

2026 OKInsight Community Survey Findings Report



Executive Summary

Purpose and Methodology

The Town of Oak Island administered the 2026 OKInsight Community Survey to gather input on community priorities, quality of life, and Town services. The survey was conducted online from February 1 through February 28, 2026 and received 789 responses. While participation was lower than in 2023 due to the shift away from mailed outreach, the results provide a strong and useful snapshot of community sentiment. Findings should be interpreted as reflective of respondent perspectives and are most valuable for identifying trends, priorities, and areas of strength and opportunity.

Respondents represented a mix of full-time residents, seasonal residents, and non-resident property owners, offering a broad perspective on community priorities and service delivery.

Key Wins

Survey results indicate that the Town of Oak Island continues to perform very strongly in core areas that define overall quality of life.

Residents overwhelmingly view the Town as a desirable place to live, with 97% rating overall quality of life positively, consistent with 2023 results. Public safety remains a major strength, with police, fire, and emergency services receiving some of the highest ratings across the survey.

The Town has also made meaningful progress in organizational performance. Most notably, communication with the public improved significantly, with positive ratings increasing from 77% in 2023 to 89.6% in 2026. Residents also reported improved access to information, customer service, and ease of interacting with Town services.

Parks and Recreation continue to be highly valued, with strong ratings across programs, facilities, and amenities. Increased satisfaction with communication about programs suggests that recent outreach efforts are having a positive impact.

Resident perception of value for tax dollars has also improved substantially, increasing from 56% to 69%, indicating growing confidence in how Town resources are being used.

Key Challenges

While overall sentiment remains highly positive, several areas continue to present challenges or opportunities for improvement.

Growth and development remain a central concern. Ratings related to growth management, development quality, and ordinance enforcement are comparatively low, and open-ended responses consistently reflect concerns about overdevelopment and the pace of change.

Infrastructure and mobility also emerged as ongoing issues. While roadway conditions, sidewalks, and parking have improved, residents continue to report challenges related to walkability, bicycle infrastructure, and overall connectivity.

Community development processes received mixed feedback. Perceptions of fairness and consistency in code enforcement declined compared to 2023, and rating related to permitting and development processes remain moderate.

Cost-related concerns are also present, with residents identifying affordability of housing, utilities, and Town services as ongoing challenges.

Top Priorities from Residents

When asked to identify the most significant issues facing Oak Island over the next five years, respondents clearly prioritized growth and infrastructure.

Infrastructure capacity and maintenance (65.3%) and pace of growth (64%) were the two most frequently identified issues, significantly outpacing all other responses.

A second tier of priorities includes:

- Affordable housing (31.9%)
- Affordability of town services (27.1%)
- Beach renourishment and coastal resilience (24.8%)
- Environmental protection (21.9%)

Open-ended feedback reinforces these findings, with residents emphasizing the need to better manage growth, maintain infrastructure, preserve natural resources, and protect the Town's character.

Notable Changes Since 2023 Survey

Several key shifts have occurred since the previous survey.

Communication preferences have changed significantly, with residents increasingly relying on direct Town communication channels. Use of the Town's email newsletter and alert systems increased substantially, while reliance on traditional resources such as newspapers and in-person events declined.

Perceptions of transportation show a mixed trend. Residents report improvements in roadway conditions, sidewalks, and parking, but continued declines in ease of walking and biking highlight ongoing gaps in multimodal infrastructure.

Resident willingness to recommend Oak Island increased slightly, rising from 84.7% in 2023 to 87.6% in 2026, reinforcing strong overall satisfaction with the community.

Overall Takeaway

The 2026 survey results reflect a community that is highly satisfied with its quality of life, public safety, and Town services, while also expressing some clear expectations for how the Town of Oak Island should grow moving forward. Residents value the Town's character, coastal environment, and sense of community, and are looking for thoughtful, well-managed growth that is supported by strong infrastructure, clear policies, and consistent service delivery.

Methodology

The Town of Oak Island administered the 2026 OKInsight Community Survey to gather input on community priorities, quality of life, and Town services. The survey was open from February 1 through February 28, 2026.

The survey was conducted entirely online and promoted through the Town’s communication channels, including social media platforms, the OKInformation email alert system, and the Town’s enewsletter, The Current.

A total of 789 responses were collected. While this is lower than the 2023 survey, which included a mailed postcard to all households, a reduced response volume was anticipated due to the change in outreach method. Participation remained strong and provides a meaningful sample of community feedback.

Survey respondents were primarily full-time residents (65.4%), with additional representation from seasonal residents (14.1%) and non-resident property owners (17.6%). Other respondent groups, including business owners, employees, and visitors, made up a smaller share of the responses.

At a 95% confidence level, the results have an estimated margin of error of approximately +-3.4% based on the Town’s population of 9,500. The findings are intended to reflect the overall community sentiment and identify key trends and priorities.

Key Findings by Category

Quality of Life

Residents continue to rate the overall quality of life in the Town of Oak Island very highly. In 2026, 97% of respondents rated the overall quality of life as excellent or good, consistent with the 96% reported in 2023. The Town continues to be viewed favorably as a place to live (97%) and retire (94%), reinforcing Oak Island’s strong appeal as a coastal residential community.

Perceptions of the Town’s overall image also remain positive, with 90% of respondents rating it as excellent or good, reflecting a slight improvement from 87% in 2023.

Several areas showed measurable improvement since the previous survey. Most notably, the perceived value for Town tax dollars and fees increased significantly from 56% in 2023 to 69% in 2026, indicating improved resident sentiment regarding the return on investment for services and infrastructure. Ratings for Oak Island as a place to raise children also increased from 66% to 70%.

Despite these gains, some areas continue to receive comparatively lower ratings. The Town remains less favorably viewed as a place to work, with 47% of respondents rating it positively. While this represents a modest improvement from 44% in 2023, it continues to be one of the lowest-rated aspects of quality of life.

The results indicate that the Town of Oak Island maintains a very high quality of life, with strong performance in core areas and measurable improvement in resident perception of value. At the same

time, opportunities remain to strengthen the Town’s appeal as a place to work and support a more balanced local economy.

Quality of Life. Please rate the quality of the following.

(N=789)

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know	Skipped
Overall quality of life in the Town of Oak Island	203 25.73%	500 63.37%	52 6.59%	15 1.9%	6 0.76%	2 0.25%	11 1.39%
Town of Oak Island as a place to live	212 26.87%	469 59.44%	67 8.49%	15 1.9%	6 0.76%	8 1.01%	12 1.52%
Town of Oak Island as a place to raise children	47 5.96%	140 17.74%	168 21.29%	65 8.24%	16 2.03%	344 43.6%	9 1.14%
Town of Oak Island as a place to retire	238 30.16%	385 48.8%	82 10.39%	34 4.31%	5 0.63%	41 5.2%	4 0.5%
Town of Oak Island as a place to work	25 3.17%	99 12.55%	169 21.42%	107 13.56%	33 4.18%	346 43.85%	10 1.27%
Overall Value that you receive for your Town tax dollars and fees	66 8.37%	302 38.28%	234 29.66%	108 13.69%	58 7.35%	15 1.9%	6 0.76%
Overall image of the Town of Oak Island	152 19.26%	426 53.99%	132 16.73%	49 6.21%	18 2.28%	2 0.25%	10 1.27%

Quality of Life. Please rate the quality of the following (% respondents with an opinion).

	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Poor
Overall quality of life in the Town of Oak Island	28%	69.1%	2.1%	0.8%
Town of Oak Island as a place to live	30.2%	66.8%	2.1%	0.9%
Town of Oak Island as a place to raise children	17.5%	52.2%	24.3%	6.0%
Town of Oak Island as a place to retire	35.9%	58.2%	5.1%	0.8%
Town of Oak Island as a place to work	9.5%	37.5%	40.5%	12.5%
Overall value that you receive for your Town tax dollars and fees	12.4%	56.6%	20.2%	10.9%

Overall image of the Town of Oak Island	23.6%	66%	7.6%	2.8%
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Quality of Life. 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Category	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
Overall Quality of Life	96%	97.1%	+1.1
Place to Live	95%	97%	+2
Place to Raise Children	66%	69.8%	+3.8
Place to Retire	92%	94.1%	+2.1
Place to Work	44%	47%	+3
Value for Tax Dollars	56%	68.9%	+12.9
Overall Image of the Town	87%	89.6%	+2.6

Safe Community

Public safety services continue to be one of the highest-rated areas in the Town of Oak Island. In 2026, most respondents rated police and fire services positively, with 96.1% rating the quality of police services as excellent or good and 97.9% rating the quality of fire services positively.

Trust in the public safety departments also remains strong. Approximately 96% of respondents reported positive perceptions of the police department, while 97.3% rather their trust in the fire department as excellent or good. These results are consistent with the 2023 survey, where public safety services were among the highest performing areas, indicating continued stability and confidence in these services.

New questions in the 2026 survey provide additional insight into community perceptions of safety. Respondents reported high levels of perceived safety across different areas of the Town, including neighborhoods (96.7%), commercial areas (97.6%), and the beach (97.7%). Additionally, 97.9% of respondents rated the responsiveness of emergency services positively.

The results indicate that residents feel safe throughout the community and well-served by public safety departments. Public safety remains a clear strength for the Town and continues to contribute significantly to Oak Island’s overall quality of life.

Safe Community. Please rate the quality of the following.

(N=789)

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know	Skipped
Quality of police services	319 40.43%	322 40.81%	67 8.49%	21 2.66%	5 0.63%	49 6.21%	6 0.76%
Trust in the Police Department	347 43.98%	295 37.39%	75 9.51%	20 2.53%	7 0.89%	39 4.94%	6 0.76%
Quality of fire services	418	236	41	8	6	75	5

	52.98%	29.91%	5.2%	1.01%	0.76%	9.51%	0.63%
Trust in the Fire Department	440 55.77%	237 30.04%	34 4.31%	13 1.65%	6 0.76%	51 6.46%	8 1.01%
Responsiveness of emergency services	363 46.01%	209 26.49%	46 5.83%	8 1.01%	1 0.13%	159 20.15%	3 0.38%
Feeling of safety in your neighborhood	366 46.39%	339 42.97%	52 6.59%	15 1.9%	6 0.76%	3 0.38%	8 1.01%
Feeling of safety in commercial areas	337 42.71%	372 47.15%	54 6.84%	12 1.52%	6 0.76%	3 0.38%	5 0.63%
Feeling of safety on the beach	369 46.77%	351 44.49%	39 4.94%	18 2.28%	2 0.25%	0 0%	10 1.27%

Safe Community. Please rate the quality of the following (% respondents with an opinion).

