2021 Grove City
Community Attitudes Survey

Saperstein Associates, Inc. / Spring 2021

This research provides Grove City residents a statistically accurate vehicle for sharing opinions on numerous city-related, quality-of-life issues.

In addition, the research provides local officials objective information as plans are conceived for the future of Grove City.

The survey was conducted in May and June 2021, the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic – and a backdrop uniquely different from those of the other 13 Grove City surveys conducted since 1992.

Though difficult to quantify, this context is likely to have had at least some impact on the relevant perceptions of local residents.
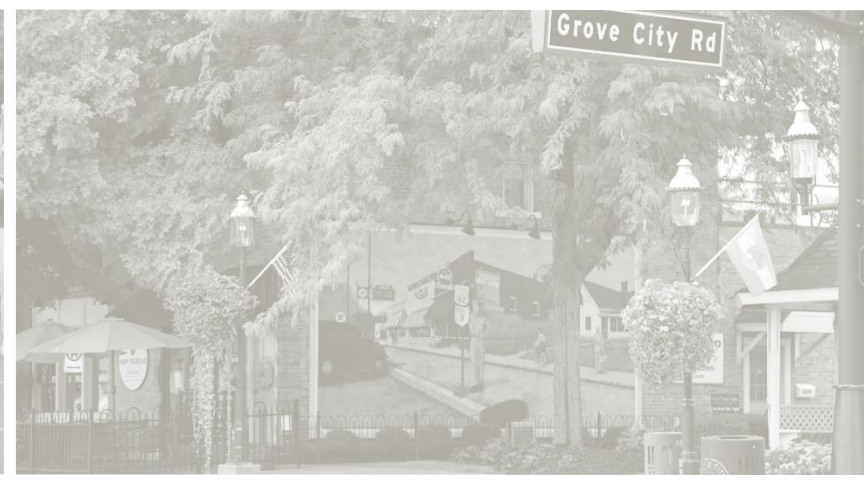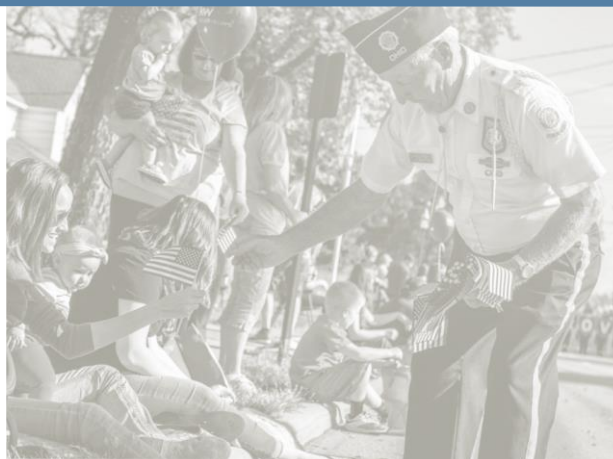
Methodology

- This study is the fourteenth in a series that began nearly 30 years ago, in 1992.

- With only two exceptions, the studies were conducted biennially.

- As in each of those studies, telephone interviews were conducted with approximately 500 adult residents of Grove City, Ohio.

- For the current study, the interviews were completed on cell phones (85%) and landlines (15%) beginning Monday, May 17 and ending Saturday, June 12.

- The interviews averaged 17 minutes in length. The shortest was 11 minutes, the longest 51.

- The Margin of Error (MoE) for this survey is ≤ ±4.4 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence.

- To complete the interviews, 14,789 unique telephone numbers were dialed manually, nearly twice as many as were dialed in 2017.

	2021	2019	2017
Total numbers dialed	14,786	9,990	7,673
Working household numbers	10,704	7,970	6,276
Resident reached	1,350	1,344	2,204
Resident refused	594	582	1,075
Resident not eligible	239	175	499
Callback not completed	13	84	125
Resident completed interview	504	503	505
Numbers dialed per complete	29	20	15
Length in minutes	17	14	14

13%

35%

- Residents who participated in this study are representative of all Grove City adults on several key demographic dimensions, including age, gender, education, and home ownership.

	Actual*	Survey†
18 to 25	8%	8%
25 to 34	19%	21%
35 to 44	19%	17%
45 to 54	18%	17%
55 to 64	16%	16%
Older than 64	20%	21%

	Actual*	Survey†
Male	48%	48%
Female	52%	52%
Bachelor Degree +	34%	33%
Owns residence	70%	66%

- Similar to the studies conducted in 2017 and 2019, the study this year borrows heavily from research conducted by Gallup for the Knight Foundation, titled Soul of the City (2010).

- The study by Gallup, conducted in 26 localities nationwide, explores why residents are "attached" to the community they live in to varying degrees, from more attached to less attached. Gallup's explanation of this phenomenon – called Community Attachment and described as "an emotional connection that transcends satisfaction, loyalty, and even passion" – is built on two sets of metrics: Hard and Soft.

- *Hard Metrics* include basic services, the economy, public safety, and leadership.

- *Soft Metrics* include social offerings, aesthetics, educational opportunities, and openness.
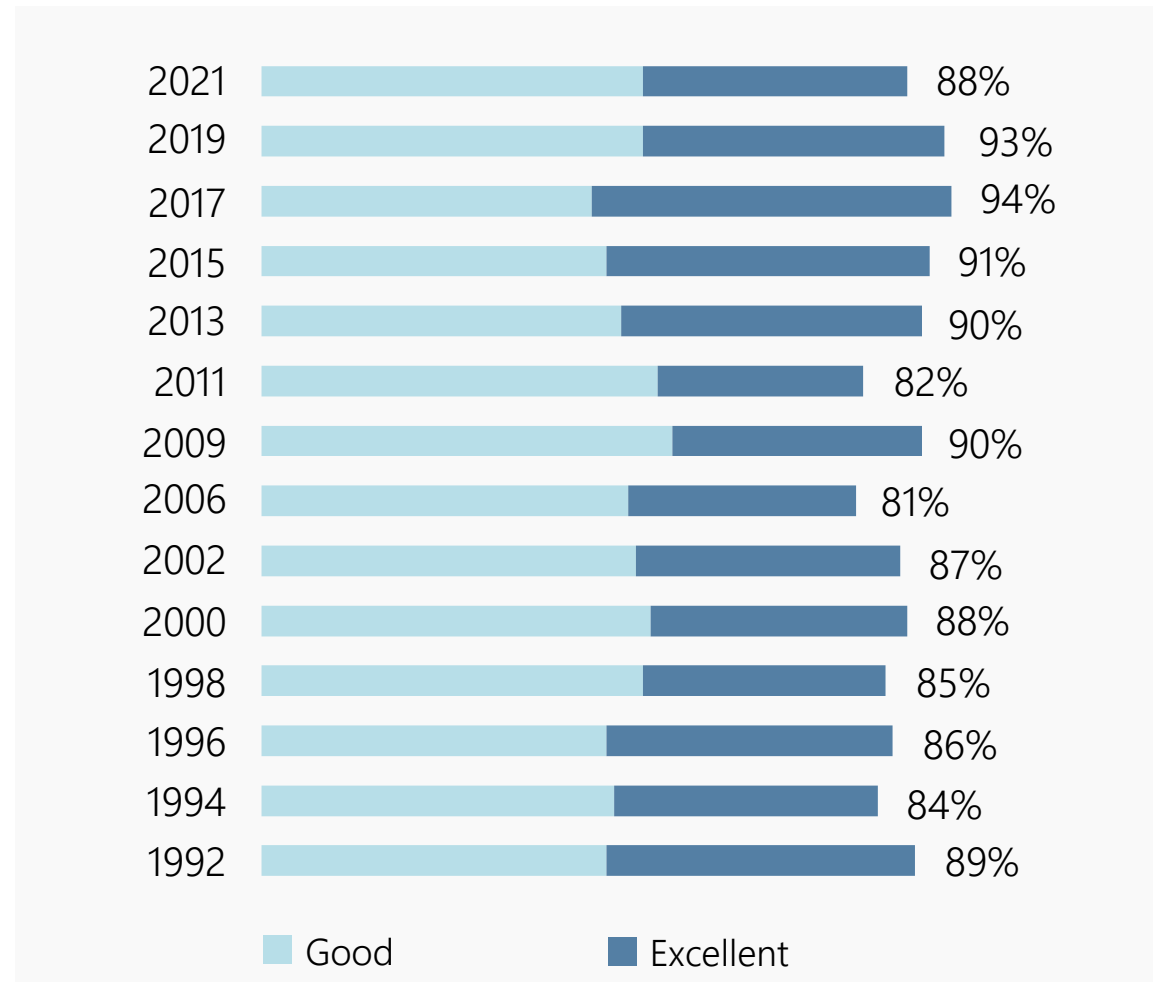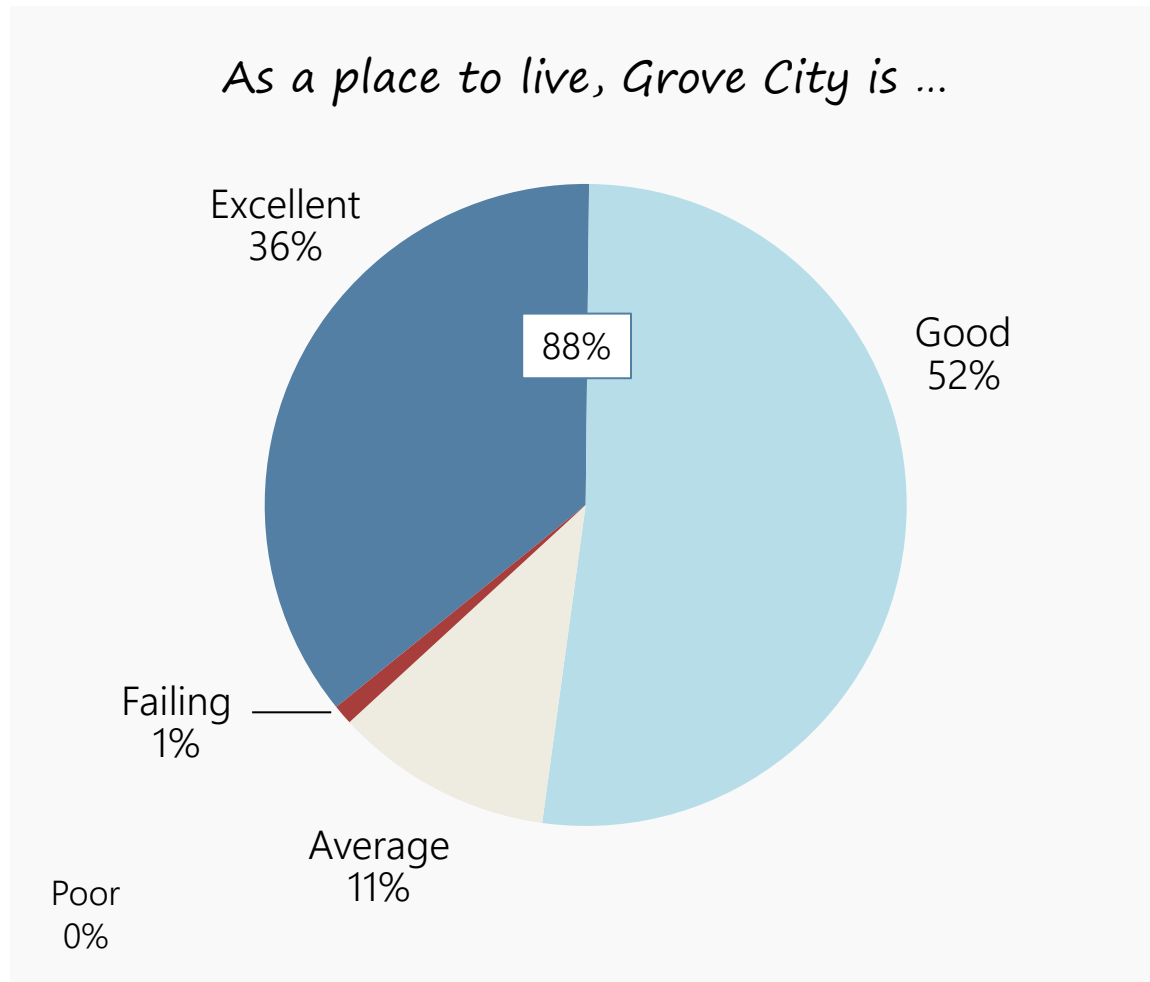
- Gallup's research helps to explain why Community Attachment varies from one locale to the next – and begins to identify those metrics most likely to foster it.

- This research applies Gallup's formulation to Grove City.
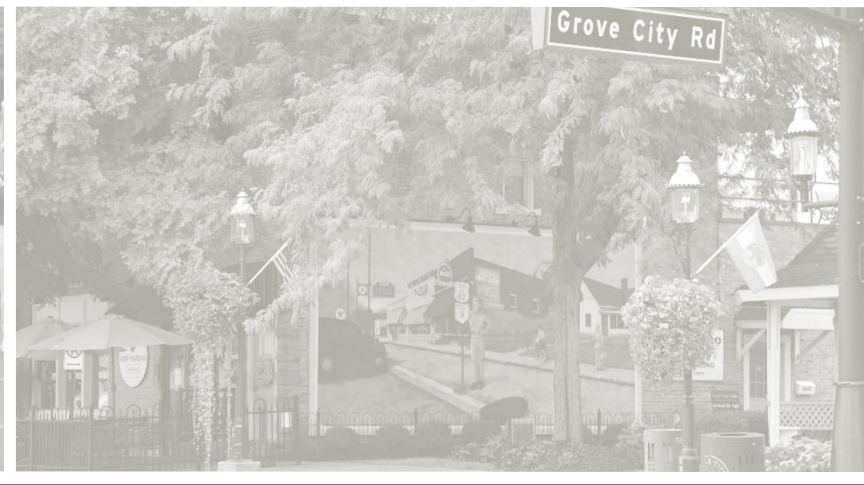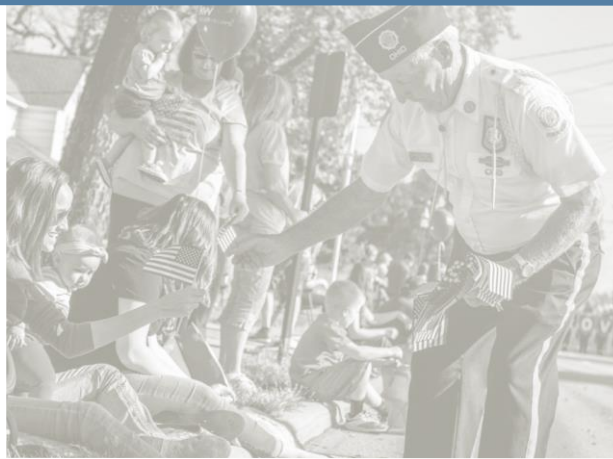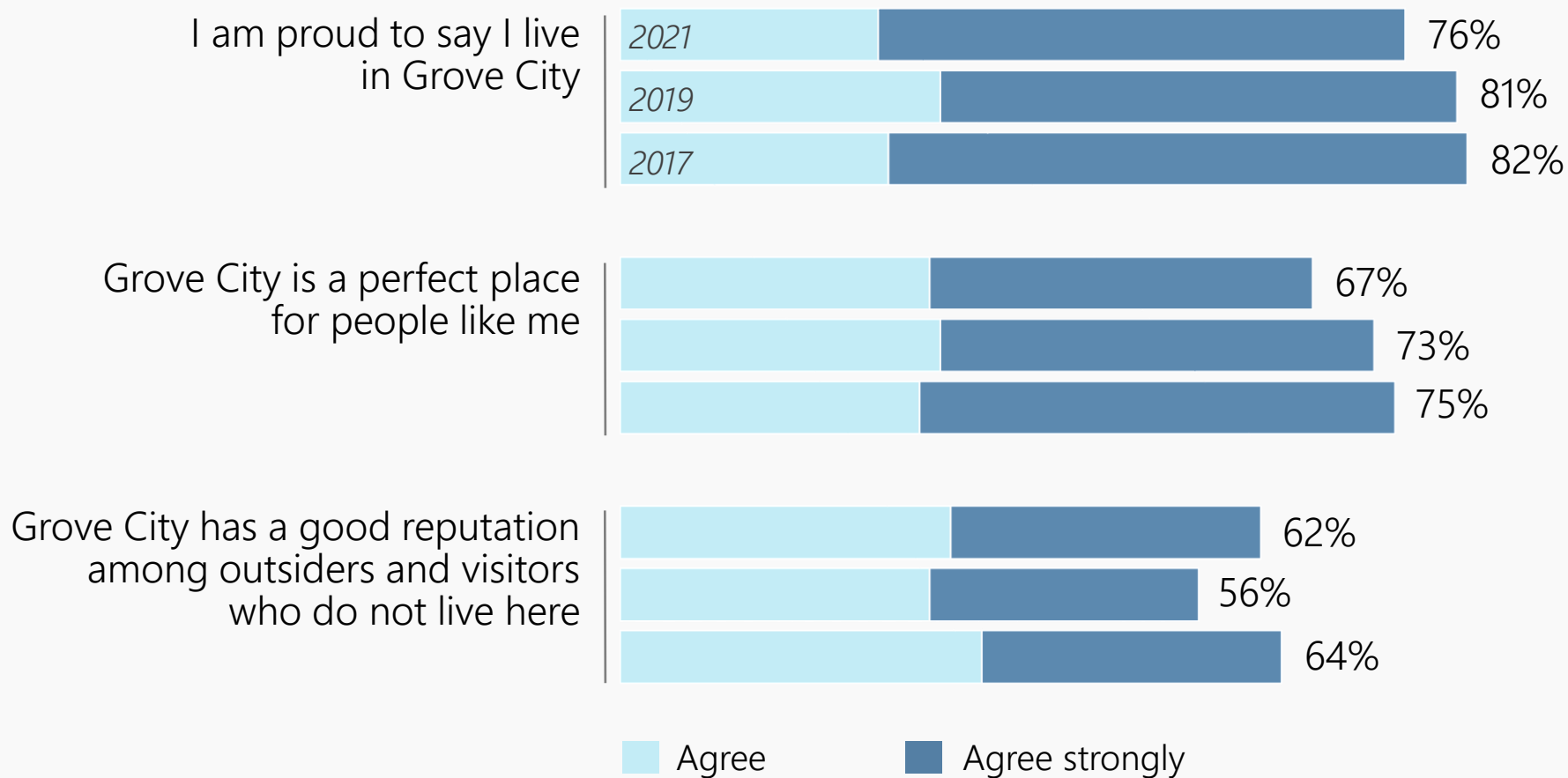
Community Attachment

