



# CITY OF BURIEN

## Community Benchmark Survey

**PREPARED FOR**

City of Burien

August 2012

[www.dhmresearch.com](http://www.dhmresearch.com)

**dhm** RESEARCH  
DAVIS, HIBBITTS & MIDGHALL, INC.

# Research Objectives

## **Gauge City of Burien residents' opinions about:**

- General quality of life in the city
- Their satisfaction with city government services

This survey benchmarks findings from a similar survey conducted for the City in 2010 and 2008.

# Research Design

- Scientific telephone survey
- 400 residents in the City of Burien
- Conducted July 14-18, 2012
- Random Digit Dialing + targeted cell
- Quotas for age, gender, and area
- 15 minute survey instrument
- Quality control measures including pre-testing, validations, and monitoring calls
- Margin of error range: +/-2.8% to 4.9% for each question

# Note to reader

- This year marks the first year DHM conducted the benchmark study.
- New questions to 2012 are noted with a \*\* in the upper brown box.
- There have been shifts in open-ended comments between 2008, 2010, and 2012. The shifts between 2010 and 2012 may be in part due to different coding techniques. DHM codes all responses, not just the first mention.

# Report Sections

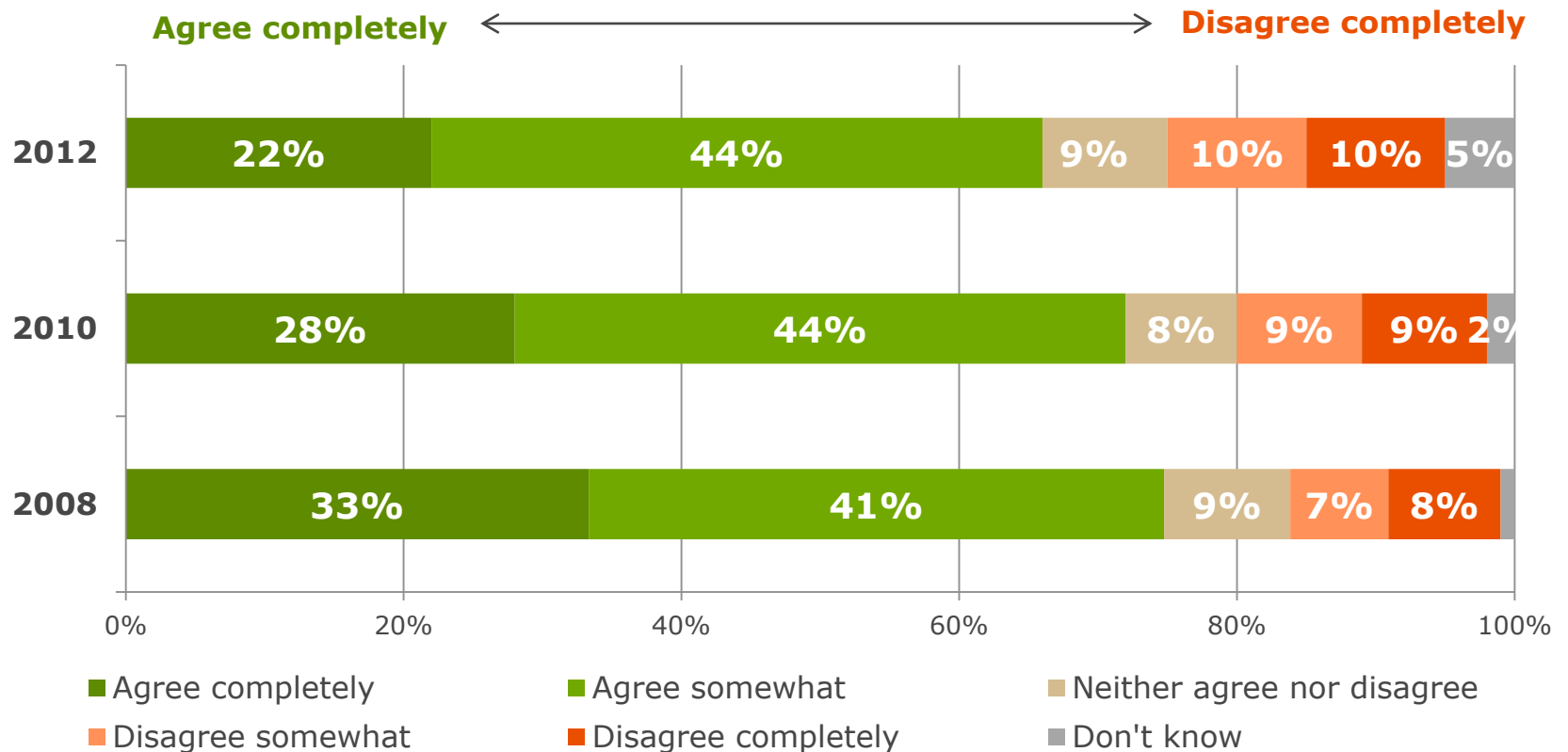
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**SECTION 1:**

**LIFE IN BURIEN**

# Majorities continue to be optimistic about the city's direction.

## Direction of City of Burien



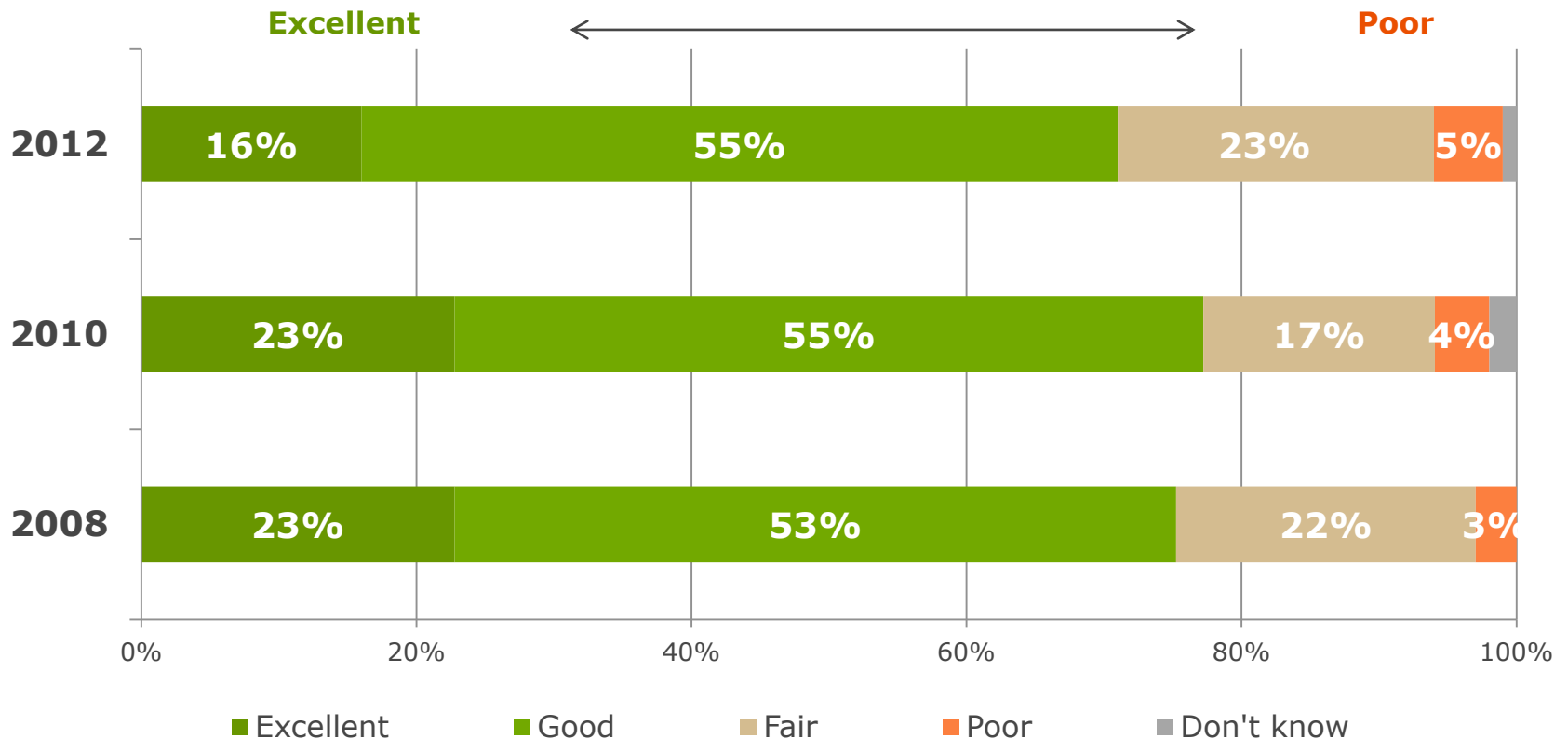
# 60% of reasons for living in Burien relate to its good location.

| Reasons for Living in Burien              | 2012<br>N=400 | 2010<br>N=461 | 2008<br>N=404 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Lived here whole life/since childhood     | 25%           | 12%           | 15%           |
| Affordable living                         | 15%           | 17%           | 17%           |
| Close to work                             | 14%           | 18%           | 23%           |
| Close to family/friends                   | 14%           | 10%           | 15%           |
| Location – nice area/close to water/parks | 12%           | 16%           | 5%            |
| Convenient/central location               | 11%           | 9%            | 7%            |
| Nice property/house/view                  | 7%            | 7%            | 9%            |
| I was annexed/I had no choice             | 6%            | 7%            | 0%            |
| Marriage/inherited house/property         | 6%            | 8%            | 4%            |
| Quiet/nice place to live/raise children   | 5%            | 8%            | 15%           |
| Proximity to Seattle                      | 4%            | 7%            | 15%           |
| Lived here before it became a city        | 4%            | 3%            | 9%            |
| Friendly neighbors/community              | 3%            | 6%            | 4%            |
| Close to school                           | 3%            | 3%            | 6%            |
| Close to airport                          | 3%            | 3%            | 5%            |



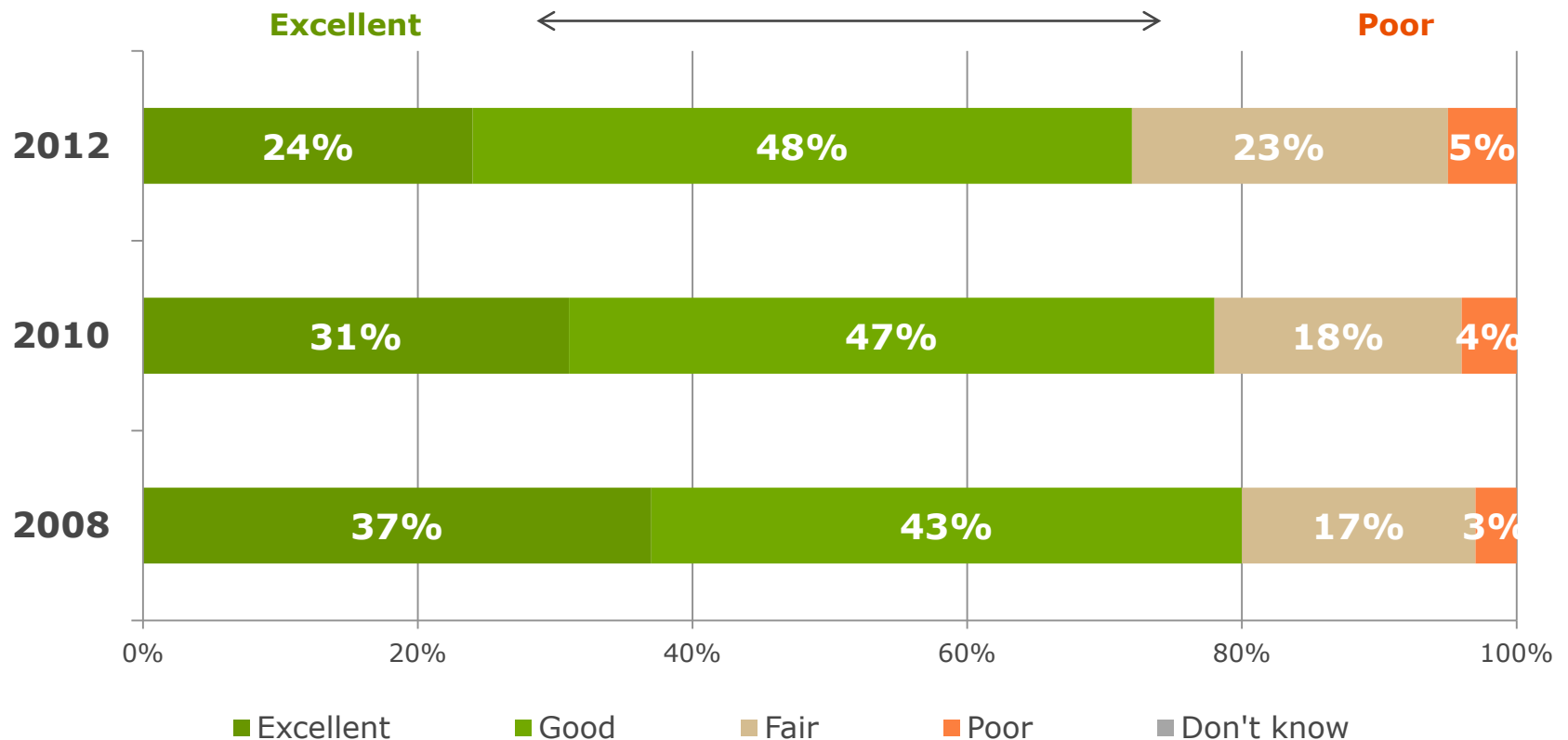
Since 2008, high majorities have rated Burien as a good or excellent place to live. This year, men are most satisfied.

