

ETHELO

Town of *Stratford*



Town of Stratford Long Term Budget Priorities

Introduction

From December 21 to January 29 2020, the Town of Stratford used a budget simulation tool to gather public feedback on their long term budget priorities. The purpose of this program was to educate residents on the Town's long-term financial forecast, empower them to provide feedback on potential initiatives and infrastructure improvements, and find consensus around how to move forward. Residents were also asked to indicate whether they'd be willing to support a fundraising campaign to offset the costs of long-term budget plan initiatives.

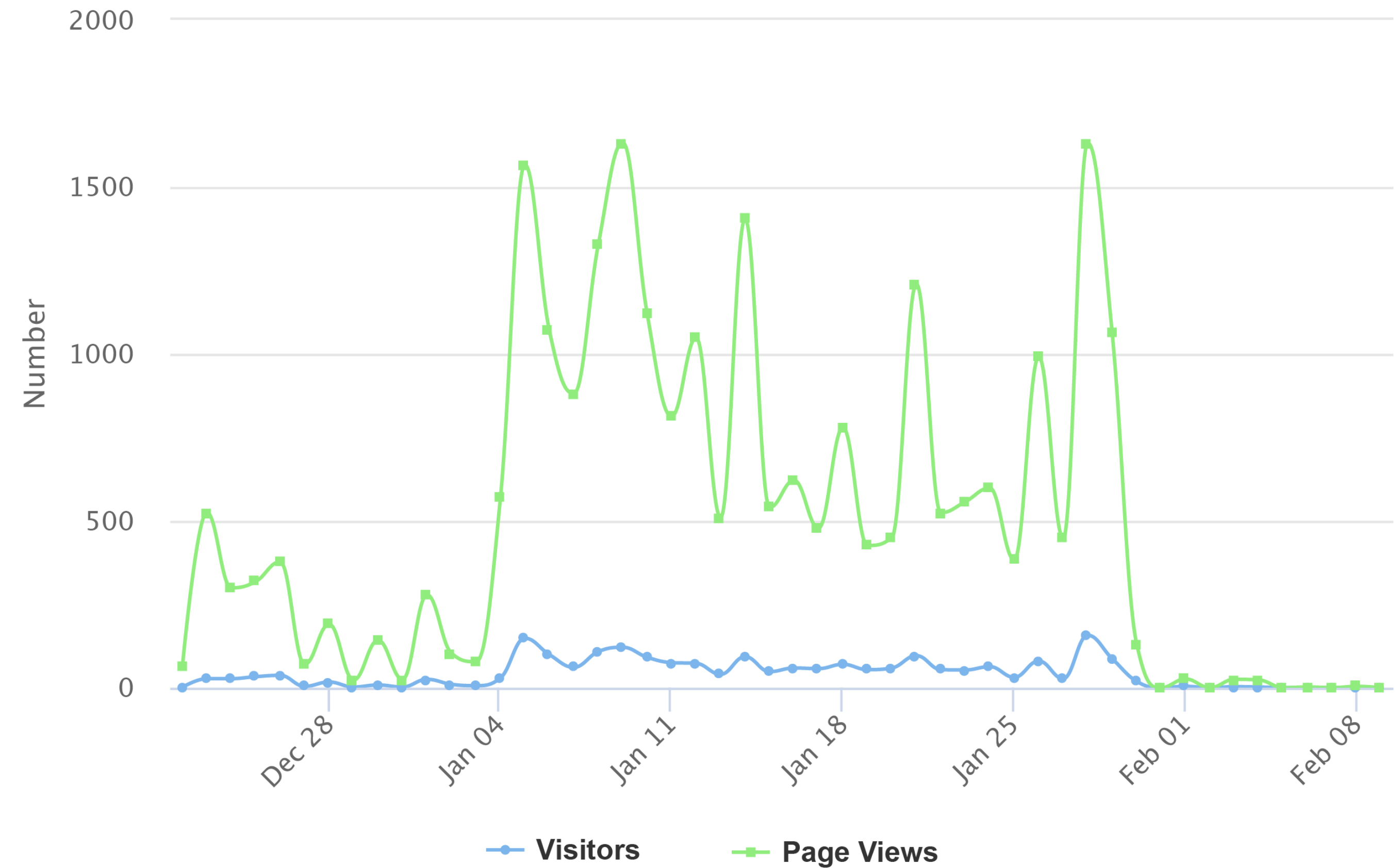
Ethelo used the results to generate a particular set of funding changes that are predicted to have the most community support.



Participation

Participation

- Number of visitors: **1,877**
- Number of respondents: **1006**
- Page views: **25,336**
- Average time on platform: **10 minutes**



Building Consensus*

The Ethelo recommended scenario doesn't detail the popular vote for funding levels in each department, but instead sifts through all budgeting scenarios, and identifies the one with the most community support, and the least polarization. For the Ethelo recommended scenario, the platform takes into account not only participant's likes, but also their dislikes, and uses these to calculate what adjustments can be made to departmental spending to optimize community buy-in.

Average Property Tax Bill: \$1,575
Average Property Tax Increase \$164

Predicted Budget Support: 87%



Totally Oppose

Neutral

Totally Support

Building Consensus

Aquatic Facilities

% Approval*

Indoor Pool	56%
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Ice Sports

% Approval*

Wellness Centre	54%
Outdoor Covered Ice Surface	48%

Sports Fields

% Approval*

Multi-use Courts	55%
Artificial Turf Fields	52%
Turf Multi-use Fields	52%

* Approval is the percentage of participants who gave a positive vote, rather than a neutral or negative vote. Approval above 50% is a traditional majority

Building Consensus

Additional Police

% Approval*

Two Additional Police Officers	53%
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Environmental Initiatives

% Approval*

Environmental Land Protection	75%
Community Energy Plan Implementation	66%

Transit

% Approval*

Unserved Area Transit	52%
Evening Transit	47%
Mid morning an afternoon transit	47%

* Approval is the percentage of participants who gave a positive vote, rather than a neutral or negative vote. Approval above 50% is a traditional majority

Building Consensus

Fundraising Value

% Approval*

\$1M	25%
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Fundraising Support

% Approval*

No	51%
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* Approval is the percentage of participants who gave a positive vote, rather than a neutral or negative vote. Approval above 50% is a traditional majority

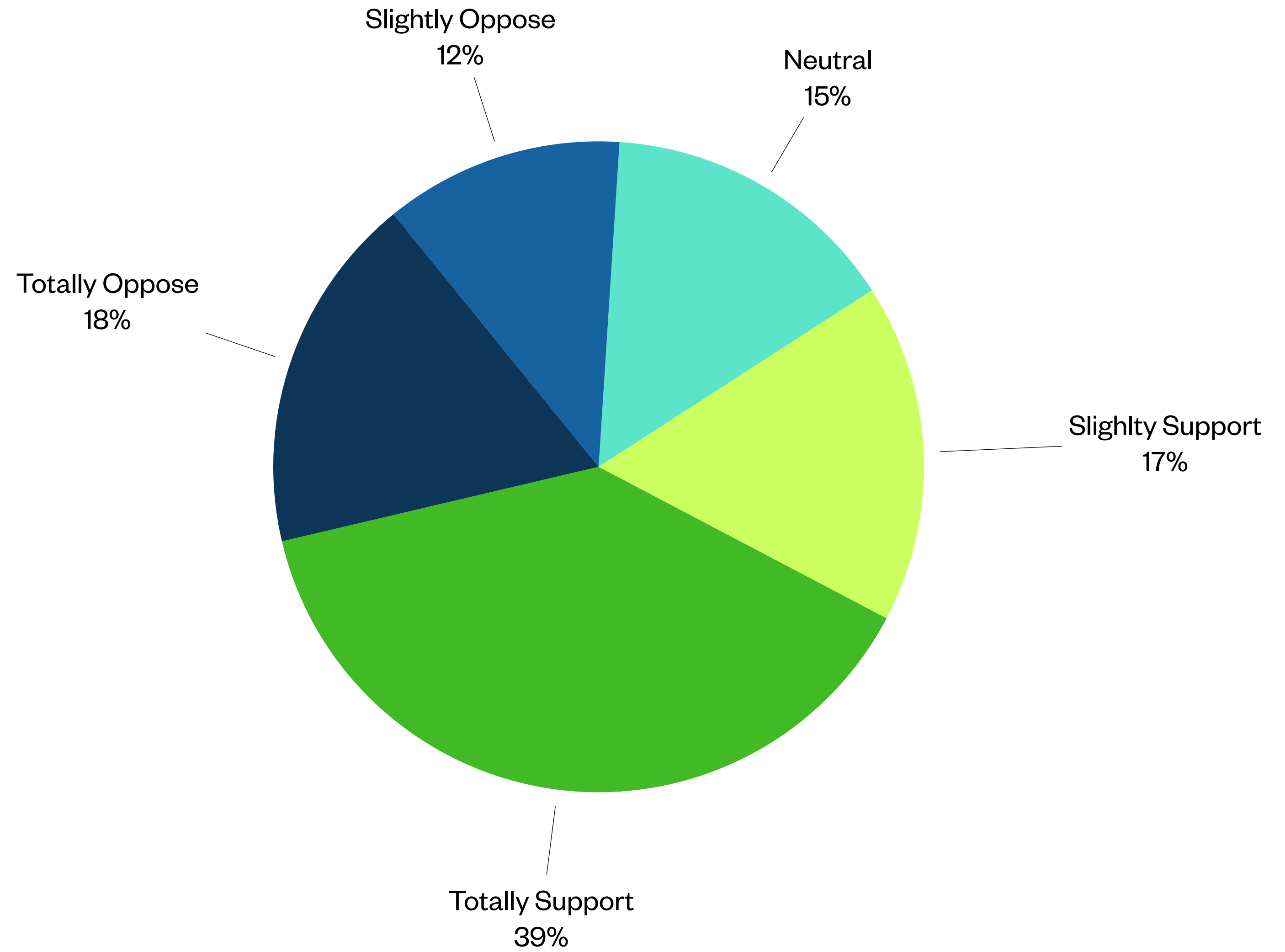


Aquatic Facilities

Aquatic Facilities

Indoor Pool

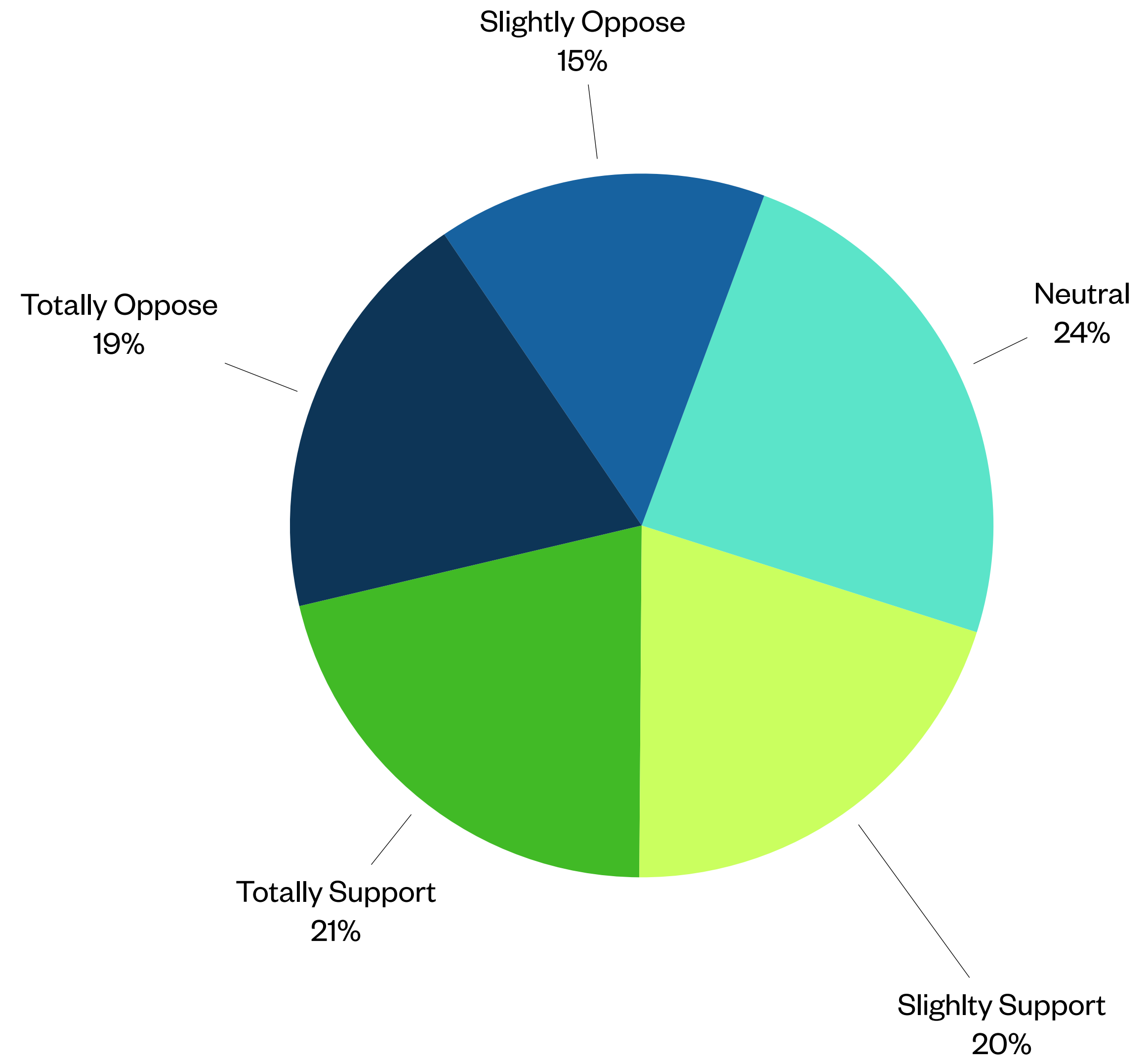
- Oppose: 30%
- Neutral: 15%
- **Support: 56%**



Aquatic Facilities

Outdoor Pool

- Oppose: 34%
- Neutral: 24%
- **Support: 41%**



Aquatic Facilities

Comments*

“Stratford doesn't need its own pool. This would be a luxury, not a need.”

“People of all ages needs an indoor pool for Recreation ! It is so good for mental and physical health for everyone not to mention the comradeship amongst the Community as a whole!”

“I think tax payer dollars should be focused on other more important and crucial infrastructure before venture down nice to have items.”

“A indoor pool would be a great addition to the Town. Although pools are expensive to operate i believe the recreational and wellness benefits far outweigh any additional expenses.”

“The outdoor season is much too short to support a pool. Indoor is the way to go.”

