

## **Appendix A – Statistical survey results**

# Report on Public Engagement for Budget 2025 – Scientific Survey Results

Prepared by PRA Inc.

January 2025

# Section 1: Survey methodology and demographics

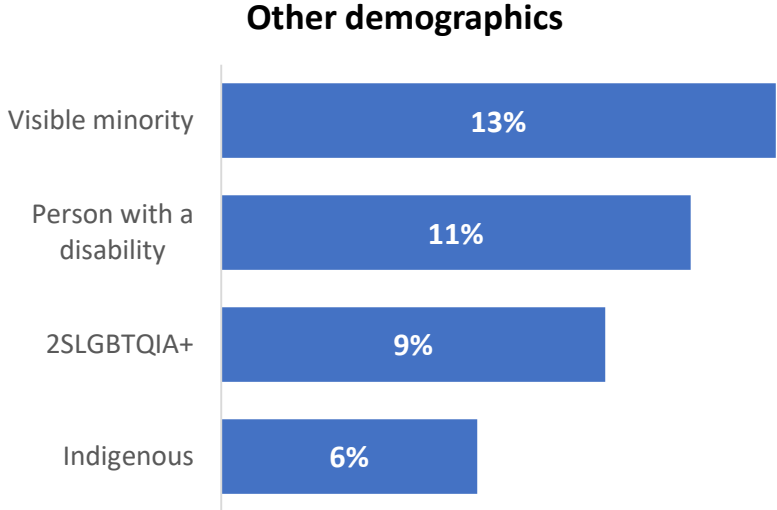
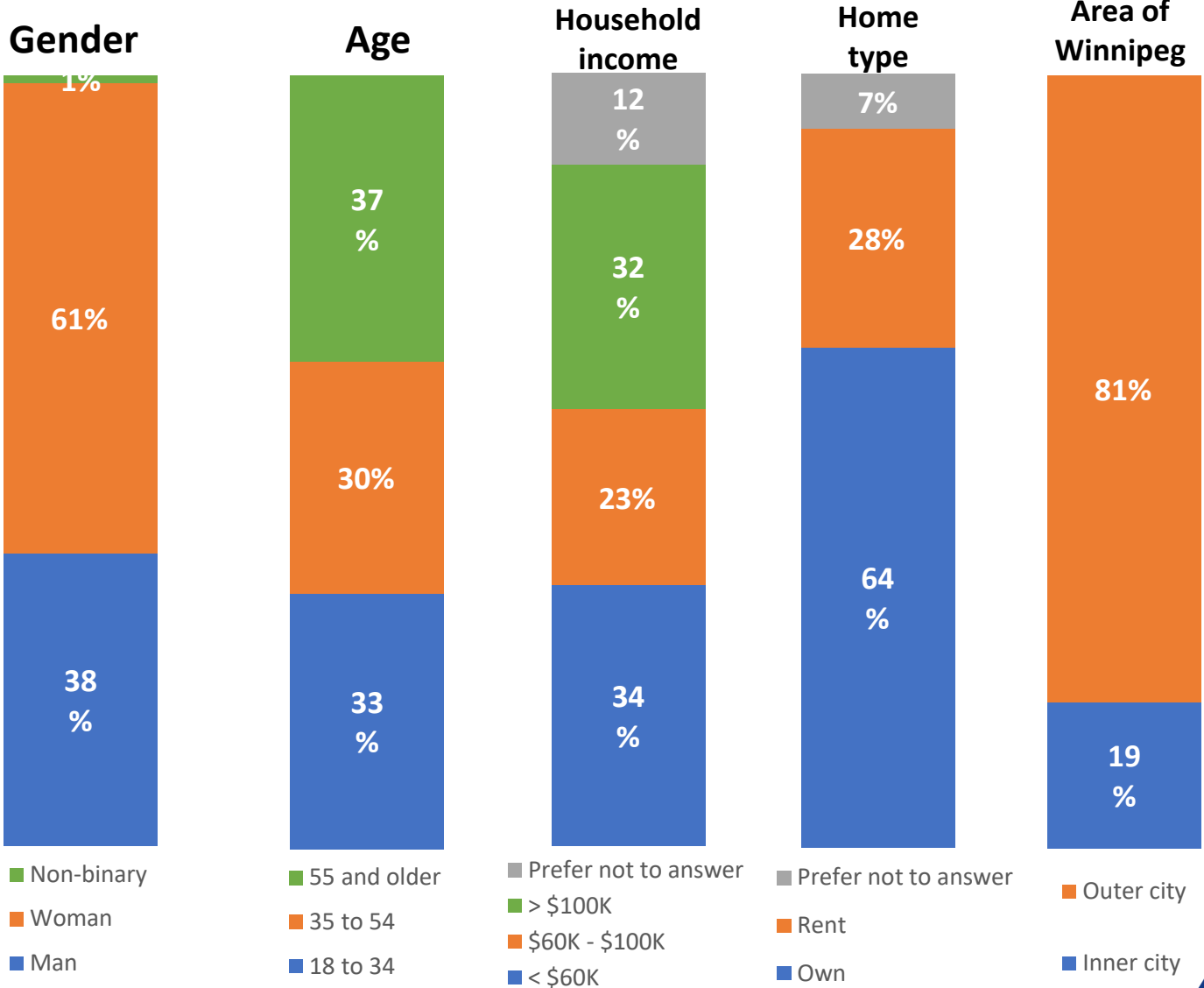
# Background and methodology

- PRA conducted the survey from December 12 to 18, 2024 with Winnipeg residents 18 years and older via its online panel. The final results in this survey are weighted by age, gender, and income of Winnipeg residents according to 2021 Statistics Canada census data.
- The theoretical margin-of-error for a survey of 800 is +/- 3.6% (based on a 95% confidence interval). The margin-of-error is higher for sub-populations analyzed in these results.

## Report notes:

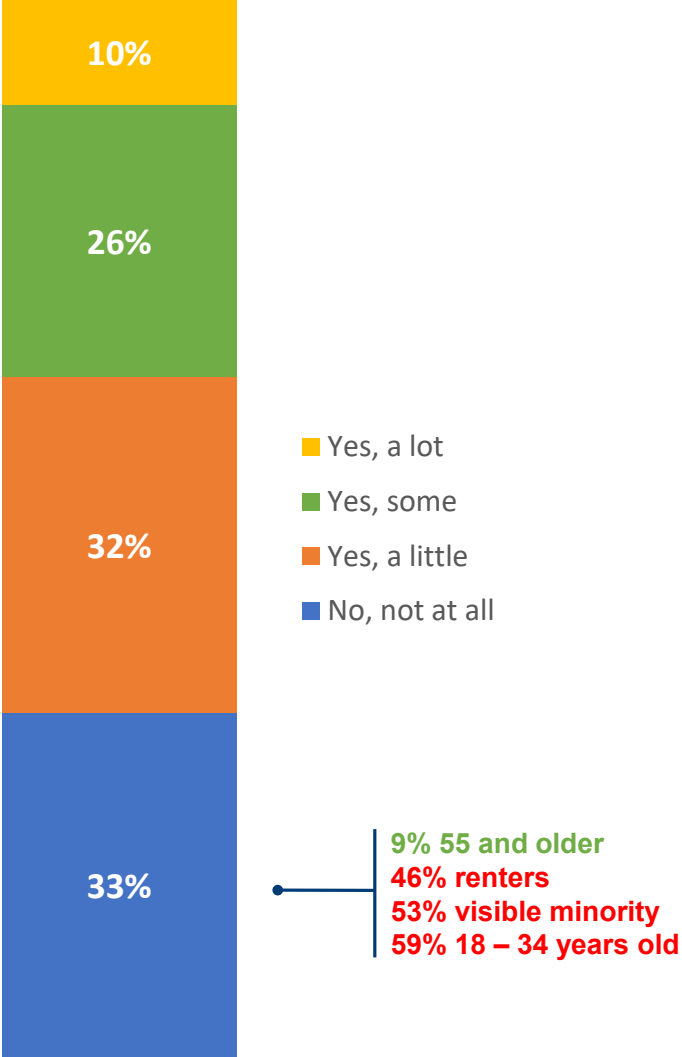
- Percentages in graphs may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
- Differences between groups were identified using chi-square tests with a p-value of less than .01 and at least a 10% difference between the group and the overall result. Text highlighted in **green** indicates a response that is more positive than the overall (aggregate) rating and text highlighted in **red** indicates a response that is more negative than the overall (aggregate) rating.

# Demographics



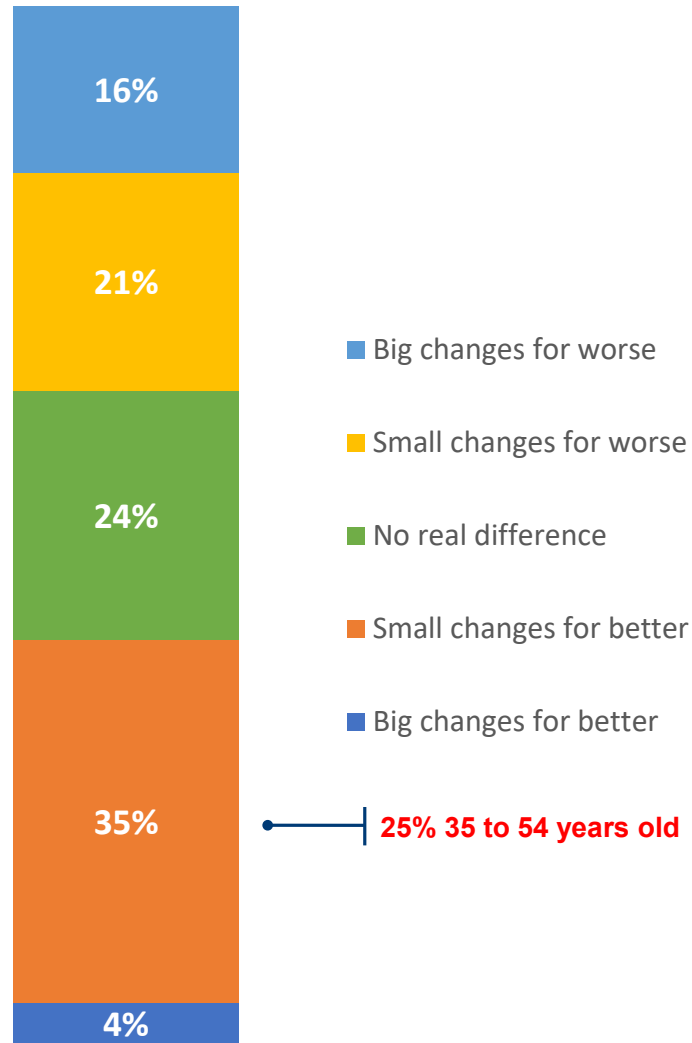
# Section 3: Survey results

# Awareness of City's 2025 budget



- When asked what they had seen, read or heard about the City's 2025 budget recently, two thirds had heard at least something, including 10% who had heard **a lot** about the budget.

