



Select Committee on Poverty Reduction

Final Recommendations For Council Consideration

May 2021



**CITY OF
PRINCE GEORGE**

Acknowledgements

Thanks and appreciation to the volunteer members of the City of Prince George Select Committee on Poverty Reduction who developed the recommendations, shared their innovative ideas, provided direction on the community engagement plan and directly supported the engagement activities. Despite the challenges associated with COVID-19 the Committee chose to convene in workshop format (complying with provincial health regulations) to ensure the recommendations were developed and the work moved forward to completion.

Acknowledgment and appreciation to the 52 community partners who participated in the community engagement process, assisting with survey dissemination, promotion and facilitation. Involvement and support from community stakeholders and agencies was critical to ensure the poverty reduction recommendations are realistic and will contribute to reducing poverty at the local level. A big thank you to the over 814 participants who completed the survey and took the time not only to prioritize the recommendations but also to provide in-depth comments and observations as part of the engagement process.

Thank you to Alyson Gourley-Cramer, Monogram Communications, for her excellent work developing and implementing the community engagement plan. Alyson's outstanding communication skills were critical for carrying out this complex work and ensured the engagement included those with lived experience of poverty, a key component that would ensure action would be impactful at the community level.

Finally, the City of Prince George would like to acknowledge that the community engagement for this project was funded by a Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Grant. The Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program, funded by the Province of BC and administered by UBCM, is designed to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to advance implementation of the Province's poverty reduction strategy, called TogetherBC. Funding supported the design and implementation of a comprehensive community engagement to ensure a diverse composition of community residents provided comment on the recommendations for City action.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	0
Executive Summary	2
Section 1: Background	4
TogetherBC- British Columbia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy	4
City of Prince George Select Committee on Poverty Reduction	4
.....	8
Section 2: Engagement Summary	9
Section 3: Prince George Poverty Reduction Survey Results.....	9
Section 4: City of Prince George Poverty Reduction Recommendations & Implementation Considerations	12
The Role of the Municipality.....	12
Rationale for the Prioritization of the 19 Recommendations (Always, Now, Soon & Later)	13
Recommendations – ADVOCACY - ALWAYS (on-going)	13
Advocacy Avenues and Tactics for Local Government	15
Recommendations- Resources & Partners	16
Recommendations – ACTION – NOW (immediately within the next year)	17
Recommendations – ACTION - SOON (within 6 months -1 year)	18
Recommendations – ACTION – LATER (1 year - 3 years)	21
Section 5: Conclusion	24
Appendices.....	25

Executive Summary

In March 2019, the Province of BC released [TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#). Mandated by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act, the strategy sets targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in BC by at least 25% and the child poverty rate by at least 50% by 2024¹.

Local governments cannot address poverty in isolation, it is critical that municipal governments align commitments with provincial and federal strategies. Therefore, in October 2019, Prince George City Council approved the formation of a Select Committee on Poverty Reduction². The purpose and mandate of the Committee was to advise Mayor and Council on matters regarding the priorities, policies and strategies affecting poverty reduction in Prince George and to determine the City's role in the implementation of the provincial poverty reduction strategy.

The Committee was comprised of a variety of representatives from the community with a diverse range of perspectives and understanding of poverty reduction. The committee met monthly from November 2019 - October 2020, to develop a series of recommendations regarding the City's role in implementation of the Province's strategy. Despite the challenges associated with the global pandemic, the Committee opted to convene in workshop format (complying with provincial health regulations) in order to meet the timelines and commitments associated with the Committee's work.

Six focus areas, aligned with the provincial strategy frame the Poverty Reduction recommendations (see text box to right). Nineteen (19) recommendations were prioritized by a community engagement process. It was of critical importance to engage the public and those with lived experience of poverty in the decision-making process, which resulted in a prioritized list of the most impactful recommendations.

This report presents recommendations regarding poverty reduction at the local level and from the perspective of municipal action and advocacy. Also noteworthy, is that with guidance from the Committee, the recommendations are practical and achievable for local government.

Finally, it is of the utmost importance to highlight the strength and fortitude of people with lived or living experience. They have an underpinning resiliency that brings a perspective to this work that cannot be undervalued. As the recommendations are implemented, there should always be consideration of a strengths-based approach. A strengths-based approach will ensure there is a focus on enhancement, that accentuates the positive, builds supportiveness and challenges stereotypes and misinformation associated with those who are experiencing poverty.

Six (6) Focus Areas frame the

Recommendations:

- Stigma & Discrimination
- Housing (suitability & affordability)
- Access to Services & Supports
- Food Security
- Education & Employment
- Transportation

Special emphasis and direct effort was placed on engaging those within the seven (7) "lenses" identified by the Select Committee:

- Children/youth (0-17 years)
- Single parent families
- Seniors
- Those living in specific neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by factors that contribute to poverty
- Those living with mental health and substance use
- The working poor and those in absolute poverty
- Reconciliation

Nineteen (19) Action/Advocacy recommendations that consider:

- Milestone(s)
- Action(s) underway
- Resources required
- Partners/Contributors
- Advocacy avenues & tactics

¹ Together BC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy report. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/initiatives-plans-strategies/poverty-reduction-strategy/togetherbc.pdf>

² Select Committee on Poverty Reduction. City of Prince George website

<https://www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Hall/Pages/Mayor%20and%20Council/Committees%20and%20Boards/SelectCommitteeonPovertyReduction.aspx#:~:text=T he%20Select%20Committee%20on%20Poverty%20Reduction%20advises%20Mayor%2C%20Council%20and,to%20potential%20local%20government%20action.>

POVERTY REDUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

ADVOCACY – ALWAYS	<p>Education & Employment: Advocate to keep adult basic education and English language learning courses free.</p>
	<p>Education & Employment: Advocate for ways to support people who want to improve their education, or access employment opportunities. For example, advocate for wage subsidies for Early Childhood Education workers and assistance programs for post-secondary students.</p>
	<p>Housing: Advocate for government programs, services and incentives at all levels that help people have suitable housing and supports for housing.</p>
	<p>Services & Supports: Respond to income insecurity and low wage poverty with advocacy focused on policy change, through, for example, living wage directives, guaranteed annual income commitments and/or competitive wages that encourage workers to enter fields like Early Childhood Education.</p>
	<p>Transportation: Ensure transit is affordable by working with BC Transit to enhance the fare structure and amenities (like free transfers).</p>
ACTION – NOW (immediately)	<p>Stigma & Discrimination: When the City is collecting information on social wellbeing priorities, ask for input from people who have experience living in poverty.</p>
	<p>Access to Services & Supports: Create more affordable childcare spaces for infants, toddlers, and school-aged children.</p>
ACTION – SOON (within 6 months - year)	<p>Stigma & Discrimination: Increase and improve services in specific areas to build social connections and get more people involved. Targets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low income neighbourhoods • groups like seniors, single parent families, children and youth.
	<p>Stigma & Discrimination: Encourage changes to public attitudes around poverty (e.g. using city communications, funding opportunities, and education).</p>
	<p>Transportation: Ensure transit is safe by, for example, increasing street lighting in bus area routes, providing additional safe indoor waiting areas and expanding night service.</p>
	<p>Food Security: Advance opportunities for sustainable food sources including community gardening, food kitchens, and programming focused on food supply and education.</p>
	<p>Access to Services & Supports: Make it easier for people to access the City’s Leisure Access Program.</p>
	<p>Food Security: Use City tools (policy, grants, zoning, etc.) to support further development of community gardens and access to healthy food.</p>
ACTION – LATER (1 year – 3 years)	<p>Access to Services & Supports: Create a baseline inventory of accessible community services and programs for low-income residents of Prince George.</p>
	<p>Housing: Complete a Housing Needs and Demand Study for Prince George in 2022 that includes attention to different types of housing along the continuum.</p>
	<p>Transportation: Provide tailored transit education and improved information services (like simple and easy to understand bus schedules).</p>
	<p>Food Security: Develop a Food Policy Council (and Food Charter) that supports issues around community food security and insecurity.</p>
	<p>Access to Services & Supports: Support development of a Navigation Hub. A person (the “navigator”) will be available to help people access services and supports.</p>
<p>Food Security: Use food access mapping to inform City project development decisions (i.e. provide incentives to develop projects close to food sources).</p>	

Section 1: Background

TogetherBC- British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy

In March 2019, the Province of BC released [TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#). Mandated by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act (November 2018), the strategy sets targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in BC by at least 25% and the child poverty rate by at least 50% by 2024. With investments from across Government,

TogetherBC reflects government's commitment to reduce poverty and make life more affordable for British Columbians. It includes policy initiatives and investments designed to lift people up, break the cycle of poverty and build a better B.C. for everyone. Built on four (4) principles of Affordability, Opportunity, Reconciliation, and Social Inclusion, TogetherBC, it encompasses twelve (12) key priorities distilled into six (6) priority action areas:

- More affordable housing for more people;
- Supporting families, children and youth;
- Expanding access to education and training;
- More opportunities, more jobs;
- Improving income supports; and
- Investing in social inclusion.

Together BC represents the beginning of the provincial government's efforts to make meaningful progress toward reducing poverty in British Columbia. It brings together government efforts aimed at improving services, offering enhanced supports and bringing down barriers for people to exist out of poverty. Undeniably, there is a role for local governments, and an opportunity to align and support the provincial strategy in their respective communities. However, local governments cannot address poverty in isolation, it is critical that municipal governments align commitments with provincial and federal strategies. Therefore, in October 2019, Prince George City Council approved the formation of a Select Committee on Poverty Reduction to investigate and develop recommendations/strategy related to the City of Prince George's role in the implementation of the provincial poverty reduction strategy.

City of Prince George Select Committee on Poverty Reduction Formation:

In October 2019, Prince George City Council approved the formation of a Select Committee on Poverty Reduction. The Committee was comprised of a variety of representatives from the community with a diverse range of perspectives and understanding of poverty reduction. The committee met monthly from November 2019 - October 2020, to develop a series of recommendations regarding the City's role in implementation of the Province's [TogetherBC](#) strategy.



Purpose and Mandate:

The purpose and mandate of the [Select Committee on Poverty Reduction](#) is to advise Mayor and Council of the City of Prince George and City Staff on matters regarding the priorities, policies and strategies affecting poverty reduction in Prince George and the City of Prince George's role in the implementation of the provincial poverty reduction strategy.

Membership:

The Committee was comprised of the following members:

- Murry Krause, Councillor, Committee Chair
- Laurel Burton, Northern Health
- Ron Carter, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Devin Croin, Northern Undergraduate Student Society
- Jennifer Harrington, Prince George Native Friendship Centre (PGNFC)
- Roy Law, Salvation Army
- Janet Marren, Prince George Council of Seniors
- Katie Marren, School District 57
- Kerry Pateman, Community Partners Addressing Homelessness (CPAH)
- Cori Ramsay, Councillor, City of Prince George
- Darcie Smith, Advisory Committee on Accessibility



Process:

At its November 2019 orientation, Committee Members received a series of presentations on the TogetherBC Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, A Profile of Poverty in the City of Prince George 2019³ and an overview on the Role of Local Government in Poverty Reduction. Using this combined information, Committee members identified six focus areas that guided Committee deliberations at subsequent meetings. Priority themes such as the affordability and suitability of housing, enabling access to services and supports and food security were identified as being particularly relevant to the Prince George context and the role of local government. The focus areas aligned with both the Province's TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Prince George Poverty Profile.

Additionally, the Committee confirmed that the recommendations encompass and consider the full spectrum of poverty - ranging from absolute poverty (i.e. homelessness) to the concept of "working poor" or relative poverty. It was acknowledged that within Prince George, certain census dissemination areas of the community are disproportionately impacted by multiple factors of poverty including low-income, unstable housing, lone-parenting status, low educational attainment and high unemployment and that it would be important to consider the scope of poverty within the entire community and not only from the lens of absolute poverty.

Last, the Committee acknowledged that individuals with lived experience or living experience of poverty are coming from a foundation of strength and resiliency. Their knowledge, insights and contribution to this work must be elevated, as a means to define and illustrate what the lived experience of poverty looks like in Prince George with the goal of challenging stereotypes and misinformation.



Poverty is a condition in which a person or community is deprived of, and or lacks the essentials for a minimum standard of well-being and life. Since poverty is understood in many senses, these essentials may be material resources such as food, safe drinking water, and shelter, or they may be social resources such as access to information, education, health care, transportation or the opportunity to develop meaningful connections with other people in society.

Working poor is a term used to describe individuals and families who maintain regular employment but remain in relative poverty due to low levels of pay and dependent expenses. It is also referred to as relative poverty.

Absolute poverty is when household income is below a certain level, which makes it impossible for the person or family to meet basic needs of life including food, shelter, safe drinking water, education, healthcare, etc.

³ A profile of Poverty in the City of Prince George

<https://www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Hall/Documents/Mayor%20and%20Council/Committees%20and%20Boards/Poverty%20Profile%20-%20Final%20-%20Nov%202019%20Update.pdf>

Focus Areas for the Recommendations

Focus Area	Significance to Poverty Reduction
Focus Area 1: Stigma & Discrimination	Some Canadians experience poorer social and health outcomes than others do. Evidence indicates this is, in part, due to how people treat each other. When people are stigmatized it affects their chances for a long and healthy life. Stigma affects health through stress and other physical pathways. Many people are exposed to multiple stigmas, preventing them from attaining the resources they need to achieve optimal health such as education, employment, housing, and health services.
Focus Area 2: Housing (affordability and suitability)	Housing in Prince George is less expensive than the provincial average, but those who rent spend significantly more of their household income on housing (39.6 %) than those who own (10.4%). Housing has significantly increased in cost. In 2020, there was an increase of 18% in Prince George compared to 11% in BC ⁴ . On-going increases in housing costs are making home-ownership an impossibility for many. Housing stability helps decrease economic stress and food insecurity, helps keep families together, reduces the rates of domestic violence and alcohol dependence, and limits school changes among children ⁵ .
Focus Area 3: Access to Services & Supports	Lack of access to various services and supports such as social and economic services or childcare has its effect at the most fundamental level of living. If there is poor access to health services, people will remain unhealthy. If there is poor access to education, people will experience limitations for their future. Concentrating on improving access to services and supports is a key component in any poverty reduction strategy and works towards ensuring a basic quality of life for all.
Focus Area 4: Food Security	Household food insecurity exists when a household worries about or lacks the financial means to buy healthy, safe, personally acceptable food. Evidence shows that food-insecure families struggle to afford a healthy diet and experience greater health and social challenges compared to people who are food secure.
Focus Area 5: Education & Employment	Education plays an important role in breaking the cycle of poverty. Inclusive and supportive K-12 programming ensures youth graduate from high school. Attending college, university, or trades training can lead to better-paying jobs. Unfortunately, post-secondary education remains out of reach for many families and young people living in poverty ⁶ . Access to high-quality primary education and supporting child well-being is a globally-recognized solution to the cycle of poverty ⁷ .
Focus Area 6: Transportation	Affordable transportation enables people to fully participate in their community. Public transit is the primary means of transportation for many low-income residents, taking them to and from jobs and school. Affordable and accessible transportation also allows people to attend health appointments, shop for food and necessities, go to school, and participate in recreational activities.

⁴ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/crea-house-price-1.5724433>

⁵ <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/reduce-poverty-improving-housing-stability>

⁶ [/www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/social-development-poverty-reduction/togetherbc-report-2019.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/social-development-poverty-reduction/togetherbc-report-2019.pdf)

⁷ <https://www.concernusa.org/story/how-education-affects-poverty/#:~:text=Education%20directly%20correlates%20with%20many,Reduced%20infant%20and%20maternal%20deaths>

In addition to the Focus Areas, seven (7) lenses were identified as important to Committee deliberations. Also noteworthy is that particular emphasis and direct effort was placed on engaging with the 7 lens groups during the engagement activities. Framed by the 6 focus areas and the 7 lenses, the Committee utilized each of its meetings (Nov 2019-Oct 2020) to examine the focus areas and developed a series of recommendations that would be impactful at the local level.

Deliberations included consideration of the relationship of each focus area to those potentially impacted (such as seniors and single parent families (identified lens groups), as well as the mandate and jurisdiction of local government. Administration collated and synthesized Committee discussion points in the form of draft recommendations that were then reviewed, amended, and endorsed by the Committee at the November 10, 2020 Committee meeting. The recommendations were the focal point of the community engagement process February 11 - March 12, 2021.

The seven (7) lenses identified by the Select Committee:

- Children/youth (0-17 years)
- Single parent families
- Seniors
- Those living in specific neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by factors that contribute to poverty
- Those living with mental health and substance use
- The working poor and those in absolute poverty
- Reconciliation



Section 2: Engagement Summary⁸

As part of its commitment to poverty reduction and the province’s *TogetherBC* strategy, the City of Prince George reached out and heard from community members through a comprehensive engagement process. Public-gathering limitations from COVID-19 and the unique access needs of our diverse lens groups drove creativity and continuous updates to ideation regarding the communications plan and participation in the online survey.

The success of the engagement is demonstrative of both the community’s commitment and interest in this issue—an issue that affects everyone. This includes the commitment of the Select Committee Members on Poverty Reduction, to the support and dedication of the 52 community partners, agencies, and advocates. Participation in the survey (both paper and online) came from 814 community members (just over 300 more than the City’s average for community engagement surveys) from each of the diverse lens groups.



Most importantly, as the initiatives to reduce poverty in the city of Prince George will continue through advocacy and action, residents are aware of the project and the City’s commitment through the extensive, social media, direct emails, community newsletters, posters, direct-mailed post cards and media coverage that this engagement and communications project garnered.

Engagement Goals	Results
To engage and receive feedback from each of the lenses identified by the Select Committee on Poverty Reduction (Youth, Seniors, Neighbourhoods, mental health and addictions, single-parent families, working poor and those in absolute poverty, reconciliation).	All provided feedback, including: 6% – Youth 18 & under 17% – Seniors 60 - 79 years 1% – Seniors 80+ years
To ensure 15% of feedback comes from Indigenous voices	14.47% of self-declared Indigenous participants in the survey
To engage and receive feedback from at least 250 people with lived experience in poverty and 500 overall based on the City’s average survey participation rate	Survey visitors (attempted survey, but not complete): 1,852 Survey participants (completed surveys): 814 Survey website page views: 17,939 Average visit length: 15 minutes
To ensure a multi-faceted, flexible engagement strategy , responsive to health, safety, and access challenges	Set a plan, evaluated, pivoted and adapted after the first two weeks as a result of lower numbers in certain lens group numbers, resulting in success.
To engage with at least 5 community partners and/or agencies on delivery and facilitation to six lens groups	52 active community partners , individuals, and agencies participate in the project and share using a developed communications toolkit.

⁸ Monogram Communications City of Prince George Engagement Report May 2021

Engagement Challenges & Mitigations

Every public engagement project comes with challenges, but the pandemic’s public-gathering restrictions forced cancellations of public forums, focus groups and input gatherings. Our focus to online engagement then faced constraints for our seven lens groups: limited access to the online platform, complex survey topics, and investment in a variety of communication methods needed for the diverse groups.

Challenges	Mitigations
<p>COVID-19 – All agencies faced challenges accessing the most marginalized of community members during this time.</p>	<p>Pivoting – Mid-survey changes to delivery, ongoing support of partners, adoption of unique delivery methods for each of the lens groups, and continual reminders and communication throughout built a strong campaign throughout the four weeks of engagement. Survey was supported by 52 community partners and variety of communication touchpoints: hampers, direct mail, computer stations, QR codes.</p>
<p>Reaching Youth – Worked closely with School District 57 on research agreement, survey review and specific communications; however, access at the classroom level was more challenging with lower uptakes than anticipated.</p>	<p>Personal connections – Made direct contacts with teachers, resulting in two classes partaking.</p>
<p>Involved Survey – Participants were asked to take up to 30 minutes to complete survey, with many questions addressing fairly complex concepts.</p>	<p>Contracted a plain language expert to simplify the language; led a Zoom survey orientations for facilitators, and a script for those helping over the phone.</p>
<p>Challenging Topics – Some of the topics were complex and difficult to convey to survey participants.</p>	<p>Invited all responses – To ensure none of the valuable feedback was lost, we accepted incomplete surveys and every response.</p>
<p>Diverse Audience – The lens groups made up a diverse audience: from youth to seniors, single-parent families and Indigenous community members.</p>	<p>Research from the <i>Poverty Profile</i> helped define the needs of the lens groups. Commitment from Select Committee members and community partners to share engagement opportunities and support the communications and engagement strategies was exceptional.</p>

Section 3: Prince George Poverty Reduction Survey Results⁹

From February 11 to March 12, 2021 the committee used an engagement platform powered by [Ethelo](#) to ask Prince George residents for input as they sought to rank the importance and urgency of its recommendations. Special efforts were made to hear from those with lived experience in poverty, and those who support and advocate for them.



Additionally, the committee partnered with community groups and organizations to ensure a diverse representation of voices were heard. Participants were invited to share their views regarding each potential initiative by voting, sharing comments, and weighing priorities against one another. Though all recommendations and priorities were generally supported by the community, Ethelo used the results to identify the most important and urgent priorities for the City to address as it aims to reduce poverty.

Top 5 Most Important Recommendations

Adult basic education and English language learning should remain free	90% Support
Ask for input from people who have experience living in poverty	87% Support
Support people who want to improve their education or access employment opportunities	85% Support
Advocate for resources at all levels of government to help with housing needs	84% Support
Create more affordable childcare spaces	84% Support

Participants were asked to indicate the importance of each recommendation, using a 7 point Likert scale ranging from *Totally Oppose* to *Totally Support*.

