

2025 Budget Survey Report

Research conducted by



June 11, 2025

Background and methodology

- In early 2025, Strathcona County commissioned a survey to understand the perspectives of residents and business and property owners on setting property taxes in relation to service levels.
- The survey results will help inform the 2026 to 2029 budget. This is the third year this study has been completed, however, there have been notable changes and additions to the survey for this year. Where possible, comparisons to 2024 and 2023 are still made.
- Strathcona County reviewed and updated the previous survey tool for this year in consultation with Y Station.

Background and methodology

- The survey was programmed by Y Station and the County:
 - The County collected surveys via their online public engagement platform (County Voice). 856 surveys were collected via this method.
 - Y Station used telephone as the primarily method to gather survey responses via cellphone and landline. If respondents preferred, they were sent the survey link via email after first being contacted by phone. In addition, to help obtain a better representation amongst younger age groups alternative methodologies (i.e. an online panel) was used to supplement the telephone methodology. 739 surveys (n=739) were analyzed by Y Station and these results are detailed in this presentation.
- Surveys were collected from April 8 to May 24, 2025.

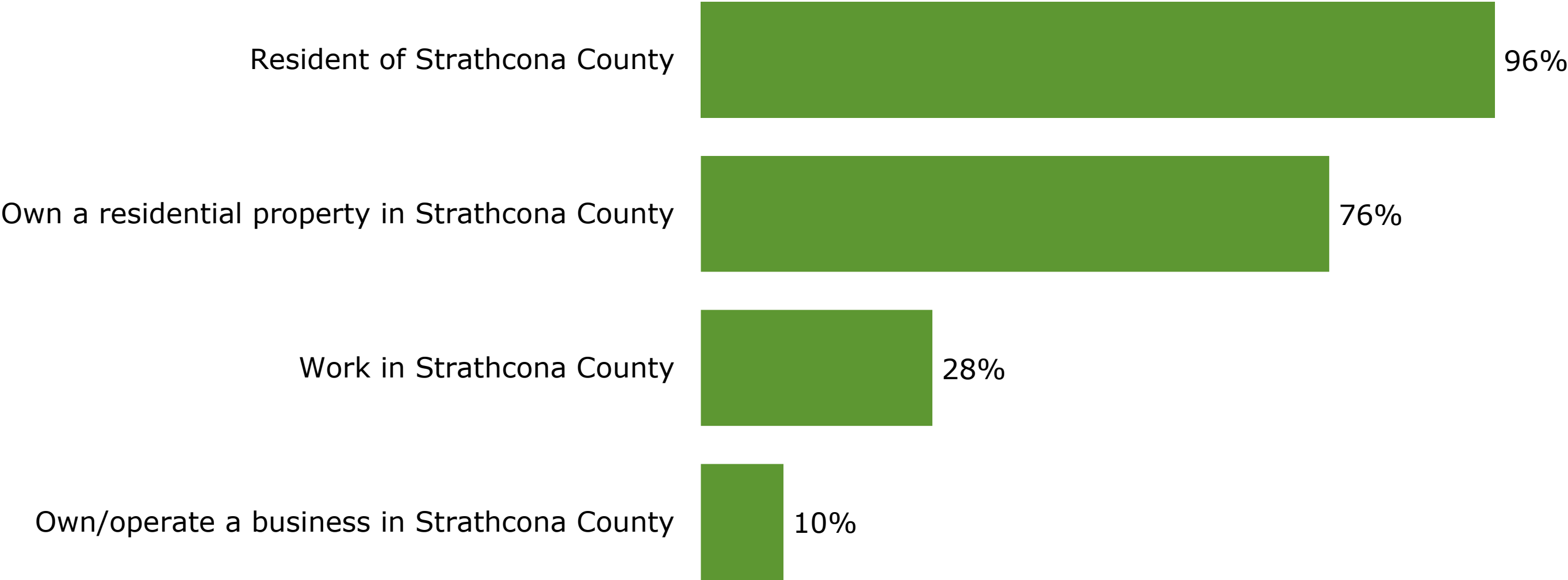
Background and methodology

- Data was weighted by region, gender, and age to ensure appropriate representation, using municipal census data.
- Subgroup analysis was used to compare differences between:
 - Data collection method
 - Region (urban vs rural)
 - Age (under 35, 35 to 54, 55+)
 - Gender

Percentages in this report may not always equal 100% either due to rounding or multiple responses recorded. Where notable differences between groups exist, those details can be found graphically illustrated on some select slides or provided in the notes section of each relevant slide.

