

# Westchester Stakeholder Results

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CP2 Consulting

October 14, 2025



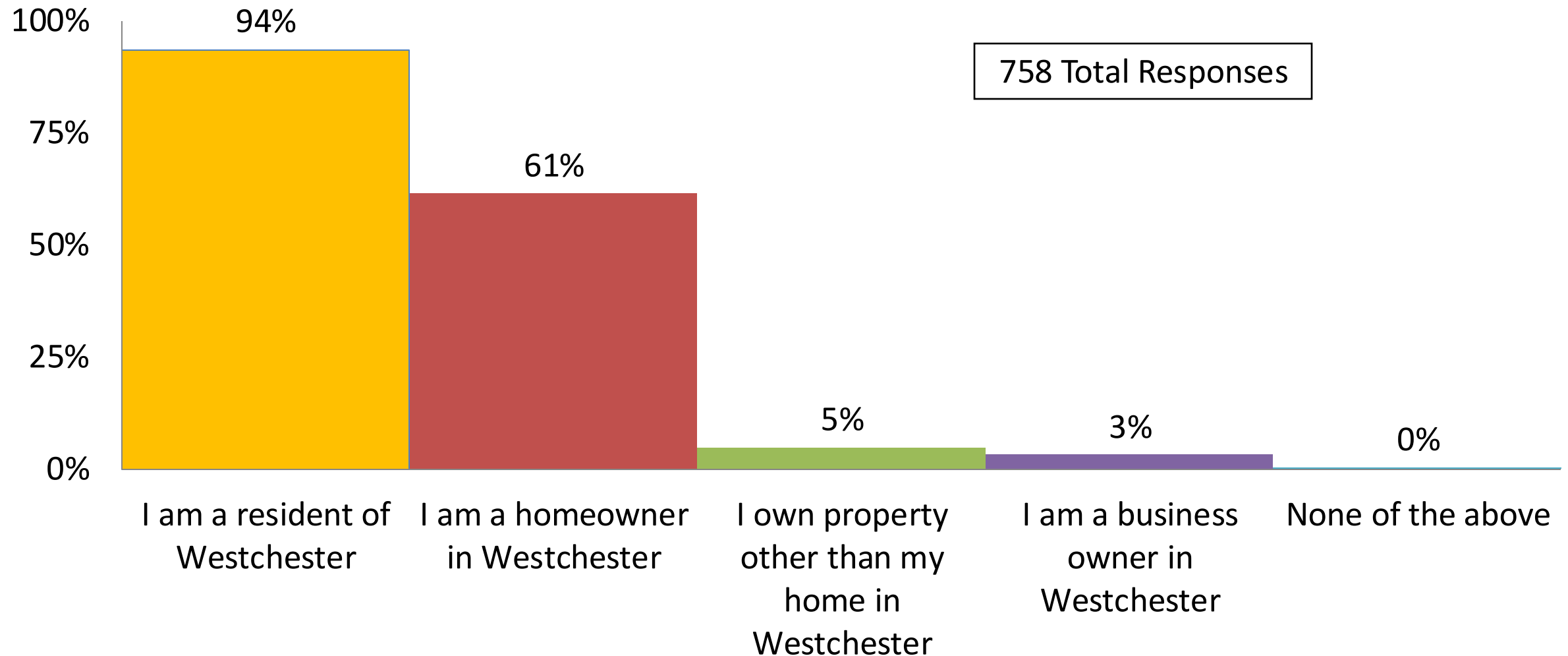
# Cory's Background

- Ten years in local government, with six as a 911 Dispatcher.
- Four years as a VP at a mission-driven tech startup company that focused on community engagement (Polco/National Research Center).
- Leadership roles in the Alliance for Innovation and the Wisconsin City/County Management Association.
- Presents at conferences nationally on strategic planning, innovation, use of data, and engaging historically marginalized populations.

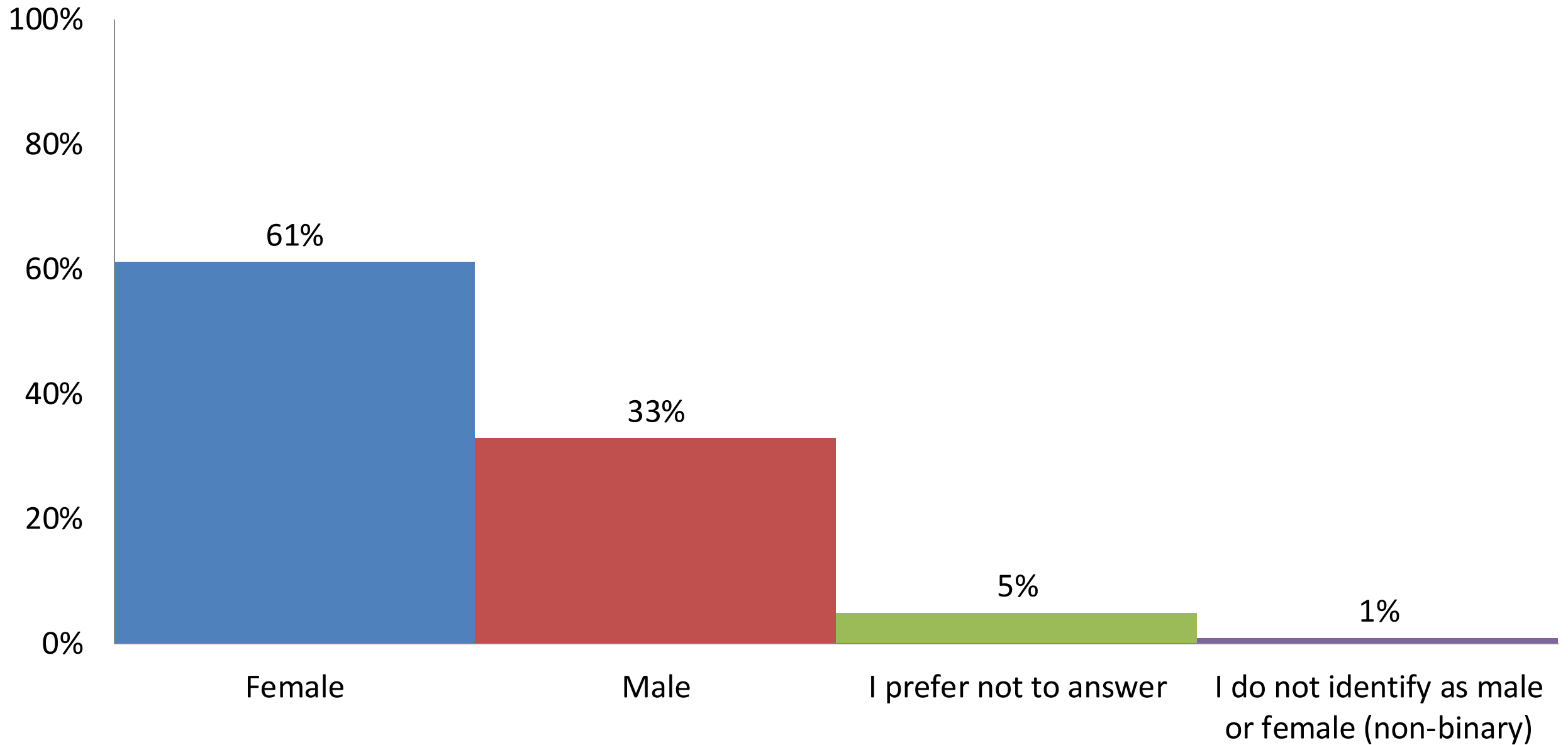


# Strategic Plan Community Survey Results

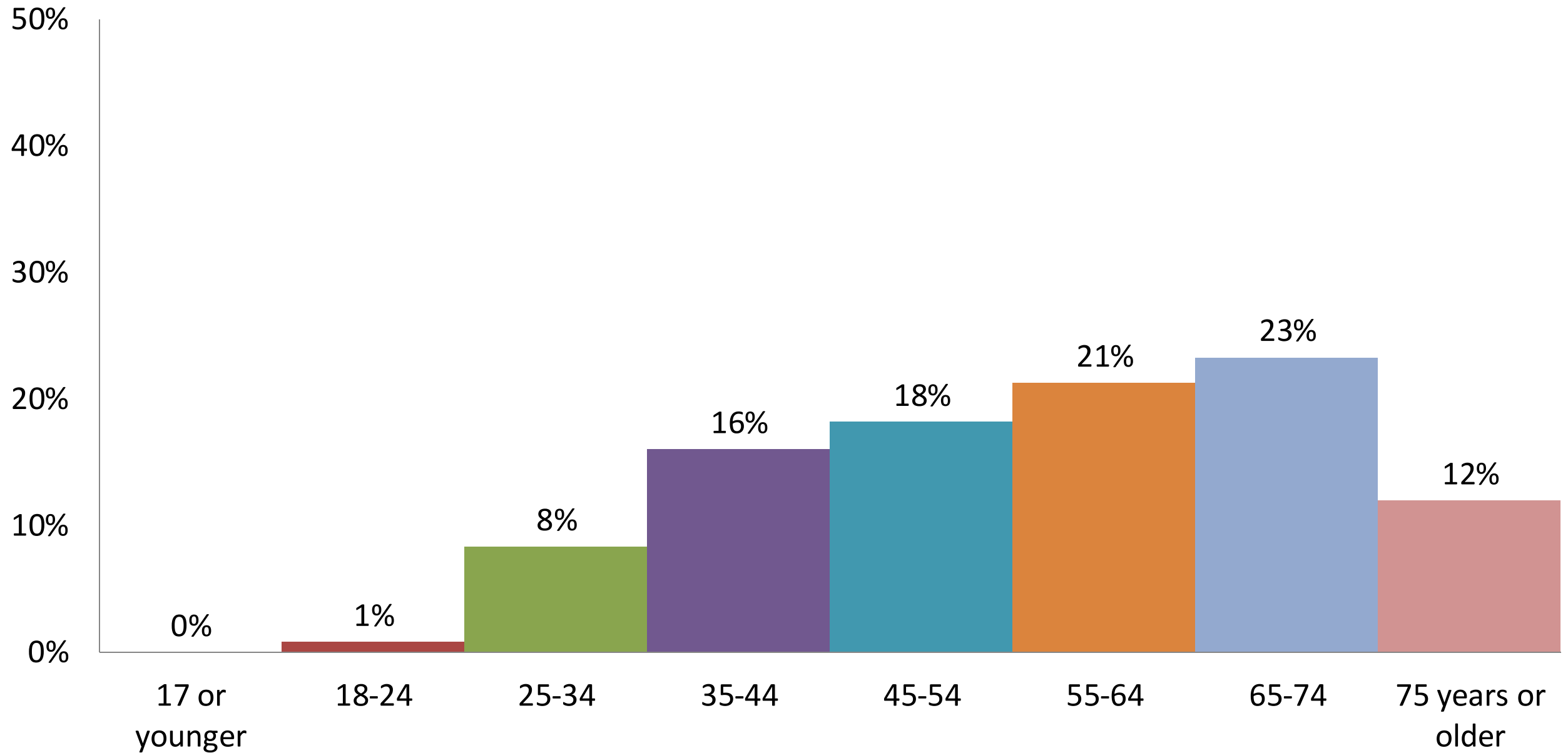
# Strategic Plan Survey Respondents



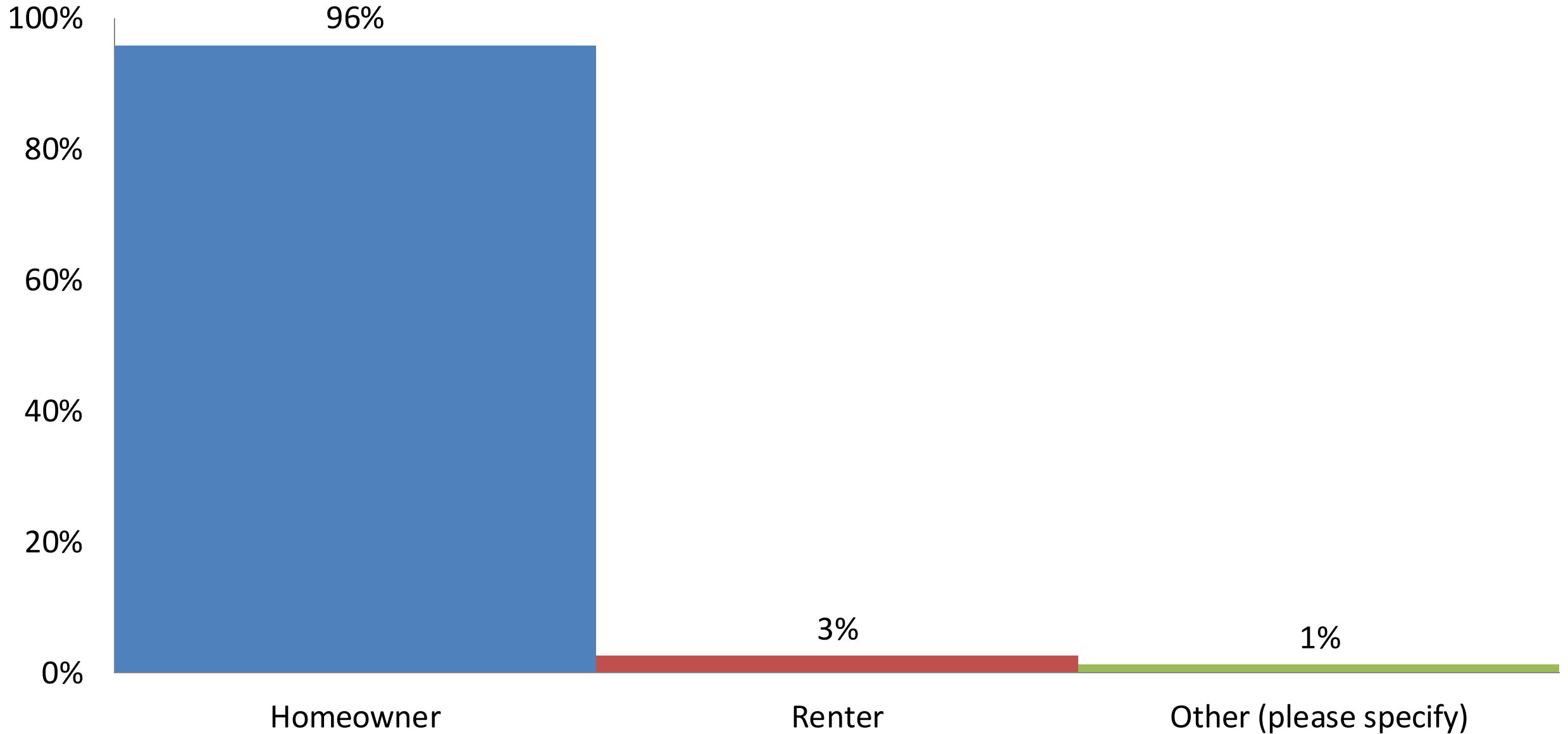
# What is your gender?



