

# THE NBS™

## The National Business Survey™

### Bloomington, MN

*Business Climate Report  
2020*



POWERED BY POLCO

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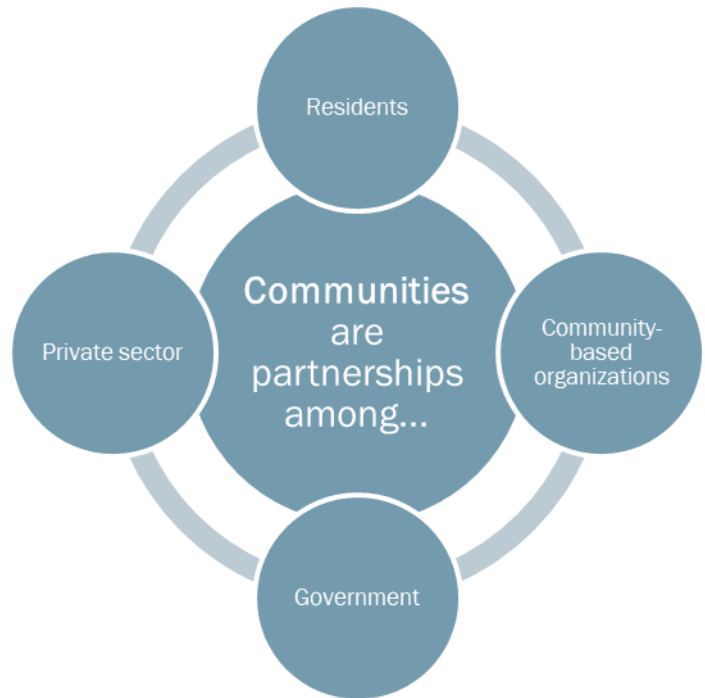
NRC is a charter member of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative, providing clear disclosure of our sound and ethical survey research practices.

# About The NBS™

The National Business Survey™ (The NBS) gives local businesses and employers the opportunity to provide feedback about the community characteristics and local government services that help support the local economy. It was developed by the experts at Polco's National Research Center.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, businesses in the private sector, community-based organizations, and residents, all geographically connected. With the Business Climate Report, the City of Bloomington gains an important perspective from its businesses and employers across six core indicators of the business climate in the community:

- Community amenities
- Business climate
- Employment opportunities and workforce supports
- Workforce readiness
- Business growth
- Governance



The Business Climate Report provides the opinions of 195 business owners and managers of the city of Bloomington. The survey was intended to be taken by all businesses in the community, so no traditional margin of error was calculated. Because not all businesses responded, Polco recommends using plus or minus 10 percentage points as the “range of uncertainty” around any given percent reported for the City as a whole. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the Technical Appendices provided under separate cover.

# Overview of Results

## **Bloomington businesses gave lower ratings to the overall economic health of the community in 2020 compared to 2018.**

Given the global pandemic and the resulting economic losses, a decrease in this rating is not surprising. However, businesses also gave lower ratings to the quality of the transportation system, overall feeling of safety in the community, and the overall opportunities for education, culture and the arts. These ratings were also lower than the benchmark comparison. However, the ratings of Bloomington as a place to do business had not changed in 2020 compared to 2018, with nearly 80% giving a positive rating. This rating is similar to the benchmark comparison.

## **The pandemic has had a negative impact on a significant proportion of businesses.**

Four in 10 businesses reported that a decline in business/sales due to COVID-19 was a major problem, and an additional 2 in 10 reported it was a moderate problem. Over half said that reduced access to customers due to State or local regulations was a major or moderate problem. Nearly half feared a second wave of the virus would result in a need to close businesses again. About 2 in 10 indicated that paying commercial rent/mortgage or lines of credit was a major problem, and 2 in 10 reported that not having funds to pay employees was a major problem.

Four in 10 business said they expected their 2020 revenue will show a serious shortage by the end of the year compared to their original budget projections, and an additional 2 in 10 expected a moderate shortage. However, nearly 1 in 10 businesses said they anticipated increased revenues.

## **In spite of the challenges that 2020 has presented to businesses, many reported business growth over the past five years and expected increases in the next five years.**

About 6 in 10 businesses reported that their business had grown over the last 5 years, and two-thirds expected that their business would grow in the next 5 years.

## **Nearly 8 in 10 businesses rated the shopping opportunities in Bloomington as excellent or good, similar to ratings from 2018.**

These ratings were also similar to the benchmark comparison. About 7 in 10 gave positive ratings to the quality of restaurants and places to eat, and to the quality of service establishments in Bloomington. However, only about two-thirds rated the vibrancy of the downtown commercial area positively, a rating that was lower than the benchmark comparison (and similar to the 2018 rating).

### **Businesses were pleased with the workforce readiness in Bloomington.**

About 8 in 10 businesses said they felt that the workforce in Bloomington fully or mostly possessed the education, qualifications and skills needed to succeed. (This is a new question, and benchmark comparisons are not yet available.) However, when asked about the workforce challenges in Bloomington, about 6 in 10 said having too many under-qualified employees or applicants was a major or moderate challenge.

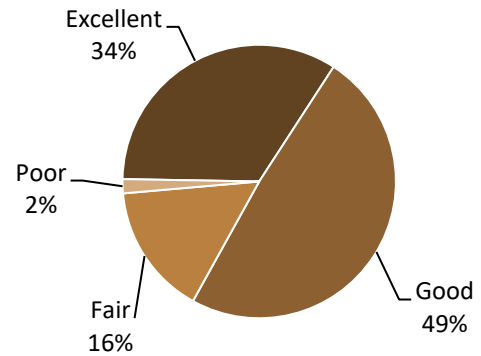
### **Ratings of the overall quality of services provided by the City of Bloomington remained stable in 2020 compared to 2018, and similar to the benchmark comparison.**

About 8 in 10 businesses gave ratings of excellent or good to the overall quality of services provided by the City, a rating that was similar to the 2018 rating and the benchmark comparison. About 6 in 10 felt the value of services for the taxes paid was excellent or good, also similar to the 2018 rating and the benchmark comparison. However, ratings of the overall direction Bloomington is taking and overall confidence in Bloomington government decreased in 2020, and the ratings were lower than the benchmark comparison.

