



**CITY AWAKE**  
a program of the Greater Boston  
Chamber of Commerce Foundation

# City Awake

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## Young Residents Survey 2023

*Funded by the Barr Foundation, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Foundation commissioned the Young Residents Survey from [HIT Strategies](#).*

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# Objectives



## 1 UNDERSTAND

Understand young Greater Boston area residents' attitudes and perceptions of the region, as well as their values and priorities in both professional and personal lives.

## 2 UNDERSTAND

Understand the barriers that push young residents to leave the city/workforce in Greater Boston or keep them from actively engaging civically and in communities. Alternatively, understand what makes residents feel positively towards the region and makes them stay and engage.

## 3 IDENTIFY

Identify what factors and programming would encourage retention of young people in Greater Boston, and motivate them towards employment, civic and community engagement.

# Methodology

### Universe

Young Adults (20-30 years of age) residing in the Greater Boston area. Greater Boston defined as Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, and Suffolk counties.

### Sample Size

Total N=823  
N=600 Base  
N=75 OS of AAPI Young Residents  
N=75 OS of Black Young Residents  
N=75 OS of Latino/a Young Residents

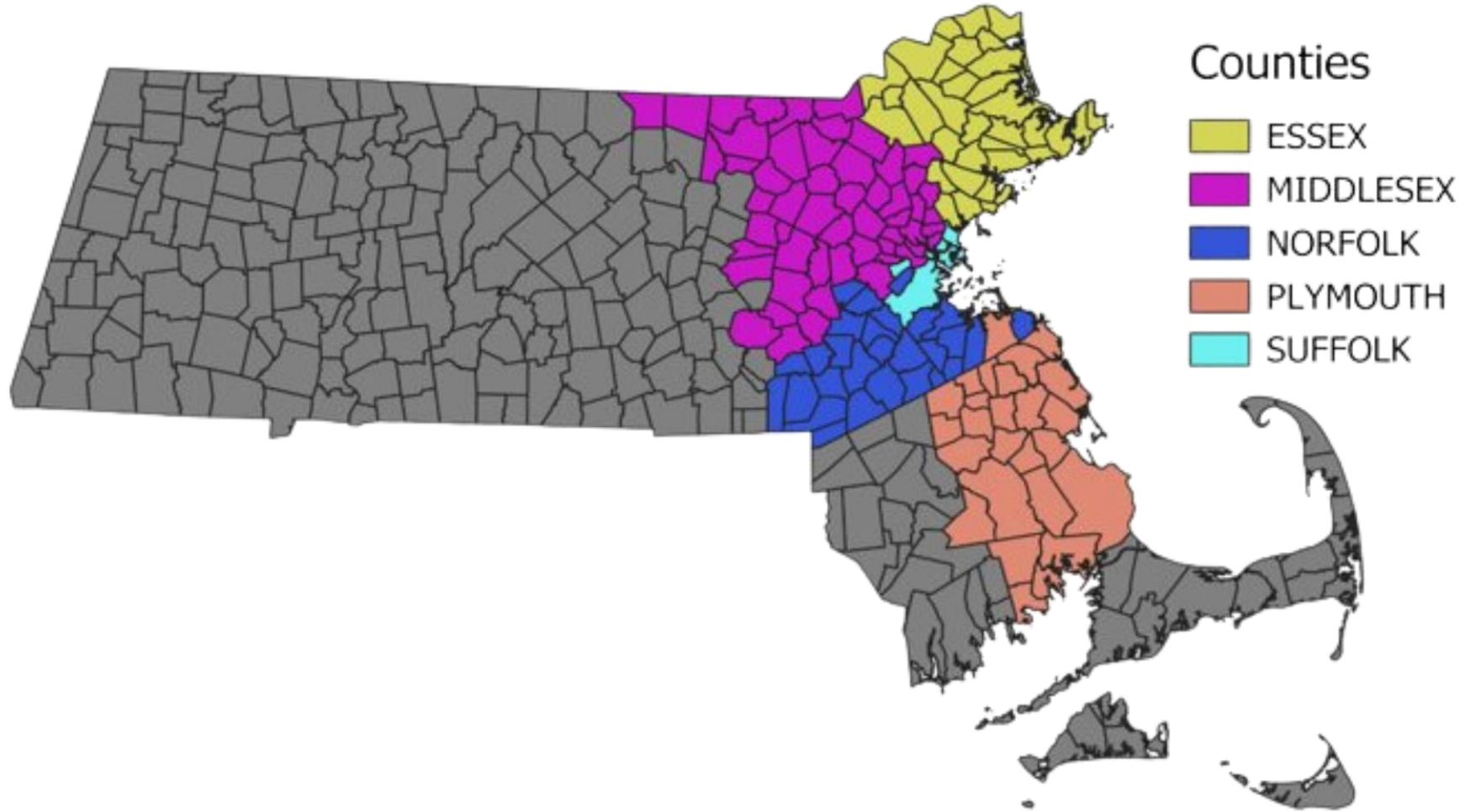
### Methodology

These findings are from a proprietary survey conducted by HIT Strategies on behalf of the Boston Chamber of Commerce Foundation. This survey consisted of 823 young adults residing in the Greater Boston area, with oversamples of Black, AAPI, and Latino/a residents. The survey was conducted via online panel and text-to-web. The survey fielded from November 16th - December 25th, 2023 and the margin of error is +/- 3.91%. Margin of error is higher among subgroups.

*\*Note: College/Non-College throughout presentation means education attained*



# Greater Boston Map



# Key Findings



## 1

**Most (89%) young Greater Boston residents are satisfied with their daily lives in the region, but a quarter (25%) are likely to leave in the next 5 years.**

When deciding how long to reside in Greater Boston, cost of rent (83% important), job availability (87% important), and ability to buy a home (78% important) were the factors most respondents found important.

Additionally, those with plans to leave Greater Boston were more likely to report that building community relationships in the area has been difficult for them (39% of those leaving reported difficulty building community compared to 22% of total audience), suggesting that social communities play a role in young people's desire stay or leave Greater Boston.

## 2

**Young people in Greater Boston want local leaders to prioritize affordable housing, quality jobs, and wages.**

There is high agreement that affordable housing is the top issue young people in Greater Boston want local leaders to prioritize (66% selected), as well as availability of quality jobs (39%) and financial compensation and wages (35%), with 61% of the total audience selecting at least one of these job-related priorities. These issues mirror the factors most important to young residents in their own decisions to stay or leave the Greater Boston area: the spotlight is on housing and job availability.

## 3

**In their personal lives, young people in Greater Boston care most about their mental health, relationships, and work-life balance.**

When it comes to young residents' personal lives, they are prioritizing improving or maintaining their mental health (46%), as well as their relationships (40%) and work-life balance (36%). Young professionals will likely be drawn to jobs and work environments that also respect and support these priorities, like when offering benefits such as health insurance coverage that including mental health services and paid sick/wellness days off.

## 4

**Young Greater Boston residents prioritize their pay and work-life balance when seeking a job. In their current professional lives, they report high satisfaction with their relationships at work, but about a quarter report dissatisfaction with pay and promotion opportunities.**

When asked what they are looking for in a job, young people in Greater Boston again emphasize that their top priorities are financial compensation/wages (42% selected) and work-life balance (41%). When it comes to their current professional lives, most employed young residents are satisfied with their relationship with their coworkers (75% satisfied), relationship with manager or supervisor (71% satisfied), and their work hours/schedule (68% satisfied). Dissatisfaction is highest with pay (26% dissatisfied) and opportunities for promotion (23% dissatisfied), pointing to areas employers can focus on improving.

