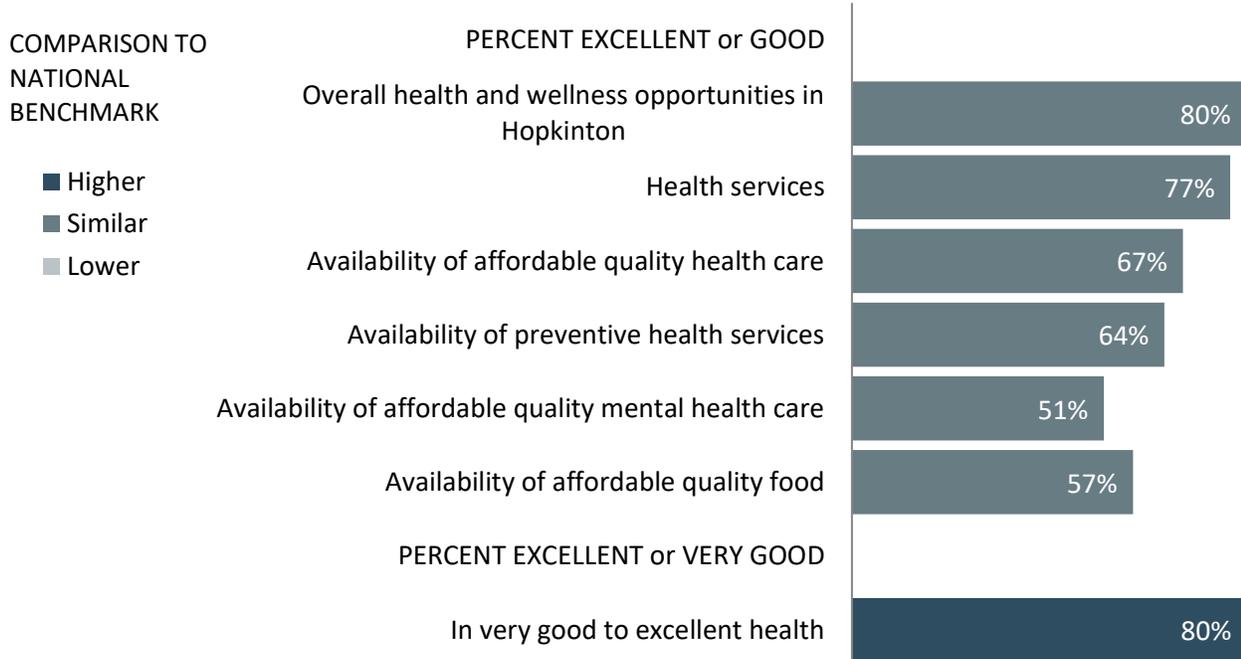


FIGURE 28: HEALTH AND WELLNESS - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Hopkinton	↔	*	80%
Health services	↔	↑	77%
Availability of affordable quality health care	↔	↑	67%
Availability of preventive health services	↔	↑	64%
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	↔	*	51%
Availability of affordable quality food	↔	↔	57%

FIGURE 29: PERSONAL HEALTH - SUMMARY

	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
In very good to excellent health	↑	*	80%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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 IN HOPKINTON

