

# City of Royal Oak Public Opinion Study

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March 17, 2021



# Background on Cobalt Community Research

- 501c3 not for profit research coalition
- Mission to provide research and education
- Developed to meet the research needs of schools, local governments and nonprofit organizations

# Measuring Where You Are: Why Research Matters

- Best practice to improve performance, management, and trust
- Enhances other engagement efforts to build context and help prioritize community requests
- Provides credible, independently-gathered data that quantifies community priorities and aids in balancing demands of vocal groups with the reality of limited resources
- Improves effectiveness of planning and communication
- Bottom line outcome measurement of service and trust: Good administration requires quality measurement and reporting

# Study Goals

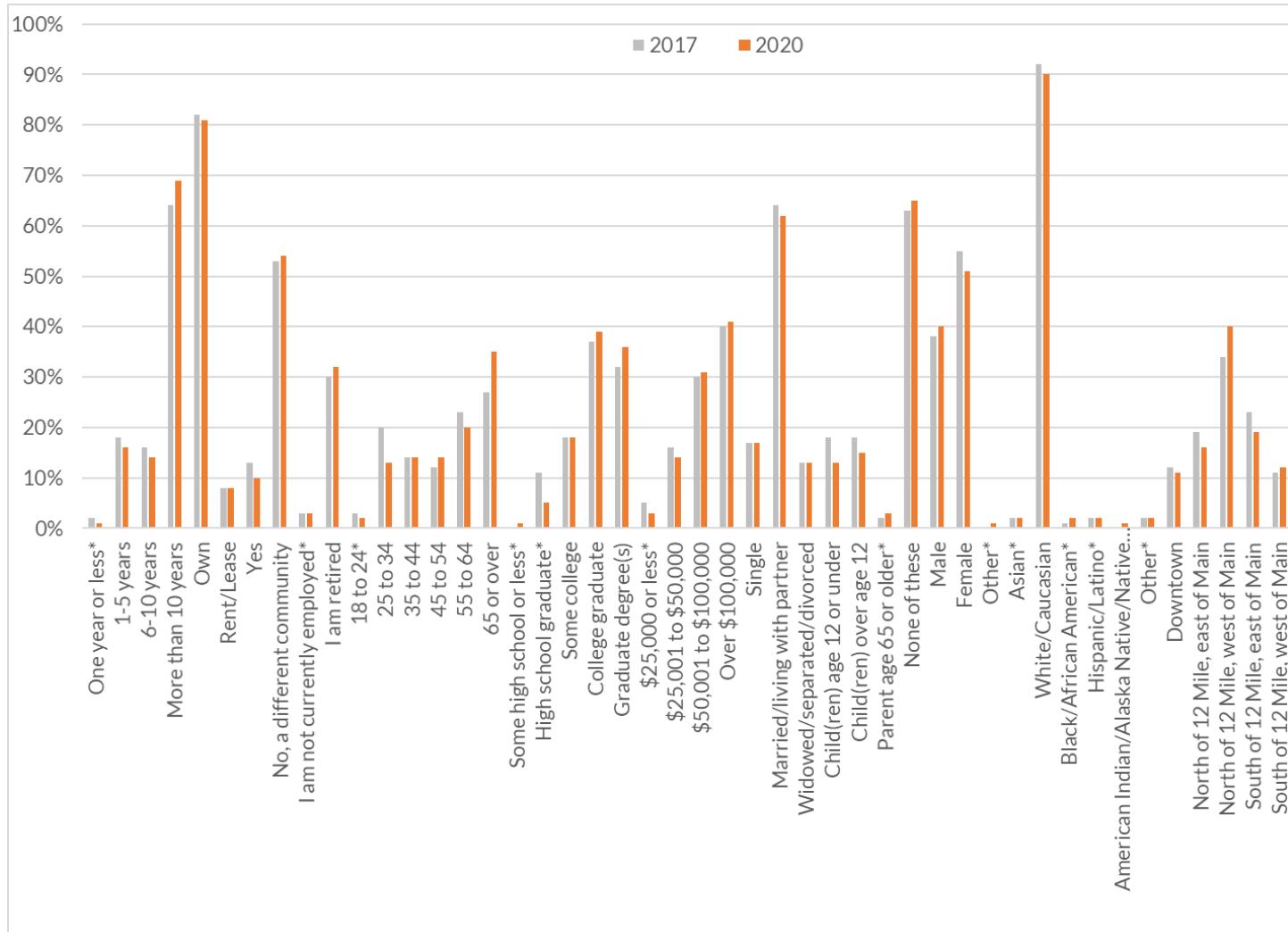
- Support budget and strategic planning decisions with additional community engagement
- Ensure baseline service measures are monitored to support improvements and transparency
- Identify which aspects of community provide the greatest leverage on residents' overall satisfaction and outcomes such as remaining in the community and recommending the community to others
- Understand results in context by benchmarking performance against statewide, regional and national indices that also measure industries and major organizations across the United States
- Compare performance to prior public opinion studies

# Methodology

- Random sample of 1,500 residents drawn from voter records
- Utilized [www.random.org](http://www.random.org), a well-respected utility used internationally by many universities and researchers to generate true random numbers
- Conducted using three mailings in November 2020-January 2021
- Valid response from 389 residents, providing a conventional margin of error of +/- 5 percent in the raw data (95% confidence) and an ACSI margin of error of +/- 2.1 percent (95% confidence)
  - Note: National surveys with a margin of error +/- 5% require a sample of 384 responses to reflect a population of 330,000,000

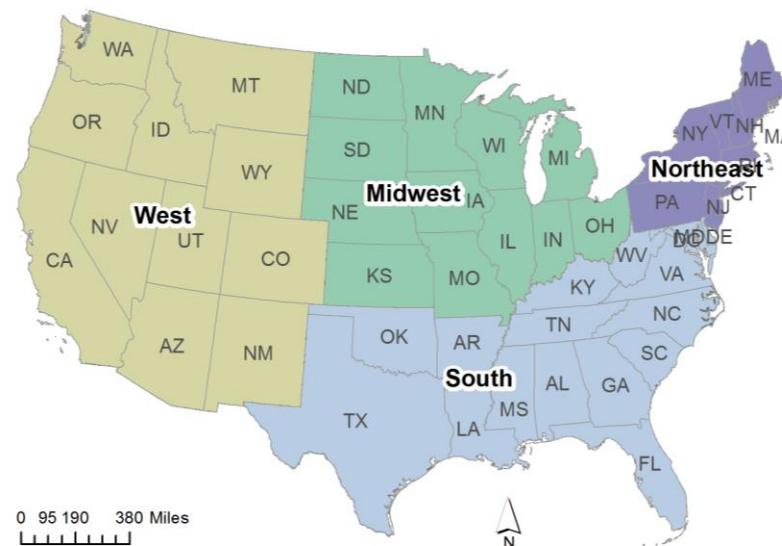
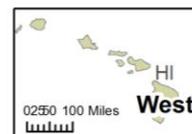
*Note: Response collection was delayed because of postal service delivery challenges*

# Respondent Profile – Similar to 2017



# Available Tools

- Detailed questions and responses broken by demographic group and “thermal mapped,” so lower scores are red and higher scores are blue
- Online portal to allow side-by-side comparisons of groups and subgroups (for example, breaking down the scores of individuals divided by age, gender, etc.)
- Online portal allowing download of data into MS Excel
- Comparison scores with local governments in Michigan, the Midwest and across the nation
- Comparison scores with non-local government comparables (industries, companies, federal agencies)



# Bottom Line

- The City's overall American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score softened to 67 from 69 (scale 1 to 100)
  - 2020 Royal Oak = 67 | 2017 Royal Oak = 69
  - 2020 Michigan = 63 | 2017 Michigan = 64
  - 2020 Midwest = 61 | 2017 Midwest = 63
  - 2020 National = 63 | 2017 National = 63
- As expected, scores softened for events, library and local schools
- Scores improved for transportation, customer service
- Areas with greatest leverage:
  - City Government Management
  - Economy
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Shopping/Dining
  - Schools

## Bottom Line (cont.)

- About 70% felt safe using parks during COVID-19
- Residents considered the following to have been critical services during shutdown: park maintenance, police response, recycling, farmers' market
- Over 70% support online and curbside delivery of services
- Detailed information by specific demographic groups is available to aid in policy review
  - Detail by: years of residency, own/rent, employment, age, education, income, marital status, household composition, gender, ethnicity and area of town

# Preserving Voice: Looking Into Detail

2020 Royal Oak, Michigan  
Distribution Questions  
Response Count 389

		Information preference for city information													
		Cell phone	Internet	Text message	Landline/telephone	Video chat/ Skype/ FaceTime	Email	Social media	Smart phone apps	Insight magazine	Newspapers	Mailings	City cable channels	Friends, family & neighbors	
Overall - 2020		11%	51%	22%	3%	1%	52%	32%	12%	46%	39%	50%	9%	26%	
Age		18 to 24*	33%	50%	17%	-	-	67%	50%	17%	17%	33%	33%	-	33%
		25 to 34	14%	63%	24%	-	-	57%	51%	16%	20%	39%	49%	-	35%
		35 to 44	13%	66%	36%	-	2%	70%	47%	23%	30%	23%	49%	-	23%
		45 to 54	8%	60%	25%	2%	2%	58%	45%	19%	42%	45%	42%	9%	26%
		55 to 64	8%	49%	19%	1%	1%	49%	23%	9%	64%	41%	49%	13%	19%
		65 or over	11%	39%	18%	7%	-	42%	18%	6%	56%	42%	54%	13%	29%

Consistent Scores Regardless  
of Demographics

Checkered Scores that  
Vary by Demographics

# Results



# Comparing 2017 and 2020

(High score = 100)

## Areas with strong impact on overall engagement

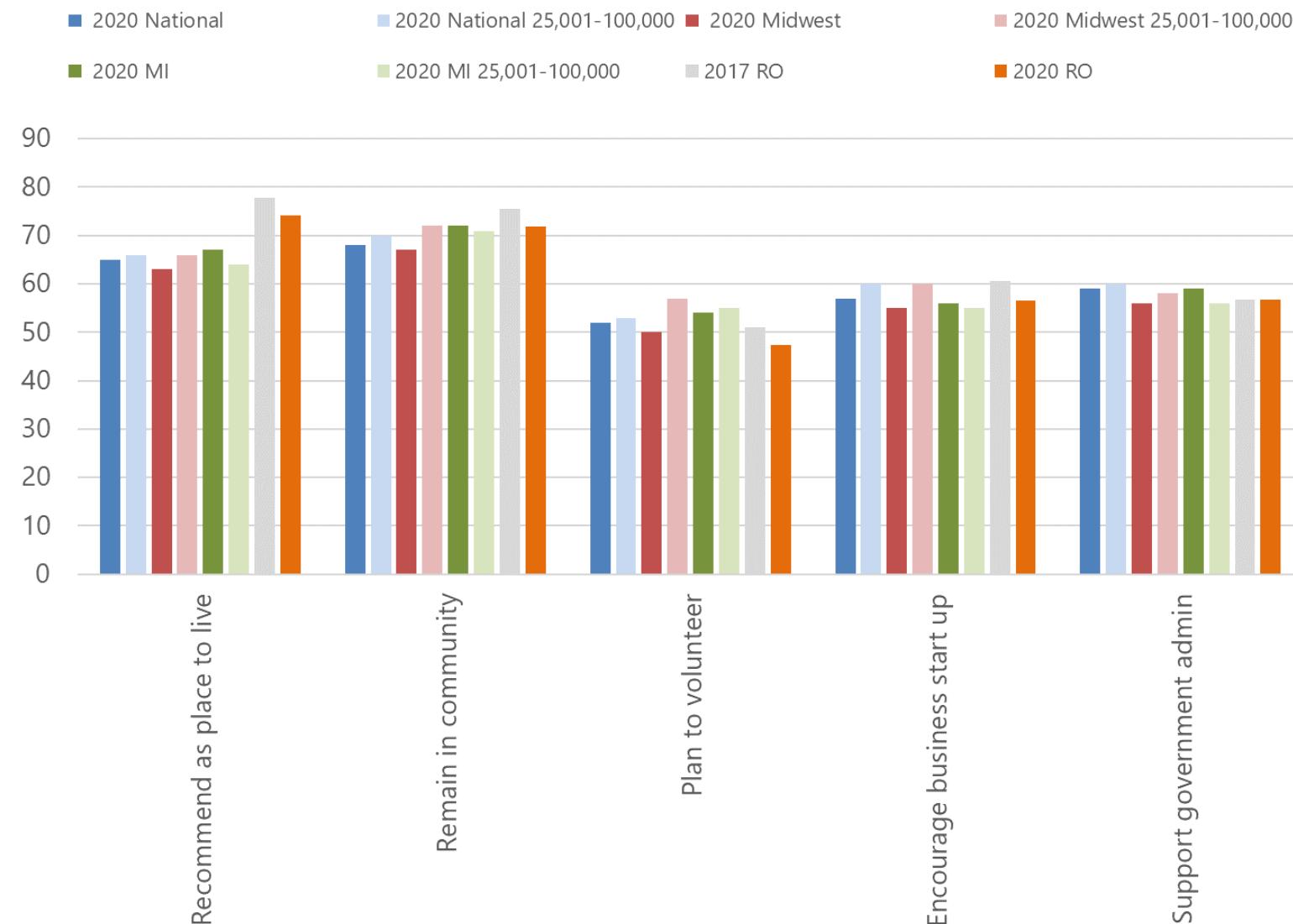
	2017 RO	2020 RO	Change
Fire and EMS Overall	90	89	➡ 0
Public Schools Overall	73	67	⬇ -6
Transportation Overall	63	63	➡ 0
Utility Services Overall	87	85	⬇ -2
Police Department Overall	81	81	➡ -1
Property Taxes Overall	64	66	➡ 2
Shopping Opportunities Overall	79	79	➡ 0
Local Government Overall	65	64	➡ 0
Community Events Overall	77	71	⬇ -6
Economic Health Overall	69	70	➡ 1
Diversity Overall	62	58	⬇ -4
Parks and Recreation Overall	76	75	➡ -1
Library Overall	85	80	⬇ -5

# Scores in Context

Cobalt Community Research Government Benchmarks	2020 U.S. Benchmark	2020 Midwest Benchmark (25k-100k)	2020 MI Benchmark (25k-100k)	2020 RO
Scale 0-100 (Perfect=100)	Overall	Overall	Overall	Overall
Local Government	62	66	59	64
Community Satisfaction	61	68	61	67
Professionalism of Staff	65	64	62	77
County Government Satisfaction	59	59	57	-
State Government Satisfaction	56	57	51	-
Federal Government Satisfaction	68	-	-	-
ACSI National Index Overall (includes private)	75	-	-	-
<b>Royal Oak 2020</b>	<b>67</b>			