## 5

**There is room to grow in making young people's voices heard in their places of employment, with 40% reporting they have little to no power to make change on issues they care about where they work.**

Perception of their power is even lower when it comes to changes in state government (53% little/no power) and federal government (59% little/no power), while half of respondents feel they have some or a lot of power to make change in the city/town where they live (51% some/a lot of power). This mimics trends among young people nationally feeling less power in distant entities than in those close to home. There is an opportunity to empower them to get involved in positive change somewhere as close to home as their place as work.





## OBJECTIVE 1: UNDERSTAND

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### 1: UNDERSTAND

- Understand young Greater Boston area residents' attitudes and perceptions of the city, as well as their values and priorities in both professional and personal lives.

### 2: UNDERSTAND

- Understand the barriers that push young residents to leave the city/workforce in Greater Boston or keep them from actively engaging civically and in communities. Alternatively, understand what makes residents feel positively towards the region and makes them stay and engage.

### 3: IDENTIFY

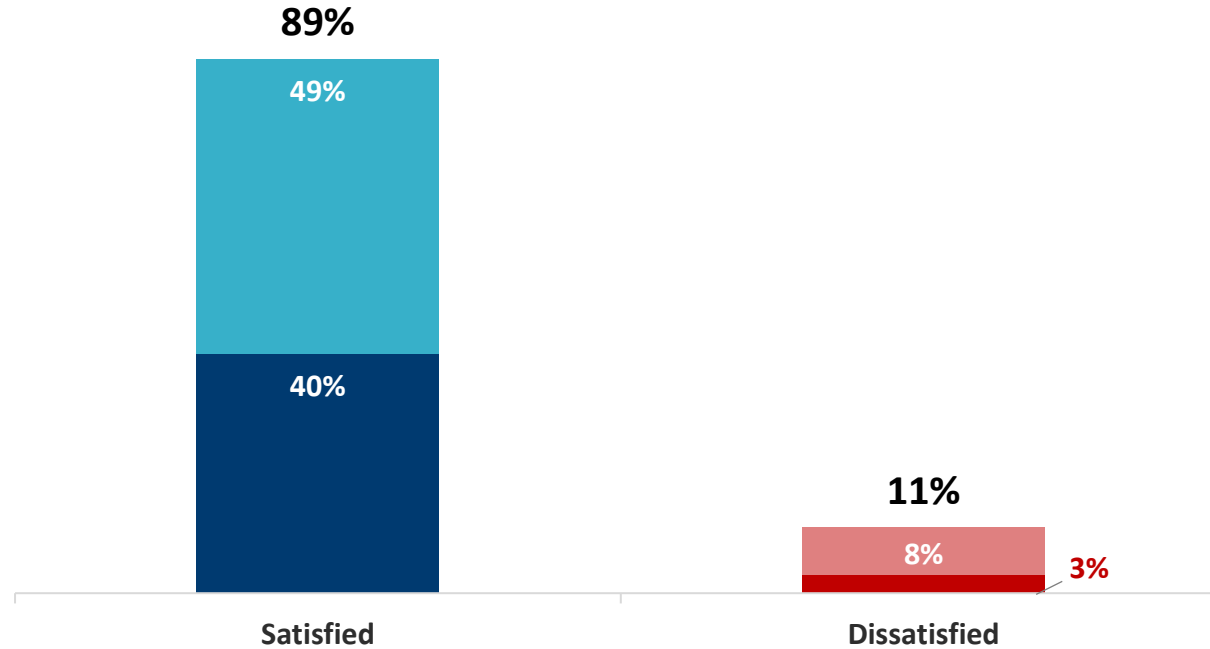
- Identify what factors and programming would encourage retention of young people in Greater Boston, and motivate them towards employment, civic and community engagement.

# Most young residents are satisfied with their day-to-day lives in Greater Boston. This is true across race and gender lines.



Q14. Thinking about your day-to-day life, how satisfied are you with Greater Boston as your place of residence?

■ Very Satisfied   
 ■ Somewhat Satisfied   
 ■ Somewhat Dissatisfied   
 ■ Very Dissatisfied



	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Non-College	College+	Men	Women
<b>Total Satisfied</b>	88%	91%	91%	93%	89%	89%	88%	81%	90%	86%	91%	89%	88%
<b>Total Dissatisfied</b>	12%	9%	9%	7%	11%	11%	12%	19%	10%	14%	9%	11%	12%

There is high agreement among young Greater Boston residents that local leaders should prioritize affordable housing, as well as availability of quality jobs and financial compensation and wages.



Q15. Which of the following are the most important issues that you think local leaders should prioritize? Please select three.

	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO/A	AAPI
Affordable housing	66%	61%	70%	70%	67%	53%	49%
Availability of quality jobs	39%	47%	32%	37%	45%	41%	43%
Financial compensation and wages	35%	31%	40%	35%	37%	38%	38%
Public transportation	30%	29%	31%	31%	30%	29%	29%
Education	28%	31%	25%	27%	25%	28%	38%
Health care accessibility	27%	26%	27%	29%	18%	25%	26%
Crime and public safety	26%	23%	28%	25%	21%	32%	26%
Racism and discrimination	17%	17%	16%	16%	22%	18%	12%
Food security	15%	15%	14%	13%	15%	15%	18%
Arts and cultural vibrancy	10%	11%	8%	9%	11%	12%	13%
Climate resiliency	7%	7%	7%	7%	9%	9%	5%

61% of the audience selected job-related priorities

POC making less than \$75k annually were more likely to say quality jobs should be prioritized (46%)

Residents of Suffolk County were more likely to say public transport should be prioritized (39%)

Newer residents (less than 3 years) were more likely to say arts and cultural vibrancy should be prioritized (18%)

# In their personal lives, young residents are prioritizing **mental health, relationships,** and **work-life balance.**



Q17. Thinking about this chapter of your life, which three of the following do you currently prioritize most?

	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO/A	AAPI
Improving or maintaining mental health	46%	44%	48%	46%	50%	47%	43%
Relationships (like romantic partnerships or friendships)	40%	38%	43%	47%	28%	31%	29%
Work-life balance	36%	33%	40%	36%	26%	40%	46%
Advancing in your career	32%	36%	28%	34%	35%	24%	38%
Caring for family members (i.e., siblings, parents, grandparents, guardians)	32%	36%	27%	30%	34%	39%	29%
Improving or maintaining physical health	29%	30%	27%	27%	33%	32%	25%
Your education	24%	23%	26%	24%	23%	24%	26%
Economic security and financial independence	21%	20%	22%	21%	19%	18%	29%
Having or caring for children	17%	17%	17%	17%	26%	21%	10%
Hobbies and free time activities	16%	17%	15%	15%	14%	15%	20%
Contributing to positive change in your community	5%	5%	4%	3%	9%	7%	5%
Something else	2%	3%	2%	1%	4%	3%	2%

← Those in **management occupations** (41%) more likely to prioritize **advancing in their career**

