

2011-2012 Budget: Civic Engagement Analysis

Part II: Group Feedback

Part I: Survey Results is separate presentation

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City of Vancouver, Washington

Council Workshop April 26th, 2010



Agenda

Part I:

- What we have done
- Caveats and cautions
- Community Survey
- Web Survey

Part II:

- “Live” Groups
- Summary: What it all means



Focus Groups

- Eight random / mixed groups of 4 to 14 participants
- Total of 77 participants
- Consistent approach in all sessions
 - Prioritization and “value allocation” exercise
 - Polling on values, budget recommendations, funding options
 - Drill downs on safety, job creation, government efficiency & direction
 - Question added for last group about a new cut option
- Used “clicker” polling technology and “flip” charts to gather data

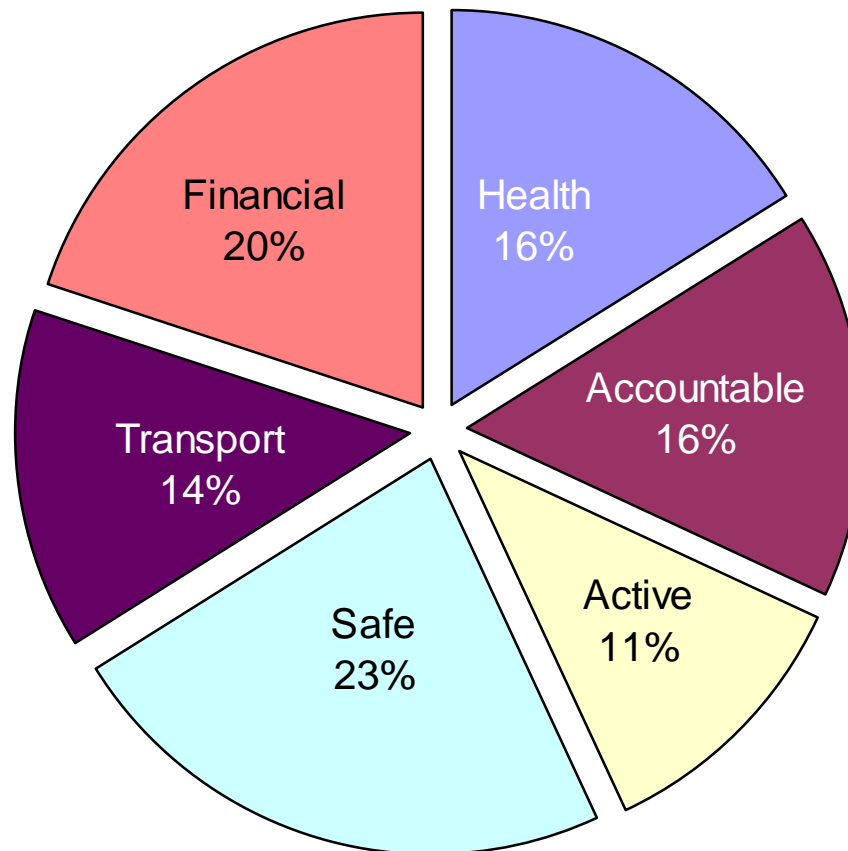
Individual Allocation Worksheet

- NEXT, beginning with your first priority, assign **100 VALUE POINTS** across the six Strategic Commitments based on your view of how valuable each Strategic Commitment is to your community, compared **with other Strategic Commitments** – What do you value most for your COMMUNITY?

	Healthy Livable & Sustainable	Accountable, Responsive Government	Active & Involved Community	Safe & Prepared Community	Transportation, Connectivity and Mobility	Fiscal Health and Economic Vitality
Priority	#4	#3	#6	#1	#5	#2
Value Points Allocation	16	16	11	23	14	20

“Value” distribution by Strategic Commitment

Value Points



Focus Group Drill Down Issue #1

Q: Why is reducing or cutting employee benefits or pay rated very low, below most other options?

A:

- Empathy based on personal experience
- Government is “important” work and needs quality employees
- Opportunities for decreased costs should include greater sharing in cost of health benefits, better managing overtime, use of private contracting where appropriate



Focus Group Drill Down Issue #2

Q: People say they are not happy with the direction the City of Vancouver is heading. What does that mean to you?

A:

- Mixed reviews in this area
- “Questionable” investments such as CRC, Waterfront, light rail, Hilton
- Lack of transparency in decision making
- “Visionary” investments such as CRC, Waterfront, light rail, Hilton
- Good public involvement in decision making (such as Horizons)

Focus Group Drill Down Issue #3

Q: People indicate the City should help with job creation. What should the City's role be?

A:

- Importance of streamlining permitting and other processes
- City often needs to “get out of the way”
- Do a better job marketing and promoting our community
- Promote “shop local”
- Mixed opinions on providing incentives
- Need to focus on the “right” jobs
- City's role is not as a direct job “creator”

Focus Group Drill Down Issue #4

Q: Compared to other cities, how efficient and “lean” do you think the City of Vancouver is?

A:

- City appears to be working hard at this – budget cuts, Horizons
- Negative attitudes colored by news about other jurisdictions and other levels of government (state, federal)
- Areas for improvement: stronger ombudsman function; better inform citizens about what we are doing; continued dialogue with the community

Focus Group Drill Down Issue #5

Q: People say they feel less safe now when walking at night in their neighborhood than 2 years ago. Why?

A:

- State of economy raises fear for general or fiscal safety
- Visible evidence such as abandoned vehicles, vacant homes, unkempt property
- Importance of “taking care of each other” and programs such as CERT, NOW
- Important factors that contribute to feelings of safety: visible police presence, safe activities for kids, well-lighted streets



Focus Group Drill Down Issue #6

Q: What does “Transportation” mean to you?

A:

- Confusion of City’s role in CRC, light rail, C-Tran
- Divergent opinions on importance of new investments
- Frustration with deterioration of current system (potholes)
- Linkage between Transportation and Job Creation recognized by a few



May 8th Invitation Group

- Invitational group, 26 members of community
- Business leaders, Neighborhoods, Community activists, Education, Transportation
- Same basic values exercise as focus groups
- Drilled down into “who should provide services” and regionalization options
- Further drill down discussions by small group into one specific issue within each strategic commitment & report out to group
- Recorded but not live television, can be viewed on web now



May 8th Invitation Group

(Sample Question) **Who should provide this service: Parks Services?**

1. All local control
2. Mostly local control
3. Equal local / regional
4. Mostly regional control
5. All regional control
6. Not sure

Do we want this service provided at the local level or regionalize it? City level has more control, higher levels less local control but potentially more resources and capacity

May 8th Invitation Group

Who should provide this service results:

- Parks Services: **Keep existing mixed structure, or become more regional**
- Recreation Centers & Programs: **No clear consensus**
- Traffic controls, Street construction & Road maintenance: **No clear consensus**
- Fire & Emergency Medical Service: **Regional service**

May 8th Invitation Group: Table Issue 1

Q: In the City's scientific survey, people said their quality of life has declined significantly over the last two years.

What elements contribute to quality of life for you?

A:

- Ability to stay in neighborhood to shop, recreate
- Easy access to parks and trails
- Safe routes for kids to get to school
- Access to healthy food (groceries, community gardens)
- Strong community enhances feeling of safety
- Being engaged in the community

May 8th Invitation Group: Table Issue 2

Q: One way we promote an active & involved community is through our recreational programs and community centers. Our surveys indicate in tough times that these are among the lowest fiscal priorities.

What should the City's role in providing recreational opportunities be, if any?

A:

- Strong consensus – the City **does** have a role in providing recreation for those who can't afford to pay for private opportunities
- Recreation benefits other strategic commitments, such as lower crime
- Importance of partnerships with schools and others

