

# City of Milwaukee 2026 Budget Public Survey Results Summary

Residents were invited to submit comments about the 2026 City of Milwaukee Budget online.

The survey was open for 82 days, from August 8 – October 28, 2025.

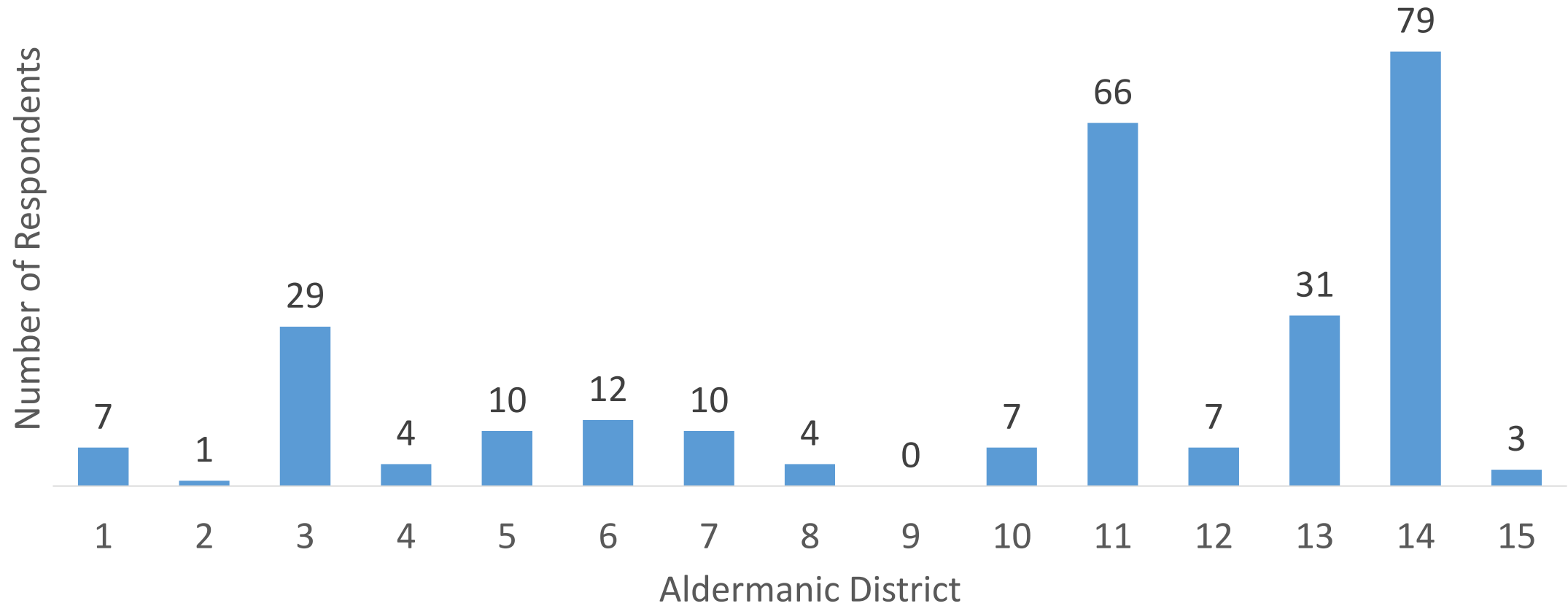
Prepared by:

Dave Gelting, Legislative & Fiscal Services Specialist

City of Milwaukee Legislative Reference Bureau

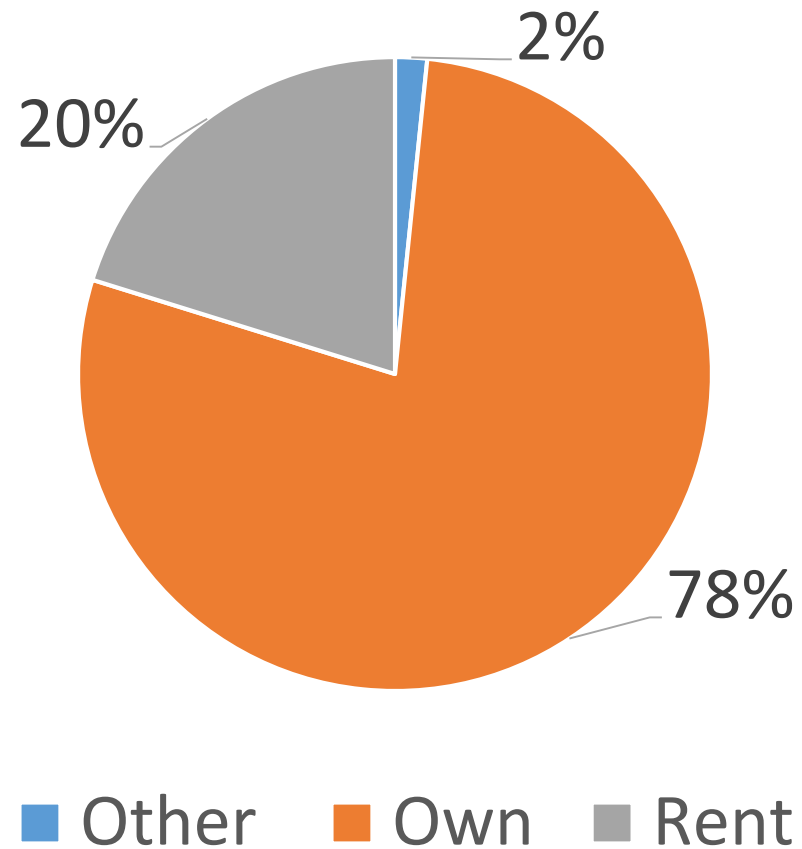
October 29, 2025

# Respondent Demographics: Which Aldermanic District do you live in?

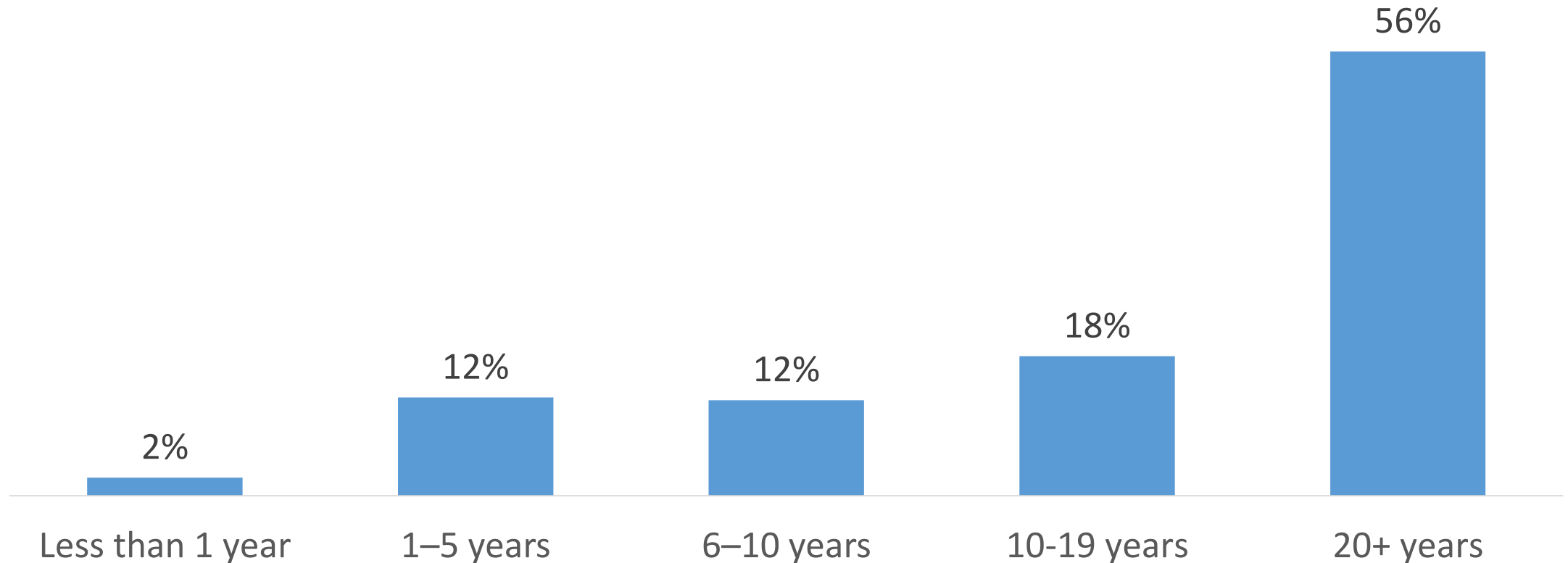


Respondents = 270

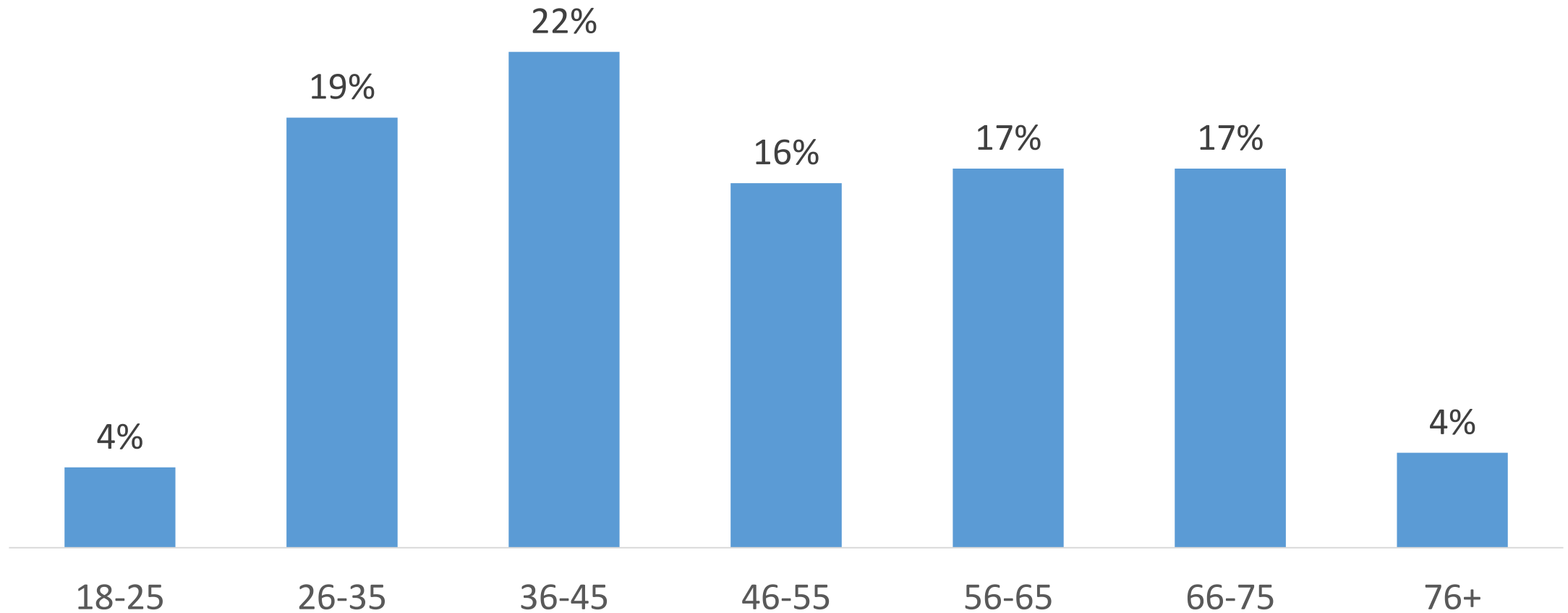
# Respondent Demographics: Do you rent or own your residence?



# Respondent Demographics: How long have you lived in Milwaukee?



# Respondent Demographics: What is your age?



Respondents = 305

Please rate the level of importance

- 1 Very Important
- 2 Somewhat Important
- 3 Unsure
- 4 Somewhat Unimportant
- 5 Very Unimportant

Budget Area	Average Level of Importance
Public Works Infrastructure	2.45
Public Works Operations	2.50
Fire Department	2.51
Milwaukee Water Works	2.56
Public Library	2.66
Health Department	2.68
Comptroller's Office	2.69
Police Department	2.70
Municipal Court	2.72
Election Commission	2.74
Neighborhood Services	2.76
City Attorney's Office	2.77
Treasurer's Office	2.81
Common Council / Office of the City Clerk	2.82
Office of the Mayor	2.88
City Development	2.93

# Please rate your level of agreement

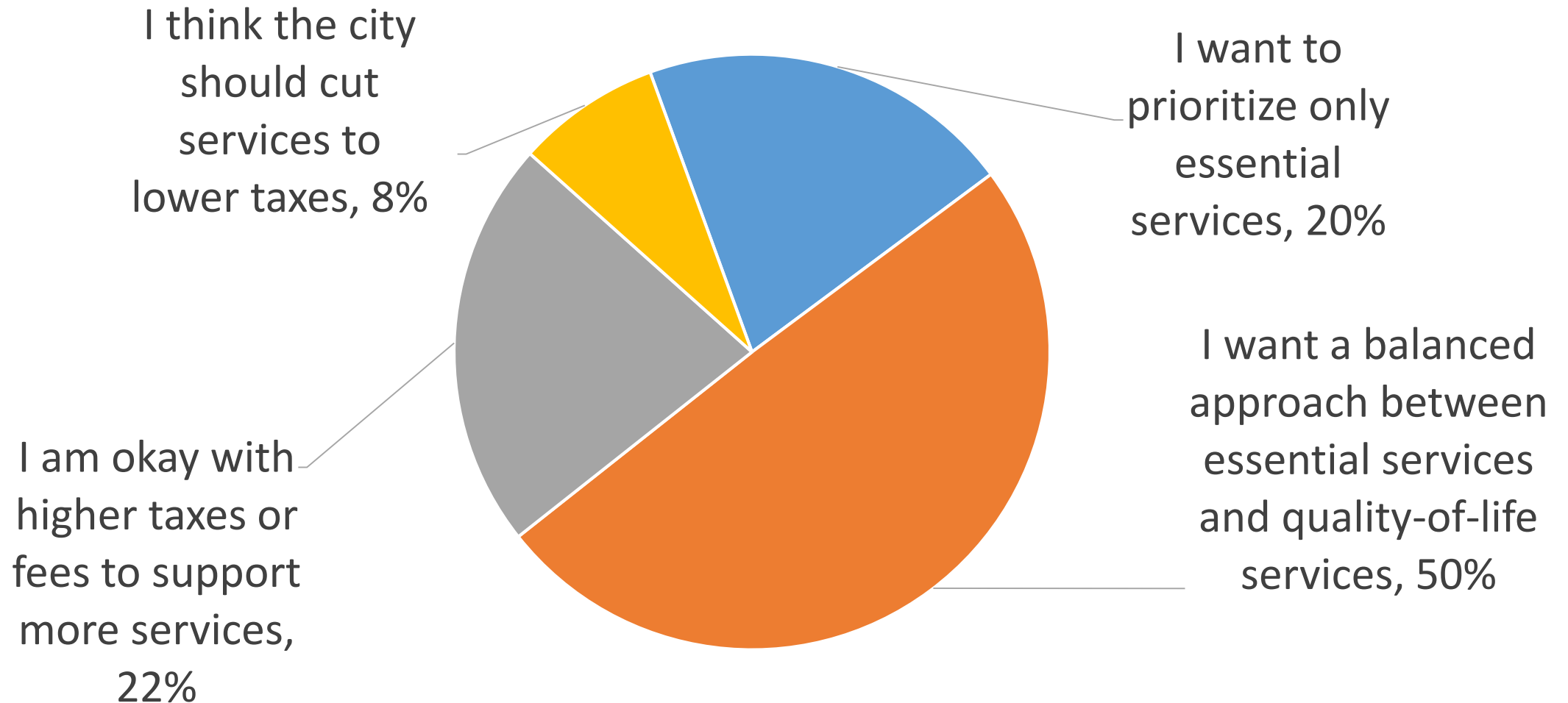
1 Completely Agree  
 2 Somewhat Agree  
 3 Unsure