	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Poor
Quality of police services	48%	48.5%	3.2%	0.8%
Trust in the Police Department	51.5%	44%	3.0%	1.1%
Quality of fire services	62.6%	35.3%	1.2%	0.9%
Trust in the fire department	63.4%	34.1%	1.9%	0.9%
Responsiveness of emergency services	62.5%	36%	1.4%	0.2%
Feeling of safety in your neighborhood	50.4%	46.7%	2.1%	0.8%
Feeling of safety in commercial areas	46.5%	51.1%	1.7%	0.8%
Feeling of safety on the beach	50.1%	47.6%	2.4%	0.3%

Safe Community. 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Category	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
Quality of police services	96%	96.1%	+0.1
Trust in Police Department	95%	96%	+1
Quality of fire services	97%	97.9%	+0.9
Trust in Fire Department	98%	97.3%	-0.7

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation services and facilities in the Town of Oak Island continue to be highly rated, with strong performance across all categories and measurable improvement since the 2023 survey.

In 2026, 90% of respondents rated the quality of recreational programs as excellent or good, with 90% of respondents rating program availability as excellent or good. The cost of recreational programs was also viewed favorably, with 92.5% of respondents providing a positive rating.

The quality of Town parks remains a particular strength, with 93% of respondents rating parks as excellent or good, reflecting an increase from 90% in 2023. Additionally, the availability of information about recreational programs and events saw the most notable improvement, increasing from 84% in 2023 to 92.5% in 2026.

These results indicate that recreation services are performing at a high level and continue to improve across key areas. These findings suggest that investments in recreational programming, facilities, and communication efforts are positively impacting resident satisfaction.

Parks and Recreation. Please rate the quality of the following.

(N=789)

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know	Skipped
Availability of recreational programs in the Town	198 25.1%	347 43.98%	124 15.72%	50 6.34%	11 1.39%	50 6.34%	9 1.14%
Quality of recreational programs in the Town	179 22.69%	333 42.21%	122 15.46%	41 5.2%	11 1.39%	94 11.91%	9 1.14%
Cost of recreational programs in the Town	159 20.15%	272 34.47%	163 20.66%	26 3.3%	9 1.14%	149 18.88%	11 1.39%
Quality of Town Parks	186 23.57%	406 51.46%	120 15.21%	36 4.56%	9 1.14%	25 3.17%	7 0.88%
Availability of information about recreational programs and events	218 27.63%	386 48.92%	108 13.69%	31 3.93%	18 2.28%	18 2.28%	10 1.27%

Parks and Recreation. Please rate the quality of the following (% respondents with an opinion).

	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Poor
Availability of recreational programs in the Town	32.7%	57.3%	8.3%	1.8%
Quality of recreational programs in the Town	31.7%	59%	7.3%	2%

Cost of recreational programs in the Town	34.1%	58.4%	5.6%	1.9%
Quality of Town Parks	29.2%	63.8%	5.7%	1.3%
Availability of information about recreational programs and events	33.4%	59.1%	4.8%	2.8%

Parks and Recreation. 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Category	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
Availability of recreational programs	88%	89.9%	+1.9
Quality of recreational programs	88%	90.8%	+2.8
Cost of recreational programs	91%	92.5%	+1.5
Quality of town parks	90%	92.9%	+2.9
Availability of information	84%	92.5%	+8.5

Organizational Excellence

Organizational performance in the Town of Oak Island shows strong improvement across all measured areas in the 2026 survey with higher ratings in every category compared to 2023.

Overall quality of services provided by the Town continues to be rated highly, with 89.5% of respondents rating services as excellent or good, a slight increase from 88% in 2023. Customer service from Town employees remains a strength, increasing from 88% to 89.8% positive.

The most notable improvement is in the effectiveness of Town communication with the public, which increased significantly from 77% in 2023 to 89.6% in 2026. This represents the largest gain across all categories in the survey and suggests that recent efforts to improve communication are begin recognized by residents.

Additional gains were seen in areas related to access and ease of interaction with the Town. The ability to access information improved from 85% to 89.9%, while ease of location information on the Town’s website increased from 82% to 86.6%. Ratings for ease of contacting Town employees and making a service request also improved, reaching 82.8% and 84% positive, respectively.

The ease of paying a Town utility bill remains one of the highest-rated services, increasing from 91% in 2023 to 92.9% in 2026.

The results indicate that the Town has made meaningful progress in communication, accessibility, and service delivery. While all areas are now rated positively by a strong majority of respondents, continued focus on improving ease of interaction and service access will help maintain and build upon these gains.

Organizational Excellence. Please rate the quality of the following.

(N=789)

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know	Skipped
Overall quality of services provided by the Town of Oak Island	146 18.5%	433 54.88%	130 16.48%	48 6.08%	20 2.53%	5 0.63%	7 0.89%
Quality of customer service you receive from Town employees	230 29.15%	345 43.73%	103 13.05%	45 5.7%	20 2.53%	41 5.2%	5 0.63%
Effectiveness of Town communication with the public	265 33.59%	337 42.71%	105 13.31%	41 5.2%	29 3.68%	4 0.51%	8 1.01%
Your ability to access the information you need about the Town	231 29.28%	375 47.53%	104 13.18%	47 5.96%	21 2.66%	2 0.25%	9 1.14%
Ease of contacting Town employees	126 15.97%	308 39.04%	148 18.76%	49 6.21%	41 5.2%	107 13.56%	10 1.26%
Ease of making a service request	86 10.9%	266 33.71%	142 18%	47 5.96%	20 2.53%	219 27.76%	9 1.14%
Ease of locating information on the Town's website	139 17.62%	401 50.82%	147 18.63%	50 6.34%	31 3.93%	12 1.52%	9 1.14%
Ease of paying a Town utility bill	260 32.95%	364 46.13%	76 9.63%	29 3.68%	19 2.41%	33 4.18%	8 1.01%

Organization. Please rate the quality of the following (% respondents with an opinion).

	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Poor
Overall quality of services provided by the Town of Oak Island	22.6%	66.9%	7.4%	3.1%
Quality of customer service you receive from Town employees	35.9%	53.9%	7%	3.1%
Effectiveness of Town communication with the public	39.5%	50.2%	6.1%	4.3%
Your ability to access the information you need about the Town	34.2%	55.6%	7%	3.1%
Ease of contacting Town employees	24%	58.7%	9.4%	7.8%
Ease of making a service request	20.6%	63.6%	11.2%	4.8%

Ease of locating information on the Town’s website	22.3%	64.3%	8%	5%
Ease of paying a Town utility bill	38.8%	54.3%	4.3%	2.8%

Organizational Excellence. 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Category	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
Overall quality of services	88%	89.5%	+1.5
Quality of customer service	88%	89.9%	+1.8
Effectiveness of Town communication	77%	89.6%	+12.6
Ability to access information	85%	89.9%	+4.9
Ease of contacting employees	80%	82.8%	+2.8
Ease of making a service request	81%	84%	+3
Ease of locating information on the Town’s website	82%	87%	+5
Ease of paying a Town utility bill	91%	92.9%	+1.9

Community Development

Community development-related topics received more mixed ratings compared to other service areas, reflecting both improved perceptions in broader economic conditions and ongoing challenges within specific aspects of the development process.

In 2026, 76.6% of respondents rated the strength and vitality of the local economy as excellent or good. While this remains a relatively strong rating, it represents a slight decrease from 79.3% in 2023. Perceptions of the Town’s overall development process remained largely unchanged, with 48.4% of respondents reporting a positive experience compared to 47.6% in 2023.

More detailed questions introduced in the 2026 survey provided additional insight into specific components of the development process. These results indicate that while some aspects are viewed more favorably, others present opportunities for improvement.

Respondents reported lower levels of satisfaction with the consistency and fairness of ordinance enforcement, with 31.1% rating this area positively, compared to 45.9% in 2023. This represents the most notable decline within the category and suggests the need for continued focus on transparency and consistency in enforcement practices.

Other elements of the development process also received more moderate ratings. Clarity of development regulations (38.6% positive), timeliness of the permitting process (41.3% positive), and the overall development experience (48.4%) indicate that while progress may be occurring, these areas continue to shape resident perceptions of the Town’s development efforts.

A significant share of respondents selected “Don’t Know” for several development-related questions, particularly those relating to permitting and staff interactions. This suggests that many residents may not directly engage with development services, and that perceptions may be influenced by limited experience or broader community sentiment.

The results indicate that while the Town is viewed more positively in terms of economic strength, there are opportunities to improve consistency, clarity, and efficiency within the development process. The expanded questions in the 2026 survey provide a more detailed understanding of these issues and can help guide future improvements.

Community Development. Please rate the quality of the following.

(N=789)

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know	Skipped
Overall effectiveness of community and economic development efforts	36 4.56%	256 32.45%	252 31.94%	100 12.67%	39 4.94%	95 12.04%	11 1.39%
Clarity of Town development regulations	22 2.79%	150 19.01%	237 30.04%	170 21.55%	104 13.18%	97 12.29%	9 1.14%
Consistency and fairness of the enforcement of Town ordinances	26 3.3%	118 14.96%	195 24.71%	164 20.79%	154 19.52%	126 15.97%	6 0.76%
Timeliness of the permitting process	18 2.28%	117 14.83%	180 22.81%	98 12.42%	96 12.17%	273 34.6%	7 0.89%
Professionalism of staff in development-related services	51 6.46%	172 21.8%	201 25.48%	43 5.45%	39 4.94%	276 34.98%	7 0.89%
Overall experience with the Town's development process	26 3.3%	114 14.45%	234 29.66%	76 9.63%	73 9.25%	259 32.83%	7 0.89%
The strength and vitality of the local economy	47 5.96%	323 40.94%	243 30.8%	89 11.28%	27 3.42%	51 6.46%	9 1.14%
Town efforts to attract, retain, and support businesses	26 3.3%	176 22.31%	230 29.15%	135 17.11%	46 5.83%	168 21.29%	8 1.01%

Community Development. Please rate the quality of the following (% respondents with an opinion).

	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Poor
Overall effectiveness of community and economic development efforts	8.4%	59.5%	23.3%	9.1%
Clarity of Town development regulations	4.9%	33.6%	38.1%	23.3%
Consistency and fairness of the enforcement of Town ordinances	5.6%	25.5%	35.5%	33.3%
Timeliness of the permitting process	5.5%	35.7%	29.9%	29%
Professionalism of staff in development-related services	16.8%	56.8%	14.2%	12.2%
Overall experience with the Town's development process	9.0%	39.6%	26.4%	25%
The strength and vitality of the local economy	9.7%	66.6%	18.4%	5.6%
Town efforts to attract, retain, and support businesses	6.8%	46%	35.3%	11.8%

Community Development 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Category	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
Consistency and fairness of the enforcement of Town ordinances	45.94%	31.1%	-14.84
Overall experience with the Town's development process	47.63%	48.4%	+0.77
The strength and vitality of the local economy	79.34%	76.1%	-3.24

Growth and Natural Resources

Perceptions of growth, development, and environmental management remain mixed among respondents, with modest improvements in some areas and continued concerns in others.

