



Town Council Retreat Day Three

Friday, February 13, 2026 | 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Apex Town Hall | 73 Hunter Street, Apex, NC
3rd Floor Training Rooms A and B

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| I. Breakfast / Agenda Review
<i>Open Discussion / Mayor Jacques K. Gilbert</i> | 8:00 AM |
| II. Legislative Agenda Review, Brainstorming, and Development
<i>Allen Coleman, Town Clerk
Hampton Billips, Government Relations Director, Checkmate
Derek Applewhite, Associate, Checkmate</i> | 8:05 AM |
| III. Community Survey Discussion
<i>Stacie Galloway, Director, Communications Department</i> | 9:15 AM |
| IV. Break - 15 minutes | 10:00 AM |
| V. New Initiatives Development – Brainstorming
<i>Celeste Sherer, Administrative Project Manager, Town
Manager's Office</i> | 10:15 AM |
| VI. Hot Topics Lightning Round – Elected
<i>Councilmembers and Mayor, 3 Minutes Each</i> | 11:15 AM |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members of the public can access and view the meeting on the Town's YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov> or attend in-person.

Accommodation Statement: Anyone needing special accommodations to attend this meeting and/or if this information is needed in an alternative format, please contact the Town Clerk's Office. The Town Clerk is located at 73 Hunter Street in Apex Town Hall on the 2nd Floor, (email) allen.coleman@apexnc.org or (phone) 919-249-60.



Town Council Retreat Day Three

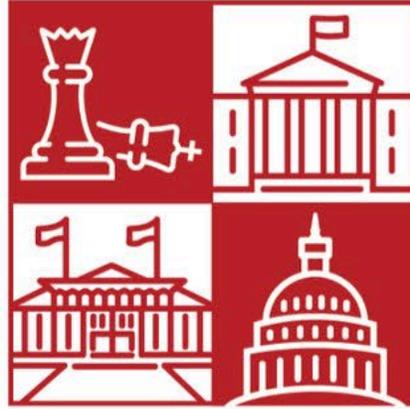
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- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| VII. Lunch – 30 Minutes | 11:45 AM |
| VIII. Strengthening Working Relations for Effective Governance – Building Trust, Communication, and Collaboration
<i>Facilitator</i> | 12:15 PM |
| IX. Wrap-up and Adjournment
<i>Mayor Jacques K. Gilbert</i> | 4:00 PM |

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CHECKMATE

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Our Team



**Ches
McDowell**



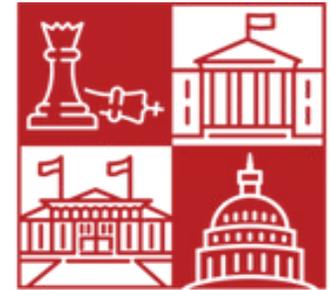
**Nelson
Freeman**



**Hampton
Billips**



**John
Easterling**



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**Kendall
Conger**

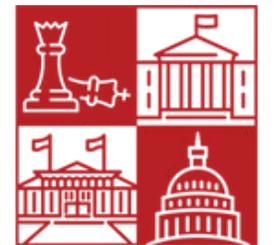
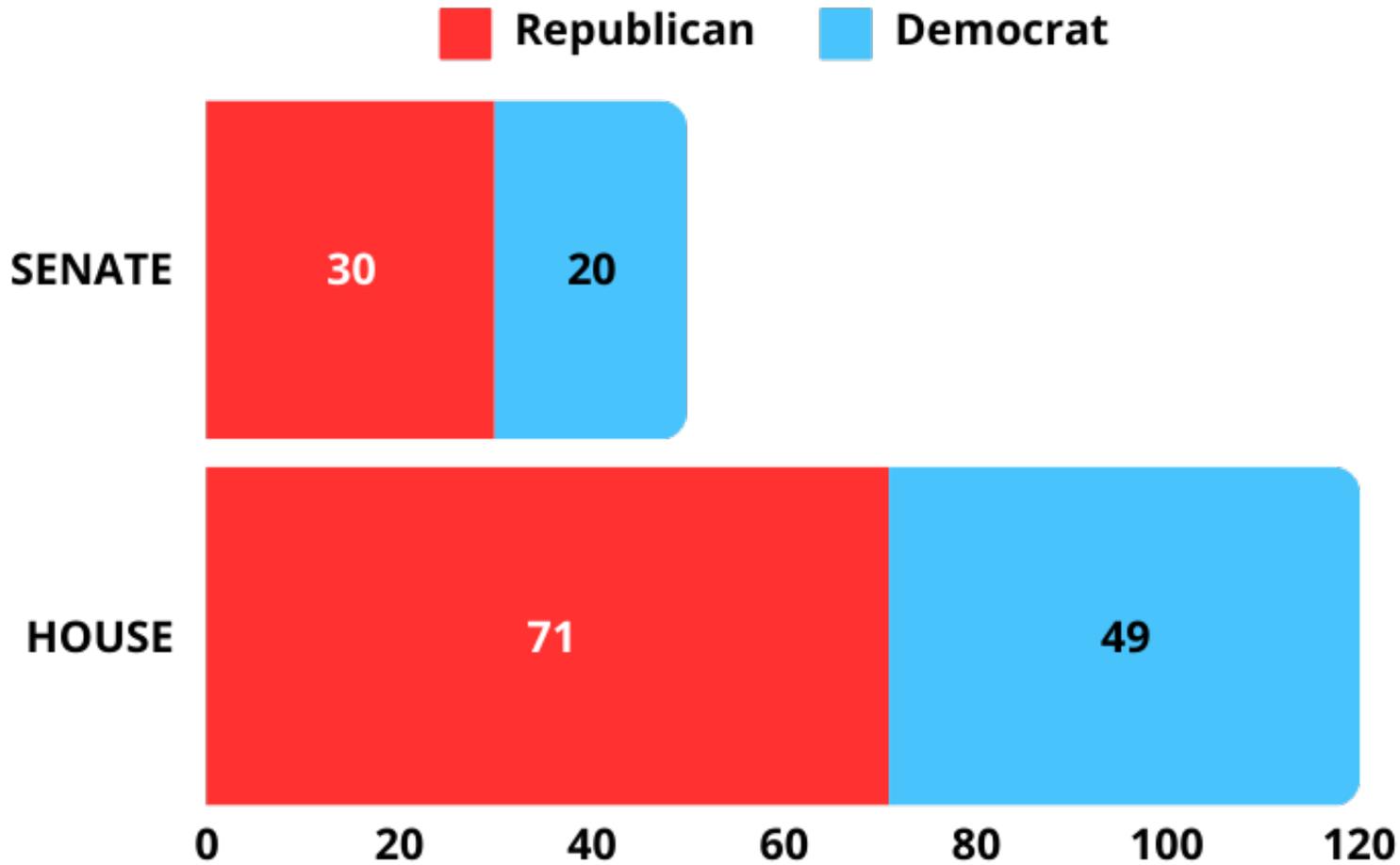


