

City of Bellingham Service Priorities and Customer Satisfaction Survey

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APPLIED RESEARCH NORTHWEST

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Introduction

Background

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- Previous surveys done of Registered Voters only

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- Interest in trending

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- Interest in trending
- Interest in addressing emerging issues

Methods

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- Average time 15 minutes
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- 38% response rate (3 attempts/household)
- Open to all city residents (RDD sample)

Methods

Strengths and weaknesses

- Good response rate

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- Demographic diversity
- Efficient margin of error
- Efficient methodology

Methods

Strengths and weaknesses

- RDD methods excludes cell-phone-only households

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Strengths and weaknesses

- RDD methods excludes cell-phone-only households
- Mix of old and new survey questions challenging

Findings

Analysis includes:

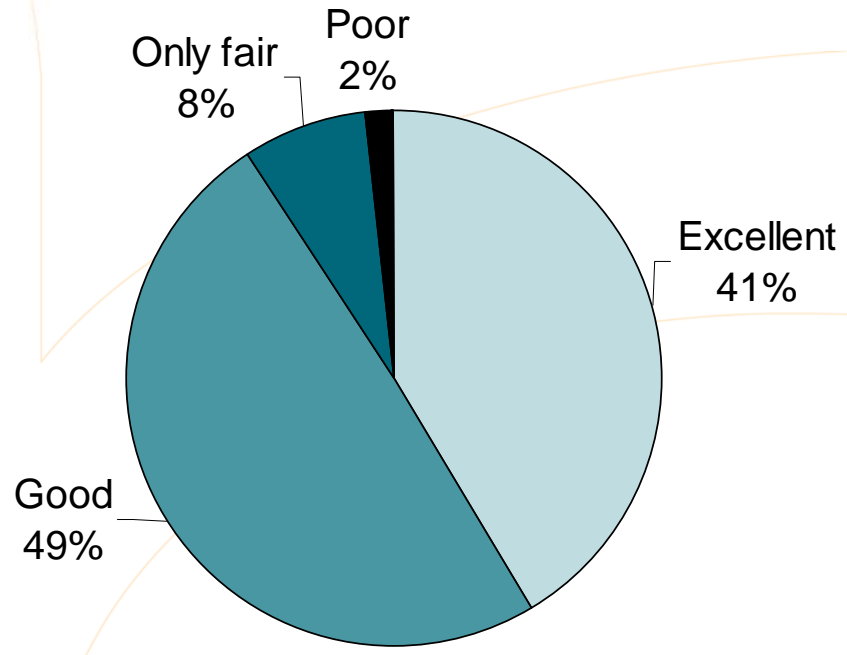
- Households with children vs. those without
- Length of time living in Bellingham
- Age
- Renters vs. Owners
- Income

Findings

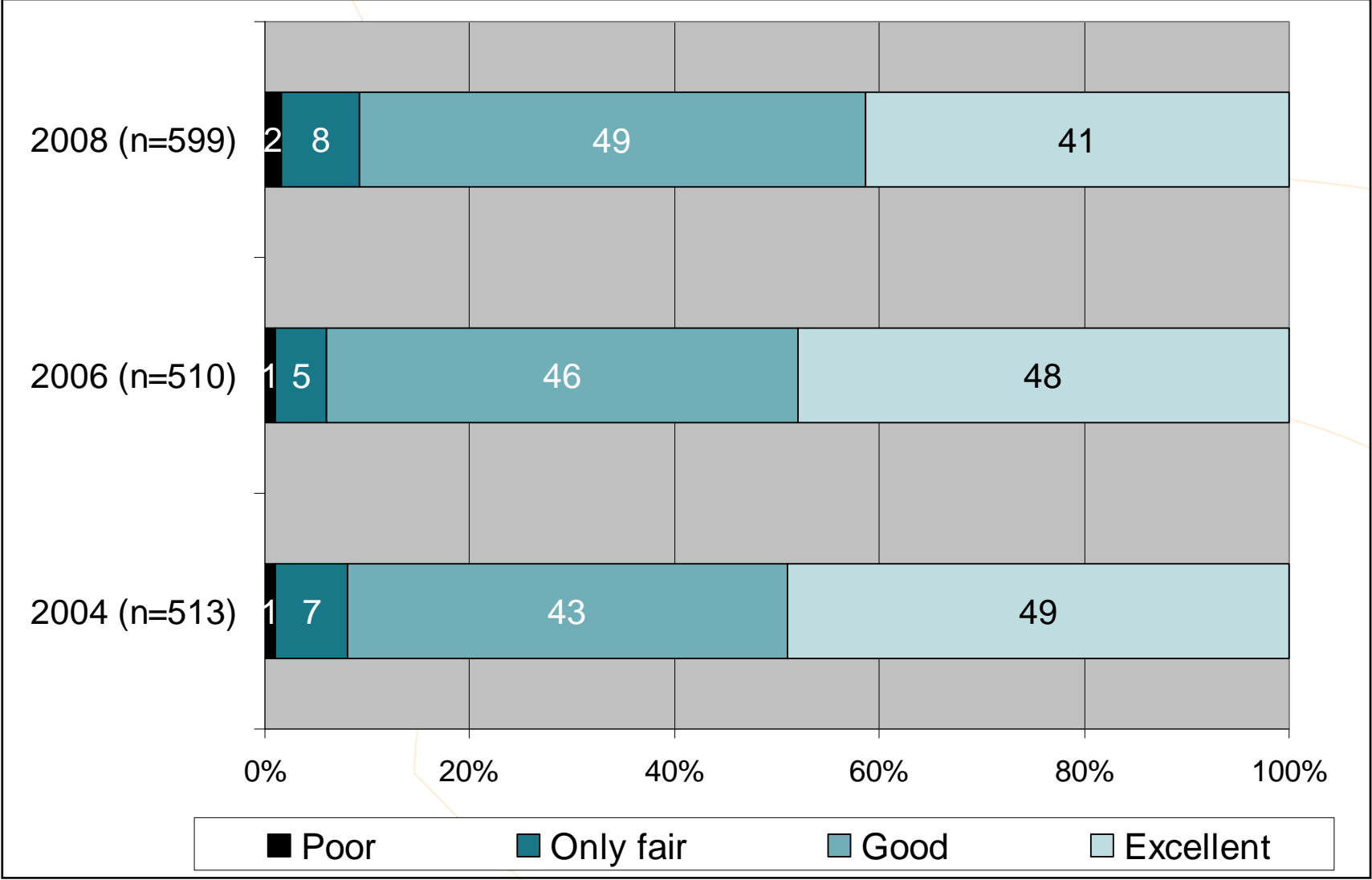
Quality of Life:

- Asked all three years

Figure 1. Overall, how would you rate the quality of life in Bellingham? (n=599)



Findings: Bellingham Quality of Life



Findings: Quality of life

What do you think is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that city leaders can do something about?