Demographics

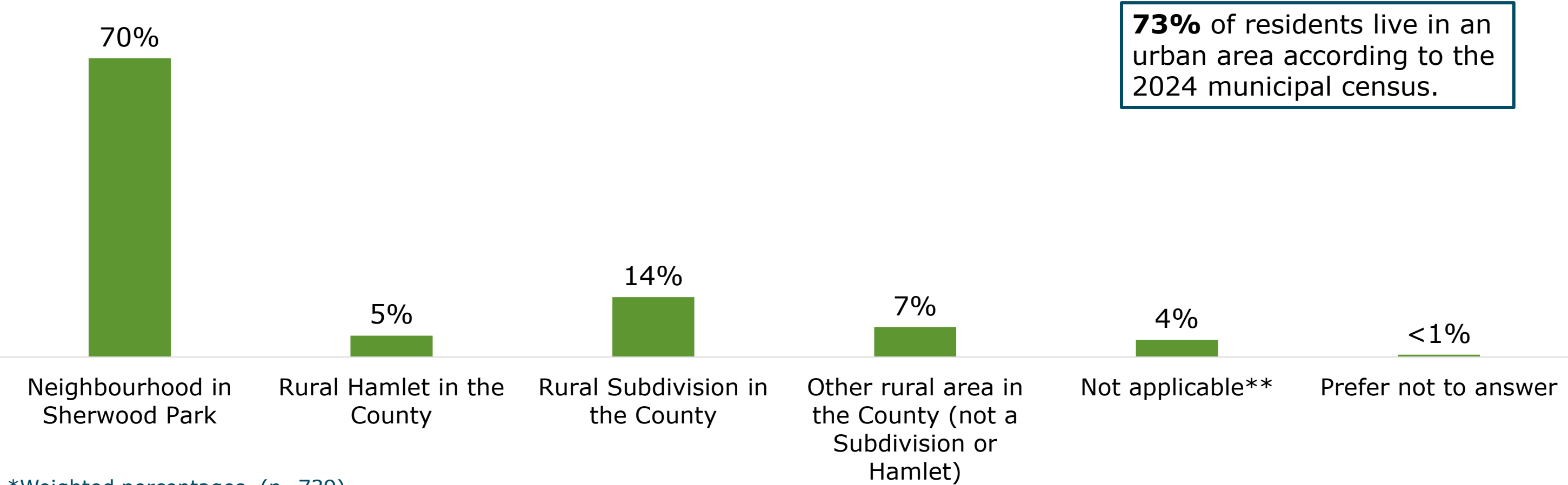
Do any of the following apply to you?*



*Weighted percentages, select all that apply.
(n=739).

Demographics

Do you live in a...?*

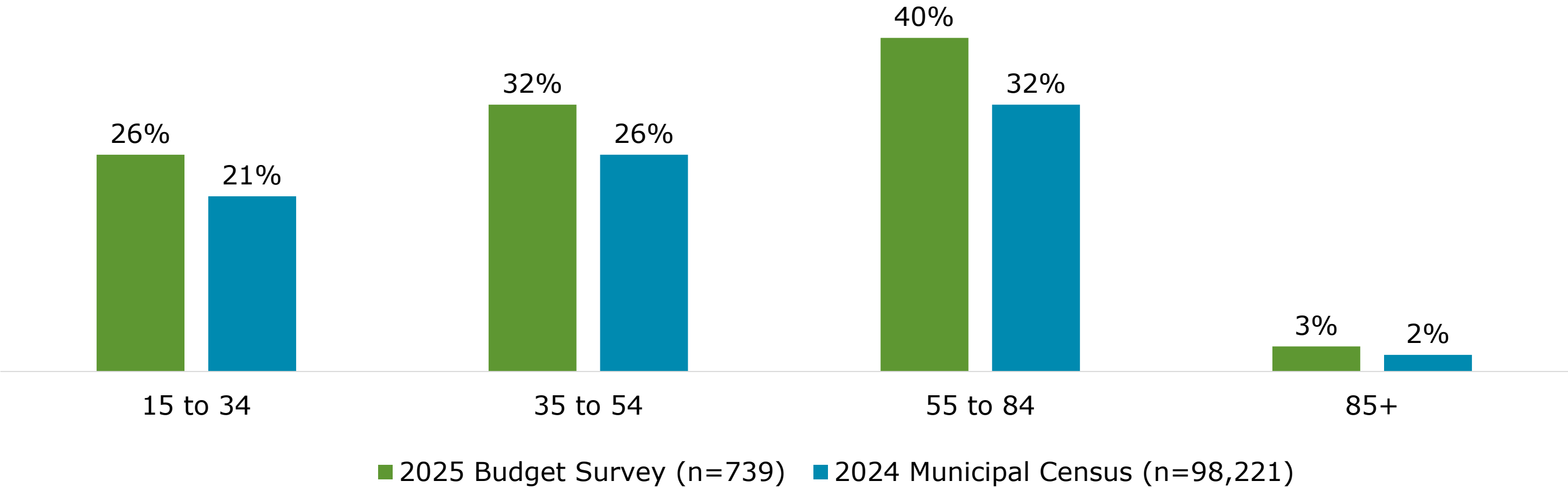


73% of residents live in an urban area according to the 2024 municipal census.

*Weighted percentages. (n=739).
Respondents who were business owners and/or owned property and/or worked in the County, but did **not identify as residents.