**Derrick
Applewhite**



**Lauren
Henderson**

NC Legislature 2025-2026



CHECKMATE
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Leadership in the General Assembly

House Leadership

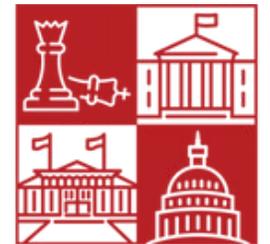
- Speaker of the House – Destin Hall (R-Caldwell)*
- House Rules Chairman – John Bell (R-Wayne)*
- House Majority Leader – Brendon Jones (R-Columbus)*
- House Speaker Pro Tempore – Mitchell Setzer (R-Catawba)*

Senate Leadership

- Senate President (Lt. Gov.) – Rachel Hunt (D)*
- President Pro Tempore (Leader) – Phil Berger (R-Rockingham)**
- Senate Rules Chairman – Bill Rabon (R-Brunswick)
- Democratic Leader – Sydney Batch (D-Wake)*

*New to leadership position

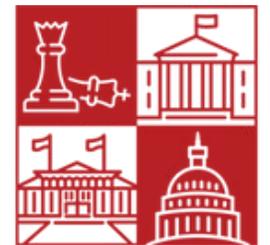
**8th term in leadership position



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Additional Leadership Roles

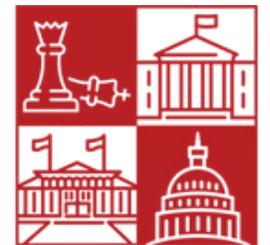
- Representative Steve Tyson (R-Craven) – Deputy Majority Leader
- Representative Robert Reives, II – House Democratic Leader
- Representative Cynthia Ball – Deputy Democratic Leader
- Representative Karl Gillespie (R-Cherokee) – Whip
- Representatives Matthew Winslow (R-Franklin) and Jeff Zenger (R-Forsyth) – Conference Committee Chairs
- Representative Harry Warren (R-Rowan) – Caucus Joint Liaison
- Representative Heather Rhyne (R-Gaston) – Freshman Leader
- Representative Blair Eddins (R-Wilkes) – Freshman Whip



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On the Horizon

- Primary Season (Berger vs Page)
- Budget Bill – Children’s Hospital
- Property Tax Discussion
- Homebuilders Bill
- Zoning/ETJ
- Down Zoning Repeal
- Hurricane Helene Funding
- Medicaid Funding

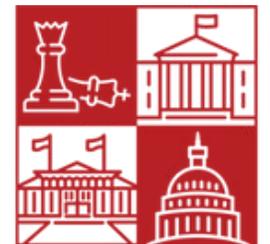


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Legislative Agenda Development

Guiding Legislative Principles

- Support Funding to Municipalities
- Support Greater Flexibility and Local Control for Municipalities
- Support Community and Accessibility Efforts
- Oppose Removal of Authority from Municipalities
- Oppose Unfunded Mandates or Cost Shifts
- Oppose efforts to eliminate or reduce funding to the Powell Bill

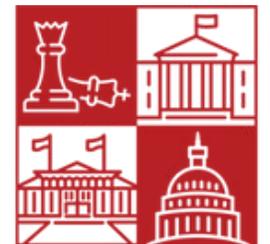


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Legislative Agenda Development

A Welcoming Community

- Identify and seek funding for outdoor recreational needs. (NC Parks Grants and direct grants)
- Support legislation that expands property tax exemptions to ensure seniors, disabled veterans, and others remain in their homes. (Several bills aimed at addressing this issue)
- Advocate for legislation that promotes opioid and other substance use prevention, intervention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery initiatives.* (Opioid Settlement Funds)



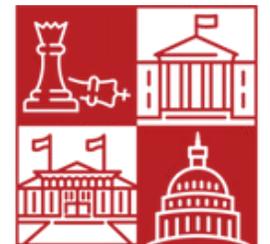
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*In Progress

Legislative Agenda Development

High Performing Government

- Promote legislation that would broaden the capabilities for providing electronic notices by local governments.*
- Identify and support legislation directed at initiatives related to reducing community violence and increasing public safety through non-traditional violence prevention. (S.L. 2025-93 Iryna's Law)
- Promote legislation to move all municipal elections to even-years reducing the costly burden to municipalities, and protect the ability for municipal elected officials to determine the election formats, districts, and other election matters.* (Several local bills filed/passed)



