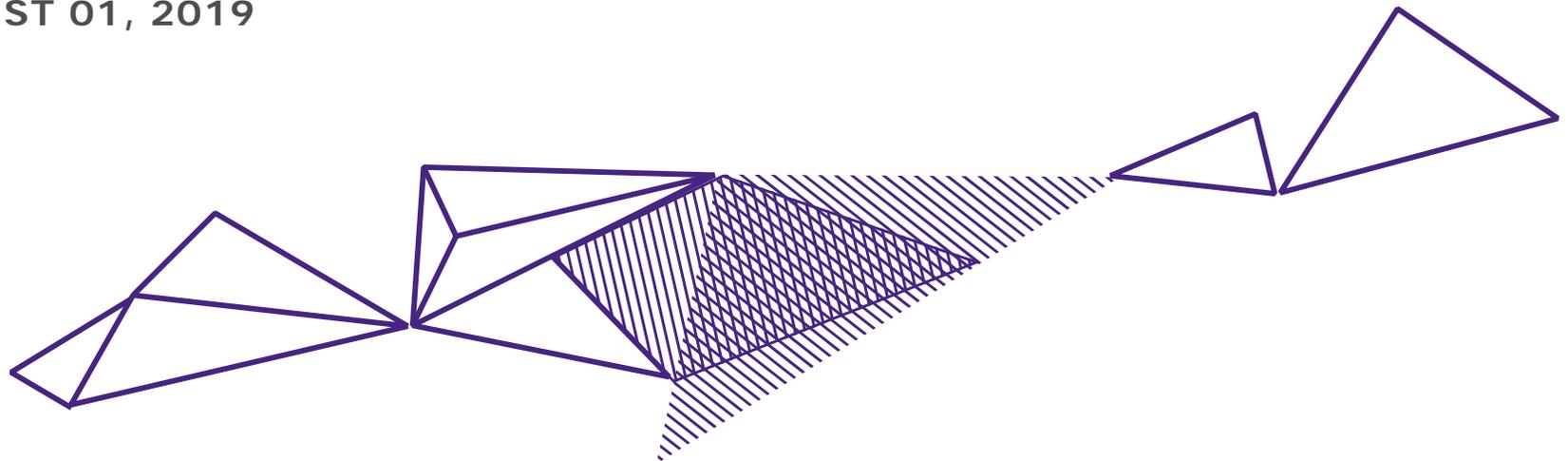


Regional Governance Review Survey Presentation of Findings

REGION OF NIAGARA

AUGUST 01, 2019

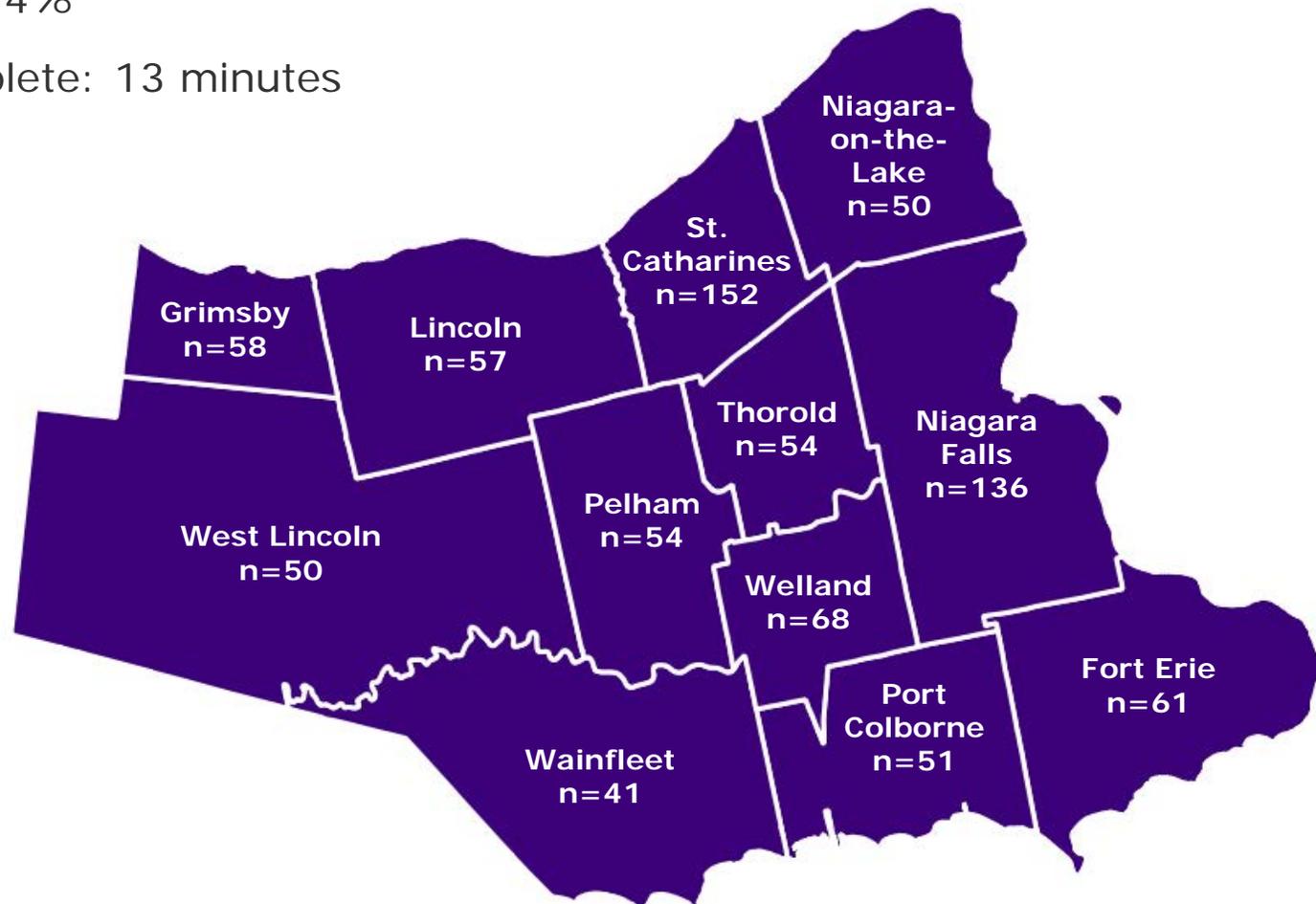


METHODOLOGY

A telephone survey was conducted with a representative sample of Niagara Region residents between May 30 – June 17, 2019:

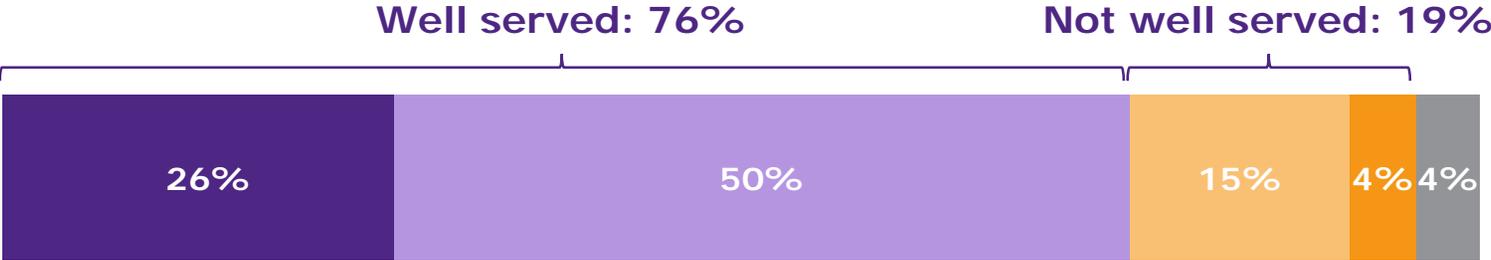
- Total N: 832
- Margin of error: +/- 3.4%
- Average Time to Complete: 13 minutes

	Actual sample (unweighted)	2016 Census (weighted)
Gender		
Men	45%	48%
Women	55%	52%
Age		
18-34	12%	24%
35-54	22%	31%
55+	66%	45%



DELIVERY OF TWO-TIER GOVERNMENT

Three-quarters of Niagara Region residents feel well-served by the current two-tier structure of municipal government.



