








A Potential Foster City Business License Tax Modernization Measure

Key Findings of a Randomized Voter Survey



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Methodology

Dates	March 24-31, 2024
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2024 Voters in Foster City
Total Interviews	343
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 5.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 7.9\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews

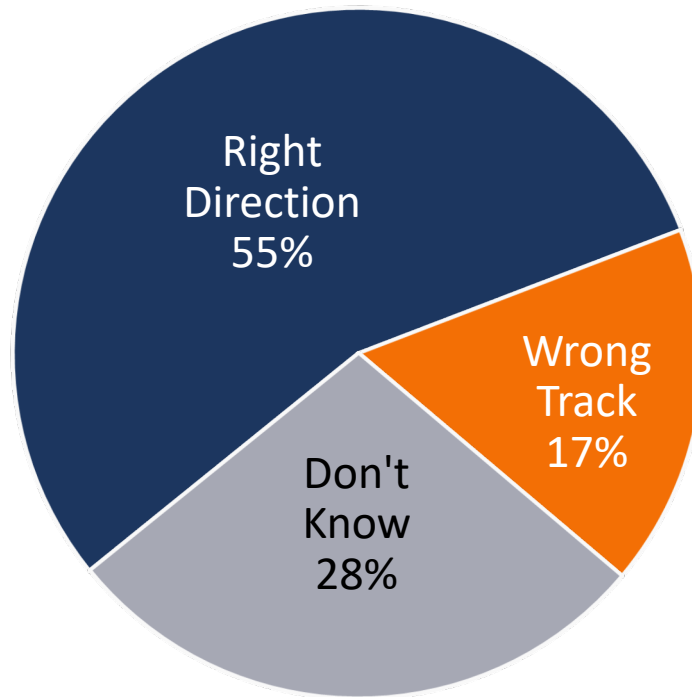
(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)



Electoral Context

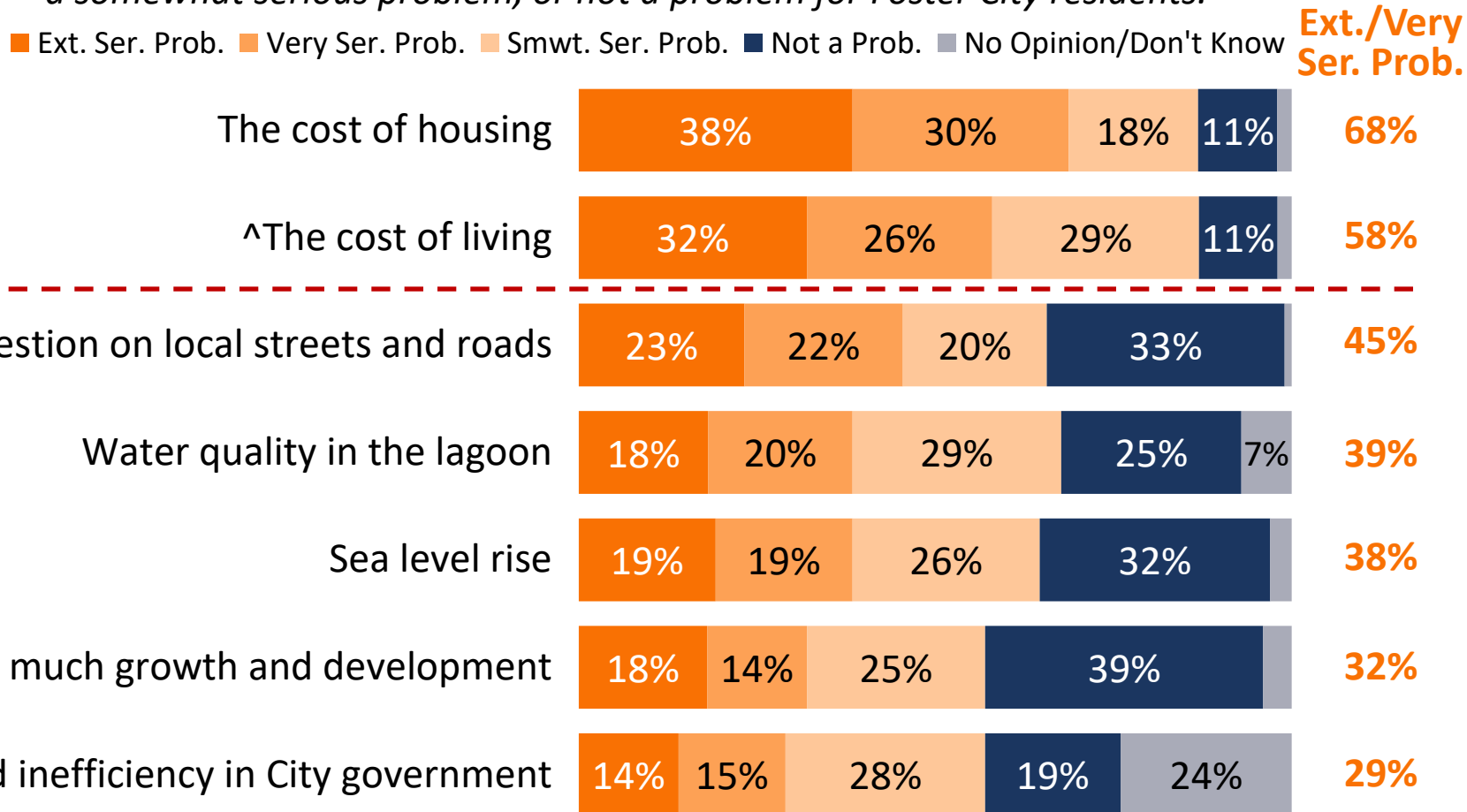
Foster City voters are optimistic about the direction of the city.