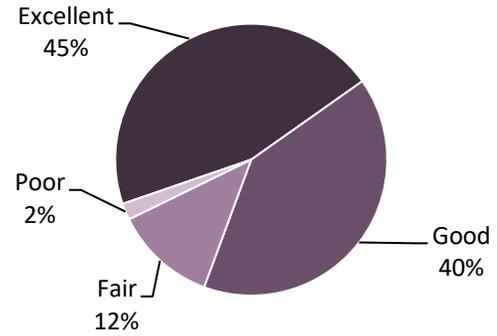


FIGURE 30: EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

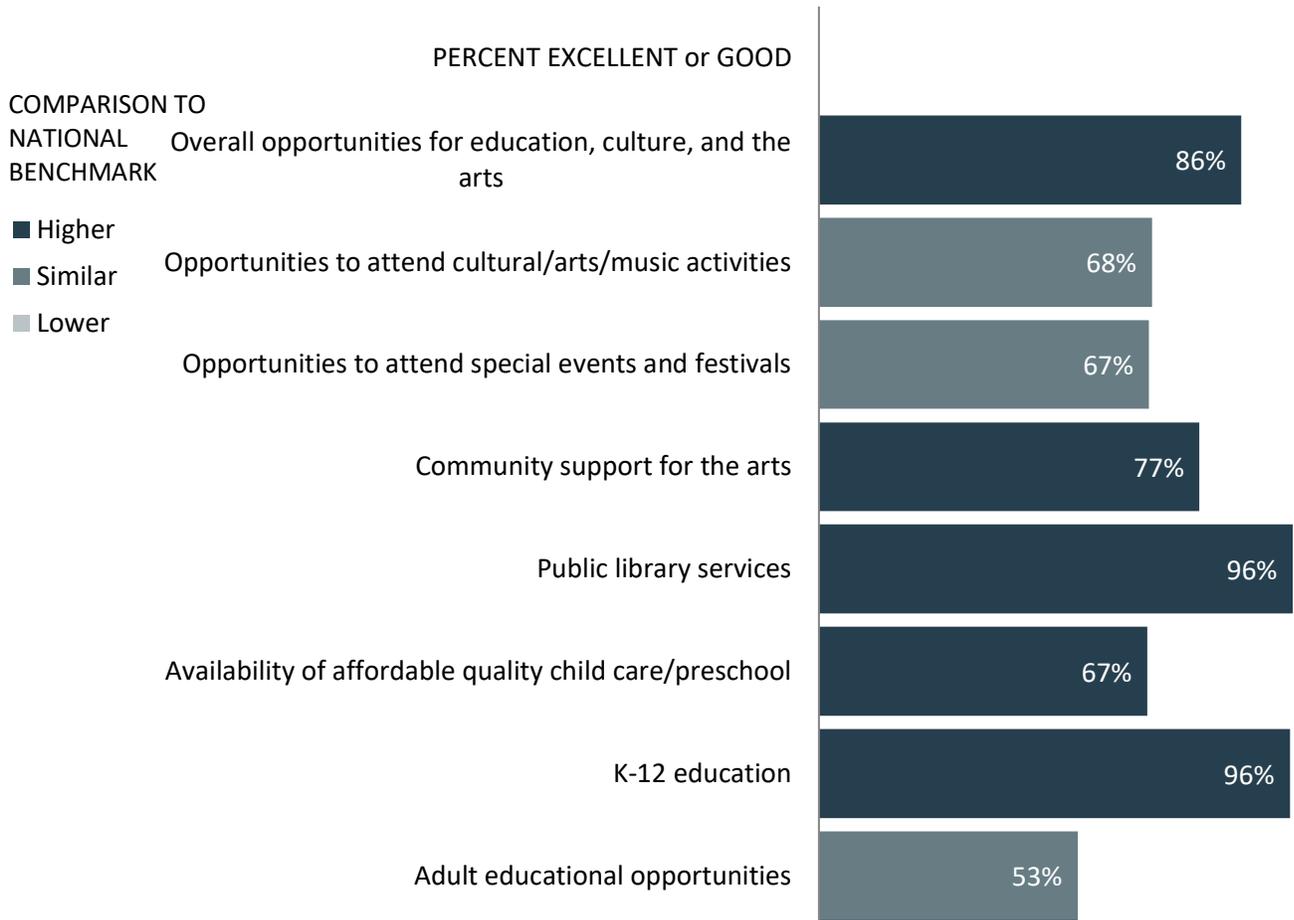


FIGURE 31: EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall opportunities for education, culture, and the arts	↑	*	86%
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	↔	↑	68%
Opportunities to attend special events and festivals	↔	*	67%
Community support for the arts	↑	*	77%
Public library services	↑	↑	96%
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	↑	↑	67%
K-12 education	↑↑	↔	96%
Adult educational opportunities	↔	*	53%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