4 Somewhat Disagree  
 5 Completely Disagree

Statement	Average Level of Agreement
Public libraries are accessible and have resources we need.	2.31
I feel safe in my neighborhood during the day.	2.42
Garbage & recycling collection is prompt and efficient.	2.44
Firefighters and EMS are prepared and available in case of an emergency or disaster.	2.53
I know how to access health, wellness, or mental health services when needed.	2.55
City parks and public green spaces are well maintained and welcoming.	2.60
I feel safe in my neighborhood at night.	2.60
Drinking water is clean affordable.	2.63
My neighborhood is generally clean and well cared for.	2.65
I feel heard and represented by my alderperson.	2.71
Street lighting in my area is adequate.	2.78

Statement	Average Level of Agreement
Snow and ice removal is timely and effective in my neighborhood.	2.90
City government communicates clearly and keeps residents informed.	2.92
Public transit is reliable and takes me where I need to go.	2.98
City permitting and licensing processes are accessible and understandable	3.00
I feel heard and represented by my mayor.	3.17
I am satisfied with the overall quality of city services funded by my tax dollars.	3.23
Major streets are well maintained and in good condition.	3.30
Police responses are timely.	3.31
Police officers regularly patrol my neighborhood.	3.40
Neighborhood roads are well maintained and in good condition.	3.68

# If the City has a limited budget, which of these statements best reflects your opinion?

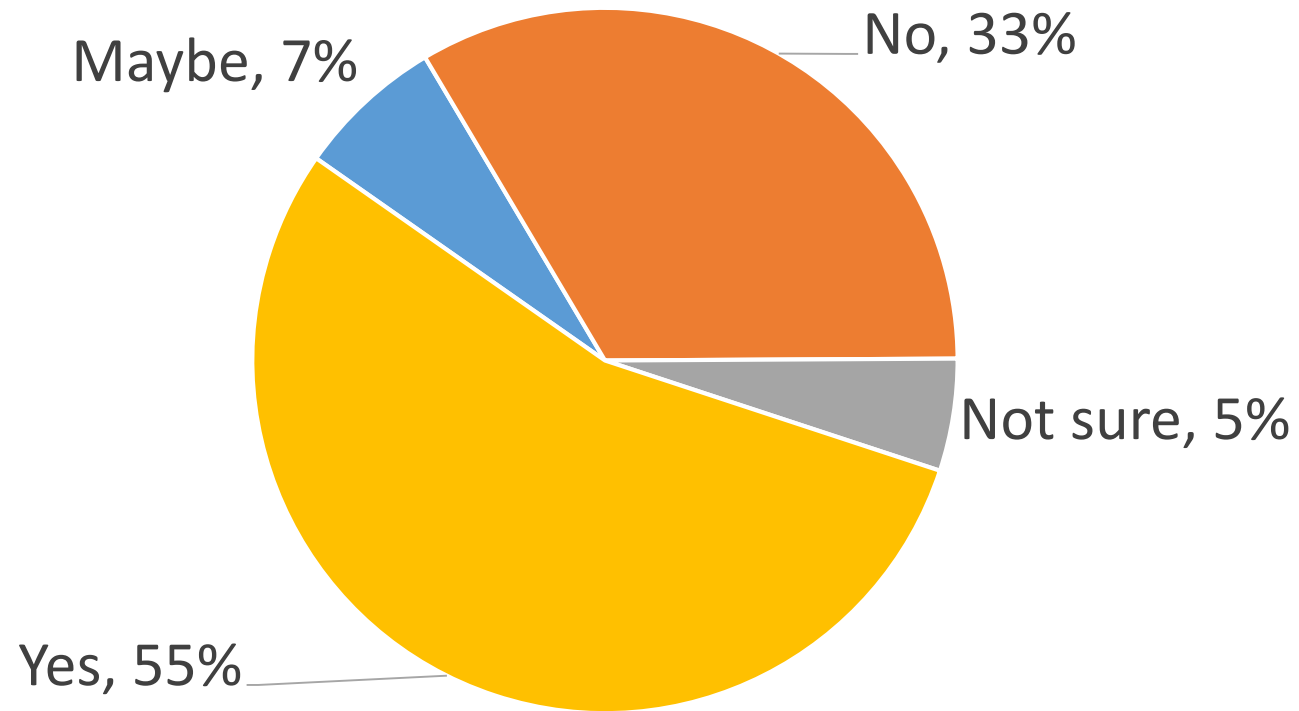


# What's one thing you'd like to see more investment in, in your neighborhood?

All 271 responses, not including any personally identifiable information, were summarized and ranked by frequency using an AI tool.

Rank	Theme	Approx. Mentions	Summary of Ideas
1	<b>Street and Road Maintenance</b>	~100 mentions	Many respondents emphasized the need to repair and maintain roads and streets, citing potholes, poor maintenance, and general infrastructure decay.
2	<b>Traffic Safety and Speeding</b>	~75 mentions	Strong concern about reckless driving, speeding, and lack of police enforcement; several called for more traffic control and visible police presence.
3	<b>Community Investment and Revitalization</b>	~55 mentions	Requests for more investment in neighborhoods, beautification, and public spaces; people want revitalization without displacement.
4	<b>Public Infrastructure and Lighting</b>	~37 mentions	Calls for improved lighting, sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit to increase safety and accessibility.
5	<b>Housing and Economic Opportunities</b>	~26 mentions	Desire for more affordable housing and access to good jobs, as well as balanced economic development that benefits residents.

Would you support shifting some funding from police services to non-police alternatives (like mental health responders or community violence prevention)?



# Comments about shifting some funding from police services to non-police alternatives.

All 209 responses, not including any personally identifiable information, were summarized and ranked by frequency using an AI tool.

Rank	Theme	Approx. Mentions	Summary of Ideas
1	<b>Opposition to Reducing Police Funding</b>	~143 mentions	Many respondents strongly opposed shifting funds away from police. They emphasized the importance of maintaining or increasing police presence for safety, crime prevention, and order. Some explicitly rejected the idea, arguing that police are essential for community protection.
2	<b>Support for Shifting Funds to Community and Mental Health Services</b>	~104 mentions	A substantial group favored reallocating resources toward non-police alternatives such as mental health responders, social services, and violence prevention programs. They expressed that police are not trained to handle crises involving mental health or social issues.
3	<b>Balanced or Conditional Views on Funding Redistribution</b>	~77 mentions	Some respondents suggested partial reallocation or conditional adjustments — for example, improving efficiency within police budgets or combining police and non-police response systems. They emphasized the need for better resource use rather than simple cuts.

# Are there any other comments?

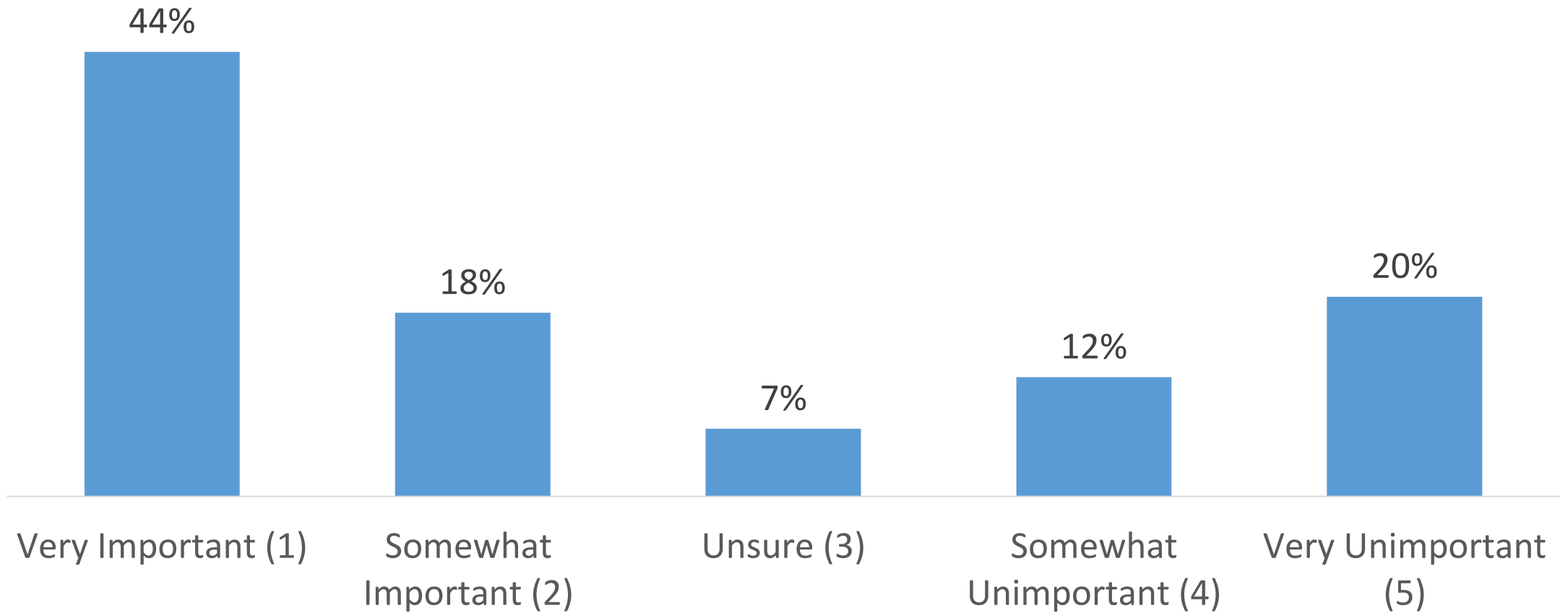
All 146 responses, not including any personally identifiable information, were summarized and ranked by frequency using an AI tool.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Approx. Mentions</b>	<b>Summary of Ideas</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Quality of City Services and Resident Satisfaction</b>	~55 mentions	Many residents shared feedback—both positive and negative—about city services. Some thanked specific departments or staff, while others pointed out inefficiencies or lack of responsiveness. Overall, residents want consistent, high-quality service delivery.
<b>2</b>	<b>Concerns About Taxes and Fiscal Responsibility</b>	~54 mentions	A large portion of comments focused on high property taxes, perceived mismanagement of funds, and calls for greater accountability in how money is spent. Some residents questioned city priorities and urged more transparency.
<b>3</b>	<b>Street and Infrastructure Maintenance</b>	~30 mentions	Respondents frequently cited deteriorating roads, potholes, and the need for improved infrastructure maintenance. Several comments tied these concerns to frustrations about how tax dollars are used.
<b>4</b>	<b>Police and Public Safety</b>	~27 mentions	Some respondents raised concerns about safety and crime, emphasizing the need for adequate policing and enforcement, while a smaller number discussed reallocating resources or reforming public safety approaches.

Please Rate the **Level of Importance** for the Following Budget Areas.