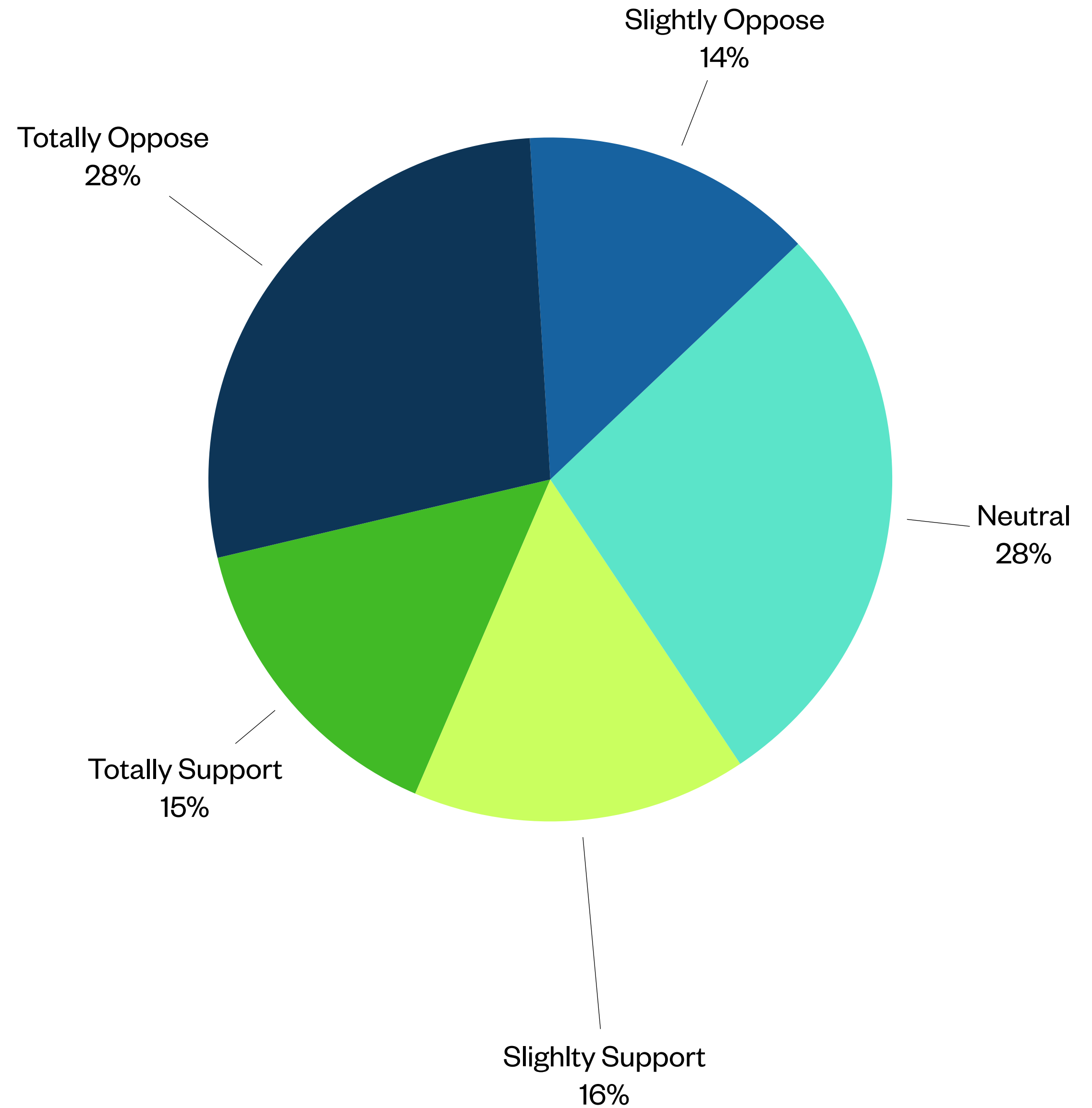
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Ice Sports

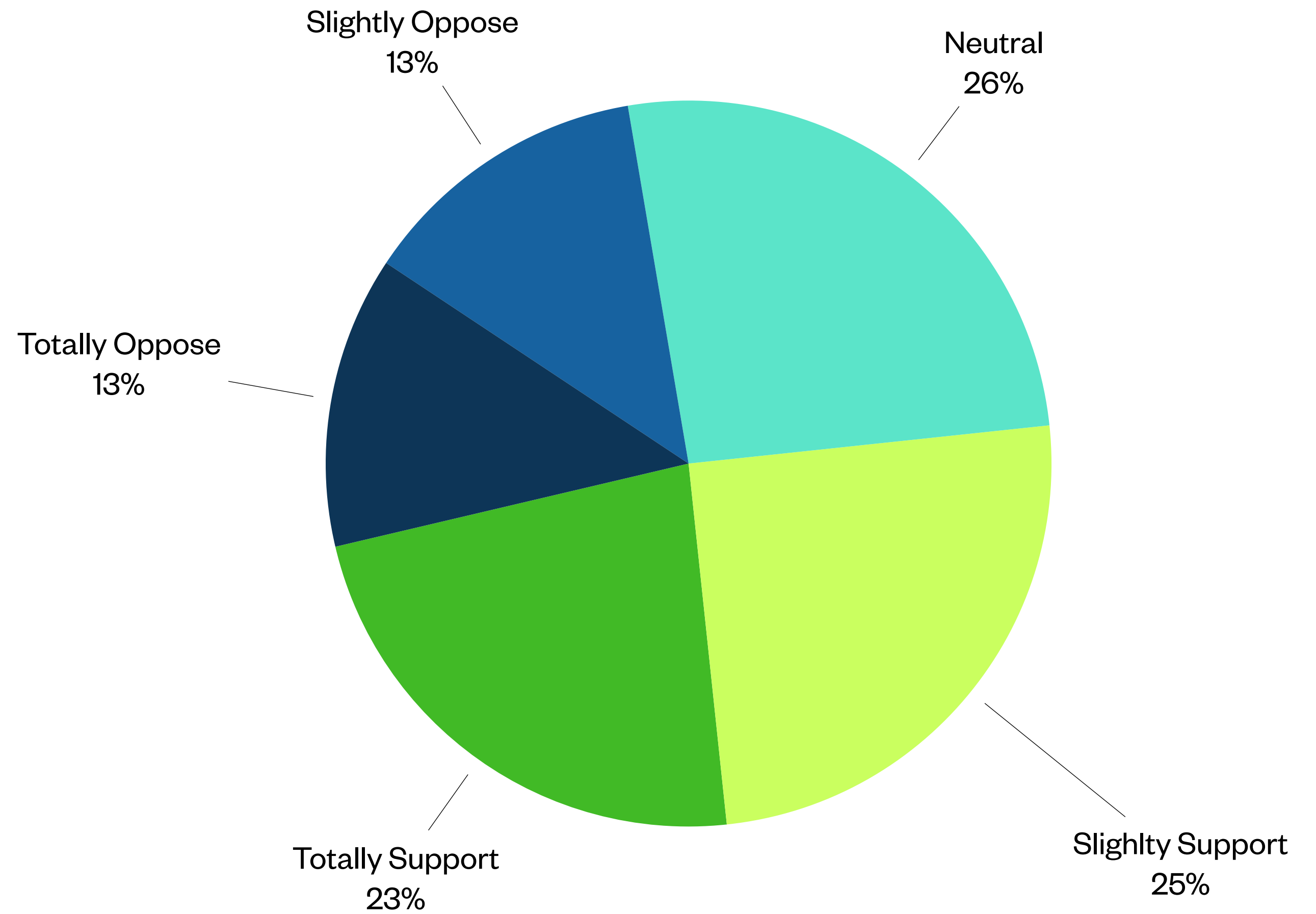
Curling Rink

- **Oppose: 42%**
- Neutral: 28%
- Support: 31%



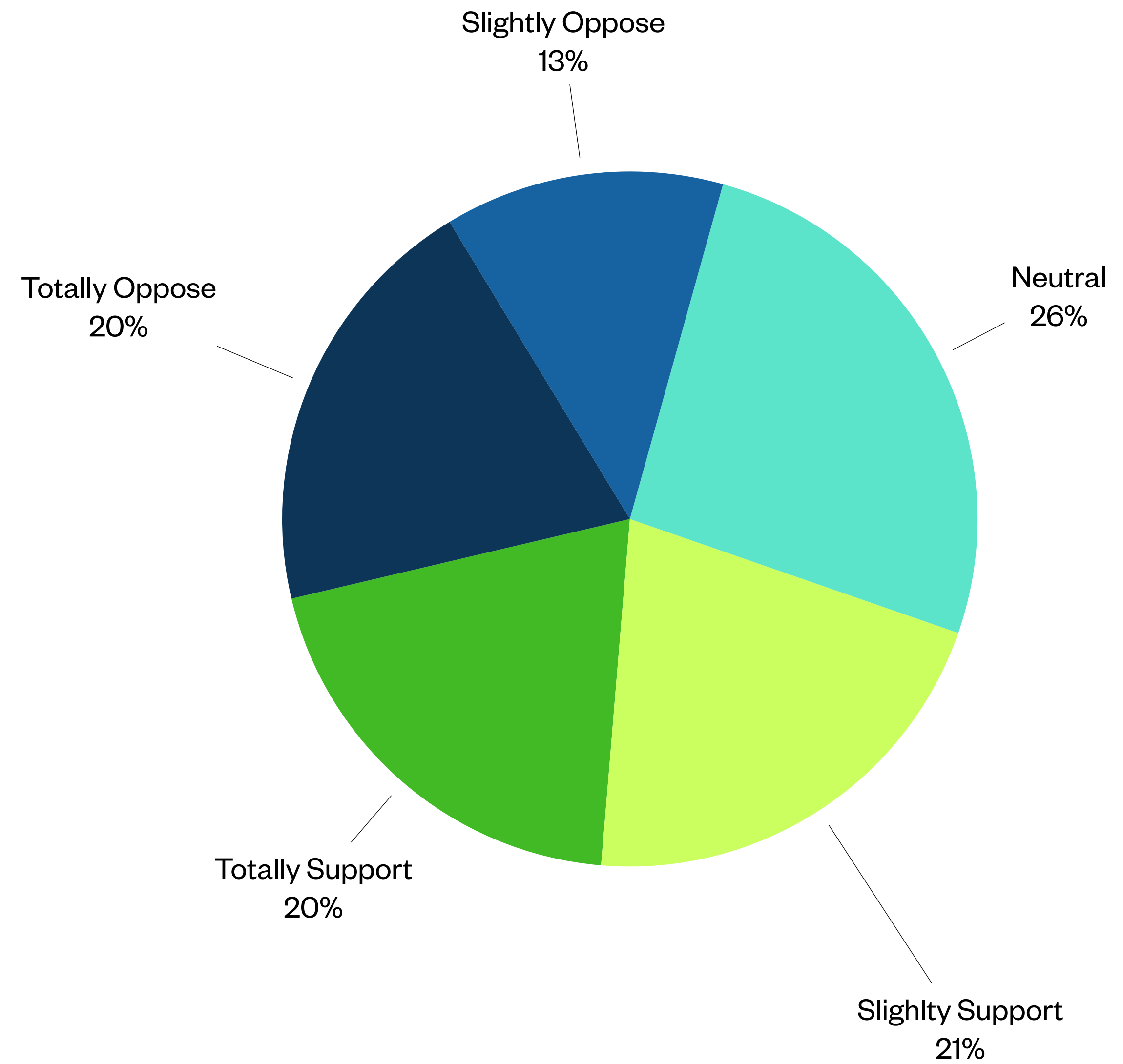
Outdoor Covered Ice Surface

- Oppose: 26%
- Neutral: 26%
- **Support: 48%**



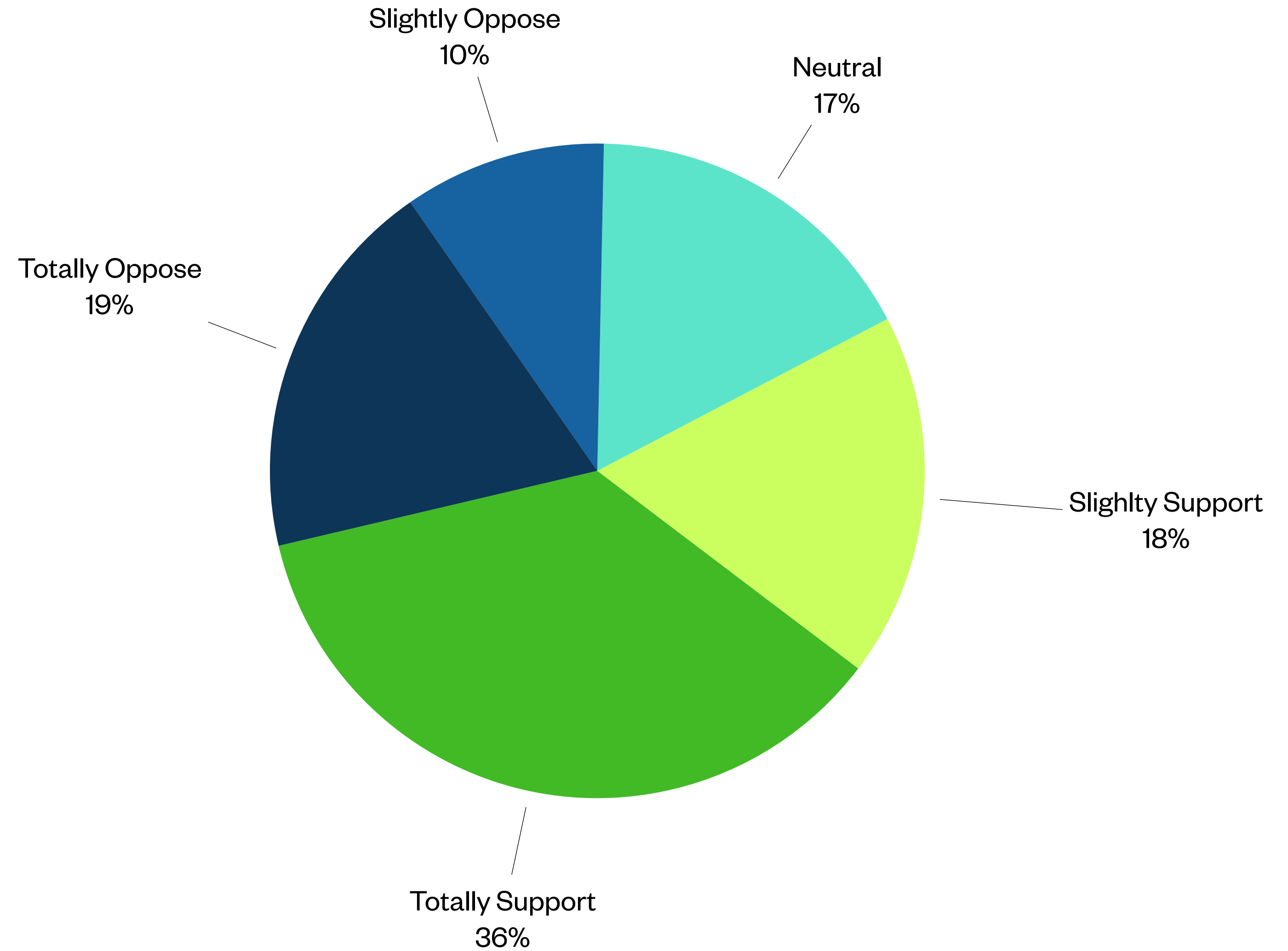
Outdoor Skating Oval

- Oppose: 23%
- Neutral: 26%
- **Support: 41%**



Wellness Centre (including ice arena)

- Oppose: 29%
- Neutral: 17%
- **Support: 54%**



Ice Sports - Curling Rink

Comments*

“Many better things to spend money on that could be used by more people”

"Charlottetown Curling Club, a long established one, has had many difficulties trying to continue in operation. Stratford taxpayers should not have to pay for a curling club. No more taxes.”

“i would like stratford to have a curling rink. For people who did not learn to skate as a child, it is a winter ice sport that can be picked up. I am thinking of the many newcomers who never learned to skate and won't learn at an ability to allow skating sports. There is a population to support a curling rink. I vote yes to curling rink.“It is important for the municipal level of government to be doing its share.”

“I like the idea. Also a bit cheaper than other winter sports.”

“So many curling rinks in Charlottetown already exist. Is there is data to show that there is an increase in demand and that the curling rinks nearby are at over capacity?”

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Ice Sports - Outdoor Covered Ice Surface

Comments*

“Its time to have kids play outdoors and enjoy all kinds of sports not just competitive ones”

“Our winter is too short for this expense for the town in our opinion.”

“Really require more info....but, don't want tax increase!”

“Don't believe we can afford or really justify such a cost. Also not sure how that extra structure fits with town green plans? policy?”

“We don't need it, there are lots of rinks close by.”

“I generally like the concept. Without more detail, it is hard to know how practical this might be and what it would cost.”

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Ice Sports - Wellness Centre

Comments*

“I wonder if a large rink is the answer when a lot of kids cannot afford to play hockey.”

“We need a rink, it’s not just for sports it create’s community.”

“I support a new ice surface or two for Stratford but does it need to be NHL size?”

“You need to separate these two things. We need additional "Wellness" space. We do not need a rink.“

“I generally like the concept. Without more detail, it is hard to know how practical this might be and what it would cost.”

"I would be concerned that such a facility would be mainly used by the segment of the population wealthy enough to have their kids in Hockey, while it is being paid for by the whole community. Perhaps there are other needs in the town that are not being served?”