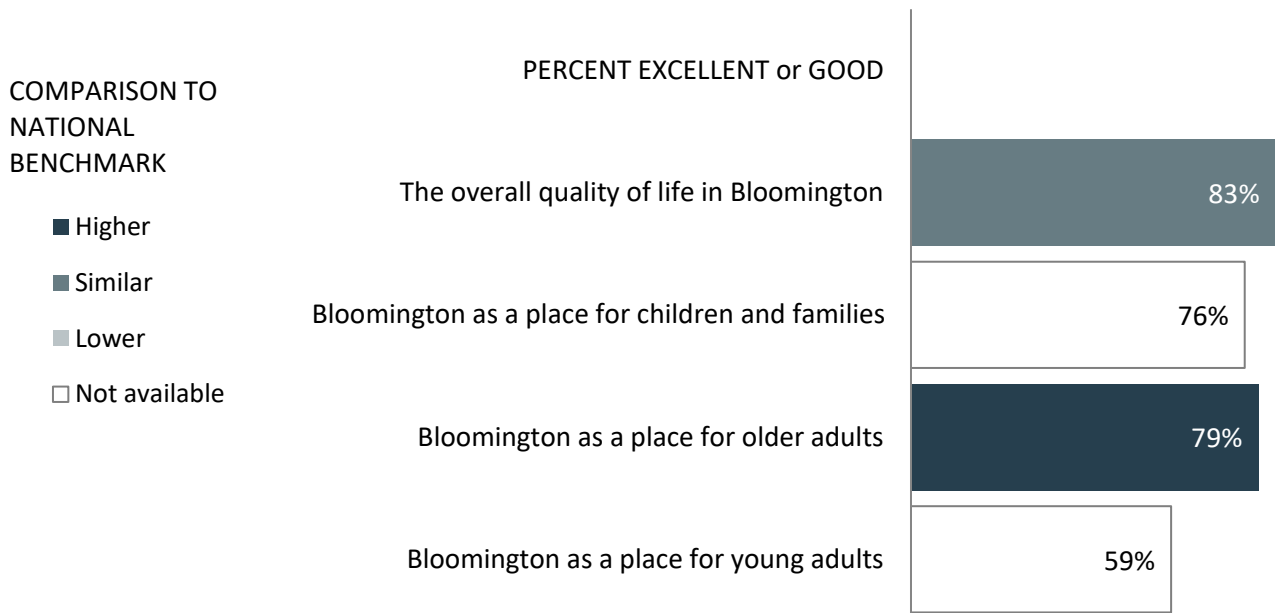
# Quality of Life

*Measuring community livability starts with assessing the quality of life of those who live and work there, and ensuring that the community is attractive, accessible, and welcoming to all.*

## OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE IN BLOOMINGTON



**FIGURE 1: QUALITY OF LIFE IN BLOOMINGTON**



**FIGURE 2: QUALITY OF LIFE IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
The overall quality of life in Bloomington	↔	↔	83%
Bloomington as a place for children and families	*	*	76%
Bloomington as a place for older adults	↑	↑	79%
Bloomington as a place for young adults	*	*	59%

**Legend**

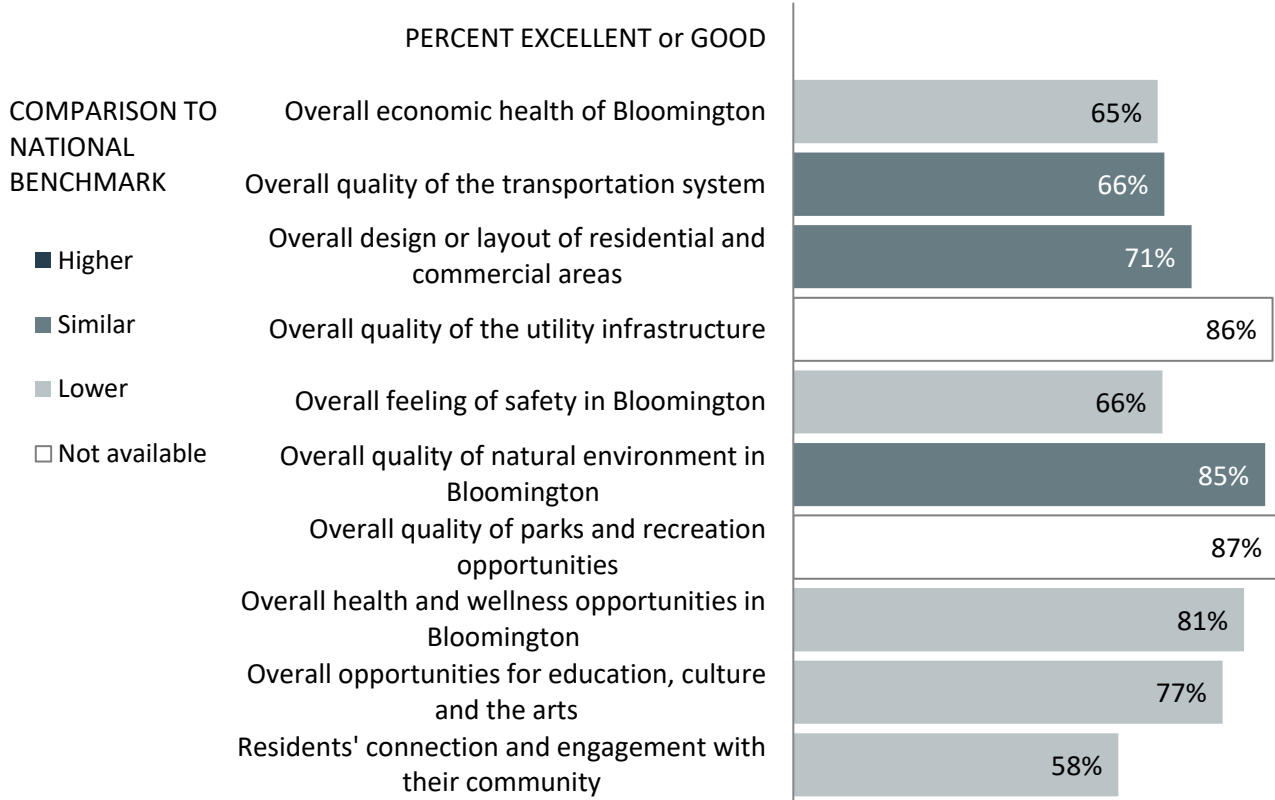
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# Facets of Community Livability

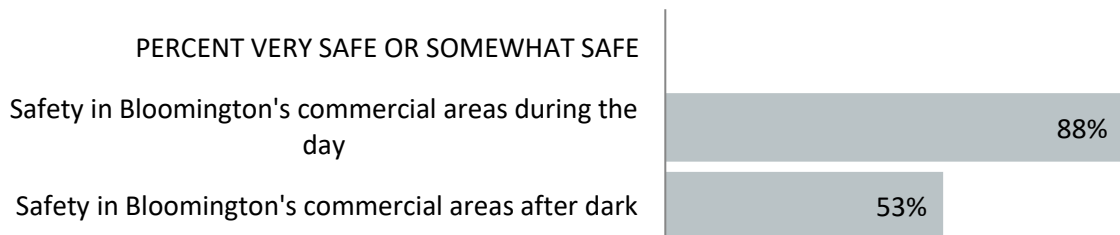
*Characteristics such as natural amenities, safety, and design ensure a community is attractive to businesses, their employees, and the residents they serve. Communities that invest in their natural, social, and built environment foster strong economies where people want to live, visit, and spend time.*



**FIGURE 3: COMMUNITY FACETS OF BLOOMINGTON**



**FIGURE 4: SAFETY IN COMMERCIAL AREAS**



**FIGURE 5: QUALITY OF FACETS OF LIVABILITY- SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Overall economic health of Bloomington	↓	↓	65%
Overall quality of the transportation system	↔	↓	66%
Overall design or layout of residential and commercial areas	↔	↔	71%
Overall quality of the utility infrastructure	*	*	86%
Overall feeling of safety in Bloomington	↓	↓	66%
Overall quality of natural environment in Bloomington	↔	↔	85%
Overall quality of parks and recreation opportunities	*	*	87%
Overall health and wellness opportunities in Bloomington	↓	↔	81%
Overall opportunities for education, culture and the arts	↓	↓	77%
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	↓	↔	58%

**FIGURE 6: SAFETY IN COMMERCIAL AREAS - SUMMARY**

Percent very or somewhat safe	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Safety in Bloomington's commercial areas during the day	↓	↔	88%
Safety in Bloomington's commercial areas after dark	↓	↓	53%

