

File Category: 05-1715-20-16

DATE: September 13, 2017
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Michael Boronowski, Manager, Civic Engagement & Corporate Initiatives
SUBJECT: **Budget & Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results**
ATTACHMENT: Appendix A – Mission 2018 Budget & Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results

This report provides Council with the results of the Budget & Citizen Satisfaction Survey that was delivered on-line and in paper format from July 11 – August 14, 2017. No staff recommendation accompanies this report as this is for Council's information only.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the results of the Budget & Citizen Satisfaction Survey that was opened to the public starting on July 11, 2017.

BACKGROUND:

Starting in 2016 staff established a standardized citizen satisfaction survey to enable improved annual consultation for financial planning and service delivery. The response was much stronger than previous efforts to establish engagement based around multiple mini-surveys, and yielded excellent baseline results to gauge change year-over-year.

Previous to this program staff provided the public with opportunities for comment on municipal operations and budgets, generally focusing on short online surveys/questionnaires supplemented with printed copies when requested. Response rates for each survey was traditionally between 200 and 350 responses.

Again this year staff undertook a review of citizen satisfaction and budget consultation best practices including a review of both scholarly literature and recent undertakings by neighbouring and like-sized municipalities, and expanded the survey for 2017 to provide improved quantitative measures for perceived value and quality of service areas.

The survey was published online and promoted on the District website, in the District page in the Mission City Record, and across social media. Paper copies were also provided upon request.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS:

There were a total of 766 responses to this survey compared to 826 from the previous year. Part of this drop can be attributed to the additional length of the survey, which did lead to drop-off as participants closed the survey before completing.

The results are generally consistent with those of the 2016 survey, with notable changes directly attributable to specific issues (snowfall events) and operational changes (changes to curbside collection and recycling).

Staff undertook an analysis of the responses to provide Council with the statistical information and high-level themes for written responses. The results are included as Appendix A to this report. A full-text report including all written-in responses has been provided to Council, and will be made available to the public upon request at Municipal hall.

COUNCIL GOALS/OBJECTIVES:

The numerous questions posed in the survey are directly related to Council’s goals:

- Enhances Lifestyle Opportunities and Community Health
- Improved Public Safety
- Excellence in Financial Management and Planning
- Optimized Planning and Management of Assets and Infrastructure
- Effective Economic Development

Additionally, this survey and the citizen satisfaction program now in place represent the completion of developing customer satisfaction metrics (Strategy 4.5) which can in future years provide a view of trends and shifts in how citizens perceive the quality, value, and importance of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

COMMUNICATION:

Staff will post this report and results on the District’s Budget webpage and to social media. Respondents who opted-in for ongoing communication will be provided with an email invitation to participate in the next round of budget consultation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This year staff posted a budget and citizen satisfaction survey with questions related to the budget on the District’s website, advertising the survey on the City Page and thru social media. The results of the survey have been tabulated and are provided for Council’s information in advance of the 2017 budget discussions.

SIGN-OFFS:



Michael Boronowski, Manager of Civic Engagement and Corporate Initiatives



Kerri Onken, Deputy Treasurer/Collector

Comment from the Chief Administrative Officer:

Reviewed

Appendix A

Mission 2018 Budget & Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results

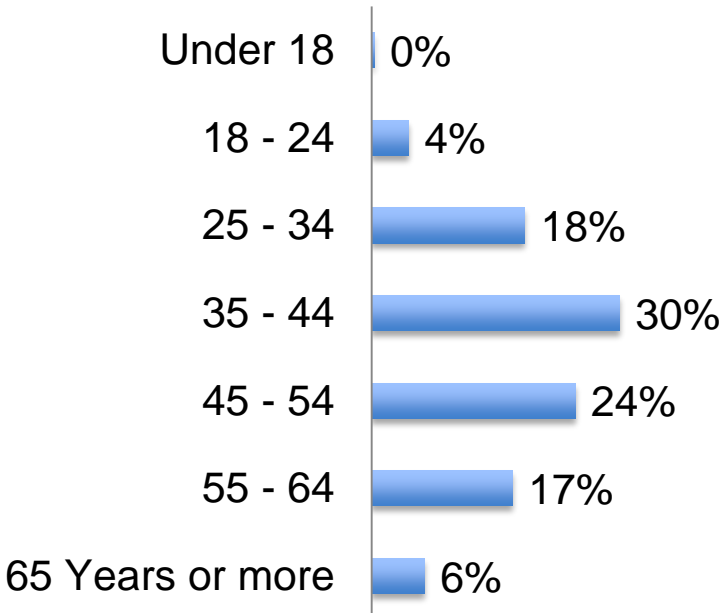
There were 766 responses to the Citizen Satisfaction & Budget Survey this year.

Demographic Information

For this survey staff requested the age of participants, but did not request gender identity.

98.7% of respondents were residents of Mission. Staff have included all responses in this analysis as filtering by residency did not have any significant impact on the results.

Age of Respondents



Overall Satisfaction and Key Issues

- 73.4% of respondents were **very satisfied** or **satisfied** with the overall quality of life in Mission.
- 13.37% of respondents indicated they felt **very dissatisfied** or **somewhat dissatisfied** with the overall quality of life in Mission.

Living in Mission - What Respondents Like Best & Least

For questions in this section respondents were asked to write-in the things they liked the best and least about living in Mission. Staff reviewed the responses and grouped into categories to identify common themes and enable comparison with previous results.

The Best

Results for this section are generally consistent with those of past surveys.

Respondents most frequently cited the **Small Town** and **community feel** with **338 unique responses** (over 45% of all responses to this question) specifically noting the small town or community feel as one of the things they liked the best about living in Mission.

Expanding on the theme of the “community feel” the most frequently noted aspects were the size and characteristic (small, town), the friendly and caring atmosphere. Greenspace, rural and country themes were also frequently referenced by respondents noting the small town feeling of the community was what they liked the best.

Following the size and feel of the community the most frequently noted items were the natural setting, proximity to parks, trails, forest areas and lakes, together mentioned in **221 responses**.

Notably, cost of living and affordability were not frequently noted, with only a combined total of 11 mentions in responses to this question.

The Least

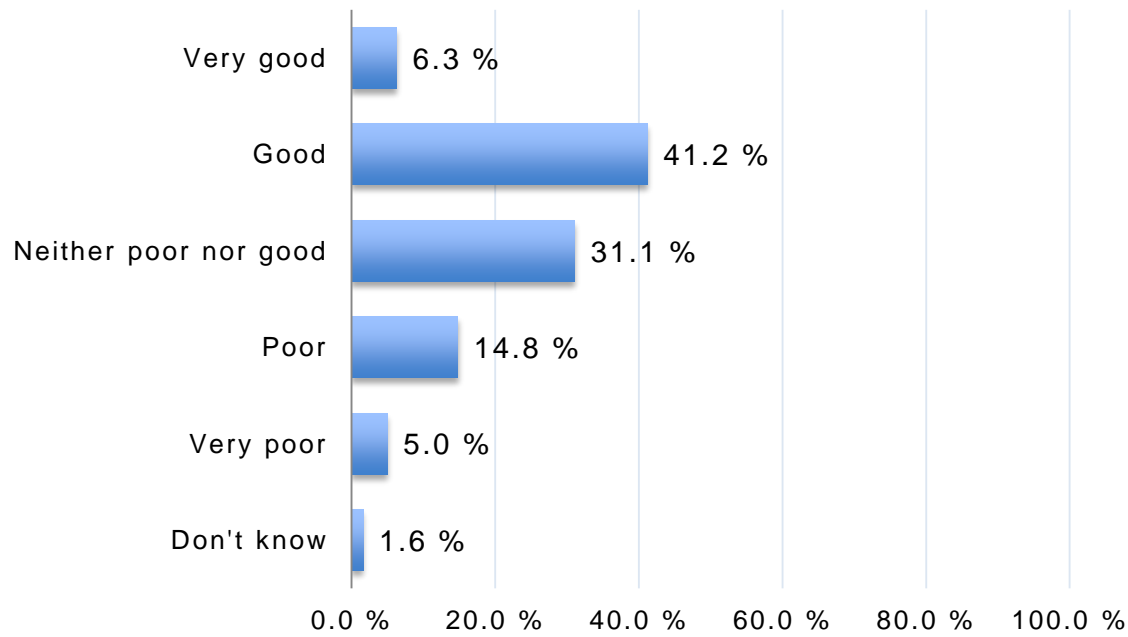
While results were generally consistent with those of past years there are some noteworthy changes this year.

Public safety and **social issues** including crime, addiction, and public drug use were the most frequently noted concerns, with a total of 258 responses combined citing these items. Frequently homelessness, a lack of affordable housing, and lack of services for vulnerable populations were connected to the issues of crime and visible drug use or homelessness.

Roads, traffic and transit issues, including multi-modal transportation i.e. sidewalks, transit, bike lanes, were the second most frequently cited concerns, together accounting for 145 responses. Dependence on vehicles for local transportation (having to drive everywhere) and lack of infrastructure for walking, cycling, or transit were the most frequently cited concerns. The length of commute to work and the limited transit services to other communities, including the West Coast Express schedule, were also common comments.

The most notable new item in this section was waste management – including curbside garbage and recycling collection. We received a total of 129 comments on these topics in this section, mostly focused on the change to curbside collection – both the switch to bi-weekly pickup and joining the RecycleBC program.

Overall Quality of Services



There has been a slight downward shift in respondents' ratings for the overall quality of municipal services.

- **47.5%** of respondents rated the overall quality of municipal services as **very good** or **good** compared to **59.6%** who chose that rating last year.
- **19.8%** of respondents rated the overall quality of municipal services as **very poor** or **poor**, compared to **13.4%** who selected those ratings last year.

Reasons for that Rating

Ratings this year overall are not as strong as the results from the 2016 (2017 budget) survey. Comments providing the context for the overall ratings indicate the drop is generally due to the changes in curbside collection, frustrations with and specific annual events including the snow events this winter and the notable mosquito hatch due to high river levels.

Insights

Respondents who selected **good** (224) or **very good** (34) most frequently cited positive experiences with staff, RCMP, and Mission Fire/Rescue, followed by parks and recreation.

When noting negative issues this group most frequently cited curbside collection, snow clearing during the extreme weather events this past year, and bylaw enforcement as areas they would like to see improved.

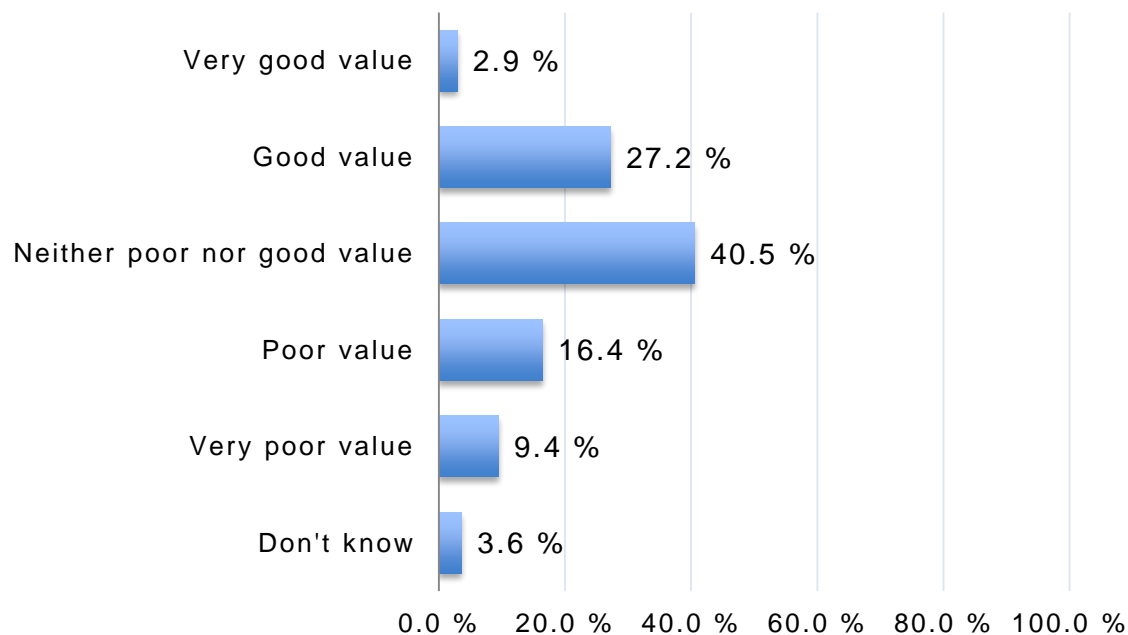
Respondents who selected, **neither poor nor good** (217) most frequently cited curbside collection, social services and support including general statements regarding a frustration with visible homelessness, and transit/traffic as reasons for choosing this rating.

Respondents who selected **poor** (103) or **very poor** (35) most frequently cite curbside collection as their reason for choosing those ratings, followed by followed by the value they feel they receive in services for the taxes paid.

An important trend to note is that in the poor and very poor responses residents from rural areas (Steelhead, Silverdale, etc.) who do not receive municipal water, sewer, or curbside collection noted taxation and the lack of municipal services as significant concerns.

It is also important to note that concerns with the upkeep and management of schools were frequently mentioned, confirming that a portion of the community respondents remains unclear on which governing bodies oversee education.

Overall Value of Municipal Services



Results for this section are again very close to last year. Most notably the percentage of respondents who were unable to rate the value of municipal services has dropped from 8.6% to 3.6% year-over-year, indicating increased and improved communications are having a positive effect on the public's understanding of municipal services.

Along with the drop in responses of "don't know" the positive, neutral, and negative ratings all rose slightly.

- Respondents selecting **good** or **very good** value at **30.1%** compared to **28%** last year.
- **40.5%** of respondents were neutral in their rating compared to **38.6%** last year.
- **25.8%** of respondents selected **poor** or **very poor** compared to **25.1%** last year

Reasons for Selecting that Rating

Respondents who selected **good (188)** or **very good (20)** value most frequently cited that parks and programs, upkeep, and services are a good value and that Mission is a nice place to live. Areas for improvement noted by this group of respondents were improvements to bylaw enforcement, curbside collection changes, and transit.

Respondents who were **neutral (280)** on value most frequently noted they felt taxes were high for the services received, followed by concerns with curbside collection (bi-weekly garbage and new recycling program) as their primary drivers for choosing this rating.

Respondents who chose **poor (113)** and **very poor value (65)** most frequently note they either do not receive services as rural residents, or noted more generally they felt property taxes seem high compared to neighbouring municipalities for the services provided. Transit and transportation (bus and WCE, sidewalks), curbside collection of garbage and recyclables, and general affordability (including homelessness due to high cost of living and rental costs) were the most frequently cited issues, with respondents also frequently suggesting an increase in business and industry in Mission would shift the tax burden away from housing, improving affordability for residents.

Notably there were 12 comments related to the secondary suite program, noting that metered watering and curbside collection to more accurately bill for usage of those services would be preferable to current flat rate billing.

Importance, Value, and Quality of Service Ratings by Service Area

This section provides ratings for the importance, quality, and value of each service area.

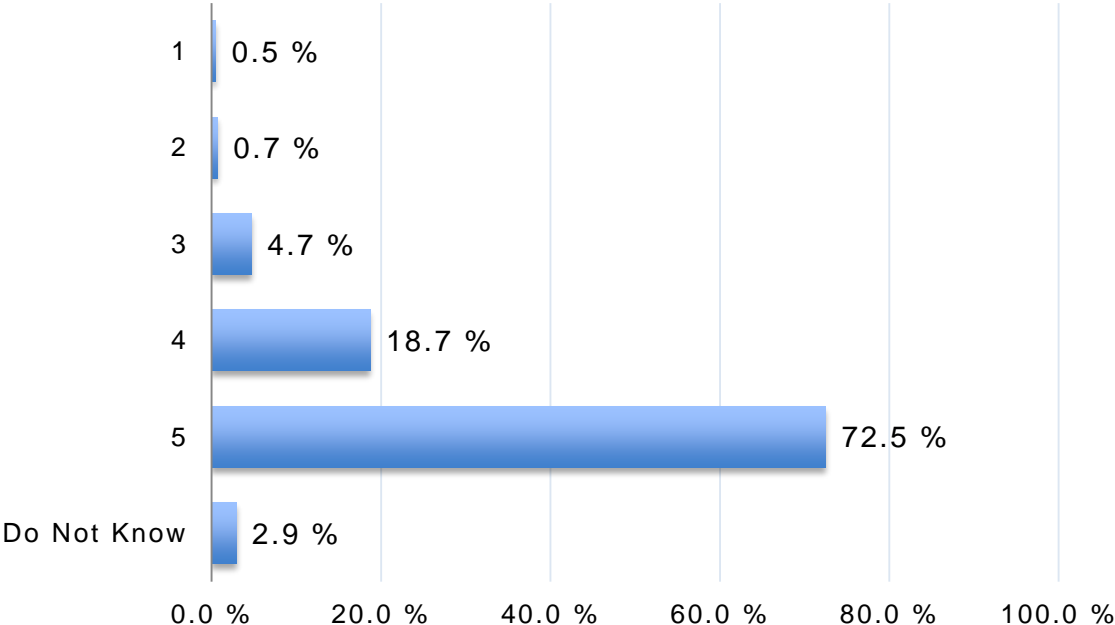
For each aspect respondents rated their assessment as:

- 1 = very low or very poor**
- 2 = low or poor**
- 3 = neutral**
- 4 = high or good**
- 5 = very high or excellent**

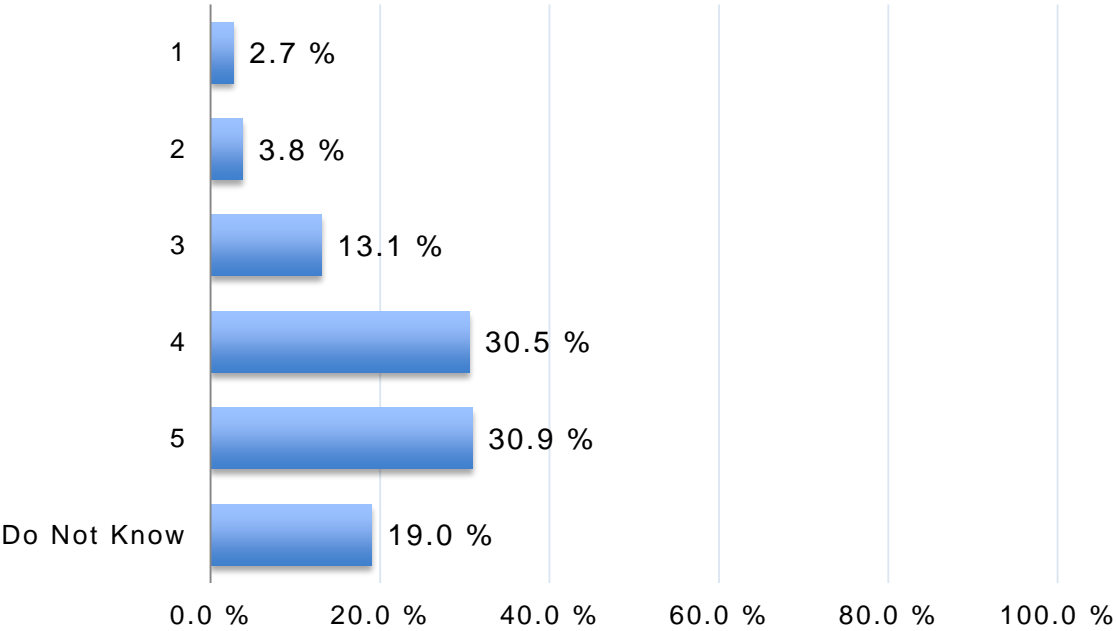
2017 Results

Fire Protection Services

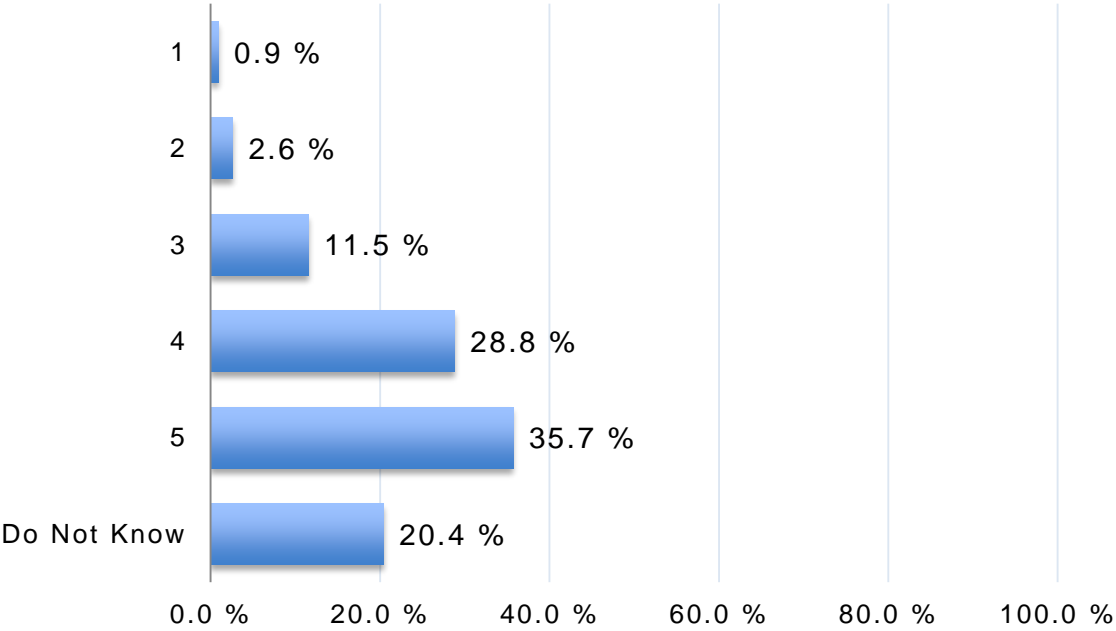
How important is this service to you?



How would you rate the value of the service you receive for the taxes you pay?

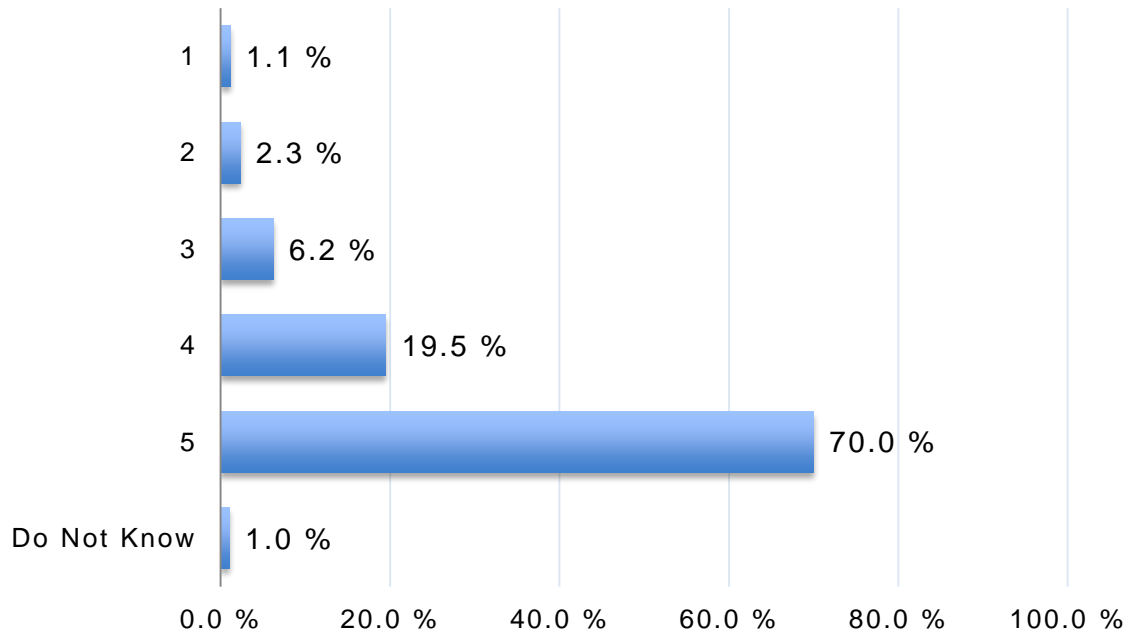


How would you rate the overall quality of this service?

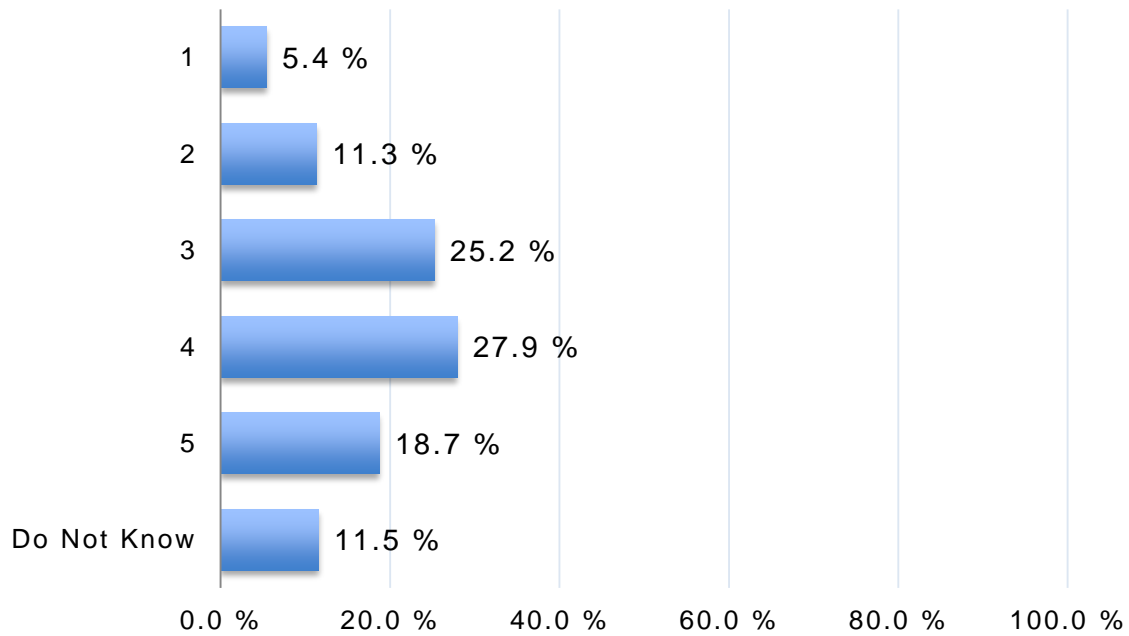


Police Services

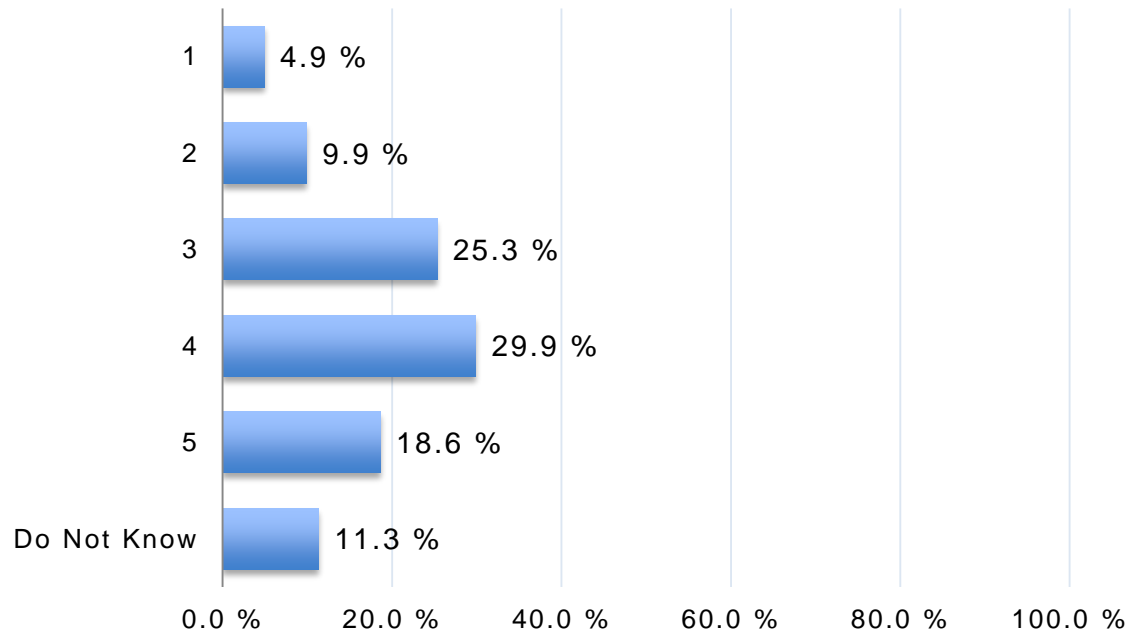
How important is this service to you?



