



CITY COUNCIL

ROUNDTABLE/WORKING MEETING

~ FINAL ACTIONS ~

Monday, February 5, 2024

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber

The City Council schedule a roundtable on Monday, February 5, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. - 5 p.m. to review the results of the 2023 Resident Survey

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3:00 PM
Joan Pickett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3:04 PM
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Policy Orders

That the City Council schedule a Roundtable for February 5, 2024.

I. Communications and Reports from Other City Officers

1. A communication was received from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, transmitting the Roundtable/Working Meeting Agenda and a presentation entitled "2023 Cambridge Resident Satisfaction Survey".



City of Cambridge

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FIRST IN COUNCIL
February 5, 2024

MAYOR SIMMONS

ORDERED: That the City Council schedule a roundtable on Monday, February 5, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. - 5 p.m. to review the results of the 2023 Resident Survey.

History:
01/22/24

City Council

ORDER ADOPTED



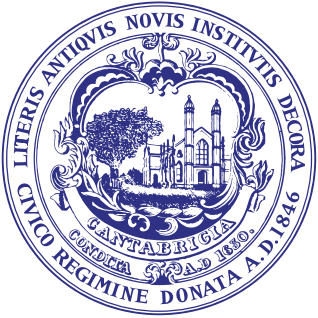
City of Cambridge

COF 2024 #8
IN CITY COUNCIL
February 5, 2024

Agenda for February 5, 2024, City Council Roundtable/Working Meeting

To review the results of the 2023 Resident Survey

- Opening and Introductions
- Presentation from the City and Polity Research Consulting
- Discussion with the City Council



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

2023 CAMBRIDGE RESIDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

FEBRUARY 5, 2024 | CITY COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

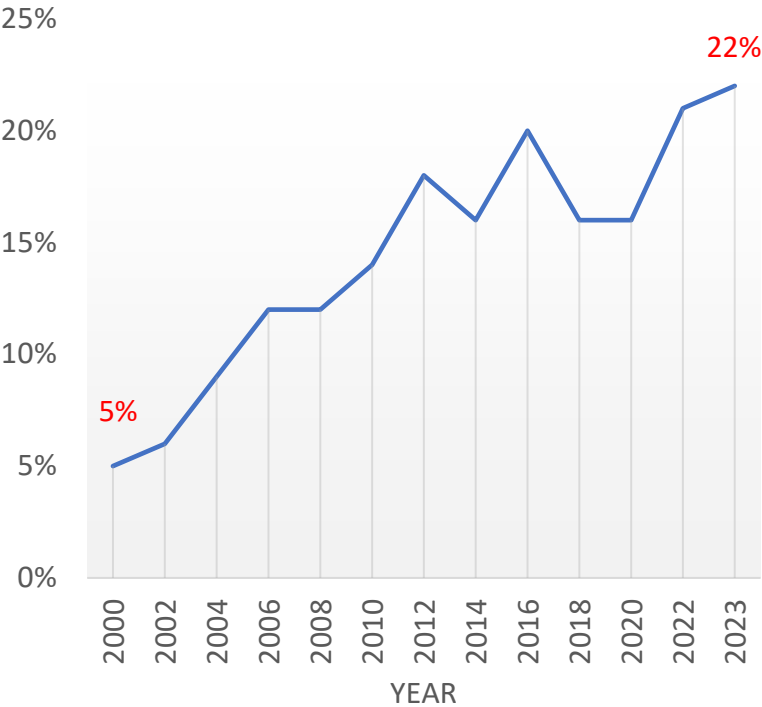
- Polity Research Consulting conducted the 2023 resident satisfaction survey from September 18 – September 23.
- Mix of landline and cell-phone households included in the survey sample.
- Random telephone survey of 400 adult residents.
- Margin of error: $\pm 4.90\%$ at a 95% confidence interval; that 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.
- Sample represents the Cambridge adult population, but does not perfectly match all demographic segments as we only balance on gender.
- 31 questions were benchmarked with the Polco/National Research Center database of comparative resident opinion surveys from over 500 communities nationwide.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