# Level of Importance

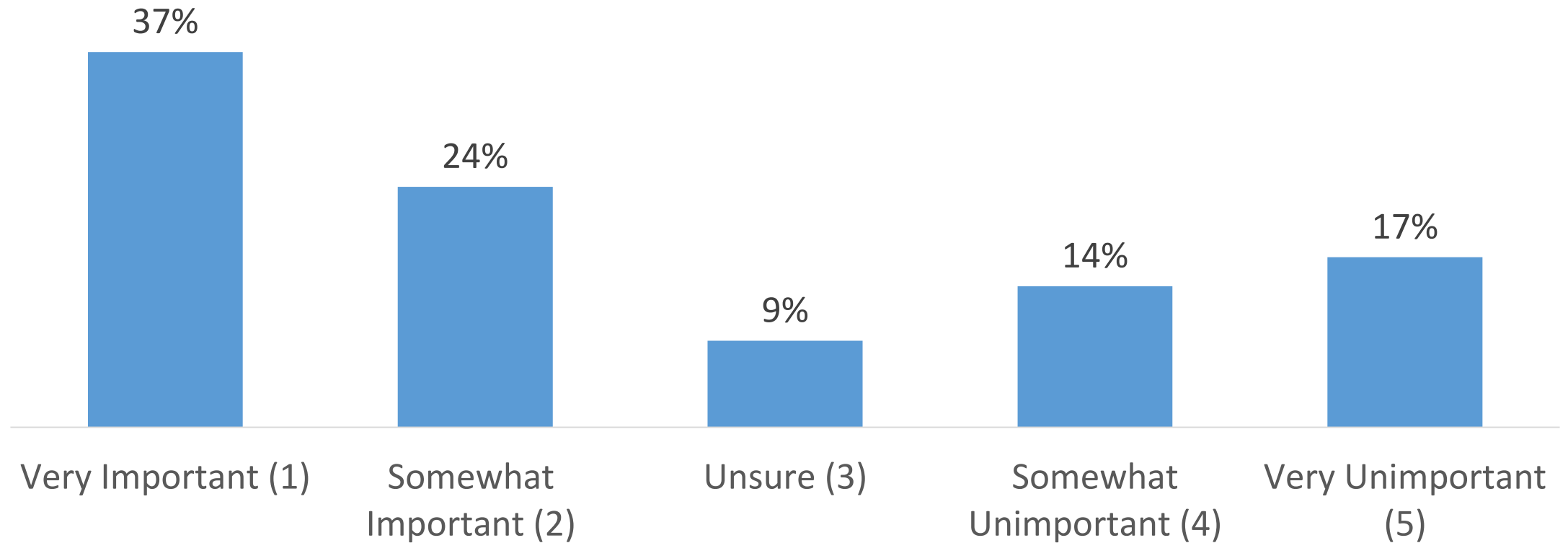
## Public Works Infrastructure



Respondents = 315

# Level of Importance

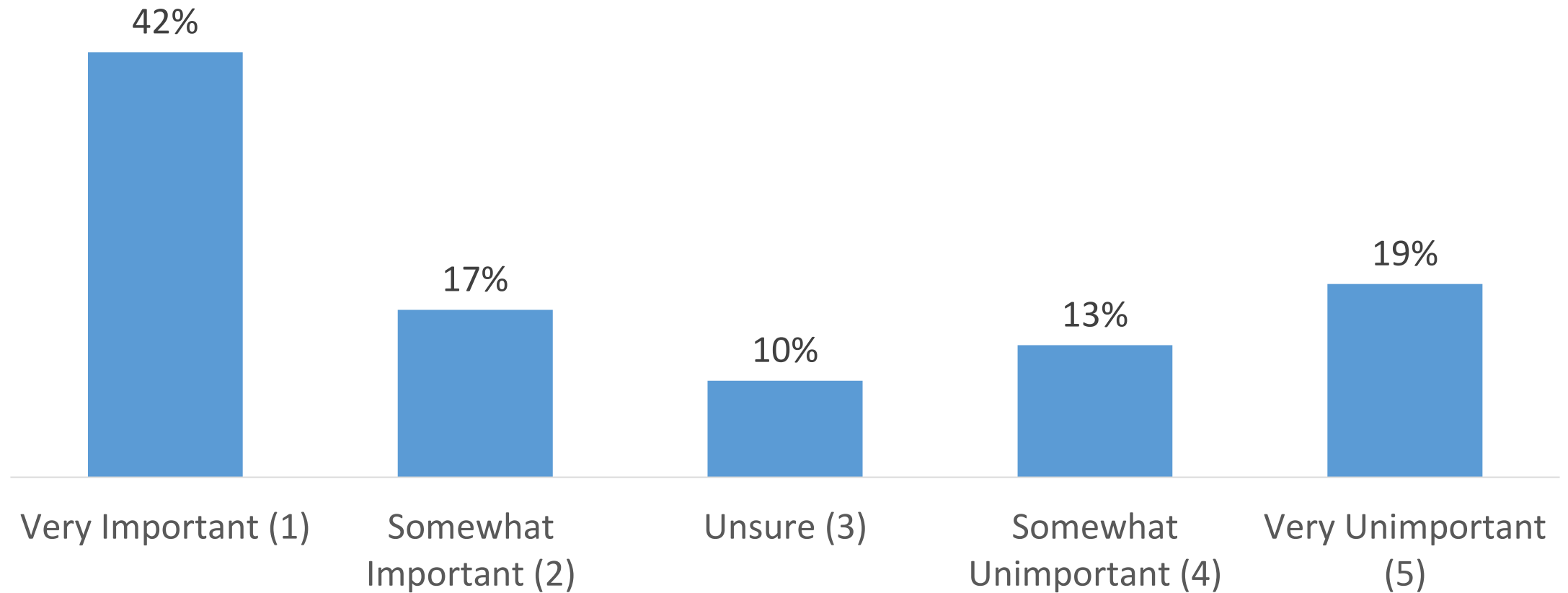
## Public Works Operations



Respondents = 316

# Level of Importance

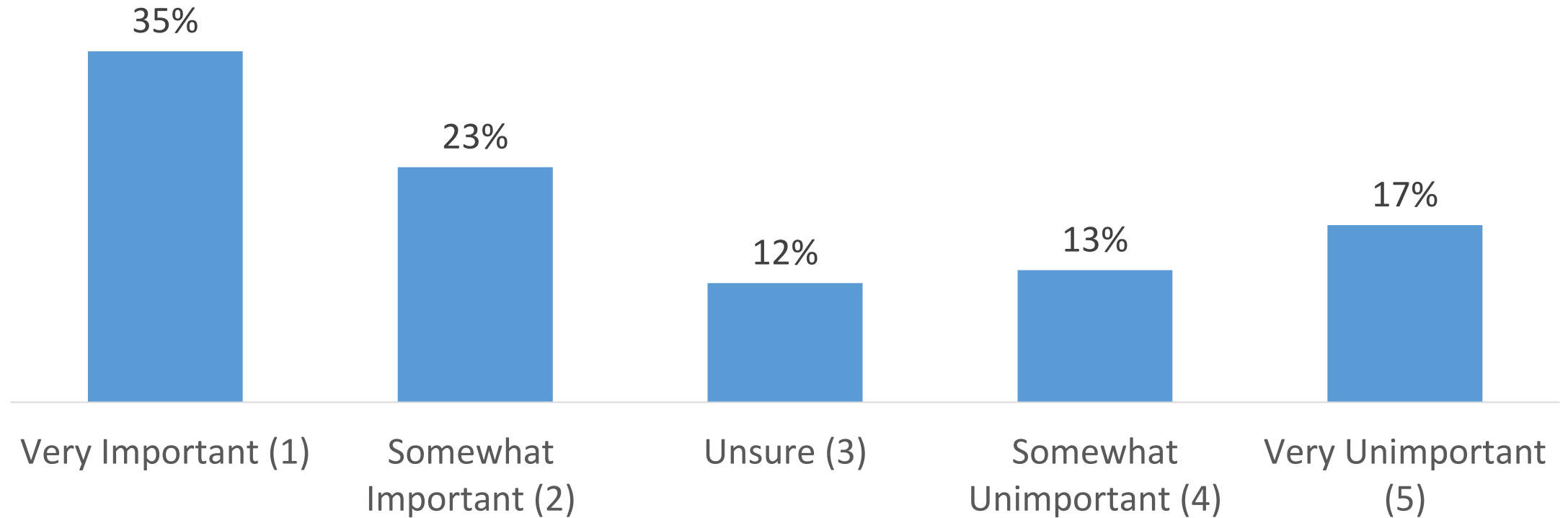
## Fire Department



Respondents = 315

# Level of Importance

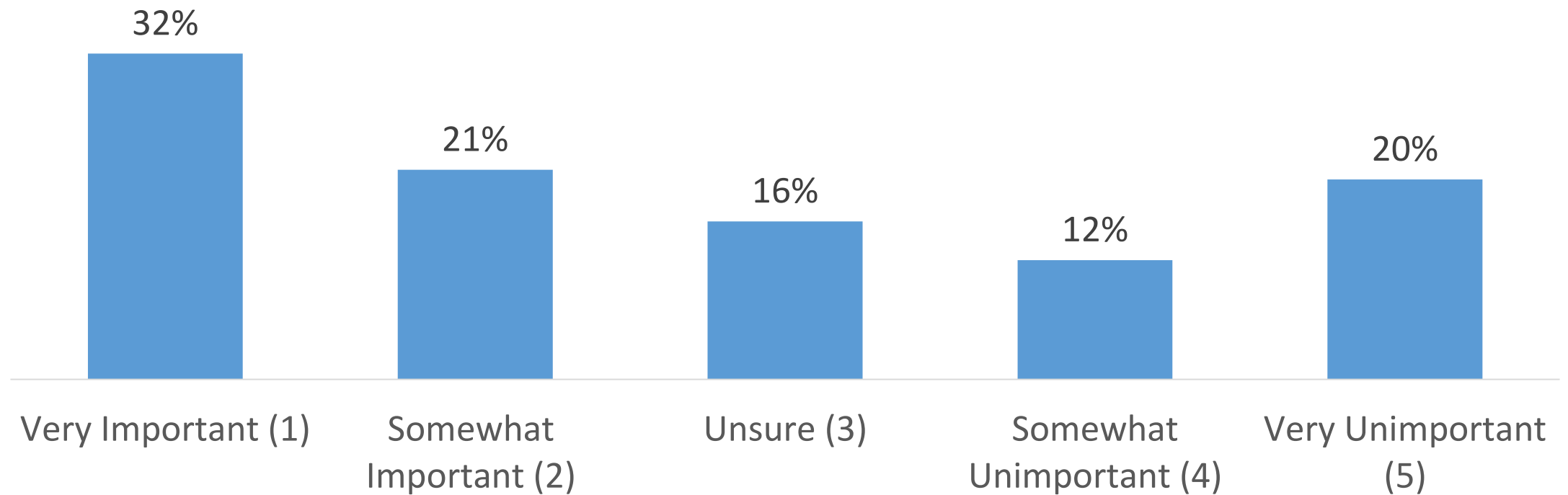
## Water Works



Respondents = 315

# Level of Importance

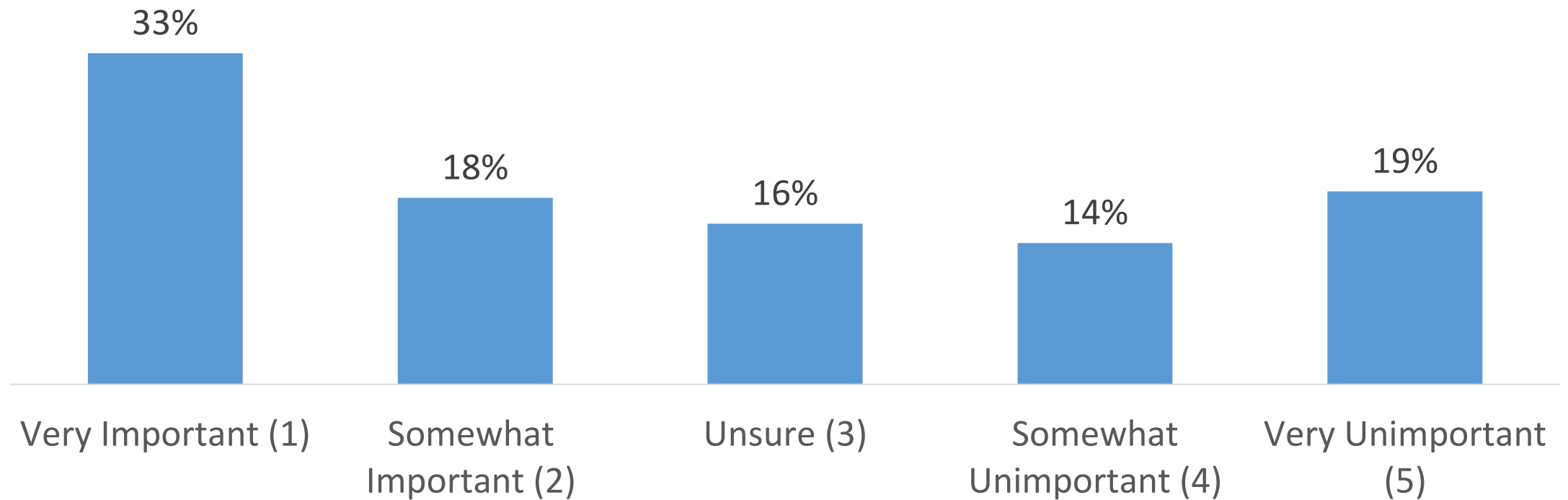
## Public Library



Respondents = 314

# Level of Importance

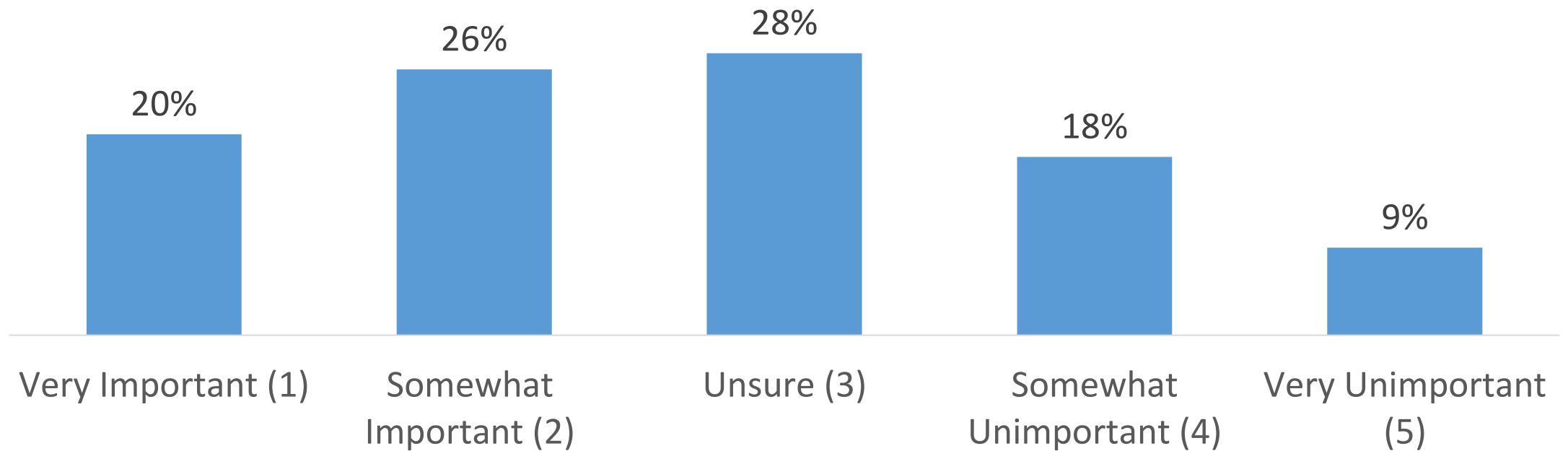
## Health Department



Respondents = 315

# Level of Importance

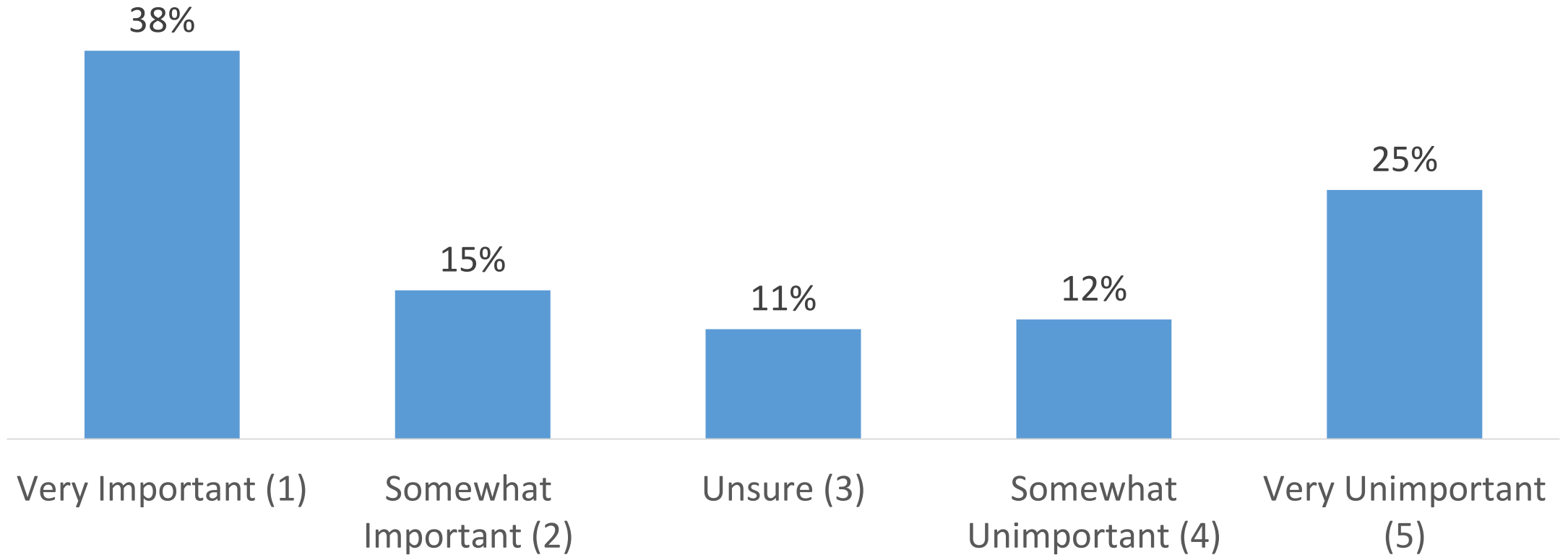
