

DuPage County Budget Survey



Northern Illinois
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The findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the NIU project team alone and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the officers and/or trustees of Northern Illinois University.

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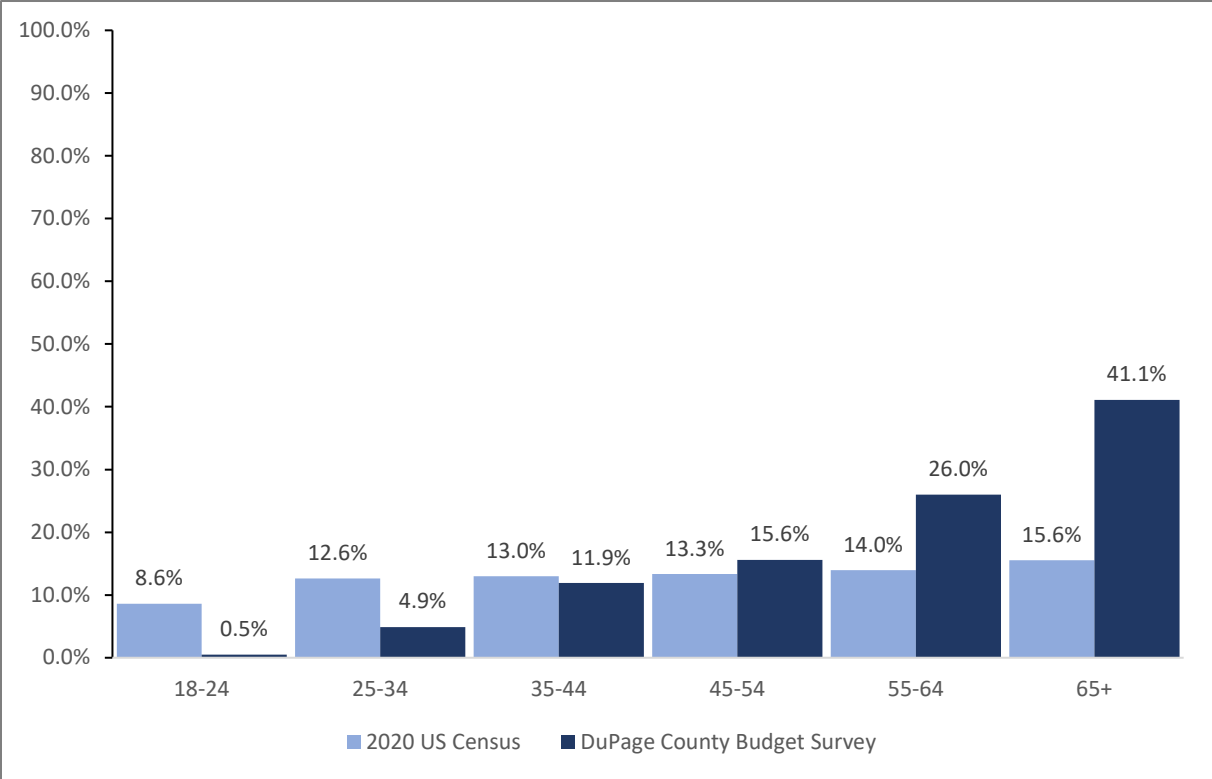
Executive Summary

DuPage County commissioned the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) to assist the County to develop and analyze the findings of an online survey to gather residents' opinions regarding County budgetary priorities and activities. The survey was administered by the County. The survey was conducted July 2022 - September 2022. A total of 3,178 surveys were received.

It is important to consider the survey results within the context of the DuPage County population at large. This section of the findings compares Census demographics for DuPage County against the demographic makeup of all survey respondents.

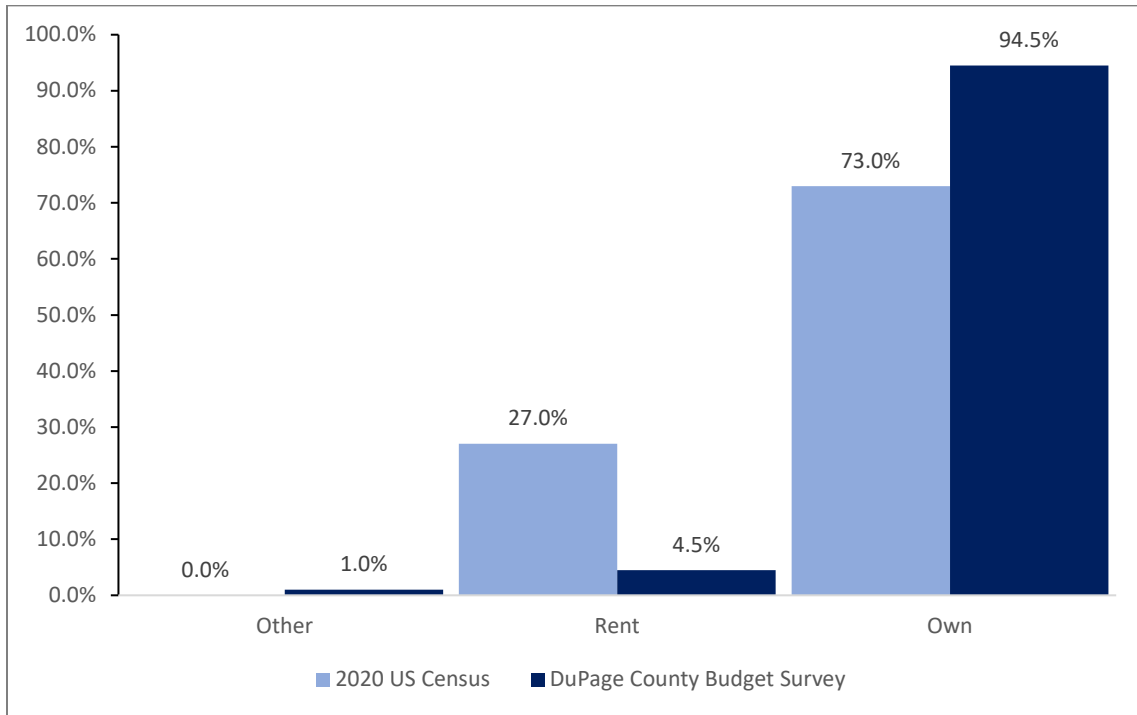
The survey response is heavily skewed toward the opinions and attitudes of older residents, as compared to those residents under 44 years of age. Figure 1 graphically depicts the response rate by age group compared to the 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

FIGURE 1: DuPage County Budget Survey Respondent Age Versus Census Age Estimates



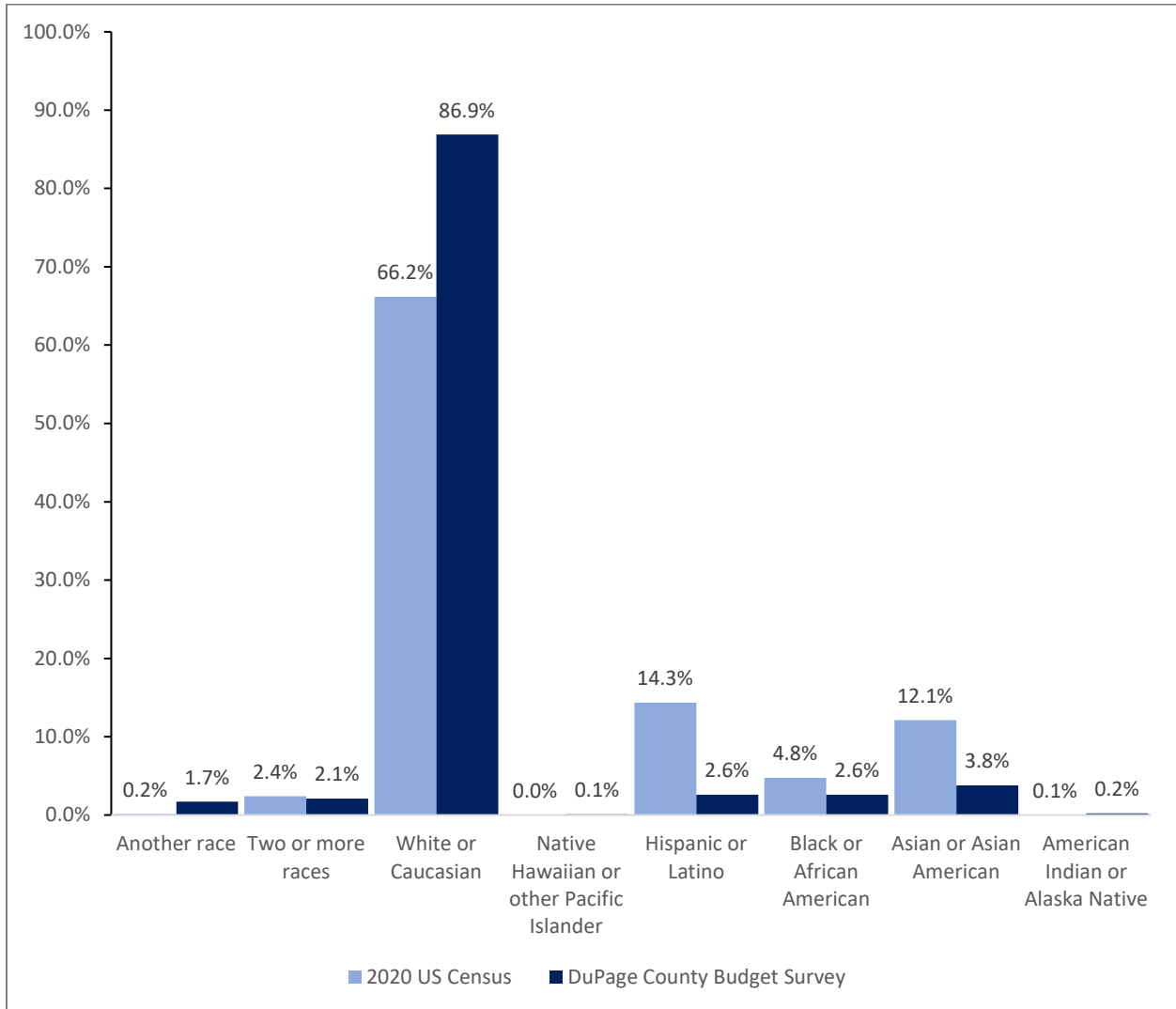
Respondent results reflect a large overrepresentation of homeowners compared to renters. Among respondents of this survey, renter perspectives are underrepresented (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: DuPage County Budget Survey Respondent Homeownership Versus Census Homeownership Estimates



DuPage County Budget Survey respondents are overwhelmingly White, though that is not entirely out of step with County-wide demographics. Still, White respondents represent an exceptionally large proportion compared to the population at large. Among those underrepresented, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian or Asian-American voices experienced the largest gap (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: Budget Survey Respondent Race Versus Census Demographic



Introduction

Background and Purpose

DuPage County commissioned the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) to assist with the development and analysis of an online survey to gather residents' opinions regarding opinions of County services. The survey was administered by the County. This survey was designed to collect information on County budget and spending priorities.

Methodology

Questionnaire

CGS staff worked with the DuPage County staff to design a questionnaire to be administered entirely online.

The questionnaire included thirteen questions including demographic questions. It was designed to collect information about resident sentiment and response to budget priorities, type of spending on climate change, lacking or missing County government services, and a demographic profile of survey respondents.

The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection

DuPage County advertised the survey on their website and social media, the County newsletter/email and traditional news media. **Participation was voluntary and self-selective; therefore, caution should be used when interpreting the survey results, as the respondents do not reflect the population in DuPage County on key demographic variables.**

The FY23 DuPage County Budget Survey was programmed online via SurveyMonkey. The survey was available from July 20, 2022, to September 2, 2022. A total of 3,178 surveys were received. Duplicate and partially completed surveys were deleted and not included in the analysis.

Analysis

Where possible, available data is provided within the context of the County-wide environment. Tables and charts are available for each individual question.