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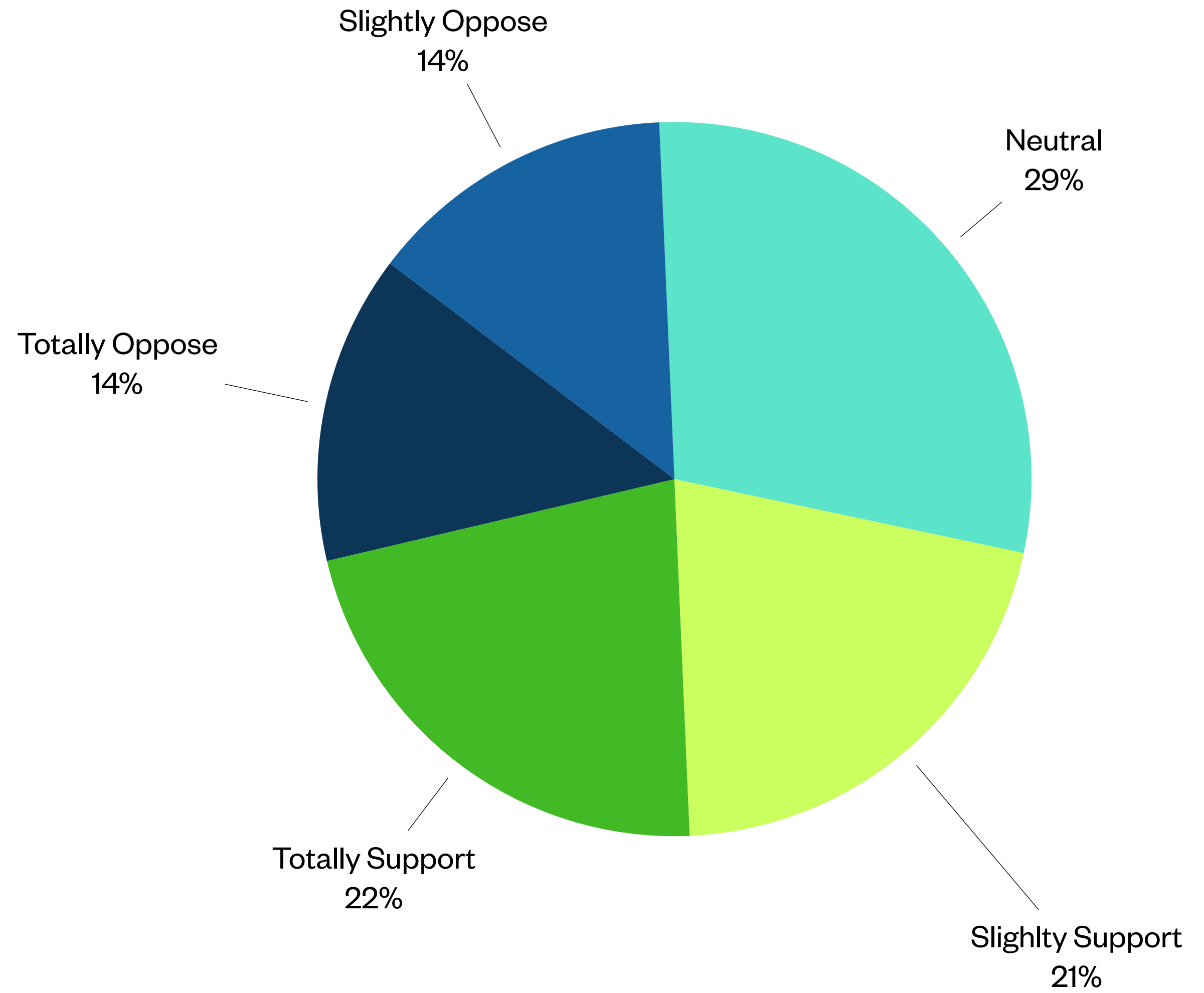


Town Facilities

Town Facilities

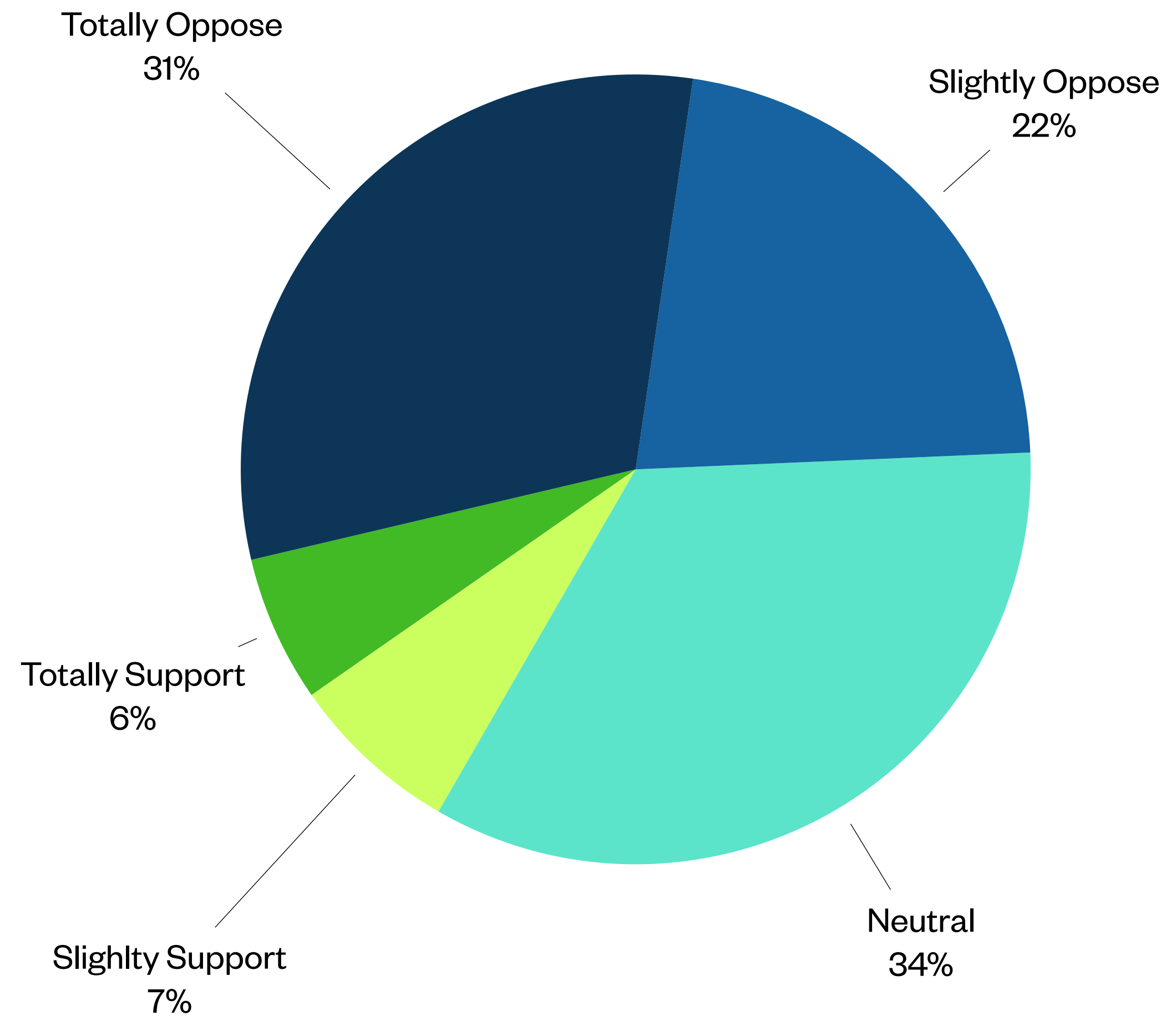
Library/Cultural Centre

- Oppose: 28%
- Neutral: 29%
- **Support: 43%**



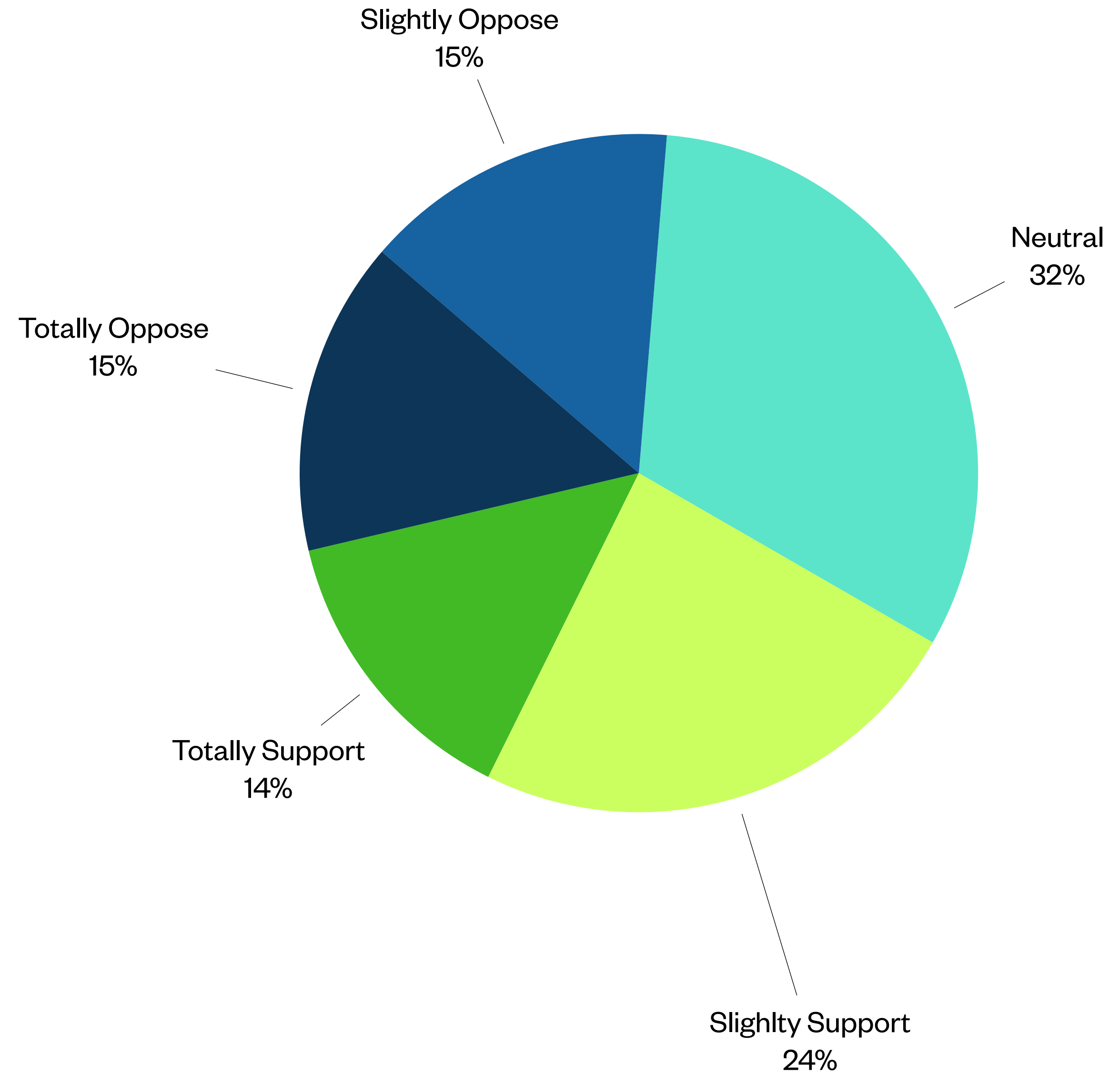
Town Centre Administration Space

- **Oppose: 53%**
- Neutral: 34%
- Support: 13%



Town Centre Recreation Space

- Oppose: 30%
- Neutral: 32%
- **Support: 38%**



Town Facilities - Library/Cultural Centre

Comments*

“Existing libraries are good enough.”

“the library can become a very vital part of the town with unique programs,the present staff are very welcoming.”

“We will have a state of the art facility in Charlottetown with a new library. Most residents will use that.”

“Depends on cost to build or use existing structure.”

“Absolutely! Expand the old space at Cotton Park. Was a very nice setting for a library, the library had use of the park for wonderful activities, and families could go to the library and then walk the trail and have a picnic, making for a nice quiet family outing.”

“Although there may be a bit of overcrowding, our present library serves us well.”

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Town Facilities - Town Recreation Centre Space

Comments*

“If the existing space can be utilized and expanded upon for the residents to have access to for exercise, meetings, etc then great.”

“Adding to existing facilities to expand programming makes for good economic sense.”

“Is there existing space to re-imagine rather than the cost of an addition?”

“I think we have a lot of space that may be underutilized, is there a possibility of connecting with businesses in the area for the use of such space?”

“I don't want to pay more money for something that I can easily access relatively close by.”

“It would be fantastic to see more recreational programs offered. Great for physical and mental health of residents of all ages...”

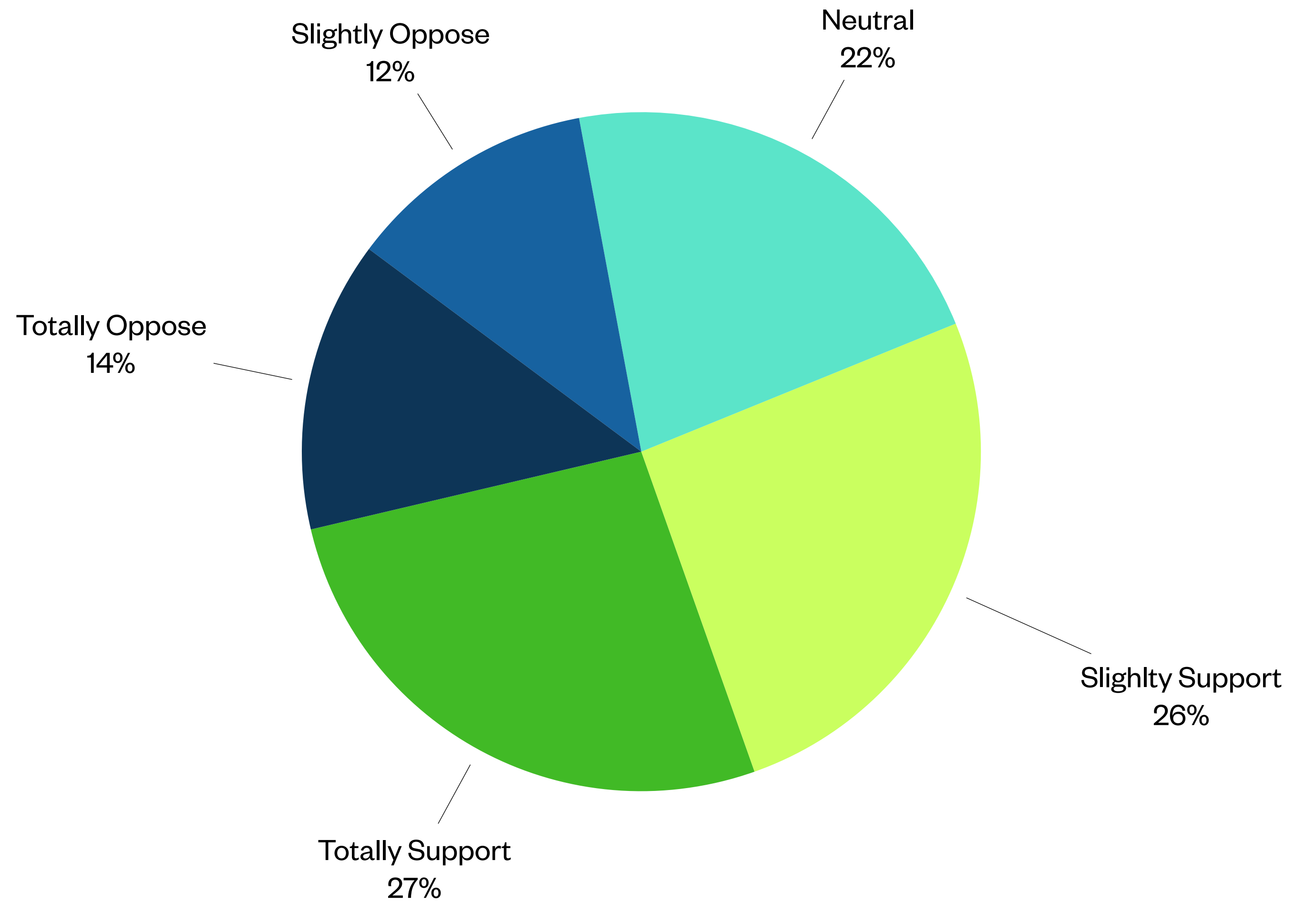
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Sports Fields

