

*National Association of REALTORS®*

*National Community and Transportation  
Preferences Survey*

*May 4-16, 2026*

# National Community and Transportation Preferences Survey Methodology



2000 Adults, 18 years or older in  
50 largest Metropolitan Statistical  
Areas in the U.S.



Interviews  
Conducted  
May 4-16, 2026

The sample was drawn from a third-party vendor file. The overall margin of error is +/-2.2%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding. Quotas and weights were set using ACS (Census) data. See detailed survey methodology at conclusion of report.

## Demographics: 50 Largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas

### Age

18-29: 20%  
30-39: 18%  
40-49: 16%  
50-64: 24%  
65+: 21%

### Gender



Women  
51%



Men  
49%

### Owner/Renter

Homeowner: 50%  
Renter: 36%  
Lives w/Friends/Family: 15%

### Income

Less than \$15K: 9%  
\$15K to \$25K: 24%  
\$25K to \$35K: 16%  
\$35K to \$50K: 14%  
\$50K to \$75K: 12%  
\$75K to \$100K: 8%  
\$100K to \$150K: 6%  
More than \$150K: 6%

### Education

Non-College Graduates: 64%  
4 Yr. College Degree: 22%  
Post-Graduate Degree: 14%

### Residence Type

City - Downtown: 10%  
City - Residential: 24%  
Suburban - Mix of house types: 32%  
Suburban - Houses only: 23%  
Small town: 6%  
Rural area: 6%

## *Executive Summary*

## Quality of Life

- **82% are satisfied** with their community quality of life (32% very satisfied), a level essentially unchanged since NAR's first Community and Transportation Preference survey in 2017.
- **Satisfaction skews wealthier and older:** homeowners (87%), post-graduates (85%), and the Baby Boom generation (40% very satisfied) rank quality of life highest, while Gen Z is least likely to be "very satisfied."
- **Walkability correlates with happiness:** residents who live in highly walkable neighborhoods are far more likely to be very satisfied with their quality of life (46% vs. 25% where walkability is absent).

## What Matters in Choosing Where to Live

- **Walkability tops the "important" list when deciding where to live:** the leading "very important" attributes are sidewalks (57%), children being able to safely walk or bike to school (50%), and an easy walk to shops and parks (42%).
- **Preferences vary by demographic:** easy access, short commutes, and public transit matter more to Generation Z, Millennials and younger (under age 50) people of color. Younger People of Color also disproportionately place high importance on being in a community where children can safely walk or bike to school.
- **Perceived cost:** 67% believe walkable neighborhoods are more expensive than car-dependent ones.
- **Safety ranks first:** When asked to rank order community qualities, low crime is the runaway top choice (70% rank it first or second), with walkability a distant second (32%). Schools, yard size, house size and commute time make up the third tier.

## Community & Housing Type Trade-offs

- **Walkability wins when choice centers on yard size:** Almost six-in-ten (59%) prefer a house with a small yard where it is easy to walk to the places you need to go over a house with a large yard where you have to drive to get to places (41% prefer).
- **Voters split over walkability when choice centers on house type:** A small majority (52%) prefer an apartment or townhouse with an easy walk to shops and restaurants and a shorter commute to work. Nearly as many (48%) would rather have a single family detached home that requires more driving and a longer commute.
  - **Life stage drives preference:** households with no kids and non-homeowners lean walkable and short-commute, while families with young kids and homeowners generally favor detached single-family homes.
- **Support for building different kinds of housing varies :** Small-lot single-family homes draw the most support (63% a good idea), rentals (44%) and condos (40%) the least. Multi-family, attached homes and large lot single family homes are in the middle.

## Travel Behavior & Barriers to Walking

- **People like walking but drive anyway:** 85% like walking, yet 62% drive because they do not have other options. Half like bike riding while personal preference for transit drops to 41%.
- **Rural residents are the most car-dependent:** 76% say they drive because they have no alternative.
- **Barriers are practical, then safety-related:** The top reason that people don't walk more is that destinations are too far (71%). Poor weather (41%), traffic safety (39%), and too few sidewalks (33%) make up the second tier of walking obstacles.
  - Lack of sidewalks and traffic fears are higher in rural areas, small towns, and the South and Southwest, while crime concerns peak among women under 50 and younger people of color.

## Survey Trends

*This is the fifth national survey of the 50 largest MSAs since 2017; results are broadly consistent with 2023 and earlier surveys. The only notable shifts in public opinion occurred in the following areas:*

- **Sidewalks gained importance:** 57% say sidewalks and places to walk are “very important,” up **7 pts** from 2023.
- **Bike access continues to rise:** 60% value nearby bike lanes/paths (**+6 pts since 2017**); 61% value separated paths/trails (**+8 pts since 2017**).
- **Small-yard, walkable communities are more preferred:** 59% choose walkable neighborhoods with shorter commutes over large-yard, car-dependent areas (**+3 pts vs. 2023; +7 pts vs. 2020**).
- **Safety remains central, but walking barriers eased:** Low crime is the top-ranked priority at 47% (**+6 pts vs. 2023**), while crime-related walking concerns fell from 38% to 26%.

## Key findings to make the case for walkable, Smart Growth communities:

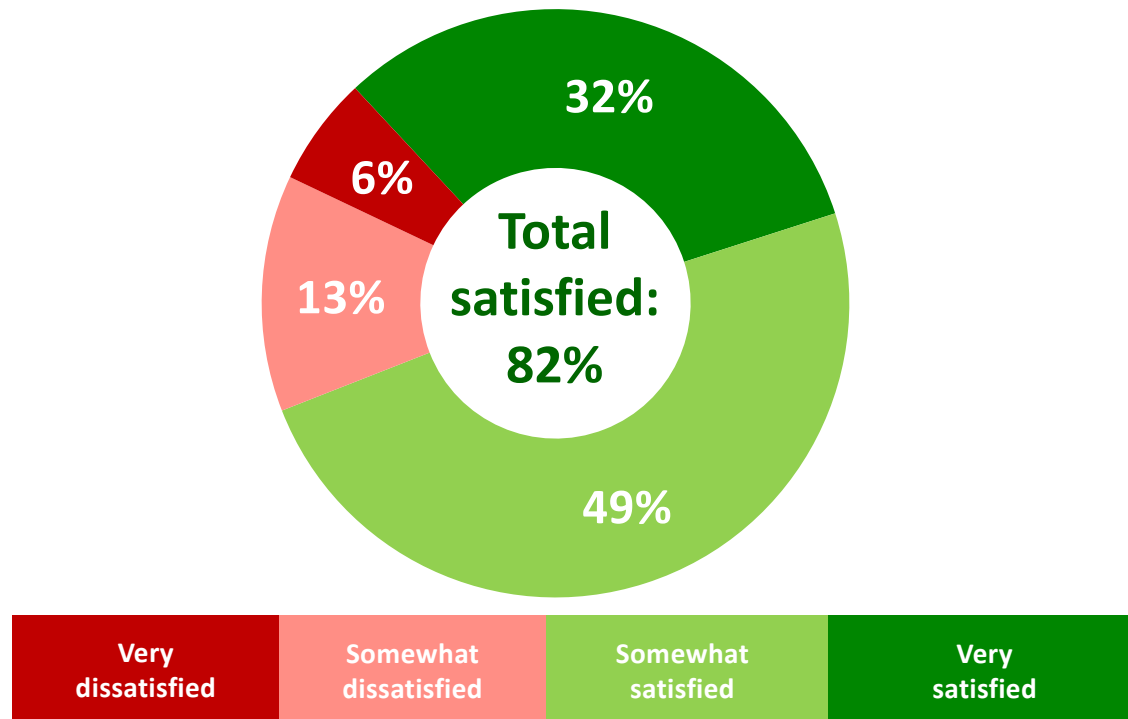
- **Walkability is a top-three priority when choosing where to live.** The top three “very important” community attributes all involve walkability – sidewalks, being within an easy walk of shops and parks, and being within an easy walk of other places.
- **Americans will pay a premium for walkability.** Nearly two-thirds (64%) are willing to spend more to live in a community where they can easily walk to parks, shops, and restaurants.
- **A clear majority chooses walkability over a larger yard.** Given the head-to-head choice, 59% prefer a home with a small yard and an easy walk to amenities over a home with a large yard that requires driving (a net +18 toward walkability).
- **People want to walk – but they don’t have the option.** 85% say they like walking but 62% say they drive because they don’t have other options. The number one barrier to walking more (71%) is that destinations are simply too far away.
- **Smart Growth aligns with the next generation of homebuyers.** Renters, single adults, college graduates, and adults aged 18 to 34 – the demographics shaping tomorrow’s housing demand - all disproportionately prefer walkable communities
- **Walkable communities deliver a higher quality of life.** Living in a highly walkable community correlates with higher quality of life – almost half of residents of highly walkable communities say they are *very* satisfied with their quality of life.

*Satisfaction With Quality of Life;  
Presence of Easy Access Options in Current Living Environment*

## Strong Majority Satisfied With Their Quality Of Life

*Just under one-third are very satisfied*

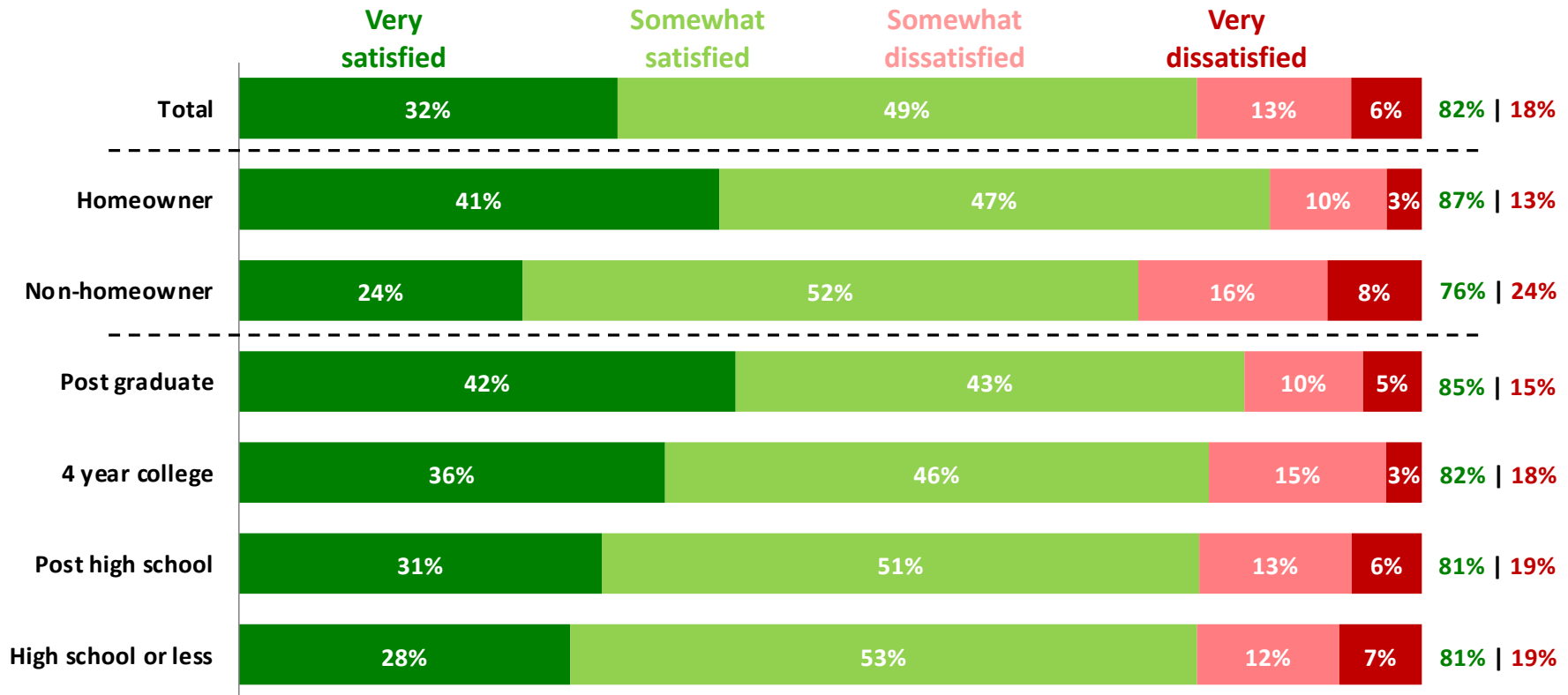
Satisfaction with Quality of Life



Q.2 The first question is about the quality of life in your community. How satisfied would you say you are with the quality of life in your community?

# Homeowners and Post-Graduates Most Bullish on Quality of Life

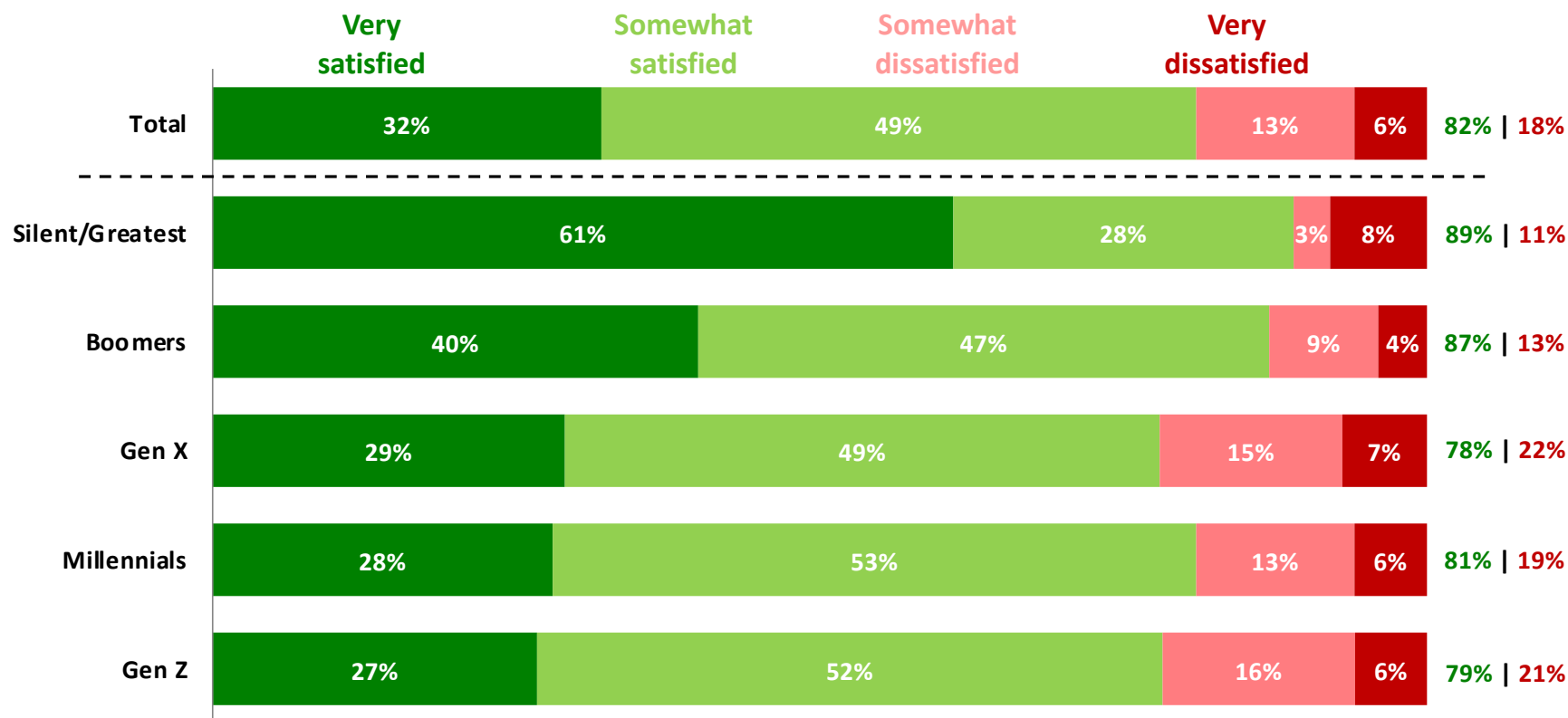
## Most Likely To Be Satisfied With Quality Of Life



Q.2 The first question is about the quality of life in your community. How satisfied would you say you are with the quality of life in your community?