### Burien As a Place to Live



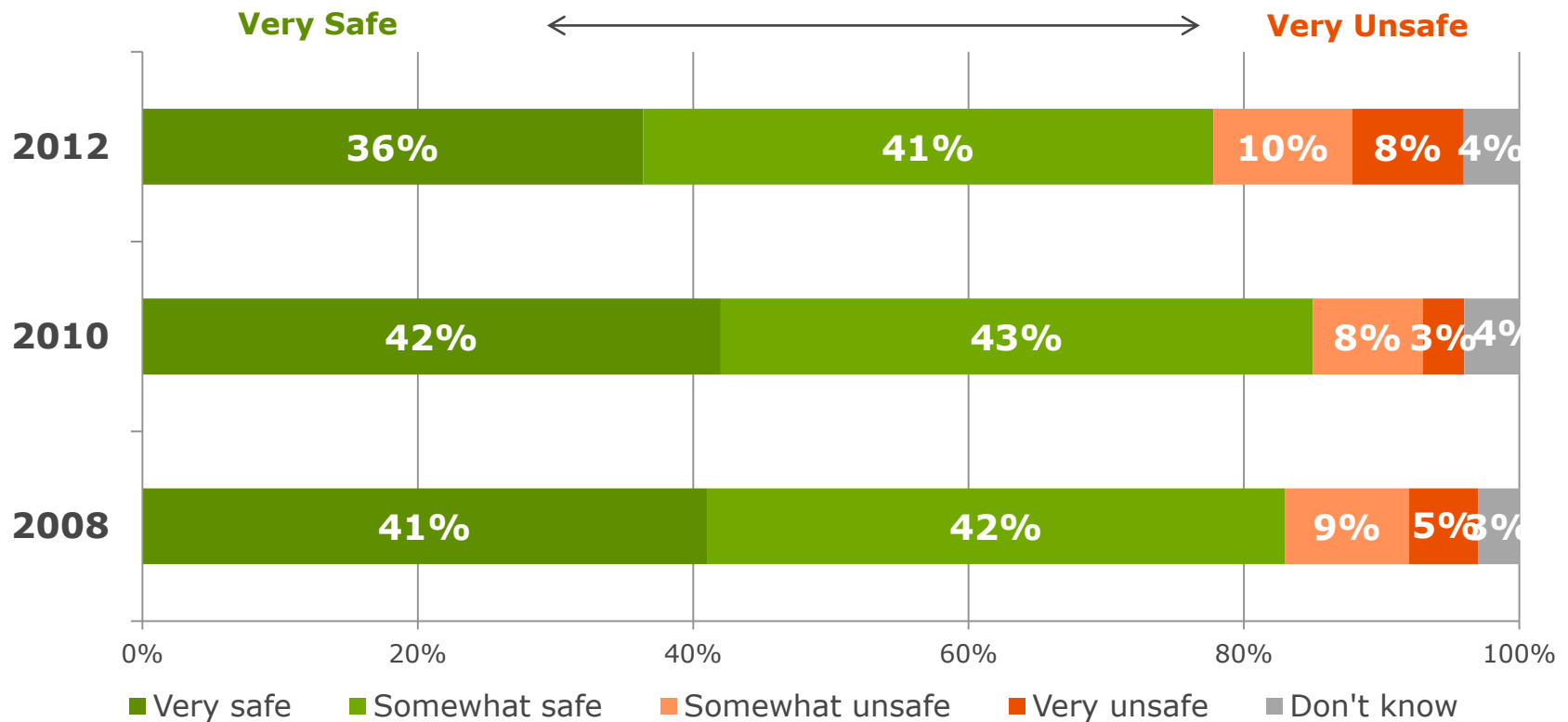
**In addition to liking the city, they also feel positively about their neighborhoods especially West Burien residents.**

### Rating Neighborhoods in Burien



# More than 3 in 4 feel safe in downtown Burien. There has been a slight uptick in people feeling unsafe, especially among women.

## Safety in Downtown Burien



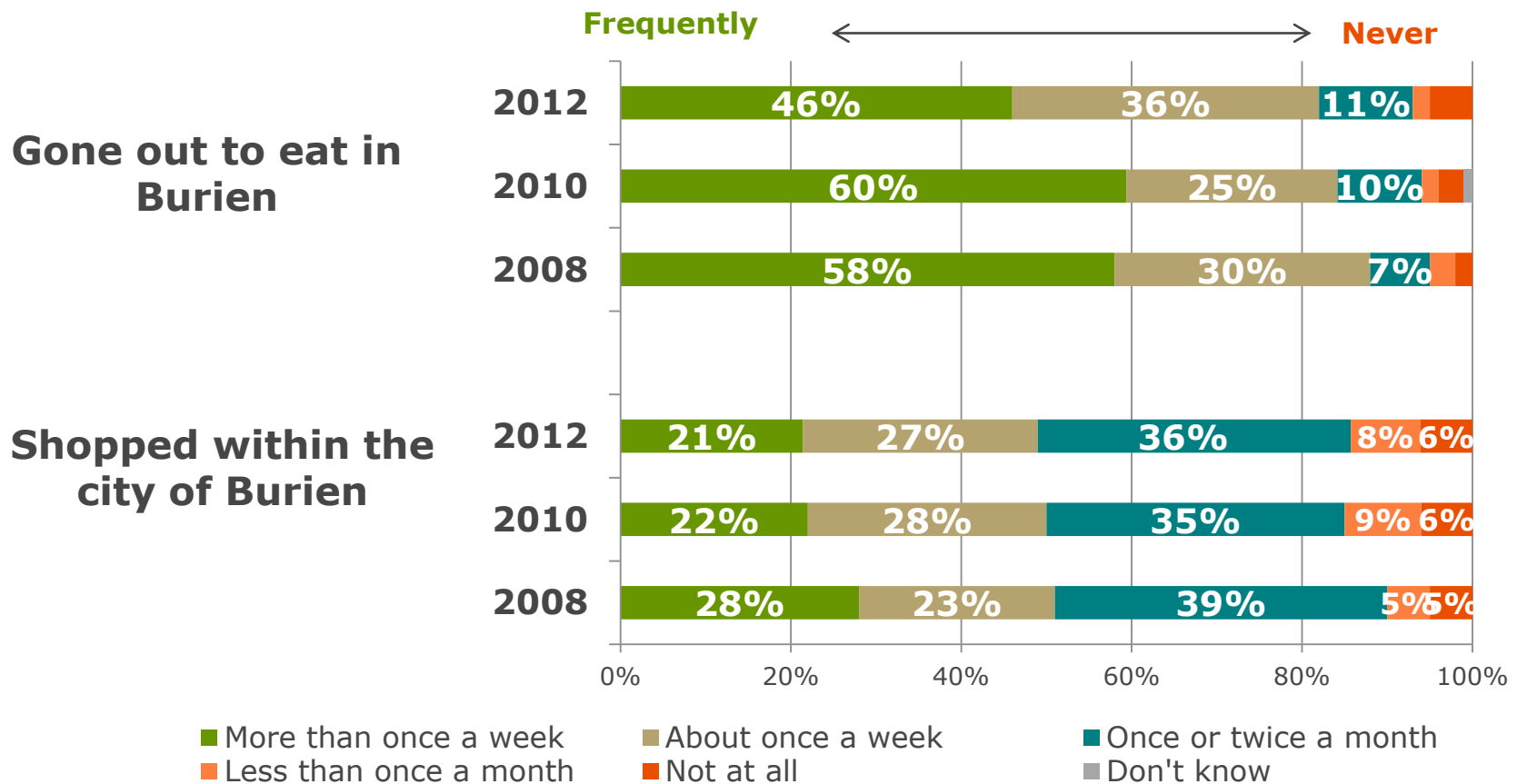
# While majorities feel safe in their neighborhoods at all hours, they feel much safer during the day than at night, especially women.

Safety in Burien Neighborhoods



# Eating out in Burien continues to be done more regularly than shopping. People are less likely to eat out multiple times a week this year.

## Frequency of Activities in Burien



## **SECTION 2:**

# **ISSUES FACING BURIEN**

# Public safety is the most important issue for residents, even above the economy.

| Most Important Issues Facing the City of Burien | 2012<br>N=400 | 2010<br>N=461 | 2008<br>N=404 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Reducing crime                                  | 30%           | 19%           | 25%           |
| Lack of economical/commercial growth            | 19%           | 39%           | 14%           |
| Lack of police presence/enforcement             | 14%           | 10%           | 9%            |
| Maintaining roads                               | 11%           | 6%            | 10%           |
| Improving education/schools                     | 9%            | 9%            | 11%           |
| Reducing traffic/congestion                     | 6%            | 3%            | 14%           |
| Annexation decisions (unspecified)              | 6%            | 4%            | 9%            |
| Lack of public transportation                   | 5%            | 2%            | 4%            |
| Managing population growth                      | 4%            | 4%            | 8%            |
| City funding/financial concerns                 | 4%            | 6%            | 3%            |
| Lack of sidewalks/walkways/bike lanes           | 4%            | 4%            | 3%            |
| Taxes   | 4%            | 6%            | 6%            |
| More parks/activities for children              | 4%            | 6%            | 6%            |
| City construction/redevelopment                 | 4%            | 4%            | 11%           |
| Poor performance of city council/leadership     | 4%            | 6%            | 2%            |
| Abandoned/vacant buildings                      | 3%            | 0%            | 0%            |
| Maintaining real estate/housing market value    | 3%            | 2%            | 3%            |
| Annexation of the White Center neighborhood     | 3%            | 0%            | 1%            |

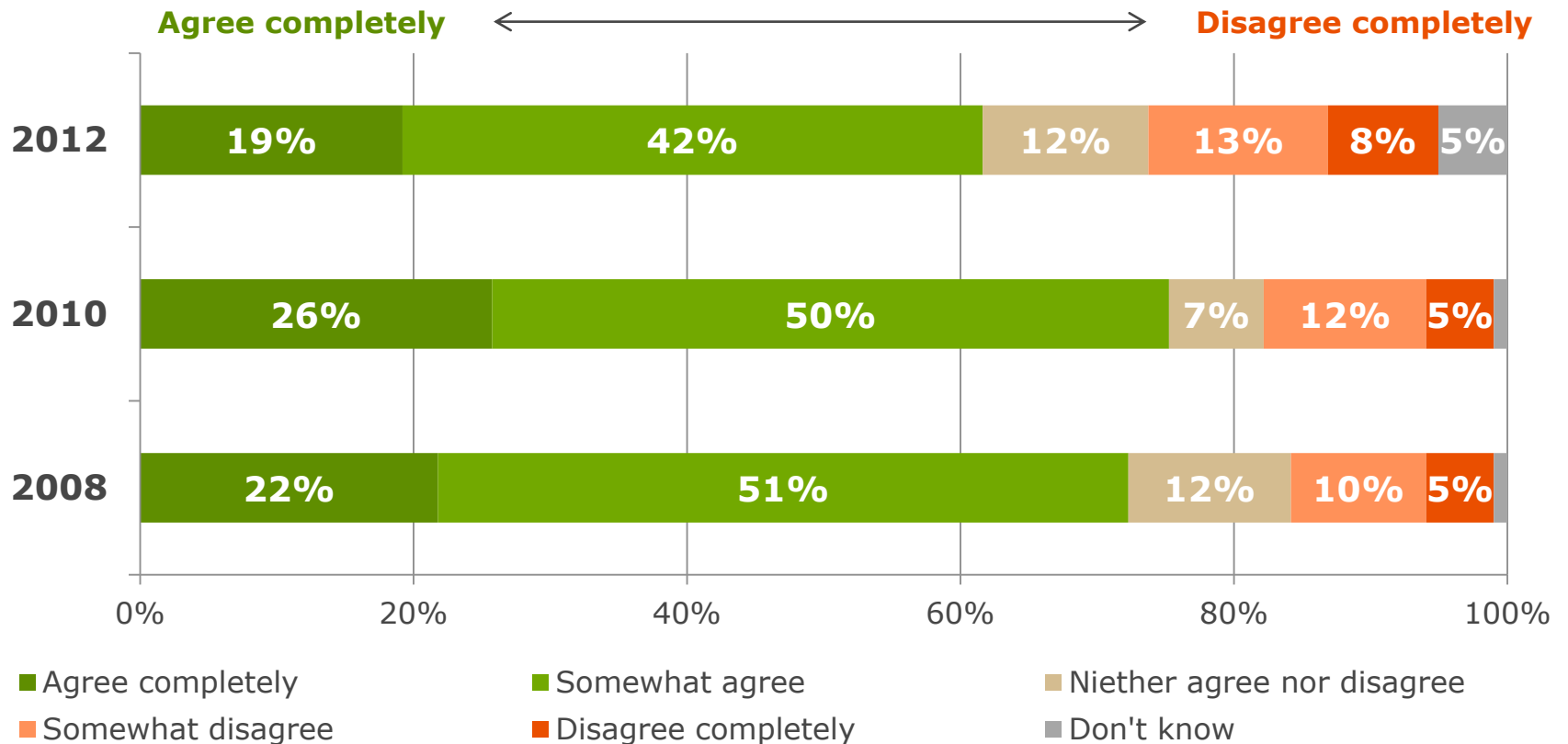
## **SECTION 3:**

# **PERCEPTIONS OF CITY GOVERNMENT & CITY PLANNING**



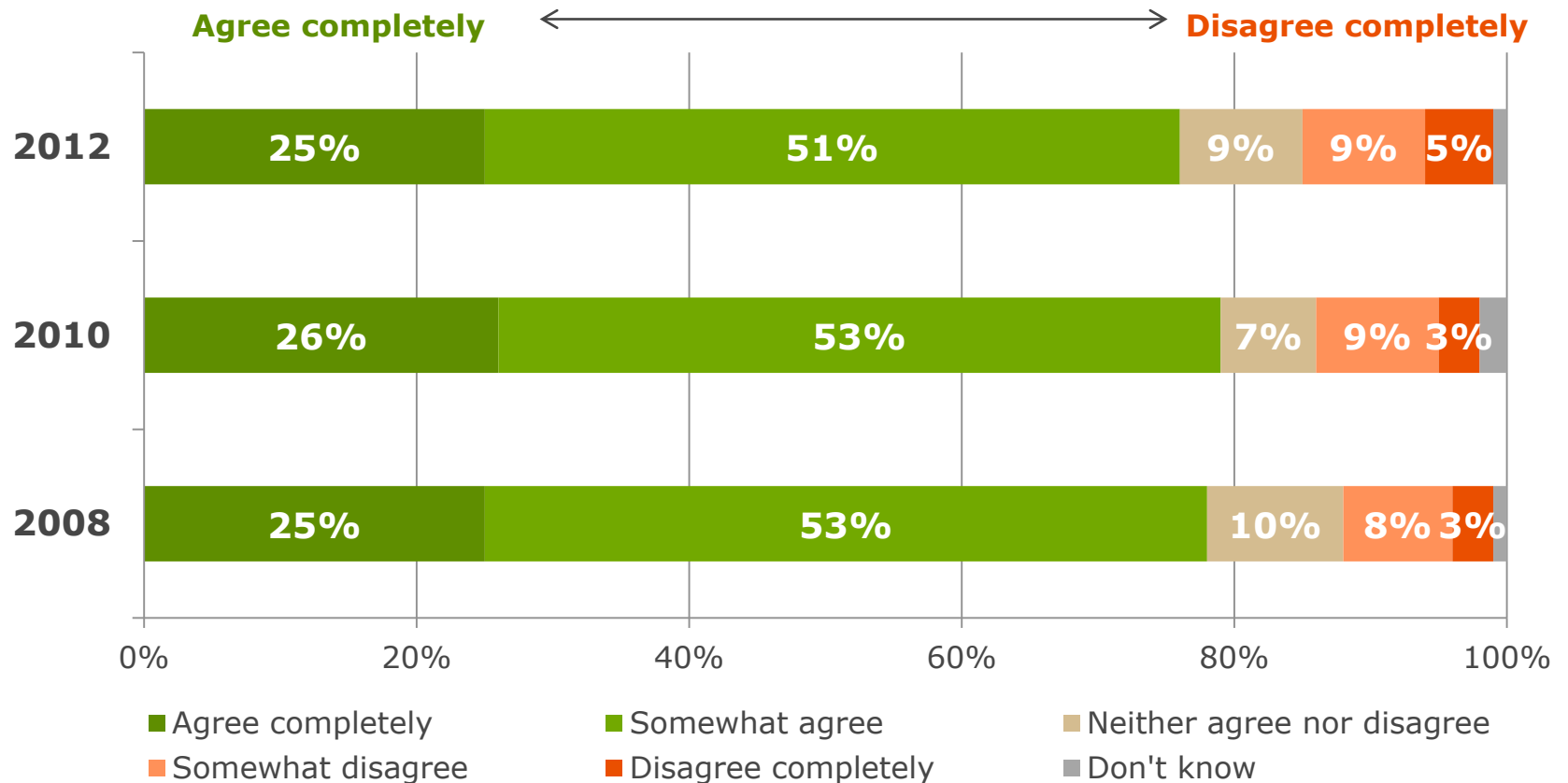
# 6 in 10 are satisfied with City government performance. There has been a slight increase in neutral and uncertain opinions.