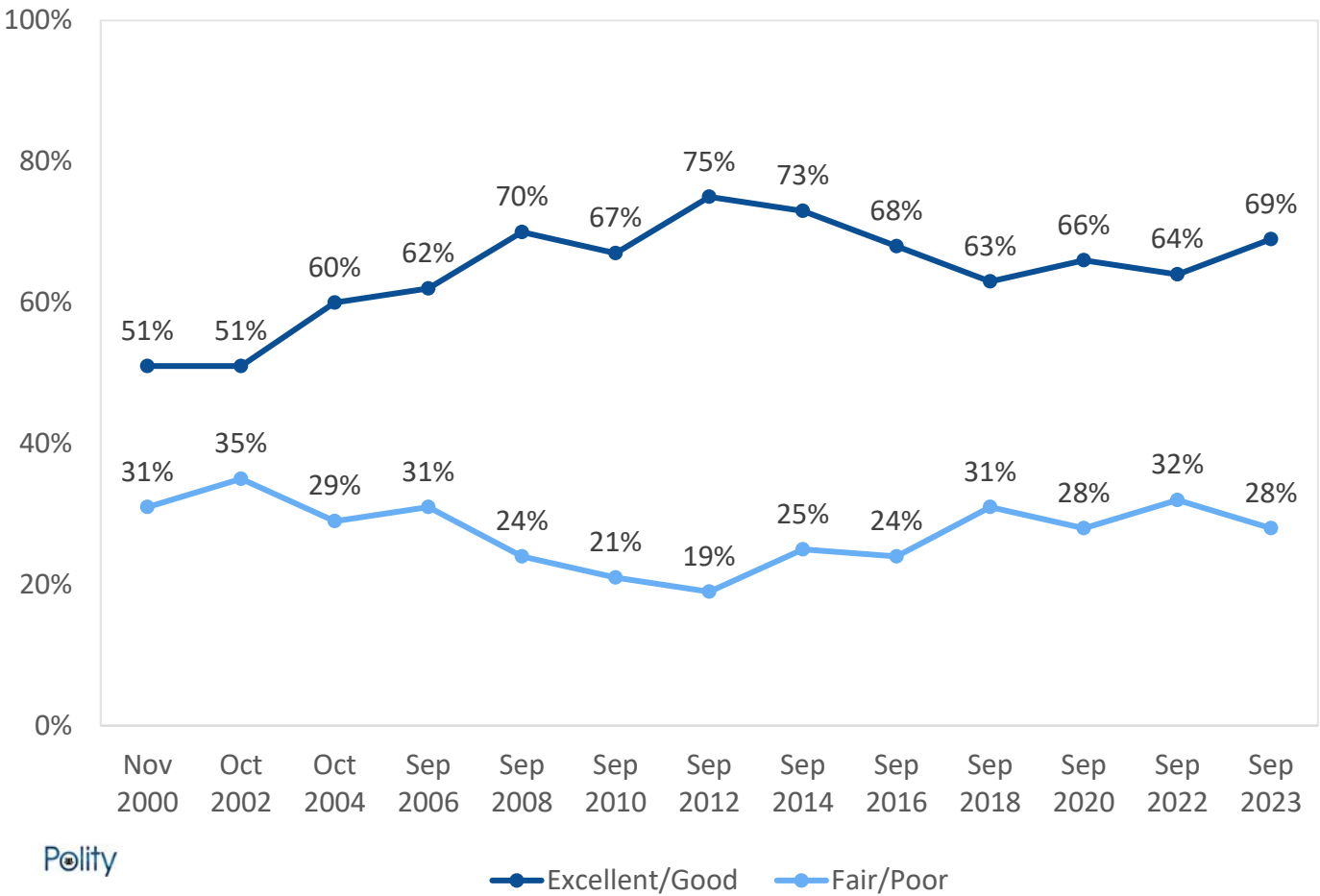
- The City received its highest "excellent" rating since 2000, with nearly seven in ten residents rating the City government's performance as "excellent" or "good".
- There was a significant rise in "excellent" ratings for "Cambridge as a place to live", increasing from 48% in 2022 to 56%.
- New questions focused on various aspects of the community highlight "gap" areas needing attention, notably housing and public transportation.
- Affordable housing remains the most critical issue, cited by 39% of respondents in the survey's single open-ended question. Public transportation follows at 7%. Additionally, 44% of respondents indicated a strong interest in enhancing transit options like buses and subways.
- There were notable increases in "excellent" ratings for the Fire and Library departments. Additionally, the "excellent" rating for Cambridge Police remained at 25%, up from 19% in 2020.
- The 2023 survey saw a decline in "excellent" ratings for educational opportunities dropping from 43% to 33% and lower ratings for efforts in climate change (9%) and equity issues (16%).
- City of Cambridge communication channels (email updates, printed mailers, and website) were most highly valued as an information source.
- In terms of national benchmarking, 3 questions ranked "much higher", 4 "higher" and 1 "much lower."

The City received its highest "excellent" rating since 2000, at 22%, with nearly seven in ten residents (69%) rating the city government's performance as "excellent" or "good".

