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Survey on Arts Initiatives for Mecklenburg County, NC Key Findings

Conducted for:

The Charlotte Regional Business Alliance

Presentations to:

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners

April 16, 2019

Purpose of Survey

- Gauge support for the referendum language
- Gauge support for arts, science, history and heritage initiatives in the County
- Gauge level of support for different types of initiatives
- Resident's opinions on arts and culture in general

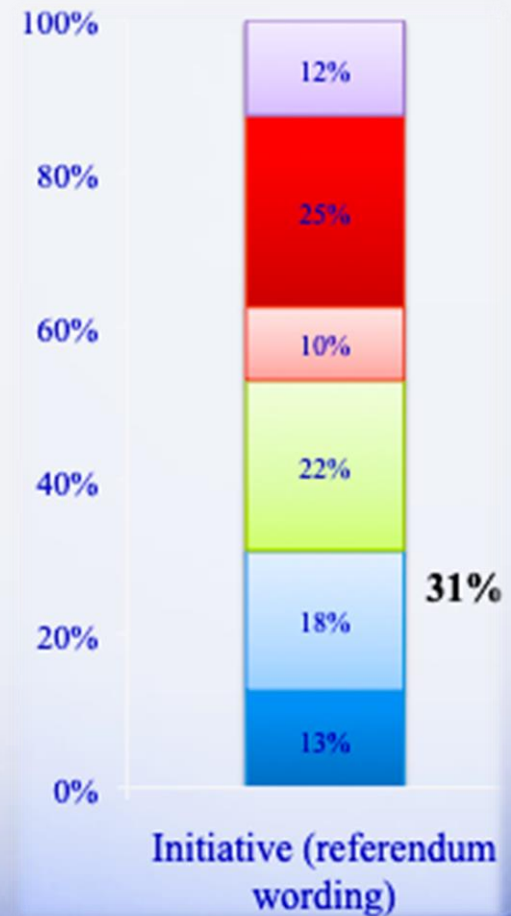
How Survey Was Conducted

- By telephone with adult residents of the County
- 1,000 completed interviews in English and Spanish
- Conducted between March 15 and April 3, 2019
- Margin of error: +/- 3 percent
- Data were weighted by gender, age, race/ethnicity and education to more accurately represent the County's adult population

Potential Referendum

The North Carolina legislature has approved legislation that would allow counties in the state to raise the sales tax by one-quarter of one cent. This would raise \$50 million per year for various initiatives within the County.

“To me that small of a tax increase would go to help people, who unlike me [who] don’t need it. If I was guessing, what it was for, I would be guessing it would be for road or low income housing, so I would be for it. If I voted for it and it passed and [then] said it was for arts initiative, I would be that much more tickled.” – 44 year-old woman living in County.