In 2026, 33% of respondents rated how well the Town is managing growth as excellent or good, representing a slight increase from 29.8% in 2023. Perceptions of overall quality of new development improved modestly from 46.5% to 48.8%. Despite these gains, both areas continue to receive comparatively low ratings, indicating that growth and development remain key concerns for the community.

Ratings for infrastructure-related services remain largely unchanged. 60.6% of respondents with an opinion rates water and sewer services positively, while 48.6% rated the management of stormwater runoff and drainage as excellent or good. Perceptions of the Town's efforts to protect natural resources and the environment were slightly higher than in 2023, increasing from 47.4% to 54.8%.

In contrast, coastal management and emergency preparedness efforts received significantly higher ratings. A strong majority of respondents rated the Town’s efforts to prepare for hurricanes and coastal hazards positively, along with the Town’s maintenance of beach quality and dune systems and its management of storm recovery and debris removal.

The results indicate a clear distinction in community perception. While coastal resilience and environmental response efforts are viewed as strengths, growth management, development quality, and certain infrastructure services continue to present challenges. These findings suggest an opportunity for the Town to build on its strong performance in coastal management while continuing to address community concerns related to growth and development.

Growth and Natural Resources. Please rate the quality of the following.

(N=789)

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know	Skipped
How well the Town of Oak Island managing growth	18 2.28%	161 20.41%	214 27.12%	206 26.11%	157 19.9%	27 3.42%	6 0.76%
Overall quality of new development in the Town	22 2.79%	201 25.48%	275 34.85%	137 17.36%	99 12.55%	46 5.83%	9 1.14%
Overall quality of water and sewer services	76 9.63%	286 36.25%	164 20.79%	128 16.22%	107 13.56%	21 2.66%	7 0.89%
Overall management of public stormwater runoff/drainage/flood control	32 4.06%	223 28.26%	207 26.24%	150 19.01%	120 15.21%	47 5.96%	10 1.27%
The Town’s overall effort to protect natural resources and the environment	65 8.24%	241 30.54%	182 23.07%	139 17.62%	113 14.32%	40 5.07%	9 1.14%
Town’s efforts to prepare for hurricanes and coastal hazards	168 21.29%	403 51.08%	132 16.73%	29 3.68%	19 2.41%	27 3.42%	11 1.39%
Town’s efforts to maintain beach quality and dune systems	248 31.43%	381 48.29%	82 10.39%	42 5.32%	24 3.04%	3 0.38%	9 1.14%
Town’s management of storm recovery/debris removal	128 16.22%	353 44.74%	150 19.01%	54 6.84%	37 4.69%	58 7.35%	9 1.14%

Growth and Natural Resources. Please rate the quality of the following (% respondents with an opinion).

	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Poor
How well the Town of Oak Island managing growth	3.3%	29.8%	38.1%	28.8%
Overall quality of new development in the Town	4.8%	43.9%	29.9%	21.6%
Overall quality of water and sewer services	12.8%	48.1%	21.5%	17.7%
Overall management of public stormwater runoff/drainage/flood control	6.1%	42.5%	28.6%	22.9%
The Town's overall effort to protect natural resources and the environment	11.6%	43.2%	24.9%	20.3%
Town's efforts to prepare for hurricanes and coastal hazards	27.2%	65.3%	4.7%	3.1%
Town's efforts to maintain beach quality and dune systems	35.9%	55.1%	6.1%	3.0%
Town's management of storm recovery/debris removal	22.4%	61.6%	9.4%	6.5%

Growth and Natural Resources. 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Category	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
How well the Town of Oak Island managing growth	29.8%	33%	+3.2
Overall quality of new development in the Town	46.5%	48.6%	+2.1
Overall quality of water and sewer services	60.3%	60.6%	+0.3
Overall management of public stormwater runoff/drainage/flood control	48.1%	48.6%	+0.5
The Town's overall effort to protect natural resources and the environment	47.4%	54.8%	+7.4

Transportation

Transportation related ratings reflect a mix of improvement in core infrastructure and ongoing challenges related to walkability and bicycle accessibility.

Several areas showed measurable improvement since the 2023 survey. Most notably, ratings for the overall maintenance of Town streets increased significantly from 39.8% positive in 2023 to 61.3% positive in 2026. Improvements were also observed in the overall condition of sidewalks (64% to 73.1%) and the availability of parking (53% to 59.1%). Perceptions of overall traffic flow improved as well, increasing from 58.4% to 65.9%.

The ability to predict travel time remains one of the higher rated aspects of the transportation system, with 76.1% of respondents reporting a positive rating in 2026, a slight increase from 74.7% in 2023.

Several areas related to pedestrian and bicycle mobility continue to receive lower ratings. The availability of sidewalks remains relatively low at 43.4% positive and has shown minimal change since 2023. Ratings for ease of walking decreased from 61.6 to 56.8% while ease of biking experienced a more notable decline from 59.9% to 47.8%. The availability of bicycle lanes continues to be the lowest rated item in the category at 16.6% positive, while availability of electric vehicle charging remains limited at 31.6% despite improving from 22.3% in 2023.

The results suggest that residents are seeing improvement in roadway conditions, sidewalks, parking, and overall traffic function, but continue to experience limitations in pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. These findings point to an opportunity for the Town to build on recent progress while continuing to address multimodal transportation needs.

Transportation. Please rate the quality of the following.

(N=789)

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know	Skipped
Overall traffic flow in the Town	34 4.31%	361 45.75%	176 22.31%	115 14.58%	89 11.28%	3 0.38%	11 1.39%
The ability to predict travel time to places in the Town	70 8.87%	394 49.94%	155 19.65%	84 10.65%	62 7.86%	16 2.03%	8 1.01%
Overall maintenance of Town streets	39 4.94%	322 40.81%	190 24.08%	136 17.24%	92 11.66%	2 0.25%	8 1.01%
Overall condition of Town sidewalks	49 6.21%	353 44.74%	193 24.46%	90 11.41%	58 7.35%	36 4.56%	10 1.27%
Availability of sidewalks	33 4.18%	228 28.9%	159 20.15%	212 26.87%	128 16.22%	23 2.92%	6 0.76%

Availability of bicycle lanes	13 1.65%	81 10.27%	125 15.84%	220 27.88%	252 31.94%	88 11.15%	10 1.27%
Availability of parking	53 6.72%	293 37.14%	192 24.33%	151 19.14%	88 11.15%	6 0.76%	6 0.76%
Availability of electric vehicle charging	11 1.39%	38 4.82%	139 17.62%	53 6.72%	53 6.72%	483 61.22%	12 1.5%
Ease of walking places in the Town	58 7.35%	256 32.45%	214 27.12%	152 19.26%	87 11.03%	16 2.03%	6 0.76%
Ease of biking places in the Town	52 6.59%	176 22.31%	175 22.18%	158 20.03%	91 11.53%	125 15.84%	12 1.52%

Transportation. Please rate the quality of the following (% respondents with an opinion).

	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Poor
Overall traffic flow in the Town	5.7%	60.3%	19.2%	14.9%
The ability to predict travel time to places in the Town	11.5%	64.9%	13.8%	9.8%
Overall maintenance of Town streets	6.6%	54.8%	23.2%	15.4%
Overall condition of Town sidewalks	8.9%	64%	16.3%	10.5%
Availability of sidewalks	5.5%	38.1%	35.5%	20.9%
Availability of bicycle lanes	2.3%	14.4%	38.9%	44.5%
Availability of parking	9.1%	50.1%	25.8%	15%
Availability of electric vehicle charging	7.1%	24.5%	34.2%	34.2%
Ease of walking places in the Town	10.5%	46.3%	27.5%	15.7%
Ease of biking places in the Town	10.9%	36.7%	32.9%	19.6%

Transportation. 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Category	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
Overall traffic flow in the Town	58.4%	65.9%	+7.5
The ability to predict travel time to places in the Town	74.7%	76.1%	+1.4

Overall maintenance of Town streets	39.8%	61.3%	+21.5
Overall condition of Town sidewalks	64%	73.1%	+9.1
Availability of sidewalks	42.8%	43.4%	+0.6
Availability of bicycle lanes	17.6%	16.6%	-1
Availability of parking	53%	59.1%	+6.1
Availability of electric vehicle charging	22.3%	31.6%	+9.3
Ease of walking places in the Town	61.6%	56.8%	-4.8
Ease of biking places in the Town	59.9%	47.8%	-12.1

Communication Preferences

Survey results indicate a shift in how respondents prefer to receive information about the Town of Oak Island, with increased use of digital and direct communication channels.

The Town website remains the most frequently selected source of information, with 73.26% of respondents including it among their top three choices. While this represents a decrease from 86.12% in 2023, it continues to serve as the primary source of information for the community.

The most notable changes since 2023 are the significant increase in the use of email-based communication. The Current (email newsletter) increased from 29.02% in 2023 to 70.85% in 2026, representing a substantial shift in how residents receive information. OKInformation (email and text alerts) increased from 26.01% to 50.06%.

In contrast, several traditional and indirect communication channels declined. The use of local newspapers decreased from 26.58% to 14.58%, while in-person events declined from 18.22% to 7.22%. Other social media usage saw a decrease, from 21.14% to 10.9%. Town social media remains an important channel at 45.75% though it declined from 55.11% in 2023.

The results suggest that residents are increasingly relying on direct, Town-managed communication channels, particularly email and alerts, while use of traditional media and in-person sources has decreased. These findings indicate an opportunity for the Town to continue to strengthen its digital communication strategies while maintaining a balanced approach to reaching different segments of the community.

What are your three preferred sources for receiving information about the Town of Oak Island? Please select no more than three options.

Source	Count	Percentage
Town website	578	73.26%
Town social media	361	45.75%
The Current (email newsletter)	559	70.85%
Local newspaper	115	14.58%
OKI Connection (mobile app)	152	19.26%
OKInformation (email and text alerts)	395	50.06%

Other social media	86	10.9%
In-person events	57	7.22%
Other	31	3.93%

	2023 %	2026 %	Change
Town website	86.12%	73.26%	-12.86
Town social media	55.11%	45.75%	-9.36
The Current	29.02%	70.85%	+41.83
Local Newspaper	26.58%	14.58%	-12
OKInformation	26.01%	50.06%	+24.05
Other social media	21.14%	10.9%	-10.24
In-person events	18.22%	7.22%	-11

Frequency of Engagement

Responses indicate that engagement with the Town of Oak Island’s primary amenities remains strong, particularly to beach use and recreation. A significant majority of respondents (87.2%) reported visiting the beach “very often” or “often” within the past year, reinforcing the central role of coastal resources in the community’s quality of life.

Participation in Town recreation programs and events also remains relatively high, with 49.3% of respondents indicating frequent engagement. Engagement in civic processes is notably lower. Only 8.1% of respondents reported frequently attending Town public meetings, and 16.1% reported frequently watching meetings online or on television.