Findings

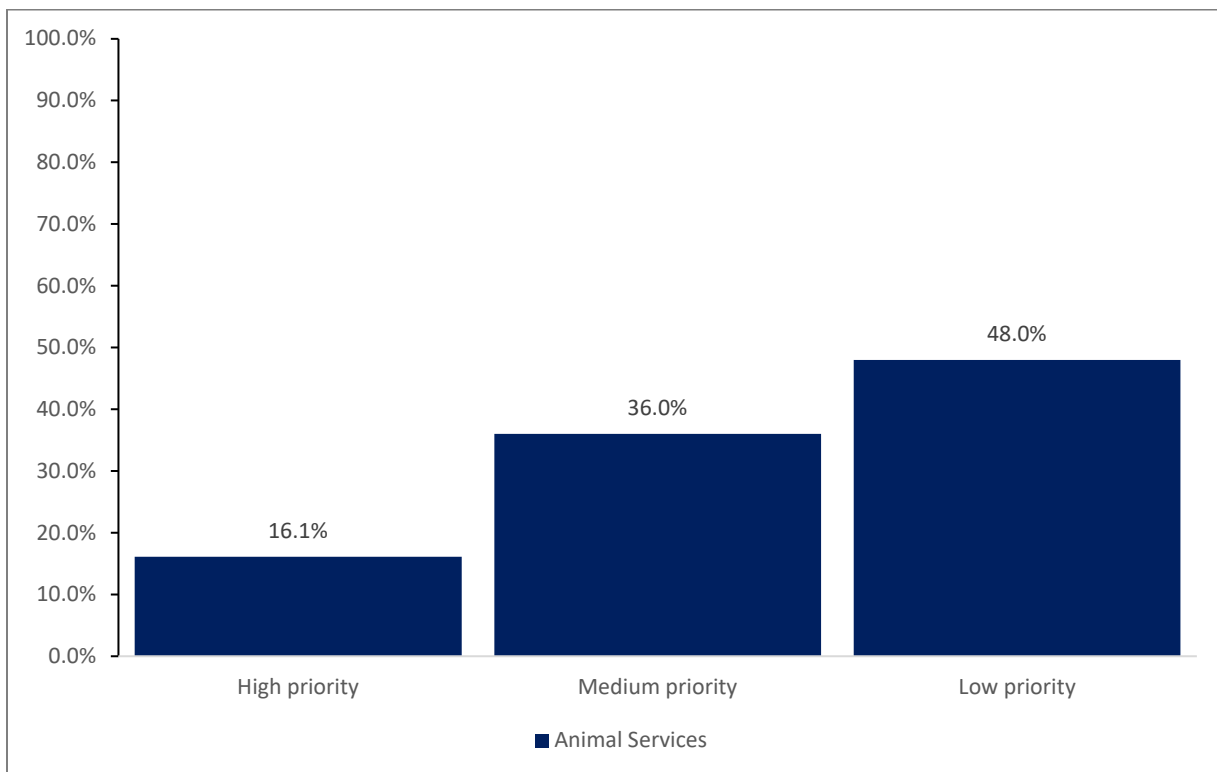
The following results represent summaries of the direct response to the FY2023 DuPage County Budget Survey.

Respondents were asked the following questions:

Q1.1 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas? Animal Services: Keep animals and residents safe and provide resources to support responsible pet ownership.

Of the 2,803 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that keeping animals and residents safe and providing resources to support responsible pet ownership are a low priority. Medium priority was the second most prevalent response.

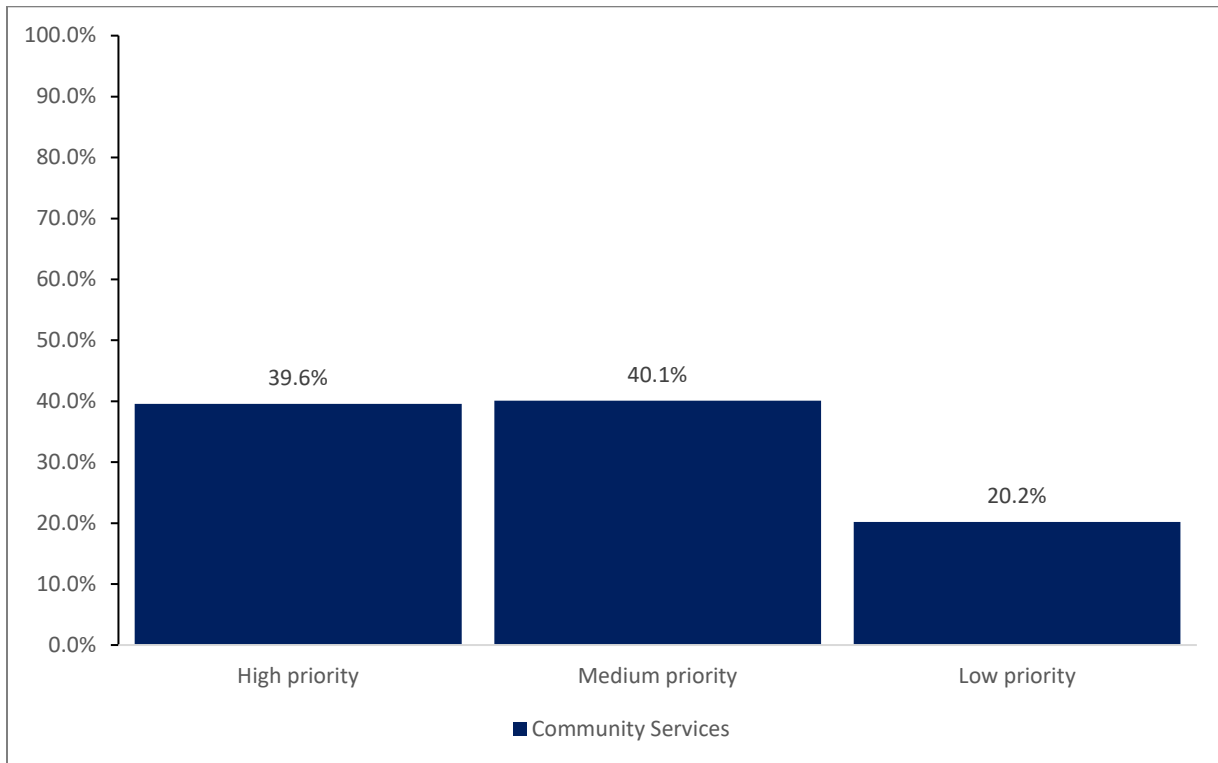
Response	Animal Services
High priority	16.1%
Medium priority	36.0%
Low priority	48.0%



Q1.2 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas? Information and Referral: Providing information to those seeking assistance and services from the County.

Of the 2,835 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that providing information to those seeking assistance and services from the County are a Medium Priority, followed closely by High Priority.

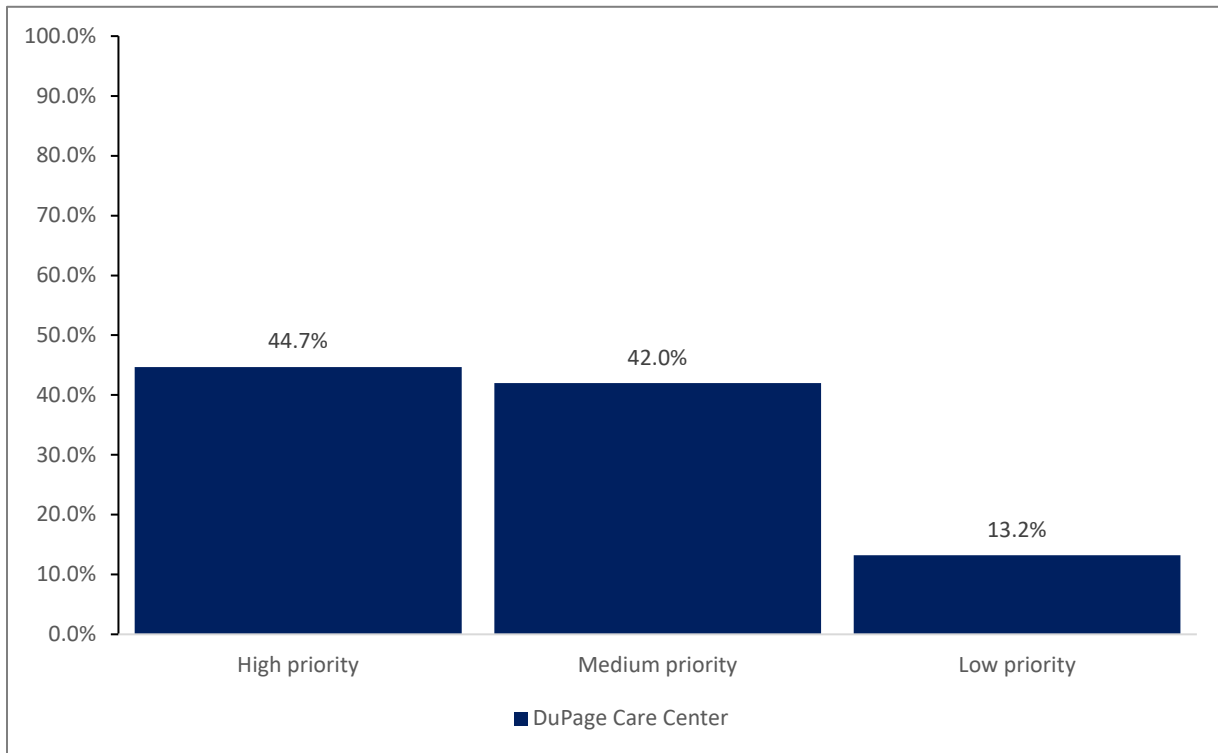
Response	Community Services
High priority	39.6%
Medium priority	40.1%
Low priority	20.2%



**Q1.3 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas?
DuPage Care Center: Long-term care for low-income elderly and disabled residents.**

Of the 2,824 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that long-term care for low-income elderly and disabled residents are a High Priority, followed by Medium Priority.

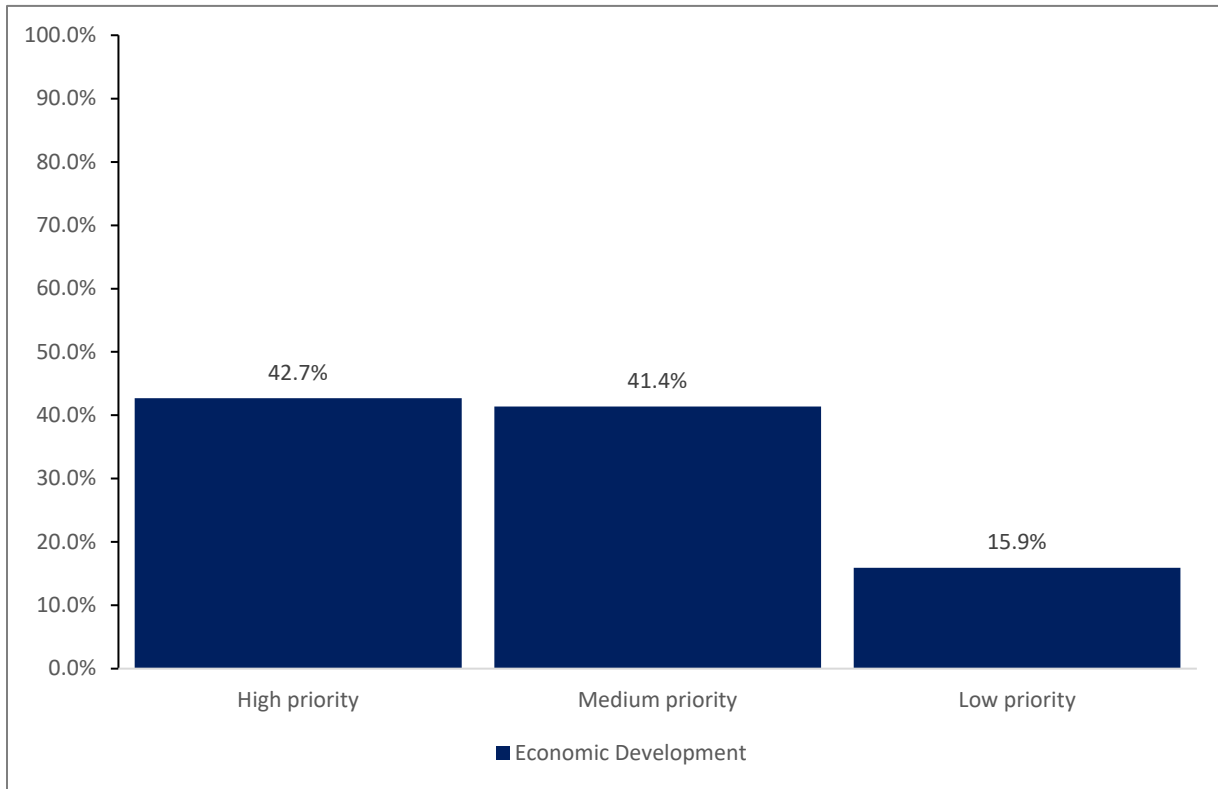
Response	DuPage Care Center
High priority	44.7%
Medium priority	42.0%
Low priority	13.2%



**Q1.4 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas?
Economic Development: Recruiting businesses and encouraging job creation**

Of the 2,838 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that recruiting businesses and encouraging job creation are a High Priority. Medium Priority was the second most-selected response.