Findings: Quality of life

What do you think is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that city leaders can do something about?

- Open ended question

Table 2. What do you think is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that city leaders can do something about? (n=585)

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Improper Growth: Growing too large/Overpopulated	86	16
Traffic	60	11
Growth (General)	50	9
Police: Crime/Safety	39	7
Drinking Water/Watershed	38	7
Politics: Decision Making/Better City Officials	32	6
Creating/keeping/finding jobs	31	6
Planning for growth/sprawl	27	5
Attract business/industry	25	5
Help Environment	25	5

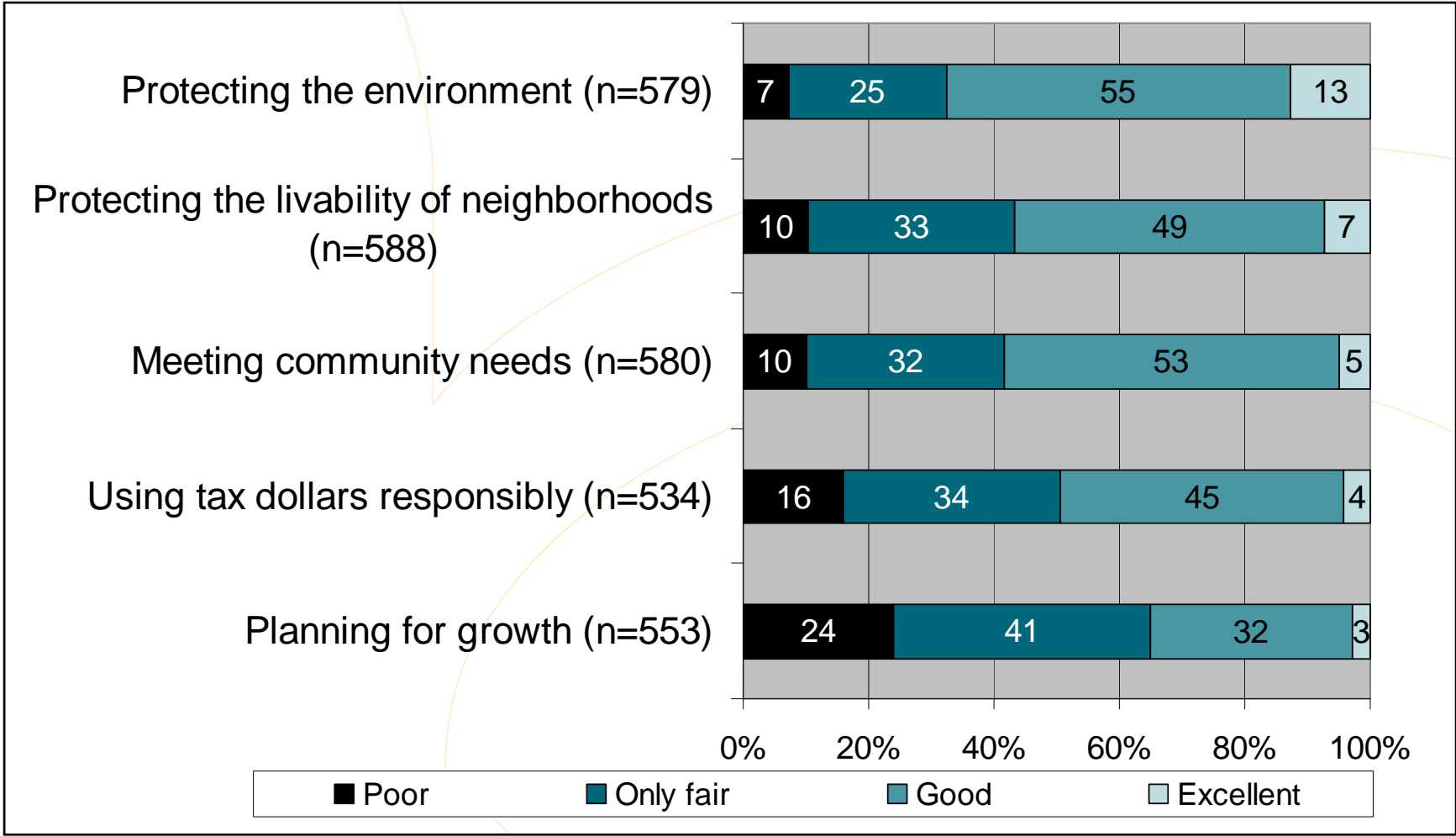
Top ten responses shown

Findings: City performance ratings

Satisfaction with city performance

- Planning for growth
- Protecting the livability of neighborhoods
- Using tax dollars responsibly
- Protecting the environment
- Meeting community needs

Figure 2. Satisfaction with the City of Bellingham



Findings: City Performance Ratings

Table X. Satisfaction with the City: Ratings across time

	Meeting community needs			Protecting the livability of neighborhoods		Planning for growth	
	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
	Excellent	13	7	5	7	7	4
Good	44	43	52	42	49	26	30
Only fair	30	34	31	31	32	36	38
Poor	9	10	10	15	10	30	22
(Don't know)	3	6	3	5	2	4	7

Findings: Priority and success of city efforts

I'm going to read you a list of items that the City of Bellingham COULD spend tax dollars on. For each item, please tell me how high a priority that item should be

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I'm going to read you a list of items that the City of Bellingham COULD spend tax dollars on. For each item, please tell me how high a priority that item should be

- ▣ 13 areas to rate
- ▣ Low, moderate, high or very high
- ▣ Presented in random order

