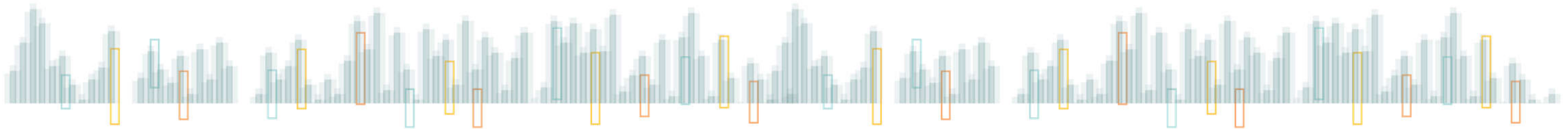




City of Salem Community Satisfaction Survey

September 2025



Research purpose

- Assess residents' satisfaction with city services and communications.
- Weigh opinions on the value and distribution of city resources, including priorities for the library levy funds.
- Gauge residents' sense of safety and livability for all areas in the City of Salem.
- Track changes in opinion back to 2017 using several benchmarked survey questions from previous surveys.



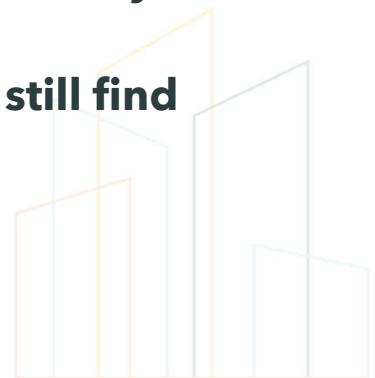
Methodology

- Mixed-mode survey of N=400 Salem residents
- Conducted September 9 - 16, 2025; 15 minutes to complete
- Quotas were set and data were weighted by age, gender, area of the city, race/ethnicity, education level, and housing status to ensure a representative sample. The survey was also offered in Spanish.
- Margin of error $\pm 4.9\%$
- Due to rounding, some totals may differ by ± 1 from the sum of separate responses



Key takeaways: City services & interactions

- **Salem residents are mostly satisfied with city services as a whole.** However, there is significant variation among individual services.
- **Yet, residents are still largely dissatisfied with the value of city services for the taxes and fees paid.** Satisfaction with service value has risen for the first time since 2020.
- **Residents believe their part of town receives its fair share of city services.** However, many residents think resources are not distributed fairly across the city.
- **Residents are split between allocating the library levy funds to expand library hours or to expand programs.**
- **The ease of interacting with the City has improved, although residents still find many activities difficult.**
- **City communications through social media reach the most residents.**

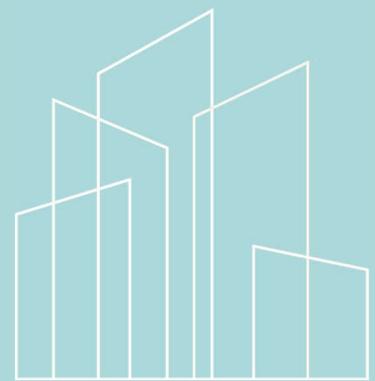


Key takeaways: Safety & livability

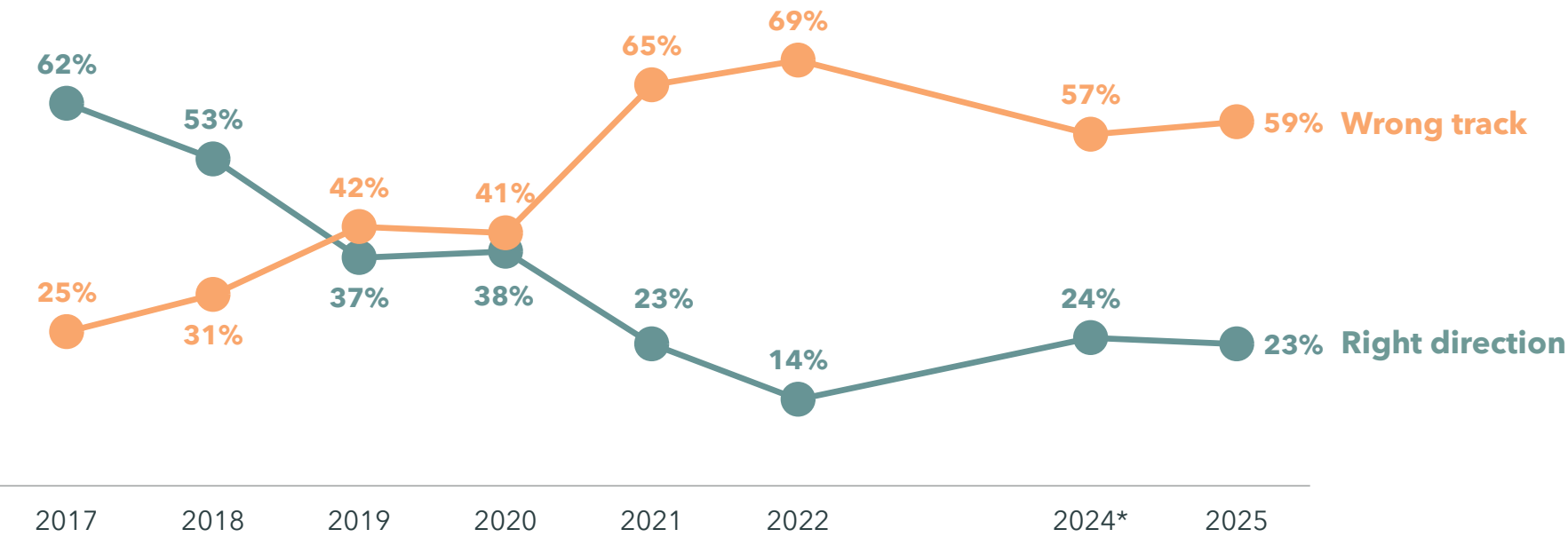
- **During the day, most residents feel safe in all parts of the city, and nearly all feel safe in their own neighborhoods.** Daytime safety is high across all areas of the city.
- **Residents' feelings of safety at night are more variable.** Most feel unsafe in North/Northeast Salem and downtown at night.
- **Residents rate the livability of their own neighborhoods the highest.** South and West Salem are most positively rated.
- **Nearly 9 in 10 residents visited downtown in the past month.** Those who have visited feel a greater sense of safety downtown during the day and at night.



Community mood



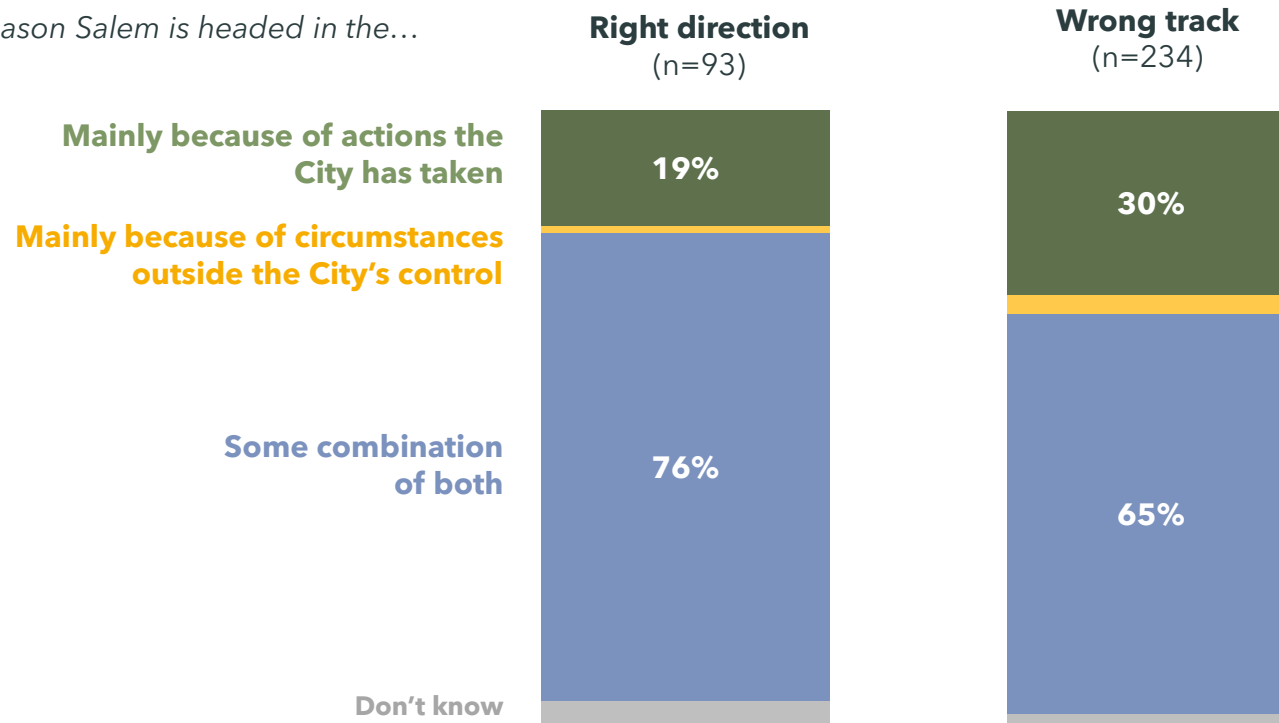
While most residents still say Salem is on the wrong track, fewer feel that way now than at the peak a few years ago.



* 2024 survey asked of likely voters

Most residents attribute Salem's direction as a combination of the City's actions and circumstances outside its control.

The reason Salem is headed in the...

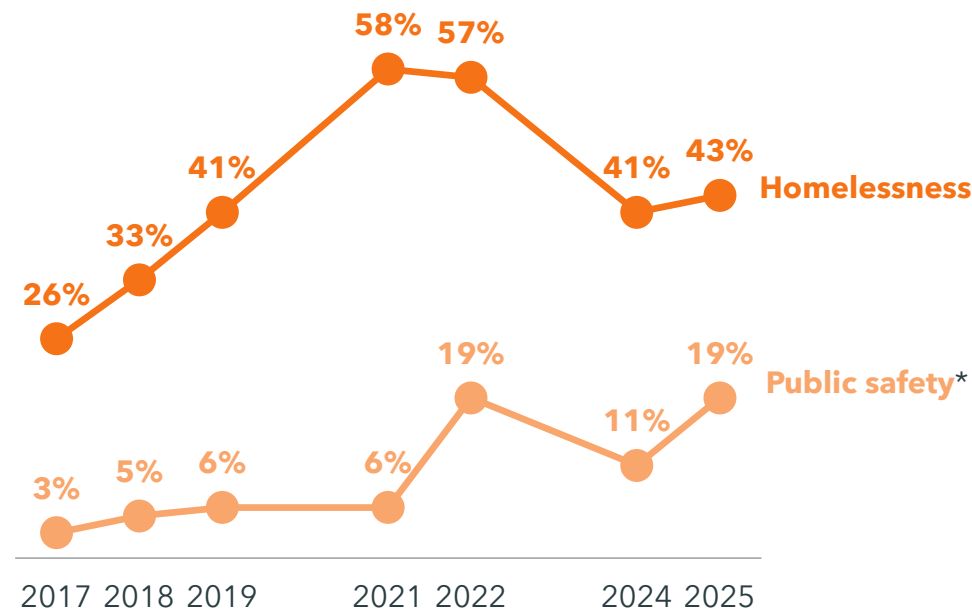


Homelessness remains the most important issue for the City to address, although fewer residents mention it compared to the peak in 2021 and 2022.