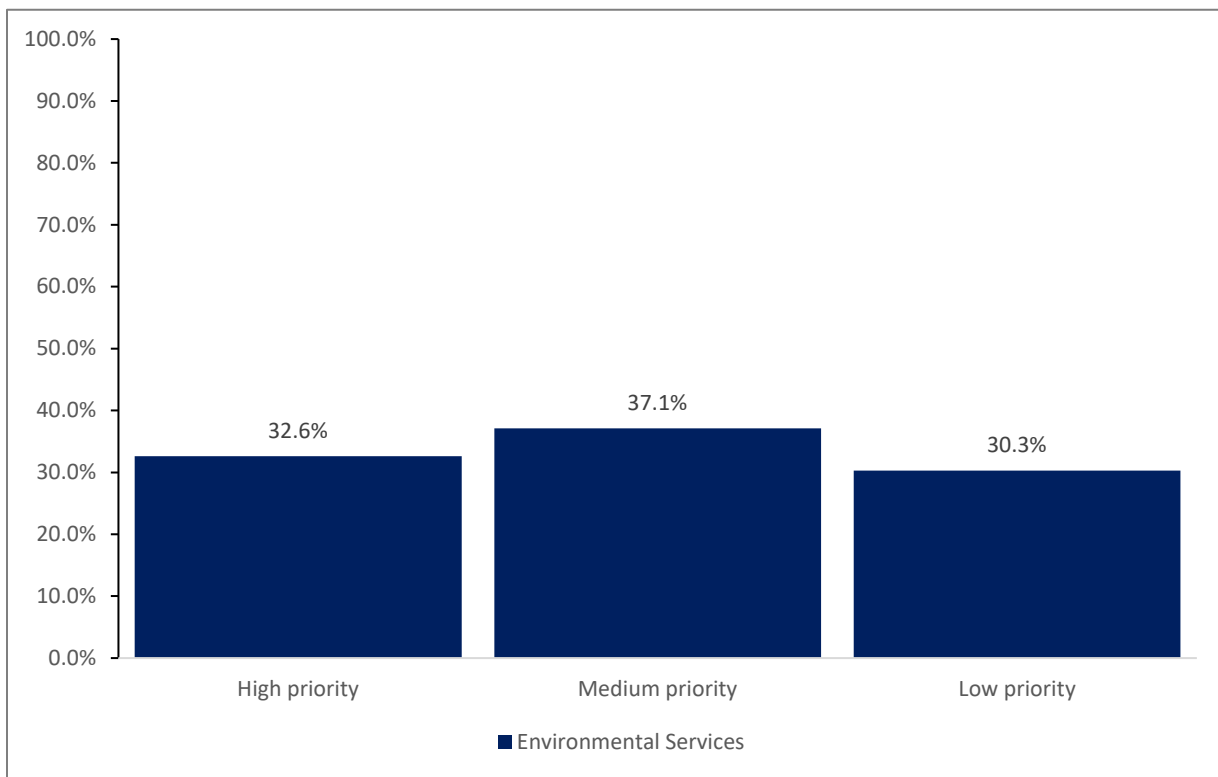
Response	Economic Development
High priority	42.7%
Medium priority	41.4%
Low priority	15.9%



Q1.5 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas? Environmental Services: Public education, outreach, recycling events.

Of the 2,826 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that public education, outreach, and recycling events are a Medium Priority. However, responses across all categories are somewhat similar, indicating residents' perspectives of environmental services are diverse.

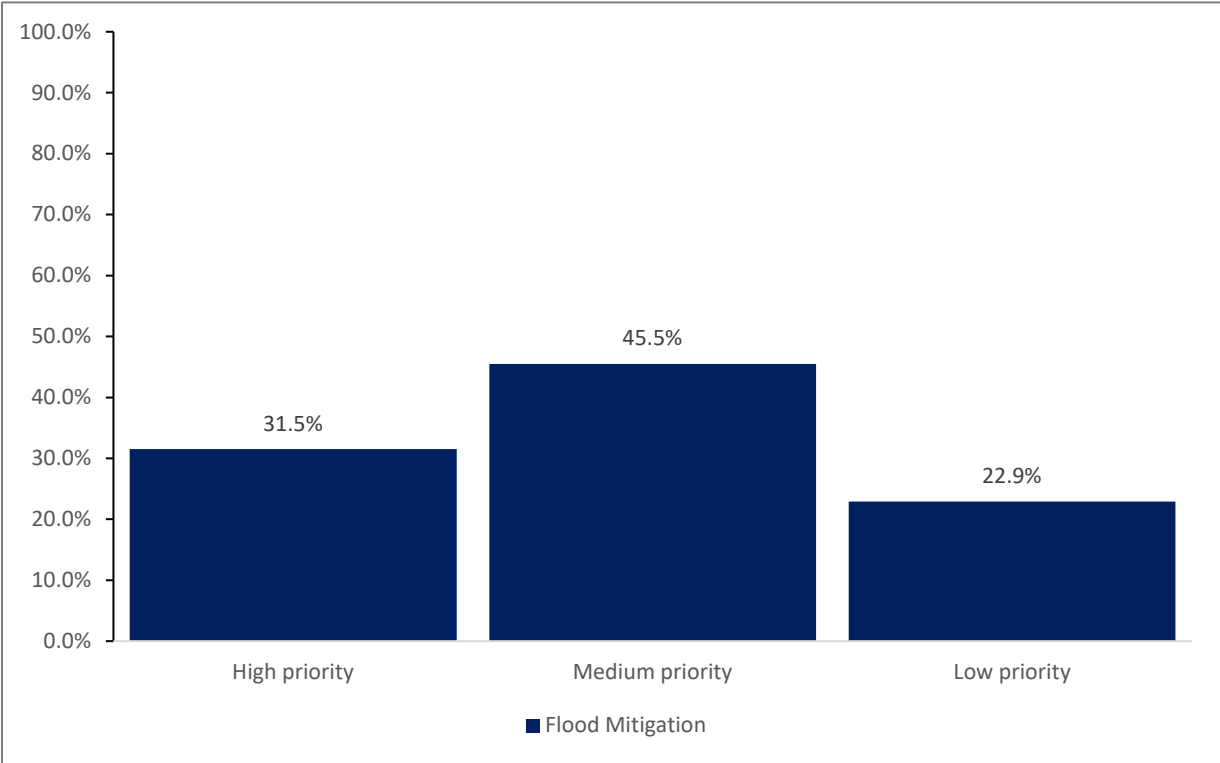
Response	Environmental Services
High priority	32.6%
Medium priority	37.1%
Low priority	30.3%



Q1.6 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas? Flood Mitigation: Programs to reduce the impact of flooding on people and property

Of the 2,784 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that programs to reduce the impact of flooding on people and property are a Medium Priority. The next greatest proportion of respondents indicate this area is a High Priority.

Response	Flood Mitigation
High priority	31.5%
Medium priority	45.5%
Low priority	22.9%

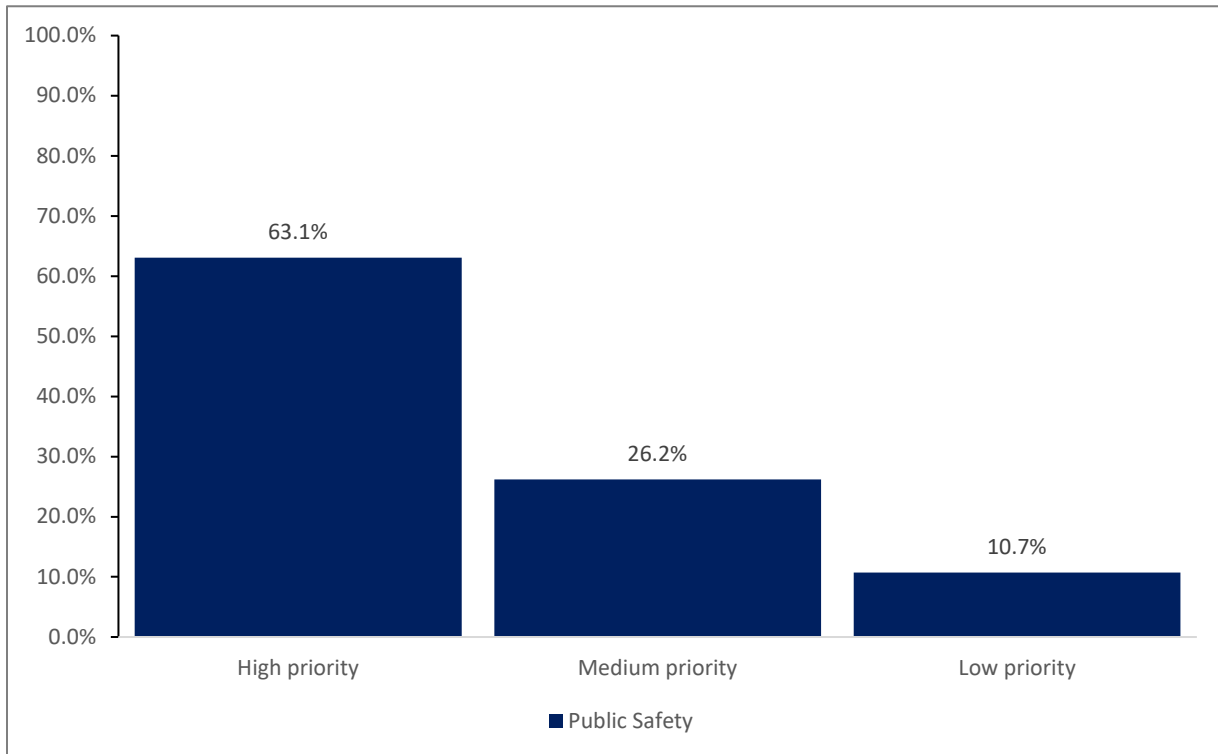


Q1.7 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas?

Public Safety: Law enforcement, corrections, criminal justice, and court operations

Of the 2,858 valid responses to this question, the majority of respondents indicate that law enforcement, corrections, criminal justice, and court operations are a High Priority.

