

CMA 2024 #237
IN CITY COUNCIL
November 18, 2024

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I am excited to present the findings of the 2024 Cambridge Resident Satisfaction Survey, conducted by Polity Research Consulting, LLC (“Polity”). This marks the second survey since transitioning to an annual format for this program. We hope that over time, the yearly frequency will allow us to stay more closely attuned to evolving community dynamics. Overall, the questions in the 2024 survey mirrored those asked in the 2023 survey, allowing us to build more consistency into how we are tracking insights and emerging issues and priorities within Cambridge over time.

The City’s survey program aims to capture insights from randomly selected residents, offering valuable perspectives from our community. This year, the rating for overall City government performance will once again feed into my annual performance review.

Methodology

Polity conducted a random telephone survey, encompassing both landline and cell-phone households, from September 11 to September 17, 2024. The 400 residents who completed the survey were randomly selected to closely mirror the adult population of the city. The margin of error for this survey stands at $\pm 4.90\%$ at a 95% confidence interval, or put another way, when conducting 100 such surveys, 95 of them will yield results that fall—at worst—4.9 points on either side of a given percentage.

We continue to incorporate language justice into our survey program by offering all respondents the ability to conduct the survey any of the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Bangla, Brazilian Portuguese, English, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese, or Spanish. Although the service was offered and all surveys were conducted in English, 11% of respondents reported their primary language spoken at home was a language other than English.

Key Findings

The analysis of this year’s survey reveals continued positive attitudes of residents towards city-related issues, with the combined positive assessments closely matching those seen in 2023. While we are seeing a lessening of positive extremes in this year’s survey, the drop has not generally translated into an increase in negative ratings. Most shifts are within positive categories—for example, from “excellent” to “good.”

Notable highlights include:



City Government Performance Ratings:

- "Excellent" ratings for City government performance are now at 15%, down from 22% in 2023 and 21% in 2022, comparable to pre-COVID levels seen in 2018 and 2020.
- Despite the drop in "excellent" ratings, most residents still view City government favorably, with 65% giving either "excellent" or "good" ratings, a slight decline from 69% in 2023, right at the survey's margin of error.

Resident Satisfaction and Likelihood to Stay:

- A majority of residents remain highly satisfied, with 56% "very likely" to recommend living in Cambridge and the same percentage likely to remain in the city over the next five years.

Key Areas for Improvement (Gap Analysis):

- The largest gaps between importance and performance continue to be in affordable housing—both market and subsidized—with mean score differences of 1.86 and 1.48, respectively. Other areas needing attention include quality of transportation (1.16 gap), balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation (0.79 gap), and informing residents (0.65 gap).
- A perceptual map identifies affordable market housing, subsidized housing, and balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation as the only issues ranked as both important and underperforming (in the “negative” quadrant).

Departmental Ratings and Communication Channels:

- Most City departments show lower "excellent" ratings than in 2023, though combined "excellent" and "good" ratings remain stable overall.
- Official City communications (email updates, mailers, and website) are highly valued by residents (47% "very valuable"), with word of mouth following at 37%. Online and print newspapers have increased in value as a source (34%, up from 28% in 2023).

Transportation:

- Walking remains the most favored mode of travel within Cambridge, followed by biking, public transit, and taxi/ride-share. Residents continue to urge a focus on improving public transportation options.

Overall Sentiment:

- While Cambridge residents generally assign positive marks to city-related services, there is a trend toward fewer "highly positive" ratings, reflecting a tempered view of City performance and services.

National Benchmark Data

For the second year, we have incorporated national benchmarking into our resident survey process. Utilizing the services of Polco/National Research Center (“Polco”), we were able to benchmark 31 of the 2024 questions to a database of comparative resident surveys from over 500 communities nationwide. The questions benchmarked fell into the following categories: quality of life; governance; economy; mobility; community design; utilities; safety; parks and recreation; health and wellness; education, arts, and culture; inclusivity and engagement; participation; and focus areas.

The following ten questions differed from the national benchmark:

Much Higher:

- Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services – (rank 3 of 305)
- Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway) – (rank 2 of 285)
- Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities – (rank 1 of 286)

Higher:

- Public transportation, like bus or subway [ease of getting around the city] – (rank 57 of 306)
- On foot [ease of getting around the city] – (rank 42 of 326)
- A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities – (rank 11 of 324)
- Opportunities in education, culture, and the arts - (rank 26 of 297)
- Residents’ connection and engagement with their community - (rank 6 of 227)

Much Lower:

- Driving [ease of getting around the city] – (rank 321 of 324)

According to Polco’s methodology, Cambridge’s results are noted as being “higher” than the benchmark, “lower” than the benchmark or “similar” to the benchmark, meaning that the average rating given by residents is statistically similar to or different (greater or lesser) than the benchmark. Being rated as “higher” or “lower” than the benchmark means that Cambridge’s average rating for a particular item was more than 10 points different than the benchmark. If a rating was “much higher” or “much lower,” then Cambridge’s average rating was more than 20 points different when compared to the benchmark. The communities in Polco’s database represent a wide geographic and population range.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, the survey results underscore the community's satisfaction with many aspects of city life, alongside clear areas for improvement. These insights can inform our collective shaping of policies and initiatives that resonate with the needs and aspirations of Cambridge residents.

I hope these findings assist the Council in its ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of life in our city. They provide insightful data to aid our collective decision-making processes. I look forward to our continued collaboration on our annual resident survey, and I recommend that we have a detailed discussion of the results of the 2024 survey at a future City Council Round Table with Polity.



Yi-An Huang
City Manager



2024 Resident Opinion Survey
Prepared for The City of Cambridge, MA

November 1, 2024
Polity Research Consulting LLC

Methodology

Polity Research Consulting conducted a random telephone survey among 400 adult residents of the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts between September 11th and September 17th 2024. The sample was constructed to represent the adult population of the City—and was comprised of *both* landline and cell-phone households. The margin of error on the full, 400-member sample is $\pm 4.90\%$ at the mid-range of the 95% confidence interval. That is, when conducting 100 such surveys, 95 of them will yield results that fall—at worst—4.9 points on either side of a given percentage. When looking at smaller segments of the sample, margins of error will *increase*.

Executive Summary Of Key Findings

All in all, the results of this survey indicate that Cambridge residents continue to express *overall* positive attitudes towards a range of measures dealing with Cambridge City Government. In fact, on most measures, combined positive assessments closely match those we saw in 2023.

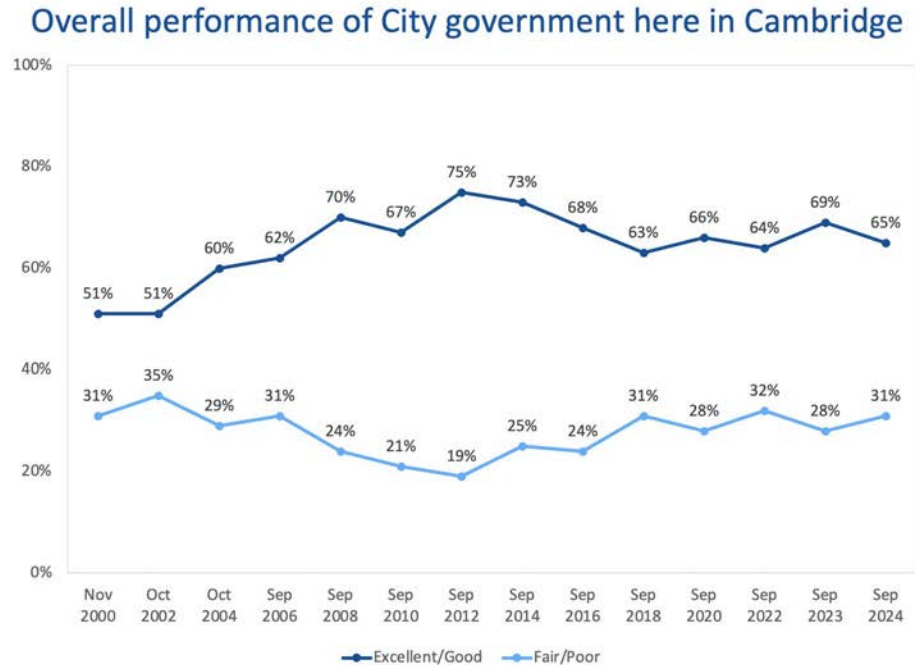
However, we also see a lessening of attitudes on the positive *extremes*—like “excellence” and strong “satisfaction”. Interestingly, several results mirror those we saw in pre-COVID surveys—suggesting that residents may be re-focusing on broader issues—and examining them more carefully. For example:

- "Excellent" ratings for City government performance currently stand at 15%—similar to the 16% we saw in both 2018 and 2020. *However*, 2022's "excellent" number was 21% and 2023's was 22%—the higher ratings then perhaps (at least partly) reflecting the City's handling of COVID during those years.
- It's important to note that this drop in "excellent" ratings has *not* (for the most part) translated into an increase in *negative* ratings. On most measures, the shift has gone from ‘excellent’ to ‘good’. For example, even with the drop in “excellence” ratings on City government performance, the *combined* "excellent" and "good" numbers total 65%, while the 2023 combined result was 69%—right at the survey's 4-point margin of error.
- Our Gap Analysis indicates areas where the most work needs to be done by the City.. The results show higher values (i.e., the biggest gaps between importance and performance) on the two affordable housing questions (1.86 mean difference on market housing; 1.48 on subsidized housing). Other large negative gaps exist on: the quality of transportation (1.16), the balance between construction and preservation (0.79), and informing residents (0.65). The lone *positive* gap exists on the question of cultural opportunities (-0.12). Other small *negative* gaps were on: quality of open space (0.12), safe streets (0.34) and connection and engagement with the community (0.37).
- When this Gap Analysis is expressed as a ‘perceptual map’, we find that **just three items fall in the "negative" quadrant** (i.e., both important *and* underperforming). The three items are: 1.) affordable market housing; 2.) affordable subsidized housing; 3.) balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation.

- Solid majorities continue to say they'd be very likely to recommend living in Cambridge and very likely to stay in Cambridge for five years (56% "very likely" for both).
- Most City Departments tested also show a drop in "excellent" ratings—although, again, combined "excellent" and "good" responses closely matched the 2023 numbers in most cases.
- City of Cambridge email updates, printed mailers and website continue to be the most valuable sources of information for residents (47% very valuable). Word of Mouth is again second in value (37%), while online and print newspapers have shown an increase in value over 2023 (34% now, 28% in 2023).
- Traveling the City on foot remains the best option for residents, followed by bicycling, public transit and taxi/ride-share. And, by a wide margin, residents continue to urge the City to focus on public transportation.
- All in all, while Cambridge residents continue to assign positive marks to most city-related measures, they also seem less likely to assign *highly* positive assessments to City performance and services.

City Government Performance Rating

As the chart shows, almost two-thirds of residents (65%) give the city either “excellent” or “good” marks on the overall performance of city government in Cambridge—although this represents a 4-point decrease from the 2023 score. Moreover, 15% now assign “excellent” ratings to overall performance—also down from 22% in 2023. These “excellent” levels are close to the levels we saw in the pre-COVID year of 2018.

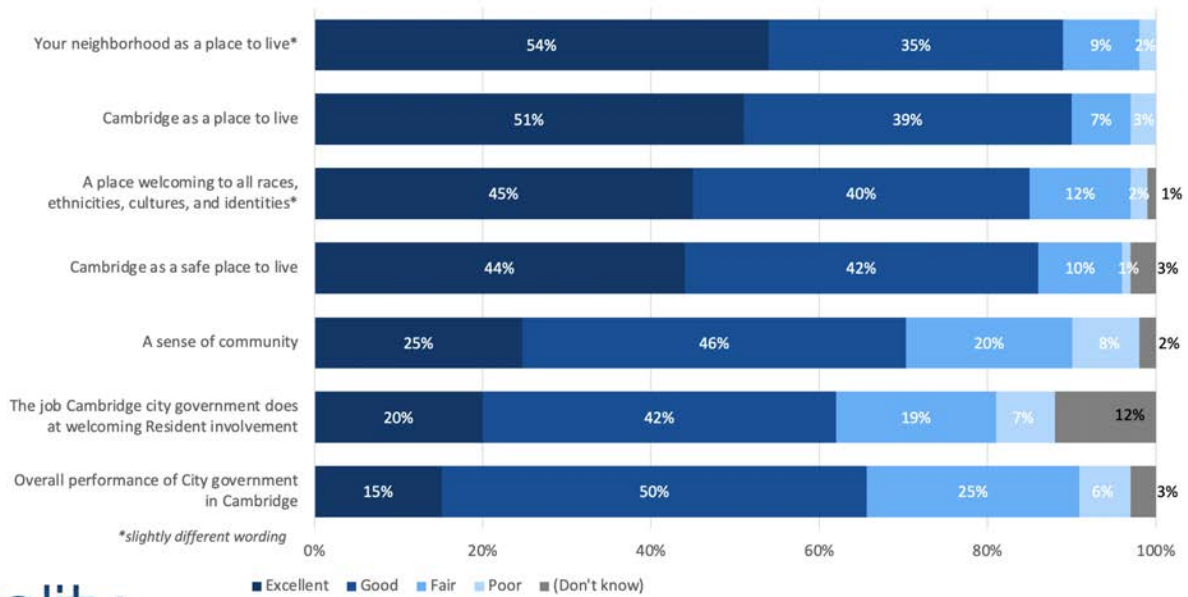


Demographically, the tendency to assign “excellent” ratings to the city comes most often from: men and women equally, people aged 45-54, residents with household incomes over \$100,000, residents of Zip Code 02139. “Poor” ratings are most likely to come from Hispanic residents, people aged 56-64, those living in Zip Code 02141 and 02142, and longer-term residents.

Overall City Attribute Ratings

Respondents were also asked to rate a range of city attributes. As the chart shows, residents continue to assign the highest “excellent” ratings to their **neighborhood being a safe place to live** (54%, down slightly from 59% in 2023), followed by **the city overall as a place to live** (51% excellent); the **city as a welcoming place** (45% excellent); **Cambridge as a safe place to live** (44% excellent); **a sense of community** (25% excellent); and **overall performance of the city government** (15% excellent). A new question asks about city government “welcoming resident involvement” garners 20% “excellent” marks.

Please rate the following on a scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor.

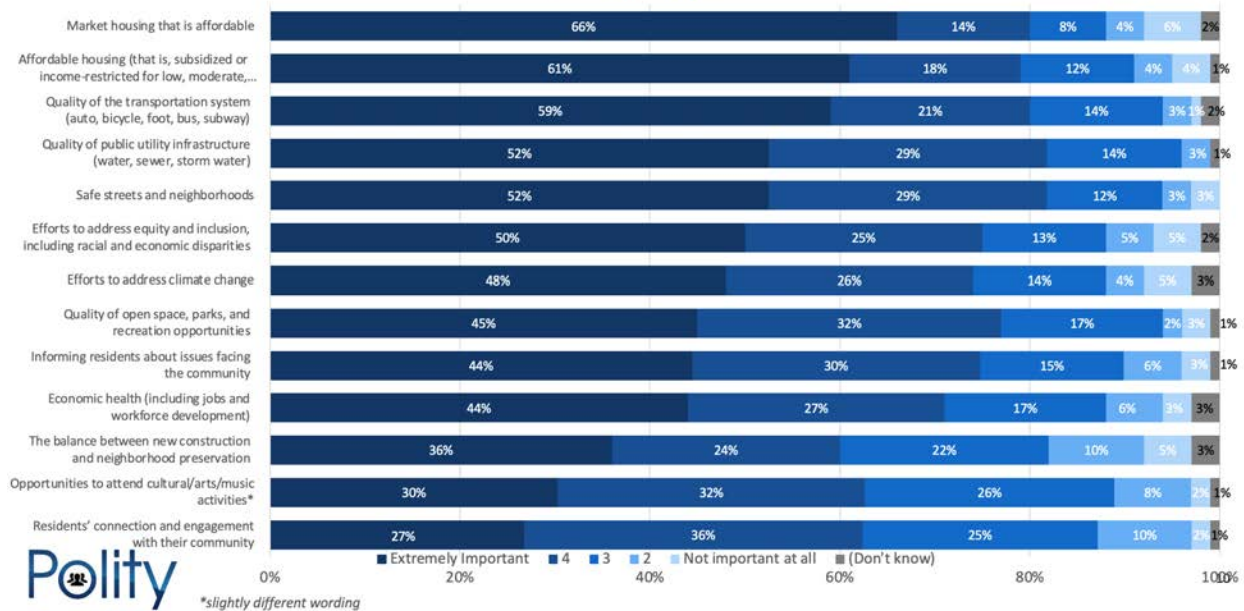


Importance/Performance Gap Analysis And Perceptual Mapping

Again this year, respondents were asked to rate a listing of 13 aspects of the community on two separate scales—first a “1” to “5” *importance* scale and next a “1” to “5” *performance* scale. We then analyzed the *mean score results* to construct a Gap Analysis—showing areas that the City performs well on and areas that need improvements.

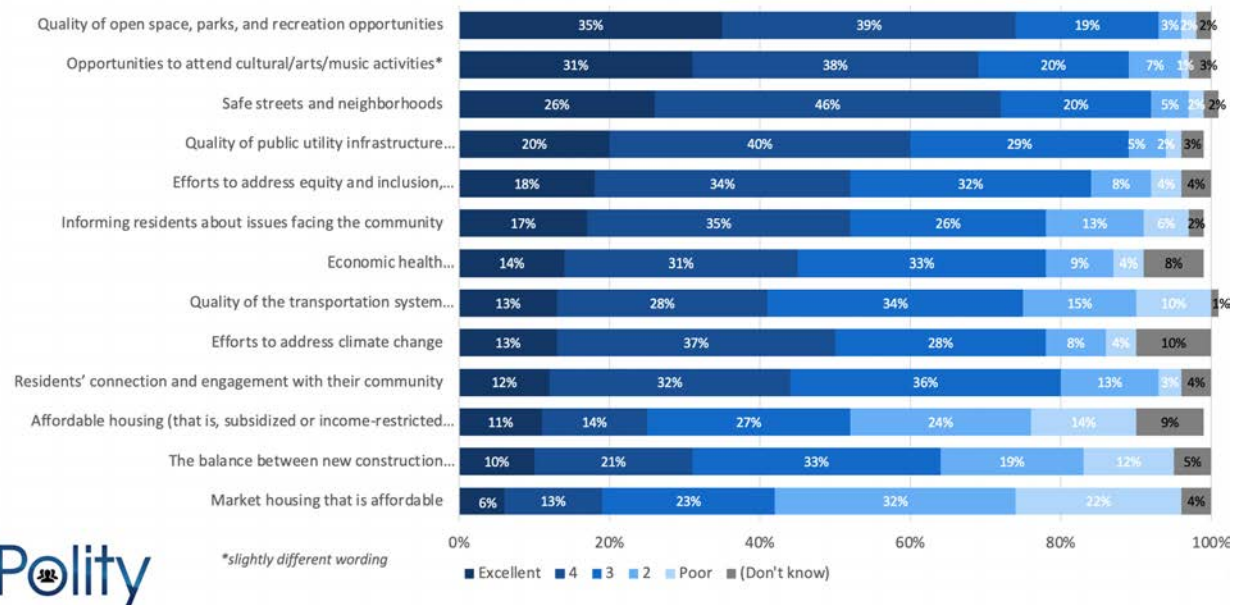
First, here are the overall results to the *importance* ratings. As the chart shows, **both affordable housing** measures continue to garner the highest percentages of “*extremely important*” ratings (66% “market” and 61% “subsidized”). Interestingly—as we saw in 2023—the **quality of the transportation system** (at 59% “extremely” important) is next in line of importance. The importance list continues with: **quality of public utility infrastructure** (52% “extremely” important); **safe streets and neighborhoods** (52%); **efforts to address equity and inclusion** (50%); **efforts to address climate change** (48%); **economic health** (44%); **quality of open space/recreation** (45%); **construction-preservation balance** (36%); **opportunities in education/culture/arts** (30%); **connection and engagement with the community** (27%). A new question was added to the mix this year asking about **informing residents about issues facing the community**—which received 44% extreme importance.

How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



Next, are the overall results to the *performance* ratings. As we saw in 2023, **quality of open space/recreation** tops the performance list—with 35% assigning “excellent” ratings to the City. **Opportunities in education/culture/arts** finishes second on the list (31% “excellent” ratings). ‘Excellent’ City performance continued on: **safe streets and neighborhoods** (26%); **quality of public utility infrastructure** (20%); **efforts to address equity and inclusion** (18%); **economic health** (14%—down from 17% in 2023); **efforts to address climate change** (13%—up from 9% in 2023); **quality of transportation system** (13%—down from 18 in 2023); **engagement with the community** (12%, down from 14% in 2023); **subsidized affordable housing** (11%—up from 9% in 2023); **construction/preservation balance** (10%—down from 13% in 2023); **market affordable housing** (6%). The new question about **informing residents about issues facing the community**—garnered 17% ‘excellent’ ratings.

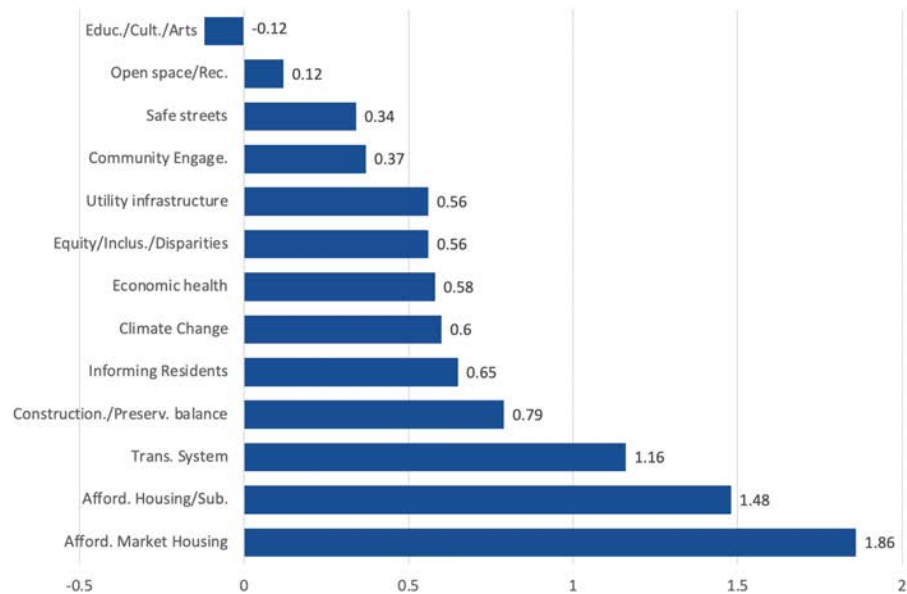
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



Next, we calculated the *mean scores* of all the importance/performance measures and matched them up with one another. We find that (not surprisingly) the two affordable housing measures show the biggest negative gaps between importance and performance (2.01 “market”, 1.61 “subsidized”). Interestingly, transportation system issues show the next biggest gap (1.13), followed by construction/preservation balance (0.76), equity efforts (0.70), climate change efforts (0.70); economic health (0.64); public utility infrastructure (0.59); resident engagement (0.49); safe streets (0.44); education/culture/arts (0.23); open space (0.10).

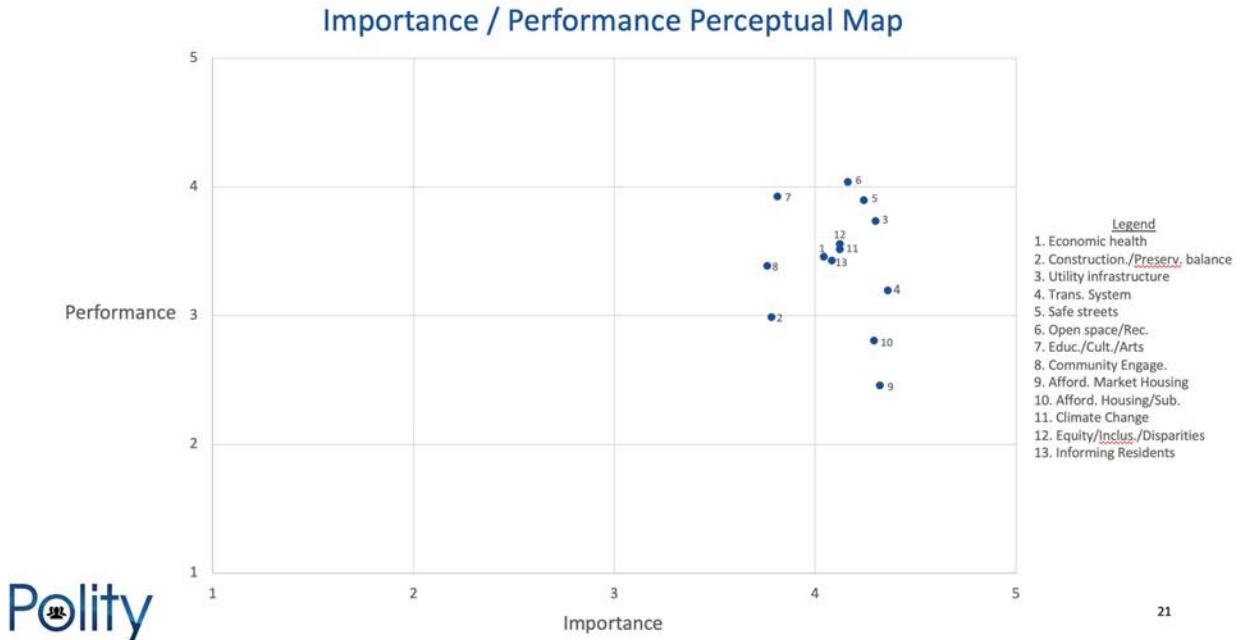
The bottom line is that the community aspects at the *top* of the Gap Analysis “pyramid” are relatively important to residents *and* the City is performing *well* on them. Conversely, those on the bottom of the pyramid are relatively important to residents and the City is performing *less well* on them. ***This would suggest that follow-up research be targeted on issues like housing, transportation, the balance between construction and preservation, and informing residents about issues facing the community.***

Importance/Performance Gap Ranking (higher number=greater attention needed)



Another way of looking at this issue is by use of a “perceptual map”—which plots the relative mean scores of the community aspects on a matrix of importance and performance. Aspects in the upper right-hand quadrant of the map represent areas where the City is performing well on areas residents consider to be important. Aspects in the lower right-hand quadrant represent those where the City performance needs improvement on issues that are important to residents.

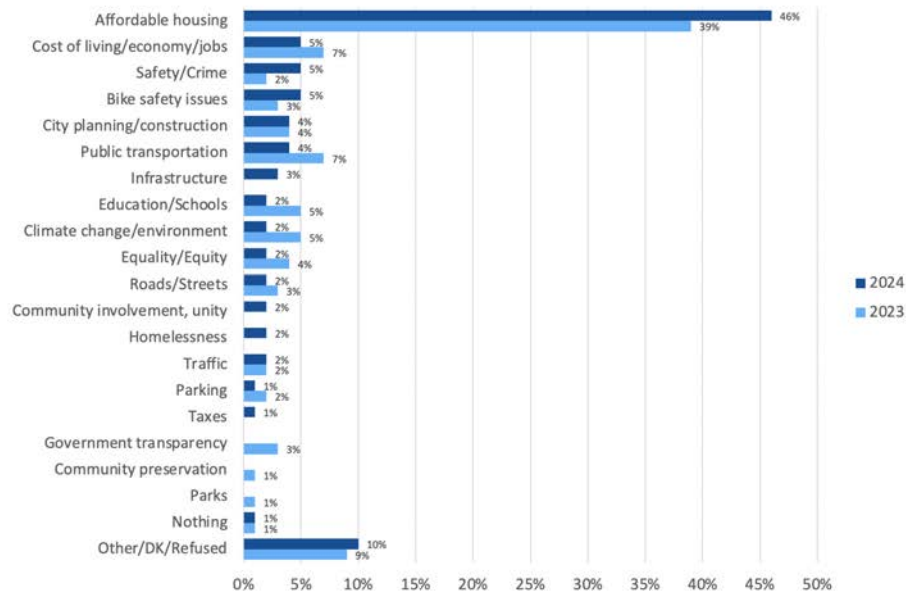
Again, the affordable housing issues are clearly in need of improved performance by the City—while transportation and preservation issues are also trending in a negative direction when using this perceptual map methodology



Most Important Issues Needing City Attention

Respondents were also asked to tell us—in their own words—what they think is the single most important issue that the City of Cambridge needs to focus on in the next *two* years. As the chart shows, affordable housing *once again* tops the list—now comprising almost half of all responses (46%). Far behind on the list are: cost of living (5%), safety/crime (5%—although *up from 2% in 2023*); bike safety issues (5%—also up from 3% in 2023); city planning/construction (4%); public transportation (4%—down from 7% in 2023); infrastructure (3%); education/schools (2%—down from 5% in 2023). A full listing of coded, open-ended responses follows.

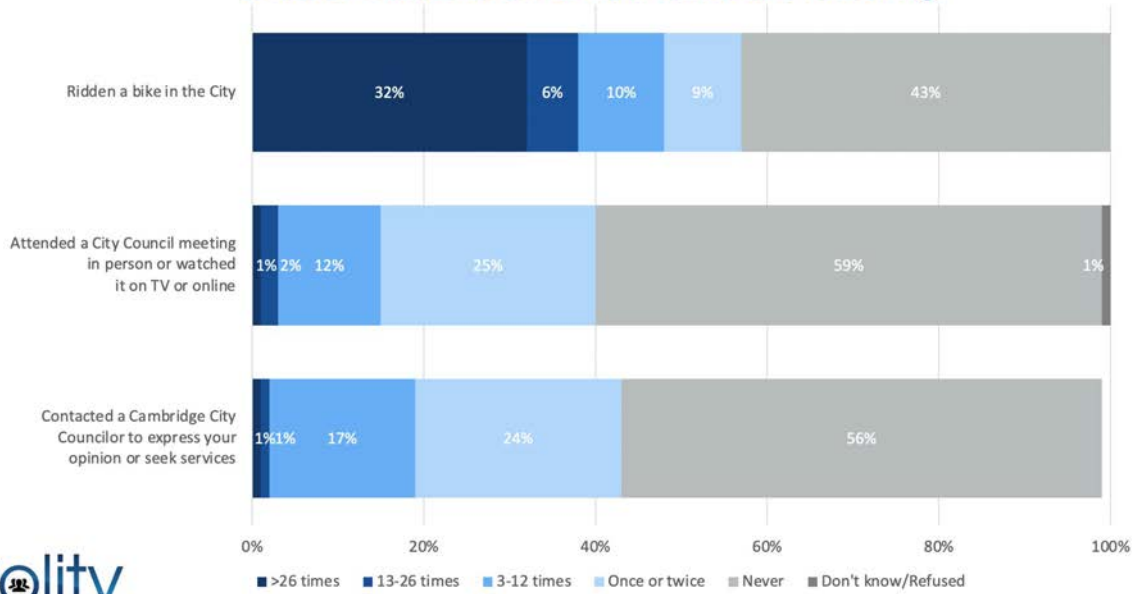
What is the *single most important* issue the City of Cambridge should focus on in the coming two years?



Frequency Of Activities

As in past surveys, respondents were asked to tell us how many times they had participated in a range of activities in the city *over the last 12 months*. As the chart shows, the percentage of residents who have **ridden a bike** more than 26 times now stands at 32%—up two percent since 2023. The percentage who say they have "never" **attended a City Council meeting** is now 59%—up four percent from 2023. And, the percentage of residents who have *never* contacted a Cambridge City Councilor is 56%—down from 60% in 2023.