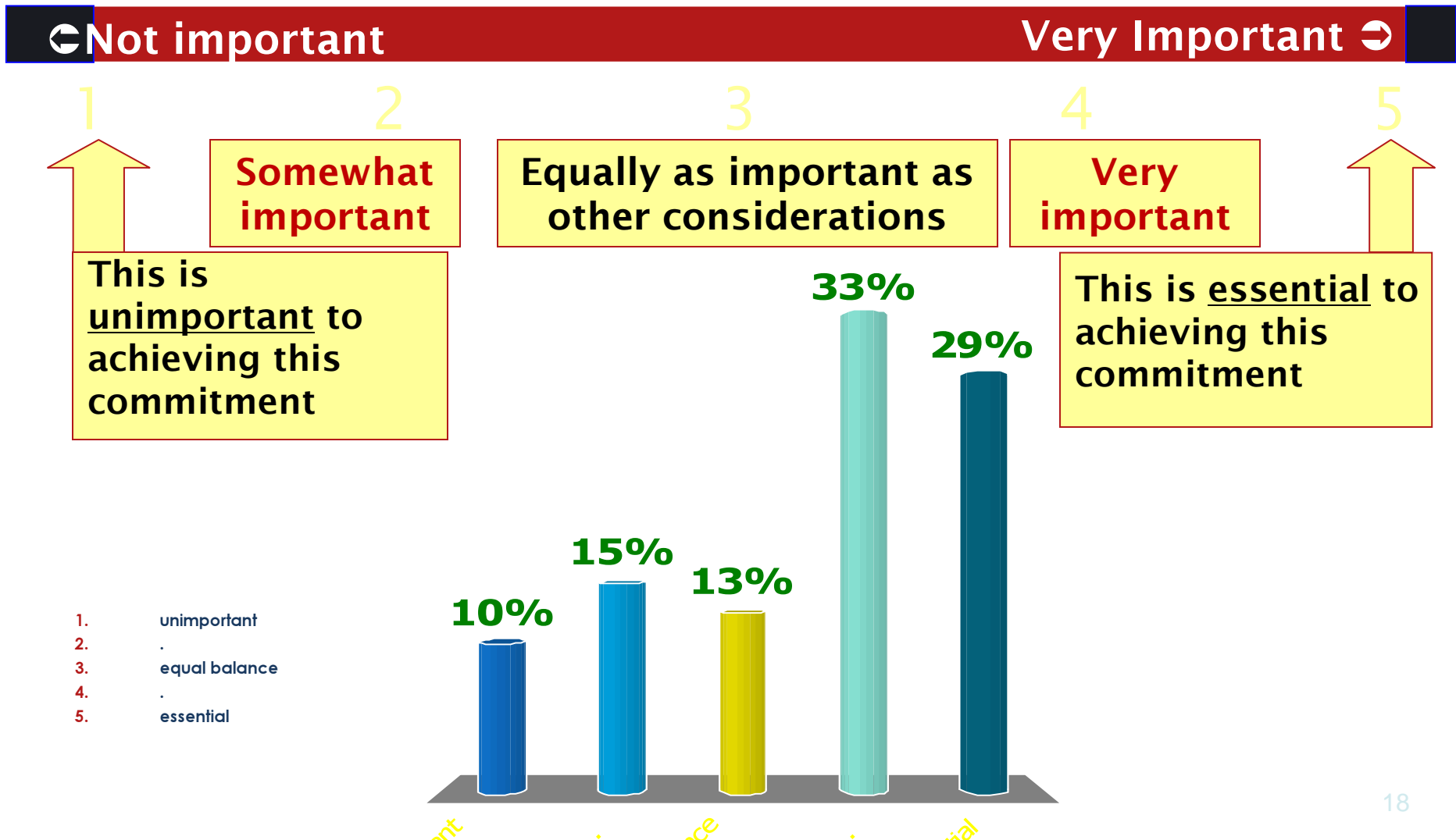


May 11th Televised Group

- 29 participants in the room, peak total of 32 call-ins (61 total)
- 23 questions that “check in” on what we think we had heard from other sources
- Compare relative importance of elements within the Strategic Commitments

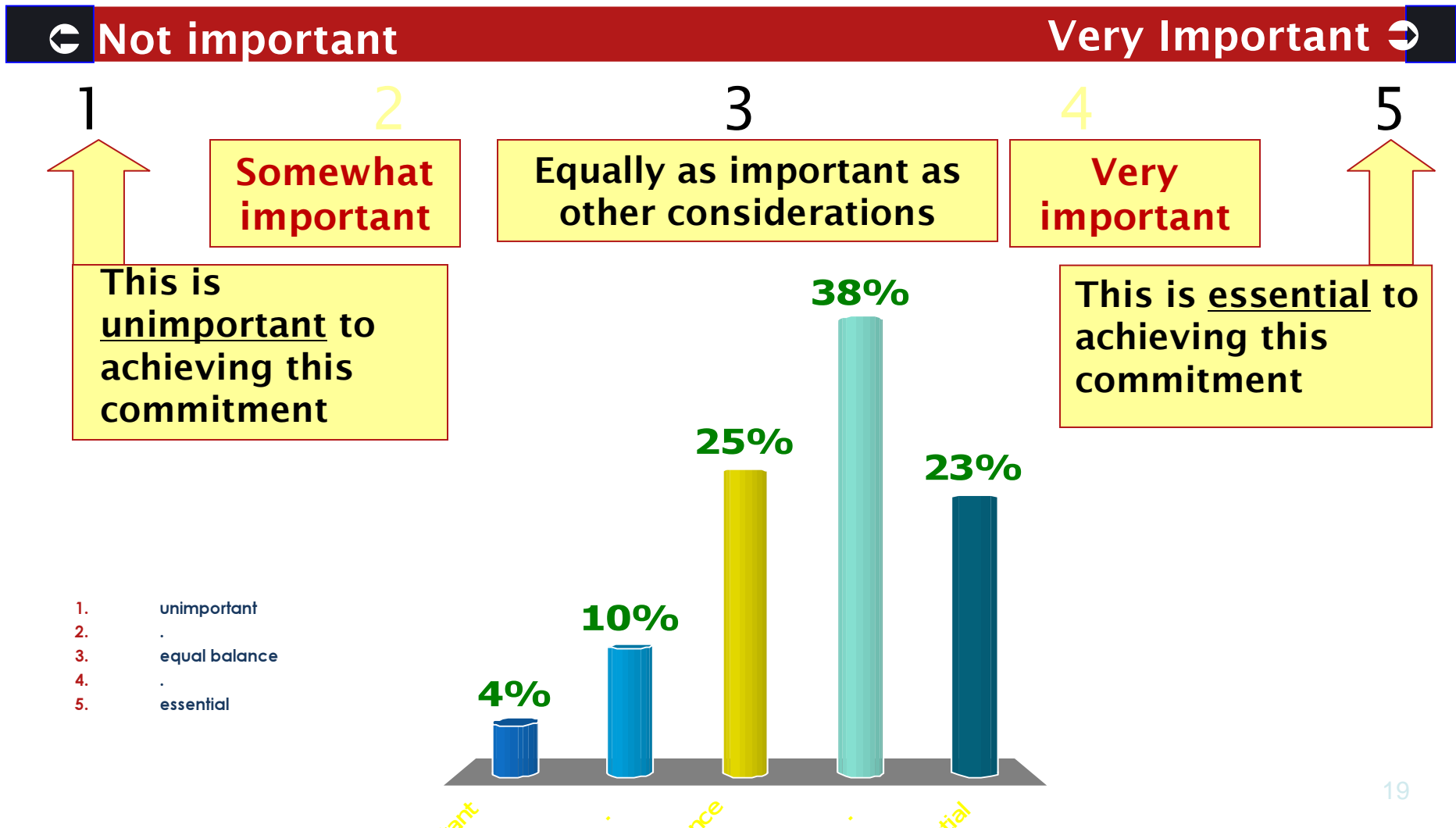
Poll: Healthy Livable Sustainable Vancouver

How important is it to have parks & open spaces close to your home?



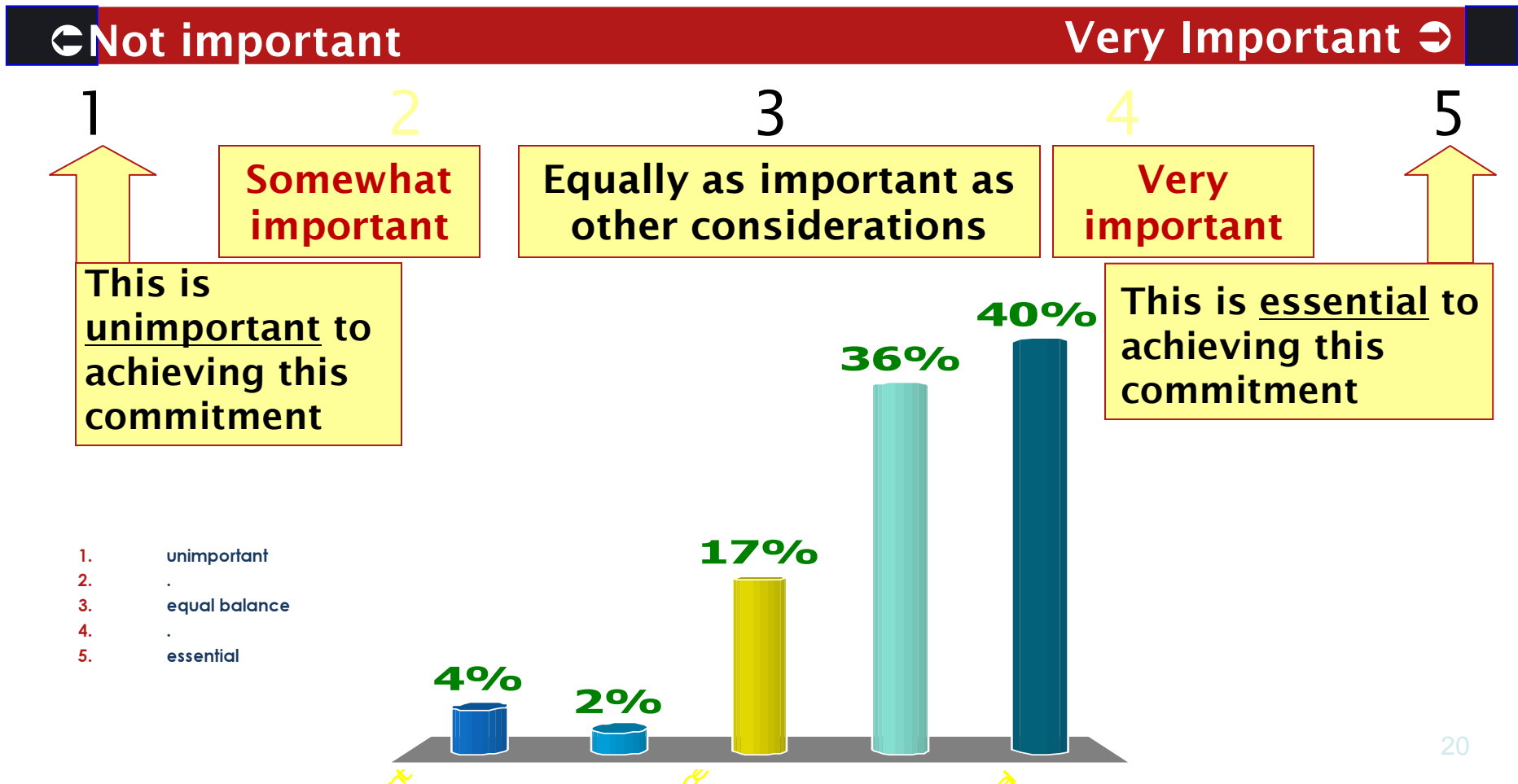
Poll: Healthy Livable Sustainable Vancouver

How important are alternative mobility choices for citizens, including trails, bike & pedestrian paths?