# Perception of 2025 Budget

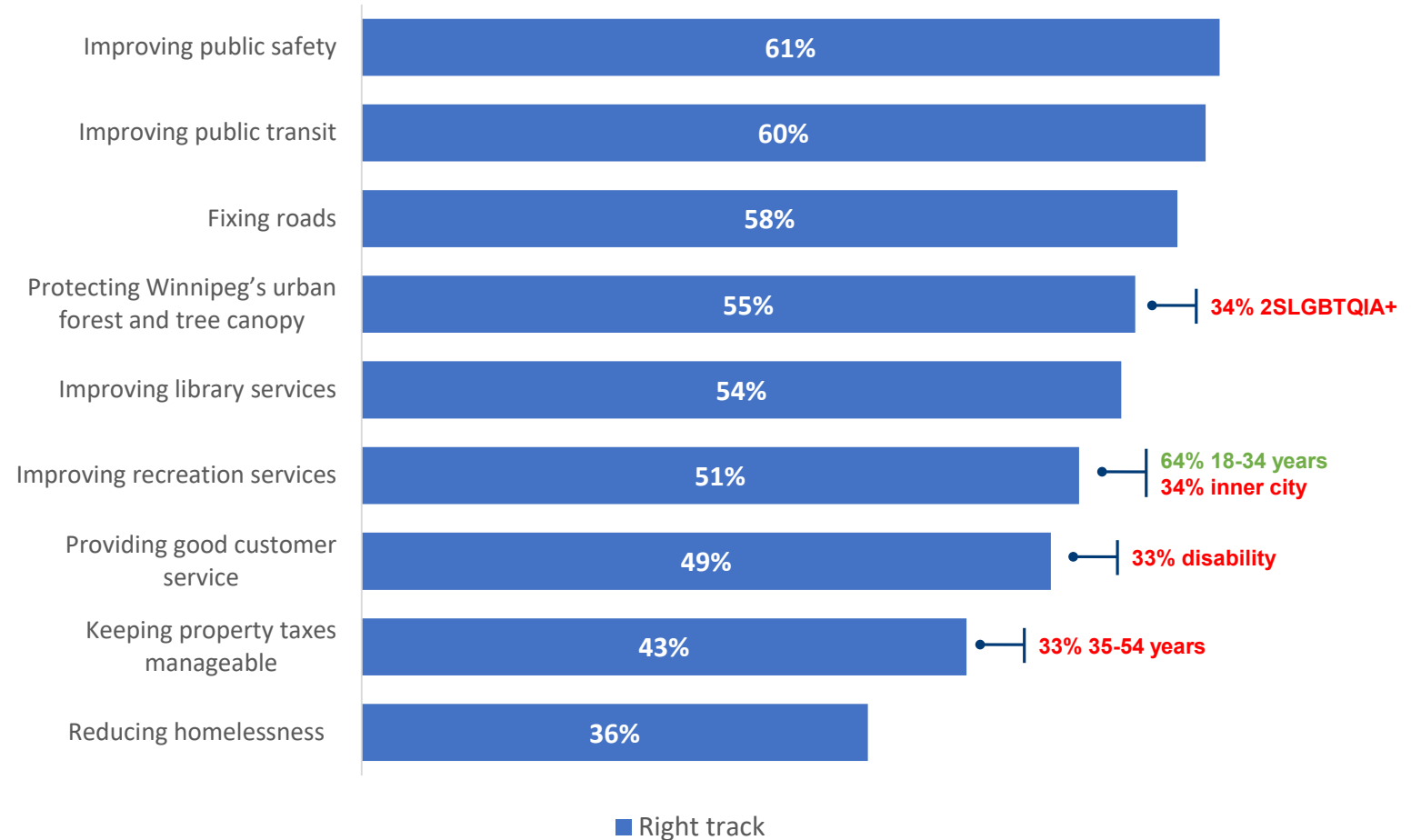


- When asked if they think the 2025 Budget will bring change for better or worse, residents are almost equally split with 39% saying it will **bring change for the better** and 37% saying it will be **bring change for the worse**.
- About one quarter believe it will **have no real difference**.

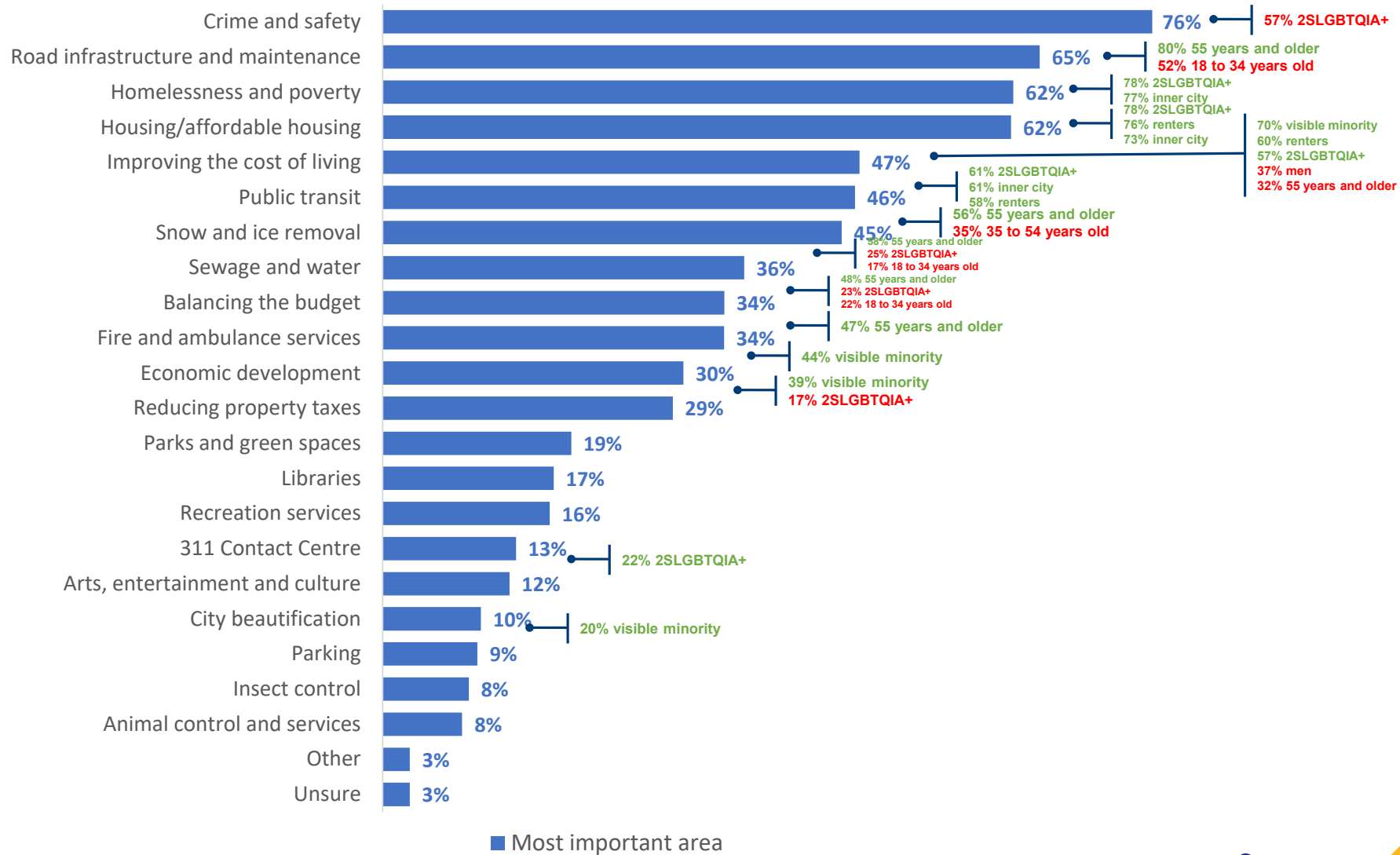


# Right or wrong track for Budget 2025

- Residents are generally split on nine areas of the 2025 budget in terms of being on the right or wrong track, with no single area rated on the right track by more than 61%.
- Reducing homelessness** stands out from the other areas as having the lowest agreement for being on the right track.



# Most important areas for Budget 2025



- When asked to select the most important areas for the City to focus on for the 2025 budget, residents were most likely to select **crime and safety**, followed by **road/street infrastructure and maintenance**, **homeless and poverty**, and **housing/affordable housing**.

