



Piopio Community Survey

PREPARED FOR PROJECT PIOPIO TRUST

JANUARY 2025

Image sourced from <https://www.piopio.net.nz/activity/scenic-drives>

Executive Summary

The Project Piopio Trust (PPT) was established in 2006 to support the development of the Piopio area. Since then, Piopio has changed and grown, and the PPT team wished to conduct a survey to better understand the community's desires for future initiatives.

The survey was undertaken between the 13th of November and the 15th of December 2024. The results demonstrate that Piopio residents value its safe, supportive community and central location but identified challenges for the area of limited amenities, housing shortages, and the high cost of living.

Respondents note Piopio's challenges relate to declining school rolls, an ageing population, and maintaining community infrastructure when considering Piopio's future. Respondents also highlighted the need for improved footpaths, walkways, and cycleways; this was particularly important to families. Furthermore, respondents note the need to focus on social initiatives and expanded housing options to support further growth in the area. The primary services that respondents wish to see include transport solutions, food-based services, and a laundromat.





Image sourced from <https://www.piopio.net.nz/activity/scenic-drive-2-short-route>

Project Overview

This section provides an overview of the project and the responses that were achieved.

Project Background

PROJECT PIOPIO TRUST ESTABLISHMENT

The Project Piopio Trust (PPT) was formed in 2006 to drive the development of Piopio so that it can best serve local residents and the wider community.

PPT was created as the result of several services and shops closing down, limiting the services available to residents and posing a direct threat to the town's existence. As a result of the PPT, several initiatives have been achieved locally, including:

- Fat Pigeon Café
- Branding with a new logo, website and signs for Piopio
- Birdtalk Magazine
- Development of the Village Green and Kara Park (including the toilet design)
- Large frame photos
- Tui Park POP

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Part of the initial establishment of PPT involved completing a community survey. The survey helped PPT understand the community's wishes for the future and aided in prioritising the initiatives that the PPT undertook.

PPT now wishes to repeat the community survey to determine what areas it should focus on in the coming years to best serve the community.

The primary objectives of this survey are to understand:

- The community's perceptions of the area (positive and challenges)
- Any areas for improvement or change that the PPT could facilitate
- Any new services that the community wishes to see brought to the area

Project Background

METHOD

The PPT designed a short survey for residents to complete online or in paper format.

The survey was set up on Versus' system and then promoted by the PPT around the Piopio community.

The survey was open for completion between the 13th of November and the 15th of December 2024.

A total of n=209 people completed the survey. Not all participants completed every question; however, any and all responses to the survey, both incomplete and complete, were included in the results.

The majority of the questions in the survey were free text questions. The responses to the questions were coded into themes at the completion of the survey.

READING THIS REPORT

The report provides the results of this work in two sections. The first examines the community's current view of Piopio, while the second examines its future development.

Each section starts with a summary of the main findings and notes any significant differences seen among demographic groups.

The results for each question are presented in charted format. The charts show the proportion of people who provided a response that fitted into that theme. Where multiple ideas are occurring under a similar theme, these responses have been grouped together to show a 'net score' for the theme.

The footnotes underneath the charts include additional content about the question, specifically the question wording and the number of people who responded to the questions. Please note that this will vary between questions as not all respondents answered every question.

Respondent Profile

A profile of the residents who participated in the survey is shown in the tables below.

RESPONDENT TYPE	%
Individual	90%
Organisation	6%
Business	2%
Other	2%

DURATION IN PIOPIO	%
Less than 5 years	12%
5 – 10 years	11%
11 – 15 years	10%
16 – 20 years	5%
21 – 30 years	24%
31 - 40 years	12%
More than 40 years	24%
Do not live in the area	1%

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	%
Family school-aged kids	33%
Couple/single no kids	26%
Retired single/couple	21%
Family adult kids	11%
Flatting	5%
Non-resident	3%
Family young kids	1%

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR	%
Farming (dairy/beef and sheep)	42%
Professional services	19%
Education (teacher, ECE, student)	16%
Transport	14%
Retail	9%
Rural support (fert spreading, rural retail, etc.)	7%
Personal services (beauty, hair, etc.)	4%
Other	13%



Image sourced from <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/waikato/places/piopio-area/things-to-do/omaru-falls-walk/>

Piopio Community

This section outlines residents' views of the Piopio community, including reasons for moving to the area, positive aspects of Piopio, and some of the challenges that the community faces.