Interaction with Town services show moderate levels of engagement, with 21.4% of respondents indicating they frequently contacted Town staff or accessed services. A larger share of respondents reported interacting with the Town only occasionally, suggesting that many residents engage on an as-needed basis rather than routinely.

Compared to 2023, high-frequency engagement appears lower across several categories, particularly for watching Town meetings and contacting Town services. However, this shift should be interpreted with caution, as the 2026 survey used more detailed response options (including “a few times” and “once”), which likely distributed responses across a broader range of categories rather than indicating a true decline in engagement.

The results suggest that while residents remain highly engaged with the Town’s recreational and coastal amenities, participation in informal civic processes and regular interaction with Town services is more limited and often situational.

How often have you done the following in the last year?

(N=789)

	Very Often	Often	A few times	Once	Never	Don't Know	Skipped
Visited a beach in the Town of Oak Island	517 65.53%	171 21.67%	85 10.77%	7 0.89%	3 0.38%	0 0%	6 0.76%
Participated in a Town recreation program or event	186 23.57%	203 25.73%	257 32.57%	44 5.58%	81 10.27%	11 1.39%	7 0.89%
Attended a Town of Oak Island Public Meeting	26 3.3%	38 4.82%	173 21.93%	84 10.65%	450 57.03%	9 1.14%	9 1.14%
Watched a Town of Oak Island meeting (online or tv)	50 6.34%	77 9.76%	213 27%	86 10.9%	346 43.85%	7 0.89%	10 1.27%
Contacted Town employees or visited the website to seek services, find information, or file a complaint	41 5.2%	128 16.22%	421 53.36%	91 11.53%	90 11.41%	11 1.39%	7 0.89%

How often have you done the following in the last year? High Frequency

Activity	Very Often	Often	High Frequency (Total)
Visited a beach in the Town of Oak Island	65.53%	21.67%	87.20%
Participated in a Town recreation program or event	23.57%	25.73%	49.3%
Attended a Town of Oak Island Public Meeting	3.3%	4.82%	8.12%
Watched a Town of Oak Island meeting (online or tv)	6.34%	9.76%	16.1%
Contacted Town employees or visited the website to seek services, find information, or file a complaint	5.2%	16.22%	21.42%

Frequency of Engagement. 2023 vs. 2026 Percent Positive Comparison

Activity	2023 High Frequency	2026 High Frequency	Change
Visited a beach in the Town of Oak Island	89.07%	87.2%	-1.87
Participated in a Town recreation program or event	52.09%	49.3%	-2.79
Attended a Town of Oak Island Public Meeting	13.47%	8.12%	-5.35
Watched a Town of Oak Island meeting (online or tv)	28.05%	16.1%	-11.95
Contacted Town employees or visited the website to seek services, find information, or file a complaint	41.64%	21.42%	-20.22

Top Issues and Priorities

Overall perceptions of Oak Island remain highly positive. Among residents with an opinion, 87.6% indicated they are likely or very likely to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks. This represents a slight increase from 84.7% in 2023, reflecting a continued strong level of community satisfaction.

More than one-third of respondents (36.7%) reported they are “very likely” to recommend Oak Island, while an additional 51% indicated they are “likely” to do so. A relatively small share of respondents expressed negative sentiment, with 7.4% indicating they are “not likely” and 5% “very unlikely” to recommend the Town.

A notable portion of respondents (18%) selected a neutral response, suggesting that while overall perceptions are strongly positive, there remains an opportunity to further strengthen resident’s overall impression of the Town.

These results indicate that the Town of Oak Island continues to be viewed favorably as a place to live, with a strong majority of residents willing to recommend the community to others.

How likely are you to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks?

(N=789)

	Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Not Likely	Very Unlikely	Don't Know	Skipped
How likely are you to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks?	228 28.9%	317 40.18%	142 18%	46 5.83%	31 3.93%	6 0.76%	19 2.41%

How likely are you to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks? Respondents with an opinion.

	Very Likely	Likely	Not Likely	Very Unlikely
How likely are you to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks?	36.66%	50.96%	7.4%	4.98%

How likely are you to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks? 2023 vs. 2026
Percent Positive Comparison

	2023 % Positive	2026 % Positive	Change
How likely are you to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks?	84.74%	87.62%	+2.88

When asked to identify the most significant issues facing Oak Island over the next five years, respondents consistently pointed to infrastructure and growth as the Town’s top concerns.

The most frequently selected issue was infrastructure capacity and maintenance (65.3%), closely followed by the pace of growth (64%). These two issues stand out as clear priorities, reflecting a strong perception that continued development must be balanced with the Town’s ability to support it through adequate infrastructure.

A second tier of concerns includes affordable housing (31.9%) and the affordability of town services (27.1%), indicating ongoing sensitivity to cost-of-living pressures within the community. Beach renourishment (24.8%) and environmental protection and climate change (21.9%) were also frequently identified, highlighting the importance of maintaining Oak Island’s natural resources and coastal resilience.

Additional issues, including access to healthcare (15.3%), disaster preparedness (14.2%), and transportation (8.9%), were selected by a smaller but still notable share of respondents. Public safety,

transportation, and job opportunities were less frequently identified as top concerns relative to other issues.

The results indicate that residents are primarily focused on managing growth and ensuring that infrastructure, environmental resources, and community services can keep pace with ongoing development.

What are the three most significant issues you think Oak Island will face over the next five years? Select no more than three.

(N=789)

Issue	Count	Percentage
Infrastructure capacity and maintenance	515	65.27%
Pace of Growth	505	64.01%
Affordable housing	252	31.94%
Affordability of town services	214	27.12%
Beach renourishment	196	24.84%
Environmental protection/climate change	173	21.93%
Access to healthcare	121	15.34%
Disaster preparedness and resilience	112	14.2%
Job opportunities	73	9.25%
Transportation	70	8.87%
Public safety	67	8.49%
Other	51	6.46%

Open-ended Feedback

Respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions to better understand community perspectives on what the Town is doing well, where improvements are needed, and what should be prioritized in the near term. Responses were reviewed and grouped into common themes to identify recurring patterns across the dataset.

Prevalence reflects the number of respondents who mentioned a given theme. Each theme was counted once per response, even if referenced more than once, to ensure that results reflect the breadth of feedback rather than the length or detail of individual responses. Because responses may include multiple topics, themes are not mutually exclusive and total may exceed the number of respondents.

This approach allows qualitative feedback to be summarized in a structured and consistent way while preserving the intent and emphasis of respondent input.

What the Town Is Doing Well

Responses to this question were strongly aligned around several key themes, with communication, community events, and beach management emerging as the most frequently cited strengths.

The most commonly mentioned theme was community events, entertainment and programming, with respondents highlighting concerts, festivals, and recreational activities as valuable contributions to community life. Communication and information sharing was also frequently identified as a strength, with many respondents noting the Town’s use of newsletters, email updates, and other channels to keep residents informed.

Beach management and renourishment was another prominent theme, reflecting the importance of maintaining coastal resources and access. Respondents also consistently recognized public safety and emergency services, as well as parks and recreation facilities, as key strengths of the Town.

Additional themes included positive feedback on town staff responsiveness and customer service, support for local businesses and economic development, and satisfaction with basic services such as waste collection. A smaller number of responses also acknowledge the Town’s efforts to manage growth and maintain fiscal responsibility.

Responses indicate that residents value the Town’s recreational offerings, communication efforts, costal management, and commitment to maintaining a safe and well-serviced community.

Theme	Prevalence	Examples from Responses
Community events, entertainment & programming	124	“Concerts in the park,” “Recreation programs” “Community events and festivals,” “Activities for residents”
Communication and information sharing	113	“Communication is excellent,” “The Current newsletter,” “Keeping residents informed,” “Providing updates during storms”
Beach management and renourishment	101	“Beach nourishment,” “Maintaining beaches,” “Dune protection,” “Beach access improvements”
Public safety and emergency services	73	“Police and fire are excellent,” “Emergency services,” “safe community”
Parks & recreation facilities	72	“Recreation center offerings are very good.” “Holding Various events including baseball team”
Economic development & local business	25	“Supporting local businesses” “New residential and commercial development is consistent and not overdone.”
Waste, recycling & yard debris	16	“Trash pickup and yard debris.” “Public services, ie trash and recycling, communications and recreation.”
Town staff responsiveness & customer service	23	“town staff is friendly” “Very supportive and helpful town staff” “New residential and commercial development is consistent and not overdone.”
Growth & development management	21	“managing growth,” “Trying to be ahead of growth,”

Taxes, fees & municipal spending	15	“effective use of resources” “Keep taxes low”
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What the Town Could Do Differently

Responses to this question highlighted several recurring areas for improvement, with the most frequently mentioned themes focused on growth management, infrastructure, and consistency in Town operations.

Growth and development management, code enforcement, and road and street maintenance emerged as leading concerns, reflecting a desire for clearer standards, more consistent enforcement, and improved upkeep of existing infrastructure. Respondents also frequently identified the need for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and safer travel conditions, as well as improved traffic management and speed enforcement.

A number of responses emphasized concerns related to environmental protection, particularly the preservation of trees, natural areas, and coastal resources. Parking management, especially in beach areas, and the impacts of tourism and increased visitation were also commonly mentioned.

Additional themes included the cost of living, including taxes and utility fees, as well as operational concerns such as waste collection, permitting processes, and communication and transparency. While mentioned less frequently, respondents also identified opportunities to enhance parks and recreation facilities, improve customer service, and maintains the Town’s overall appearance and community character.

Responses indicate a strong interest in managing growth more deliberately, improving infrastructure and mobility, and ensuring consistent and transparent delivery of Town services.

