



The Importance of Place: Neighborhood Amenities as a Source of Social Connection and Trust

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Key Points

- Americans who live in closer proximity to community parks, libraries, restaurants, and theaters are more content with their neighborhood, more trusting of others, and less lonely regardless of whether they live in large cities, suburbs, or small cities or towns.
- Residents of amenity-packed neighborhoods are more likely to say their community is an excellent place to live, to feel safer walking around their neighborhood at night, and to report greater interest in neighborhood goings-on.
- Americans who live in communities with little access to amenities have a far greater likelihood of feeling socially isolated.
- Even after accounting for an individual's social class, education, gender, and race, amenity access predicts feelings of community satisfaction, social trust, and social isolation.

Place matters. When given a choice, most people prefer to live close to the basics of community life—schools, stores, parks, and restaurants. People are willing to pay more for a house that is closer to valued community amenities such as grocery stores, and a majority of Americans believe that schools, community centers, and libraries have a lot to do with making a community successful.

New data from the American Enterprise Institute Survey on Community and Society (SCS) add to a body of research on the value of living close to a mix of neighborhood institutions and amenities.¹ Our findings suggest that living in communities rich in amenities positively affects social goods such as trust, sociability, and neighborliness, while decreasing social maladies such as loneliness.

Urbanists have been arguing at least since Jane Jacobs' pioneering work on successful neighborhoods that communities are more desirable when the basics of everyday life are all around us and nearby, rather than scattered across disconnected landscapes.² These insights have borne out in the research. To date, most assessments of the positive impact of mixed-use neighborhoods have focused on property values. Studies have found that people are willing to pay more for homes that are close to amenities and located in walkable neighborhoods. Increased home values correlate with proximity to grocery stores and reduced commute times.³

The SCS expands on this work by showing that proximity to a blend of neighborhood amenities is associated with noneconomic values such as community satisfaction and trust. When all else is equal,

people seem to prefer a sense of community in the built environment.

This does not always have to take the form of village-like, walkable neighborhoods. It is possible to blend amenities with Americans' penchant for detached single-family homes and automobiles, as numerous suburban developments have done in recent years. In the SCS, people living in amenity-rich suburban communities often have similar levels of community satisfaction as people in dense, urban neighborhoods. It seems that proximity and a multiplicity of amenities matter more than whether one lives in the middle of a big city, the suburbs, or a small town.

The Neighborhood Amenities Index

The SCS included questions to better understand the different types of neighborhood resources and amenities available to Americans in close proximity to where they live. The survey set out to gauge not only the variety of amenities but also their accessibility. For instance, how close do you live to a grocery store? Or a park?

The survey included the following types of neighborhood amenities: grocery stores; restaurants, bars, or coffee shops; gyms or fitness centers; movie theaters, bowling alleys, or other entertainment venues; and community parks or libraries. This is not an exhaustive list of all the different types of

neighborhood amenities, but it includes those most commonly found in American communities.

Most Americans report that at least some amenities are fairly close to where they live (Table 1). More than three-quarters (77 percent) of Americans say their grocery store is less than a 15-minute drive from their house or apartment. However, only 13 percent of Americans report that their grocery store is walking distance from where they live. An identical number (77 percent) of Americans report that they are within a 15-minute drive to their public library or community center, including 17 percent who live within walking distance. Roughly three-quarters (73 percent) of the public say they live less than a 15-minute car ride away from a community park or recreation area, including 26 percent who have a park within walking distance from their home. Approximately three-quarters (73 percent) of Americans also say they are at most a 15-minute drive from a gym, fitness center, or indoor recreation center, with 16 percent reporting that they are within walking distance of this amenity.

Americans live a bit farther away from restaurants and other entertainment options, although most say these amenities are still quite close. A majority (58 percent) of Americans report being no more than a short car trip (less than 15 minutes) away from their favorite restaurant, bar, or coffee shop. Ten percent say it is walkable from their house or apartment. Slightly more than half (53 percent) say

Table 1. Proximity to Neighborhood Amenities

	Grocery Store	Restaurant, Bar, or Coffee Shop	Gym or Fitness Center	Movie Theater, Arcade, Bowling Alley, or Other Entertainment Venue	Community Park or Recreation Area	Community Center or Library
Walking Distance	13	10	16	6	26	17
Short Trip by Car or Public Transportation (5–15 Minutes)	64	48	57	47	47	60
Moderate Trip by Car or Public Transportation (15–30 Minutes)	18	29	19	34	18	18
Longer Trip by Car or Public Transportation (30–60 Minutes)	3	8	3	9	5	2
Longer Than an Hour Away	1	4	2	4	2	1
Do Not Know/Refused	1	1	2	1	2	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Results do not always add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: AEI Survey on Community and Society, 2018.

they are no more than a short drive away from a theater, bowling alley, or other entertainment venue, although only 6 percent report that they are within walking distance.