Would you say things in Foster City are going in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?



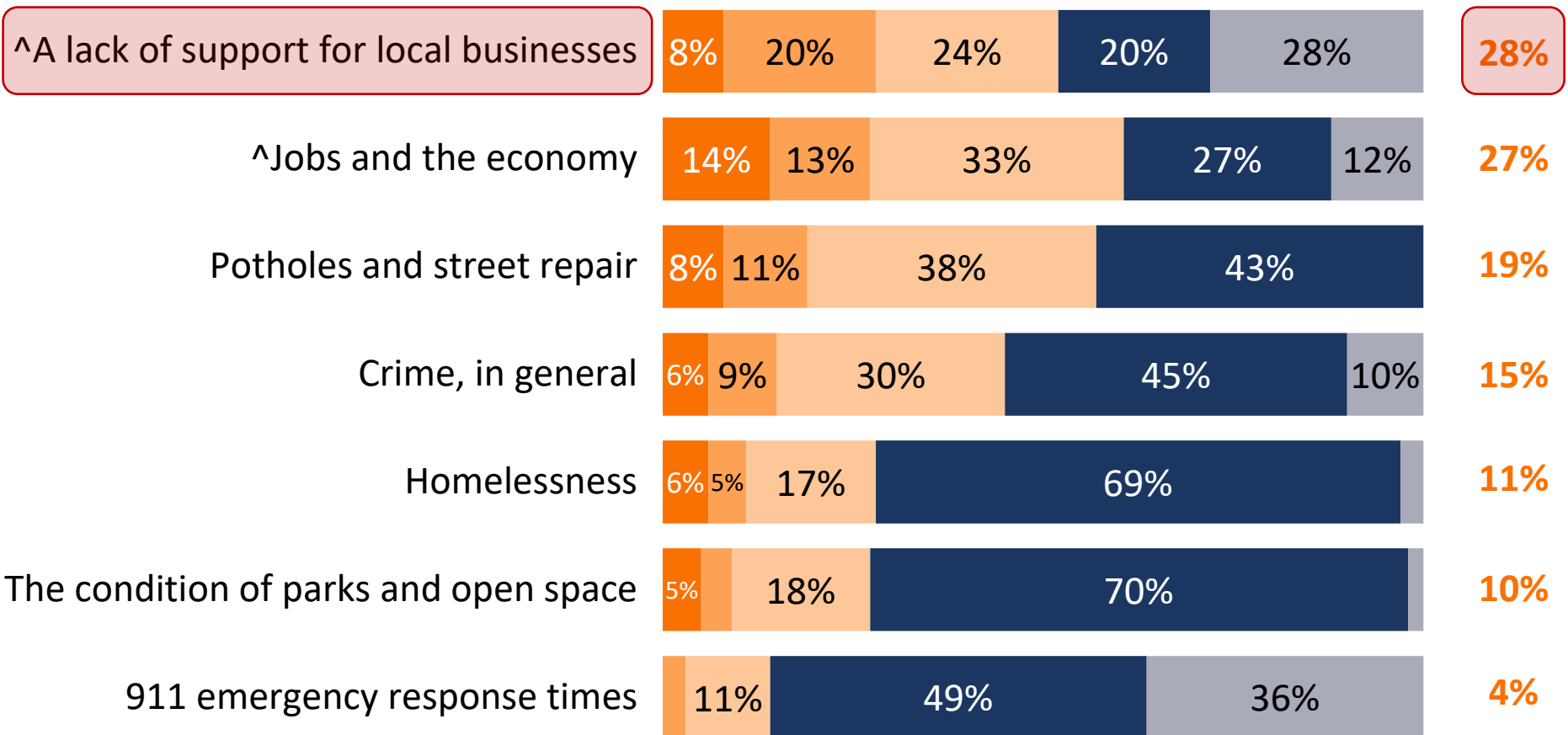
The cost of housing and cost of living are the only problems that majorities view as “very serious.”

