

ETHELO



The City of Red Deer COVID-19 Citizen Survey



Introduction

From December 3 to December 18, 2020, the City of Red Deer used an engagement process to allow its community members to provide feedback on the City's municipal response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to determine what action can be taken by the City, to better support the community through the pandemic response. The survey tasked participants with indicating their perception of the City's response, in terms of health and safety, social wellbeing, and economic wellbeing.

- Ethelo conducted community outreach in order to draw in a representative sample, and give local residents the opportunity to have a say in the City's ongoing COVID-19 response.
- The survey took place over the time period where a mandatory mask law was implemented, which sparked more discussion (11,647 comments) and activity (38,465 page views) on the Ethelo platform.



Participation

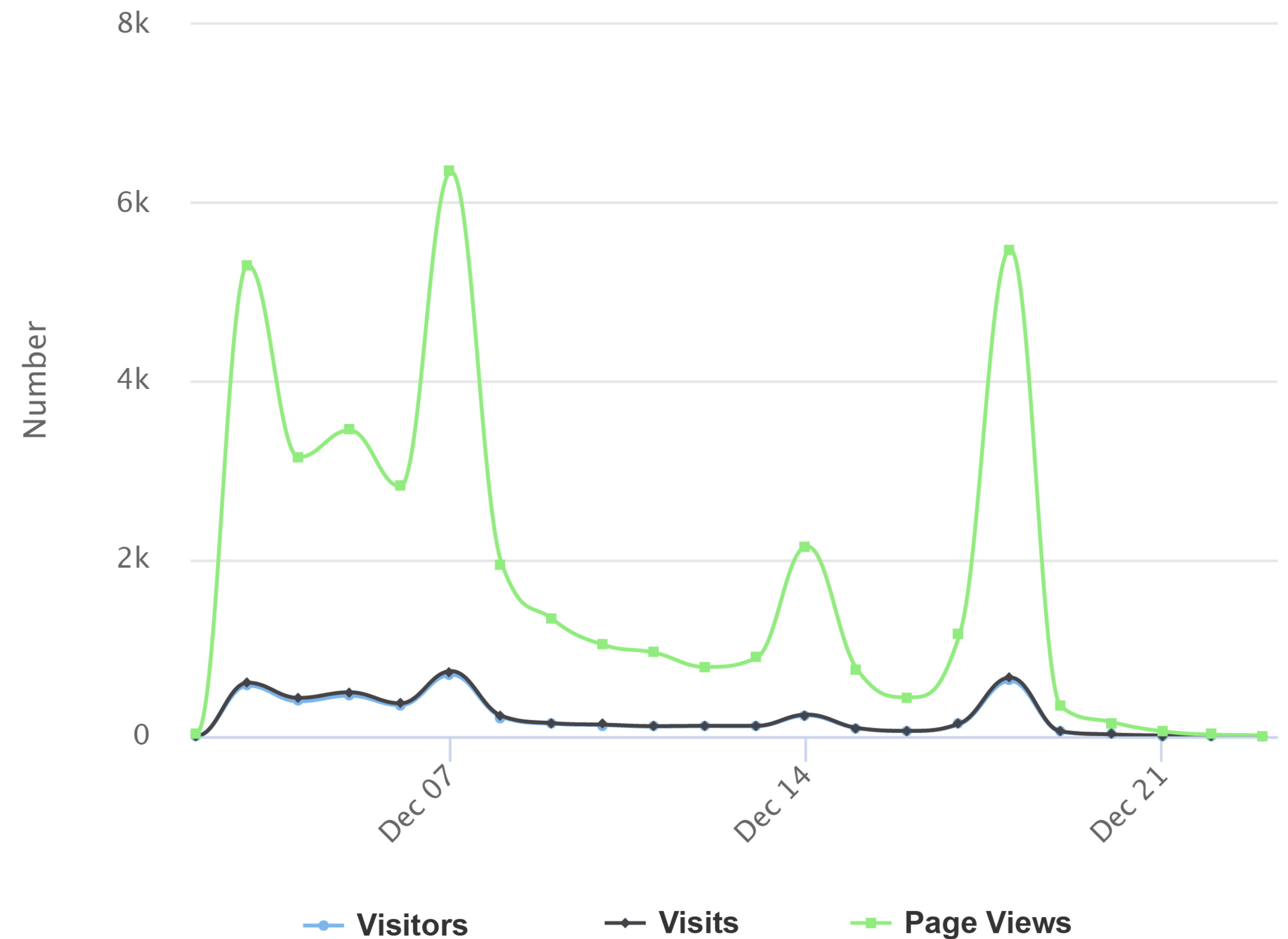
Participation

Number of visitors: **4,088**

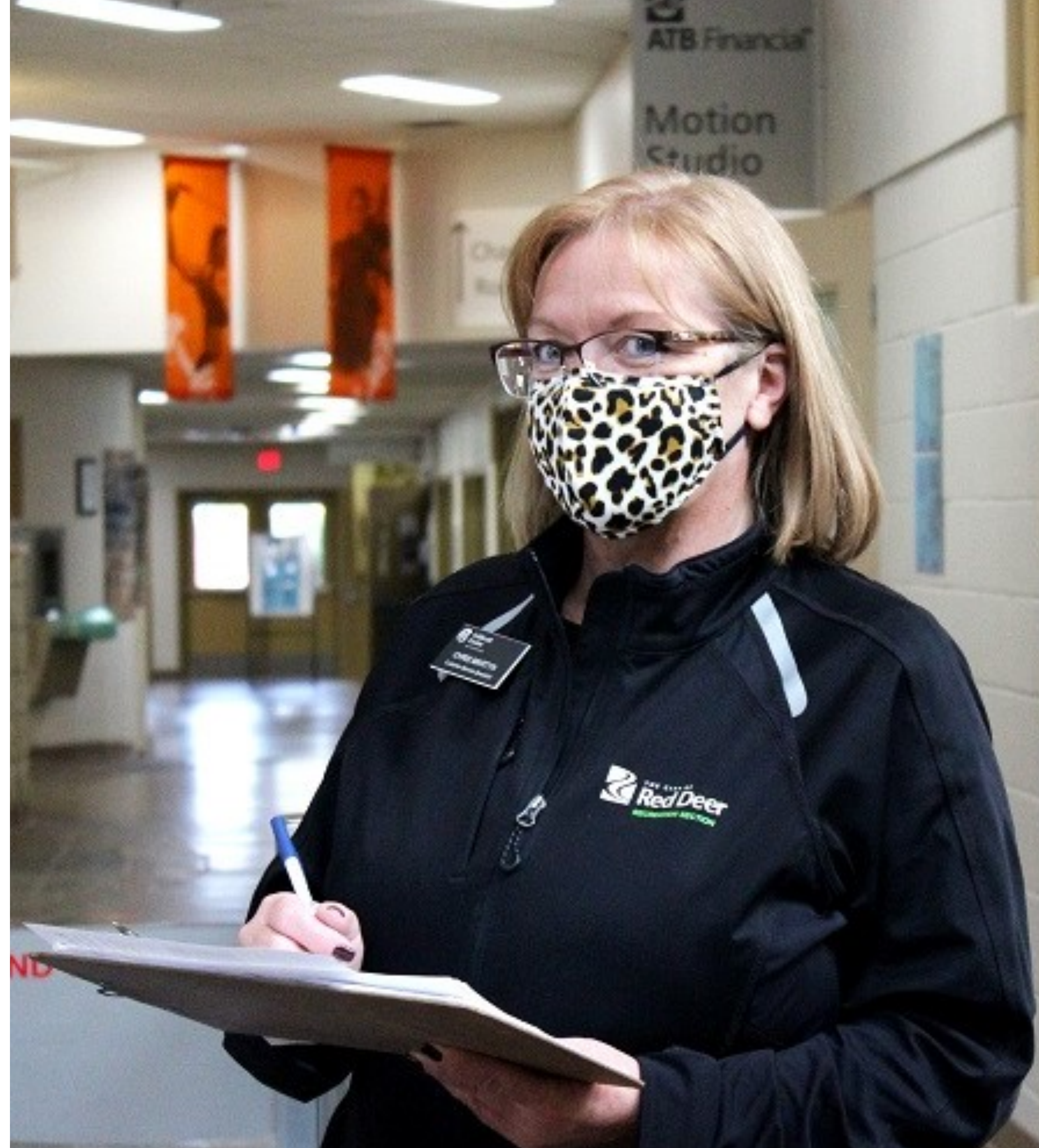
Number Respondents: **3,083**

Page views: **38,465**

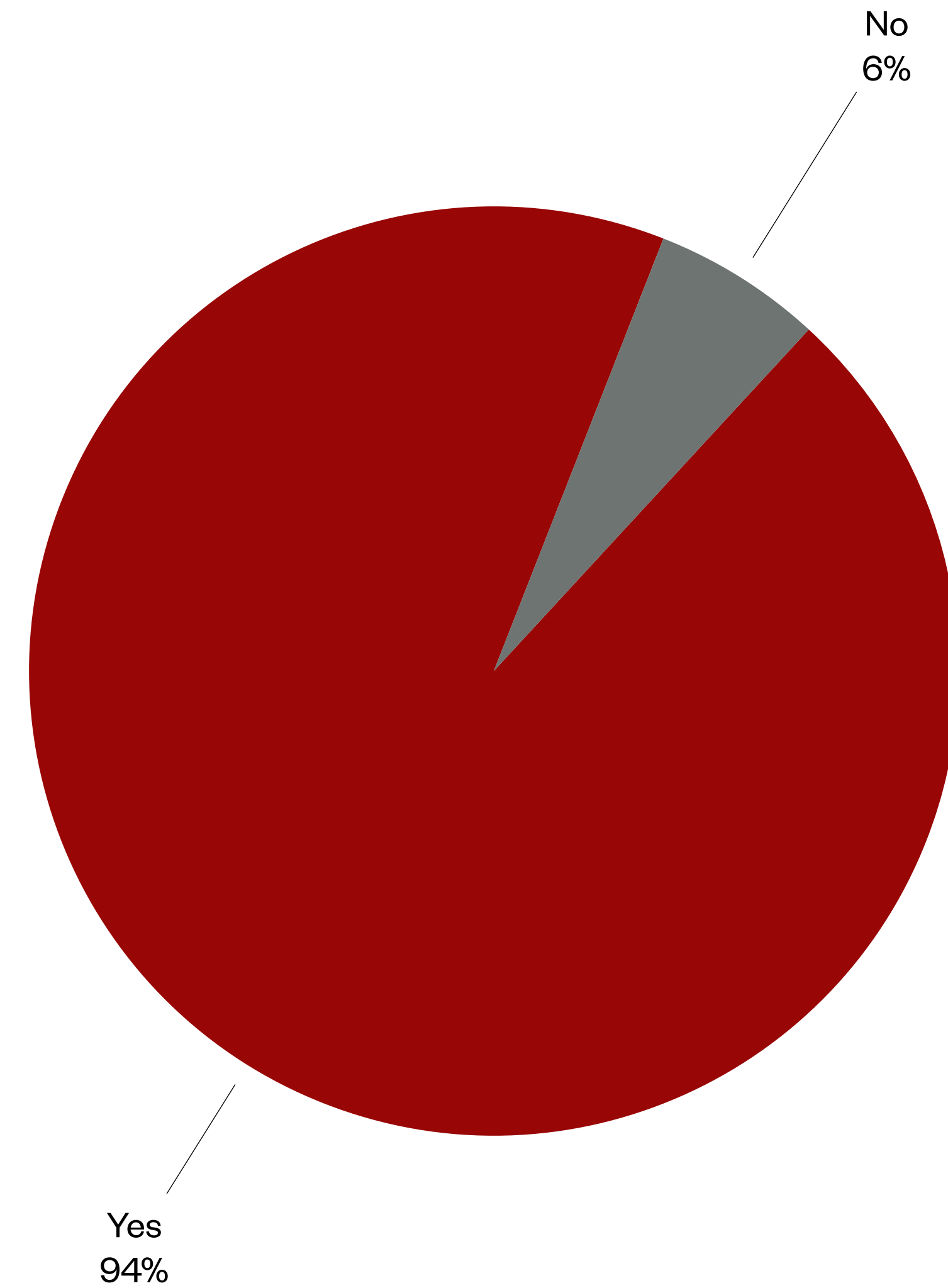
Average time on platform: **7.5 minutes**