## Comptroller's Office



Respondents = 313

# Level of Importance

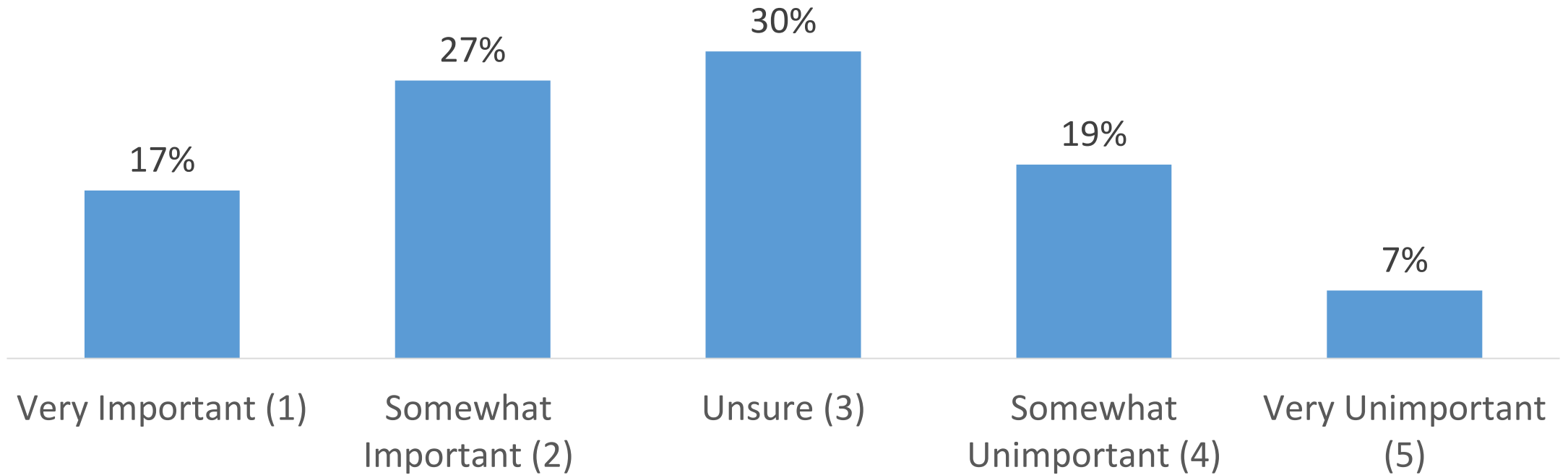
## Police Department



Respondents = 314

# Level of Importance

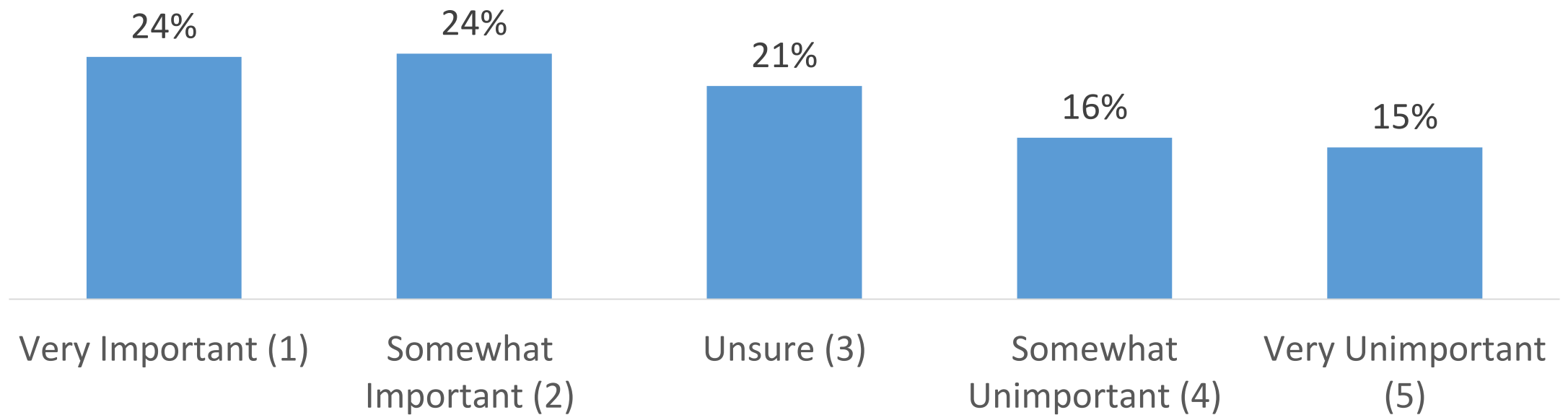
## Municipal Court



Respondents = 314

# Level of Importance

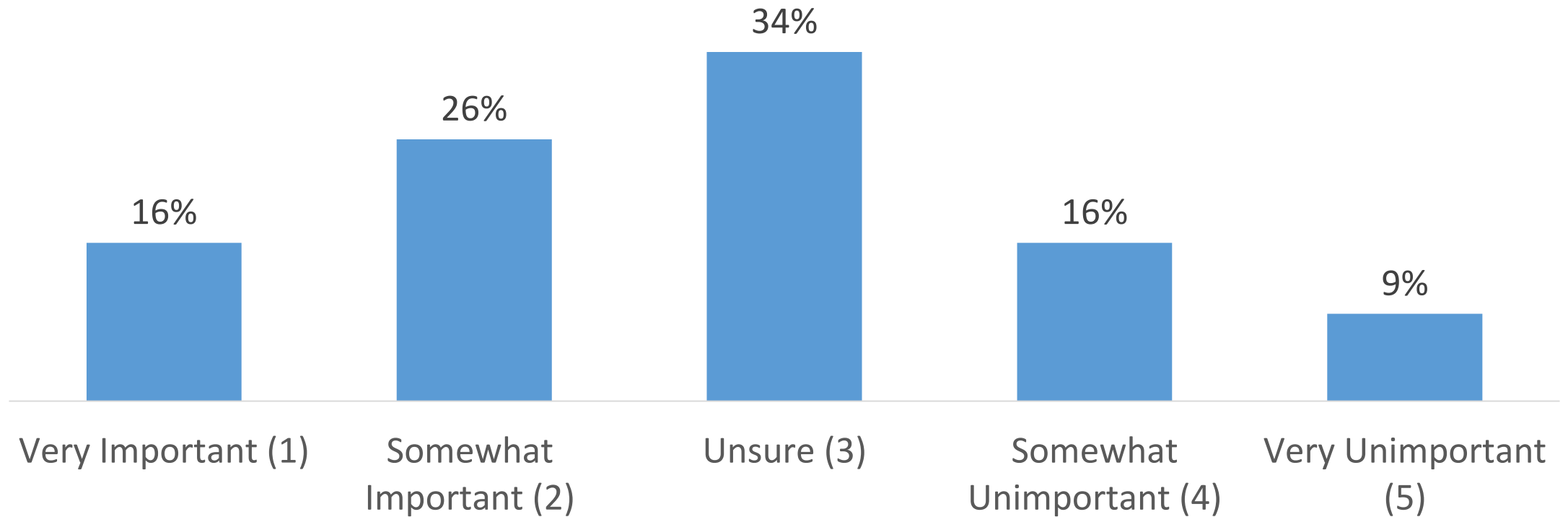
## Election Commission



Respondents = 314

# Level of Importance

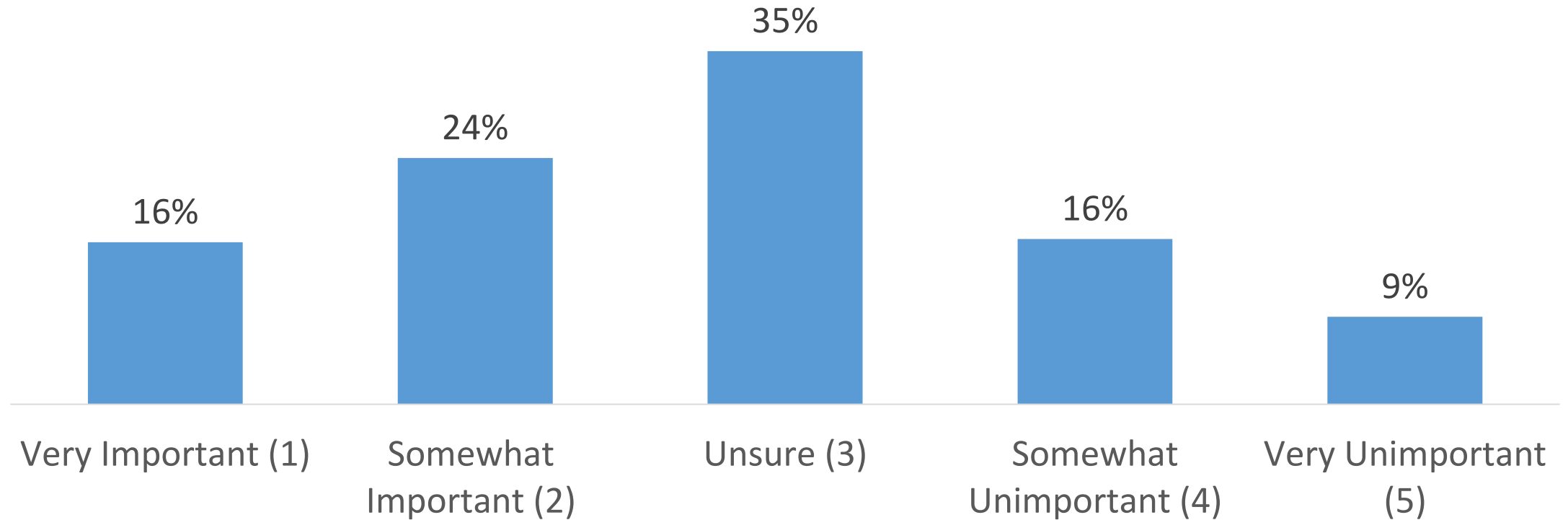
## Neighborhood Services



Respondents = 314

# Level of Importance

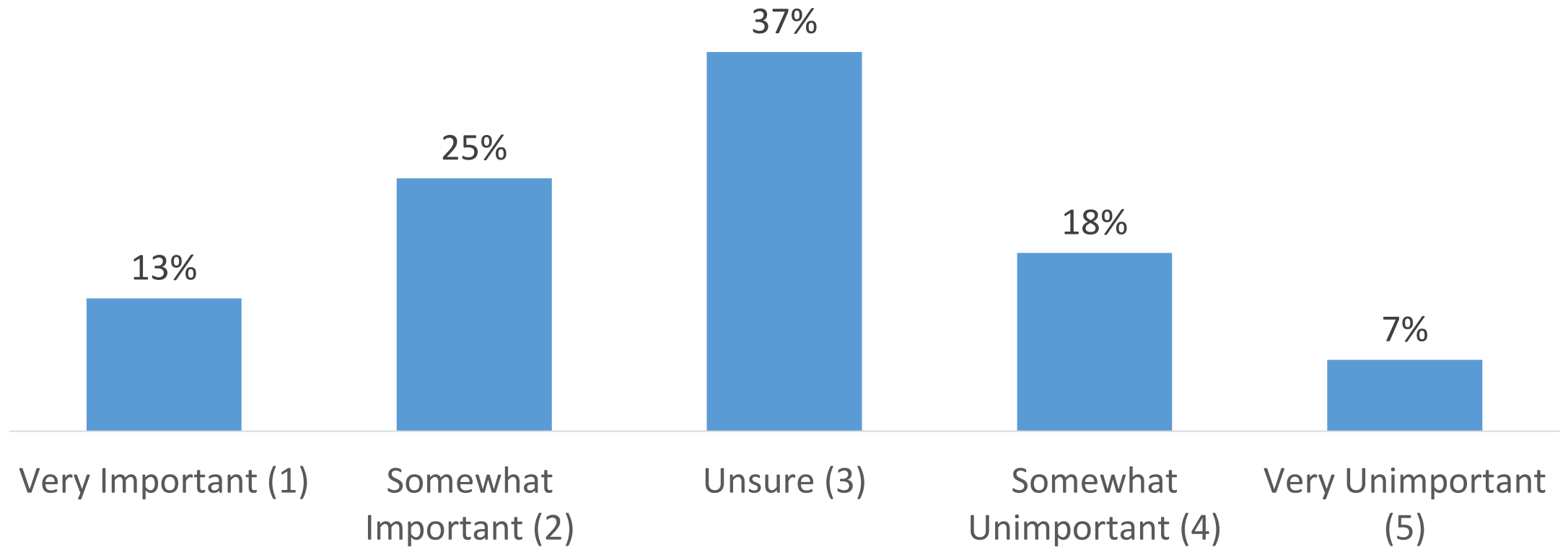
## City Attorney's Office



Respondents = 313

# Level of Importance

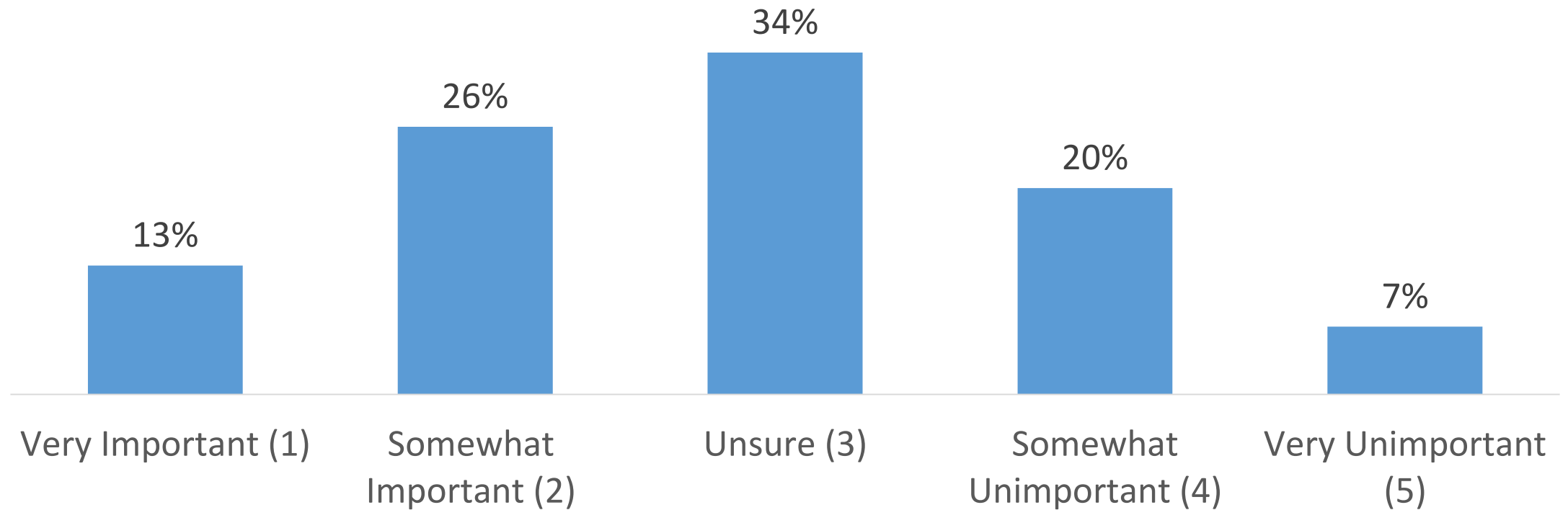
## Treasurer's Office



Respondents = 313

# Level of Importance

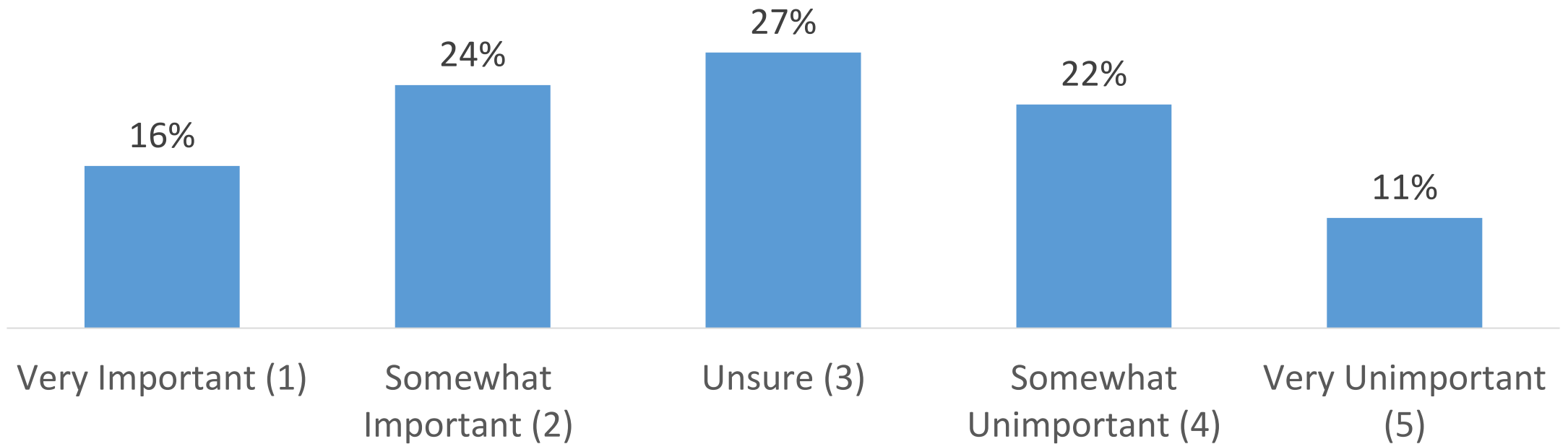