I’m going to read you a list of things some people say may be problems facing Foster City. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem for Foster City residents.



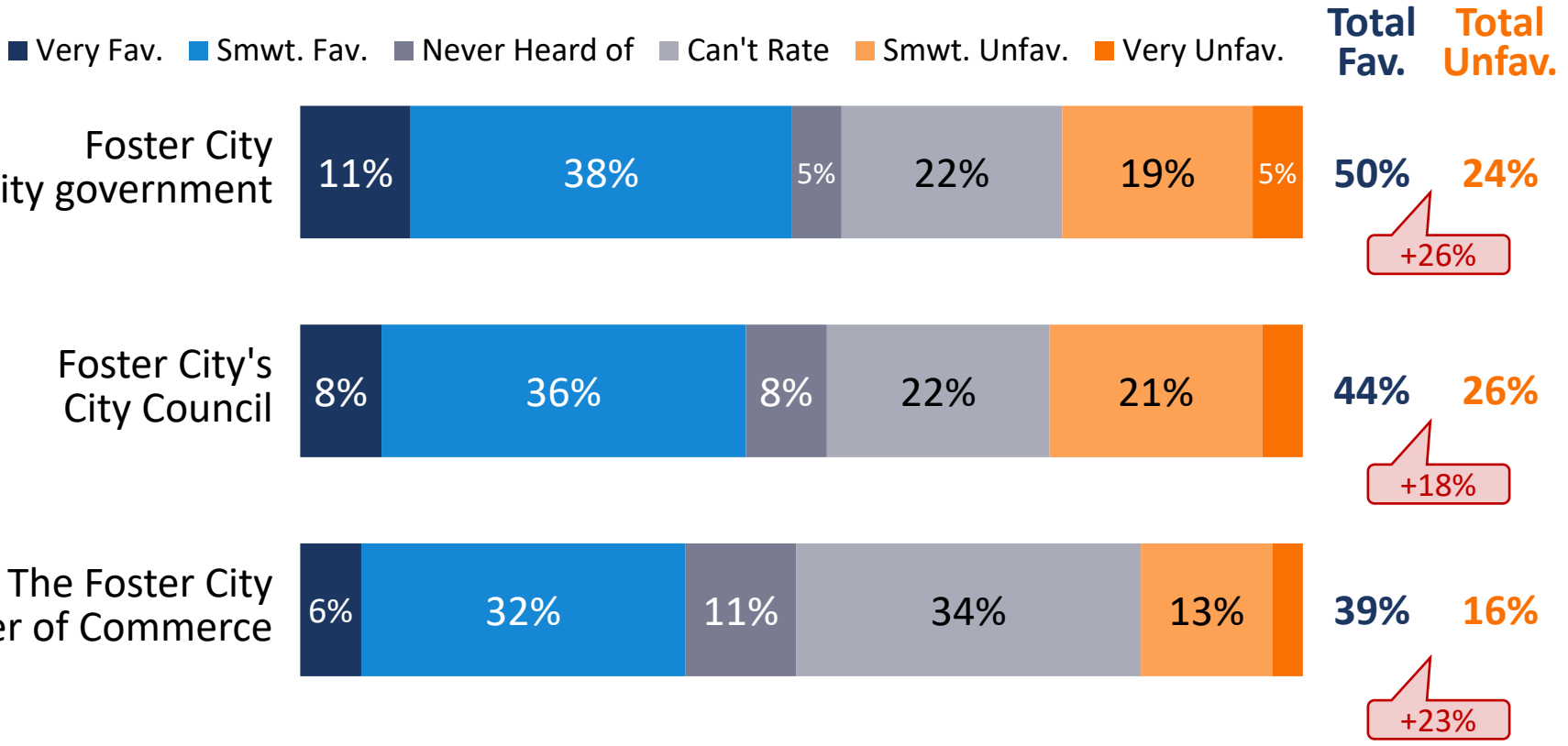
Very few worry about crime, homelessness, parks, and emergency response times.