In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or another household member done the following:



Ratings Of Specific City Services

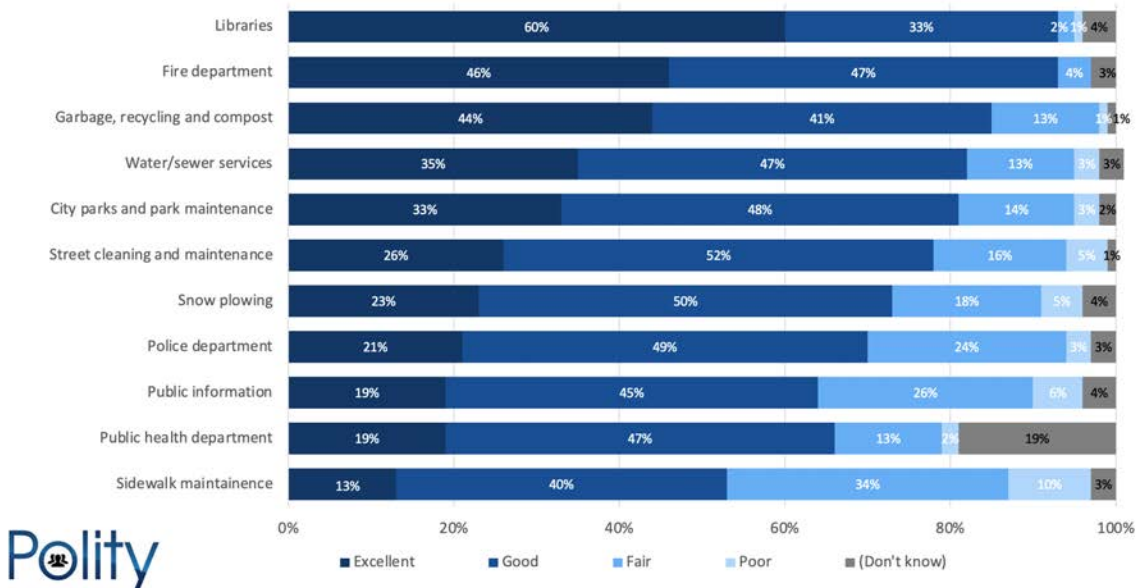
Respondents were asked to rate a range of City services on a scale of “excellent” to “poor”. As we have seen with other measures this year, “excellent” ratings have dropped for a number of departments. For example: **public information** (down 10 points); **library services** (down 6 points); **public health department** (down 6 points); **garbage recycling and compost** (down 6 points); **fire department services** (down 5 points); **police department** (down 4 points).

Smaller drops in “excellent” ratings occurred on: **street cleaning and maintenance** (down 3 points) and **city parks and maintenance** (down 2 points).

Bucking the overall downward trend were *increases* in ‘excellent’ ratings for: **water/sewer services** (up 6 points, after rising 3 points in 2023) and **sidewalk maintenance** (up 1 point). **Snow plowing** held steady at 23% excellent).

In terms of overall “excellent” scores, the top three were: libraries (60%); Fire Department services (46%); garbage, compost and recycling (44%).

Now, I'd like to read you a number of services provided by the City of Cambridge. For each one, please rate the *quality* of these services on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.

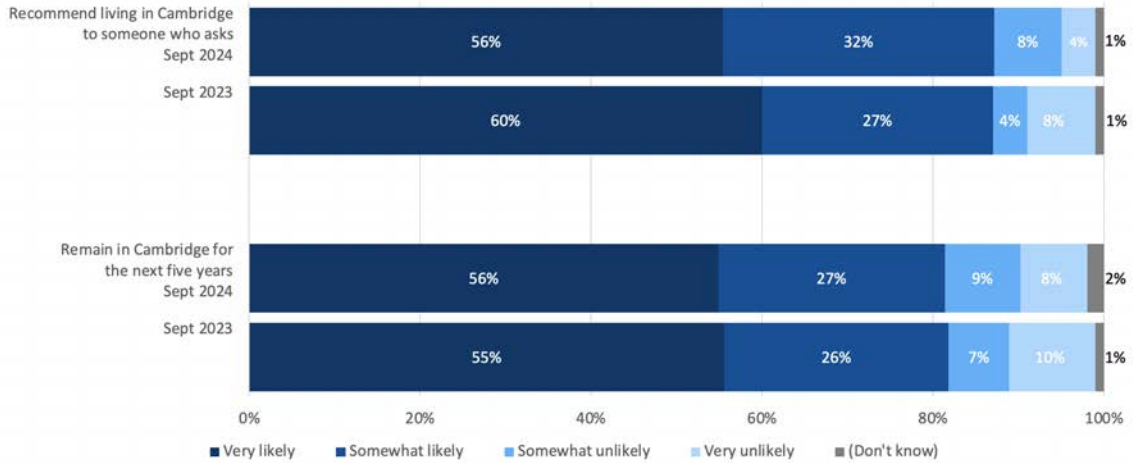


Demographic analysis on the “**public information**” measure shows that the tendency to assign “excellent” ratings comes most often from: women, those aged 35-44, residents with a bachelor’s degree, residents of 5-10 years and those living in Zip Code 02139. Less favorable view of public information tend to come from among: people aged 18-24, Black and Asian residents, students and those living in Zip Code 02141.

City Pride, Resident Intentions And Recommendations

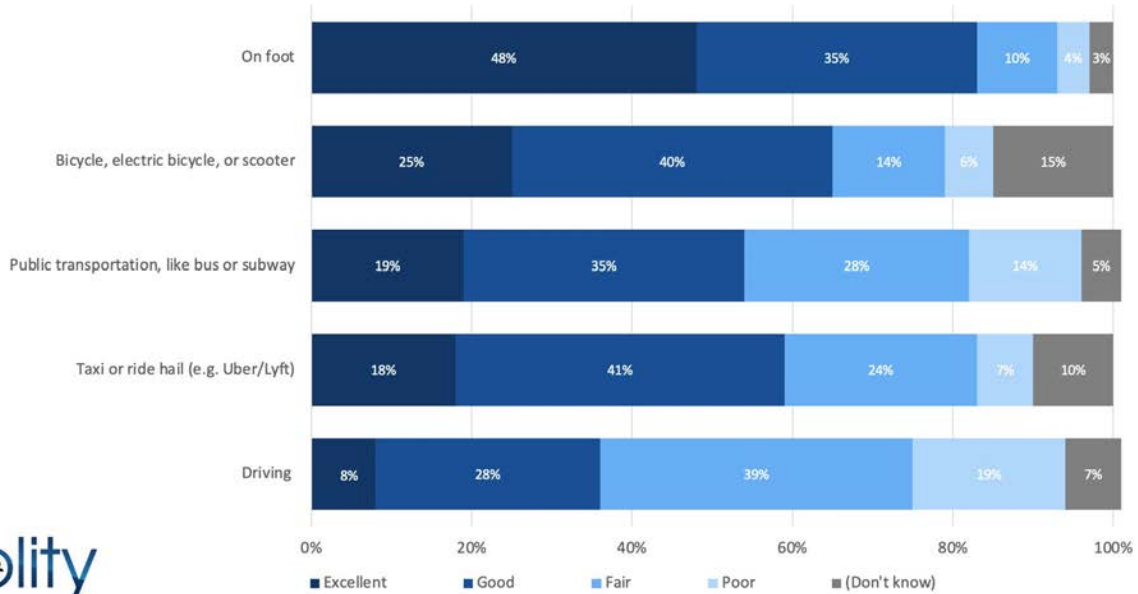
As we did last year, we asked respondents two questions that reflect their level of pride in the City of Cambridge. First, we measured the likelihood that residents would “recommend” living in the city to someone who asked them. As the table shows, 56% of residents (down from 60% in 2023) say they are “very likely” to make that recommendation. Exactly the same number (56%) say they are “very likely” to “remain in Cambridge for the next five years”.

Please tell me how likely you’d be to do each of the following—
very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely.



As the following chart indicates, Cambridge residents continue to view walking as the best method for getting around the city—with almost half (48%) rating that option as “excellent”—down from 52% in 2023. Bicycle riding is considered the next best option (24% “excellent”—down from 30% in 2023). Further down the list of options is public bus or subway (19%—up from 16% in 2023), Taxi/Uber (18%), and driving (8%).

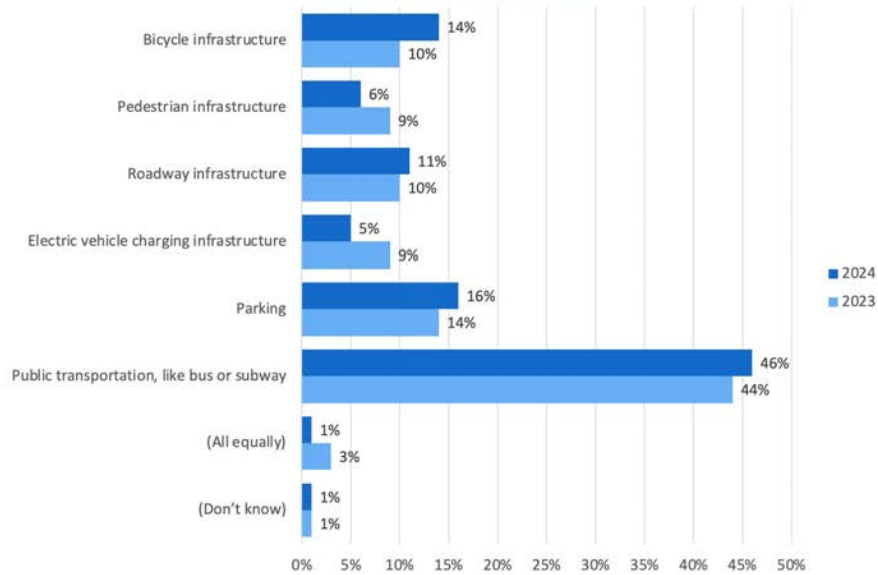
On a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate the ease of getting around the city for each of the following transportation options.



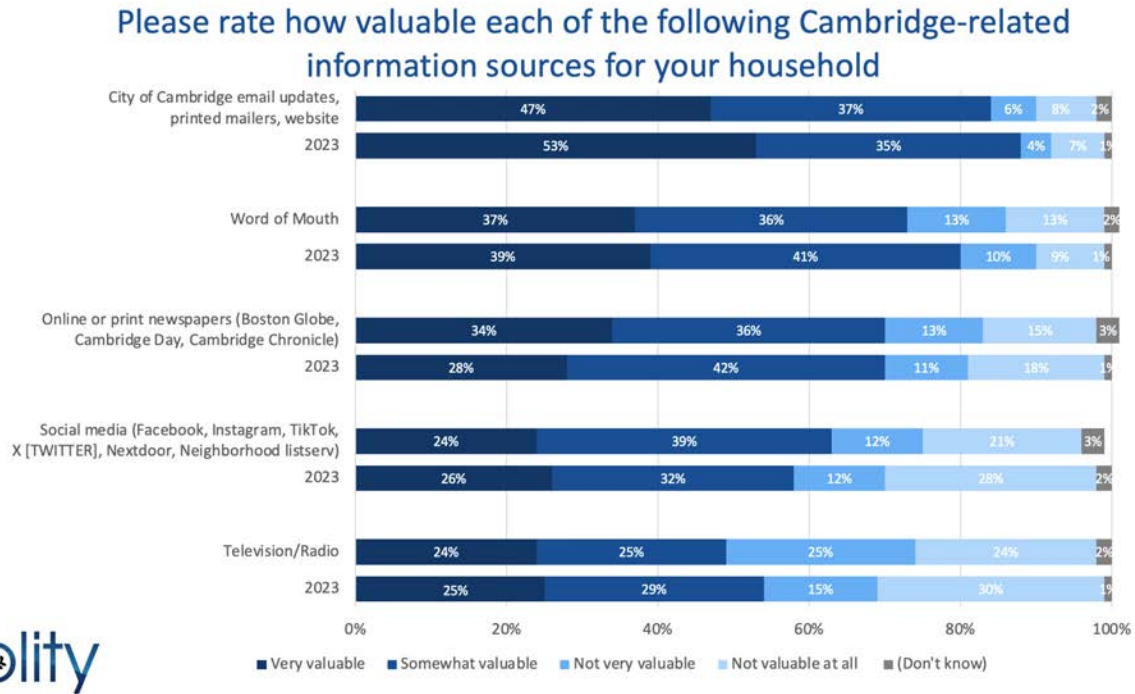
As we did last year, we asked residents which *single transportation option* is most important for the City to improve. As the chart shows, public transportation continues to top the list at 46%—

up 2 points from 2023. Parking comes in second place at 16%, followed by bicycle infrastructure at 14% (up from 10% in 2023) and roadway infrastructure at 11%.

As you continue to think about transportation options to get around Cambridge, which of the following do you think is the *single most important option* for the city to focus on improving over the next few years?



As the next chart shows, Cambridge residents continue to evaluate *official city information* sources (emails, mailers, city website) as the most valuable for their household (47% “very valuable”). Next on list are: word of mouth (37% “very valuable”); online or print newspapers (34%—up from 28% in 2023), social media (24%) and television/radio (24%).



Demographically, residents who consider City communications to be “very valuable” tend to be: women, those aged 35-44, Asian residents, those with household incomes between \$100,000 and \$124,000 a year, the best-educated, those with children in the home, and shorter-term residents.



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**2024 CITY OF CAMBRIDGE RESIDENT SURVEY
 PRC #5420—SEPTEMBER 2024**

SOME PERCENTAGES MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING ERROR

Interviewing dates: 9/11-9/17/2024; Sample size: N=400 Phone; MOE: ±4.90%

To begin, on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, how would you rate each of the following quality of life aspects here in the City of Cambridge?

- SCALE:**
- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 1. Excellent | 2. Good |
| 3. Fair | 4. Poor |
| 5. (Don't know) | |

1. Cambridge as a place to live

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	51%	39	7	3	--
September 2023	56%	31	8	5	--
September 2022	48%	40	9	4	--
September 2020	50%	42	6	2	--
September 2018	49%	42	8	-	-
September 2016	54%	32	11	3	-
September 2014	49%	43	6	2	-
September 2012	62%	34	3	1	-
September 2010	48%	42	8	1	1
September 2008	43%	49	7	2	-
September 2006	41%	45	10	3	1
October 2004	42%	47	8	2	1
October 2002	42%	44	10	3	1
November 2000	39%	50	8	2	1

2. Your neighborhood as a place to live*

**different wording*

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	54%	35	9	2	--
September 2023	59%	28	8	5	1
September 2022	42%	45	9	4	-
September 2020	47%	40	11	1	1

September 2018	45%	43	11	1	-
September 2016	43%	48	6	3	-
September 2014	37%	51	10	2	-
September 2012	46%	43	10	-	-
September 2010	42%	43	14	-	-
September 2008	37%	46	14	3	-
September 2006	36%	48	12	4	-
October 2004	34%	51	12	3	-
October 2002	32%	48	17	2	1
November 2000	36%	49	13	2	-

3. Cambridge as a safe place to live

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	44%	42	10	1	3
September 2023	45%	41	9	3	1
September 2022	39%	43	14	5	-
September 2020	45%	44	9	--	2
September 2018	38%	48	12	1	-
September 2016	41%	37	18	3	-
September 2014	34%	52	14	1	-
September 2012	32%	51	15	1	-
September 2010	25%	52	22	1	1
September 2008	17%	55	24	4	-
September 2006	19%	54	22	3	1
October 2004	21%	58	17	3	1
October 2002	24%	52	19	4	1
November 2000	21%	62	15	1	1

4. A sense of community

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	25%	46	20	8	2
September 2023	26%	42	22	8	2
September 2022	21%	44	26	8	2
September 2020	18%	53	25	4	1
September 2018	21%	48	22	7	1
September 2016	20%	47	21	11	2
September 2014	27%	51	18	4	-
September 2012	16%	55	27	1	1
September 2010	21%	49	25	3	1
September 2008	16%	46	30	5	2
September 2006	17%	47	30	3	3
October 2004	18%	52	24	4	2
October 2002	17%	45	29	6	3
November 2000	10%	52	31	5	2

5. A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities*

**slightly different wording*

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	45%	40	12	2	1
September 2023	48%	35	12	3	2
September 2022	36%	40	18	4	3
September 2020	34%	43	19	2	2
September 2018	41%	37	18	3	-
September 2016	38%	46	13	3	-
September 2014	53%	35	9	2	-
September 2012	44%	45	8	1	1
September 2010	42%	47	9	1	1
September 2008	38%	44	13	3	2
September 2006	37%	46	13	2	1
October 2004	37%	46	14	1	2
October 2002	33%	46	15	3	3
November 2000	32%	45	17	4	3

6. Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	15%	50	25	6	3
September 2023	22%	47	19	9	2
September 2022	21%	43	21	11	4
September 2020	16%	50	24	4	6
September 2018	16%	47	25	5	6
September 2016	20%	48	20	4	8
September 2014	16%	57	17	8	2
September 2012	18%	57	17	2	6
September 2010	14%	53	16	5	11
September 2008	12%	58	21	3	6
September 2006	12%	50	24	7	7
October 2004	9%	51	23	6	11
October 2002	6%	45	27	8	14
November 2000	5%	46	26	5	18

7. The job Cambridge city government does at welcoming Resident involvement

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	20%	42	19	7	12

Please tell me how likely you'd be to do each of the following—very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely.

SCALE: 1. Very likely 2. Somewhat likely
3. Somewhat unlikely 4. Very unlikely
5. (Don't know)

	1	2	3	4	5
8. Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks					
September 2024	56%	32	8	4	1
September 2023	60%	27	4	8	1
9. Remain in Cambridge for the next five years					
September 2024	56%	27	9	8	2
September 2023	55%	26	7	10	1

Next, on a scale of “1” to “5”, where “1” means “Not important at all” and “5” means “Extremely important”, please rate how important, if at all, you think it is *for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years*:

Not important at all					Extremely Important	(Don't Know)
1	2	3	4	5	6	6
<hr/>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. The balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation						
September 2024	5%	10	22	24	36	3
September 2023	7%	5	20	20	42	5
11. Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)						
September 2024	--%	3	14	29	52	1
September 2023	3%	1	15	23	58	1
12. Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)						
September 2024	1%	3	14	21	59	2
September 2023	3%	2	10	21	64	1
13. Safe streets and neighborhoods						
September 2024	3%	3	12	29	52	--
September 2023	1%	3	16	26	54	--
14. Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities						
September 2024	3%	2	17	32	45	1
September 2023	3%	2	18	32	45	--
15. Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities <i>*different wording</i>						
September 2024	2%	8	26	32	30	1
September 2023*	2%	3	16	29	48	1
16. Residents' connection and engagement with their community						
September 2024	2%	10	25	36	27	1
September 2023	4%	6	23	37	31	1
17. Market housing that is affordable						
September 2024	6%	4	8	14	66	2
September 2023	6%	5	10	13	65	1

Not important at all					Extremely Important				(Don't Know)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<hr/>										
<hr/>										
18. Affordable housing (that is, subsidized or income-restricted for low, moderate, and middle income families)										
September 2024					4%	4	12	18	61	1
September 2023					4%	4	13	14	64	1
19. Efforts to address climate change										
September 2024					5%	4	14	26	48	3
September 2023					5%	5	15	25	49	1
20. Efforts to address equity and inclusion, including racial and economic disparities										
September 2024					5%	5	13	25	50	2
September 2023					5%	4	12	25	52	1
21. Informing residents about issues facing the community										
September 2024					3%	6	15	30	44	1
22. Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)										
September 2024					3%	6	17	27	44	3
September 2023					2%	3	14	29	50	3

Now, using a “1” to “5” scale, where “1” means “poor” and “5” means “excellent”, please rate how well *the City of Cambridge performs* on each of these. [ROTATE QUESTIONS 23-35]

Poor					Excellent				(Don't Know)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<hr/>										
<hr/>										
23. The balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation										
September 2024					12%	19	33	21	10	5
September 2023					11%	16	34	22	13	5
24. Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)										
September 2024					2%	5	29	40	20	3
September 2023					5%	6	25	36	26	2
25. Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)										
September 2024					10%	15	34	28	13	1
September 2023					10%	16	26	30	18	--
26. Safe streets and neighborhoods										
September 2024					2%	5	20	46	26	2
September 2023					5%	2	20	48	25	--
27. Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities										
September 2024					2%	3	19	39	35	2
September 2023					5%	3	15	39	37	1
28. Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities <i>*different wording</i>										
September 2024					1%	7	20	38	31	3
September 2023*					4%	3	19	39	33	2
29. Residents' connection and engagement with their community										
September 2024					3%	13	36	32	12	4
September 2023					5%	12	36	30	14	3

Poor					Excellent				(Don't Know)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<hr/>										
30. Market housing that is affordable										
September 2024					22%	32	23	13	6	4
September 2023					30%	34	19	7	7	3
31. Affordable housing (that is, subsidized or income-restricted for low, moderate, and middle income families)										
September 2024					14%	24	27	14	11	9
September 2023					18%	24	27	14	9	7
32. Efforts to address climate change										
September 2024					4%	8	28	37	13	10
September 2023					6%	7	34	35	9	10
33. Efforts to address equity and inclusion, including racial and economic disparities										
September 2024					4%	8	32	34	18	4
September 2023					5%	10	31	33	16	6
34. Informing residents about issues facing the community										
September 2024					6%	13	26	35	17	2
35. Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)										
September 2024					4%	9	33	31	14	8
September 2023					6%	3	27	36	17	12

36. And, what is the *single most important issue* the City of Cambridge should focus on in the coming two years?

	<u>September 2024</u>	<u>September 2023</u>
Affordable housing	46%	39%
Cost of living/economy/jobs	5	7
Safety/Crime	5	2
Bike safety issues	5	3
City planning/construction	4	4
Public transportation	4	7
Infrastructure	3	--
Education/Schools	2	5
Climate change/environment	2	5
Equality/Equity	2	4
Roads/Streets	2	3
Community involvement, unity	2	--
Homelessness	2	--
Traffic	2	2
Parking	1	2
Taxes	1	--
Government transparency	--	3
Community preservation	--	1
Parks	--	1
Nothing	1	1
Other/DK/Refused	10	9

Now, I'd like to read you a number of services provided by the City of Cambridge. For each one, please rate the *quality* of these services on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.

SCALE:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 1. Excellent | 2. Good |
| 3. Fair | 4. Poor |
| 5. (Don't know) | |

		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
37. Police department						
		<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
	September 2024	21%	49	24	3	3
	September 2023	25%	46	19	6	4
	September 2022	25%	42	18	6	10
	September 2020	19%	44	22	5	10
	September 2018	29%	52	10	4	5
	September 2016	36%	42	16	1	5
	September 2014	25%	52	15	4	5
	September 2012	33%	38	16	2	10
	September 2010	24%	52	11	3	11
	September 2008	26%	53	13	4	3
	September 2006	23%	53	14	3	7
	October 2004	22%	56	10	2	10
	October 2002	21%	54	10	3	12
	November 2000	15%	58	15	2	9

38. Fire department						
		<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
	September 2024	46%	47	4	--	3
	September 2023	51%	38	4	1	6
	September 2022	42%	44	5	--	9
	September 2020	36%	43	4	--	16
	September 2018	52%	36	3	--	10
	September 2016	55%	34	3	--	7
	September 2014	41%	52	1	--	6
	September 2012	47%	35	2	--	16
	September 2010	37%	40	2	1	19
	September 2008	40%	48	3	--	9
	September 2006	36%	46	5	1	12
	October 2004	31%	47	3	--	19
	October 2002	34%	46	2	--	18
	November 2000	24%	53	3	--	19

39. Libraries

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	60%	33	2	1	4
September 2023	68%	23	4	2	2
September 2022	57%	32	2	1	8
September 2020	53%	32	5	--	10
September 2018	56%	34	2	1	8
September 2016	67%	24	3	-	6
September 2014	56%	39	1	-	5
September 2012	56%	32	3	-	8
September 2010	47%	38	3	-	12
September 2008	38%	39	6	1	16
September 2006	38%	38	6	2	16
October 2004	34%	43	6	-	17
October 2002	30%	44	4	-	22
November 2000	21%	54	9	1	16

40. Public health department

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024.	19%	47	13	2	19
September 2023	25%	41	15	7	13

41. City parks and park maintenance

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	33%	48	14	3	2
September 2023	35%	47	11	6	1
September 2022	37%	50	8	4	2
September 2020	37%	51	8	2	2
September 2018	39%	49	6	3	2
September 2016	36%	43	13	4	3
September 2014	33%	53	12	1	1
September 2012	36%	51	7	3	3
September 2010	28%	57	9	3	4
September 2008	27%	57	12	3	2
September 2006	29%	53	14	1	3
October 2004	23%	59	12	2	4
October 2002	22%	58	12	2	6
November 2000	17%	61	14	2	5

42. Street cleaning and maintenance

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	26%	52	16	5	1
September 2023	29%	43	20	8	--
September 2022	28%	51	17	4	1

September 2020	29%	51	14	4	2
September 2018	20%	51	22	6	-
September 2016	16%	47	28	9	-
September 2014	20%	44	22	14	-
September 2012	26%	46	18	10	-
September 2010	19%	49	22	9	1
September 2008	13%	50	27	9	1
September 2006	13%	42	34	10	-
October 2004	9%	48	30	12	1
October 2002	11%	50	28	10	1
November 2000	10%	53	27	8	1

43. Sidewalk maintenance

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	13%	40	34	10	3
September 2023	12%	39	34	14	1
September 2022	15%	45	27	12	2
September 2020	14%	44	31	8	3
September 2018	16%	47	28	7	1
September 2016	15%	40	29	15	1
September 2014	10%	47	34	8	1
September 2012	15%	51	23	9	1
September 2010	13%	51	26	9	1
September 2008	6%	48	34	11	1
September 2006	7%	44	35	11	3
October 2004	8%	42	34	14	2
October 2002	9%	41	32	15	3
November 2000	6%	47	30	16	1

44. Snow plowing

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	23%	50	18	5	4
September 2023	23%	47	21	7	2
September 2022	26%	47	21	6	1

45. Water/sewer services

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	35%	47	13	3	3
September 2023	29%	52	12	4	3
September 2022	26%	50	18	4	3
September 2020	31%	51	11	1	6
September 2018	32%	55	6	2	5
September 2016	43%	43	3	5	5
September 2014	31%	57	8	1	3

September 2012	35%	53	6	1	6
September 2010	24%	50	11	2	12
September 2008	17%	57	13	5	8
September 2006	16%	61	12	3	8
October 2004	13%	60	14	4	9
October 2002	13%	58	16	3	10
November 2000	10%	66	15	3	6

46. Garbage, recycling and compost

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	44%	41	13	1	1
September 2023	50%	36	9	4	1

47. Public information

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2024	19%	45	26	6	4
September 2023	29%	40	23	6	2
September 2022	25%	54	15	4	2
September 2020	30%	53	13	2	2

September 2018	27%	49	17	4	3
September 2016	21%	58	14	5	2
September 2014	25%	58	12	3	2
September 2012	22%	55	14	2	7
September 2010	22%	56	14	1	6
September 2008	17%	58	15	2	7
September 2006	18%	59	13	3	6
October 2004	14%	58	17	3	8
October 2002	12%	55	20	4	9
November 2000	9%	59	22	4	7

In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or another household member done the following:

- SCALE:** 1. (Never) 2. (Once) 3. (Twice)
 4. (3 to 12 times) 5. (13-26 times) 6. (More than 26 times)
 8. (Don't know/Refused)

	<u>(Never)</u>	<u>(Once)</u>	<u>(Twice)</u>	<u>(3-12 times)</u>	<u>(13-26 times)</u>	<u>(> 26 times)</u>	<u>(DK/Ref)</u>
48. Attended a City Council meeting in person or watched it on TV or online							
September 2024	59%	16	9	12	2	1	1
September 2023	55%	15	10	14	1	4	1
September 2022	55%	14	10	17	3	2	1
September 2020	57%	13	10	13	1	3	2
September 2018	64%	6	7	18	1	4	-
September 2016	59%	12	6	18	2	4	-

September 2014	80%	10	3	7	-	-	-
September 2012	79%	8	5	7	1	-	1
September 2010	76%	7	4	10	-	1	1
September 2008	77%	6	6	10	1	-	-
September 2006	78%	8	5	8	1	-	-
October 2004	77%	9	6	7	-	1	-
October 2002	77%	9	6	6	-	1	1
November 2000	83%	9	3	4	-	1	1

49.	Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services							
	September 2024	56%	12	12	17	1	1	--
	September 2023	60%	11	8	16	2	2	1
50.	Ridden a bike in the City							
	September 2024	43%	4	5	10	6	32	-
	September 2023	46%	2	3	12	7	30	-
	September 2022	41%	3	6	15	7	29	-
	September 2020	37%	4	5	14	6	34	-
	September 2018	47%	2	4	11	6	30	-

Please rate how valuable each of the following Cambridge-related information sources are for your household—using a scale of very valuable, somewhat valuable, not very valuable or not valuable at all. [ROTATE LIST]

SCALE:	1. Very valuable	2. Somewhat valuable					
	3. Not very valuable	4. Not valuable at all	5. (Don't know)				
		1	2	3	4	5	
51.	Television/Radio						
	September 2024	24%	25	25	24	2	
	September 2023	25%	29	15	30	1	
52.	City of Cambridge email updates, printed mailers, website						
	September 2024	47%	37	6	8	2	
	September 2023	53%	35	4	7	1	
53.	Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X [TWITTER], Nextdoor, Neighborhood listserv)						
	September 2024	24%	39	12	21	3	
	September 2023	26%	32	12	28	2	
54.	Online or print newspapers (Boston Globe, Cambridge Day, Cambridge Chronicle)						
	September 2024	34%	36	13	15	3	
	September 2023	28%	42	11	18	1	
55.	Word of Mouth						
	September 2024	37%	36	13	13	2	
	September 2023	39%	41	10	9	1	

On a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate the ease of getting around the city for each of the following transportation options.