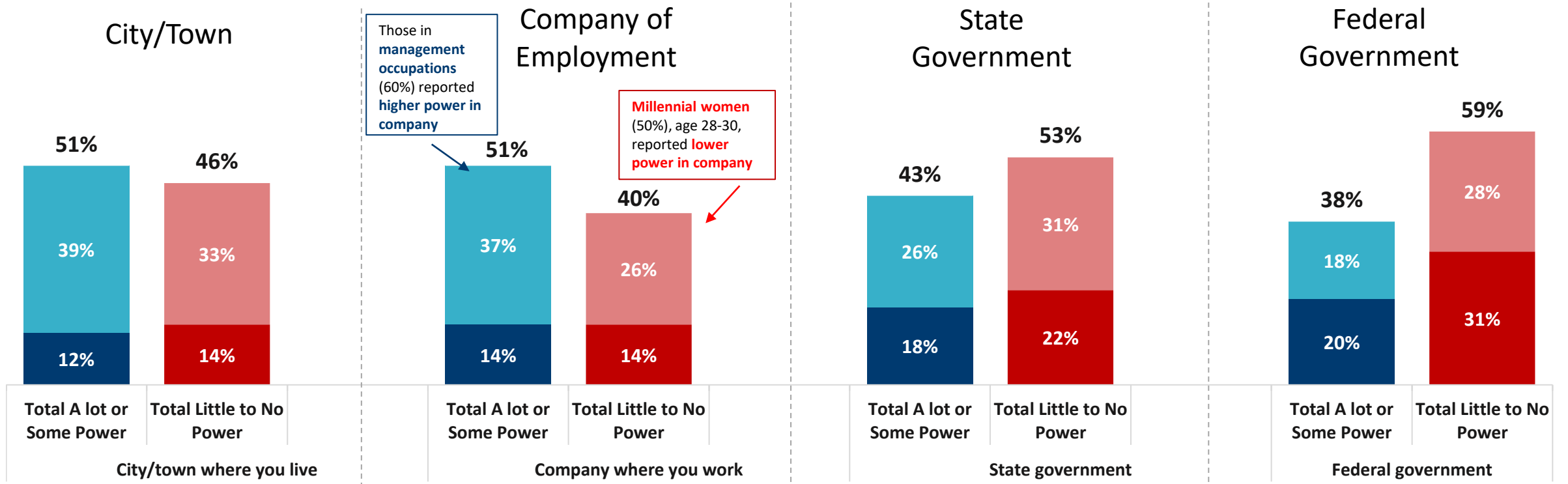


# There is room to grow in making young people's voices heard in their places of employment, with 40% reporting they have little to no power to make change in their companies.

Q16. How much power do you feel you have to make change on the issues you care about in each of the following environments?

\*Don't know/Refuse answer option not included in graphs

■ A lot of power   
 ■ Some power   
 ■ Very little power   
 ■ No power at all



	White	Black	Latino	AAPI
<b>Total A lot/Some Power</b>	49%	66%	53%	54%
<b>Total Little to No Power</b>	49%	33%	42%	42%

	White	Black	Latino	AAPI
<b>Total A lot/Some Power</b>	51%	57%	50%	55%
<b>Total Little to No Power</b>	40%	35%	39%	38%

	White	Black	Latino	AAPI
<b>Total A lot/Some Power</b>	41%	55%	53%	51%
<b>Total Little to No Power</b>	57%	40%	41%	42%

	White	Black	Latino	AAPI
<b>Total A lot/Some Power</b>	33%	47%	47%	52%
<b>Total Little to No Power</b>	64%	51%	45%	44%



## OBJECTIVE 2: UNDERSTAND

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### 1: UNDERSTAND

- Understand young Greater Boston area residents' attitudes and perceptions of the city, as well as their values and priorities in both professional and personal lives.

### 2: UNDERSTAND

- Understand the barriers that push young residents to leave the city/workforce in Greater Boston or keep them from actively engaging civically and in communities. Alternatively, understand what makes residents feel positively towards the region and makes them stay and engage.

### 3: IDENTIFY

- Identify what factors and programming would encourage retention of young people in Greater Boston, and motivate them towards employment, civic and community engagement.



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### 3: IDENTIFY

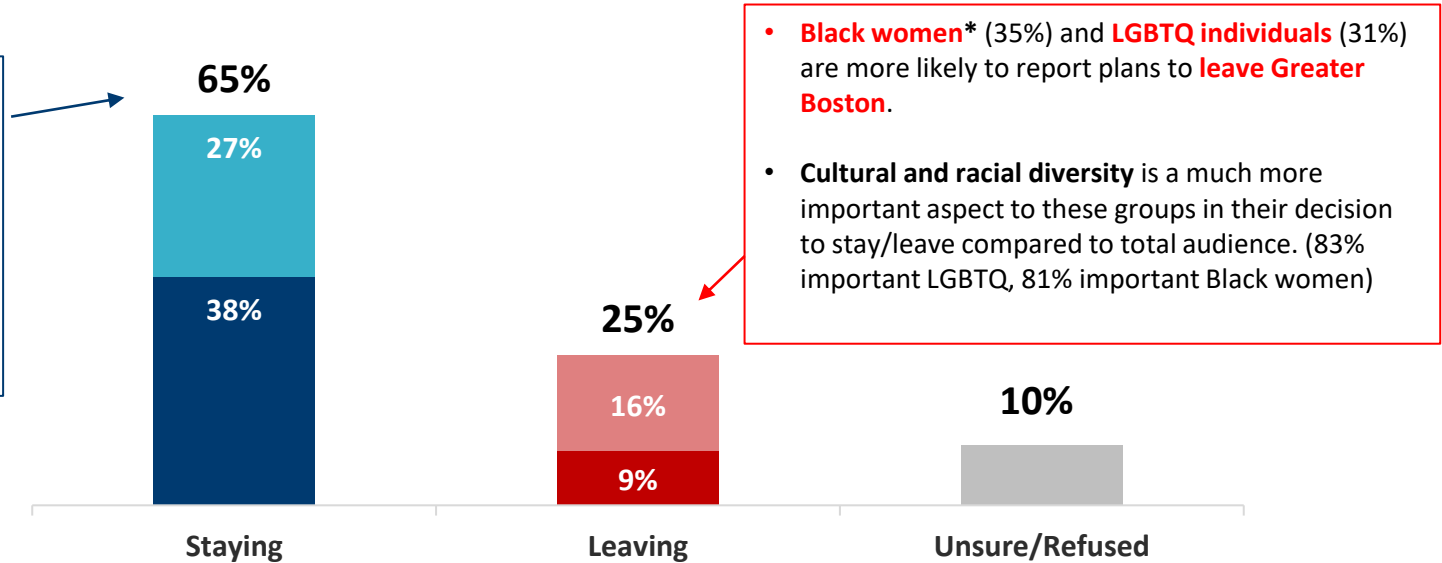
- Identify what factors and programming would encourage retention of young people in Greater Boston, and motivate them towards employment, civic and community engagement.

# A quarter (25%) of young residents are planning to leave the Greater Boston area in the next 5 years.

Q18. Looking ahead to the next 5 years, how likely are you to stay in the Greater Boston area, or leave to another city/state?

■ Very Likely to Stay   
 ■ Somewhat Likely to Stay   
 ■ Somewhat Likely to Leave   
 ■ Very Likely to Leave

- **Millennial women** aged 28-30 (76%) and **AAPI folks** (77%), and those in **management occupations** (76%), are more likely to report plans to **remain in Greater Boston**.
- **More than half (61%) of students** say they are somewhat or very likely to **stay in the Greater Boston area**.