Demographics

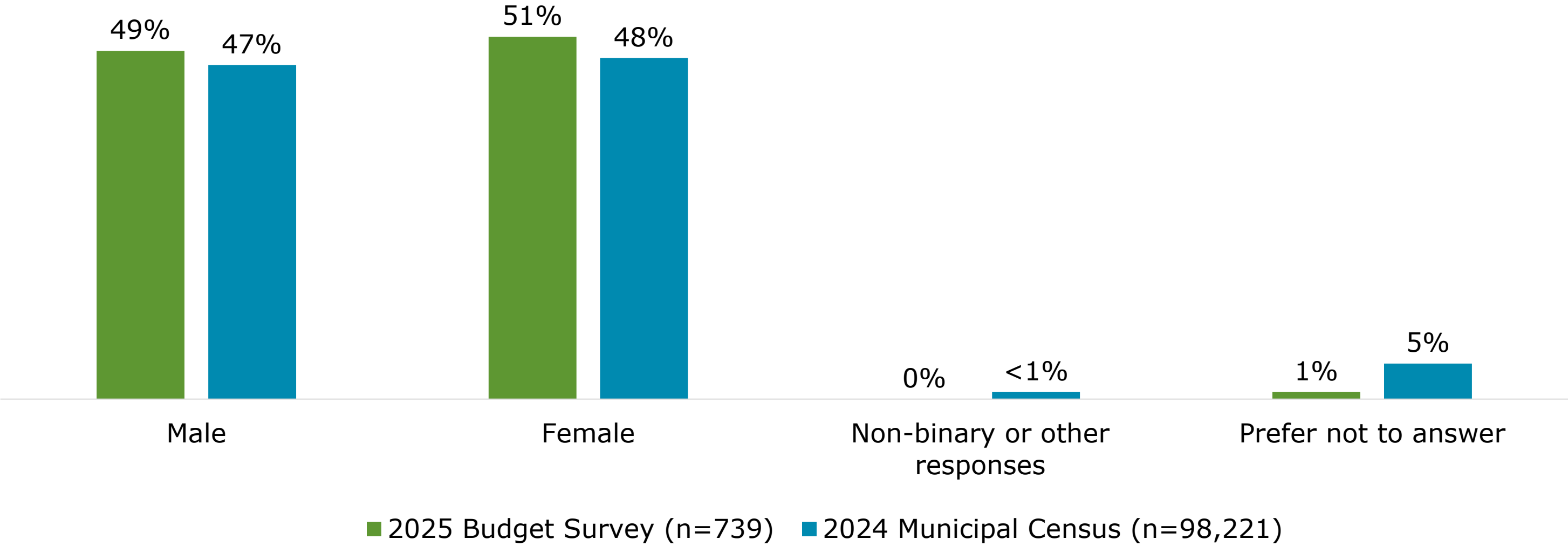
Age



*Weighted percentages for budget survey data.
Municipal census data does not add up to 100% due to those under the age of 15 not shown.

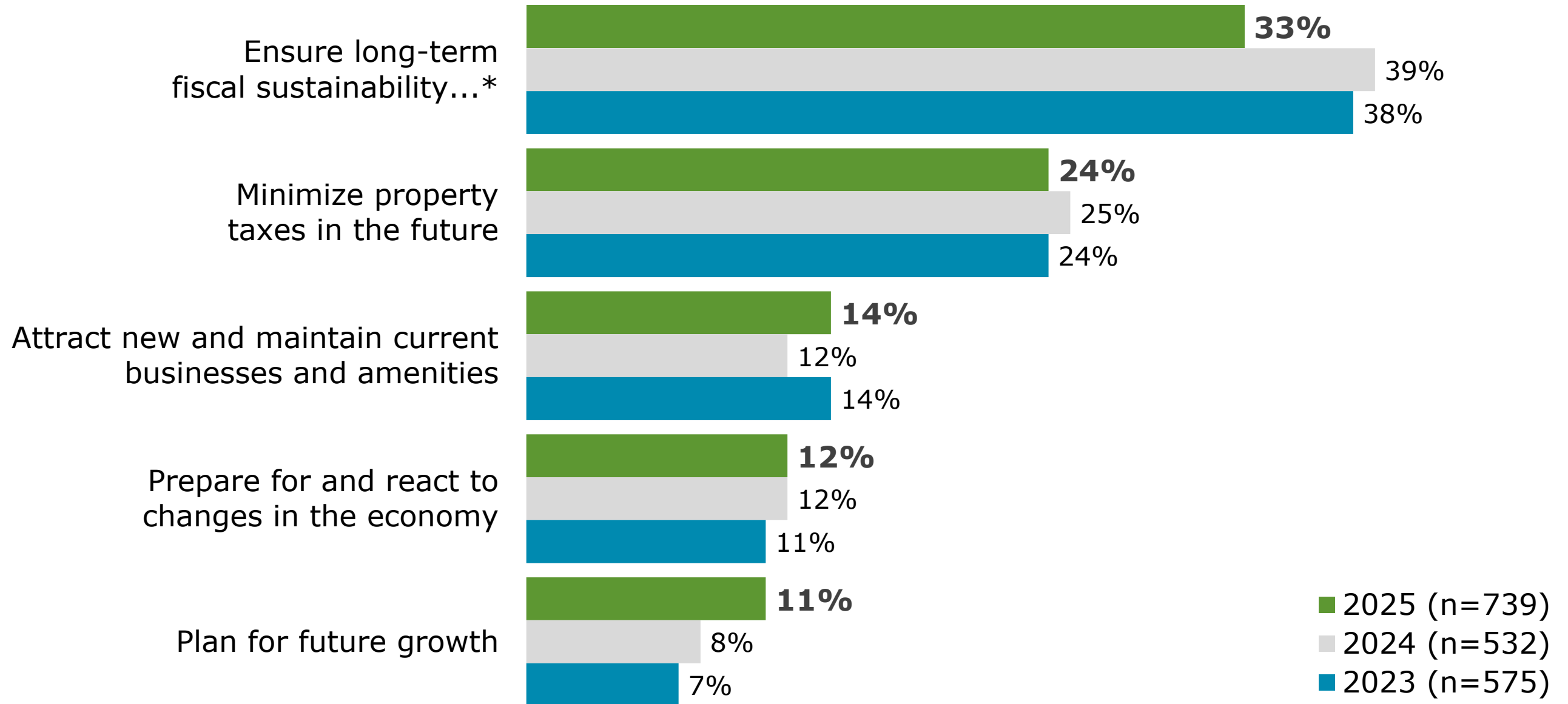
Demographics

Gender



*Weighted percentages for budget survey data.