SCALE: 1. Excellent 2. Good
 3. Fair 4. Poor
 5. (Don't know)

		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
56. Bicycle, electric bicycle, or scooter	September 2024	25%	40	14	6	15
	September 2023	30%	36	14	5	14
57. On foot	September 2024	48%	35	10	4	3
	September 2023	52%	32	11	4	1
58. Driving	September 2024	8%	28	39	19	7
	September 2023	10%	31	33	22	5
59. Taxi or ride hail (e.g. Uber/Lyft)	September 2024	18%	41	24	7	10
	September 2023	18%	39	25	9	8
60. Public transportation, like bus or subway	September 2024	19%	35	28	14	5
	September 2023	16%	34	35	13	2

61. As you continue to think about transportation options to get around Cambridge, which of the following do you think is the single most important option for the city to focus on improving over the next few years [READ 1-6]:

	<u>September 2024</u>	<u>September 2023</u>
1. Bicycle infrastructure	14%	10%
2. Pedestrian infrastructure	6	9
3. Roadway infrastructure	11	10
4. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure	5	9
5. Parking	16	14
6. Public transportation, like bus or subway	46	44
7. (All equally)	1	3
8. (Don't know)	1	1

Our last questions are about you and your household. Again, *all of your responses to this survey are confidential and no identifying information will be shared.*

62. Are there any children under the age of 18 living in your household?

1. Yes	16%
2. No	83
3. (Refused)	1

63. What is your gender identity? **[DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]**
- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Female/woman | 49% |
| 2. Male/man | 47 |
| 3. Non-binary/gender non-conforming | -- |
| 4. Transgender—birth gender different from current gender | -- |
| 5. Cisgender—birth gender same as current gender | 1 |
| 6. Other, SPECIFY _____ | -- |
| 7. Refused | 3 |
64. And what is your ZIP CODE here in Cambridge?
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. 02138 | 25% |
| 2. 02139 | 29 |
| 3. 02140 | 29 |
| 4. 02141 | 13 |
| 5. 02142 | 3 |
| 6. (Don't know/Refused) | 1 |
65. In which of the following categories is your age?
- | | |
|----------------|-----|
| 1. 18-24 | 14% |
| 2. 25-34 | 21 |
| 3. 35-44 | 9 |
| 4. 45-54 | 14 |
| 5. 55-64 | 14 |
| 6. 65-74 | 18 |
| 7. 75 and over | 9 |
| 8. (Refused) | 1 |
66. How many years have you lived in Cambridge?
- | | |
|---------------------|----|
| 1. Less than 1 year | 2% |
| 2. 1.1 to 2 years | 7 |
| 3. 2.1 to 5 years | 14 |
| 4. 5.1 to 10 years | 14 |
| 5. 10.1 to 20 years | 20 |
| 6. 20.1 to 30 years | 13 |
| 7. Over 30 years | 20 |
| 8. All my life | 10 |
| 9. (Refused) | -- |

67. What is the primary language you speak at home? **[DO NOT READ]**

01. (Amharic)	2%
02. (Arabic)	--
03. (Bengali)	1
04. (Chinese)	3
05. (English)	89
06. (Haitian Kreyol)	--
07. (Portuguese)	--
08. (Spanish)	3
09. (Other, SPECIFY)	2
10. (Don't know/Refused)	1

68. Do you own or rent your home?

1. Own	37%
2. Rent	61
3. (Other)	1
9. (Refused)	1

69. Which one of the following *best* describes the neighborhood of Cambridge you live in?

[READ RESPONSES 01-13]

01. East Cambridge (Kendall Sq. northeast of Broadway)	15%
02. MIT/Area 2	3
03. Wellington/Harrington	2
04. The Port (Central Square north of Mass Ave)	10
05. CambridgePort	9
06. Mid-Cambridge	8
07. Riverside	4
08. Baldwin (formally Agassiz)	2
09. Neighborhood Nine	7
10. West Cambridge	8
11. North Cambridge	22
12. Cambridge Highlands	1
13. Strawberry Hill	3
14. (Other _____)	2
15. (Don't know/Not sure/Refused)	4

70. Please tell me which of the following groups you identify with racially or ethnically:
[READ RESPONSES 1-8, ACCEPT UP TO 3 RESPONSES]
- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Asian/East Indian | 15% |
| 2. Black/African American | 14 |
| 3. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | -- |
| 4. Hispanic/Latinx | 9 |
| 5. Middle Eastern or North African | 2 |
| 6. Native American/Alaskan | 1 |
| 7. White/Caucasian | 58 |
| 8. (Self-describe _____) | 2 |
| 9. (Don't know/Refused) | 3 |
71. What is the highest level of education you have completed? **[READ ALL GROUPS EXCEPT RESPONSE 7]**
- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Less than High School/GED | --% |
| 2. High School/GED | 9 |
| 3. Some college, no degree | 12 |
| 4. Associate degree or technical certificate | 5 |
| 5. Bachelor's degree | 31 |
| 6. Graduate school, professional, or advanced studies; no degree | 28 |
| 7. Graduate school, professional, or advanced degree | 13 |
| 8. (Refused/Don't know) | 1 |
72. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?
[READ ALL GROUPS EXCEPT RESPONSE 7]
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. Employed full-time | 56% |
| 2. Employed part-time | 9 |
| 3. Student | 6 |
| 4. Retired | 23 |
| 5. Homemaker | 2 |
| 6. Not employed | 3 |
| 7. Other _____ | -- |
| 8. (Refused/Don't know) | 1 |
73. How much do you anticipate your household's total income before taxes will be for the current year? Please include in your total income money from all sources for all persons living in your household. **[READ ALL GROUPS EXCEPT RESPONSE 7]**
- | | |
|---------------------------|----|
| 1. Less than \$25,000 | 7% |
| 2. \$25,000-\$49,999 | 11 |
| 3. \$50,000-\$74,999 | 12 |
| 4. \$75,000-\$99,999 | 13 |
| 5. \$100,000-\$124,999 | 11 |
| 6. \$125,000 or more | 35 |
| 7. (Prefer not to answer) | 12 |



September 2024

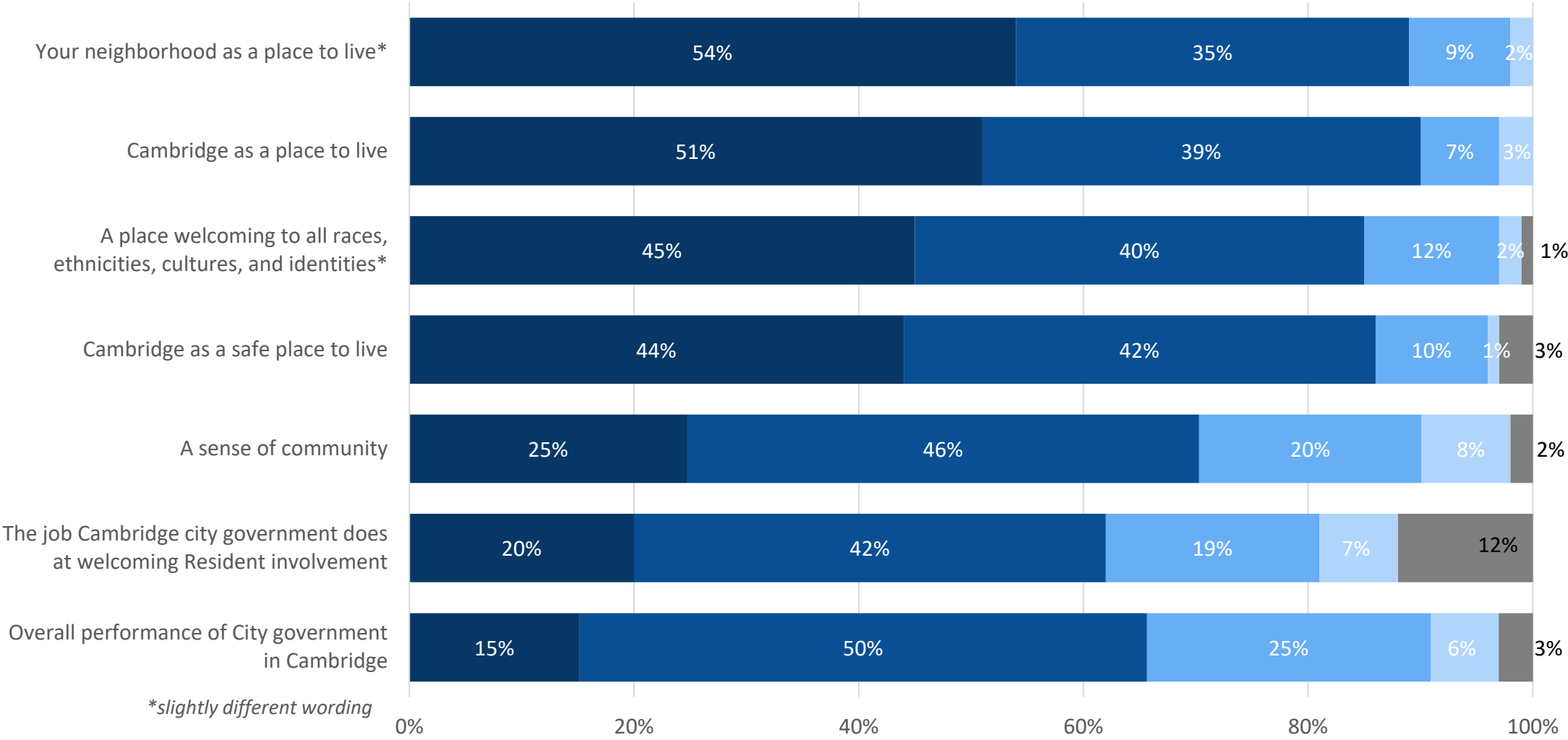
Cambridge Resident Survey

Executive Summary

All in all, the results of this survey indicate that Cambridge residents continue to express *overall* positive attitudes towards a range of measures dealing with Cambridge City Government. In fact, on most measures, combined positive assessments closely match those we saw in 2023. *However*, we also see a lessening of attitudes on the positive extremes—like “excellence” and strong “satisfaction”. Interestingly, several results mirror those we saw in pre-COVID surveys—suggesting that residents may be re-focusing on broader issues—and examining them more carefully. For example:

- The current "excellent" rating for City government performance stands at 15%—similar to the 16% we saw in both 2018 and 2020. However, in 2022, the "excellent" number was 21% and in 2023 it was 22%—perhaps (at least partly) reflecting the City's handling of COVID.
- It's important to note that this drop in "excellent" ratings has **not** (for the most part) translated into an increase in *negative* ratings. On most measures, the shift is from ‘excellent’ to ‘good’. For example, even with the drop in “excellent” ratings on City government performance, the *combined* "excellent" and "good" numbers total 65%, while the 2023 combined result was 69%—right at the survey's 4-point margin of error.
- Our Gap Analysis shows where higher values (i.e., the biggest gaps between importance and performance) indicate areas where the most work needs to be done. The results show the highest such values on the two affordable housing questions (1.86 mean difference on market housing; 1.48 on subsidized housing). Other large negative gaps exist on: the quality of transportation (1.16), the balance between construction and preservation (0.79), and informing residents (0.65). The lone *positive* gap exists on the question of cultural opportunities (-0.12). Other small *negative* gaps appear on: quality of open space (0.12), safe streets (0.34) and connection and engagement with the community (0.37).
- When this Gap Analysis is expressed as a ‘perceptual map’, we find that just three items fall in the "negative" quadrant (i.e., important **and** underperforming). The three items are: 1.) affordable market housing; 2.) affordable subsidized housing; 3.) balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation.
- Solid majorities continue to say they'd be very likely to recommend living in Cambridge and very likely to stay in Cambridge for five years (56% "very likely" for both).
- Most City Departments tested also show a drop in "excellent" ratings—although, again, combined "excellent" and "good" responses closely matched the 2023 numbers in most cases.
- City of Cambridge email updates, printed mailers and website continue to be the most valuable sources of information for residents (47% very valuable). Word of Mouth is again second in value (37%), while online and print newspapers have shown an increase in value over 2023 (34% now, 28% in 2023).
- Traveling the City on foot remains the best option for residents, followed by bicycling, public transit and taxi/ride-share. And, by a wide margin, residents continue to urge the City to focus on public transportation.
- All in all, Cambridge residents seem to have moved to a somewhat less positive assessment of City performance and services—although, for the most part, combined positive ratings still dominate on most key measures.

Please rate the following on a scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor.

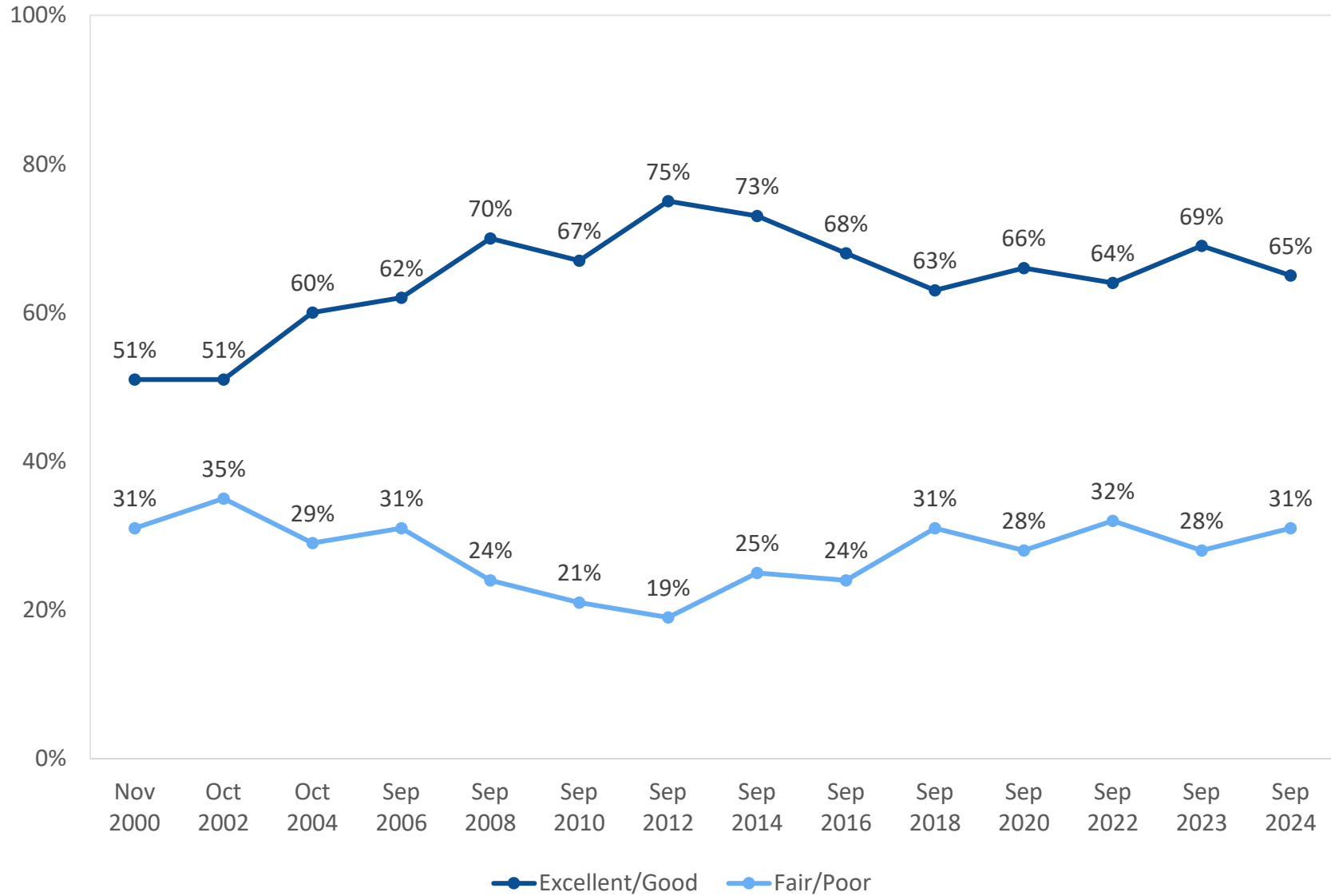


**slightly different wording*

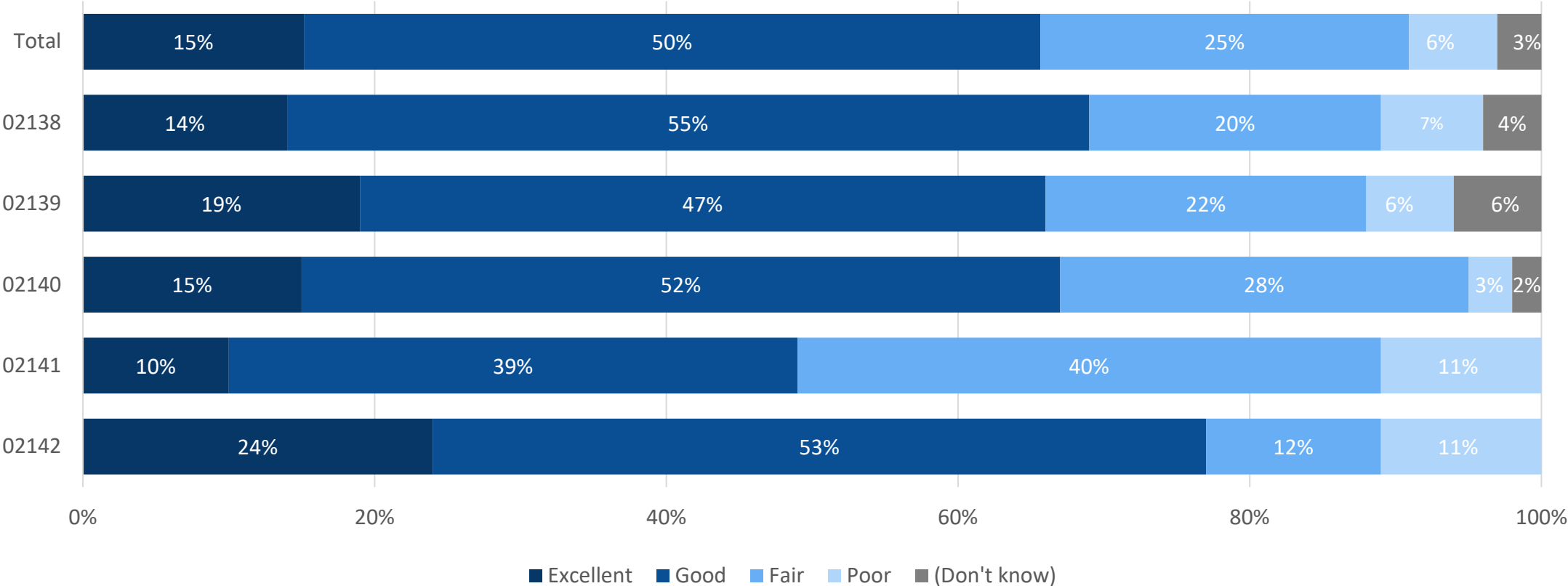
■ Excellent
 ■ Good
 ■ Fair
 ■ Poor
 ■ (Don't know)



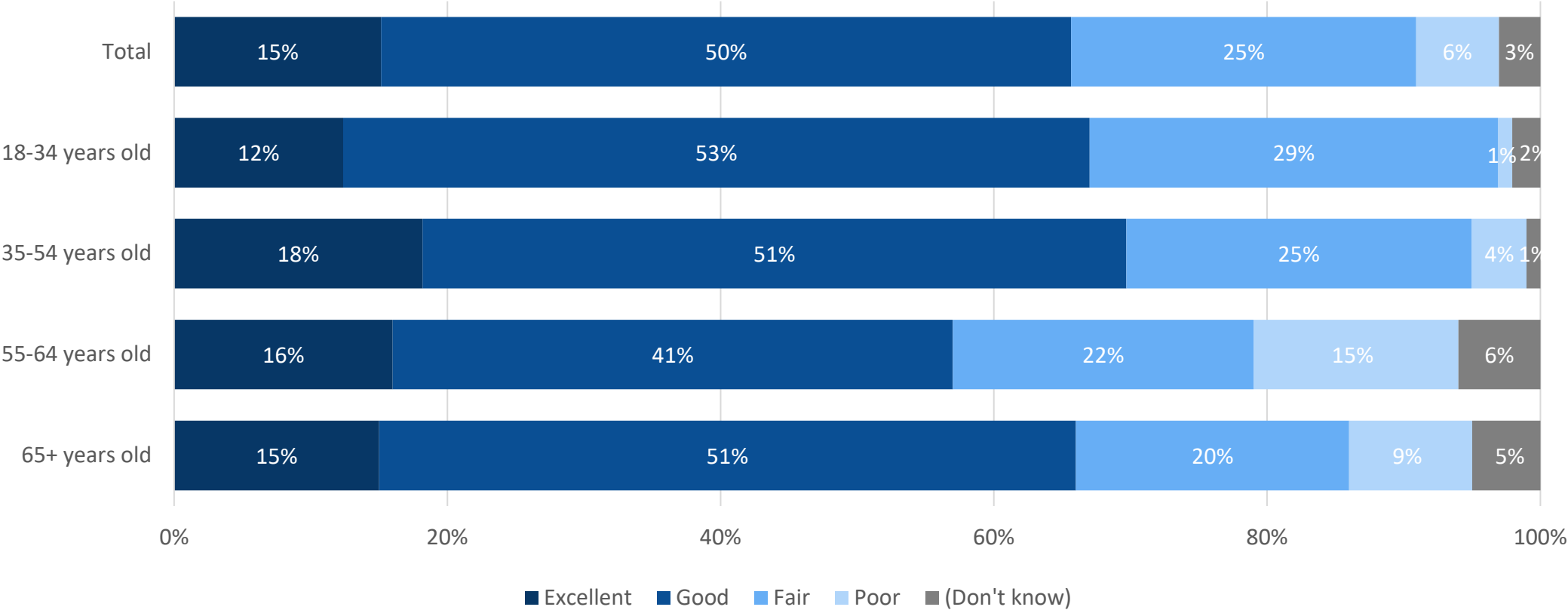
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge



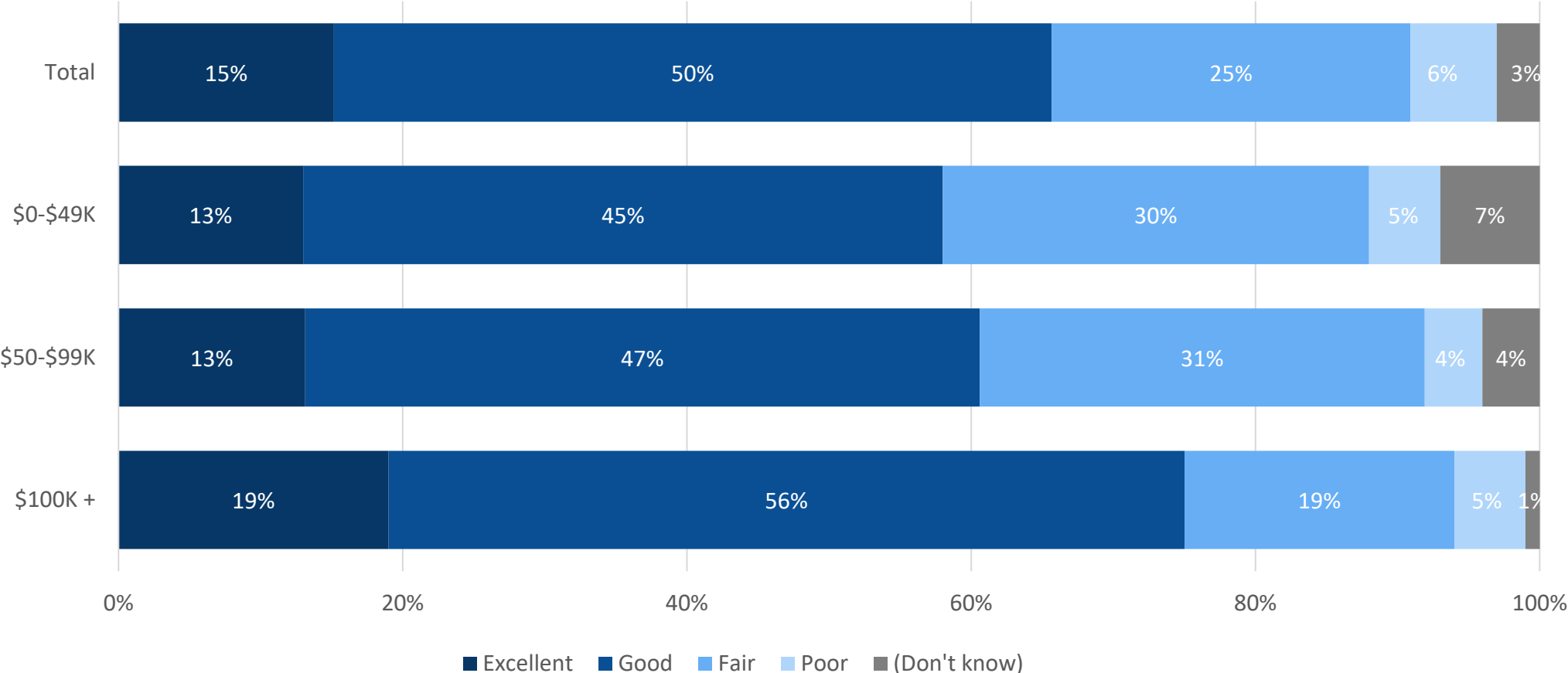
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge By Area



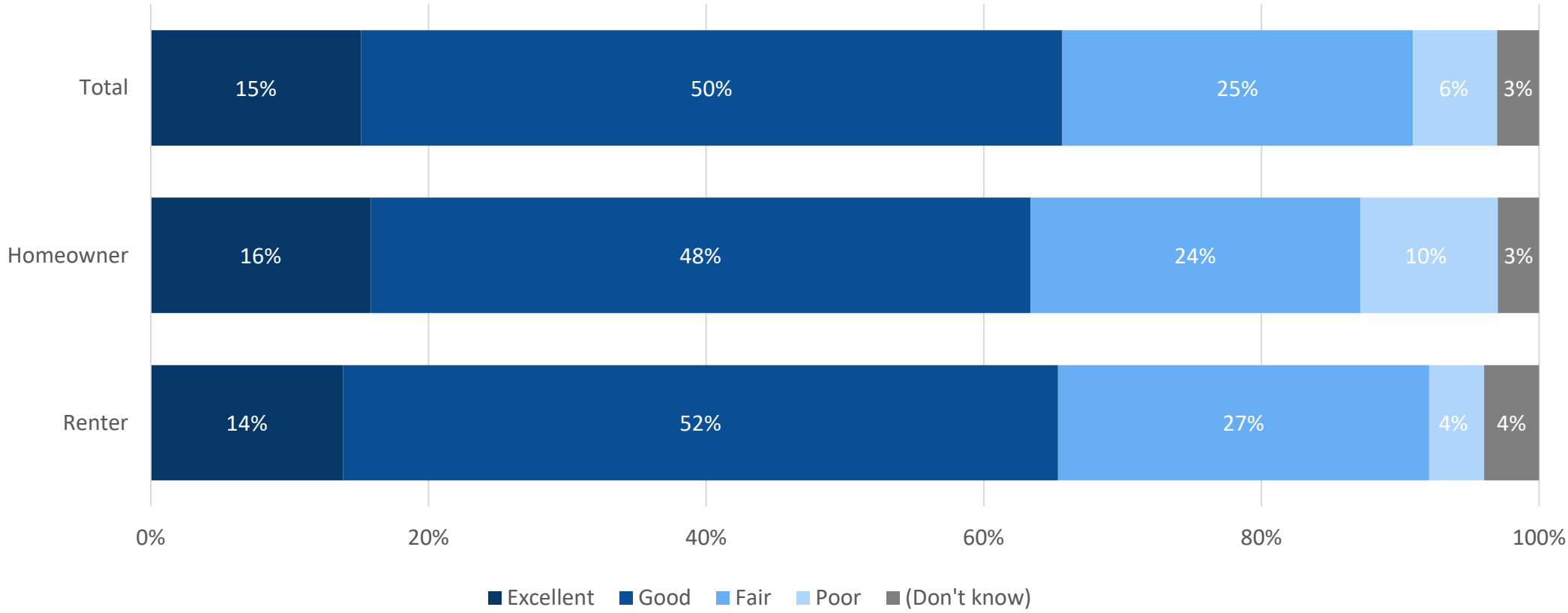
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge By Age



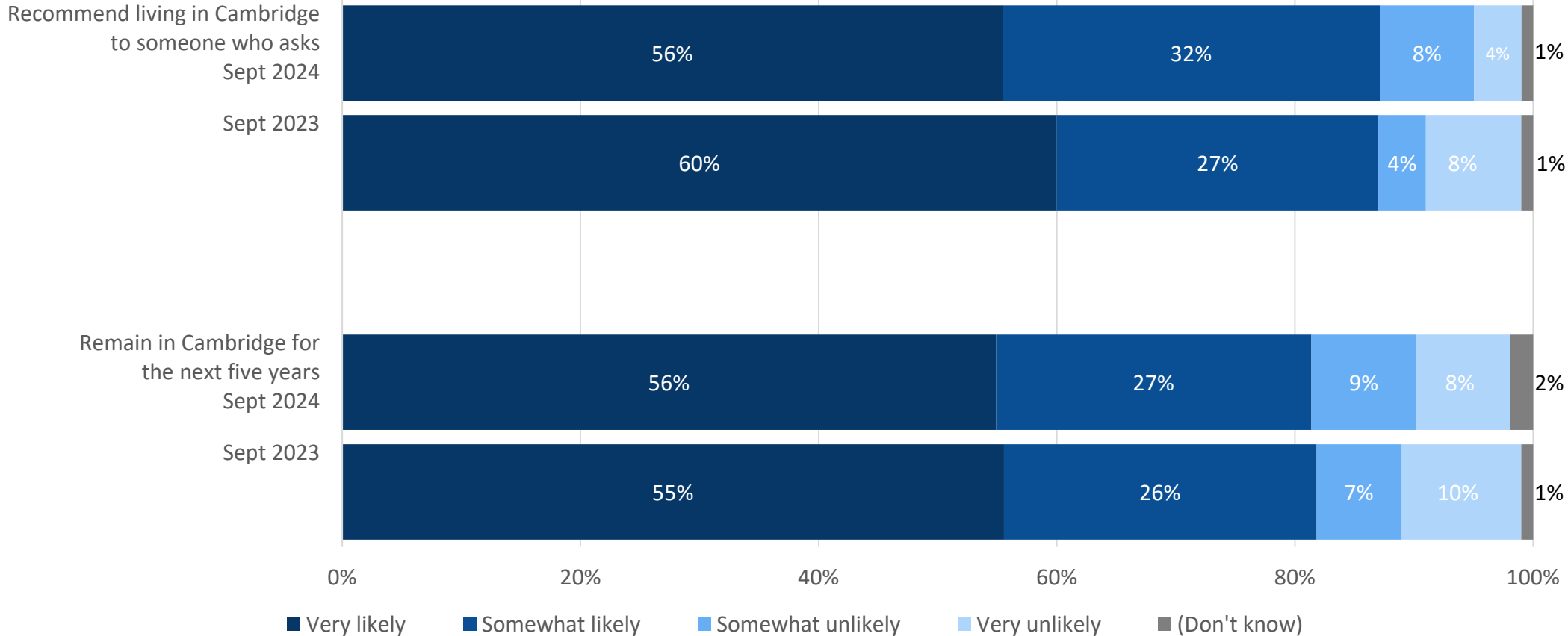
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge By Income



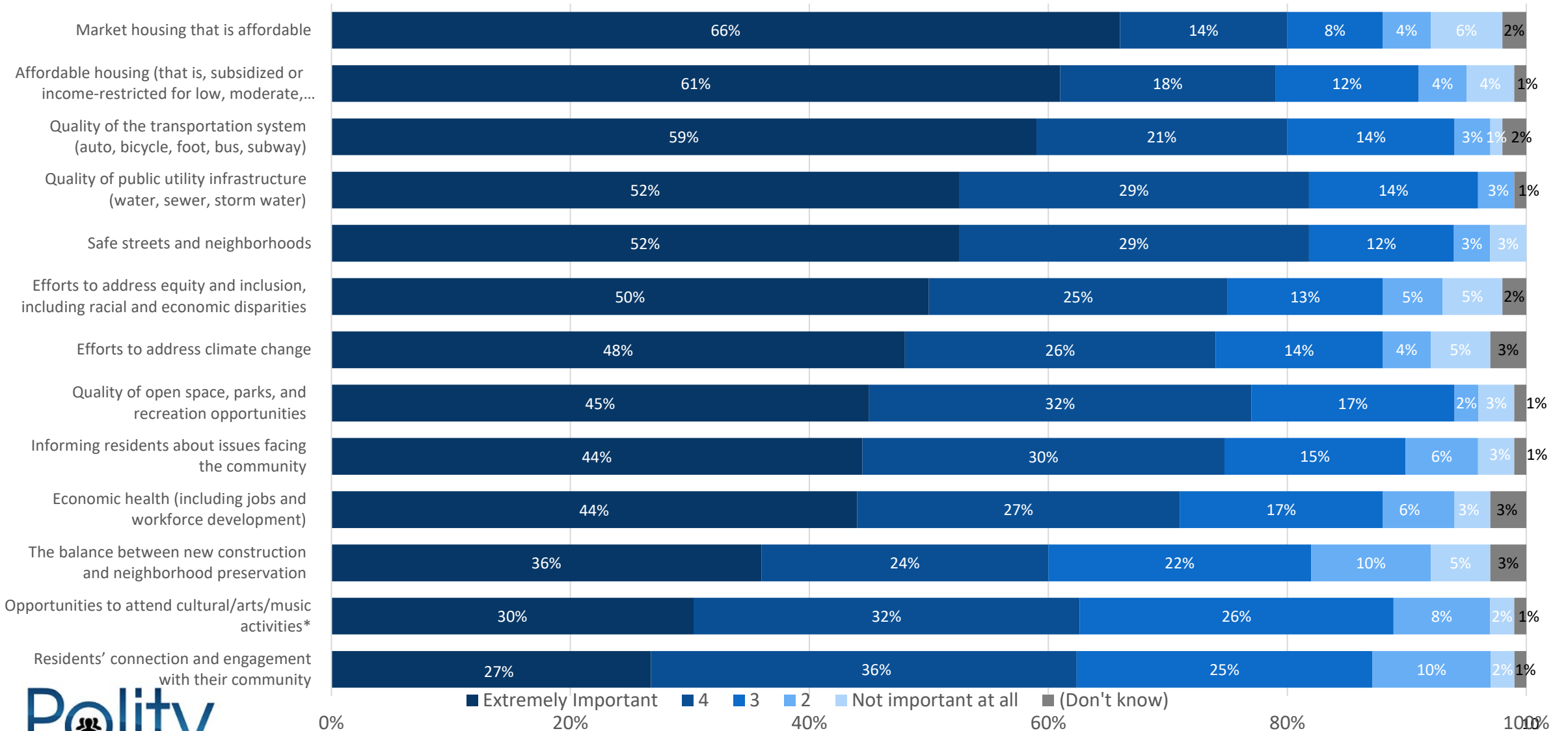
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge By Homeowner / Renter



Please tell me how likely you'd be to do each of the following—
 very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely.