**Legend**

↑↑ Much higher

↑ Higher

↔ Similar

↓ Lower

↓↓ Much lower

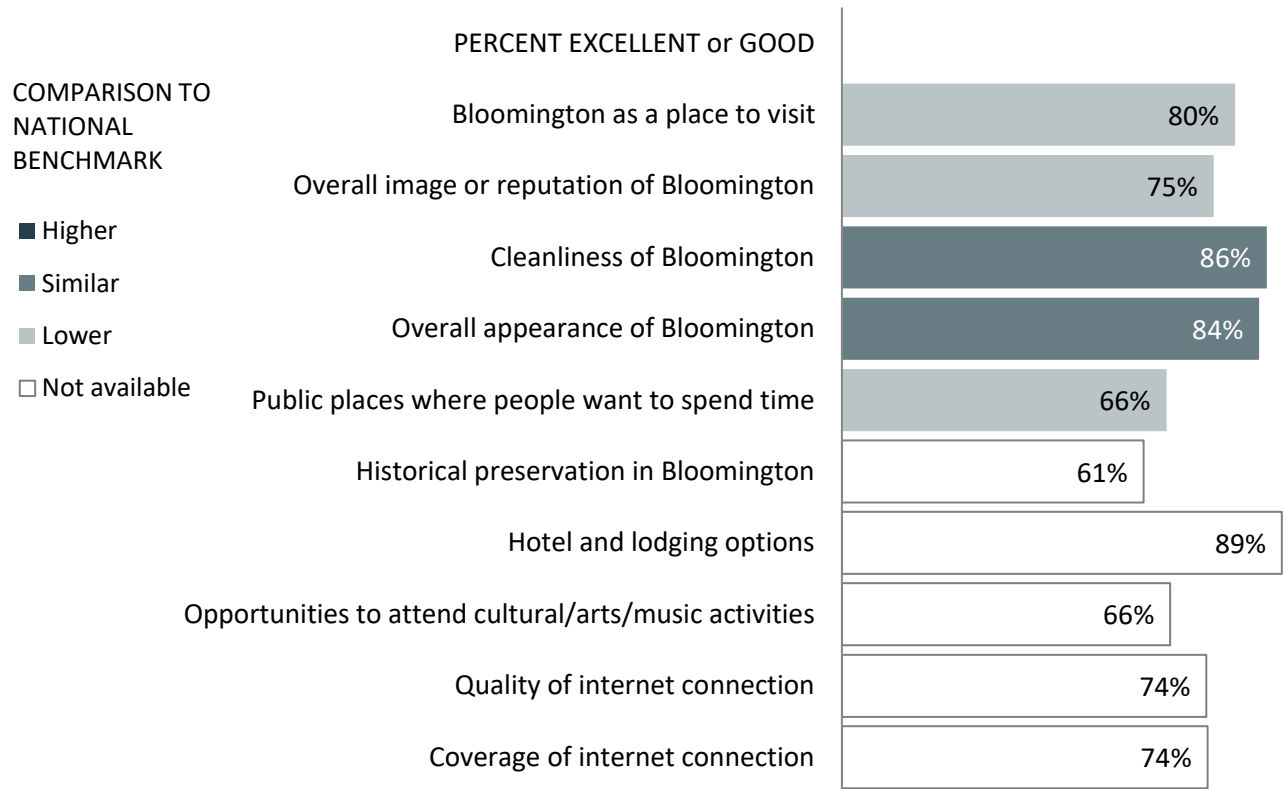
\* Not available



# Community Amenities

When businesses choose where to locate and think about the potential for growth, they are highly influenced by community infrastructure, local markets, and the quality of amenities that may help attract and retain employees.

**FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY AMENITIES IN BLOOMINGTON**



**FIGURE 8: COMMUNITY AMENITIES IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Bloomington as a place to visit	↓	↓	80%
Overall image or reputation of Bloomington	↓	↔	75%
Cleanliness of Bloomington	↔	↔	86%
Overall appearance of Bloomington	↔	↔	84%
Public places where people want to spend time	↓	↓	66%
Historical preservation in Bloomington	*	*	61%
Hotel and lodging options	*	*	89%
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	*	*	66%
Quality of internet connection	*	*	74%
Coverage of internet connection	*	*	74%

**Legend**

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

**FIGURE 9: BUSINESS AND SERVICE AMENITIES IN BLOOMINGTON**



**FIGURE 10: BUSINESS AND SERVICE AMENITIES IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area	↓	↔	65%
Overall quality of commercial development in Bloomington	↓	↓	66%
Overall opportunity for business growth and expansion	*	*	58%
Opportunities for tourism	*	*	63%
Quality of shopping opportunities	↔	↔	84%
Variety of shopping opportunities	*	*	81%
Quality of restaurants and places to eat	*	*	71%
Variety of restaurants and places to eat	*	*	68%
Quality of service establishments	*	*	81%
Variety of service establishments	*	*	71%

**Legend**

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

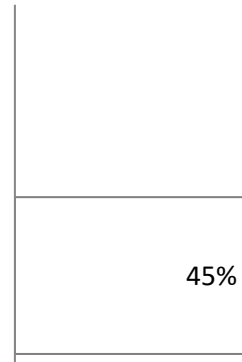
**FIGURE 11: DISRUPTIVE, NUISANCE, ILLEGAL BEHAVIORS**

COMPARISON TO NATIONAL BENCHMARK

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

PERCENT NOT AT ALL A PROBLEM

Disruptive, nuisance, or illegal behaviors a problem for business



**FIGURE 12: DISRUPTIVE, NUISANCE, AND ILLEGAL BEHAVIORS - SUMMARY**

Percent not at all a problem	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Disruptive, nuisance, or illegal behaviors a problem for business	*	*	45%

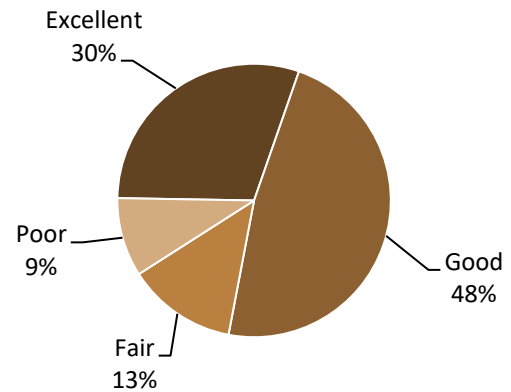
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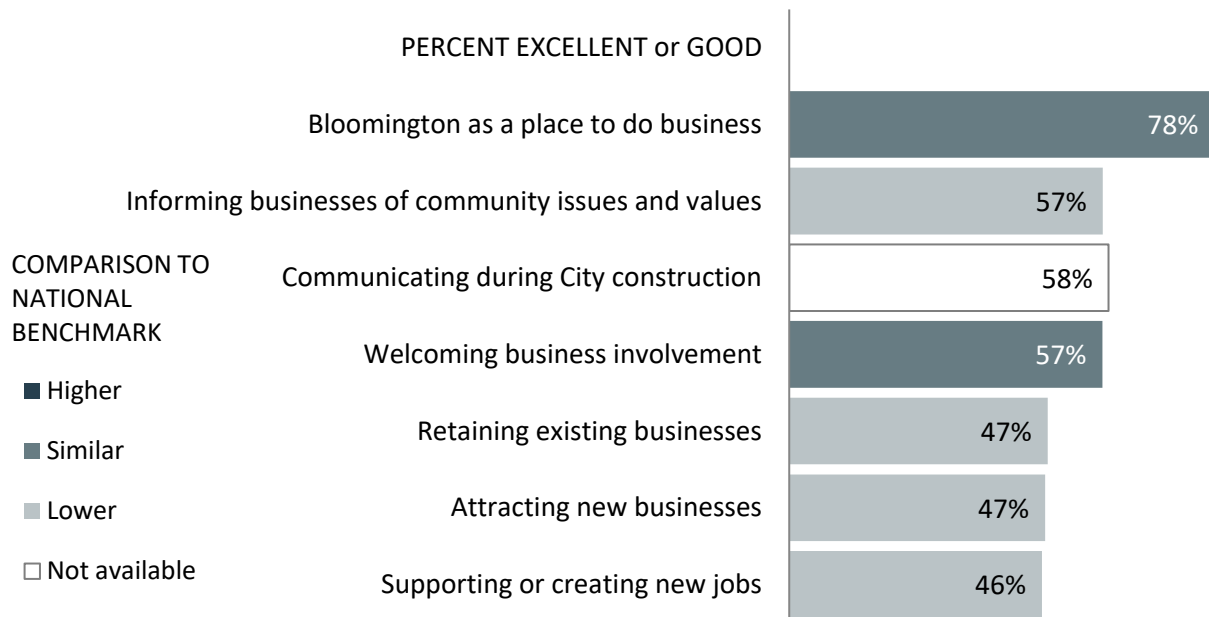
# Business Climate

