



City of Ottawa

COMMUNITY SURVEY REPORT

AUGUST 2025

SURVEY LOGISTICS

DISTRIBUTION

- Postcard mailed to all registered voter households
- Link on city website's homepage
- Social media posts throughout survey period
- Inserts in utility bills
- Fliers at city facilities (library, pool, golf course)

SURVEY TIMELINE

Survey was conducted between July 7 - August 6, 2025

OF RESPONSES

- 991 total respondents
- 11% of registered voters (8,936 voters)
- 20.4% of voter households (4,848 households)

RESPONSE TYPE

- 960 online submissions
- 31 paper submissions



IMPORTANT COMMUNITY SURVEY

We need your input on Ottawa's future.

More repairs to our streets and sidewalks?
A new community pool?
Upgrades to our utility infrastructure?
Improvements to our parks and trails?
Increased focus on police, fire & public safety?

Let us know what you value most about our city, what areas need improvement, and what would you like to see the city prioritize over the next few years.

Please scan this QR code or visit ottawaks.gov/survey to share your feedback, or call us at (785) 229-3637 to request a hardcopy survey and we will mail one to you.



ottawaks.gov/survey


PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR INPUT BY AUGUST 6

City of Ottawa Kansas Municipal Government
July 7 at 4:45 PM · 0

More repairs to our streets and sidewalks?
A new community pool?
Upgrades to our utility infrastructure?
Improvements to our parks and trails?
Increased focus on police, fire & public safety?

Visit www.ottawaks.gov/survey to let us know what you value most about Ottawa, opportunities for improvement, and what you would like to see the city prioritize over the next few years.

Please share your feedback using the survey link.



We need your input on Ottawa's future.

Please be part of the decision-making process for our community. Share your input, ideas and concerns by August 6.

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY SURVEY



BRIAN SILCOTT
City Manager
(785) 229-3637
bsilcott@ottawaks.gov



ottawaks.gov/survey

Would you take a few minutes to be part of the decision-making for our city?

The first thing I recognized when I moved to Ottawa was the sincerity of everyone I met. There is a genuine interest in our community to make Ottawa a great place to live, work and raise our families. But, what draws and keeps people in Ottawa – whether it's that you were born and raised here, or you value a smaller community, or you found a good job here – is different for each of us.

As your city staff, city commissioners and I plan ahead, we need your help. We need to know what you value most about our city, what areas need improvement, and what you'd like to see us prioritize over the next few years. We also need to make some decisions over the next several months about the city's one-cent sales tax, how it's utilized, and whether there is support to continue that initiative.

Please scan this QR code or visit ottawaks.gov/survey to share your feedback, or call us at (785) 229-3637 to request a hardcopy survey and we will mail one to you. Your response will provide us with meaningful direction as we evaluate what the city needs to keep doing well and what we need to do better. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Brian

PLEASE RESPOND BY AUGUST 6

We need your input on Ottawa's future.



COMPLETE THE SURVEY ONLINE
Scan this QR code or visit www.ottawaks.gov/survey to provide your input online.

OR, REQUEST A MAIL SURVEY
To have a paper copy of the survey mailed to you, please call the city manager's office at (785) 229-3637.



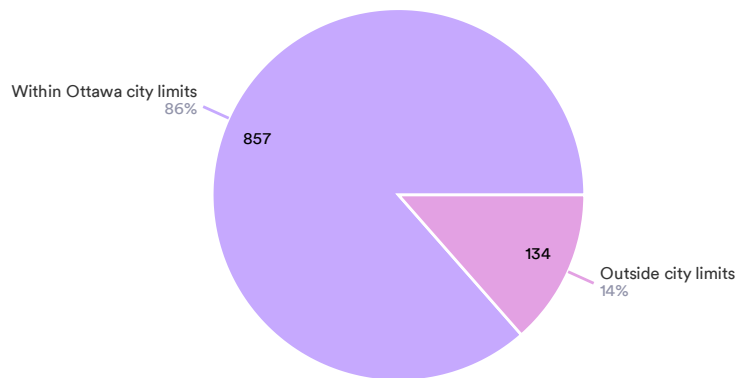
City of Ottawa
101 S Hickory Street
Ottawa, Kansas 66067

