



City of
WHITEHALL
Opportunity is Here

2022 Whitehall Community Attitudes Survey

Saperstein Associates, Inc. / Fall 2022

This research gives residents of Whitehall a voice. It allows the public to express opinions on myriad issues – and, in doing so, provides the city's leadership objective data as planning for the future continues.



Owner Name, Parcel ID,



Methodology

- This report is the fourth in a biennial series dating to 2016.
- Unlike the earlier studies, the current research required two data collection methodologies. Specifically, 277 residents of Whitehall were interviewed by telephone (65%), while 152 completed a self-administered online questionnaire (35%). In total, 429 residents participated in this study.
- In recent years, studies employing more than a single data collection methodology have become more common as the percentage of potential survey participants who answer their telephone continues to decline.

For this survey, for example, skilled interviewers dialed, on average, more than 50 telephone numbers for each completed interview. The corresponding numbers for the studies conducted in 2020, 2018, and 2016 are 35, 25, and 15, respectively.

- The current study also differs from the previous studies due to changes in the sampling frame. Indeed, while the sampling frame for each of the earlier studies was developed almost entirely from an updated list of Whitehall's registered voters, the sampling frame for the current study is more inclusive, involving lists provided by the City of Whitehall and two commercial vendors of sampling data, Aristotle and the IHR Research Group*.
- The telephone interviews were completed from September 10 through October 5 and averaged 21 minutes in length.
- The online interviews were completed from September 9 through October 6 with a median length of 18 minutes.
- The margin of error for a random sample of 429 respondents is $\leq \pm 4.7$ percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence.

*Both the current and previous studies also employed a list by the Whitehall City Schools.

- As the table below demonstrates, the survey respondents approximate the city's adult residents on several dimensions, including gender, education, home ownership, race, and age.

	Whitehall: Actual*	Survey Sample
Male	50%	48%
Female	50%	52%
Grade school	15%	6%
High school grad	40%	39%
Some college plus	45%	55%
Own	38%	38%
Rent	59%	59%
African American	40%	44%
White	43%	41%

	Whitehall: Actual [†]	Survey Sample
18 to 24	14%	3%
25 to 34	20%	15%
35 to 44	22%	23%
45 to 54	17%	18%
55 to 64	13%	16%
65 to 74	9%	16%
Older than 74	5%	9%

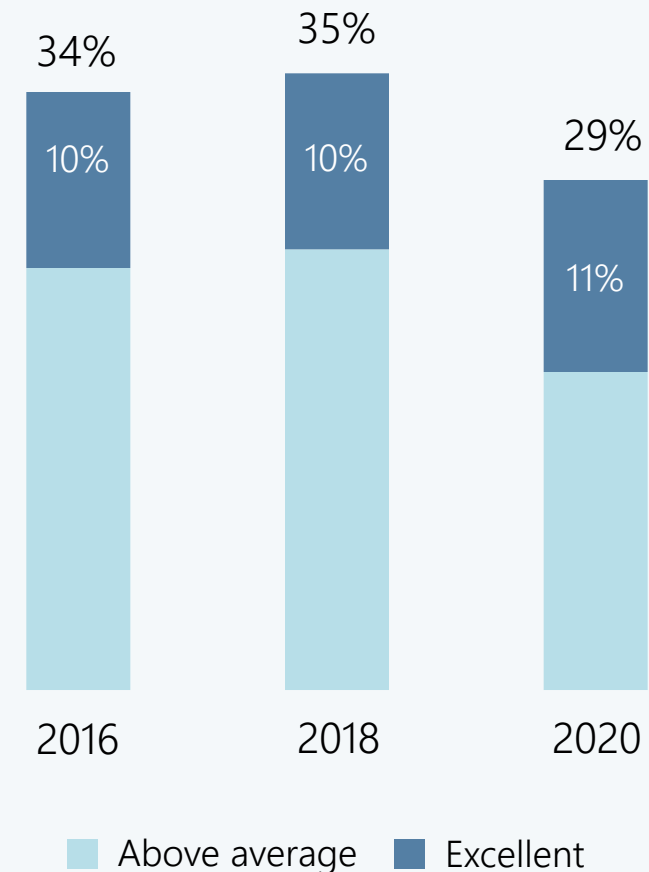
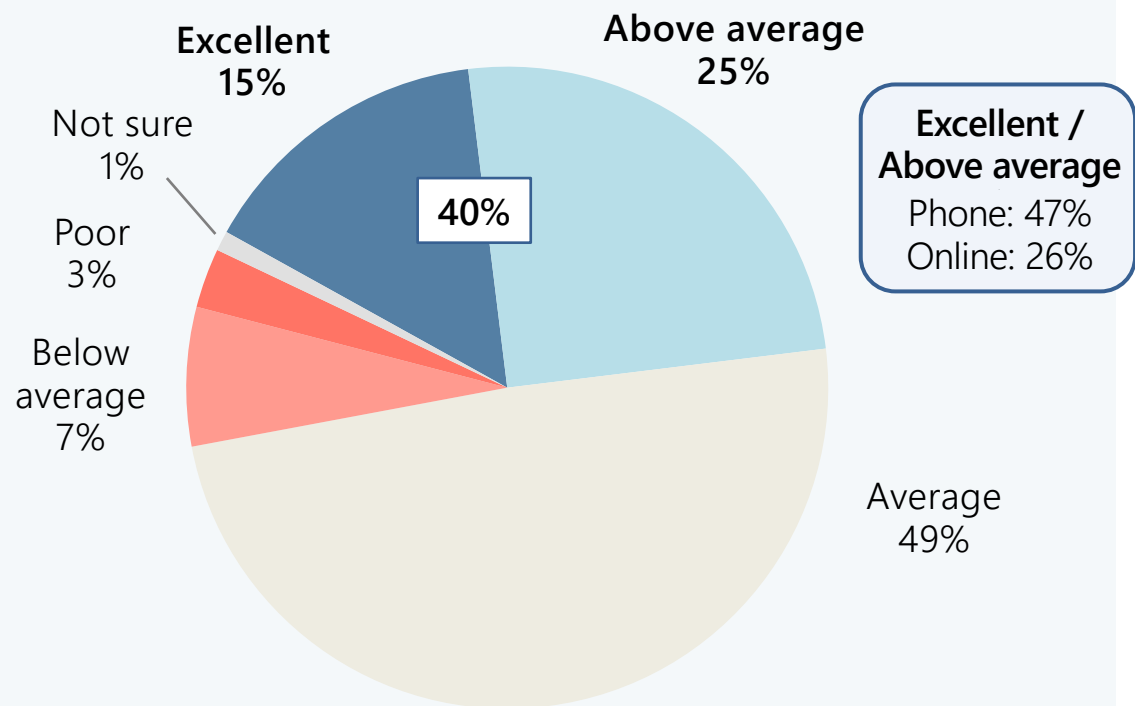
- Each data collection methodology tends to favor, albeit slightly, different respondent demographics.

	Phone	Online
Total respondents	65%	35%
Male	55%	45%
Female	73%	27%
High school or less	74%	26%
Associate / vocational	61%	39%
College plus	55%	45%
Owner-occupied	61%	39%
Rent	67%	33%
<\$45,000	66%	34%
≥\$45,000	61%	39%
African American	73%	27%
White	56%	44%

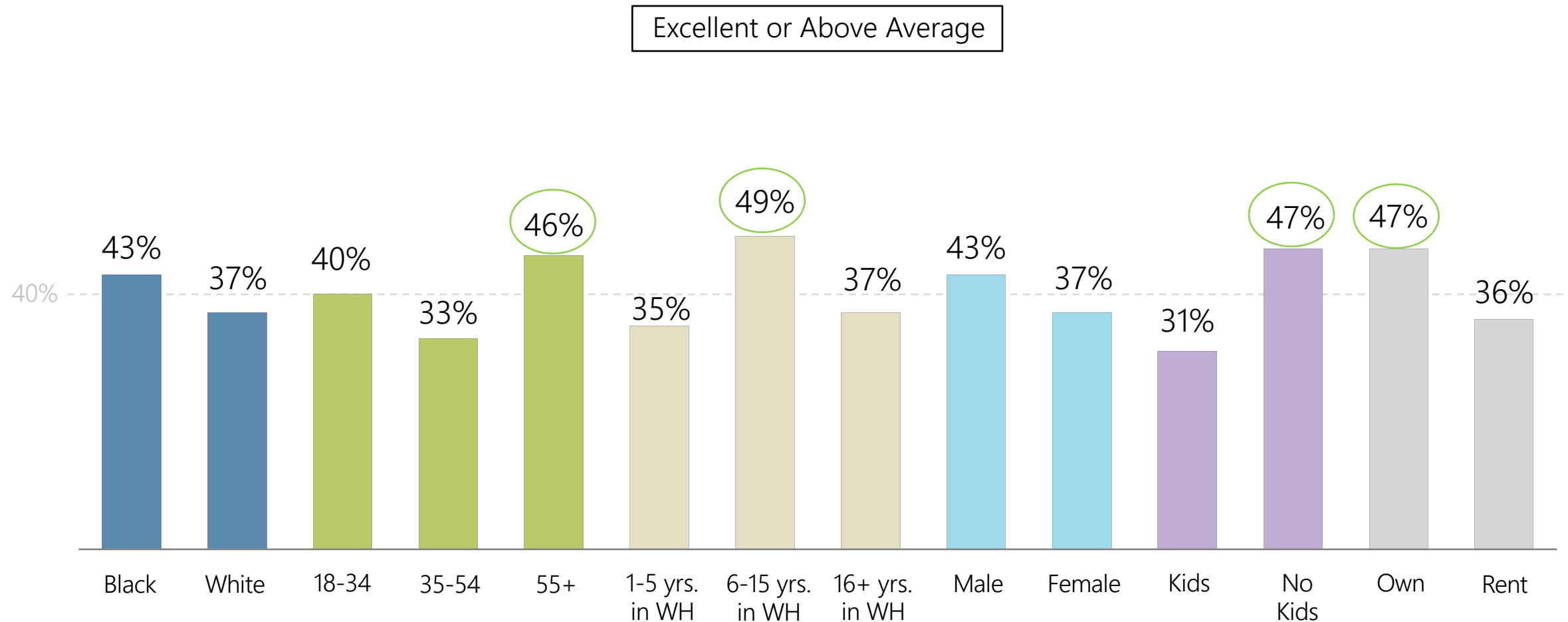


Whitehall as a Place to Live

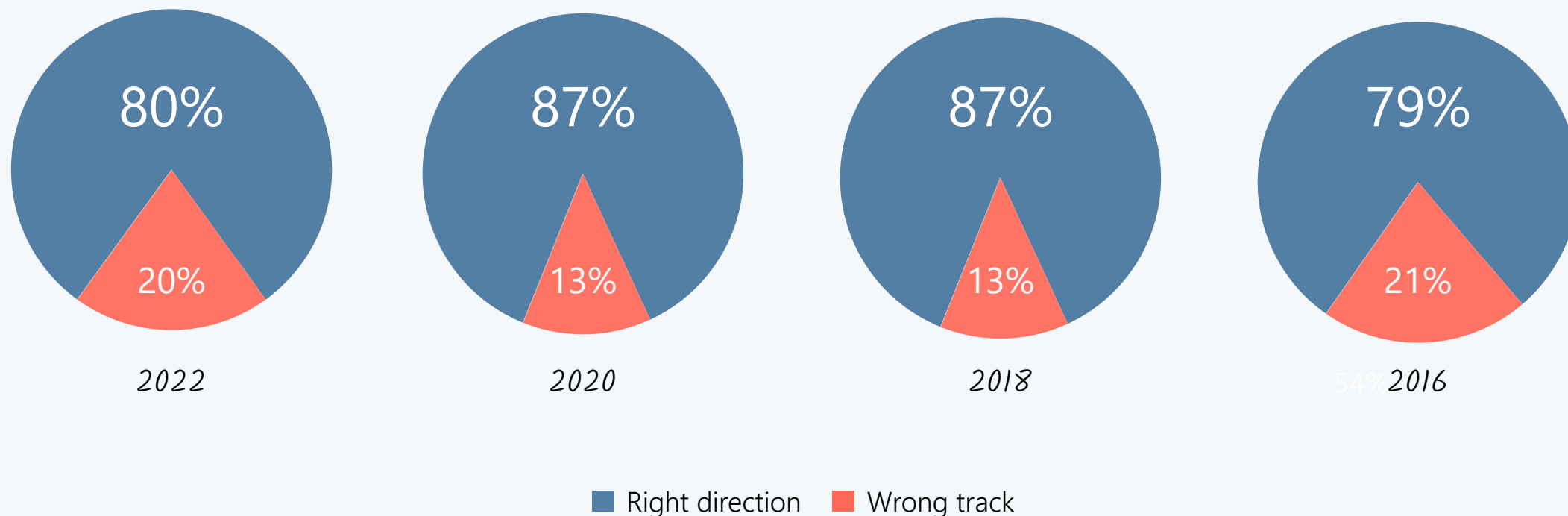
As a place to live, four out of ten Whitehall residents (40%) consider the city either excellent or above average. Two years ago, the comparable figure was lower at three out of ten (29%).



