



RESULTS FOR

Forsyth County, NC

2026 Community Survey & Focus Groups

September 14, 2026

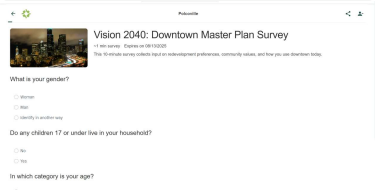
About Polco



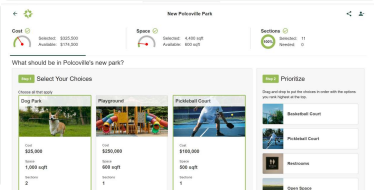
Polco's **engagement** and **analytics** platform helps public entities improve quality of life.

- 70 Bloomberg WWC
- 2 Baldrige Winners
- Hundreds of GFOA DBA winners

Engagement



Surveys & Polls



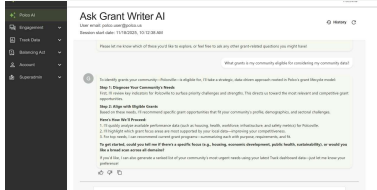
Prioritizations



Simulations

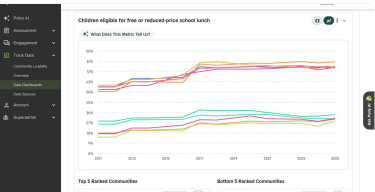
Your Sales Tax Receipt	
Excise Tax	\$179.47
Revenue	\$179.47
Transportation Development	\$124.36
Transportation Development	\$124.36
State of Good Repair	\$1.42
Local Return Programs	\$124.44
Local Municipalities & Operators	\$124.44
Paratransit & Related Fare Programs	\$1.42
Highway Multimodal Development	\$99.34
Highway Multimodal Development	\$99.34
Transportation Operations	\$124.36
Bus Operations	\$124.36

Taxpayer Receipts

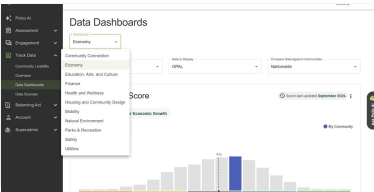


Constituent Facing AI Chatbots

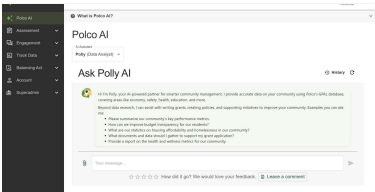
Performance Measurement



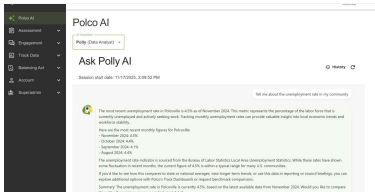
Comparison Dashboards



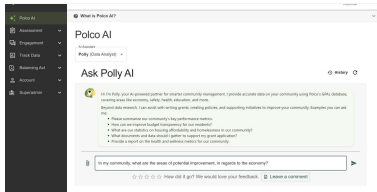
Advanced Analytics



AI Strategic Planner



AI Grant Finder & Writer



AI Evaluation & Report Writer

METHODOLOGY

Survey Methodology

Additionally, three Focus Groups and a Community-wide Open-participation survey were conducted.

Feb 27 – Apr 22, 2026

Survey open

19,479

Invitations mailed to households

1,200

Responses received

District A: 225 · District B: 975

±3%

Margin of error

Address-based random sample every household had a known, equal chance of selection, and results are **statistically weighted** to reflect the full population of Forsyth County.

Results are compared to the **2023 survey**. Trends were considered statistically significant if the change was **±5% or more**. Differences greater than 5% are indicated by a single arrow, and differences greater than 10% by two arrows.

2026 Forsyth County Community Survey

Please complete this survey if you are an adult (18 years older) living in the household.
Your answers are completely anonymous and will only be shared as part of combined, group results.

1. Please CHECK ALL of the reasons why you choose to live in Forsyth County.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ 01. Arts, cultural, and entertainment amenities | ☐ 10. Low crime rates |
| ☐ 02. Housing options | ☐ 11. Low traffic congestion |
| ☐ 03. Parks and open space options | ☐ 12. Close to family/friends |
| ☐ 04. Shopping options | ☐ 13. Close to your work/school |
| ☐ 05. Higher education opportunities | ☐ 14. Access to health care services |
| ☐ 06. Public transportation systems | ☐ 15. Access to farm fresh meats and produce |
| ☐ 07. Diversity of the people who live here | ☐ 16. Quality of public education opportunities |
| ☐ 08. Employment opportunities | ☐ 17. Blend of farm and city environments |
| ☐ 09. Local tax rate and cost of living | ☐ 18. Other: _____ |

2. Which THREE of the items listed in Question 1 will have the BIGGEST IMPACT on your decision to stay in Forsyth County over the next five years? (Use the numbers from Q1 to answer)

First: _____ Second: _____ Third: _____ ☐ None

3. Please indicate how important you believe each of the following will be to the overall quality of life in Forsyth County over the next 20 years.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not sure	Not important
01. Health care access.....	4	3	2	1
02. Behavioral health access.....	4	3	2	1
03. Support systems for those in need.....	4	3	2	1
04. Natural open space.....	4	3	2	1
05. Parks and trails.....	4	3	2	1
06. Library services.....	4	3	2	1
07. Public education (K-12).....	4	3	2	1
08. College and post-secondary education.....	4	3	2	1
09. Environmental stewardship and sustainability.....	4	3	2	1
10. Land use planning.....	4	3	2	1
11. Bike lanes, walkability.....	4	3	2	1
12. Adequacy of residential growth to meet the needs of the County.....	4	3	2	1
13. Adequacy of commercial/industrial growth to meet the job opportunity needs of the County.....	4	3	2	1
14. Job training and workforce development (post-secondary education and training).....	4	3	2	1
15. Housing.....	4	3	2	1
16. Safety, low crime.....	4	3	2	1
17. Social justice/equity/inclusivity.....	4	3	2	1

4. Which THREE of the issues listed in Question 3 do you think will be the most important for the County to address over the next 20 years? (Use the numbers from Q3 to answer)

First: _____ Second: _____ Third: _____

5. What do you think about the overall quality of life in Forsyth County?

☐ Is getting better ☐ Staying the same ☐ Is getting worse

6. Please rate Forsyth County with regard to the following.

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Below average	Poor	Don't know
As a place to live.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place to work.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place to play.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place to raise children.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place to educate children.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place to retire.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place to visit.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place to start a business.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a community that is moving in the right direction.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place where you can earn a living wage.....	5	4	3	2	1	9
As a place where you can find affordable housing.....	5	4	3	2	1	9

Key Findings

KEY FINDING #1

Community Life Remains Strong, with Stable Quality of Life.