*In Progress

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Legislative Agenda Development

Environmental Leadership

- Advocate for pollinator habitats and protection of native species. (HB 84 The Pollinator Protection Act)
- Support legislation that will protect energy consumers and improve reliability.*
- Promote efforts that prioritize clean water for our communities and provide funds for remediating the contamination in local water supplies.* (HB 569 PFAS Pollution and Polluter Liability)
- Oppose legislation that places limitation on local government regulations concerning tree removal. (Defensive win)

*In Progress

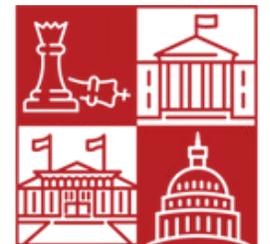


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Legislative Agenda Development

Responsible Development

- Support opportunities to increase access to affordable housing, by expanding incentive programs and address concerns of large investors and corporate-owned housing. (Presidential E.O.)
- Support the expansion and continuation of the Community Opportunity Tax Credit.* (Earned House Speaker Pro Tem support)
- Advocate for legislation to fund and support mobility initiatives, including expansion of roads, bus, bicycle, and light rail systems to suburban areas.*



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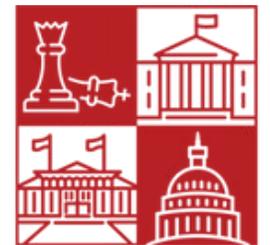
*In Progress

Legislative Agenda Development

Responsible Development Cont.

- Support the establishment of long-term funding streams that adequately address, water, sewer, stormwater, transportation, and other infrastructure needs.* (General Assembly priority)
- Advocate for and support the restoration of Down Zoning authority.* (SB 587 Clarify Nonconforming Uses)

*In Progress



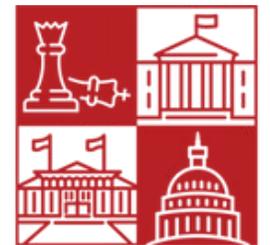
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Legislative Agenda Development

Economic Vitality

- Support efforts that ensure equitable distribution of sales tax.
- Invest heavily in infrastructure grants to provide capacity for siting new businesses and expansions to ensure robust recruitment and strong retention.*
- Promote legislation that would provide local revenue options beyond the property tax.* (S.L. 2025-39 P.A.V.E. Act)

*In Progress



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Legislative Agenda Development - Partners

Partners

- North Carolina League of Municipalities – Statewide monitoring
- ElectriCities – Membership monitoring
- NC Economic Development Association – Relationship building and coordination
- American Planning Association - NC Chapter – Monitoring and expertise
- NC County Commissioners Association – Statewide monitoring

Checkmate GR works collaboratively to advance Apex's interests



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Legislative Agenda Development - Framework

- **Clear, Concise, and Simple Priorities**
- **Include Policy Priorities, and Capital Needs**
- **Incorporate State Association Priorities**
- **Education and Engagement** – Community, Staff, Legislators
- **Strategic Goal Alignment** – Game Plan Apex
- **Credibility** – Council Adoption (March 24th)



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Legislative Agenda Development - Prioritization

The “Peak” Prioritization Project

Outcome: Produce a focused, council-driven agenda with three top priorities, five secondary priorities, and a watch list.

1. Individual Prioritization (5 minutes)
2. Small Group Prioritization (10 minutes)
3. Whole Council Prioritization (10 minutes)
4. Reality Check and Wrap Up (5 minutes)



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Appropriations Requests

Projects

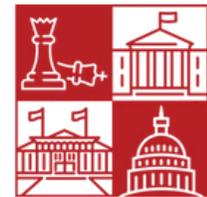
- Old Raleigh Road Waterline Design
- Design and Construction of new spillway at Swift Creek.
- Wimberly Road Water Supply Vault
- Additional viable projects related to economic development



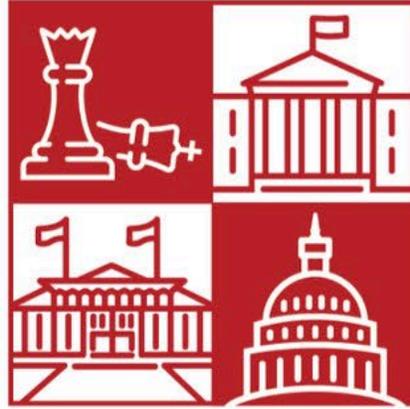
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Legislative Agenda – Implementation

- **Prioritization** – Facilitated
- **Council Adoption**
- **Legislative Breakfast**
- **Strengthen Relationships** - Local, State, and Federal
- **Government Relations Council Committee**
 - Join legislative Work Group – Apex, Cary, Holly Springs, and Morrisville (Western Wake)
- **Progress Monitoring**



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TOWN OF APEX LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2025-2026



GUIDING LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

- Support Funding to Municipalities
- Support Greater Flexibility and Local Control for Municipalities
- Support Equity and Inclusion Efforts
- Oppose Removal of Authority from Municipalities
- Oppose Unfunded Mandates or Cost Shifts
- Oppose efforts to eliminate or reduce funding to the Powell Bill

A WELCOME COMMUNITY



- Identify and seek funding needs for outdoor recreational needs
- Support legislation that expands property tax exemptions to ensure seniors, disabled veterans, and others remain in their homes.
- Advocate for equitable legislation that aims to create policies that are fair and inclusive for all people, without attention to race, gender identify, national origin, veteran, disability, or other factors.
- Advocate for legislation that promotes opioid and other substance use prevention, intervention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery initiatives.