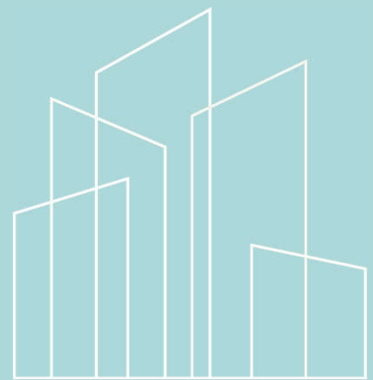
43% Homelessness

19% Public safety concerns

- 8%** Affordable housing / housing
- 7%** Promote businesses / downtown development
- 7%** Budget, spending
- 5%** Roads, potholes, infrastructure
- 5%** High taxes, property taxes
- 4%** Cleanliness
- 3%** Education, funding, class sizes
- 3%** Government, regulations

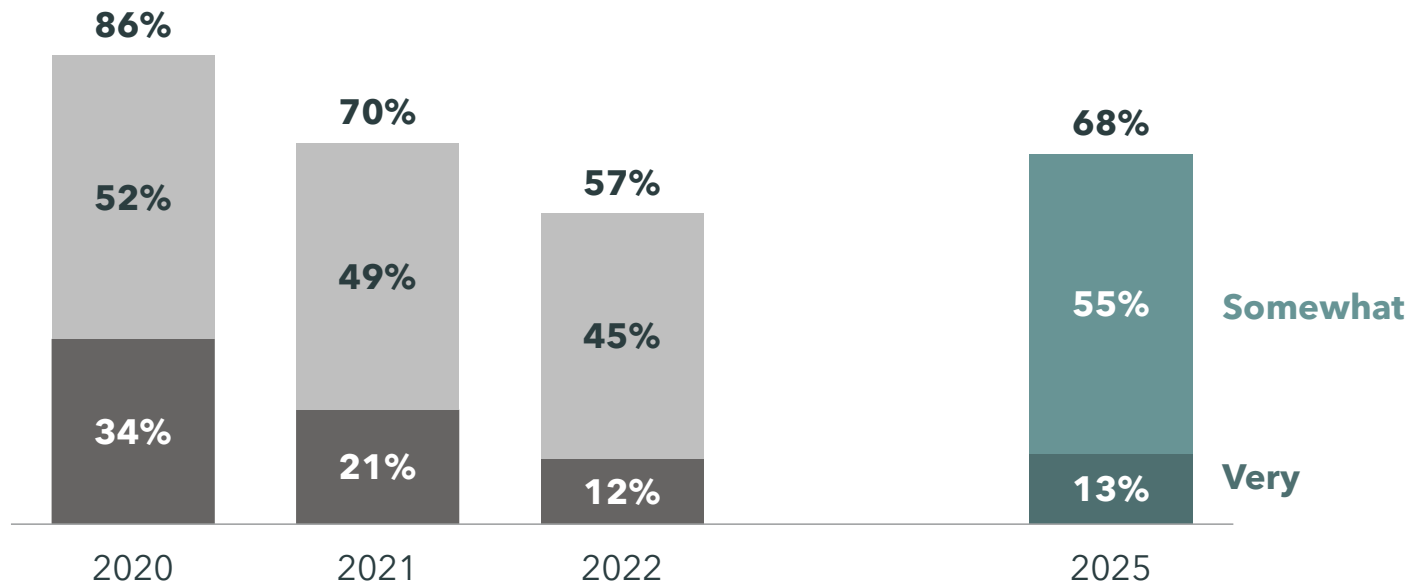


Satisfaction with services

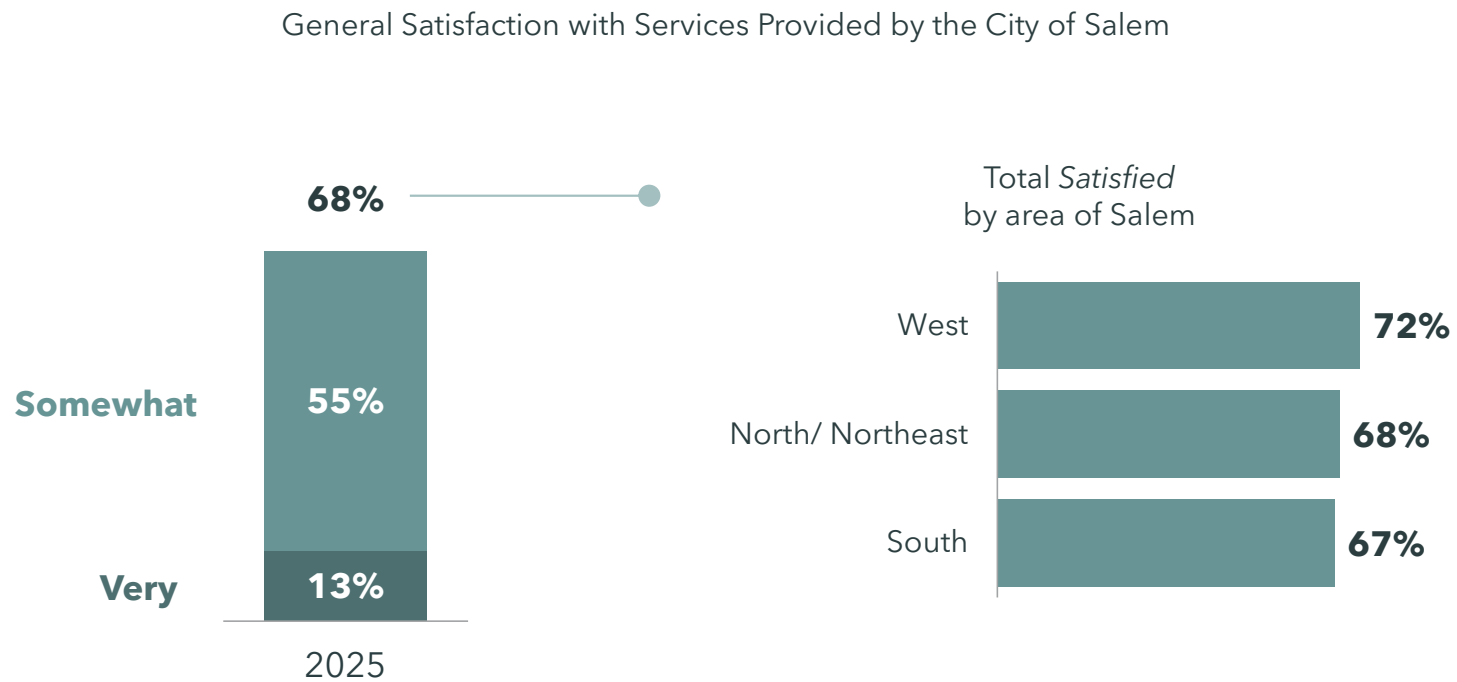


Overall satisfaction with city services has increased since 2022, although it is lower than previous satisfaction levels.

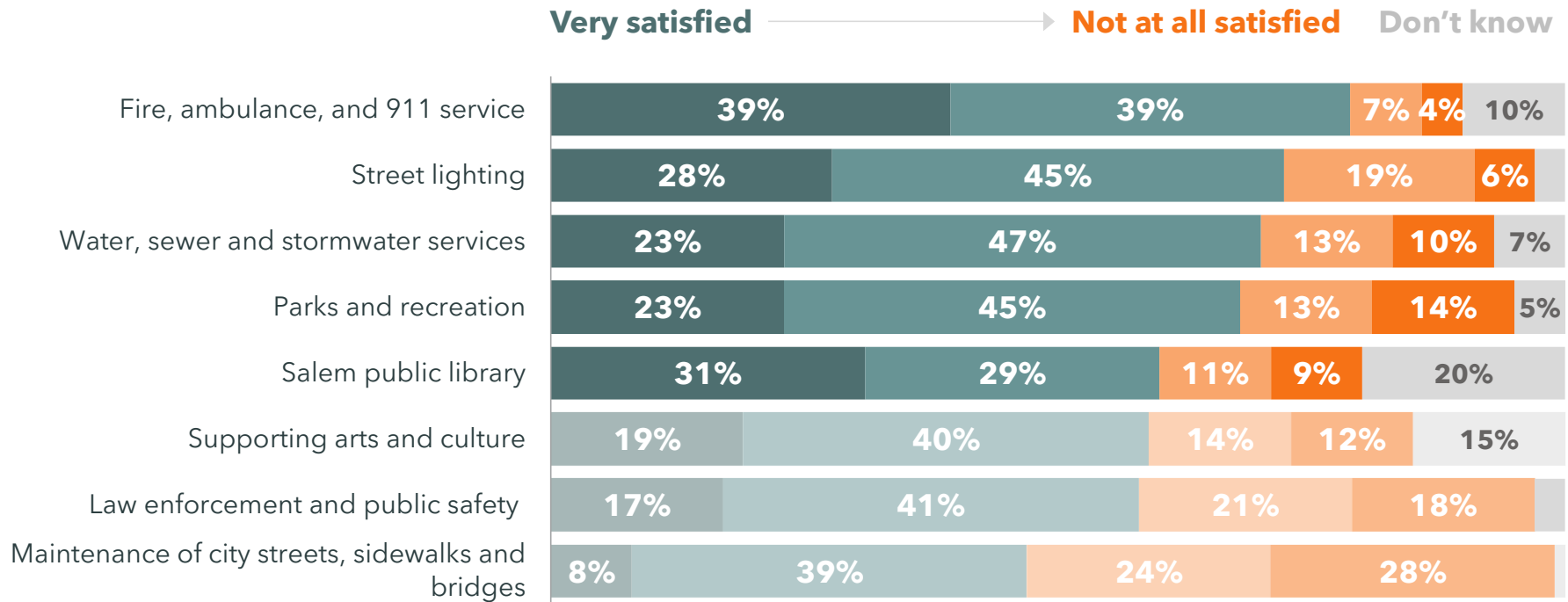
General Satisfaction with Services Provided by the City of Salem



Residents across Salem are satisfied with city services.

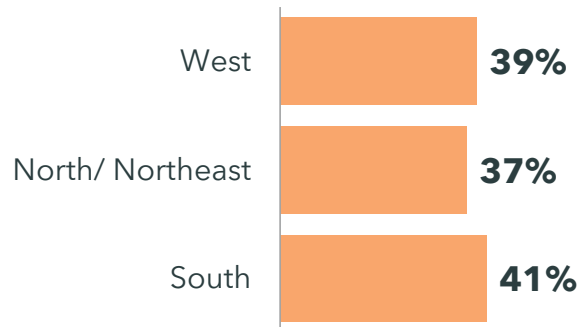


Most residents are satisfied with fire and emergency services, street lighting, water services, parks and recreation, and the library.