■ Ext. Ser. Prob.
■ Very Ser. Prob.
■ Smwt. Ser. Prob.
■ Not a Prob.
■ No Opinion/Don't Know
Ext./Very Ser. Prob.



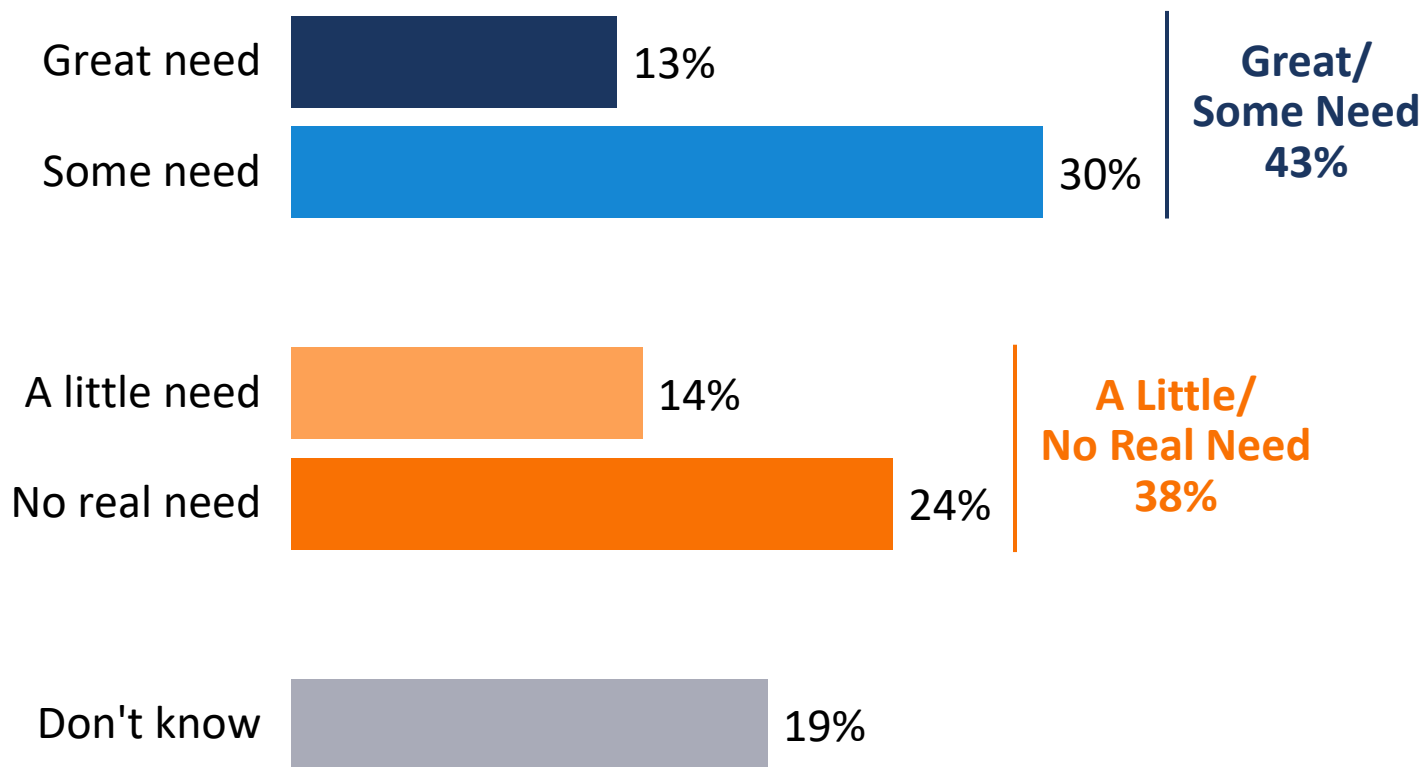
Voters have net favorable opinions of city government, the City Council, and the local chamber of commerce.

I am going to read you a list of names of some local institutions that are often in the public eye. Please tell me if your overall impression of that institution is favorable or unfavorable.



Only two in five see an appreciable need for funding for city services; only one in ten see a “great need.”

In your personal opinion, do you think there is a great need, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funds to provide uninterrupted levels of City services that Foster City residents need and want?