## Silent Generation and Baby Boomers Most Satisfied With Quality of Life; Gen Z Least Likely to be “*Very Satisfied*”

### Most Likely To Be Satisfied With Quality Of Life

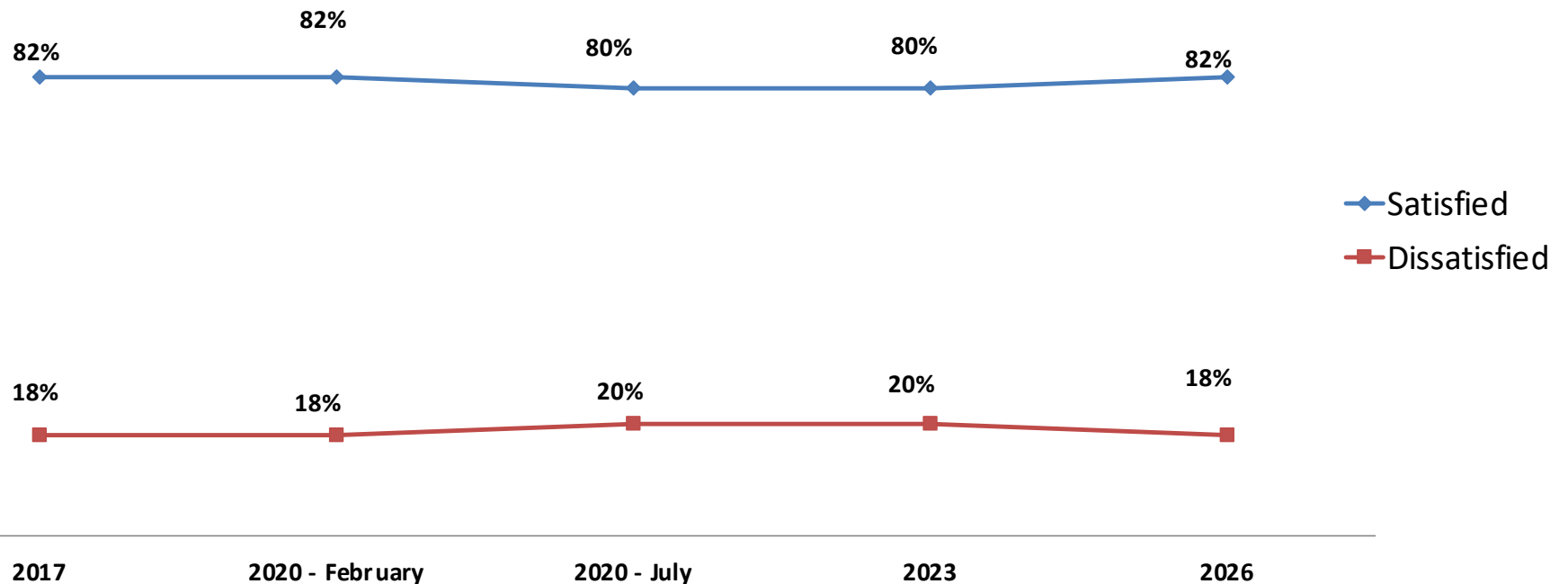


Q.2 The first question is about the quality of life in your community. How satisfied would you say you are with the quality of life in your community?

# Overall Satisfaction With Quality of Life Remains Steady

*Community satisfaction levels mostly unchanged since 2017*

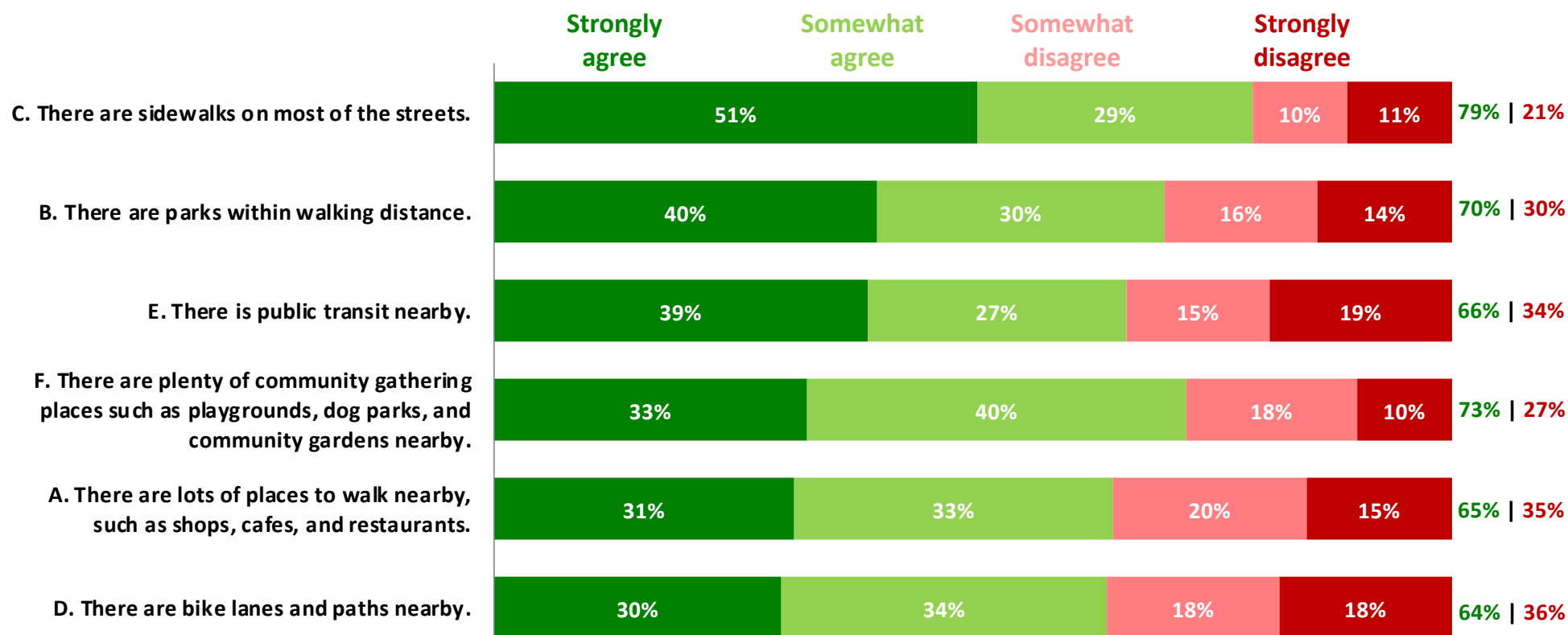
## Quality of Life In Your Community



Q.2 The first question is about the quality of life in your community. How satisfied would you say you are with the quality of life in your community?

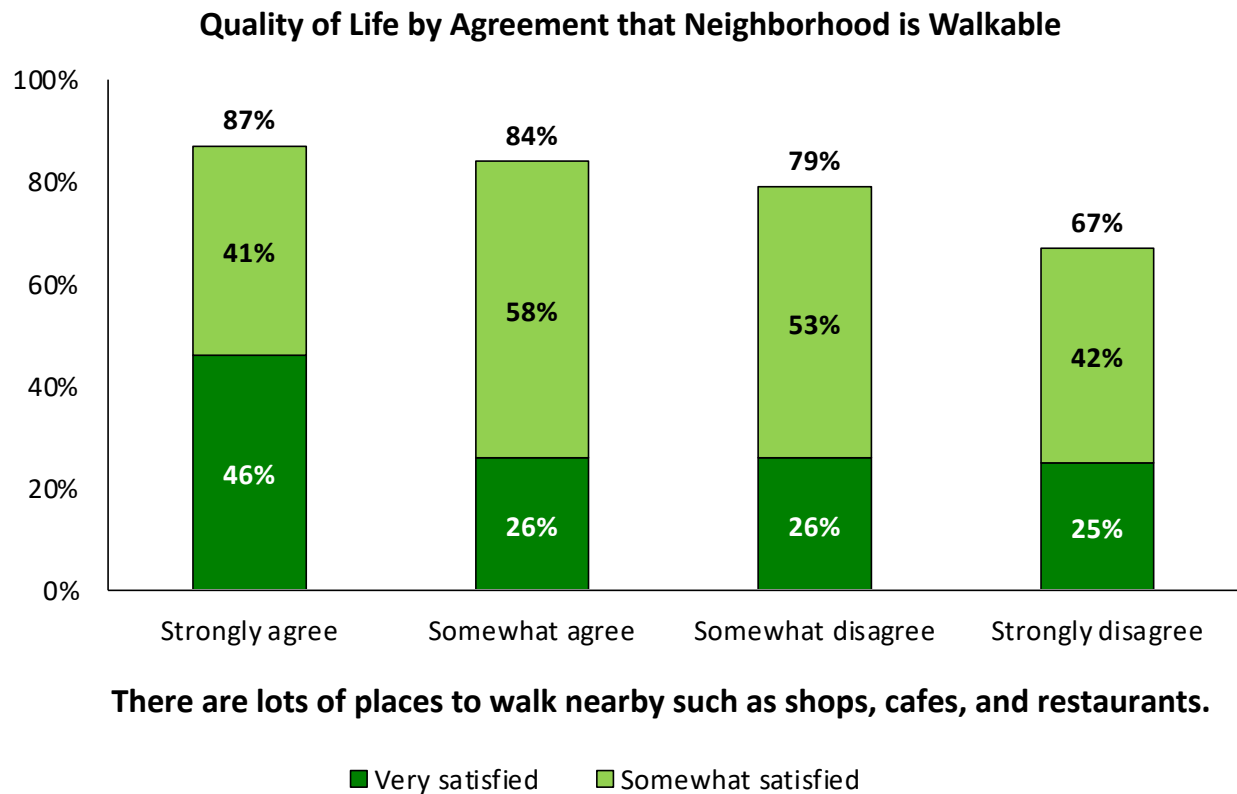
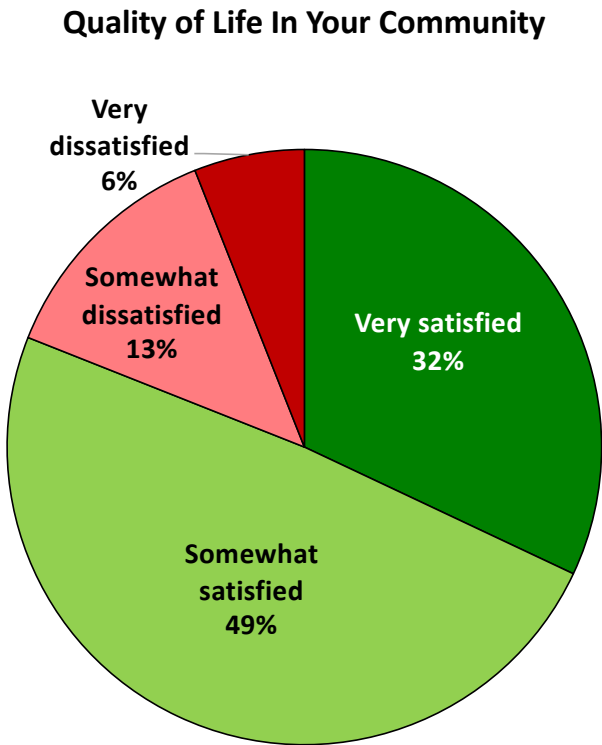
# General Agreement That Mobility Options Exist in Current Neighborhood

## Descriptors of the Area Where You Currently Live



3. Here are a few questions about your neighborhood and home. For each, please indicate whether you (ROTATE) agree or disagree with that statement.

# People Who Live in Communities With Lots of Places to Walk Nearby Are More Likely To Be *Very Satisfied* With Their Quality Of Life

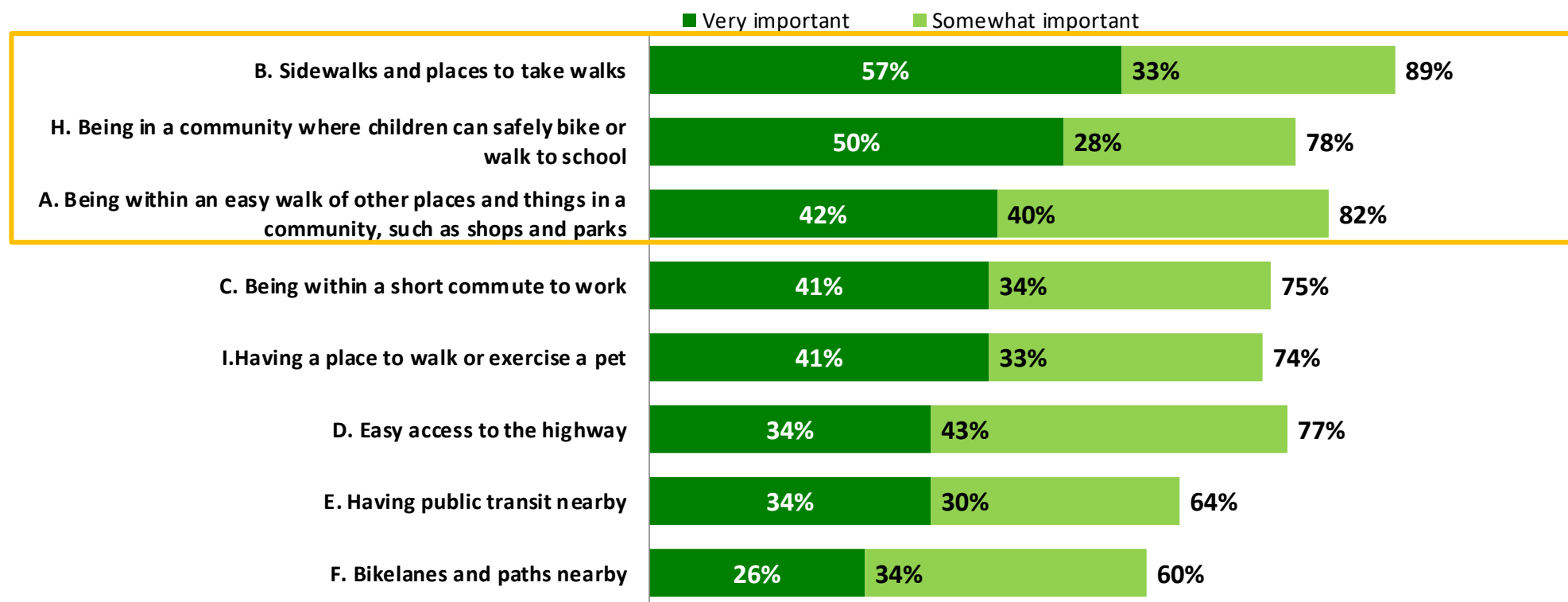


Q.2 The first question is about the quality of life in your community. How satisfied would you say you are with the quality of life in your community?

## *What's Important in Deciding Where to Live*

# Top 'Very Important' Aspects Involve Walkability and Easy Access

## Importance Of Community Aspects

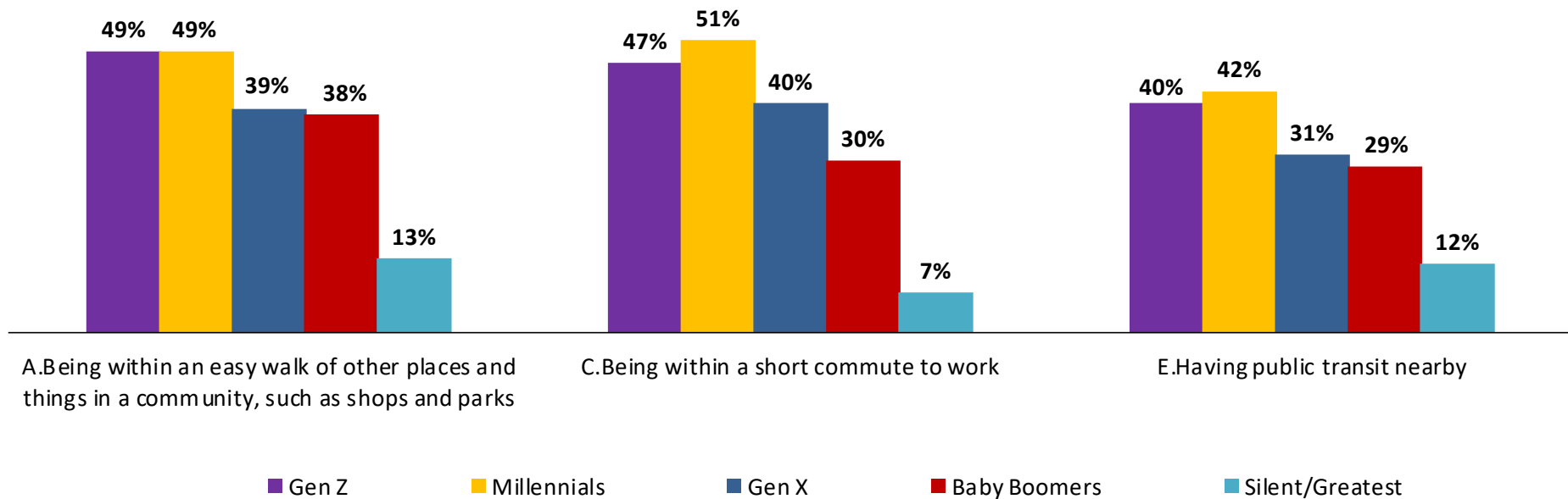


Q.5 If you were deciding today where to live, please indicate how important each of the following would be to you.