Satisfaction with Whitehall is highest among residents who have lived in Whitehall for 6 to 15 years, households without children, homeowners, and seniors.



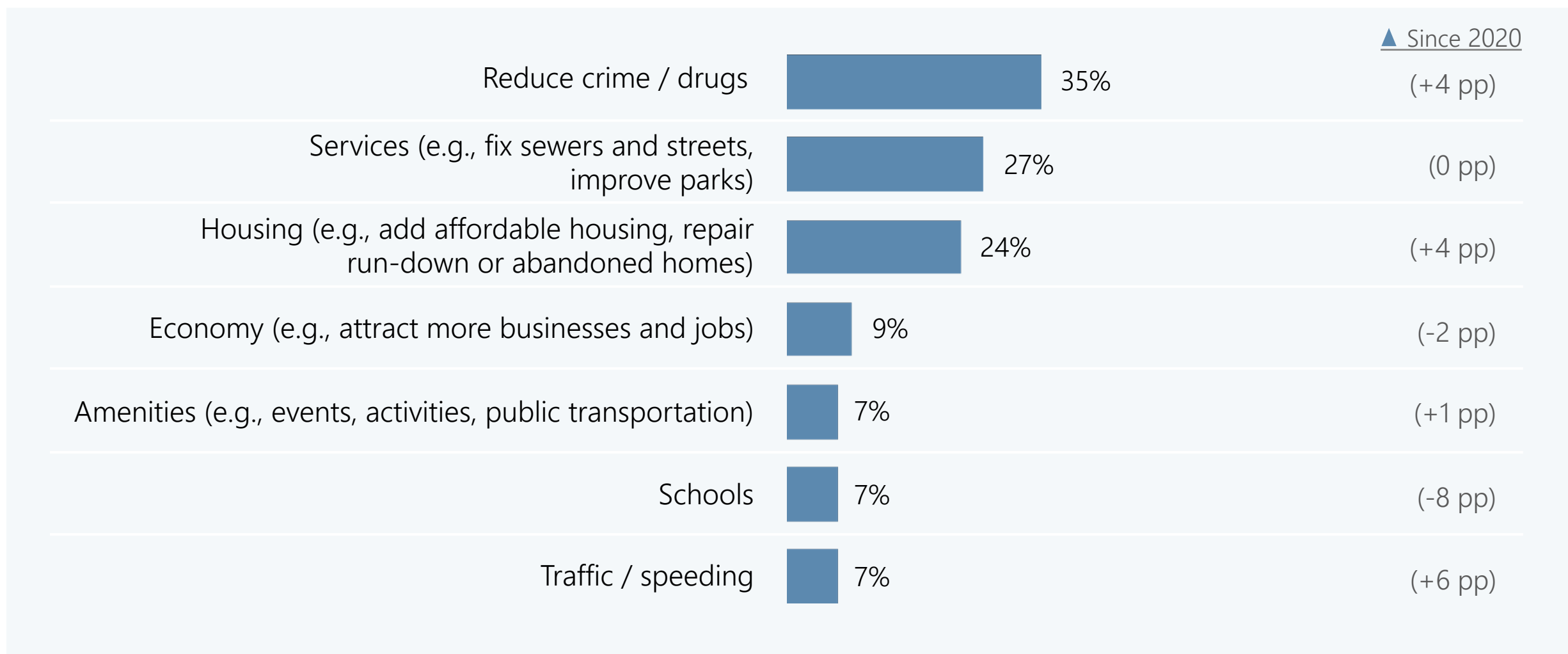
Of those with an opinion, 80% of residents agree that Whitehall is heading in the right direction. Though lower than the comparable figures in previous surveys, much of the change reflects the introduction of online data.



Residents were asked:

“When you think of issues, concerns, or problems facing the City of Whitehall, what should your local public officials consider their two or three highest priorities?”

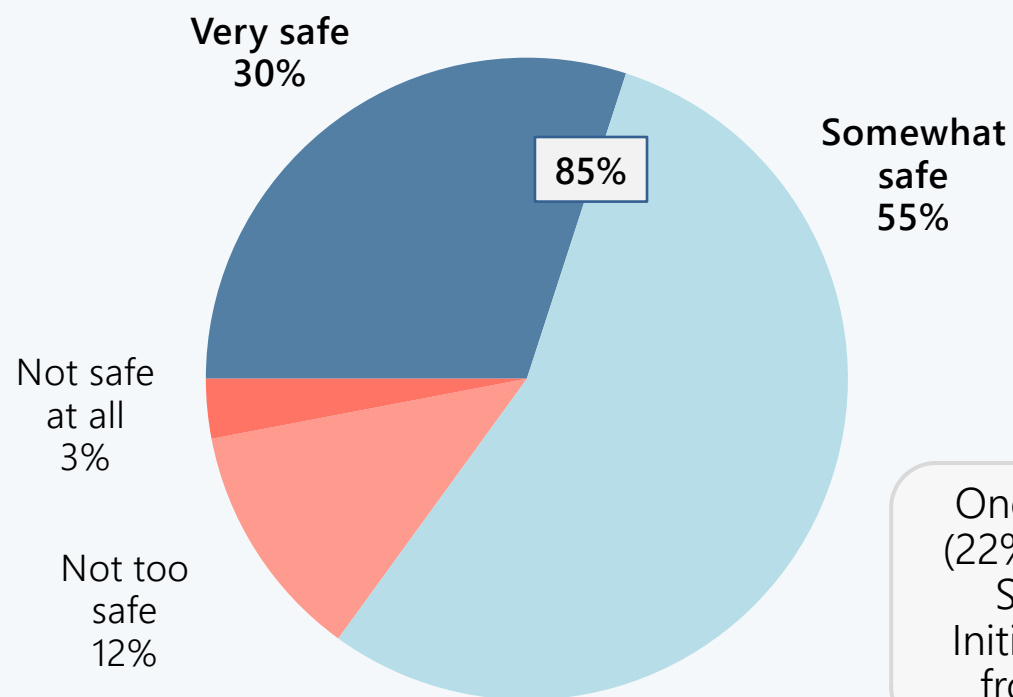
Once again, crime was the issue, concern, or problem mentioned most often.



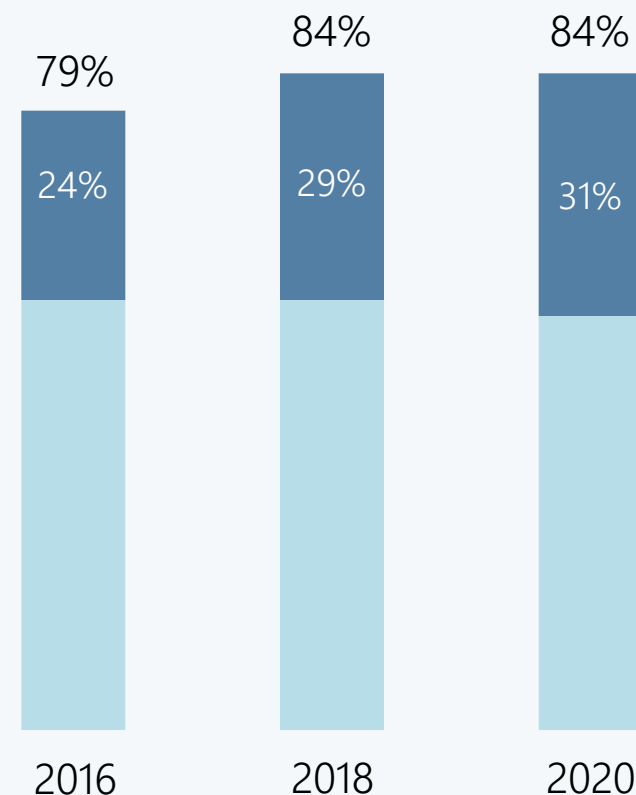


Crime and Safety

Though a majority of residents feel somewhat safe, only three out of ten feel very safe. These figures have changed very little since 2018.

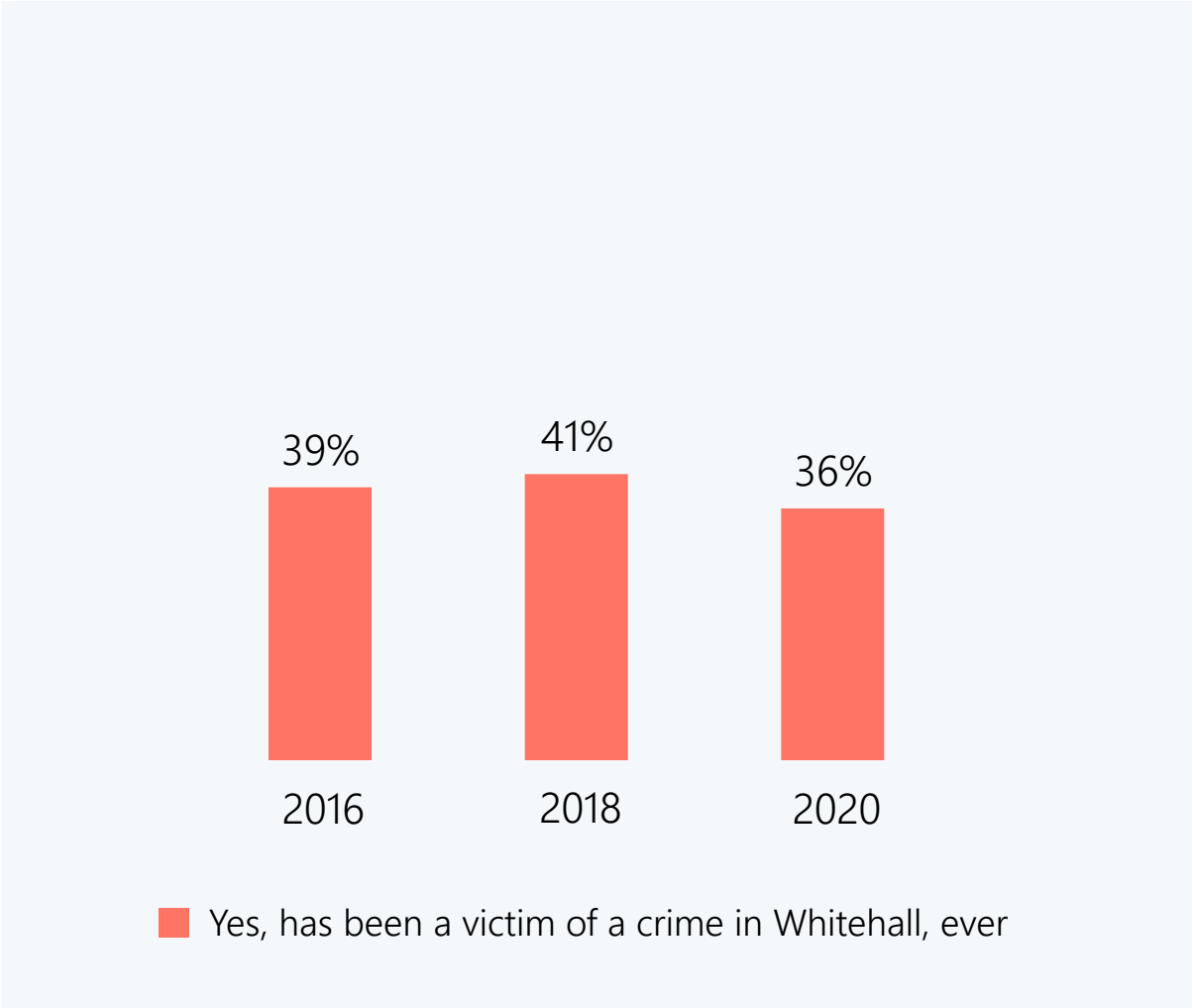
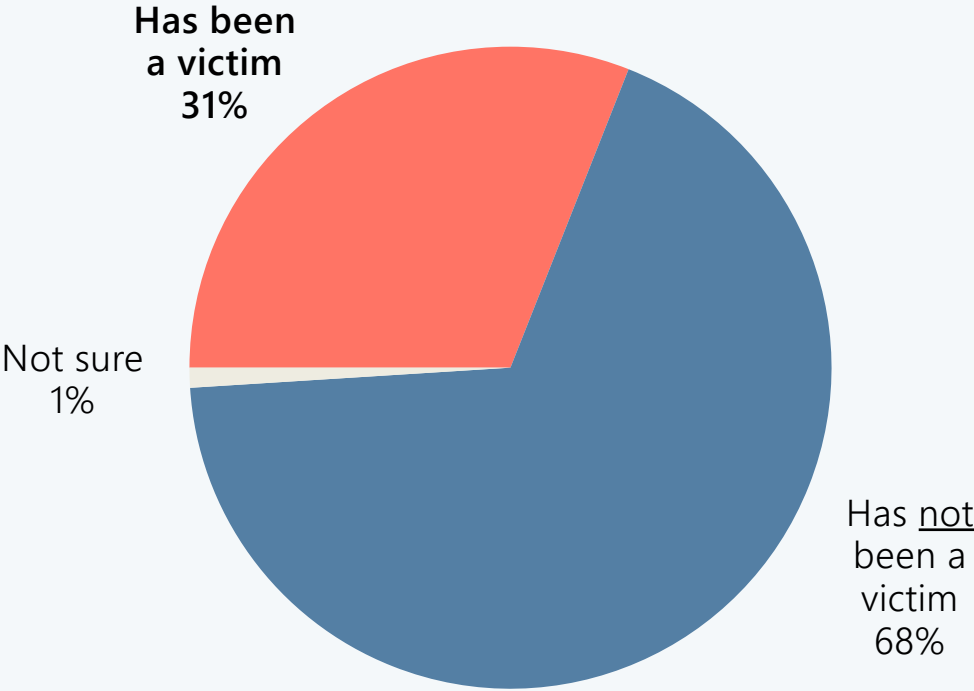