*A strong business climate can improve the local economy, increase employment, and wages, and provide additional tax revenues to support community livability.*

## BLOOMINGTON AS A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS



**FIGURE 13: GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**



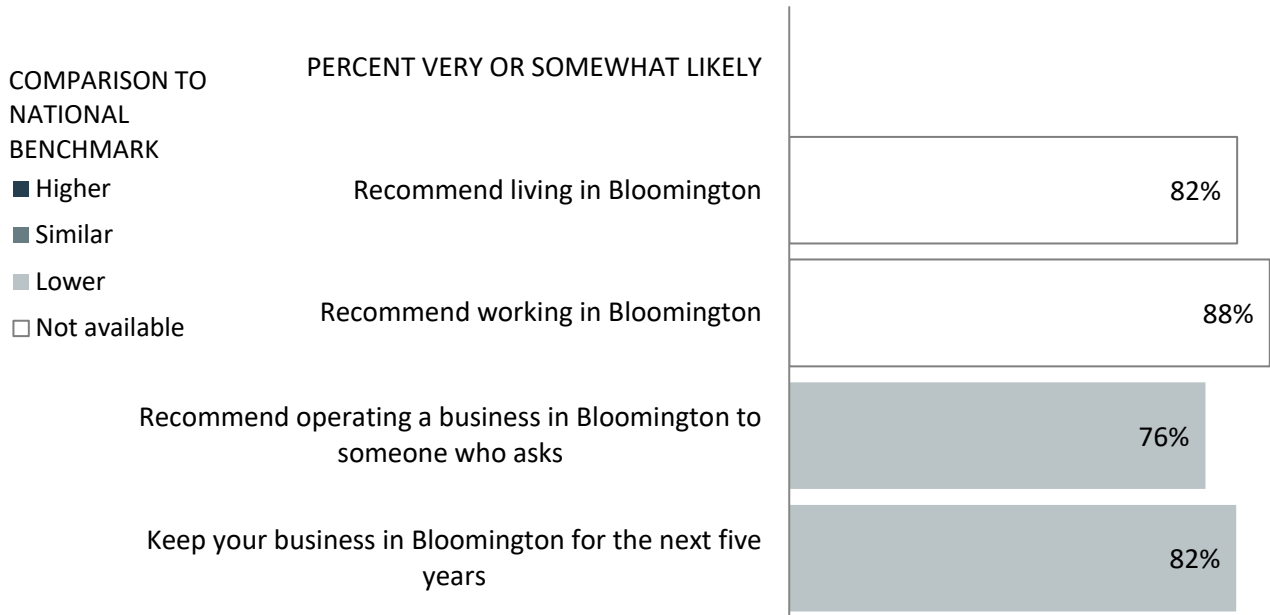
**FIGURE 14: GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Bloomington as a place to do business	↔	↔	78%
Informing businesses of community issues and values	↓	↔	57%
Communicating during City construction	*	*	58%
Welcoming business involvement	↔	↔	57%
Retaining existing businesses	↓	↓	47%
Attracting new businesses	↓	↓	47%
Supporting or creating new jobs	↓	↓	46%

**Legend**

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

**FIGURE 15: RECOMMEND AND INTENTION TO STAY**



**FIGURE 16: RECOMMEND AND INTENTION TO STAY - SUMMARY**

Percent very or somewhat likely	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Recommend living in Bloomington	*	*	82%
Recommend working in Bloomington	*	*	88%
Recommend operating a business in Bloomington to someone who asks	↓	↓	76%
Keep your business in Bloomington for the next five years	↓	↔	82%

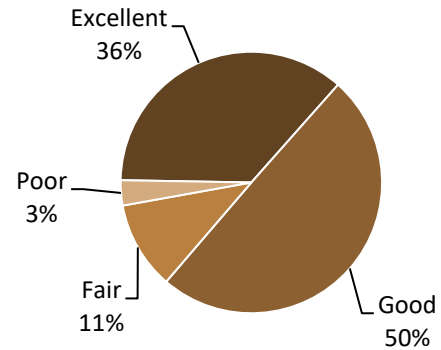
**Legend**

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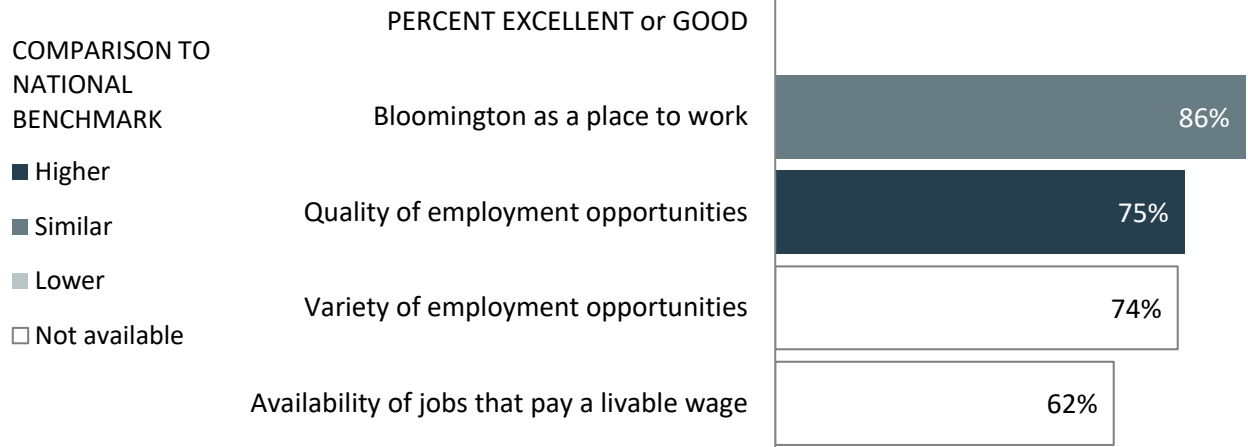
# Employment Opportunities and Workforce Supports

*Offering quality employment opportunities and the supports needed for residents to successfully access that work are critical for a healthy and resilient local economy.*