Theme	Prevalence	Examples from Responses
Code enforcement & ordinances	70	“Enforce ordinances consistently” “Enforce ordinances on poorly maintained properties and do it quicker/more efficiently.”
Pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure	68	“Support more pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in town.” “More sidewalks,” “Bike lanes,” “Crosswalks,” “Lower speed limits,” “Safer crossings on Oak Island Drive”
Road & street maintenance	66	“Better street maintenance.” “Fix the roads,” “Pave streets,”
Growth & development management	69	“Stop building,” “Slow down growth,” “Limit mega houses,” “Overdevelopment is outpacing infrastructure”
Trees, nature & habitat protection	46	“Stop clear cutting,” “Protect trees,” “Preserve natural areas,” “Concern about building on dunes/wetlands”
Taxes, fees, and cost of living	39	“Lower taxes,” “Reduce sewer costs,” “Fees are too high,” “Utility bills increasing”
Waste, recycling & yard debris	30	“Debris pickup too infrequent,” “Trash issues,”

Traffic management & speed enforcement	44	"lower speed limit" "Speeding"
Economic development & local business	38	"Limit commercial development" "Support local businesses more and try not to price them out..."
Parking management	39	"More beach parking," "Parking is a nightmare," "Reduce parking fees," "Resident parking needed"
Construction projects & permitting		"Permitting is difficult," "Confusing regulations," "Slow review process," "Inconsistent information from staff"
Communication & information sharing	26	"Better communication" "More communication" "Improve communication," "More transparency," "Hard to reach staff," "Better notice of changes"
Golf carts & low-speed vehicles	28	"Traffic, especially LSV rentals..." "golf carts"
Community events, entertainment & programming	21	"more community events" "More community events and for all age groups."
Water quality & utilities	21	"Have safe drinking water." "Improve water quality"
Parks & recreation facilities	26	"Recreation center" "Improve parks"
Public safety & law enforcement	19	"More police presence" "Public safety"
Beach access, walkovers & rights-of-way	19	"Right of way for property owners" "Maintaining the ICW access points."
Stormwater drainage, dredging & flooding	16	"Drainage" "Dredging" "Stormwater management"
Town staff responsiveness & customer service	16	"More responsive" "Better customer service from the town."
Town appearance & beautification	16	"Keeping the town and beaches clean" "The appearance of the town..."
Tourism, rentals & visitor impacts	15	"Tourism" "Traffic, especially LSV rentals..."
Small-town character & quality of life	10	"Keep it small" "Maintaining small town feel."
Transparency, trust & accountability	7	"Improved transparency..." "Accountability..."
Housing affordability & cost of living	6	"Affordable housing"

Top Priority for Next Year

Responses to this question were more concentrated than other open-ended feedback, with a clear emphasis on a small number of priority areas for the Town to address in the near term.

The most frequently identified priority was growth and development management, with many respondents calling for a more deliberate approach to the new development and stronger controls to maintain the Town's character and quality of life. Road and street maintenance, along with broader infrastructure concerns, also emerged as a key priority, with respondents noting the need to address roadway conditions, drainage, and capacity issues.

Respondents also consistently identified the need for improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and safer travel conditions, as well as continued attention to beach and shoreline management, particularly beach renourishment efforts.

A second tier of priorities includes concerns related to the cost of living, includes taxes and utility costs, as well as public safety, traffic management, and environmental protection, particularly related to trees and natural resources. Additional themes included water and utility infrastructure, support for local businesses, and the need for consistent enforcement of Town ordinances.

Responses indicate a strong desire to better manage growth, maintain and improve infrastructure, and preserve the natural and community character of Oak Island, while ensuring that services and systems keep pace with ongoing development.

Theme	Prevalence	Examples from Responses
Growth & development management	128	"Stop building," "Limit growth," "Moratorium on new builds," "Overdevelopment"
Road & street maintenance	70	"Infrastructure can't keep up," "Stormwater flooding," "Fix roads," "Water/sewer issues"
Pedestrian & bicycle infrastructure	69	"Maintain roads and sidewalks and enforce speed limits." "Bikeways, sidewalks, crosswalks"
Beach & shoreline	62	"Beach renourishment" "Beach nourishment"
Taxes, fees & municipal spending	62	"Lower taxes" "Taxes" "Lower taxes," "Utility costs," "Fixed income concerns"
Public safety & law enforcement	55	"Public safety," "Hurricane preparedness," "Police presence"
Traffic management & speed enforcement	46	"Crosswalks," "Bike lanes," "Safer crossings," "Speeding concerns" "Traffic control," "Golf carts on main roads," "Congestion," "Parking"
Trees, nature & habitat protection	41	"Stop clear cutting," "Protect trees," "Dune protection," "Wetlands"
Water quality & utilities	40	"fire hydrants cannot provide enough" "Keeping infrastructure costs down. Especially costs for the sewer system."
Economic development & local business	32	"more to do with the teens, and industry- unless you want to only have seniors/retirees" "Support local businesses more and try not to price them out"

Code enforcement & ordinances	27	"Enforce ordinances," "Permitting issues," "Control builders"
Housing affordability & cost of living	26	"Affordable housing for people that work on the island" "We need to think about those who work in our town, don't make enough to live here, but are needed"
Parking management	20	"Better access (more) and resident only parking." "locals could visibly display a permit (like one could do at the state parks). Also pave the lots"
Golf carts & low-speed vehicles	19	"golf carts off oki drive other than to cross the street!" "Traffic, especially LSV"
Stormwater drainage, dredging & flooding	18	"Storm water management, lots of road flooding just with rainfall" "Update infrastructure for water control."
Construction projects & permitting	15	"Permitting is difficult," "Confusing regulations," "Slow review process," "Inconsistent information from staff"

Demographics

Which of the following best describes your relationship to the Town of Oak Island?

(N=789)

	Full-time resident	Seasonal resident	Property Owner	Business Owner	Work in OKI	Visitor	Skipped
Which of the following best describes your relationship to the Town of Oak Island?	516 65.4%	111 14.07%	139 17.62%	3 0.38%	5 0.63%	10 1.27%	5 0.63%
Which of the following best describes your relationship to the Town of Oak Island? (percentage of respondents)	65.82%	14.16%	17.73%	0.38%	0.64%	1.28%	-

How long have you lived in the Town of Oak Island?

(N=789)

	< a year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-19 years	> 20 years	N/A	Skipped
How long have you lived in the Town of Oak Island?	33 4.18%	76 9.63%	177 22.43%	204 25.86%	134 16.98%	121 15.34%	38 4.82%	6 0.76%
How long have you lived in the Town of Oak Island?	33 4.43%	76 10.2%	177 23.76%	204 27.38%	134 17.99%	121 16.24%	-	-

What describes the building you live in?

(N=789)

	Single-family	Townhome or Duplex	Multi-family	Mobile Home	No permanent housing	Other	Skipped
What describes the building you live in?	743 94.17%	4 0.51%	14 1.77%	10 1.27%	5 0.63%	5 0.63%	8 1.01%
What describes the building you live in? (percentage of respondents)	95.13%	0.51%	1.79%	1.28%	0.64%	0.64%	-

Do you own or rent your current residence?

(N=789)

	Own	Rent	Other	Skipped
Do you own or rent your current residence?	755 95.69%	15 1.9%	10 1.27%	9 1.14%
Do you own or rent your current residence? (percentage of respondents)	96.79%	1.92%	1.28%	-

What is your age?

(N=789)

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Prefer not to answer	Skipped
What is your age?	2 0.25%	12 1.52%	31 3.93%	70 8.87%	265 33.59%	300 38.02%	73 9.25%	31 3.93%	5 0.63%
What is your age? (% of respondents)	0.27%	1.59%	4.12%	9.3%	35.19%	39.84%	9.69%	-	-

Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? Select all that apply.

(N=789)

	Asian or Asian Indian	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaskan Native	White	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Hispanic of Latino	Other	Prefer Not to Answer	Skipped
Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?	2 <i>0.25%</i>	1 <i>0.13%</i>	3 <i>0.38%</i>	689 <i>87.33%</i>	3 <i>0.38%</i>	2 <i>0.25%</i>	4 <i>0.51%</i>	85 <i>10.77%</i>	8 <i>1.01%</i>
Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? (percentage of respondents)	0.29%	0.14%	0.43%	98.99%	0.43%	0.29	0.57%	-	-

What is your gender/gender identity?

(N=789)

	Female	Male	Prefer not to Answer	Skipped
What is your gender/gender identity?	417 <i>52.85%</i>	299 <i>37.9%</i>	62 <i>7.86%</i>	11 <i>1.39%</i>
What is your gender/gender identity? (percentage of respondents)	58.24%	41.76%	-	-

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

(N=789)

	< high school graduate	High school diploma or equivalent (GED)	Special or technical training (not college)	Some college (no degree)	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate/ Professional degree	Prefer not to Answer	Skipped
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	1 0.13%	19 2.41%	34 4.31%	85 10.77%	73 9.25%	282 35.74%	246 31.18%	40 5.07%	9 1.14%
What is the highest level of education you have completed? (percentage of respondents)	0.14%	2.57%	4.59%	11.49%	9.86%	38.11%	33.24%	-	-

What is your total annual household income?

(N=789)

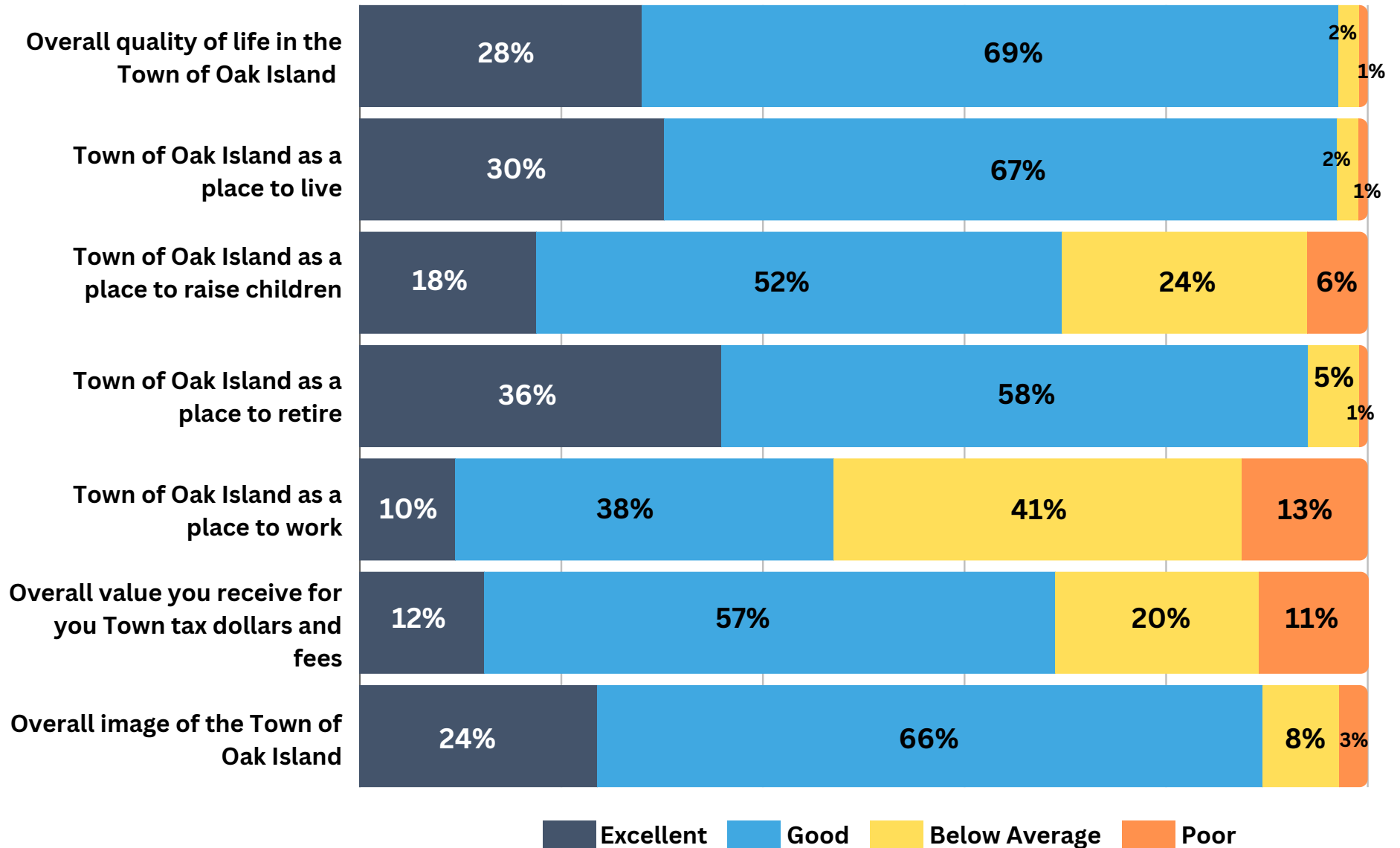
	< \$30k	\$30-60k	\$60-100k	\$100-150k	\$150-250k	>\$250k	Prefer not to Answer	Skipped
What is your total annual household income?	6 0.76%	57 7.22%	100 12.67%	128 16.22%	136 17.24%	92 11.6%	259 32.83%	11 13.56%
What is your annual household income? (percentage of respondents)	1.16%	10.98%	19.27%	24.66%	26.2%	17.73%	-	-



