

2025 BUDGET SURVEY

Final Report

October 2024



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01 INTRODUCTION

Objectives and Methodology

Objectives

This report presents the findings of the City of Victoria's 2025 Budget Survey. The main purpose of this survey is to obtain residents' input on City services, programs, and spending priorities to help guide the development of the City's 2025 Budget.

Methodology

Ipsos conducted a total of 700 telephone interviews with a randomly selected representative sample of Victoria residents aged 18 years or older.

Interviewing was conducted using numbers from both cellphones and landlines. A screening question was included at the start of the survey to confirm residency in Victoria.

To ensure the data was gathered from a representative group of residents across the city, neighbourhood quotas were set roughly proportionate to the population in each of Victoria's 12 neighbourhoods.

All interviews were conducted between June 3 and 19, 2024.

The final data has been weighted to ensure that the gender/age and neighbourhood distribution reflects that of the actual population in Victoria according to 2021 Census data. Please note, the boundaries of the Downtown, Fairfield, Oaklands and Jubilee neighbourhoods have changed since Census 2021.

Overall results based on a sample size of 700 are accurate to within $\pm 3.7\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger for sample subgroups.





Notes to Reader

Some totals in the report may not add to 100%. Some summary statistics (e.g., total satisfied) may not match their component parts. The numbers are correct, and the apparent errors are due to rounding.

Analysis of some of the statistically significant demographic results is included where applicable. While a number of significant differences may appear in the cross-tabulation output, not all differences warrant discussion.

Where possible, this year's results have been compared to the City's 2024 Budget Survey to understand how attitudes and priorities are changing, identify new or emerging issues, and monitor perceptions of the City's performance. Arrows (▲ ▼) are used to denote any significant differences between the year-over-year results.

The City's 12 neighbourhoods have been grouped into four broad areas for analytical purposes. Neighbourhood groupings are based on geographical proximity and ensure a statistically robust sample size in each area.

- Gonzales/Rockland/Fairfield (n=163)
- James Bay/Downtown/Victoria West (n=220)
- Jubilee/Fernwood/Oaklands (n=167)
- Hillside Quadra/North Park/Burnside (n=150)

02 KEY FINDINGS



Key Findings

1

This year's results are consistent with 2023, with generally little change in residents' perceptions or priorities.

2

Perceptions of the overall quality of life in Victoria are positive but many feel this has worsened over the past three years.

- Main reasons for rating the quality of life as good: the favourable weather, the city's general appeal as a nice place to live, its aesthetic beauty, and the friendly community.
- Main reason for rating the quality of life as poor: the high cost of living.

3

Social issues, particularly housing/affordable housing and poverty/homelessness, dominate the public issue agenda. Transportation sits in distant second, followed by public safety/crime.

4

A majority of residents are satisfied with the overall level and quality of City services. Just over half say services have stayed the same over the past three years but among those noticing a change, perceptions are more negative than positive.

5

Housing is identified as the number one priority for investment. Community safety and well-being places second. The emphasis placed on climate change has slipped this year while transportation sees a slight bump in mentions.

6

To balance the budget, residents would most prefer to see the City continue to offer the same services but not to the same level, for example, reduced hours. An increase in property taxes is the least preferred option overall.

03 DETAILED FINDINGS

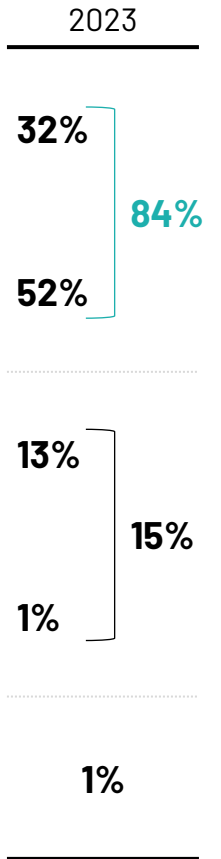
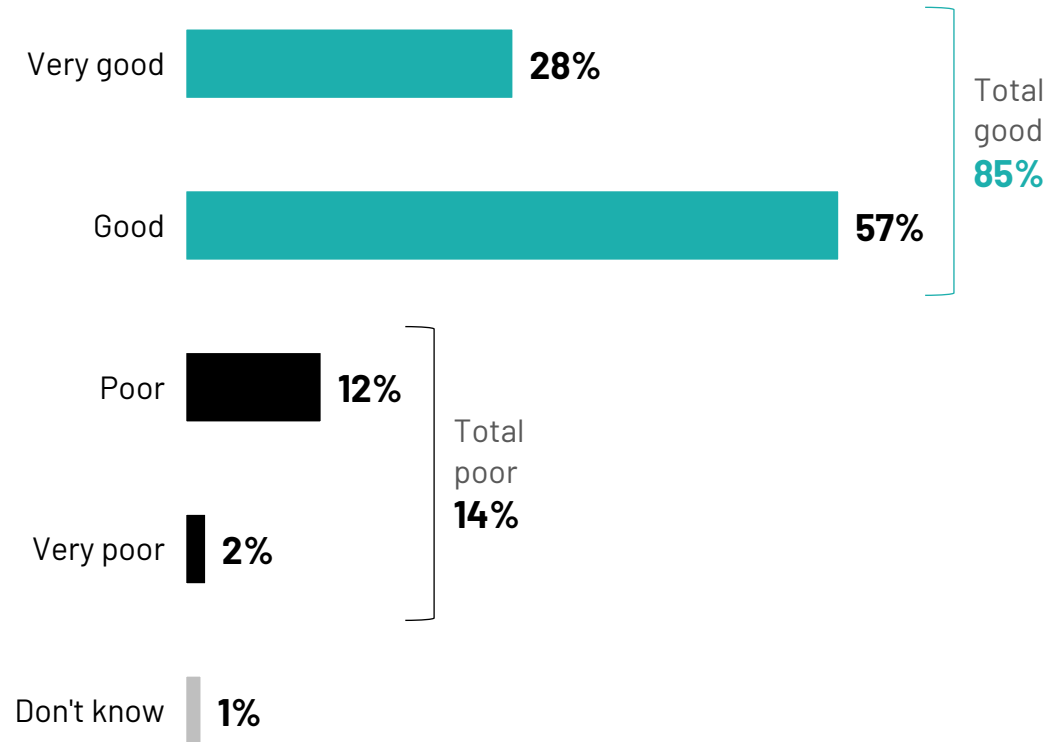


3.1

QUALITY OF LIFE

Overall quality of life in Victoria today

- Perceptions of the overall quality of life in Victoria today are positive (85% total good) and on par with 2023.
- Total good is higher among:
 - Those who are 55+ years of age (87% versus 80% of 35-54 years, 85% of 18-34 years)
 - Those who have lived in Victoria for <20 years (89% versus 80% of 20+ years)