Piopio Community

The main reasons respondents moved to the Piopio area relate to work, predominantly farming-based reasons, or family. A further 22% stated that they were born in the area (mostly those who have lived in the district for more than 40 years). Those who have lived in the community for fewer than 5 years are more likely to indicate that they moved here for the lifestyle and the community feel. Respondents' most positive aspect of the Piopio area is the supportive/safe community, followed by friendly people, a central location, and a range of amenities.

“There is a strong sense of community. Is a small safe town, has good schools and work opportunities and all my friends and family are here.”

Those newer to the community are more likely to state that the area is peaceful and has no traffic issues, while those with children are more likely to state they feel the community is safe and supportive. Interestingly, those who responded on behalf of a business are more likely to state that Piopio's central location is a positive aspect.

Respondents were also asked about the area's potential disadvantages. The most commonly mentioned items are a lack of community amenities and the distance to access these amenities.

“Being isolated away from cities, having to go to Te Kuiti for health issues and supermarket shopping, and for major health issues having to go to Hamilton. Limited employment.”

“Lack of choice with supermarkets. Lack of choice with restaurants and cafes. Lack of choice with home hardware and garden centres.”

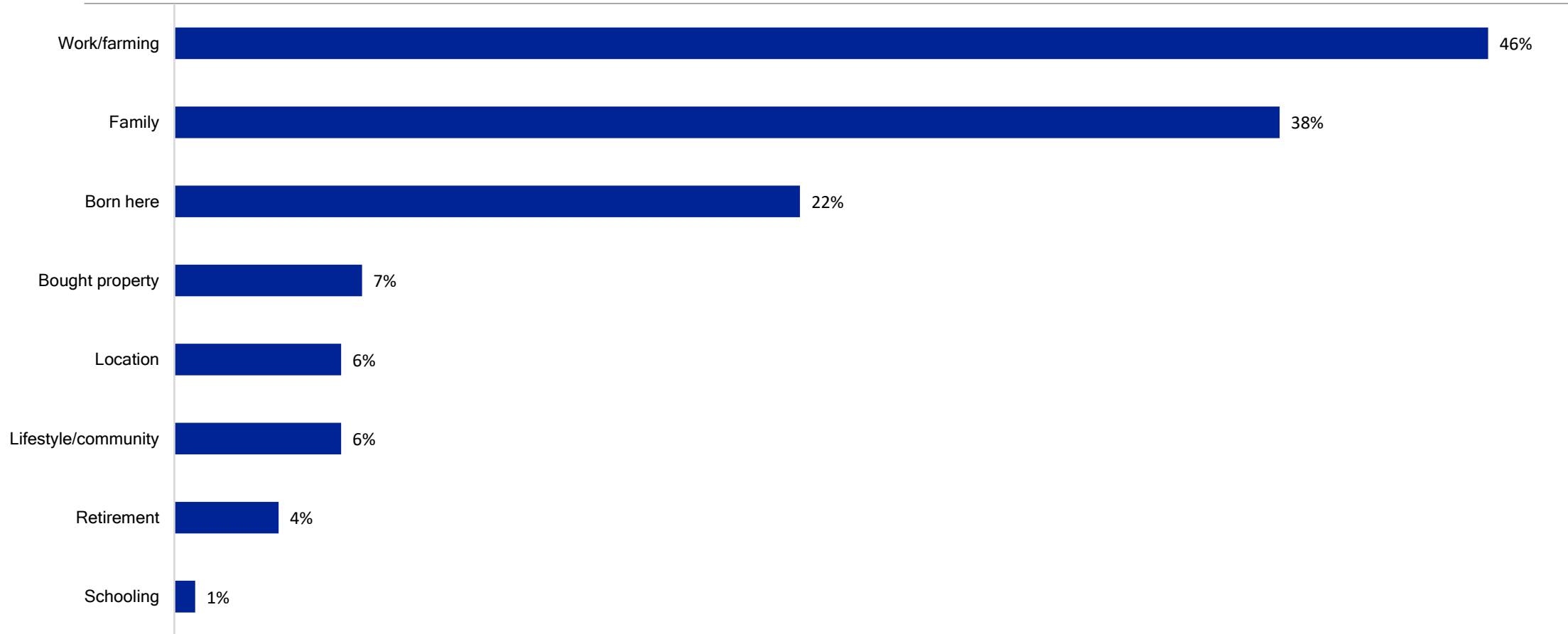
Piopio Community

Those who have lived in the area for fewer than 5 years are more likely to indicate that the lack of amenities is a disadvantage, possibly in comparison to the access they have had in previous locations. Families and those with school-aged children appear more likely to mention the high cost of living in the area as a disadvantage.