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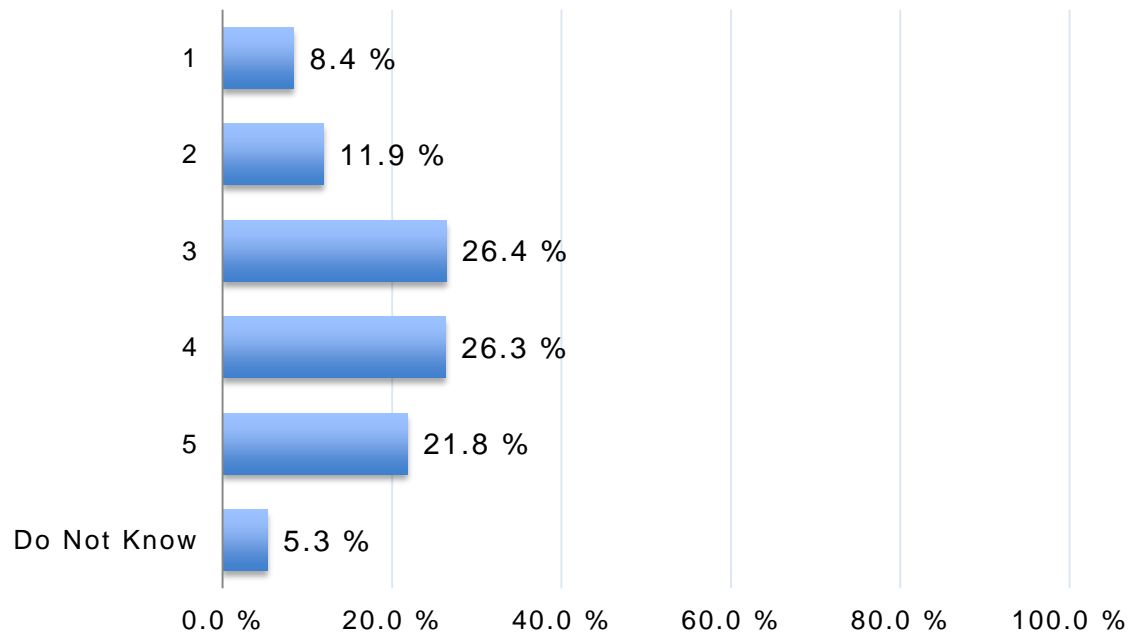


How would you rate the overall quality of this service?

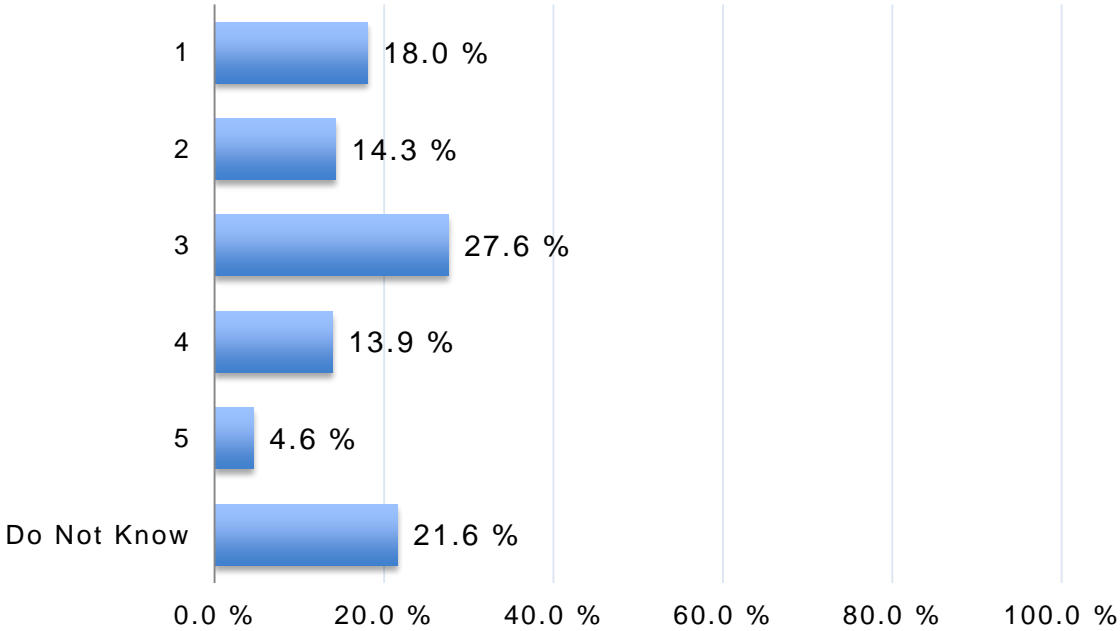


Bylaw Enforcement Services

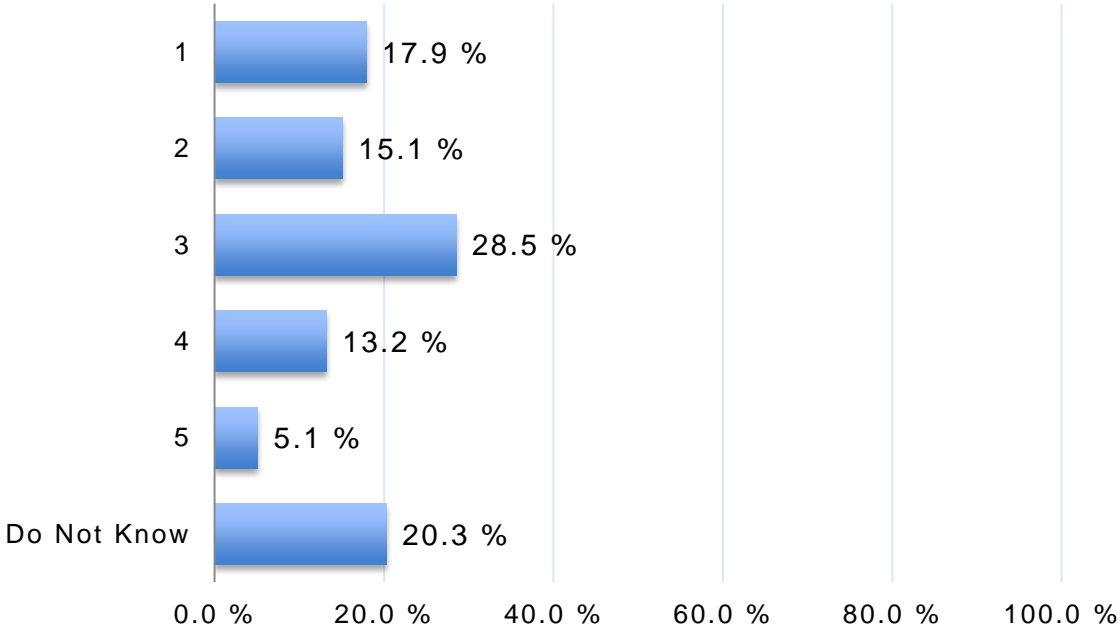
How important is this service to you?



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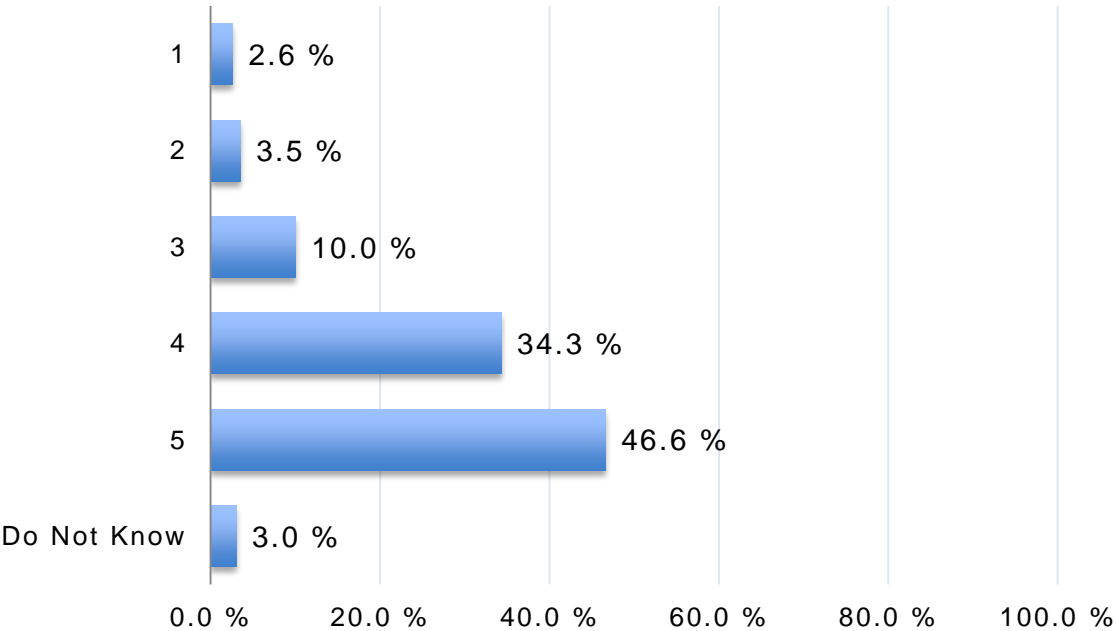
How would you rate the overall quality of this service?



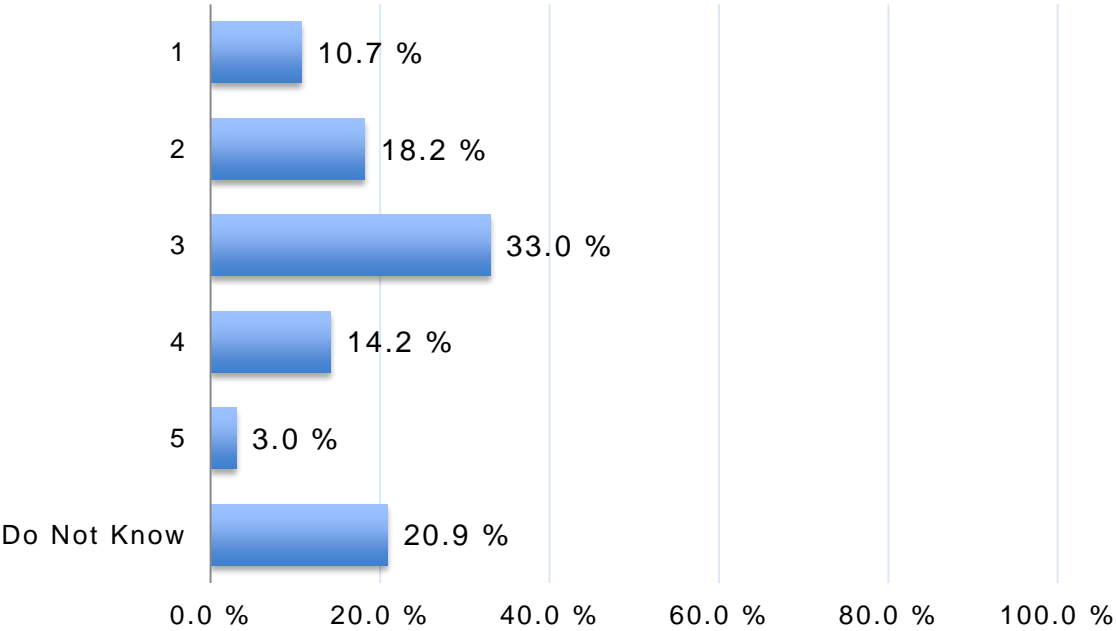
Growth and the Economy

Attracting and Retaining Businesses and Employers

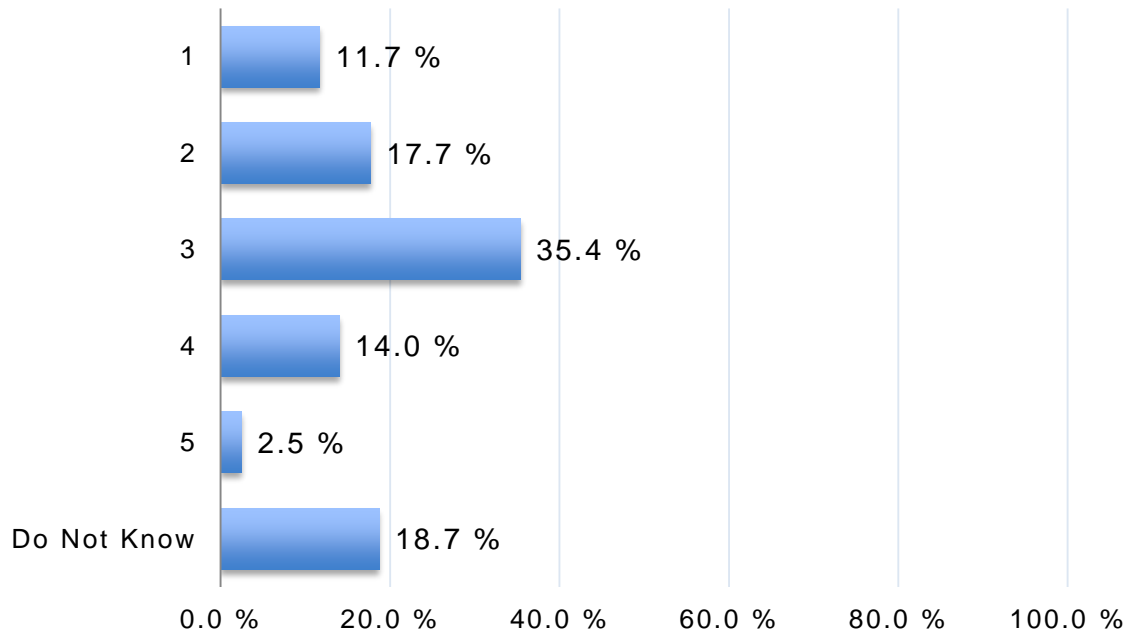
How important is this service to you?



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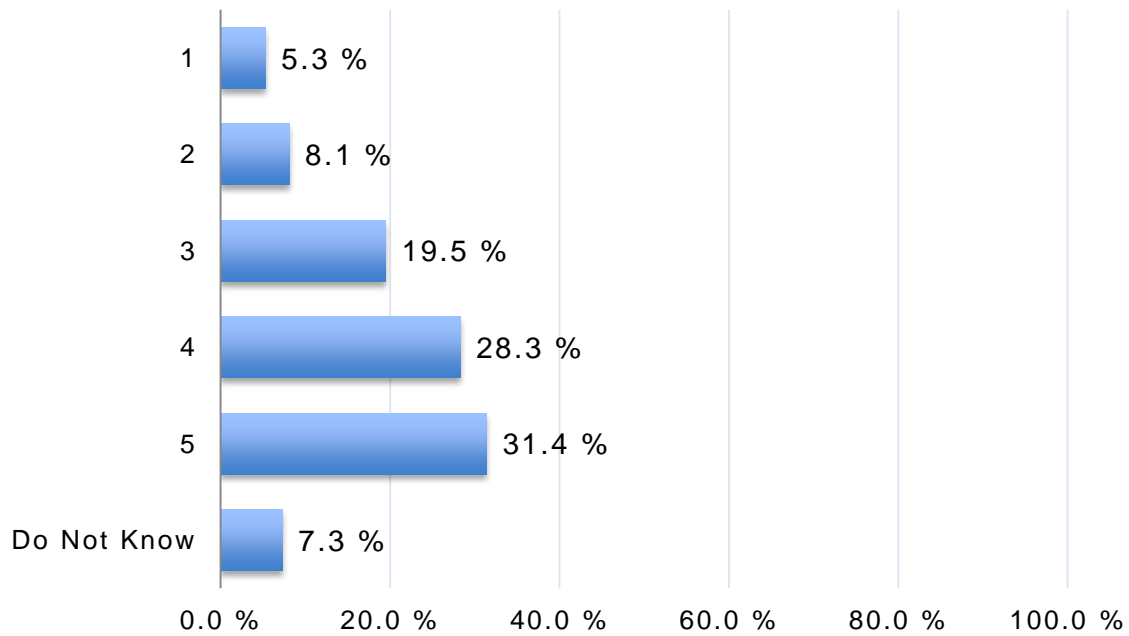


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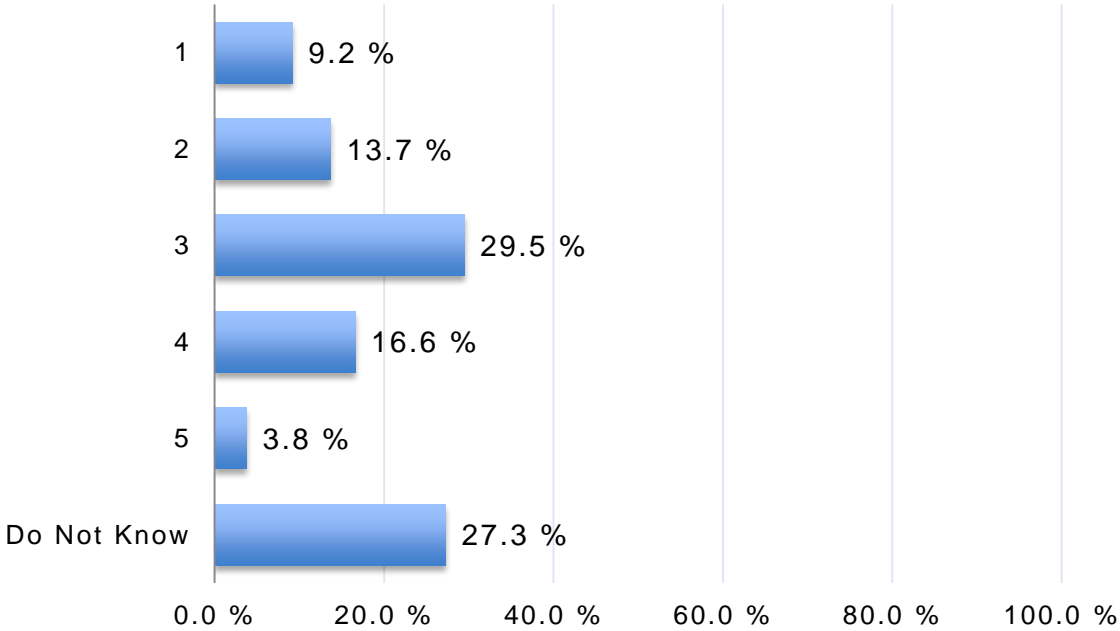


Regulating What Types of Buildings can be Built in Specific Areas

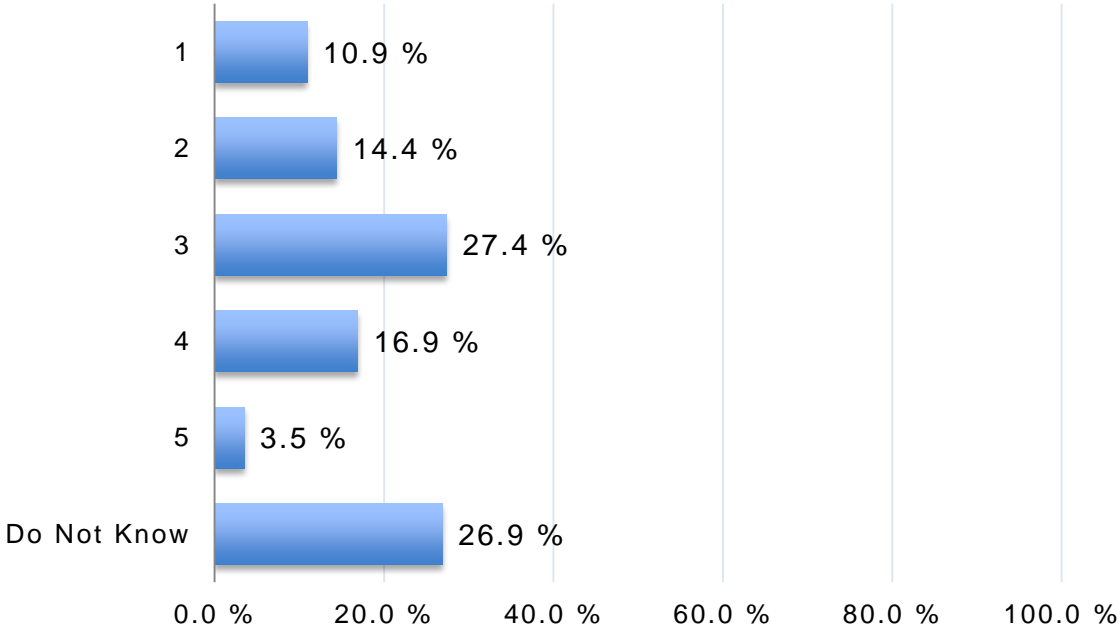
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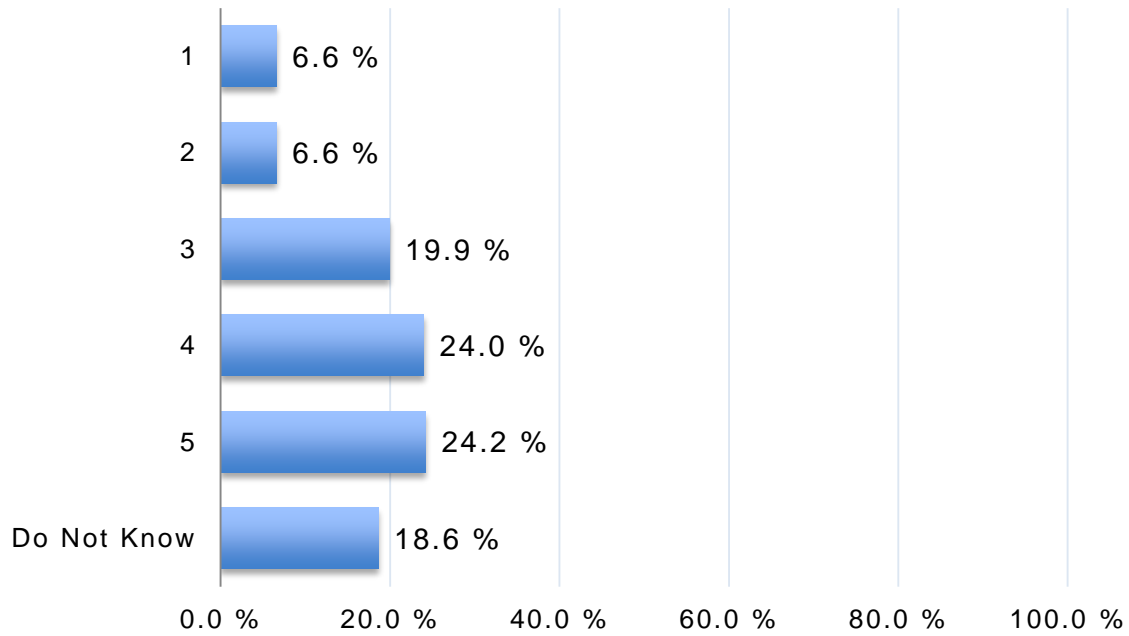


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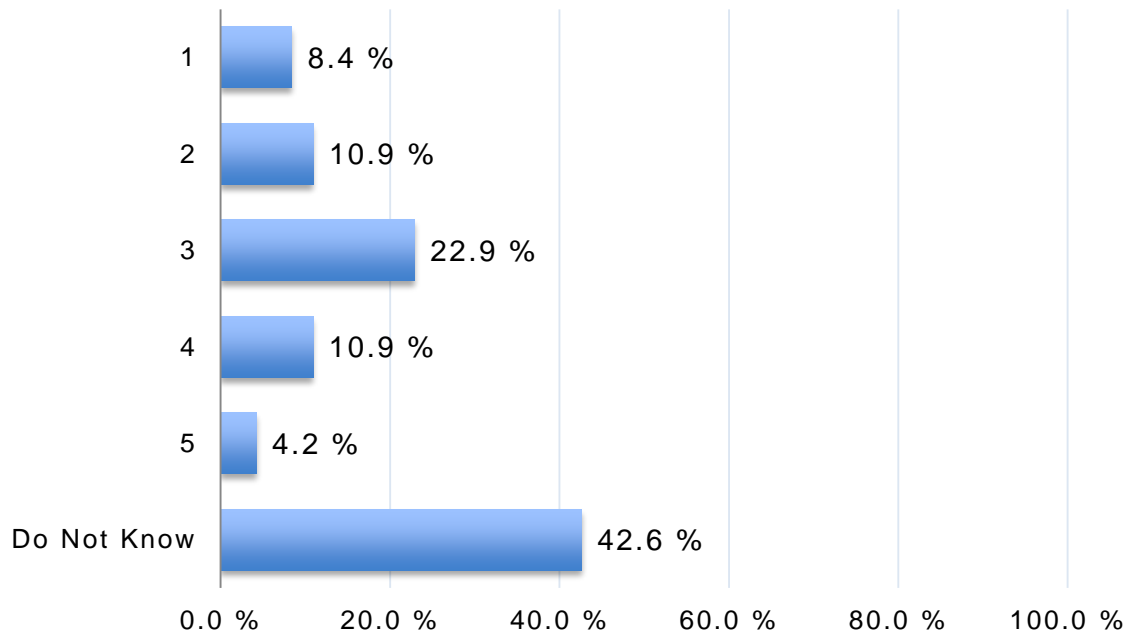


