

The
Free Press

Public Views on the State of the City & Election

June 2026

Manitoba Omnibus Survey

PROBE Research



Key Findings

Winnipeg residents enter a municipal election season with a negative view about their city – and their incumbent mayor. Two-thirds of Winnipeg residents indicate the quality of life in the city has deteriorated in the past four years, with only 15 per cent believing things have become better and 17 per cent seeing things stay the same.

Faced with this, only one in five Winnipeggers believe incumbent mayor Scott Gillingham should be re-elected for another term, with nearly one-half wanting a different person in charge of the City and one-third unsure. Gillingham has more fans among men, higher-income earners and those in outer suburban areas, while older citizens are more likely to want someone else to take office after the October municipal election. Provincial Progressive Conservative (PC) and federal Conservative voters are also more likely than others to want change at Winnipeg city hall.

Winnipeggers do not have a high degree of faith in the next city council to make major headway solving the city's most pressing issues. Fewer than one in 10 see the next set of elected officials making a major difference, with one-third believing they could make a minor difference addressing Winnipeg's challenges. Fully one-third think they will make no difference, with one-quarter unsure. A majority of residents think the next mayor and council will make some progress improving streets, roads and other basic infrastructure, with about one-half believing they could make the city safer and downtown more vibrant. Only four in 10 think the next mayor and council will make life in Winnipeg more affordable.

The three main issues for Winnipeggers are tightly interconnected. More than one-quarter identify crime and public safety as the top issue facing Winnipeg, with a similar proportion (27%) pointing to poverty and homelessness as the main challenge. Meanwhile, slightly more than one in five highlight the addictions crisis as the city's main challenge. The cost of living (13%), infrastructure (8%), health care (6%) and affordable housing (5%) are the other main issues Winnipeggers are concerned about.

Methodology

Probe Research surveyed a random and representative sample of 600 Winnipeg adults between May 25 and June 8, 2026.

Respondents were contacted using four different methods. The sample includes 284 Winnipeg residents randomly recruited via live-agent operator, 88 randomly recruited via text message/SMS, 110 randomly recruited via Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and 118 members of Probe Research's online panel. All respondents completed the survey using an online platform.

With a sample of 600, one can say with 95 per cent certainty that the results are within ± 4.0 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Winnipeg had been surveyed. The margin of error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

Probe reached out to Winnipeggers through modified random digit dialing, including both landline and wireless numbers. This ensured all Manitoba adults had an equal opportunity to participate in this survey.

The sample has been weighted slightly by age, gender, region and educational attainment so it properly reflects the city's population, based on Census data. Probe used SPSS software to conduct all statistical analysis.