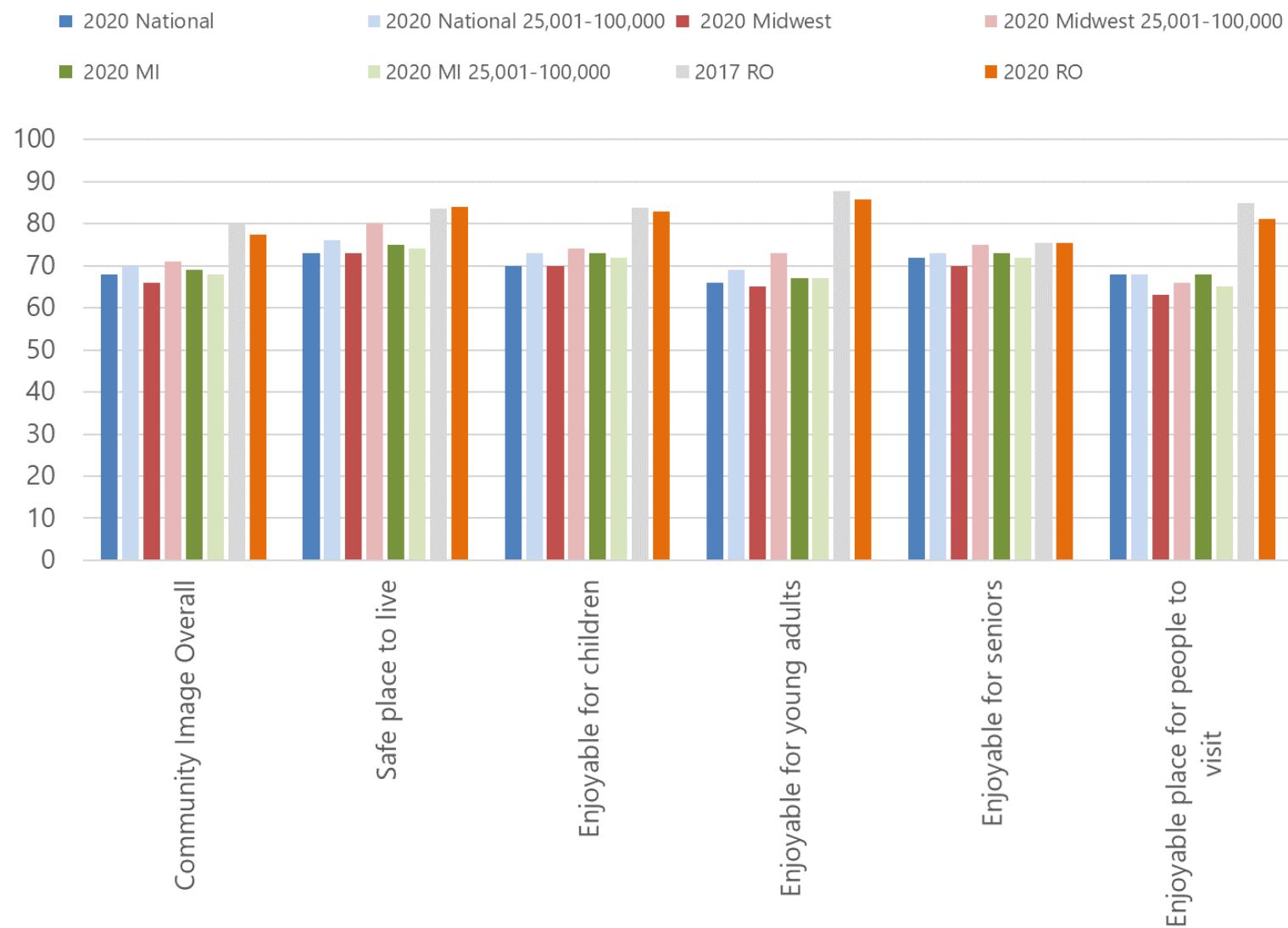
# Outcome Behaviors to Benchmarks

(High score = 100)



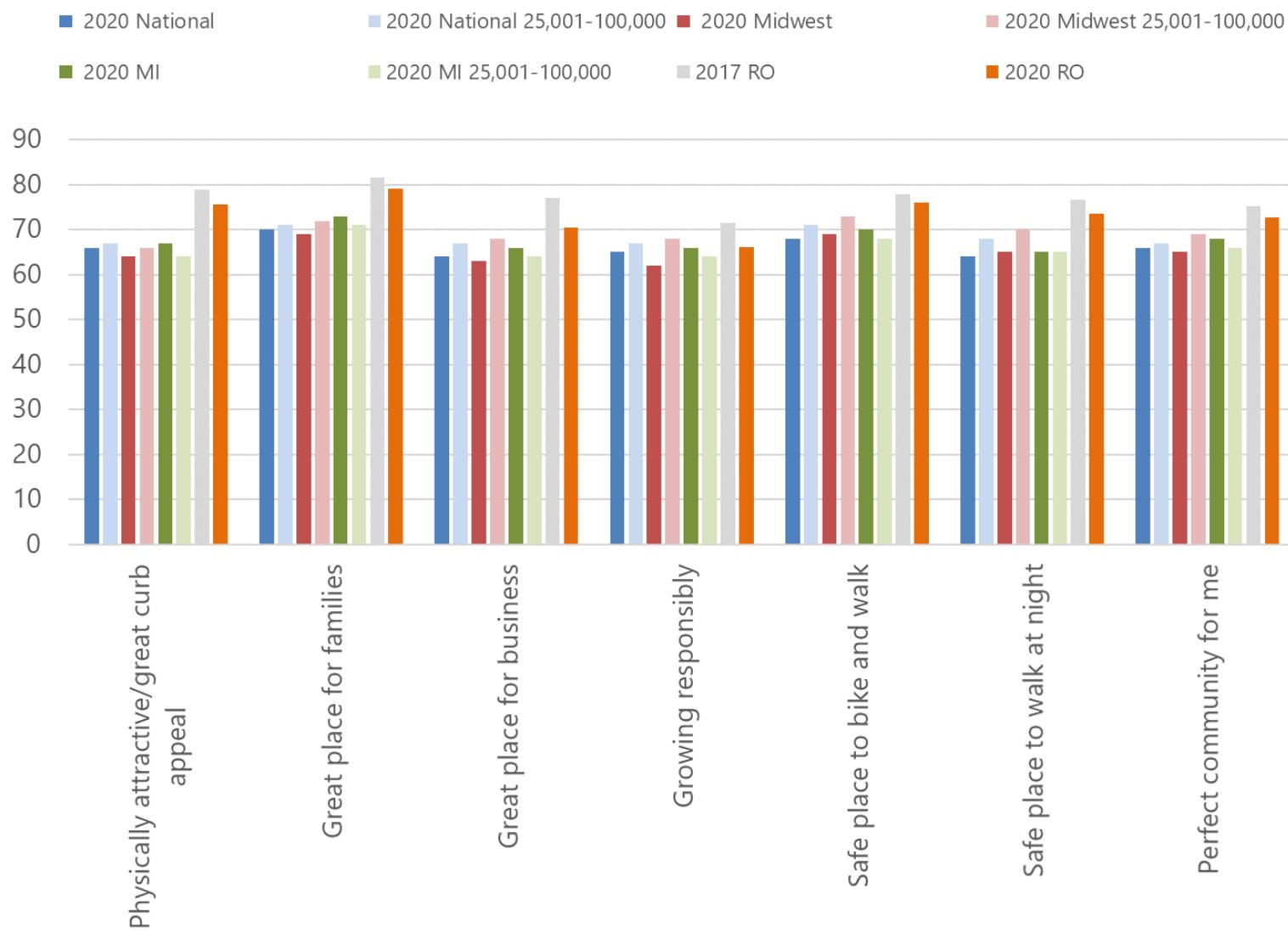
# Community Image to Benchmarks

(High score = 100)



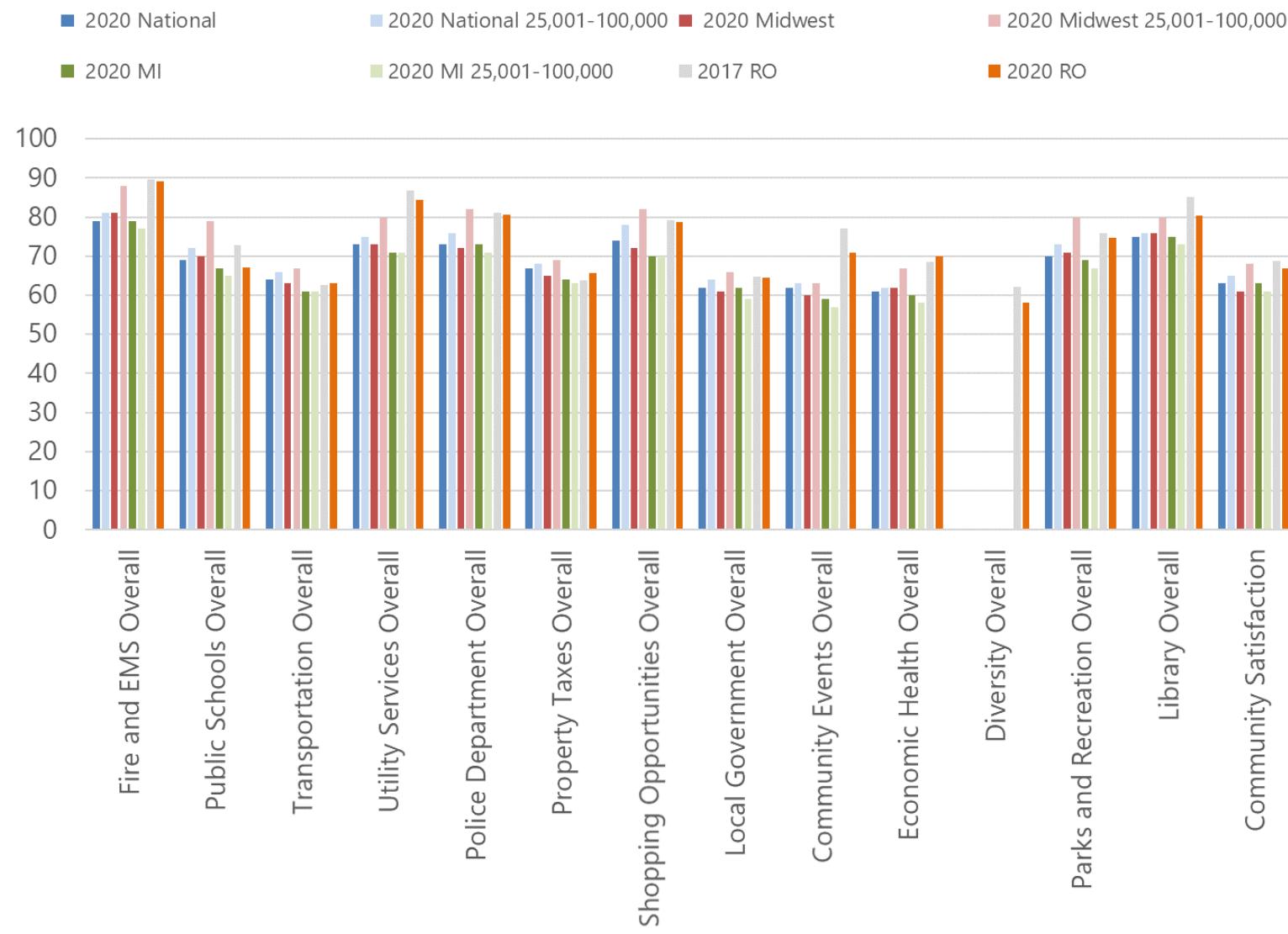
# Community Image to Benchmarks

(High score = 100)

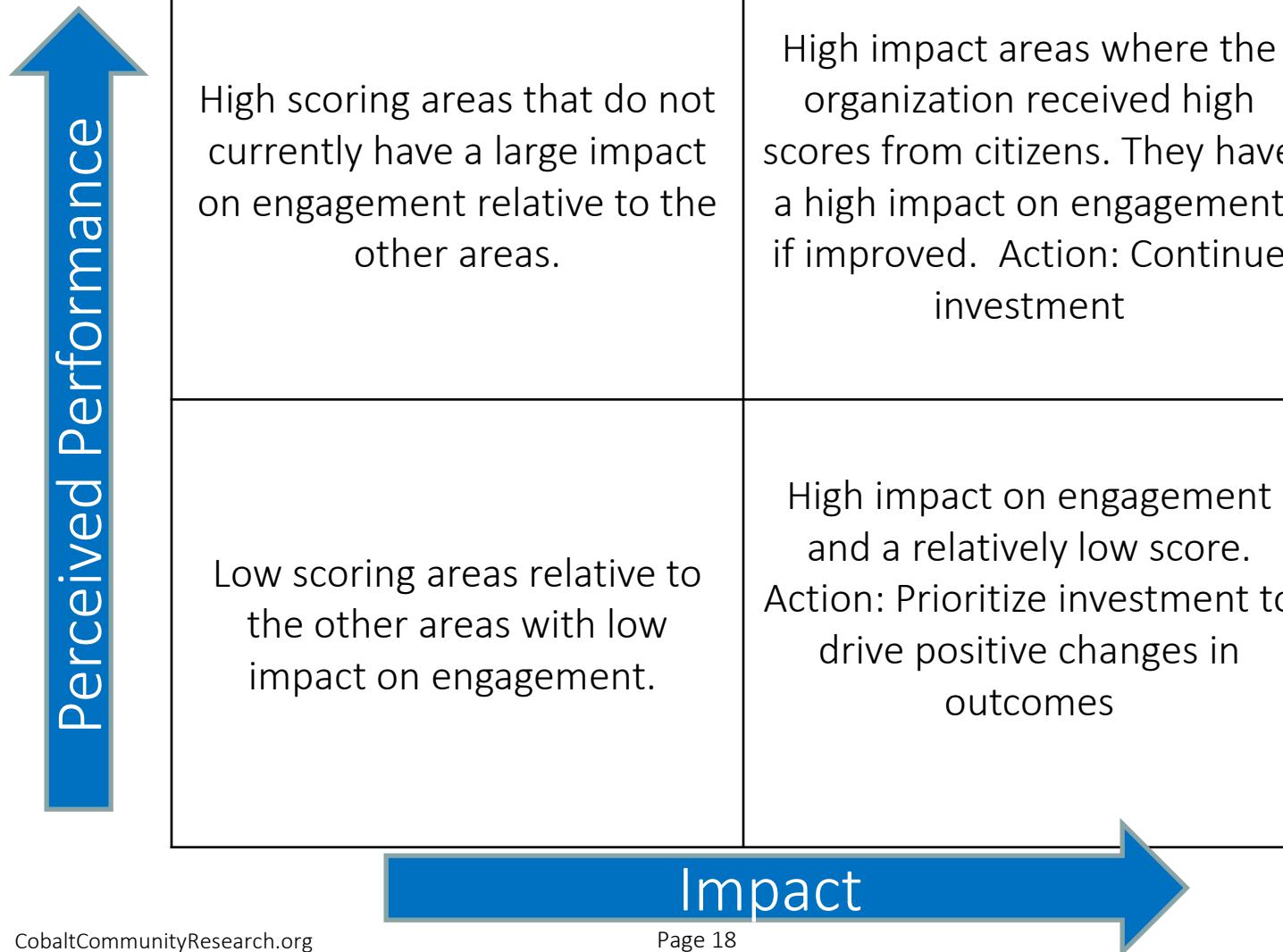


# Community Experience Benchmarks

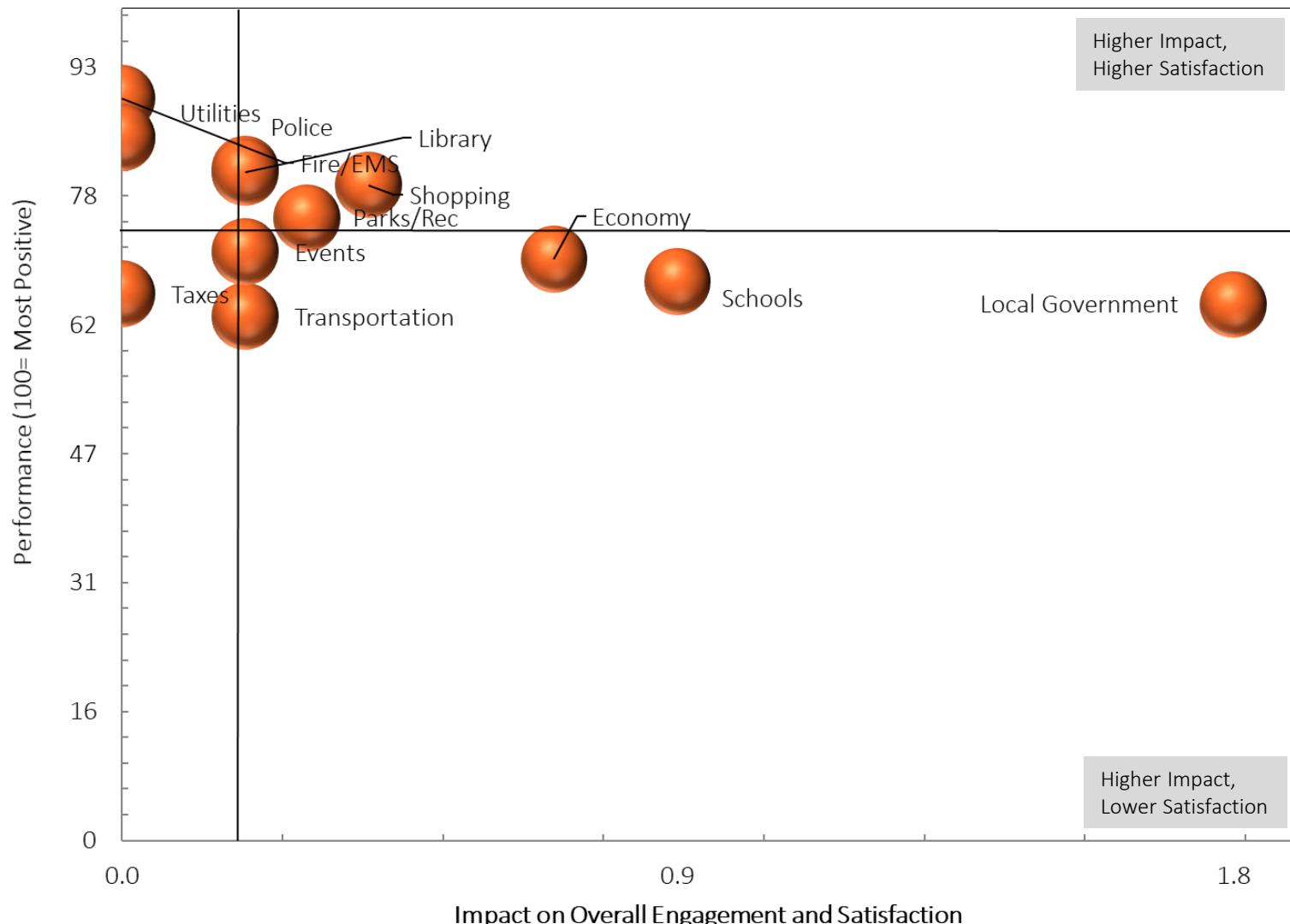
(High score = 100)