⁹ Appendix 3: Ethelo Poverty Reduction Survey Summary Report March 2021

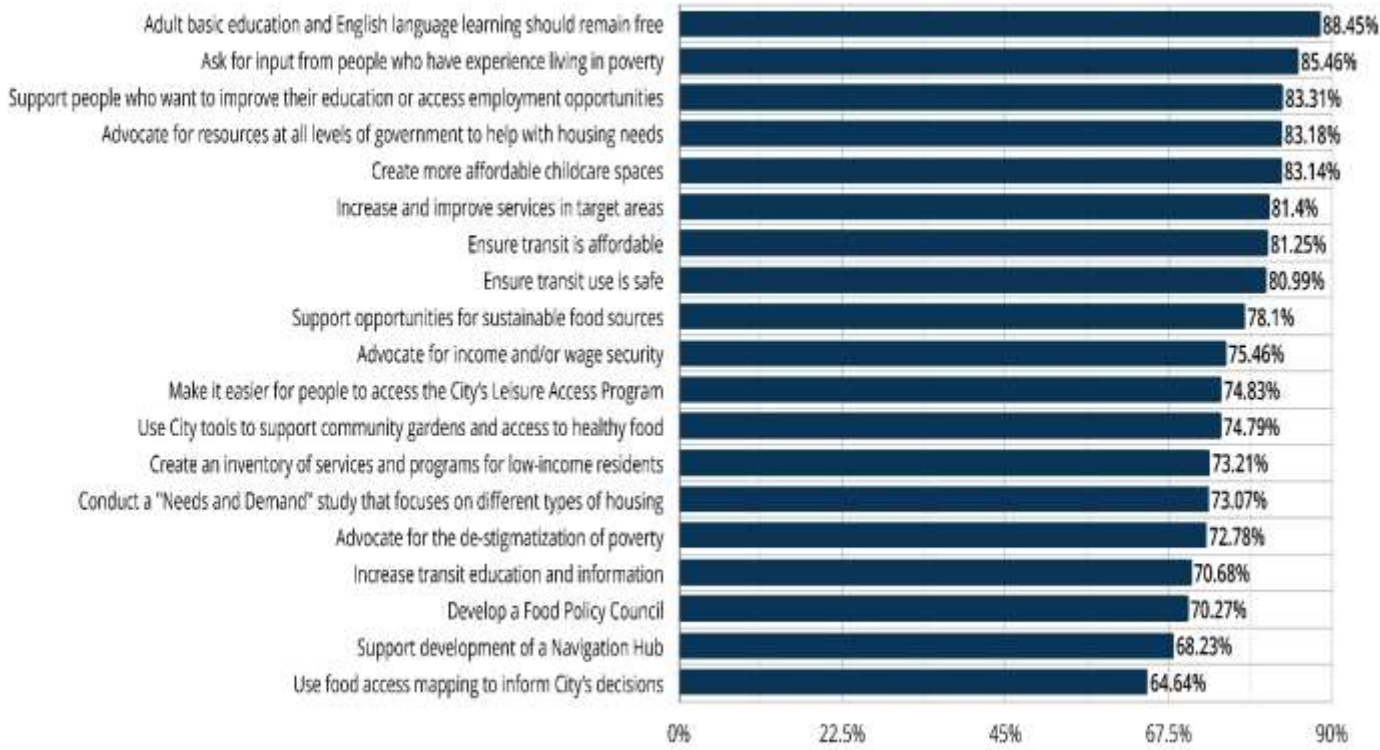
Top 5 Most Urgent Priorities

Adult basic education and English language learning should remain free	87% Support
Ask for input from people who have experience living in poverty	84% Support
Advocate for resources at all levels of government to help with housing needs	82% Support
Support people who want to improve their education or access to employment opportunities	82% Support
Create more affordable childcare spaces	82% Support

Participants were also asked to indicate the urgency of each recommendation, using a 7 point Likert scale ranging from *Totally Oppose* to *Totally Support*.

Using the input gathered from both the importance votes and the urgency votes from each recommendation, an overall score was created for each recommendation. Below is the ranking for each recommendation ranked against all of the other recommendations. Overall, all nineteen recommendations were highly supported by the community, as seen by the voting scores. Therefore, the approach for prioritization of the recommendations is based on timing and scheduling for Municipal advocacy and action. Further detail on this approach is included in the Recommendations section of this report.

Overall Recommendations Rank



Further Considerations of the Survey Results

While the Committee was satisfied with the community-based ranking of the 19 recommendations, there were concerns whether participants who indicated a higher income bracket could potentially skew the results. Additionally, Committee members questioned if it was possible for partial responses to the survey to alter results. Therefore, from the perspective of due diligence and instilling strong confidence in the survey results, Ethelo was requested to complete a second examination of the data based on:

- participants who identified as having a household income between \$0 - \$49,999 / year
- participants identifying as living in V2L or V2M neighbourhoods (particular neighborhoods identified in the poverty profile and established by the Committee as a lens group).
- partial survey responses

The second review of the data, based on the sub-group categorizations above, confirmed no significant deviation of the original survey results. Furthermore, explanation was provided that advised against using the sub-group data results when presenting the data and making decisions. It was suggested that subgrouping of the data was problematic, because it assumes a number of things:

- it assumes people in higher income brackets do not have any lived-poverty experience;
- it assumes people's willingness to accurately report their household income;
- it purposely excludes responses from people who work in fields assisting and advocating those in poverty, who were specifically sought out as respondents; and
- it ignores community-level feedback that was considered critical to this engagement.

The additional review of the survey results confirmed the sub-group results were not as valid as the full data set, and should not be used to replace the existing data. Furthermore, Ethelo data analysis staff reviewed the data from the perspective of partial completion and reported that not-completed votes are only of concern when there's a concerted effort by a group of individuals to select particular options. Ethelo staff reviewed the original data further and confirmed that those participants who were not able to complete the engagement did not display any strategy of targeting questions, or providing specific answers. Rather, as is often seen with engagements, more people completed the questions that came at the beginning of the survey, than those questions that came later. This had no impact over how likely or unlikely they were to support or oppose these particular options, it simply was a completion indicator.

In conclusion, the additional review of the data was valuable to the process, it instilled confidence in the survey process and substantiates the prioritization of the recommendations based on the original data results.

Section 4: City of Prince George Poverty Reduction Recommendations & Implementation Considerations

The Role of the Municipality

The Community Charter provides the statutory framework for all municipalities in BC, except the City of Vancouver. It sets out municipalities' core areas of authority. To align with the Community Charter, the City of Prince George typically plays five roles in relation to fostering the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community. The five roles are described in more detail below. Municipalities cannot address poverty alone. Solving the challenges of poverty requires all three levels of government working in collaboration. It is critical that municipal governments align commitments with provincial and federal strategies. Overall there are nineteen (19) poverty reduction recommendations. Five (5) of the recommendations are “advocacy” in nature and as such an accompanying “advocacy avenues and tactics for local government” table is included with those recommendations. Fourteen (14) of the recommendations are “action” in nature and specifics of these action recommendations, including milestones, required resources and partners/contributors are included in a subsequent section of the report..

ACT	FACILITATE	ADVOCATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planner - the City is responsible for defining the short-, medium, and long-term direction for a variety of services.• Protector/Regulator - under the Community Charter there are certain enforcement responsibilities the City has to ensure safety and quality of life.• Provider - the City delivers and maintains services, infrastructure and utilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City plays an important role as facilitator, convener and partner to align community action on shared goals.• The City may work with non-municipal entities (i.e. the private sector, not-for-profits, services providers, etc.) to align community action on shared goals• The City's facilitation of collective work is focused on guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurements, building public will, advancing policy and mobilizing funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City routinely advocates for policy, funding, and/or support from other levels of government.

Rationale for the Prioritization of the 19 Recommendations (Always, Now, Soon & Later)

As mentioned previously, community support for all nineteen of the recommendations was strong, as shown by the community voting scores for each of the individual recommendations. Therefore, the approach for prioritization of the recommendations is based on timing and scheduling for Municipal action/advocacy. Using the community voting scores for the recommendations, they were classified into tables of action and advocacy.

- **Advocacy- ALWAYS.** These are the recommendations (regardless of voting scores) that are of an advocacy focus for local government. Attention to these recommendations would be on-going, as opportunity (such as funding) arises and would include a commitment from Council along with staff support. These recommendations were placed in their own table labelled as Advocacy.
- **Action that can be taken NOW (as soon as possible, within the year).** These recommendations were from the Most Important/Urgent table and were “action” in nature. The remaining recommendations ranked as important/urgent were advocacy in nature and as such were placed in the advocacy category.
- **Action that can be taken SOON (within 6 months- 1 year).** These recommendations were based on the scores from the overall rankings table (Ethelo Poverty Reduction Summary report, pg. 7.).
- **Action that can be taken LATER (1 year- 3 years).** These recommendations were based on the scores from the overall rankings table (Ethelo Poverty Reduction Summary report, pg. 7.).

This approach ensures all of the recommendations (since they were all generally supported, as ranked by community voting) are included for City of Prince George response to poverty reduction. Considerations of required resources and partners/contributors would be applicable to all of the recommendations and are highlighted as overarching to all recommendations. The milestones, and an example of action underway (where applicable) are markers that will continually be monitored in order to update milestones and include additional actions underway as progress is made toward implementation of the recommendations.

Recommendations – ADVOCACY - ALWAYS (on-going)

Local governments are vital partners in the on-going work around poverty reduction. Being at the ground level, and seeing the impacts of poverty in community, they can play a fundamental role in developing local solutions with community partners and other levels of government. While local government plays an important role in poverty reduction, much of that role must include strong advocacy to senior levels of government to impact their priorities and necessary investments. The Committee has confirmed that advocacy with other levels of government, is a priority for poverty reduction at the local level. Advocacy can be defined as a collective effort to bring about changes to political priorities, funding levels, legislation, regulations or policies. Relying on advocacy avenues and tactics available (outlined in the table below) as well as taking advantage of opportunities as they arise (i.e. available funding), the City of Prince George will facilitate advocacy efforts for the 5 recommendations below.

RECOMMENDATION—EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Advocate to keep adult basic education and English language learning course free.

“Yesssss!!! Give people the opportunity to better themselves. Please... I got my grade 12 through the adult education program, it was free and I probably wouldn't have my dogwood if it hadn't have been free. Not everyone is ready to graduate when they should and sometimes it takes a bit of growing up before you understand how important it is.”

- Survey Participant

RECOMMENDATION—EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Advocate for ways to support people who want to improve their education, or access employment opportunities. For example, advocate for wage subsidies for Early Childhood Education workers and assistance programs for post-secondary students.

“Post-secondary education needs to be more accessible to those in poverty. There needs to be more “full ride” scholarships available to educate those in poverty who want to attend, but cannot afford it. I have met numerous people who have brilliant ideas on where they want to go in life, but either don’t know how to get there or cannot afford it. We need to make it easier for them.”

- Survey Participant

RECOMMENDATION—HOUSING

Advocate for government programs, services and incentives at all levels that help people have suitable housing and supports for housing.

“More housing that is affordable and accessible to single parent families, youth, and other low income households. Also supports in place so those that need additional help sustaining their housing can do so.”

- Survey Participant

RECOMMENDATION—SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Respond to income insecurity and low wage poverty with advocacy focused on policy change, through, for example, living wage directives, guaranteed annual income commitments and/or competitive wages that encourage workers to enter fields like Early Childhood Education.

“Supporting a living wage for ALL workers is an essential aspect of long-term poverty reduction and economic equality. Anyone working 35+ hours a week, regardless of age or gender or ethnicity or ability, should be able to support themselves and their families.”

- Survey Participant

RECOMMENDATION—TRANSPORTATION

Ensure transit is affordable by working with BC Transit to enhance the fare structure and amenities (like free transfers).

“Transportation is a huge concern for many people and can cause barriers for continuing education and job security. Ensuring transportation is affordable could be a huge step to empowering those who struggle with poverty. I also think this community would benefit from letting senior citizens ride for free.”

- Survey Participant

Advocacy Avenues and Tactics for Local Government

ADVOCACY PARTNER/AVENUE	DESCRIPTION	SAMPLE ADVOCACY TACTIC
Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formed to provide a common voice for local government in BC. • Convention continues to be the main forum for UBCM policy-making. • Provides an opportunity for local governments of all sizes and from all areas of the province to come together, share their experiences and take a united position. • Positions developed by members are carried to other orders of government and other organizations involved in local affairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual presentations at UBCM convention • Involvement in UBCM committees • Regular meetings with Ministers • Regular contact with senior government • Letters of support
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates for municipalities to be sure their citizens' needs are reflected in federal policies and programs. • FCM's work benefits every municipal government in Canada. • FCM programming delivers tools that help municipalities tackle local challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit resolutions on subjects of national municipal interest that fall within the jurisdiction of the federal government.
North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A coalition of cities, towns, Indigenous communities, villages and regional districts. • A non-profit, non-partisan association comprised of all elected officials in North Central British Columbia. • Works to connect communities, identify common challenges and facilitate positive change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit NCLGA resolutions for UBCM • Letters of Support • Advocacy Reports • Contact local MLAs
Provincial & Federal Ministers	<p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one meetings, • Monitor progress on ministerial commitments and progress
BC Poverty Reduction Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprised of over 100 organizations and community mobilizations that come together to advocate for public policy solutions to end poverty, homelessness and inequality in B.C. • Advocates for a targeted and comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that prioritizes equity-seeking groups • Focused on a whole government, cross-ministry approach to ending poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signature to petitions • Letters • Membership in the Coalition • Support anti-poverty campaigns
Cities Reducing Poverty Network, Vibrant Cities, Tamarack Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A powerful collective impact movement comprised of 330 municipalities and represented by 80 regional roundtables. • Operating philosophy is that in order to reduce poverty, it takes the whole community and the entire country working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership • Participation in educational workshops, webinars etc. • Participate in communities of practice • Utilize toolkits, consultancy

	<p>together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership ensures all sectors are brought to the table, harness the assets of their communities and drive long-term change as they develop and implement plans to reduce poverty in their communities. 	services etc.
Local MLA, MP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of legislative assemblies (MLA) are members of the elected provincial legislatures. • Member of Parliament (MP) is the representative of the people who live in their constituency. • Represent their constituents in the Assembly by sharing views, introducing Bills, debating issues, and discussing concerns with other Members and various government ministries. • MLAs advocate on behalf of their constituents in the Assembly. • In addition to their responsibilities as MLAs, Members might also carry additional roles in the Legislative Assembly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters, meetings, on policy, platforms, issues that are important at the community level
Committee members, individuals, agencies, stakeholders in the community	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members each have well developed networks that can be utilized to advocate for change at a local level • Individuals, agencies and stakeholders can be a powerful force in local advocacy
Other Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively/align with other local municipalities to meet shared challenges and interests 	

Recommendations- Resources & Partners

While it is anticipated that Prince George City Council will endorse the 19 recommendations as presented in this report, it is understood that as work begins on the recommendations, and in particular the *action* themed recommendations, any incremental costs associated with implementation as well as a work plan would be brought forward for Council consideration and approval prior to any investment of resources. All 14 of the *action* recommendations have consistent expectations associated with implementation and progress. As such the required resources and potential partners/contributors, applicable to all of the recommendations are outlined in the table below.

Resources Required	Partners/Contributors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council commitment & approval (i.e. any incremental costs associated with implementation) • External funding • Staff support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant City Departments & Divisions • Community Partners • Other levels of Government

Recommendations – ACTION – NOW (immediately within the next year)

RECOMMENDATION—STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION

When the City is collecting information on social wellbeing priorities, ask for input from people who have experience living in poverty.

Milestones

- Residents with lived or living experience of poverty are included in City of Prince George public engagement activities.

“You will never truly understand what it's like to live in poverty unless you've experienced it. Insight from those who've lived in poverty is invaluable across all sectors. This input would expose more barriers and even more solutions to many social well-being problems in the city.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- The community engagement for the poverty reduction, involved 52 community stakeholders and ensured a diverse composition of community residents provided comment on the recommendations for City action.

RECOMMENDATION—ACCESS TO SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Create more affordable childcare spaces for infants, toddlers, and school-aged children.

Milestones

- Achievement of child care space creation targets outlined in the City of Prince George Child Care Action Plan March 2020.

“Even those who can afford childcare cannot access it because of the lack of spaces, so those in poverty are at an even greater disadvantage. Early childhood education, especially within the first five years of life, is incredibly important towards a person's development and future milestones and people living in poverty often are not able to access these supports. Access to early childhood education should be universal.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- Work is progressing on the YMCA Park House Care and Early Learning Centre, bringing 85 new childcare spaces to the downtown.

Recommendations – ACTION - SOON (within 6 months -1 year)

RECOMMENDATION—STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION

Increase and improve services in specific areas to build social connections and get more people involved. Targets include low income neighbourhoods and groups like seniors, single parent families, children and youth.

Milestones

- Improved and enhanced service delivery in identified neighbourhoods is evident.

“Very much depends on the services being provided and how easy it is to access them. I think that services to help with quality of life (food security, housing, safe places for substance use) are extremely important right away. However level of ease of access is also very important. If the amount of red tape to go through is high and there are many barriers to get these services my support goes down. People need to be able to easily access the services.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- With funding from the Vancouver Foundation, the Raise Up Our Kids community service hub is being established at Nusdeh Yoh Elementary School to connect students and families to services & supports.

RECOMMENDATION—STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION

Encourage changes to public attitudes around poverty (e.g. using city communications, funding opportunities, and education).

Milestones

- Note: Change in public attitudes can be difficult to measure. Simply providing information and increasing knowledge about a topic is not enough to lead to attitude and behavior change.
- It is possible to acknowledge/evaluate efforts contributed to, for example, an anti-stigma campaign, however this does not evaluate impact.
- The preparation of a Theory of Change could be a foundation milestone for this recommendation.

“Extremely important to address intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, substance use stigma, and misunderstanding of the social determinants of health and poverty. These social constructs are at the root of discriminatory practices that dehumanize people experiencing poverty and reinforce the cycle.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- The City of Prince George myPG Community Grants criteria encourages projects that ensures equity and inclusion (with an emphasis on initiatives that reduce stigma and discrimination associated with issues like poverty to ensure all citizens can fully participate in community life)

RECOMMENDATION—TRANSPORTATION

Ensure transit is safe by, for example, increasing street lighting in bus area routes, providing additional safe indoor waiting areas and expanding night service.

Milestones

- Continued implementation of the Transit Future Action Plan.

“Many people, especially those suffering from poverty, utilize the bus system. It is very important to ensure our communities safety while also making the lives of those who regularly use the system easier.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- Improved street lighting is being added on an ongoing basis (e.g. lighting audits on each street and neighbourhood to determine ideal spacing, additional lighting at intersections - where bus stops are usually located).
-

RECOMMENDATION—FOOD SECURITY

Advance opportunities for sustainable food sources including community gardening, food kitchens, and programming focused on food supply and education.

Milestones

- Zoning is accessible for supporting development of community gardens and access to healthy food.
- Support development of community led pilot project(s) that promotes food kitchens, education.

“I agree - education is huge. Also, increasing access and creating community by increasing local food infrastructure.. More than just gardens. I.e. Neighborhood composting, community food processing equipment. Things to promote use and increase the value of local food.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- To be determined as recommendation is implemented.

RECOMMENDATION—ACCESS TO SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Make it easier for people to access the City's Leisure Access Program

Milestones

- comprehensive review of the City's current LAP program, include looking at other municipalities' programs.

"Yes, this is great. Allowing low-income people to engage in community activity not only brings the community closer but destigmatizing poverty and homelessness would reduce a significant barrier."

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- To be determined as recommendation is implemented.

RECOMMENDATION—FOOD SECURITY

Use City tools (policy, grants, zoning, etc.) to support further development of community gardens and access to healthy food.

Milestones

- Ensure zoning is accessible for supporting development of community gardens and access to healthy food.
- Develop a community led pilot project that promotes food security.

"Because of COVID, shared community gardens may not be possible but planning/consultation could take place during this time, especially with Save On closing at Parkwood, what can be done to bridge needs especially for those most vulnerable."

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- To be determined as recommendation is implemented.

Recommendations – ACTION – LATER (1 year - 3 years)

RECOMMENDATION—HOUSING

Complete a Housing Needs and Demand Study for Prince George in 2022 that includes attention to different types of housing along the continuum.

Milestones

- City decision-making in relation to housing development(s) reflects needs identified in the 2022 Housing Needs Study.

“Planning is a very important step in creating housing development, so this is a great first step. Planning should include community input and understanding what people in need of housing think should be done.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- City of PG Housing Needs Study will be undertaken May 2021 by Urban Matters with attention to both market and non-market housing needs.

RECOMMENDATION—ACCESS TO SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Create a baseline inventory of accessible community services and programs for low-income residents of Prince George.

Milestones

- Existing community inventory of services can easily be navigated for those requiring services.

“Let's not reinvent the wheel. There's a provincial resource BC211 (by web or phone), that does this already. Making residents aware of it, and making sure services are included would be a far better use of resources.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- Community success with BC211 that connects individuals to programs and services in the community.

RECOMMENDATION—TRANSPORTATION

Provide tailored transit education and improved information services (like simple and easy to understand bus schedules).

Milestones

- Establishment of a formalized transit training program.

“Improved info e.g. easy to understand bus schedules important for those with many forms of disabilities - definitely support this!”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- Addition of new bus stop flag signs system-wide
- Addition of new schedules at major stops
- First Phase of new signage installation underway

RECOMMENDATION—FOOD SECURITY

Develop a Food Policy Council (and Food Charter) that supports issues around community food security and insecurity.

Milestones

- A lead community agency provides Council with a food charter for consideration.

“The Nechako Valley Food Network in Vanderhoof is a model of working for local food literacy, skills in growing gardens, connecting school kids with seniors at the community garden, healthy food in the schools, and so much more. The knowledge exists in PG city and regional district and just needs to be coordinated to be more effective for outreach and education.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- Local Food PG Society provided myPG Community Grant (Spring 2021) to host community engagement in order to develop a food charter.