Findings: Priority and success of city efforts

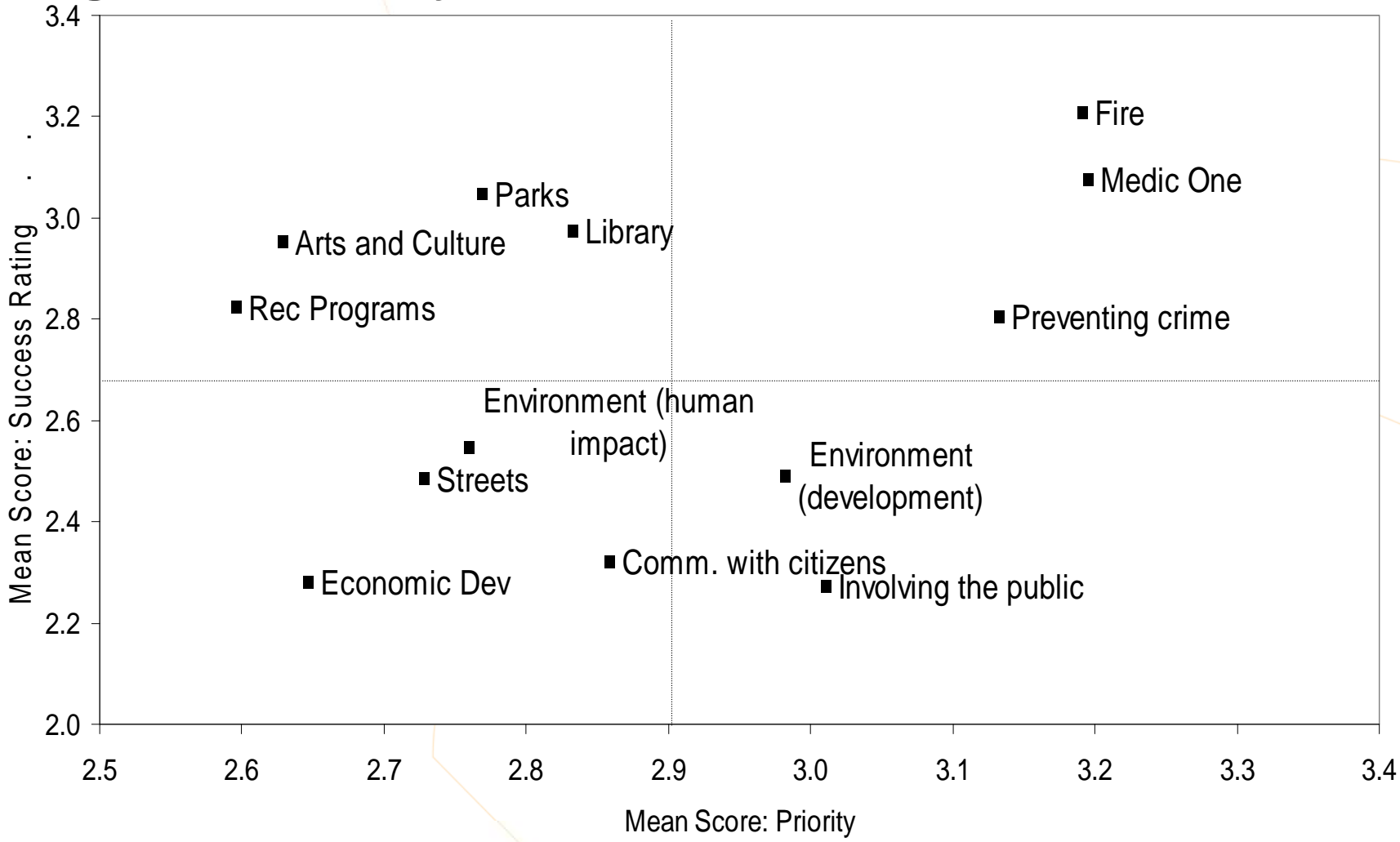
Now I'm going to ask you to rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing in providing services that rely on tax-payer dollars

Findings: Priority and success of city efforts

Now I'm going to ask you to rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing in providing services that rely on tax-payer dollars

- Same 13 areas to rate
- Excellent, good, only fair, poor
- Presented in random order

Figure 7. Priority and Success Quadrants



Findings: Budget and taxes

**If you had to choose only one,
which would you choose for the
City of Bellingham?**

Findings: Budget and taxes

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- Increase taxes and fees to maintain city services at current levels to keep up with inflation and citizens' demand for services, or

Findings: Budget and taxes

If you had to choose only one, which would you choose for the City of Bellingham?

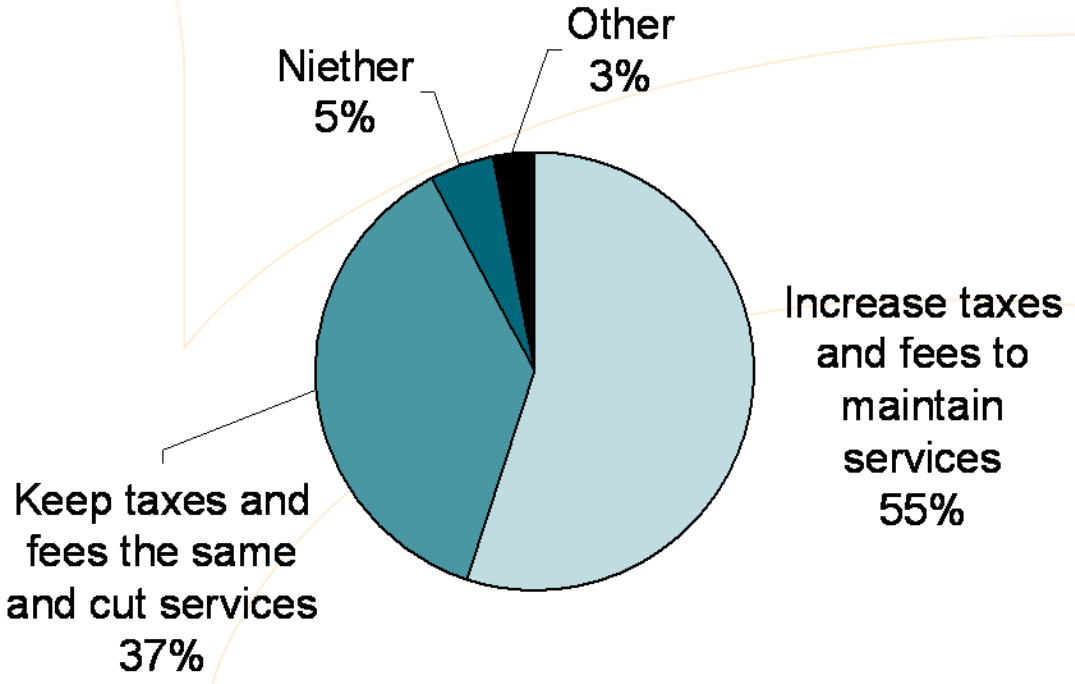
- Increase taxes and fees to maintain city services at current levels to keep up with inflation and citizens' demand for services, or
- Keep taxes and fees the same and cut existing services