## Agreement That City Government Is Doing a Good Job For Burien



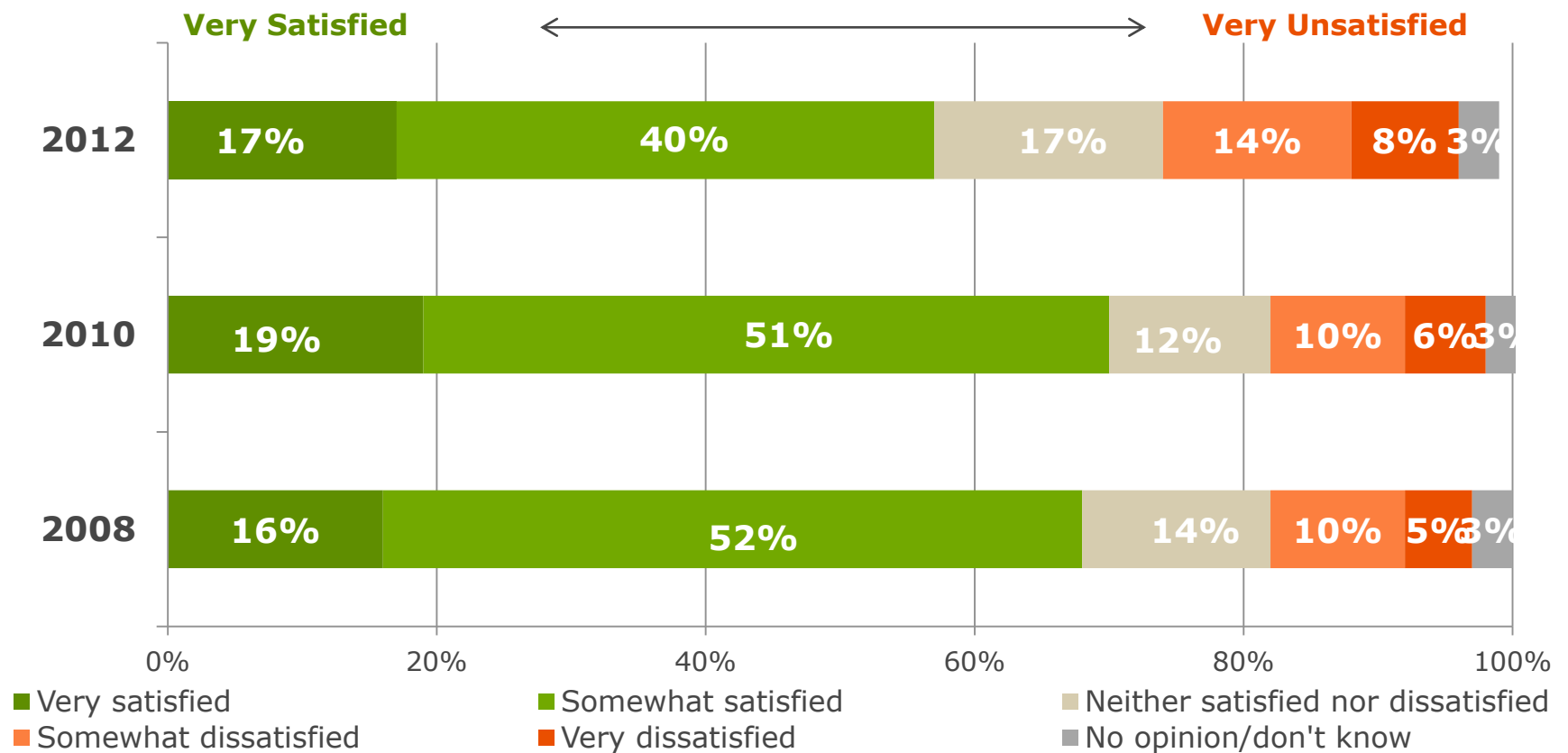
# Three-quarters of residents are satisfied with City services.

## Agreement That The City Provides Quality Services



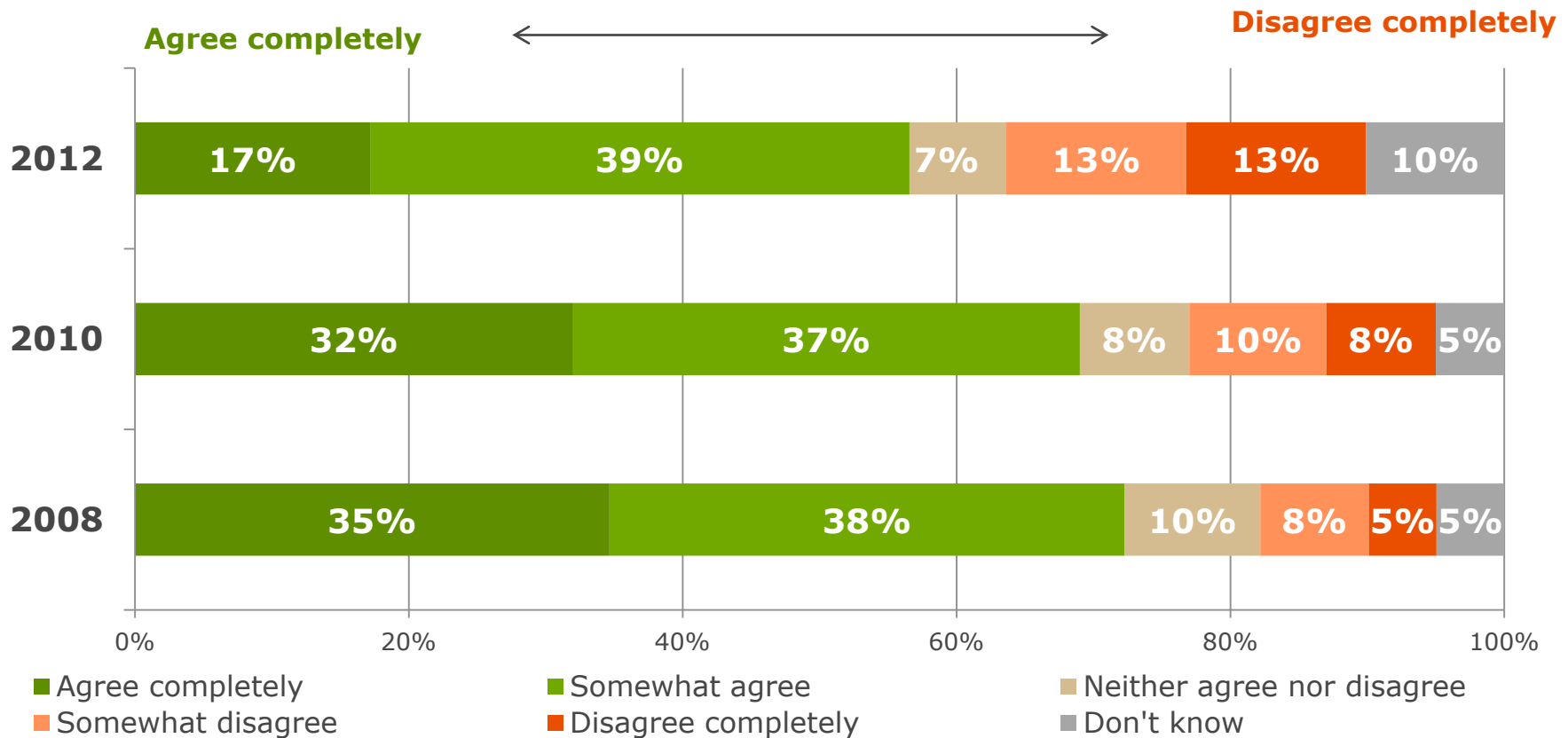
# While still at a majority, satisfaction for services is slightly lower when connected to value for taxes paid.

## Agreement That The City Provides Quality Basic Services for The Taxes Paid



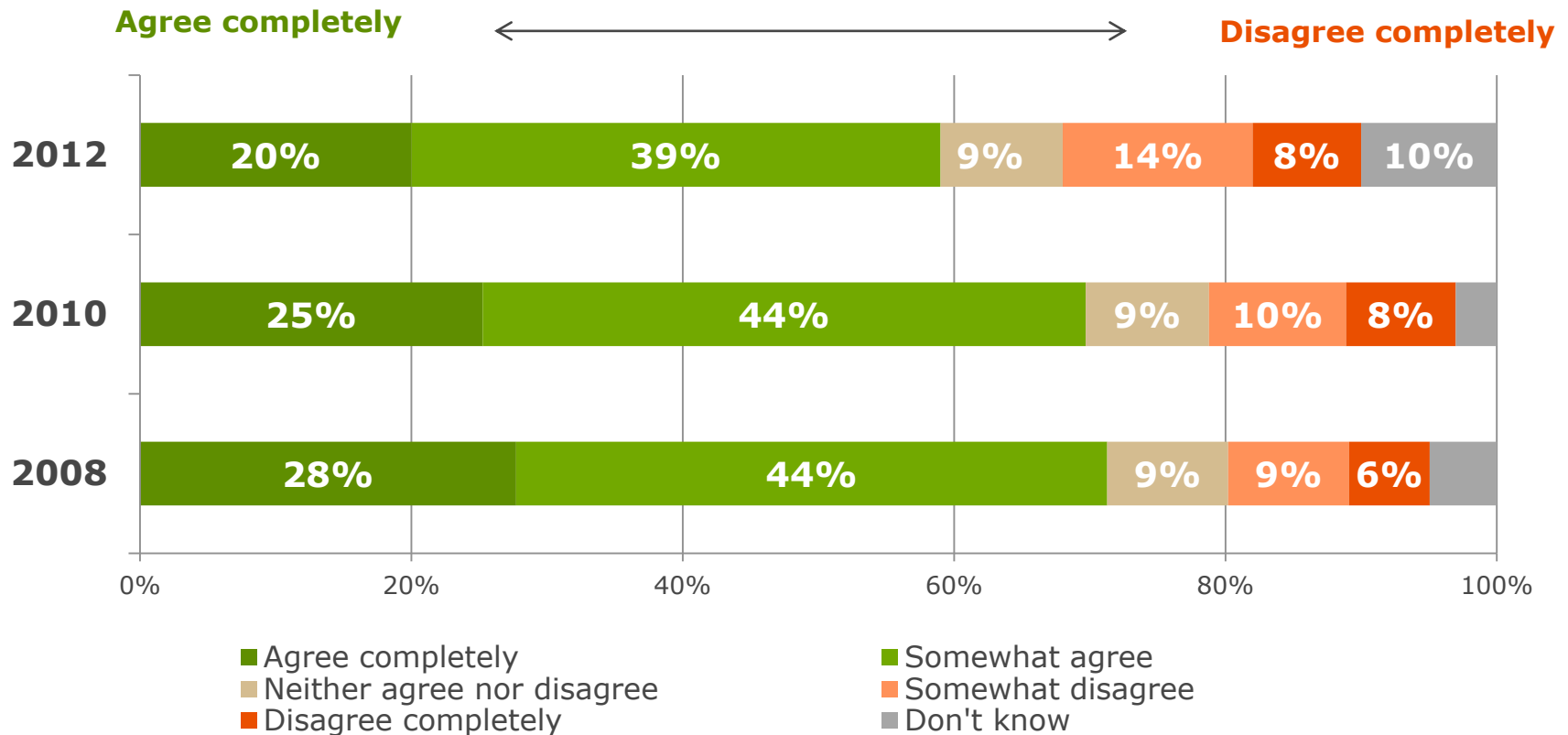
# While still majority agreement, there is less strong conviction this year that City government is encouraging economic growth.

## Agreement that the City of Burien is Proactively Encouraging Economic Growth Within the City



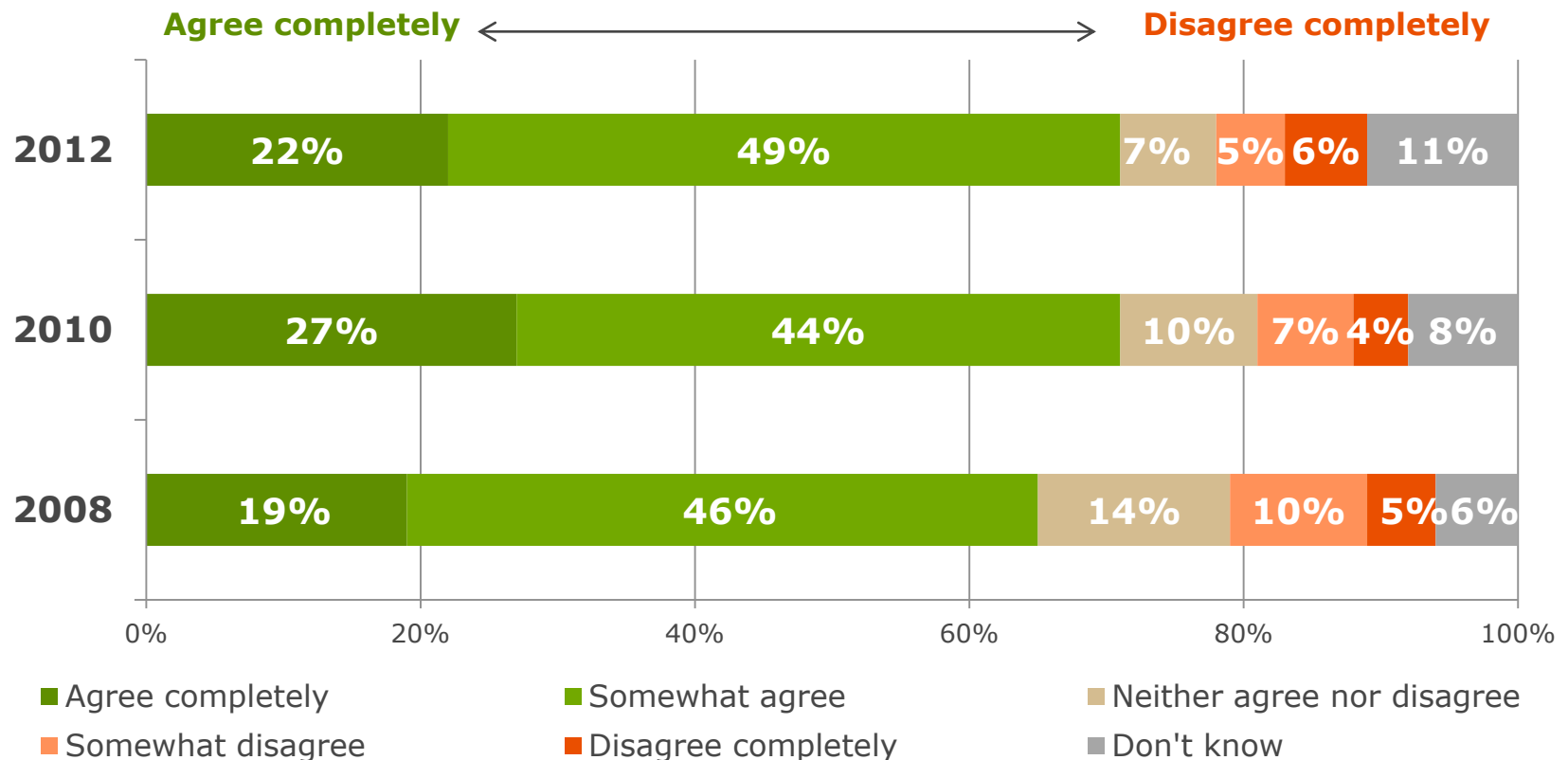
# While the scale leans to the positive side, there is also less agreement that the City is adequately planning for Burien's future.

