



Public Participation and Partners Chapter: Survey Results Summary

Of the ninety-five survey respondents, the majority indicated that they supported the overall intent and goals of the chapter. However, they also felt that the goals were not being achieved and that some revisions to the chapter were needed to facilitate reaching the goals of the chapter.

Common responses:

- Goals and values and vision statements are good but the implementation needs work*
- The City tries to inform but needs more work on engagement*
- Do more to seek diverse opinions, listen, and respond to comments*
- Find ways to build relationships*
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion need to be practiced*
- The traditional public involvement process creates barriers. Formal public meetings and hearings can be intimidating.*
- Communicate to the public that they are being heard, their concerns are valid, and public input is being used to help guide decision making*

SURVEY RESULTS:

Values & Vision Statements

What Olympia values:

“Olympians value their right to participate in city government, and to engage in meaningful, open and respectful community dialogue regarding decisions that affect our community.”

Do you believe the statement above reflects how you feel about participation in city government?

Yes 93%

No 7%

Please explain.

Summary of responses: (7 of the 95 respondents commented)

The responses were negative suggesting public hearings, especially before city council, were biased against low-income, progressives, and local business. Providing meaningful input is considered difficult. Council does not listen, and decisions are made in advance of public input.

Do you believe something should be added or removed from the value statement?

Yes 71%

No 29%

Please explain.

Summary of Responses: (27 of the 95 respondents commented)

The process restricts meaningful input because of time limits on comments and the 45-day blackouts for public input. The phrases “equitable” or “equity” are missing. People should be allowed safe, non-intimidating opportunity to speak. Council should listen to comments before making decisions and respond to comments. Pro-business and pro-progressive attitudes prevail. Add transparency and sincerity.

Our vision for the future:

“Through collaborative and open discussions, Olympians embrace a shared responsibility to make our community a better place.”

Do you believe the statement above reflects how you feel about participation in city government?

Yes 82%

No 18%

Please explain.

Summary of Responses: Some responses indicate this is a token statement, city council doesn’t listen and is unresponsive. Council should provide feedback to comments – communication should be two ways. Define “better place”. “Cancel culture” prevails.

Do you believe something should be added or removed from this vision statement?

Yes: 38%

No: 62%

Please explain.

Summary of Responses: Most responses indicated the statement was okay and nothing should be added or removed. Some felt that there was room for improvement and more specificity.

Community Outreach & Participation Opportunities

Outreach methods:

"...the City is always looking for new and creative ways to engage the community, including using new technologies, such as social media, online discussion portals and high-quality visual maps. The City strives to create clear, concise and jargon-free information so that people from all walks of life can easily and quickly understand the issues and provide input."

Do you believe the above statement provides enough guidance for continuing to improve community outreach?

Yes 82%

No 18%

Please explain.

Summary of Responses: Some responses indicate there is a feeling that participation is not collaborative or truly open. The City needs to improve its outreach efforts to reach the citizens most affected and those with the least ability to participate.

Participation opportunities:

"The city provides a number of methods for community members to participate in local government planning and decision-making. These include, but are not limited to, serving on city council or an advisory board (there are 13 boards/committees), participating in public hearings or community workshops or meetings, volunteering for city programs (parks, stream team, etc), involvement with neighborhood programs and associations, and establishing a partnership with the city."

Do you believe the chapter adequately describes the public participation opportunities available to the community?

Yes 80%

No 20%

Please explain.

Summary of responses:

Some responses indicate this is a token statement. There are rarely openings on advisory committees or other roles to participate. Participation opportunities for those that do not have the time to serve on commissions need to be offered as well.

Underrepresented community members and groups:

“Evaluate and pursue creative methods to inform and engage community members and underrepresented groups who may not ordinarily get involved in civic affairs.”

Do you believe the city could improve its efforts on engaging members of the community that are typically underrepresented?

Yes 71%

No 29%

Please explain.