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

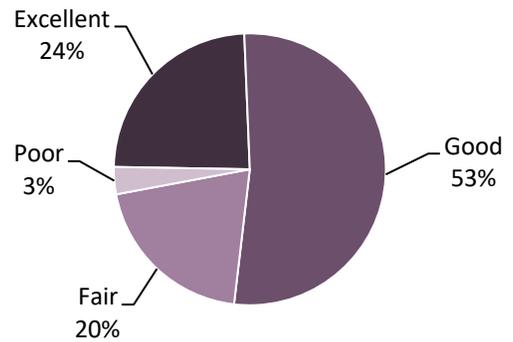


FIGURE 32: INCLUSIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT



FIGURE 33: INCLUSIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT - SUMMARY

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	↑	*	77%
Sense of community	↔	↓	76%
Sense of civic/community pride	↔	*	80%
Neighborliness of Hopkinton	↔	*	73%
Hopkinton as a place to raise children	↑↑	↔	97%
Hopkinton as a place to retire	↓	↔	44%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	↔	↓	59%
Making all residents feel welcome	↔	*	77%
Attracting people from diverse backgrounds	↔	*	53%
Valuing/respecting residents from diverse backgrounds	↔	*	64%
Taking care of vulnerable residents	↔	*	73%
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	↔	↔	66%
Opportunities to volunteer	↔	↓	75%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	↑	↔	79%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