Budget priorities

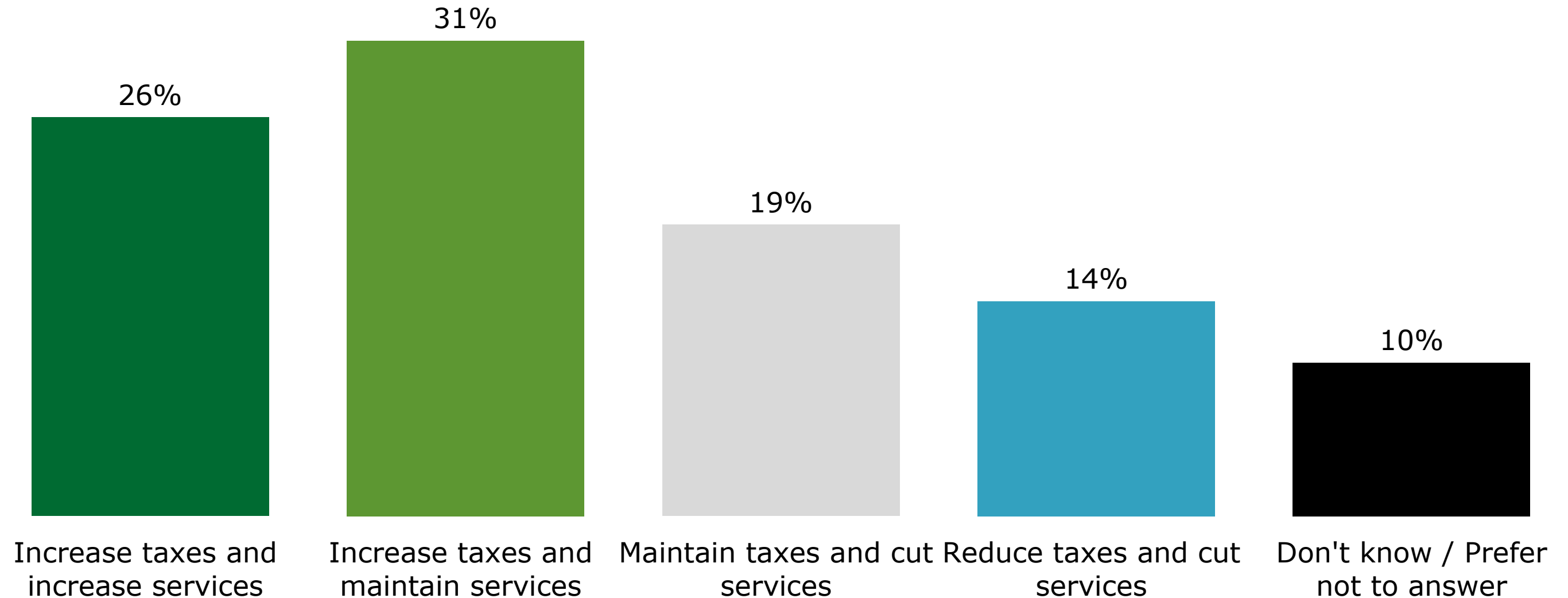


Single response.

*Meaning financial decisions today maintain a healthy financial position in the future. "Other" and don't know response options not shown.

Budget preferences

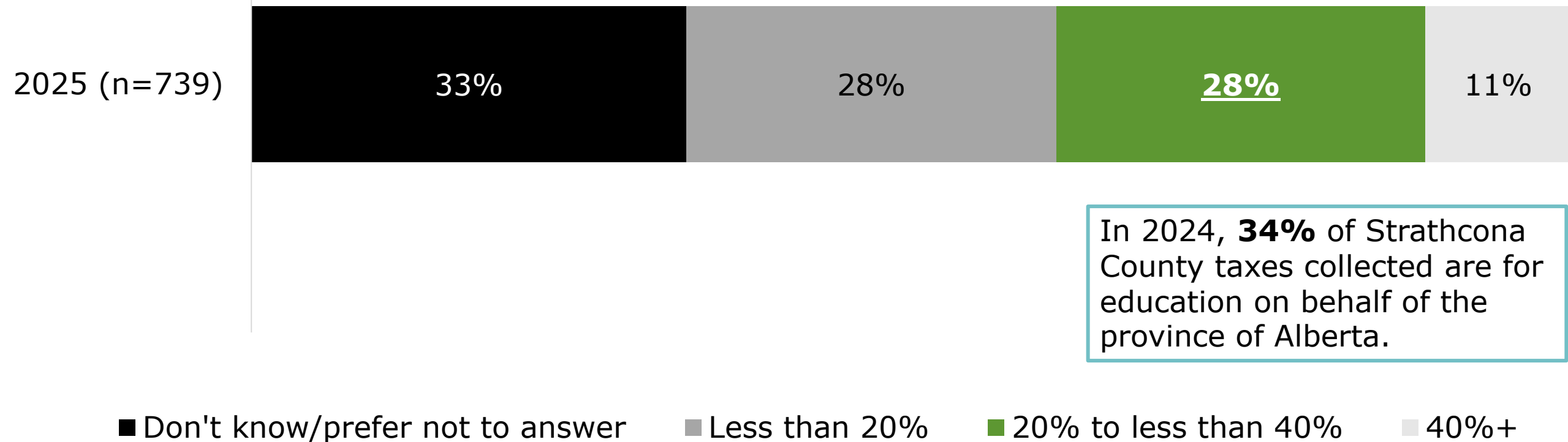
What is your preferred tax strategy for Strathcona County?