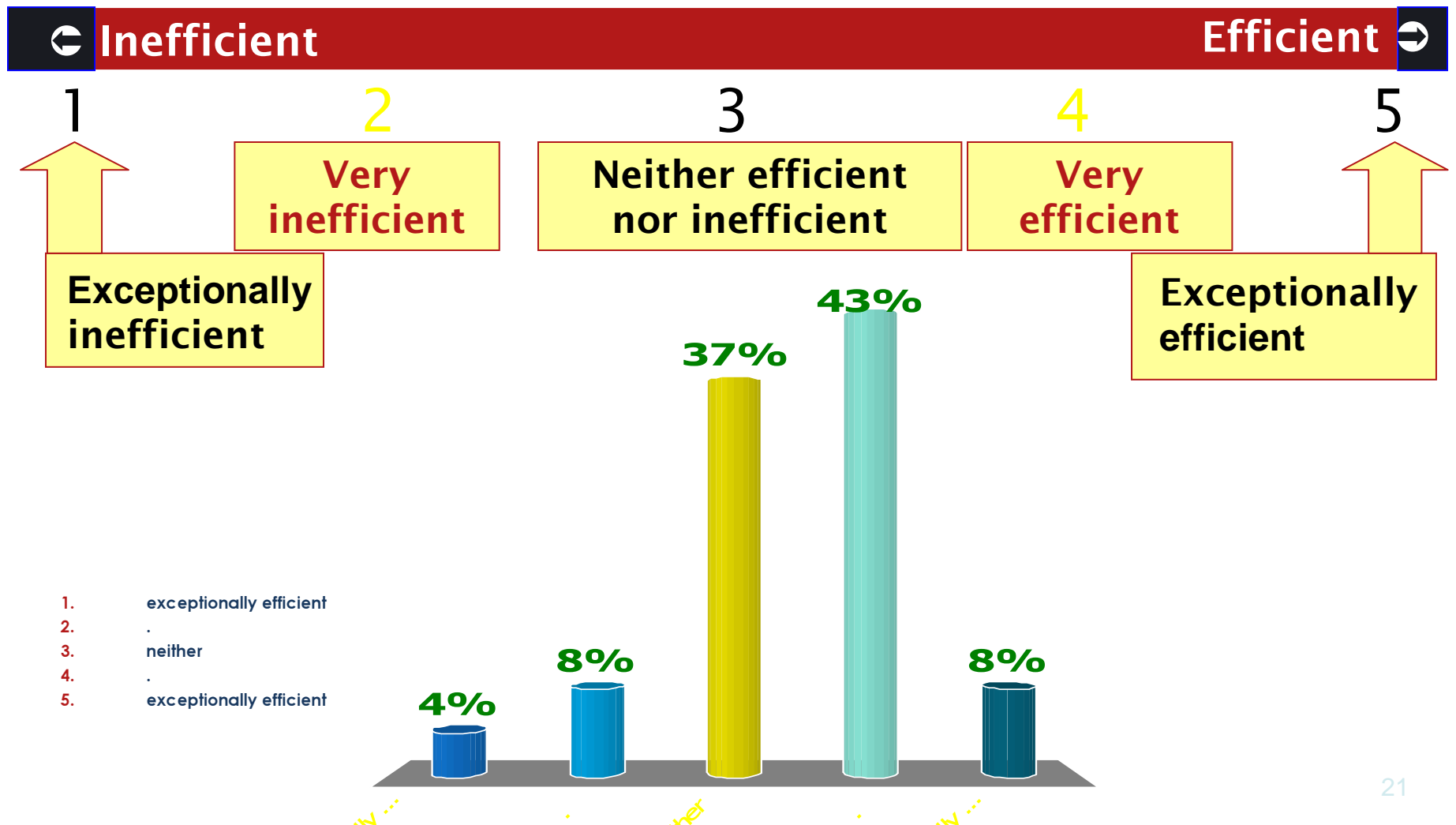


Poll: Healthy Livable Sustainable Vancouver

How important is having a well-planned community that balances jobs, housing, services and recreation?



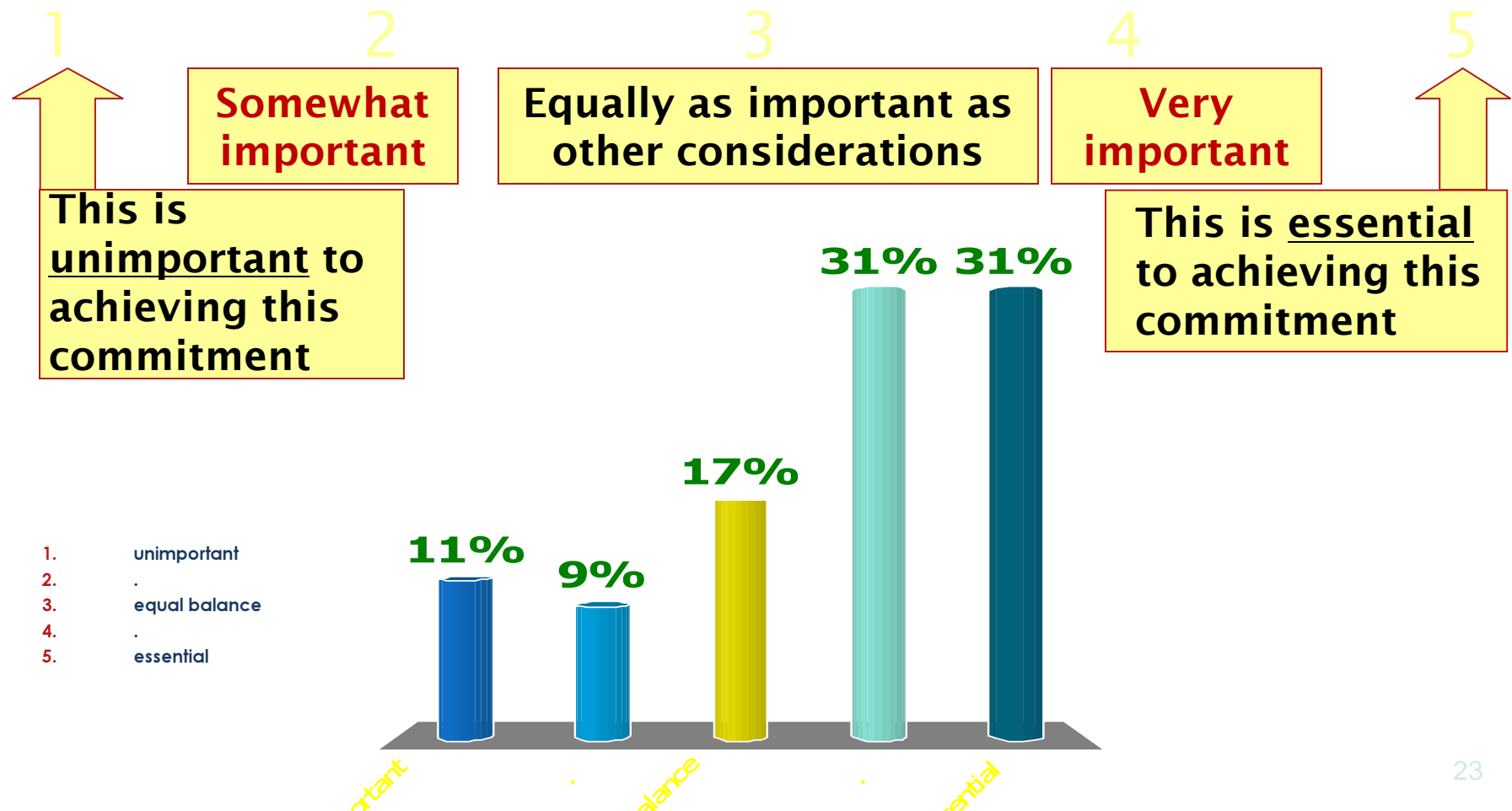
Poll: Accountable, Responsive Government - How efficient is Vancouver city government at delivering services at a good value?



Poll: Active & Involved Community - How important is it for the city to provide opportunities for community engagement and volunteerism?