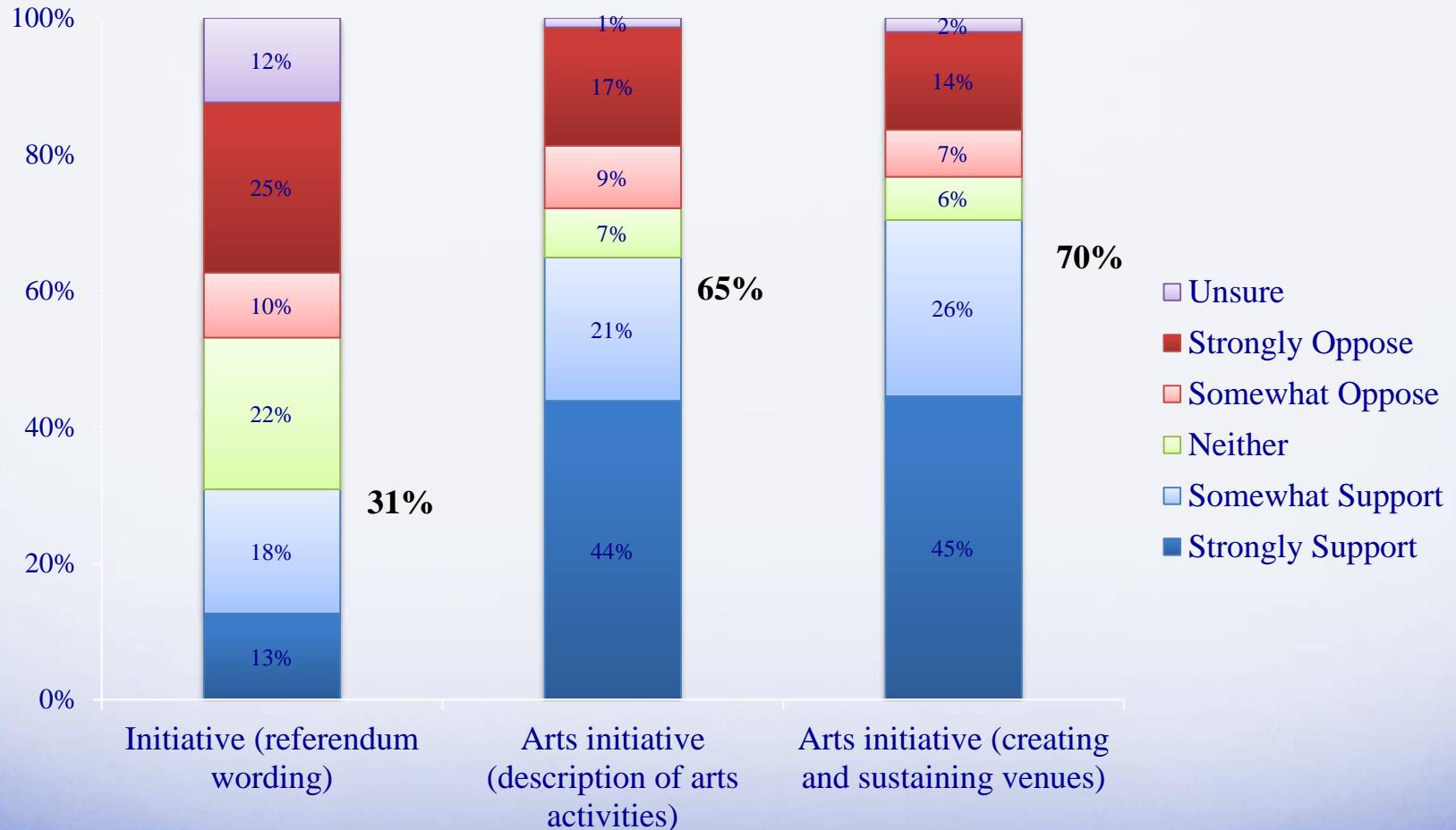


Initiatives

If the sales tax were to increase by one-quarter of one cent, Mecklenburg County will have an additional \$50 million per year to fund several different ideas. One idea is that the County should use part of the \$50 million to...

- a. Increase residents', including children's, access to arts, science, history and heritage activities. These **activities** may include but are not limited to making music, writing poetry or stories, participating in a play, musical, dance or other performance art, taking part in scientific projects, or visiting an art or science museum or gallery, attending a film screening, play, concert or a music, film, literary or other arts, science, history or heritage-related festivals and events.
- a. Increase residents', including children's, access to arts, science, history and heritage activities by providing more opportunities for participation in the arts and sciences and by **creating and sustaining venues** where everyone in the County can enjoy arts, science, history and heritage programs.

Support for Initiative



Support Strongest for Referendum Wording Among

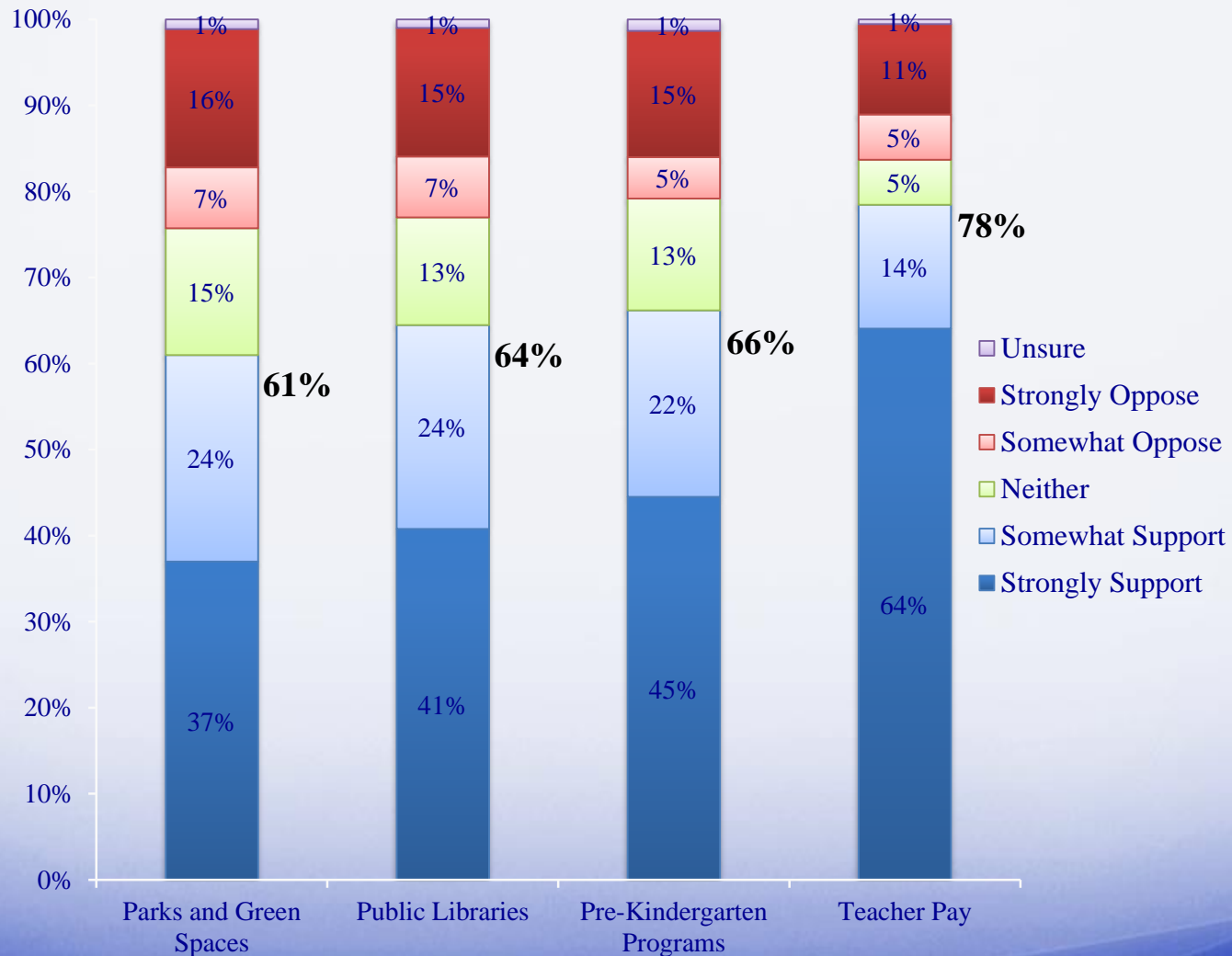
- **Under 35 years** (37%) and 65 years or older (34% compared to 27%-29% of other ages)
- **White only, non-Hispanic** (37% compared to about one-quarter of other groups)
- **Unmarried** (34% versus 28% of Married)
- Those with household incomes of **less than \$75K** (39% compared to 28% of those earning more)
- **Renters** (37% versus 28% of homeowners)
- Support **similar across party lines**, but **stronger among self-identified Liberals** (45% versus 31% of Moderates and 26% of Conservatives)