## Common Council / City Clerk



Respondents = 314

# Level of Importance

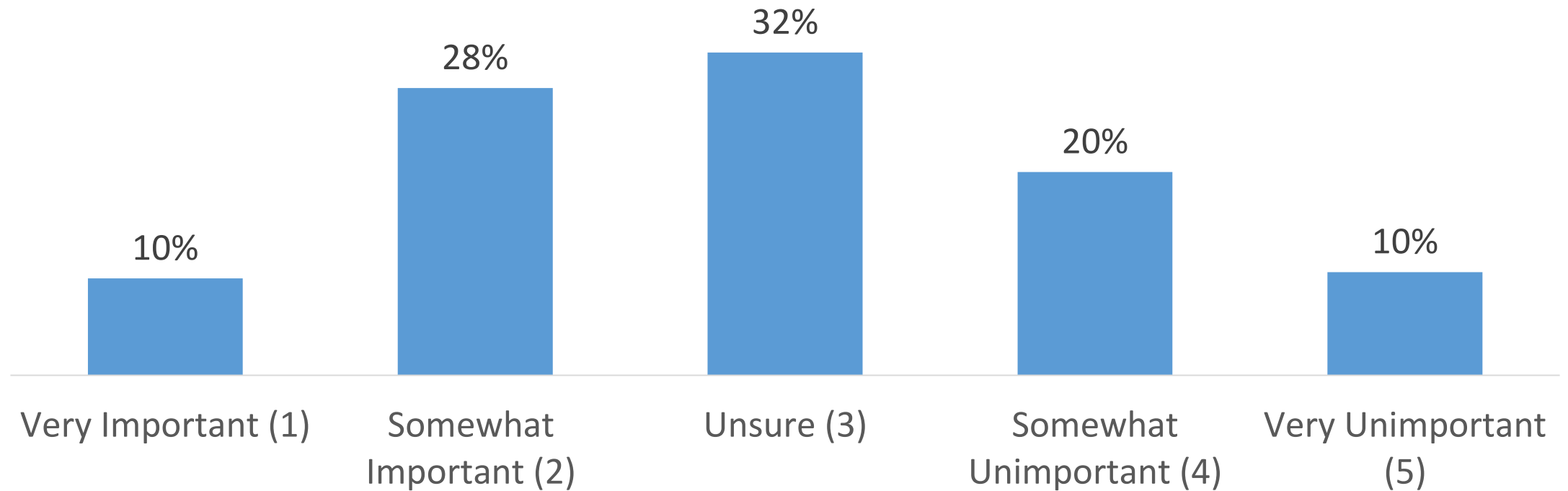
## Mayor's Office



Respondents = 313

# Level of Importance

## City Development

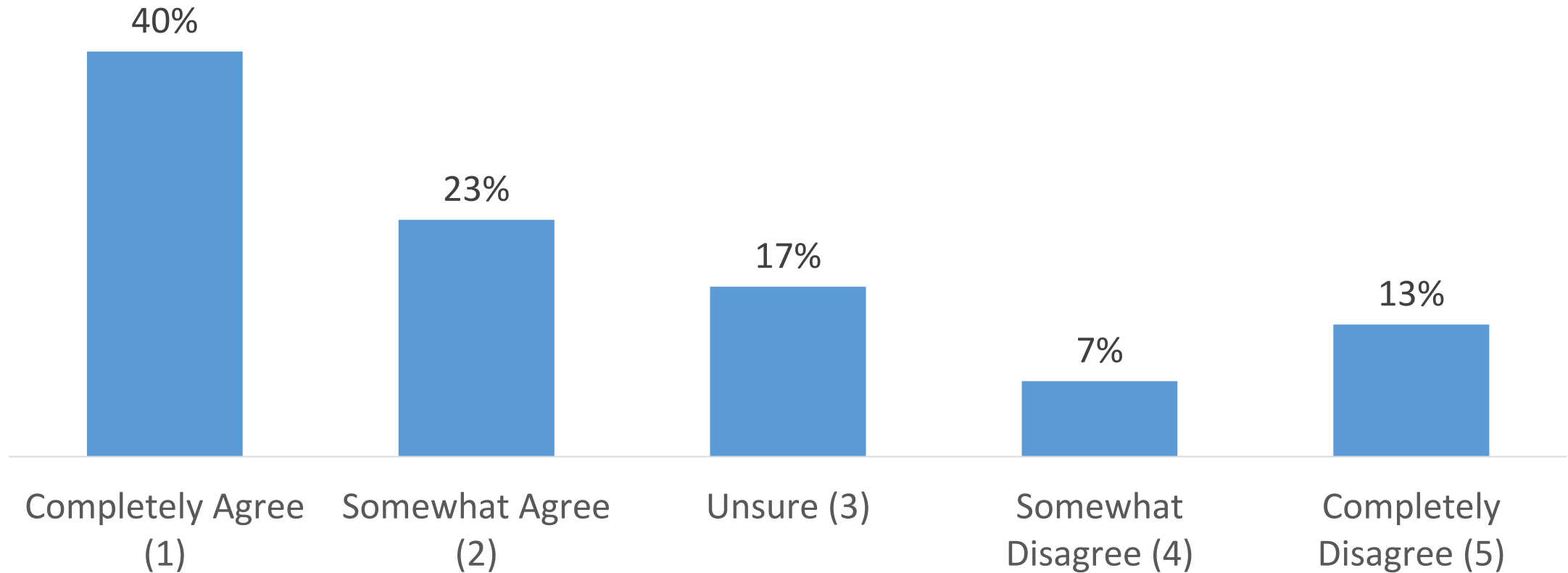


Respondents = 314

Please Rate your **Level of Agreement** for Following Statements.

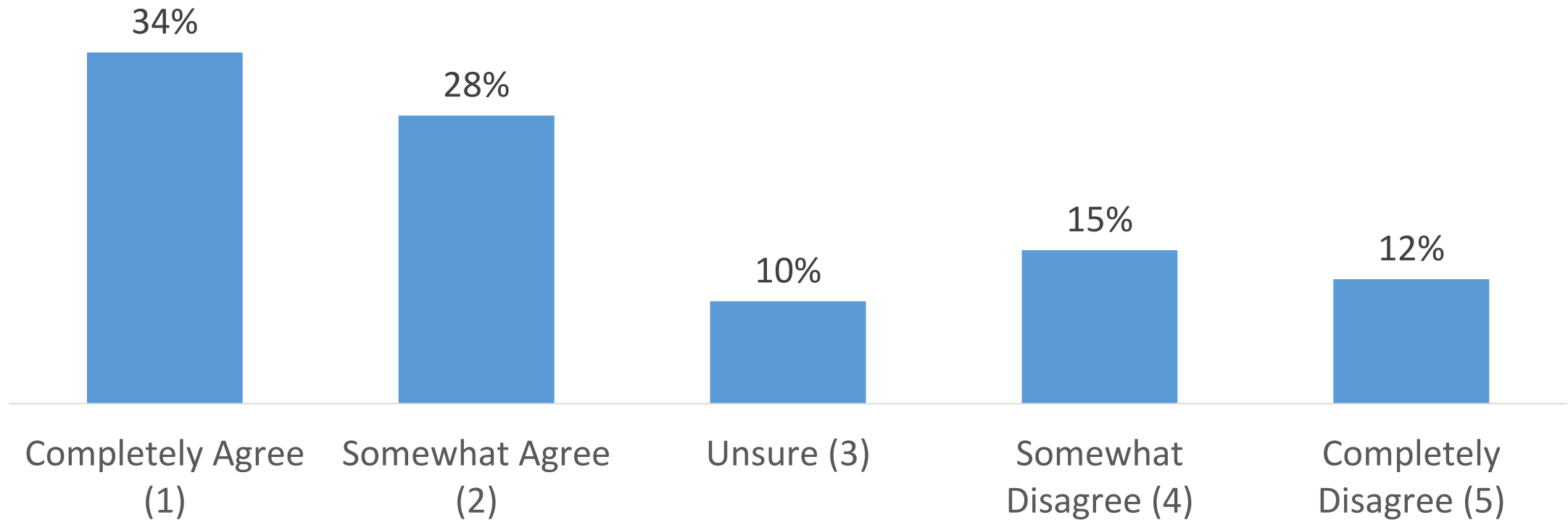
# Level of Agreement

Public libraries are accessible and have resources we need.



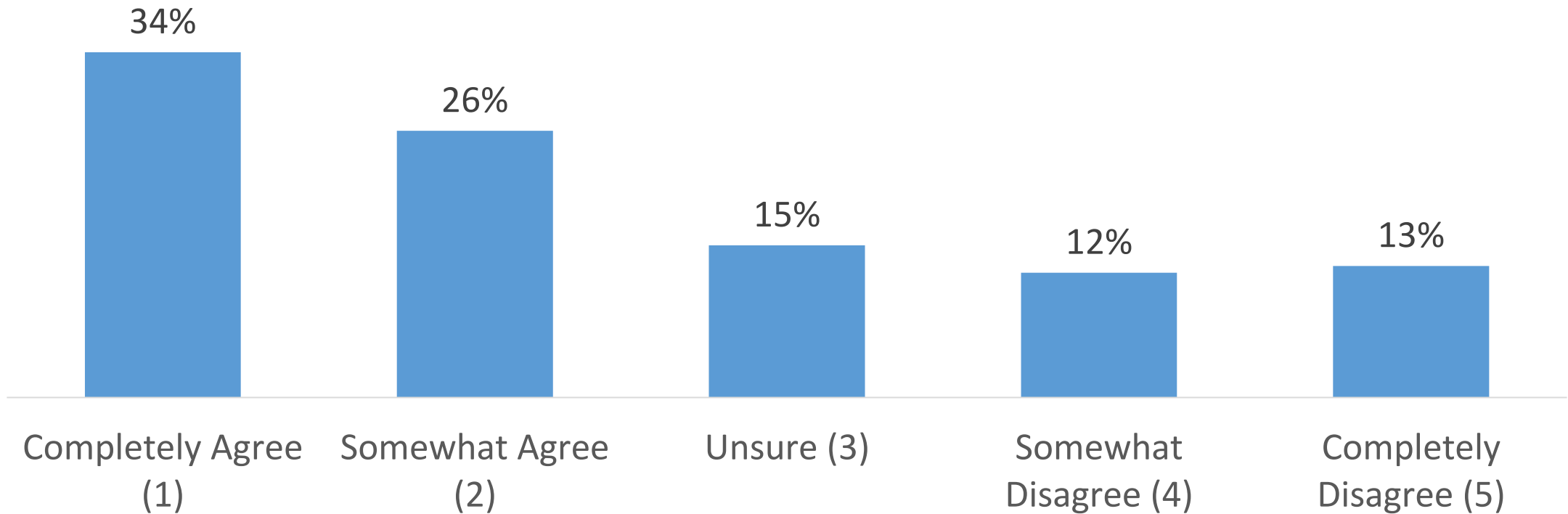
# Level of Agreement

I feel safe in my neighborhood during the day.



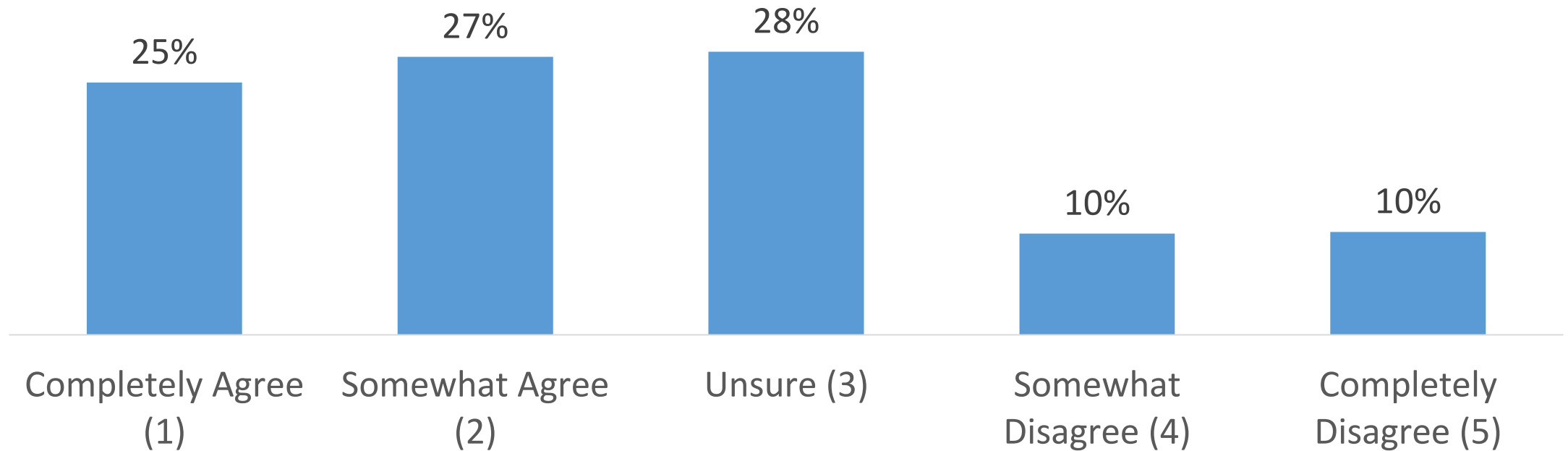
# Level of Agreement

Garbage & recycling collection is prompt and efficient.