To provide a more complete picture of the amenities available in American communities, we developed the Neighborhood Amenity Index. The additive scale combined the six different measures of neighborhood amenity proximity with values ranging from 6 to 30.⁴ Higher scores indicate a lack of amenities nearby, while lower scores indicate a greater number of neighborhood amenities. The index was collapsed into five discrete categories that divided Americans into the following types of neighborhoods: “very high amenity,” “high amenity,” “moderate amenity,” “low amenity,” and “very low amenity.”⁵

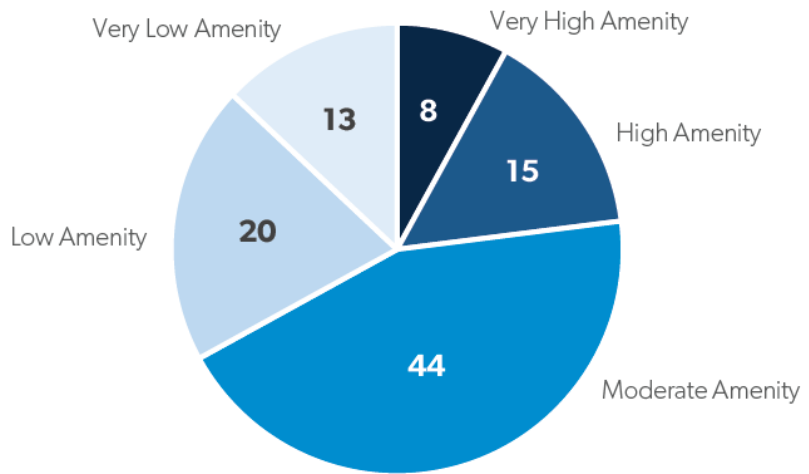
Relatively few Americans live in neighborhoods that include a wide variety of neighborhood amenities all conveniently located. Only 8 percent of Americans live in very-high-amenity communities. Fifteen percent live in high-amenity neighborhoods. Close to half (44 percent) live in communities with a moderate number of amenities, while one-third live in low-amenity (20 percent) or very-low-amenity (13 percent) communities (Figure 1).

A Profile of Neighborhood Amenity Groups

White Americans are overrepresented in high-amenity communities. Two-thirds (67 percent) of Americans living in very-high-amenity communities and 70 percent of Americans in high-amenity communities are white, non-Hispanic. Only 6 percent of residents in very-high-amenity communities are black, while 18 percent are Hispanic. In contrast, among those living in very-low-amenity communities, 55 percent are white, 18 percent are Hispanic, and 18 percent are black.

Compared to communities with fewer amenities, high-amenity communities have a greater concentration of residents with more formal education. Nearly half (45 percent) of Americans living in very-

Figure 1. The Neighborhood Amenities Index
Percentage of Americans Who Live in High-, Moderate-, and Low-Amenity Neighborhoods



Source: AEI Survey on Community and Society, 2018.

high-amenity communities have at least a four-year college degree. In contrast, only 21 percent of Americans living in very-low-amenity communities have a college degree. Nearly half (49 percent) have no college education at all.

There is also a sizable age gap. More than one-third (34 percent) of Americans residing in very-high-amenity communities are under the age of 30, compared to 23 percent of those in very-low-amenity communities.

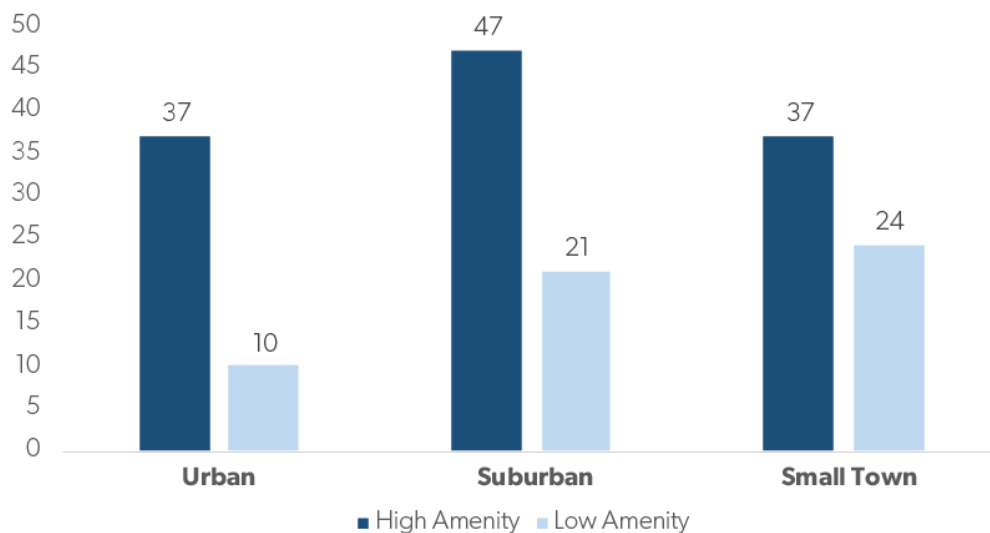
Not surprisingly, proximity to amenities is strongly associated with urbanity. More densely populated areas tend to include a greater number of amenities. Very-high-amenity communities are disproportionately urban and suburban, while very-low-amenity communities are far more likely to be rural. A majority of Americans living in very-high-amenity communities say they live in a large city (35 percent) or the suburb of a large city (27 percent). In contrast, only one-third of Americans living in very-low-amenity communities describe the places where they live as urban (14 percent) or suburban (19 percent). Four in 10 (40 percent) say they live in rural areas.