Single response.
Not asked prior to 2025.
n=739

Budget awareness

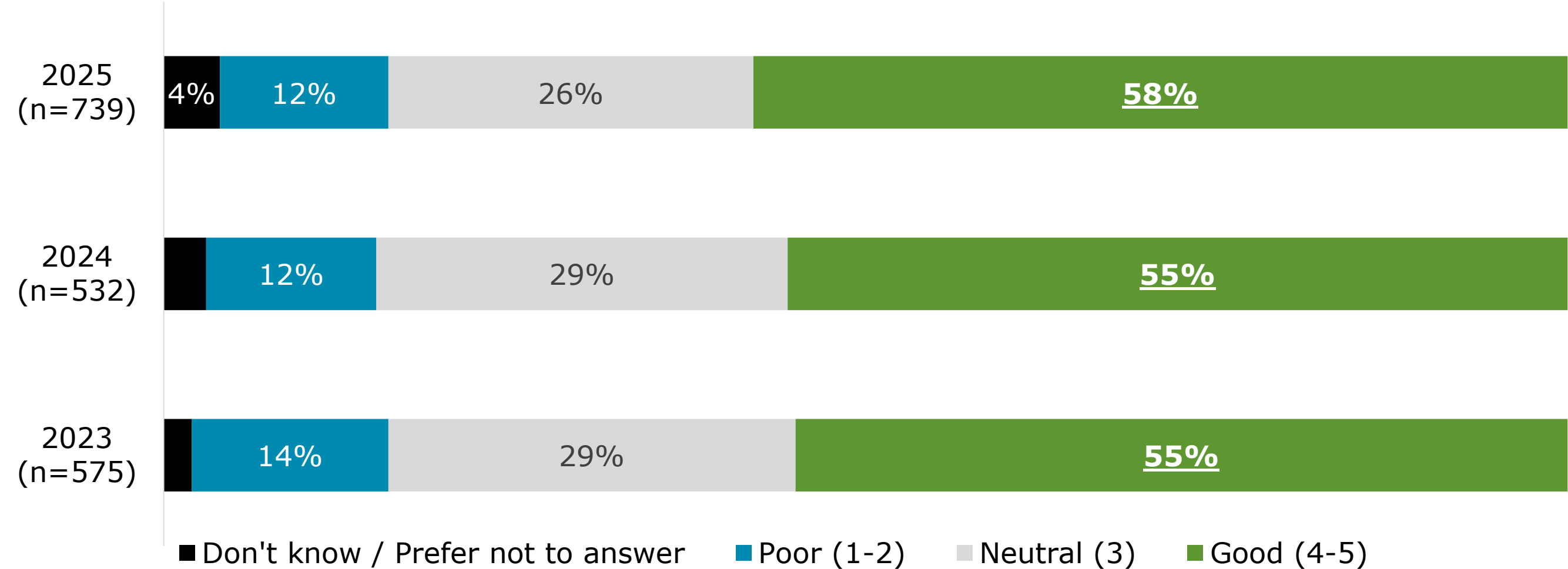
What percentage of taxes collected by the County are transferred to the province to pay for education?



Not asked prior to 2025.

Value for taxes (trends over time)

What value do you receive from County services for taxes paid?



Caution should be used interpreting results to 2024 and 2023 as “for taxes paid” was added in 2025 and previous scale used to be 1-very poor to 5 – excellent. Data labels <4% not shown.

Value for taxes

Comments – poor (1 to 2) value responses (n=88)

- Lack of or poor ice and snow removal services was the most frequent response provided by those who indicated they receive poor value for their taxes.
- Other frequently mentioned responses included:
 - Taxes are too high (in general)
 - A lack of/poor road maintenance or roads in poor condition/too many potholes
 - Minimal services provided for rural residents (in general)
 - A lack of or poor water and sewer services

Comments – neutral (3) value responses (n=192)

- Respondents who indicated they receive (3) value for their taxes most frequently did not provide any explanation for their response.
- For those that did provide an explanation, they most frequently mentioned the same top themes mentioned by respondents who provided poor (1 to 2) value responses.
- Comments were not always negative, however. For example, some positive themes were expressed by this group:
 - The County is doing a good job
 - There's good infrastructure
 - There's good public library services