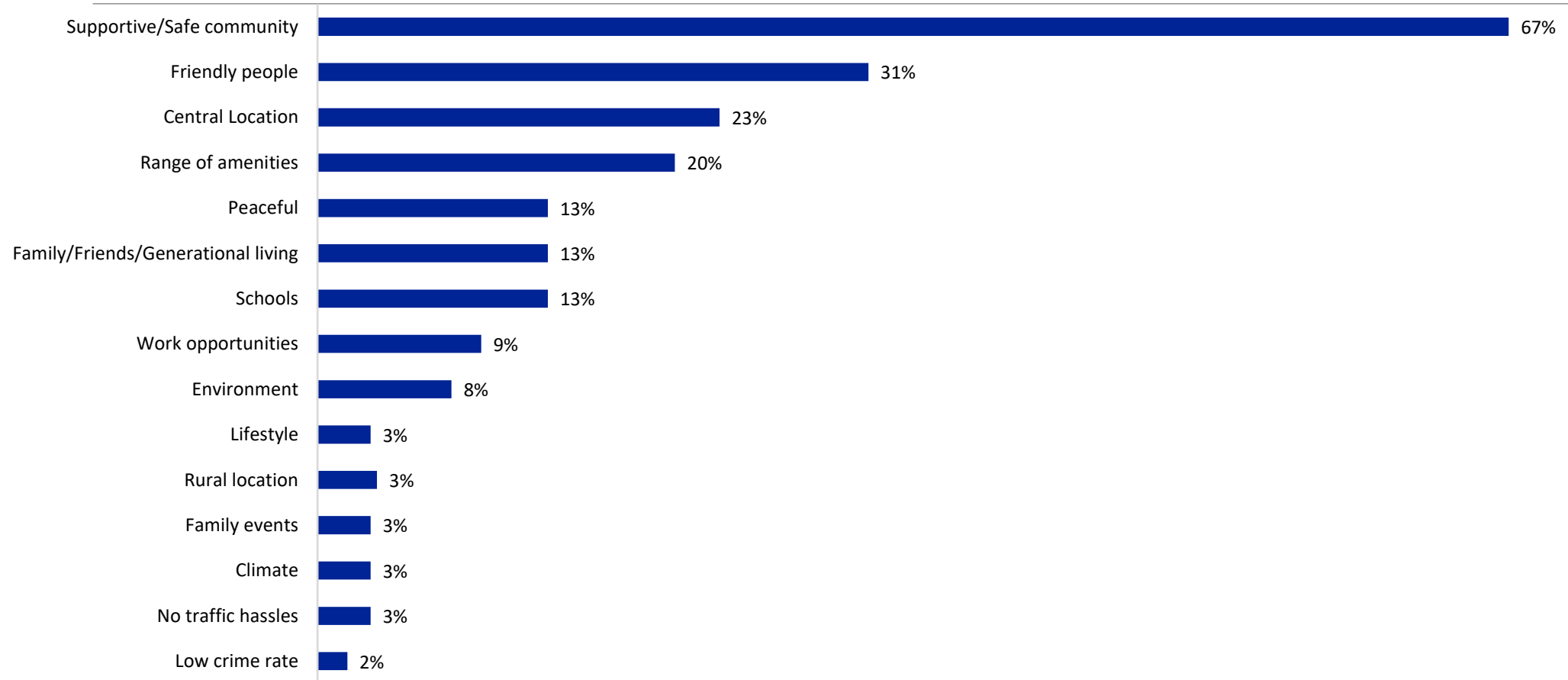
Respondents were asked about their views on housing in the area. The primary comment from respondents relates to the lack of housing available in the area, both to rent and to buy. Comments about the lack of housing are followed by the need to develop more land for housing in the area, and this is particularly important to those who have families. In comparison, older respondents note the need to extend the retirement village.

“Rentals? Poor, of course. It's understandable, though, but people are forced to look at other places since houses are snatched up quickly. Think about young families or empty nesters who don't have the necessary funds to buy a property of their own but don't fit the requirements of retirement homes or the village. After all, this is more than a local problem, isn't it?”