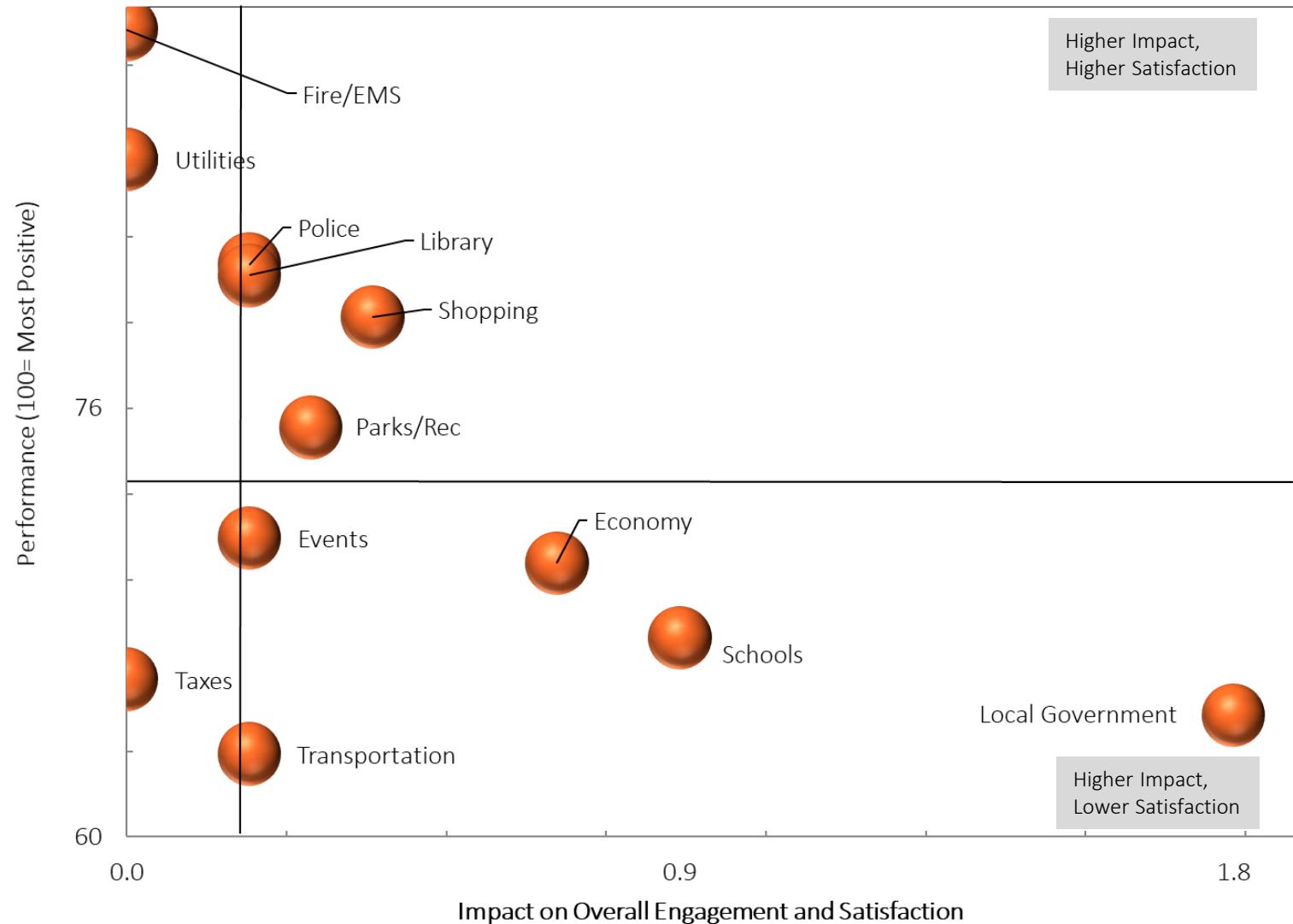
# Understanding the Charts: Community Questions – Long-term Drivers



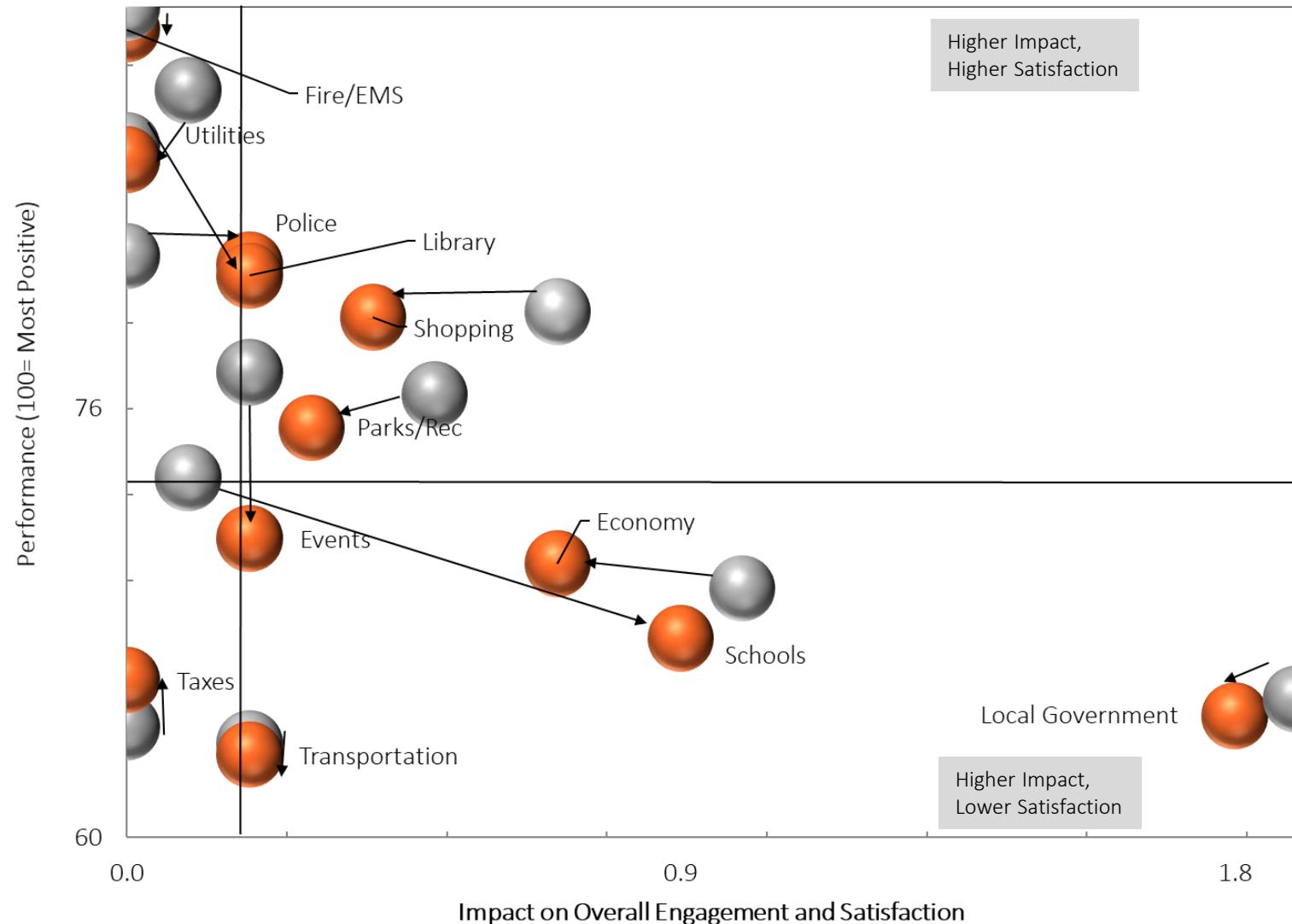
# Drivers of Satisfaction and Behavior: Strategic Priorities



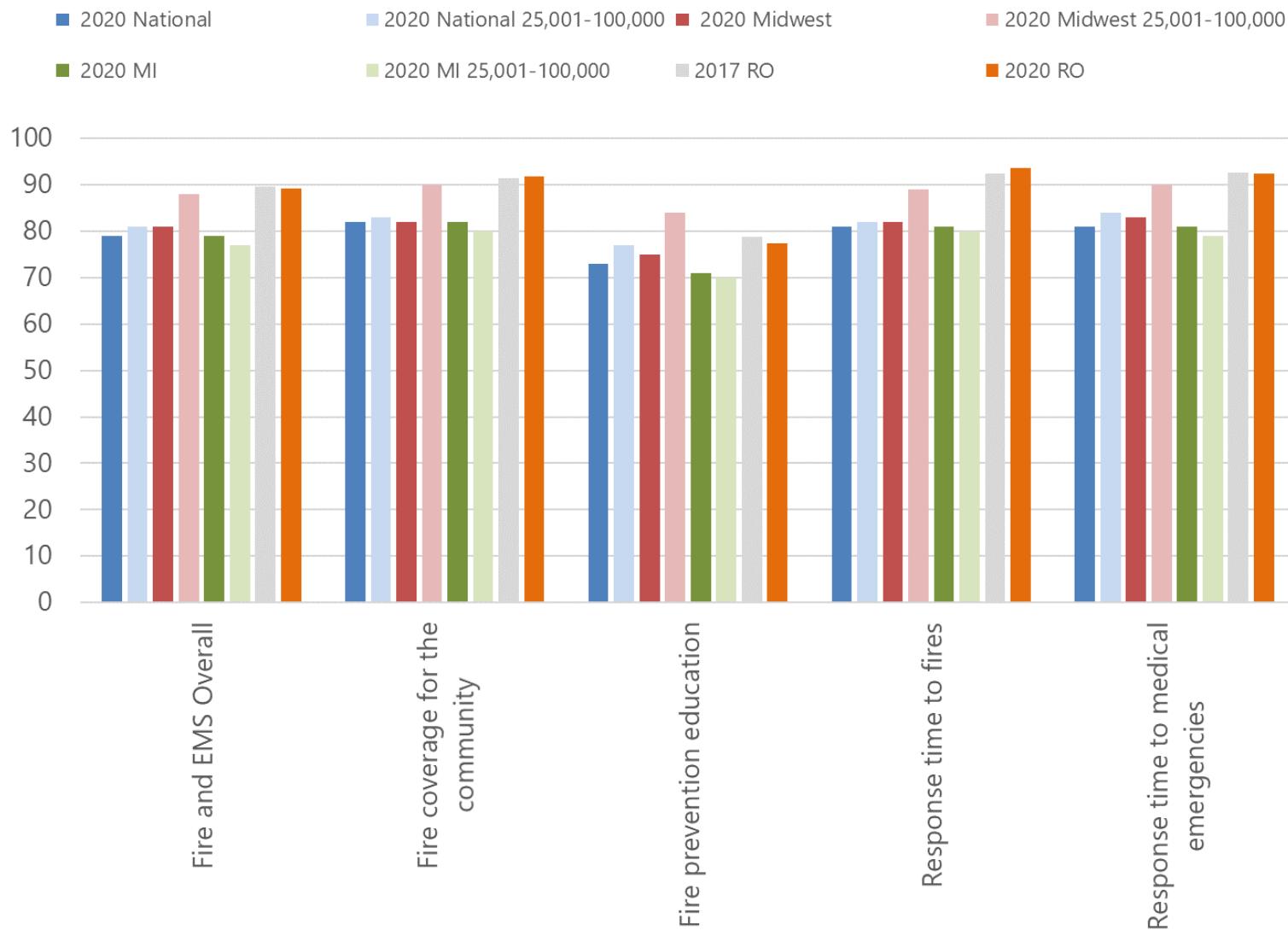
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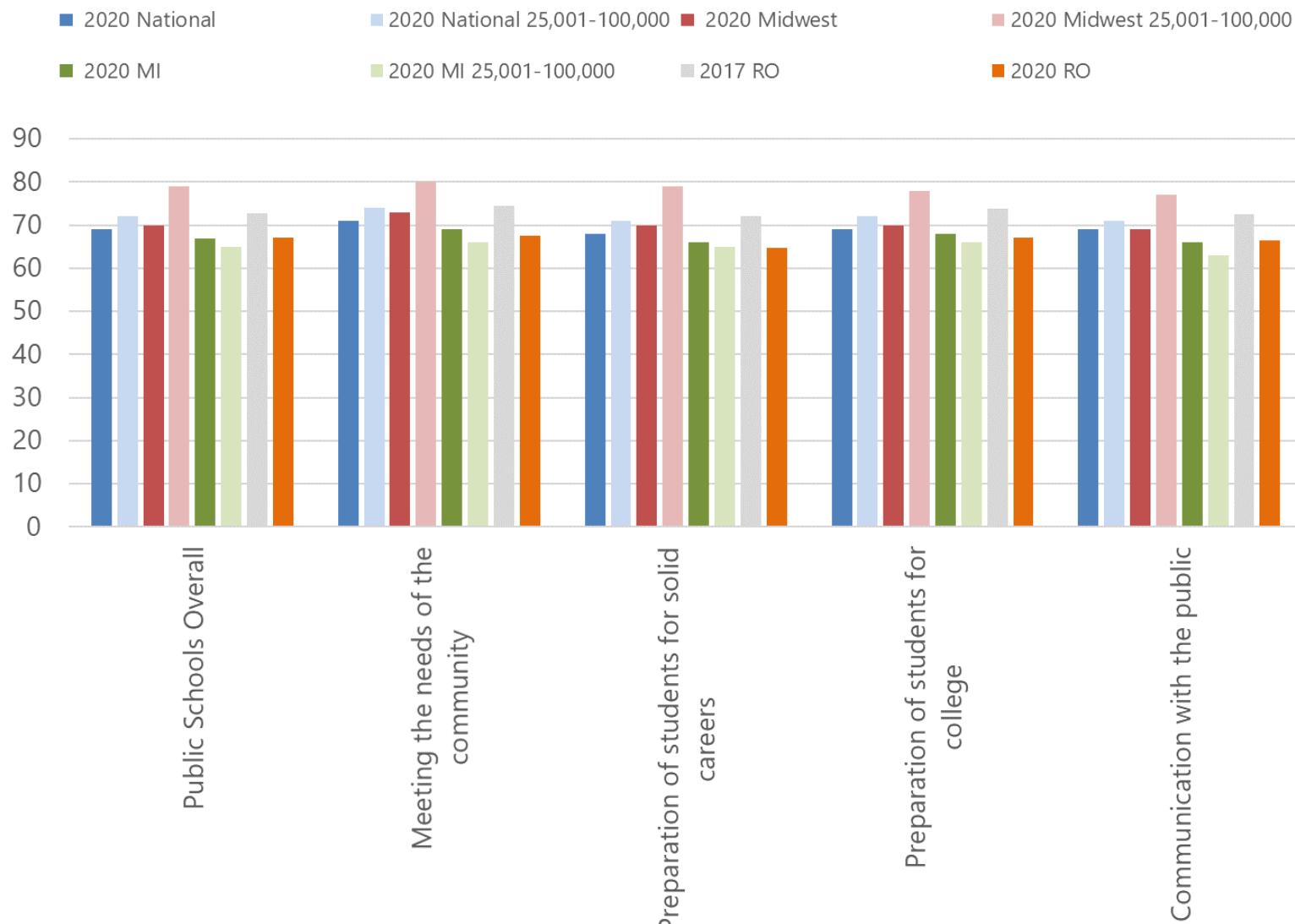
# Drivers of Satisfaction and Behavior: Strategic Priorities – Compared to 2017