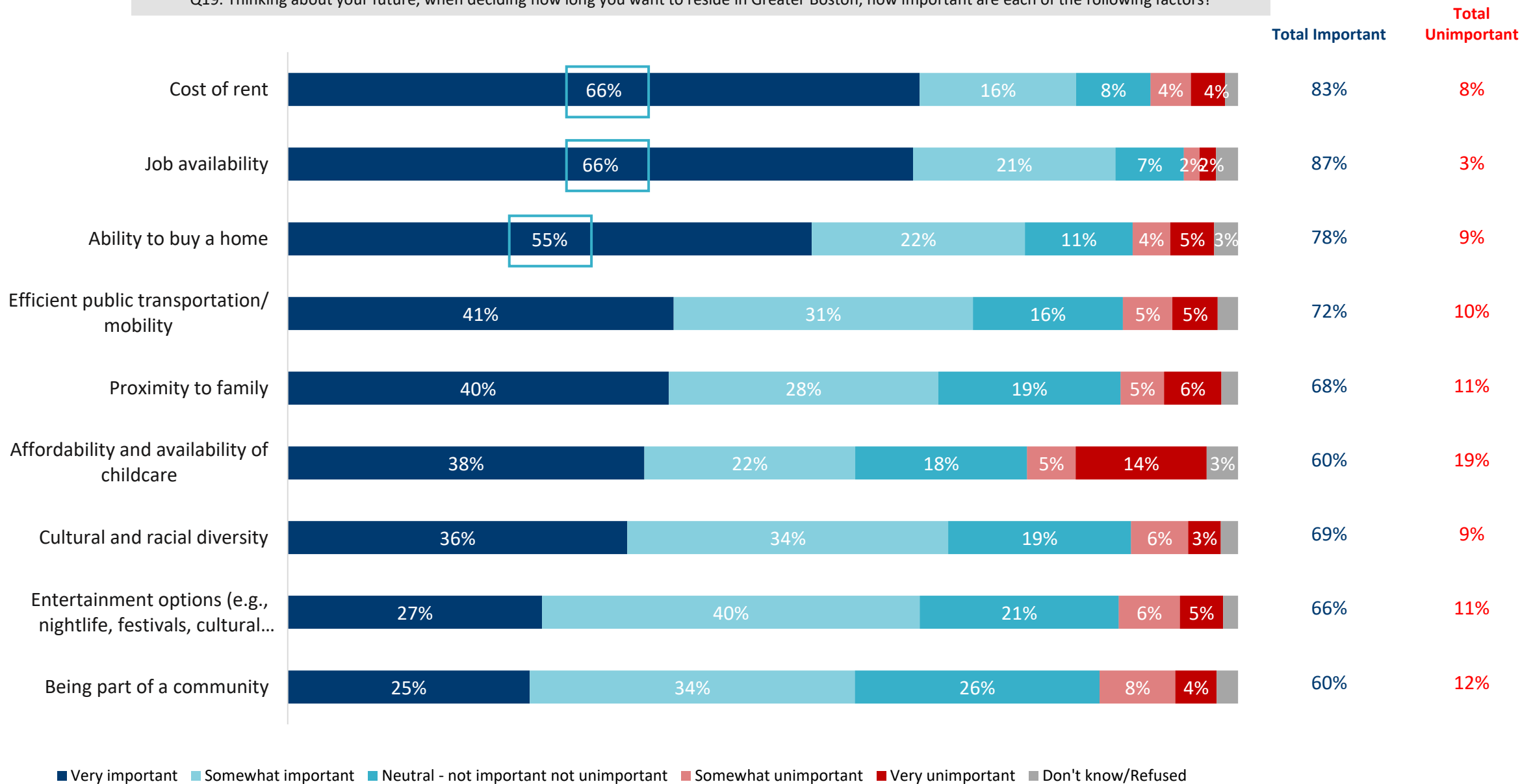
- **Black women\*** (35%) and **LGBTQ individuals** (31%) are more likely to report plans to **leave Greater Boston**.
- **Cultural and racial diversity** is a much more important aspect to these groups in their decision to stay/leave compared to total audience. (83% important LGBTQ, 81% important Black women)

	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Non-College	College+
<b>Total Staying</b>	64%	72%	64%	77%	64%	63%	63%	65%	69%	59%	70%
<b>Total Leaving</b>	25%	24%	29%	18%	29%	28%	24%	19%	23%	28%	23%

*\*small N size, directional finding*

Majorities consider all factors we tested important parts of their decision to reside in Greater Boston, but **job availability, cost of rent, and ability to buy a home** have the most intensity behind their reported importance.

Q19. Thinking about your future, when deciding how long you want to reside in Greater Boston, how important are each of the following factors?

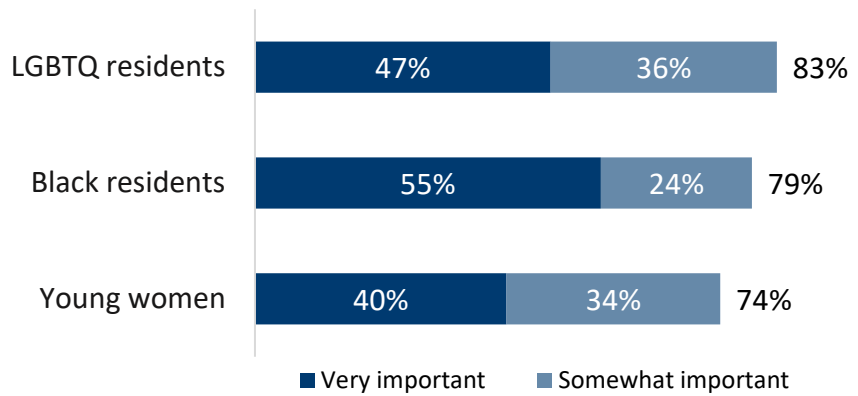




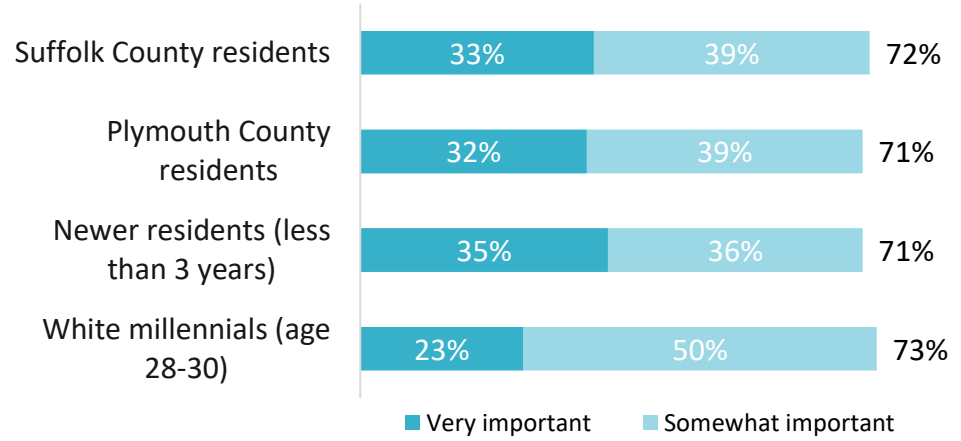
# Different demographic groups prioritize varying factors when thinking about their futures in Greater Boston.

Q19. Thinking about your future, when deciding how long you want to reside in Greater Boston, how important are each of the following factors?