HIGH PERFORMING GOVERNMENT



- Promote legislation that would broaden the capabilities for providing electronic notices by local governments.
- Identify and support legislation directed at initiatives related to reducing community violence and increasing public safety through non-traditional violence prevention.
- Promote legislation to move all municipal elections to even-years reducing the costly burden to municipalities, and protect the ability for municipal elected officials to determine the election formats, districts, and other election matters.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP



- Advocate for pollinator habitats and protection of native species.
- Support legislation that will protect energy consumers and improve reliability.
- Promote efforts that prioritize clean water for our communities and provide funds for remediating the contamination in local water supplies.
- Oppose legislation that places limitation on local government regulations concerning tree removal.

Questions about the Town of Apex's Legislative Agenda or Government Relations Team, please contact the Town Clerk Allen Coleman at allen.coleman@apenc.org or by telephone at 919-249-1260.

TOWN OF APEX LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2025-2026



RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT



- Support opportunities to increase access to affordable housing, by expanding incentive programs and address concerns of large investors and corporate-owned housing.
- Support the expansion and continuation of the Community Opportunity Tax Credit.
- Advocate for legislation to fund and support mobility initiatives, including expansion of roads, bus, bicycle, and light rail systems to suburban areas.
- Support the establishment of long-term funding streams that adequately address, water, sewer, stormwater, transportation, and other infrastructure needs.
- Advocate for and support the restoration of Down Zoning authority.

ECONOMIC VITALITY



- Support efforts that ensure equitable distribution of sales tax.
- Invest heavily in infrastructure grants to provide capacity for siting new businesses and expansions to ensure robust recruitment and strong retention.
- Promote legislation that would provide local revenue options beyond the property tax.

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February 13, 2026

Community Survey Update

AGENDA

- Background
- Most Recent Results
- Insights



Background





Background

- Every three years prior to 2023
 - Traditional mail / phone method
- Zencity Survey
 - Transitioned to Zencity in Fall 2023
 - Runs twice annually (spring and fall)

Most Recent Results





Apex, NC

Community Survey

September - November 2025

Powered by  Zensity



Survey Methodology

The current cycle of the web-based Community Survey collected survey data between September - November 2025. Respondents were digitally recruited (e.g., over social media, mobile apps, websites, and survey panels). These ads are targeted to residents, and responses are only included in the data when a local valid zipcode is provided.

Respondents who self-reported being under 18, who declined to provide any demographic information, or those who provided an invalid zipcode are excluded from the results.

405 valid respondents participated in the web-based Community Survey during this cycle.

Representation

Zencity ensures broad demographic representation in several ways:

Before data collection, Zencity employs national statistical data to establish response targets. These targets are defined based on race/ethnicity, age, and gender.

During data collection, we track the demographic composition of the survey responses in real time, comparing them to the predetermined targets. We fine-tune our distribution and advertising strategies as needed to target all demographic groups.

After data collection, Zencity employs an industry-standard statistical technique called rake weighting. This assigns a unique weight to each respondent based on their demographic characteristics. This method ensures that the distribution of these characteristics in the final weighted sample aligns with the community's overall demographics.

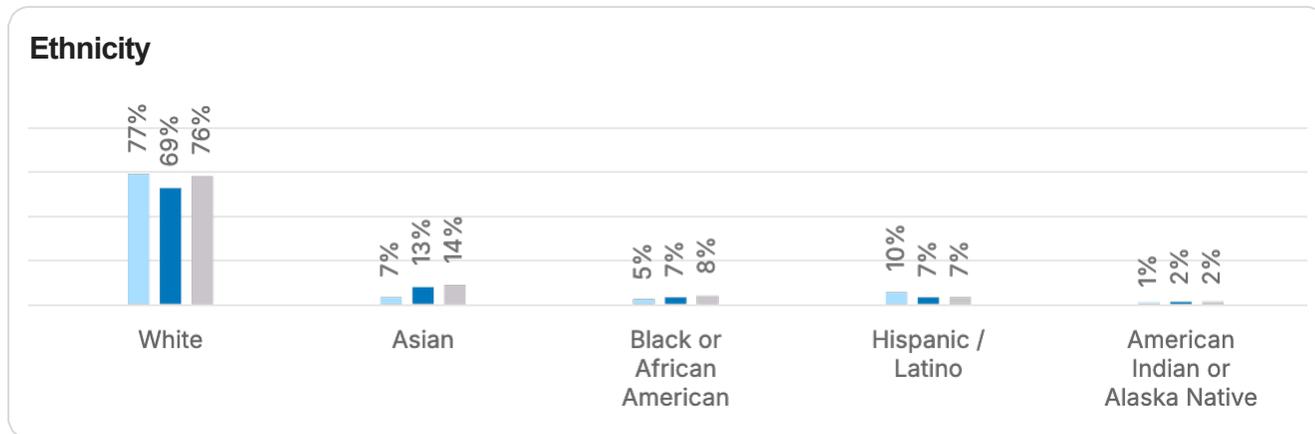
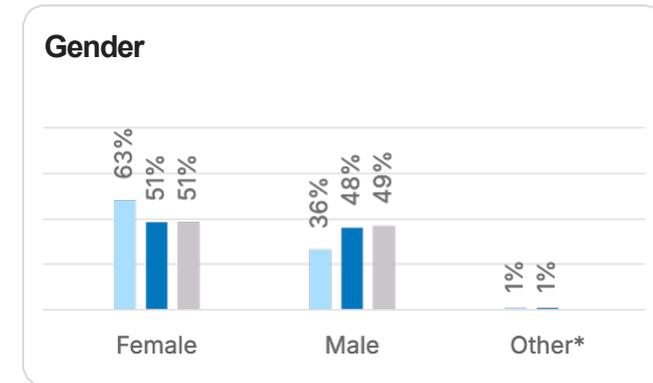
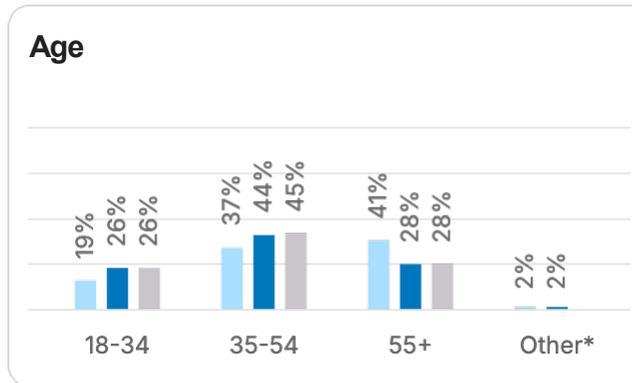
Sample Composition