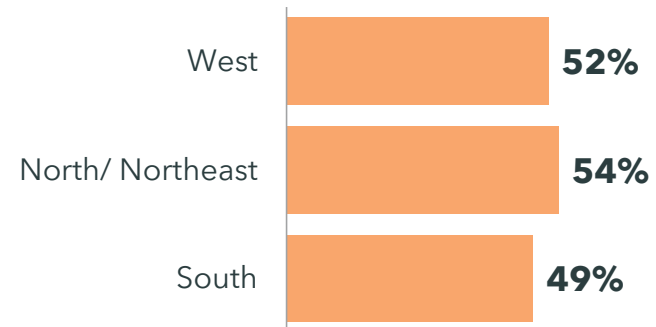


Resident dissatisfaction with law enforcement and public safety, and maintenance of city streets is consistent across areas of the city.

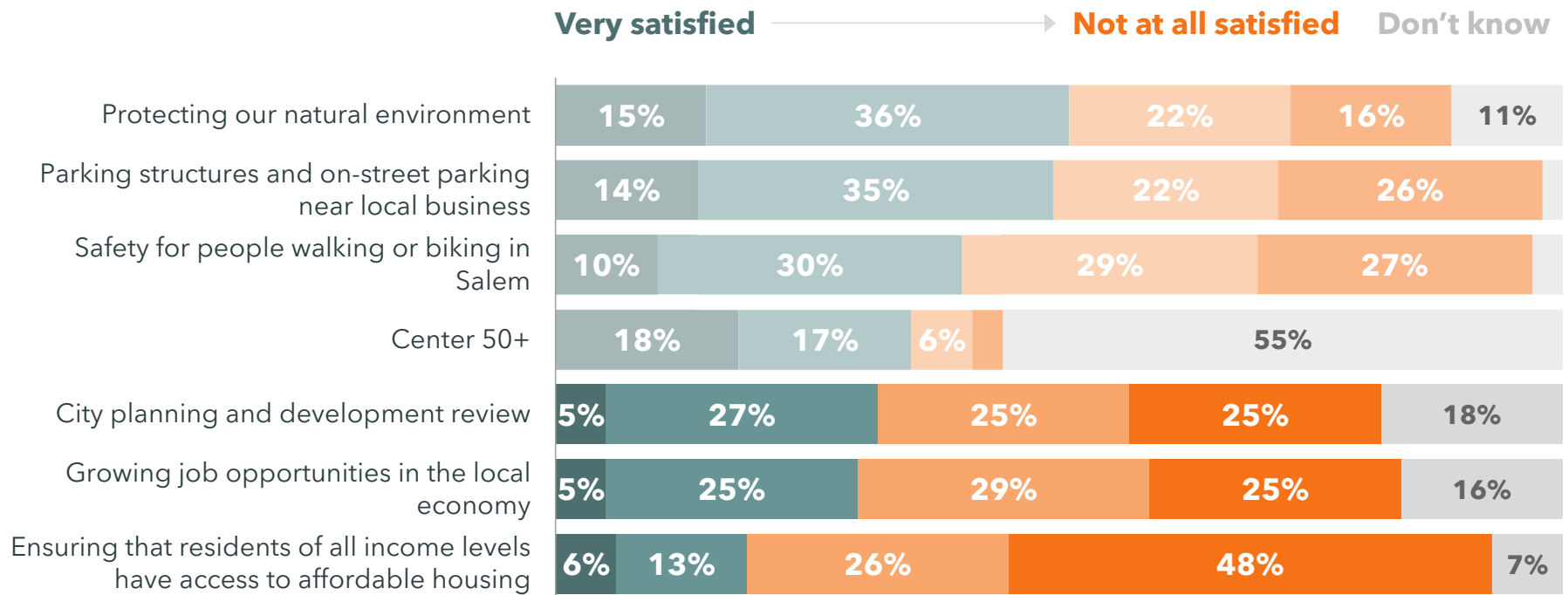
Total **not satisfied** with **law enforcement and public safety** by area of Salem



Total **not satisfied** with **maintenance of city streets** by area of Salem

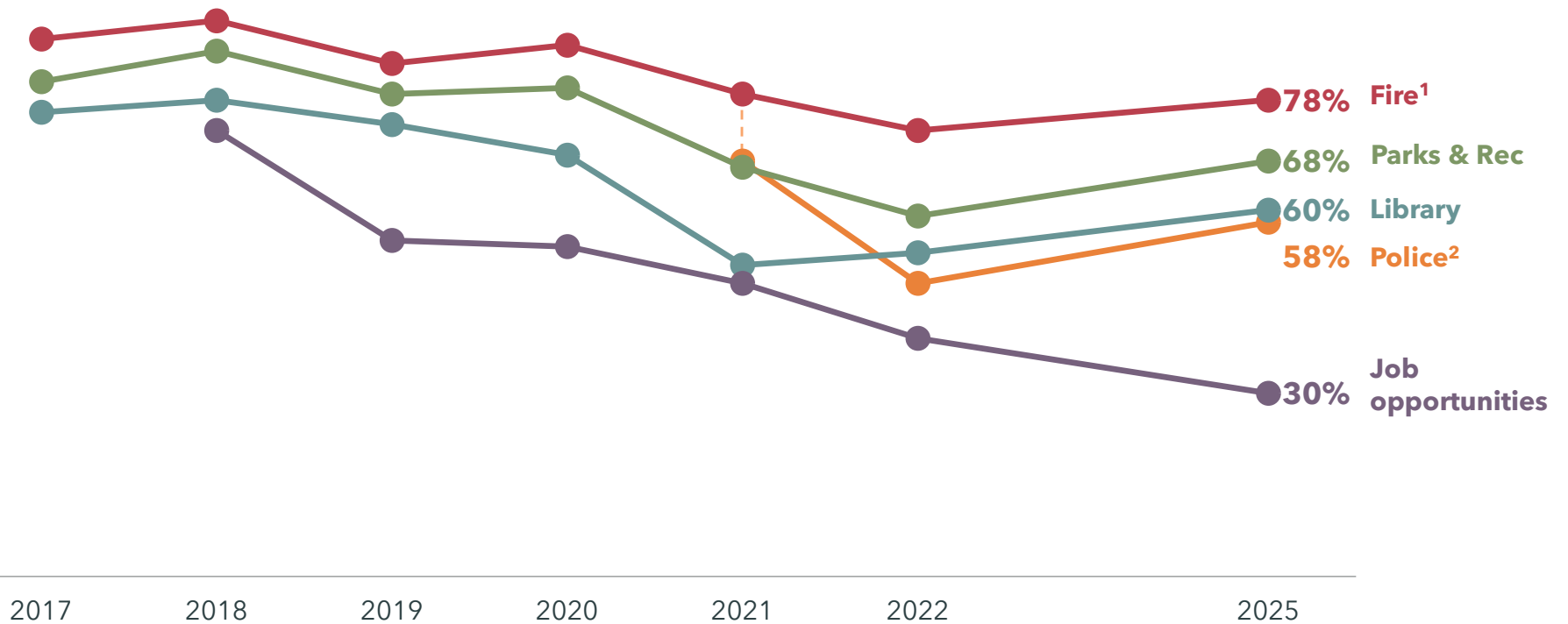


The highest levels of dissatisfaction are around access to affordable housing, growing local job opportunities, and city planning and development review.



Showing bottom 7 of 15 services

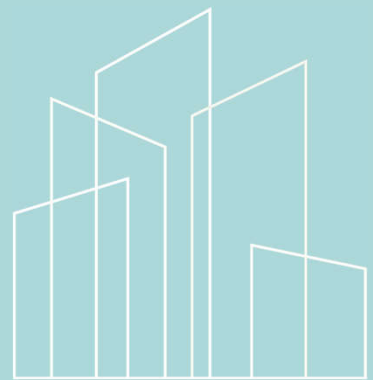
Satisfaction with most key services in Salem has increased since 2022. The decline in job opportunities is consistent with negative economic sentiments nationally.



¹2017-2020 results for "Police, fire, ambulance, and 911 service"; Police separated in its own category in 2021.

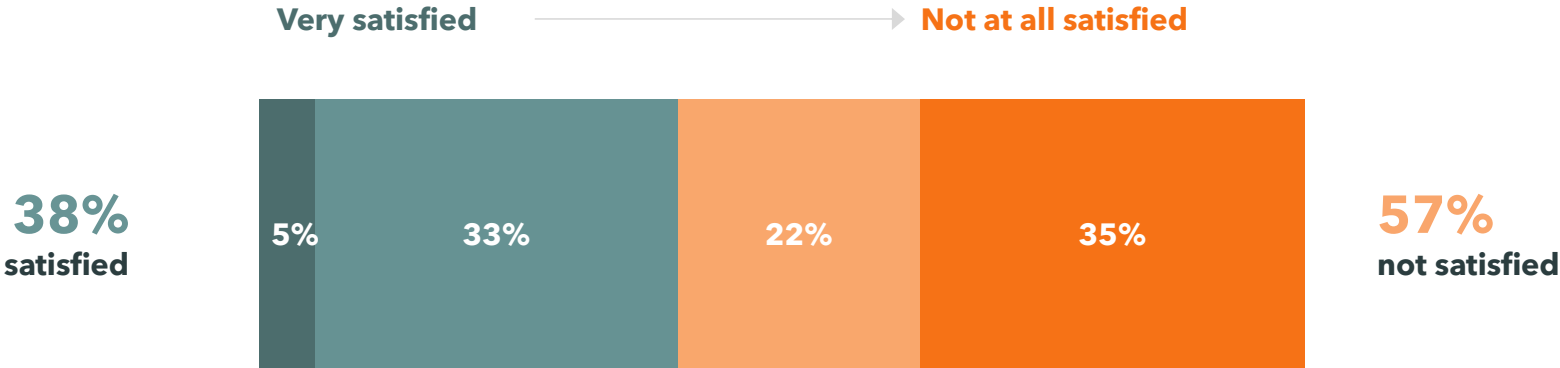
²2022-2025 "Police" changed to "Law enforcement and public safety"

Value of city services



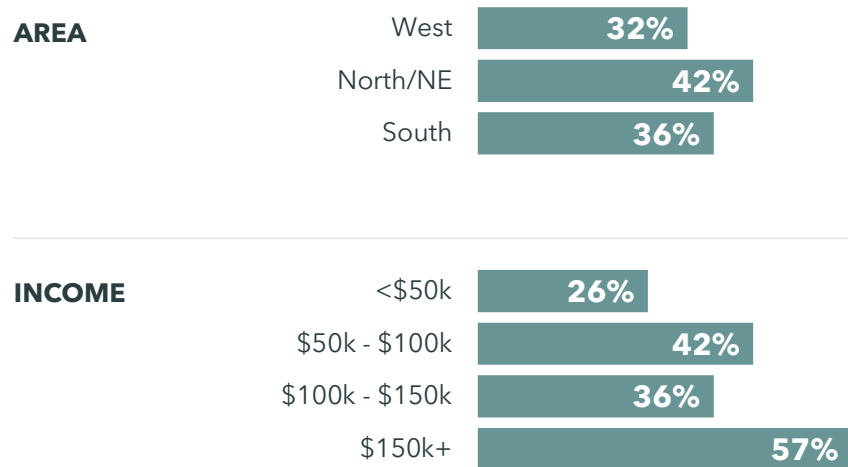
The majority of residents are not satisfied with the value of city services.