# What is your age?

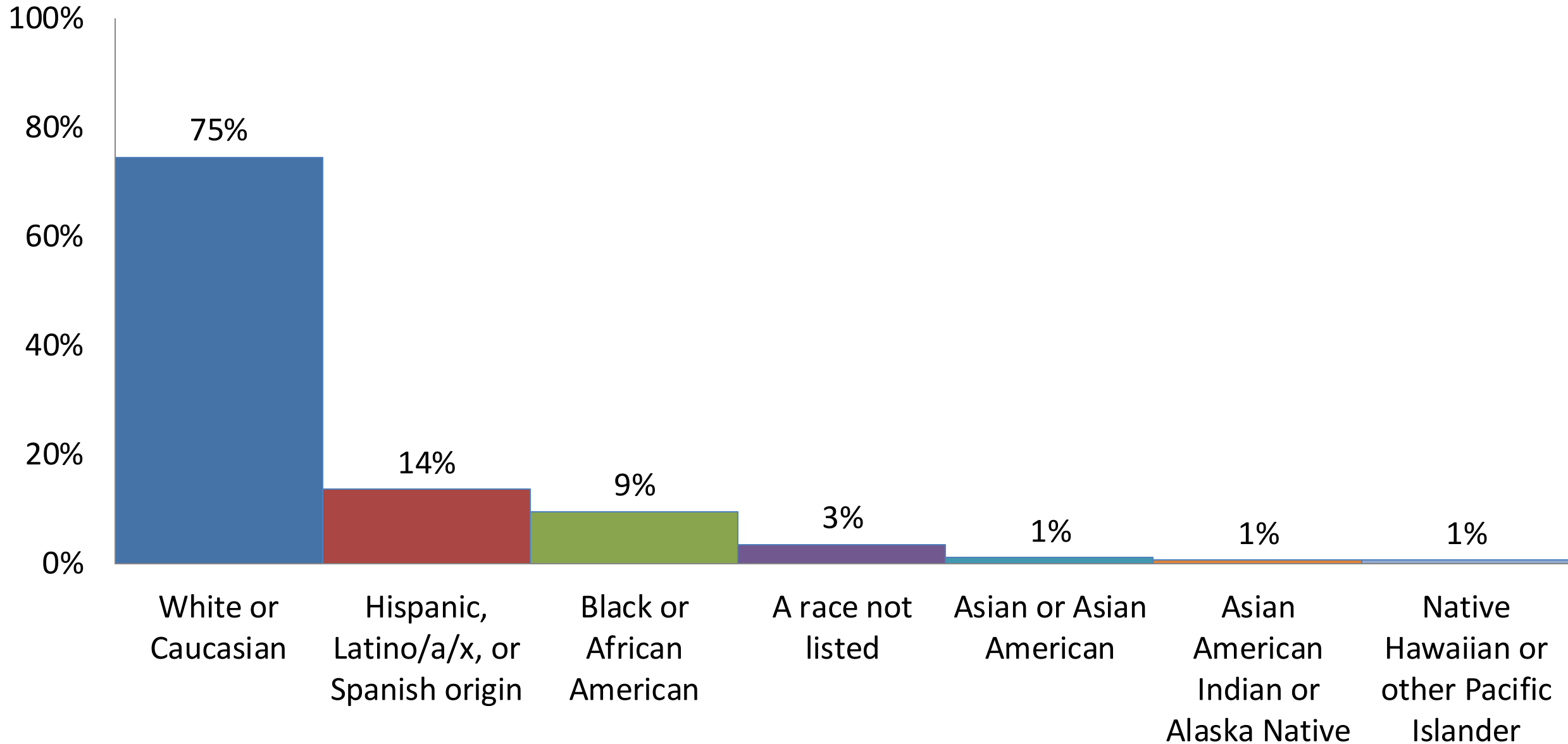


# What is your living situation?



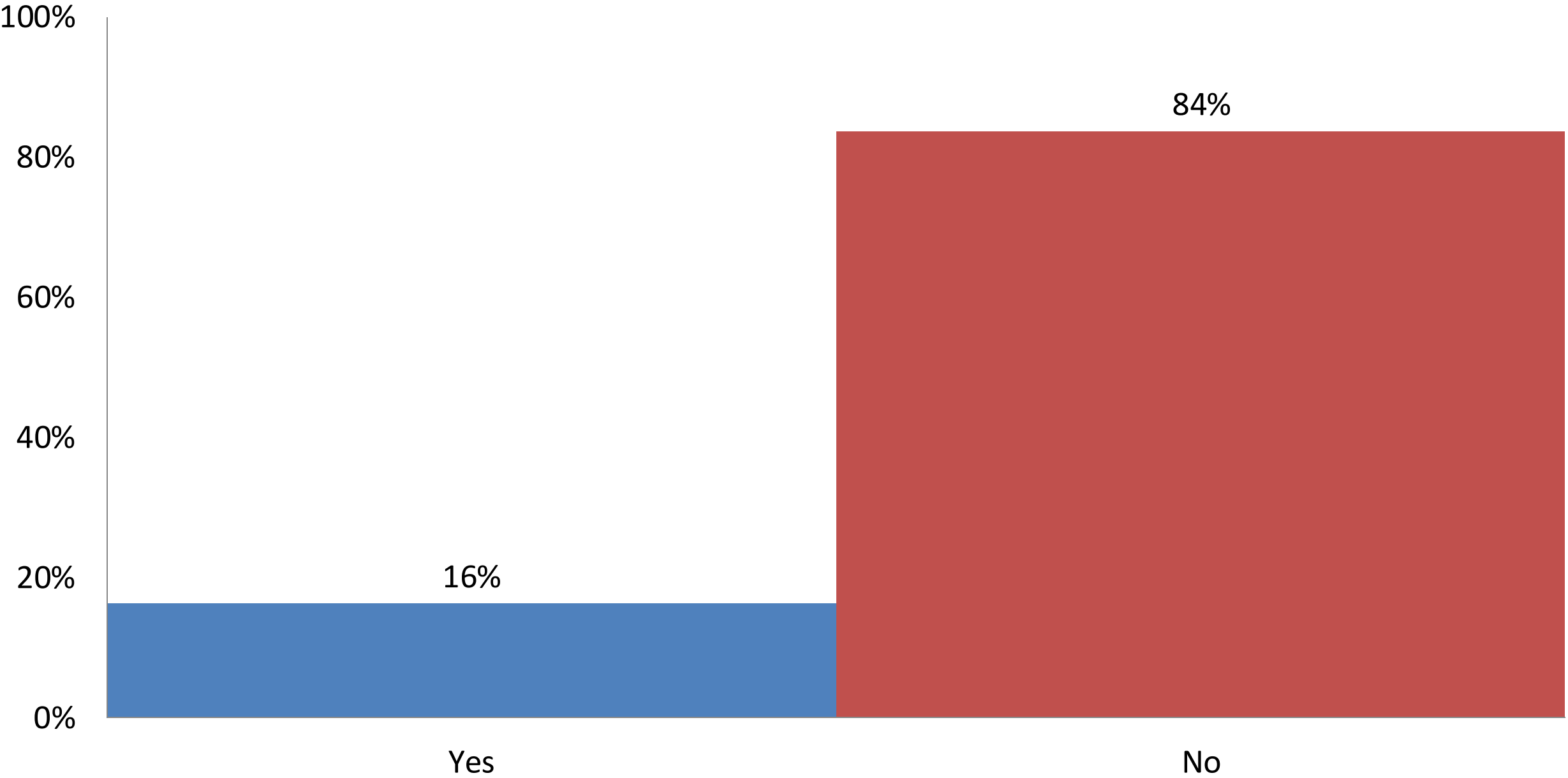
# What is your race?

(Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.)

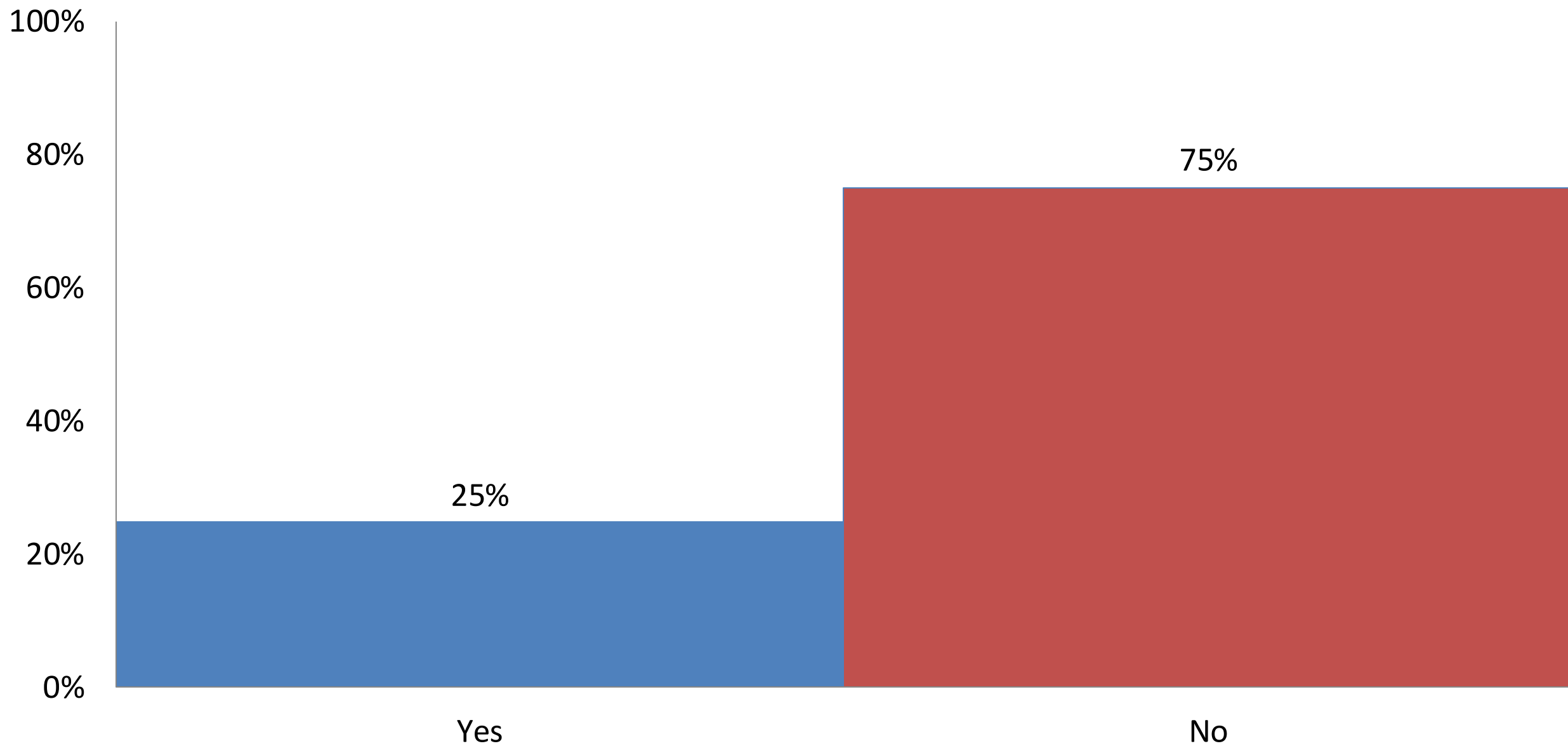




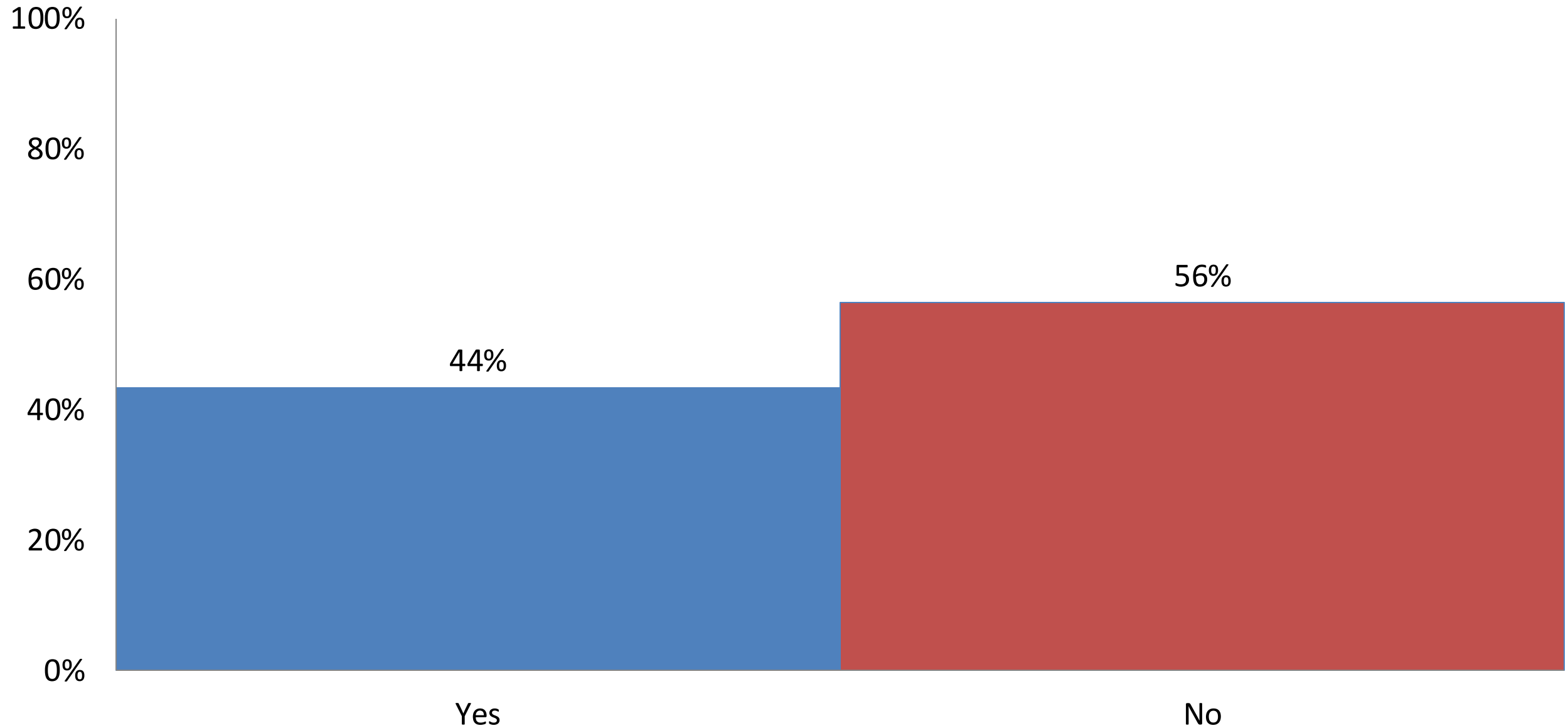
# Does a member of your household have a disability?



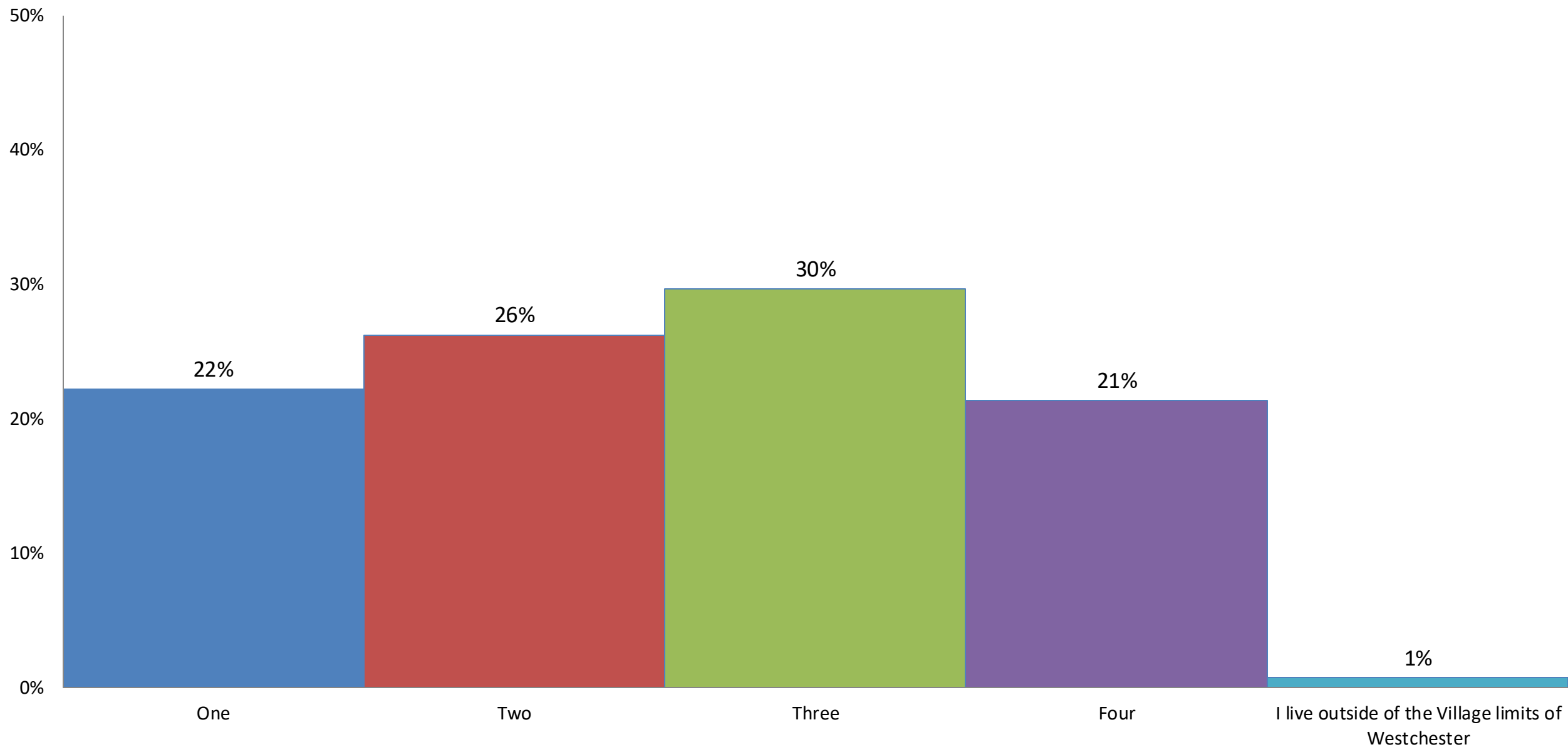
# Do you have children 17 or under in your household?