Artificial Turf Fields

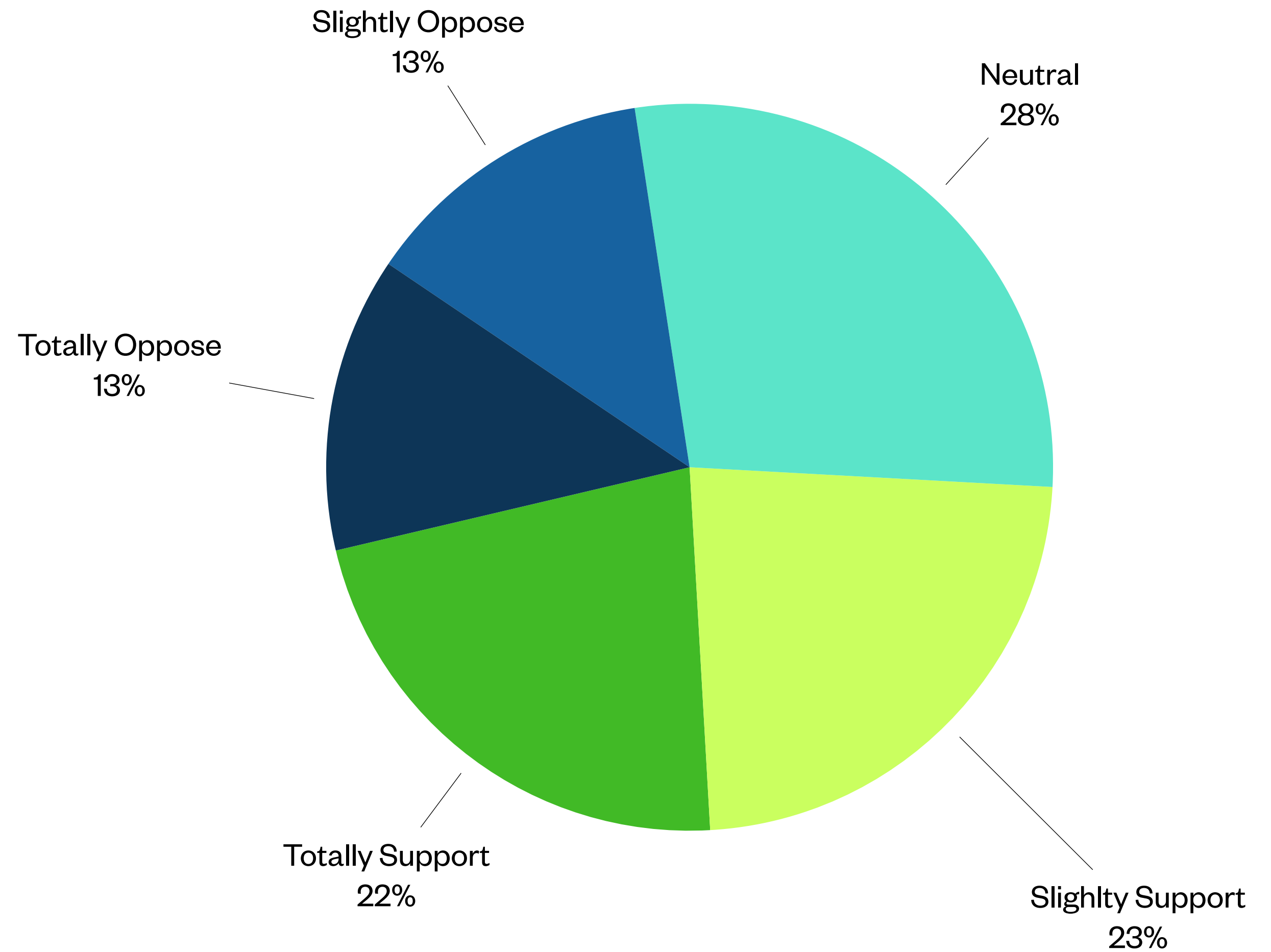
- Oppose: 26%
- Neutral: 22%
- **Support: 53%**



Sports Fields

Ball Fields

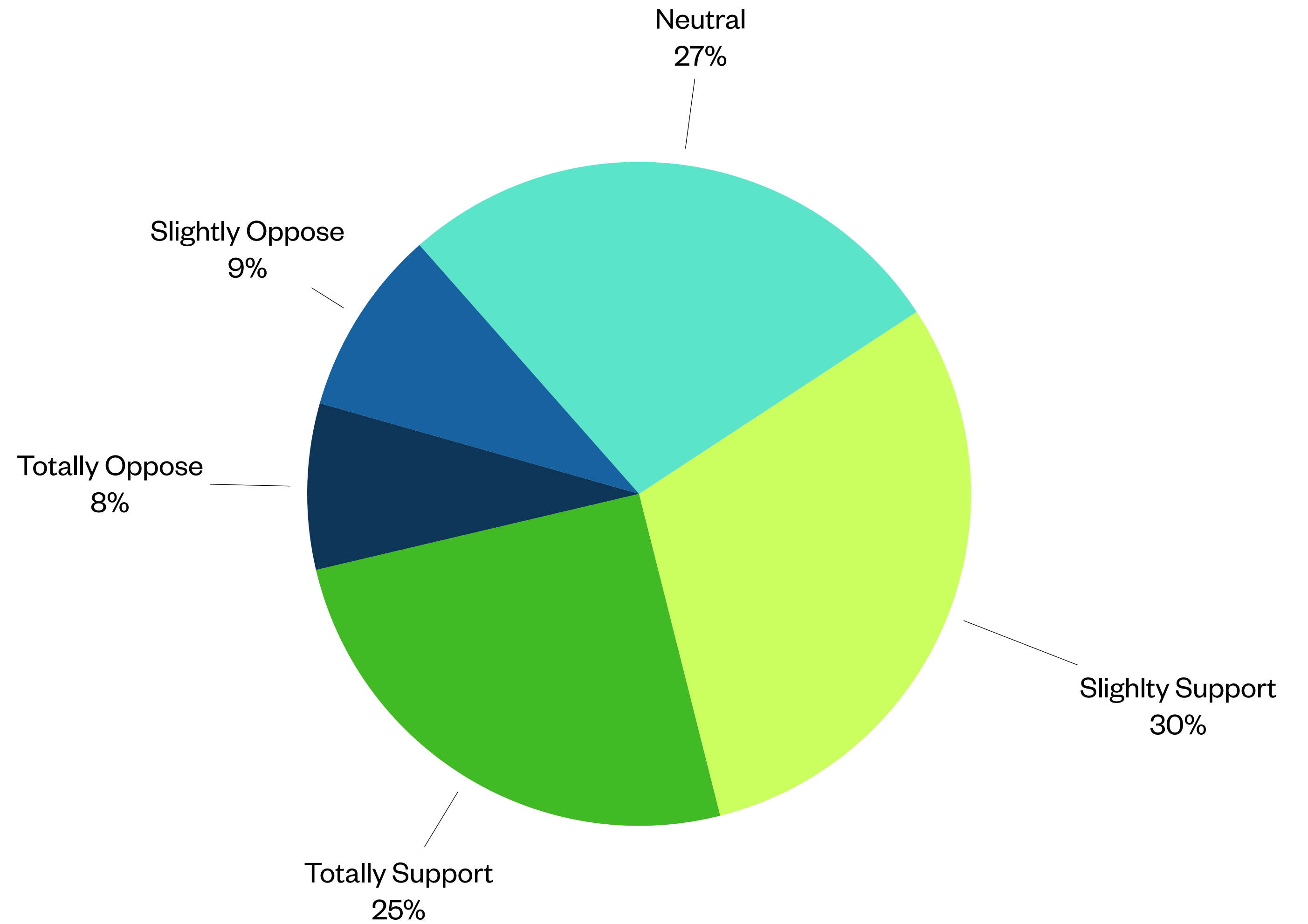
- Oppose: 26%
- Neutral: 28%
- **Support: 45%**



Sports Fields

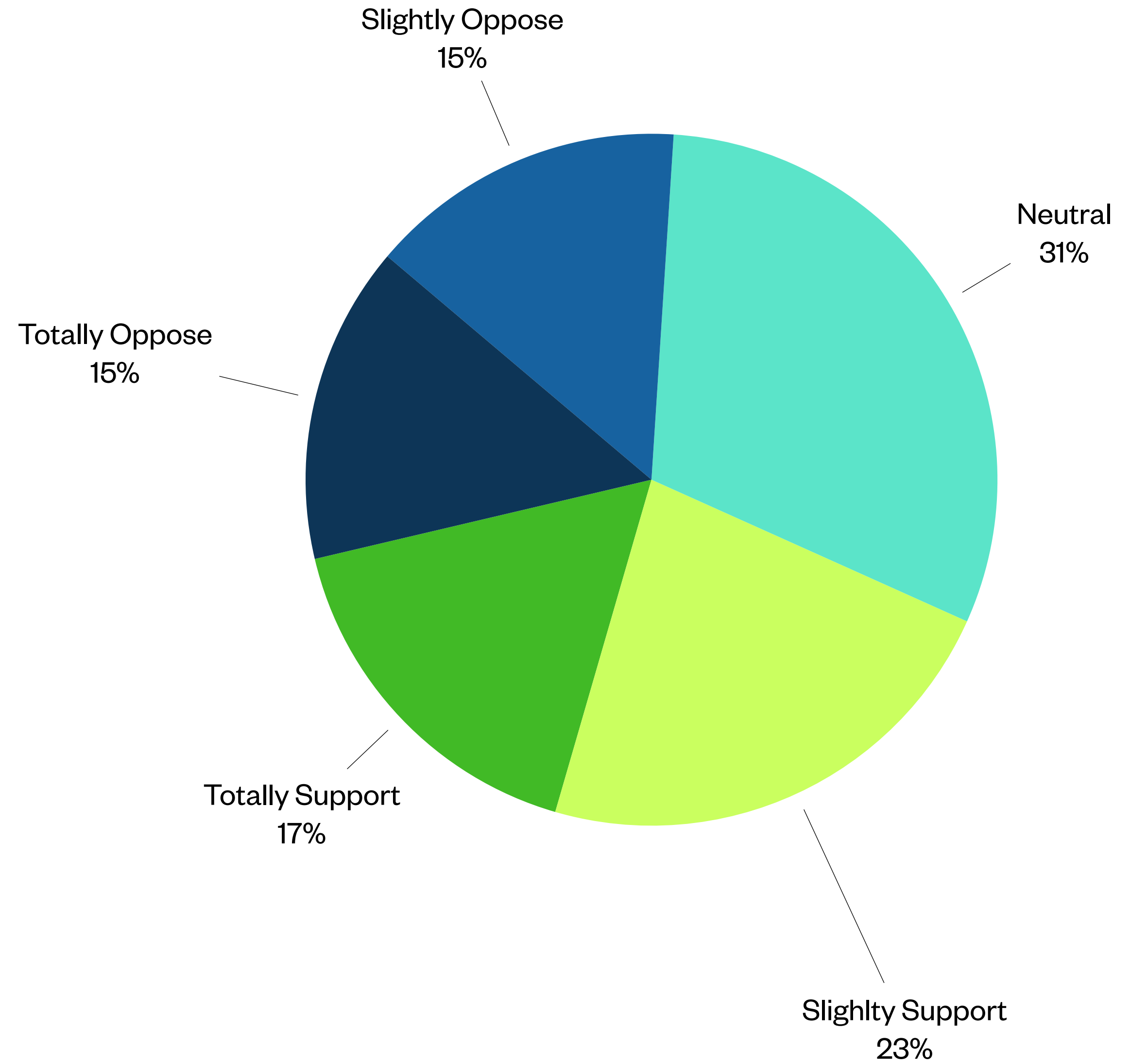
Multi-use Courts

- Oppose: 17%
- Neutral: 27%
- **Support: 55%**



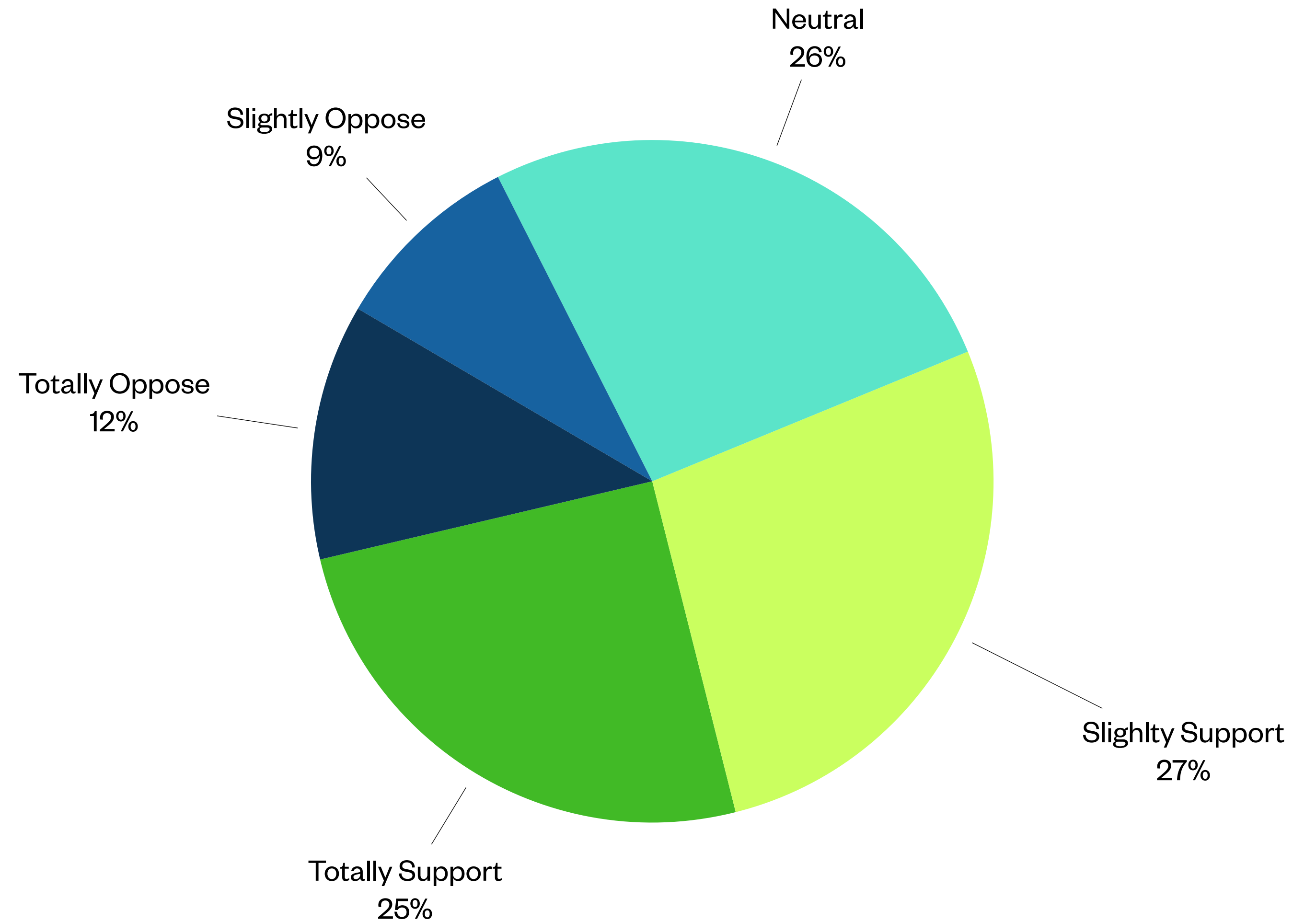
Track and Field Facilities

- Oppose: 30%
- Neutral: 31%
- **Support: 40%**



Turf Multi-use Fields

- Oppose: 21%
- Neutral: 26%
- **Support: 52%**



Sports Fields - Ball Fields

Comments*

“The registration numbers for softball and baseball speak for themselves. Additional ball fields are needed to support the development and interest in these sports.”

“Not necessary. There are plenty of Baseball and Softball fields”

“Through out this survey there are questions that without current data/statistics of usage it is difficult to provide a response in support of an initiative without being informed of the Town's intentions, current usage of facilities, vision of closing parks if facilities are centralized etc.”

“We have sufficient facilities now.”

“We really need these. The strain on our fields now is beyond what the softball and baseball associations can handle. Low cost sports that are seeing numbers grow year after year.”

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Sports Fields - Multi-use Courts

Comments*

“We have enough now”

“This can be done relatively cheaply, if the need is there.”

“Perhaps the current courts could get some maintenance and updates?”