Issuing Building Permits and Providing Inspections

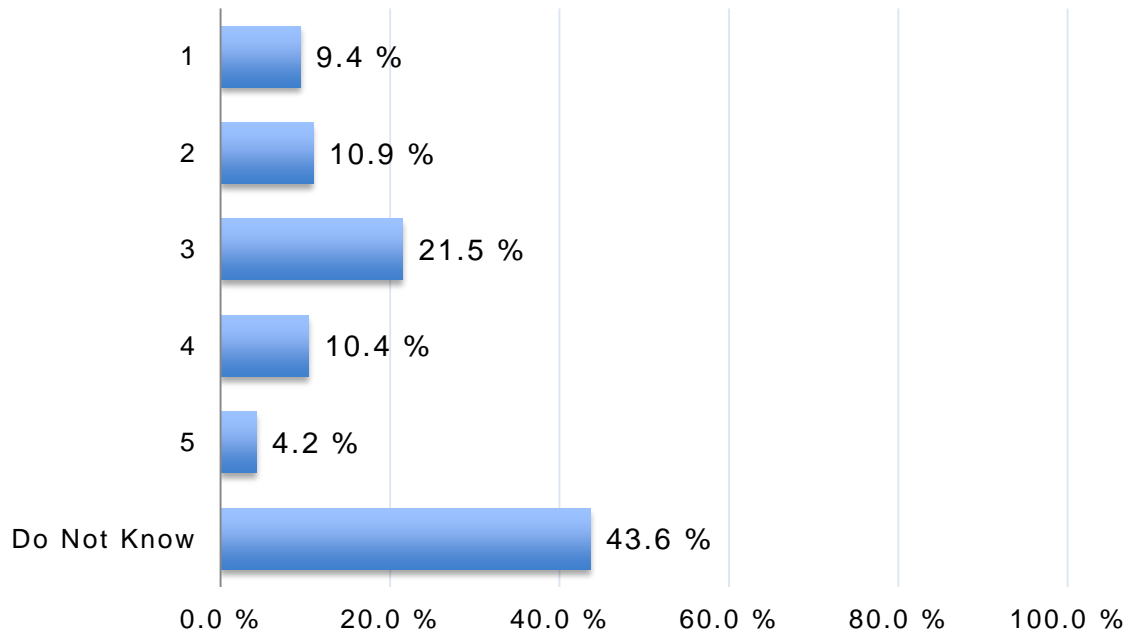
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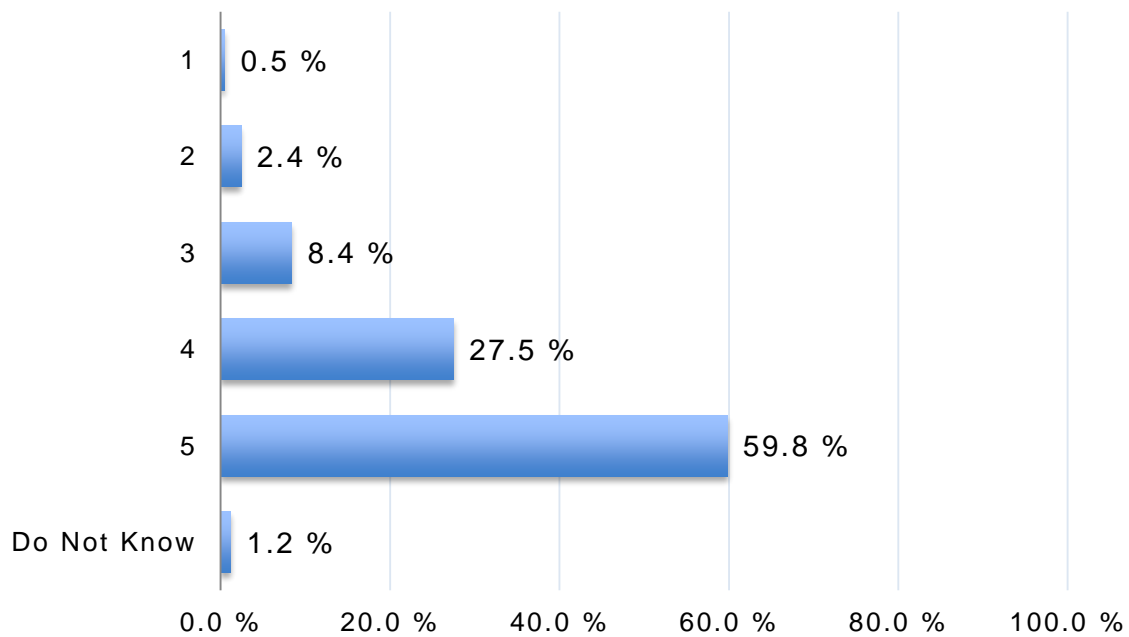
How would you rate the overall quality of this service?



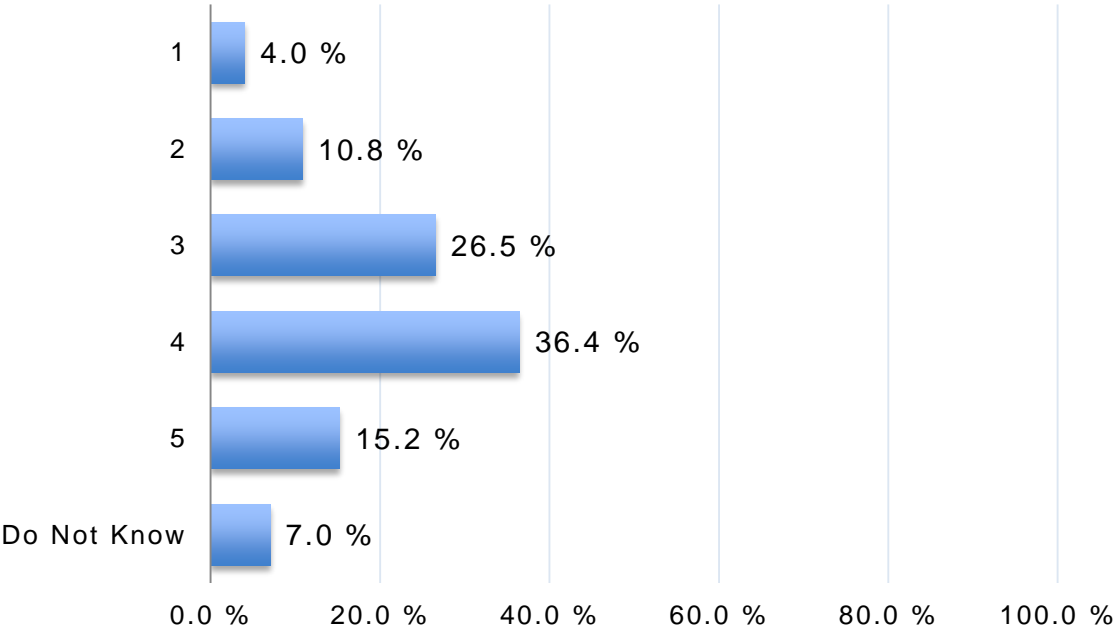
Parks, Recreation & Culture Services

Recreation Facilities and Programming

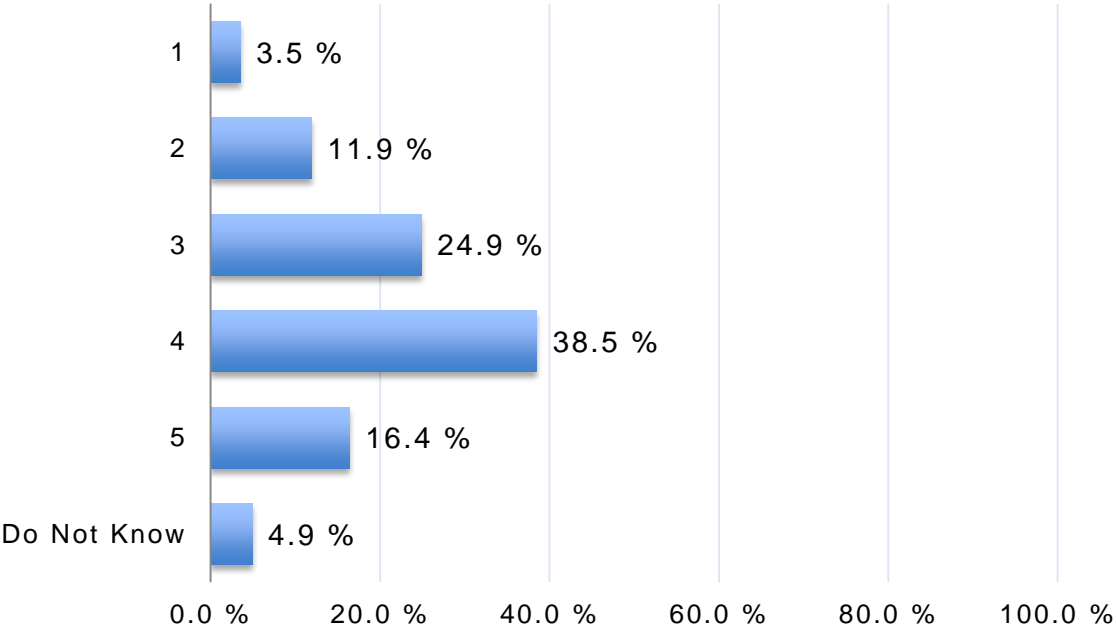
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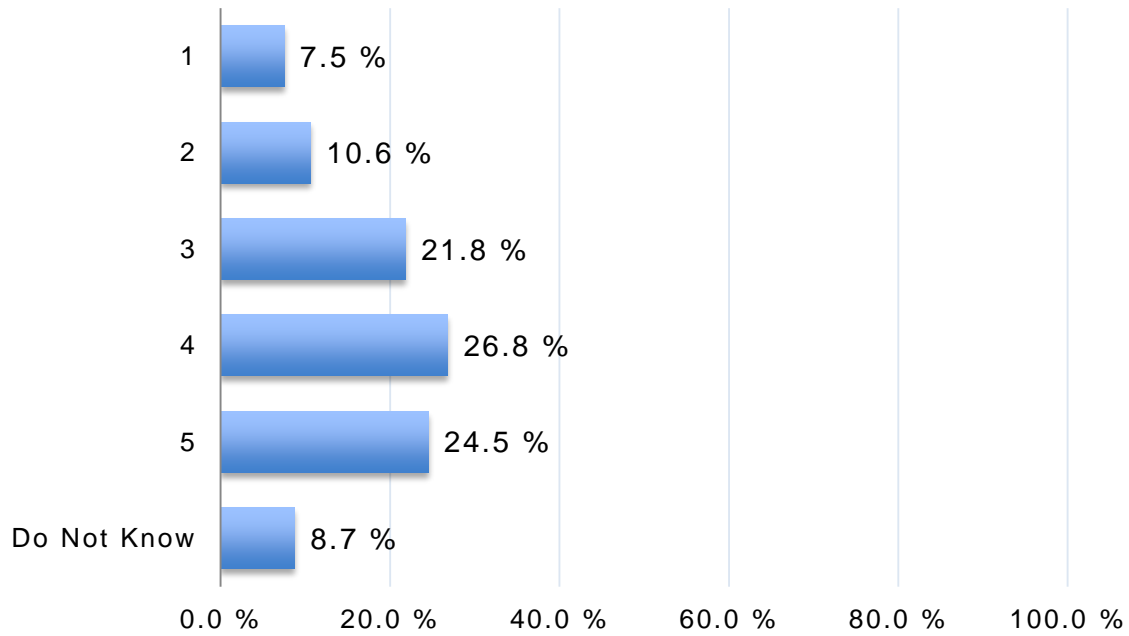


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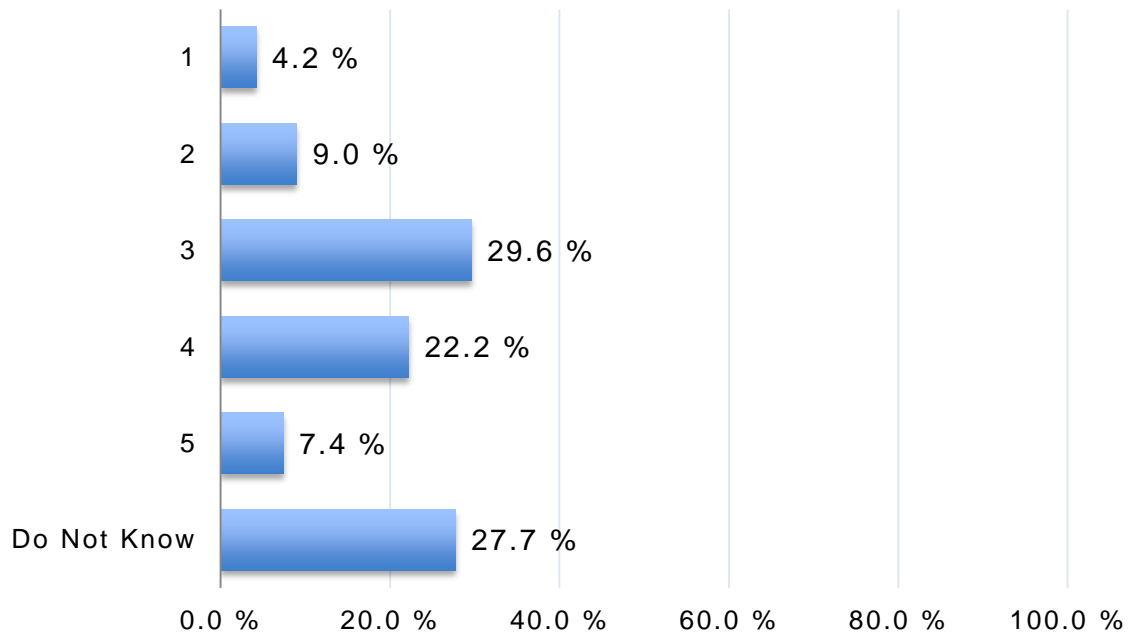


Cultural Facilities and Programming

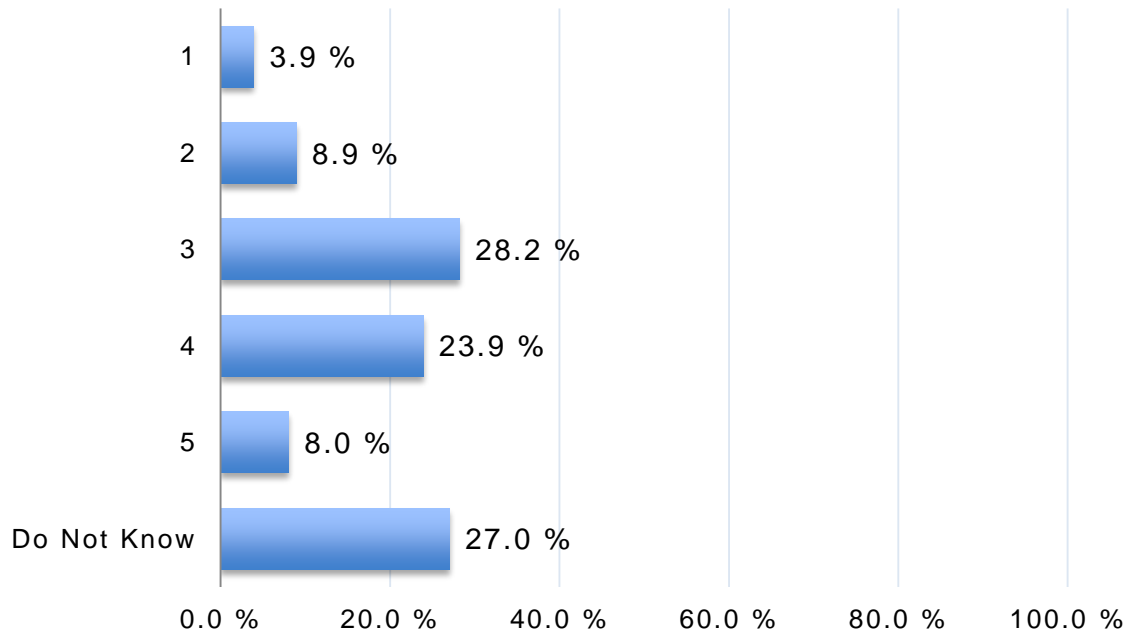
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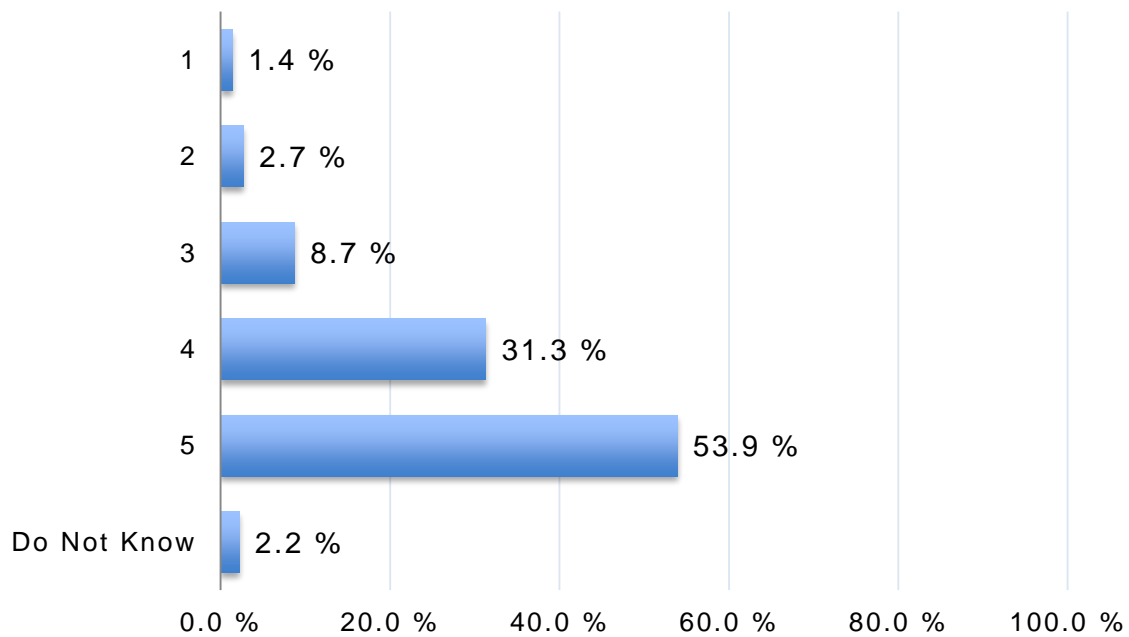


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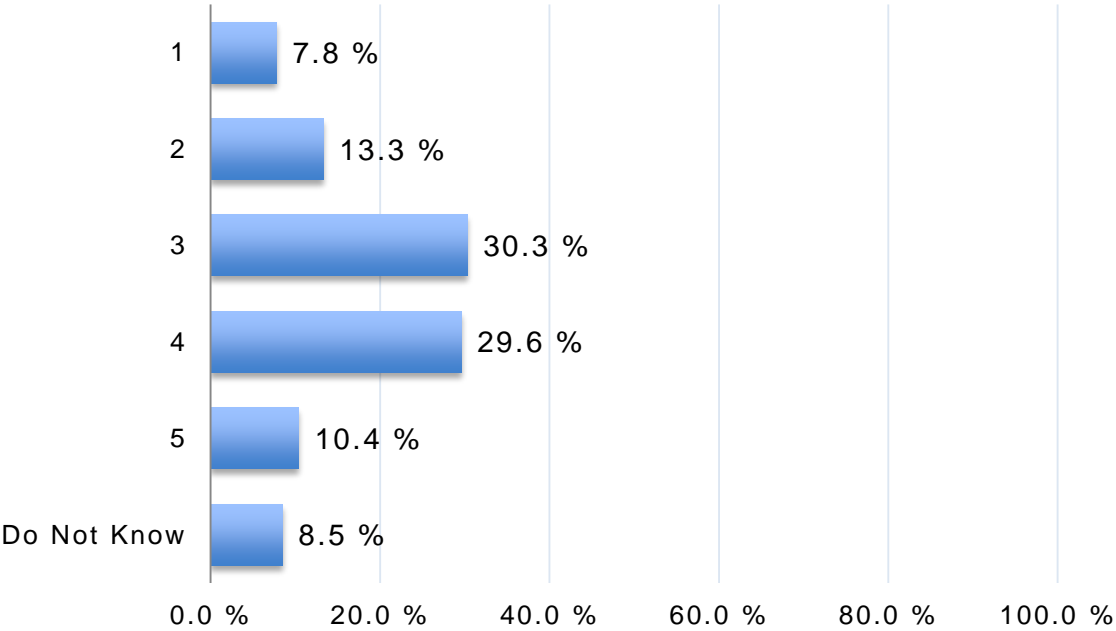


Building, Maintaining, and Upgrading Parks, Playgrounds, Sports-fields and Trails

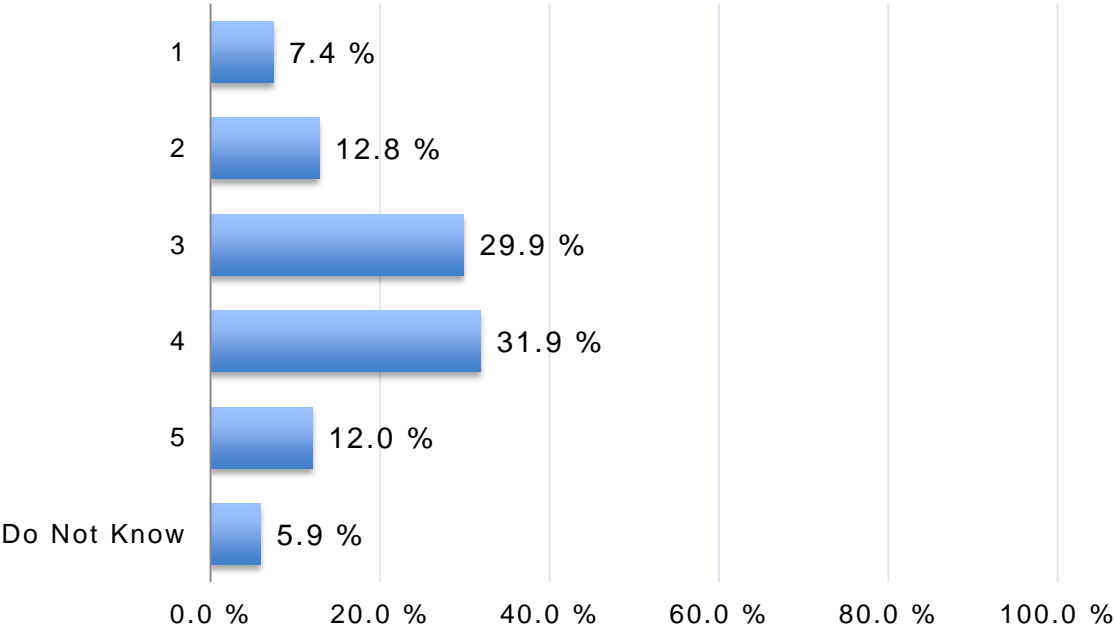
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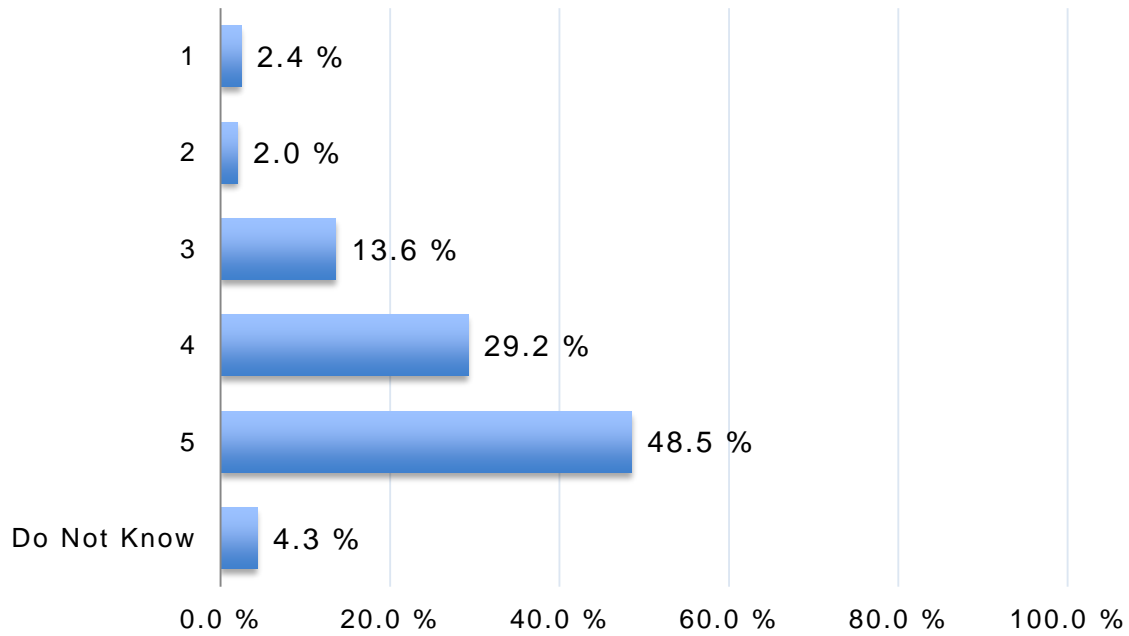


