

# City of Columbus Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Evaluation

## Key Issues and Recommendations

Date: October 9, 2025

### Executive Summary

The City of Columbus last rewrote the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance in the 1970's with minor revisions also occurring in 2009. Over time, there has been a patchwork of amendments, but the result is an ordinance that is outdated in many areas relative to modern development standards and difficult for staff to administer.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2020) recommends “updating and monitoring the City’s Zoning, Sign, Building, and other codes to enhance the design of future development”.

The principal goals of this process are to implement the Comprehensive Plan, modernize the code, and make the code more user-friendly, flexible, and predictable. With these goals in mind, Vandewalle & Associates has reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and the existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance and identified overarching issues to be addressed during the rewrite.

### Project Timeline

City staff and the Plan Commission will oversee the process, gather input, and assist in the development of the new ordinances. It is anticipated that several Plan Commission meetings over the next year will involve working sessions, which will all be open to the public for participation.

The project kicked off in the summer of 2025 and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2026. The overarching project tasks and timelines are listed below:

| Timing                | Project Phase                                                             |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summer 2025           | Information and Input Gathering and Issues Identification                 |
| Fall 2025             | Develop New Zoning Districts, Land Uses, and Bulk Standards               |
| Fall/Winter 2025-2026 | Prepare Draft Ordinance                                                   |
| Spring 2026           | Review Draft Ordinance with City Staff, Plan Commission, and City Council |
| Summer 2026           | Public Open House Review and Revisions to Draft Ordinance and Map         |
| Late Summer 2026      | Prepare for Adoption of the New Zoning Ordinance and Map                  |

## Background on Planning and Policy Relationship

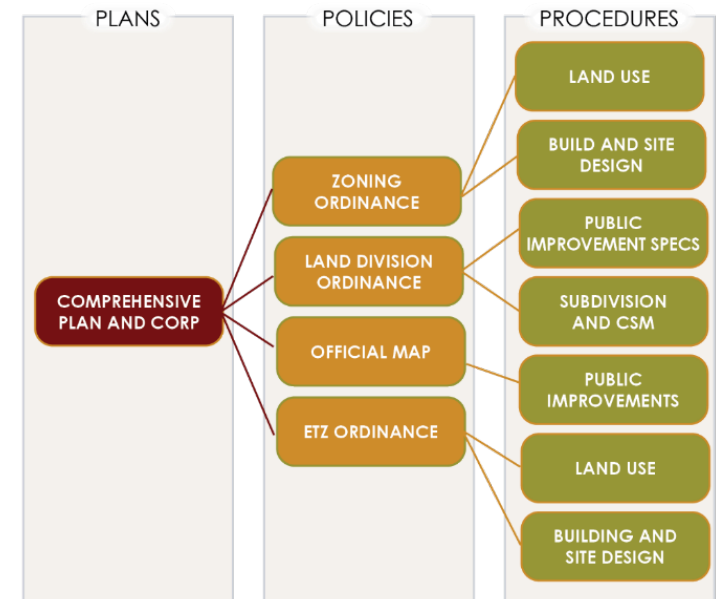
Zoning and subdivision controls are tools to implement community plans and goals. Development review often proceeds on two tracks: zoning approval and subdivision approval, without one taking priority over the other. Because of this overlap and equal hierarchy in implementation, development regulations should be coordinated wherever possible and must be consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

## Comprehensive Plan Summary

In a modern planning-zoning relationship, the Comprehensive Plan is designed to be implemented, in part, through zoning and land division control. The Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan guides land use decision making in the City and contains the Future Land Use map. Per state statutes, the new Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance and Map will be developed to be consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the City review its ordinances to identify changes needed to implement the plan. Relevant chapter goals include:

- Provide a variety of housing types to meet existing housing needs and encourage future growth within the City of Columbus.
- Establish and promote a unique identity for the City of Columbus.
- The City will ensure that zoning and land development ordinances are consistent with the plan.
- The City will adhere to the future land use plan when considering land division and zoning amendment petitions.
- Promote redevelopment and infill development for the downtown area and on other key sites.
- Preserve and enhance the historic character of the downtown by encouraging compatible new development and redevelopment.
- Promote efficient and orderly development to mitigate impacts on agricultural lands.
- Protect natural resources within the City's Planning Area.
- Require all new residential, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use developments to be served with sidewalks or pedestrian/bicycle paths.



## Issues Summary

Vandewalle & Associates has reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and the existing ordinances, in addition to conducting an issue identification meeting with staff, the Plan Commission, and the City Council, a public workshop, and an online survey. Together, this information was utilized to create the following list of overarching issues to be addressed during the rewrite. Each is explored in more depth throughout the document.

1. Address Housing Barriers And Bulk Dimensional Standards
2. Increase User-Friendliness And Improve Consistency Of The Code
3. Allow A Mix Of Uses And Promote Infill and Redevelopment
4. Determine Appropriate Exterior Building Design And Landscaping Standards
5. Update And Standardize Performance Standards
6. Address Parking Requirements
7. Make The Zoning And Subdivision Ordinance Compliant With State And Federal Law Changes
8. Update Definitions For Increased Clarity And Consistency
9. Modernize The Subdivision Code
10. Determine The Best-Fit Impervious Surface Approach

### Issue 1: Address Housing Barriers and Bulk Dimensional Standards

Housing densities between single-family and large multi-unit structures, sometimes referred to as “missing middle” housing, are an important part of a well-functioning housing market. Missing middle units provide options for young families or those looking to downsize that may not be financially feasible on large lot single family developments. Including missing middle housing formats in more zoning districts will create more housing options for Columbus residents. The table below is a summary of the existing housing types and densities permitted within the community today. It is recommended that the City modifies this approach to address existing issues and allow greater housing diversity by reconfiguring the residential zoning districts into mixed residential districts with fewer conditional uses and more housing options.

Further the new Zoning Ordinance will require the creation of new zoning districts to accommodate the range of desired development patterns throughout the City. Some new districts will be created to enable greater housing choice, some will provide greater control than conditional use processes (see Issue 7), and others will be needed to enable mixed-uses and greater infill and redevelopment opportunities (see Issue 3). Even in cases where the regulations are virtually unchanged, there is a need to rename all of the zoning districts to clearly signal when the old Zoning Ordinance is being referenced, versus the new standards.

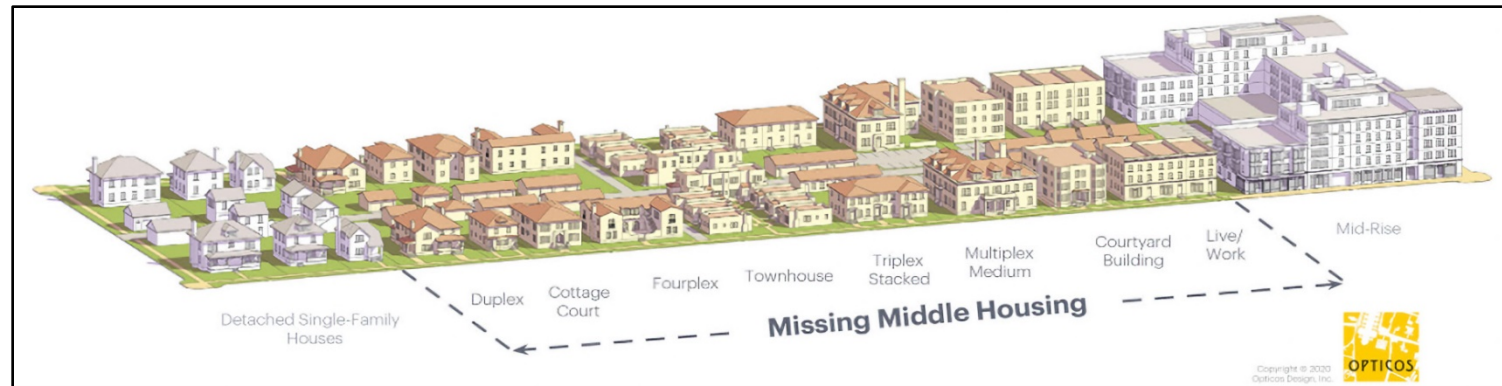
Additionally, residential districts today have large minimum lot areas (7,000-12,150 square feet for single-family, 12,000 square feet for two-family, 15,000 square feet for multi-family) and setbacks (25-30 ft), in addition to restrictive maximum heights (35 ft) and lot coverages (30-60%). To promote more diverse housing

densities, match existing development patterns, and reflect modern development formats, the City can adjust existing bulk dimension standards

to allow smaller lots sizes (ex. 3,000 – 6,000 sf) and setbacks (15' or 8'), in addition to exploring increasing heights (35-50 ft) and lot coverages (50-70%). Other key issues include the requirement for a Conditional Use for two-family zero lot line situations and the conversion of single-family to two-family uses. Diverse multi-family options are also an existing barrier today in only permitting greater than two dwelling units in the same structure within the R-4 zoning district and the restrictive height and lot coverage requirements in that district. Together, these limit creative opportunities for the full range of multi-family that occur within existing developed areas and new development situations. An alternative approach could be utilizing revised bulk dimensions within various districts to create a form-based solution to density.

Finally, in-family suites (otherwise known as Granny Flats or Mother-In-Law Suites) and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are an important part of addressing the housing shortage. In-family suites are typically smaller-scale where a small kitchenette or living area is located within the existing structure, whereas ADUs are typically detached or attached structures that serve as another Building Code-compliant dwelling unit on the property. Today, neither are explicitly permitted within the zoning ordinance. The City can explore allowing in-family suites and ADUs by-right in residential zoning districts, similar to what has recently been done in many other areas of the state. This change will give residents more flexibility to make improvements to their property that allows them to take care of aging family members. Specified standards for both types of uses such as setbacks, maximum sizes, access, configuration, parking, etc. can accompany each new land use within the new Zoning Ordinance.

Overall, the development of new zoning districts and bulk standards should consider less restrictive requirements that will enable missing middle and diverse housing formats throughout the City.



Source: *Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis*. Daniel Parolek

Figure 1: Existing Residential Uses Permitted in Columbus

|       | 1 Unit                         | 2 Units (Duplex, Twin Home, Two-Flat) | 3+ Units                       | Residential On Second Floor and Above (Mixed-Use Building) | Mobile Homes                       |
|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| RD    | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 87,120 SF | Not Allowed                           | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                                                | Conditional<br>Lot Size: 87,120 SF |
| R-1   | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 12,150 SF | Not Allowed                           | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                                                | Not Allowed                        |
| R-2   | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 9,000 SF  | Conditional<br>Lot Size: 12,000 SF    | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                                                | Not Allowed                        |
| R-3   | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 7,000 SF  | Conditional<br>Lot Size: 12,000 SF    | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                                                | Conditional<br>Lot Size: 87,120 SF |
| R-4   | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 7,000 SF  | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 12,000 SF        | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 15,000 SF | Not Allowed                                                | Not Allowed                        |
| R-5   | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                           | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                                                | Allowed<br>Lot Size: 5,000 SF      |
| CBD-1 | Conditional<br>Lot Size: X SF  | Not Allowed                           | Not Allowed                    | Allowed<br>Lot Size: None                                  | Not Allowed                        |
| B-2   | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                           | Not Allowed                    | Conditional<br>Lot Size: 21,730 SF                         | Not Allowed                        |
| B-3   | Not Allowed                    | Not Allowed                           | Not Allowed                    | Conditional<br>Lot Size: 9,600 SF                          | Not Allowed                        |

## Issue 2: Increase User-Friendliness And Improve Consistency Of The Code

It is recommended that the new Zoning Ordinance be reorganized into twelve articles as detailed in the text box. This includes combining all administrative and procedural sections into a single Article. The City's goal is to find a balance between staff-level approvals and the need for Plan Commission approvals. Throughout this process, it will be important for staff, elected and appointed officials, and the public to develop and feel comfortable with the standards in the new code. This will lend itself toward a more streamlined approval process via staff review vs. Plan Commission.

Further, it is recommended that the code clearly spells out the approval process for all zoning-related procedures. For example: notice requirements, amendments, conditional uses, zoning permits, site plan review, planned developments, interpretations, variances, and violations should all be located together. Detailed descriptions of procedures can add substantial length to the ordinance, but can also result in more predictable procedures, more complete submittals, and more efficient project review – clearly worth the tradeoff.