# Generational Variance on Easy Access, Commute Times and Public Transit

*Being within an easy walk to places, short commute, and having public transit less important to older generations.*

% Very Important Factor in Deciding Where to Live By Generation

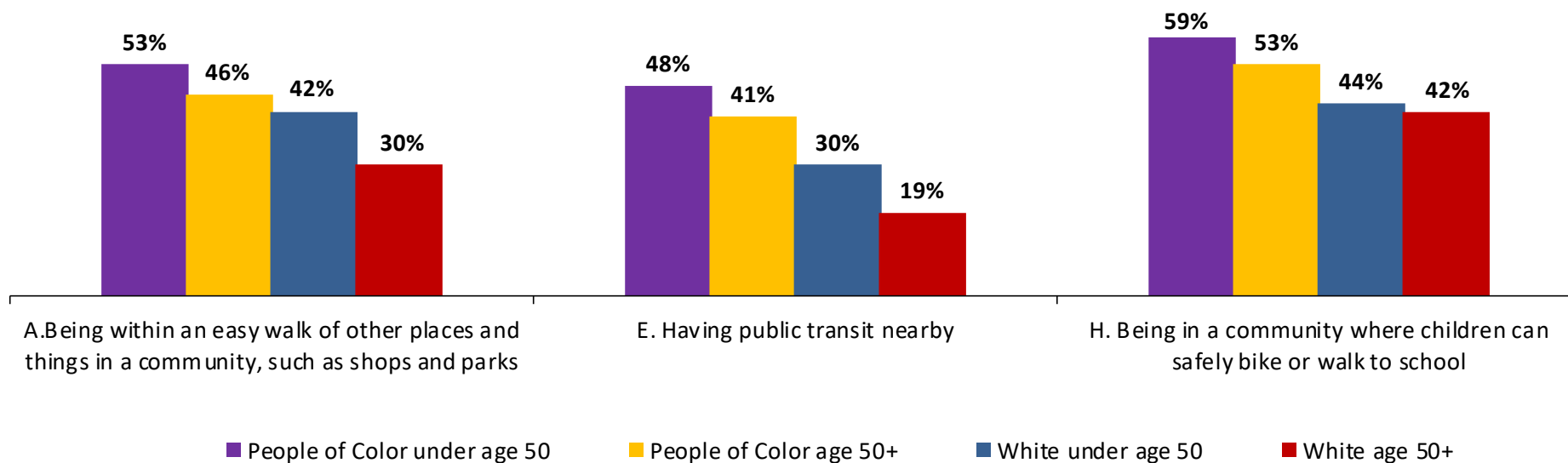


Q.5 If you were deciding today where to live, please indicate how important each of the following would be to you.

# Race and Age Variance On Walkability, Public Transit And School Access

*People of Color – especially those under age 50 - place more importance on each item*

% Very Important Factor in Deciding Where to Live By Race/Age



Q.5 If you were deciding today where to live, please indicate how important each of the following would be to you.

## Younger Hispanics, Higher Income and College Women Place More Importance on Having a Place to Walk or Exercise a Pet

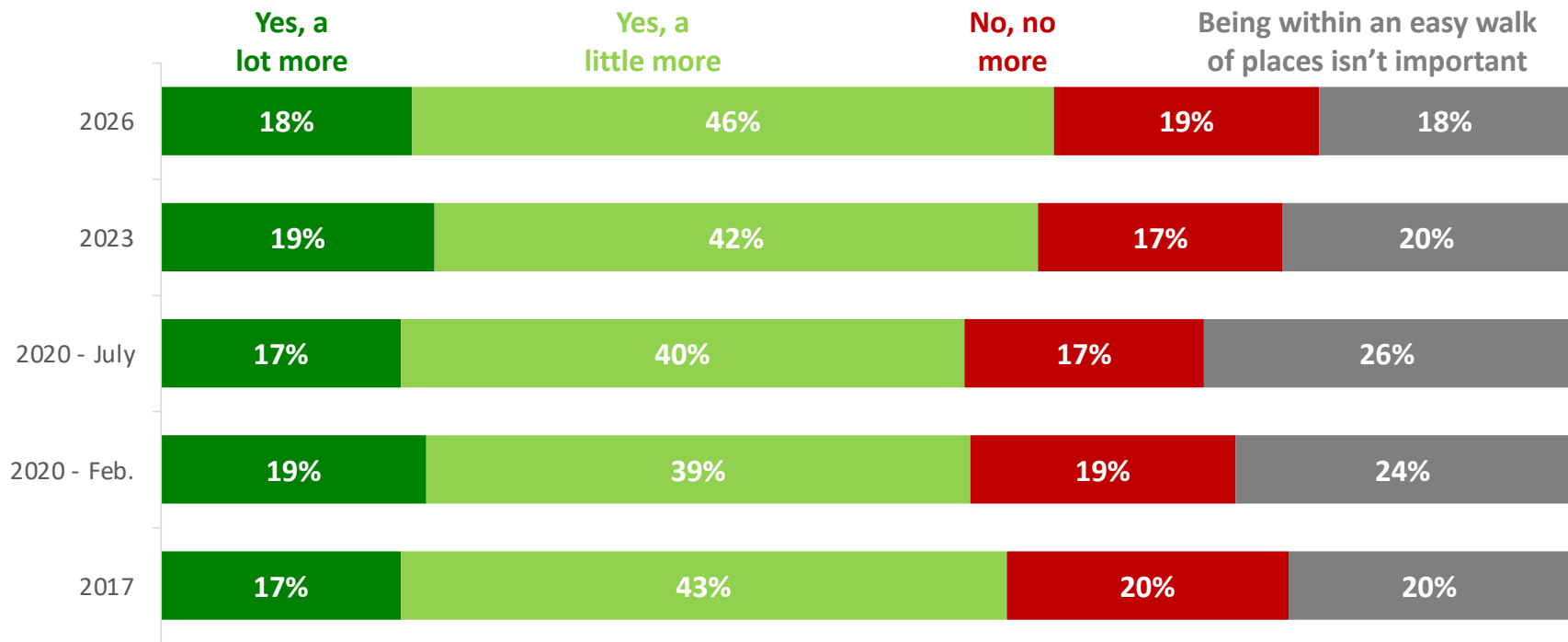
### I. Having a place to walk or exercise a pet



Q.5 If you were deciding today where to live, please indicate how important each of the following would be to you.

## Small Uptick in Percentage Who Would Pay A Little More To Live in a Walkable Community

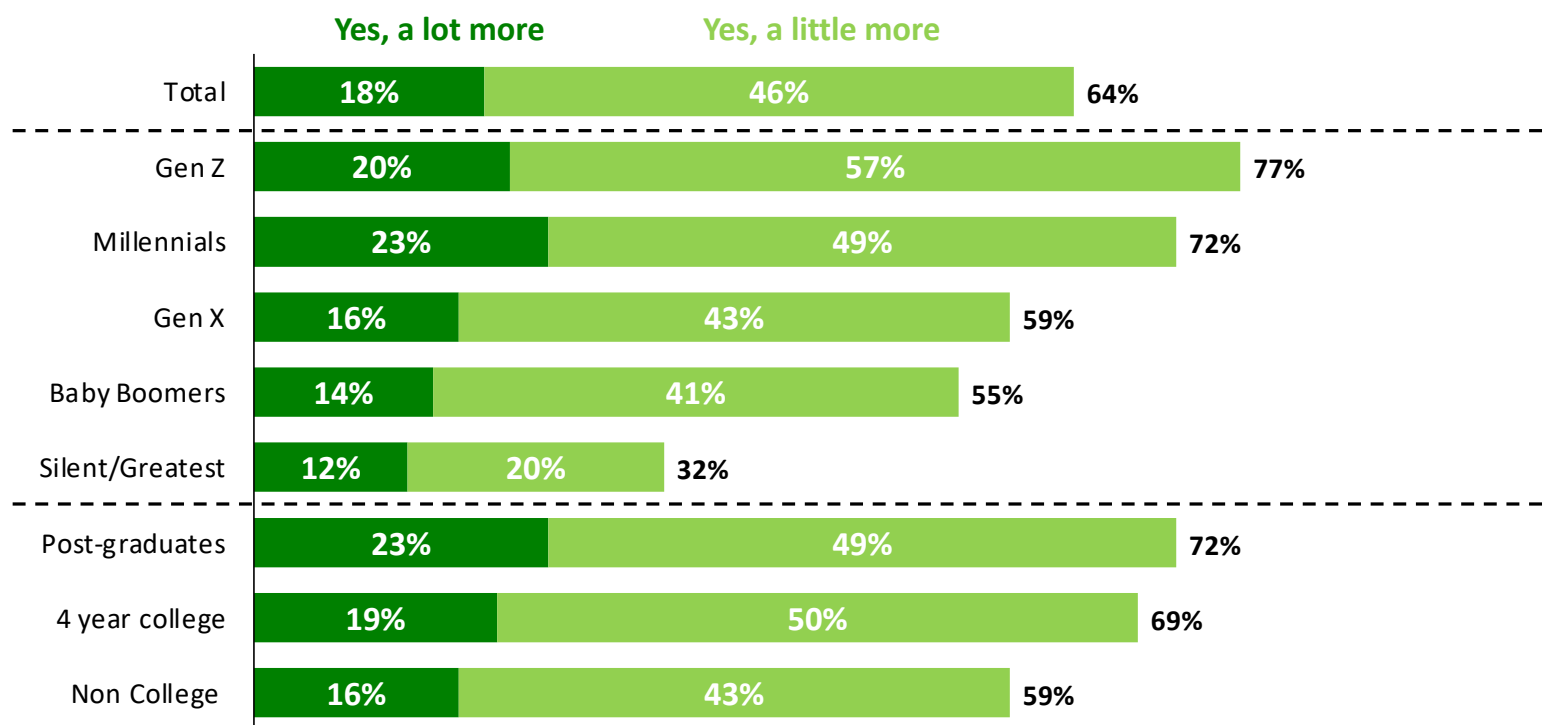
Willingness to Spend More to Live Within Walking Distance of Parks, Shops, and Restaurants Time Series



Q.6 If you were moving to a new home, would you be willing to spend more to live in a community where you could easily walk to parks, shops, and restaurants?

# Gen Z, Millennials and College Graduates Most Likely to Say They Will Pay More for Walkable Communities

Willingness to Spend More to Live Within Walking Distance to Parks, Shops, and Restaurants By Generation and Education

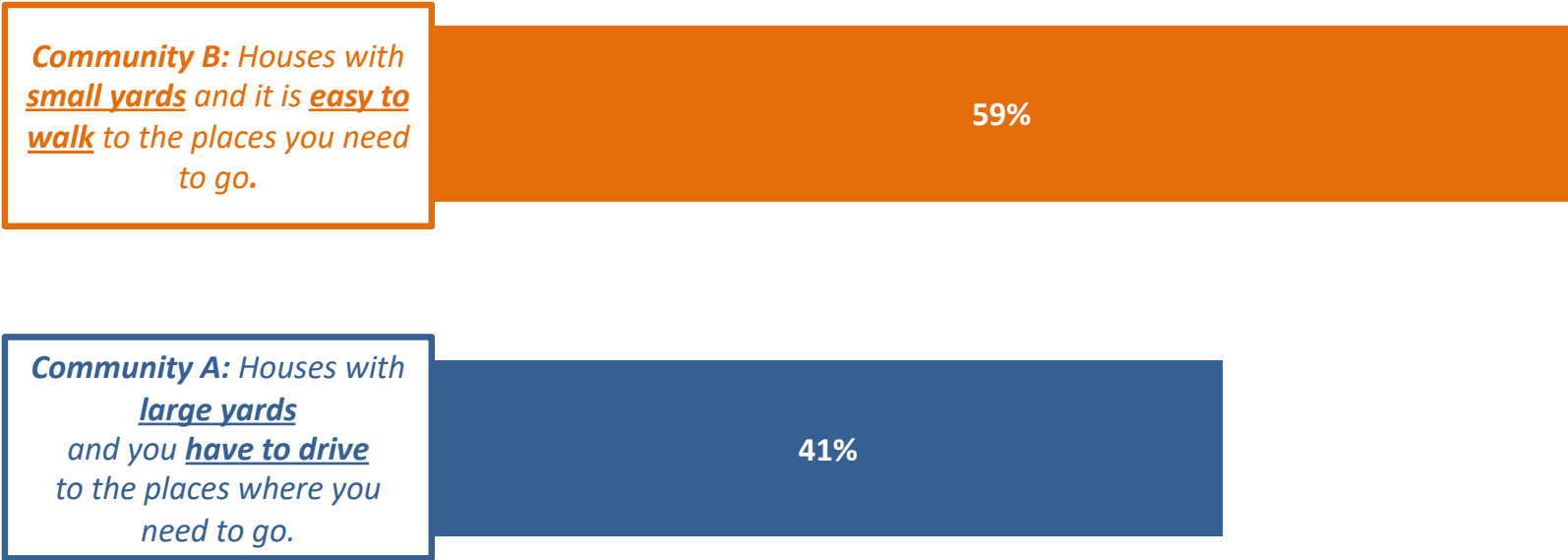


Q.6 If you were moving to a new home, would you be willing to spend more to live in a community where you could easily walk to parks, shops, and restaurants?

## *Community Preference*

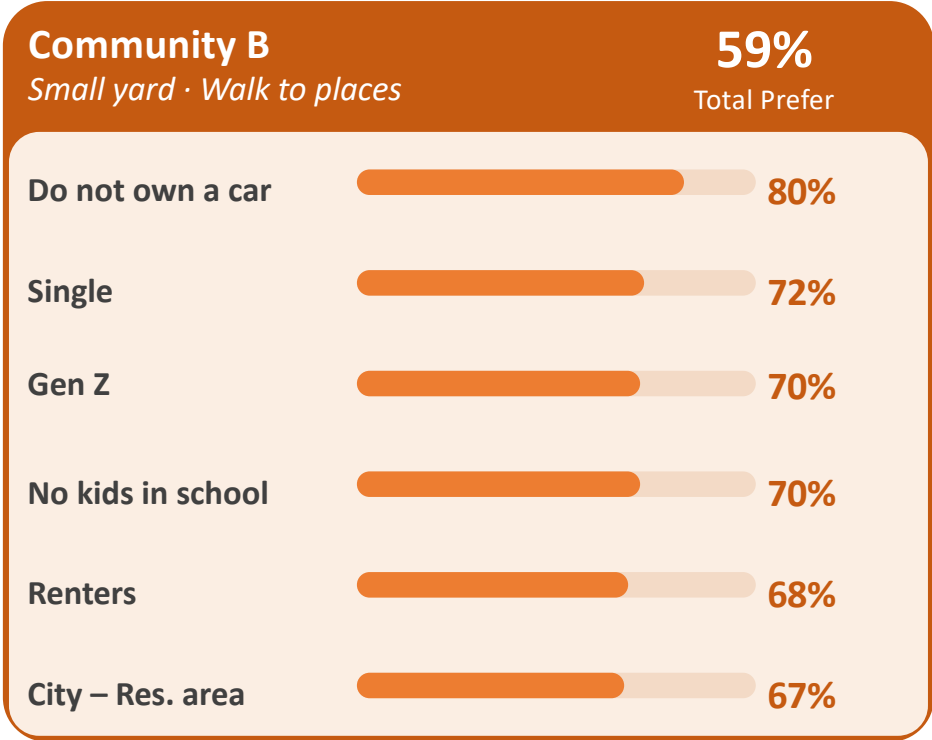
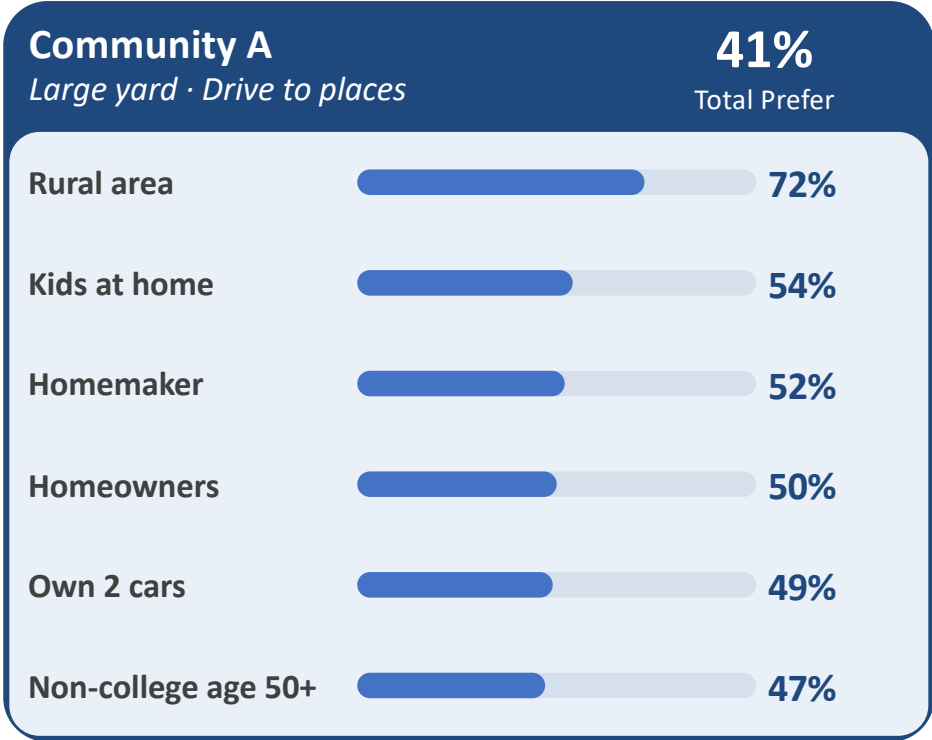
# Majority Prefer Houses With Small Yards and More Walkability Over Homes With Large Yards and More Driving

Preferred Community: Houses with Large Yards vs Small Yards



Q.7 Continue to imagine that you are moving to another home. These next questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community that you prefer.

