City of St. John's Resident Satisfaction Survey

2026 Resident Satisfaction Survey Final Report

ST. JOHN'S

Fall 2026



MQO RESEARCH

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Section 1:
Background and Methodology

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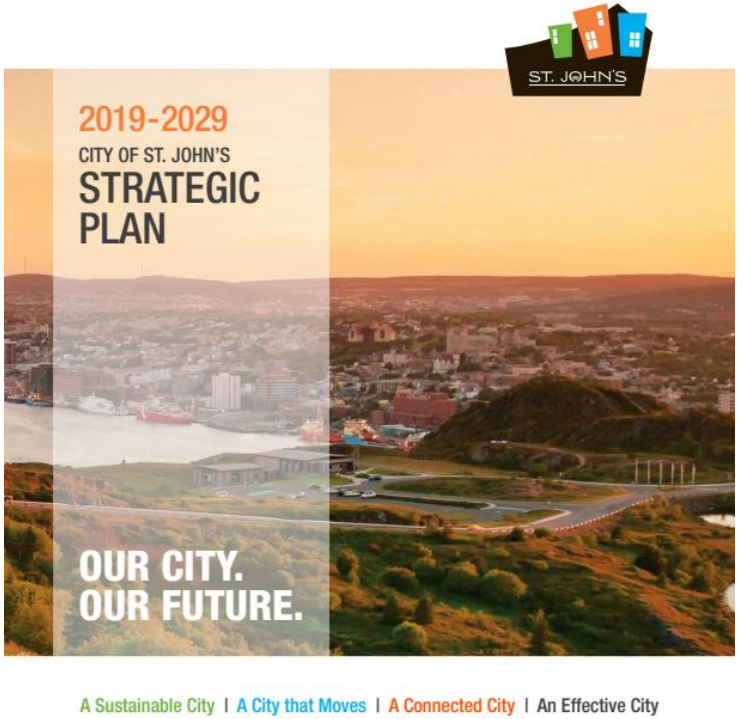
Background

In 2015, the City of St. John's rolled out its first strategic plan, which was used to provide direction for the council and the city's operations based on five core values.

As the council began the process of developing a new strategic plan and budget for the 2019-2021 timeframe, it was determined that a Resident Satisfaction Survey was needed to help guide this process.

The 2018 survey provided a benchmark from which the City can measure any changes in priorities and provide ongoing performance measurement following the implementation of the 2019 Strategic Plan.

Since then, this survey has been repeated in 2020, 2022, 2024 and most recently in 2026 to measure any changes in perceptions over time, and to evaluate the City's performance on key metrics.



Objectives

The key objectives of this research are to:

- Provide further input into the City's strategic planning and budget processes;
- Identify priority issues and priority programs and services;
- Gauge resident awareness, perception of, and satisfaction with City programs and services;
- Identify gaps in services (gap analysis of service importance vs. satisfaction);
- Measure progress/improvement over time;
- Provide data for the City's developing performance management systems;
- Measure resident perceptions of new municipal topics/areas that are relevant for the particular year.

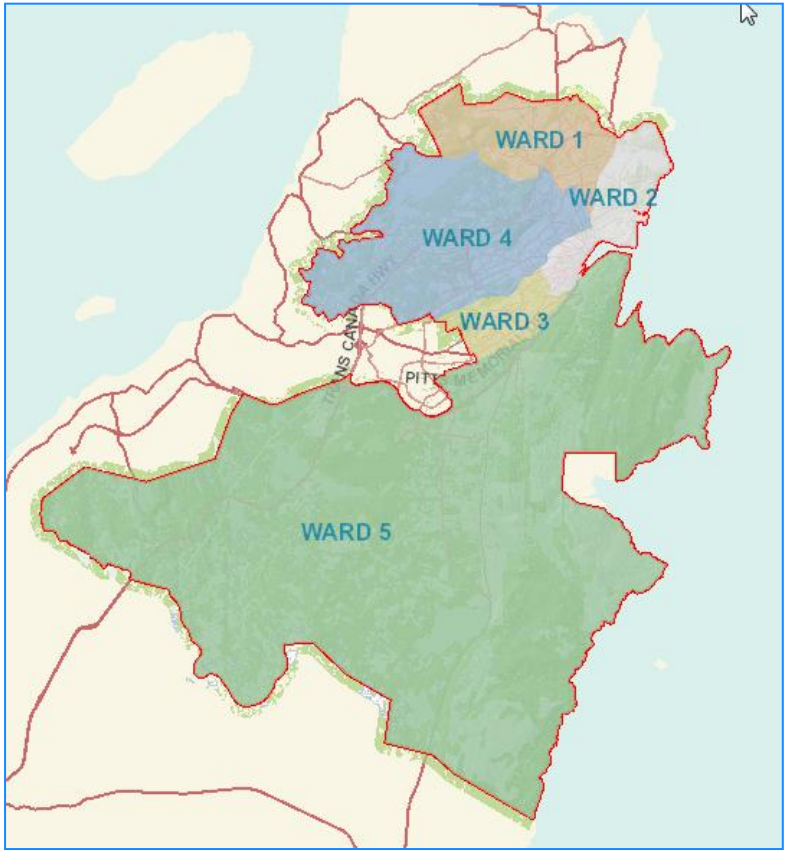


Methodology (1/2)

- A telephone methodology was used for this study. This year, quotas were filled through numbers coded as cellular due to decreasing proportions of landline users and increasing use of cell phones as primary phones across all demographics, so no known landline records were required. However, phone classifications are less clear than they used to be as many home phones now use VoIP or internet-based services and may be coded as cellular/virtual numbers by providers. As a result, some respondents reached through “cell” records may have been using a home phone, but that cannot be verified definitively.
- The survey was conducted between September 2nd and September 22nd, 2026.
- A total of 604 surveys were completed resulting in an overall margin of error of ±3.97 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error at the ward level is ±8.92 percentage points.
- Differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level are highlighted throughout the report. This means the observed differences are unlikely to be due to sampling variation alone.
- Due to a technical issue, question B5 on value for tax dollars was not collected through the 2026 telephone survey; results are based on an additional online-panel survey of 145 homeowners and should be treated as a stand-alone, directional finding, with caution used when comparing results with prior telephone-survey years or other 2026 telephone-survey measures.

Methodology (2/2)

- 120 surveys were completed in each of the 5 Wards of the City using a stratified sampling approach.
- The questionnaire was designed by MQO Research in consultation with the City of St. John's. The average survey length was approximately 26 minutes.
- Results were weighted to reflect the City's age and gender distribution based on the most recent census data. Weighting was applied citywide and not separately by ward.
- The adjacent map provides an overview of the ward boundaries for the City of St. John's.



Context: Newfoundland and Labrador

In interpreting the results from this study, it is important to keep in mind the current economic climate in Newfoundland and Labrador. Housing and cost of living impacts highlight the challenges facing residents which may be reflected in the survey results.

- In 2025, Food First NL reported a quarter of households (25.5%) in Newfoundland and Labrador struggled with food insecurity, down from 30.6% of people in 2024.
- In 2025, the Community Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (CFNL) and Annex Consulting, reported Newfoundland and Labrador was behind the rest of Canada in terms of community housing; 0.3% of housing in the province was community housing compared to an average of 4% nationally.
- In 2026, the price of housing in St. John's continued to rise, a report by Royal LePage found that the median price for all types of homes increased by 4.9% from $372,100 in Q2 2025 to $390,400 in Q2 2026.
- In 2026, The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador reports 29,180 people are recipients of income support, around 5% of the current population of the province.
- In 2026, The NL Anti-Poverty Coalition found that living wages across Newfoundland and Labrador range from $24.40/hour in Central to $28.30/hour for the Labrador-Northern Peninsula region, but the current minimum wage is only $16.35/hour.

* See appendix for sources

Context: Similar Cities

These pressures are not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador and St. John's. Comparable Atlantic Canadian cities, including Halifax, NS, Saint John, NB, and Charlottetown, PEI, are also experiencing housing affordability challenges, rising living costs, income pressures, and growing demands on municipal services. Although conditions vary by city, the 2026 results should be interpreted within this broader regional context.

- Halifax: High or very high life satisfaction declined from 62.8% in 2025 to 58.9% in 2026. The average rating fell from 6.6 to 6.4, although 75.3% remained satisfied with Halifax as a place to live. This suggests that declining quality-of-life perceptions are not unique to St. John's.
- Saint John: Average rent increased 5.5% in 2025 to approximately $1,200 per month, while the average single-family home price increased 9.6% to nearly $343,000. Although still comparatively affordable, housing costs were increasing faster than incomes for many households.
- Charlottetown: The latest living-wage report identified a 0.7% rental vacancy rate for 2025, indicating a particularly constrained rental market.

* See appendix for sources



Section 2:

Executive Summary Infographic

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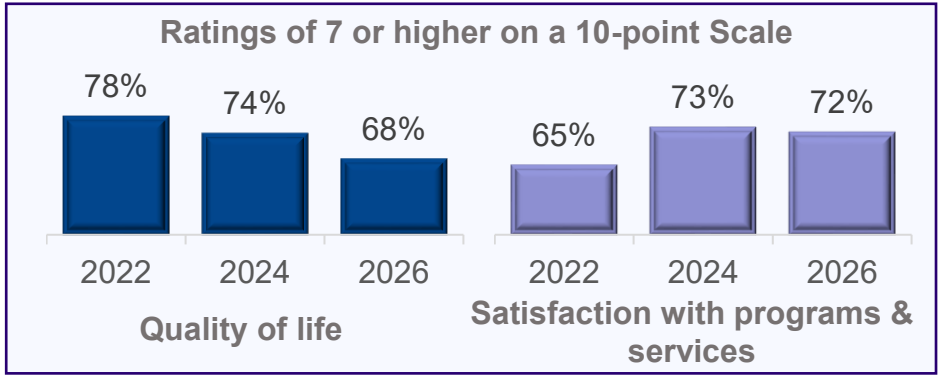
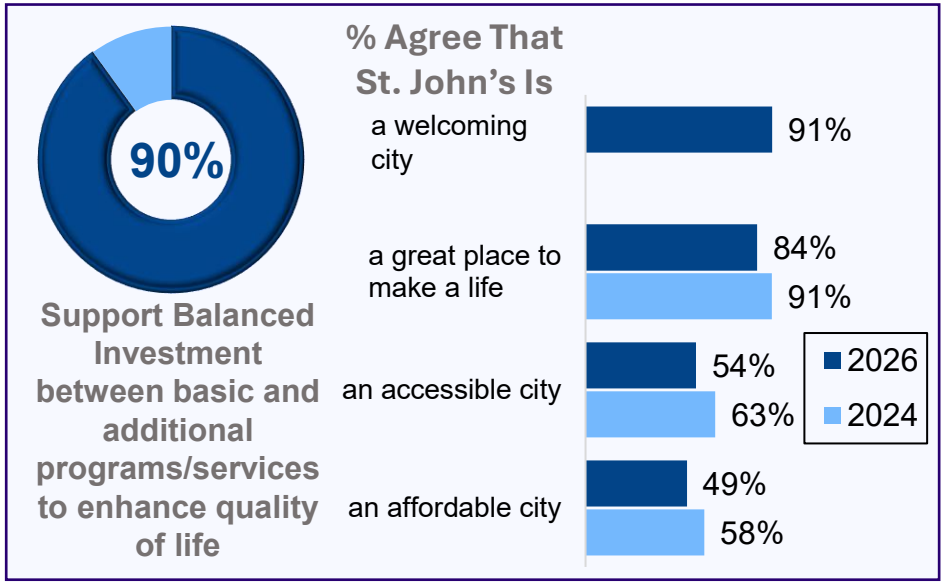
Infographic