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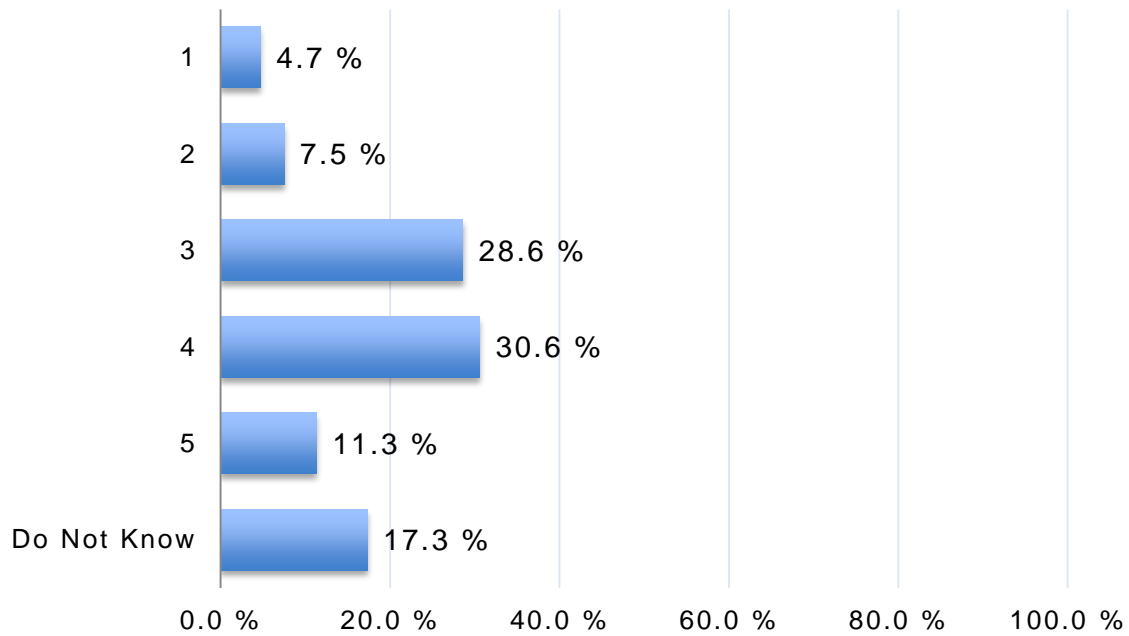


Developing and Maintaining Forest Recreation Areas and Trails

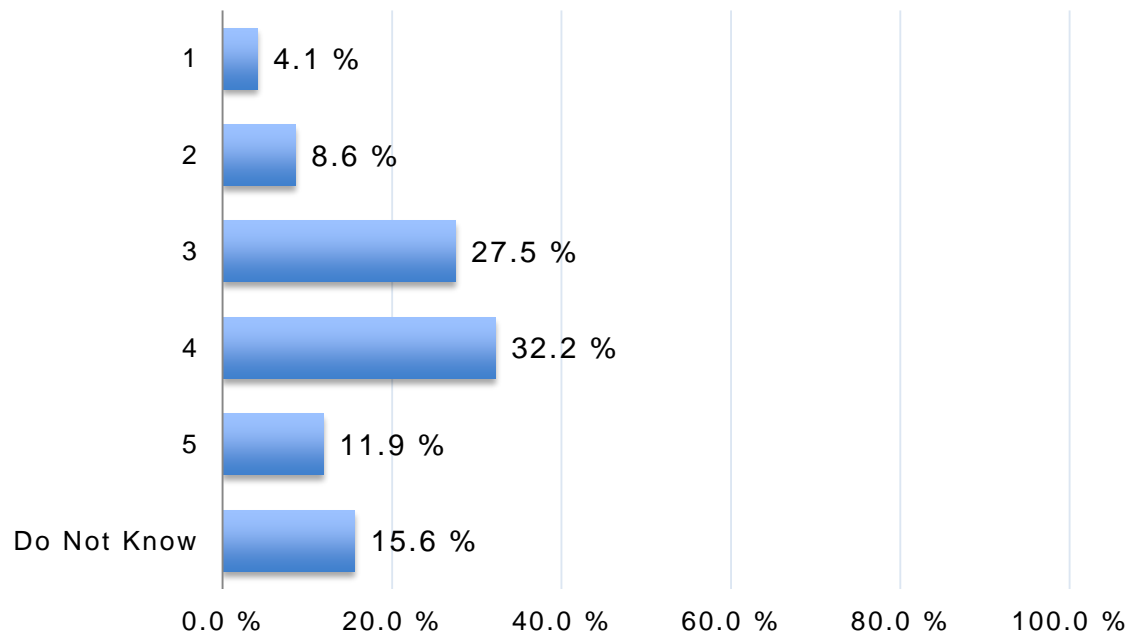
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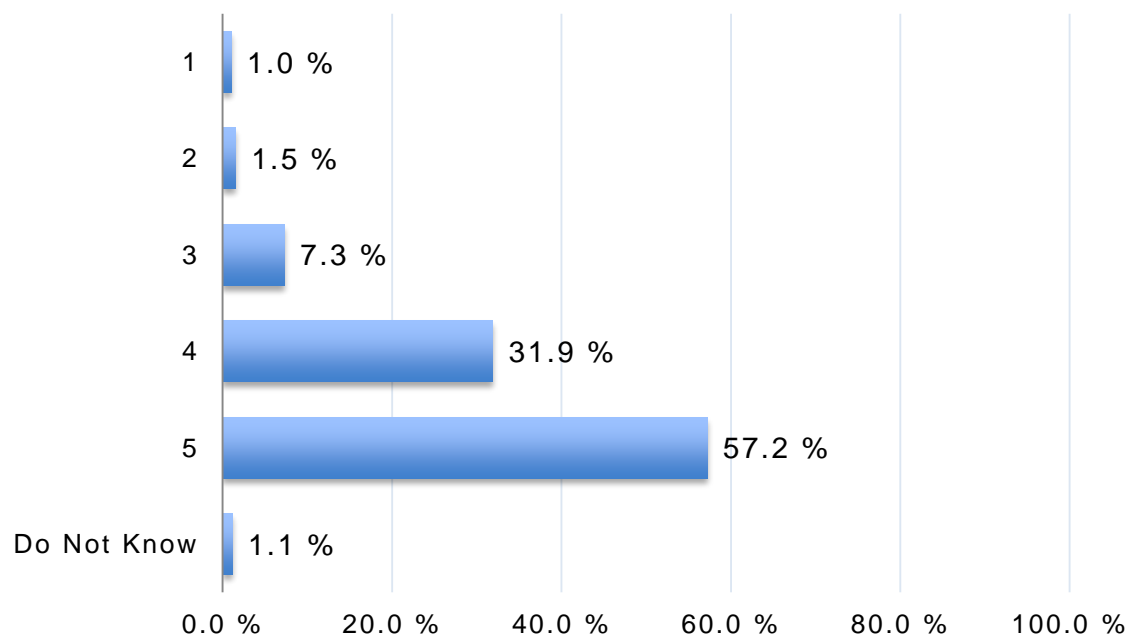
How would you rate the overall quality of this service?



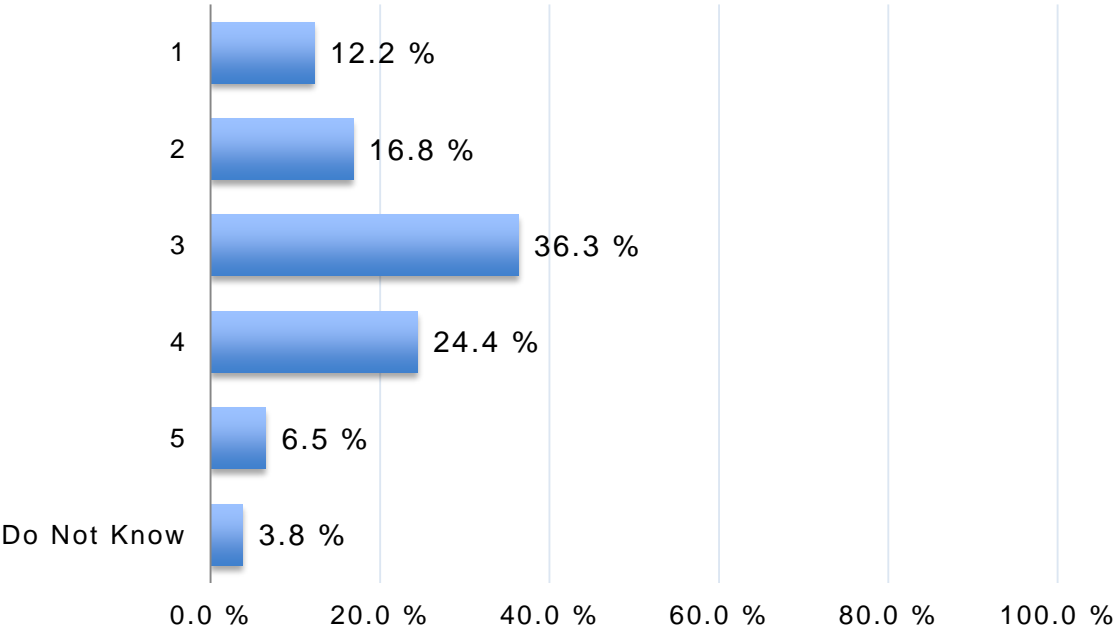
Engineering Services & Public Works

Streets and Roadways

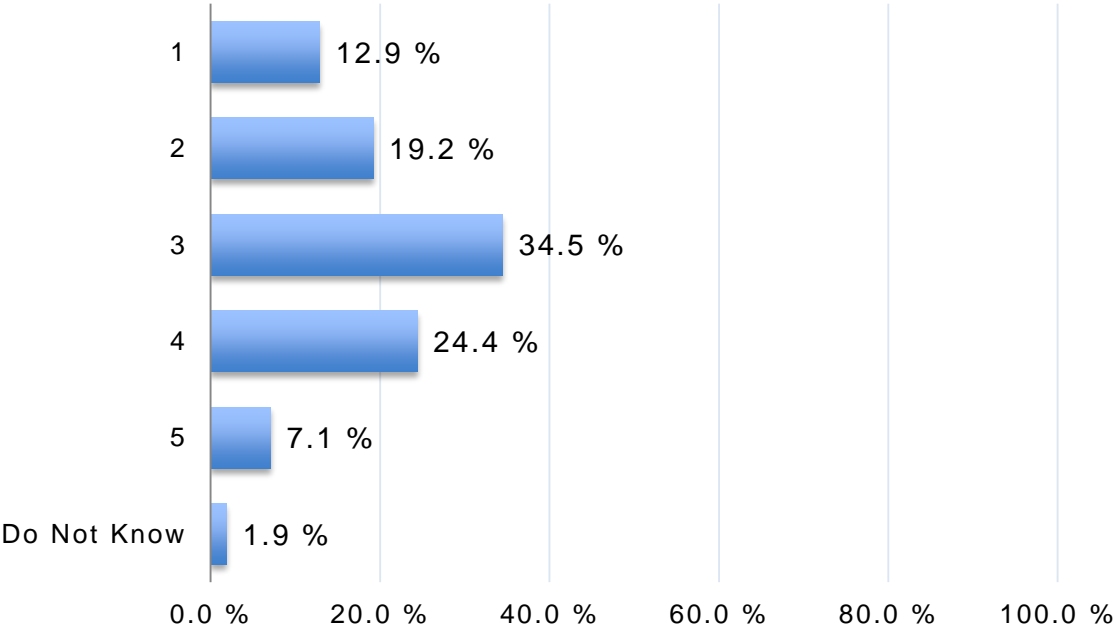
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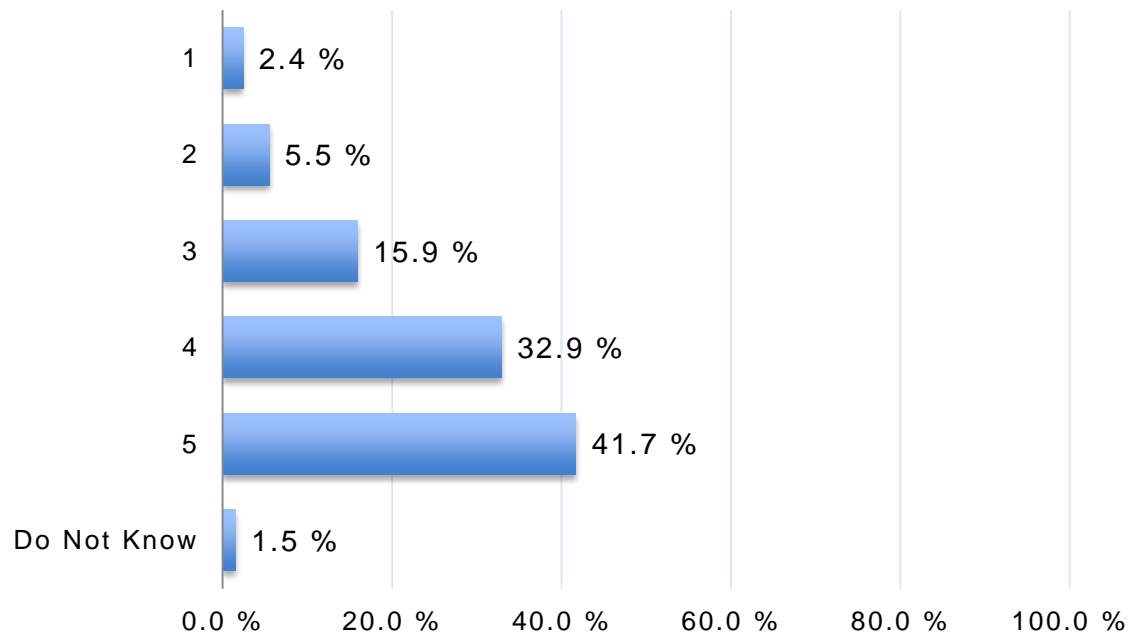


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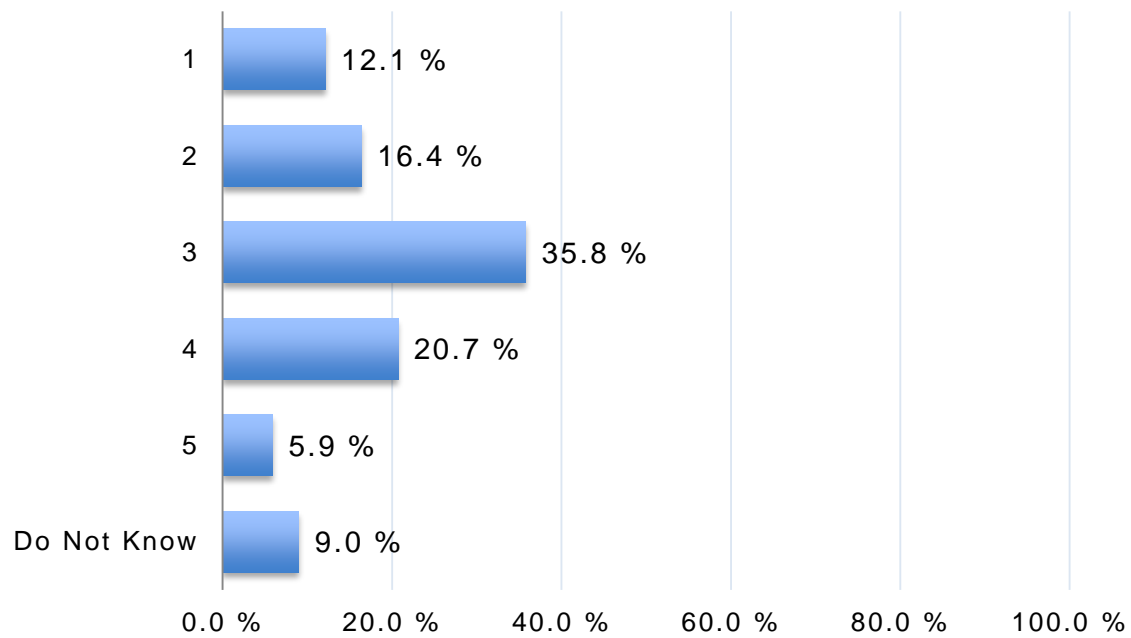


Sidewalks and Walkways

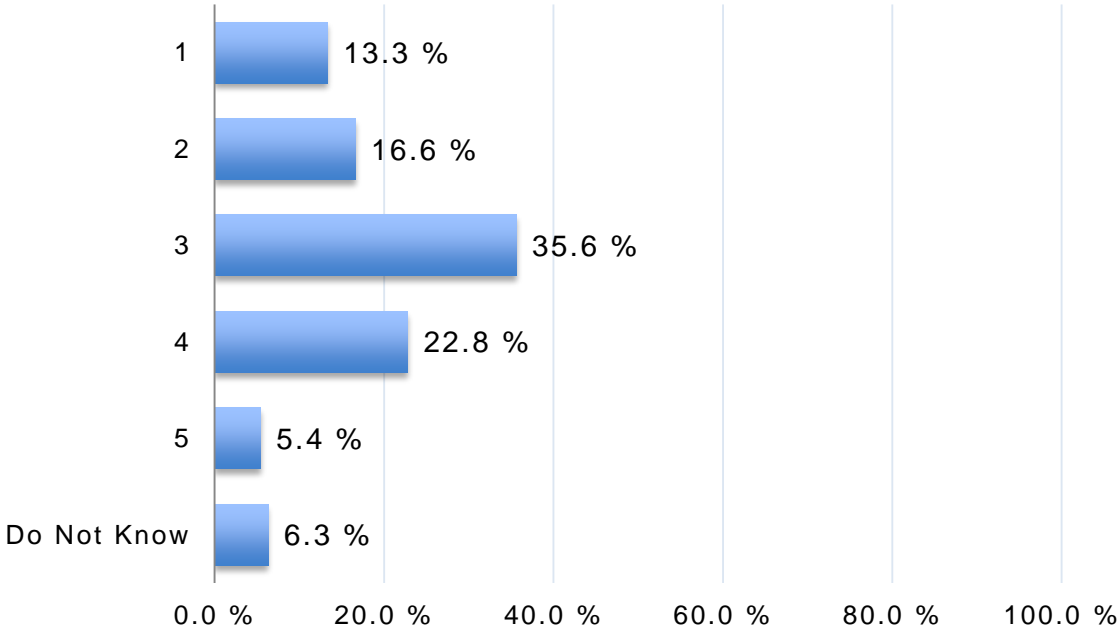
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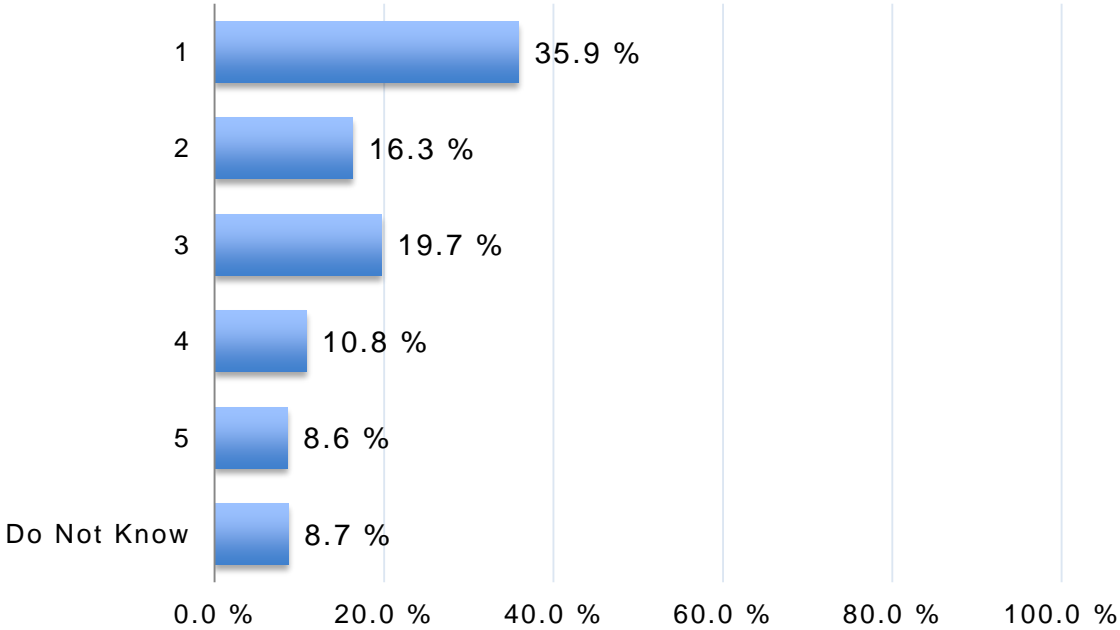


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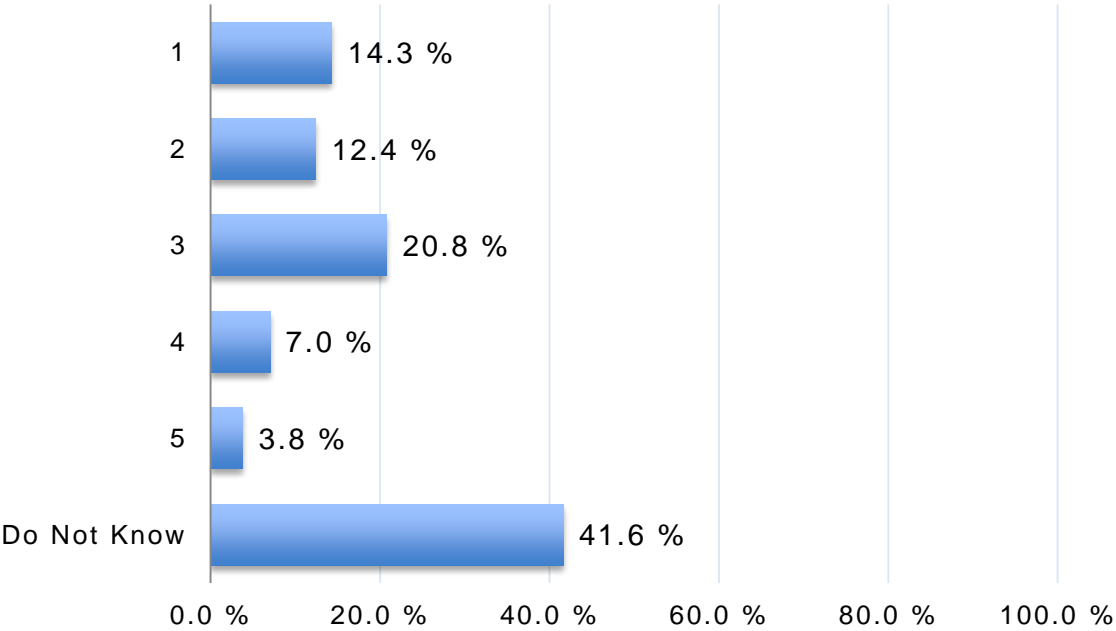


Cycling Routes

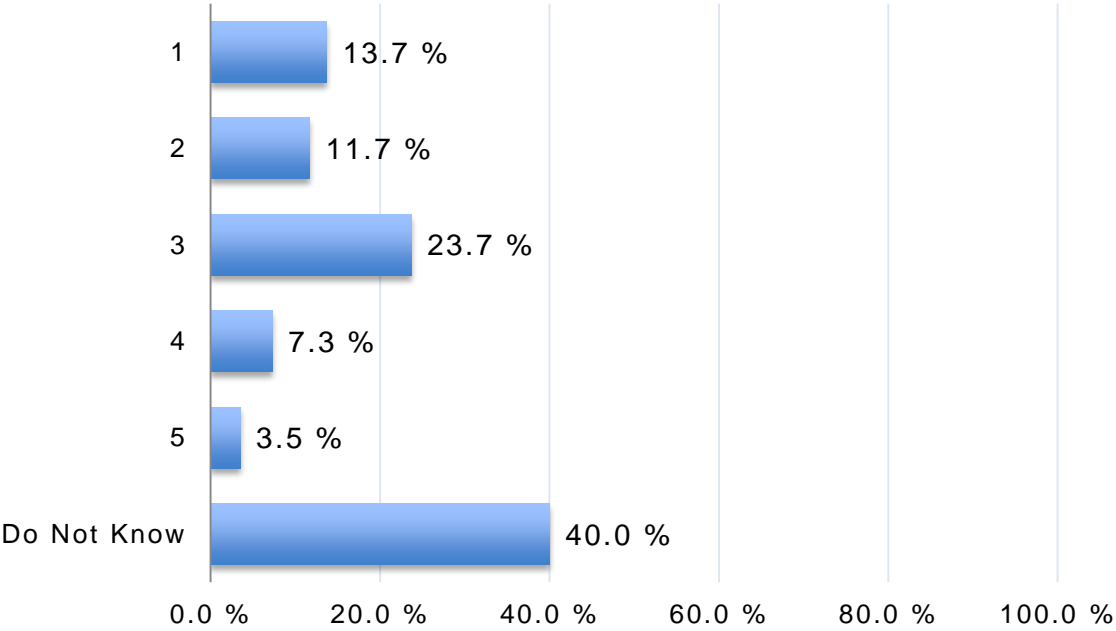
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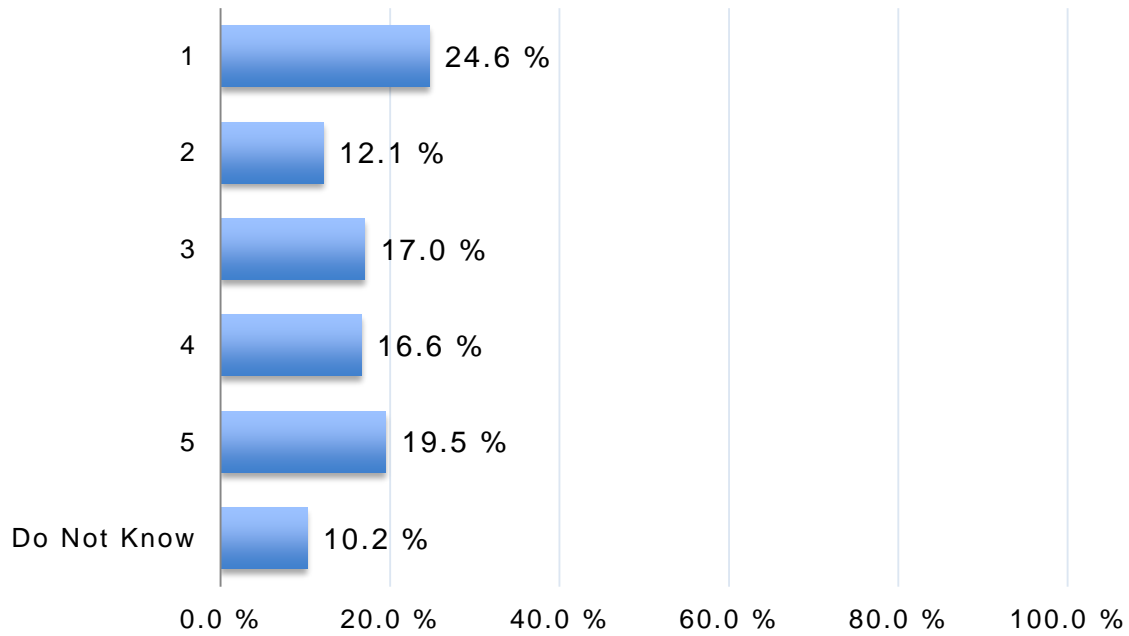