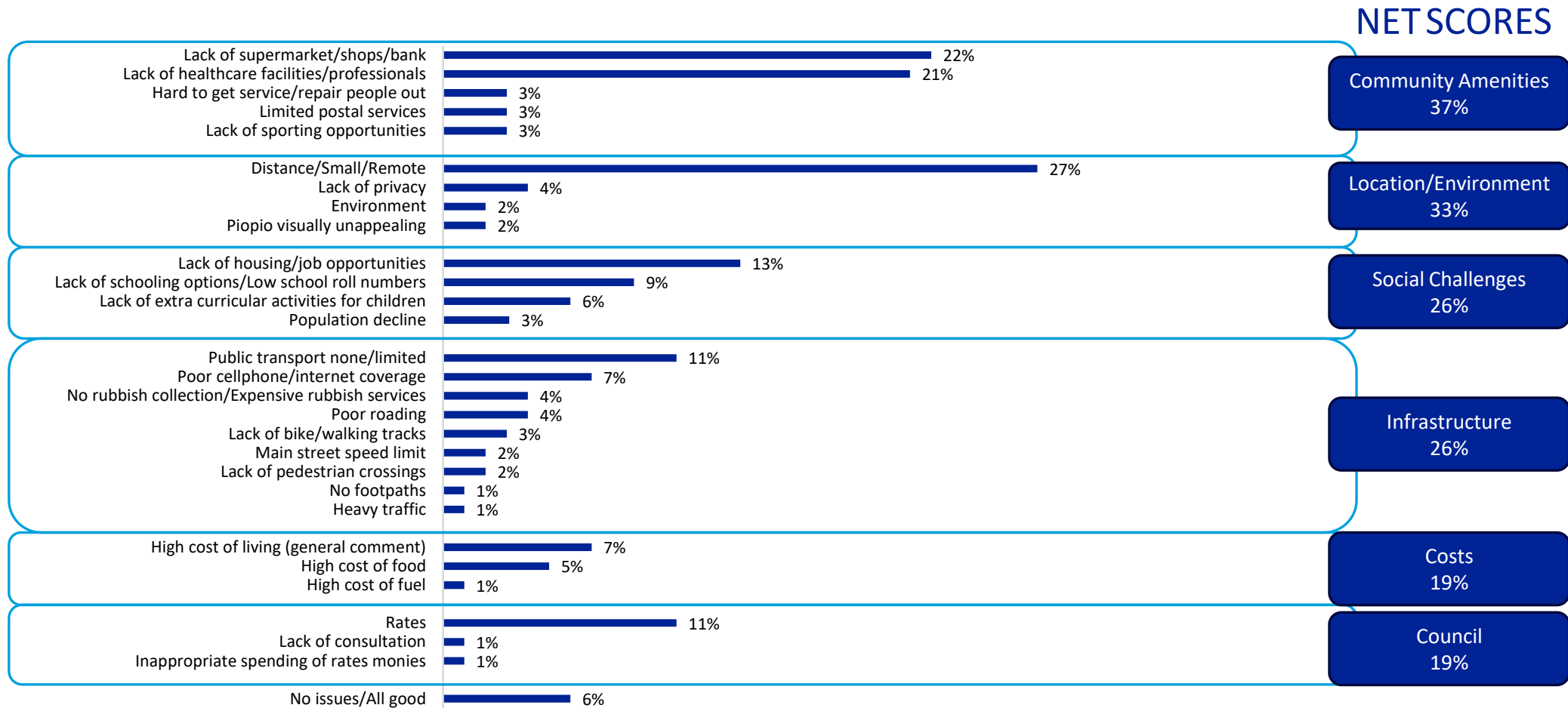
Moving to the Piopio Area



Piopio Positives



Piopio Disadvantages



Housing

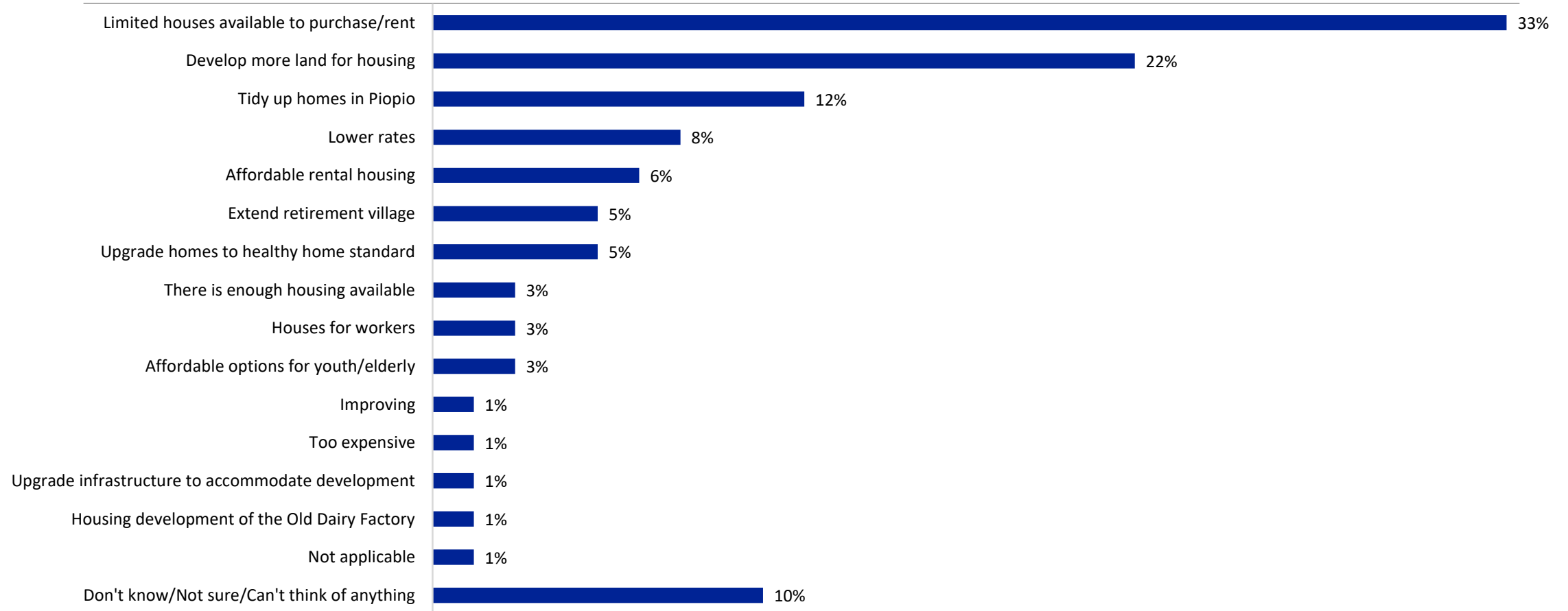




Image sourced from <https://www.piopio.net.nz/activity/scenic-drive-2-short-route>

Looking Ahead

This section looks at the most significant challenges the community faces in the next five years along with residents' desired improvements and services for the town.

Looking Ahead

Respondents were asked what they thought was the most pressing challenge for the community in the next five years. Respondents note that the area will face social challenges, particularly with declining school rolls and an ageing population.

“Movement outside of community for work opportunities, our kids and next generations are having to look for work and move. Infrastructure: water systems especially, water quality and consumption. We should be thinking about household and business consumption and regenerative ways of collecting water, storage and use. If 20 households utilised a regenerative water system, a marae, or 3 business it would take pressure off infrastructure, possibly stall rates increases, and support environmental impacts.”

Families cite declining school rolls and limited opportunities for people to stay in the area as the main challenges for Piopio. Organisations cite declining volunteering, much of which is important to the sustainability of current initiatives in the community.

“Keeping school numbers. Lack of numbers to run the voluntary sporting facilities - same people putting in. Everyone too thin on time. Water problems in Piopio!”

Coupled with these issues are the challenges of maintaining current industries in the area while encouraging new initiatives.

“Viability of agriculture and associated industries. Keeping our school vibrant and retaining top students. Our Village infrastructure if we want any type of expansion. Keeping health care accessible.”