## Agreement that the City of Burien is Adequately Planning for the Future



# The City continues to receive high ratings for protecting the natural environment.

## Agreement that the City of Burien is Adequately Protecting the Natural Environment



**SECTION 4:**

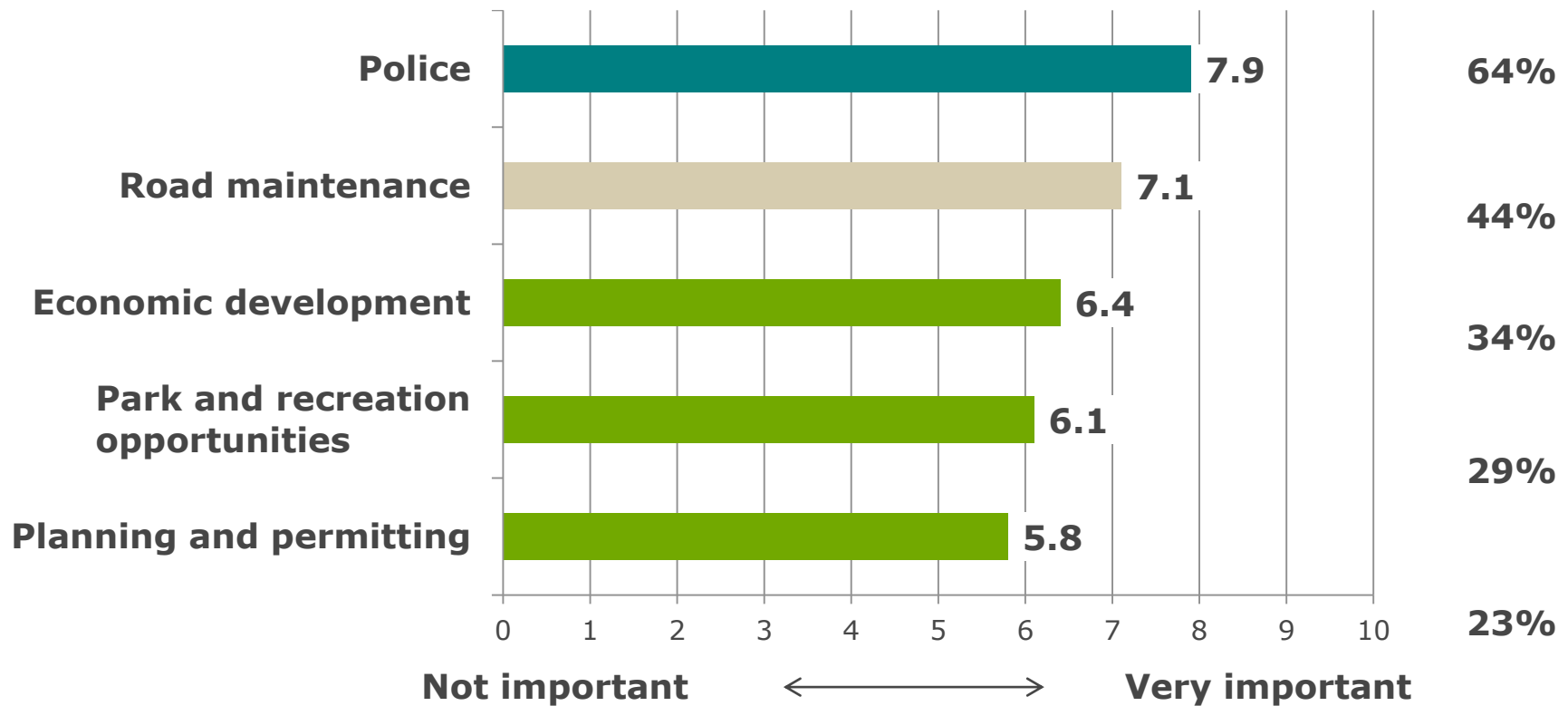
**SERVICE PRIORITIES**

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# Public safety is a top concern in Burien, so it is no surprise that police service is the top priority.

### Importance of Services 2012

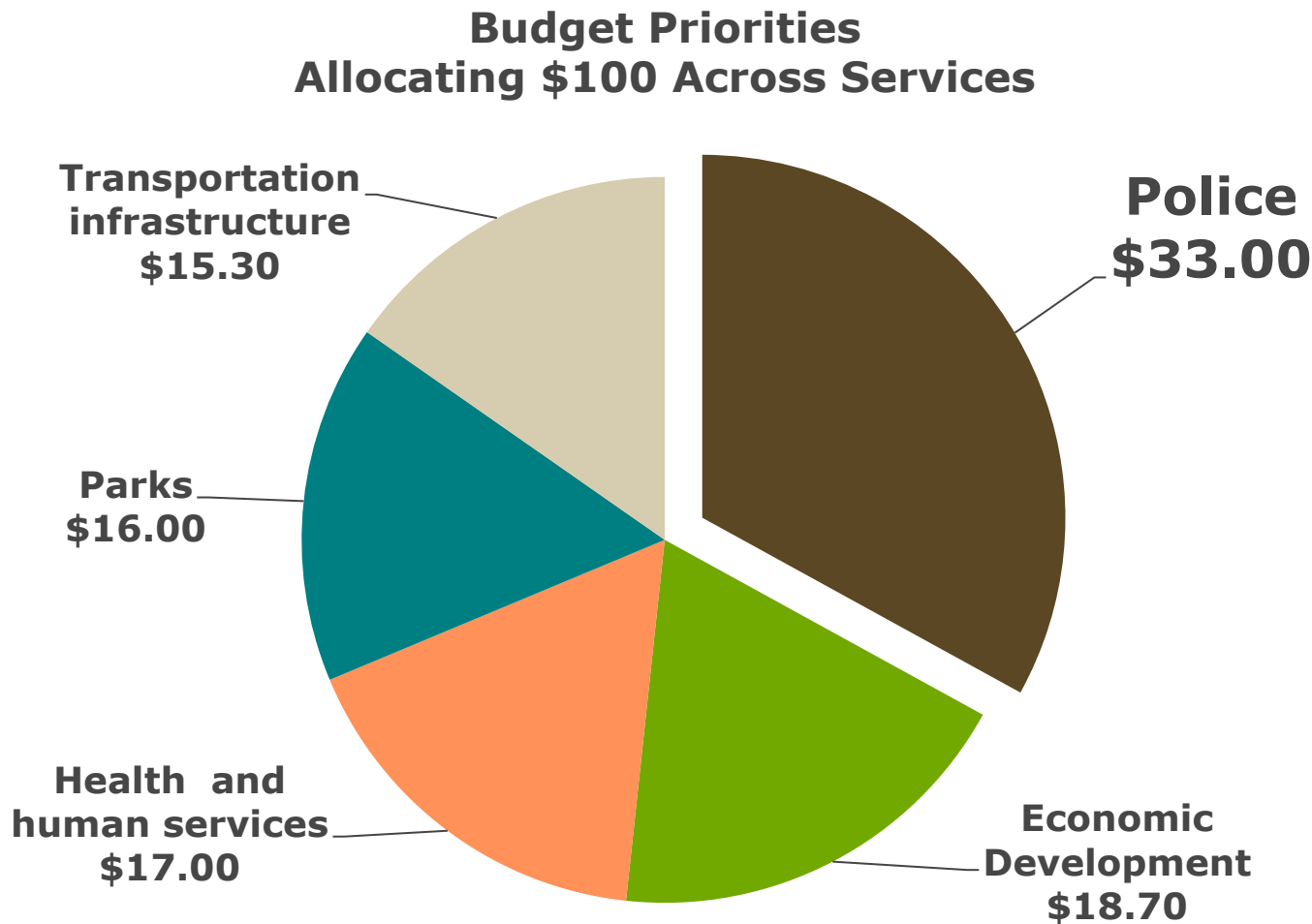
**Top Importance Rating 8-10**





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**Residents allocated one-third of their \$100 to police, around twice as much as any other service.**

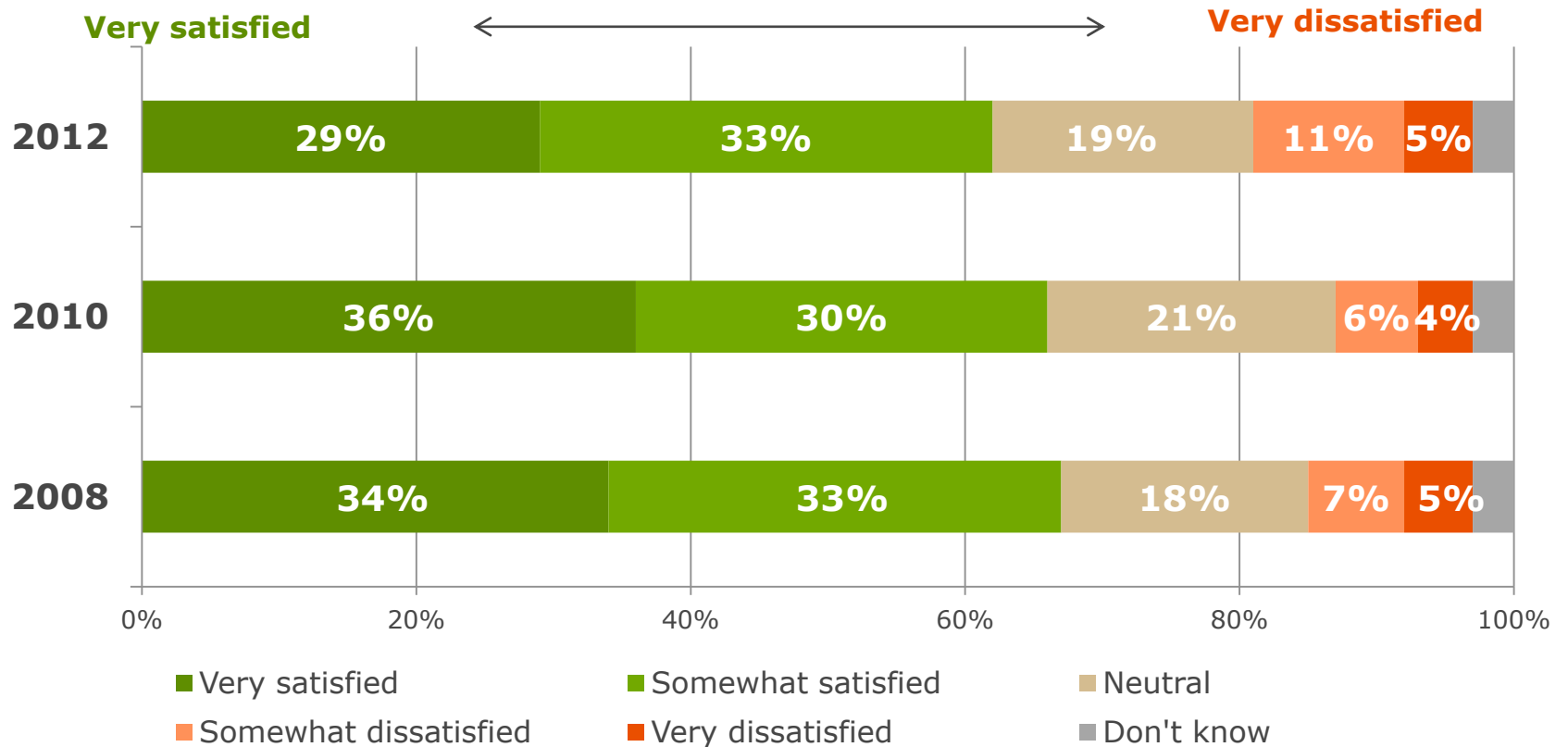


**SECTION 5:**

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

# Public safety is top of mind for residents. Many are satisfied with the Police Department, although with less intensity than in 2010.

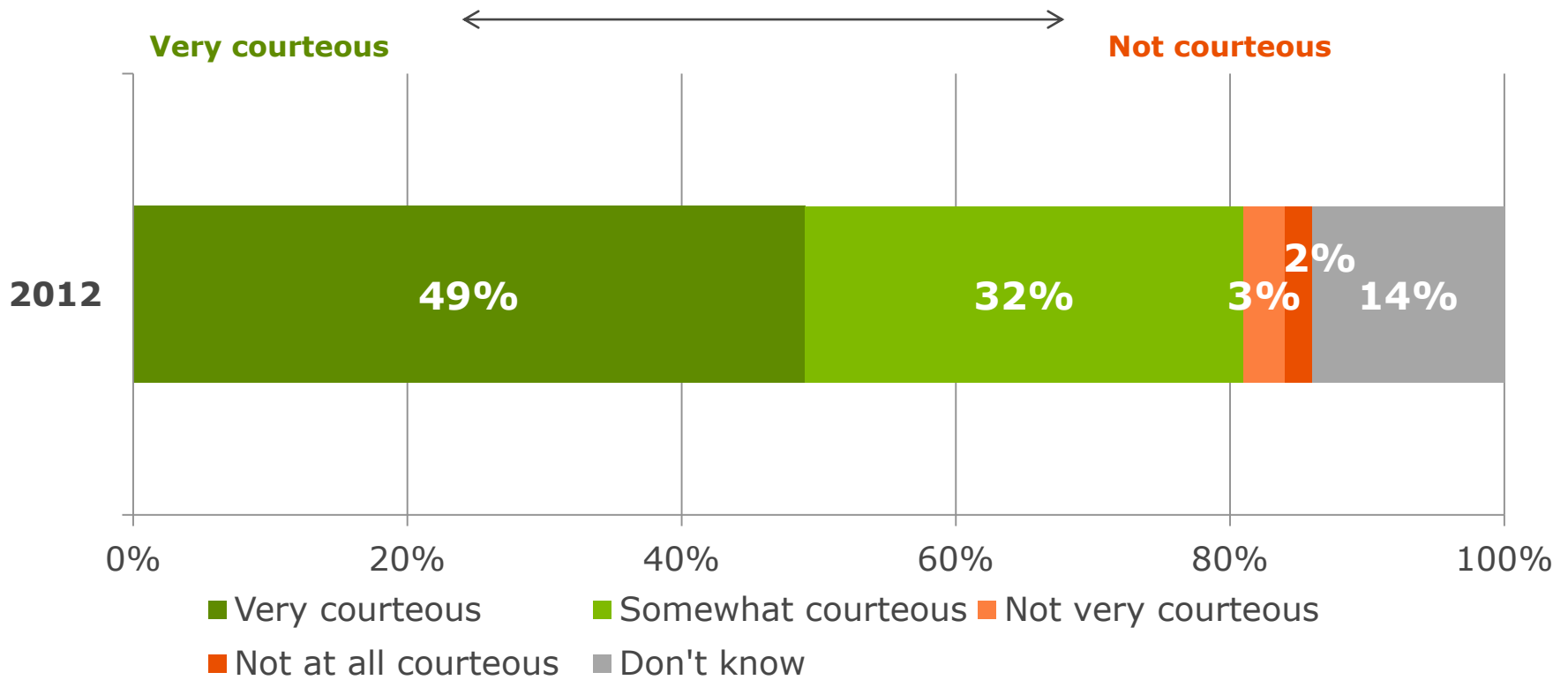
## Performance Ratings of Burien Police Department



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# Burien police have a reputation for courteousness.