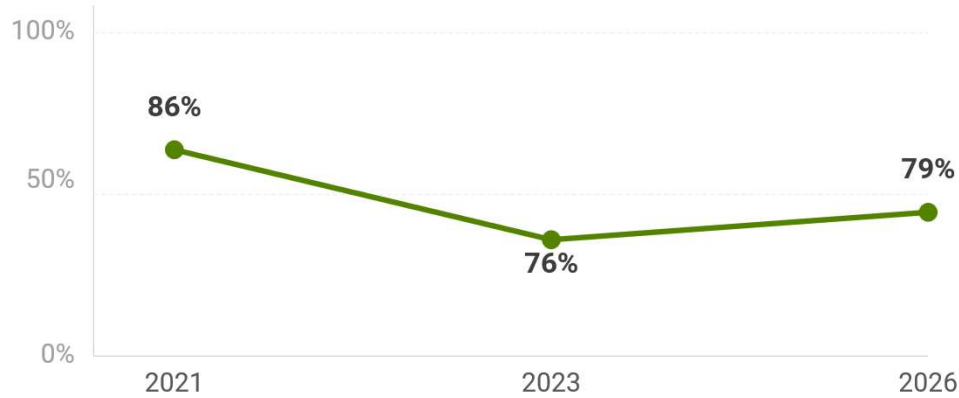
KEY FINDING #1

Overall Quality of Life

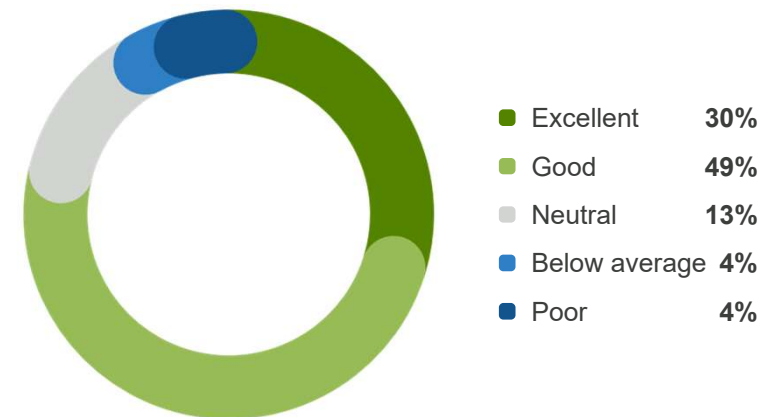
Please rate Forsyth County as a place to live.



Percent rating as "Excellent" or "Good" place to live



2026 rating breakdown

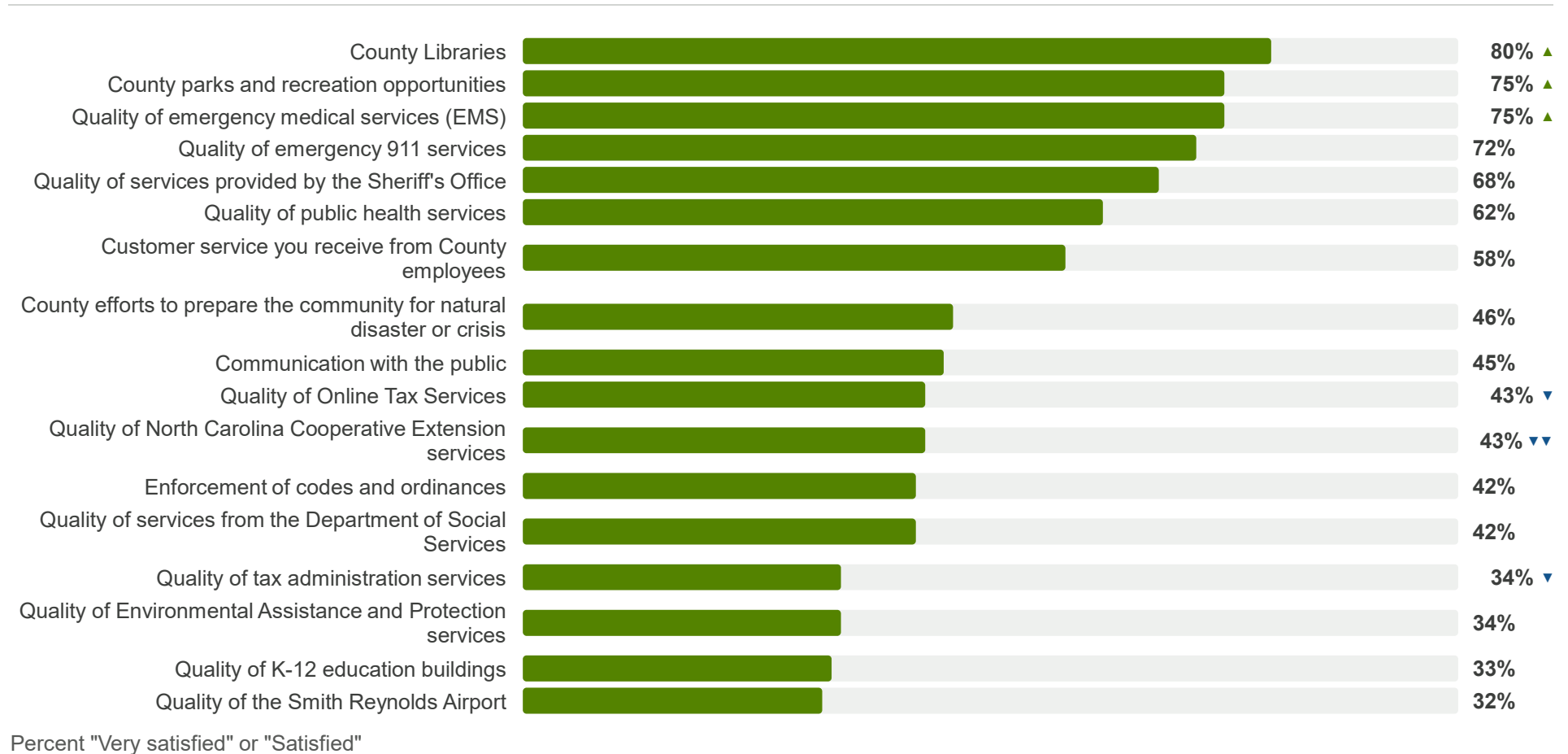


KEY FINDING #1

Quality of County Services



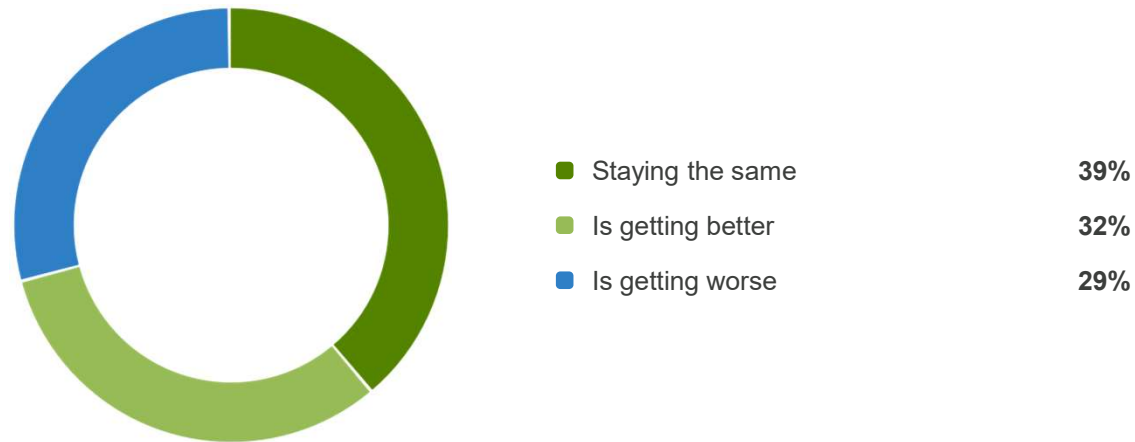
Please rate your satisfaction with each of the major categories of services provided by Forsyth County.