About the Probe Research Omnibus

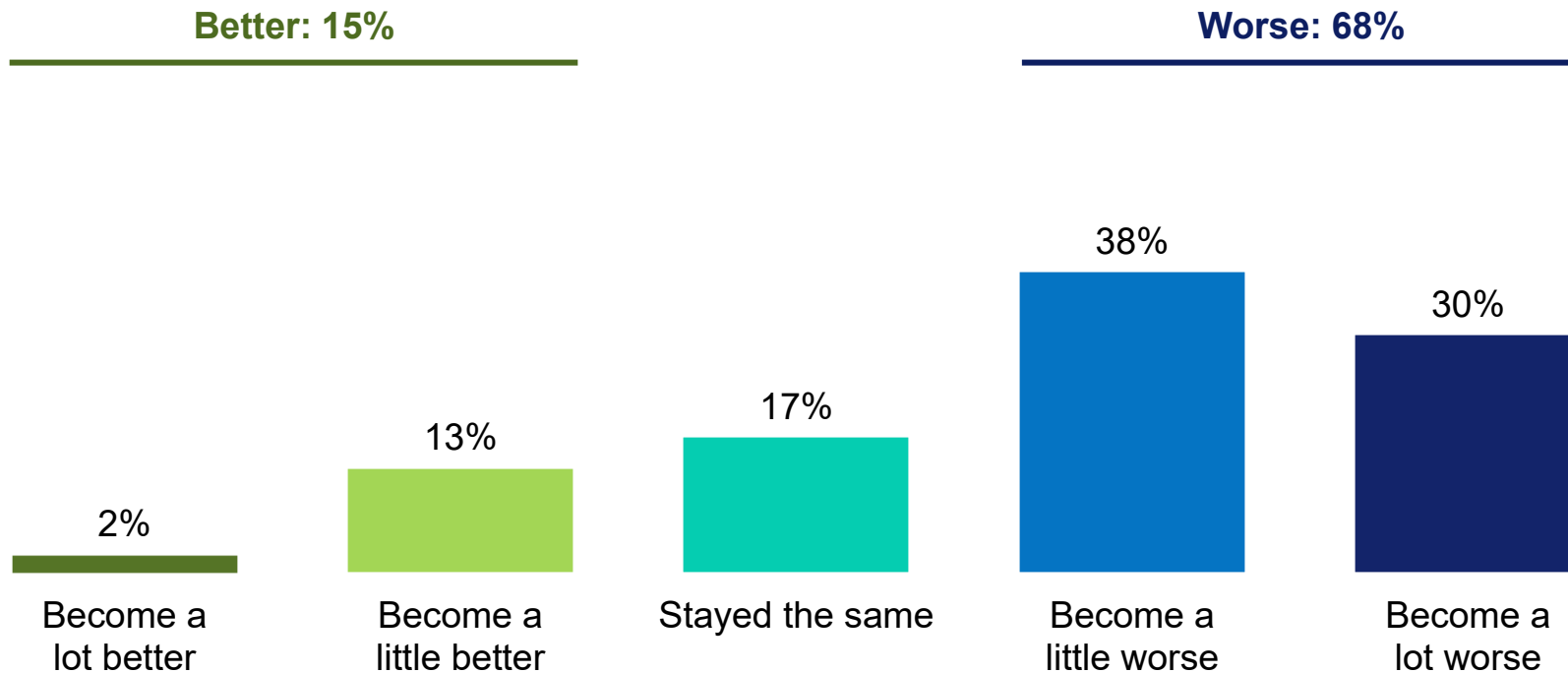
For nearly 30 years, Probe Research has conducted quarterly omnibus surveys of random and representative samples of Manitoba adults. These surveys have provided strategic and proprietary insights to hundreds of public, private and not-for-profit clients on many different social, cultural and public policy topics. The Probe Research Omnibus Survey is the province's largest and most trusted general population survey.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS, with coding/analysis of open-ended responses completed with the MQO A.I. Hub platform. This is a Canadian-hosted platform that uses OpenAI's technology through a Zero Data Retention workflow, which means that data entered into the platform are never stored on data servers nor used to train AI models. All coding was tested and verified with experienced human coders.

The survey was designed by Probe Research in close consultation with the Free Press.

Two-thirds of Winnipeggers think the quality of life here has deteriorated in the past four years