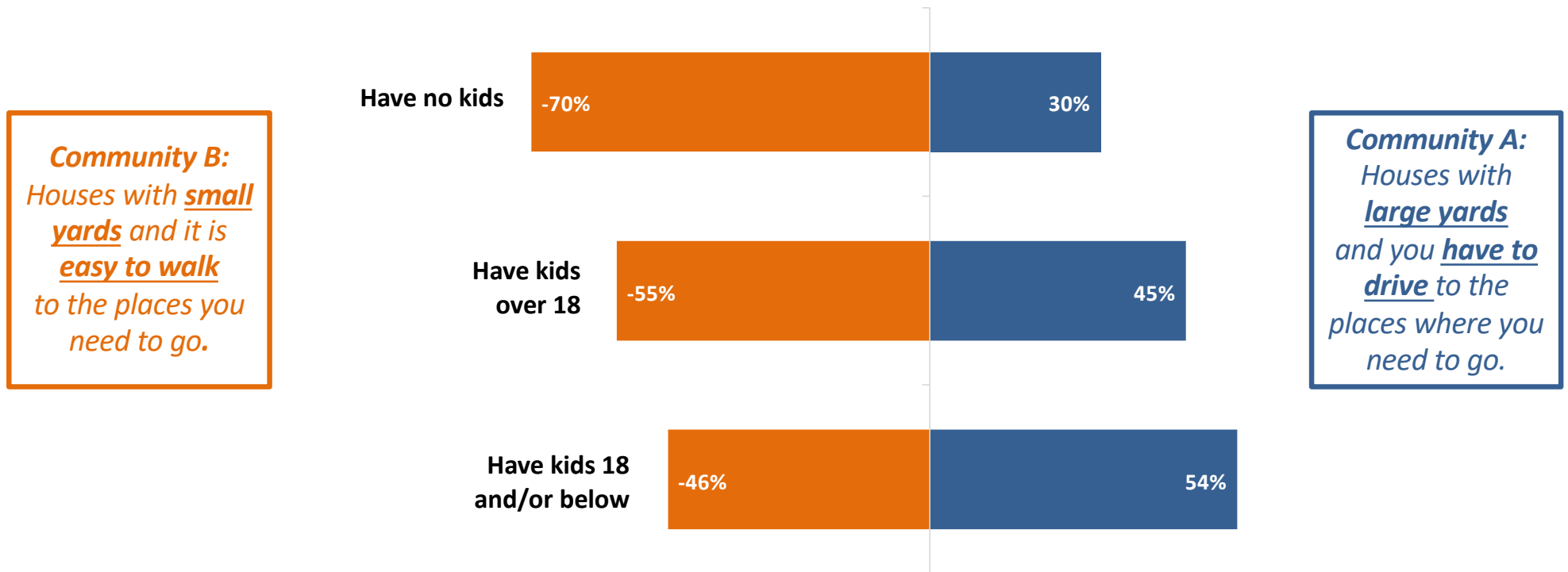
# Demographic Differences Between Those Preferring Large Yards and Small Yards



Q.7 Continue to imagine that you are moving to another home. These next questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community that you prefer.

## Those With No Kids Most Likely to Prefer Small Yards and Walkability

Preferred Community: Houses with Large Yards vs Small Yards



Q.7 Continue to imagine that you are moving to another home. These next questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community that you prefer.

# Choice Between Attached Housing With Easy Walks and Detached Home With More Driving Results in Statistical Tie

Preferred Community: Houses with Apartment vs Detached SFH

**Community A:** Own or rent an apartment or townhouse and you have an easy walk to shops and restaurants and have a shorter commute to work.

52%

**Community B:** Own or rent a detached, single-family house and you have to drive to shops and restaurants and have a longer commute to work.

48%

Q.7 Continue to imagine that you are moving to another home. These next questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community that you prefer.



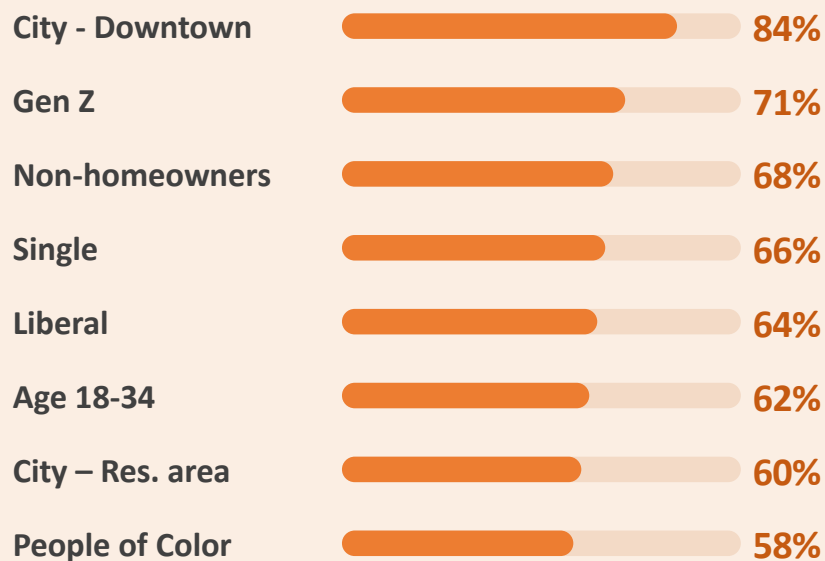
## Demographic Differences Between Those Preferring Walkability and Single-Family Homes

### Community A

*Apartment, Walk to places*

**52%**

Total Prefer



### Community B

*SFH, Drive to places*

**48%**

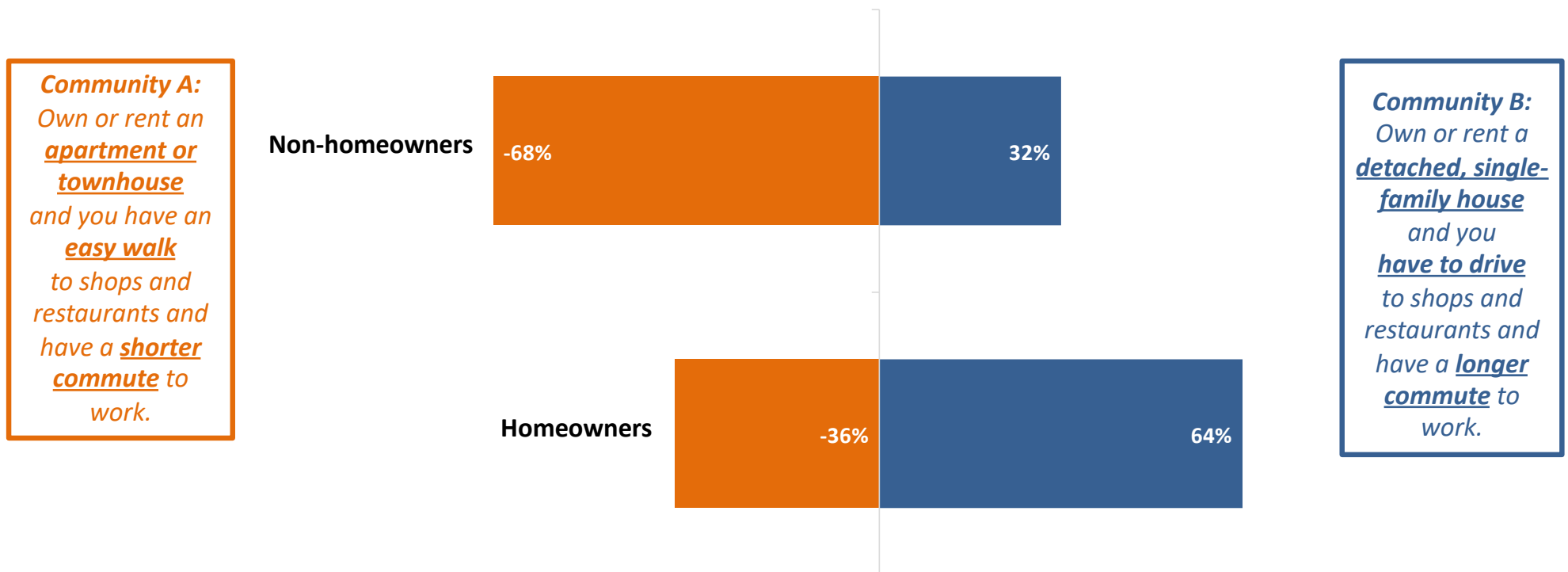
Total Prefer



Q.7 Continue to imagine that you are moving to another home. These next questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community that you prefer.

## Non-Homeowners Prefer Walkable Community and Short Commute; Homeowners Prefer Detached, Single-Family Houses

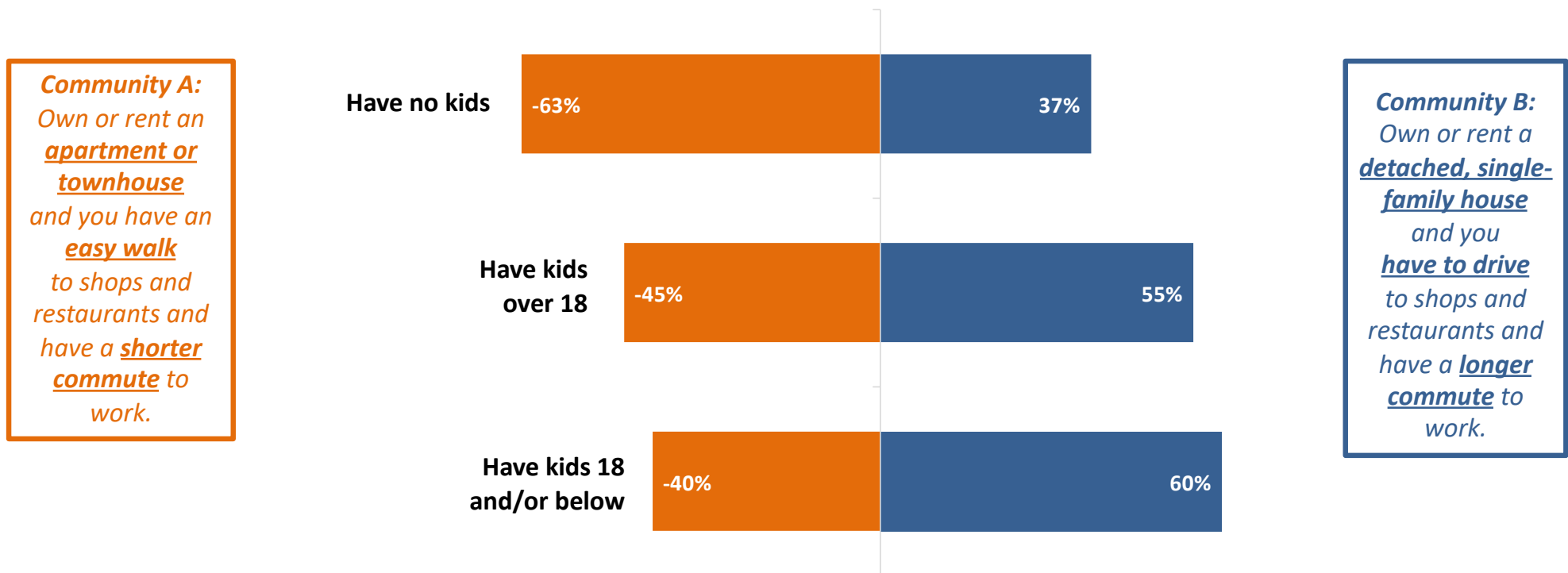
Preferred Community: Houses with Apartment vs Detached SFH



Q.7 Continue to imagine that you are moving to another home. These next questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community that you prefer.

## Those with No Kids Most Likely to Prefer Walkability and Shorter Commutes, Those With Younger Kids Prefer Single Family Homes

Preferred Community: Houses with Apartment vs Detached SFH



Q.7 Continue to imagine that you are moving to another home. These next questions are about the kind of community where you would like to live. Please select the community that you prefer.

***Still imagine that you are moving to another home. Please rank the following home and community qualities from most important to least important.***

- *Low levels of crime*
- *Walkable to shops and restaurants*
- *A large house*
- *High quality public schools*
- *A large yard*
- *A short commute*



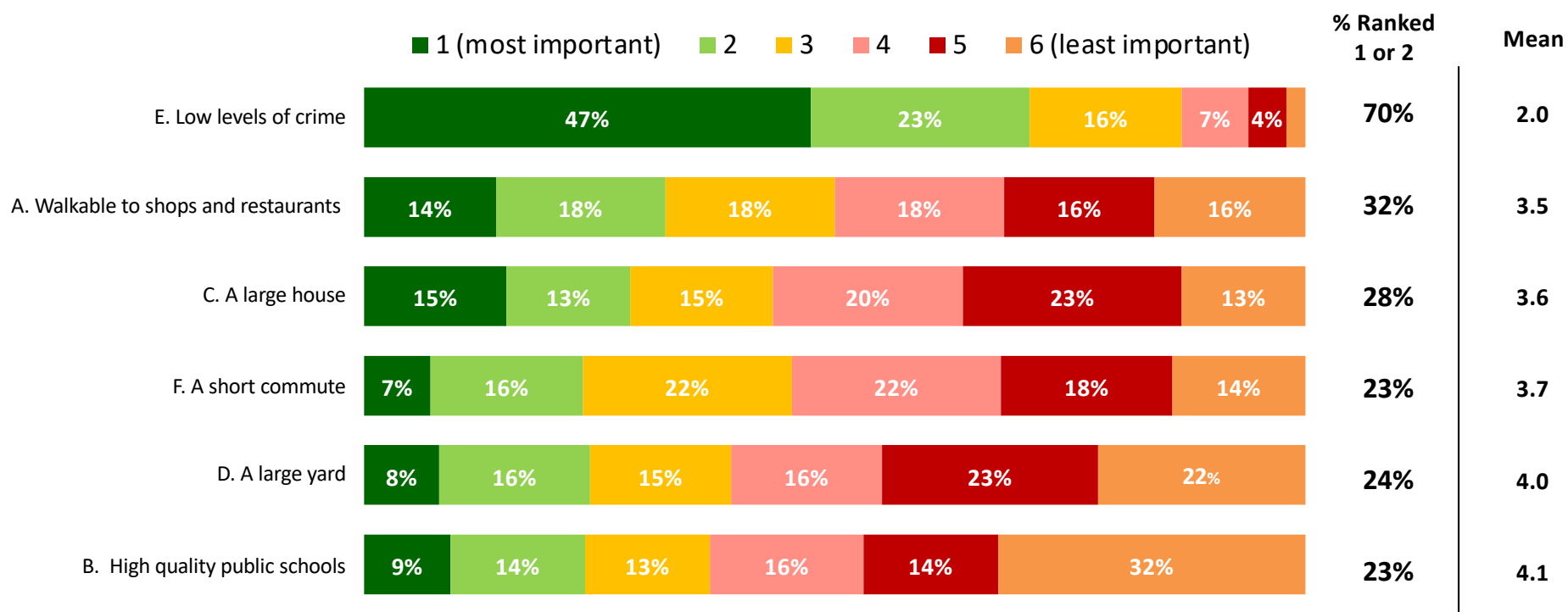
---

Q.8 Still imagine that you are moving to another home. Please rank the following home and community qualities from most important to least important.

## Low Crime Levels Ranked Most Important Community Quality

*Walkability a distant second with other attributes not far behind; Lower mean score = higher importance*

### Home And Community Qualities Rank



Q.8 Still imagine that you are moving to another home. Please rank the following home and community qualities from most important to least important.



## Crime Levels Important to All - Especially Older Generations; Walkability Most Important to Gen Z

Home And Community Qualities Rank by Generation

| Percent Ranked 1 or 2                | Total | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomers | Silent/Greatest<br>(small sample size caution) |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|---------|------------------------------------------------|
| E. Low levels of crime               | 70%   | 62%   | 61%         | 69%   | 83%     | 85%                                            |
| A. Walkable to shops and restaurants | 33%   | 40%   | 34%         | 28%   | 34%     | 18%                                            |
| C. A large house                     | 28%   | 27%   | 31%         | 31%   | 24%     | 28%                                            |
| D. A large yard                      | 24%   | 15%   | 19%         | 28%   | 27%     | 38%                                            |
| F. A short commute                   | 23%   | 30%   | 26%         | 24%   | 17%     | 11%                                            |
| B. High quality public schools       | 23%   | 26%   | 30%         | 21%   | 17%     | 20%                                            |

Q.8 Still imagine that you are moving to another home. Please rank the following home and community qualities from most important to least important.



## Attribute Importance: Demographic Highlights

*(Lower mean score = higher importance)*

There is less demographic variance around the quality of being **walkable to shops and restaurants** (3.5 mean). It ranks relatively high with most groups. Those without a car (2.6) and single voters (3.1) stand out, but this trait is more closely tied to where people currently live with those in urban areas placing more importance on walkability than those who live in smaller towns or rural areas; suburbs are, appropriately, in between.

Groups that place higher importance on **having a large yard** include non-college graduates over the age of 50 (3.6 mean score), homeowners (3.7 mean) and whites over the age of 50 (3.7). Not surprisingly, people who live in small towns (3.5) or more rural areas (3.0) also place a higher importance on having a large yard.

The importance of having a **large house** (3.6 overall mean) is especially pronounced in more rural areas (3.2), among men of color (3.2) and among non-college men (3.3.)

