

FY 2027 Budget Engagement Analysis

February 2026



FY 2027 BUDGET ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Balancing the Budget

The County Manager was directed to propose a **balanced budget** that includes both reductions in services and options for revenue increases.

Who Participated?



2,455 participants

Online responses came from community members in all Arlington zip codes and neighborhoods



including **164** participants who responded in-person



More than **100 participants** responded in Spanish

Among who participated:

- 41%** Regularly use public transit
- 37%** Parent/caregiver of a child or teen
- 34%** Over the age of 65
- 11%** Primary language is not English
- 9%** Can only get to County facilities or services near home
- 7%** Participates in a DHS program

Reducing Services & Programs

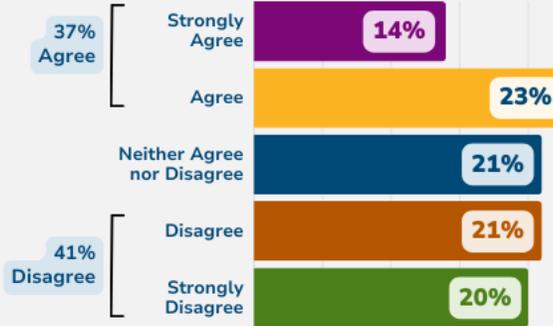
Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the following statement:

"It is more appropriate to reduce operational services (e.g., snow removal, road maintenance) than to reduce programs (e.g., housing, food security, behavioral health) that serve community members."



41%

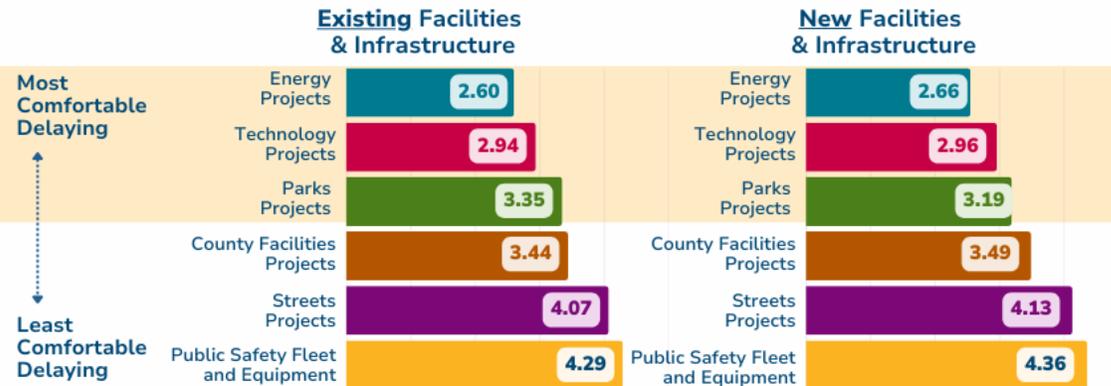
disagree with reducing operational services rather than reducing programs that serve the community, whereas 37% agree.



2,234 Respondents

Delaying Capital Projects

Participants were asked to rank which types of capital projects they would be most comfortable delaying for both existing and new facilities and infrastructure.



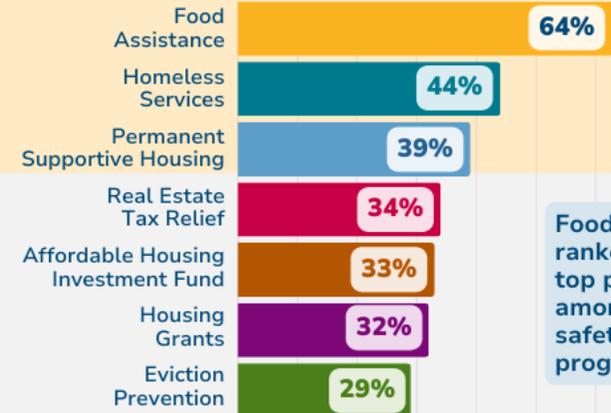
1,097 Respondents

1,045 Respondents

Social Safety Net Services



Participants were asked to identify their top 3 priorities for affordable housing and social safety net programs, given increased need and the County's budget pressures.



Food assistance ranked as the top priority among social safety net programs.

2,009 Respondents

Impacts of Tax and Fee Increases

Real Estate Tax Rate

53% of respondents said they can afford—or can adjust their budgets to afford—an increase

33% of respondents said they cannot afford an increase

49% of respondents who said they cannot afford an increase are *parents or caregivers of children/teens*

Fees for County Programs

70% of respondents said they can afford—or can adjust their budgets to afford—an increase

Engagement Period: Jan. 14-30, 2026

2,455

Total responses

Including

164

in-person responses, collected via pop-ups and ballot boxes at libraries and community centers. Several in-person pop-ups and canvassing opportunities were canceled due to inclement weather.

More than 100 participants completed the form in Spanish.

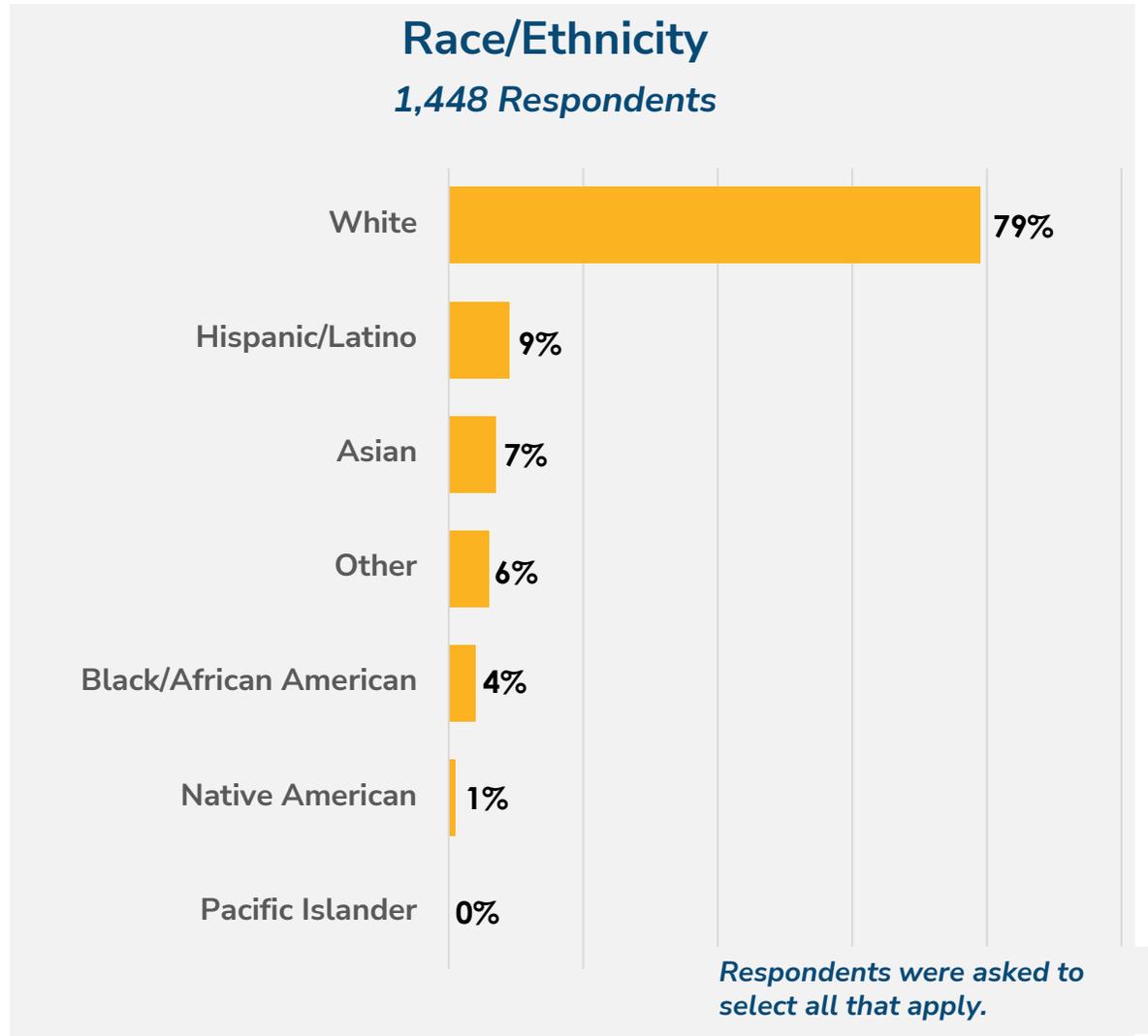
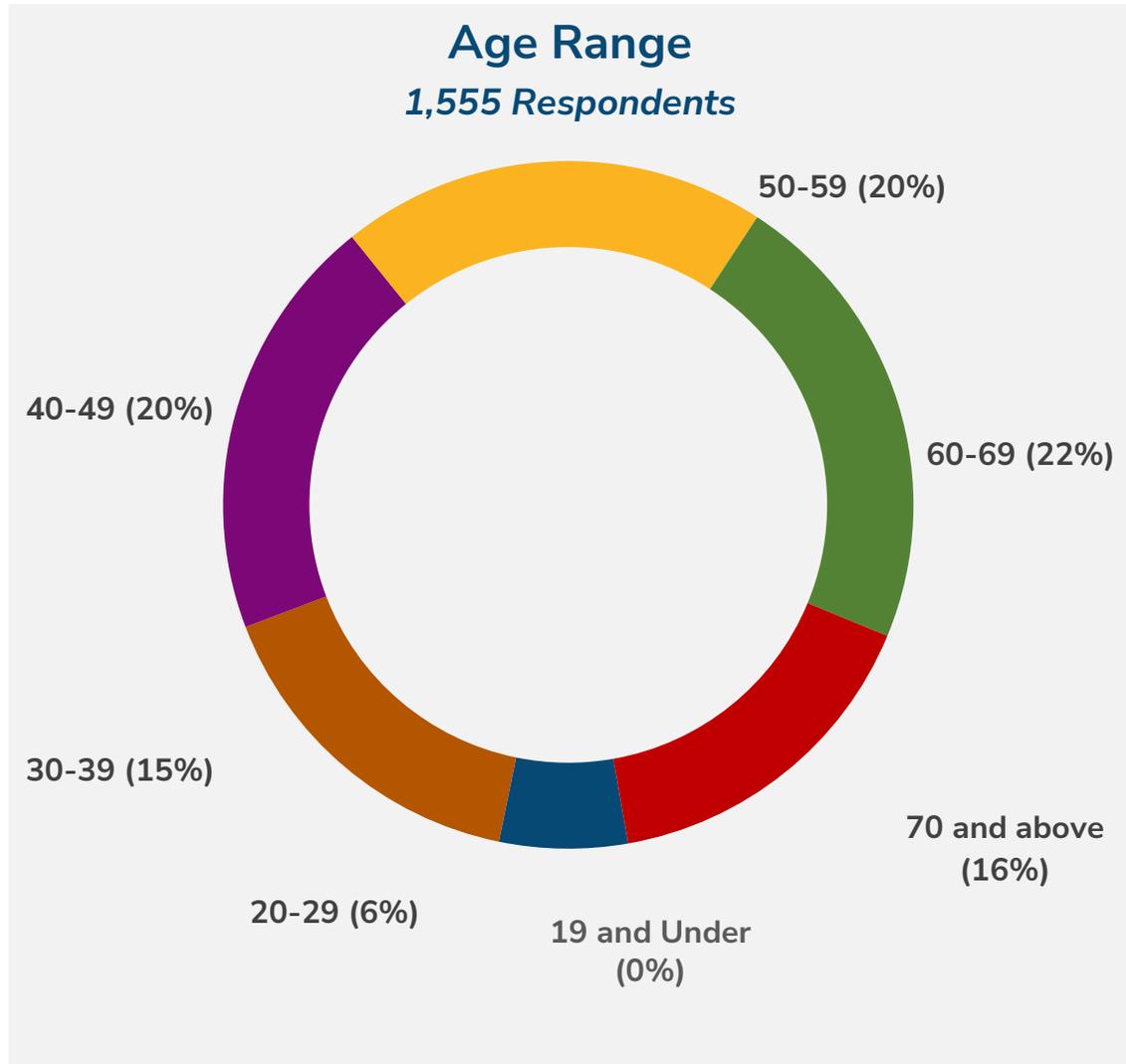
Outreach conducted through online and in-person communications, canvassing, poster distributions, and community pop-ups.