A Sense of Community and Feelings of Community Satisfaction

There is a strong relationship between amenity proximity and feelings of neighborhood satisfaction.

Figure 2. Americans Living in High-Amenity Neighborhoods Feel More Positively About Their Community

Percentage Who Say Their Community Is an Excellent Place to Live



Source: AEI Survey on Community and Society, 2018.

Americans living in close proximity to neighborhood amenities, such as restaurants, bars, parks, and libraries, have a stronger affinity for their neighborhood and express a greater desire to stay.

Overall, Americans who live in communities that have more amenities generally rate their neighborhood much more positively than those who do not. Nearly half (45 percent) of Americans who live in very-high-amenity neighborhoods rate their community as excellent, compared to roughly one-quarter (26 percent) of Americans who live in very-low-amenity neighborhoods.

This same pattern is evident across community types (Figure 2).⁶ Nearly four in 10 (37 percent) Americans living in urban areas with a high number of amenities nearby report that their community is an excellent place to live. In contrast, only 10 percent of Americans living in low-amenity urban neighborhoods report feeling so positively about their community. Nearly half (47 percent) of Americans who live in suburbs with a high number of neighborhood amenities say their community is excellent, a view shared by only 21 percent of suburbanites who have access to few amenities in their neighborhood. The gap among small-town residents is more modest: 37 percent of high-amenity residents of small cities and towns say their community is an excellent place to live, compared to fewer than one in four

(24 percent) of small-town residents with limited access to amenities.

Access to neighborhood amenities, such as bars, restaurants, libraries, and parks, also predicts the extent to which Americans want to leave their communities. Two-thirds (67 percent) of Americans in large cities who live in neighborhoods with few or no amenities say they would move away from their community if possible. In contrast, fewer

than half (46 percent) of city dwellers living in high-amenity neighborhoods report an interest in moving away. There are also stark differences among suburbanites. Americans living in high-amenity suburbs are considerably less likely to express an interest in moving than those in low-amenity neighborhoods (45 percent versus 63 percent). Notably, residents of small towns or cities are not any more likely to express an interest in moving away regardless of their access to amenities.

More than seven in 10 (71 percent) Americans living in high-amenity urban neighborhoods say they are likely to still be living in their community five years from now. In contrast, only 55 percent of Americans residing in low-amenity urban neighborhoods say they will still be living in their community five years from now. Close to half (44 percent) of low-amenity residents in large cities say this prospect is unlikely.

There are more modest differences in views of Americans living in suburbs. Americans living in high-amenity suburbs are somewhat more likely to report that they will still likely live in their neighborhood in five years than those in low-amenity suburban neighborhoods (72 percent versus 63 percent). There are no significant differences in the views of Americans living in small cities or towns when it comes to access to neighborhood amenities.

Neighborhood Safety. Having amenities close by is strongly associated with feelings of safety. Americans who live in small towns and suburbs generally feel safer than those who live in larger metropolitan areas, but Americans who live closer to neighborhood amenities tend to feel safer in their neighborhood.⁷

Nearly one-third (32 percent) of Americans living in high-amenity urban communities report that they feel very safe walking alone at night, while fewer than one in five (18 percent) of those in low-amenity communities say the same. There is an even larger gap among residents of suburbs and small towns. Roughly half of Americans living in high-amenity suburbs (49 percent) or small towns (50 percent) say they feel very safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night. In contrast, less than one-third of those living in low-amenity suburbs (28 percent) or small towns (30 percent) say they would feel very safe walking around their neighborhood after dark.

Neighborliness: A Willingness to Help. Most Americans say that people in their community are at least somewhat willing to help out their neighbors. Twenty-eight percent say their neighbors would be very willing to help out, while 47 percent say they would be fairly willing to lend a hand. About one in five (18 percent) say people in their area are not very or not at all willing to help out their neighbors, while 8 percent report that they are unsure.