Primary Areas for Improvement:
Road maintenance
Road snow clearing
Traffic planning
Sidewalk snow clearing
Metrobus

Sustain and Reinforce:
Garbage collection
Residential water & sewer repairs
Parks, open spaces and trails
Curbside recycling & yard waste
GoBus/Accessible taxi service
Recreation & leisure facilities

Secondary Areas for Improvement:
Permits and inspections
Land use planning
Heritage preservation
Parking services
Arts/cultural grants
Preserving and protecting wetlands

Watch and Maintain:
311/Access St. John's
Community events
Outdoor sports field



Section 3:

Quality of Life

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Overall Quality Of Life

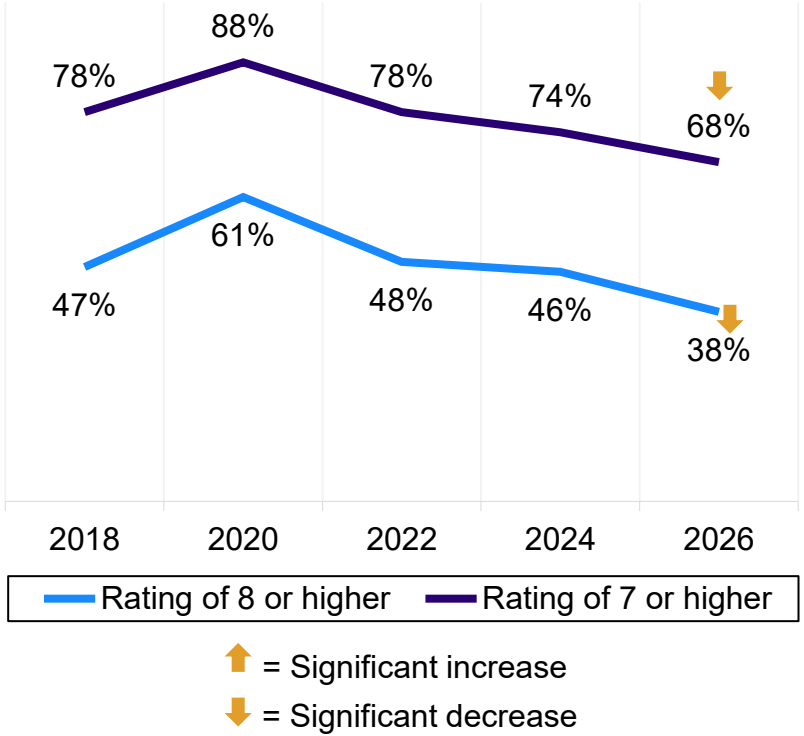
Perceptions of quality of life in St. John's trended down compared to 2024.

In 2026, 38% of residents rated their overall quality of life an 8 or higher on a 10-point scale while 68% gave a rating of 7 or higher. Both continue to maintain a downward trend since peaking in 2020.

Respondents were asked to explain their ratings. The main reasons included:

Reason[2]	2024	2026
Crime/public safety (negative)	15%	**25%** ⬆
Cost of living (negative)	15%	**16%**
Housing crisis/homelessness (negative)	10%	**16%**
Public transit (negative)	11%	**11%**
Snow clearing (negative)	-	**10%**
Road maintenance/conditions (negative)	9%	**9%**

Quality of Life[1]

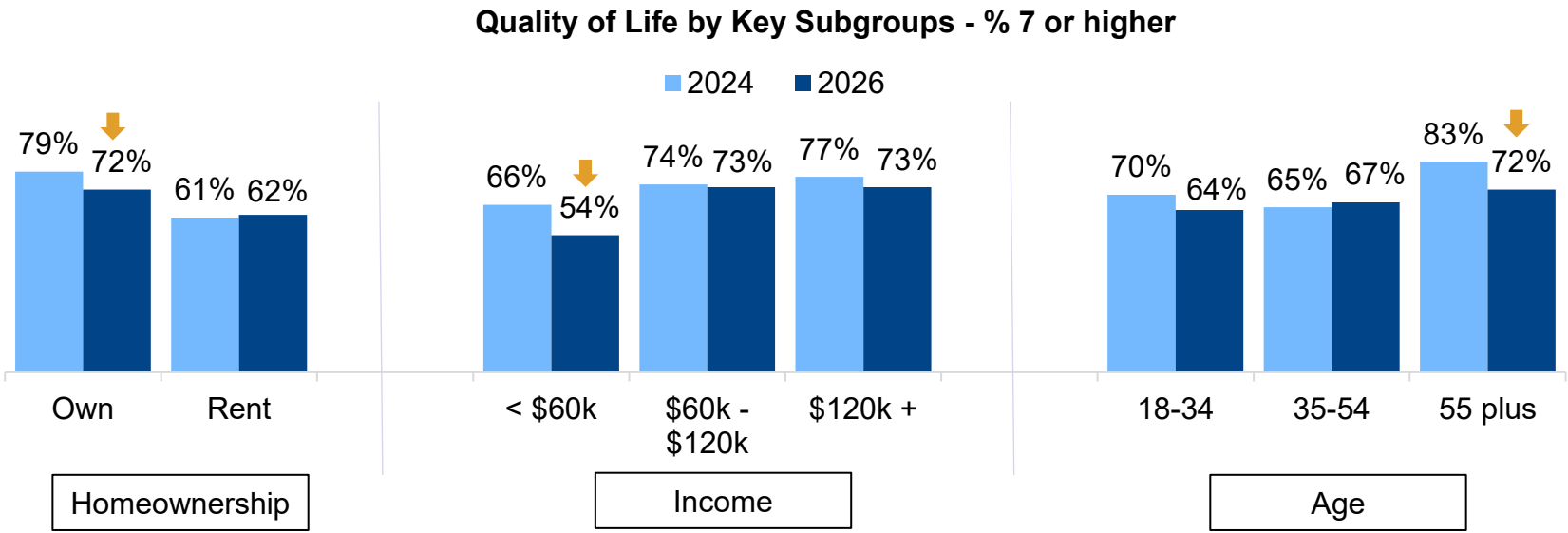


[1]Q. How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City of St. John's today? (n = 604)
[2]Q. Why did you rate the overall quality of life in the City of St. John's a <quality of life rating>? (n = 601)

Overall Quality Of Life By Key Demographics

Quality-of-life ratings remain highest among homeowners (72%), higher-income households (73%), and residents aged 55+ (72%).

Ratings of 7 or higher trended down among most groups, with significant declines for residents aged 55+ (83% to 72%), and lower-income households (66% to 54%).

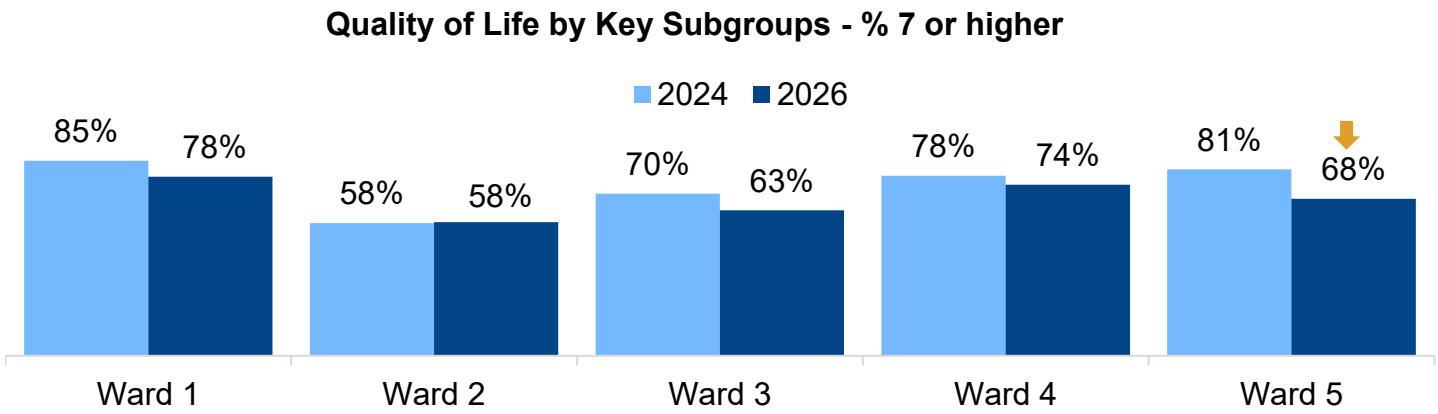


= Significant increase

= Significant decrease **Q. How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City of St. John's today? (n = 604)**

Overall Quality Of Life By Ward

As in 2024, Ward 2 had the lowest ratings for overall quality of life (58%, compared with 63% to 78% elsewhere). Ratings trended down across all wards but only Ward 5 experienced a significant decreased.



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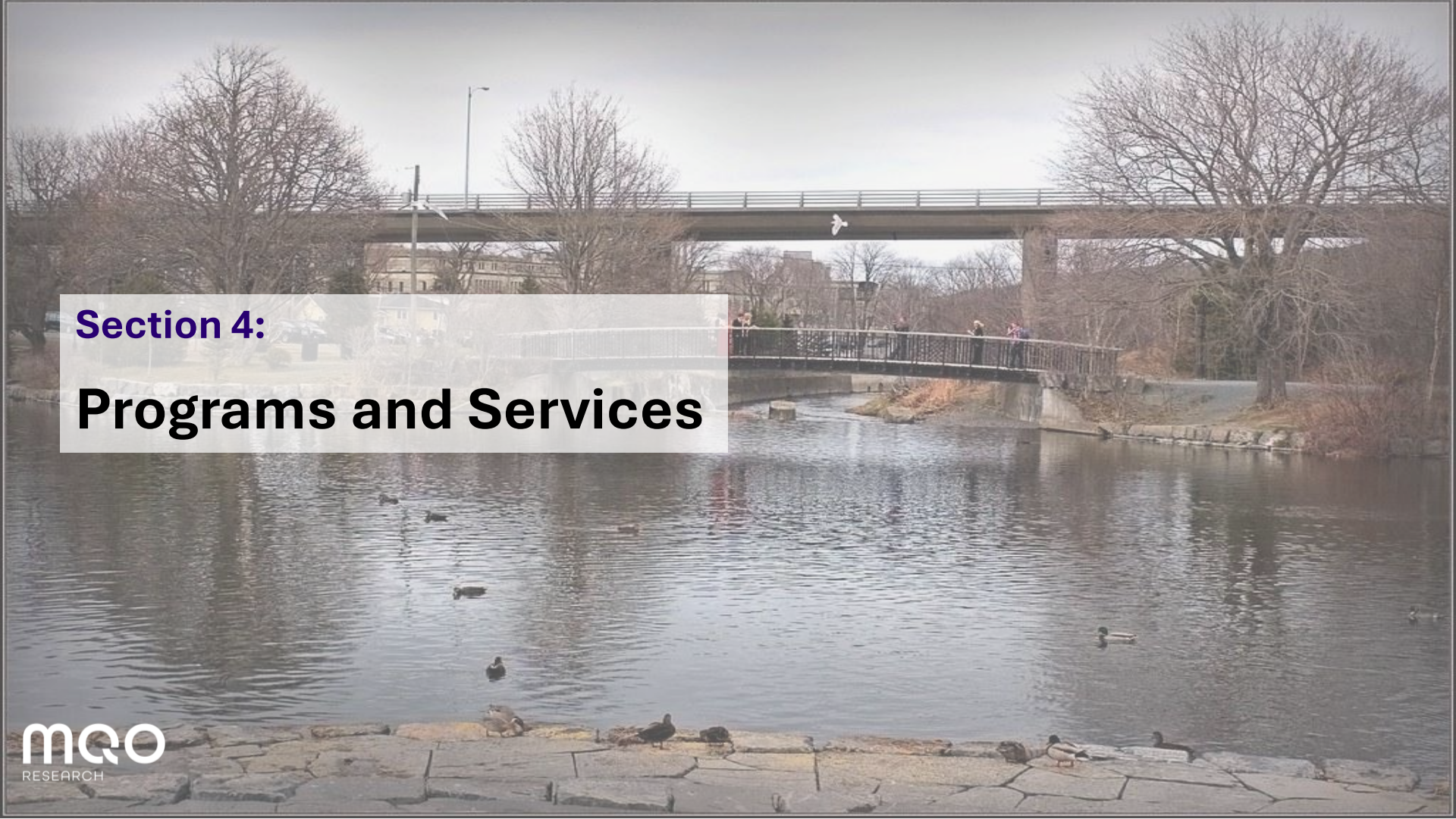
Q. How would you rate the overall quality of life in the City of St. John's today? (n = 604)