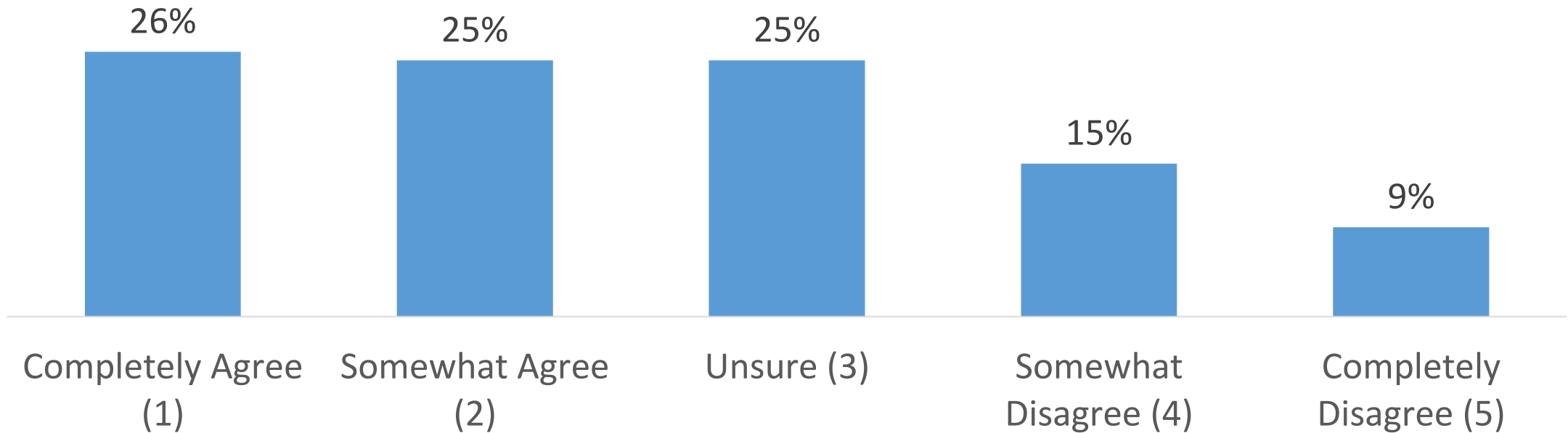
# Level of Agreement

Firefighters and EMS are prepared and available in case of an emergency or disaster.



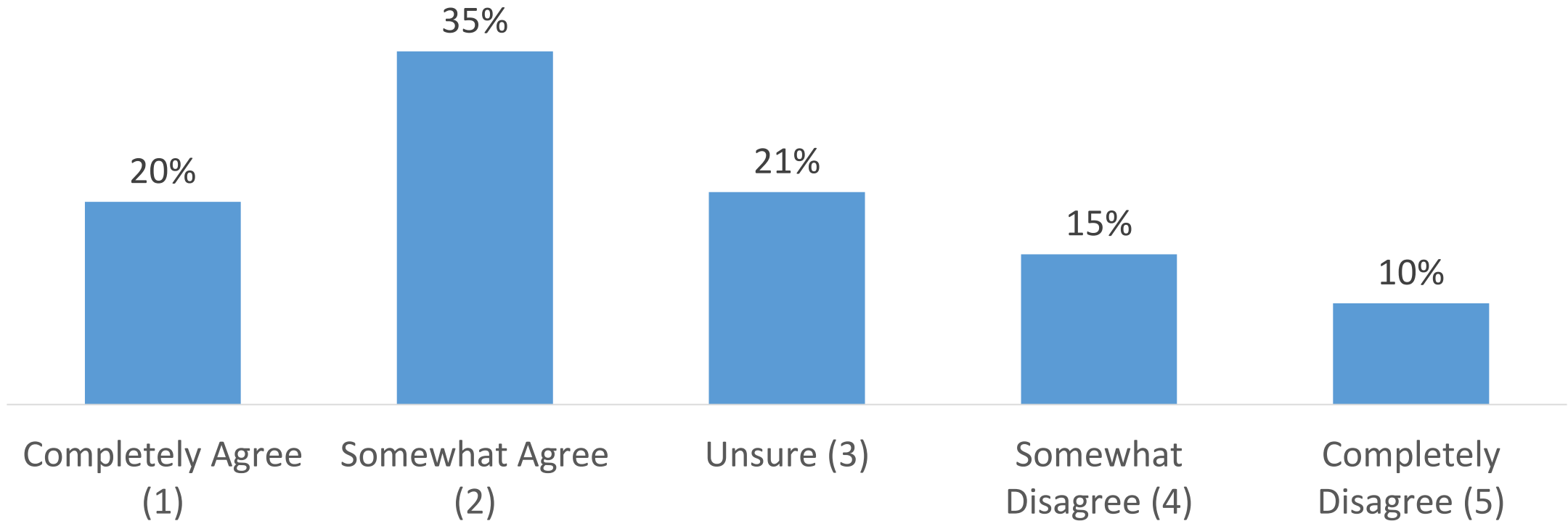
# Level of Agreement

I know how to access health, wellness, or mental health services when needed.



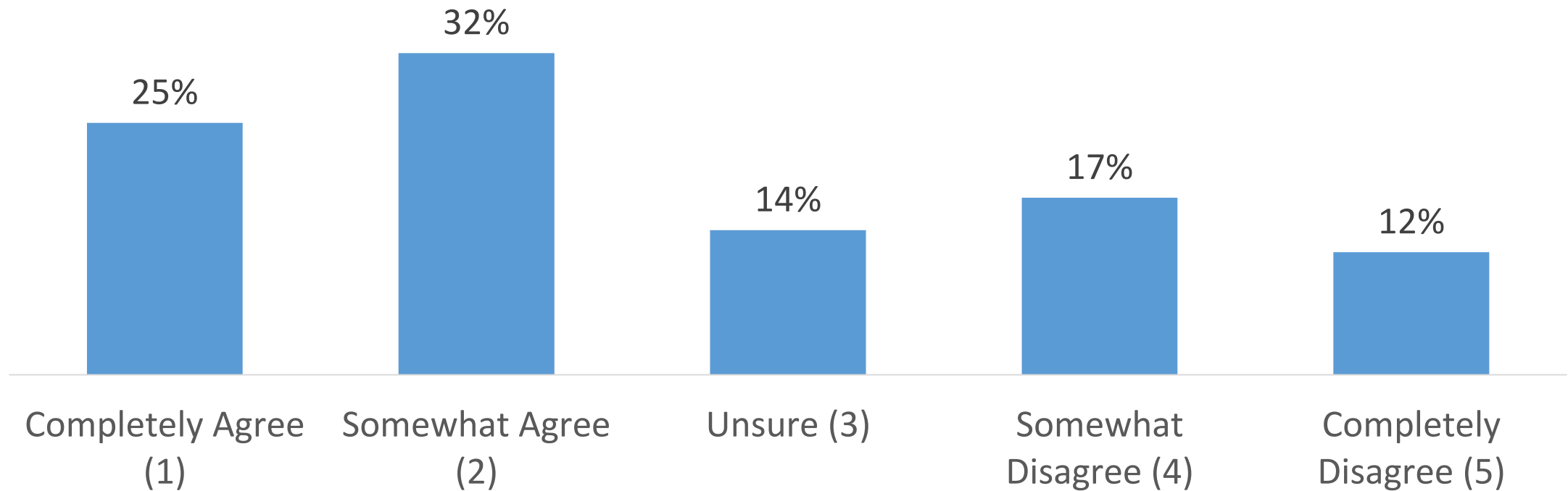
# Level of Agreement

City parks and public green spaces are well maintained and welcoming.



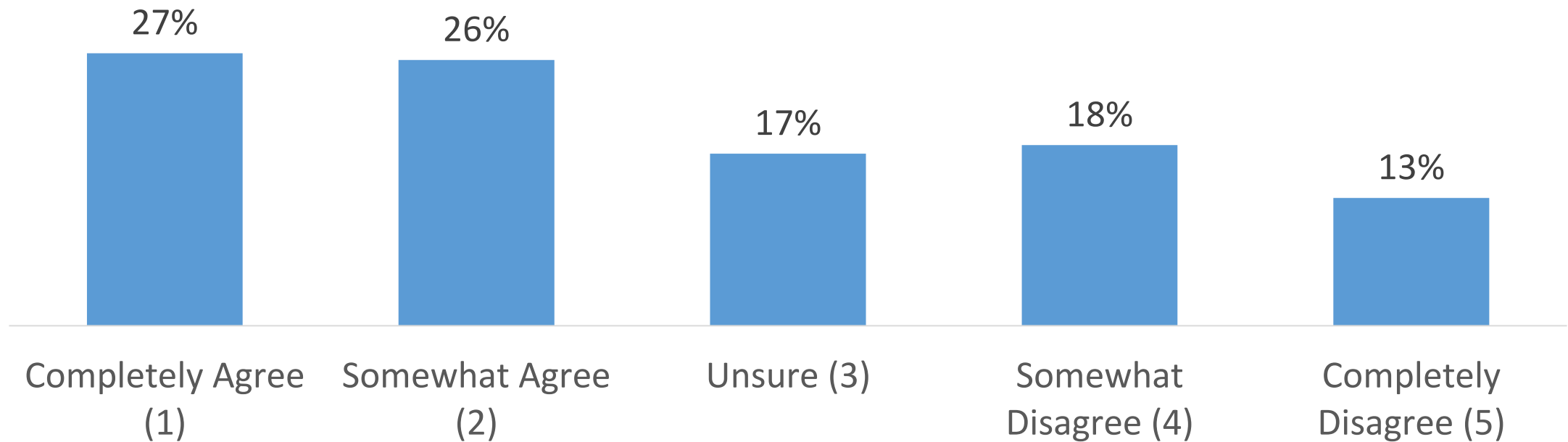
# Level of Agreement

I feel safe in my neighborhood at night.



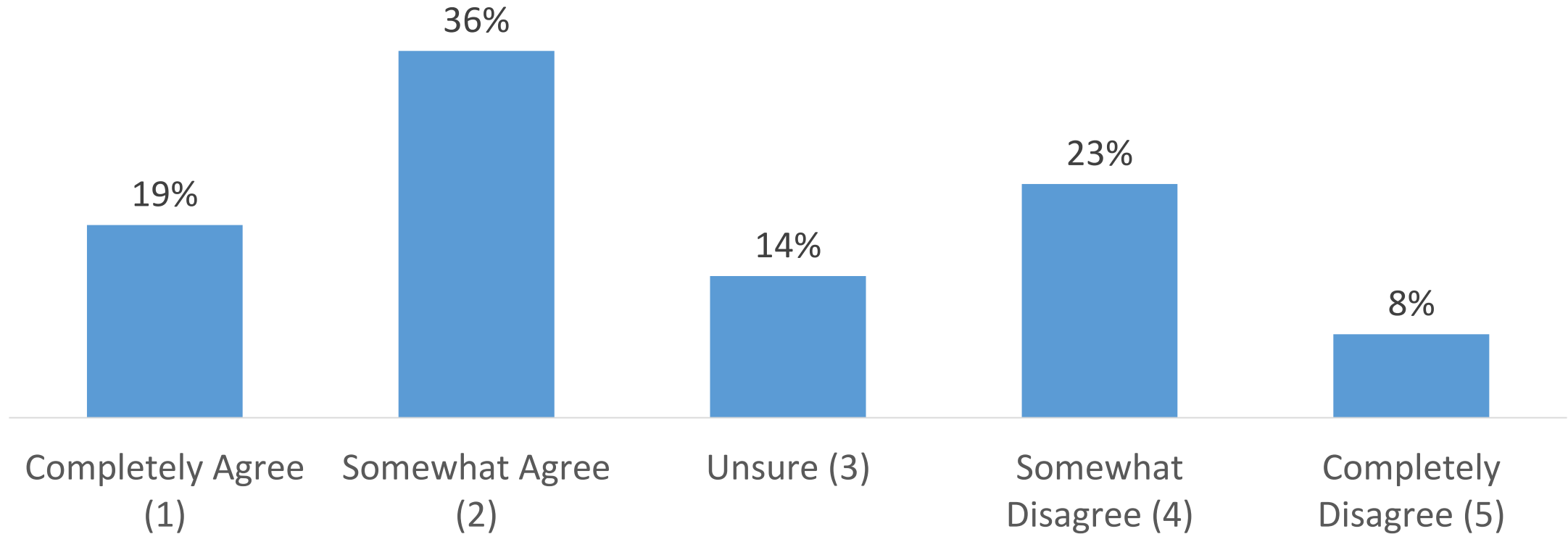
# Level of Agreement

Drinking water is clean and affordable.



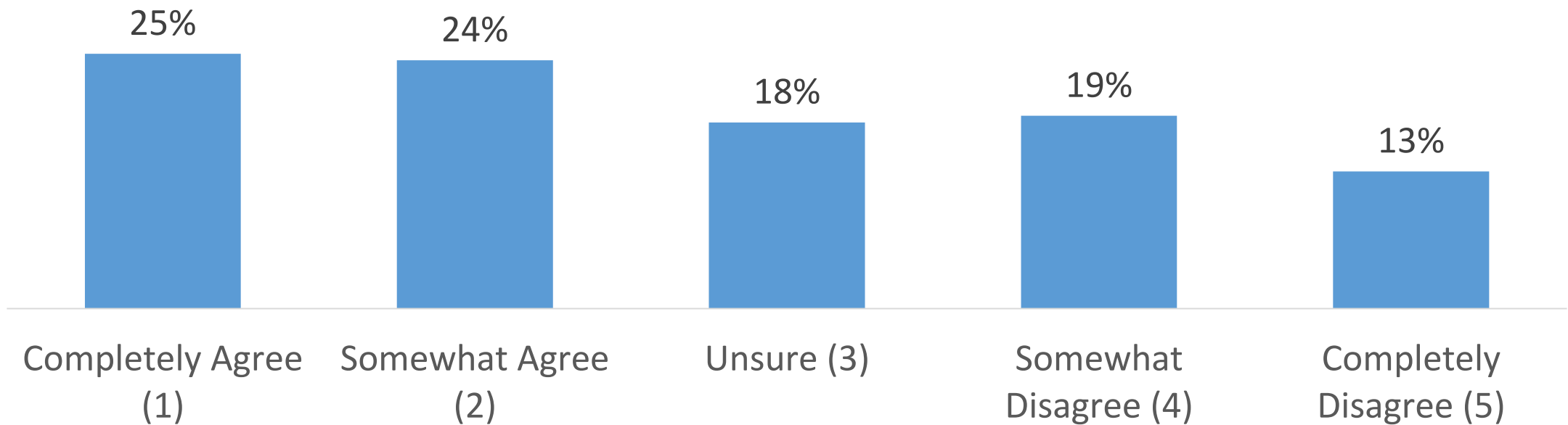
# Level of Agreement

My neighborhood is generally clean and well cared for.