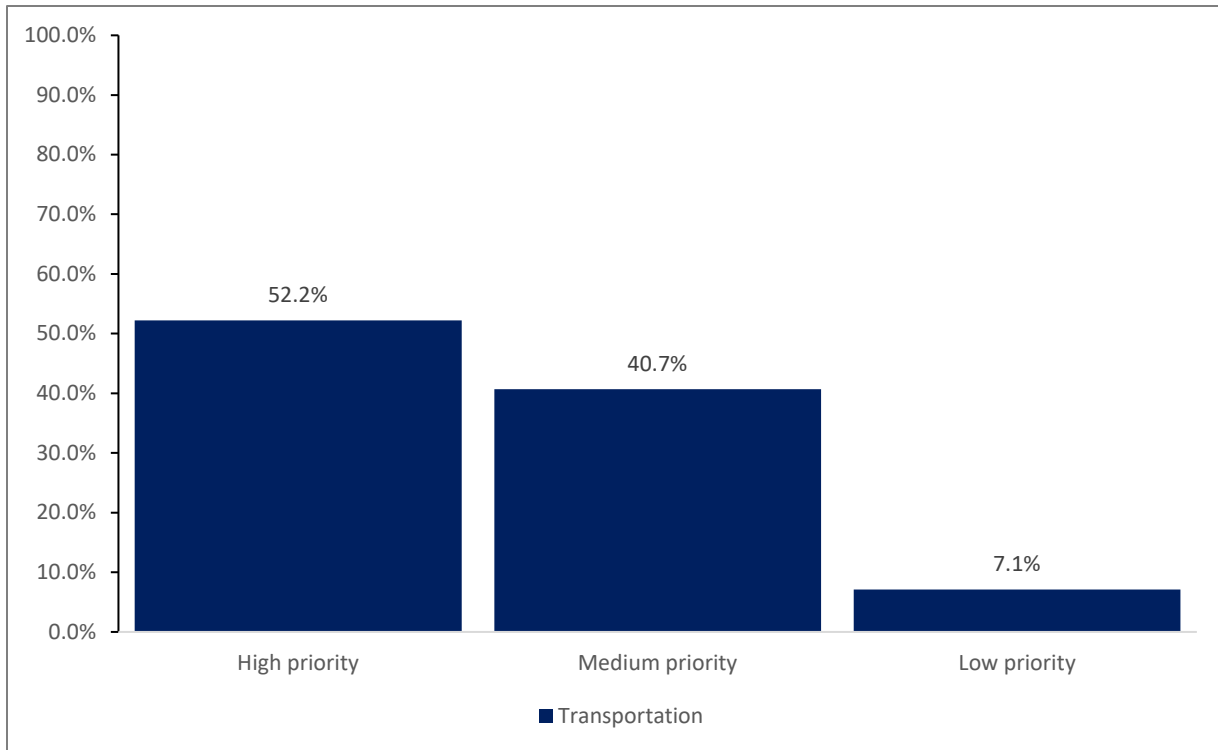
Response	Public Safety
High priority	63.1%
Medium priority	26.2%
Low priority	10.7%



Q1.8 In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas? Transportation: Construct, improve, and repair County roads, bridges, paths, and sidewalks

Of the 2,851 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that constructing, improving, and repairing County roads, bridges, paths, and sidewalks are a High Priority.

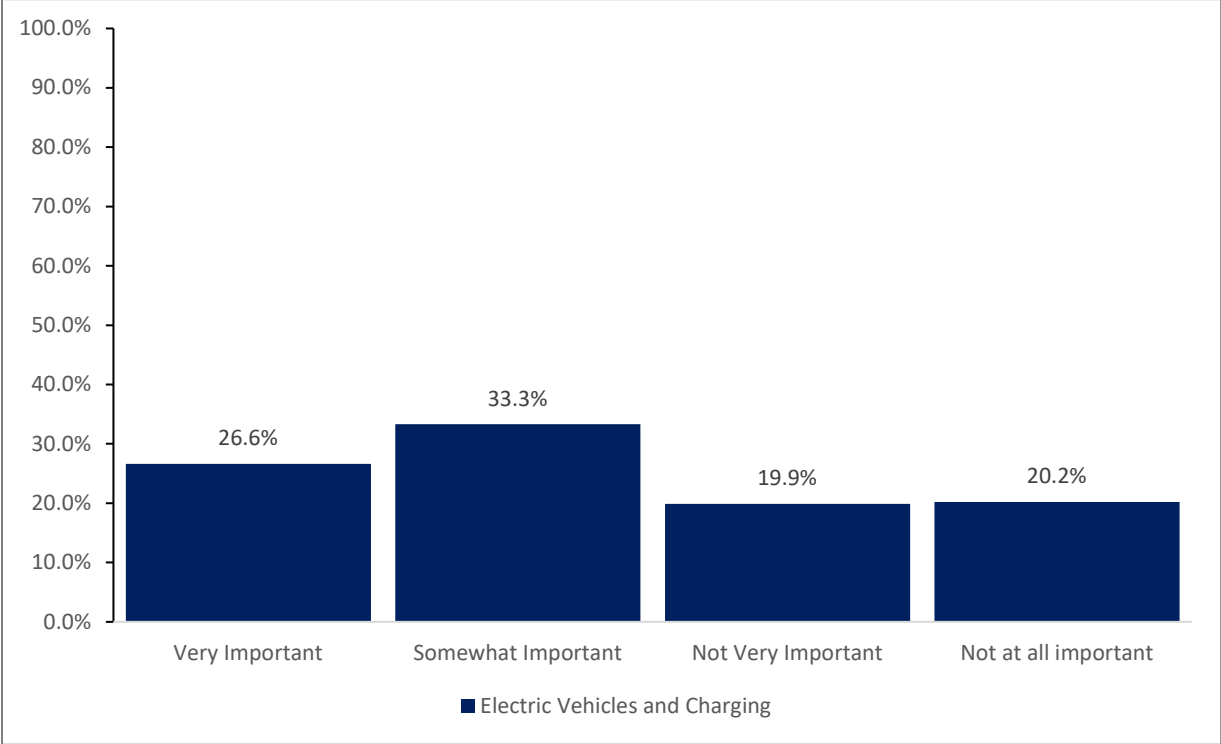
Response	Transportation
High priority	52.2%
Medium priority	40.7%
Low priority	7.1%



Q2.1 As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs: Electric vehicles and charging stations for the County fleet.

Of the 2,845 valid responses to this question, 59.9% of respondents indicate that electric vehicles and charging stations for the County fleet are very or somewhat important.

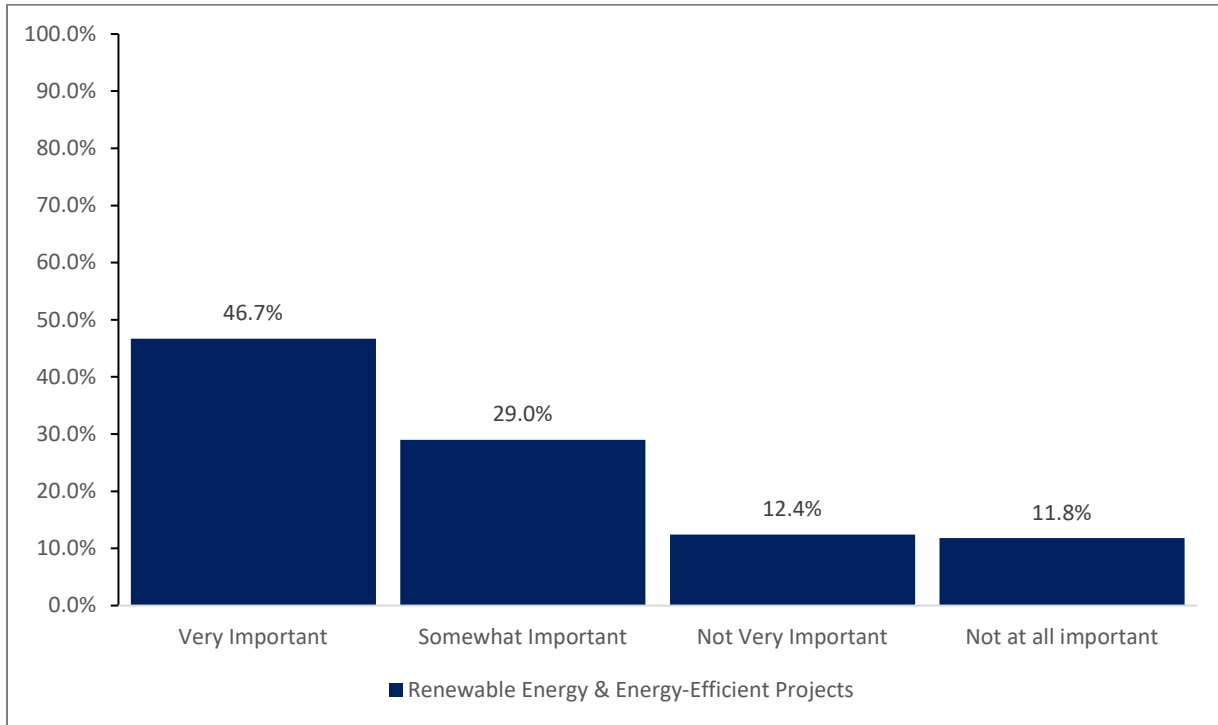
Response	Electric Vehicles and Charging
Very Important	26.6%
Somewhat Important	33.3%
Not Very Important	19.9%
Not at all important	20.2%



Q2.2 As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs: Renewable energy and energy-efficient projects.

Of the 2,854 valid responses to this question, three-fourths (75.7%) of respondents indicate that renewable energy and energy-efficient projects are very or somewhat important, with 46.7% indicating very important.

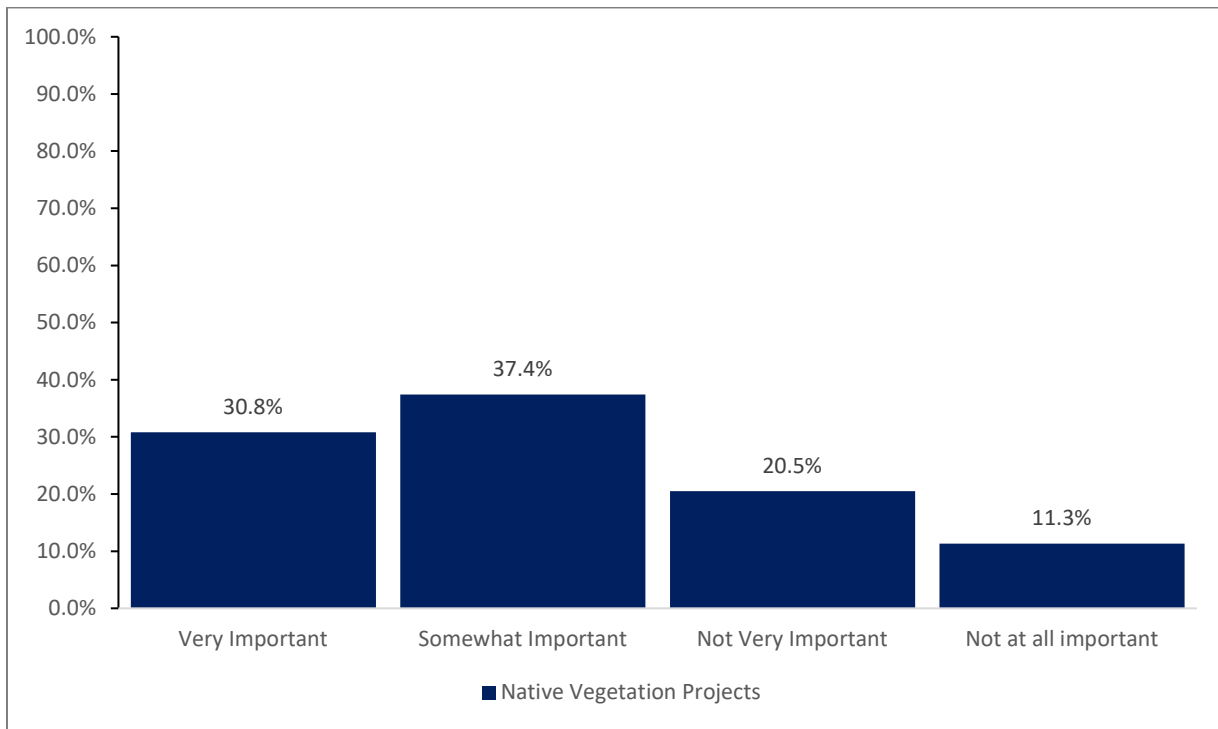
Response	Renewable Energy & Energy-Efficient Projects
Very Important	46.7%
Somewhat Important	29.0%
Not Very Important	12.4%
Not at all important	11.8%



Q2.3 As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs: Native vegetation projects.

Of the 2,808 valid responses to this question, more than two-thirds (68.2%) indicate that native vegetation projects are very or somewhat important.