Findings: Budget and taxes

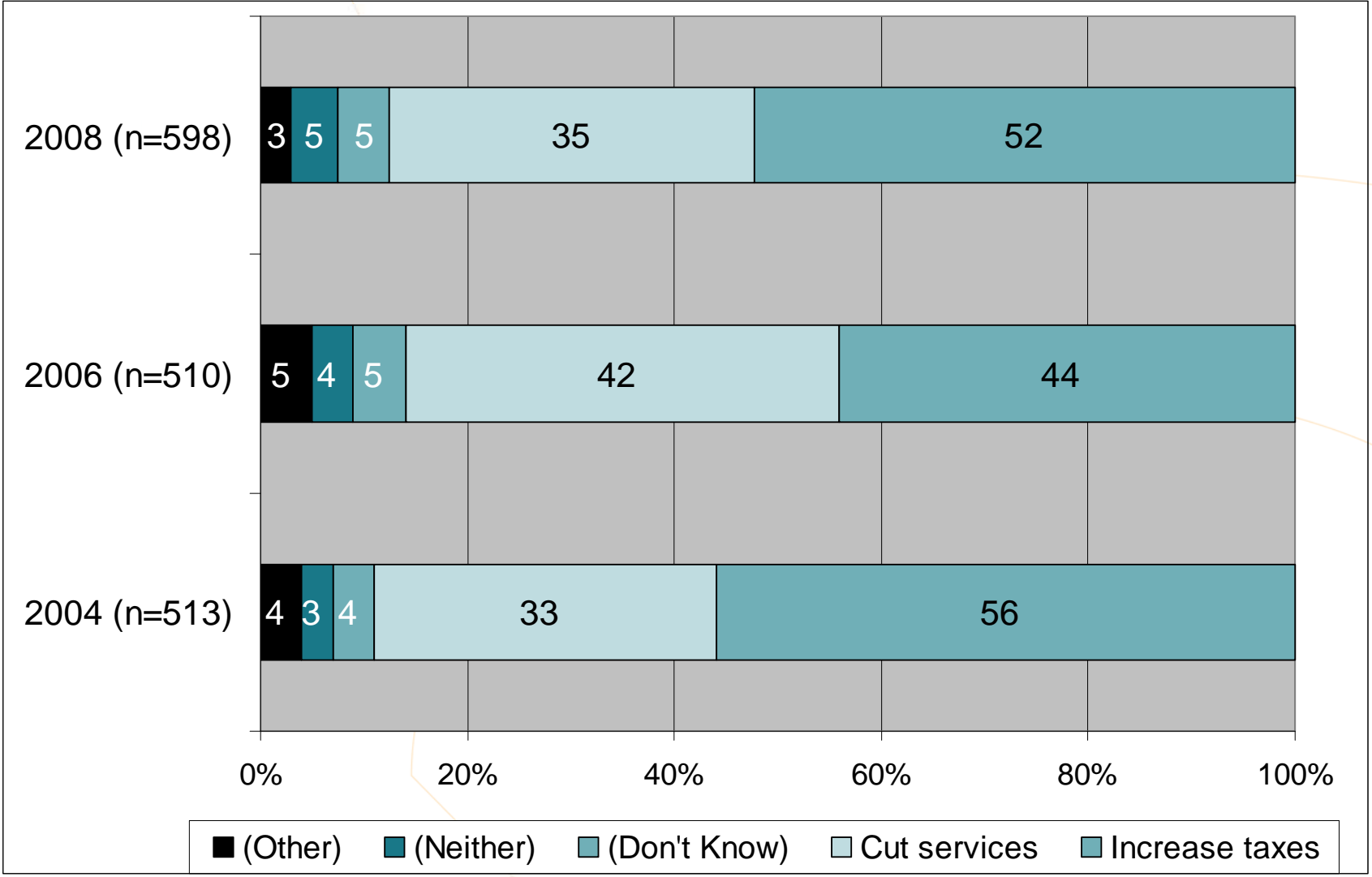
If you had to choose only one, which would you choose for the City of Bellingham?

- ▣ Increase taxes and fees to maintain city services at current levels to keep up with inflation and citizens' demand for services, or
- ▣ Keep taxes and fees the same and cut existing services
- ▣ Asked in 2004, 2006 and 2008

Figure 8. Which would you choose for the City of Bellingham? (n=564)



Findings: Budget and Taxes

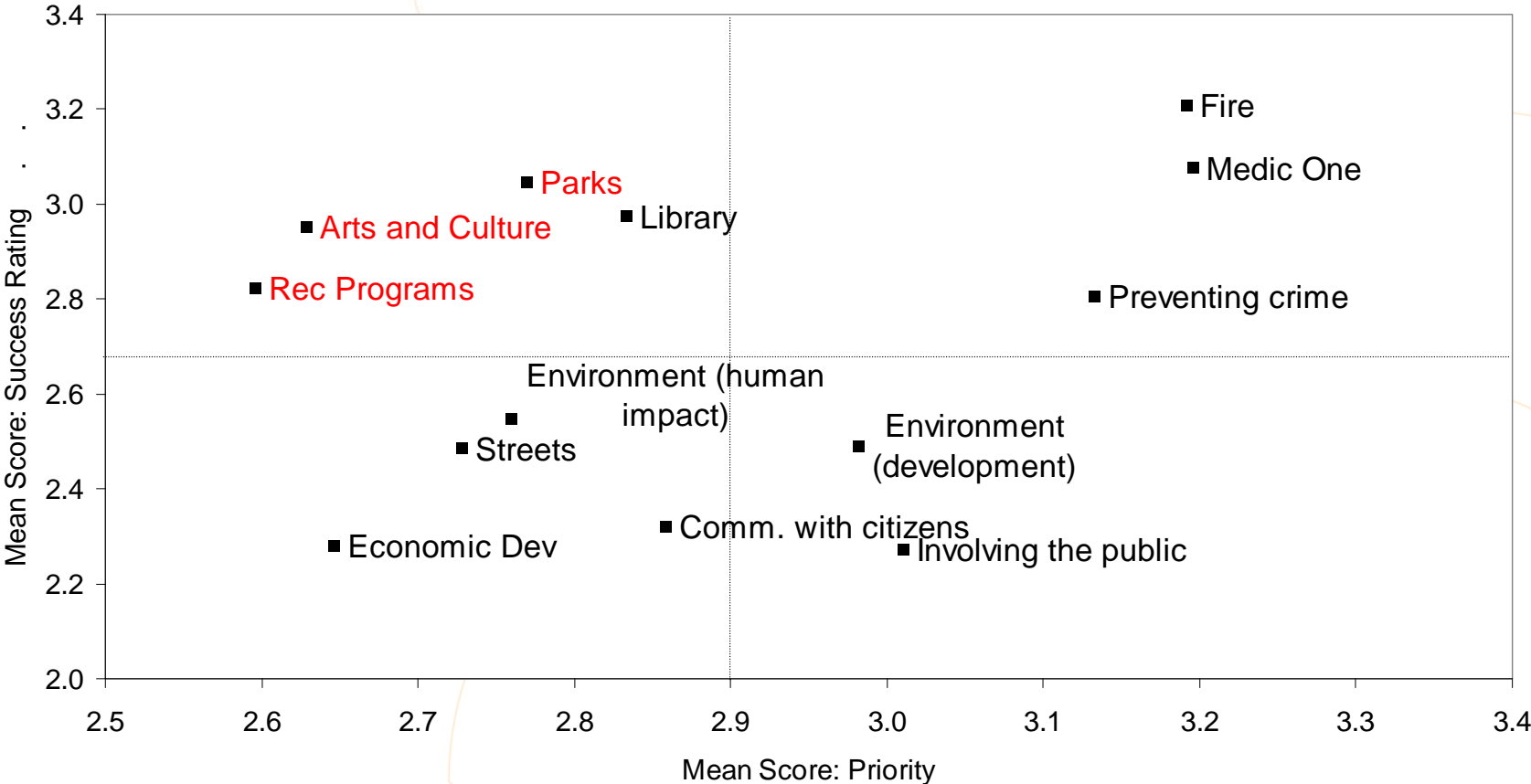


Findings: Budget and taxes

What services to cut?