# Fire and EMS

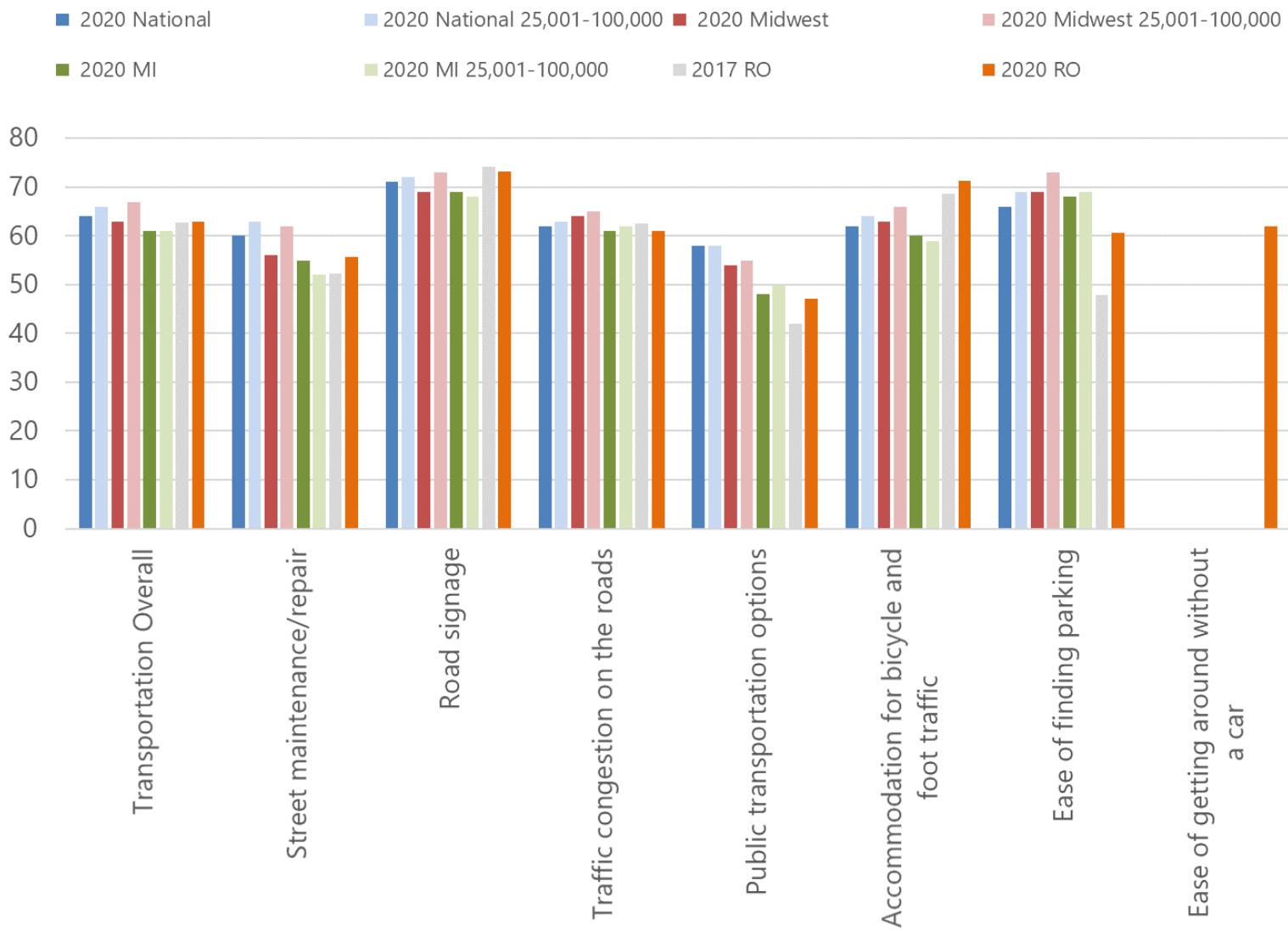


# Public Schools

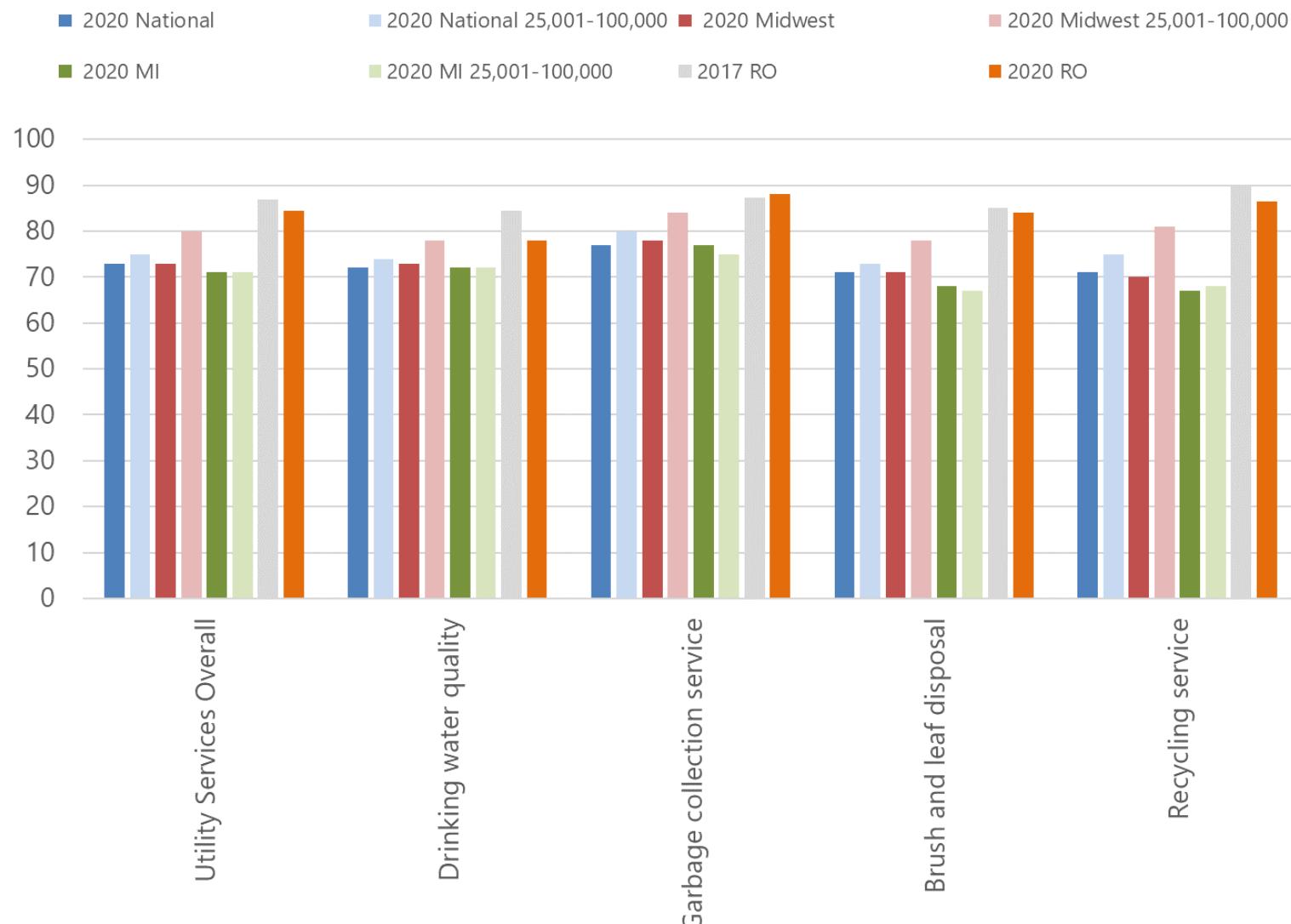


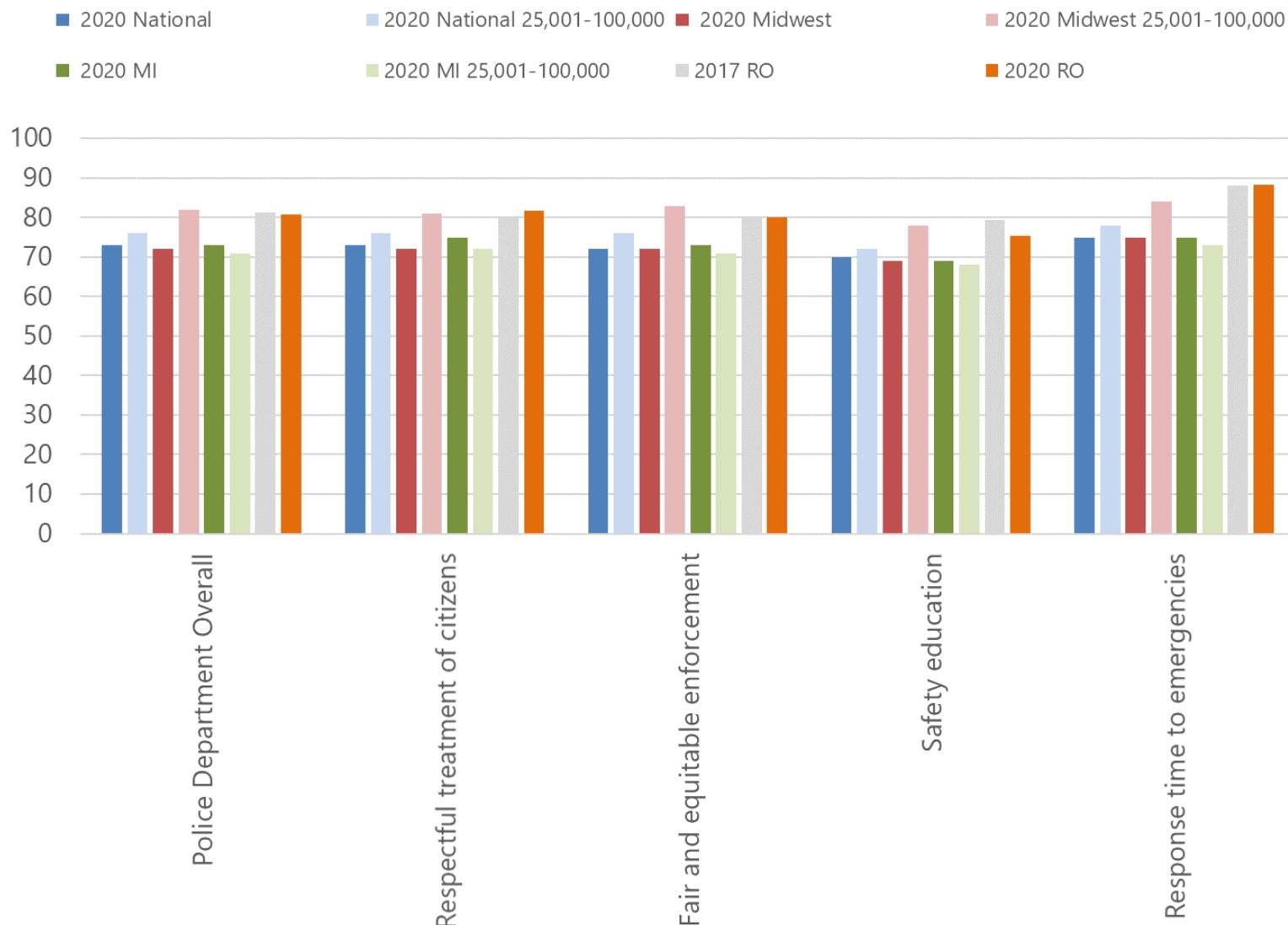
Driver

# Transportation

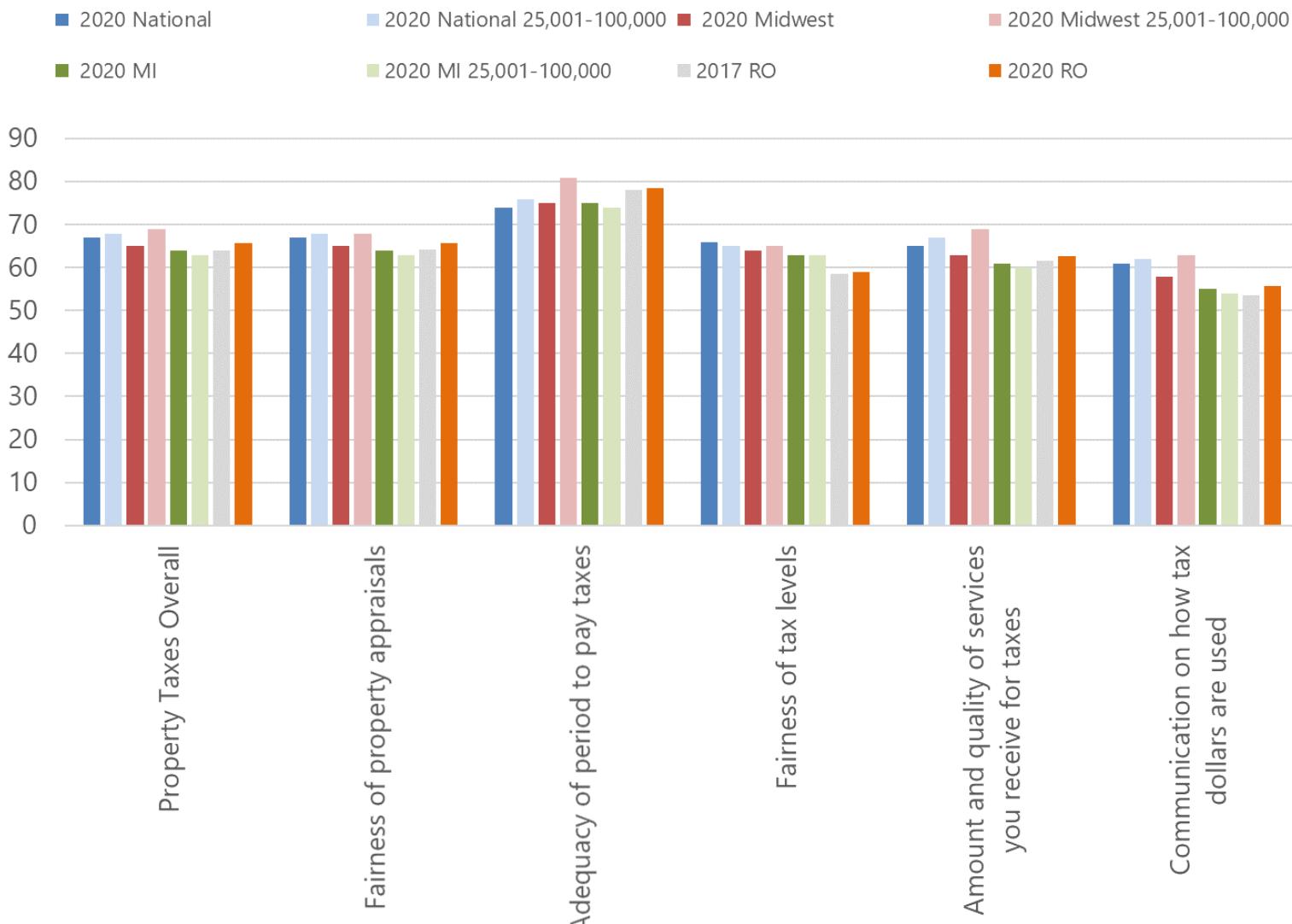