## Perceptions of Courtesy of Burien Police 2012

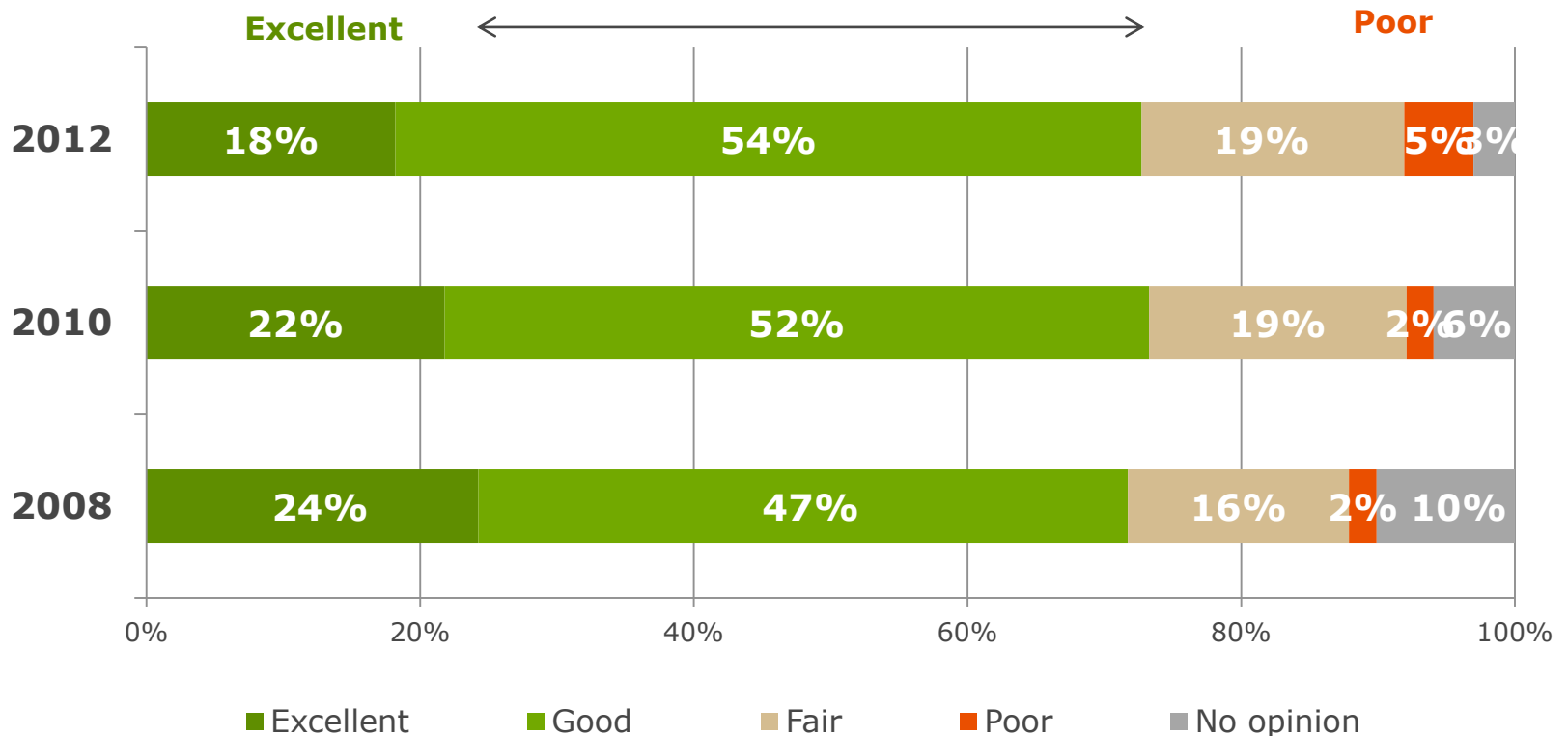


## **SECTION 6:**

# **PARKS & RECREATION**

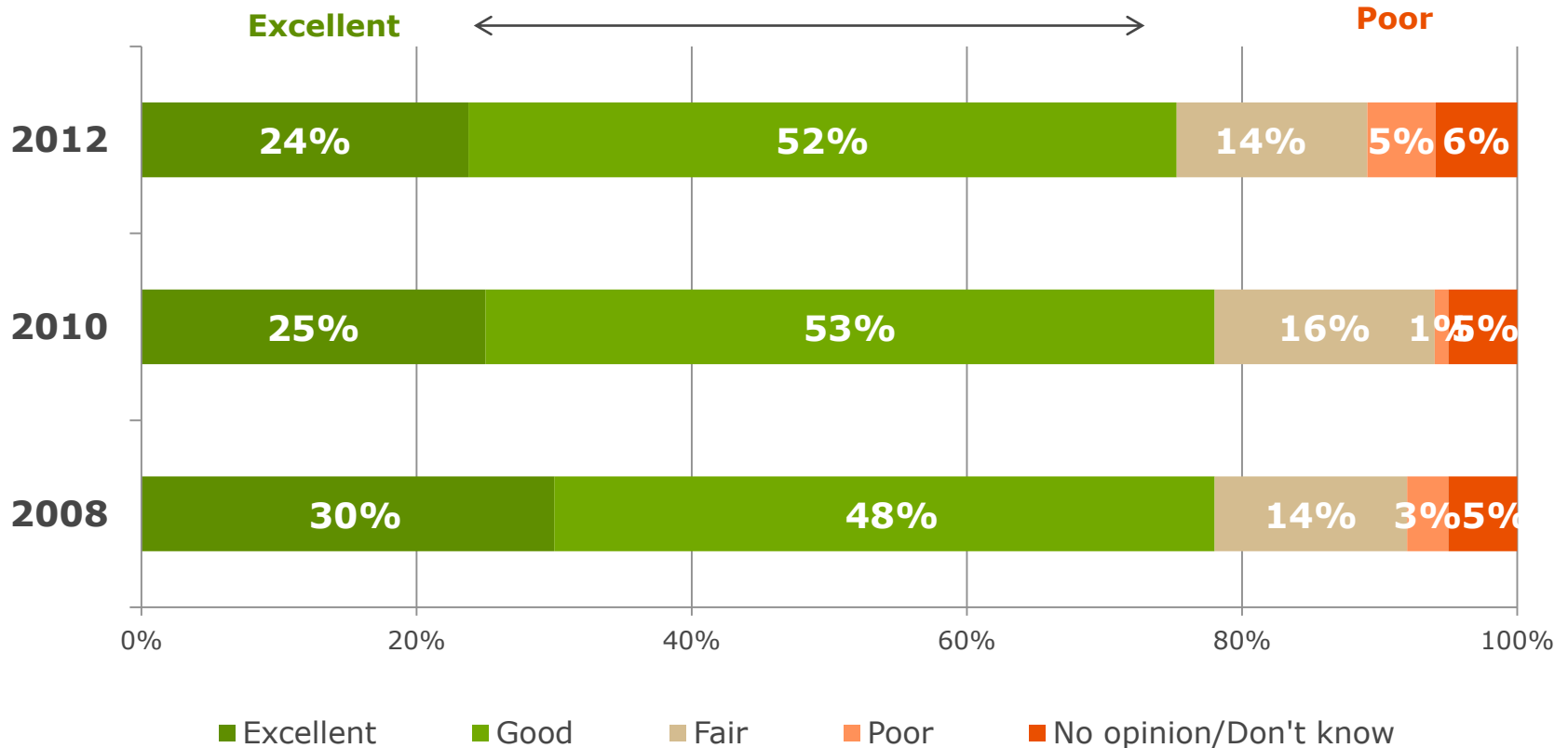
# 7 in 10 continued to be satisfied with parks and recreation programs.

## Performance with Burien's Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Programs



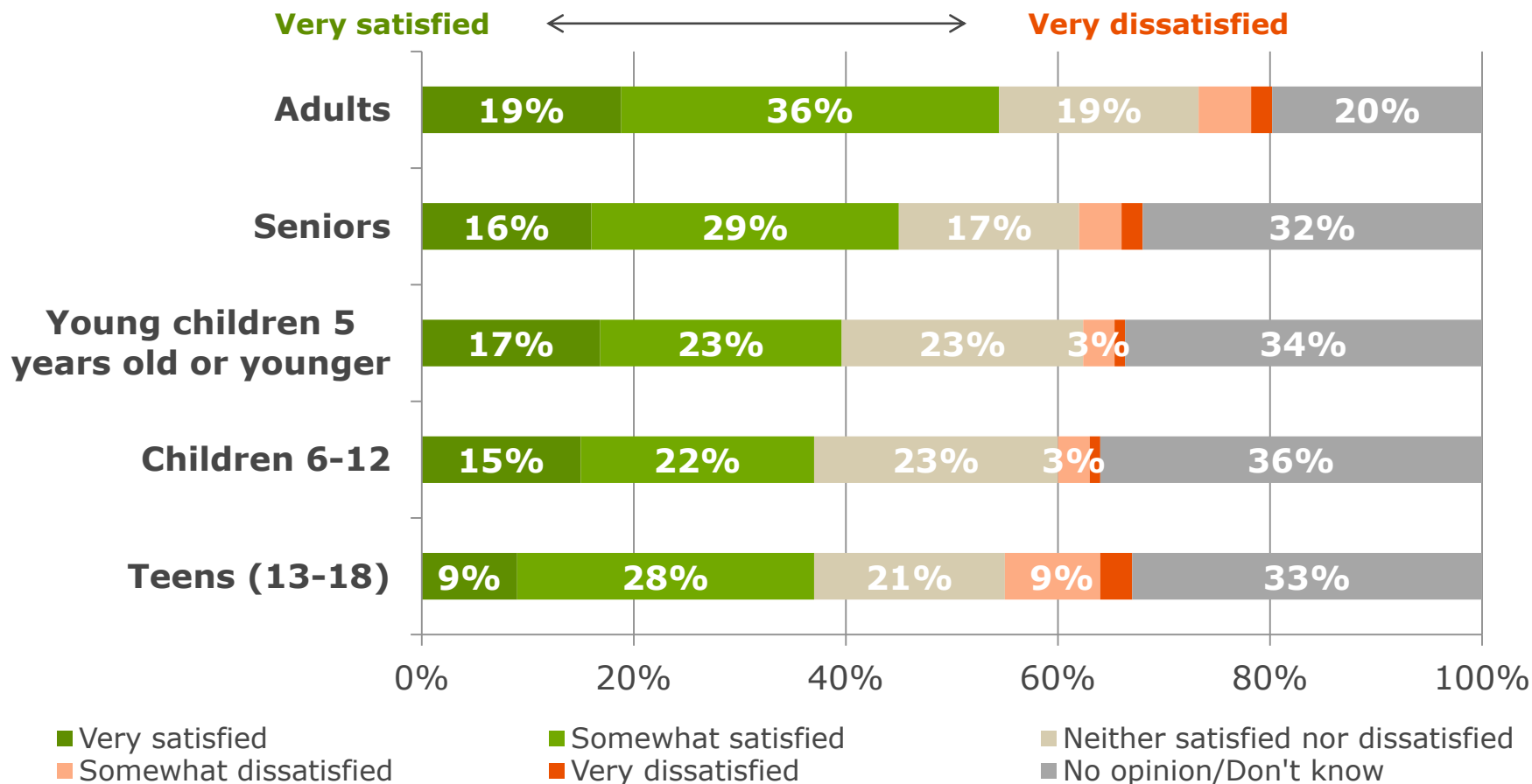
# And have similar high satisfaction levels with parks maintenance.

## Satisfaction with Maintenance of City's Parks



# Satisfaction for programs is high among those who are aware of them, but 39%-59% don't know enough to give programs a rating.

## Satisfaction with Recreation Programs By Group

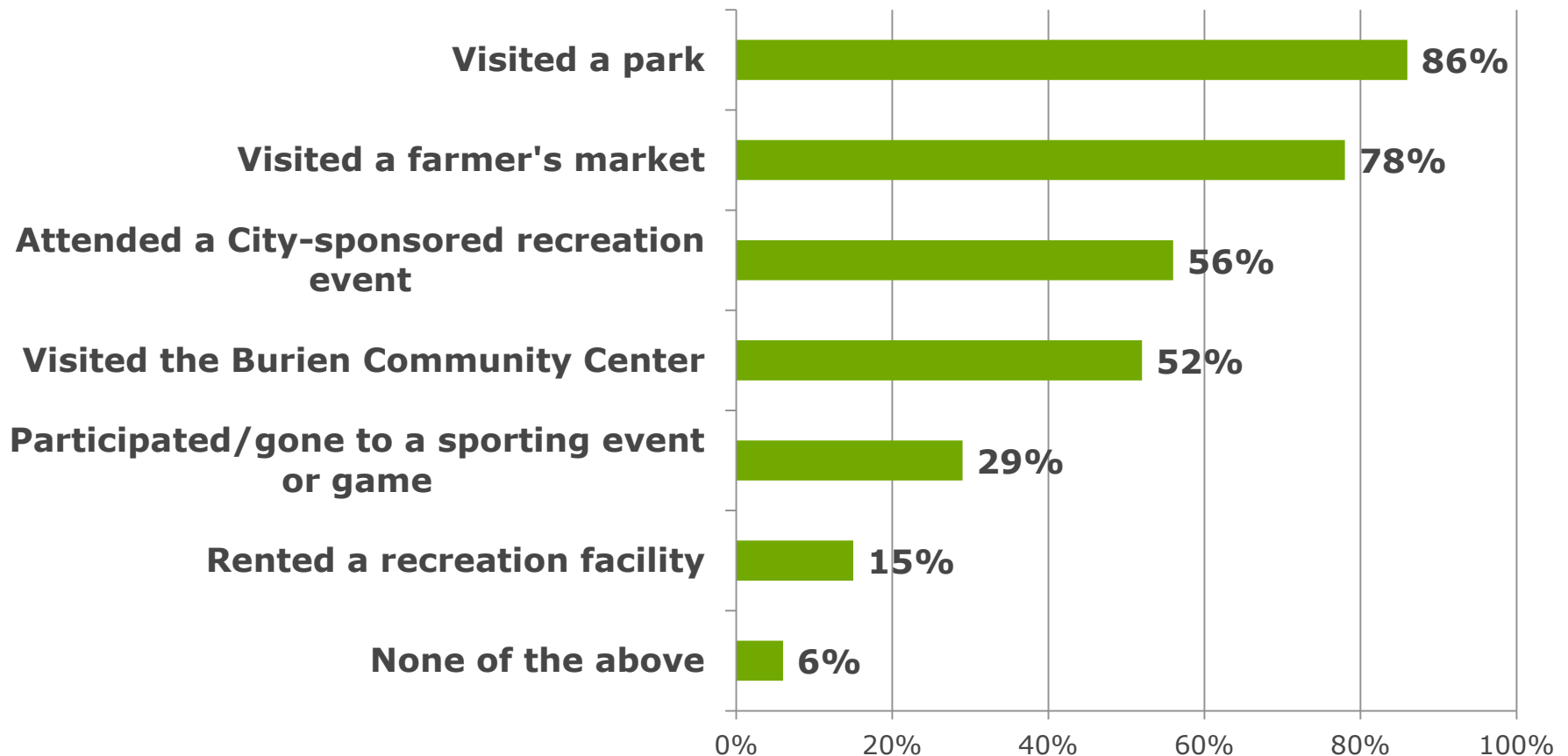




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# Many residents have experience with parks programs in Burien, especially visiting parks and farmer's markets.