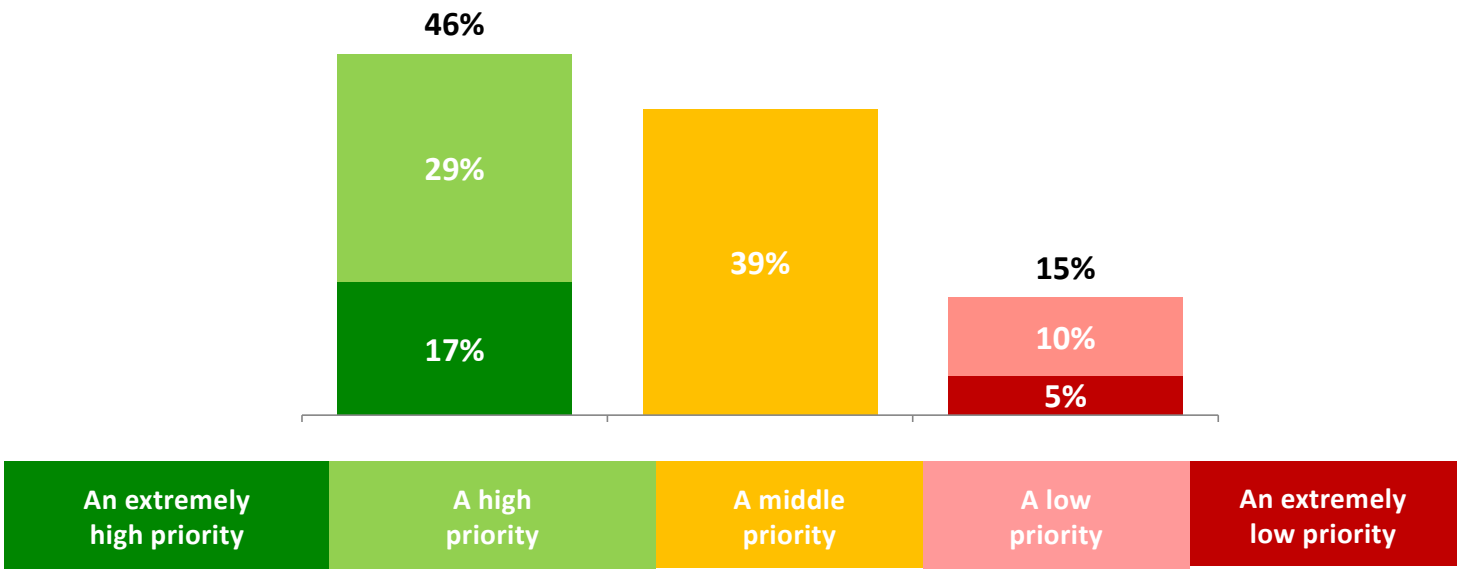
## Attribute Importance - Demographic Highlights

Groups that place higher importance on **a short commute** (3.7 overall mean) tend to be under age 50, including college graduates under age 50 (3.4) and Asians under age 50 (3.4). Age is highly correlated with commute time with voters under age 35 (3.4) placing much more importance on commute time than seniors (4.1).

**High quality public schools** (4.1 mean) are more important to married voters (3.8), women under age 50 (3.7) and Hispanics under age 50 (3.7). There is a big difference between those who have children under 18 (3.2) and those who have no children (4.6) or whose kids are over 19 (4.2).

# Plurality Feels It Should Be A High Priority for Local Government to Make it Easier to Develop Communities Where People Do Not Have to Drive So Much

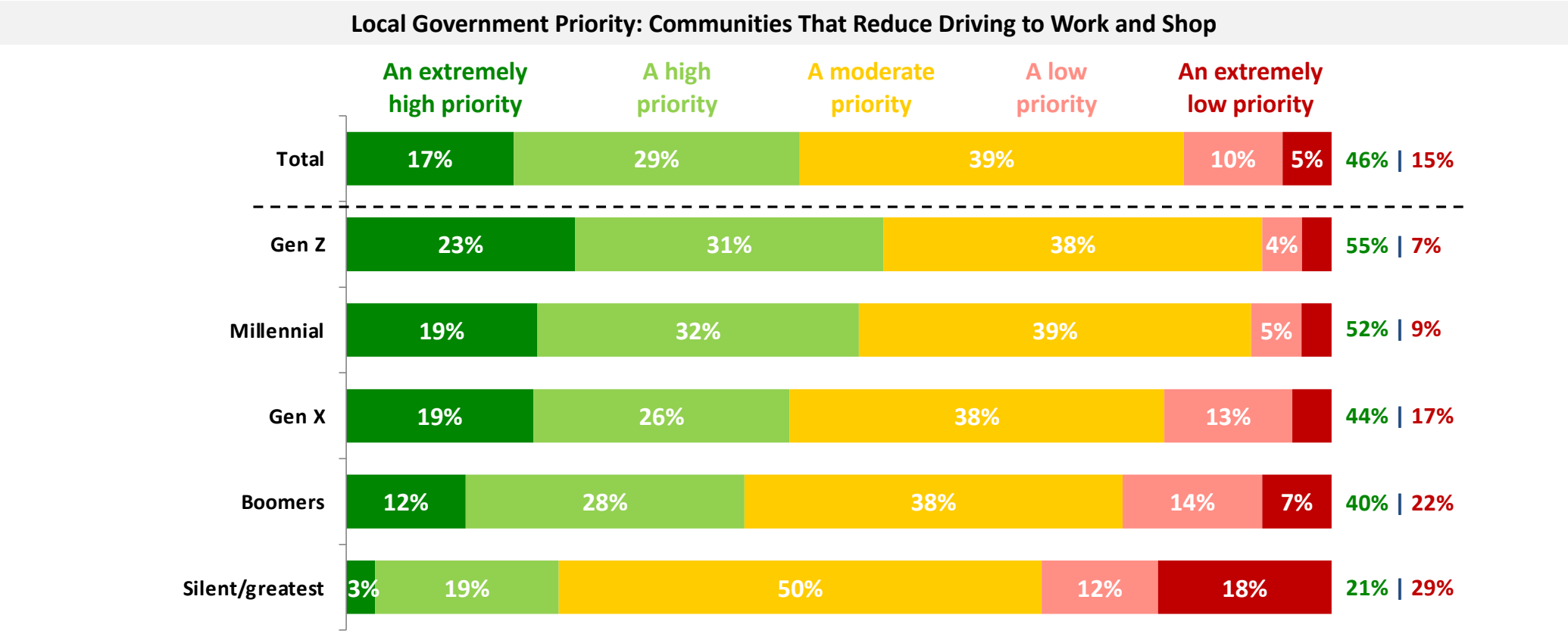
Local Government Priority: Communities That Reduce Driving to Work and Shop



Q.9 How high of a priority should it be for local government in your area to make it easier to develop communities where people do not have to drive long distances to work or shop?



# Younger Generations Feel It Should Be A Higher Priority for Local Gov. to Develop Communities Where People Do Not Have Long Commutes to Work or Shop

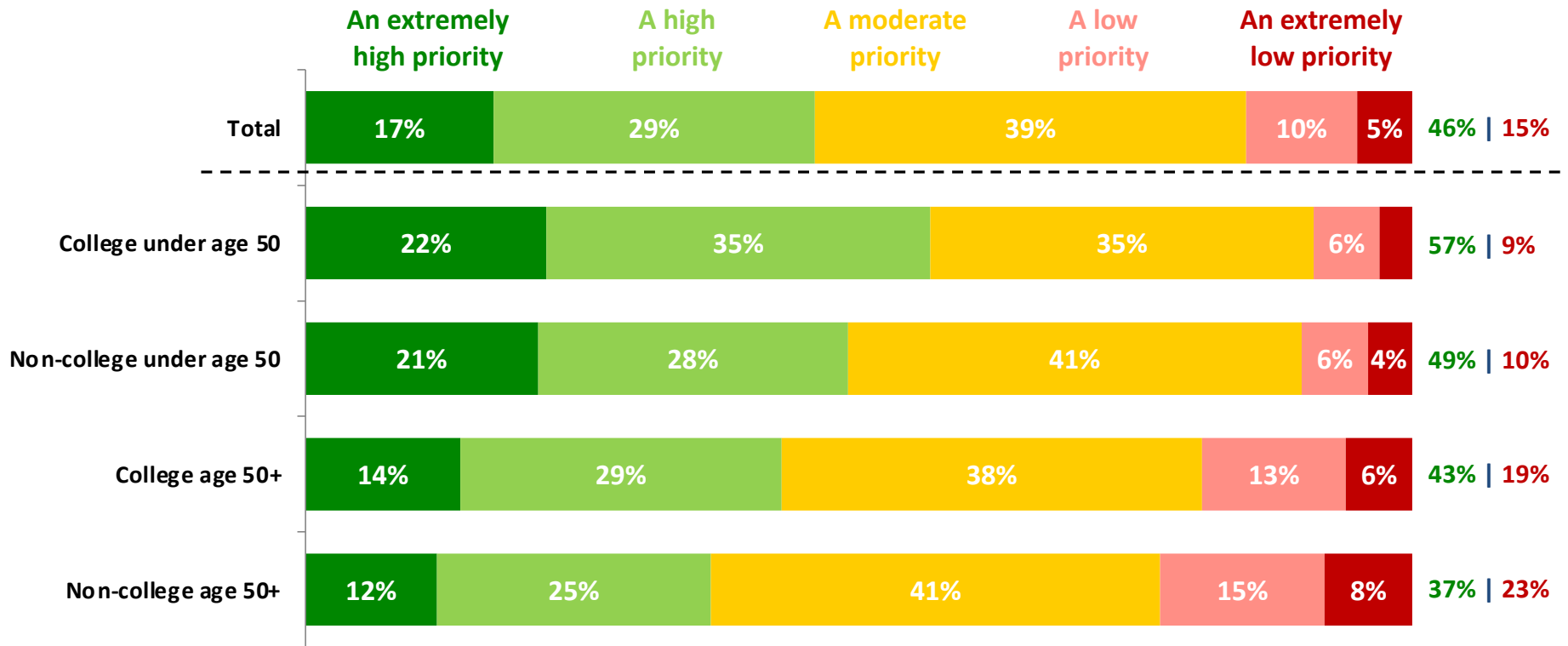


Q.9 How high of a priority should it be for local government in your area to make it easier to develop communities where people do not have to drive long distances to work or shop?



## College Graduates Place Higher Priority On Developing Communities That Require Less Driving Than Their Generational Counterparts

### Local Government Priority: Communities That Reduce Driving to Work and Shop

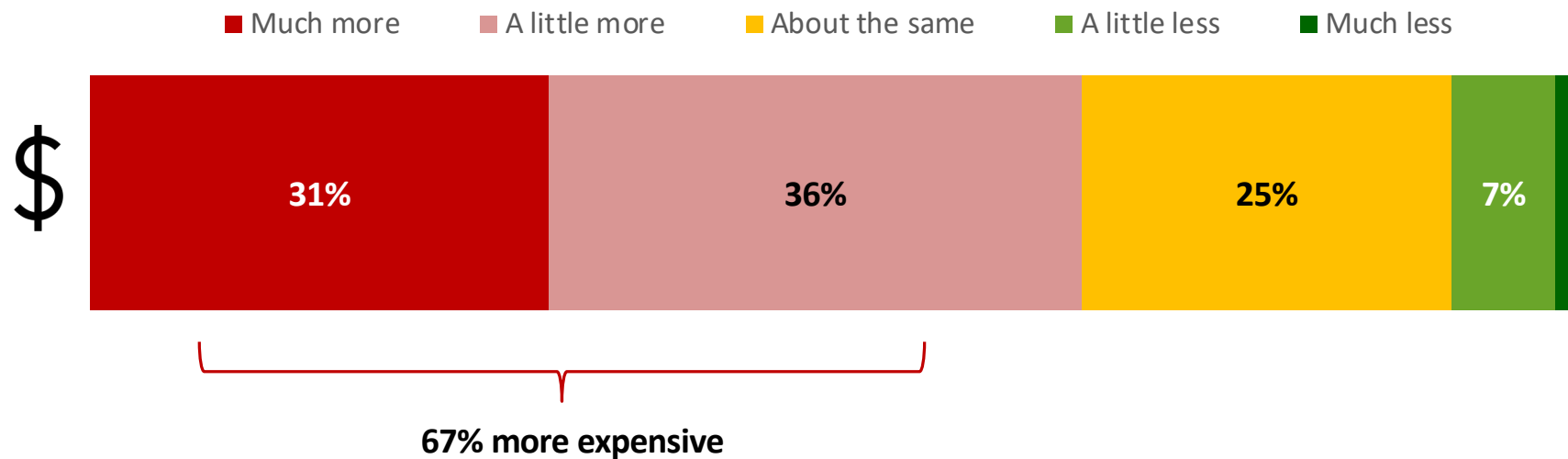


Q.9 How high of a priority should it be for local government in your area to make it easier to develop communities where people do not have to drive long distances to work or shop?



## Two-in-three Perceive Walkable Communities As Being More Expensive Than Those That Require Driving

Perception Of Walkable Communities – More Or Less Expensive



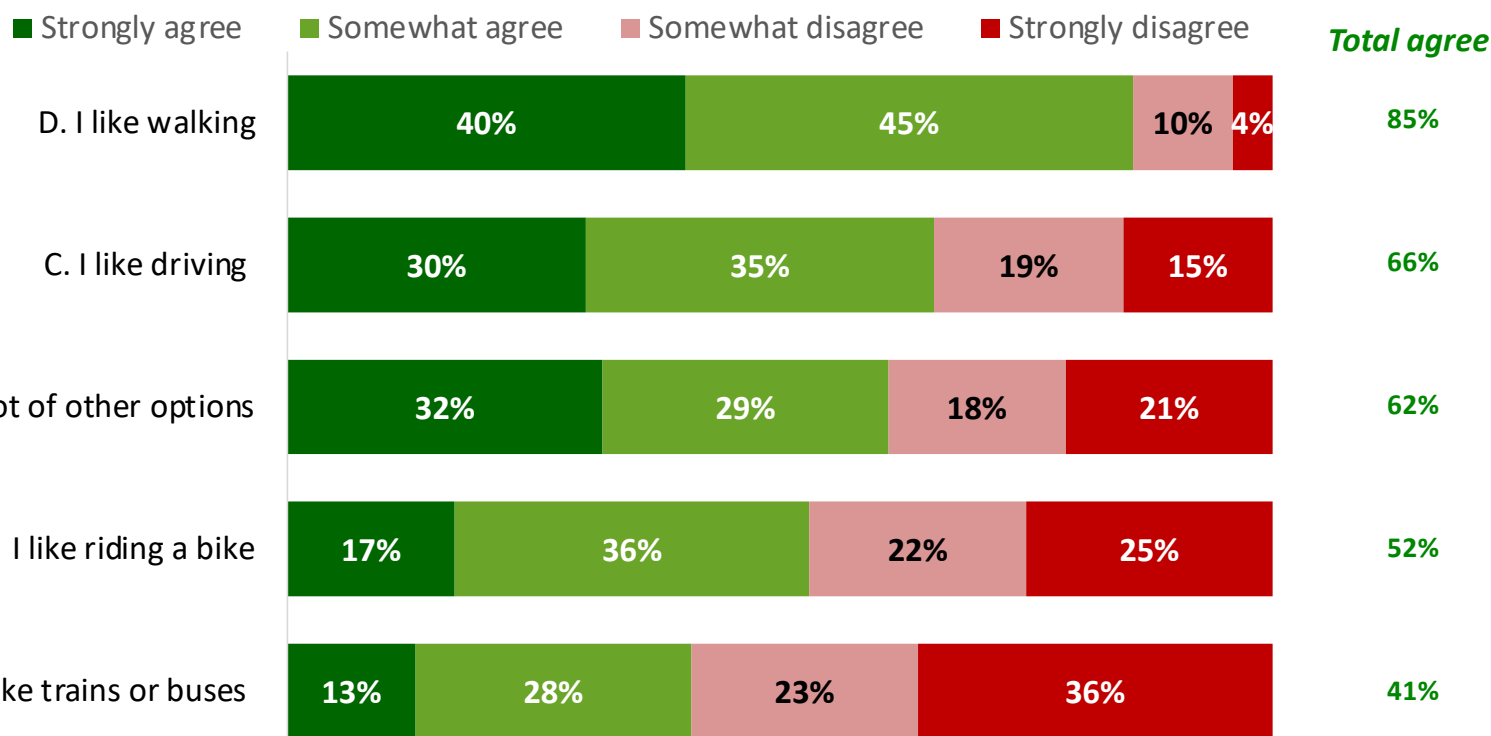
Q.10 Do you think homes or apartments in walkable neighborhoods-where you can walk to shops, restaurants, offices, and parks-are generally more or less expensive than homes in neighborhoods where you have to drive for those things?

