

City of Columbia, MO
Residential Curbside Collection Survey

February 16, 2023

Public Engagement Activity

November 2022–Council asked the Solid Waste Utility group to seek the public’s opinions on the future of automated trash collection.

January 2023–Public meetings held and BeHeard online survey and other information was available.

February 2023– Results and analysis from public’s input conducted.

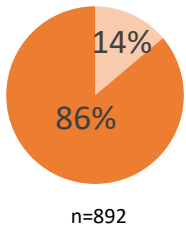
Methodology & Who Took the Survey

Methodology

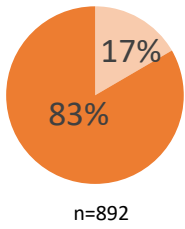
- 892 Surveys were collected from Columbia, MO residents through three different methods January 6, 2023 – February 10, 2023:
 - Paper survey collected during listening sessions n=124
 - Session 1/10/2023 n=72
 - Session 1/31/2023 n=50
 - iPad survey collected during listening sessions n=26
 - Session 1/10/2023 n=23
 - Session 1/31/2023 n=3
 - Online survey on the City of Columbia BeHeard website n=742
 - From 1/6/2023-2/10/2023

Respondents who took the survey generally...

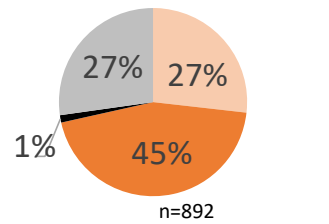
Used digital surveys



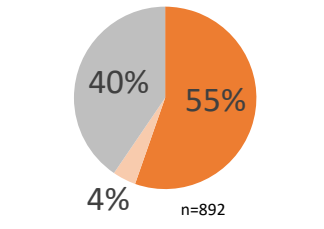
Filled survey out on BeHeard website



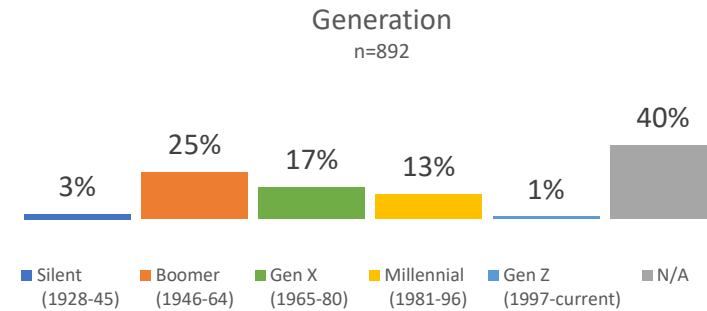