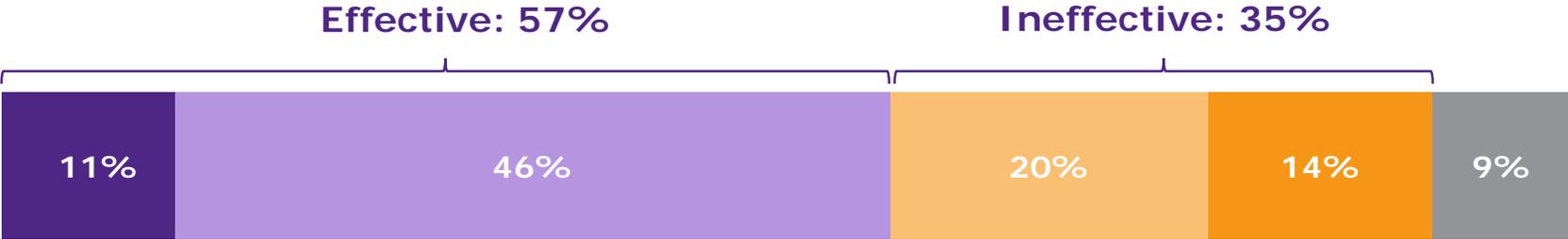
■ Very well served ■ Somewhat well served ■ Not very well served ■ Not at all well served ■ Don't know

Q1. As you may know, <Municipality> residents are served by two levels of municipal government: <Municipality>, providing local services such as fire services, parks and recreation and community centres, and Niagara Region, which provides services across a broader geography such as emergency medical services, policing, public health, seniors services, and waste management. How well do you feel <Municipality> residents are being served by this current two-tier structure of municipal government?

Base: all respondents (n=832)

EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A majority of residents feel that the current structure of elected officials is effective at representing their interests when making decisions for Niagara Region.



■ Very effective ■ Somewhat effective ■ Somewhat ineffective ■ Very ineffective ■ don't know/no opinion

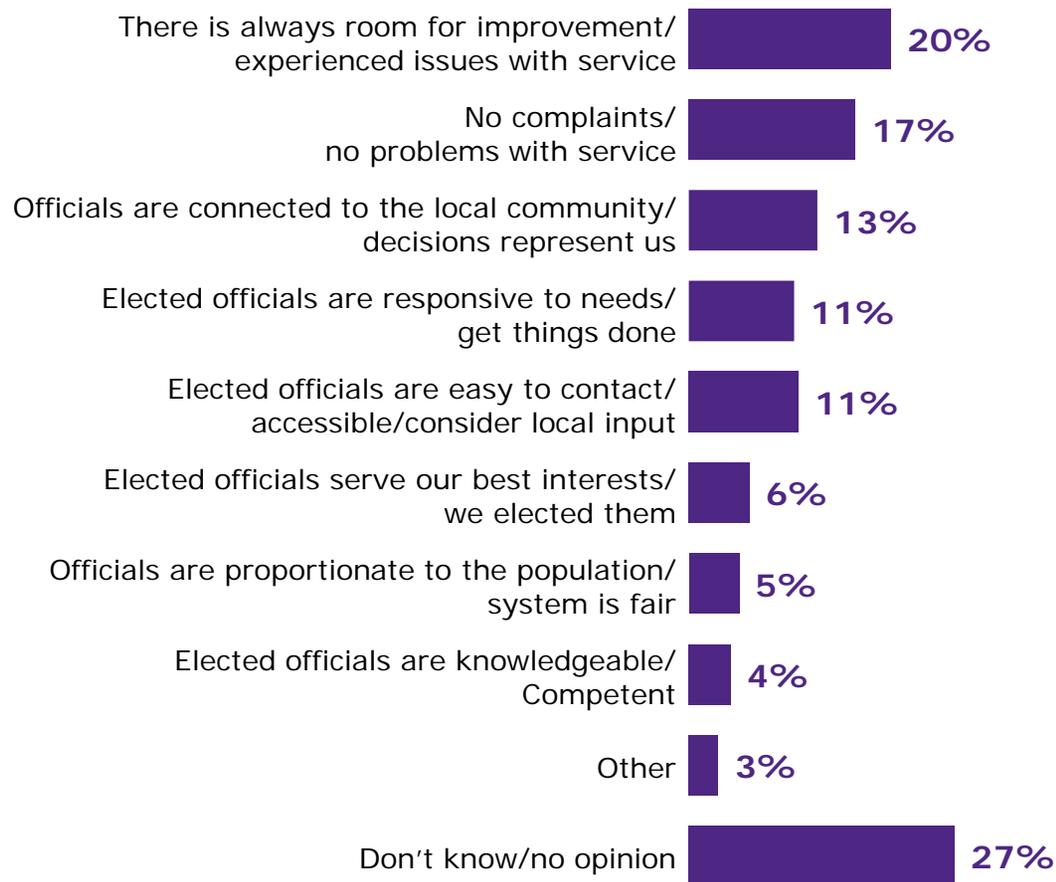
Q2. Niagara Region is made up of five cities, five towns and two townships, each of which have elected local councils governing them. Each community also elects Regional councillors, who along with the elected mayor, make decisions for Niagara Region. The number of regional councillors elected depends on the size of the community. <Municipality> has <number of regional councillors>.