Who Participated?



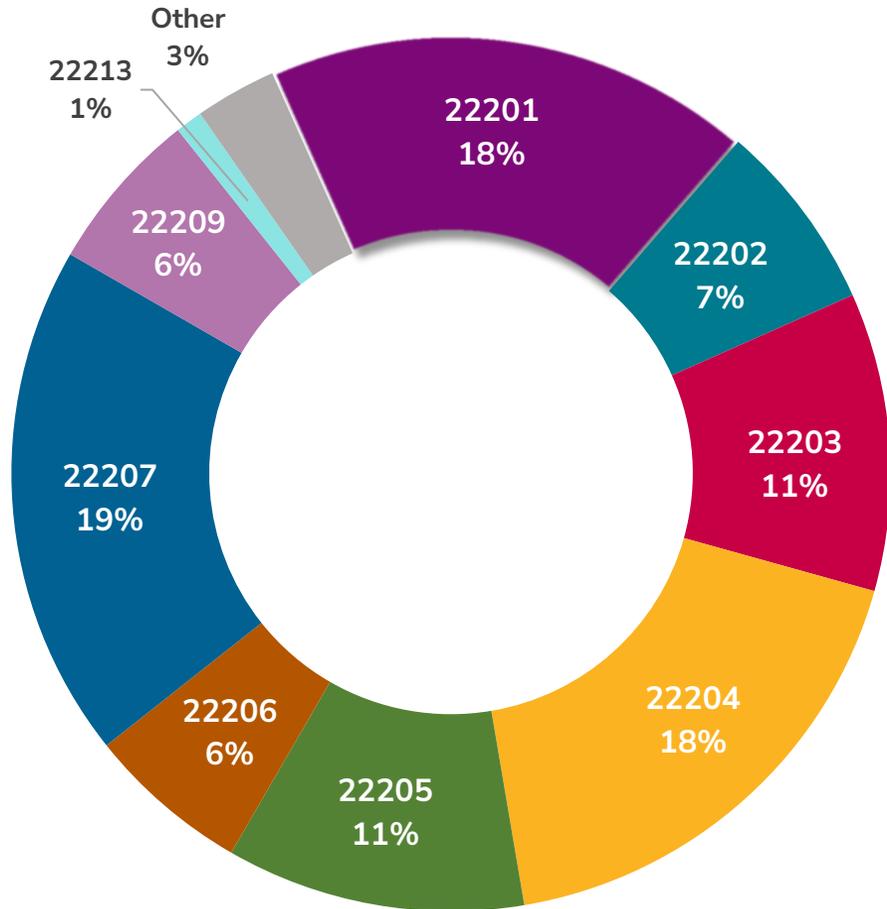
Who Participated



Who Participated

ZIP Code

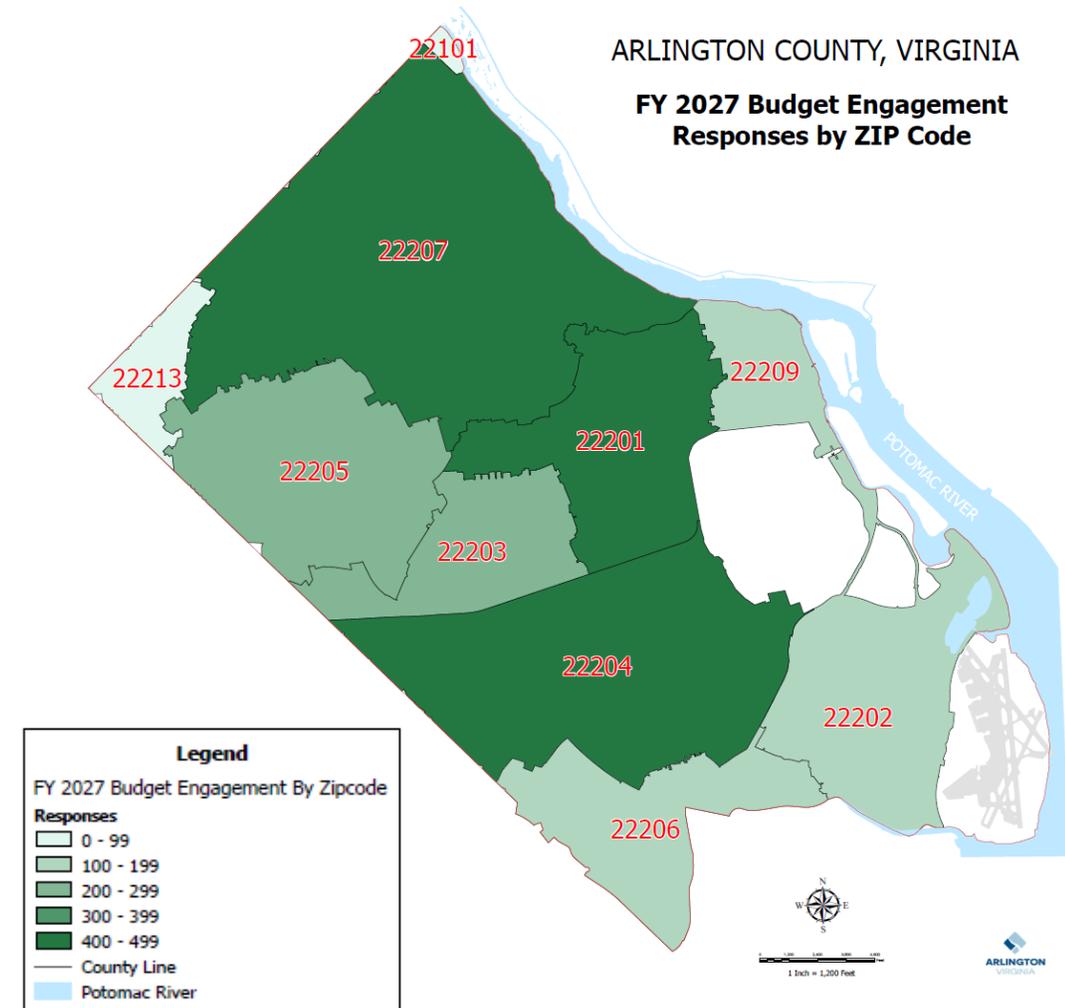
2,410 Respondents



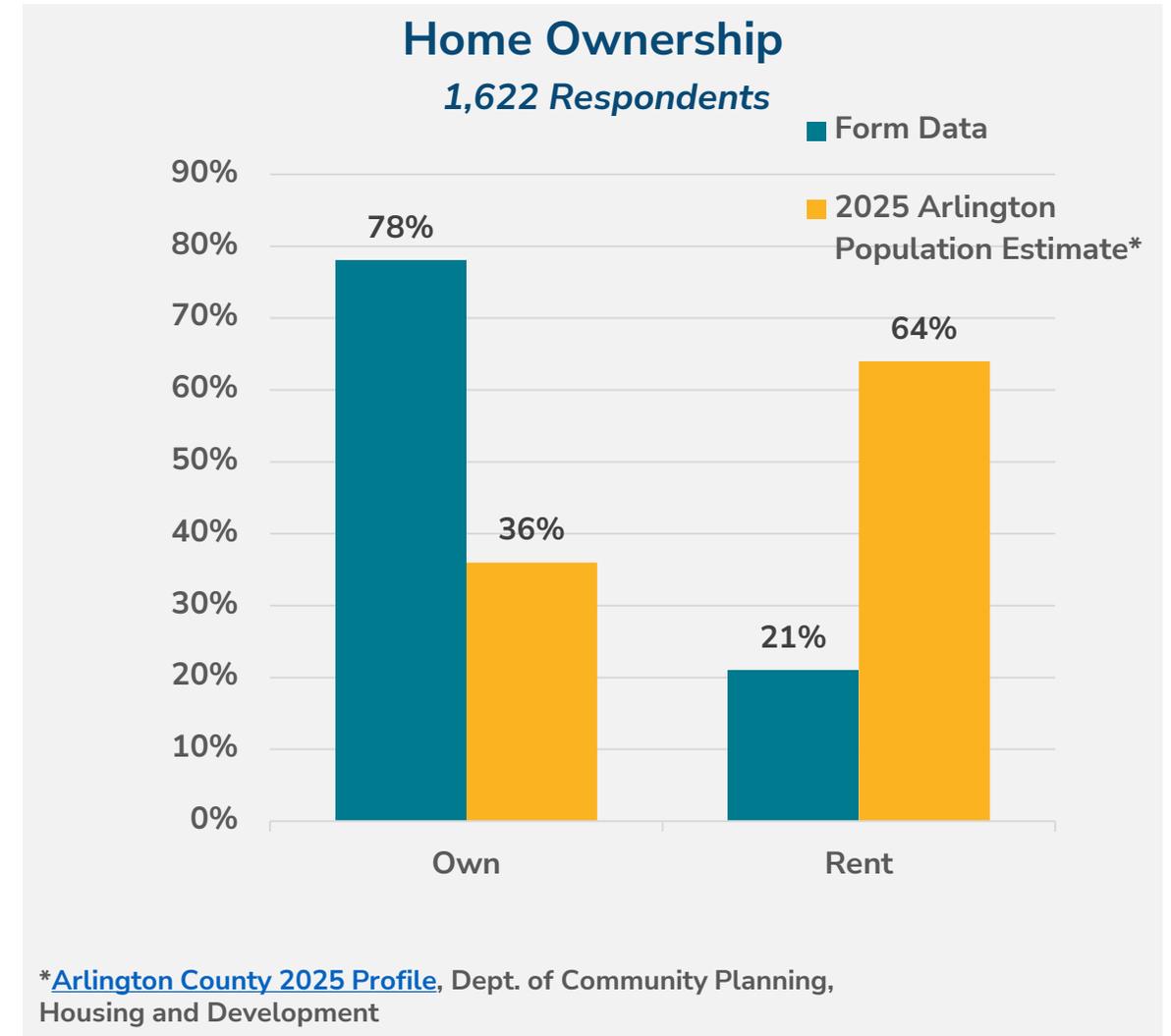
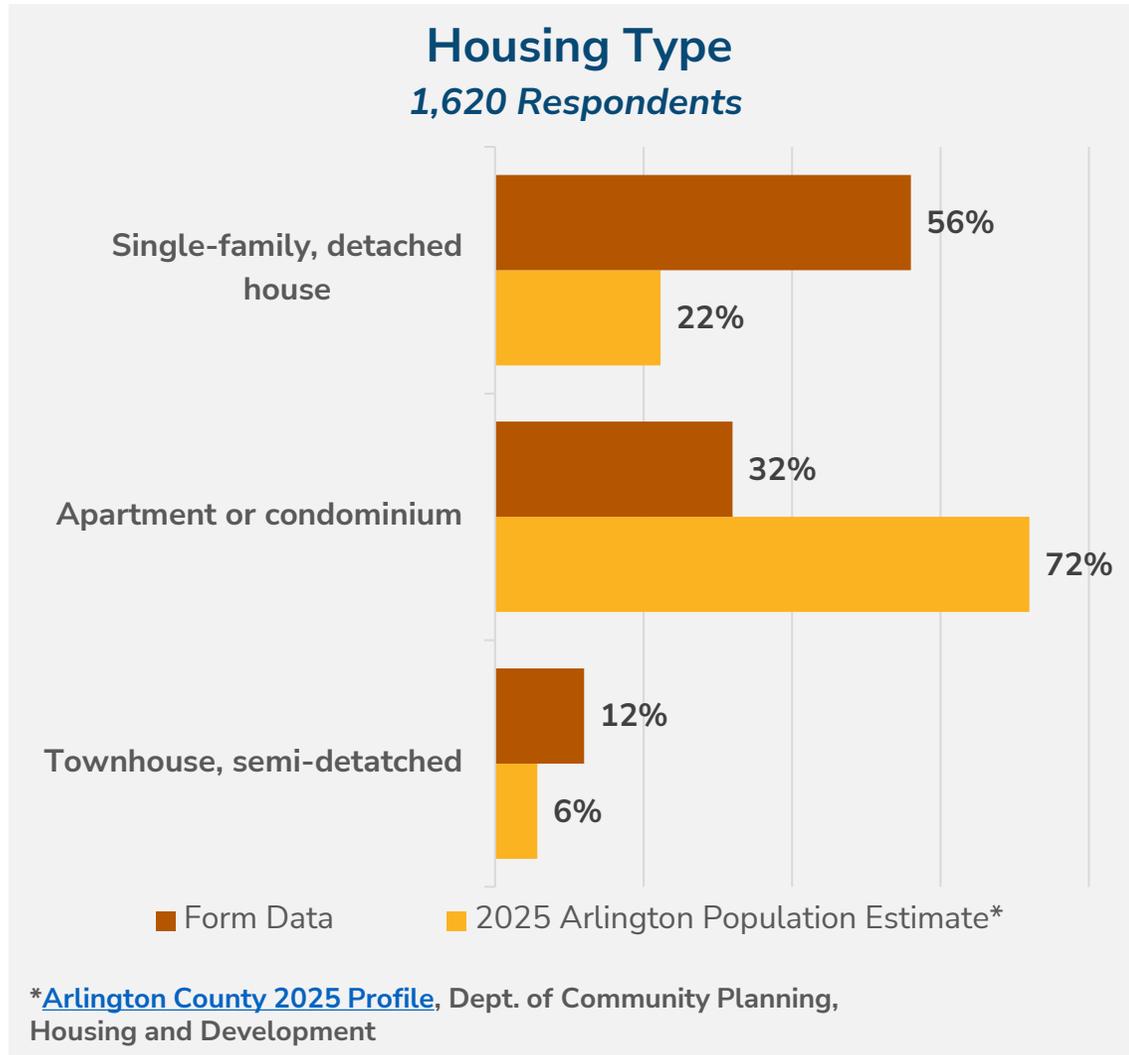
Reached at least 0.5% of the population in each ZIP code.