Excellent rating for City Performance:
2000 - 2023

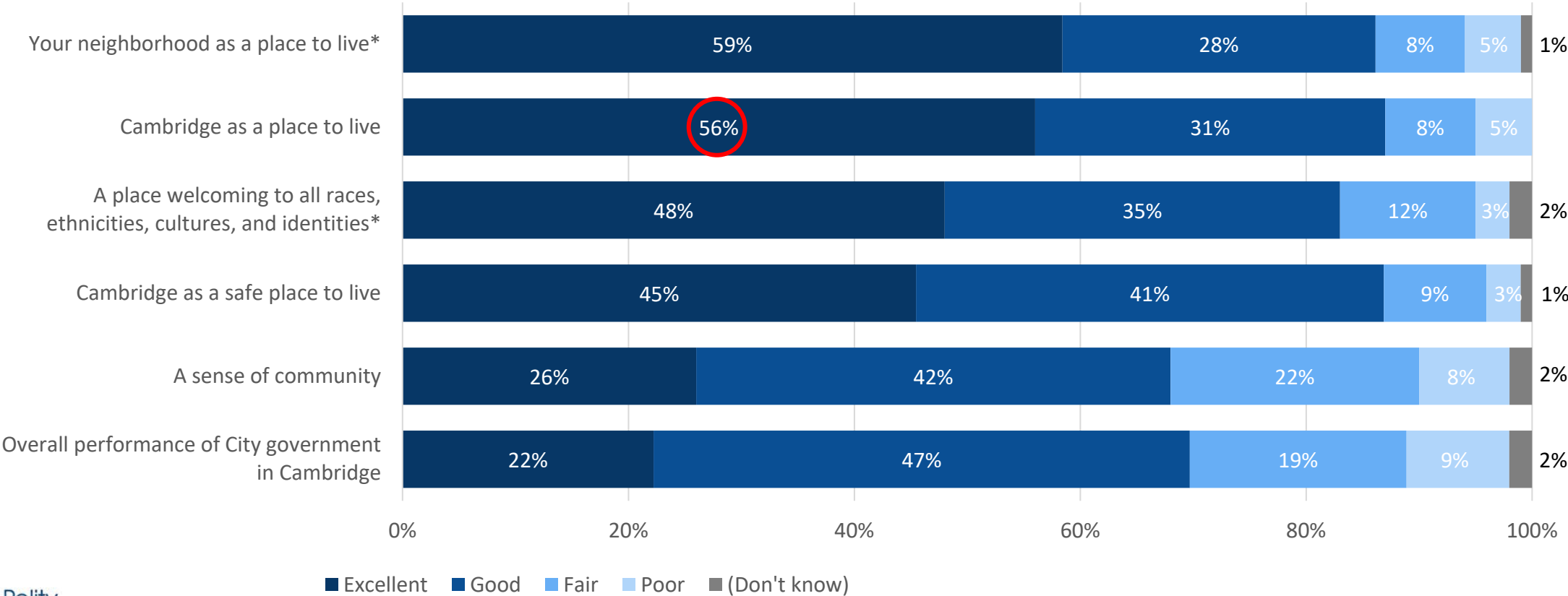


Overall performance of City government here in Cambridge

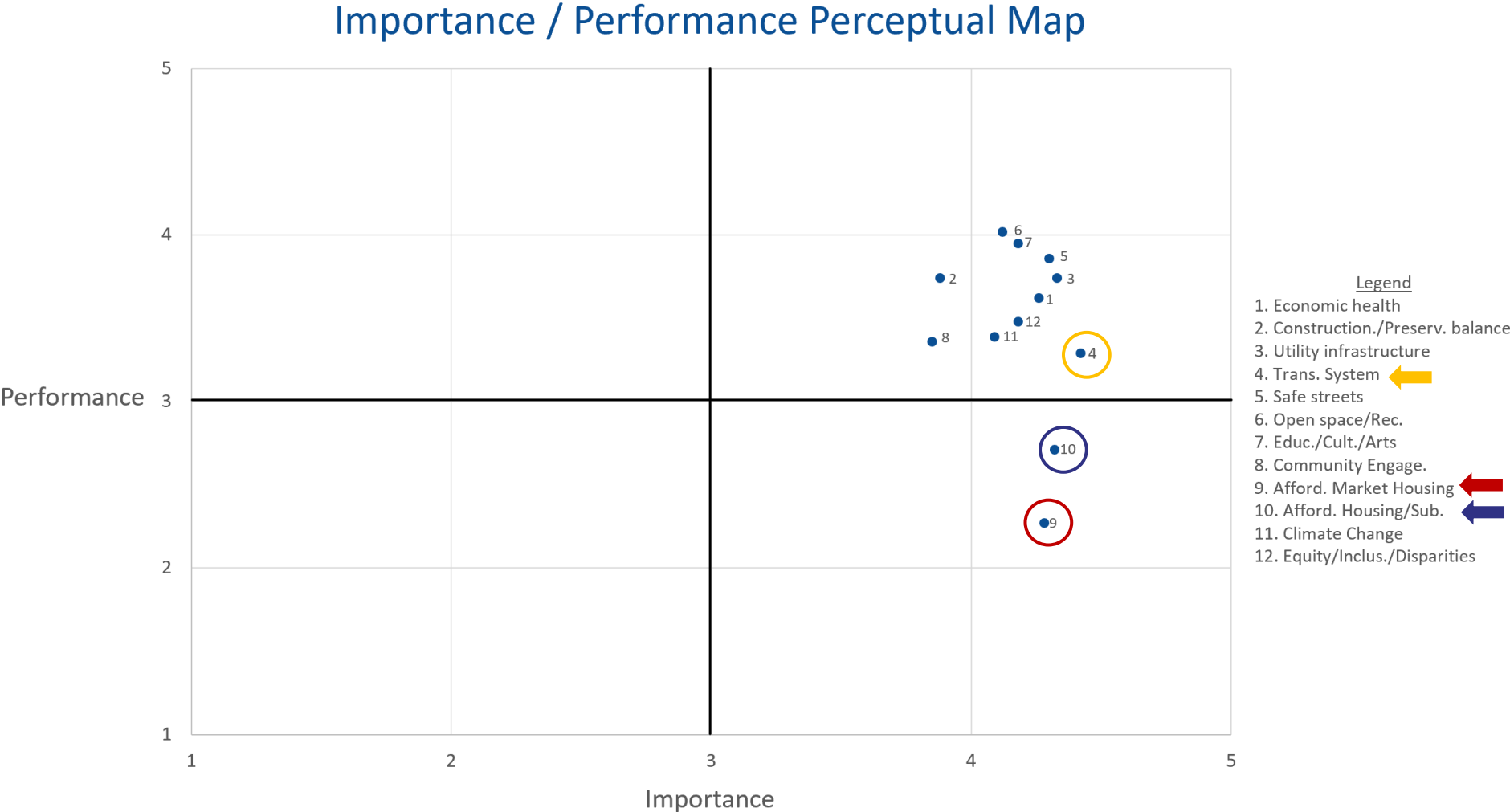


There was a significant rise in "excellent" ratings for "Cambridge as a place to live", increasing from 48% in 2022 to 56%.