- Community Attachment is a dependent variable constructed from five metrics, each assessed using a five-point scale:

  o "How would you rate Grove City, overall, as a place to live?" Responses range from "A" (excellent) to "F" (failing);

  o "I am proud to say I live in Grove City." Responses range from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly";

  o "Grove City is a perfect place for people like me." Responses range from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly";

  o "Grove City has a good reputation among outsiders and visitors who do not live here." Responses range from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly"; and

  o "How likely are you to recommend Grove City to a friend or associate as a place to live?" Responses range from "extremely likely" to "not likely at all."

Nearly nine out of ten residents have positive impressions of Grove City as a place to live.*

As a place to live, Grove City is …

Excellent 36%
Good 52%
88%
Average 11%
Failing 1%
Poor 0%

2021 88%
2019 93%
2017 94%
2015 91%
2013 90%
2011 82%
2009 90%
2006 81%
2002 87%
2000 88%
1998 85%
1996 86%
1994 84%
1992 89%

Good ■ Excellent

At least six out of ten residents are proud to say they live in Grove City, feel that Grove City is a perfect place for "people like me," and agree that Grove City has a good reputation among people who live elsewhere.

I am proud to say I live in Grove City
- 2021: 76%
- 2019: 81%
- 2017: 82%

Grove City is a perfect place for people like me
- 67%
- 73%
- 75%

Grove City has a good reputation among outsiders and visitors who do not live here
- 62%
- 56%
- 64%

Agree   Agree strongly

Q3: For each of the following three statements, tell me if you agree or disagree …

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Nearly eight out of ten residents are extremely or very likely to recommend Grove City as place to live.

2021

Extremely likely
50%

Very likely
27%

77%

Not likely
at all
3%

Not
likely
4%

Somewhat
likely
16%

2019

Extremely likely
55%

Very
likely
32%

87%

Not likely
at all
0%

Not
likely
2%

Somewhat
likely
11%

2017

Extremely likely
59%

Very
likely
28%

87%

Not likely
at all
0%

Not
likely
2%

Somewhat
likely
11%

Q4: How likely are you to recommend Grove City to a friend or associate as a place to live?
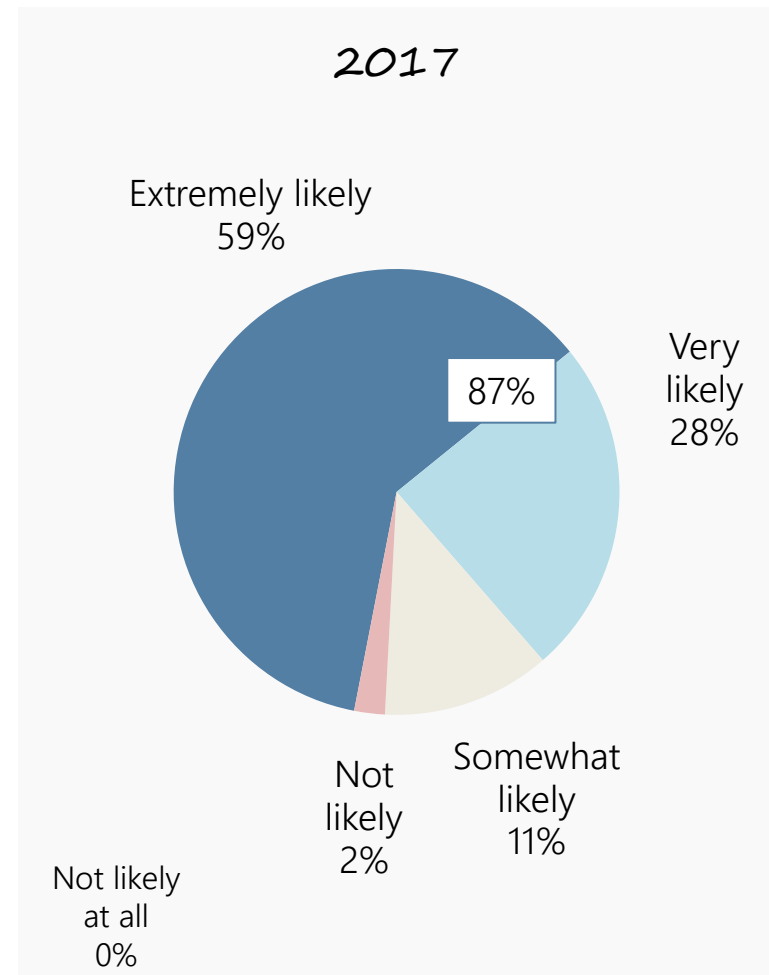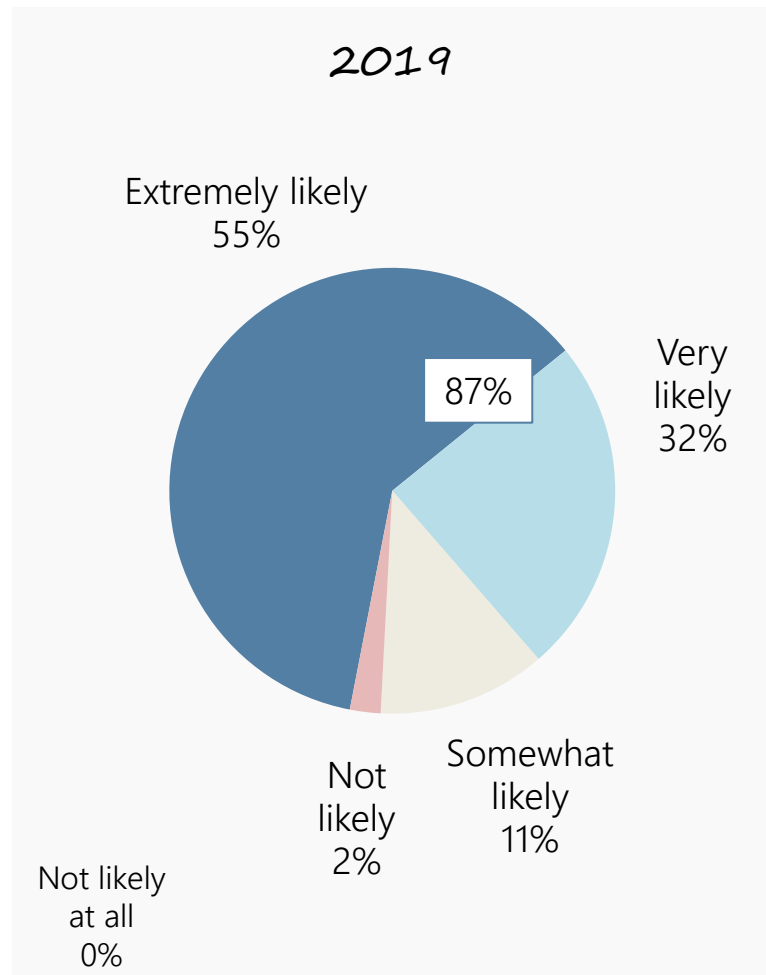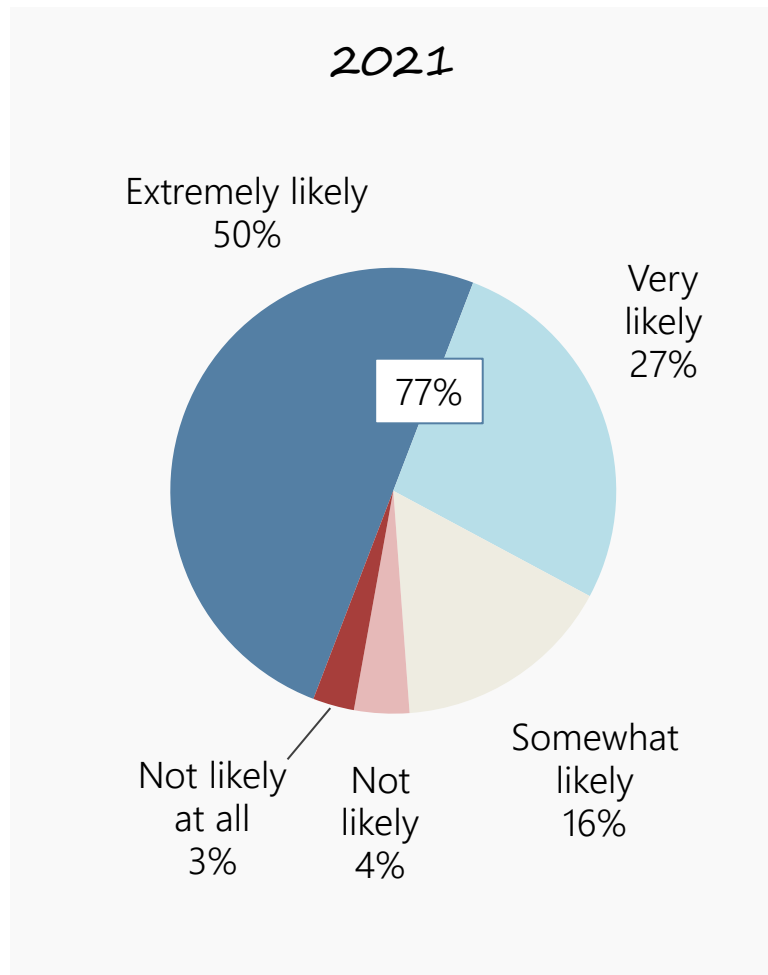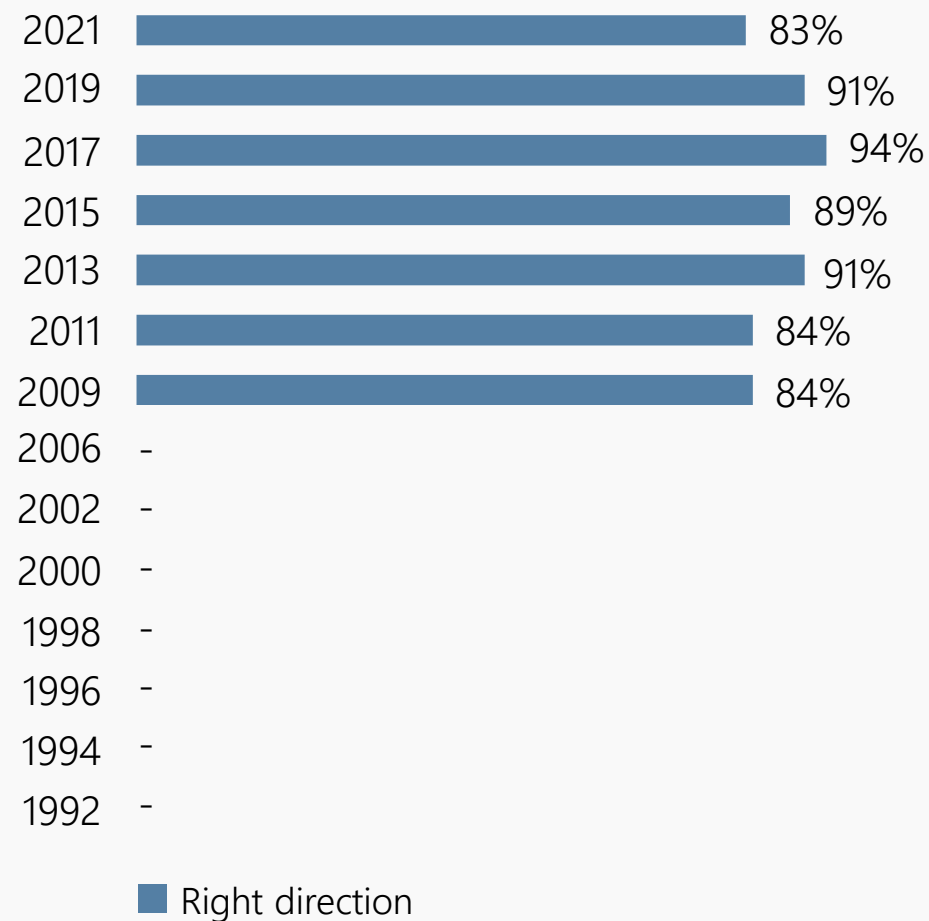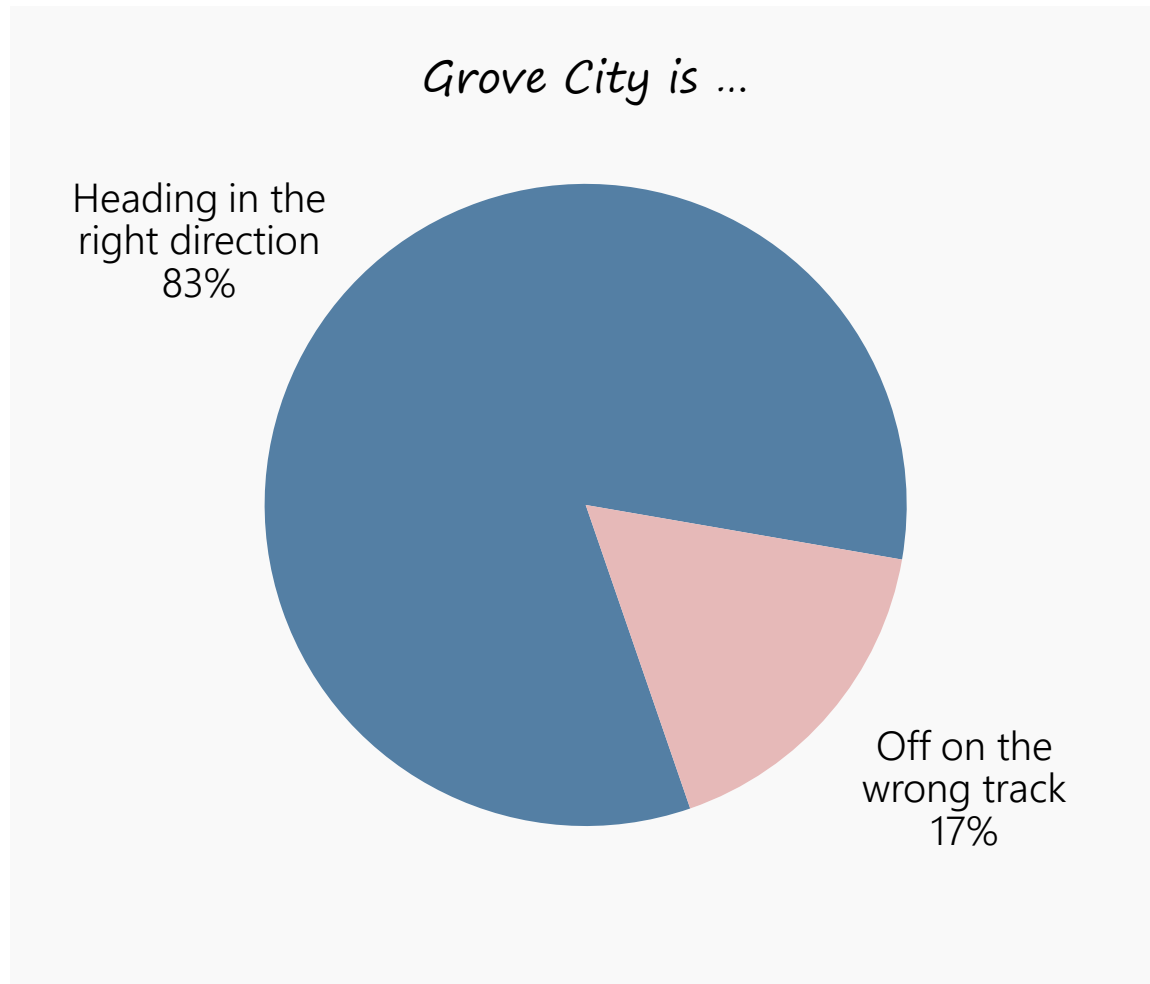
Data from the previous slides, when aggregated, reveal a Community Attachment "score" of 76 (out of 100), nearly identical to the score computed in 2019 (i.e.,78).* This similarity suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic had little impact on the bond between local residents and Grove City, overall.
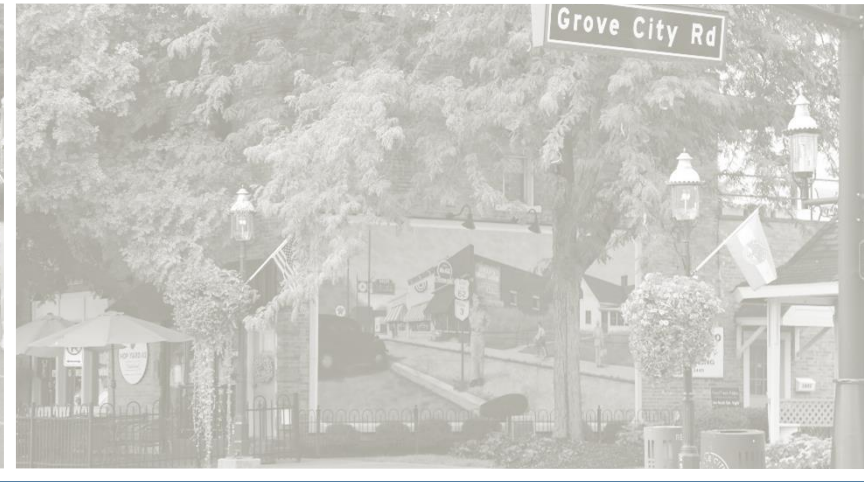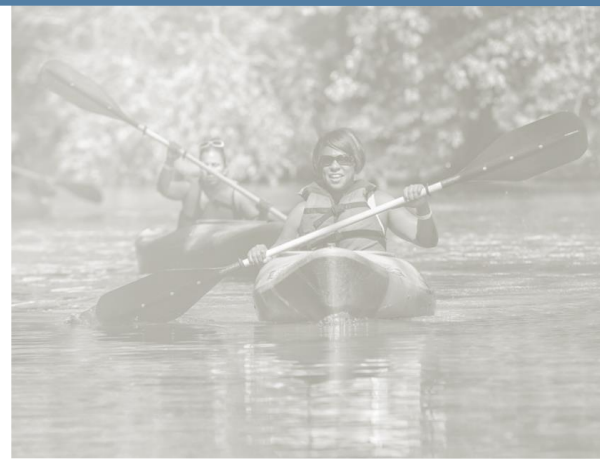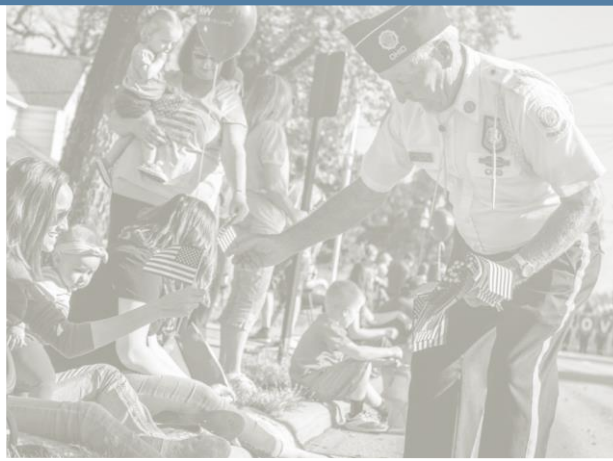

