



2025 Resident Opinion Survey
Prepared for The City of Cambridge, MA

November 1, 2025
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 15th and September 19th 2025. 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, the margins of error will increase.

Executive Summary Of Key Findings

With a few notable exceptions, the results of this survey point to a Cambridge resident population that is generally positive about most City-related issues. Some of the highlights are:

- 'Overall Performance of City government' *equaled the highest "excellent" rating (22%) in the history of the survey program—dating back to 2000.* This 22% “excellent” rating was matched only by the 2023 reading. Moreover, in a new question, more than three-quarters of residents give either an “excellent” or “good” rating to ‘overall customer service by Cambridge City employees’ (76%), with more than one-quarter (26%) giving ‘excellent’ ratings. In a follow-up question, we found that recent resident interactions were centered mostly on ‘Traffic, Parking and Transportation’ (26%) and ‘Public Works’ (15%);
- Several other key measures are higher this year. For example, "Cambridge as a safe place to live" saw "excellent" ratings rise from 44% in 2024 to 47% today—*setting the highest mark for this measure in the history of the survey program*; “Cambridge as a place welcoming to all races” came in at 47% today up from 45% in 2024. In a *new* question, almost two-thirds of residents (65%) say the overall direction the City is taking is either ‘excellent’ (14%) or ‘good’ (51%);
- There were drops in some important measures. For example, ‘excellent’ ratings for ‘Cambridge as a place to live’ went down from 51% in 2024 to 48% today. Similarly, ‘excellent’ ratings for ‘your neighborhood as a place to live’ dropped from 54% in 2024 to 45% today. And, the percentage of residents who have “never” contacted a Cambridge City Councilor rose from 56% in 2004 to 64% today;
- A "Gap Analysis" shows that the areas needing greatest attention are: "providing market housing" (1.89 mean score gap between 'importance ' and 'performance'); affordable housing (i.e, subsidized) (1.36 mean score gap between 'importance ' and 'performance'); and ‘economic health—including jobs and workforce development’ (0.90 mean score gap between 'importance ' and 'performance'). Where the City performed best on important areas were ‘the quality of open space’ (just a 0.16 mean score gap between 'importance ' and 'performance') and ‘opportunities to attend cultural events’(a *positive* mean score gap of 0.13);
- Not surprisingly, 'affordable housing' still dominates the list as the most important issue the city needs to focus on (46% of open-ended responses). Interestingly, when measuring extreme “importance”, affordable *market* housing scores higher (64%) than affordable *subsidized*

housing. The ‘cost of living and jobs’ is second at 8%, while transportation issues and politics are next on the list with 6% each;

- Aside from housing issues the lowest “excellent” scores were on ‘the balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation’ (12%), ‘resident engagement with the community’ (14%), ‘economic health’ (15%) and ‘efforts to address climate change’ (15%);

- When looking at the quality of a range of City services, the Fire (+6) and the Public Health (+5) departments both showed solid increases in "excellent" ratings. Libraries still score the highest at 61% “excellent”;

- Interestingly, the percentage of residents who say they ‘ride a bike in the City more than 26 times a year’ has dropped from 32% in 2024 to 22% today. Also, bikes are regarded as an “excellent” option to get around the city by the same percentage as last year (25%). By contrast, “excellent” ratings for both taxi and public transportation have both *risen* by 5 points;

- Respondents most want the City to focus on public transportation options—but this number is down from 46% in 2024 to 37% today. By contrast, there has been a dramatic rise in the percentage of residents who want the city to focus on *parking*—24% today, up from 16% in 2024;

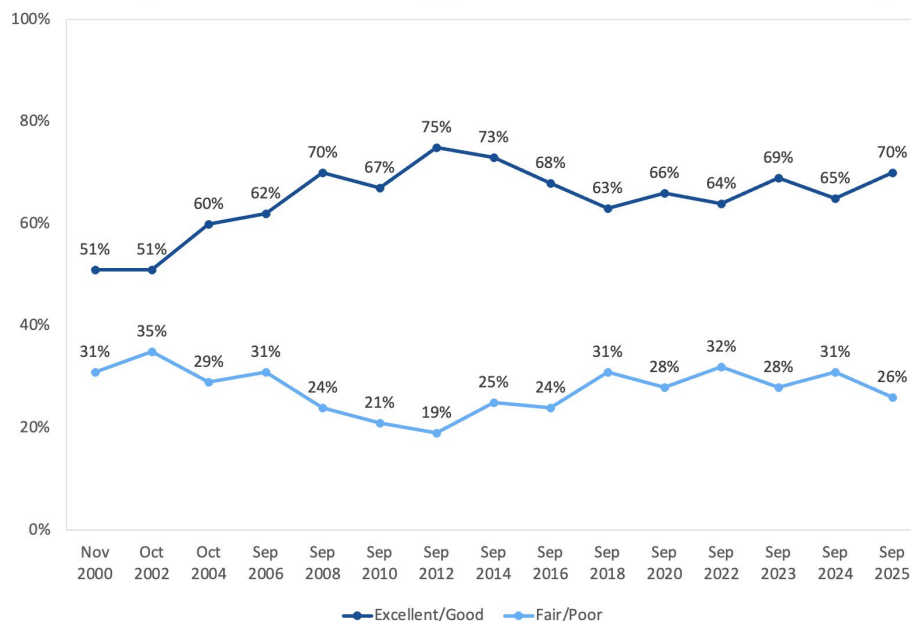
- On a new question, 49% of residents say they have volunteered time to “some group or activity” in the city. Almost as many (48%) say they have never volunteered.

A question-by-question analysis follows.

City Performance Ratings

As the chart shows, seven in ten residents (70%) give the city either “excellent” or “good” marks on the overall performance of city government in Cambridge—a 5-point increase from the 2024 score. Moreover, 22% assign “excellent” ratings to overall performance—*equalling the highest level in the history of this survey program*. And, the “excellent” score represents a 7-point increase over 2024.

Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge



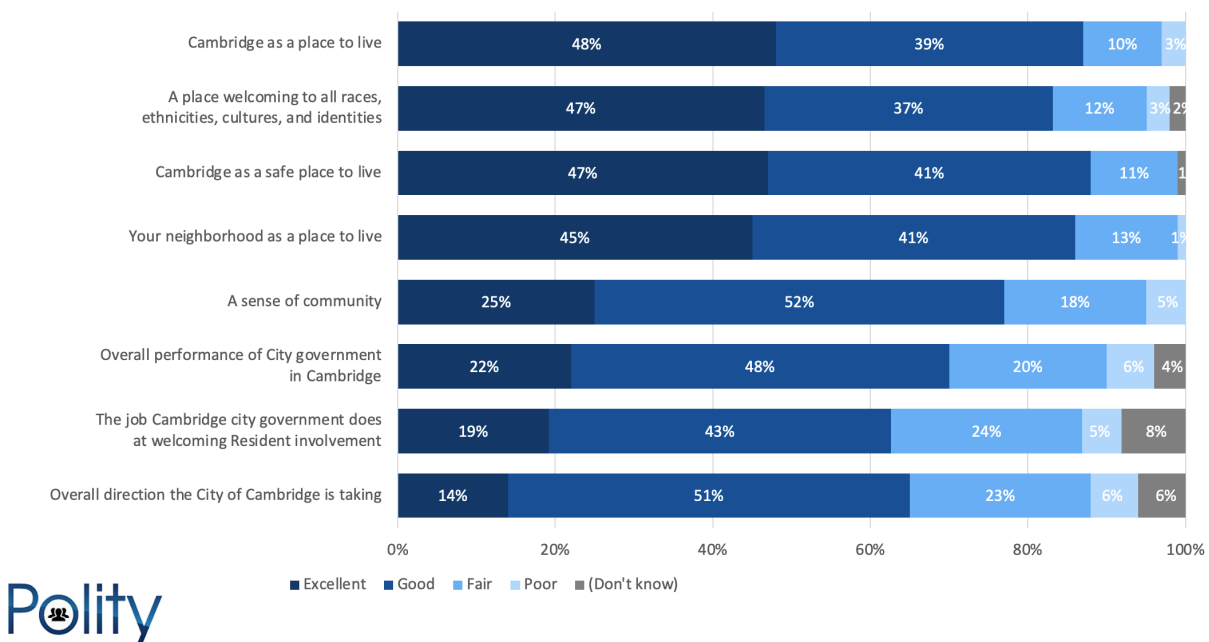
Demographically, the tendency to assign “excellent” ratings to the city comes most often from: men, those aged 18-34, West Cambridge residents, short-term residents, Asian/East Indian and African-American residents. “Fair” ratings are most likely to come from residents earning under \$50,000 a year, Hispanic residents, those with some college education, longer-term residents, retirees and residents of The Port.

Additional City Attribute Ratings

Respondents were also asked to rate a range of city attributes—in addition to overall performance of City government. We see a **drop** in “excellent” ratings for their **neighborhood as a place to live** (45% excellent, down from 54% in 2024), and **the city overall as a place to live** (48% excellent, down from 51% in 2024). The rest of the attributes are: the **city as a welcoming place** (47% excellent); **Cambridge as a safe place to live** (47% excellent); **a sense of community** (25% excellent); **welcoming resident involvement** (19% excellent). And, as we saw earlier, **overall performance of the city government** (22% excellent—up seven points from 2024).

A **new** question asks residents to rate the **overall direction the City is taking**. About one in seven residents (14%) give an “excellent” score to this attribute—with another 51% assign a “good” rating. A total of 29% give “only fair” (23%) or “poor” ratings (6%).

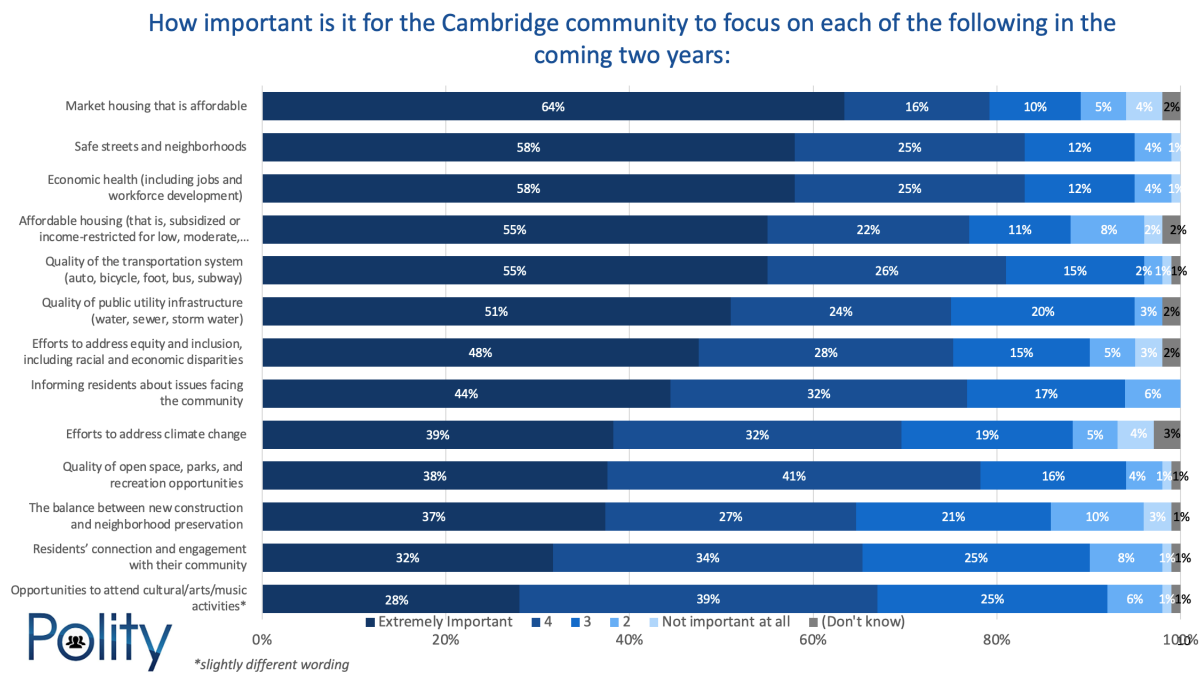
Please rate the following on a scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor.



Importance/Performance Gap Analysis

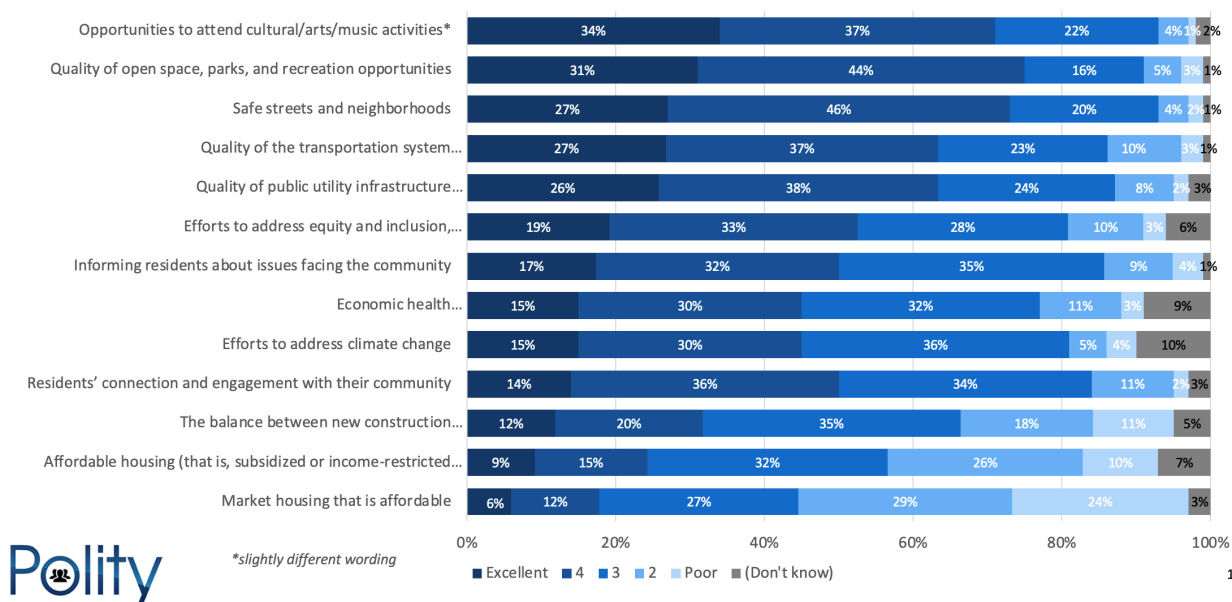
This year, respondents were asked to rate a listing of 13 city services on two separate scales—first a “1” to “5” importance scale and next a “1” to “5” performance scale. We then analyzed the mean score results to construct a Gap Analysis—showing areas that the City performs well on and areas that need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

First, here are the overall results to the *importance* ratings. As the chart shows, *market affordable housing* garners the highest percentages of “*extremely important*” ratings (64%) , while *subsidized housing* comes in at 55% “extremely important”—six points lower than in 2024. In fact, subsidized housing is eclipsed by *safe streets and neighborhoods* and *economic health* for second place on the list (58% “extremely important”). Interestingly, the *quality of the transportation system* (at 55% “extremely” important) *ties* subsidized housing for third place on the list. The importance list continues with: *quality of public utility infrastructure* (51% “extremely” important); *efforts to address equity and inclusion* (48%); *informing residents about issues facing the community* (44%); *efforts to address climate change* (39%—down 9 points from 2024); *quality of open space/recreation* (38%); *construction/preservation balance* (37%); *connection and engagement with the community* (32%); and *opportunities in education/culture/arts* (28%).



The next chart shows the overall results for *performance* ratings. As the chart shows, **opportunities to attend culture events/arts** head the performance list—with 34% assigning “excellent” ratings to the City. **Quality of open space/recreation** finishes second on the list (31% “excellent” ratings). Next in succession on City performance are: **quality of transportation system** (27%—*up 14 points since 2024*); **safe streets and neighborhoods** (27%); **quality of public utility infrastructure** (26%); **efforts to address equity and inclusion** (19%); **informing residents about issues facing the community** (17%); **efforts to address climate change** (15%); **economic health** (15%); **engagement with the community** (14%); **construction/preservation balance** (12%); **market affordable housing** (9%); and **subsidized affordable housing** (6%).

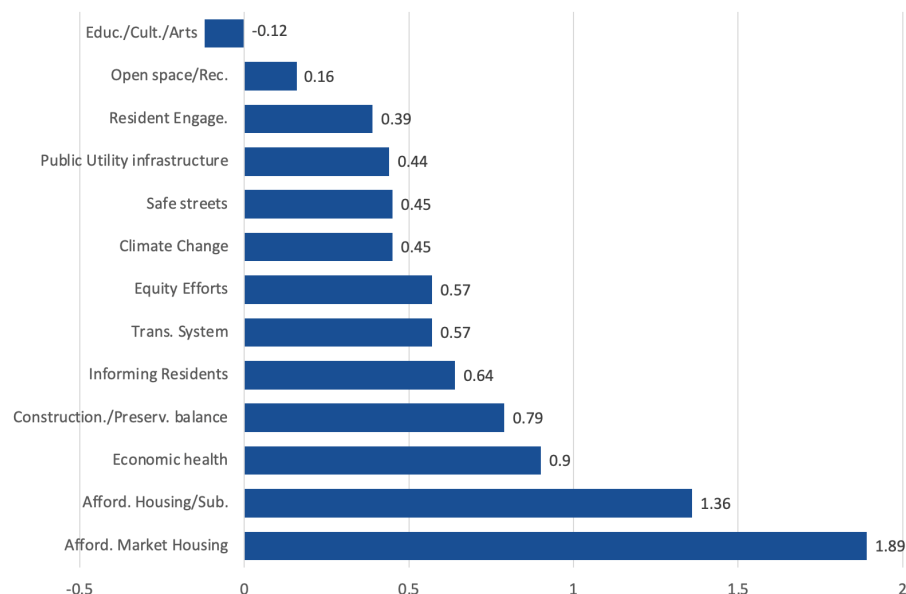
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



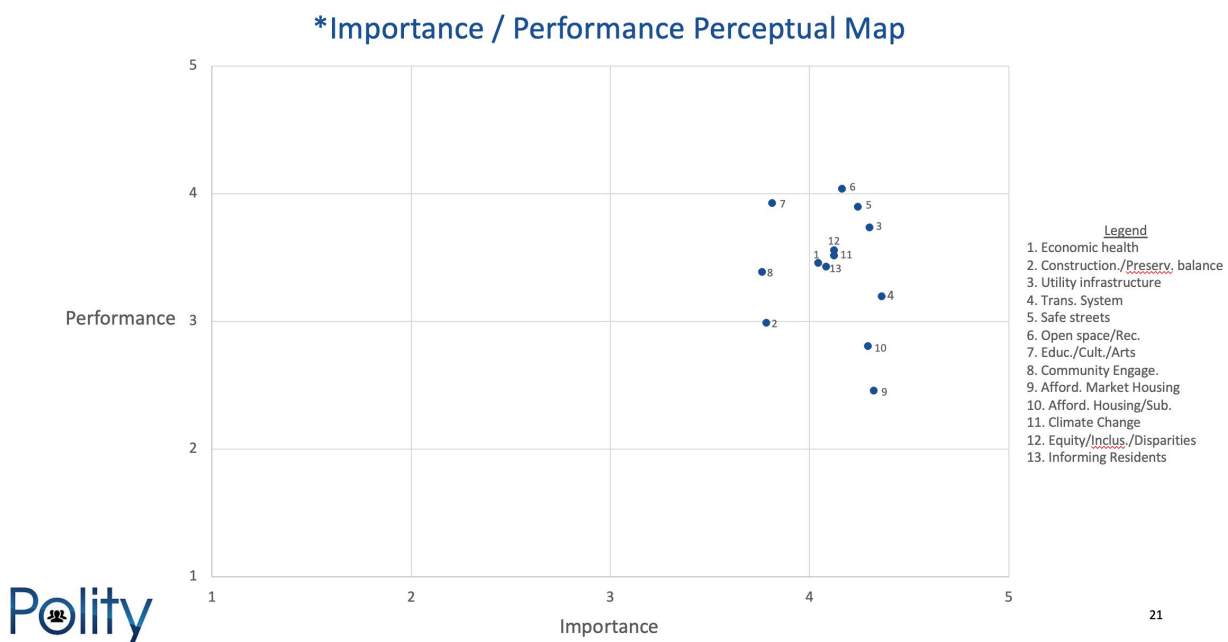
Next, we calculated the **mean (average) scores** of all the importance/performance measures and matched them up with one another. Not surprisingly, the two affordable housing measures show the biggest negative gaps between importance and performance (1.89 “market”, 1.36 “subsidized”). Economic health shows the next biggest gap (0.90), followed by construction/preservation balance (0.79), resident engagement (0.64), equity efforts (0.57), transportation systems (0.57), safe streets (0.45), climate change efforts (0.45), public utility infrastructure (0.44), open space (0.16) and education/cultural activities (-0.12)

The bottom line is that the services 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.

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



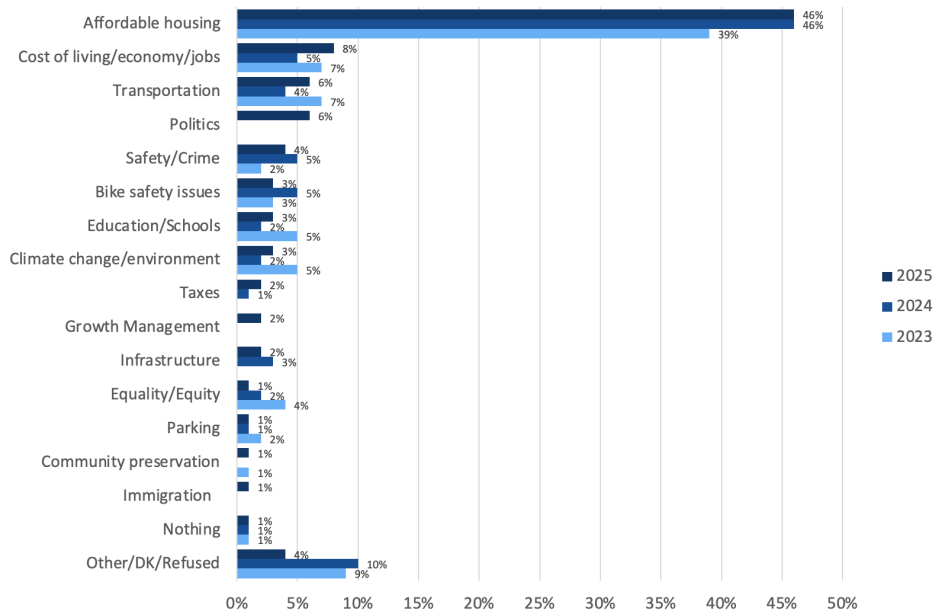
Another way of looking at this issue is by use of a “perceptual map”—which plots the relative mean scores of the services on a matrix of importance and performance. Services in the upper right-hand quadrant of the map represent areas where the City is performing well on important services. Services in the lower right-hand quadrant represent those where the City performance needs improvement on issues that are important to residents. Once again, the affordable housing issues are clearly in need of improved performance by the City—while construction/preservation balance issues are trending in a negative direction.



Most Important Issues Needing City Attention

Residents 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 of “open-ended” responses shows, affordable housing once again tops the list—with the identical score we saw in 2024 (46%). Following far down the list are: the cost of living (8%), transportation (6%), politics (6%), safety/crime (4%), bike safety (3%), education (3%), climate change (3%) and taxes (2%).

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

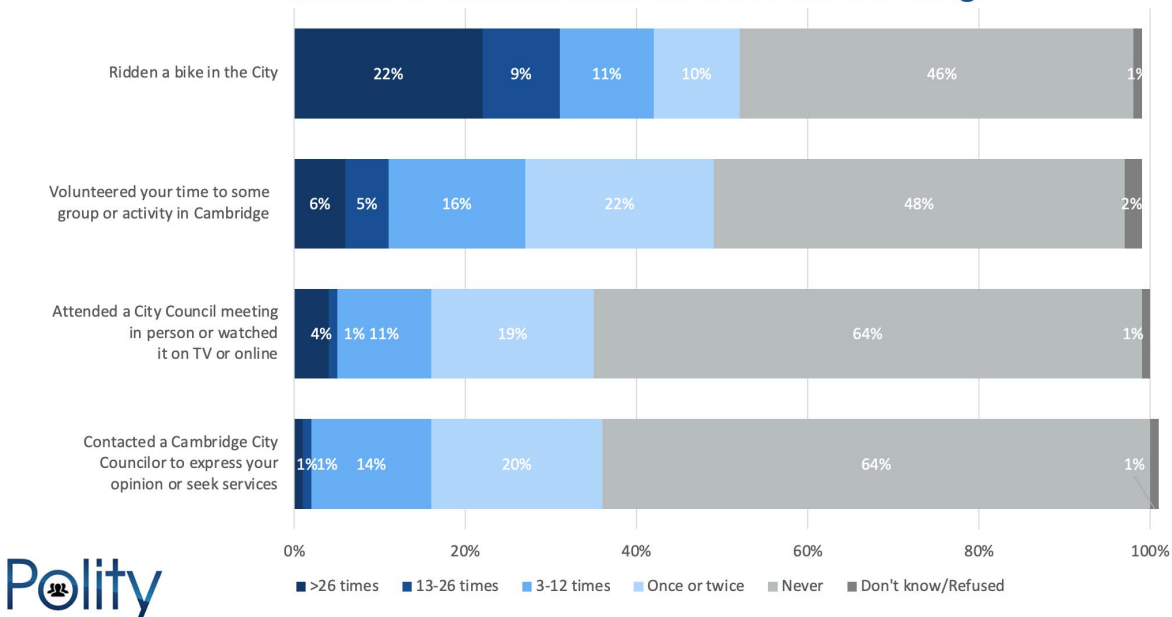


Frequency Of Activities

Respondents were also asked to tell us how many times they had participated in certain activities in the city. We find that the percentage of residents who have **ridden a bike** more than 26 times **has dropped sharply**—from 32% in 2024 to 22% today. The percentage who say they have "never" **attended a City Council meeting** has shot up—from 59% in 2024 to 64% today. And, the percentage of residents who have **never** contacted a Cambridge City Councilor has also increased from 56% in 2024 to 64% today. Clearly, these last two measures suggest issues with civic engagement.

A **new** question in this battery asks whether residents have volunteered their time to “some group or activity” in Cambridge. As the chart shows, a plurality (48%) say they have never volunteered, although a fairly substantial proportion (22%) have volunteered “once or twice”. About one in seven (16%) have donated their time between 3 and 12 times, 5% between 13-26 times, and 6% more than 26 times.

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

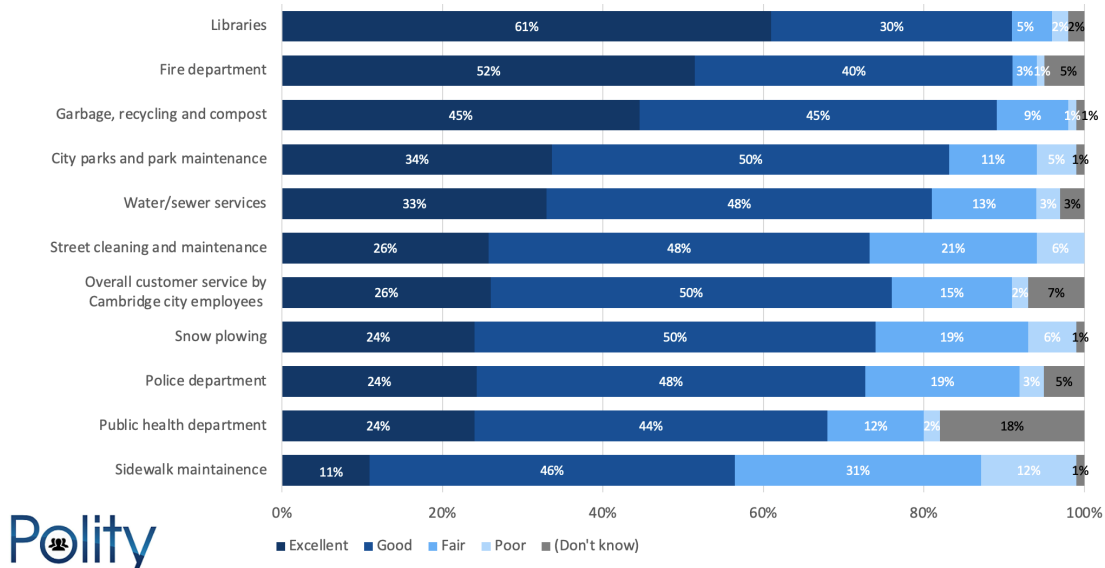


Ratings Of Specific City Services

Residents were also asked to rate a range of City services on a scale of “excellent” to “poor”. Since the 2024 survey, notable **improvements** in “excellent” scores occurred on: **fire department services** (up 6 points); the Public Health department (up 5 points) and the police department (up 3 points). In terms of “excellent” scores alone, the top four were: Library (61%); Fire Department services (52%); Garbage, compost and recycling (45%) and City parks and maintenance (34%).