RECOMMENDATION—ACCESS TO SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Support development of a Navigation Hub. A person (the “navigator”) will be available to help people access services and supports.

Milestones

- A lead community agency is identified to begin the development of a Navigation Hub.

“As someone who grew up living in poverty, there were probably many supports and services my family could have utilized but we were not aware of or did not have access to. If a position like this was available back then where someone could listen to the specific concerns of our family and provide us with the best fitting services - I think that would have been greatly beneficial. I think this position could be a lifeline for a lot of people who are struggling and falling through the cracks.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- To be determined as recommendation is implemented.

RECOMMENDATION—FOOD SECURITY

Use food access mapping to inform City project development decisions (i.e. provide incentives to develop projects close to food sources).

Milestones

- This may be informed by the development of a food charter and/or food policy. See previous recommendation.

“This is very important especially given the recent news about Save-On Foods leaving downtown. There's a risk of downtown and the VLA becoming food deserts and that should be a concern when the city is discussing zoning changes, etc.”

- Survey Participant

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

- To be determined as recommendation is implemented.

Section 5: Conclusion

In March 2019, the Province of BC released [TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#). Mandated by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act (November 2018), the strategy sets targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in BC by at least 25% and the child poverty rate by at least 50% by 2024. With investments from across Government, TogetherBC reflects government's commitment to reduce poverty and make life more affordable for British Columbians.



Without question, there is a role for local governments in poverty reduction, and an opportunity to align and support the provincial strategy in communities. However, local governments cannot address poverty in isolation, it is critical that municipal governments align commitments with provincial and federal strategies. Therefore, in October 2019, Prince George City Council approved the formation of a Select Committee on Poverty Reduction to develop recommendations related to the City of Prince George's role in the implementation of the provincial poverty reduction strategy.

This report presents nineteen (19) recommendations regarding poverty reduction at the local level and from the perspective of municipal action and advocacy. The recommendations are the culmination of the Select Committee on Poverty Reduction's work that took place from Nov 2019 - Oct 2020. Framed by six focus areas and seven lenses, the recommendations are relevant to the local context, the role of local government and they encompass and consider the full spectrum of poverty - ranging from absolute poverty (i.e. homelessness) to the concept of "working poor" or relative poverty.

Considerations of resources, partners/contributors, milestones, examples of action underway (where applicable) as well as advocacy avenues and tactics are included with the recommendations. As work begins on the recommendations, and in particular the *action* themed recommendations, any incremental costs associated with implementation as well as a work plan would be brought forward for Council consideration and approval prior to any investment of resources.

In conclusion, Council identified supporting initiatives that provide access to safe housing, healthy food, and community services, as a Social Health and Well-being focus area. The Select Committee on Poverty Reduction's final recommendations, concerning the City of Prince George's role in the implementation of the provincial poverty reduction strategy, addresses this focus area and was identified as a 2020 work plan priority.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Select Committee on Poverty Reduction Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2: Infographic on Poverty in Prince George
- Appendix 3: Ethelo Poverty Reduction Survey Summary Report March 2021
- Appendix 4: Monogram Communications - City of Prince George Engagement Report May 2021



TERMS OF REFERENCE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POVERTY REDUCTION

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Select Committee Name:	Select Committee on Poverty Reduction
Meeting Frequency:	Meeting Frequency and Schedule to be Determined

The Select Committee on Poverty Reduction is a select committee of Council established in accordance with the *Community Charter* and “*City of Prince George Council Procedures Bylaw No. 8388, 2011*”.

2. PURPOSE AND MANDATE

The Select Committee on Poverty Reduction hereafter referred to as the “Committee”, is to advise Mayor and Council of the City of Prince George, hereafter referred to as “Council”, and City Staff on matters regarding the priorities, policies and strategies affecting poverty reduction in Prince George, in accordance with these Terms of Reference. Specifically, the committee will:

- Review relevant documentation (including the Province’s *TogetherBC* strategy as it relates to potential local government action, recommendations made by the Select Committee on a Healthy City Framework related to poverty reduction, key strategies identified by the community during a 2015 process funded and facilitated by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, current City initiatives that contribute to poverty reduction, and the 2019 Prince George Poverty Profile);
- Consider and integrate the advice and activities of other Council Committees with mandates aligned with poverty reduction;
- Prepare recommendations regarding strategies that the City of Prince George could implement to advance Council’s strategic priority related to poverty reduction and;
- Endeavour to strengthen communication and collaboration between the City of Prince George and community partners working to advance poverty reduction strategies.

3. MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION

3.1 Composition

3.1.1 Voting Members

The Committee shall be comprised of a maximum of thirteen (13) members including:

1. Two (2) members of Council
2. Up to seven (7) members including, as possible, representation from:
 - School District 57
 - Northern Health
 - Community Partners Addressing Homelessness (CPAH)
 - Student Society (NUGSS **and/or** CNC Student Union)
 - Local Food Bank (Salvation Army)
 - Prince George Native Friendship Centre
 - Local Food Prince George
3. In addition, up to four (4) members will contribute to the advancement of shared vision for poverty reduction through their affiliation with:
 - The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy Advisory Committee (1 member)
 - BC Office of the Seniors Advocate Advisory Committee or the Prince George Council of Seniors (1 member)
 - City of Prince George Advisory Committee on Accessibility (1 member)
 - Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction – Prince George (1 member)

Committee Chairperson

Select committees are chaired by an appointed Council member to preside over meetings and Committee business.

3.1.2 Staff and Council Members (Ex-Officio Members)

Staff Liaison

A City staff member shall be appointed by the City Manager to serve as Staff Liaison, who along with other city staff may attend meetings of the Committee in a resource capacity by providing information and professional advice.



TERMS OF REFERENCE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POVERTY REDUCTION

Legislative Services

The Corporate Officer will appoint a Legislative Assistant to the Committee who will serve in an administrative support role.

Council

All remaining members of Council are ex-officio members of the Committee and may attend meetings and participate in debate, but may not make motions and do not have voting rights.

3.2 Length of Term

The Select Committee on Poverty Reduction will convene its first meeting in October of 2019 and will deliver its recommendations to Council by June 30, 2021. Therefore, appointed members will serve a term ending June 30, 2021.

TERMS OF REFERENCE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POVERTY REDUCTION

4. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

As a municipal advisory body, Select Committee roles include:

- Advising and making recommendations to Council in a manner that will support City policy matters relevant to the Committee's defined Purpose and Mandate.
- Providing resident and organizational based expertise.
- Working within given resources.

Roles and responsibilities specific to the chairperson, staff liaison and Legislative Assistant are set out in the *City of Prince George Committees, Commissions and Boards Procedures Manual*.

Shared Member Responsibilities

Conduct

- The Committee shall conduct its proceedings in accordance with procedures established in the *City of Prince George Committees, Commissions and Boards Procedures Manual*.
- In providing its advice the Committee shall have due regard for the *Local Government Act*, the *Community Charter*, the bylaws and policies of the City and these Terms of Reference.
- Select committee members are to be transparent in their duties to promote public confidence.
- Members are to respect the rights and opinions of other committee members.
- Representatives will serve as conduits to other affiliated/aligned organizations, networks, and City committees (including staff liaisons) by providing regular updates, seeking feedback as appropriate, and identifying opportunities for integration of activities.

Preparation

Meeting agenda and accompanying materials will be circulated electronically one week prior to scheduled meeting dates.

4.2 Reporting

In addition to the annual reporting requirement as established in the *City of Prince George Committees, Commissions and Boards Procedures Manual*, the Committee will report to Council in a timely manner on issues that have been referred to it by Council.

TERMS OF REFERENCE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POVERTY REDUCTION

<p>5. OTHER GOVERNANCE</p>
<p>5.1 Review of Terms</p>
<p>Taking into account recommendations from the Committee, the Corporate Officer and Staff Liaison, the Select Committee Terms of Reference documents may be reviewed as required. The purpose of a review will be to ensure that the Committee is operating in alignment with its defined purpose and mandate.</p>
<p>5.2 Eligibility and Selection</p>
<p>Eligibility and selection for membership on select committees will be accepted in accordance with the <i>City of Prince George Committees, Commissions and Boards Procedures Manual</i>.</p>
<p>5.3 Decisions of the Committee</p>
<p>All acts and matters that come before the Committee must be done and decided by a majority of the members present at a duly constituted meeting with quorum present.</p>
<p>5.4 Budget</p>
<p>The Committee shall be responsible for the distribution or allocation of funding that may be available to the Committee and ensure that such allocation directly relates to the mandate of the Committee.</p>
<p>5.5 Governance</p>
<p>Meetings and operations of the Committee shall be governed by the provisions of the <i>City of Prince George Committees, Commissions and Boards Procedures Manual</i>. In case of conflict between the provisions of these Terms of Reference and the Procedures Manual, the provisions of the Procedures Manual shall prevail.</p>



PRINCE GEORGE POVERTY PROFILE:

WHAT DOES POVERTY LOOK LIKE?

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Population

Population of PG, BC = **74,003** (2016 Census)

Male / female: **50:50**

Youth **18%**, adult **68%**, elderly **14%** (65+)

17.5% of the population in PG is under the age of 15, whereas the provincial average is **14.9%**

Ethnicity

8% visible minority, **15%** Indigenous, **10%** immigrants

The percentage of Indigenous people living in PG is **15.4%**, compared to the provincial average of **5.9%**

There are more younger Indigenous people in PG under the age of 14 yrs: **29%** in PG vs **18.6%** in BC

Education

Of the population in PG, **23%** have no certificate, diploma or degree, **38%** have a high school diploma, **13%** have a trades certificate, **7%** have a college education and **19%** have some university education

LIVING IN POVERTY

Based on Canada's low income measure (LIM), **8.2%** of the population are low income in PG, **11%** in BC and **9.2%** in Canada.

The highest percentage of PG's demographic living in poverty are: **18%** youth, **13%** seniors, and **32%** are single-parent families.

Who is living in poverty?

Women in PG are more likely to be low income, and the disparities increase with age.

Indigenous people are more likely to live in poverty.

Children & youth are more likely to live in poverty. Age 0-5 yrs: 20.6% PG, 18% in BC and 18% in Canada.

Single-parent families in PG are more likely to live in low-income households.

Families

Of the families living in PG, **13.3%** are living in poverty. Of those living in poverty:

- 32.2%** are single parent families
- 24.1%** are single persons
- 7.3%** are couples with kids
- 4.6%** are couples without kids

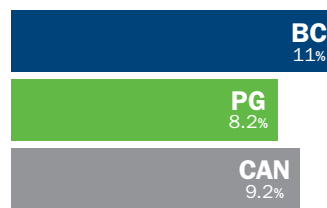
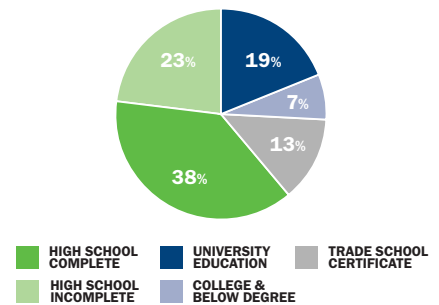
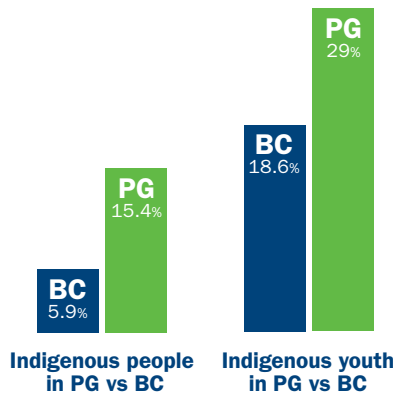
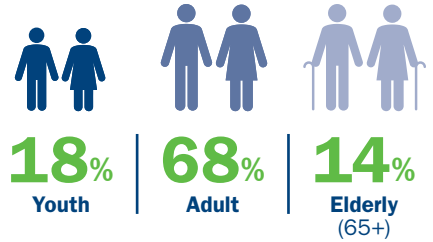
77.2% are female single-parent families



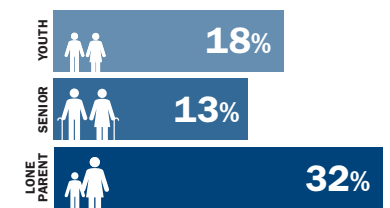
Population of PG

74,003

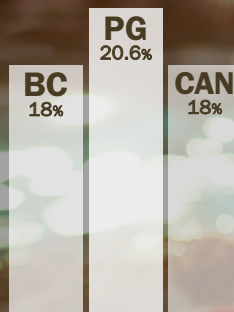
50% Male | **50%** Female



Percentage of population considered low income (2016 census)



Highest percentage of demographic living in low income



Percentage of children (0-5 years) living in poverty

CHALLENGES FACED BY THOSE LIVING POVERTY



Housing & Homelessness

Sustainable cities need to provide housing opportunities for all residents. This includes affordable and appropriate housing options.

Home ownership

Prince George has a higher percentage of homeowners than BC and Canada, increasing from 70% to 72% between 2011 and 2016.

Cost of housing increasing

The cost to own and rent went up in PG (from 2010 – 2018):



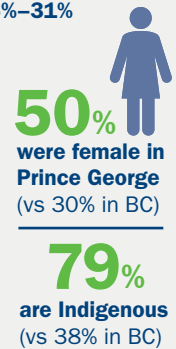
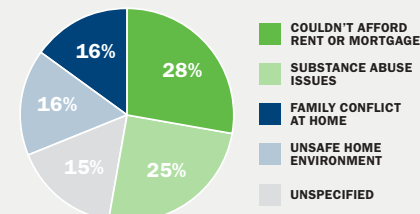
Core housing need

“Core Housing Need” is a term that indicates unsuitable living conditions, needing major repairs, costing over 30% of income, and unaffordable alternate housing to meet a person’s needs.



Major factors contributing to homelessness:

During the 2018 provincial homeless point-in-time count by Community Partners Addressing Homelessness (CPAH), there were 133 absolutely homeless, and 79 people in transitional housing. Of those interviewed, **16%–31%** were unsheltered vs **37%** in BC.



Reasons for living in homelessness



Affordable childcare

Underserved:

- children needing extra support
- Indigenous people
- low-income families
- young parents
- minorities
- refugees
- immigrants

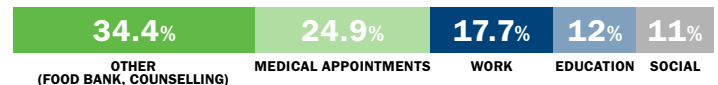
Key gaps:

- wrap around support
- long waitlists
- Early Childcare Education (ECE) worker shortage
- access to in-care social workers
- transportation
- childcare for shift workers
- culture & language programming

Transportation

Poor access to transportation creates a barrier that hampers an individual’s ability to move from social support to sustainable employment.

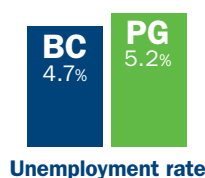
In 2019, when 10,000 transit vouchers were distributed to those in need by agencies, usage destinations included:



Employment & Education

5.2% of the PG workforce is unemployed; the provincial average is 4.7%.

Fewer people in PG have their diploma, certificate or degree than the provincial or national averages.



Quality of life

Low-income families are less satisfied with their standard of living, health, achievement in life, personal relationships, feelings of safety, feeling part of their community, quality of local environment, BUT have higher levels of satisfaction with quality of family time.

Social Inclusion

For low-income families, cost is a barrier to participation in cultural activities, outdoor activities and organized sports due to cost, spending 8% of income compared to those in higher income brackets who spend 3.3% of income.

Food insecurity – HDSA

Food insecurity is when a household lacks the financial means to buy healthy, safe, personally acceptable food. The Northern Health Authority region is more food insecure than all other health authorities in BC.

Percentage of households who are:

	BC	NHA
food secure	92.3%	89.2%
moderately food insecure	4.7%	6.2%
severely food insecure	2.9%	4.6%

Indigenous community-members in PG were 2-3 times more likely to be food insecure this past year than non-Indigenous community members.



ETHELO

Prince George Poverty Reduction

Introduction

In October 2019, Prince George City Council approved the formation of a [Select Committee on Poverty Reduction](#) to recommend how the City could address poverty. Councillor Murry Krause chaired the committee of volunteers, who brought diverse perspectives and understandings of poverty reduction to meetings that took place from November 2019 - October 2020.

From February 11, to March 12, 2021 the committee used an engagement platform powered by Ethelo to ask the larger Prince George community for input as they sought to rank the importance and urgency of its recommendations. Special efforts were made to hear from those with lived experience in poverty, and those who support and advocate for them. Additionally, the committee partnered with community groups and organizations to ensure a diverse representation of voices were heard.

The engagement helped to educate participants on the experience of poverty within their City, in addition to the various recommendations and priorities the committee had identified to help reduce poverty and its impacts. Participants were invited to share their views regarding each potential initiative by voting , sharing comments, and weighing priorities against one another.

Though all recommendations and priorities were generally supported by the community, Ethelo used the results to identify the most important and urgent priorities for the City to address as it aims to reduce poverty.

Overview

Participation

- Visitors: **1,852**
- Total Participants: **814**
- Page Views: **17,939**
- Average Visit Length: **15 minutes**



Overview

Participants were asked to indicate the importance of each recommendation, using a 7 point Likert scale ranging from Totally Oppose to Totally Support. Below are the top 5 most important recommendations ranked, in order.

Top 5 Most Important Recommendations

Adult basic education and English language learning should remain free	90% Support
Ask for input from people who have experience living in poverty	87% Support
Support people who want to improve their education or access employment opportunities	85% Support
Advocate for resources at all levels of government to help with housing needs	84% Support
Create more affordable childcare spaces	84% Support

Overview

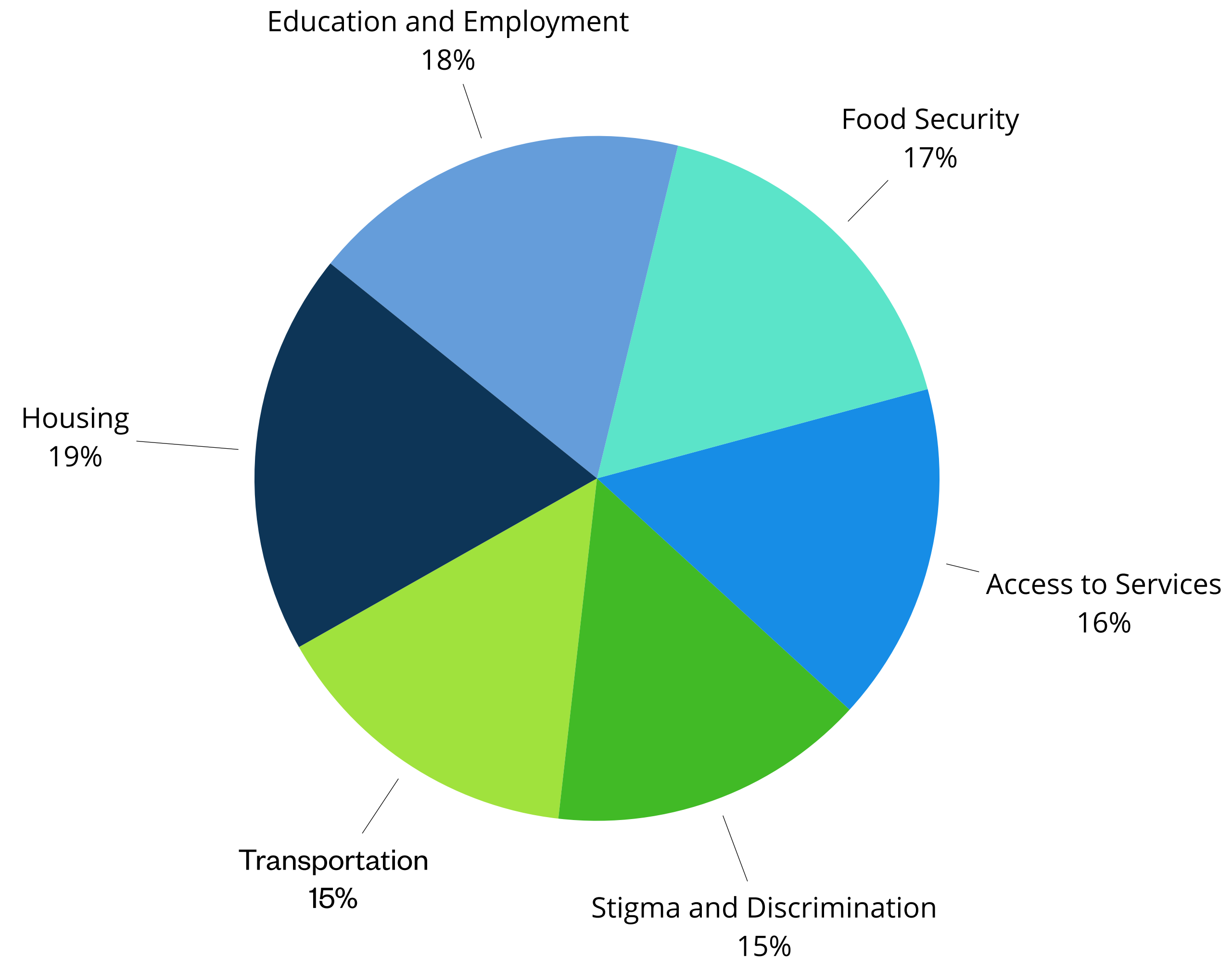
Participants were asked to indicate the urgency of each recommendation, using a 7 point Likert scale ranging from Totally Oppose to Totally Support. Below are the top 5 most urgent recommendations ranked, in order.

