

DNA Retail Survey Results



Summary

The Downtown Neighborhood Association retail survey shows strong support for a more balanced and resident-oriented Washington Avenue neighborhood balanced by retail, restaurants, services, and compatible entertainment.

Respondents value Downtown's walkability and urban lifestyle but identified major gaps in grocery access, everyday retail, and neighborhood services.

Residents also raised concerns about late-night disorder, noise, safety, cleanliness, and vacant storefronts, while calling for stronger law enforcement and a higher-quality business mix.

Overall, respondents envision Washington Avenue as a vibrant mixed-use corridor that better supports residential living and everyday needs.

Methodology

- The purpose of the survey was to better understand the views of downtown residents, businesses, and property owners and to guide future advocacy and policy activities of DNA and other downtown groups.
- The survey was administered as an online questionnaire using Survey Monkey. The questionnaire was reviewed by a range of downtown stakeholders prior to distribution. The survey was not intended to be a random sample, but rather to solicit the views of people most engaged in downtown affairs.
- Survey responses were sought from downtown residents, businesses, and property owners.
- Responses were solicited by email and social media. Emails were sent directly to the DNA mailing list (approximately 660 DNA members and a number of other downtown stakeholders).
- Links to the survey were provided in regular DNA newsletters and Facebook posts (7,778 views, 4316 unique views) and announcements made at DNA membership and committee meetings. Outreach was also made with property managers, HOA's, and building/property owners.

Methodology (cont.)

- The survey was available for about a month.
- Respondents were required to provide name, address, and other information to assure that they were downtown residents, businesses, or property owners. No other demographic information was collected.
- The resulting responses came from a variety of owners, renters, businesses, and property owners. Some were DNA members, but others were represented as well.
- While it's not a random sample, the survey was widely distributed and responses came from a range of downtown interests - owners, renters, and businesses. The results reflect the views of people that are most likely to be engaged with the neighborhood and with DNA. The survey results provide legitimate data to guide DNA policy decisions and advocacy.

Purpose

The Downtown Neighborhood Association conducted a survey designed to gather information about how people are connected to downtown, and how they feel about conditions downtown and specifically in the Washington Avenue area. We also asked for reasons for choosing to live, work, or invest in downtown, and awareness of local businesses, and what kinds of businesses they would like to see downtown. The survey featured both multiple-choice and open-ended questions to help us better understand the perspectives and motivations of everyone involved in the downtown community. The results will help guide future activities and advocacy in our neighborhood.

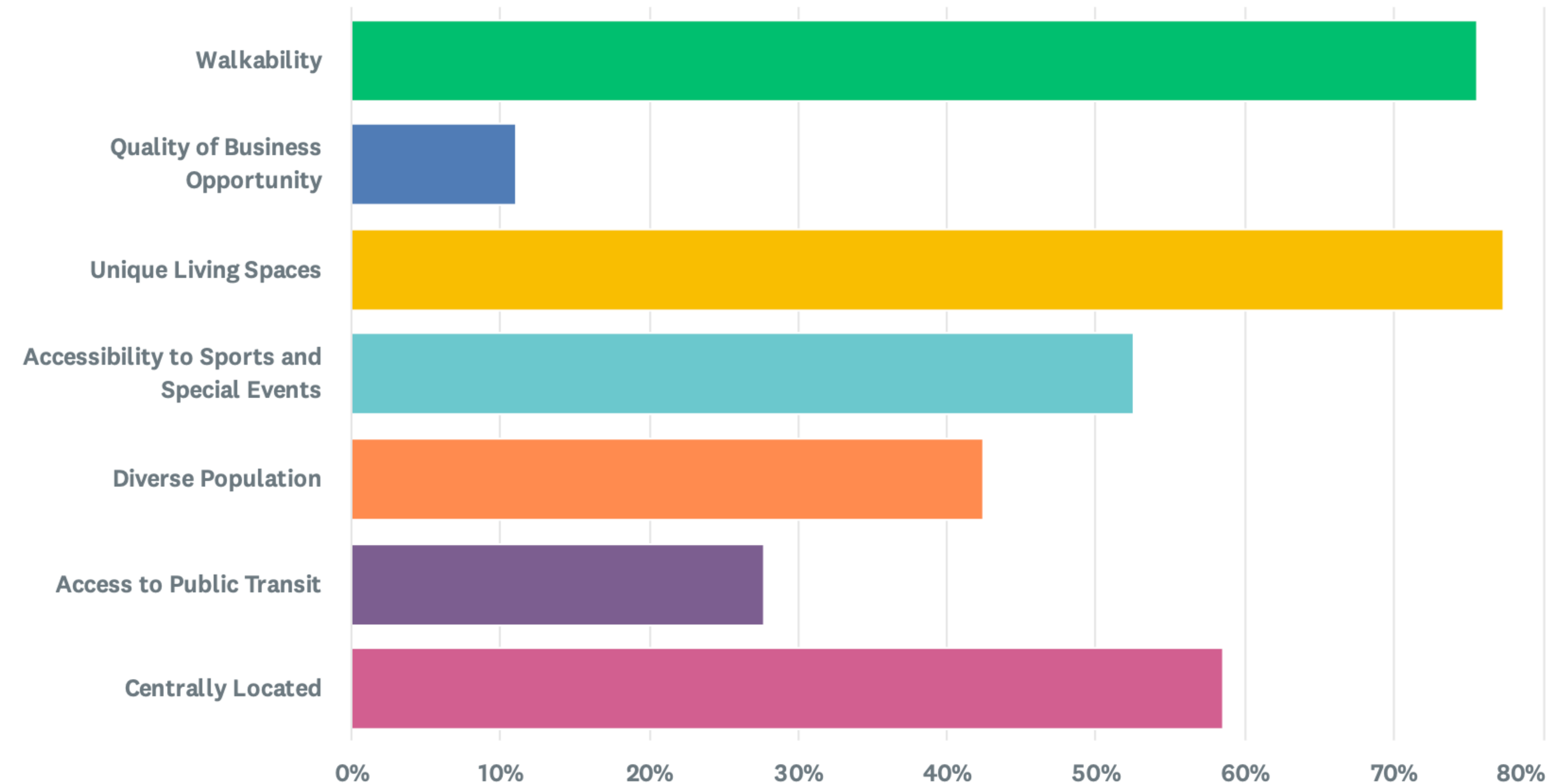
Key Observations

- Walkability and unique living spaces were the primary reason for living downtown.
- The current business mix along Washington Avenue needs improvement.
- Dining and events were the primary reason for visiting downtown businesses.
- 80% of respondents felt safe walking downtown during the day/early evening. The response was more mixed with more people feeling less safe during the late evening/early morning.
- Respondents would like to see more businesses and visible law enforcement downtown.
- The majority of respondents would like to see businesses, sidewalk cafes, vendors, buskers, etc close between 11pm and 1am to maintain a safe environment with a high quality of life.
- 3am nightclubs and vape shops are viewed as businesses that detract from quality of life and downtown living.
- 80% of respondents thought it was important for the city to strictly enforce it's existing ordinances.
- 84% of respondents thought that cruising detracted from the quality of life downtown.
- 90% of respondents thought it was necessary for a teen curfew to be implemented and enforced.
- 65% of respondents thought that Washington Avenue should not be the regional destination for people wanting to party.