Female



Caucasian*

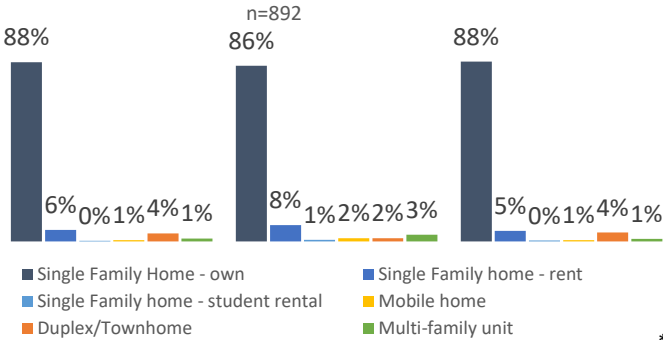


Age Unknown or Boomer*



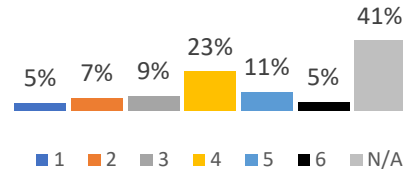
Lives in a Single Family Home - Own

Residence Type



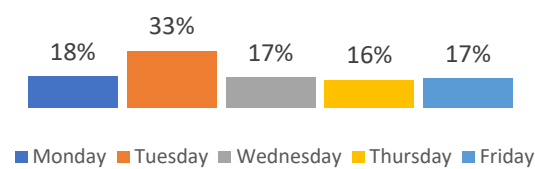
Lives in Unknown Ward or 4th Ward*

Ward



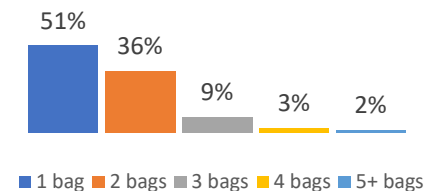
Tuesday Trash Day

Trash Day



Puts out 1 bag

of bags



* Only asked question in the online BeHeard survey

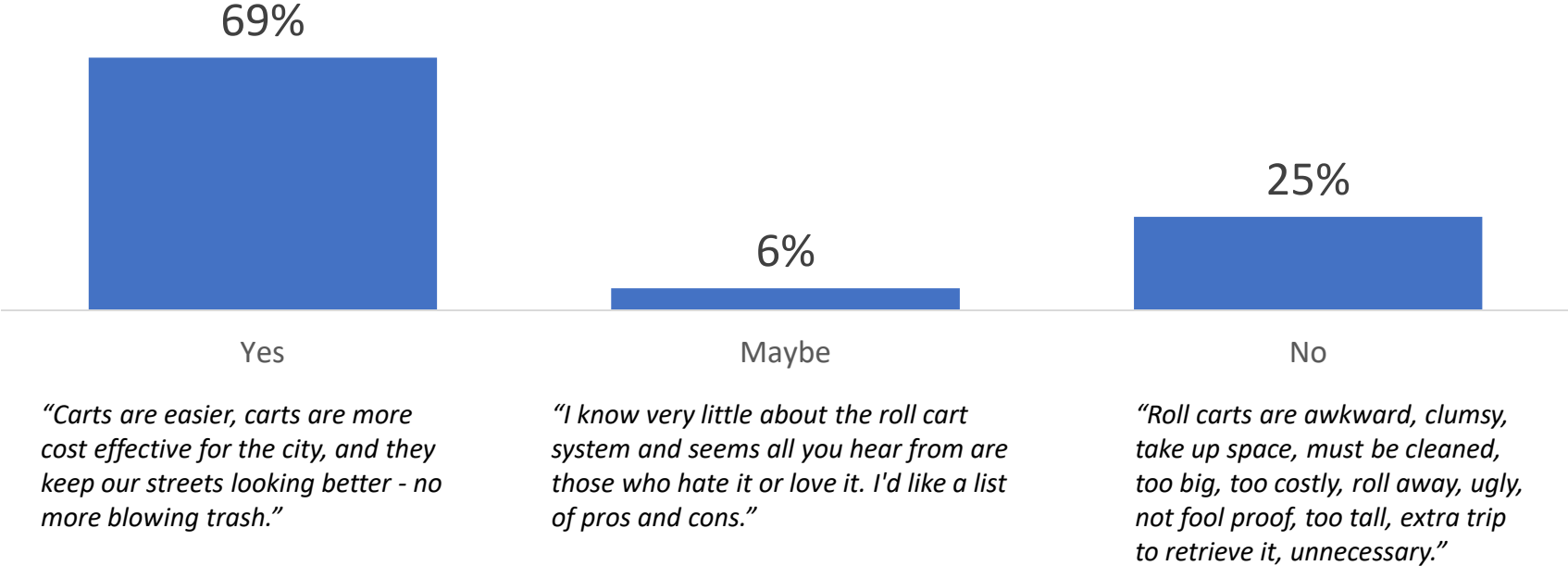
Summary

Overall Insights

- Majority of respondents are in favor of the idea.
 - Especially Younger people and those that generate more trash.
- But, there is a lot of passion on both sides of the issue.
 - Top reasons for those IN FAVOR are: Aesthetics, Worker Safety, Ease of Use, Animal Control, and Good Experiences in Other Cities
 - Top reasons for those OPPOSED are: Aesthetics, Cumbersome, Lack of Storage Space, Concern for Elderly/Disabled, Not an Improvement over Current System
- If the move to roll carts is approved, education of residents should be conducted to help reduce fears and concerns about the change.

More than 2/3rds of respondents are OPEN to the idea of changing from bags to bins.