KEY FINDING #1

Quality of Life Direction

What do you think about the overall quality of life in Forsyth County?



KEY FINDING #2

Family ties and housing options attract residents to Forsyth County.

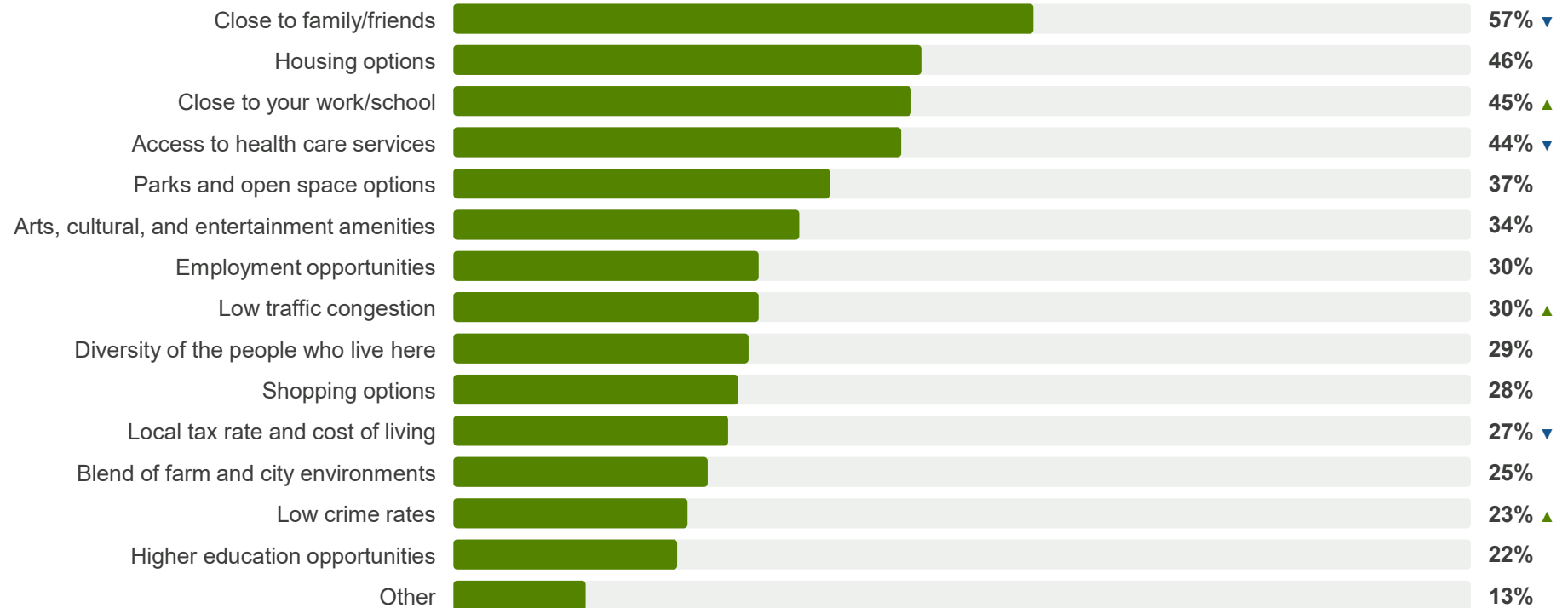


KEY FINDING #2

Reasons for Living in Forsyth County



Please CHECK ALL of the reasons why you choose to live in Forsyth County.



All statistically significant differences from 2023 ranged between 5 and 10 percentage points.

KEY FINDING #3

**Residents Emphasize
Safety, Core Needs, and
Clear Priorities for the
Future.**



KEY FINDING #3

Quality of Life Components



Please indicate how important you believe each of the following will be to the overall quality of life in Forsyth County over the next 20 years.



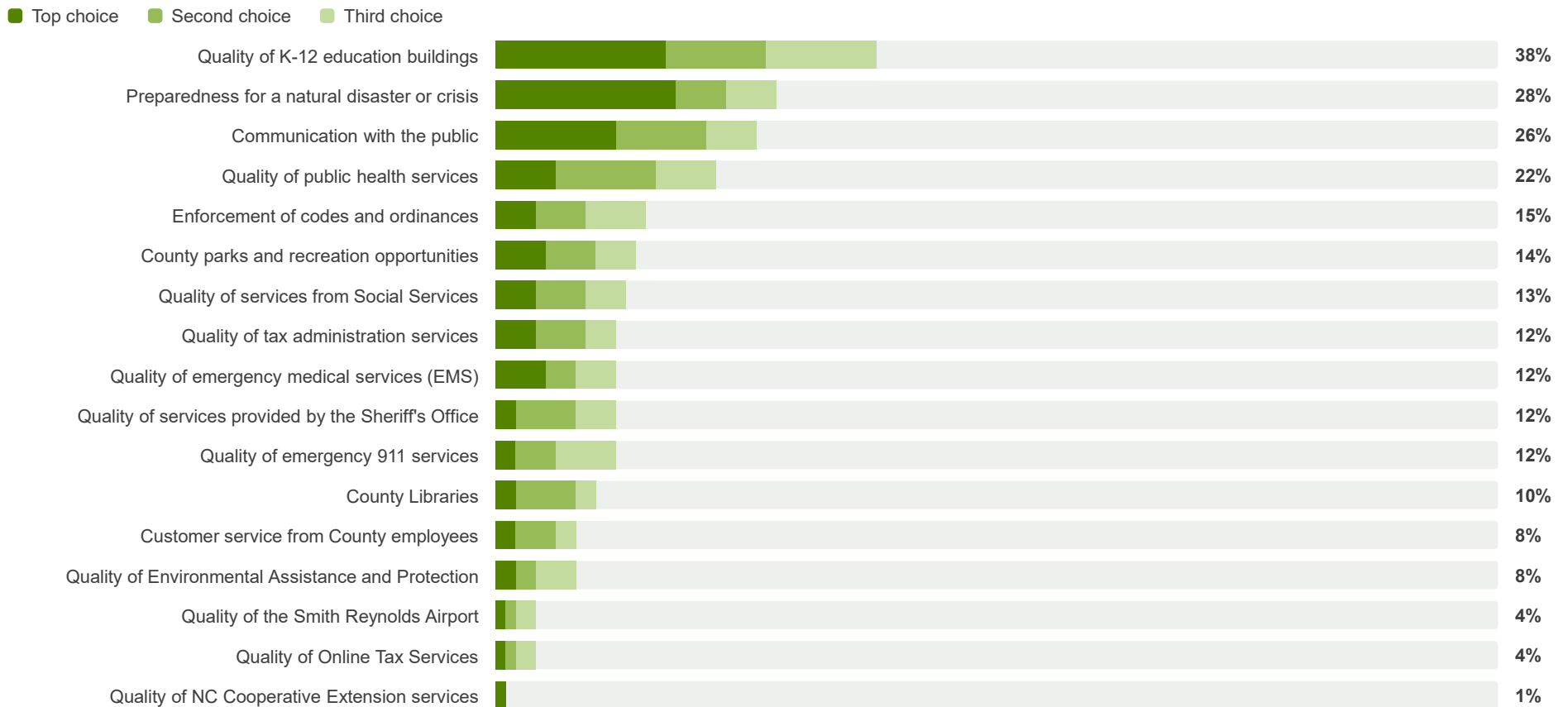
Percent rating "Very important" or "Somewhat important" — showing items at 85% or above