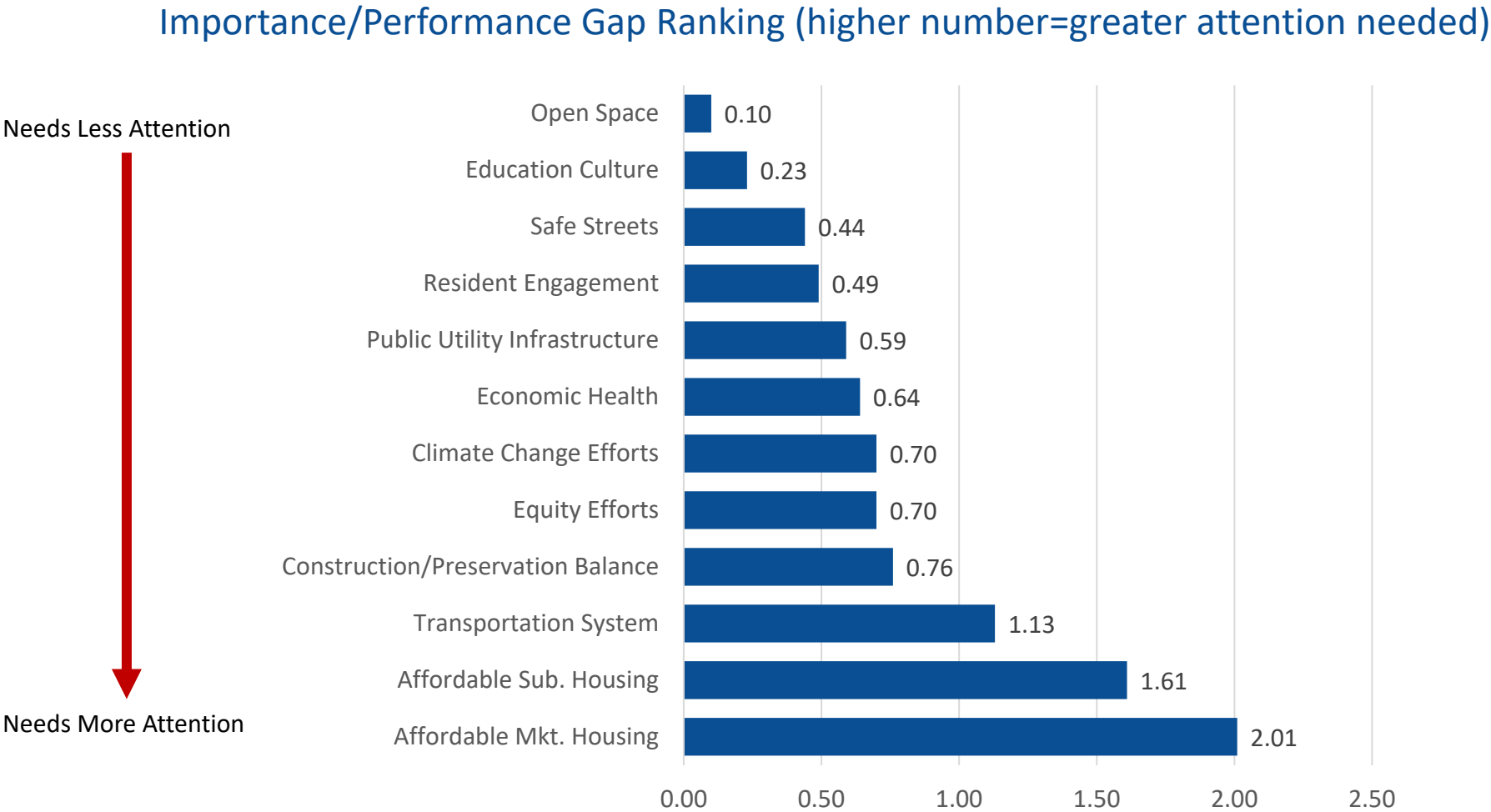
Please rate the following on a scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor.



This year, respondents were asked to rate 12 aspects of the community on two separate scales— an importance scale and a performance scale. Using the results, a Gap Analysis was constructed

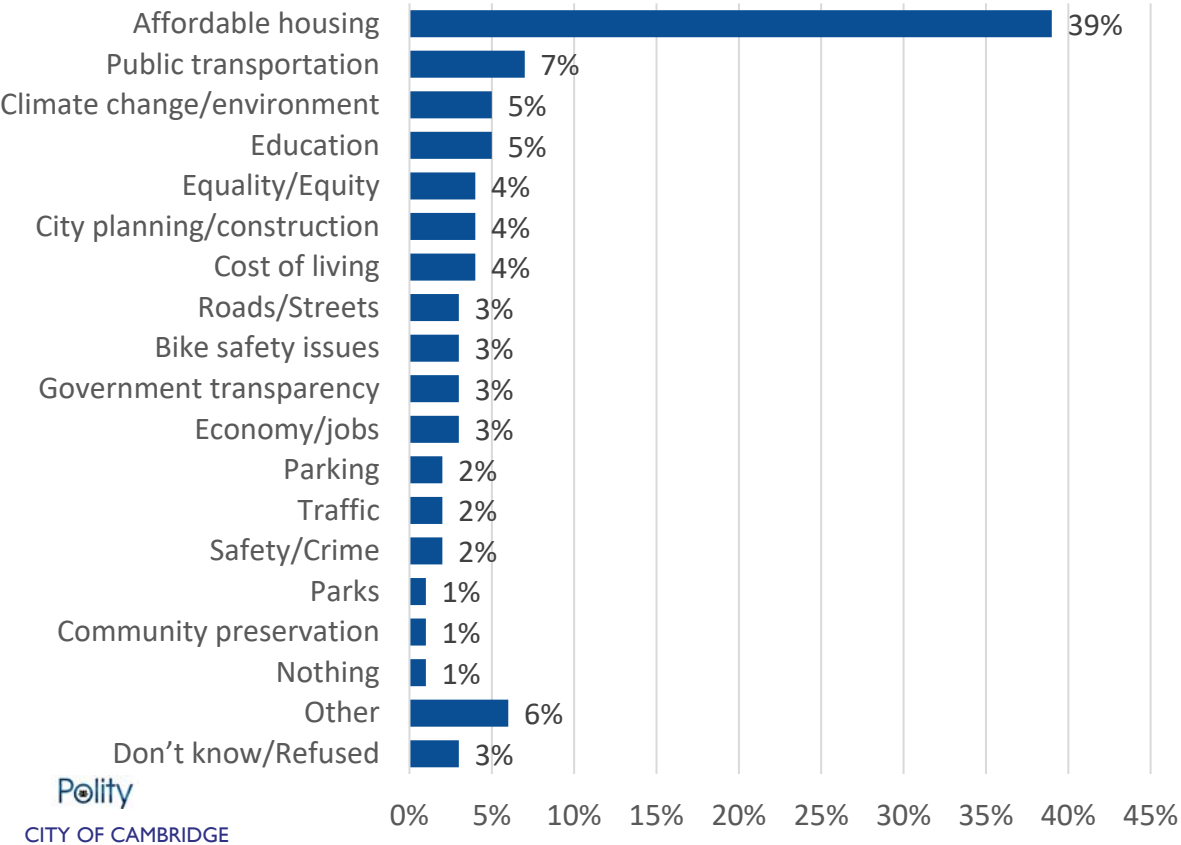


The Gap Analysis shows areas that the City performs well on and areas that need improvements. Affordable market housing, affordable subsidized housing, and transportation system show the largest gaps.