A **new** question shows overall customer service by Cambridge City employees at 26% “excellent”—and 76% total positive ratings.

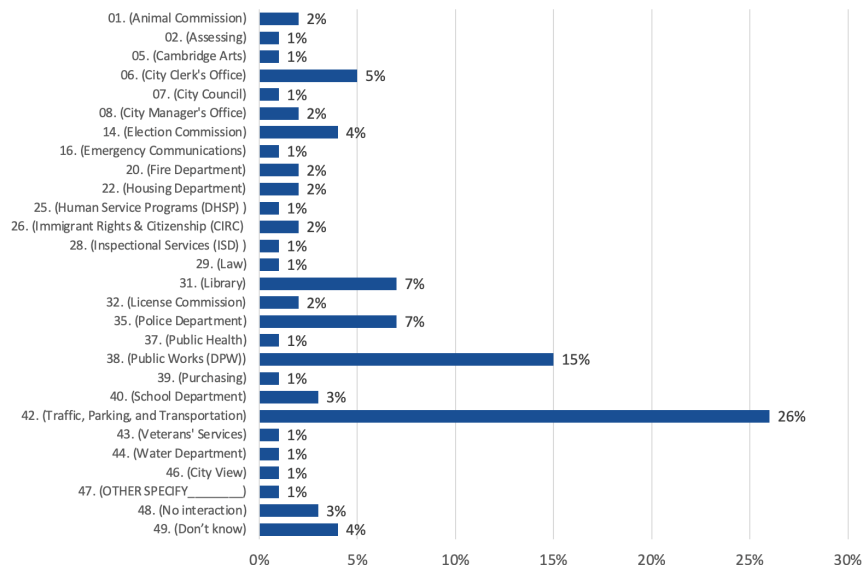
Now, I'd like to read you a number of services provided by the City of Cambridge. For each one, please rate the **quality** of these services on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.



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We then asked *those have interacted* with City employees (93% of the sample) which city departments they interacted with *last*. As the table shows, recent interactions were dominated by four departments: Traffic, parking, transportation (26%); Public Works (15%); Police department (7%) and Library (7%)

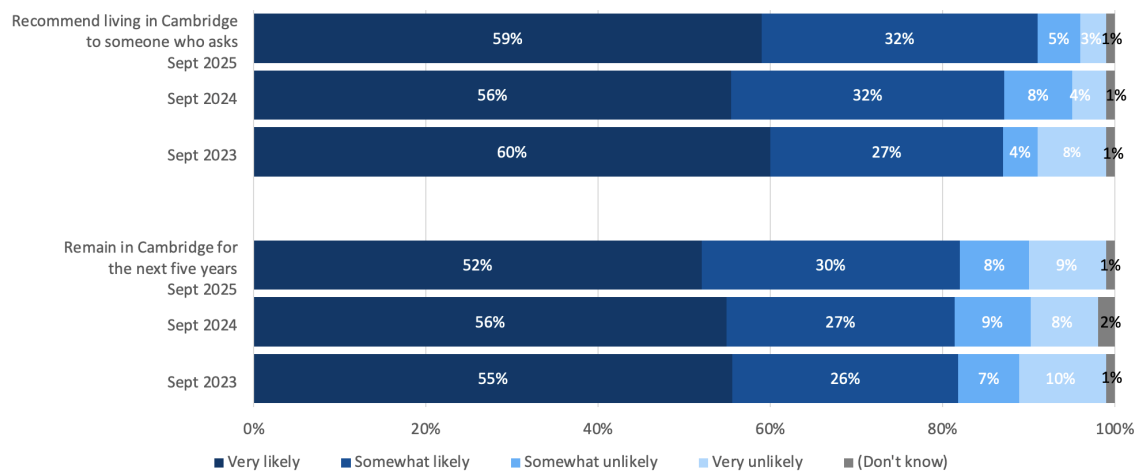
Thinking of this last issue—*overall customer service by Cambridge City employees*—
what specific City Department did you have your *last* interaction with?



Resident Intentions And Recommendations

We also asked residents two questions that reflect their level of pride in the city. First, we asked the likelihood that residents would “recommend” living in the city to someone who asked them. As the table shows, almost six in ten residents (59%) are “very likely” to make that recommendation—up 3 points from 2024. Slightly fewer (52%) say they are “very likely” to “remain in Cambridge for the next five years”—down from a reading of 56% in 2024.

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

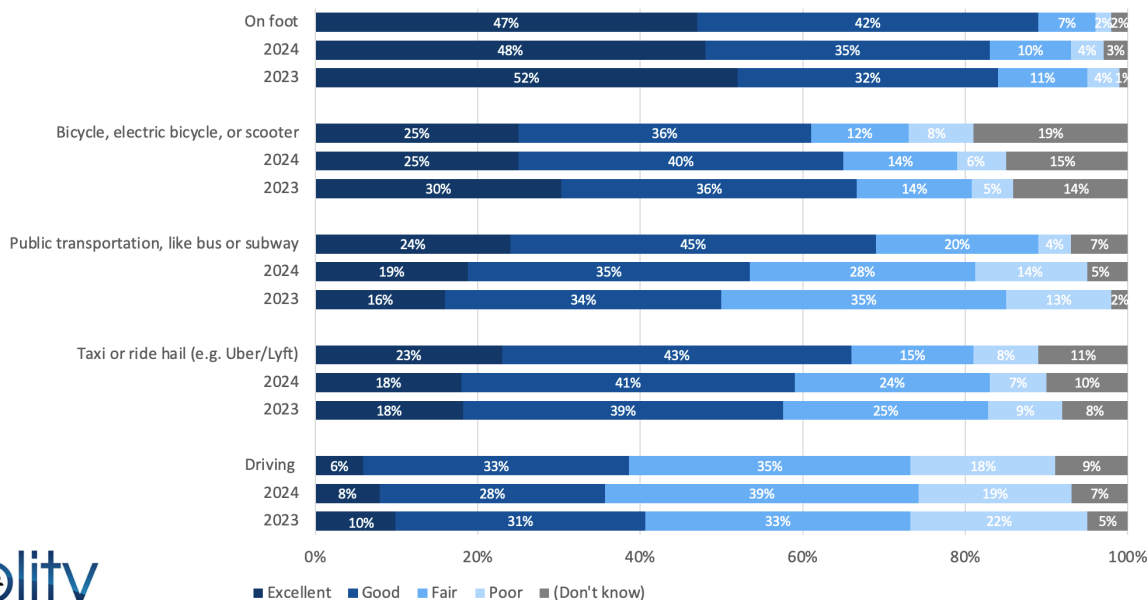


Transportation Options

As we have seen in the past, Cambridge residents continue to consider **walking** as the best way to get around the city—with almost half rating that option as “excellent” (47%). Bicycle riding is seen as the next best option (25% “excellent”), followed very closely by public transportation (24%) and Taxi/Uber (23%). Driving in the city continues to be the **least** appealing transportation option at just 6% excellent.

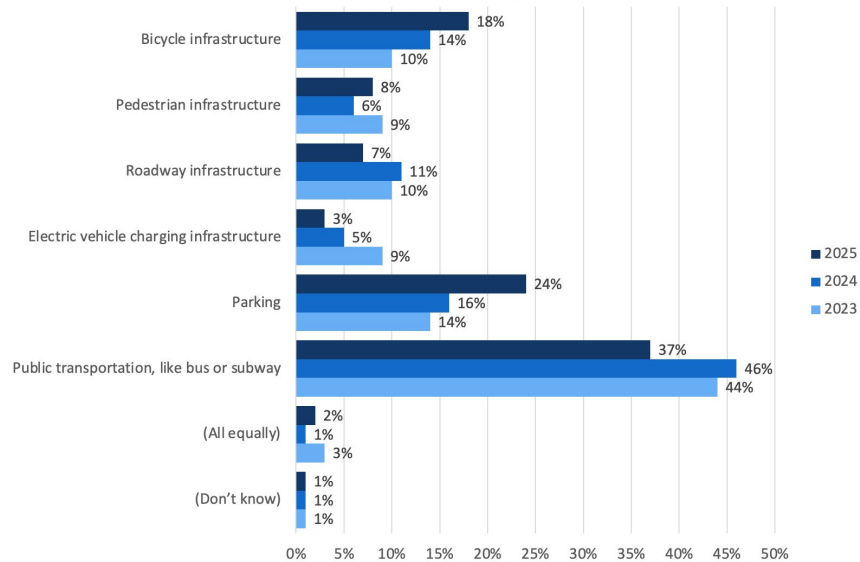
Interestingly, both public transportation (up 6 points) and Taxi/Uber (up 5 points) showed gains over the 2024 readings.

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.



And, when we asked residents which ***one*** transportation option is the most important for the City to improve—public transportation continues to top the list at 37%, *but this is 9 points lower than we saw in 2024 (46%)*. Conversely, parking has shot up in importance—*going from just 16% in 2024 to 24% today*.

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?



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2025 CITY OF CAMBRIDGE RESIDENT SURVEY

PRC #5520—SEPTEMBER 2025

SOME PERCENTAGES MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING ERROR

Interviewing dates: 9/15-9/19/2025; Sample size: N=400 Phone; MOE: $\pm 4.90\%$

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 2025	48%	39	10	3	--
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

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	45%	41	13	1	--
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 2025	47%	41	11	--	1
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 2025	25%	52	18	5	--
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

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	47%	37	12	3	2
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 2025	22%	48	20	6	4
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 2025	19%	43	24	5	8
September 2024	20%	42	19	7	12

8. Overall direction the City of Cambridge is taking

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	14%	51	23	6	6

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)

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
09. Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks					
September 2025	59%	32	5	3	1
September 2024	56%	32	8	4	1
September 2023	60%	27	4	8	1

10. Remain in Cambridge for the next five years

September 2025	52%	30	8	9	1
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		
				1	2	3	4	5	6
11. The balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation									
September 2025				3%	10	21	27	37	1
September 2024				5%	10	22	24	36	3
September 2023				7%	5	20	20	42	5
12. Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)									
September 2025				--%	3	20	24	51	2
September 2024				--%	3	14	29	52	1
September 2023				3%	1	15	23	58	1
13. Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)									
September 2025				1%	2	15	26	55	1
September 2024				1%	3	14	21	59	2
September 2023				3%	2	10	21	64	1
14. Safe streets and neighborhoods									
September 2025				1%	4	12	25	58	--
September 2024				3%	3	12	29	52	--
September 2023				1%	3	16	26	54	--
15. Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities									
September 2025				1%	4	16	41	38	1
September 2024				3%	2	17	32	45	1
September 2023				3%	2	18	32	45	--
16. Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities <i>*different wording</i>									
September 2025				1%	6	25	39	28	1
September 2024				2%	8	26	32	30	1
September 2023*				2%	3	16	29	48	1
17. Residents' connection and engagement with their community									
September 2025				1%	8	25	34	32	1
September 2024				2%	10	25	36	27	1
September 2023				4%	6	23	37	31	1
18. Market housing that is affordable									
September 2025				4%	5	10	16	64	2
September 2024				6%	4	8	14	66	2
September 2023				6%	5	10	13	65	1
19. Affordable housing (that is, subsidized or income-restricted for low, moderate, and middle income families)									
September 2025				2%	8	11	22	55	2
September 2024				4%	4	12	18	61	1
September 2023				4%	4	13	14	64	1

Not important at all				Extremely Important			(Don't Know)		
1	2	3	4	5				6	
				1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Efforts to address climate change									
September 2025				4%	5	19	32	39	3
September 2024				5%	4	14	26	48	3
September 2023				5%	5	15	25	49	1
21. Efforts to address equity and inclusion, including racial and economic disparities									
September 2025				3%	5	15	28	48	2
September 2024				5%	5	13	25	50	2
September 2023				5%	4	12	25	52	1
22. Informing residents about issues facing the community									
September 2025				--%	6	17	32	44	--
September 2024				3%	6	15	30	44	1
23. Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)									
September 2025				1%	4	12	25	58	--
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.

Poor				Excellent				(Don't Know)	
1	2	3	4	5			6		
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
24. The balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation									
September 2025				11%	18	35	20	12	5
September 2024				12%	19	33	21	10	5
September 2023				11%	16	34	22	13	5
25. Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)									
September 2025				2%	8	24	38	26	3
September 2024				2%	5	29	40	20	3
September 2023				5%	6	25	36	26	2
26. Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)									
September 2025				3%	10	23	37	27	1
September 2024				10%	15	34	28	13	1
September 2023				10%	16	26	30	18	--
27. Safe streets and neighborhoods									
September 2025				2%	4	20	46	27	1
September 2024				2%	5	20	46	26	2
September 2023				5%	2	20	48	25	--
28. Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities									
September 2025				3%	5	16	44	31	1
September 2024				2%	3	19	39	35	2
September 2023				5%	3	15	39	37	1

Poor					Excellent		(Don't Know)		
1	2	3	4	5	6				
				1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities <i>*different wording</i>									
September 2025				1%	4	22	37	34	2
September 2024				1%	7	20	38	31	3
September 2023*				4%	3	19	39	33	2
30. Residents' connection and engagement with their community									
September 2025				2%	11	34	36	14	3
September 2024				3%	13	36	32	12	4
September 2023				5%	12	36	30	14	3
31. Market housing that is affordable									
September 2025				24%	29	27	12	6	3
September 2024				22%	32	23	13	6	4
September 2023				30%	34	19	7	7	3
32. Affordable housing (that is, subsidized or income-restricted for low, moderate, and middle income families)									
September 2025				10%	26	32	15	9	7
September 2024				14%	24	27	14	11	9
September 2023				18%	24	27	14	9	7
33. Efforts to address climate change									
September 2025				4%	5	36	30	15	10
September 2024				4%	8	28	37	13	10
September 2023				6%	7	34	35	9	10
34. Efforts to address equity and inclusion, including racial and economic disparities									
September 2025				3%	10	28	33.	19	6
September 2024				4%	8	32	34	18	4
September 2023				5%	10	31	33	16	6
35. Informing residents about issues facing the community									
September 2025				4%	9	35	32	17	1
September 2024				6%	13	26	35	17	2
36. Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)									
September 2025				3%	11	32	30	15	9
September 2024				4%	9	33	31	14	8
September 2023				6%	3	27	36	17	12

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

	<u>9/25</u>	<u>9/24</u>	<u>9/23</u>
Affordable housing	46%	46%	39%
Cost of living/economy/jobs	8	5	7
Transportation	6	4	7
Politics	6	--	--
Safety/Crime	4	5	2
Bike safety issues	3	5	3
Education/Schools	3	2	5
Climate change/environment	3	2	5
Taxes	2	1	--
Growth Management	2	--	--
Infrastructure	2	3	--
Equality/Equity	1	2	4
Parking	1	1	2
Community preservation	1	--	1
Immigration	1	--	--
Nothing	1	1	1
Other/DK/Refused	4	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>
38. Police department					
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	24%	48	19	3	5
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

39. Fire department

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	52%	40	3	1	5
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

40. Libraries

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	61%	30	5	2	2
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

41. Public health department

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	24%	44	12	2	18
September 2024	19%	47	13	2	19
September 2023	25%	41	15	7	13

42. City parks and park maintenance

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	34%	50	11	5	1
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

43. Street cleaning and maintenance

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	26%	48	21	6	--
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

44. Sidewalk maintenance

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	11%	46	31	12	1
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

45. Snow plowing

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	24%	50	19	6	1
September 2024	23%	50	18	5	4
September 2023	23%	47	21	7	2
September 2022	26%	47	21	6	1

46. Water/sewer services

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	33%	48	13	3	3
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

47. Garbage, recycling and compost

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	45%	45	9	1	1
September 2024	44%	41	13	1	1
September 2023	50%	36	9	4	1

48. Overall customer service by Cambridge city employees

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(DK)</u>
September 2025	26%	50	15	2	7

[IF 1-4 ON Q. 48]

49. Thinking of this last issue—*overall customer service by Cambridge City employees*—what specific City Department did you have your ***last*** interaction with? **[DO NOT READ]**

01. (Animal Commission)	2%	02. (Assessing)	1
03. (Auditing)	--	04. (Budget)	--
05. (Cambridge Arts)	1	06. (City Clerk's Office)	5
07. (City Council)	1	08. (City Manager's Office)	2
09. (Comm. for Persons w/Disabilities)	--	10. (Communications & Community Eng.)	--
11. (Community Development (CDD))	--	12. (Community Safety)	--
13. (Consumers' Council)	--	14. (Election Commission)	4
15. (Electrical)	--	16. (Emergency Communications)	1
17. (Equity & Inclusion)	--	18. (Family Policy Council)	--
19. (Finance)	--	20. (Fire Department)	2
21. (Historical Commission)	--	22. (Housing Department)	2
23. (Human Resources)	--	24. (Human Rights Commission)	--
25. (Human Service Programs (DHSP))	1	26. (Immigrant Rights & Citizenship (CIRC))	2
27. (Information Technology)	--	28. (Inspectional Services (ISD))	1
29. (Law)	1	30. (LGBTQ+ Commission)	--
31. (Library)	7	32. (License Commission)	2
33. (Mayor's Office)	--	34. (Peace Commission)	--
35. (Police Department)	7	36. (Police Review and Advisory Board)	--
37. (Public Health)	1	38. (Public Works (DPW))	15
39. (Purchasing)	1	40. (School Department)	3
41. (Sustainability Office)	--	42. (Traffic, Parking, and Transportation)	26
43. (Veterans' Services)	1	44. (Water Department)	1
45. (Women's Commission)	--	46. (City View)	1
47. (OTHER SPECIFY _____)	1	48. (No interaction)	3
49. (Don't know)	4		

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>
50. Attended a City Council meeting in person or watched it on TV or online							
September 2025	64%	13	6	11	1	4	1
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

		(Never)	(Once)	(Twice)	(3-12 times)	(13-26 times)	(> 26 times)	(DK/ Ref)
51.	Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services							
	September 2025	64%	11	9	14	1	1	1
	September 2024	56%	12	12	17	1	1	--
	September 2023	60%	11	8	16	2	2	1
52.	Ridden a bike in the City							
	September 2025	46%	9	1	11	9	22	1
	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	-
53.	Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Cambridge							
	September 2025	48%	11	11	16	5	6	2

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>
54.	Bicycle, electric bicycle, or scooter					
	September 2025	25%	36	12	8	19
	September 2024	25%	40	14	6	15
	September 2023	30%	36	14	5	14
55.	On foot					
	September 2025	47%	42	7	2	2
	September 2024	48%	35	10	4	3
	September 2023	52%	32	11	4	1
56.	Driving					
	September 2025	6%	33	35	18	9
	September 2024	8%	28	39	19	7
	September 2023	10%	31	33	22	5
57.	Taxi or ride hail (e.g. Uber/Lyft)					
	September 2025	23%	43	15	8	11
	September 2024	18%	41	24	7	10
	September 2023	18%	39	25	9	8
58.	Public transportation, like bus or subway					
	September 2025	24%	45	20	4	7
	September 2024	19%	35	28	14	5
	September 2023	16%	34	35	13	2

59. 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>9/2025</u>	<u>9/2024</u>	<u>9/2023</u>
1. Bicycle infrastructure	18%	14%	10%
2. Pedestrian infrastructure	8	6	9
3. Roadway infrastructure	7	11	10
4. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure	3	5	9
5. Parking	24	16	14
6. Public transportation, like bus or subway	37	46	44
7. (All equally)	2	1	3
8. (Don't know)	1	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.*

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

1. Yes 19% 2. No 79 3. (Refused) 1

61. What is your gender identity? **[DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]**

1. Female/woman	50%
2. Male/man	49
3. Non-binary/gender non-conforming	1
4. Transgender—birth gender different from current gender	--
5. Cisgender—birth gender same as current gender	--
6. Other, SPECIFY _____	--
7. Refused	--

62. And what is your ZIP CODE here in Cambridge?

1. 02138	23%	2. 02139	34
3. 02140	25	4. 02141	13
5. 02142	2	6. (Don't know/Refused)	4

63. In which of the following categories is your age?

1. 18-24	14%	2. 25-34	21
3. 35-44	9	4. 45-54	15
5. 55-64	14	6. 65-74	17
7. 75 and over	9	8. (Refused)	1

64. How many years have you lived in Cambridge?

1. Less than 1 year	3%	2. 1.1 to 2 years	9
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	12
7. Over 30 years	17	8. All my life	9
9. (Refused)	1		

65. 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

66. Do you own or rent your home?

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

67. 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)	12%
02. MIT/Area 2	3
03. Wellington/Harrington	4
04. The Port (Central Square north of Mass Ave)	13
05. CambridgePort	9
06. Mid-Cambridge	4
07. Riverside	4
08. Baldwin (formally Agassiz)	4
09. Neighborhood Nine	6
10. West Cambridge	9
11. North Cambridge	19
12. Cambridge Highlands	1
13. Strawberry Hill	3
14. (Other _____)	3
15. (Don't know/Not sure/Refused)	5

68. 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 | 16% |
| 2. Black/African American | 14 |
| 3. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | -- |
| 4. Hispanic/Latinx | 11 |
| 5. Middle Eastern or North African | 2 |
| 6. Native American/Alaskan | 1 |
| 7. White/Caucasian | 58 |
| 8. (Self-describe _____) | -- |
| 9. (Don't know/Refused) | 2 |
69. What is the highest level of education you have completed? **[READ ALL GROUPS EXCEPT RESPONSE 8]**
- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Less than High School/GED | 1% |
| 2. High School/GED | 5 |
| 3. Some college, no degree | 11 |
| 4. Associate degree or technical certificate | 8 |
| 5. Bachelor's degree | 32 |
| 6. Graduate school, professional, or advanced studies; no degree | 9 |
| 7. Graduate school, professional, or advanced degree | 34 |
| 8. (Refused/Don't know) | 1 |
70. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?
[READ ALL GROUPS EXCEPT RESPONSE 7]
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. Employed full-time | 53% |
| 2. Employed part-time | 9 |
| 3. Student | 7 |
| 4. Retired | 19 |
| 5. Homemaker | 1 |
| 6. Not employed | 7 |
| 7. Other _____ | 1 |
| 8. (Refused/Don't know) | 2 |
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 | 8% |
| 2. \$25,000-\$49,999 | 10 |
| 3. \$50,000-\$74,999 | 13 |
| 4. \$75,000-\$99,999 | 10 |
| 5. \$100,000-\$124,999 | 12 |
| 6. \$125,000 or more | 32 |
| 7. (Prefer not to answer) | 16 |



Cambridge, MA

2025 Public Opinion Survey

National & Custom Benchmark Comparisons

November 2025



1241 John Q. Hammons Dr, Suite #203
Madison, WI 53717
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Detailed Benchmark Comparisons

Comparison Data

Polco's database of comparative resident opinion comprises resident perspectives gathered in surveys from over 400 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.

The present report includes national benchmark comparisons and similar size communities' comparisons (jurisdictions with populations between 100,000 and 150,000) when similar questions to the 2025 City of Cambridge Resident Survey were included in Polco's database.

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	88%	206	357	Similar
Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks	92%	64	329	Higher
Remain in Cambridge for the next five years	85%	141	333	Similar

Table 2: Governance

Governance Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall direction the City of Cambridge is taking	70%	146	345	Similar
The job Cambridge city government does at welcoming resident involvement	71%	71	343	Similar
Overall customer service by Cambridge city employees	82%	255	353	Similar

Table 3: Economy

Economy Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	48%	232	331	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)	61%	104	325	Similar
Driving	43%	325	337	Much lower
Public transportation, like bus or subway	75%	17	321	Much higher
On foot	91%	37	337	Higher
Snow plowing	76%	148	280	Similar
Sidewalk maintenance	55%	232	325	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	87%	220	343	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)	67%	157	317	Similar

Table 7: Safety

Safety Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Cambridge as a safe place to live	90%	140	346	Similar
Police department	78%	285	366	Similar
Fire department	97%	196	350	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%	215	323	Similar
City parks and park maintenance	87%	198	349	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%	89	312	Similar

Table 10: Education, Arts, and Culture

Education, Arts, and Culture Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	73%	104	331	Similar
Libraries	95%	103	340	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	53%	188	319	Similar
A sense of community	78%	135	343	Similar
A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities	84%	7	337	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	40%	4	321	Much higher
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Cambridge	54%	14	326	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)	82%	23	318	Similar
Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	83%	1	316	Much higher
Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	79%	49	316	Similar
Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	80%	2	317	Higher
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	66%	22	318	Higher
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	68%	1	318	Much higher

National Benchmark Comparisons (2025-2023)

Table 14: COMPARISON OF BENCHMARKS

All benchmarks		2025	2024	2023
Evaluative Items	Police department	S	S	S
	Fire department	S	S	S
	Snow plowing	S	S	S
	Sidewalk maintenance	S	S	S
	Driving	ML	ML	ML
	On foot	H	H	H
	Public transportation, like bus or subway	MH	H	S
	Quality of public utility infrastructure	S	S	S
	Libraries	S	S	S
	City parks and park maintenance	S	S	S
	Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	S	S	S
	Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	S	S	S
	Public health department	S	S	S
	Overall direction the City of Cambridge is taking	S	-	-
	Overall customer service by Cambridge city employees	S	-	-
	Cambridge as a place to live	S	S	S
	Your neighborhood as a place to live	S	S	S
	Cambridge as a safe place to live	S	S	S
	A sense of community	S	S	S
	A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities	H	H	H
	Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	S	S	S
	Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks	H	S	S
	Remain in Cambridge for the next five years	S	S	S
	Residents' connection and engagement with their community	S	S	S
	Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	S	S	S
Participation Items	Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek	MH	MH	MH
	Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Cambridge	MH	-	-
Importance Items	Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	S	S	S
	Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	MH	MH	MH
	Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	S	S	S
	Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	H	MH	H
	Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	H	H	MH
	Residents' connection and engagement with their community	MH	H	H

ML=Much Lower / L=Lower / S=Similar / H=Higher / MH=Much Higher

Similar Size Jurisdictions Benchmark Comparisons

Table 15: Quality of Life

Quality of Life Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Cambridge as a place to live	88%	14	29	Similar
Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks	92%	4	23	Higher
Remain in Cambridge for the next five years	85%	10	22	Similar

Table 16: Governance

Governance Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Overall direction the City of Cambridge is taking	70%	11	26	Similar
The job Cambridge city government does at welcoming resident involvement	71%	3	28	Similar
Overall customer service by Cambridge city employees	82%	20	27	Similar

Table 17: Economy

Economy Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	48%	15	24	Similar

Table 18: Mobility

Mobility Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	61%	8	25	Similar
Driving	43%	24	24	Much lower
Public transportation, like bus or subway	75%	1	22	Much higher
On foot	91%	2	24	Much higher
Snow plowing	76%	7	20	Similar
Sidewalk maintenance	55%	15	22	Similar

Table 19: Community Design

Community Design Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Your neighborhood as a place to live	87%	18	26	Similar

Table 20: Utilities

Utilities Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	67%	9	23	Similar

Table 21: Safety

Safety Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Cambridge as a safe place to live	90%	8	27	Higher
Police department	78%	20	28	Similar
Fire department	97%	14	27	Similar

Table 22: 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%	15	24	Similar
City parks and park maintenance	87%	11	24	Similar

Table 23: Health and Wellness

Health and Wellness Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Public health department	83%	5	22	Similar

Table 24: Education, Arts, and Culture

Education, Arts, and Culture Items	Percent positive	Rank	Number of communities in comparison	Comparison to benchmark
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	73%	8	25	Similar
Libraries	95%	4	26	Similar

Table 25: 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	53%	12	23	Similar
A sense of community	78%	9	26	Similar
A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities	84%	1	23	Higher

Table 26: 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	40%	1	23	Much higher
Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Cambridge	54%	1	23	Higher