# Are you or any other members of your household aged 65 or older?



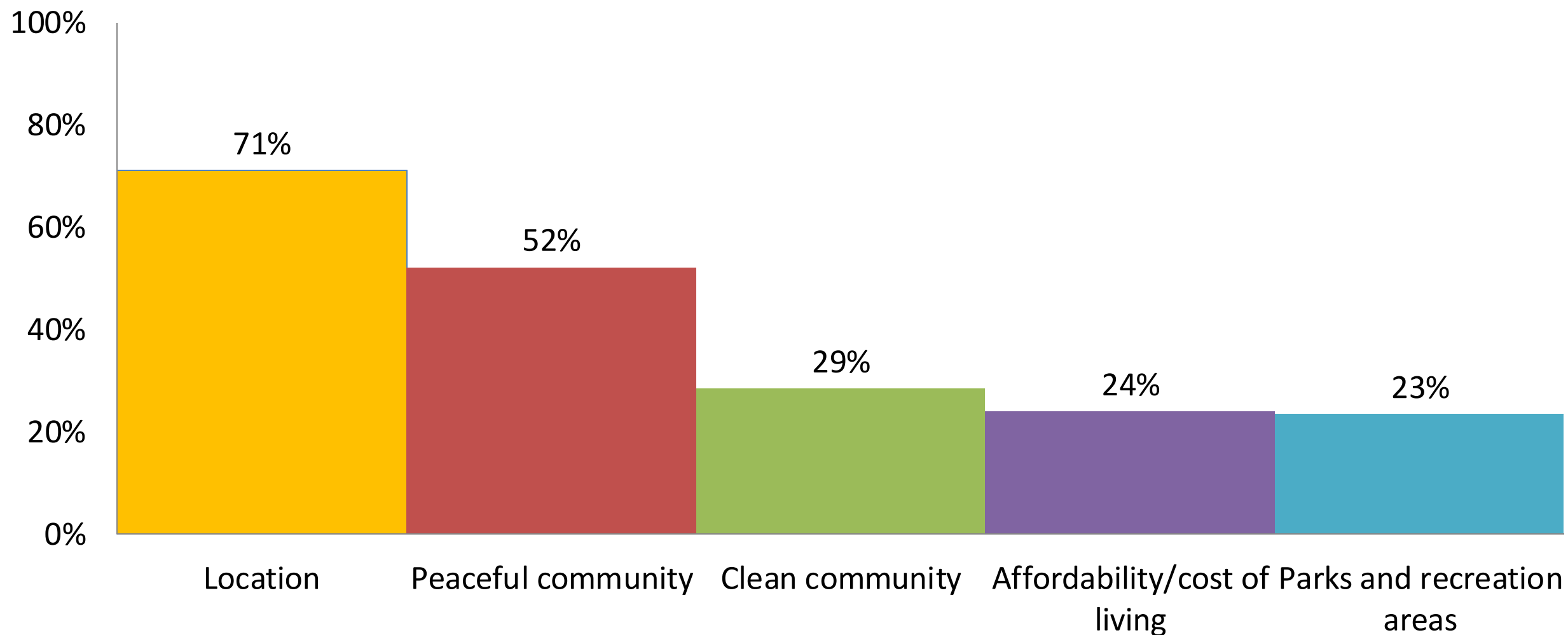
# Please indicate which zone you live in:



# What do you like best about living in Westchester?

(Participants could choose up to three options.)

> 20%

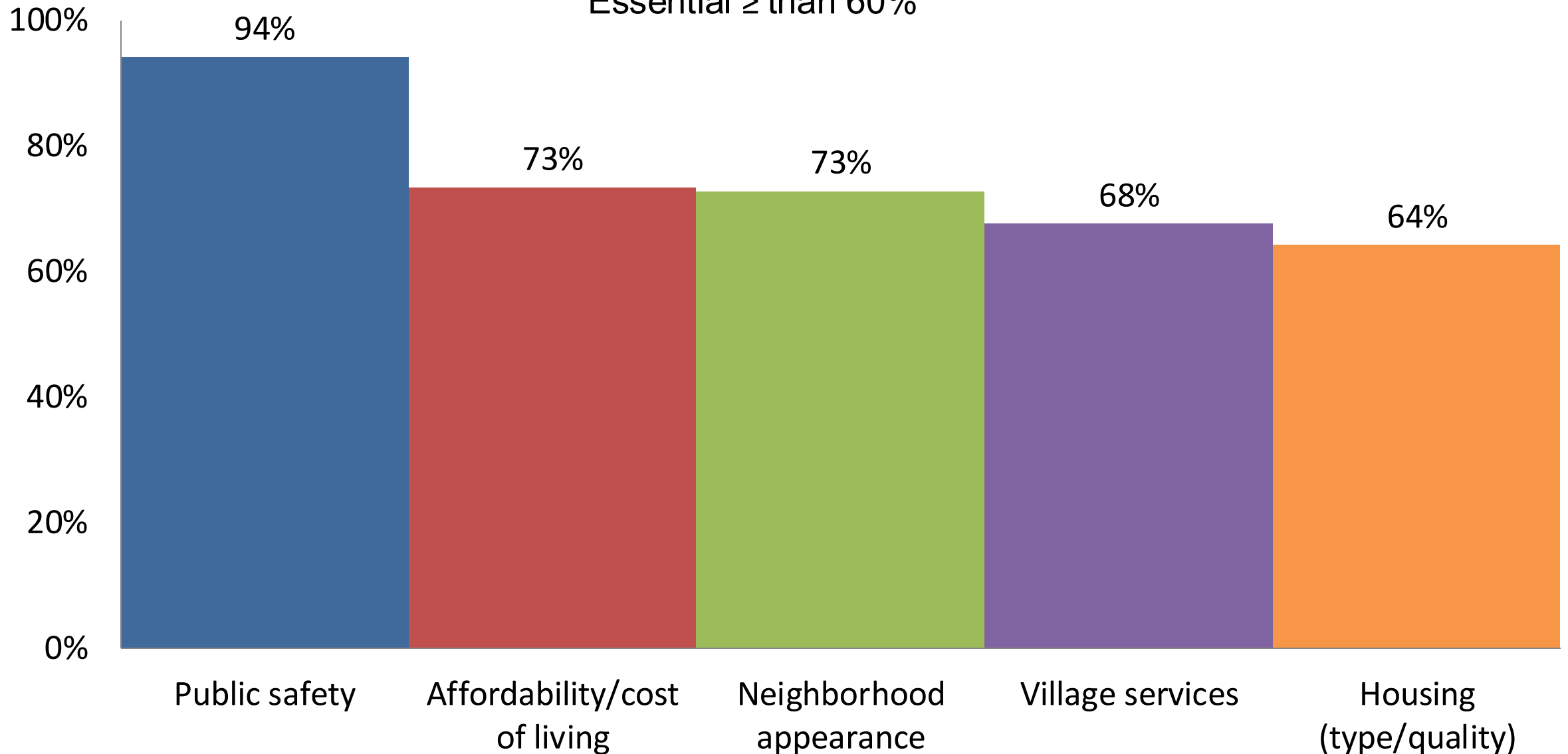


# What do you like best about living in Westchester?



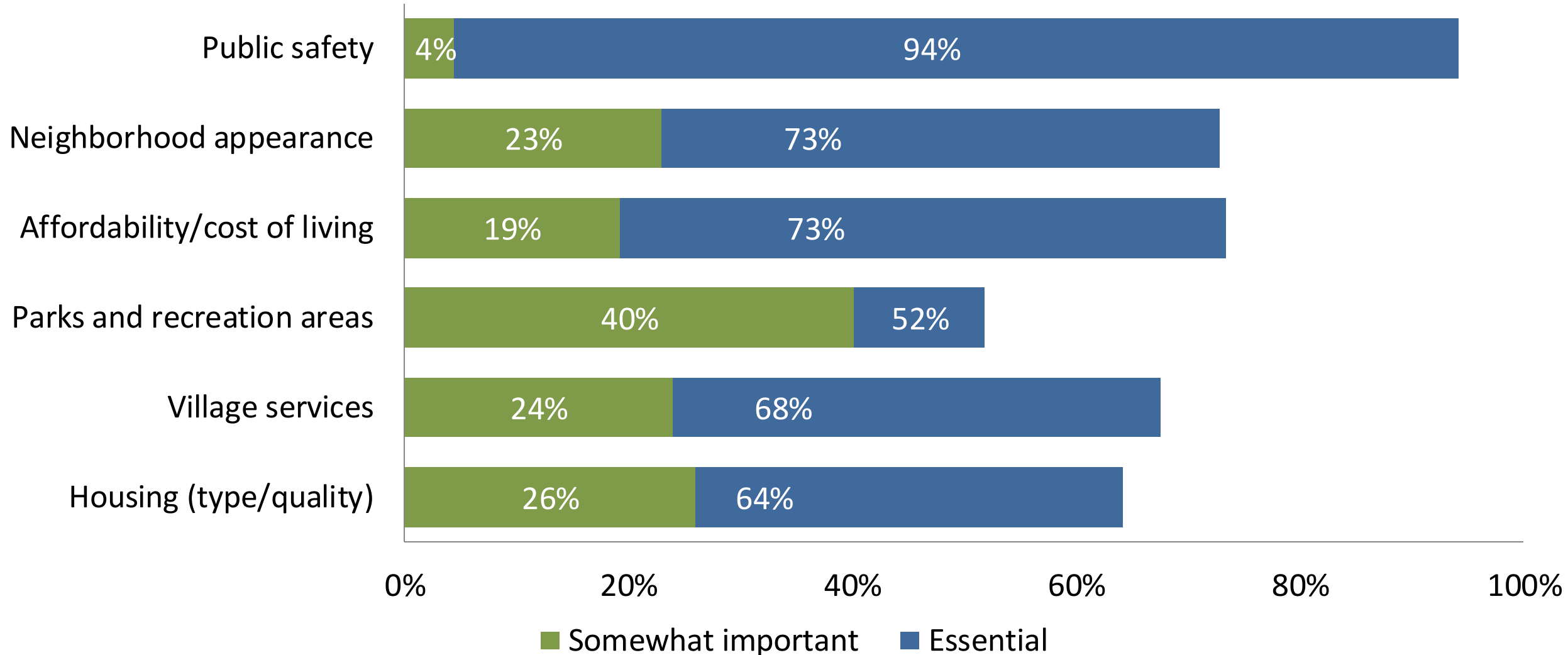
# Please rate how important the following are to your quality of life in Westchester.

Essential  $\geq$  than 60%



# Please rate how important the following are to your quality of life in Westchester.

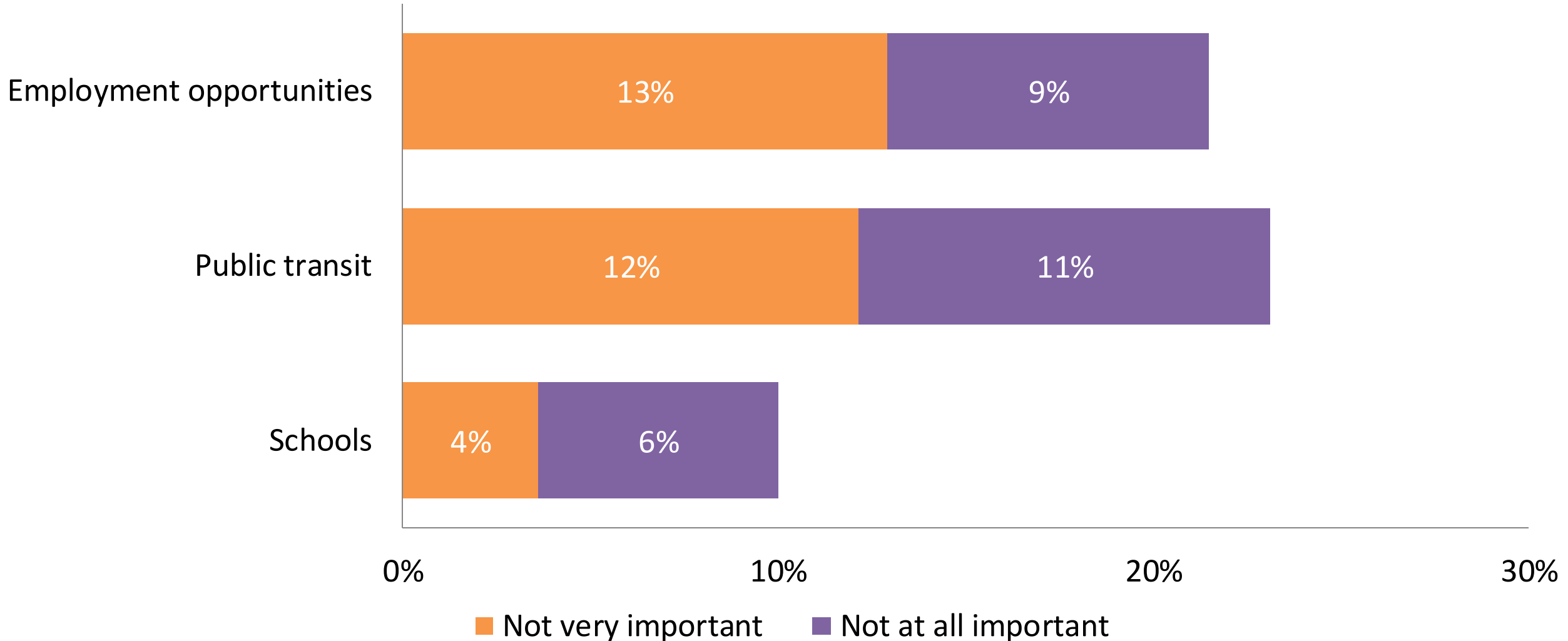
Very Important or Somewhat Important  $\geq$  than 90%





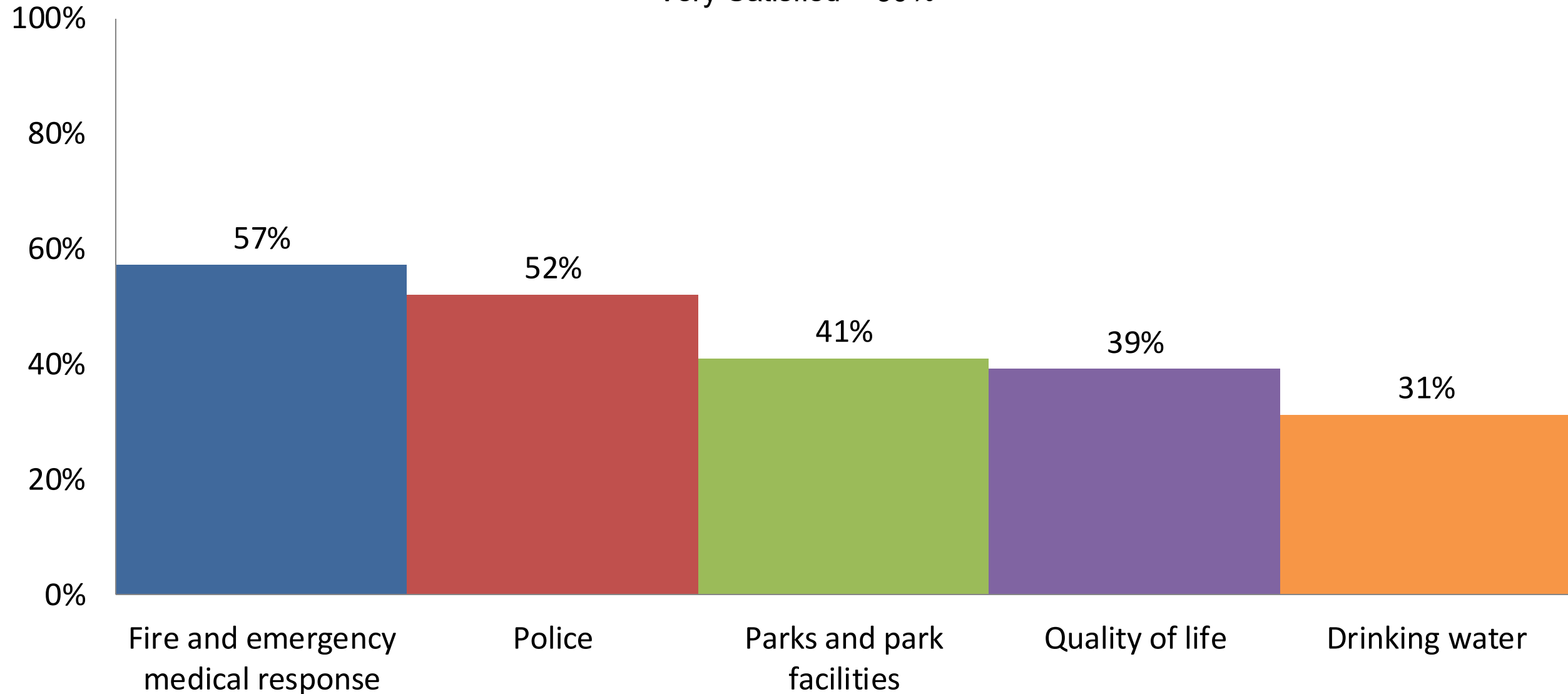
# Please rate how important the following are to your quality of life in Westchester.

