

# Resident Experience Survey Summary

February 2025



# Research Approach

This Resident Experience Research will serve as a valuable baseline, providing a better understanding of how residents perceive the District's reputation, how to effectively engage with them and enable a metric-based approach to strategic communication and inform business and initiative planning.

The survey will seek to measure:

- What the residents of the CRD value
- The level of knowledge or awareness of the CRD in the region
- The level of trust in the CRD
- The level of satisfaction in CRD service
- The desired role of digital in-service delivery





# Methodology

## Qualitative

### Online research study with residents of the CRD (n=402)

- Primary data set was collected from the ARF panel, representative of residents across the Capital Regional District.
- To validate findings and increase participation from less populated areas, additional responses were gathered through community partners and targeted social media outreach. (n=109).
- The data from this sample confirmed the findings from the representative sample. As such, it will not be visualized in this report.
- All responses were anonymous, and fraud prevention measures were implemented to ensure data quality.
- Data in the report will focus on the representative sample.

## Quantitative

### Focused Interviews with residents of the CRD (n=14)

- To deepen our understanding of resident experiences in rural regions, we conducted focused interviews enabling us to contextualize survey responses and identify emergent themes. These respondents were recruited from amongst those that participated in the quantitative study.
- All responses were anonymous, and fraud prevention measures were implemented to ensure data quality.
- Data in the report will focus on the representative sample of the quantitative study and the qualitative interviews.

## Timing

Quantitative study recruitment between Nov. 1st and 18th, 2024.

Focused interviews completed in Dec. 2024



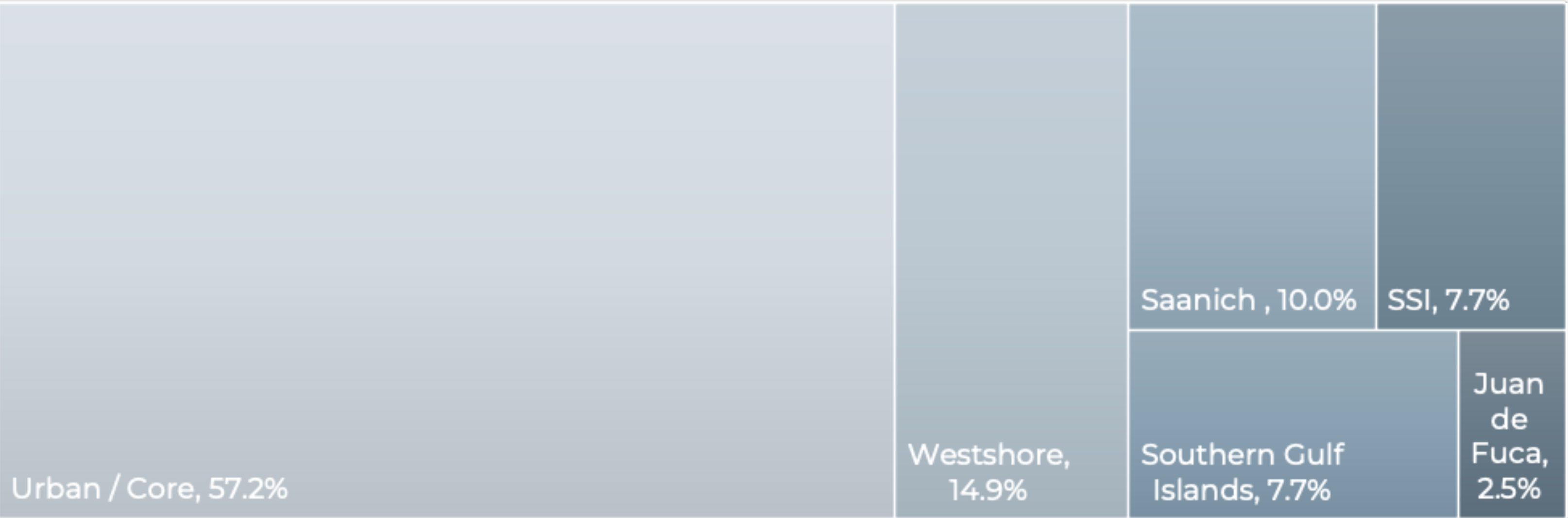
402 residents surveyed  
14 in-depth interviews  
Every CRD region represented  
Baseline established



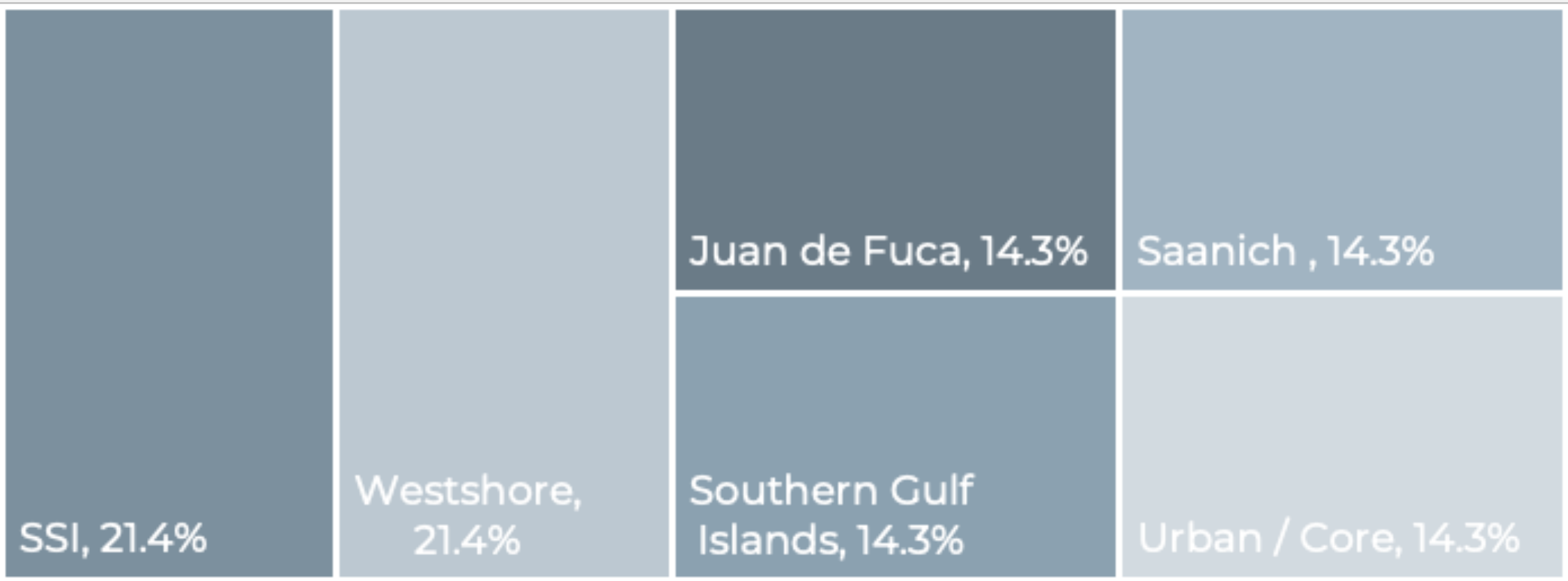
# Regional breakdown of participants

The research engaged participants from across the CRD as shown in the breakdown below.