← Not important

Very Important →

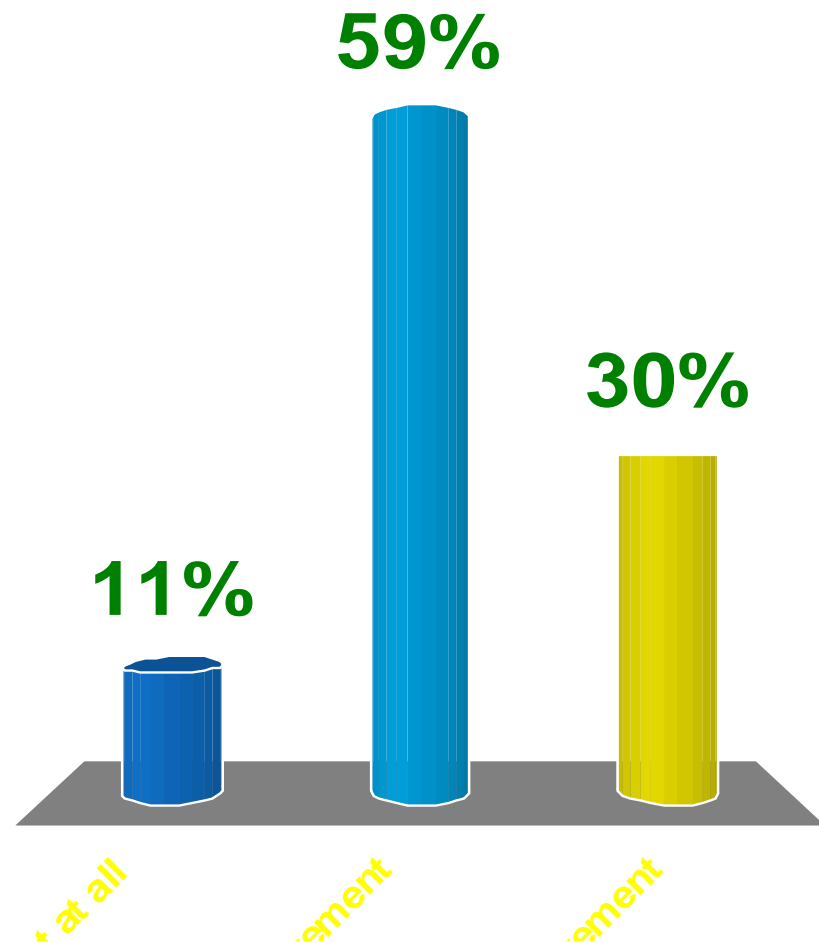


Poll: Active & Involved Community



To what degree should City government be involved in arts, culture, heritage and special events activities?

1. Not at all
2. Some involvement
3. Strong involvement

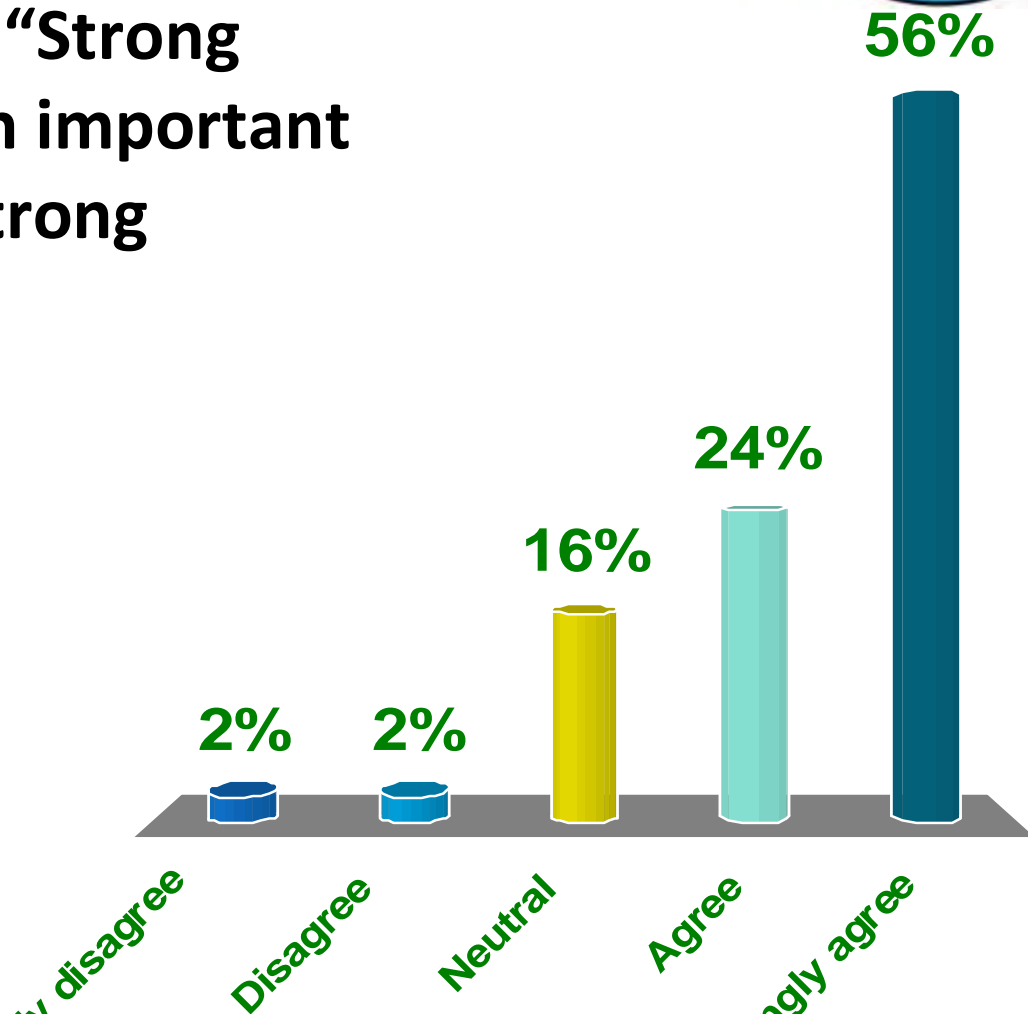


Poll: Active & Involved Community



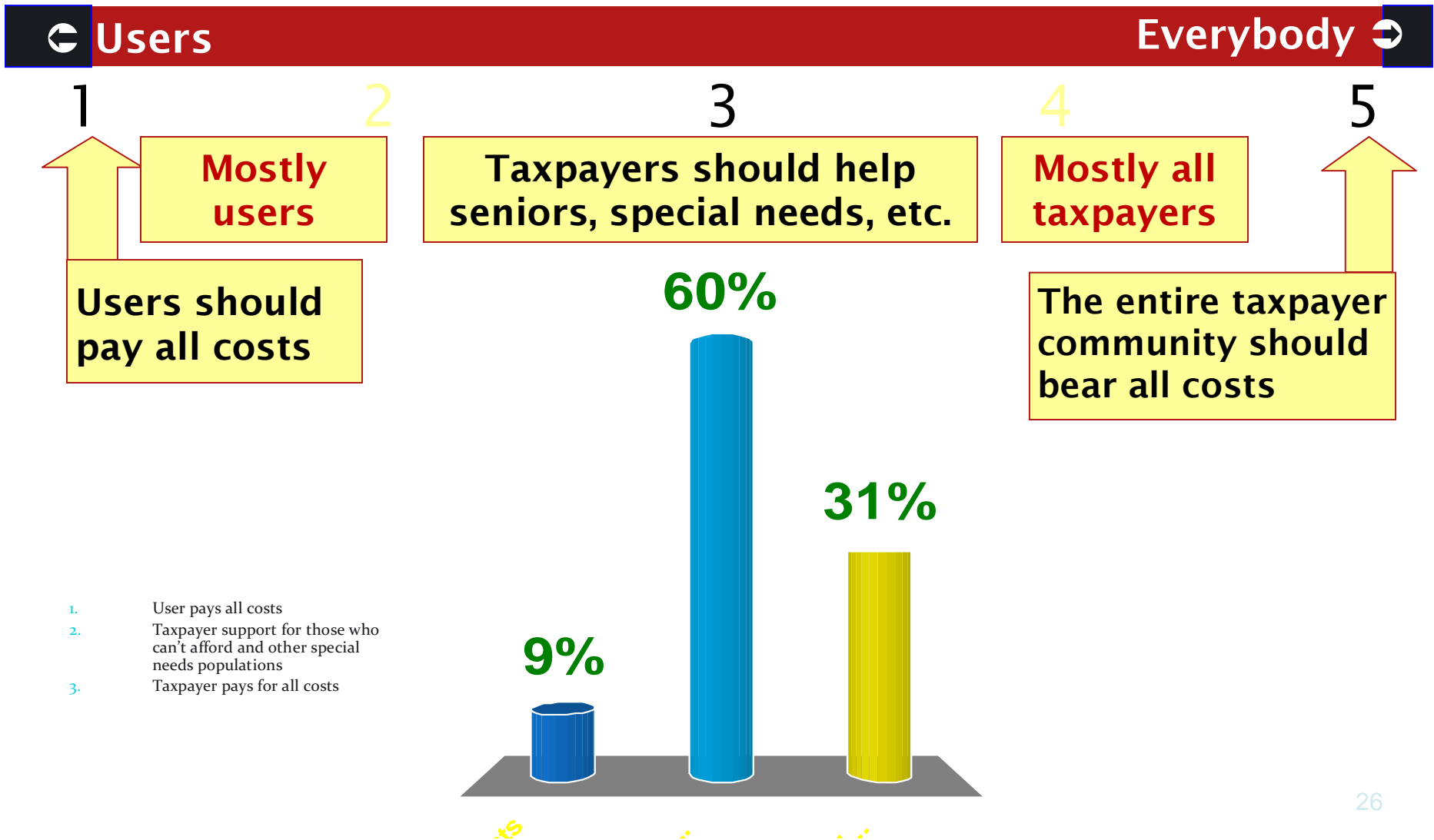
How do you feel about the following statement: “Strong neighborhoods are an important building block for a strong community.”