One resident in five (22%) is aware of the Safer Whitehall Initiative, up slightly from 2020 (17%).

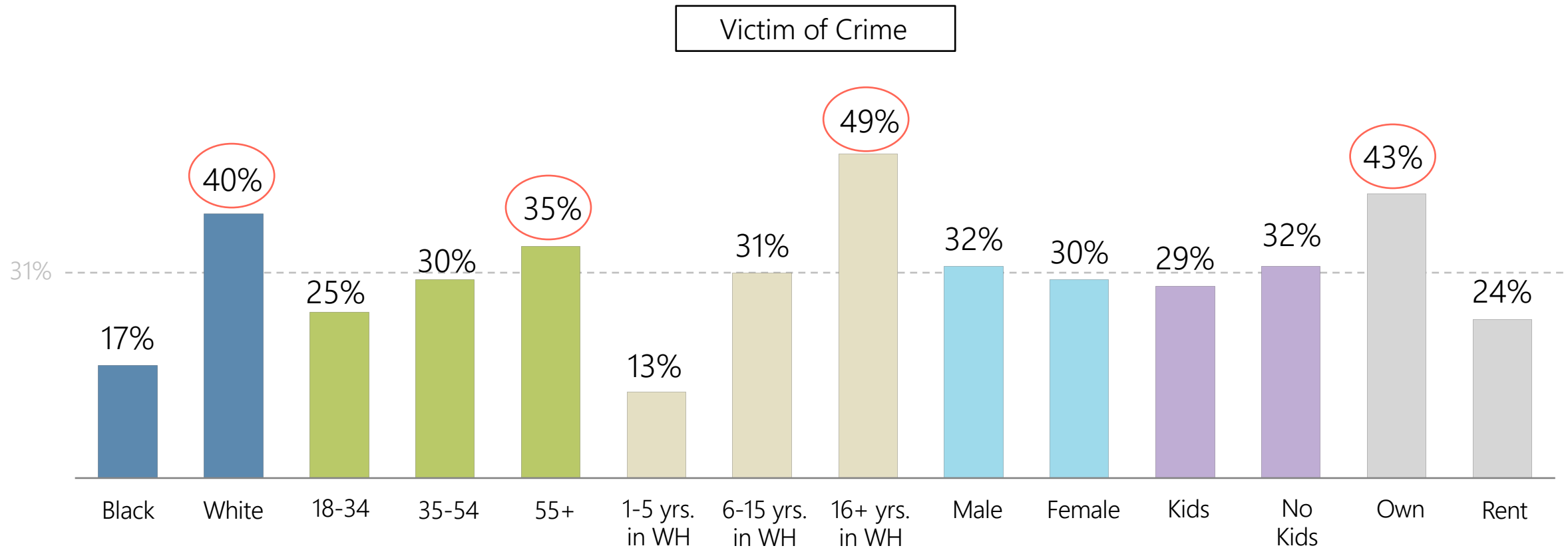


■ Somewhat safe ■ Very safe

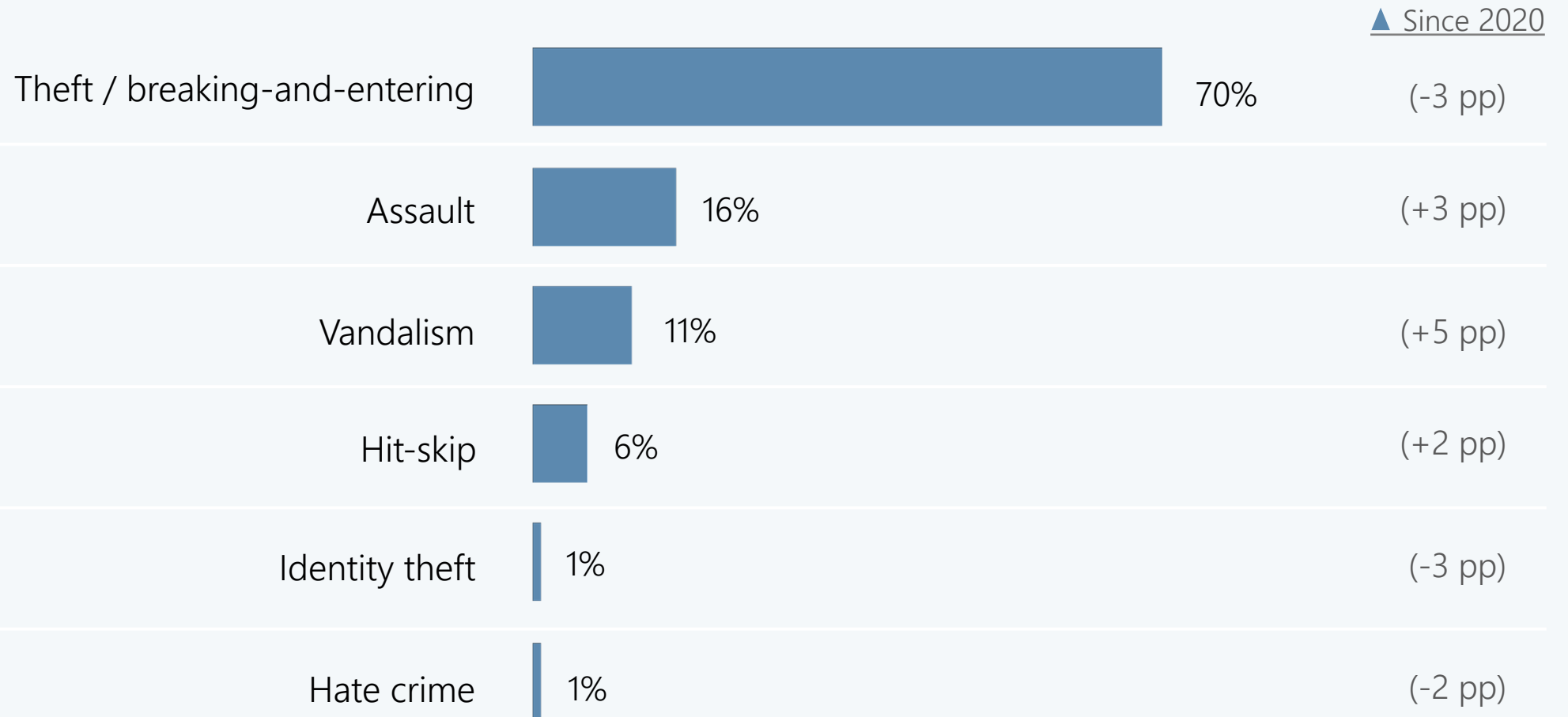
Approximately one resident in three (31%) has been a victim of crime in Whitehall, down from each of the previous surveys.



The most common victims of crime include more tenured residents (49%), homeowners (43%), white residents (40%), and seniors (35%).



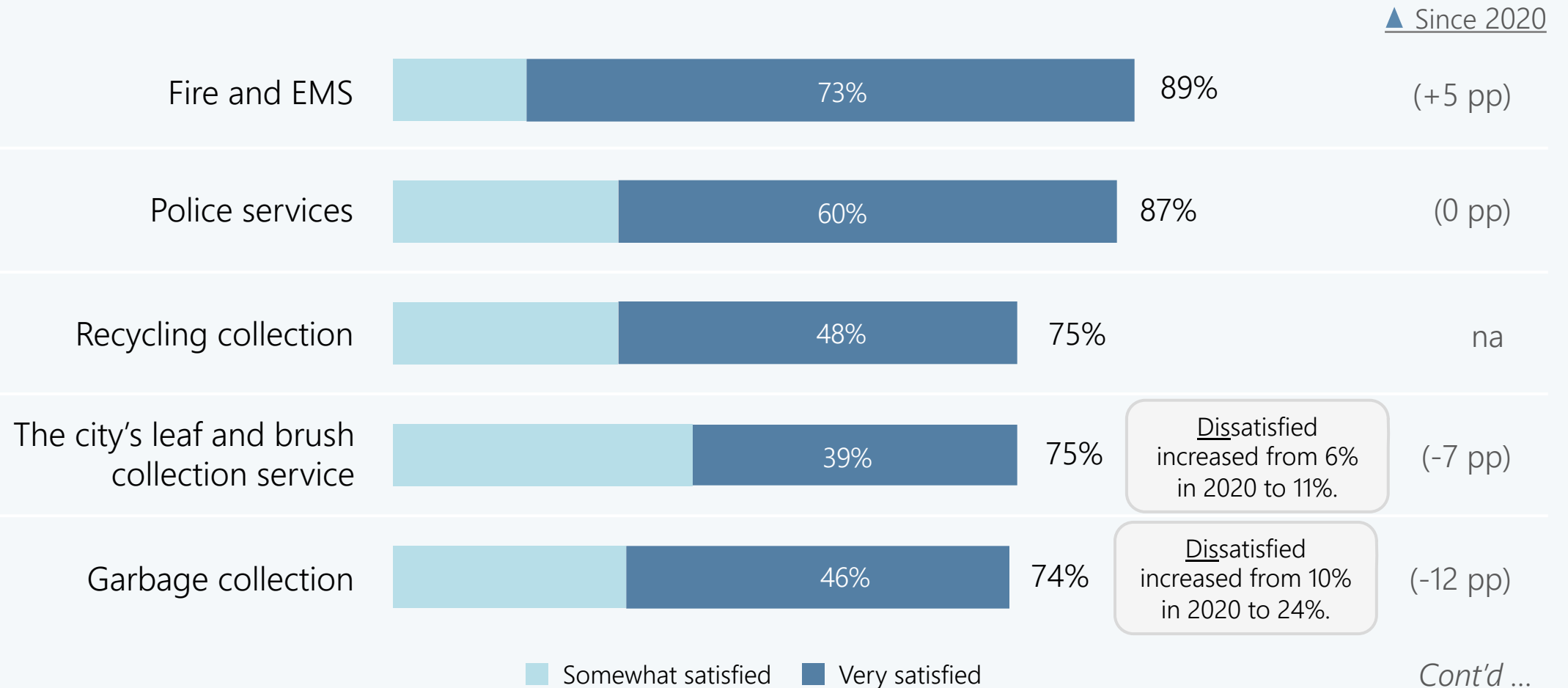
Though down slightly from 2020, theft (especially breaking and entering) remains, by far, the most common type of crime.