## BLOOMINGTON AS A PLACE TO WORK



**FIGURE 17: EMPLOYMENT IN BLOOMINGTON**



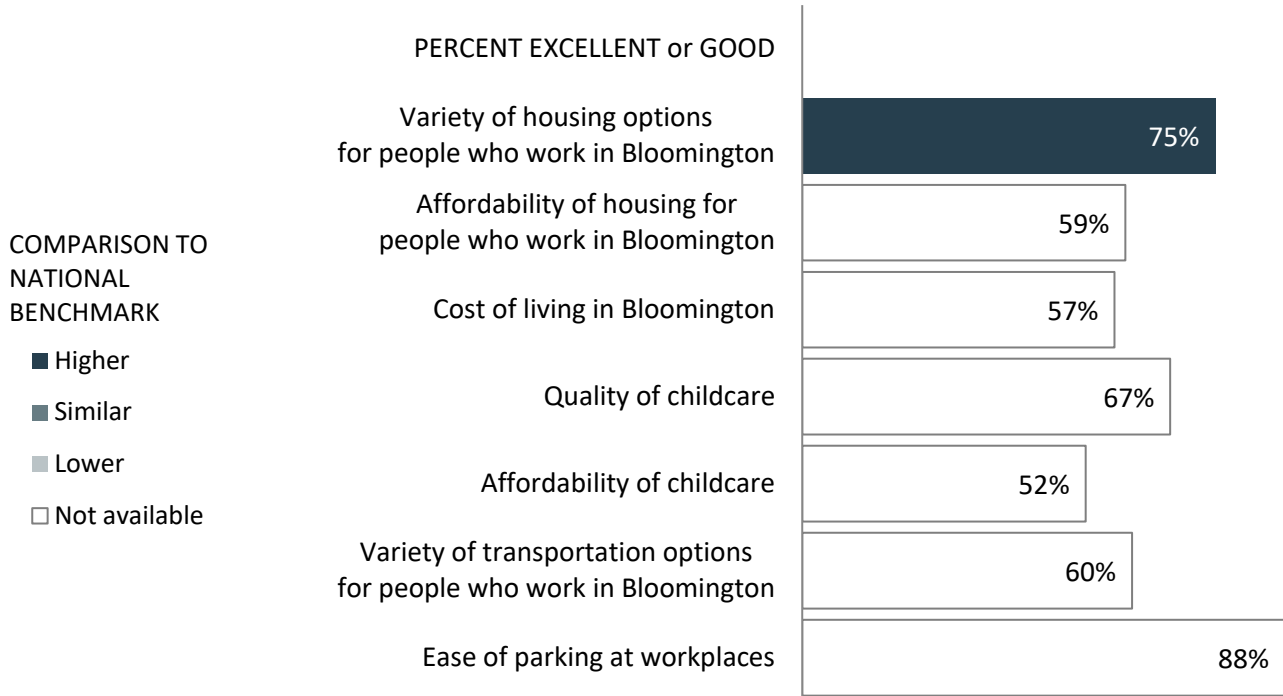
**FIGURE 18: EMPLOYMENT IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Bloomington as a place to work	↔	↔	86%
Quality of employment opportunities	↑	↓	75%
Variety of employment opportunities	*	*	74%
Availability of jobs that pay a livable wage	*	*	62%

**Legend**

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

**FIGURE 19: WORKFORCE SUPPORTS IN BLOOMINGTON**



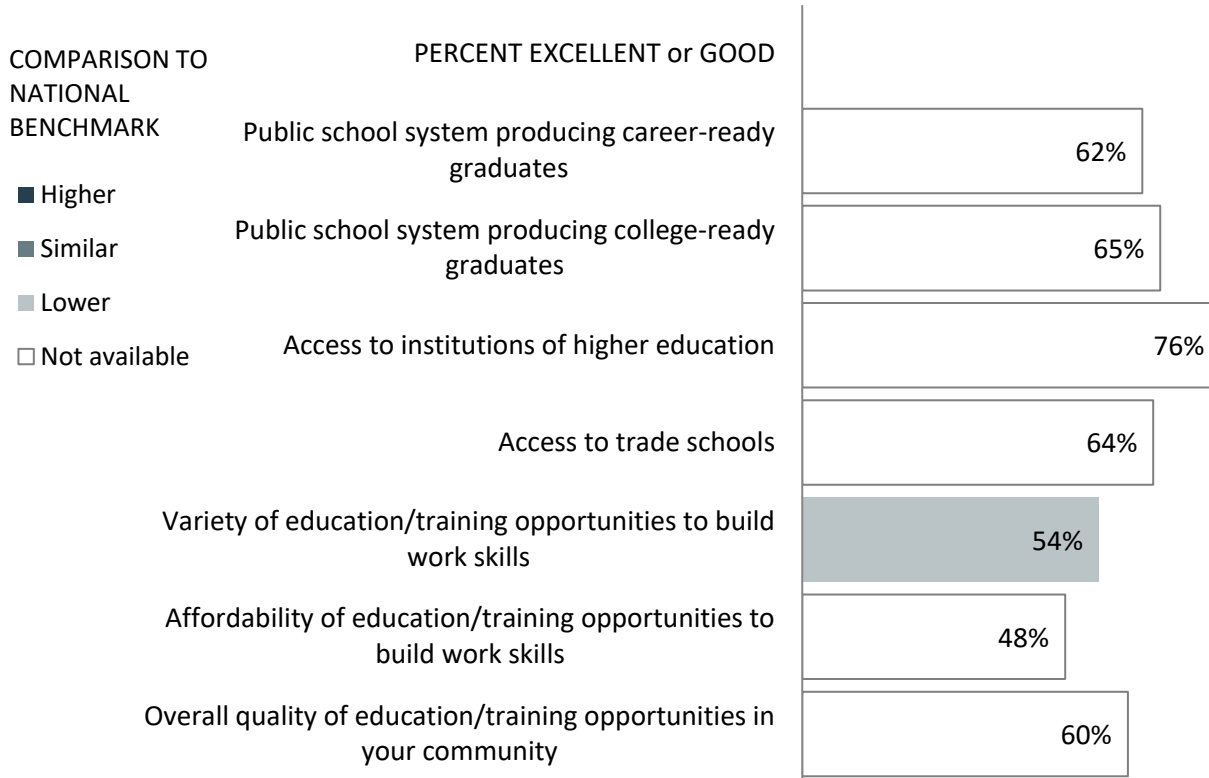
**FIGURE 20: WORKFORCE SUPPORTS IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Variety of housing options for people who work in Bloomington	↑	↑	75%
Affordability of housing for people who work in Bloomington	*	*	59%
Cost of living in Bloomington	*	*	57%
Quality of childcare	*	*	67%
Affordability of childcare	*	*	52%
Variety of transportation options for people who work in Bloomington	*	*	60%
Ease of parking at workplaces	*	*	88%

**Legend**

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

**FIGURE 21: WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND SKILL SUPPORTS IN BLOOMINGTON**



**FIGURE 22: WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND SKILL SUPPORTS IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Public school system producing career-ready graduates	*	*	62%
Public school system producing college-ready graduates	*	*	65%
Access to institutions of higher education	*	*	76%
Access to trade schools	*	*	64%
Variety of education/training opportunities to build work skills	↓	↓	54%
Affordability of education/training opportunities to build work skills	*	*	48%
Overall quality of education/training opportunities in your community	*	*	60%