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree



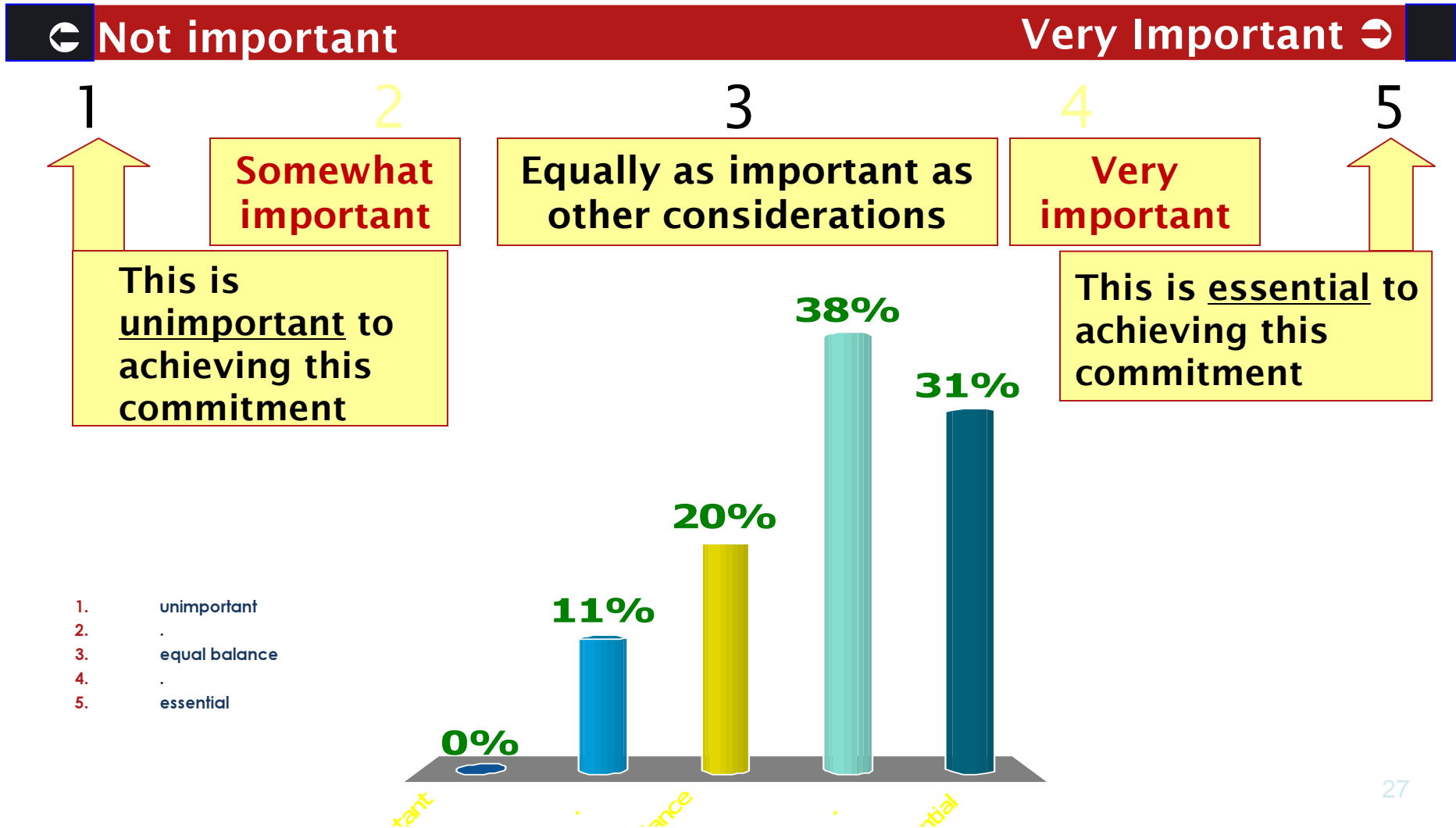
Poll: Active and Involved Community

Who should bear the cost for recreational programs and facilities?



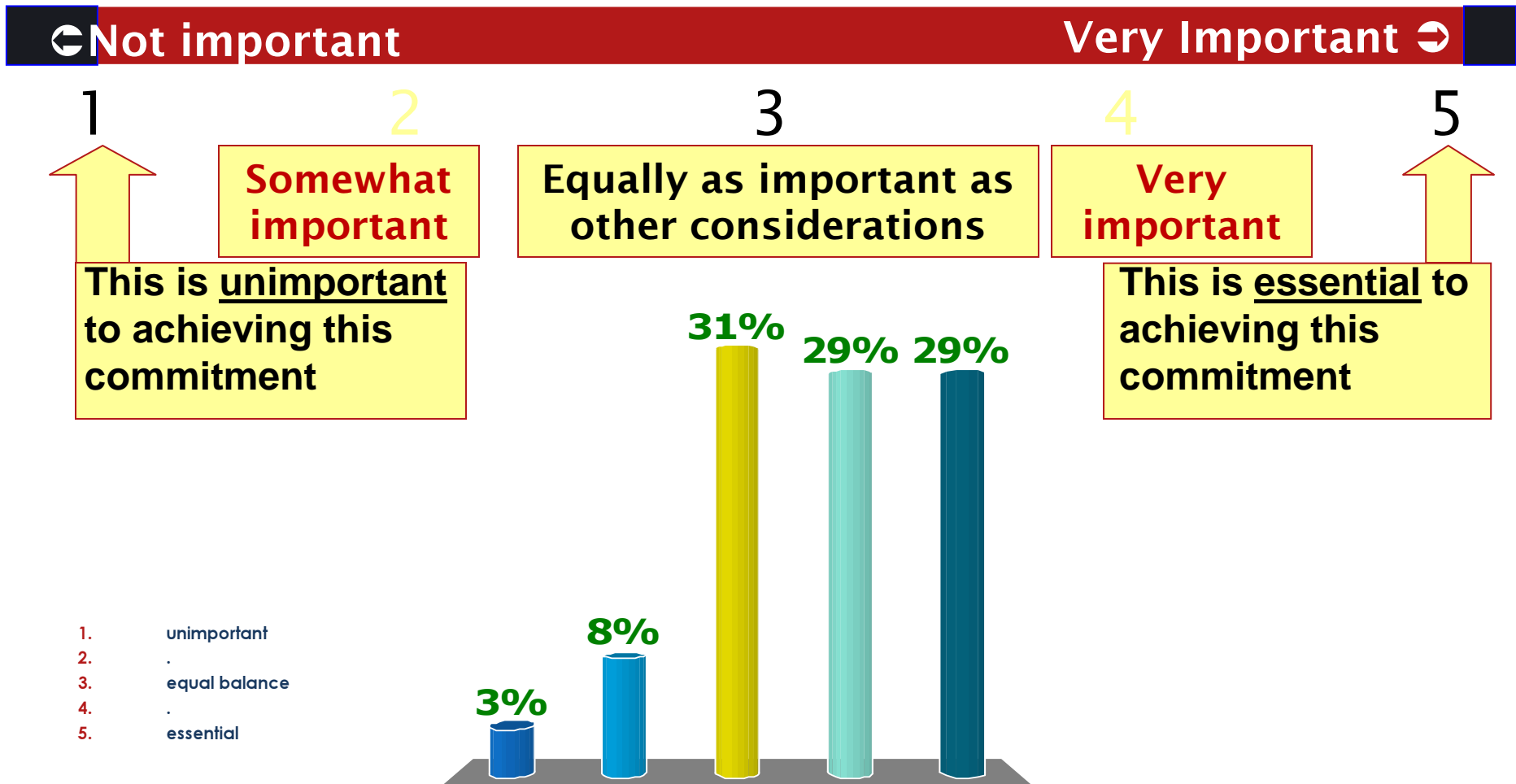
Poll: Safe & Prepared Community

How important is police visibility?