“we need a real tennis facility, they are currently wait lists that you may never get on to play tennis, we are in need of a year round tennis facility ... Tennis brings the best of kids and adult alike together, what better way to showcase Stratford as the best town to live and come to with an amazing indoor/outdoor tennis destination.”

“I think would be used by many age groups”

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Sports Fields - Artificial Turf Fields

Comments*

“I believe soccer players would benefit and it is a growing sport for both boys and girls and does not require expensive equipment.”

“How can one express an opinion without knowing at least an estimated cost, and whether or not there is a demand for the fields? Looks really nice, but is there a demonstrated need for the facility?”

“Some of these 'nice to have' facilities may have to wait until the public and commercial tax base can more easily absorb the capital and operating costs, and the proven need and demand is supported by the community. We can't have it all...”

“Great for kids to have spaces like this to be athletic and improve their skills. But don't we already have some fields like this.”

“Much needed. Shouldn't have to go to Cornwall for everything. We could have more tournaments here. Bring money into the town”

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Sports Fields - Track and Field Facilities

Comments*

“Other areas require funding.”

“Definitely something to be tied to the overall school development project. Such facilities need to be available to casual users as well as dedicated track athletes”

“It depends on the scope of what is meant by "facility". Sure, if it means a track built around a sports field that for be used for training purposes, but I'm not in favour of a large scale facility with stadium. There is a track and field facility at UPEI for competition meets.”

“Yes an outdoor track would be good. Next to the school.”

“I rarely see people using the one at UPEI so I don't expect there is the demand for this. Perhaps something more simple/multi purpose.”

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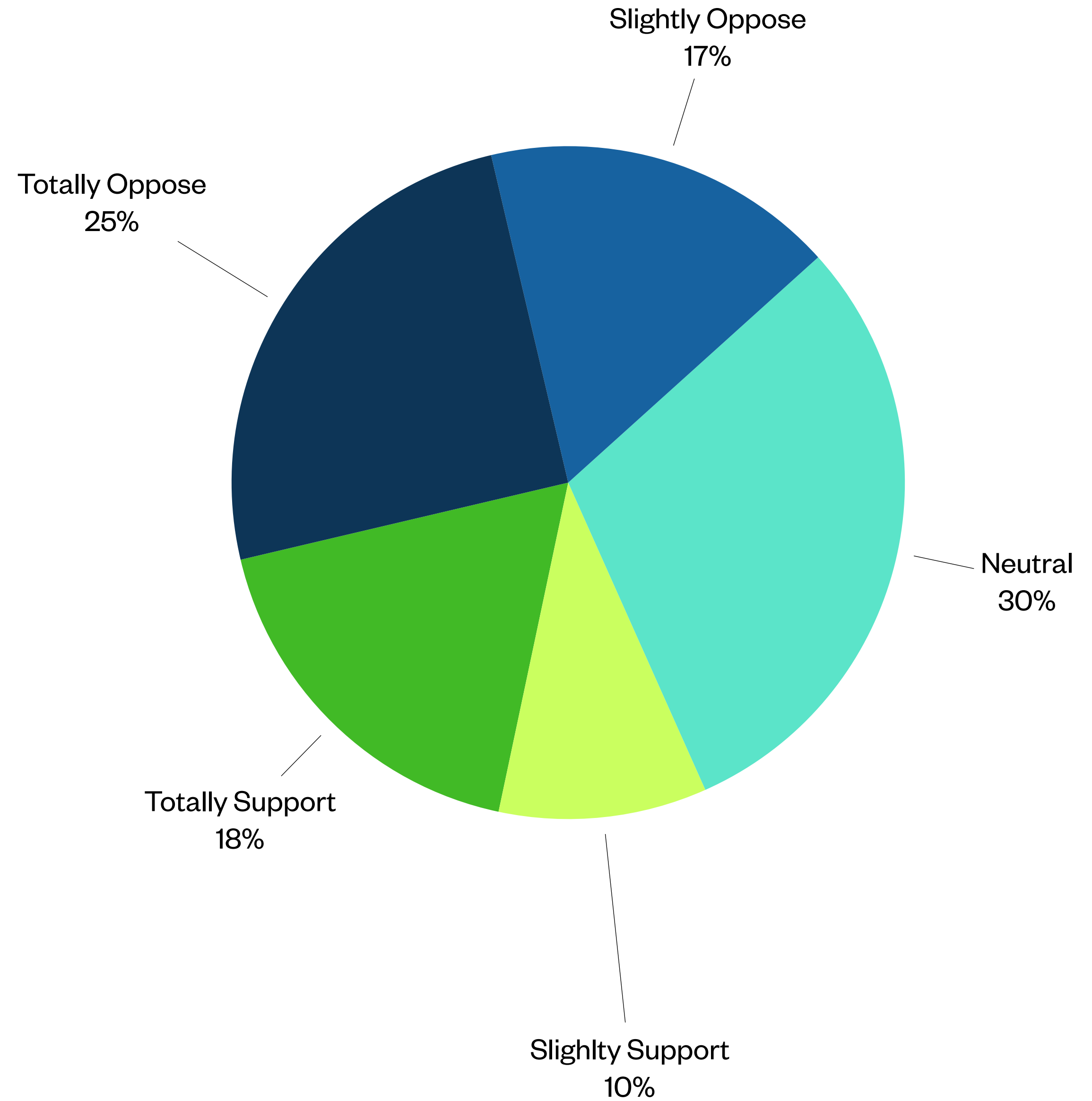


Additional Police

Additional Police

Four Additional Police Officers

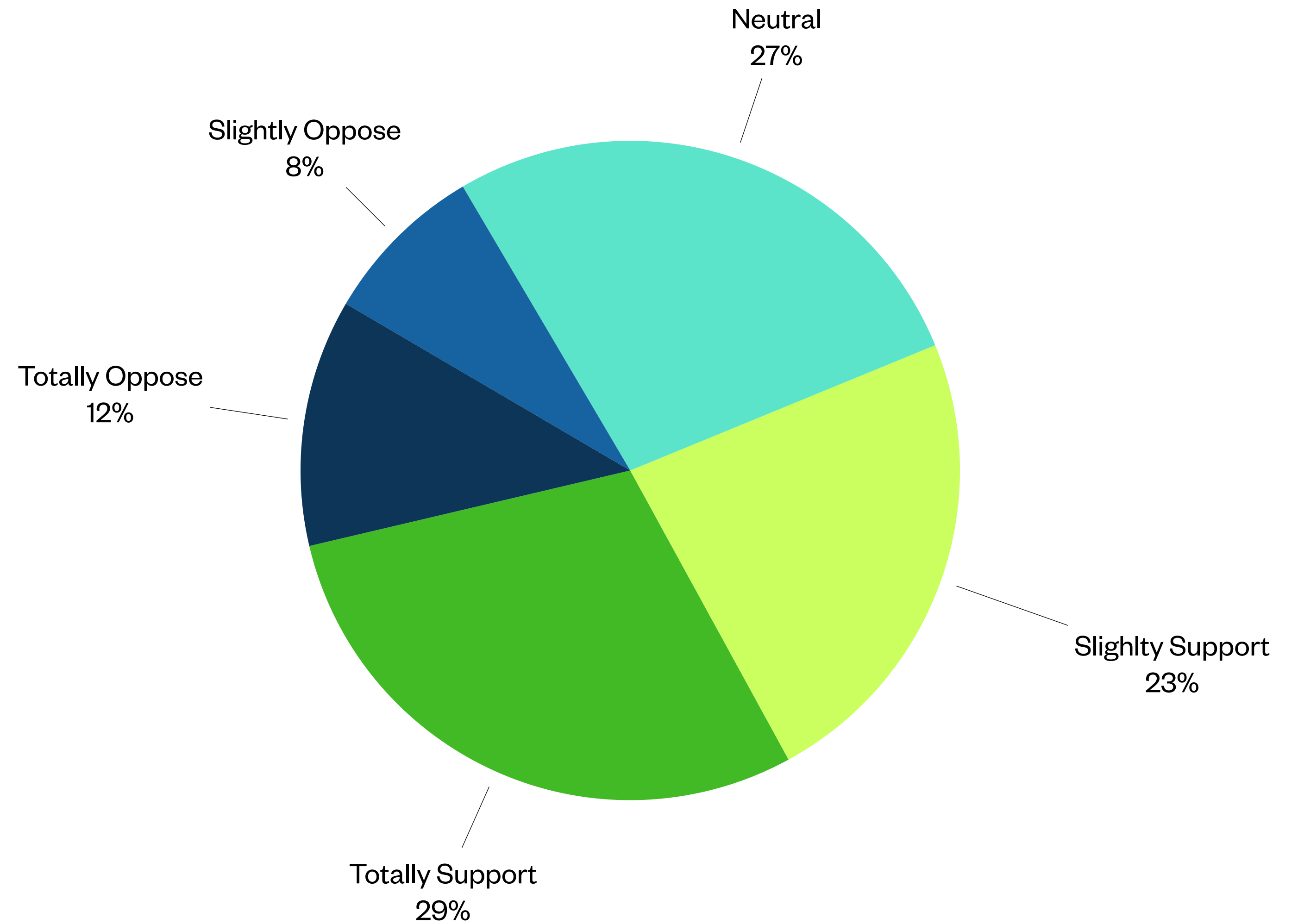
- **Oppose: 42%**
- Neutral: 30%
- Support: 28%



Additional Police

Two Additional Police Officers

- Oppose: 20%
- Neutral: 27%
- **Support: 52%**



Additional Police

Comments*

“Do we have the amount of violent crime and car crashes and thefts to justify needing more police and not less?”

“I would agree with funding for 8 police officers which can be revisited in future years.”

“Four more police officers would provide a higher level of service to the community. The service provider should continue to be the RCMP.”

“I think adding in non-officer positions (i.e. Youth worker, social worker) to help address root causes of crime may be more helpful.”

“Maybe hire 2 new people to deal with mental health crisis as these programs keep getting cut.”

“Existing RCMP are doing an excellent job.”

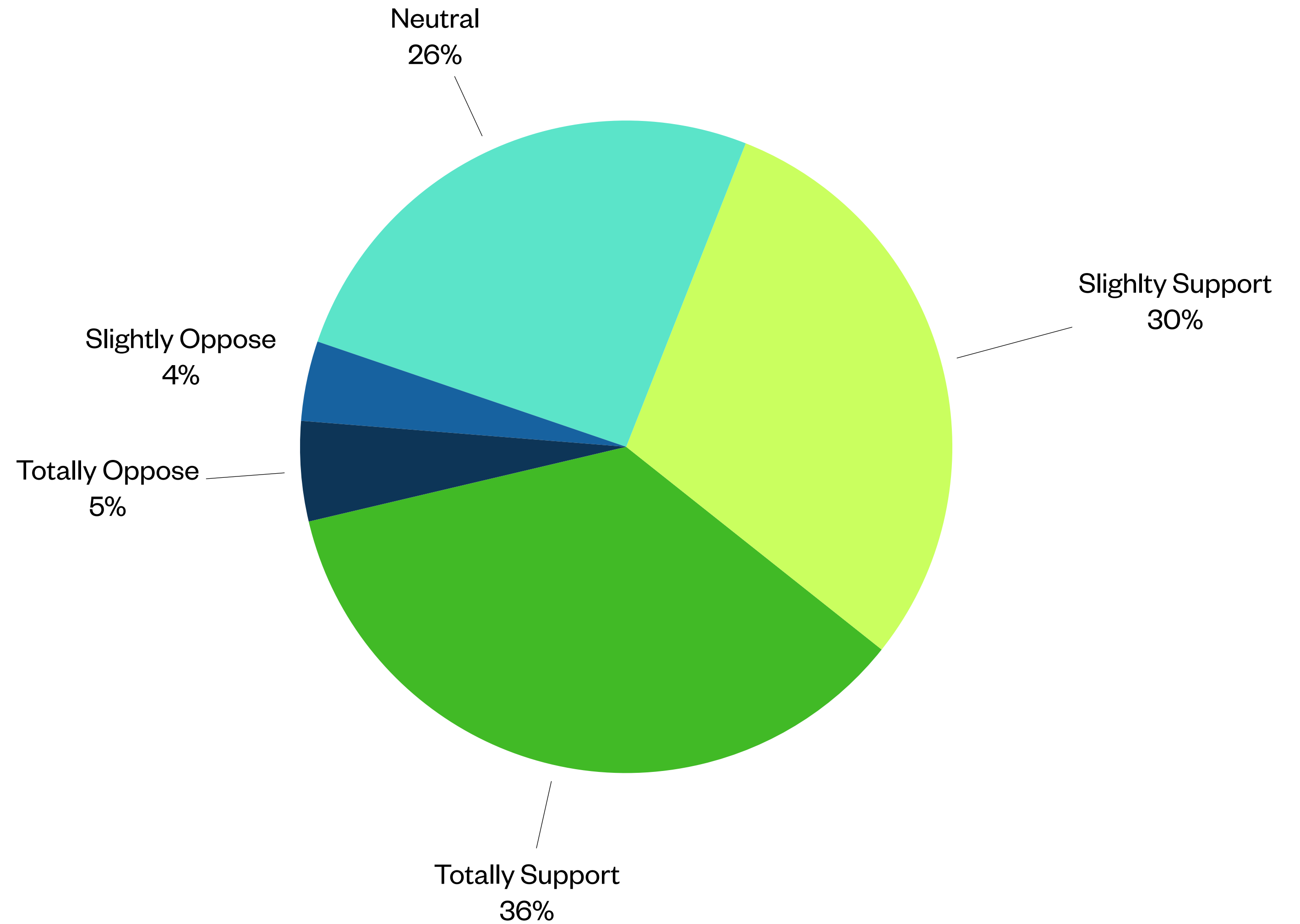
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Environmental Initiatives

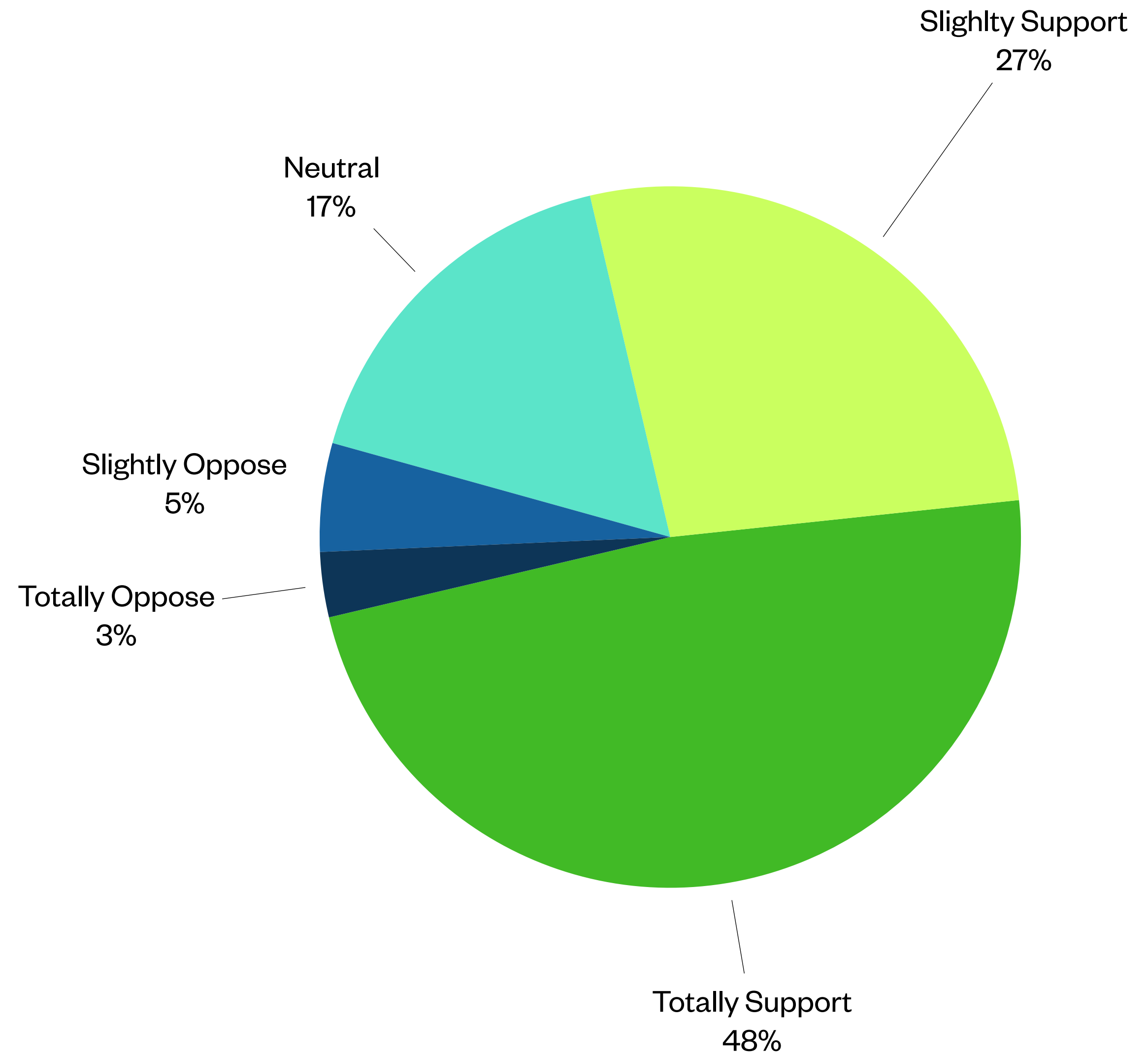
Community Energy Plan Implementation

- Oppose: 9%
- Neutral: 26%
- **Support: 63%**



Environmental Land Protection

- Oppose: 8%
- Neutral: 17%
- **Support: 75%**



Environmental Initiatives

Comments*

“Of course, this would be a good idea. Further information would have to be supplied in order to form a real opinion.”