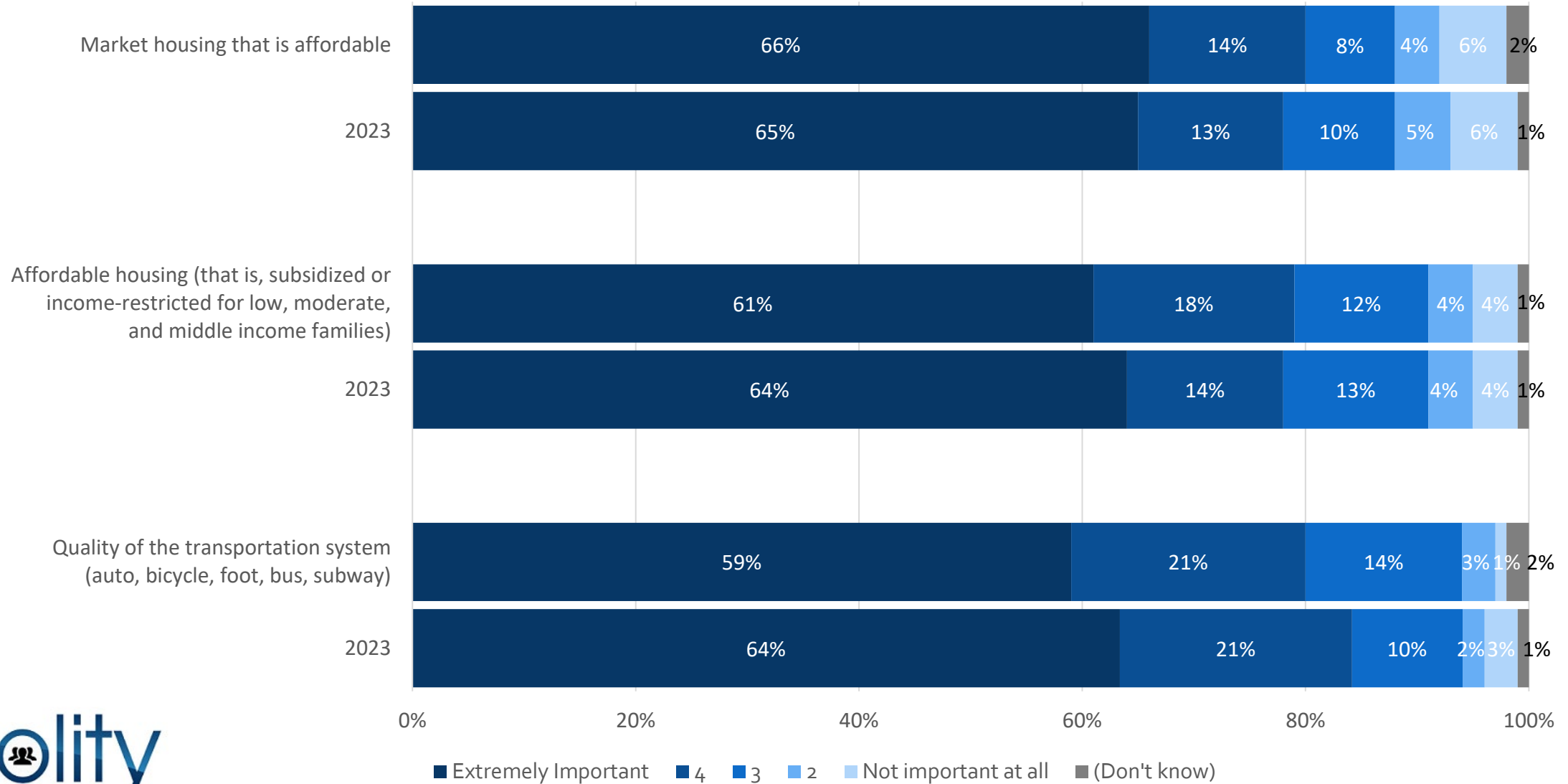


How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:

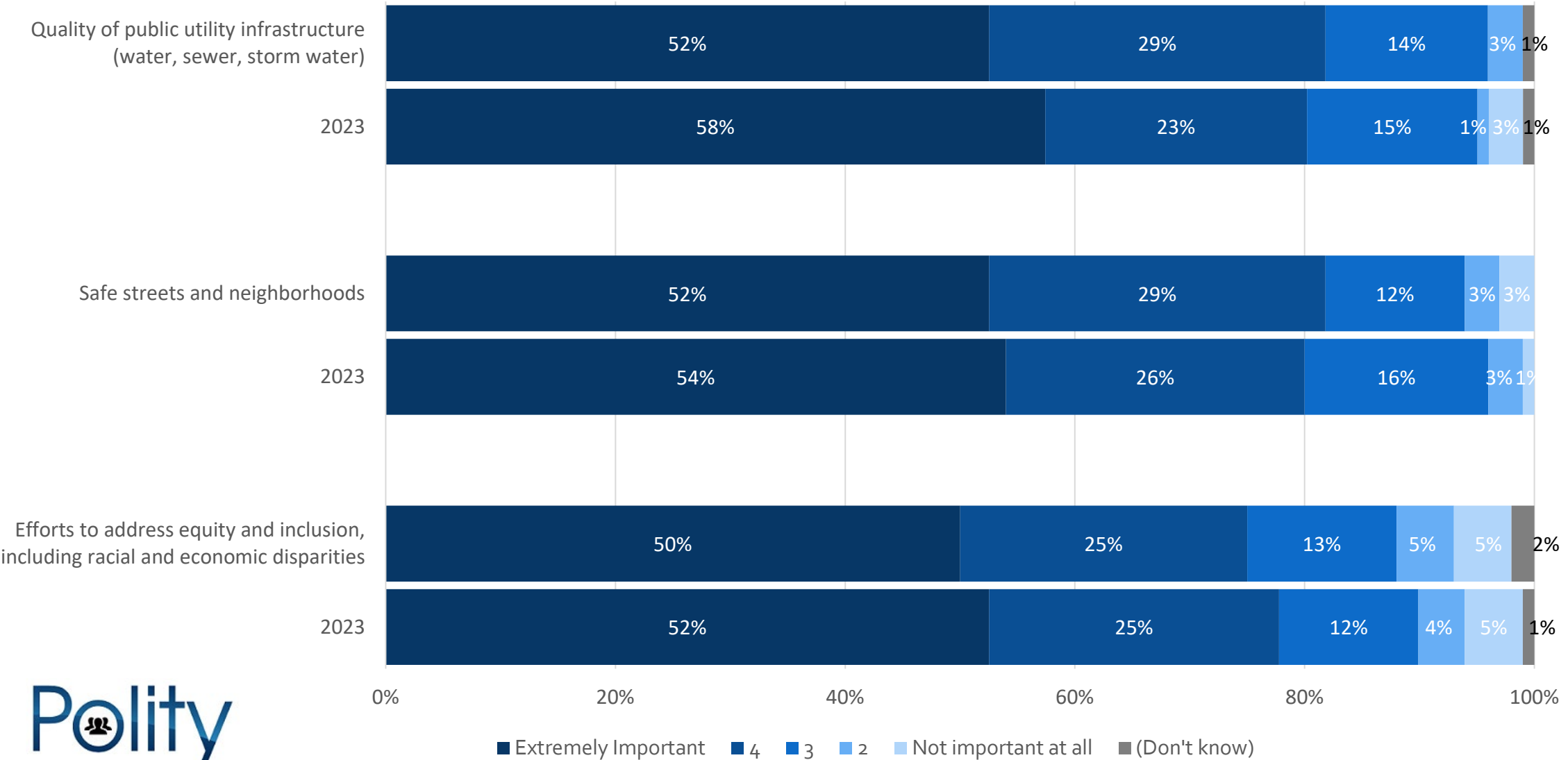


*slightly different wording

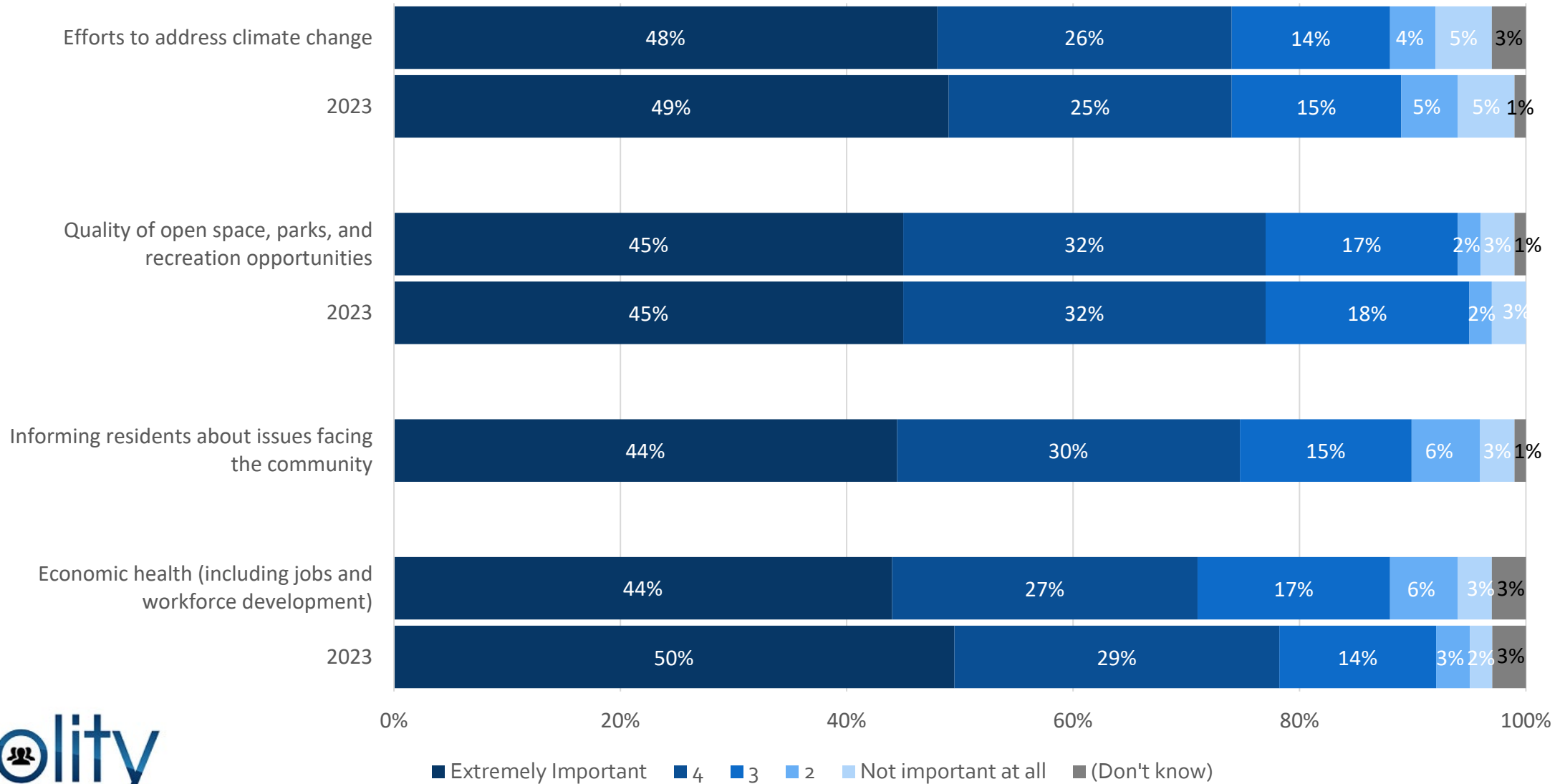
How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



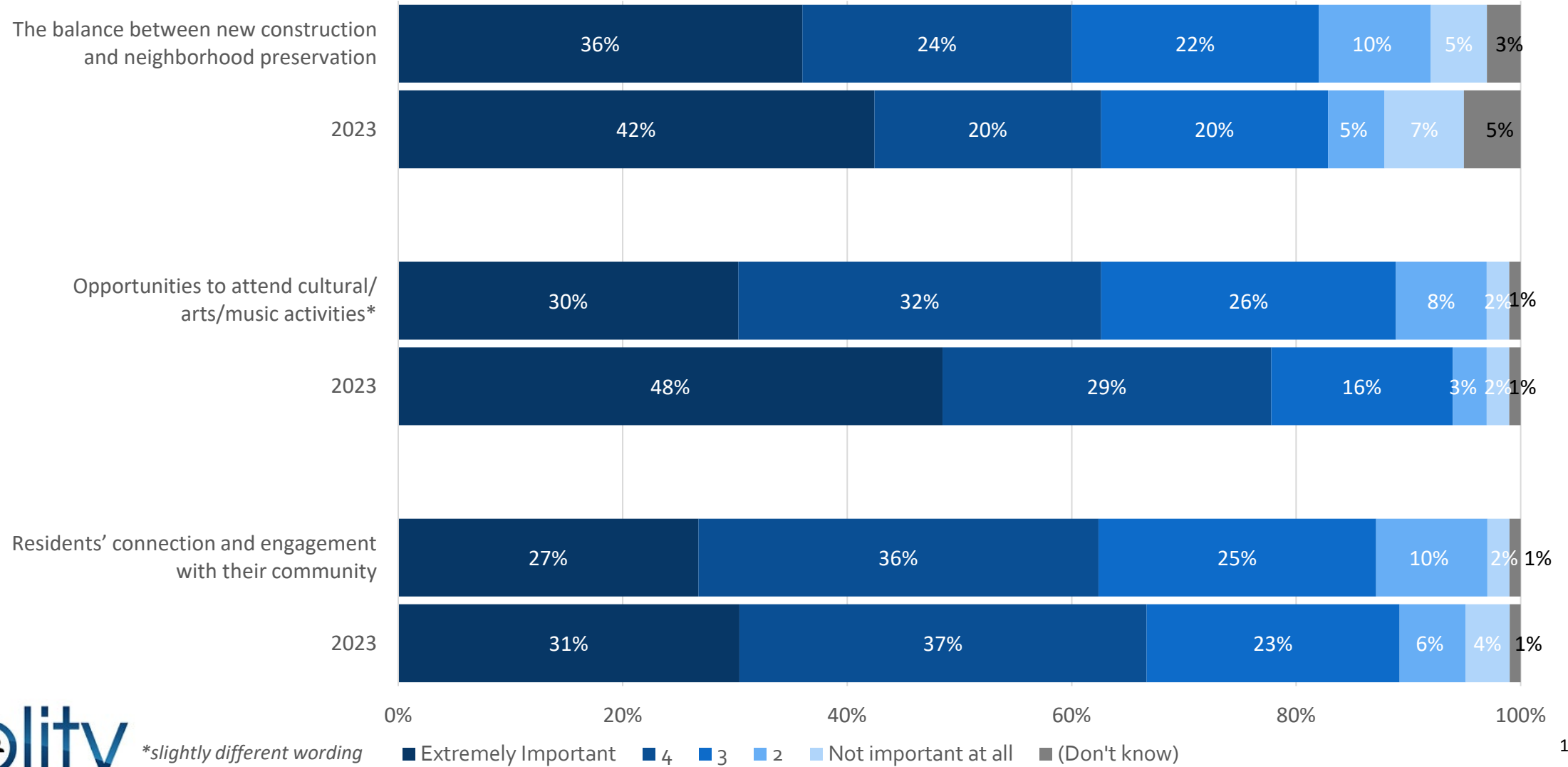
How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



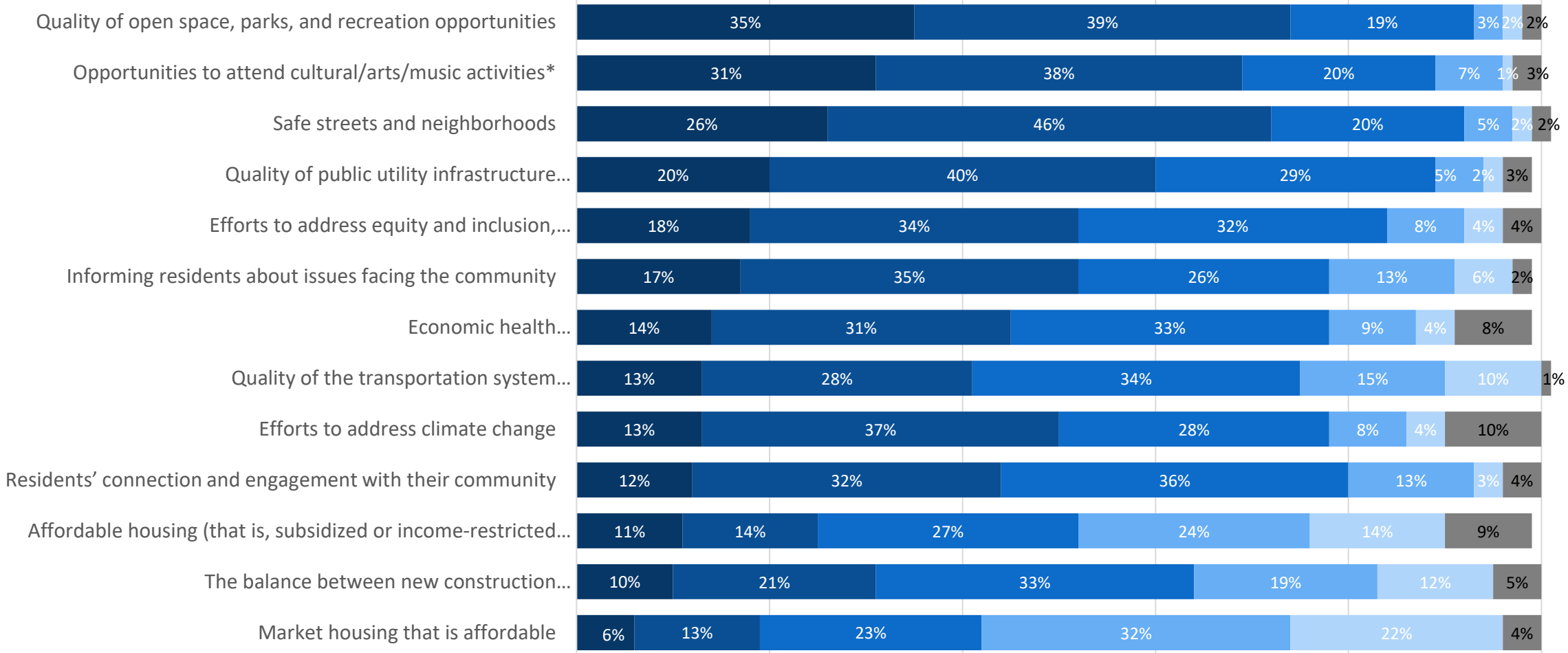
How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



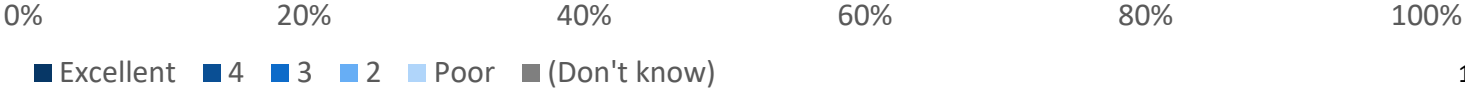
**slightly different wording*

Extremely Important
 4
 3
 2
 Not important at all
 (Don't know)

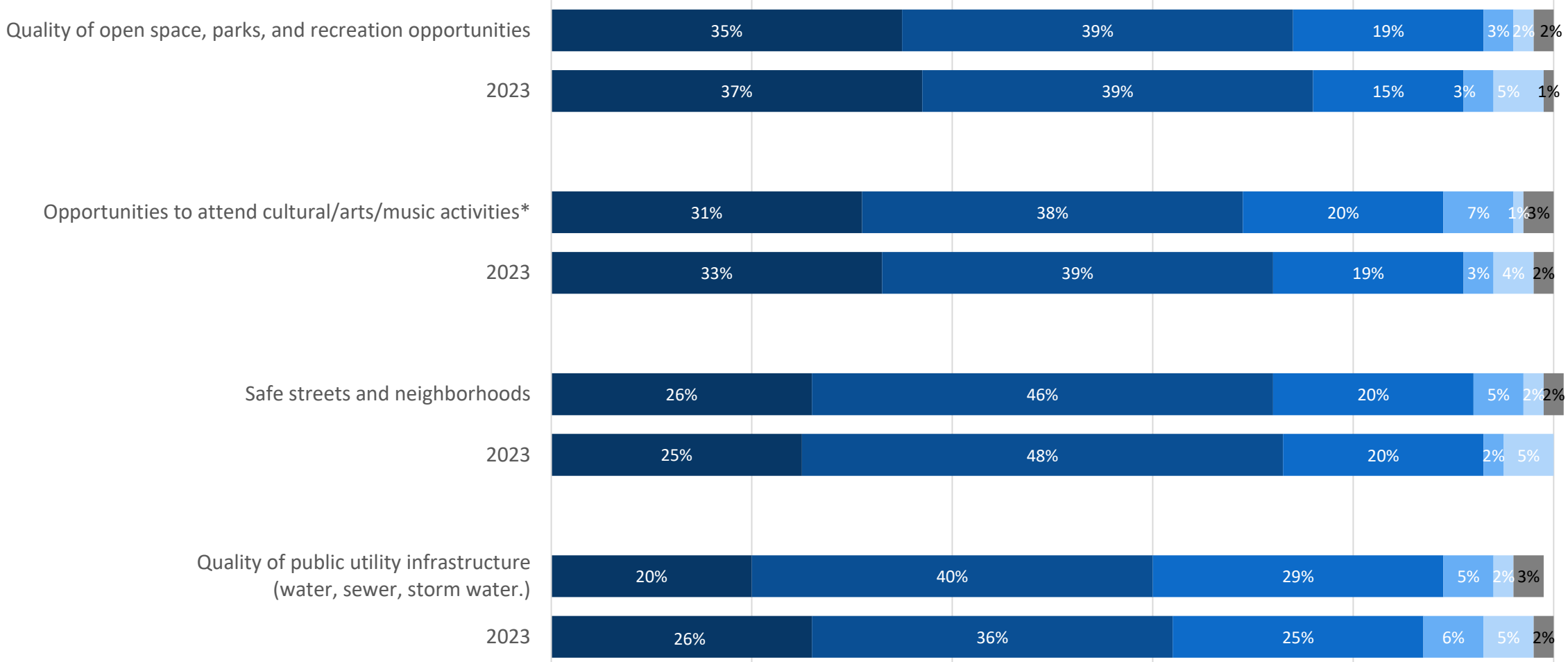
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



*slightly different wording



Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.

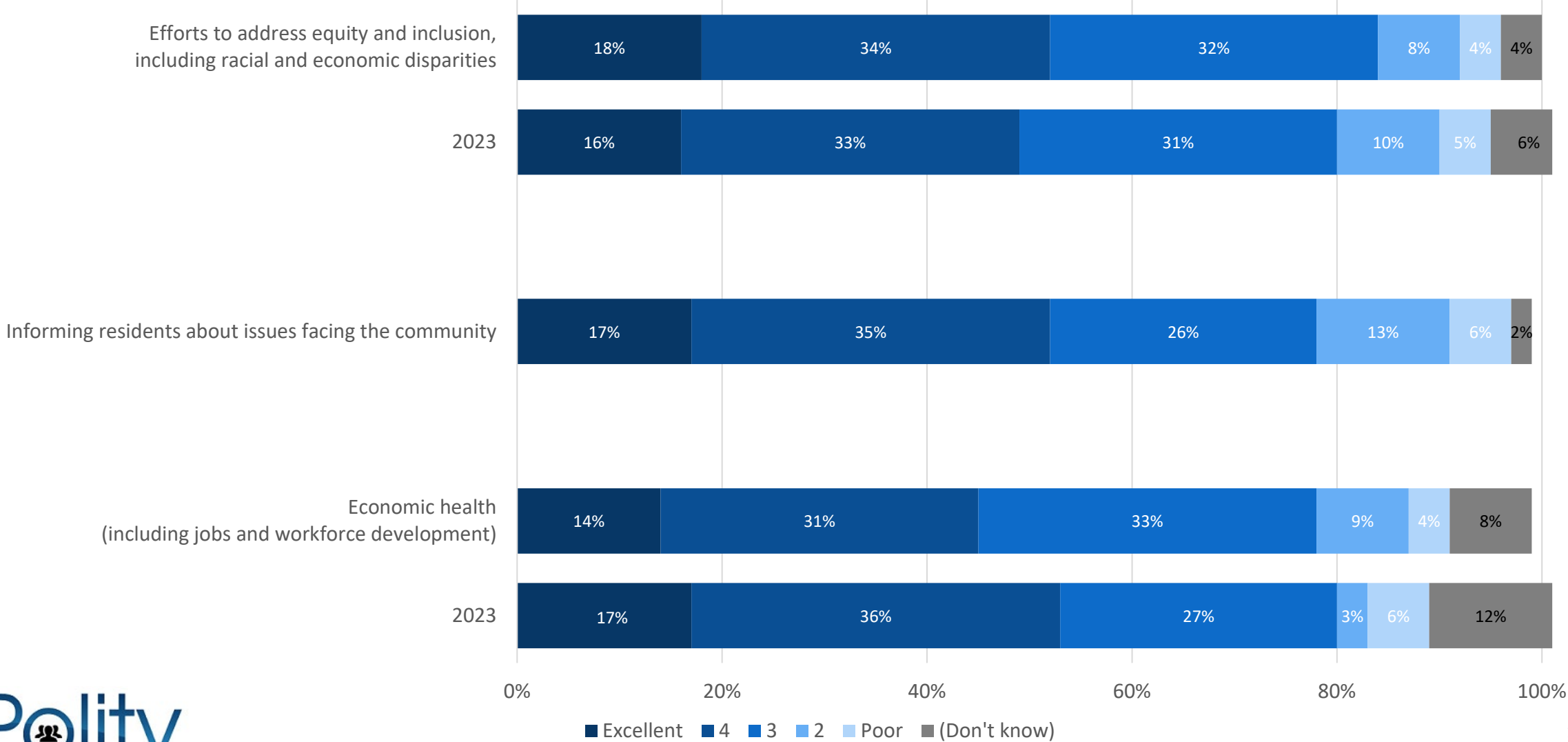


*slightly different wording

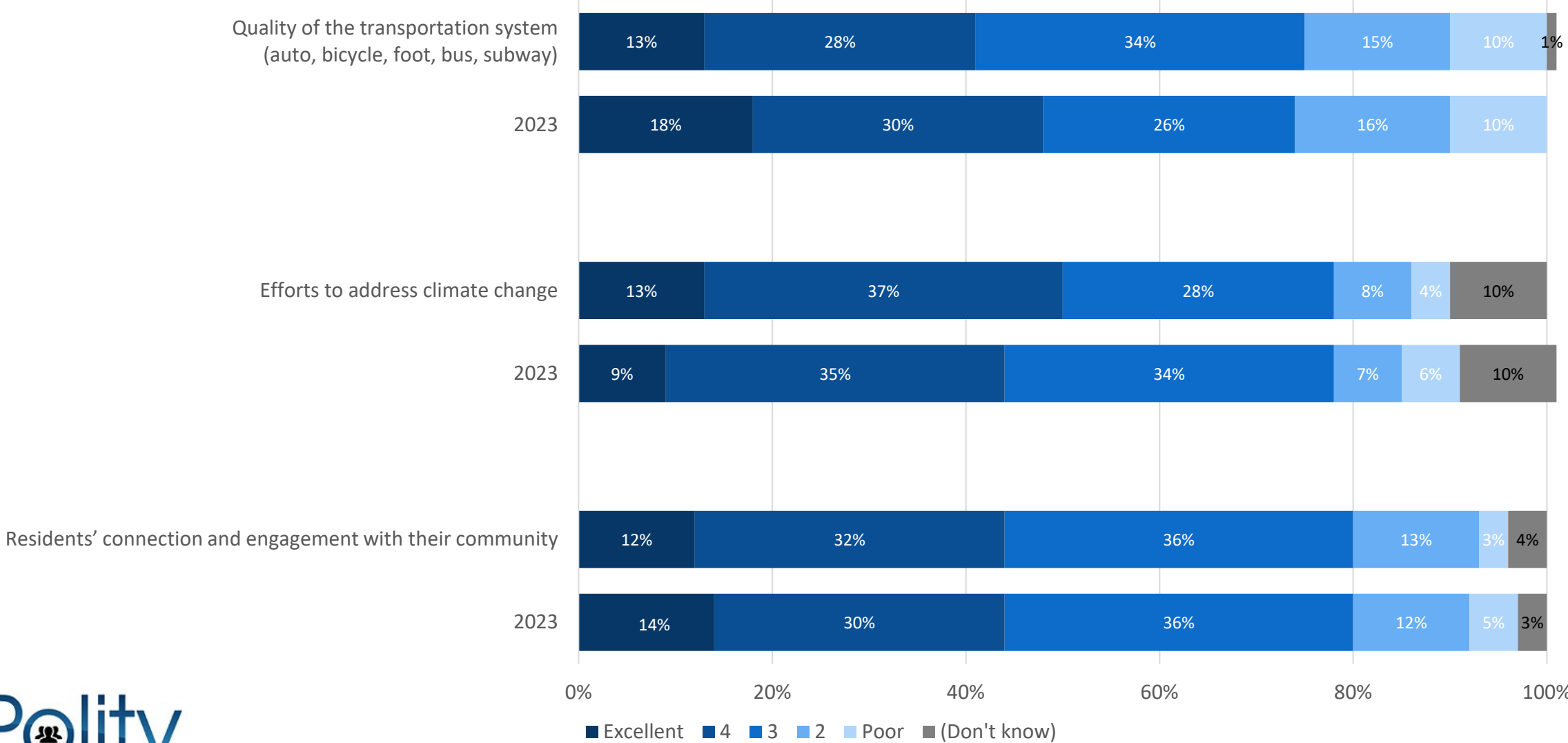
■ Excellent ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ Poor ■ (Don't know)