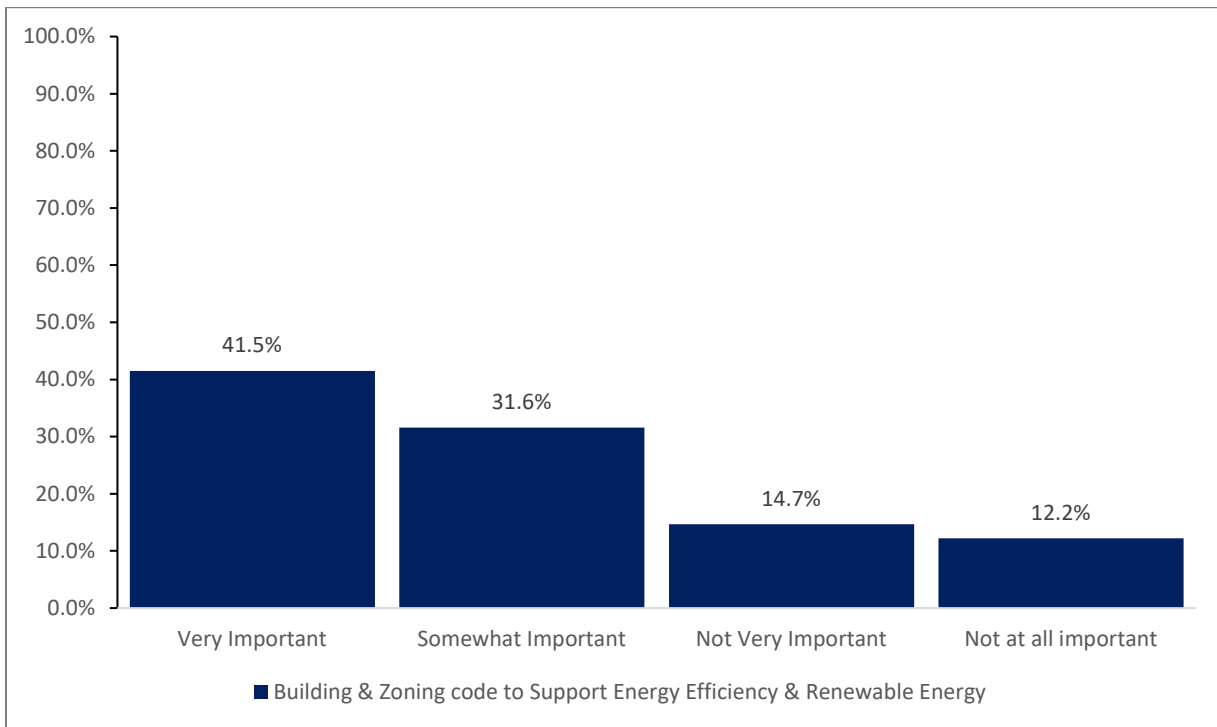
Response	Native Vegetation Projects
Very Important	30.8%
Somewhat Important	37.4%
Not Very Important	20.5%
Not at all important	11.3%



Q2.4 As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs: Building and Zoning codes that support energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Of the 2,858 valid responses to this question, almost three-fourths (73.1%) of respondents indicate renewable and energy efficient building and zoning codes are very or somewhat important, with 41.5% indicating very important.

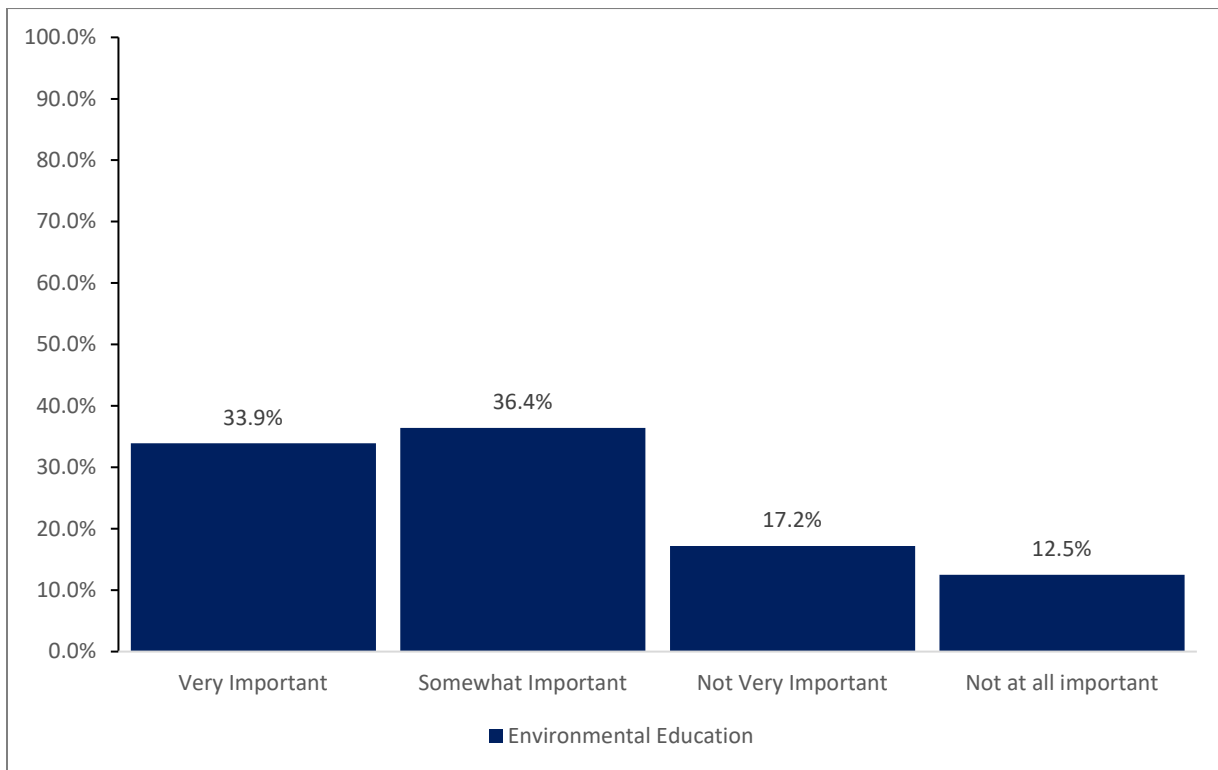
Response	Building & Zoning Codes to Support Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy
Very Important	41.5%
Somewhat Important	31.6%
Not Very Important	14.7%
Not at all important	12.2%



Q2.5 As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs: Environmental education in the community and schools.

Of the 2,860 valid responses to this question, 70.3% of respondents indicate that environmental education in the community and in schools is somewhat or very important.

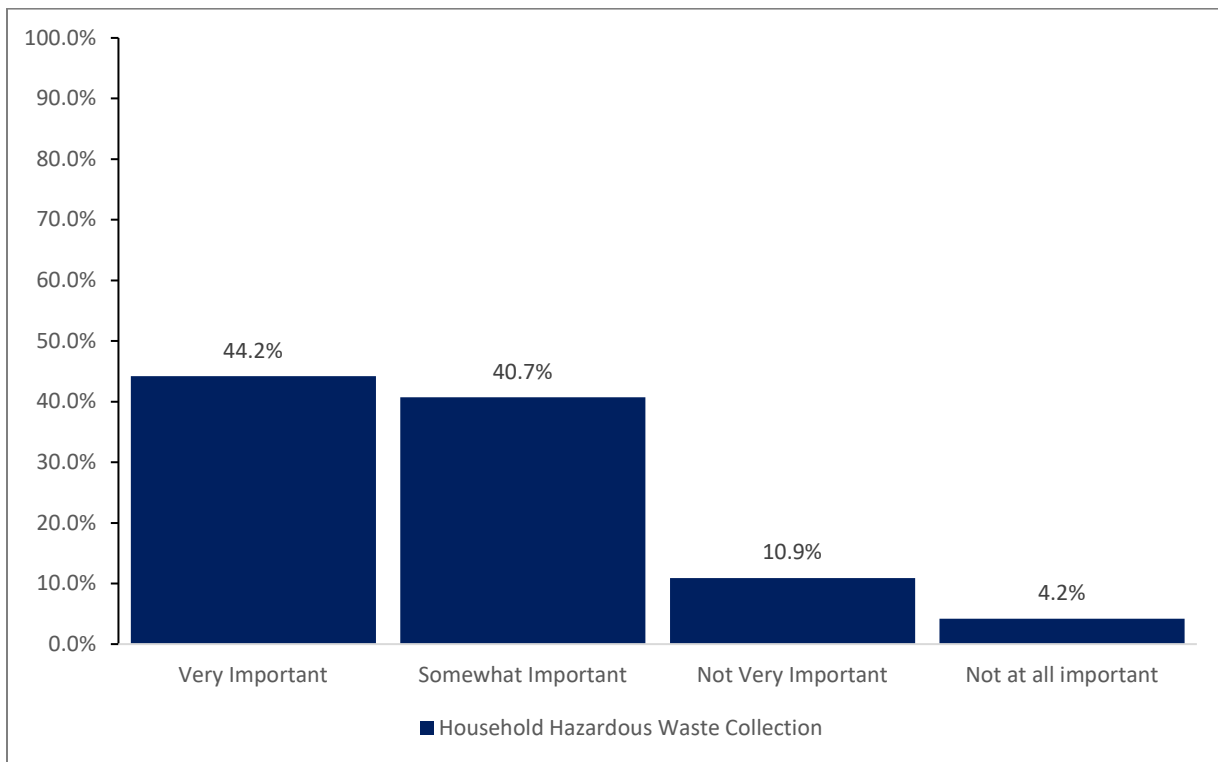
Response	Environmental Education
Very Important	33.9%
Somewhat Important	36.4%
Not Very Important	17.2%
Not at all important	12.5%



Q2.6 As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs: Household hazardous waste collection.

Of the 2,863 valid responses to this question, 84.9% of respondents indicate that household hazardous waste collection is very or somewhat important.

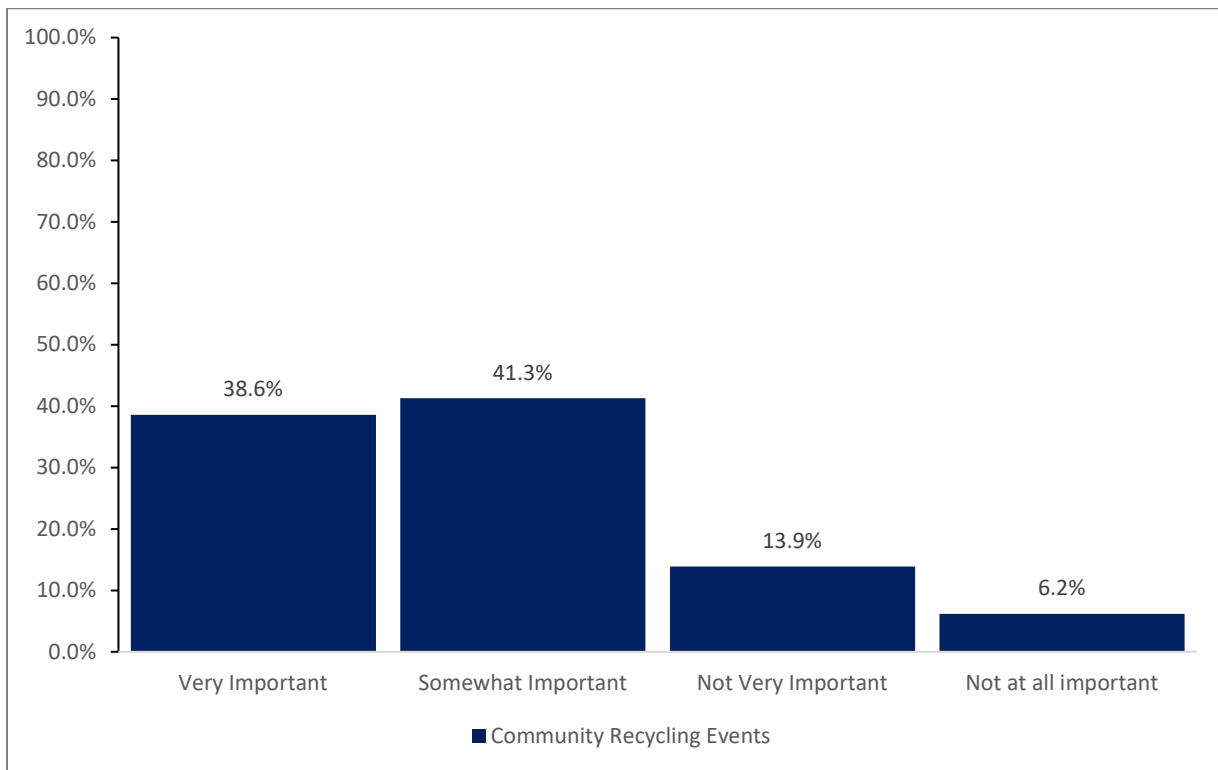
Response	Household Hazardous Waste Collection
Very Important	44.2%
Somewhat Important	40.7%
Not Very Important	10.9%
Not at all important	4.2%



Q2.7 As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs: Community recycling events.