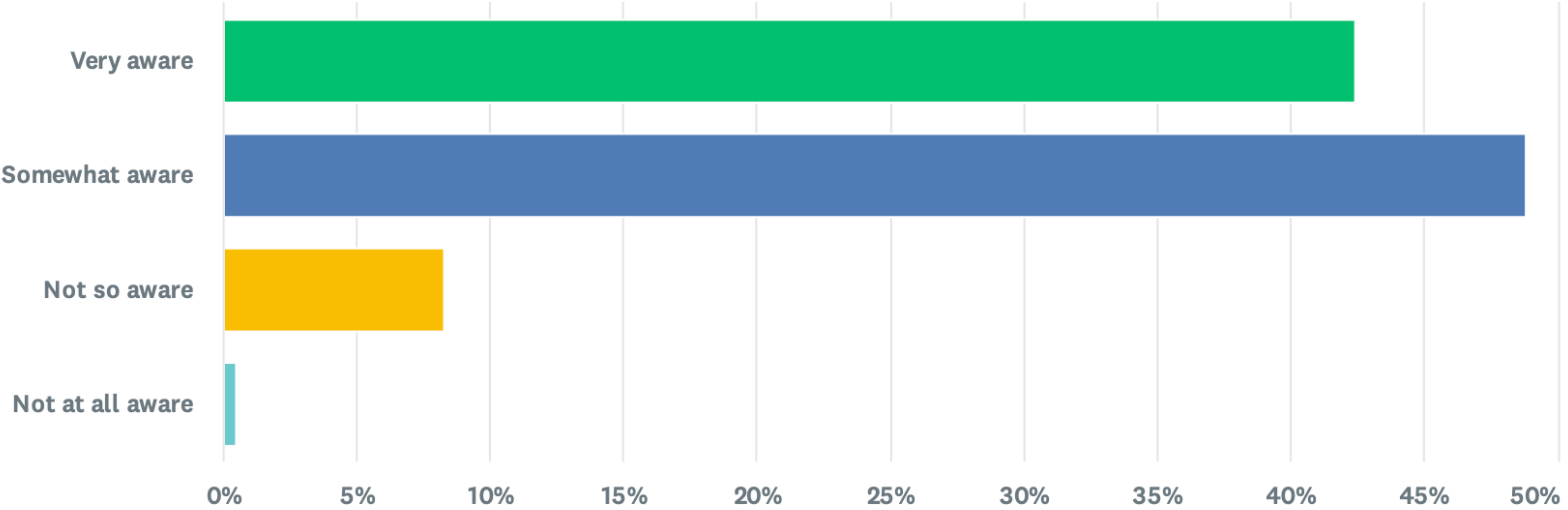
Who Responded

- 230 Total Responses
- 58% Condo Owners
- 29% Renters
- 7% Other
- 3% Business Owners
- 2% Commercial Property Owner

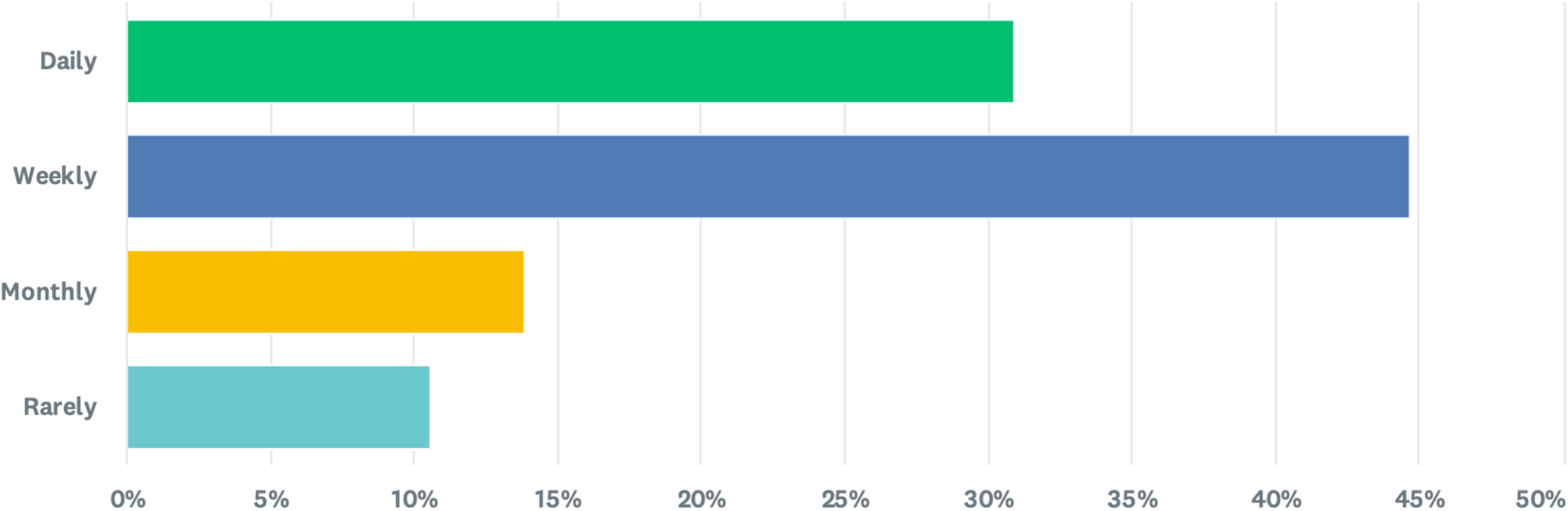
Why did you choose to live downtown, open a business, or invest downtown?



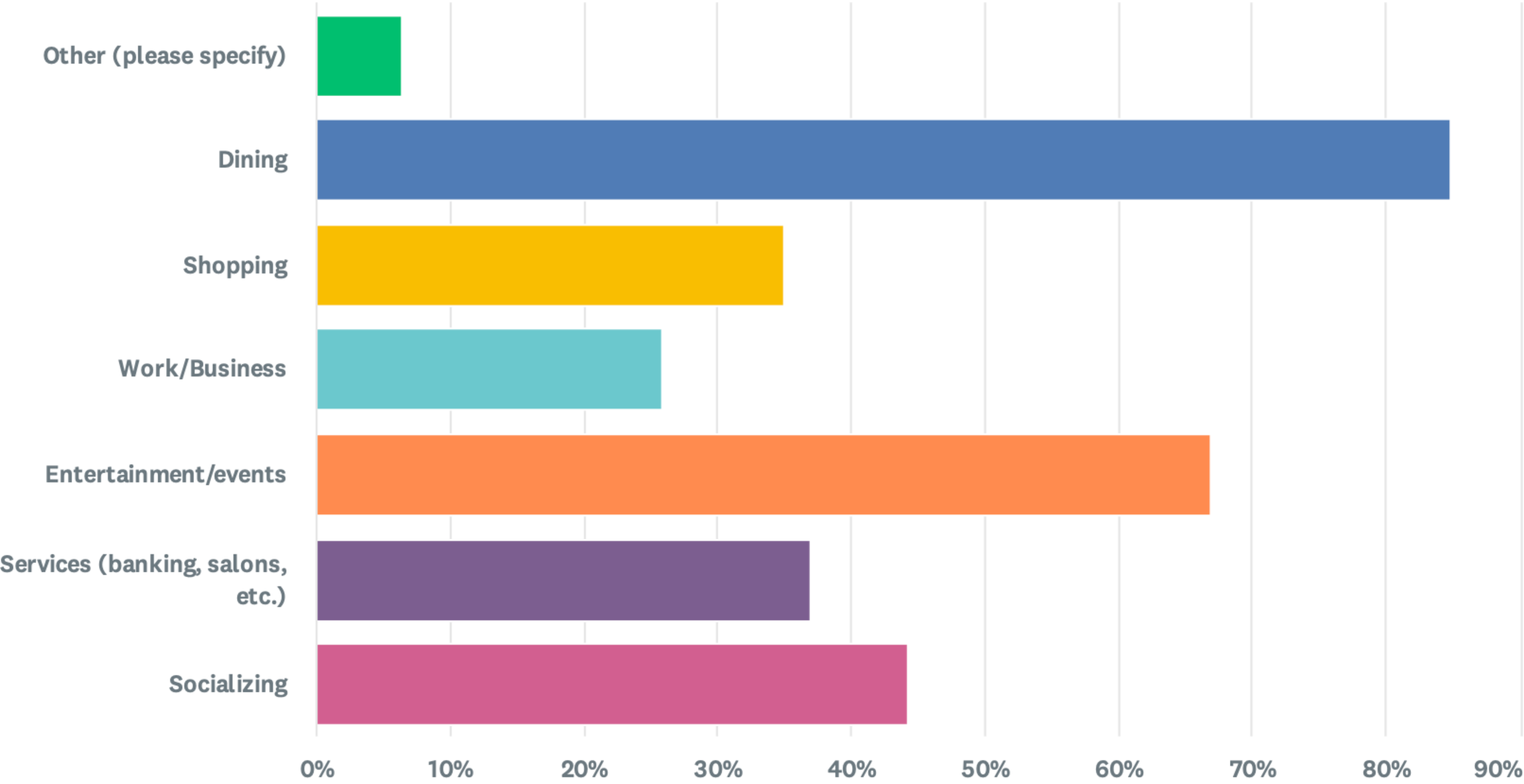
How well are you aware of what businesses are located downtown?