KEY FINDING #3

Top Priorities for Next Two Years



Which THREE categories do you think should receive the MOST EMPHASIS from the County over the next TWO years?



Percent selecting as a top, second, or third choice

KEY FINDING #4

**Parks and Open Spaces Are
Widely Used and Highly
Valued.**

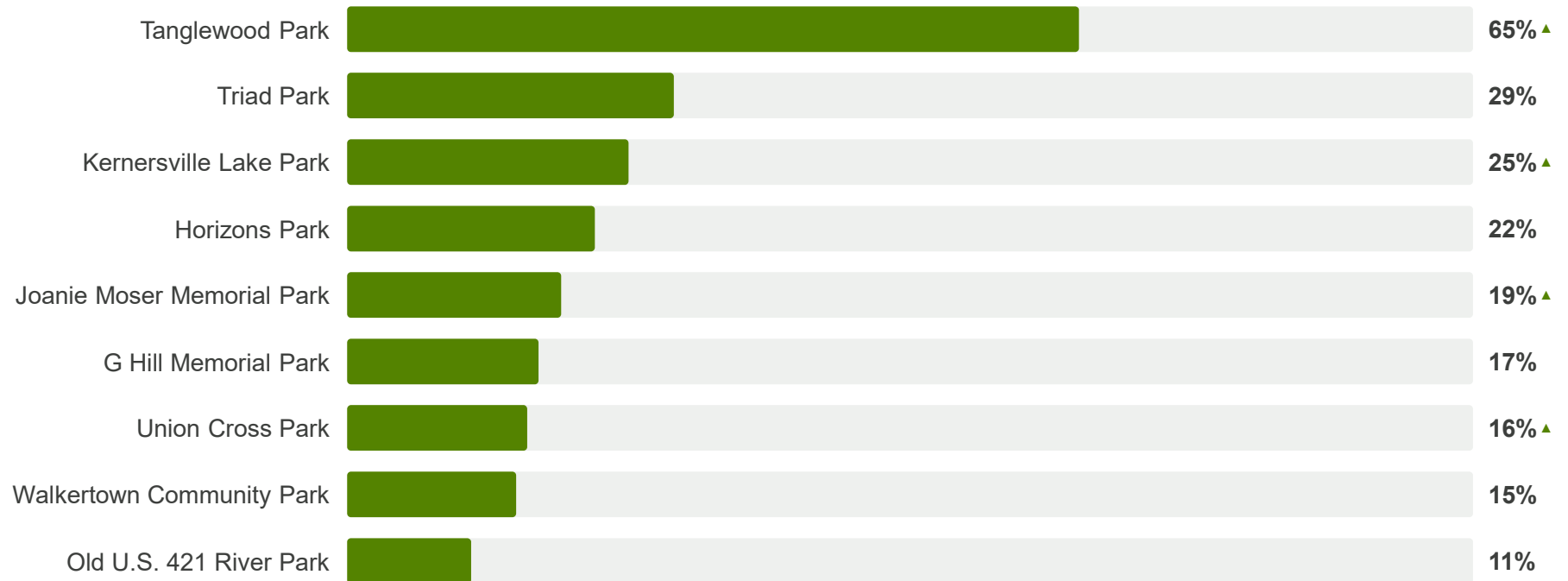


KEY FINDING #4

County Parks Usage



Please indicate if you or other members of your household have visited any of the County parks during the past year.

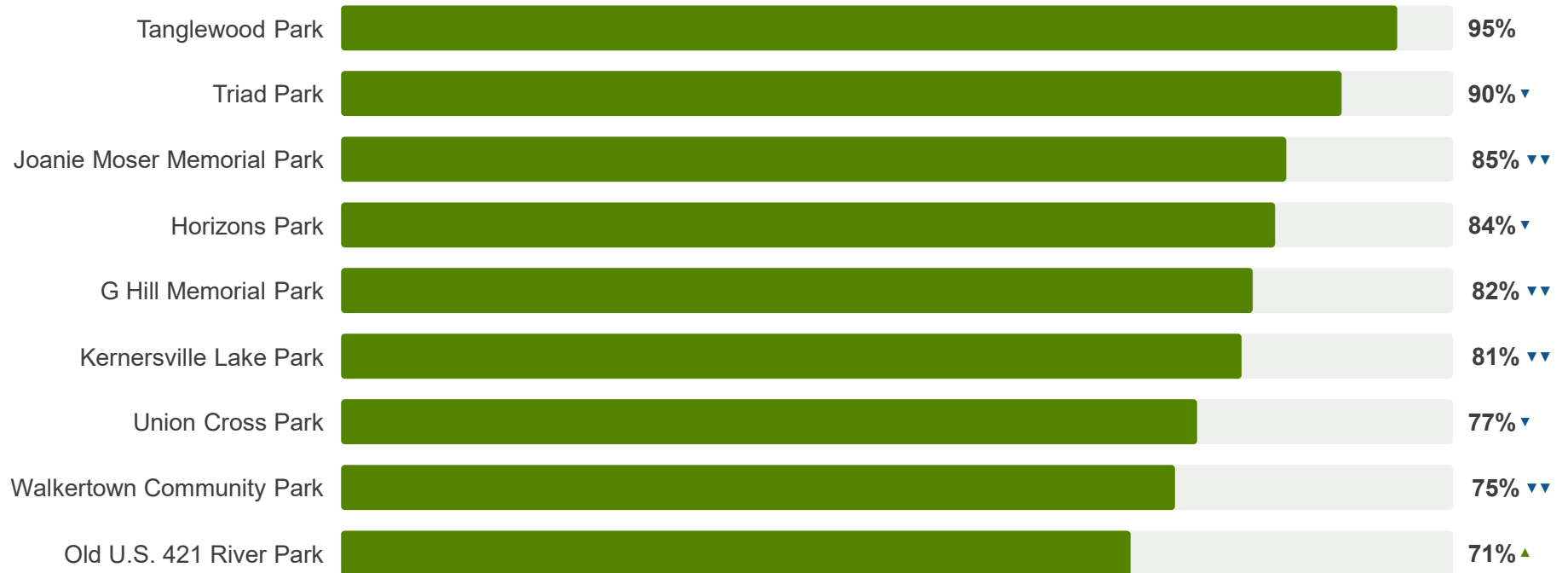


KEY FINDING #4

Condition of the County Parks



Please rate the condition of the facility based on your most recent experience.