Increasing user-friendliness of the code will reduce time administering the code and increase predictability of outcomes. Additional recommendations include:

- Identify and remedy all inconsistent requirements.
- Remove all provisions that do not pertain to zoning and relocate them to the proper section of City ordinances.
- Summarize and procedures in a table that provides easy reference for the public, City staff, and City officials.
- Streamline approval processes by creating defined metrics that can be approved by the Zoning Administrator and further define the situations that require Plan Commission approval and the criteria in which they are using to make such approvals.
- Combine and consolidate land use categories. Example: Indoor Institutional instead of community center, cultural institution, library, public safety facility, office government, and religious assembly.
- Add modern land use types to accommodate uses such as small and large-scale solar and wind energy systems, electric vehicle charging stations, short-term residential rentals, community gardens, etc.
- Create a unified table of land uses to indicate what's permitted by-right, by conditional use, or not permitted in each zoning district and a summary table of all bulk dimensional standards (setbacks, lot sizes, etc.).

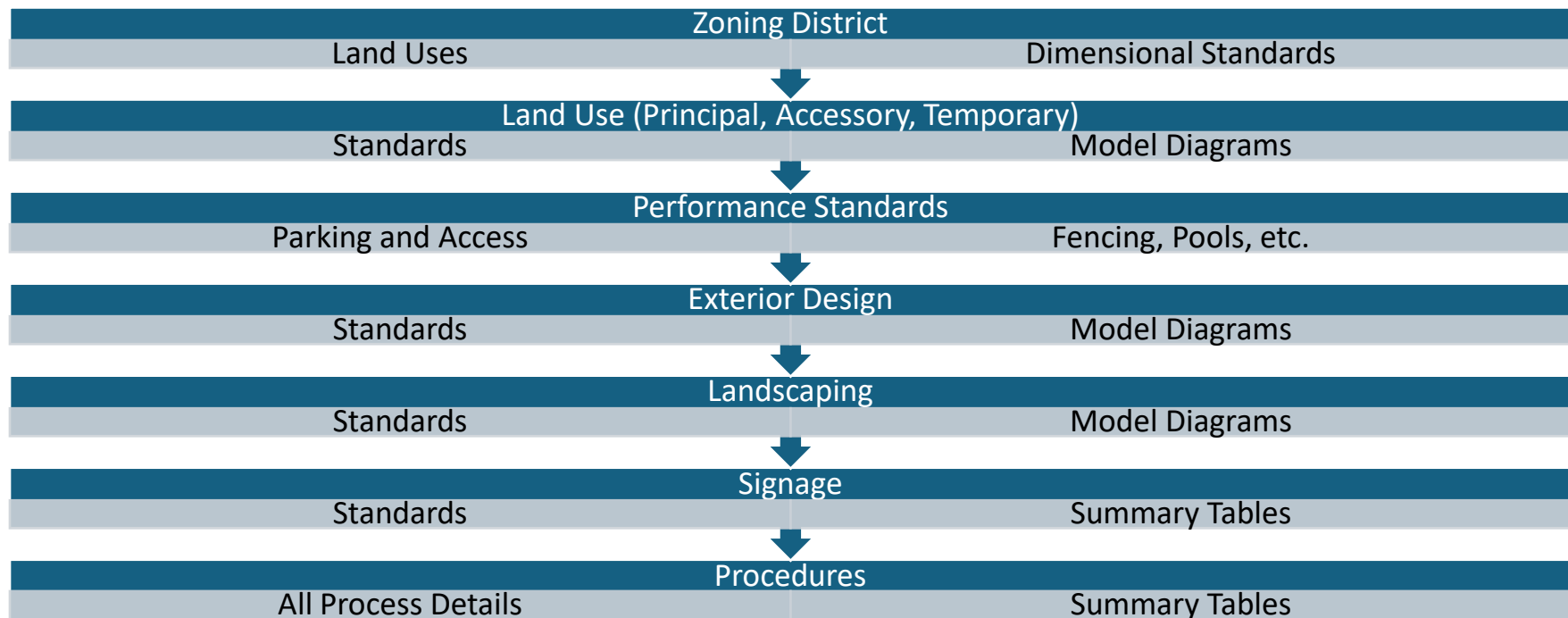
### Proposed Zoning Code Reorganization

- Article 1: Introduction and Definitions
- Article 2: Establishment of Zoning Districts
- Article 3: Land Use Regulations
- Article 4: Bulk Regulations
- Article 5: Nonconforming Situations
- Article 6: Performance Standards
- Article 7: Exterior Building Design Standards
- Article 8: Landscaping Requirements
- Article 9: Sign Ordinance
- Article 10: Administration and Procedures
- Article 11: Historic Preservation
- Article 12: Shoreland Zoning

- Create a defined list of accessory land uses for each zoning district that can be used in combination with principal land uses on permitted lots such as incidental uses, off-street parking, storage areas, etc. This same approach could be utilized for Temporary Land Uses.
- Improve definitions and standards for common accessory and temporary structures such as car ports, sheds, and structures that may not be affixed via a secure foundation.
- Publish how-to guides that cover common issues residents may encounter, such as fencing, signs, pools, and ADUs requirements.

Below, in Figure 2, is a proposed approach to how requirements can be collocated together and organized in a typical order of development procedural steps within the new Zoning Ordinance and include accompanying text and illustrative versions of each requirement to improve user-friendliness.

*Figure 2: Project Review Components*



### Issue 3: Allow A Mix Of Uses And Promote Infill/Redevelopment

The new Zoning Ordinance can increase flexibility by permitting a mixture of uses within the same building along commercial corridors and downtown. Mixed use buildings are a key component to a thriving community by creating attractive commercial spaces and housing units within the same structure. New downtown residents increase foot traffic for downtown businesses and help make the area more vibrant. The majority of mixed-use buildings in Columbus today are located downtown, but new mixed-use development is limited to only the second floor or above in the business districts right now.

One of the Comprehensive Plan's goals is to foster new infill and redevelopment within the City's existing boundaries on sites already served by infrastructure. While this is possible with the existing Zoning Ordinance, it is limited. Communities across Wisconsin have similar goals and have employed a number of different approaches to enable flexibility for constrained development situations. The City could explore the creation of one or more redevelopment-oriented new zoning districts that provide reduced lot sizes and setbacks, coupled with greater height and lot coverage flexibility. It can also employ mechanisms such as setback averaging to enable shorter setbacks for infill development that matches the surrounding neighborhood context. Overall, many of the ideas in Issue 1 will also contribute to enabling greater flexibility for these types of situations.

Finally, permitting multiple principal land uses on the same lot creates more flexibility and predictability for common business types. For example, a gas station may include gas services, retail options, car wash services, and outdoor sales components. Many communities want to enable multiple principal land uses on the same lot or principal and accessory uses on the same lot, but their code does not have clearly defined standards for each. The new Zoning Ordinance can enable each land use to occur with defined standards that must be met for different land uses working in conjunction with one another.



*Source: Gresham Smith GP*

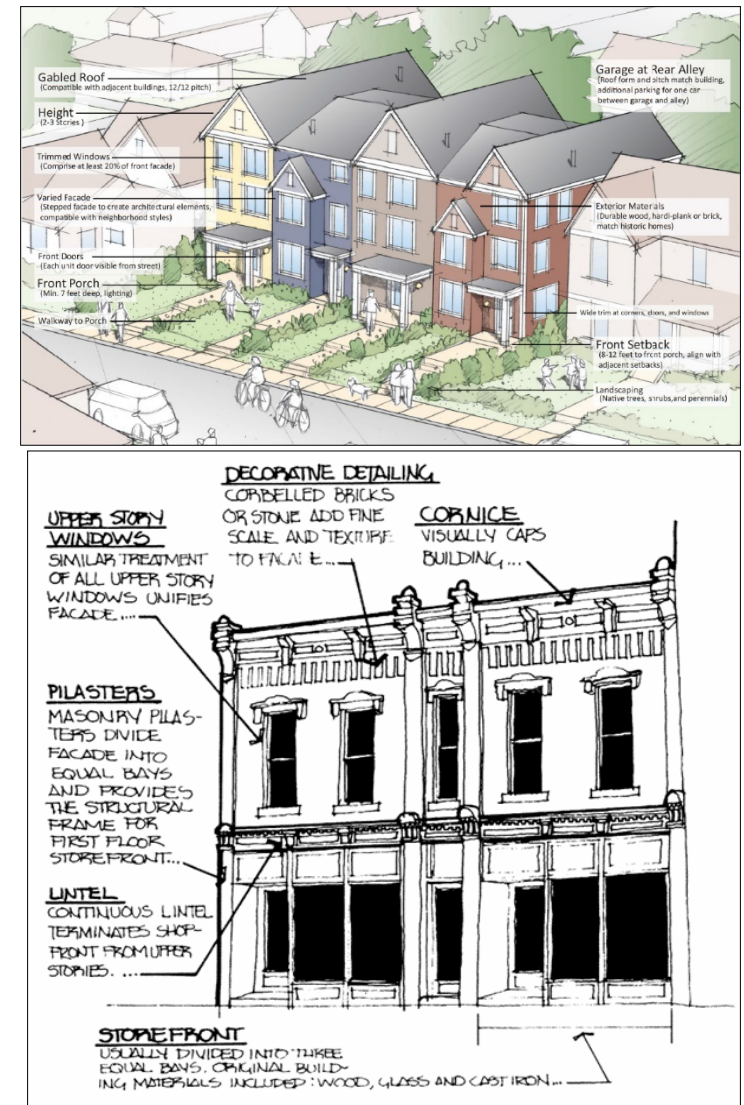
## Issue 4: Determine Appropriate Exterior Building Design And Landscaping Standards

The existing code includes some design guidelines for historic structures, but very little else in terms of standards for building materials, articulation, orientation, and landscaping. The lack of such standards creates instances of both high-quality and low-quality design across community corridors, which directly impacts the community's image.

The new Zoning Ordinance can include defined design standards for different types of land uses (residential, commercial/mixed-use, downtown, industrial, etc.). This approach has been utilized successfully in many other communities of similar size to Columbus and can assist in achieving the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations for promoting high-quality building design. As an alternative, overlay design districts could be employed to set defined standards in key gateway or downtown areas throughout the community. Overall, new standards should be based on defined metrics that are easy to calculate and apply (ex. requirement that 50% of the façade needs to be a brick), creating consistency in application and approvals.

Further, the City has designated historic structures, a local historic preservation ordinance, and a Historic Preservation Committee. Three key aspects of this project will need to determine 1) the appropriate process for local designation (Plan Commission, Historic Preservation, City Council, etc.), 2) the mission, role, and purpose of the Historic Preservation Committee, and 3) the suitable standards that should be incorporated into the ordinance for the review of projects associated with local historic structures. It is anticipated that this topic will be explored in greater depth throughout the project to determine the best fit approach for Columbus.

Finally, the City's existing landscaping standards can be improved using a point-based system that establishes zoning district-based standards for different areas of the lot (street, building foundation, yards, etc.). The property owner can then meet those standards in a variety of ways using different plant types with associated point values to satisfy the requirements for each area



of the lot. This approach is very common across Wisconsin and has been utilized in many similar sized communities to create consistency, enhance aesthetics and green spaces, and provide flexibility in meeting the baseline standards.

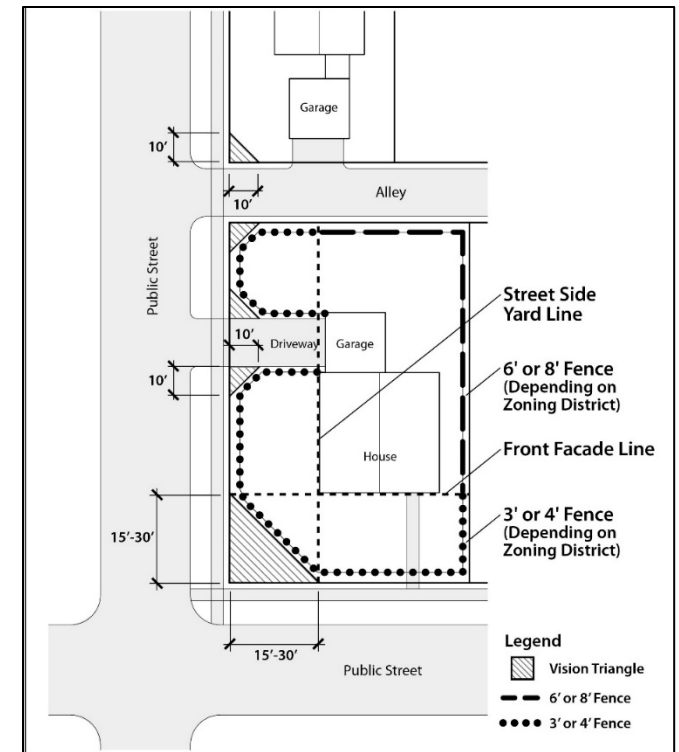
## Issue 5: Update And Standardize Performance Standards

Some provisions related to fencing, outdoor storage, screening, noise, odor, and glare are addressed in the City's Zoning Ordinance. It is recommended that defined standards be developed and applied via text and illustrative figures, in addition to further clarifying how they apply to specific situations, consolidating them all into one section, and adding more modern performance standards. This will improve user-friendliness, application of the standards, and establish predictable outcomes throughout the community.