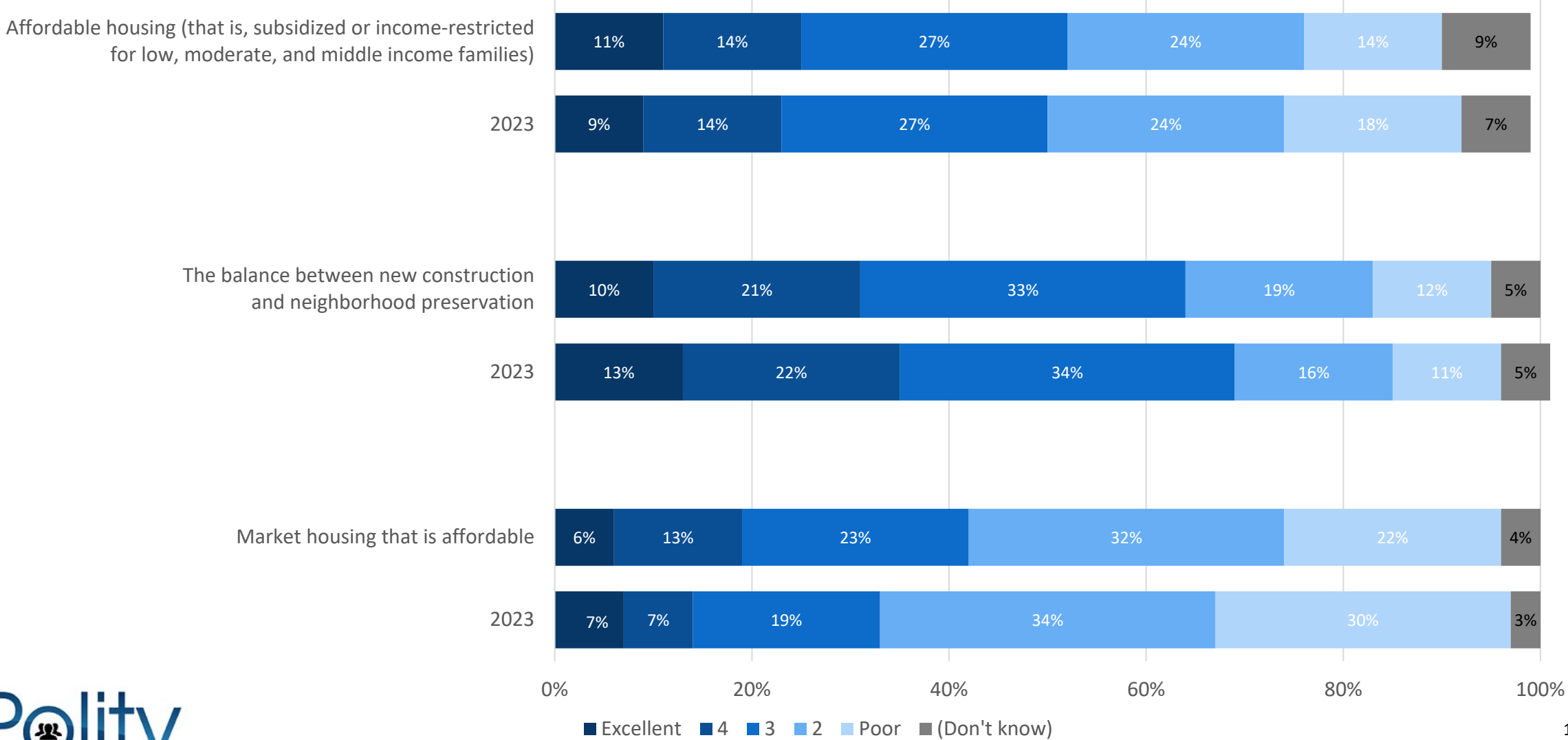
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



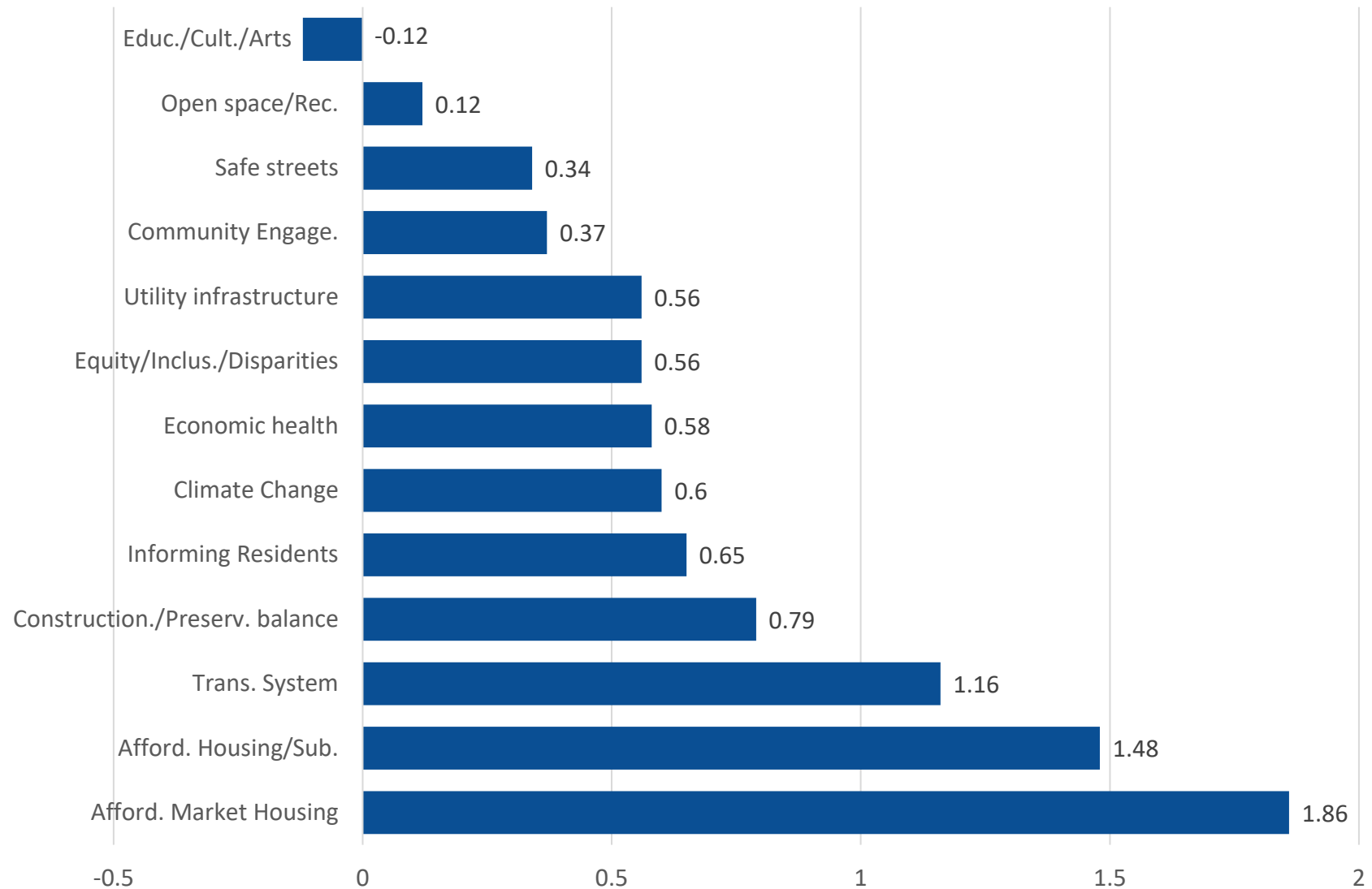
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



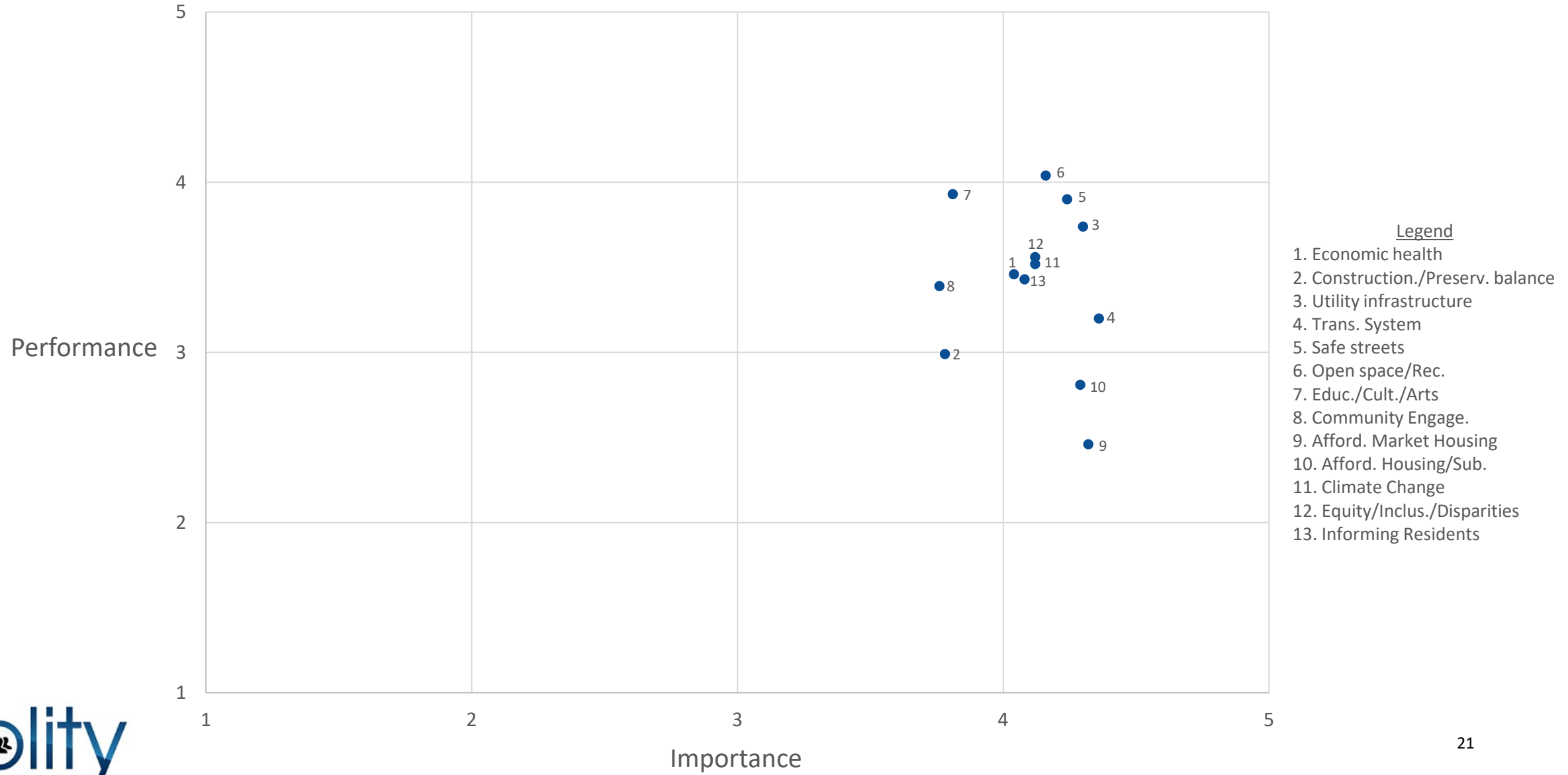
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



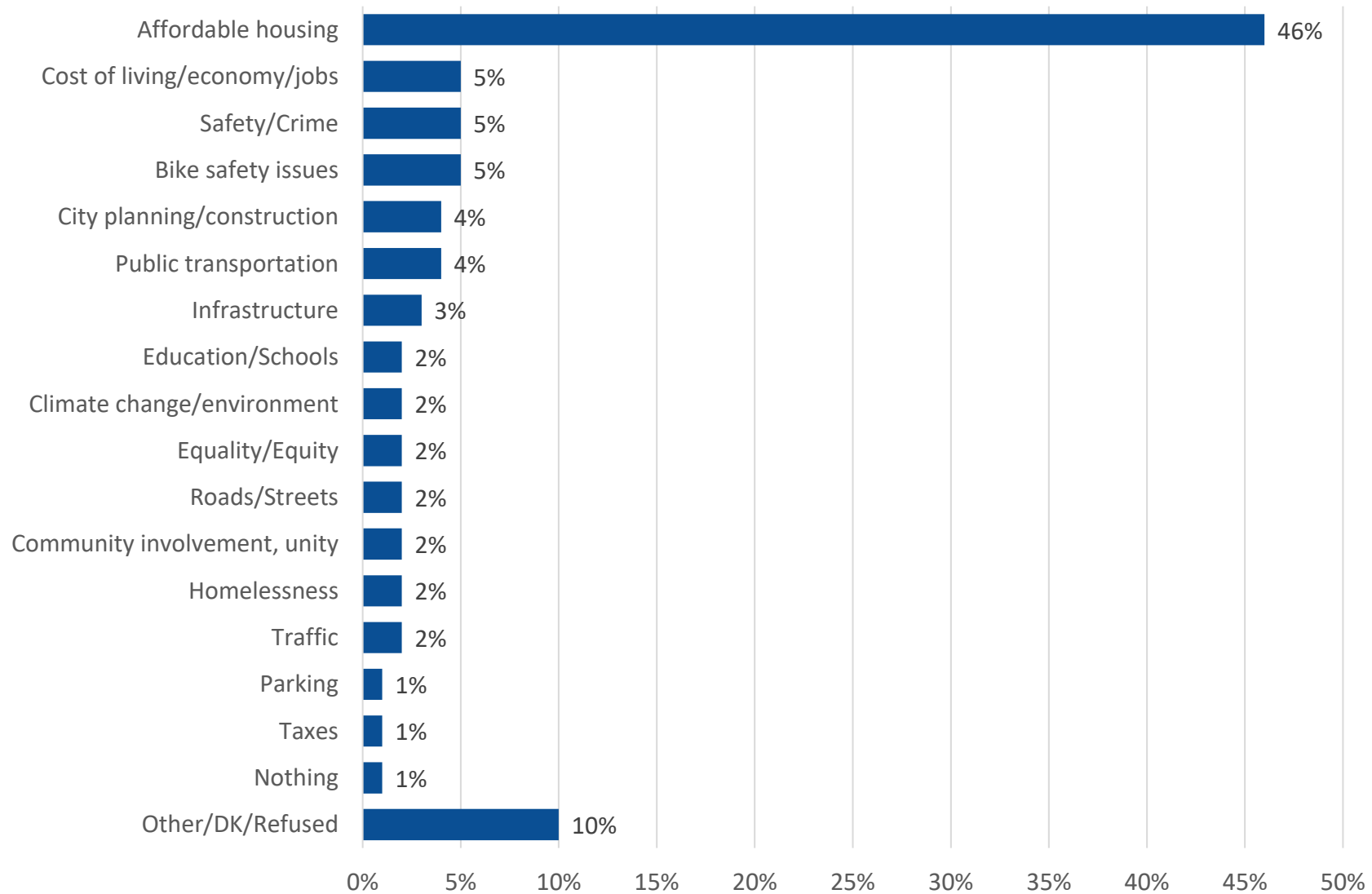
Importance/Performance Gap Ranking (higher number=greater attention needed)



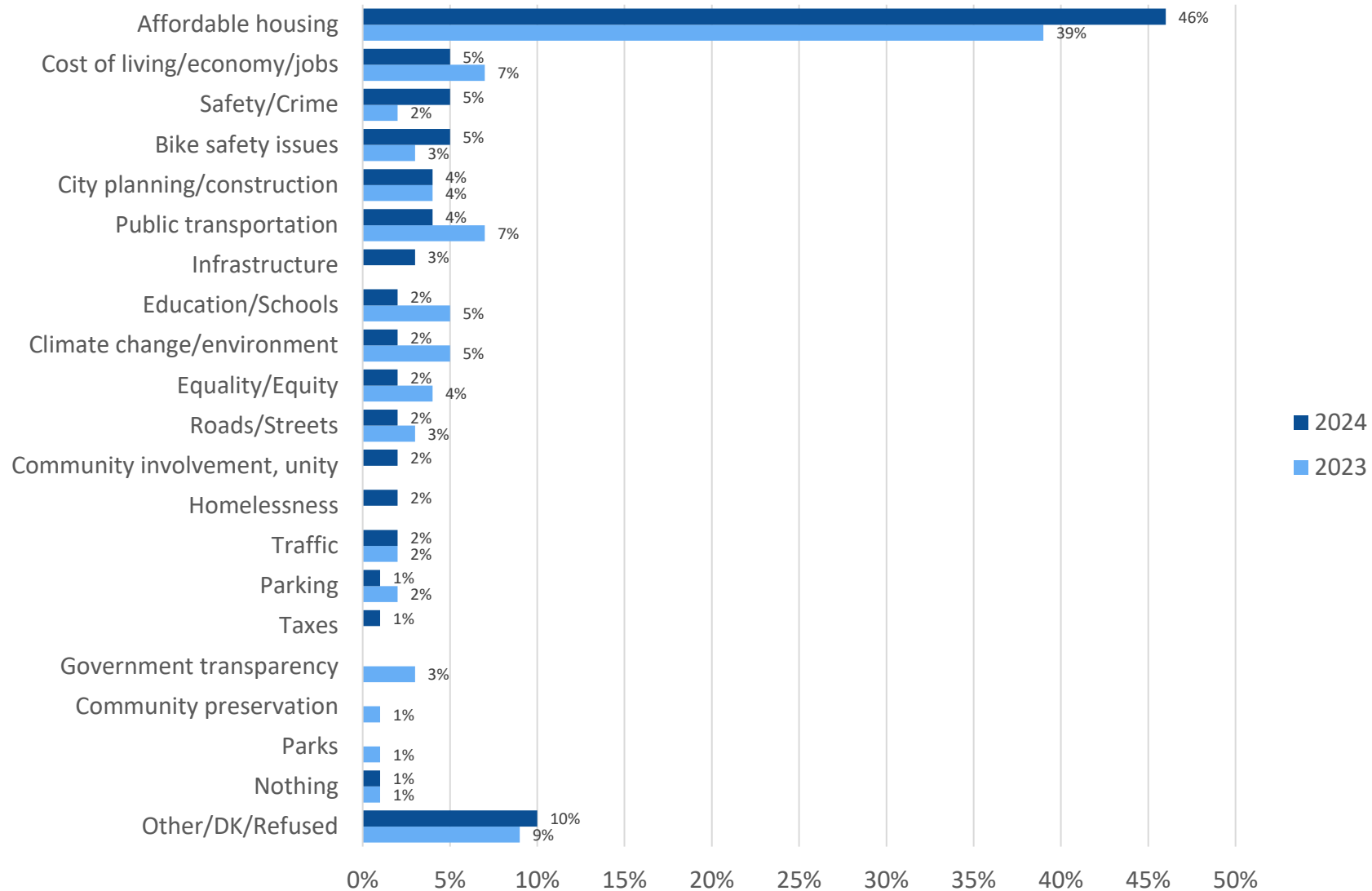
Importance / Performance Perceptual Map



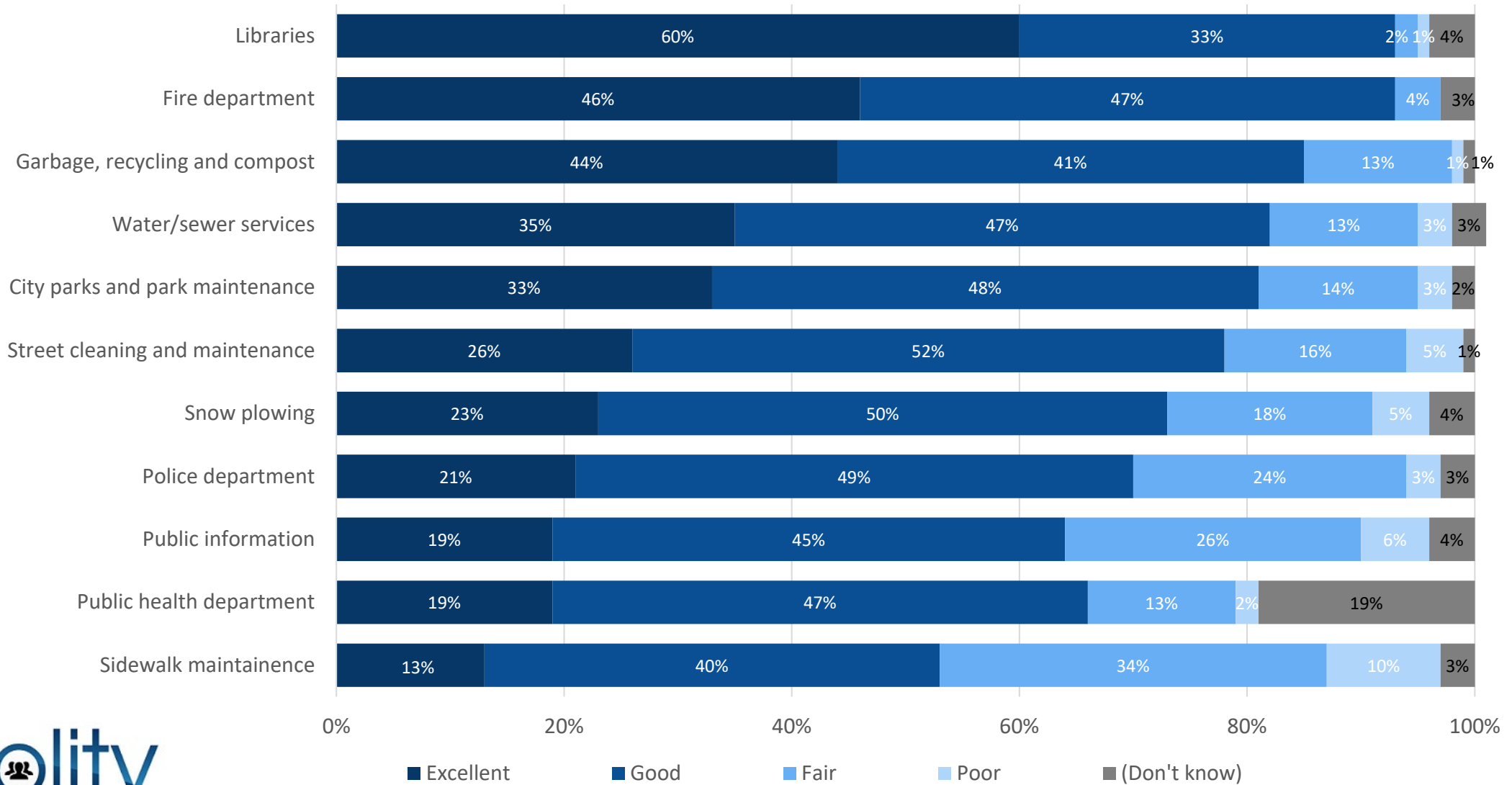
What is the *single most important* issue the City of Cambridge should focus on in the coming two years?



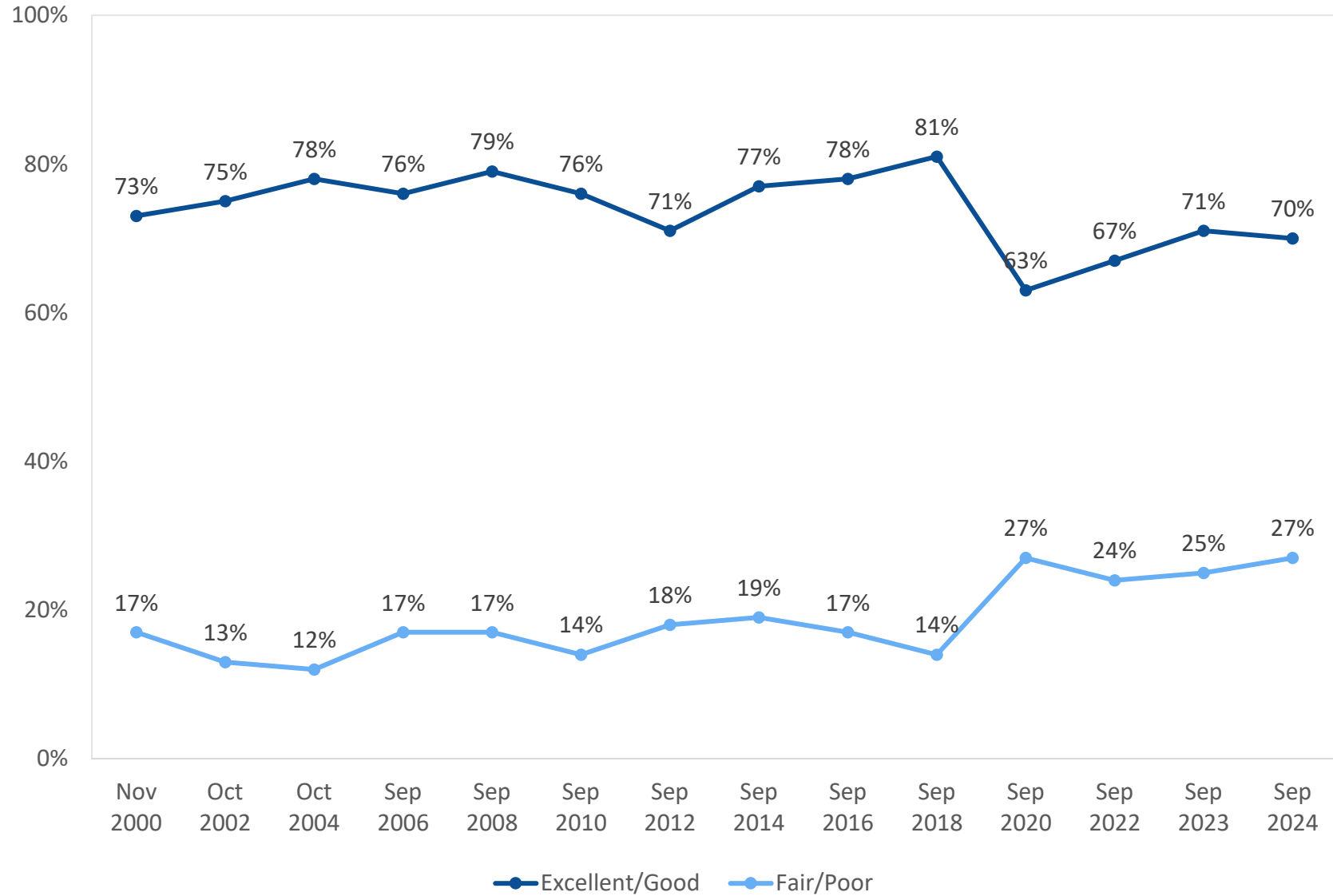
What is the *single most important* issue the City of Cambridge should focus on in the coming two years?



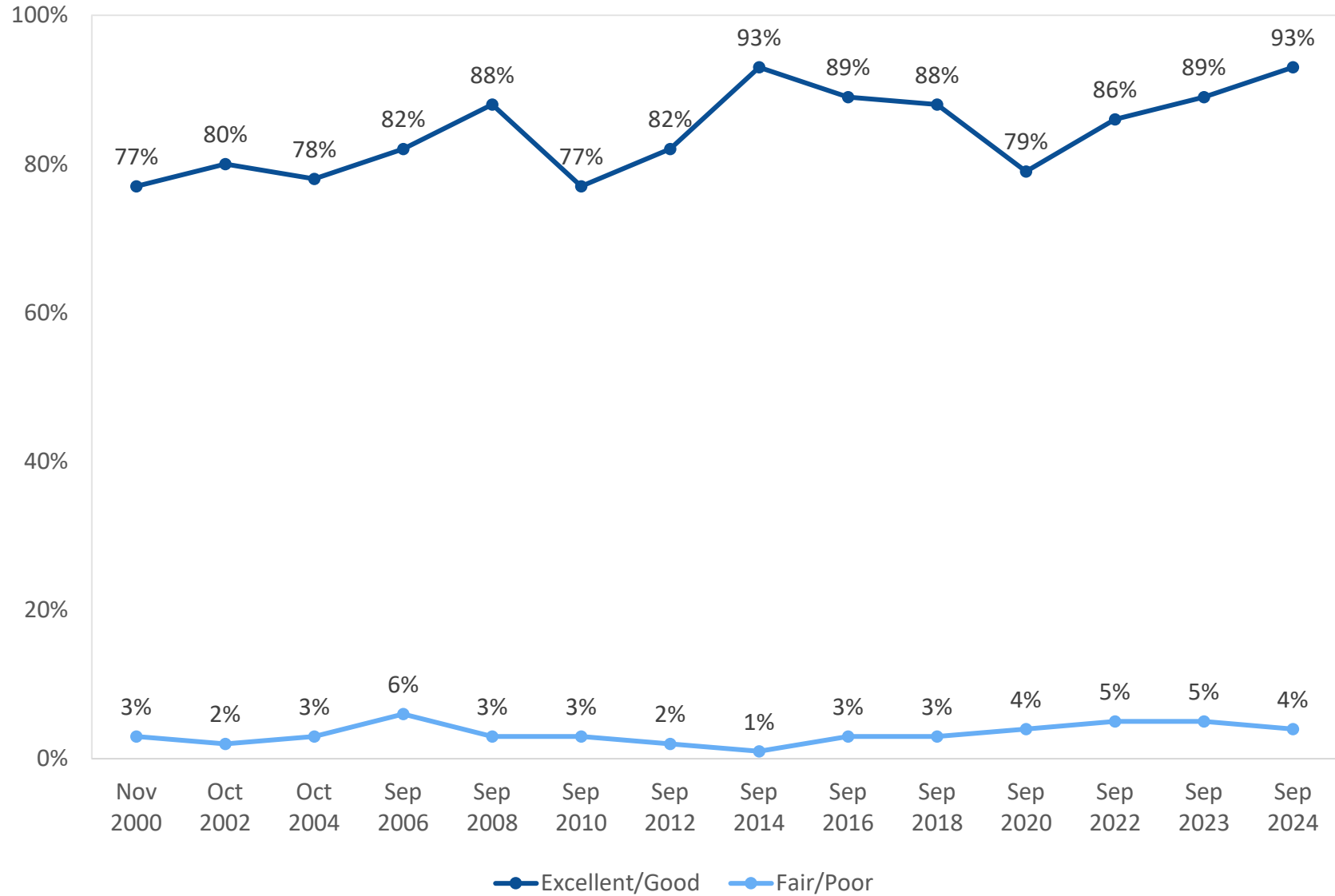
Now, I'd like to read you a number of services provided by the City of Cambridge. For each one, please rate the *quality* of these services on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.