76   78

'21   '19

Community
Attachment
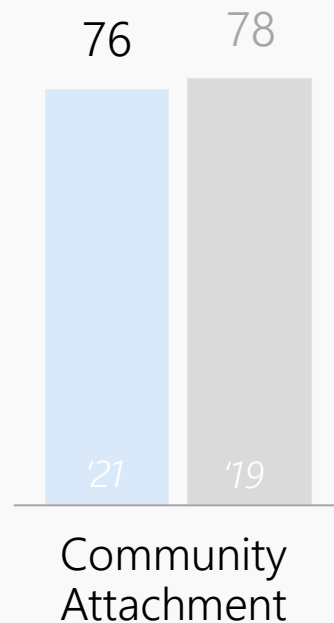
*Community Attachment scores range from 0 (no attachment) to 100 (strong attachment). A score of 100 indicates that every resident gave each relevant metric the highest rating.

More than eight out of ten residents believe that Grove City is heading in the right direction.

Grove City is ...

Heading in the right direction
83%

Off on the wrong track
17%

Year	Right direction
2021	83%
2019	91%
2017	94%
2015	89%
2013	91%
2011	84%
2009	84%
2006	-
2002	-
2000	-
1998	-
1996	-
1994	-
1992	-

■ Right direction

Q2: Generally speaking, would you say that Grove City is heading in the right direction or is it off on the wrong track? / This is a legacy question, not included in the Gallup construct.
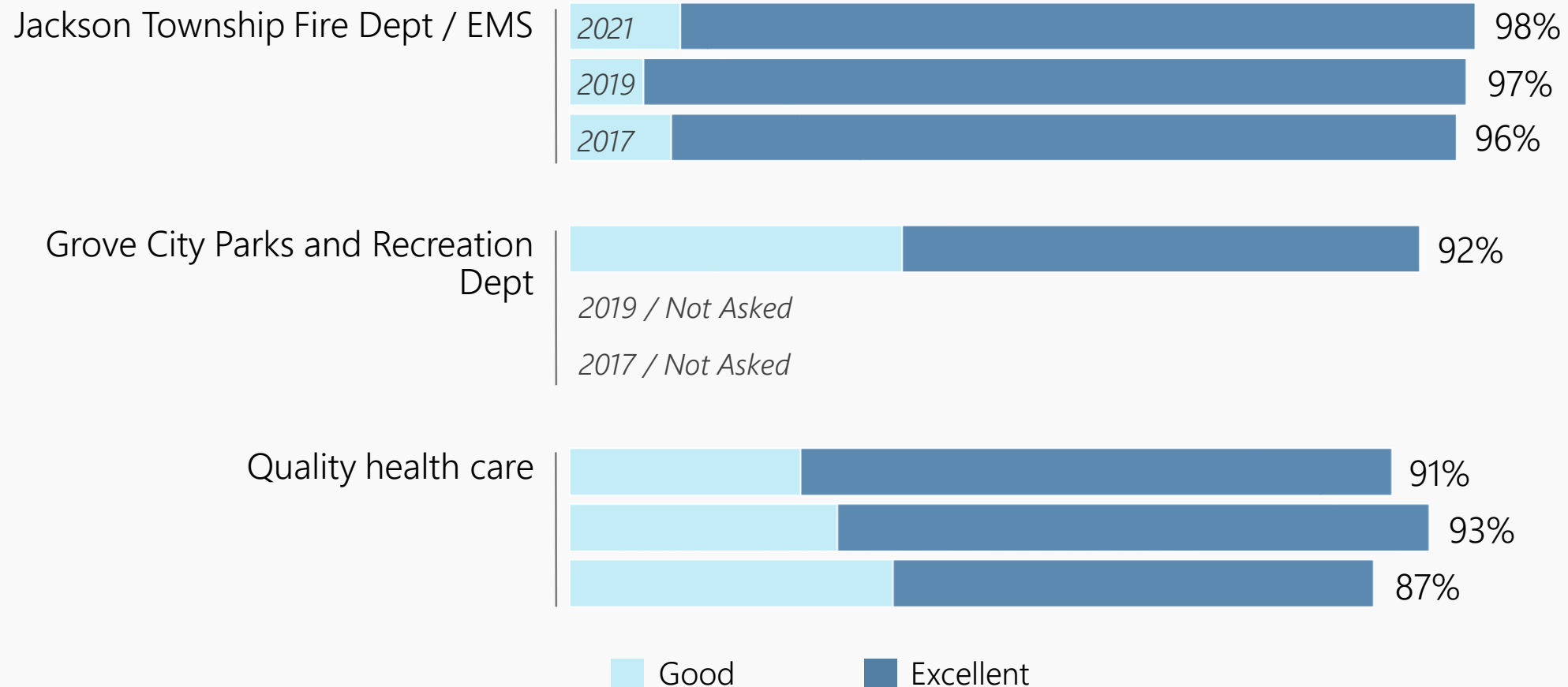
16

Hard Metrics:
Basic Services, the Economy, and Public Safety

As in 2019, nearly all residents consider the Jackson Township Fire Department either excellent or good. Ratings are strong, as well, for the Parks and Rec Department, local health care providers ...

Jackson Township Fire Dept / EMS
- 2021: 98%
- 2019: 97%
- 2017: 96%

Grove City Parks and Recreation Dept
- 92%
- 2019 / Not Asked
- 2017 / Not Asked

Quality health care
- 91%
- 93%
- 87%

Legend: Good | Excellent

Q6/11: What letter grade, from A (excellent) to F (failing), would you give ...?

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... trash collection, and the Grove City police. Fewer residents, but still a significant majority, have positive impressions of Grove City as a place to move or start a business ...
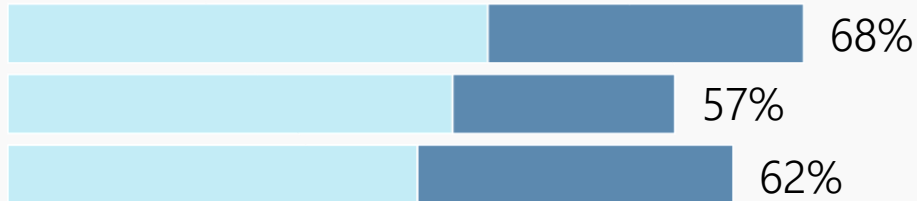
Q6/11: What letter grade, from A (excellent) to F (failing), would you give ...?

19
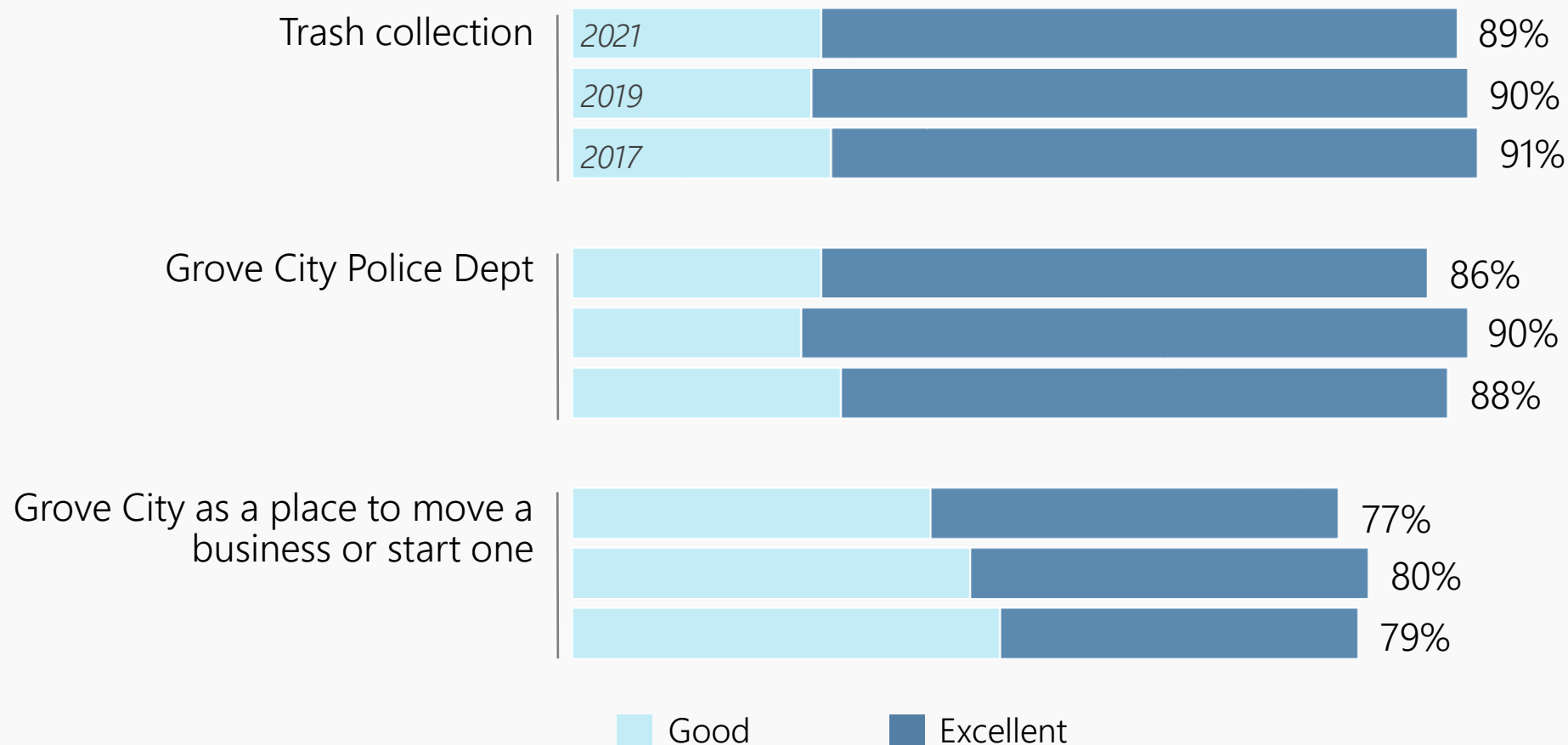
… of Grove City's Service Department, and of the highways and freeway system in the Grove City area. Positive impressions are less common in areas involving good paying jobs …

Grove City Service Dept (maintains streets and sewers)
- 2021: 76%
- 2019: 84%
- 2017: 84%

Grove City highways and freeway system
- 68%
- 57%
- 62%

Good paying jobs
- 59%
- 63%
- 56%

Legend: Good | Excellent

Q11: What letter grade, from A (excellent) to F (failing), would you give …?
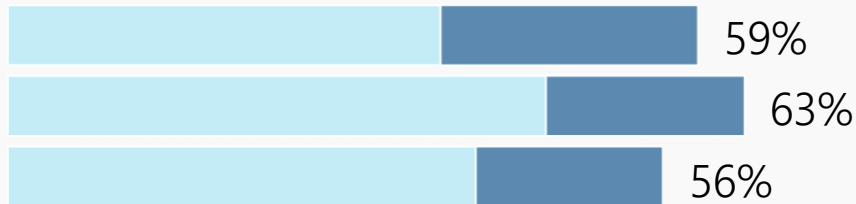
... and housing perceived as affordable.