One of the most effective modern zoning practices is the use of summary tables and illustrative graphics. This helps both staff and applicants understand common standards in a user-friendly format. A common example is fencing regulations that are a frequent application type and can be summarized in a few simple graphics, in addition to supporting text.

## Issue 6: Address Parking Requirements

Addressing the parking requirements section of the code will help the City avoid large unused fields of parking, reduce costs for new development, and promote biking and walking in the community. Parking minimums in the City should be evaluated to ensure that the City does not require more parking than is needed for each land use. For example, the off-street parking requirement of two garage spaces per dwelling unit and one additional space per dwelling unit for residential may be unnecessary considering that many residents may only have one or two vehicles. Additionally, the City could consider implementing parking maximums, adding bike parking standards, and allowing shared parking situations by-right where adjoining uses have adequate parking to accommodate the associated demand of each use. Finally, one of the Comprehensive Plan's goals is to promote bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The City could consider developing bicycle and pedestrian connection standards to ensure safe access to and from each property.



## Issue 7: Make The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Compliant With State And Federal Law Changes

The existing Zoning Ordinance will need to be reviewed in detail to ensure it is in line with changes in state and federal law that have occurred after it was last rewritten. This includes areas such as short-term rentals, conditional uses (see below), content-based signage standards (see below), large and small-scale solar, community living arrangements, nonconforming structures, telecommunication uses, and more.

Wisconsin Act 67 requires that municipalities approve conditional use permits if the applicant meets all of the requirements specified in the ordinance and the only way a conditional use may be denied is through the finding of substantial evidence. The City can reduce the need for conditional uses by utilizing zoning districts and zoning map amendment processes instead of the conditional use process for defined land uses such as institutional, multi-family, outdoor storage and activity, business parks, etc. Additionally, all procedural steps can be updated to reflect statutory requirements and outline processes that are in line with state laws.

The U.S. Supreme Court case *Reed v. Gilbert* (2015) established that the regulation of signs must be content-neutral. The City can establish new sign categories and names to remove content-based terms like Political Sign and instead use terms that reflect the structural components of the sign types like Board, Banner, Arm and Post, Stake, etc. These requirements can be consolidated into a set of overarching summary tables to increase user-friendliness of the ordinance and standardize requirements by zoning district.

The new provisions can also clarify the standards for when signs can be approved on the administrative level and when signs need to be reviewed by the Plan Commission. Furthermore, the code can create additional requirements that prohibit signs in the Right-of-Way, regulate off-premise signs, and create context-appropriate sign requirements by zoning district. Implementing these provisions may require additional staff time for enforcement of the new sign standards, but will increase the aesthetics of the City.

The existing Subdivision Ordinance will also need to be reviewed in detail for this same reason. This includes state law consistency with impact fees, public improvements, expanded use of Certified Survey Maps, substandard lots, extraterritorial jurisdiction controls, and technical and procedural changes. Between statutory changes and case law, each of these items has experienced a change over the past decade and the City's Subdivision Ordinance is no longer in compliance with that change.

Overall, the new Zoning Ordinance will address all law changes and provide references to applicable state and federal provisions that apply.

## Issue 8: Update Definitions For Increased Clarity And Consistency

We recommend relocating and expanding the existing definitions into the new Article 1. In general, the existing definitions section is comprehensive and provides a good starting point. However, we suggest a thorough review of existing definitions to increase clarity, include easily

applied metrics, and update to modern iterations. One example is updating the definition of family to accommodate common types of legally-recognized family living arrangements not covered currently while also avoiding an unlimited number of unrelated adults.

Further, definitions are key to providing clear and consistent interpretation of the ordinance. While there will inevitably always be some level of human interpretation required with zoning standards, improved definitions and clear, metrics-based standards can reduce the need for them. This is particularly important when it comes to avoiding setting a precedent. The fewer times a zoning decision has to establish a new precedent, the more likely that uniform, fair, and unbiased standards are being applied across the community. Following an ordinance rewrite is the perfect time to reset and consistently apply standards with all situations encountered following adoption.

## Issue 9: Modernize The Subdivision Code

Beyond just state and federal law changes as discussed in Issue 7, a full reorientation of the City's Subdivision Code can help provide greater user-friendliness and more consistent application of standards. The recommended reorganization is shown in the call out box.

Other key areas to address include double frontage lots, integrating references and standards with the Stormwater Ordinance, and determining the appropriate approach to parkland dedication and other fee requirements. One of the most important modernizations within Subdivision Ordinances is considering items such as reducing minimum street widths, establishing standards for sidewalks or multi-use trail connections, emphasizing street connectivity vs. cul-de-sac street design, and ensuring interconnected intersections between developments.

Finally, the most advantageous aspects of conducting a rewrite of both the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance at the same time is creating two ordinances that seamlessly work together rather than creating contradictory standards. This type of process ensures that the City will avoid two code chapters that conflict with one another.

## Issue 10: Determine Best-Fit Impervious Surface Approach

The City recently moved its stormwater requirements out of the Zoning Ordinance and into a separate chapter of the Municipal Ordinance. With that change, the new Zoning Ordinance must adapt its references and standards. Additionally, the existing Zoning Ordinance references lot coverage, which has caused interpretation issues regarding impervious surface coverage verses building coverage. The City has the opportunity to remove this ambiguity through the new code which could utilize a simple approach of orienting development toward only an impervious surface

### Proposed Subdivision Code Reorganization

- Article 1: Introduction
- Article 2: Definitions
- Article 3: General Provisions
- Article 4: Land Division Procedures
- Article 5: Preliminary Plat
- Article 6: Final Plat
- Article 7: Certified Survey map
- Article 8: Design Standards
- Article 9: Dedication of Land, Parkland Dedication, and Fees
- Article 10: Required Improvements
- Article 11: Construction
- Article 12: Variances and Appeals

standard. This is beneficial over a building coverage standard because it accounts for driveways, parking areas, patios, sidewalks, and structures within the same metric. A building coverage approach can create confusion between which of these improvements to the lot count toward the metric or not. Further, having both metrics typically leads to even greater confusion.

However, one of the key items that will need to be discussed and developed through the new Zoning Ordinance will need to be the impervious surface standard because Columbus is located within a low-lying area that presents challenges with wetlands, floodplain, and flooding. A balanced approach will need to be developed to provide greater flexibility in attempt to accomplish many of the solutions as noted above, while also protecting the community long-term from future stormwater runoff issues.

## Conclusion

In total, the goal of the rewrite project will be to remedy these overarching issues and reflect solutions to each within the new ordinances. Throughout the process, the Plan Commission will be provided with policy decisions related to each of these issues to determine the best fit and customized solution for Columbus.

### **Reducing Barriers For New Development: What Have Other Communities Done?**

During the joint Plan Commission and City Council Kickoff Meeting, the discussion focused on how Columbus can reduce barriers for development with this ordinance rewrite and utilize approaches that other communities are employing to accomplish similar goals. Many of the issues and potential solutions identified above aim to do just that – provide opportunities to reduce barriers based on other successful approaches and zoning best practices. In summary, a few key opportunities include:

- Reducing process time for projects by providing opportunities for administrative approval, creating clear standards to reduce ambiguity and interpretation needed, and reducing the number of Conditional Uses and making more land uses permitted by-right.
- Upzoning lots throughout the community to provide greater opportunities to utilize the existing property in terms of both permitted land uses and bulk dimensional requirements.
- Creating a new set of zoning districts that enables flexibility, provides opportunities for the development types the City would like to see occur, and provides choices that will reduce the need for Planned Unit Development.

## Appendix

### City Staff Meetings

Multiple staff kickoff meetings occurred between June-August 2025. A summary of those discussions is provided below:

Key priorities for this project included:

- Increase user-friendliness, address definitions, and use more tables, charts, graphics, diagrams, etc.
- Match zoning to what's on the ground in older parts of the City (pre-1980s), fewer issues in the post-1980s areas of the community

Key issues that need to be addressed with this project included:

- Need standards that don't require a PUD
- Need smaller lot single-family zoning and clear up confusion with multi-family zoning (lot coverage). Overall, increase variety of housing choices available
- Reduce reliance on CUPs (ex. institutional uses) and variances
- Address state and federal laws (ex. short-term rentals)
- Rethink Rural Development and Agricultural district (ex. protect City, but promote City's housing goals)
- Accommodate bicycle and pedestrian access and reduce parking minimums
- Require quality design downtown, but rethink approach (ex. historic preservation committee)
- Require quality design for gateway areas
- Address the sign ordinance and bring it into compliance with federal law
- Subdivision code: double frontage lots, stormwater management, and law compliance

### Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting

On August 6, 2025, a joint Plan Commission and City Council meeting was held to kickoff the process and gather input on key issues and priorities. A summary of that discussion is provided below:

Examples of good development:

- Red Bud Trail, Highland Ridge, Meadow Lane, and the Golf Course neighborhoods

Items to address with this process:

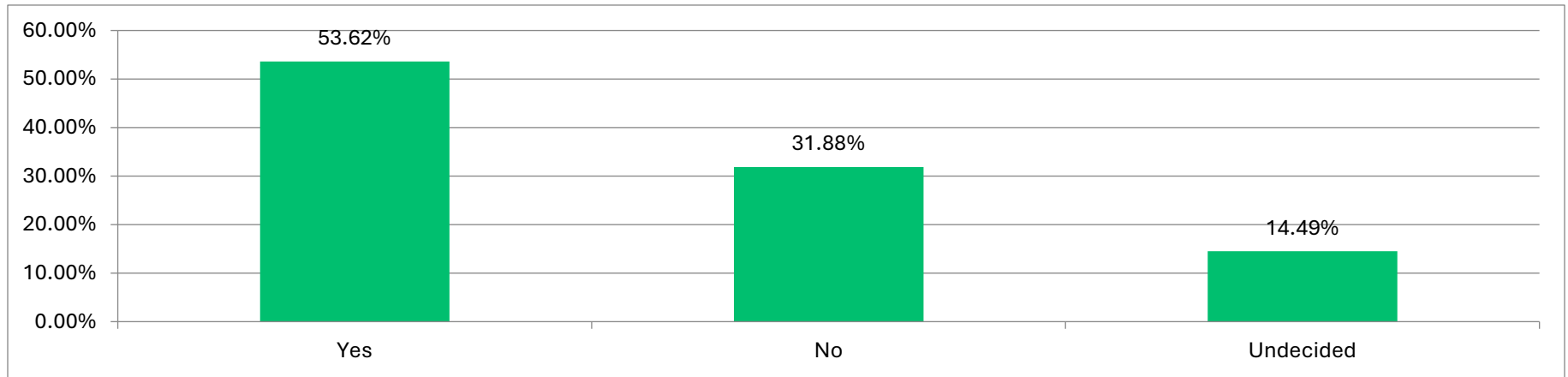
- Residential neighborhoods in the past have required many Planned Unit Development elements to enable the development to take place and those should be instead built into the new code.
- Zoning amendments in the past have taken a considerable amount of time and the new code should reflect the statutory requirements for the process to be streamlined.
- Is the existing code a barrier to new development? The City has needed to take it upon themselves to generate new housing over the past several years because the market was not providing it. Seeking input from developers through this process could help identify barriers. Cutting out red tape from the new code could be one solution to make Columbus more attractive to developers.
- Reducing parking could be one method of reducing costs for new development, especially for infill and redevelopment projects that the City wants to see happen.
- Impact fees need to be evaluated because there are obvious benefits to having them, but its often one way that the community can reduce costs for new development.
- Need to explore the right impervious surface ratios because the community has lots of wetlands, floodplain, and low-lying areas, but wants to enable new development opportunities.
- Duplexes are treated as condominiums today within the code and require HOAs and CUPs. Addressing this issue within the existing residential zoning districts is needed.