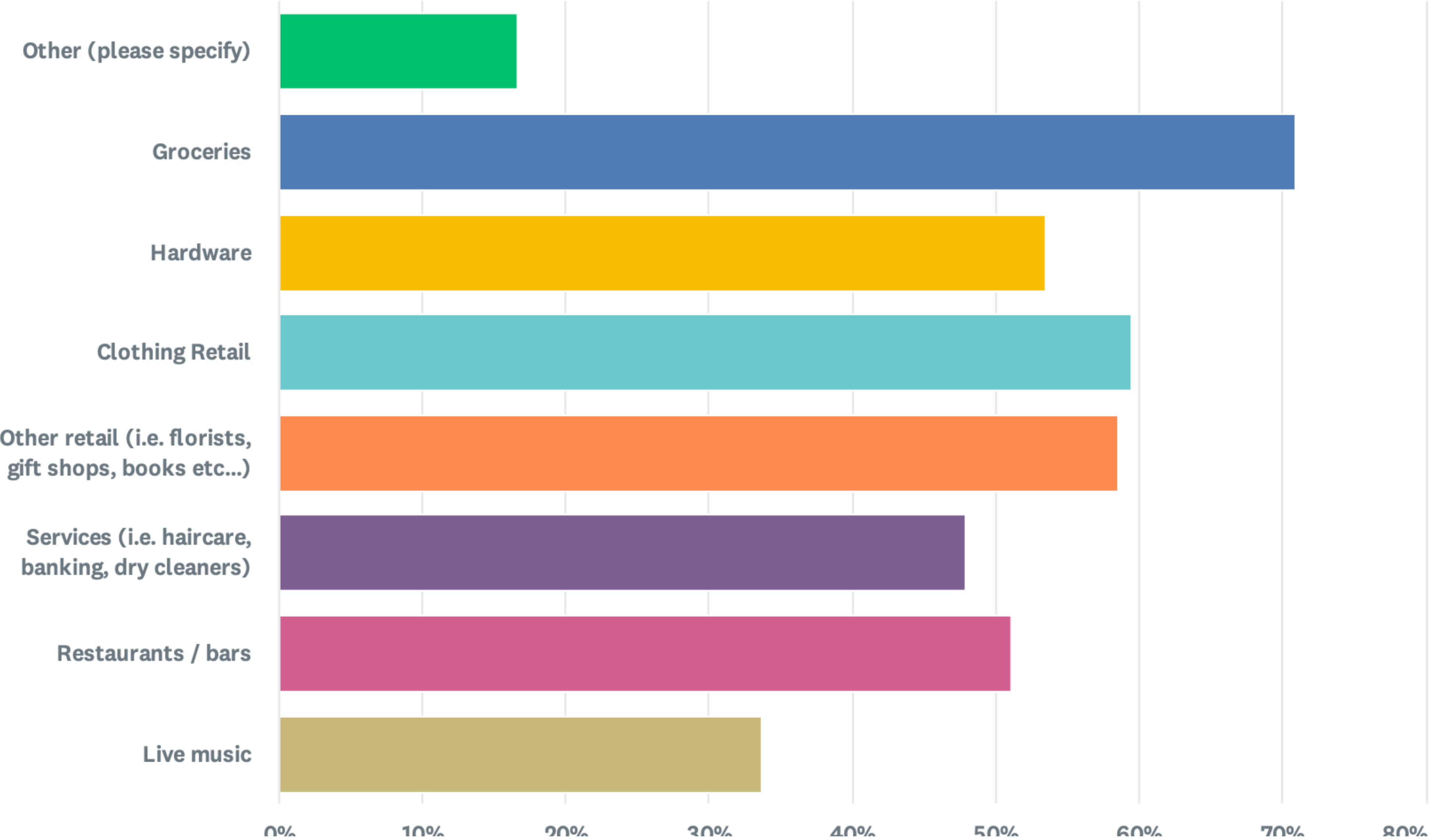
How often do you visit businesses downtown?



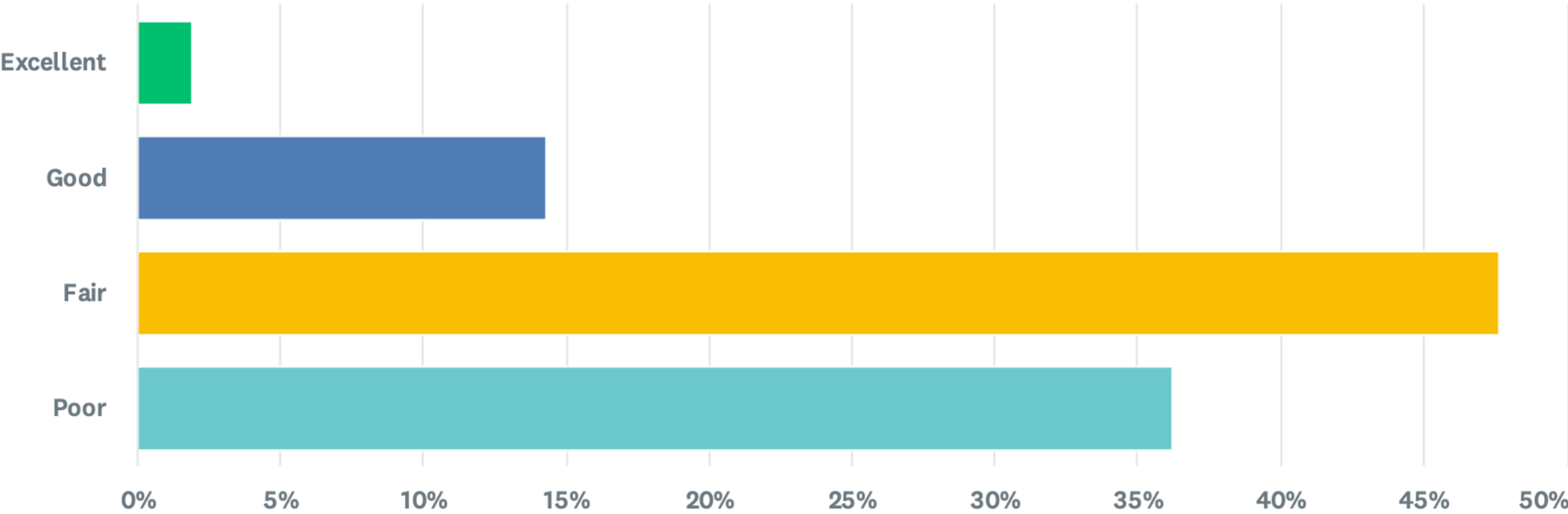
What are your primary reasons for visiting downtown businesses?