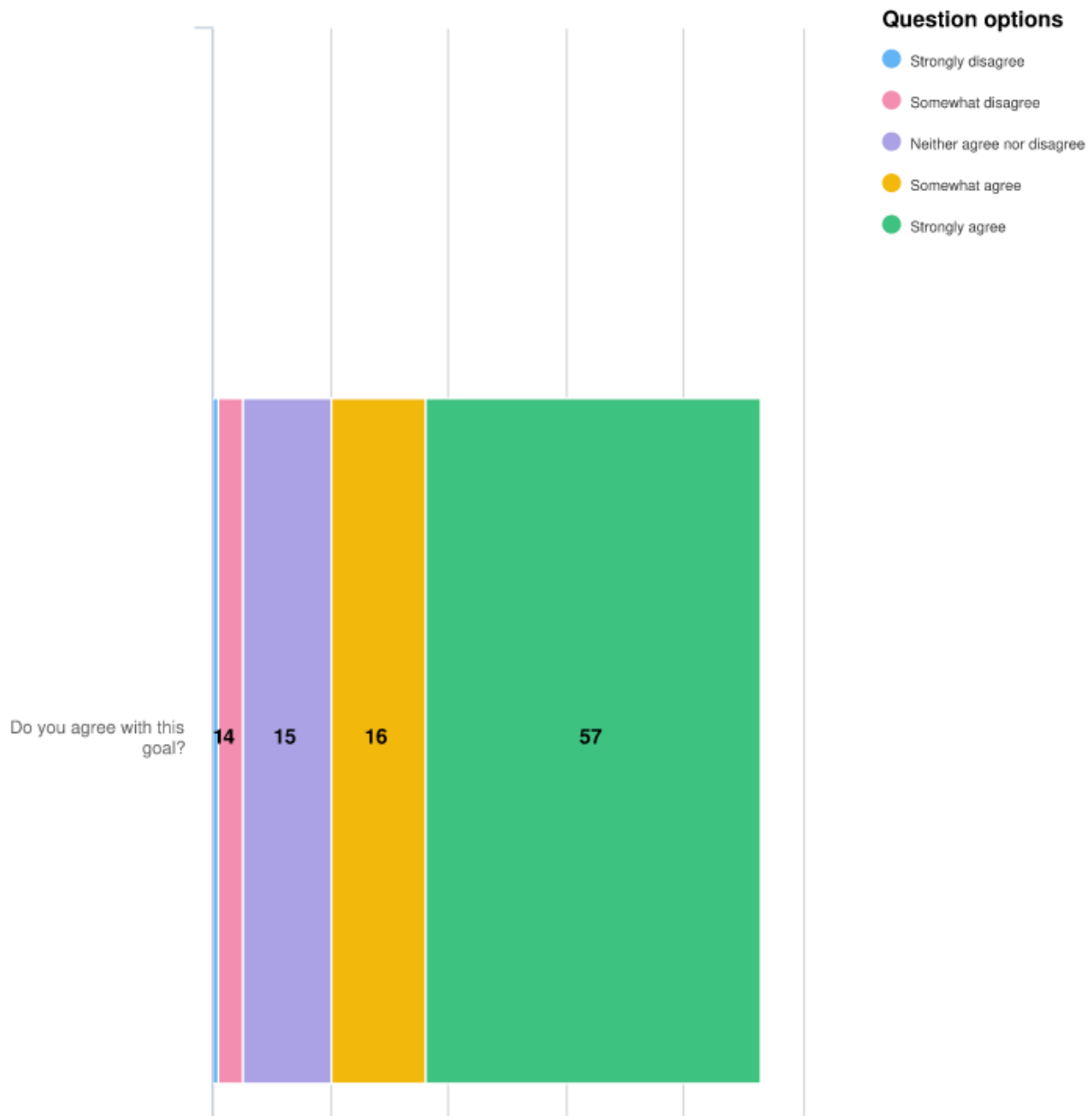
Summary of responses:

Extra effort by the city is needed to reach the underrepresented portions of the community. City events and participation opportunities need to be designed to be welcoming to all members of the community, especially those that typically are not able or do not feel welcome.