# Utilities

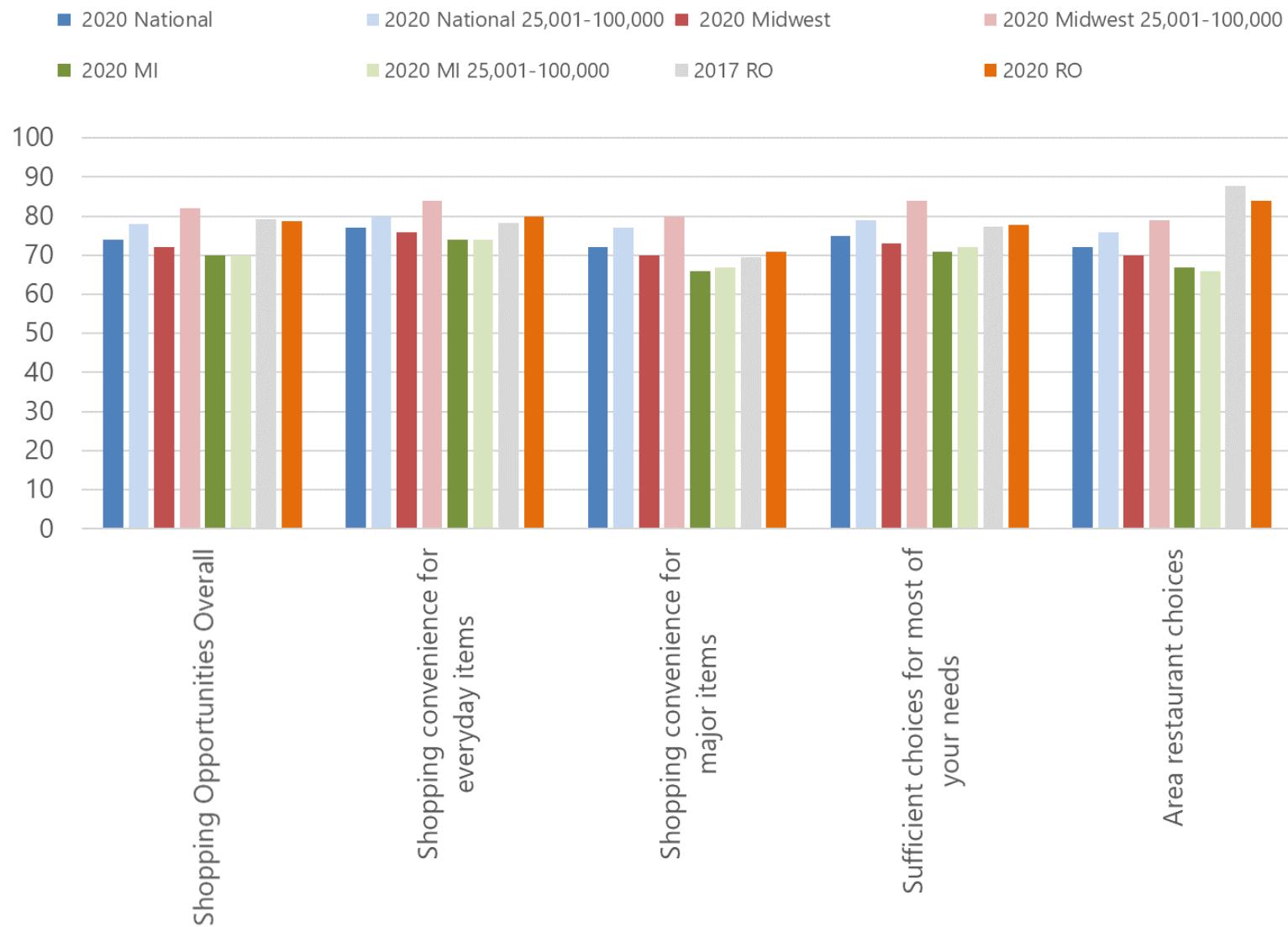




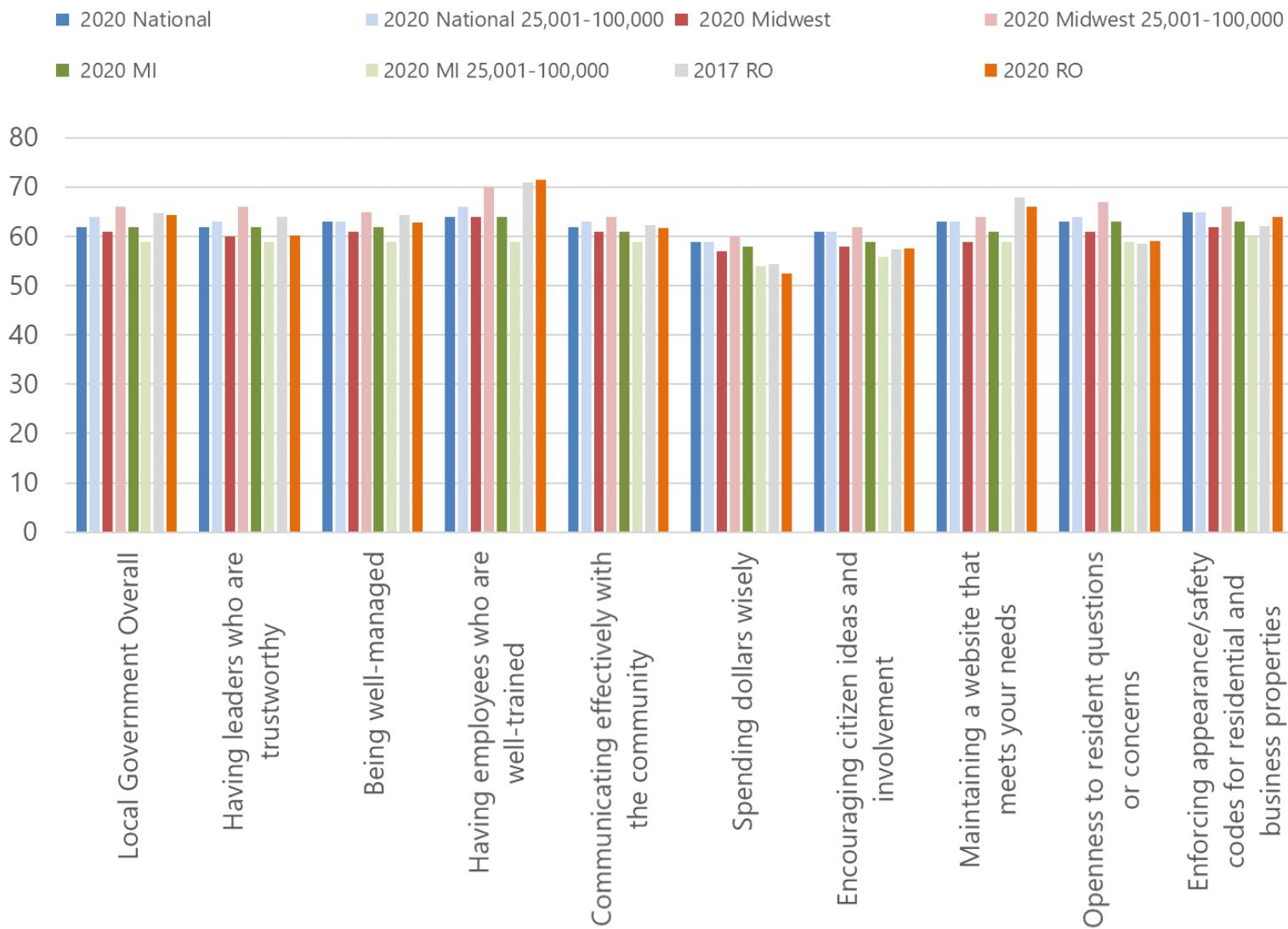
# Taxes



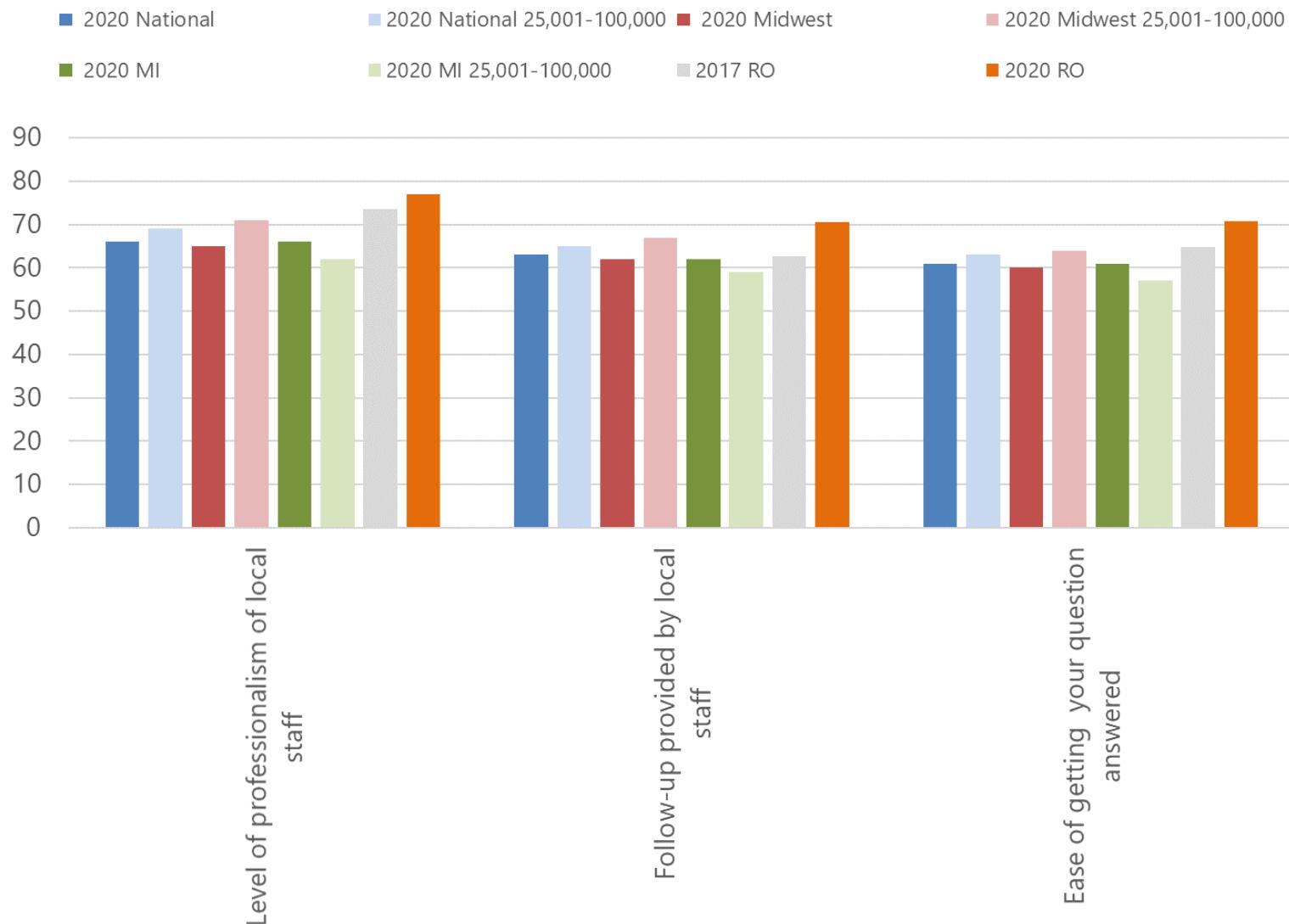
# Shopping and Dining



# Local Government

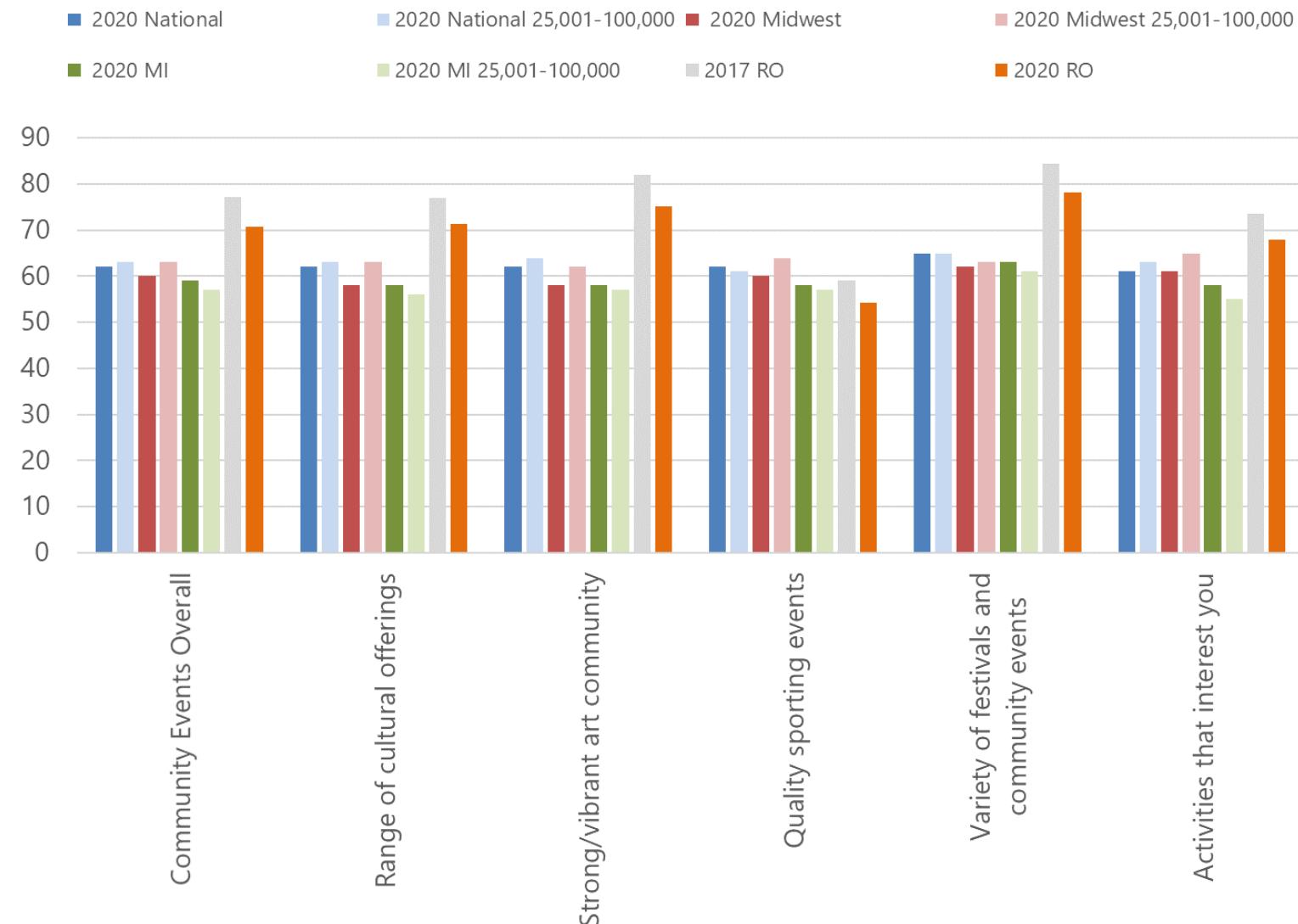


# Customer Service

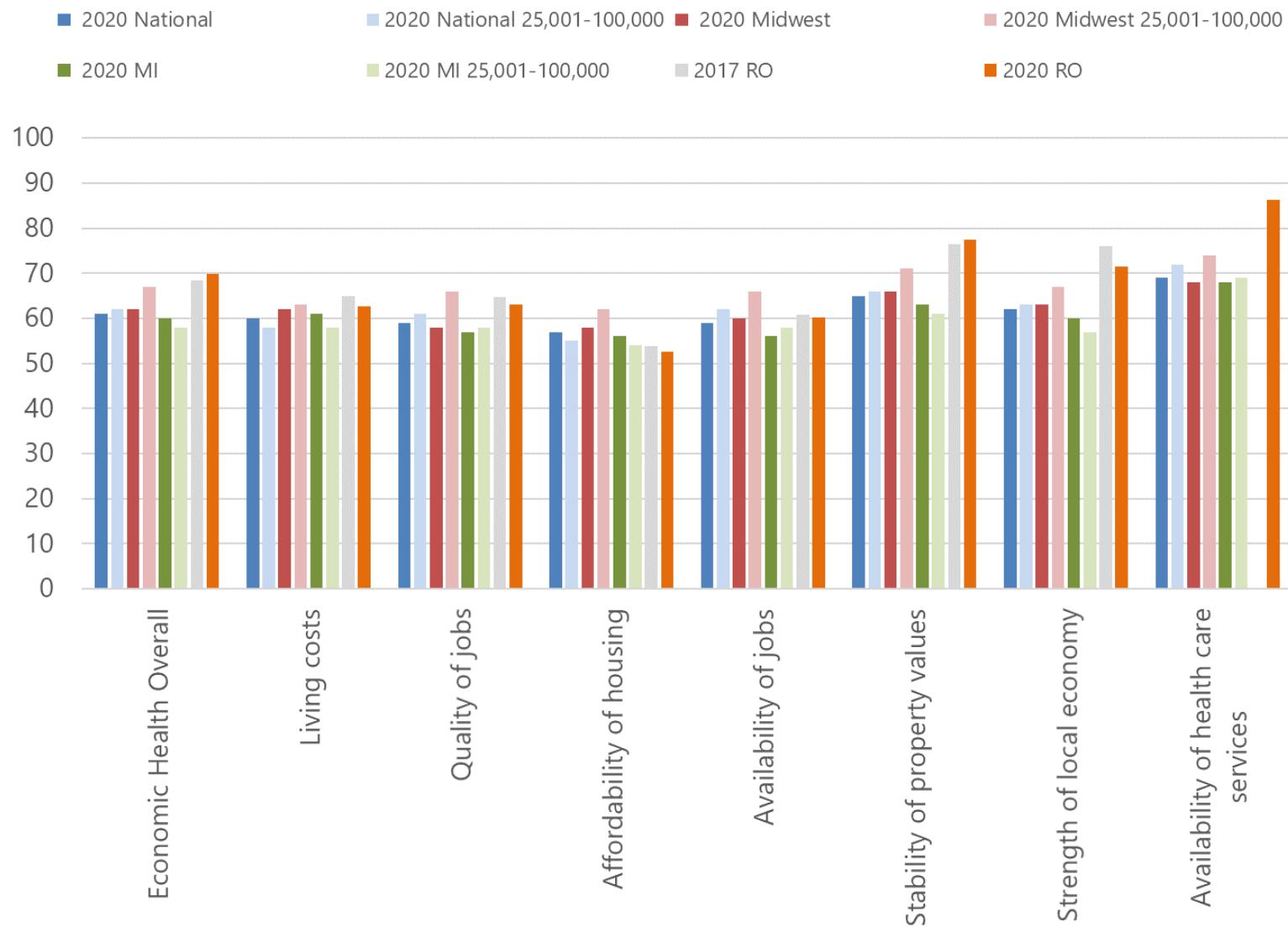