CHARTS AND GRAPHS

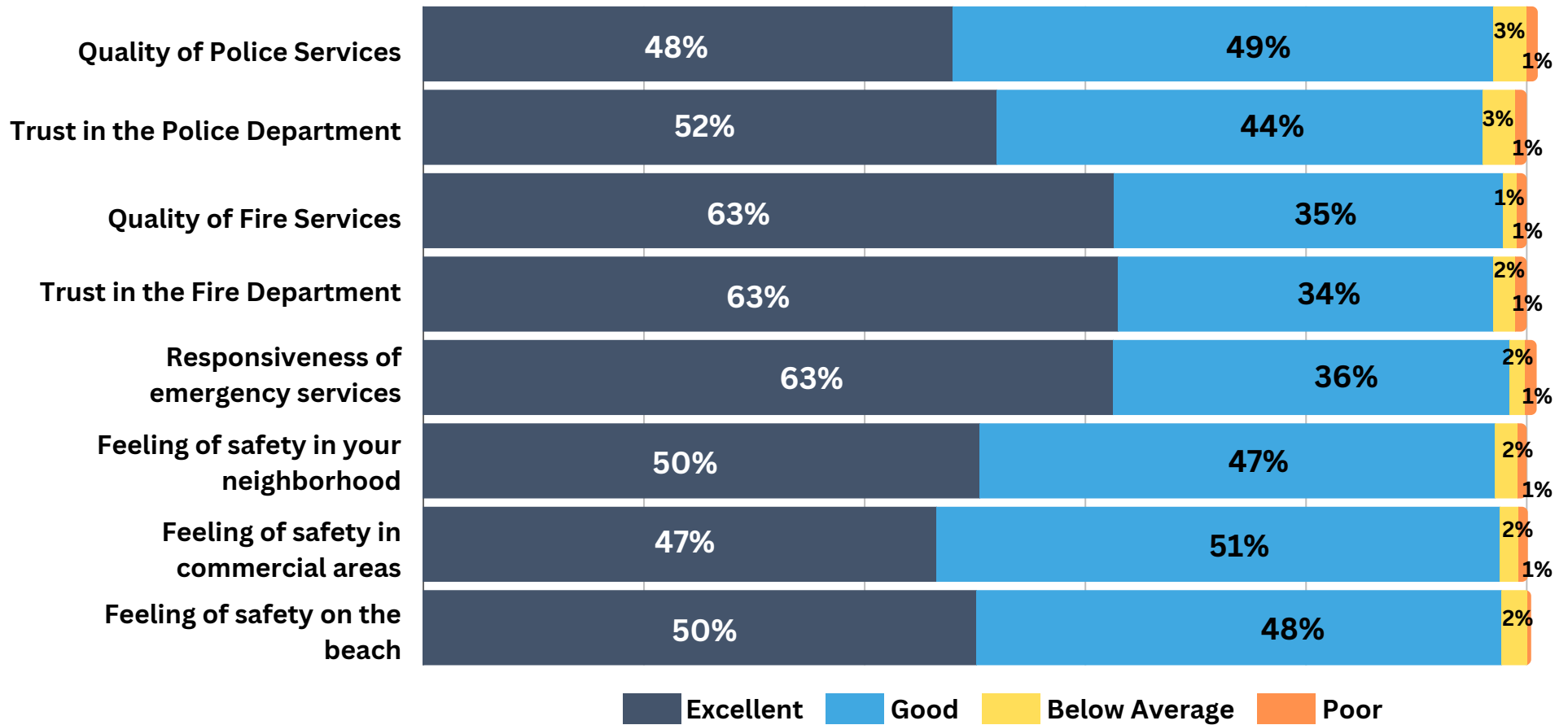
Quality of Life

by percentage of respondents with an opinion (rounded to the nearest percentage).



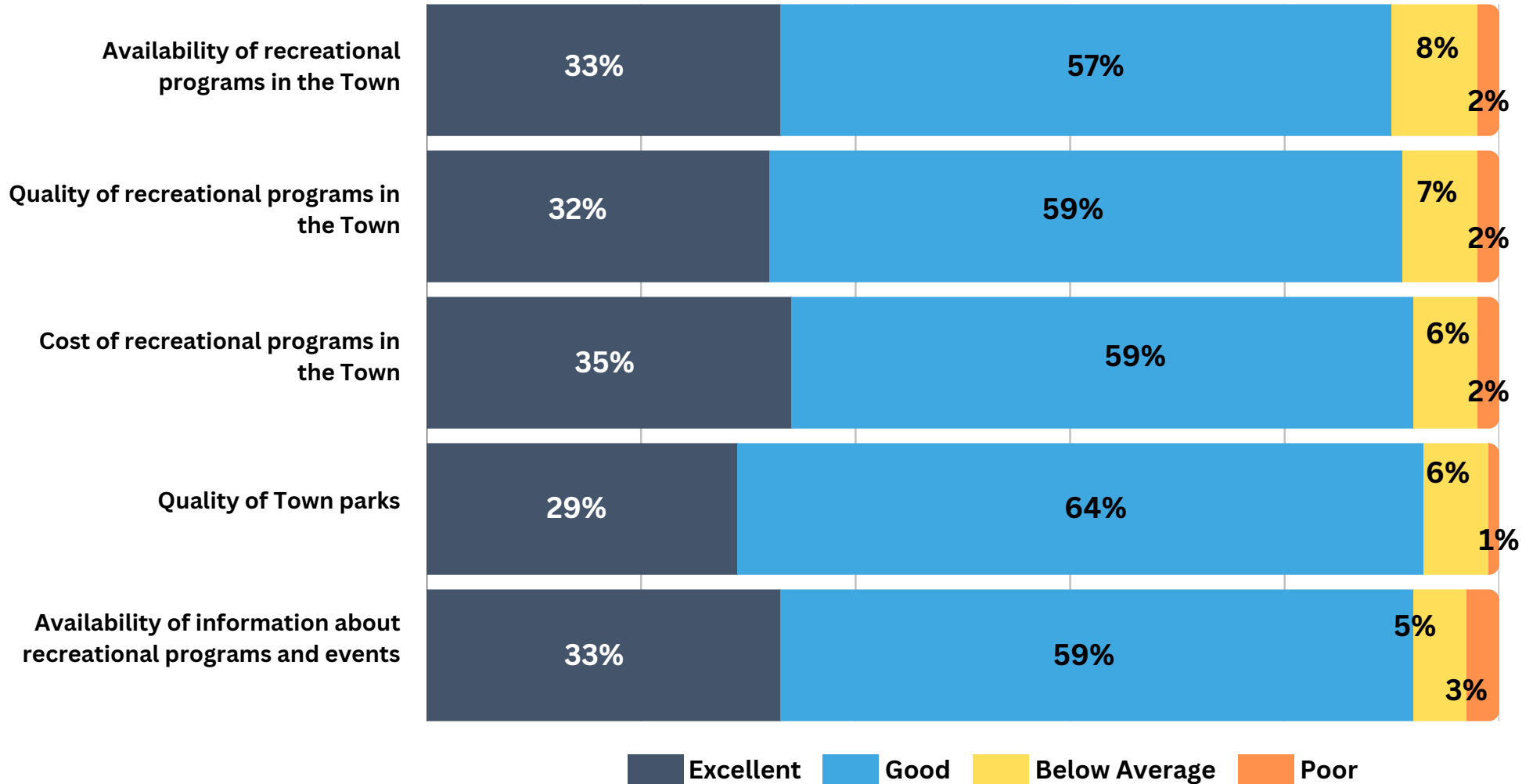
Safe Community

by percentage of respondents with an opinion (rounded to the nearest percentage).