## Public Workshop and Survey

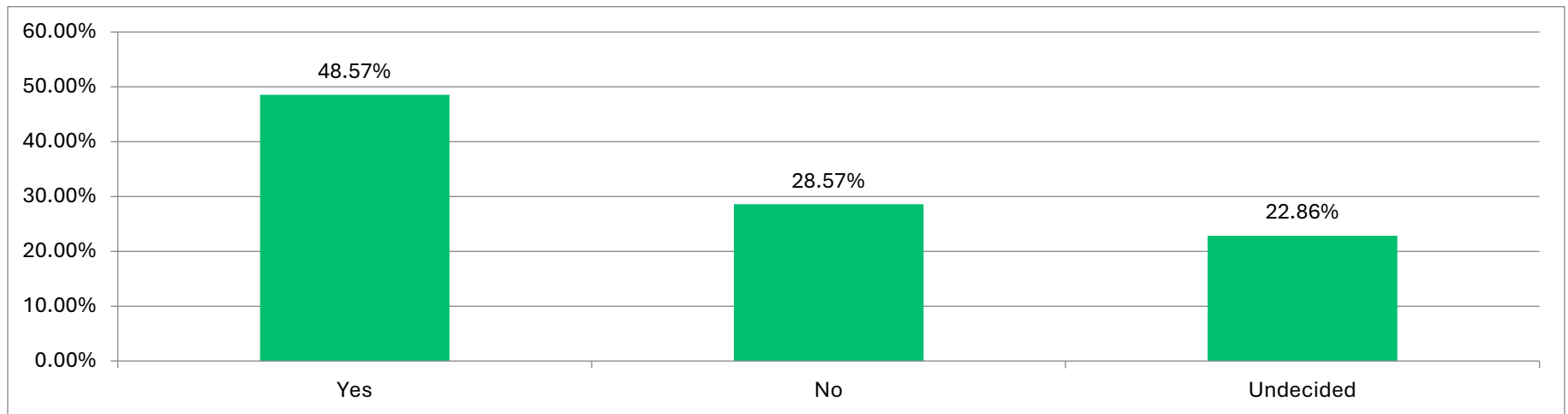
On September 17, 2025, a public workshop was held at the Community Center Building in Columbus. Approximately, 15 total people were in attendance and provided feedback on key issues and opportunities to be addressed within the ordinance rewrite. An online survey was provided between September 15-30 to gather the same input for those unable to attend the in-person event. A total of 60 online survey responses were collected.

The tables below include the combined results of the questions asked in both the workshop and survey. An additional mapping exercise was conducted during the workshop and the map images at the end of this document are only the feedback collected via the in-person workshop.

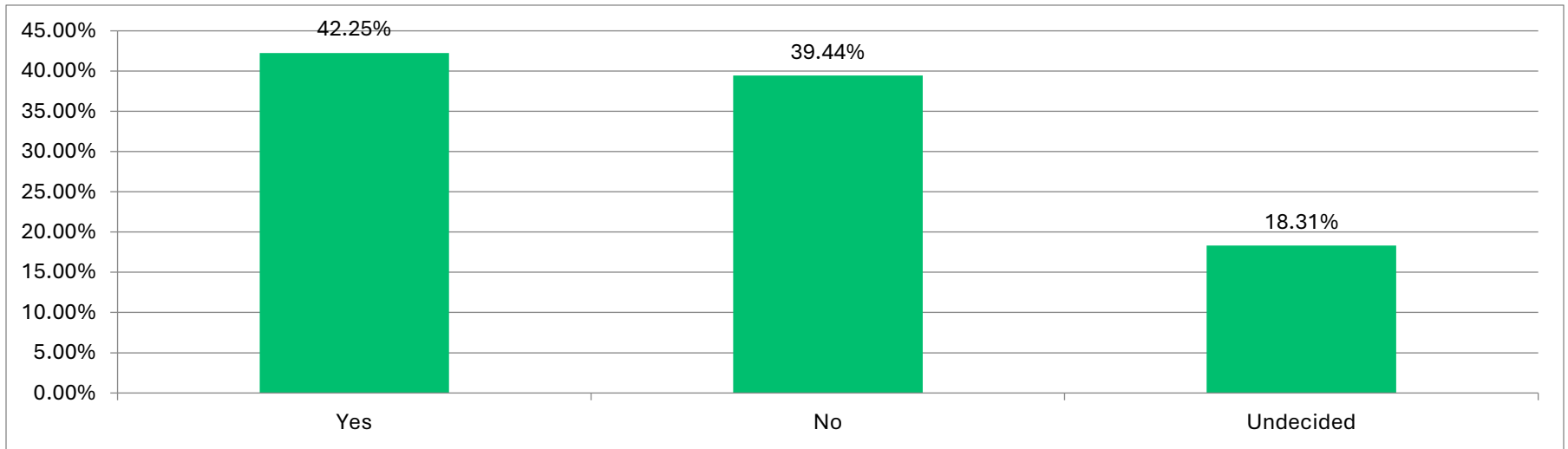
**Question 1: Should the City consider reducing minimum parking standards to provide greater flexibility?**



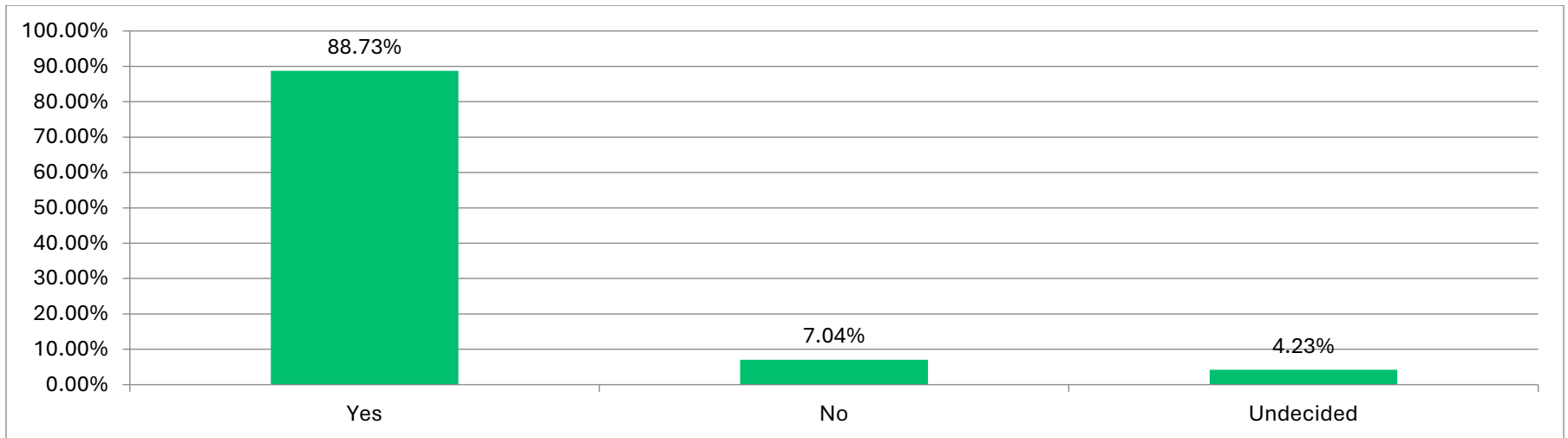
**Question 2: Should the City consider no minimum parking standards for downtown to promote reinvestment, infill development, and redevelopment opportunities?**



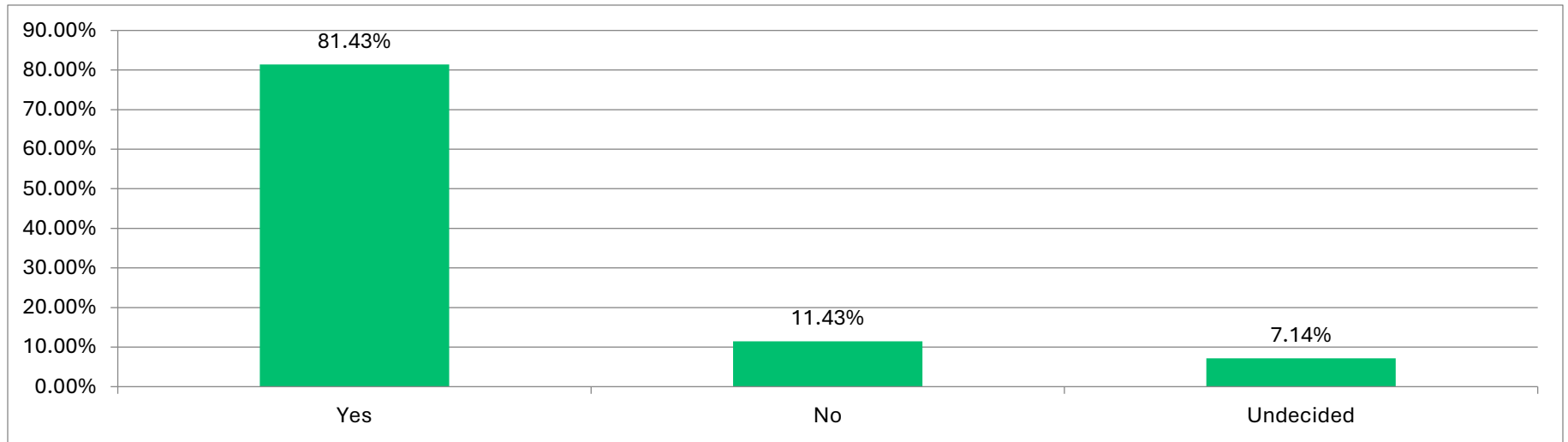
**Question 3: Should the City consider requiring a maximum number of parking stalls per lot to avoid large, unused parking fields?**



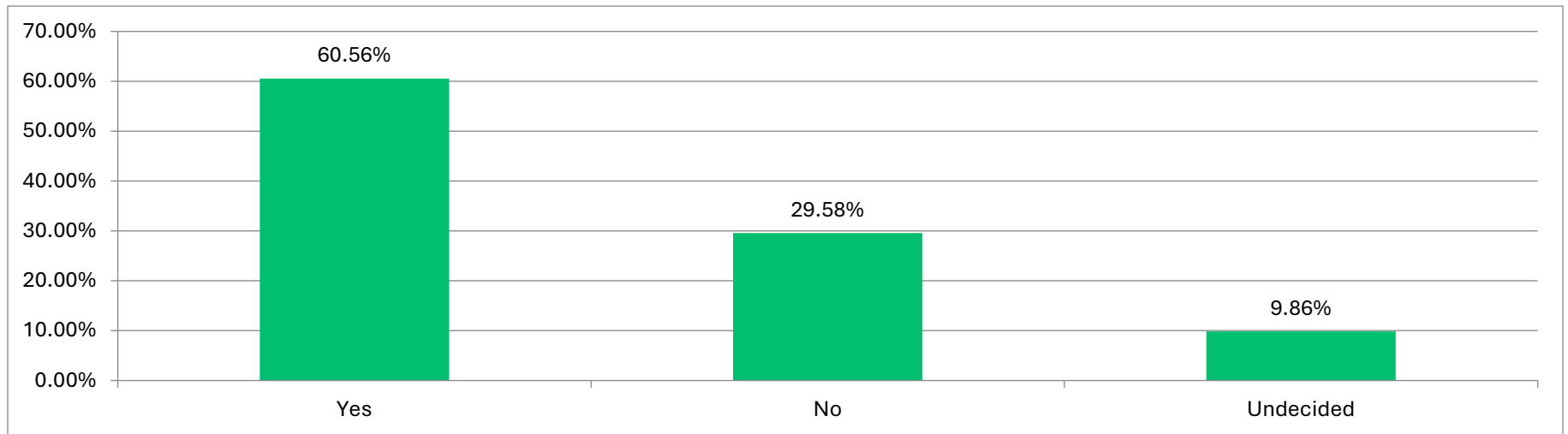
**Question 4: Should the City consider allowing multiple types of single-family home configurations?**