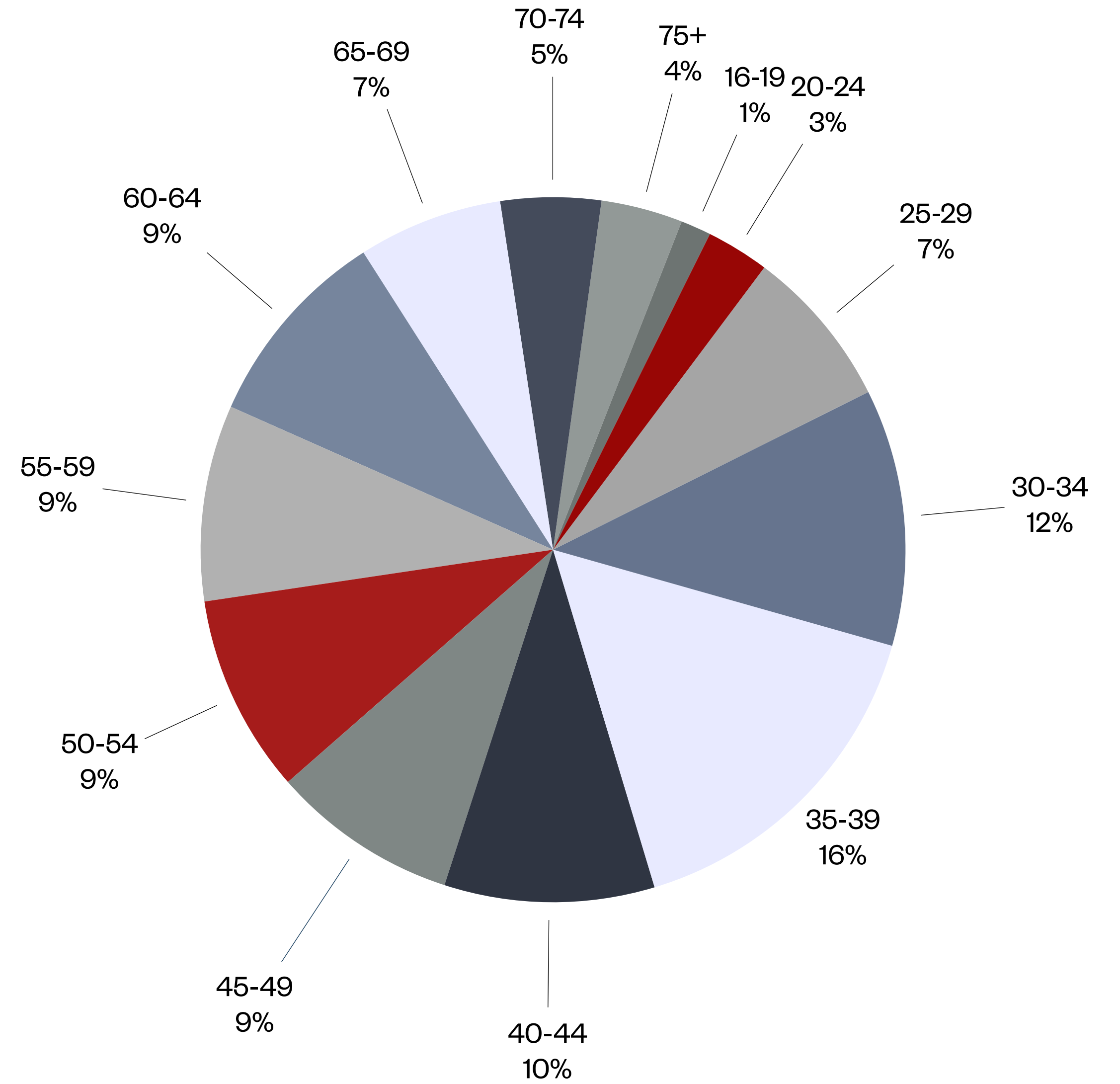
Demographics



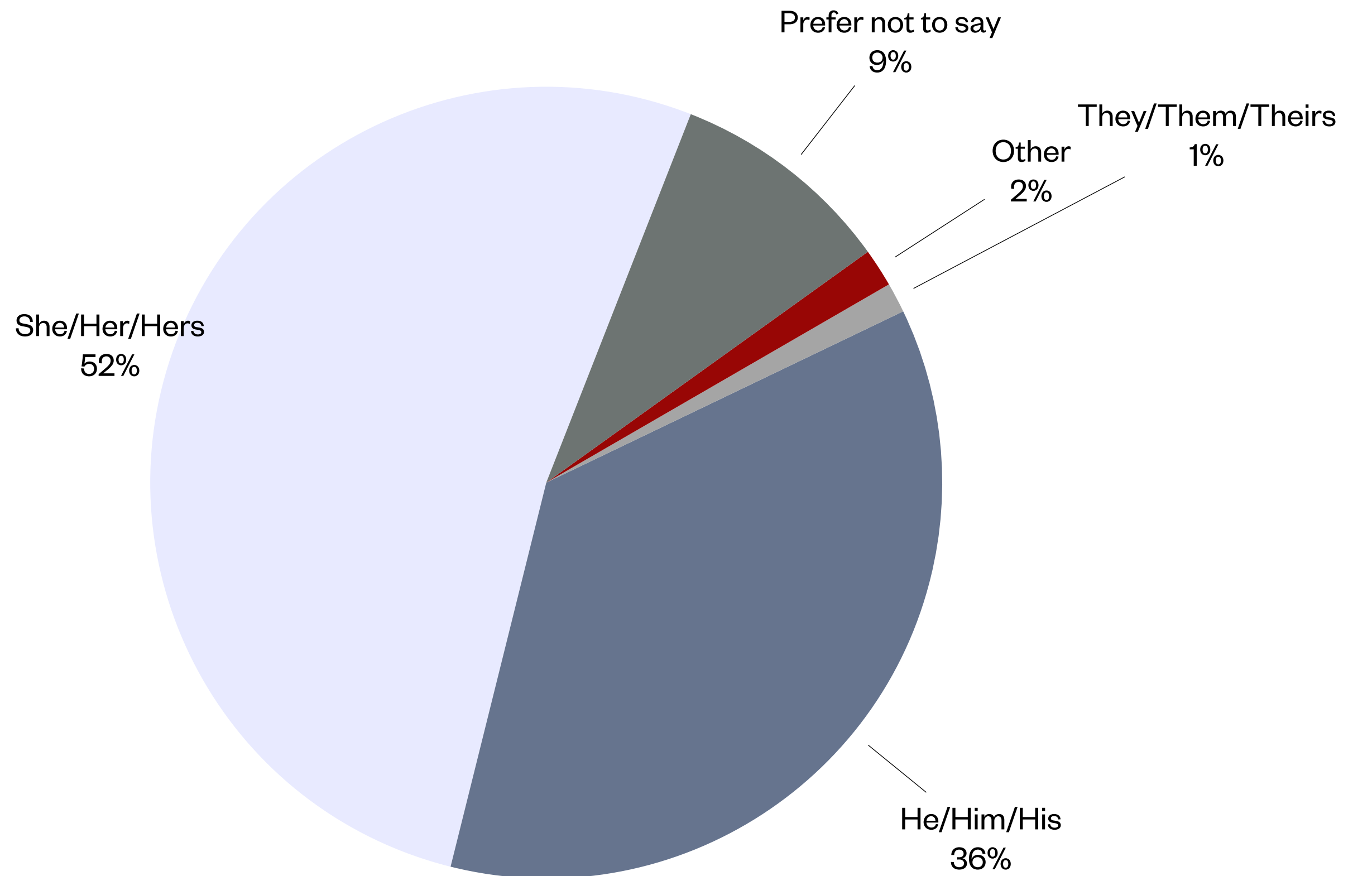
Do you live in Red Deer?



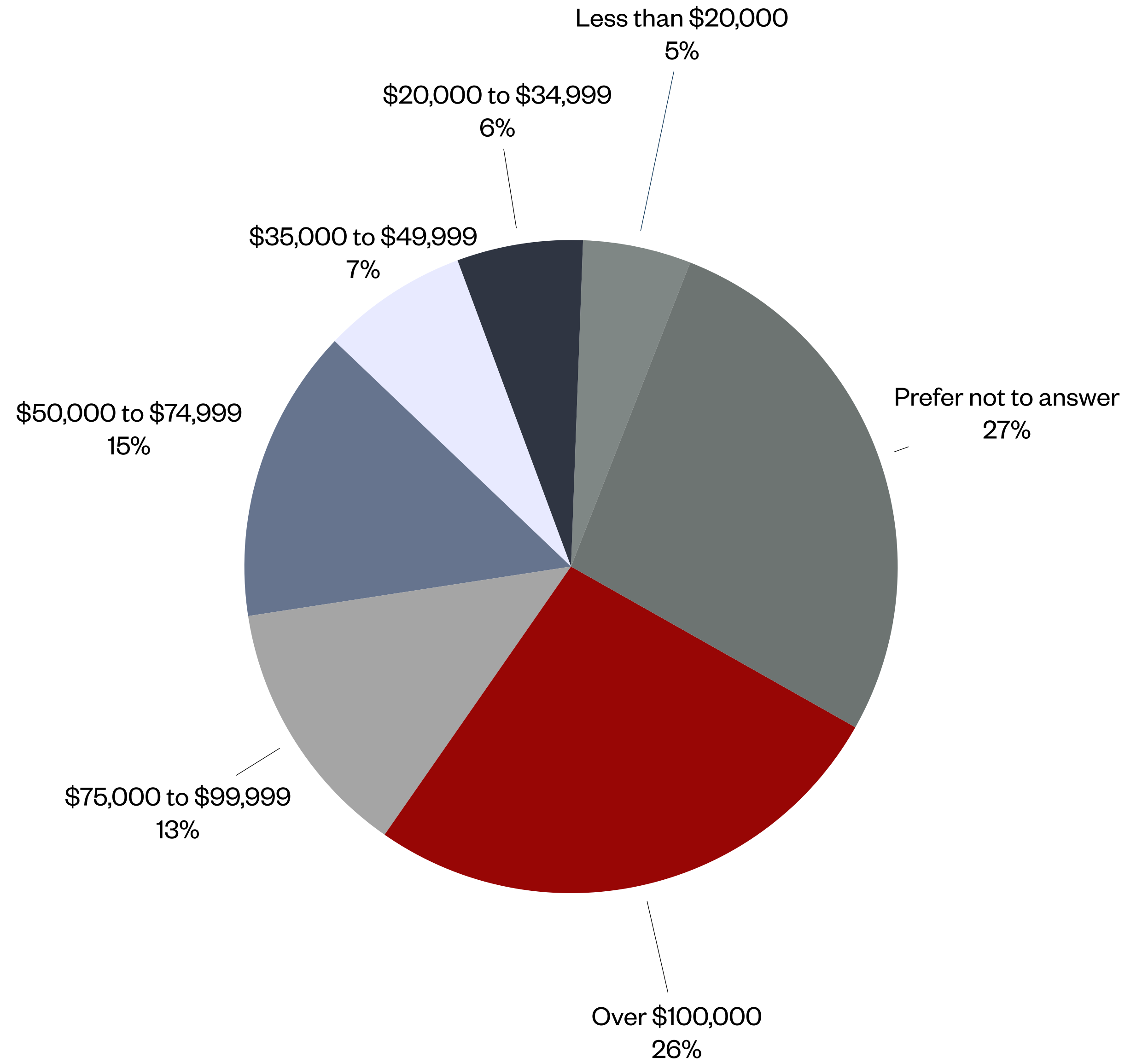
What is your age group?