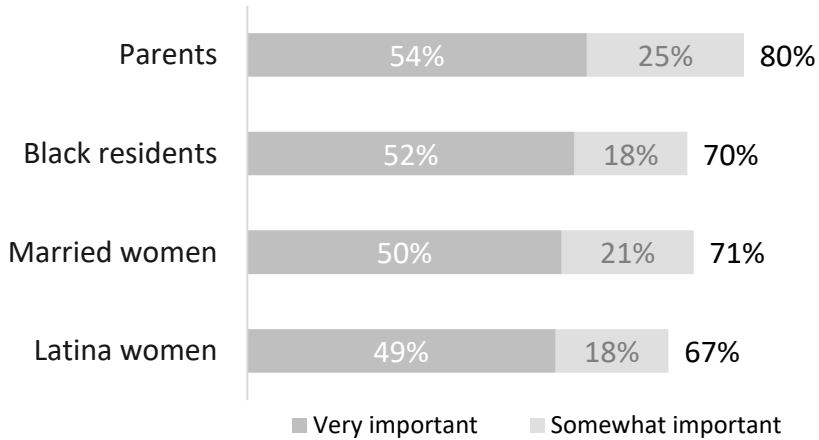
## Cultural & Racial Diversity



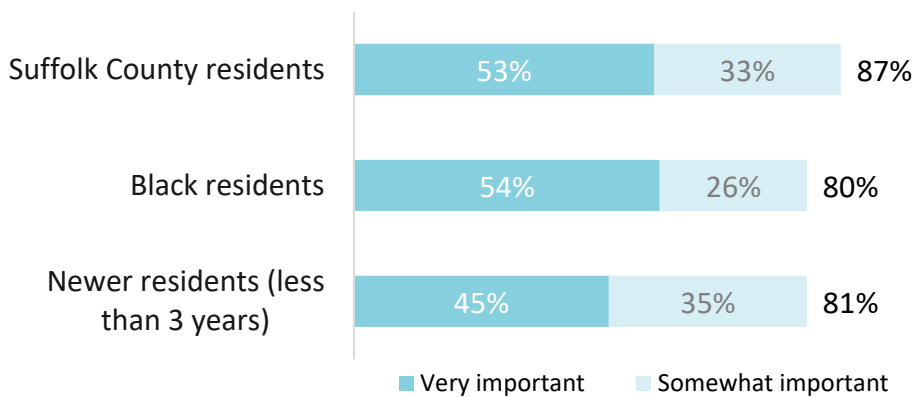
## Entertainment Options



## Affordability & Availability of Childcare



## Efficient Transportation & Mobility







OBJECTIVE 2: UNDERSTAND

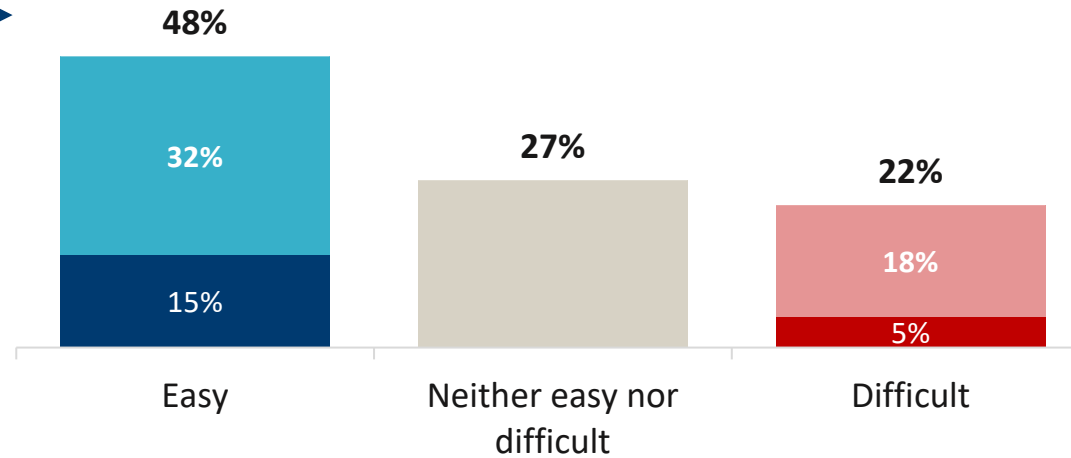
# COMMUNITY

A plurality of young residents have found it at least somewhat **easy to build community**, but almost a quarter (22%) have found it **difficult**, potentially contributing to plans to leave.

Q20. How easy or difficult is it for you to build community relationships in Boston?

■ Very Easy   
 ■ Somewhat Easy   
 ■ Neither Easy or Difficult   
 ■ Somewhat Difficult   
 ■ Very Difficult

Parents (60%) more likely to report ease in building community.



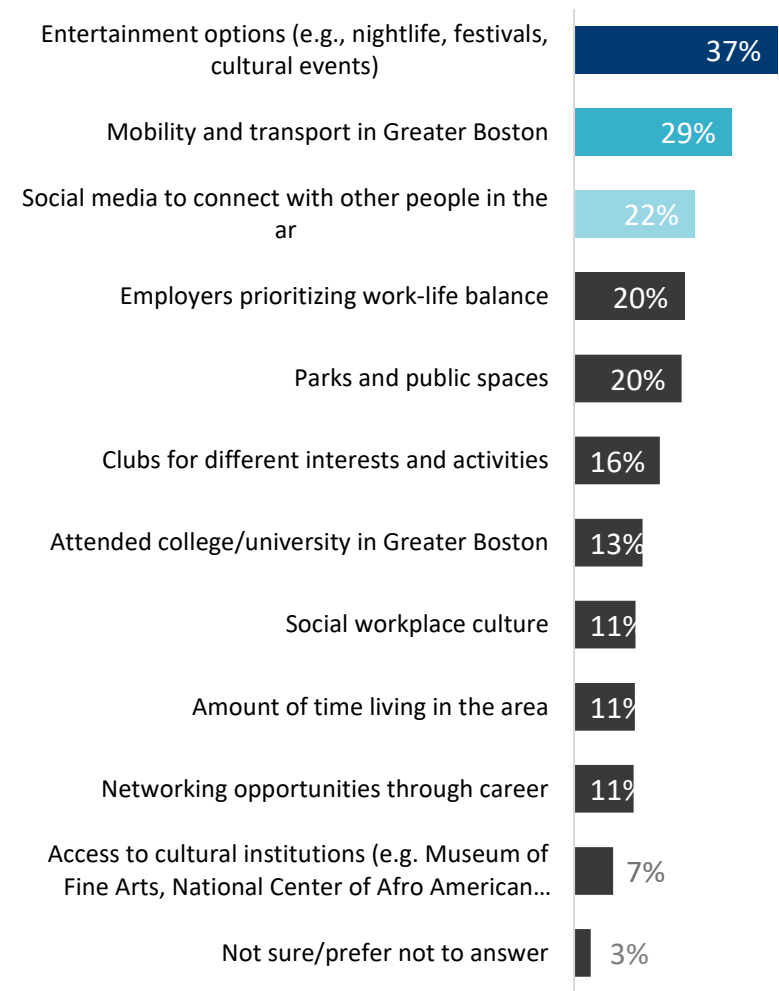
- **LGBTQ individuals** (32%) more likely to report **difficulty building community** in Greater Boston.
- **Those with plans to leave Greater Boston** in the next 5 years reported **difficulty building community** (39%).