Somewhat Unimportant and Not Important  $\geq$  than 10%



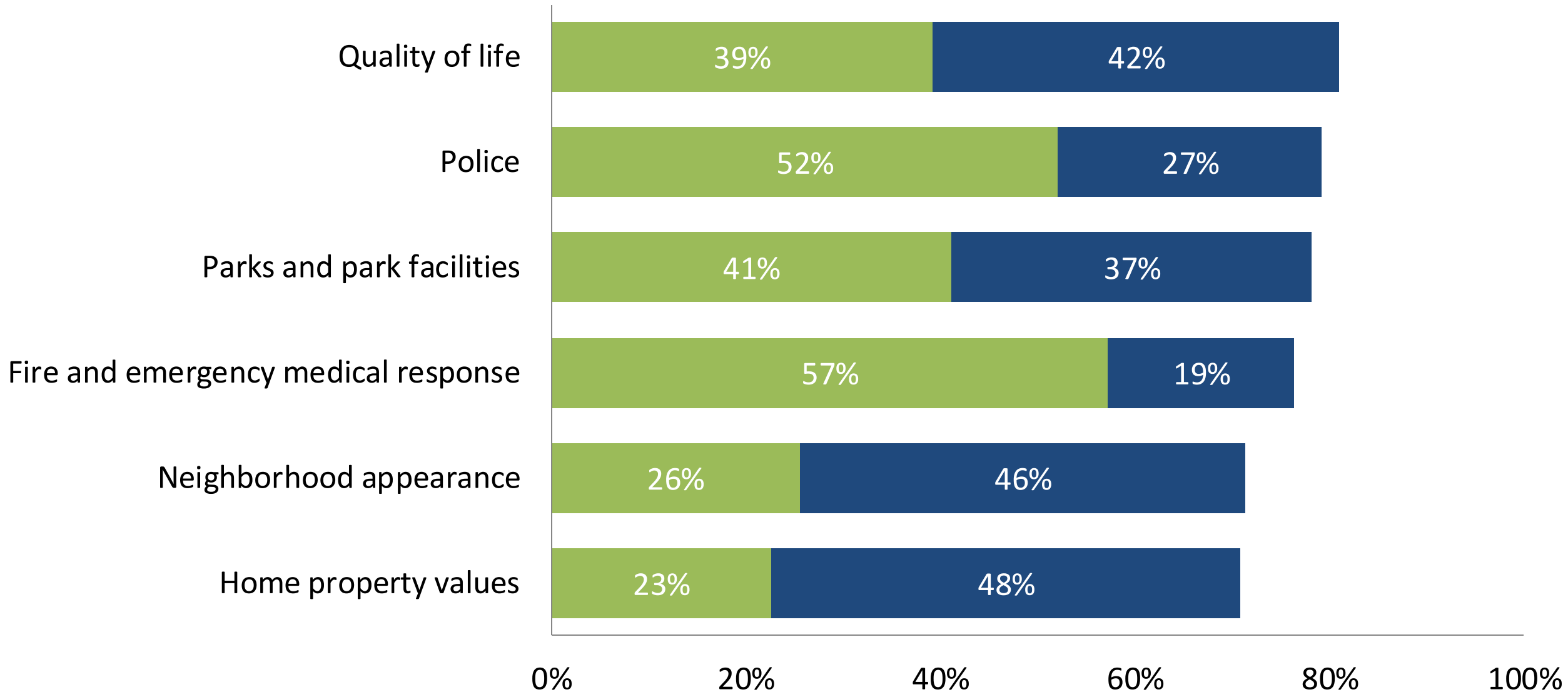
# Please rate how satisfied you are with the quality of the following services/features in Westchester.

Very Satisfied > 30%



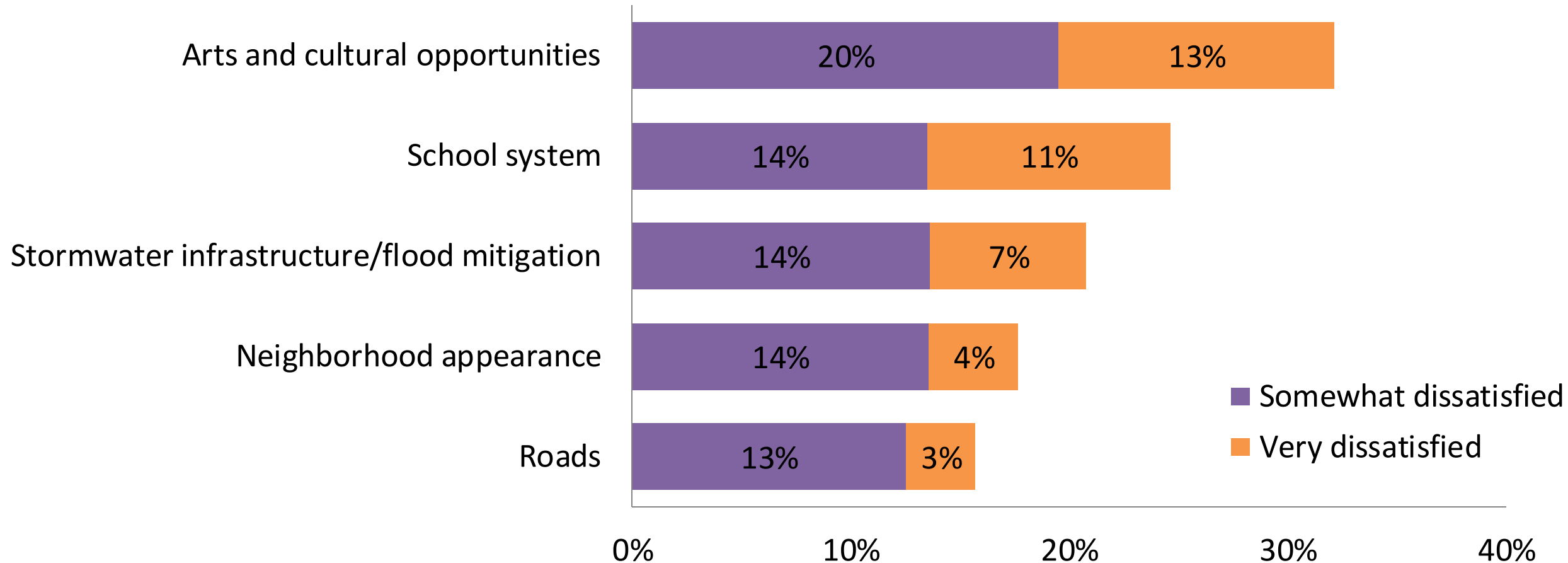
# Please rate how satisfied you are with the quality of the following services/features in Westchester.

Very Satisfied & Somewhat Satisfied > 70%



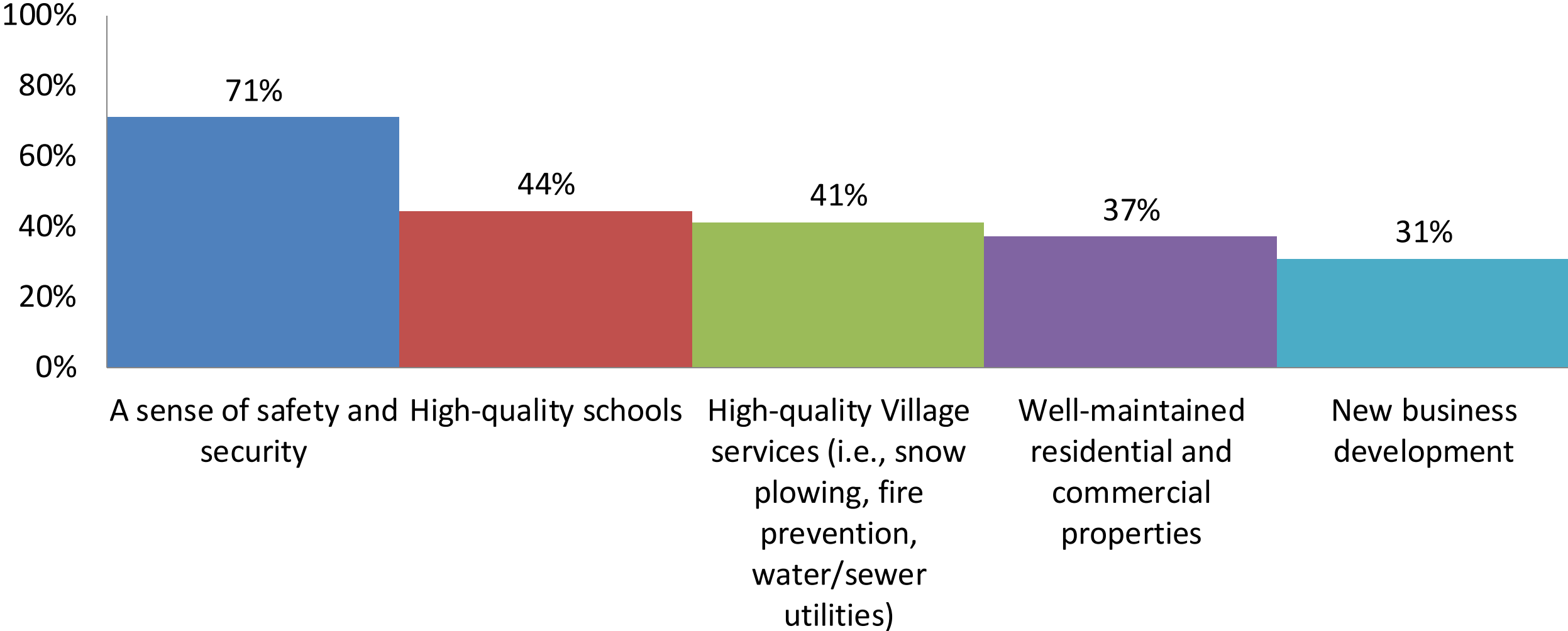
# Please rate how satisfied you are with the quality of the following services/features in Westchester.

Somewhat Dissatisfied & Dissatisfied > 15%

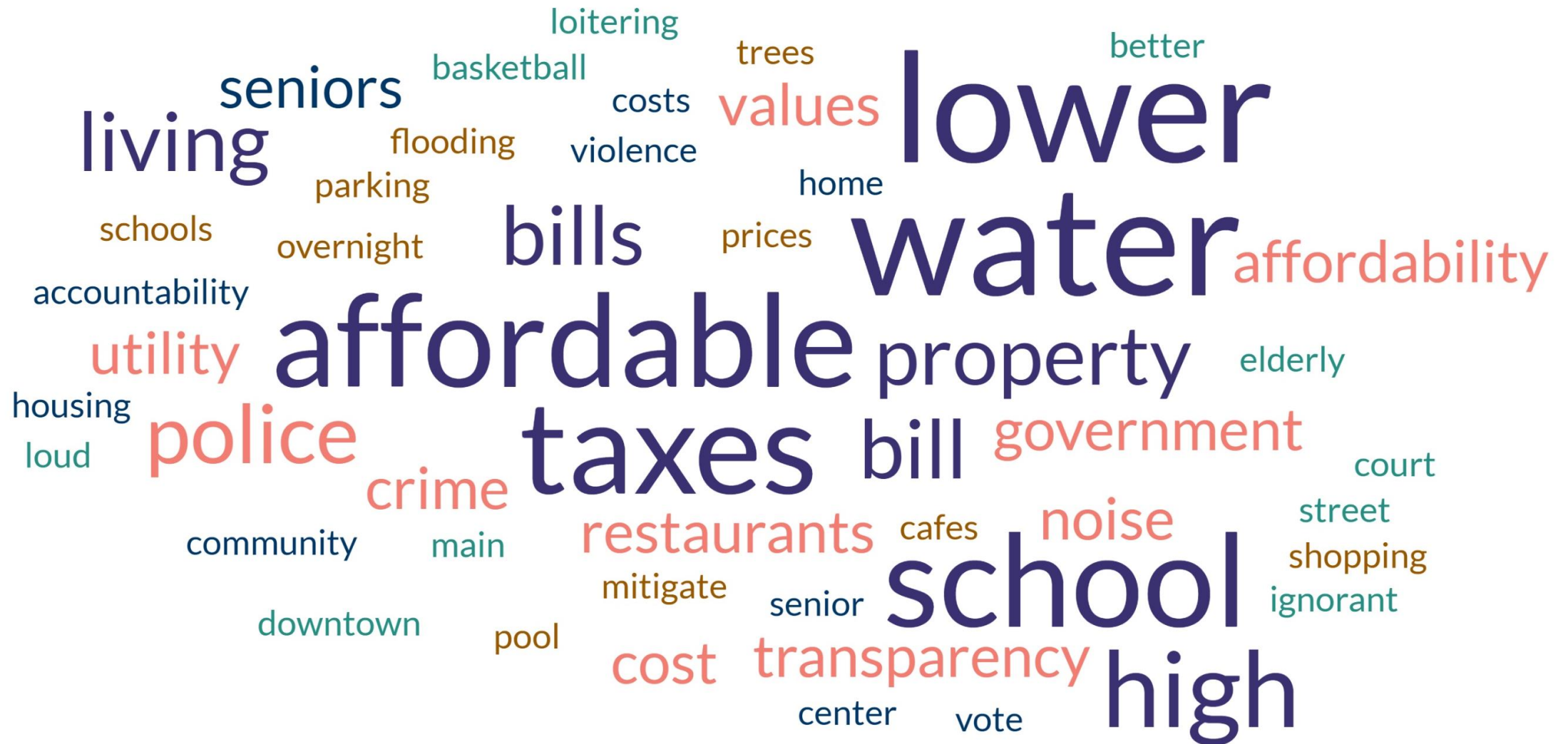


# Thinking about the future of Westchester, what are the three most important things for a strong and healthy community?

> 30%

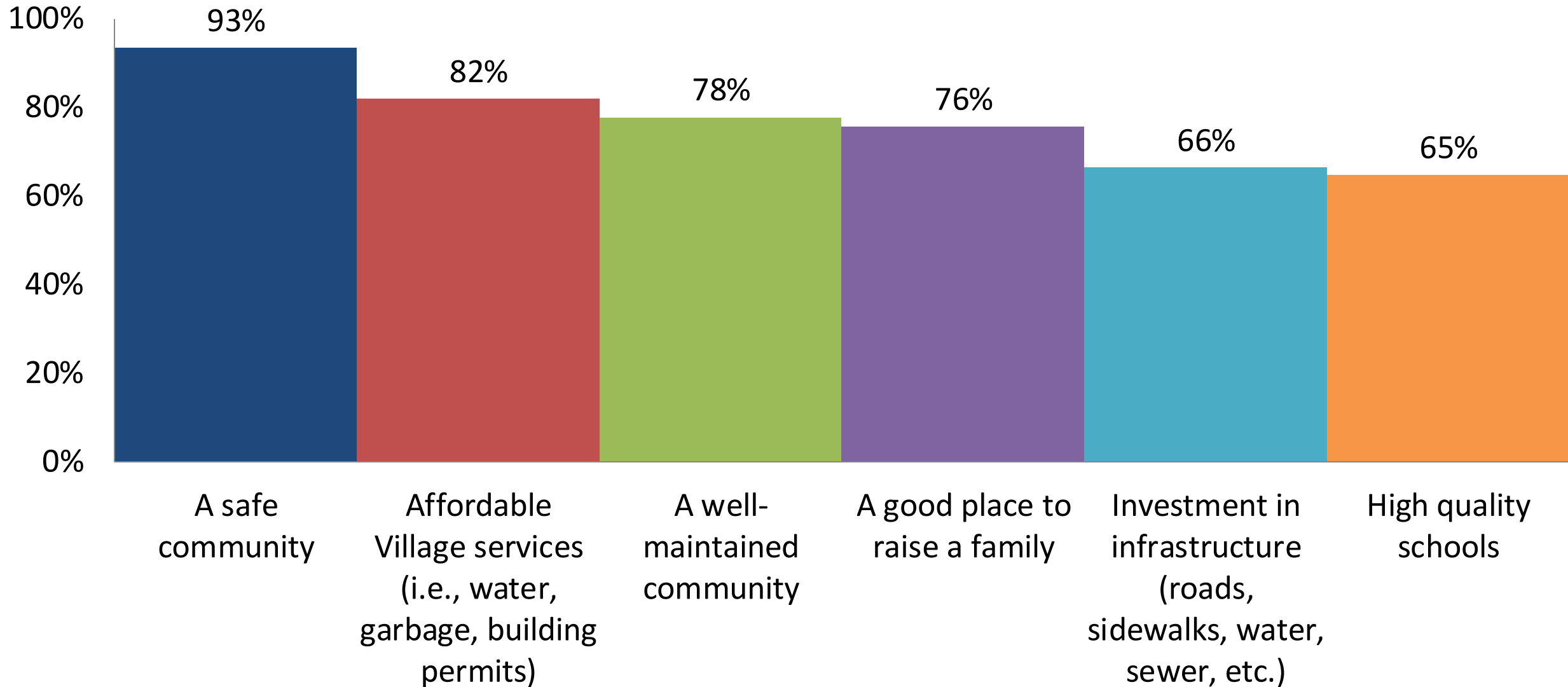


**Thinking about the future of Westchester, what are the three most important things for a strong and healthy community?**



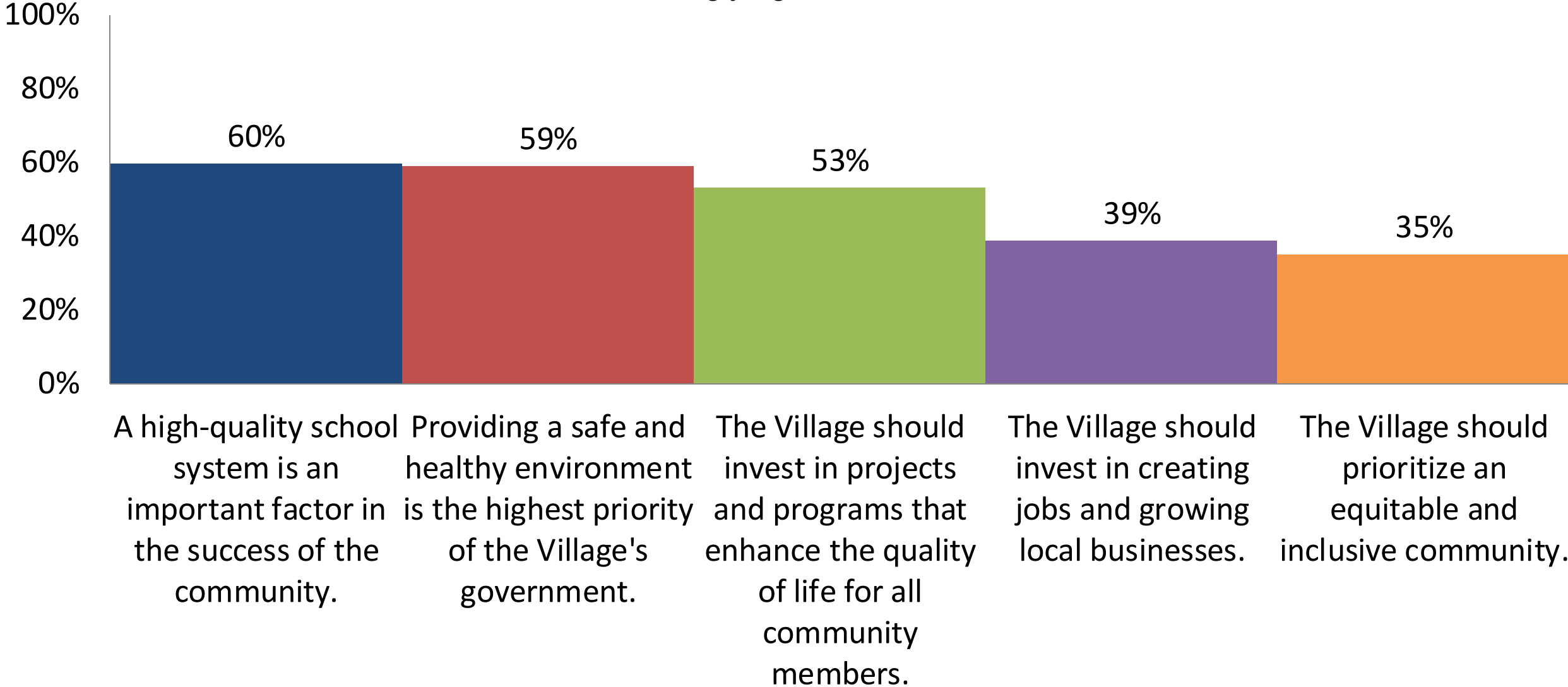
# How important are the following to the future of Westchester?