## Usage of Parks Programs and Services

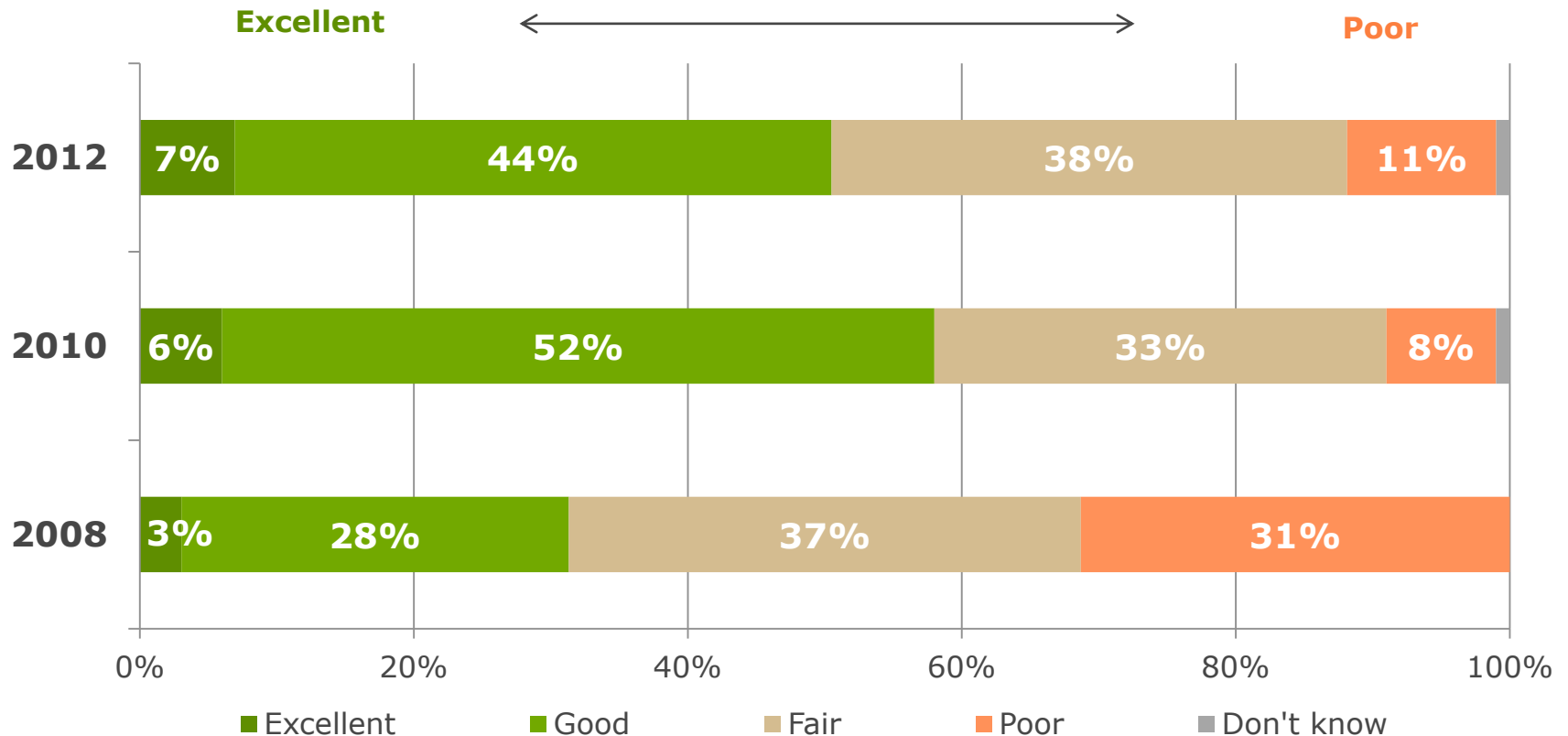


## **SECTION 7:**

# **TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

# Since 2008, there has been significant gains in satisfaction with the quality of Burien's roads.

## Satisfaction with Road Quality

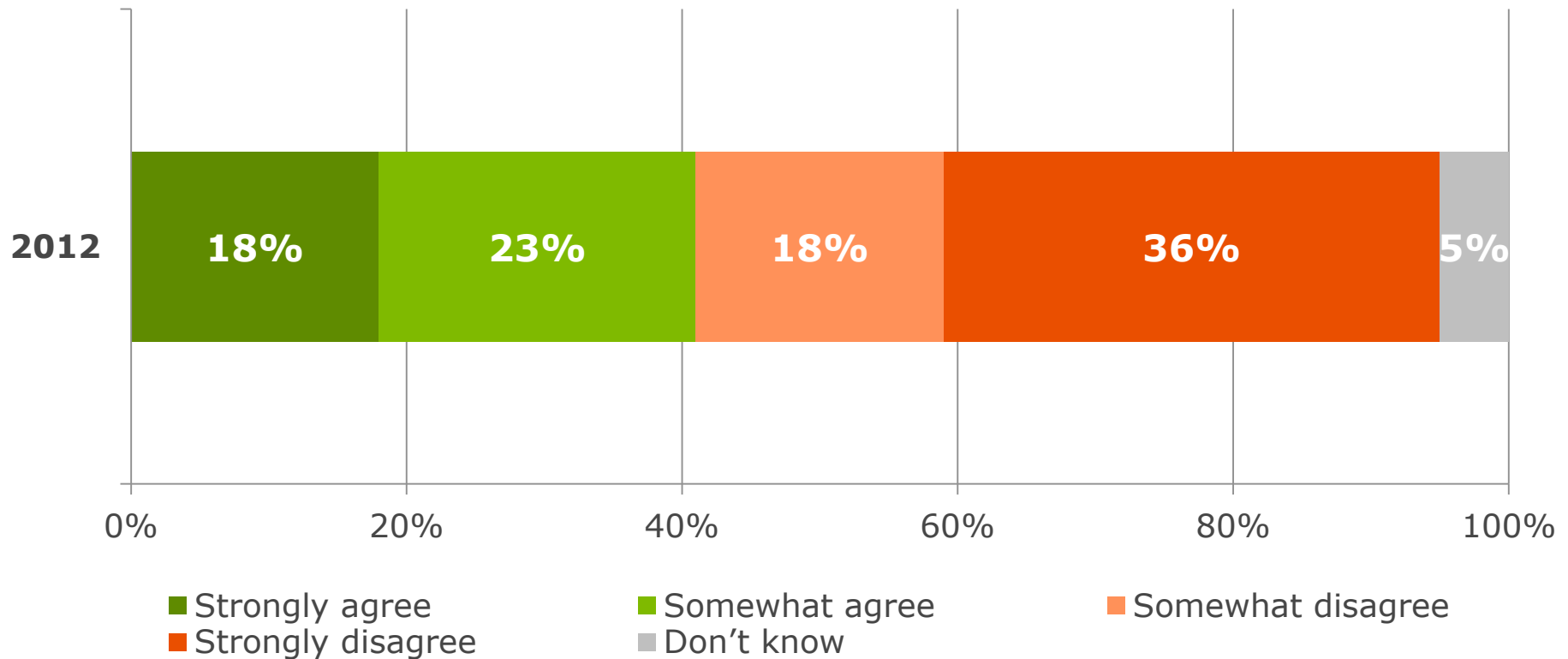


# A majority of residents expressed dissatisfaction with the number of sidewalks and walking paths in their neighborhoods.

## Agreement that Their Neighborhood Has Enough Sidewalks and Biking Paths

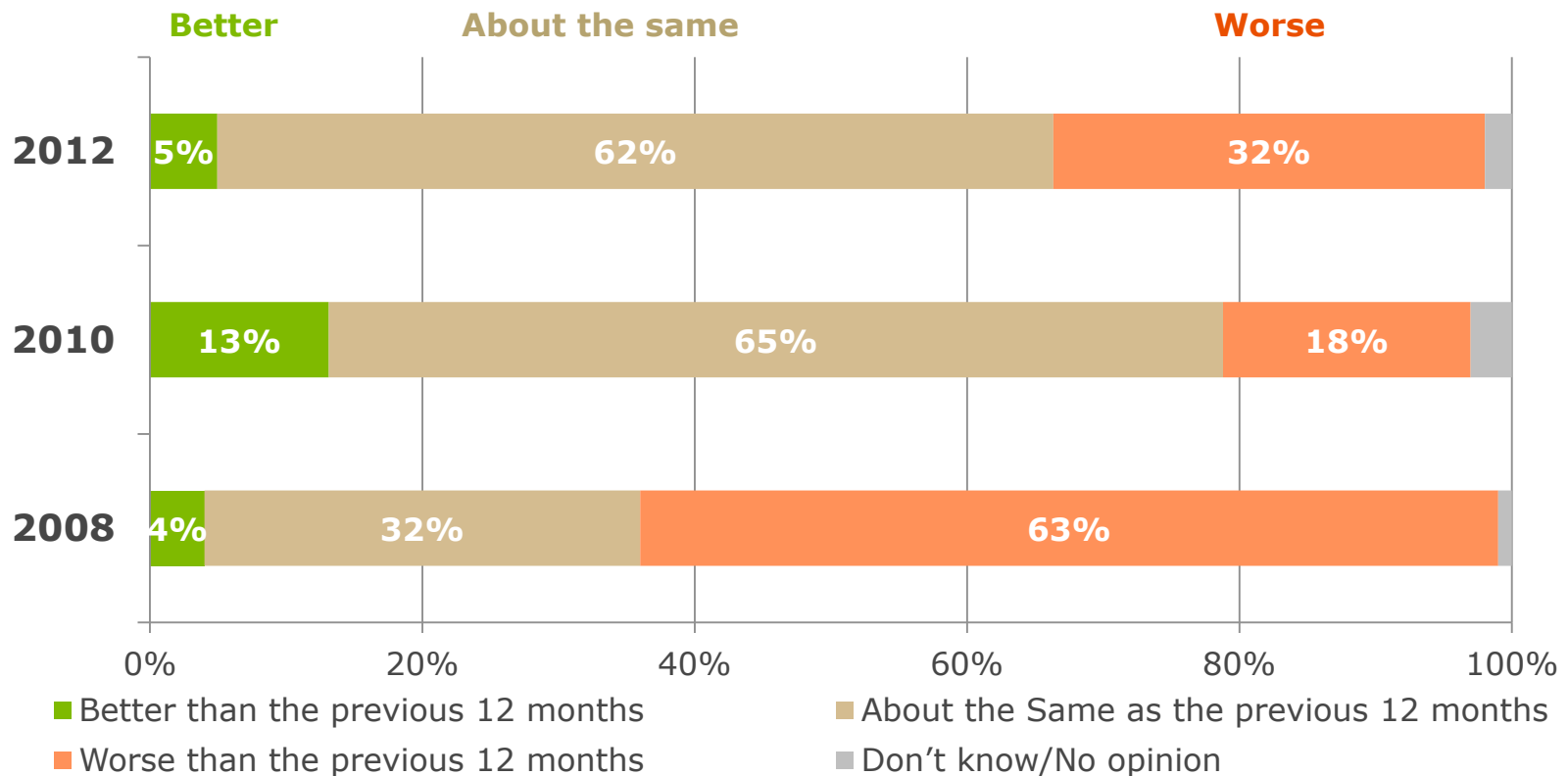
Strongly agree

Strongly disagree



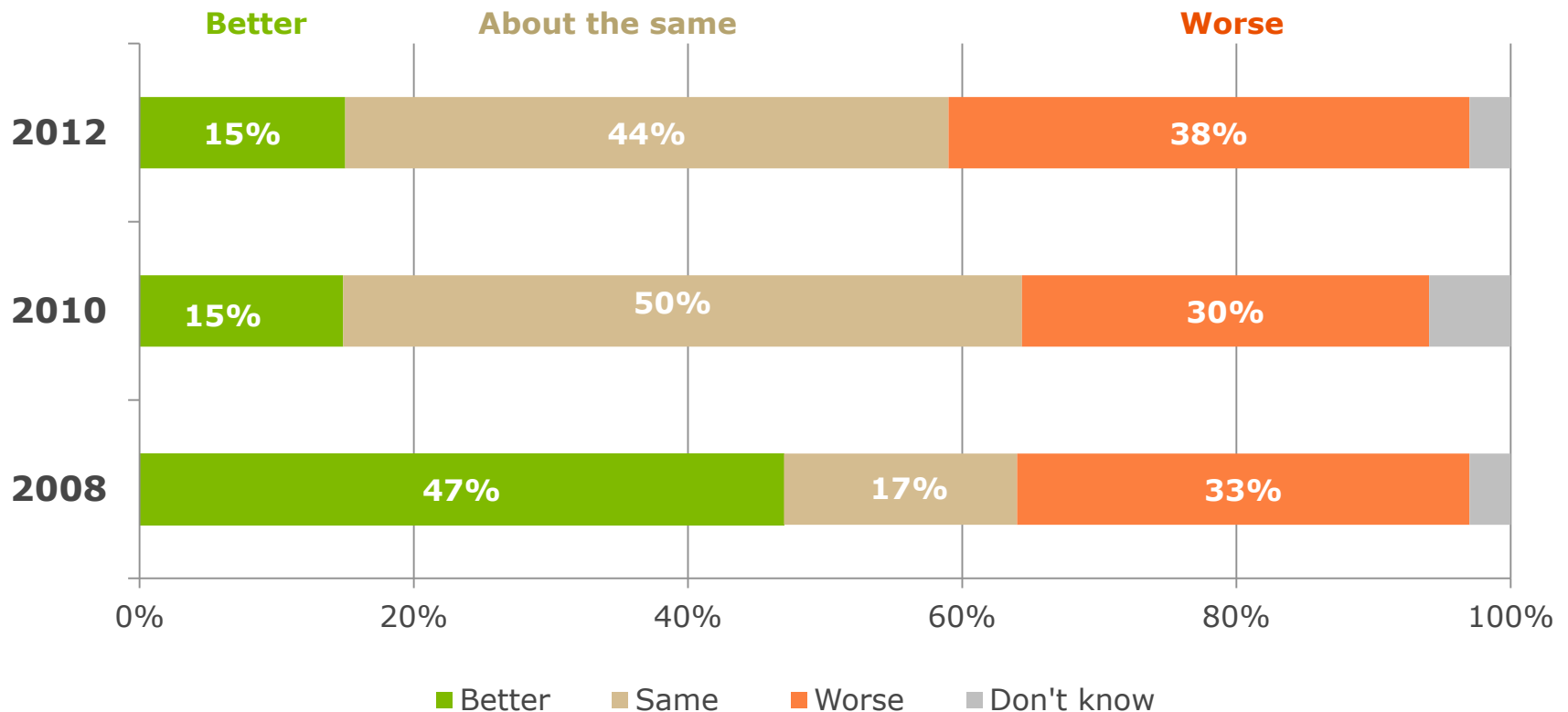
# Residents feel more positively about traffic in Burien. Since 2008, there has been a 31-point drop in perceptions that traffic is worse.