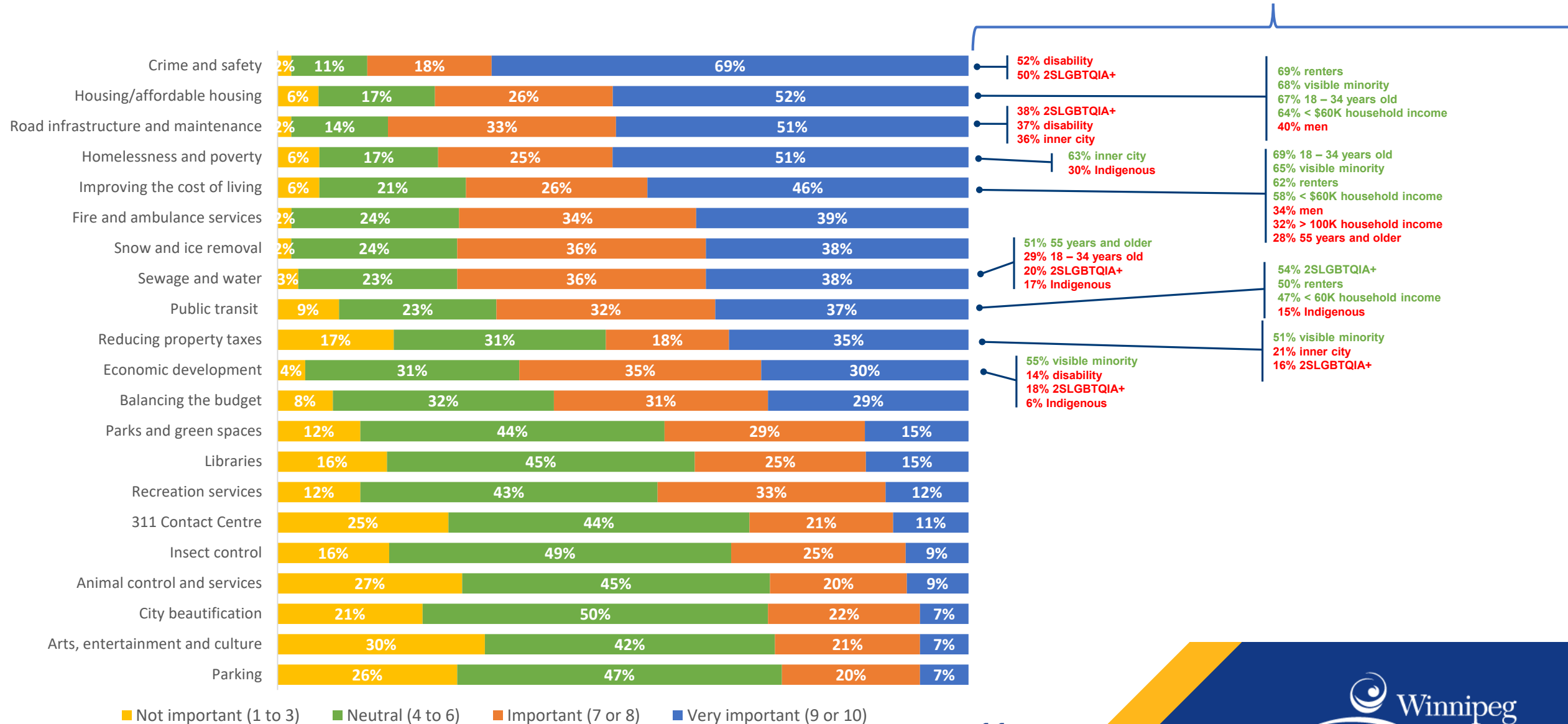
Note: Residents could select more than one area.

# Importance for City's budget 2025

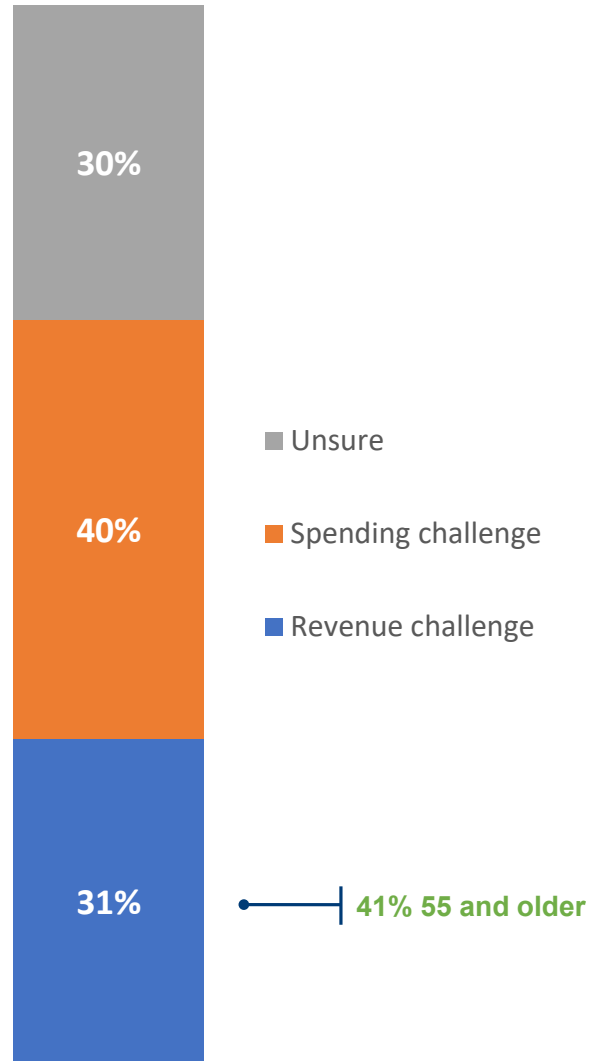
- The next page shows how residents rated the importance of 21 different areas for the City's 2025 budget using a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important).
- Similar to the previous slide, the most important area is **crime and safety**, with 69% rating it a 9 or 10 out of 10.
- This was followed by three other areas where about half of residents rate them a 9 or 10 out of 10 – **housing/affordable housing, road and street infrastructure and maintenance, and homelessness and poverty.**
- At the lower end, three areas seem to rank lower than others, with just 7% rating them as a 9 or 10 out of 10. These include **city beautification; arts, entertainment, and culture; and parking.**

# Importance for City's budget 2025

% very important

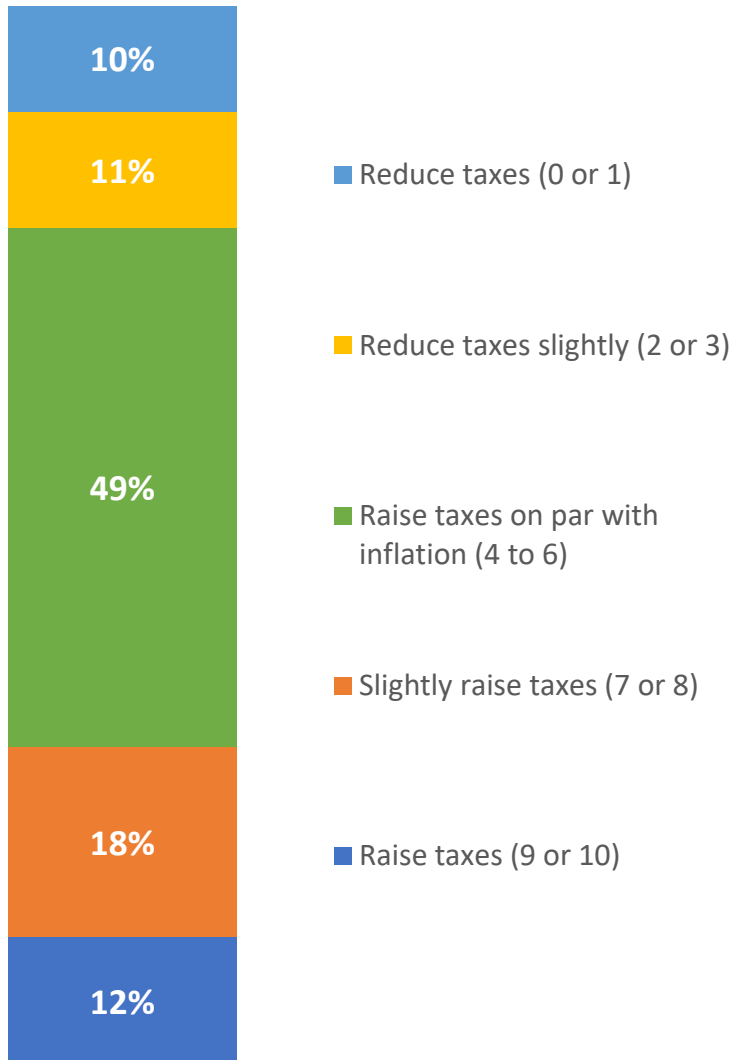


# Revenue versus spending challenge



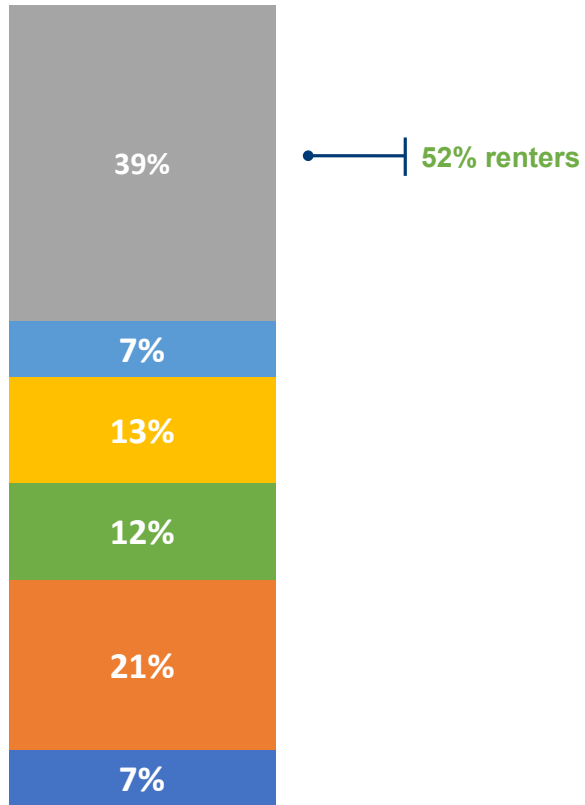
- Residents are slightly more likely to say the City has a **spending challenge** – the City spends too much on programs – than a **revenue challenge** – the City isn't raising enough money through property taxes.
- However, almost one third are unsure of which statement reflects the City's budgeting.

# Increasing versus reducing property taxes



- When asked what best reflects their opinion about how the City should consider property taxes, residents slightly favour **raising property taxes above inflation to improve city services over reducing taxes with cuts to city services** by 30% versus 21%.
- However, the largest group are those who say **increase taxes at the rate of inflation to maintain current service** at 49%.