Table 27: 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)	82%	1	23	Similar
Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	83%	1	23	Much higher
Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	79%	3	23	Higher
Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	80%	1	23	Higher
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	66%	5	23	Similar
Residents' connection and engagement with their community	68%	1	23	Much higher

National and Similar Size Jurisdiction Comparisons

Table 28: COMPARISON OF BENCHMARKS

	All benchmarks	National	Similar Size
Evaluative Items	Police department	S	S
	Fire department	S	S
	Snow plowing	S	S
	Sidewalk maintenance	S	S
	Driving	ML	ML
	On foot	H	MH
	Public transportation, like bus or subway	MH	MH
	Quality of public utility infrastructure	S	S
	Libraries	S	S
	City parks and park maintenance	S	S
	Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus,	S	S
	Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	S	S
	Public health department	S	S
	Overall direction the City of Cambridge is taking	S	S
	Overall customer service by Cambridge city employees	S	S
	Cambridge as a place to live	S	H
	Your neighborhood as a place to live	S	S
	Cambridge as a safe place to live	S	S
	A sense of community	S	S
	A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities	H	H
Participation Items	Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	S	S
	Recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks	H	H
	Remain in Cambridge for the next five years	S	S
	Residents' connection and engagement with their community	S	S
Importance Items	Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	S	H
	Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek	MH	MH
	Volunteered your time to some group or activity in Cambridge	MH	H
	Economic health (including jobs and workforce development)	S	S
	Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus,	MH	MH
	Quality of public utility infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)	S	H
	Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	H	S
	Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	H	S
	Residents' connection and engagement with their community	MH	MH

ML=Much Lower / L=Lower / S=Similar / H=Higher / MH=Much Higher



November 2025

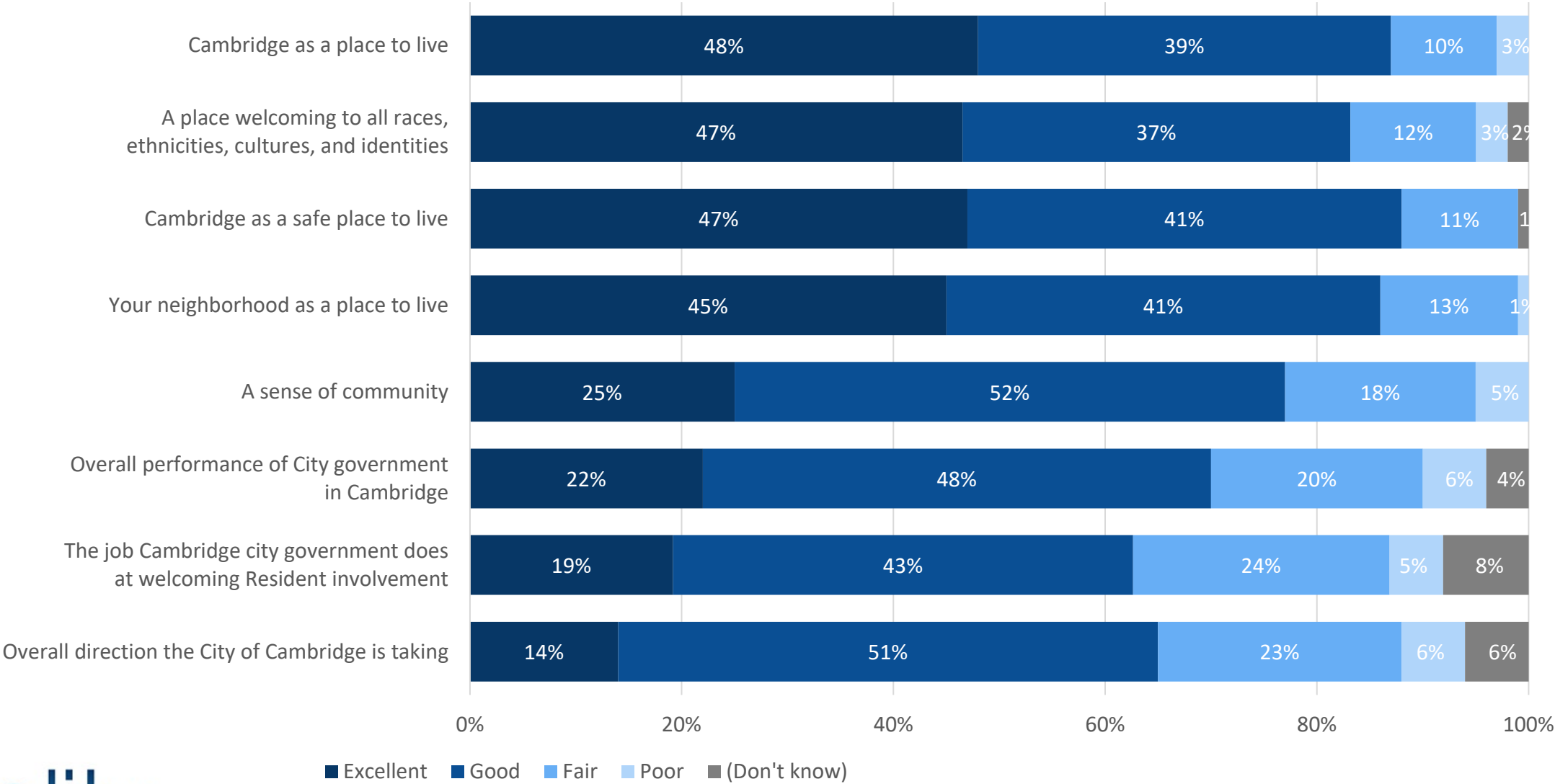
Cambridge Resident Survey

Executive Summary

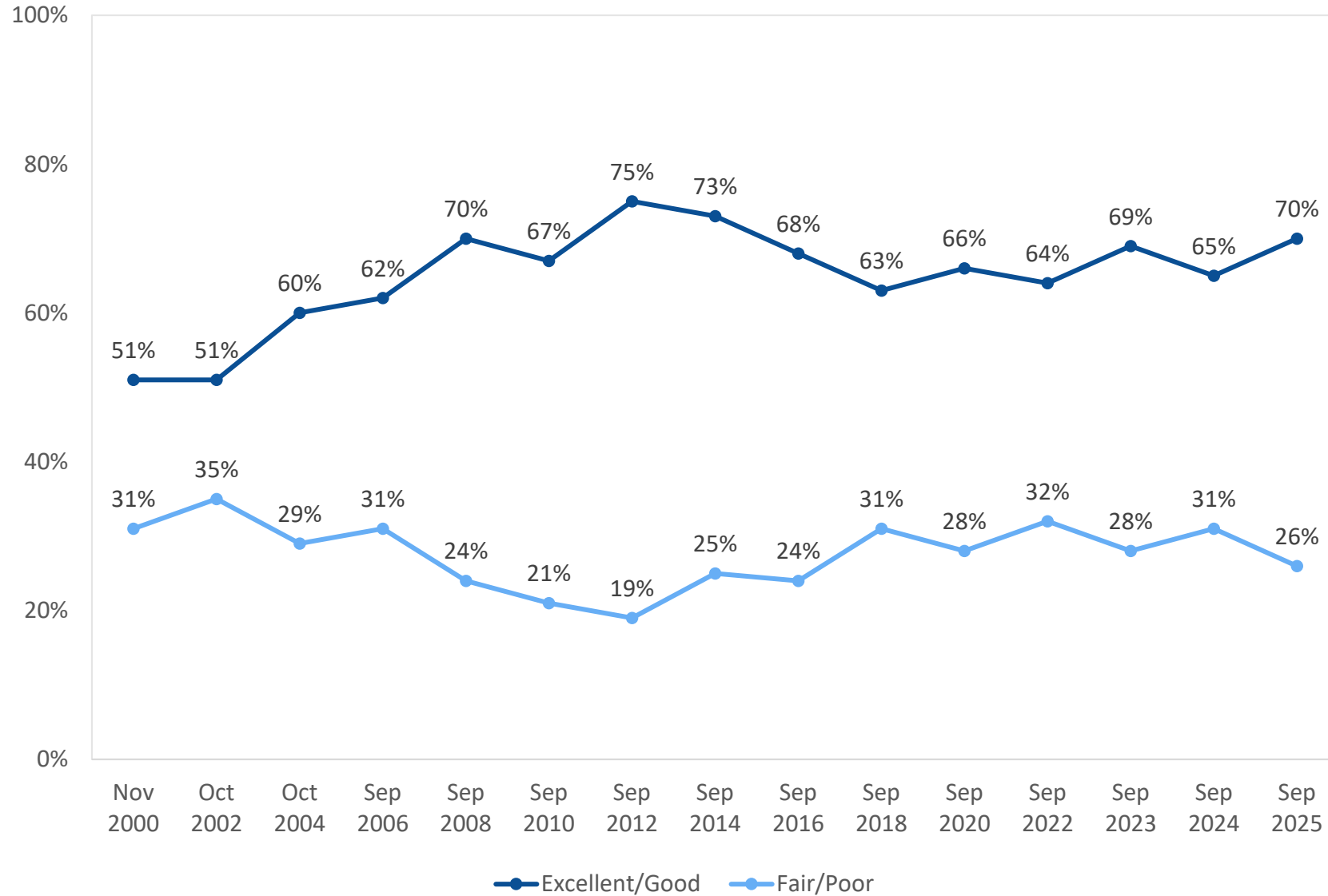
With a few notable exceptions, the results of this survey point to a Cambridge resident population that is generally positive about most City-related issues. Some of the highlights are:

- 'Overall Performance of City government' *equaled the highest "excellent" rating (22%) in the history of the survey program—dating back to 2000*. This 22% "excellent" rating was matched only by the 2023 reading. Moreover, in a new question, more than three-quarters of residents give either an "excellent" or "good" rating to 'overall customer service by Cambridge City employees' (76%), with more than one-quarter (26%) giving 'excellent' ratings. In a follow-up question, we found that resident interactions were centered on 'Traffic, Parking and Transportation' (26%) and 'Public Works' (15%);
- Several other key measures are higher this year. For example, "Cambridge as a safe place to live" saw "excellent" ratings rise from 44% in 2024 to 47% today—*setting the highest mark for this measure in the history of the survey program*; "Cambridge as a place welcoming to all races" came in at 47% today up from 45% in 2024. In a *new* question, almost two-thirds of residents (65%) say the overall direction the City is taking is either 'excellent' (14%) or 'good' (51%);
- There were drops in some important measures. For example, 'excellent' ratings for 'Cambridge as a place to live' went down from 51% in 2024 to 48% today. Similarly, 'excellent' ratings for 'your neighborhood as a place to live' dropped from 54% in 2024 to 45% today. And, the percentage of residents who have "never" contacted a Cambridge City Councilor rose from 56% in 2004 to 64% today;
- A "Gap Analysis" shows that the areas needing greatest attention are: "providing market housing" (1.89 mean score gap between 'importance' and 'performance'); affordable housing (i.e. subsidized) (1.36 mean score gap between 'importance' and 'performance'); and 'economic health—including jobs and workforce development' (0.90 mean score gap between 'importance' and 'performance'). Where the City performed best on important areas were 'the quality of open space' (just a 0.16 mean score gap between 'importance' and 'performance') and 'opportunities to attend cultural events' (a *positive* mean score gap of 0.13);
- Not surprisingly, 'affordable housing' still dominates the list as the most important issue the city needs to focus on (46% of open-ended responses). Interestingly, when measuring extreme "importance", affordable *market* housing scores higher (64%) than affordable *subsidized* housing. The 'cost of living and jobs' is second at 8%, while transportation issues and politics are next on the list with 6% each;
- Aside from housing issues the lowest "excellent" scores were on 'the balance between new construction and neighborhood preservation' (12%), 'resident engagement with the community' (14%), 'economic health' (15%) and 'efforts to address climate change' (15%);
- When looking at the quality of a range of City services, the Fire (+6) and the Public Health (+5) departments both showed solid increases in "excellent" ratings. Libraries still score the highest at 61% "excellent";
- Interestingly, the percentage of residents who say they 'ride a bike in the City more than 26 times a year' has dropped from 32% in 2024 to 22% today. Also, bikes are regarded as an "excellent" option to get around the city by the same percentage as last year (25%). By contrast, "excellent" ratings for both taxi and public transportation have both *risen* by 5 points;
- Respondents most want the City to focus on public transportation options—but this number is down from 46% in 2024 to 37% today. There has been a dramatic rise, however, in the percentage of residents who want the city to focus on *parking*—24% today, up from 16% in 2024;
- On a new question, 49% of residents say they have volunteered time to "some group or activity" in the city. Almost as many (48%) say they have never volunteered.

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

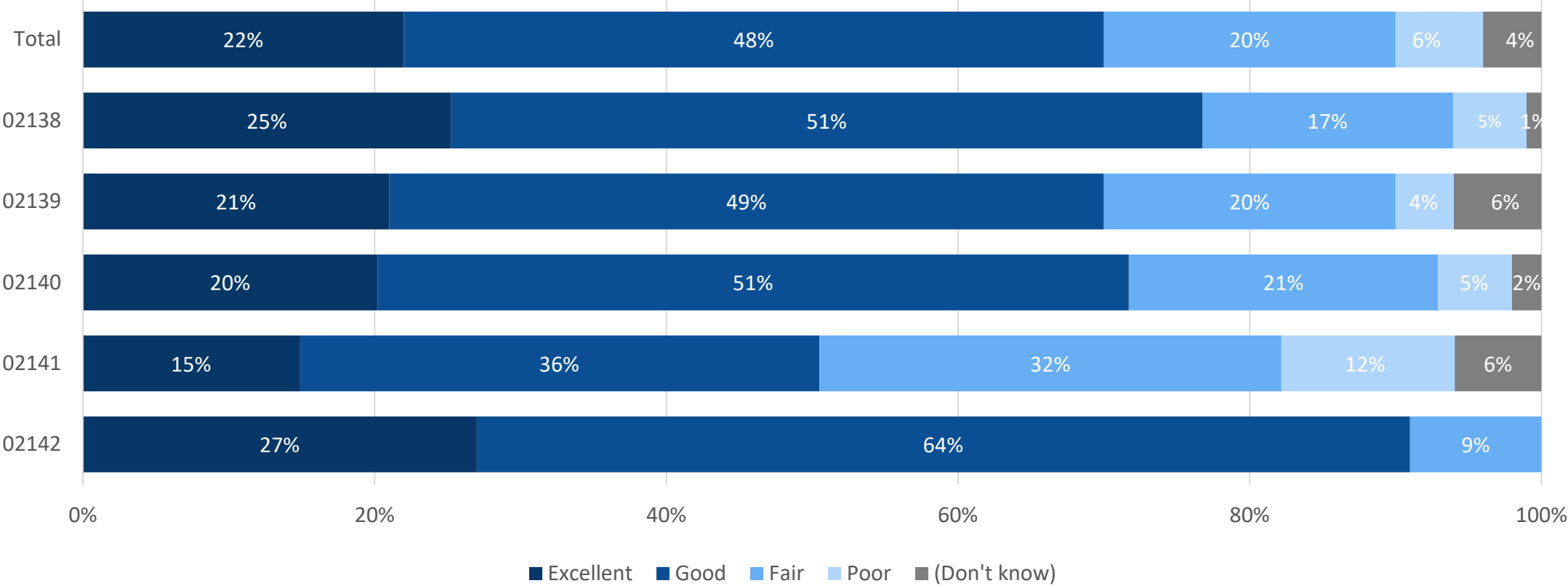


Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge



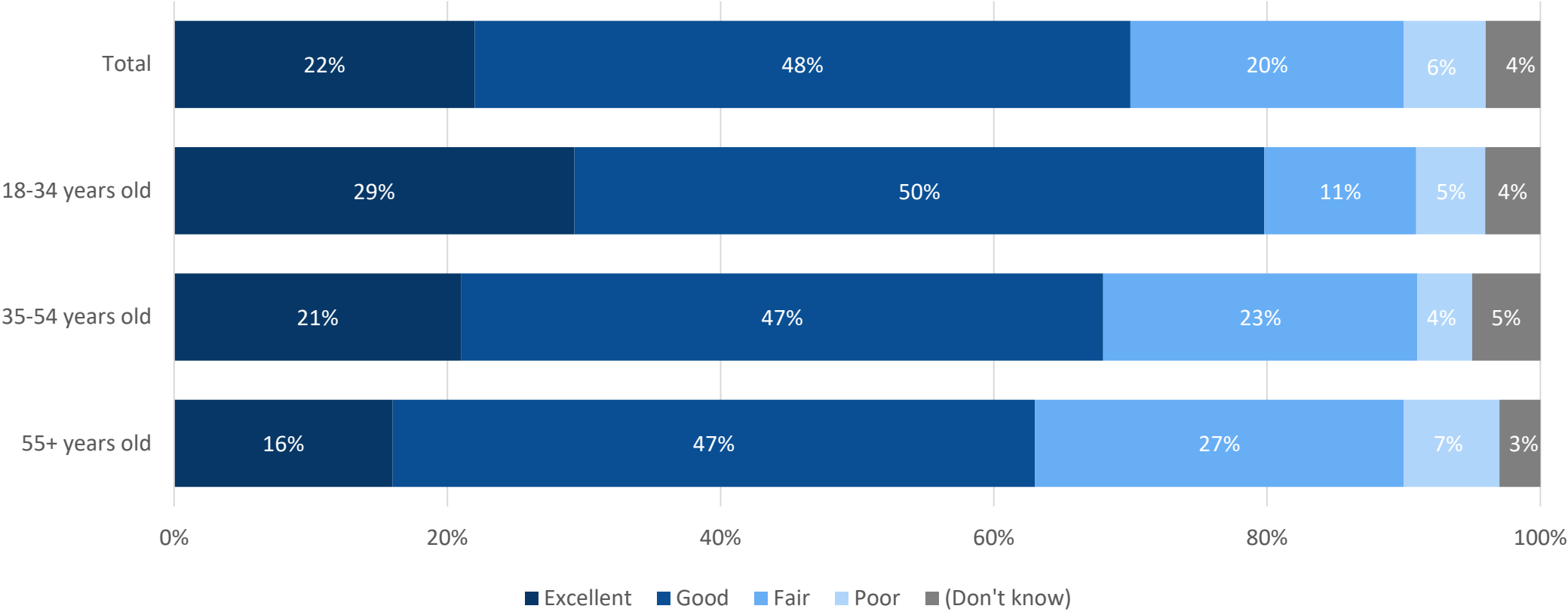
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge

By Area



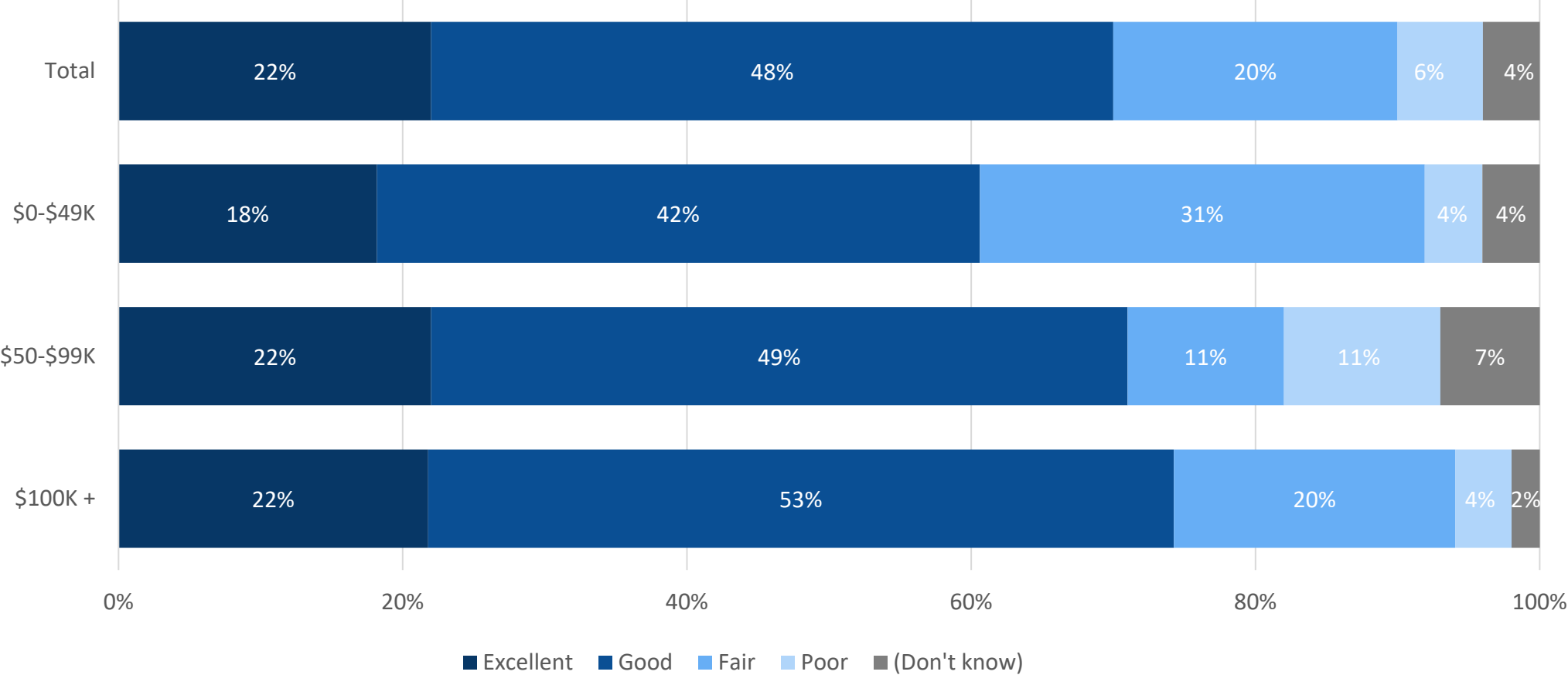
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge

By Age



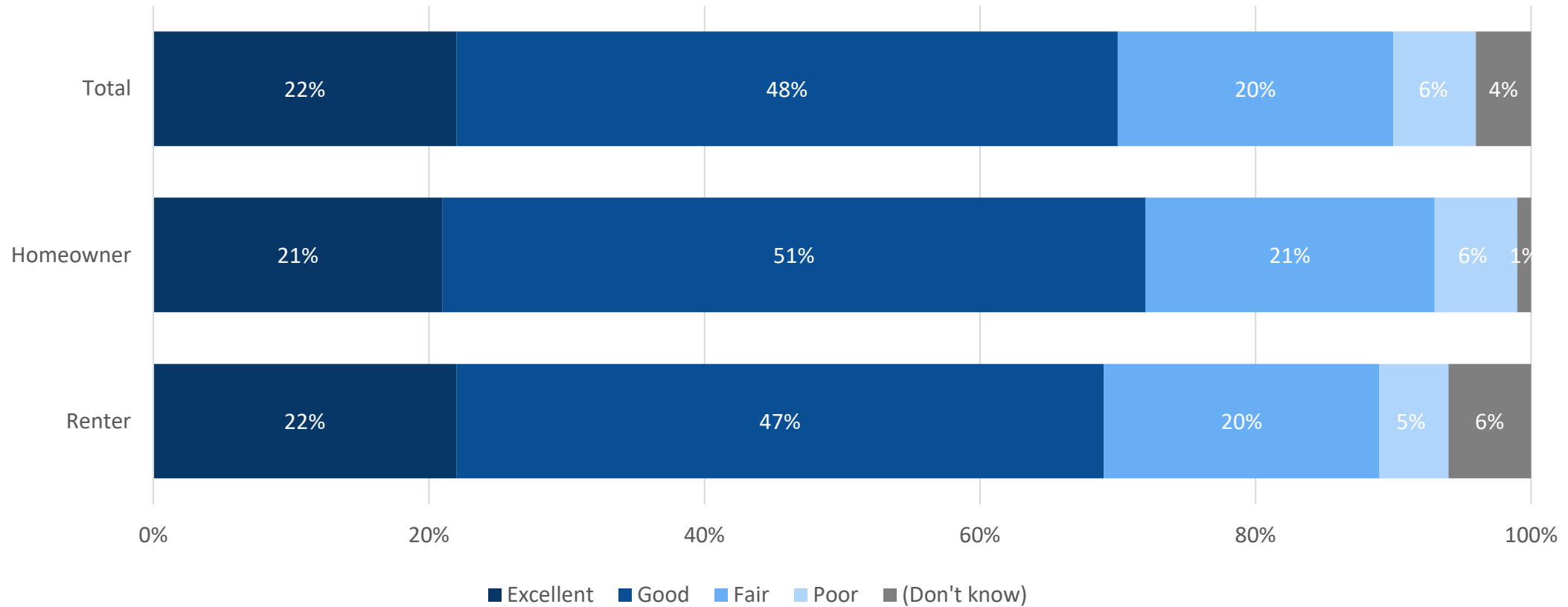
Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge

By Income

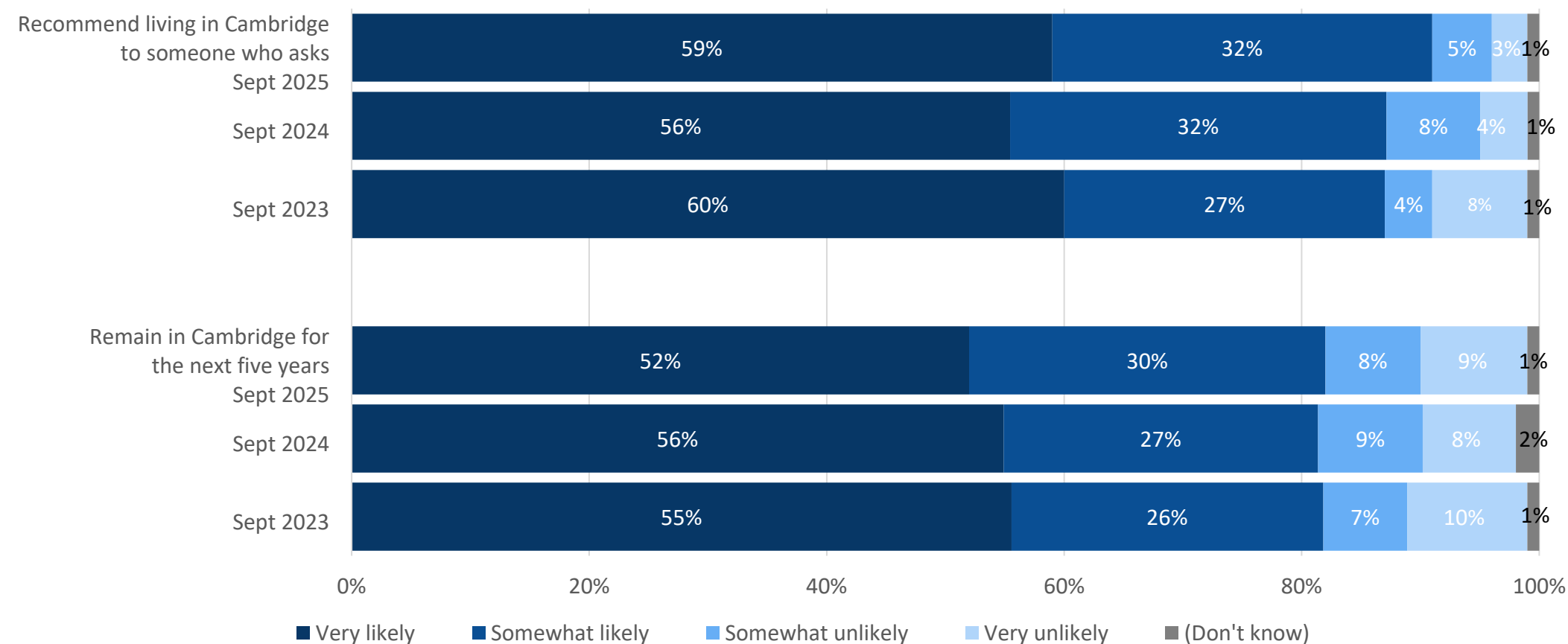


Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge

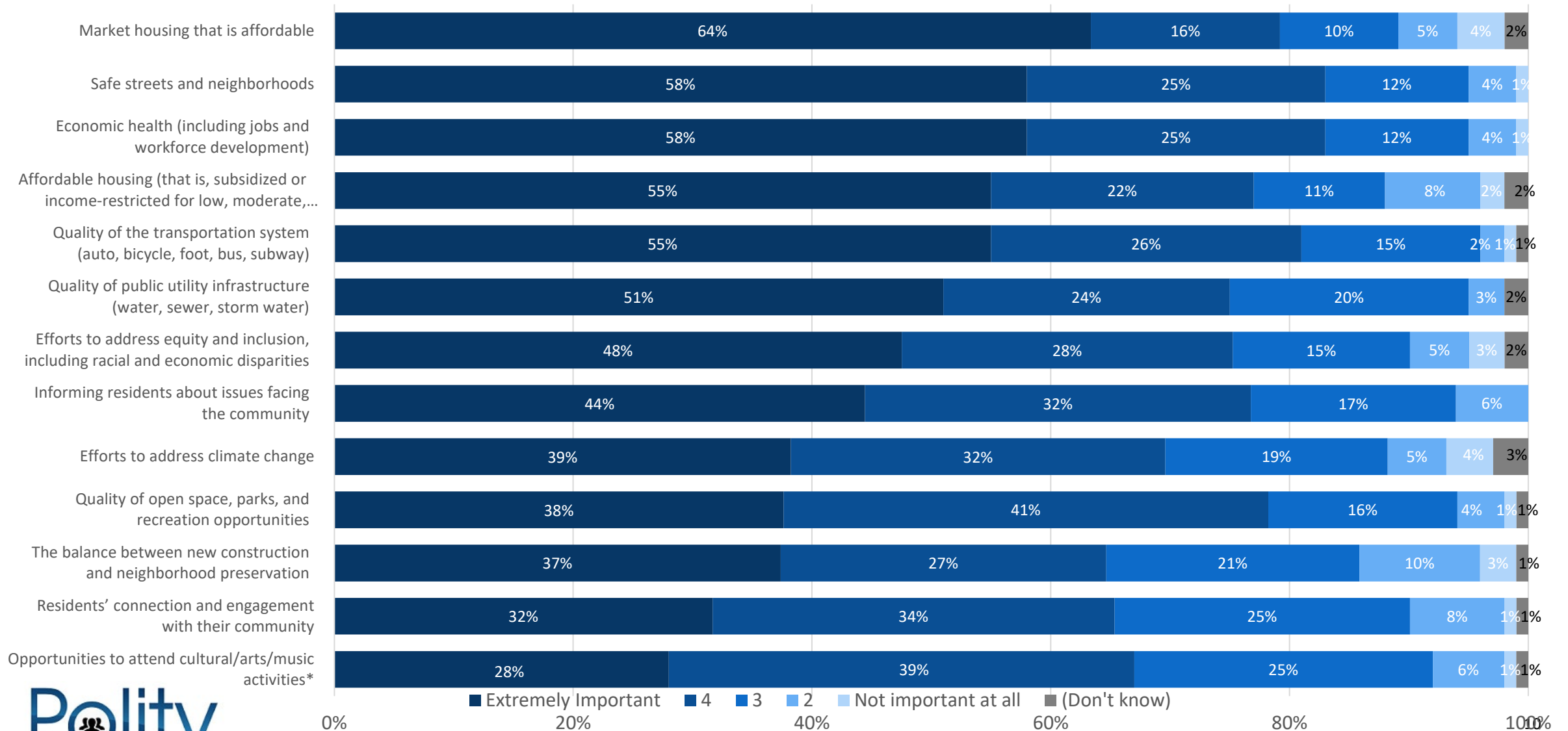
By Homeowner / Renter



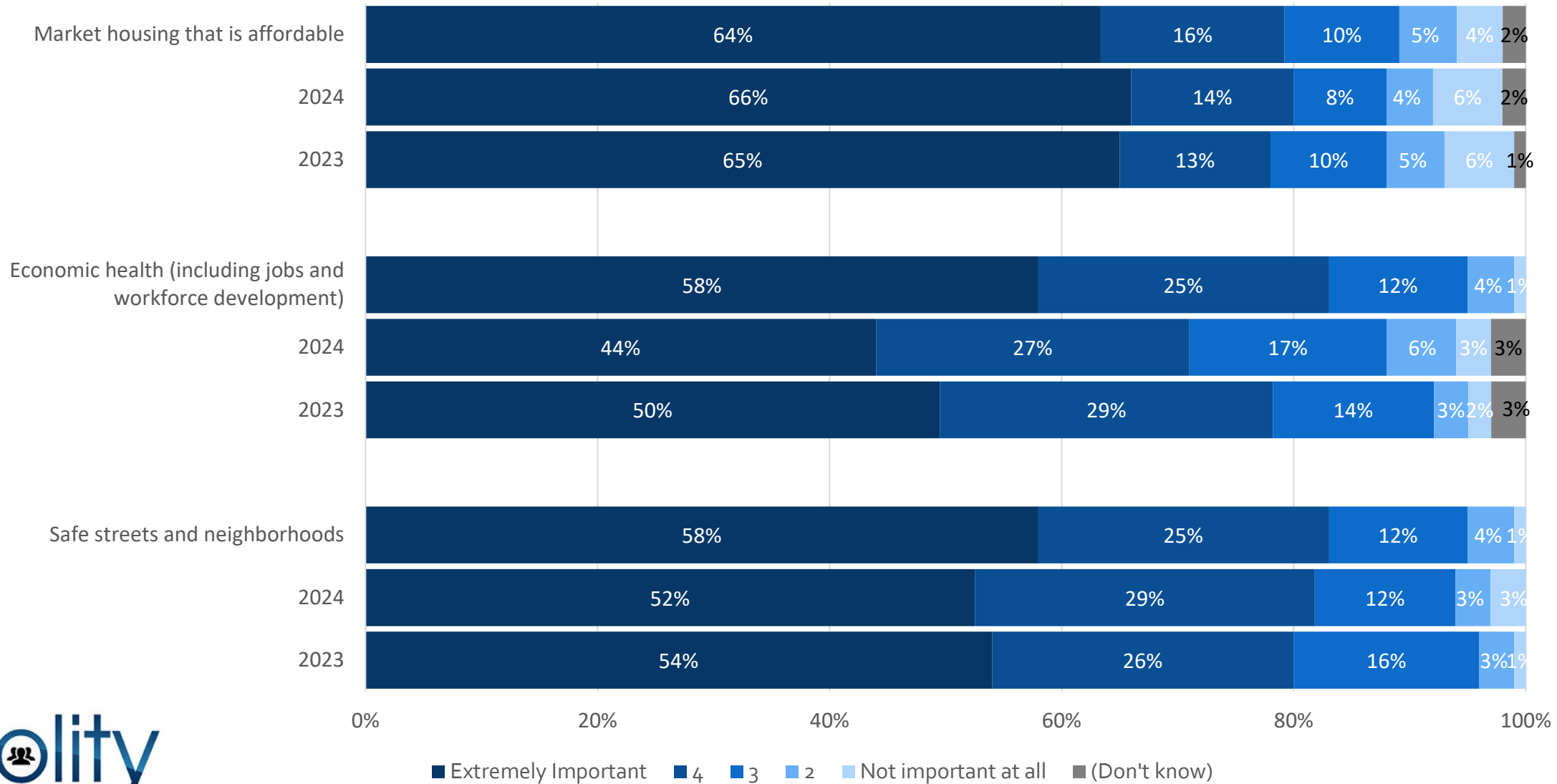
Please tell me how likely you'd be to do each of the following—
very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely.



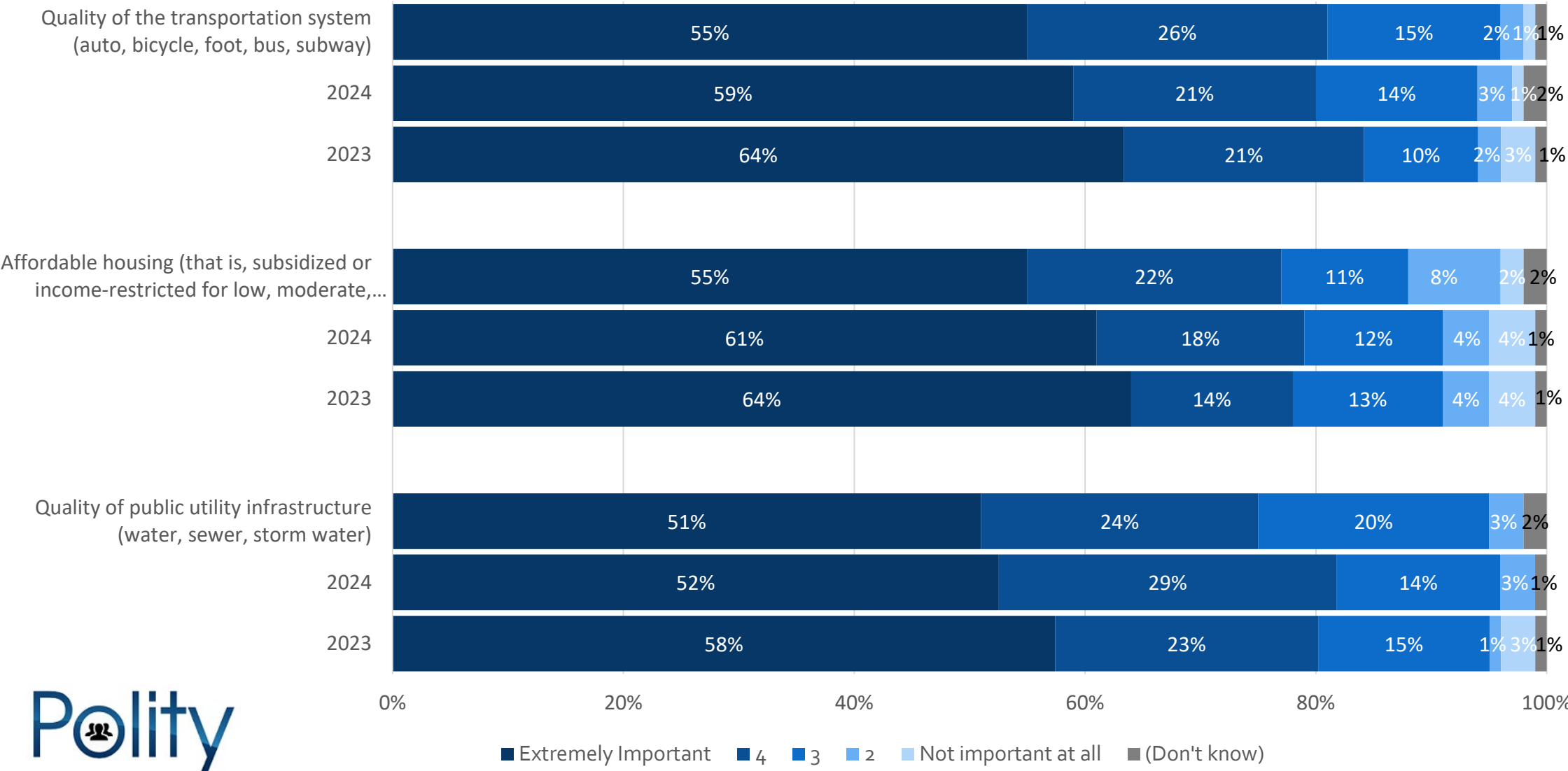
How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



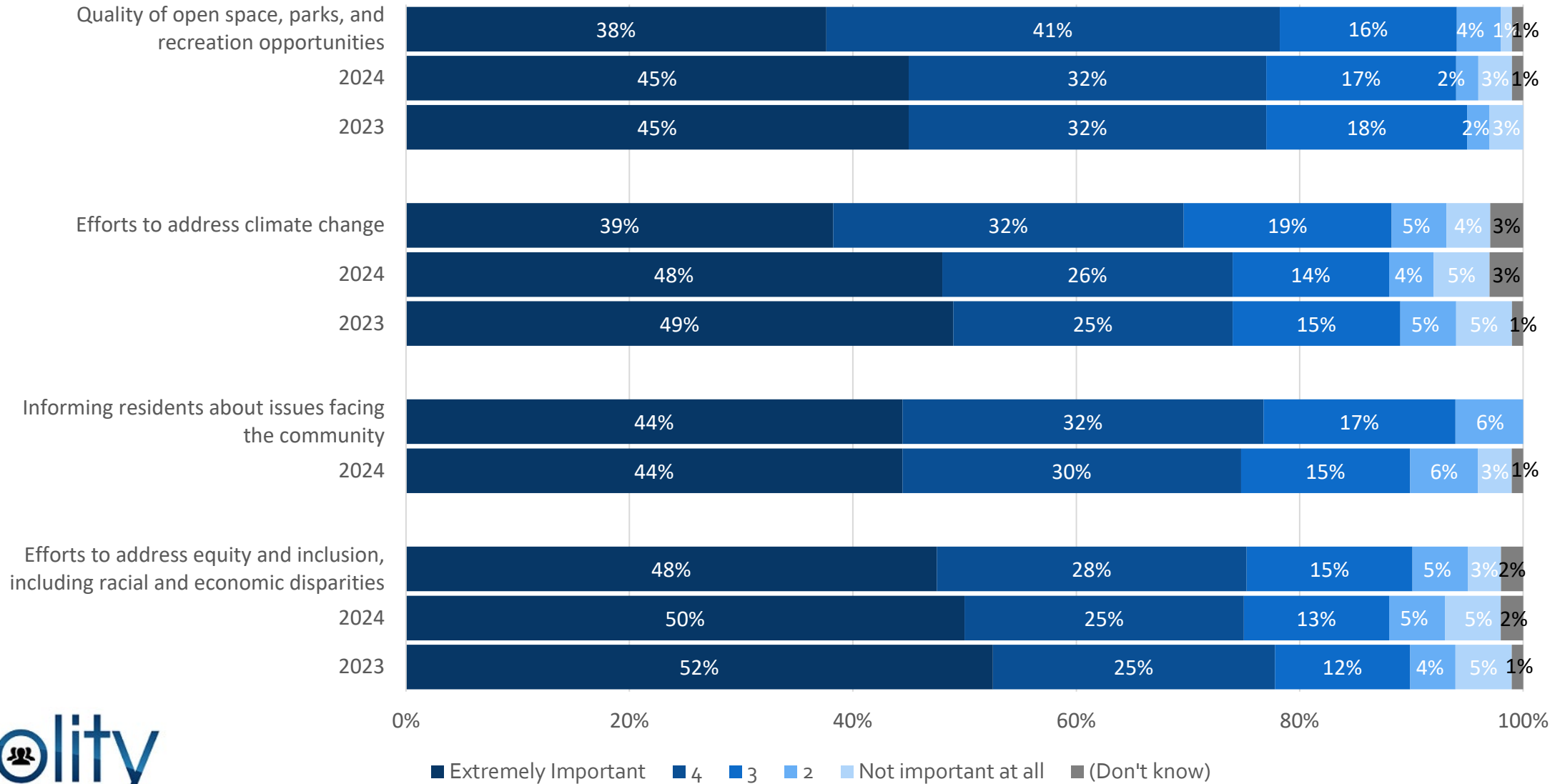
How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



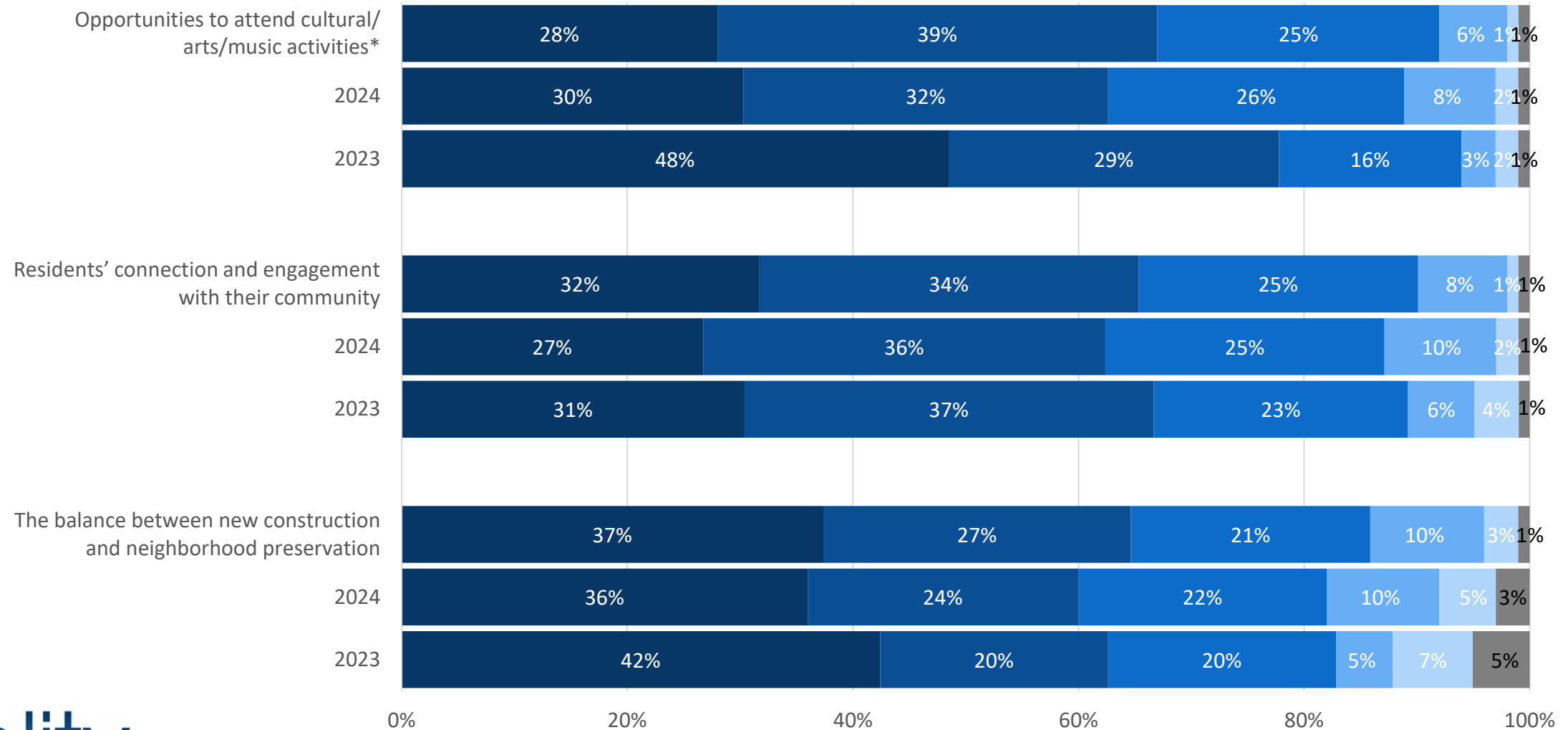
How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



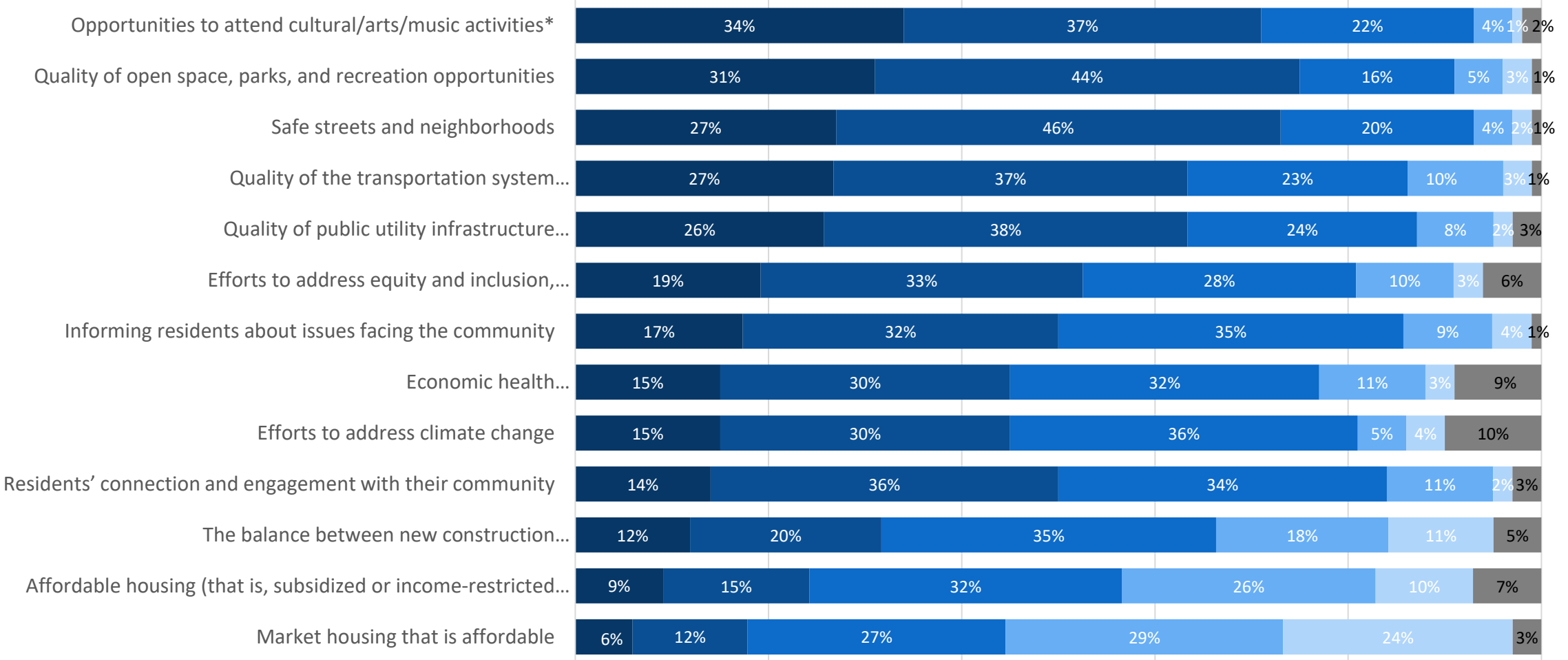
How important is it for the Cambridge community to focus on each of the following in the coming two years:



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

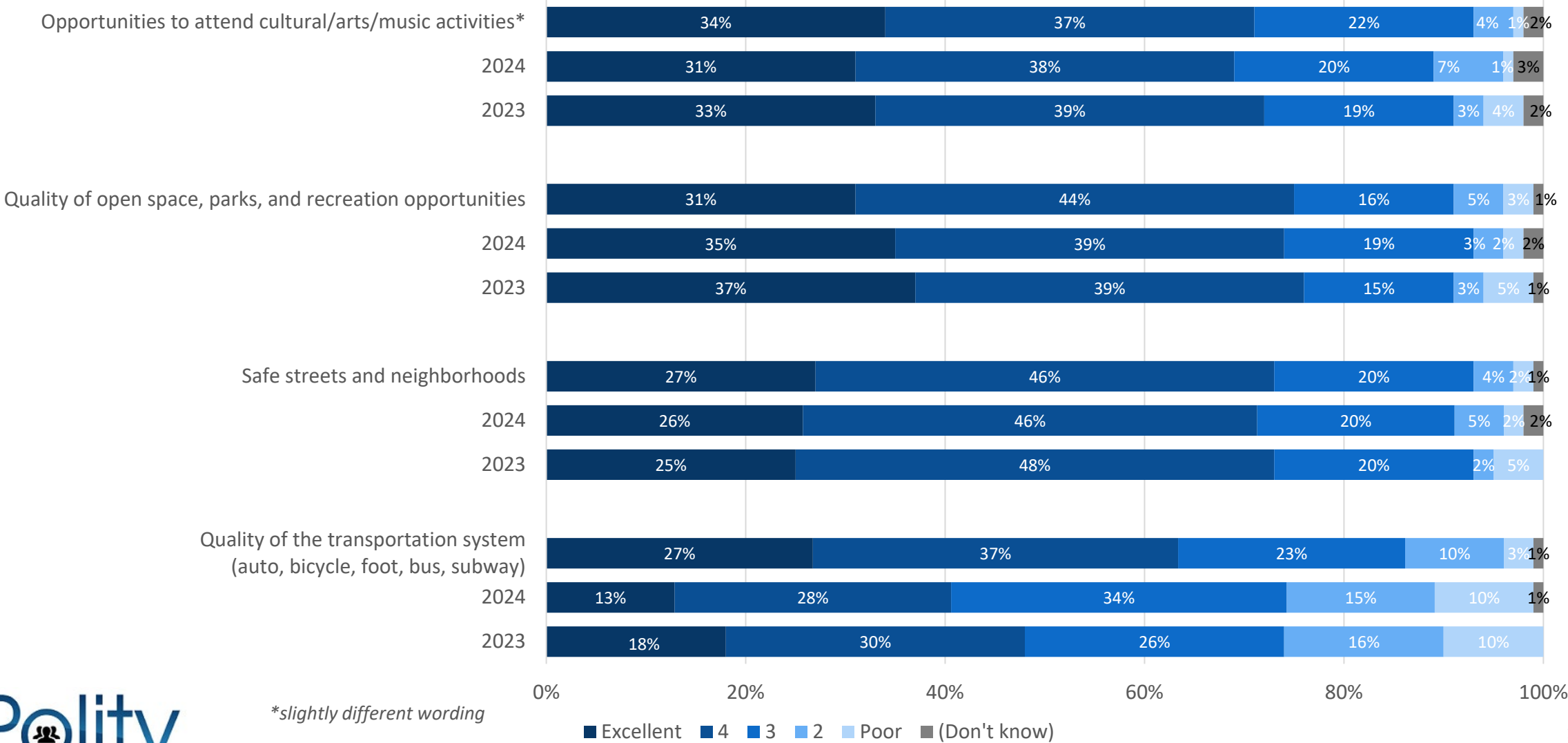


Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.