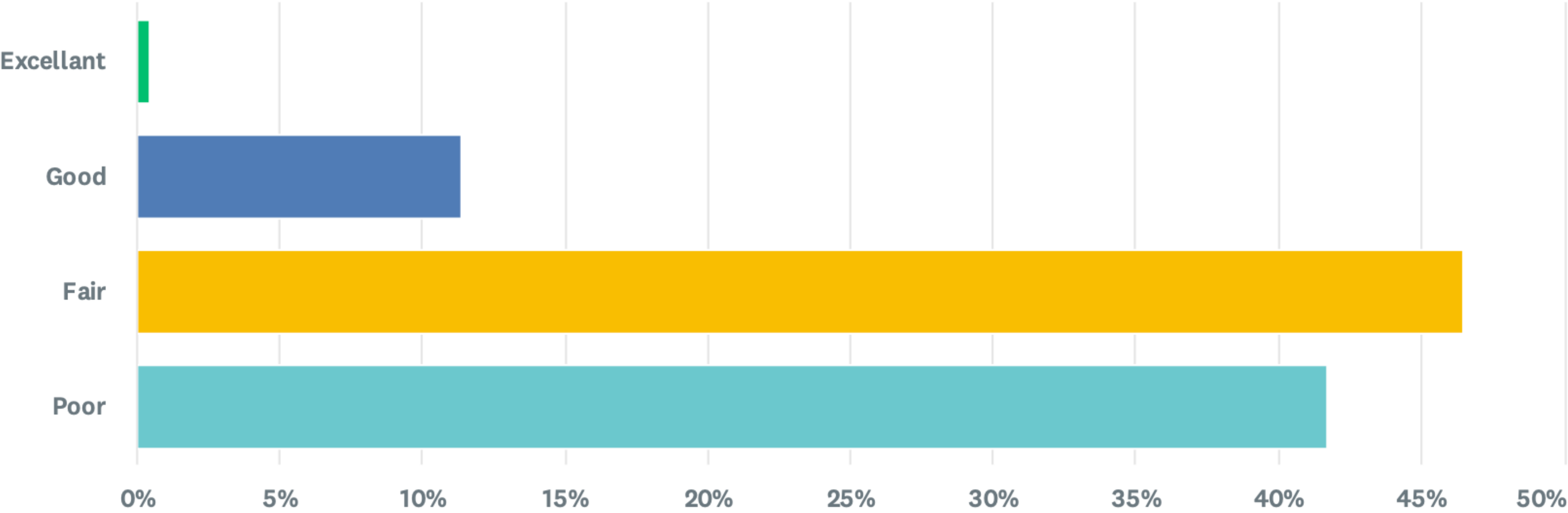
Which businesses or services do you currently leave the neighborhood to access that you wish were downtown?



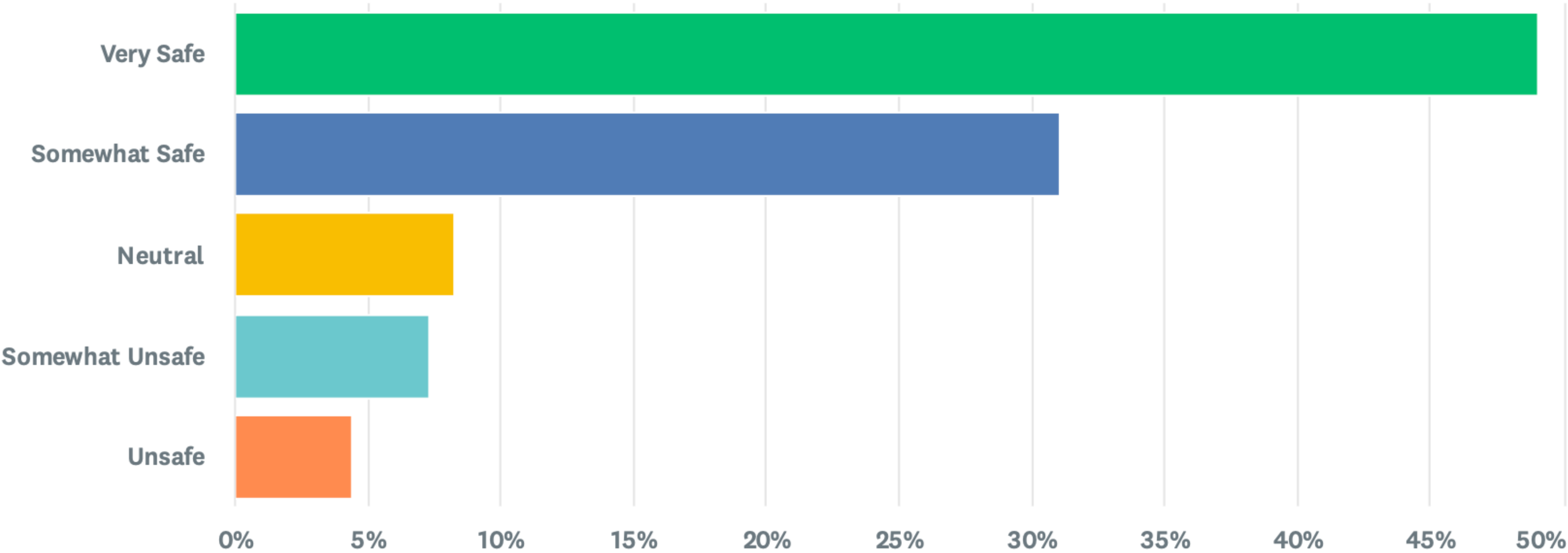
How would you rate the current mix of street-level businesses along the Washington Avenue Corridor



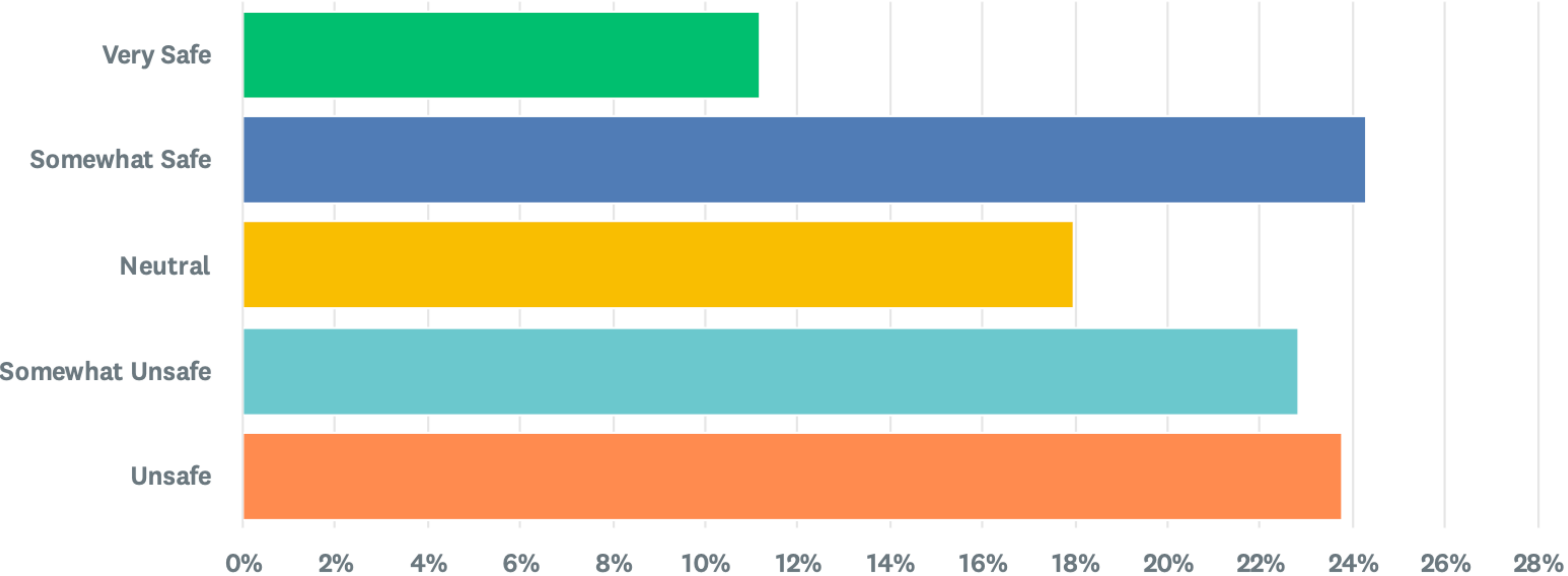
How would you rate the current Washington Avenue Corridor business mix as far as meeting your everyday needs?