405 valid respondents

Key

- **Unweighted demographics** - What we collected, without adjustments
- **Weighted demographics** - Our sample, adjusted to be representative of the population
- **Population demographics** - The demographics of the 18+ population

* The "Other" category includes missing data, people who selected "prefer not to say", and other groups not defined in the census.



Community Benchmark

We aim to help Zencity clients understand their results and put them into context. To that end, we will compare Apex's results to the United States as a whole and against communities with similar characteristics such as size, population density, and region (their "cohort").

These cohorts help to distinguish patterns unique to each client from those that are common in similar communities.

How we compare Apex to other similar communities

Creating the cohorts

First, all cities, towns, and counties in the US—not just Zencity clients—are put into cohorts based on geography and demographics using a method known as cluster analysis. This method balances a range of different characteristics to put communities into cohorts that are statistically similar to one another. The result of this step is one set of cohorts for cities and towns and a second set for counties.

We chose this method to create objectively similar groups of communities with respect to characteristics that are likely to be correlated with answers to the survey questions. By creating cohorts of larger sets of communities we have found that our benchmark baselines tend to be more reliable than they would be if we had direct comparisons of a small number of communities. See our Help Site for more information on cohorts, including the full list of communities in your cohort.

Creating cohort scores and national benchmark scores

The Zencity National Benchmark Survey is conducted semiannually, collecting about 5000 responses across the country. The cohort scores are the weighted average of scores for respondents in each cohort. These weights are calculated to match the client's own demographics, to make them directly comparable to the clients' scores. National scores are calculated in a similar manner.

The overall quality of life in Apex is **1% higher** than its cohort and **higher** than the national score.

77% Apex
76% Cohort
66% National

- Apex
- Cohort
- ▲ National

Question	National	Cohort	Your Score	Satisfaction Comparison
How is the overall quality of life in Apex?	66%	76%	77%	
How likely are you to recommend Apex as a place to live?	63%	73%	69%	
How likely are you to be living in Apex 5 years from now?	64%	65%	64%	

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Satisfaction with Life in Apex

Breakdown by characteristic

- Apex
- Cohort
- ▲ National

Question	National	Cohort	Your Score	Satisfaction Comparison
Availability of affordable housing	38%	35%	28%	
Availability of a variety of art and cultural events	52%	59%	56%	
Sense of overall safety	62%	71%	81%	
Sense of community among residents	53%	57%	61%	
Acceptance of residents of all backgrounds	62%	65%	70%	
Overall cleanliness and maintenance	61%	74%	77%	
Quality of parks and recreational amenities	64%	74%	82%	
Quality of waste and recycling services	63%	74%	74%	

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Overall Quality of Life

Residents' quality of life is a key metric for local government leaders. Here, we present how Apex residents are feeling about their quality of life, looking at how this changes by demographic group and geography.

We will show the percent of valid respondents who reported either a 4 or a 5 on the 1-5 scale, weighted by age, gender, and race/ethnicity (see page 3 for details).

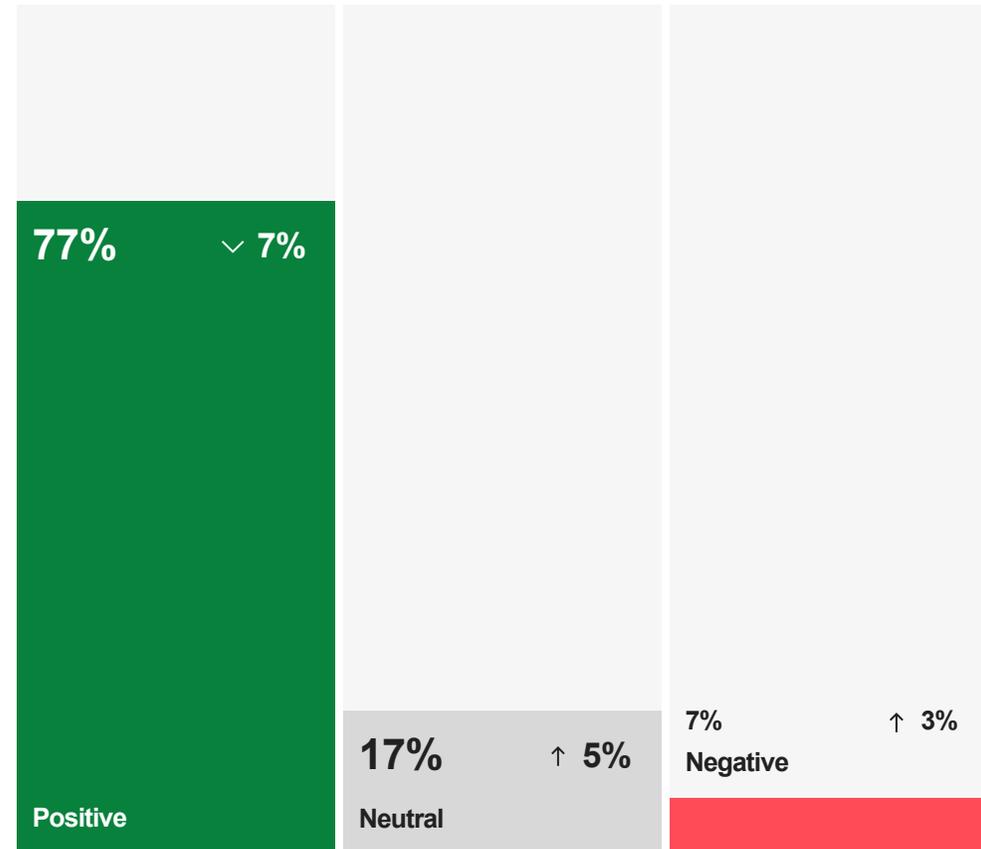
Scores will be shown only for groups (e.g., for a geographic area or for a demographic group) with at least 30 responses. For groups between 30 and 49 respondents, we highlight the small sample size using an (!). Use these scores with caution.