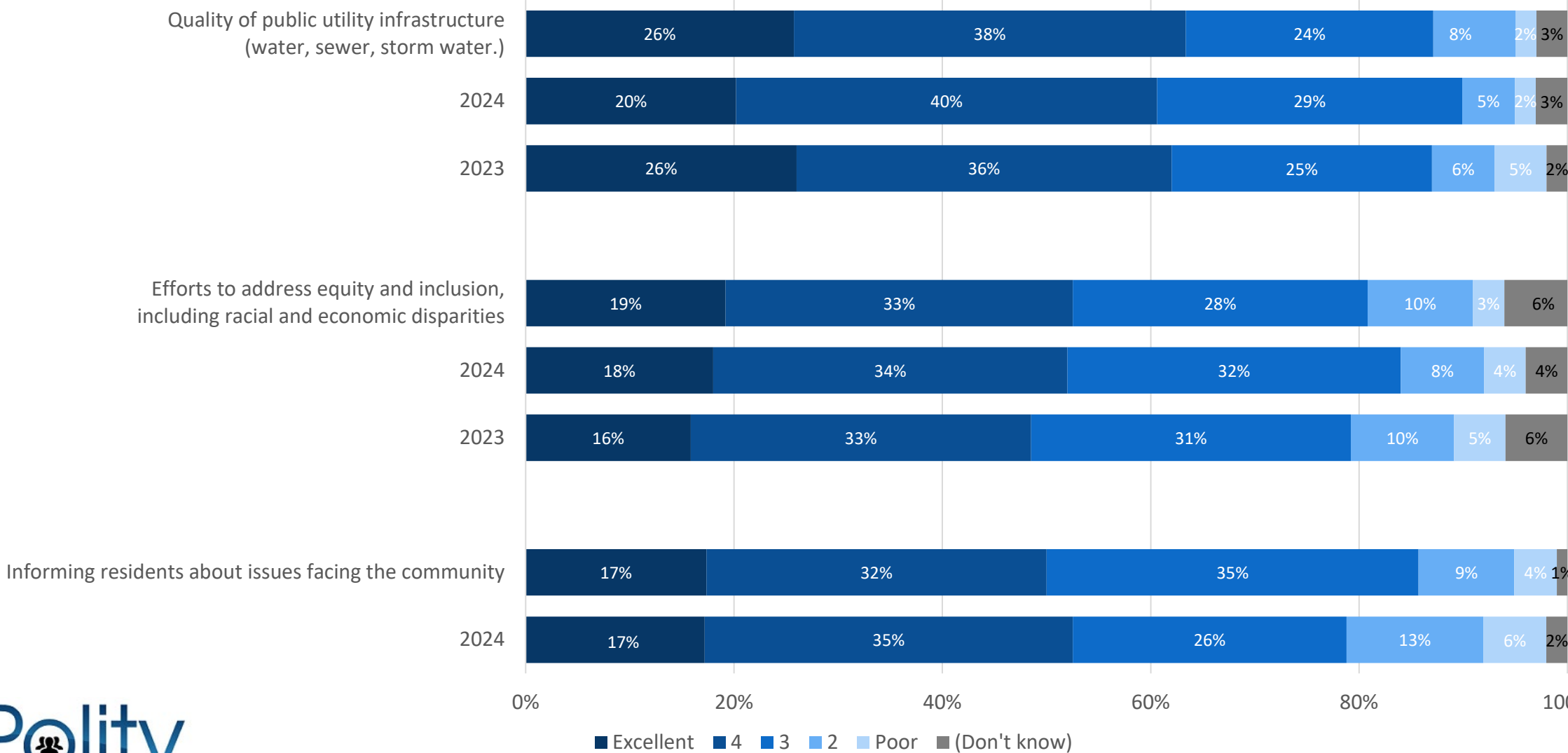


**slightly different wording*

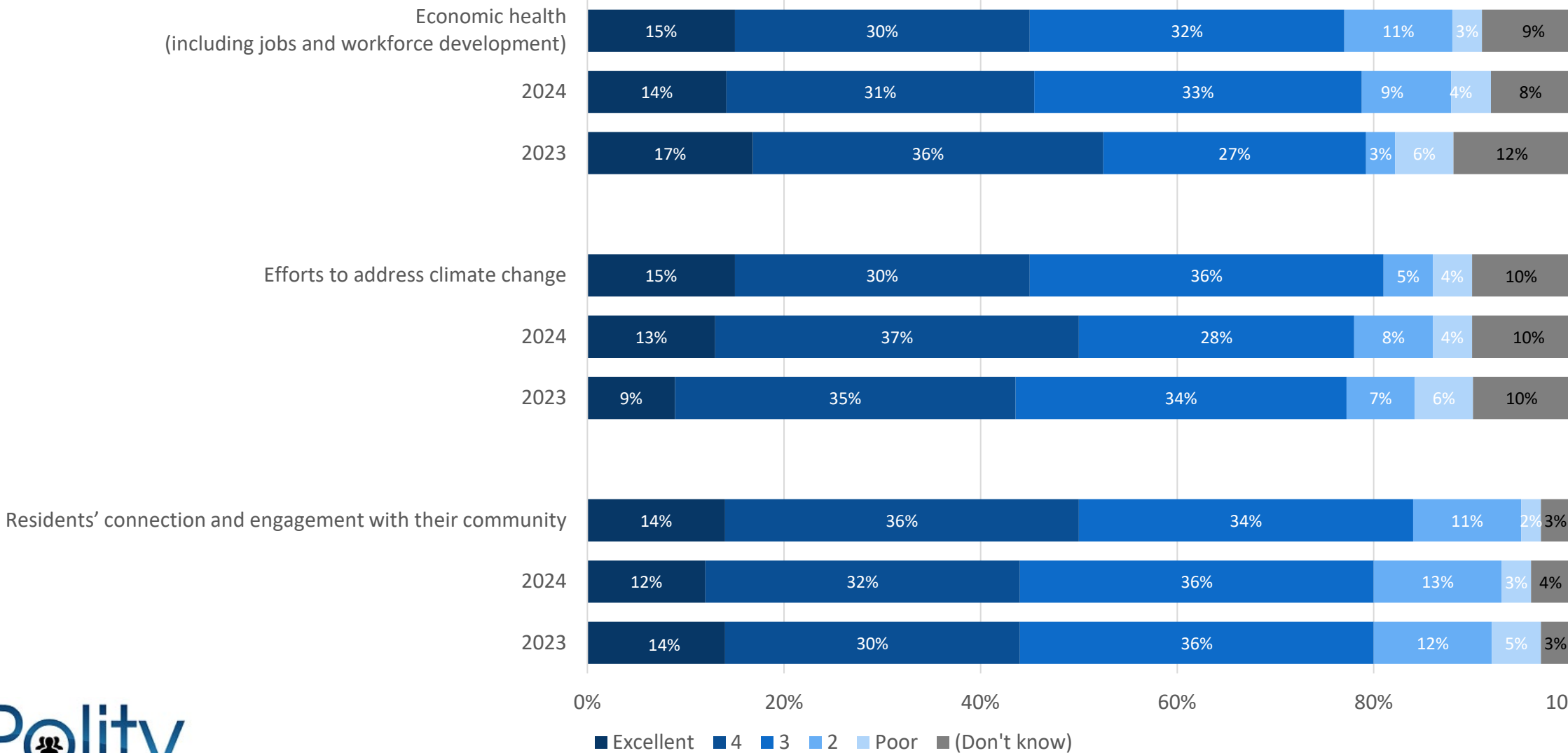
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



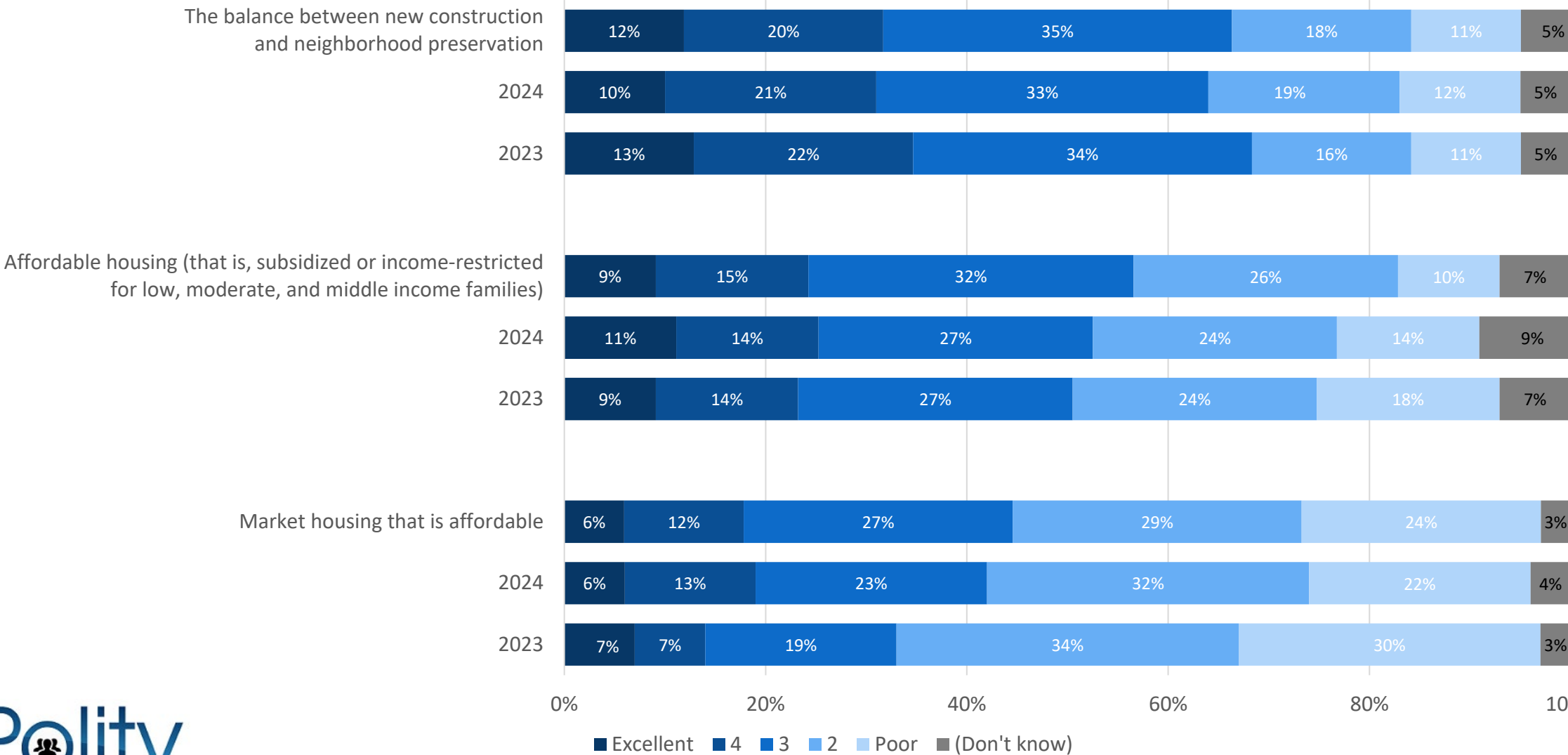
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



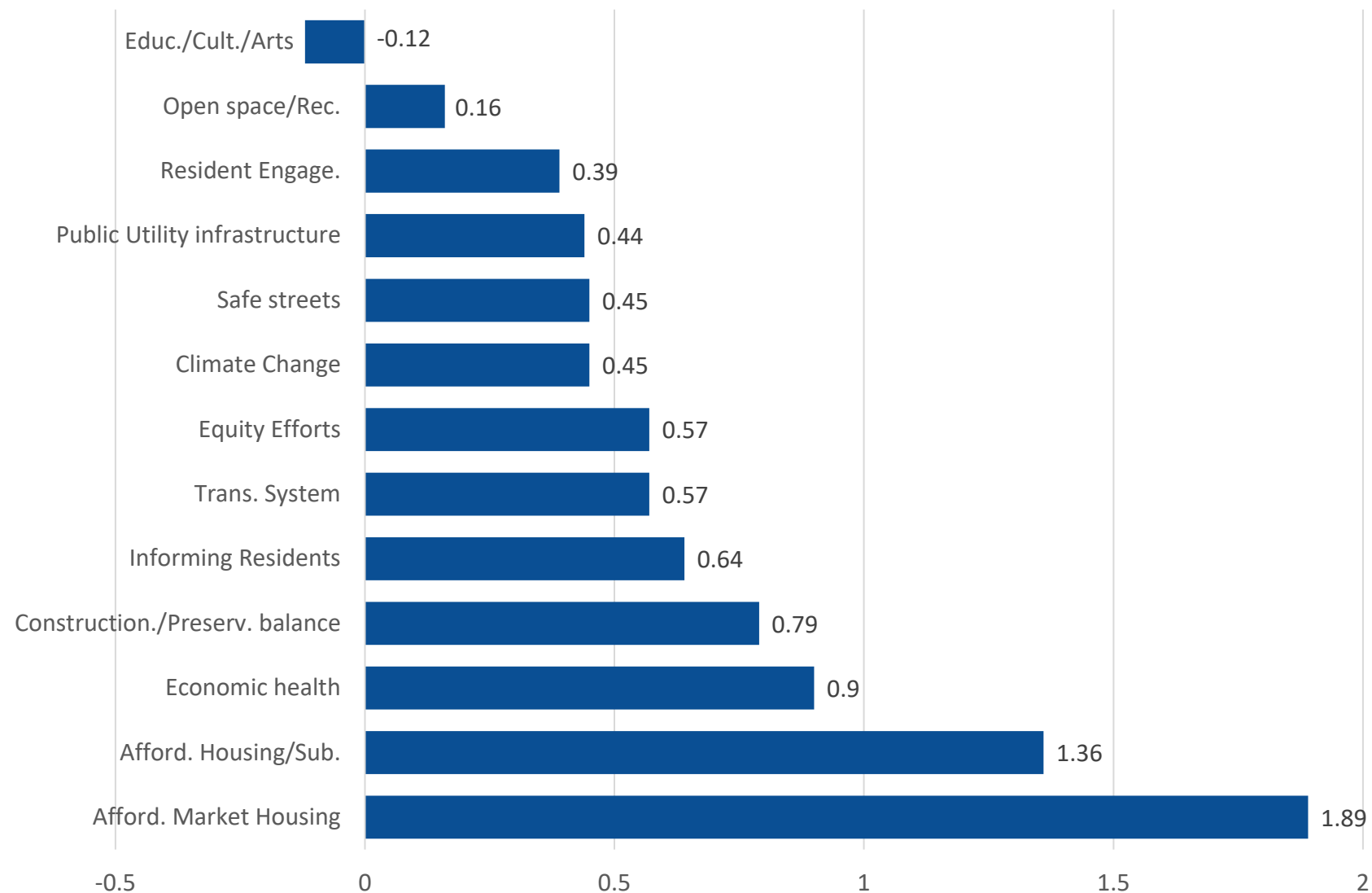
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



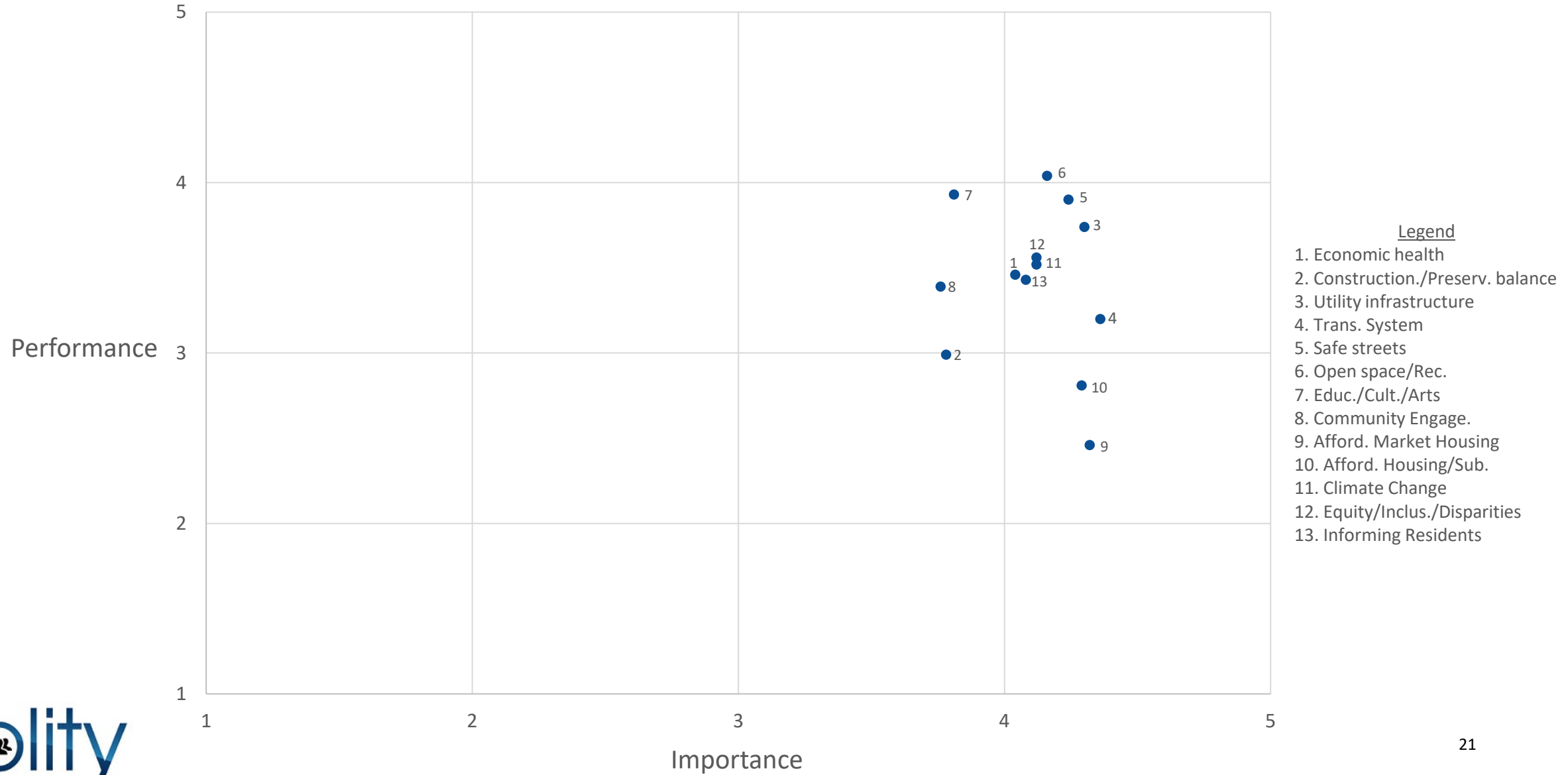
Please rate how well the City of Cambridge performs on each of these.



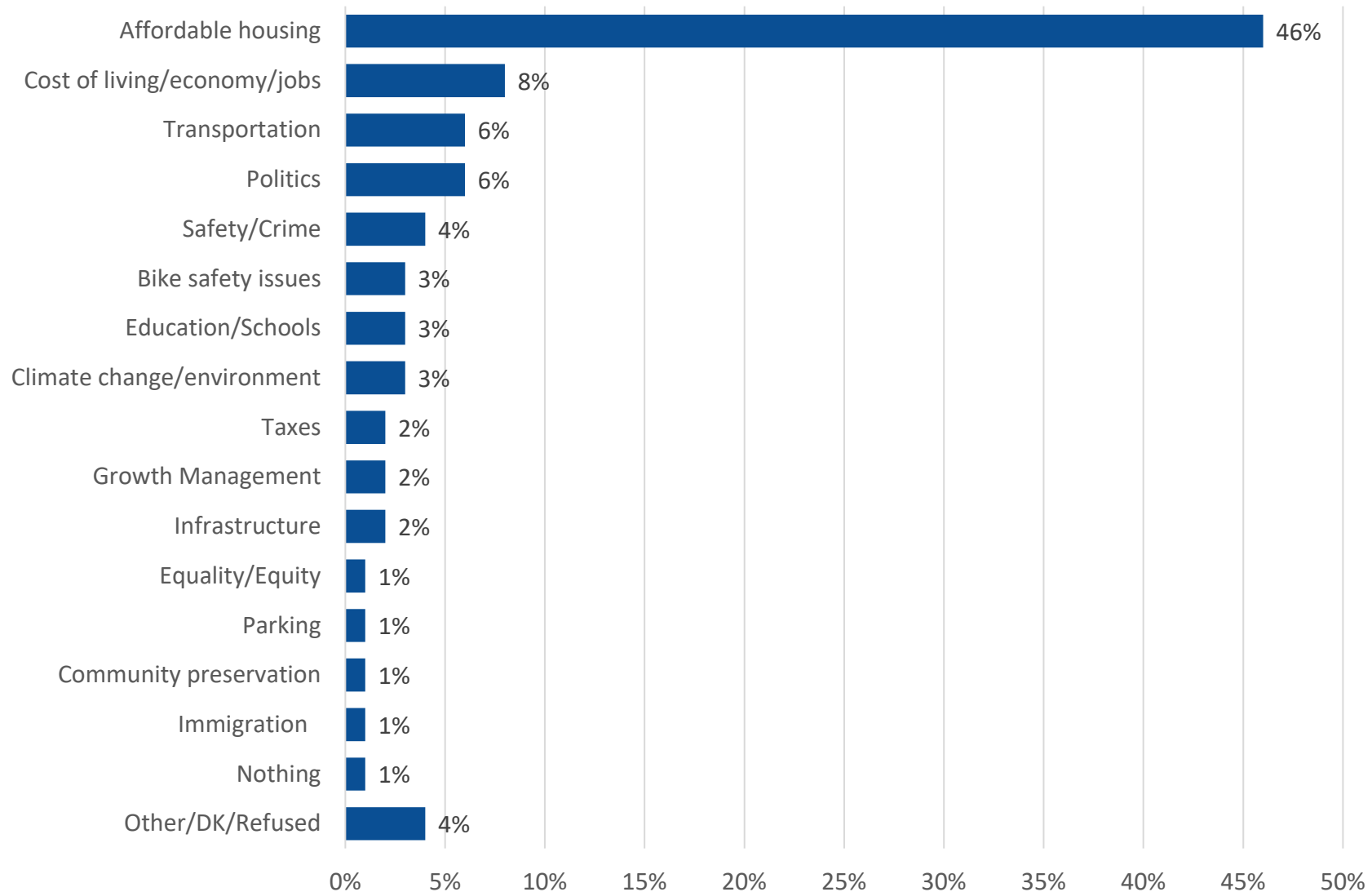
Importance/Performance Gap Ranking (higher number=greater attention needed)



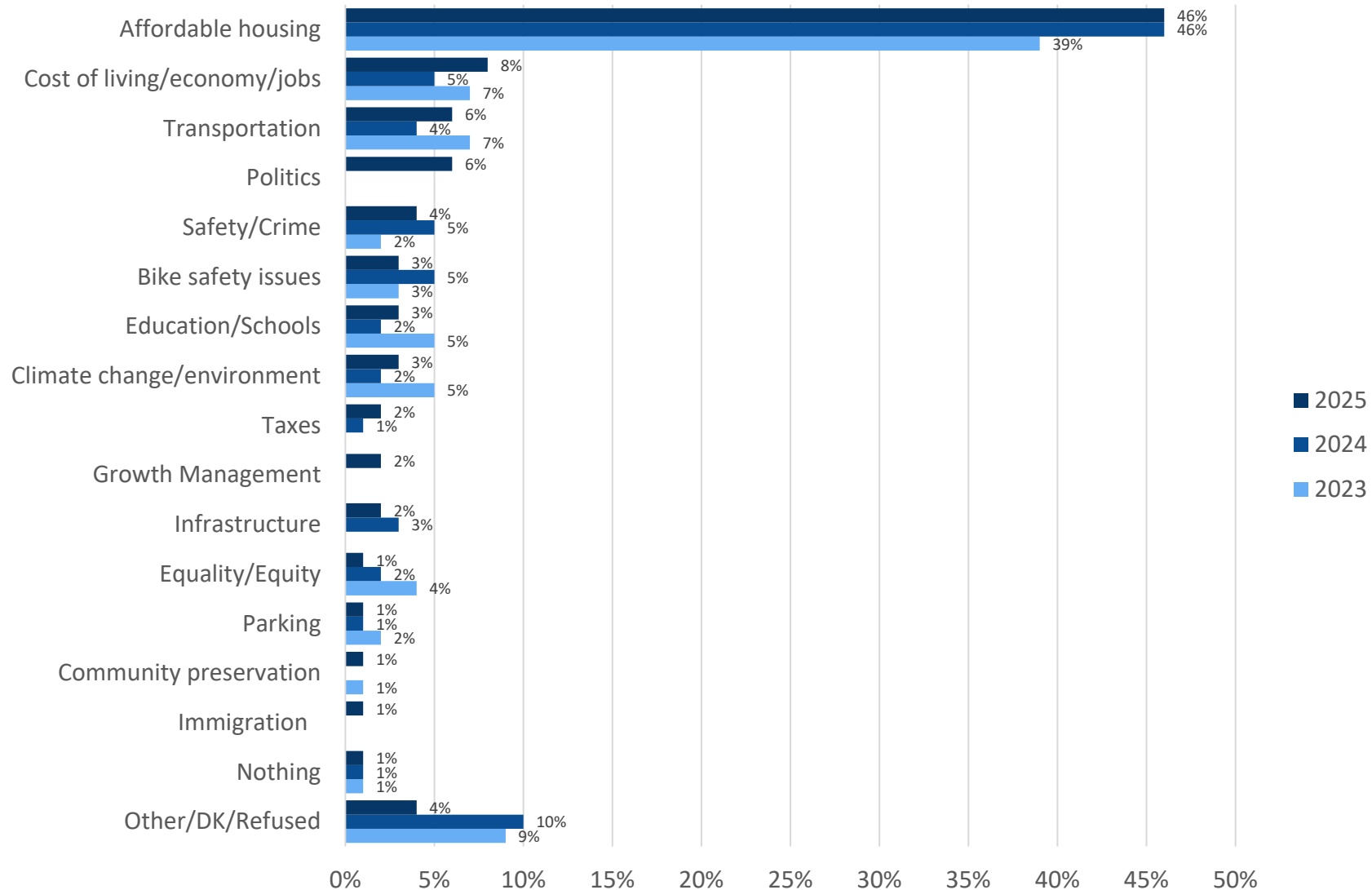
*Importance / Performance Perceptual Map



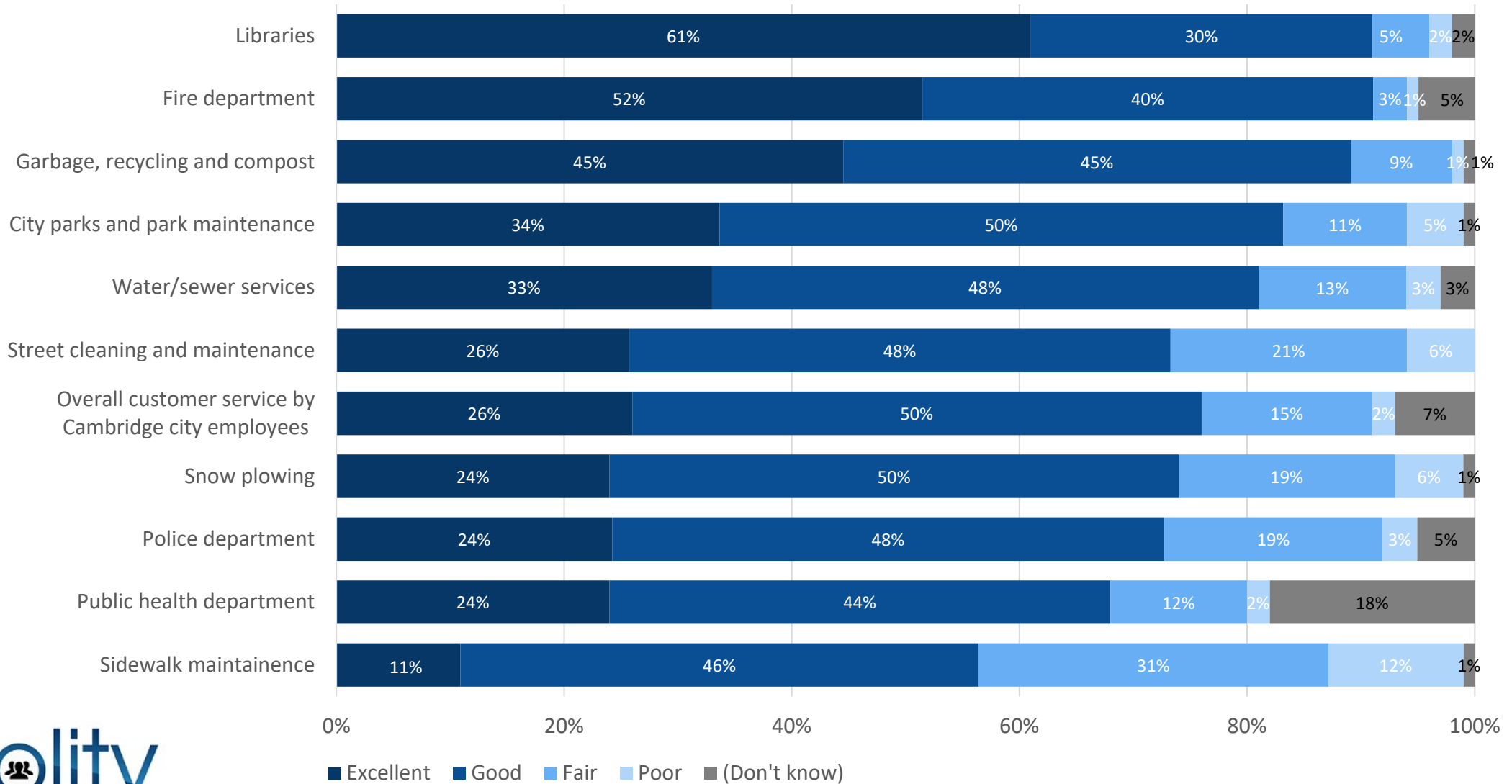
What is the *single most important* issue the City of Cambridge should focus on in the coming two years?