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

FY 2027 Budget Engagement Responses by ZIP Code



Who Participated

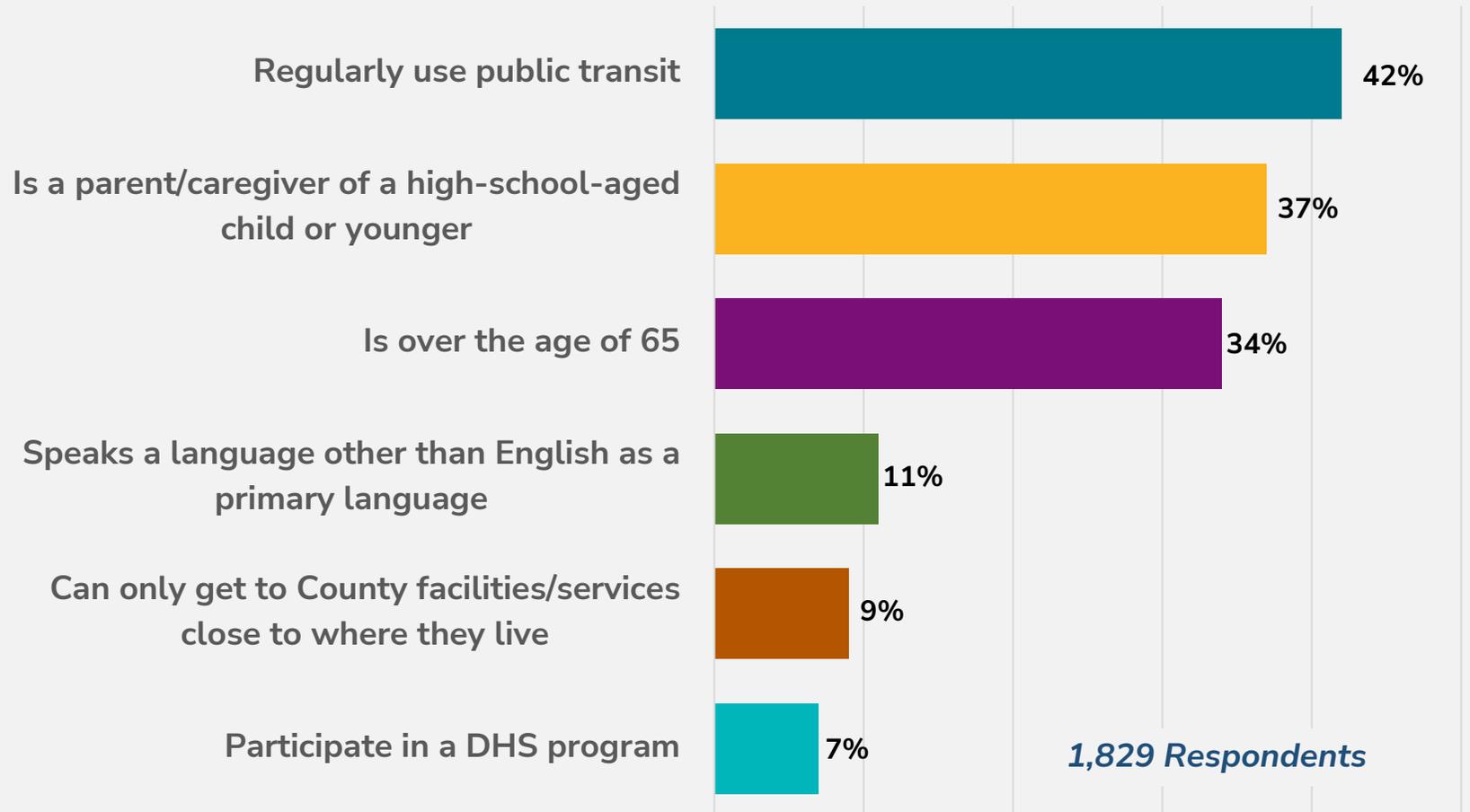


Who Participated

75%

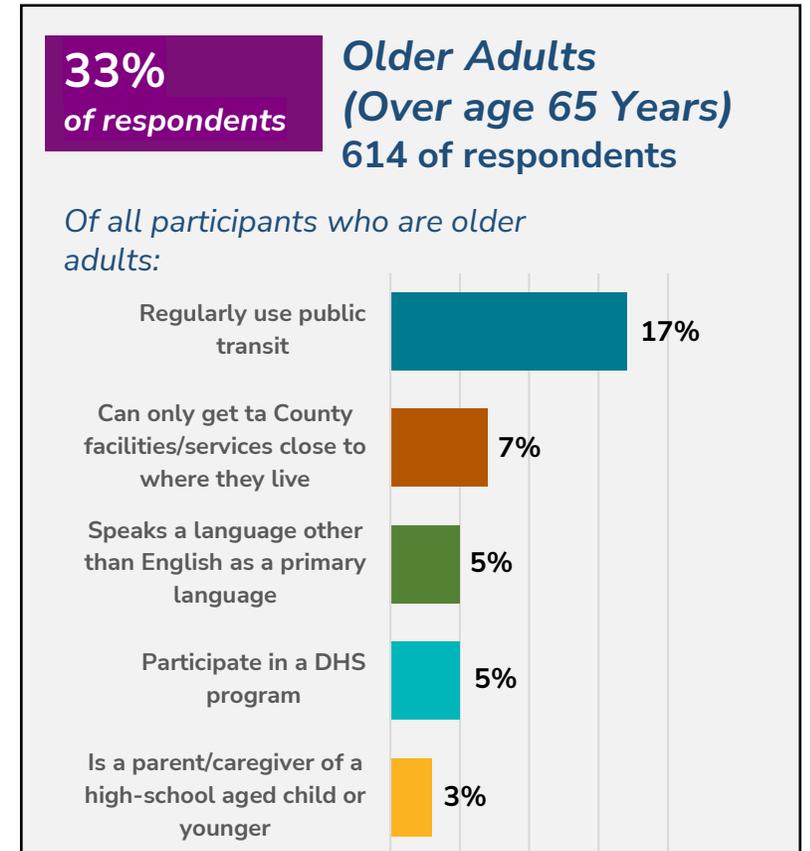
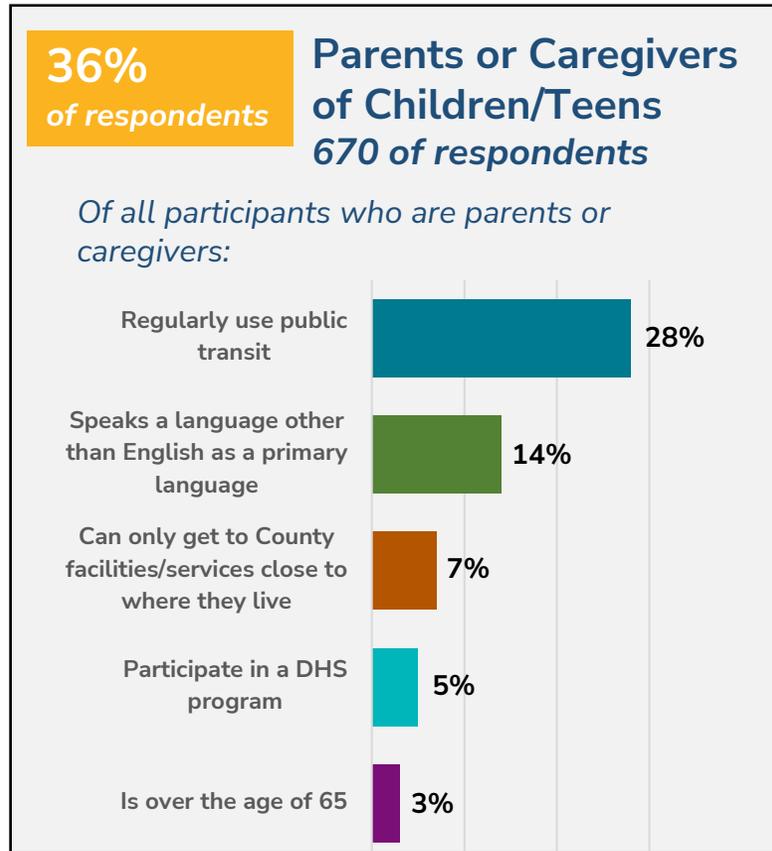
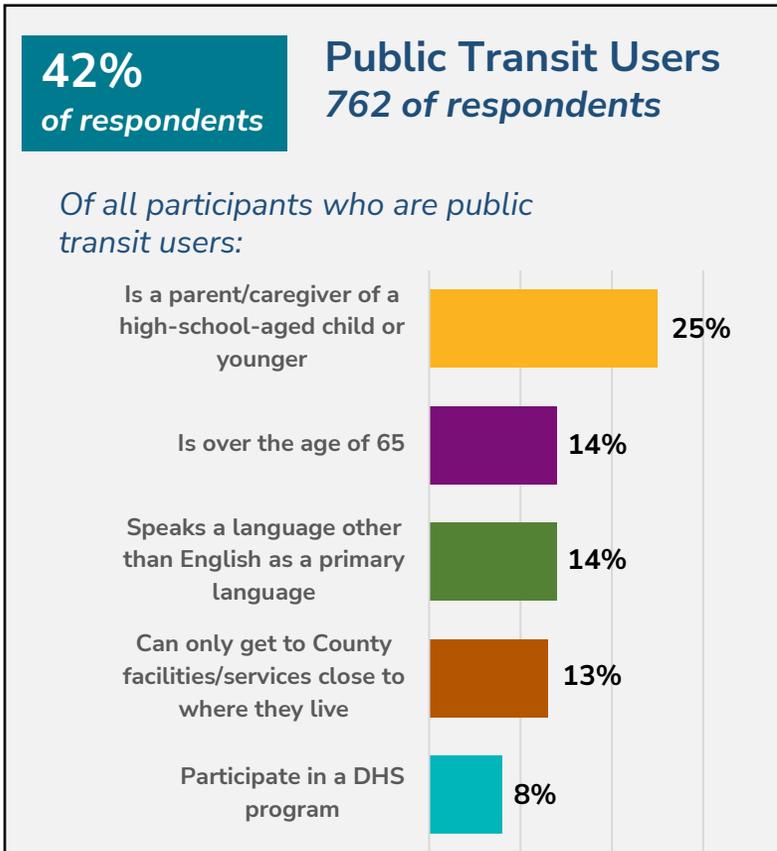
of all participants selected at least one option. Answer options were based on the Community Vulnerability Index indicators.