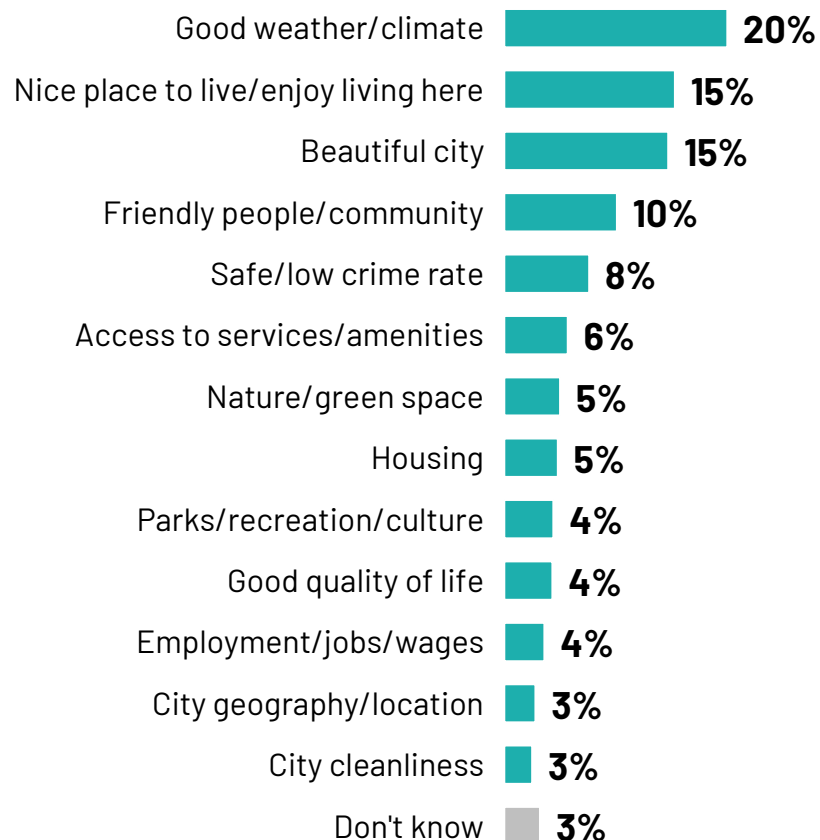
Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700); 2023 (n=700)
 Q2. How would you rate the overall quality of life in Victoria today?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2023.

Reasons quality of life is good

(among those rating the overall quality of life as very good/good)(coded open-ends, multiple mentions allowed)

- Victoria’s good quality of life is attributed to a variety of factors.
- The three most frequently mentioned open-ended responses are “good weather/ climate” (20%), “nice place to live/enjoy living here” (15%), and “beautiful city” (15%).
- One-in-ten (10%) mention “friendly people/community”.



Mentions <3% not shown.

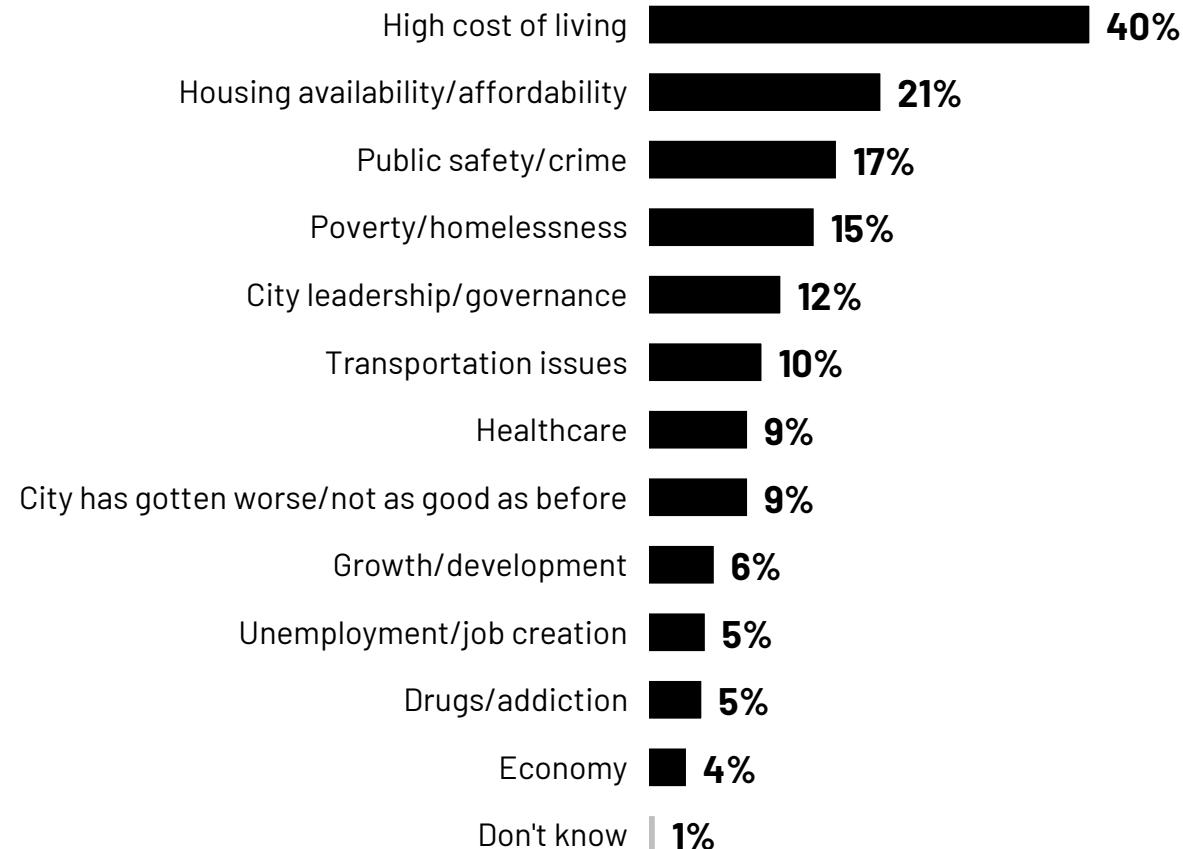
Base: Rated the overall quality of life as very good/good (n=595)

Q2a. Why do you rate the overall quality of life as good? Any other reasons?

Reasons quality of life is poor

(among those rating the overall quality of life as very poor/poor)(coded open-ends, multiple mentions allowed)