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DEMOGRAPHICS

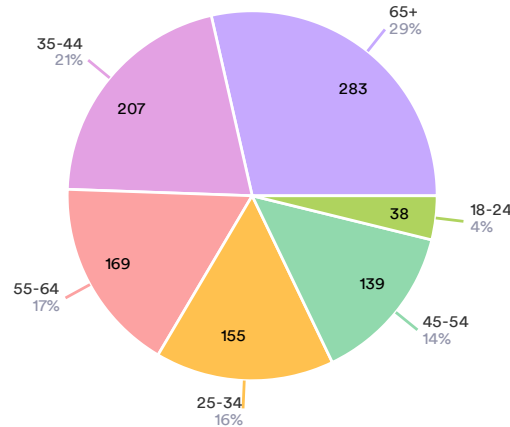
GEOGRAPHY

- Inside City Limits - 857
- Outside City Limits - 134 *



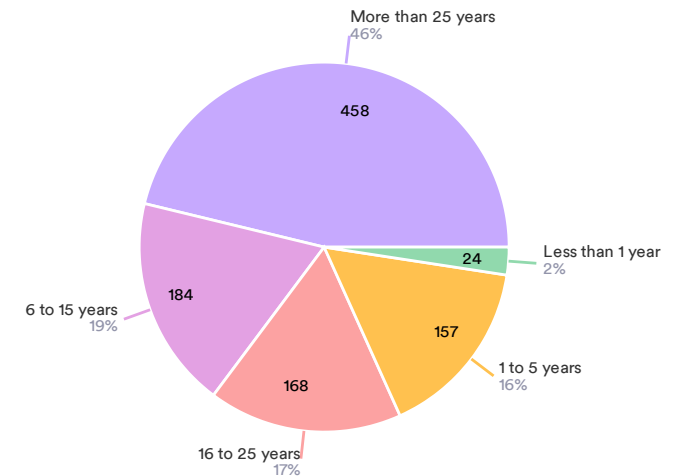
AGE GROUP

- 18 to 24 year olds - 38
- 25 to 34 year olds - 155
- 35 to 44 year olds - 207
- 45 to 54 year olds - 139
- 55 to 64 year olds - 169
- 65+ - 283