## Change in Traffic Over Past 12 Months



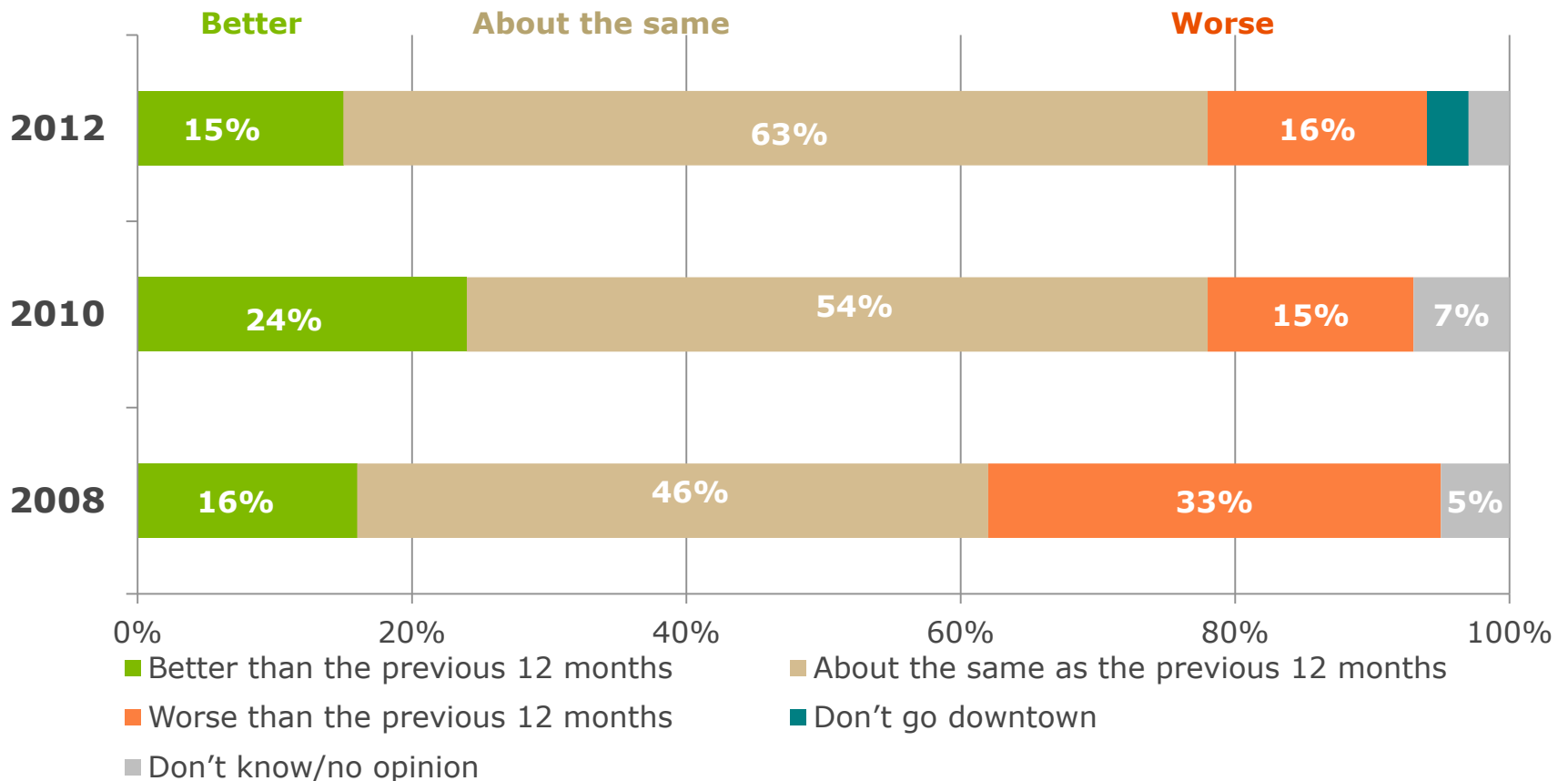
# Residents are divided between thinking traffic will stay the same or get worse, which is not uncommon in the Puget Sound area.

## Perception of Traffic In the Next 12 months



# 6 in 10 think parking downtown as remained about the same; few are negative.

## Perception of Downtown Parking Over Past 12 Months



**SECTION 8:**

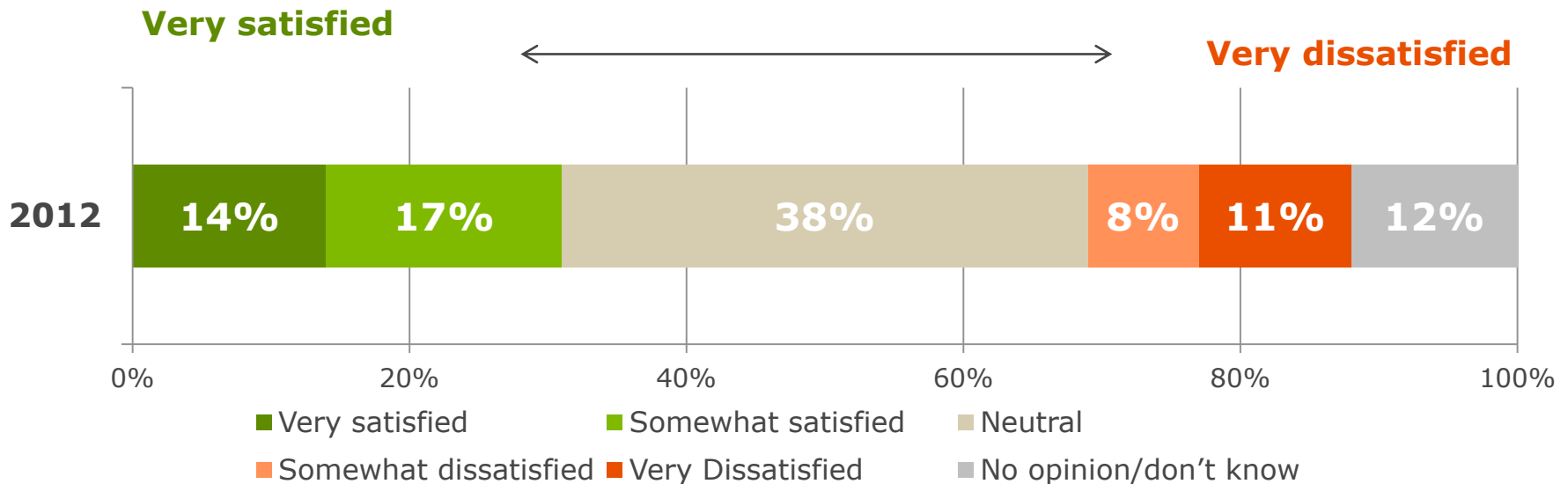
**ANIMAL CONTROL**



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# Residents are neutral to positive about animal control in Burien. Just over one-quarter have used this service.

## Satisfaction with Animal Control Services



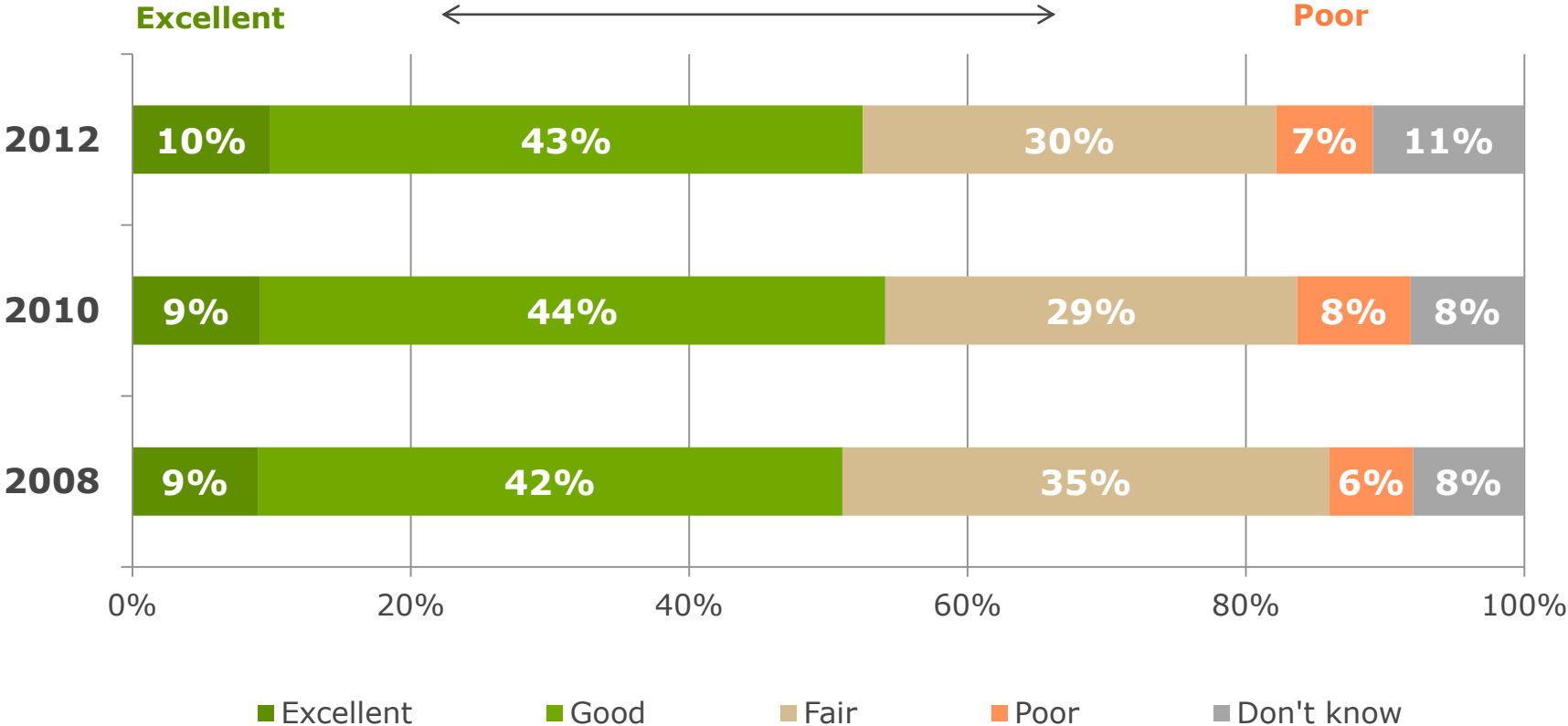
**Have you used animal control services:**  
**Yes: 27% | No: 72%**

**SECTION 9:**

**EQUITY**

# Residents are more likely to think relationships between different races are good; 3 in 10 continue to be lukewarm.

**Rating for Relationships Between People of Different Races and Cultures**



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# The biggest reason for having positive perceptions of interracial relations is simply that everyone gets along.

| Reasons for Thinking Relationships Between Different Cultures are Good/Excellent | 2012<br>N=210 |
|--|---------------|
| Everyone gets along  | 57%           |
| Multi-racial community   | 32%           |
| Never had any issues with race   | 17%           |
| Lack of unity between racial groups  | 9%            |
| Racism/discrimination  | 7%            |
| Racial diversity in schools  | 2%            |
| Multi-cultural restaurants   | 2%            |
| Crime/gang-related issues  | 2%            |

# Lack of unity between groups is the biggest reason for negative ratings, particularly for Hispanic residents.

| Reasons for Thinking Relationships Between Different Cultures are Fair/Poor | 2012<br>N=148 |
|---|---------------|
| Lack of unity between racial groups   | 45%           |
| Everyone gets along   | 26%           |
| Multi-racial community  | 25%           |
| Racism/discrimination   | 12%           |
| Crime/gang-related issues   | 7%            |
| Room for improvement – general  | 5%            |
| Language barriers/people speaking different languages                       | 4%            |
| Never had any issues with race  | 3%            |

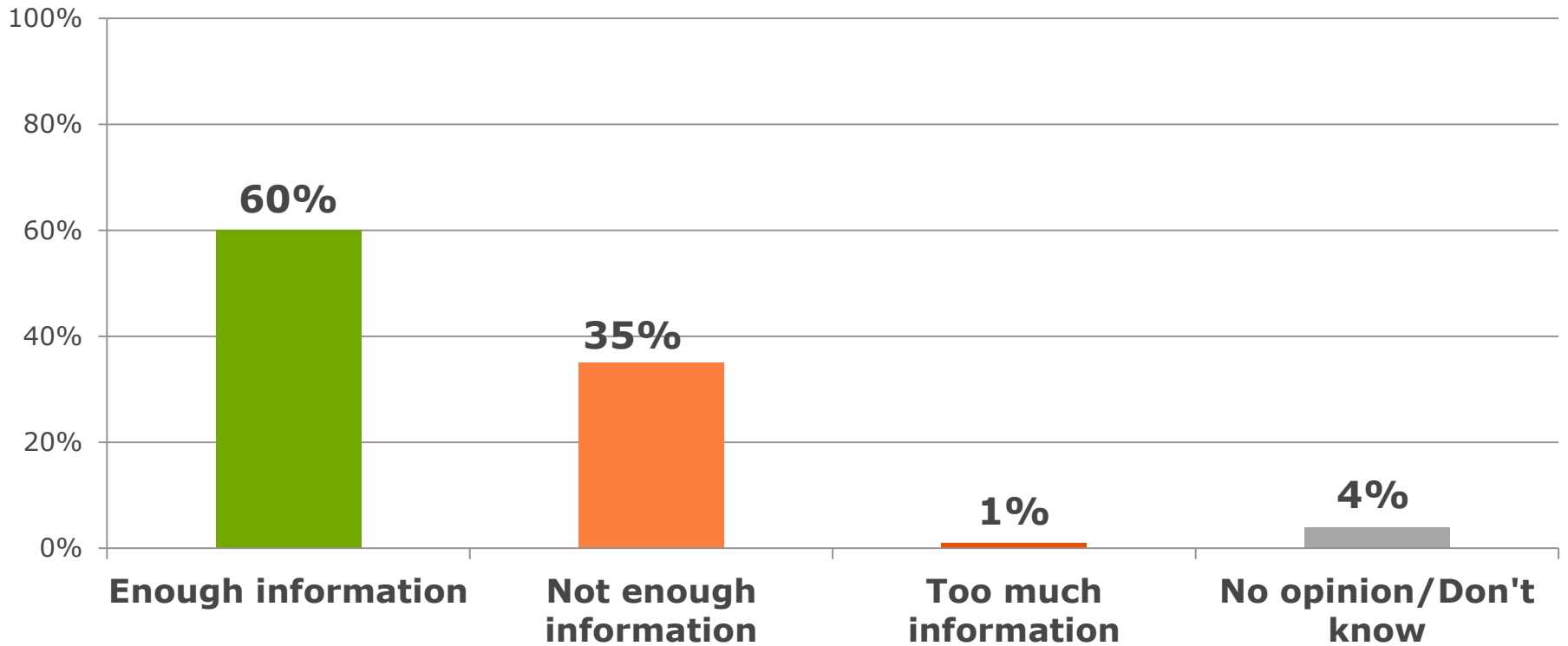
**SECTION 10:**  
**COMMUNICATIONS**

# This year, Burien residents mentioned a bigger variety of information sources, with sizable increases in email, blogs, flyers, and mail.