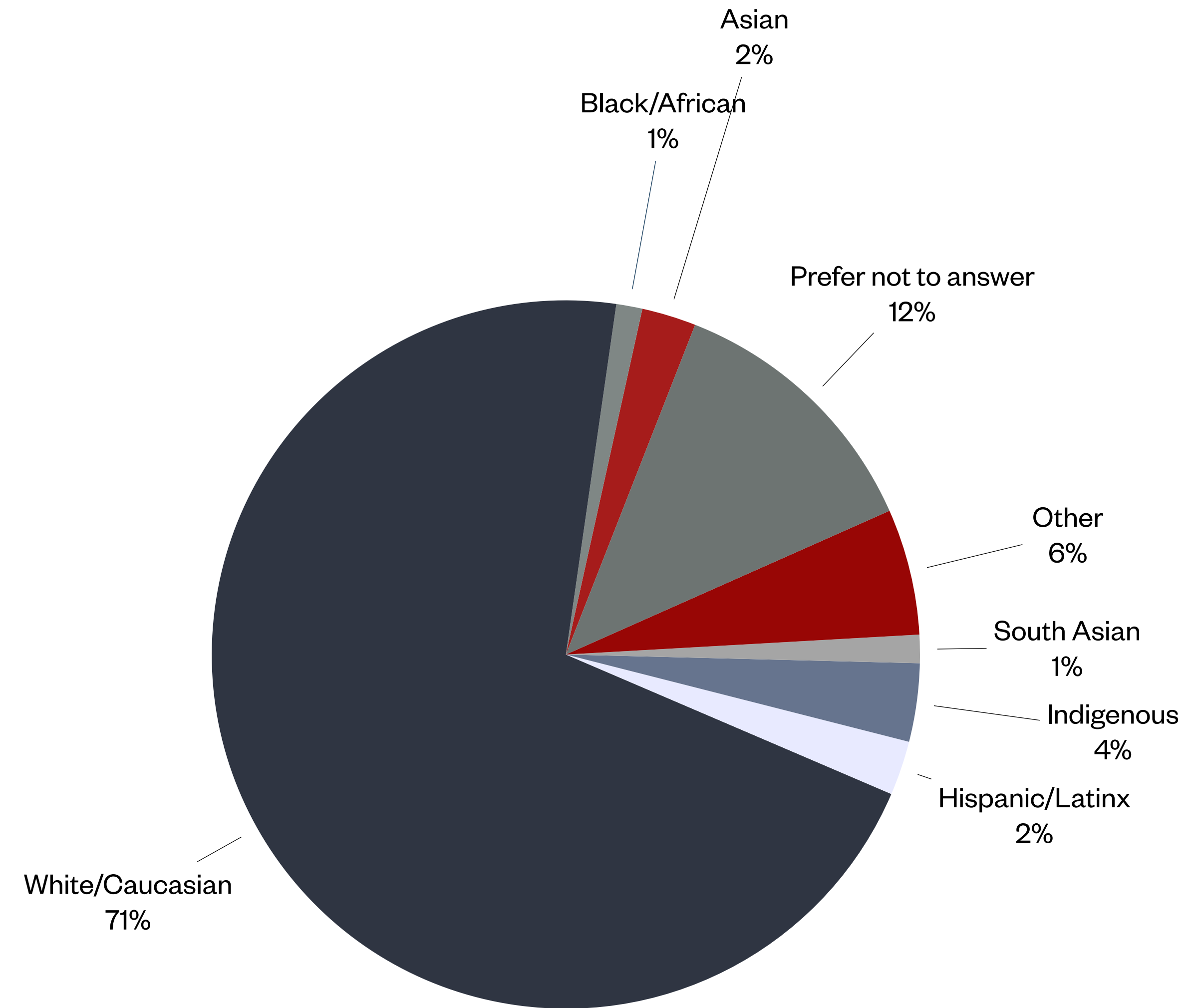
What are your pronouns?