The City of Salem funds basic services with taxpayer dollars and fees for services. In general, how satisfied are you with the value received for your taxes and fees paid?

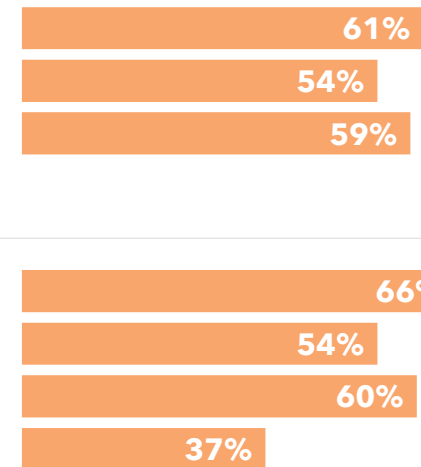


Satisfaction with the value of city services is similar across the city. Low-income residents are the least satisfied.

Showing % total **satisfied** with service value by subgroup

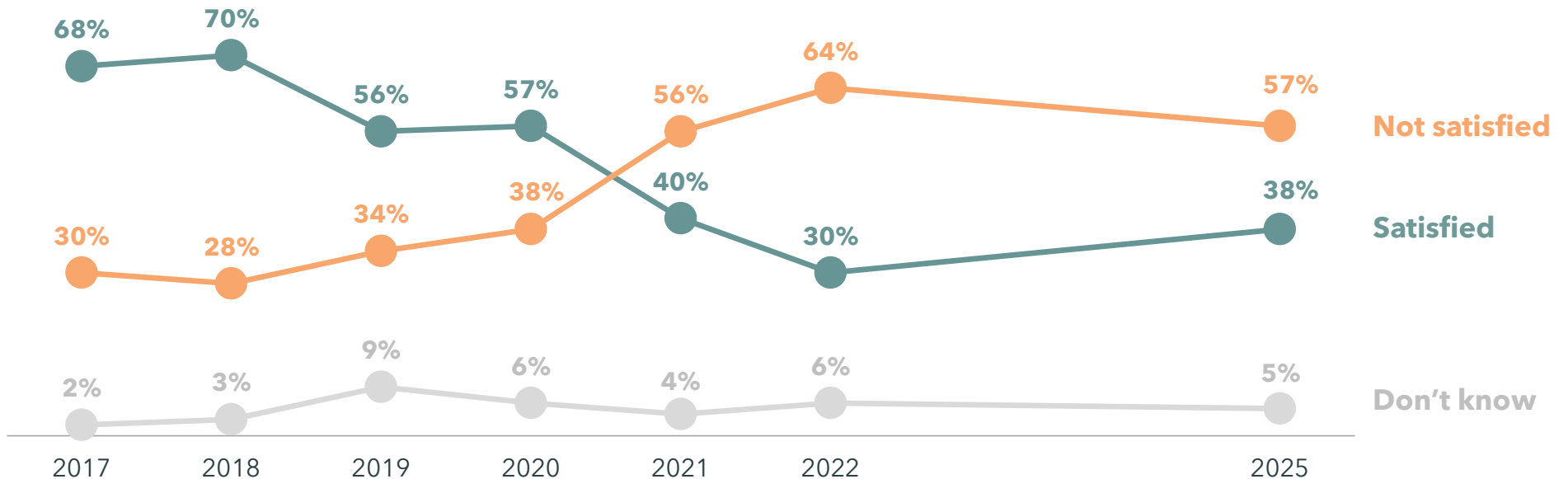


Showing % total **not satisfied** with service value by subgroup

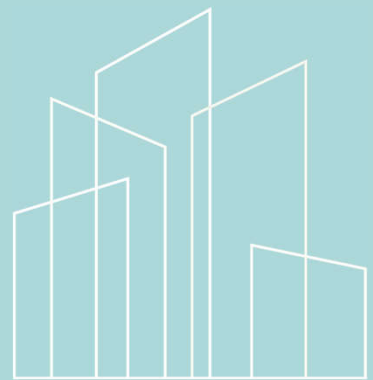


Satisfaction with the value of city services for the fees paid has improved from the low of 2022.

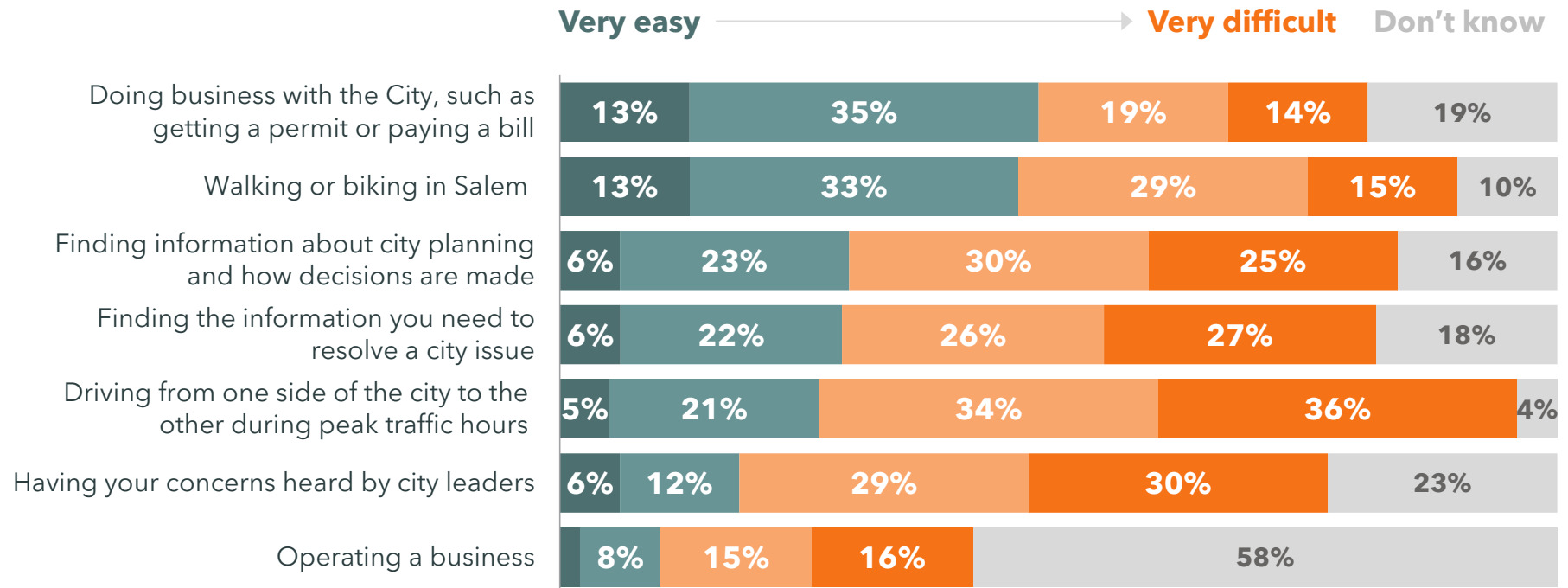
Satisfaction with Value of Services for Taxes and Fees Paid in Salem



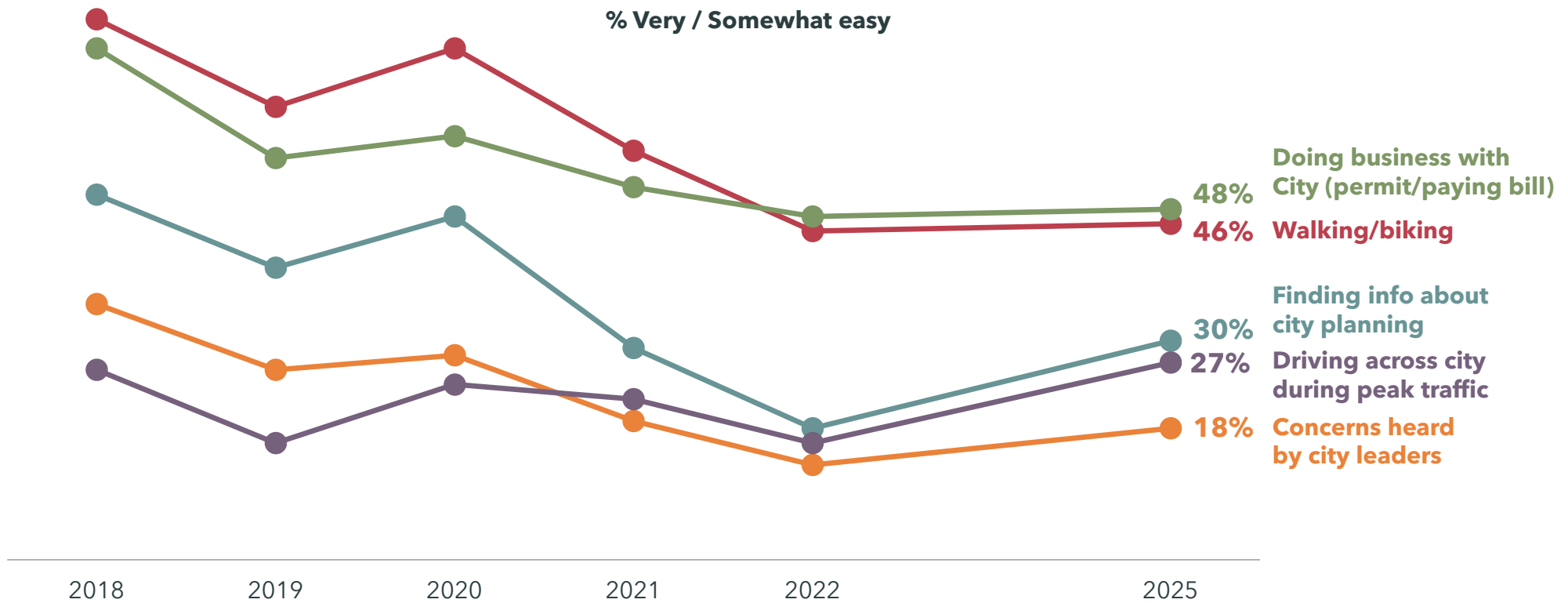
Ease of activities



A plurality of residents find doing business with the city and walking or biking in Salem easy, while a majority find other activities difficult.



The ease of many key activities is slightly improved after reaching a low in 2022.



The difficulty of driving across town is consistent across key demographic groups. Younger residents are less likely to find walking or biking easy.

Base: Those who gave a rating		Area			Gender		Age		
Response category	% very / somewhat easy	West*	North/ NE	South	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+
Walking or biking in Salem (n=358)		57%	46%	56%	51%	51%	42%	56%	56%
Driving from one side of the city to the other during peak traffic hours (n=385)		29%	28%	26%	31%	24%	26%	31%	26%

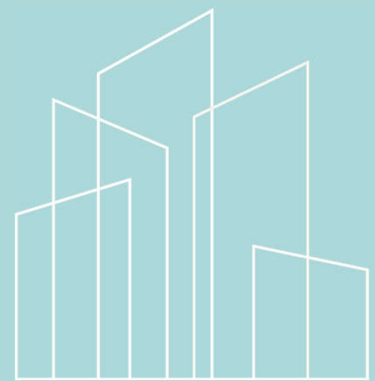
*Note low base size of n=60

Doing business with the City is easier among women and younger residents, and finding information about planning is easier among West Salem residents.