Setting aside your political views, how effective or ineffective do you feel this structure of elected officials is at representing your interests when they are making decisions for Niagara Region?

Base: all respondents (n=832)

REASONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS

Residents who consider the current structure effective say that there is always room for improvement, that they have no complaints, or that officials are connected to and represent the local community.

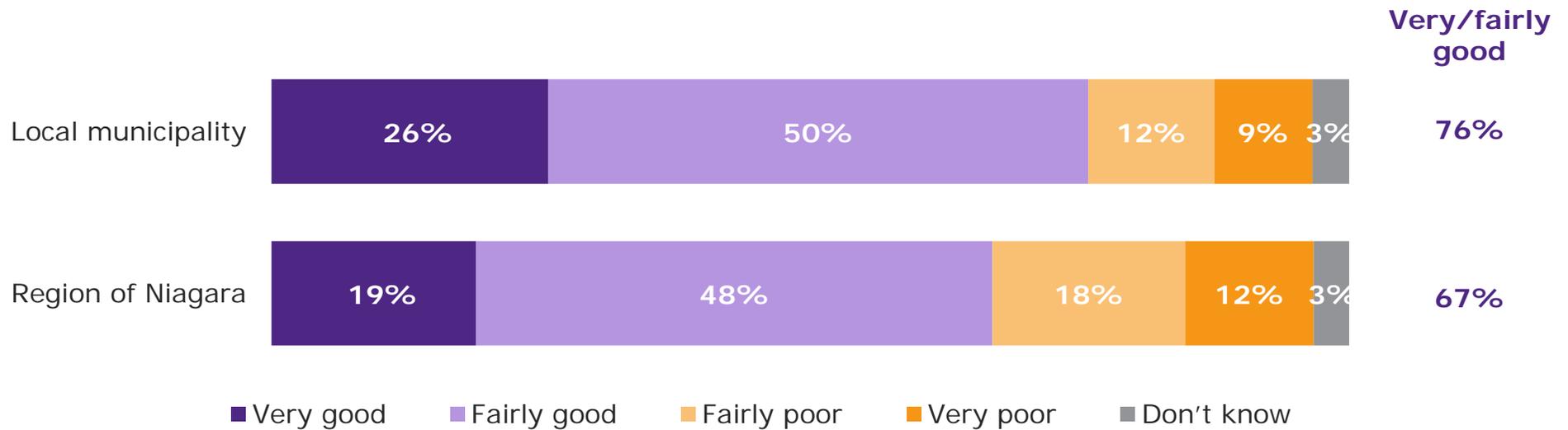


Q3A. Why do you say the structure of elected officials is effective at representing your interests when they are making decisions for Niagara Region?

Base: current structure is effective (n=466)

VALUE FOR TAX DOLLARS

Three-quarters of residents say they receive good value for their tax dollars from their local municipality, while two-thirds say the same of Niagara Region.