Affordable housing

2021	48%
2019	66%
2017	73%

Good   Excellent

Q11: What letter grade, from A (excellent) to F (failing), would you give ...?
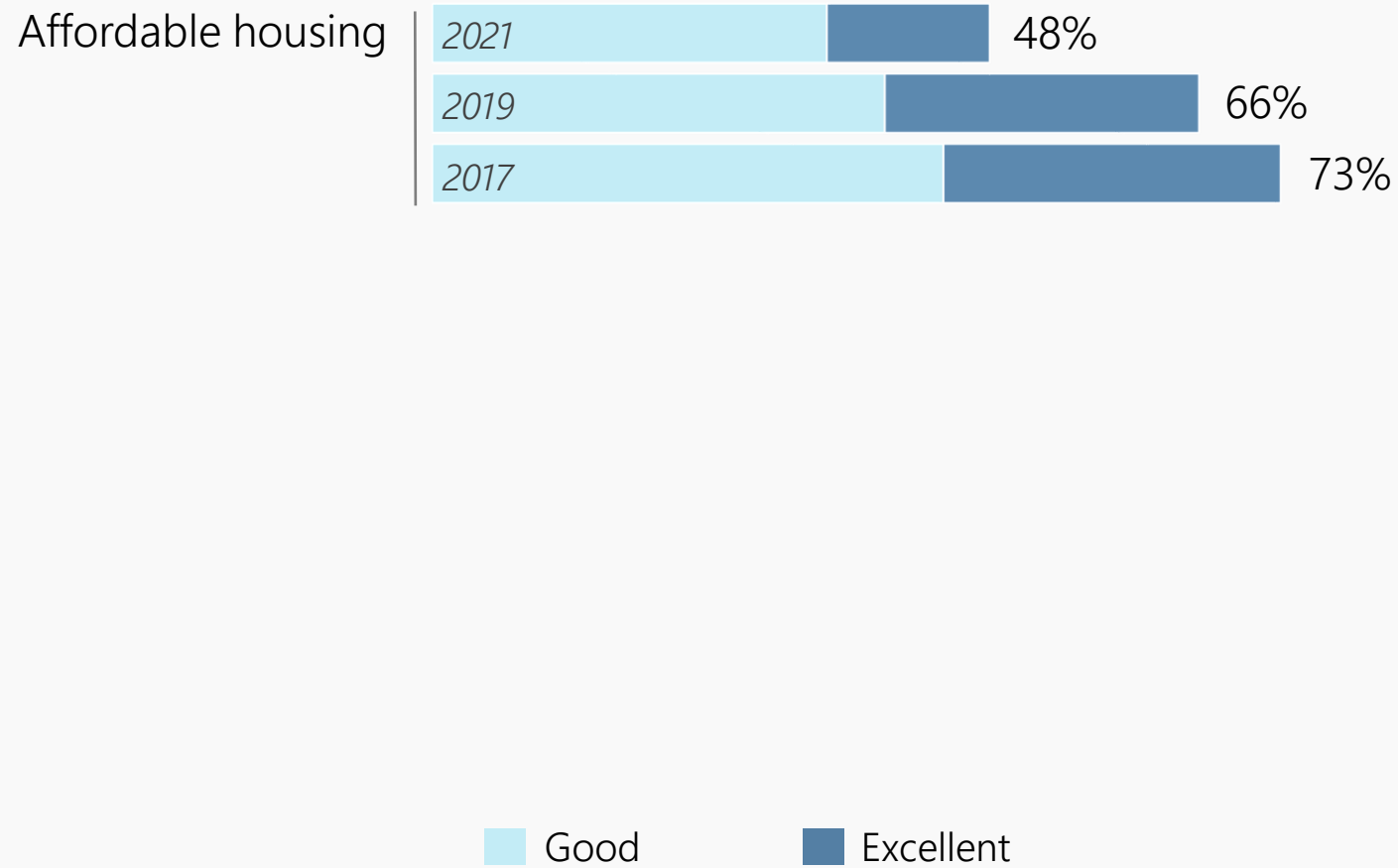
As in past years, eight out of ten residents feel very safe when walking near home. Almost no one does _not_ feel safe.

2021

Feel very safe walking in neighborhood 82%

Do not feel safe 1%

Feel somewhat safe walking in neighborhood 17%

2019

Feel very safe walking in neighborhood 81%

Do not feel safe 1%

Feel somewhat safe walking in neighborhood 19%

2017

Feel very safe walking in neighborhood 84%

Do not feel safe 1%

Feel somewhat safe walking in neighborhood 15%
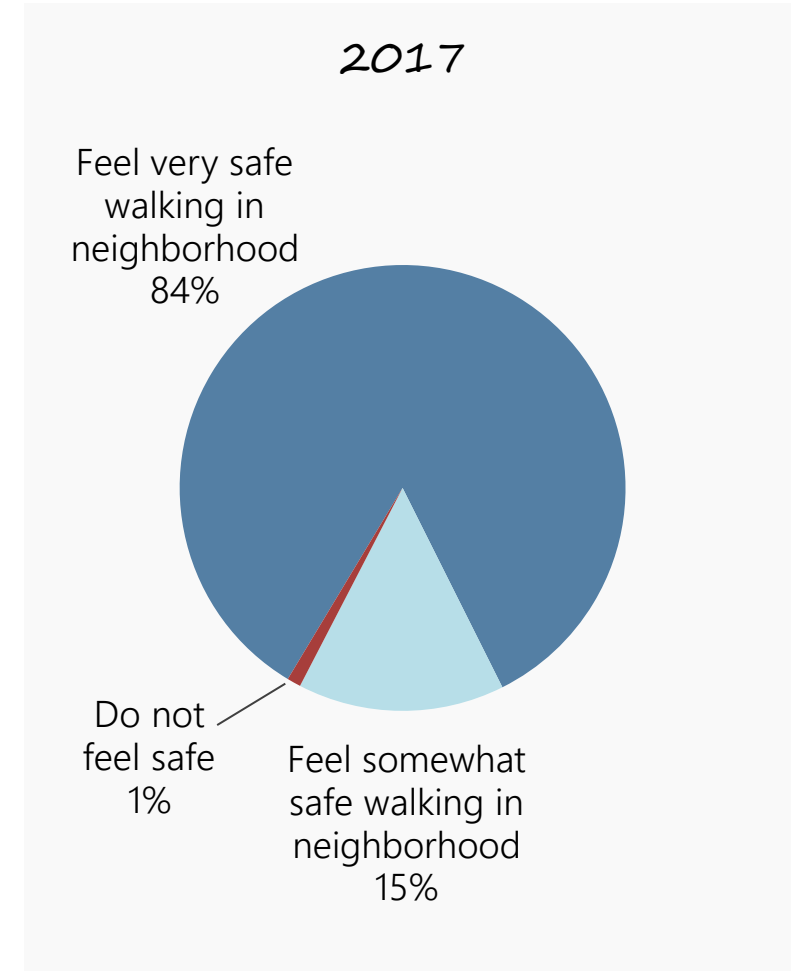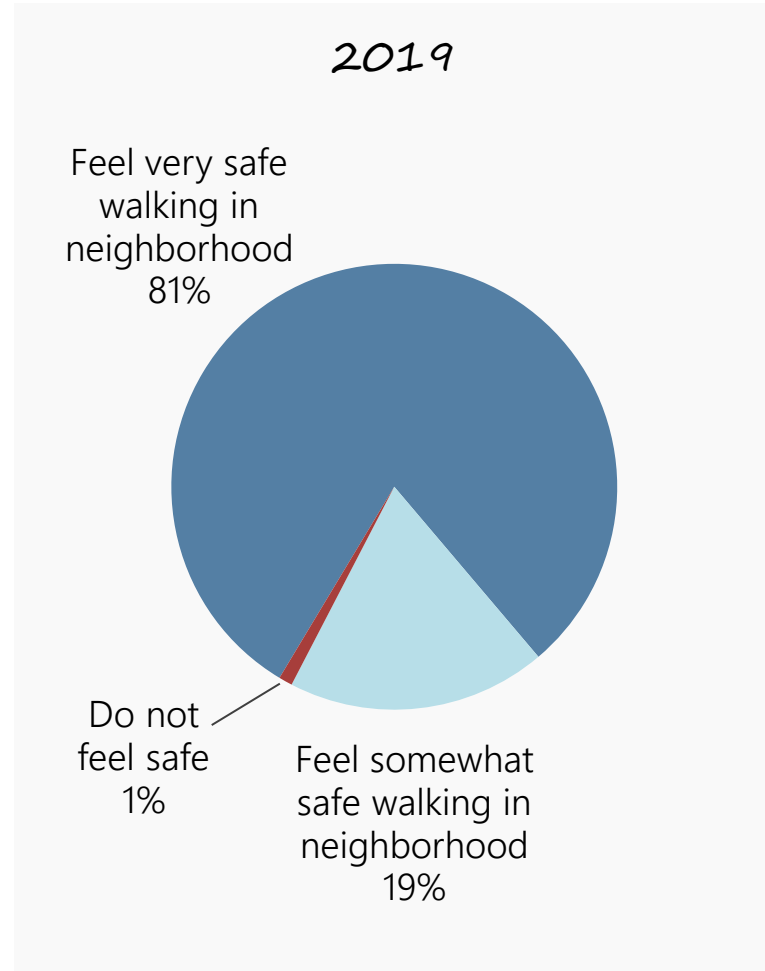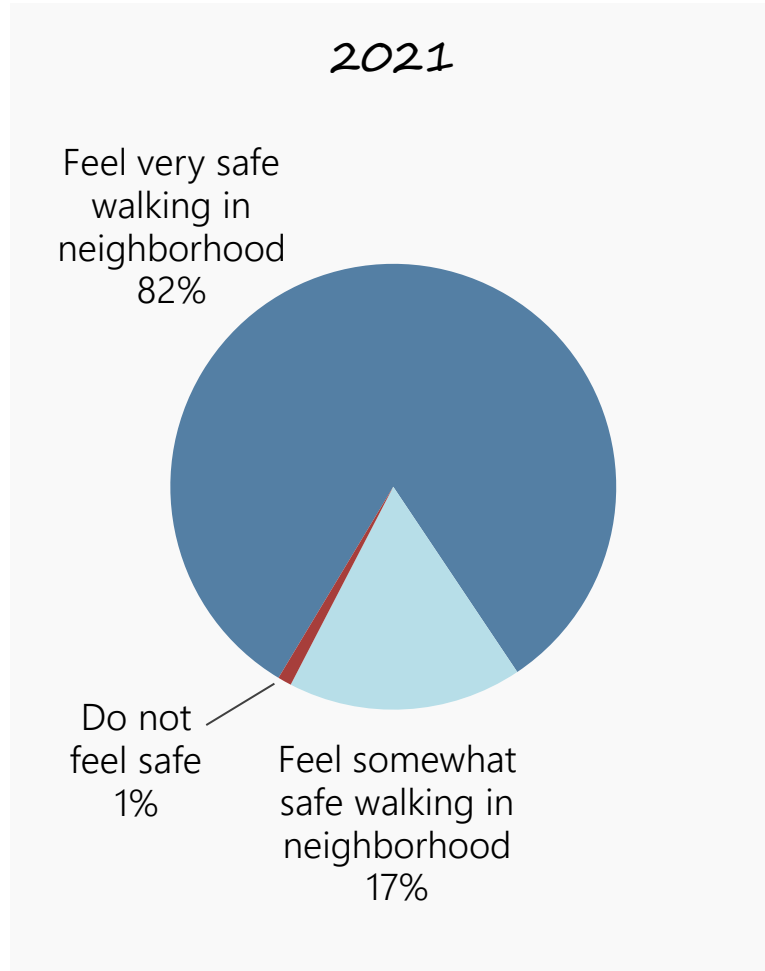
When aggregated, data from the Hard Metrics involving basic services, the economy, and public safety yield a score of 78, similar, again, to the comparable score from 2019 (i.e., 80).*
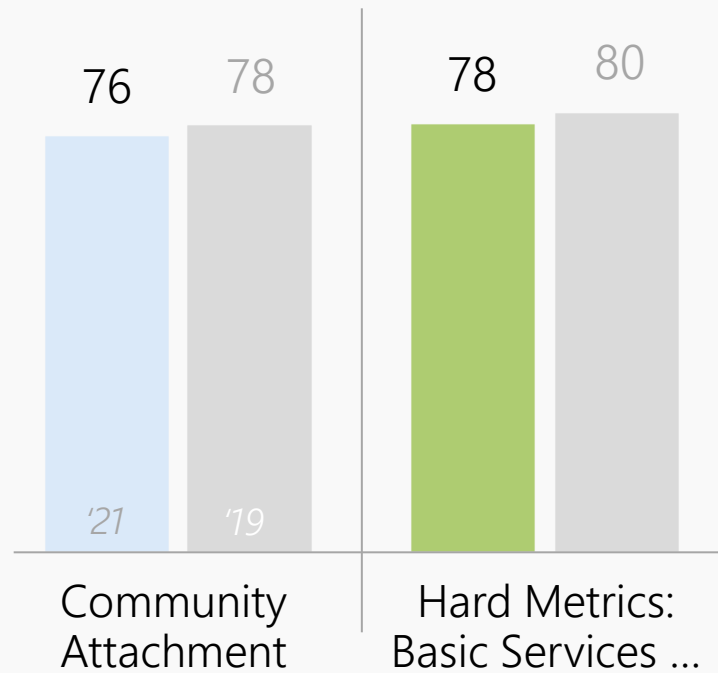
76 78   78   80