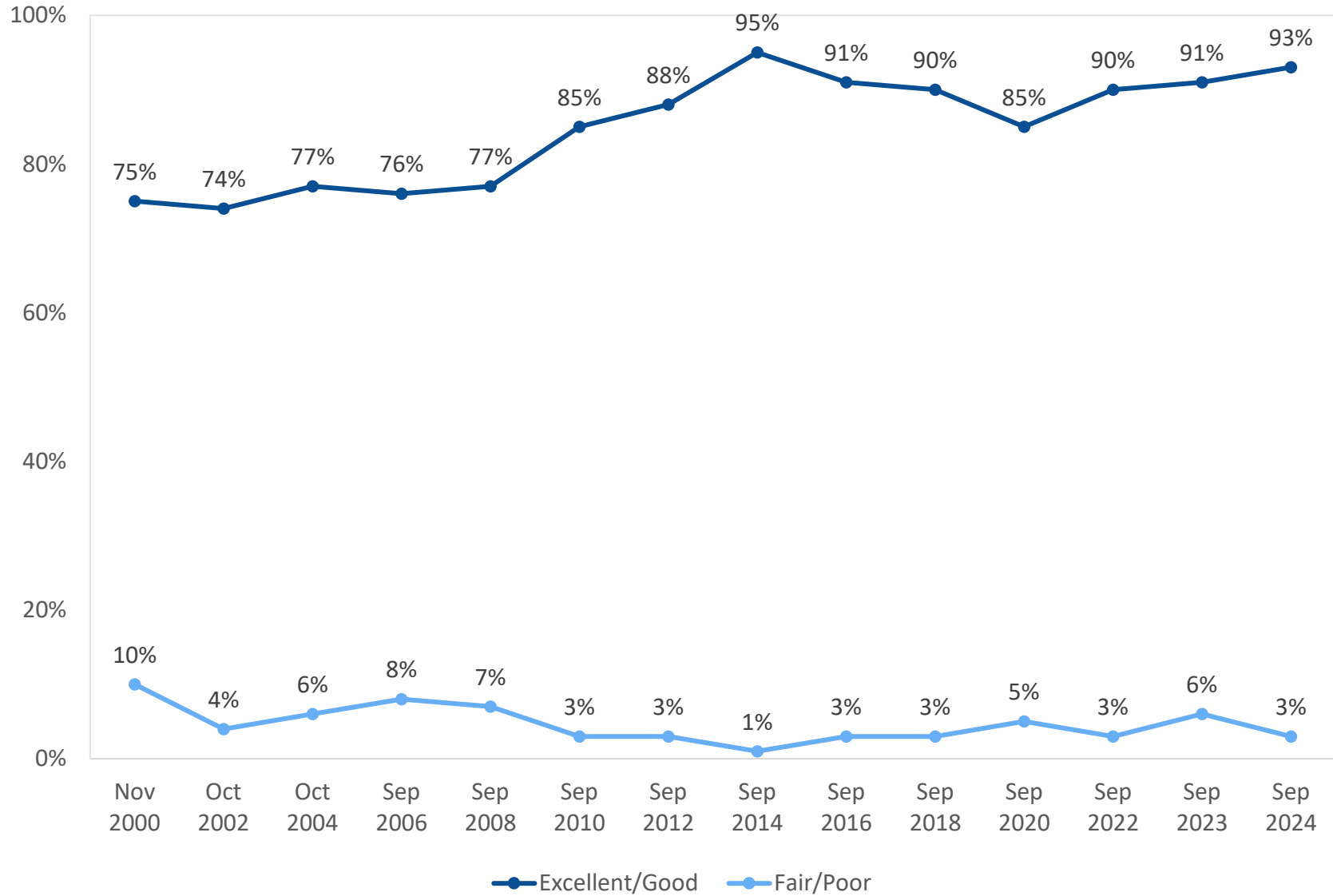
Police Department



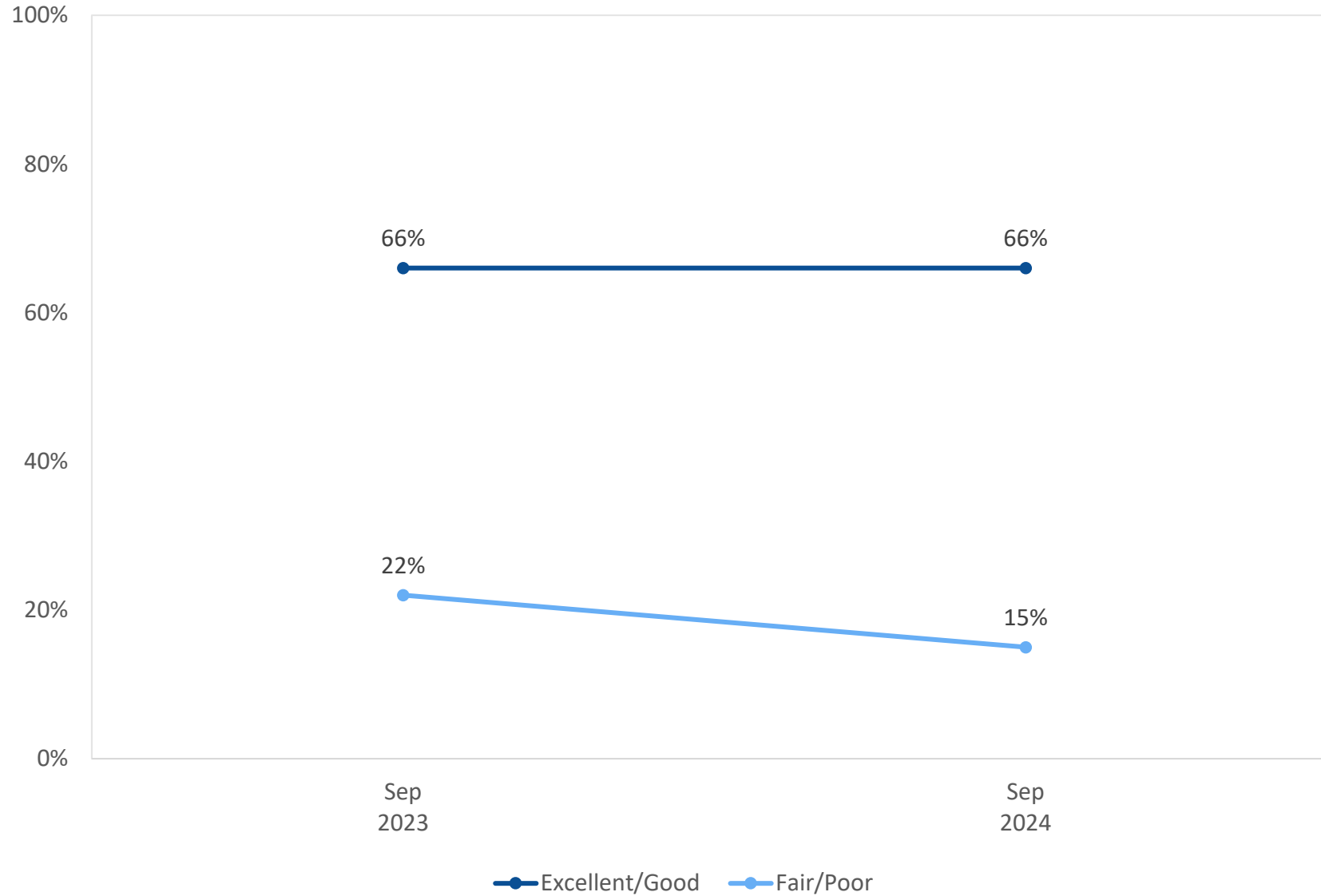
Fire Department



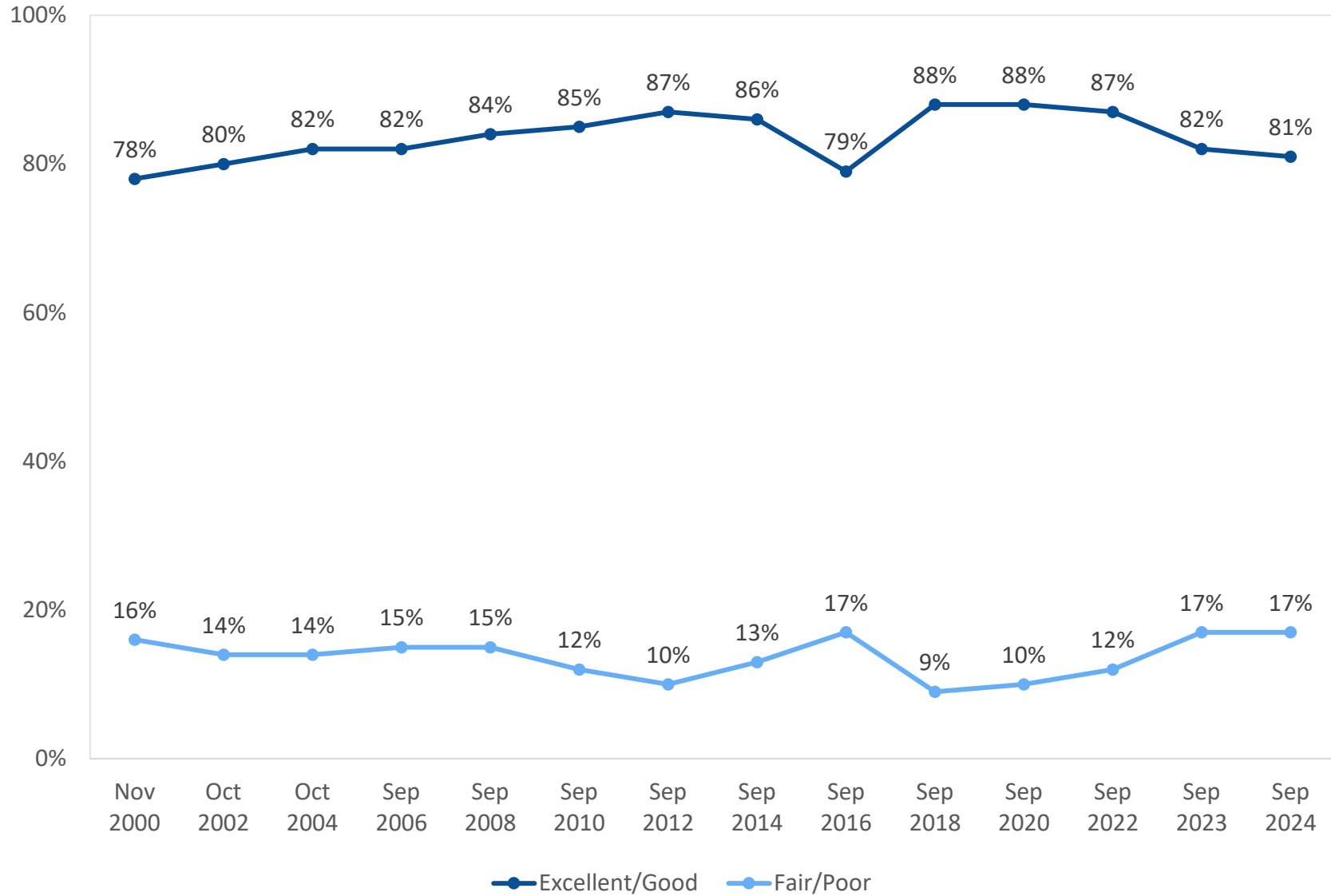
Libraries



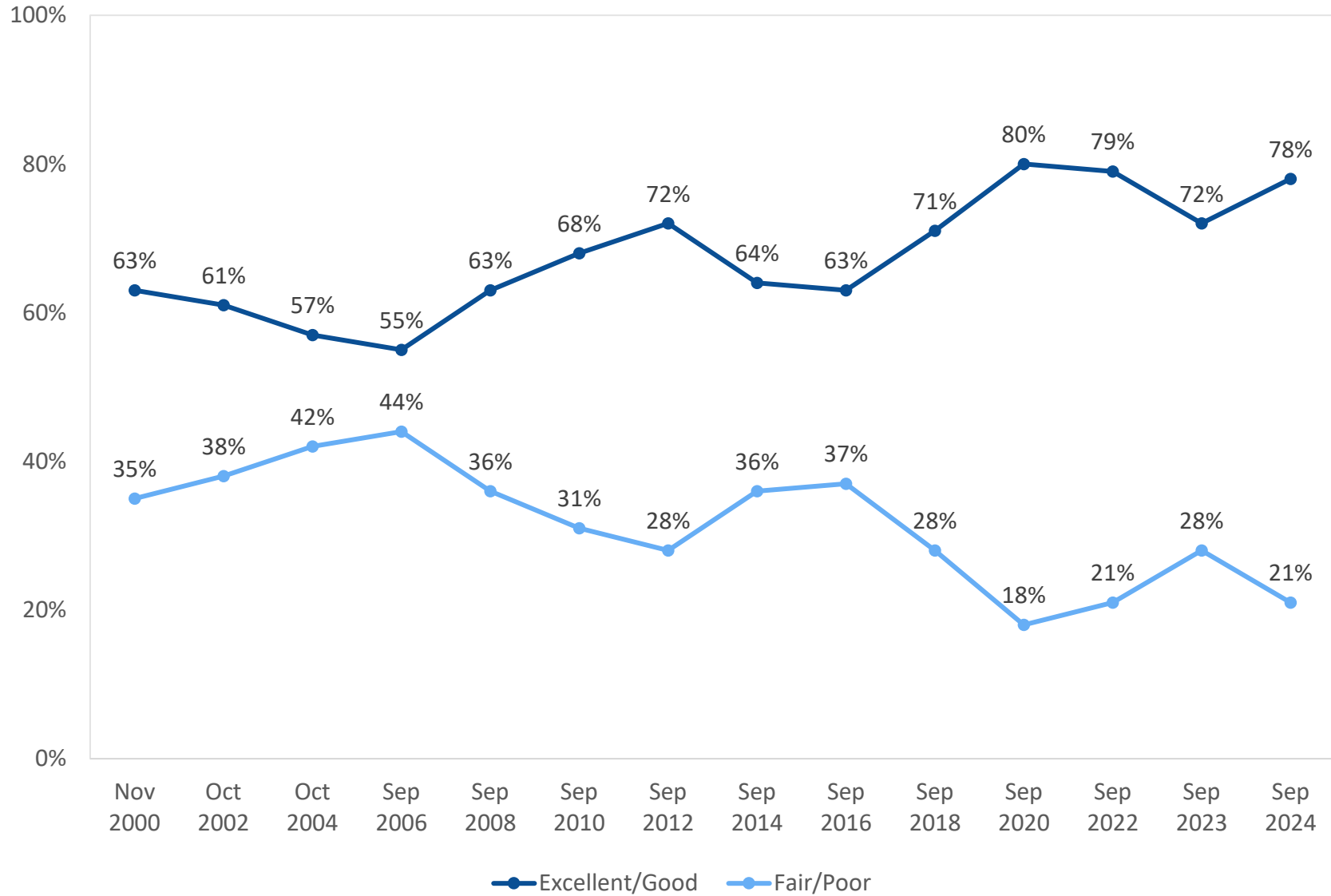
Public Health Department



City parks and park maintenance

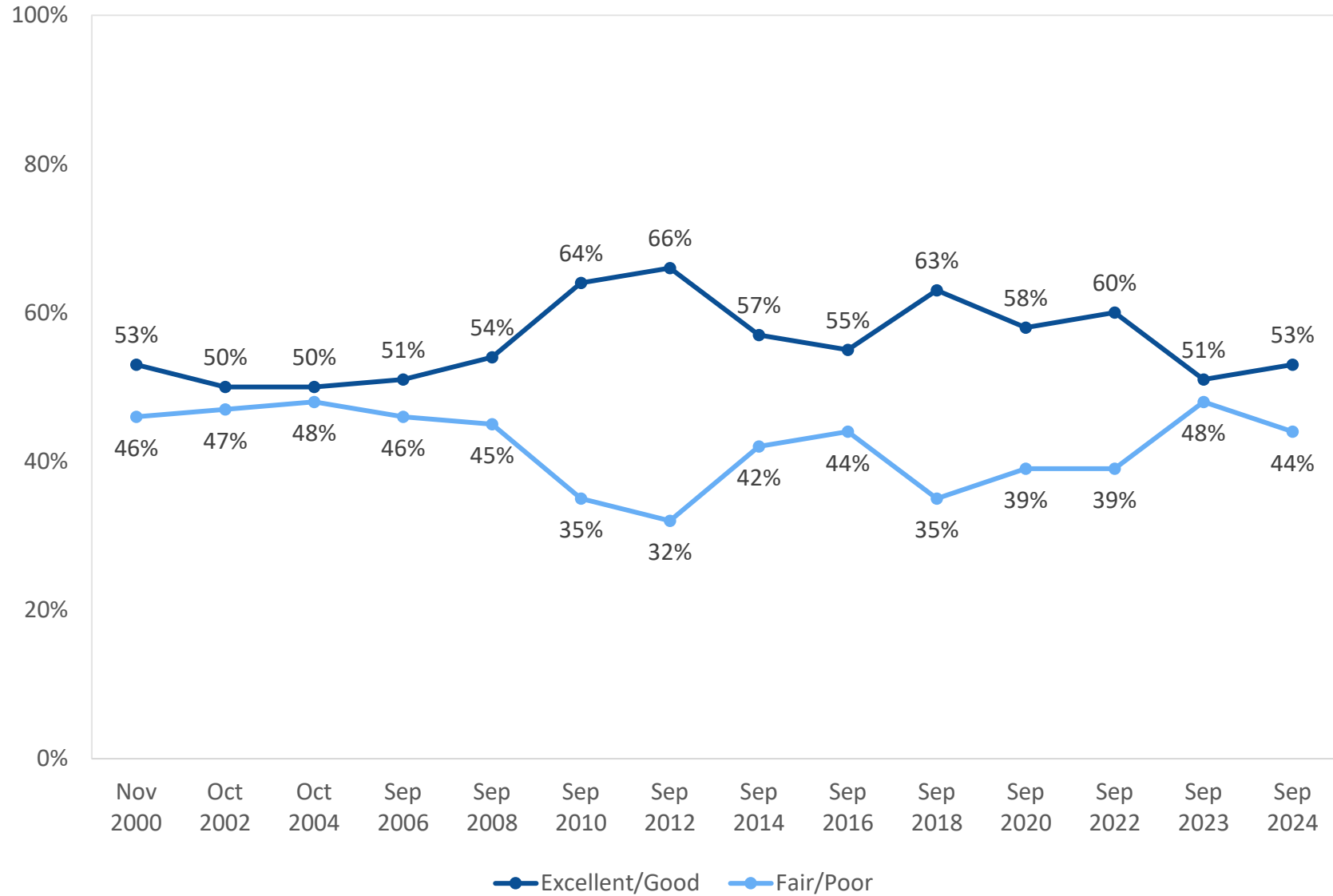


Street cleaning and maintenance*

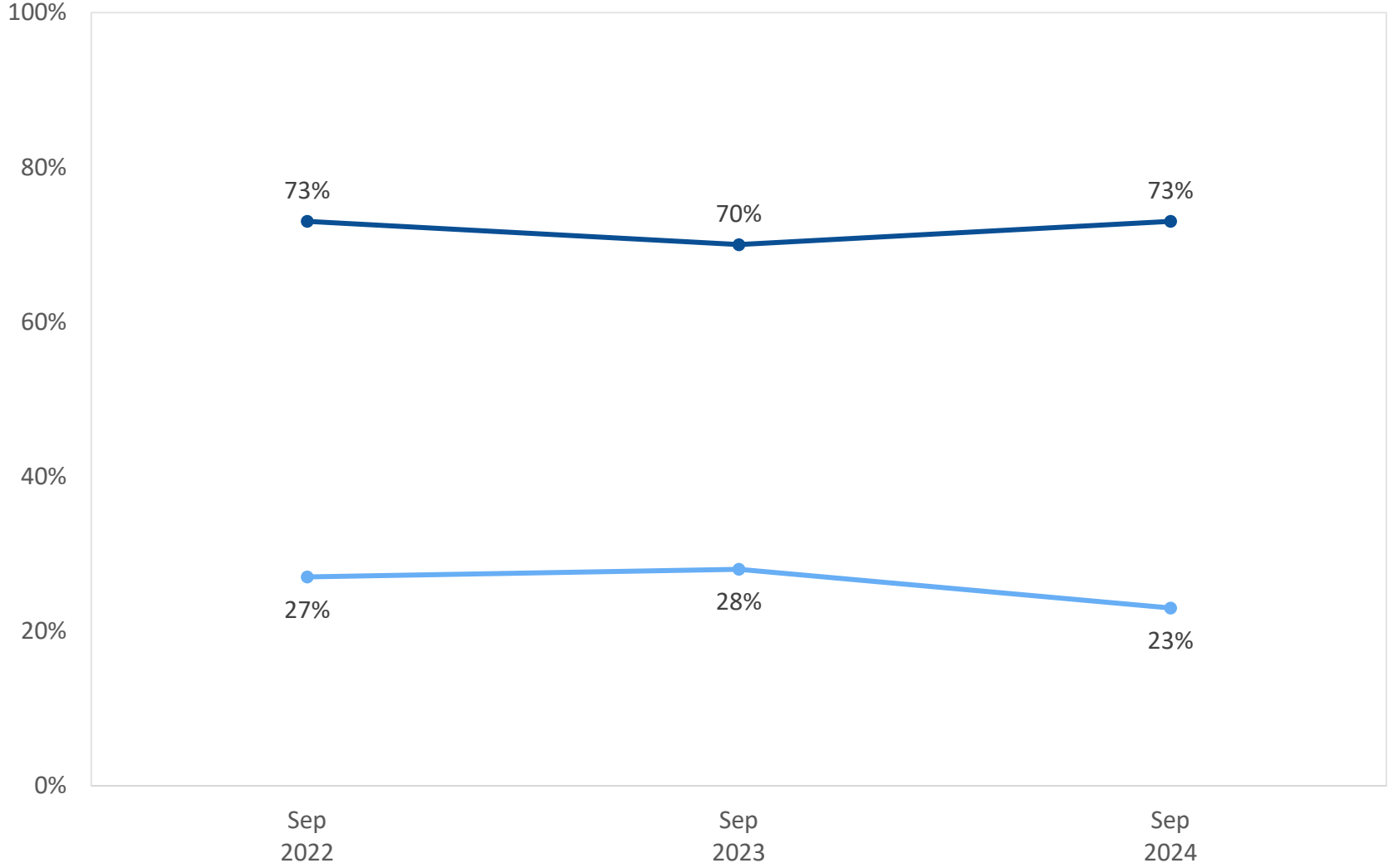


* new wording in 2020

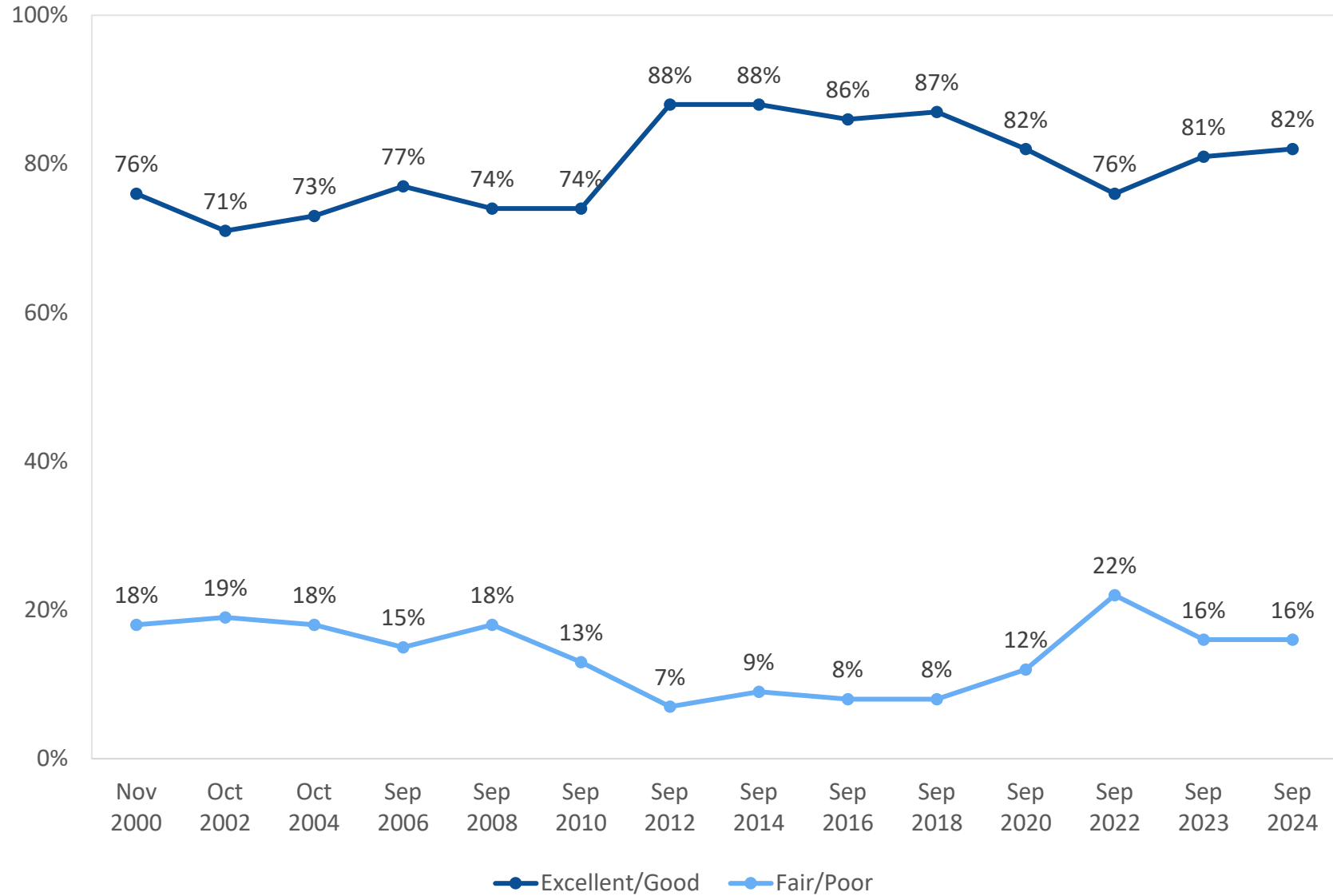
Sidewalk maintenance



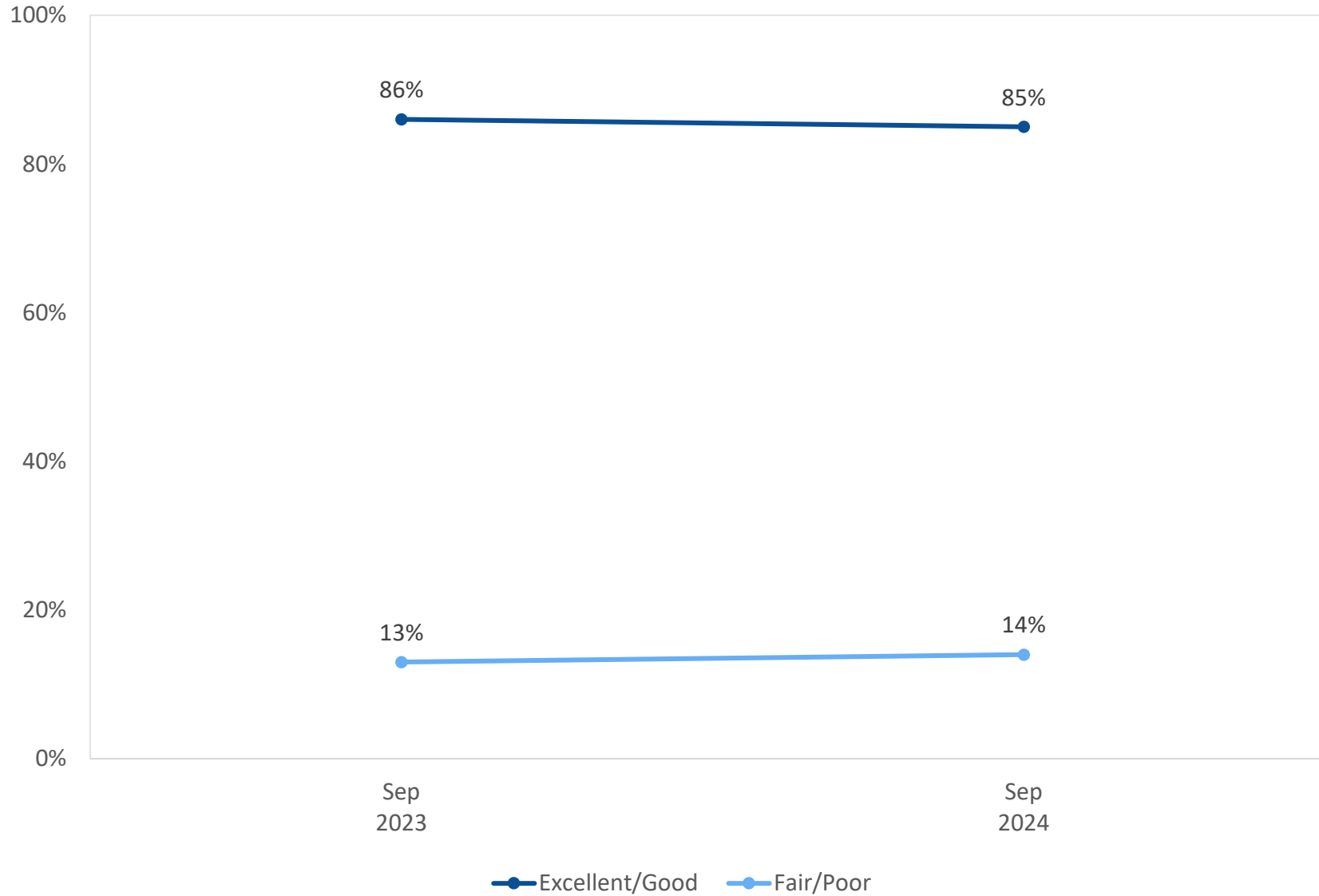
Snow plowing



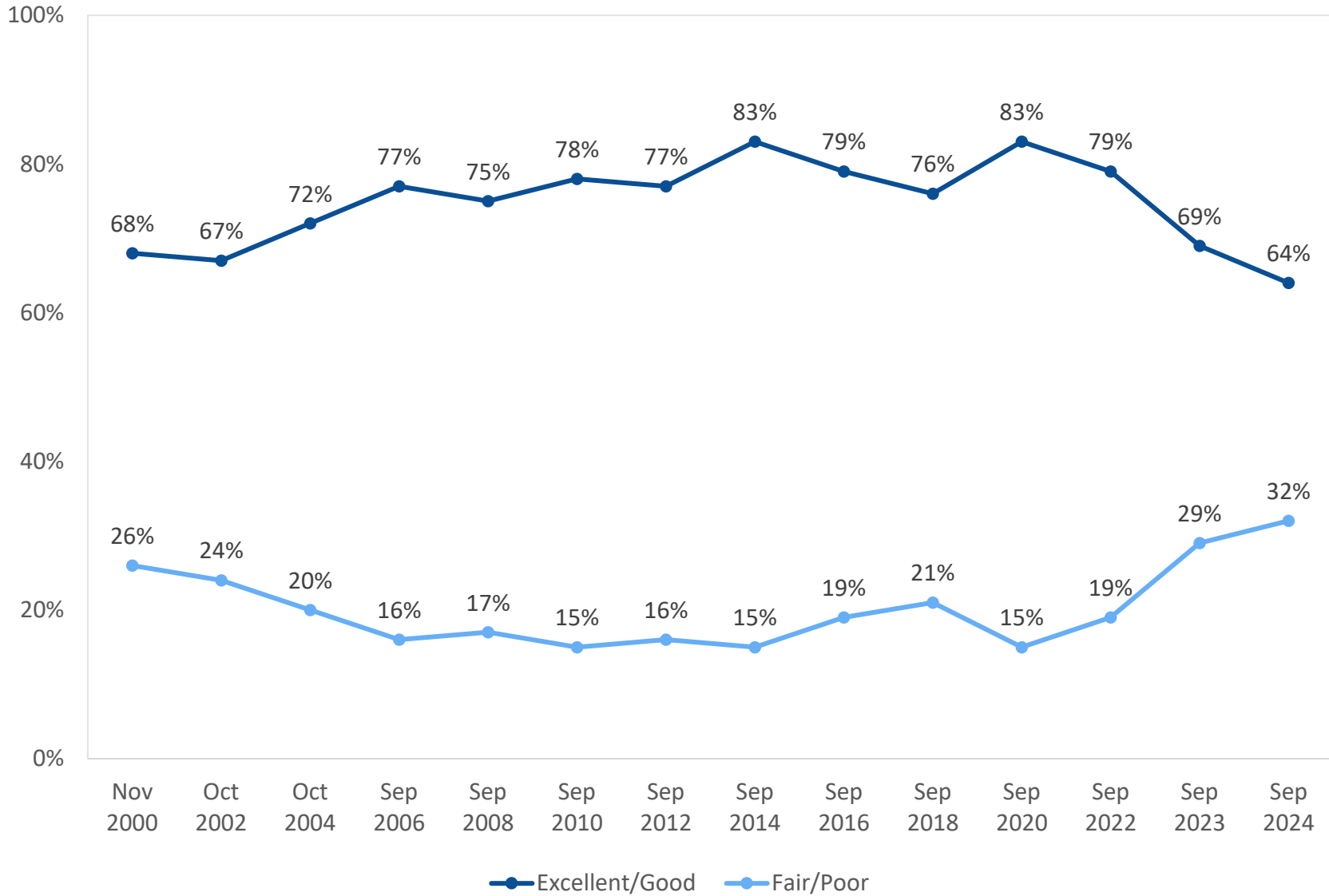
Water/sewer services



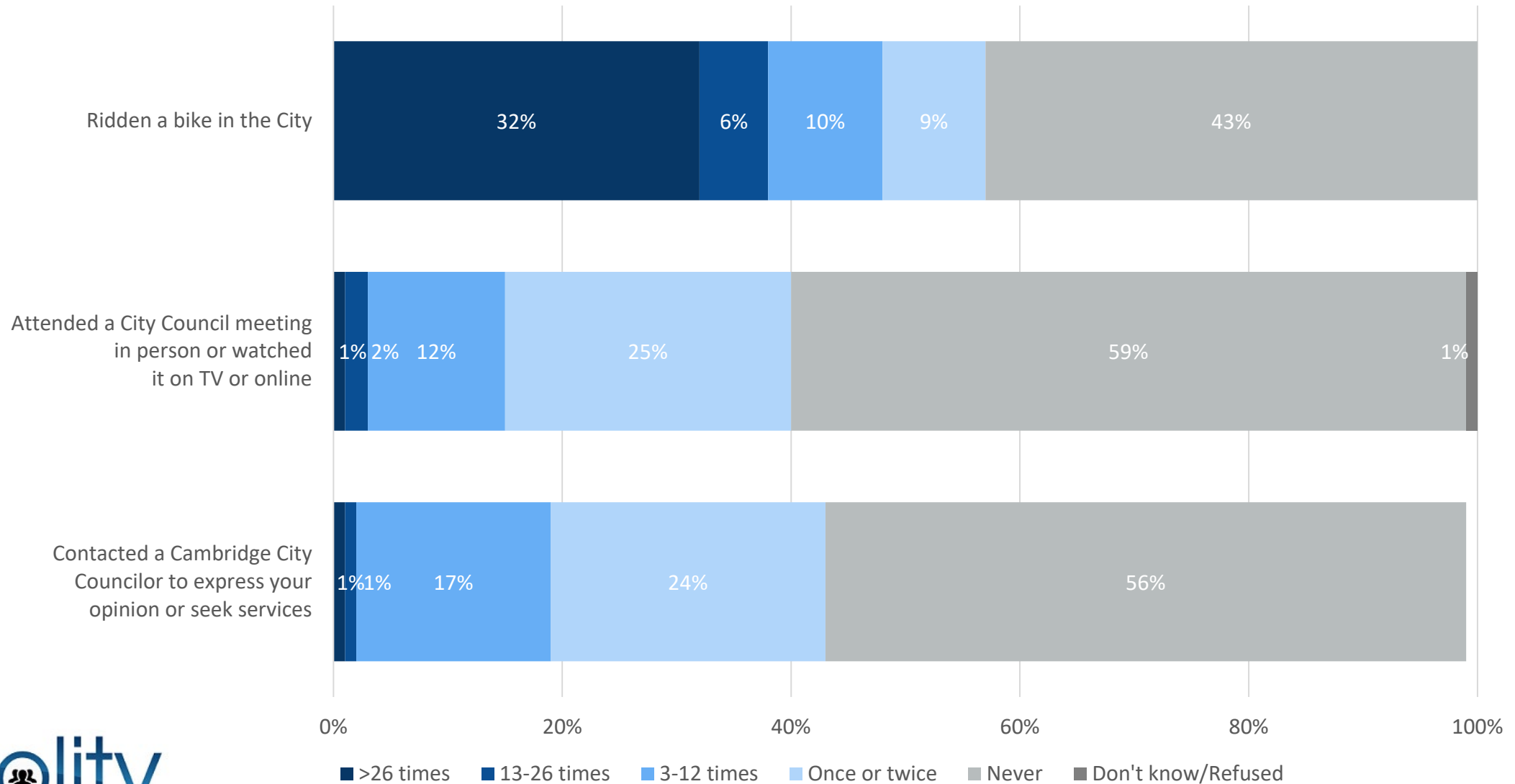
Garbage, recycling and compost



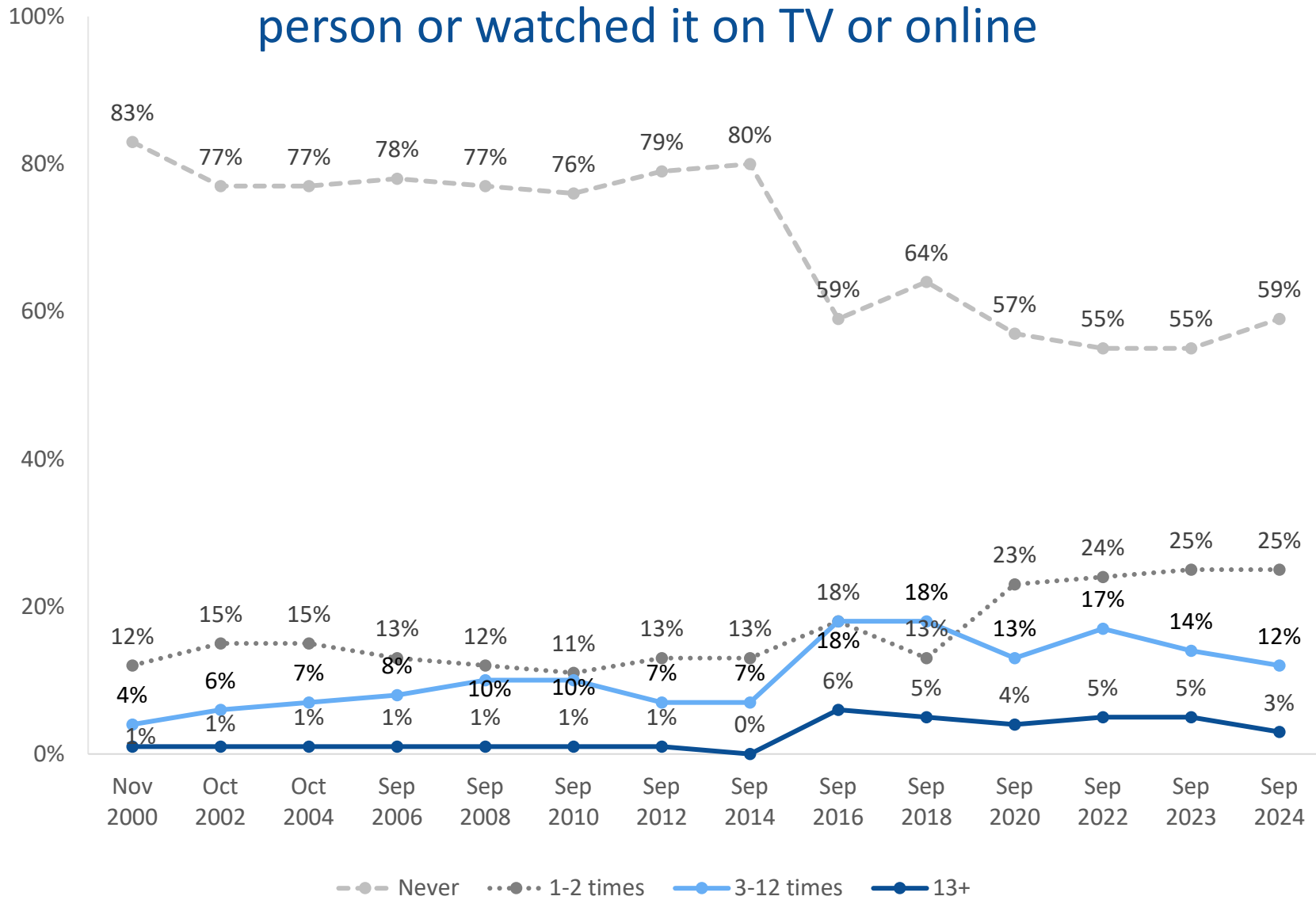
Public Information



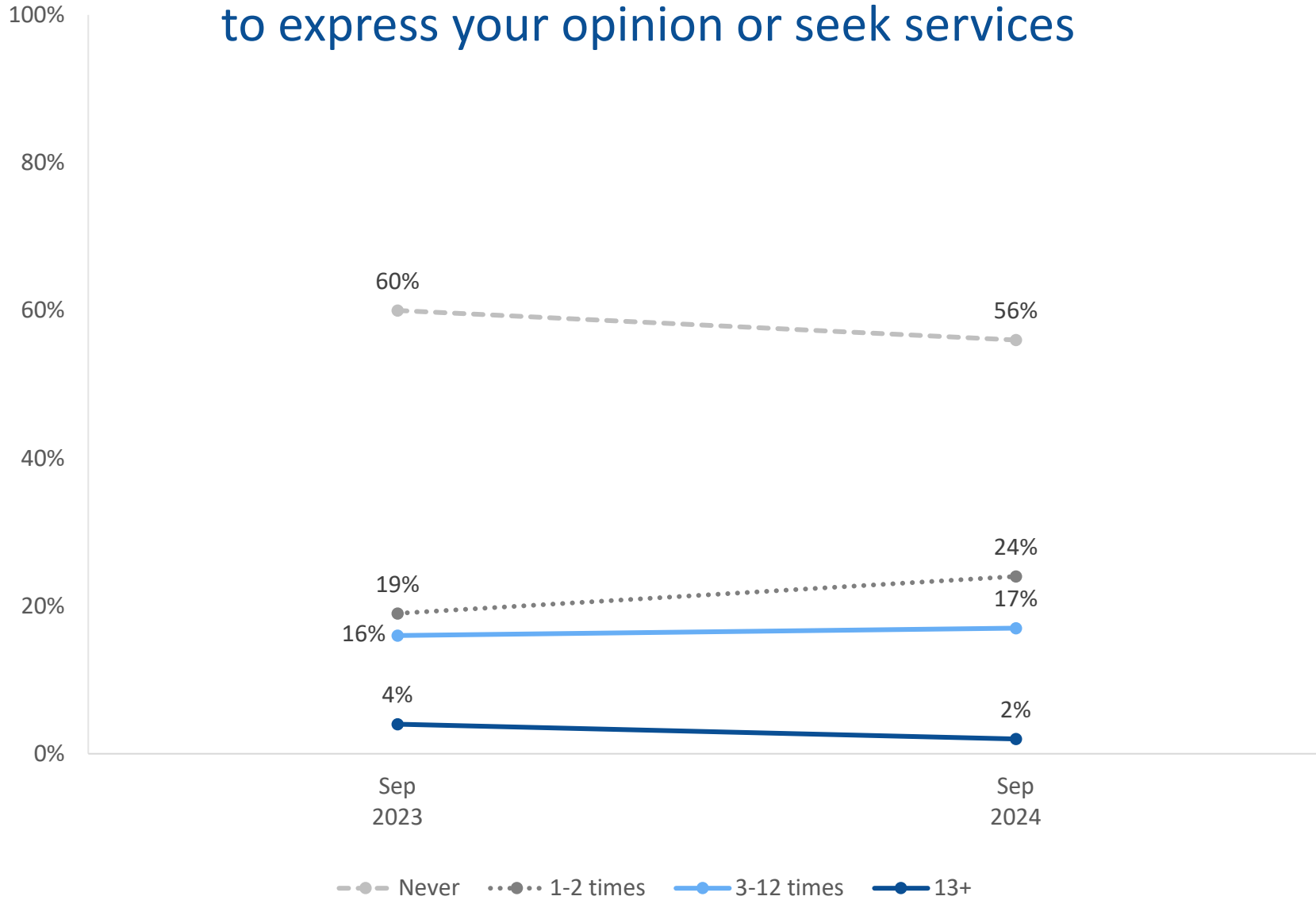
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or another household member done the following:



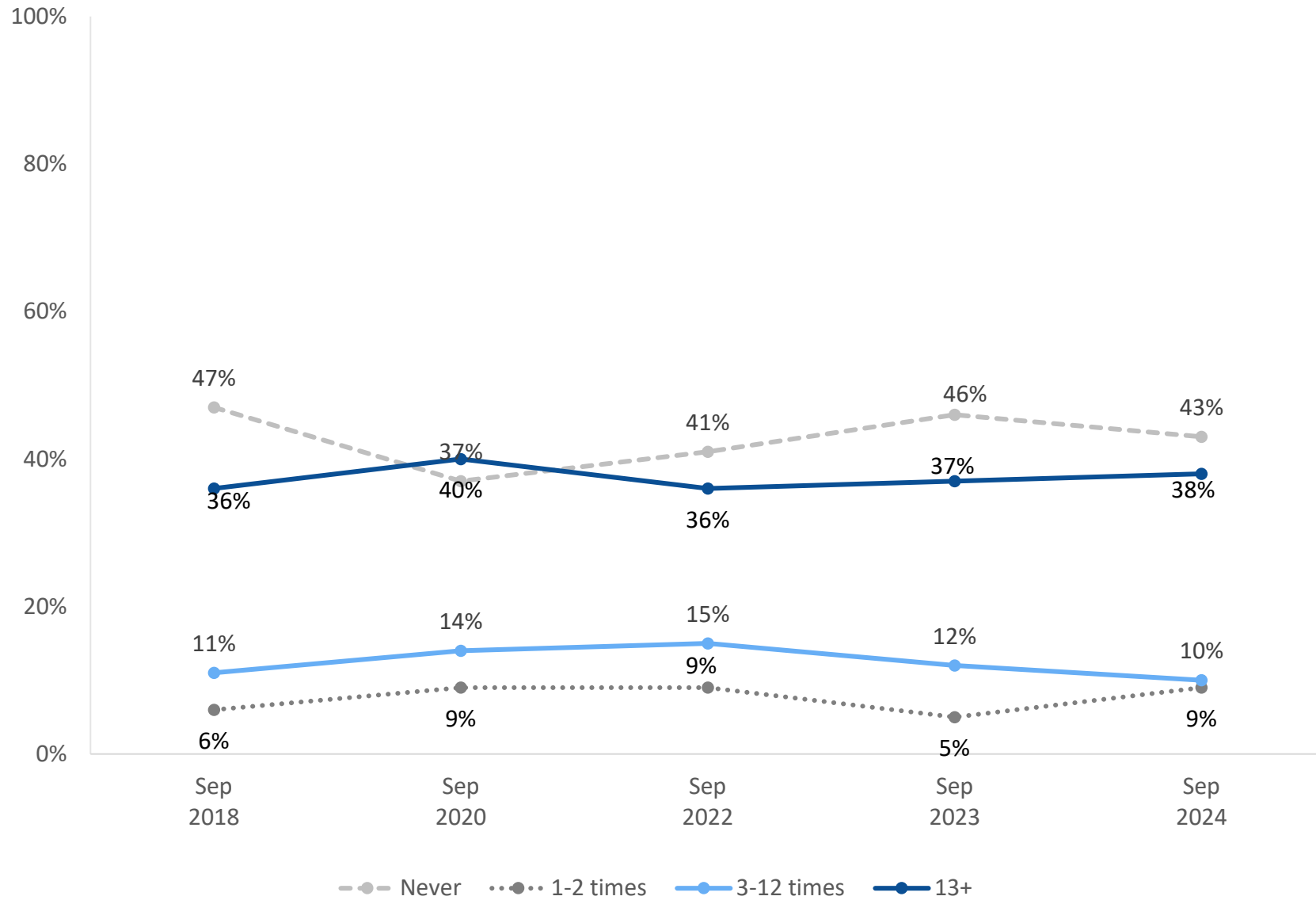
Times in the Last 12 Months: Attended a City Council meeting in person or watched it on TV or online



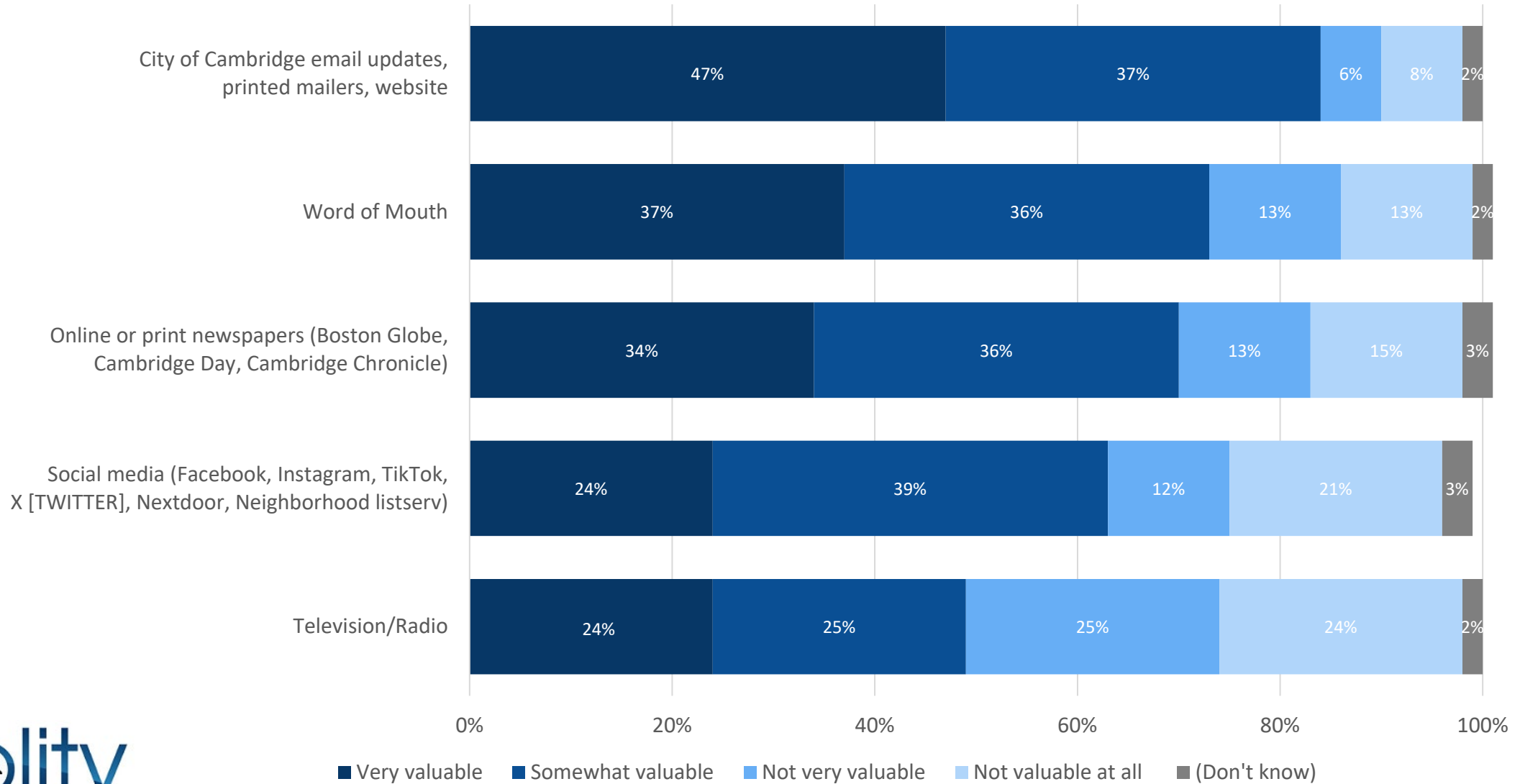
Times in the Last 12 Months: Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services



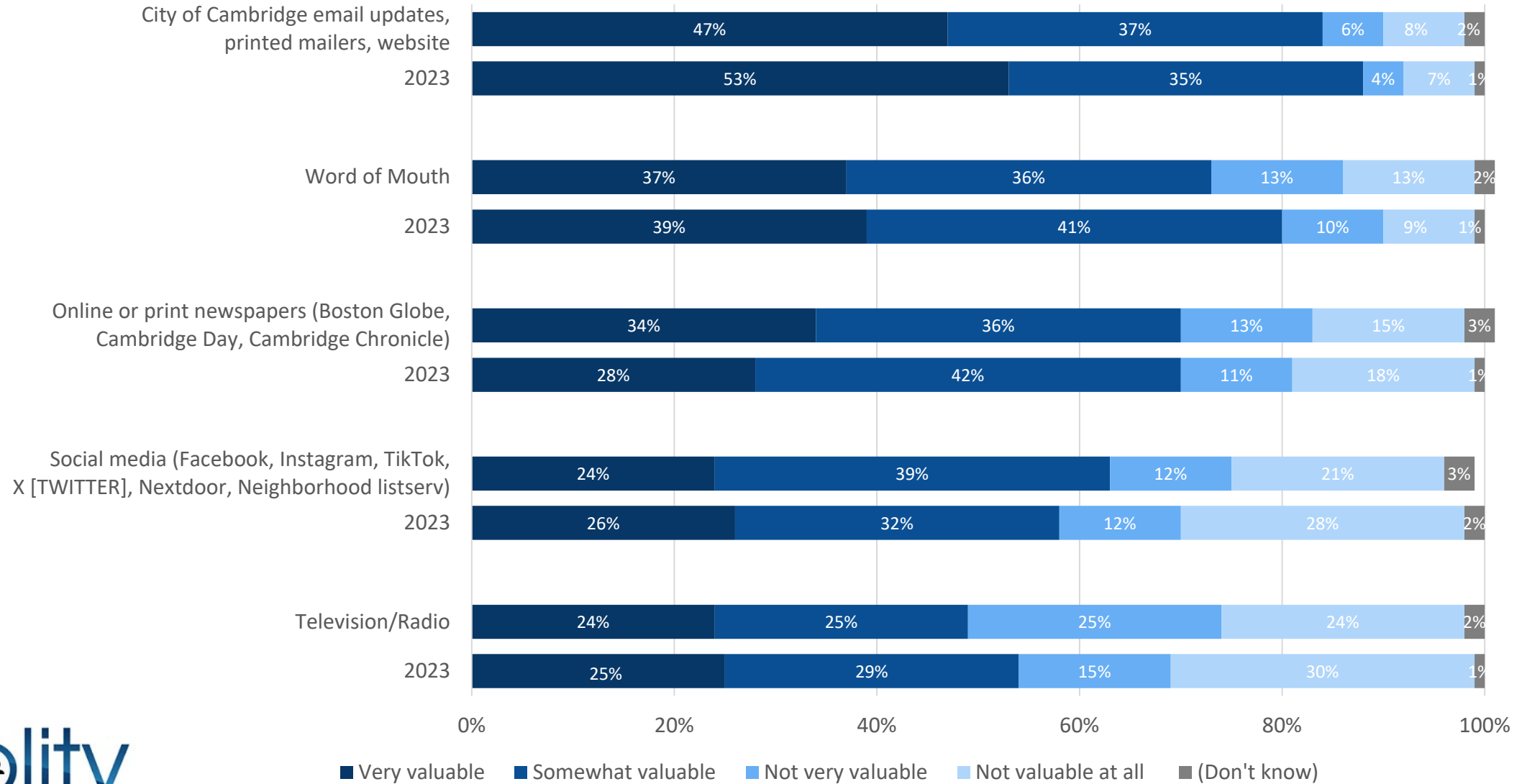
Times in the Last 12 Months: Ridden a bike in the City



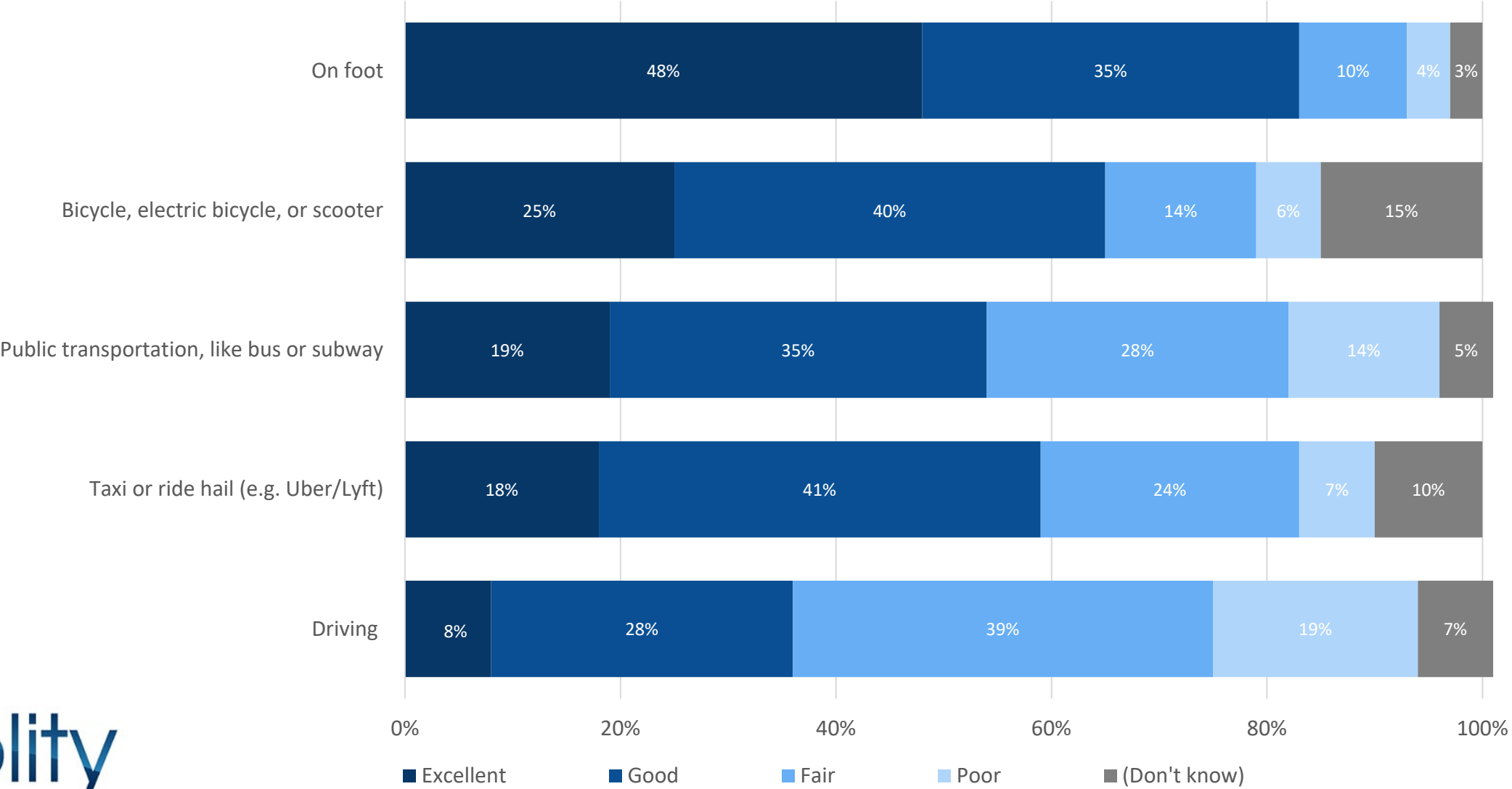
Please rate how valuable each of the following Cambridge-related information sources for your household



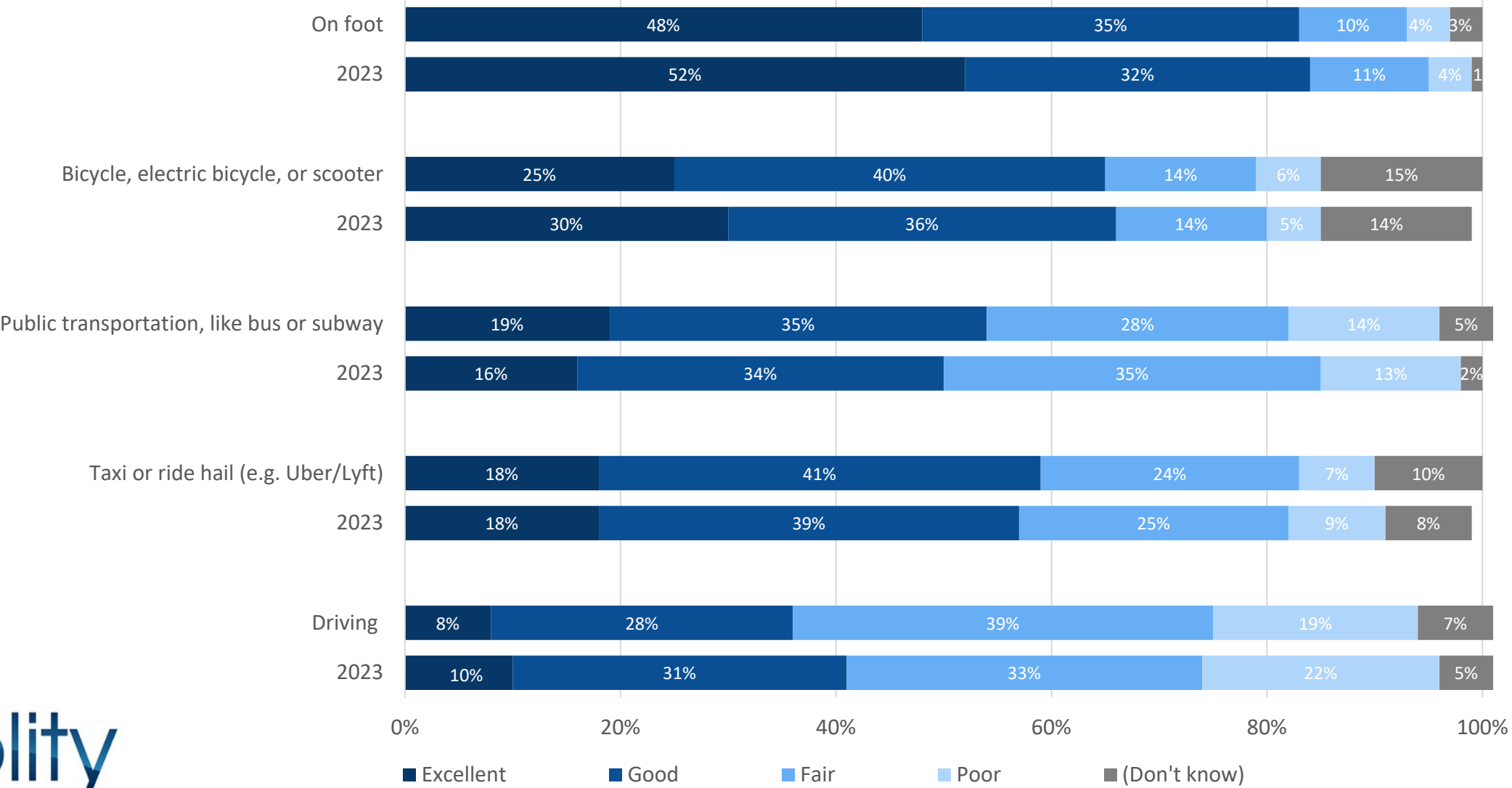
Please rate how valuable each of the following Cambridge-related information sources for your household



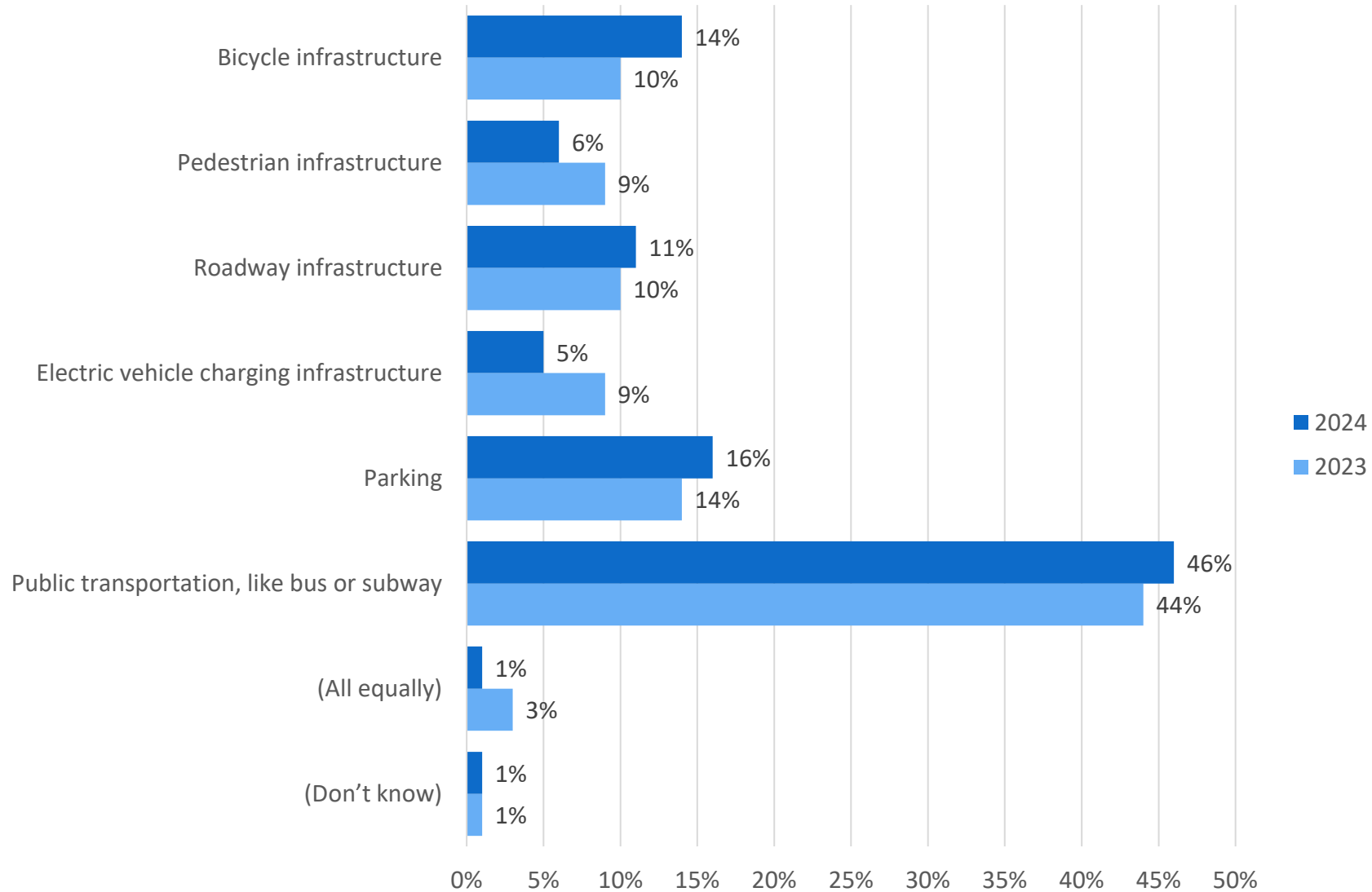
On a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate the ease of getting around the city for each of the following transportation options.