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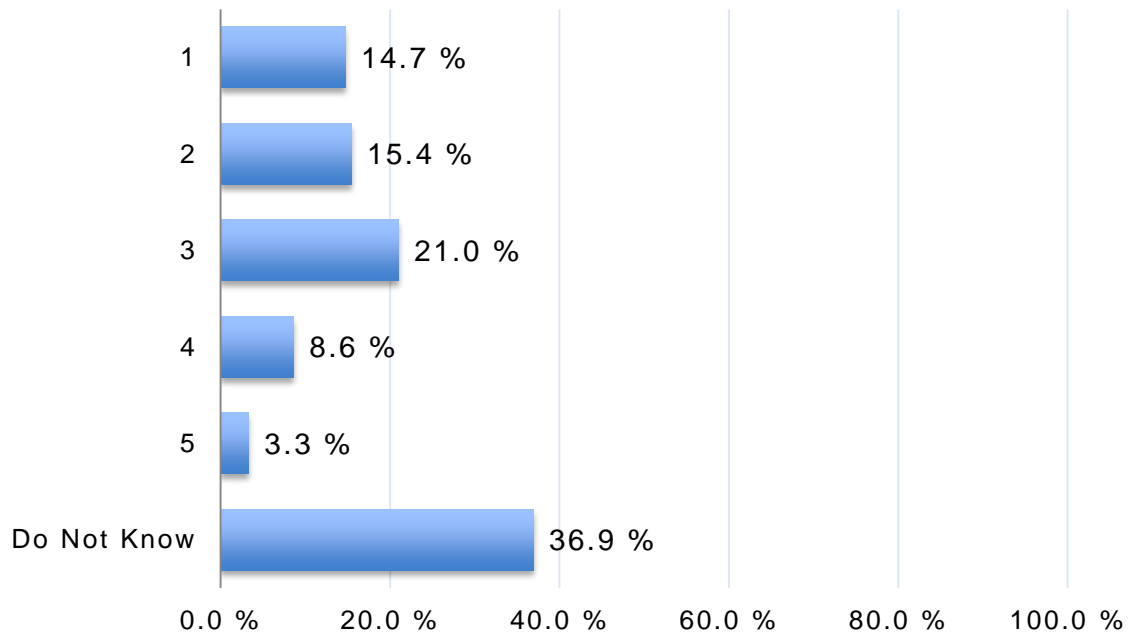


Public Transit Services

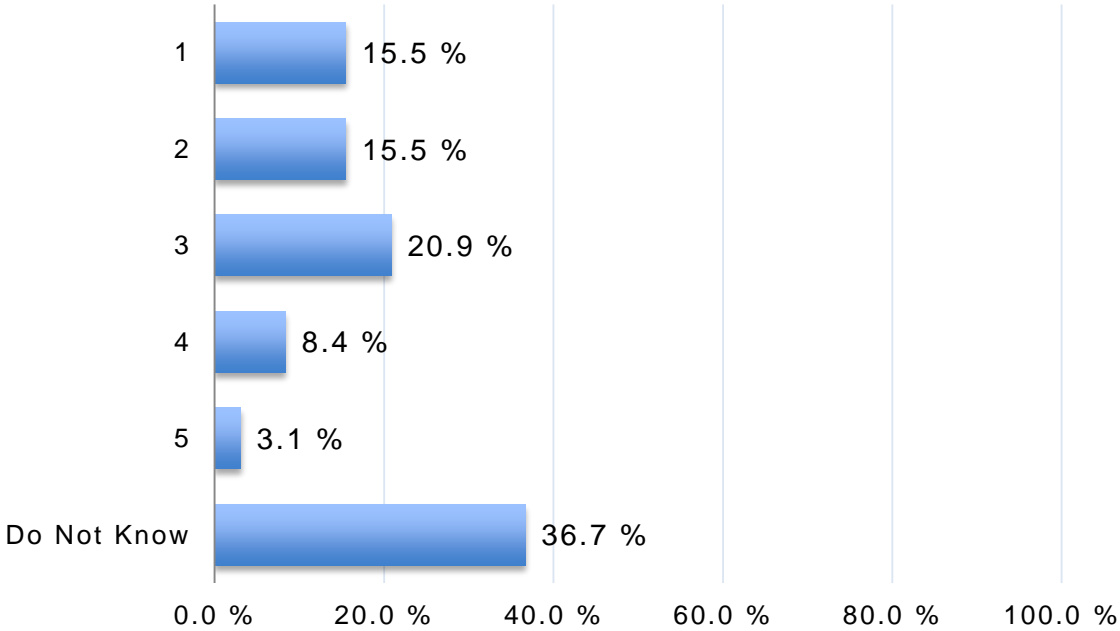
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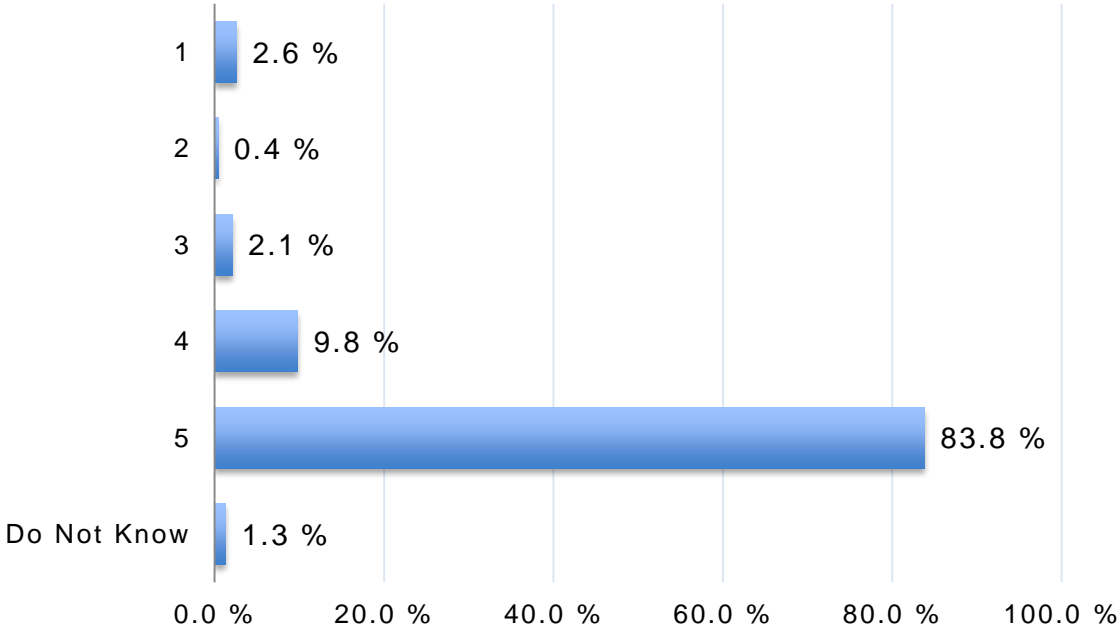


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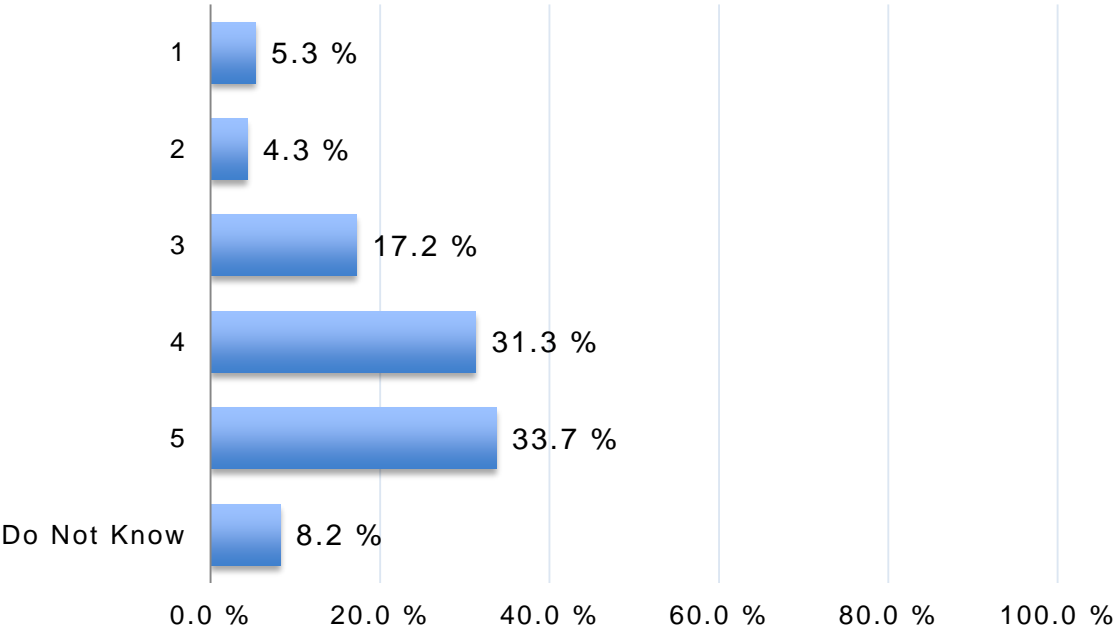


Drinking Water

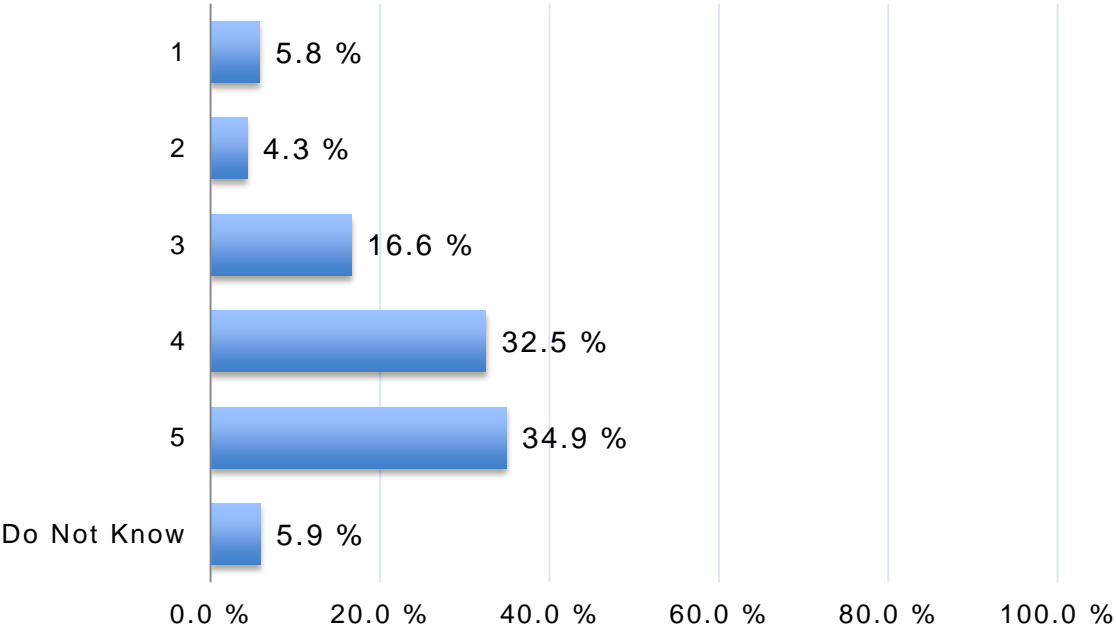
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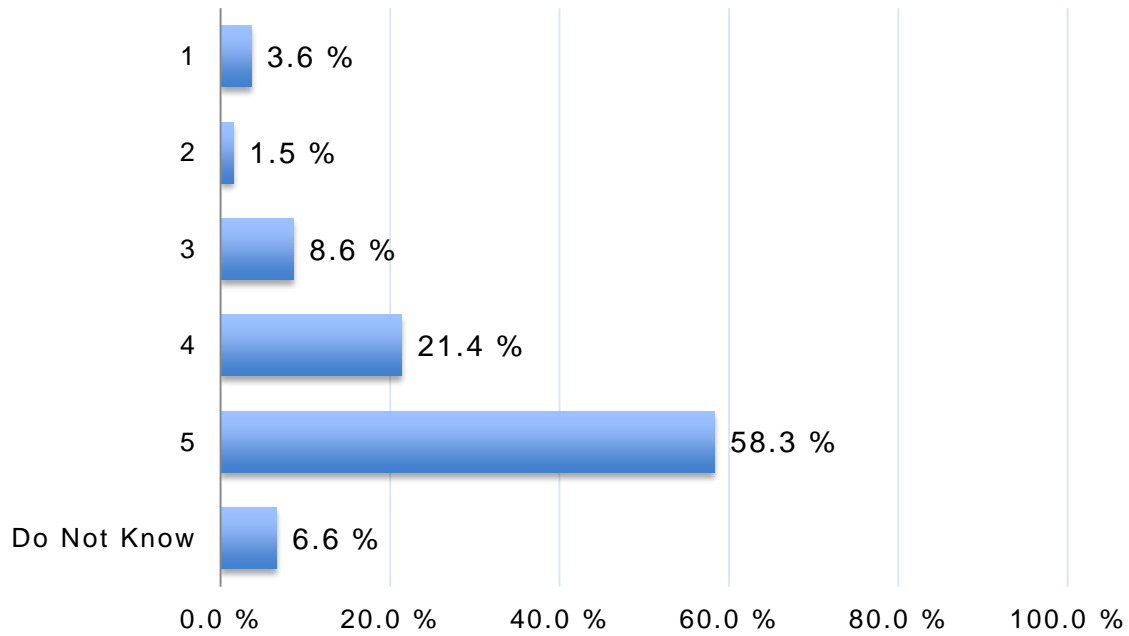


How would you rate the overall quality of this service?

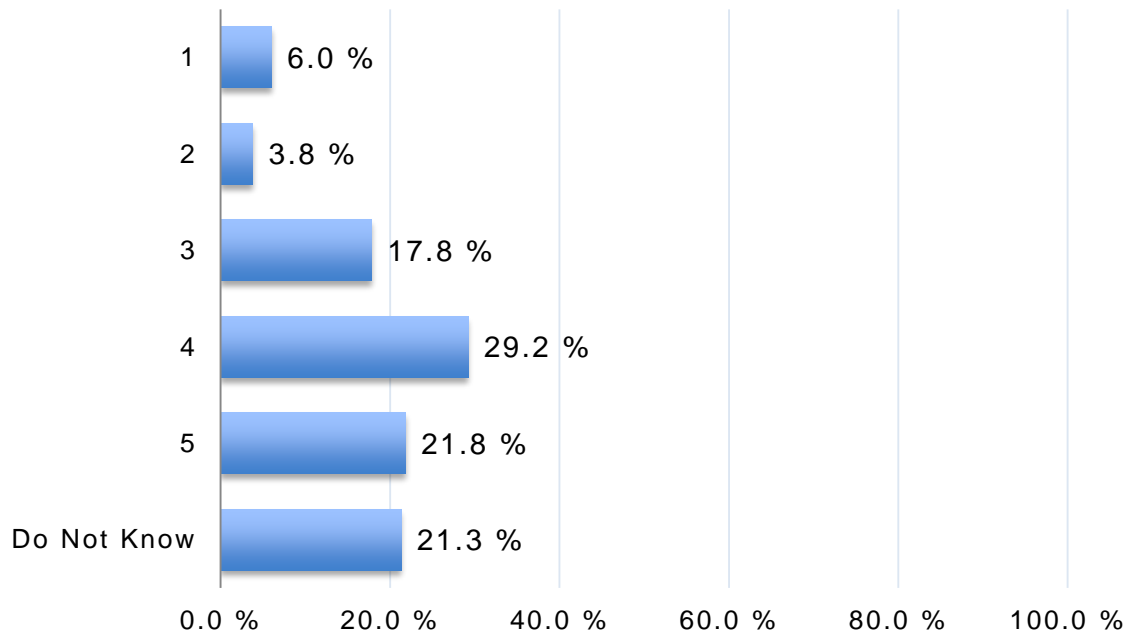


Sanitary Sewer and Stormwater Drainage

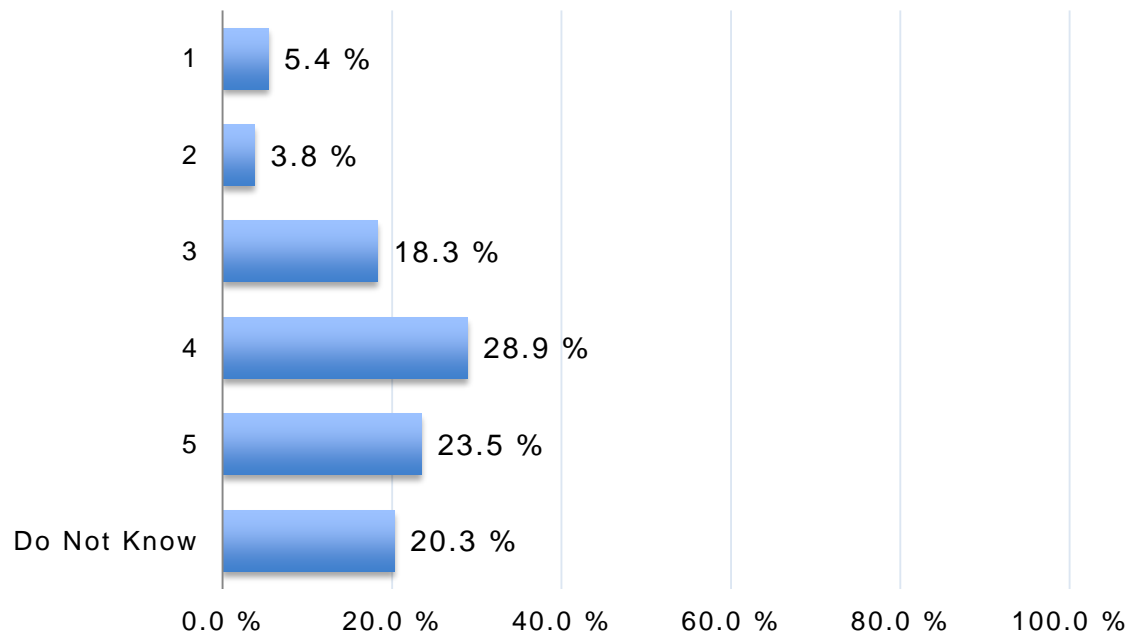
How important is this service to you?



How would you rate the value of the service you receive for the taxes you pay?



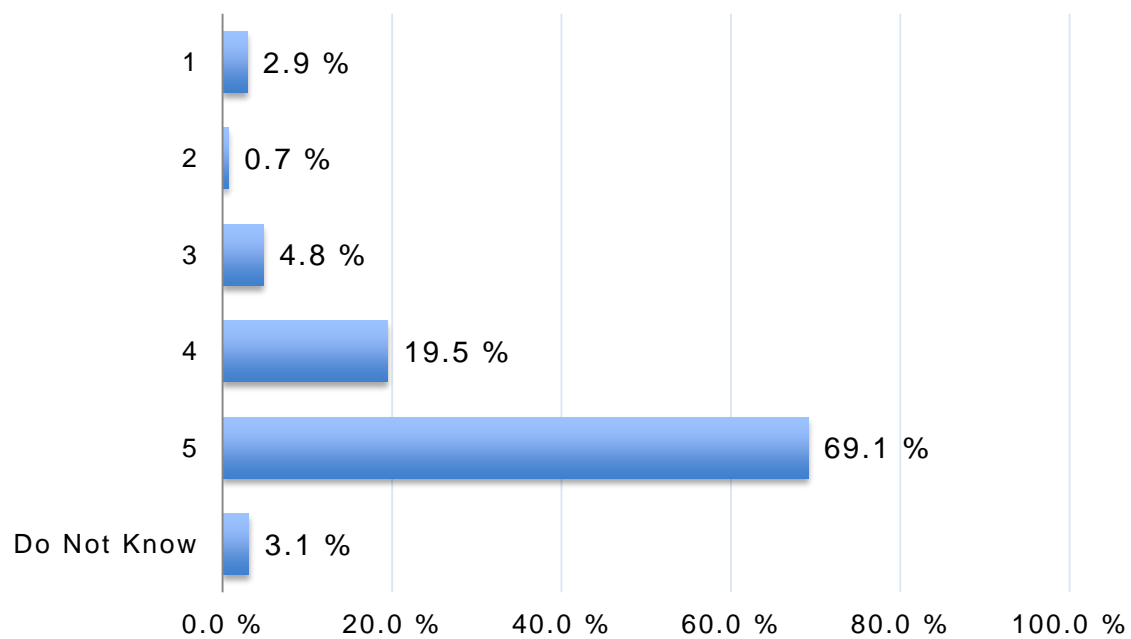
How would you rate the overall quality of this service?



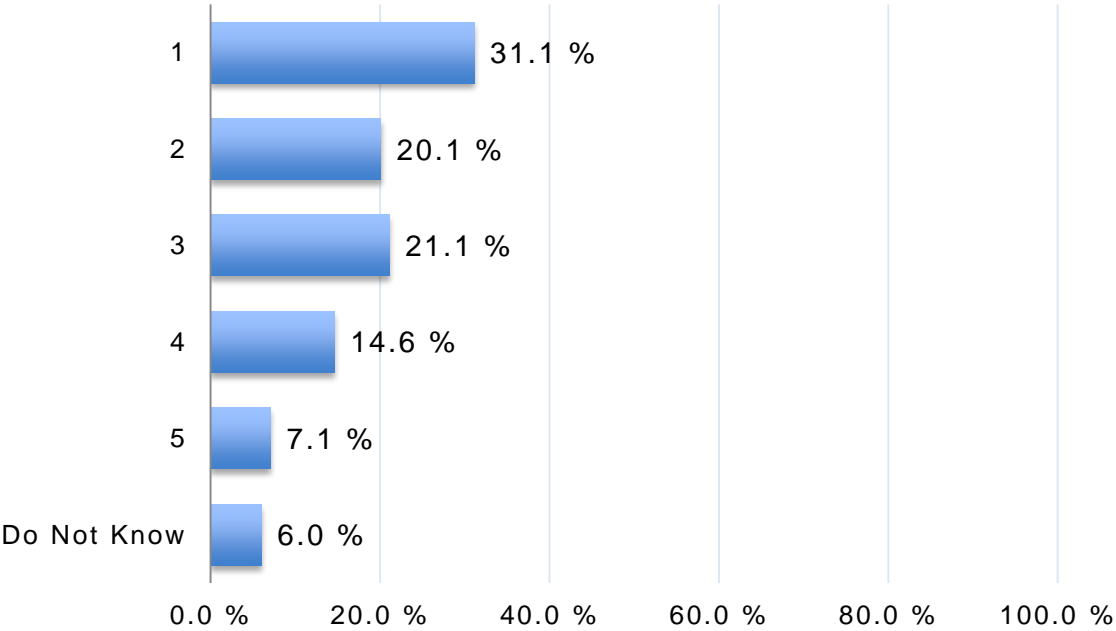
Environmental Services

Solid Waste Management and Curbside Collection

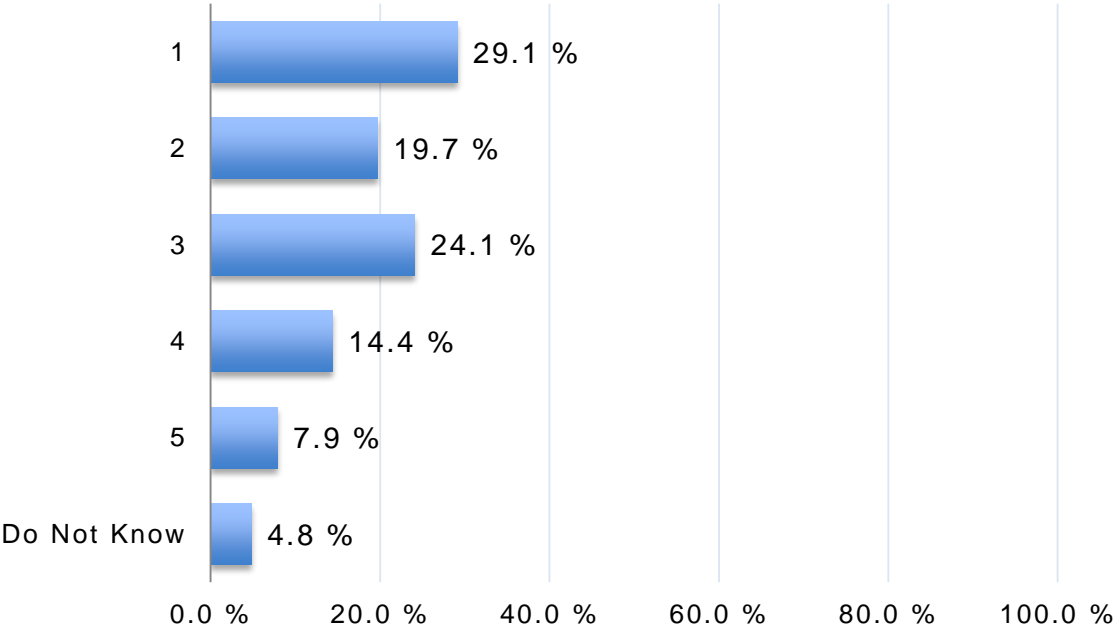
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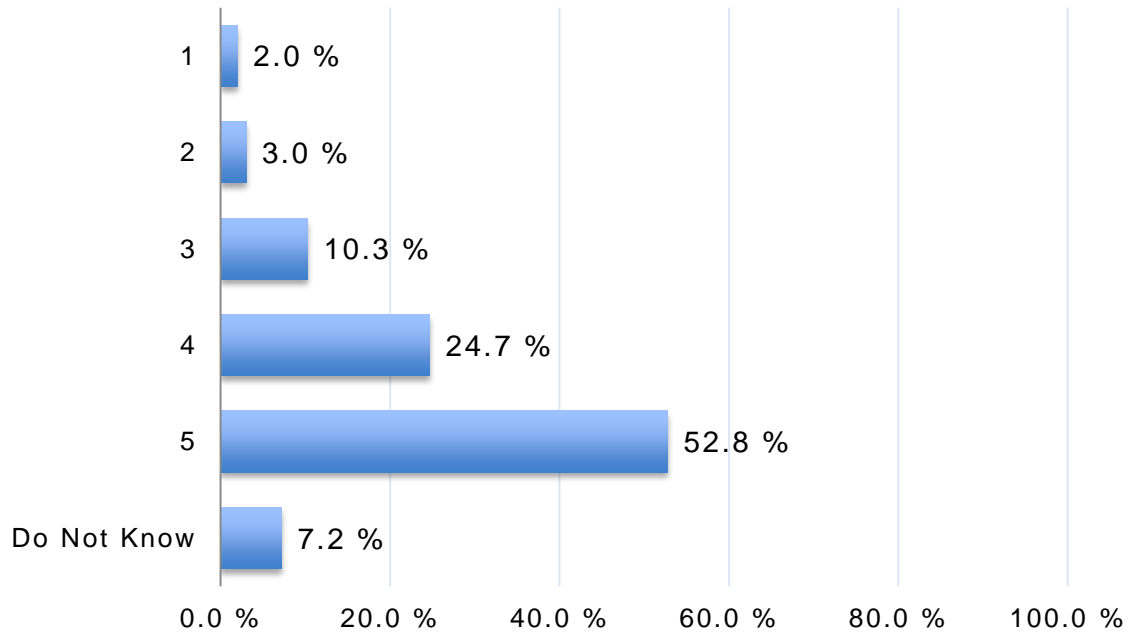


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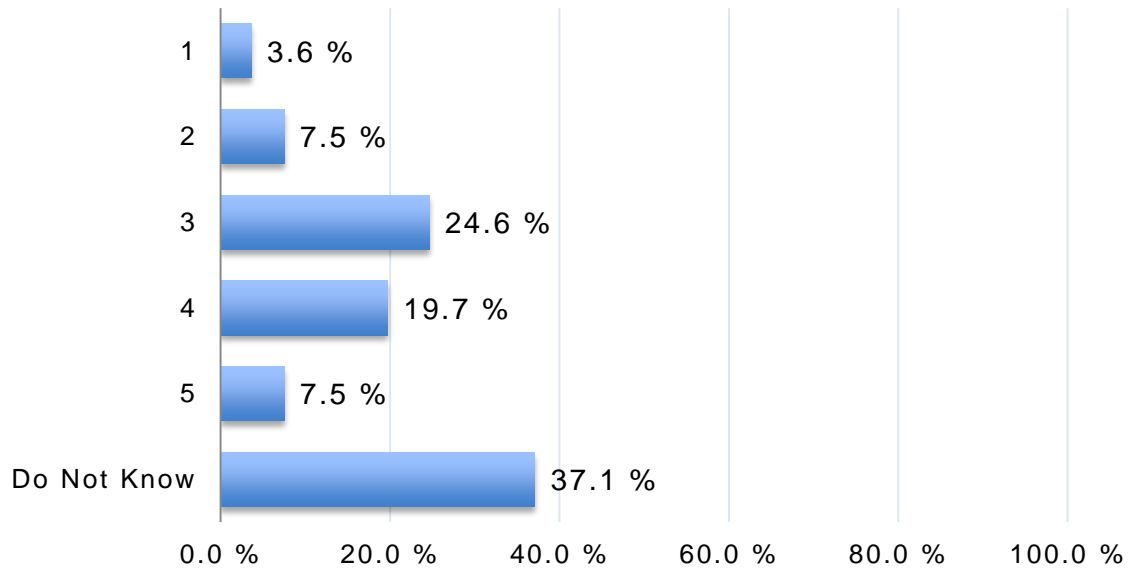


Protecting Environmentally Sensitive Areas

How important is this service to you?