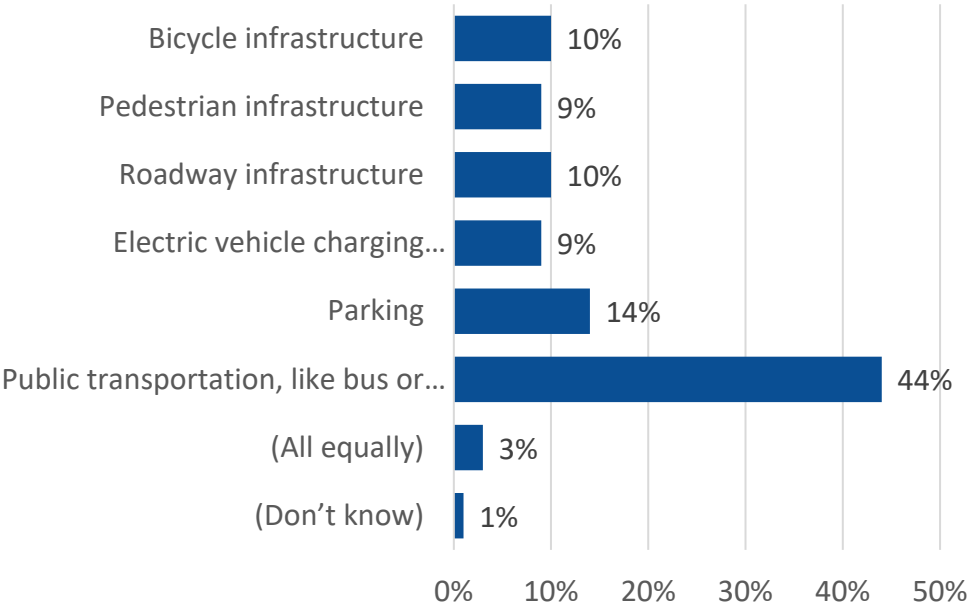


Affordable housing remains the most critical issue, cited by 39% of respondents in the survey’s single open-ended question. Public transportation follows at 7%. Additionally, 44% said public transportation is the single most important transportation option for city to focus on.

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

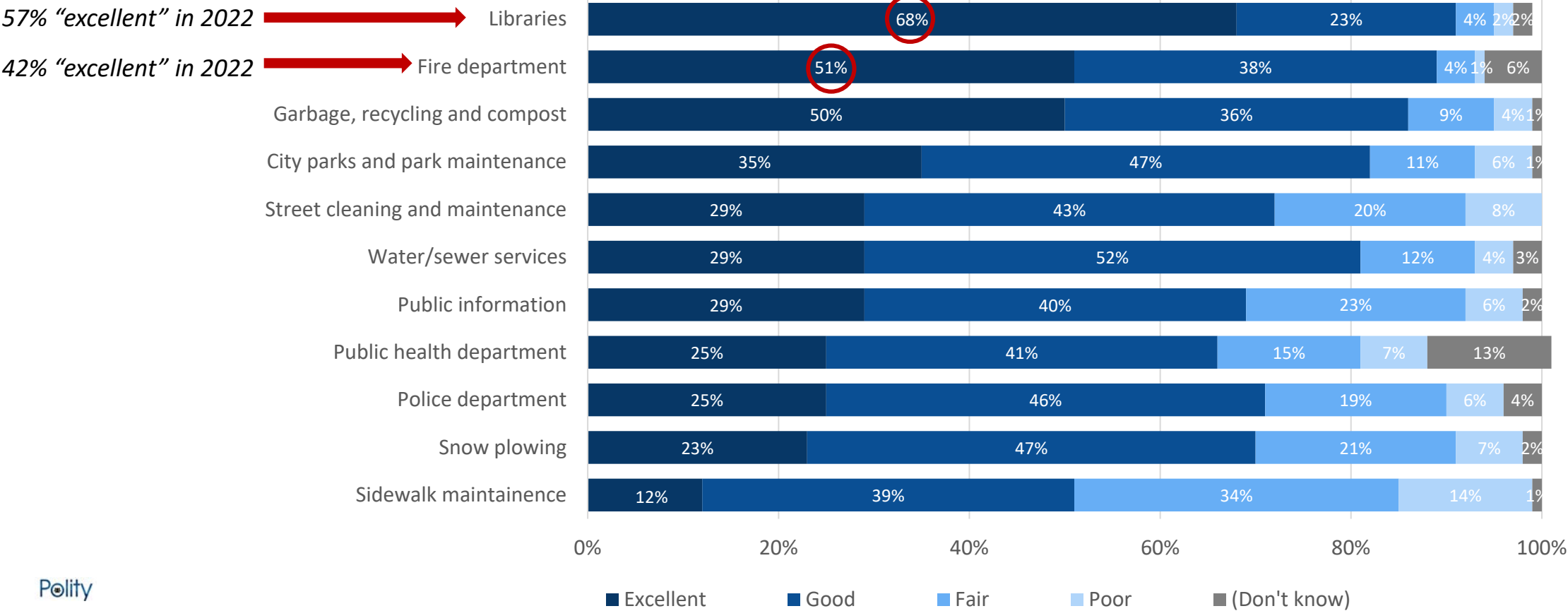


As you continue to think about transportation options to get around Cambridge, which of the following do you think is the *single most important option* for the city to focus on improving over the next few years?