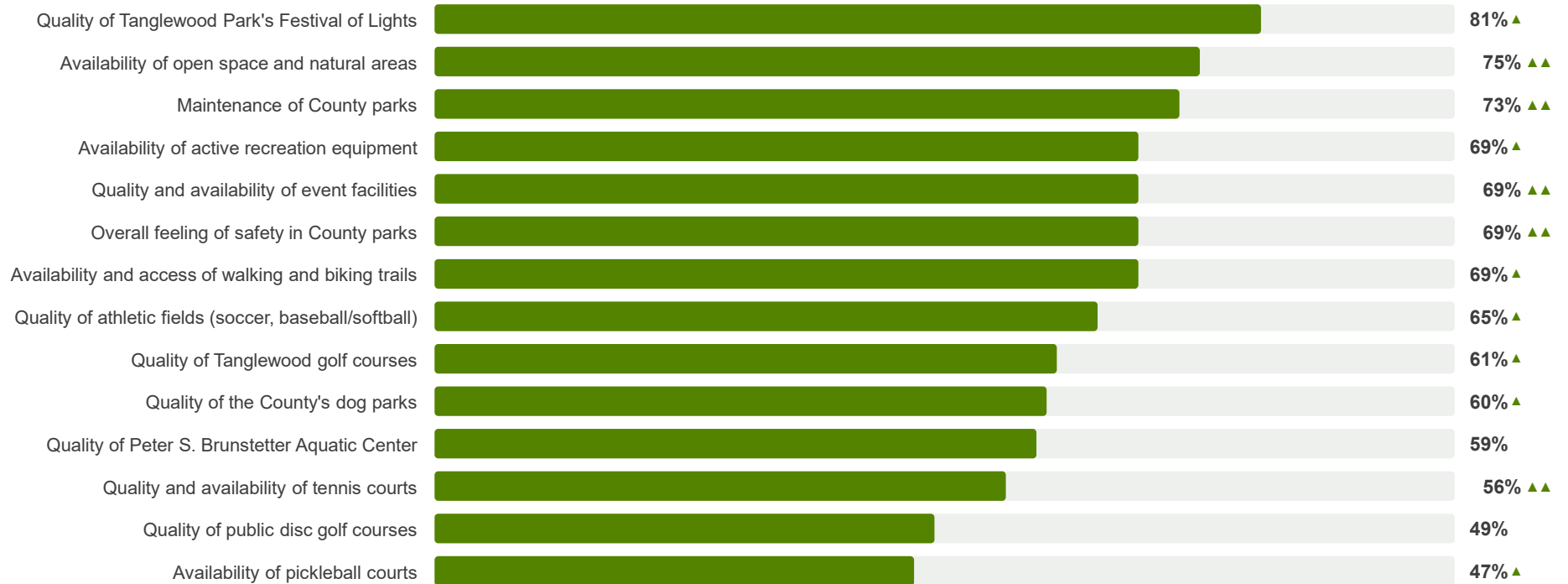
Percent "Excellent" or "Good"

KEY FINDING #4

Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Services



Rate your satisfaction with each of the parks and recreation services provided by Forsyth County.



Percent "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied"

KEY FINDING #5

Libraries Are a Trusted and Well-Used Community Resource.

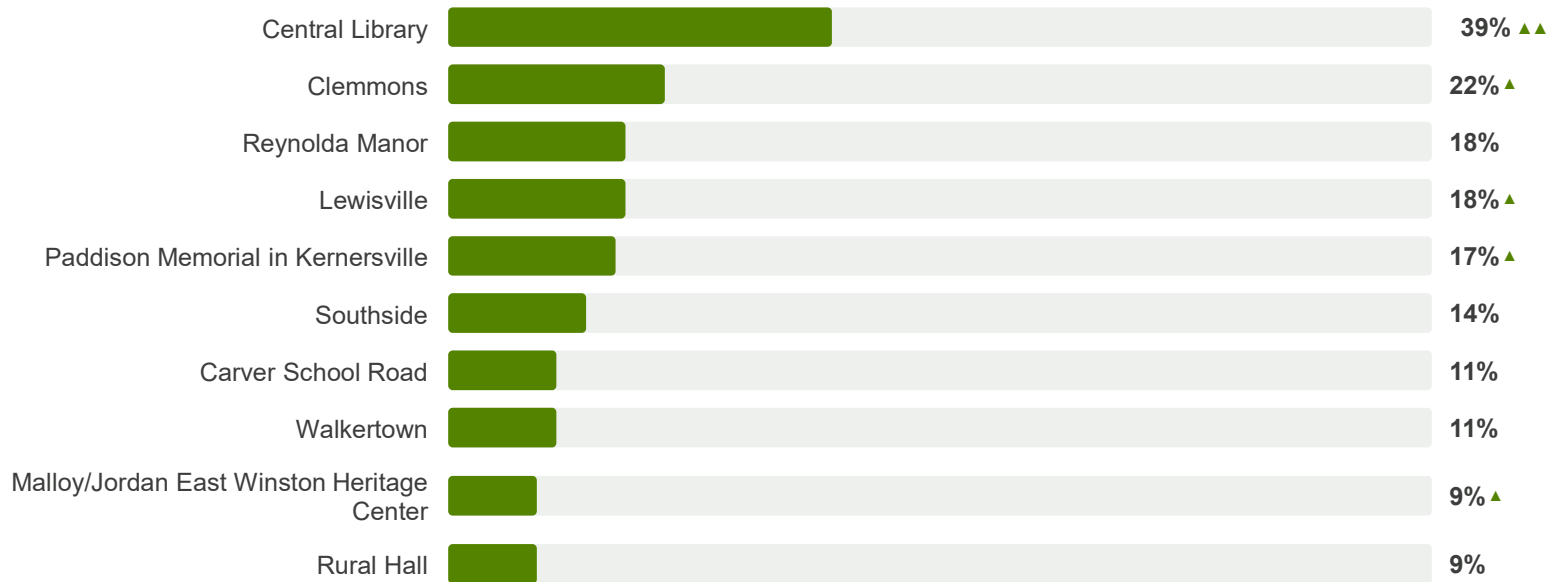


KEY FINDING #5

Libraries Visited



Please indicate if you or other members of your household have visited each of the libraries during the past year.