- ▣ Culture/Arts
- ▣ Parks and recreation
- ▣ Administration/salaries

Figure 7. Priority and Success Quadrants



Findings

BTV10 and COB.org

- 70% knew of BTV10
- 54% knew of COB.org
- No change in either since 2006

Figure 10. Frequency of watching BTV10. (n=419)

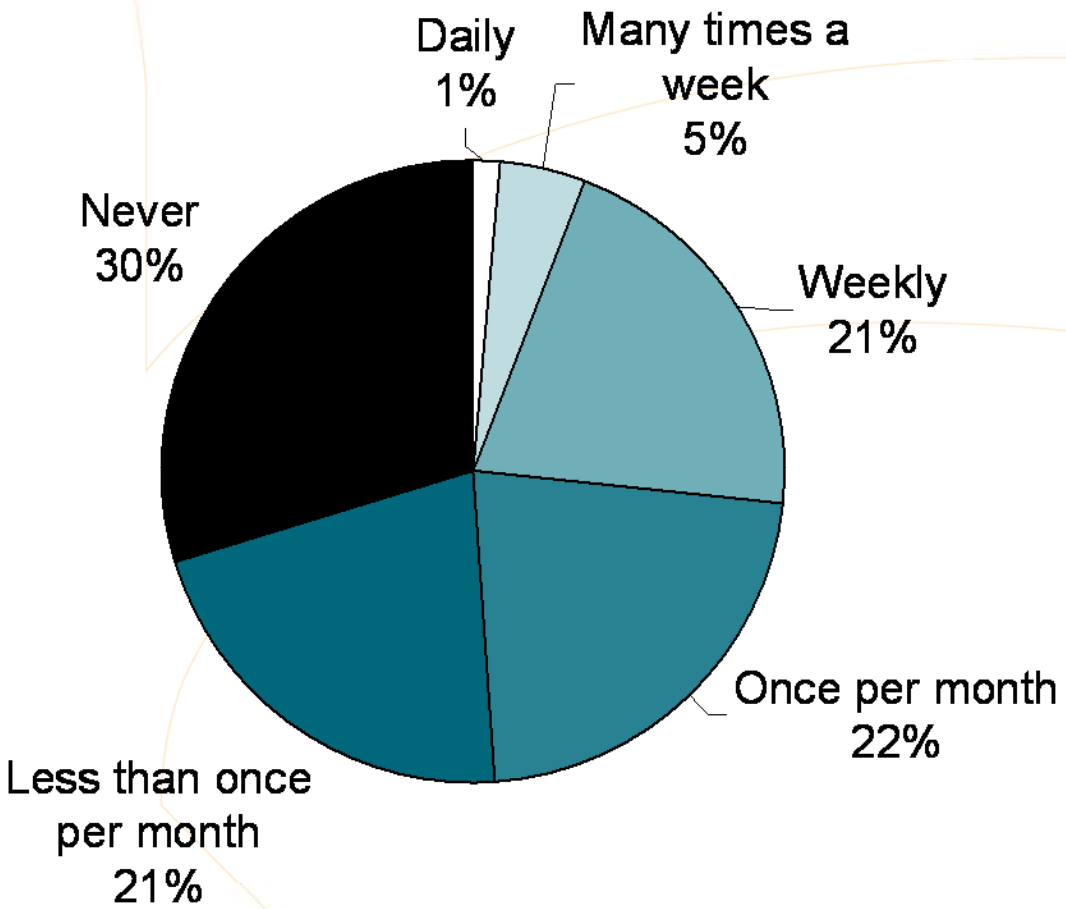


Figure 11. How often were you tuning in to watch a City Council meeting? (n=295)