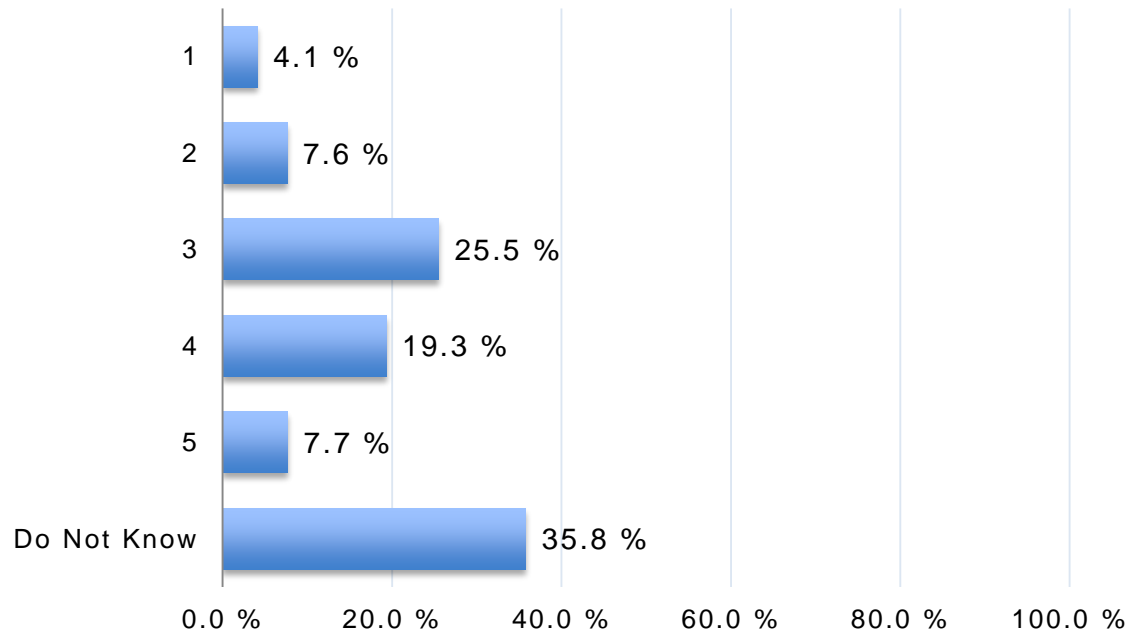


How would you rate the value of the service you receive for the taxes you pay?



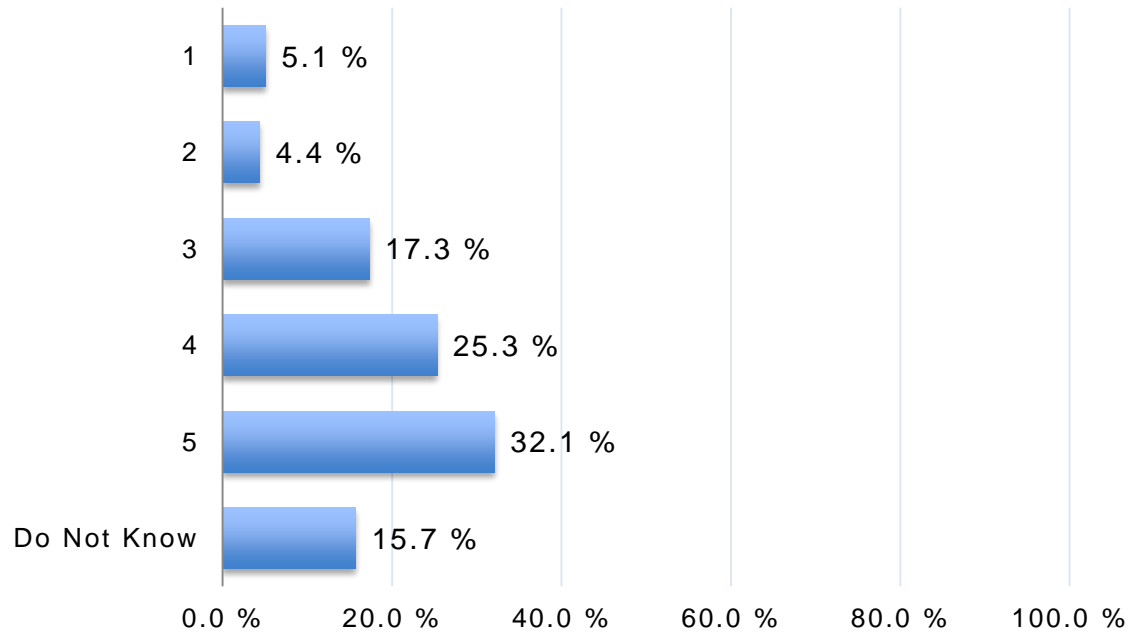
■ All (Mean:3.32, Deviation:1.02) (Responses:747)

How would you rate the overall quality of this service?

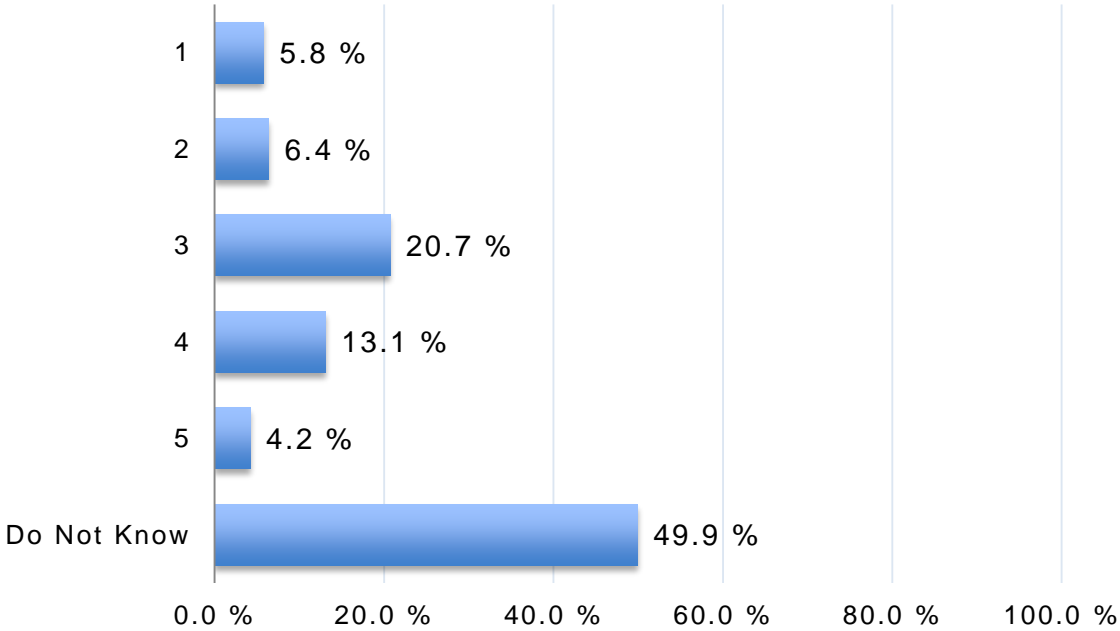


Management of Invasive Plants

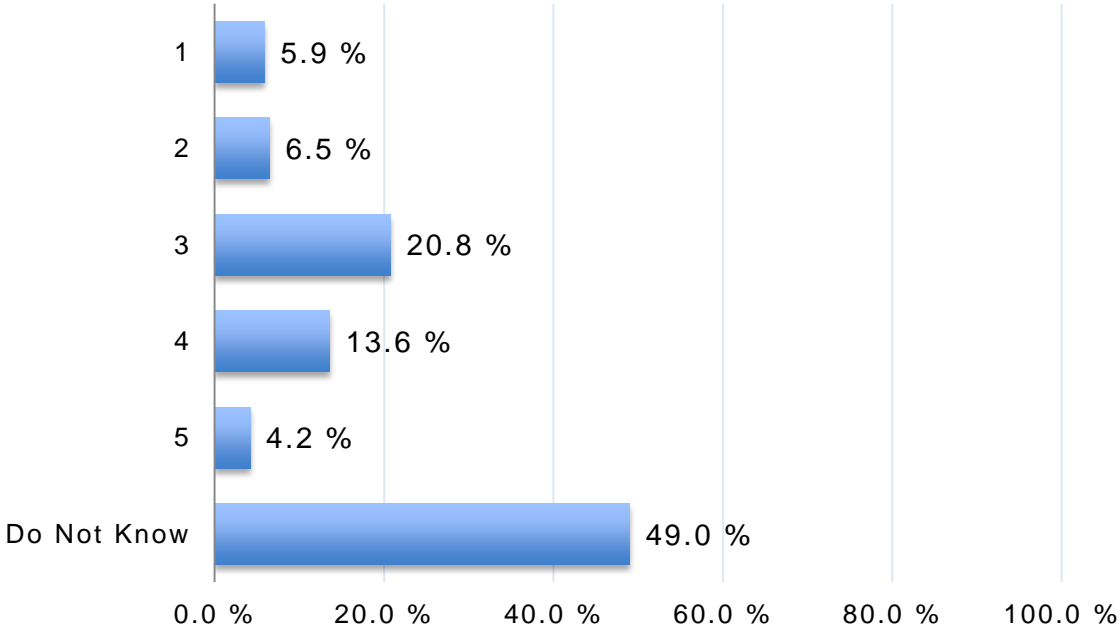
How important is this service to you?



How would you rate the value of the service you receive for the taxes you pay?



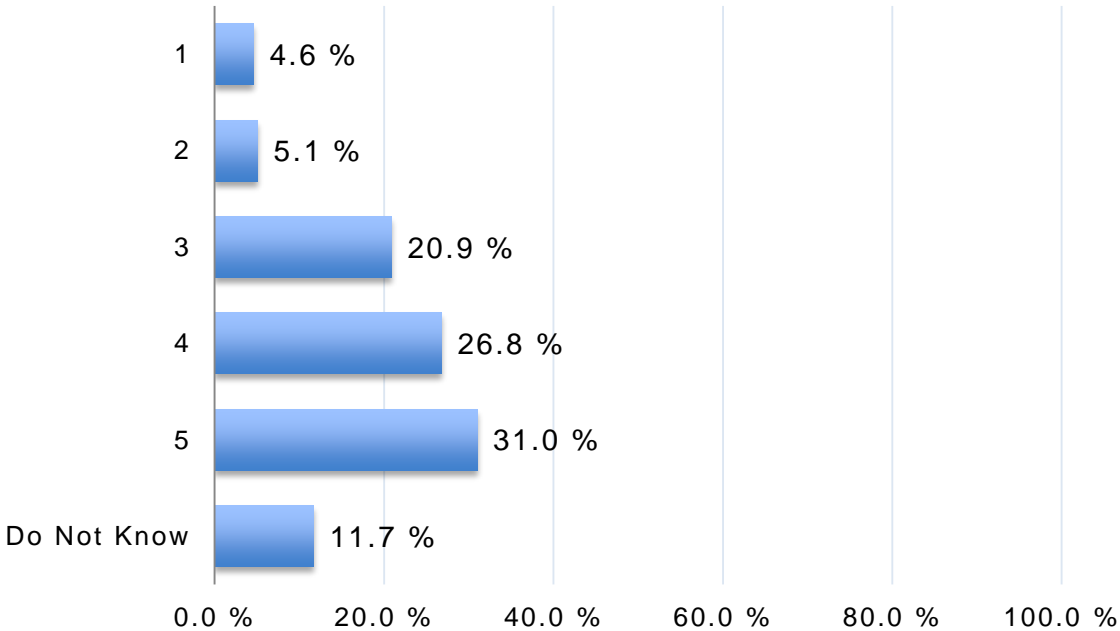
How would you rate the overall quality of this service?



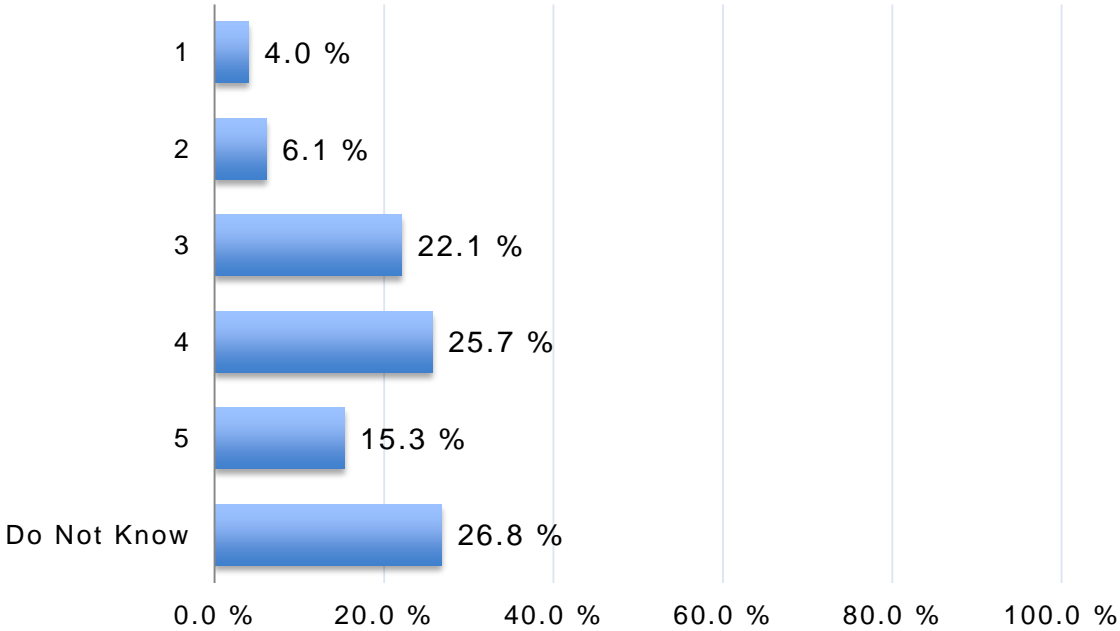
Online and In-person Services

In-Person Services like Applying for Permits, Paying Taxes etc.

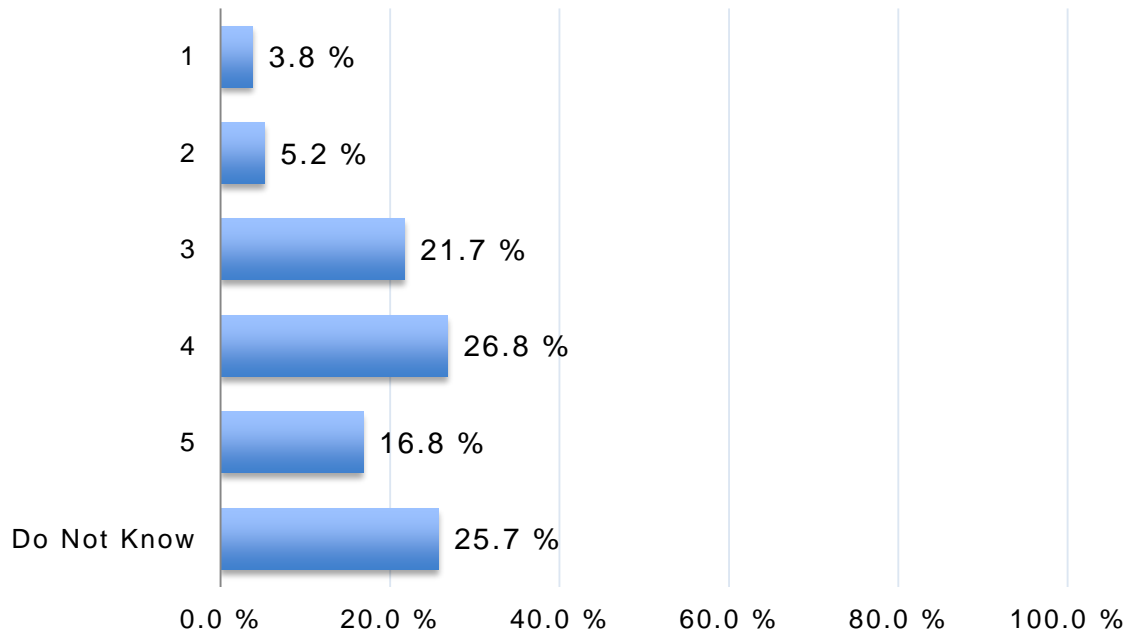
How important is this service to you?



How would you rate the value of the service you receive for the taxes you pay?

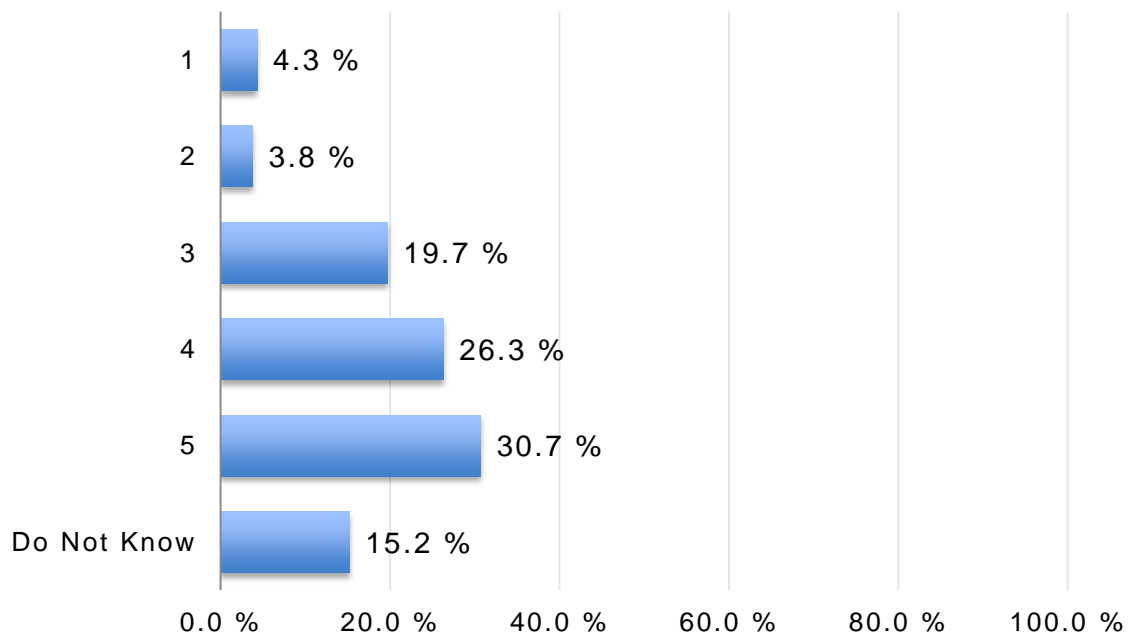


How would you rate the overall quality of this service?

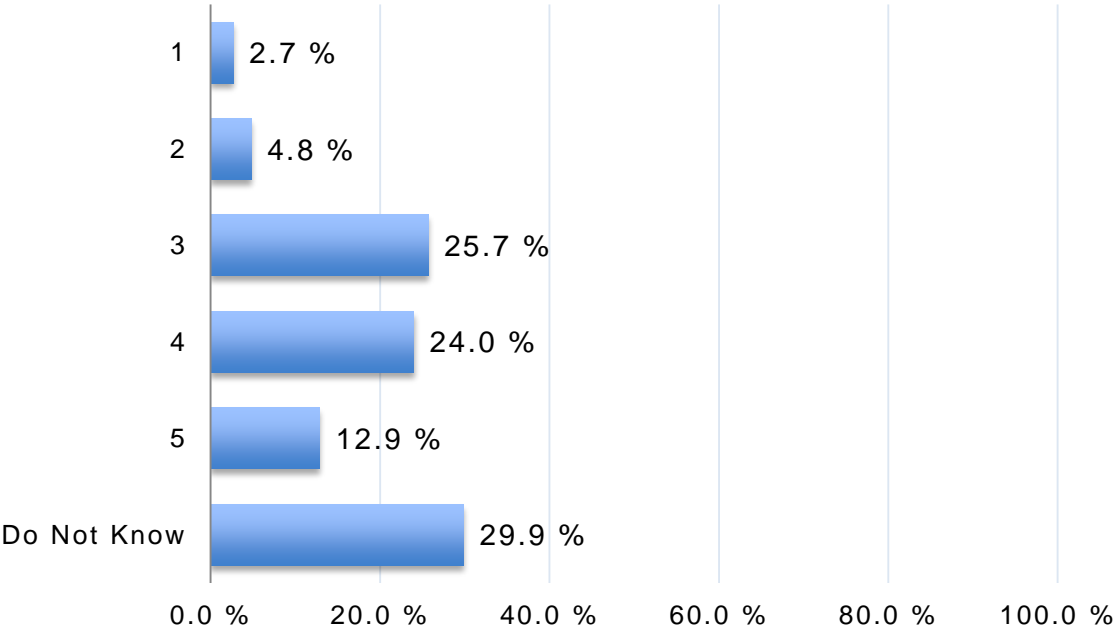


Online Services like Registering for Recreational Programs, Applying for Permits or Licenses, Paying Fees etc.

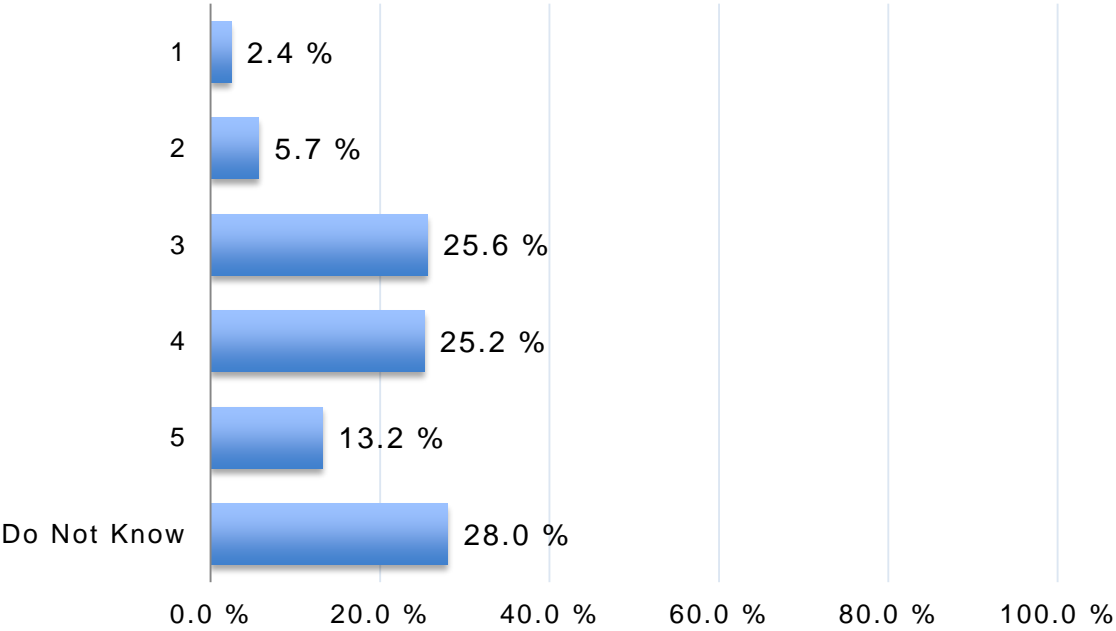
How important is this service to you?