Respondents were asked to select all that apply.



Who Participated

A plurality of participants report being public transit users, parents or caregivers of children/teens, or older adults.

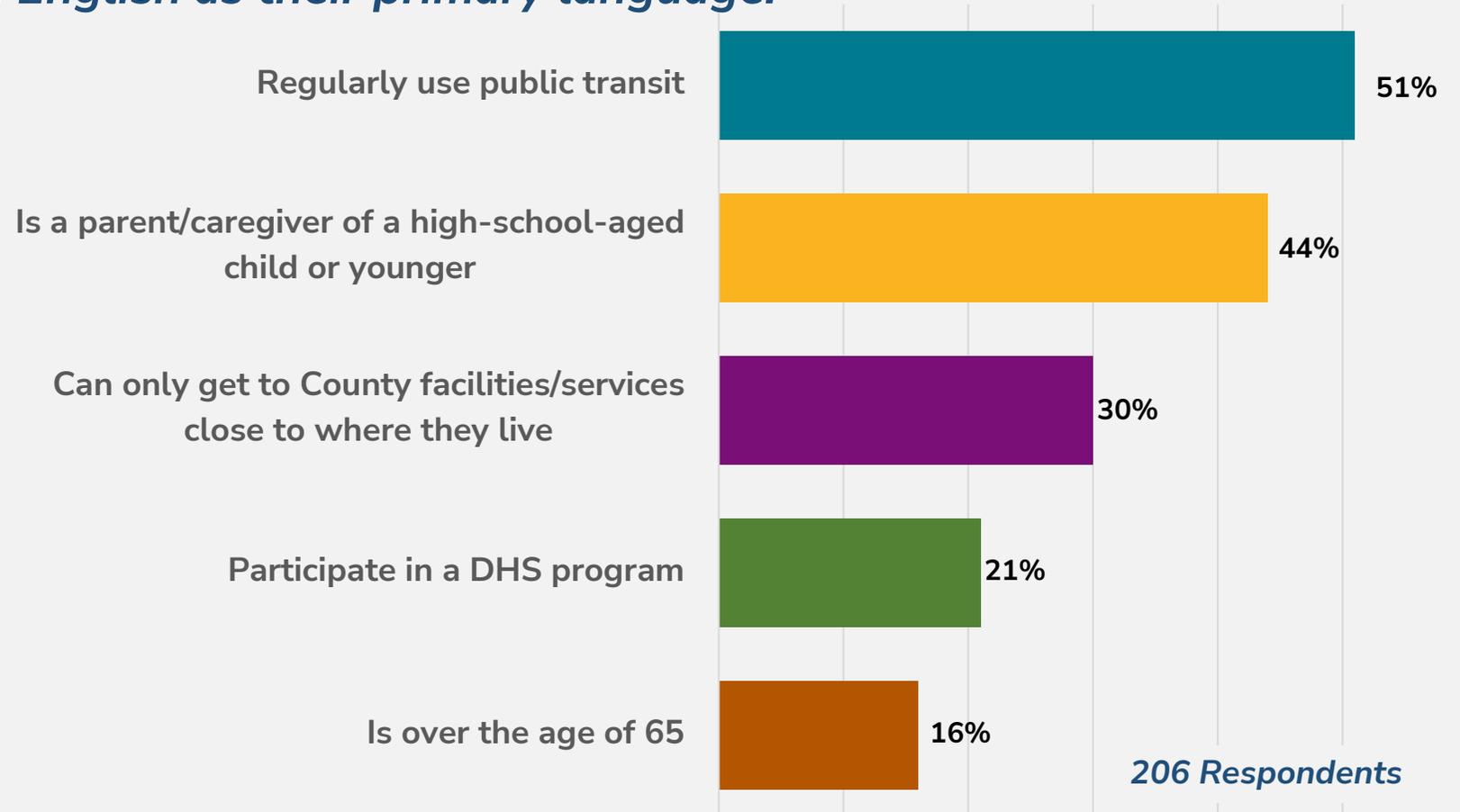


Who Participated

11%

of all participants speak a language other than English as their primary language.