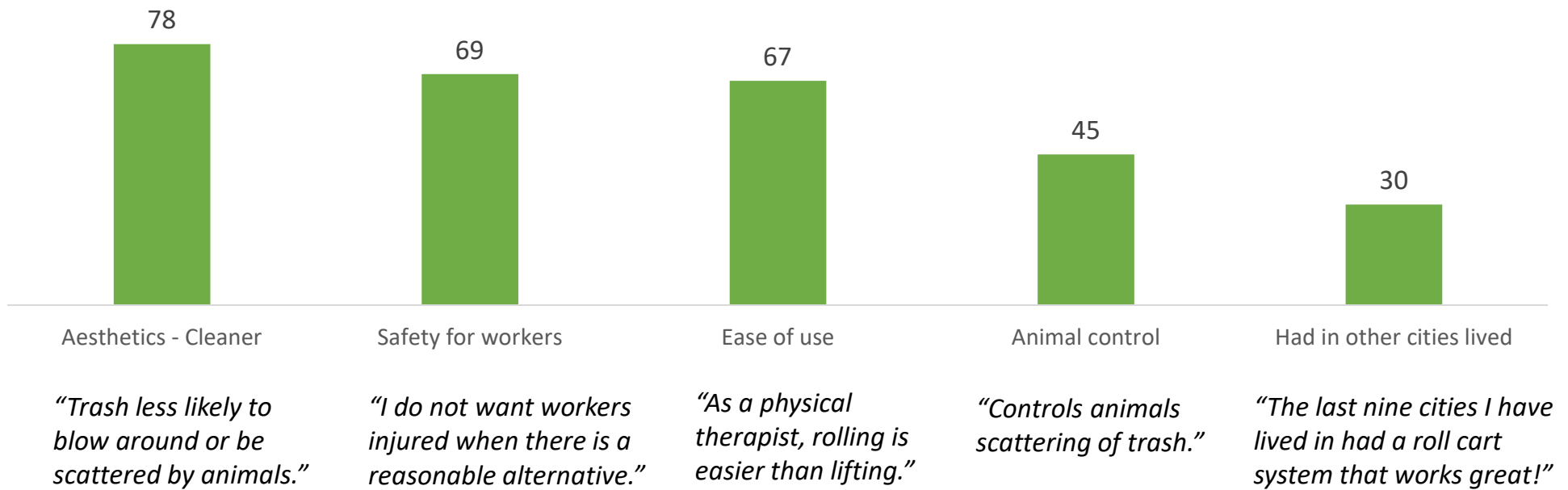
In favor of switching to automated collection with city-provided rolling trash can?
(n=891)



Q: If the City switched everyone to automated collection with a City-provided rolling trash can, would you be in favor of that change?