Base: Those who gave a rating		Area			Gender		Age		
Response category	% very / somewhat easy	West*	North/NE	South	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+
Doing business with the City, such as getting a permit or paying a bill (n=326)		58%	62%	57%	53%	66%	66%	61%	52%
Finding information about city planning and how decisions are made (n=327)		51%	29%	37%	37%	34%	33%	41%	31%
Finding the information you need to resolve a city issue (n=338)		43%	35%	33%	34%	37%	33%	41%	32%
Having your concerns heard by city leaders (n=309)		27%	20%	27%	27%	19%	17%	27%	26%

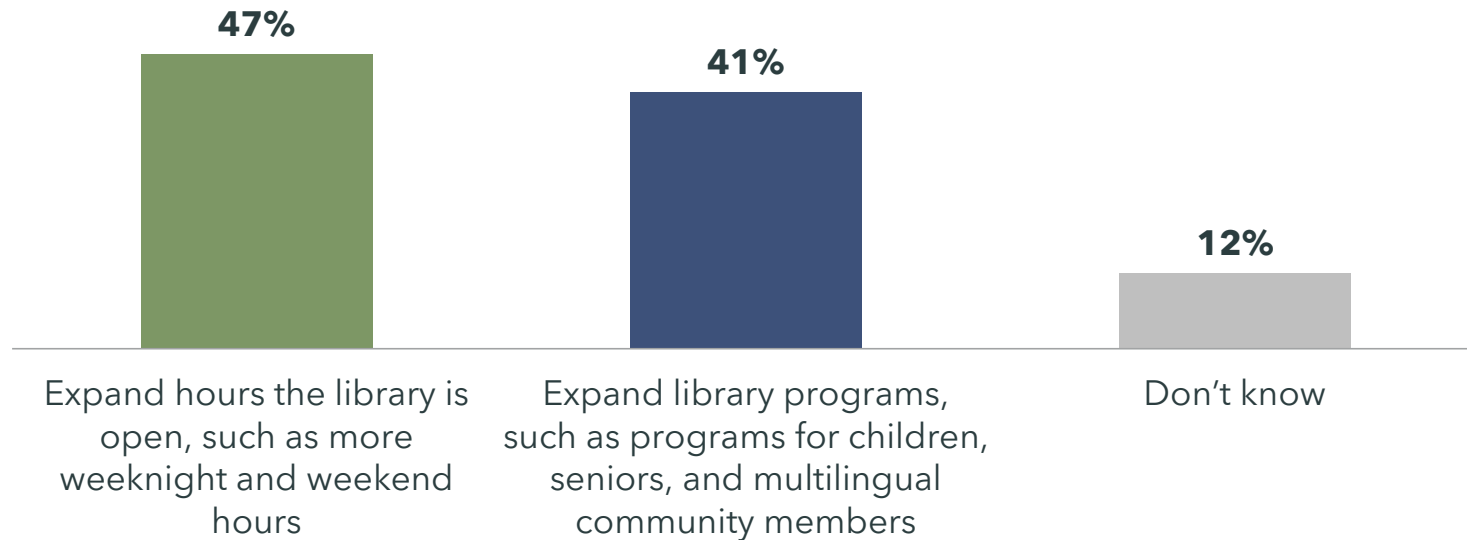
*Note low base size of n=60

Library levy priorities



Residents are split on allocating the library levy funds to expand library hours or programming, but they lean towards prioritizing the expansion of hours.

In May 2025, voters in Salem passed a levy to provide new funding for the Salem Public Library. The following are two options for using these funds. Which do you think the city should prioritize?

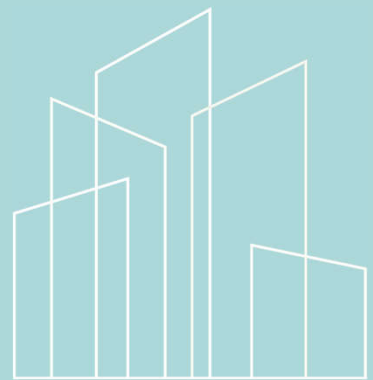


Younger residents are somewhat more interested in expanding library programs, while older residents prefer expanded hours.

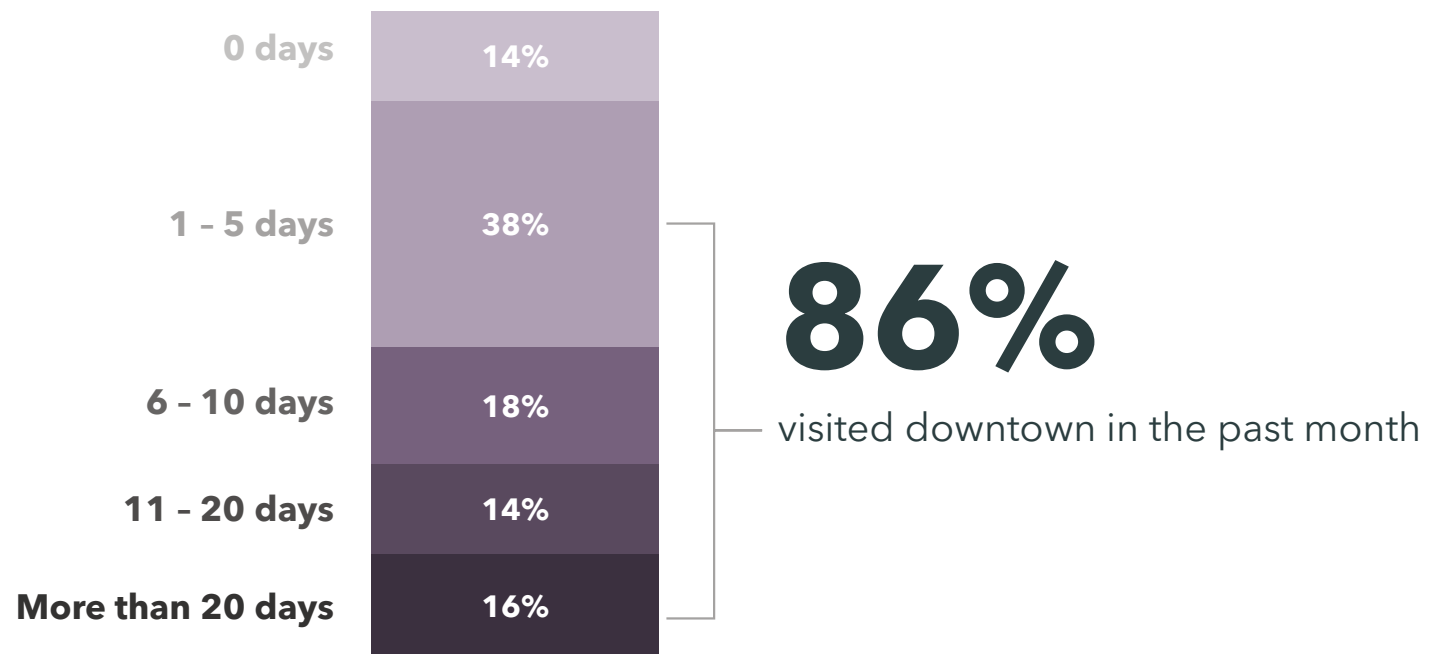
	Area			Age			Race	
Response category	West*	North/ NE	South	18-34	35-54	55+	White alone	POC
Expand hours	45%	45%	51%	44%	43%	54%	44%	51%
Expand programs	37%	42%	41%	47%	44%	31%	43%	38%
Don't know	18%	13%	8%	9%	13%	15%	13%	10%

*Note low base size of n=60

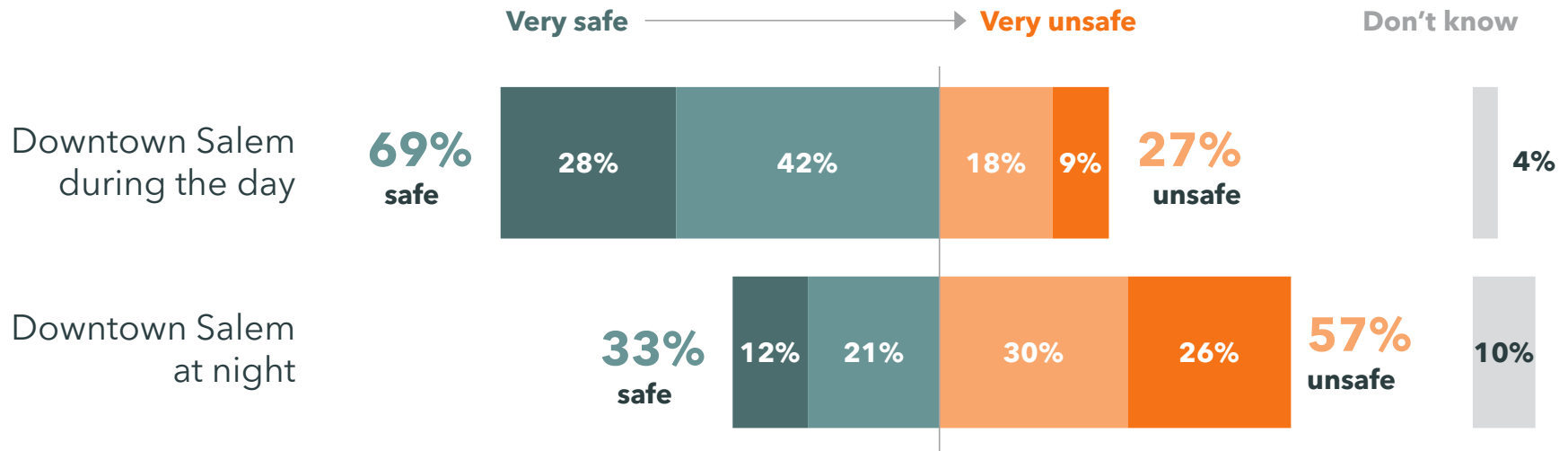
Safety and livability



Over 8 in 10 residents have visited downtown in the past month, most visiting multiple times.