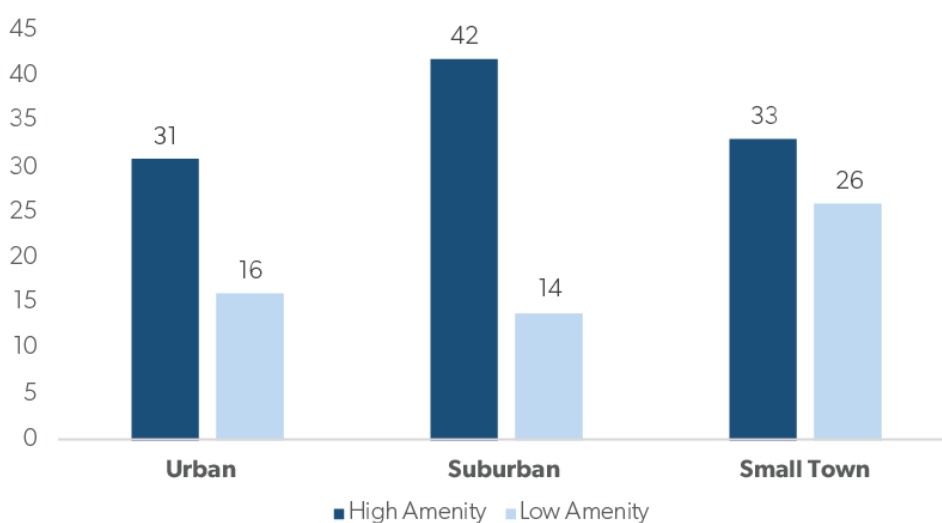
However, the views of Americans living in high-amenity communities and those with less access to neighborhood amenities are considerably different (Figure 3). Americans living in high-amenity urban communities are about twice as likely as those living in a low-amenity neighborhood to say that people in their area are very willing to help out their neighbors (31 percent versus 16 percent, respectively). There is an even wider gap among residents of suburbs. More than four in 10 (42 percent) Americans living

in high-amenity suburbs say their neighbors are willing to help, while only 14 percent of those in low-amenity suburbs say the same. Small-town residents in high-amenity neighborhoods are also more likely to say that people in their community are very willing to help their neighbors than those in low-amenity neighborhoods, although the gap is smaller (33 percent versus 26 percent).

Interest in Neighborhood Goings-On. The greater sense of community found in amenity-rich environments is also evident in the conversations that Americans have about their neighborhoods. Overall, less than half (41 percent) of Americans report that they have talked about their neighborhood or local community with friends in the past month.⁸ However, Americans who live in amenity-dense places express far more interest in the events and happenings in their community than those who live in areas that are more sparsely populated with restaurants, libraries, and parks.

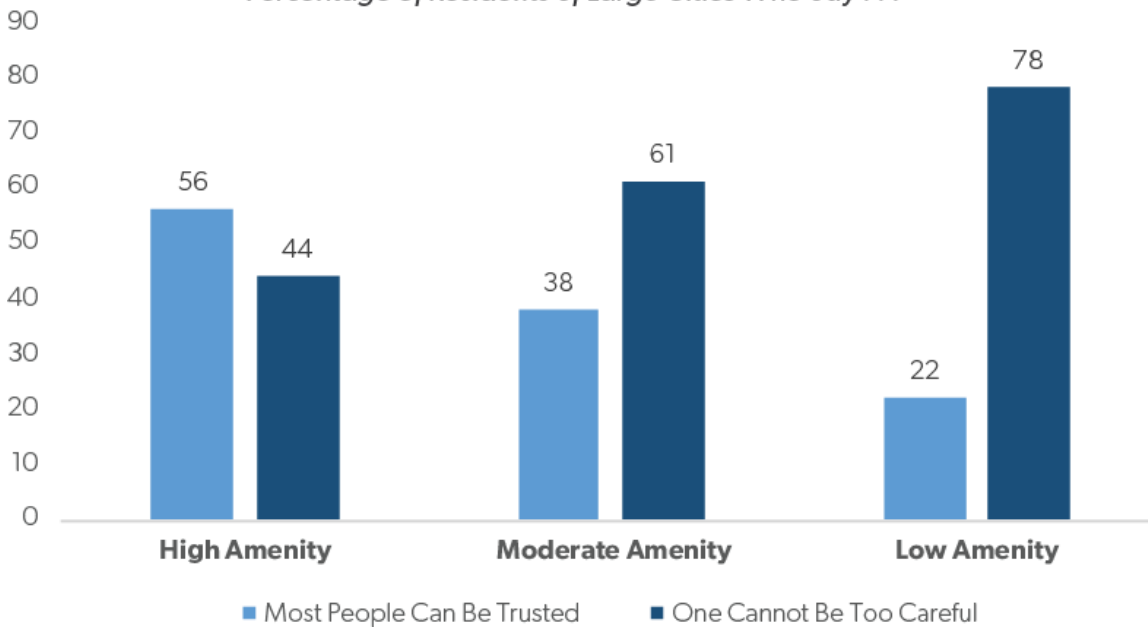
A majority (55 percent) of high-amenity urban residents say that in conversations with friends during the past month issues and events in their neighborhood come up at least occasionally. In stark contrast, only about half as many (26 percent) residents of low-amenity urban communities say the neighborhood has been a topic of conversation among their friends. There is a similarly wide gap among residents of small towns and cities. More than half (51 percent) of small-town residents living

Figure 3. Higher Amenity Communities Are More Neighborly
Percentage Who Say People in Their Area Are Very Willing to Help Their Neighbors



Source: AEI Survey on Community and Society, 2018.