Support Strongest for Initiative To Fund Arts Among

- **Under 35 years** (81% versus 59%-65% of those older)
- **Unmarried** (71% versus 65% of Married)
- **Other, non-Hispanic** (80%) and **Hispanic** (73% compared to 64% of Whites only and 67% of Blacks only)
- **Renters** (81% compared to 62% of homeowners)
- Self-identified **Liberals** (85%) and **Moderates** (70% versus 52% of Conservatives)

“I am lucky enough to be able to purchase those [theater] tickets. But most people aren’t that lucky. So, access that my daughter gets should be given to other kids that want it and need it. That’s why I would definitely support those initiatives.” – 44-year old mother living in County

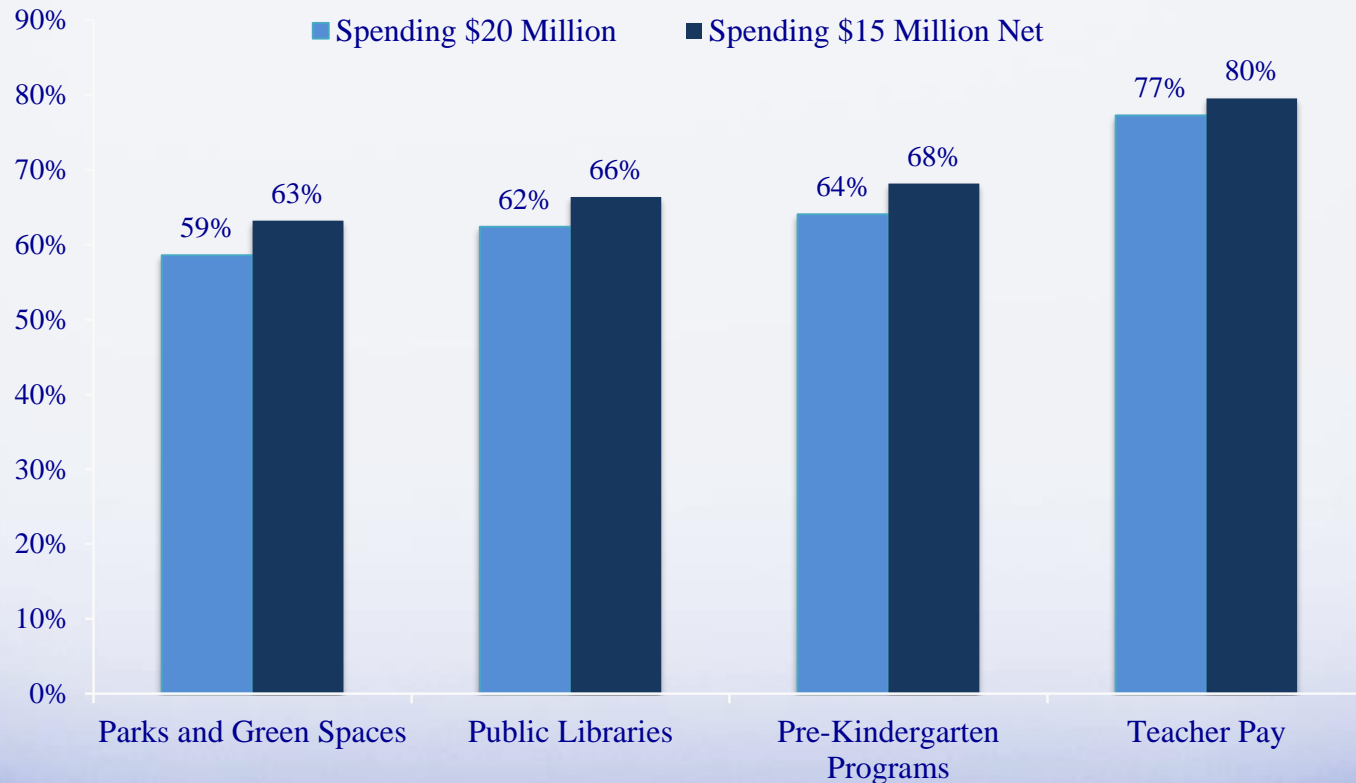
Support for Arts +...