Top 5 Most Urgent Priorities

Adult basic education and English language learning should remain free	87% Support
Ask for input from people who have experience living in poverty	84% Support
Advocate for resources at all levels of government to help with housing needs	82% Support
Support people who want to improve their education or access to employment opportunities	82% Support
Create more affordable childcare spaces	82% Support

Overview

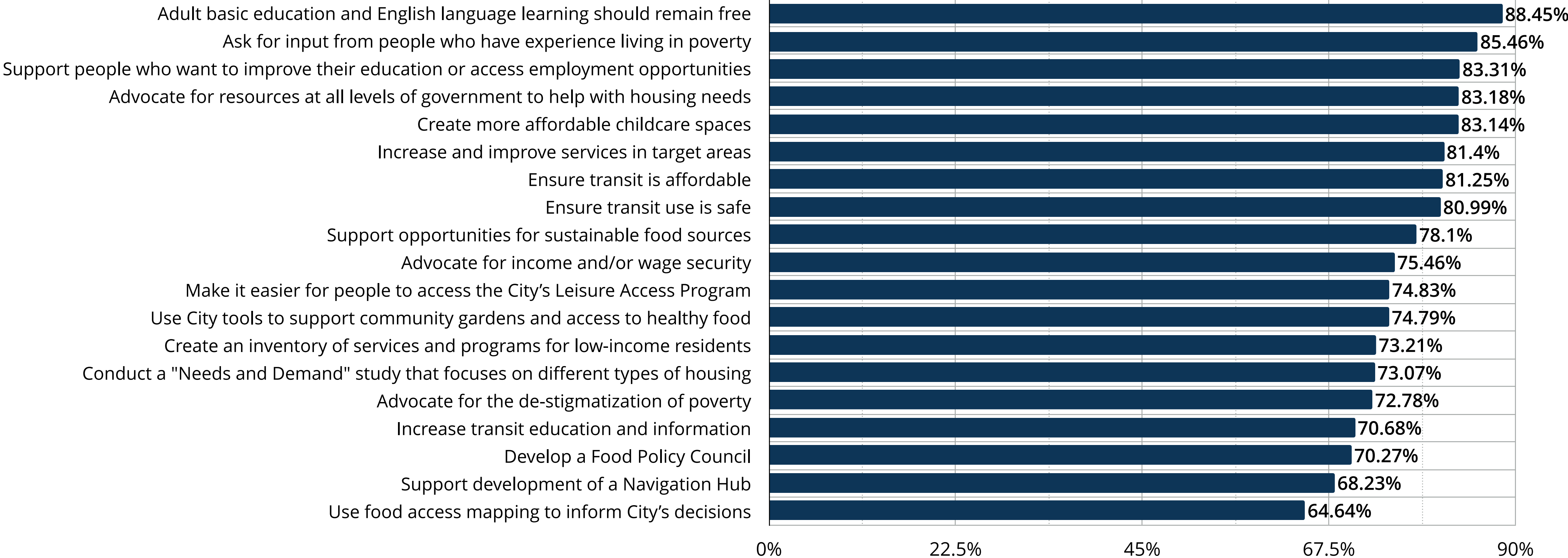
Average Weight per Topic



Overview

Using the input gathered from both the importance votes and the urgency votes from each recommendation, an overall score was created for each recommendation. Below can be seen each recommendation ranked against the others.

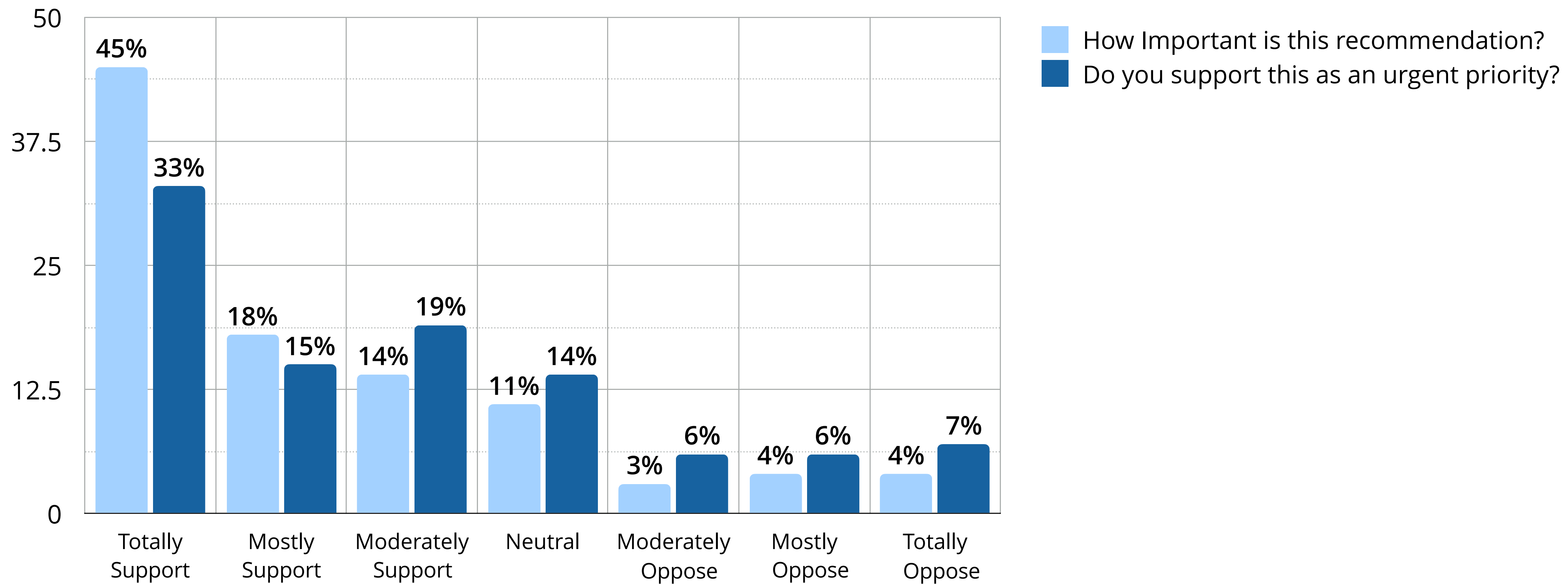
Overall Recommendations Rank



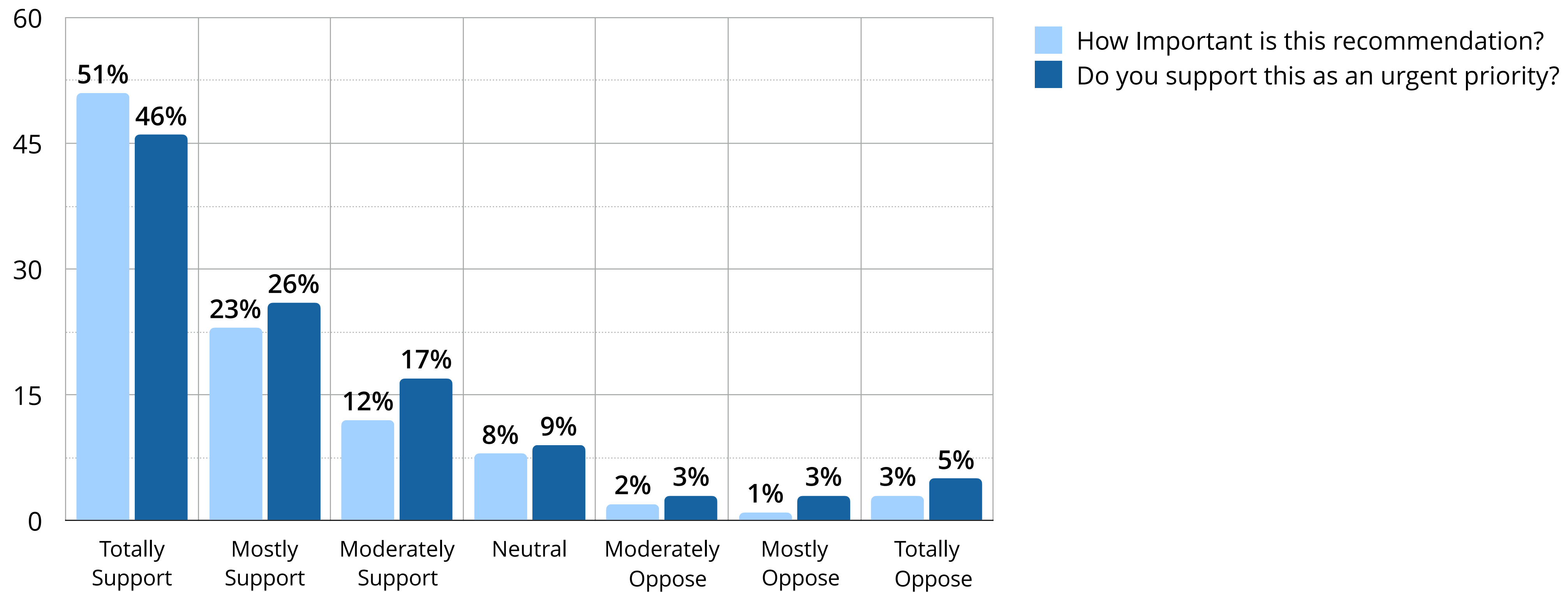
A photograph of a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a dark purple off-the-shoulder top, holding a baby. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The baby is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and has a blue pacifier in its mouth. The background is a solid, muted blue color.

Stigma and Discrimination

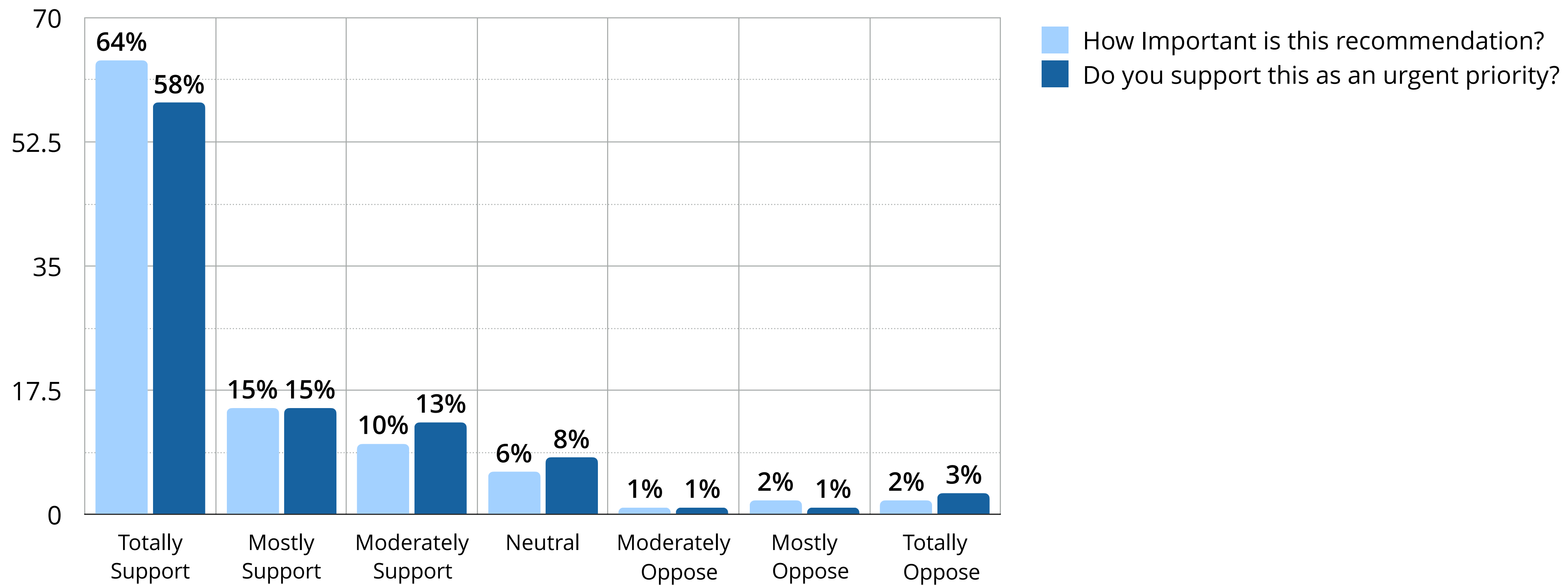
Advocate for the de-stigmatization of poverty



Increase and improve services in target areas



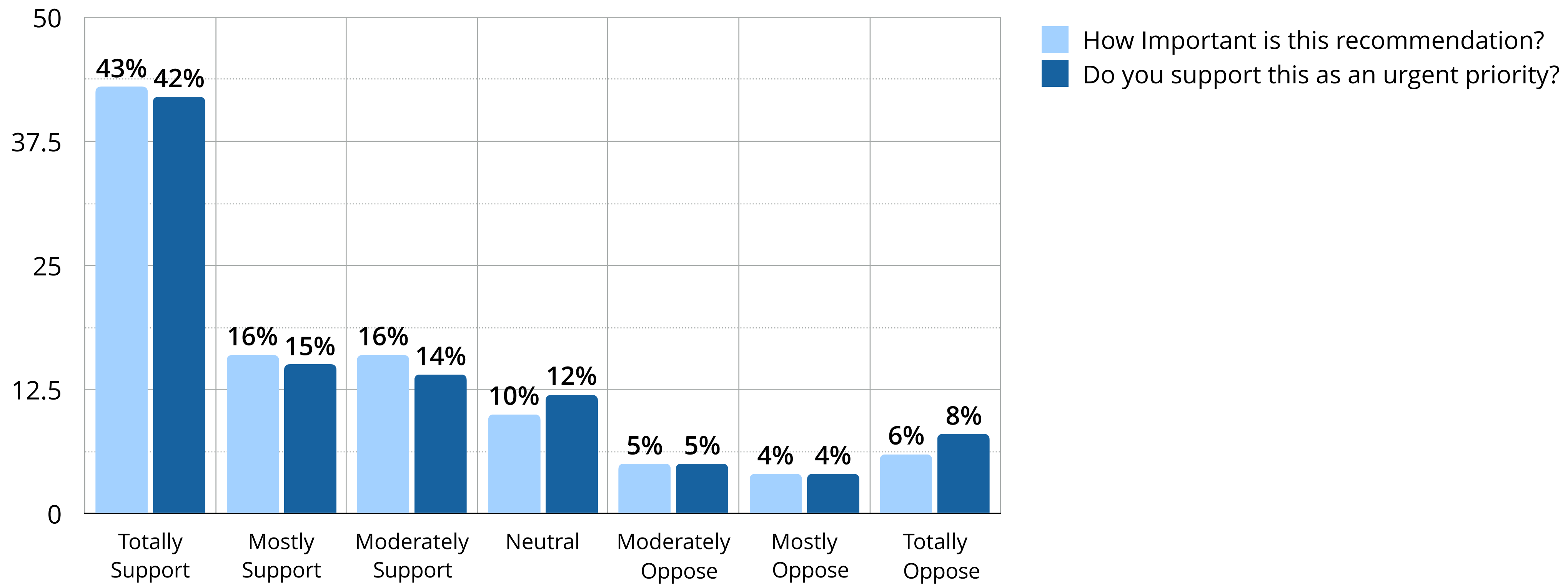
Ask for input from people who have experience living in poverty



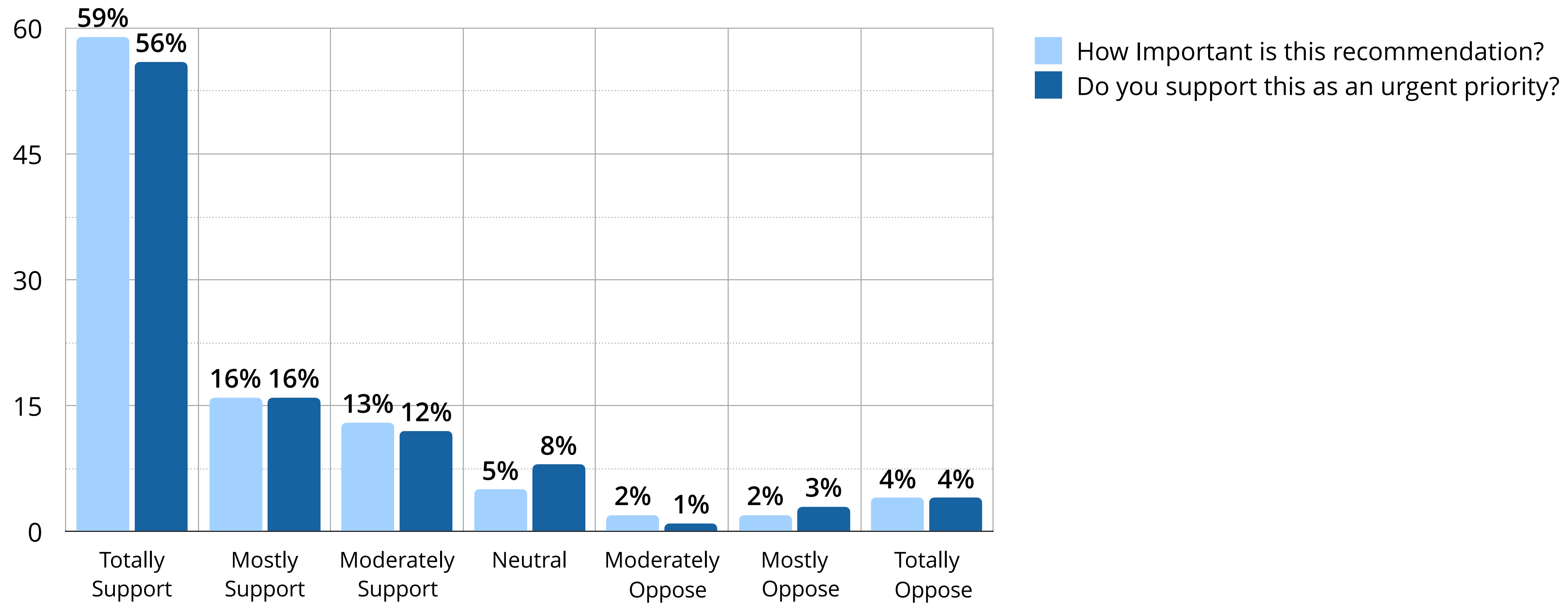
Housing



Conduct a “Needs and Demand” study that focuses on different types of housing



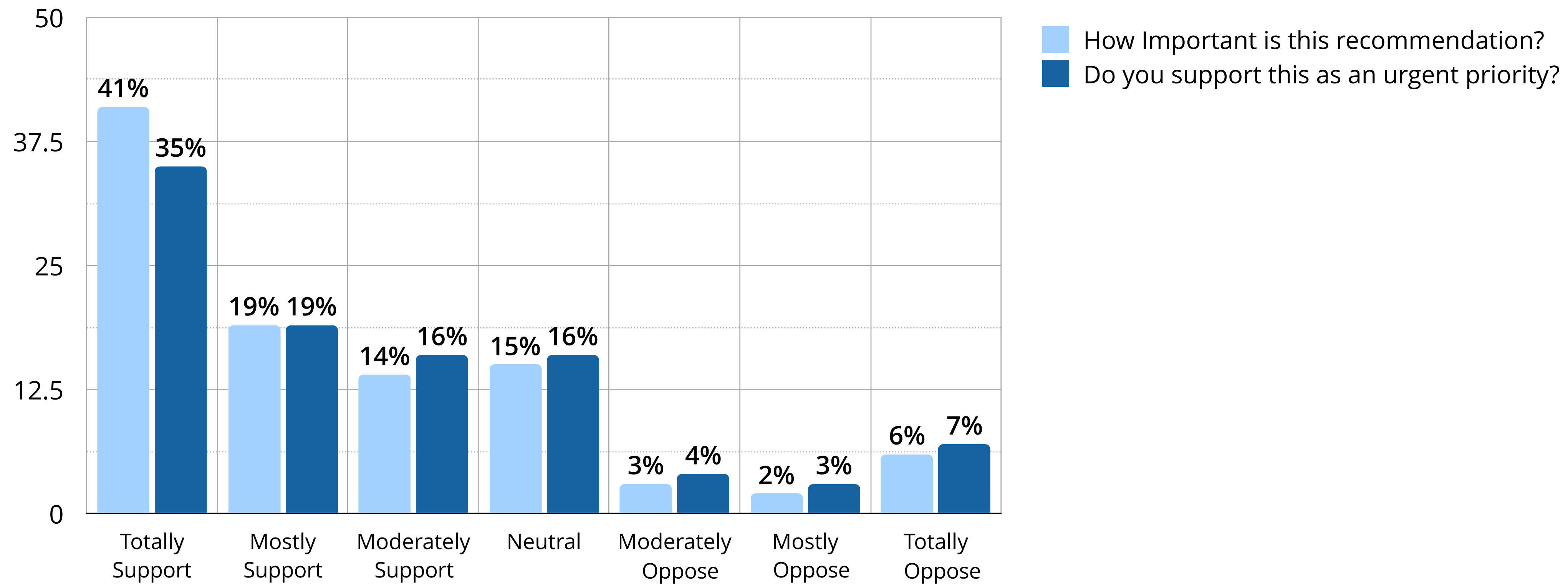
Advocate for resources at all levels of government to help with housing needs



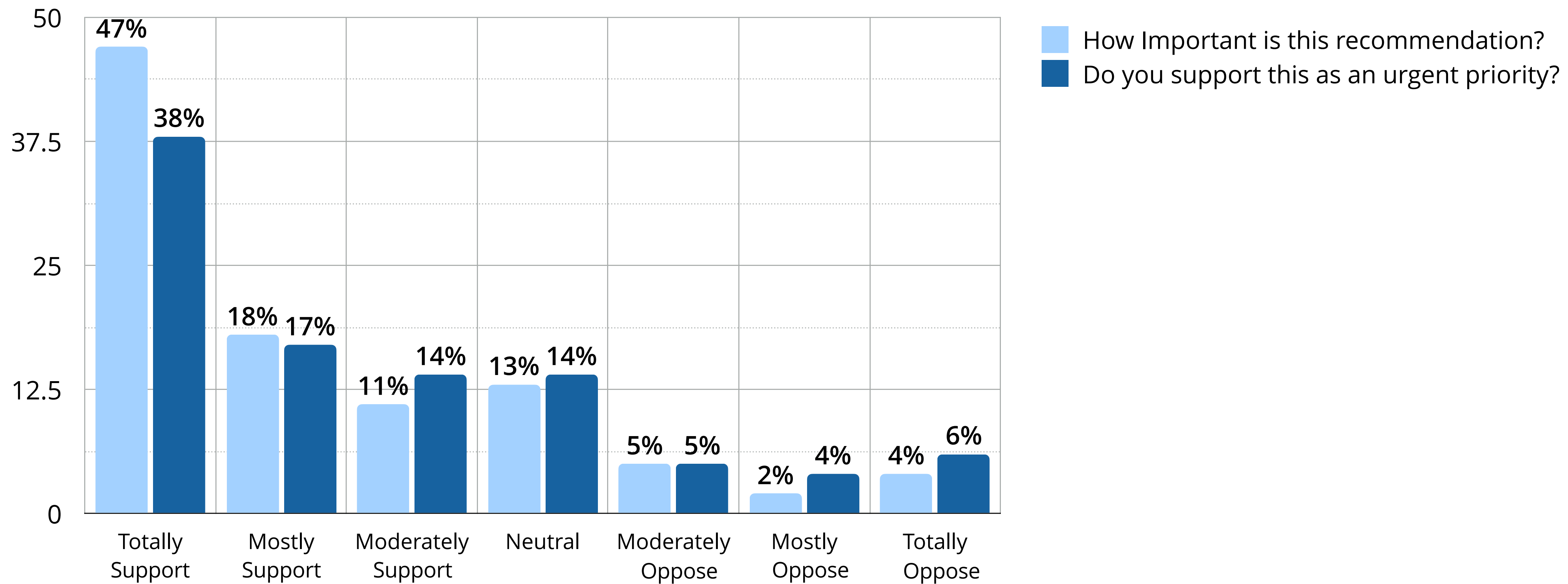
A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a green bottle, likely a water bottle, against a background of shimmering water and out-of-focus lights. The scene is brightly lit, creating a bokeh effect with many small, glowing light spots. The hands are positioned in the foreground, and the bottle is tilted. The overall atmosphere is bright and somewhat abstract due to the shallow depth of field.