'21   '19

Community
Attachment

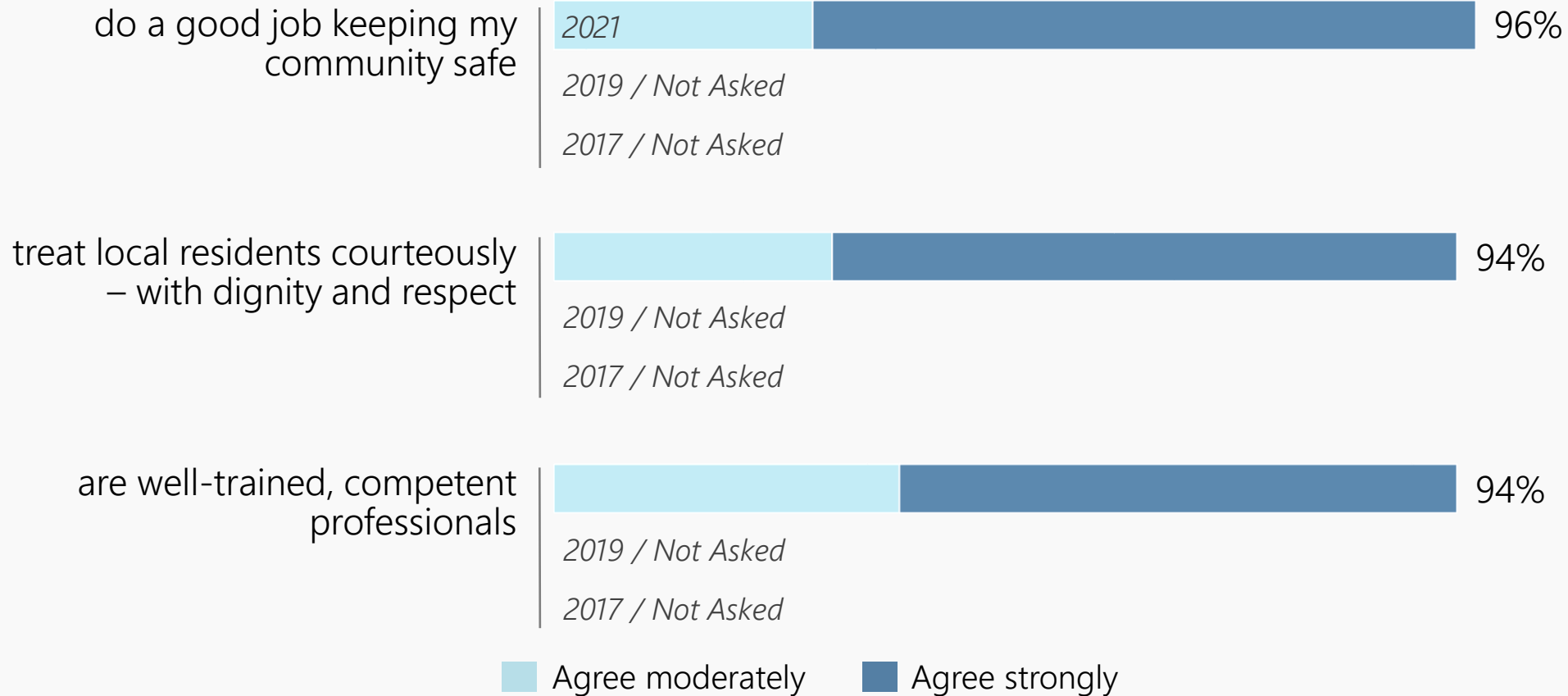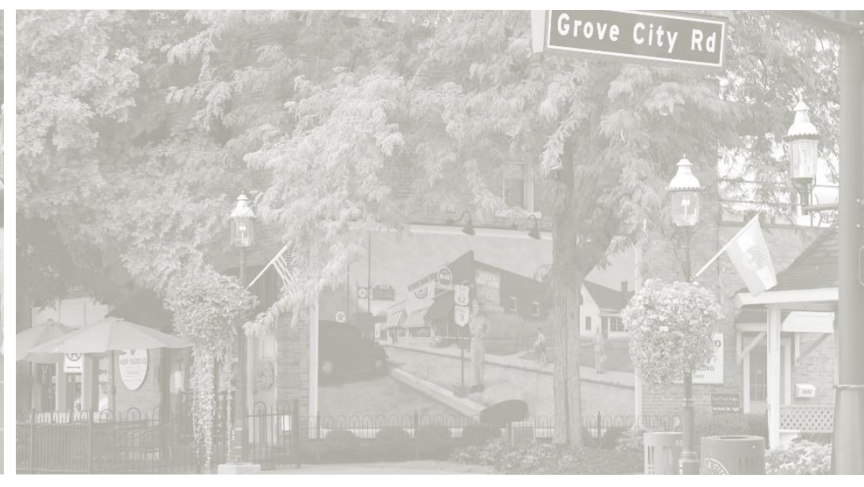Hard Metrics:
Basic Services ...

*The maximum value, 100, indicates that every resident gave each relevant indicator the highest rating.

Residents agree that Grove City police do a good job keeping the community safe, treat local residents courteously, and are well-trained, competent professionals.

Grove City Police …

do a good job keeping my community safe

2021
2019 / Not Asked
2017 / Not Asked

96%

treat local residents courteously – with dignity and respect

2019 / Not Asked
2017 / Not Asked

94%

are well-trained, competent professionals

2019 / Not Asked
2017 / Not Asked

94%

Agree moderately   Agree strongly

Q7: Agree or disagree: The Grove City Police …

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Hard Metrics: Leadership

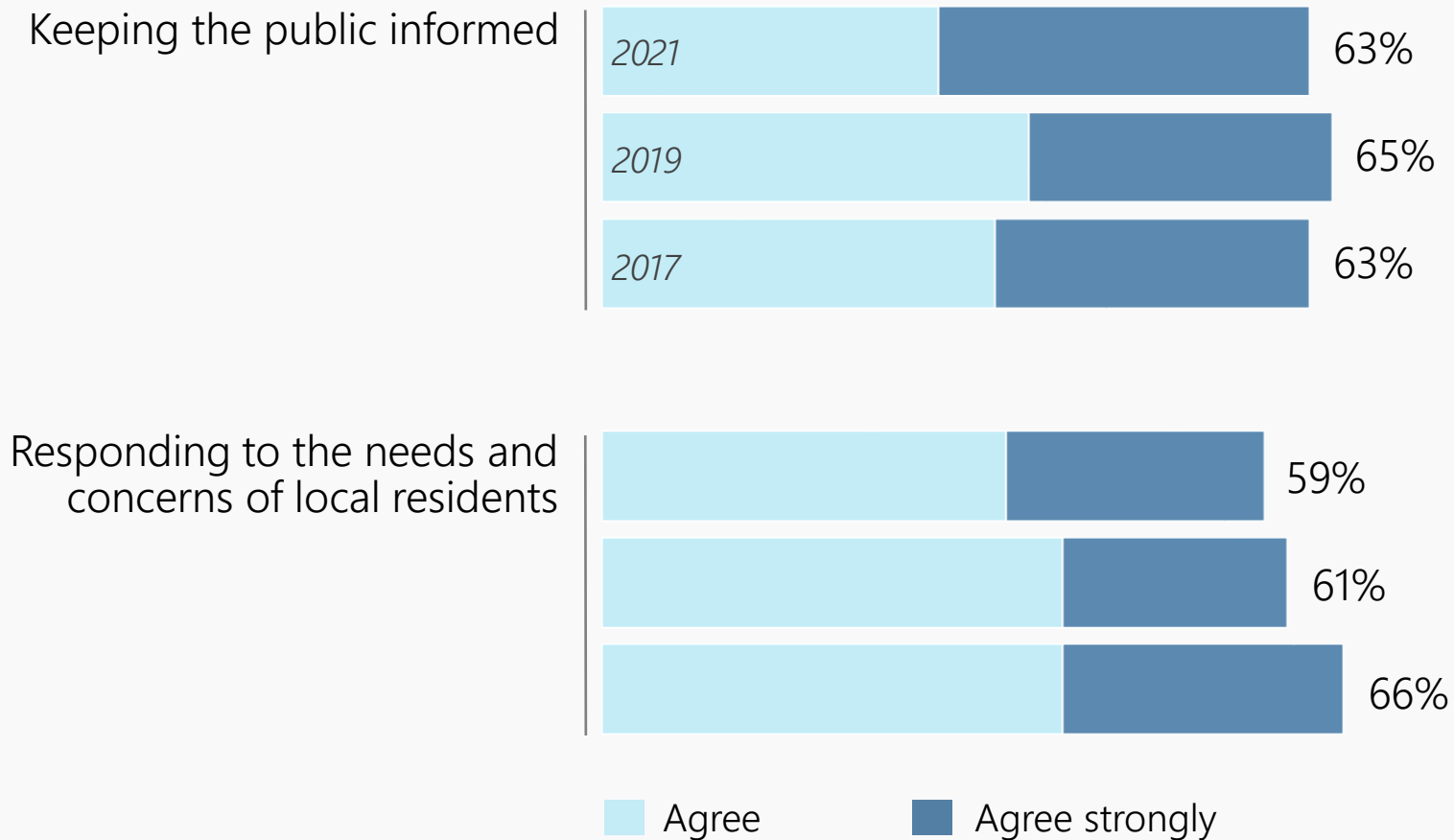# Roughly six out of ten residents agree that city officials are effective at keeping the public informed, responding to the needs and concerns of residents, ...

Keeping the public informed

2021	63%
2019	65%
2017	63%

Responding to the needs and concerns of local residents

| 59% |
| 61% |
| 66% |

Agree   Agree strongly

Q10: Here are some statements about Grove City's public officials. If 5 means "agree strongly" and 1 means "disagree strongly," where are you on this statement?

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... managing the city's money, and planning for the future. In three of these areas, the relevant figures are trending lower, though not by much.

Managing the city's money

- 2021: 58%
- 2019: 61%
- 2017: 66%

Planning for the future

- 57%
- 64%
- 71%

Legend: ☐ Agree   ■ Agree strongly

Q10: Here are some statements about Grove City's public officials. If 5 means "agree strongly" and 1 means "disagree strongly," where are you on this statement?
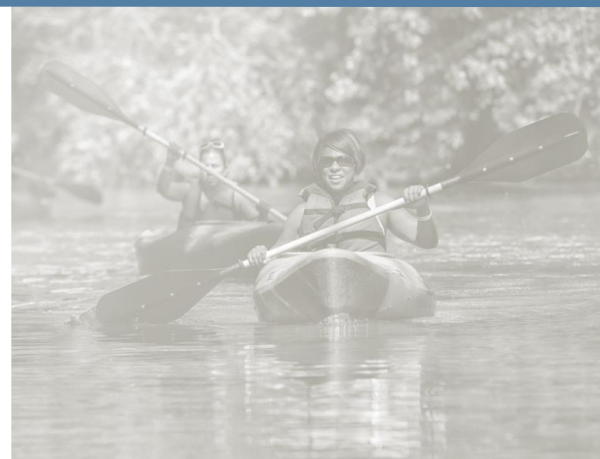
27
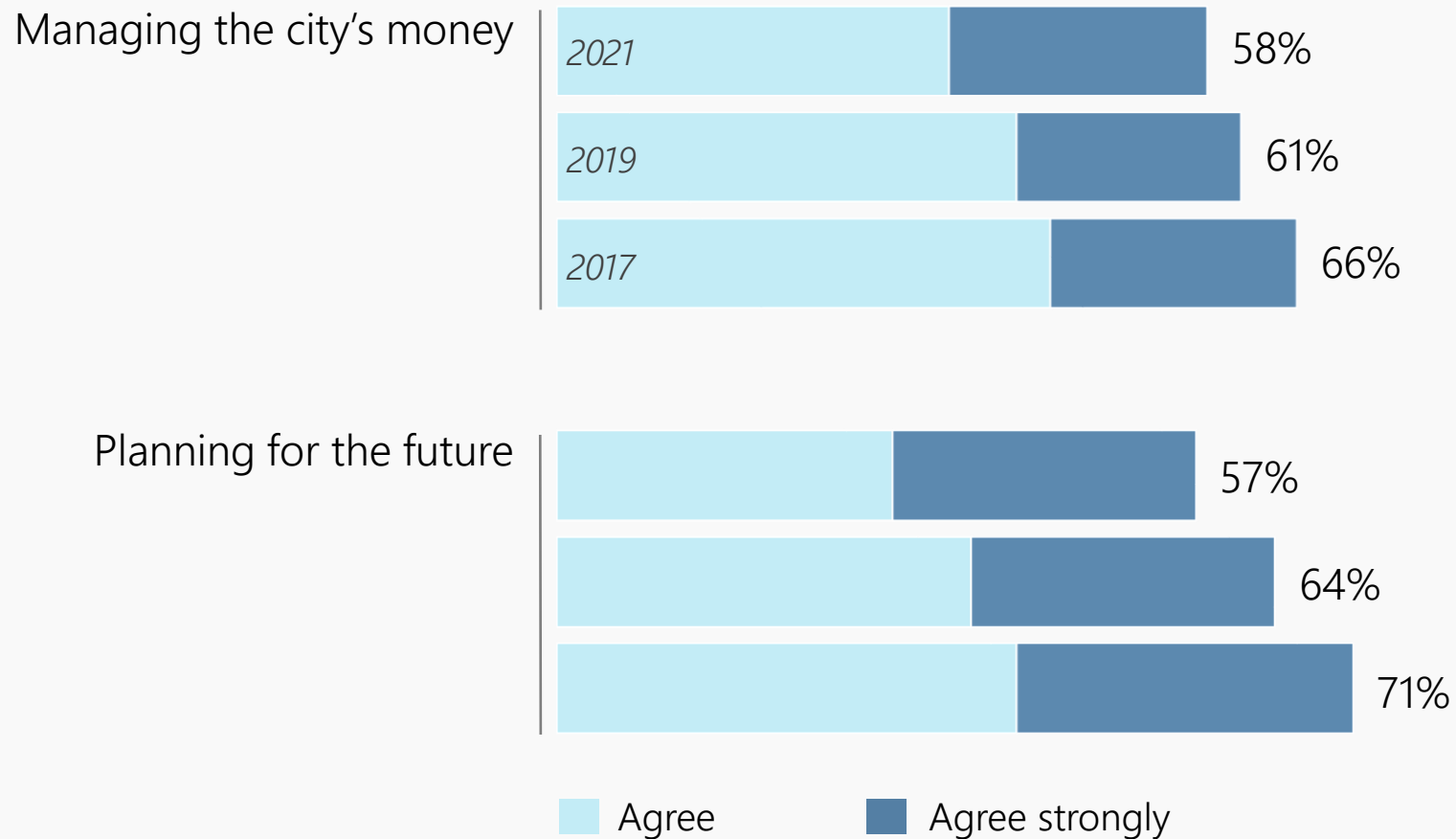
On leadership, the second set of Hard Metrics, the aggregated data yield a score of 66, similar to the score posted in 2019 (i.e., 68) and lower than the score seen this year for the Hard Metrics involving basic services, the economy, and public safety (i.e., 78).*
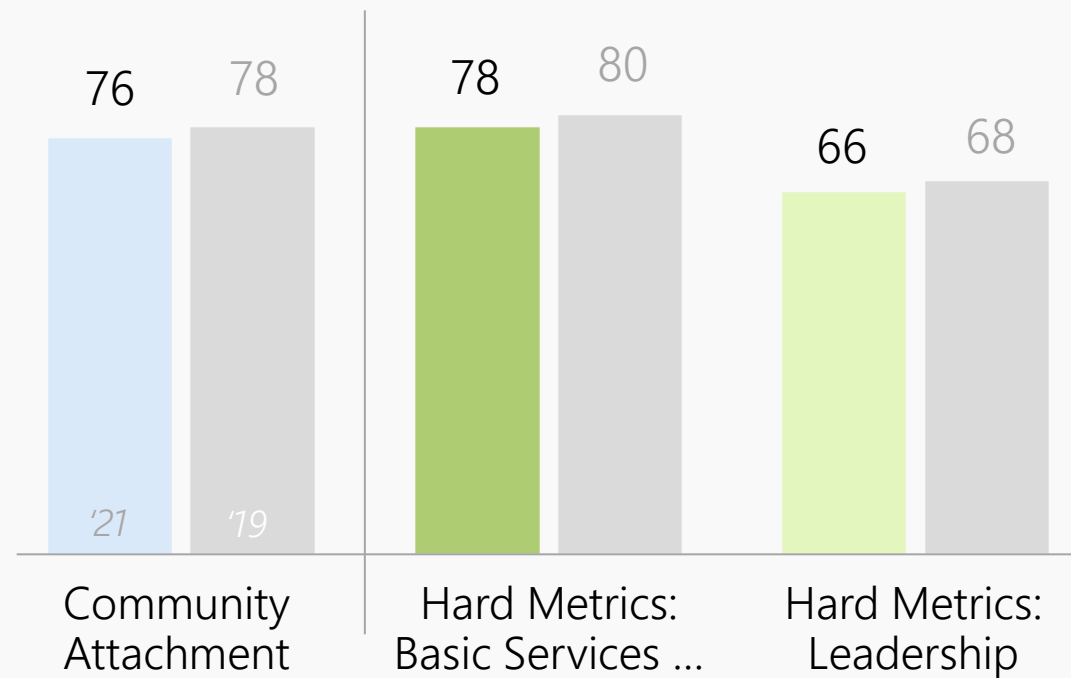
	'21	'19
Community Attachment	76	78
Hard Metrics: Basic Services …	78	80
Hard Metrics: Leadership	66	68