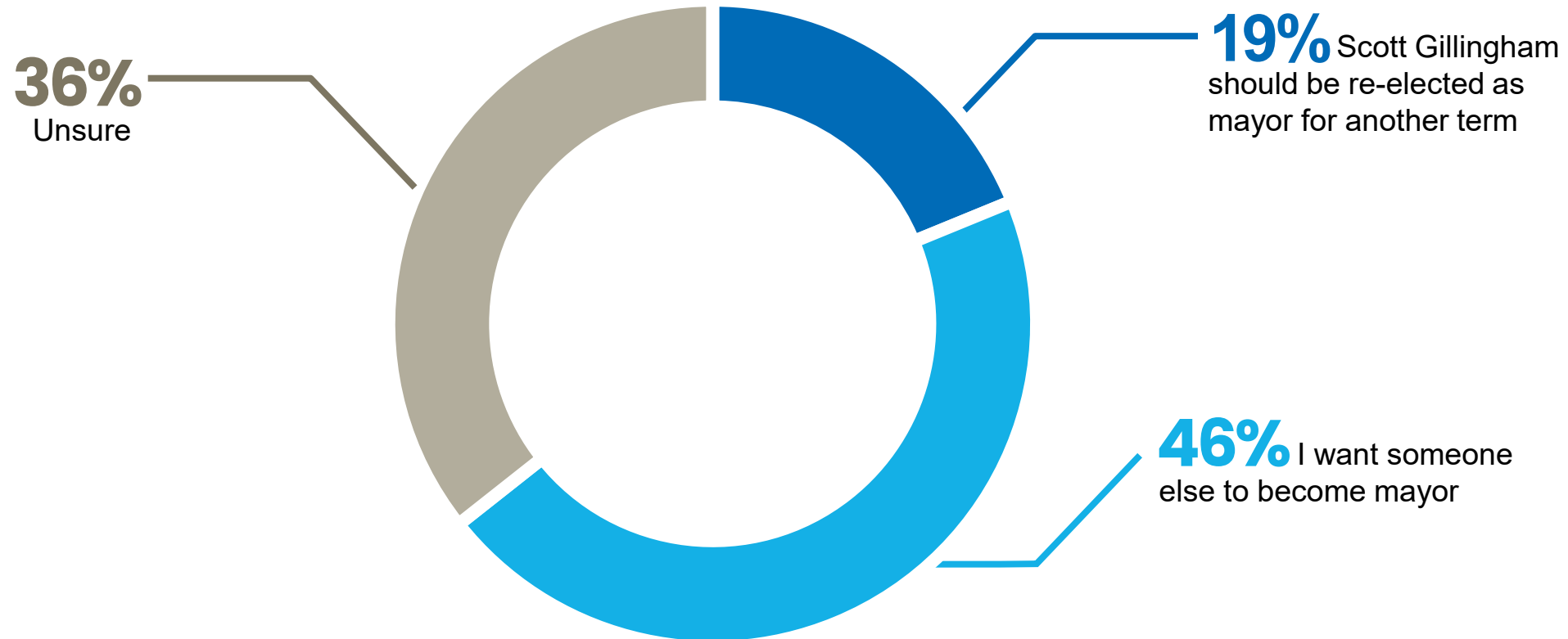


Those most likely to say the quality of life in Winnipeg has **worsened:**

- Those in the inner suburbs (72% vs. 65% in other parts of Winnipeg).
- Older adults (75% 35-54 and 71% 55+ vs. 55% 18-34).
- Indigenous people (80% vs. 65% of white Winnipeggers).
- Provincial Progressive Conservative (PC) voters (87% vs. 61% of NDP supporters).

CC1. Thinking about the past four years, would you say the quality of life in Winnipeg has...
(Base: All Winnipeg respondents, N=600)

Only one in five want Scott Gillingham re-elected; nearly one-half want another candidate



CC4. Mayor Scott Gillingham is running for another term in this fall's municipal election. Which of the following two statements best describes how you feel about this? (Base: All Winnipeg respondents, N=600)

Only one in five want Scott Gillingham re-elected; nearly one-half want another candidate



Most likely to **want Scott Gillingham re-elected:**

- Those in the outer suburbs (25% vs. 9% of those in the inner city).
- Men (24% vs. 14% of women).
- Homeowners (25% vs. 13% of renters).
- Higher-income earners (34% \$120K+ vs. 11% <\$60K).
- Federal Liberal voters (31% vs. 12% of Conservative supporters).



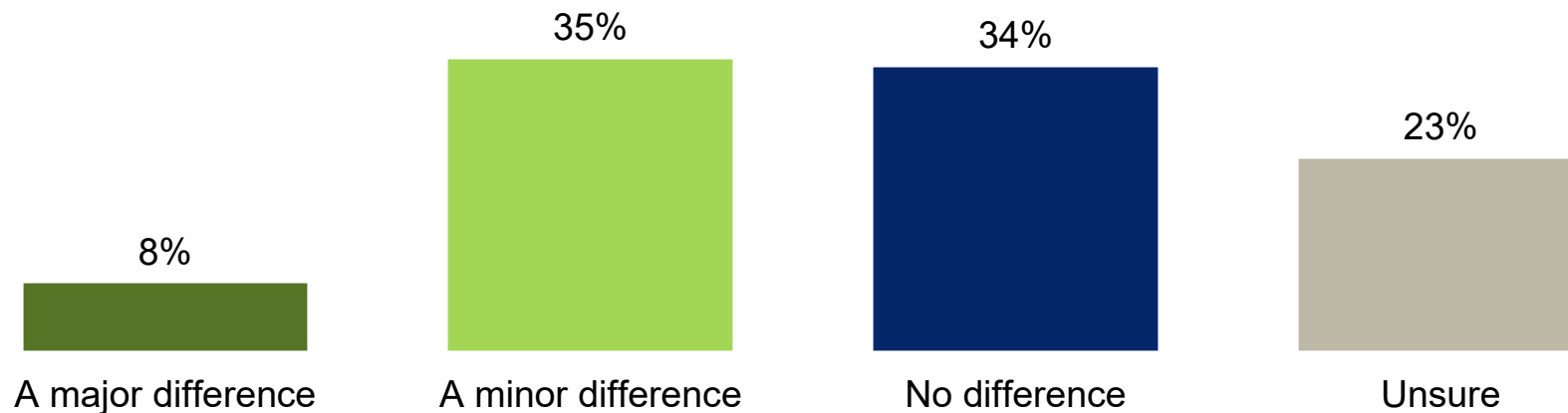
Most likely to **want someone else as mayor:**

- Older adults (54% 55+ and 47% 35-54 vs. 34% 18-34).
- Provincial PC supporters (69% vs. 41% of NDP supporters and 40% who back other parties).
- Federal Conservative supporters (60% vs. 42% of federal Liberals).
- Those who think the quality of life has worsened (53% vs. 31% of those who say it is better or same).