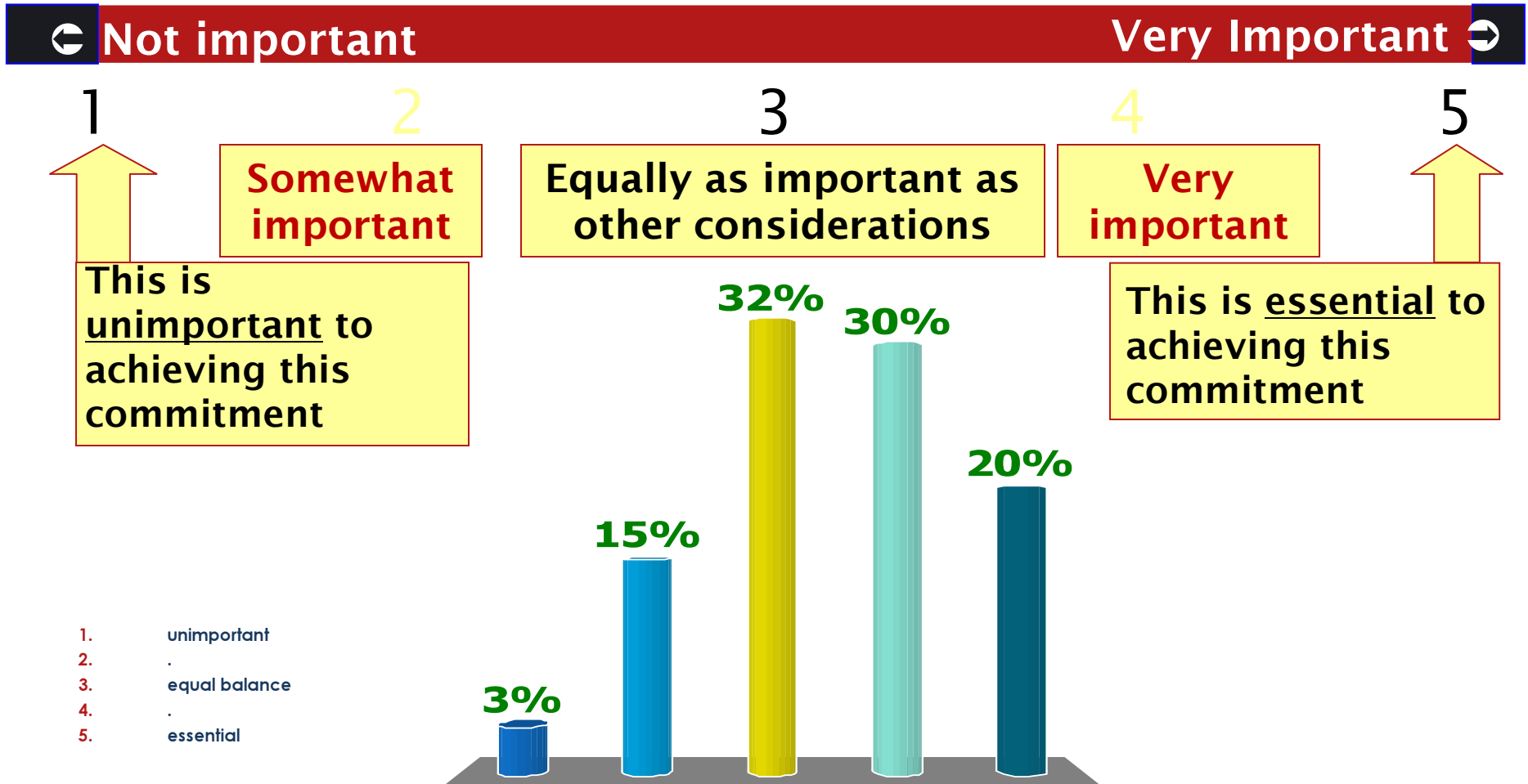
Poll: Safe & Prepared Community

How important is the City's role in Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness?



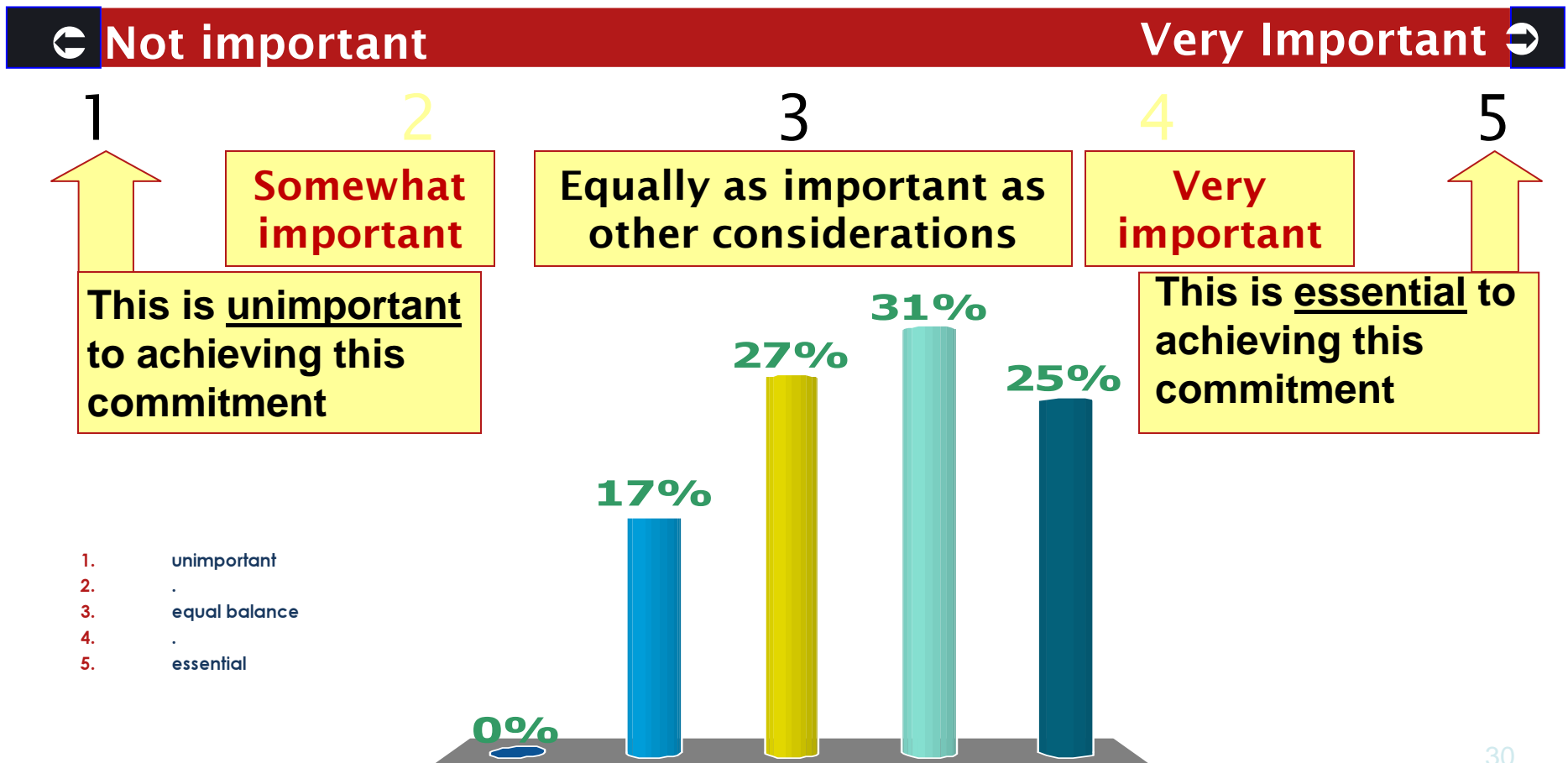
Poll: Safe & Prepared Community

How important are well-lighted streets?



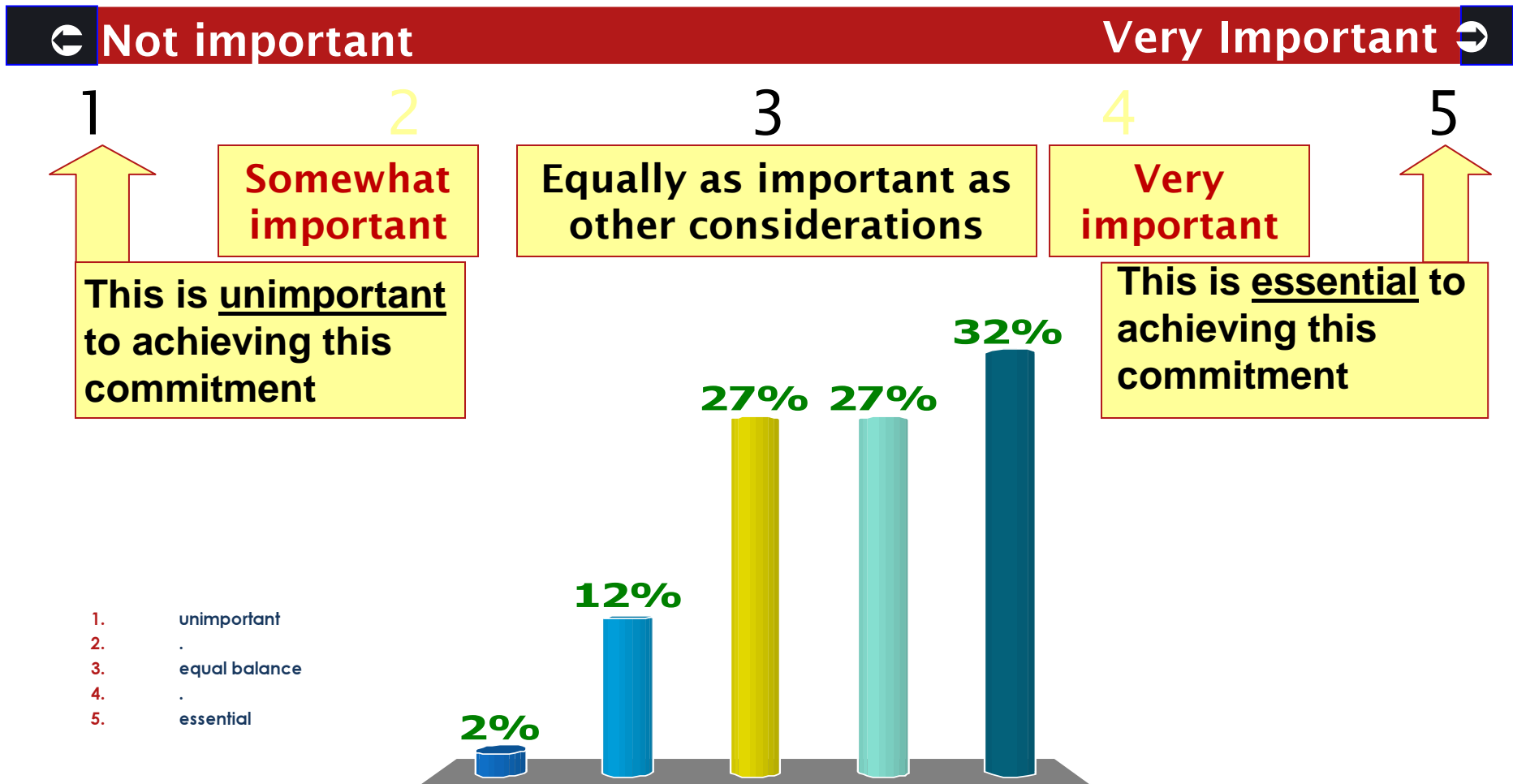
Poll: Safe & Prepared Community

How important is active enforcement of property code violations, such as junk, weeds, graffiti or vandalism?