Looking Ahead

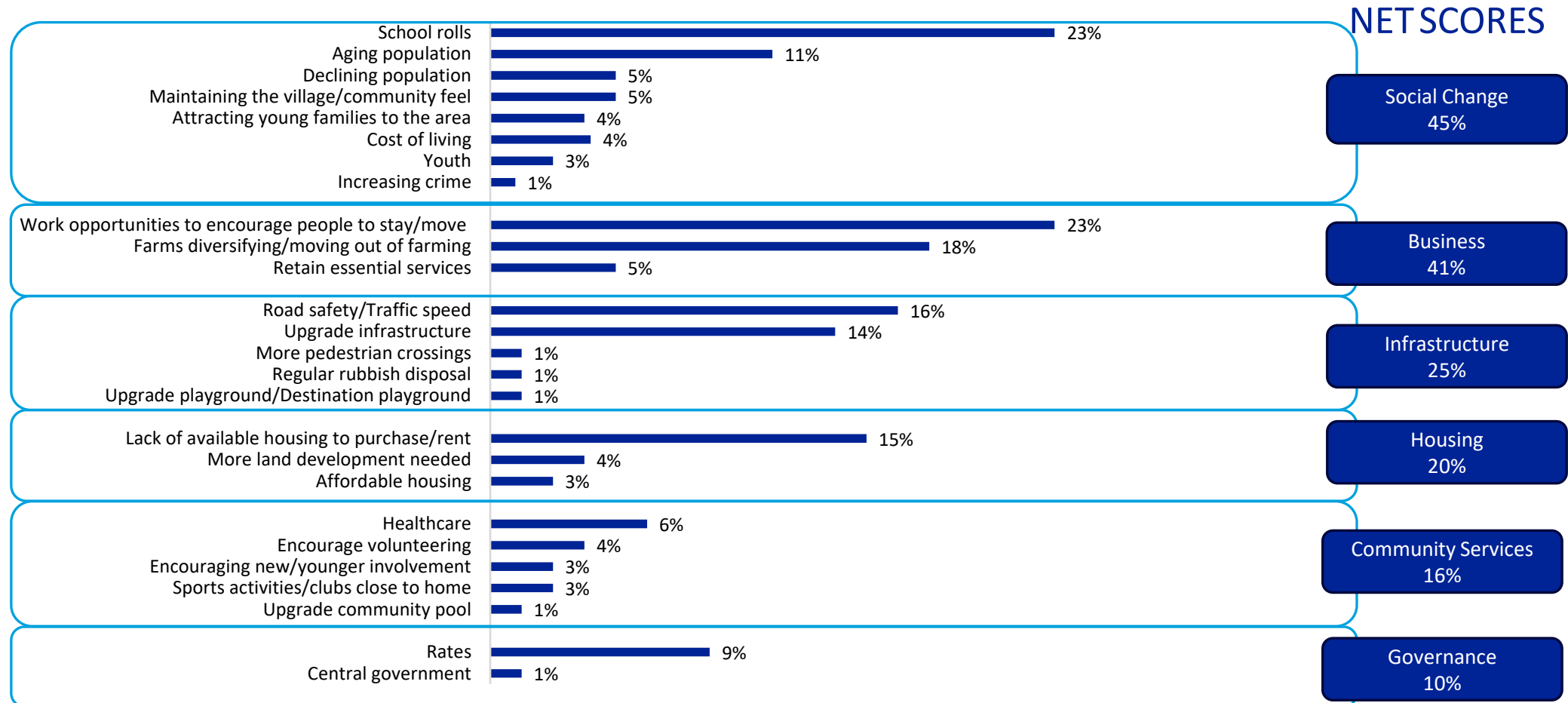
Interestingly, when asked about the primary improvements for the area, respondents overwhelmingly cited infrastructure and traffic issues, particularly the footpaths, walkways, and cycleways. Other enhancements relate to sports facilities, social initiatives, and business developments.

Older respondents are more likely to be concerned about increasing social initiatives in the area, while families are more concerned about infrastructure and traffic. Those with children wish to see improvements in the area's "walkability" and safer road crossings, with some comments about the increasing traffic volume in recent years.