Of the 2866 valid responses to this question, 79.9% of respondents indicate that community recycling events are very or somewhat Important.

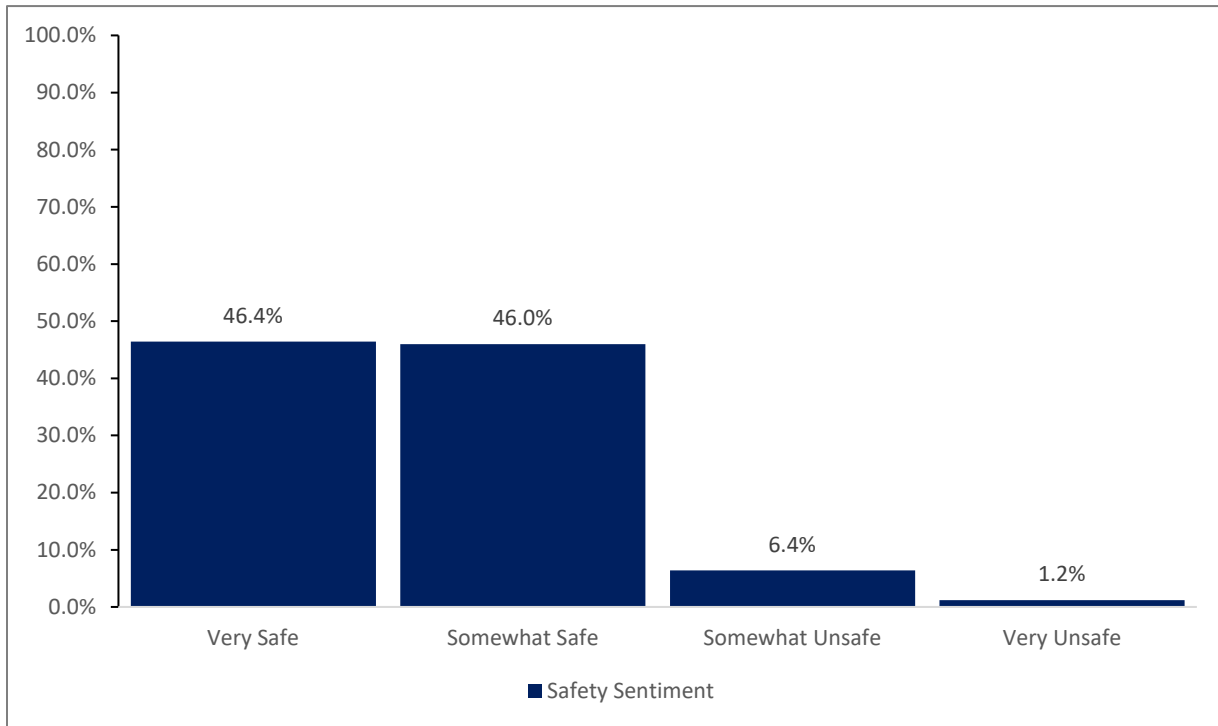
Response	Community Recycling Events
Very Important	38.6%
Somewhat Important	41.3%
Not Very Important	13.9%
Not at all important	6.2%



Q.3 How safe or unsafe do you feel in DuPage County?

Of the 2,881 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate that they overwhelmingly feel “somewhat” or “very” safe in DuPage County. A mere 7.6% of responses reflect residents who feel unsafe.

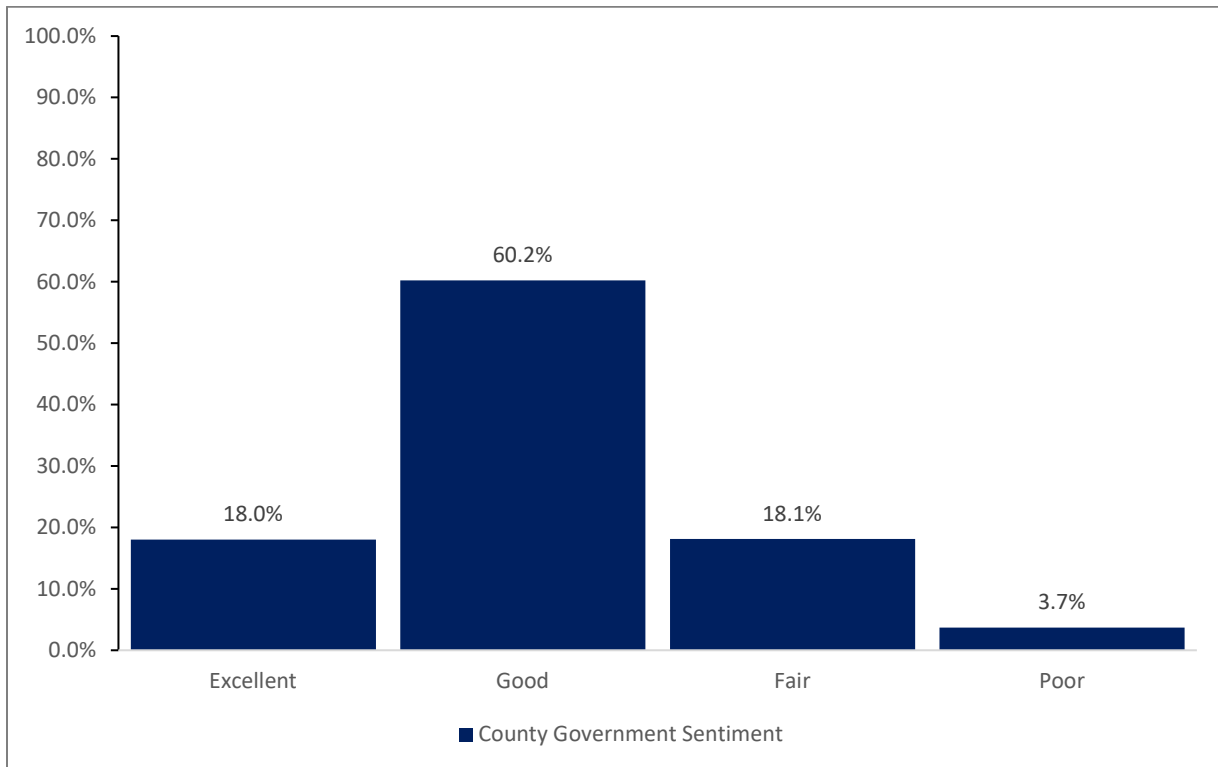
Response	Safety Sentiment
Very Safe	46.4%
Somewhat Safe	46.0%
Somewhat Unsafe	6.4%
Very Unsafe	1.2%



Q.4 Overall, how would you rate the job the DuPage County government is doing?

Of the 2806 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate satisfaction with the County government. However, more than two-fifths, 21.8% of respondents, believe the County has room for improvement.

Response	County Government Sentiment
Excellent	18.0%
Good	60.2%
Fair	18.1%
Poor	3.7%



Q.5 How can the DuPage County government better serve you?

While the total number of unique, viable survey responses total to 2,833, responses to Question 5 were analyzed according to all themes mentioned in the respondent's open-answer response to this question. Of the 2,833 responses, 1,086 or 38.3% did not provide any answer whatsoever.

For the purposes of this report, only themes which made up at least 1% of *all themes mentioned* (multiple themes may be mentioned in a single response) are included. A complete list of these themes and their corresponding proportion of all content responses to Question 5 is provided below.

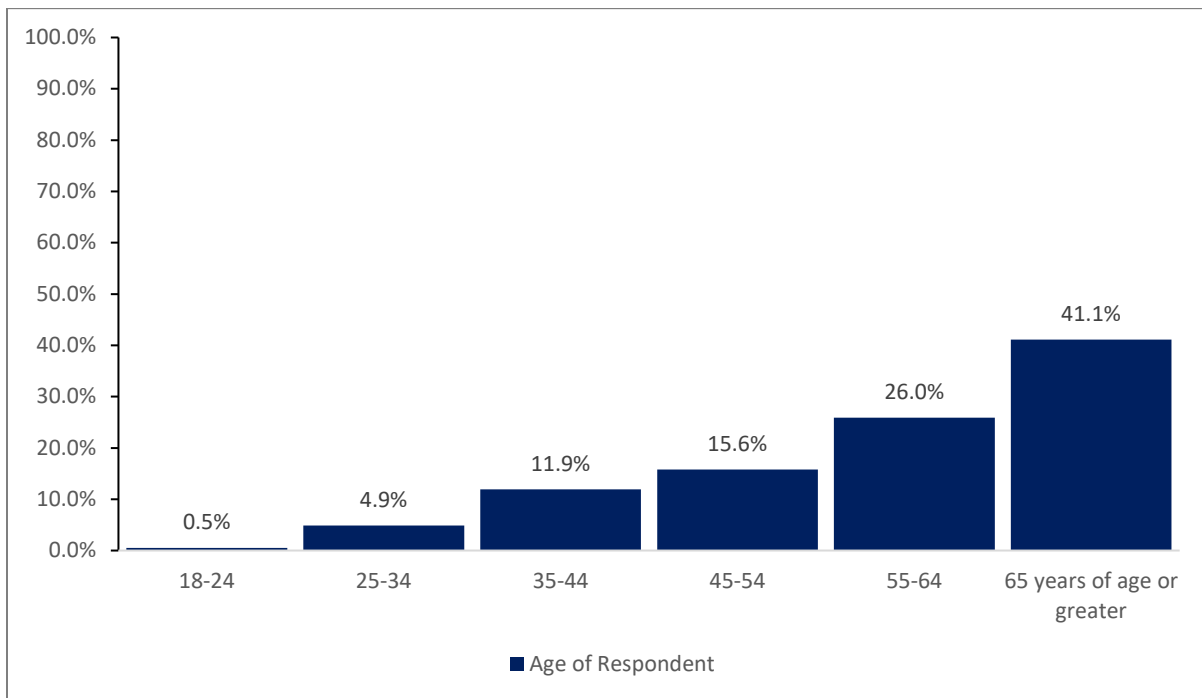
The greatest takeaway from the survey indicates the most consistent theme throughout those responses is a desire for the County to reduce taxes imposed on residents, nearly 11%, or 320 unique mentions. Many comments cited real estate taxes specifically, though not all.