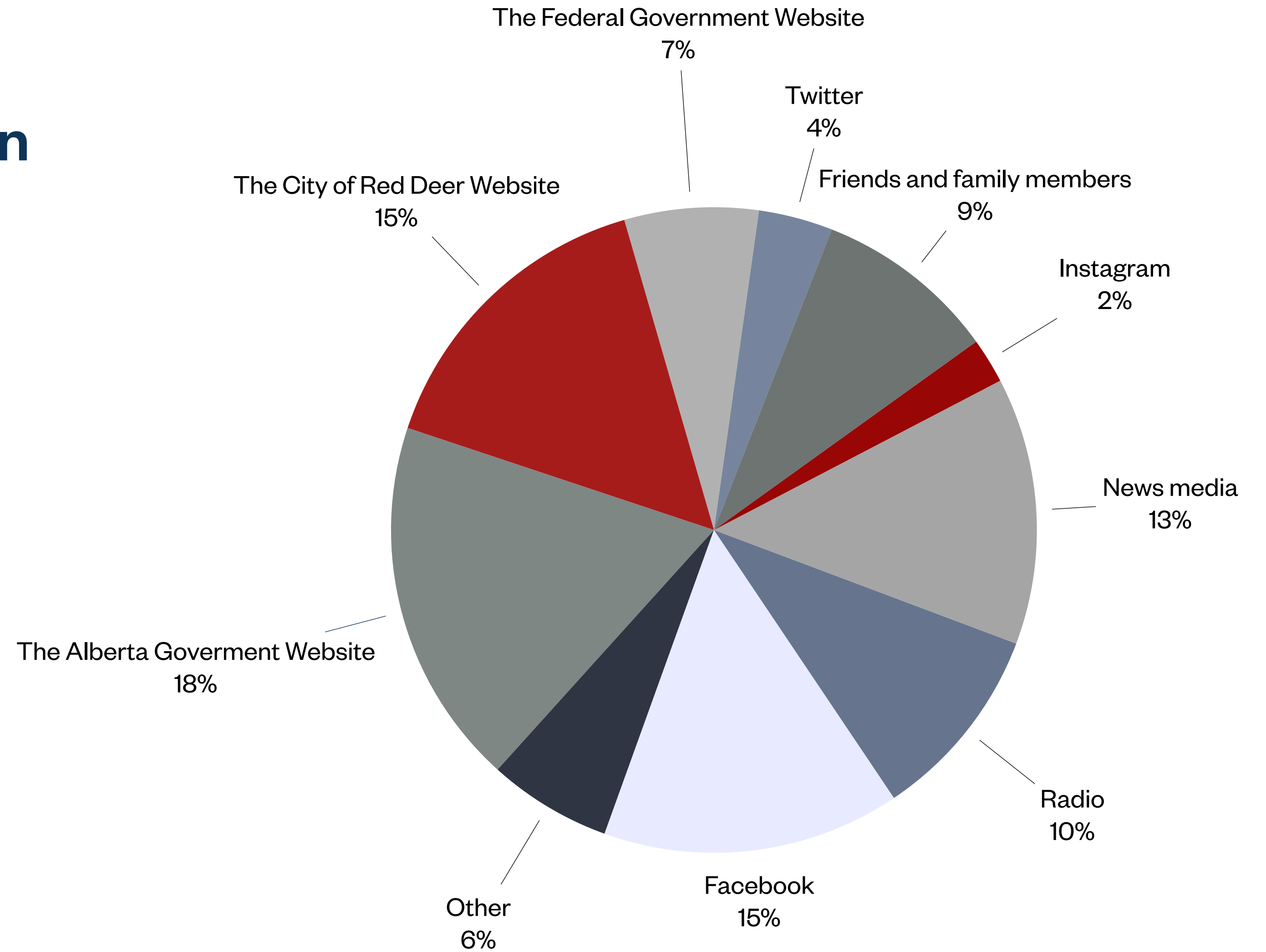
What is your income?



What would you describe as your ethnic origins?



How do you normally get information about our COVID-19 municipal response?





COVID-19 Response

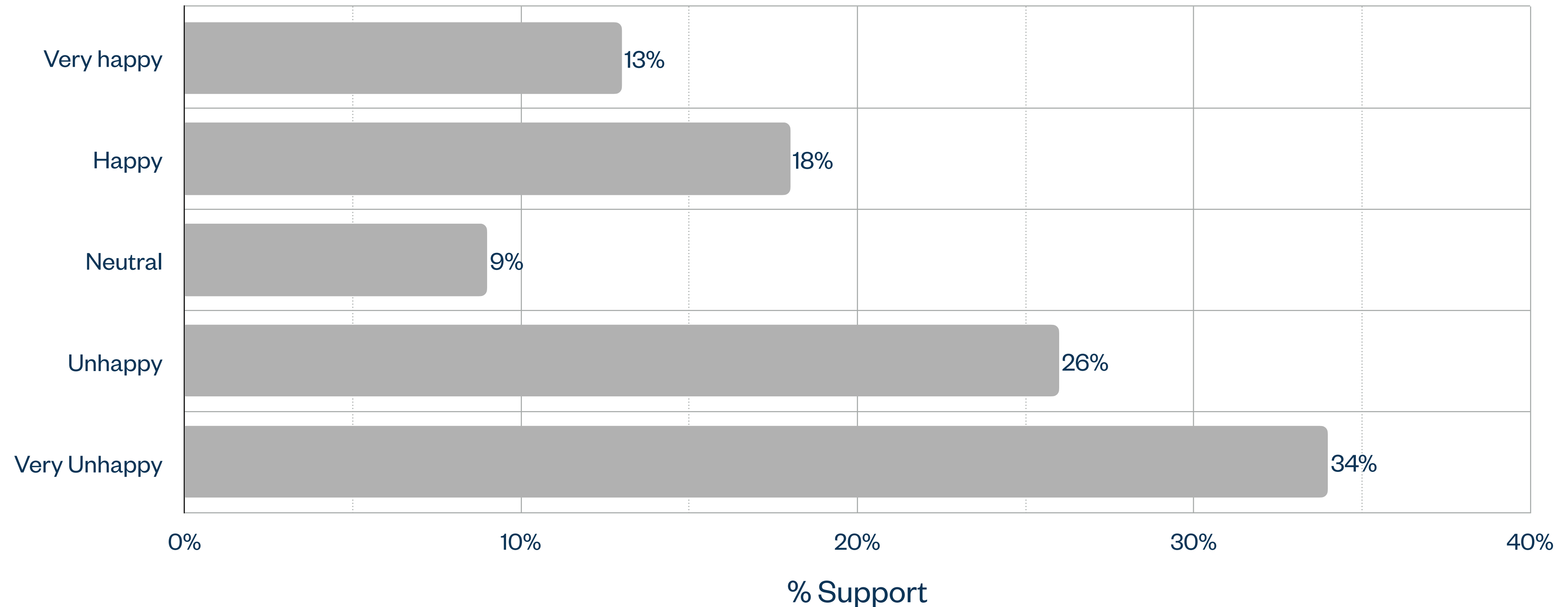
Key Findings

Factor Important for COVID Response Moving Forward	% Support
Economic Wellbeing	79%
Social Wellbeing	78%
Health & Safety	76%

- This was a very contentious topic with participants speaking passionately on behalf of both sides
- Generally speaking, the provincial mask mandate which was enacted on December 9th in Alberta was not seen to significantly impact either votes or comments
- Overall, participants voted in support of a temporary mandatory mask bylaw, although this was a contentious issue, with 56% of participants in favour
- 60% of participants pointed to the fact that they were unhappy with the Red Deer's COVID response so far

COVID-19 Response So Far

How satisfied are you with the City's pandemic response so far?*



*Votes were collected based on a numerical scale (0 for very unhappy, 100 for very happy). For the purpose of clearly communicating overall participant satisfaction, this chart uses the following scale: 0-20 = very unhappy, 21-40 = unhappy, 41-60 = neutral, 61-80 = happy, and 81-100 = very happy.

What areas of our local response do you think The City has handled well?

“I think at the very beginning you all did a great job of keeping us informed of everything that was happening in our city. Closing all the pools and everything was a great way to flatten the curve.”

“In a fluid situation you have followed all orders that have been outlined as they were recommended by the province and health care professionals. With an unknown virus it is a difficult position to be in. I applaud your effort.”

“Numbers were managed very well for a long time. They were doing a great job. I believe the testing has become too accessible and that is why the cases have sky rocketed. There is no more sick people then there was in March. Just more people getting tested without any symptoms.”

“Parks and trails maintained.”

“The first initial amount of freedom we had, before the mask mandate, allowing for personal choice.”

“Holding off mandatory mask wearing and lockdowns for as long as possible. The covid numbers are falsely inflated and the science actually backs how mask usage is pointless in keeping people safe and instead cause respiratory infections for the wearer. So I guess, thanks for holding off the ridiculousness.”

What areas of our local response do you think The City has not handled well?

“The time delay before restrictions were implemented. A faster intervention may have saved more people from potential covid exposure and infection.”