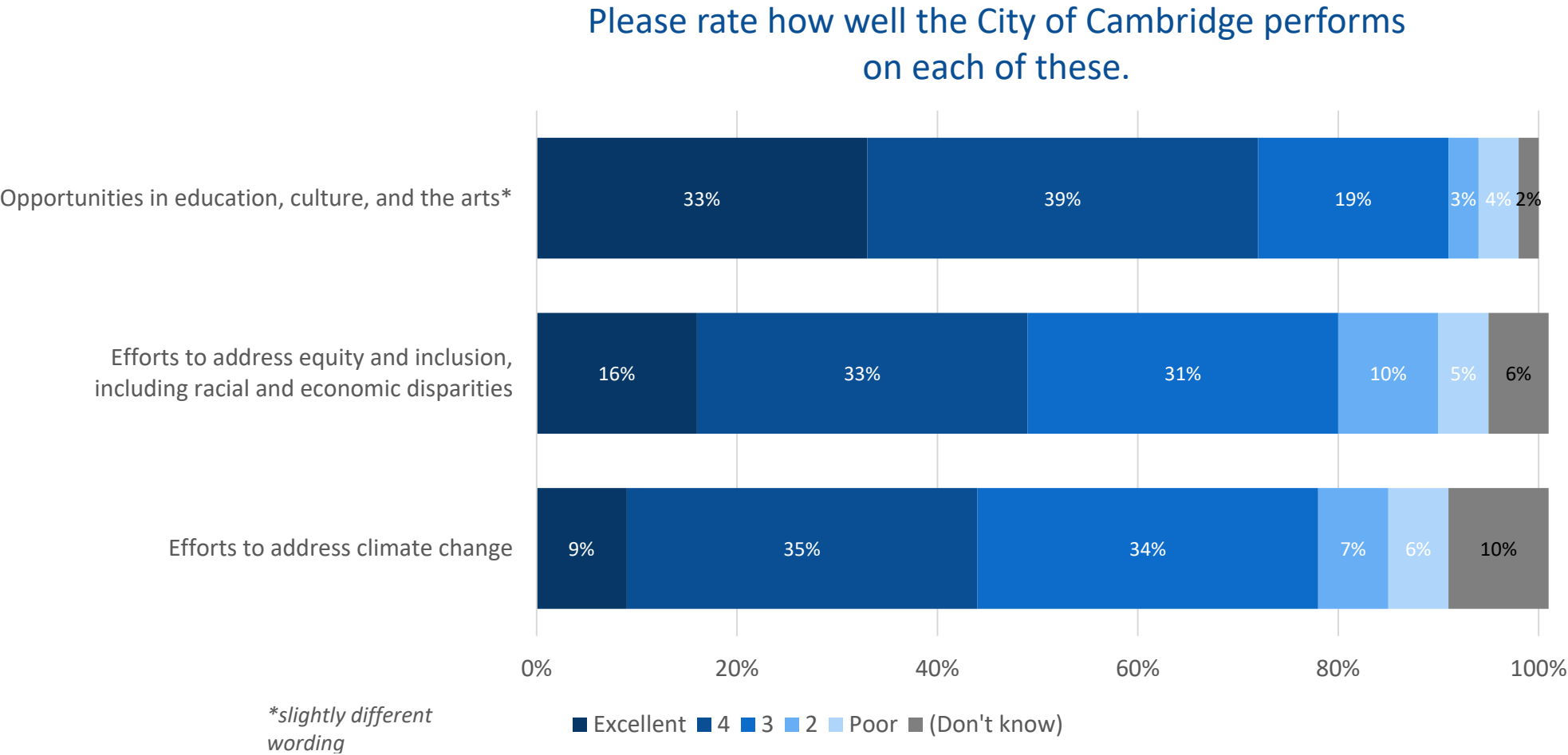


There were notable increases in “excellent” ratings for the Fire and Library departments. Additionally, the “excellent” rating for Cambridge Police remained steady at 25%, up from 19% in 2020.