How would you rate the value of the service you receive for the taxes you pay?



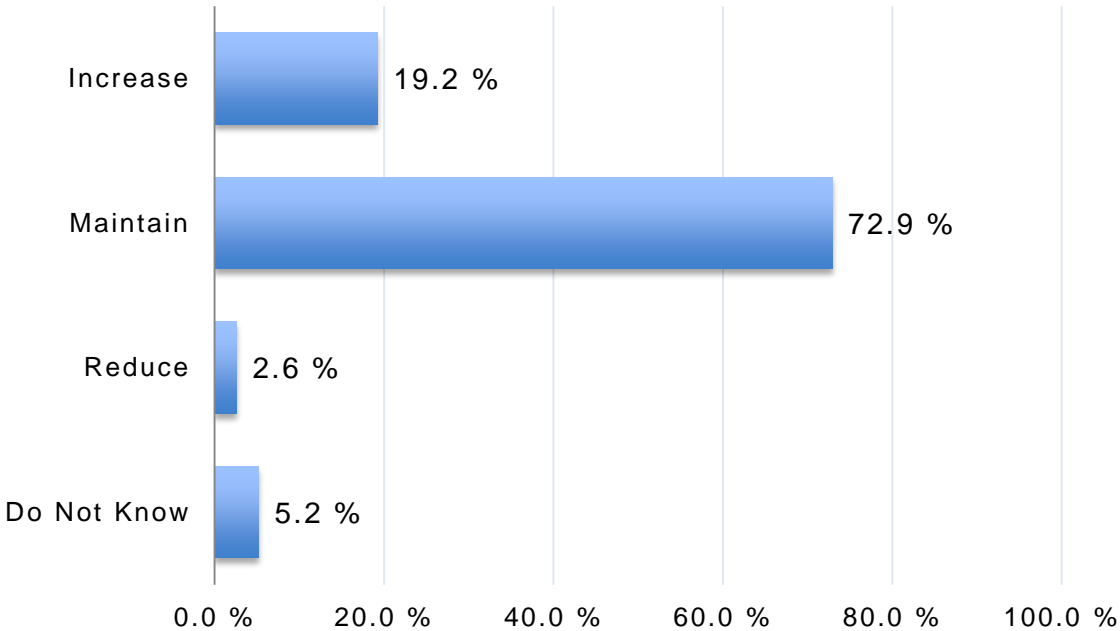
How would you rate the overall quality of this service?



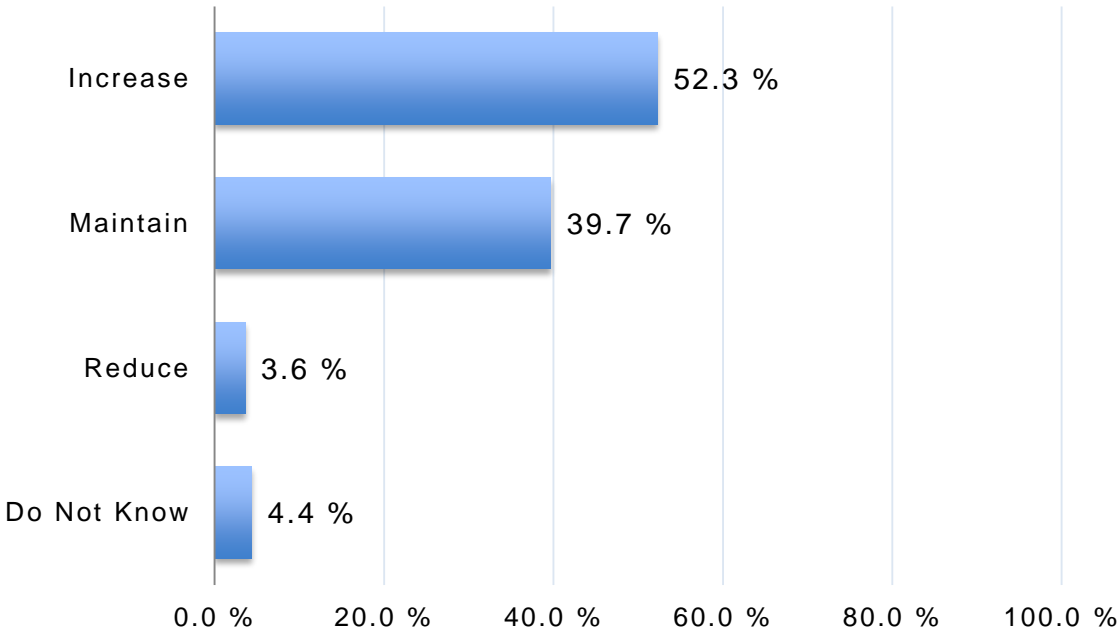
Should Service Levels be Increased, Maintained, or Reduced?

In this section respondents were asked to identify where they would increase, maintain, or reduce services.

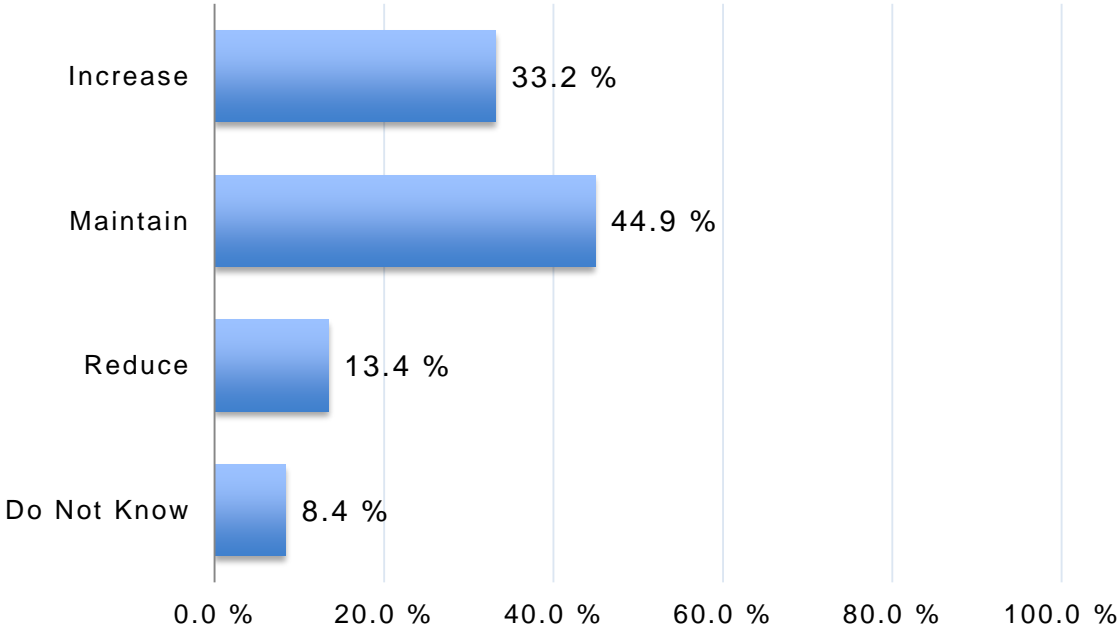
Fire protection services



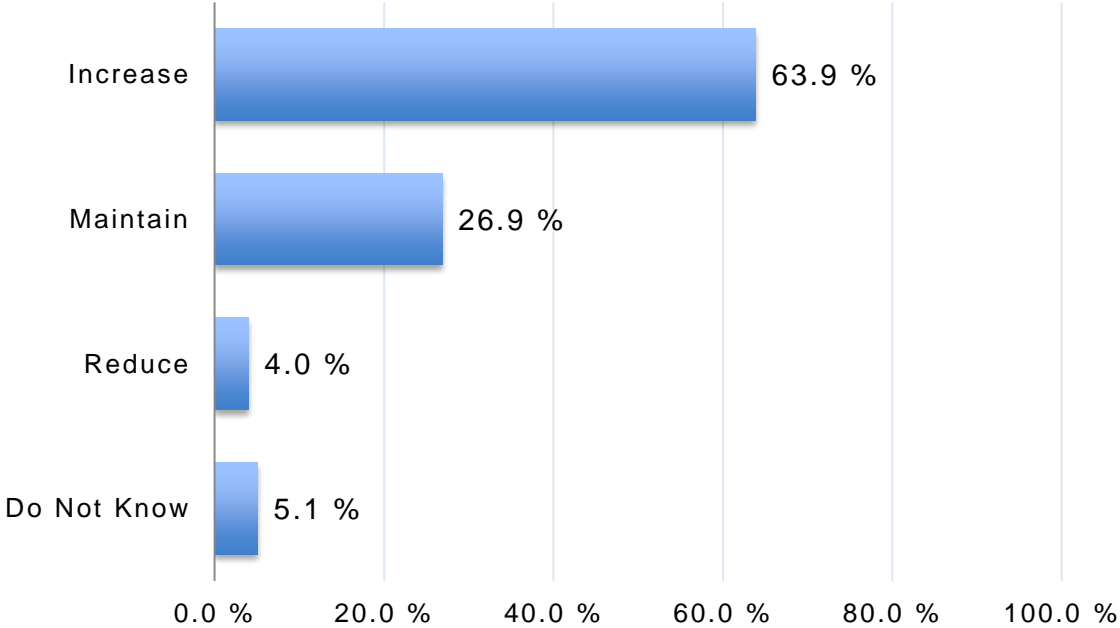
Police services



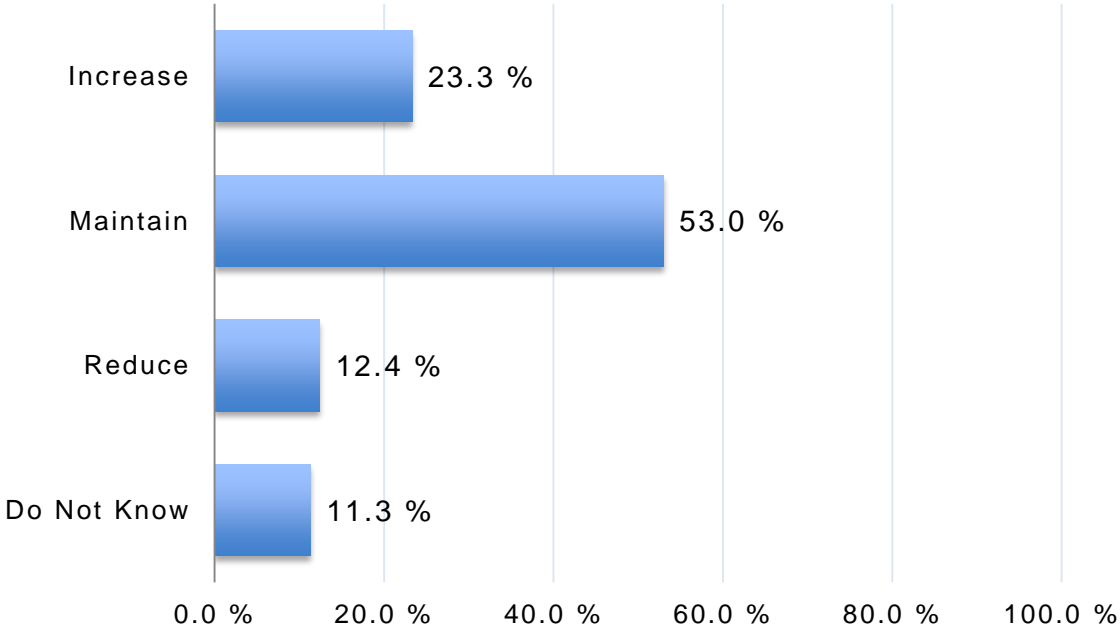
Bylaw enforcement services



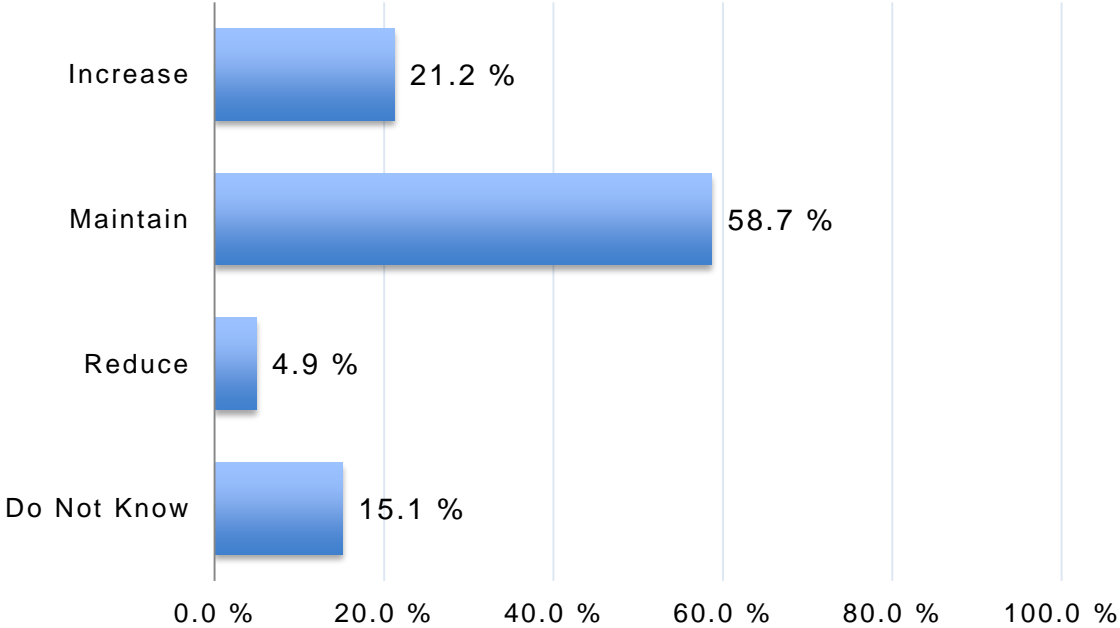
Attracting and retaining businesses and employers



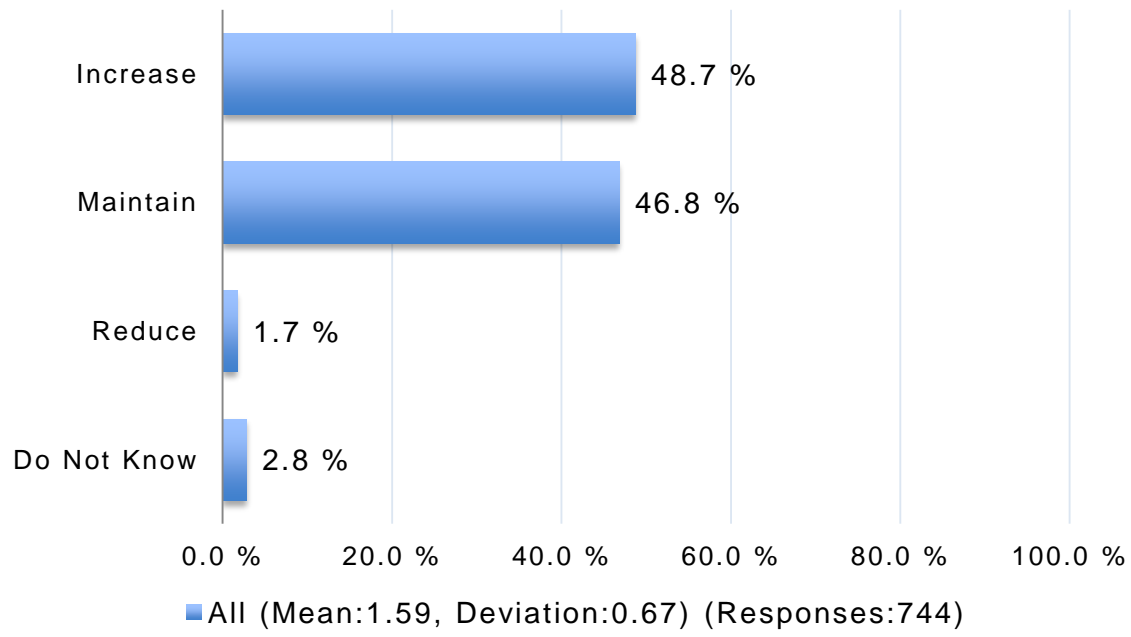
Regulating what types of building can be built in specific areas



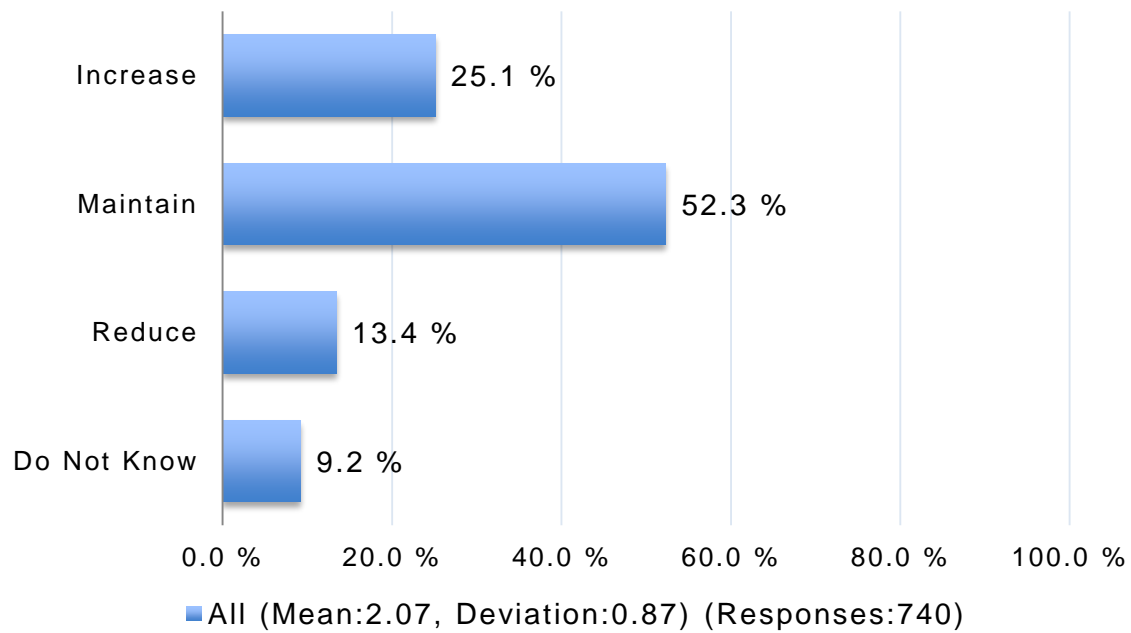
Issuing building permits and providing inspections



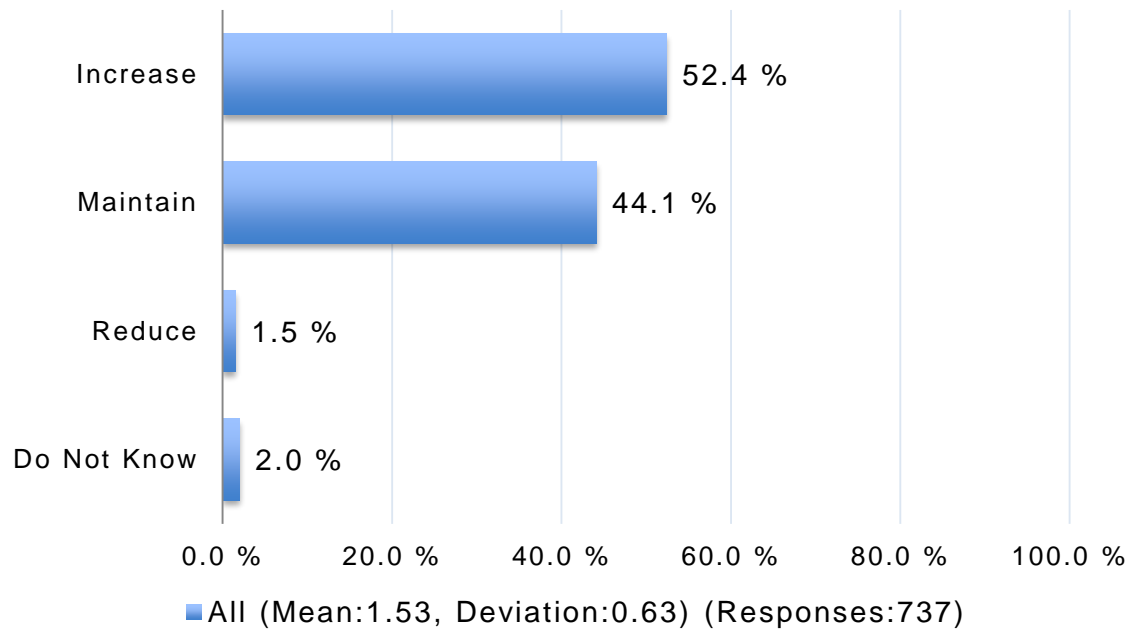
Recreation facilities and programming



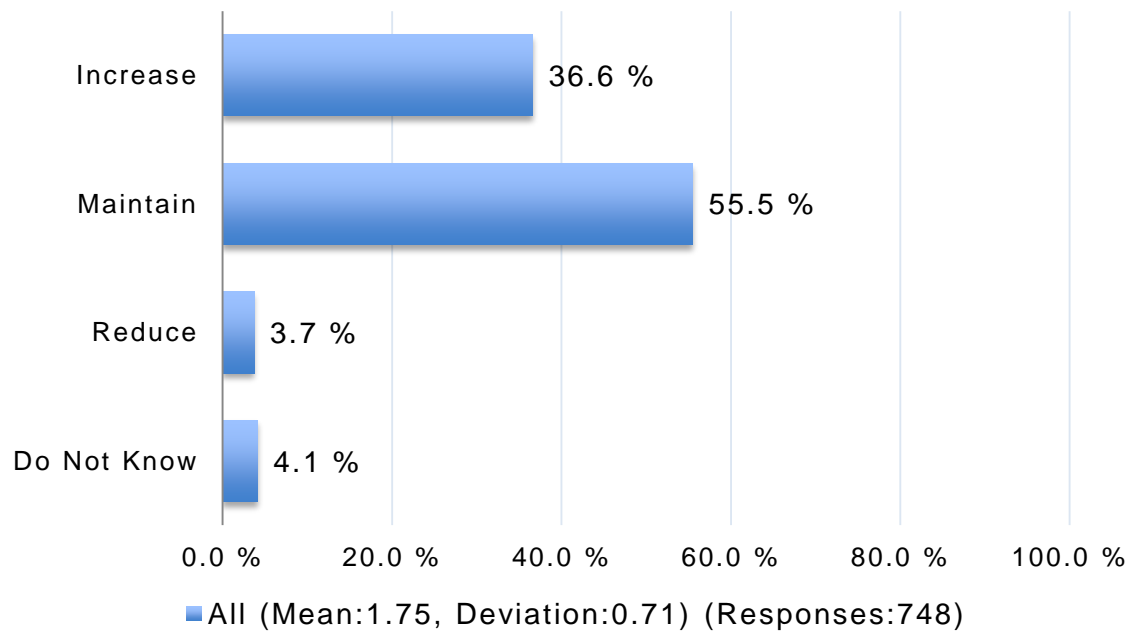
Cultural facilities and programming



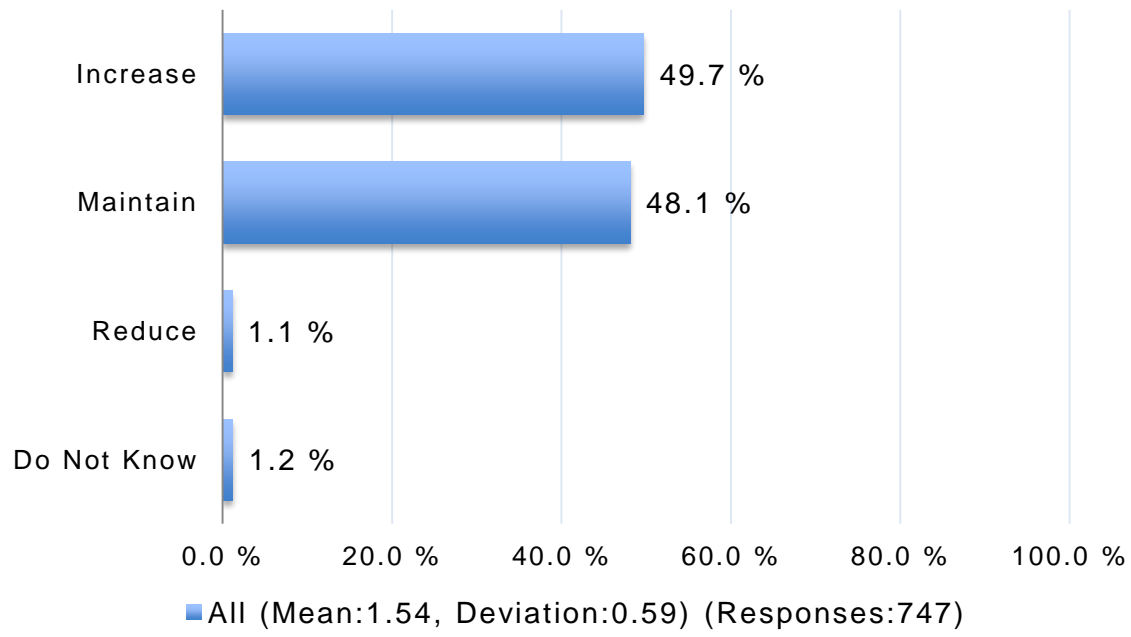
Building, maintaining, and upgrading parks, playgrounds, sports-fields and trails