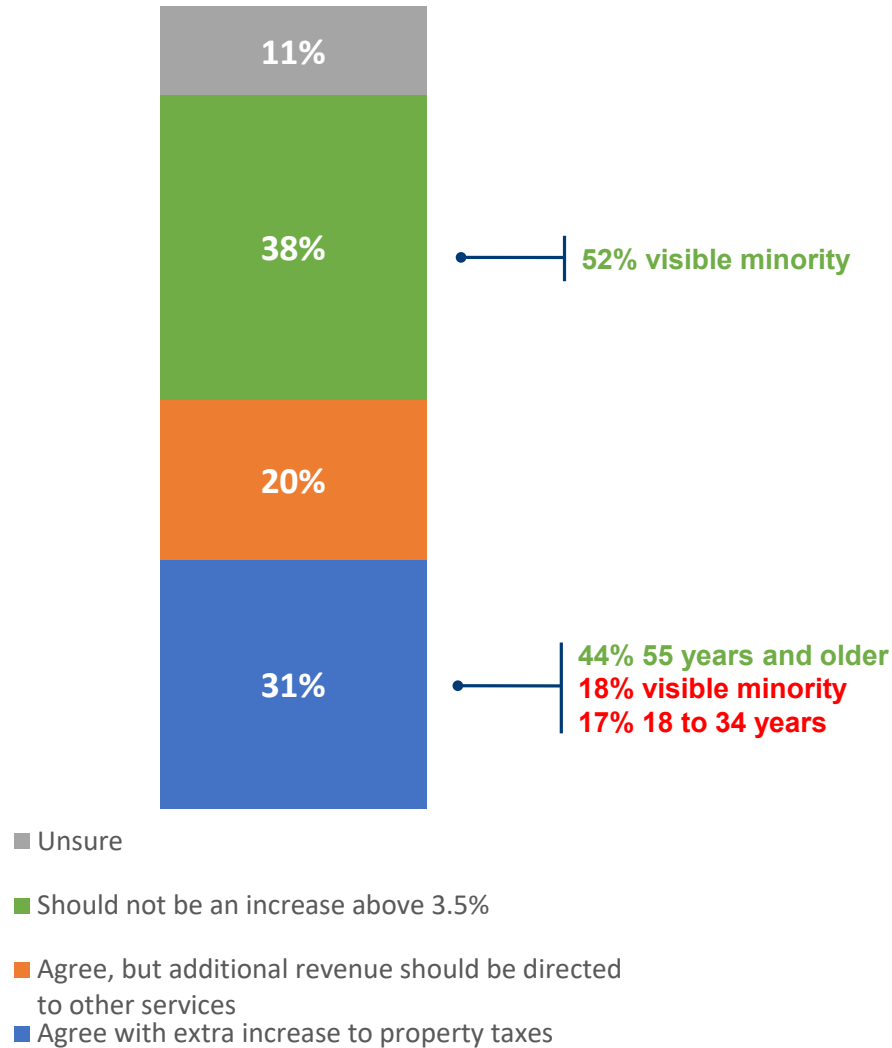
# Comparison to other Canadian cities



- Unsure
- A lot higher than other comparable cities
- Slightly higher
- About the same
- Slightly lower
- A lot lower than other comparable cities

- When asked how they believe the City’s property taxes compare to other comparable cities in Canada, residents tend to believe they are **lower than other comparable cities** than **higher** – 28% versus 20% - with 12% saying they are **about the same**.
- However, the largest group are those who are unsure at 39%.

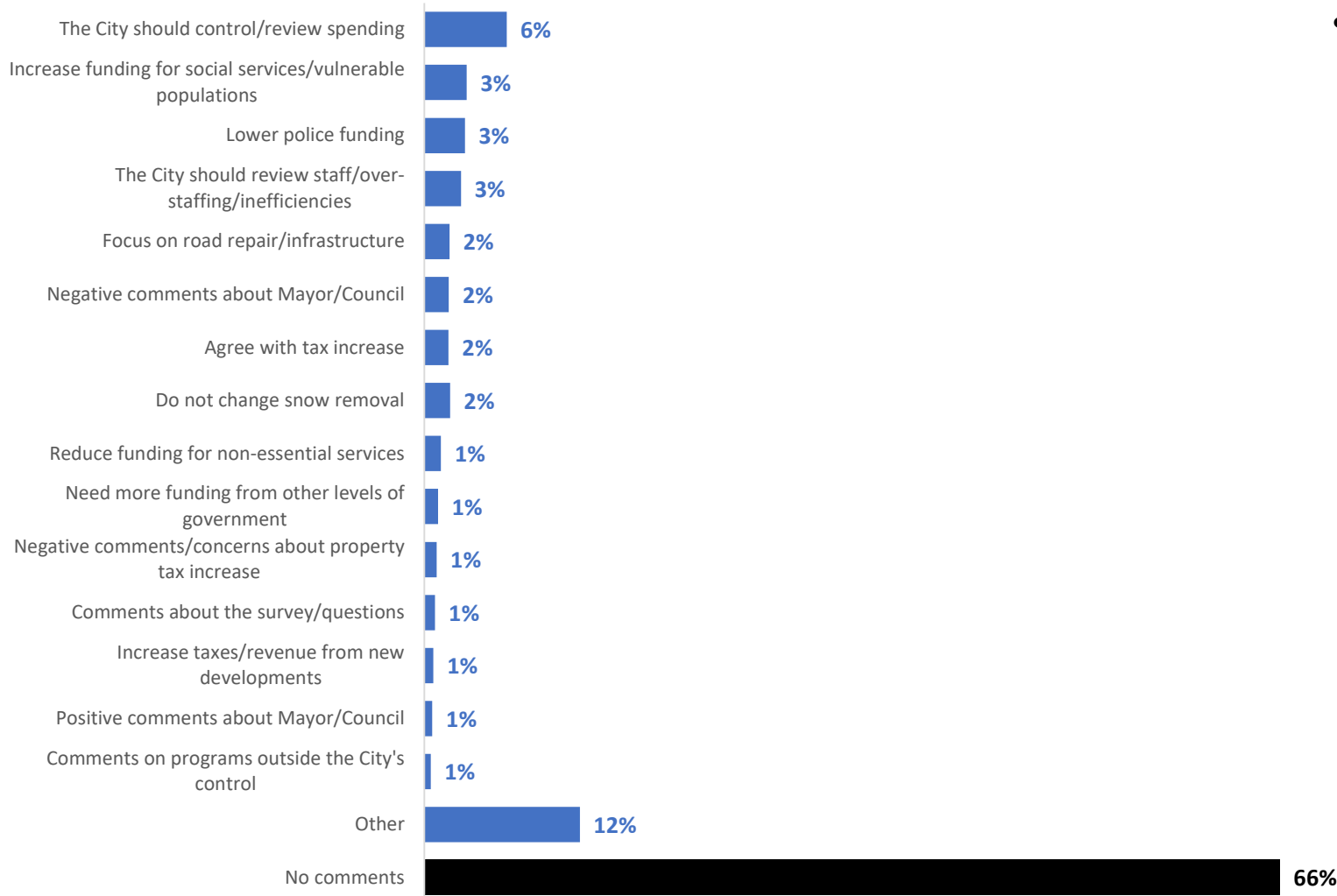
# Reaction to extra property tax increase



- Residents were provided the following information - *The city had initially expected a 3.5% increase in property taxes in 2025; however, the city is proposing to increase property taxes to 5.95%. The extra increase is designed to invest more money in public safety, road renewals, and getting the City's finances in a stable position.*
- Residents tend to agree with the increase – 51% versus 38% - however, 20% say the **increase should be directed to other services**, while 31% agree **with the increase in principle**.



# Other comments on City's budget



- When asked for any comments on the City's budget, 34% provided a comment with the most common comment being that **the City should control/review its spending**. No other comment was mentioned by more than 3%.

Note: Residents could give more than one response. Comments that did not relate to the budget or City spending were grouped as "Other".

## **Appendix B – Online survey results**

# **Report on Public Engagement for Budget 2025 - Online Survey Results**

**Prepared by City of Winnipeg**

**January 2025**

# Section 1: Survey methodology and demographics

# Background and methodology

- PRA conducted the survey from December 12, 2024 to January 5, 2025.
- The survey was available online and open to all Winnipeg residents.
- Survey respondents were voluntary and self-selected.
- A total of 1,362 surveys were completed.

# Demographics

**Gender**



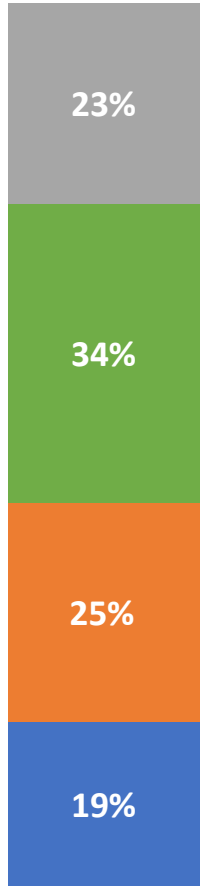
- Would prefer to self-identify
- Woman
- Man

**Age**



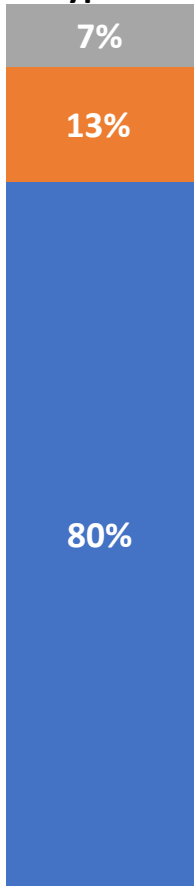
- 55 and older
- 35 to 54
- 18 to 34

**Household income**



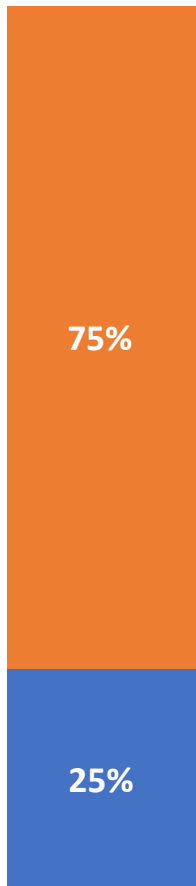
- Prefer not to answer
- > \$100K
- \$60K - \$100K
- < \$60K