Region, Quantitative Study, n=402



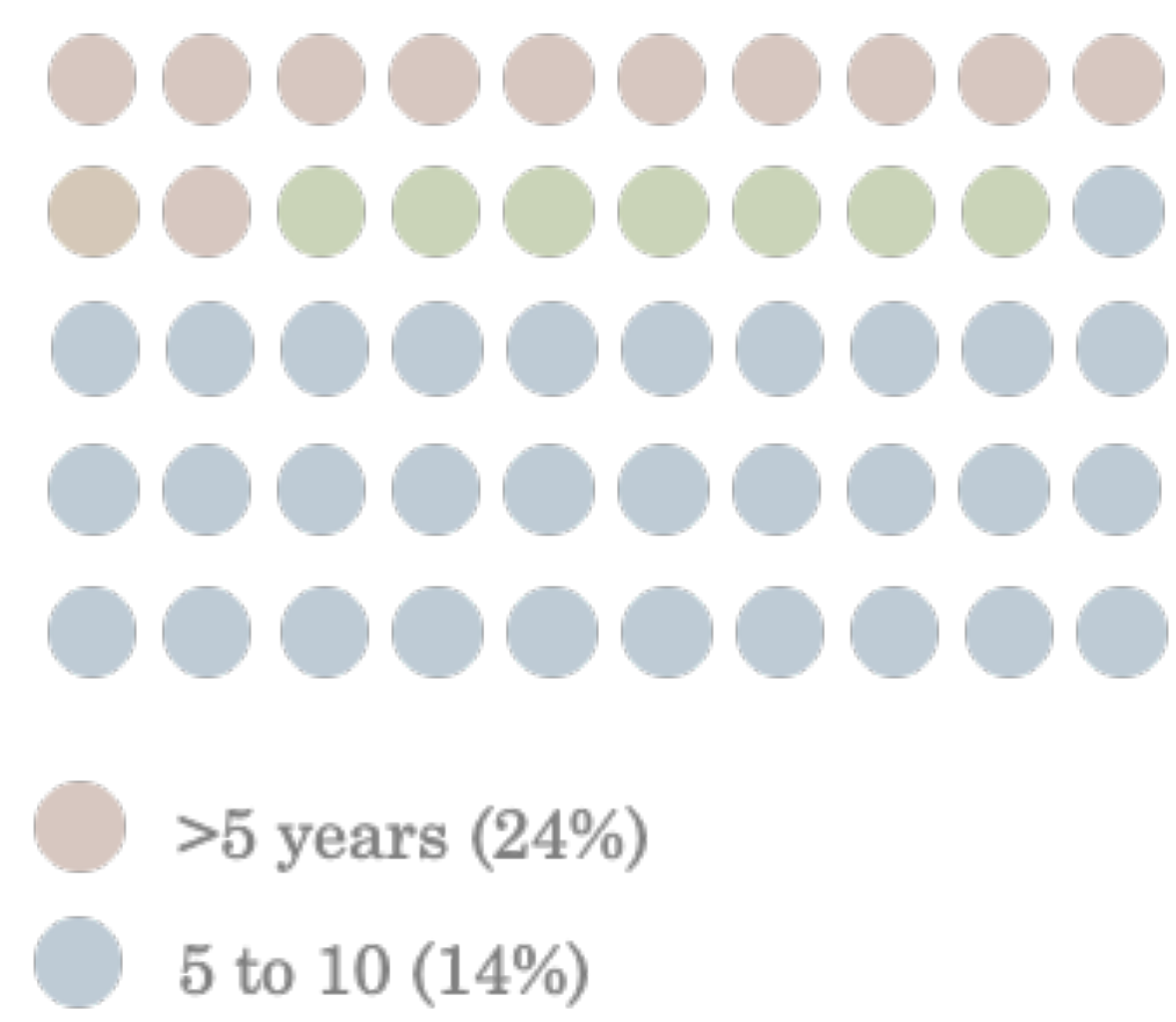
Region, Focused Interviews, n=14



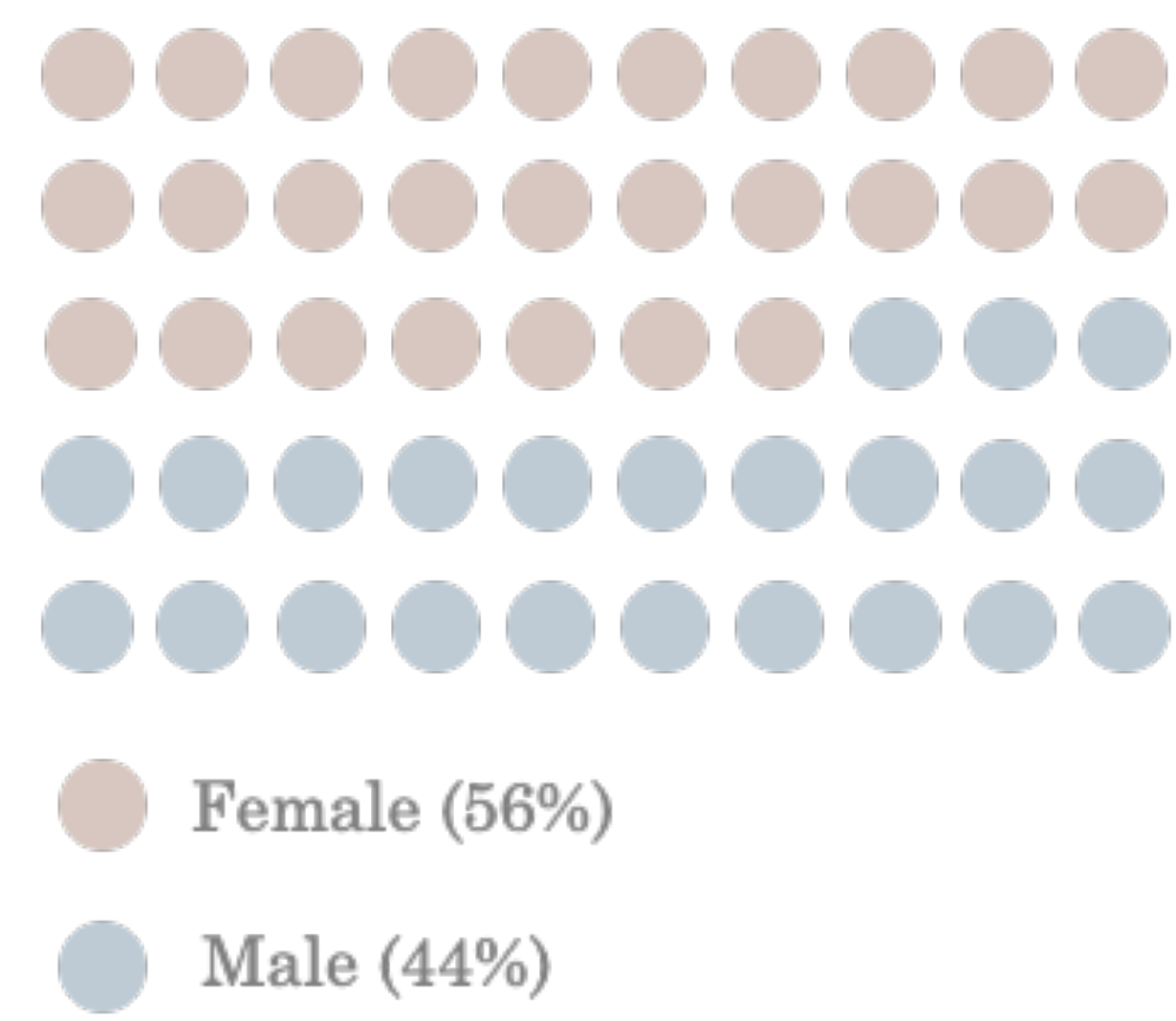


# Participate Profile

## Length of residency in CRD



## Gender





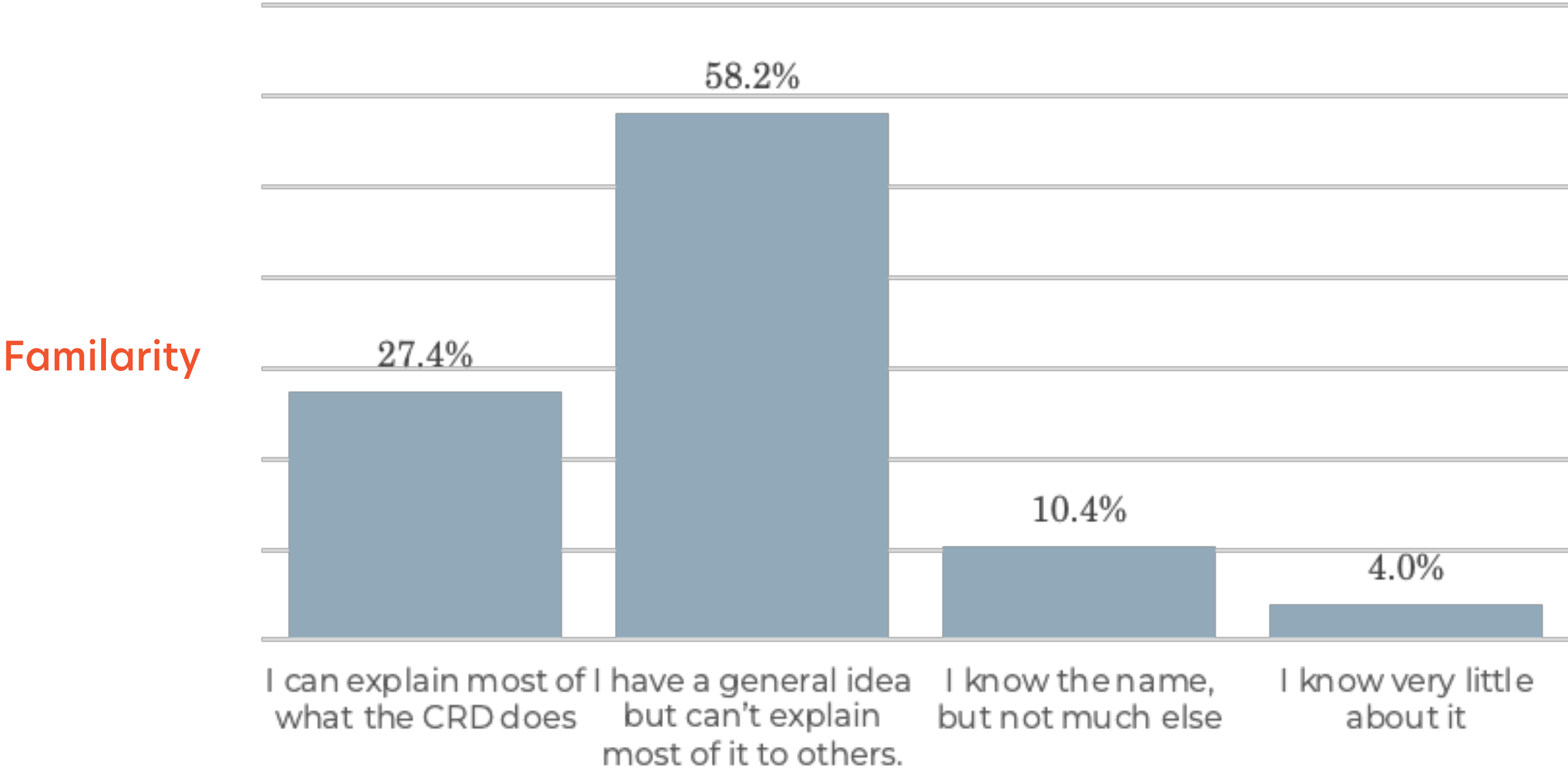
# Awareness & Understanding

Capital Region District



# Most residents have basic CRD knowledge, but lack deep understanding

- 85.6% of residents have at least basic familiarity with CRD, yet only 27.4% can explain its services.
- Opportunity exists to bridge this knowledge gap through targeted communication of CRD's core services and impact.



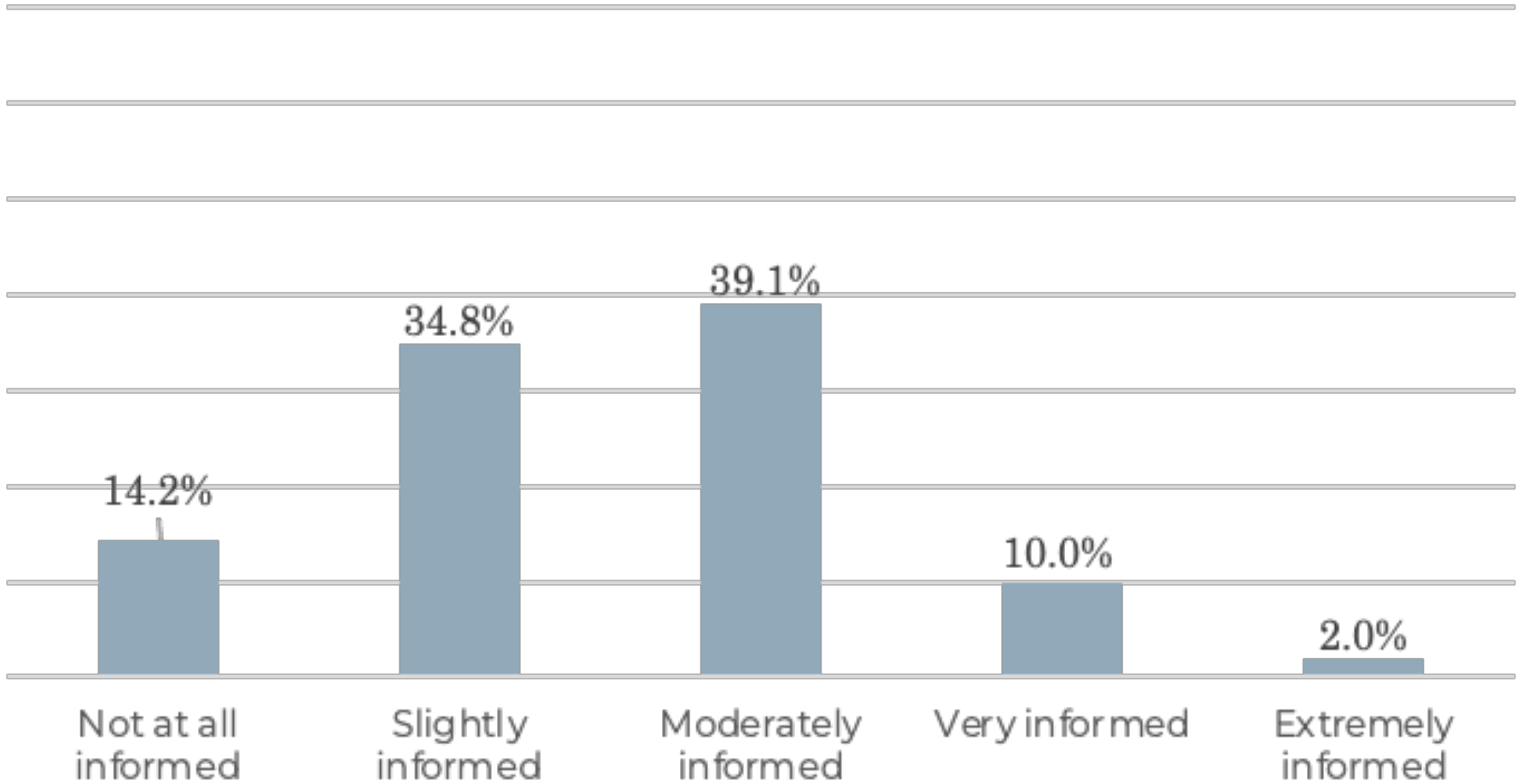
Q: N=402. Which of the following best describes how familiar you are with the services and responsibilities of the Capital Regional District (CRD)?