Essential > 60%



# Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

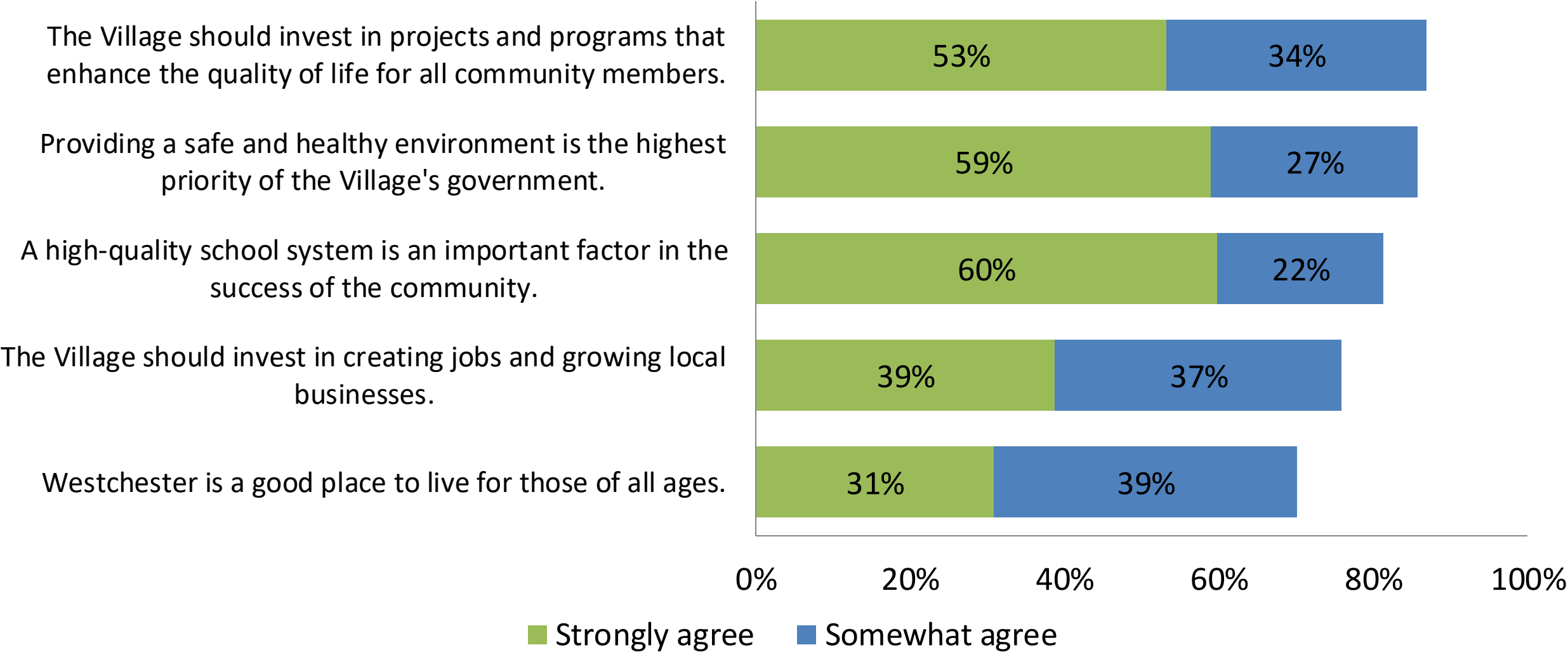
Strongly Agree > 30%





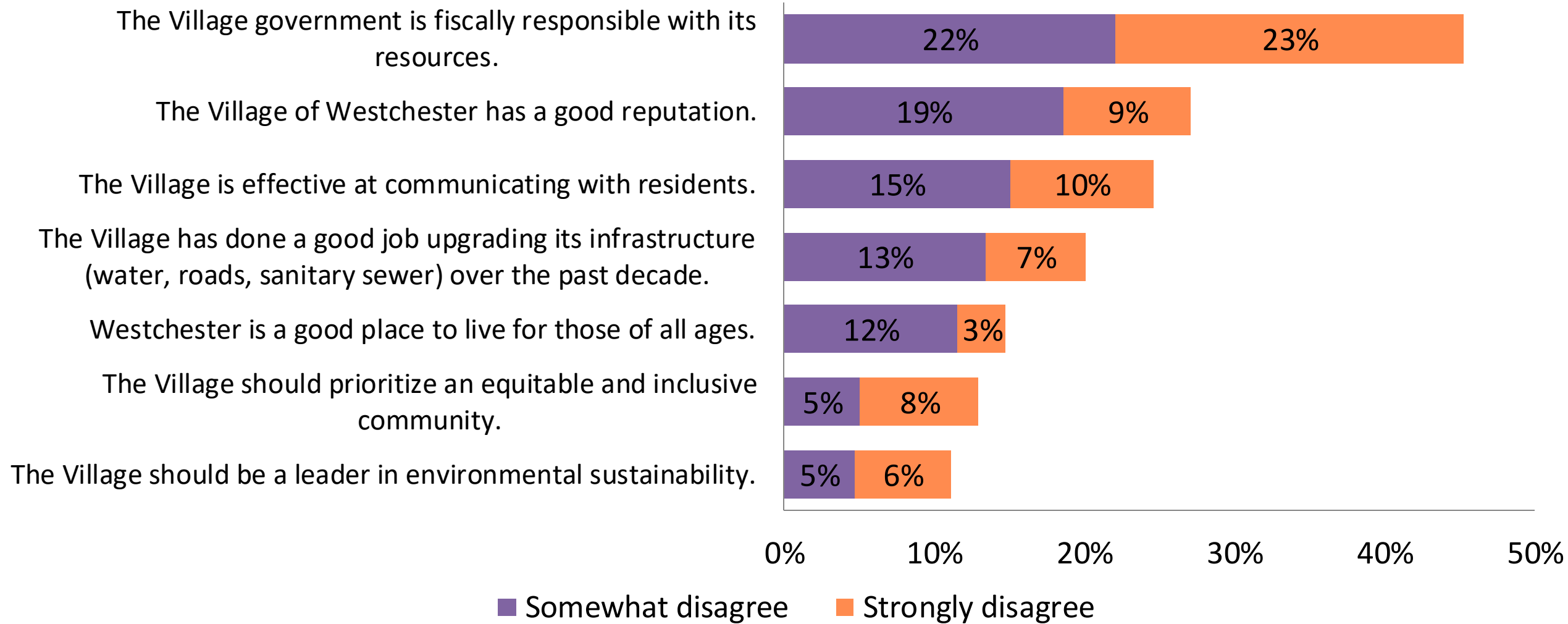
# Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Strongly Agree & Somewhat Agree > 70%

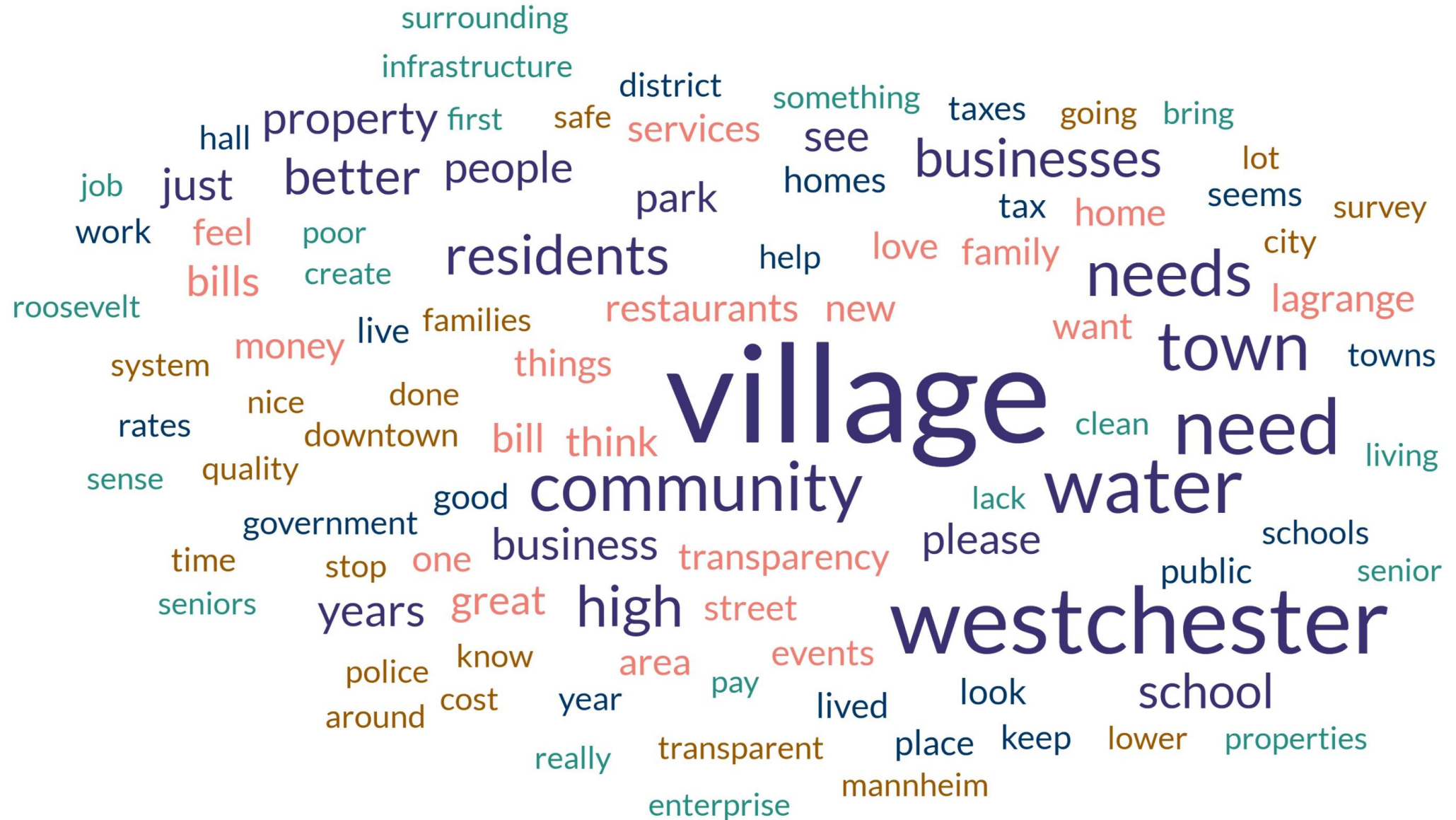


# Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Somewhat Disagree & Strongly Disagree > 10%

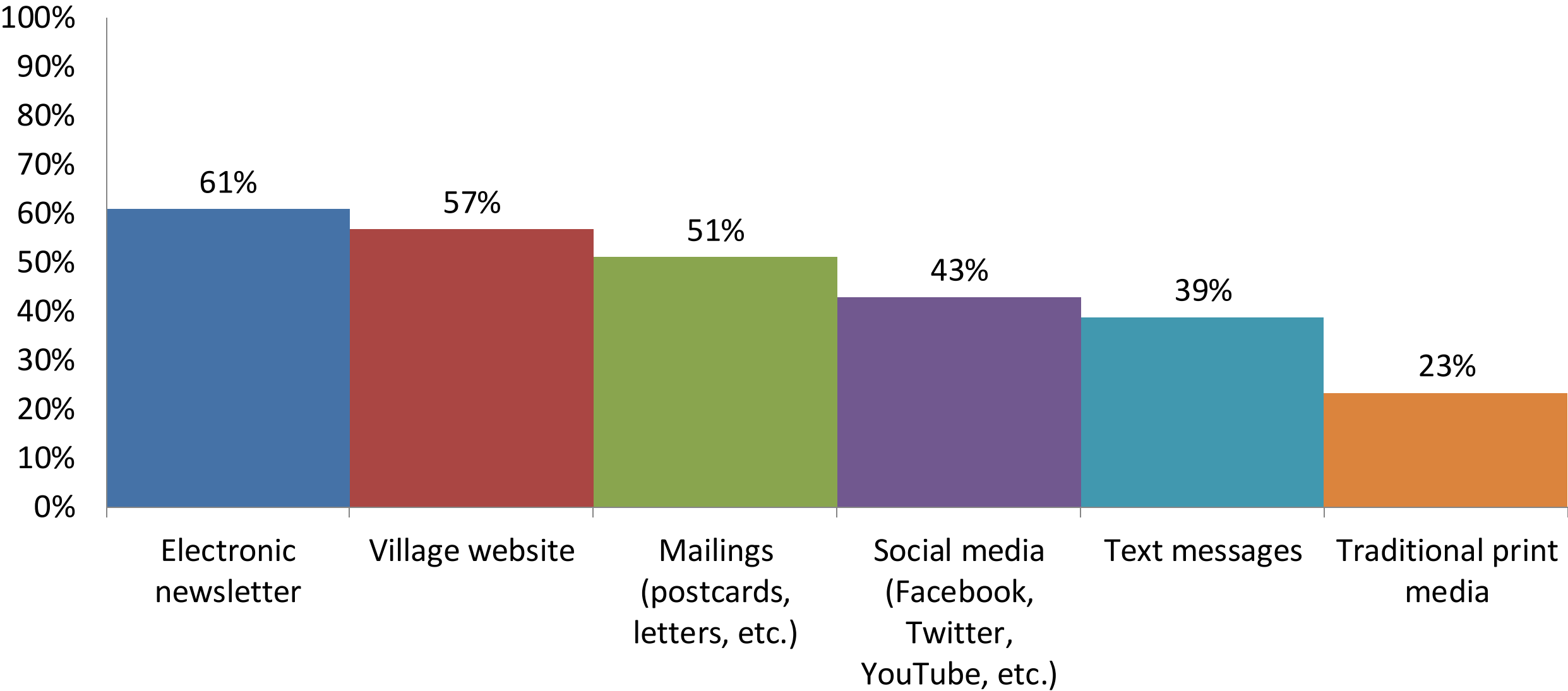


## Any Additional Comments You Wish to Share?



# How do you prefer to get your information from Westchester?

Select all that apply.





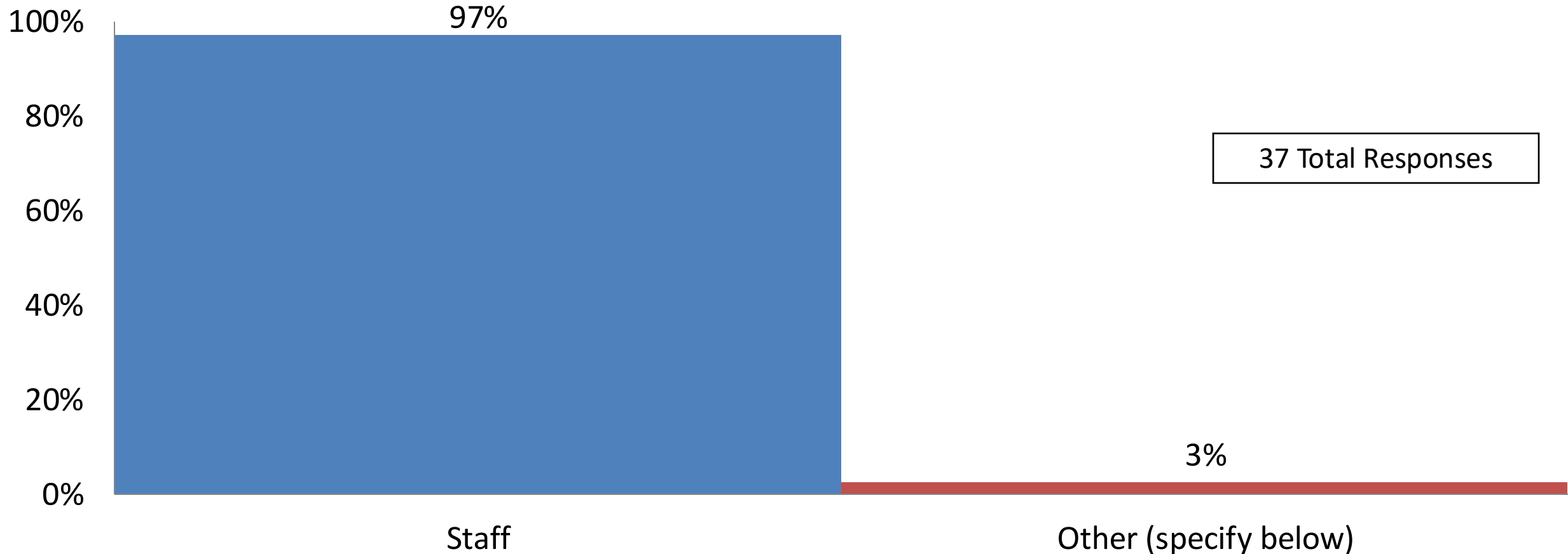
Questions?