**Home type**



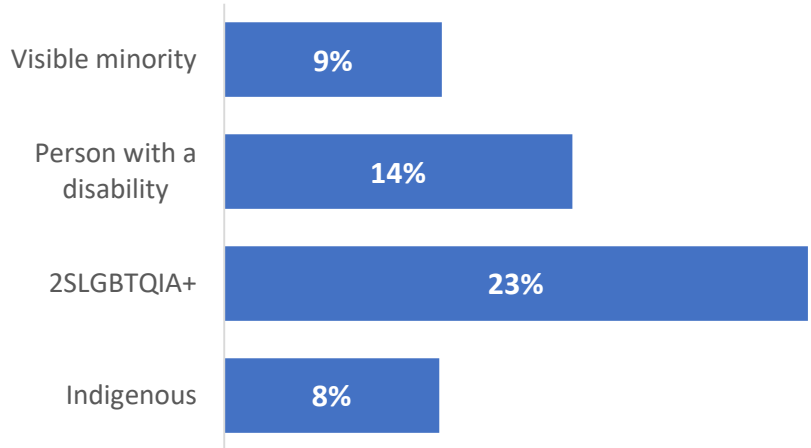
- Prefer not to answer
- Rent
- Own

**Area of Winnipeg**



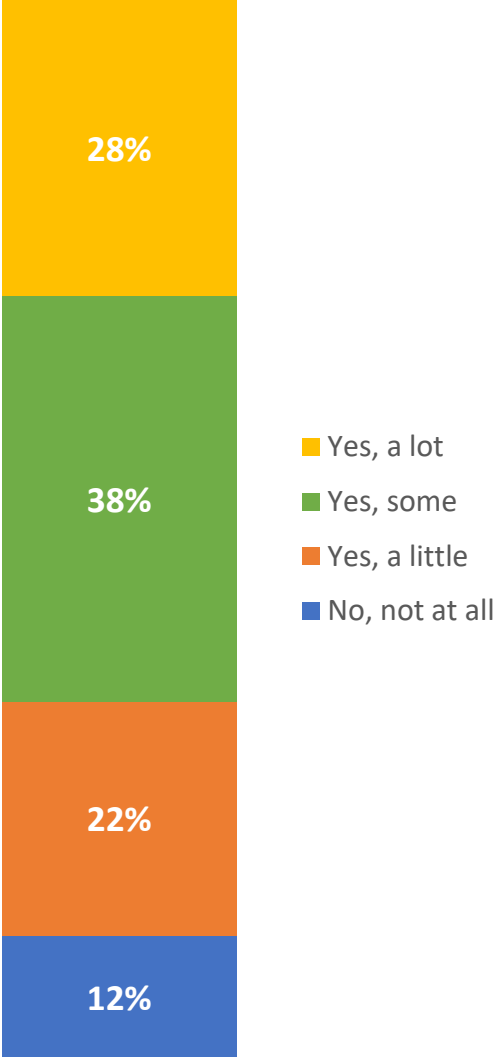
- Outer city
- Inner city

**Other demographics**



# Section 3: Survey results

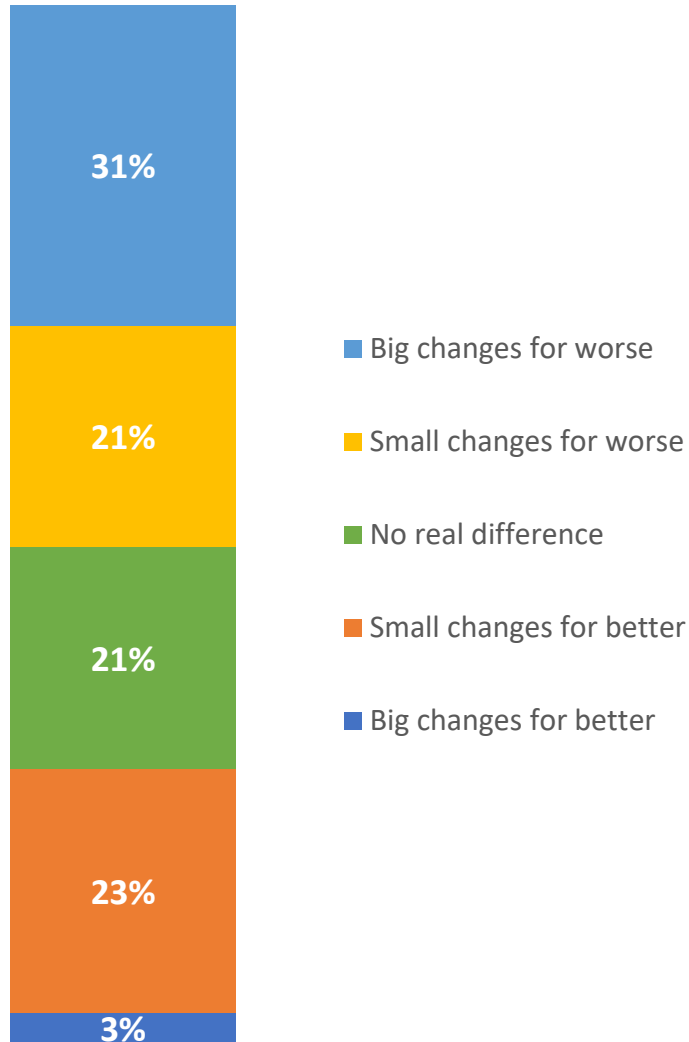
# Awareness of City's 2025 budget



- When asked what they had seen, read or heard about the City's 2025 budget recently, 88% of respondents had heard at least something, including 28% who had heard **a lot** about the budget.