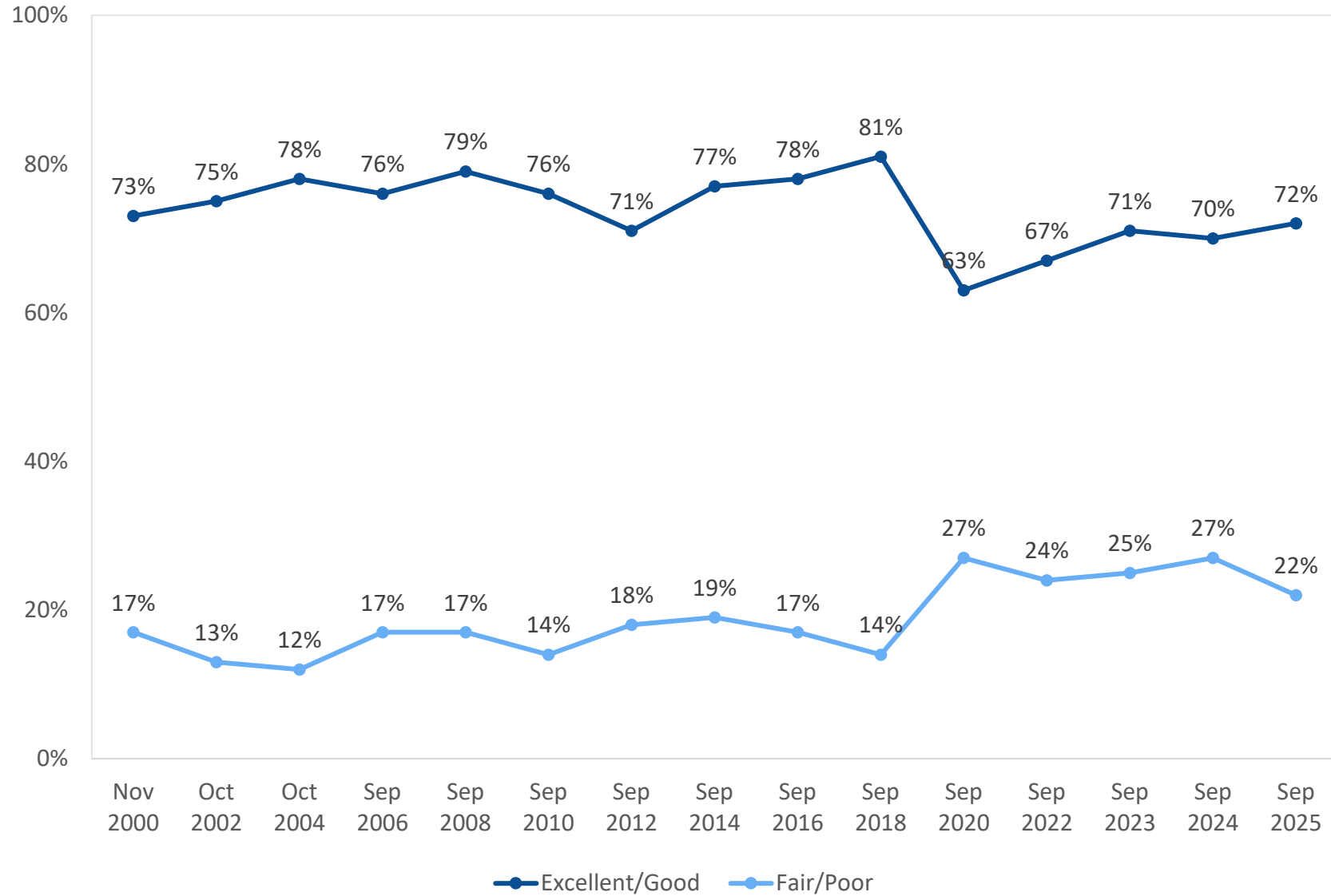
What is the *single most important* issue the City of Cambridge should focus on in the coming two years?



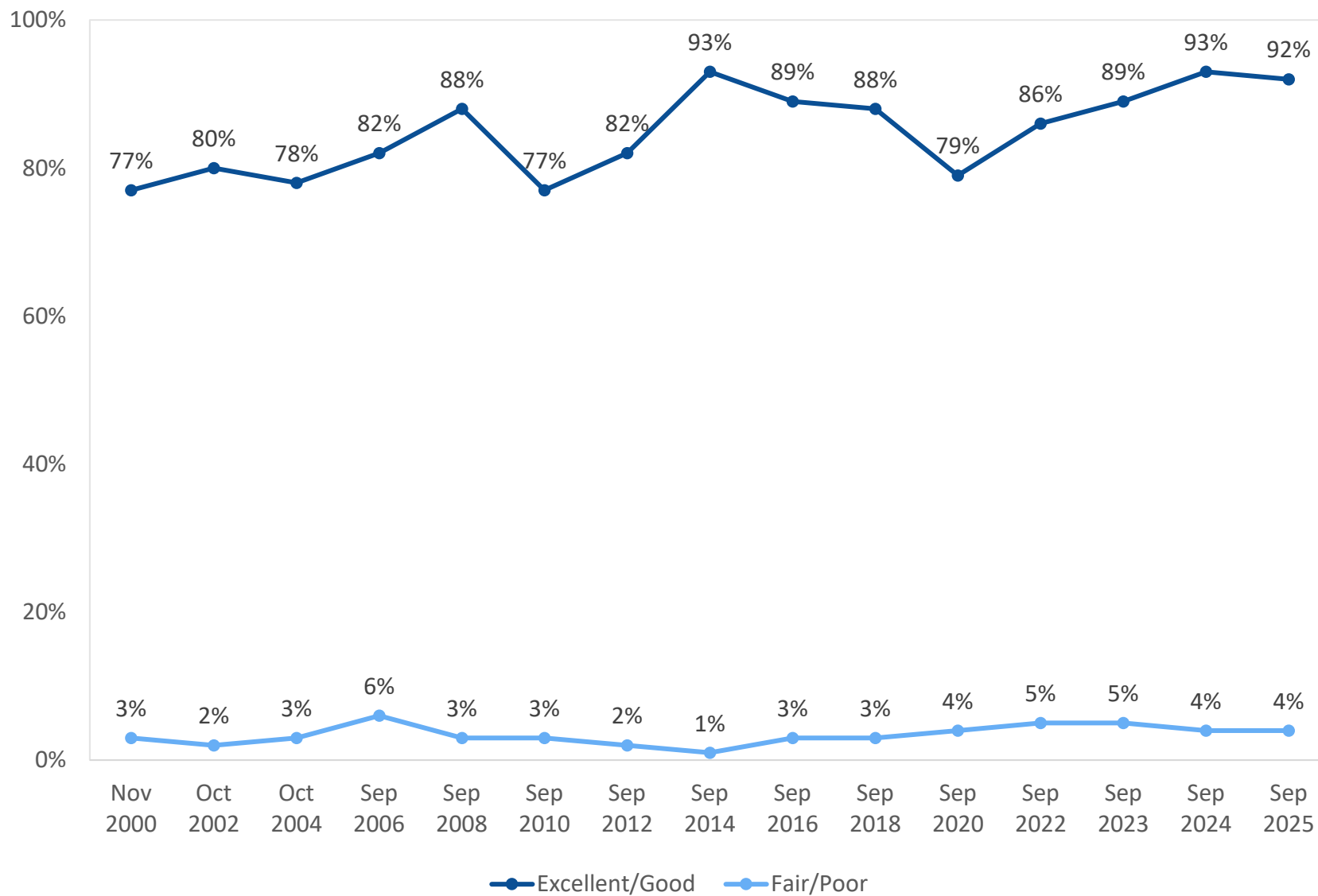
Now, I'd like to read you a number of services provided by the City of Cambridge. For each one, please rate the *quality* of these services on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.