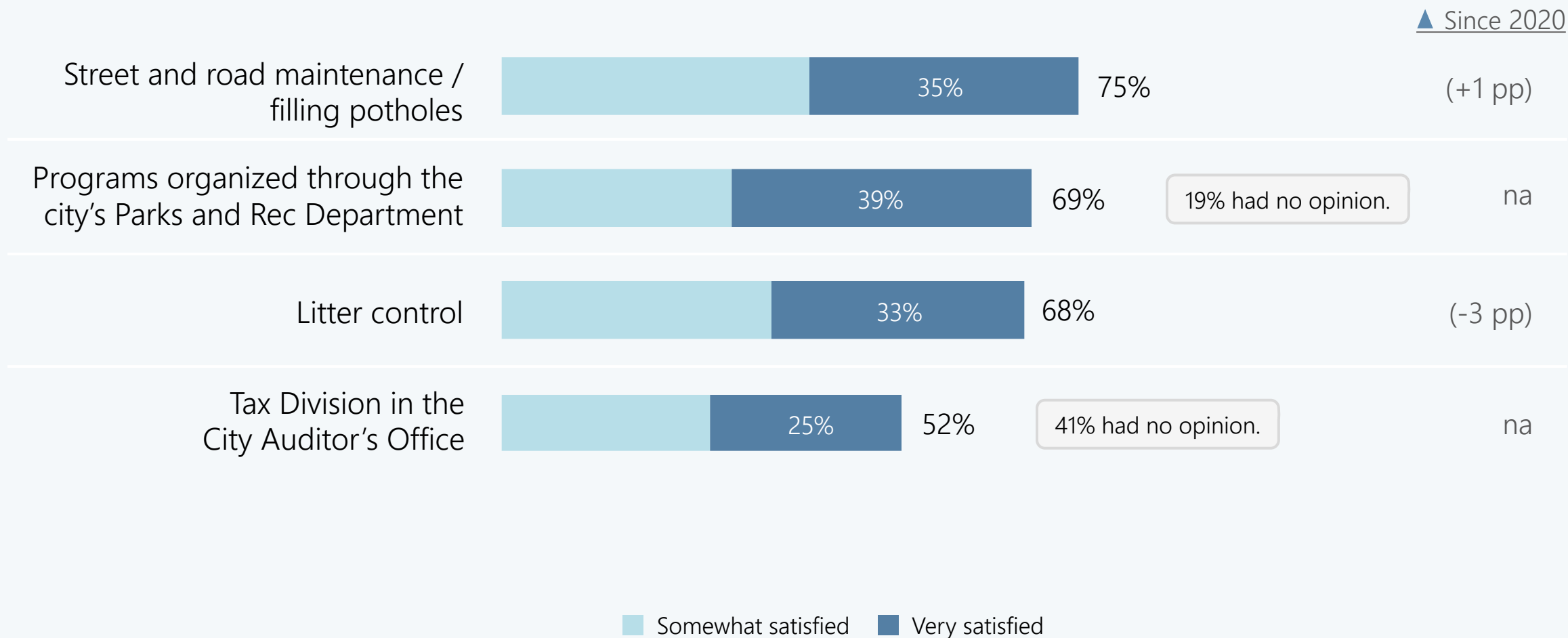


City Services

Most residents are satisfied with the services the city provides. For some services, such as fire, EMS, and police, a majority are *very* satisfied.



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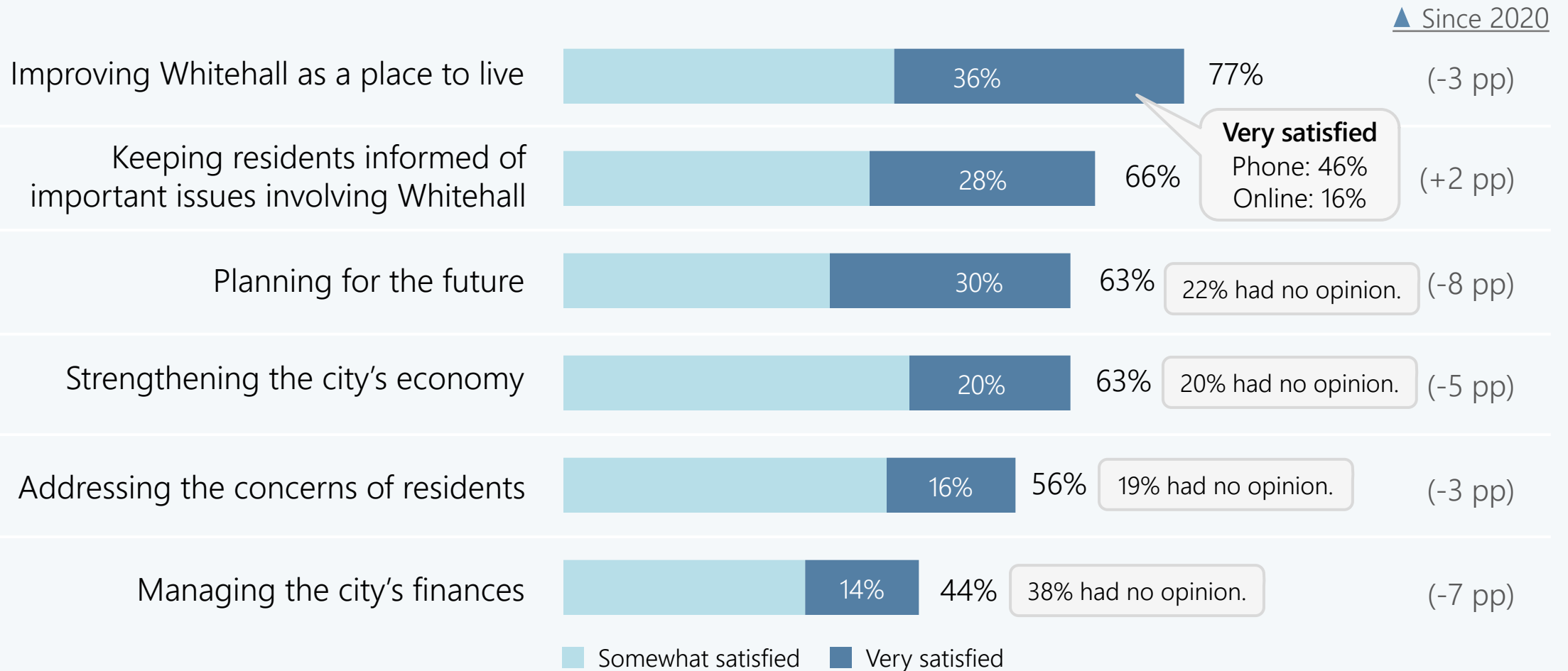


C I T Y O F W H I T E H A L L



City Officials

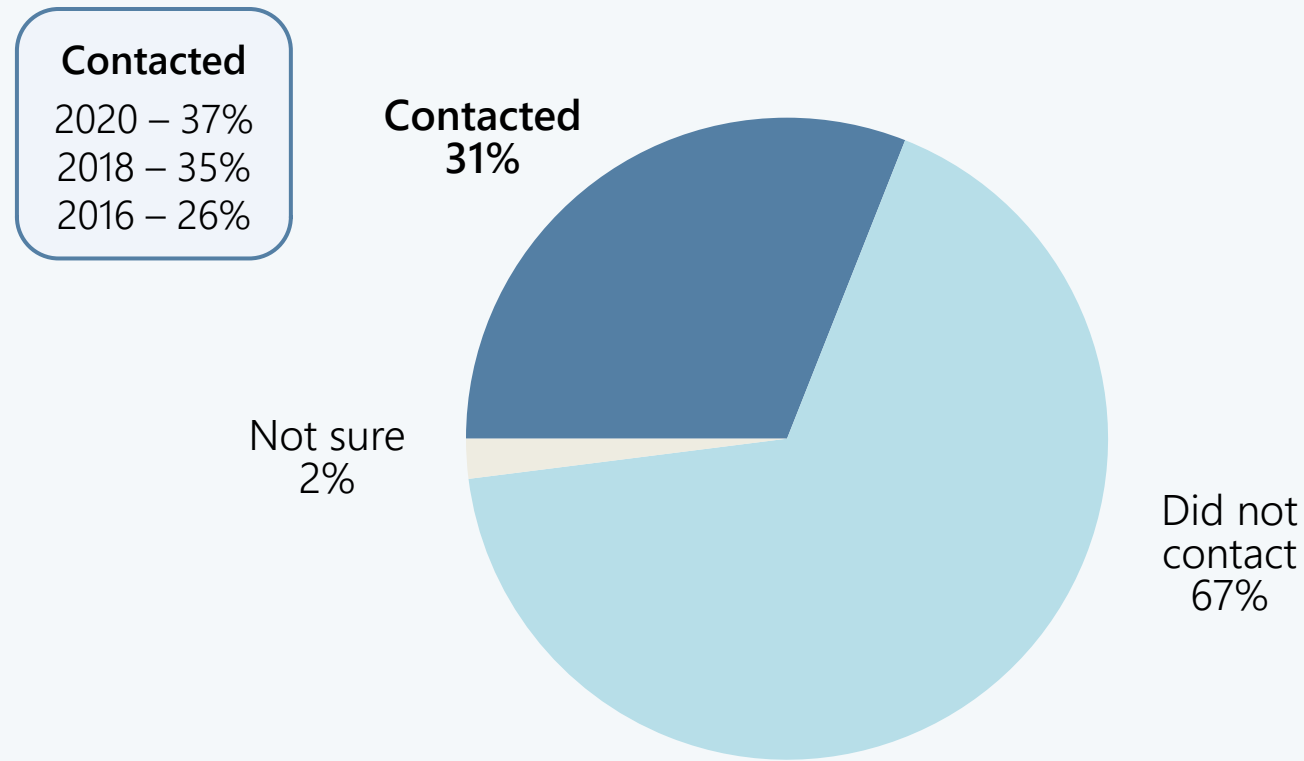
Satisfaction with the performance of city officials varies widely, from nearly eight out of ten (77%) for improving Whitehall as a place to live to fewer than five out of ten (44%) for managing the city's finances.