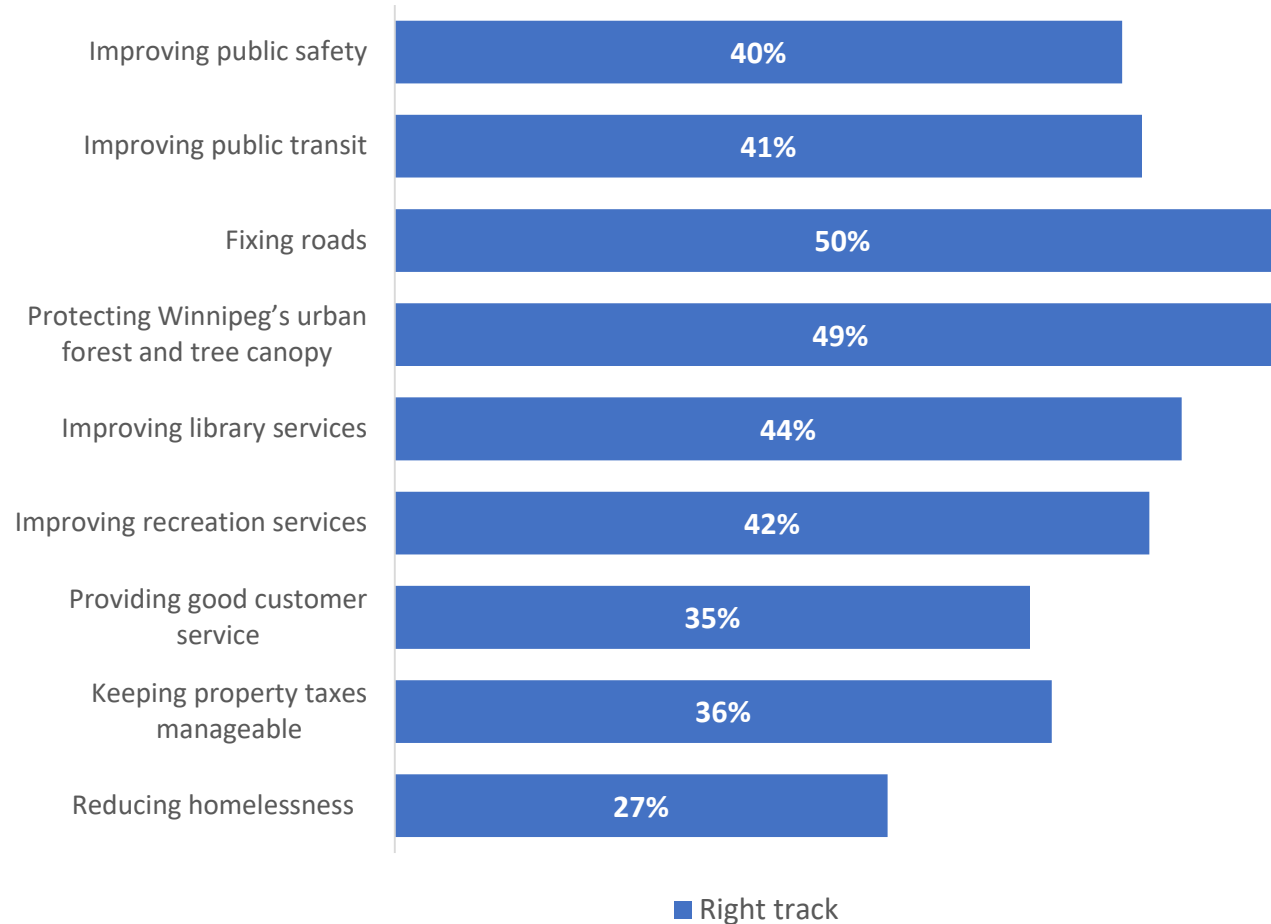
# Perception of 2025 Budget



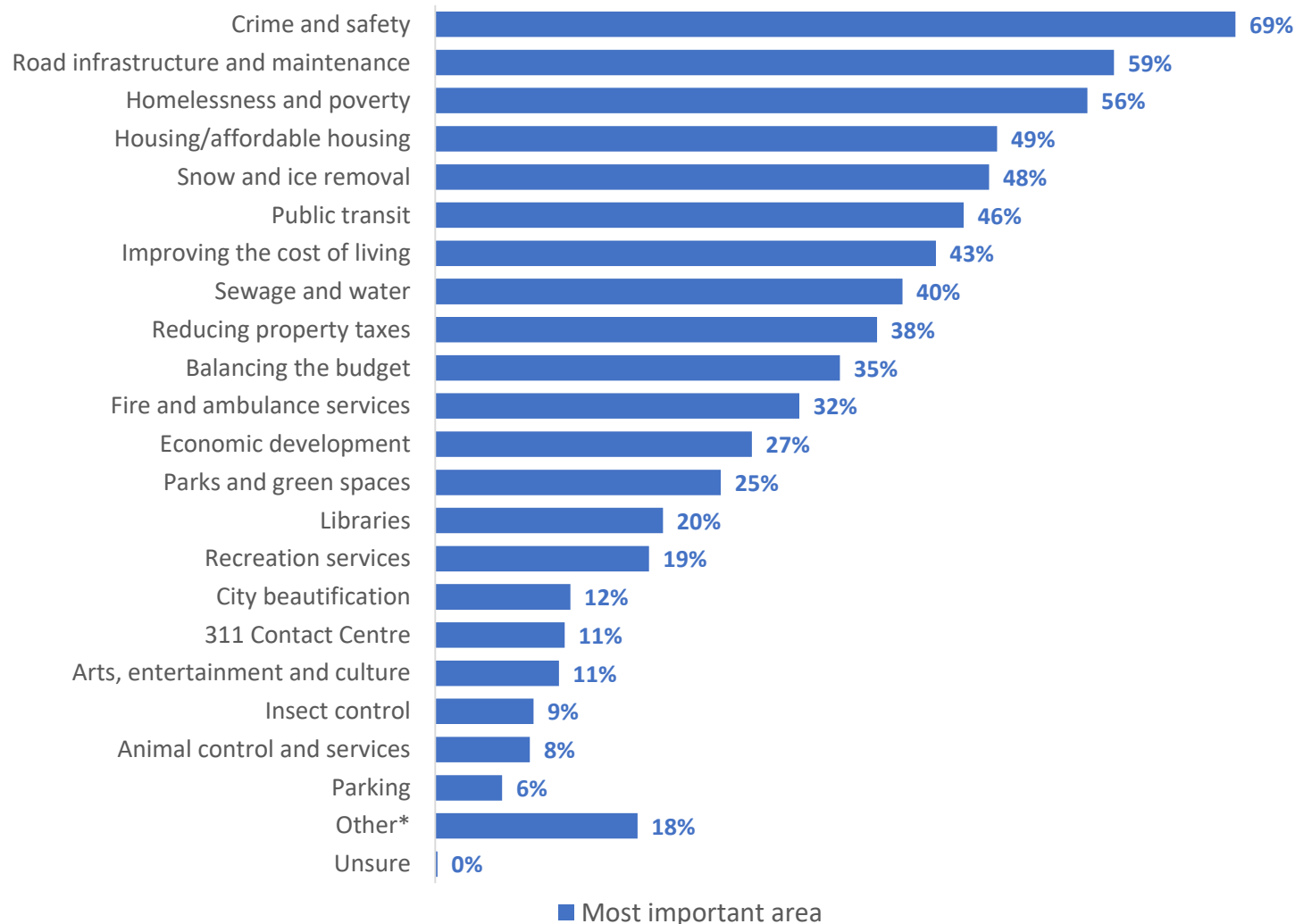
- When asked if they think the 2025 Budget will bring change for better or worse, 26% of respondents said it will **bring change for the better** and 52% said it will be **bring change for the worse**.
- About one fifth believe it will **have no real difference**.

# Right or wrong track for Budget 2025

- Respondents are generally split on nine areas of the 2025 budget in terms of being on the right or wrong track, with no single area rated on the right track by more than 50%.
- **Reducing homelessness** stands out from the other areas as having the lowest agreement for being on the right track.



# Most important areas for Budget 2025



- When asked to select the most important areas for the City to focus on for the 2025 budget, respondents were most likely to select **crime and safety**, followed by **road/street infrastructure and maintenance, homeless and poverty, and housing/affordable housing**.

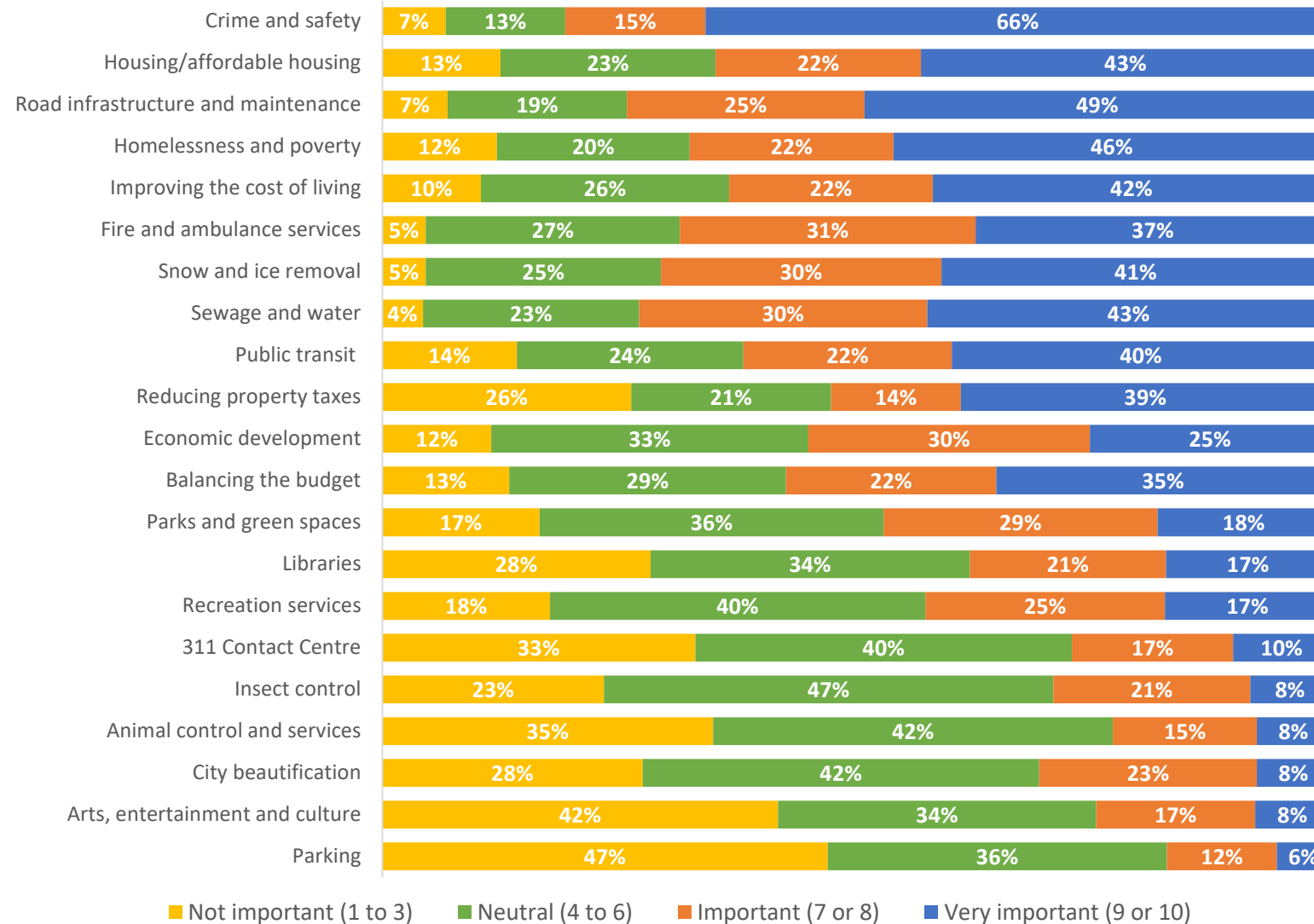
Note: Residents could select more than one area.

\* The top themes submitted as "other" were: Invest in active transportation (2 percent of respondents), reduce wasteful spending (2 percent of respondents), invest in social services (2 percent of respondents), invest in snow clearing (2 percent of respondents), and reduce active transportation funding (1 percent of respondents).

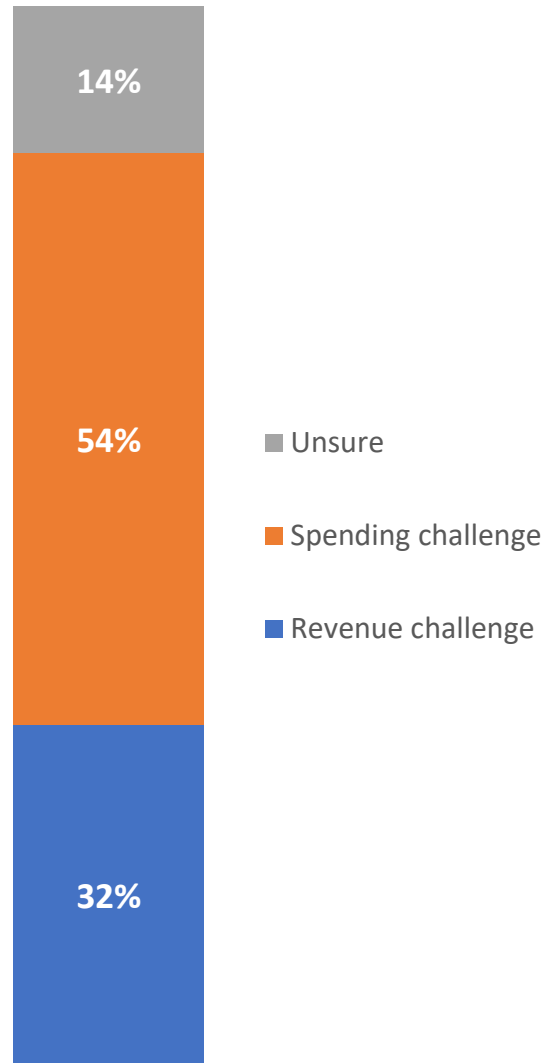
# Importance for City's budget 2025

- The next page shows how respondents rated the importance of 21 different areas for the City's 2025 budget using a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important).
- Similar to the previous slide, the most important area is **crime and safety**, with 66% rating it a 9 or 10 out of 10.
- This was followed by three other areas where about half of residents rate them a 9 or 10 out of 10 – **road and street infrastructure and maintenance, homelessness and poverty, and housing/affordable housing**.
- At the lower end, **parking** area seemed to rank lower than others, with just 6% rating it as a 9 or 10 out of 10.