ONLINE, NOT A BRANCH

The Library's website

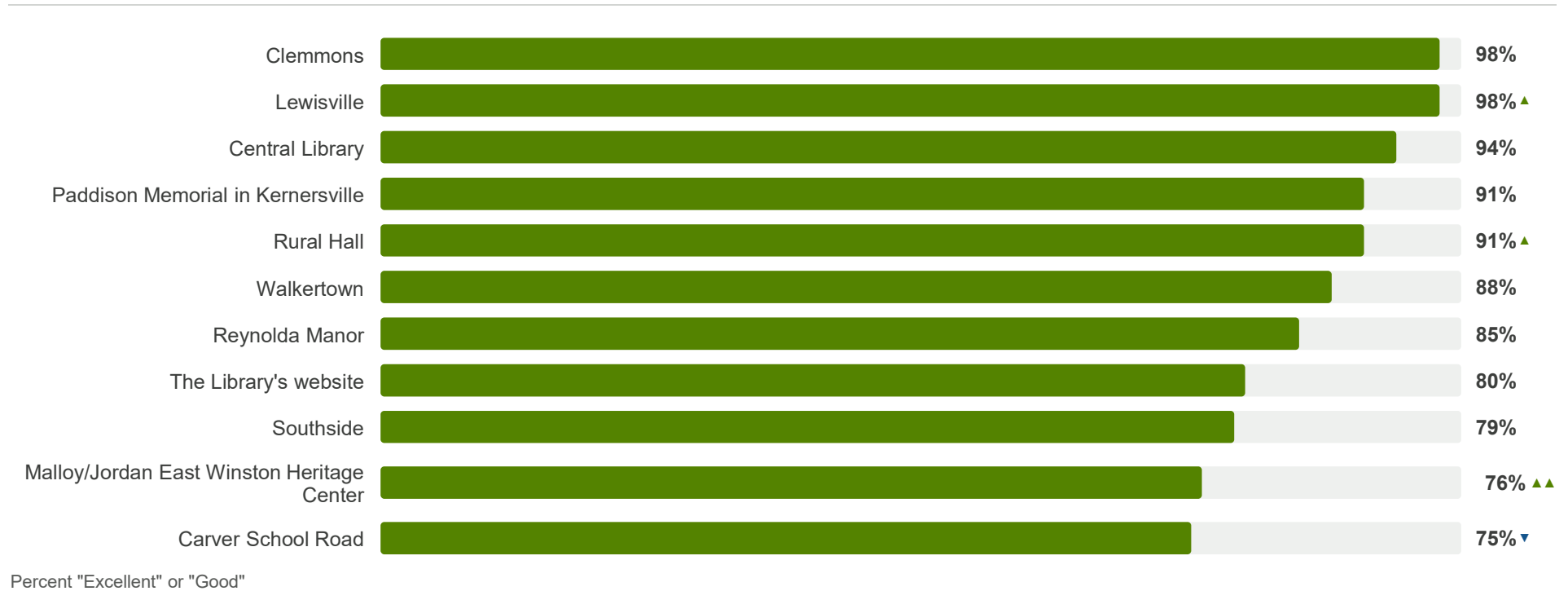
33% ▲▲

KEY FINDING #5

Condition of the Libraries



Please rate the condition of the facility based on your most recent experience.



KEY FINDING #6

Opportunities for Improvement and Emerging Priorities.



KEY FINDING #6

Quality of County Services — Lower End



Please rate your satisfaction with each of the major categories of services provided by Forsyth County.

Satisfaction between 40% and 49%

County efforts to ensure the community is prepared for a natural disaster or crisis	46%
Communication with the public	45%
Quality of Online Tax Services	43%
Quality of North Carolina Cooperative Extension services	43% ▼▼
Enforcement of codes and ordinances	42%
Quality of services from the Department of Social Services	42%

Percent "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied"

Satisfaction between 30% and 39%

Quality of tax administration services	34% ▼
Quality of Environmental Assistance and Protection services	34%
Quality of K-12 education buildings	33%
Quality of the Smith Reynolds Airport	32%

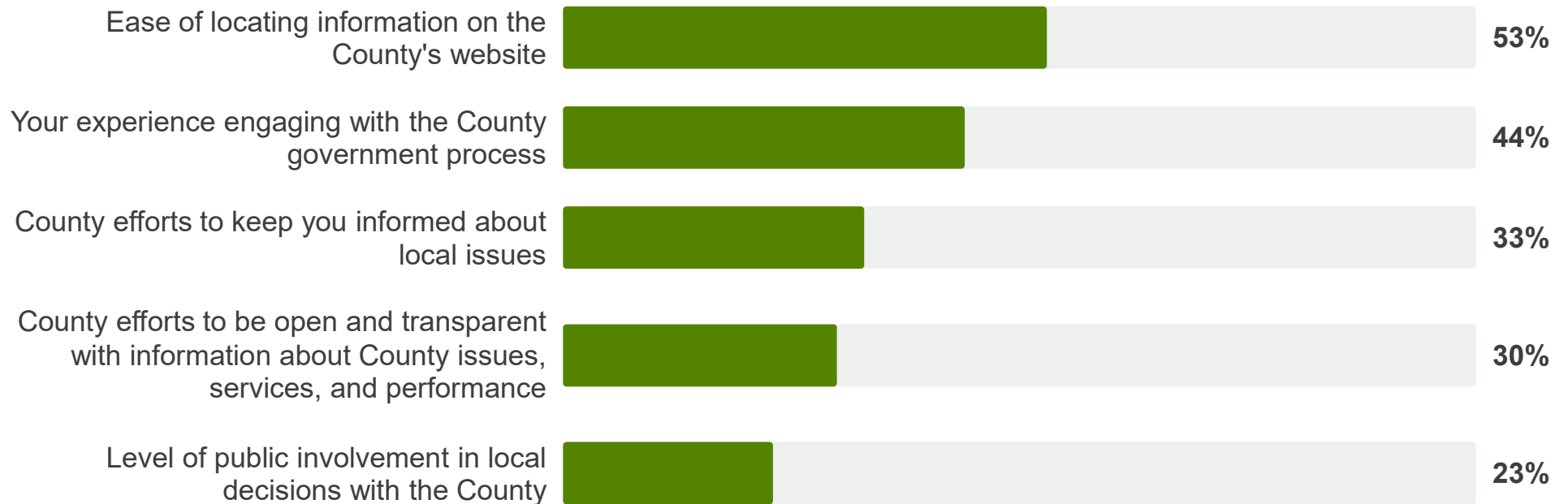
Most items on this list were not rated statistically different from 2023 and remain the same items rated lowest in 2023.

KEY FINDING #6

Satisfaction with County Communications



For each of the following, please rate your satisfaction.