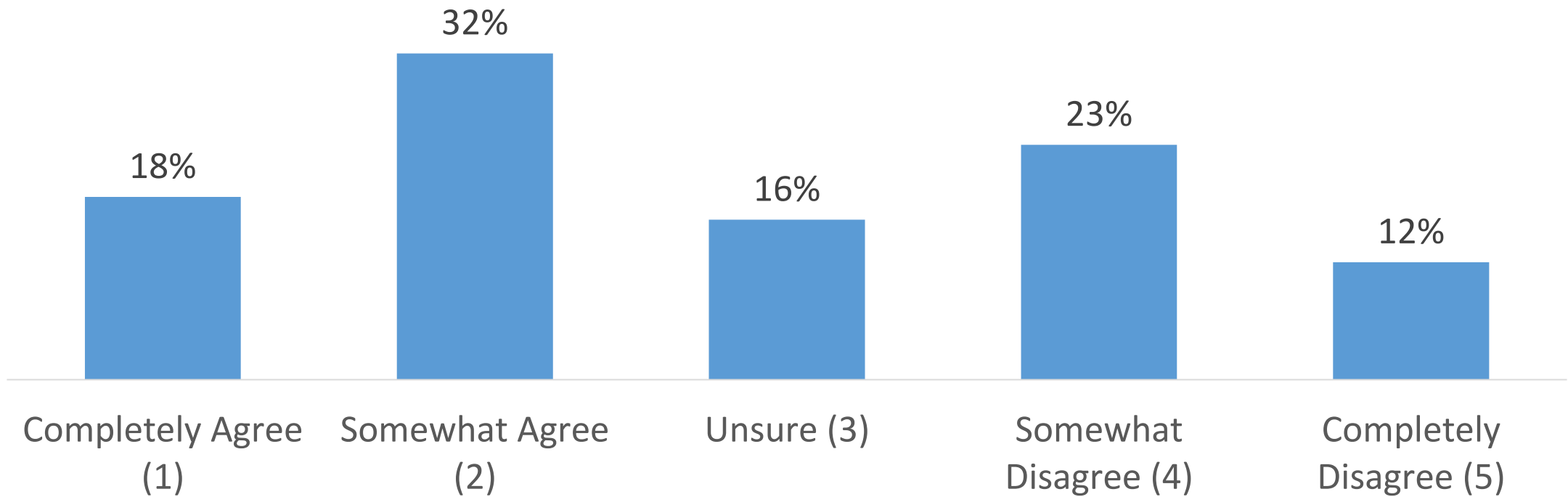
# Level of Agreement

I feel heard and represented by my alderperson.



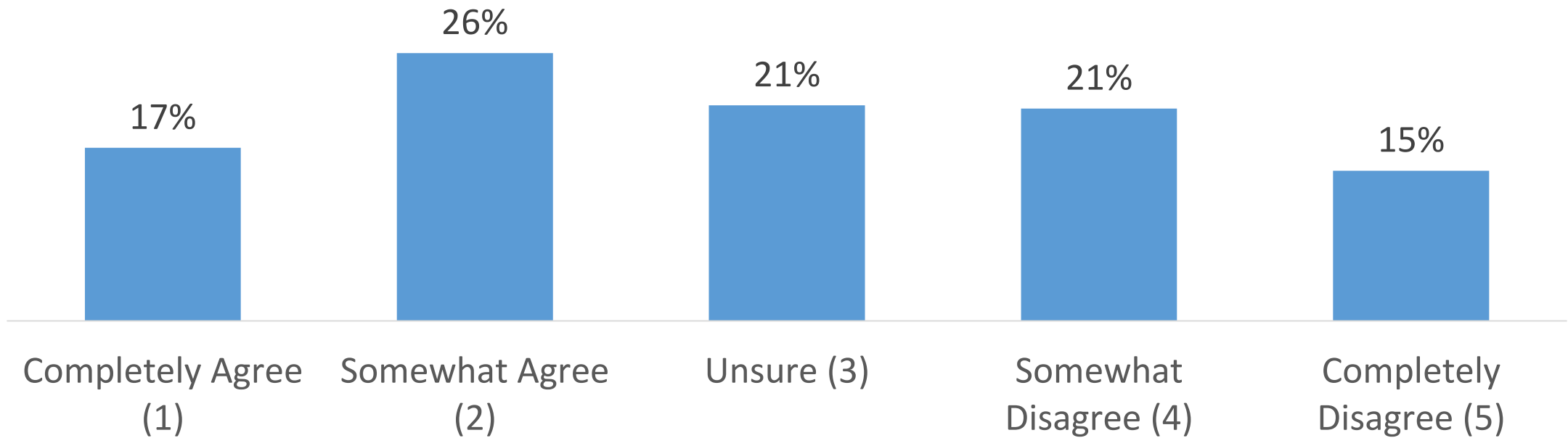
# Level of Agreement

Street lighting in my area is adequate.



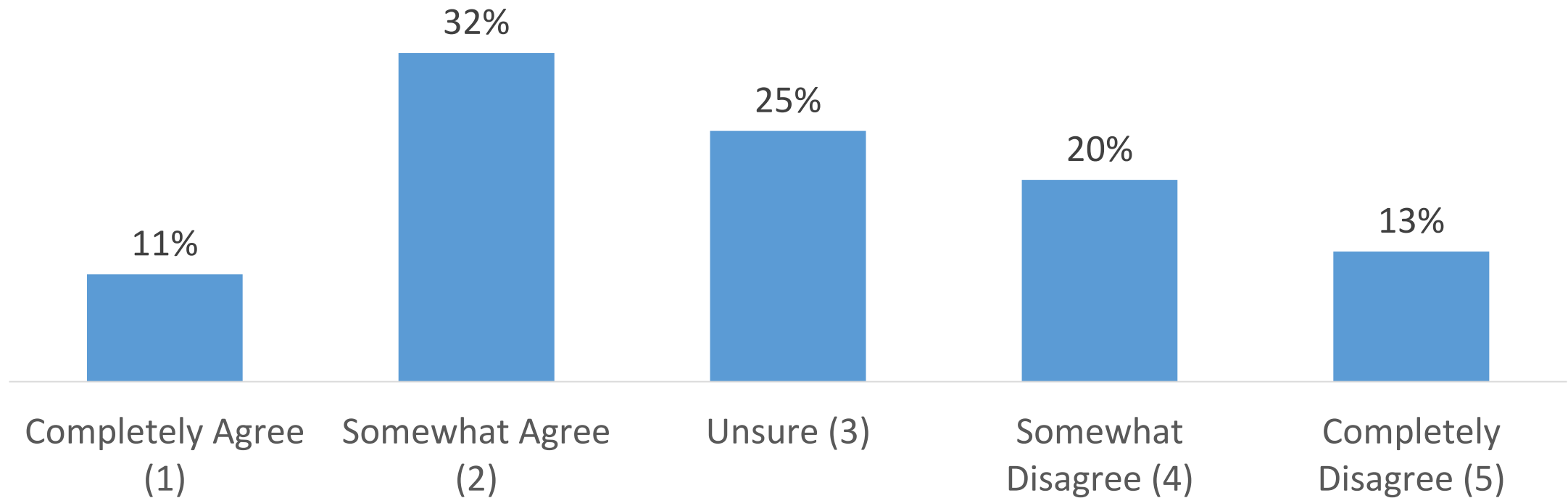
# Level of Agreement

Snow and ice removal is timely and effective in my neighborhood.



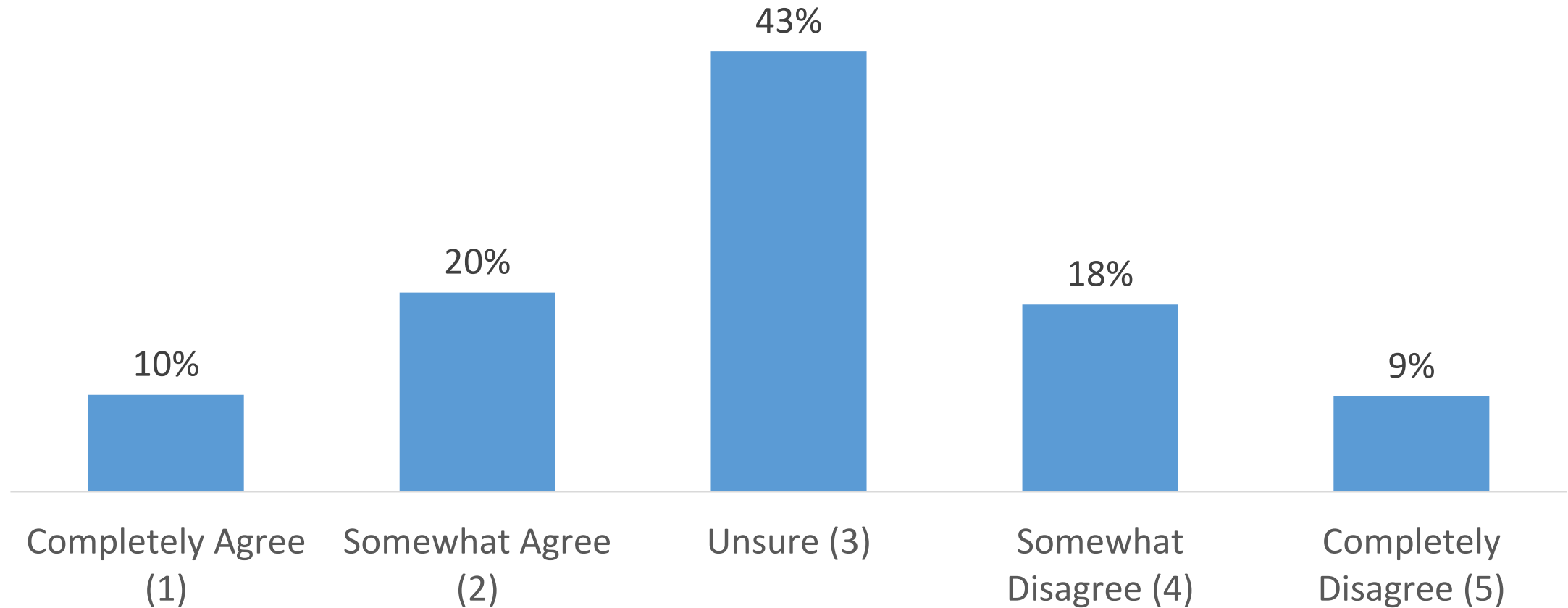
# Level of Agreement

City government communicates clearly and keeps residents informed.



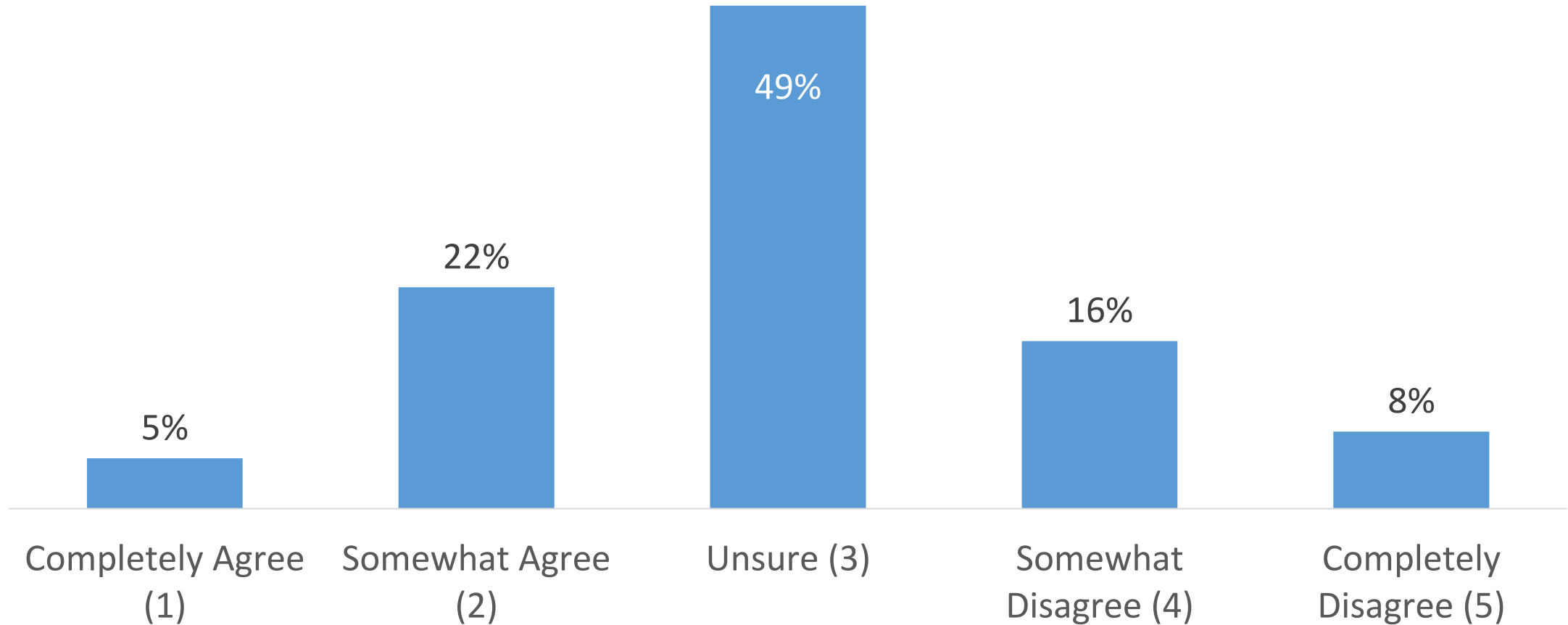
# Level of Agreement

Public transit is reliable and takes me where I need to go.