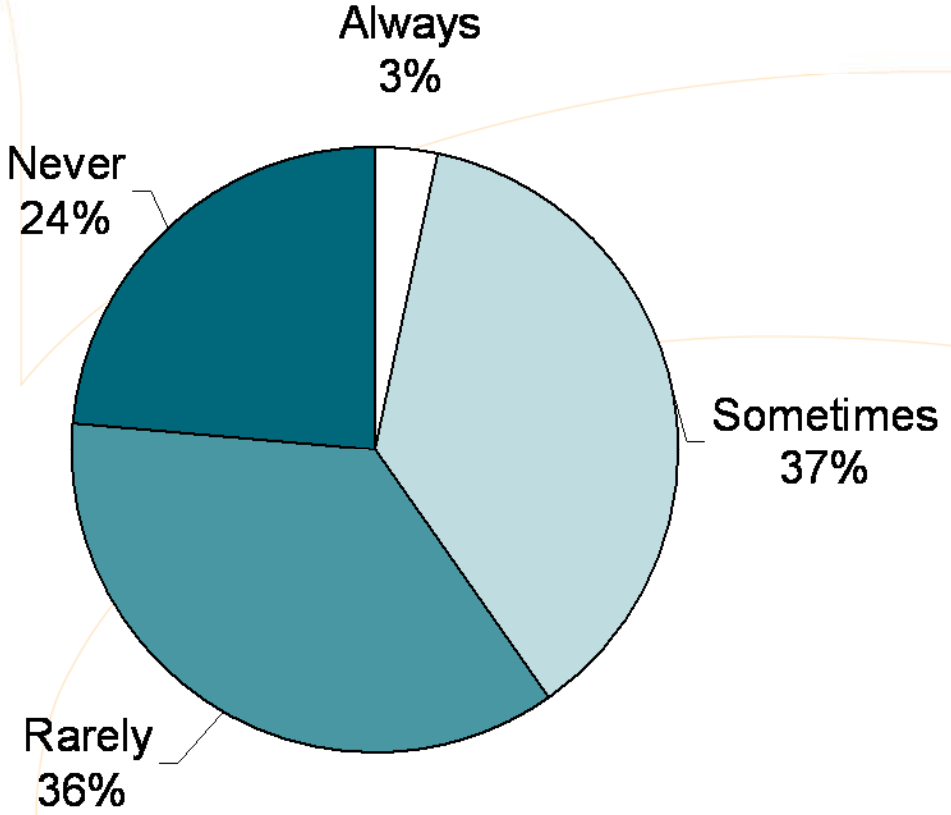
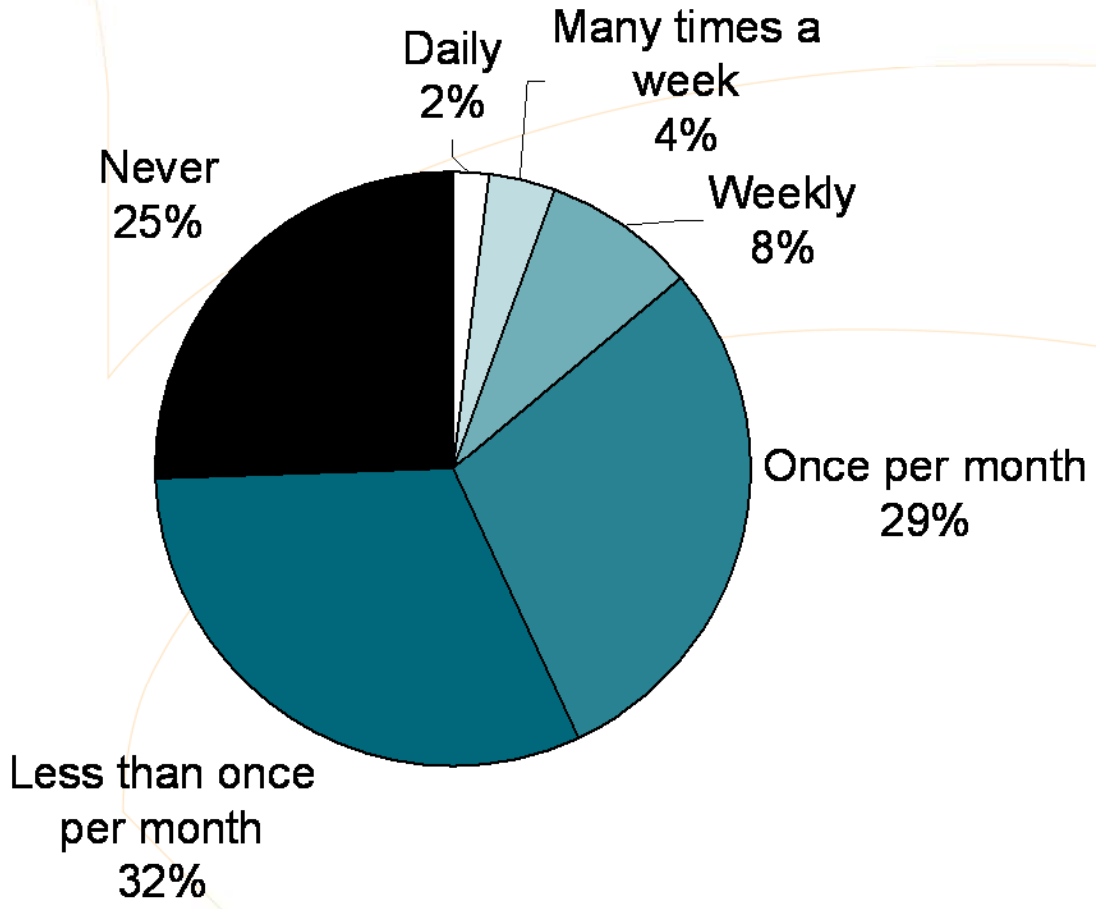


Figure 12. Frequency of visiting cob.org. (n=326)