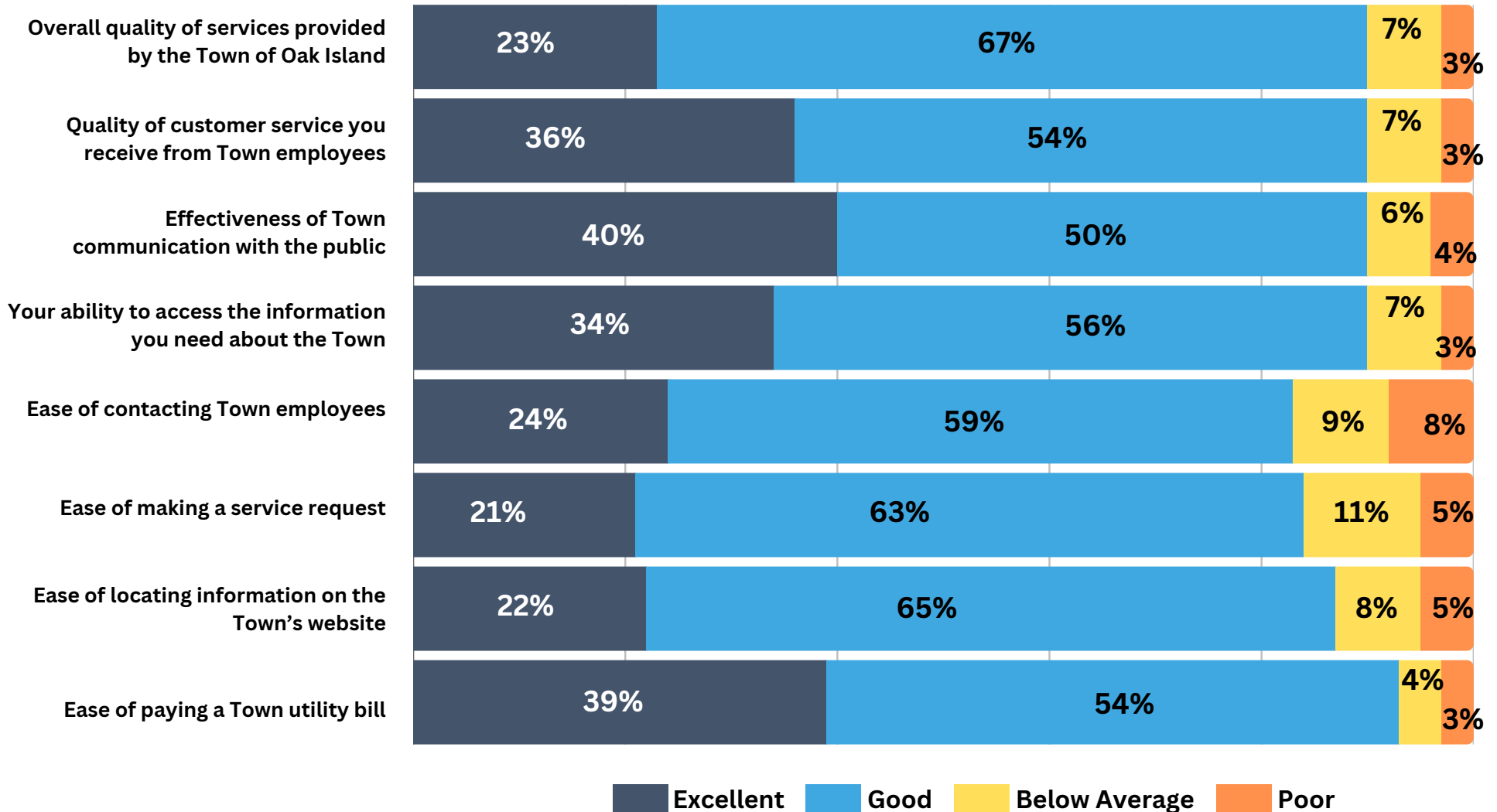
Parks and Recreation

by percentage of respondents with an opinion (rounded to the nearest percentage).



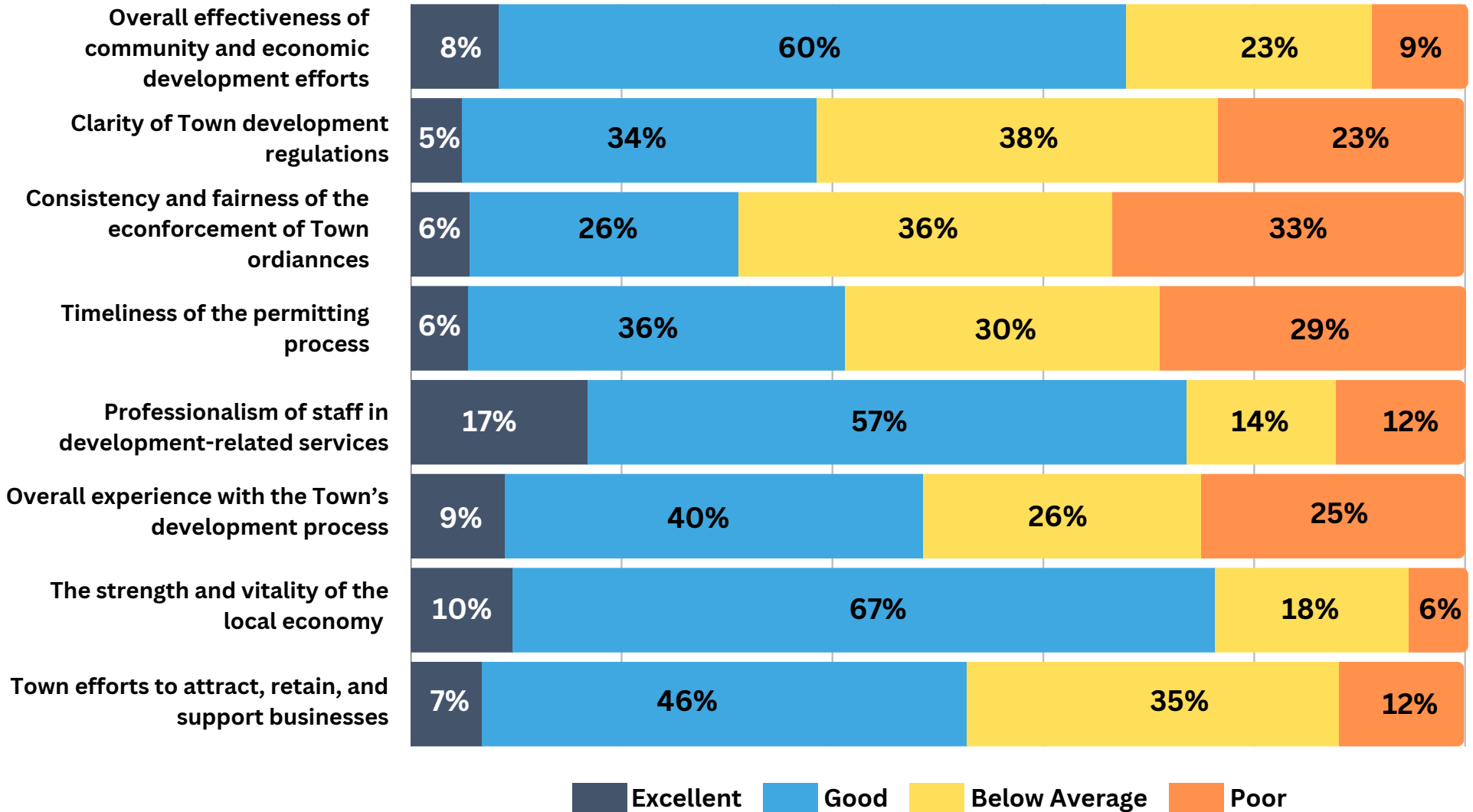
Organization

by percentage of respondents with an opinion (rounded to the nearest percentage).



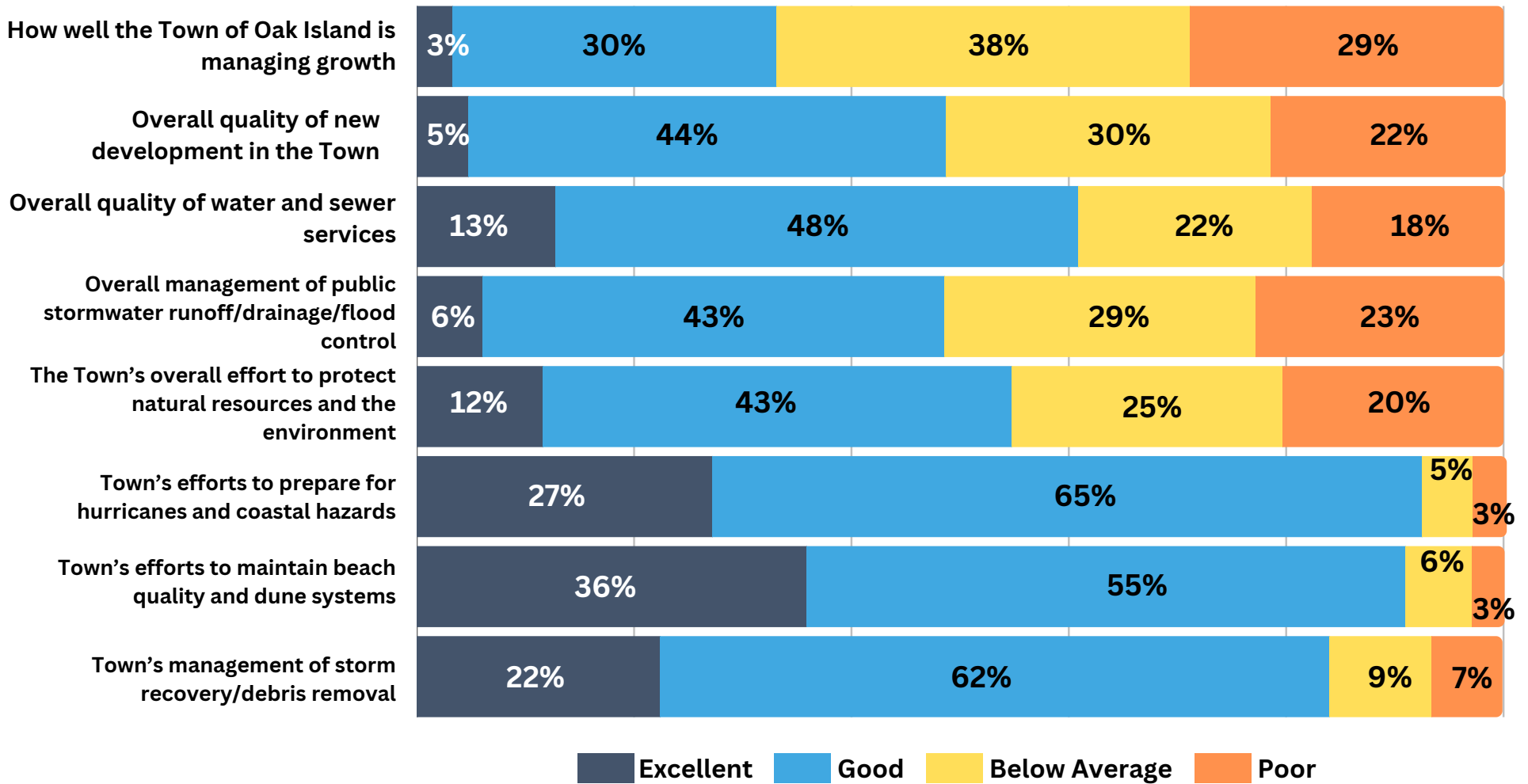
Community Development

by percentage of respondents with an opinion (rounded to the nearest percentage).