# Importance for City's budget 2025

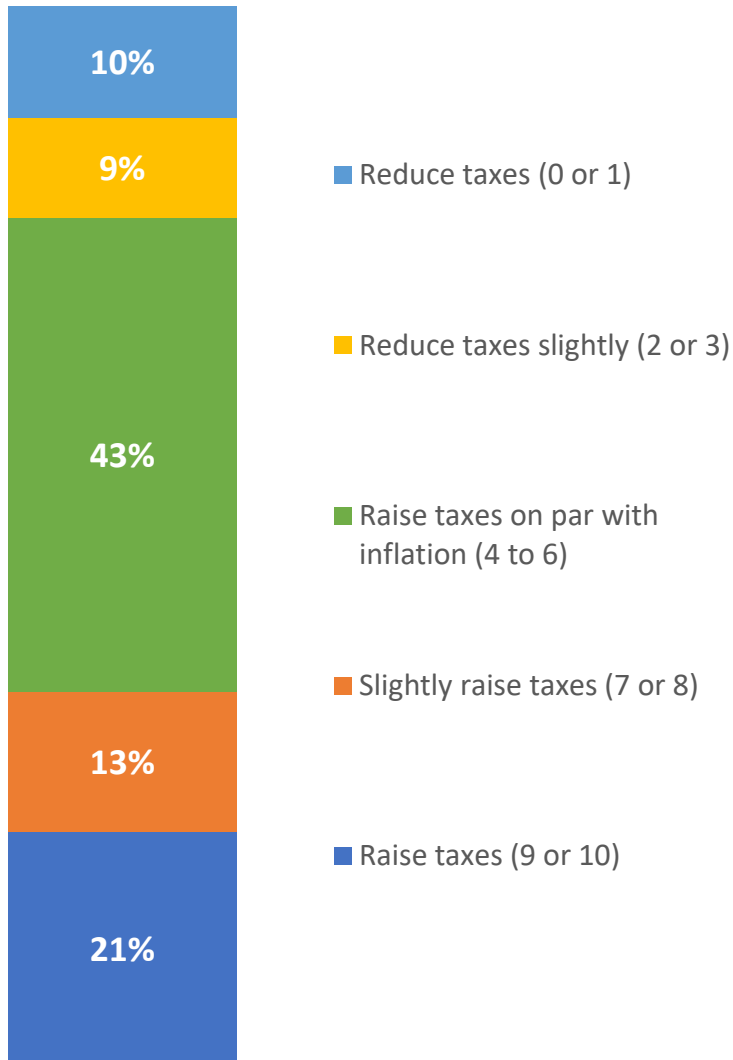


# Revenue versus spending challenge



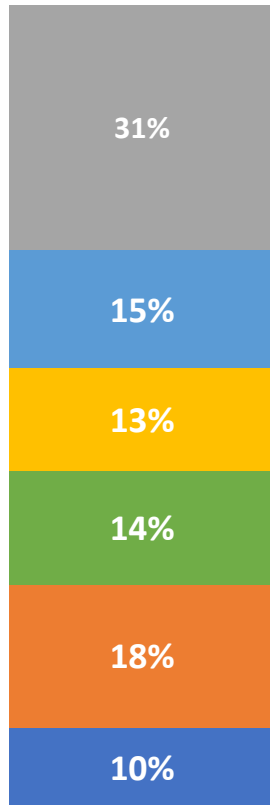
- Respondents are more likely to say the City has a **spending challenge** – the City spends too much on programs – than a **revenue challenge** – the City isn't raising enough money through property taxes.

# Increasing versus reducing property taxes



- When asked what best reflects their opinion about how the City should consider property taxes, respondents favour **raising property taxes above inflation to improve city services over reducing taxes with cuts to city services** by 34% versus 19%.
- However, the largest group are those who say **increase taxes at the rate of inflation to maintain current service** at 43%.

# Comparison to other Canadian cities

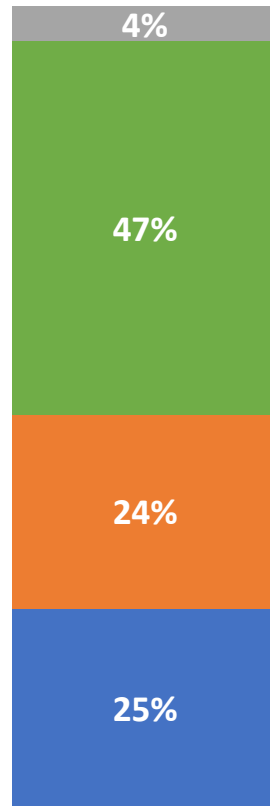


- Unsure
- A lot higher than other comparable cities
- Slightly higher
- About the same
- Slightly lower
- A lot lower than other comparable cities

- When asked how they believe the City's property taxes compare to other comparable cities in Canada, respondents are divided with 28% saying **lower than other comparable cities** and 28% saying **higher than other comparable**.
- However, the largest group are those who are unsure at 31%.



# Reaction to extra property tax increase



■ Unsure

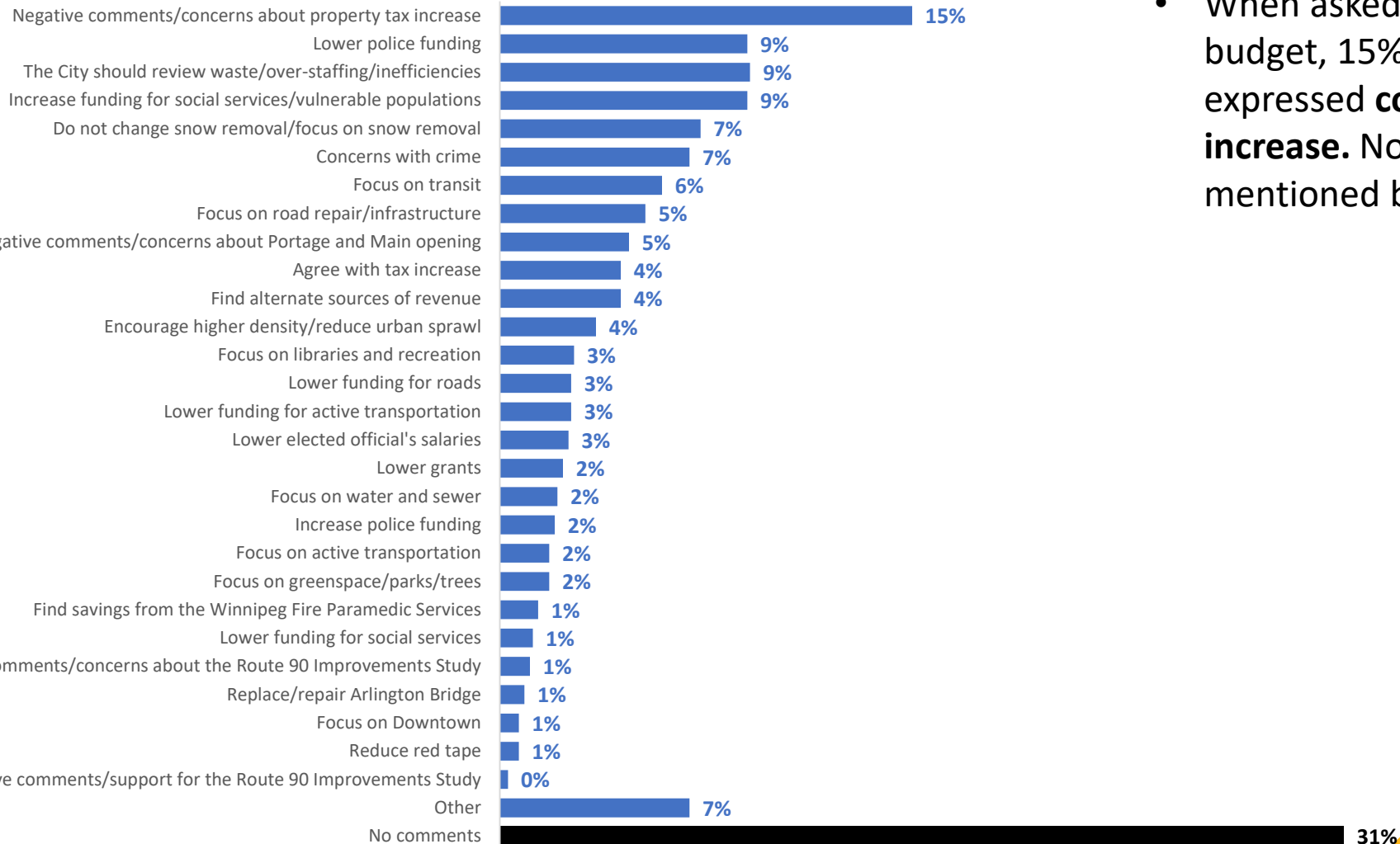
■ Should not be an increase above 3.5%

■ Agree, but additional revenue should be directed to other services

■ Agree with extra increase to property taxes

- Respondents were provided the following information - *The city had initially expected a 3.5% increase in property taxes in 2025; however, the city is proposing to increase property taxes to 5.95%. The extra increase is designed to invest more money in public safety, road renewals, and getting the City's finances in a stable position.*
- Respondents are divided on the property tax increase – 49% agree versus 47% disagree - however, 24% say the **increase should be directed to other services**, while 25% agree **with the increase in principle**.

# Other comments on City's budget



- When asked for any comments on the City's budget, 15% provided a comment that expressed **concerns about the property tax increase**. No other comment was mentioned by more than 0.3%.

Note: Respondents could have multiple comments in a response so the total does not equal 100%.

## **Appendix C - Focus groups results**

# Report on Public Engagement for Budget 2025: Focus Groups

Prepared by PRA Inc.

January 2025

# Section 1: Focus group methodology

# Background and methodology

- As part of gathering feedback from Winnipeg residents on its 2025 Budget, the City of Winnipeg hired PRA Inc. to conduct focus groups.
- PRA conducted four online focus groups, segmented by general population or equity population. Equity populations included women, Indigenous peoples, racialized peoples, persons with disabilities, newcomers and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons.
- To qualify, participants must have been 18 years of age or older and a Winnipeg resident.
- Participants were recruited from randomly selecting respondents from the City's 2025 Budget surveys who put their name forward to participate in focus group discussions.
- In total, 36 residents participated across the four groups.
- It is important to remember that, while focus groups provide insight into participants' attitudes and opinions, they cannot be said to be representative of the population as a whole. Any quantification of the results refers only to group participants and cannot necessarily be extrapolated to the entire sample population represented.

# Section 2: Focus group themes

# Budget priorities

- When asked to assess what they would prioritize for the City of Winnipeg's 2025 budget, participants tended to focus on three areas (unaided).



- **Winnipeg Transit.** Winnipeg Transit tended to be common across groups, with participants seeing a need for funding to improve and enhance transit services. Many spoke about how Winnipeg's public transit is worse than other major Canadian cities and needed to be an area of focus. Participants said that improving transit would have positive impacts on many groups and would be a catalyst for attracting new residents and business to the city.