*The maximum value, 100, indicates that every resident gave each relevant indicator the highest rating.
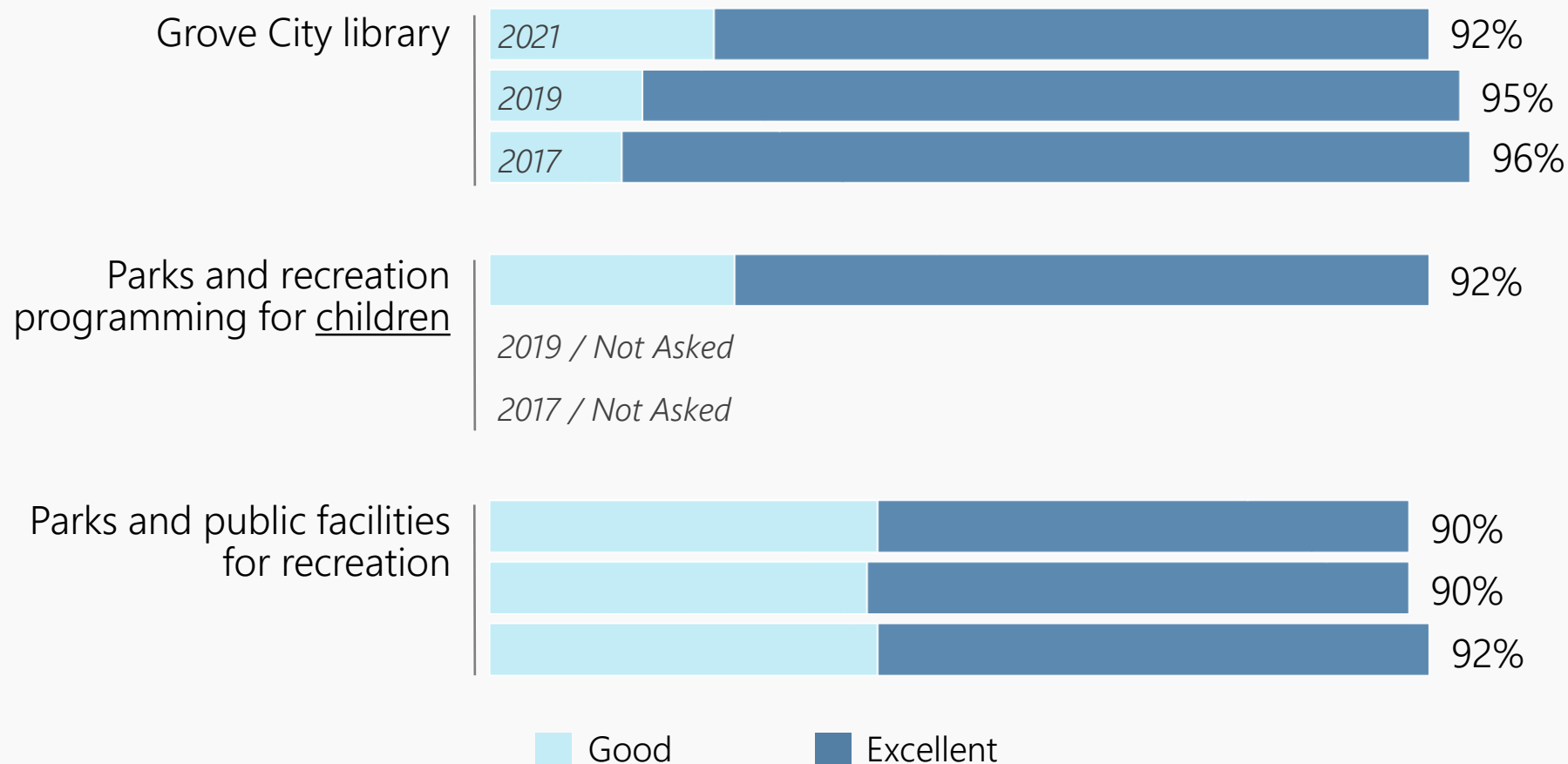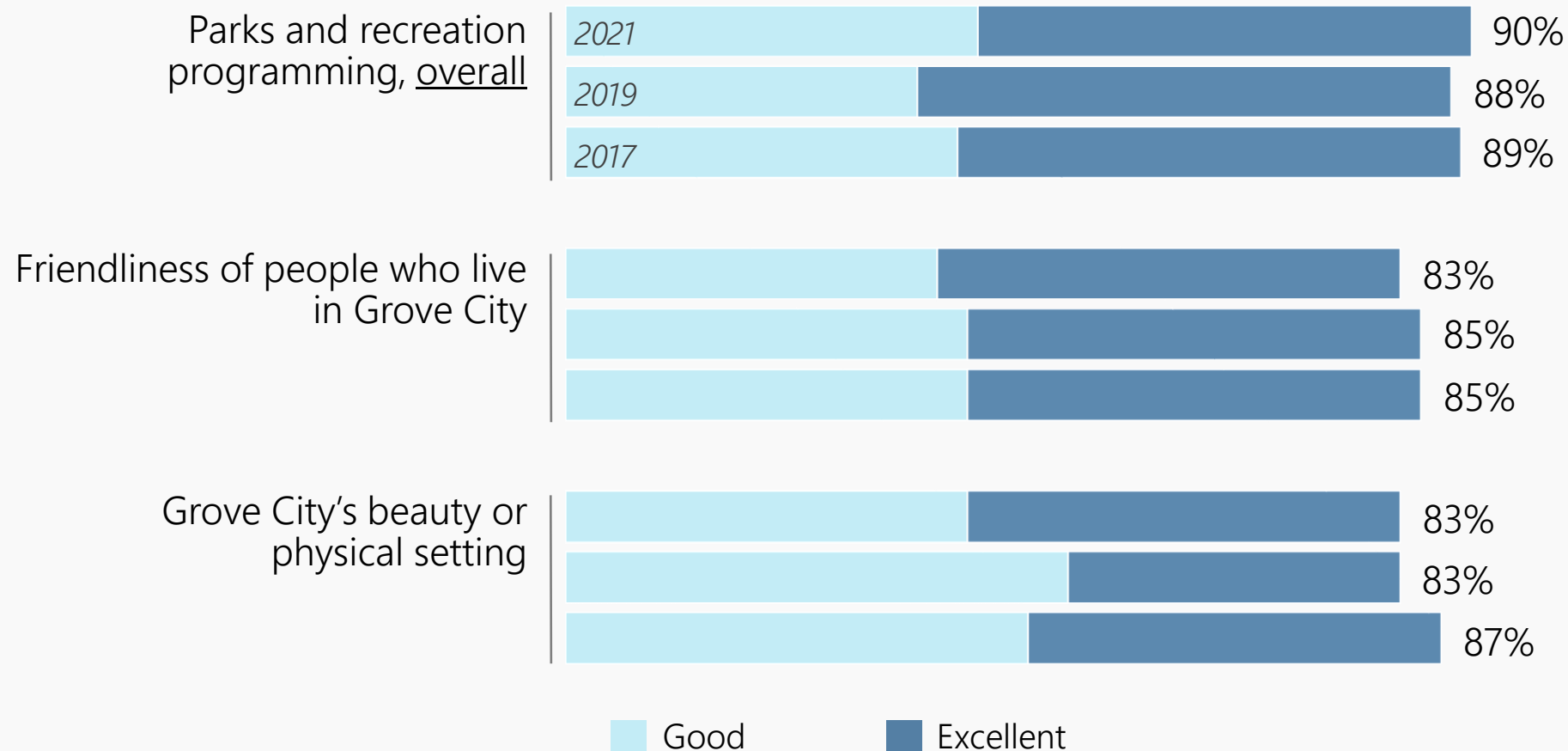
Soft Metrics:
Social Offerings, Aesthetics, and Education

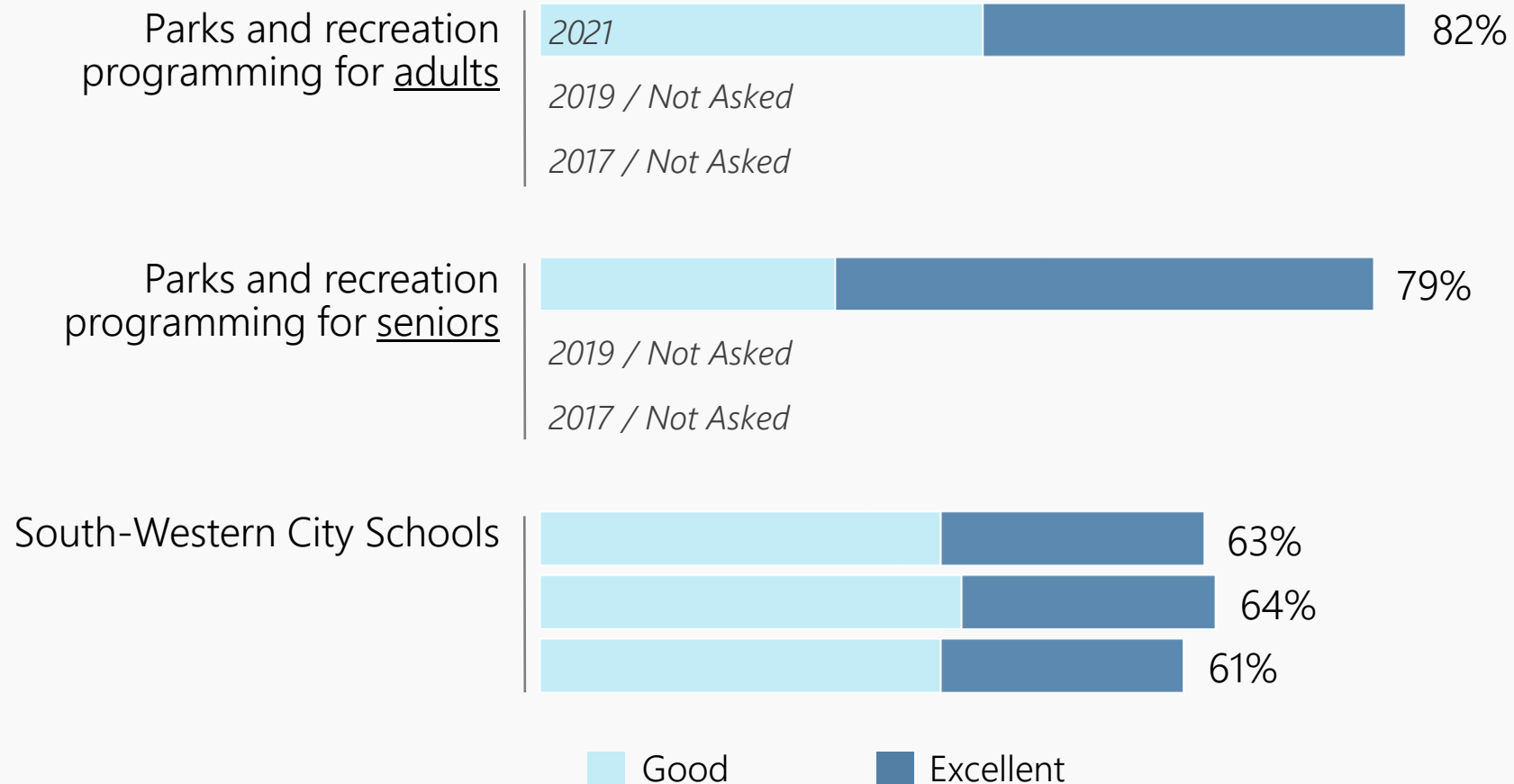# At least nine out of ten residents have positive impressions of Grove City's library, parks and rec programming for children, parks and public facilities for recreation ...

Grove City library
- 2021 — 92%
- 2019 — 95%
- 2017 — 96%

Parks and recreation programming for children
- 92%
- 2019 / Not Asked
- 2017 / Not Asked

Parks and public facilities for recreation
- 90%
- 90%
- 92%

Good Excellent
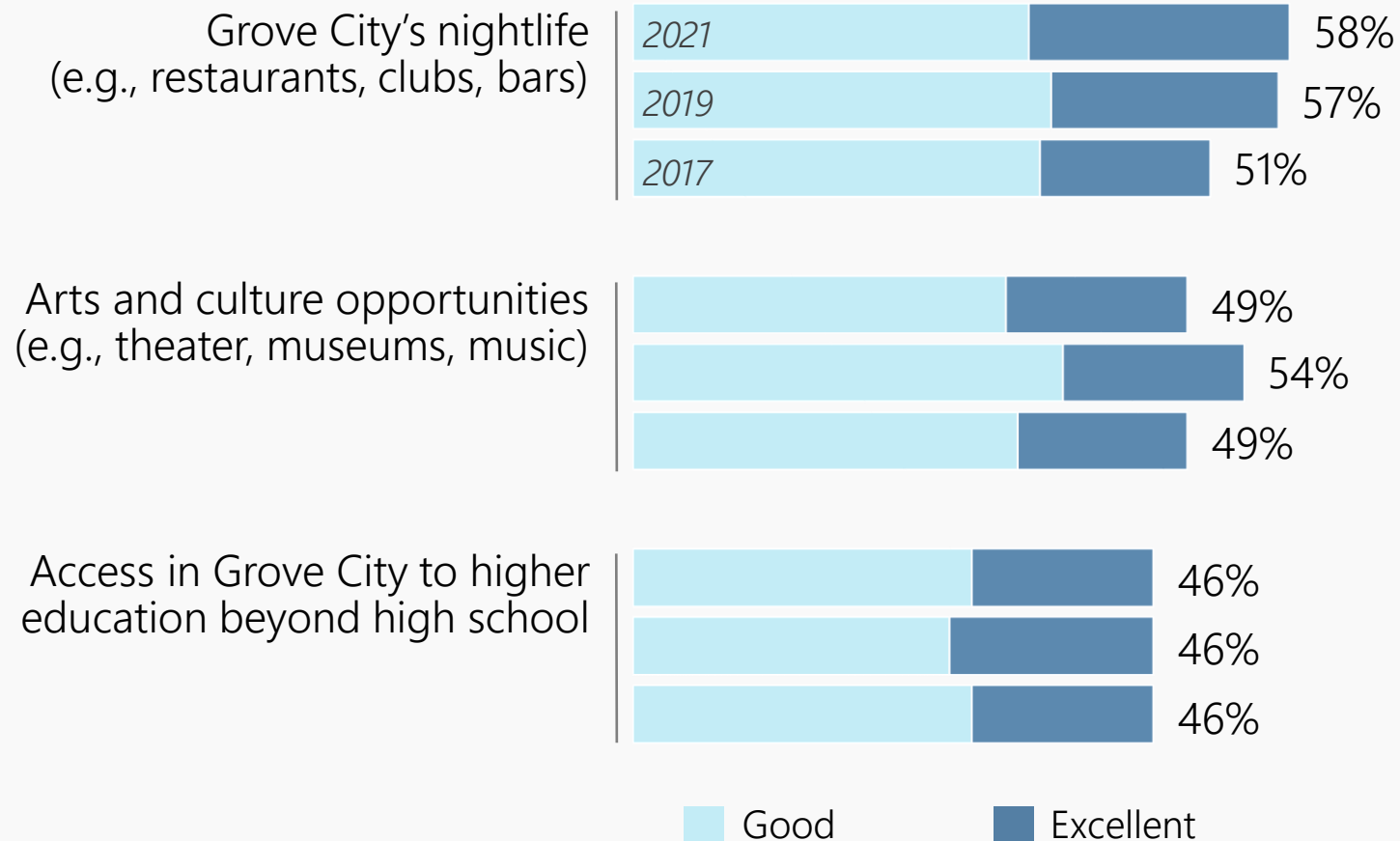
... and parks and rec programming, overall. Almost as many consider local residents friendly and have positive impressions of the city's physical setting ...

Soft Metrics: Social off.

Parks and recreation programming, overall

2021 — 90%
2019 — 88%
2017 — 89%

Friendliness of people who live in Grove City

83%
85%
85%

Grove City's beauty or physical setting

83%
83%
87%

Good   Excellent

... and parks and rec programming for adults and seniors. As in past years, fewer residents have positive impressions of South-Western City Schools ...

Parks and recreation programming for <u>adults</u>

2021   82%
2019 / Not Asked
2017 / Not Asked

Parks and recreation programming for <u>seniors</u>

79%
2019 / Not Asked
2017 / Not Asked

South-Western City Schools

63%
64%
61%

Good   Excellent

...the city's nightlife, arts and cultural opportunities, and access to higher education within Grove City.