Figure 4. Higher-Amenity Urban Residents Have Greater Levels of Interpersonal Trust
Percentage of Residents of Large Cities Who Say . . .



Source: AEI Survey on Community and Society, 2018.

in neighborhoods with a lot of amenities say community events and issues have been a topic of conversation among their friends, while only about one-third (34 percent) of low-amenity residents say the same. There is a more modest difference in American suburbs. More than four in 10 (41 percent) high-amenity suburbanites say the neighborhood has been a topic of conversation among their friends in the past month, compared to 33 percent of low-amenity suburban residents.

Interpersonal and Institutional Trust and Political Efficacy

Social scientists have produced a significant body of literature on the subject of trust. High-trust communities and societies are associated with a range of positive outcomes, including greater stability in institutions and improved economic activity. Less is known about the relationship between trust and proximity to amenities.

General Trust. The SCS finds an unmistakably clear relationship between proximity to amenities and trust. When asked, “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful when dealing with people?”

less than half (43 percent) of Americans say that most people can be trusted, while 56 percent disagree. There is a massive trust gap in America’s urban neighborhoods between high- and low-amenity residents. A majority (56 percent) of residents in high-amenity, large cities say people can generally be trusted, while only 22 percent of those in low-amenity, urban neighborhoods say the same (Figure 4). The same trend can be seen in small towns, where 49 percent of high-amenity respondents believe most people can be trusted, compared with 38 percent of low-amenity residents. The only group that slightly bucks the high-moderate-low downward trend in general trust is suburbanites, whose levels of trust are similar regardless of neighborhood amenities.

Trust at Work and in the Community. This trust pattern holds steady at the community level, where people in high-amenity communities are the most trusting of neighbors, coworkers, and people working in the shops they frequent. For instance, only 12 percent of people living in low-amenity neighborhoods in large cities and 15 percent of those in low-amenity parts of the suburbs say they trust their neighbors “a great deal,” compared to 26 percent

and 27 percent of those in high-amenity neighborhoods in large cities and suburbs, respectively.

The pattern is especially pronounced regarding colleagues at work and school. Seventy-five percent of people in high-amenity areas in cities and suburbs say they trust the people they work with or go to school with “a great deal” or “some,” compared to 55 percent and 58 percent of those in low-amenity cities and suburbs, respectively. The only group in which the largest share says they trust their colleagues “a great deal” is the cluster of people in high-amenity parts of large cities (44 percent). In every other group, including the amenity-rich suburbs, the share of people saying they trust coworkers “some” outnumbers those who say “a great deal”—and usually by a considerable margin.

Trust in Government. When it comes to trust in government, there is some variation in how much people in different types of neighborhoods trust the federal government or their state government. There is no evident connection between how amenity-rich a neighborhood is and how people think federal and state governments are doing. For instance, Americans in high-amenity, urban neighborhoods report slightly higher levels of trust in the federal government. However, in suburbs and small towns, low-amenity residents actually trust the federal government more. This same pattern is evident in feelings of trust about state government.

That changes, however, at the local government level, especially in large cities. Thirty-nine percent of amenity-rich urban dwellers say they can trust their local government “most of the time” or “just about always,” compared to 30 percent of those in neighborhoods with moderate amenity levels and only 22 percent of those in urban places with low amenity levels. Differences are more modest among suburban residents. More than half (52 percent) of high-amenity suburban residents say they trust their local government at least most of the time, compared to 45 percent of lower-amenity residents. In small towns, people living in the lowest-amenity environments trust their local governments the most.

Political Efficacy. The concept of political efficacy is closely related to trust. Early work defined efficacy as the “feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political

process, that is, that it is worthwhile to perform one’s civic duties.”⁹

The SCS employed a paired opposite question design to measure political efficacy. Respondents were asked to identify which statement came closer to their own view: “Ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Washington if they are willing to make the effort” or “There’s not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Washington.”¹⁰