Of respondents who speak a language other than English as their primary language:

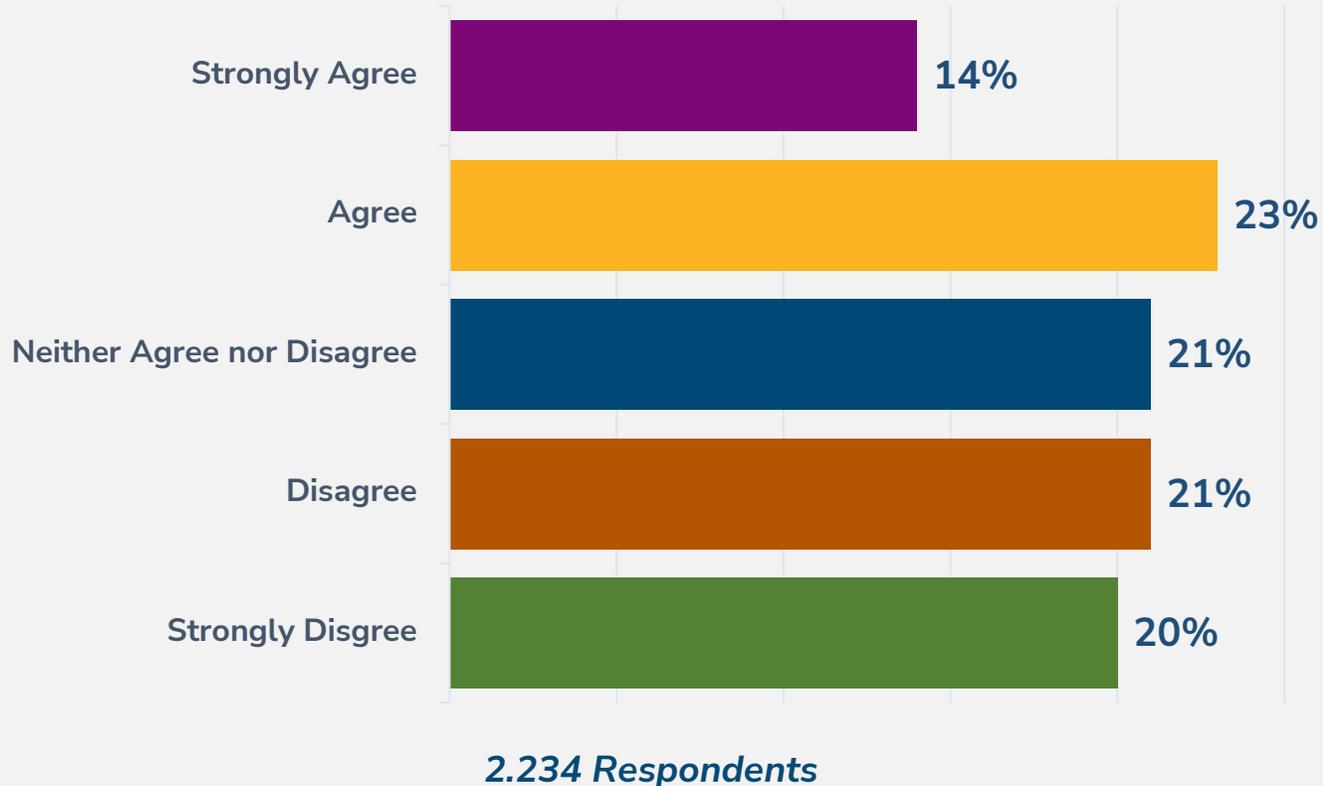


Reducing Programs & Services



Reducing Services and Programs

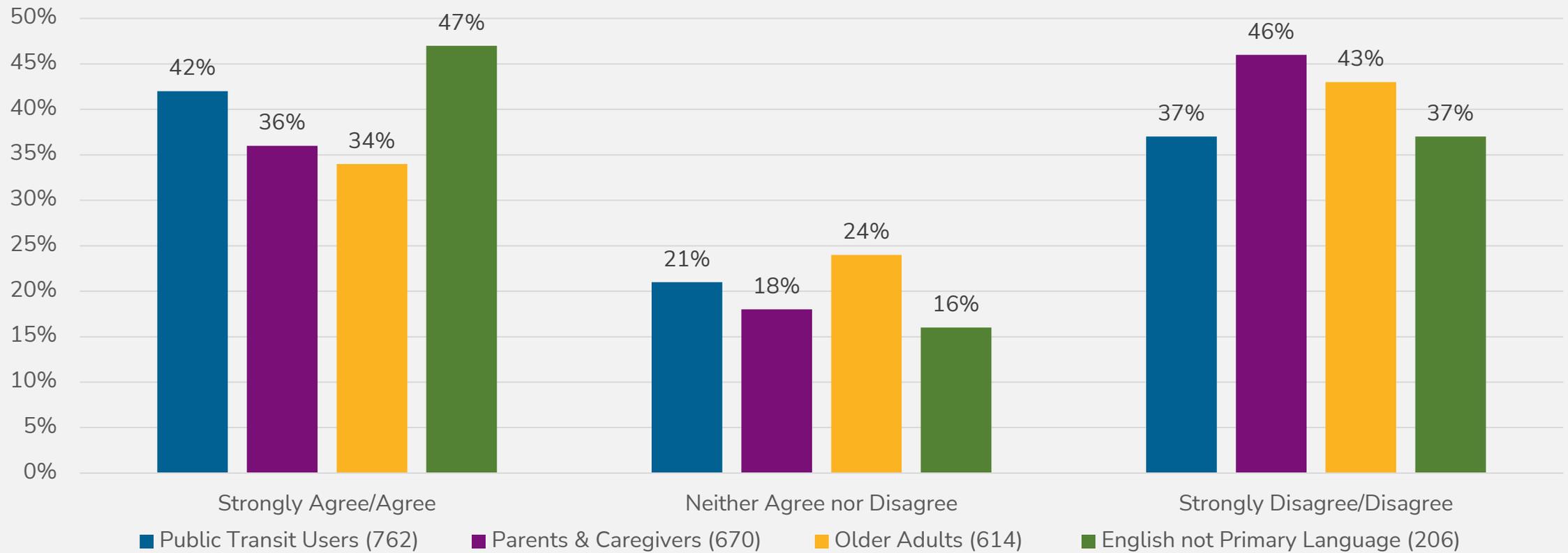
Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the following statement:
It is more appropriate to reduce operational services (e.g., snow removal, road maintenance) than to reduce programs (e.g., housing, food security, behavioral health) that serve community members.



Opinions are divided—
41% of respondents disagree
with reducing operational
services rather than reducing
programs that serve the
community whereas 37% agree.

Reducing Services and Programs

Parents/caregivers and older adults more likely to disagree, while respondents whose primary language is not English are more likely to agree.