CC4. Mayor Scott Gillingham is running for another term in this fall's municipal election. Which of the following two statements best describes how you feel about this? (Base: All Winnipeg respondents, N=600)

Fewer than one in 10 Winnipeggers think the next mayor, council will make major headway

Some difference: 43%

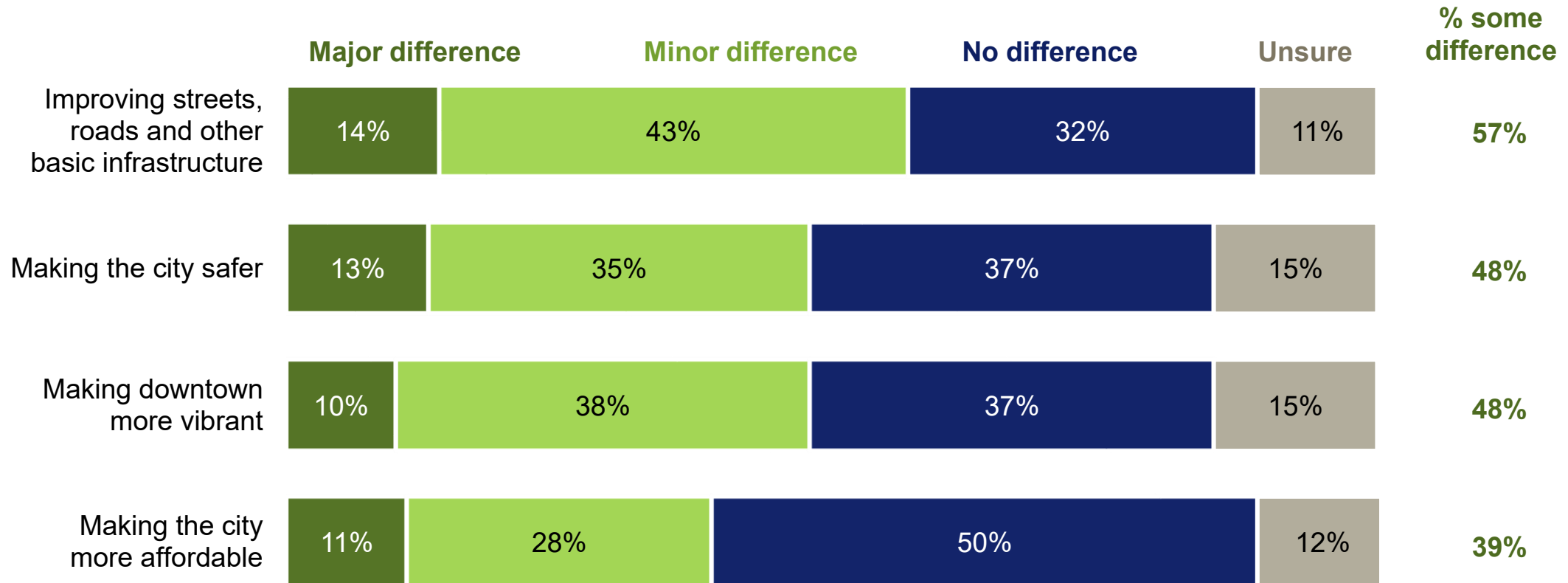


Those most likely to believe the **next mayor and council can make some difference** on major issues:

- Those in the outer suburbs (49% vs. 33% in the inner city).
- Older residents (48% 55+ vs. 34% among those 18-34).
- Those with higher levels of education and household income.