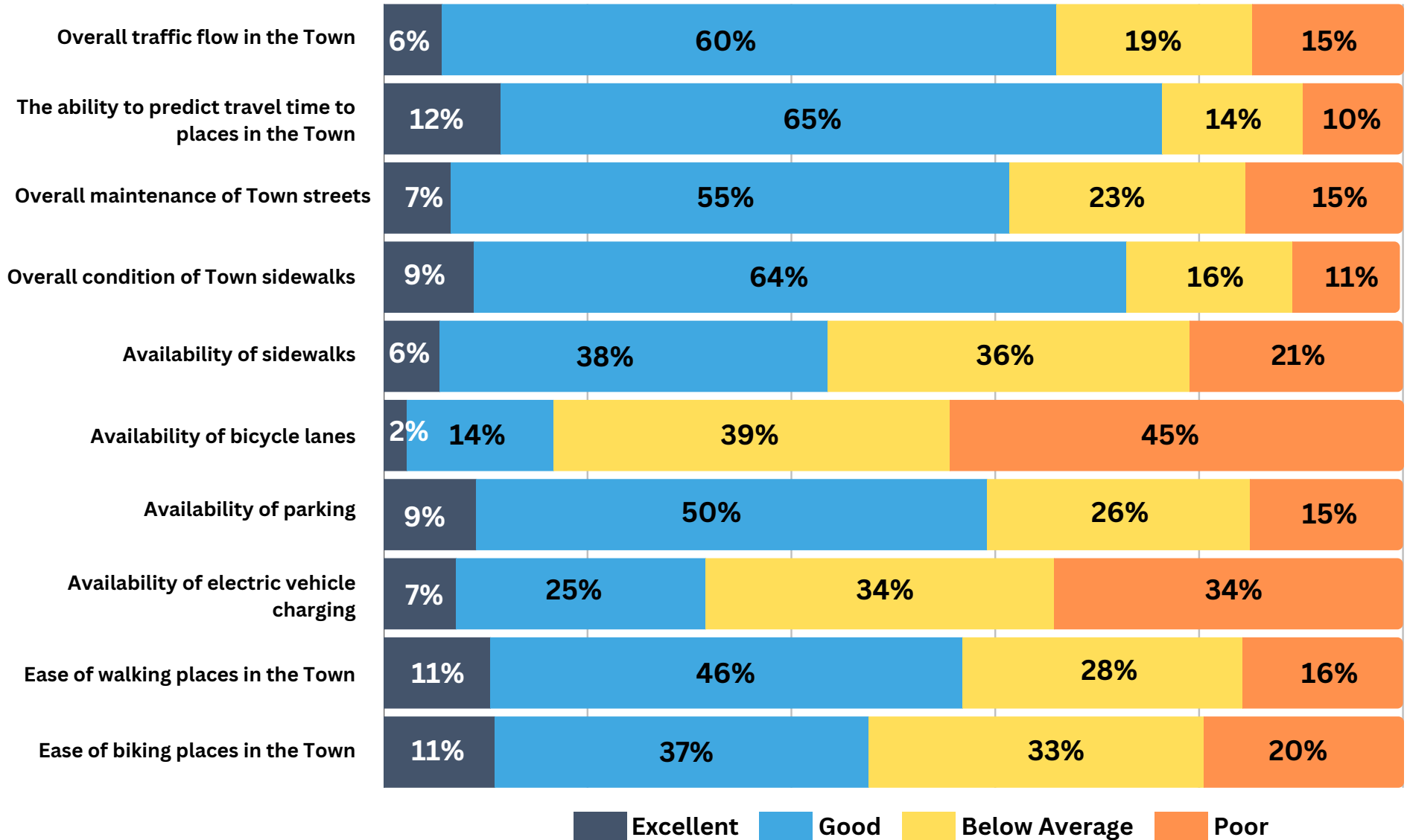
Growth and Natural Resources

by percentage of respondents with an opinion (rounded to the nearest percentage).



Transportation

by percentage of respondents with an opinion (rounded to the nearest percentage).





SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Thank you for taking part in the Town of Oak Island 2026 Community Survey! Every two years, the Town invites residents, property owners, business owners, and community stakeholders to share their views on what makes Oak Island a great place to live, work, play, and plan for the future. The community's feedback helps Town leaders and staff understand what matters most to you and how we can improve services, programs, and quality of life across our community.

Your Responses Are Confidential

Your privacy is important to us. All survey responses are anonymous. We look at the results as a whole and do not see or report individual answers. Nothing you share can be linked back to you. We are focused on overall community trends and priorities, not on identifying anyone who responds.

It Takes About 10-15 Minutes

This survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your honest feedback will directly influence decisions about Town services, budgets, programs, planning initiatives, and long-term community priorities.

Please note: If you do not have experience with a particular service or topic, please select "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable," as appropriate.

Quality of Life

The following questions ask about your overall experience living, working, and spending time in Oak Island. Your responses help the Town understand how residents and stakeholders perceive quality of life in the community and how that perception may differ across groups and over time.

Quality of Life

Please rate each item based on your own experience or impression.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Overall quality of life in the Town of Oak Island	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town of Oak Island as a place to live	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town of Oak Island as a place to raise children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town of Oak Island as a place to retire	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town of Oak Island as a place to work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall value that you receive for your Town tax dollars and fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall image of the Town of Oak Island	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Safe Community

The following questions focus on public safety services and your overall sense of safety in Oak Island. Your responses help the Town understand how residents and visitors perceive police and fire services, emergency response, and safety in neighborhoods, commercial areas, and public spaces.

Safe Community

Please rate each item based on your own experience or impression.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Quality of police services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trust in the Police Department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of fire services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trust in the Fire Department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsiveness of emergency services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling of safety in your neighborhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling of safety in commercial areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling of safety on the beach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Organization

The following questions ask about your experience interacting with the Town of Oak Island as an organization. Your responses help the Town understand how well services are delivered, how effective communication is, and how easy it is to access information and complete common tasks.

Organization

Please rate each item based on your own experience or impression.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Overall quality of services provided by the Town of Oak Island	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of customer service you receive from Town employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effectiveness of Town communication with the public	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your ability to access the information you need about the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of contacting Town employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of making a service request	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of locating information on the Town's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of paying a Town utility bill	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Parks and Recreation

The following questions focus on parks, recreational facilities, programs, and events offered in Oak Island. Your responses help the Town understand how well these amenities meet community needs and where there may be opportunities for improvement.

Parks and Recreation

Please rate each item based on your own experience or impression.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Availability of recreational programs in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of recreation programs in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of recreational programs in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of Town parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of information about recreational programs and events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Community Development

The following questions relate to development activity and economic vitality in Oak Island. Your responses help the Town understand perceptions of growth, business activity, and how effectively development-related services and economic development efforts support the community.

Community Development

Please rate each item based on your own experience or impression.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Overall effectiveness of community and economic development efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarity of Town development regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consistency and fairness in the enforcement of Town ordinances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timeliness of the permitting process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionalism of staff involved in development-related services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall experience with the Town's development process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The strength and vitality of the local economy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town efforts to attract, retain, and support businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Growth and Natural Resources

The following questions focus on how growth is managed in Oak Island and how natural resources are protected. Your responses help the Town understand perceptions related to development, infrastructure, environmental stewardship, storm preparedness, and long-term resilience.

Growth and Natural Resources

Please rate each item based on your own experience or impression.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
How well the Town of Oak Island is managing growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall quality of new development in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall quality of water and sewer services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall management of public stormwater runoff/drainage/flood control	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Town's overall effort to protect natural resources and the environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town's efforts to prepare for hurricanes and coastal hazards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town's efforts to maintain beach quality and dune systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Town's management of storm recovery/debris removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transportation

The following questions focus on how people move around Oak Island. Your responses help the Town understand perceptions related to traffic, streets, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, parking, and overall ease of travel within the community.

Transportation

Please rate each item based on your own experience or impression.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Overall traffic flow in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ability to predict travel time to places in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall maintenance of Town streets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall condition of Town sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of bicycle lanes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of electric vehicle charging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of walking places in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of biking places in the Town	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Communication and Engagement

The following questions ask about how you receive information from the Town of Oak Island and how often you interact with Town services, programs, and activities. Your responses help the Town understand how residents and visitors engage with the community and which communication methods are most effective.

What are your three preferred sources of receiving information about the Town of Oak Island?

Please answer based on your experience over the past year.

Town website

Town social media

The Current (email newsletter)

Local newspaper

OKI Connection (mobile app)

OKInformation (email and text alerts)

Other social media

In-person events

Other

How often have you done the following in the last year?

Please answer based on your experience over the past year.

	Very Often	Often	A few times	Once	Never	Don't Know
Visited a beach in the Town of Oak Island	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participated in a Town recreation program or event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attended a Town of Oak Island public meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watched a Town of Oak Island meeting (online or tv)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contacted Town employees or visited the website to seek services, find information, or file a complaint	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall Impression

The following question asks for your overall impression of living in Oak Island. Your response provides a high-level summary of community sentiment and helps the Town track how perceptions change over time.

How likely are you to recommend living in Oak Island to someone who asks?

Very likely

Likely

Neutral


Not likely

Very unlikely

Don't know

Looking Ahead

The following question asks about the challenges and issues Oak Island may face in the coming years. Your responses help the Town understand community priorities and inform future planning, investments, and policy decisions.

What are the three most significant issues you think Oak Island will face over the next five years? 

Infrastructure capacity and maintenance

Environmental protection/climate change

Disaster preparedness and resilience

Transportation

Affordable housing

Pace of growth

Public safety

Job opportunities

Affordability of town services

Access to healthcare

Beach renourishment

Other

Reflection and Feedback

The following questions invite you to share your thoughts about what is working well in Oak Island, where there may be opportunities for improvement, and what should be prioritized moving forward. Your feedback helps provide important context to the survey results and gives the Town a clearer understanding of community perspectives.

Please keep responses brief and specific.

What is one thing the Town of Oak Island is doing well?

What is one thing you would like to see the Town of Oak Island do differently?

What should the top priority for the Town to address in the next year?

Demographics

About These Questions

The following questions help the Town understand who is represented in the survey responses so we can better evaluate whether we are hearing from a broad and diverse cross-section of the community.

Your responses are completely confidential and will be reported only in summary form. Individual responses are never identified or linked back to you. Providing this information is voluntary, and you may skip any question you prefer not to answer.

Demographic information helps the Town:

- Identify gaps in participation
- Ensure community feedback reflects different perspectives and experiences
- Make more informed, equitable decisions about programs, services, and priorities

Thank you for helping us better understand our community.

Which of the following best describes your relationship to the Town of Oak Island?

Full time resident

Seasonal resident

Property owner (non resident)

Business owner (non resident)

Work in Oak Island (non resident)

Visitor

How long have you lived in the Town of Oak Island?

< a year

1 - 2 years

3 - 5 years

6 - 10 years

11 - 19 years

> 20 years

Not Applicable

What best describes the building you live in?

Single family

Multi-family (apartment or condo)

Townhome or duplex

Mobile home

No permanent housing

Other

Do you own or rent your current residence?

Own

Rent

Other

What is your age?

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75+

Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes your race and/or ethnicity?

White

Black or African American

Asian

American Indian or Alaska Native

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Hispanic or Latino

Prefer not to answer

Other

What is your gender?

Male

Female

Prefer not to answer

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

<input type="radio"/> Less than high school graduate
<input type="radio"/> High school diploma or equivalent (GED)
<input type="radio"/> Special/technical training (not college)
<input type="radio"/> Some college (no degree)
<input type="radio"/> Associate's degree
<input type="radio"/> Bachelor's degree
<input type="radio"/> Graduate/professional degree
<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to answer

What is your total annual household income?

Household income is measured by the total gross income by all members of a household within a 12 month period.

<input type="radio"/> Under \$30,000
<input type="radio"/> \$30,000 - \$59,999
<input type="radio"/> \$60,000 - \$99,999
<input type="radio"/> \$100,000 - \$149,999
<input type="radio"/> \$150,000 - \$249,999
<input type="radio"/> \$250,000 or more
<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to answer