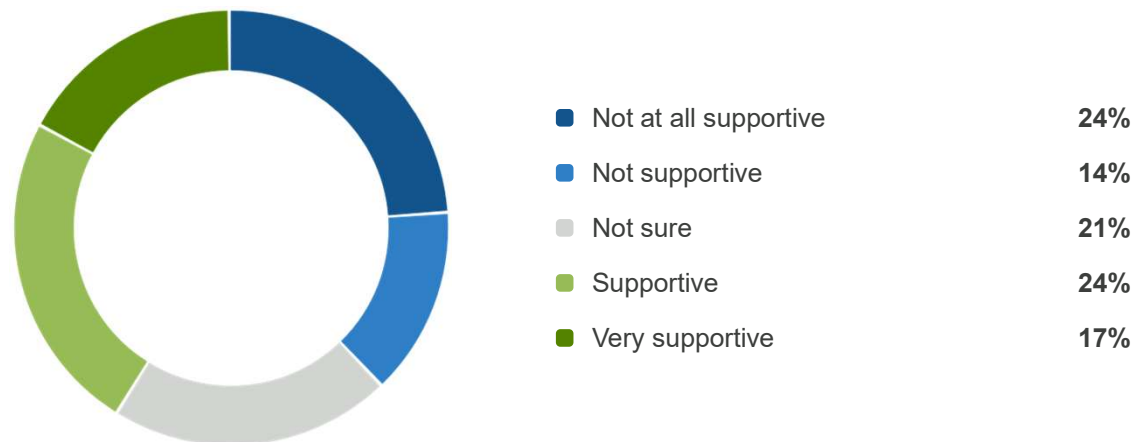


Percent "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied"

KEY FINDING #6

Tax Increase Support

How supportive would you be of a tax increase if it were used to fund the services that you indicated should receive the most emphasis?



Comparison of Forsyth County Ratings to the Nation

Most benchmarked results are on par with the nation

17 of 24 measures were rated similar to the national benchmark

As a place to live	79%	Walking and biking trails: availability and access	69%	Sheriff's Office services	68%
As a place to visit	55%	Quality of public health services	62%	Emergency medical services (EMS)	75%
As a place to work	69%	Tanglewood Park's Festival of Lights	81%	Fire Division services	82%
Enforcement of codes and ordinances	42%	County libraries	80%	Preparedness for a natural disaster or crisis	46%
Open space and natural areas in County parks	75%	As a place to raise children	65%	Moving in the right direction	44%
County parks and recreation opportunities	75%	As a place to retire	63%		

HIGHER THAN THE NATION

Affordable housing

41%

Percent positive shown for each measure

Six measures are lower than the national benchmark

Four of the six lower-rated measures relate to governance and communication

EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE As a place to educate children 48%	SAFETY Quality of animal services 49%
GOVERNANCE Open and transparent information 30%	GOVERNANCE Public involvement in local decisions 23%
GOVERNANCE Customer service from County employees 58%	GOVERNANCE Keeping residents informed about local issues 33%

Percent positive shown for each measure

Comparison of Responses by Commissioner District

District A and District B differ most in outlook, priorities, and use of place

Only statistically significant differences are shown; percentages illustrate selected findings

DISTRICT A

More positive countywide outlook

Residents more often say quality of life is improving and rate the county as moving in the right direction.

Stronger ratings of education and county systems

A given higher marks to education, preparedness, public health, social services, code enforcement, and several public facilities.

DISTRICT B

More emphasis on parks and open space

B more often identifies natural open space and parks and trails as important to future quality of life.

Greater use of several parks and libraries

B reports more visits to Tanglewood, Triad, Joanie Moser, and several suburban libraries, with higher ratings for many park features.

88 STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT COMPARISONS



Counts show which district had the higher percentage. A higher percentage does not always indicate a more favorable response.

District A is more positive about direction, opportunity, and county engagement

Selected significant differences where District A reports the higher or more favorable response

COUNTY OUTLOOK Quality of life improving 41% vs 29%	COUNTY SERVICES Public health services 68% vs 59%
EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY Place to educate children 56% vs 44%	FACILITIES Courthouse condition 77% vs 67%
ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY Experience engaging with County 54% vs 40%	RATED BEST TO SPEND RETIREMENT Place to retire 71% vs 60%

Other recurring A advantages include health care and higher education as reasons for living in the county, support for inclusion, disaster preparedness, social services, code enforcement, enterprise services, public involvement, and transparency.

District B stands out for parks, place-based use, and physical library preferences

Selected significant differences where District B reports the higher response

FUTURE PRIORITIES Natural open space 93% vs 85%	LIBRARY USE Clemmons Library 27% vs 11%
PARK USE Tanglewood Park 69% vs 56%	LIBRARY PREFERENCES Physical materials preferred 45% vs 27%
PARK SERVICES Active recreation equipment 73% vs 57%	INFORMATION SOURCES County website 54% vs 39%

B also reports higher use of Joanie Moser, Old U.S. 421 River park, and Triad parks, stronger ratings for several park conditions and amenities, and more visits to Paddison Memorial, Lewisville, and Rural Hall libraries.

Summary of Key Findings from the Resident Survey

01

Community Life Remains Strong, with Stable Quality of Life.

02

Family ties and housing options attract residents to Forsyth County.

03

Residents Emphasize Safety, Core Needs, and Clear Priorities for the Future.

04

Parks and Open Spaces Are Widely Used and Highly Valued.



Libraries Are a Trusted and Well-Used Community Resource.

06

Opportunities for Improvement and Emerging Priorities Include Communication, Transparency, and Opportunities for Public Involvement.

2026 RESIDENT FOCUS GROUPS

A qualitative follow-up to the 2026 Resident Survey

As a follow-up to the 2026 Resident Survey, Polco conducted two focus groups with survey participants who volunteered to continue engaging — going beyond the ratings to hear, in their own words, what shapes their experience of living in Forsyth County.

Focus Group Methods	
Dates	August 4 and 5, 2026
Format	Two moderated Zoom discussions, approximately 60 minutes each — one evening session and one midday session — to allow a broader cross-section of working and non-working residents to take part
Recruitment	Residents who completed the 2026 Resident Survey and volunteered for continued engagement. Participants received compensation via an Amazon gift card or check.
Participation	17 residents recruited; 10 attended
Discussion topics	Initial impressions of the county; awareness of government roles and services; current information sources; preferred communication; trust and engagement

WHAT WE HEARD

Residents value Forsyth County's scale, variety and quality of life

The best of both worlds

A manageable scale with meaningful amenities, without the traffic and sprawl of a larger metro.

Distinctive assets

Parks, arts and culture, varied neighborhoods, and respected educational institutions.

A place worth staying

Residents described small-town friendliness paired with big-city convenience.

Priorities residents raised

- Housing affordability and paths to homeownership
- School support, finance and safety
- Emergency preparedness and development impacts
- Transportation capacity and connected greenways
- Job creation and downtown revitalization

Focus groups add context and depth; the resident survey remains the primary measure of countywide opinion.

CENTRAL INSIGHT

The core challenge is discoverability, not disinterest

"You don't know what you don't know."

Participant on why residents do not use communication tools that already exist

1

Blurred roles

Residents often could not distinguish county, city, school district and state responsibilities.

2

Low channel awareness

Most participants did not know the county newsletter, social accounts or alerts existed.

3

High willingness

Residents said they would subscribe, follow and participate if the paths were clear and easy.