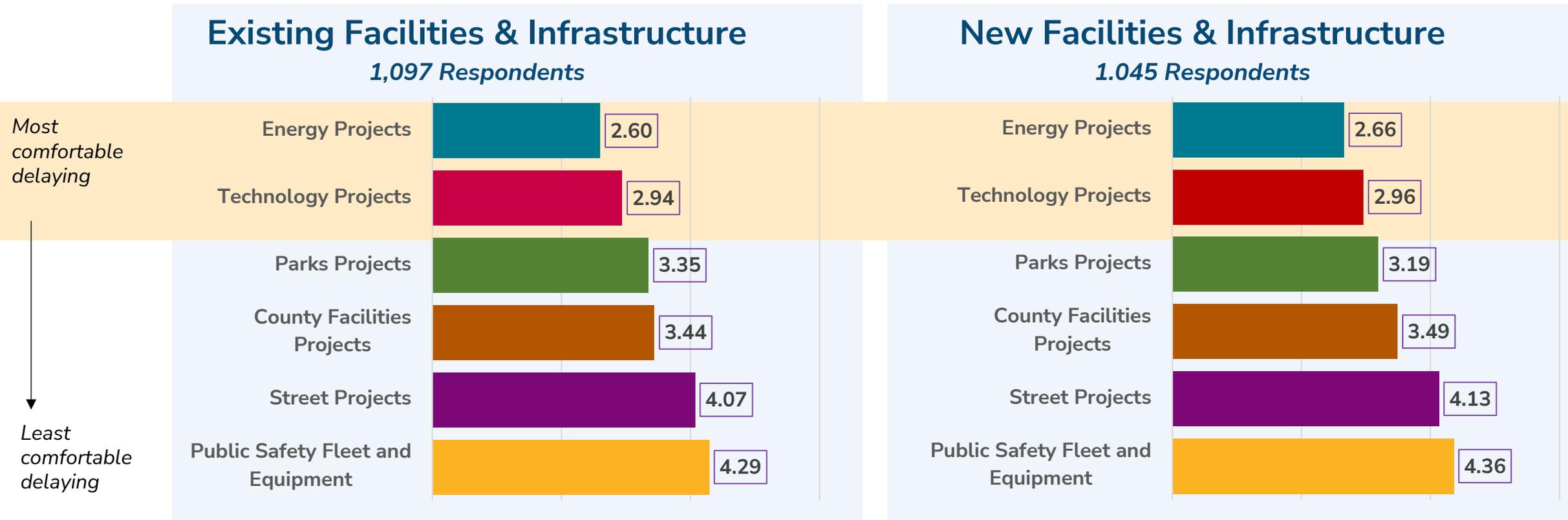


Delaying Capital Projects



Delaying Capital Projects for Existing & New Infrastructure

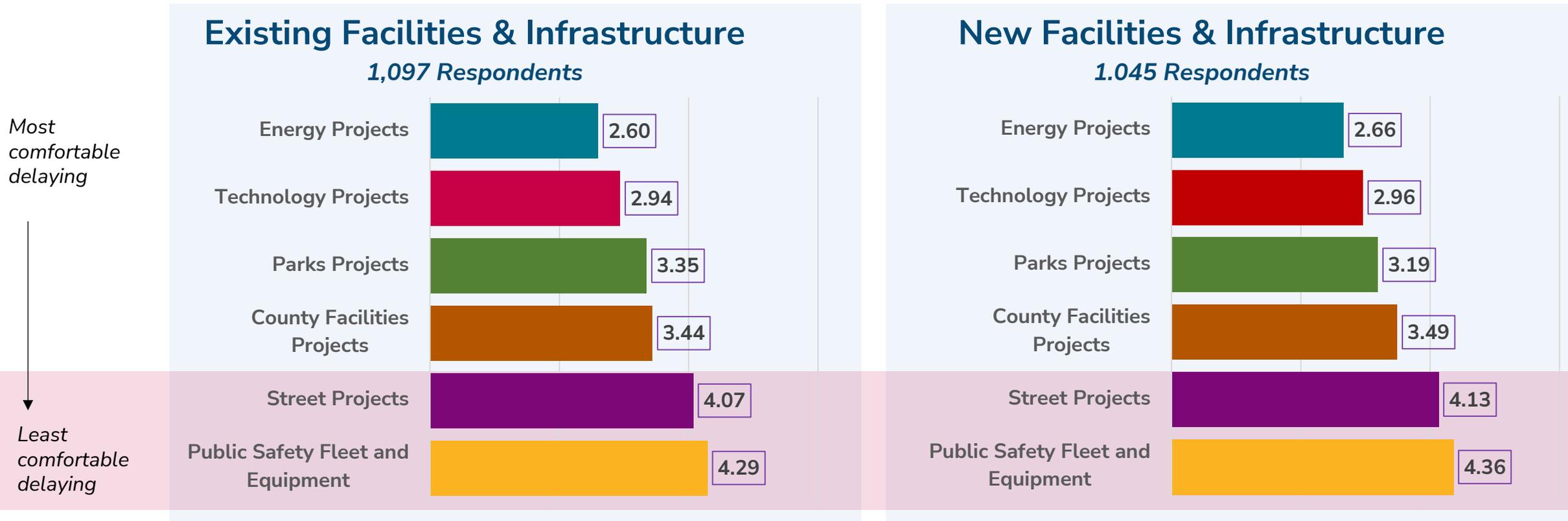
Energy and technology projects emerged as those respondents are most comfortable delaying for both existing and new infrastructure.



Participants were asked to rank which types of capital projects that would be most comfortable delaying for existing and new facilities and infrastructure.

Delaying Capital Projects for Existing & New Infrastructure

Street and Public Safety Fleet and Equipment projects emerged as those respondents are least comfortable delaying for both existing and new infrastructure.



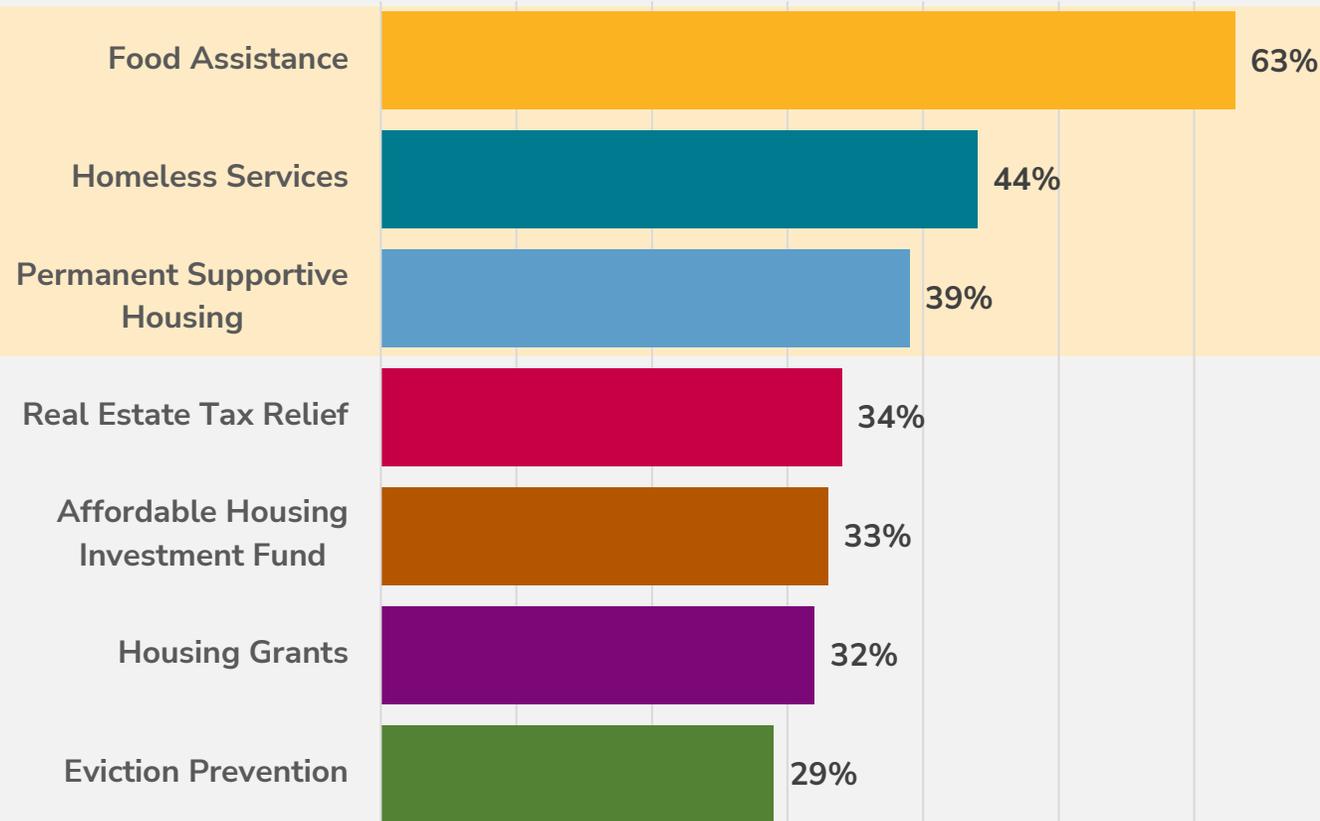
Participants were asked to rank which types of capital projects that would be most comfortable delaying for existing and new facilities and infrastructure.

Prioritizing Social Safety Net Services



Prioritizing Social Safety Net Services

Respondents were asked to identify their *top 3 priorities* for affordable housing and social safety net programs, given increased need and the County's budget pressures.



Respondents prioritized food assistance above all other services, followed by homeless services and housing programs.

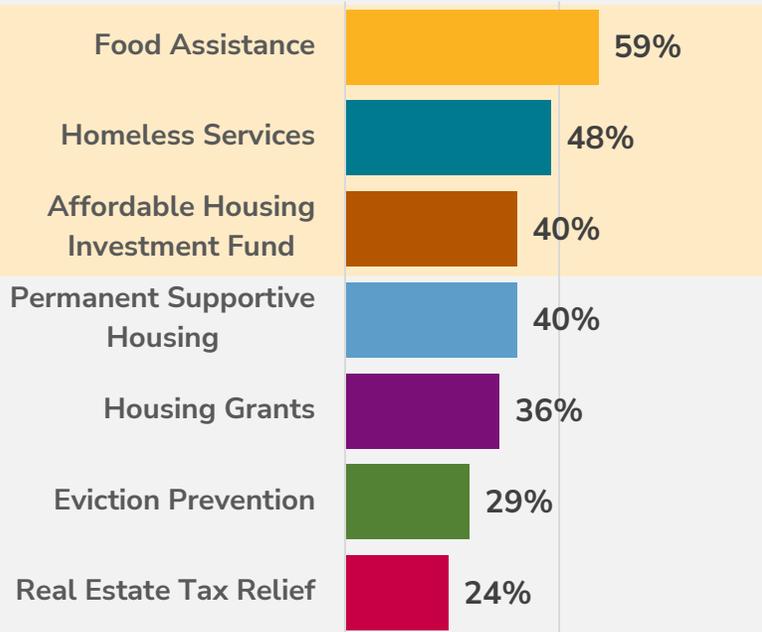
2,009 Respondents

Prioritizing Social Safety Net Services

Food assistance is the top priority across demographic groups. Older adults also selected Real Estate Tax Relief in their top 3 priorities.