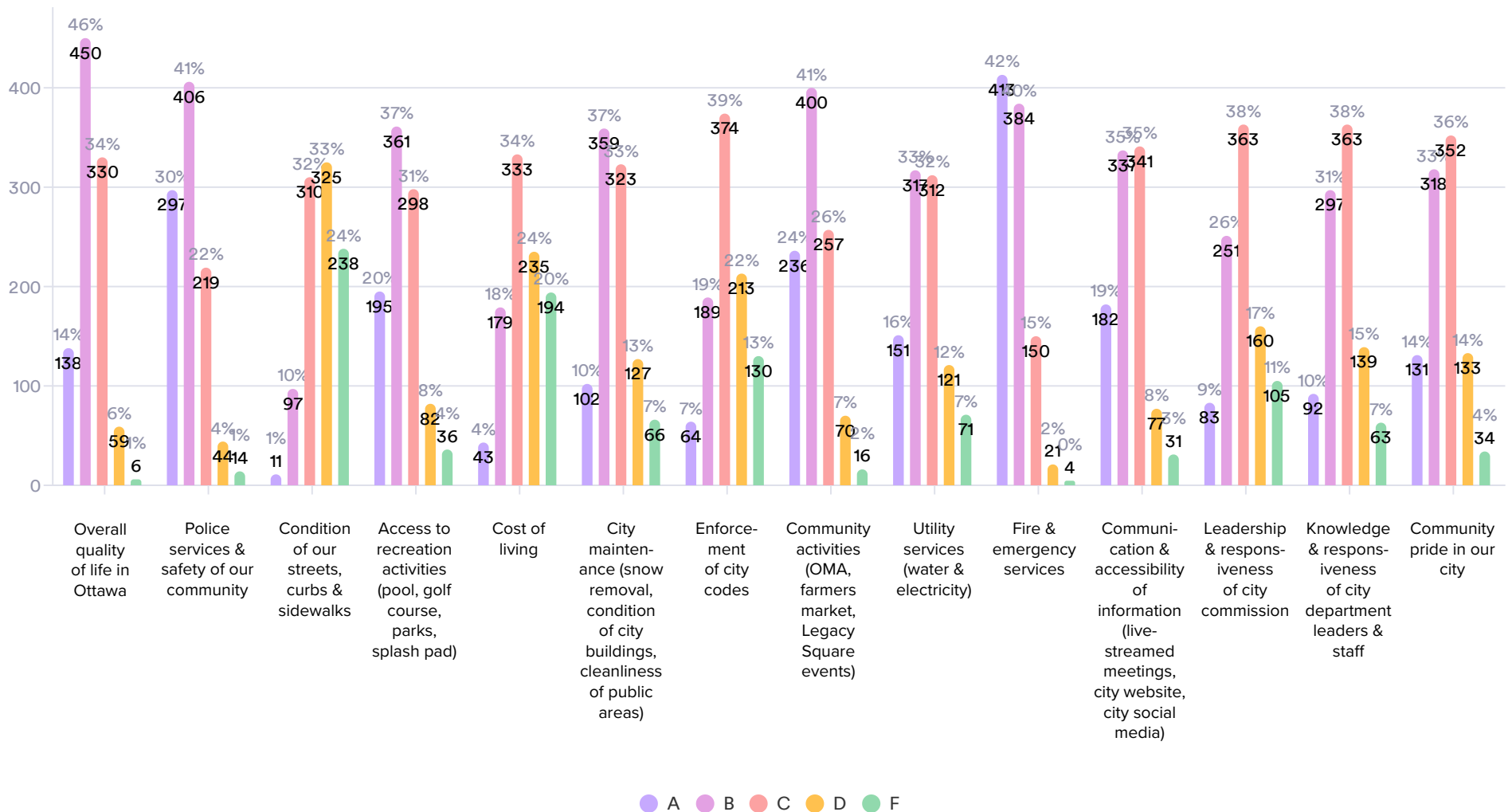
YEARS OF RESIDENCY

- Less than 1 year - 24
- 1 to 5 years - 157
- 6 to 15 years - 184
- 16 to 25 years - 168
- More than 25 years - 458



* For analysis purposes, the 134 responses received from non-city residents were not included in survey calculations, however, their full responses are included at the end of this report for review and consideration

COMMUNITY METRICS



COMMUNITY METRICS

ANALYSIS

Survey respondents generally value their quality of life in Ottawa. Specifically, respondents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of fire/EMS and police services provided by the city. Community activities (OMA, Forest Park events, Legacy Square events) and access to recreational activities (city pool, golf course, parks, playgrounds) also rated higher than average.

- **Quality of life** - received a passing grade (A-B-C) from 94% of respondents; and an A or B rating from 60% of respondents
- **Fire/emergency services** - rated the highest with a passing grade from 98% of respondents; and an A or B rating from 83% of respondents
- **Police services** - rated second highest with a passing grade from 95% of respondents; and an A or B rating from 71% of respondents
- **Community activities** - received a passing grade from 91% of respondents; and an A or B rating from 65% of respondents
- **Recreational activities** - received passing grade from 88% from respondents; and an A or B rating from 57% of respondents

PRIMARY CONCERNS

Respondents are least satisfied with the condition of city streets, curbs & sidewalks, followed by the cost of living and the enforcement of city codes.

- **Condition of our streets, curbs & sidewalks** - received a D or F rating from 57% of respondents (24% F rating)
- **Cost of living in our community** - received a D or F rating from 44% of respondents (20% F rating)
- **Enforcement of city codes for upkeep of residences, yards & commercial buildings** - received a D or F rating from 36% of respondents (13% F rating)

WHY OTTAWA?

The majority of respondents choose to live in Ottawa because they were **raised in the community or have family in Ottawa** (40.6%). Other reasons for choosing Ottawa ranked as follows:

- **Small town living** - 25%
- **Job opportunity** - 16.6%
- **More affordable compared to larger communities (Lawrence, Johnson County, Topeka, KC)** - 10%
- **Proximity to larger communities (Lawrence, KC)** - 7.7%

Other reasons mentioned included Ottawa University (5 respondents), the schools (5 respondents) and the bike trails (3 respondents).