Section 4:

Programs and Services

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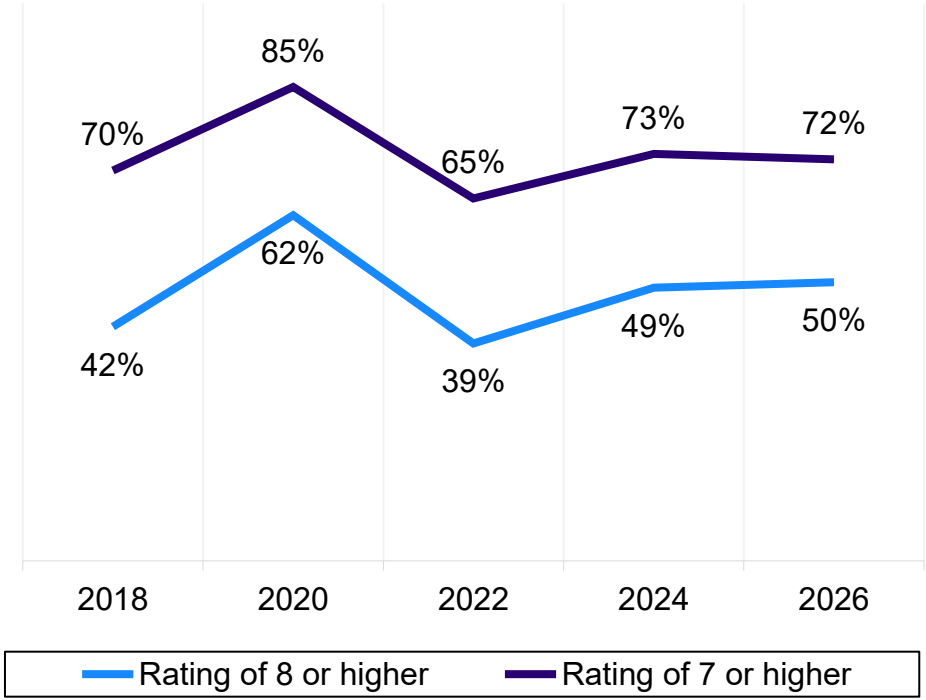
Overall Satisfaction With City Programs And Services

Satisfaction with City programs and services remained stable compared to 2024.

In 2026, 72% of residents rated their overall satisfaction with the programs and services provided by the City of St. John's a 7 or higher, while 50% gave a rating of 8 or higher. Both measures were stable compared to 2024.

Satisfaction remains below levels seen in 2020; however, that year was unique because of COVID-19-related public health measures.

Overall Satisfaction With Services and Programs

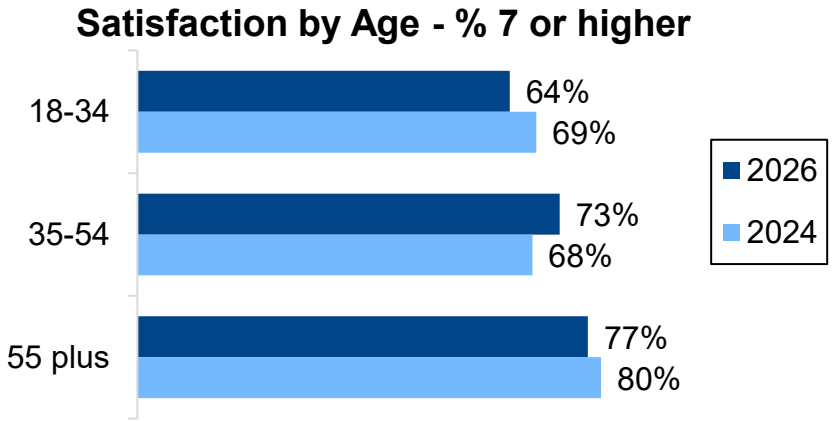


Q. Taking into consideration all City of St. John's services and programs - overall how satisfied are you with what is provided to residents? Please use a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all satisfied, and 10 is very satisfied? (n = 604)

Overall Satisfaction With City Programs By Age

Residents aged 55 or more continue to be the most satisfied group with services and programs offered to residents (77%).

In the age group of 18-34 the proportion of residents satisfied with the City's programs and services trended down from 69% in 2024 to 64% in 2026. Meanwhile satisfaction with the City services and programs trended up among the 35-54 age group from 68% in 2024 to 73% in 2026.



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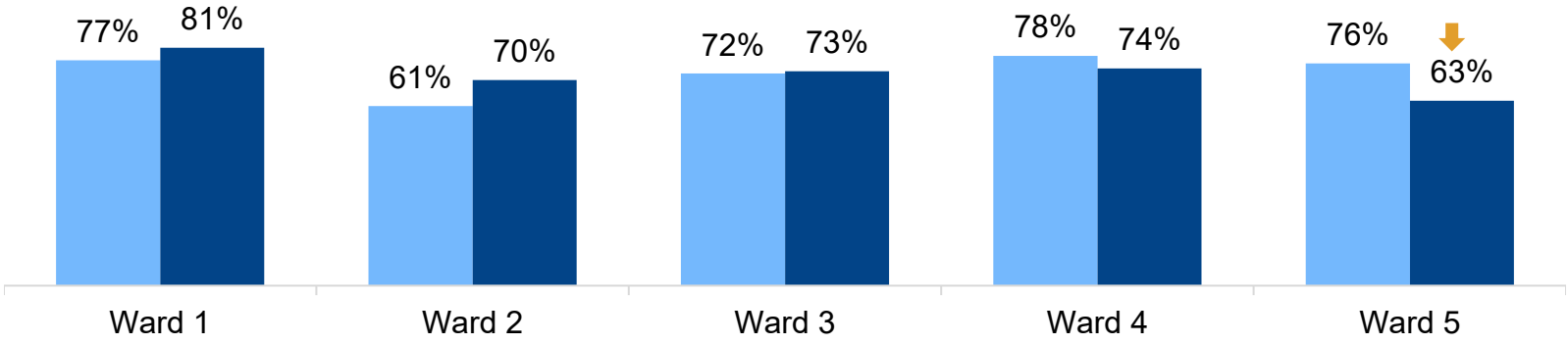
Overall Satisfaction With City Programs By Ward

- **Satisfaction with the City services and programs significantly decreased among residents of Ward 5**, lowering from 76% to 63% and satisfaction levels in Ward 4 decreased from 78% to 74% in 2026.

Satisfaction among residents of Wards 1 and 2 trended up, but differences were not statistically significant.

Satisfaction by Ward - % 7 or higher



⬆ = Significant increase

⬇ = Significant decrease

Q. Taking into consideration all City of St. John's services and programs - overall how satisfied are you with what is provided to residents? Please use a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all satisfied, and 10 is very satisfied? (n = 604)

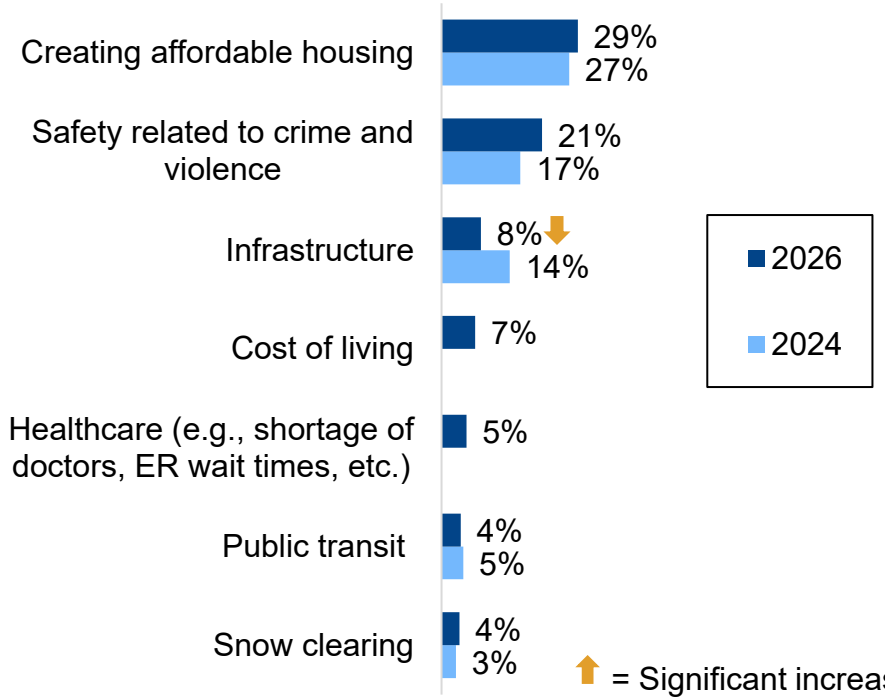
Most Important Issue Facing Community

Creating affordable housing remained the most important issue in 2026. Over one-quarter of residents identified it (29%) as the most important issue facing their community.

The second most mentioned issue was safety related to crime and violence (21%), followed by infrastructure (8%).

The need for affordable housing increased as household income decreased; over a third of residents with household income less than $60k (37%) felt affordable housing was the most important issue facing the community, compared with 30% of residents with an income between 60K and 120K, and less than a quarter of residents with an income of $ 120k+ (24%).