Reasons Why Like the Idea

Top 5 Reasons Support the Idea
of comments

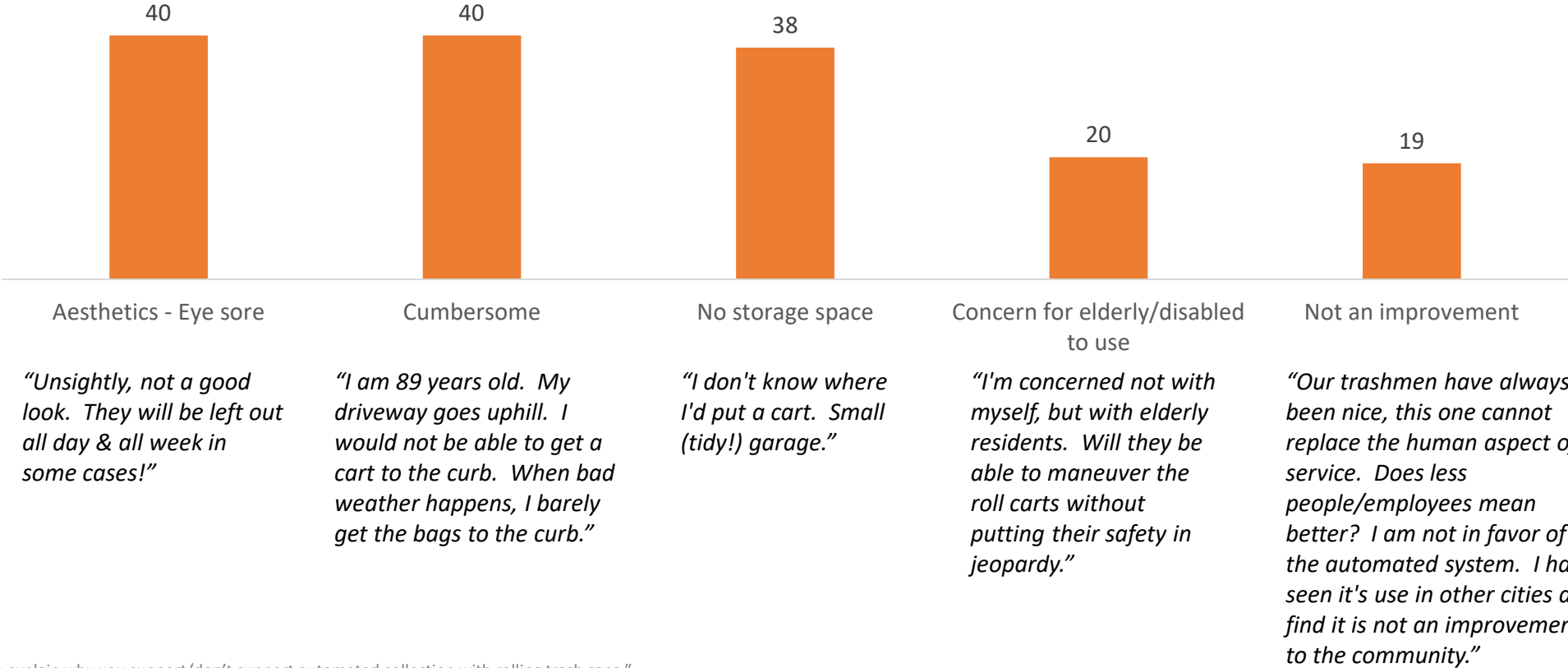


Q: Please explain why you support/don't support automated collection with rolling trash cans."

Note: More comments in the appendix

Reasons Why Not Sure/Opposed to the Idea

Top Reasons Opposed to the idea
of comments



Q: Please explain why you support/don't support automated collection with rolling trash cans."

Same issues seen differently by both sides

For Change

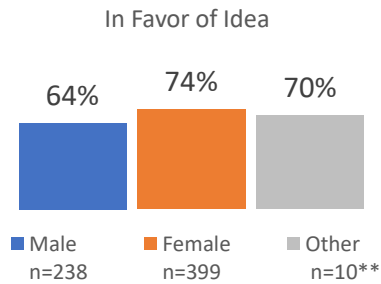
Against Change

<p><i>"Would eliminate many households that routinely pile up 7 or 8 bags of trash at curb."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye-sore 	<p><i>"After the trash is picked up the neighborhood looks good. No carts on the curb or out in front of homes"</i></p>
<p><i>"I'm hoping roll carts will reduce worker injury."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety 	<p><i>"The employees are young . Why is their health more important than who you serve. Both are important."</i></p>
<p><i>"Easier to move to curb."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease 	<p><i>"Much easier for me to set a bag out in the early morning and be done with it with no need to bring any cart back from the curb."</i></p>
<p><i>"No debris on the roads like with bags that can break."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleanliness 	<p><i>"During the big winds these last weeks I had to pick up my neighbors trash cart that spewed trash all over my lot 3 times."</i></p>
<p><i>"Less labor cost."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost 	<p><i>"Automated trucks cannot hold as much trash and would be much slower which means the city will need to purchase and operate more automated trucks and pay more drivers."</i></p>
<p><i>"Seems like it would help prevent animals from getting into the trash and making a mess."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal control 	<p><i>"How do you guard against racoons? They will tip them over."</i></p>
<p><i>"I've lived in 2 other cities w/roll carts. I had wonderful experiences."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior Experience 	<p><i>"Not a fan. Been there, do not want to go back!"</i></p>
<p><i>"Less plastic bags in landfill."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Trash bags 	<p><i>"Carts smell and you have to scrub them."</i></p>
<p><i>"You could operate the trucks with less people, which would solve staffing problems."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency 	<p><i>"The automated truck collection cannot pickup the trash as quickly as the workers that ride on the back of the garbage trucks."</i></p>

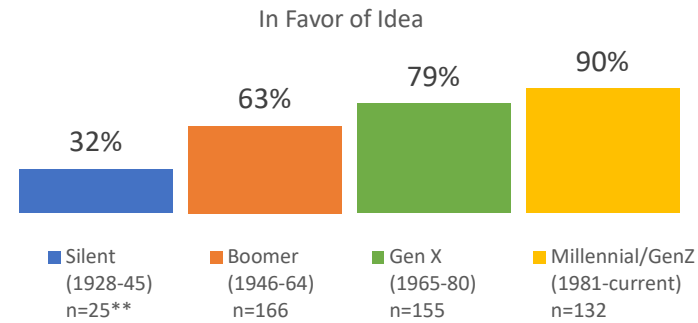
Appendix

All groups are open to the idea (except Silent generation), but some groups are more open than others...