Data	Response	%
★★★★★	216	36%
★★★★☆	149	25%
★★★☆☆	123	21%
★★★☆☆	54	9%
★☆☆☆☆	56	9%

CITY DEPARTMENT EXPERIENCES

ANALYSIS

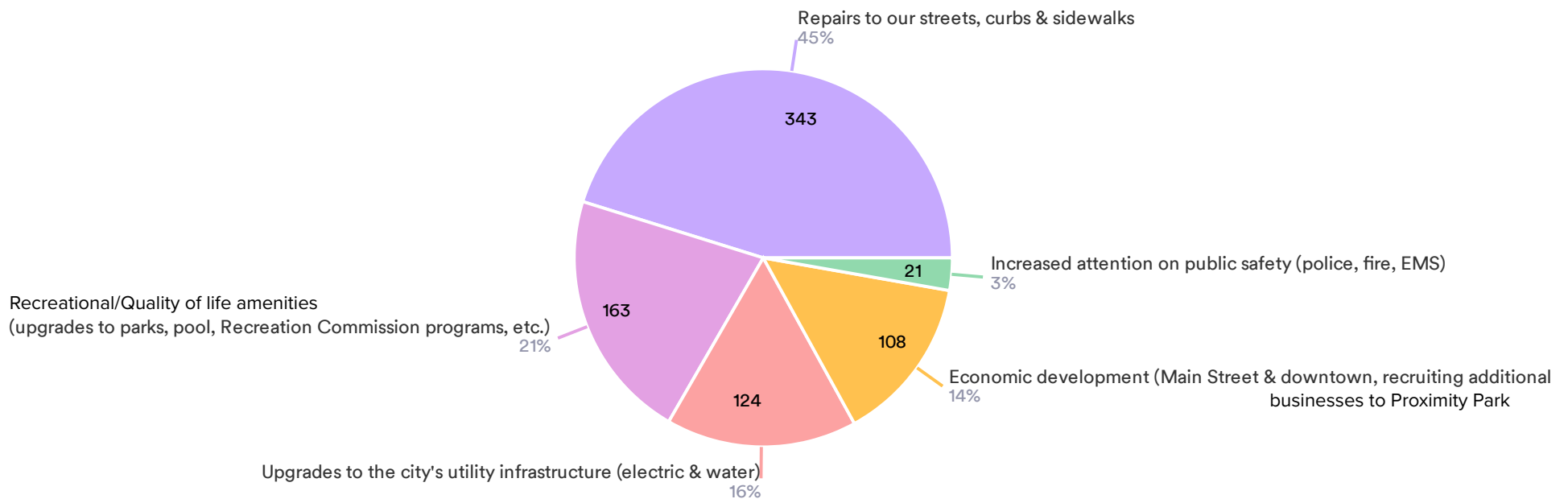
Of the survey respondents who had a recent interaction or communication with a city department, the average satisfaction with their experience was 3.69 (on a scale of 5). 36% of these respondents had an excellent experience (5-star rating) while 9% had a very poor experience (1-star rating). When the data is broken down by department, experience ratings were as follows. Departments receiving fewer than 5 ratings are included in the 3.69 aggregate rating.

- **Fire Department** - 4.5
- **Utilities** - 4
- **Police Department** - 3.8
- **Parks & Recreation** - 3.2
- **Public Works** - 2.9
- **Neighborhood & Community Services** - 2.9

COMMUNICATION & ACCESSIBILITY

Survey respondents are generally satisfied with the level of communication and accessibility of information from the city (such as live video streaming of city commission meetings, ease of finding information on city website, updates and information on city's social media). 89% of respondents gave communication & accessibility of information a passing grade, while 54% rated city communication at an A or B.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE CITY'S TOP PRIORITY OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS?