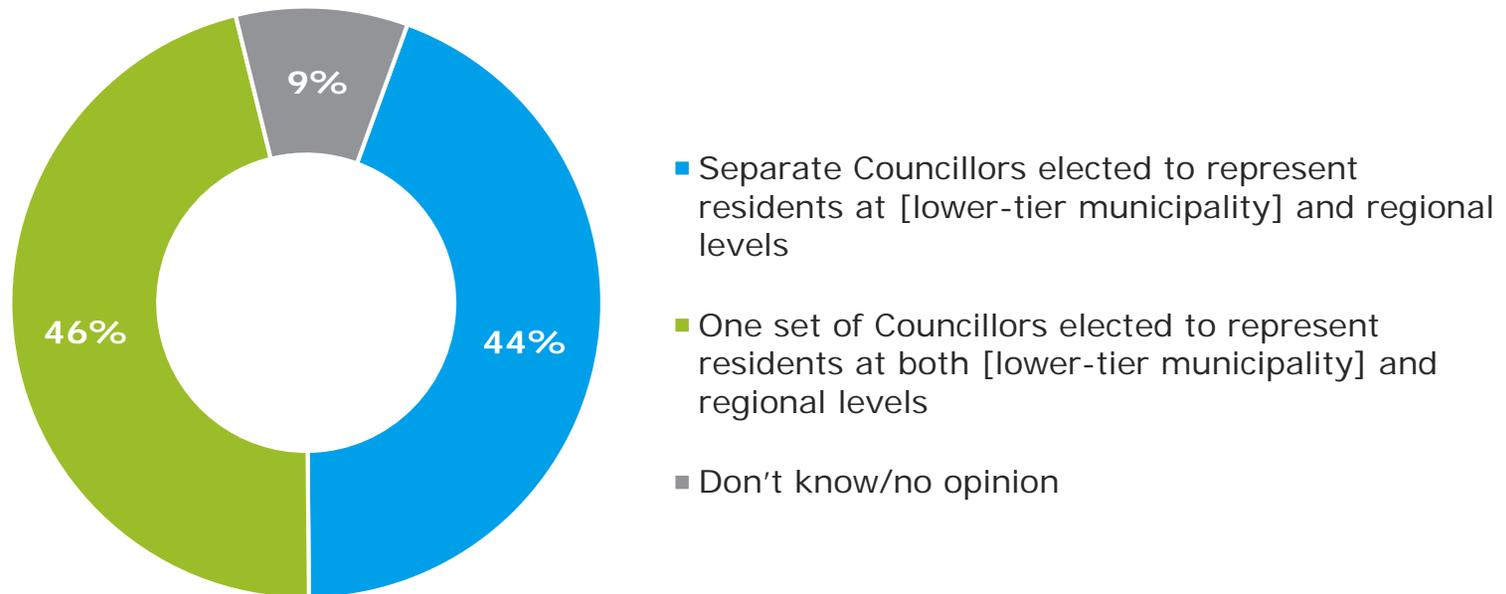
Q4. Thinking about all the programs and services you receive from <municipality>, would you say that, overall, you receive very good, fairly good, fairly poor or very poor value for your tax dollars?

Q5. And thinking about all the programs and services you receive from the Region of Niagara, would you say that, overall, you receive very good, fairly good, fairly poor or very poor value for your tax dollars?

Base: all respondents (n=832)

REPRESENTATION PREFERENCE

Niagara Region residents are closely split between a preference for separate councillors elected at the lower-tier and regional level and one set of councillors elected for both.