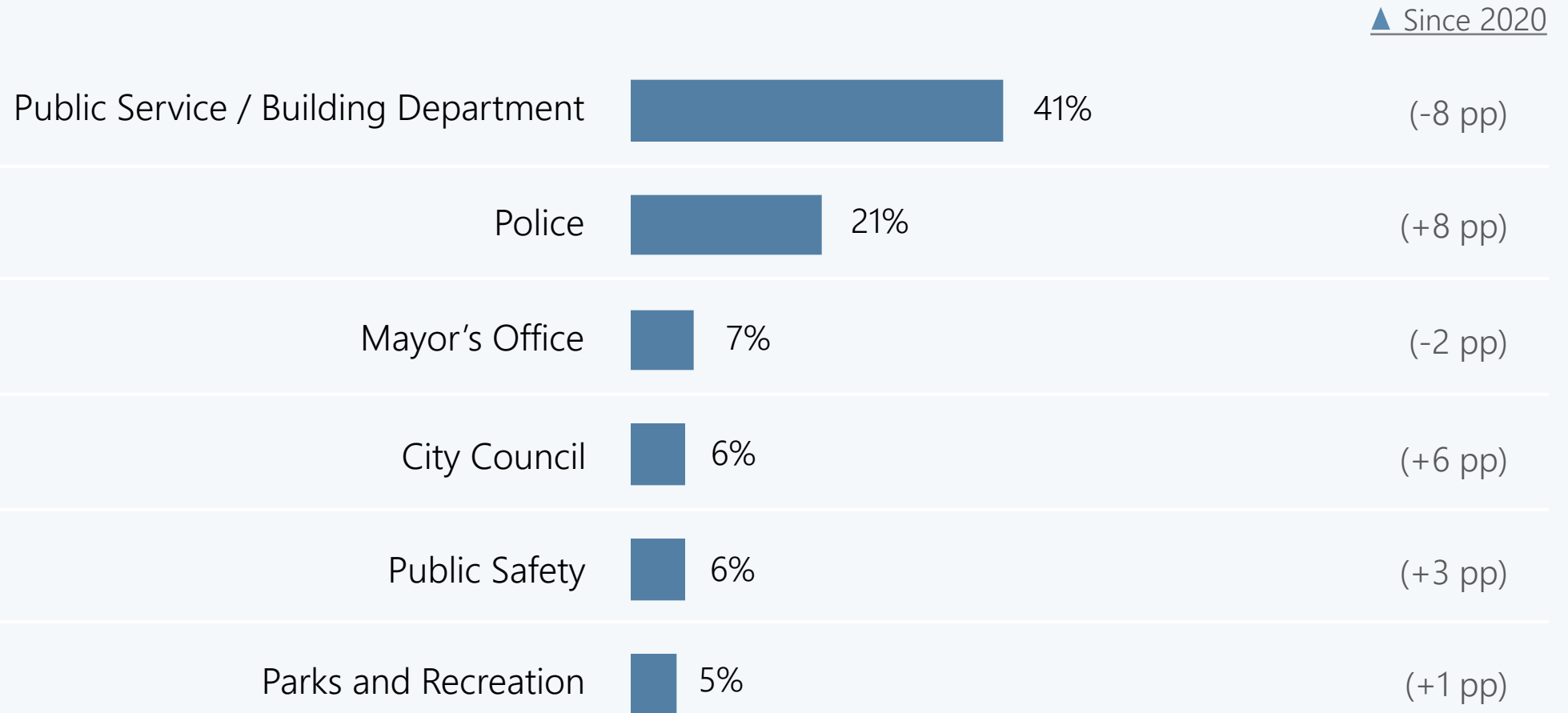


Contacting the City

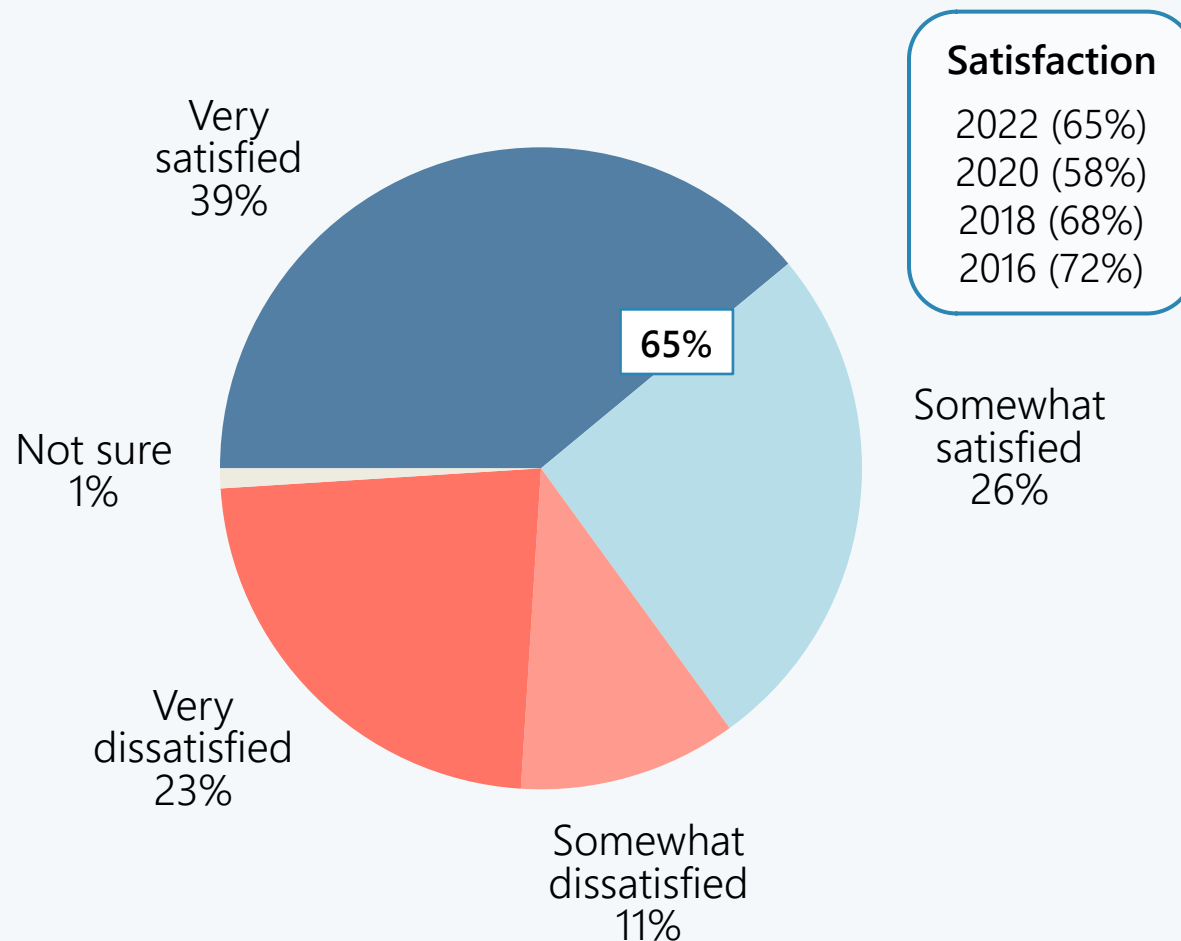
Three out of ten residents (31%) claim to have contacted a city office during the past year to raise an issue, express a concern, or obtain information.



Whitehall's Public Service / Building Department was approached by more residents (41%) than was any other city department.



Though most residents (65%) were satisfied with these contacts ...
many (34%) were not.

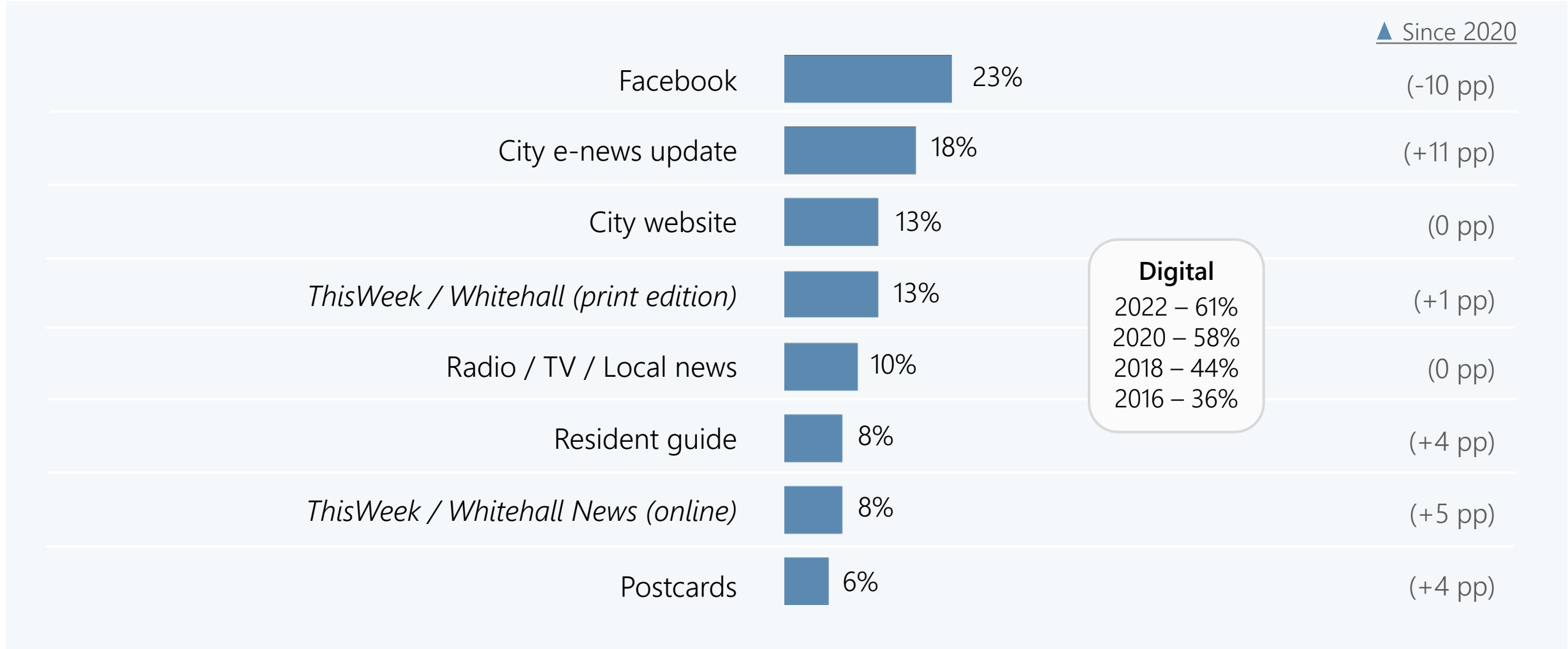


It is not always clear whether dissatisfaction reflects bad service or bad news.



Communication

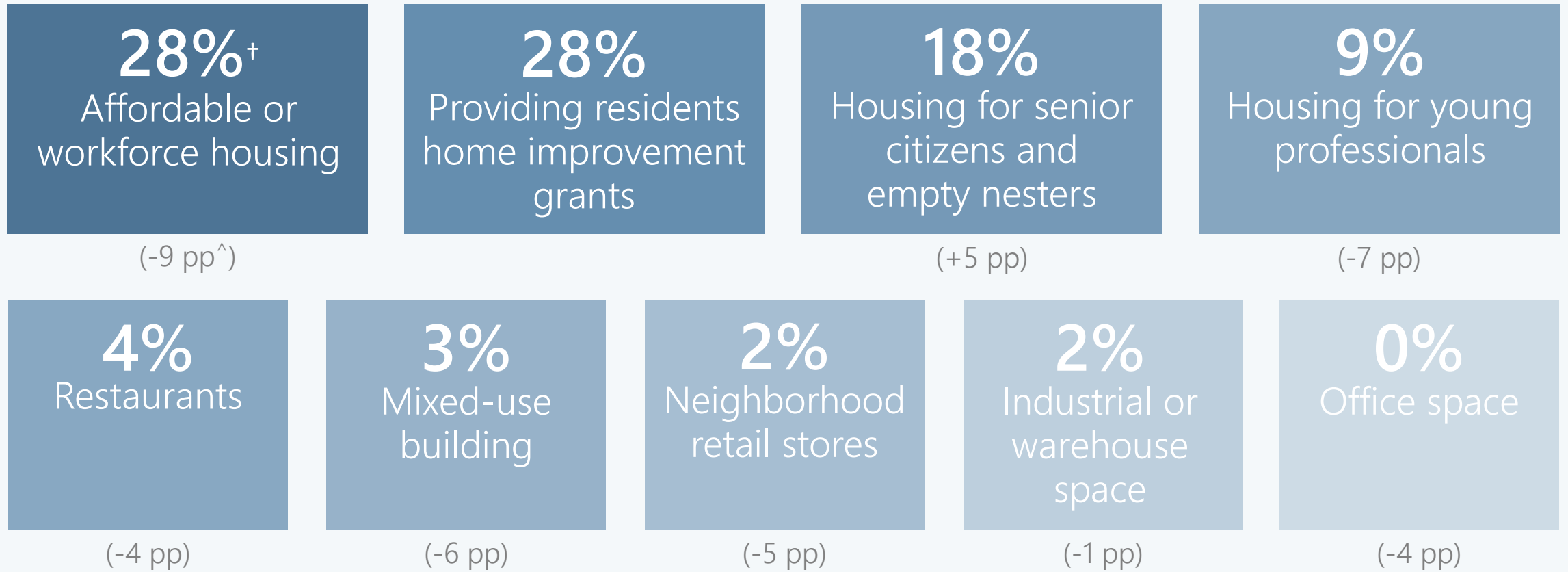
Once again, the most common source of news and information about Whitehall is Facebook. The city's e-news update, however, has made significant strides.





Priorities

Residents were presented with nine potential community initiatives*
and encouraged to identify their top priority ...



*The initiatives were presented in a randomized sequence. / ⁺Highest priority / [^]Change since 2020

Q16: Which of these (initiatives) should city officials make their highest priority?

Residents were presented with six additional potential priorities* and, again, encouraged to identify their top priority. Here, one potential priority was clearly dominant.

35%⁺

Adding programs
to assist when
inflation is high

19%

Adding programs
that address
food insecurity

16%

Increasing rec
programming for
all ages

14%

Offering emergency
preparedness
training

7%

Adding Parks and
Rec Department
programs

4%

Adding backyard
gardening
programs

(-15 pp[^])

(-23 pp)

*The initiatives were presented in a randomized sequence. / ⁺Highest priority / [^]Change since 2020

Q18: And, which of these (initiatives) should city officials make their highest priority?