## *Walking & Transportation Mode*

## Strong Majority Say They Like Walking – But Driving Also Popular

*Over half agree that they drive because they don't have other options*

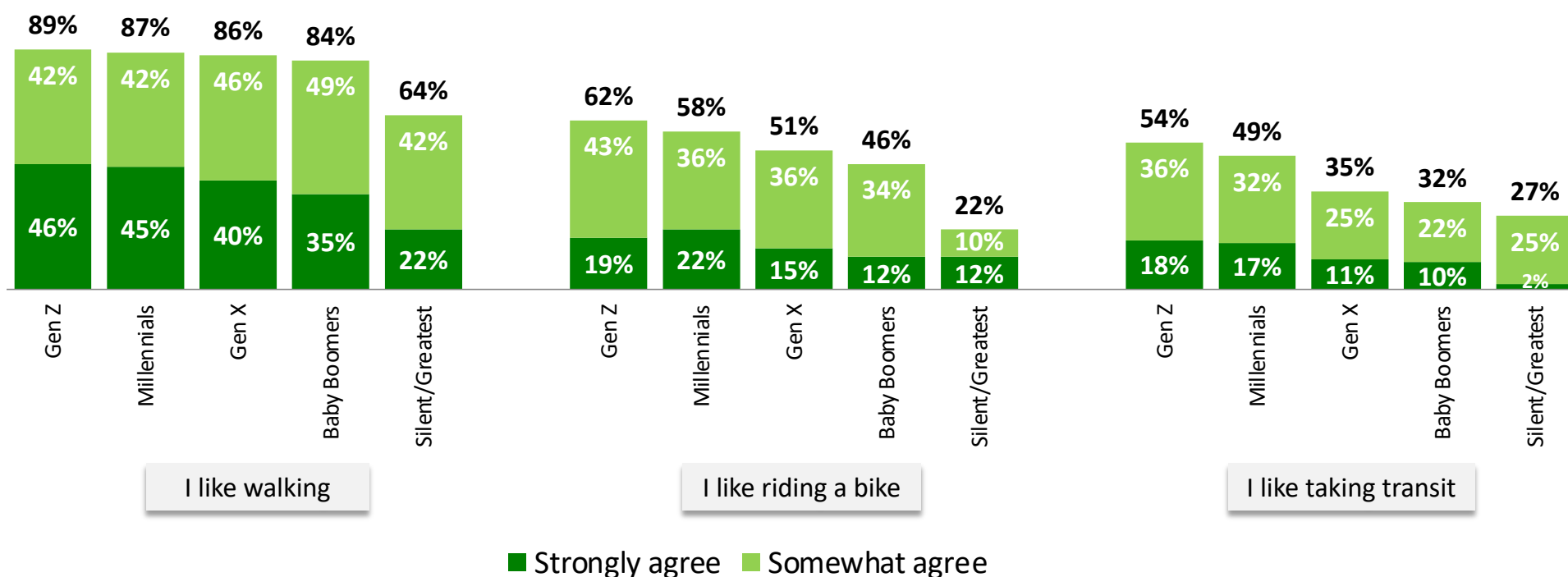
### Daily Travel Preferences



Q.18 Now, we'd like to ask about your preferences regarding your current daily travel. For each statement, please indicate if you agree or disagree.

# Younger Generations More Likely To Like Walking, Biking, or Taking Transit Than Older Generations

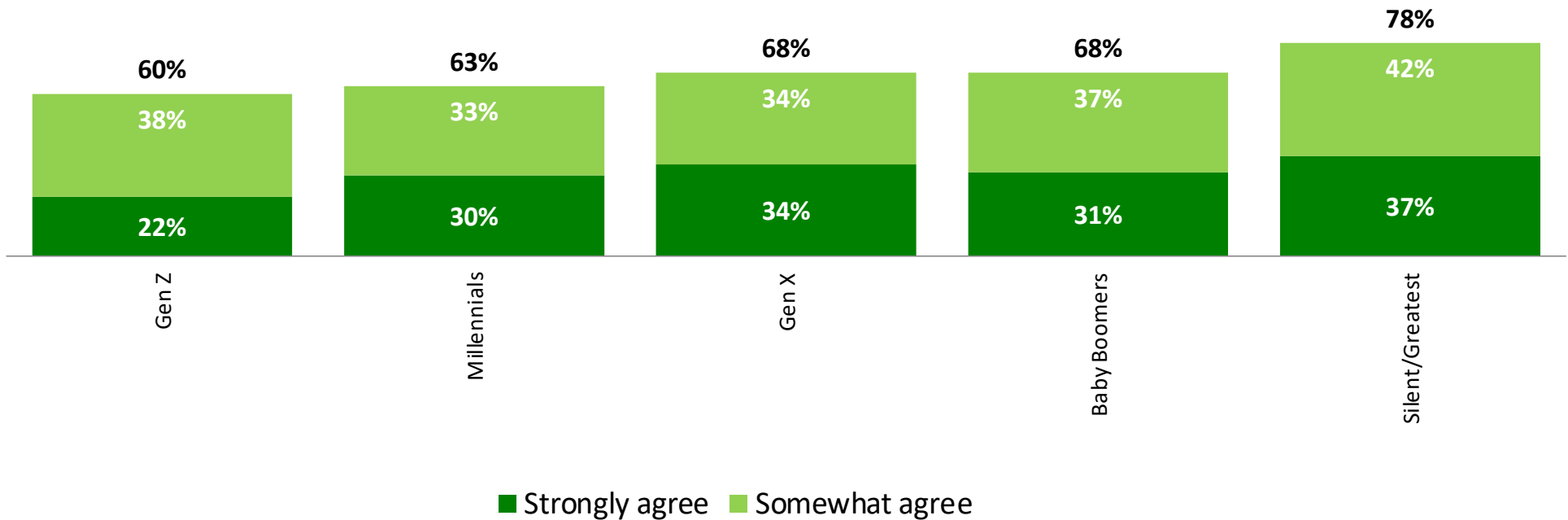
Attitudes Towards Travel Modes by Generation



Q.18 Now, we'd like to ask about your preferences regarding your current daily travel. For each statement, please indicate if you agree or disagree.

## Older Generations Are More Likely To Prefer Driving For Daily Travel

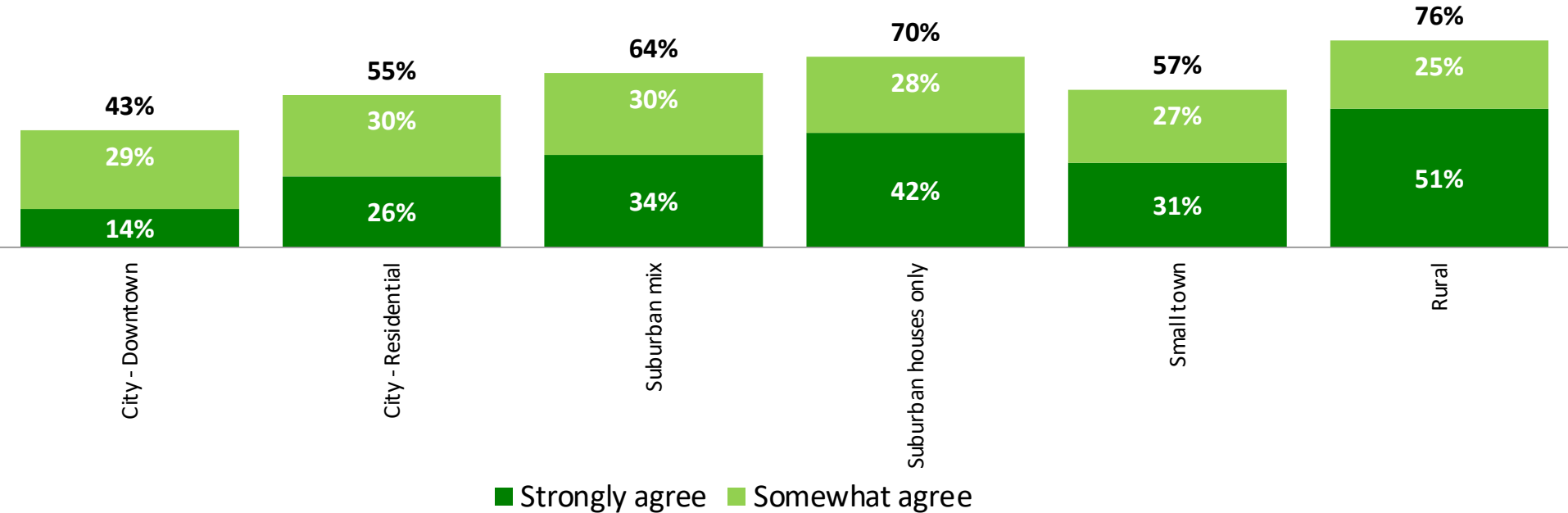
Attitudes Towards Driving by Generation



Q.18 Now, we'd like to ask about your preferences regarding your current daily travel. For each statement, please indicate if you agree or disagree.

# Rural Residents Most Likely To Not Have Other Options Other Than Driving

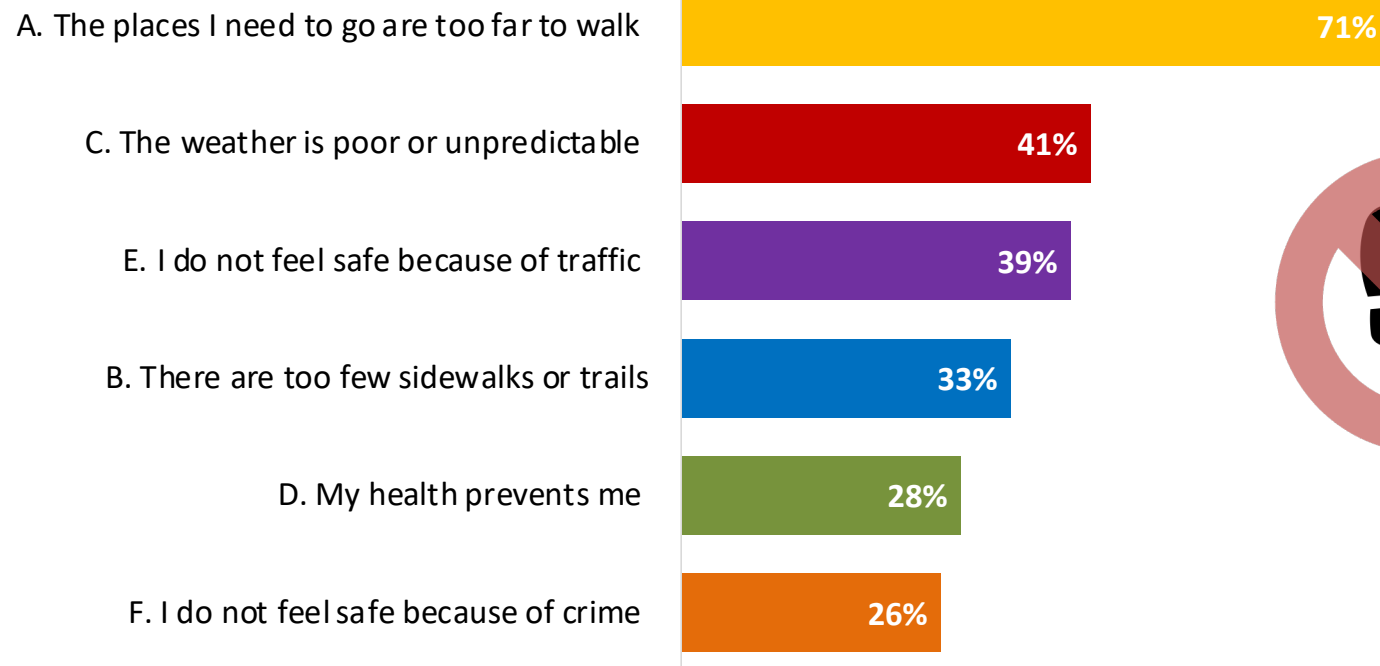
E. I drive because I don't have a lot of other options.



Q.18 Now, we'd like to ask about your preferences regarding your current daily travel. For each statement, please indicate if you agree or disagree.

## Biggest Barrier To Walking More Is Places Being Too Far Away

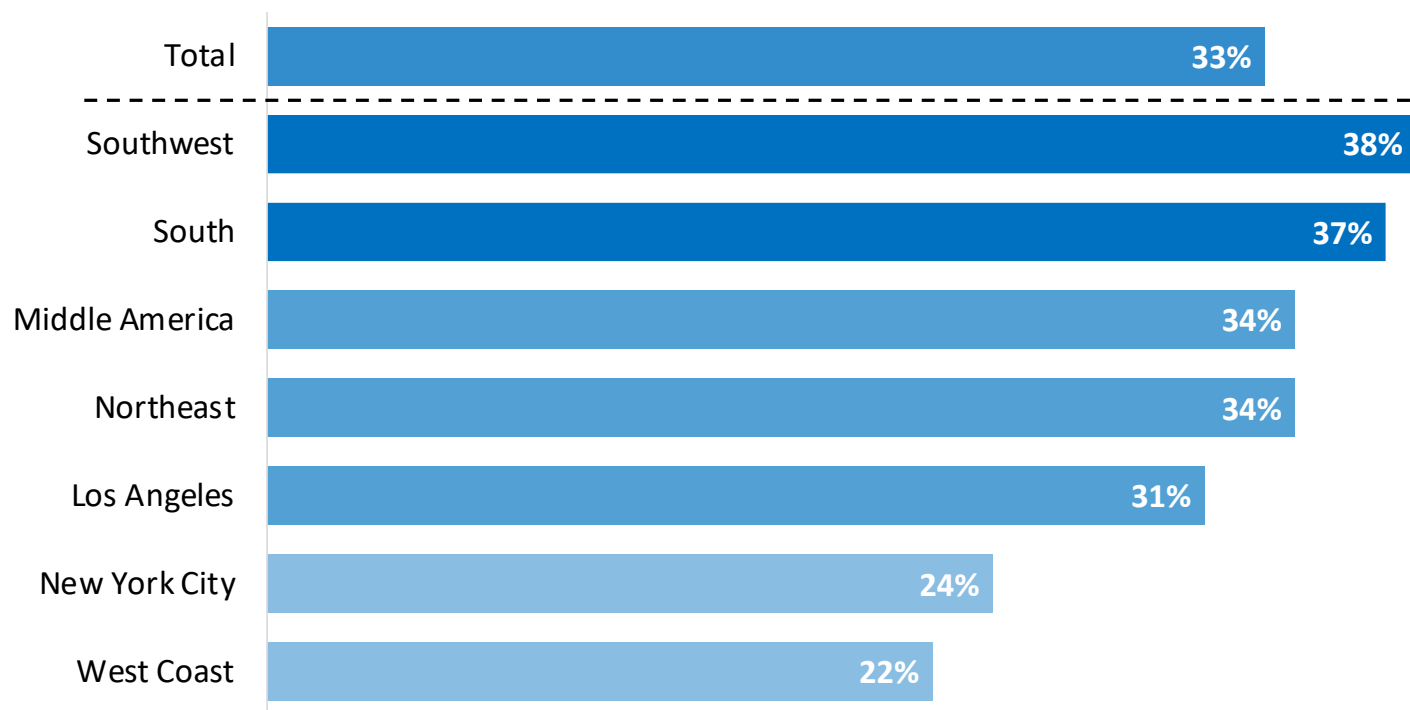
### Barriers To Walking More



Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## Lack of Sidewalks or Trails As Deterrent to Walking More Pronounced in Southwest and South Regions

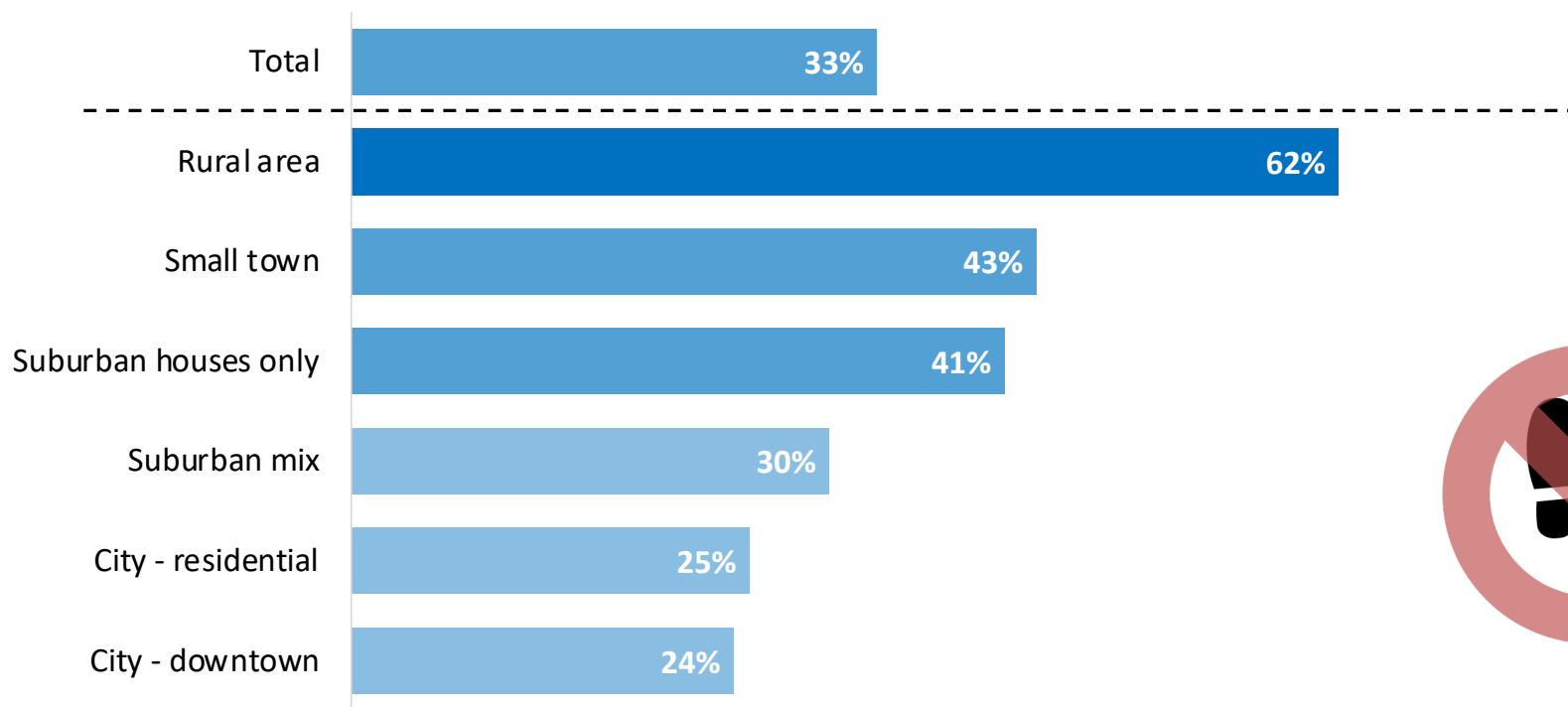
B. There are too few sidewalks or trails.



Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## Lack of Sidewalks Also Cited More in Rural Areas, Small Towns and Suburbs With Houses Only

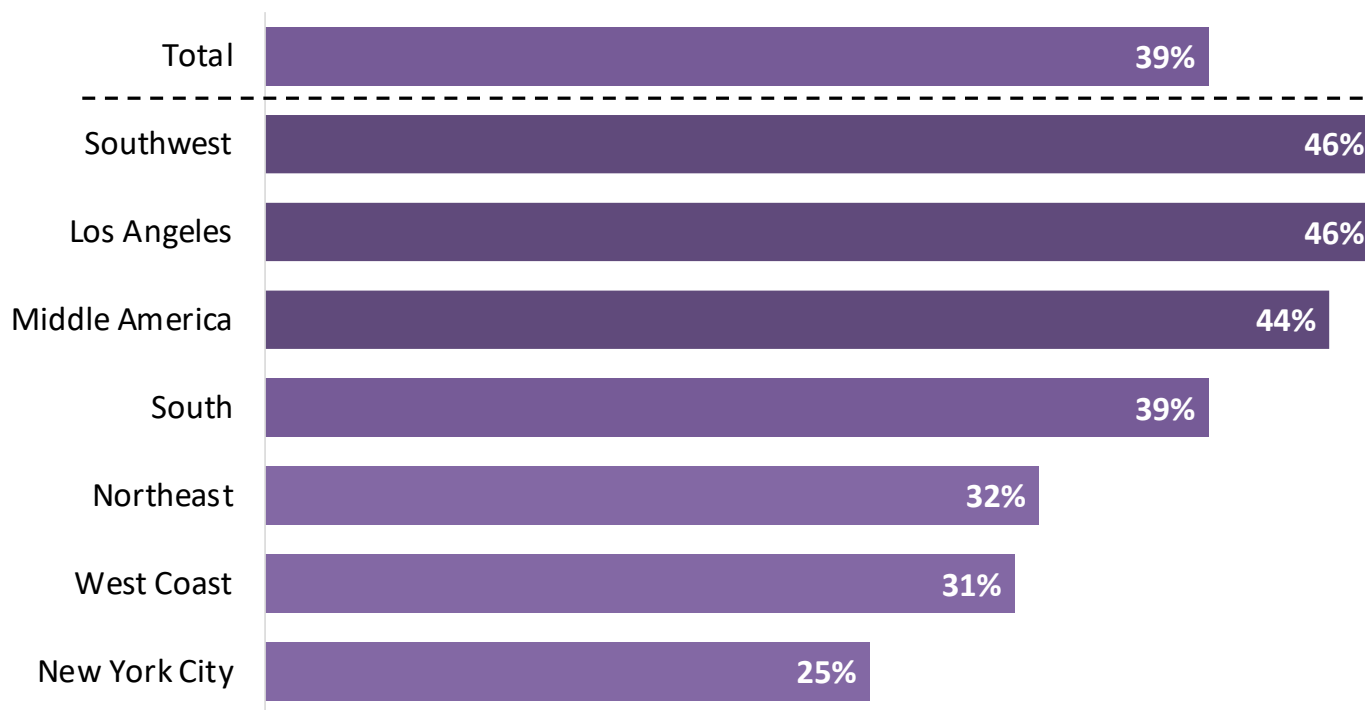
### B. There are too few sidewalks or trails.



Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## Southwest, Los Angeles and Middle America Most Likely to Avoid Walking Because of Safety Issues Caused by Traffic

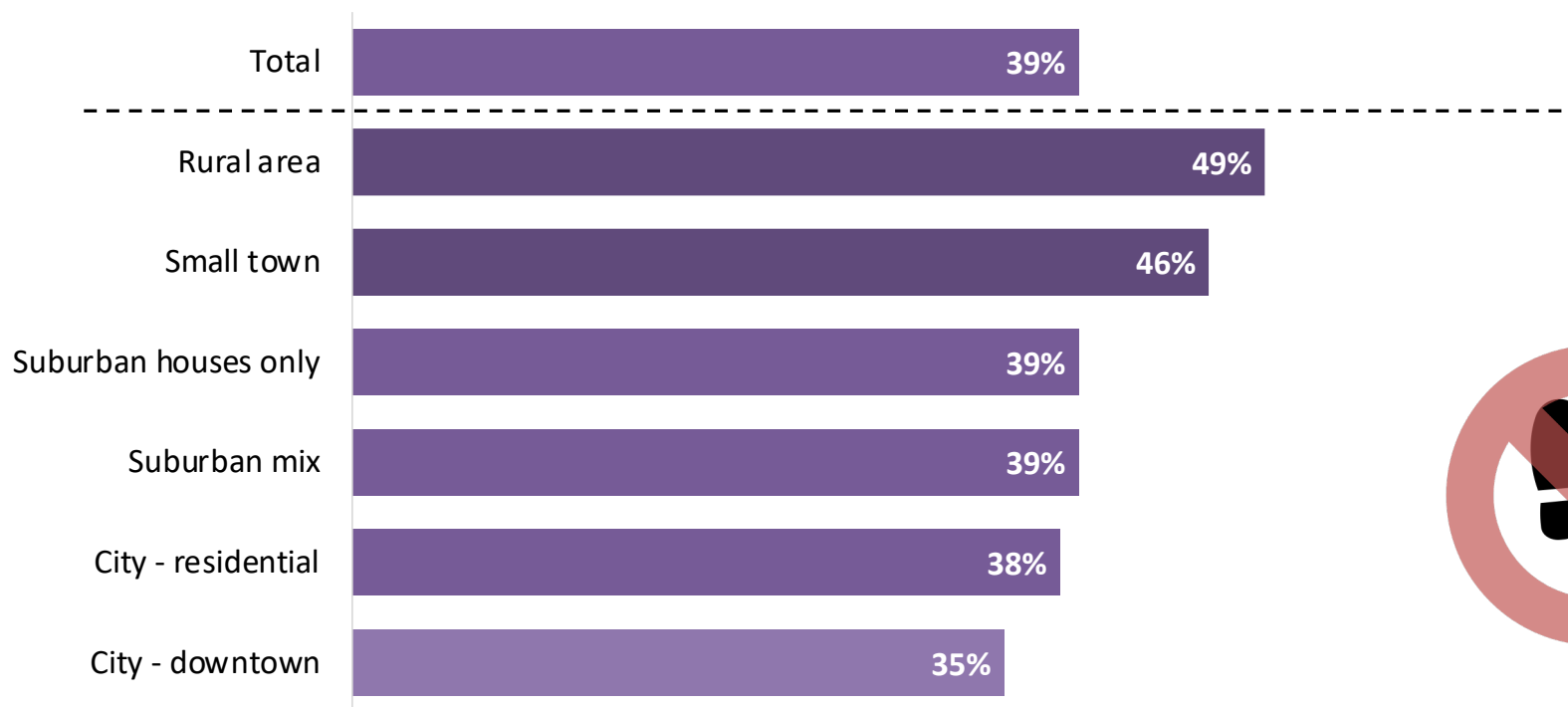
E. I do not feel safe because of traffic.



Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## Those in Rural Areas and Small Towns Most Likely to Feel Unsafe Walking Because of Traffic

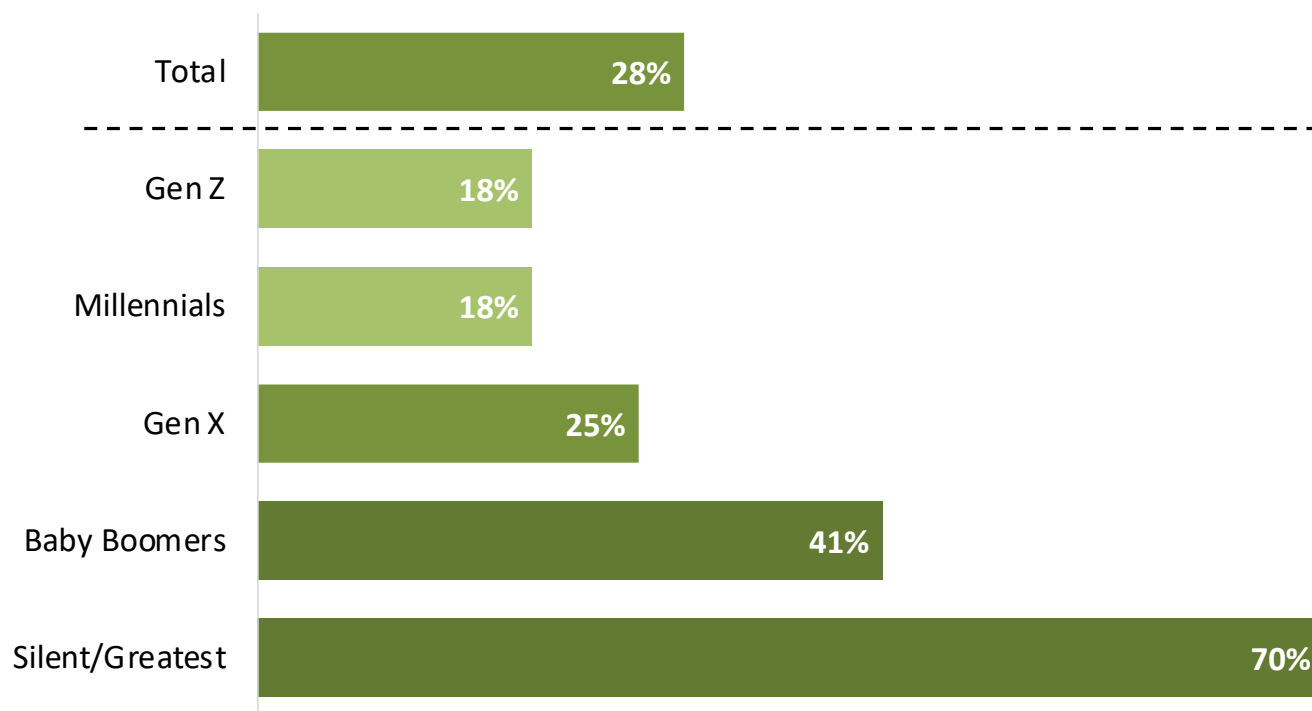
E. I do not feel safe because of traffic.



Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## Baby Boomers and Silent Generation Most Likely to Say Their Health Prevents Them From Doing More Walking

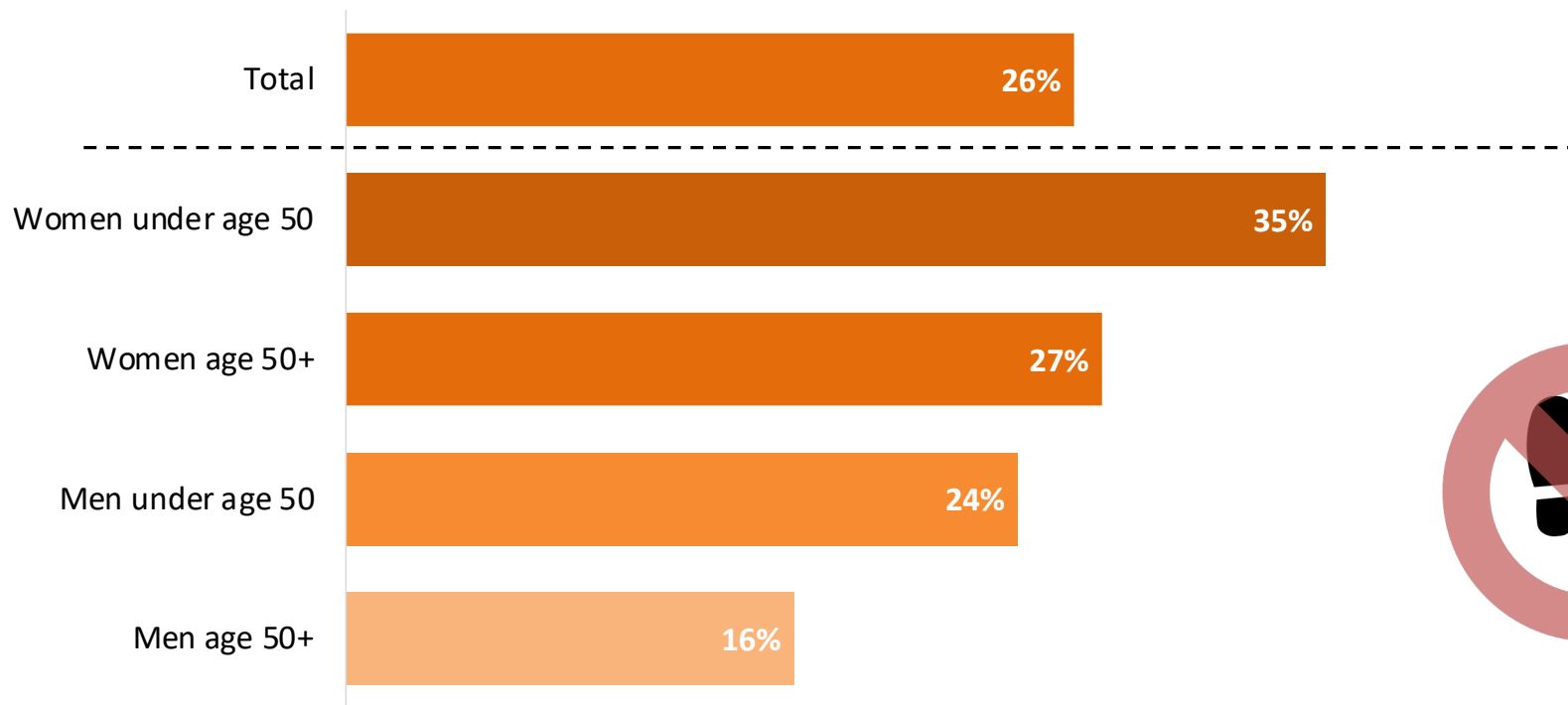
D. My health prevents me.



Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## Crime as a Deterrent to Walking Highest Among Women Under Age 50

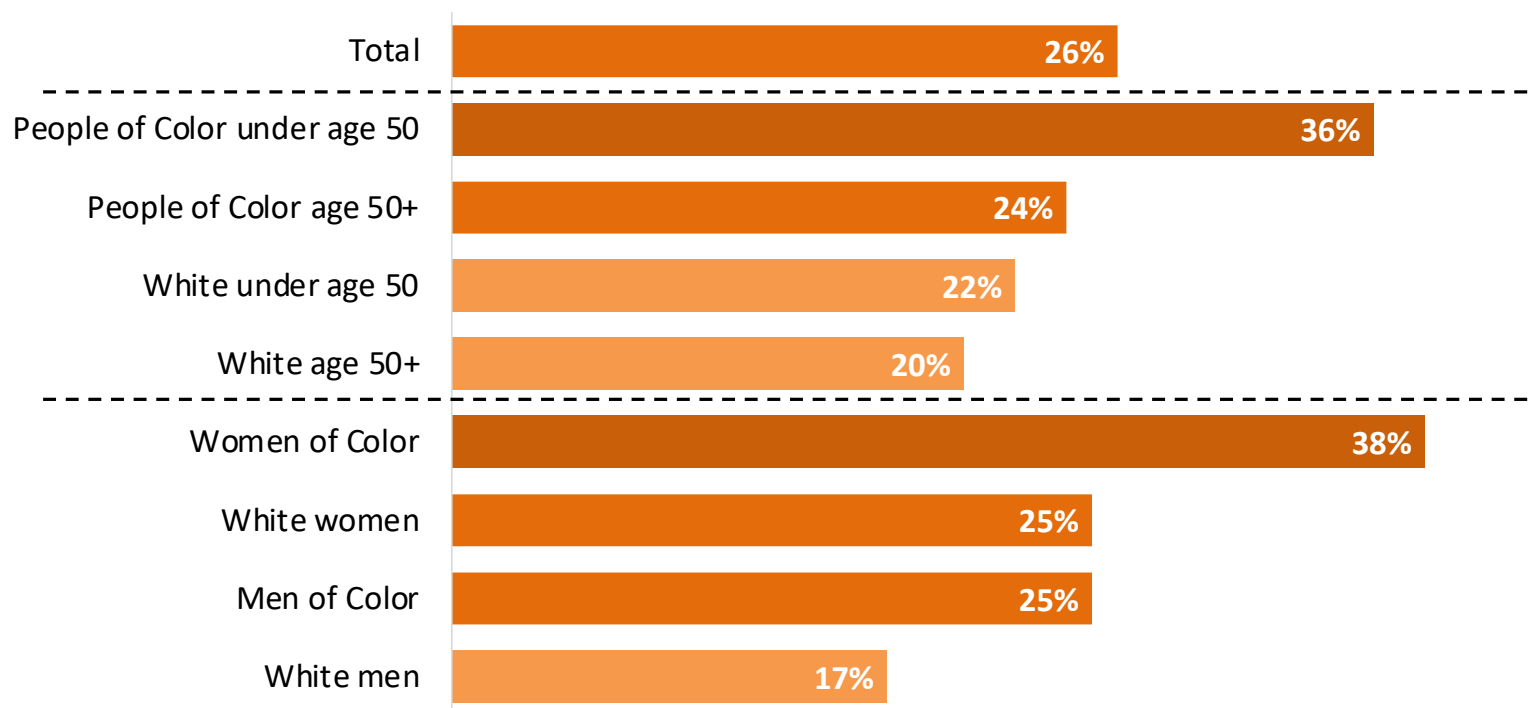
F. I do not feel safe because of crime.



Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## People of Color – Especially Women and Younger – Also More Likely to Cite Crime as a Deterrent to Walking More

F. I do not feel safe because of crime.

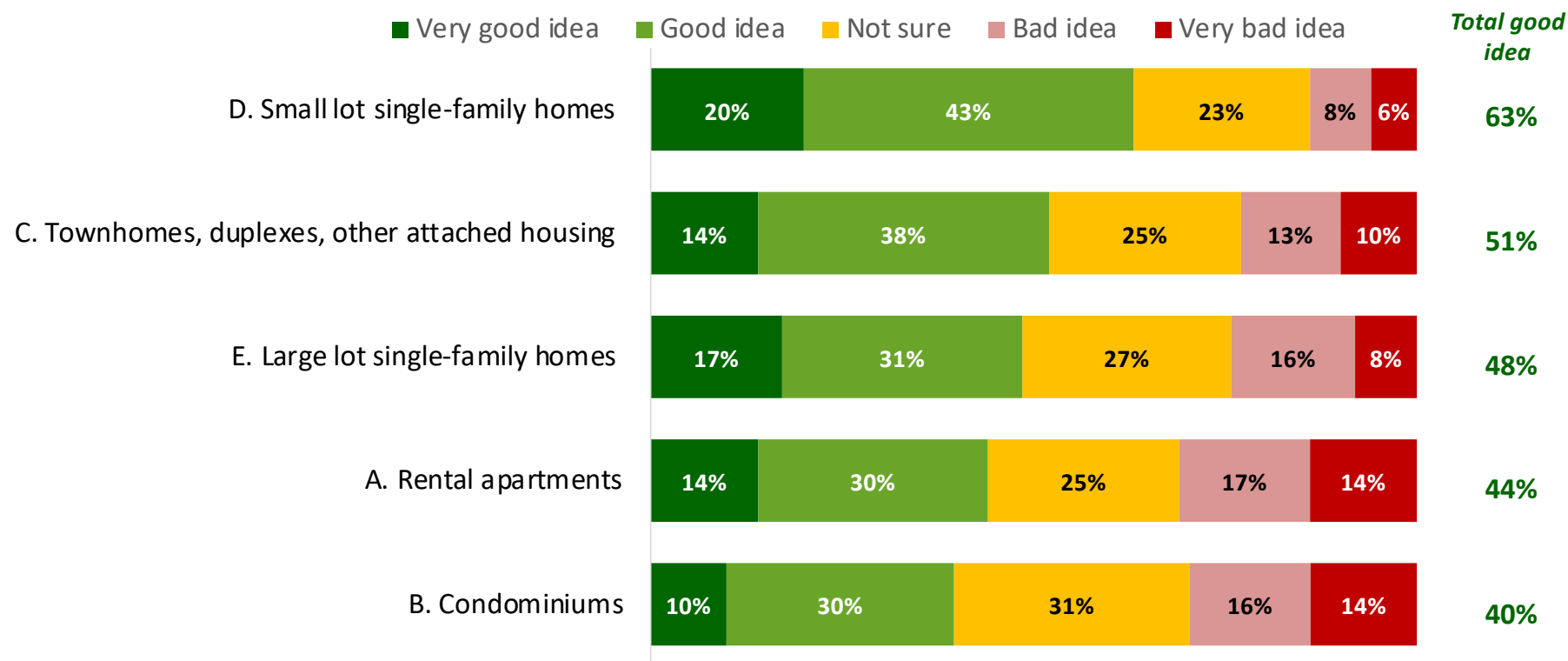


Q.19 Now think about things that may keep you from doing more walking. Please indicate if each of the following keeps you from doing more walking.

## *Openness to Housing Types*

## Most Adults Think Building More Small-lot Homes Is A Good Idea, But Are Less Enthused About Rentals And Condos

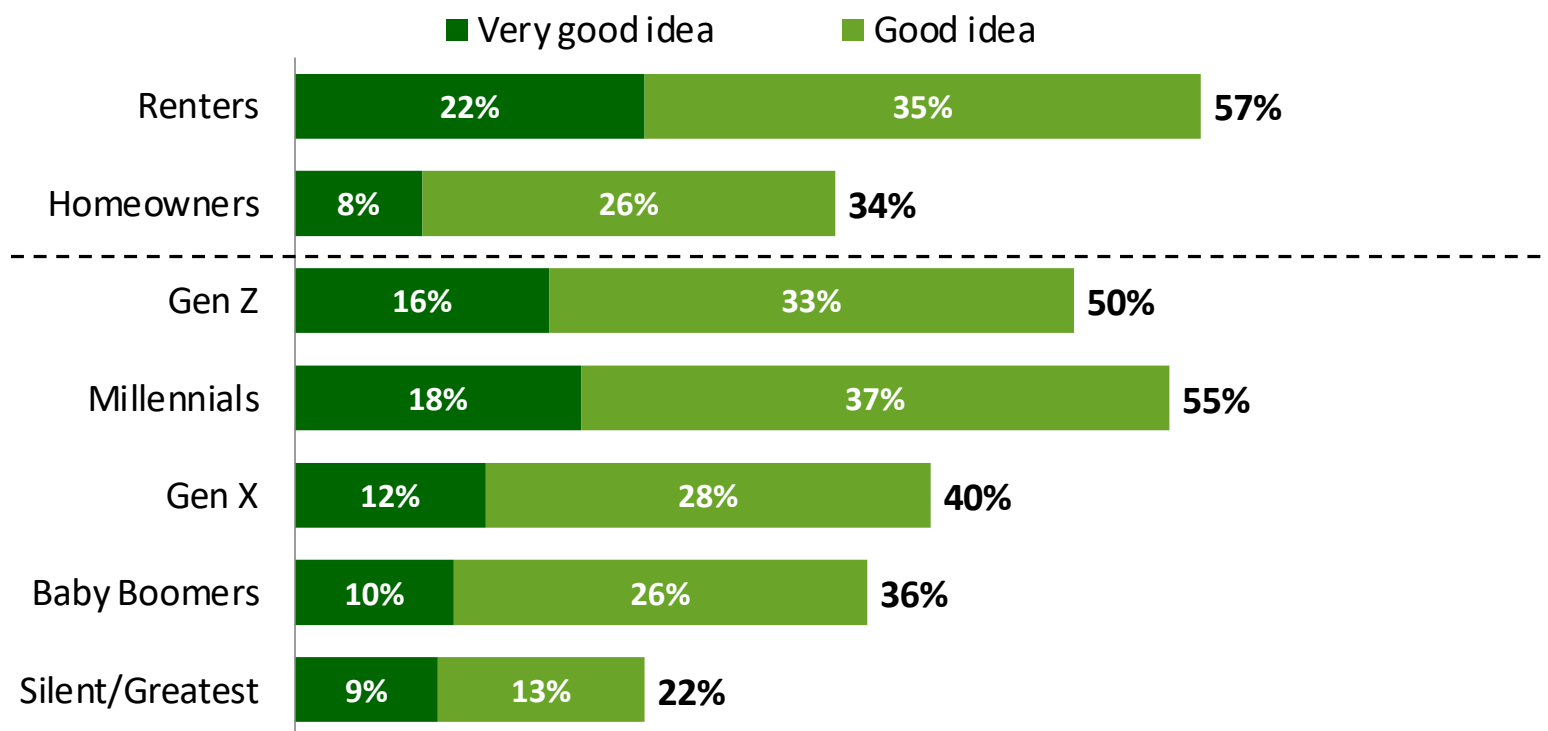
### Opinions on Building More housing



Q.20 Thinking about the issue of housing availability. In your opinion, how good or bad of an idea is it to build more of the following types of housing in your community?

## Renters and Younger Generations Are More Supportive Of Building More Rental Apartments In Their Community

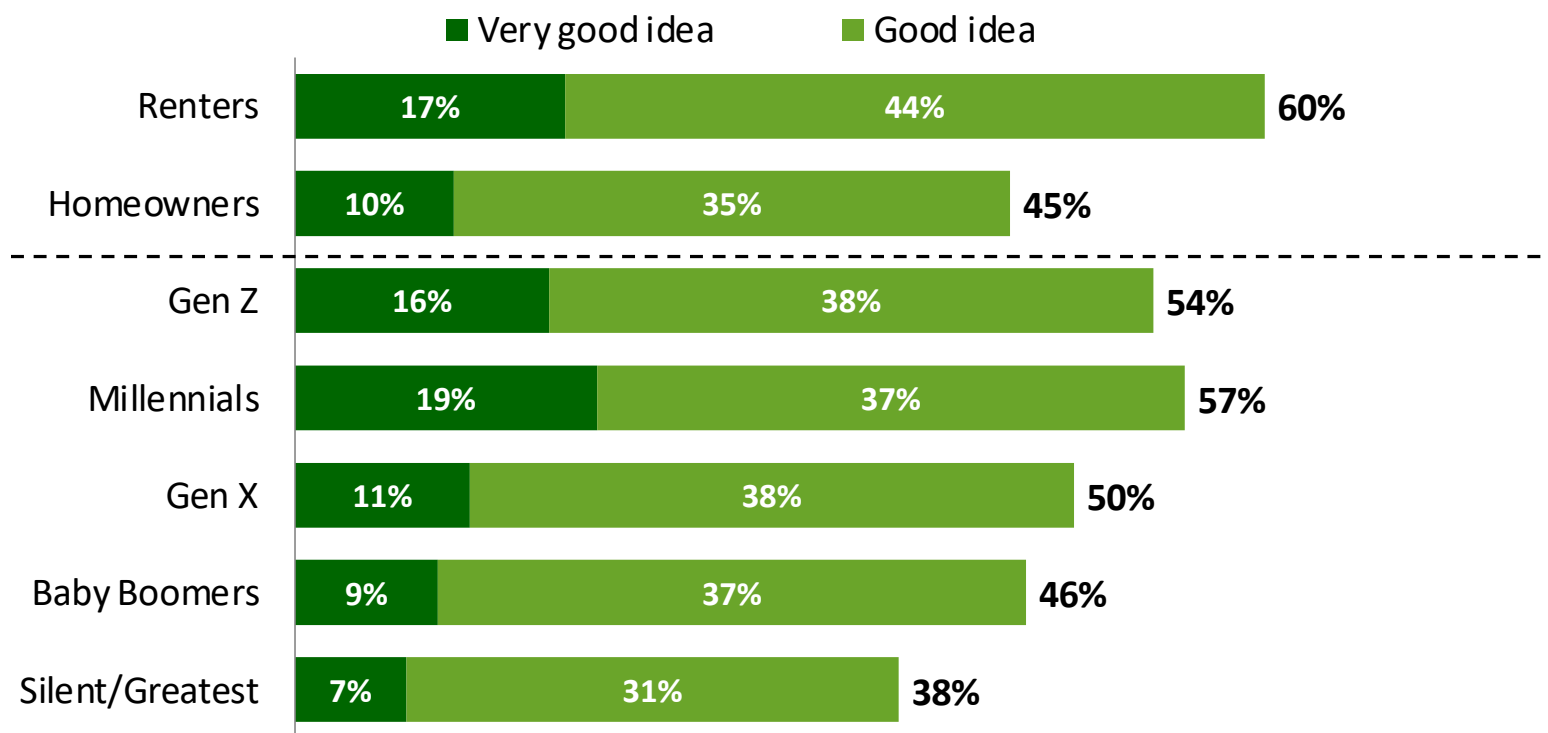
### A. Building More Rental Apartments



Q.20 Thinking about the issue of housing availability. In your opinion, how good or bad of an idea is it to build more of the following types of housing in your community?

## Younger Generations And Renters Are More Supportive Of Building More Townhomes and Duplexes In Their Community

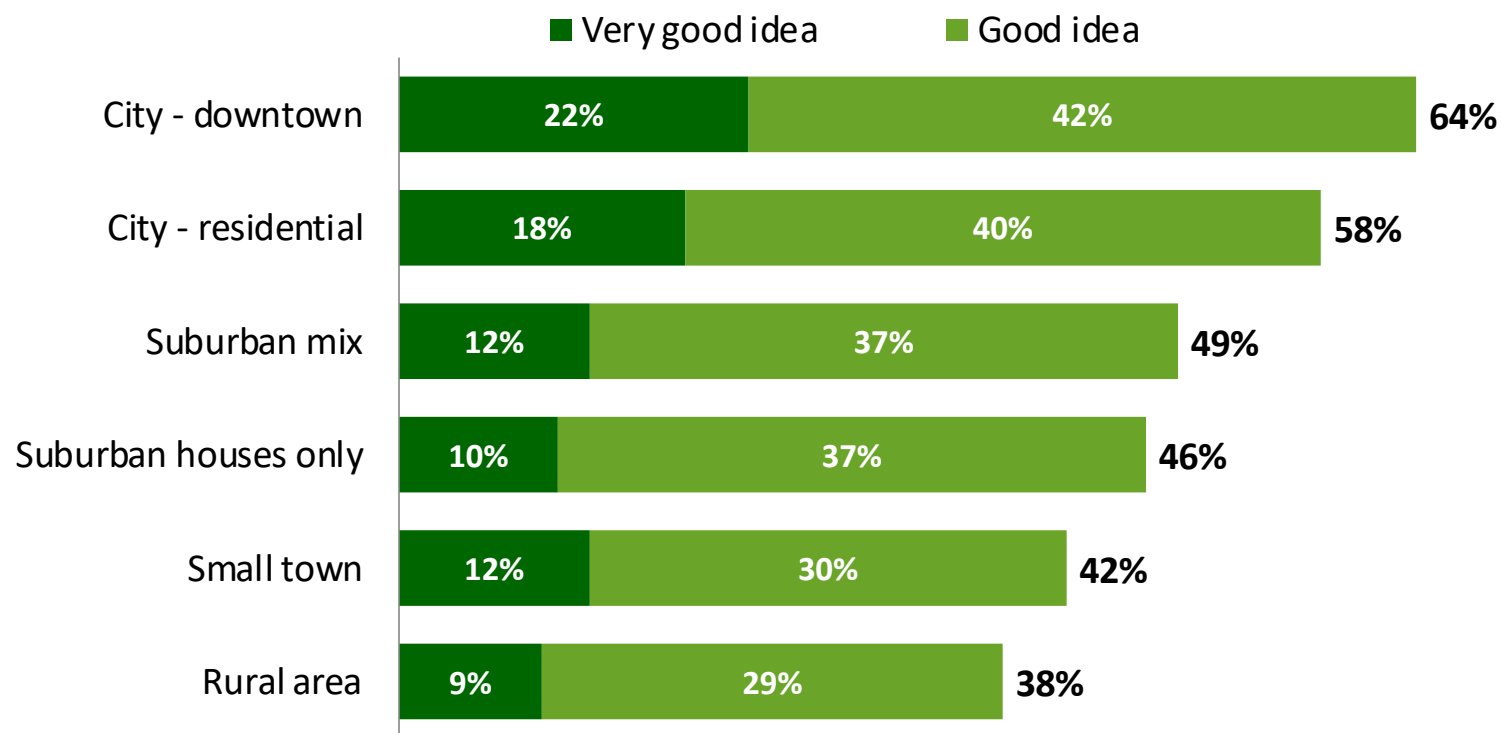
### C. Townhomes, duplexes, or other attached housing



Q.20 Thinking about the issue of housing availability. In your opinion, how good or bad of an idea is it to build more of the following types of housing in your community?

## Residents in Cities Are More Supportive Of Building More Townhomes and Duplexes In Their Community

### C. Townhomes, duplexes, or other attached housing



Q.20 Thinking about the issue of housing availability. In your opinion, how good or bad of an idea is it to build more of the following types of housing in your community?

## Survey Methodology

Statara designed this Internet survey of the top 50 metropolitan statistical areas in the United States. The survey reached 2,000 adults, 18 years or older. The survey was conducted by YouGov on May 4-May 16, 2026.

YouGov interviewed 2000 respondents who were then matched down to a sample of 2000 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). The demographic characteristics of the top 50 MSAs were calculated by mapping PUMAs on the ACS to MSAs correspondence files from the Geocorr 2026: Geographic Correspondence Engine (Missouri Census Data Center) The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores.

The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and Statara regions. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles.

The weights were then post-stratified on a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories), and education (4-categories), and a post-stratification on parents with children under 19, to produce the final weight.