Most Important Issue Facing St. John's[1]



Q. In your view, what is the most important issue facing your community, that is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your Mayor and Members of Council? (n = 604)

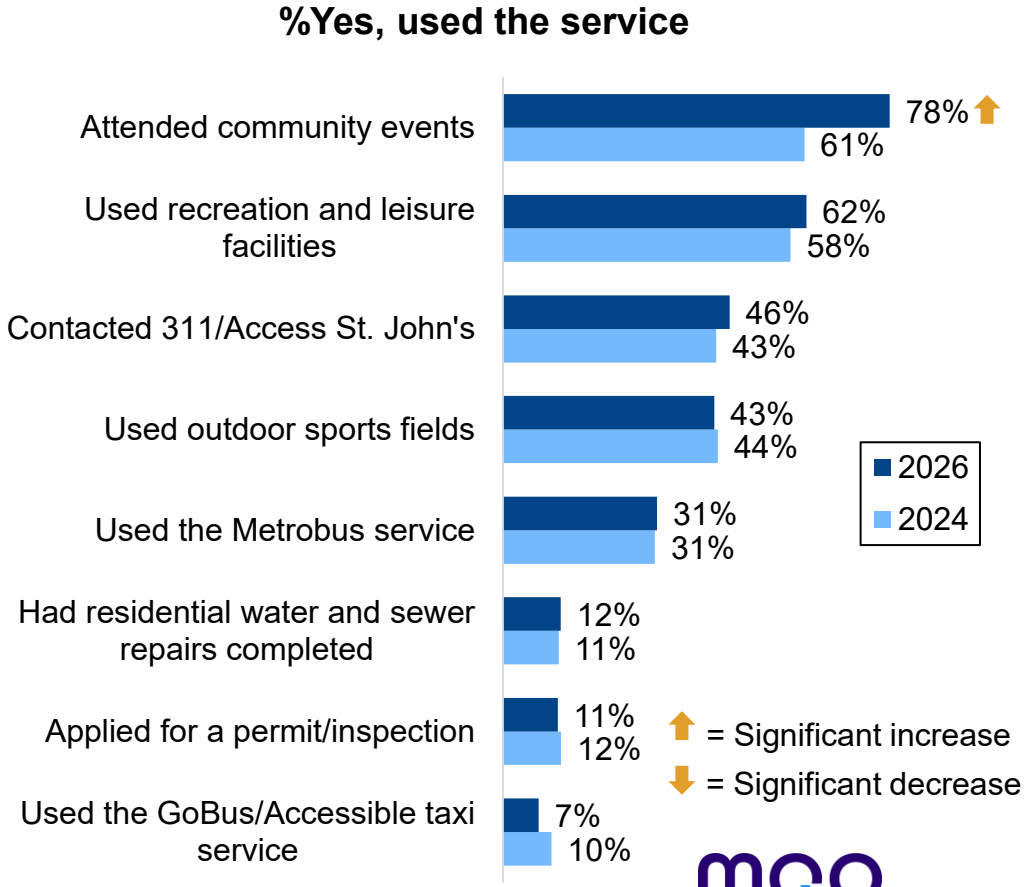
[1]Don't know (8%) and categories with 3% or fewer response rate were not reported

Service Usage

Residents were asked if they had used eight City services in the past 12 months. Attending community events (78%, up 17% from 2024) and using recreation and leisure facilities (62%) remained the top two services used.

Just under half contacted 311/Access St. John's (46%) or used outdoor sports fields (43%).

Similar to 2024, under one-third used the Metrobus service (31%), and around a tenth had residential water and sewer repairs completed (12%), applied for a permit/ inspection (11%), or used the GoBus/accessible taxi service (7%).



Q. In the past 12 months, have you...? (n = 604)

Service Usage By Key Demographics

Metrobus usage:

- Residents aged 18-34 (48%) are more likely to have used Metrobus than those aged 35-54 (34%) or 55+ (17%).
- Residents living in St. John's for 10 years or less (47%) are more likely to have used Metrobus than those living in St. John's for 11-20 years (31%) or 20+ years (21%).
- Minority group residents are more likely to have used Metrobus (46%) compared to non-minorities (22%).
- Residents from Ward 5 were less likely (19%) to have used Metrobus than residents from other wards (32%-36%).

Use of other services:

- The use of 311/Access St. John's increased with age: a third of residents aged 18-34 (33%) had contacted 311/Access St. John's compared to a little under half of residents aged 35-54 (44%), and over half of residents aged 55+ (57%).
- Residents who had lived in St. John's for 10 years or less (30%) were less likely to have contacted 311/Access St. John's than those living in St. John's for 11-20 years (43%) or 20+ years (57%).

City Programs And Services - Overview

In order to assess the programs and services currently provided by the City of St. John's, residents were provided with a list of 20 service areas and asked to rate the importance of each service area and how satisfied they were with each.

Table 1: Service Areas Evaluated	
Grants and supports to arts, festivals, and cultural activities	Preserving and protecting wetlands
Parks, open spaces, and trails	Metrobus service
Curbside recycling & yard waste	Garbage collection
Outdoor sports fields such as soccer pitches, tennis courts, baseball fields	Traffic planning and management such as street design, signage, and signals
Recreation and leisure facilities, programs, and activities	GoBus/Accessible taxi service
Community events such as the Downtown Pedestrian Mall and Holiday Lights at Bowring Park	Parking services such as meters, permits, parking lots and enforcement
Road maintenance	Road snow clearing
Residential water and sewer repairs	Sidewalk snow clearing
Heritage preservation	311/Access St. John's
Permits and inspections process for such things as building, electrical and plumbing	Land use planning such as development regulations and residential vs. commercial zoning areas

Overall Importance Of City Programs And Services

Overall, residents tended to rate the importance of most programs and services similarly to 2024, while ratings for a few service areas changed.

Parks, open spaces, and trails, preserving and protecting wetlands and parking services trended down by four to five percentage points. On the other hand, grants and supports to arts and culture, and community events increased by six percentage points.

Table 2: Importance (% 8 or higher)		Change 2024-2026
	2026	+/-
Road snow clearing	91%	-1%
Garbage collection	90%	-3%
Residential water and sewer repairs	89%	-1%
Road maintenance	83%	-3%
Parks, open spaces, and trails	81%	-4%
Sidewalk snow clearing	80%	-1%
Metrobus service	79%	+1%
Traffic planning	79%	-1%
Curbside recycling & yard waste	78%	-1%
GoBus/Accessible taxi service	77%	+1%

Table 2: Importance (% 8 or higher)		Change 2024-2026
	2026	+/-
Recreation and leisure facilities	75%	+2%
Preserving and protecting wetlands	73%	-5%
311/Access St. John's	69%	+4%
Outdoor sports fields	67%	-1%
Land use planning	67%	0%
Permits and inspections process	67%	+1%
Heritage preservation	63%	+5%
Grants and supports to arts & culture	59%	**+6%** ⬆
Community events	59%	**+6%** ⬆
Parking services	45%	-4%

Q. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some of the programs and services provided by the City of St. John's. First, please rate how important you feel the service is (n = 604)

⬆ = Significant increase

⬇ = Significant decrease

Importance And Satisfaction For Programs & Services Among Users

Overall, those who used the services tended to give higher importance ratings compared to those who did not use the services.

St. John's residents who used Metrobus, residential water and sewer services, GoBus/accessible tax services, recreation and leisure facilities, 311/access St. John's, outdoor sports fields, or attended community events gave higher importance ratings than those who did not use these services.

Table 3: Importance by Usage & Satisfaction (% 8 or higher)	Importance		Satisfaction
	Did not use	Used service	Used service
Residential water and sewer repairs	88%	**94%**	**62%**
Metrobus service	74%	**89%**	**40%**
GoBus/Accessible taxi service	76%	**91%**	**66%**
Recreation and leisure facilities	64%	**81%**	**61%**
311/Access St. John's	61%	**75%**	**79%**
Outdoor sports fields	61%	**75%**	**67%**
Permits and inspections process	68%	**62%**	**31%**
Community events	45%	**63%**	**65%**

Q. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some of the programs and services provided by the City of St. John's. First, please rate how important you feel the service is (n = 604)

Q. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some of the programs and services again and this time please rate your overall satisfaction with that service (n varies by program/service)

Satisfaction With City Programs And Services

The following table shows the level of satisfaction with each of the 20 service areas that were evaluated and the change from 2024 to 2026. Seven out of twenty service areas experienced significant decreases in satisfaction levels. *Road snow clearing* experienced the largest decrease of ten percent.

Satisfaction with 311/access St. John's, outdoor sports fields, community events, residential water and sewer repairs, recreation and leisure facilities, Metrobus, and the permits and inspection process was asked only of those who used these services. Among these services, only satisfaction with community events decreased compared to 2024.

Table 4: Satisfaction (% 8 or higher)		Change 2024-2026
	2026	+/-
Garbage collection	86%	-1%
311/Access St. John's (n=282)	79%	+2%
Curbside recycling & yard waste	73%	-2%
Parks, open spaces, and trails	68%	**-8%** ↓
Outdoor sports fields (n=274)	67%	+3%
GoBus/Accessible taxi service (n=46)	66%	+8%
Community Events (n=478)	65%	**-9%** ↓
Residential water and sewer repairs (n=71)	62%	-7%
Recreation and leisure facilities (n=371)	61%	-1%
Heritage preservation	41%	**-6%** ↓

Table 4: Satisfaction (% 8 or higher)		Change 2024-2026
	2026	+/-
Grants and supports to arts and culture	41%	**-6%** ↓
Parking services	41%	-2%
Metrobus service (n=180)	40%	+2%
Preserving and protecting wetlands	40%	**-9%** ↓
Road snow clearing	38%	**-10%** ↓
Traffic planning	32%	-4%
Permits and inspections process (n=72)	31%	-5%
Land use planning	28%	-4%
Sidewalk snow clearing	22%	-2%
Road maintenance	21%	-4%

Q. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some of the programs and services again and this time please rate your overall satisfaction with that service (n=604, unless stated otherwise)

↑ = Significant increase

↓ = Significant decrease

Gap Analysis – Perceived Importance Vs. Satisfaction

A **gap analysis** was conducted to identify the difference between the perceived importance of each service area and residents' level of satisfaction. The gap analysis identifies those service attributes for which there is a gap in how important an attribute is to a resident and how the City is performing.

As illustrated in the sample table below, the gap analysis identifies key attributes where the perceived current service level matches the importance of that service area and where there is a "gap."

Table 5: Gap Analysis - Example

	Importance % rating 8 or higher	Satisfaction % rating 8 or higher	Difference (percentage points)
Service Area #1	56%	52%	- 4
Service Area #2	75%	23%	- 52



Service area #2 highlights a significant gap that should be addressed.

Q. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some of the programs and services provided by the City of St. John's. First, please rate how important you feel the service is (n = 604)
Q. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some of the programs and services again and this time please rate your overall satisfaction with that service (n varies by program/service)

Gap Analysis (1/2)

The table on the following slide shows the difference between the perceived importance of each service area and residents' level of satisfaction.

As the table demonstrates, the largest gaps exist for areas related to roads and transportation, such as road maintenance (-62%), road snow clearing (-53%), sidewalk snow clearing(-58%), and traffic planning (-47%).

Conversely, there was minimal difference between the importance and satisfaction for curbside recycling & yard waste (-5%), parking services (-4%), garbage collection (-4%), and outdoor sports fields (0%).

Community events (+6%) and 311/Access St. John's (+10%) had a positive difference indicating that satisfaction with these service areas was higher than their importance.

Gap Analysis (2/2)

Table 6: Gap Analysis (2026)	% 8 or higher		Difference
	Importance	Satisfaction	+/-
311/Access St. John's	69%	79%	**10%**
Community Events	59%	65%	**6%**
Outdoor sports fields	67%	67%	**0%**
Parking services	45%	41%	**-4%**
Garbage collection	90%	86%	**-4%**
Curbside recycling & yard waste	78%	73%	**-5%**
GoBus/Accessible taxi service	77%	66%	-11%
Parks, open spaces, and trails	81%	68%	-13%
Recreation and leisure facilities	75%	61%	-14%
Grants and supports to arts and culture	59%	41%	-18%
Heritage preservation	63%	41%	-22%
Residential water and sewer repairs	89%	62%	-27%
Preserving and protecting wetlands	73%	40%	-33%
Permits and inspections process	67%	31%	-36%
Metrobus service	79%	40%	-39%
Land use planning	67%	28%	-39%
Traffic planning	79%	32%	**-47%**
Road snow clearing	91%	38%	**-53%**
Sidewalk snow clearing	80%	22%	**-58%**
Road maintenance	83%	21%	**-62%**

Priority Areas (1/2)

Program and service areas were grouped based on the level of importance and satisfaction (e.g., Primary areas for improvement have high importance and low satisfaction).