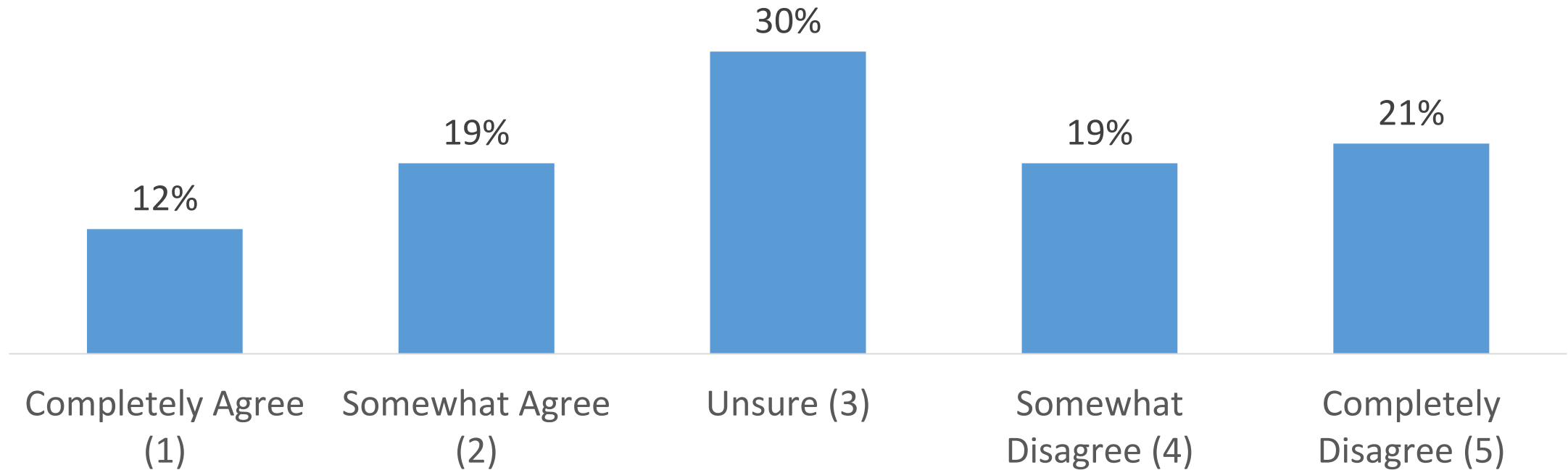
# Level of Agreement

City permitting and licensing processes are accessible and understandable.



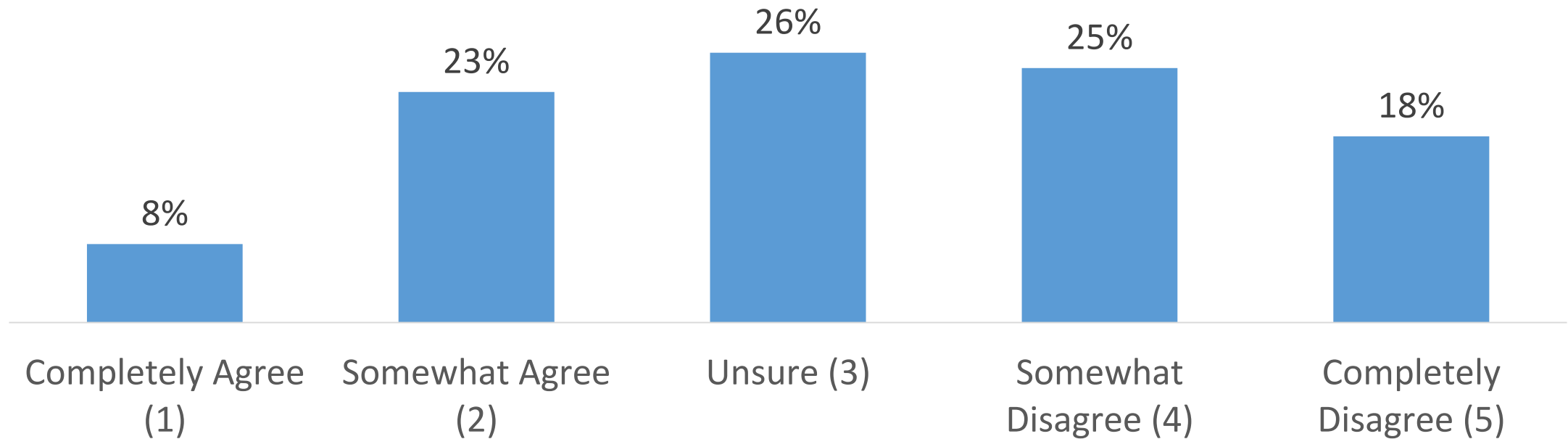
# Level of Agreement

I feel heard and represented by my mayor.



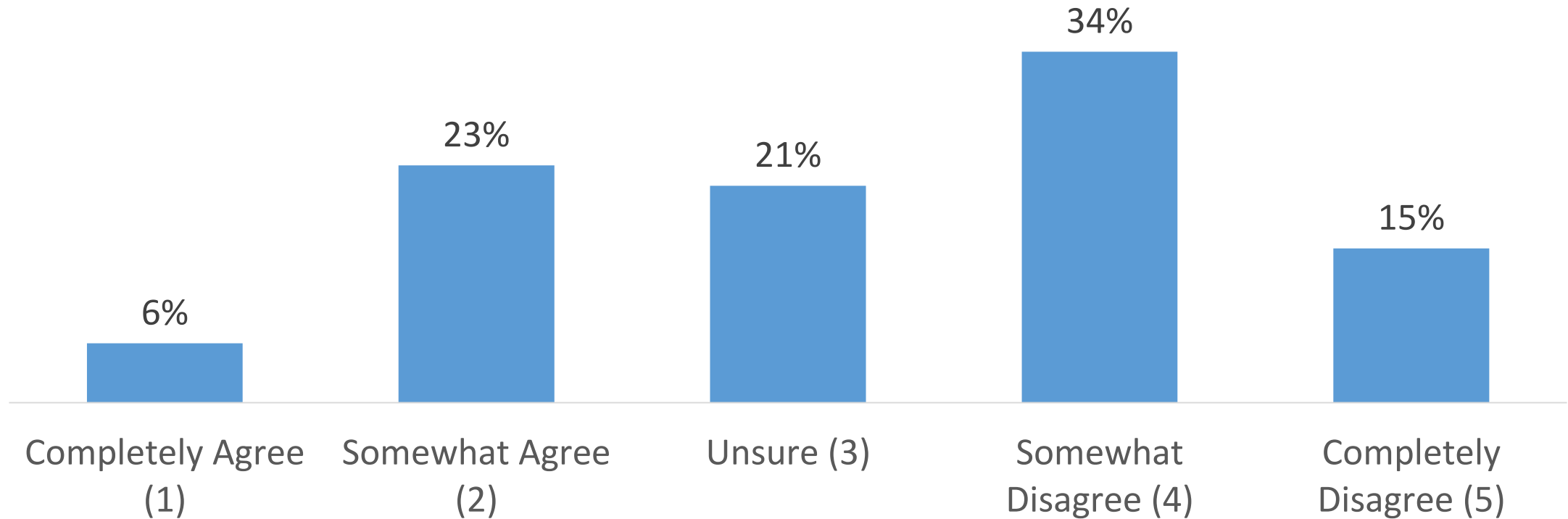
# Level of Agreement

I am satisfied with the overall quality of city services funded by my tax dollars.



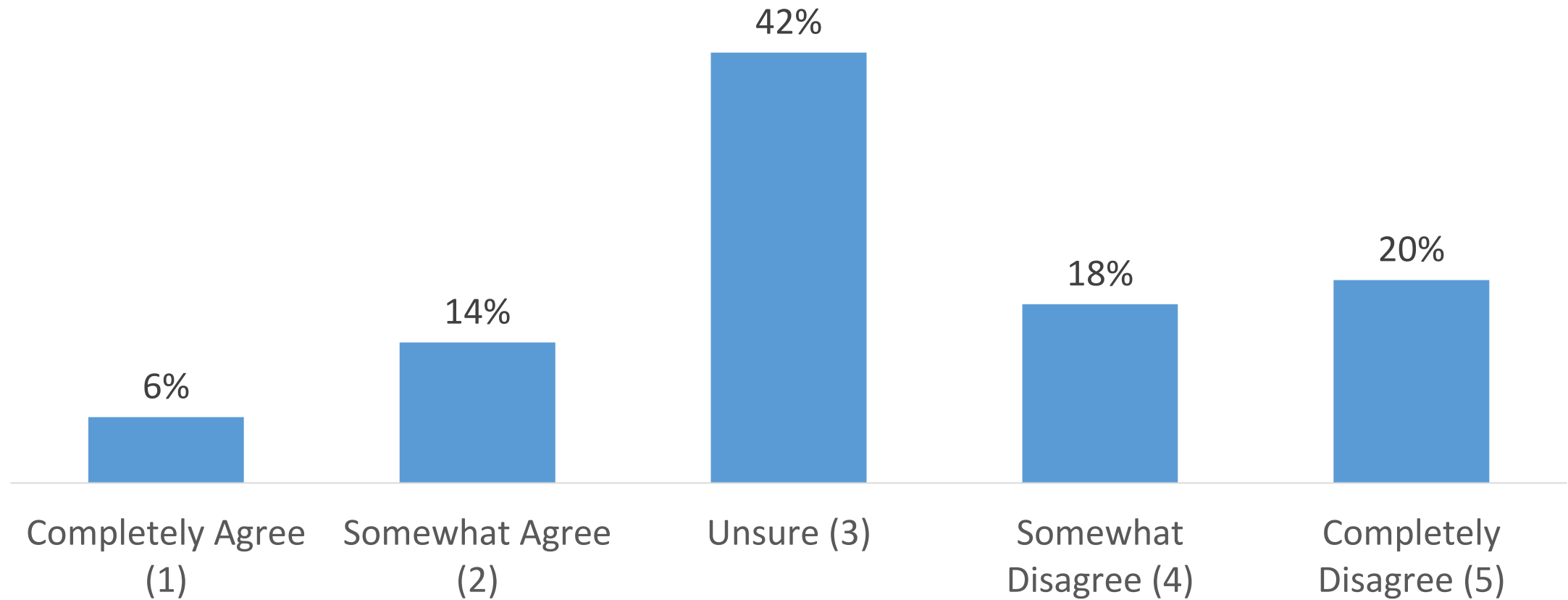
# Level of Agreement

Major streets in the city are well maintained and in good condition.



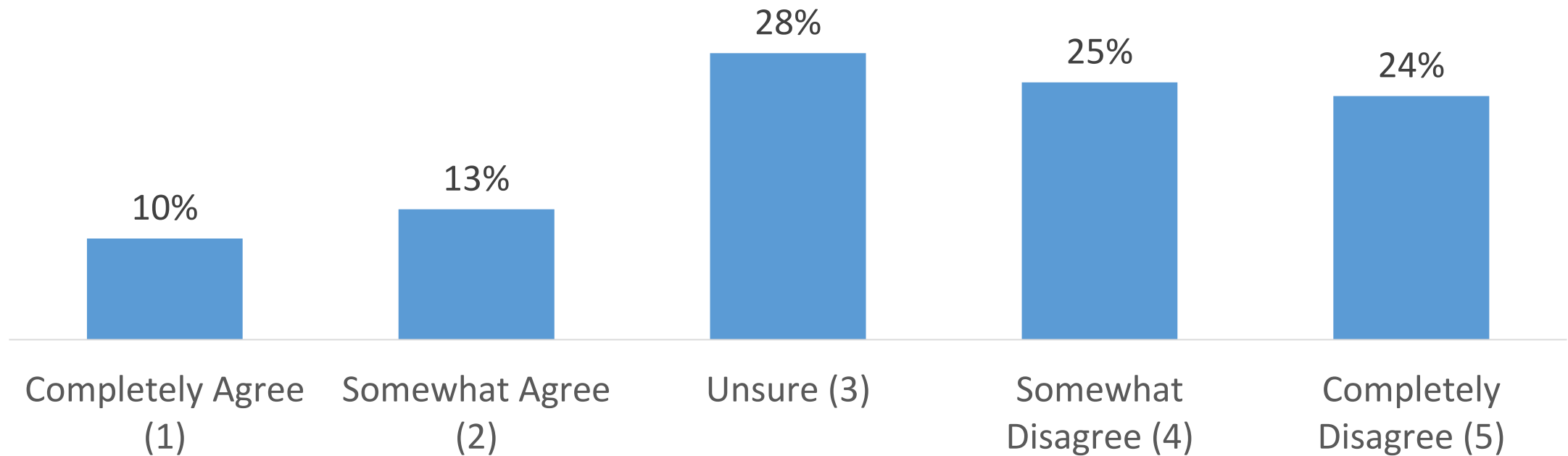
# Level of Agreement

Police responses are timely.



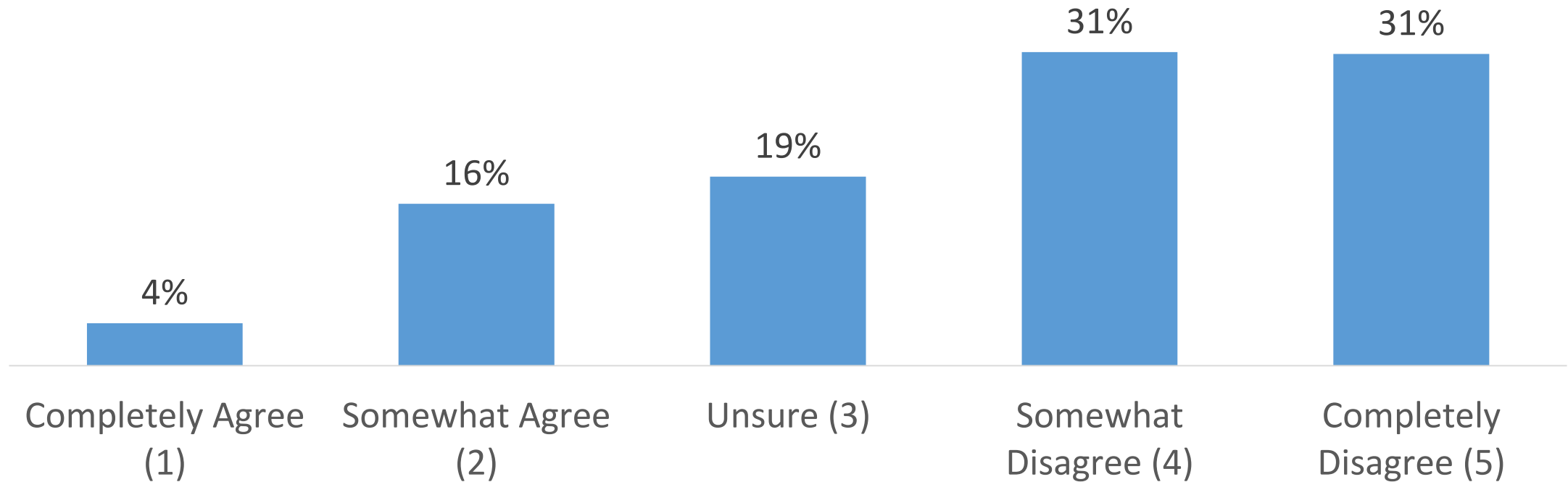
# Level of Agreement

Police officers regularly patrol my neighborhood.



# Level of Agreement

Neighborhood/residential streets are well maintained and in good condition.



# More information

- An anonymized copy of the dataset that this summary is based on can be found at:  
<https://city.milwaukee.gov/commoncouncil/Committee/Finance-and-Personnel.htm>.