	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Men	Women
<b>Total Easy</b>	47%	44%	48%	53%	43%	46%	56%	46%	48%	52%	43%
<b>Total Neither</b>	27%	34%	28%	29%	28%	20%	14%	20%	27%	23%	31%
<b>Total Difficult</b>	23%	21%	19%	15%	43%	46%	56%	46%	48%	21%	23%

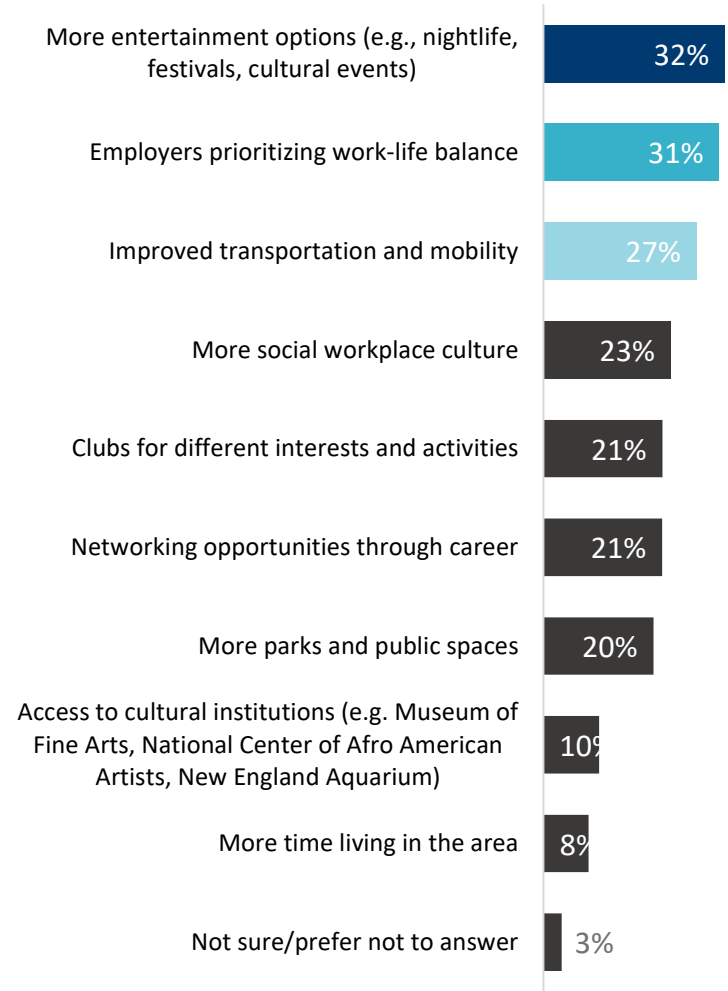
# Entertainment options, transportation, and work-life balance can be pathways or barriers to community-building in Greater Boston.

Q20. How easy or difficult is it for you to build community relationships in Greater Boston?

[IF EASY] Which of the following made it easy for you to build community and relationships in Boston? Select the top two reasons you feel contributed most.



[IF DIFFICULT] Which of the following would make it easier for you to build community relationships in Boston? Select the top two factors you feel would contribute most.



**Latino/a residents** with difficulty building community were more likely to say **work-life balance** would make it easier for them to build community (52%)

**Residents of Suffolk County** with difficulty building community were more likely to say **more entertainment options** (46%) and improved **transport** (35%) would make it easier for them to build community

**LGBTQ individuals** with difficulty building community were also more likely to say **improved transport** (40%) would make it easier for them to build community

\*Other not shown



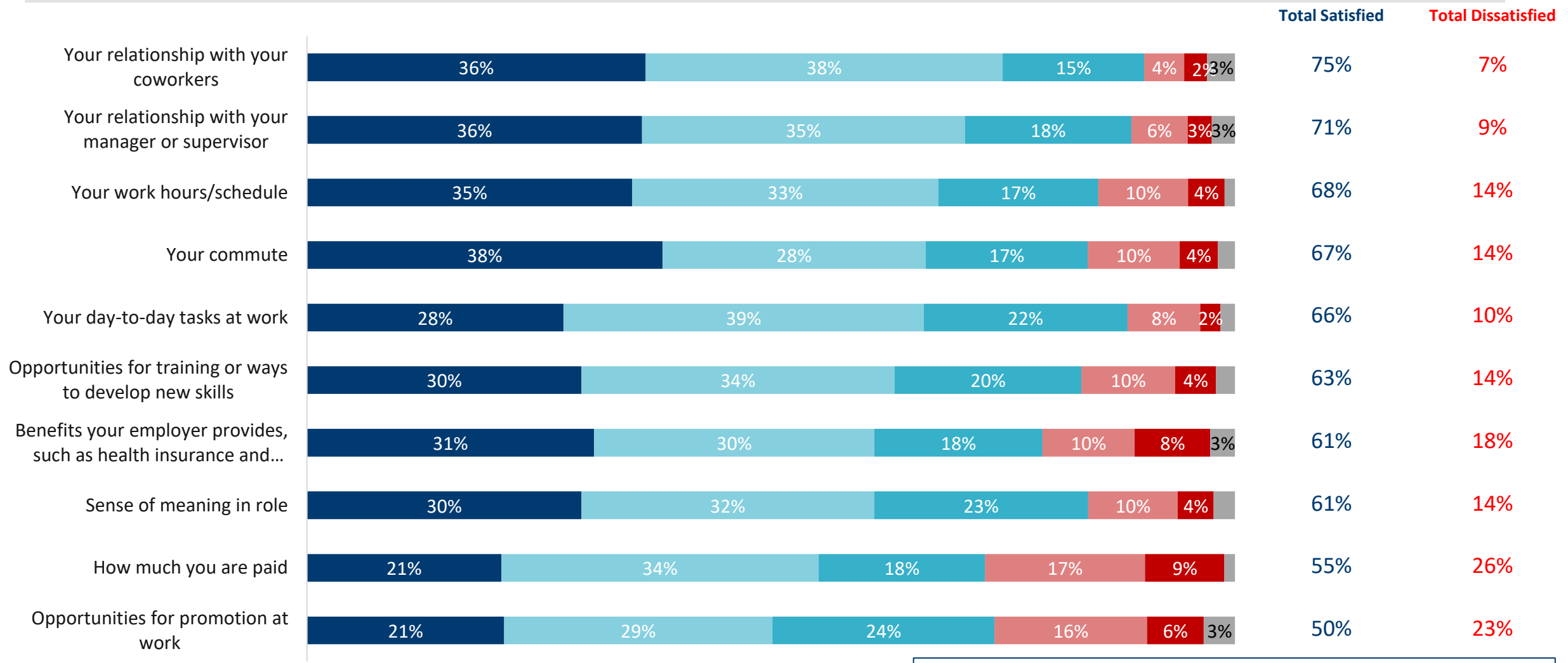


OBJECTIVE 2: UNDERSTAND

# PROFESSION

Satisfaction with **relationships at work** is highest, satisfaction with **pay and promotions** is lowest, but still folks are generally satisfied.

Q26. [OF EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS] Thinking about some specific aspects of your current job, employer, and workplace, how satisfied are you with each of the following?



■ Very satisfied 
 ■ Somewhat satisfied 
 ■ Neutral 
 ■ Somewhat dissatisfied 
 ■ Very dissatisfied 
 ■ Don't know

- Those with the **possibility of working remote** are more satisfied with their **work hours/schedule** (78% total satisfied) and **benefits** (69% satisfied).
- Those with **income above \$75k** are more satisfied with their **pay** (63% satisfied)
- Those in **management occupations** are more satisfied with their **benefits** (74% satisfied), **pay** (64% satisfied), and **opportunities for promotion** (59% satisfied).