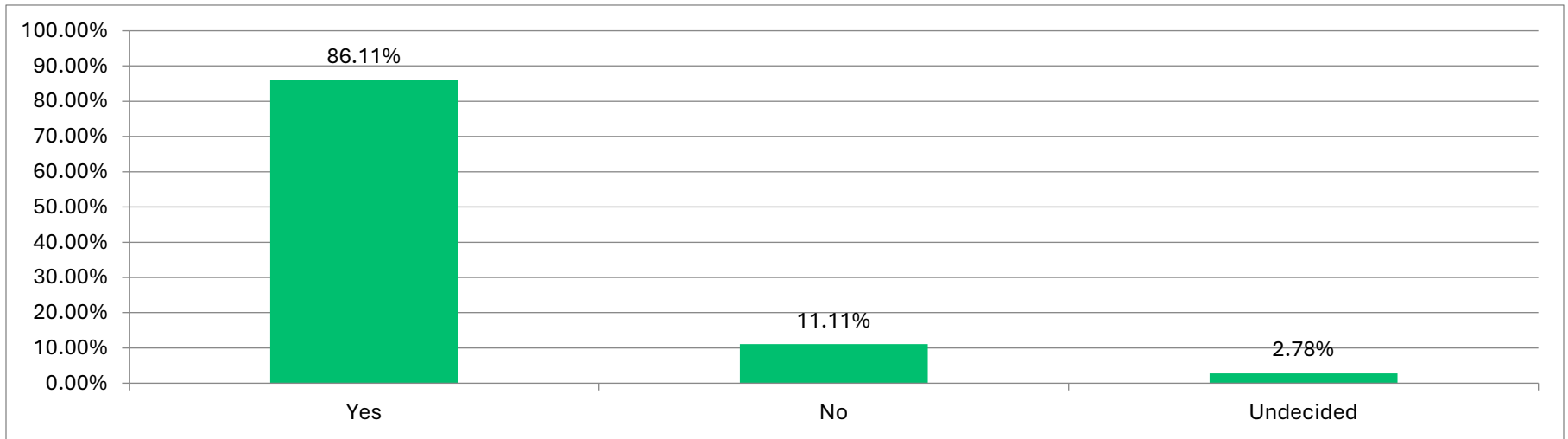
**Question 5: Should the City consider allowing multiple types of two-family home configurations?**



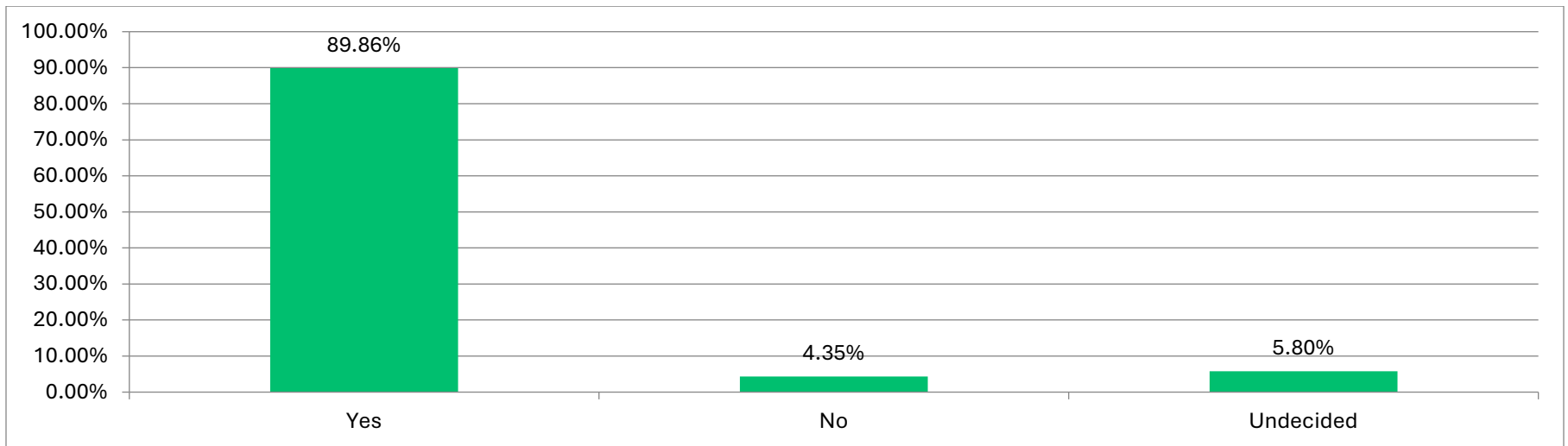
**Question 6: Should the City consider allowing multiple types of multi-family home configurations?**



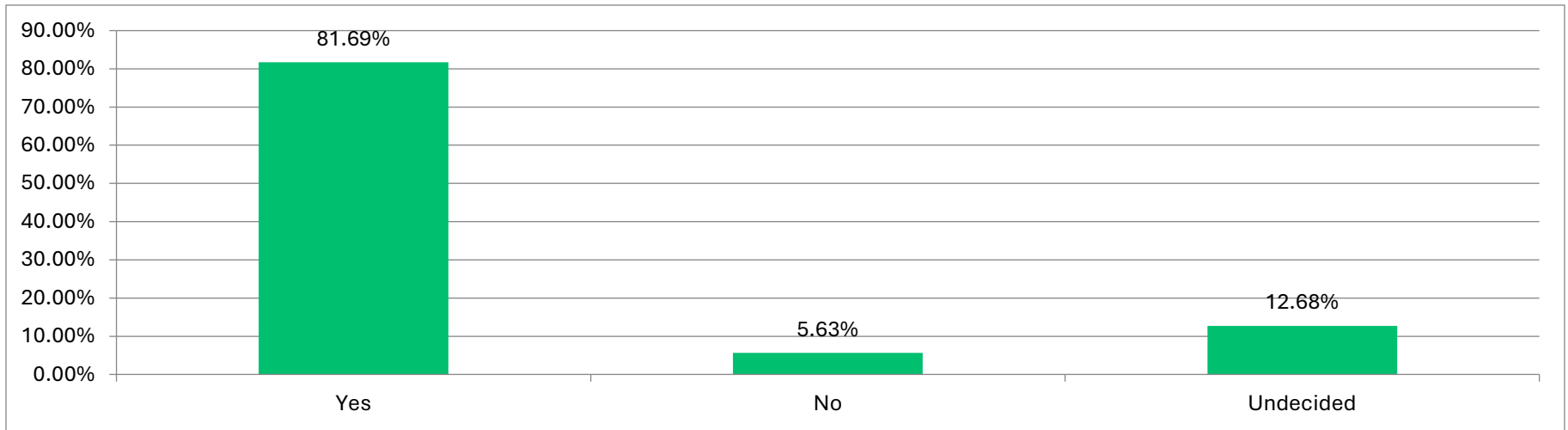
**Question 7: Should the City consider allowing opportunities for Accessory Dwelling Units/Mother-in-Law Suites?**



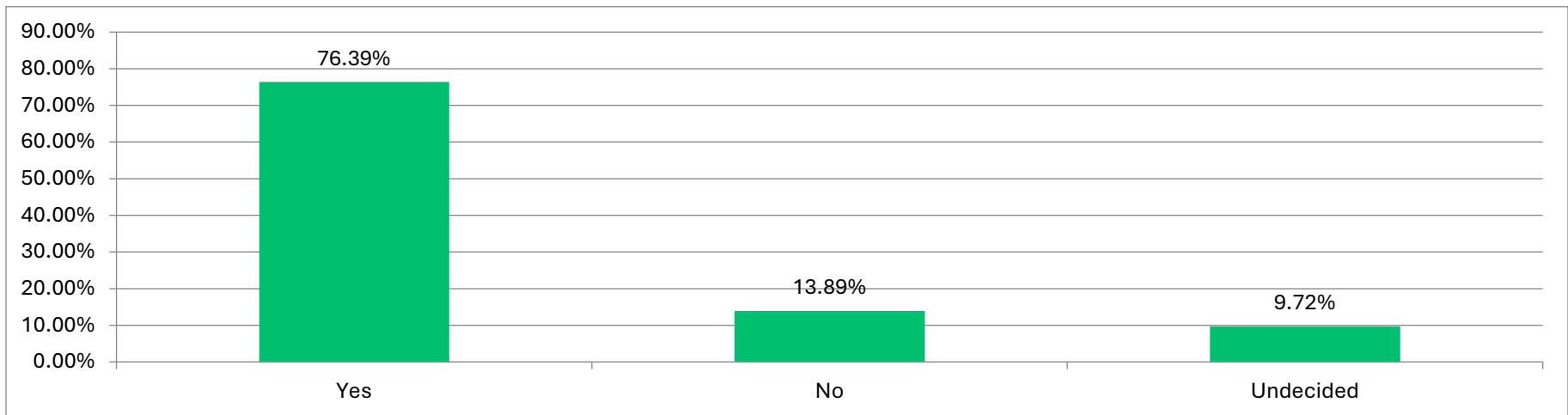
**Question 8: Should the City consider providing opportunities for a mixing of uses within the same building in all commercial areas?**



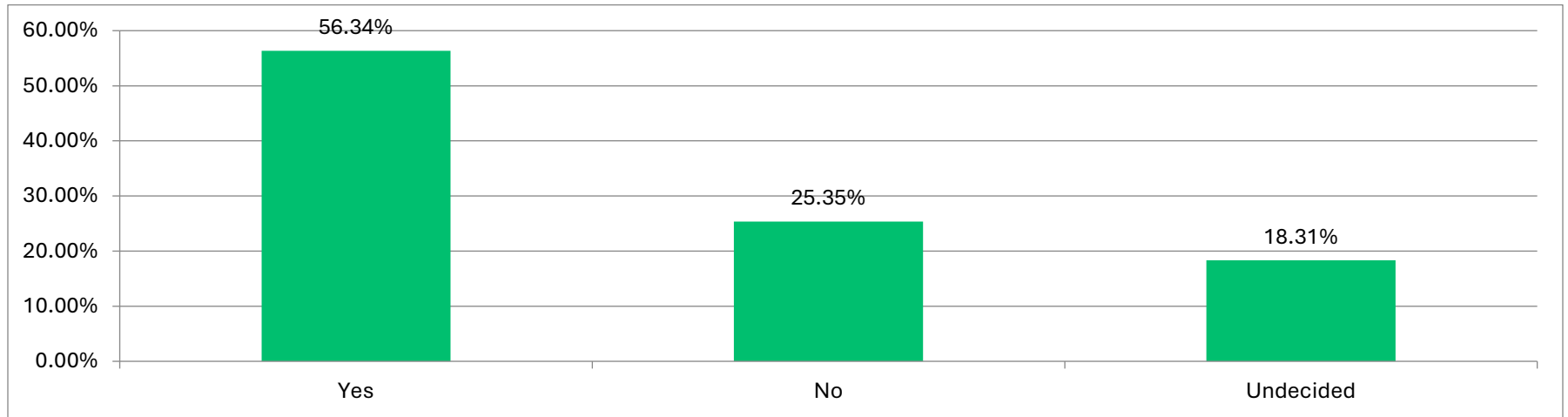
**Question 9: Should the City consider providing opportunities for shared parking between uses?**



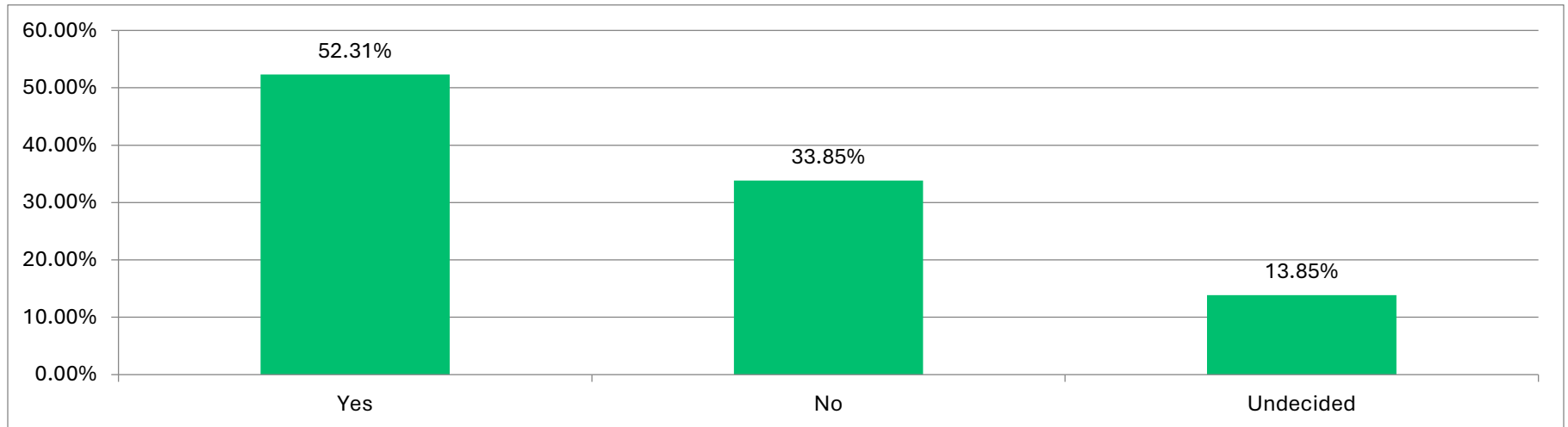
**Question 10: Should the City consider providing opportunities for neighborhood-serving businesses to be located near residential neighborhoods?**