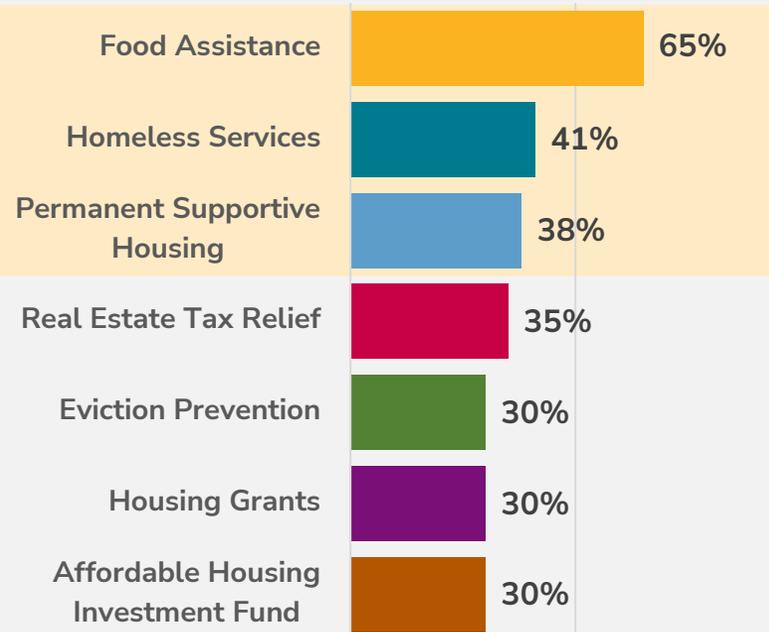
Public Transit Users

639 Respondents



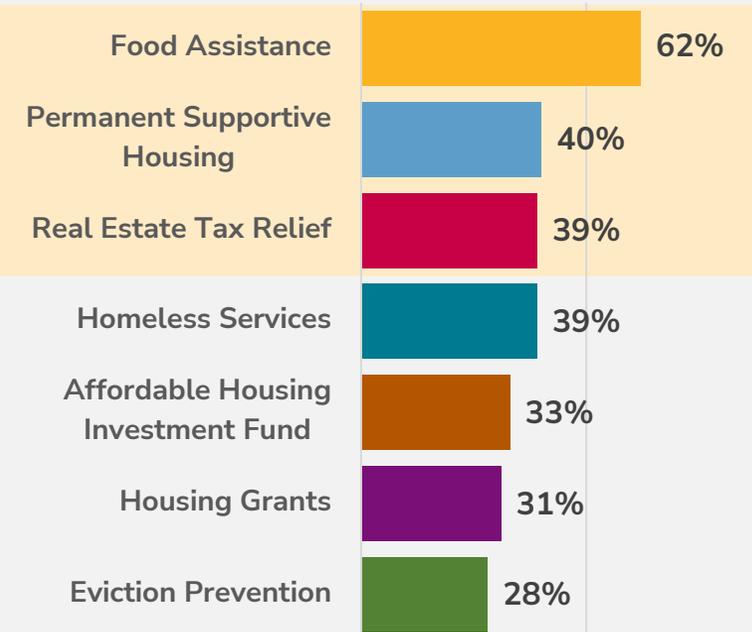
Parents and Caregivers

569 Respondents



Older Adults

522 Respondents



Impacts of Tax and Fee Increases

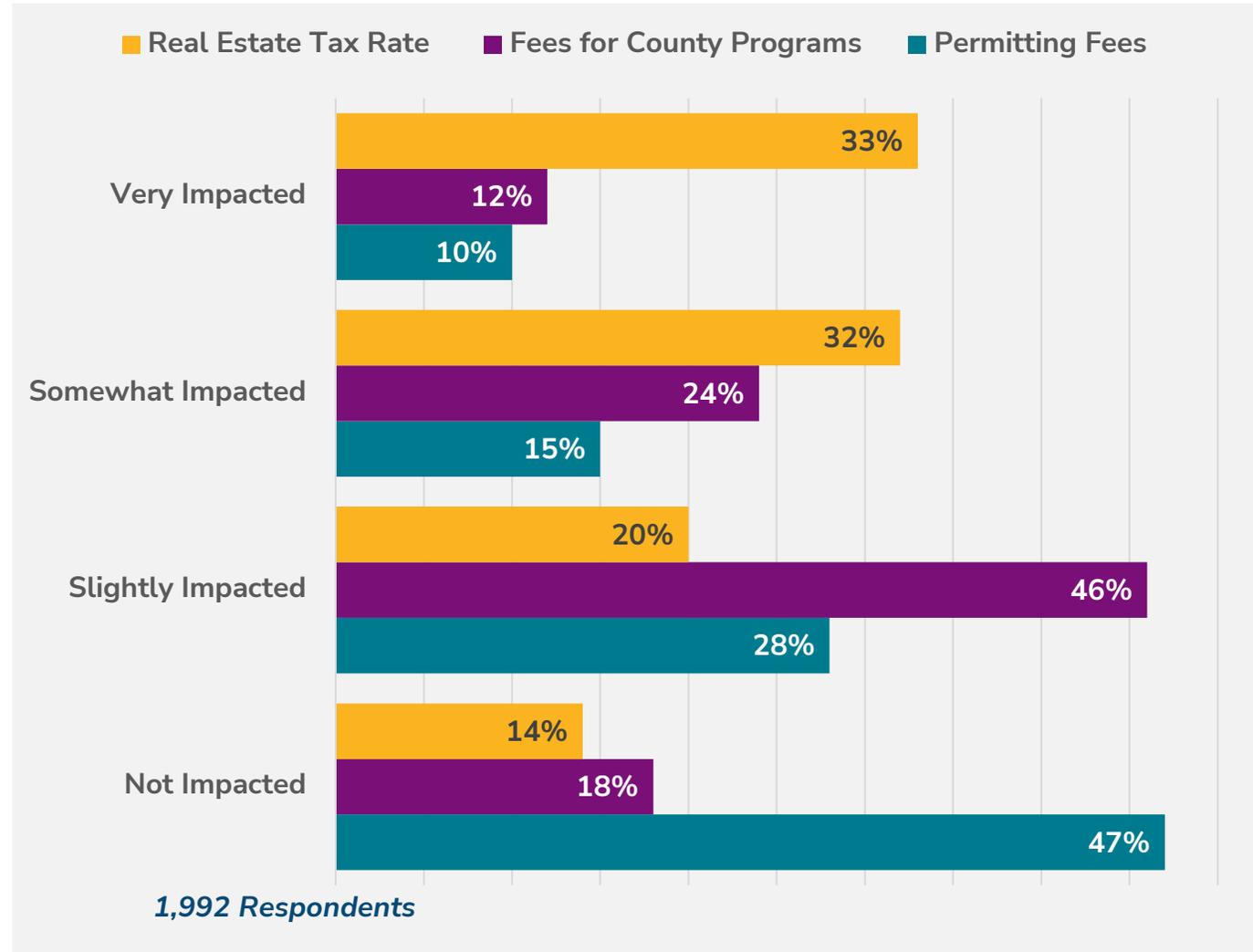


Impacts of Tax and Fee Increases

Over half of respondents (53%) can afford—or adjust their budgets to afford—an increase in the real estate tax rate.

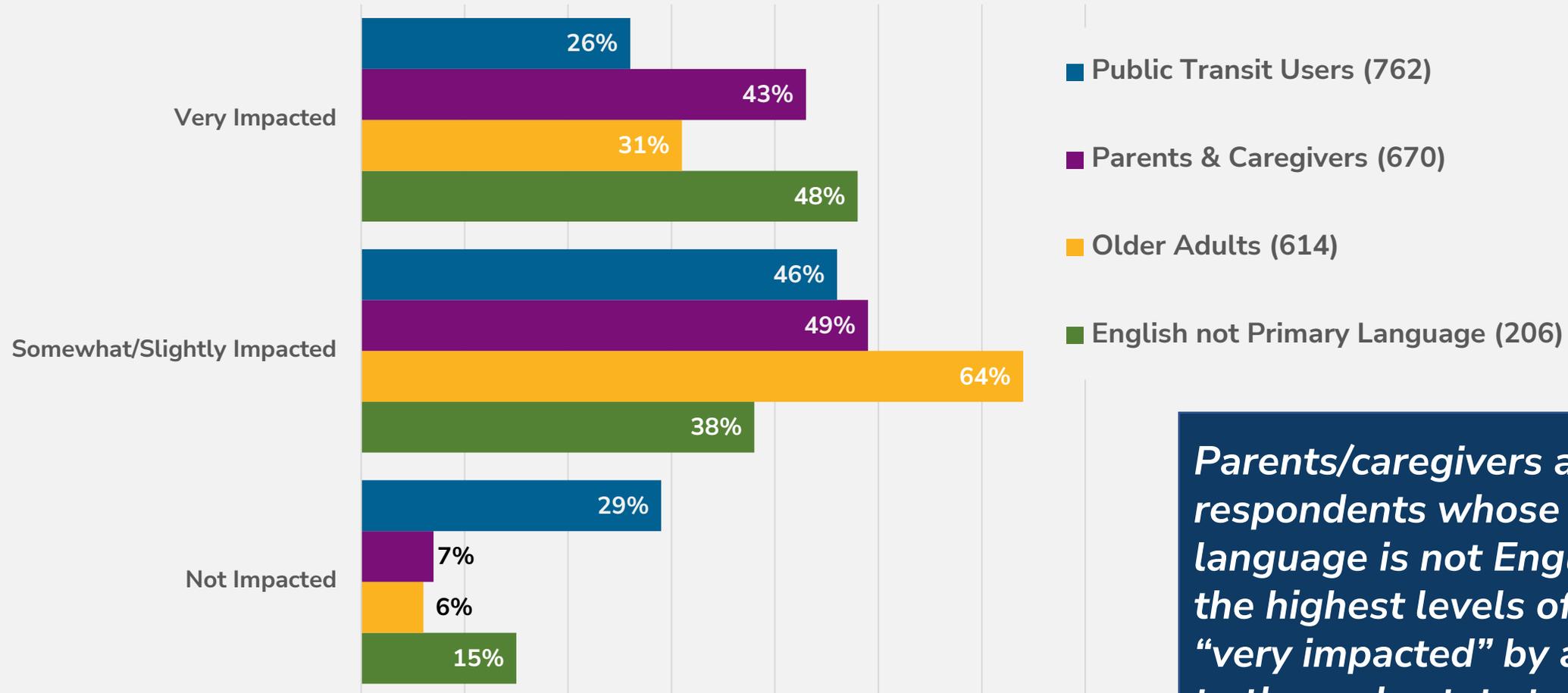
One-third cannot afford an increase.