Grove City's nightlife (e.g., restaurants, clubs, bars)
- 2021: 58%
- 2019: 57%
- 2017: 51%

Arts and culture opportunities (e.g., theater, museums, music)
- 49%
- 54%
- 49%

Access in Grove City to higher education beyond high school
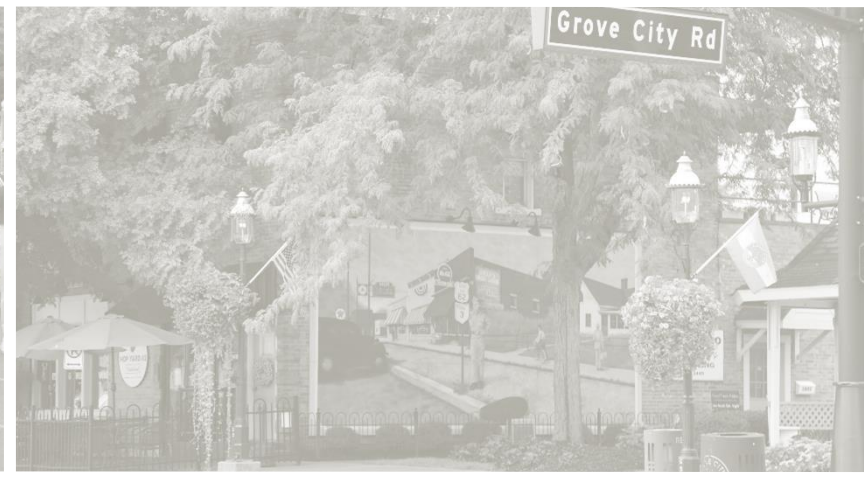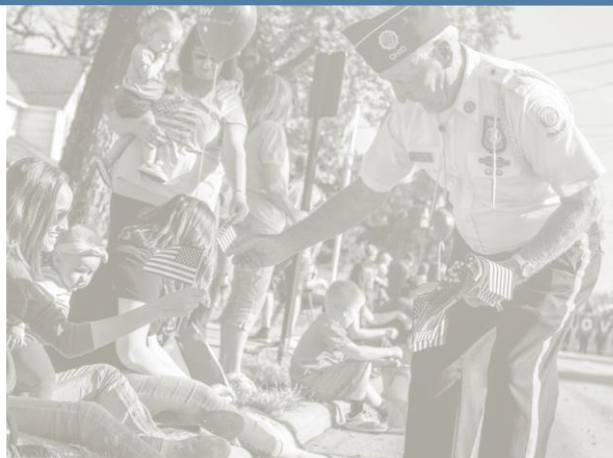- 46%
- 46%
- 46%

Legend: Good | Excellent

On social offerings, aesthetics, and education, the aggregated data yield a score of 75, again, similar to the score recorded in 2019 (i.e., 77).*
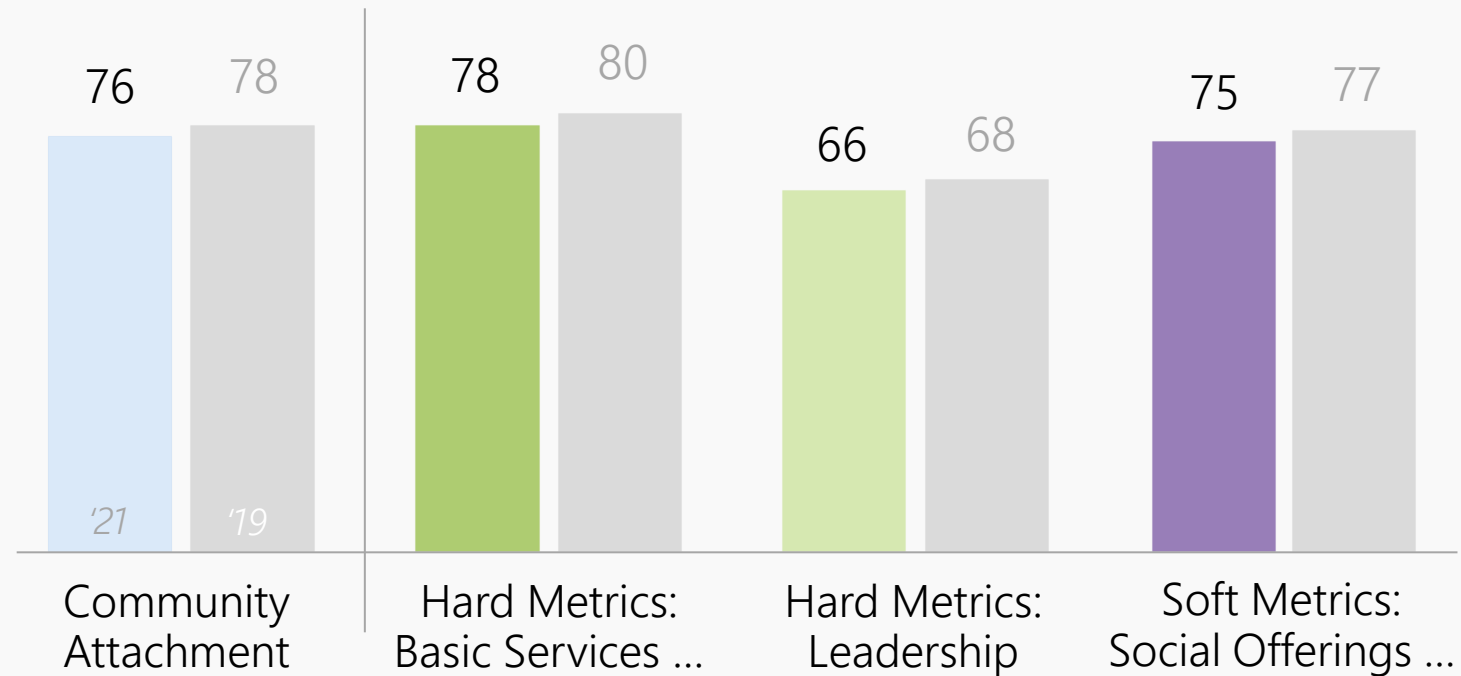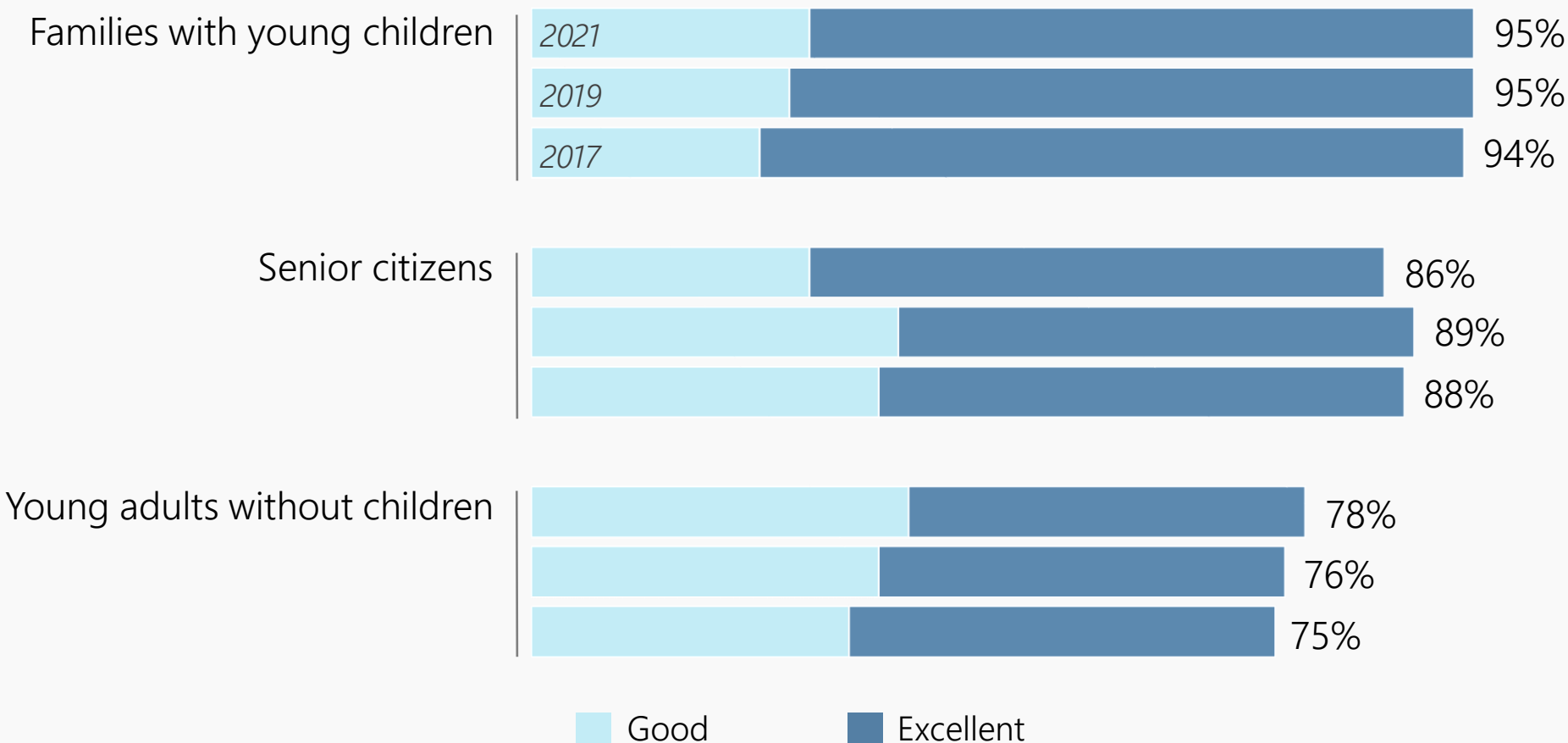

*The maximum value, 100, indicates that every resident gave each relevant indicator the highest rating.
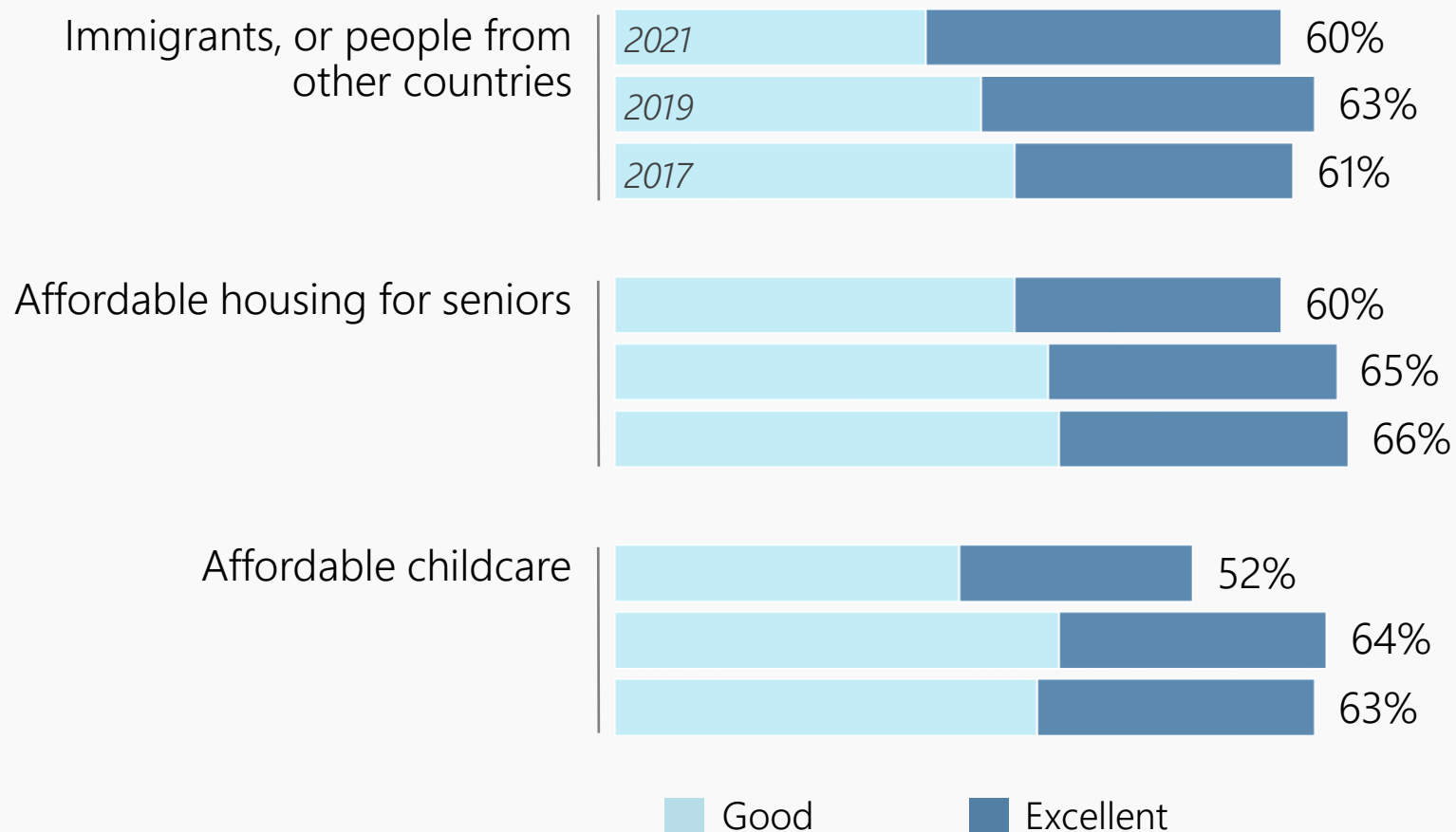
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Soft Metrics: Openness

More than eight out of ten residents consider Grove City excellent or good as a place to live for families with young children and for seniors. Slightly fewer residents consider Grove City excellent or good for young adults without children.

Families with young children
- 2021: 95%
- 2019: 95%
- 2017: 94%

Senior citizens
- 86%
- 89%
- 88%

Young adults without children
- 78%
- 76%
- 75%

Legend: ▢ Good ▢ Excellent

Q13: I'd like you to rate Grove City as a place to live for different groups of people. For each group I mention, choose, again, a letter grade from A (excellent) to F (failing).
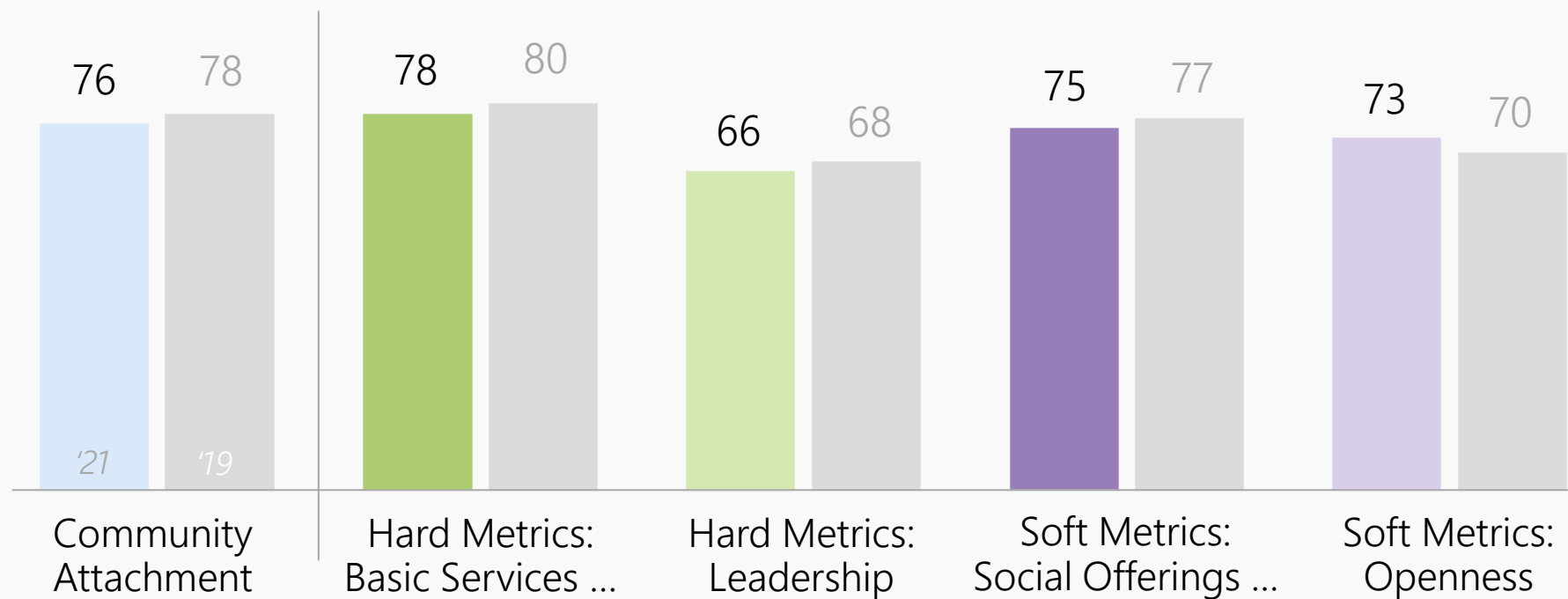
Still fewer residents consider Grove City excellent or good for the LGBTQ+ community; racial and ethnic minorities; young, talented college graduates looking for jobs; and …

LGBTQ+ community
- *2021* — 68%
- *2019* — 73%
- *2017* — 70%

Racial and ethnic minorities
- 68%
- 71%
- 70%

Young, talented college graduates looking to enter the job market
- 62%
- 61%
- 61%

Legend: Good — Excellent

Q13: I'd like you to rate Grove City as a place to live for different groups of people. For each group I mention, choose, again, a letter grade from A (excellent) to F (failing).