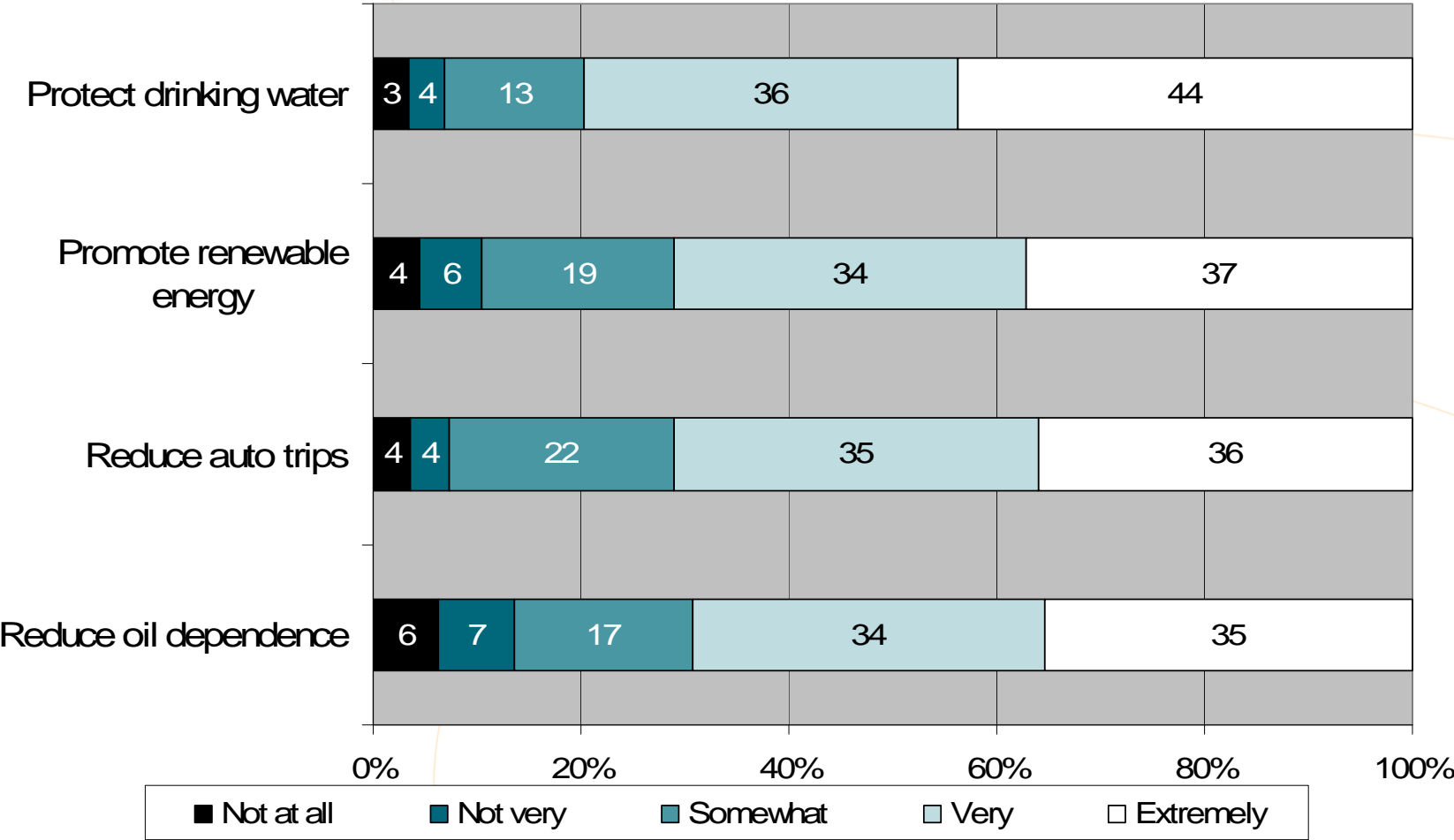


Findings: Environment

Importance of four actions

- Reducing automobile trips by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian choices
- Promoting the use of renewable energy such as green and solar power.
- Preventing further development in the Lake Whatcom watershed to protect our drinking water.
- Creating a plan to reduce dependence on oil and respond to an oil supply crisis.

Figure 13. Environmental actions

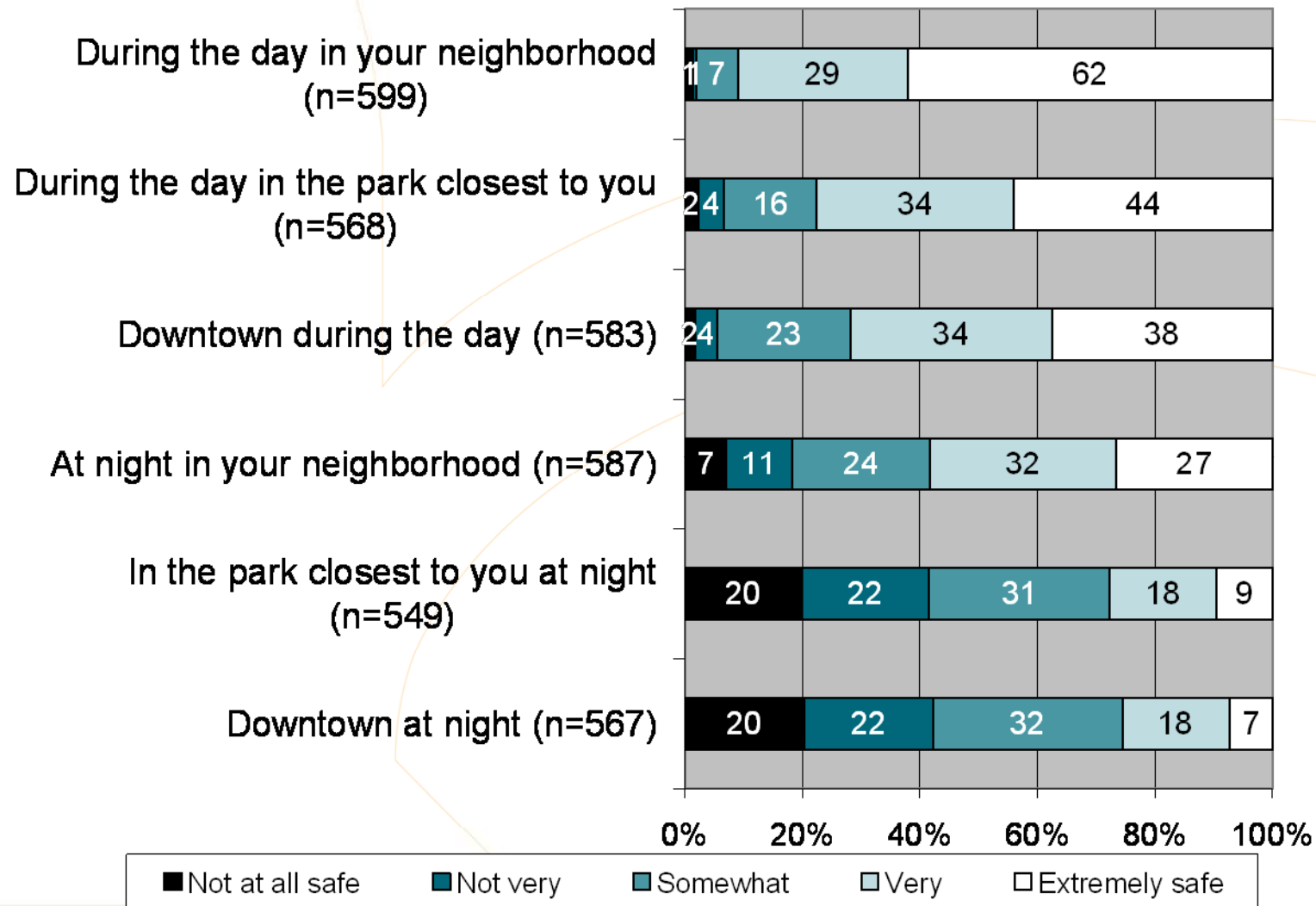


Findings

Safety

- Based on questions from the City of Portland
- Used a modified scale – not perfectly comparable
- Day and night
- Neighborhood, parks & downtown

Figure 14. Safety ratings



Findings

Neighborhood ratings

- Based on questions from the City of Portland
- Used a modified scale – not perfectly comparable