FIGURE 34: RESIDENTS' PARTICIPATION LEVELS

COMPARISON TO NATIONAL BENCHMARK

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

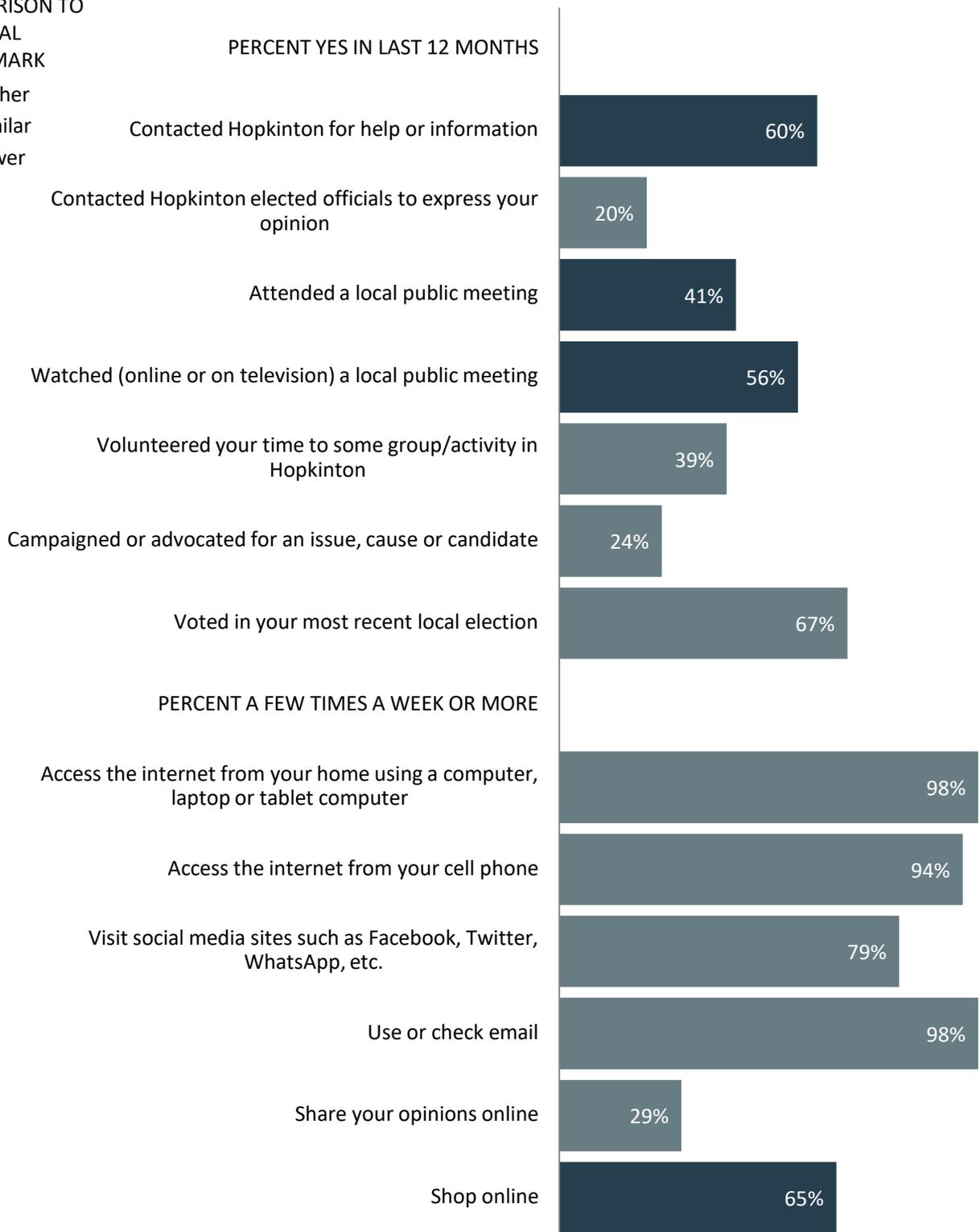


FIGURE 35: RESIDENTS’ PARTICIPATION IN LAST 12 MONTHS- SUMMARY

Percent who had done each in last 12 months	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Contacted Hopkinton for help or information	↑	↔	60%
Contacted Hopkinton elected officials to express your opinion	↔	*	20%
Attended a local public meeting	↑	↓	41%
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	↑↑	↔	56%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Hopkinton	↔	↓	39%
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	↔	*	24%
Voted in your most recent local election	↔	*	67%

FIGURE 36: RESIDENTS’ GENERAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY- SUMMARY

Percent who report doing each at least a few times a week	Comparison to benchmark	2013 to 2020	2020 rating
Access the internet from your home using a computer, laptop or tablet computer	↔	*	98%
Access the internet from your cell phone	↔	*	94%
Visit social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.	↔	*	79%
Use or check email	↔	*	98%
Share your opinions online	↔	*	29%
Shop online	↑	*	65%

Legend

↑↑ Much higher ↑ Higher ↔ Similar ↓ Lower ↓↓ Much lower * Not available

Special Topics

FIGURE 37: IMPORTANT FOCUS AREAS IN NEXT FIVE YEARS

Please rate how important, if at all, you think it is for Hopkinton to address each of the following in the coming five years.