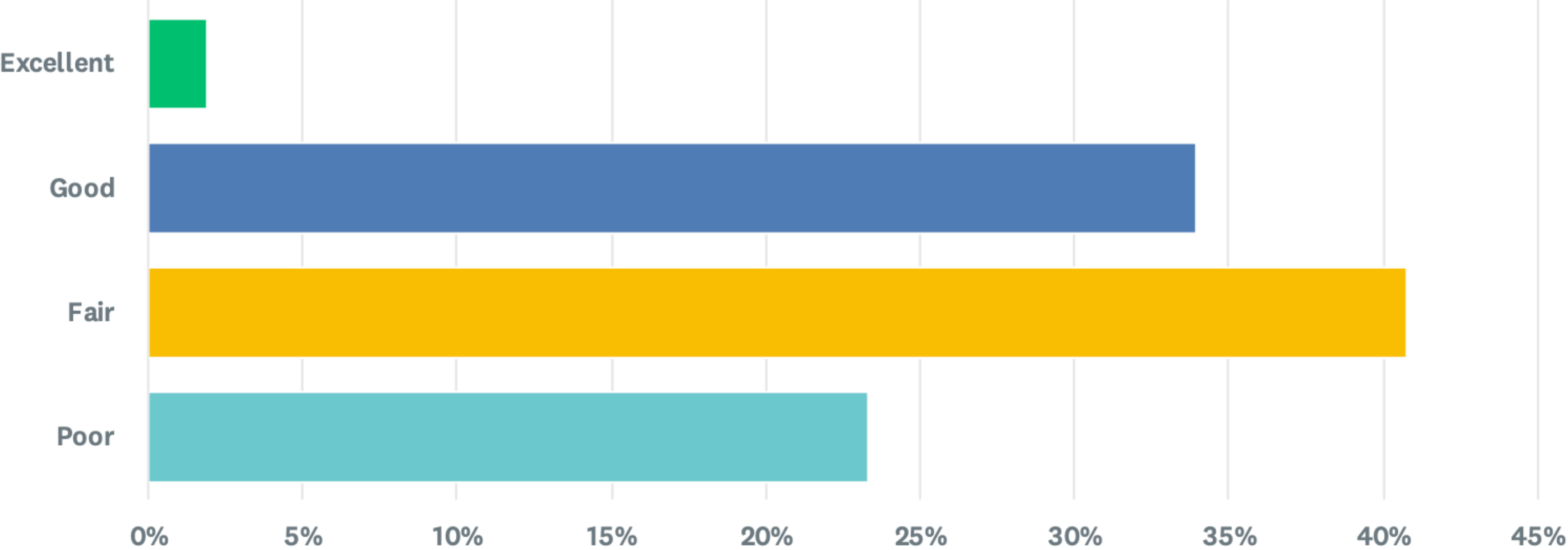
How safe do you feel walking in the Washington Avenue Corridor during the day/early evening?



How safe do you feel walking in the Washington Avenue Corridor during the late evening/early morning?



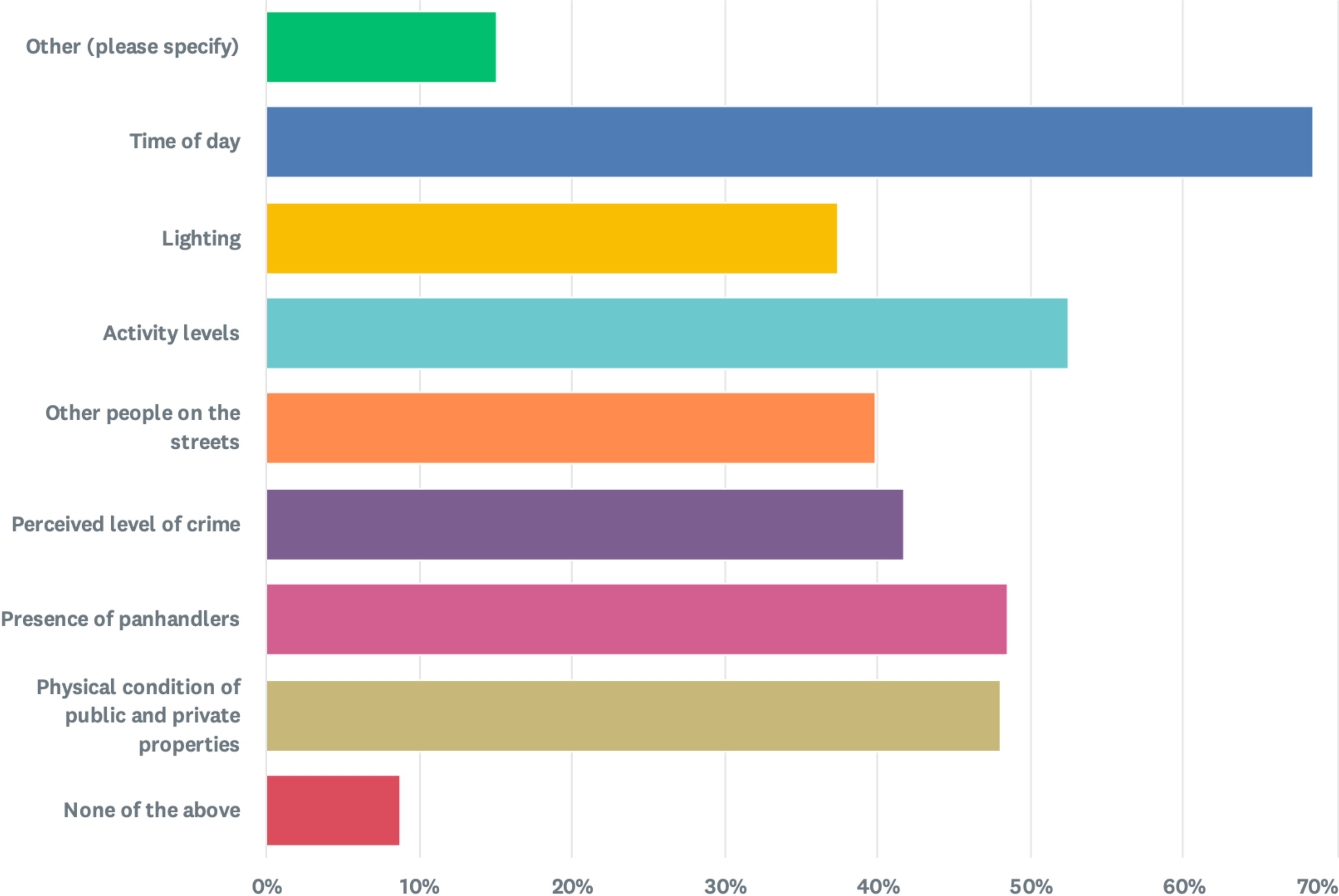
How would you rate the overall street experience in the Washington Avenue Corridor. (cleanliness, lighting, safety, sidewalks, storefronts)?