Chapter Goals

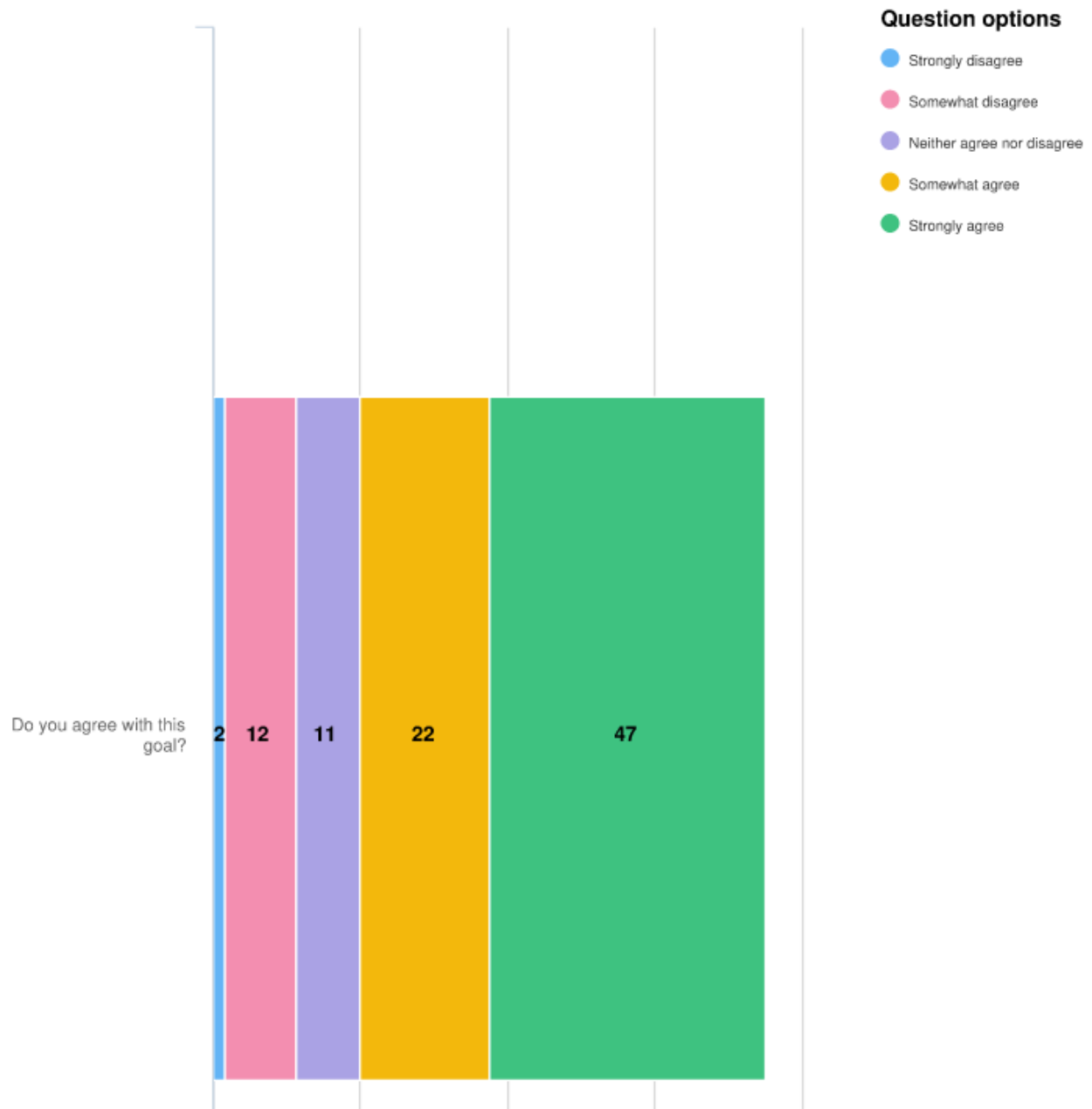
“GP1: The City, individual community members, other agencies and organizations all have a role in helping accomplish the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.”

Do you agree with this goal?