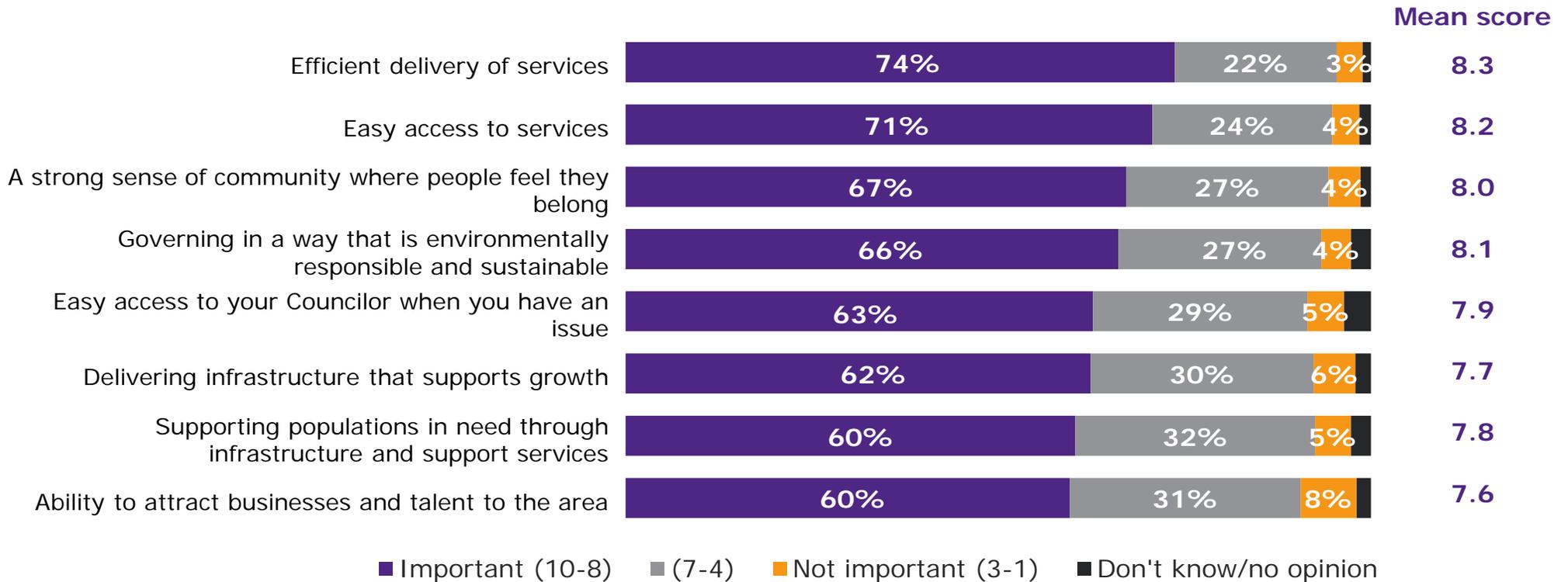


Q6. When you think about how you are represented at both the <town/city/township> and Regional levels, which scenario would you prefer?

Base: all respondents (n=832)

CITIZEN PRIORITIES

When considering aspects of local government that are of importance, Niagara Region residents prioritize efficient delivery and easy access to services.



Q8-Q15. Using a ten-point scale where one means “not at all important” and ten means “extremely important”, please indicate how important each of the following are to you personally when thinking about your local government.

Base: all respondents (n=832)

DEFINITIONS OF POTENTIAL STRUCTURES

Residents were given the following descriptions of potential municipal governance structures before proceeding to subsequent questions.

As you may know, the provincial government is currently undertaking a review of the governance, decision-making and service delivery functions of Ontario's regional municipalities, including the Niagara Region and its twelve municipalities. Some possible outcomes from this review could include the following:

Current Structure. The province may decide to leave the current structure in place where the <municipality> remains a lower-tier municipality within Niagara Region. Each level of government would retain responsibility for delivery of services.

Partial amalgamation. A scenario that combines some Niagara area municipalities into larger municipal governments which are responsible for delivering services within the new municipality.

Total amalgamation. A scenario whereby the 12 municipalities within the Niagara Region are brought together into one central government which has the sole responsibility for administering services across a new amalgamated geography.

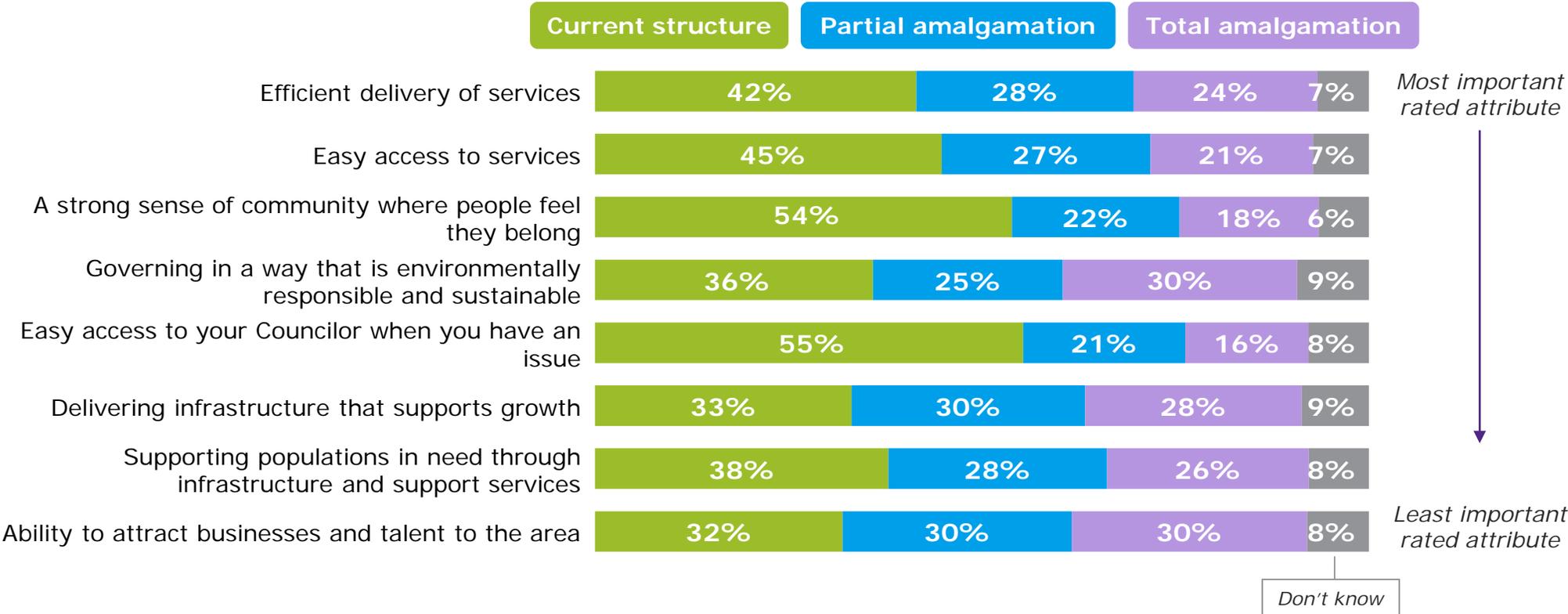
I'd like to ask you about the different aspects of municipal governance and administration discussed earlier and get your sense of which of these three municipal models you think would do the best job of delivering services in a way that meets your expectations.