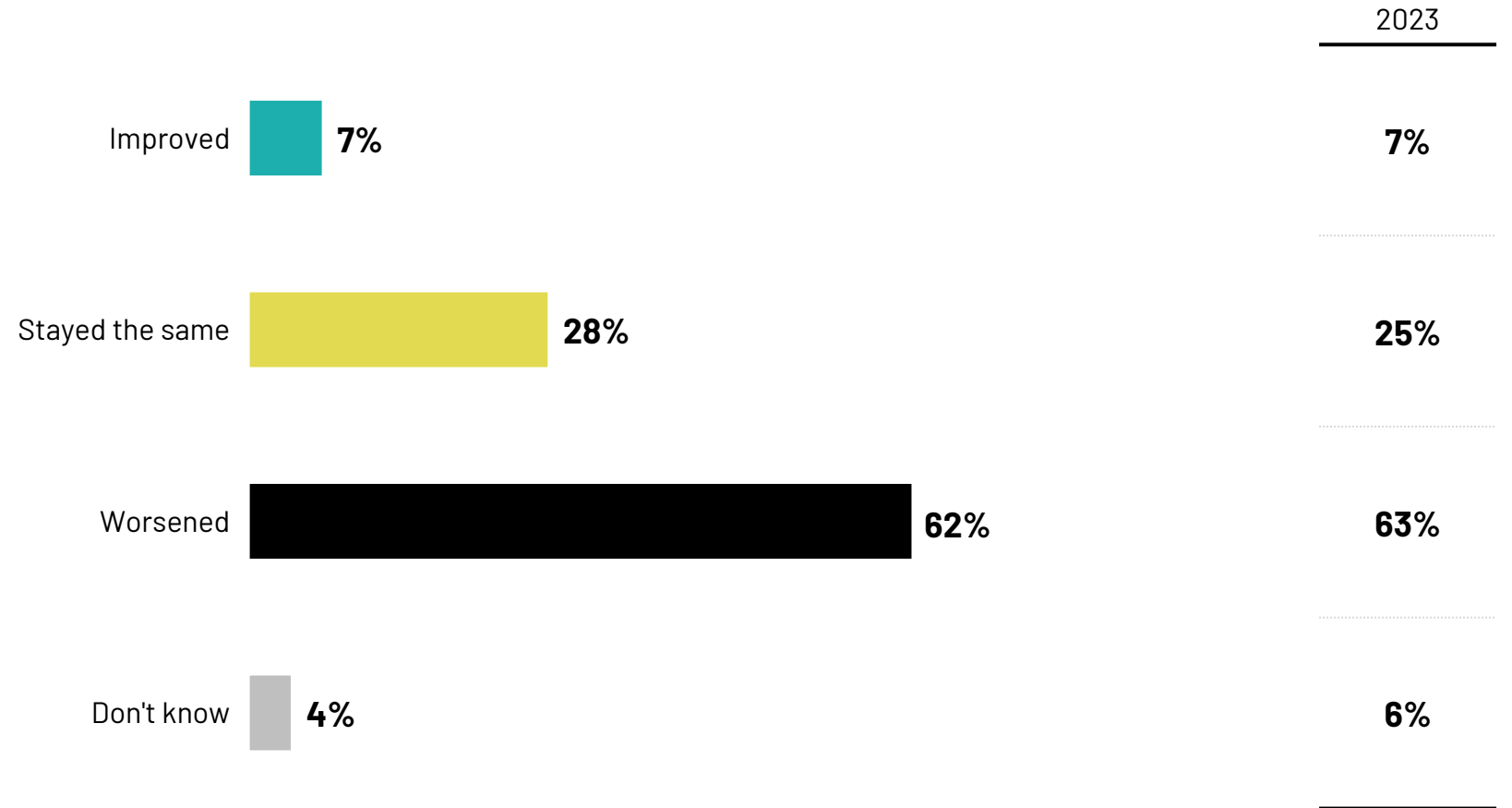
- The “high cost of living” is the number one open-ended reason for rating Victoria’s quality of life poorly (40%).
- Less frequently mentioned reasons include “housing availability/affordability” (21%), “public safety/crime” (17%), “poverty/homelessness” (15%), “City leadership/governance” (12%), and “transportation issues” (10%).



Mentions <3% not shown.
 * Small base size (<100), interpret with caution.
 Base: Rated the overall quality of life as very poor/poor (n=95)*
 Q2b. Why do you rate the overall quality of life as poor? Any other reasons?

Change in quality of life in Victoria in past three years

- Most (62%) residents believe that the quality of life in Victoria has 'worsened' over the past three years, consistent with 2023.
- Nearly three-in-ten (28%) feel the quality of life has 'stayed the same'. Only 7% say 'improved'.
- Perceptions of a 'worsened' quality of life are higher among:
 - Those who have lived in Victoria for 20+ years (67% versus 55% of <20 years)
 - Those with household incomes of \$60K-<\$100K (72% versus 56% of <\$60K, 57% of \$100K+)



Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700); 2023 (n=700)
 Q3. And, do you feel that the quality of life in Victoria in the past three years has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2023.

3.2

IMPORTANT LOCAL ISSUES

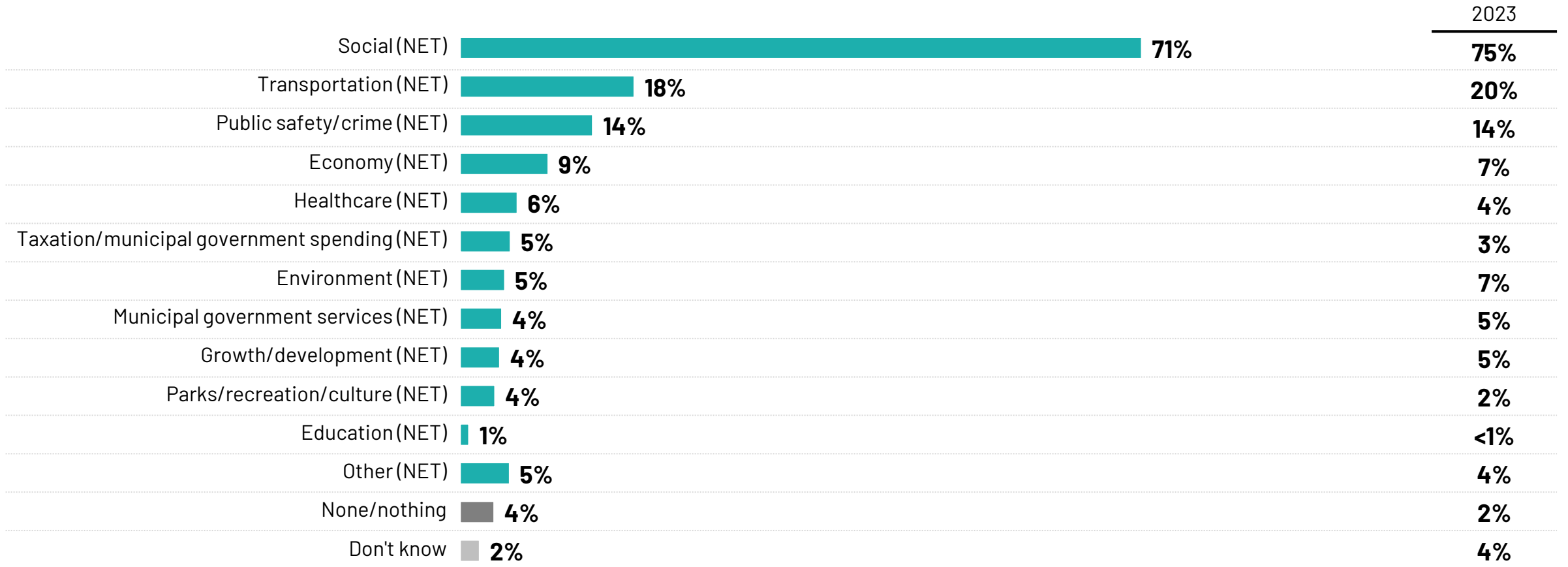
Important local issues

(coded open-ends, multiple mentions allowed)