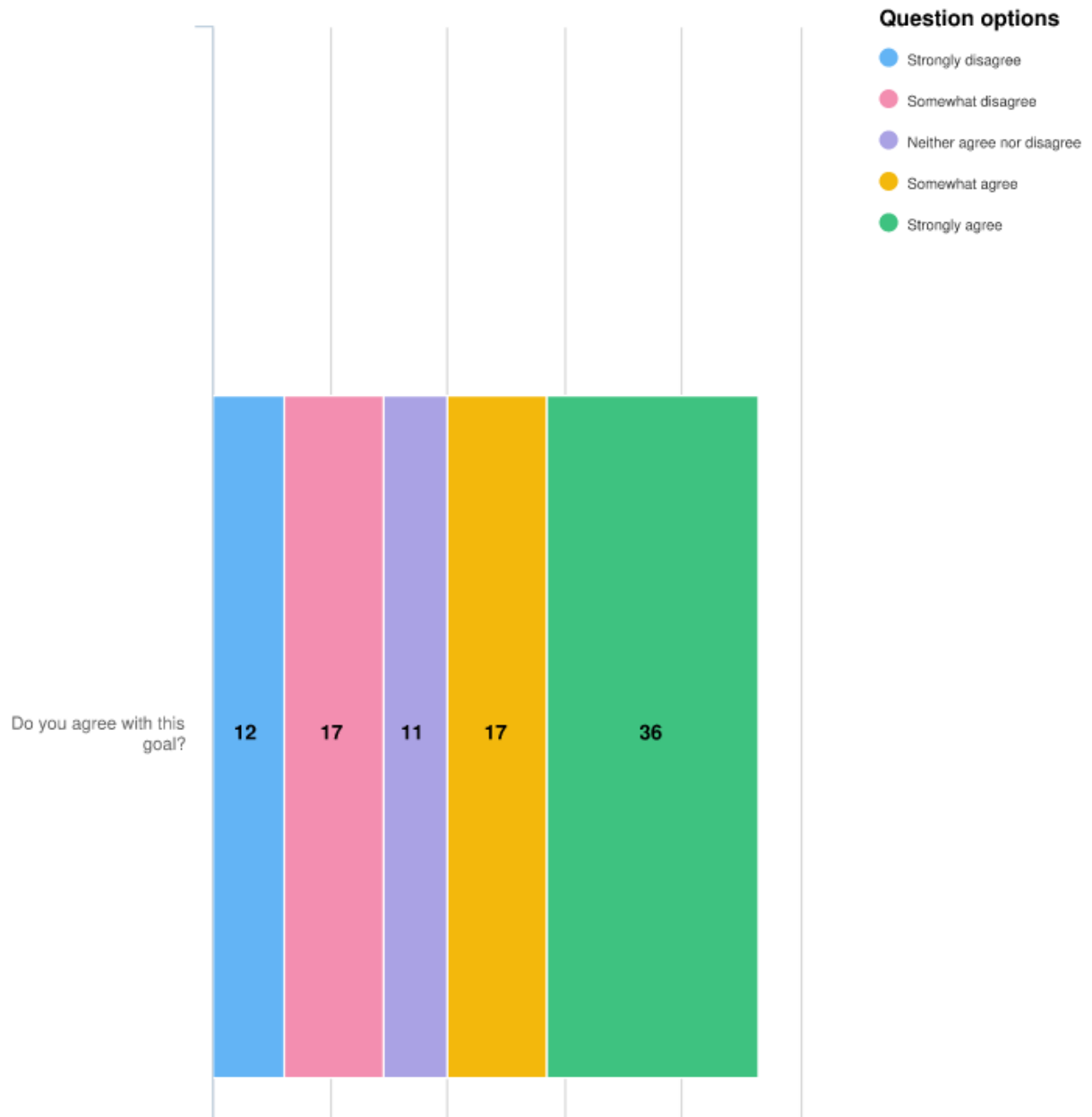
“GP2: People of all ages, backgrounds and physical abilities can access public meetings and information.”

Do you agree with this goal?