*"I've lived in other Canadian cities and to me, the public transit system there opened my eyes to what a city can be and how a public transit system can create a city and I see Winnipeg has an opportunity to do the same thing. I think it just needs a little bit more attention."*

- **Roads and infrastructure.** Roads and infrastructure was another area of focus, but primarily on having the City improve current roads and not about funding new infrastructure projects. For instance, stopping the expansion of Kenaston was mentioned across all focus groups.

*"I would cancel the widening of Kenaston. I think that's a huge cost, almost one of the highest cost items that the City of Winnipeg has ever invested in. That affects a short stretch of road in a small part of the city. And I think that if we're going to spend that kind of money, there are smarter places to spend it on infrastructure."*



# Budget priorities (continued)



- **Homelessness/affordable housing.** Homelessness and affordable housing were common concerns among all groups. They were seen as important for supporting people in need and for helping to lower crime rates in the city.

*“Housing homelessness, which are kind of two of the sides of the same coin. Looking at different solutions like tiny homes for sort of bridging the gap for how to house people in the shorter term.”*



- **Areas to reduce budget.** In terms of reducing budget, policing came up across all groups, especially in the equity groups. For the most part, participants felt that policing already took up too much of the City’s annual budget, and additional funding was not necessary. In addition, many participants felt that funding should be shifted from the police to areas that may help reduce crime in the longer term – such as housing or social programs.

*“We have a huge budget for policing Winnipeg. It's out of control, needs to be reined in in some manner.”*

# Approach to property taxes

**Question: Which statement most closely matches your views- increase property taxes to help improve services, keep property tax increase relative to inflation and keep services as is, or cut property taxes and cut back on services?**

- Participants tended to be split between increasing property taxes above inflation or keeping them at the rate of inflation, with equity groups tending to lean more towards raising above inflation than those in the general population groups.
- The few participants who said it should be lower than inflation tended to be those who felt the City was not managing its spending appropriately and not getting value for tax dollars and preferred the City reassesses how it spends money.

*“My gut reaction would be that I would rather see them either stay at the rate of inflation or even lower. I think that if we just keep giving the city the money they ask for, they're never going to have the incentive to actually do a good job and they're never going to have to make difficult decisions or be efficient with the money we're giving them. I think if a student is failing a class, you don't give them a reward for failing a class.”*

- Across all groups, some participants said that property taxes could be raised more for those in higher income areas to reduce property taxes for lower income households. In fact, a few participants who recommend this approach considered themselves to be in higher income households and were okay with this approach.
- When asked how Winnipeg's property taxes compared to other cities in Canada, participants tended to believe that Winnipeg's property taxes were lower. However, those in equity groups were not very knowledgeable about property taxes in other cities.



# Impressions of the City's 2025 budget

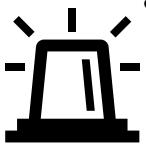
- Those in the general population groups tended to be more knowledgeable about the City's 2025 budget than those in the equity groups. In fact, many in the equity groups said they do not follow local news or media.
- Amongst those who were aware, the primary information participants recalled was the property tax increase and that it was higher than the Mayor had promised when running for office. With that being said, many could not recall the specific property tax increase amount or what the Mayor had campaigned on. Rather it was a general feeling that it was higher, with estimates typically around 5%.
- Most believed that the property tax increase was necessary to keep or improve the City's services, especially because participants believed that the City's property taxes been increased below inflation for many years, and the City had to do some 'catch up' in this area.

*"I think we probably have a lot of catching up to do on our property taxes. I'm young and I don't know too much about what happened before I was the age where I could vote, but my understanding is that property taxes were frozen for quite some time and the city kept growing. I think our footprint has grown a lot and our resident base has not grown at a sustainable rate with how much infrastructure we've added."*

- However, many felt that the City's 2025 budget was not on the right track, for a few reasons:
  - **Not spending tax dollars efficiently.** Foremost, there was a strong belief that the City was not spending tax dollars properly and not getting maximum value for dollars. Many felt the City was spending money inefficiently, either by pointing to projects they felt were not a good use of tax dollars (e.g., Kenaston expansion) or a general belief that the City and its staff are inefficient.
  - **Budget did not address priorities of interest.** Another issue was that the budget did not address the areas that they were most concerned about – as noted earlier, many issues that are highest priority for participants were not seen as a specific focus in the City's budget.

# Aspects of the City's budget – Public Safety

Participants were given the following information - *The 2025 budget includes funding for 36 new police officers and patrol cars over the next two years, 15 additional Community Safety officers for transit, 24 new firefighters, and \$1 million for youth rec programs in high needs area.*



- Most participants did not favour adding more police officers, as many felt the Winnipeg Police Service's budget was already high (relatively) and many did not feel residents were getting value for dollars from the Winnipeg Police Service. In addition, many preferred that funds used for additional officers to be put into programs that would proactively reduce crime, such as dealing with homelessness, mental health, and addictions.

*"With policing, you're treating the symptom, but you're not treating the root cause. Like, why. You should be thinking, like, why the youth or the people in general, why they will be committing crimes. Well, you didn't help them to start with and therefore you ended up by having more crimes."*

- Most were indifferent to the addition of Community Safety officers and firefighters, and did not have very strong opinions about this component of the budget. A few felt that Community Safety officers were important, but questioned how effective they will be given the number of officers relative to the number of buses that operate in Winnipeg every day.
- Most were positive about the money for youth rec programs; however, many did not feel this was enough money and felt that this was an important area for the City to fund – in part because it was important to them, but also was related to being a program that they thought would have positive impacts on social problems in the future (e.g., lower crime rates, reducing addiction).

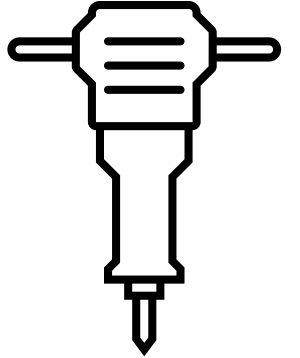
# Aspects of the City's budget - Roads

Participants were given the following information - *\$1 billion in roads and infrastructure over the next six years, with \$169 million scheduled for 2025, up from \$146 in 2024.*

- Most were okay with the increase to roads and infrastructure because they saw this as being one of the major areas the City should be funding, but also something that has implications for all residents.
- However, participants were concerned that the City was directing the funds to the 'right' projects, most often using the funds to fix the City's current infrastructure and not on new projects (e.g., widening of Kenaston or adding to Chief Peguis Trail) or to accommodate greater urban sprawl.

*"I believe it has to do with urban sprawl and the ever-increasing suburbs and outward horizontal expansion and with new neighborhoods and new roads that are being built that correlates to having more surface area that needs to be dealt with when it comes to snow clearing and road repairs and pothole repairs. So, the costs just increase evermore."*

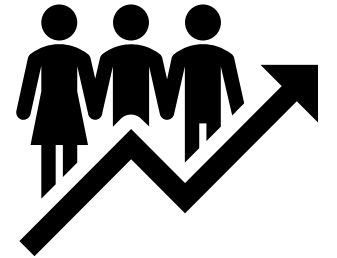
- A few participants pointed out that the increase for 2025 (\$23 million) was not much higher than inflation, and likely represented the same amount of work as 2024 since they expected inflation in road construction to be higher than general inflation.



# Aspects of the City's budget - Property taxes

Participants were given the following information - *A 5.95% increase in property taxes, up from a promised 3.5% increase in property taxes.*

- As noted earlier, most participants were okay with property tax increases above inflation especially if it meant improving the City's services; however, many did not think the City was managing its spending appropriately and worried that the additional funds would continue to be spent poorly and not yielding appropriate value for dollars.
- A few participants (primarily those in the equity groups) were concerned that the Mayor did not keep his election promise, but also realized that the property tax increase was likely necessary to deal with inflation.
- When asked how the property tax increase would impact them, participants could not identify specific impacts on them directly, but spoke about how the increase will impact 'people' and make it harder for some people to manage their finances, especially in light of the increasing cost of living in Winnipeg.



*"I'll have the room for it in my budget. I don't know how it will affect the people who don't have the room for that."*

# Aspects of the City's budget - Transit

Participants were given the following information - *Transit fares will rise ten cents at the beginning of each calendar year over the four years of the Plan to support the new service improvements. The Preliminary Budget also caps the one-year increase for most fees at 5%.*

- Most participants were indifferent to the proposed increases in Winnipeg Transit fares, as they did not consider it to be a substantial increase; however, many expressed that Winnipeg Transit fees should be lowered in general to help support those who are most in need. Many believed that those who use Winnipeg Transit are those in lower income households, and that the cost of Transit should be offset by increases in property taxes for higher income households. This feeling was consistent across groups.

*"I don't take the bus myself to work or use it daily; however, I would be very supportive of increasing my property taxes to make bus free. I just think if you want to get cars off the road, make it easy for people to take and incent people to take things other than their personal vehicle."*

- Many had concerns about Winnipeg Transit in general and felt that Transit was not doing a good job of meeting the needs of residents. Some were positive about the City's Transit Master Plan and the changes it may have for residents, but wanted to see the City's budget focus more on Transit and bringing new and innovative changes to better meet residents' needs.



# Participant recommendations

Each focus group ended with participants able to provide their recommendation to the City about what it should focus on for its 2025 budget.

- In general, participants did not have a single area that was mentioned often across groups, rather, each participant mentioned an area (or two) that was most important to them, without considerable consensus.
- If anything, two themes seemed to be consistent across recommendations:
  - **Getting best value for money.** The first was the City needed to ensure that it was getting the best value for tax dollars spent, and the City should be looking for greater efficiencies regardless of the area funded (e.g., policing, transit, etc.).

*“Make sure that the money that we do invest in certain areas is used efficiently and not wasted.”*

- **Creating a budget that resonates.** The second was that the City needed to be doing more for residents. Many of the recommendations were for the City to be innovative or fund new initiatives that would bring greater value to residents (both current and prospective). Participants seemed to indicate that the proposed 2025 budget was lacking in new ideas or aspects that participants felt excited about.

*“The City of Winnipeg needs a visionary, someone with new ideas to come in. I like a lot of the things that the City of Winnipeg is looking at doing. There are actually some pretty progressive projects that can be transformative that are in the works, but there's no urgency to implement them.”*