# Thinking about an ideal job, financial compensation and work-life balance are the most prioritized traits.



Q27. Thinking about your ideal job and workplace, what qualities do you prioritize most when seeking a job? You may select up to three.

	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	WHITE	BLACK	LATINO/A	AAPI
Financial compensation/wages	42%	41%	43%	46%	30%	38%	44%
Work-life balance	41%	39%	42%	43%	37%	38%	43%
Schedule flexibility	28%	23%	33%	27%	39%	29%	27%
Fulfilling work	24%	27%	22%	26%	23%	19%	29%
Quality benefits (health care, PTO, etc.)	22%	21%	23%	21%	15%	25%	23%
Coworkers you get along with	20%	18%	23%	21%	18%	17%	22%
Location convenience	20%	22%	20%	19%	21%	22%	19%
Opportunities for career advancement/promotion	18%	20%	16%	17%	17%	17%	17%
Management you like	16%	16%	16%	17%	23%	12%	11%
Remote work capability	16%	16%	16%	15%	15%	16%	20%
Diversity of team	12%	14%	9%	9%	17%	19%	7%
Networking opportunities	10%	13%	7%	10%	7%	12%	14%
Inclusive workplace culture	9%	8%	10%	10%	7%	9%	7%
Shared values with company mission	9%	10%	7%	10%	7%	7%	7%





OBJECTIVE 2: UNDERSTAND

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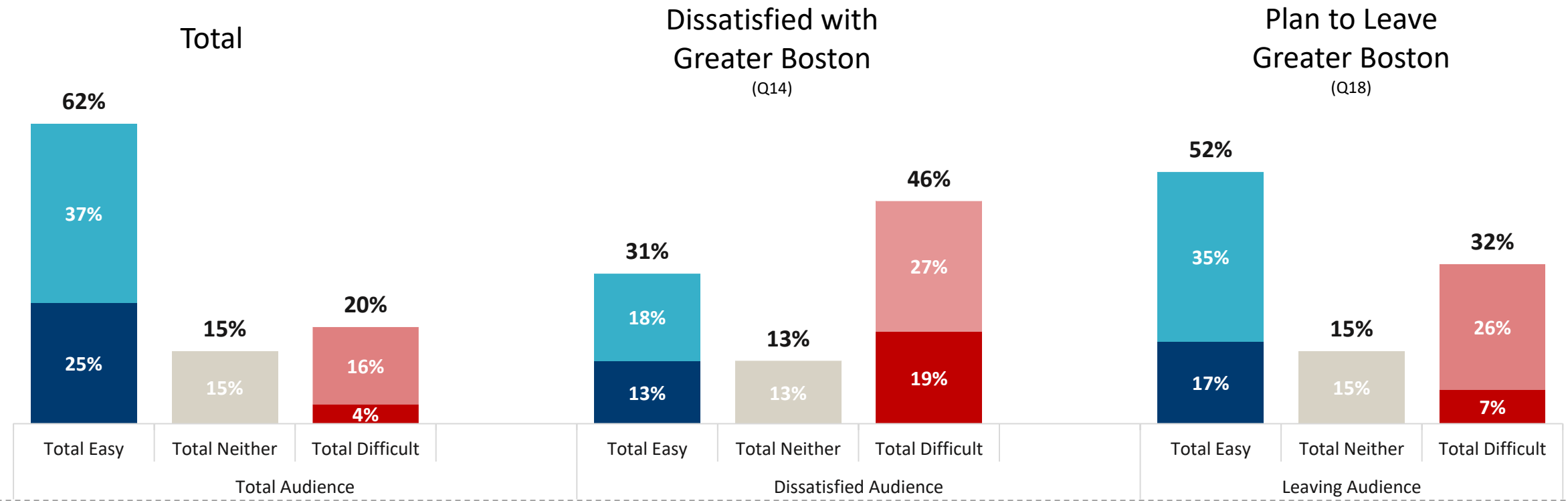
# TRANSPORTATION

Those who reported dissatisfaction with Greater Boston and plans to leave report **difficulty in transportation** at significantly higher rates than the total audience, suggesting a relationship between these variables.



Q29. When it comes to transportation and mobility in the Boston area, how easy or difficult is it for you to get where you need to go on a daily basis?

Very Easy    Somewhat Easy    Neither Easy or Difficult    Somewhat Difficult    Very Difficult



	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Men	Women
<b>Total Easy</b>	61%	62%	63%	70%	60%	61%	64%	55%	67%	64%	61%
<b>Total Neither</b>	15%	15%	15%	13%	17%	13%	12%	27%	12%	13%	16%
<b>Total Difficult</b>	22%	22%	18%	16%	22%	23%	18%	16%	19%	19%	21%

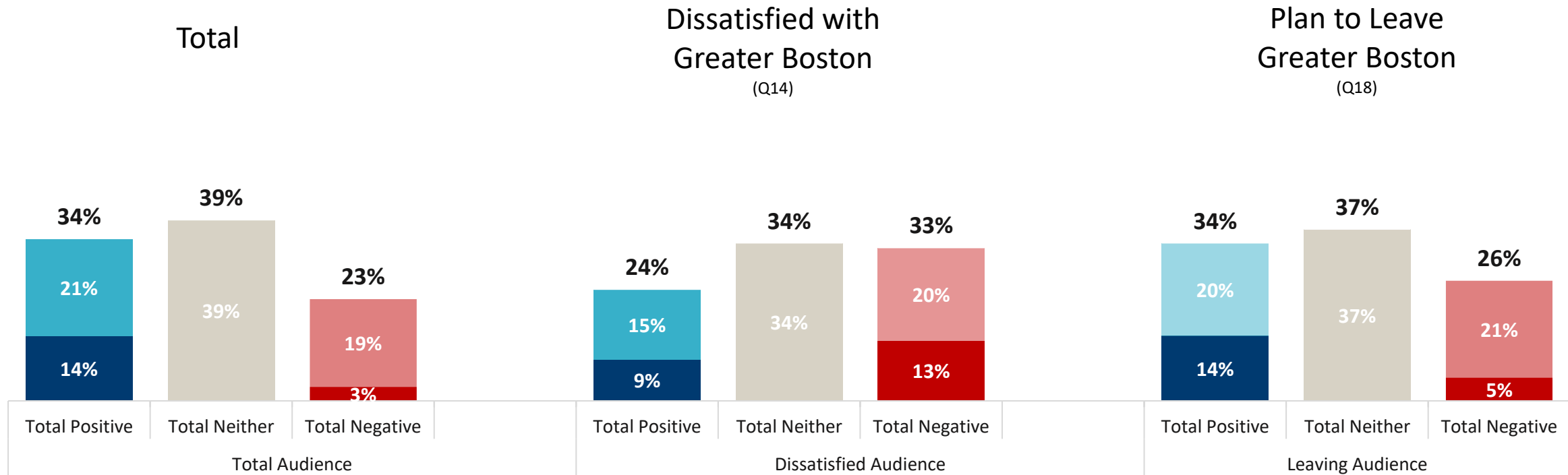
\*Dk not shown



Similarly, those who reported dissatisfaction with Greater Boston also reported that transportation in Greater Boston has a **negative impact** on their quality of life at higher rates than the audience overall.