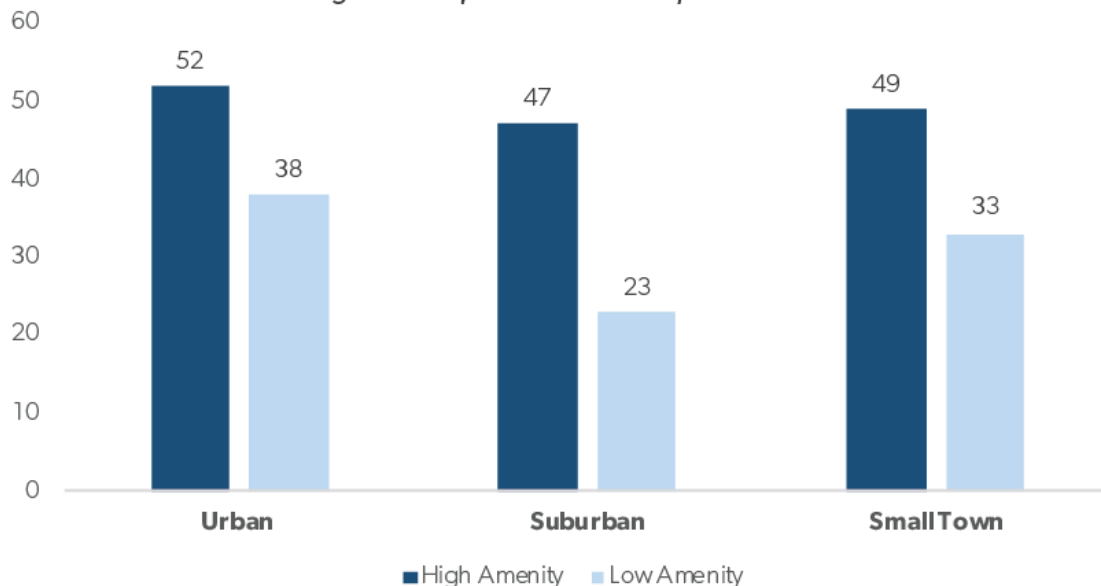
Americans are generally divided over whether ordinary citizens can do much to influence government in Washington. About half (48 percent) say citizens have the capacity to influence the federal government, while roughly as many (50 percent) say there is little they can do. However, there is wide variation in feelings of efficacy between those who reside in high- versus low-amenity communities.

A majority of Americans living in high-amenity suburbs (59 percent) and urban communities (56 percent) believe that ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Washington. In contrast, fewer than half of Americans residing in low-amenity suburbs (48 percent) and only 37 percent of Americans in low-amenity urban neighborhoods believe ordinary citizens have power to influence the federal government. Nearly six in 10 (59 percent) low-amenity urbanites say there is not much ordinary citizens can do to influence federal policymakers. Proximity to amenities does not appear to have much of an impact for this question on Americans living in small towns or cities.

Social Isolation and Sociability

Americans who live in communities with a richer array of neighborhood amenities are consistently more likely to socialize with their neighbors, regardless of where they live. Americans in high-amenity, urban areas are twice as likely as those with few or no amenities to talk with their neighbors daily (21 percent versus 10 percent). Similarly, suburbanites living in high-amenity neighborhoods are twice as likely as those living in low-amenity neighborhoods to chat with their neighbors daily (16 percent versus 8 percent). Denizens of small towns who have access to a lot of amenities are also significantly more likely to talk with their neighbors regularly than small-town residents with less access (19 percent

Figure 5. Greater Access to Amenities Linked with Lower Levels of Social Isolation
Percentage Who Express Low Levels of Social Isolation



Source: AEI Survey on Community and Society, 2018.

versus 8 percent). However, it is not just talking with their neighbors; higher-amenity communities also tend to have residents who feel more socially connected and less isolated.

To measure social isolation, we use a modified version of the University of California, Los Angeles, loneliness scale.¹¹ We constructed an additive index comprised of 10 different items that measure the frequency with which Americans express various aspects of social isolation, such as feeling “completely alone,” “left out,” and that “no one really knows you well.”¹² The index with scores ranging from 10 to 40 was collapsed into five categories of roughly equal size. The social isolation index includes the following categories: very low (10–16), low (17–20), moderate (21–24), high (25–29), and very high (30–40).

Across different community types—large cities, suburbs, and small towns—Americans living in amenity-dense communities are less apt to feel socially isolated (Figure 5). More than half (52 percent) of urban residents in high-amenity neighborhoods feel little if any sense of social isolation. In contrast, fewer than four in 10 (38 percent) urbanites living in low-amenity communities express a similar sentiment.

High-amenity suburban residents are also far less likely than those living in low-amenity neighborhoods to report feelings of social isolation. Nearly half

(47 percent) of Americans living in suburban neighborhoods that have a wealth of amenities feel little if any social isolation, while only 23 percent of those living in low-amenity suburbs say the same. A majority (55 percent) of suburban residents in low-amenity communities report a high degree of social isolation.

Finally, there is a sizable gap among residents of small towns and cities. About half (49 percent) of Americans living in amenity-rich small towns report low or very low feelings of social isolation, compared to about one-third (34 percent) of those living in amenity-poor communities.

The Amenities Effect

Because neighborhoods with higher concentrations of amenities are demographically and geographically distinct from those with limited amenity access, the strong associations we observe may be primarily or even completely attributable to some other factor as opposed to proximity to restaurants, bars, and libraries. To this end, we ran three separate logistic regression models predicting neighborhood satisfaction, social isolation, and levels of interpersonal trust while controlling for basic demographic, geographic, and political characteristics.