Response Theme	Number of Mentions	Percent of all Content Responses
Reduce taxes or Taxes are too high	320	10.9%
Support/fund/increase the number of police	149	5.1%
Balanced budget/fiscal responsibility/reduce waste or spending	148	5.0%
Be more communicative, transparent & responsive to constituents	146	5.0%
Support green initiatives	116	4.0%
Keep DuPage County safe, concerns about crime/safety, crime is increasing	110	3.8%
Services/support for seniors	109	3.7%
County is doing a good job/keep up the good work/positive remark	97	3.3%
Streamline government—reduce/consolidate units or personnel, or services	93	3.2%
Prosecute crime/tough on crime	91	3.1%
Paths and trails, walkability/bikeability	65	2.2%
Mental health resources/services, including substance use	59	2.0%
Other comments	59	2.0%
Transit/public transportation	58	2.0%
Other health and social services comment, public health	55	1.9%
Affordable housing	55	1.9%
Other crime/safety/policing comment; first responders	54	1.8%
Infrastructure: improvement and repair	49	1.7%
Services/support for low-income households/individuals	49	1.7%
Waste management—garbage, recycling, yard waste, composting	46	1.6%
Decorum and civility, keep politics/religion/prayer out of government, work together	45	1.5%
Permits, planning, zoning, land use, code enforcement	42	1.4%
Business/economic development	41	1.4%
Support gun control/safety	40	1.4%
Other government comments	39	1.3%
Beautification, conservation of green spaces	39	1.3%
Employment/jobs	37	1.3%
Elections/election reform	37	1.3%
Other government service comments; animal control, snow plowing, fine art festival(s)	37	1.3%
Traffic/speed control or improvement	36	1.2%
Street and sidewalks maintenance	34	1.2%
Other taxes, budget, fiscal comment	32	1.1%
Exact Response was either: “Don’t know” or “Not Sure”	32	1.1%
County Employee pay, pension, or benefits	31	1.1%
Services/support for people with disabilities	30	1.0%
Exact Response was either: “N/A” or “nothing”	29	1.0%

Q.6 What is your age?

Of the 2,882 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents were from those residents aged 65 years or more.

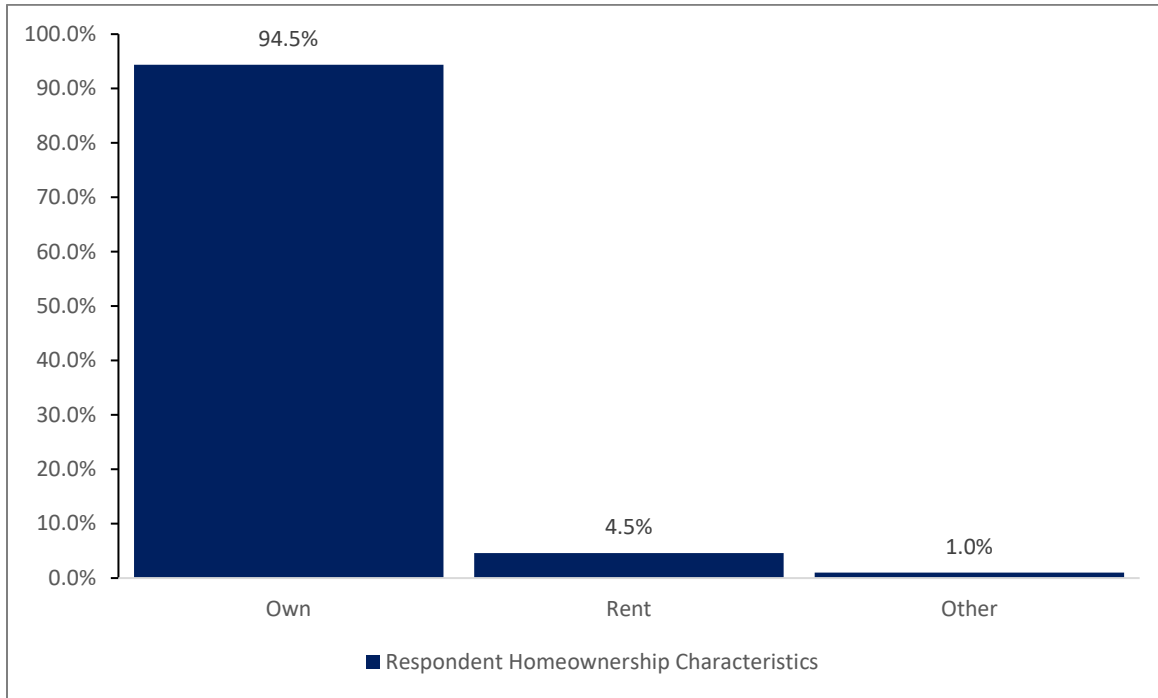
Response	Age of Respondent
18-24	0.5%
25-34	4.9%
35-44	11.9%
45-54	15.6%
55-64	26.0%
65 years of age or greater	41.1%



Q7. Do you own your home, or do you rent?

Of the 1,926 responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents represent homeowners.

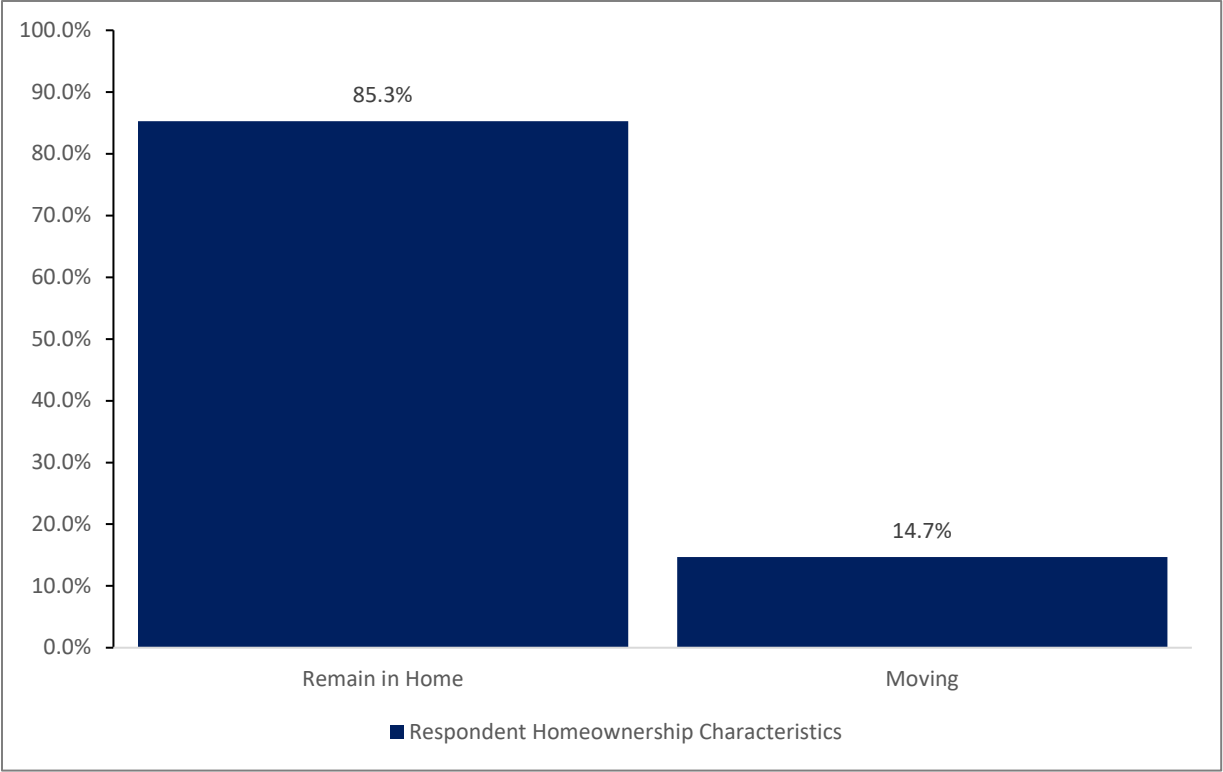
Response	Respondent Homeownership Characteristics
Own	94.5%
Rent	4.5%
Other	1.0%



Q.8 Do you intend to remain in your home, or do you anticipate moving in the next five years?

Of the 1,449 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicate they will continue residing in in their home over the next five years.

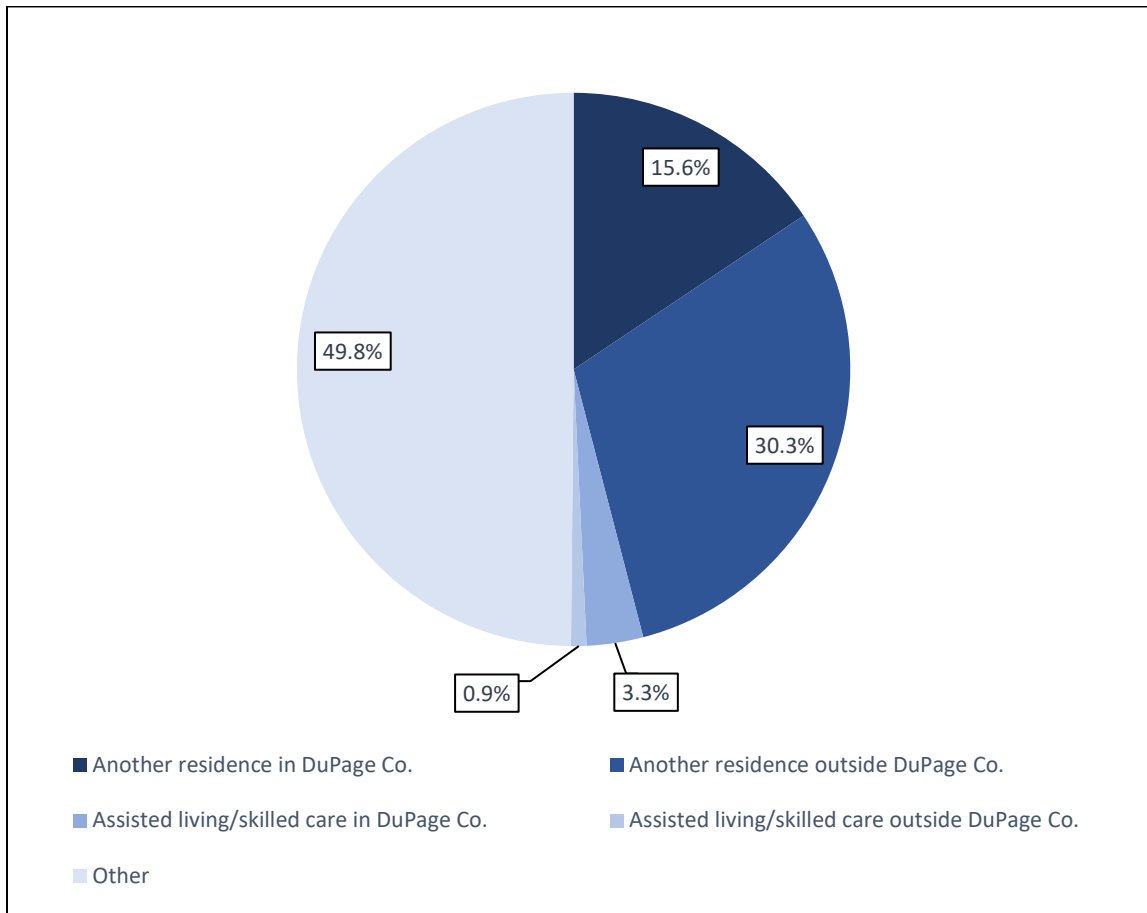
Response	Respondent Homeownership Characteristics
Remain in Home	85.3%
Moving	14.7%



Q9. Where do you anticipate moving?

Of the 211 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents selected “other” (49.8%). This could reflect an unwillingness among respondents to disclose their migration intentions. Just over 30% of valid responses chose “Move to another residence outside DuPage County.” Analysis of responses to “Other” in which respondents provided an explanation indicates the majority of these respondents intend to move out of DuPage County as well, such as out of state.