# Residents show limited understanding of CRD decision-making process

- Only 12% of residents feel well-informed about CRD's decision-making process, while 49% report being slightly or not at all informed.
- Salt Spring Island residents show particularly low awareness, with over 50% reporting slight or no familiarity with CRD processes.
- Current awareness levels indicate room for improved communication about governance processes across all regions, particularly in outlying areas.

## Decision- Making Understanding





# “ In their own words ”

Theme: Size and Bureaucracy—Perception of CRD as a large bureaucratic organization.

Theme: Rural-Urban Divide—Concern over the representation of smaller/rural areas.

“Municipal politics is very confusing. In other jurisdictions, the cities work together. I do not know how they work together, and where the CRD sits.”

“It is a big bureaucracy, and big organization... do they care about the smaller islands . The more rural area. It is a big mismatch... the mouse sleeping next the elephant .. It rolls over.. Like Canada beside US.”

“No I do not know how decisions are made. Tbh, I do not understand the make up of how many councilers, and do we have to pay so many people to be there, when it could be mayors... just seems like another hierarchy.”

“What part of the cost did I pay living in town, like in Sooke..or Langford... how do your taxdollars support those in other regions. The one thing I do not understand -- the Juan do Fuca rec center -- it is shared with a few places... there are a lot of mini-budgets in there... who pays for what.. I do not know...”



### Levels of Awareness

- Strong basic awareness (85.6% have at least general understanding)
- While 85.6% of residents have at least a general understanding of CRD, only 27.4% feel confident explaining its functions in detail.
- Educational opportunity with 58.2% having "general idea" group

### Decision-Making and Impact Understanding

- Only 12% very/extremely informed about decision-making
- Generally positive (47.8%) or neutral (29.9%)
- Only 10.2% negative impact perception
- This varies significantly amongst those outside the core.

### Implications

1. Opportunity to convert "general understanding" group to "can explain most" (or more detailed knowledge)
2. Room for improvement in communicating decision-making processes
3. Leverage positive impact perception
4. Need for targeted campaigns outside the core.



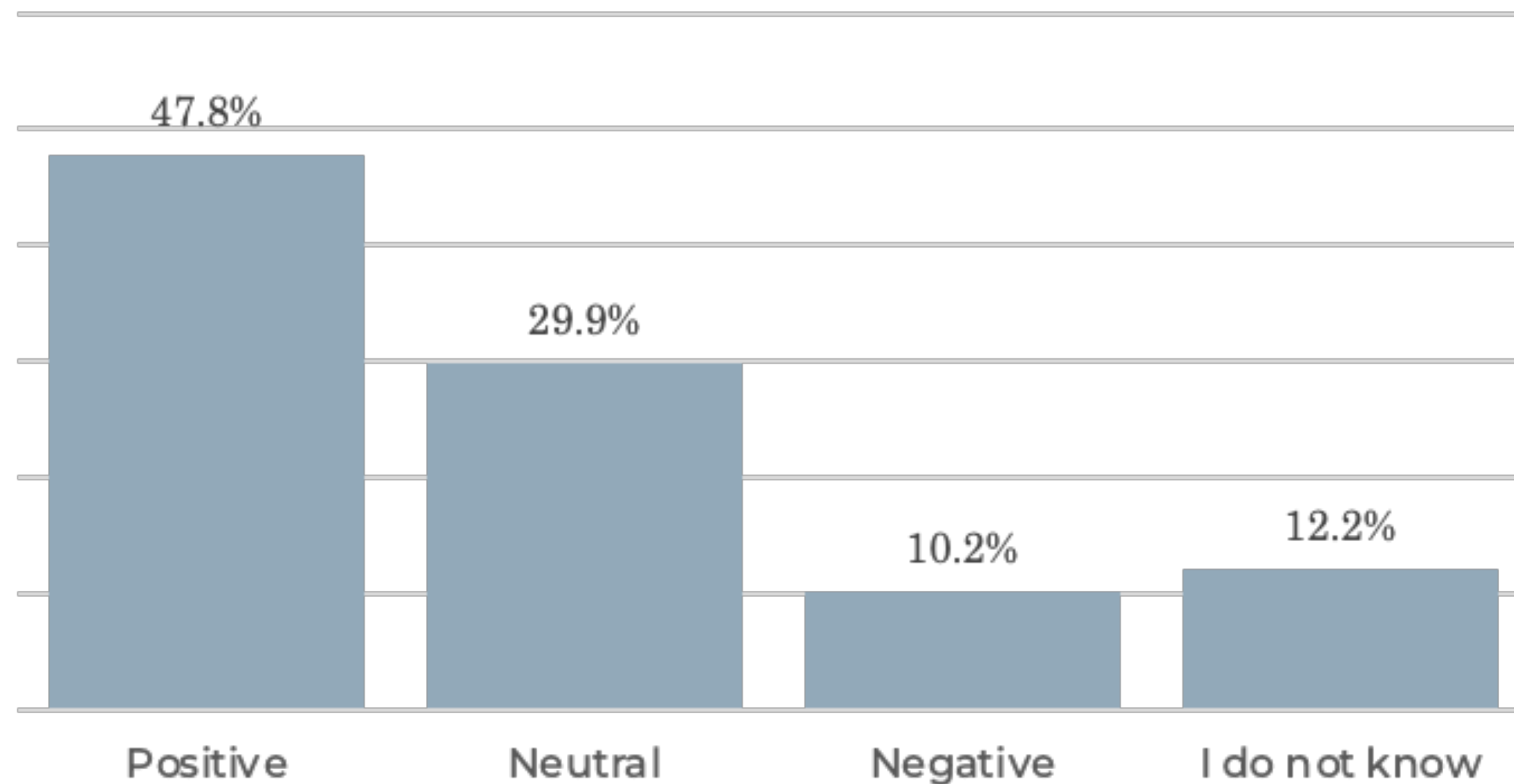
# Trust & Credibility

## Capital Region District



# Nearly half of residents see positive CRD community impact

## Community Impact Perceptions

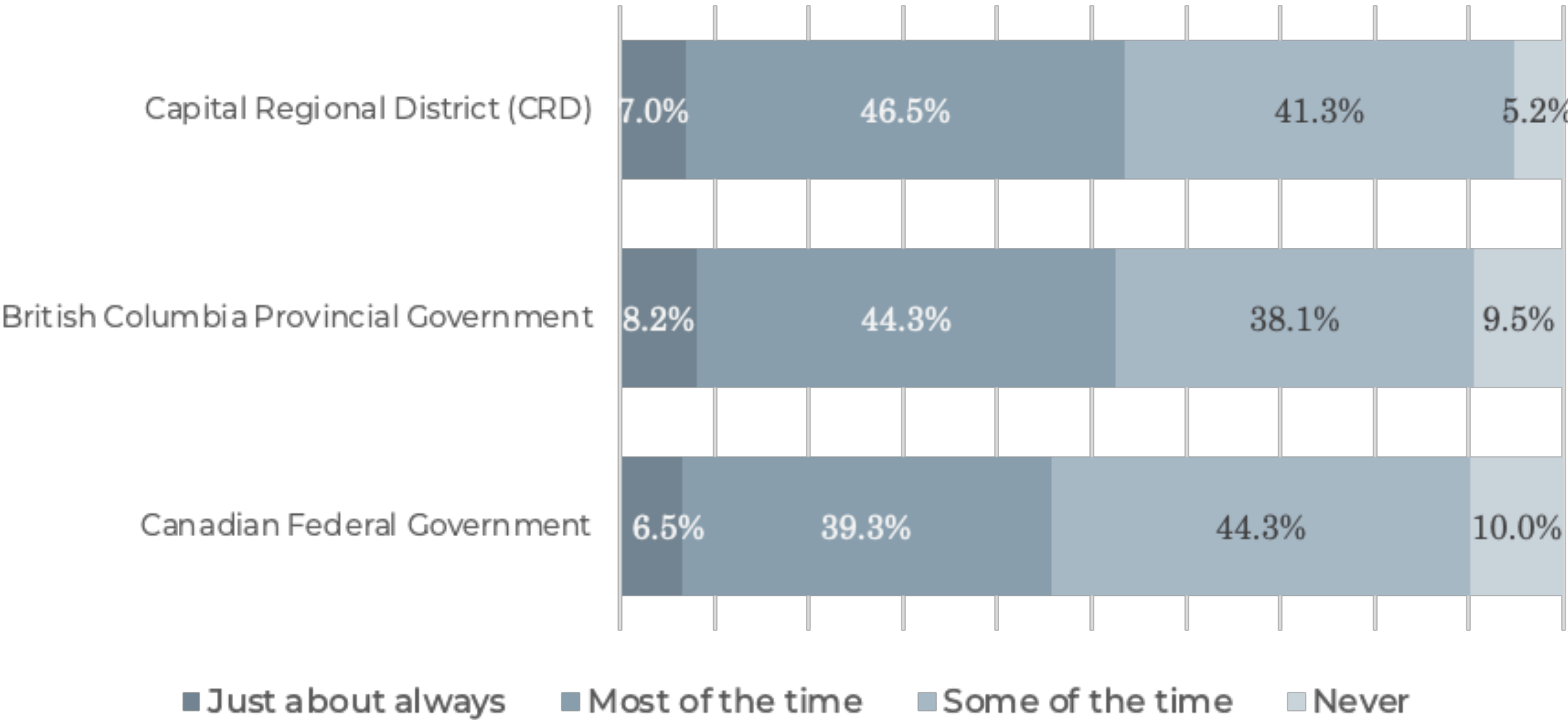


- 47.8% of residents believe CRD has a positive impact on the community, while only 10.2% perceive it negatively.
- This positive sentiment provides a strong foundation for building community support.
- But this is heavily influenced by those in the Core and Westshore, 38% of those in SSI, 20% in Southern Gulf Islands, and 18% in Saanich indicate a Negative impact.