How is the overall quality of life in Apex?

77%

of 405 surveyed residents are satisfied with the overall quality of life in Apex

∨ 7% vs. previous cycle

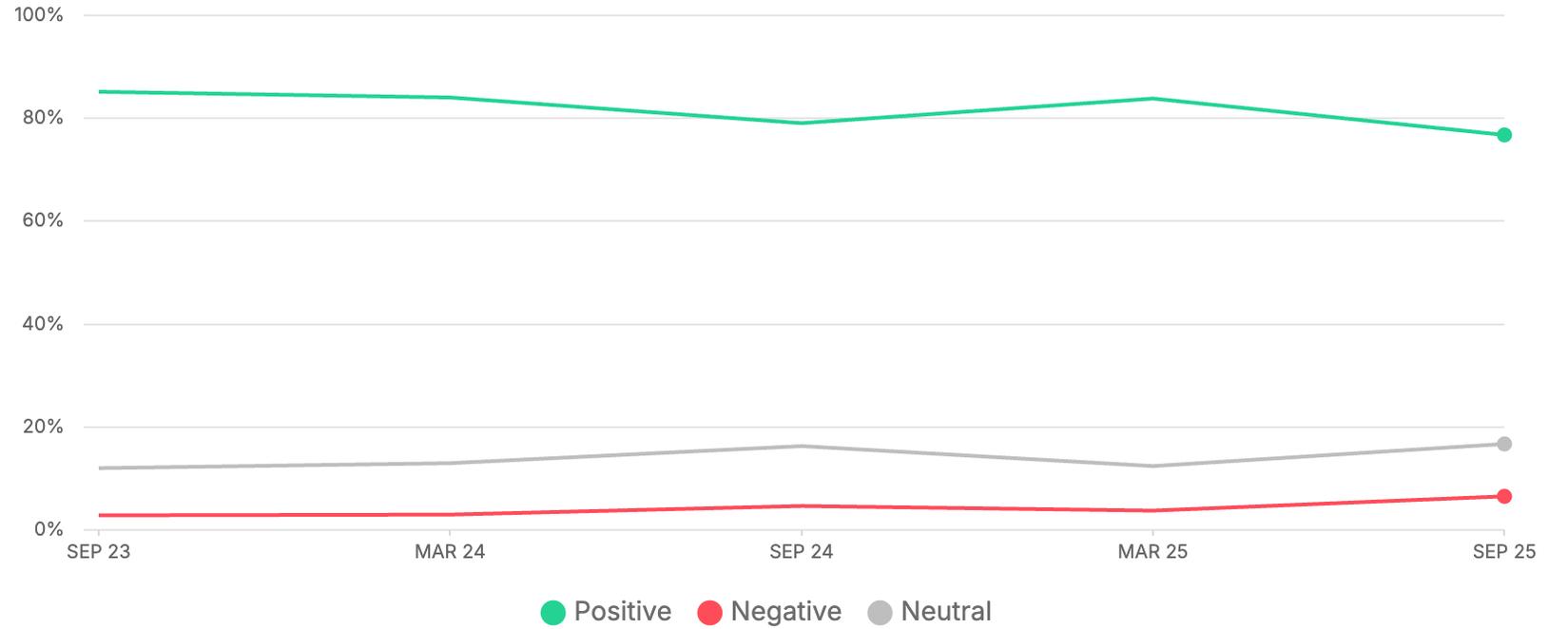


How is the overall quality of life in Apex?

77% ∨ 7% 

Neutral **17%** · ↑ 5% Negative **7%** · ↑ 3%

 This result is noteworthy



Other measures of satisfaction with life in Apex

How likely are you to recommend Apex as a place to live?

69% ∨ 4%

Neutral

14% · ∨ 2%

Negative

17% · ↑ 6%

How likely are you to be living in Apex 5 years from now?

64% ∨ 2%

Neutral

18% · ↑ 1%

Negative

18% · ↑ 2%

Community Characteristics

Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with a range of community characteristics on a scale from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent).