“educate & encourage -but taxes high enough.”

“Do what we can to encourage green initiatives”

“Difficult to express support without knowing the economics.”

“It is important for the municipal level of government to be doing its share.”

“Yes with associated initiatives to make it more accessible to residents.”

“Yes!!!! This is also very important! We need to reduce our footprint as much as possible.”

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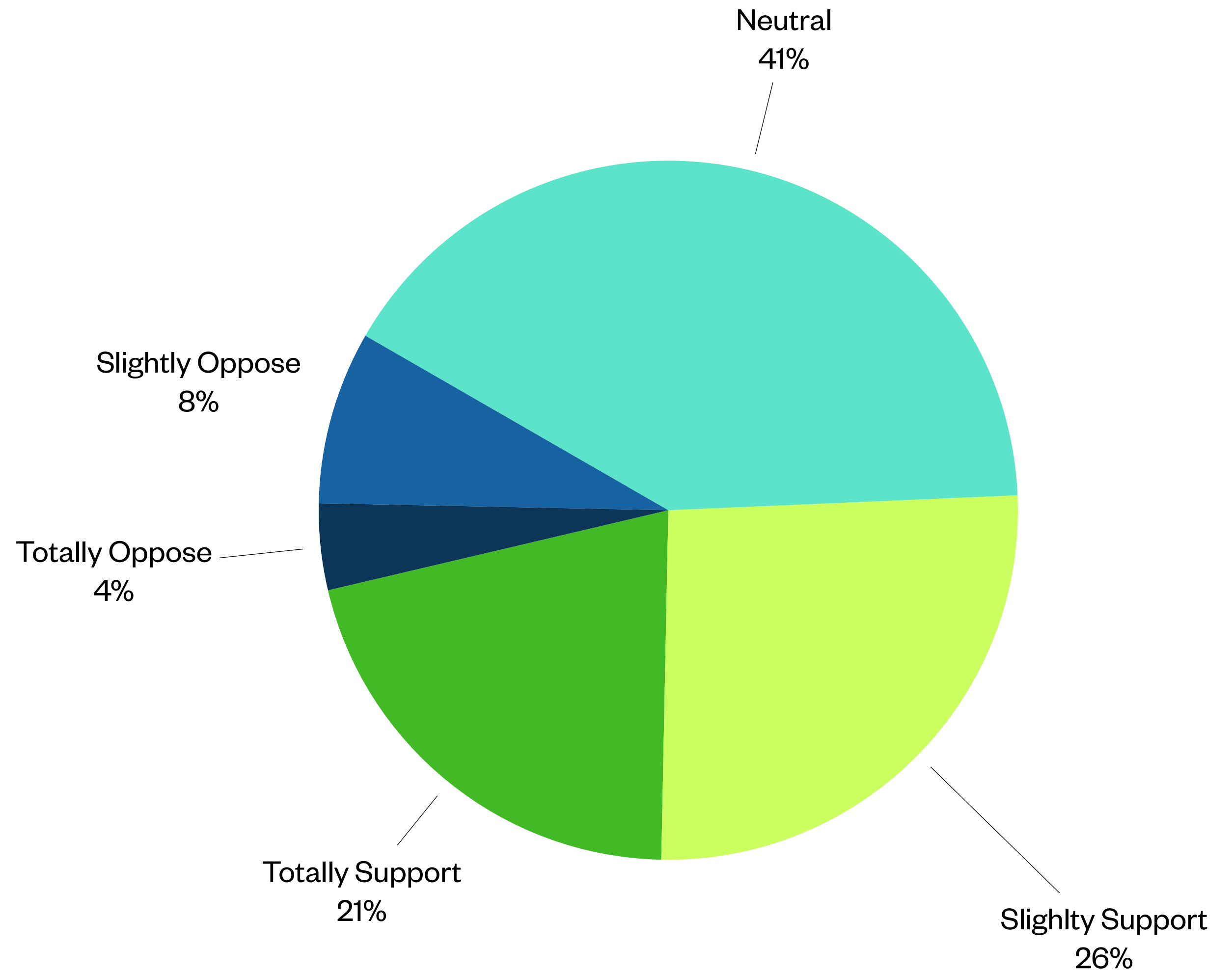


Transit

Transit

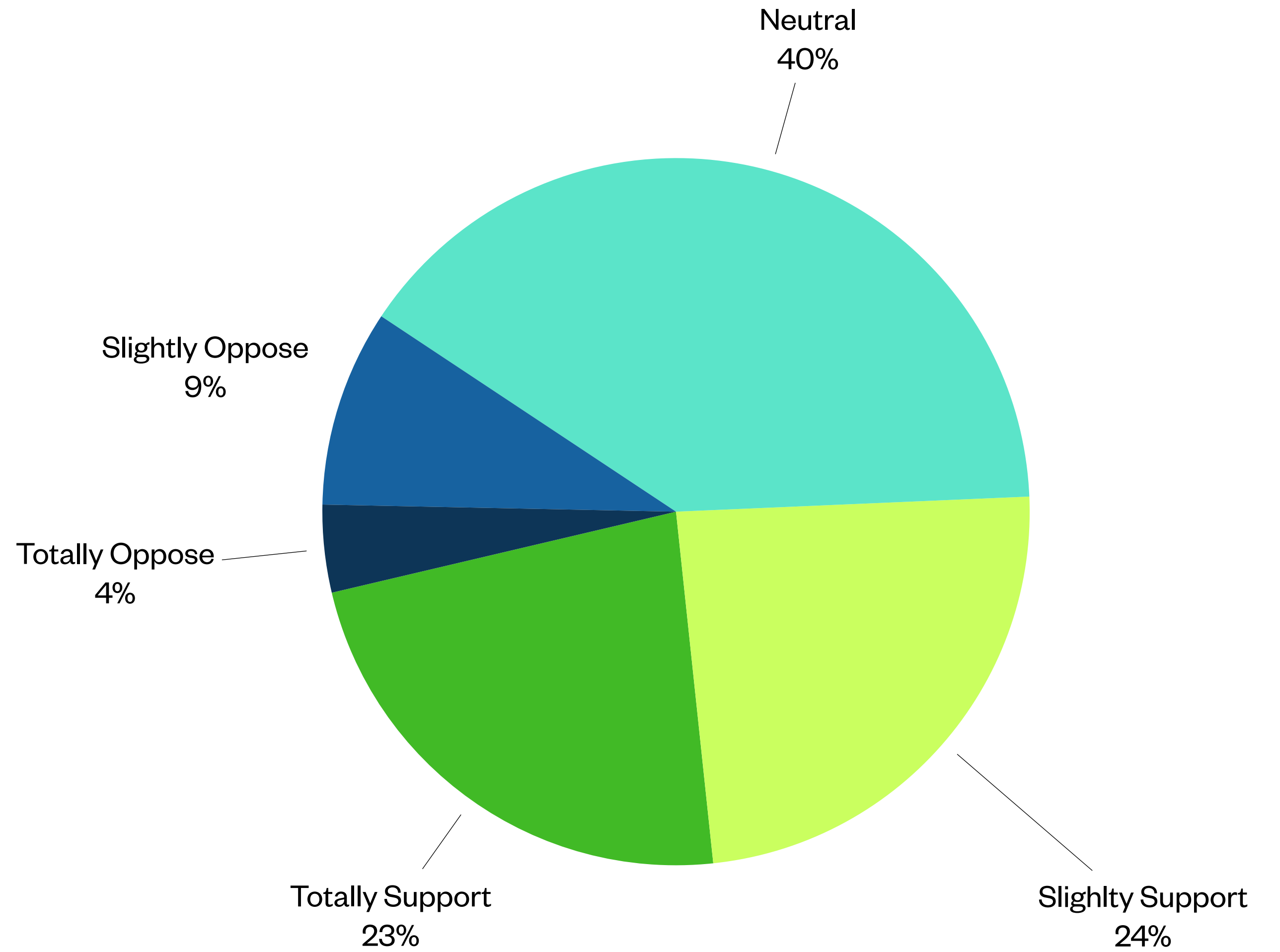
Evening Transit

- Oppose: 12%
- Neutral: 41%
- **Support: 47%**



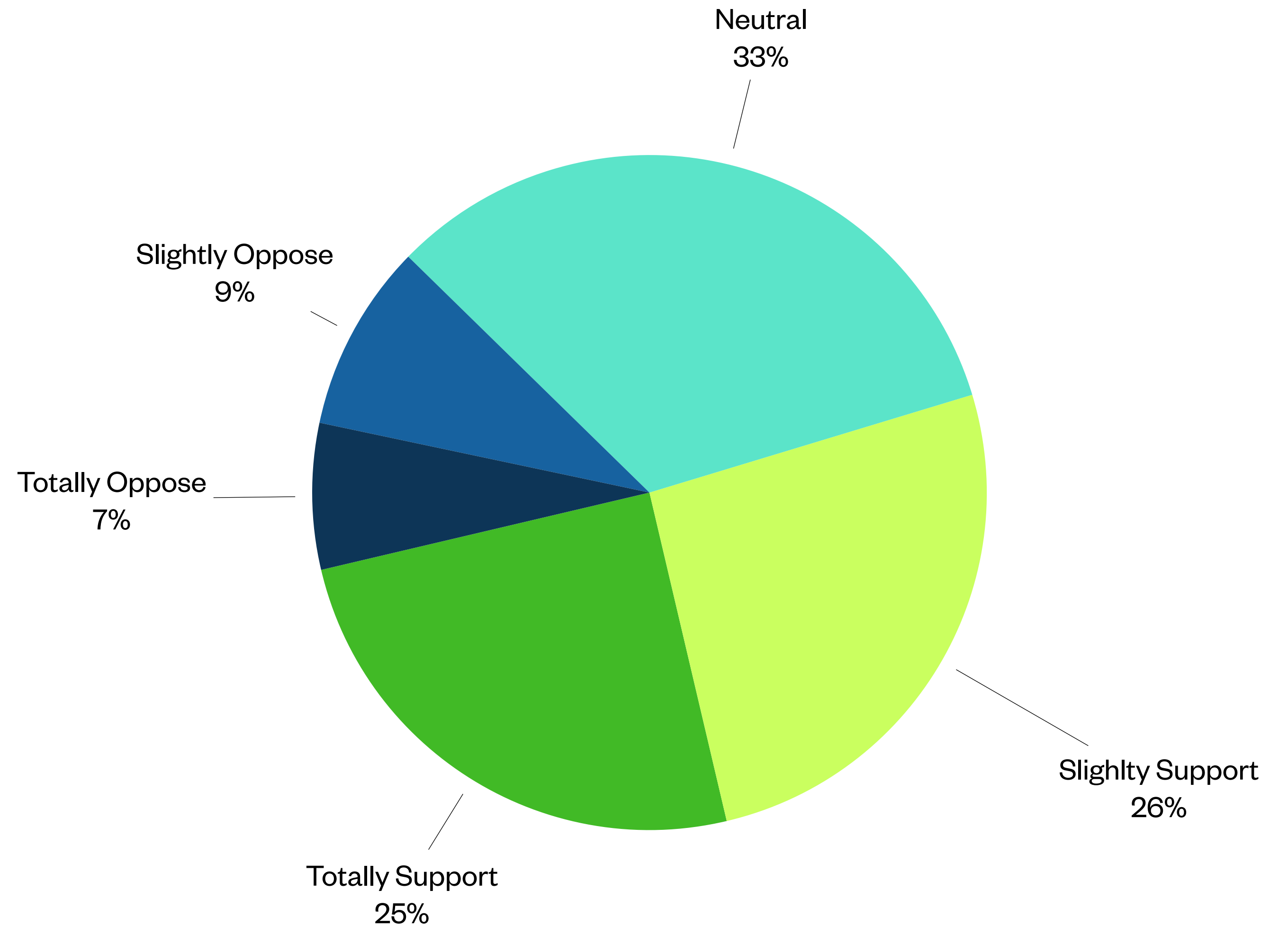
Mid Morning and Afternoon Transit

- Oppose: 13%
- Neutral: 40%
- **Support: 47%**



Unserviced Area Transit

- Oppose: 16%
- Neutral: 33%
- **Support: 51%**



Transit - Evening Transit

Comments*

“I think if times were increased to make the service more reliable it would be used more.”

“i believe this could be helpful to people who work the evening shift. On weekends buses to help people get home safely from bars as we see the rise in impaired drivers.”

“Is it necessary? Will it be used? Conduct survey if haven't done so yet.”

“Need data to know if this is viable.”

“Absolutely necessary. There is currently no safe way to work in charlottetown and come home in the evening past 6pm.”

“Only if ridership would support.”

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Transit - Mid Morning and Afternoon Transit

Comments*

“If needed, then why not.”

“The mid morning is needed. The busses stop to early in the morning. There is only a 3 hour gap in the afternoon but you could add one. I know It's been frustrating waiting in the afternoon.”

“Everything must be thoroughly looked at to see if potential use is appropriate and what will be a reasonable long term expansion plan for all components of this”

“This would be a nice ‘to do’ if considered feasible”

“Need data to know if this is viable.”

“Unless the ridership increases to a point which justifies the runs, it would only add costs and more pollution.”

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Transit - Unserviced Area Transit

Comments*

“If needed then yes, don’t know the stats of who uses the buses... but I never see them on the roads.”

“In order for the Transit system to be effective it needs to service all of Stratford, and have a schedule that supports shift workers.”

“Increasing transit is only beneficial if the schedule is convenient for users to forego using their car. It would impact future populations but not current residents who only relocate within their current capabilities.”

“You should survey people who use the busses. I haven’t used them so I don’t know the scheduling or their needs of the service.”