Access to Services

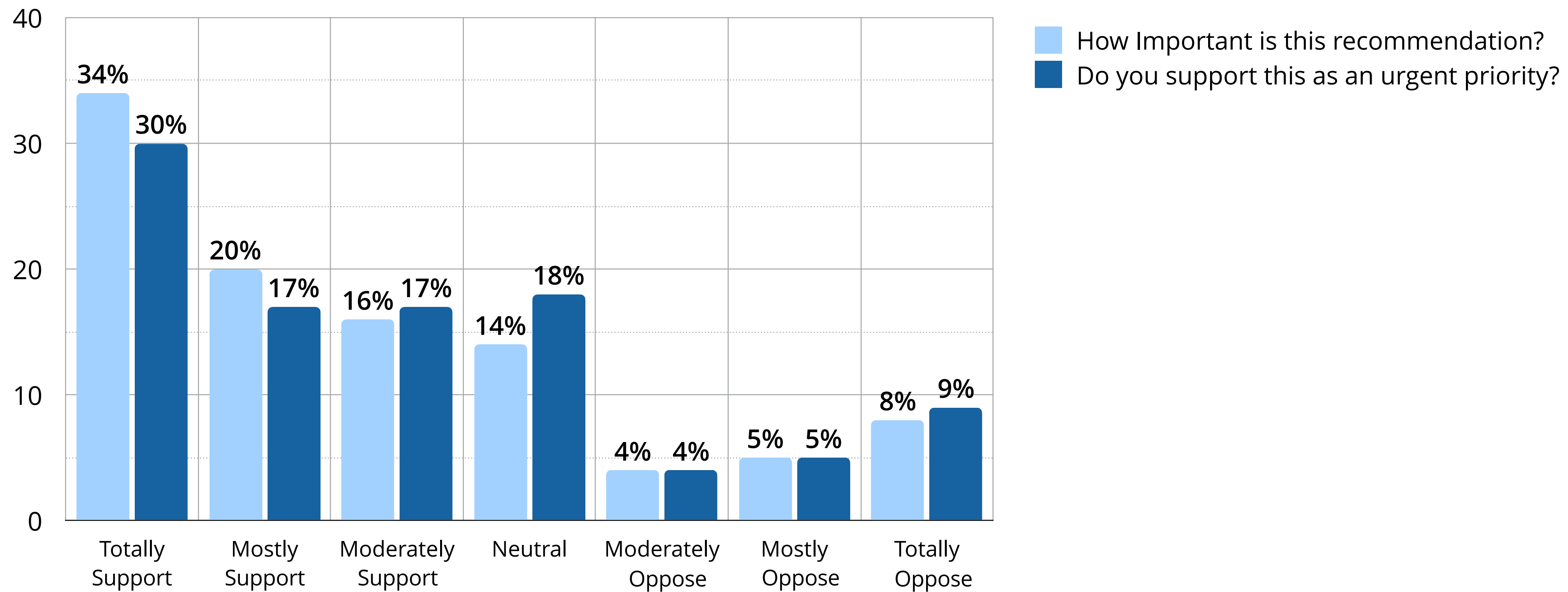
Create an inventory of services and programs for low-income residents



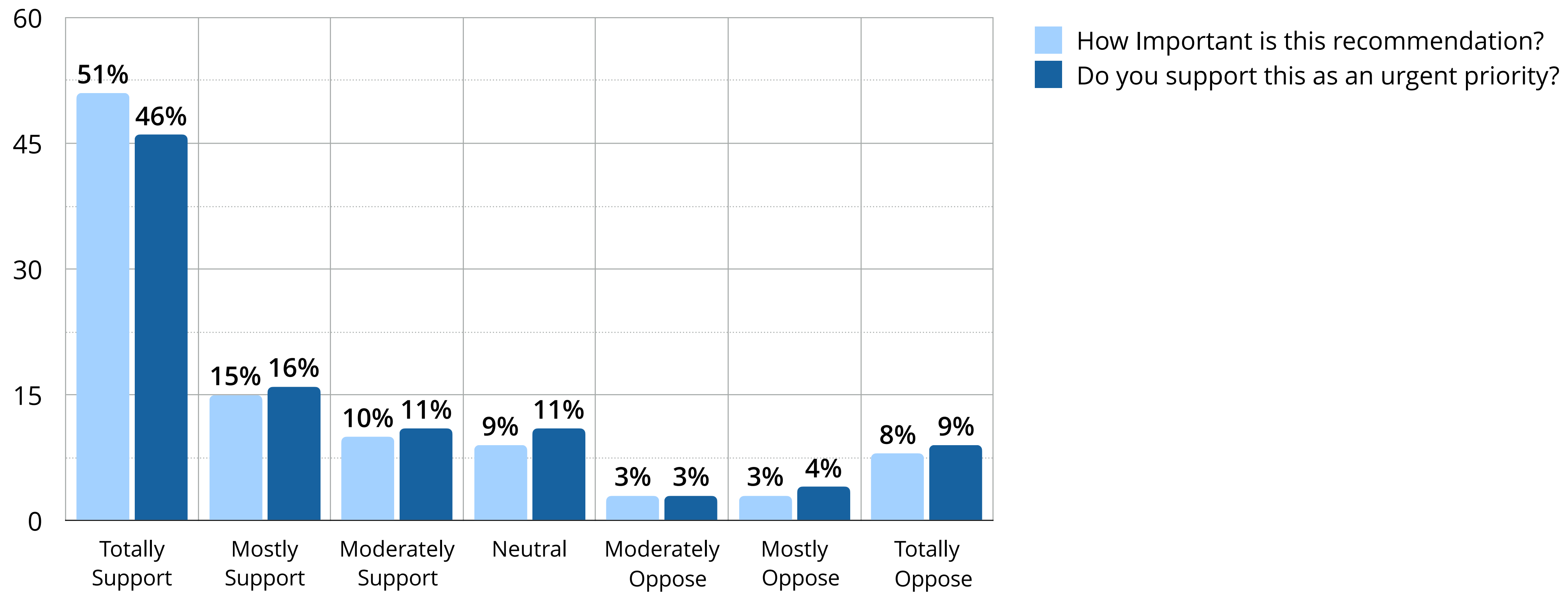
Make it easier for people to access the City's Leisure Access Program



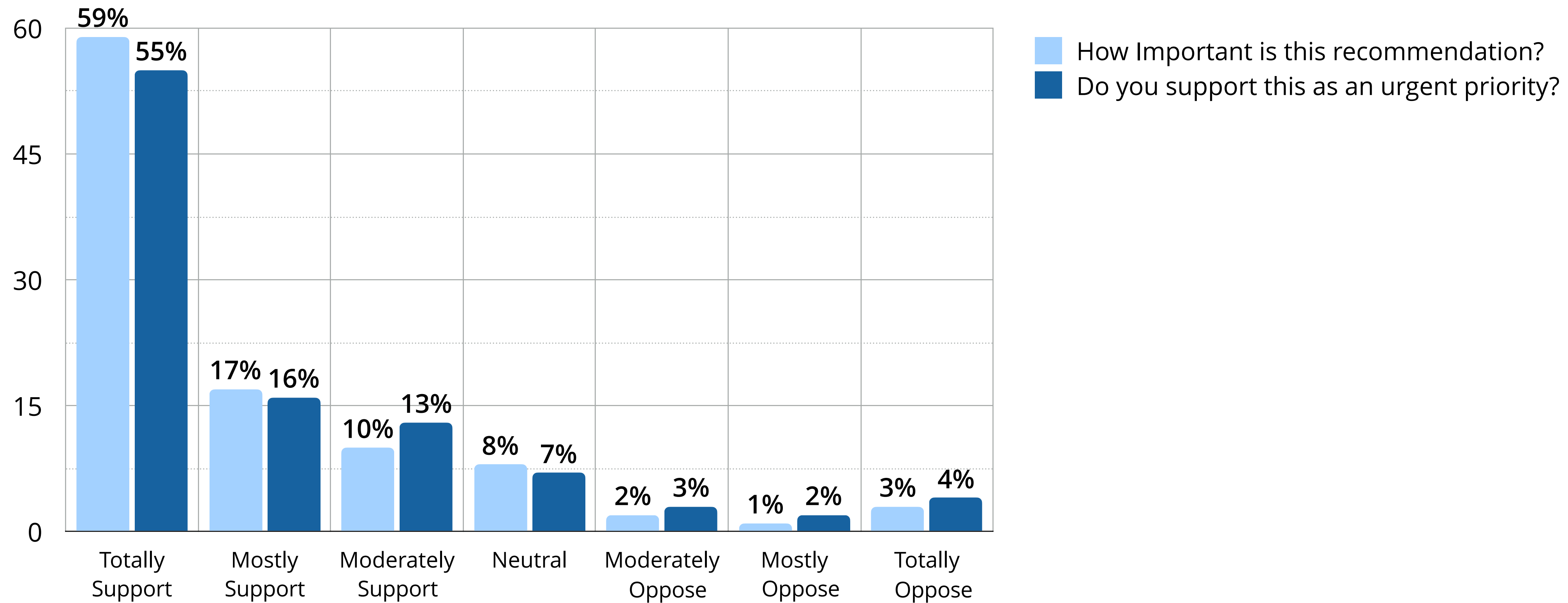
Support development of a Navigation Hub



Advocate for income and/or wage security



Create more affordable childcare spaces



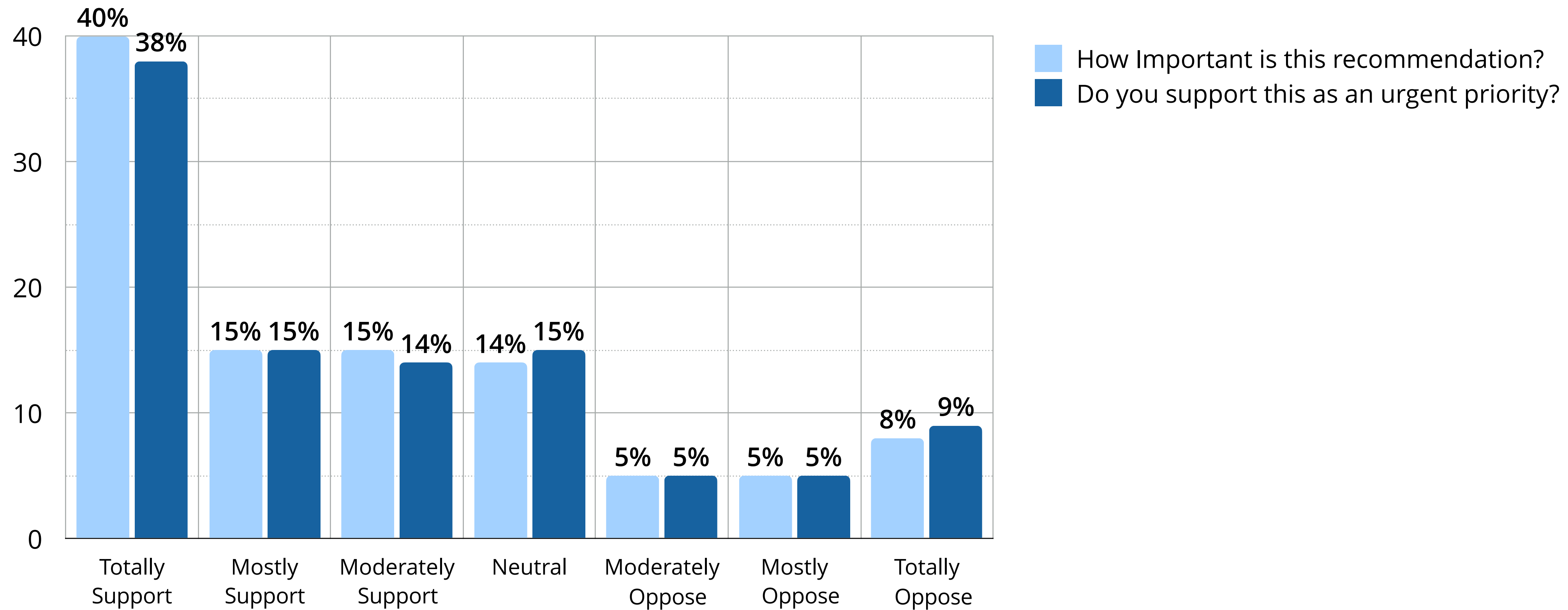


Food Security

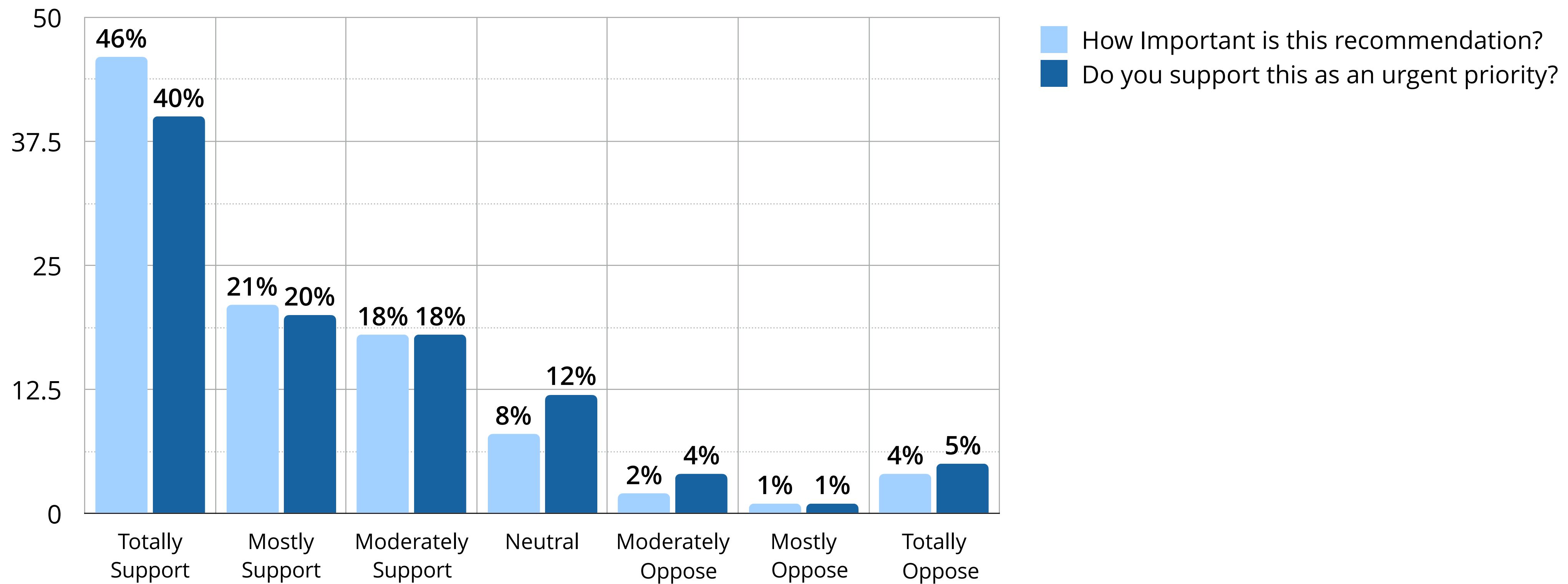
\$2.00 LB

BEETS
\$2.50

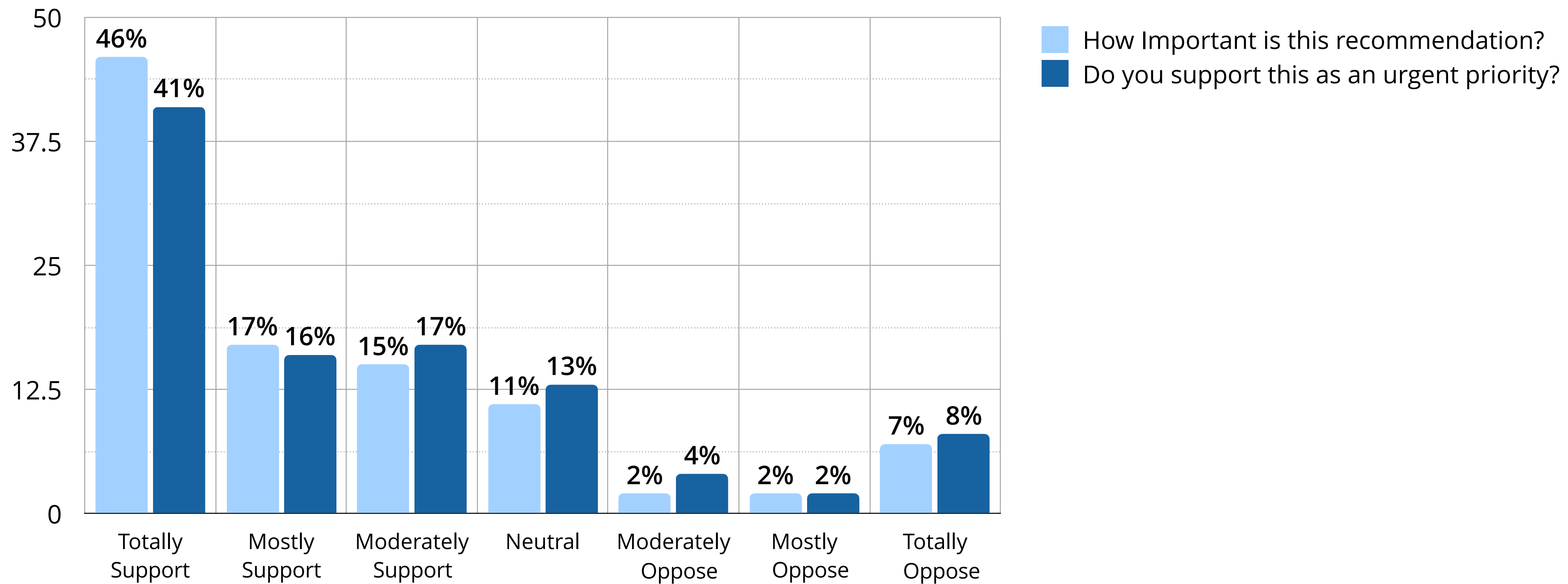
Develop a Food Policy Council



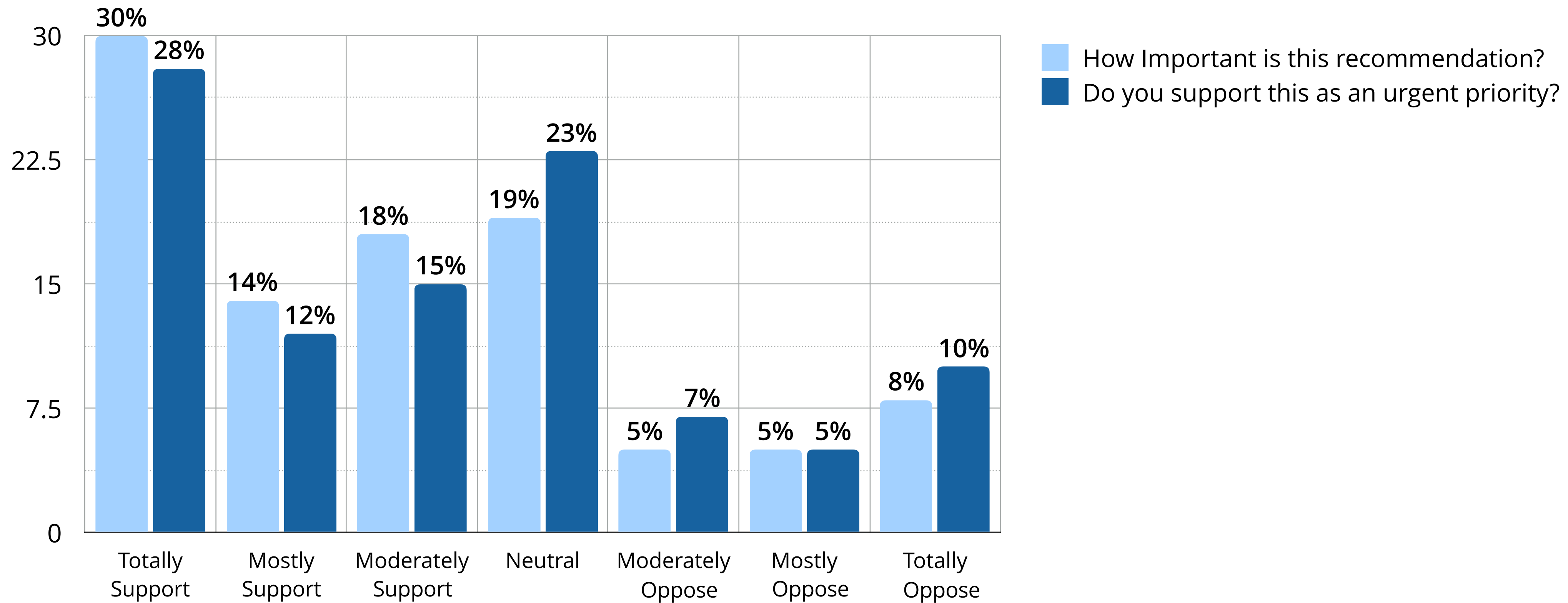
Support opportunities for sustainable food sources