“A more consistent approach with other Alberta cities on same days would have been less confusing. I blame the provincial government for downloading this on council but I also think city reacted to slowly.”

“Not posting security guards and peace officers at all public stores to enforced wearing masks while shopping. We need more people telling people to wear a mask while shopping. Also having the officers walk around the stores to make sure that everyone is wearing a mask.”

“Advertising on how to stay mentally healthy. Getting outside. Vitamin D. Making sure we’re getting other essential vitamins.”

“All of it. Citizens were not heard regarding masks , small business etc. For those of us that lost a loved one and were not allowed to visit nor pay our respects - we will never get that back. Less than 200 Canadians died out side of long term care facilities. Protect them without cutting them off from families and the workers and let the rest of us continue our life. I will not live in fear.”

What have we missed?

“The mental health of your peace officers who have to enforce these laws. They’re burnt out, and all I know personally want to leave over the handling of enforcement of mask bylaw.”

“Enforcement of the health measures ie: masks and distancing.”

“Community involvement. Creative thinking to operate different services in safe manner.”

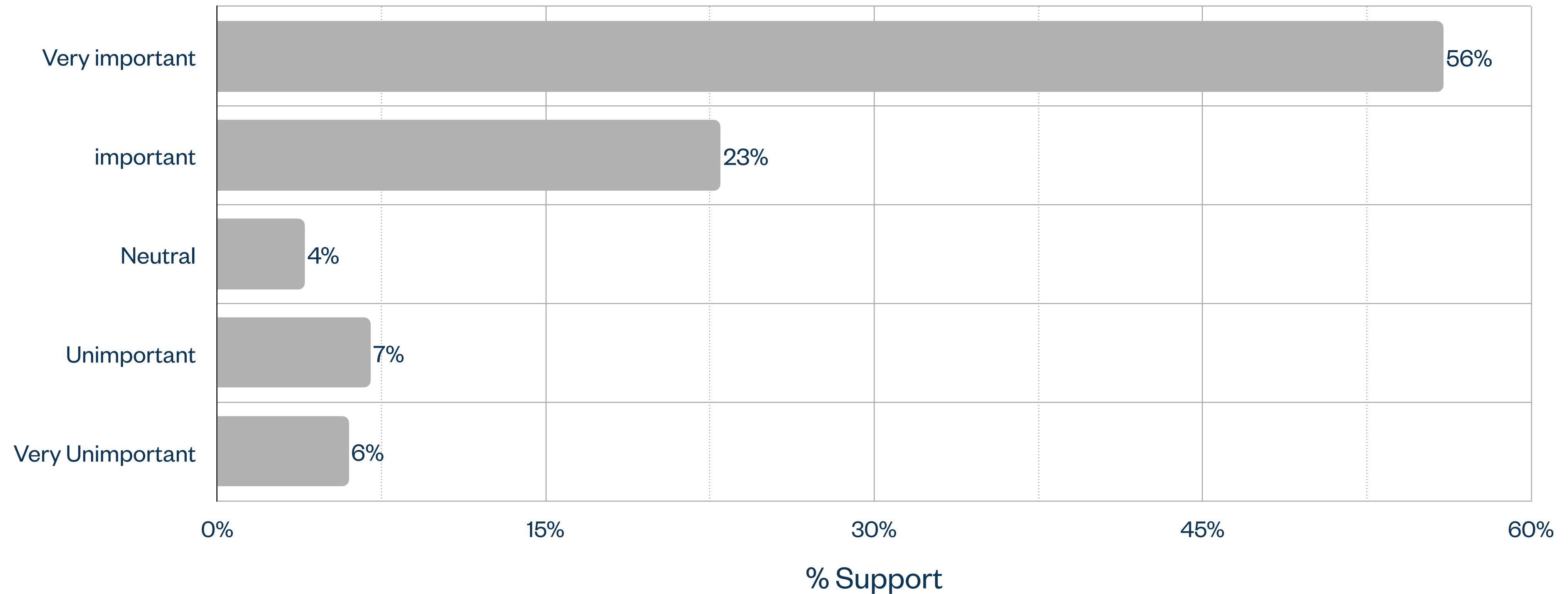
“Helping seniors with extra costs of PPE, better enforcement in senior buildings not only care homes but also independent living for seniors.”

“Seeing the big picture. This is the start of more and more government intervention. When we have to show proof of vaccination to do any public activity and to travel an individuals choice will be gone and it will be too late.”

“My rights and freedoms.”

COVID-19 Response Going Forward

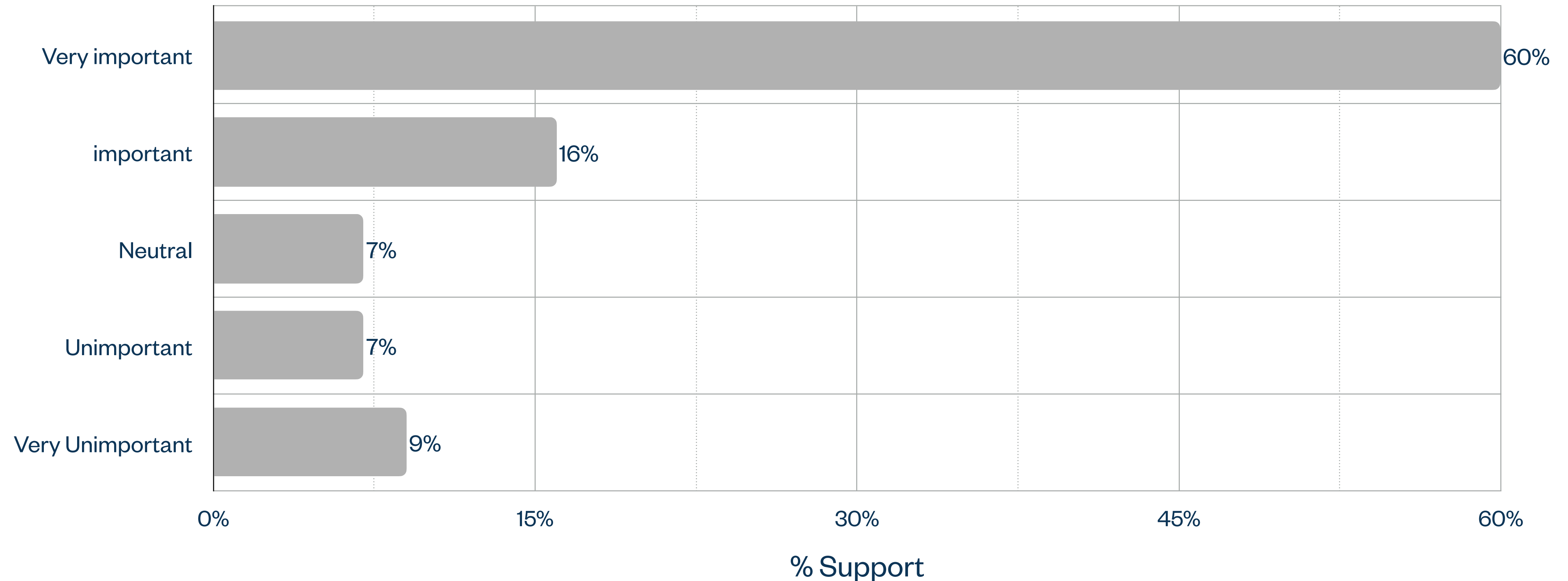
How important is the factor of **Economic Wellbeing**, as the City of Red Deer plans next steps around COVID-19?