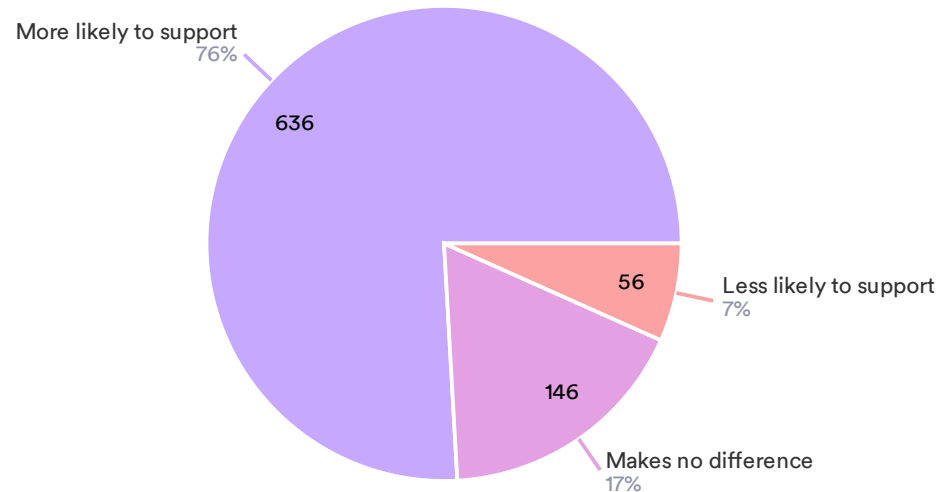
ANALYSIS

Survey respondents are most interested in seeing repairs to streets, curbs & sidewalks (45%) prioritized over the next five years, followed by recreational/quality of life amenities, such as upgrades to parks, the pool, Recreation Commission programs (21%); upgrades to the city's utility infrastructure (16%); and increased economic development, such as Main Street, downtown & recruiting additional businesses to Proximity Park (14%).

3% of respondents would like to see increased attention on public safety prioritized. Other items mentioned at 1% or less included affordable housing, trimming city trees, lowering taxes, and enforcement of animal control.

1¢ SALES TAX: TO HOLD PROPERTY TAX DOWN

Right now, the one cent sales tax holds down property taxes on our homes and businesses by about 30% (a 13.87 mill reduction, which is \$2.02 million in reduced property taxes). Knowing this, would you be more or less likely to support continuing the one cent sales tax?

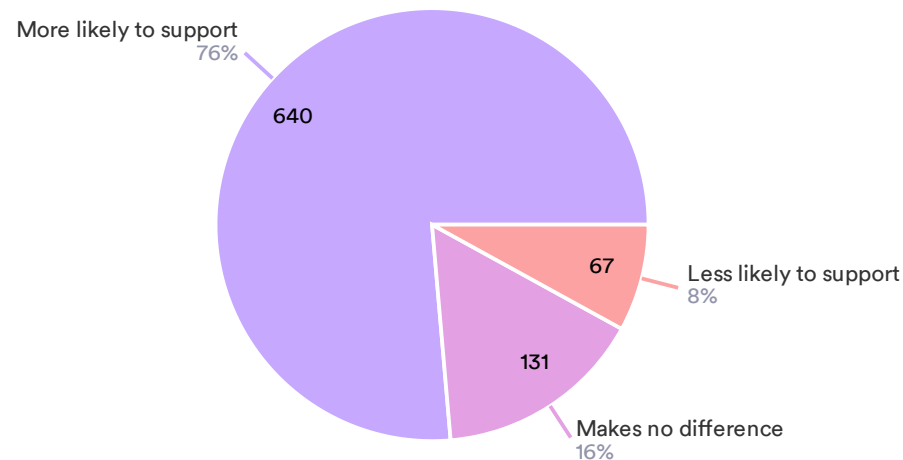


ANALYSIS

76% of respondents indicate they would be more likely to support continuing the 1-cent sales tax if it continues to hold down property taxes on property owners.

1¢ SALES TAX: SPREADS COSTS OVER MORE PEOPLE

Currently, the one cent sales tax prevents a scenario where Ottawa residents bear all of the costs for services. The sales tax allows the city to spread the cost of services across more people - like visitors and neighbors who live outside the city limits and do not pay city property taxes, but who utilize city streets, parks, police and first responder services. Knowing this, would you be more or less likely to support continuing the one cent sales tax?