Q30. What kind of impact, if any, does public transportation in Greater Boston have on the quality of your everyday life?

Very Positive    Somewhat Positive    Neither/No Impact    Somewhat Negative    Very Negative



	White	Black	Latino	AAPI	Essex	Middlesex	Norfolk	Plymouth	Suffolk	Men	Women
<b>Total Positive</b>	32%	28%	39%	45%	28%	34%	27%	34%	42%	39%	29%
<b>Total Neither</b>	44%	39%	28%	34%	45%	41%	48%	38%	27%	37%	42%
<b>Total Negative</b>	21%	30%	29%	18%	24%	20%	20%	24%	29%	21%	24%

\*DK not shown

Young people of color in Greater Boston reported taking the T and bus at higher rates, highlighting how inefficiencies within the public transport system may disproportionately affect their commutes.

Q28. What modes of transportation do you use most? Please select up to three modes you use most.

	TOTAL	ESSEX	MIDDLESEX	NORFOLK	PLYMOUTH	SUFFOLK
Drive	64%	76%	70%	70%	70%	44%
Walk	40%	39%	41%	26%	34%	47%
The T	35%	20%	31%	25%	23%	59%
Ride share (like Uber, Lyft)	25%	29%	23%	25%	16%	31%
Bus	25%	15%	23%	24%	23%	35%
Commuter rail	16%	18%	12%	23%	24%	13%
Bike	10%	9%	13%	7%	15%	8%
Ferry	3%	2%	3%	0%	8%	4%
Trolley	2%	0%	1%	1%	7%	4%

AAPI (52%) and Black (42%) residents are more likely to use the T regularly

Black (32%) and Latino (37%) folks are more likely to use the bus regularly



OBJECTIVE 2: UNDERSTAND

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# HOUSING

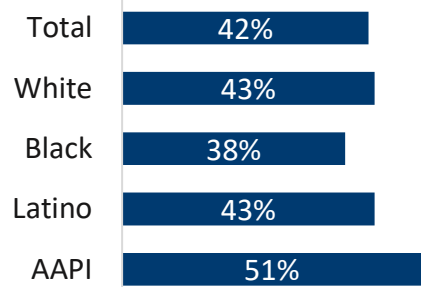


# Most young people in Greater Boston are renting or living with relatives. Housing affordability stands out as an important factor for young people.

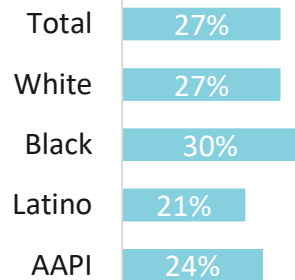


36. Do you rent or own your primary residence?

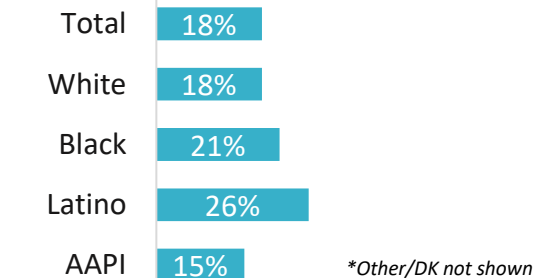
## Renting House or Condo



## Living with Relatives for Free



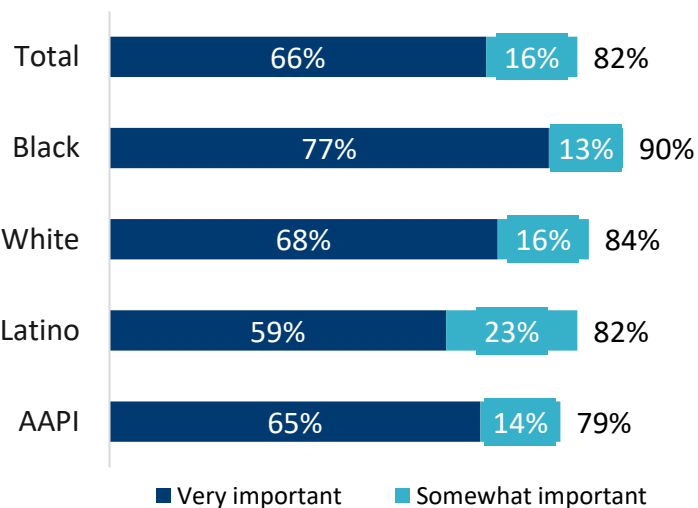
## Own House or Condo



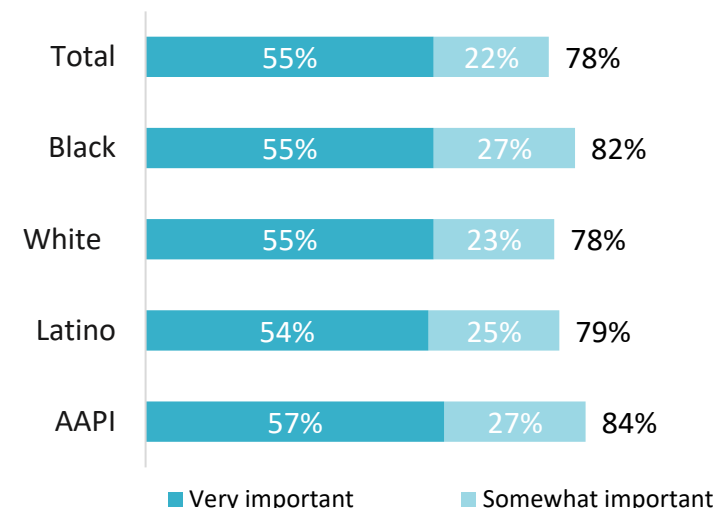
\*Other/DK not shown

Q19. Thinking about your future, when deciding how long you want to reside in Greater Boston, how important are each of the following factors?

## Cost of Rent



## Ability to Buy a Home



Q15. Which of the following are the most important issues that you think local leaders should prioritize? Please select three.

		Men	Women	White	Black	Latino/a	AAPI
Affordable housing	66%	61%	70%	70%	67%	53%	49%
Availability of quality jobs	39%	47%	32%	37%	45%	41%	43%
Financial compensation and wages	35%	31%	40%	35%	37%	38%	38%





## OBJECTIVE 3: IDENTIFY

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### 1: UNDERSTAND

- Understand young Greater Boston area residents' attitudes and perceptions of the city, as well as their values and priorities in both professional and personal lives.

### 2: UNDERSTAND

- Understand the barriers that push young residents to leave the city/workforce in Greater Boston or keep them from actively engaging civically and in communities. Alternatively, understand what makes residents feel positively towards the region and makes them stay and engage.

### 3: IDENTIFY

- Identify what factors and programming would encourage retention of young people in Greater Boston, and motivate them towards employment, civic and community engagement.

# Push & Pull Factors



## Push:

- Cost of rent
- A quarter of young people have plans to leave in the next 5 years
- Dissatisfaction with pay and promotion opportunities at work
- Power to make change in company low
- Negative impact of transportation on quality of life
- Difficulty building community for almost a quarter of young people

## Pull:

- Most young people satisfied with day-to-day life in Greater Boston
- Most young people plan to remain in Greater Boston for the next 5 years
- Satisfaction with relationships with coworker and management high
- Remote workers especially satisfied with work
- More entertainment options, work-life balance, and transportation to ease community-building



## CITY AWAKE

a program of the Greater Boston  
Chamber of Commerce Foundation

# Thank you

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For more information, please contact:  
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