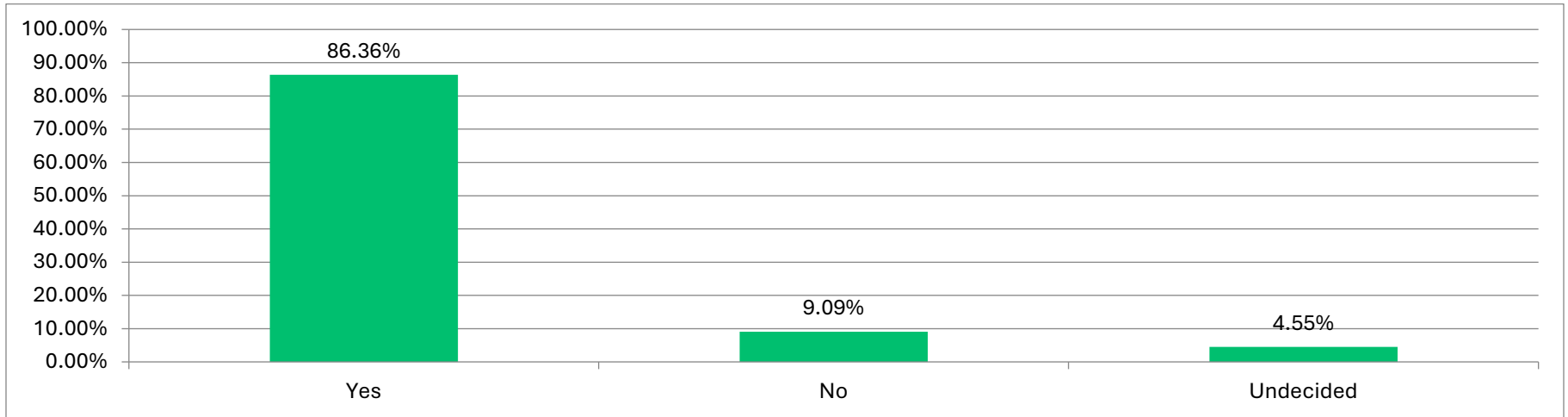
**Question 11: Should the City consider providing opportunities for neighborhood-serving businesses to be located near residential neighborhoods?**



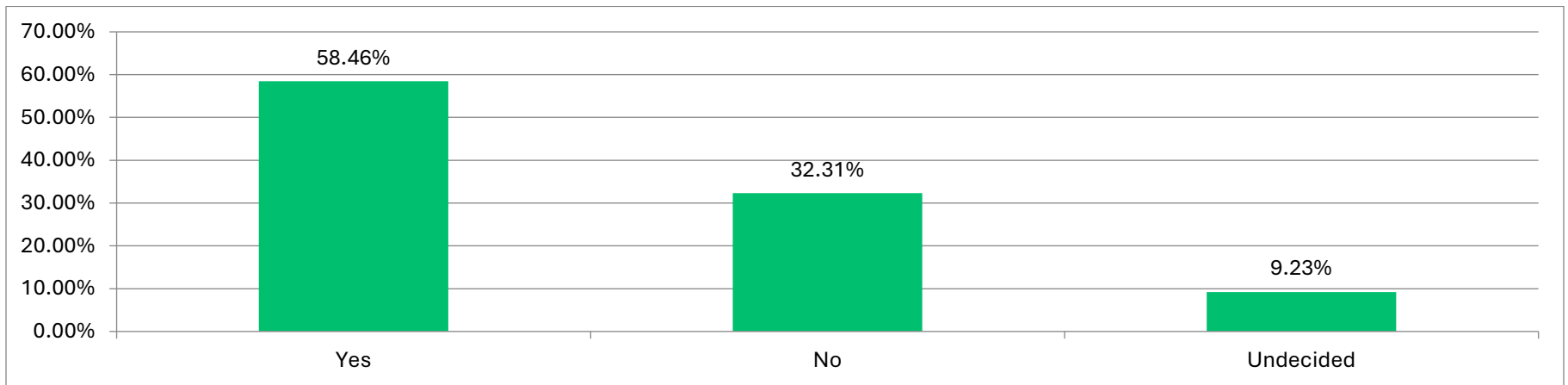
**Question 12: Should the City consider discouraging the use of cul-de-sacs to promote more interconnected and walkable street networks?**



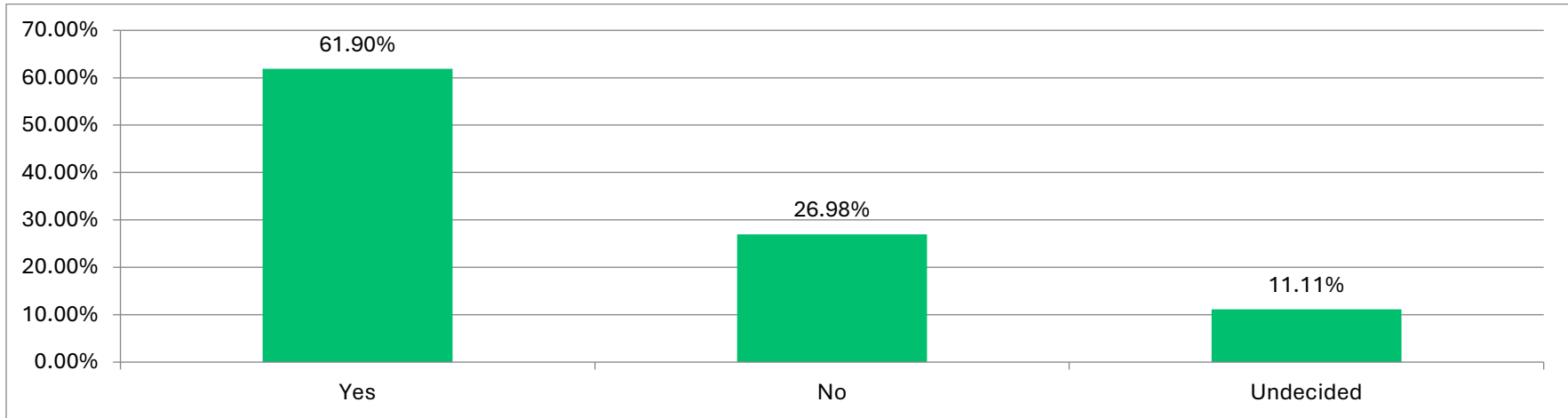
**Question 13: Should the City consider requiring the alignment of street intersections to enhance traffic flow, improve safety, and promote pedestrian and bicycle connectivity?**



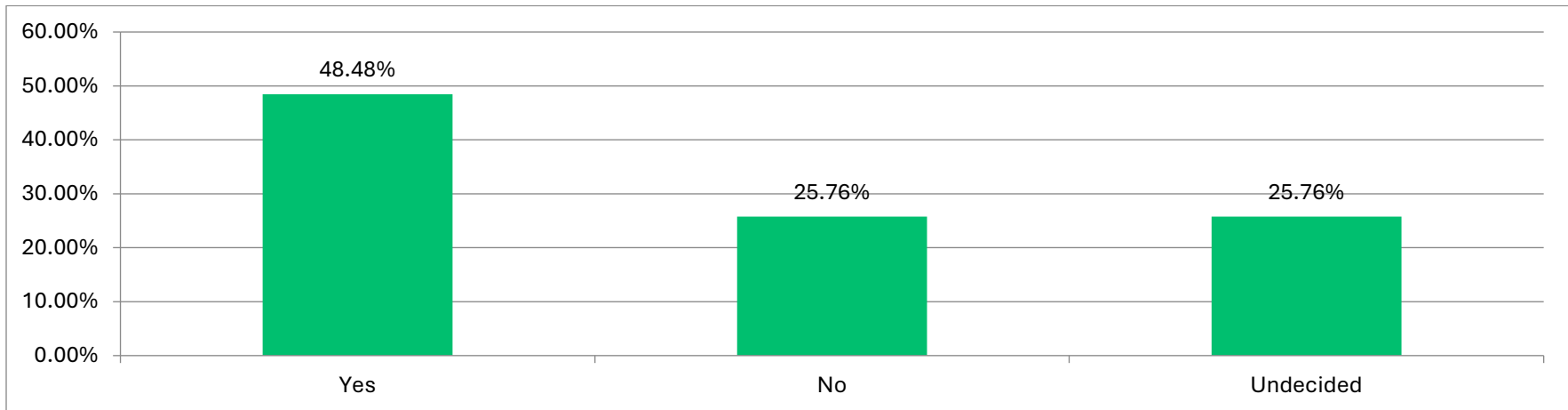
**Question 14: Should the City consider requiring sidewalks on both sides of all streets to ensure safe pedestrian access throughout a neighborhood?**



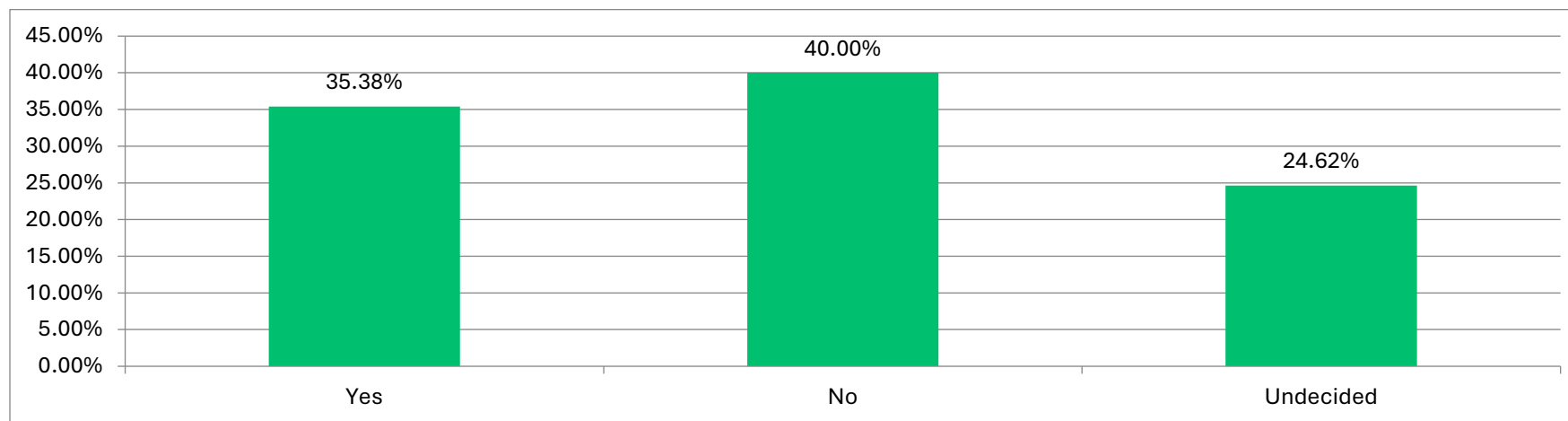
**Question 15: Should the City consider promoting high-quality and long-lasting building design by requiring windows, storefronts, stone, brick, and masonry on facades within the downtown?**



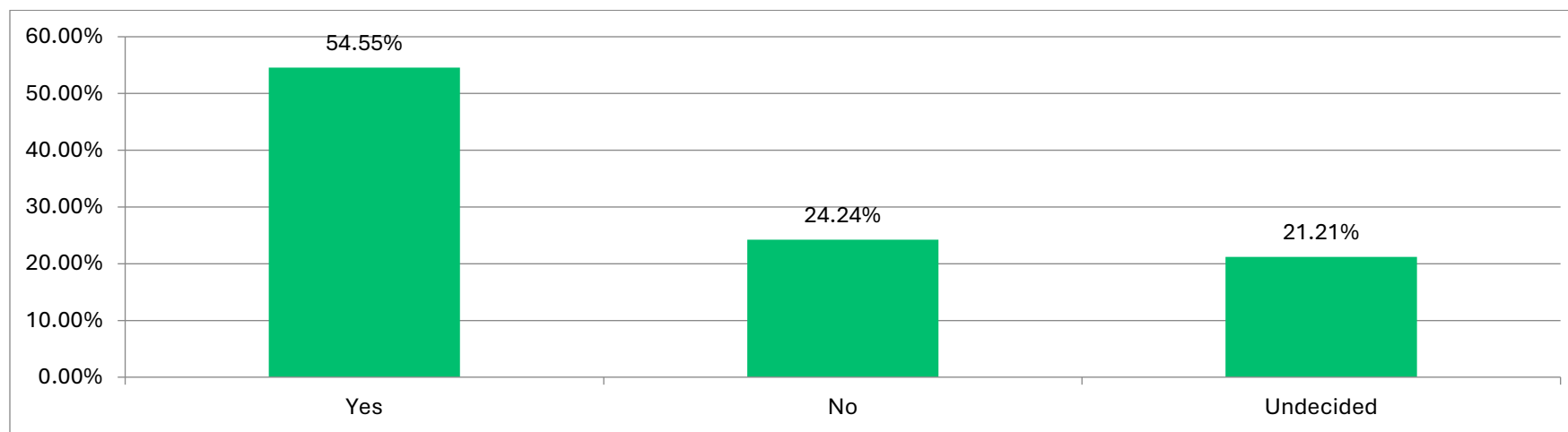
**Question 16: Should the City consider promoting high-quality, long-lasting building design along commercial corridors by requiring the use of architectural and building material variation?**