- **Social** issues continue to dominate the public issue agenda, mentioned by 71% of residents on an open-ended basis (NET mentions).
 - Social issues are primarily comprised of mentions related to “housing/affordable housing” (37%) and “poverty/homelessness” (33%).
 - Other mentions include “substance use/drugs/addiction” (12%), “mental health” (3%), “food security” (1%), “seniors’ issues” (<1%), “childcare” (<1%), and “other social mentions” (2%).
- **Transportation** sits in distant second (18% NET mentions).
 - Transportation includes mentions of “cycling infrastructure” (5%), “traffic congestion” (4%), “public transportation” (3%), “condition of roads” (3%), “transportation (general)” (2%), “road safety (including speeding)” (1%), “parking” (1%), and “other transportation mentions” (1%).
- **Public safety/crime** rounds out the top three (14% NET mentions).
 - Public safety/crime includes mentions of “public safety” (12%), “policing/law enforcement” (2%), “crime (general)” (<1%), “downtown safety/crime” (<1%), and “other public safety/crime mentions” (<1%).
- All other issues are mentioned by fewer than one-in-ten residents.
- This year’s results are statistically similar to 2023.
- Demographic highlights include:
 - **Social** issues are mentioned more often by renters (75% versus 67% of homeowners) and those with household incomes of \$60K-<\$100K (78% versus 67% of <\$60K, 72% of \$100K+).
 - **Transportation** is mentioned more often by those living in Gonzales/Rockland/Fairfield (27% versus 15% of James Bay/Downtown/Victoria West, 16% of Hillside Quadra/North Park/Burnside, 17% of Jubilee/Fernwood/Oaklands). It is also mentioned more often by men (22% versus 15% of women), those who are 55+ years of age (25% versus 14% of 18-34 years, 14% of 35-54 years), those who have lived in Victoria for 20+ years (22% versus 14% of <20 years), and homeowners (24% versus 13% of renters).
 - **Public safety/crime** is mentioned more often by homeowners (18% versus 10% of renters) and those living alone (19% versus 10% of 2 person households, 15% of 3+ person households).

Important local issues

(coded open-ends, multiple mentions allowed)



A "NET" is a combination of two or more mentions that cover a specific theme.

Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700); 2023 (n=700)

Q1. In your view, as a resident of the City of Victoria, what is the most important issue facing your community, that is the one issue you feel should receive the greatest attention from your local leaders?

Are there any other important local issues?

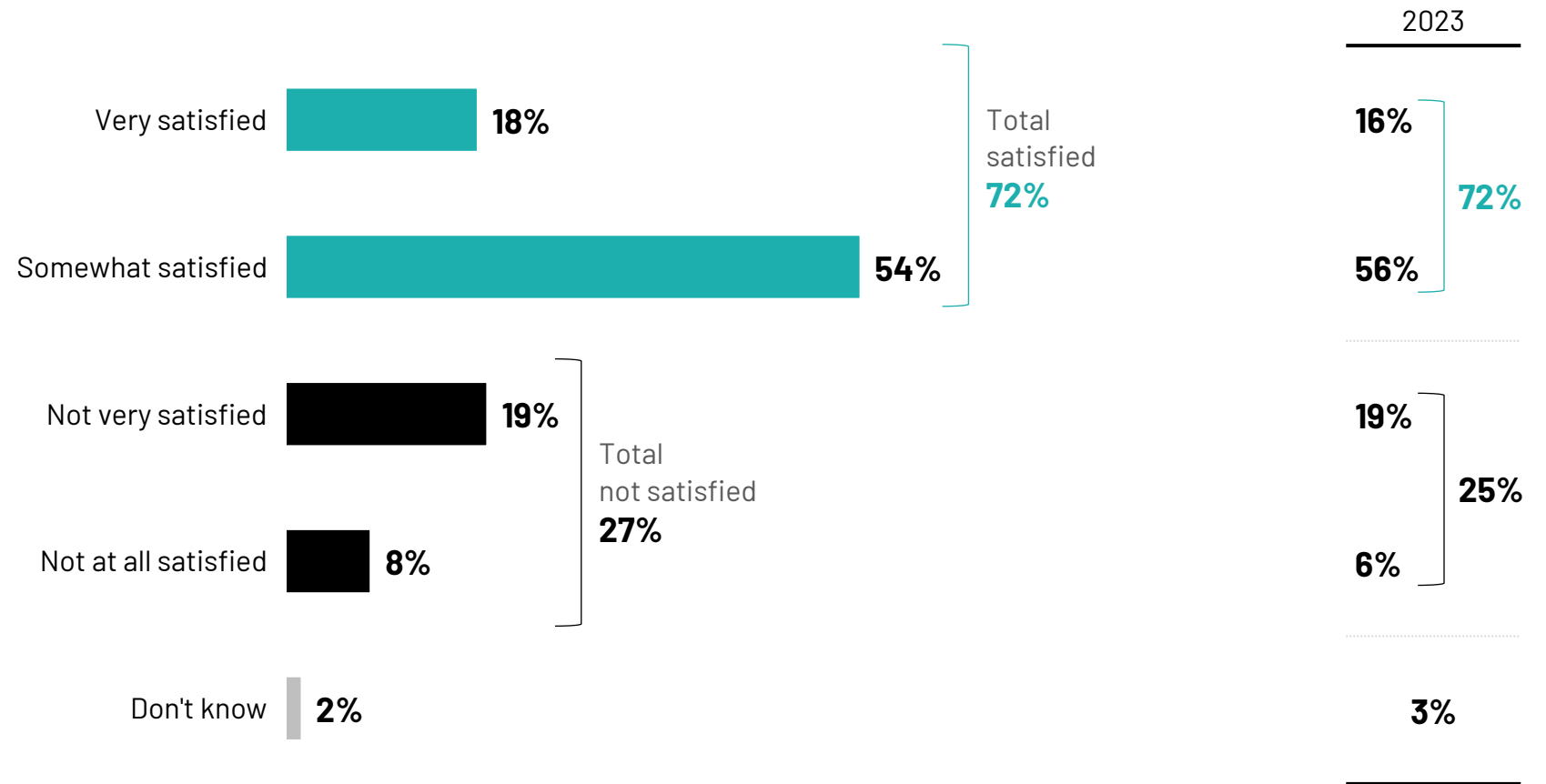
▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2023.