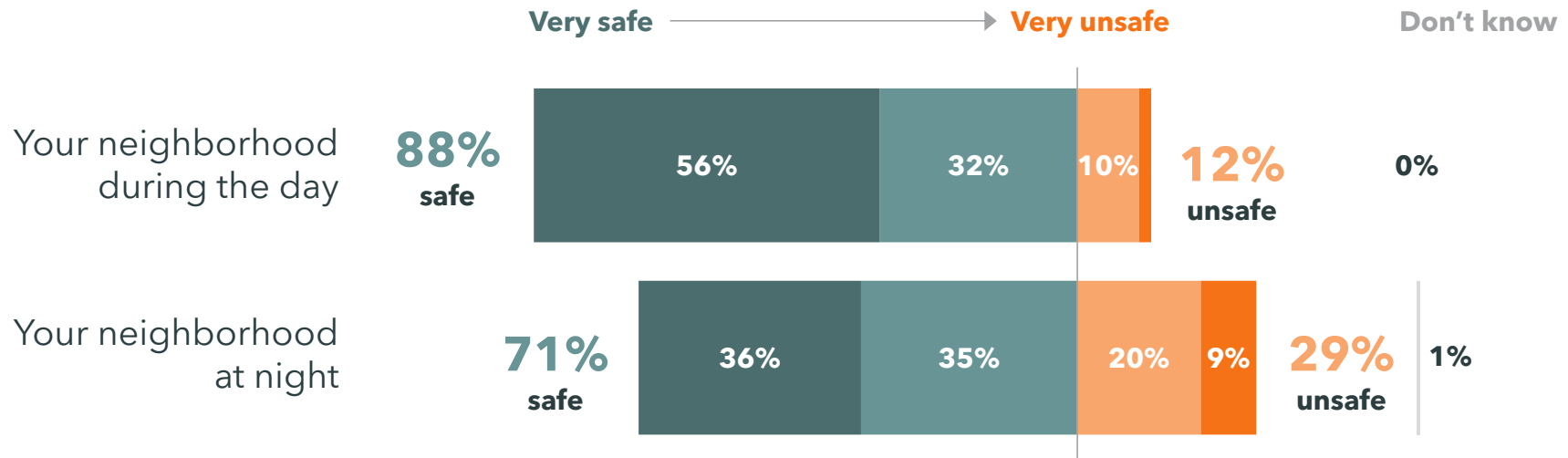
Most residents feel safe in downtown Salem during the day, but many feel unsafe at night.



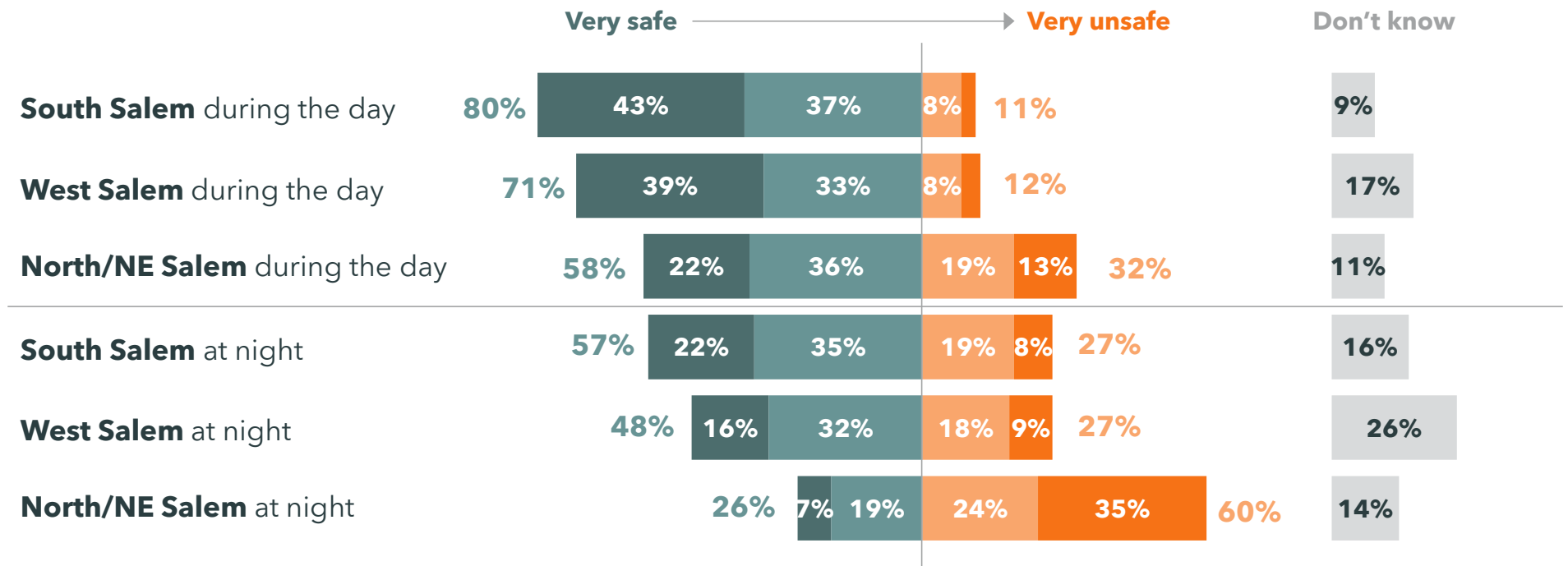
Those who have visited downtown feel safer there.
 Women feel less safe downtown at night, but there are
 no differences in feelings of safety across age groups.

	Visited downtown			Age			Gender	
Response category	0 Days	1-10 Days	11+ Days	18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
Downtown during the day (% <i>Safe</i>)	51%	70%	77%	69%	71%	68%	72%	67%
Downtown during the day (% <i>Unsafe</i>)	34%	29%	20%	27%	27%	27%	25%	29%
Downtown at night (% <i>Safe</i>)	11%	36%	38%	36%	33%	30%	39%	25%
Downtown at night (% <i>Unsafe</i>)	60%	56%	57%	57%	57%	56%	52%	63%

Salem residents feel safe in their neighborhood day and night, with nearly 9 in 10 feeling safe during the day.



During the day, most residents feel safe in all parts of the city, but there is more variability at night, with most residents feeling unsafe at night in North/NE Salem.



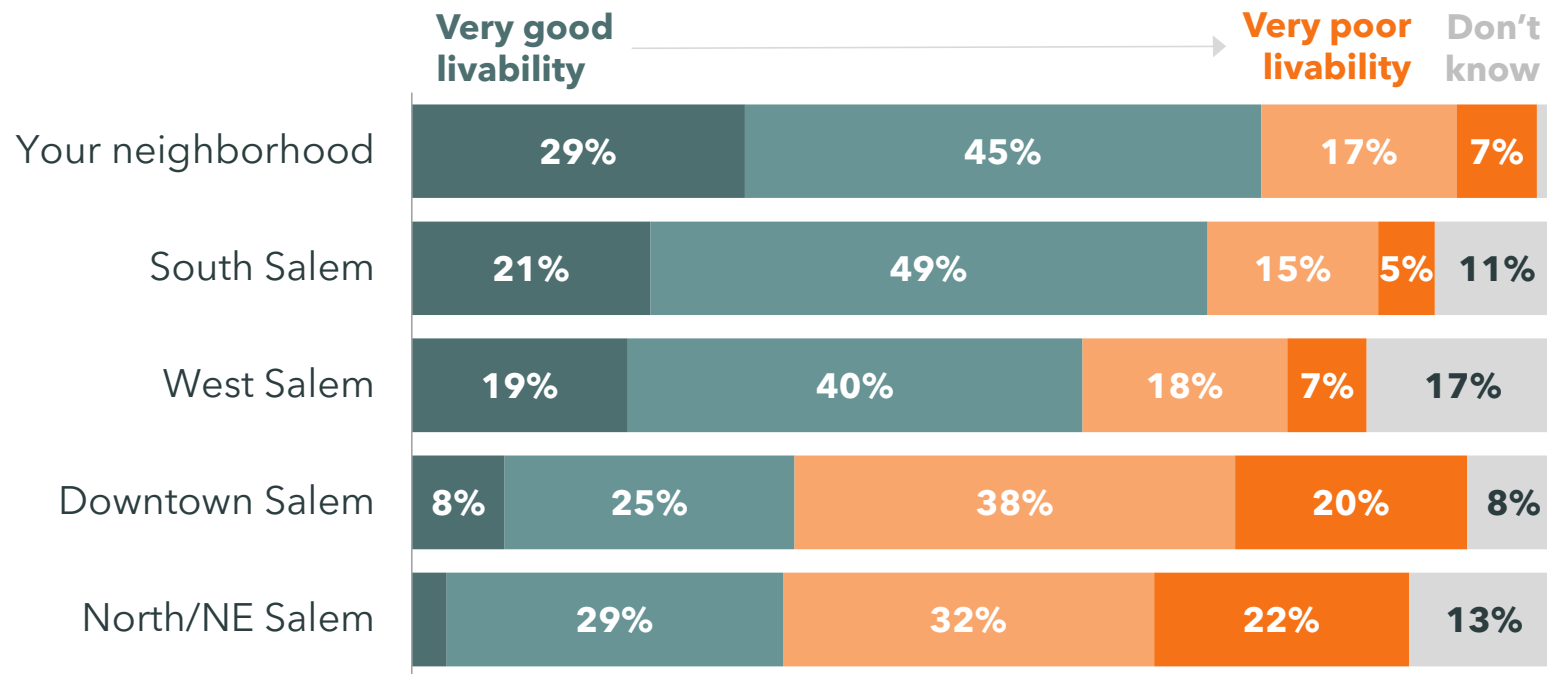
Across areas, residents feel safest in their neighborhoods during the day or night, and most feel safe everywhere in the city during the day.

Response category	% Safe	Area			Age			Gender	
		West*	North/NE	South	18-34	35-54	55+	Men	Women
Your neighborhood during the day		96%	83%	90%	81%	92%	90%	88%	87%
South during the day		74%	89%	81%	86%	74%	80%	81%	80%
West during the day		88%	70%	67%	77%	77%	61%	74%	68%
North/NE during the day		60%	65%	45%	56%	61%	56%	59%	56%
Your neighborhood at night		75%	61%	82%	66%	75%	72%	76%	65%
South at night		43%	49%	74%	58%	63%	49%	63%	50%
West at night		59%	48%	42%	54%	54%	35%	53%	42%
North/NE at night		20%	31%	22%	27%	29%	22%	33%	18%

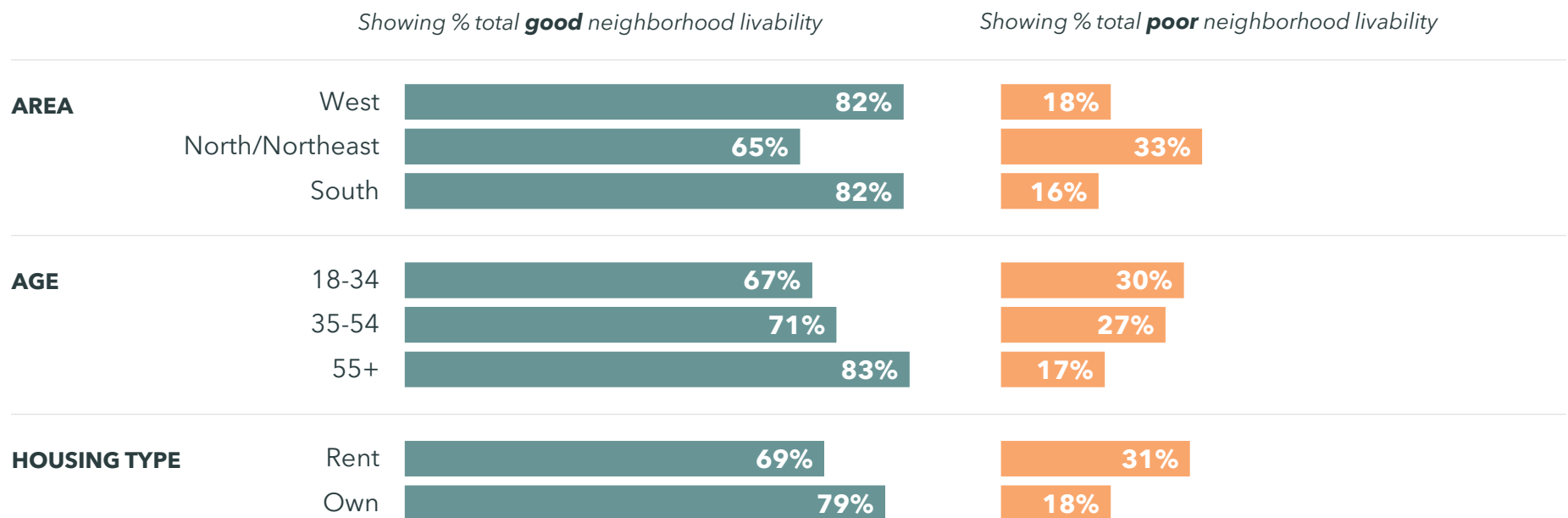
*Note low base size of n=60

% = statistically significant difference

Residents feel the livability of their own neighborhoods is good, while most feel the livability of downtown and North/Northeast Salem is poor.