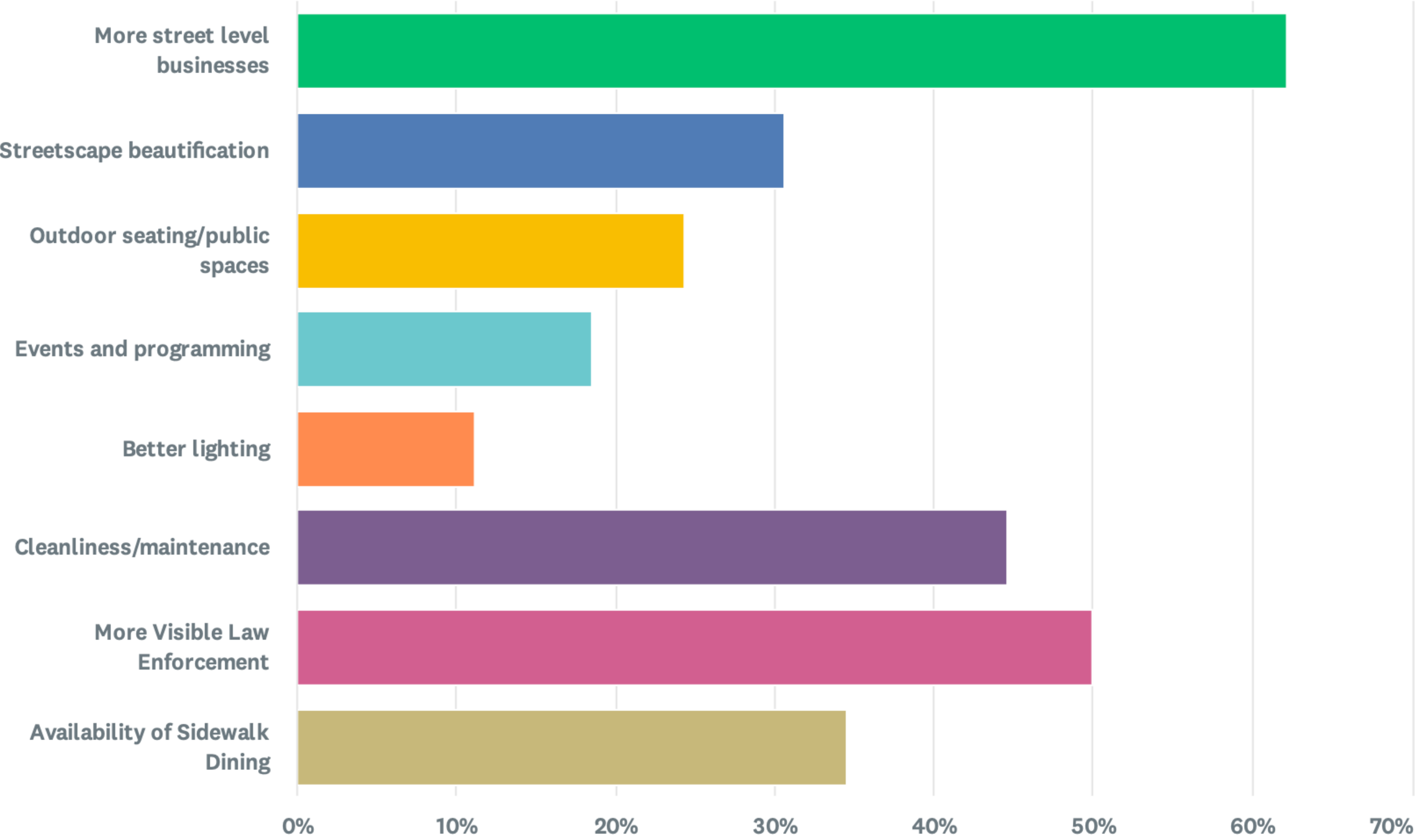
What types of businesses would you like to see that would improve the street level business mix in the Washington Avenue Corridor?

- Strong interest in **national or specialty grocers** (e.g., Trader Joe's, Aldi, Whole Foods)
- Shopping Options (Clothing, Bookstore, Hardware)
- More Diverse & Higher-Quality Dining
- Coffee Shops, Cafés, and “Third Places”
- Lifestyle & Service-Based Businesses (Fitness, Wellness, Pet)
- Entertainment & Activity-Based Uses (Live Music, Art Galleries, Arcades)

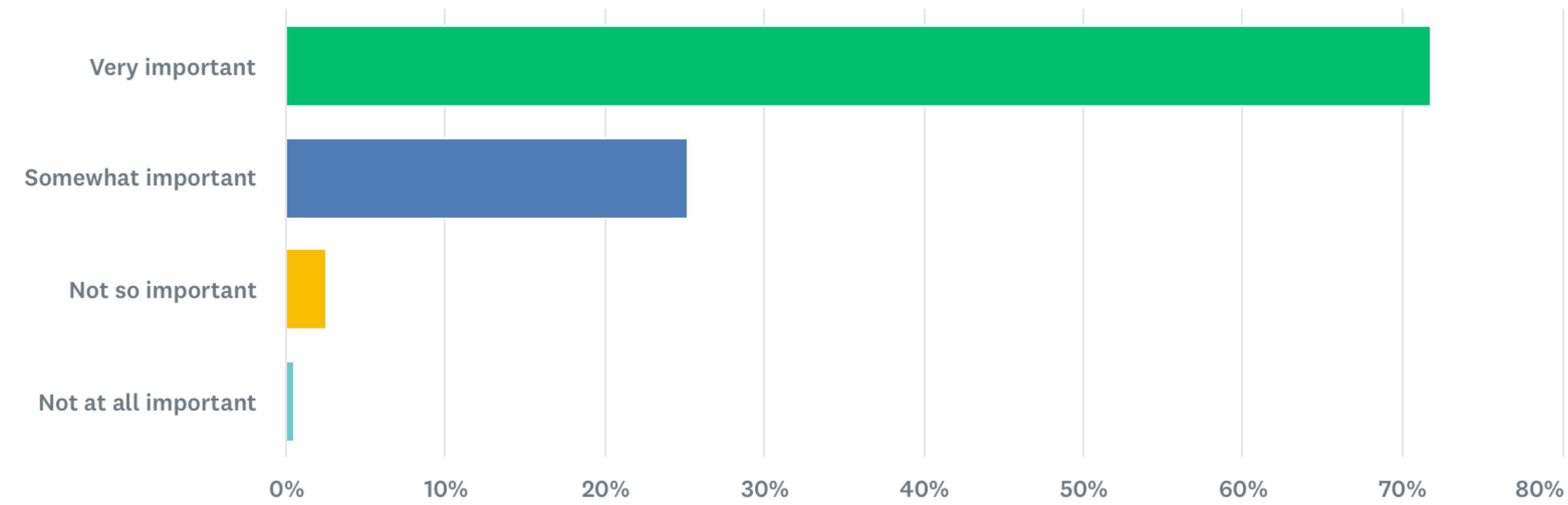
Are there specific conditions that influence when or how you/ your staff/your visitors come downtown or leave their offices to walk the sidewalks?



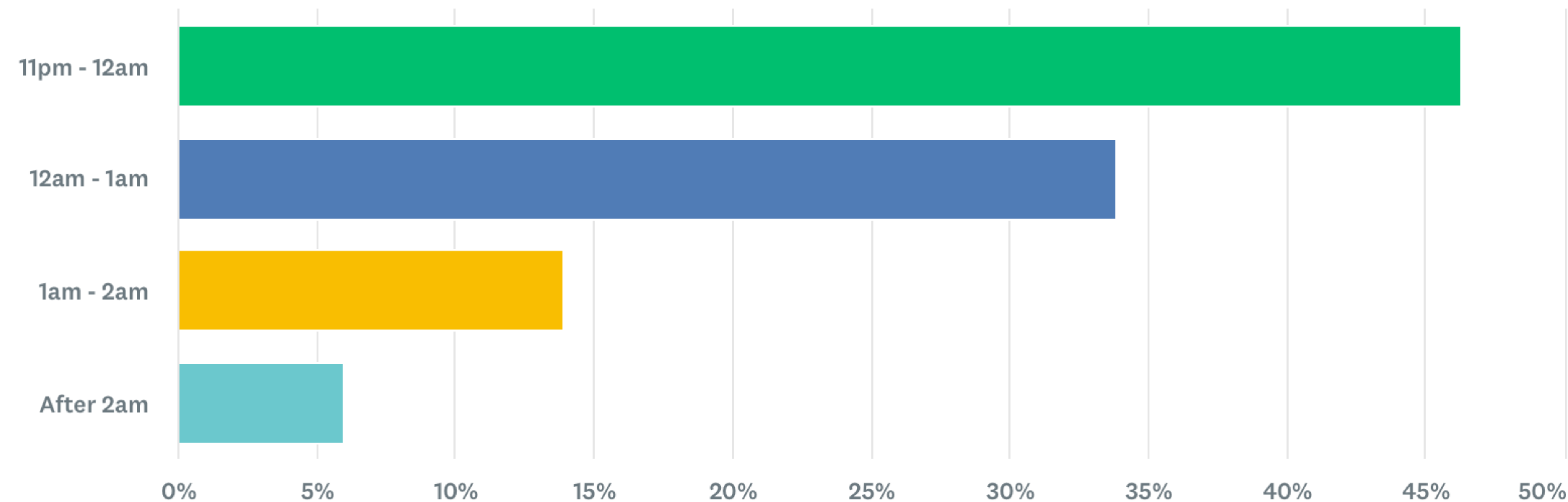
What improvements would most enhance the Washington Avenue experience?