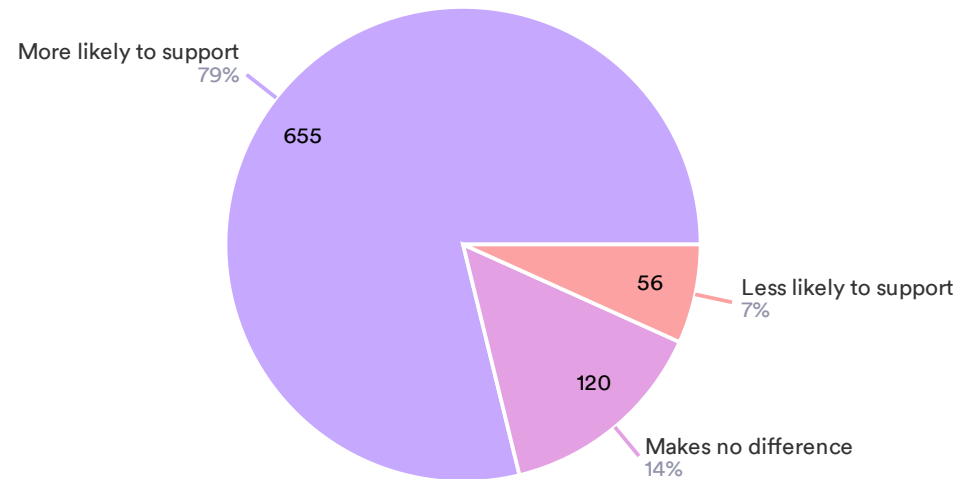


ANALYSIS

On par with the property tax reduction factor, 76% of respondents indicated they would be more likely to support continuing the 1-cent sales tax because it spreads costs for services over more people, including taxpayers who live outside the city limits but utilize city services.

1¢ SALES TAX: IF USED FOR STREETS

Renewal of the one cent sales tax could be used to make street improvements around town, including maintaining and upgrading streets and making sidewalk, curb, gutter and pothole repairs. If a portion of the sales tax were dedicated to streets, would you be:

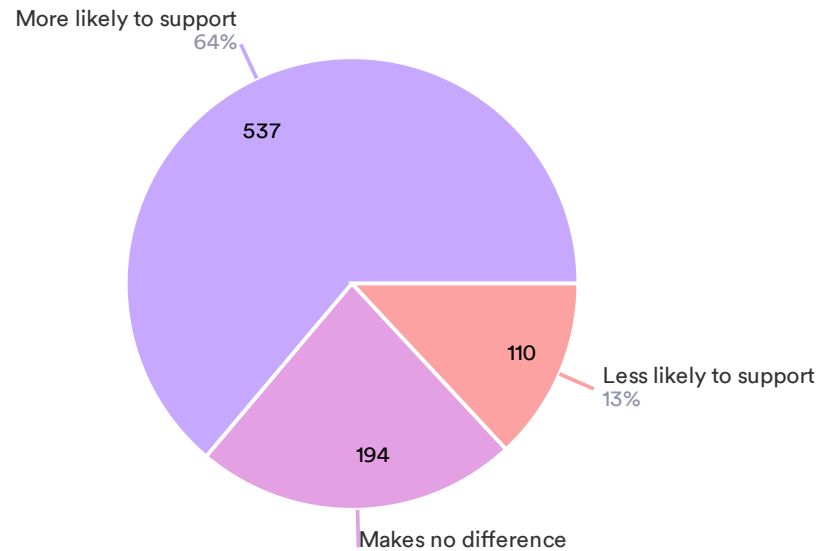


ANALYSIS

Of the three suggested uses for the 1-cent sales tax revenues, street improvements garnered the most support with 79% of respondents indicating they would be more likely to support continuation of the sales tax if a portion of it were used to maintain and upgrade streets, and make sidewalk, curb, gutter and pothole repairs.