Initiatives – Arts +

- a. What about if the County **used 20 of the \$50 million raised by the increase in the sales tax to increase residents'**, including children's access to arts, science, history and heritage programs, and use the remaining \$30 million to... .
- a. Local governments in Mecklenburg County **currently spend \$5 million** on arts, science, history and heritage programs. If the voters of the County choose to pass the increased sales tax, which would raise \$50 million, then the County would **eliminate the current \$5 million** in spending for arts, science, history and heritage programs, and instead **use 20 of the \$50 million** raised by the increase in the sales tax, in short spending an **additional \$15 million**, to Increase residents', including children's access to arts, science, history and heritage programs, and use the remaining \$30 million to... .

Support for Arts +... Higher with Net Wording



Support Strongest for Arts+ Among

- **Pre-Kindergarten**

- **Women** (70% versus 62% of men)
- **Less than 45 years** (74% of less than 35 year olds and 72% of those 35-44 years) compared to those older (57%-64%)
- **Blacks only, non-Hispanic** (73% versus 61% of Whites only and 65% of Other non-Hispanics)
- **Less than college** (72% versus 61% College)
- **Unmarried** (69% versus 65%)
- Household income **less than \$75K** (72% versus 65% of \$75K+)
- **Renters** (74% versus 63% of homeowners)

- **Teacher Raises**

- **Women** (85% versus 71% of men)
- **Less than 35 years** (87% versus 74%-77% of those older)
- Household income **less than \$75K** (83% versus 76%)
- **Renters** (86% versus 75% of homeowners)
- Support **high across demographic groups**