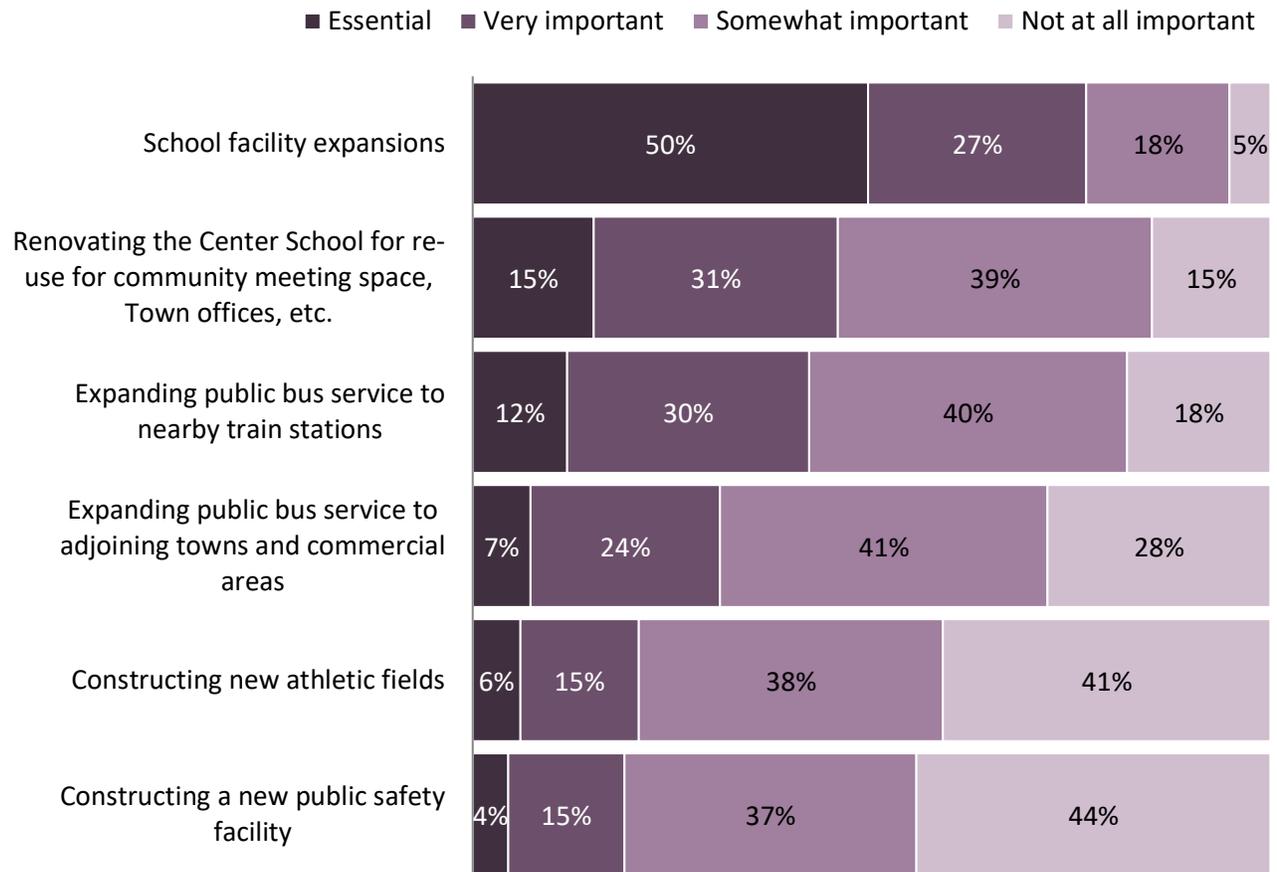


FIGURE 38: SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT LEVEL OF TAXES AND SERVICES

Please select the statement that best describes your opinion:

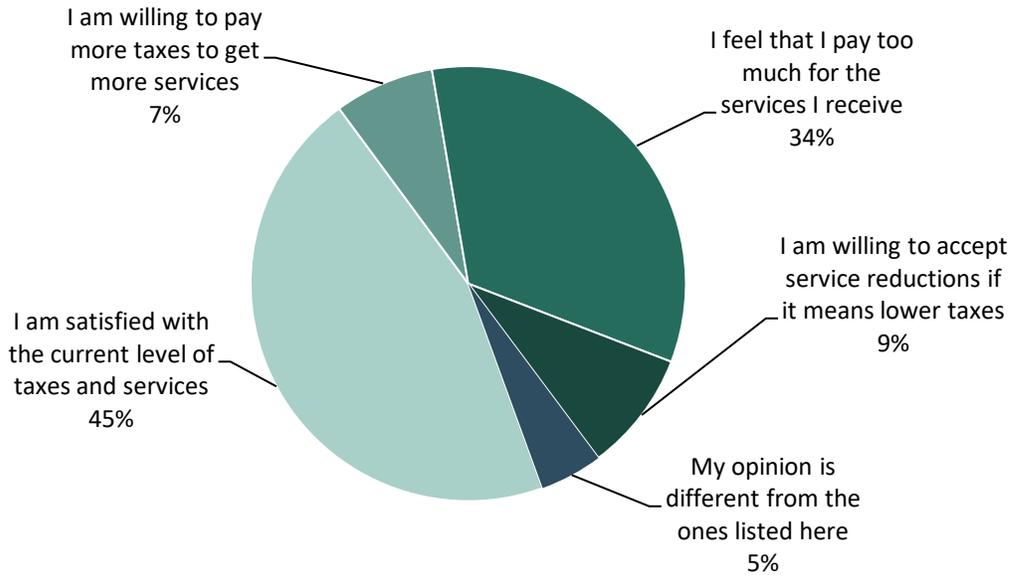


FIGURE 39: MANAGEMENT OF REVENUE DEFICIT DUE TO COVID-19

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the Town is anticipating reductions in local and state revenues in the coming fiscal year. Which of the following best describes how Hopkinton should manage the projected revenue deficit?

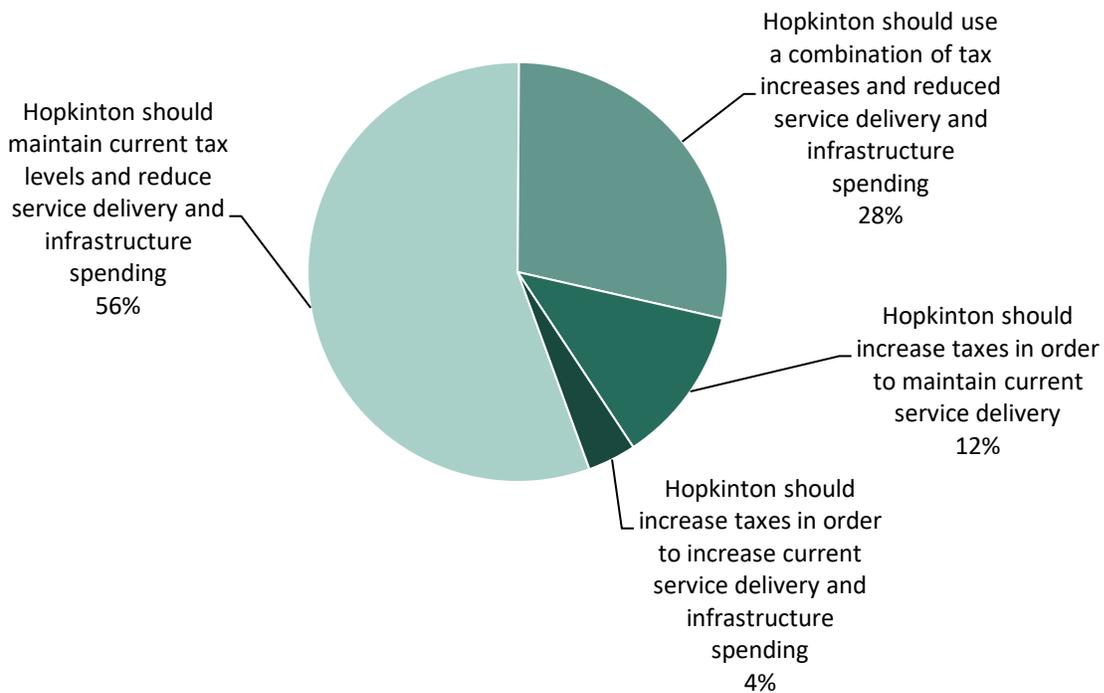


FIGURE 40: GENERAL PRIORITIES FOR HOPKINTON

How much of a priority, if at all, should it be for the Town of Hopkinton to focus on each of the following?