“Walkway around the stock route. Cycle/walkway way out to the orchard. Safer road crossings for our kids. Speed bumps or roundabouts put in on the Main Street. More events at the village green.”

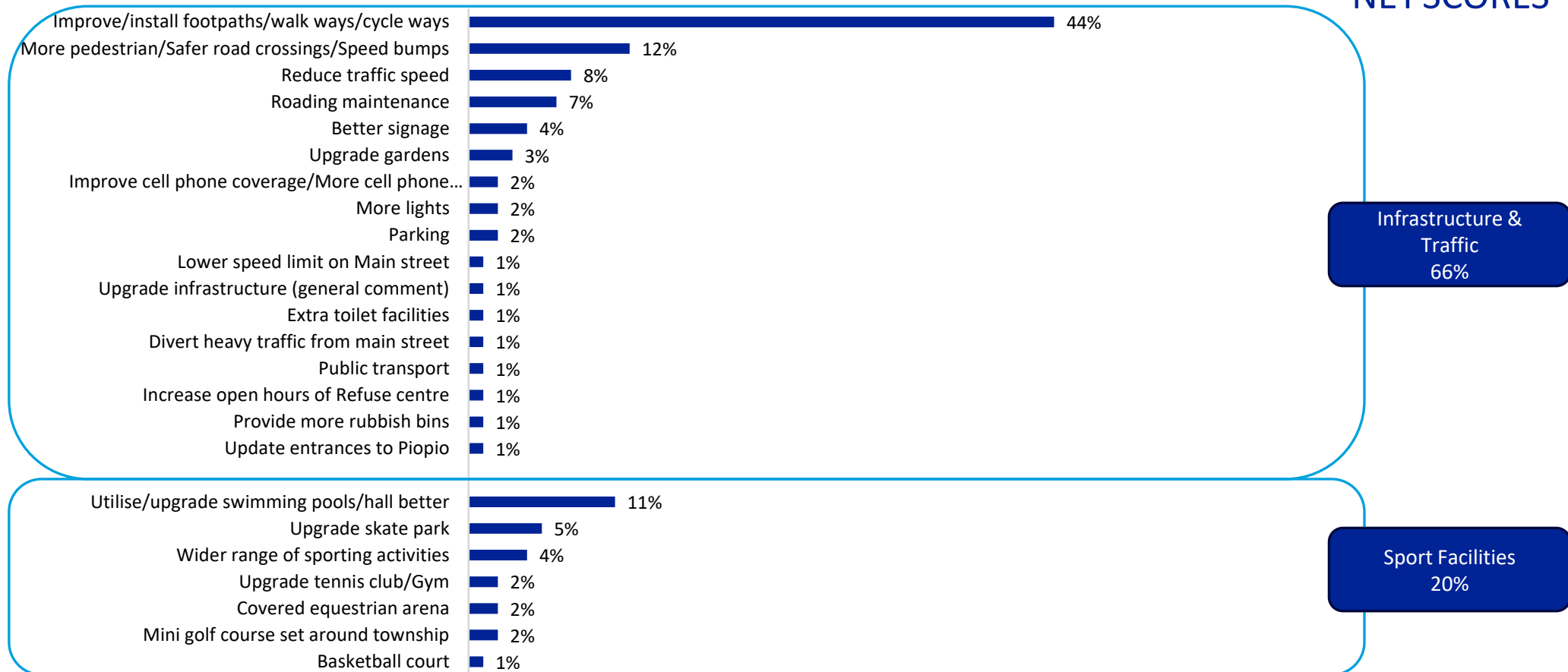
New services that respondents would like to see in the area relate to laundromats, transport solutions, and food-based services, e.g., Meals on Wheels or an increase in local retailers. Respondents who are retired are particularly keen on supporting older residents, while those who are flatting were interested in services that support day-to-day living, e.g., ATM, K-Mart, liquor store, and a laundromat.