| Information Sources about Burien                    | 2012<br>N=400 | 2010<br>N=461 | 2008<br>N=404 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Local newspaper/Highline times                      | 31%           | 29%           | 47%           |
| Burien city newsletter                              | 25%           | 44%           | 50%           |
| Friends/colleagues                                  | 18%           | 13%           | 20%           |
| Flyers/signs/billboards posted around the community | 18%           | 2%            | 10%           |
| Direct mail   | 18%           | 4%            | 5%            |
| Email/internet                                      | 16%           | 6%            | 3%            |
| Blogs   | 10%           | 3%            | -             |
| Pamphlets/brochures                                 | 8%            | 2%            | 3%            |
| City of Burien website                              | 7%            | 27%           | 18%           |
| TV/TV news – general                                | 5%            | 0%            | 0%            |
| The library   | 3%            | 1%            | -             |
| Do not receive information                          | 5%            | 3%            | 2%            |

# A majority think they get enough information about Burien, however 35% said they could use more.

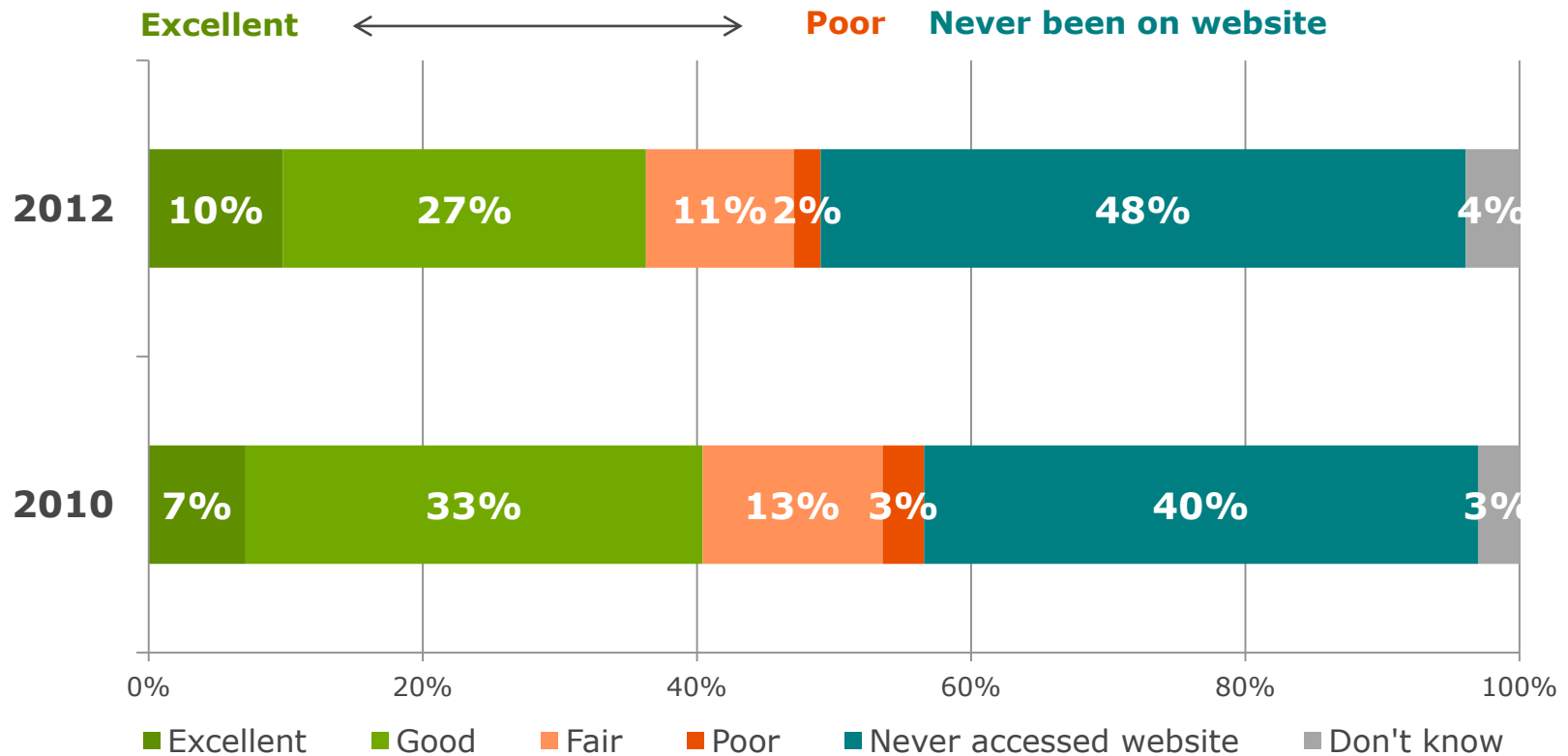
## Satisfaction with Amount of Information





**5 in 10 have never been on the City's website. Those who have are 3 times more likely to rate it positively than negatively.**

### Satisfaction with City Website

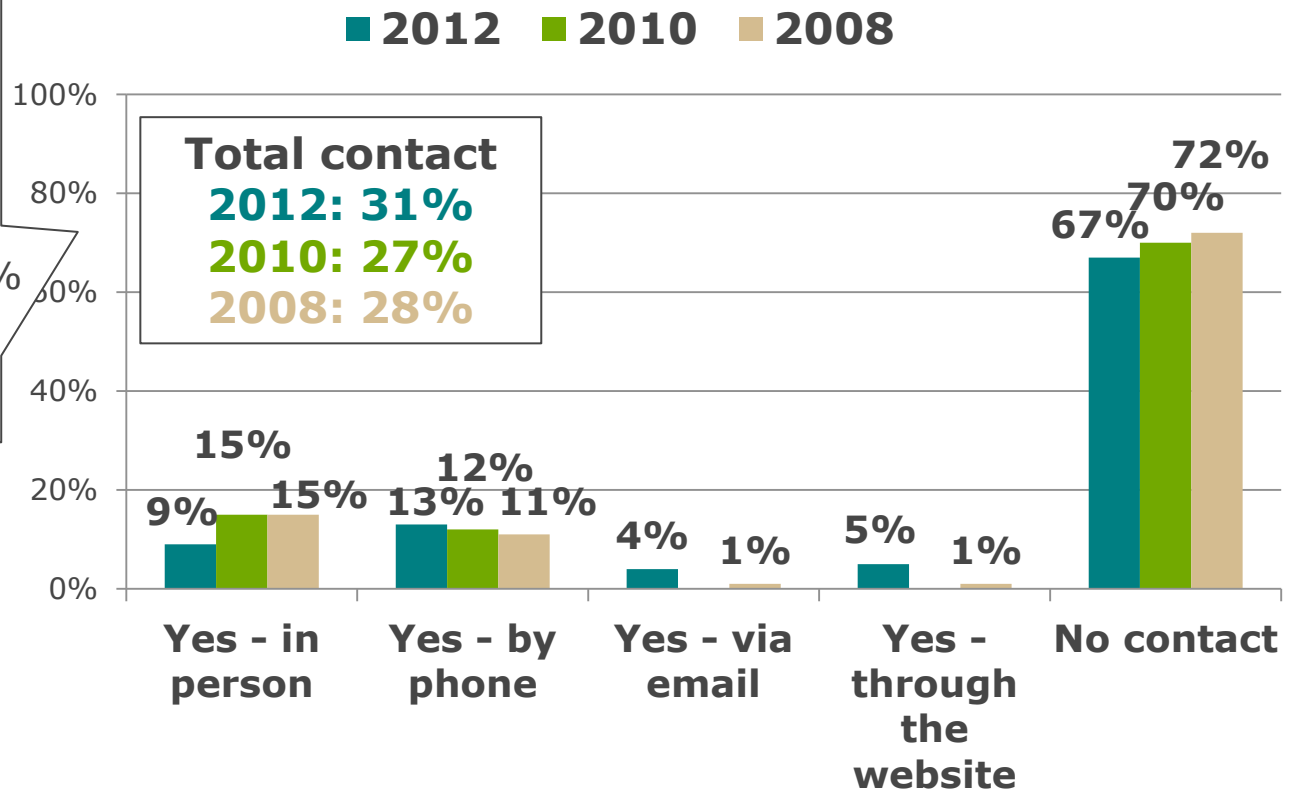


# Two-thirds of residents have not contacted the city in the past few years. Those who have did so in person or by phone.

## If and How Residents Contacted the City

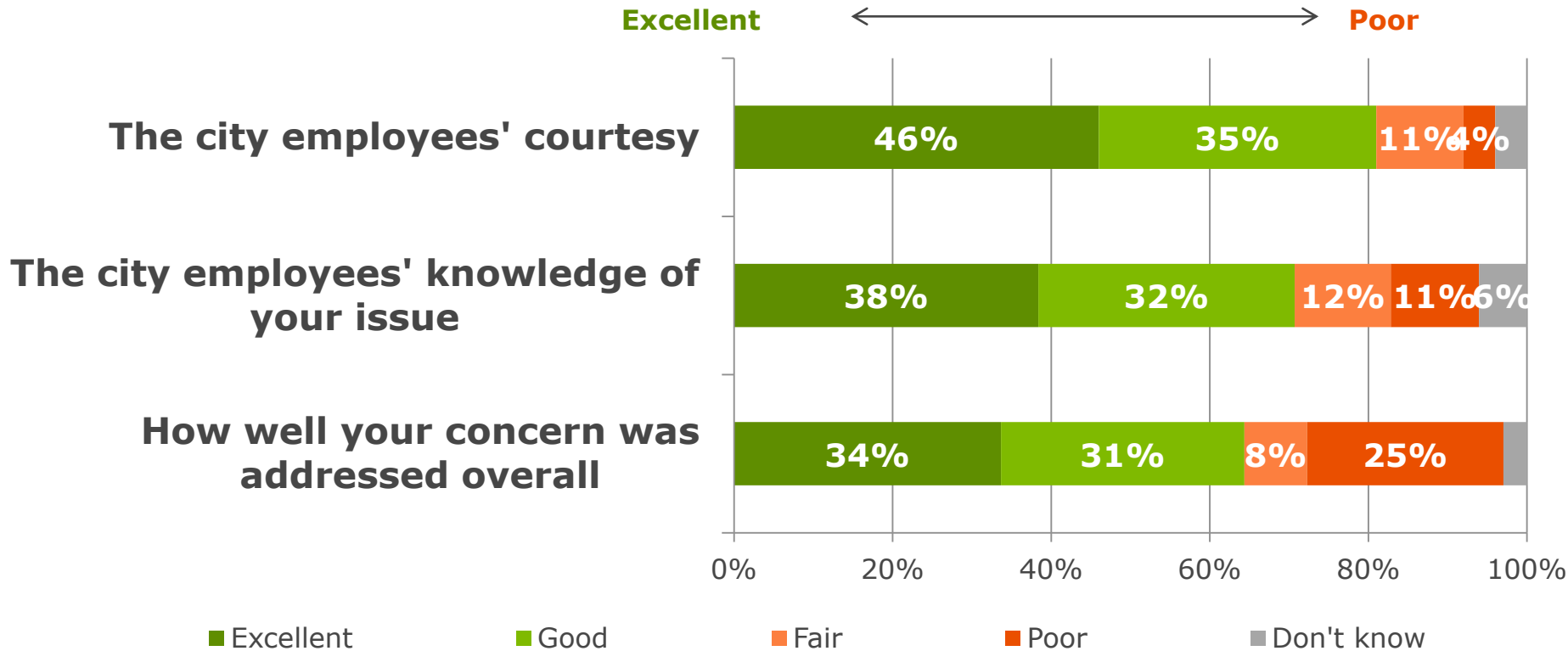
### What department?

- Public works: 16%
- Police: 15%
- Animal control: 13%
- Parks: 9%
- City Hall: 9%
- Code Enforcement: 8%
- Planning and zoning: 7%
- Building/permit: 5%
- Council member: 3%
- City manager: 1%



# Residents are satisfied with City employees' courtesy and knowledge. There is some dissatisfaction with getting issues addressed.

## Satisfaction with Contacting the City



## **SECTION 11:**

# **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

## **Majorities continue to feel positively about living in Burien, yet with slight drops in enthusiasm since 2008.**

Two-thirds (66%) think things in Burien are headed in the right direction, a slight decrease from 2010 (72%) and 2008 (74%). There have been no substantial increases in negative attitudes. It is worth noting that Burien residents feel more positively about the city's direction than the direction of the state, for which attitudes are split.

Since 2008, high majorities have rated Burien and their neighborhoods as a good or excellent place to live. Residents of West Burien were more likely to view their neighborhood positively than residents of East Burien, as are women compared to men.

Majorities of people feel safe in downtown Burien and in their neighborhoods, however people, particularly women, feel much safer during the day.

## **Satisfaction is high for City government performance and all City Services.**

**Overall:** Seventy-six percent (76%) are satisfied with the overall quality of city services, similar to 2010 and 2008. More than six in ten (61%) are satisfied with the job the City government is doing for the Burien community. While a drop from 76% in 2010, there has not been an increase in dissatisfaction, rather an increase in “don’t know” and “neutral” attitudes.

**Police:** More than six in ten (62%) residents are satisfied with the Burien Police Department, continuing a strong trend of satisfaction from 2008 (66%) to 2010 (67%). Additionally, more than eight in ten (81%) residents view the Burien Police as courteous.

**Parks:** Almost all residents have visited a park, and strong majorities are satisfied with Burien’s parks, facilities, and recreation programs (72%) and park maintenance (76%). Residents are less connected to recreation programs, particularly for kids.

**Transportation Infrastructure:** More than five in ten (51%) residents are satisfied with the quality of Burien’s roads, a large improvement over 2008 (31%), and most don’t think traffic has gotten worse over the last year. A majority, however, do not feel they have enough sidewalks and walking paths in their neighborhoods.

## **While all city services are important to residents, police are the top priority.**

Public safety is top of mind for residents, with 44% who said open-ended that it is the top issue for the city to address, over the economy. Given \$100 of city revenue to allocate, residents chose to award one-third (\$33.00) to police services, nearly twice as much as any other service, and 64% gave police a top importance rating.

It is worth noting that crime is not traditionally a major concern of NW suburbs and therefore such a response warrants further investigation.

## **Women have more concerns about the city than in previous years, particularly its safety.**

There has been an increase in the number of women who are worried about their safety. They feel less safe downtown this year than in 2010 (23% vs. 10%), and less than five in ten (47%) feel safe walking in their neighborhood at night, compared to 71% of men.

This concern may be impacting their attitudes about their neighborhood and city. In 2010, men and women had similar satisfaction scores for their city and neighborhood. This year there was a 15-point drop in excellent scores among women for the city (from 26% to 11%) and a 13-point drop for their neighborhoods (from 35% to 22%). Attitudes among men have stayed similar between the 2010 and 2012 surveys.

Finally, women are less likely to think they are getting the full value of city services for taxes paid. This year, men were more satisfied with the city's ability to provide quality services for their tax dollars than women. (62% vs. 52%), a notable reversal from 2010 when women were slightly more likely to be satisfied than men (70% vs. 69%).





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