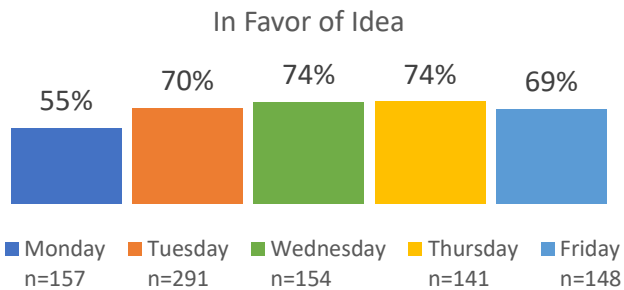
Males least open to the idea



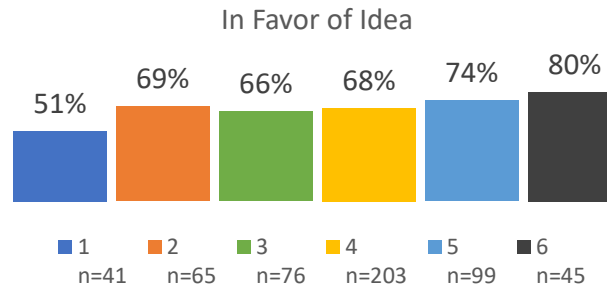
The younger you are, the more open to the idea*



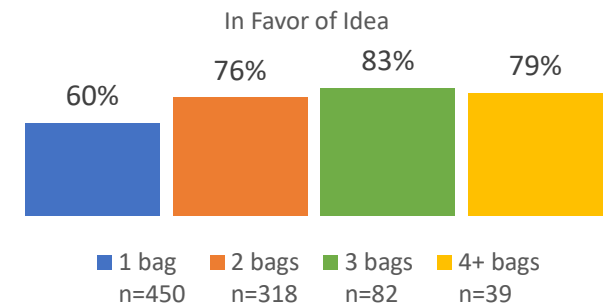
Monday Trash people are the least open to the idea



Ward 1 residents are the least open to the idea*



Higher bag users most open to the idea

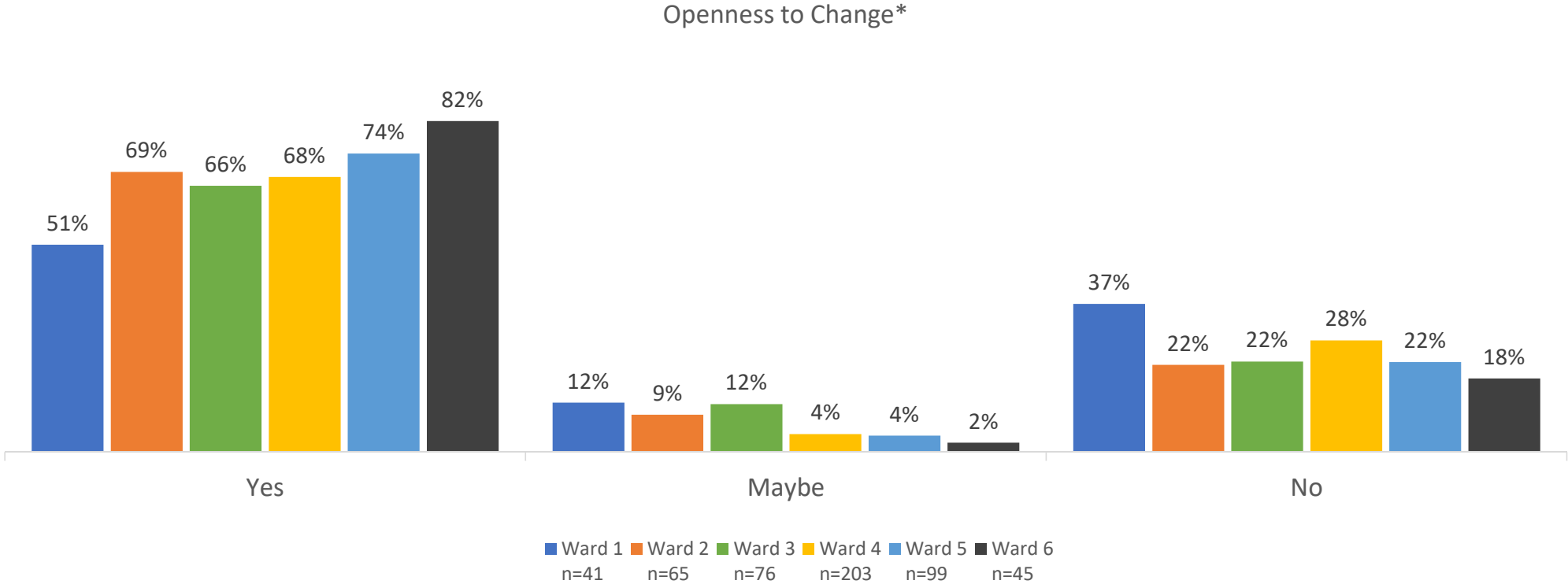


Q: If the City switched everyone to automated collection with a City-provided rolling trash can, would you be in favor of that change?