Perceptions of neighborhood livability differ by area, income, and housing type, but remain positive for the majority across key demographic groups.

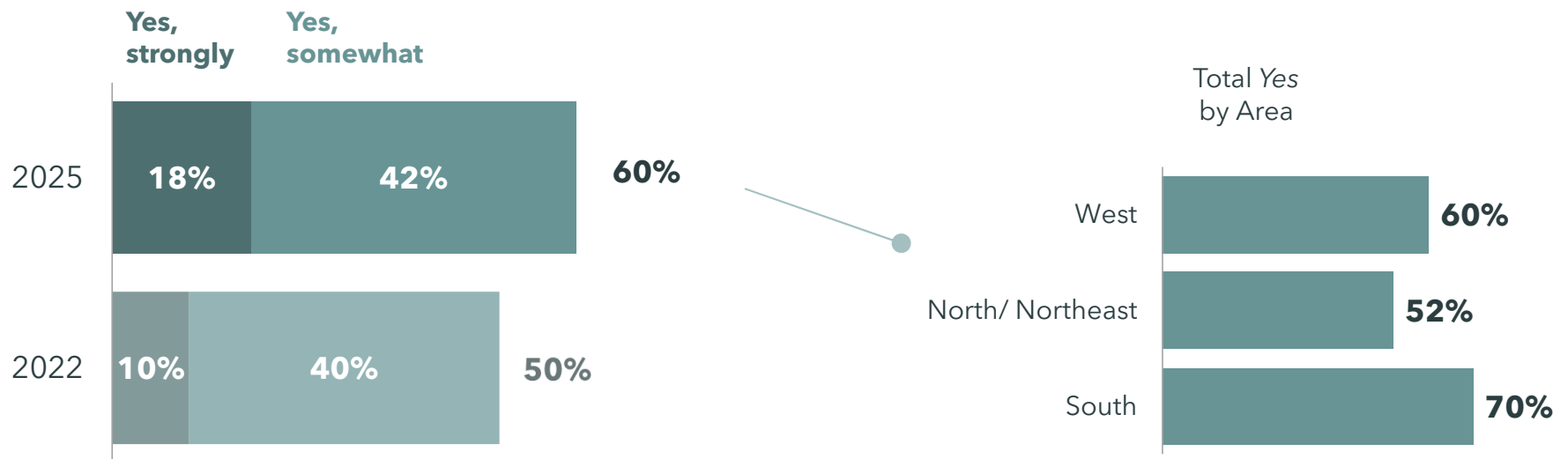


Service distribution



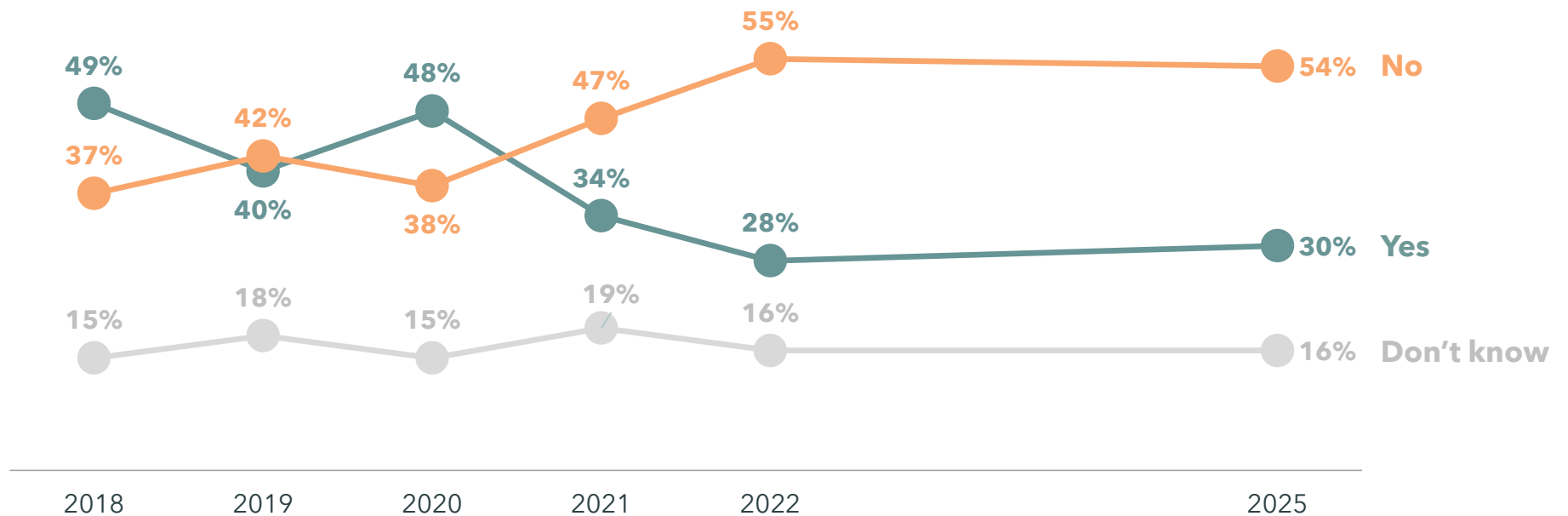
Across areas, most residents believe their part of town receives its fair share of city services, with an improvement of 10 percentage points from 2022.

Thinking about the **part of Salem where you live**, do you feel your area receives its fair share of city services?



However, the perception of the city as a whole is that services are not distributed fairly, similar to recent years.

Thinking about the **City of Salem as a whole**, do you think city services are distributed fairly?

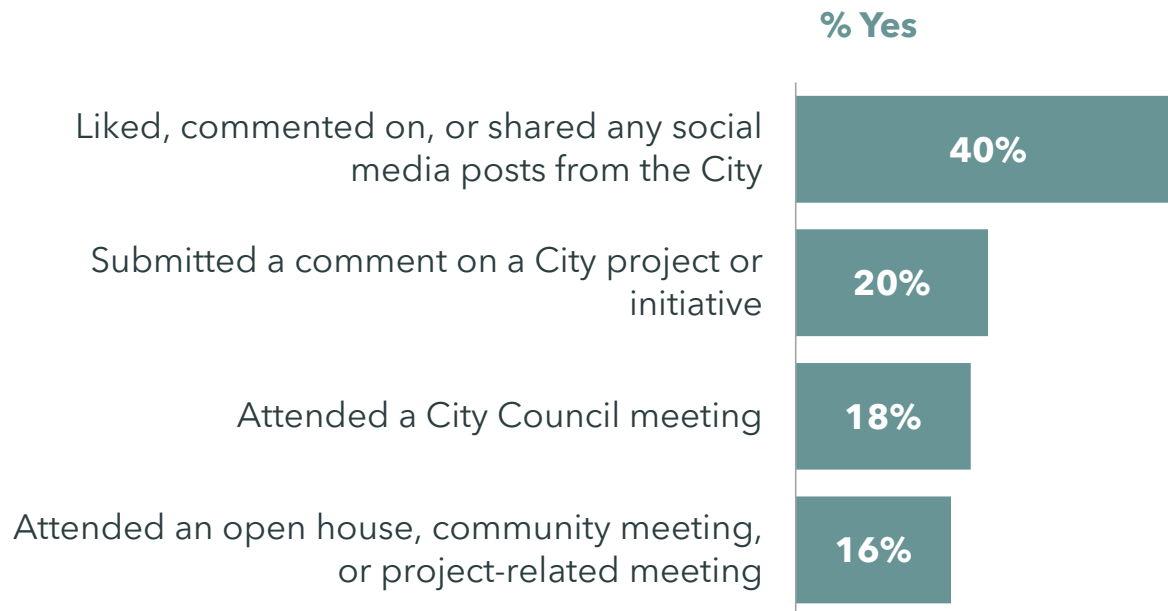


Communications



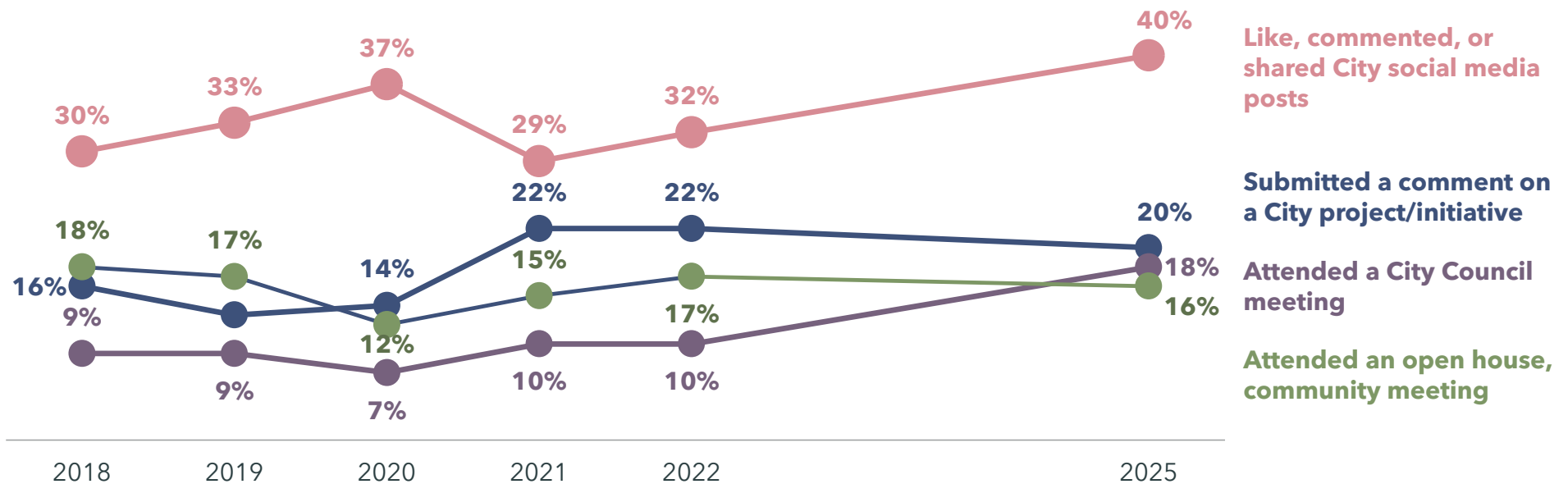
2 in 5 residents engage with the City via social media, which is higher than other forms of engagement.