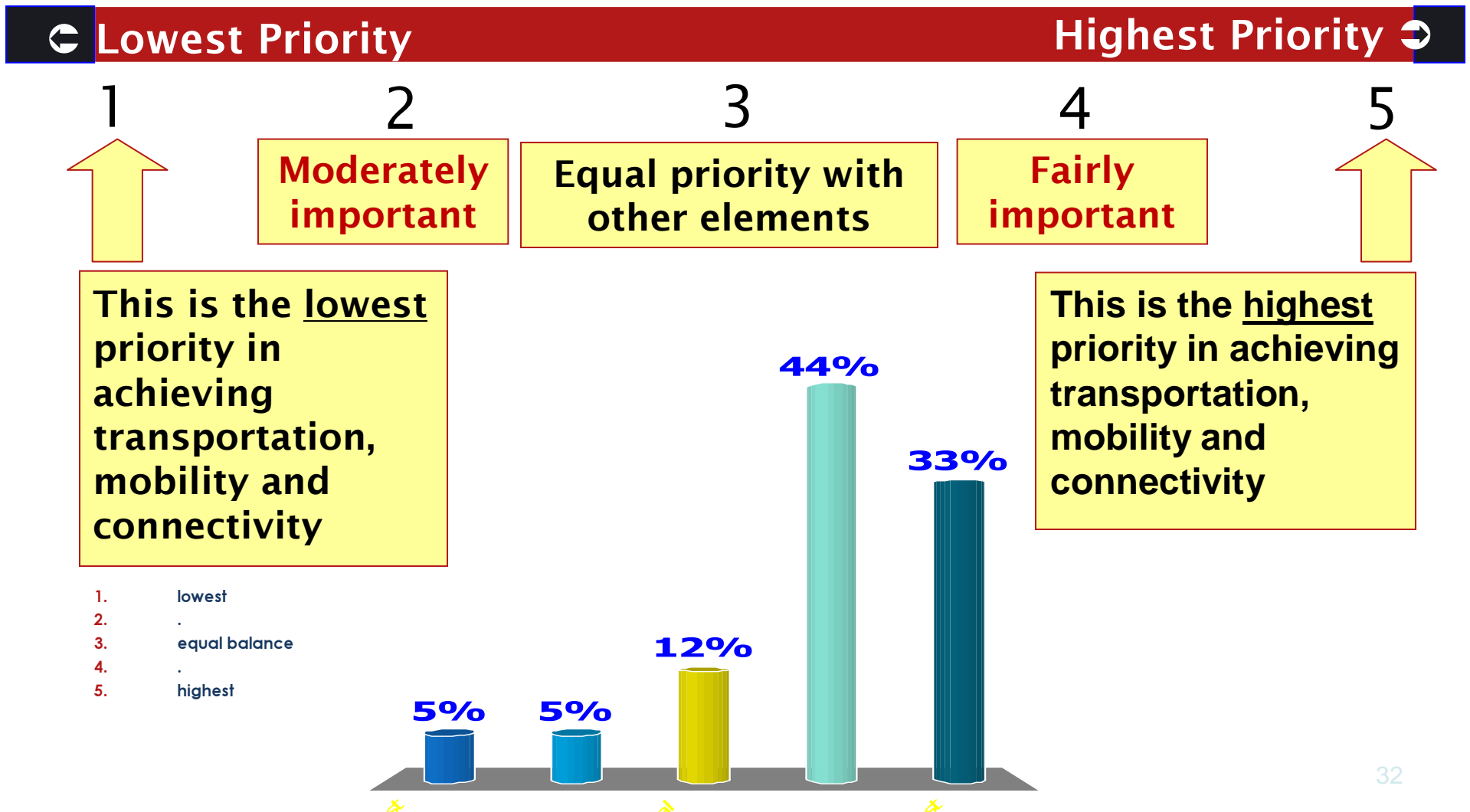
Poll: Safe & Prepared Community

How important is an adult supervised place with structured programs for kids after school?



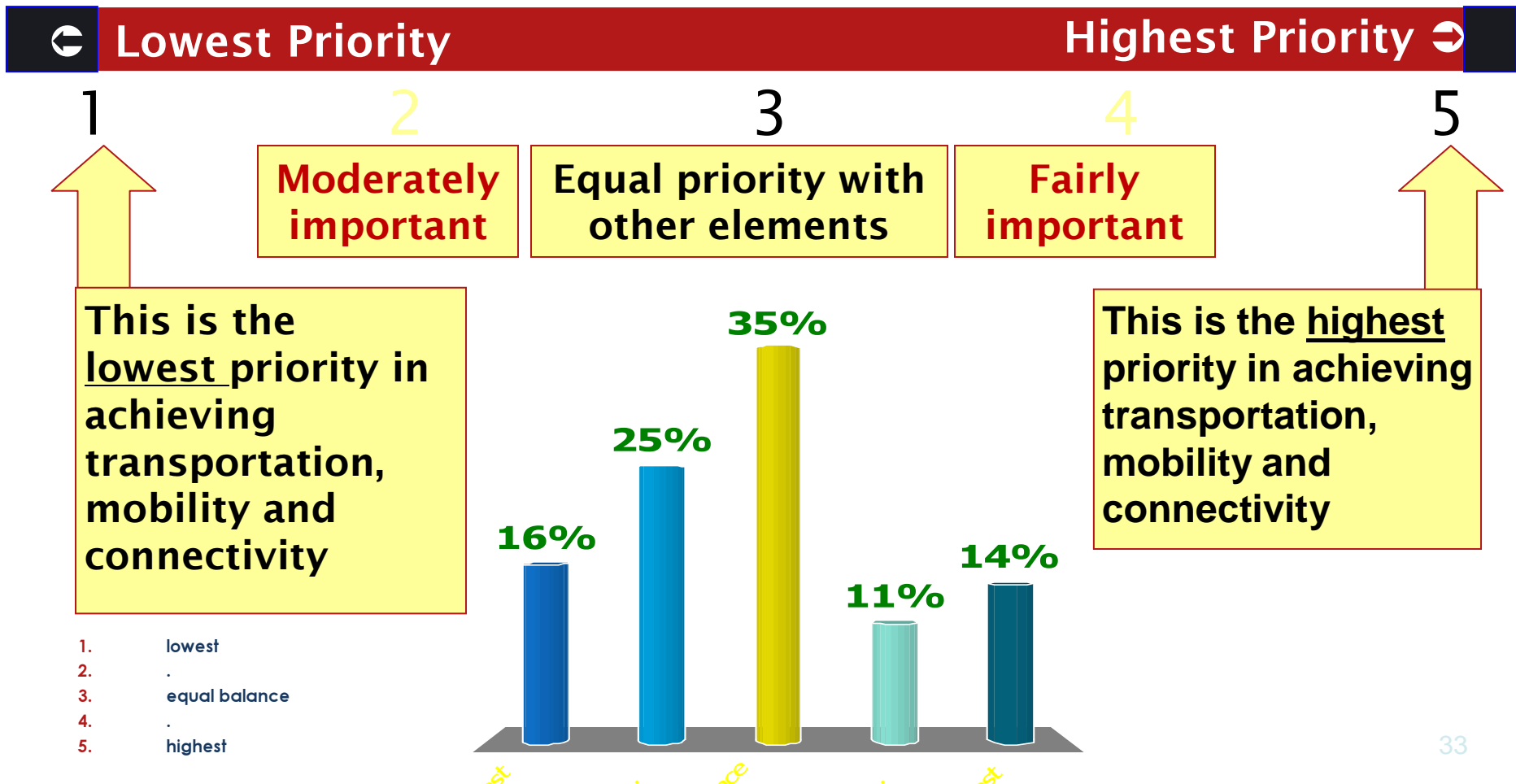
Poll: Transportation, Mobility & Connectivity

How important is keeping existing city streets in good repair?