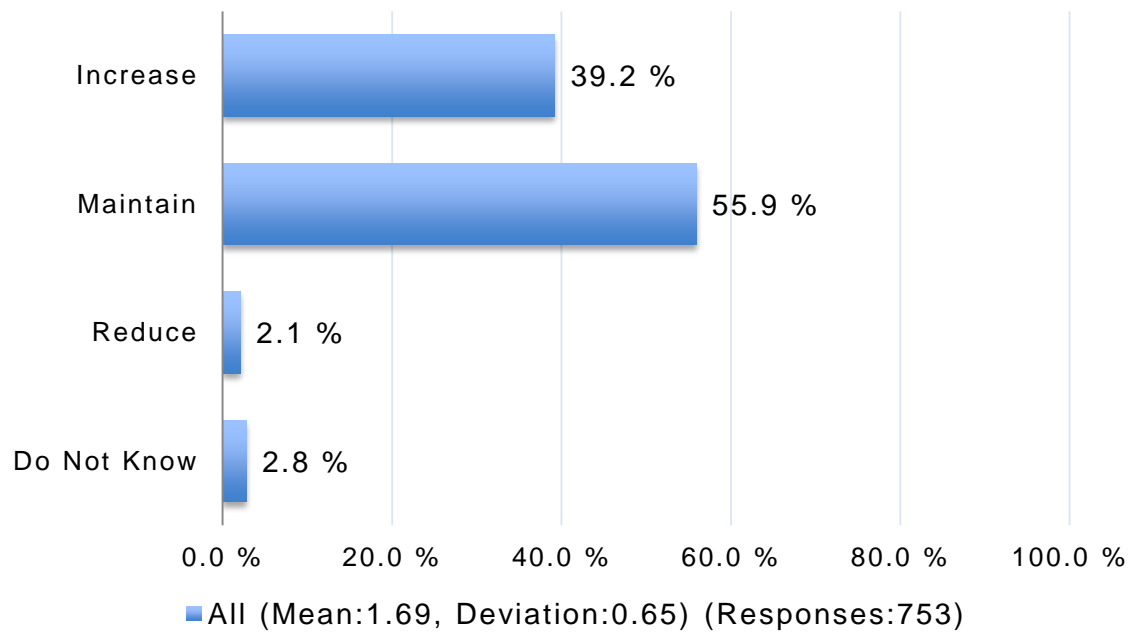
Developing and maintaining forest recreation areas and trails



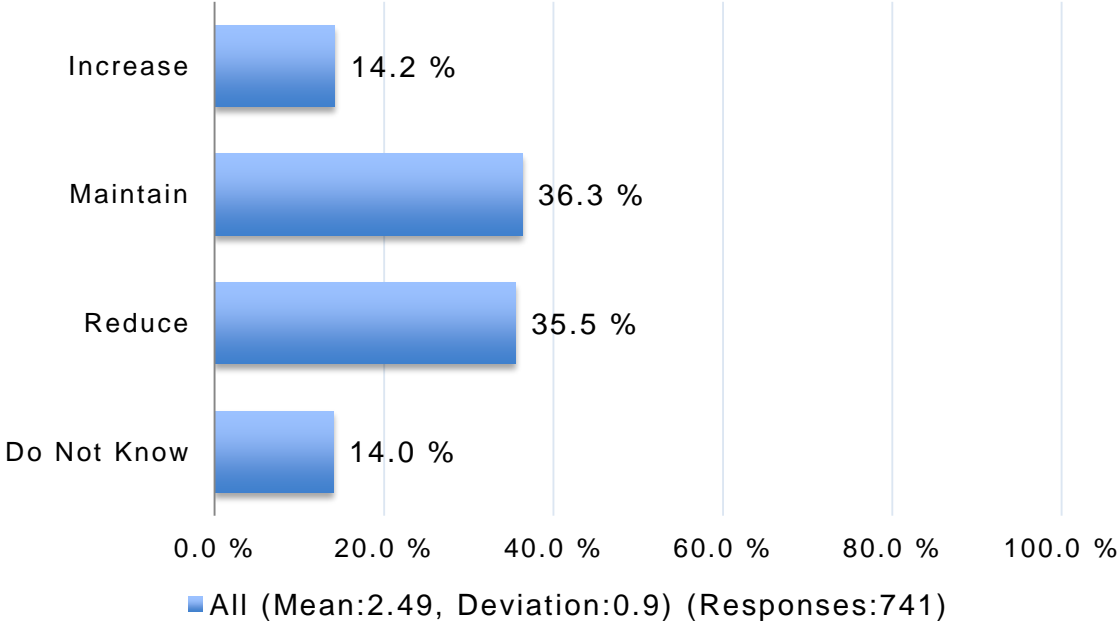
Streets and roadways



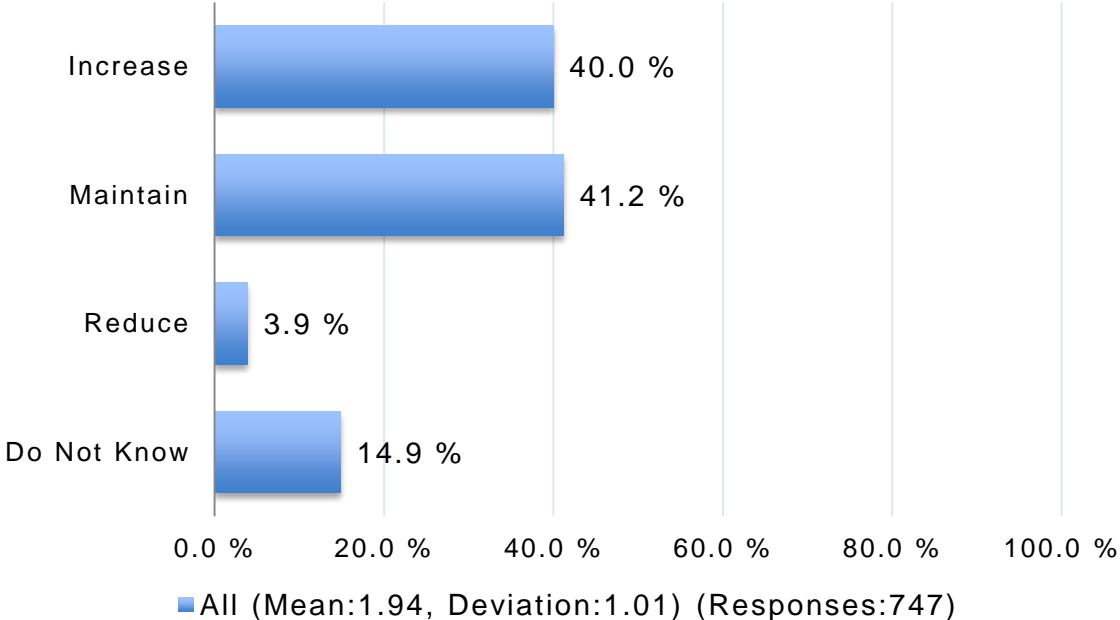
Sidewalks and walkways



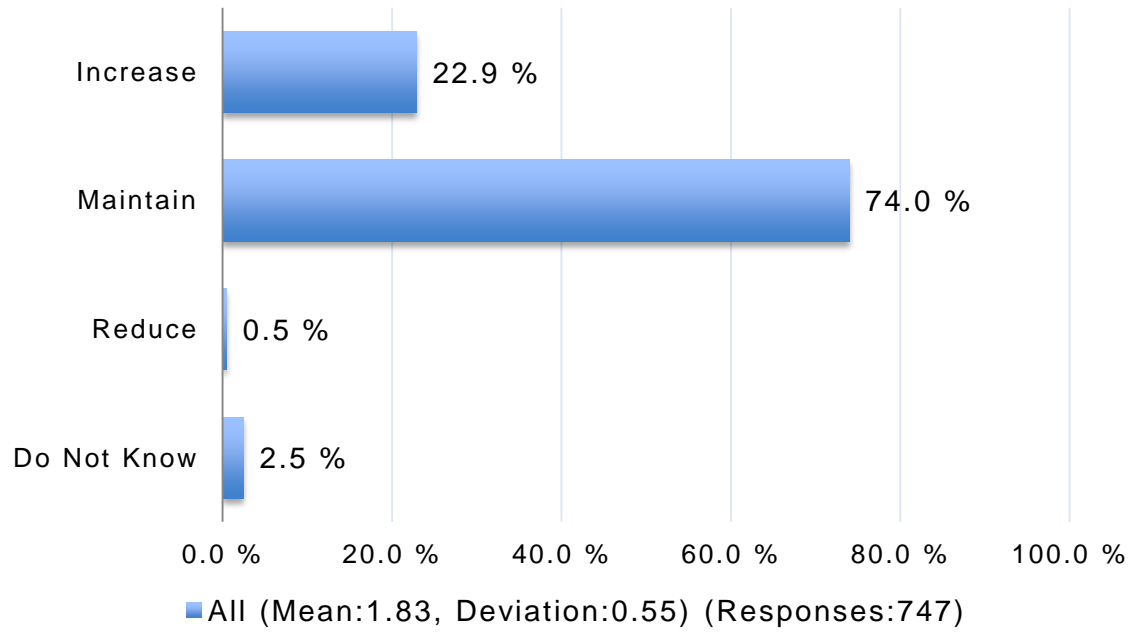
Cycling routes



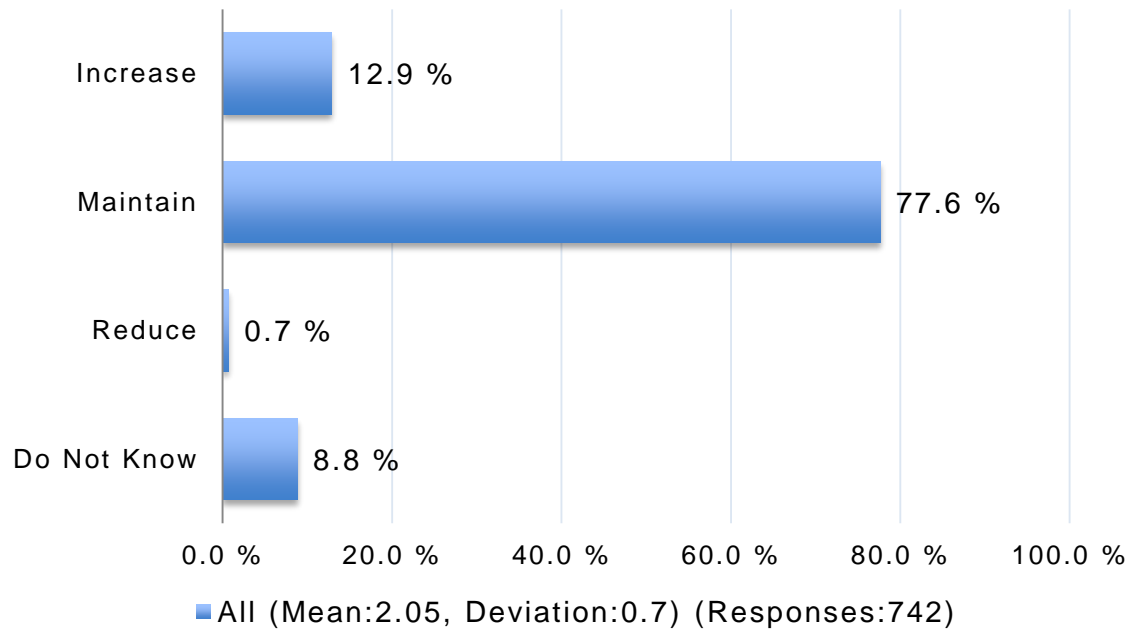
Public transit services



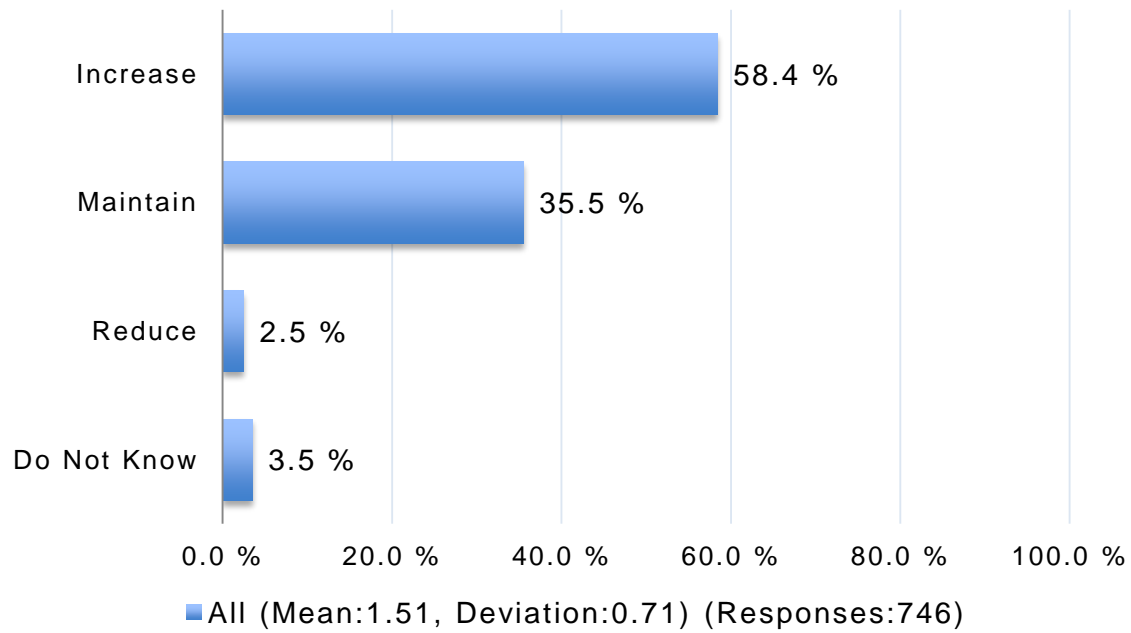
Drinking water



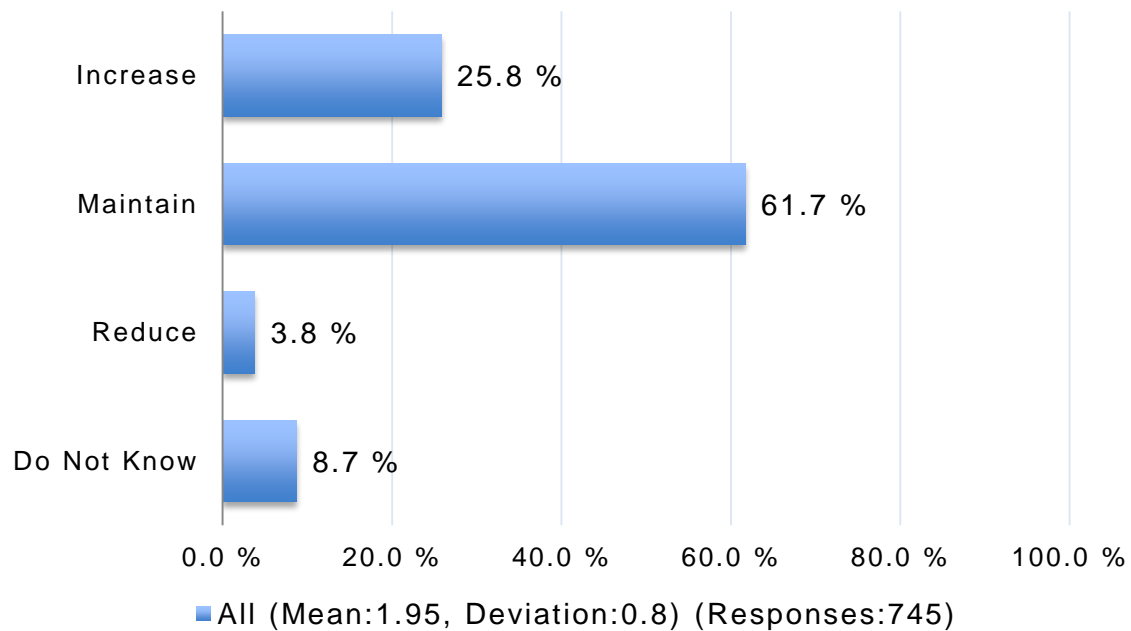
Sanitary sewer and stormwater drainage



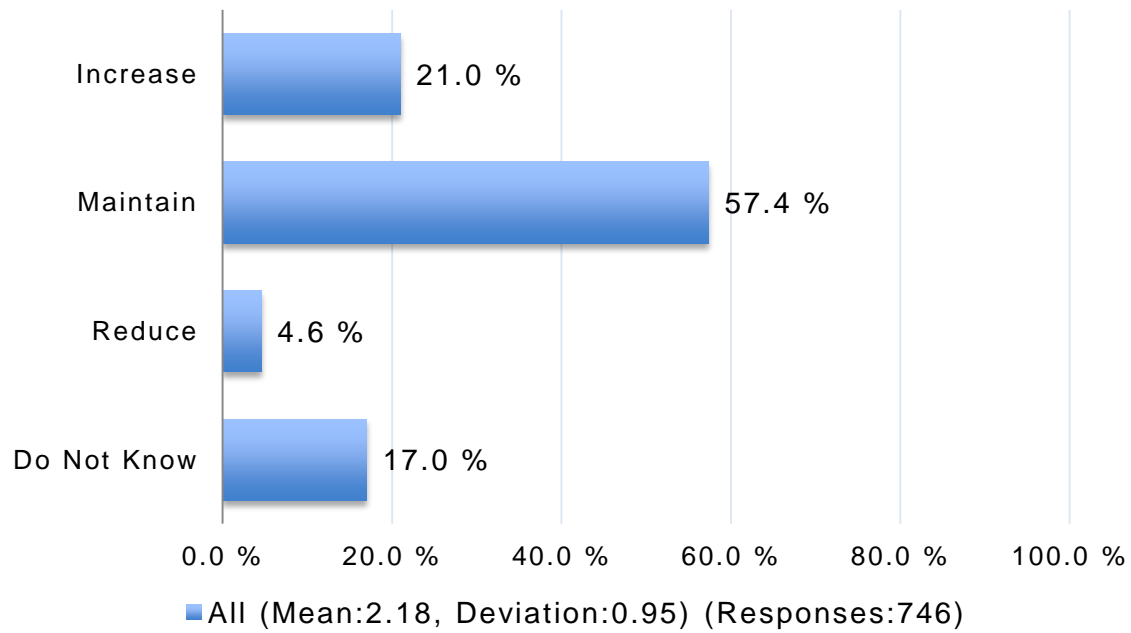
Solid waste management and curbside collection



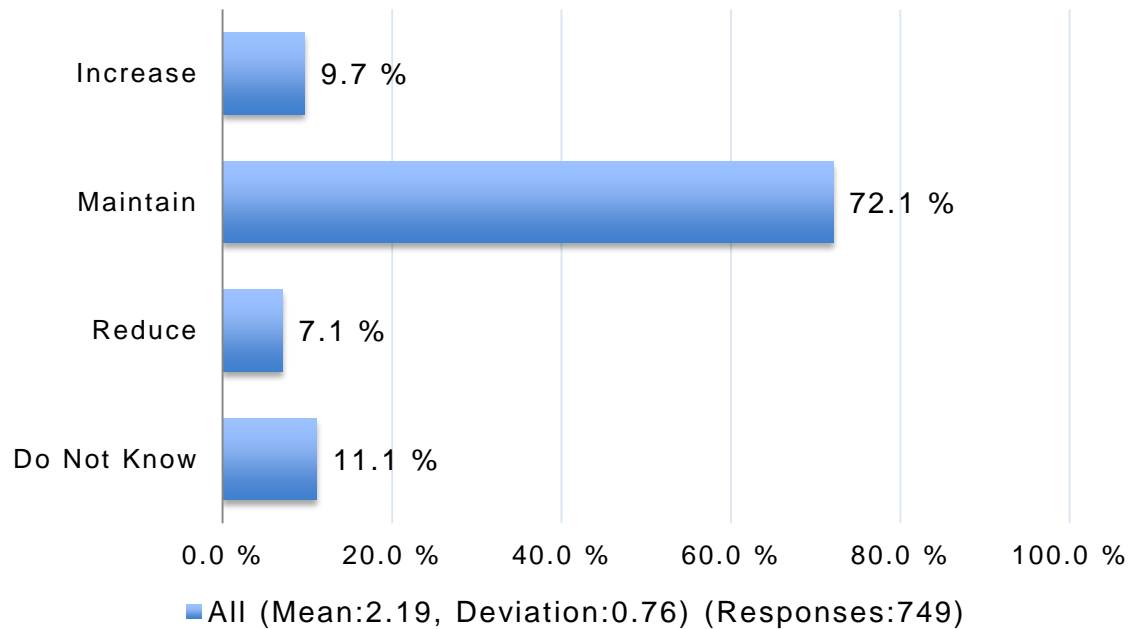
Protecting environmentally sensitive areas



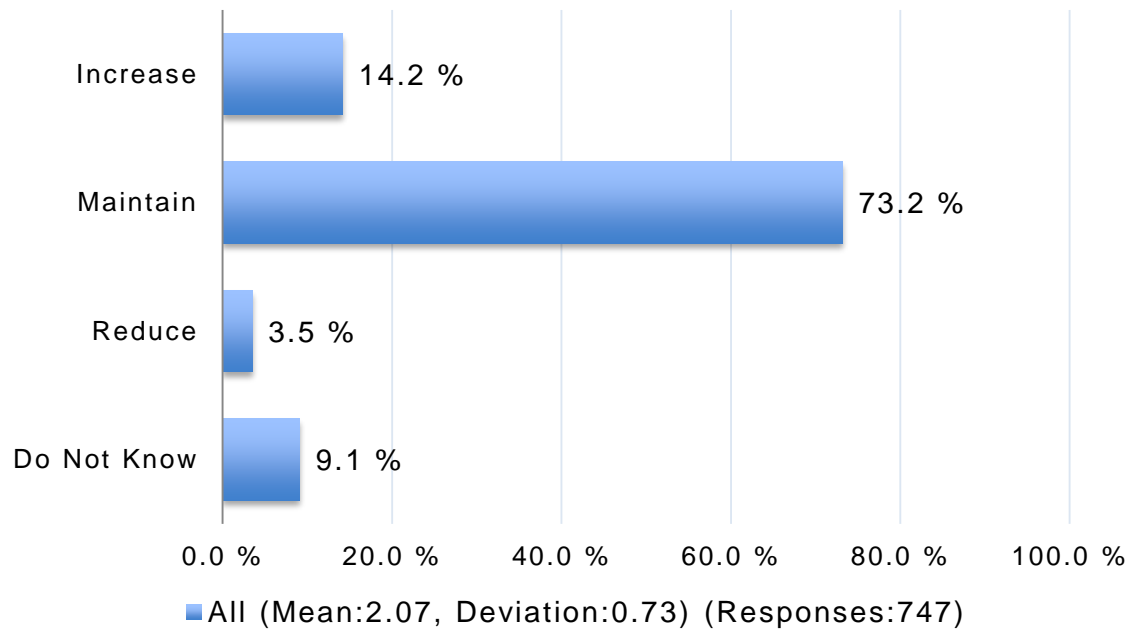
Management of invasive plants



Applying for permits, paying taxes and other in-person services



Registering for recreation programs, applying for permits of licenses, paying fees and other online services



Comparisons to Previous Year

While we now have baseline data on the importance of service areas and input on increasing, maintaining, or reducing service levels, the metrics for value and quality are new for 2017 and will only be used for comparison moving beyond 2017.

In almost all cases the shift in ratings is small, and can be attributed to specific issues driving the agenda for many respondents (snow events, curbside collection) and to a growth in respondents indicating they did not know enough about the service to rate its importance. Staff caution placing too much emphasis on year-over-year analysis until additional years allow for longer term trends to surface.

Protection & Security

Police services and fire protection remain very highly rated in terms of importance, with only minor shifts in ratings from very important to important for these services compared to last year.

Respondents rated the importance of bylaw enforcement services slightly lower than last year. Staff believe this shift is due to respondents feeling that specific issues this year were more important than bylaw enforcement – rather than as a comment specifically to the importance of bylaw enforcement overall.

In terms of increasing, maintaining, or reducing services respondents were very consistent with fire protection and policing, while support for increasing bylaw enforcement increased from 14.5% to 33.2%

Growth & the Economy

Attracting and retaining businesses was again rated as important or very important by over 80% of respondents, with just a small shift from very important to important.

Regulating what types of buildings can be built in specific areas was rated as relatively important with 59.7% of respondents selecting very important or important compared to 81.7% last year.

Issuing building permits and providing inspections saw the most notable shift in this section with an evening out of responses across very important, important, and neither important nor unimportant at approximately 20 – 25% each.

In terms of any change in service levels the ratings this year are consistent with those of last year with only minor changes.

Parks, Recreation & Culture Services

Results in this section are very similar to last year, with negligible shifts in ratings for all areas.

Noteworthy this year are that respondents were much more supportive of increasing the levels of service across parks, recreation & culture services, with about 50% of respondents supporting increasing both recreation facilities and programming and building, maintaining, and upgrading parks, playgrounds, sports-fields and trails.

Engineering Services & Public Works

Very little change for most service areas within this section as well with the exception of cycling routes, where a larger percentage of respondents indicated they were of very low importance, and transit services which, despite being frequently noted as needing improvement in written-in responses were rated less important overall than in last year's survey.

Responses to changes to service levels in this section were generally consistent with the exception being stronger support for increases in service related to streets and roadways and sidewalks and pedestrian facilities.

Environmental Services

There were no noteworthy changes in importance ratings in the results from this survey, save to note that the common theme of concerns regarding curbside collection and recycling are echoed in the value and quality ratings in the survey for this year.

The most significant shift in terms of changes to service levels in this section was a significant increase in respondents who selected they would increase service in solid waste management and curbside collection, coming in at 58.4% compared to only 20.5% last year.

Online and In-person Services

Very little change in this section.

Top 3 Priorities

Following noting where they would increase, maintain, or reduce service levels, respondents were asked to prioritize the top three service areas as priorities for 2018

Parks and recreation-facilities & programming were the most frequently cited priorities at 232.

Policing and public safety were the second most frequently cited service areas with 222 mentions.

Curbside collection including garbage and recycling were mentioned a combined total of 198 times.

Transportation and transit (including sidewalks and cycling) improvements were also frequently noted 94 times, followed **attracting and retaining businesses** (72) and **bylaw enforcement** (32) not related to social issues or public safety.

New Services or Amenities

Respondents were asked to write-in suggestions for new services. 267 of the total 766 participants chose to provide a response to this question.

Of those 267 unique responses 26 specifically noted they either had no suggestions or that specifically the District should not provide any new services, indicating the strongest overall trend is a reluctance to consider new services funded by residential property taxes.

While the majority of responses noting new services or amenities were more realistically requests to improve existing services (curbside collection, business attraction and retention), amenities (more playgrounds, improved facilities), or broad requests for solutions to multi-agency challenges (solving homelessness, affordable housing, addiction) the strongest trends across responses expressed a desire for increased programming / activities (festivals, activities, entertainment) for teens and seniors, and improvements to parks and accessibility / multi-modal transportation.

Funding for New Services or Amenities

Respondents to this question were asked to provide suggestions on how they would fund any new services, if they suggested any should be brought in.

The responses to this question conform to two broad themes, one being statements that residential property taxes are too high and spending should be frozen or cut, and the other noting that increased business and industry contributions were the best means of funding any new initiatives.

User fees and user-pay models were the most consistently referenced strategy, with a number of respondents also noting these models would create improved fairness for homeowners with suites currently paying double for utilities.

Finally, increased efficiency and streamlining / reducing costs and wages were noteworthy themes in this section.