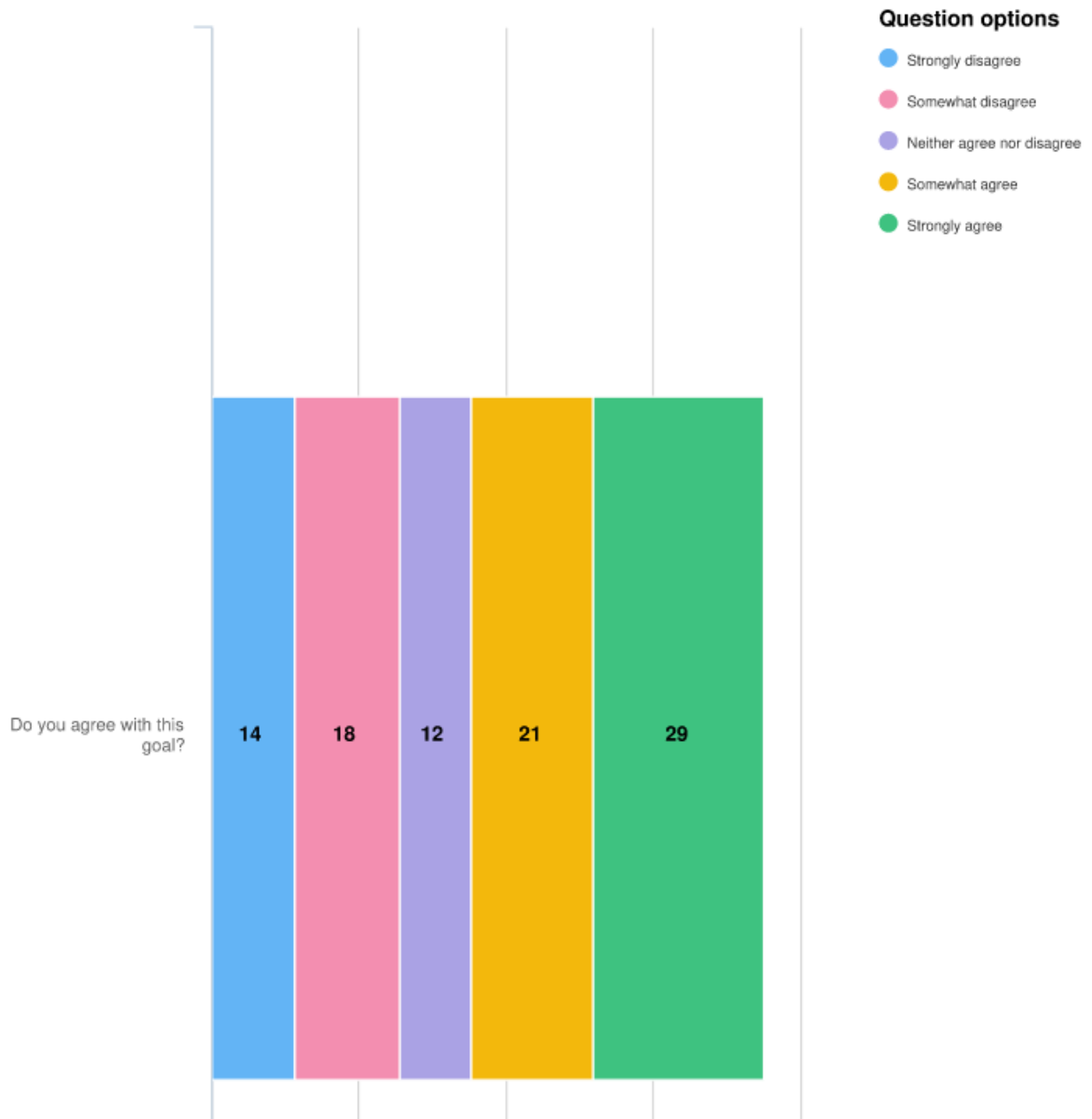
“GP3 City decision processes are transparent and enable effective participation of the public.”

Do you agree with this goal?