In the past six months, which of the following have you done?



City communications through social media reach the most residents. Social media reach and City Council meeting attendance have each increased by 8 points since 2022.

In the past six months, which of the following have you done?



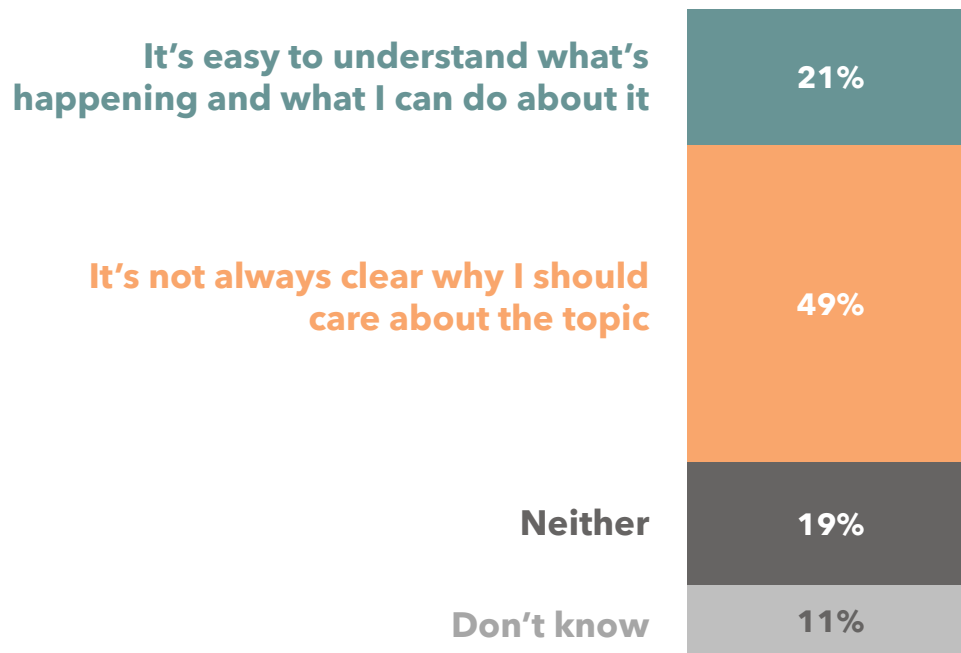
Social media engagement is higher among women, while attending an open house or community meeting is higher among North/Northeast residents.

	Area			Gender		Age			
Response category	% yes	West*	North/ NE	South	Men	Women	18-34	35-54	55+
Liked, commented on, or shared City social media posts	41%	42%	36%	34%	46%	41%	45%	34%	
Submitted a comment on a City project/initiative	12%	22%	22%	20%	20%	18%	21%	22%	
Attended a City Council meeting	15%	23%	12%	16%	20%	21%	21%	12%	
Attended an open house, community meeting	8%	19%	17%	17%	16%	19%	15%	16%	

% = statistically significant difference

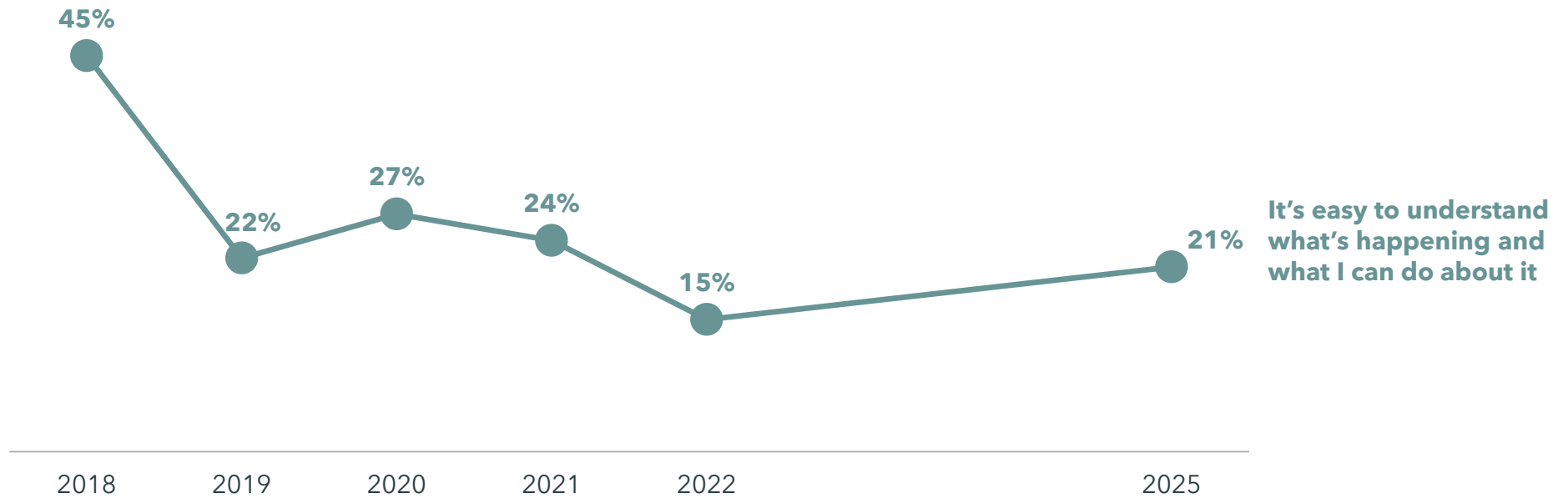
*Note low base size of n=60

Many residents are unsure why they should care about a topic when they receive communications from the City.

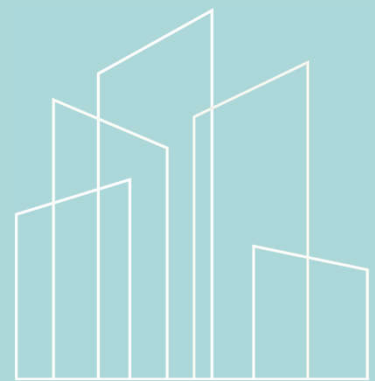


Since 2022, residents' perceptions of the quality of information received from the City have improved.

Perceptions of Quality of Information Over Time



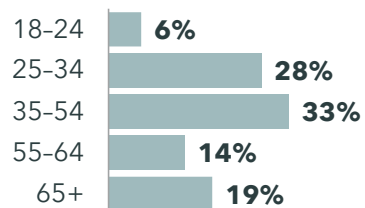
Demographics



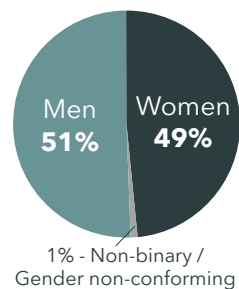
Demographic breakdown of survey respondents

N=400 Salem Residents

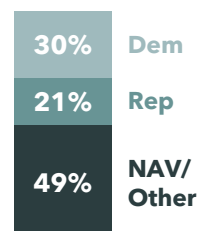
AGE



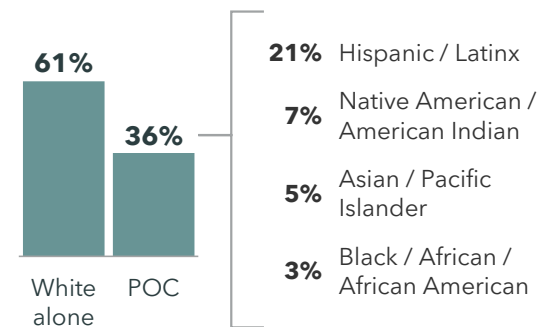
GENDER



PARTY

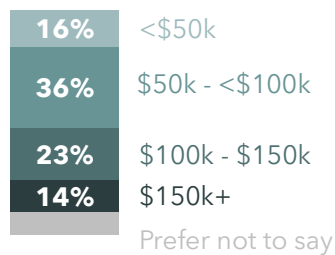


RACE / ETHNICITY

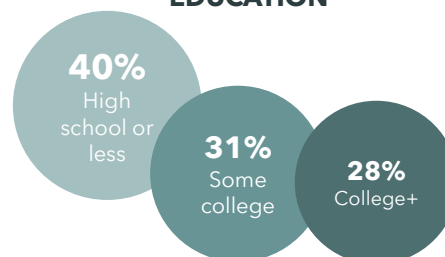


Note: 3% responded 'Prefer not to say'

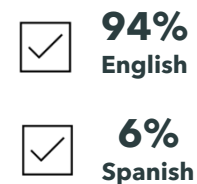
INCOME



EDUCATION



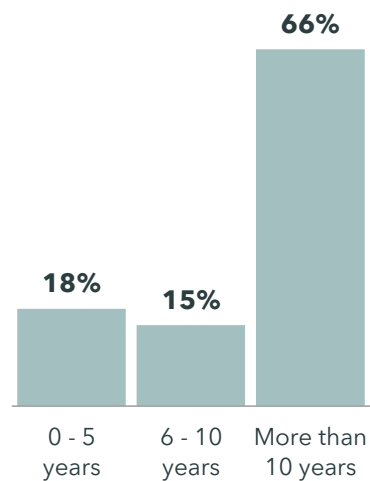
LANGUAGE OF SURVEY



Demographic breakdown of survey respondents

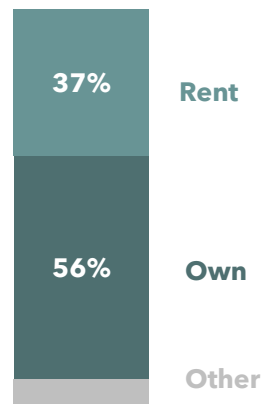
N=400 Salem Residents

YEARS IN SALEM

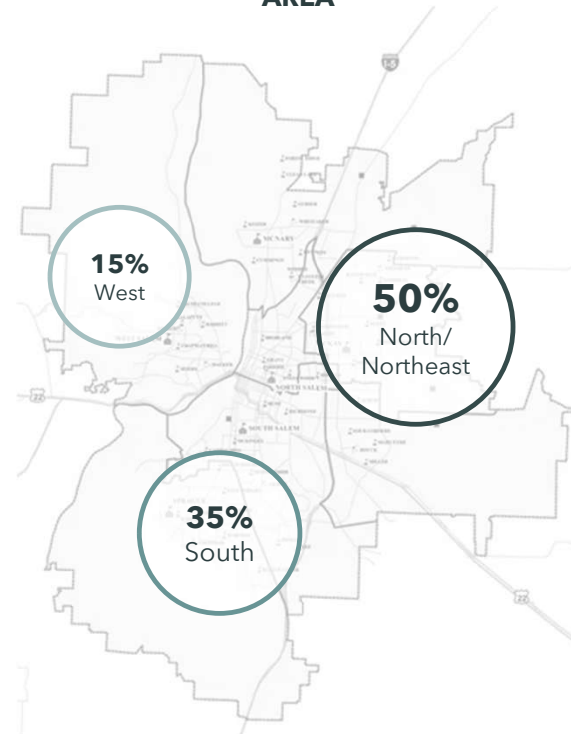


Note: 2% responded Prefer not to say

HOUSING



AREA





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Hannah Borenstein

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Phoebe Wagner

pwagner@dhmresearch.com