3.3

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

Overall satisfaction with City services

- A majority (72%) of residents say they are satisfied with the overall level and quality of services provided by the City, unchanged from 2023.
- Total satisfied is higher among:
 - Those living in Hillside Quadra/North Park/Burnside (82% versus 67% of Jubilee/Fernwood/Oaklands, 69% of James Bay/Downtown/Victoria West, 73% of Gonzales/Rockland/Fairfield)
 - Those who have lived in Victoria for <20 years (76% versus 67% of 20+ years)
 - Those with household incomes of <\$60K (80% versus 67% of \$60K-<\$100K, 72% of \$100K+)

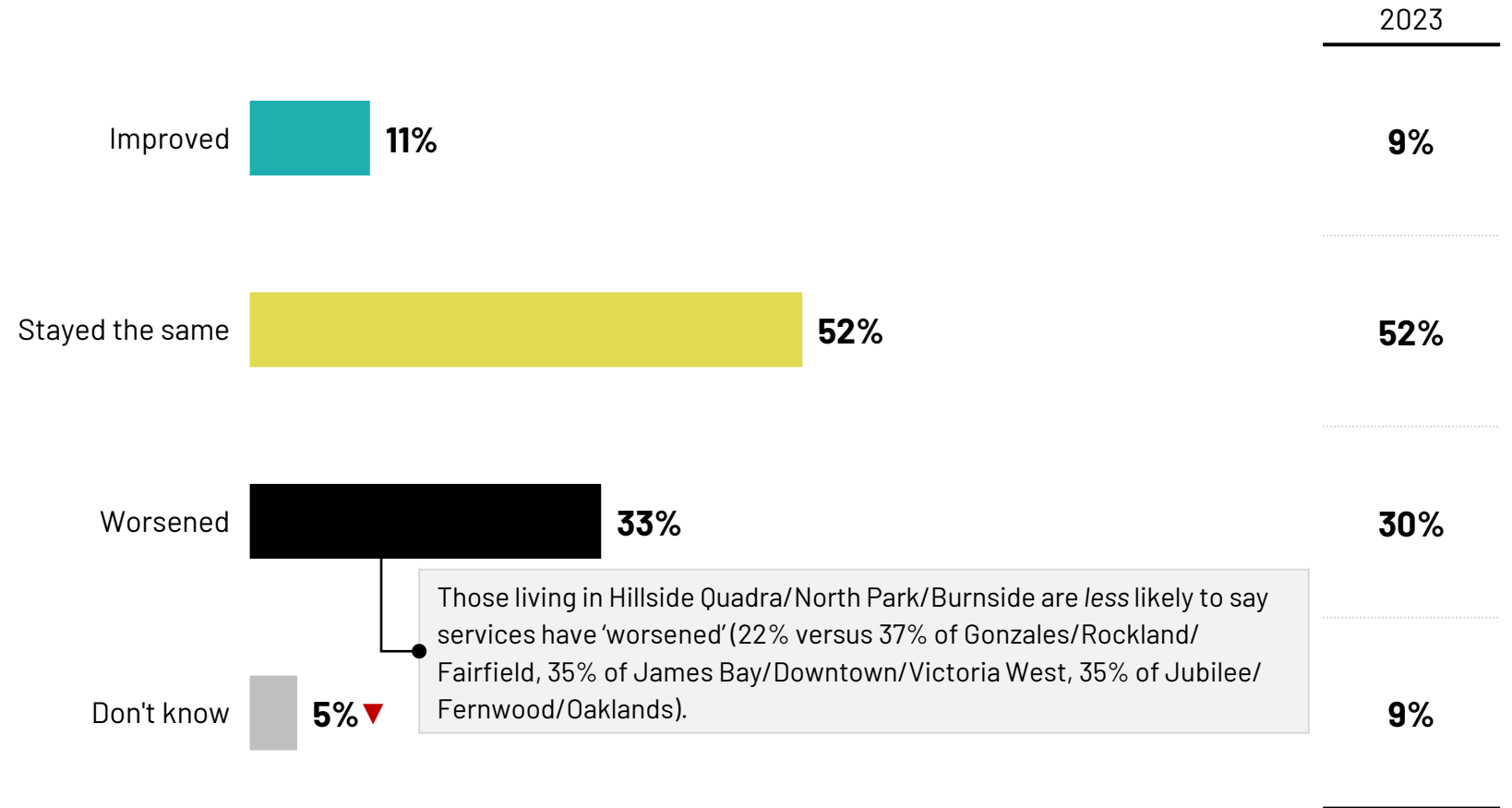


Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700); 2023 (n=700)
 Q4. How satisfied are you with the overall level and quality of services provided by the City of Victoria?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2023.

Change in satisfaction with City services in past three years

- Just over half (52%) feel City services have 'stayed the same' over the past three years.
- Among those noticing a change, more feel services have 'worsened' (33%) than 'improved' (11%), consistent with 2023.
- 'Worsened' is higher among:
 - Those who have lived in Victoria for 20+ years (37% versus 28% of <20 years)
 - Homeowners (38% versus 28% of renters)
 - Those with household incomes of \$60K-<\$100K (40% versus 24% of <\$60K, 32% of \$100K+)



Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700); 2023 (n=700)

Q5. And, do you feel that the overall level and quality of services provided by the City over the past three years has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2023.

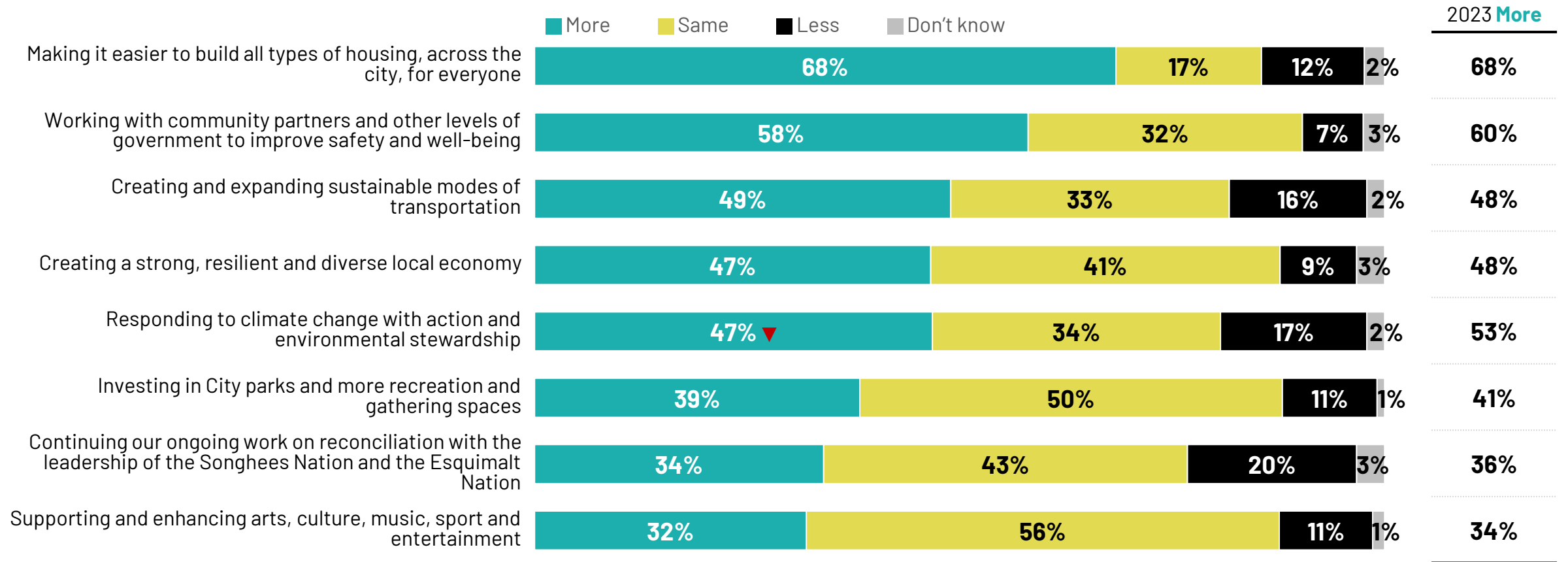
3.4 PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT

Investment in City services and programs

- Residents think the City should invest 'more' or 'the same' in all the evaluated services and programs. There are no services and programs where a majority thinks the City should reduce investment. However, there are clearly some services and programs that are a greater spending priority.
- Overall, residents continue to prioritize investment in *making it easier to build all types of housing, across the city, for everyone* most of all (68% invest more).
- This is followed by *working with community partners and other levels of government to improve safety and well-being* (58% invest more).
- Rounding out the top five are:
 - *Creating and expanding sustainable modes of transportation* (49% invest more)
 - *Creating a strong, resilient and diverse local economy* (47% invest more)
 - *Responding to climate change with action and environmental stewardship* (47% invest more).
- In comparison, less emphasis is placed on:
 - *Investing in City parks and more recreation and gathering spaces* (39% invest more)
 - *Continuing our ongoing work on reconciliation with the leadership of the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt Nation* (34% invest more)
 - *Supporting and enhancing arts, culture, music, sport and entertainment* (32% invest more).
- This year's results are statistically consistent with 2023 with one exception. Specifically, the percentage saying the City should 'invest more' in *responding to climate change with action and environmental stewardship* has declined by 6 percentage points.



Investment in City services and programs



Base: All respondents – 2024 (n=700); 2023 (n=700)

Q6. The City of Victoria has started planning for its 2025 Draft Budget. To help inform this process, the City is interested in learning residents' priorities for investment next year. Considering all the services and programs competing for funding dollars, please tell me whether you think the City should invest more, less, or about the same as this year in each of the following.

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2023.

Investment in City services and programs by gender, age, neighbourhood, and own/rent (1/2)

2024 INVEST MORE												
	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			NEIGHBOURHOOD				OWN/RENT	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Gonzales/ Rockland/ Fairfield	James Bay/ Downtown/ Victoria West	Jubilee/ Fernwood/ Oaklands	Hillside Quandra/ North Park/ Burnside	Own	Rent
Base:	700	350	327	109	203	381	163	220	167	150	402	285
Making it easier to build all types of housing, across the city, for everyone	68%	70%	67%	89%	70%	52%	57%	71%	67%	78%	55%	83%
Working with community partners and other levels of government to improve safety and well-being	58%	54%	63%	61%	62%	55%	50%	66%	58%	56%	59%	58%
Creating and expanding sustainable modes of transportation	49%	47%	51%	59%	46%	44%	53%	48%	39%	59%	47%	53%
Creating a strong, resilient and diverse local economy	47%	46%	48%	55%	44%	44%	37%	51%	44%	54%	46%	48%

Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700)

Q6. The City of Victoria has started planning for its 2025 Draft Budget. To help inform this process, the City is interested in learning residents' priorities for investment next year. Considering all the services and programs competing for funding dollars, please tell me whether you think the City should invest more, less, or about the same as this year in each of the following.

 = Statistically higher
 = Statistically lower

Investment in City services and programs by gender, age, neighbourhood, and own/rent (2/2)

2024 INVEST MORE												
	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			NEIGHBOURHOOD				OWN/RENT	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Gonzales/ Rockland/ Fairfield	James Bay/ Downtown/ Victoria West	Jubilee/ Fernwood/ Oaklands	Hillside Quandra/ North Park/ Burnside	Own	Rent
Base:	700	350	327	109	203	381	163	220	167	150	402	285
Responding to climate change with action and environmental stewardship	47%	38%	55%	55%	44%	44%	43%	52%	40%	53%	44%	51%
Investing in City parks and more recreation and gathering spaces	39%	40%	37%	40%	42%	35%	35%	38%	39%	43%	38%	39%
Continuing our ongoing work on reconciliation with the leadership of the Songhees Nation and the Esquimalt Nation	34%	29%	37%	50%	34%	21%	28%	31%	35%	44%	26%	43%
Supporting and enhancing arts, culture, music, sport and entertainment	32%	32%	30%	38%	33%	26%	32%	33%	25%	37%	29%	34%

Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700)

Q6. The City of Victoria has started planning for its 2025 Draft Budget. To help inform this process, the City is interested in learning residents' priorities for investment next year. Considering all the services and programs competing for funding dollars, please tell me whether you think the City should invest more, less, or about the same as this year in each of the following.

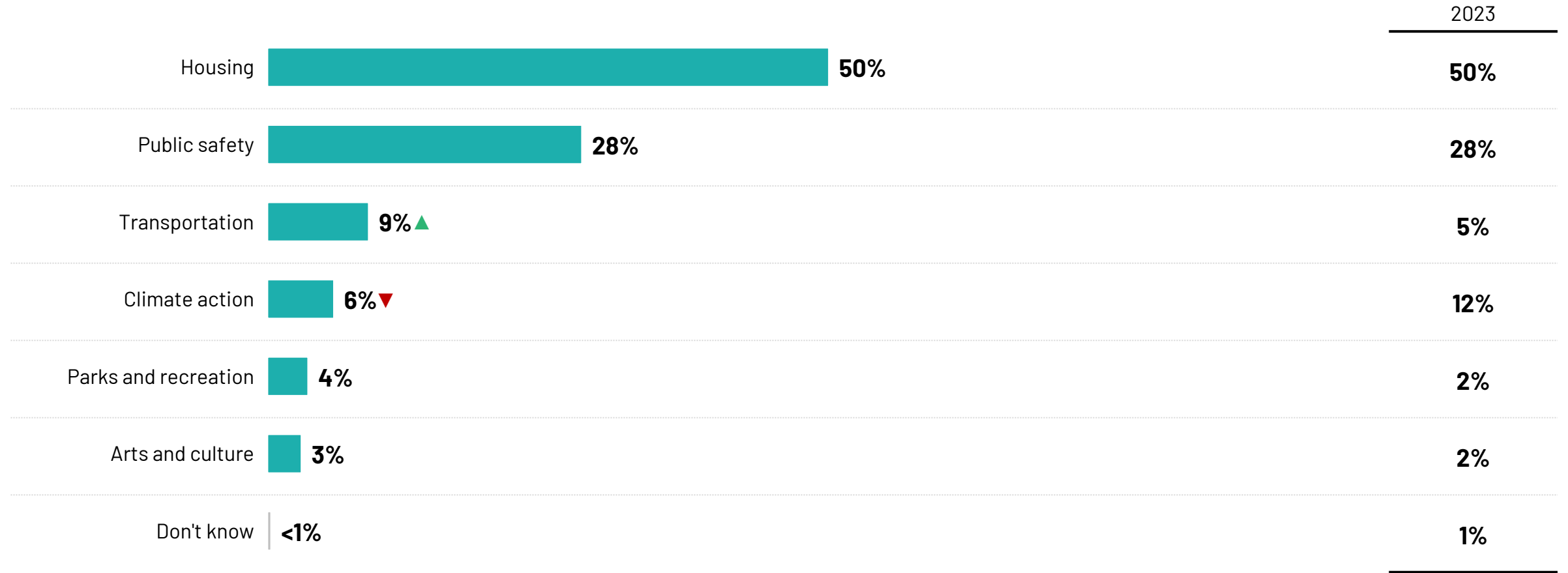
 = Statistically higher
 = Statistically lower