*Votes were collected based on a numerical scale (0 for very unimportant, 100 for very important). For the purpose of clearly communicating overall participant satisfaction, this chart uses the following scale: 0-20 = very unimportant, 21-40 = unimportant, 41-60 = neutral, 61-80 = important, and 81-100 = very important.

COVID-19 Response Going Forward

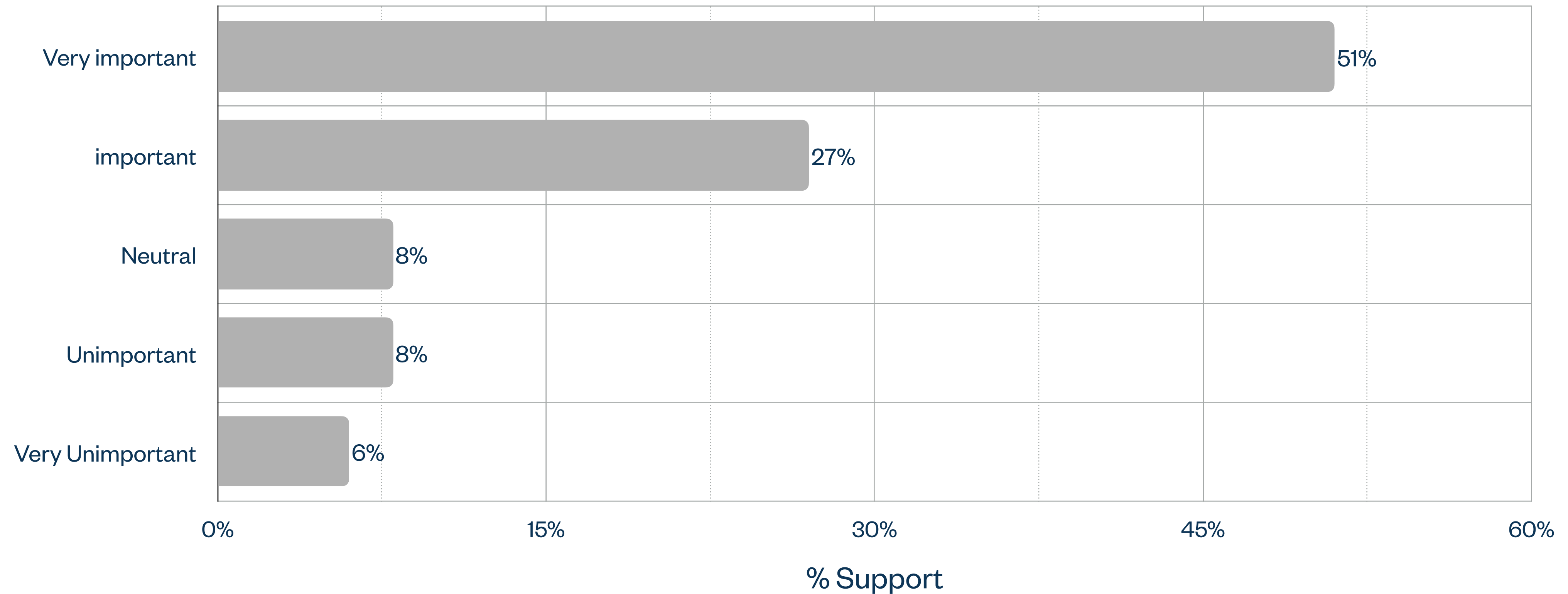
How important is the factor of **Health and Safety**, as the City of Red Deer plans next steps around COVID-19?



*Votes were collected based on a numerical scale (0 for very unimportant, 100 for very important). For the purpose of clearly communicating overall participant satisfaction, this chart uses the following scale: 0-20 = very unimportant, 21-40 = unimportant, 41-60 = neutral, 61-80 = important, and 81-100 = very important.

COVID-19 Response Going Forward

How important is the factor of **Social Wellbeing**, as the City of Red Deer plans next steps around COVID-19?



*Votes were collected based on a numerical scale (0 for very unimportant, 100 for very important). For the purpose of clearly communicating overall participant satisfaction, this chart uses the following scale: 0-20 = very unimportant, 21-40 = unimportant, 41-60 = neutral, 61-80 = important, and 81-100 = very important.

Response going forward: Other Considerations

“Mental wellbeing (100%)”

“Hospital Capacity and WellBeing of Essential Workers/Front Line Healthcare Practitioners (100%)”

“Our children. We have lost them in the mix. (100%)”

“Public testing (75%); Transparency re: CoVid vaccines (100%)”

“Our freedom (100%).”

What should The City enhance or expand in response to COVID-19 in the coming weeks?

“Enforce the mask mandate. Enforce the no social gathering rule. Hold people and businesses accountable.”

“Ways to entertain, keep fit, communication.”

“How about a program using zoom or Skype to connect seniors to students to share reading or art experiences? The pathways and trails are incredibly icy. Stepping up some additional resources to help clear those paths. Bring back the bookmobiles into the communities for seniors and families alike.”

“Stop testing for covid, just test when ppl with symptoms got admitted to the hospital. Stop fear mongering about ‘casedemic’, no mandates anymore! Let's get back to normal. There are no more death this year than any other year. Get your facts together. Domestic violence through the roof, suicides and overdoses skyrocketing. Hospitals are not overwhelmed with covid cases.”

“Nothing. We need normal.”

What should The City change in response to COVID-19 in the coming weeks?

“Enforce gathering bans so that the virus doesn't spread through these and to protect our economy from getting shut down further.”

“Gyms open.”

“Better communication.”

“Stop using only the scare tactics being employed by AHS and look more carefully at the real data that is available. Consider more carefully the damage being done by the social isolation, and look for ways to negate that damage.”

“Keep the elderly safe but let the rest of us live our lives!”

“Everything. Drop bylaw, open everything up. No masks. 99.9% survival rate.”

Is there anything you think The City should do/implement in the longer term (one to two months) in response to COVID-19?

“Distancing ourselves to relieve the burden on hospitals will actually do citizens a lot of good. Especially those who are dealing with non-covid related matters, who require hospital services. If hospitals are at capacity, people with other issues won't be able to access service in a timely manner. Additionally, putting front line workers, service workers, and health care workers at risk isn't beneficial to the overall community either as each of us rely on these services to go about our daily lives. So, going about life as most Albertans have been for the last few months, obviously hasn't been working and it's insanity to think that this is just going away because some people openly state they don't believe it is serious.”

“Mandatory masks, everywhere. Informing the public how masks will be enforced. I have heard of customers entering stores without masks and not being stopped because employees are worried they will get into a fight. There is no point to stating that masks are mandatory if it is not enforced for all people.”

“It depends on how the numbers go. Take your cue from that data.”

“Open Up! stop charging people who are already struggling financially.”

“There already is an over implementation of measures being taken. Please do not add more - people are suffering enough from the current measures.”

In your opinion, what could The City do right now to help you get through the pandemic?

“Property tax freezes & extensions. Help small local businesses instead of creating rules that benefit big box stores.”

“Forms of activity for children. Repercussions for anti-maskers.”

“Better enforcement of mask rules. Work with province to provide more accessible mental health supports where possible. Give citizens a 2-5% relief on their utility bill for December.”

“Let me get together with friends and family. Let those dying alone be surrounded with loved ones. Drop the masks.”

“Allow physical activity.”

“Much of what the city is doing is provincially mandated and the city is powerless to change them. Do not encourage people to report their neighbours and do not have people hired to patrol neighbourhoods to check up on people. That is communism.”