# CRD enjoys higher trust levels than other public bodies

Comparative Trust Levels

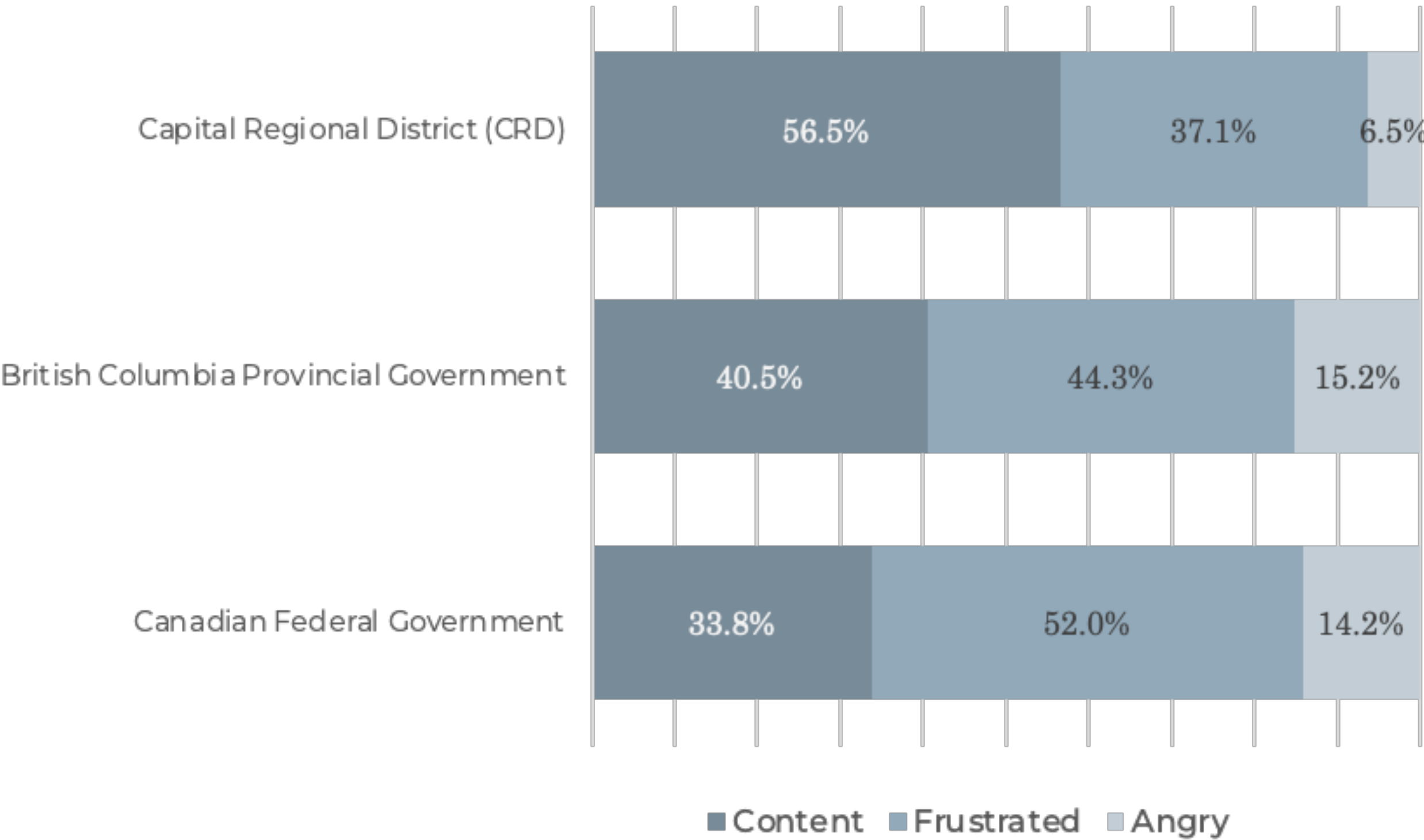


- 53.5% of residents trust CRD to do what's right "always" or "most of the time," exceeding trust levels for both provincial (52.5%) and federal (45.8%) governments. This trust advantage represents a valuable asset for advancing regional initiatives and partnerships.
- While general trust levels are high, only a third of those in SSI or Southern Gulf Islands indicate they can trust the CRD always/most of the time.



# CRD enjoys higher trust levels than other public bodies

## Emotional Response



- CRD services receive 56.5% satisfaction rating, outperforming provincial and federal governments, with only 6.5% expressing strong dissatisfaction in core areas.
- Outer regions show higher frustration levels, particularly Salt Spring Island (66%) and Southern Gulf Islands (55%), despite rating CRD above other government bodies.
- Saanich presents a mixed picture with 58% satisfaction but 11% expressing strong dissatisfaction, similar to Salt Spring Island's 13% dissatisfaction rate, suggesting targeted service improvements could yield significant gains in resident satisfaction.

n=402 Some people say they are basically content with public services and infrastructure, others say they are frustrated, and others say they are angry. Which of the following best describes how you feel about the...?



# “ In their own words ”

Theme: Communication gaps—general belief that the CRD operates in public interest; skepticism and lack of understanding about execution and resource allocation.

“It seems like this ghost organization, somewhere out there in the ether, not somewhere you can go. That is my impression.”

“The population here is very distrusting of government - you need to break the barriers down to get people to understand them. After all the consultation they supposedly did, they needed to go back and do it again.”

“It is always nice to know what they are responsible for, what type of spending is done. We can vote in and vote out our local politicians, but I do not know how that works for the CRD.”

“They are ramming decisions down our throat. If it is a democracy -I should know everything. Not the nickle and dime stuff, but the stuff that you will spend millions of dollars on.”



# “ In their own words ”

Theme: Fiscal transparency—interest in fiscal accountability, how funds are used, and how resources are being allocated.

“Where is the money being spent...feels like we are constantly being asked for more money--- they created something to look into traffic...how did they get permission to spend more money... even in a municipal budget you have to go down to the nitty gritty to figure it out.. i think all municipal... they are all very boss heavy...not a lot of workers... so many senior people... why do we need them all...what is a necessary biz that we need to be in... then what are all the blue sky issues -- the latest is the housing thing -- if I am paying for it in my tax dollars... why i am paying for it twice.”

“An example, rapid transit: Not making people have to come in to say no to the proposal, for forced active transportation. People it impacts are busy and do not have time to come in. It seems like they are trying to make it seem like people are accepting what they want. Whereas if it went to a referendum, where they had to get a certain amount of yas.. ”



### Trust Levels

- **Comparative Trust Levels (always/most of the time):**
  - CRD: 53.5%
  - Provincial: 52.5%
  - Federal: 45.8%
- **Frustration/Anger Levels:**
  - CRD: 43.6% (37.1% frustrated, 6.5% angry)  
However, this shifts for SSI (66%) and Southern Gulf (55%).  
Also, in Saanich, 11% are angry.
  - Provincial: 59.5% (44.3% frustrated, 15.2% angry)
  - Federal: 66.2% (52.0% frustrated, 14.2% angry)

### Credibility

#### Strong Areas:

- Reliable service delivery (62.4% moderate to extremely effective)
- Fair treatment (58.4% moderate to extremely effective)
- Overall performance (61.2% moderate to extremely effective)

### Implications

1. Strong operational trust creates opportunity to build deeper public engagement - capitalize on service deliver reputation to improve communication effectiveness.
2. Address growing frustration in areas outside the core through targeted outreach and engagement strategies.
3. Leverage high trust position relative to other government levels to enhance communication and launch new initiatives.