Challenges for the Next Five Years



Improvements

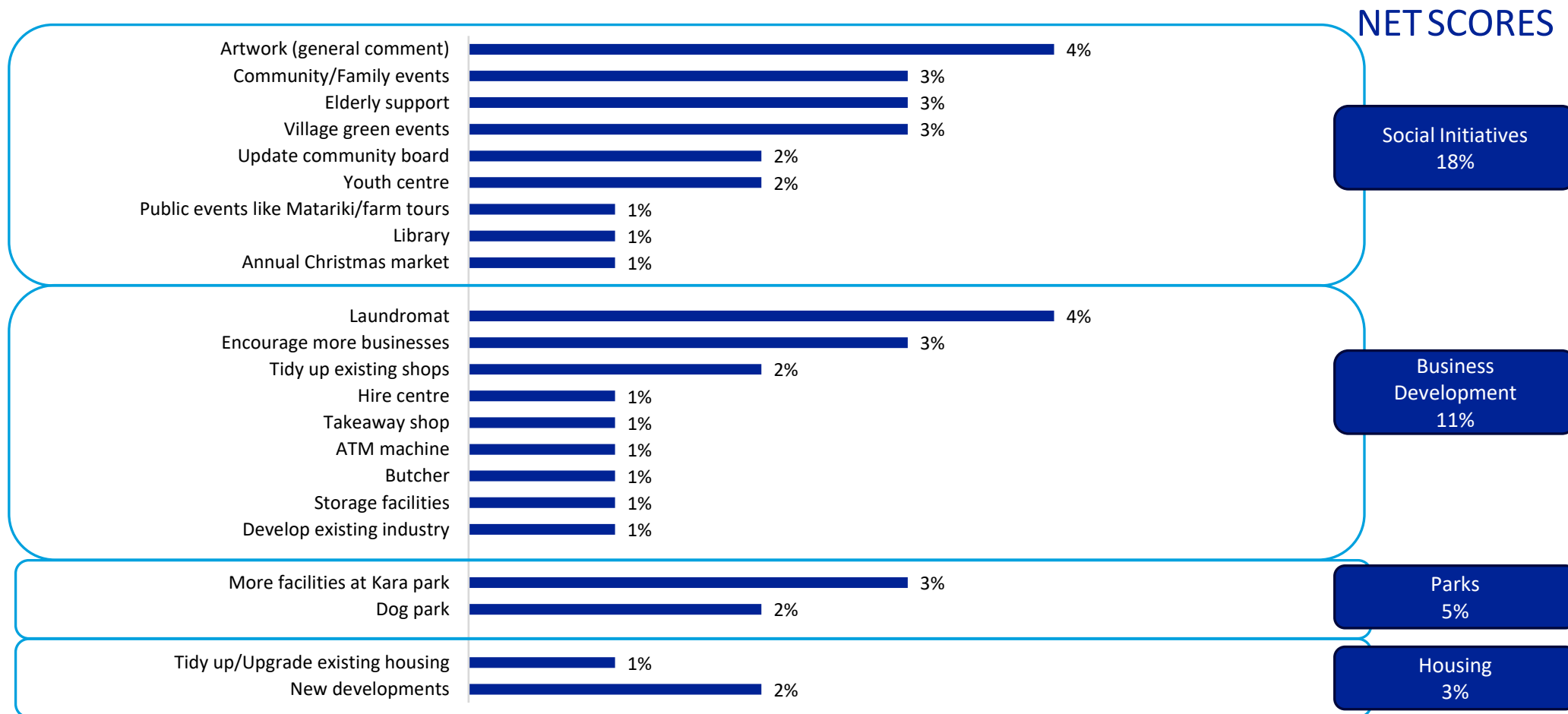
NET SCORES



Infrastructure & Traffic
66%

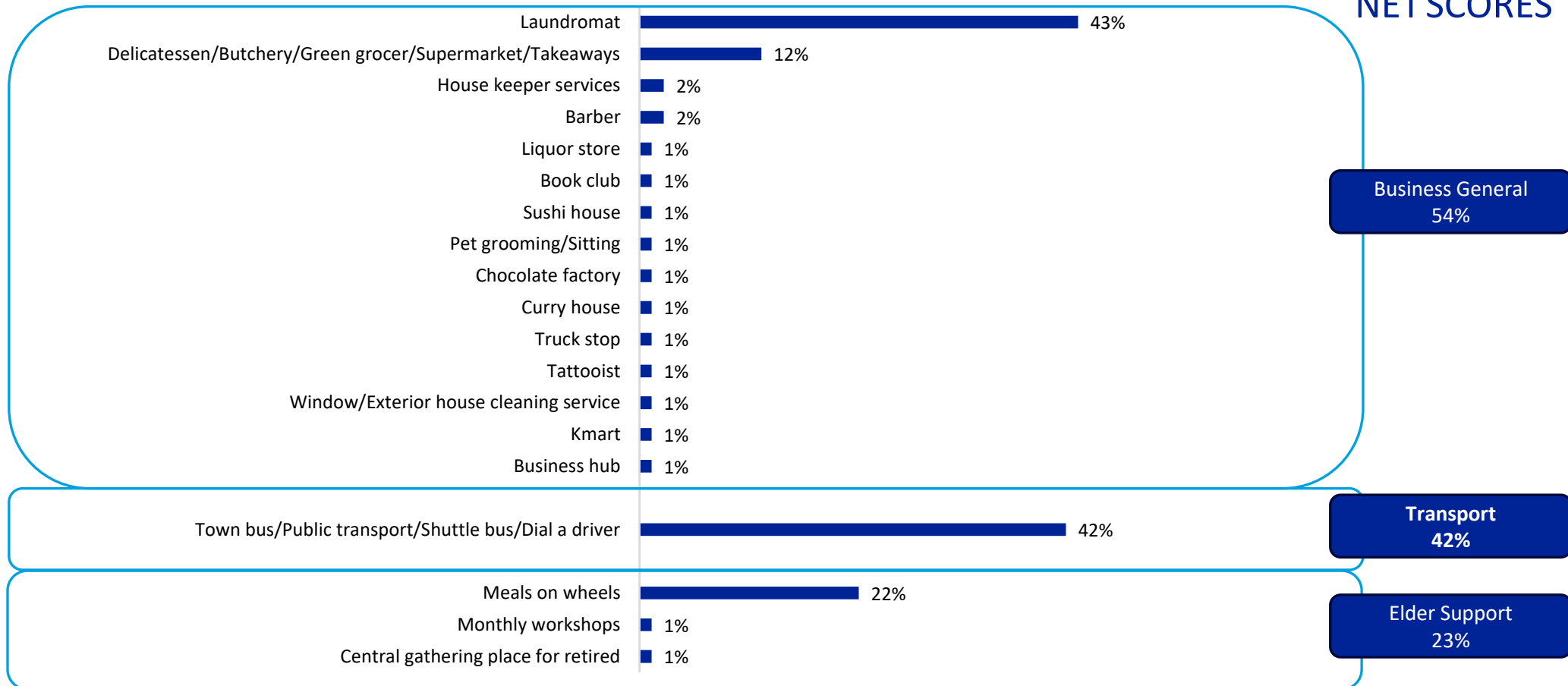
Sport Facilities
20%

Improvements continued



New Services

NET SCORES



New Services continued