What are your household's concerns right now regarding COVID-19?

“Not getting sick and dying. We're also worried about the morons who think it's their RIGHT to protest every Saturday downtown. Fine them. Period. Their actions cannot be tolerated.”

“That Red Deer is a non-caring community which will increase spread of Covid due to individual selfishness. We are considering moving based on how we have seen people react to evidence based things like wearing a mask to protect others. This is not a community I want to raise a family in.”

“The economy.”

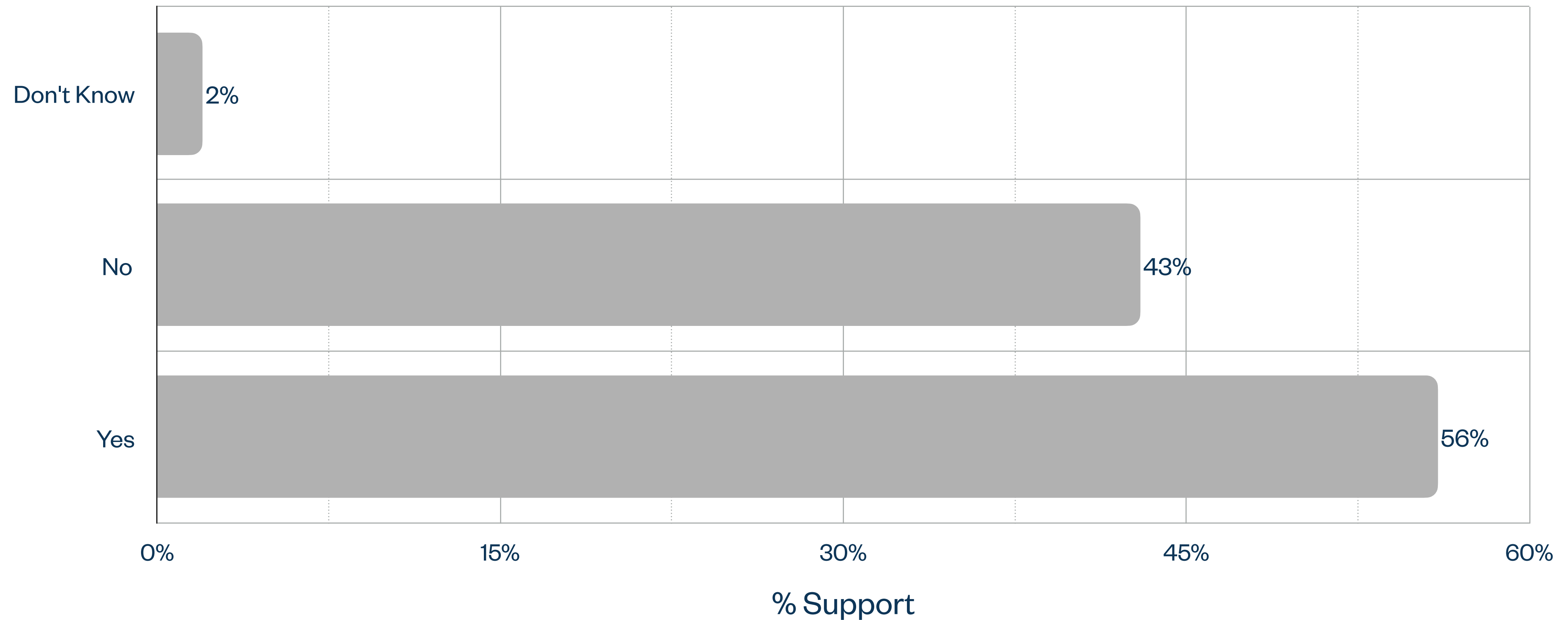
“That we are going to get in trouble for spending time with lived ones, and keeping our mental health in check.”

“Infringement on my rights as a citizen and taxpayer, the fact that the hysterical few has the ear of the government and the government appeals to their fears.”

“No freedom! Rising prices of the food, lack of work.”

Mandatory Mask Bylaw

Do you support the temporary mandatory mask bylaw in Red Deer?



Do you support mandatory masks? Why?

“Because I was told the initiative was backed by science and expert opinion.”

“Because we all need to be responsible citizens. It's not about rights but about being responsible so that we can continue to support our economy.”

“Masks do work to prevent the spread of COVID-19. I would rather wear the cloth over my face and find out it doesn't help, rather than avoid wearing it and finding out it could have saved my life. Not everyone understands the science of it or chooses to not believe so enforcing this is critical.”

“I want this over with!!!”

“Because it's been proven both by Edmonton and Calgary that they do not work. You're letting a virus with a 99% survival rate ruin families and small businesses.”

“Too many studies showing that masking is not effective, but can cause more harm. Loved Mayor Veer's comment that Red Deerians were smart enough to figure out when to wear masks and didn't need the govt to tell them what to do. I wish the city had held to that stance.”

What COVID-19 information would be most useful right now for The City to provide to your household?

“We are getting all the information needed, we have enough information given.”

“Total number of daily active cases within our city, number of covid cases in the covid unit in our hospital as well as in the icu.”

“Evidence based information on the benefits of mask use and where to access supports.”

“Where the outbreaks are happening so we can avoid those spots.”

“How to improve your immune system!”

“Death stats with full info on age and pre existing conditions. Hospital bed capacity”

“None. Stop talking about it all together.”



Suggestions and Ideas

What measures make you feel safe in a public space?

“Enforced mask bylaws, sanitizer, restricted numbers of people allowed in spaces, air circulation.”

“Just being respectful of others.”

“Masks, lower numbers in stores, people that follow rules and walk in direction of floor arrows.”

“I will decide if I’m comfortable with the situation. If not I will not go. Please, I’m not asking anyone to be responsible for my health.”

“Seeing peoples faces and trusting that if you're sick you will stay home.”

“Sanitizer stations.”

What creative solutions can you share with us to increase that feeling of safety in our community?

“Visible Peace and Police Officers making the rounds (during the early days of the shutdown, this made me feel safe).”

“Take a step back while encouraging people to take care of their whole health and while being kind to all others.”

“Drive in movies. Socially distanced outdoor activities when it gets warmer. Volunteer opportunities to help front line workers and those in need.”

Offer better delivery and care services for high-risk individuals who are unable to leave do to immunocompromise or age.”

“Free public Tai Chi. Easily social-distanced, active, will foster a feeling of community among participants.”

“Stop the fear mongering from the media.”

What community activities have you enjoyed seeing residents partake in?

“Discovering red deer trails, light tours, walking the neighborhood, video calls to stay connected.”

“Walks in parks and trails.”

“Swimming, skating, outdoor rink, Santa bus (that was awesome) lights at the library.”

“Christmas lights in city hall park.”

“Outdoor activities, where social distancing etc. can be met.”

“I sure miss the gym. Hard to run with a mask on. End masks now.”

“Nothing because we aren’t allowed to do anything.”

Are there any positive things that have happened in your community that you would like to see continued?

“People checking in on one another.”

“Supporting local businesses. Local businesses working together to promote each other. How my favourite local businesses have adapted to ensure favorite products and experiences are still available despite everything that's happening. An influx of free/low-cost activities have been happening, it would be nice for that to continue....”

“People getting outside and being active! People valuing their time with friends and family!”

“Awareness of hygiene.”

“Continue protests on this ridiculous policy of masks.”

“I struggle to find a positive take away -- my community is divided.”

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Thank you!