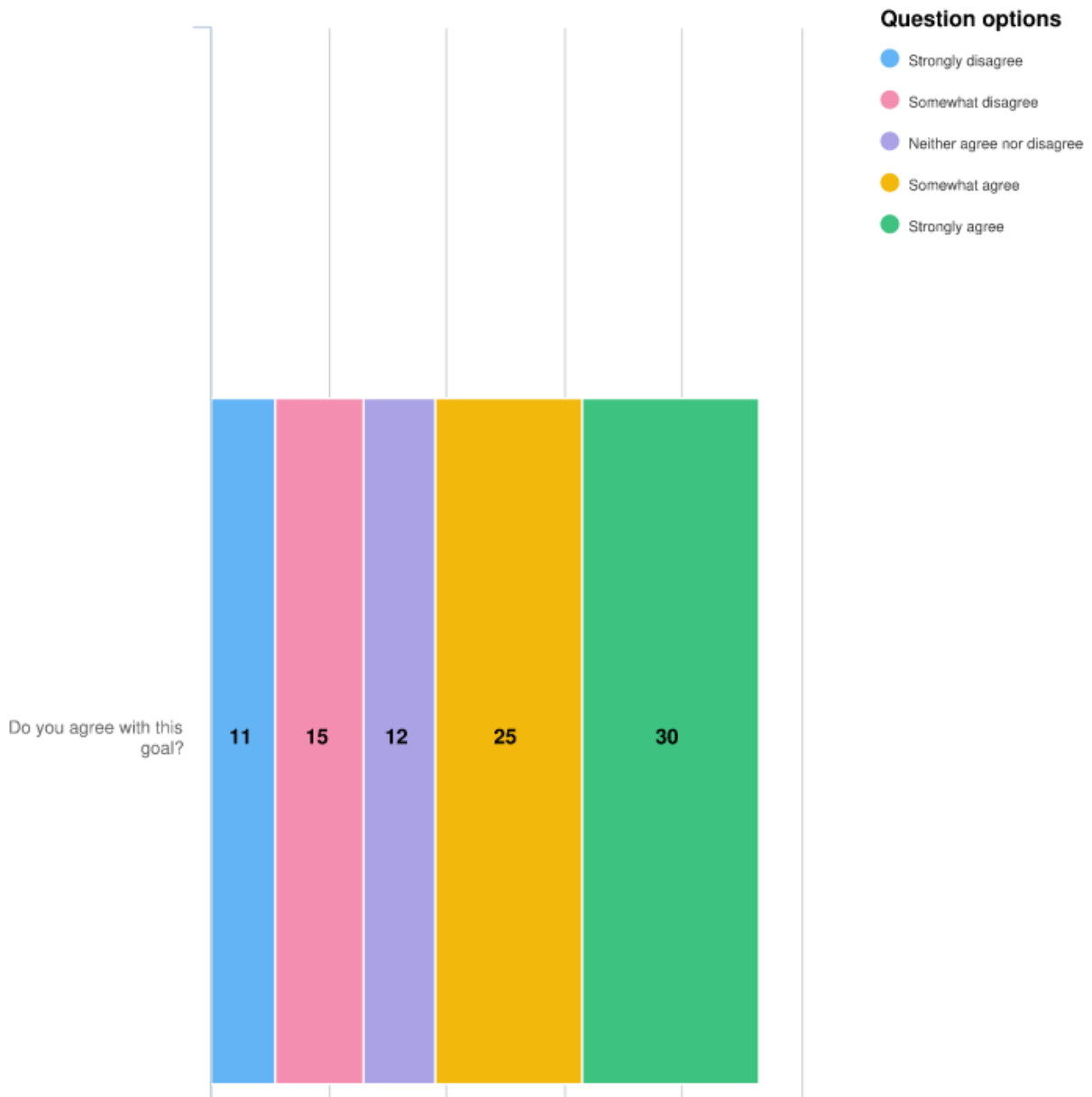
“GP4 Community members and other key stakeholders feel their opinions and ideas are heard, valued, and used by policy makers, advisory committees, and staff.”

Do you agree with this goal?



“GP5 Sub-area planning is conducted through a collaborative effort by community members and the City, and is used to shape how neighborhoods grow and develop.”

Do you agree with this goal?



Overall, do you feel the current Public Participation and Partners chapter is:

Adequate: 38%

Needs some work: 49%

Needs a significant rewrite 13%

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Takeaways: Most responses are specific to individual issues.

- Decisions made are often anti-low income and anti-local resident. Decisions favor progressive types, developers, business
- Make Olympia clean, safe and thriving
- Reach out to churches
- Not addressing law and order
- Links to Countywide Planning Policies don't work
- Decisions ignore business interest
- Create focus groups
- The published Comprehensive Plan schedule is vague
- Consider other types of notification besides email
- City is ruining downtown
- Support affordable housing
- Information should be timely often too late in process
- Open meetings can be intimidating
- Public opinion should weigh more
- More and improved sidewalks are needed
- Civic education is needed