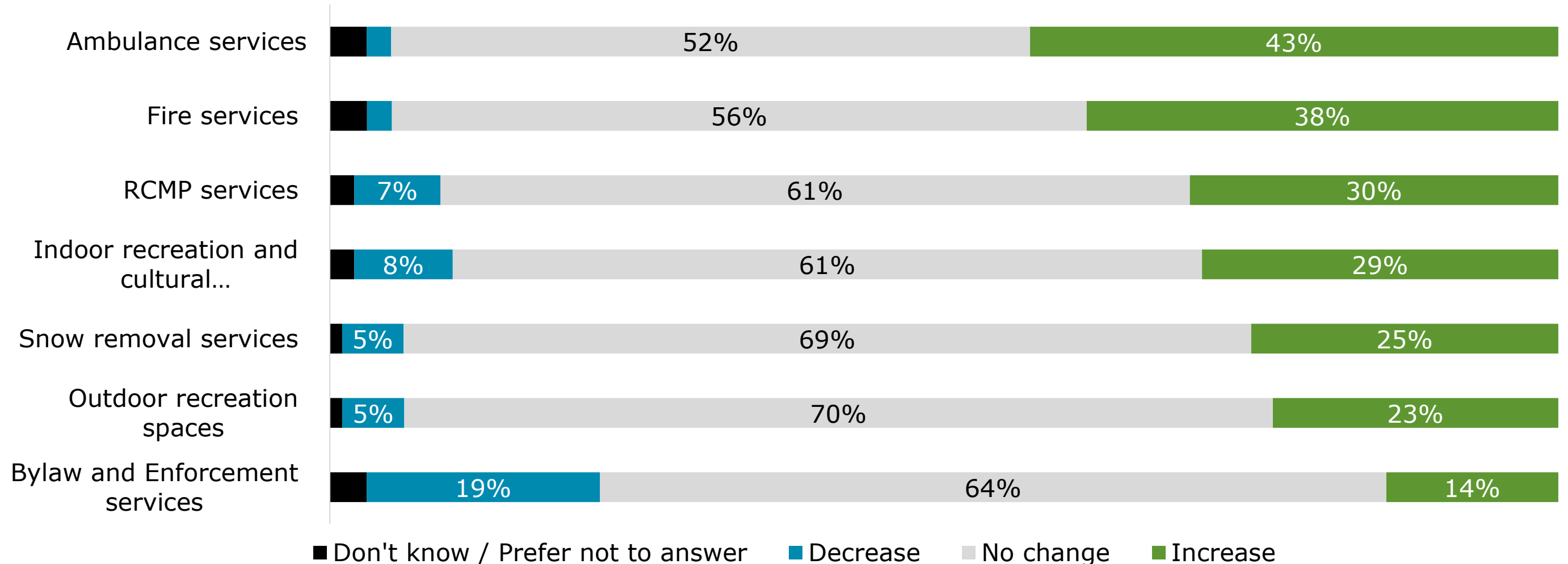
Value for taxes

Comments – good (4 to 5) value responses (n=430)

- General comments about how respondents are satisfied with County services and think the County is doing a good job was, overwhelmingly, the most frequently mentioned theme.
- Other frequently mentioned themes included:
 - Good roads/road maintenance and roads are in good condition
 - Good snow removal services
 - Good recreational services, programs and facilities
 - Good park and green space maintenance/cleanliness
- Not as frequently mentioned themes included:
 - Good garbage/recycling collection
 - Good public library services
 - Good parks/green spaces/walking paths
- While these respondents provided a positive rating, it should be noted that there were still respondents that provided concerns or that the County still had some room for improvement.

Level of spending

What is your desired change to **variable** spending for the following services?



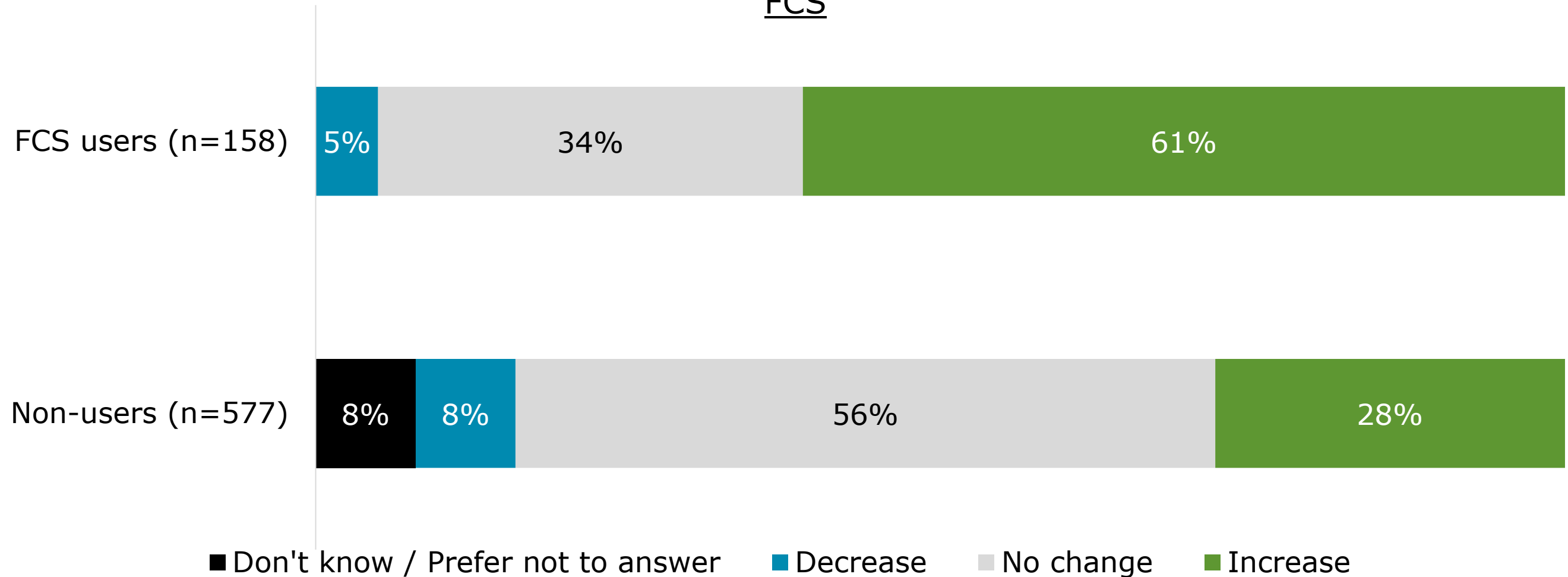
A definition of variable spending was provided to respondents as needed.

n=739

Not asked prior to 2025. Data labels <5% not shown.