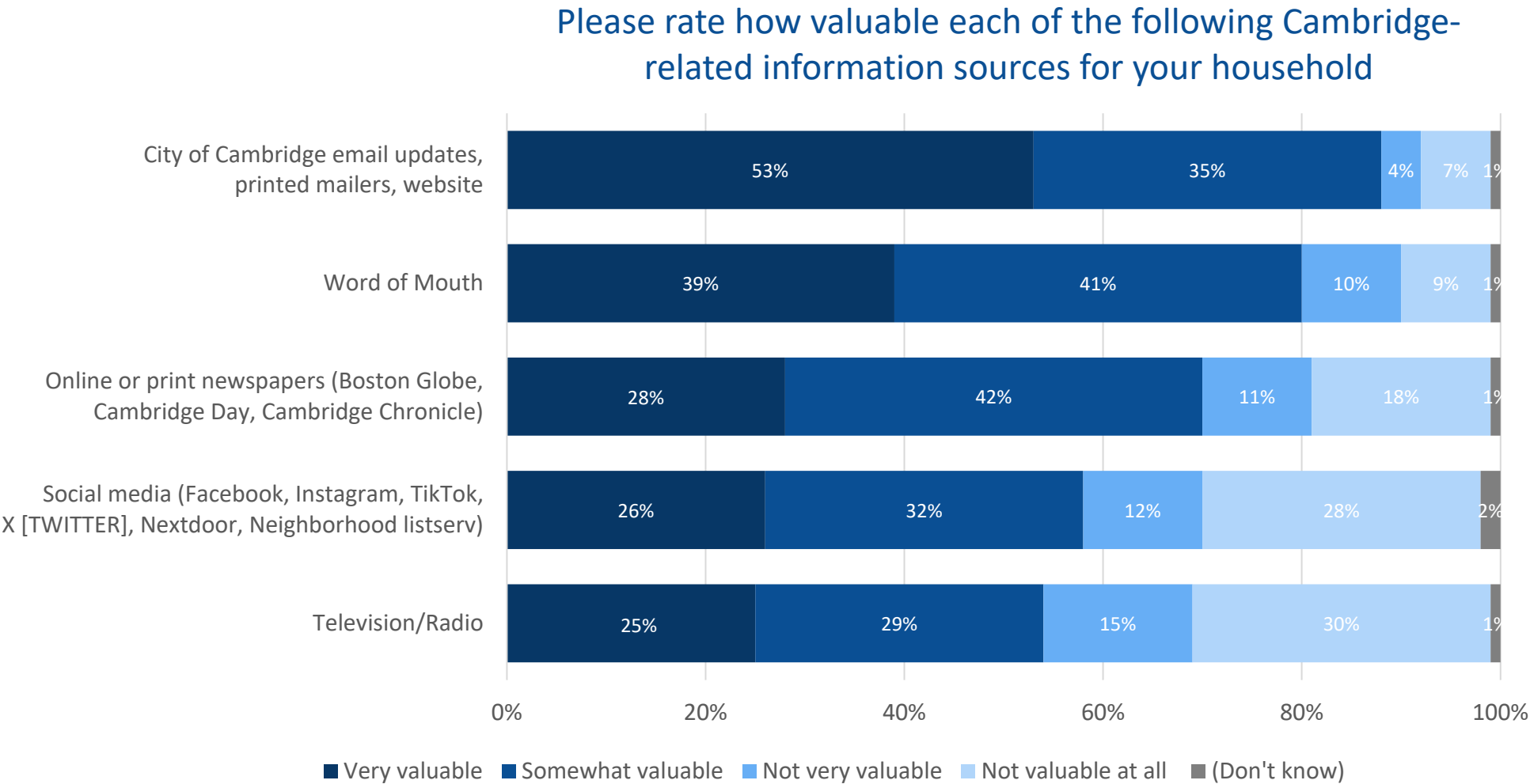
Now, I’d like to read you a number of services provided by the City of Cambridge. For each one, please rate the *quality* of these services on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.



The 2023 survey saw a decline in “excellent” ratings for educational opportunities dropping from 43% to 33% and relatively low “excellent” ratings for efforts in climate change (9%) and equity issues (16%).



City of Cambridge communication channels (email updates, printed mailers, and website) were most highly valued as an information source.



For the first time, utilizing the services of Polco, we were able to nationally benchmark 31 of the 2023 questions to a database of comparative resident surveys from over 500 communities nationwide

The questions benchmarked fell into the following categories:

- Quality of life
- Governance
- Economy
- Mobility
- Community design
- Utilities
- Parks and recreation
- Health and wellness
- Education, arts, and culture
- Inclusivity and engagement
- Participation
- Focus areas

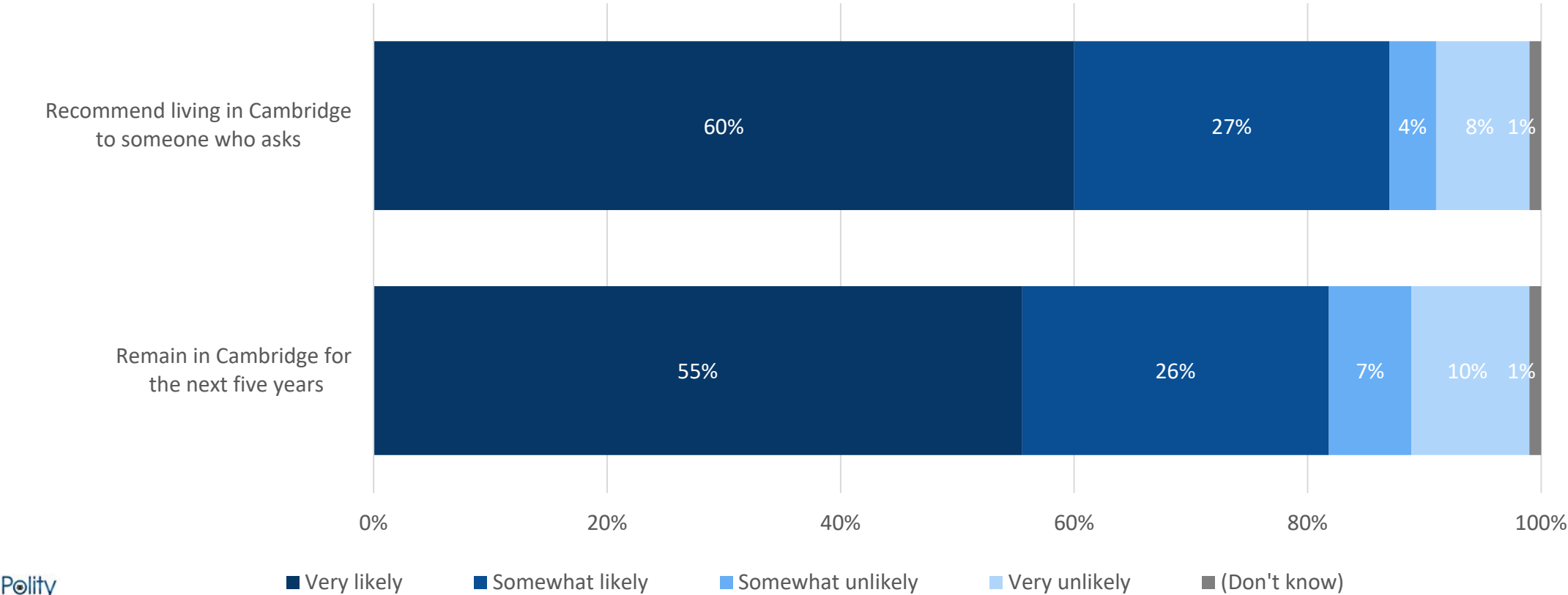
Much Higher/Lower	If Cambridge’s average rating was more than 20 points different when compared to the benchmark.
Higher/Lower	If Cambridge’s average rating was more than 10 points different when compared to the benchmark.
Similar	The average rating given by residents is statistically similar to or different (greater or lesser) than the benchmark

In terms of national benchmarking, 3 questions ranked “much higher”, 4 questions ranked “higher” and 1 question ranked “much lower.” These fell into the categories of mobility, inclusivity and engagement, participation, and focus area.