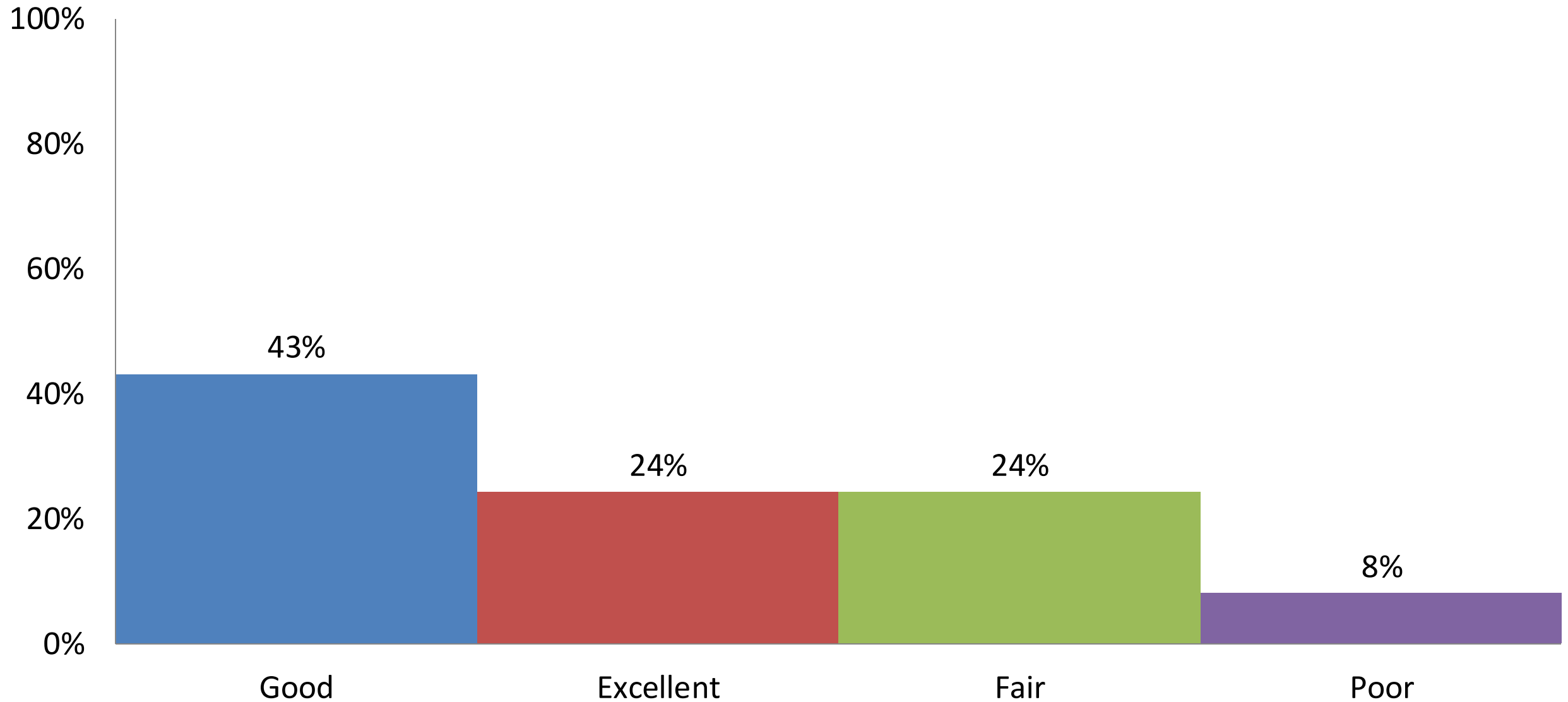
# Internal Stakeholder Survey Results

# Internal Stakeholder Survey Respondents

**What is your role with the Village of Westchester?**



# How would you rate the overall quality of services in Westchester?





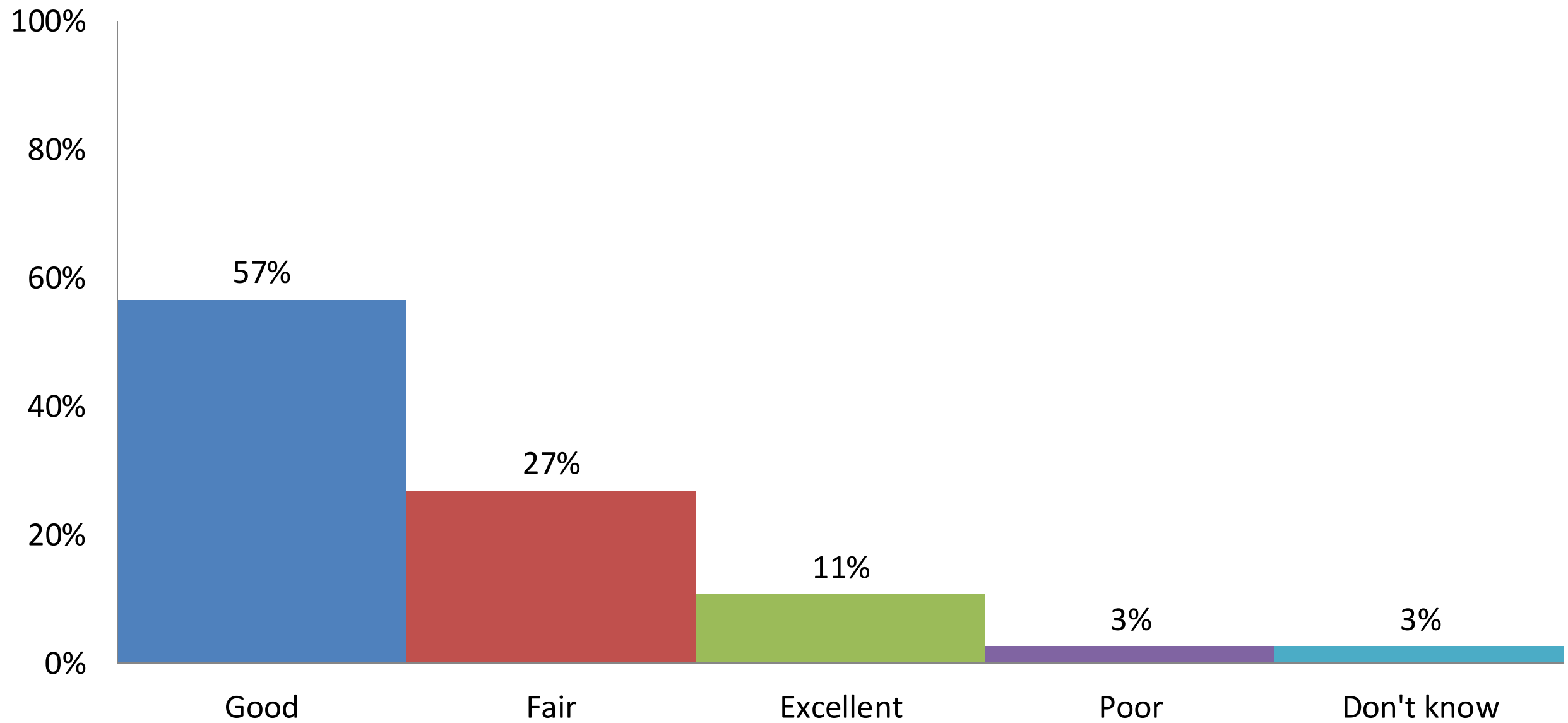
## What city services do you believe need improvement?



# What three things does the Village do really well?



# How would you rate the overall quality of life in Westchester?

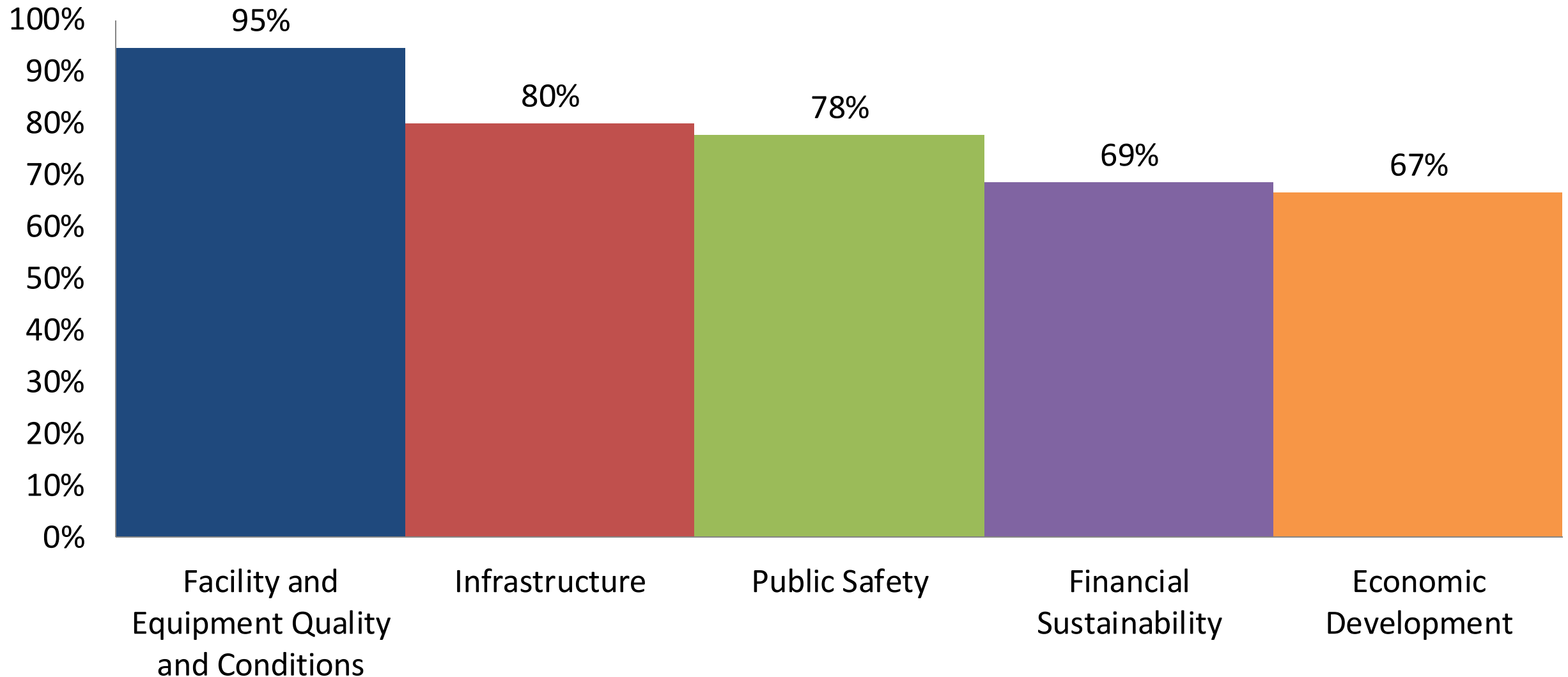


# What one improvement could have the greatest positive impact on quality of life in Westchester?



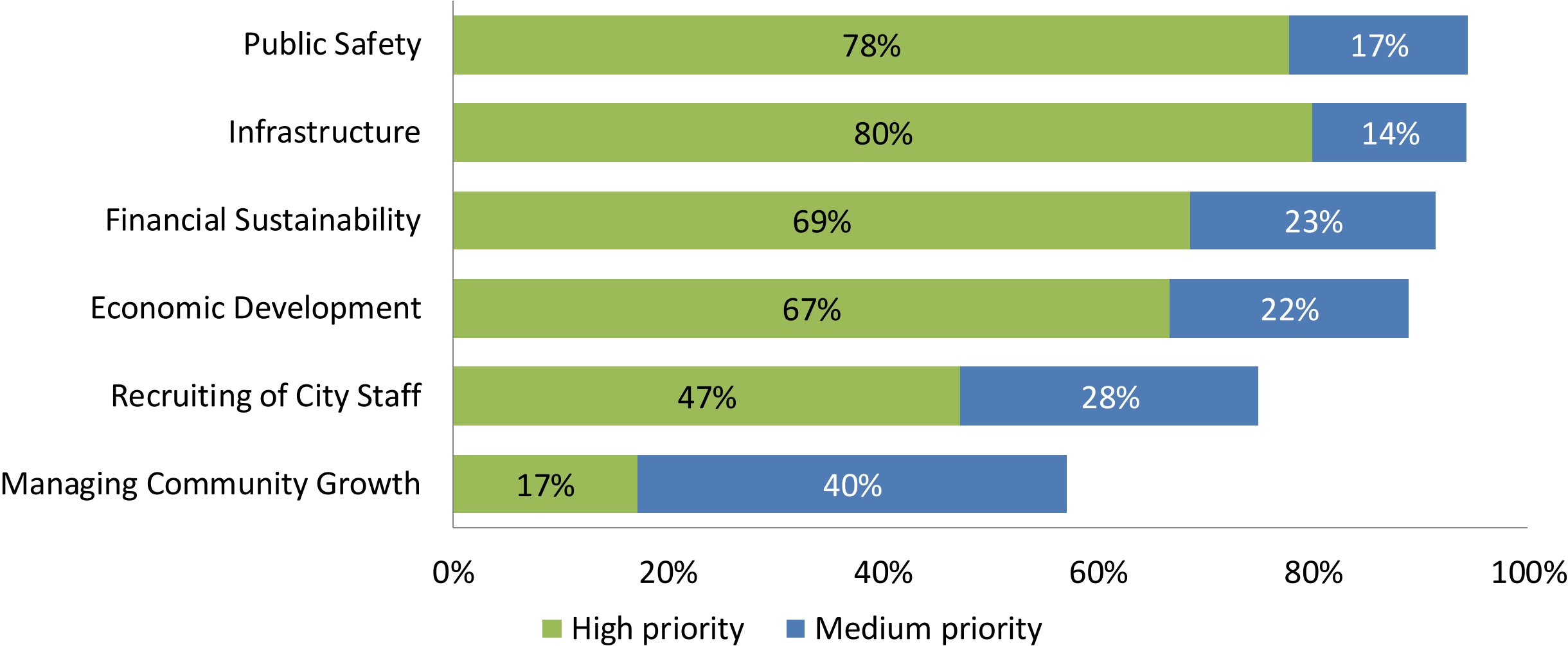
# Over the next 3-5 years, please indicate how much of a priority each of the following should be for Westchester?

High Priority > 65%



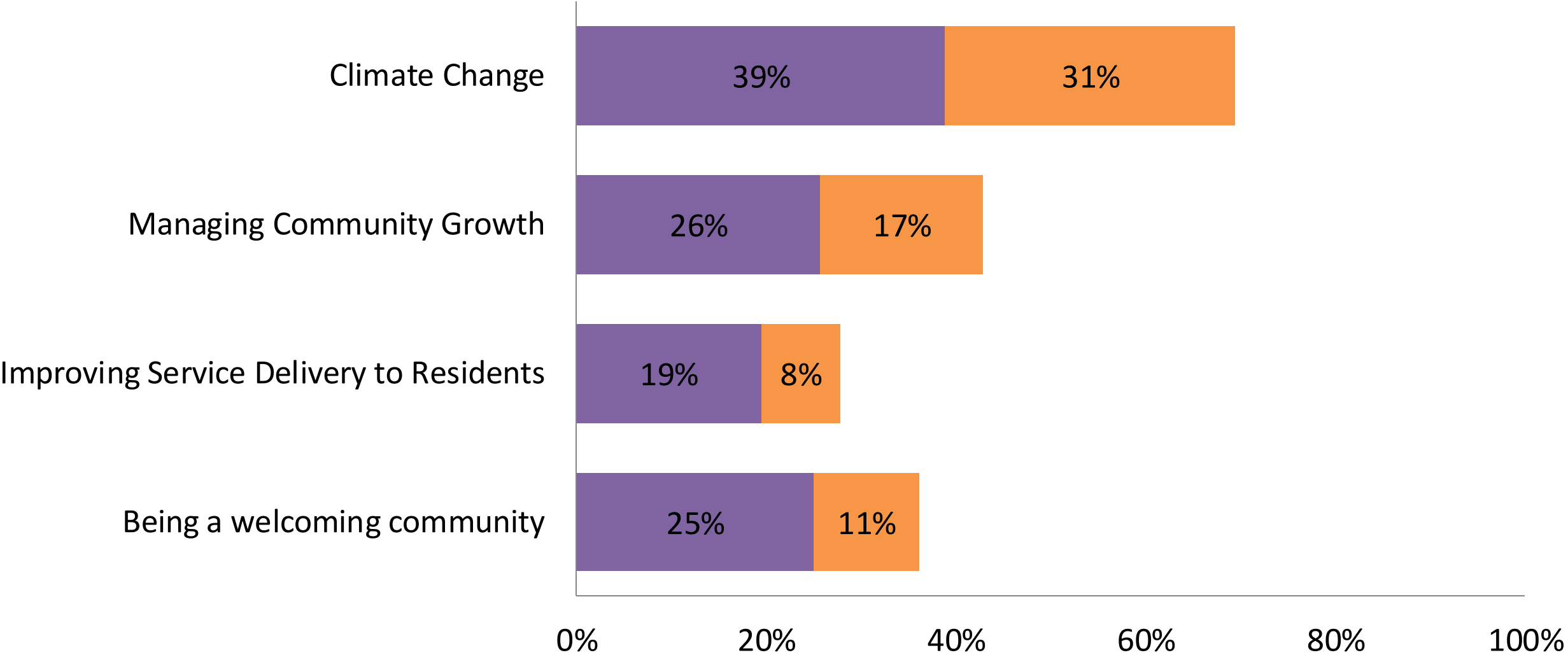
# Over the next 3-5 years, please indicate how much of a priority each of the following should be for Westchester?