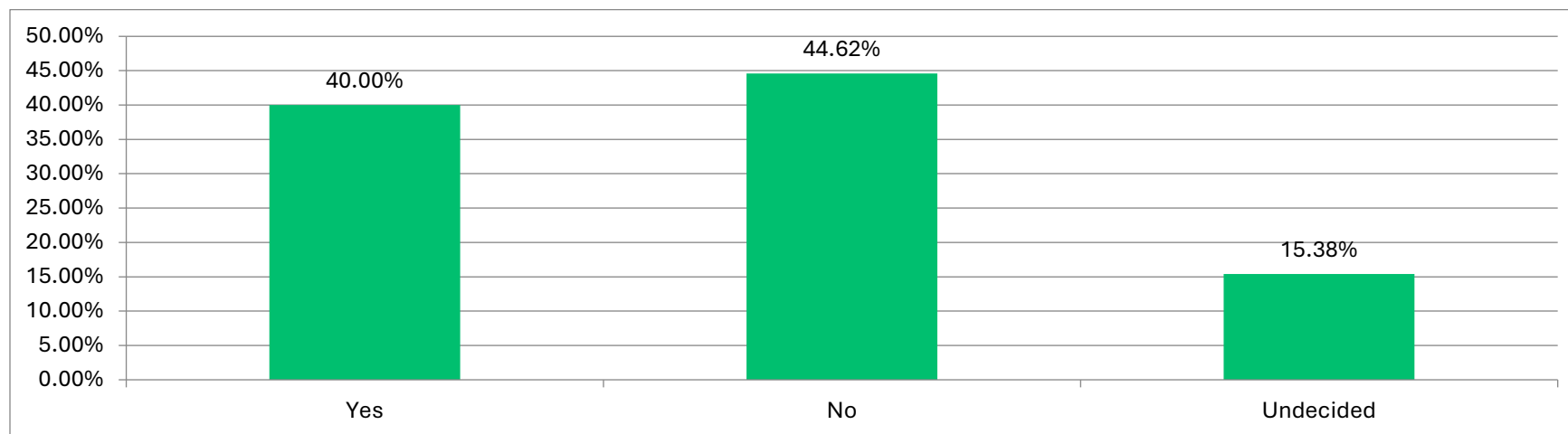
**Question 17: Should the City consider promoting high-quality, long-lasting building design within industrial areas by requiring the use of architectural and building material variation?**



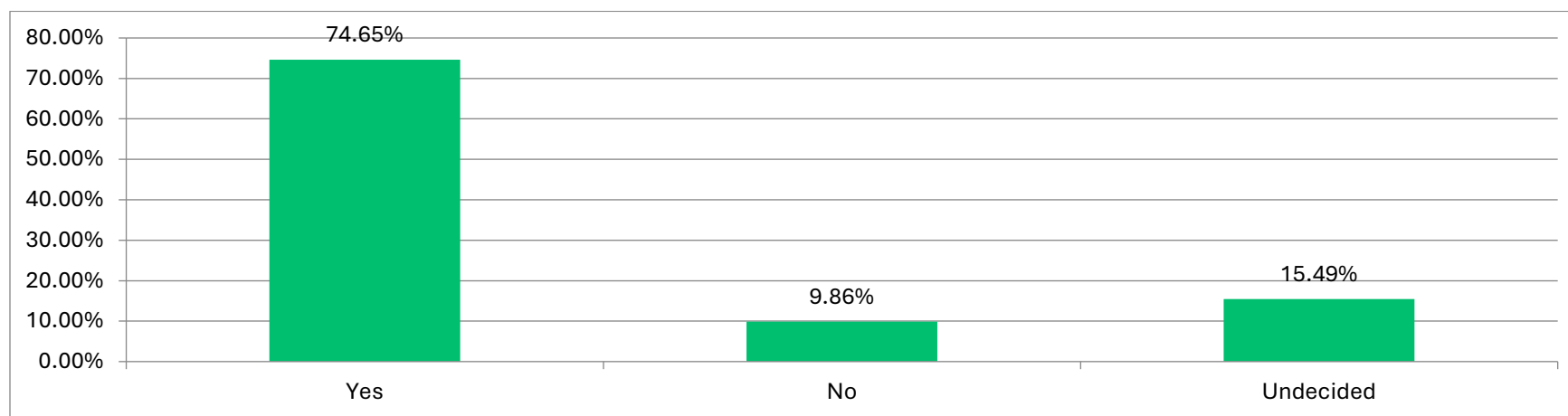
**Question 18: Should the City consider promoting high-quality, long-lasting building design within multi-family areas by requiring the use of architectural and building material variation?**



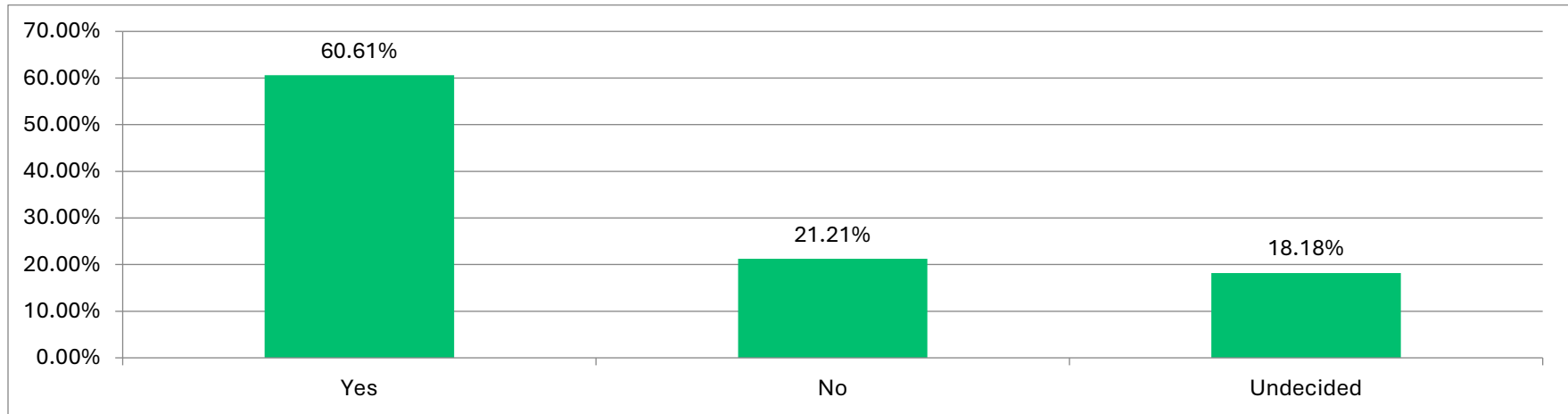
**Question 19: Should the City consider promoting high-quality, long-lasting building design within single- and two-family areas by requiring building design standards?**



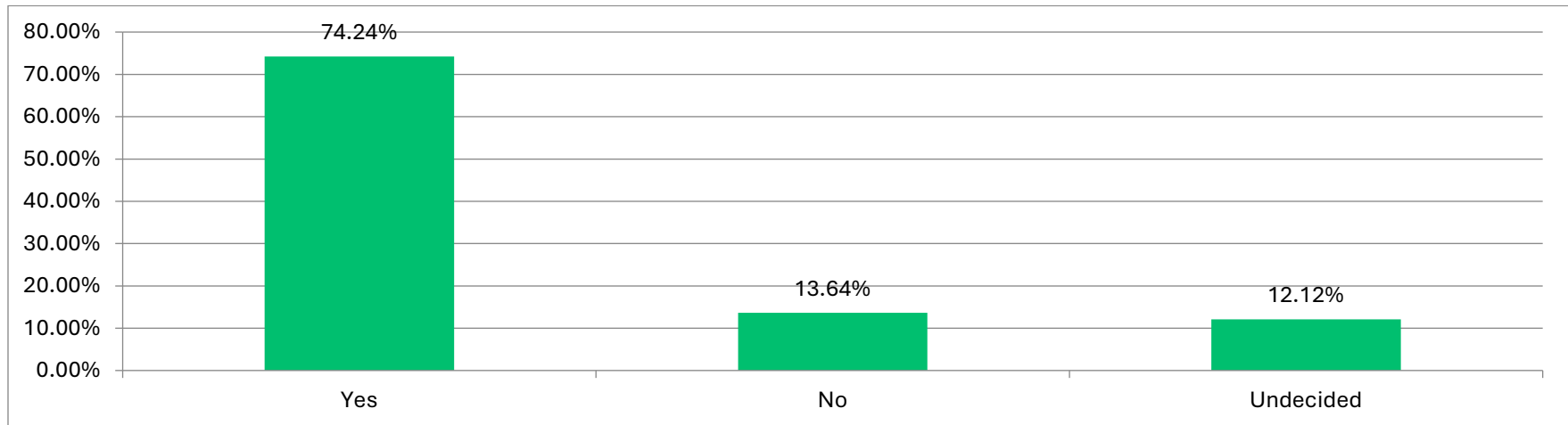
**Question 20: Should the City consider requiring transportation connectivity by providing opportunities for vehicles, bicyclist, and pedestrians to safely access new development?**



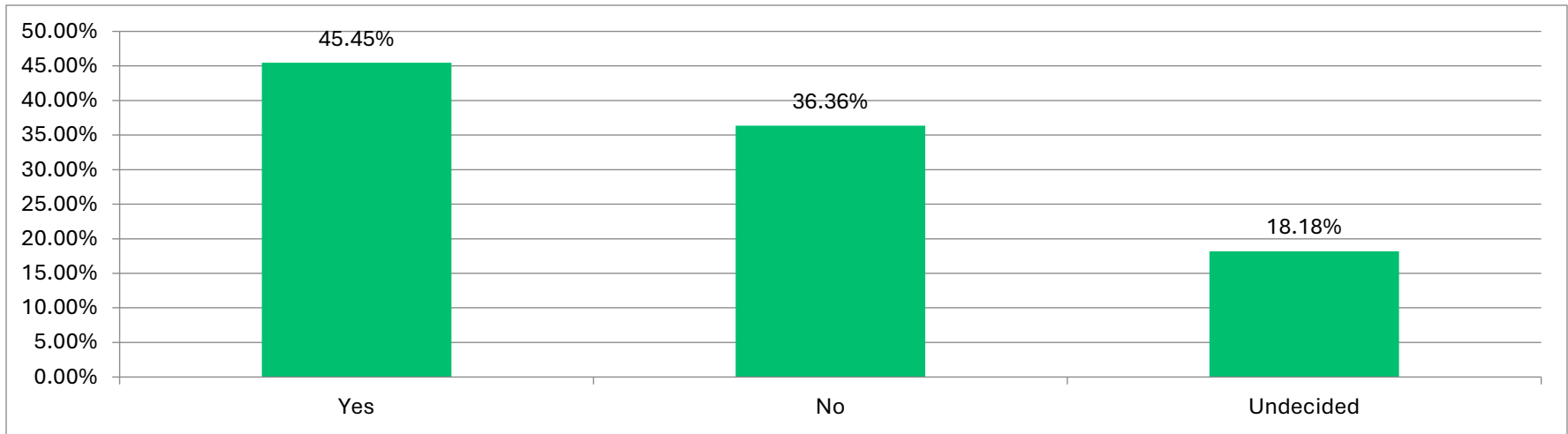
**Question 21: Should the City consider promoting safe transportation parking by ensuring designated spaces for both vehicles and bicycles within new development?**