In 2026, preserving and protecting wetlands moved into the secondary areas for improvement category.

2024	2026
Primary Areas for Improvement: Road maintenance Road snow clearing Traffic planning Sidewalk snow clearing Metrobus Preserving and protecting wetlands	**Primary Areas for Improvement:** Road maintenance Road snow clearing Traffic planning Sidewalk snow clearing Metrobus
Secondary Areas for Improvement: Permits and inspections Land use planning Heritage preservation Parking services Arts/cultural grants	**Secondary Areas for Improvement:** Permits and inspections Land use planning Heritage preservation Parking services Arts/cultural grants Preserving and protecting wetlands

Priority Areas (2/2)

In 2026, recreation and leisure facilities moved into the sustain and reinforce category. Most other programs and services were unchanged in terms of level of priority.

2024	2026
Sustain and Reinforce: Garbage collection Residential water and sewer repairs Parks, open spaces and trails Curbside recycling & yard waste GoBus/Accessible taxi service	**Sustain and Reinforce:** Garbage collection Residential water and sewer repairs Parks, open spaces and trails Curbside recycling & yard waste GoBus/Accessible taxi service Recreation and leisure facilities
Watch and Maintain: 311/Access St. John's Community events Outdoor sports field Recreation and leisure facilities	**Watch and Maintain:** 311/Access St. John's Community events Outdoor sports field

Summary By Ward

	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5
Road maintenance	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Road snow clearing	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Traffic planning	Primary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Primary
Sidewalk snow clearing	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Protecting wetlands	Secondary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Secondary
Metrobus	Sustain	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
GoBus/Accessible taxi service	Watch	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
Land use planning	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Parking services	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Watch
Heritage preservation	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
Arts/cultural grants	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Watch
Permits and inspections process	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary	Watch
Residential water and sewer repairs	Sustain	Primary	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
Parks, open spaces, and trails	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
Recreation facilities and programs	Sustain	Watch	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
Curbside recycling/Yard waste	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
Garbage collection	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain	Sustain
311/Access St. John’s	Watch	Sustain	Watch	Watch	Watch
Community events	Watch	Watch	Watch	Watch	Watch
Outdoor sports field	Watch	Watch	Watch	Watch	Watch



Section 5:
Communication and Engagement

MQO RESEARCH

Interactions With City Staff

Overall agreement that residents have positive interactions with the City trended down.

Overall, 43% of residents surveyed had direct contact with the City over the past 12 months.

Among this group, residents expressed positive views towards their interactions, though there were decreases for two statements. The weakest area continued to be allowing residents to have meaningful input into decision-making, for which agreement trended down from 57% to 42% in 2026.

The strongest area continued to be that City staff are courteous, helpful, and knowledgeable (81%) though it trended slightly down compared to 2024.

⬆ = Significant increase

⬇ = Significant decrease

% Agree

Table 7: Interactions with Staff	2020	2022	2024	2026
City staff are courteous, helpful, and knowledgeable	86%	86%	87%	**81%**
When I contact the City I get the information I am looking for	83%	81%	81%	**77%**
The City makes customer service a priority	71%	66%	67%	**57%**⬇
The City responds in a timely manner to requests and concerns	69%	67%	61%	**59%**
The City allows citizens to have meaningful input into decision-making	60%	51%	57%	**42%**⬇

Q. Thinking about your personal dealings with the City of St. John's please indicate whether you ____ with each of the following statements about the City??

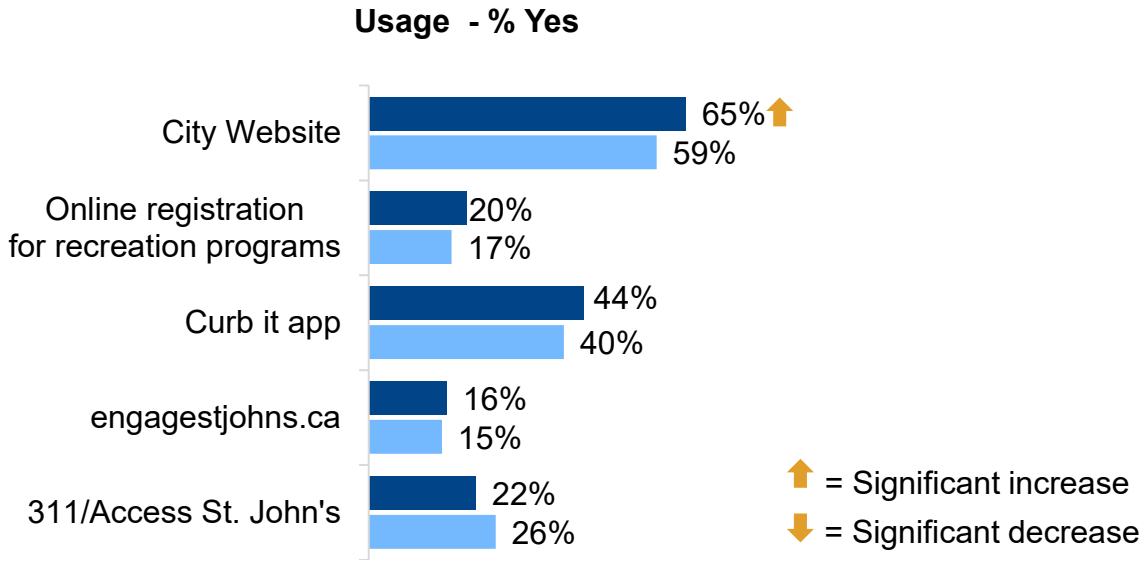
SUBSET: Those who had direct contact or dealt with the City of St. John's (n = 260)

MQO RESEARCH

Usage Of Online Services

In 2026, online service usage increased for two out of the five services. This year 65% of St. John's residents accessed the City website, up from 59% in 2024.

Usage of the 'curb it app' (44%) also increased marginally from 2024 (40%). Meanwhile, online registration for programs (20%) and use of engagestjohns.ca (16%) remained stable from 2024.



Q. Next, I'm going to read you a list of online services the City provides. For each one, first, please indicate whether or not you have used it (n = 604)

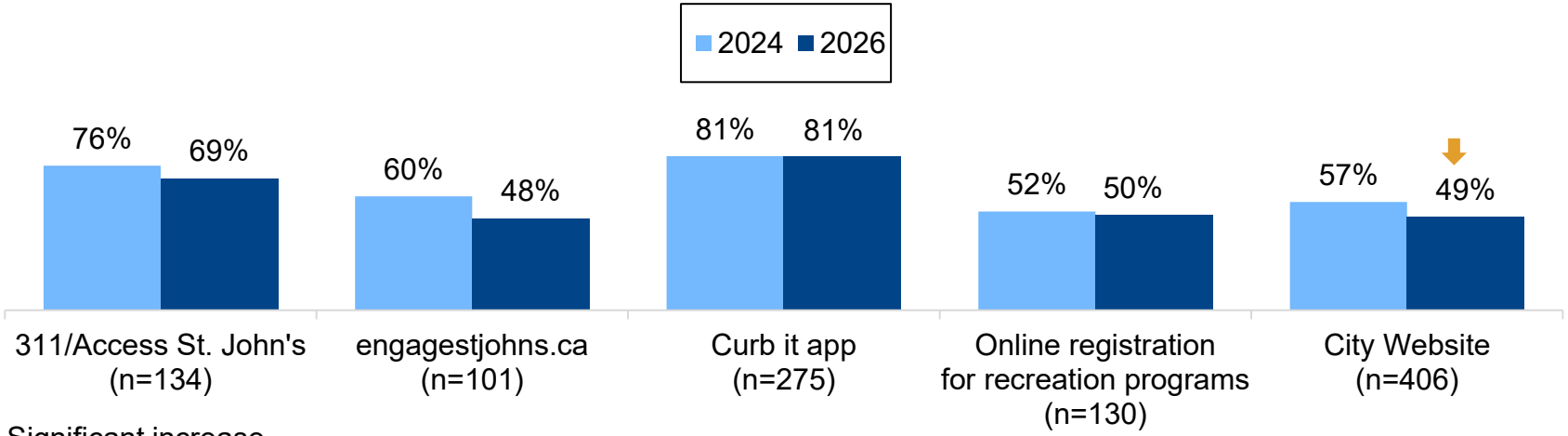
Satisfaction With Online Services

In 2026, online service satisfaction with the City website decreased from 57% in 2024 to 49%.

Satisfaction for online registration (50%) and the 'curb it app' (81%) remained stable while fewer residents were satisfied with 311/access St. John's (69%, down from 76%) and engagestjohns.ca (48%, down from 60%).

The City's website, engagestjohns.ca and 311/Access online tools have changed since the 2024 survey.

Satisfaction - % 8 or higher (1-10 Scale)



⬆ = Significant increase

⬇ = Significant decrease

Q. For each one, please rate your overall satisfaction with...
SUBSET: Respondents that used the online service(s)

Communication And Accountability

Overall, the City's performance in terms of communication and accountability decreased compared to 2024.

Consistent with previous years, the City received its highest rating for keeping residents informed (61%), although this result trended down from 2024 (66%).

It was rated the lowest in terms of managing the City's money responsibly (43%), and being accountable (43%, down 7%).

Resident ratings for the City making decisions in their best interest also trended down in 2026 (50%, from 56% in 2024).

% Good, Very Good and Excellent

Table 8: City's Performance	2020	2022	2024	2026
Keeps residents informed	76%	66%	66%	**61%↓**
Open and transparent information	70%	57%	59%	**56%**
Making decisions that are in the best interest to the community	65%	57%	56%	**50%↓**
Being accountable to the public	65%	47%	50%	**43%↓**
Managing the City's money responsibly	56%	47%	44%	**43%**

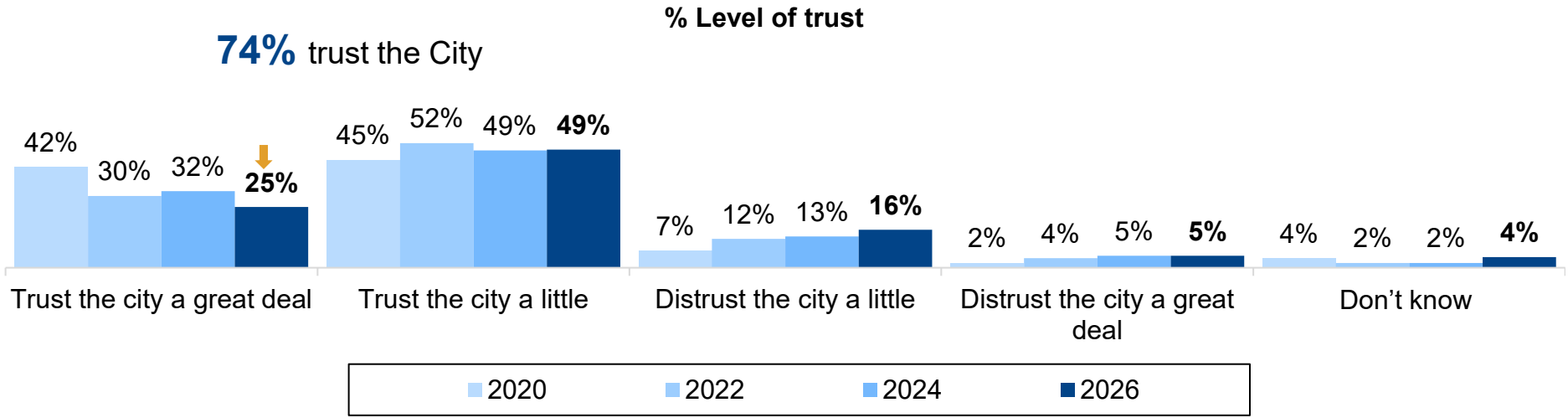
Q. In your opinion, does the City of St. John's do an excellent, very good, good, fair or poor job in terms of…? (n = 604)

↑ = Significant increase

↓ = Significant decrease

Level Of Trust

Overall, 74% of residents expressed some level of trust in the City, down from 81% in 2024.
Meanwhile, 21% expressed some level of distrust, marginally up from 18%.