Medium and High Priority  $\geq 75\%$



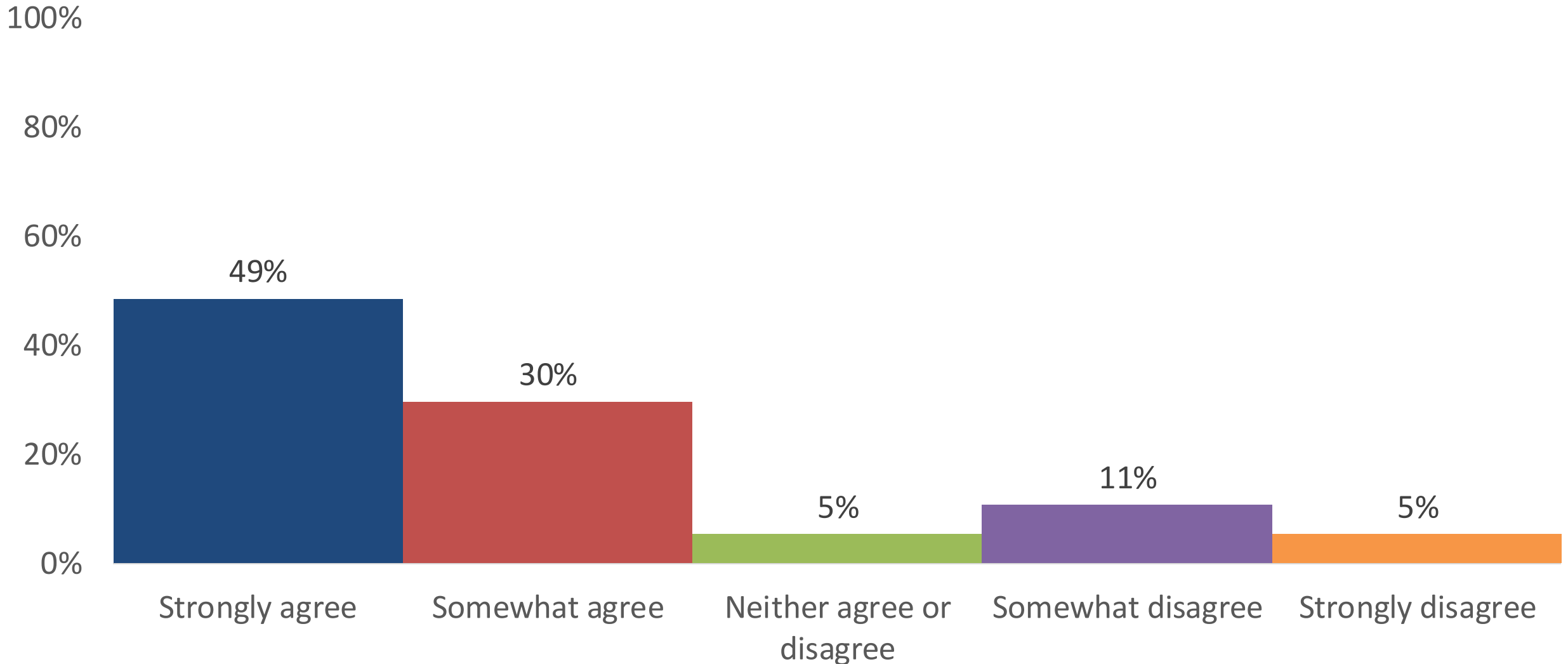
Over the next 3-5 years, please indicate how much of a priority each of the following should be for Westchester?

Low Priority & Not a Priority > 10%



# Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

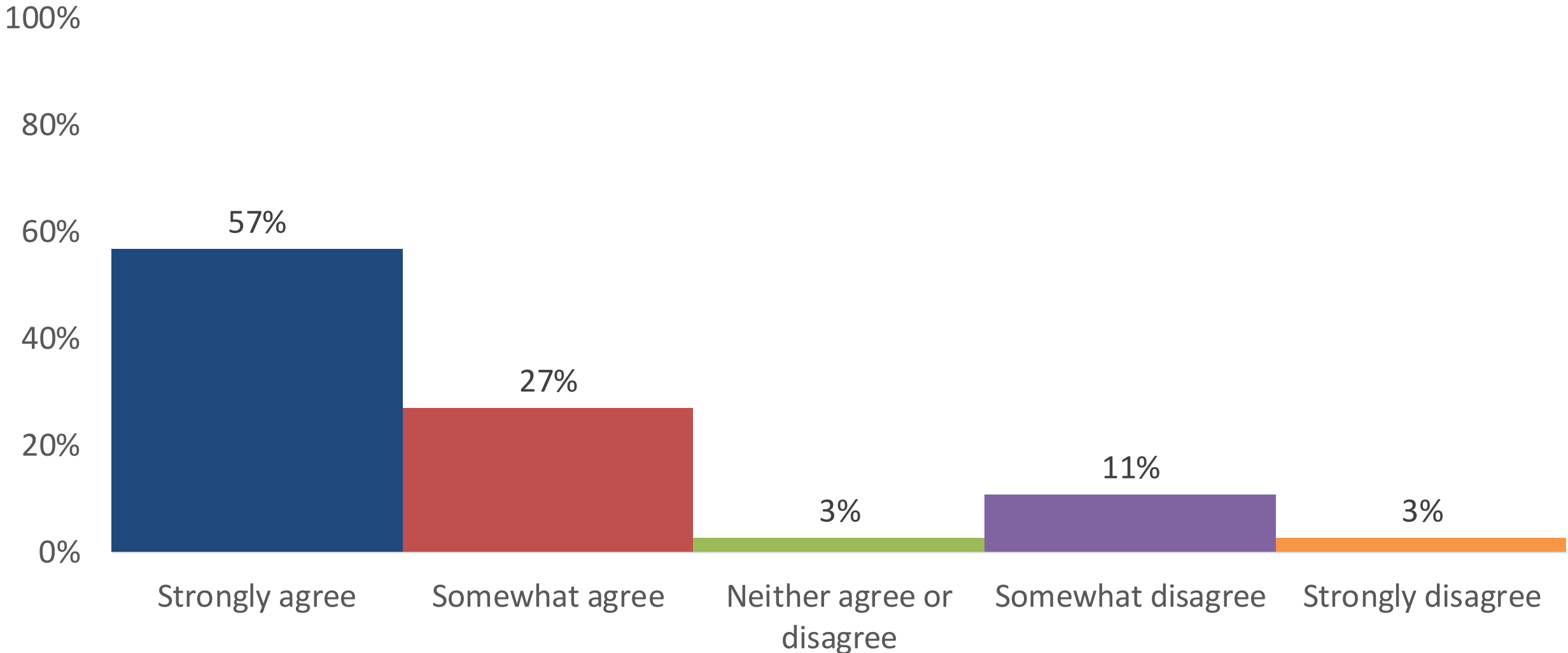
Westchester operates with openness and transparency





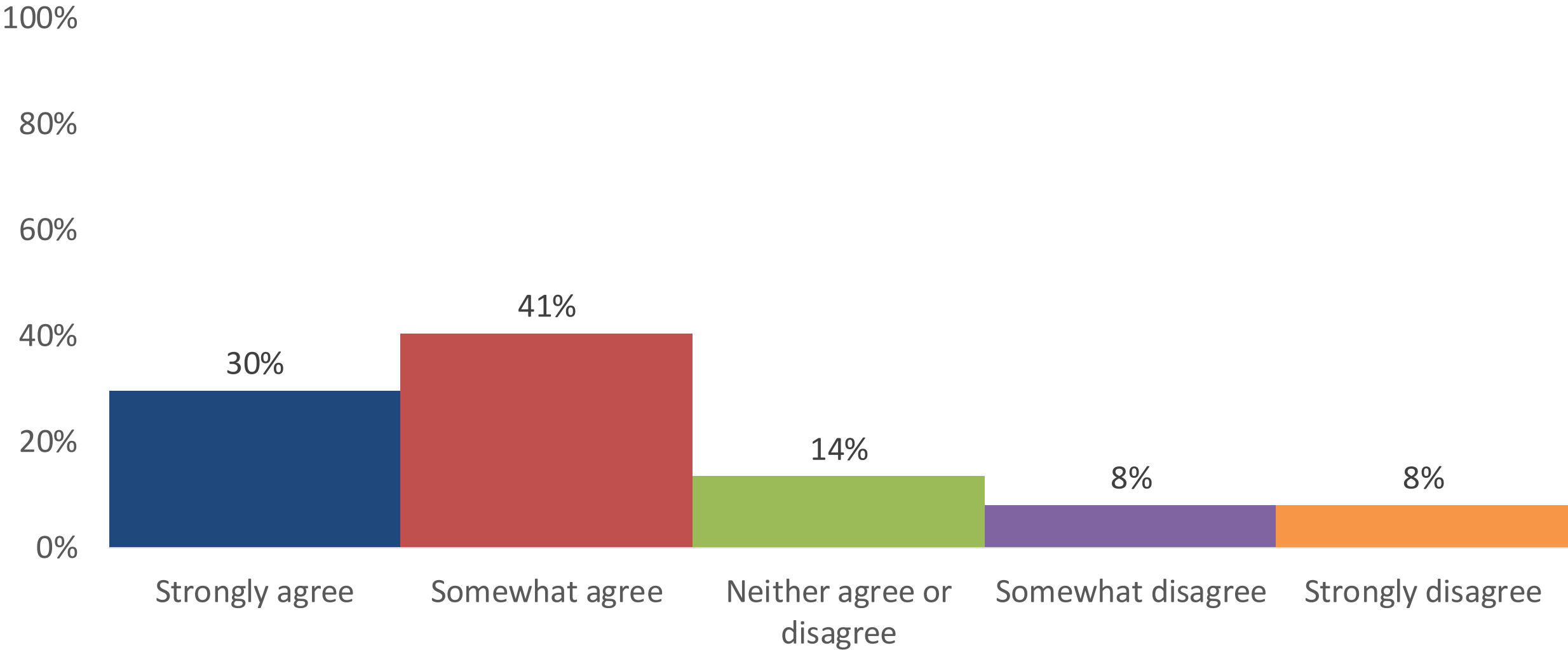
**Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.**

Westchester does a good job communicating with residents



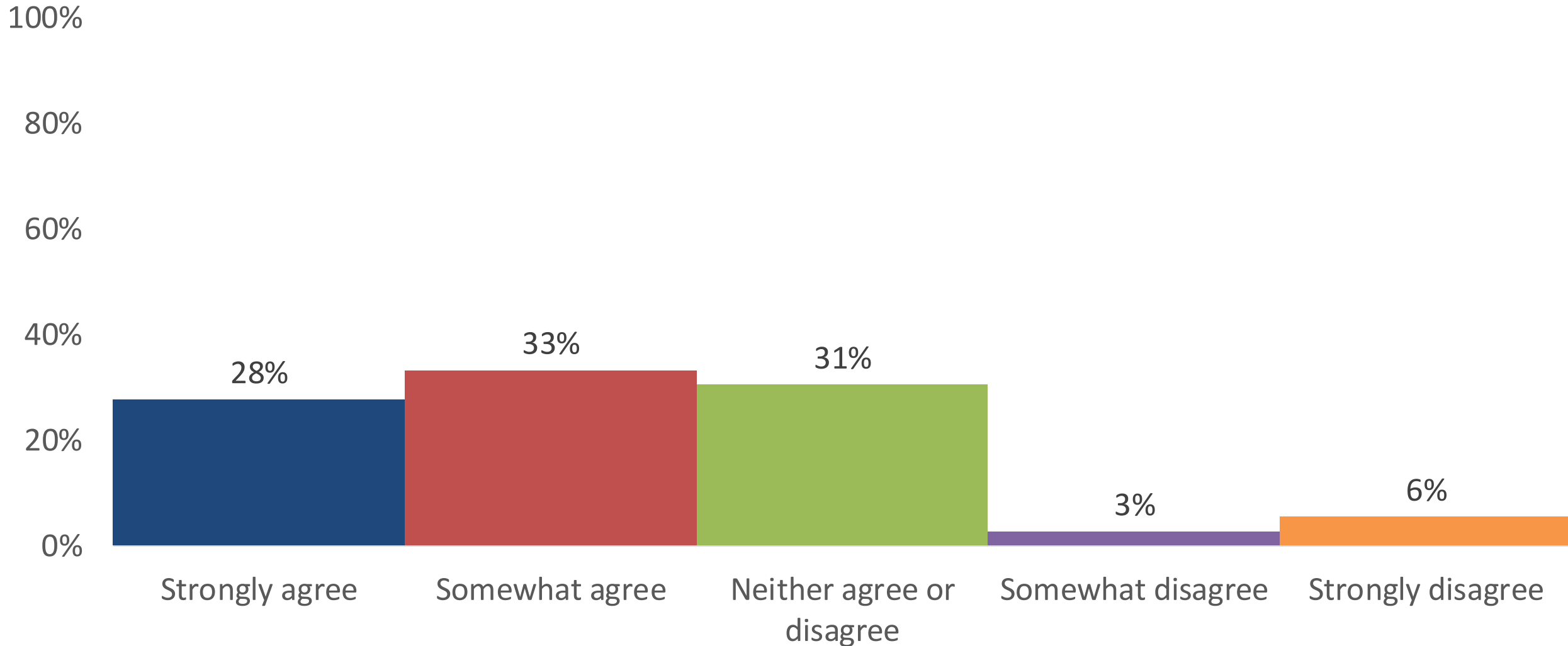
**Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.**

Westchester is open to new ideas and ways of doing things



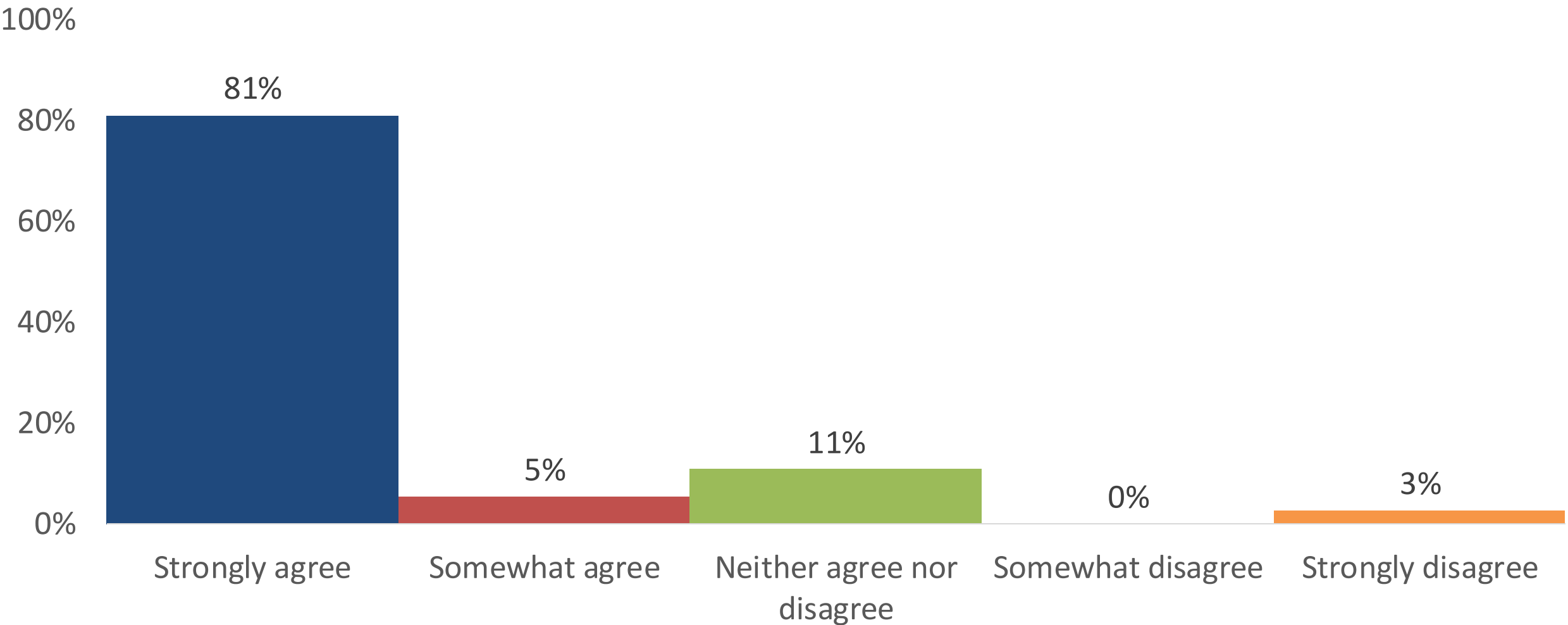
# Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