PHASE II:
HEARTLAND BANK
HEADQUARTERS
(COMPLETE)

PHASE III:
COMMUNITY
PARK YMCA
(COMPLETE)

PHASE V:
FUTURE
50 ACRE MIXED
USE SITE

BROAD AND HAMILTON
REDEVELOPMENT ZONE
130 ACRES TOTAL

PHASE I:
COMMUNITY PARK
NATURALIZATION AND
RESTORATION
(PARTIALLY COMPLETE)

PHASE IV:
ADDITIONAL PARK
IMPROVEMENTS

6 MILES TO
JOHN GLENN
COLUMBUS
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
TERMINALS

7 MILES TO
DOWNTOWN

INTERSTATE 270

E BROAD ST

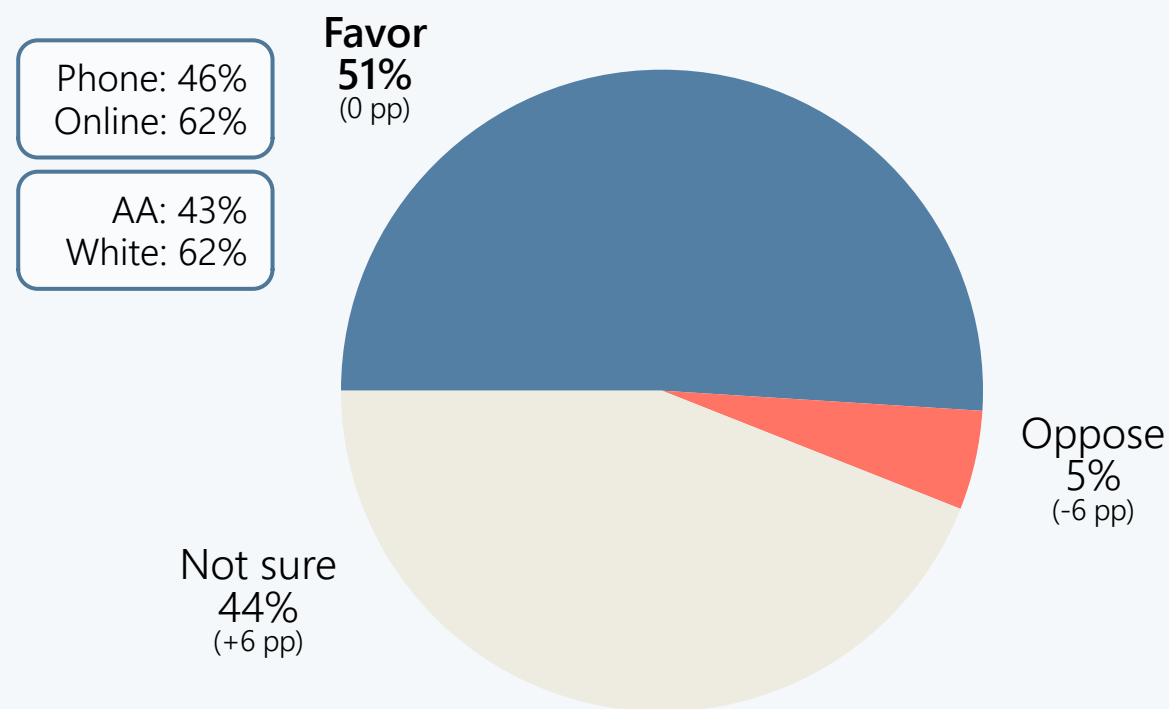
BIG WALNUT CREEK

Development

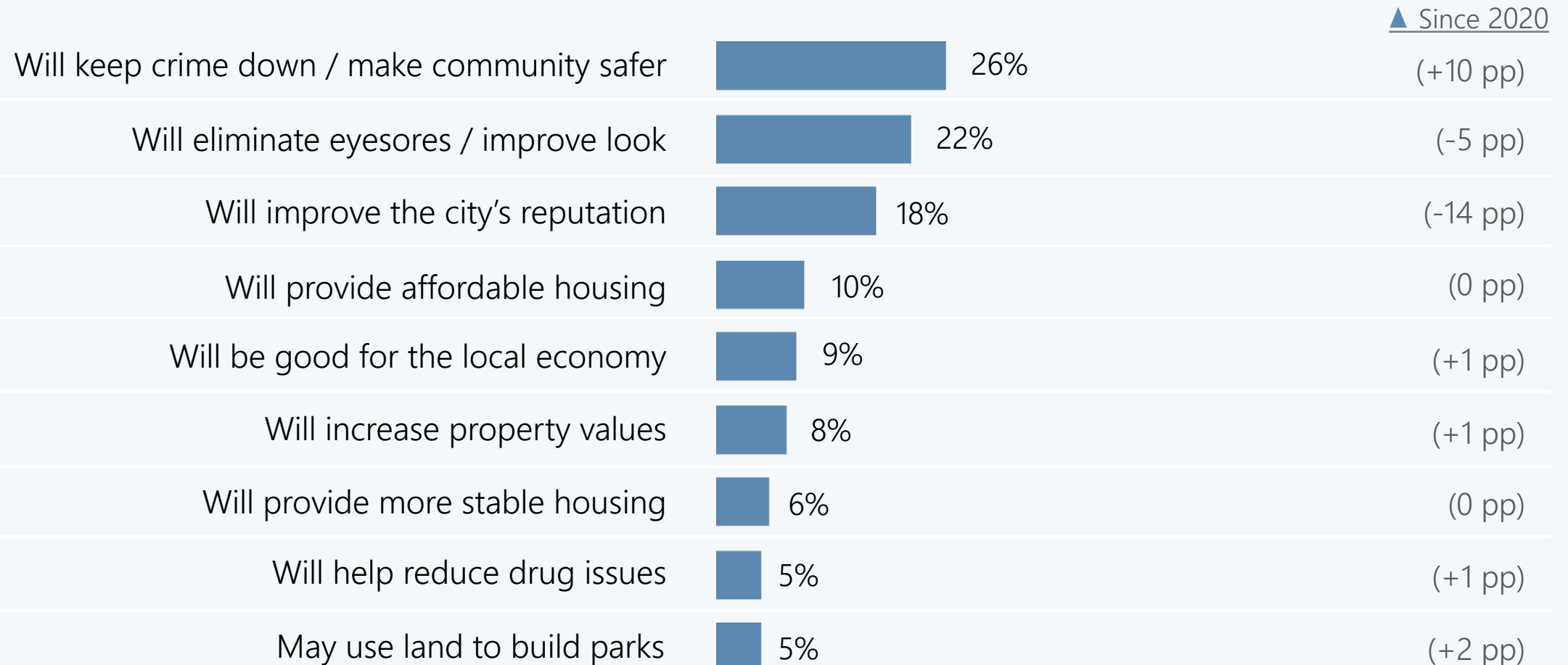
OR LIVING

COLUMBUS
COUNTRY

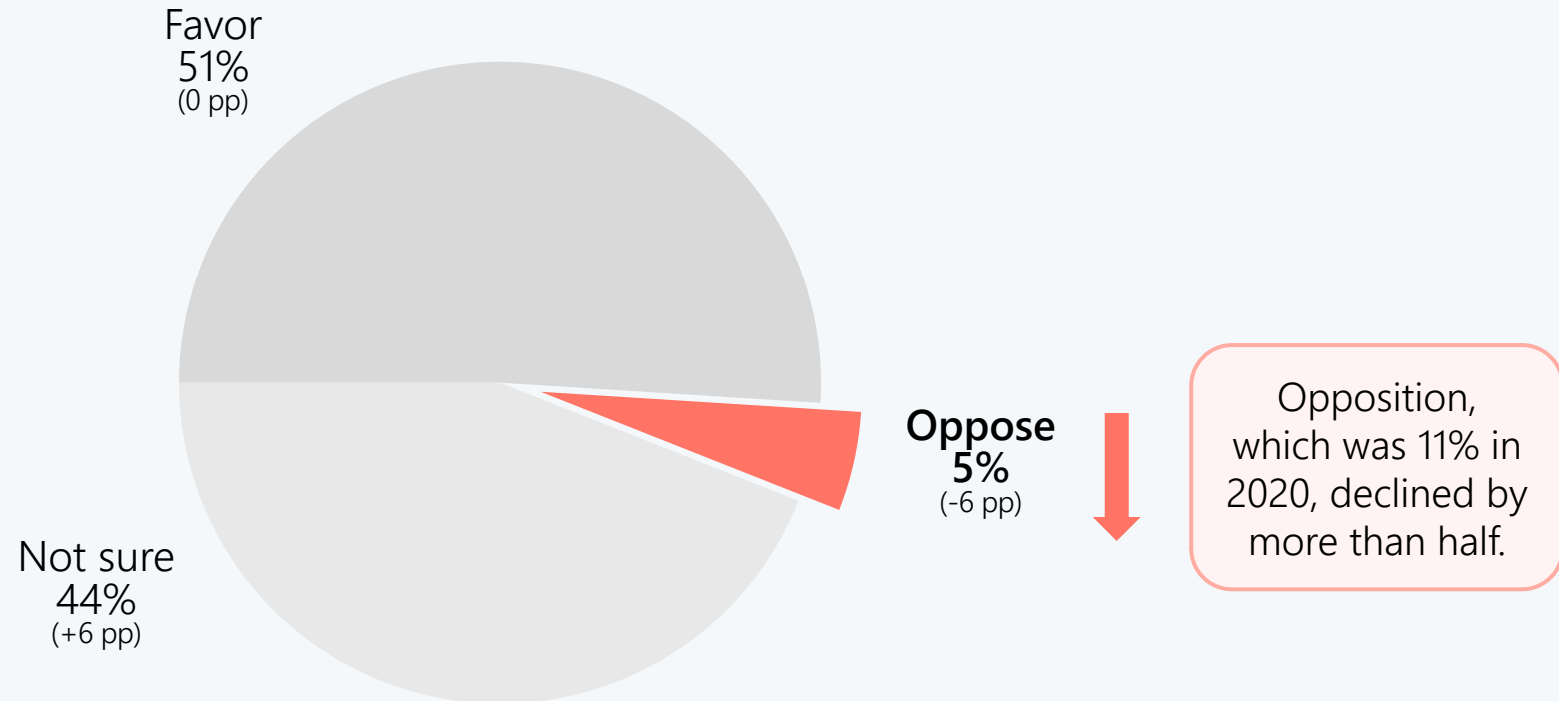
Half of Whitehall's residents (51%) favor the city's approach to acquiring blighted and nuisance properties for redevelopment. Nearly everyone else (44%) is uncertain.



The most common reasons for **favoring** the city's approach to acquiring blighted and nuisance properties involve less crime, fewer eyesores, and an improvement in the city's reputation.



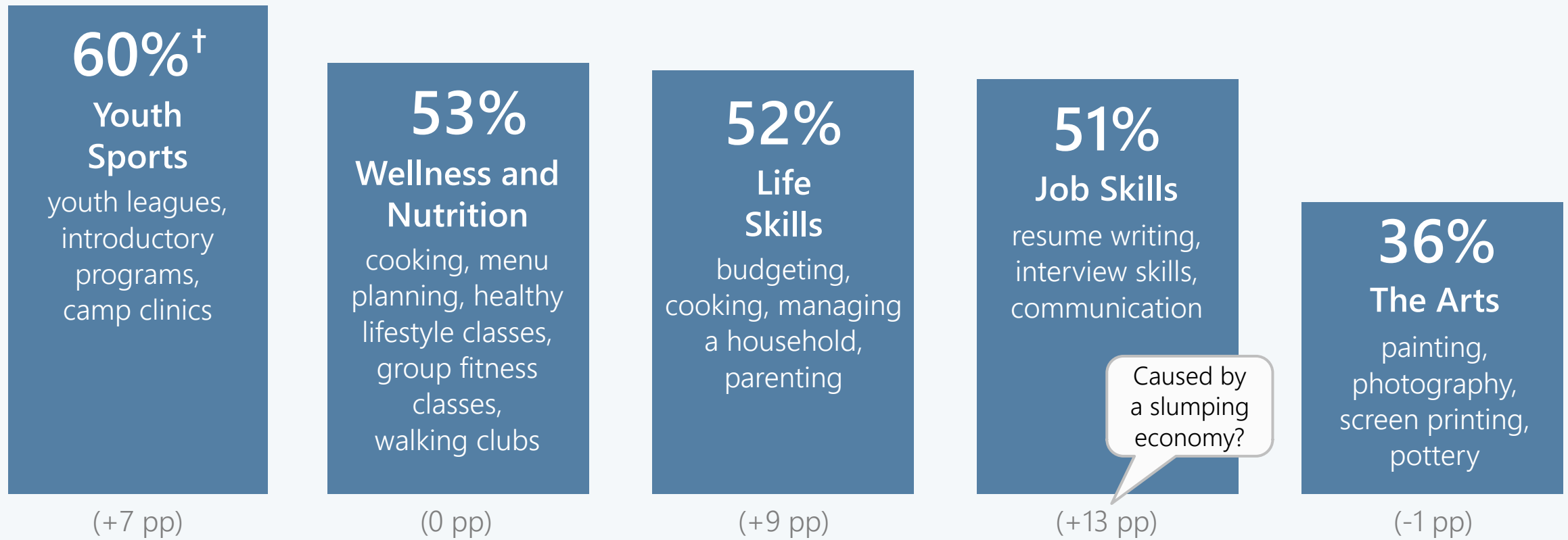
The most common reason for **opposing** the city's approach to acquiring blighted and nuisance properties for redevelopment involves cost to taxpayers.*





Parks and Recreation Programming

Among five programming options* offered by the city's Parks and Recreation Department, interest was strongest in youth sports. Interest was weakest in programs involving the arts.