Each model included a standard set of demographic controls, such as age, gender, race and

ethnicity, marital status, income, and education. In addition, the models accounted for region (based on the US Census definition), self-reported community type—whether respondents lived in a large city, suburb of a large city, small city or town, or rural area—and political ideology.

The results show a strong relationship between amenity access and neighborhood satisfaction. Even when including a robust set of demographic and geographic variables in the model, proximity to neighborhood amenities, such as parks, libraries, and restaurants, is a strong and significant predictor of community satisfaction. Americans who live in neighborhoods with a very high concentration of amenities have a 48 percent probability of saying their community is excellent.¹³ Americans living in moderate-amenity communities have only a 30 percent probability of expressing this same sentiment, and those in neighborhoods with very low amenity access have only an 18 percent probability of doing so.

The findings are somewhat similar for interpersonal trust. Americans who live in communities where many different types of neighborhood amenities are available nearby are significantly more likely to express higher levels of trust. Those living in communities with the greatest concentration of amenities have a 53 percent probability of agreeing with the statement that “most people can be trusted.” Americans residing in neighborhoods with a moderate amount of amenities close by have a 42 percent chance of expressing trust in others, while only 38 percent of those with limited or no access to neighborhood amenities believe that people are generally trustworthy.

Finally, access to neighborhood amenities is also a strong predictor of feelings of social isolation, even when accounting for other important demographic and geographic attributes. Americans who reside in neighborhoods with fewer amenities express greater feelings of isolation. Americans who live in very-low-amenity communities have a 61 percent probability of expressing high levels of social isolation. In contrast, Americans residing in very-high-amenity communities have only a 34 percent probability of expressing high levels of social isolation.

Conclusion

As more of our work lives and social lives migrate online, the physical spaces in our communities that serve as the foundation for much of our social interactions can be easily overlooked. But having access to parks, coffee shops, and other neighborhood amenities is associated with an incredible array of positive social outcomes. They increase our sense of satisfaction about our neighborhood, boost our interest in local events, generate greater feelings of interpersonal trust, and make us feel less alone.

Eric Klinenberg, a sociologist at New York University, argues that these types of amenities serve as “social infrastructure,” the shared spaces that facilitate regularized social interactions. In a recent article for the *Atlantic*, Klinenberg suggests that parks, libraries, bars, and restaurants are crucial. Most of us do not set out to forge social ties with strangers or build a community, but “when people engage in sustained, recurrent interaction, particularly while doing things they enjoy,” these become the necessary by-products.¹⁴ He continues, “When social infrastructure is robust, it fosters contact, mutual support, and collaboration among friends and neighbors; when degraded, it inhibits social activity, leaving families and individuals to fend for themselves.”¹⁵

Klinenberg argues that, despite the benefits that “social infrastructure” provides, it has too often been neglected. In local and state budgets in both red states and blue states, libraries, public parks, and other neighborhood amenities have faced significant cuts. And while local governments cannot decide whether a restaurant or bar is going to set up shop in a certain community, there are many ways for local leaders to encourage or discourage this type of development.

Human beings are social creatures who benefit from interaction with each other. For this reason, as others have demonstrated, families, schools, and communities are important crucibles for developing trust, interpersonal skills, and overall social well-being. The SCS adds to this literature by demonstrating that how communities are constituted also plays an important role in the social health of Americans, whether they live in a large city, a suburb, or a small town.

Appendix A. The Amenities Effect

Table A1. Logistic Regression Results Predicting Community Satisfaction, Interpersonal Trust, and Social Isolation

Variables	Community Satisfaction	Interpersonal Trust	Social Isolation
Four-Year College Graduate	0.225** (0.104)	0.600*** (0.098)	-0.172* (0.100)
Male	0.011 (0.094)	0.244*** (0.087)	0.093 (0.087)
Married	0.544*** (0.101)	0.241** (0.095)	-0.517*** (0.095)
White, Non-Hispanic	0.215** (0.106)	0.380*** (0.096)	0.126 (0.096)
Urban Resident	-0.433*** (0.122)	-0.240** (0.107)	-0.172 (0.106)
Rural Resident	0.497*** (0.146)	-0.072 (0.140)	-0.061 (0.139)
Political Conservative	0.136 (0.103)	-0.197** (0.098)	-0.052 (0.098)
Age (18–97)	0.009*** (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)
Annual Household Income (\$0–\$200,000+)	0.069*** (0.013)	0.035*** (0.012)	-0.059*** (0.012)
Midwest Region	0.014 (0.150)	0.133 (0.140)	-0.140 (0.141)
Southern Region	-0.061 (0.143)	-0.092 (0.133)	-0.107 (0.133)
Western Region	-0.053 (0.153)	0.178 (0.142)	-0.079 (0.142)
High-Amenity Neighborhood	-0.471*** (0.177)	-0.125 (0.172)	0.133 (0.176)
Moderate-Amenity Neighborhood	-0.770*** (0.158)	-0.476*** (0.153)	0.215 (0.156)
Low-Amenity Neighborhood	-1.199*** (0.186)	-0.658*** (0.173)	0.337* (0.173)
Very-Low-Amenity Neighborhood	-1.443*** (0.216)	-0.649*** (0.194)	1.076*** (0.195)
Constant	-1.560*** (0.252)	-0.934*** (0.234)	0.574** (0.234)
Observations	2,411	2,411	2,411

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.
Source: AEI Survey on Community and Society, 2018.