Zencity Community Survey

September - November 2025

Powered by  Zencity

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTIC	SATISFACTION SCORE	CHANGE	KEY
Quality of parks and recreational amenities	82% 	↓ 3% ↑ 2%	<p>KEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● POSITIVE ● NEUTRAL ● NEGATIVE ○ NON-SUBSTANTIATIVE <hr/> <p>↓ ↑ CHANGE IN POSITIVE SCORE</p> <p>↓ ↑ CHANGE IN NEGATIVE SCORE</p> <p>■ NOTEWORTHY</p> <p>■ SOMEWHAT NOTEWORTHY</p> <hr/> <p>The 'Change' column shows percentage point changes from the previous cycle. Questions with changes above 5% are highlighted.</p>
Sense of overall safety	81% 	↓ 3% ↑ 3%	
Overall cleanliness and maintenance	77% 	↓ 4% ↑ 3%	
Quality of waste and recycling services	74% 	↓ 1% ↓ 1%	
Quality of your experience in downtown Apex	72% 	↑ 3% ↑ 3%	
Overall quality of services provided by Apex	71% 	↓ 4% ↑ 8%	
Acceptance of residents of all backgrounds	70% 	↓ 2% ↑ 3%	
Overall satisfaction of customer service from town employees	 62% 	↓ 6% ↑ 6%	

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTIC	SATISFACTION SCORE			CHANGE	
Sense of community among residents	61%	24%	14%	↑ 3%	↑ 4%
Quality of utility services provided by the town	59%	17%	23%	↓ 9%	↑ 13%
Availability of a variety of art and cultural events	56%	29%	14%	↑ 4%	- 0%
Sense of overall feeling of traffic safety	49%	24%	27%	↑ 1%	↑ 6%
Value that you receive for your town tax dollars	48%	28%	24%	↓ 4%	↑ 8%
Sense of transparency in town government	46%	26%	27%	↓ 4%	↑ 8%
Ability of residents to give input to the Apex government	45%	28%	27%	↓ 9%	↑ 10%
Availability of affordable housing	28%	31%	41%	↑ 2%	↑ 1%

KEY

- POSITIVE
- NEUTRAL
- NEGATIVE
- NON-SUBSTANTIATIVE

- ↓ ↑ CHANGE IN POSITIVE SCORE
- ↓ ↑ CHANGE IN NEGATIVE SCORE
- ■ ■ NOTEWORTHY
- ■ ■ SOMEWHAT NOTEWORTHY

The 'Change' column shows percentage point changes from the previous cycle. Questions with changes above 5% are highlighted.

Focus Areas

The next pages highlight community characteristics of interest and provide insights into these characteristics, along with breakdowns by relevant groups for further analysis.

These insights are designed to support targeted strategic planning and deeper analysis. Where applicable, follow-up questions were included, focusing on responses that highlighted challenges (e.g., low ratings).

Follow-up questions in Zencity surveys gather detailed feedback, clarify responses, or provide context triggered by prior answers to help address issues or improve services.

Sense of transparency in town government

September - November 2025

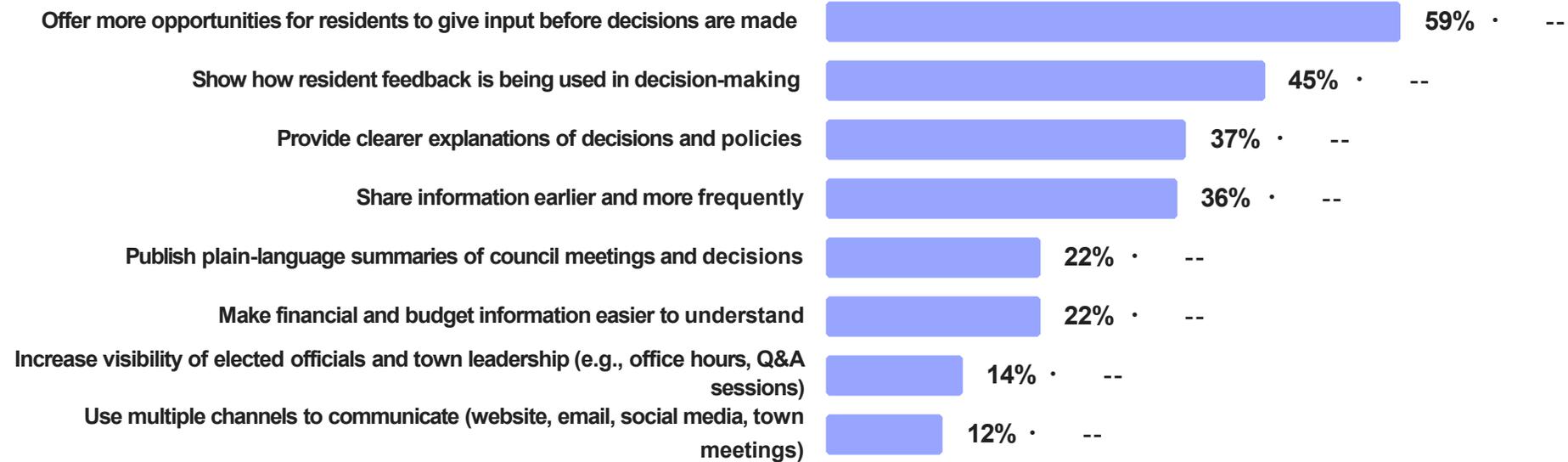
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46% ∨ 4%

Neutral
26% · ∨ 5%

Negative
27% · ↑ 8%

What is the most important thing you think the Apex government can do to improve the sense of transparency in town government?