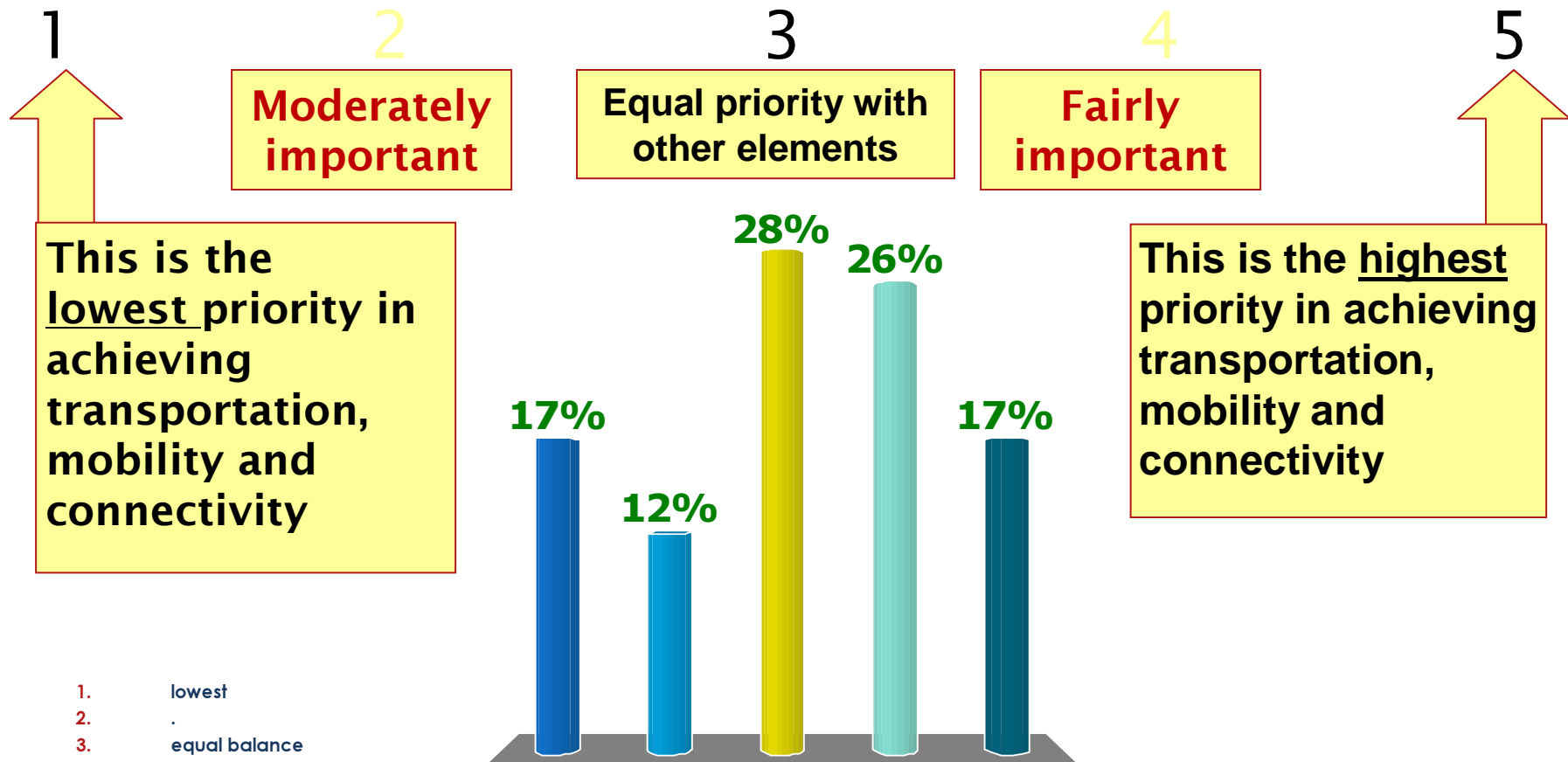
Poll: Transportation, Mobility & Connectivity

How important is adding vehicle traffic capacity through new or widened roads?



Poll: Transportation, Mobility & Connectivity - How important is it to expand transportation options by improving & expanding trails, bikeways & sidewalks?

← **Lowest Priority** **Highest Priority** →



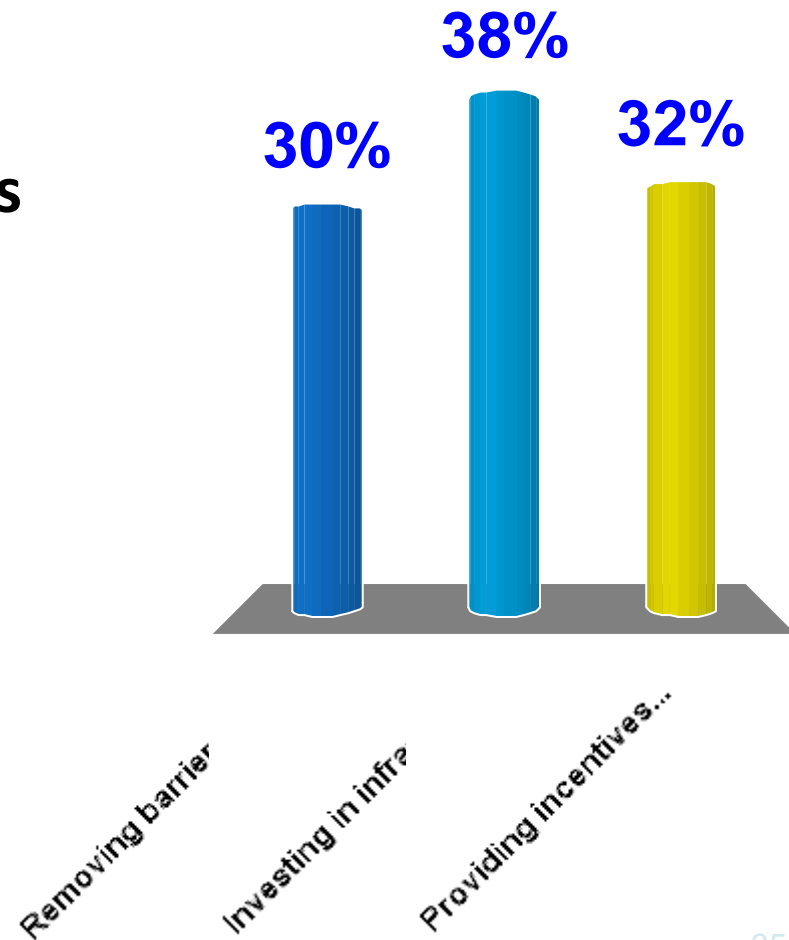
- 1. lowest
- 2. .
- 3. equal balance
- 4. .
- 5. highest

Poll: Financial Health & Economic Vitality



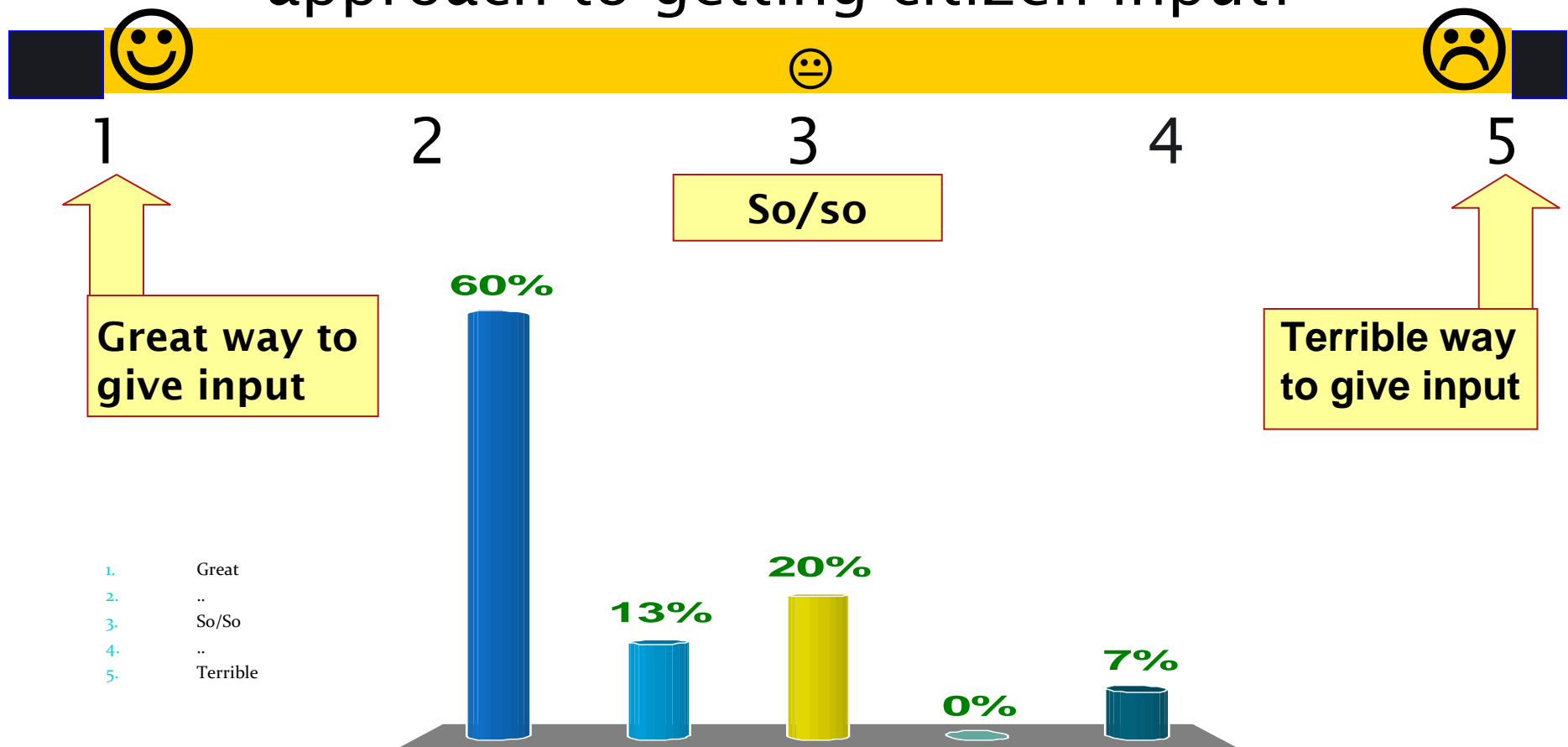
Which of these options is the most important for the City to do?

1. Removing barriers to business investment
2. Investing in infrastructure
3. Providing incentives and facilitating business transactions



If you're still with us.....

This is the first time for us to use this new polling technology. What did you think of this approach to getting citizen input?



Summary Observations (1 of 2)

- Community is overall very safe, but people are concerned about declining quality of life
- People are overall satisfied with most services – so far
- The City is perceived as very efficient
- People want to vote on taxes – later
- “A Safe & Prepared Community” is high priority – but it is more than simply Fire, EMS & Police Response

Summary Observations (2 of 2)

- Parks & Recreation is a low fiscal priority – but highly valued for quality of life
- Transportation is a high priority – but only for existing street maintenance
- Job creation – The City has a key but very specific role
- Significant interconnectedness exists among the Strategic Commitments – none can stand alone.