Driver

# Events

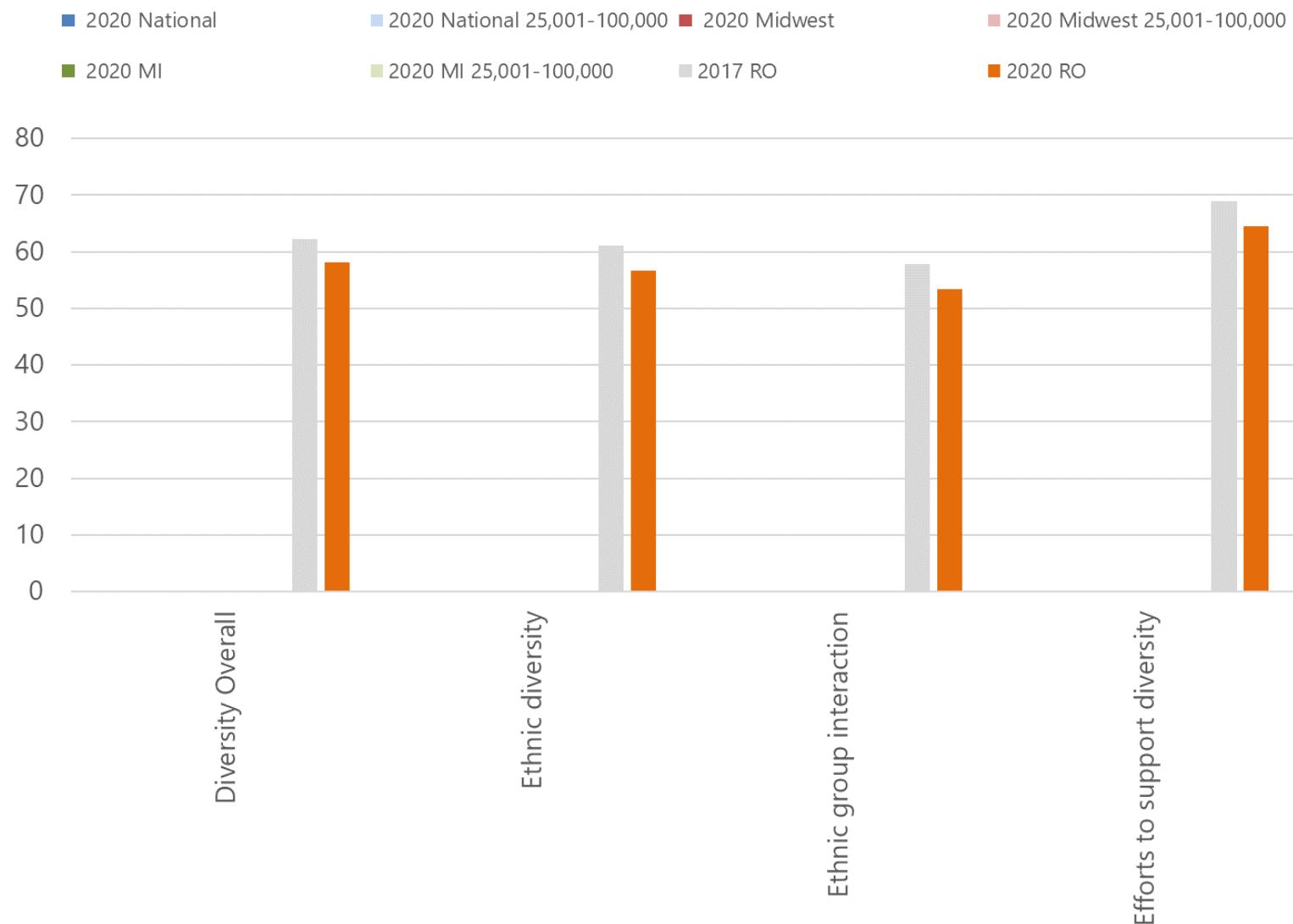


# Economic Health

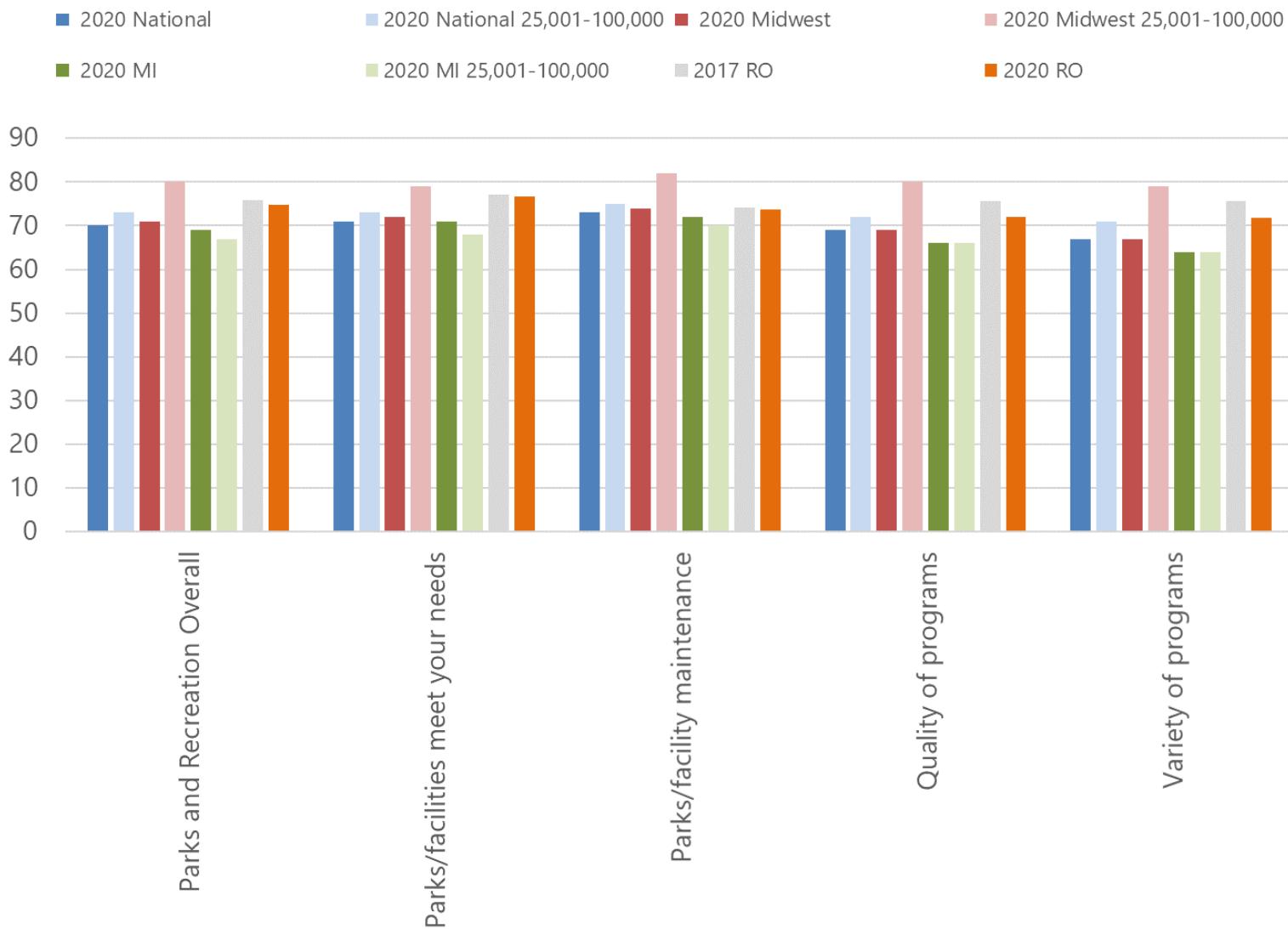


Driver

# Diversity

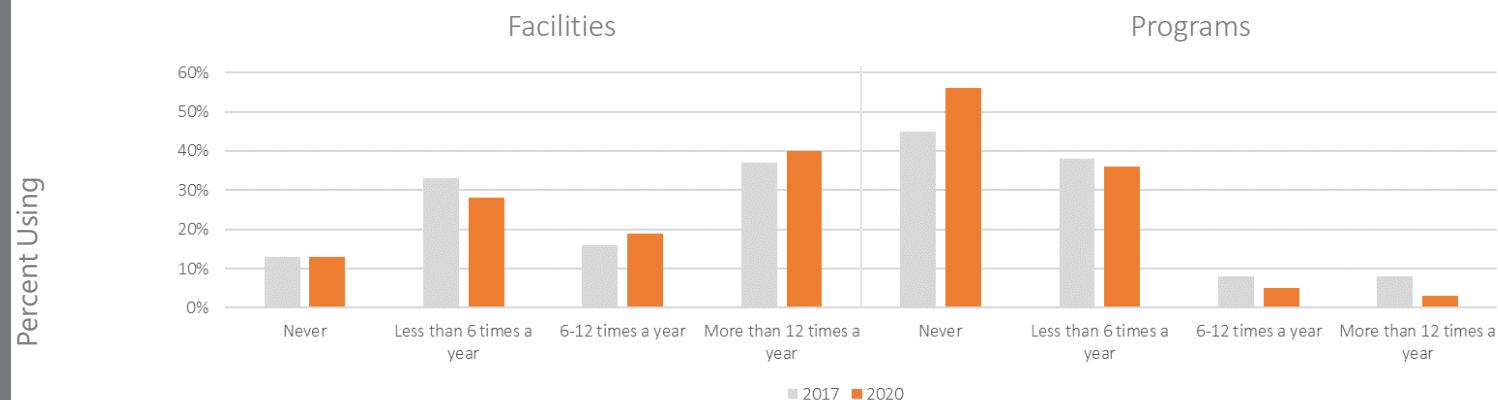
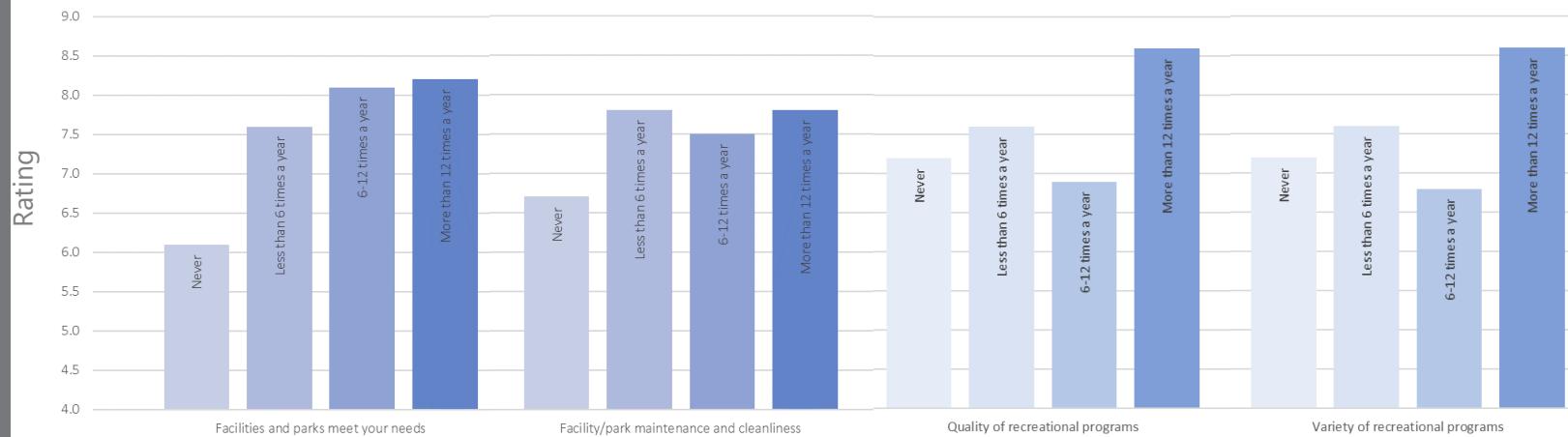