Use City tools to support community gardens and access to healthy food



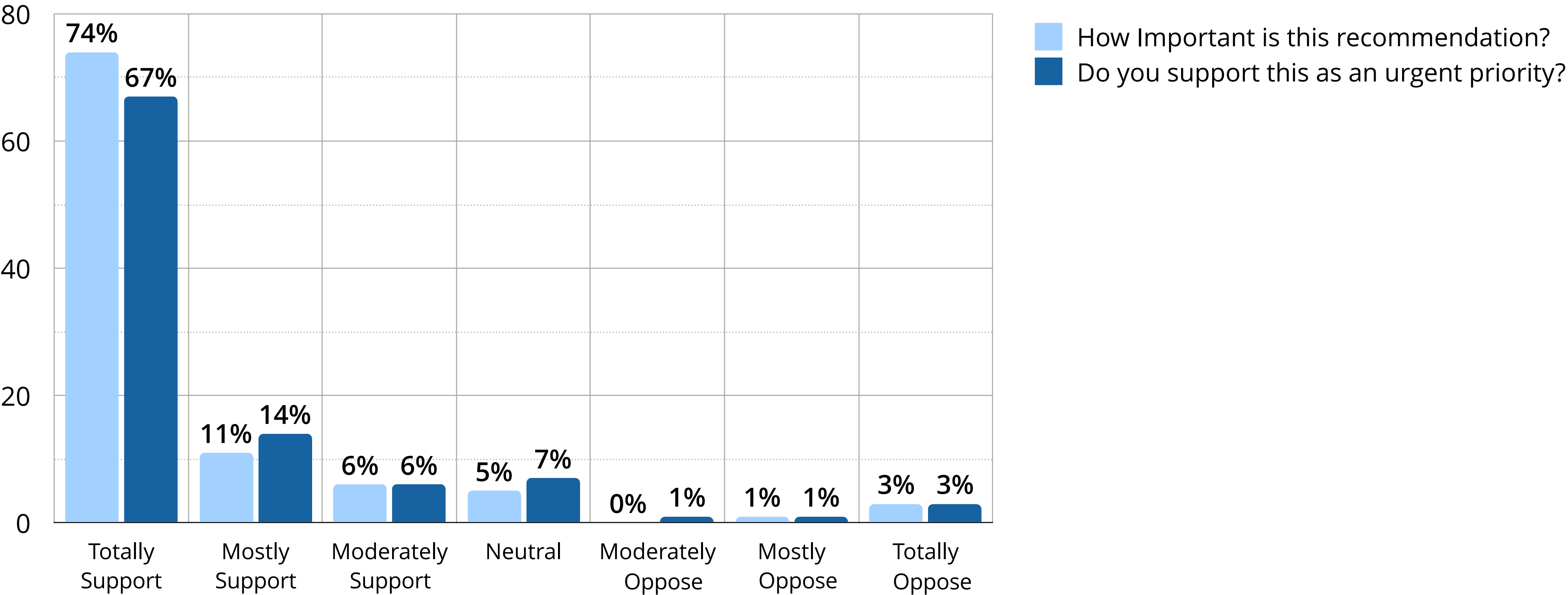
Use food access mapping to inform City's decision



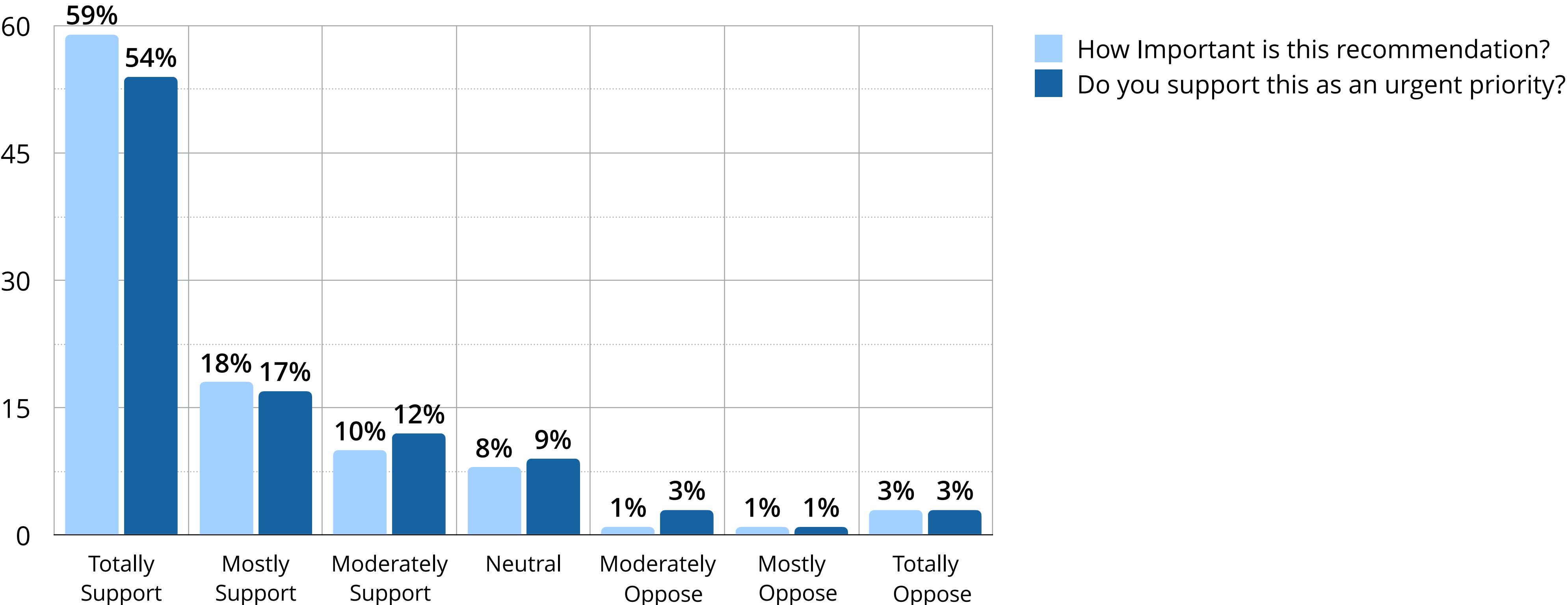


Education and Employment

Adult basic education and English language learning should remain free



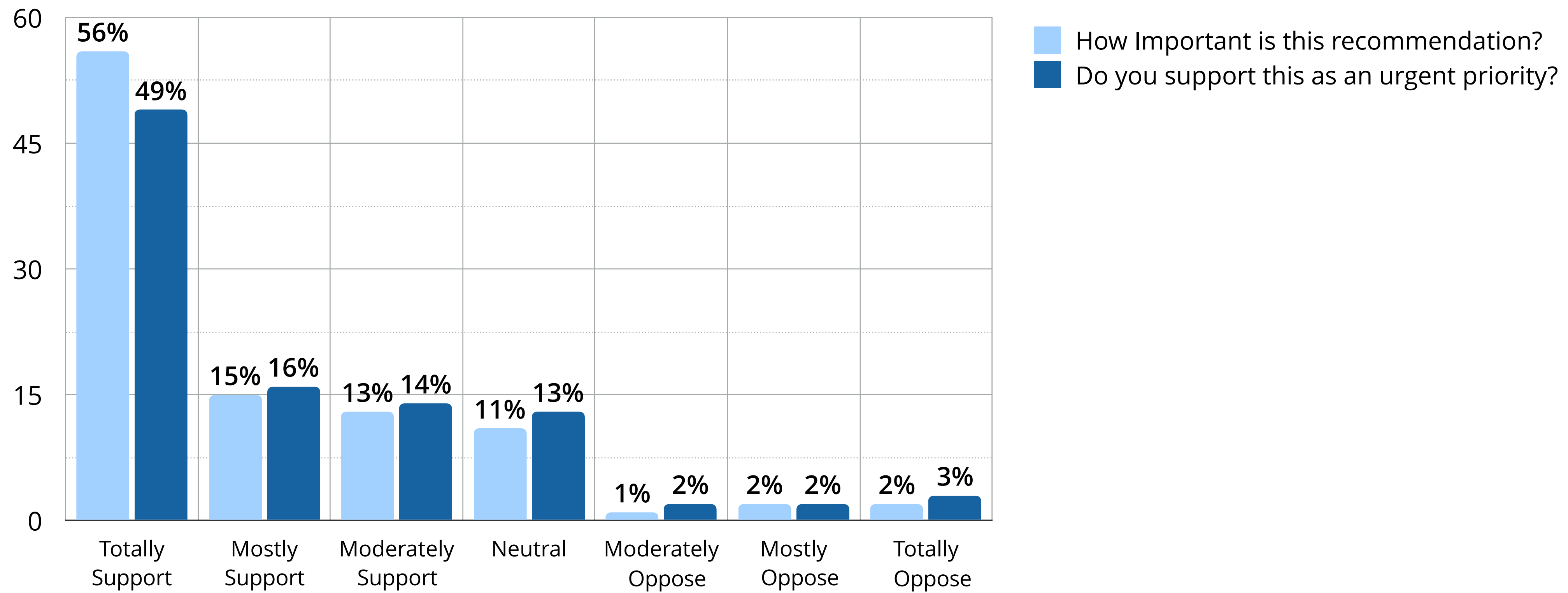
Support people who want to improve their education or access to employment opportunities



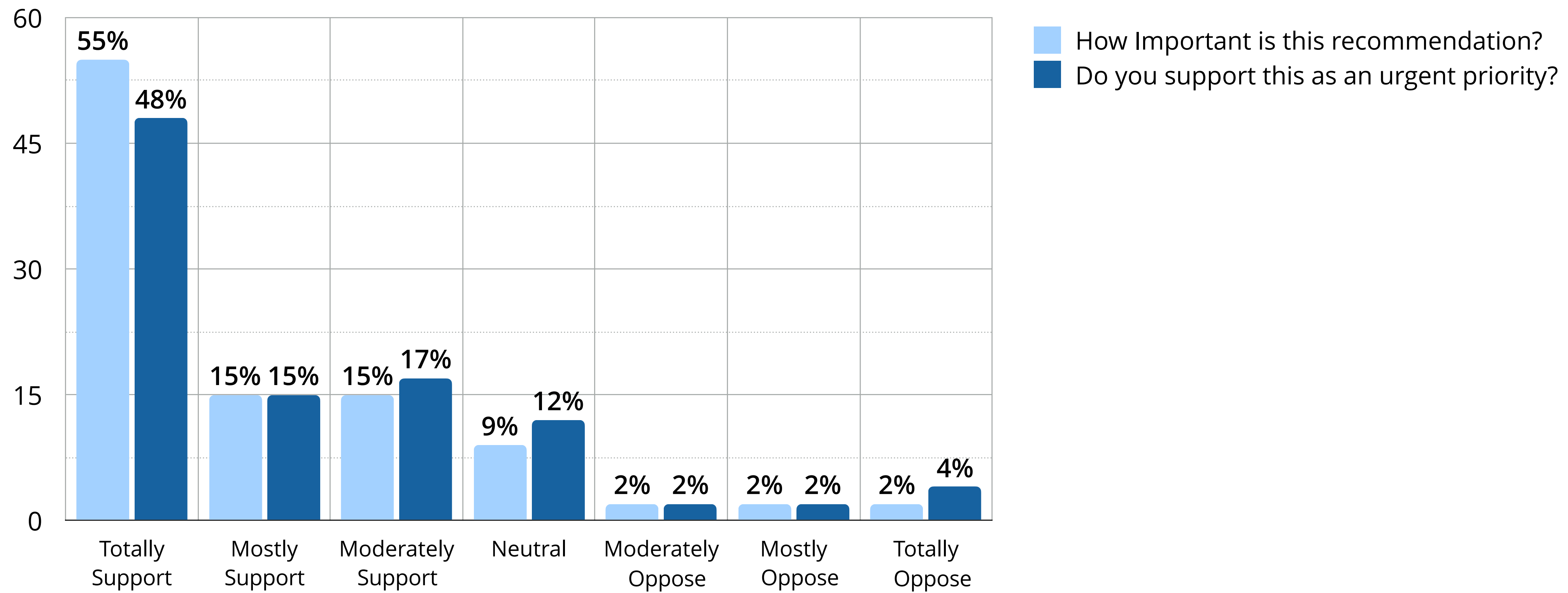


Transportation

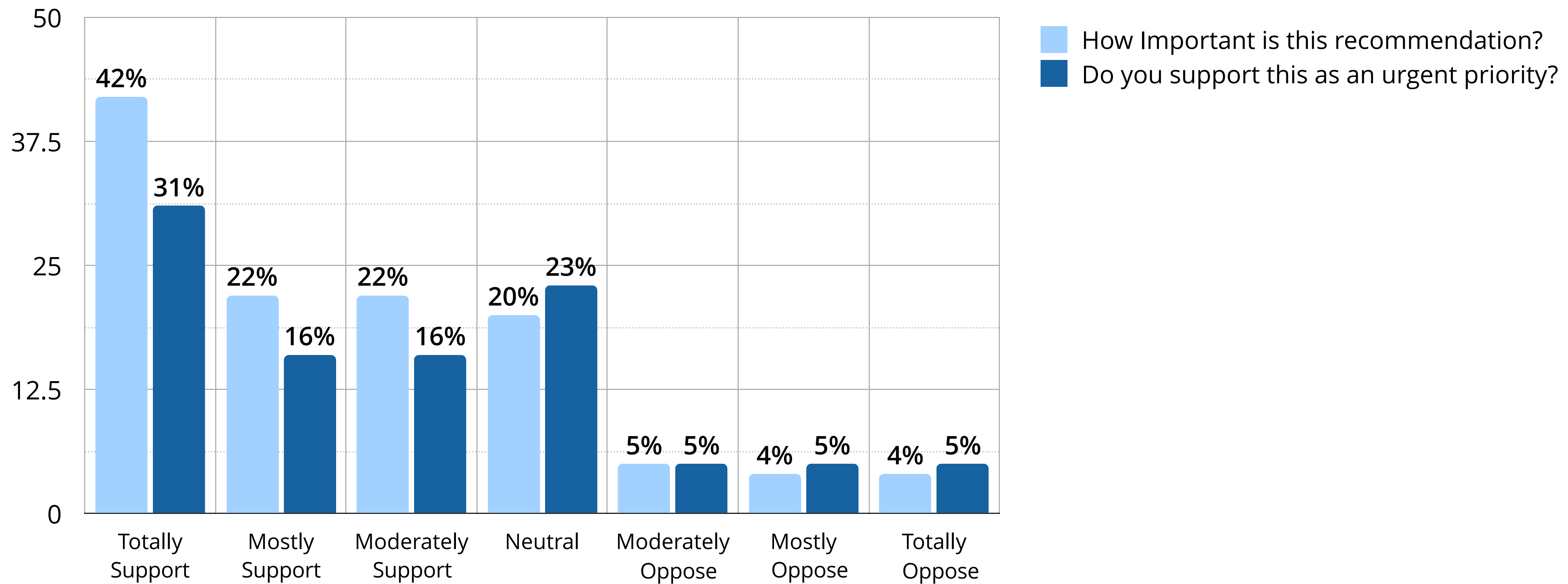
Ensure transit is affordable



Ensure transit use is safe



Increase transit education and information

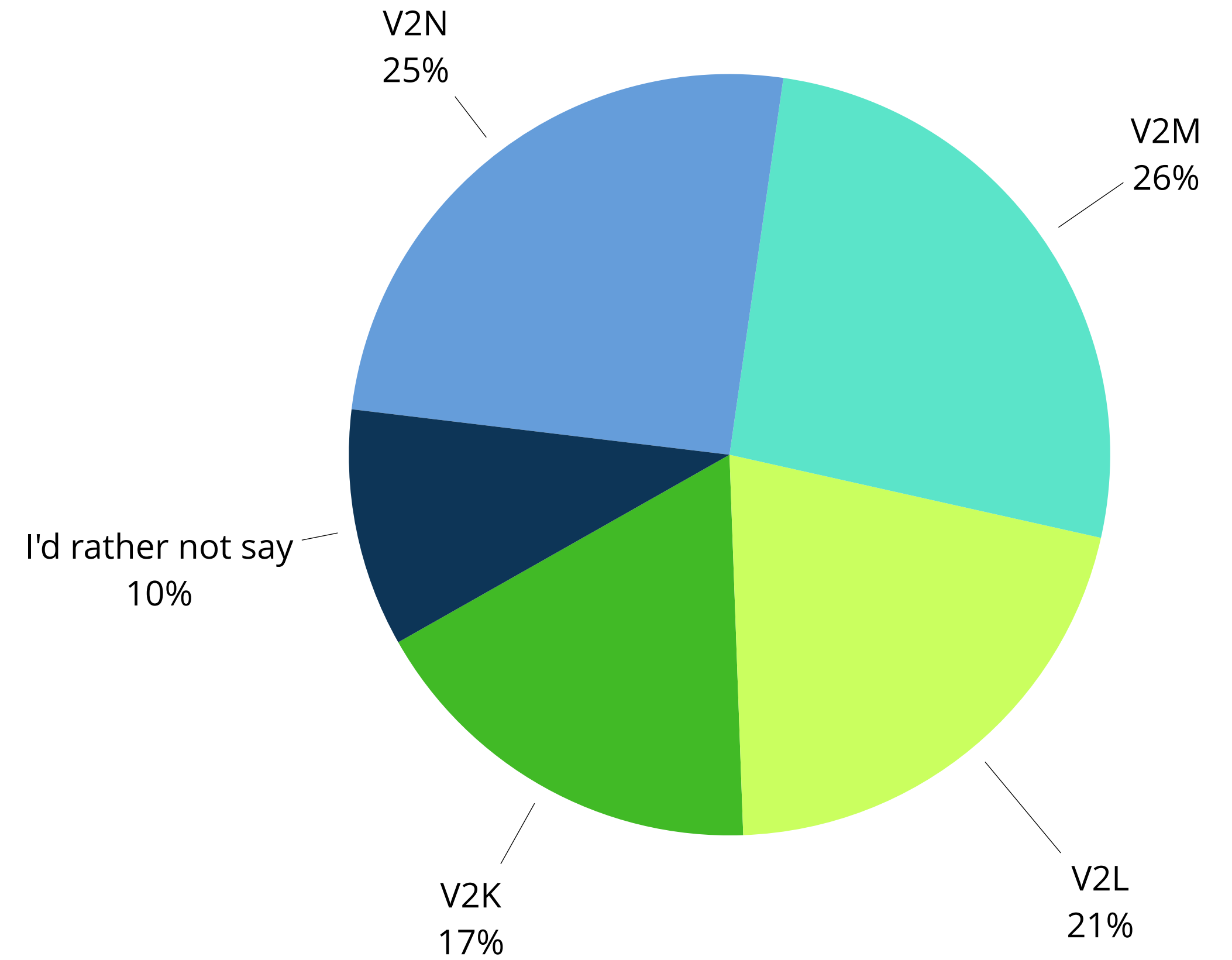




About you

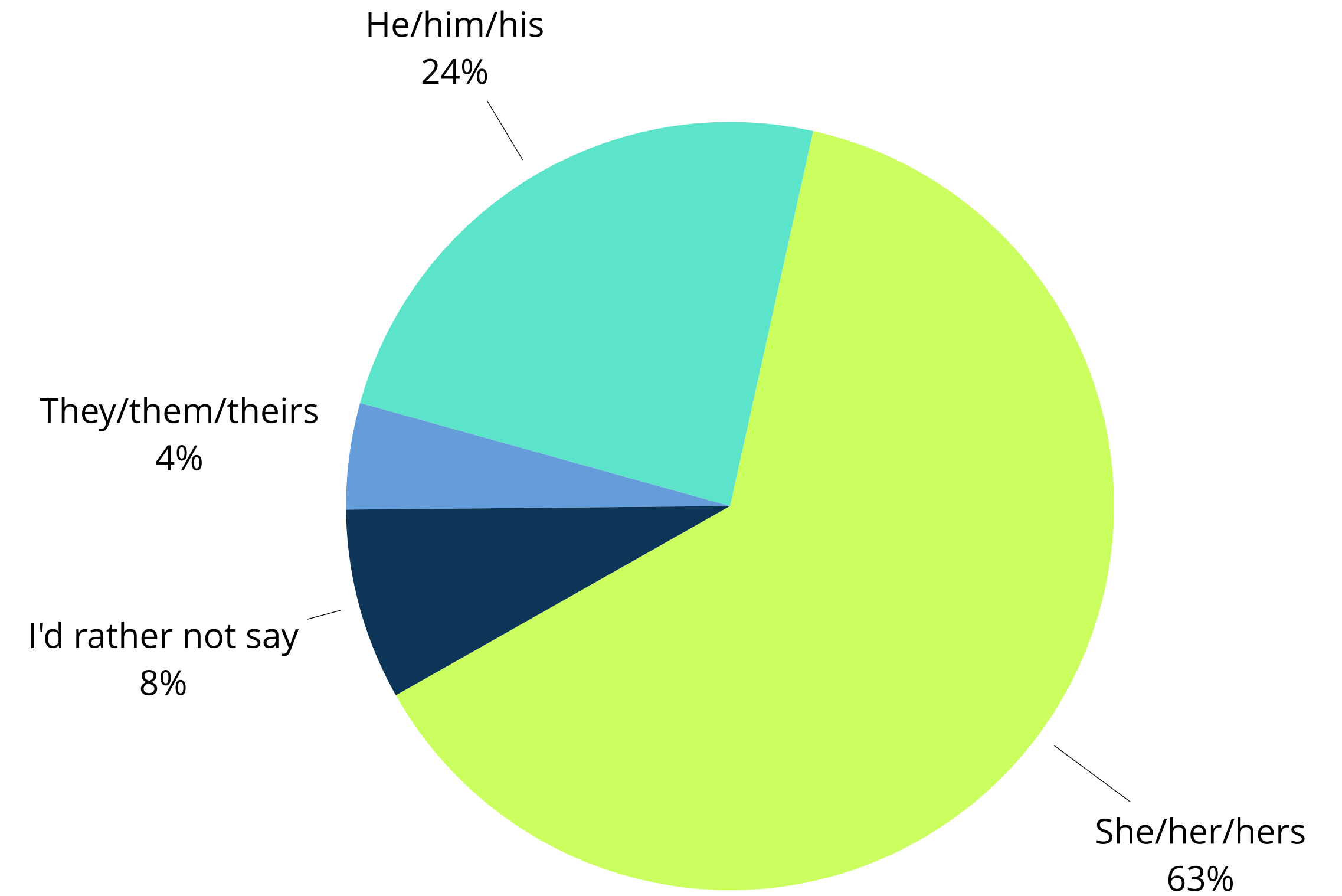
Location

Respondents were asked to indicate their postal code.