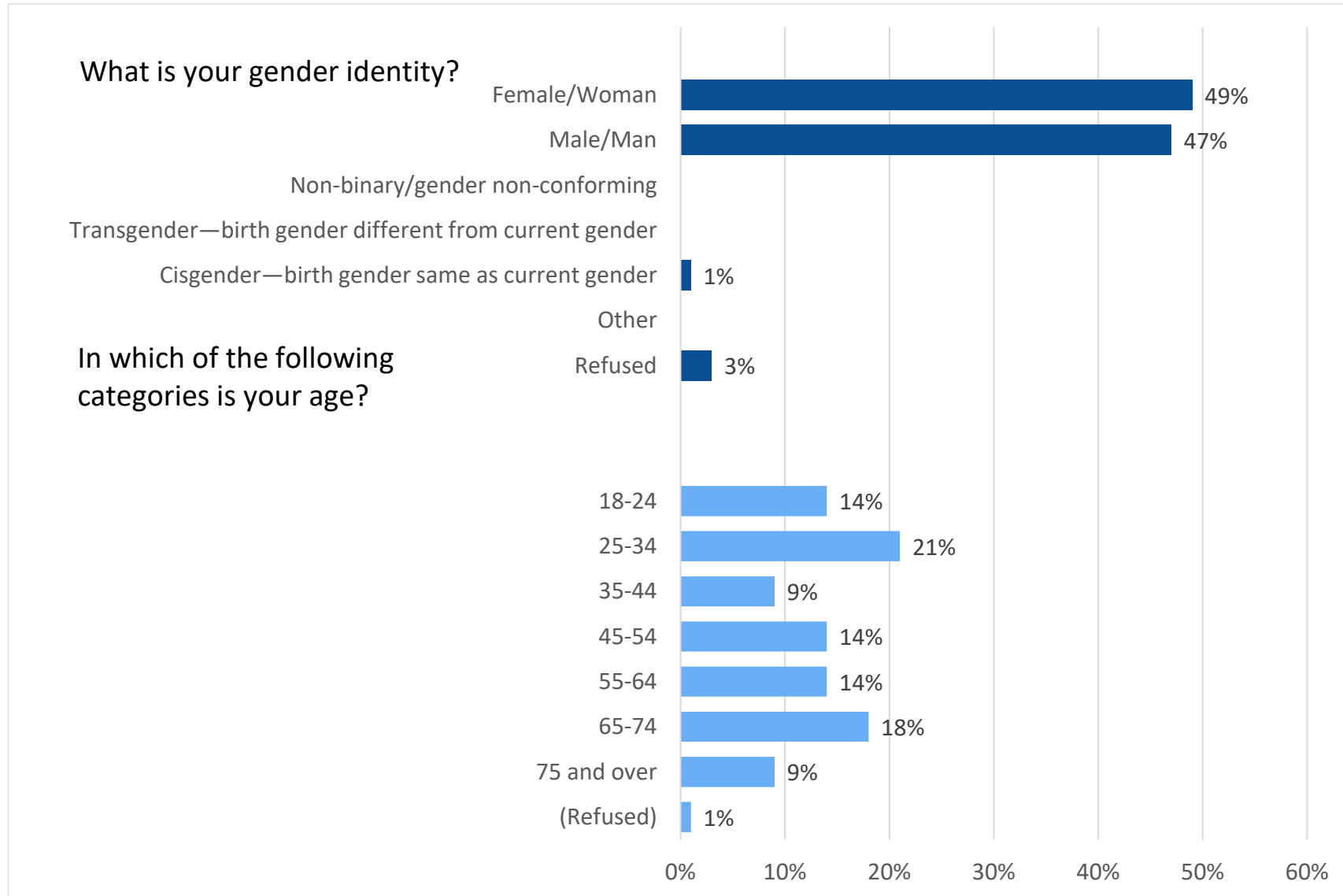
On a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate the ease of getting around the city for each of the following transportation options.



As you continue to think about transportation options to get around Cambridge, which of the following do you think is the *single most important option* for the city to focus on improving over the next few years?

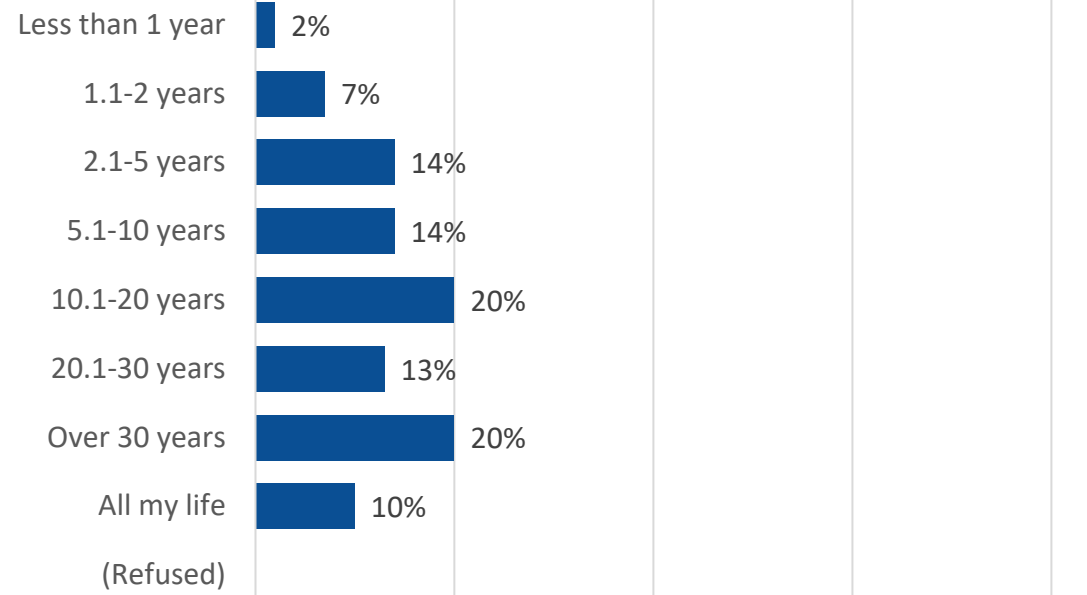


Demographics

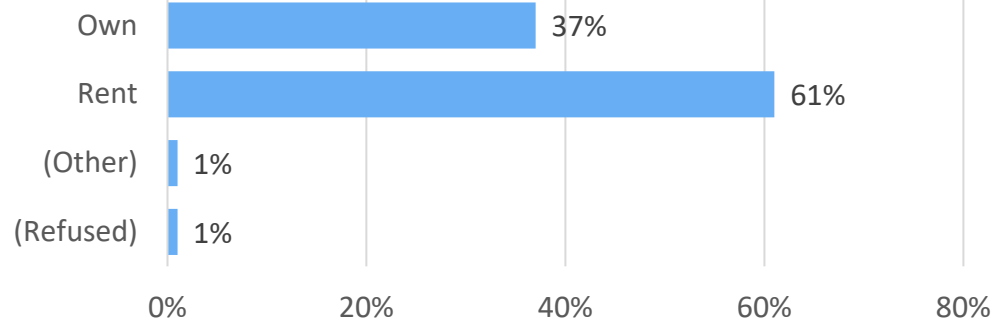


Demographics

How many years have you lived in Cambridge?

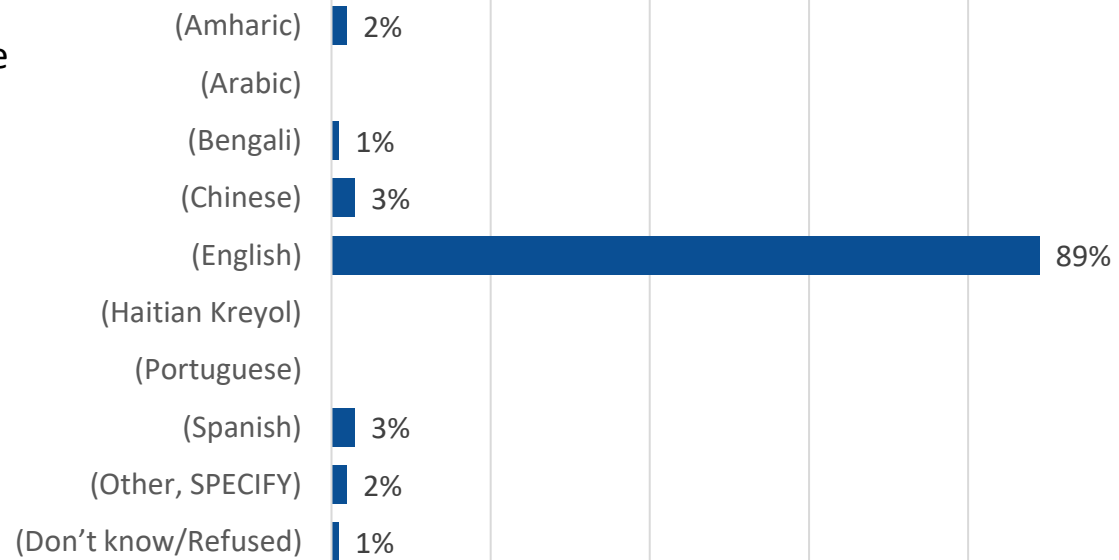


Do you own or rent your home?

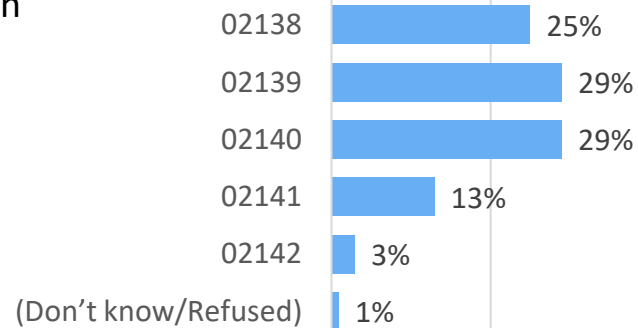


Demographics

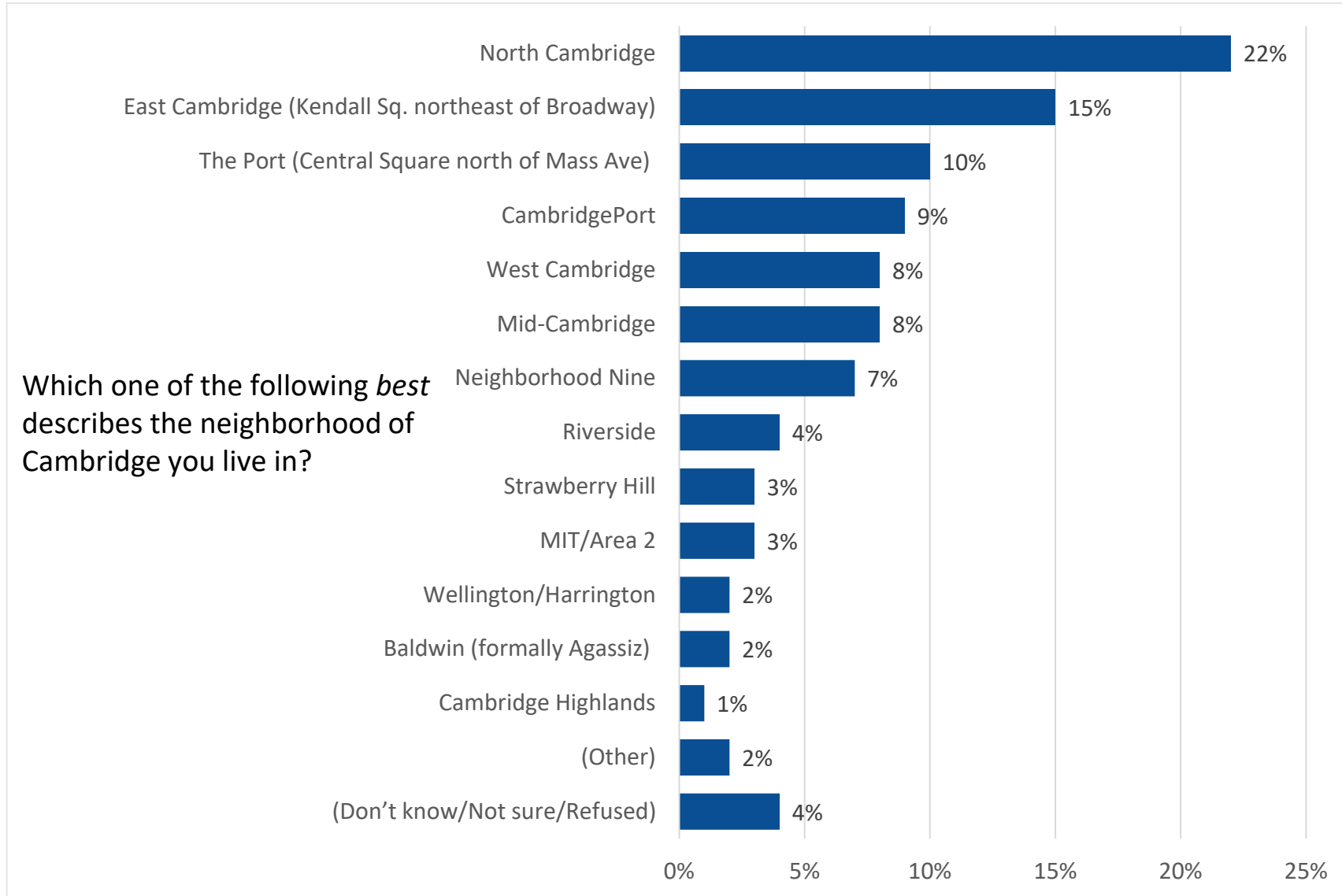
What is the primary language you speak at home?



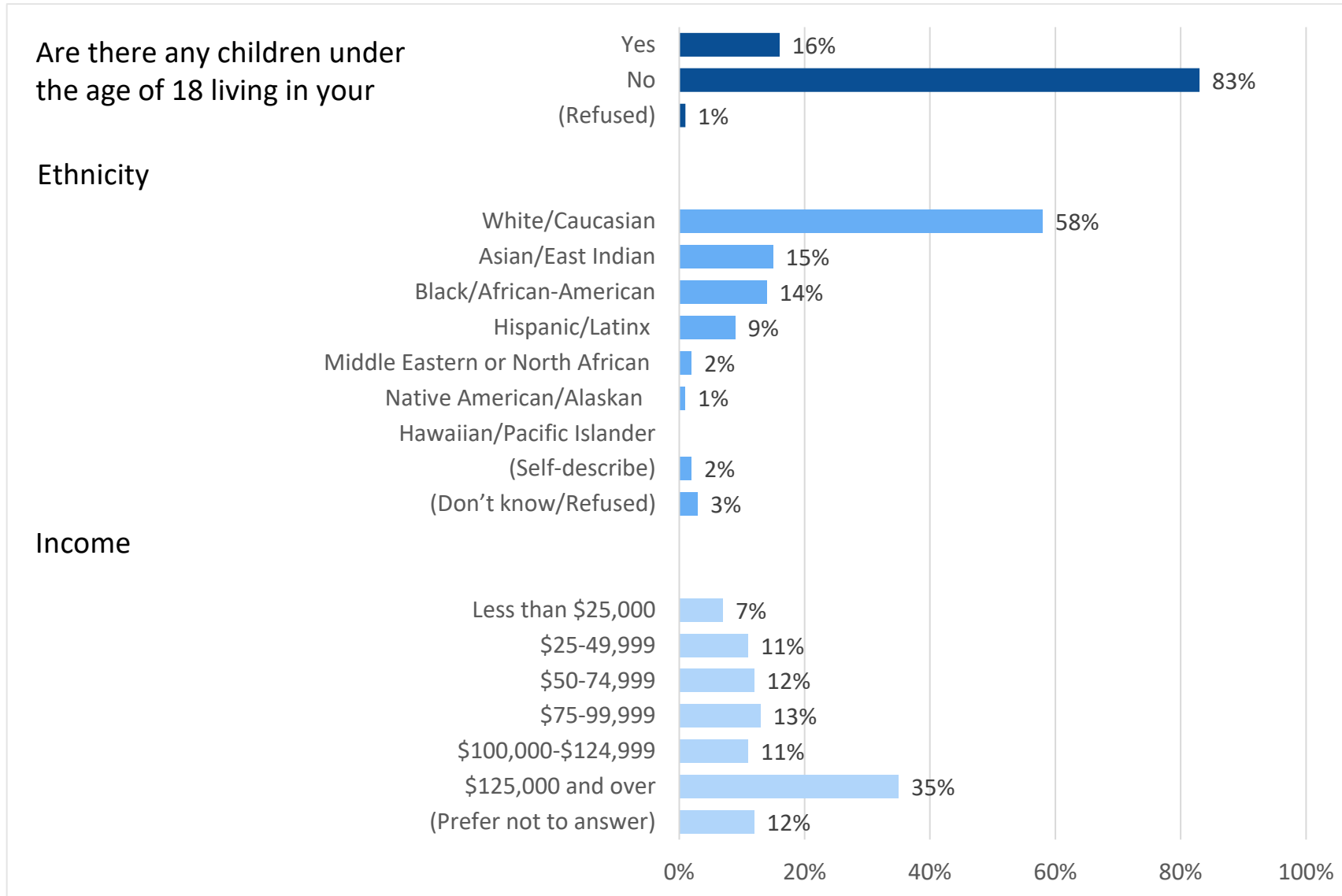
What is your ZIP CODE here in Cambridge?



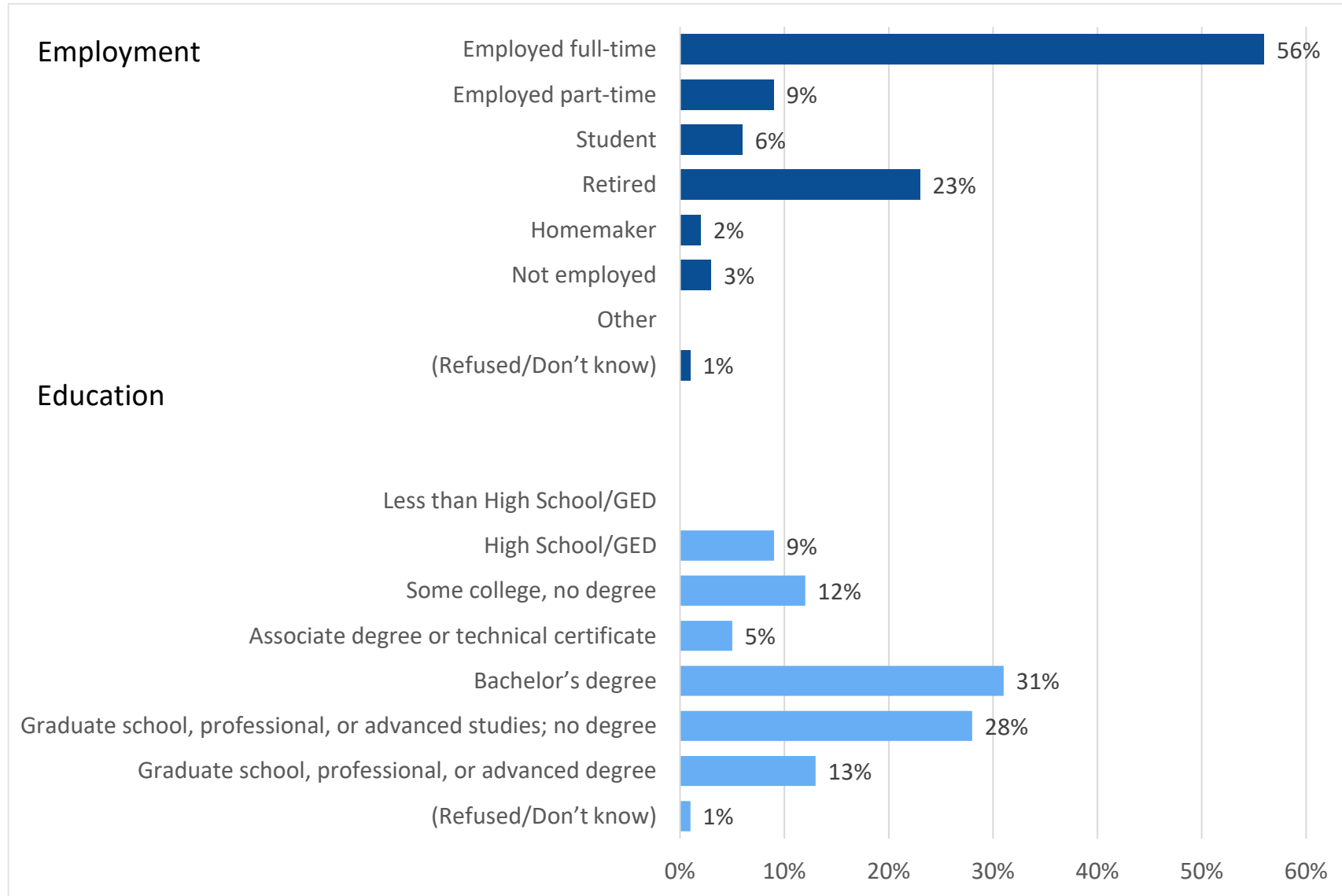
Demographics

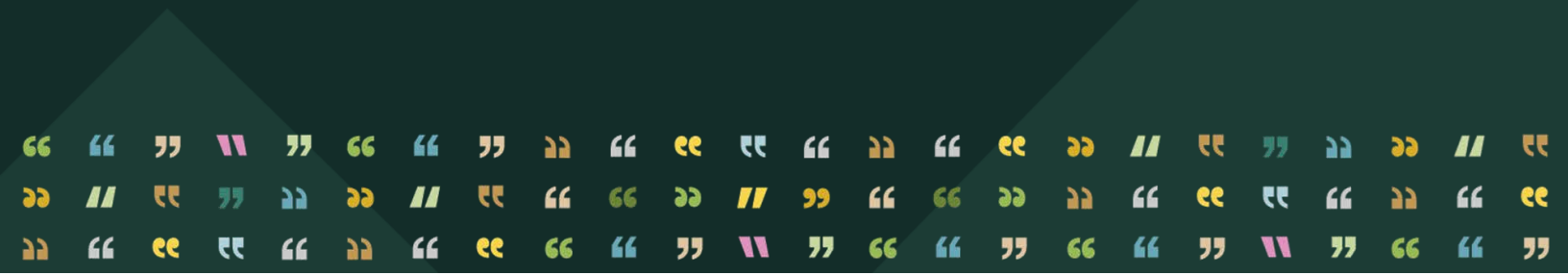


Demographics



Demographics





Cambridge, MA
Public Opinion Survey
National Benchmark Comparisons
October 2024



1241 John Q. Hammons Dr, Suite #203
Madison, WI 53717
info.polco.us • 608-709-8683

Detailed Benchmark Comparisons

Comparison Data

Polco/National Research Center (NRC)'s database of comparative resident opinion comprises resident perspectives gathered in surveys from over 500 communities. The comparison evaluations are from the most recent survey completed in each community; most communities conduct surveys every year or in alternating years. Polco adds the latest results quickly upon survey completion, keeping the benchmark data fresh and relevant. The communities in the database represent a wide geographic and population range.

Interpreting the Results

Ratings are compared when there are at least five communities in which a similar question was asked. Where comparisons are available, four columns are provided in the table. The first column is Cambridge's "percent positive." The percent positive is the combination of the top two most positive response options (i.e., "excellent" and "good," "very safe" and "somewhat safe," "essential" and "very important," etc.), or, in the case of resident behaviors/participation, the percent positive represents the proportion of respondents indicating "yes" or participating in an activity at least once a month. The second column is the rank assigned to Cambridge's rating among communities where a similar question was asked. The third column is the number of communities that asked a similar question. The final column shows the comparison of Cambridge's rating to the benchmark.

In that final column, Cambridge's results are noted as being "higher" than the benchmark, "lower" than the benchmark or "similar" to the benchmark, meaning that the average rating given by residents is statistically similar to or different (greater or lesser) than the benchmark. Being rated as "higher" or "lower" than the benchmark means that Cambridge's average rating for a particular item was more than 10 points different than the benchmark. If a rating was "much higher" or "much lower," then Cambridge's average rating was more than 20 points different when compared to the benchmark.

National Benchmark Comparisons

Table 1: Quality of Life

Quality of Life Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Cambridge as a place to live	91%	182	349	Similar
Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks	90%	110	316	Similar
Remain in Cambridge for the next five years	85%	135	320	Similar

Table 2: Governance

Governance Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Public information	67%	224	320	Similar

Table 3: Economy

Economy Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	53%	206	316	Similar

Table 4: Mobility

Mobility Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	45%	148	295	Similar
Driving	38%	321	324	Much lower
Public transportation, like bus or subway	56%	57	306	Higher
On foot	86%	42	326	Higher
Snow plowing	75%	146	272	Similar
Sidewalk maintenance	53%	232	318	Similar

Table 5: Community Design

Community Design Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Your neighborhood as a place to live	89%	177	329	Similar

Table 6: Utilities

Utilities Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	65%	153	286	Similar

Table 7: Safety

Safety Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Cambridge as a safe place to live	88%	154	337	Similar
Police department	73%	312	360	Similar
Fire department	95%	257	340	Similar

Table 8: Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	79%	182	292	Similar
City parks and park maintenance	83%	216	337	Similar

Table 9: Health and Wellness

Health and Wellness Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Public health department	83%	116	298	Similar

Table 10: Education, Arts, and Culture

Education, Arts, and Culture Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities in education, culture, and the arts	73%	121	316	Similar
Libraries	96%	88	330	Similar

Table 11: Inclusivity and Engagement

Inclusivity and Engagement Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	49%	181	288	Similar
A sense of community	74%	171	330	Similar
A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities	86%	11	324	Higher

Table 12: Participation

Participation Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services	45%	3	305	Much higher

Table 13: Focus Areas

Importance Items	Percent essential or very important	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	76%	101	297	Similar
Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	82%	2	285	Much higher
Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	81%	51	285	Similar
Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	79%	1	286	Much higher
Opportunities in education, culture, and the arts	64%	26	297	Higher
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	65%	6	297	Higher

National Benchmark Comparisons (2024 -2023)

Table 14: COMPARISON OF BENCHMARKS

All benchmarks	2024	2023
Police department	Similar	Similar
Fire department	Similar	Similar
Snow plowing	Similar	Similar
Sidewalk maintenance	Similar	Similar
Driving	Much lower	Much lower
On foot	Higher	Higher
Public transportation, like bus or subway	Higher	Similar
Quality of public utility infrastructure	Similar	Similar
Libraries	Similar	Similar
City parks and park maintenance	Similar	Similar
Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	Similar	Similar
Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	Similar	Similar
Public health department	Similar	Similar
Public information	Similar	Similar
Cambridge as a place to live	Similar	Similar
Your neighborhood as a place to live	Similar	Similar
Cambridge as a safe place to live	Similar	Similar
A sense of community	Similar	Similar
A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities	Higher	Higher
Opportunities in education, culture, and the arts	Similar	Similar
Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks	Similar	Similar
Remain in Cambridge for the next five years	Similar	Similar
Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services	Much higher	Much higher
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	Similar	Similar
Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	Similar	Similar
Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	Similar	Similar
Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	Much higher	Much higher
Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	Similar	Similar
Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	Much higher	Higher
Opportunities in education, culture, and the arts	Higher	Much higher
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	Higher	Higher