# Parks and Recreation

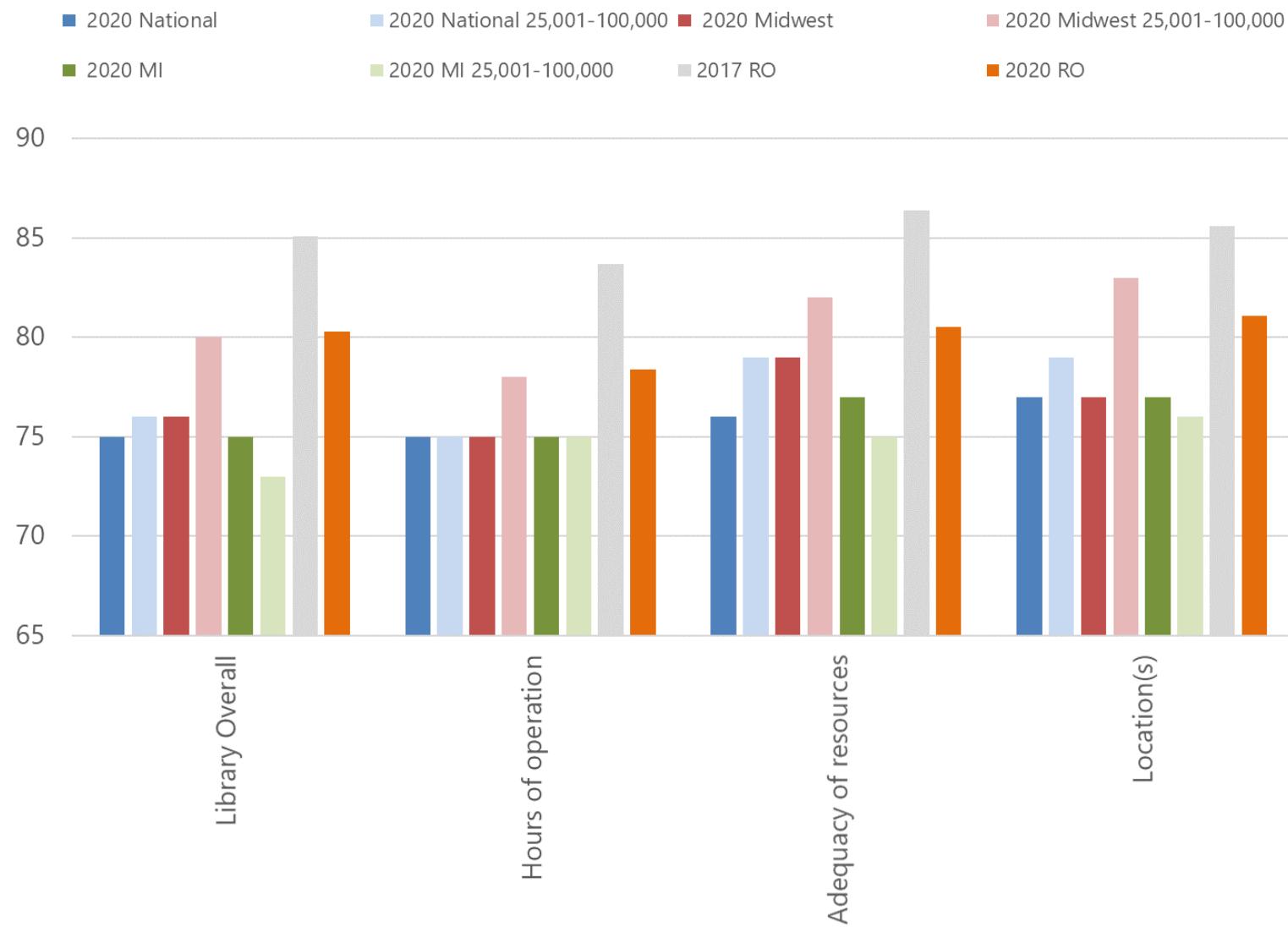


Driver

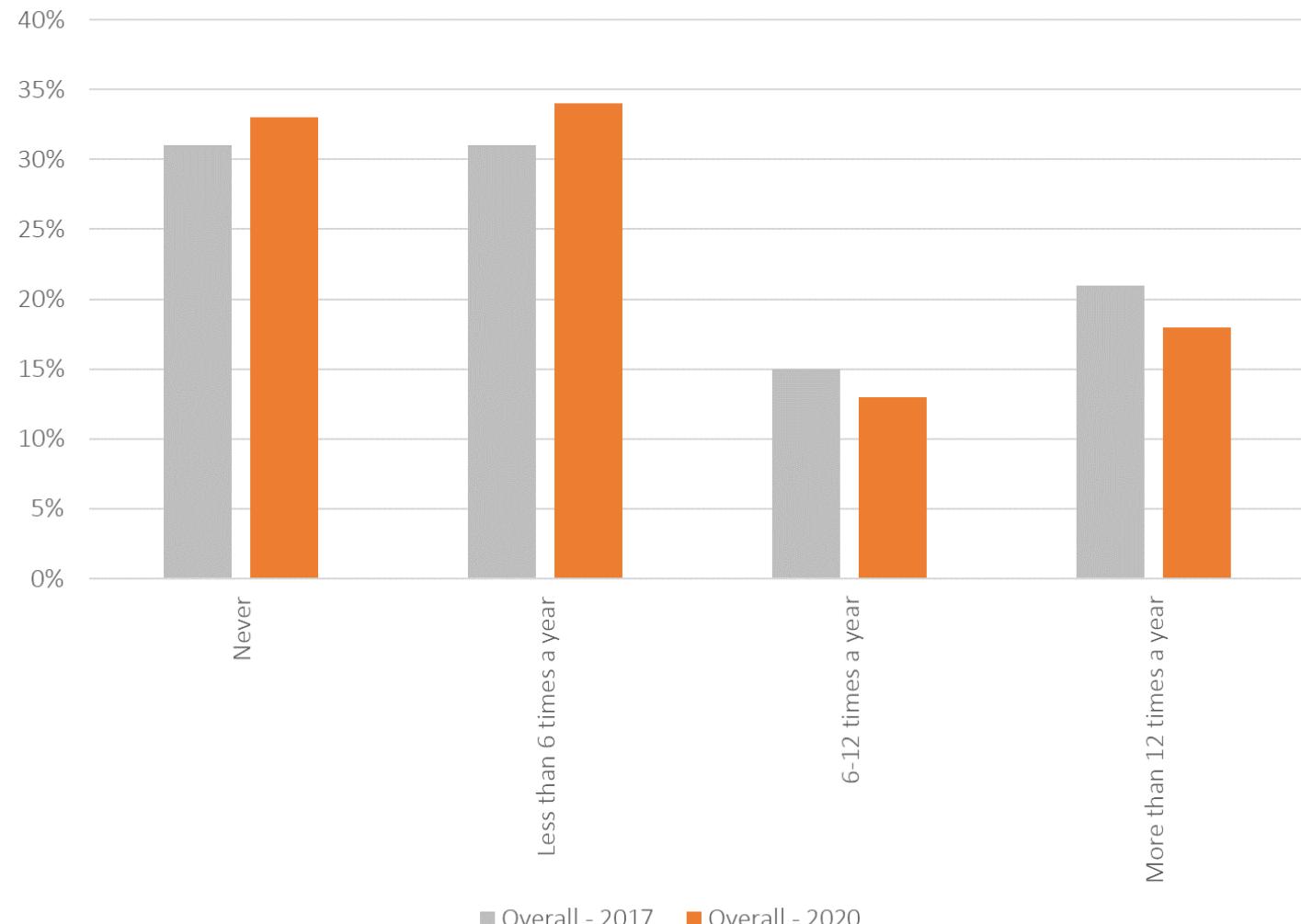
# Parks and Rec Ratings by Use



# Library

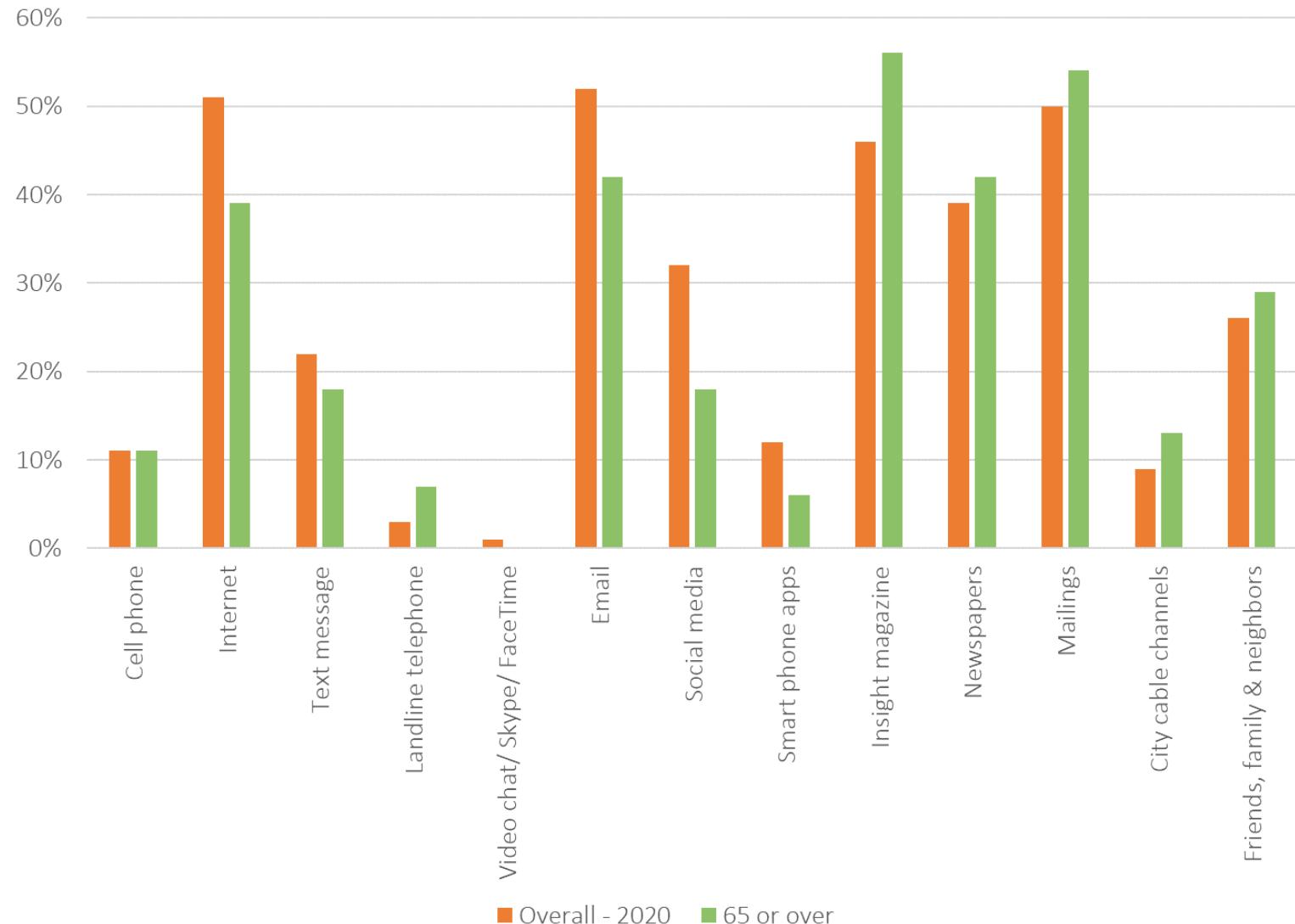


# Library Use



# Communication Preferences

# Preferred Source of Information

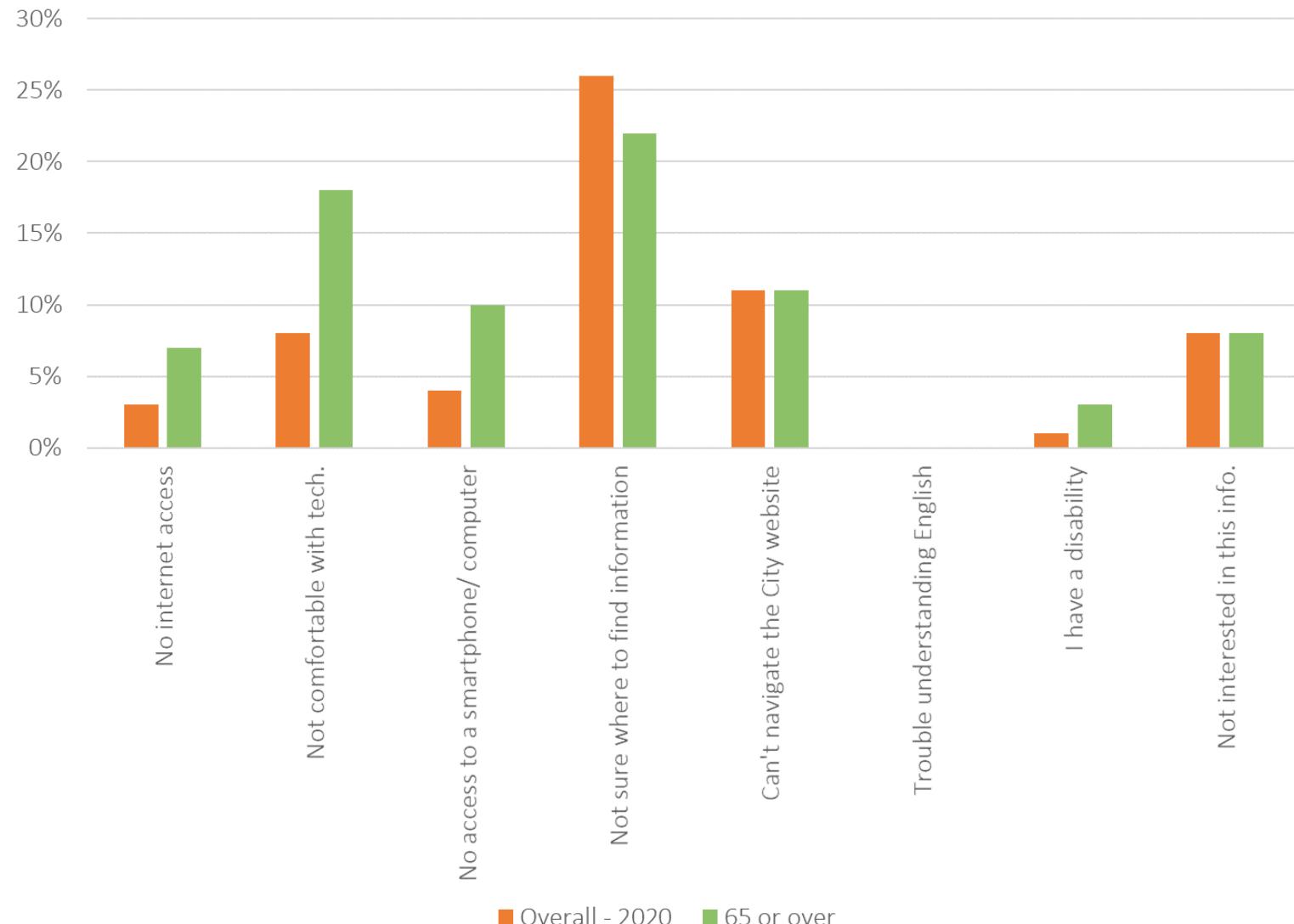


# Preferred Source of Information by Age

2020 Royal Oak, Michigan  
 Distribution Questions  
 Response Count 389

		Information preference for city information												
Age	Overall - 2020	11%	51%	22%	3%	1%	52%	32%	12%	46%	39%	50%	9%	26%
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# Information Barriers



# COVID-19 and Planning

# City Services Used During COVID-19

## Top Themes:

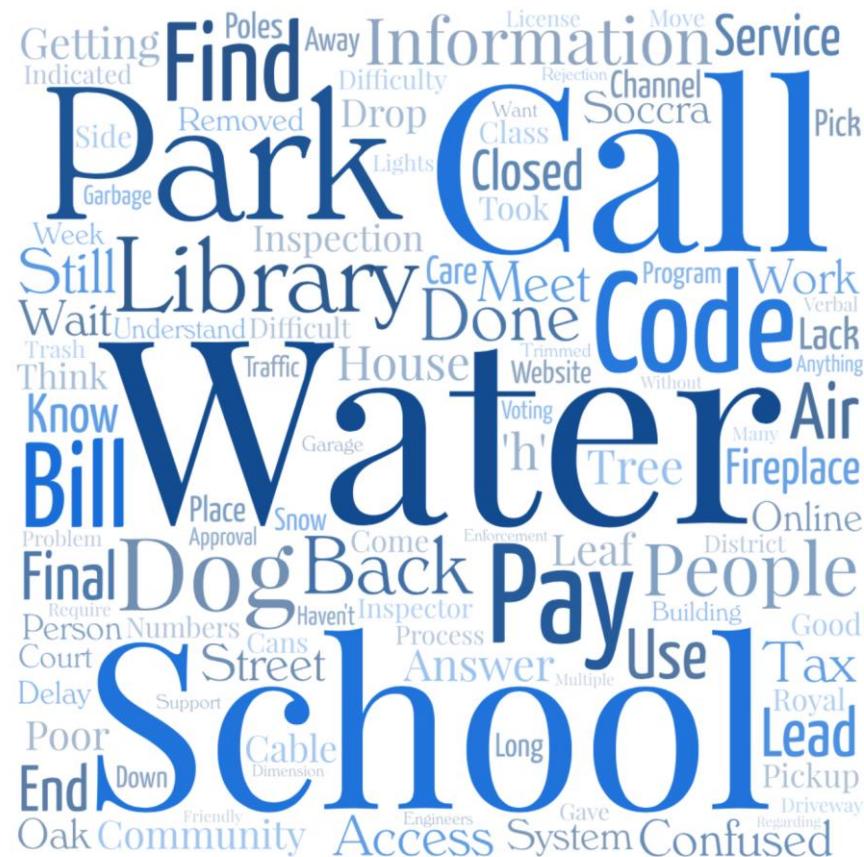
- 1) **Vote** - many individuals utilized the absentee ballot pickup and drop box.
  - 2) **Drop** - the drop box for many services such as: dog registration, permit applications, and bill drop off.
  - 3) **Library** - The online/pick-up services of the library were noted



