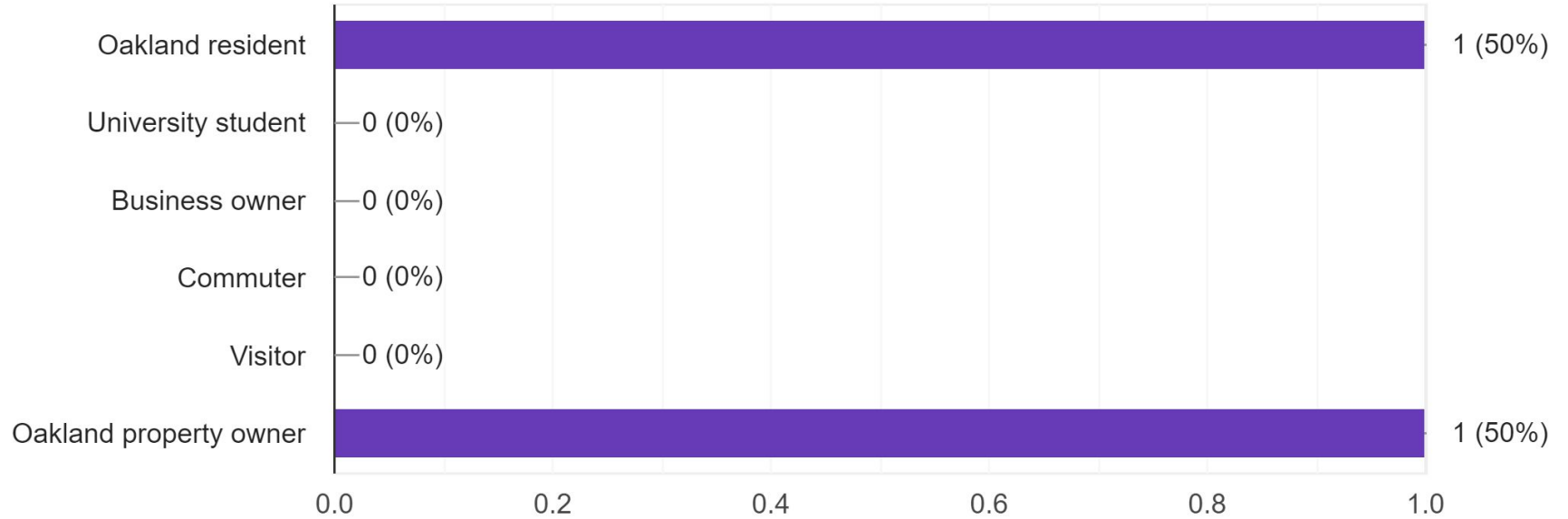


Carlow University IMP

February 2021 Presentation Feedback
(as of 3/12/21)

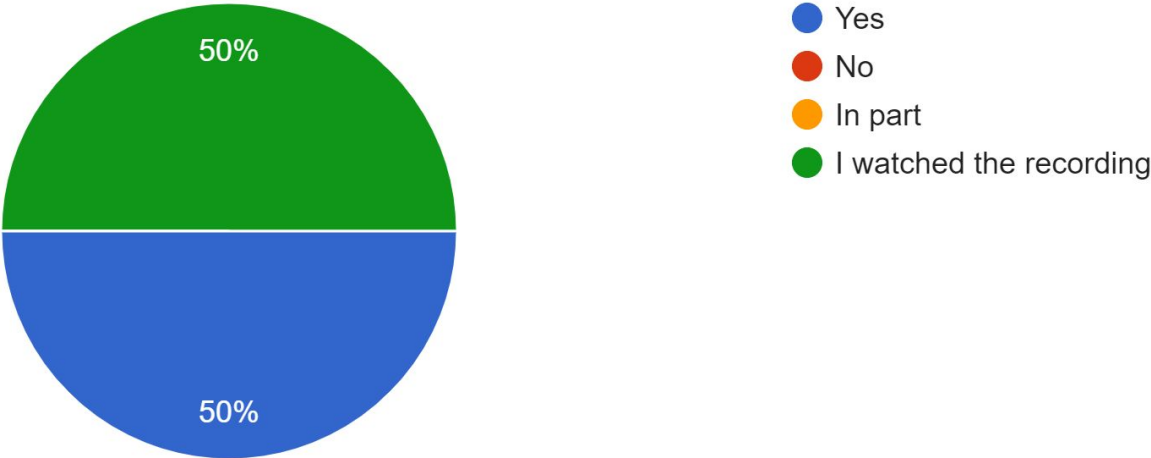
I am a (check all that apply)