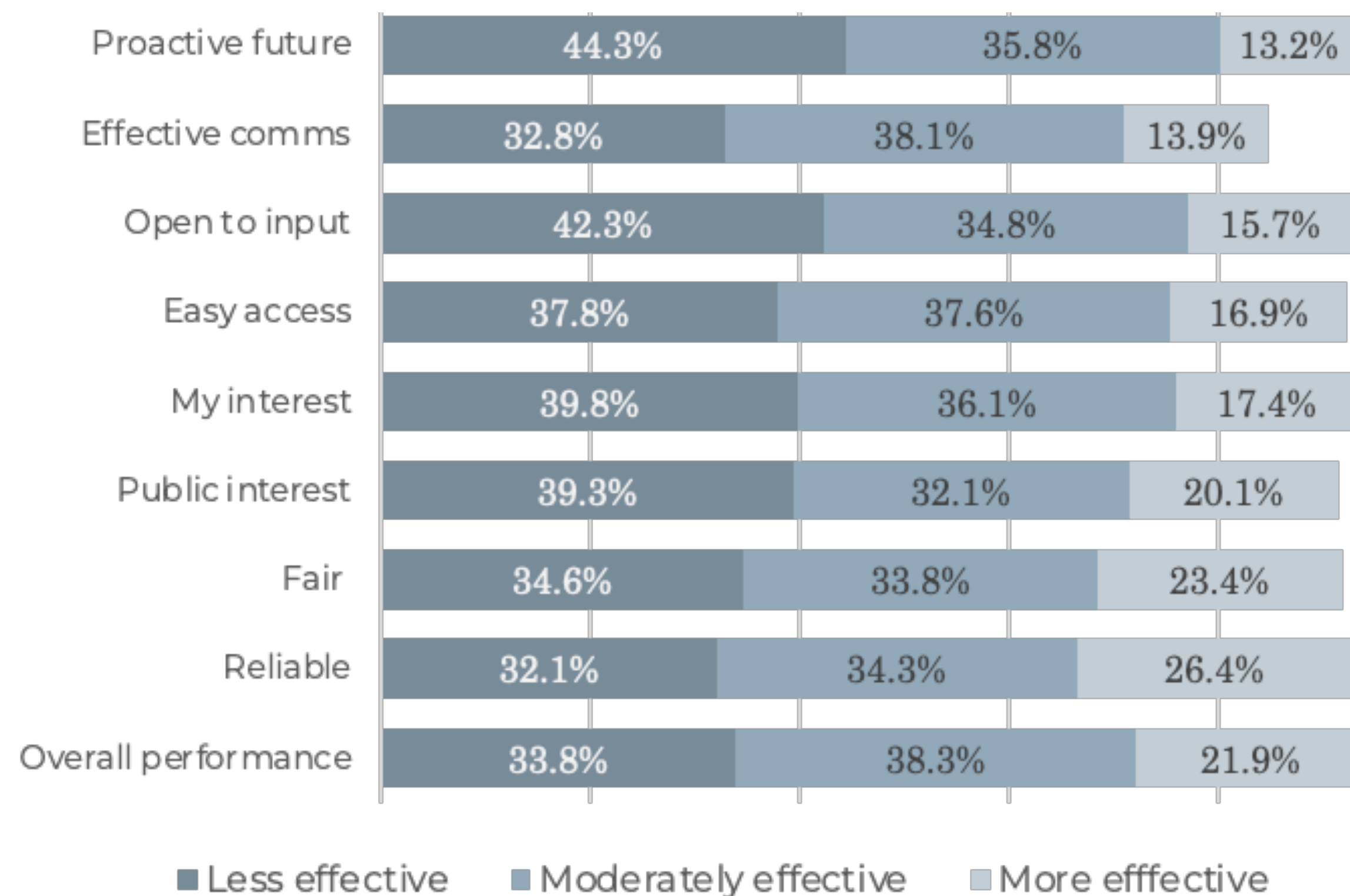
# Engagement

## Capital Region District



# CRD service performance demonstrates operational and communication differences

## Performance Assessment



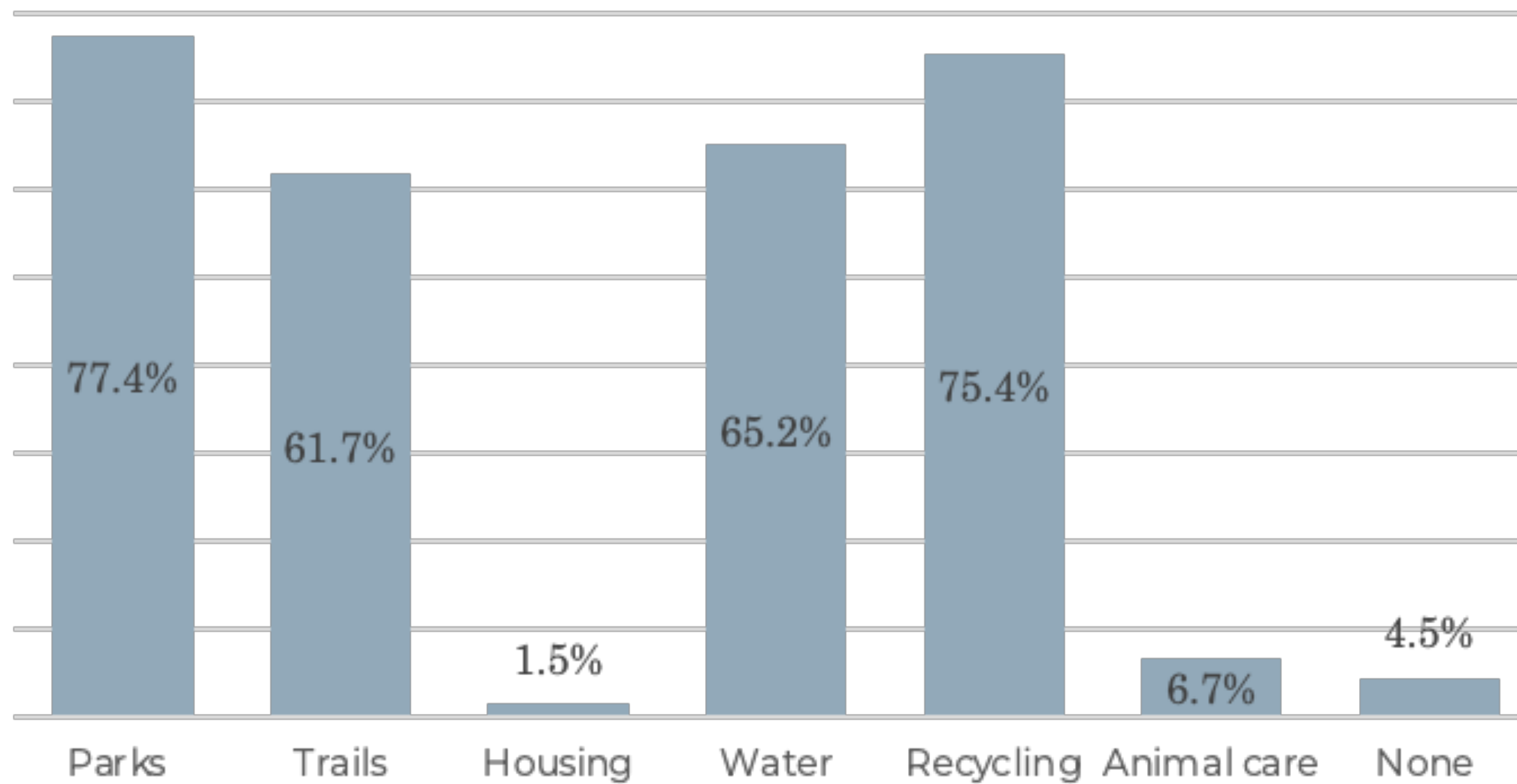
- Service operations show mixed results: while 60.7% rate reliability as moderately to highly effective, only 26.4% indicate strong satisfaction with service dependability.
- Communication and engagement metrics reveal room for improvement, with proactive planning (44.3%) and effective communications (32.8%) rated as less effective by respondents.
- Overall performance reflects this divide: while 60.2% rate CRD as moderately to highly effective, only 21.9% indicate strong satisfaction, suggesting opportunities to move from moderate to high performance.

n=402. How well do you believe the Capital Regional District (CRD) performs in the following areas? Select from: Less [Not at all effective, Slightly effective], Moderately effective, More [Very effective, Extremely effective], Not applicable [removed from above visualization]



# Parks and waste management lead CRD service usage

Service Usage

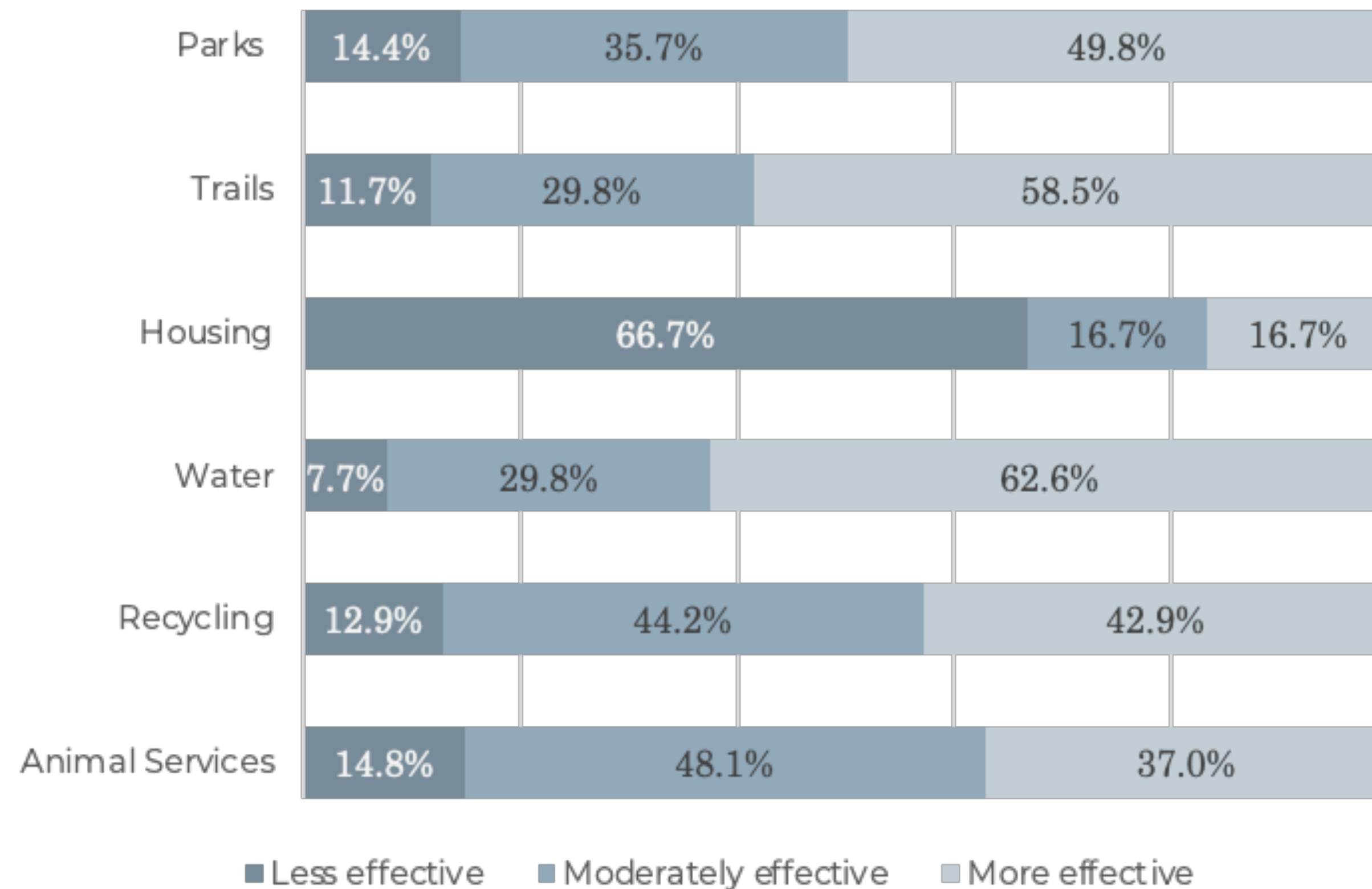


- Parks (77.4%) and recycling/landfill services (75.4%) are the most widely used CRD services, with regional trails (61.7%) following closely.
- The high utilization of outdoor recreational services highlights an opportunity to leverage these touchpoints for broader community engagement.



# CRD core services show varied effectiveness across functions

## Performance Assessment



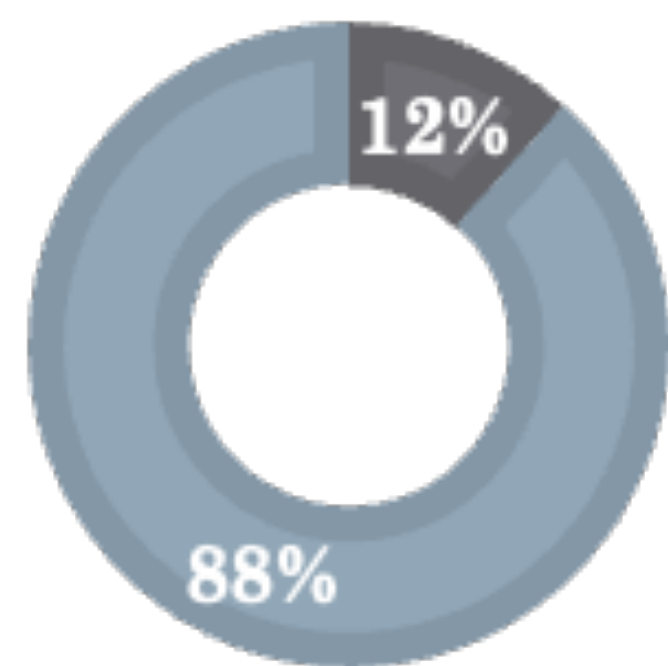
- Essential infrastructure services receive highest ratings, with water services showing strongest performance (92.4% moderate to high effectiveness) and trails close behind (88.3%).
- Housing emerges as a key challenge area, with 66.7% rating it less effective, significantly lower than other core services.
- Community services like parks and recycling maintain solid performance, with over 85% rating them moderately to highly effective.
- Strong performance in essential services provides a foundation for building public confidence in newer initiatives.

n=Varied, only shown to those that utilized these services. Based on your experience, how effective is the CRD in delivering the services you selected? Select from: Less [ Not at all effective, Slightly effective], Moderately effective, More [Very effective, Extremely effective]. Only shown to those that utilized these services.