**Legend**

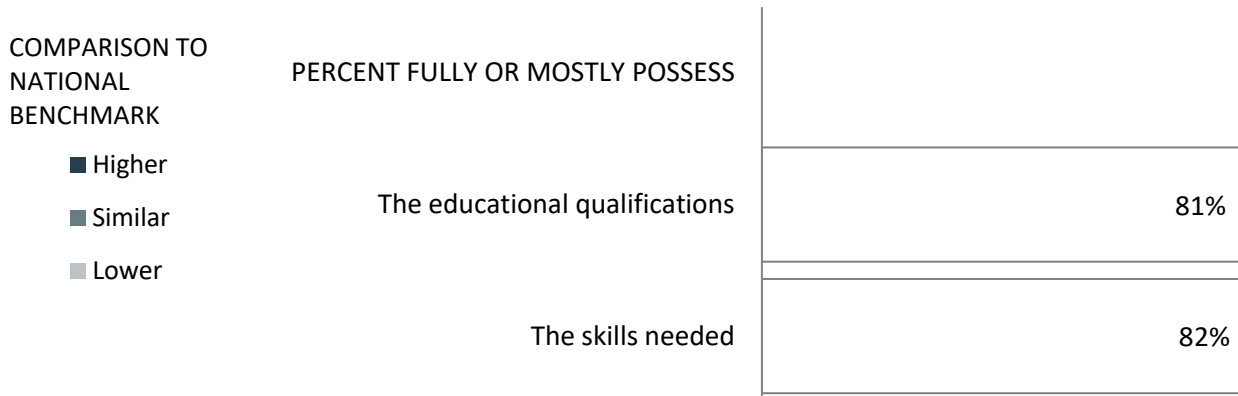
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# Workforce Readiness

*Workforce readiness is the measure of how well a community’s employees’ education and skill levels align with current and future labor market needs. Growing the economy, jobs, and wages often requires an investment in training programs as well as community partnerships to help support residents as they seek to meet new employment opportunities.*

**FIGURE 23: WORKFORCE READINESS IN BLOOMINGTON**



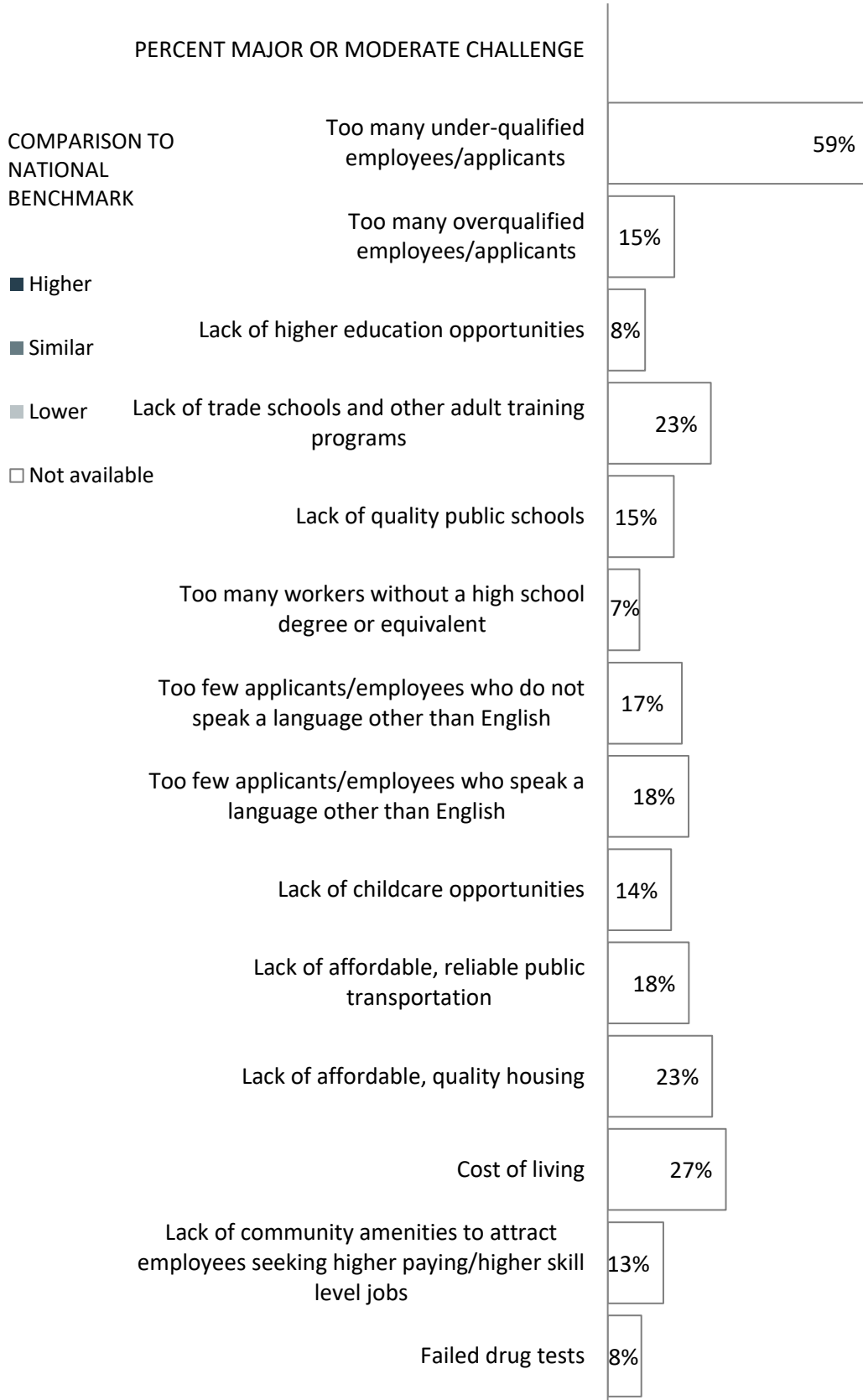
**FIGURE 24: WORKFORCE READINESS IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent fully or mostly possess	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
The educational qualifications	*	*	81%
The skills needed	*	*	82%

**Legend**

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

**FIGURE 25: WORKFORCE CHALLENGES IN BLOOMINGTON**



**Legend**

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

**FIGURE 26: WORKFORCE CHALLENGES IN BLOOMINGTON - SUMMARY**

Percent major or moderate challenge	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Too many under-qualified employees/applicants	*	*	59%
Too many overqualified employees/applicants	*	*	15%
Lack of higher education opportunities	*	*	8%
Lack of trade schools and other adult training programs	*	*	23%
Lack of quality public schools	*	*	15%
Too many workers without a high school degree or equivalent	*	*	7%
Too few applicants/employees who do not speak a language other than English	*	*	17%
Too few applicants/employees who speak a language other than English	*	*	18%
Lack of childcare opportunities	*	*	14%
Lack of affordable, reliable public transportation	*	*	18%
Lack of affordable, quality housing	*	*	23%
Cost of living	*	*	27%
Lack of community amenities to attract employees seeking higher paying/higher skill level jobs	*	*	13%
Failed drug tests	*	*	8%

**Legend**

↑↑ Much higher

↑ Higher

↔ Similar

↓ Lower

↓↓ Much lower

\* Not available

# Business Growth

*Growth is a key indicator of both company and community level economic health.*

**FIGURE 27: EXPECTED BUSINESS GROWTH**

COMPARISON TO NATIONAL BENCHMARK

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

PERCENT LARGE OR SMALL INCREASE

Increased over the PAST five years

58%

Increase expected in the NEXT five years

65%

**FIGURE 28: EXPECTED BUSINESS GROWTH - SUMMARY**

Percent large or small increase	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Increased over the PAST five years	*	*	58%
Increase expected in the NEXT five years	*	*	65%

**FIGURE 29: IMPACT OF ECONOMY ON BUSINESS REVENUE IN NEXT 6 MONTHS**

PERCENT VERY OR SOMEWHAT POSITIVE

Economy will have POSITIVE impact on revenues in the next 6 months

29%

**FIGURE 30: IMPACT OF ECONOMY ON BUSINESS REVENUE IN NEXT 6 MONTHS - SUMMARY**

Percent very or somewhat positive	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Economy will have POSITIVE impact on revenues in the next 6 months	↓	↓	29%