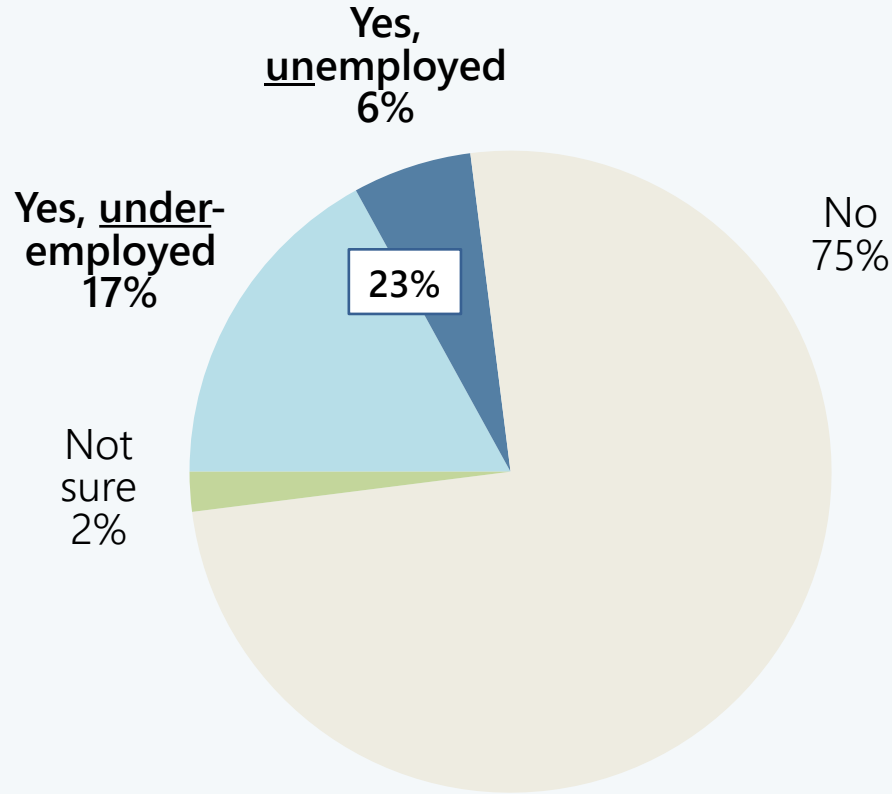
*The programming options were presented in a randomized sequence. / ⁺High interest

Q21: How interested are you likely to be in each of the following programs offered through the city's Parks and Recreation Department?



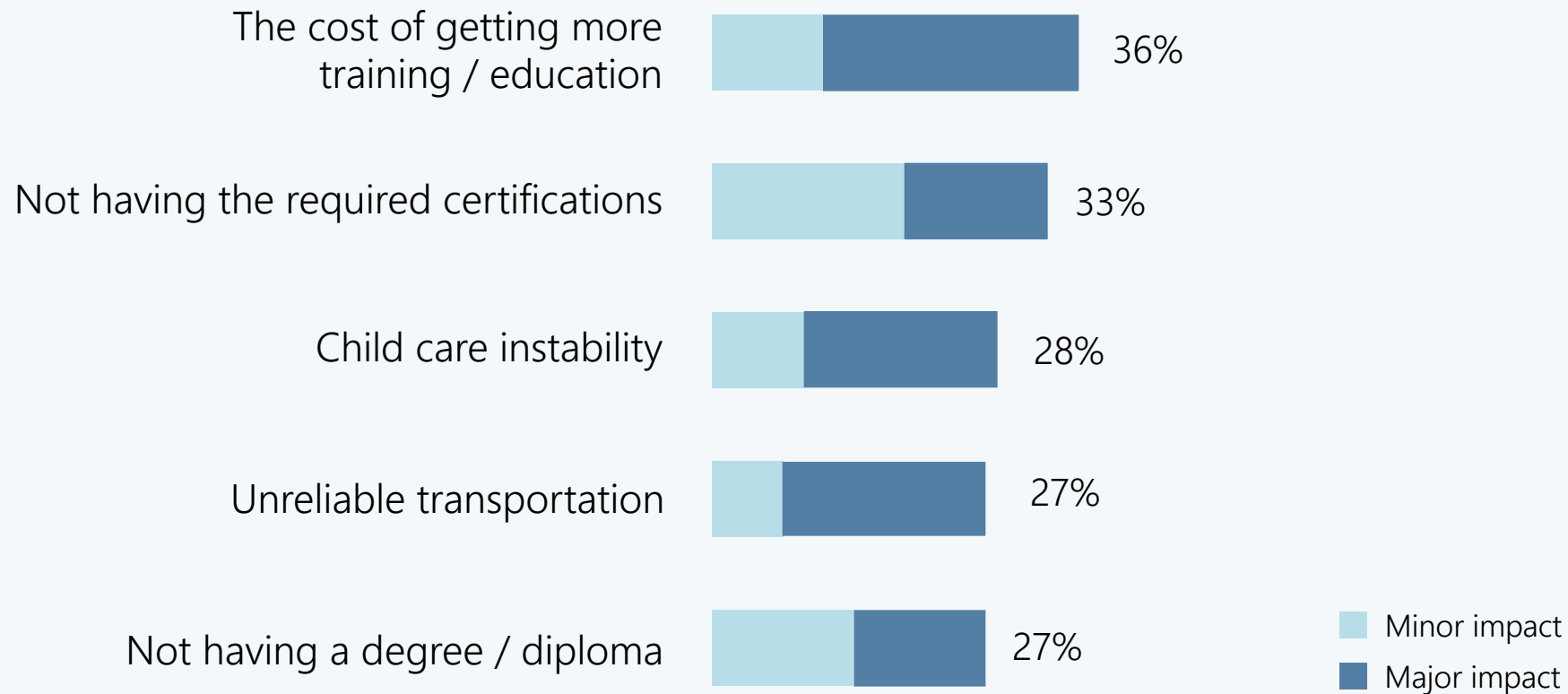
Barriers to Employment

During the past year, one resident in four has been either unemployed (6%) or underemployed (17%).



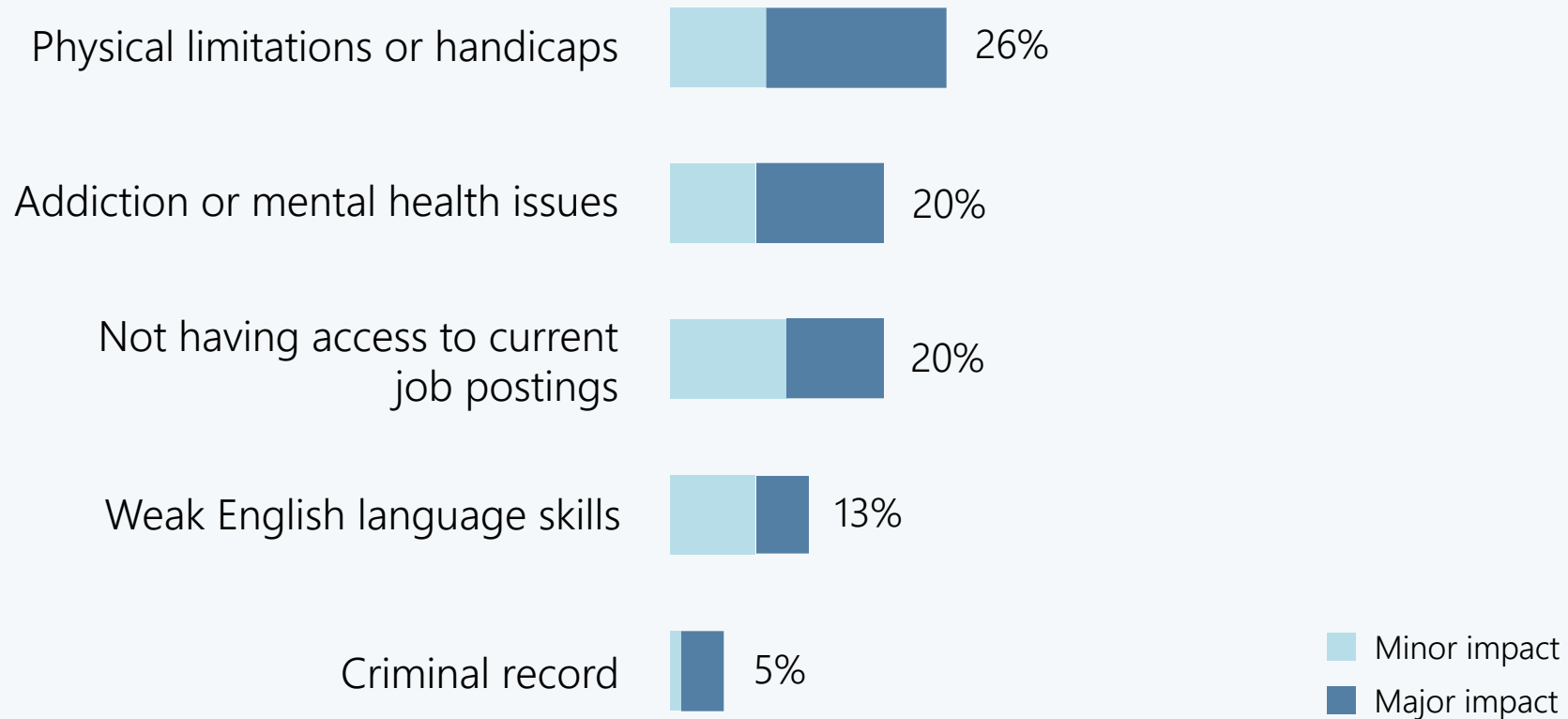
	Under- employd	Un- employd	Total
Black / African American	22%	9%	31%
White	11%	3%	14%
Owns	11%	3%	14%
Rents	21%	8%	29%
HS Diploma or less	19%	8%	27%
Assoc. / Voca. / Tech.	19%	4%	23%
4-year college or higher	13%	4%	17%

For residents unemployed or underemployed, the most common barriers to finding a job focus on the cost of additional training or education and the absence of a required certificate.



Cont'd ...