Figure 16. Neighborhood ratings

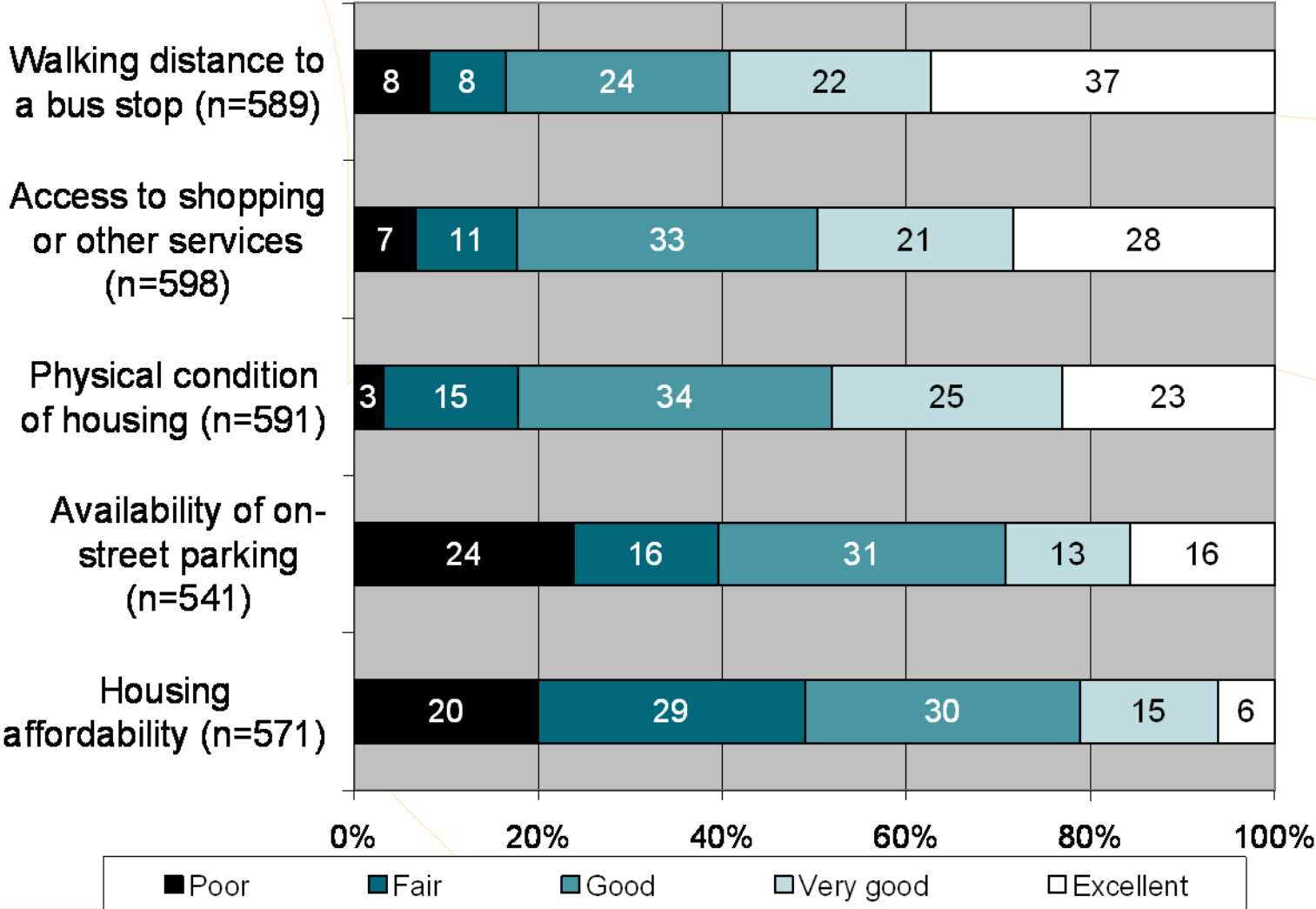
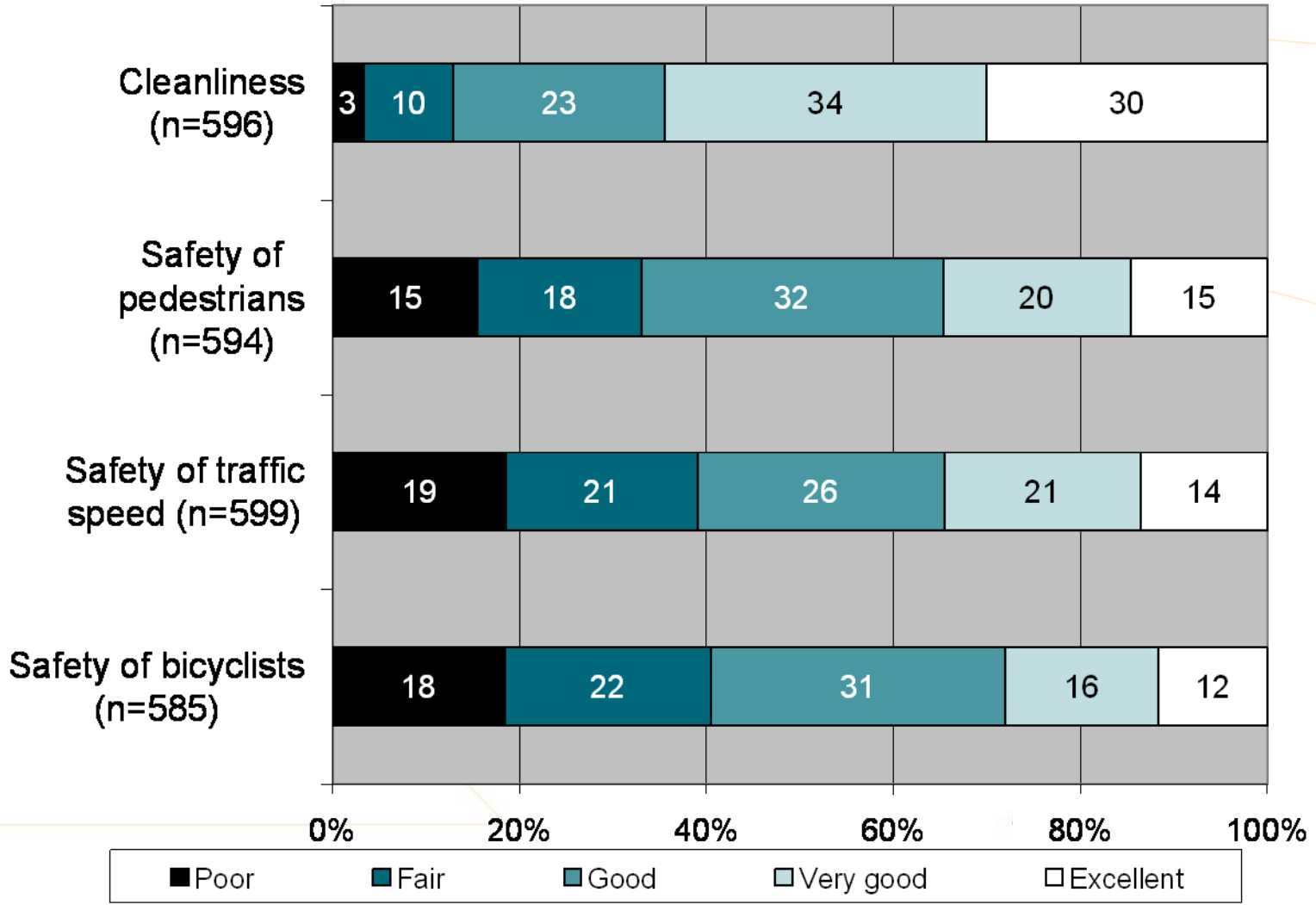


Figure 17. Ratings of neighborhood streets, sorted by ratings of *excellent*



Conclusion

- Residents mostly pleased with quality of life in Bellingham
- High marks for key priority areas
- Most residents showed willingness to pay more to maintain services
- Environmental issues important to residents
- Questions?



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