* Only asked question in the online BeHeard survey

** caution, very small sample

All Wards are open to the idea of change, with Ward 1 the least open and Ward 6 the most open

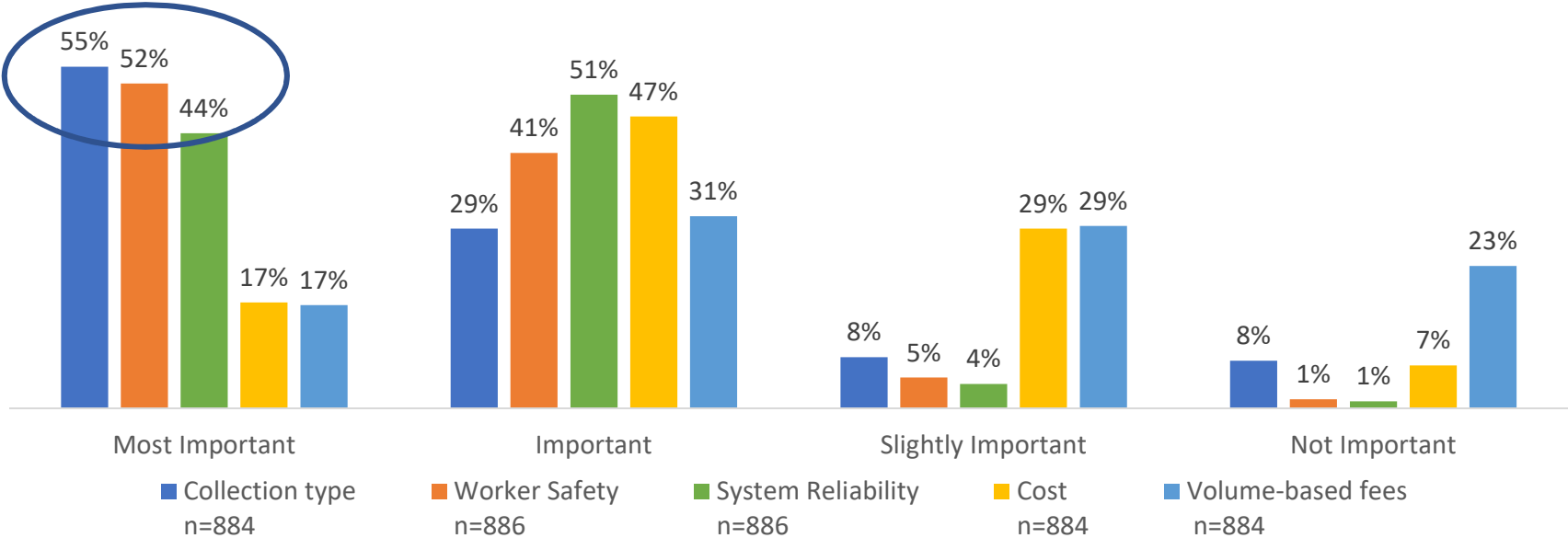


Q: If the City switched everyone to automated collection with a City-provided rolling trash can, would you be in favor of that change?

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Collection type, Worker Safety & System Reliability are the most important of the considerations tested

Importance of Considerations



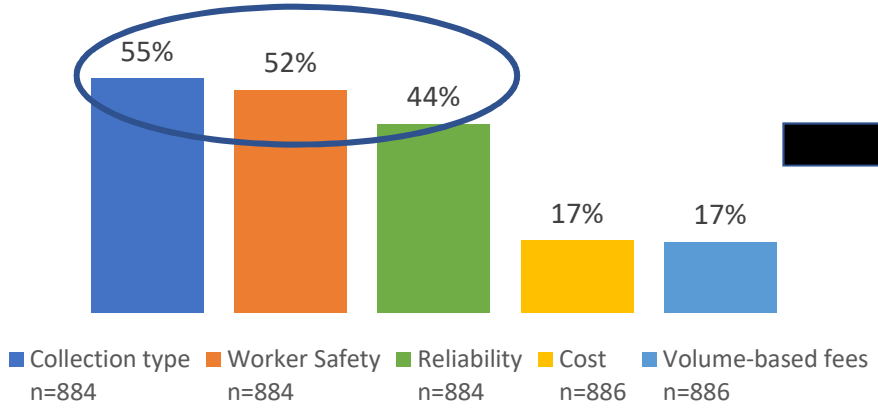
Q: Please rank the following considerations from most important to not important as the City reevaluates curbside trash collection.