CC2. Overall, when you think about the ability of Winnipeg's next mayor and council to deal with the major issues facing the city, do you think they will make... (Base: All Winnipeg respondents, N=600)

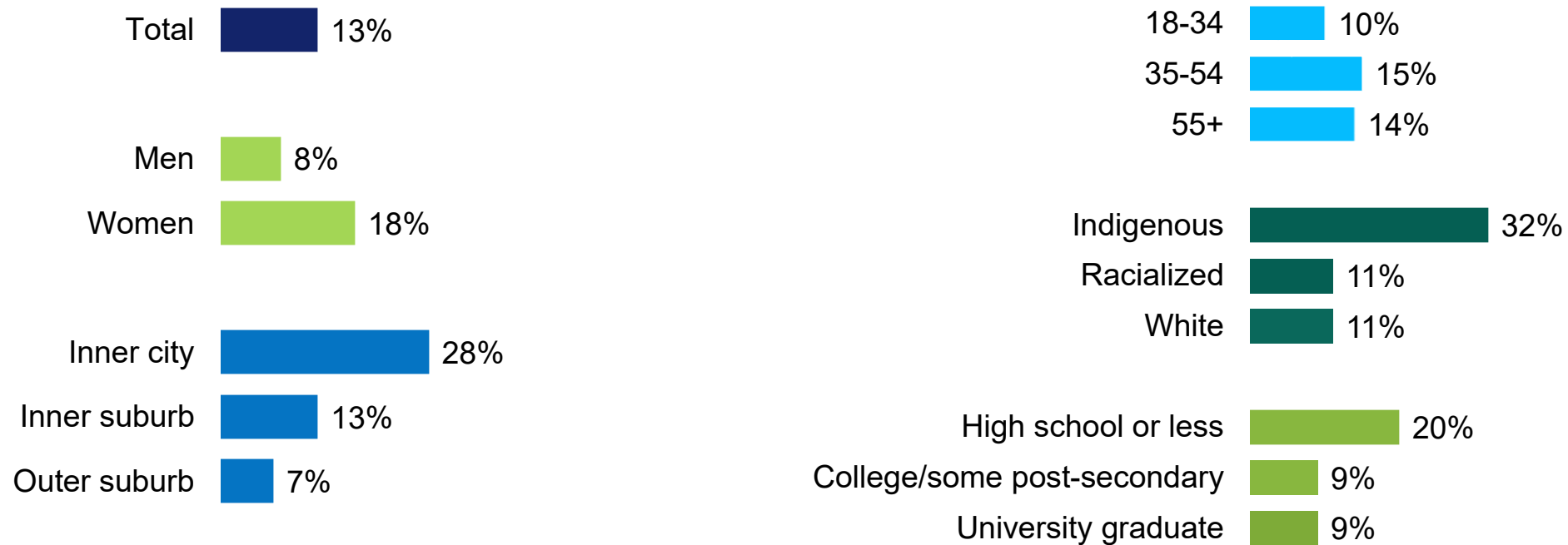
Residents have the most faith the next mayor and council will improve basic infrastructure



CC3. And how much of a difference do you think Winnipeg's next mayor and city council will be able to make when it comes to addressing the following issues? (Base: All Winnipeg respondents, N=600)

Inner city and Indigenous residents have more faith public safety will improve

% who think the next mayor/council will make a major difference on public safety



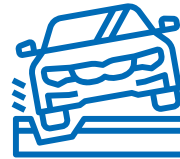
CC3. And how much of a difference do you think Winnipeg's next mayor and city council will be able to make when it comes to addressing **the following issues: Making the city safer?**

(Base: All Winnipeg respondents, N=600)

Crime, poverty and drugs top the list of Winnipeggers' main concerns



27%
Crime/violence/vandalism



8%
Infrastructure/roads/potholes



27%
Poverty/homelessness



6%
Health care



22%
Drugs/addictions/meth/opioid crisis



5%
Affordable housing



13%
Cost of living

Other issues: 26%
Unsure/no issues: 18%

CG1. What do you consider to be the most important issue or concern facing your community today? (Base: All respondents, N=600. Multiple mentions, so totals will exceed 100%.)

PC supporters are much more concerned about crime than others



Indigenous residents are more likely than others to be concerned about **crime, poverty and addictions.**

CG1. What do you consider to be the most important issue or concern facing your community today? (Base: All respondents, N=600. Multiple mentions, so totals will exceed 100%.)

Contact:

Curtis Brown, Partner

204-894-3298

Curtis@Probe-Research.com

PROBE Research

603 – 191 Lombard Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0X1

Probe-Research.com

Probe Research is working to ensure its documents exceed modern accessibility and screen-readability standards. If you encounter any barriers to accessing this content or if you require this document in an alternative format, please contact probe@probe-research.com or 204-926-6565.