Q. To what extent do you trust or distrust the City of St. John's? Do you… (n = 604)

= Significant increase
= Significant decrease



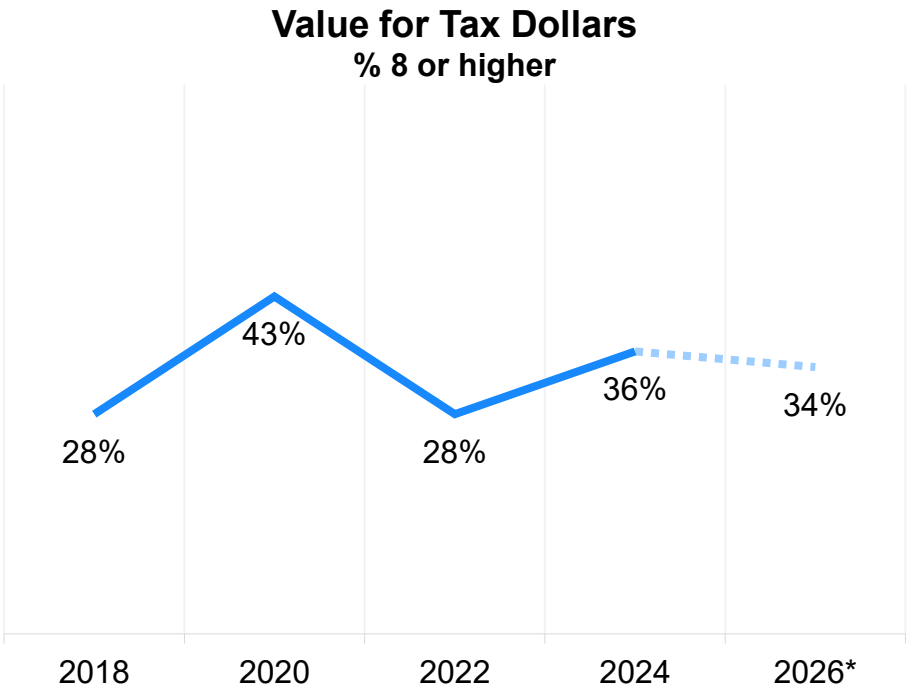
Section 6:

Taxation and Capital Spending

MQO RESEARCH

Value For Tax Dollars

This year, 34% rated the overall value for tax dollars with an 8 or higher.



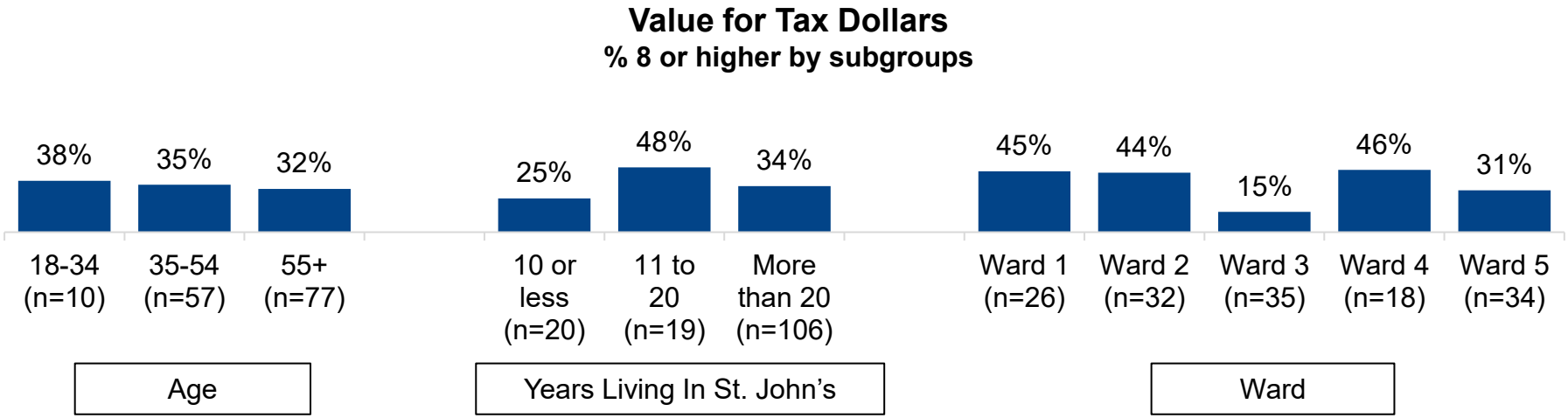
**Due to a technical issue, this question was not collected by telephone in 2026. Results are based on an online panel sample of 145 homeowners and should be interpreted directionally and with caution when compared with prior survey years or other 2026 telephone-survey findings.*

Q. How would you rate the overall value of what you receive for your tax dollars?
SUBSET: Those who own their home (n=145)

Value For Tax Dollars

Residents who have lived in St. John's for 10 years or less are generally less likely to rate the value they receive for their tax dollars as 8 or higher.

Residents of Wards 3 and 5 are generally less likely to provide ratings of 8 or higher than residents of the other wards.



**Due to a technical issue, this question was not collected by telephone in 2026. Results are based on an online panel sample of 145 homeowners and should be interpreted directionally and with caution when comparing subgroups due to the limited sample size.*

Q. How would you rate the overall value of what you receive for your tax dollars?
SUBSET: Those who own their home (n=145)

Capital Spending

Recreation and community facilities rank first for inclusion in the top three priorities (70%), but energy efficiency ranks first as respondents' single top priority (33%).

All areas experienced an increase in terms of being ranked first or within respondents' top 3.
Even though priorities may have shifted, these changes should be interpreted with caution due to the removal of 2024's top category "City-owned and operated non-profit housing" from the options, as the city does not build houses.

Table 9: Priority Area For Capital Spending	Ranked Top 3			Ranked 1		
	2024	**2026**	-/+	2024	**2026**	-/+
Recreation and community facilities	59%	**70%**	+11% ⬆	17%	**26%**	+9% ⬆
Initiatives to improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gases and reduce operating costs	54%	**64%**	+10% ⬆	15%	**33%**	+18% ⬆
Parks and playgrounds	39%	**54%**	+15% ⬆	9%	**15%**	+6% ⬆
Green spaces and outdoor facilities	40%	**53%**	+13% ⬆	7%	**11%**	+4% ⬆
Cycling infrastructure	24%	**36%**	+12% ⬆	5%	**9%**	+4% ⬆

Q. When thinking of capital spending on infrastructure other than water, sewer, and road maintenance, which of the following should be the first priority? What should be the second priority? And the third? (n = 604)
***City-owned and operated non-profit housing was not asked in the 2026 survey**

⬆ = Significant increase
⬇ = Significant decrease

Taxes

There is still significant support for balancing investments between providing basic services and additional programs/services to enhance the quality of life (90% in 2026, 87% in 2024).

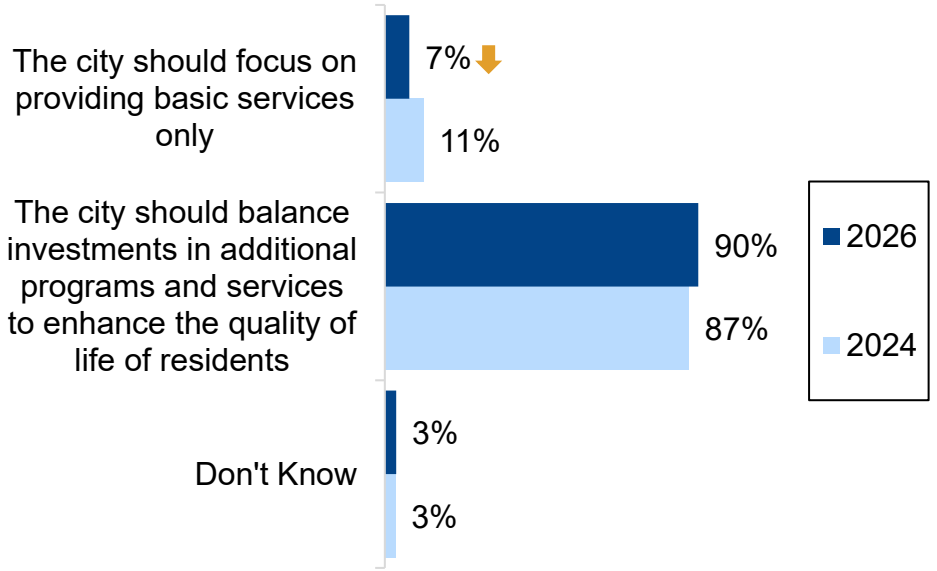
The number of residents who think the City should provide basic services only remained relatively low (7%, down from 11% in 2024).

Results were consistent across key demographics.

⬆ = Significant increase

⬇ = Significant decrease

% Support for Balanced Investing



Q. Which of the following statements best describes your view on how the City invests in basic services such as snow clearing, roads and garbage collection versus recreation and community facilities, green spaces and other quality of life programs and services? (n = 604)

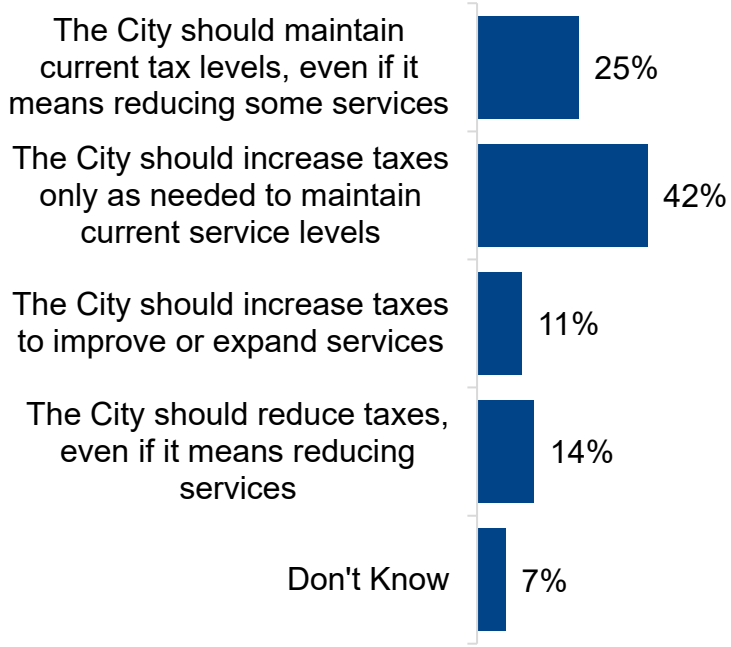
Future Tax Increases

Under half of surveyed residents support an increase in taxes only as needed to maintain current service levels (42%).

A quarter of residents (25%) felt the City should maintain current tax levels, even if it means reducing some services. Around a tenth felt that the City should increase taxes to improve or expand services (11%) or that the City should reduce taxes even if it means reducing services (14%).

Twice as many residents (31%) with a household income over $120K reported that the City should maintain current tax levels, even if it means reducing some services than those with household incomes less than $60K (14%).