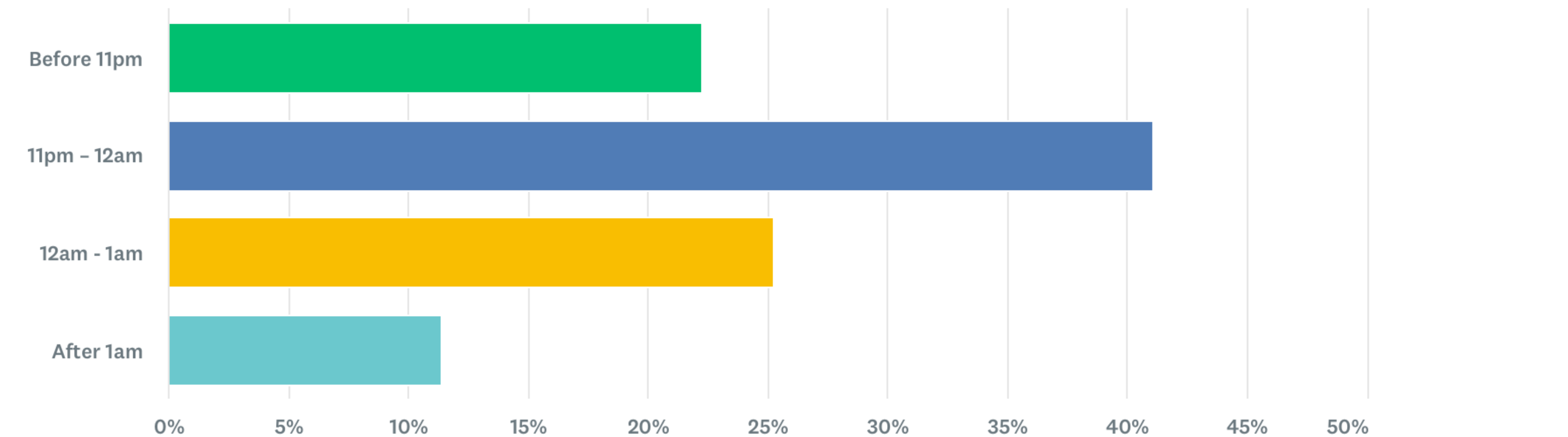
How important is a vibrant Washington Avenue Corridor to your quality of life as a resident?



Based on your experience, what closing time for business operating hours will best support a safe and active Washington Avenue Corridor?



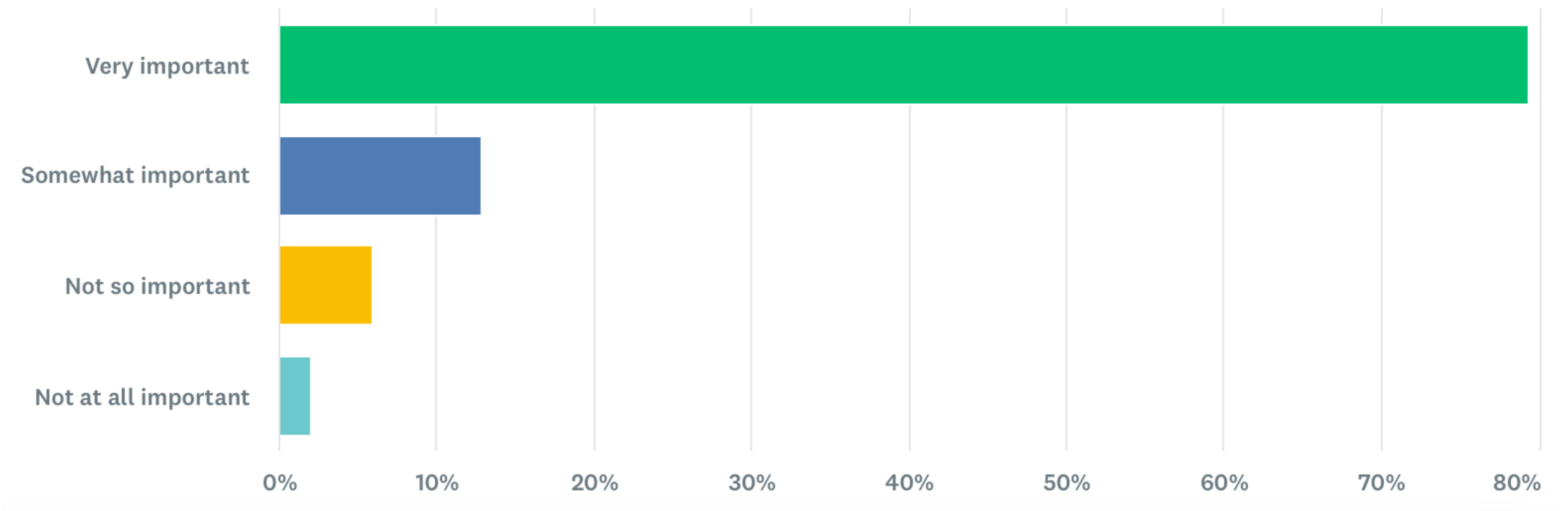
At what time do you think outdoor businesses or portions of businesses (e.g. food vendors, sidewalk cafes, live music, buskers) should close in the Washington Avenue Corridor?



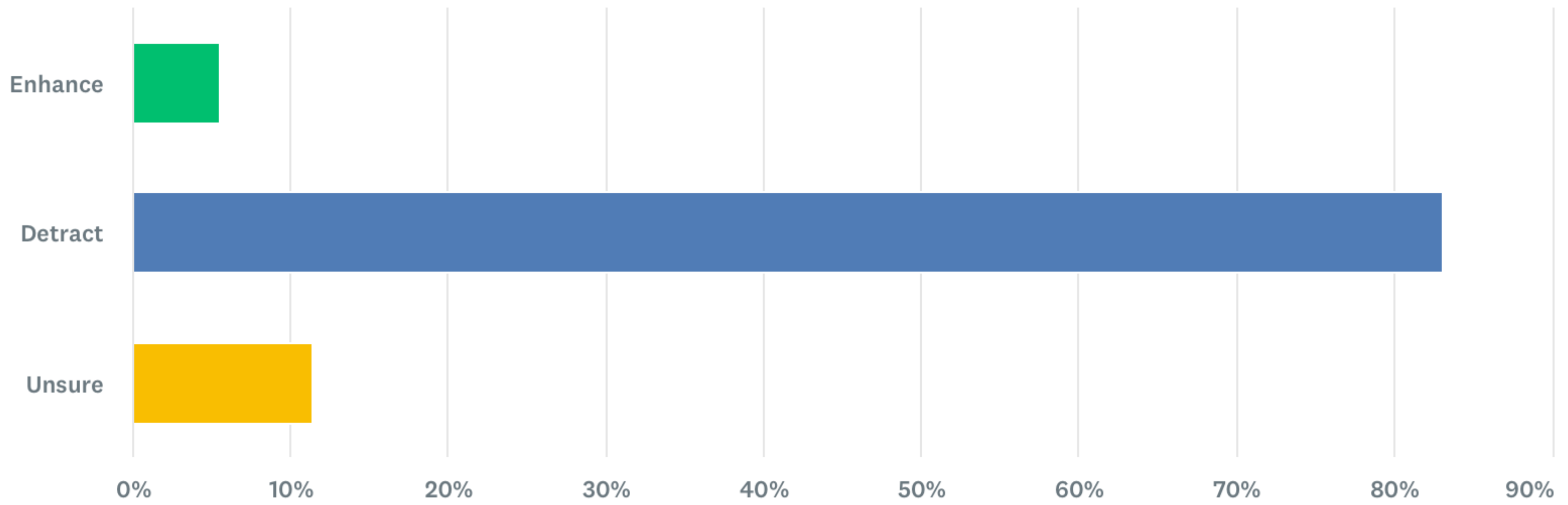
Are there types of businesses or activities currently, or previously, in the Washington Avenue Corridor that you feel negatively impact residents' quality of life?