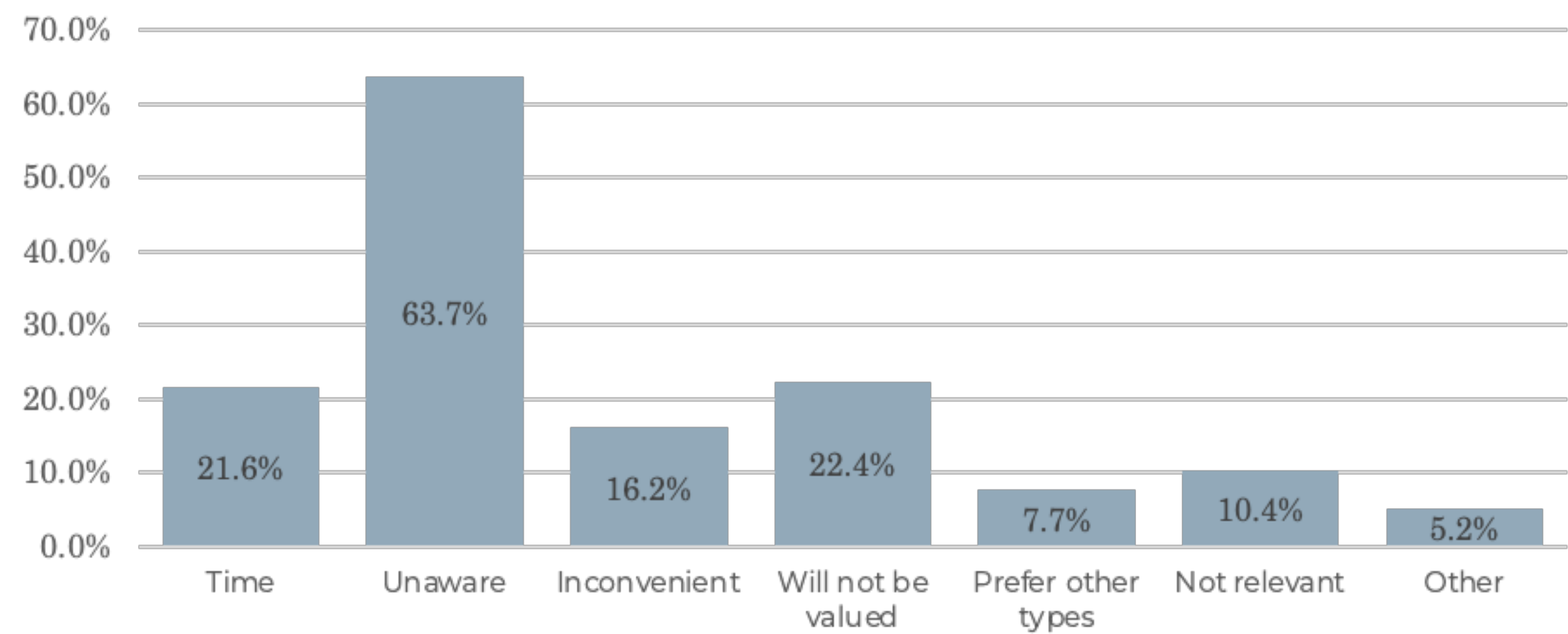
# Awareness Gap Is Primary Barrier to Public Participation

- Few participated in CRD public engagement opportunities in the past year.
- 63.7% of residents cite lack of awareness as their main barrier to participation, while 21.6% indicate time constraints. This clear feedback points to an opportunity to enhance communication channels and simplify engagement processes.

Participated in Public Engagement?



Reasons to Not Participate in Public Engagement



n=402. In the last 12 months, have you provided input into any of the public participation opportunities offered by the Capital Regional District (CRD), such as the recent initiative about Rural Housing or the Regional Water Supply ? What are the barriers that prevent you from participating or from participating more fully? Select all





## In their own words



Theme: Core service reliability—generally positive on core services, where and when they are aware of what is being provided.

Theme: Infrastructure planning concerns—disconnect between operational performance and public perceptions.

“When I turn on the tap the water goes, when I flush the water goes. They rebuilt the bridge that fall into the ravine. They do a darn good job”

“It is a fractured system. Can’t go to one council, make your views known...If you have an issue of fire protection, you go to one meeting. If it is an issue about water, you go to a water meeting. If it is planning, you go to Islands Trust. You end up going to so many different meetings and track the organizations to understand the different services you are getting.”

“I have no real complaints on what they do. The basic infrastructure generally works well, the trails and parks are nice. But, beyond that I do not really know what they do.”

“They tell us we need more housing. Have they asked the tax payer do we want more people. I have not been asked that question. So, what or who is this housing for?”

### Insights about services

- Core services perform well (water, trails, parks)
- High satisfaction among actual users (>60% positive for key services)
- Room for improvement in service awareness and accessibility

### Insights about engagement with CRD public activities

- Awareness is primary barrier (63.7%)
- Trust/value perception issues (22.4%) indicate communication gap
- Time constraints (21.6%) suggest need for flexible engagement option
- Multiple barriers often overlap, requiring multi-faceted solutions

### Implications

1. Leverage high satisfaction with core services (>60%) to build awareness and increase engagement with lesser-known CRD offerings.
2. Address the significant awareness barrier (63.7%) by integrating service promotion into existing high-performing touchpoints like parks and trails.
3. Develop multi-channel engagement strategy that addresses both time constraints and trust gaps while improving accessibility.



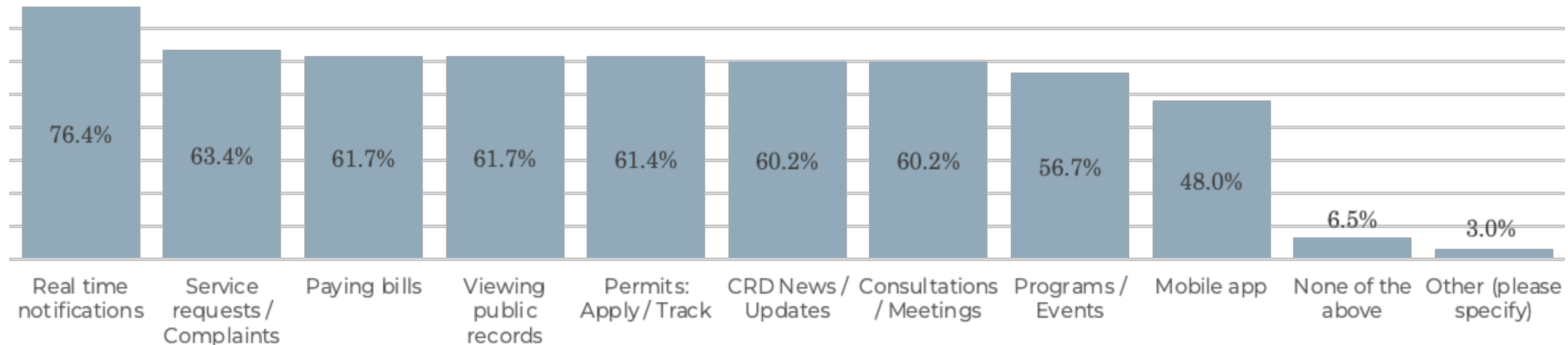
# Digital Engagement

## Capital Region District

# Real time notifications top list of expected digital services

- Real-time service notifications lead resident expectations at 75.4%, followed by basic service requests and bill payments (around 62%)
- Core administrative functions like permit tracking, public records access, and CRD updates are expected by approximately 61% of residents
- While digital communication tools are highly valued, traditional programs and events remain important to 56.7% of residents