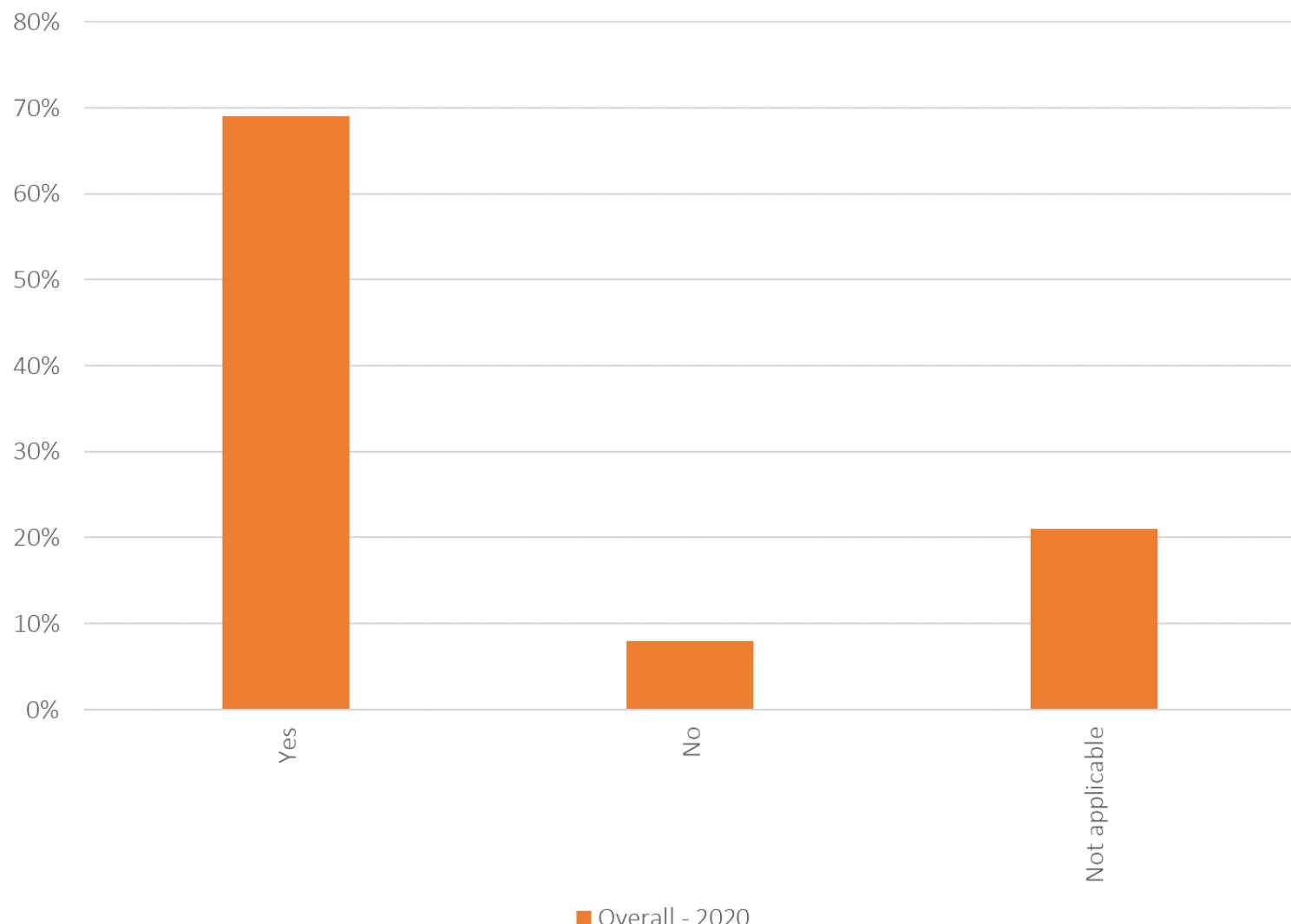
# City Service Difficulty

## Top Themes:

- 1) **Water** - Residents noted water quality/lead; some confusion with online bill pay.
  - 2) **Call** – Resident calls were not returned.
  - 3) **School** - Individuals were upset about no in-person schooling.



# Did You Feel Safe Using City Parks



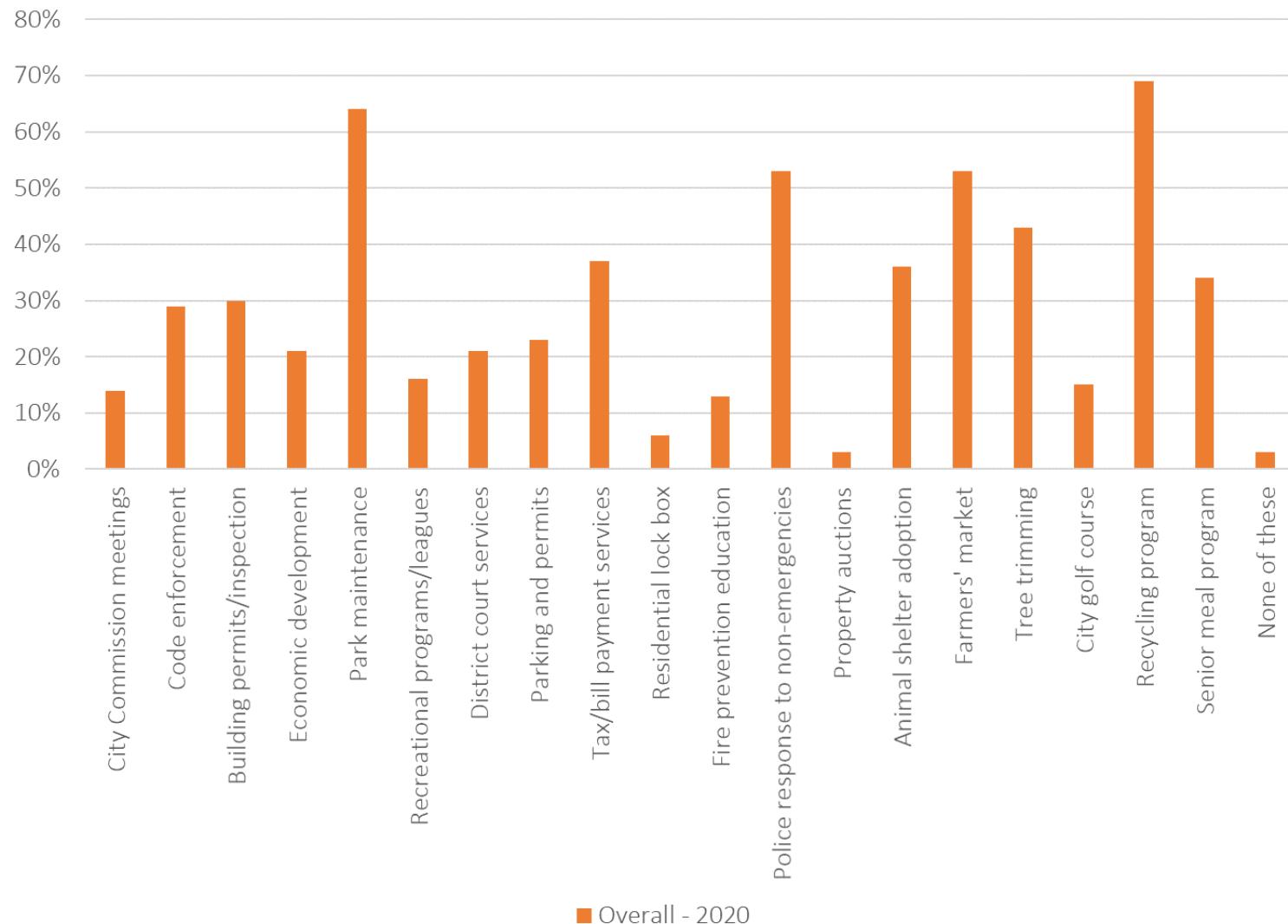
# Recommendations to Improve Experience

## Top Themes:

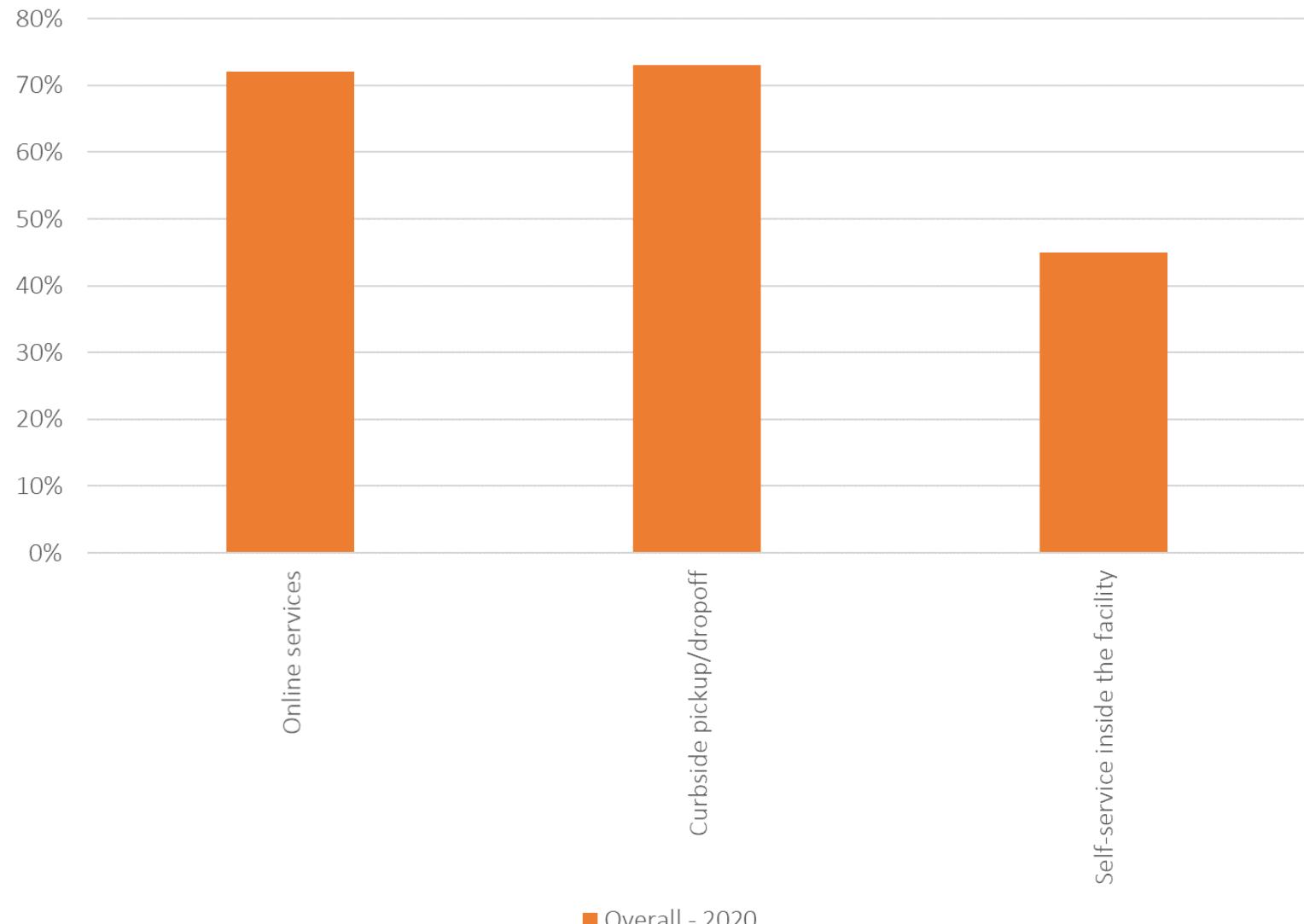
- 1) **Open** - Community members would love to see more information on what is open and what is closed; would like to see the senior center, library, and other City facilities open.
  - 2) **Park** - People are looking for parks to have more access, maintenance.
  - 3) **Service** - Community members noted more outbound information and improved phone service; more service hours.



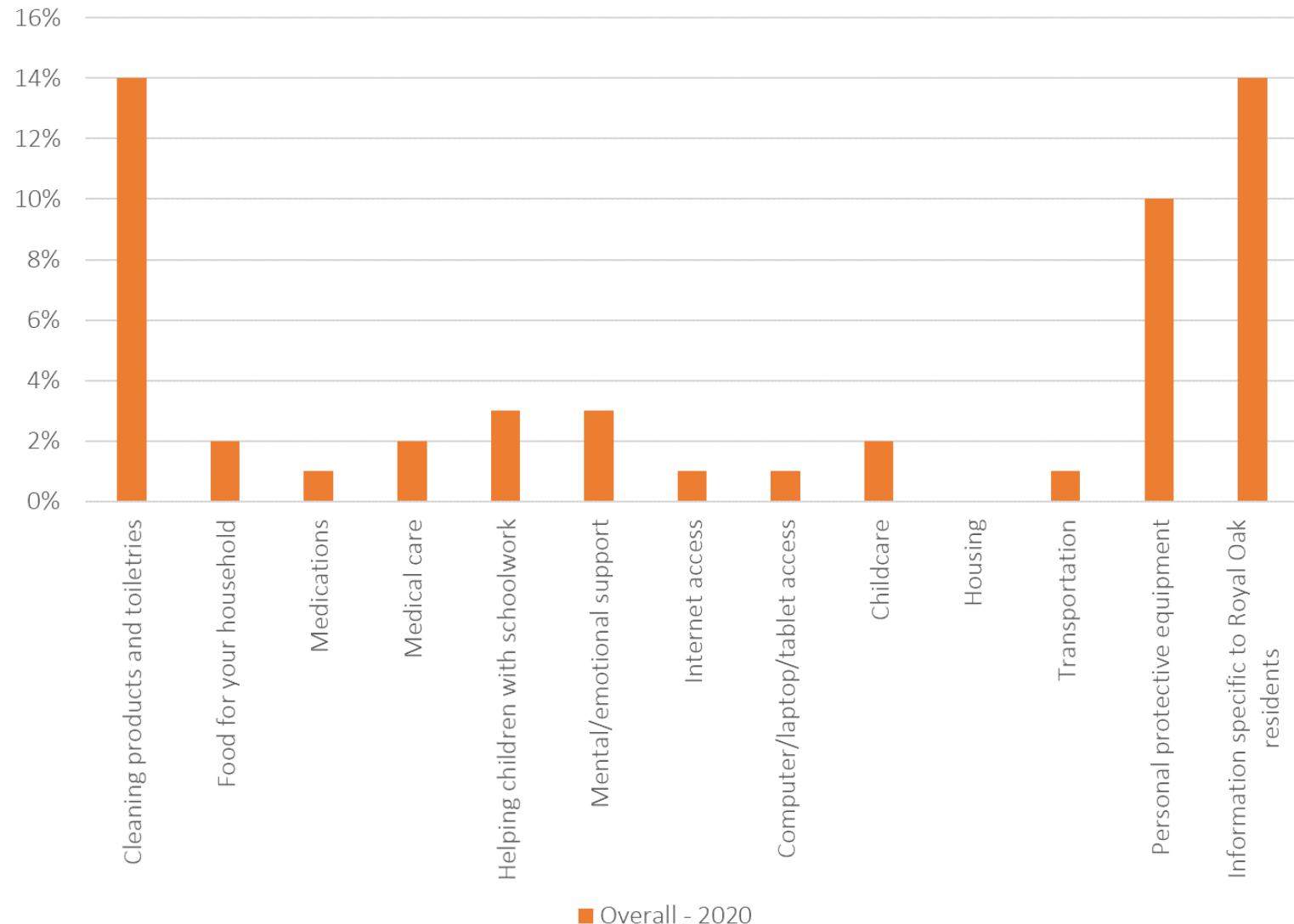
As the city prepares for future potential stay-at-home orders, which city services do you consider to be critical for you, your household, or your business?



# Preferred Alternate Delivery Mode



# What Were You Unable to Access?



# Implementing Results

# Perception v Reality: Minimize Distortion or Fix Real Performance Issues

## Perception gap:

Respondents rated based on an inaccurate idea or understanding. Address with communication strategy to change that perception.

## Real performance issue:

Address with an improvement plan. When performance improves, it becomes a perception gap to address with a communication strategy.



# Strategy is About Action: Improve Performance to Improve Outcomes

The diagram at the right provides a framework for following up on this survey.

- The first step (measurement) is complete. This measurement helps prioritize resources and create a baseline against which progress can be measured.
- The second step is to use internal teams to further analyze the results and form ideas about why respondents answered as they did and potential actions in response.
- The third step is to validate ideas and potential actions through conversations with residents and line staff – do the ideas and actions make sense. Focus groups, short special-topic surveys and benchmarking are helpful.
- The fourth step is to provide staff with the skills and tools to effectively implement the actions.
- The fifth step is to execute the actions.
- The final step is to re-measure to ensure progress was made and track changes in resident needs.