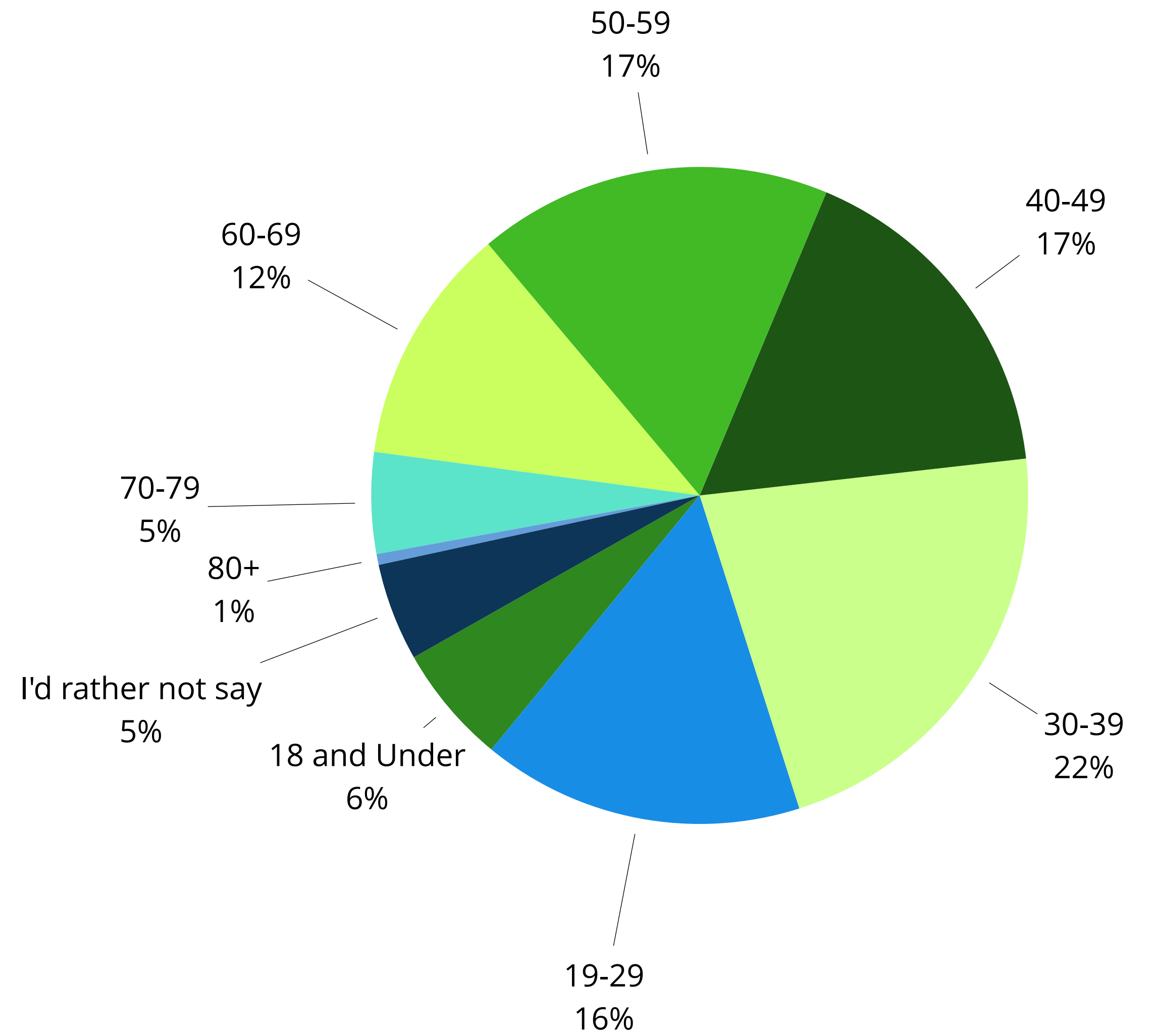
Pronouns

Respondents were asked to indicate their preferred pronouns.



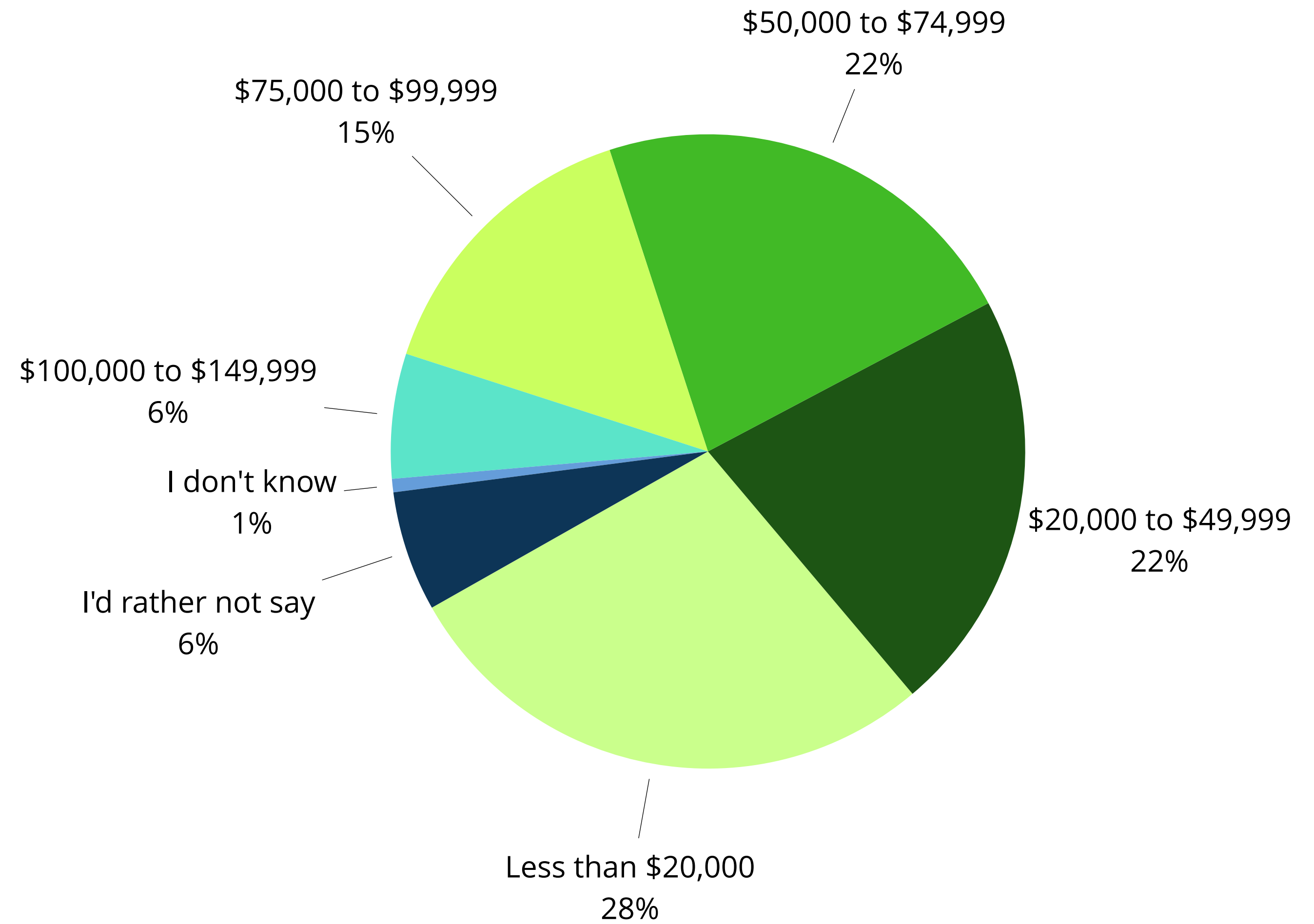
Age

Respondents were asked to indicate their age.



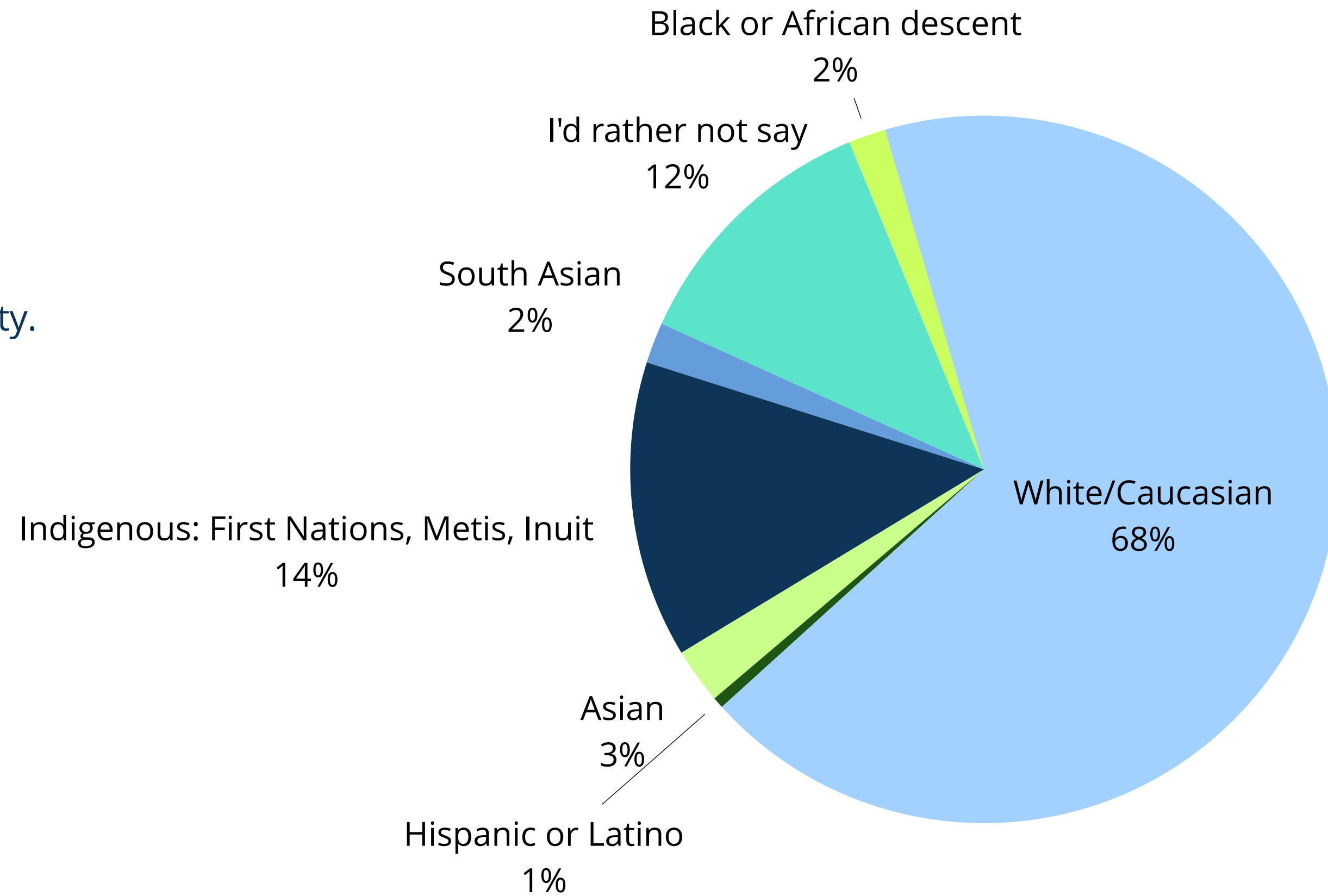
Income

Respondents were asked to indicate their household income.



Race & Ethnicity

Respondents were asked to indicate their race and ethnicity.





ETHELO

Thank you!

CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POVERTY REDUCTION

Poverty Reduction Strategy
Public Engagement Project

FINAL REPORT | APRIL 26, 2021

Alyson Gourley-Cramer, MA, APR



TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	1
Select Committee on Poverty Reduction: Role & Responsibilities	1
Six Theme Areas	1
POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY: ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS	2
Support for Engagement	2
IAP2 Best Practices in Public Participation & Engagement	2
Public Participation & Engagement	2
RESEARCH	3
Research: Primary	3
Research: Secondary	3
AUDIENCE	4
Audiences: Six Priority Lens Groups	4
Audience: Other Key Stakeholders	4
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	5
Engagement: Components	5
Engagement: Process	7
Engagement & Research Methods: Planned	7
Engagement & Research Methods: Final	8
Communication Methods	9
Community Partners	9
Output	10
ENGAGEMENT GOALS / RESULTS	11
CHALLENGES	13
CONCLUSION	14

BACKGROUND

In early 2019, the City of Prince George prioritized poverty reduction as a key priority, and in October 2019, Prince George City Council approved the formation of a Select Committee on Poverty Reduction.¹ The Committee was comprised of a variety of representatives from the community with a diverse range of perspectives and understanding of the issue.

The Committee, an advisory body to the Mayor and Council, was convened to make recommendations regarding how the City of Prince George could support the implementation of the Province of BC's *TogetherBC*² strategy. *TogetherBC* is British Columbia's (B.C.) first-ever poverty reduction strategy, and sets a path to reduce overall poverty in B.C. by 25% and child poverty by 50% by 2024. StatsCanada information shows that in 2016, there were 557,000 people in B.C. living in poverty; 99,000 of them children.

Select Committee on Poverty Reduction: Role & Responsibilities

The Select Committee on Poverty Reduction met monthly from November 2019 until May 2021, hearing from multiple subject matter experts on a comprehensive selection of topics that highlighted and explained the complexities of poverty. They utilized a topics-based approach to develop a series of 22 recommendations regarding the City's role in the implementation of the Province's *TogetherBC* strategy within Prince George.

Six theme areas to consider

In order to manage the process efficiently, Select Committee members identified six theme areas to guide their deliberations:

- 1 **Stigma & Discrimination**
- 2 **Housing**
- 3 **Access to Services**
- 4 **Education & Training**
- 5 **Food Security**
- 6 **Transportation**



Priority themes such as the affordability and suitability of housing, enabling access to services and supports, and food security were identified as being particularly relevant to the Prince George context and the role of local government in poverty reduction. Themes also aligned with both the Province's *TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy* and the *Prince George Poverty Profile*.³

¹ Select Committee on Poverty Reduction. City of Prince George website. www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Hall/Pages/Mayor%20and%20Council/Committees%20and%20Boards/SelectCommitteeonPovertyReduction.aspx

² Together BC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy report. www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/initiatives-plans-strategies/poverty-reduction-strategy/togetherbc.pdf

³ Fraess-Philip, Alex, MSc. "A Profile of Poverty in the City of Prince George". November 19, 2019. www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Hall/Documents/Mayor%20and%20Council/Committees%20and%20Boards/Poverty%20Profile%20-%20Final%20-%20Nov%2019%20Update.pdf

POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY: ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Support for Engagement

The City of Prince George was approved for a *UBCM 2020 Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program* grant⁴ to support the design and implementation of a comprehensive public engagement process and ensure a diverse composition of community residents provided comments on the recommendations for City action. These recommendations will be informed by the public participation of those who are both directly and indirectly affected by poverty, with a specific focus on those with lived experience.

IAP2 Best Practices in Public Participation & Engagement: Public Participation & Engagement

The City followed IAP2 public participation best practices after assessing the nature of the City of Prince George poverty reduction project's participation level at "Collaborate".⁶ At the **collaborate level**, on the IAP2 spectrum, the **public is directly engaged in decision-making**; however, **the agency is still the ultimate decision-maker**.

Public participation (engagement) as defined by IAP2⁵ is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

Public Participation Level: COLLABORATE

Public Participation Goal:

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solution(s).

Promise to the Public:

We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Final Decision:

Prince George City Council will consider/ utilize the final recommendations from the public participation process, prioritized by the public (those directly and indirectly affected by poverty, especially those with lived experience) as part of the City's strategic direction and operational plan, through the public engagement process throughout the months of January – March 2021. We will provide feedback on how public input influenced the final decision.

The public engagement process that the City of Prince George is undertaking will accomplish two things:

- 1 Select and rank the series of recommendations shared with Prince George City Council for action and advocacy work aimed at reducing poverty in our city; and
- 2 Build a better understanding of how poverty is impacting our community and its members.

⁴ The Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program, funded by the Province of B.C. and administered by the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM), is designed to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to advance the implementation of TogetherBC.

⁵ www.iap2.org/page/corevalues

⁶ As per IAP2 International Association for Public Participation Guidelines



RESEARCH

Research: Primary

The engagement and communications plan for the project were informed by both primary and secondary research. Attendance at Select Committee meetings gave an understanding of the priorities of the group and the goals for the engagement plan as a whole. It identified the key stakeholders to keep informed, and those to prioritise hearing from throughout the public participation process.

Other primary research and information came from a direct interview with *TogetherBC* leads Leah Squance and Whitney Borowko who shared their successes and challenges with the *TogetherBC* engagement plan. That interview solidified our direction to focus on asking the public to prioritise the 22 recommendations based on both impact and priority, and without additional suggestions or recommendations from the public.

Finally, one-on-one interviews with Select Committee members and their community networks (attending regular PG Council of Seniors and Community Partners Against Homelessness meetings), informed the City's engagement plan with a unique specificity to each of the core audience types and lenses. That information and the ability to reach out to these subject matter experts (SME's) for feedback and suggestions throughout the process was undoubtedly integral to the success of the project as a whole.

Research: Secondary

Three key secondary research documents influenced the direction of the engagement plan:

A Profile of Poverty in the City of Prince George, TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, and *Select Committee for a Healthy City Framework: Social Development Strategy Recommendations.*

AUDIENCE

Audiences: Lens Groups

The engagement process for the PG Poverty Reduction Strategy placed special emphasis on enabling those living in poverty and those with lived experience to participate.

There were six specific lens groups identified as most affected by poverty in Prince George in the 2019 Poverty Profile, and included:

- 1 Children/youth (0-17 yrs)**
- 2 Lone-parent families**
- 3 Seniors**
- 4 Those living in lower-income neighborhoods**
- 5 Those living with mental health and substance use**
- 6 Working poor and those in absolute poverty**



The Select Committee and the engagement plan also paid special attention to statistics in the *Poverty Profile* which identified approximately 15% of the City's population as Indigenous and also disproportionately affected by poverty in Prince George.

By participating in the survey and focus groups, the feedback from participants in the six lens groups would ensure final recommendations for the City's actions to reduce poverty would be relevant and have a positive impact on those directly affected by poverty.