Although Collection type, Worker Safety & System Reliability are the most important of the considerations tested, Worker Safety is the main driver for appeal of changing from bags to bins.

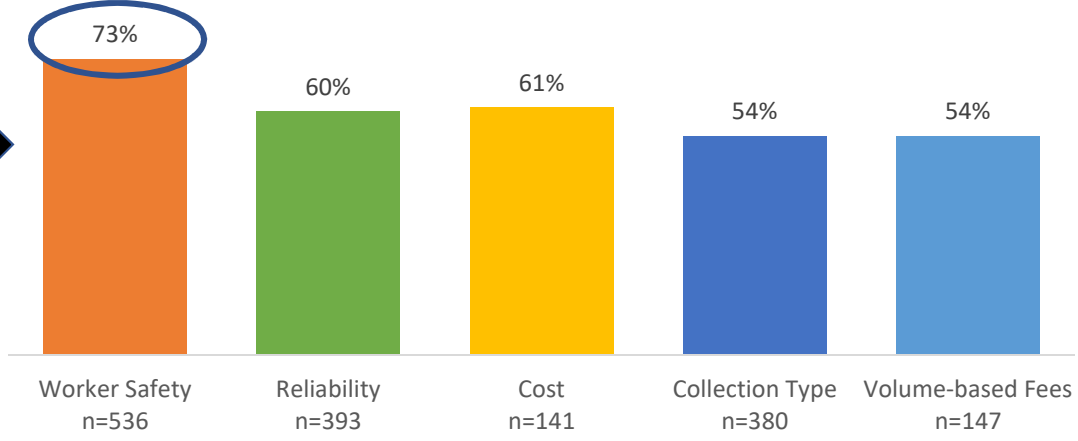
Of the Considerations tested, Collection Type, Worker Safety & Reliability were deemed most important by all respondents

But of the people open to the idea of moving to bins, Worker Safety rises to the top as a consideration

Consider Most Important – All Respondents



Consider Most Important – Those In-favor of Change



"I DO really care about the workers -- I want for them to feel safe, valued, and supported."

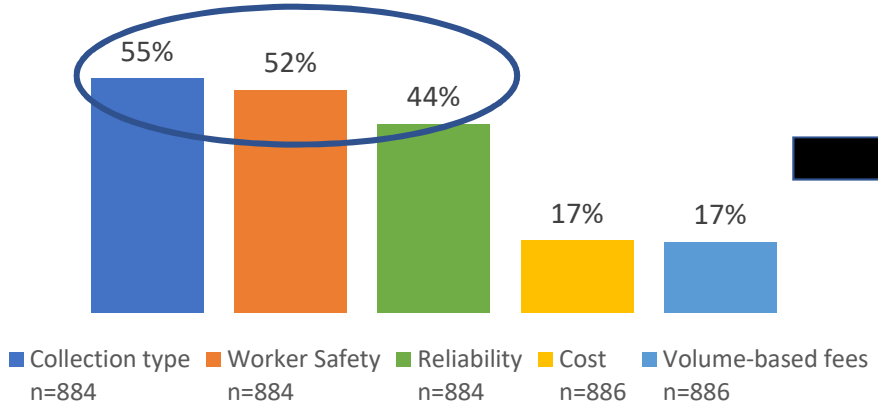
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 Q: If the City switched everyone to automated collection with a City-provided rolling trash can, would you be in favor of that change?

Although Collection type, Worker Safety & System Reliability are the most important of the considerations tested, Fairness of Volume-based Fees is the main driver for opposition of changing from bags to bins.