Support Strongest for Arts+ Among

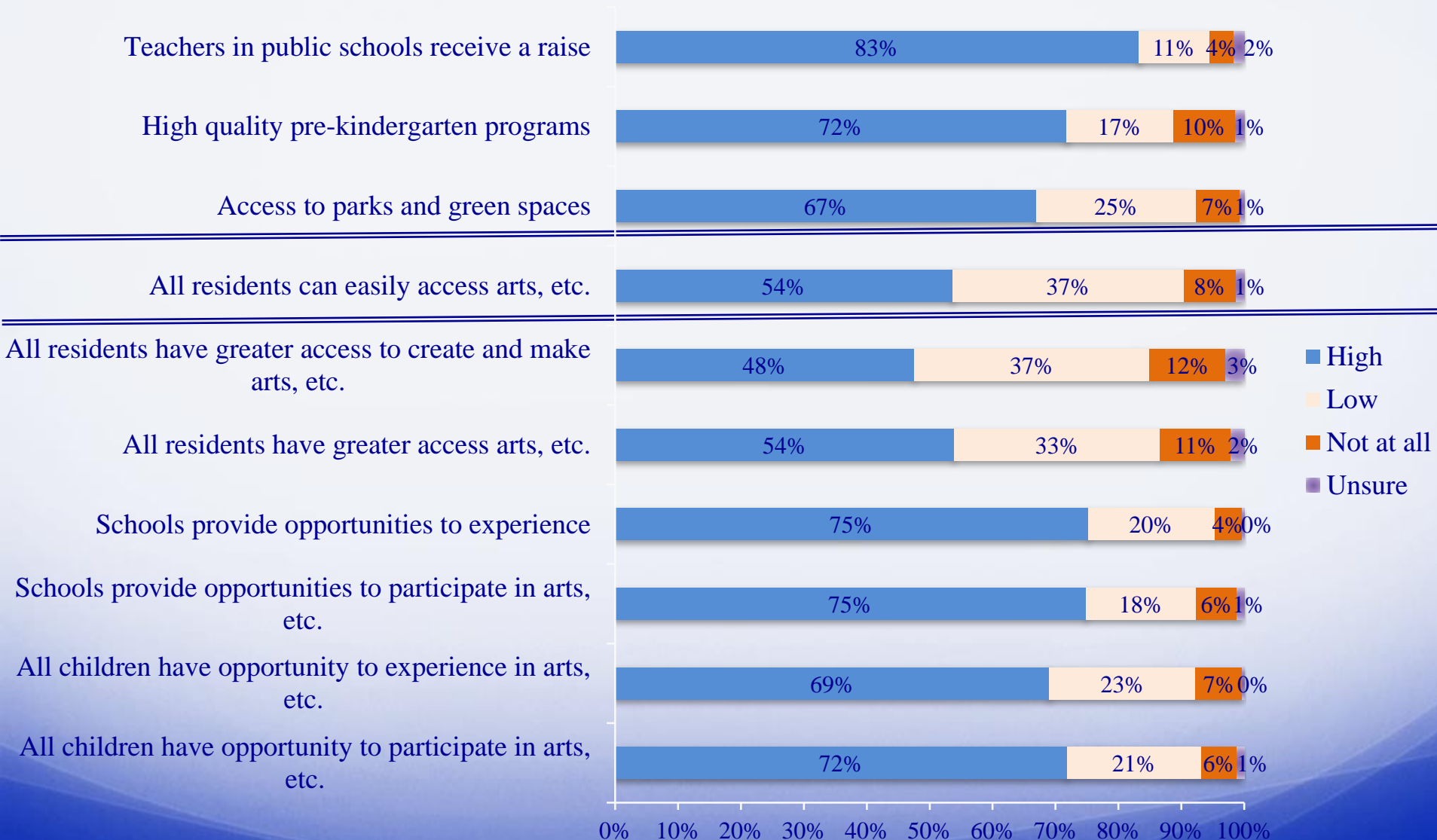
● Public Libraries

- **Women** (68% versus 59% of men)
- **Under 35** (75%), 35-44 years (66%) and 65 years and older (63% versus 58% of 45-64 year olds)
- **Black only, non-Hispanic** (73% versus 59% of Whites only and Other non-Hispanics)
- **Less than college** (69% versus 61% College)
- **Unmarried** (69% versus 61% Married)
- Household income **less than \$75K** (74% versus 59% of \$75K+)
- **Renters** (73% versus 61% of homeowners)

● Parks and Green Spaces

- **Men** (66% versus 57% of women)
- **Under 45** (74% of less than 35 and) 66% of those 35-44 years) compared to those older (49%-54%)
- **Unmarried** (65% versus 58% Married)
- Household income **less than \$75K** (67% versus 61%)
- **Renters** (65% versus 59% of homeowners)
- **No significant variation by race/ethnicity** (about 60% for all groups, except Other at 74%) **or highest level of education completed** (about 60% for less than college and more)