Sense of overall feeling of traffic safety

September - November 2025

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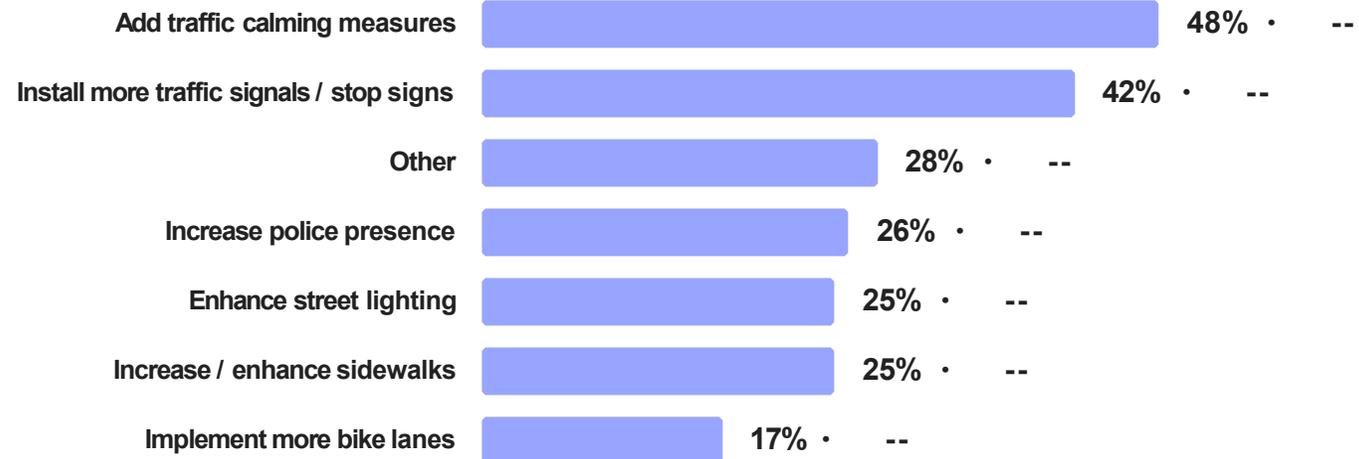
49% ↑ 1%

Neutral

24% · ↓ 7%

27% · ↑ 6%

What is the most important thing you think the Apex government can do to improve the sense of overall feeling of traffic safety?



Quality of your experience in downtown Apex

September - November 2025

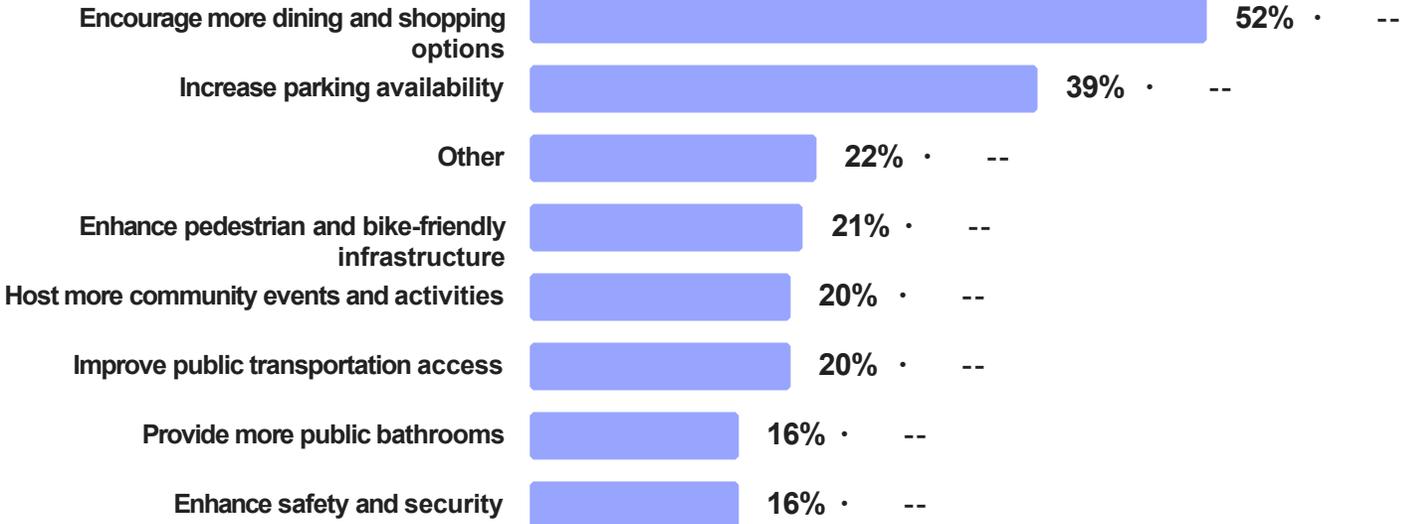
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72% ↑ 3%

Neutral
18% · ∨ 5%

Negative
11% · ↑ 3%

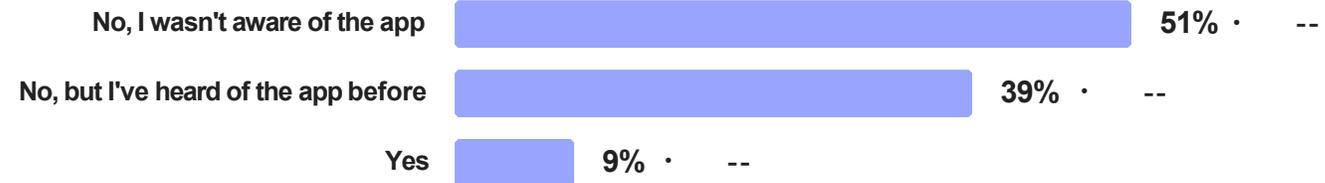
What is the most important thing you think the Apex government can do to improve the quality of your experience in downtown Apex?



Rotating Survey Section

The rotating survey section focuses on areas of interest each cycle and can be updated as new areas of interest emerge.

Have you used the 'Apex Parking' mobile app to find available parking downtown?



Did you find the app to be helpful in locating an available parking space?



New digital signage was recently installed in the downtown area that displays the number of available spaces in four parking lots. Have you found that signage to be helpful as you visit and park in downtown Apex?





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