3.5 CORE SERVICES

Core City service needing most attention and investment

- *Housing* continues to stand out as the core City service perceived as needing the most attention and investment (50%).
 - *Public safety* places second (28%).
 - *Transportation* moves into third (9%), up 4 percentage points from 2023.
 - In contrast, *climate action* slips 6 percentage points, dropping to 6% and fourth overall.
 - Few identify *parks and recreation* (4%) and *arts and culture* (3%) as the areas most in need of attention and investment.
- Perceptions of core City services most in need of attention and investment are statistically consistent by neighbourhood and gender. However, some statistically significant differences are seen by age and housing tenure (own/rent).
 - Highlights by Age
 - While *housing* is the top priority across all age groups, mentions are highest among those <55 years of age (includes 59% of 18-34 years and 58% of 35-54 years versus 39% of 55+ years).
 - Older residents attach a higher priority to *public safety* (33% of 55+ years versus 19% of 18-34 years, 29% of 35-54 years), *climate action* (10% of 55+ years versus 2% of 35-54 years, 5% of 18-34 years), and *parks and recreation* (6% of 55+ years versus 2% of 35-54 years, 2% of 18-34 years).
 - *Transportation* is a greater priority to those who are 18-34 years of age (14% versus 5% of 35-54 years, 8% of 55+ years).
 - Highlights by Housing Tenure
 - For renters, *housing* is the number one priority (63%) by a wide margin. *Public safety* sits in distant second (19%).
 - In contrast, homeowners prioritize *housing* (39%) and *public safety* (36%) equally.

Core City service needing most attention and investment



Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700); 2023 (n=700)
 Q9. Of the following six core City services, which one do you think needs the most attention and investment next year?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2023.

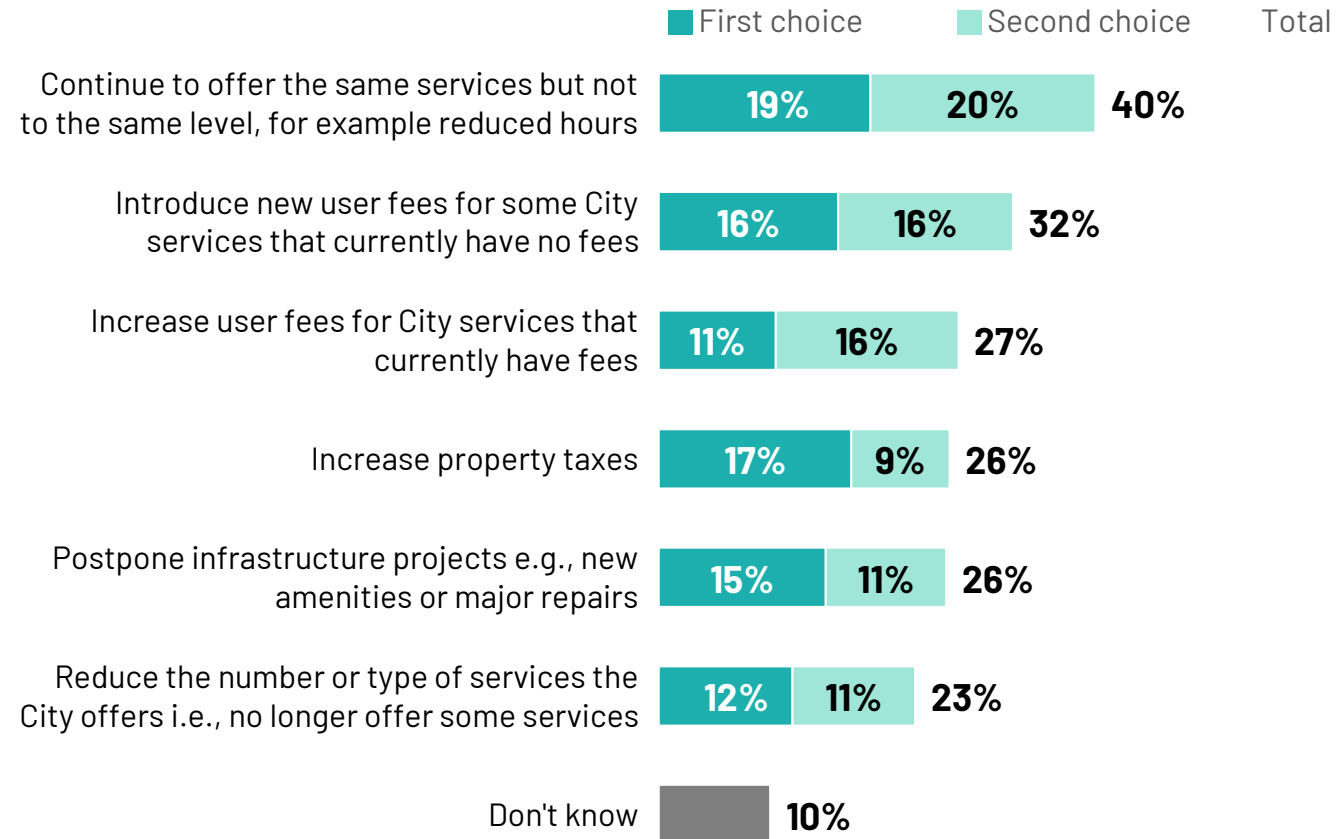
3.6

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Cannot be compared to 2023 due to differences in question wording¹

Preferred financial tools to balance City budget

- To balance the budget, residents are most likely to prefer that the City *continue to offer the same services but not to the same level, for example reduced hours* (40%).
 - Women are more likely than men to prefer this option (47% versus 32%).
- This is followed by *introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees* (32%).