Prioritizing



High Priority Strongest Among

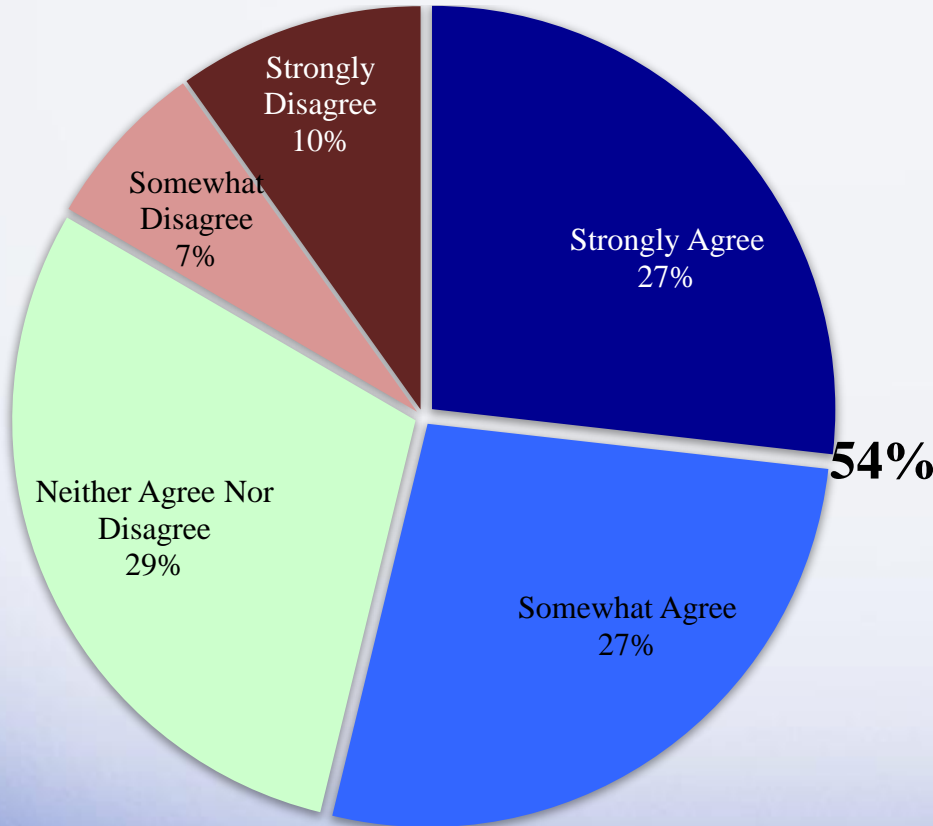
- **Arts Initiatives**

- Black, non Hispanics and Hispanics
- Unmarried
- Less than college
- Under 35 years
- Renters
- Less than \$75K household income
- Schools-related priorities resonated strongest among homeowners, those 35-44 years of age and those with household incomes of \$75,000 or more.

- **Other Initiatives**

- Parks and green spaces:
 - Men,
 - White, non-Hispanics
 - Less than college
 - Younger than 35 years of age
 - Unmarried
 - Renters
- Pre-kindergarten
 - Under 55 years of age
 - Black, non-Hispanics and Hispanics
 - With children under 18 years
- Teacher Raises
 - Women
 - Renters
 - Broad support across demographic groups

Vision – Make County Arts Capital of Region

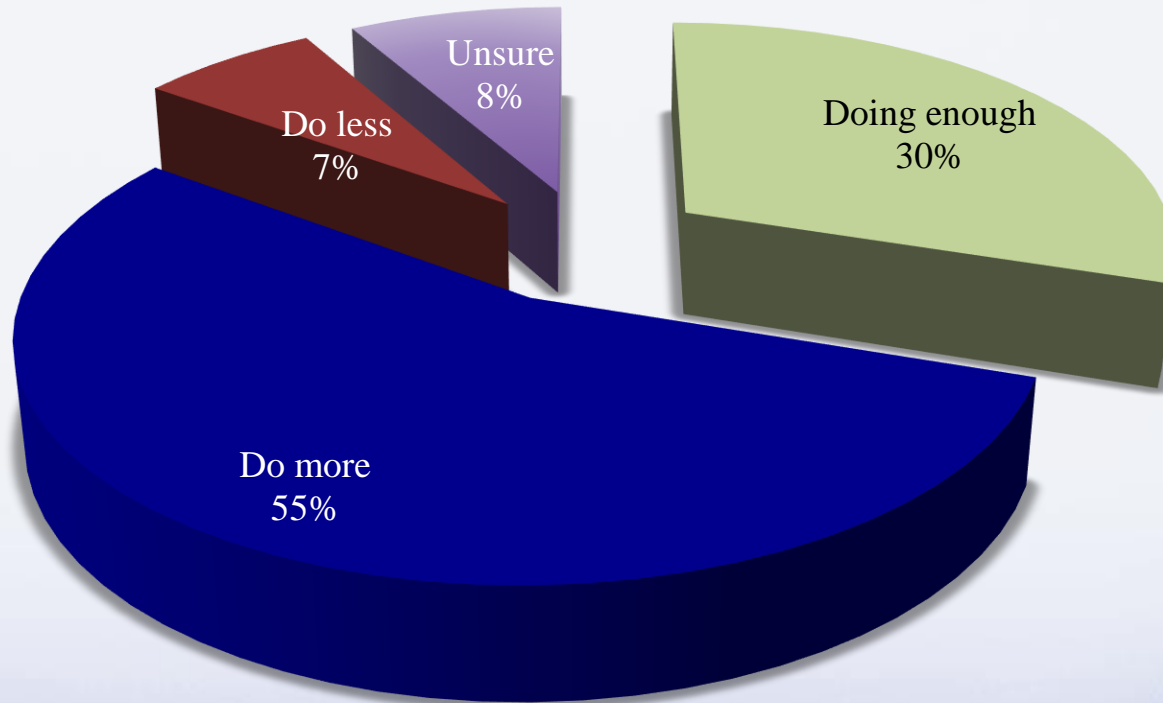


More likely to support:

- **Under 35** years of age (66%) versus those older (47%-52%);
- **Non-White** (55% Black only, 59% Other, non-Hispanics and 69% of Hispanics versus 48% of White only, non-Hispanics (69%);
- **Household incomes less than \$75K** (65% versus 47% of those with higher incomes); and
- **Renters** (68% versus 48% of homeowners) are more likely to support this vision.