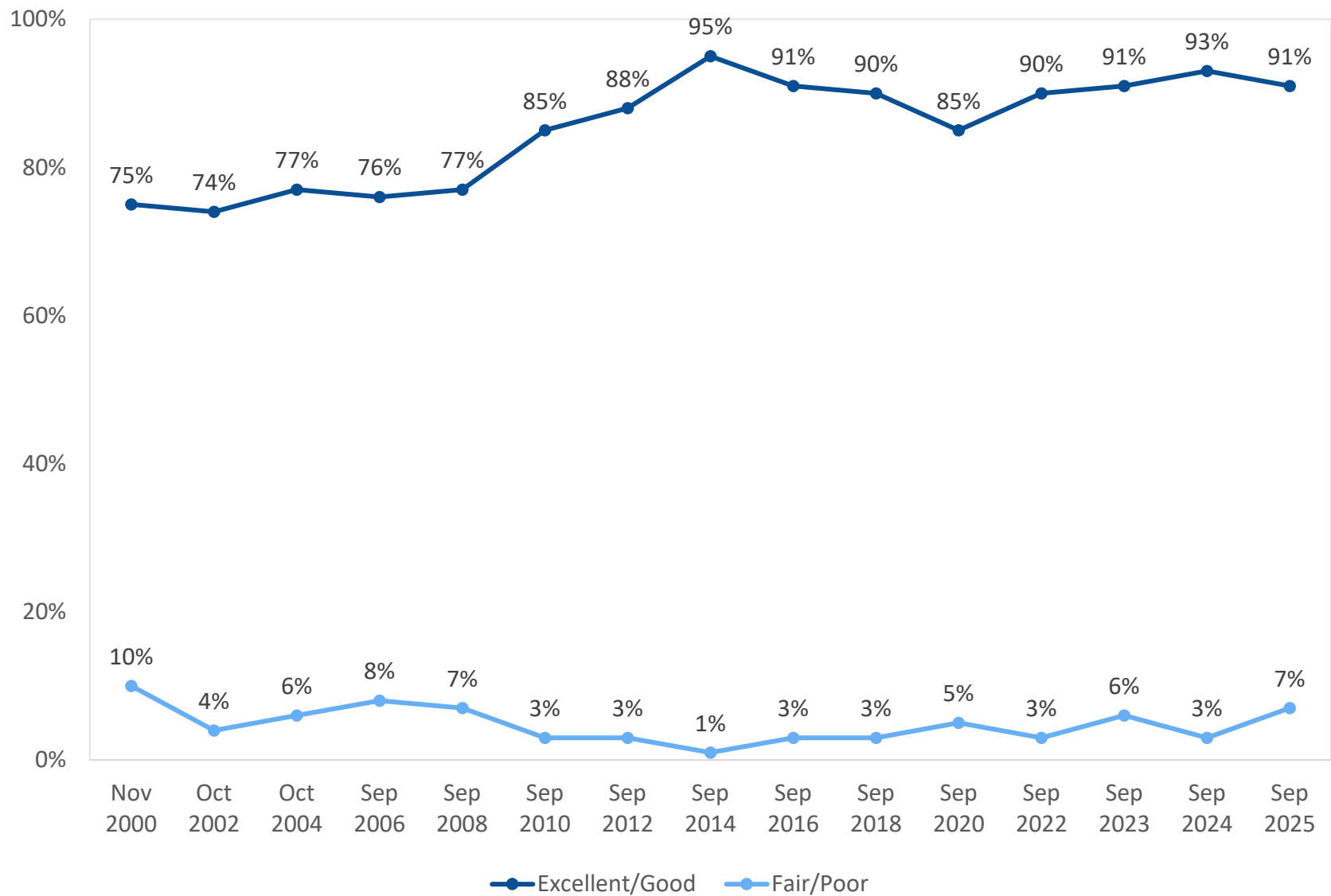
Police Department



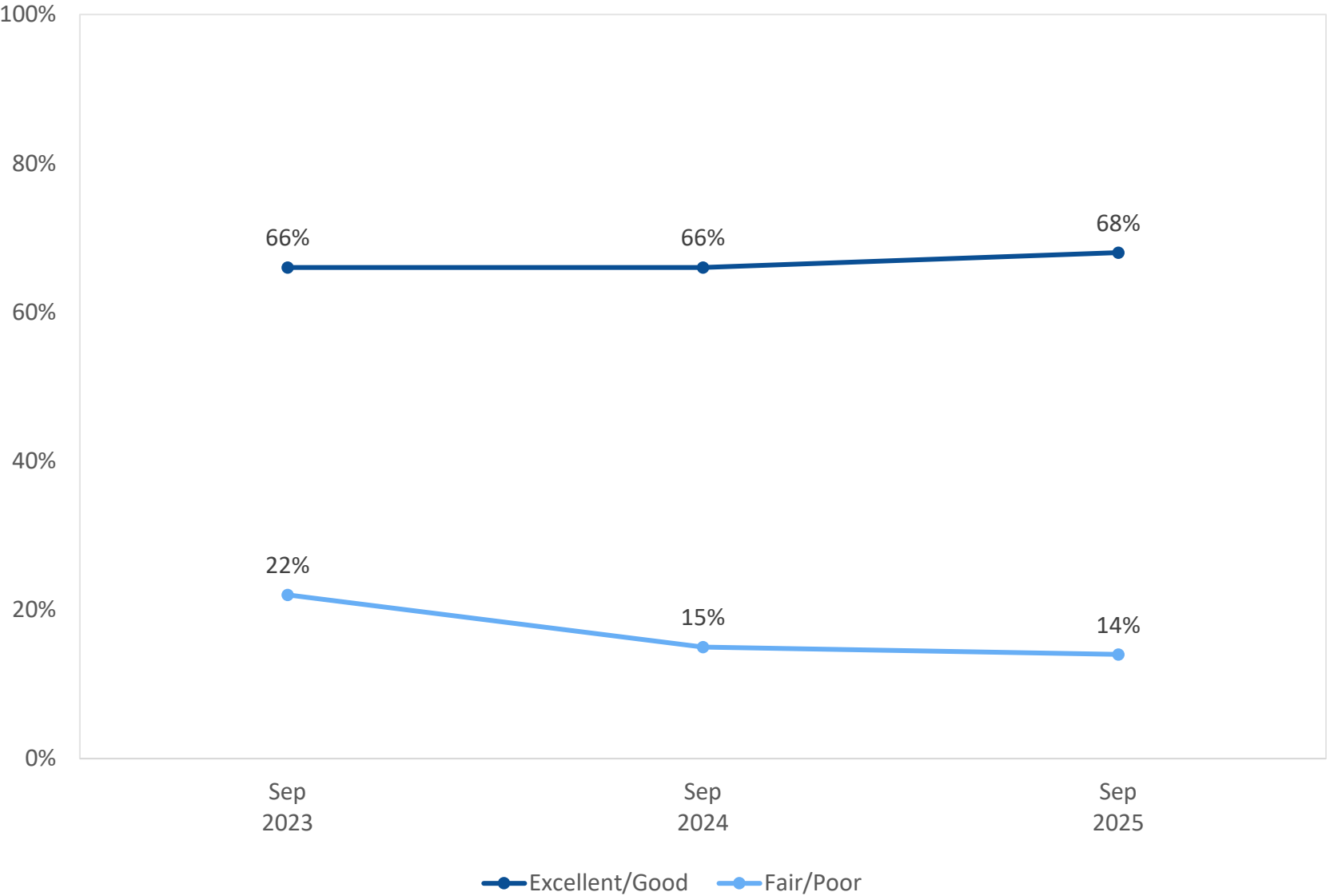
Fire Department



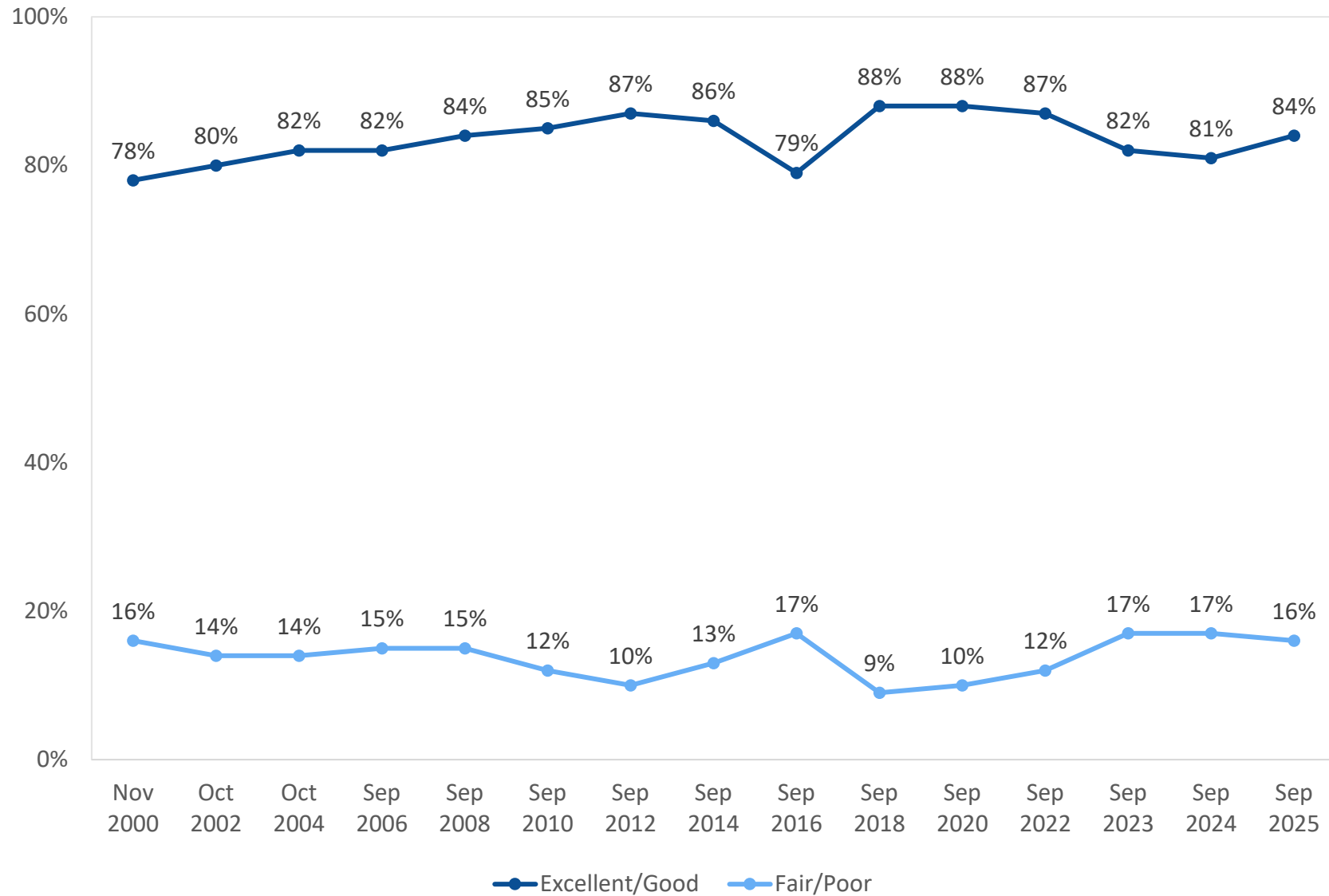
Libraries



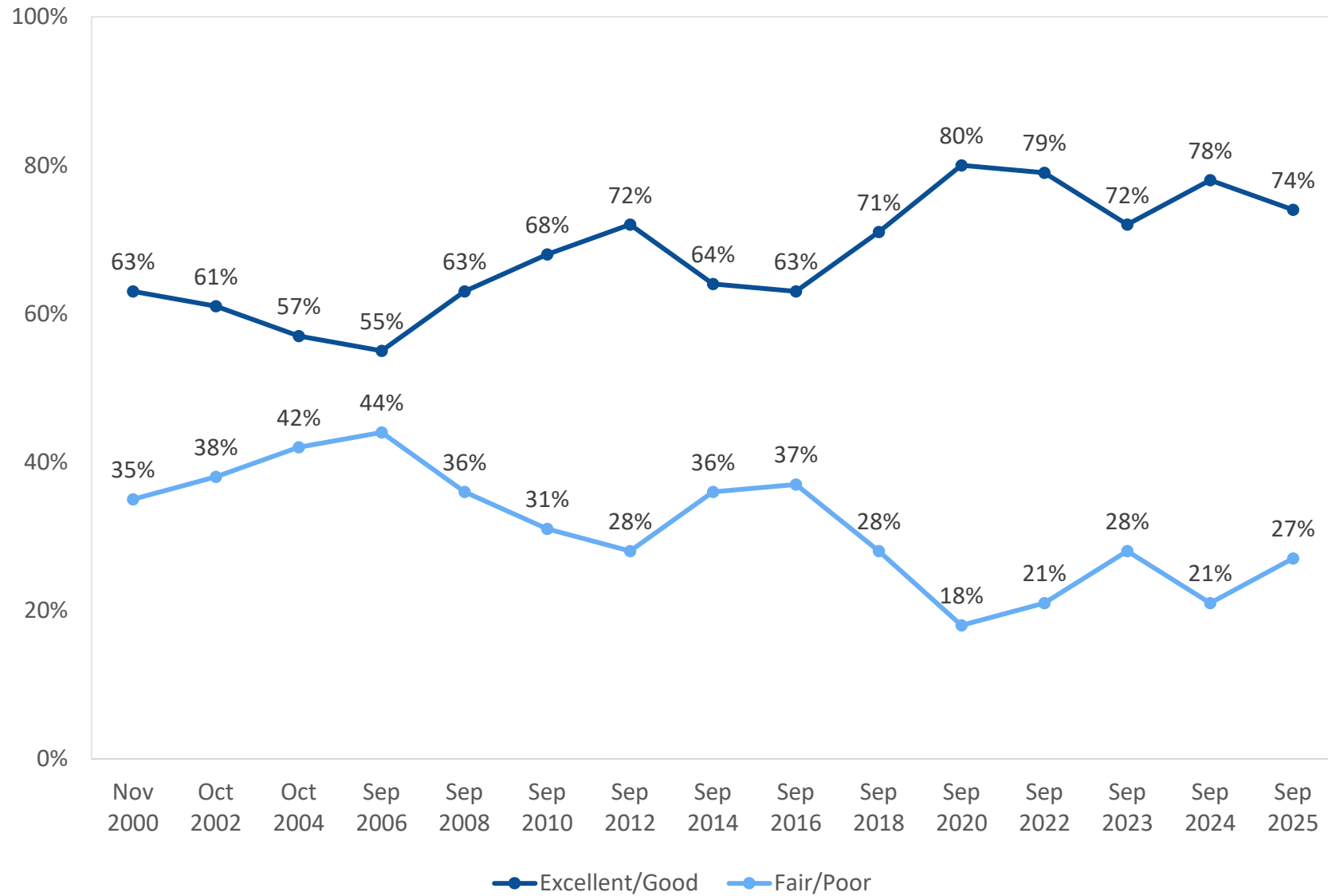
Public Health Department



City parks and park maintenance

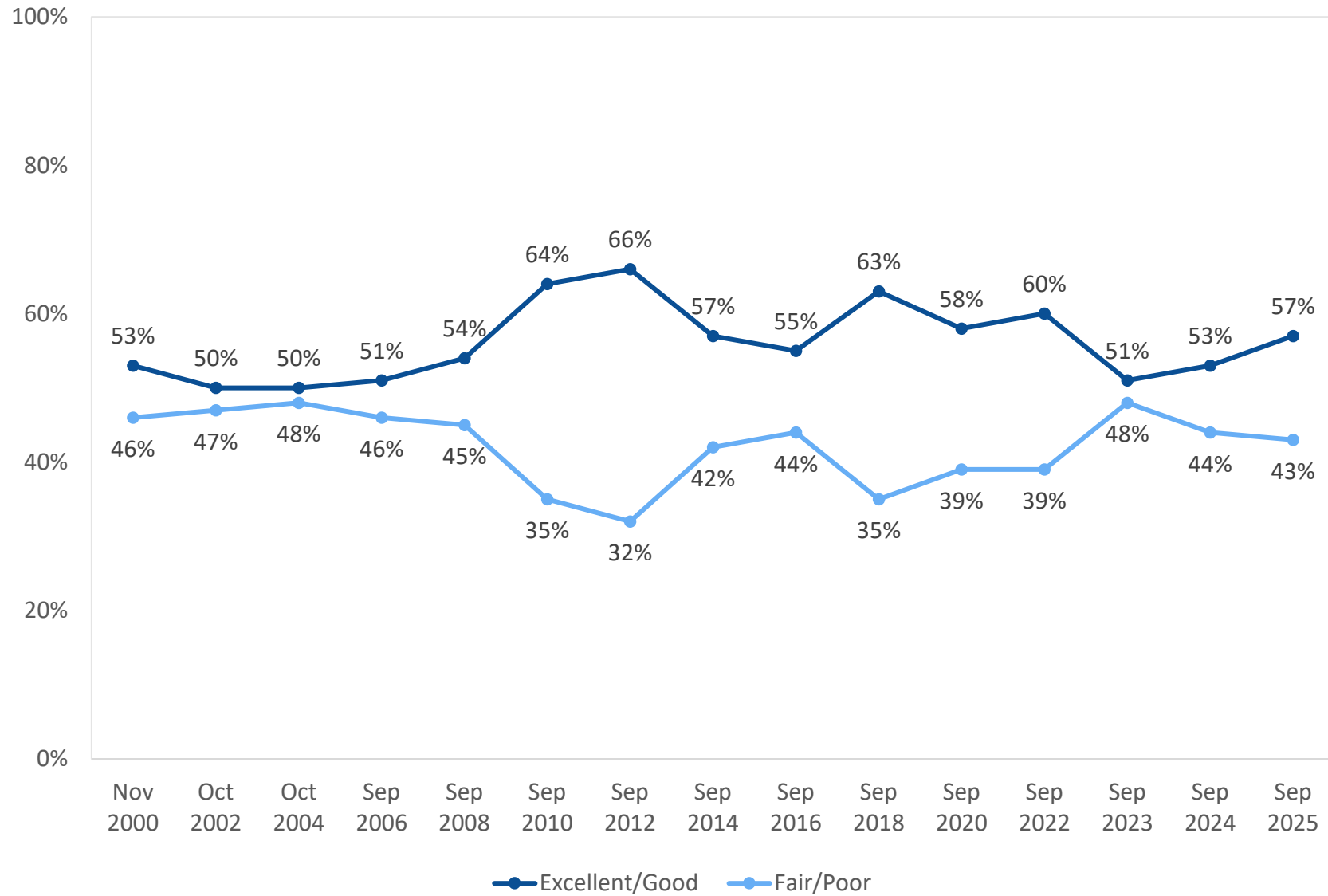


Street cleaning and maintenance*

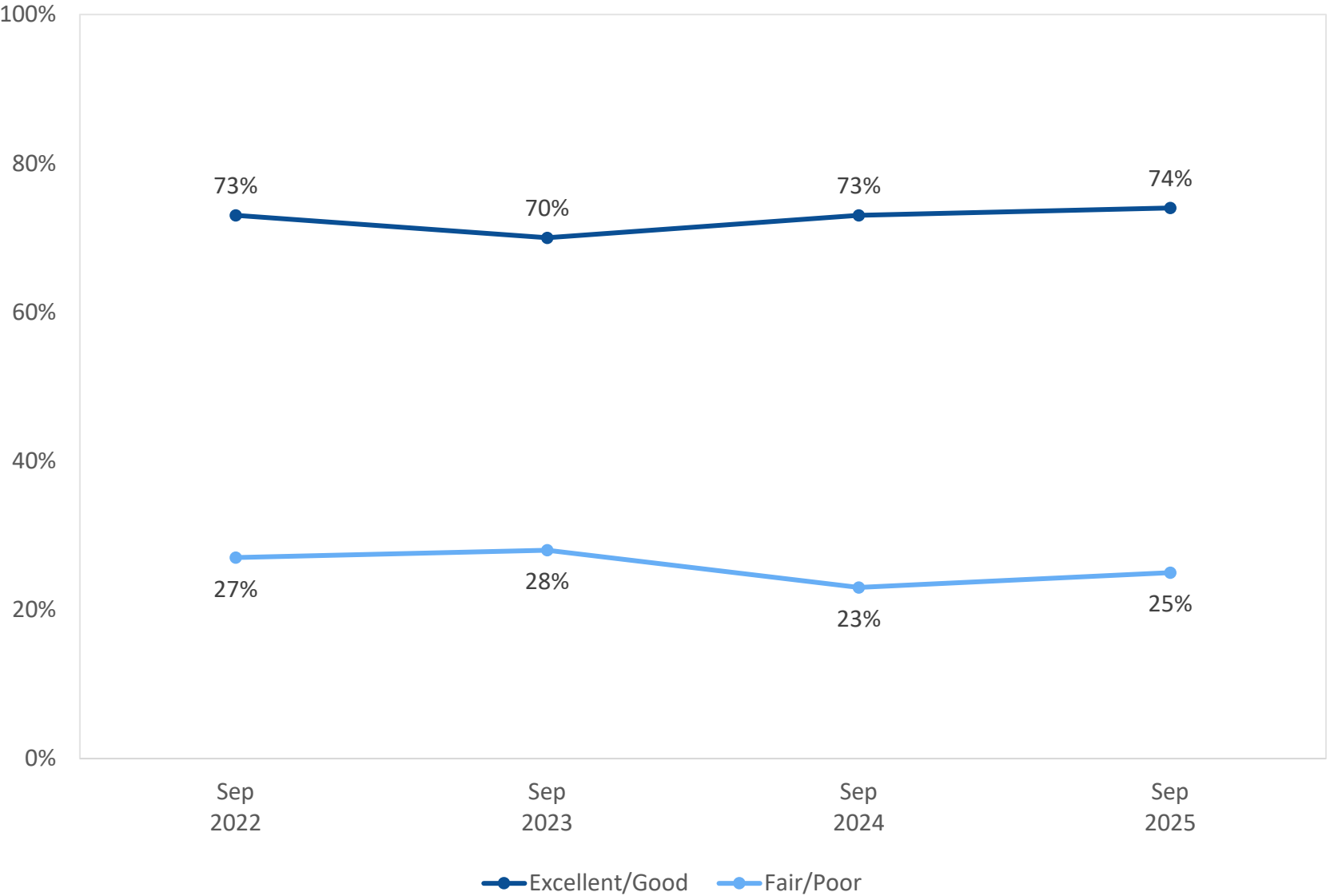


* new wording in 2020

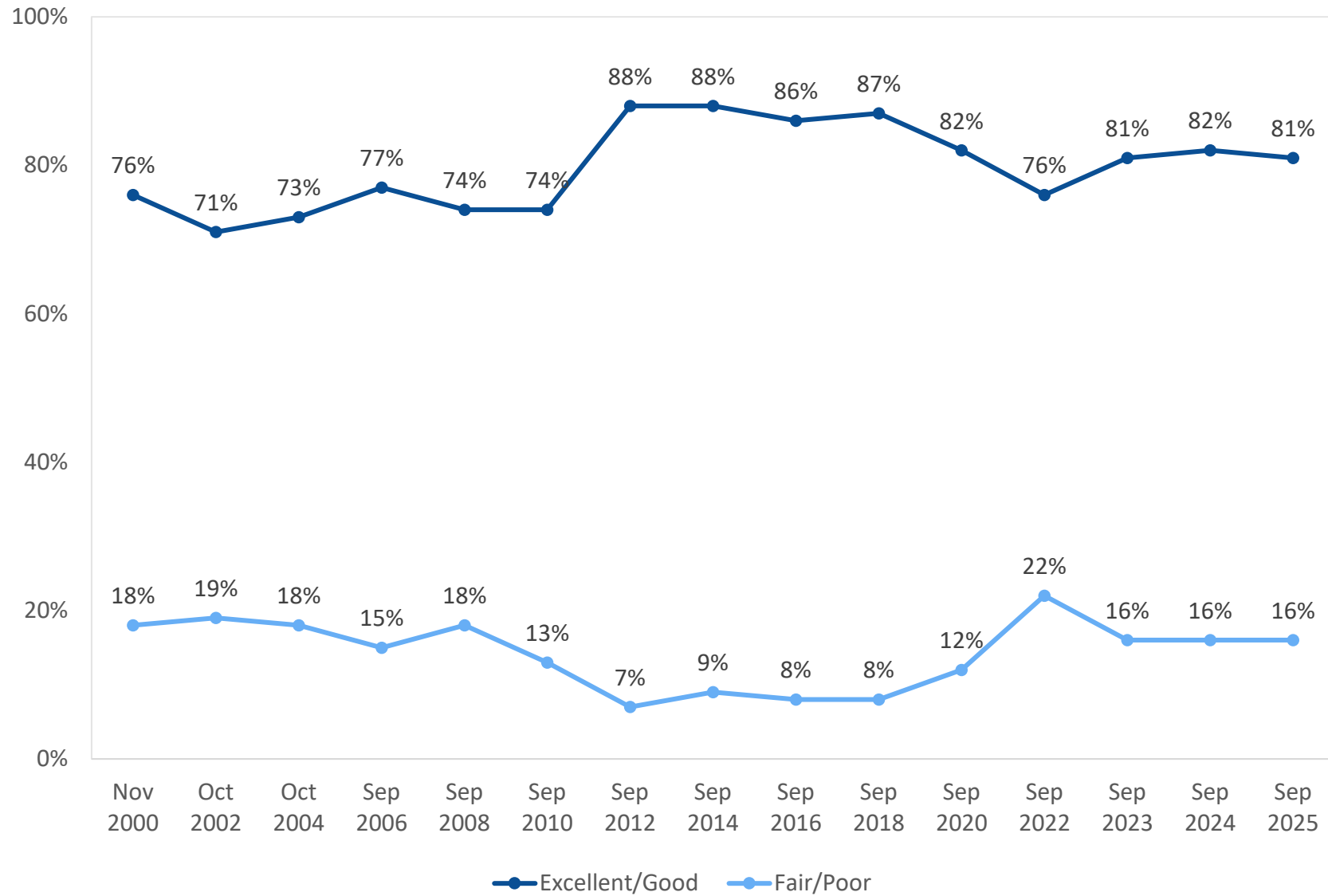
Sidewalk maintenance



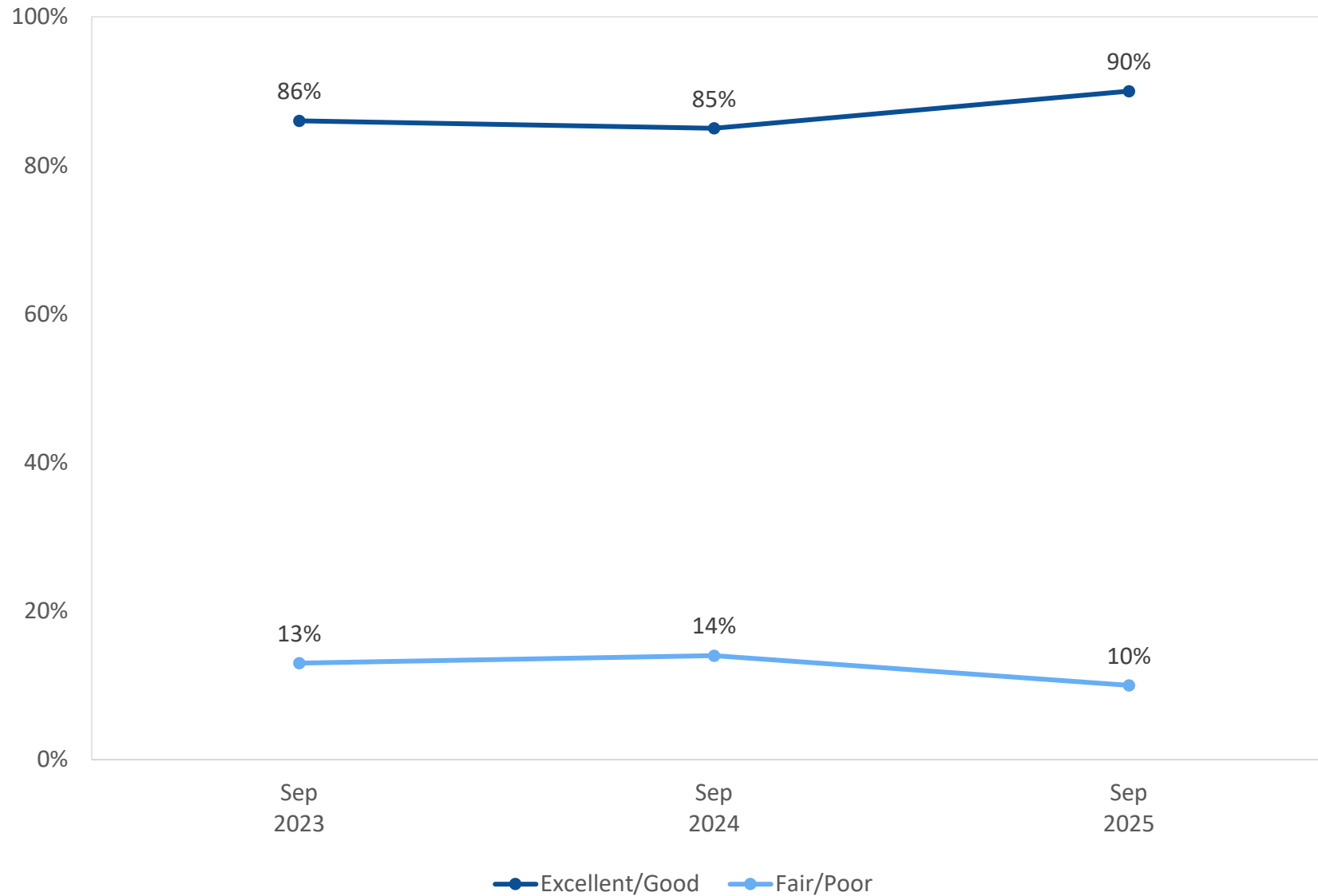
Snow plowing



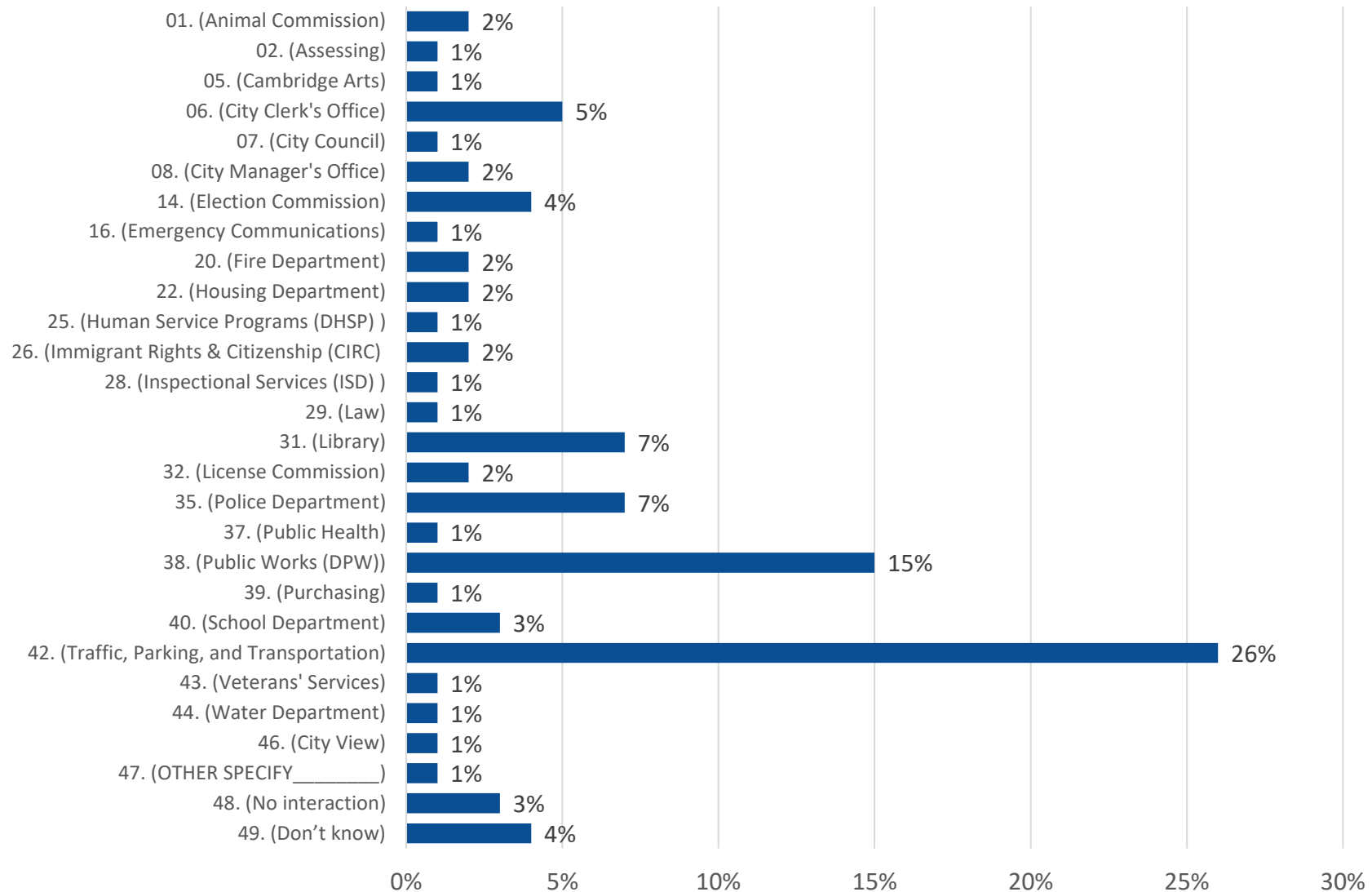
Water/sewer services



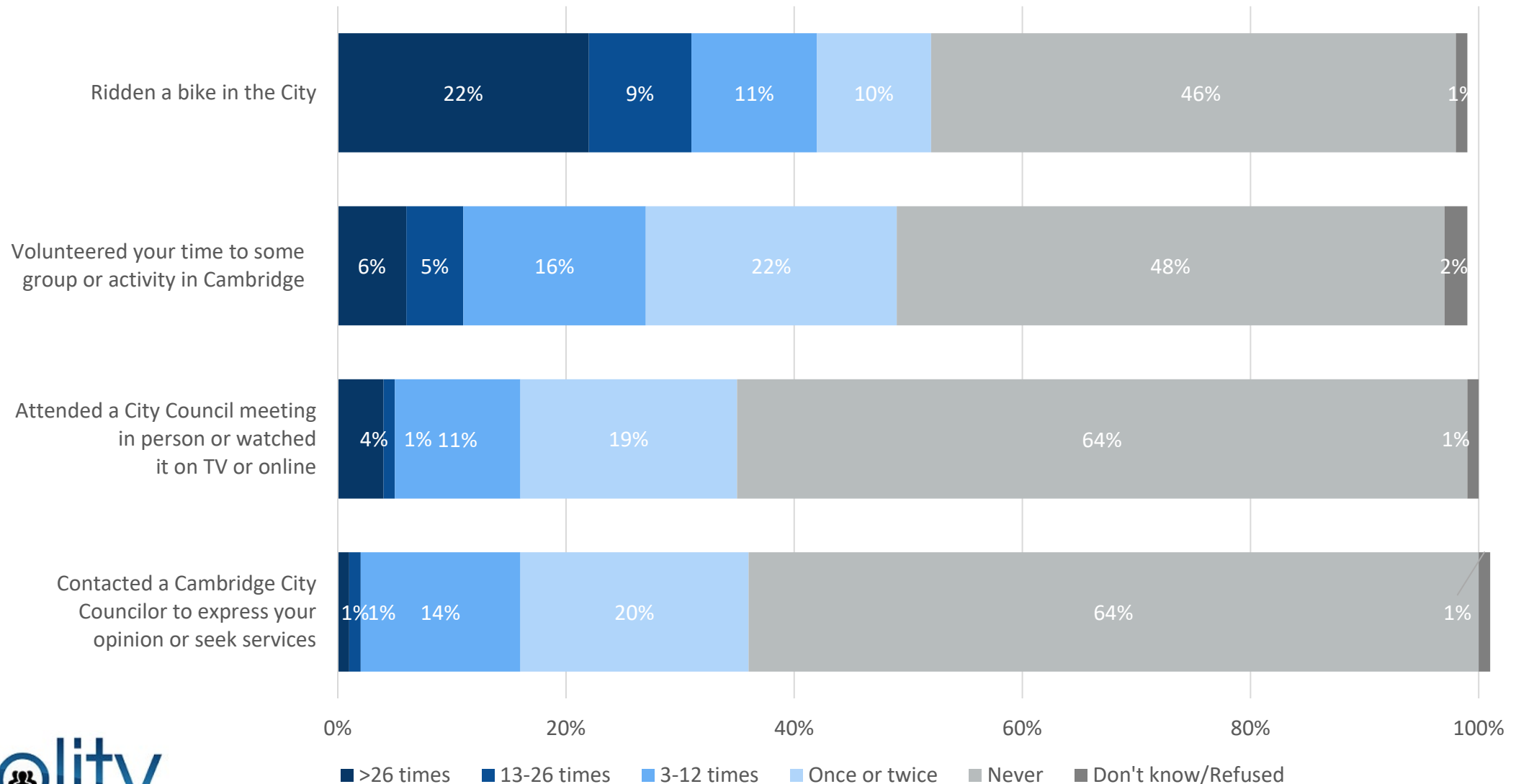
Garbage, recycling and compost



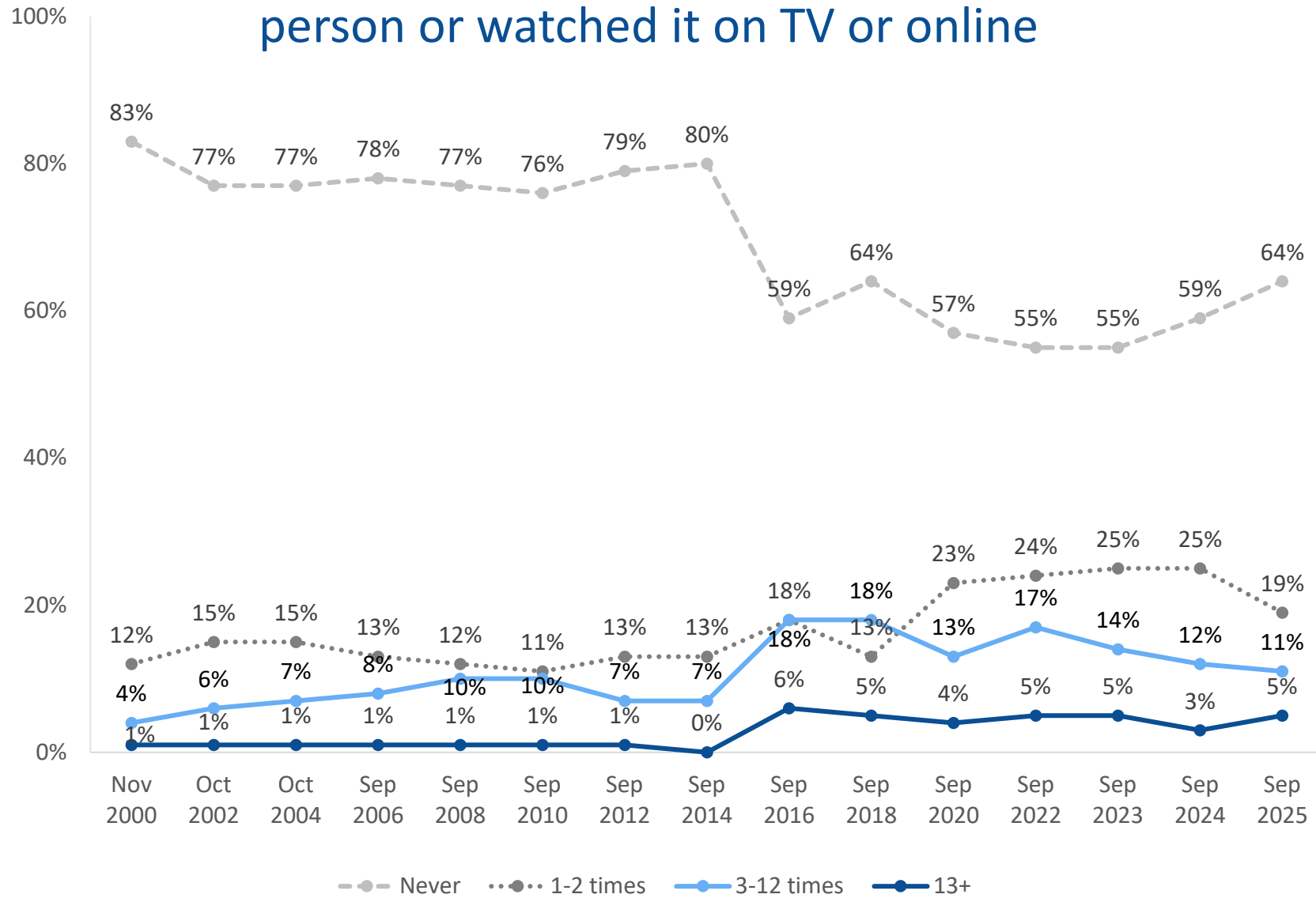
Thinking of this last issue—*overall customer service by Cambridge City employees*— what specific City Department did you have your *last* interaction with?



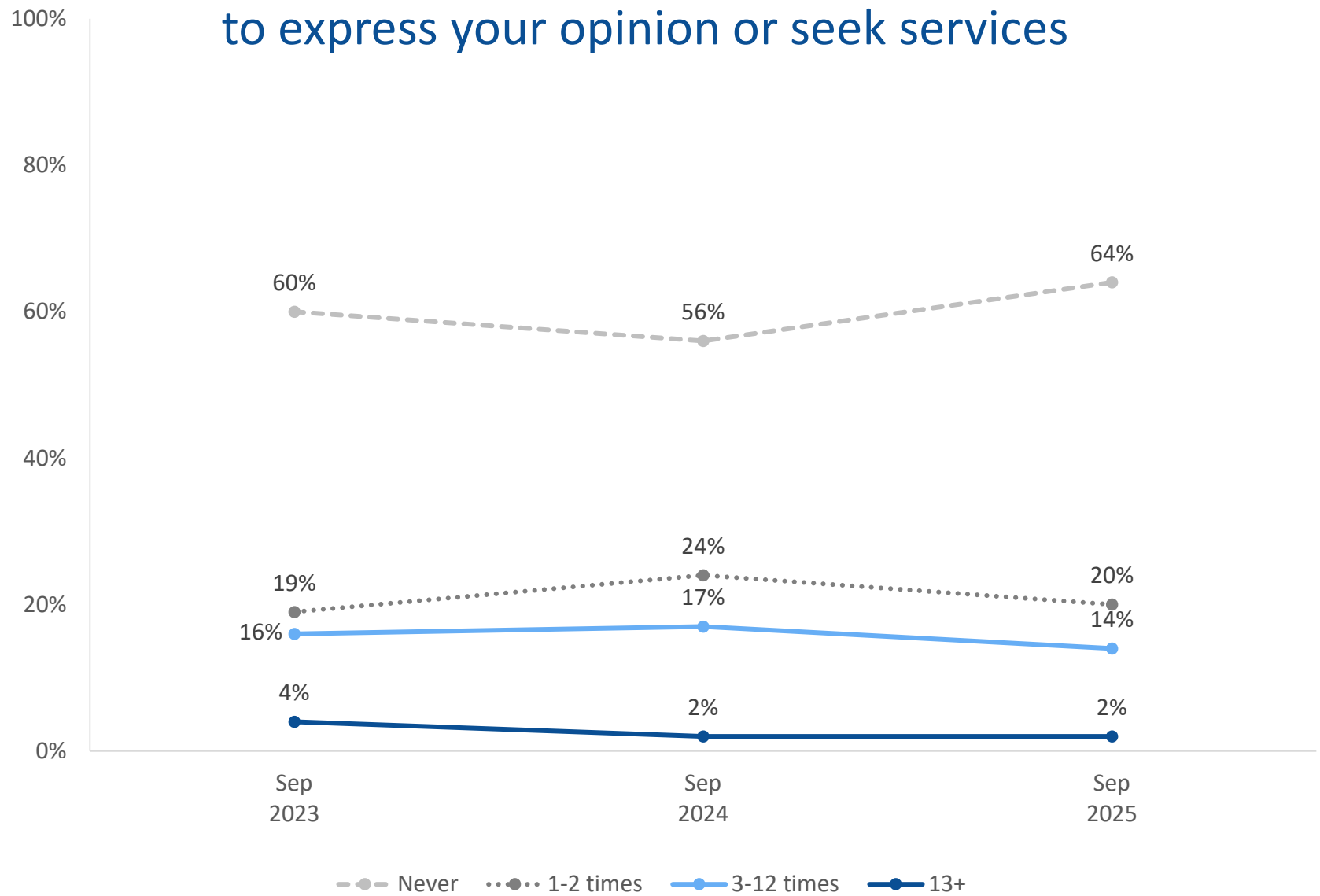
In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or another household member done the following:



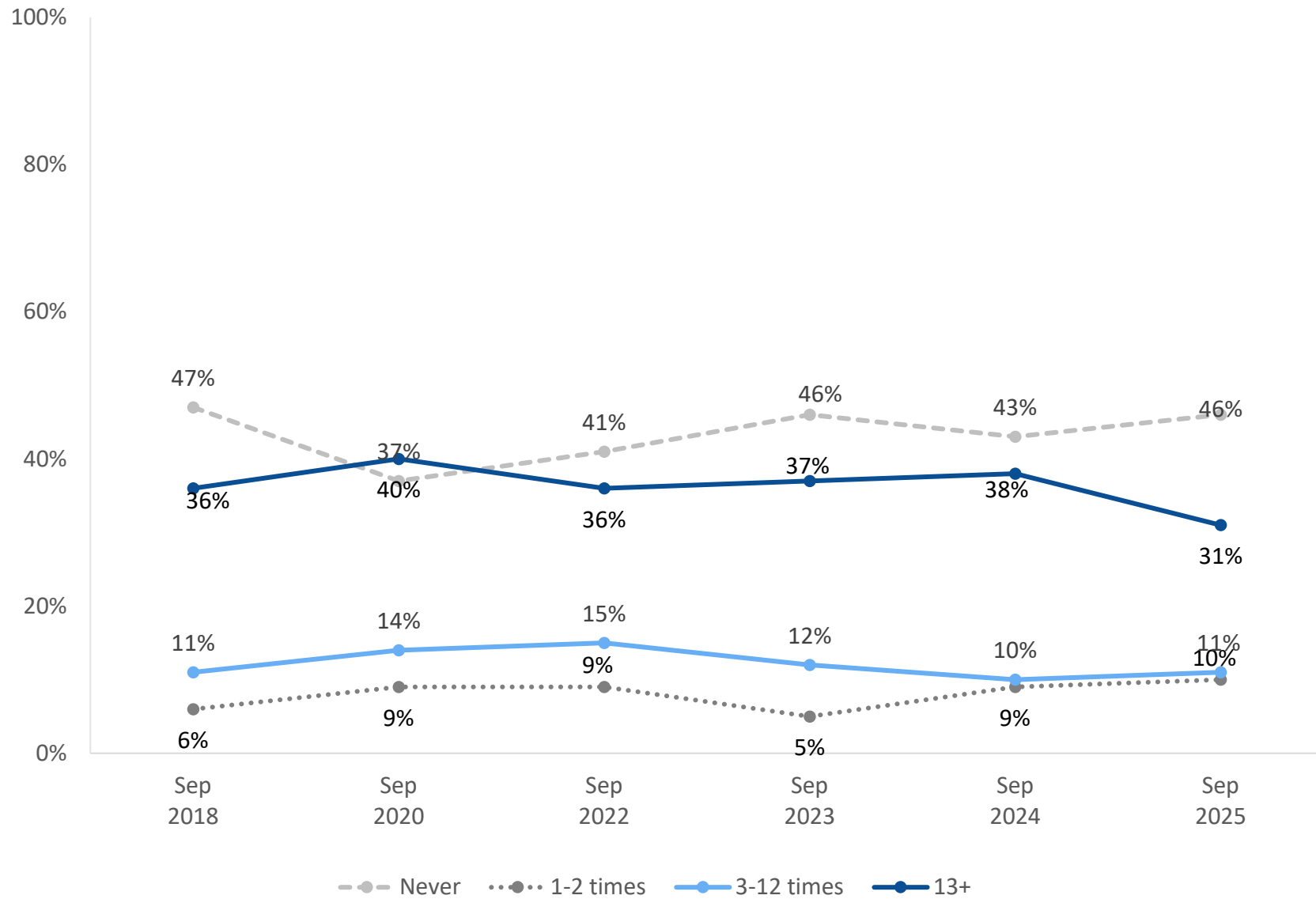
Times in the Last 12 Months: Attended a City Council meeting in person or watched it on TV or online