Level of spending

What is your desired change to **variable** spending for the following services?
FCS

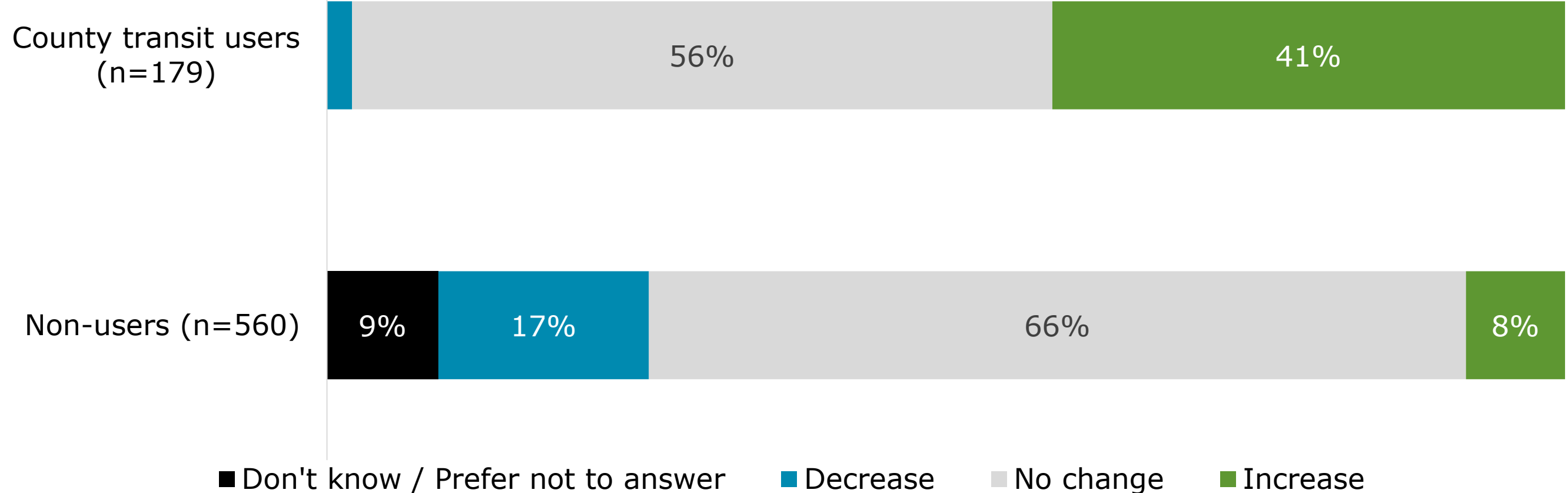


A definition of variable spending was provided to respondents as needed.
Respondents that did not provide a response to FCSS usage are not shown.
Not asked prior to 2025.

Level of spending

What is your desired change to **variable** spending for the following services?