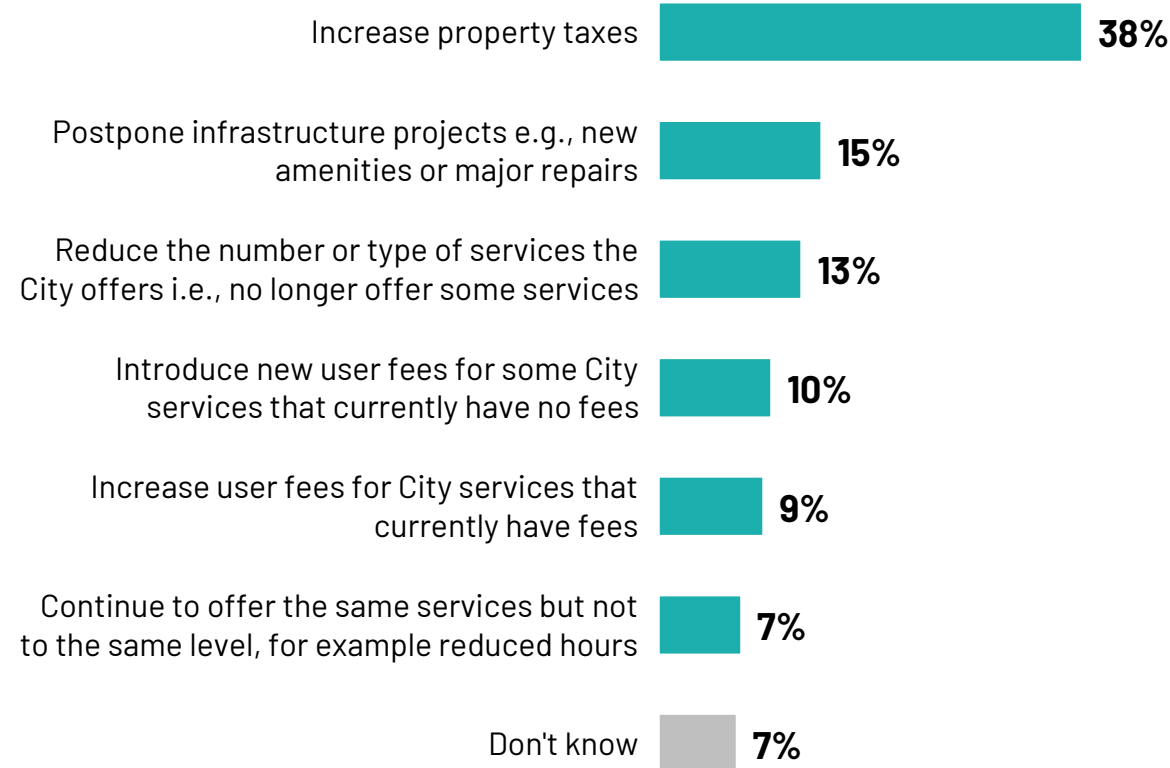
Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700)
 Q10. The City has a number of financial tools that can be used to balance the budget. Which one of the following would you most prefer the City use to balance its budget?
 Q11. Which one would you next most prefer?

¹ 2023 survey also asked about corporate sponsorship and naming rights for municipal programs and facilities.

Cannot be compared to 2023 due to differences in question wording¹

Least preferred financial tool to balance City budget

- An increase in property taxes is the least preferred option overall (38%).
- Residents least likely to prefer an increase in property taxes include:
 - Those living in Jubilee/ Fernwood/Oaklands (48% versus 32% of James Bay/ Downtown/Victoria West, 37% of Hillside Quadra/North Park/ Burnside, 39% of Gonzales/ Rockland/Fairfield)
 - Those who have lived in Victoria for 20+ years (43% versus 34% of <20 years)
 - Homeowners (49% versus 27% of renters)
 - Business owners (50% versus 37% of non-business owners)



Base: All respondents - 2024 (n=700)
Q12. And which one would you least prefer?

¹ 2023 survey also asked about corporate sponsorship and naming rights for municipal programs and facilities.

04 WEIGHTED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

2024 Weighted sample characteristics (1/2)



GENDER IDENTITY



46%

Man

Non-binary 1%



51%

Woman

Prefer to self-describe 1%

Refused 1%



NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD

1 32%

2 37%

3 14%

4 10%

5 or more 6%

Refused 1%



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

<\$40K 12%

\$40K to <\$60K 15%

\$60K to <\$80K 16%

\$80K to <\$100K 15%

\$100K+ 34%

Refused 9%



AGE

18 to 34 30%

35 to 54 29%

55+ 40%

Refused 1%



CHILDREN <18 IN HOUSEHOLD

Yes 17%

No 83%

Refused 1%



EDUCATION

High school or less 14%

Some post-secondary/
college diploma 33%

Completed university
degree/ post-grad 53%

Refused 1%



OWN VS. RENT

Own 51%

Rent 47%

Refused 2%

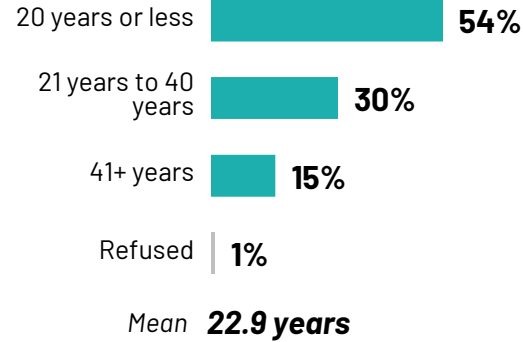
2024 Weighted sample characteristics (2/2)



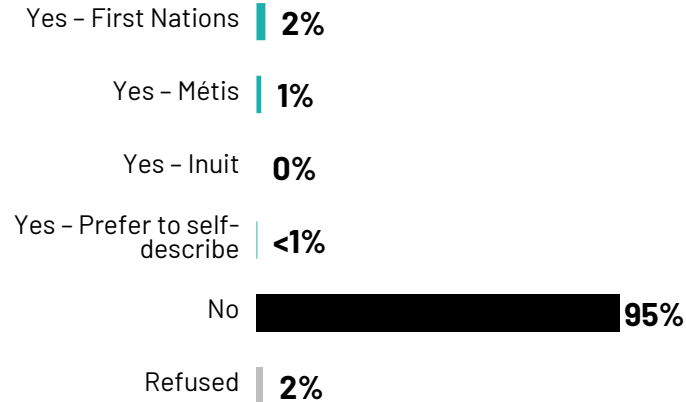
NEIGHBOURHOOD



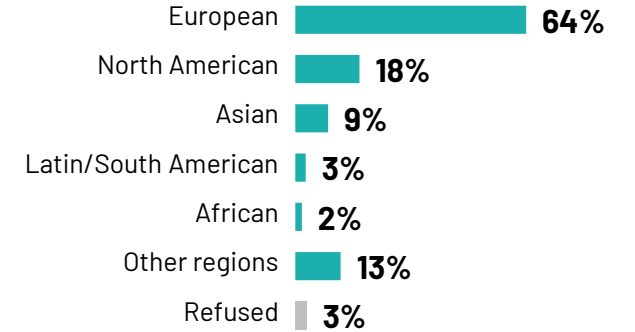
YEARS LIVED IN VICTORIA



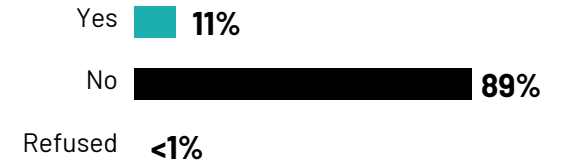
INDIGENOUS IDENTITY



ENTHIC ORIGIN



OWN VICTORIA BUSINESS



DISABILITY IN HOUSEHOLD