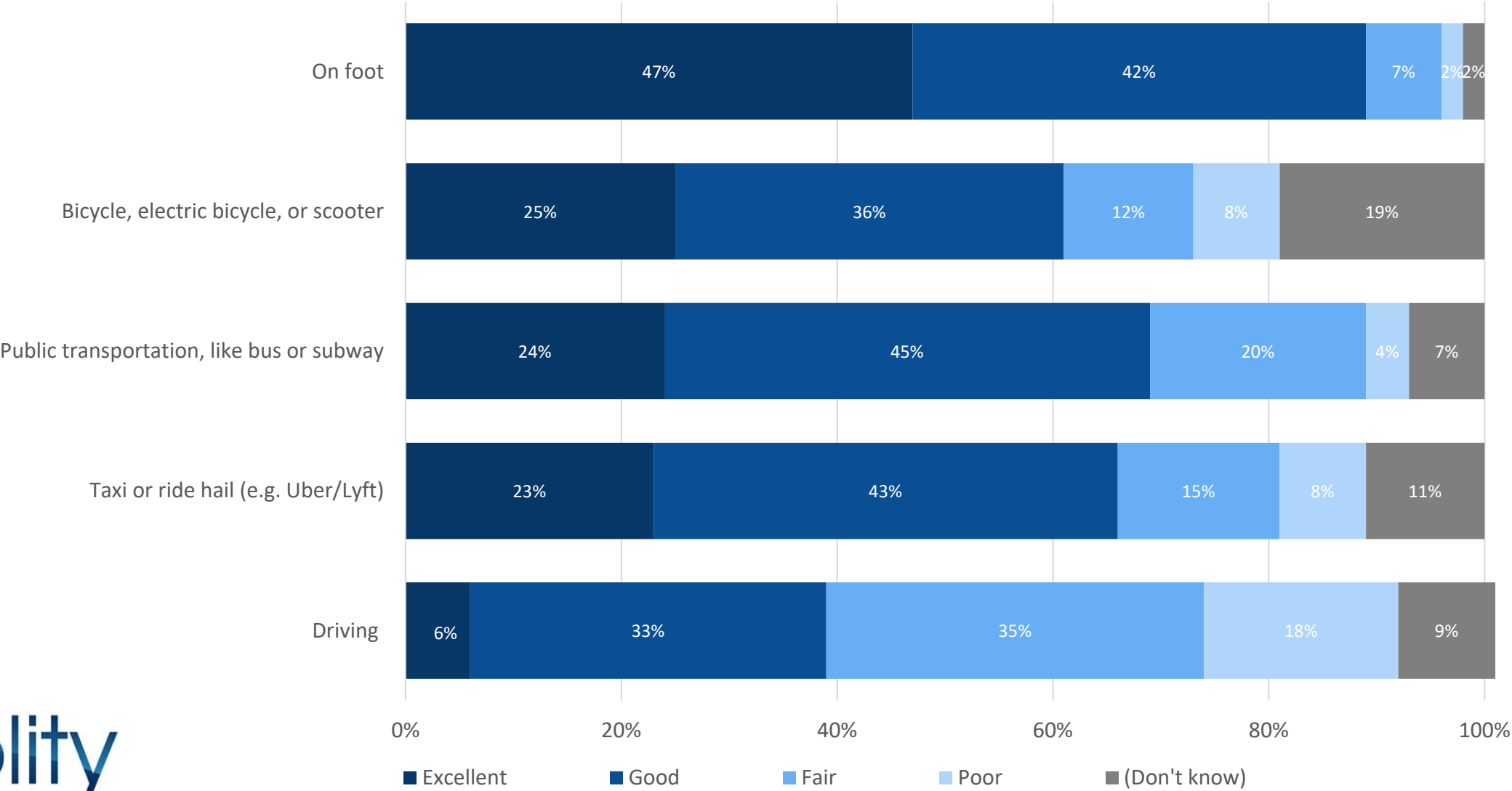
Times in the Last 12 Months: Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services



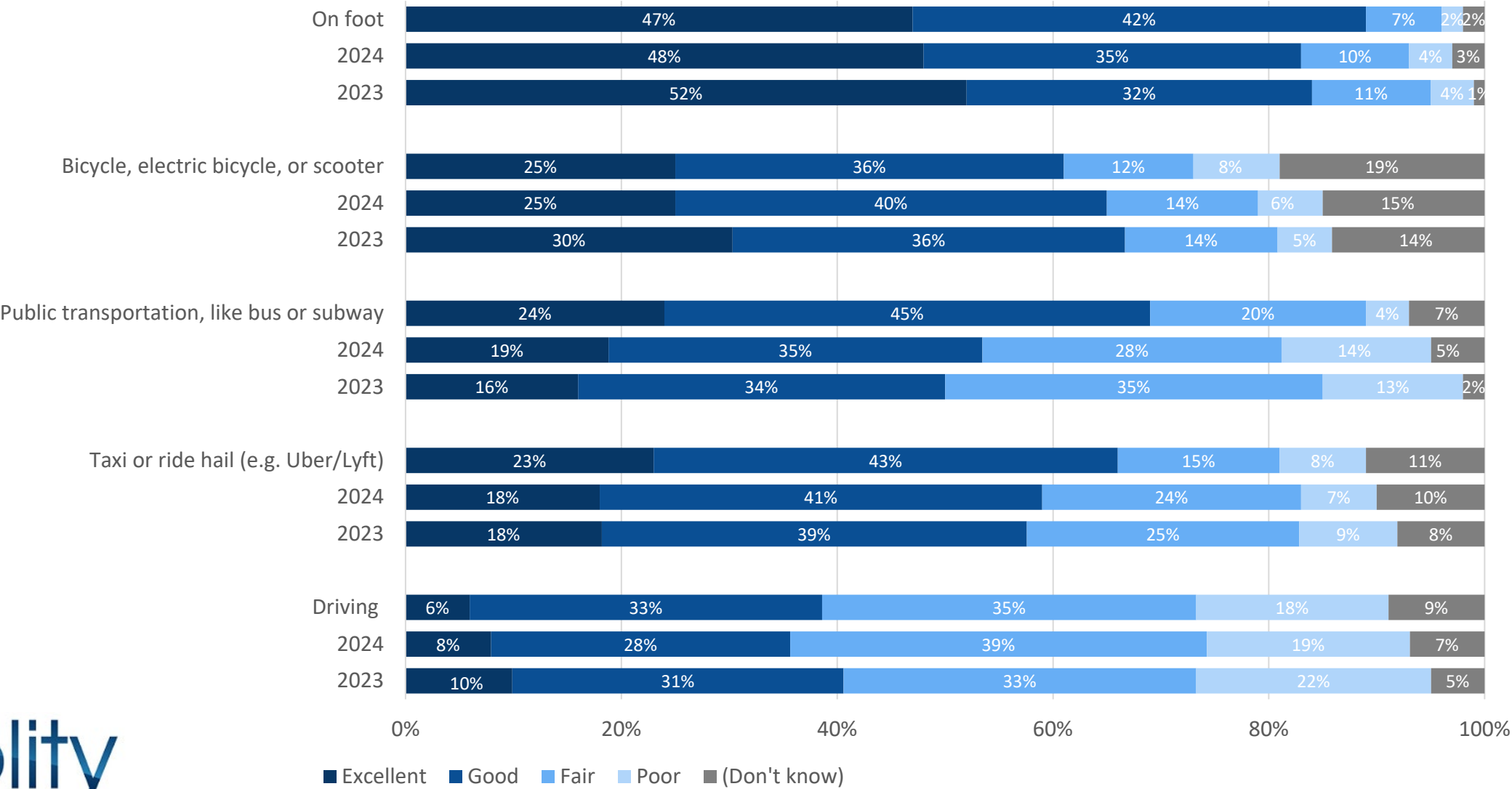
Times in the Last 12 Months: Ridden a bike in the City



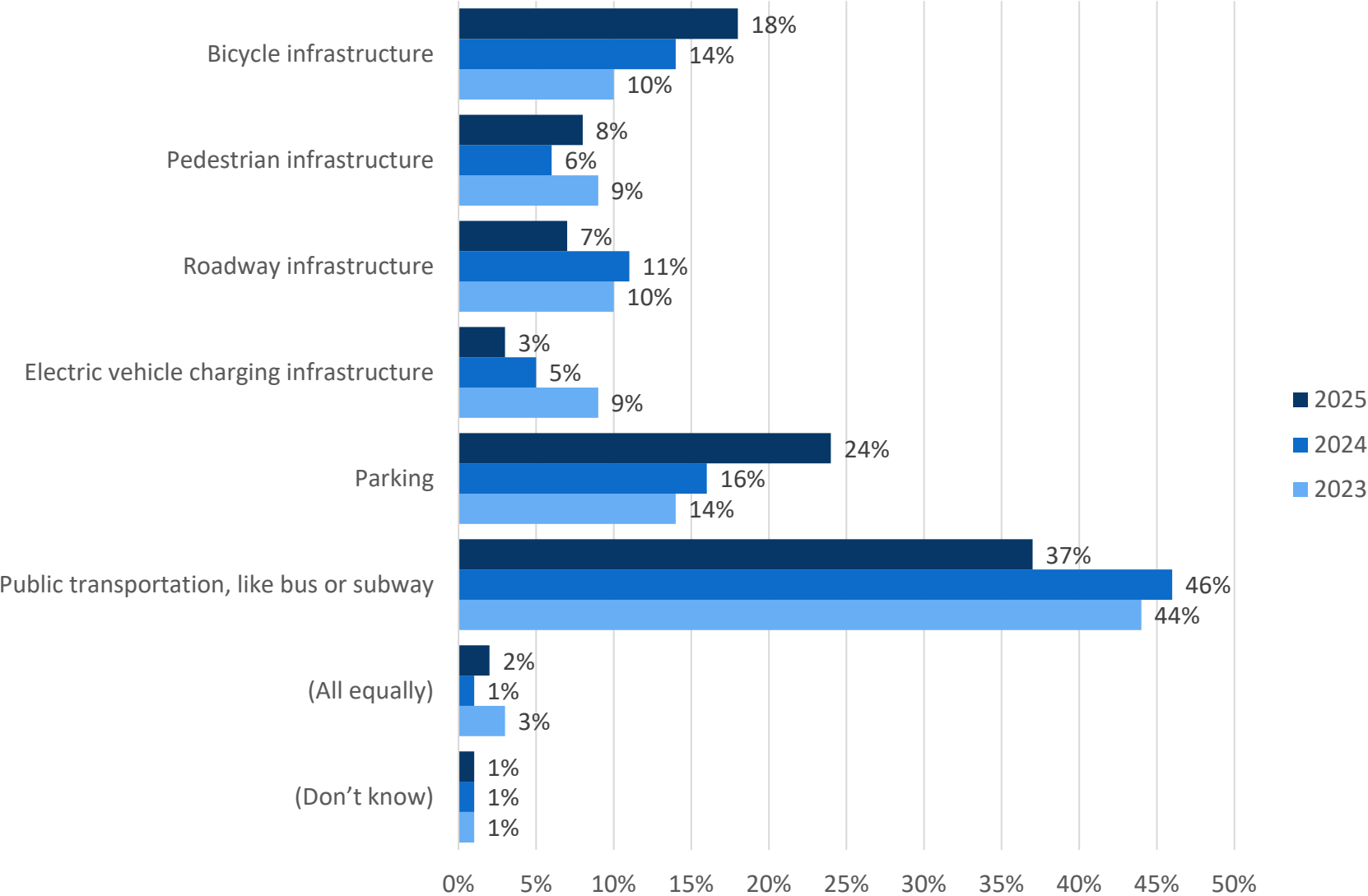
On a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate the ease of getting around the city for each of the following transportation options.



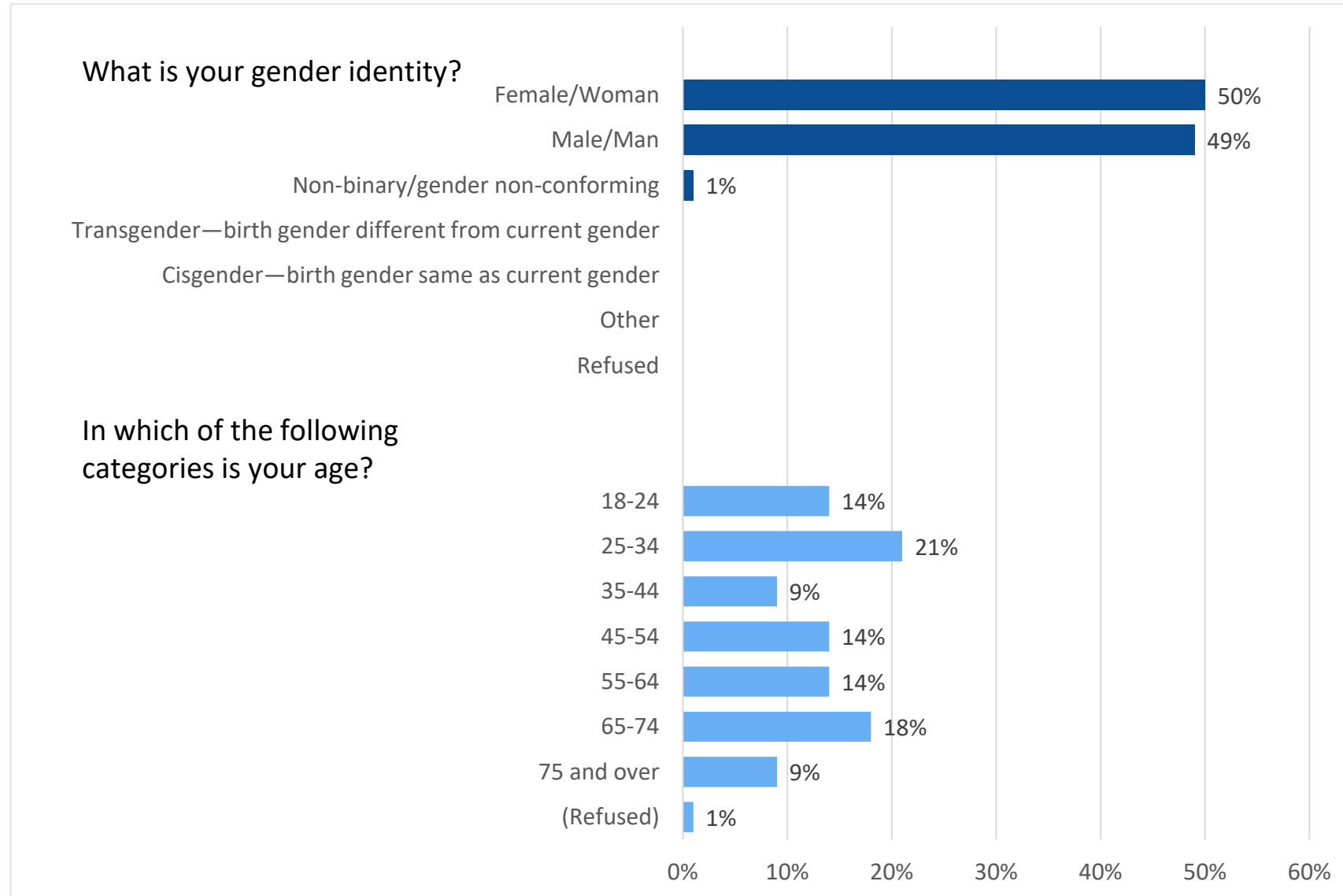
On a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, please rate the ease of getting around the city for each of the following transportation options.



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?

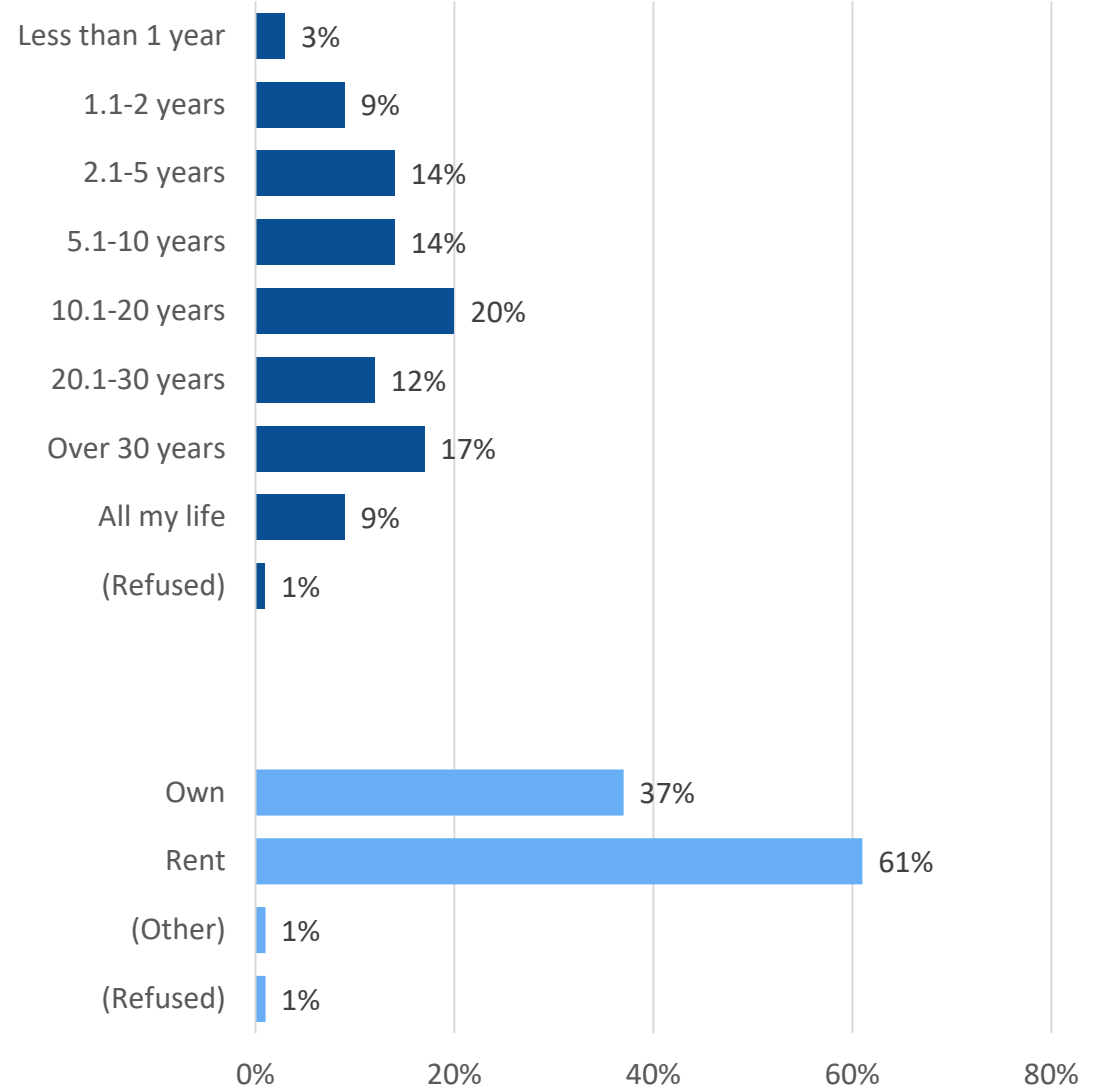


Demographics

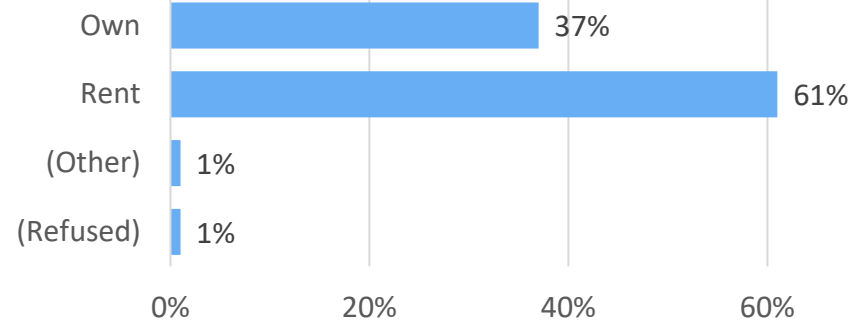


Demographics

How many years have you lived in Cambridge?

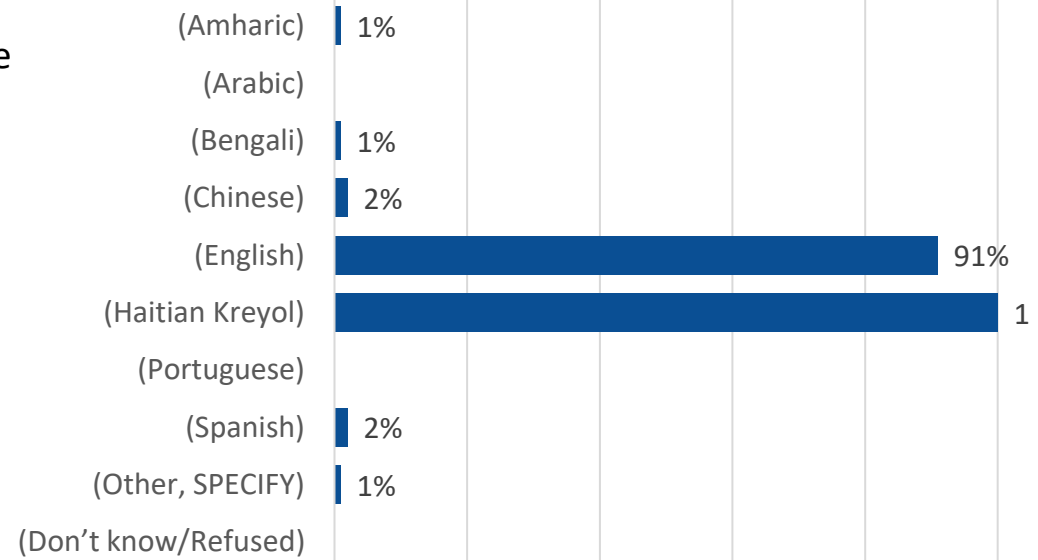


Do you own or rent your home?

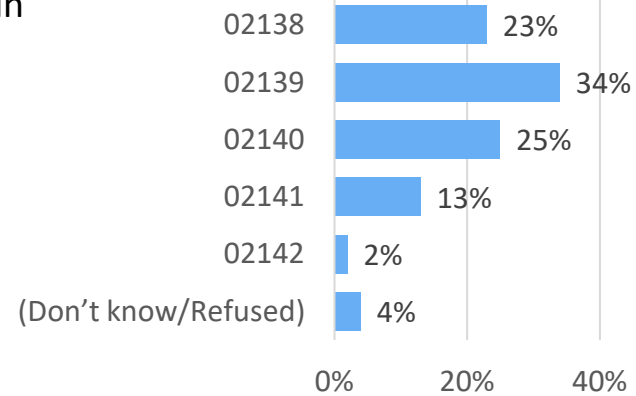


Demographics

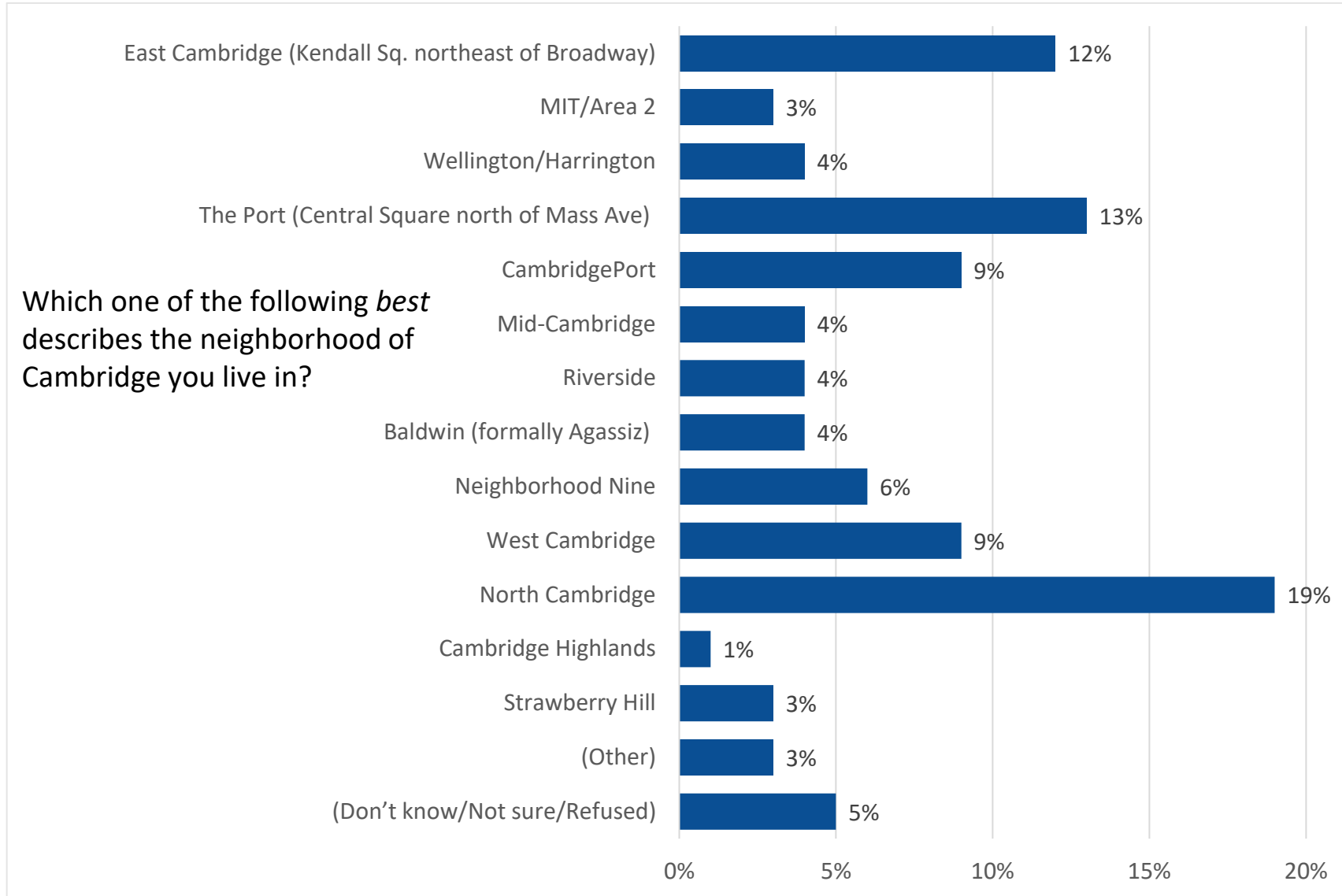
What is the primary language you speak at home?



What is your ZIP CODE here in Cambridge?

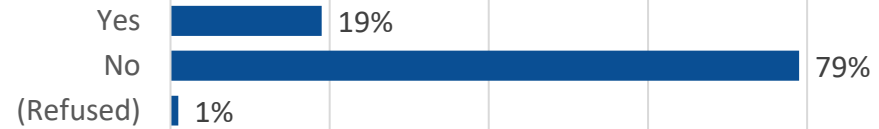


Demographics

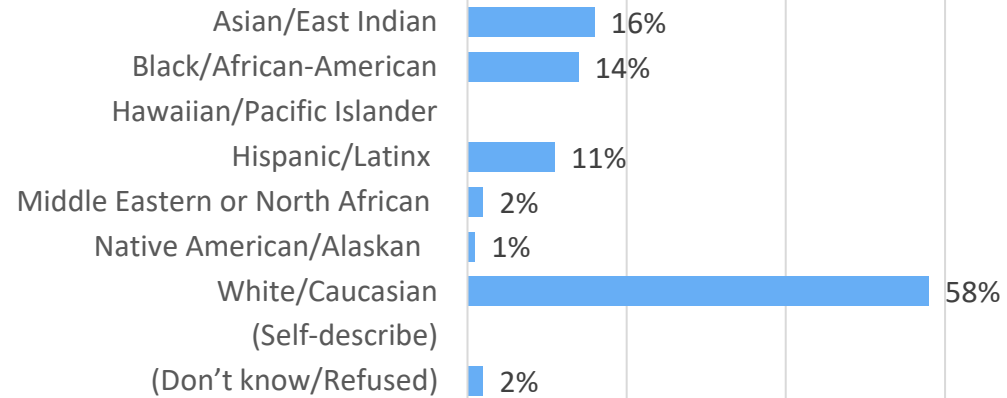


Demographics

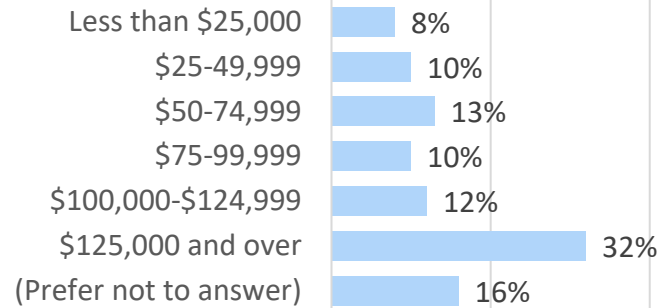
Are there any children under the age of 18 living in your



Ethnicity



Income



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Demographics