2 responses



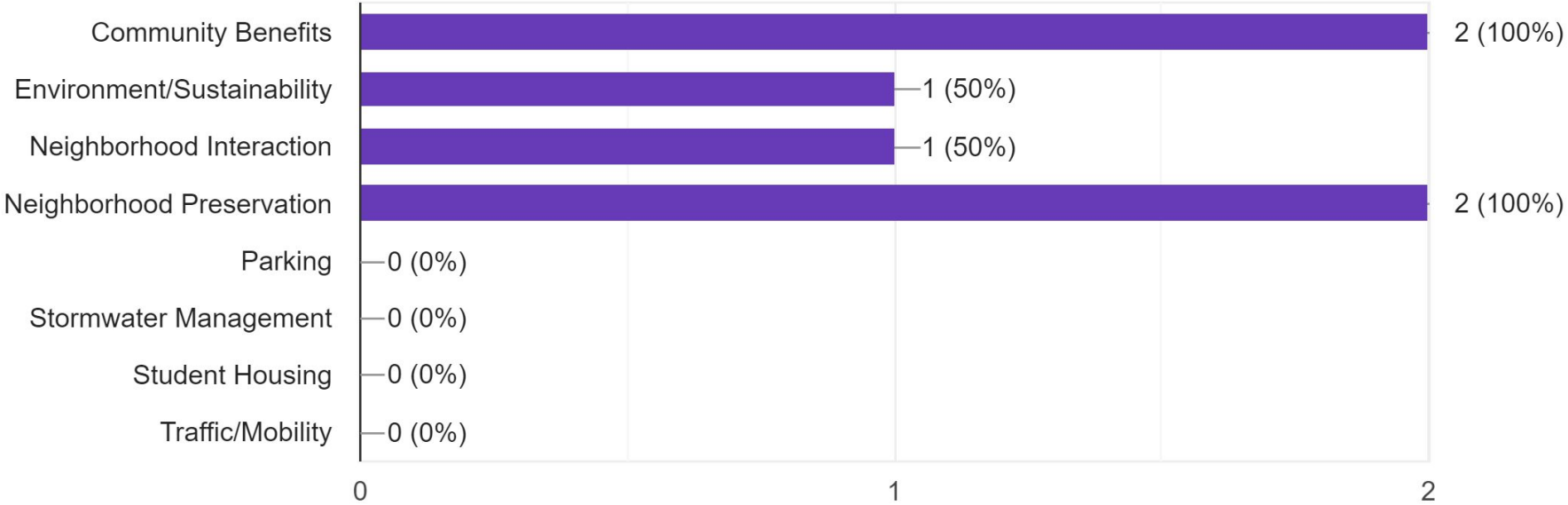
Did you attend the public meeting where this was presented on February 23, 2021?