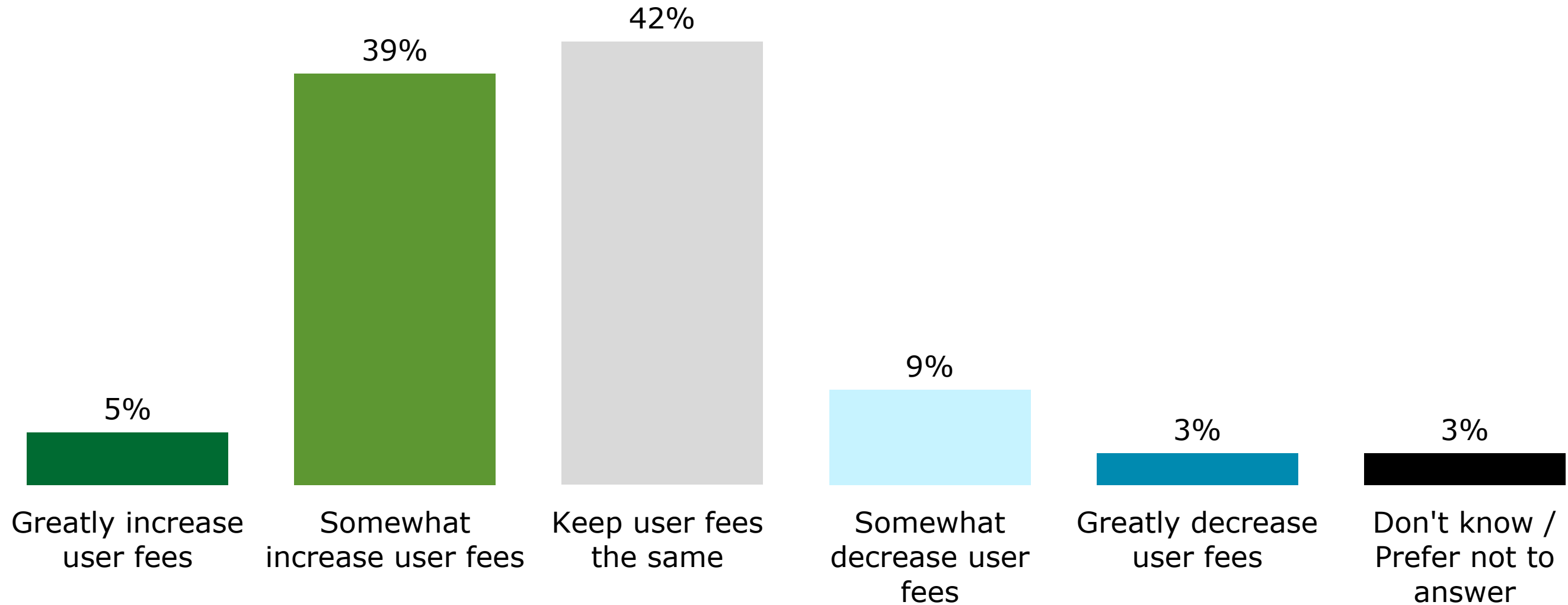
County Transit



A definition of variable spending was provided to respondents as needed.
Data labels <4% not shown.
Not asked prior to 2025.

User fees

How should the County adjust user fees in the future?



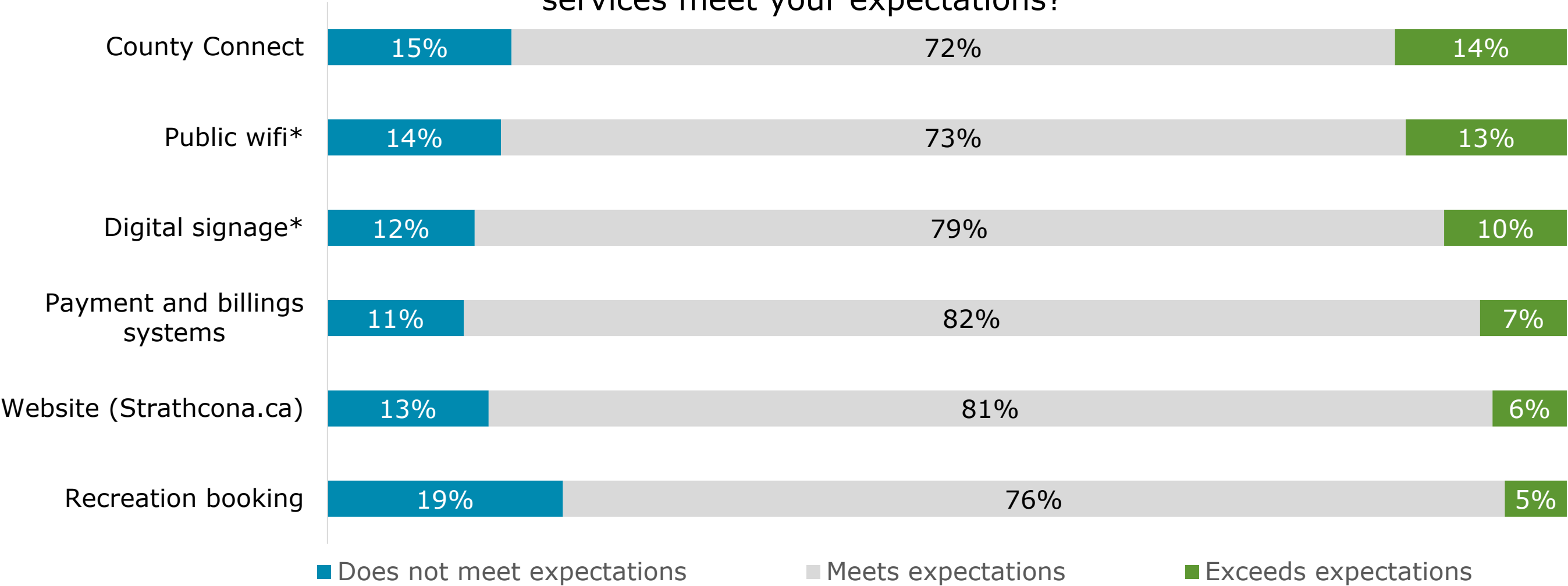
Single response.

n=739

Not asked prior to 2025. A preamble regarding how changing user fees would correspondingly impact taxation was provided.

Service expectations

To what extent do the following County online and technology services meet your expectations?



n=319-589, non-applicable/prefer not to answer responses excluded. Data labels <4% not shown. Not asked prior to 2025.
*(at County facilities)

Comparisons to online survey

- Across all questions, online survey results confirmed or validated results observed in the vendor sample. Giving the study a greater level of reliability.
- Online respondents more likely to support long term fiscal sustainability as a priority, higher user fees, maintaining or reducing taxes with service cuts.
- Online results regarding value for taxes were identical to the vendor sample and highly consistent year over year – validating our results strongly.
- Online results for variable service spending were broadly similar to the vendor sample results.

Results driven



Reliable public insight



**Indicators of where
improvements may be
made**



**Inform budgeting,
planning and policy
decisions**

Commitment to listening to resident input

Questions?