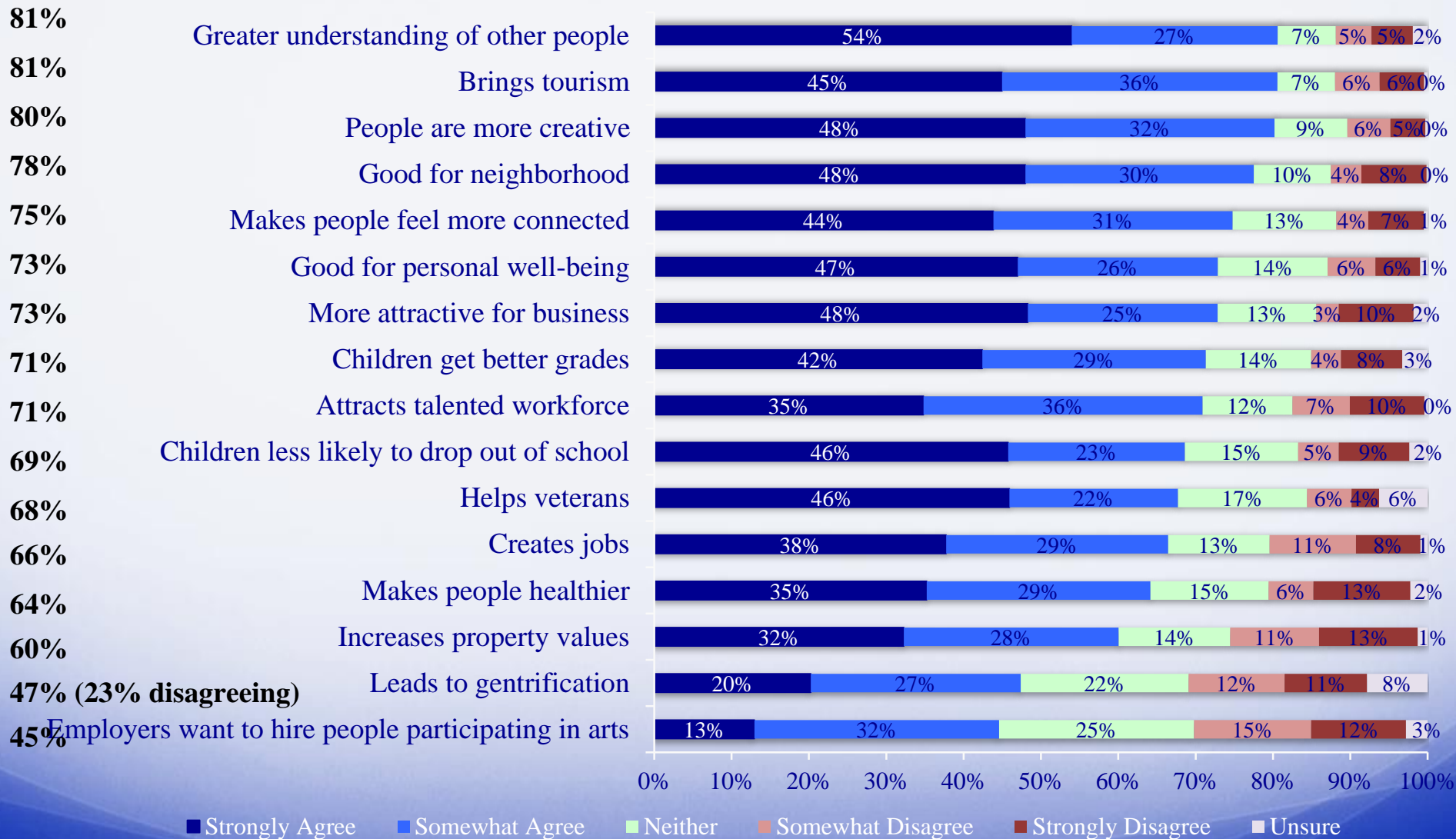
County Should...

to make arts, science, history and heritage more accessible to all County residents



Those with **less than college education** are more likely to want the County to **do more** (61% versus 49%); as do **non-Whites** (about 66% versus 42% of Whites only)
Women more likely than men to think County is **doing enough** (34% versus 26%), while **men** are more likely to be **unsure** (12% versus 5%).

Opinion on Arts and Culture



Top Messages

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1=Not At All Convincing and 10=Very Convincing