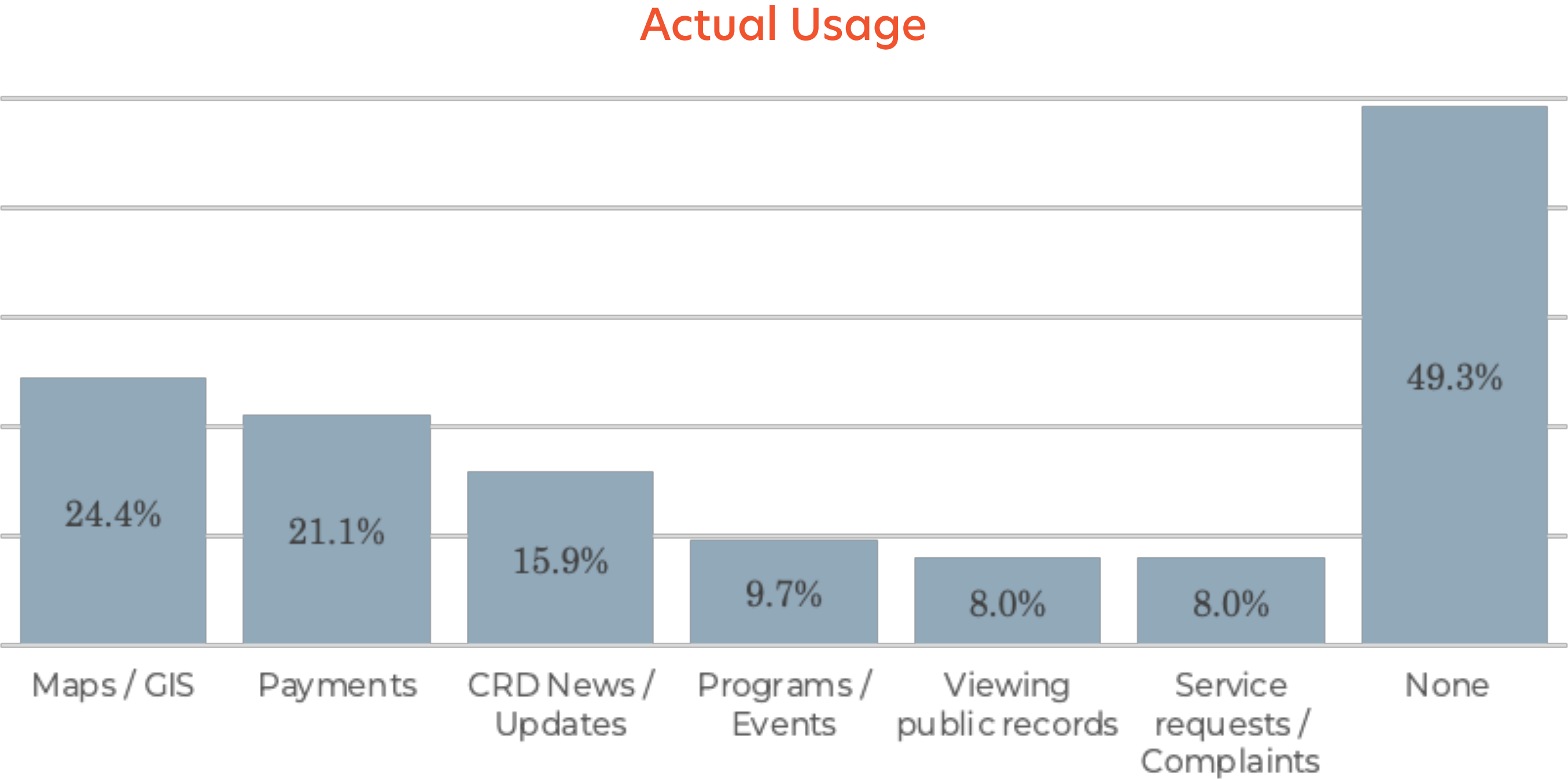
## Expected Services



n=402. Which of the following services would you expect the Capital Regional District (CRD) to offer? Select all that apply.



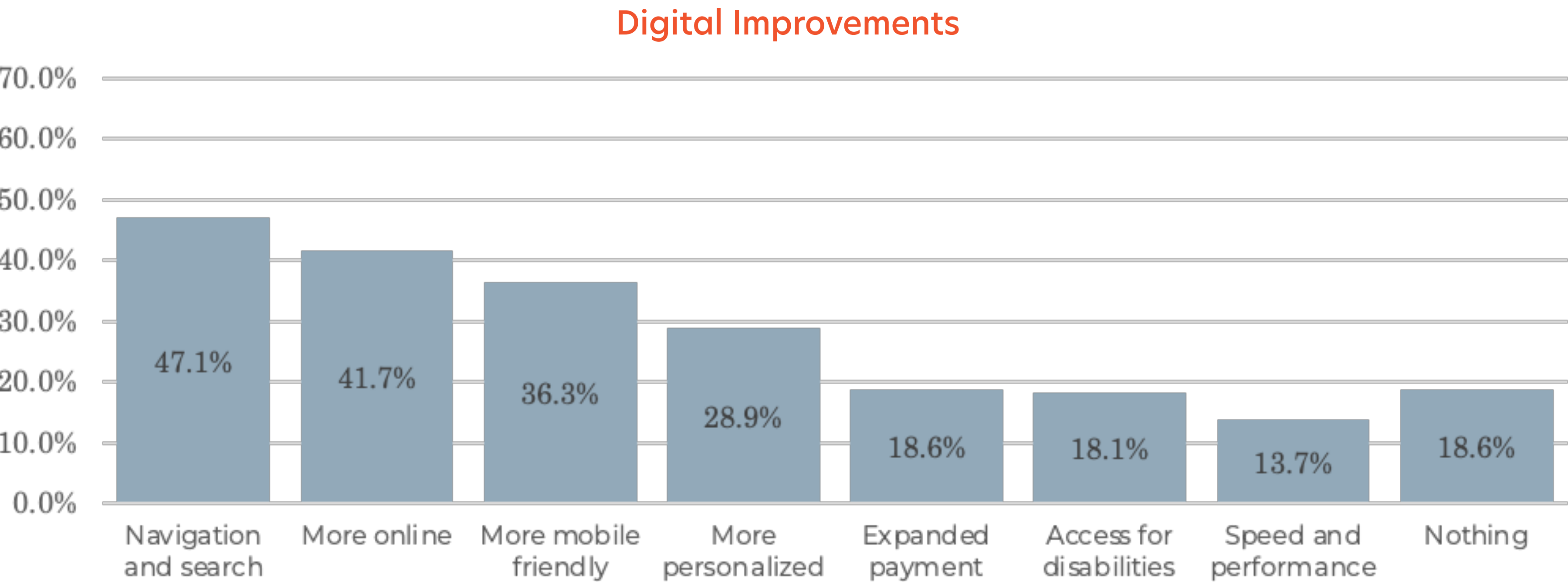
# Digital service adoption lags behind expectations



- While 49.3% of residents haven't used any CRD digital services, online maps/GIS (24.4%) and payments (21.1%) show strongest adoption.
- The gap between expected and actual digital service usage indicates an opportunity to improve awareness and accessibility of existing online tools.

# Website navigation and digital services top improvement priorities

- 47.1% of users want better navigation and search tools, while 41.7% seek more online services overall. The focus on basic usability improvements, particularly among 55+ users (58.8%), suggests a need to enhance the fundamental digital experience before expanding services.



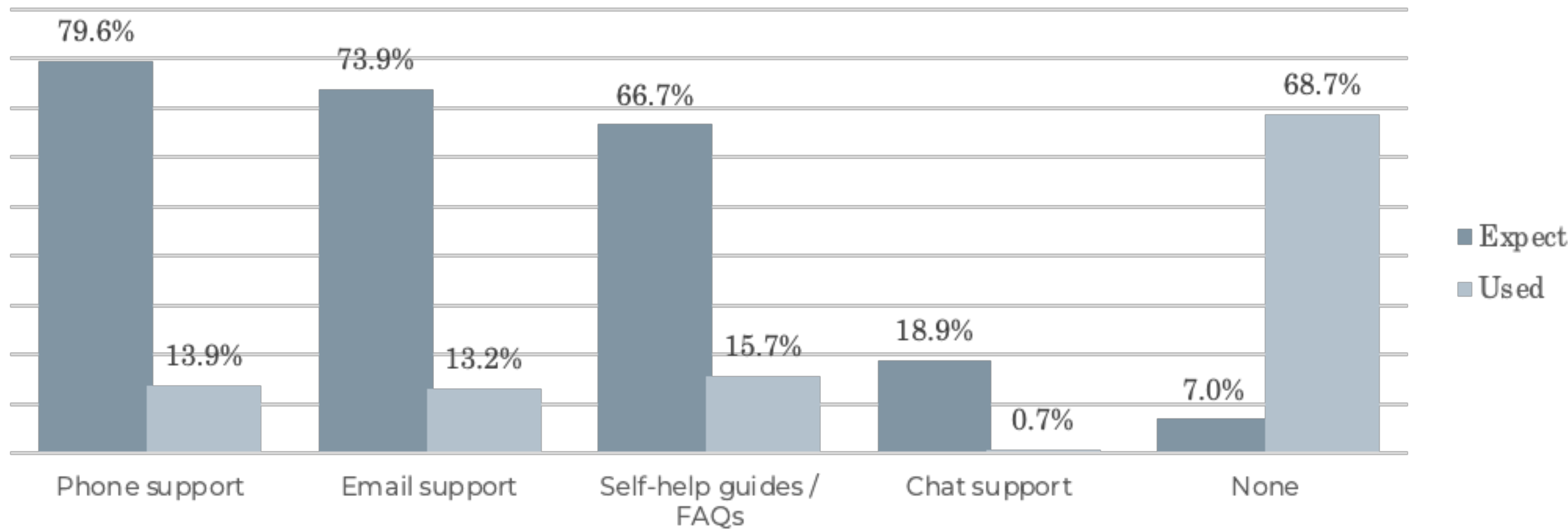
n=402. What improvements would you like to see in CRD's digital services? Select all that apply.



# Traditional support channels remain most expected service option

- Phone (79.6%) and email (73.9%) support during business hours are the most expected service channels, while only 18.9% expect 24/7 live chat. The high demand for traditional channels suggests a need to maintain robust phone/email support while gradually introducing digital alternatives.
- 68.7% of residents haven't used any CRD support services in the past year, with self-help resources showing highest usage at 15.7%. The low utilization rates across all channels suggest an opportunity to either improve service visibility or reduce friction points that lead to support needs.

Customer Support: Expected vs Actual Usage

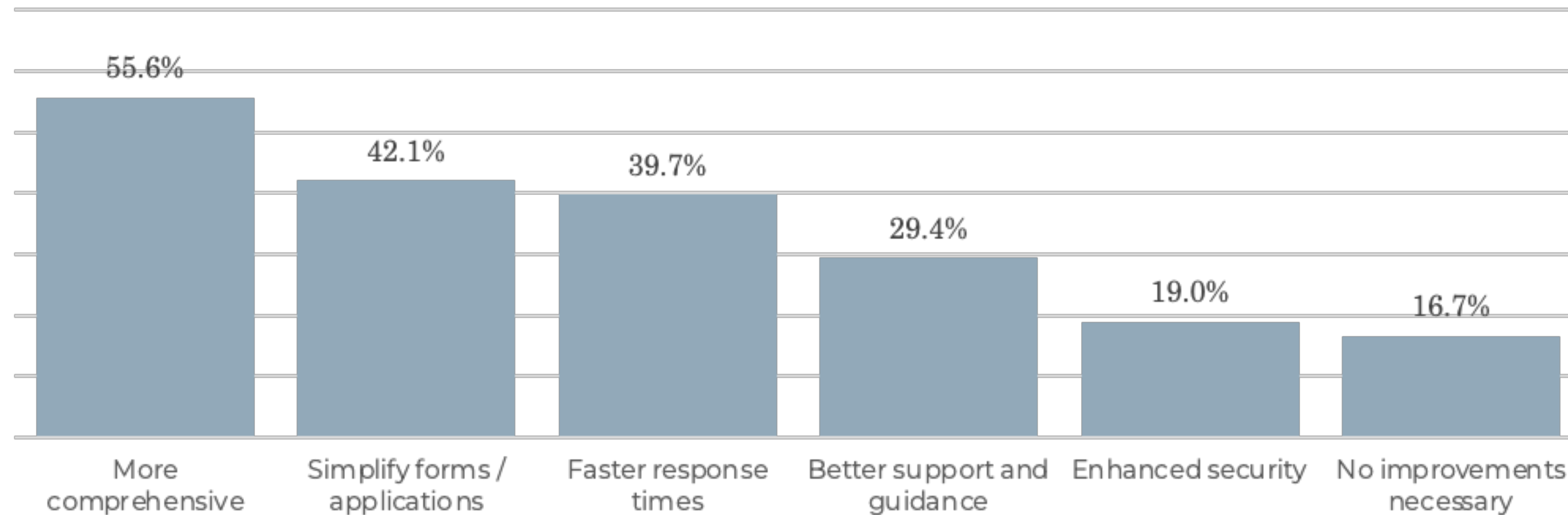


n=402.. In addition to in-person services, which types of customer support would you expect the CRD to offer? Which of these customer support services have you used when interacting with the CRD in the last 12 months? Select all that apply.