Opinions on tax increases



Q. As the cost of providing City services continues to increase over time due to inflation and other increases, which statement best reflects your view? (n = 604)

Services to Reduce

When residents who think the City should maintain or reduce current tax levels were asked which services should be reduced, the most frequently reported area for reduction was parks and recreation (20%), followed by arts and cultural services (8%).

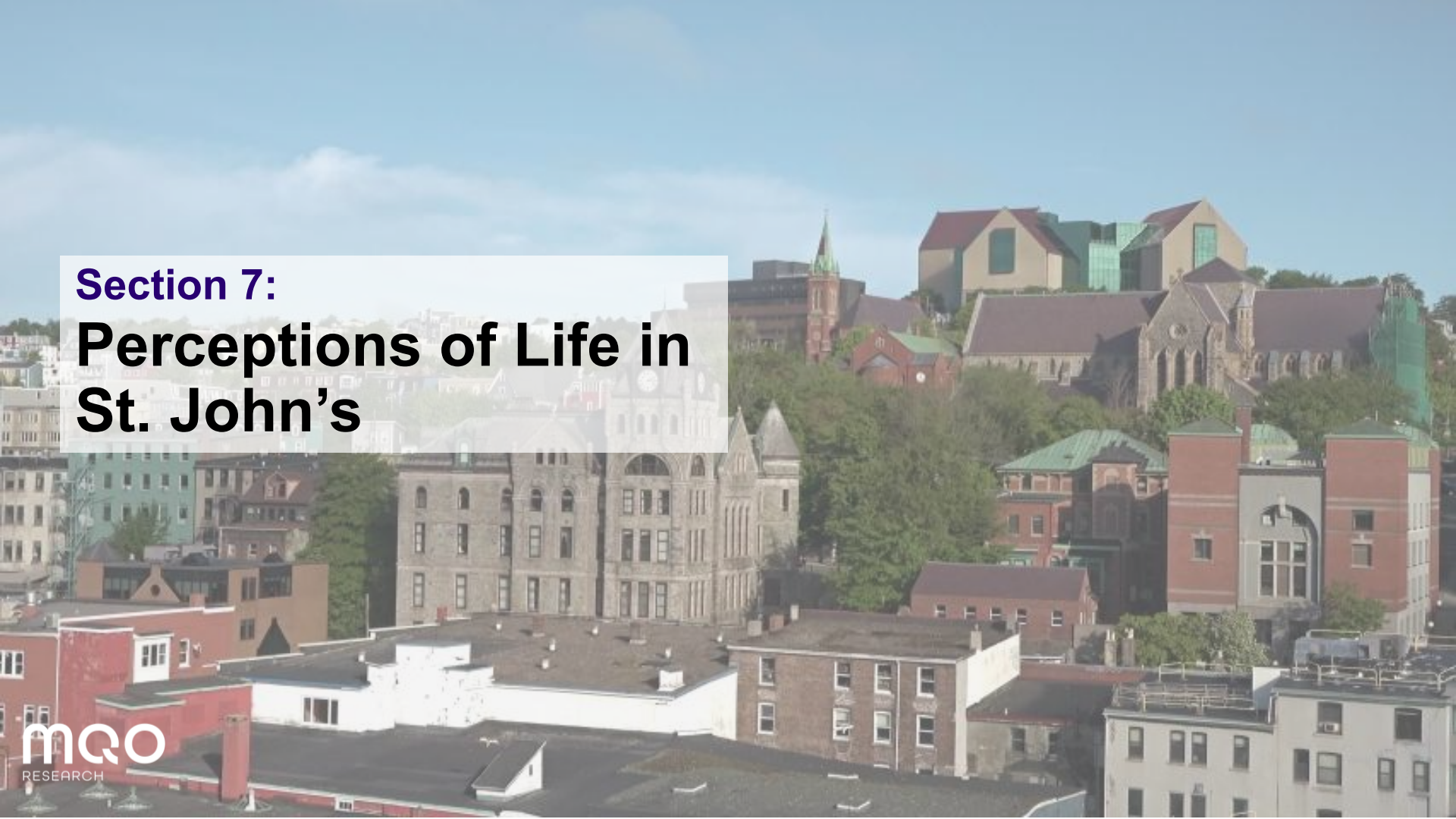
Residents that think the City should maintain current tax levels or reduce taxes and who have lived in St. John's for more than 20 years (10%), more often mentioned reducing support for roads and infrastructure versus those who have lived in St. John's for 11 to 20 years (9%), or 10 or less years (2%).

A little under half of residents who think the City should maintain current tax levels or reduce taxes (44%) did not know in which area to reduce services.

Those who own their home more often reported reducing City administration and management services (10%) than those who rent (2%).

Table 10: Services to Reduce	2026
Parks and Recreation	20%
Arts and Cultural Services	8%
City Administration and Management	7%
Roads and Infrastructure	7%
Miscellaneous mentions	7%
Bike Lanes	5%
Parking Services and Enforcement	4%
Waste Management and Recycling	2%
Social and Community Services	2%
Public Transit	2%
Snow Removal	1%
Green Energy Initiatives	1%
Don't know	44%

Q. Which City services can be reduced? SUBSET: Respondents that think the City should maintain current tax levels or reduce taxes? (n = 241)



Section 7:

Perceptions of Life in St. John's

MQO RESEARCH

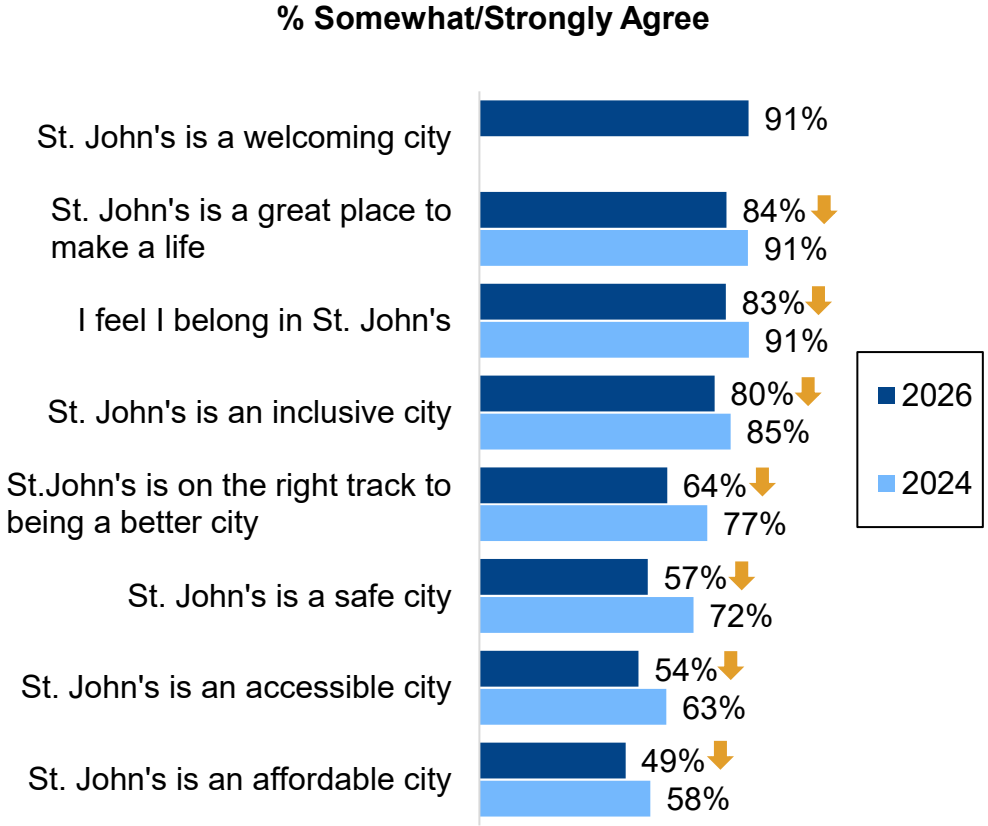
Perceptions

Overall resident perceptions of St. John's as a City to reside in decreased.

‘St. John’s is a welcoming City’ was the statement with the highest agreement rate (91%). ‘St. John’s is a great place to make a life’ (84%, decreased from 91%) and ‘I feel I belong in St. John’s’(83%, decreased from 91%) remained as highly agreed with statements despite decreases.

Eight-in-ten (80%, decreased from 85%) agreed with ‘St. John’s is an inclusive City’. The number of those who agreed with ‘St. John's is on the right track to being a better City’ (64%) also fell compared to 2024 (77%).

Over half of residents (57%, down from 72%) agreed with ‘St. John’s is a safe City’, and with ‘St. John's is an accessible City’ (54%, down from 63%). The statement with the lowest agreement rate was ‘St. John's is an affordable City’ (49%, down from 58%).



= Significant increase

= Significant decrease

Q. Do you ____ with each of the following statements? (n = 604)

Perceptions By Ward

Overall, residents of Ward 1 were the most likely to agree with most of the statements, especially for 'St. John's is a safe City' (70%) which residents of the other wards agreed with less often (52%-55%)

Residents of Ward 2 (84%) and Ward 4 (88%) were less likely to agree that 'St. John's is a welcoming City' compared to Ward 1 (94%), Ward 3 (95%), and Ward 5 (93%).

Residents of Ward 4 most frequently agreed that 'St. John's is on the right track to being a better City' (70%)

Table 11: Perceptions By Ward

% Somewhat/Strongly Agree

	Total	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5
St. John's is a welcoming City	**91%**	94%	84%	95%	88%	93%
I feel I belong in St. John's	**83%**	88%	78%	81%	86%	84%
St. John's is a great place to make a life	**84%**	88%	78%	86%	83%	82%
St. John's is an inclusive City	**80%**	83%	79%	79%	76%	81%
St. John's is on the right track to being a better City	**64%**	65%	57%	60%	70%	67%
St. John's is a safe City	**57%**	70%	55%	52%	54%	55%
St. John's is an accessible City	**54%**	53%	50%	55%	55%	55%
St. John's is an affordable City	**49%**	51%	47%	52%	49%	48%

Q. Do you ____ with each of the following statements? (n = 604)

Perceptions by Key Demographics

Resident perceptions of St. John's as a City to reside in varied across gender, age, income, having children, and minority status.

- **"St. John's is an affordable city":** Minority-group residents were less likely than non-minority residents to agree that St. John's is affordable (44% versus 55%). Renters were also less likely to agree than homeowners (41% versus 55%). Agreement was highest among residents aged 55 or older (57%, versus 41% to 48% among younger residents).

- "**St. John's is a safe city":** Renters were more likely than homeowners to agree that St. John's is safe. Agreement was also higher among men than women (64% versus 51%) and residents with children than those without children (70% versus 52%). Residents aged 55 or older were less likely to agree than younger residents (48% versus 60% to 66%).

- "**St. John's is an accessible city**": Residents with any form of disability were less likely to agree that St. John's is an accessible city (42%) than those who didn't report a disability (58%). Agreement increased with age, from 40% among residents aged 18 to 34 to 51% among those aged 35 to 54 and 67% among those aged 55 or older.

- "**St. John's is an inclusive city":** Residents aged 55 or older were more likely than younger residents to agree that St. John's is inclusive (84% versus 75% to 79%).