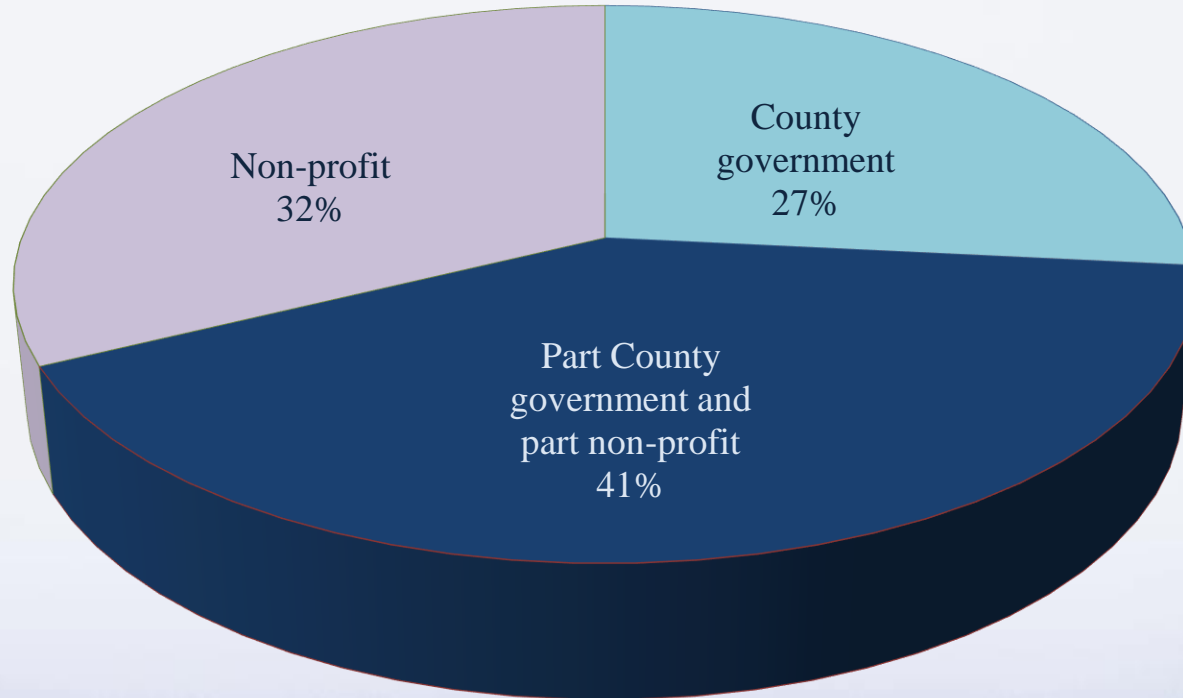
| Message | Average Conviction Rating |
|--|---------------------------|
| (VETERANS) Research on veterans suffering the after effects of war has shown that participating in arts and cultural activities can help them heal . We, as a community, should make more arts and cultural programs accessible to veterans returning from war to increase their and our community's well-being . | 7.57 |
| (EDUCATION) Research has shown that children who participate in arts and cultural activities are less likely to drop out of school and are more likely to have better grades and higher scores on standardized exams . We, as a community, should ensure that all children in the county have the opportunity to participate in arts and cultural programs. | 7.41 |
| (TOURISM) The presence of arts and cultural activities in a community brings in tourist dollars , which helps the local economy and creates jobs. To help our county grow, we, as a community, should invest more to ensure the presence of the arts and cultural programs within our communities. | 7.05 |
| (COMMUNITY) The presence of the arts and culture has been shown to foster greater understanding among different people living in a community . For the well-being of our neighborhoods and communities, we as a county, should invest more in making arts and cultural programs available within our neighborhoods and communities. | 6.98 |
| (INDIVIDUAL) Participating in arts and cultural activities increases our personal happiness and well-being . For a healthier, happier community, we, as a community, must ensure that all residents in the county can access arts and cultural programs within our communities. | 6.85 |

Bottom Messages

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1=Not At All Convincing and 10=Very Convincing

| Message | Average Conviction Rating |
|---|---------------------------|
| (HEALTH) Research has shown that participating in arts and cultural activities reduces the length of hospital stays, leads to less use of medication and better pain management. We should, as a community, invest more in providing those who are unwell with access to arts and cultural programs as this will reduce our healthcare costs . | 5.67 |
| (HOUSING) The presence of arts and culture in a community leads to increases in home prices . To increase the value of our homes, we, as a community, should invest more in arts and cultural programs to ensure their presence within our communities. | 5.76 |
| (HEALTH) Research has shown that participating in arts and cultural activities reduces the length of hospital stays, leads to less use of medication and better pain management. We should, as a community, invest more in providing those who are unwell with access to arts and cultural programs as this will make our county healthier . | 6.05 |

Managed By If Approved



Take Away's

- Support for increase in sales tax increases from 31% to 68% if residents know funds will be used for arts, science, history and heritage programs
- Support for sales tax increase for arts, science, history and heritage programs strongest among those under 35 years of age, those who are unmarried, and those who identify as Other race, non-Hispanics or Hispanics
- Support strongest for funding arts, science, history and heritage programs along with education initiatives, chiefly giving raises to public school teachers followed by investing more in pre-kindergarten programs – support stronger when residents learn that current spending for \$5 million will be freed up for other purposes.
- Providing arts, science, history and heritage opportunities in schools and to children garner highest support followed by providing children with opportunities to participate in these activities, in general
- Residents are more likely to believe that arts and culture is good for the well-being of their neighborhoods, communities and them personally, and are more likely to find messages on those themes convincing

Final Thought

“I think it [the vision of Regional Arts Capital] will help to create a sense of unity. The amount of strength people can get, and belonging from that idea, I think, is huge and will only strengthen what’s going on in Charlotte and pull people together when everything seems to be pushing people apart these days.”

-- Woman residing in County (37 years old)

Questions?

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