# Information access and process simplification lead online improvement priorities

- 55.6% of users want more comprehensive online information, while 42.1% seek simplified forms and applications.
- The focus on content and usability improvements points to clear priorities for enhancing digital service delivery.

## Improve Online Experiences

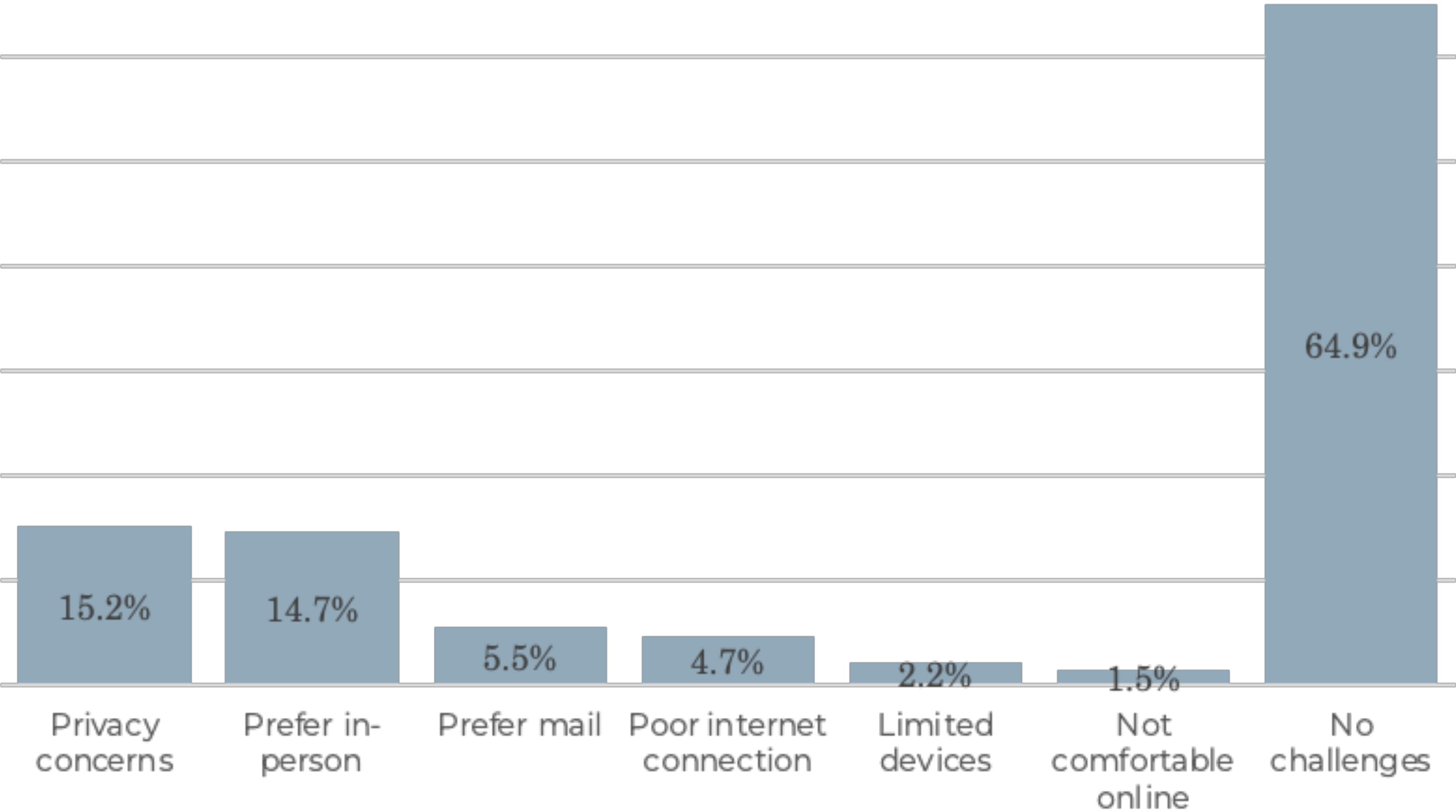


n=402. Which of these would most improve your online experience with the CRD? Select all that apply.



# Digital service access barriers affect minority of residents

Digital Challenges

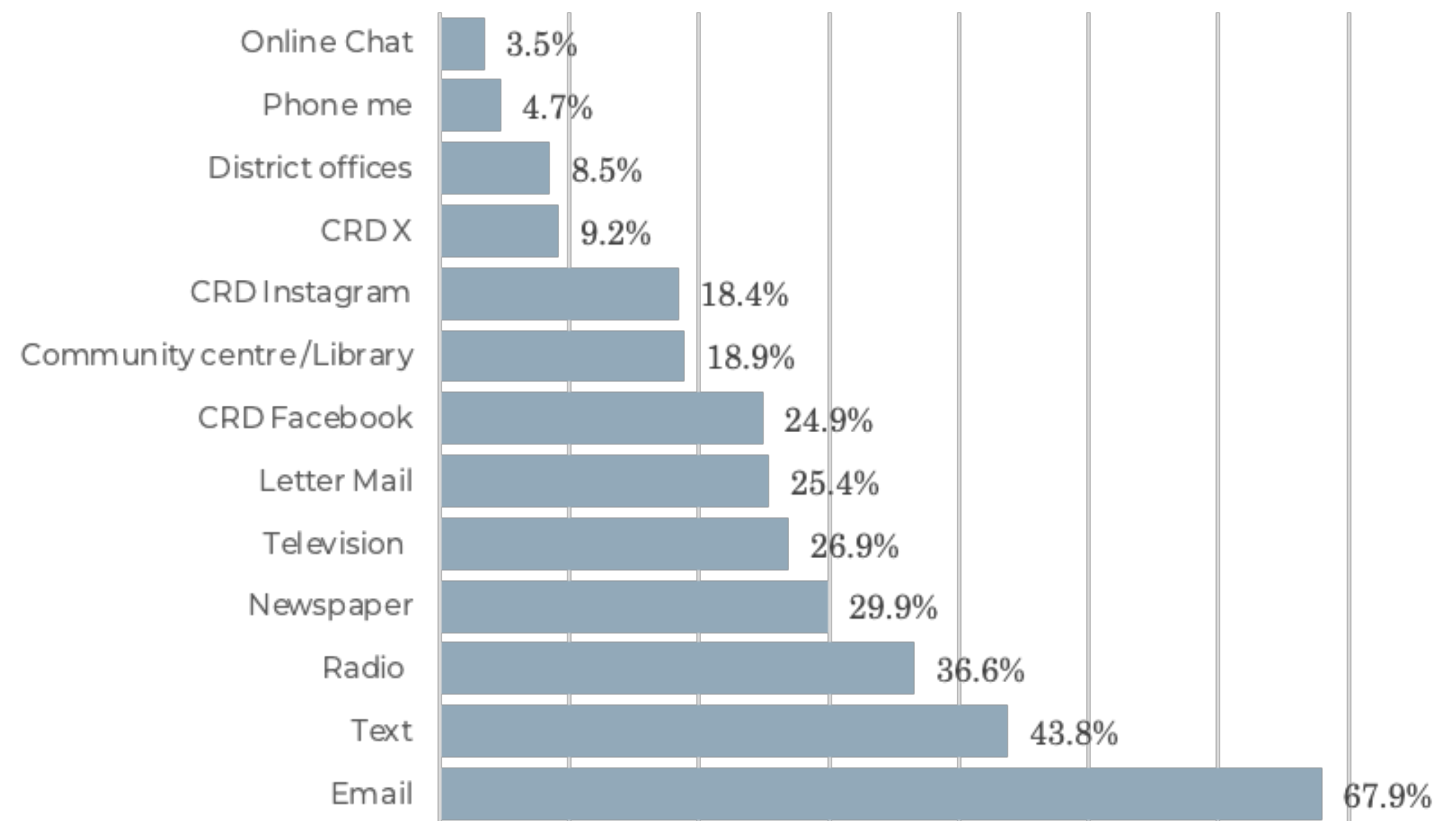


- 64.9% of residents report no challenges using digital services, with privacy concerns (15.2%) being the primary barrier.
- The preference for in-person interactions suggests value in maintaining multi-channel service delivery.

n=402. What challenges do you face when using digital services? Select all that apply.

# Residents show strong preference for direct communication channels

## Feedback Channels



- Email dominates as the preferred communication method at 67.9%, followed by text messaging at 43.8%, indicating strong preference for direct digital contact.
- Traditional media channels maintain significant relevance, with radio (36.6%), newspaper (29.9%), and television (26.9%) reaching substantial audiences.
- Social media platforms show varying impact: Facebook leads at 24.9%, while Instagram (18.4%) and CRD X (9.2%) demonstrate lower preference levels among residents.

n=402. We use different forms of communication to share information. We want to know how you prefer to hear from us. Today we are just asking about one example, water restrictions. How will you want to hear about water restrictions? Select all that apply.





## In their own words



Theme: Website navigation and information architecture—current structure creates barriers to finding relevant information.

Theme: Content format preferences—strong preference for direct, searchable text content.

“The email is good - you need people to be engaged. What can you add to the email to make it interesting so people know what the CRD is doing. There is a lot of misinformation and simple communication could overcome the mistrust.”

“Email, for sure...- if anything relevant to me and how I live- it would be nice to get an email from them. Of course, it needs to be focused on my region, not all of CRD. I can imagine they could help me register in advance.”

“I do not know how they communicate - you hear about them in news media and from tv from time to time. Otherwise I am not sure.”

“I learned about the active transit from roads being torn up, social media. It would be better through billboards. DO not read newspapers, do not listen to the radio.”

Information Architecture Challenge

- StrongUsers struggle with information overload and relevance filtering
- "Have to burrow through technical stuff to find basic information"

Channel preference more complex than data suggests

- Regional/demographic variations in digital readiness
- Mixed reception to email (concerns about overload, but preference to self select into email list services)
- Traditional channels still vital in rural areas

Strong user experience preferences

- Preference for searchable text over multimedia
- Demand for smart, guided tools for specific tasks
- Need for layered information (summary → detail)

Implications

1. Enhance User Navigation

- Improve search and filtering capabilities
- Create clear topic-based pathways
- Implement summary views with optional detail

2. Multi-Channel Strategy

- Develop integrated digital/traditional approach
- Enable end-to-end digital service deliver
- Maintain traditional channels where needed

3. Personalization Priority

- Enable customizable notifications
- Create region-specific content hubs
- Develop smart tools for common tasks



# Thank you.

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CRD