The opportunity: make existing tools easier to find, understand and use.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Residents want communication that is direct, brief and easy to act on

Urgent information

A push or text alert system for boil-water advisories, road closures and other critical events. Make enrollment simple and visible. Residents also want one authoritative, ad-free source during a crisis.

Everyday information

Shorter, more frequent updates with clear headlines, brief summaries and links to detail on a predictable schedule.

A mix of channels

Facebook was consistently valued, but print remains important for residents less comfortable online.

Accessible ways to participate

Promote meeting times clearly and bring informal outreach to trusted locations such as recreation and senior centers.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Close the awareness gap—and show residents that their input led to action

1 Promote what already exists

Run a coordinated awareness campaign for the newsletter, Facebook page, alerts and meeting information.

2 Strengthen critical alerts

Launch direct push or text notifications and remove friction from sign-up.

3 Broaden participation

Use accessible locations, informal events, surveys and focus groups before major decisions.

4 Report back visibly

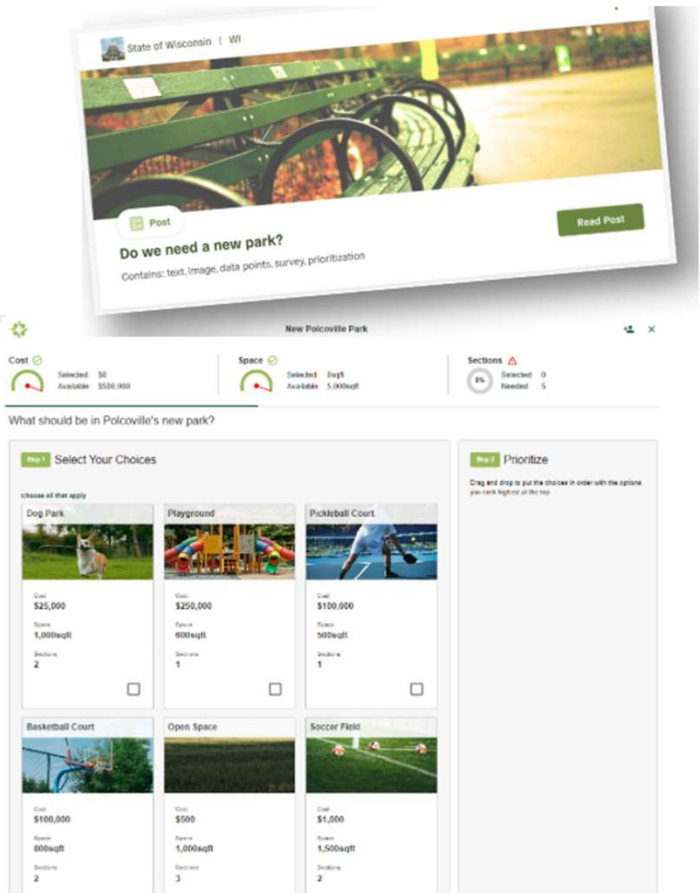
Share what the county heard, what it will do and where responsibility sits across county, city and schools.

How to know the gap is closing

- Newsletter subscriptions and open rates
- Alert sign-ups and enrollment completion
- Growth in county social followers
- Awareness of channels in future research

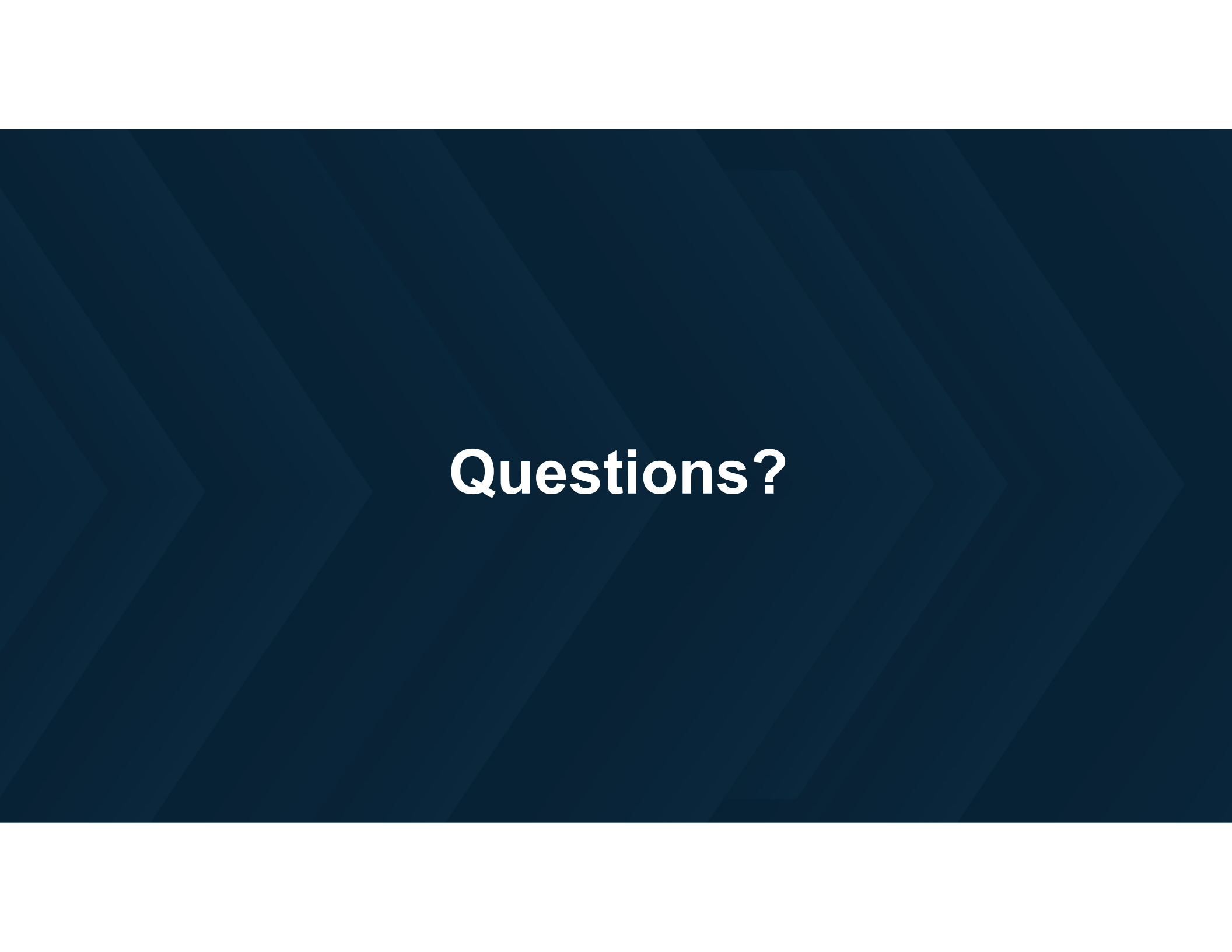
Visible follow-through can extend the trust created by asking and listening.

Next Steps: Continue to Engage Residents and Track Outcomes



Forsyth County
has 918
subscribers on
Polco





Questions?

Thank you!

Michelle Kobayashi

Principal Research Strategist

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