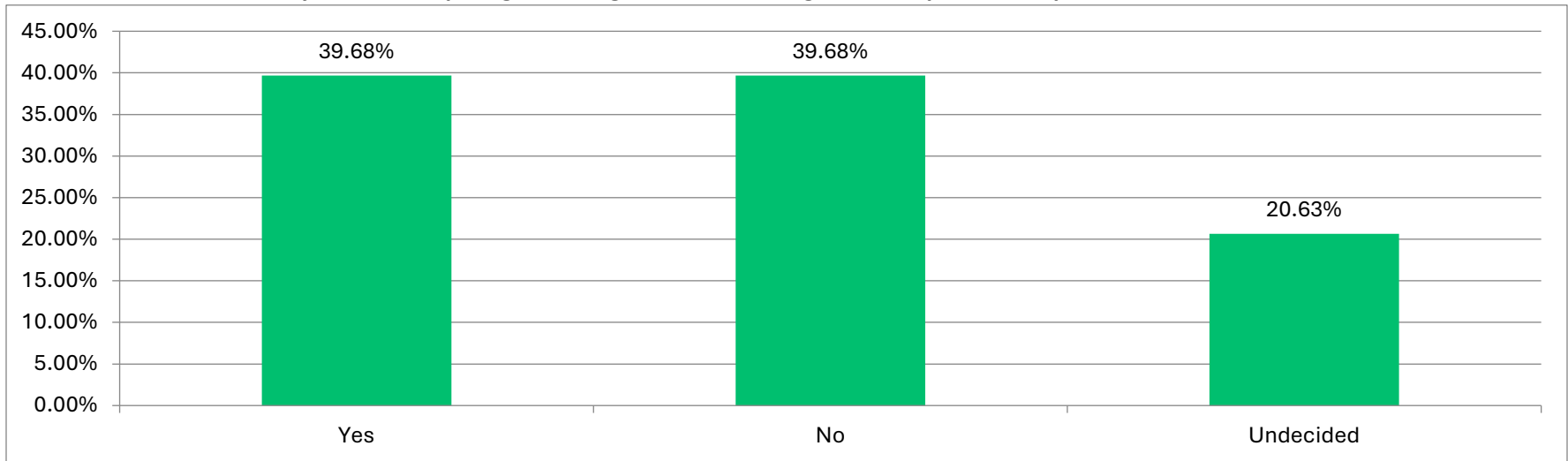
**Question 22: Should the City consider the use of landscaping standards to enhance visual appeal, create inviting places, and help with stormwater management?**



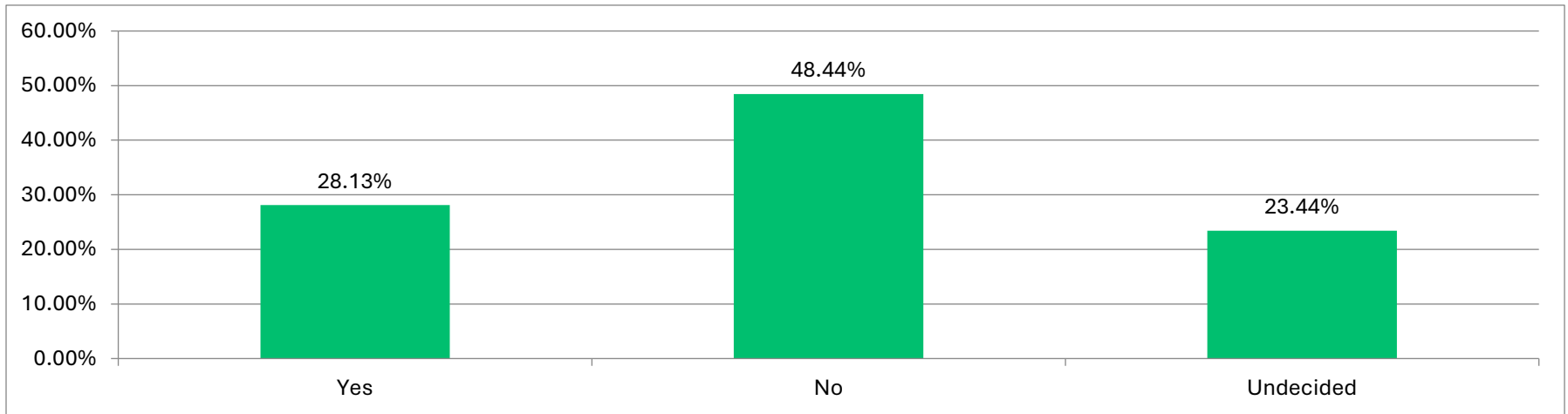
**Question 23: Should the City consider requiring screening trash enclosures and building mechanicals to promote improved aesthetics?**



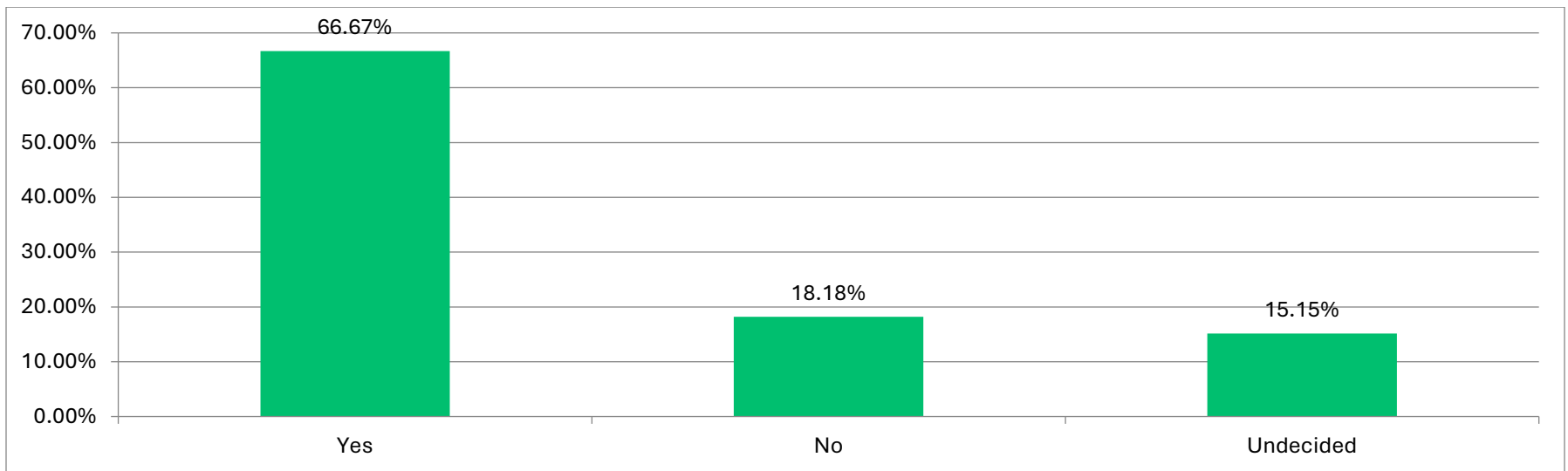
**Question 24: Should the City consider requiring screening of outdoor storage areas to promote improved aesthetics?**



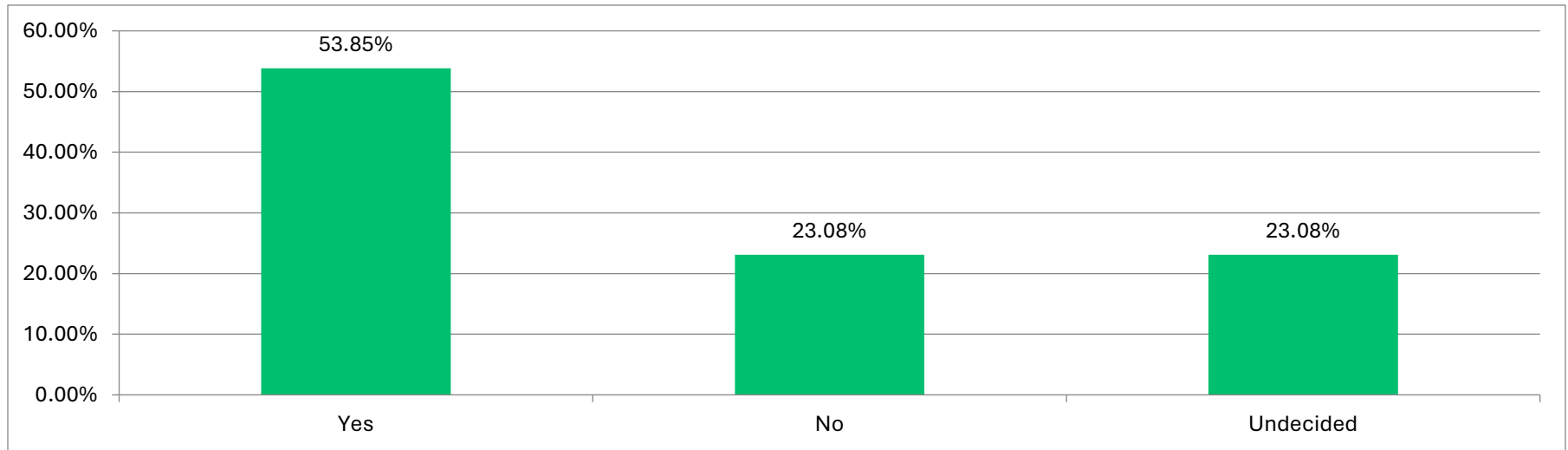
**Question 25: Should the City consider requiring outdoor storage areas only in the rear of the property to promote improved aesthetics?**



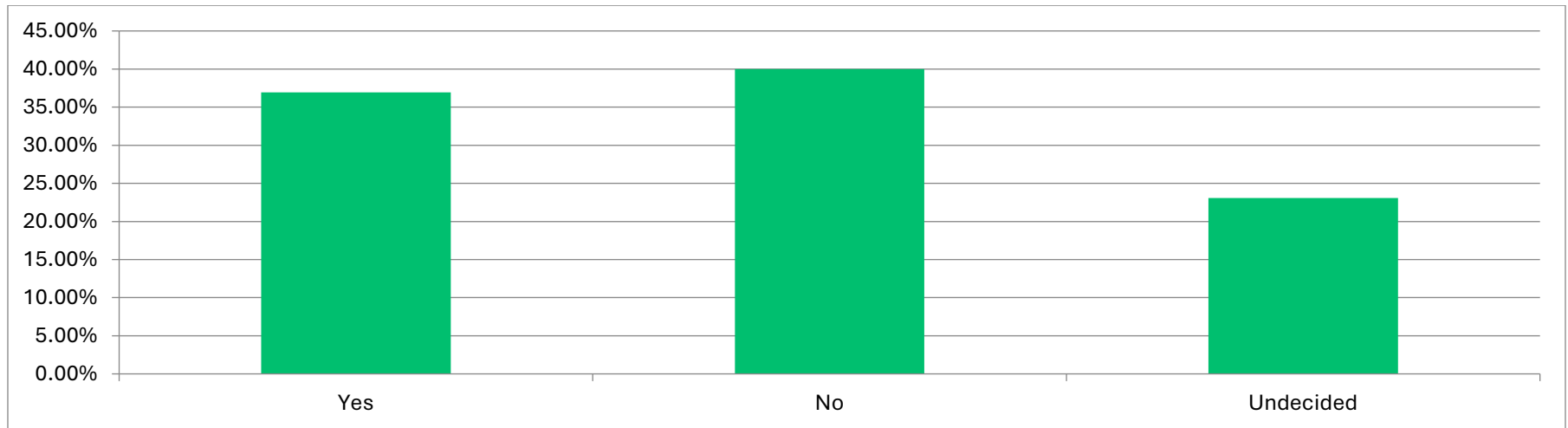
**Question 26: Should the City allow electronic message signs along commercial corridors and industrial areas?**



**Question 27: Should the City allow pylon signs along commercial corridors and industrial areas?**



**Question 28: Should the City allow only pedestrian-oriented signage in the downtown area?**



### **Workshop Map Feedback**

Attendees of the workshop were asked to review the City's existing zoning map in respect to the zoning districts that permit some form of residential development today. Each small group was provided with a set of sticky dots to apply on the map. Attendees were asked to identify areas where the existing housing choices provided through the zoning standards today should be retained and seem to be a good fit. Likewise, they were asked to identify areas where existing housing choices could be expanded or increased to enable greater housing opportunities within Columbus.

- Blue Dot - keep existing housing choice options
- Green Dot - increase existing housing choice options
- Red Dot - non consensus/undecided or something to investigate further