CATEGORY	QUESTION	PERCENT POSITIVE	RANK	# BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES	COMPARISON TO BENCHMARK
PARTICIPATION	Contacted a Cambridge City Councilor to express your opinion or seek services	40%	2	295	Much Higher
FOCUS AREA	Quality of the transportation system (auto, bicycle, foot, bus, subway)	86%	2	244	Much Higher
FOCUS AREA	Opportunities in education, culture, and the arts	79%	1	284	Much Higher
MOBILITY	On foot [ease of getting around the city]	87%	36	322	Higher
INCLUSIVITY & ENGAGEMENT	A place welcoming to all races, ethnicities, cultures, and identities	86%	7	320	Higher
FOCUS AREA	Quality of open space, parks, and recreation opportunities	77%	5	245	Higher
FOCUS AREA	Residents’ connection and engagement with their community	67%	11	284	Higher
MOBILITY	Driving [ease of getting around the city]	42%	315	319	Much Lower

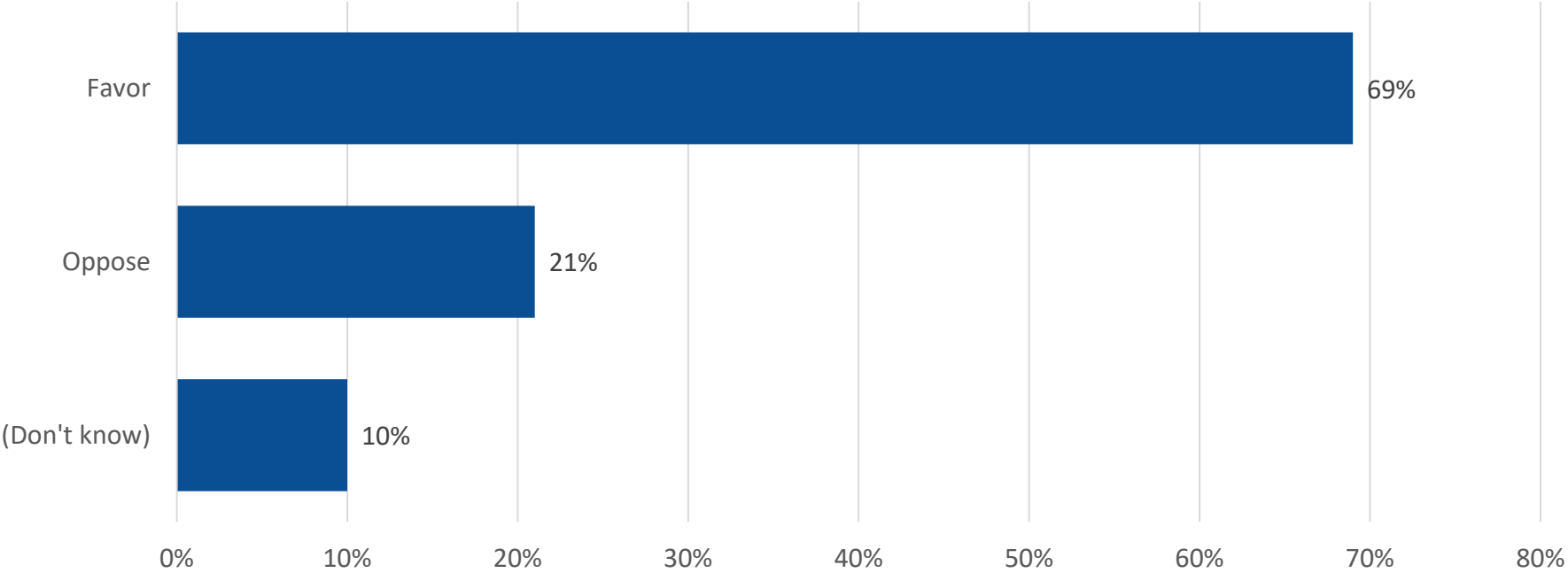
Finally, we want to point out that we asked two new “types” of questions in the 2023 survey. The first type asked respondents two questions that reflect their level of pride in the City of Cambridge.

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



The second type of question asked the respondents directly for their opinion about a decision the city will need to make, namely should the street cleaning pilot continue.

As you may know, the City implemented a street cleaning pilot program that replaced towing associated with street cleaning with a \$50 fine. Thinking about the current level of cleanliness of our streets, do you favor or oppose this pilot program becoming permanent?



2023 marked a significant transition for our survey program as we move to an annual survey format, allowing us to stay more closely attuned to evolving community dynamics.

- Moving forward, we will continue to refine our questions for more actionable insights and to better align with emerging issues and priorities within Cambridge.
- The rating for “overall City government performance” in the 2023 survey fed into the City Manager’s annual performance review and the survey results can provide valuable input for the City Council’s goal setting.
- The City’s survey program aims to capture insights from randomly selected residents, offering valuable perspectives from our community.

Polity

Polity



2023 Resident Opinion Survey
Prepared for The City of Cambridge, MA

November 1, 2023
Polity Research Consulting LLC