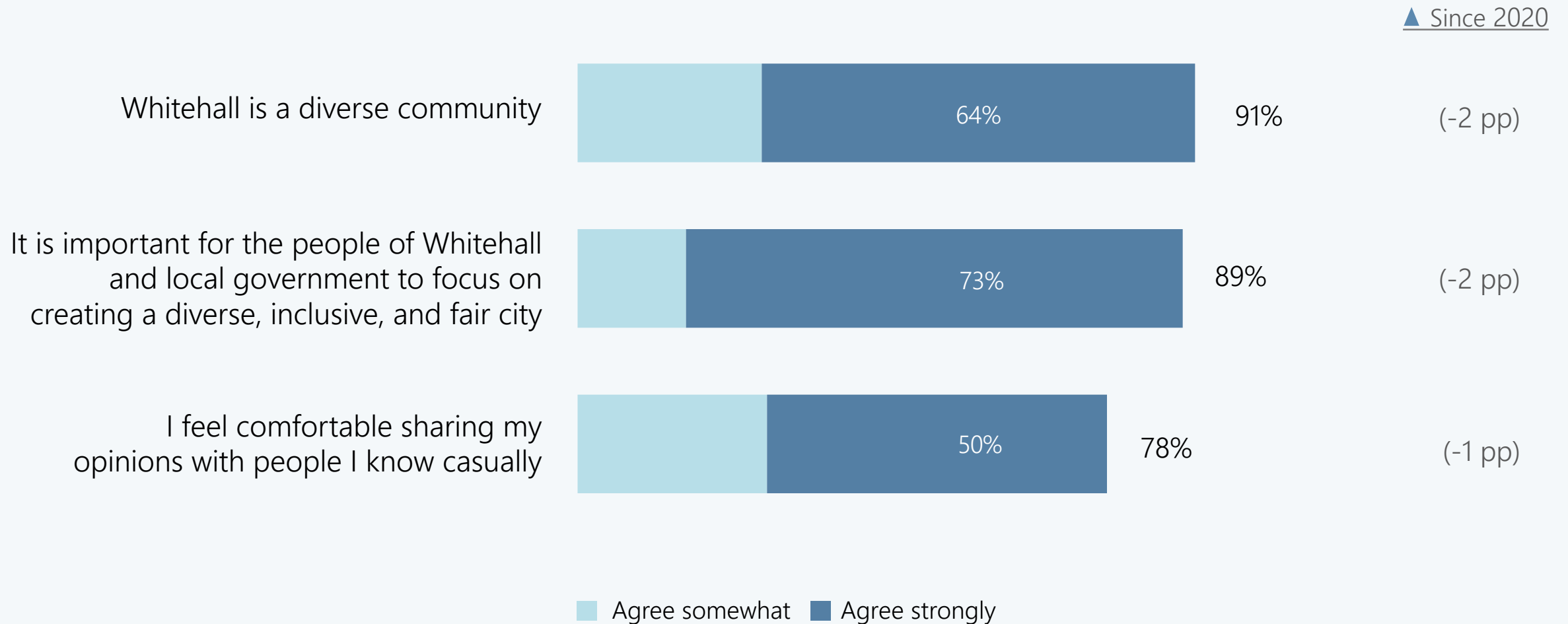
Weak English language skills and a criminal record were mentioned least often.





Diversity and Inclusion

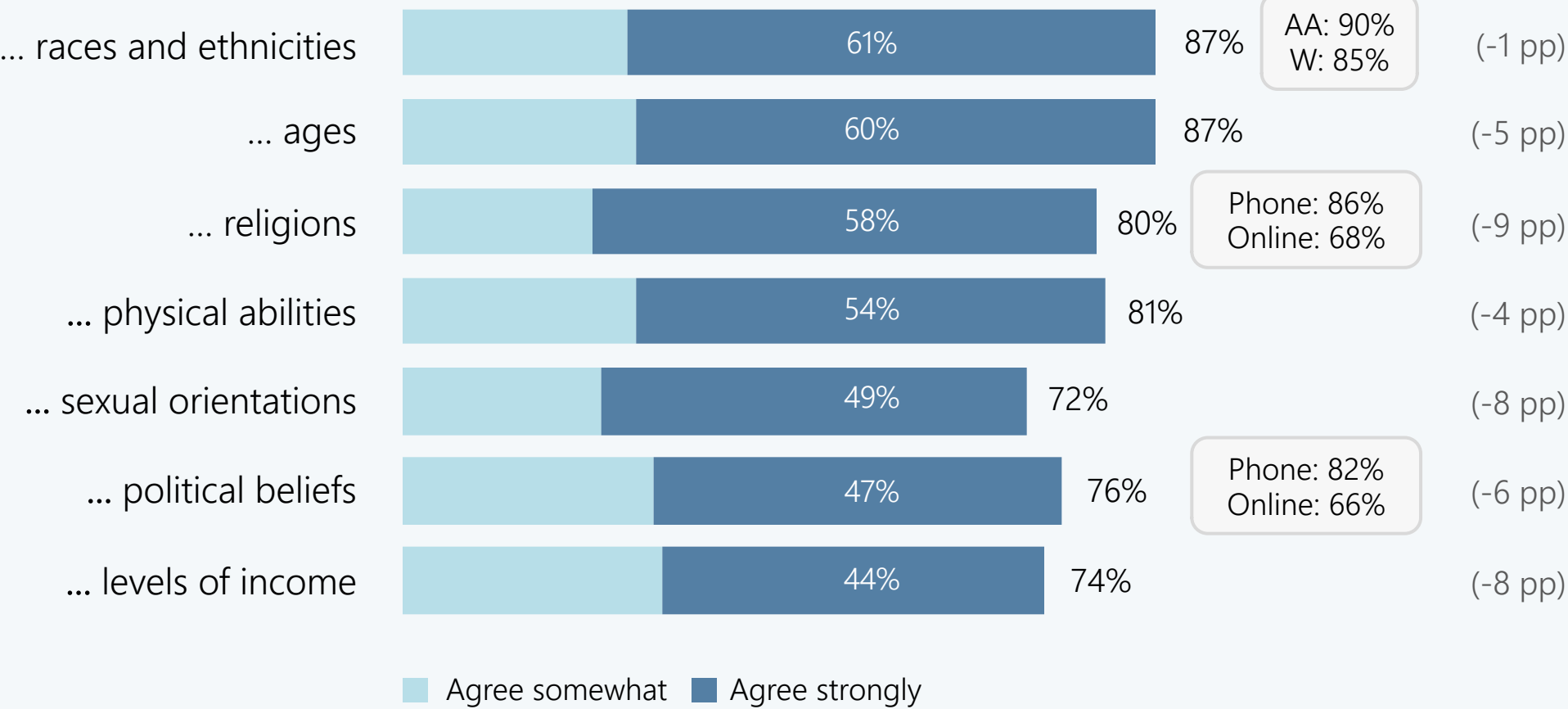
Most residents agree strongly that Whitehall is a diverse community.
Most also agree that living *in* a diverse community is important.
Little has changed since 2020.



Overall, the city's residents perceive Whitehall as a welcoming community.

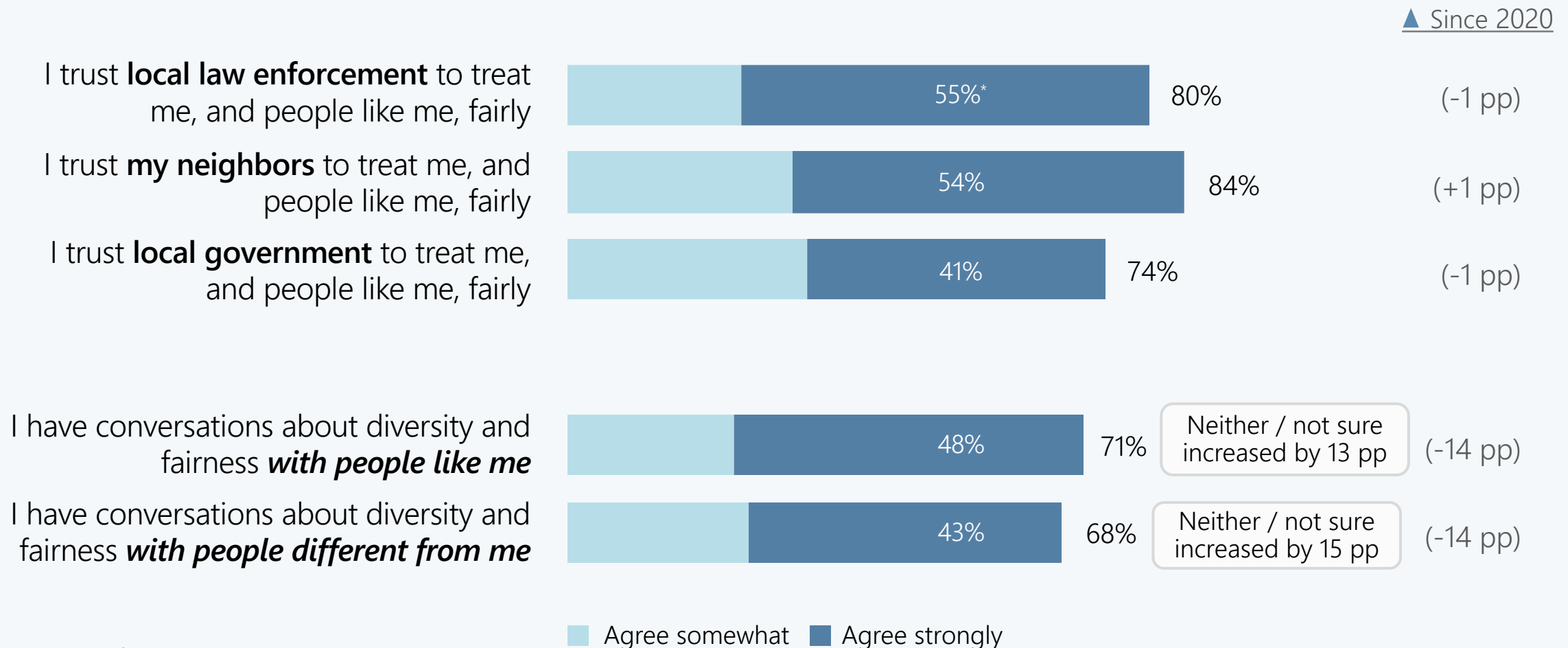
Whitehall is **welcoming** to people of all* ...

▲ Since 2020



*Sorted by agree strongly.

Most residents agree – many strongly – that their neighbors, law enforcement, and local government treat them, and people like them, fairly. This year, however, fewer residents are having conversations about diversity and fairness.



*Sorted by agree strongly.

Once again, the most common suggestion for promoting diversity and inclusion in Whitehall involves festivals and events.

		▲ Since 2020
Host festivals and events (e.g., TED Talks)	23%	(-1 pp)
Encourage people to treat everyone the same	13%	(+6 pp)
Not needed / already happening	7%	(-6 pp)
Offer programs in school and through social service agencies	7%	(+4 pp)
Encourage people to follow the golden rule / be open-minded	6%	(+1 pp)
Have more affordable housing / lower tax / economic incentives	5%	(+3 pp)
Business community should be more welcoming / provide opportunities	5%	(0 pp)
Encourage discussion and listening	5%	(+1 pp)
Have more diversity in government / policies / legislation	5%	(+2 pp)
Communicate to residents what is being / has been done	3%	(+1 pp)
Reform police / BLM	3%	(-2 pp)



Summary

General Findings

- As a place to live, four out of ten Whitehall residents consider the city either excellent or above average, up from 2020.
- Once again, crime and drugs are the most common concerns among residents, followed by worn out infrastructure (involving, for example, sewers and streets) and a lack of affordable housing. Despite this, satisfaction is high with basic city services, especially those involving police, fire, and EMS.
- Satisfaction also is high with the performance of city officials, who residents believe are improving Whitehall as a place to live and providing information on important issues affecting Whitehall. Here, little has changed since 2020.
- Among the minority of residents who contacted a city office, two out of three were satisfied with the experience, again, up from 2020.

- Though Facebook, rebranded as Meta, continues to be the most common source of news and information about Whitehall, the city's e-news update has become more popular. Predictably, the appeal of digital content continues to grow.
- Among nine potential community initiatives, the two most popular involve affordable or workforce housing and home improvement grants. (The former topped the list in 2020; the latter is a recent addition.)
- Among six additional potential priorities, the most popular, by far, deals with programs to assist residents when inflation is high. This is hardly surprising given that inflation, currently, is high.
- Support for the city's approach to redevelopment, involving blighted and nuisance properties, continues to hover around 50%.

- Among five programming options offered through the city's Parks and Recreation Department, interest is strongest in youth sports. That said, compared with two years ago, interest in life and job skills has increased significantly, the result, arguably, of a struggling economy.
- Over the past year, roughly one resident in four was either underemployed or unemployed. Those most affected include African Americans, renters, and the poorly educated. Moreover, the most common barriers to finding a job involve the cost of additional training or education and the absence of a required certificate.

Diversity and Inclusion

- Once again, residents agree that Whitehall is a diverse community – and that living *in* a diverse community is important. Residents also agree that Whitehall is a welcoming community, though slightly less so, relative to 2020.

- Most residents agree that local law enforcement, neighbors, and local government will treat them, and people like them, fairly. It may also be true that residents of Whitehall are less inclined to discuss diversity and fairness than they were two years ago.
- Once again, the most common suggestions for promoting diversity and inclusion involve festivals and events.

Methodology

- The decision to include a second method of data collection for this survey has had several consequences:
 - It expanded the sampling frame, which enabled the interviewing staff to complete, then exceed, the targeted number of interviews (350);

- It enfranchised at least some residents who would never agree to be interviewed by phone, but found an online version more acceptable; and
 - It demonstrated that the two means of data collection do not always produce the same results, which makes comparing the findings from the current survey to previous surveys more challenging – and potentially less definitive.
- Whether the net of these differences is positive or negative, it is likely that multiple methods of data collection is a shift in procedure that is here to stay.

Questions?

This study was conducted by
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