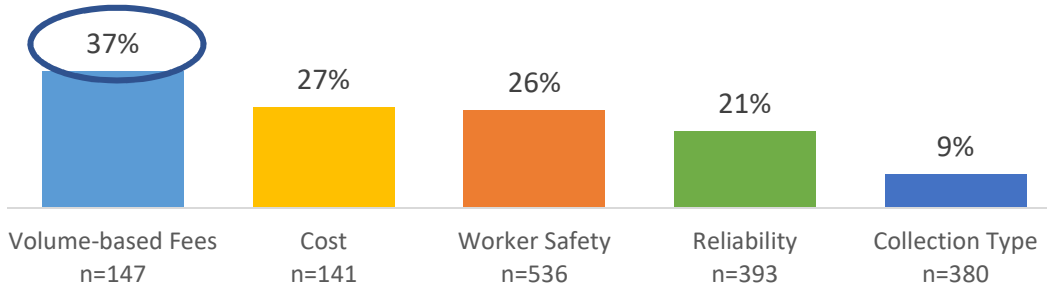
Of the Considerations tested, Collection Type, Worker Safety & Reliability were deemed most important by all respondents

But of the people opposed to the idea of moving to bins, Fairness of Volume-based fees rises to the top as a consideration

Consider Most Important – All Respondents



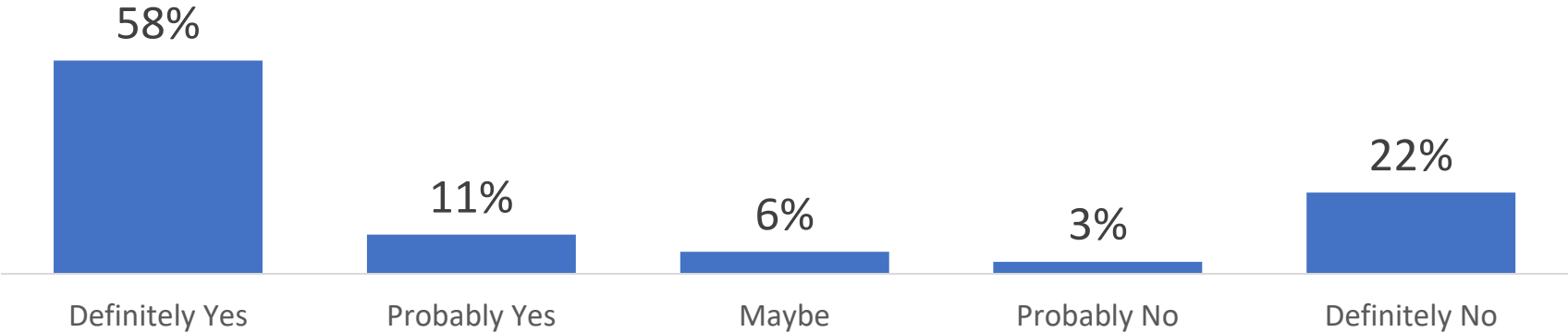
Consider Most Important – Those Opposed to Change



Q: Please rank the following considerations from most important to not important as the City reevaluates curbside trash collection.
 Q: If the City switched everyone to automated collection with a City-provided rolling trash can, would you be in favor of that change?

Rolling Trash Can Issue is Polarizing

In favor of switching to automated collection with city-provided rolling trash can?
(n=891)



Q: If the City switched everyone to automated collection with a City-provided rolling trash can, would you be in favor of that change?

Both Sides Emotional about the Potential Change

For Change

- *“I am so mad we are still arguing about how to do the trash. Everyone wants trash to get collected. No one wants the employees to get hurt. Everyone wants a decent bin. There should be a way to move forward w/that much consensus. We have endless feedback sessions. I view this as a failure of government which is why this makes me mad. I really appreciate the city's efforts to communicate w/us - please do more.”*
- *“This has somehow become an emotional debate. People need solid statistics and facts to convince them that this is a good idea.”*

Against Change

- *“This topic has been so poorly managed that opinions about city management staff will suffer for years.”*
- *“We voted for bags. Why was our vote not respected? Trash bag system has worked well for us over 50 years with no problems. If the city of Columbia would pay it's workers a competitive wage, treat them respectable then there would be no labor shortage.”*
- *“Let the people of CoMo vote on having or not having roll carts AS WE DID in 2015!!!”*

Public Comments

Public Comment Totals and Channels

Total Number of Comments: 194

Public Comment Channel	For	Against	Maybe
Jan. 10 Public Meeting	20	10	4
Jan. 31 Public Meeting (includes emails post Jan. 31)	2	13	2
Emails (prior to Jan. 10)	2	8	1
BeHeard	82	31	19

Public Comment By Category – Top 3 Reasons for Concerns

1. No Storage Space

2. Eye Sore

3. Cumbersome/Hard to Handle

Public Comment By Category – Top Three Reasons for Support

1. Worker Safety

2. Ease of Use

3. Cleaner Streets and More Efficient System (tied for 3rd)