- **Very Impacted:** Cannot afford an increase
- **Somewhat Impacted:** Can adjust to afford an increase
- **Slightly Impacted:** Can afford an increase
- **Not impacted:** Does not apply



Impacts of Tax and Fee Increases

Impacts of Real Estate Tax Rate Increase

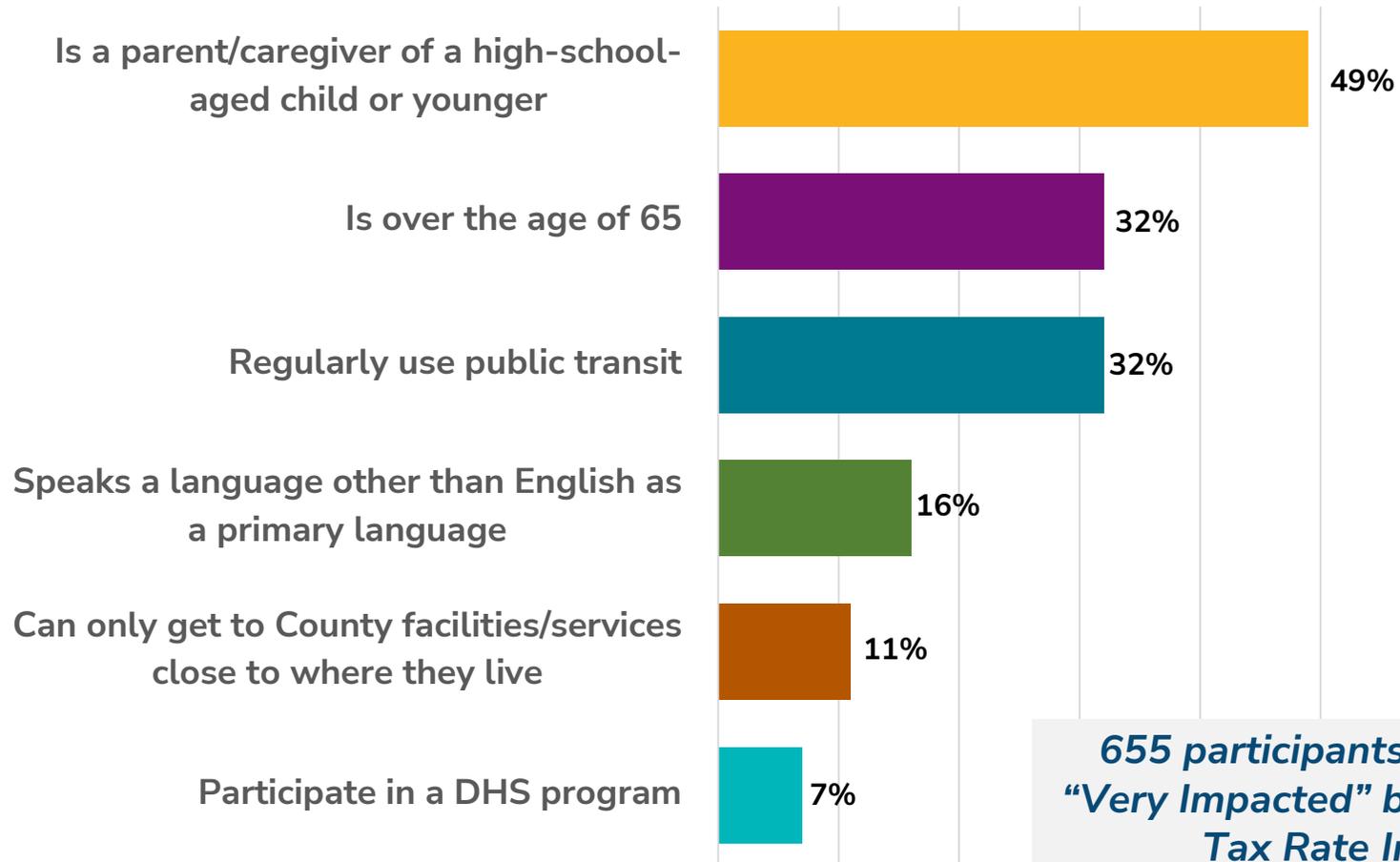


Parents/caregivers and respondents whose primary language is not English report the highest levels of being “very impacted” by an increase to the real estate tax rate.

Respondents *Very Impacted* by Real Estate Tax Rate Increase

Respondents “Very Impacted”

Respondents were asked to select all that apply.



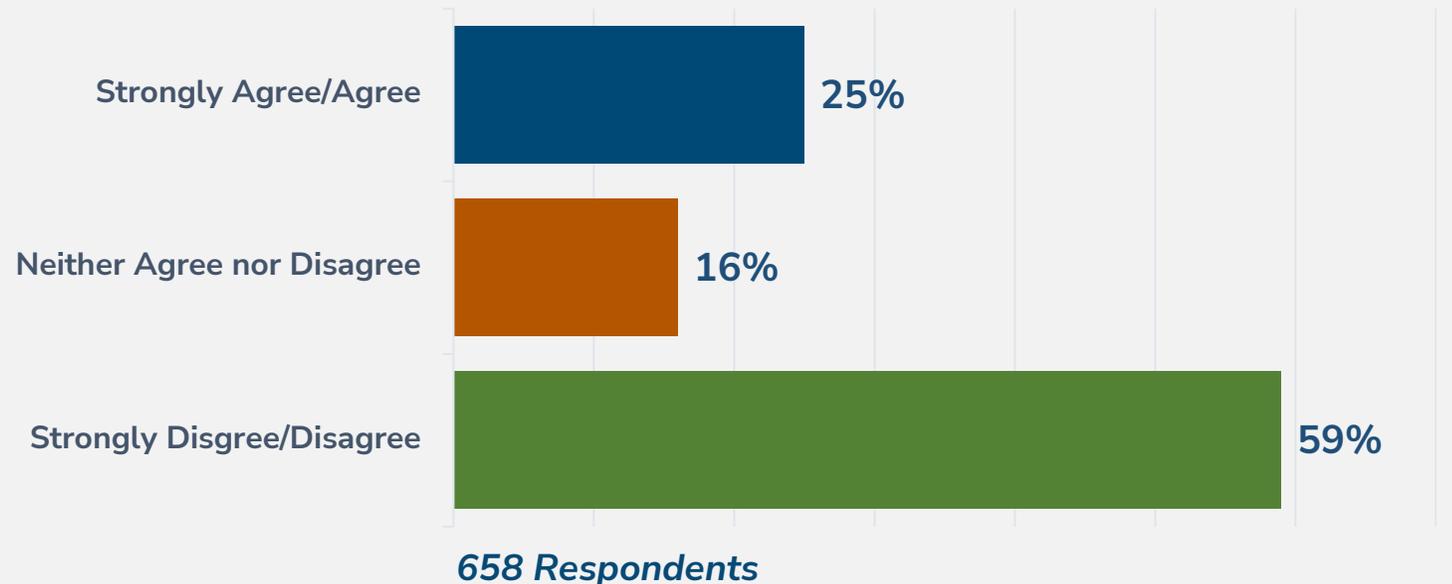
Nearly half of respondents who report being very impacted by a real estate tax rate increase are parents/caregivers of children or teens.

655 participants report being “Very Impacted” by a Real Estate Tax Rate Increase. 76% selected at least one of the above options.

Respondents “Very Impacted”

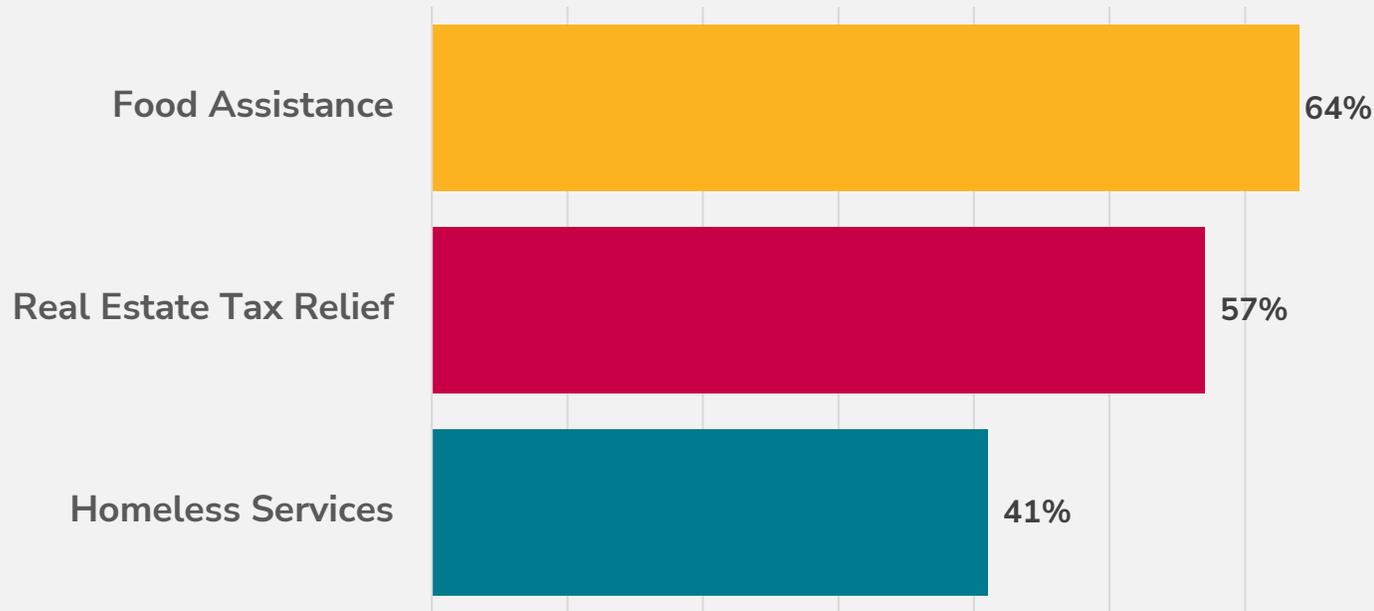
Over half of respondents “very impacted” by a real estate tax rate increase do not agree with the provided statement.

Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the following statement:
It is more appropriate to reduce operational services (e.g., snow removal, road maintenance) than to reduce programs (e.g., housing, food security, behavioral health) that serve community members.



Respondents “Very Impacted”

Food assistance and tax relief are top priorities for those most impacted an increase to the real estate tax rate.



644 Respondents

Comments & Feedback



Comments & Feedback

Respondents shared over 1,000 comments on the budget, covering topics about program and service cuts, the need to prioritize core service, the importance of the social safety net in helping those in need, concerns about affordability, and more.

[Click to read all comments](#)

- **Taxes:** While some respondents stated they do not want the County to enact tax increases, others expressed willingness to pay more in taxes to support communities in need. Some called for a progressive tax.
- **Budget Priorities:** Many respondents called for prioritizing social safety net services; some suggested cutting these programs or ensuring they are effective. Other priorities identified included youth programs, transit, public safety, housing, and other core services.
- **Fiscal Restraint:** Some participants expressed concern that the County is not exercising fiscal restraint in its spending and called for more transparency and oversight.
- **Program Cuts:** Many participants called for spending cuts, but suggestions covered a broad range, including schools, housing, environmental programs, equity programs, public art, parks, and libraries.
- **Immigrants:** Some respondents do not want the County to provide programs and services to undocumented immigrants.

FY 2027 Budget Engagement Analysis

February 2026