- 3am Nightclubs
- Overconcentration of Smoke/Vape/Cannabis Shops
- Street Racing, Loud Vehicles, and Traffic Behavior
- Aggressive panhandling/loitering
- Late-Night Food Vendors & Street Activity
- Poorly Managed or Non-Compliant Businesses
- Summary - Residents are not opposed to activity, but they overwhelmingly want better-managed nightlife, fewer low-quality retail uses, stronger enforcement, and improved overall quality of life Downtown.

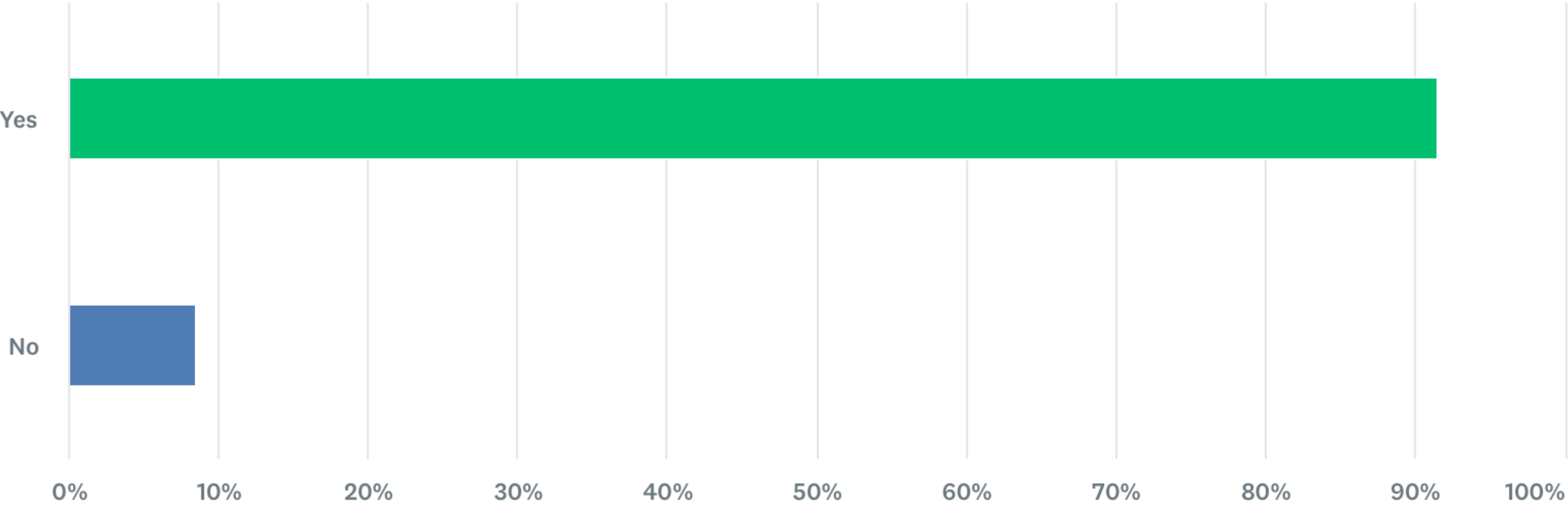
How important do you think it is for the City of St. Louis to vigorously enforce existing ordinances, whether Liquor, Health Department, Traffic, Parking, Zoning or otherwise, in the Washington Avenue Corridor?



Do you think people who “cruise” on Washington Avenue in cars or on motorcycles / 4-wheelers, often generating significant noise, enhance or detract from quality of life for those who live, visit or office in the Washington Avenue Corridor?



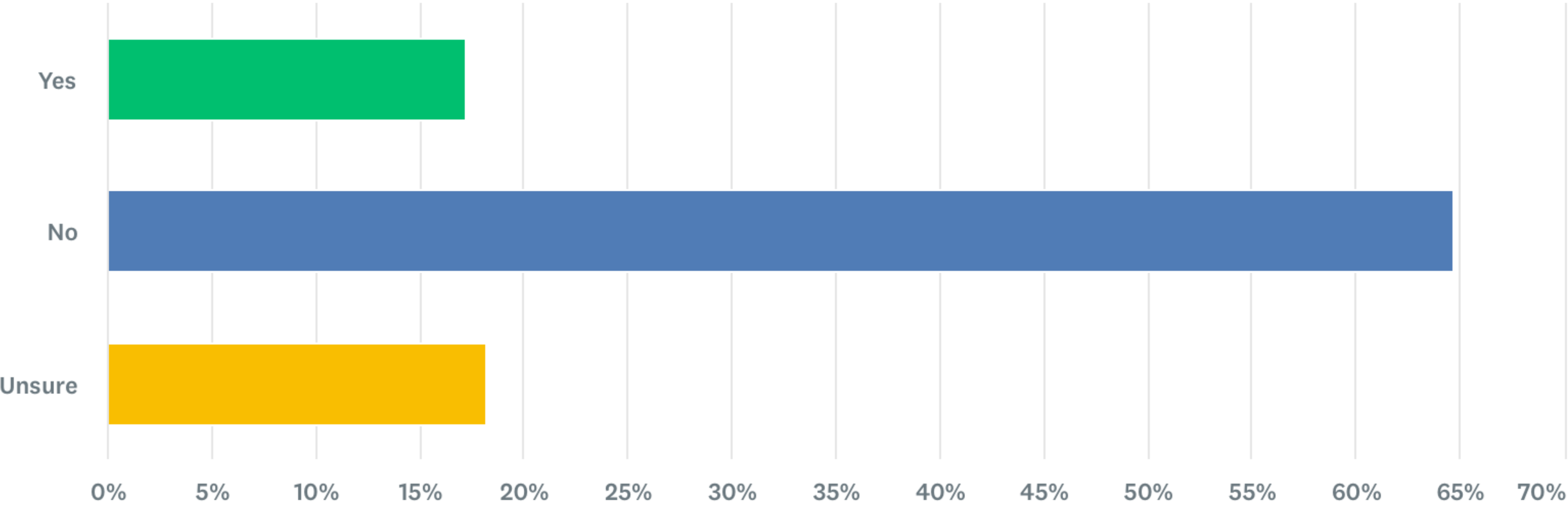
Do you think there should be a teen curfew for Downtown and Downtown West?



What should be the top priority for revitalizing Washington Avenue?

- 82% Attracting New Businesses and Supporting Existing Businesses
- 60% Reducing Panhandling and Disorderly Conduct
- 57% Vigorous Action to Address Problem Properties and Problem Liquor Licenses
- 55% Greater Police Presence
- 34% Improving Walkability

Do you think Washington Avenue should be a regional destination for people who want to party outside on the streets / sidewalks until early in the morning?



What other neighborhoods or streets in the St. Louis region, if any, do you want the Washington Avenue Corridor to feel like? Feel free to share what are the aspects of those neighborhoods that you view as desirable?

- Central West End
- The Loop
- Maplewood
- The Grove
- The best version of Downtown