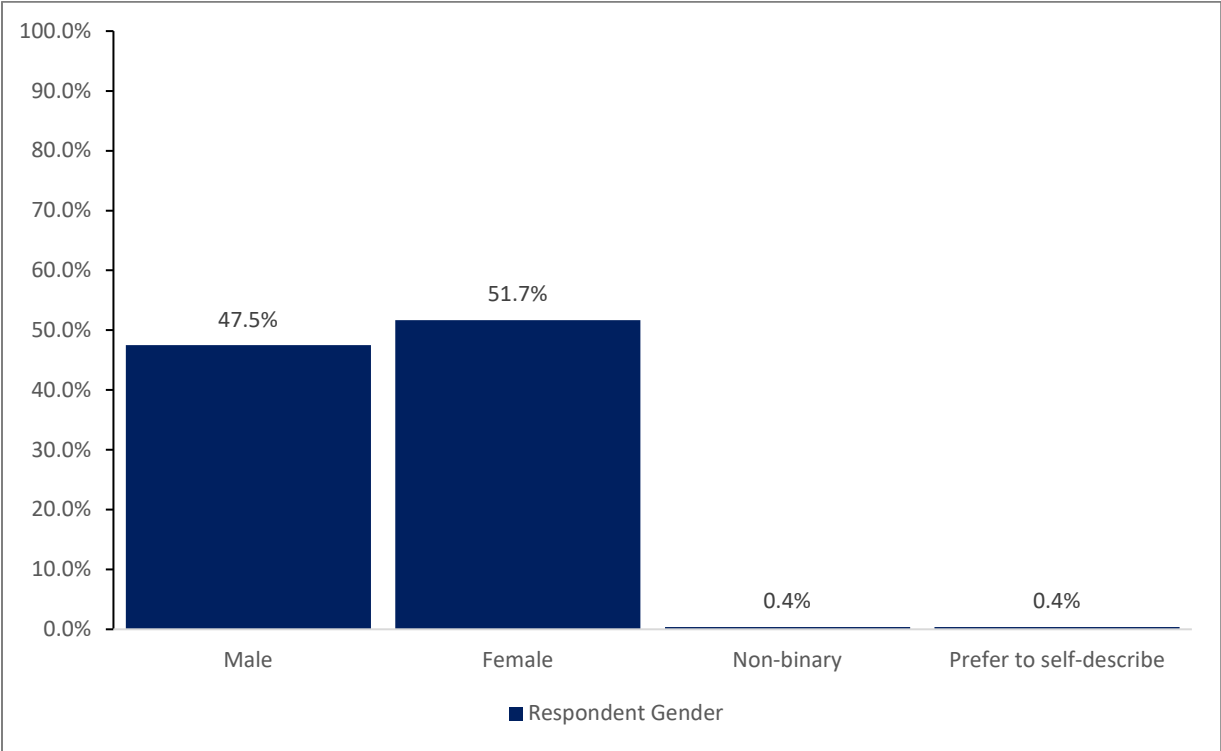
Response	Respondent Moving
Other	49.8%
Move to another residence outside of DuPage County	30.3%
Move to another residence within DuPage County	15.6%
Seek assisted living or skilled care facility in DuPage County	3.3%
Seek assisted living or skilled care facility outside of DuPage County	0.9%



Q10. What is your gender?

The 2,665 valid responses to this question show an almost equal split between male and female respondents.

Response	Respondent Gender
Male	47.5%
Female	51.7%
Non-binary	0.4%
Prefer to self-describe	0.4%



Q11. What is your race/ethnicity?

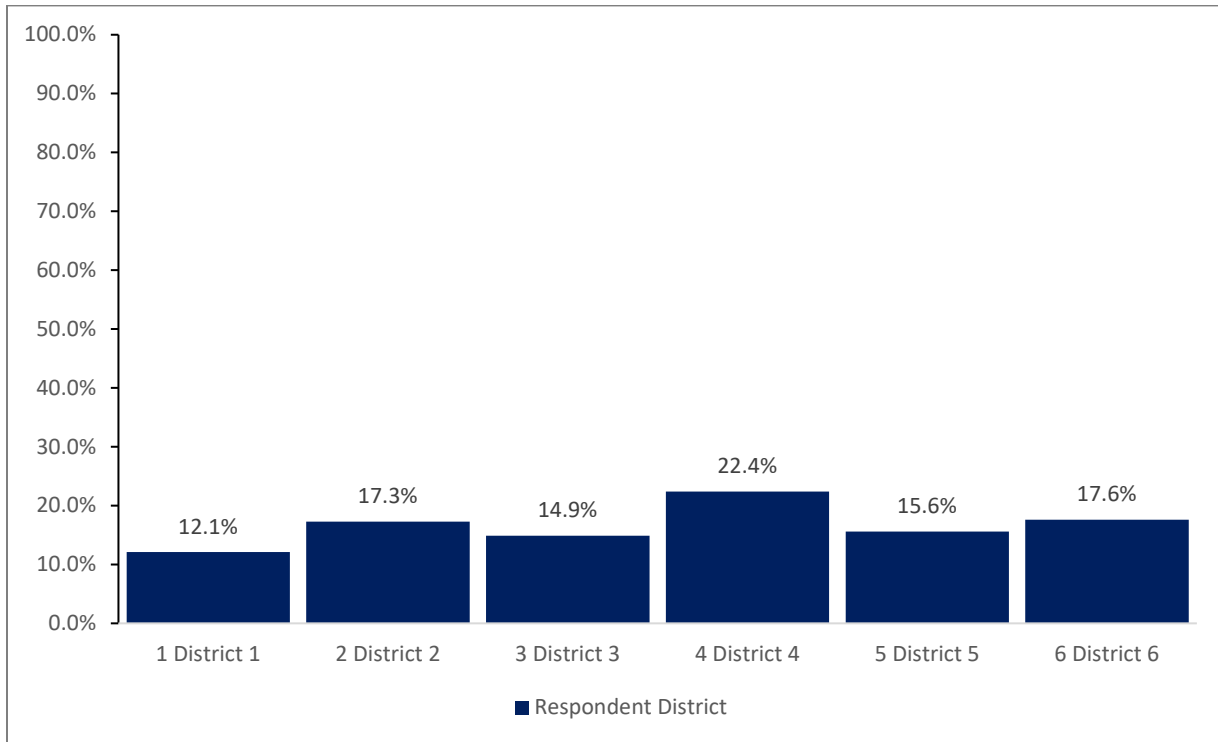
Of the 2,498 valid responses to this question, the overwhelming majority of respondents are white.

Response	Respondent Race/Ethnicity
Other race	1.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%
Asian or Asian American	3.8%
Black or African American	2.6%
Hispanic or Latino	2.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%
White or Caucasian	86.9%
Two or more races	2.1%

Q12. What County Board district do you live in?

Among the 2,321 valid responses to this question, the six county districts each witnessed between 280 – 525 responses, with an average of about 387 responses. None of the districts appear to be underrepresented. The greatest number of respondents live in District 4.

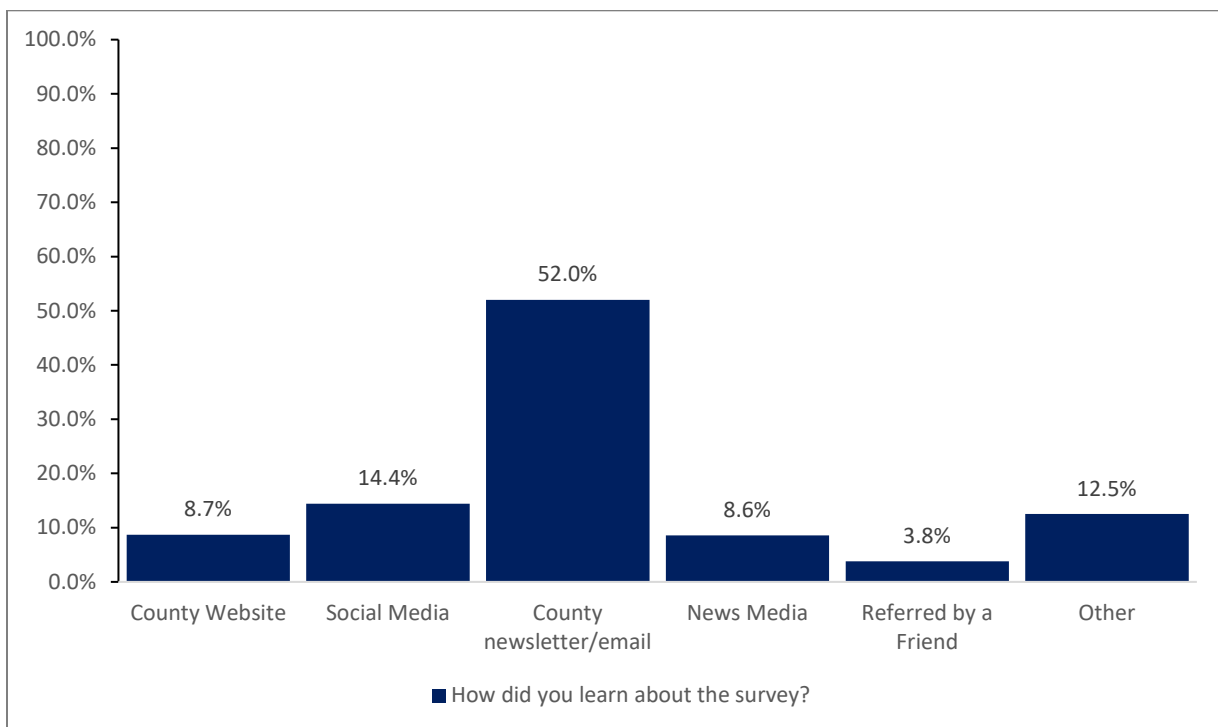
Response	Respondent District
District 1	12.1%
District 2	17.3%
District 3	14.9%
District 4	22.4%
District 5	15.6%
District 6	17.6%



Q13. How did you learn about the survey?

Of the 2,757 valid responses to this question, the greatest proportion of respondents indicated that they learned of the survey from the County newsletter/email.

Response	How did you learn about the survey?
County Website	8.7%
Social Media	14.4%
County newsletter/email	52.0%
News Media	8.6%
Referred by a Friend	3.8%
Other	12.5%



Conclusions

The majority of survey respondents believe the County is doing a good job. Most respondents feel safe in the County.

Survey results suggest the following hierarchy from highest to lowest priority among county service categories for financial budgeting purposes:

- Public Safety,
- Transportation,
- Economic Development,
- DuPage Care Center.
- Community Services,
- Flood Mitigation.
- Environmental Services, and
- Animal Services.

Survey results suggest the residents are most eager to see the County implement the following environmental programs: hazardous waste collection, environmental education for the community and schools, and community recycling events.

APPENDIX A: FY23 BUDGET SURVEY

1. In the next 12 months, how much of a priority should DuPage County place on the following areas?

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Don't Know
Animal Services: Keep animals and residents safe and provide resources to support responsible pet ownership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Services Information and Referral: Providing information to low-income residents, seniors, and those in need of social services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DuPage Care Center: Long-term care for low-income elderly and disabled residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic Development: Recruiting businesses and encouraging job creation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental Services: Public education, outreach, recycling events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flood Mitigation: Programs to reduce the impact of flooding on people and property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Safety: Law enforcement, corrections, criminal justice, and court operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation: Construct, improve, and repair County roads, bridges, paths, and sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. As the County government responds to climate change and seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, how important or unimportant to you and your household are each of the following environmental programs.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know
Electric vehicles and charging stations for the County fleet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Renewable energy and energy-efficient projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Native vegetation projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building and Zoning codes that support energy efficiency and renewable energy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental education in the community and schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Household hazardous waste collection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community recycling events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. How safe or unsafe do you feel in DuPage County?

- Very safe
- Somewhat safe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Very unsafe

4. Overall, how would you rate the job the DuPage County government is doing?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

5. How can the DuPage County government better serve you?

* 6. What is your age?

- 24 years of age or less
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 years of age or greater

7. Do you own your home or do you rent?

- Own
- Rent
- Other

8. Do you intend to remain in your home, or do you anticipate moving in the next five years?

- Remain in home
- Moving
- Unsure

9. Where do you anticipate moving?

- Move to another residence within DuPage County
- Move to another residence outside of DuPage County
- Seek assisted living or skilled care facility in DuPage County
- Seek assisted living or skilled care facility outside of DuPage County
- Other (please specify)



10. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to answer
- Prefer to self-describe

Self-describe



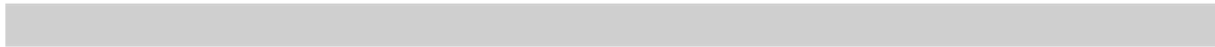
11. What is your race/ethnicity?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- Two or more races
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: (please specify)



12. What County Board district do you live in? (Find your County Board district)

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5
- District 6
- I don't know
- Not a County resident



13. How did you learn about the survey?

- County website
- Social media
- County newsletter/email
- News media (newspaper, radio, internet site)
- Referred by a friend
- Other (please specify)