Q. Do you ____ with each of the following statements? (n = 604)



Section 8:

Elections

MQO RESEARCH

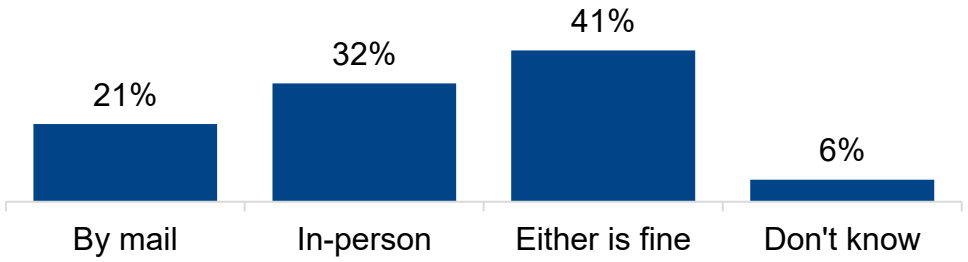
Voter Preference

Just over two-fifths of residents have no preference between voting in-person or by mail (41%).
Around a third of residents (32%) would prefer to vote in-person, while a fifth would prefer to vote by mail (21%)

Voting in-person was more often preferred by residents aged 18-34 (40%) than residents aged 35-54 (30%) or aged 55+ (28%). Male residents more often preferred to vote in-person (38%) than female residents (27%).

The preference to vote by mail increased with age: fifteen percent of residents aged 18-34 (15%) preferred to vote by mail versus a fifth of residents aged 35-54 (20%), and a quarter of residents aged 55+ (26%).

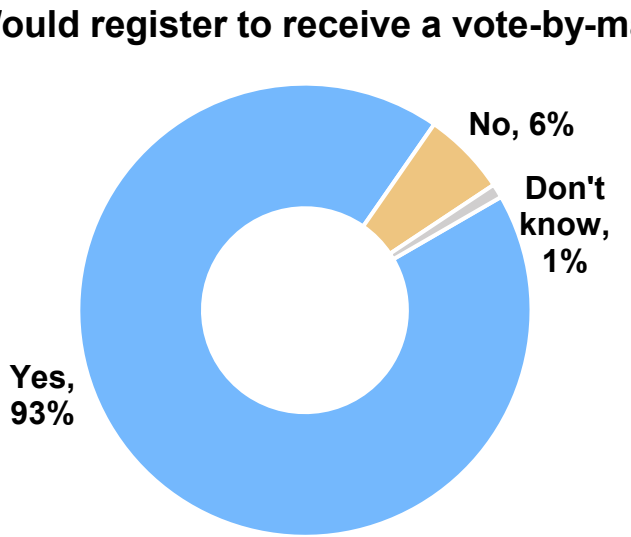
In-person or by mail voting preference



Q. How do you prefer to vote? (n = 604)

Vote-By-Mail Registration

For residents who prefer to vote by mail, almost all (93%) would register to receive a Vote-by-Mail kit if it was a requirement of voting .



Q. Would you register to receive a Vote-by-Mail kit if it was a requirement of voting? SUBSET: Respondents that prefer to vote by mail (n = 126)



Section 9:

Demographic Profile

MQO RESEARCH

Demographic Profile (1/4)

		City of St. John's	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5
Gender 	Male	47%	52%	38%	46%	52%	49%
	Female	51%	47%	59%	54%	46%	50%
	Other	1%	1%	2%	0%	3%	1%
Age	18 to 34	29%	19%	29%	37%	35%	25%
	35 to 54	31%	44%	32%	21%	32%	31%
	55 plus	39%	37%	39%	42%	33%	44%
Housing 	Own	60%	69%	49%	59%	47%	78%
	Rent	38%	29%	51%	39%	53%	18%
Has Children 	Yes	27%	36%	16%	21%	27%	33%
	No	73%	64%	84%	79%	73%	67%

Results were weighted to reflect the City's age and gender distribution based on the most recent census data. Weighting was applied citywide and not separately by ward.

Demographic Profile (2/4)

		City of St. John's	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5
Length of Time Living in St. John's	1 to 5 years	19%	17%	23%	11%	27%	19%
	6 to 10 years	13%	7%	12%	16%	17%	11%
	11 to 15 years	10%	6%	9%	9%	11%	14%
	16 to 20 years	8%	10%	10%	4%	6%	12%
	Over 20 years	50%	61%	46%	60%	38%	44%
Wards	Ward 1	18%	-	-	-	-	-
	Ward 2	20%	-	-	-	-	-
	Ward 3	22%	-	-	-	-	-
	Ward 4	20%	-	-	-	-	-
	Ward 5	20%	-	-	-	-	-

Results were weighted to reflect the City's age and gender distribution based on the most recent census data. Weighting was applied citywide and not separately by ward.

Demographic Profile (3/4)

		City of St. John's	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5
Highest Level of Education 	Less than high school	2%	0%	4%	1%	4%	2%
	Completed high school	8%	6%	5%	14%	7%	5%
	Some university or community college	9%	8%	10%	7%	5%	14%
	Completed university or community college	52%	47%	51%	53%	55%	53%
	Post graduate studies	30%	39%	30%	25%	30%	26%
Minority Status	Newcomer, immigrant, or refugee	12%	14%	16%	11%	13%	7%
	Racialized community (someone other than an Indigenous person who is non-white in colour/race)	12%	14%	12%	11%	14%	8%
	Indigenous person (Inuit, First Nations, Metis)	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	3%
	Person with disability such as a disability related to mobility, mental health, vision, hearing, learning, etc.	23%	18%	18%	36%	26%	15%
	2SLGBTQIA+	10%	4%	12%	16%	10%	9%

Results were weighted to reflect the City's age and gender distribution based on the most recent census data. Weighting was applied citywide and not separately by ward.

Demographic Profile (4/4)

		City of St. John's	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5
Employment 	Employed	64%	60%	57%	61%	70%	71%
	Retired	21%	21%	24%	22%	17%	23%
	Student	3%	6%	1%	3%	2%	1%
	Unemployed	8%	9%	10%	9%	7%	2%
Income 	<$60,000	23%	20%	38%	25%	21%	11%
	$60,000 - $120,000	42%	37%	40%	49%	47%	39%
	$120,000 or more	34%	44%	22%	27%	33%	50%

Results were weighted to reflect the City's age and gender distribution based on the most recent census data. Weighting was applied citywide and not separately by ward.



Section 10:
Conclusions and Implications

MQO RESEARCH

Conclusions And Implications (1/5)

- ✓ **Overall quality of life and perceptions of St. John's declined in 2026, although residents continued to report positive perceptions of the city.**
  - The share of residents rating quality of life 7 or higher declined from 74% in 2024 to 68% in 2026.
  - St. John's continued to be viewed positively as a welcoming city (91%), a great place to make a life (84%), and a place where residents feel they belong (83%).
  - However, agreement declined across all other perception measures, most notably:
    - St. John's is a safe city: 72% to 57%
    - St. John's is on the right track: 77% to 64%
    - St. John's is accessible: 63% to 54%
    - St. John's is affordable: 58% to 49%
  - The results show a distinction between residents' continued connection to St. John's and their more negative assessments of affordability, safety, accessibility, and the city's direction.
  - Perceptions also varied among demographic groups, particularly by age, income, gender, housing tenure, and minority status.

Conclusions And Implications (2/5)

- ✓ **Overall satisfaction with City programs and services was stable; however, the gap analysis identifies a consistent set of high-priority service areas.**
  - Overall satisfaction was essentially unchanged: 73% in 2024 and 72% in 2026 rated City programs and services 7 or higher.
  - This stable overall result contrasts with declines in satisfaction for several individual services and online channels.
  - The largest importance-satisfaction gaps were concentrated in transportation and winter-maintenance services:
    - Road maintenance: -62 points
    - Sidewalk snow clearing: -58 points
    - Road snow clearing: -53 points
    - Traffic planning: -47 points
    - Metrobus: -39 points
  - These services are not only lower-rated, but are also rated as highly important, distinguishing them from services with lower satisfaction but lower overall importance.
  - In contrast, satisfaction exceeded importance for 311/Access St. John's (+10 points) and community events (+6 points), while garbage collection and recycling showed relatively small gaps.

Conclusions And Implications (3/5)

- ✓ **Residents gave lower ratings to the City's communication and accountability performance in 2026, particularly on measures related to decision-making and accountability.**
  - Keeping residents informed remained the City's highest-rated measure at 61%, although this was down from 66% in 2024.
  - Ratings for open and transparent information were comparatively stable, moving from 59% to 56%.
  - The larger declines related to residents' assessments of the City's governance:
    - Makes decisions in the community's best interest: 56% to 50%
    - Accountable to the public: 50% to 43%
  - Managing the City's money responsibly remained the lowest-rated measure at 43%, similar to 2024 (44%).
  - Overall, the results indicate that ratings of communication remain stronger than ratings of accountability, financial management, and decision-making.

Conclusions And Implications (4/5)

- ✓ **Trust in the City declined in 2026, while residents with direct contact continued to rate staff interactions positively.**
  - The proportion of residents expressing some trust in the City declined from 81% in 2024 to 74% in 2026.
    - This change was driven by a decline in residents who trust the City “a great deal,” from 32% to 25%. The proportion who trust the City “a little” remained unchanged at 49%.
  - Among residents who had direct contact with the City, staff were most often described as courteous, helpful, and knowledgeable (81%) and able to provide needed information (77%).
  - However, ratings declined for customer service being a priority (67% to 57%) and for meaningful public input into decision-making (57% to 42%).
  - The findings show a difference between relatively positive experiences with staff and lower confidence in broader City responsiveness, accountability, and decision-making.

Conclusions And Implications (5/5)

- ✓ **Residents support balancing core services with quality-of-life investments, while the service-priority results identify where expectations are highest.**
  - Nine in ten residents (90%) support balancing investment in basic services with investment in programs and services that enhance quality of life.
  - For capital spending, residents most often included recreation and community facilities in their top three priorities (70%). Energy-efficiency initiatives were most often selected as the single highest priority (33%).
  - Views on taxes indicate limited support for service expansion: 42% preferred tax increases only as needed to maintain current service levels, while 25% preferred maintaining taxes even if this required reducing some services.
  - Among residents open to service reductions, parks and recreation (20%) and arts and cultural services (8%) were the most frequently identified areas, though 44% were unsure which services should be reduced.



Section 11:

Appendices

MQO RESEARCH

Question Wording Changes in 2026

2026 Wording	2024 Wording
S6. Which age group best describes you?	Into which of the following categories does your age fall?
B6. In your view, what is the most important issue facing St. John's that you feel should receive the greatest attention from your Mayor and Members of Council?	In your view, as a resident of the City of St. John's, what is the most important issue facing your community, that is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your Mayor and Members of Council?
C1. Next, I'm going to read you a list of some programs and services the City provides. First, please rate how important you feel the service is using a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is Not at All Important and 10 is Very Important. If you are not familiar enough with the service to provide a rating please clearly state that you are not familiar.	Next, I'm going to read you a list of some of the programs and services provided by the City of St. John's. First, please rate how important you feel the service is using a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is Not at All Important and 10 is Very Important. If you are not familiar enough with the service to provide a rating please let us know.
D3. Next, I'm going to read you a list of **online** services the City provides. For each one, first, please indicate whether or not you have used it, and for the ones you have used, please rate your overall satisfaction with that service using a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is Not at all Satisfied and 10 is Very Satisfied.	Next, I'm going to read you a list of online services provided by the City of St. John's. For each one, first, please indicate whether or not you have used it, and for the ones you have used, please rate your overall satisfaction with that online service using a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is Not at all Satisfied and 10 is Very Satisfied.
G1. Thinking of the people in your household, please indicate the number of people in each of the following age categories.	Do you currently have any children 17 years of age or younger living in your household?
G3. Which of the following categories best describes your household annual income?	Is your total household income $60,000 per year or more? AND Is your total household income $120,000 per year or more?

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