**Legend**

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

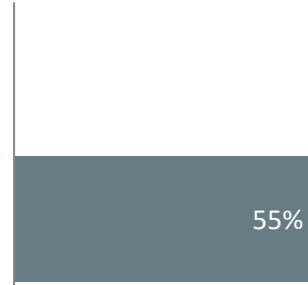
**FIGURE 31: BUSINESS PLANS TO HIRE IN NEXT 6-12 MONTHS**

COMPARISON TO NATIONAL BENCHMARK

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

PERCENT YES OR NOT SURE

Hiring in 6 to 12 months



**FIGURE 32: BUSINESS PLANS TO HIRE IN NEXT 6-12 MONTHS - SUMMARY**

Percent yes or not sure	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Hiring in 6 to 12 months	↔	↔	55%

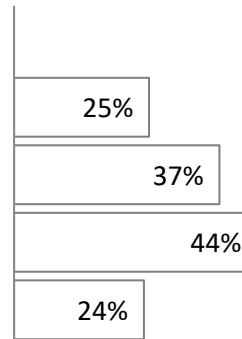
**FIGURE 33: TYPES OF JOBS BUSINESSES PLAN TO ADD**

COMPARISON TO NATIONAL BENCHMARK

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower
- Not available

PERCENT YES

Unskilled jobs  
Semi-skilled jobs  
Skilled jobs  
Highly skilled jobs



**FIGURE 34: TYPES OF JOBS BUSINESSES PLAN TO ADD - SUMMARY**

Percent yes	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Unskilled jobs	*	*	25%
Semi-skilled jobs	*	*	37%
Skilled jobs	*	*	44%
Highly skilled jobs	*	*	24%

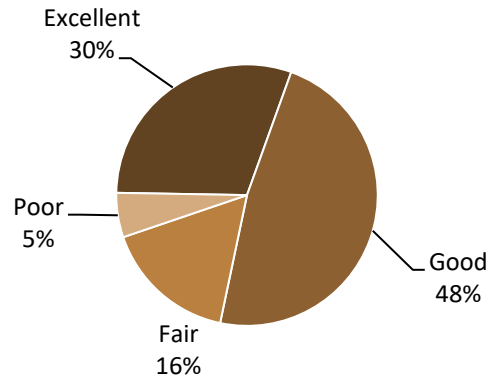
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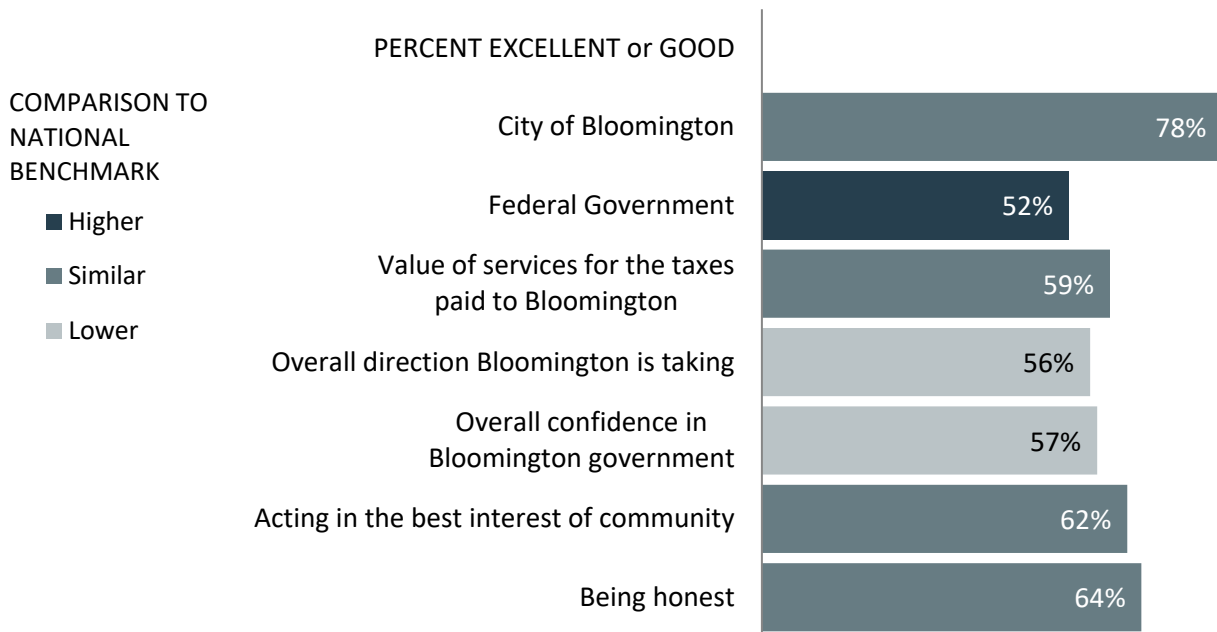
# Governance

*The overall quality of the services provided by the local government, as well as the manner in which these services are delivered, form the backbone for the community in which local economies prosper.*

## OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



**FIGURE 35: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**



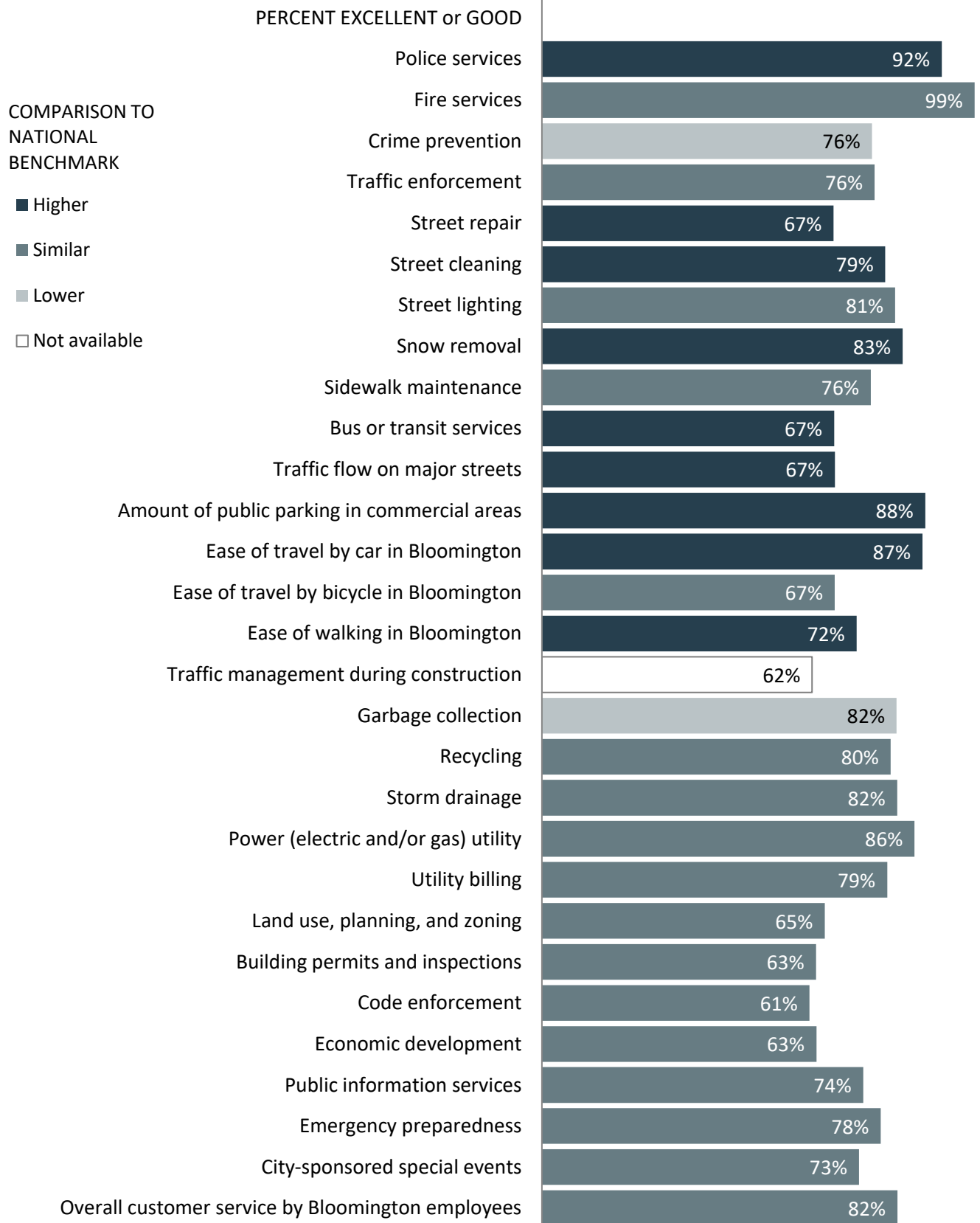
**FIGURE 36: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
City of Bloomington	↔	↔	78%
Federal Government	↑	↔	52%
Value of services for the taxes paid to Bloomington	↔	↔	59%
Overall direction Bloomington is taking	↓	↓	56%
Overall confidence in Bloomington government	↓	↓	57%
Acting in the best interest of community	↔	↔	62%
Being honest	↔	↔	64%