Audience: Other Key Stakeholders

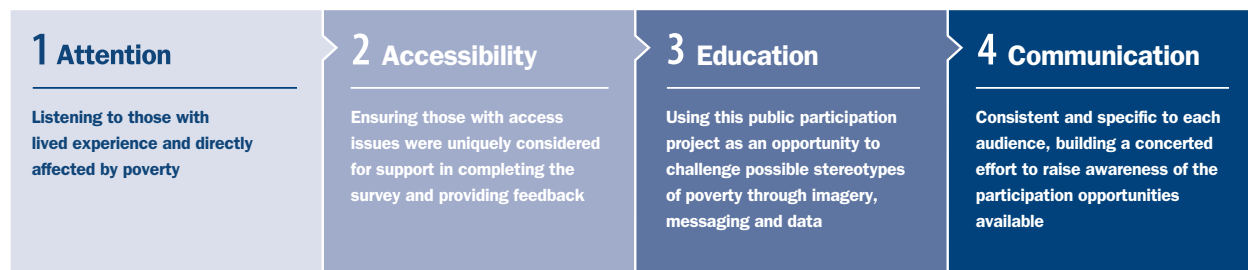
The engagement plan also identified two other key stakeholder groups to gather feedback from:

- 1 Agencies, advocates and community partners** who directly support those living in poverty or those who are part of the system that supports and interacts with people experiencing poverty, can provide unique perspective on clients, funding priorities, deficiencies, outcomes and the system itself.
- 2 General public:** those who may be indirectly affected by poverty, whose buy-in and support for change may affect the outcomes of the project.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Engagement: Components

There were four key components of the engagement strategy:



1 Attention: the engagement plan made specific efforts to hear from those from the six lens groups and Indigenous community members, and designed a survey that would generate action and advocacy at the local government level.

Examples:

- a** The online survey we designed, focused on prioritizing recommendations that are feasible and actionable by the municipal government to ensure feedback is useful and can make an impact.
- b** We worked directly with agencies to ensure lived experiences and personal stories are included in the research. This supports the objective of humanizing the face of poverty and challenging stereotypes.

2 Accessibility: ensuring those with access issues were uniquely considered for support in completing the survey and providing feedback – including those with technology issues, mobility limitations and comprehension barriers.

We hired a plain-language specialist to review and edit the survey so it was more easily understood.

3 Education: challenging possible stereotypes of poverty. The survey was accompanied by an educational infographic component (see page 6) and realistic imagery informed by the Prince George Poverty Profile to help define and illustrate what the lived experience of poverty looks like in Prince George, with the goal of challenging stereotypes and misinformation.

4 Communication: consistent, specific to each audience, utilizing the City's own methods.

The communications plan was audience-specific, primarily focussed on engaging with the six lens groups. **Some examples include:**

- Mailed postcards with a QR code to scan, leading participants in identified neighbourhoods directly to the online survey
- Direct phone calls with seniors to ensure participation and access with volunteers completing the surveys on their behalf
- Direct emails and a communications toolkit for agencies and community partners to garner support and facilitation
- Paid social media ads to reach specific neighbourhoods
- Utilization of the City's digital signs, displays, poster boards, etc

Educational Infographic

CHALLENGES FACED BY THOSE LIVING POVERTY



Housing & Homelessness

Sustainable cities need to provide housing opportunities for all residents. This includes affordable and appropriate housing options.

Home ownership

Prince George has a higher percentage of homeowners than BC and Canada, increasing from 70% to 72% between 2011 and 2016.

Cost of housing increasing

The cost to own and rent went up in PG (from 2010 – 2018):



Core housing need

"Core Housing Need" is a term that indicates unsuitable living conditions, needing major repairs, costing over 30% of income, and unaffordable alternate housing to meet a person's needs.



Affordable childcare

Underserved:

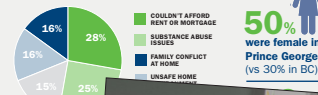
- children needing extra support
- Indigenous people
- low-income families
- young parents
- minorities
- refugees
- immigrants

Key gaps:

- wrap around support
- long waitlists
- Early Childcare Education (ECE) worker shortage
- access to in-care social workers
- childcare for shift workers
- culture & language programming

Major factors contributing to homelessness:

During the 2018 provincial homeless point-in-time count by Community Partners Addressing Homelessness (CPAH), there were 133 absolutely homeless, and 79 people in transitional housing. Of those interviewed, **16%–31%** were unsheltered vs **37%** in BC.



50% were female in Prince George (vs 30% in BC)

Food insecurity – HDSA

Food insecurity is when a household lacks the financial means to buy healthy, safe, personally acceptable food. The Northern Health Authority region is more food insecure than all other health authorities in BC.

Percentage of households who are:

	BC	NHA
Food secure	92.3%	89.2%
moderately food insecure	4.7%	6.2%
severely food insecure	2.9%	4.6%

Indigenous community members in PG were 2.3 times more likely to be food insecure this past year than non-Indigenous community members.

Transportation

Poor access to transportation is a barrier to an individual's ability to find employment. In 2019, when 10% of the population in need by agencies.



Employment

5.2% of the population is 4.7%. Fewer people than the p...

Quality of life

Low-income families are less satisfied with their standard of living, health, achievement in life, personal relationships, feelings of safety, feeling part of the community, quality of local environment. BUT have higher levels of satisfaction with quality of family time.

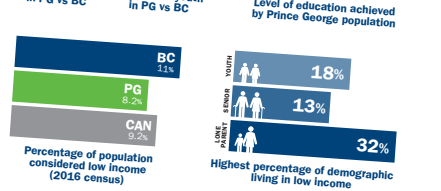
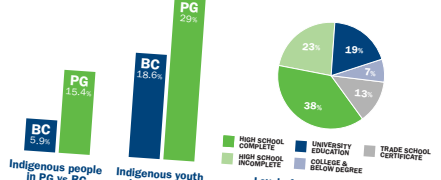
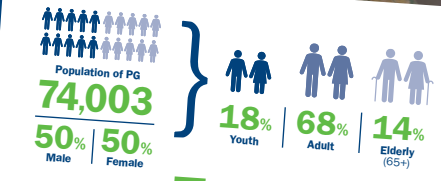
PRINCE GEORGE POVERTY PROFILE: WHAT DOES POVERTY LOOK LIKE?

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Population
Population of PG, BC = 74,003 (2016 Census)
Male / female: 50:50
Youth 18%, adult 68%, elderly 14% (65+)
17.5% of the population in PG is under the age of 15, whereas the provincial average is 14.9%

Ethnicity
8% visible minority, 15% Indigenous, 10% immigrants
The percentage of Indigenous people living in PG is 15.4%, compared to the provincial average of 5.9%. There are more younger Indigenous people in PG under the age of 14 yrs: 29% in PG vs 18.6% in BC

Education
Of the population in PG, 23% have no certificate, diploma or degree, 38% have a high school diploma, 13% have a trades certificate, 7% have a college education and 19% have some university education



LIVING IN POVERTY

Based on Canada's low income measure (LIM), 8.2% of the population are low income in PG, 11% in BC and 9.2% in Canada.
The highest percentage of PG's demographic living in poverty are: 19% youth, 13% seniors, and 32% are single-parent families.

Who is living in poverty?
Women in PG are more likely to be low income, and the disparities increase with age.
Indigenous people are more likely to live in poverty.
Children & youth are more likely to live in poverty. Age 0-5 yrs: 20.6% PG, 18% in BC and 18% in Canada.
Single-parent families in PG are more likely to live in low-income households.

Families
Of the families living in PG, 13.3% are living in poverty. Of those living in poverty:
32.2% are single parent families
24.1% are single persons
7.3% are couples with kids
4.6% are couples without kids

77.2% are female single-parent families



Engagement: Process



Engagement & Research Methods: Planned

The engagement plan and research methods evolved over the course of three months. In that time, after consultation and recommendation from our Select Committee members, and as a result of increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases in the Northern Health region, the decision was made to scale back the in-person opportunities for engagement. It was also adjusted a second time as necessary based on mid-point evaluation and safety considerations due to COVID-19.

The main data capture for the project was through the City of Prince George's online survey platform, Ethelo. Participants were asked to rank the Select Committee's recommendations for how to reduce poverty in two ways, on a scale from 0 – 5:

- i. IMPACT – what impact would this project have on you and the community?**
- ii. URGENCY – how quickly should the City address / act on this recommendation?**

To support those at risk or with limited or no access to an online environment, other distribution, facilitation and support methods were envisioned:

1 Small focus groups: Clients

Agency and community partner-led with direct clients, with completion facilitated in-person and/or online

2 Small focus groups: Community

In secondary, post-secondary and community centres/locations (ie. library) with live, facilitated, in-person digital polling using software such as Mentimeter

3 Community Champion program:

Neighbourhood champions garnering participation in the survey within their networks

4 Phone calls:

To seniors and others with access challenges - caller will complete online survey as directed by participant

5 Street teams:

In-person interviews on digital devices for those who may be homeless or in the most vulnerable situations.



Engagement & Research Methods: Final

- 1 Online survey platform** – the 15 minute survey was available via the City’s engagement website
 - a** This could be accessed by visiting the City’s engagement website, by direct entry through online search or social media, by using the QR code from the mailed postcards.
 - b** Some agencies dedicated public computer stations to the survey to provide access
 - c** Teacher-led facilitation in classrooms with high school and post-secondary students
- 2 Paper survey** – was an exact replication of the online survey for those with online access challenges. In some cases participants were supported in the completion of the paper surveys, by volunteers or care workers in shelters or by phone.
 - a** These were delivered and picked up by Meals on Wheels or in shelters, food grocery bags at St Vincent de Paul and Salvation Army, or drop-in centres, in apartments and facilitated by volunteers who then entered the data online.
 - b** Using clipboards, in-person outreach and interviews with those at high risk in community
- 3 Phone calls and over-the-phone interviews** by volunteers who completed the survey on behalf of their clients
- 4 Reliance on network and partner delivery methods** at computer labs and in person through emails, newsletters, social media and word of mouth

Partners were supported with City staff support, Zoom onboarding and survey orientation, and all communications, supplies and facilitation materials for either individual or small-group led sessions, including scripts. In addition, all participating agents received offers of support for client incentives. As in-person meetings were cancelled, the budget for childcare, travel and food was allocated towards promotion and awareness, and some incentives for those most in need.

Communication Methods

It's challenging to engage with the public in the middle of a pandemic, especially with some of the City's most at risk community members, so we relied on our most valuable and valued resource in Prince George to bring awareness to the campaign: our community networks.

52 community agencies, partners and individuals met and advised us on how to best reach their clients. Our approach was unique to each audience-type and creatively adapted when challenges arose.

Community Partners

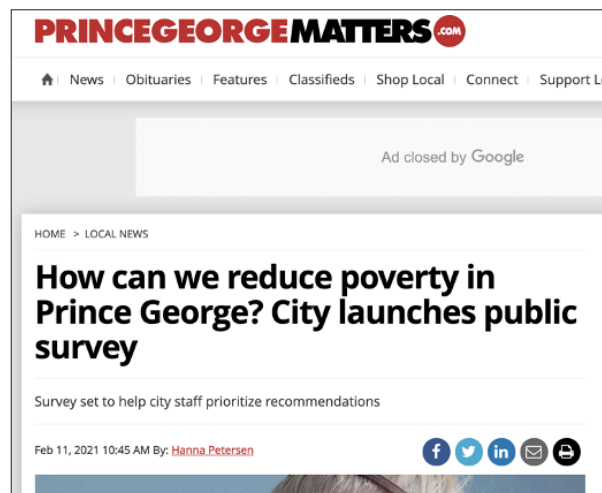
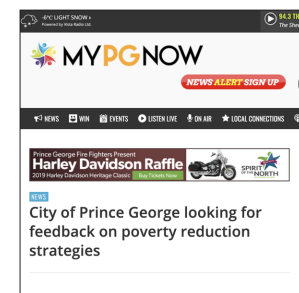
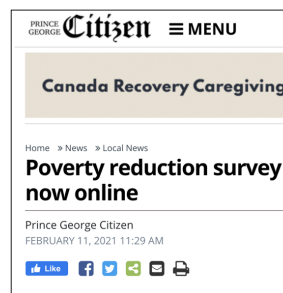
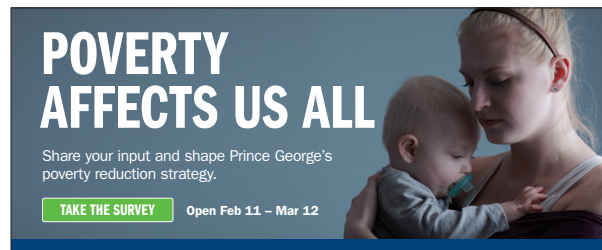
The success of the engagement project can be attributed to the huge support from the community. We did invest in some paid promotion, but our best method for reaching our six lens groups was through word of mouth and direct communication to this very diverse audience.

Partners	Lens
SD 57, BBBS, YMCA, CNC, UNBC, Carrier Sekani Family Services, Lheidli T'enneh, CSFS, libraries	Youth
Carney Hill Community Centre, Library, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, United Way, Mennonite Central Committee	Neighbourhoods
PG Council of Seniors, Seniors Helping Seniors, Seniors Community Centres, Northern Health	Seniors
AWAC, CPAH, Library, St Vincent de Paul, United Way, Salvation Army, PEERS, Blue Line Group, (NHA) Needle Exchange, PG Aboriginal Housing, Active Support Against Poverty, CPAH, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Canadian Mental Health Association, Blue Pine, Northern John Howard Society, Positive Living North	Those living in poverty, homelessness, mental illness, addictions
SD 57, BBBS, YMCA, Carrier Sekani Family Services, Lheidli T'enneh, Child Resource Centre, Phoenix Transition House, Integris, City of PG, United Way, Farmer's Market, Elizabeth Fry Society	Single-parents, families
PG Native Friendship Centre, Carrier Sekani Family Services, Lheidli T'enneh, PG Aboriginal Housing	Indigenous participants

Output included:

We produced a lot of materials to ensure the message reached our audiences.

- **5,000 direct-mailed post cards** to target neighbourhoods with embedded QR codes to lead directly to digital survey
- **100 posters, 50 tent cards** displayed at agency sites
- **5 Computer stations** throughout the city facilitated at agency sites
- **10 trained facilitators** to deliver the surveys online, on the phone and in person
- **Digital signage** in City buildings
- City engagement **website**
- **Social media:** ongoing posts for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram with tagging of participating agencies to generate interaction and sharing, some boosted
- **Media coverage** in all northern BC outlets, including CBC
- **Community partner communications toolkit**, consisting of pre-written emails, newsletter content, social media posts and sharable graphics, downloadable posters.
- **52 active partners:** facilitating, promoting, sharing the survey and content related to the issue of poverty in PG.



ENGAGEMENT GOALS / RESULTS

Goals	Results
To engage and receive feedback from each of the six lenses identified by the Select Committee on Poverty Reduction (Youth, Seniors, Neighbourhoods, mental health and addictions, single-parent families, homeless).	All provided feedback, including: 6% – Youth 18 & under 17% – Seniors 60 - 79 years 1% – Seniors 80+ years
To ensure 15% of feedback comes from Indigenous voices	14.47% of self-declared Indigenous participants in the survey
To engage and receive feedback from at least 250 people with lived experience in poverty and 500 overall based on the City’s average survey participation rate	Survey visitors (attempted survey, but not complete): 1,852 Survey participants (completed surveys): 814 Survey website page views: 17,939 Average visit length: 15 minutes 28% of participants cited an income less than \$20,000/year 266 participants from the V2M + V2L neighbourhoods
To ensure a multi-faceted, flexible engagement strategy , responsive to health, safety, and access challenges	We set a plan, evaluated, pivoted and adapted after the first two weeks as a result of lower numbers in certain lens group numbers, resulting in success.
To engage with at least 5 community partners and/or agencies on delivery and facilitation to six lens groups	We had 52 active community partners , individuals, and agencies participate in the project and share using a developed comms toolkit.

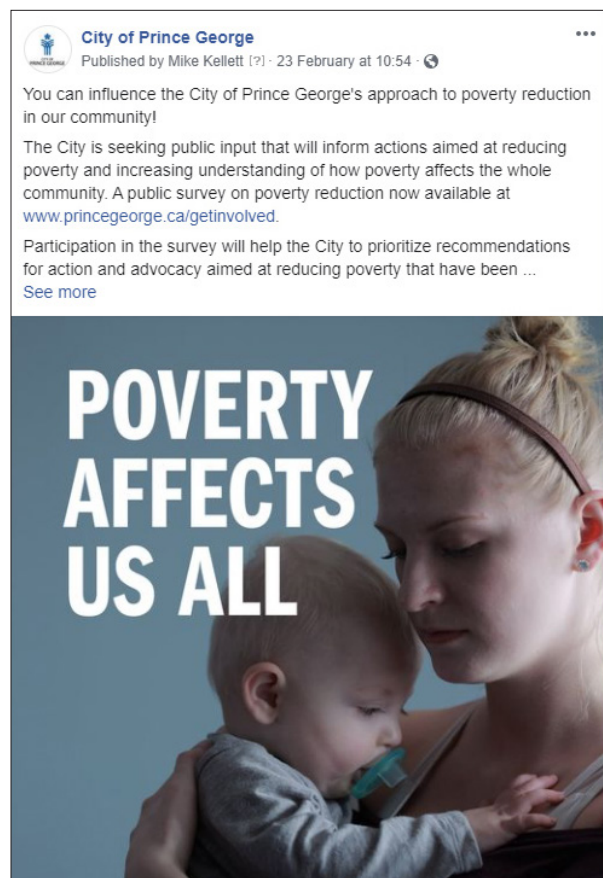
RESULTS

Engagement

- **395 completed paper surveys** out of 500 paper surveys delivered by volunteers
- Poverty Reduction survey viewed on Ethelo platform: **1,852 times**
- Poverty Reduction survey accessed: **1,789 times**
- Poverty Reduction survey completed by: **814 participants**

Communication

- Media coverage in **all major northern BC outlets**, including three interviews on the project
- **48 direct QR code activations** from 5000 postcards
- Approximately **18,520 total pageviews** of City engagement website in the 4 week period
 - 528** views came from Facebook.
 - 13** views came from LinkedIn.
 - 13** views came from Twitter.
 - 3** views came from Instagram.
 - 231** views came via PrinceGeorgeMatters.com digital banner ad
 - 152** views came via PrinceGeorgeCitizen.com digital banner ad
 - 37** views came via CKPG digital banner ad
 - 43** views came via MyPrinceGeorgeNow.com digital banner ad



CHALLENGES

Every public engagement project comes with challenges, but the pandemic's public-gathering restrictions forced cancellations of public forums, focus groups and input gatherings. Our focus to online engagement then faced constraints for our six lens groups: limited access to the online platform, complex survey topics, and investment in a variety of communication methods needed for the diverse groups.

Challenges	Mitigations
<p>COVID-19 – All agencies faced challenges accessing the most marginalized of community members during this time.</p>	<p>Pivotting – Mid-survey changes to delivery, ongoing support of partners, adoption of unique delivery methods for each of the six lens groups, and continual reminders and communication throughout built a strong campaign throughout the four weeks of engagement. Survey was supported by 52 community partners and variety of communication touchpoints: hampers, direct mail, computer stations, QR codes.</p>
<p>Reaching Youth – Worked closely with School District 57 on research agreement, survey review and specific communications; however, access at the classroom level was more challenging with lower uptakes than anticipated.</p>	<p>Personal connections – Made direct contacts with teachers, resulting in two classes partaking.</p>
<p>Involved Survey – Participants were asked to take up to 30 mins to complete survey, with many questions addressing fairly complex concepts.</p>	<p>We hired a plain language expert to simplify the language; led a Zoom survey orientations for facilitators, and a script for those helping over the phone.</p>
<p>Challenging Topics – Some of the topics were complex and difficult to convey to survey participants.</p>	<p>Invited all responses – To ensure none of the valuable feedback was lost, we accepted incomplete surveys and every response.</p>
<p>Diverse Audience – The six lens groups made up a diverse audience: from youth to seniors, single-parent families and Indigenous community members.</p>	<p>Research from the <i>Poverty Profile</i> helped define the needs of the six lens groups. Commitment from Select Committee members and community partners to share engagement opportunities and support the communications and engagement strategies was exceptional.</p>



CONCLUSION

As part of its commitment to poverty reduction and the province's *TogetherBC* strategy, the City of Prince George reached out and heard from community-members through a comprehensive engagement process.

Public-gathering limitations from COVID-19 and the unique access needs of our diverse lens groups drove creativity and continuous updates to ideation regarding the communications plan and participation in the online survey.

The success of this engagement project is demonstrative of both the community's commitment and interest in this issue—an issue that affects everyone. This includes the commitment of the Select Committee Members on Poverty Reduction, to the support and dedication of the 52 community partners, agencies, and advocates. Participation in the survey (both paper and online) came from 814 community members (just over 300 more than the City's average for community engagement surveys) from each of the six diverse lens groups, including 14% from Indigenous community members (1% shy of our goal).

Most importantly, as the initiatives to reduce poverty in the city of Prince George will likely continue through advocacy and action, thousands are now aware of the project and the city's commitment through the extensive, social media, direct emails, community newsletters, posters, direct-mailed post cards and media coverage that this engagement and communications project garnered.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this important initiative.

Alyson Gourley-Cramer
Monogram Communications & Consulting, Inc.



Alyson Gourley-Cramer, MA, APR
alyson@monogramcomms.ca
monogramcomms.ca

ABOUT MONOGRAM

Monogram Communication & Consulting is a full-service public relations firm based in Prince George, BC on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh. The dedicated team at Monogram Communications provides outstanding service to clients in a variety of sectors, with significant experience in education, non-profits, industry, sport and tourism, with an expansion into Indigenous Relations and project management. Areas of focus include public participation and stakeholder engagement, crisis and issues management, rebrands and website/intranet designs, major events, writing, and digital strategy.

With an incredible work ethic, attention to detail, and creativity in problem-solving, Monogram Communications has the award-winning collective experience of a large firm, with the agile output of a small but mighty team.



**CITY OF
PRINCE GEORGE**

Select Committee on Poverty Reduction Final
Recommendations for Council Consideration
May 2021