To recall, the three options are:

- The **current structure**, or two-tier model, in place now in Niagara Region;
- The **partial amalgamation** of a few municipalities into one municipality
- A **total amalgamation** of all of the municipalities currently within Niagara Region.

PREFERRED GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

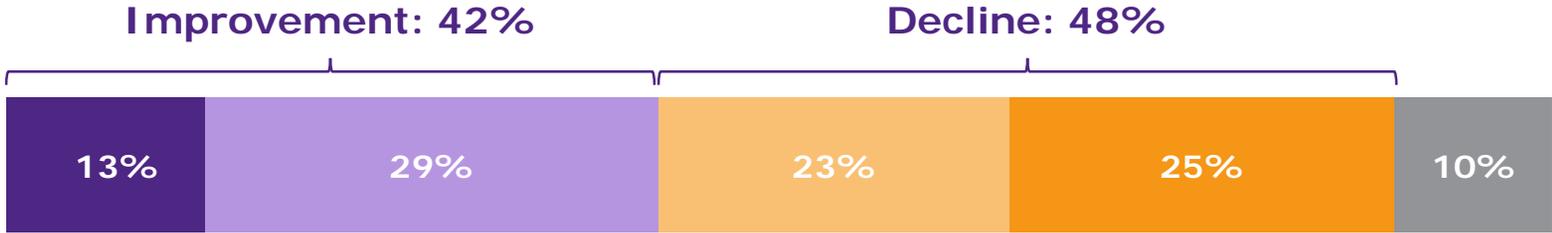
Majorities of residents express a preference for the current structure when considering delivering a strong sense of community and providing easy access to Councillors.



Q16-Q23. Which of the three models would do the best job of...
 Base: all respondents (n=832)

EFFECT OF LARGER GOVERNMENT ON SERVICES

Overall, residents are closely split in their expectations of the quality of service delivered if their local municipality became part of a larger municipal structure. A plurality lean towards an expectation of a decline in service, of which one-quarter anticipate the decline would be significant.



■ A significant improvement ■ A moderate improvement ■ A moderate decline ■ A significant decline ■ Don't know/no opinion

Q24. If [MUNICIPALITY] was reorganized to make it larger would that result in an [improvement/decline] in the quality of service delivery to [MUNICIPALITY]?

Base: all respondents (n=832)

Key Takeaways

- ▶ Residents generally express **confidence in the current state** of representation in Niagara Region; they feel well-served by current political representation, feel their interests are well represented by the two-tier system and derive value for the taxes they pay to both tiers of municipal government.
- ▶ There are small pockets of evidence of a **limited appetite for some changes** to the two-tier system. A significant proportion of Niagara Region residents anticipate efficiencies derived from one set of councilors to represent residents at both municipal levels. However, this sentiment is limited as it runs into opposition from a majority of residents who believe a larger government will result in a decline in service delivery and who strongly oppose any increase in property taxes to fund a new, larger municipality.
- ▶ Support for the current government structure translates into confidence that **existing representation can best deliver important services and community character**. Amalgamation scenarios receive diffused support for the delivery of some municipal responsibilities, however the overall tone of support for the current structure and pronounced opposition to any changes that would negatively impact service delivery or taxation suggest that resistance to change would be vocalized should amalgamation be imposed throughout the region.