**Legend**

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

**FIGURE 37: QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES**



**FIGURE 38: QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES - SUMMARY**

Percent excellent or good	Comparison to benchmark	Change 2018 to 2020	2020 rating
Police services	↑	↔	92%
Fire services	↔	↔	99%
Crime prevention	↓	↓	76%
Traffic enforcement	↔	↔	76%
Street repair	↑	↔	67%
Street cleaning	↑	↔	79%
Street lighting	↔	↔	81%
Snow removal	↑	↔	83%
Sidewalk maintenance	↔	↔	76%
Bus or transit services	↑	↔	67%
Traffic flow on major streets	↑	↔	67%
Amount of public parking in commercial areas	↑	↔	88%
Ease of travel by car in Bloomington	↑	↑	87%
Ease of travel by bicycle in Bloomington	↔	↔	67%
Ease of walking in Bloomington	↑	↔	72%
Traffic management during construction	*	*	62%
Garbage collection	C	↔	82%
Recycling	↔	↔	80%
Storm drainage	↔	↔	82%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	↔	↔	86%
Utility billing	↔	↔	79%
Land use, planning, and zoning	↔	↔	65%
Building permits and inspections	↔	↔	63%
Code enforcement	↔	↔	61%
Economic development	↔	*	63%
Public information services	↔	↔	74%
Emergency preparedness	↔	*	78%
City-sponsored special events	↔	*	73%
Overall customer service by Bloomington employees	↔	↔	82%

**Legend**

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

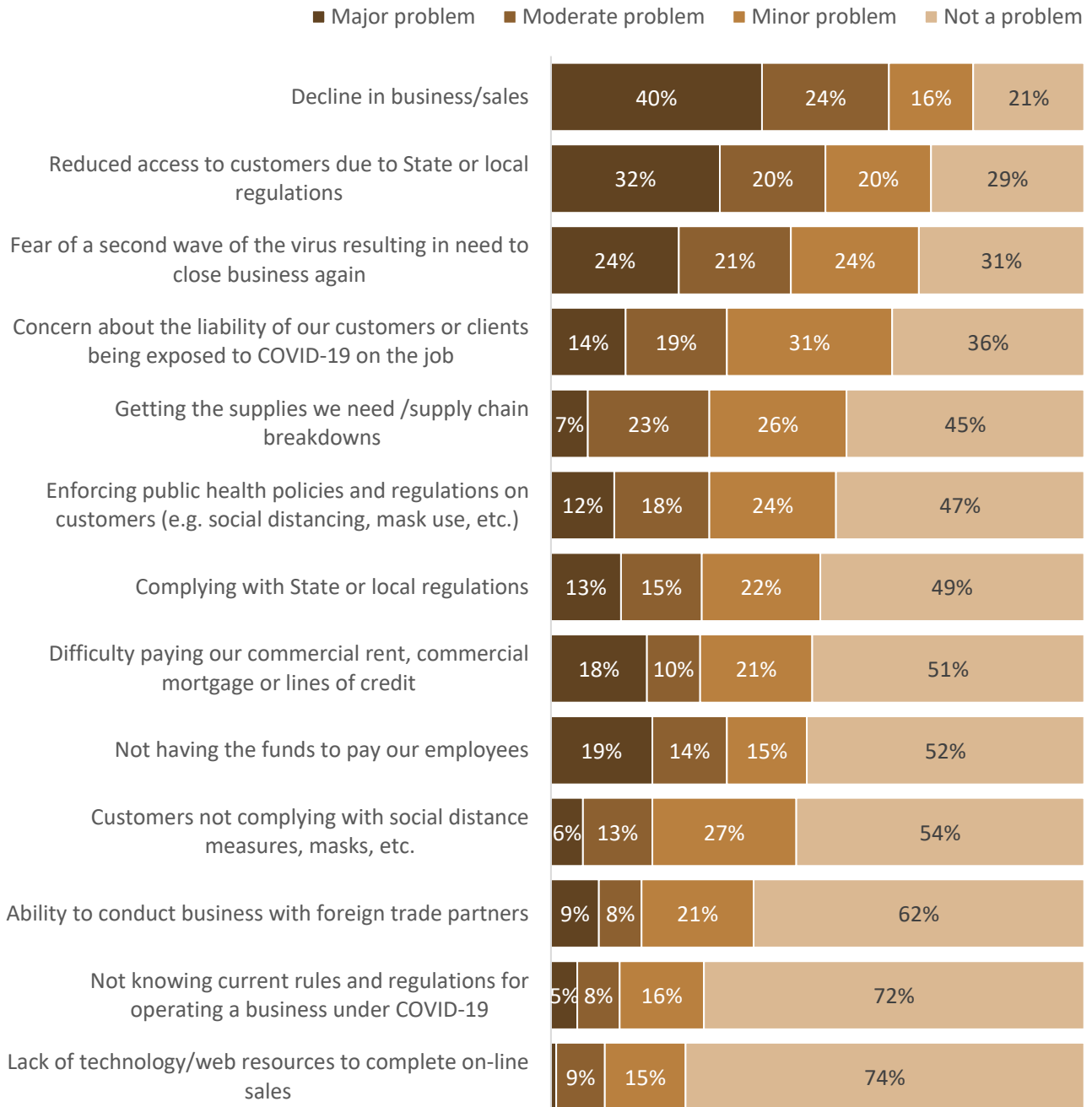


# Special Topics

In order to better understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local businesses, the City of Bloomington included several questions on this topic on The NBS.

**FIGURE 39: BUSINESS PROBLEMS DUE TO COVID-19**

*How much of a problem, if at all, are the following issues for your business as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?*



**FIGURE 40: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STAFFING LEVELS**

*Because of COVID-19, most businesses are expecting lower revenues than they projected at the outset of the year. How do you think your actual 2020 revenue will compare to your original budget projections?*