… immigrants; seniors in need of affordable housing; and parents in need of affordable childcare.

Immigrants, or people from other countries
- 2021: 60%
- 2019: 63%
- 2017: 61%

Affordable housing for seniors
- 60%
- 65%
- 66%

Affordable childcare
- 52%
- 64%
- 63%
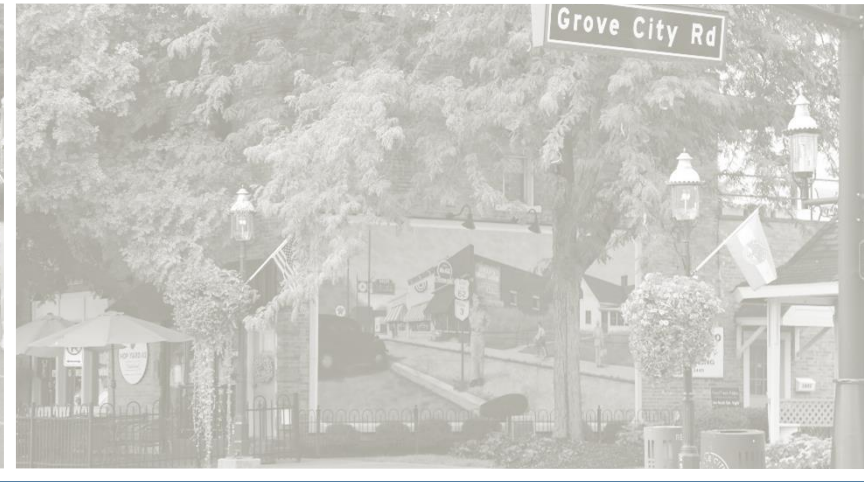
Legend: Good | Excellent
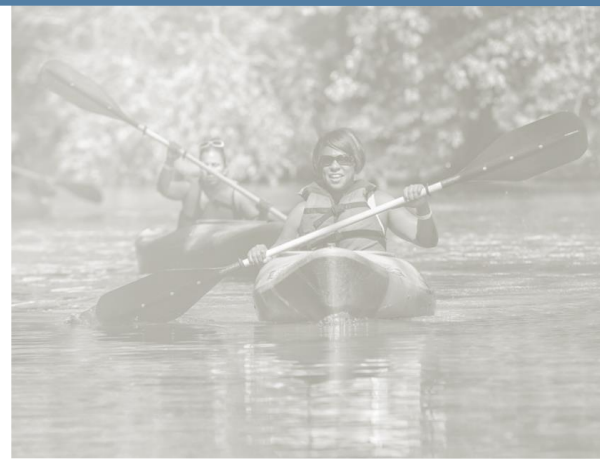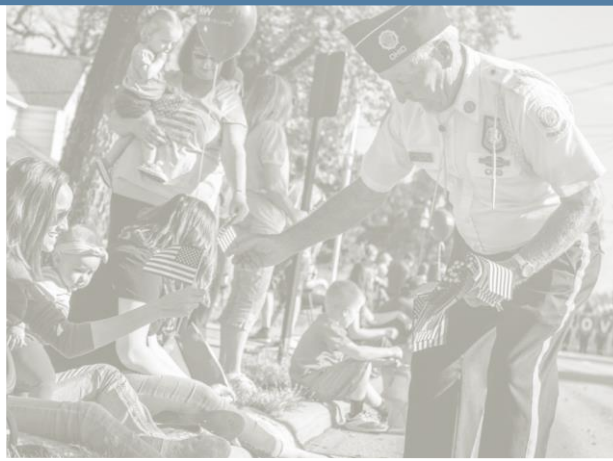
Q13/11: … again, a letter grade from A (excellent) to F (failing).

On openness, the aggregated data yield a score of 73, slightly higher than the comparable figure in 2019 (i.e., 70).*

	'21	'19
Community Attachment	76	78
Hard Metrics: Basic Services ...	78	80
Hard Metrics: Leadership	66	68
Soft Metrics: Social Offerings ...	75	77
Soft Metrics: Openness	73	70

*The maximum value, 100, indicates that every resident gave each relevant indicator the highest rating.

Correlates of Community Attachment

To identify the most likely sources of Community Attachment, a community attachment score was computed for each survey respondent using the five questions comprising the concept.
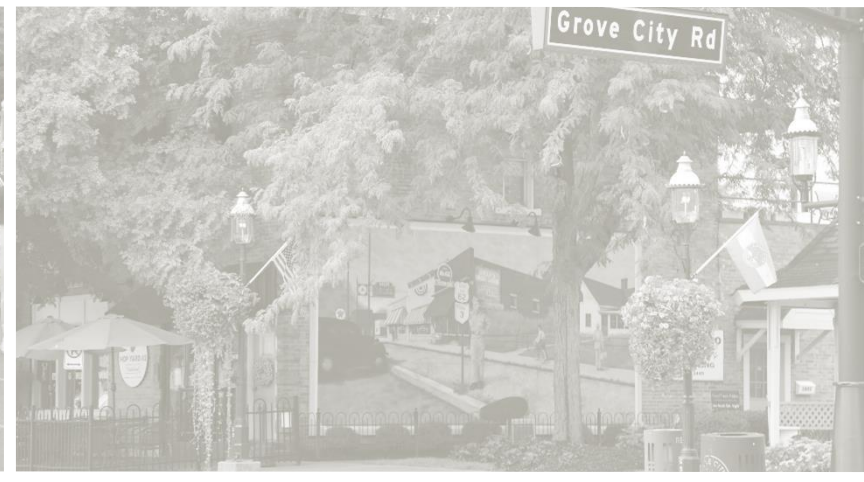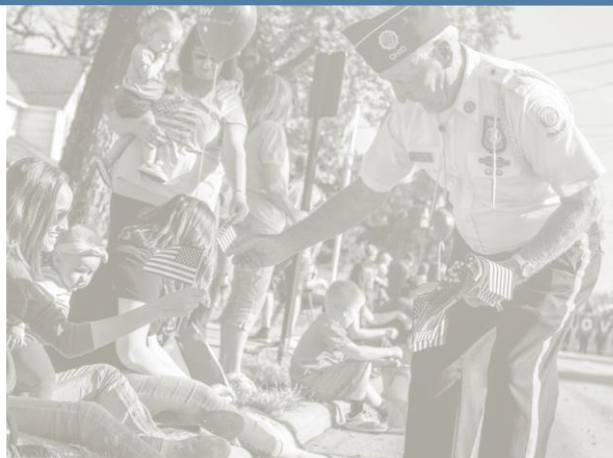
These scores were then correlated with each of the 32 Hard and Soft Metrics to determine which metrics produce the strongest links to Community Attachment.

For example, a correlation (stated as an r value) of 1.0 would mean that the metric producing that result is strongly related to Community Attachment. By contrast, a correlation of 0.0 would mean that the corresponding metric and Community Attachment are unrelated.

Top 5	Metric	r value	Strong Positive*
1. City officials do a good job planning for the future of Grove City	HARD-leadership	.477	27%
2. Grove City's beauty or physical setting	SOFT-aesthetics	.436	43%
3. Friendliness of the people who live in Grove City	SOFT-social	.435	46%
4. Grove City as a good place to move or start a business	HARD-economic	.429	41%
5. City officials are responsive to the needs and concerns of local residents	HARD-leadership	.428	23%

Bottom 5	Metric	r value	Strong Positive
28. Feel very safe walking in their neighborhood	HARD-safety	.207	82%
29. Grove City's highways and freeway system	HARD-basic	.202	27%
30. Grove City Library	SOFT-education	.174	70%
31. Access in Grove City to affordable childcare	SOFT-openness	.160	21%
32. Trash collection	HARD-basic	.096	64%

*Response was either "A" (excellent) grade, Agree strongly, or Very safe.
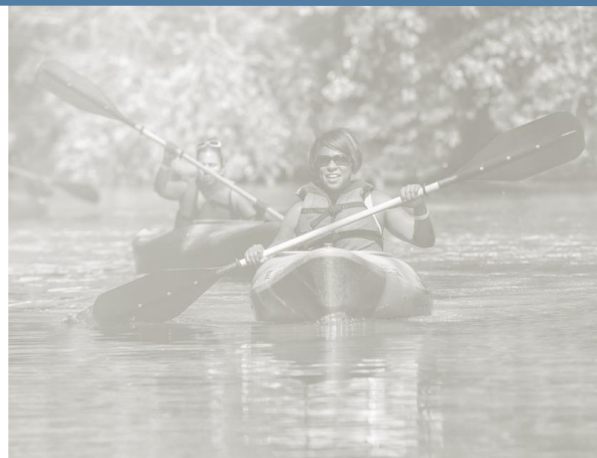
Community Priorities

Residents were asked:

Which of the following should the city make its highest priority:*

Building a performing arts center;

Building a community recreation center;

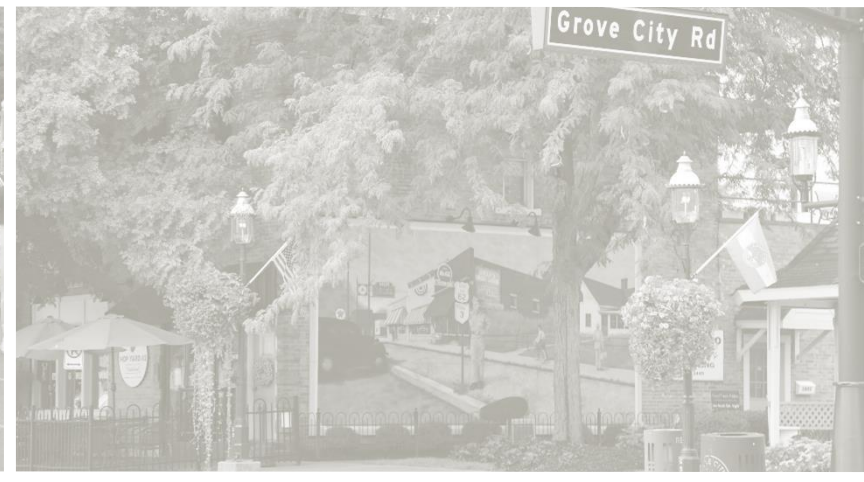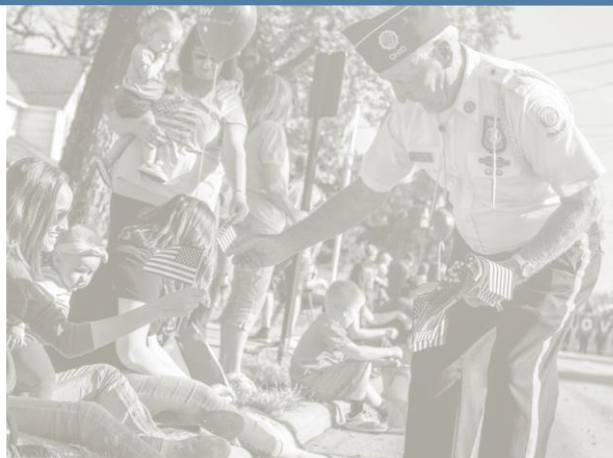Building a second community swimming pool;

Building a permanent facility where colleges and universities can offer courses for area residents; or

Continuing redevelopment of Town Center?

*Options were presented in randomized order.

As in past years, building a permanent facility for higher education was the top priority, among the options tested, for a plurality of Grove City residents.

41%	25%	20%	7%	6%
College facility	Community rec. center	Redeveloping Town Center	Second swimming pool	Performing arts center
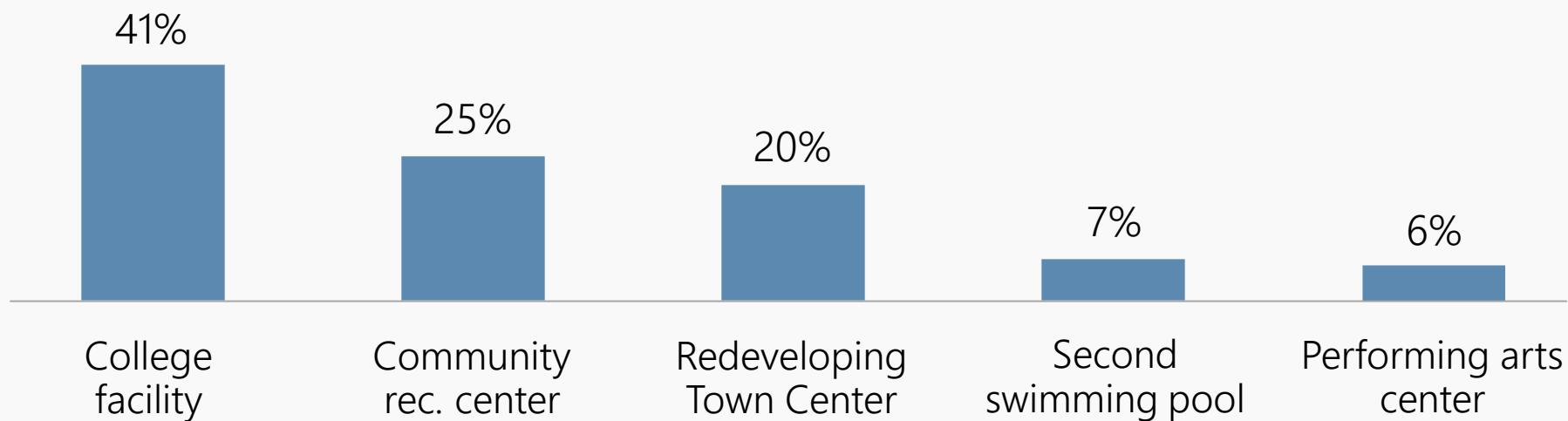
Key Findings

- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, impressions of Grove City as a place to live, once again, are highly positive.

- According to most residents, the city is heading in the right direction, not off on the wrong track. Indeed, most residents would recommend the city to friends and associates.

- On Hard Metrics, satisfaction is high with the local fire department, the city's Parks and Recreation Department, the community's health care providers, trash collection, and the Grove City Police. As in 2019, most residents feel very safe walking in their neighborhood.

- Fewer residents are satisfied with the availability of good paying jobs, the cost of housing (which, arguably, transcends Grove City), and the performance of city officials.

- On Soft Metrics, most residents praised the library; parks and rec programming, especially for children; and parks and public facilities for recreation.

- As in previous studies, residents are less enamored of the city's nightlife, arts and cultural opportunities, and local access to higher education.

- Residents tend to agree that Grove City is attractive to seniors and families with young children. Many also agree that the city is less attractive to young, talented college graduates looking for jobs; immigrants; seniors in need of affordable housing; and families in need of affordable childcare.

- The metrics most likely to foster Community Attachment involve city officials, as they plan for the future (H)* and respond to the needs and concerns of local residents (H), the city's beauty or physical setting (S), the friendliness of the people who live in Grove City (S); and the opportunities for business (H).

*H = Hard Metric; S = Soft Metric

- The metrics least likely to foster Community Attachment involve public safety (H), the city's highways and freeway system (H),* the Grove City Library (S), access to affordable childcare (S), and trash collection (H).

- Though most of the latter enjoy highly positive ratings, apparently, these metrics are the least responsible for creating the "emotional connection" that fosters Community Attachment.

- Finally, when residents considered five potential community development projects, a facility linked to a college or university topped the list, as it has since 2011, when the question was added. A community recreation center ranked second.

*H = Hard Metric; S = Soft Metric

Questions?

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