1¢ SALES TAX: IF USED FOR PARKS & RECREATION

The city maintains our community parks and walking trails, including Forest Park, Legacy Square, the ballfields, teen park, disc golf course, new fitness court and the new splash park. If a portion of the sales tax were dedicated to maintaining and improving our parks, trails and recreation amenities, would you be:

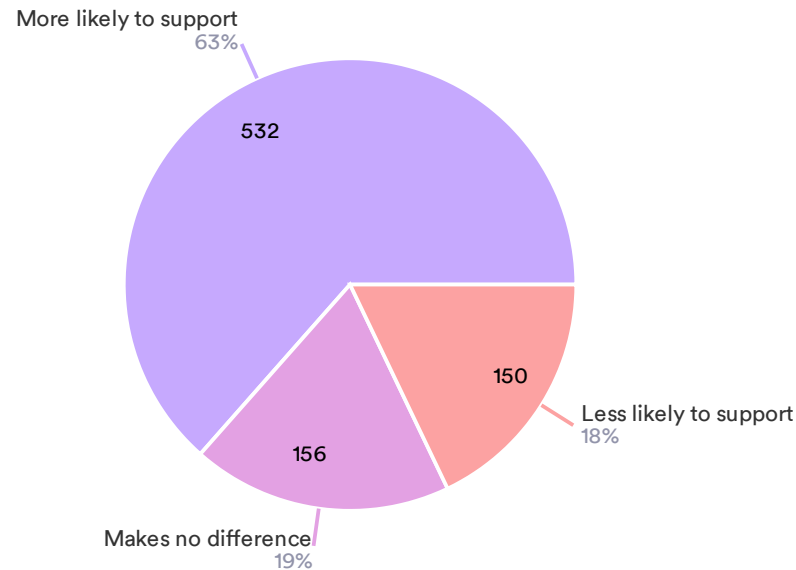


ANALYSIS

64% of respondents indicated they would be more likely to support continuation of the 1-cent sales tax if a portion of it were used to maintain and improve the city's parks, trails and recreational amenities.

1¢ SALES TAX: IF USED FOR NEW POOL

The city pool is nearly 60 years old. Built in 1967, it has served our community well but is past its expected life cycle and continues to require costly repairs. Renewal of the one cent sales tax could be used to replace the city pool with a more cost efficient community pool that has more modern aquatics features. If a portion of the sales tax were dedicated to a new community pool, would you be:

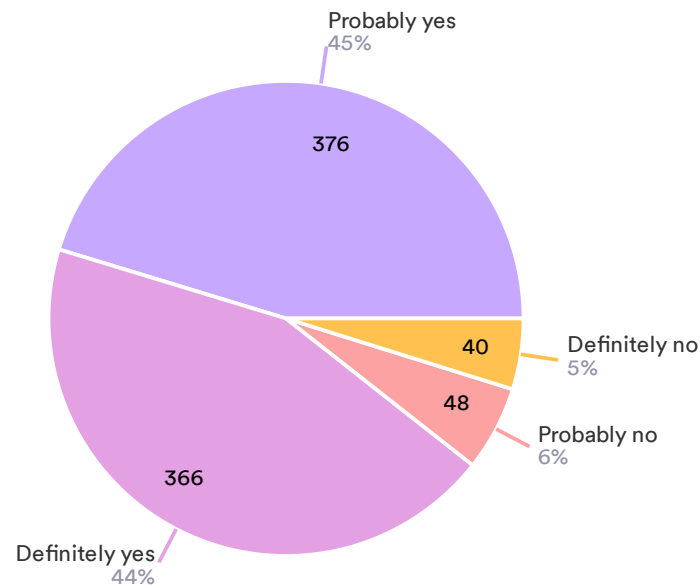


ANALYSIS

63% of respondents indicated they would be more likely to support continuation of the 1-cent sales tax if a portion of it were used to replace the city pool with a new pool. While receiving strong support, this use of the sales tax did garner the highest percentage of opposition with 18% less likely to support continuation of the sales tax if it were invested in a new pool.

1¢ SALES TAX: SUPPORT FOR CONTINUATION

Having read how the one cent sales tax has been used and what it could be used for if renewed, if an election were held today, would you vote to keep the one cent sales tax in place?



ANALYSIS

Overall support for continuing the 1-cent sales tax was strong with 89% of respondents indicating they would likely support a ballot question to keep the sales tax in place, with 44% of those indicating a definite yes. 11% of respondents indicated they would not likely support continuation, with 5% of those indicating a definite no.