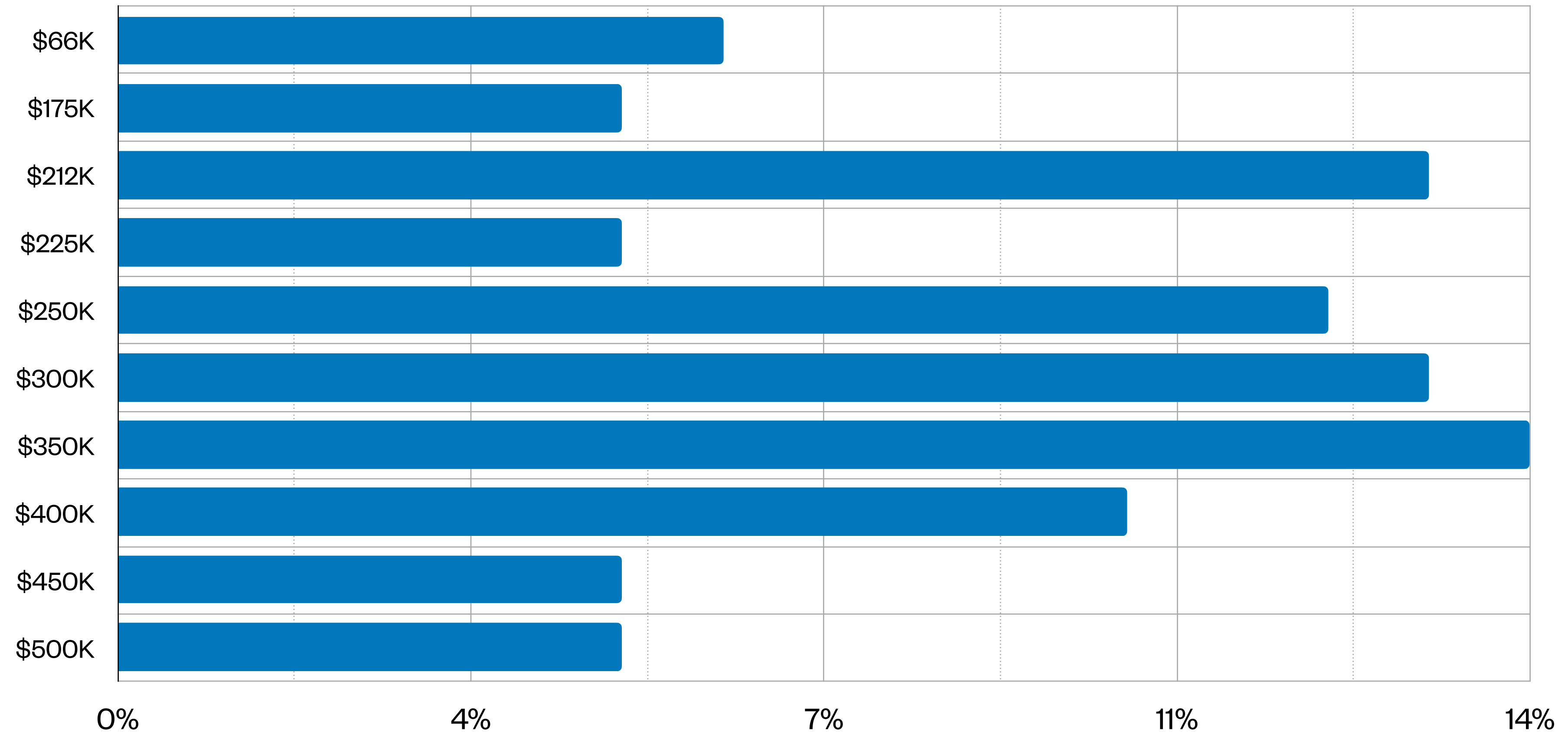
“Only where active ridership has sufficient numbers to warrant it. This should be monitored on an ongoing basis as the town grows.”

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Property Value

Property Value*



* Participants were instructed that if they don't know their property value, then they should use the average Town property values, which are: Home Owner: \$212,000 Renter: \$66,000. Not included: \$103K, \$139K, \$600K, \$700K, \$800K, \$900K, \$1M, \$1,205M, \$1.5M (< 3%)

Property Taxes

Comments*

“Canadians in general already feel over-taxed. Many new Stratford residents already are over-stretched or cash poor. A well managed municipality does not need to rely on tax increases. It so needs to live within its means.”

“With all the growth in Stratford I can’t see why we would need a tax increase. Revenues should be up. Review our taxes-huge properties not paying their fair share.”

“I started to complete this survey but there is no financial information that I could find to go along with these plans. I would not complete the survey without that information.”

“It is very important for our community to continue in investing for our residents. A community who has a solid infrastructure plan is better prepared et equipped in receiving new residents, businesses as well as keeping them here from school years to retirement.”

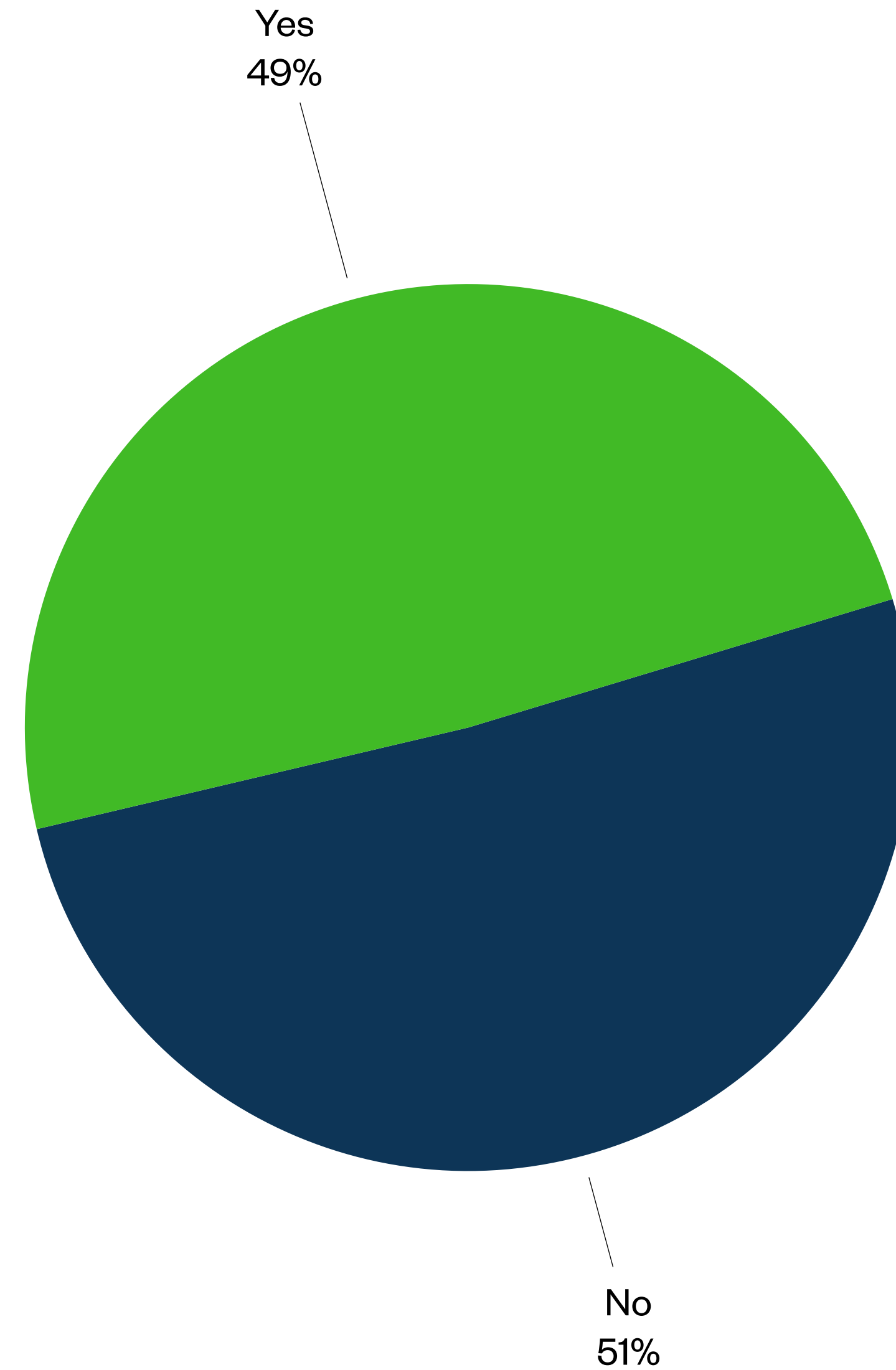
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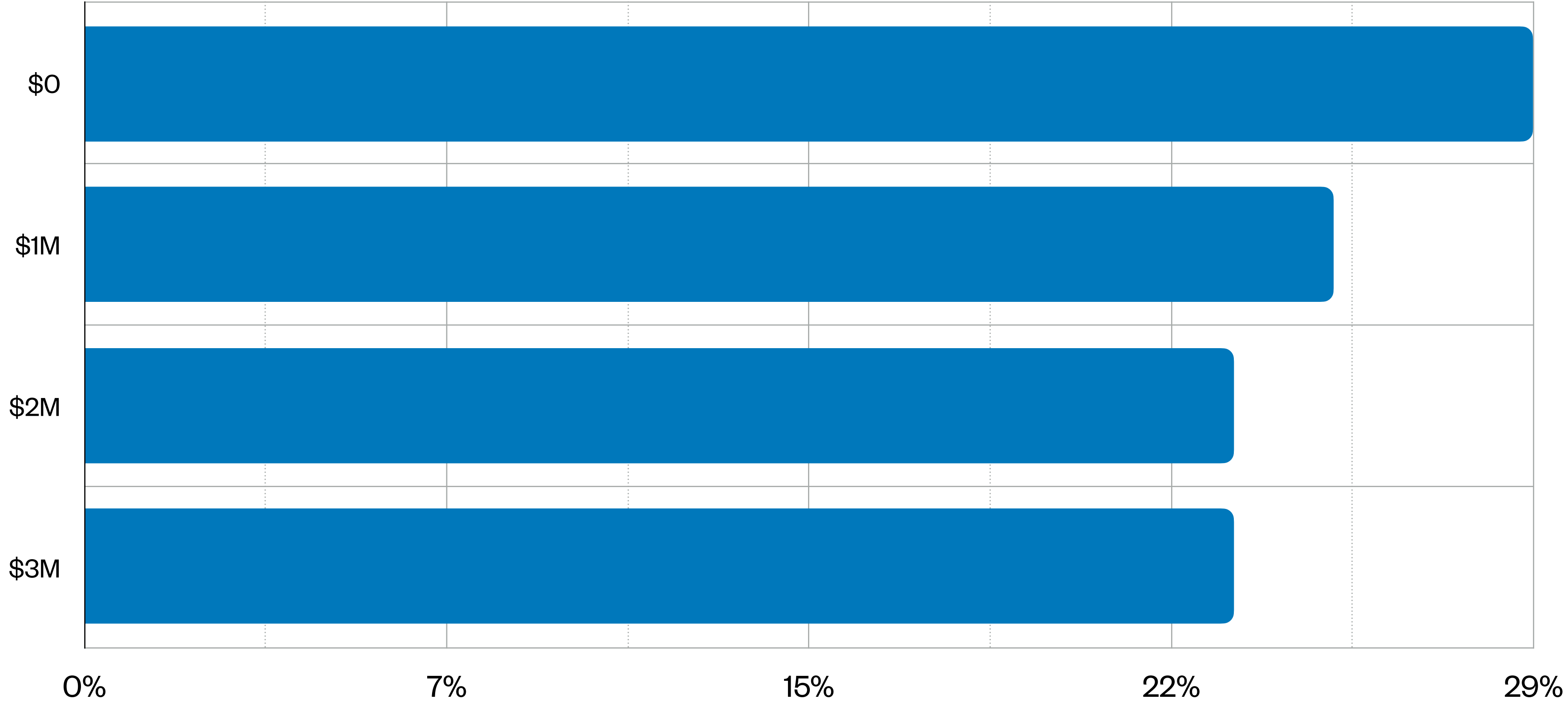
Fundraising Goal

Fundraising Support

Would you support a fundraising campaign to offset the costs of long-term budget plan initiatives?



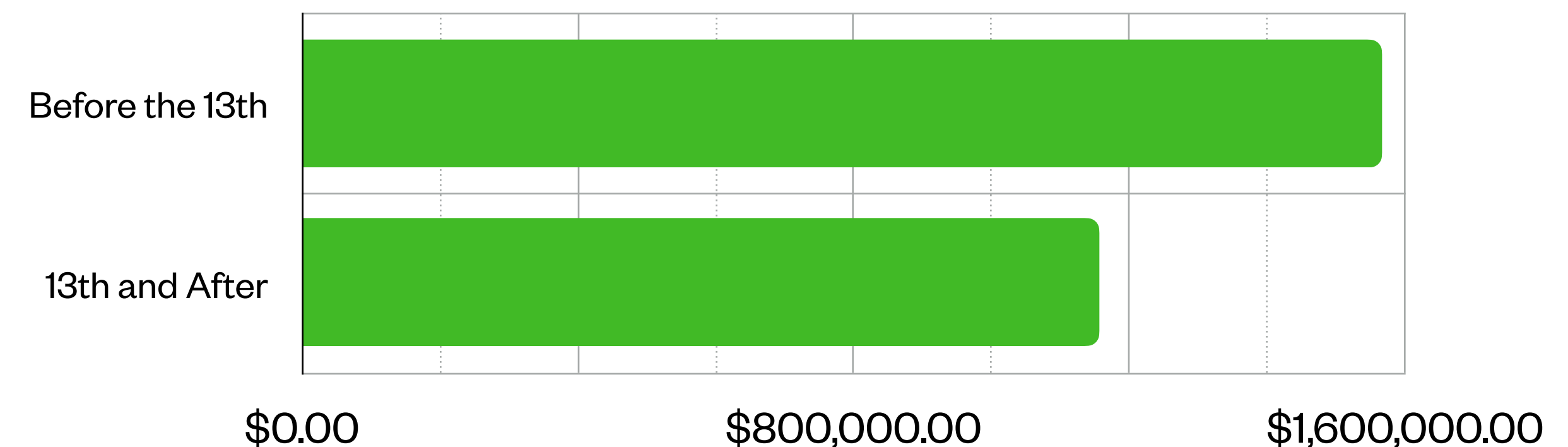
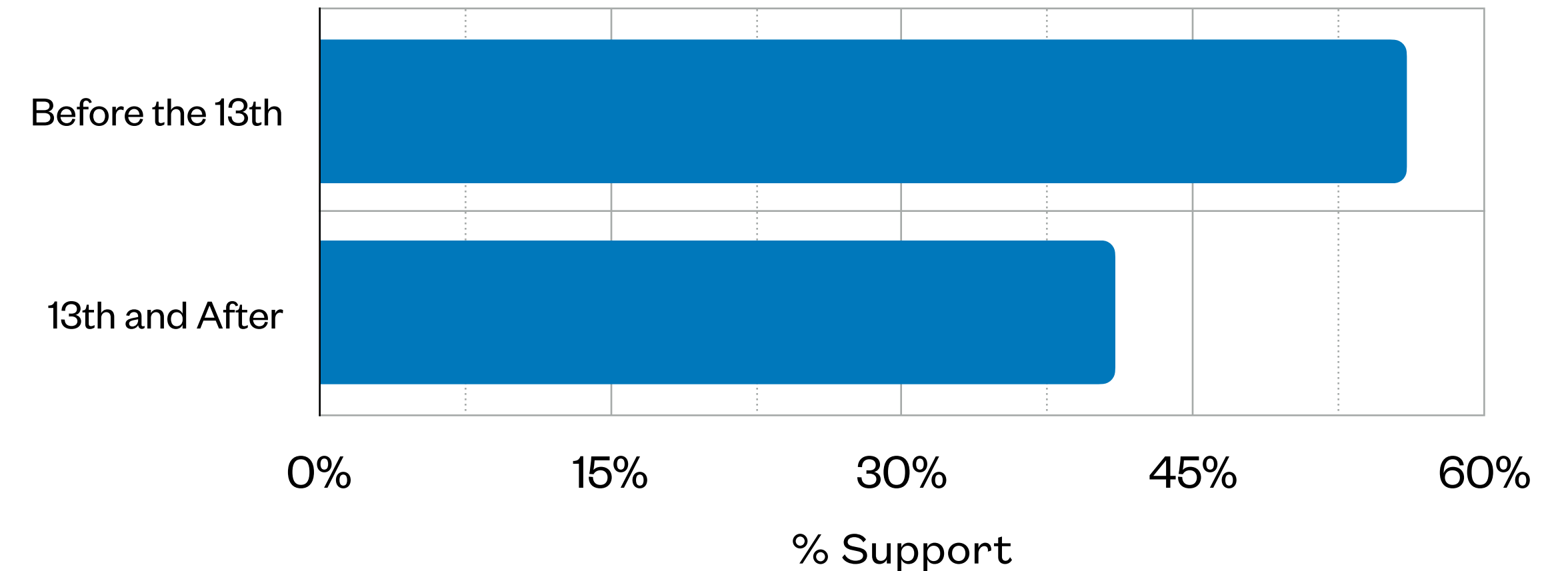
Fundraising Goal



Fundraising Support and Fundraising Goal

Prior to January 13th, the platform enabled participants to vote in opposition to Fundraising, while still identifying a Fundraising Goal, which would in turn lower their projected taxes. On January 13th, the tool was reconfigured so that those who voted against Fundraising would not have their taxes impacted. These charts showcases differences in voting patterns and results prior to and following this change.