I would recommend Westchester as a place to live



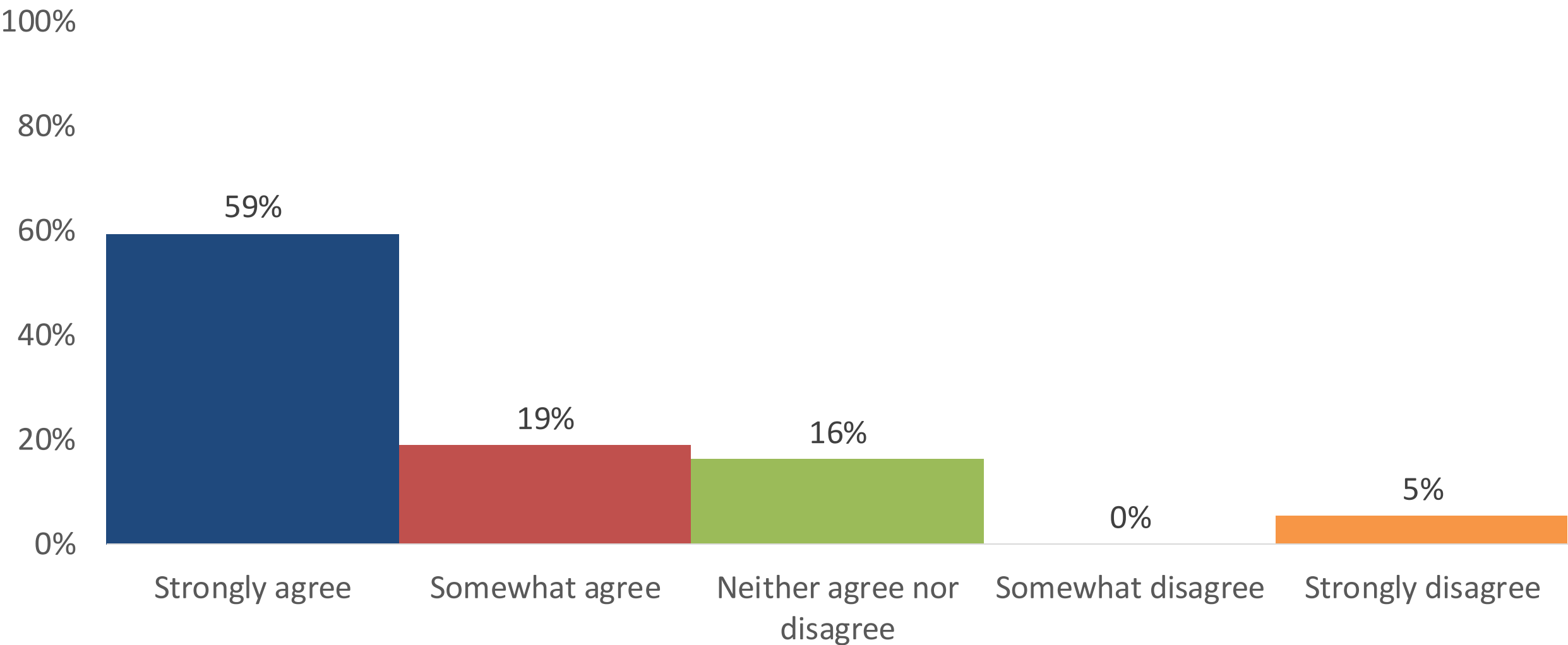
**Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.**

I am likely to stay with Westchester for another year



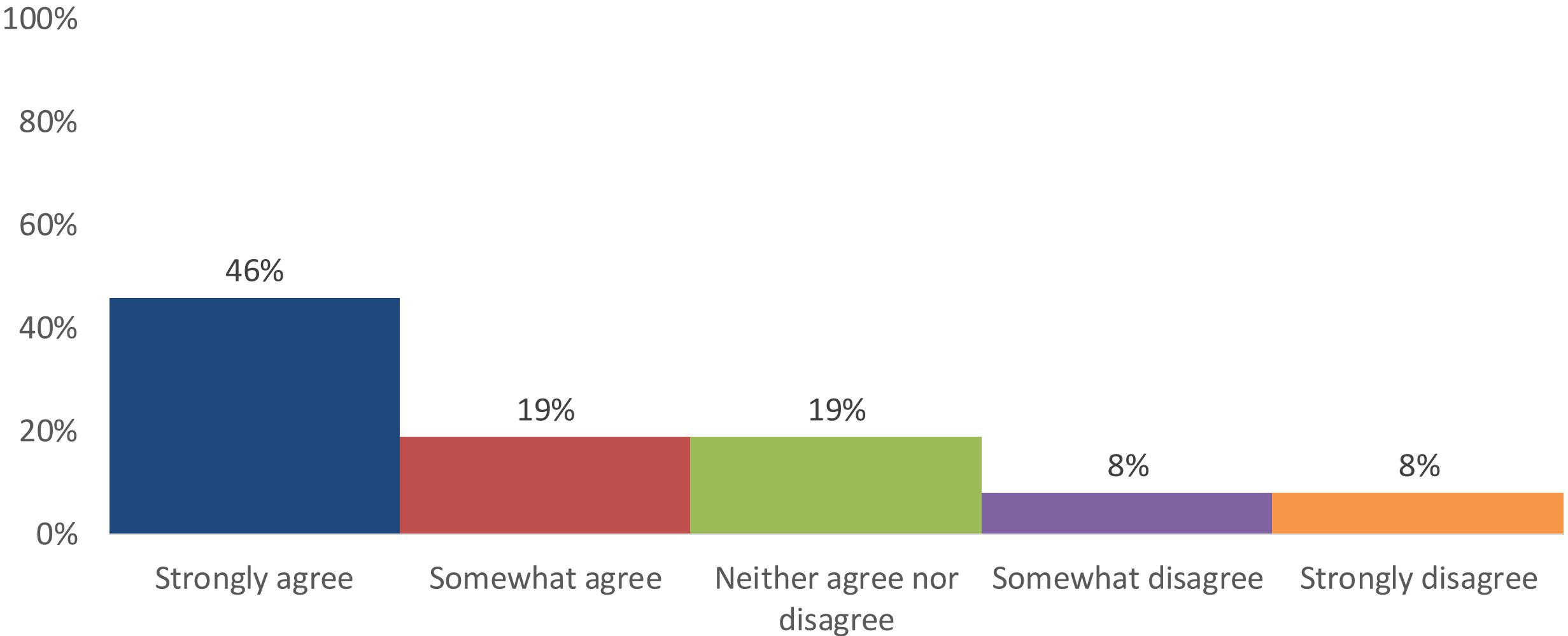
**Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.**

I would apply to this position again



**Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.**

I would recommend working at Westchester to friends



**Please add any additional information you think would help to inform the strategic planning process at Westchester.**





Questions?





# Focus Group Results

# Focus Group Overview

- As part of Westchester's strategic planning process, Focus Groups were conducted on October 3rd and 6th, 2025. Summaries of the major themes discussed by the Focus Groups are contained on the following pages.
- The 49 participants were recruited by Westchester staff and consisted of businesses, nonprofits, residents, and employees of Westchester. 79 residents requested to be in the resident focus group, so a second focus group was added.

# Focus Group Process

- A focus group is a small-group discussion guided by a trained facilitator. Clarifying questions are used if needed to better understand thoughts and opinions.
- It is used to gather in-depth information about a community's thoughts and opinions about a designated topic.
- In the case of Westchester's Focus Groups, the subject was strengths and challenges for Westchester.
- The meetings ran for approximately 90 minutes.

# Some General Information on Data

- The data is best understood when grouped into larger themes. However, some topics can go under multiple thematic categories. Closely related topics may be combined into one or one topic may be separated into subtopics based on the amount of time spent on the topic.
- An idea of scale is indicated by words such as some, most, one group, etc.
- Much of the data is general and as a result is aggregated. However, in some instances it is important to note the specific group that shared the feedback.
- All participants were told the information would be anonymous unless permission was obtained to share data that could be identifying.

# Focus Group Questions/ Areas of Exploration

1. What do you like best about Westchester?
2. What are some of the challenges for the community?
3. What are the advantages of living in Westchester as compared to other places?
4. If you could change things about Westchester what would you change?
5. What do we need to think about now to have the future we want?
6. What are 2 things we should devote efforts and resources to over the next 3-5 years? And what one thing should we maintain/leave alone because it's going well?

# Summary

- Six focus groups: 2 employee groups, 4 community groups
- Strong appreciation for location, diversity, and sense of community
- Critical needs: economic development, central downtown, infrastructure, communication/transparency, high school quality
- Common desire for strategic vision

# Methodology

- **Focus Group Composition:**
  - Two groups: Village employees
  - Four groups: Community members, nonprofits and business representatives
- **Process:**
  - All groups asked identical questions about what they like, challenges, desired changes, and future priorities

# What Participants Value Most

## **Location and Accessibility (All 6 Groups)**

- Proximity to expressways, airports, shopping, Chicago, forest preserves
- Can reach major destinations within 10-30 minutes

## **Sense of Community (All 6 Groups)**

- Strong neighborly connections, family-oriented, welcoming
- Successful community events (parades, Fun Fest, Fourth of July)



# What Participants Value Most

## **Diversity (5 Groups)**

- "Melting pot" of cultures, races, socioeconomic levels
- Schools foster acceptance

## **Housing Quality and Affordability (4 Groups)**

- Well-maintained homes, reasonable taxes
- Options for all life stages

# Top Challenges: Infrastructure and Schools

## **Infrastructure Deficiencies (4 Groups, Including Both Employee Groups)**

- Some infrastructure from 1920s-1930s
- 30 years of deferred maintenance now requiring catch-up
- Water main breaks, street closures frustrate residents
- Residents don't understand costs and time required

## **High School Reputation (5 Groups)**

- Proviso West has poor reputation, low test scores
- Primary reason families leave when kids reach high school
- Community needs to "take ownership" of the issue
- "Can't continue to bury our heads in the sand"

# Top Challenges: Communication and Governance

## **Communication and Transparency (5 Groups)**

- Too many closed sessions, hidden information
- Committee minutes not posted regularly
- Communication between taxing bodies fragmented
- Facebook spreads misinformation (employee group)
- Need town halls, regular updates, multiple communication methods

## **Board Dynamics (Multiple Groups)**

- Board division impacts decisions
- Plans shelved when boards change
- Perception of reluctance to support innovative ideas
- "Doing it the way we have always done it"

# Employee-Specific Challenges

## **Staffing and Resource Constraints (Both Employee Groups)**

- Understaffing in police and public works
- Employees doing "18 jobs" instead of one
- Burnout from overtime and 24-hour emergency shifts
- Trained staff leave for better opportunities

## **Facilities and Expectations (Employee Groups)**

- Poor facility conditions hurt recruitment
- Resident expectations don't match available resources
- "Want high level of services but don't understand the costs"
- Front-line staff bear brunt of frustrated interactions with the community

# What Participants Want to Change: Economic Development

## **Strategic Approach (All 6 Groups)**

- Hire professional economic development staff with expertise
- Create anchor developments: sports complex, entertainment district, restaurant clusters
- Develop "West 40" property (150-acre Diocese site) for mixed-use downtown
- Address vacant Mannheim & Roosevelt lot
- Follow through on plans regardless of board turnover

## **Property Strategy (2 Groups)**

- Village should acquire strategic properties
- Create larger parcels for development with parking
- Incentivize property improvements with "carrots and sticks"

# What Participants Want to Change: Operations and Services

## **Communication Improvements (4 Groups)**

- Town halls and "coffee with the board/staff"
- Regular project updates and transparent explanations
- Better event advertising with visible signage
- Education about why work is needed

## **Address School Quality (3 Groups)**

- Community "take ownership" of high school
- Strengthen K-8 schools
- More programming for kids and families

## **Break Down Silos (3 Groups)**

- Improve collaboration between departments
- Coordinate between taxing bodies
- Share resources across organizations

# What Participants Want to Change: Employee Needs

## **Workplace Improvements (Both Employee Groups)**

- Increase staffing, especially police and public works
- Improve facility conditions to aid recruitment
- Fair compensation for long-term employees
- More training and professional development
- Middle managers should affirm good work and develop staff

## **Culture Changes (Employee Groups)**

- Clearer priorities and decision-making
- Less emphasis on "mundane" issues from individual residents
- Trust employees to do their work
- "Let us make something great"

# Future Priorities: Vision and Development

## **Strategic Planning (5 Groups)**

- Develop clear mission and vision for community
- Ensure all committees "rowing in the same direction"
- Make plans actionable with follow-through
- "Lack of action turns people away from participating"

## **Specific Development Opportunities**

- Sports complexes for regional tournaments
- Entertainment districts (like Rosemont)
- Mixed-use development with residential, commercial, green space
- Arts and culture venues (like Berwyn, Oak Park)

## **Revenue Diversification (3 Groups)**

- Diversify beyond property taxes
- Economic development produces dollars for services
- Reduce tax burden on residents



# Future Priorities: Identity and Community

## **Community Identity (4 Groups)**

- "We need to know who we are"
- Clear answer for "why WESTCHESTER is the place to be"
- Market the community like Berwyn does
- Improved welcome signs, wayfinding, historical markers

## **Demographic Planning (3 Groups)**

- Plan for Millennials and children
- Senior housing to allow aging in place
- Age diversity for economic health
- Sustainability and energy use planning

# Future Priorities: Organizational Effectiveness

## **Professional Management (4 Groups)**

- Praised village manager Barry Krumstok and team for improvements
- Prevailing wages and adequate staffing
- Professional standards and clear expectations
- Shift from "good old boys club"
- Need qualified professional staff (finance director with credentials)

## **Board and Community Engagement**

- More objective decision-making
- Active citizen advisory boards
- Workshops to align commissions with vision
- Transparency about plan follow-through

# Future Priorities: Organizational Effectiveness, Cont.

## **Employee Wellbeing (Both Employee Groups)**

- Realistic work-life balance
- Team building across departments
- Recognition and affirmation of good work
- "It's about being seen and appreciated"

# Conclusion

## **Universal Themes:**

- All 6 groups want central downtown/business district
- Professional economic development with sustained execution
- Strategic vision with clear priorities

## **Key Insights:**

- Strong foundation: community pride, diversity, engaged residents
- Internal challenges: understaffing, facilities, resource constraints
- External challenges: downtown identity, economic development, schools
- Trust has been an issue for the community. Continued work is needed.

# Conclusion

## **Path Forward:**

- Strategic vision and continued professional management
- Specific anchor developments leveraging central location
- Sustained commitment regardless of political changes
- Transparency and alignment across stakeholders
- Investment in workforce and infrastructure

# Two Priorities for Westchester?

Cohesive vision/identity (3)

**Economic development (7)**

- Economic development with professional staff and plan (3)
- Land acquisition for a central business district (2)
- Central business district (3)
- Business development/pop up shop/incubator (5)
- **Strategic development consistent with vision (9)**
  - Mannheim/Roosevelt (2)
- Revenue through economic development (4)
- Inventory assets and build vision (2)
- Breakfast restaurant

# Two Priorities for Westchester?

Infrastructure including roads, buildings, sewer, water (3)

- Capital improvement plan
- Budget for capital improvements
- Updating facilities (2)
- New Fire Department

Appearance of Westchester (4)

- Code enforcement (3)
- Appearance of commercial properties (2)

# Two Priorities for Westchester?

Misc.

- Staffing levels/capacity (4)
- Revenue generation/financial responsibility (3)
- Public relations for the community/Branding/Public perception (3)
- Transparency among the elected officials/transparency about past (3)
- Community support of all demographics (age/race/family structure)
- Collaborative relationships with other orgs/ taxing bodies (3)
- New events (2)



# Two Priorities for Westchester?

Misc.

- Creative cultural programs (2)
- Get rid of “This is how it has always been done” (2)
- Internal communications (board and with front line) (2)
- Housing for seniors
- External communications
- Opportunities to build relationships between Village departments
- Help the food pantry find space
- Organized base of community volunteers
- Healthy environment

# What one thing to maintain/leave alone?

- Barry/professional management by professionals (12)
- Feeling of safety/public safety (11)
- Sense of community (6)
- Events/events that we know work (4)
- Green space and forest preserves (3)
- Services/public works (3)

# What one thing to maintain/leave alone?

- Wolf Road Prairie (2)
- Village newsletters (2)
- Village cleanliness
- Mayfair Park
- Housing stock
- Lines of communication between organizations



Questions?

# Thank you!