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Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Samuel J. Abrams et al., *AEI Survey on Community and Society: Social Capital, Civic Health, and Quality of Life in the United States*, American Enterprise Institute, February 5, 2019, <http://www.aei.org/publication/aei-survey-on-community-and-society-social-capital-civic-health-and-quality-of-life-in-the-united-states/>. The Survey on Community and Society was conducted among a random sample of American adults age 18 to 70.

2. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

3. See, for instance, Michelle Bina and Kara Kockelman, “Location Choice vis-à-vis Transportation: The Case of Recent Homebuyers,” University of Texas, 2006, http://www.ce.utexas.edu/prof/kockelman/public_html/TRBo6HomeChoice.pdf; Beth Wilson and James Frew, “Apartment Rents and Locations in Portland, Oregon: 1992–2002,” *Journal of Real Estate Research* 29, no. 2 (2007), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=978977; Charles C. Tu and Mark Eppli, “An Empirical Examination of Traditional Neighborhood Development,” *Real Estate Economics* 29, no. 3 (2001): 485–501, https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1002&context=fin_fac; Yan Song and Gerrit-Jan Knaap, “New Urbanism and Housing Values: A Disaggregate Assessment,” *Journal of Urban Economics* 54, no. 2 (2003): 218, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.197.7545&rep=rep1&type=pdf>; Joe Cortright, *Walking the Walk: How Walkability Raises Home Values in U.S. Cities*, CEOs for Cities, August 2009, https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/walking_the_walk_cortright.pdf; Emily Hamilton and Eli Dourado, “The Premium for Walkable Development Under Land-Use Regulations,” Mercatus Center, 2018, <https://www.mercatus.org/system/files/hamilton-walkable-development-mercatus-research-v1.pdf>; and Claire Zillman, “Trader Joe’s vs. Whole Foods: Which Boosts Your Home Value the Most?,” *Fortune*, August 13, 2015, <http://fortune.com/2015/08/13/trader-joes-whole-foods-home-value/>.

4. The Cronbach’s Alpha for the index, a statistic that measures the internal consistency between items, was 0.79, indicating that the items are suitable to be included together in a scale. The additive scale was calculated so that higher scores correspond with greater travel time to that amenity. A score of 30 indicates that the respondent lived a substantial distance from all the different types of amenities measured in the survey.

5. The skewed distribution of responses made a quintile categorization scheme impractical for our purposes. We divided the groups as follows: The very-high-amenity group included scores of 6–9, the high-amenity group had scores of 10–11, the moderate-amenity group included scores of 12–14, the low-amenity group included scores of 15–17, and the very-low-amenity group had scores of 18–30.

6. For the remainder of the analysis, we collapse the “very-high” and “high” categories and the “very-low” and “low” categories to ensure we had a robust sample size to perform the analyses. Rural communities were omitted due to sample size limitations.

7. There are no significant differences in the views of rural residents.

8. These results are based on a subset of respondents who report having at least one close friend with whom they have had a conversation in the past month.

9. Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, and Warren E. Miller, *The Voter Decides* (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1954).

10. Stephen Craig, Richard Niemi, and Glenn Silver identified two dimensions of political efficacy—internal efficacy, which measured “beliefs about one’s own competence,” and external efficacy, which referred to “responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions to citizens’ demands.” This measure is more consistent with the concept of external political efficacy. See Stephen C. Craig, Richard G. Niemi, and Glenn E. Silver, “Political Efficacy and Trust: A Report on the NES Pilot Study Items,” *Political Behavior* 12, no. 3 (1990): 289–314, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00992337>.

11. Dan Russell, Letitia Anne Peplau, and Mary Lund Ferguson, “Developing a Measure of Loneliness,” *Journal of Personality Assessment* 42, no. 3 (1978): 290–94, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15327752jpa4203_11.

12. These measures are highly correlated. The Cronbach's Alpha for the index is 0.91, well above the conventional threshold. For a more complete description of the questions that were included in the social isolation index, see Abrams et al., *AEI Survey on Community and Society*.

13. The predicted probability was computed from the logistic regression model for amenity type by holding all other covariates at their means.

14. Eric Klinenberg, "Worry Less About Crumbling Roads, More About Crumbling Libraries," *Atlantic*, September 20, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/09/worry-less-about-crumbling-roads-more-about-crumbling-libraries/570721/>.

15. Klinenberg, "Worry Less About Crumbling Roads, More About Crumbling Libraries."

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