- No significant differences were seen between initiative voting patterns prior to and following January 13th
- A lower proportion of Fundraising Support was seen following the 13th
- The control group (those who voted after January 13th) showed **41% Support of Fundraising**, and an **average fundraising goal of \$1,16M**



Fundraising Goal

Comments*

“I have no idea how much would be needed so this question is impossible to answer”

“A plan should be supported through property taxes. People pay for amenities according to ownership and income from property.”

“Would prefer to know where taxes are being spent first and the costs of these initiatives before weighing in”

“The survey might be more helpful if it included links to budgets identifying where all of the money is currently being spent, then residents could weigh in on how they feel those same resources could be more effectively allocated. Most Stratford residents are currently paying a significant amount of tax and this survey is talking about increasing that burden of tax, this conversation should not be about increases - it should be about priorities.”

“Not sure what fund-raising would look like. It's hard to commit to that plan without knowing what it involves. I do support lower taxes in overall budget planning. Taxes in Stratford are way too high.”

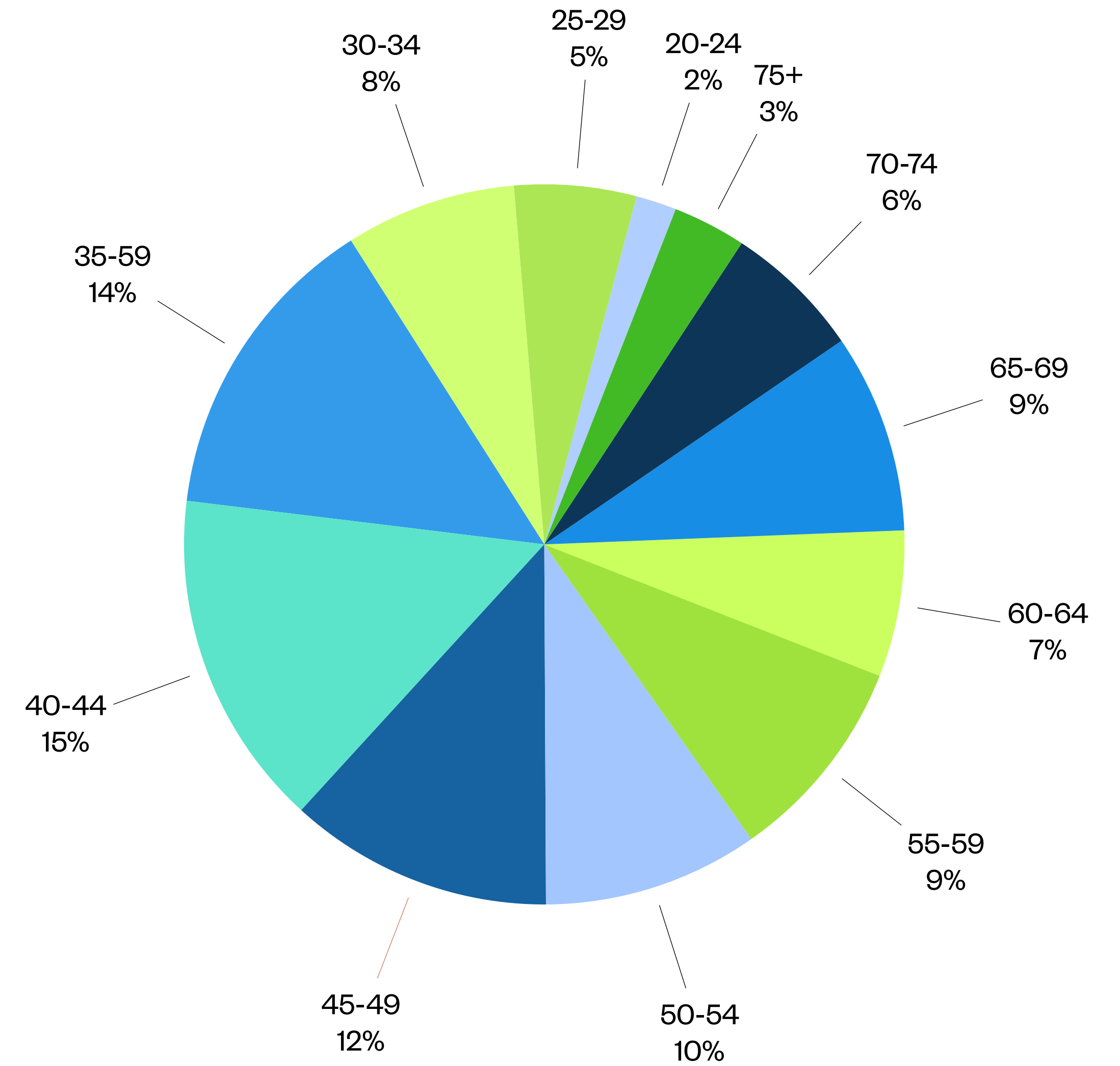
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Demographic Information

Demographic Information

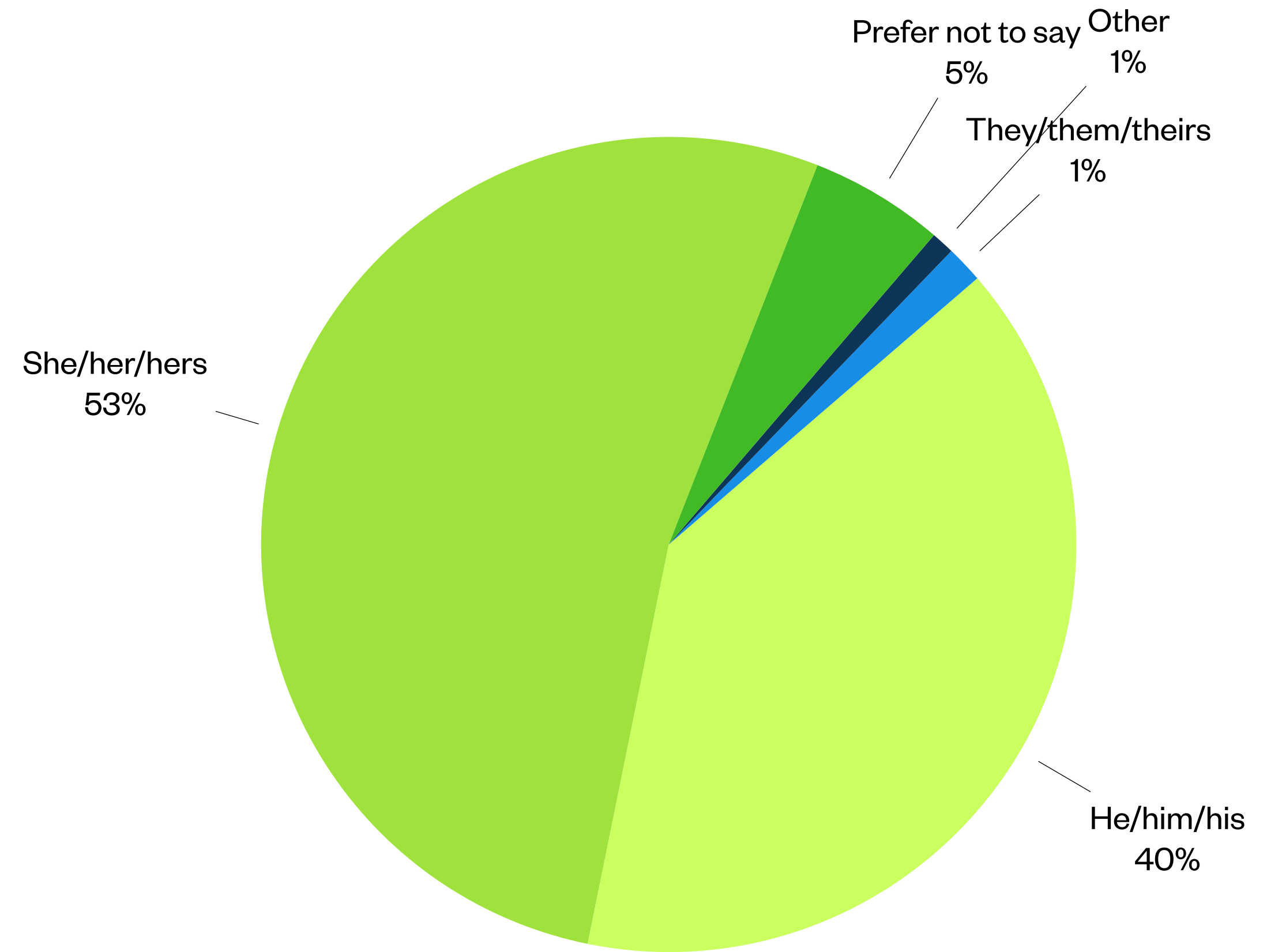
Age



* Not included: 16-19 (< 1%)

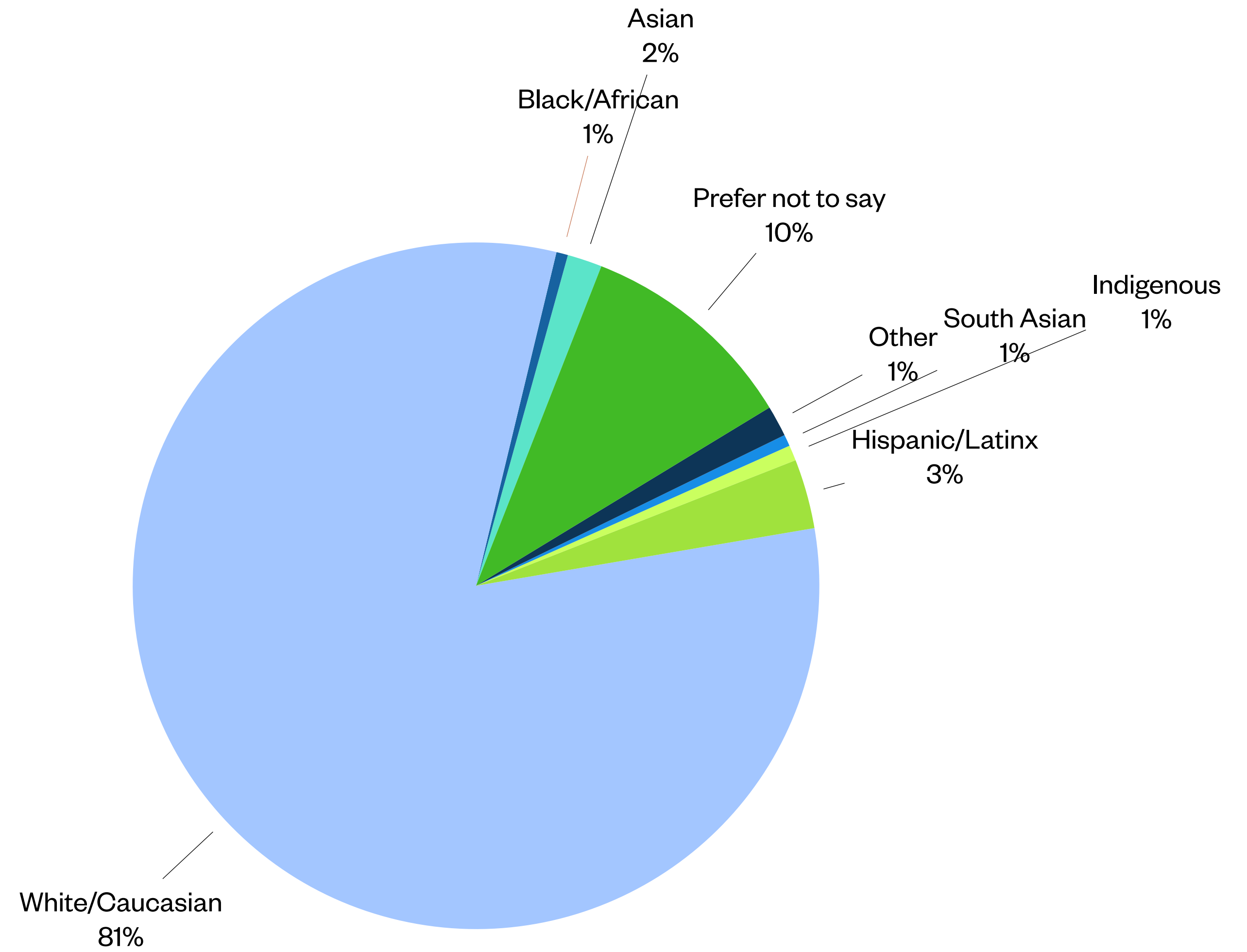
Demographic Information

Gender



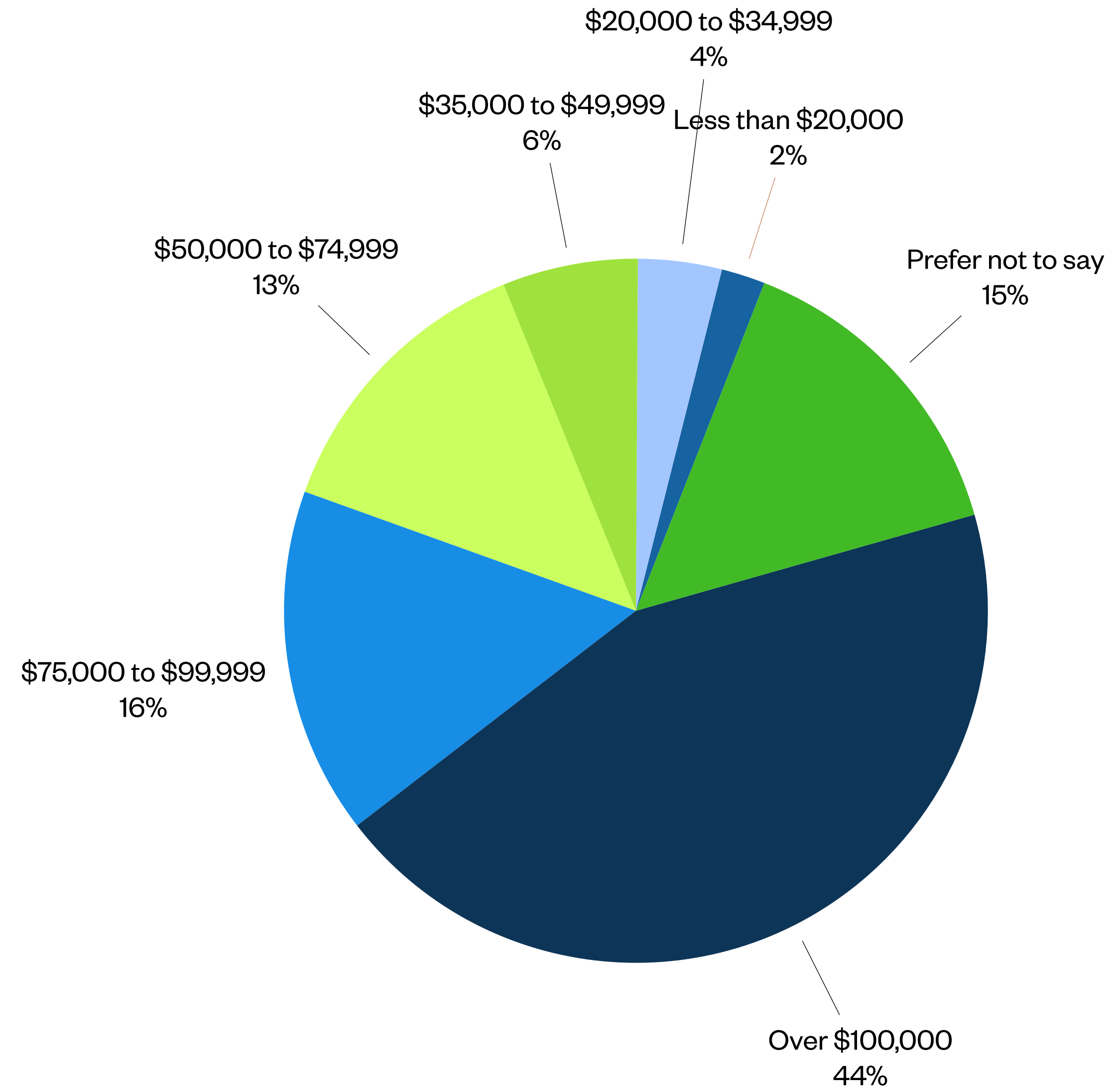
Demographic Information

Race/Ethnicity



Demographic Information

Household income



ETHELO

Town of *Stratford*



Thank you!