2 responses

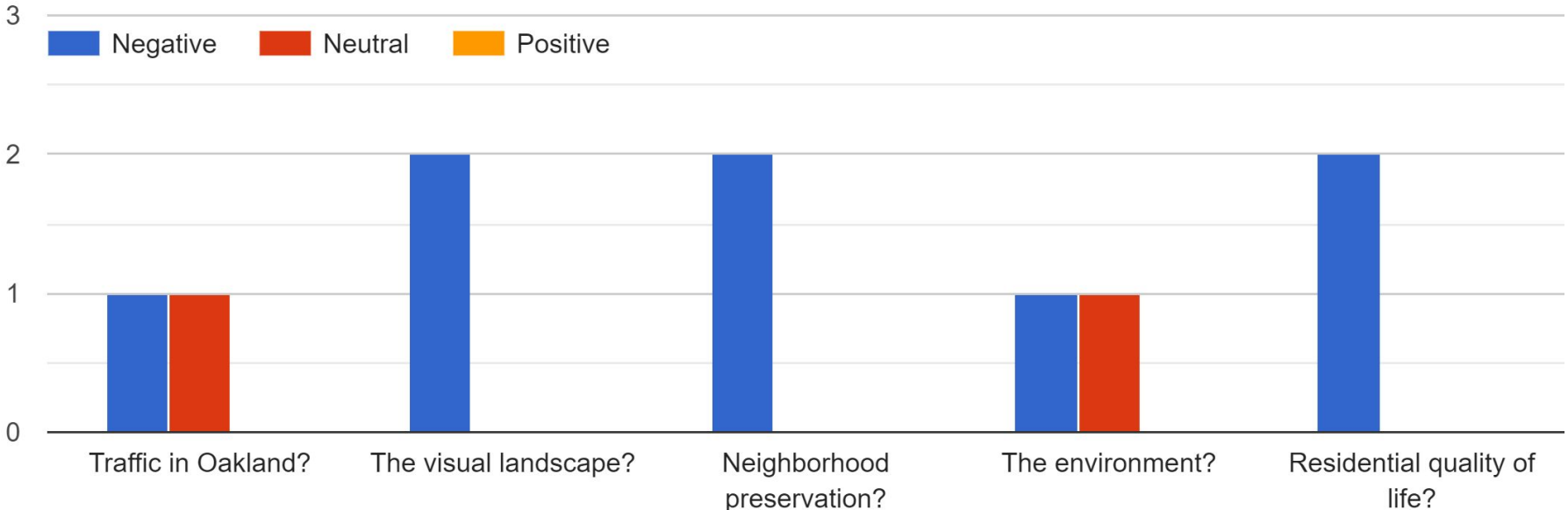


What are your primary areas of concerns for the IMP? (check all that apply)

2 responses



How would you describe the proposed development project's impact on...



Is there any part of the plan that you want more details on?¹ response

A few specific things: Carlow said that there are site constraints that led them to the decision of demolishing the former St. Agnes Church including that they are limited regarding allowed curb cuts on 5th Avenue. What if curb cuts were allowed on 5th Ave - would that help to make reuse more feasible? It was also mentioned that City Planning wants to know materials, design, height, setback of buildings to be built in the lower campus. Additionally, because the site is so large, City Planning wants to know how they would break up the building(s) so that it's not one massive structure. This makes me wonder about the coordination (or disconnect) between City Planning, Carlow's planning, Oakland community planning, and community feedback regarding the site. Were there more coordination in an earlier stage between everyone, could there be a plan that recognizes that the former church could be spared? It was stated that City Planning would like a "stepped down" structure on the western side to be compatible with residential scale and that a larger building could be on the eastern side. The former St. Agnes leans toward the western side and is already compatible with the former St. Agnes school that will be renovated. Saving the church would be much less disruptive to residential character. And a larger and possibly more massive building could be built on the eastern side where there is parking lot. It is possible that variances would be needed and City Planning could/should accept a more massive vertical building so the church could be reused. If looking for a vibrant site with foot traffic, coffee shop or other amenities that would draw people, why not incorporate the former church into this plan? It just takes willingness, creativity, and an open mind. In addition to developer financing, Carlow could possibly obtain financing by allowing air rights (allows a developer to build higher in order to save a cultural resource).

Any additional comments or feedback? 2 responses

I have attended Carlow's presentations on this IMP for almost a year. It appears to me that at each presentation they become more dismissive of overwhelming community opposition to the demolition of the historic St. Agnes Church. I have followed community comments on social media, seen an online petition that is approaching 700 signatures, and listened to residents' comments at numerous meetings. In their list of "community benefits" they announce a community playground. When questioned, the playground will only be available to the neighborhood nights and weekends. They maintain that they are committed to public art and community members can walk on their campus anytime while they plan to destroy unique, historic murals that have been a part of this community for close to 100 years. They will have their campus police monitor increased traffic on Robinson Street - traffic that they will create. They claim that they would have to cannibalize the building in order to use it for anything other than a church. Don't they own the building? They previously used the building as a venue for concerts, lectures. There are other structures on their campus with religious symbols that they have not removed and they are not churches - see recently renovated St. Joseph Hall. I see no community benefit in this proposal. In response to a question regarding the removal of state-owned PHMC marker honoring the work of architect John Comes, they said they removed it because it "was confusing". I walk in Oakland every day, I never confuse the person honored with the building - ex. Stephen Foster, Jane Holmes. As a third-generation Oakland resident, I am totally opposed to Carlow University demolishing yet another unique, historic building in our neighborhood.

Carlow is not open to considering alternatives to demolishing the former St. Agnes church nor are they listening to community concern that has been voiced. Given the prominent placement of the lower campus that bridges neighborhoods and is seen by many plus desire to be sensitive to residential character and to draw foot traffic, there are other options that should be explored.