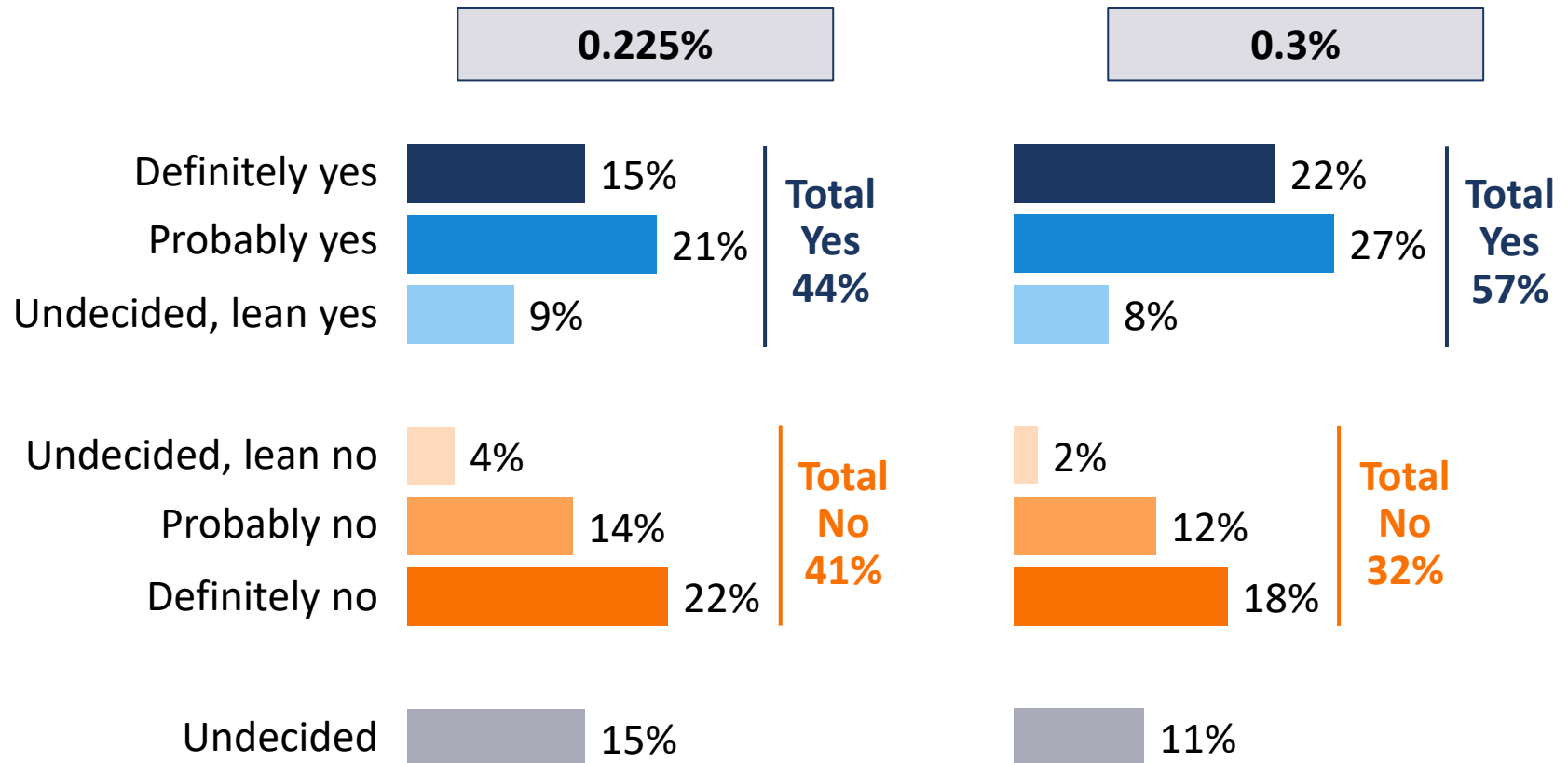
Reactions to a Potential BLT Measure

Hypothetical Ballot Measure Language

(General-purpose; 50% Vote Threshold)

Foster City Business License Modernization and City Services Measure. To maintain essential city services — such as police/fire protection, 911 response, and parks/street maintenance — shall Foster City adopt an ordinance increasing its business license tax by up to **(SPLIT SAMPLE C: 0.225%) (SPLIT SAMPLE D: 0.3%)** on gross receipts — with a \$100 minimum, smaller businesses paying lower rates, and a maximum tax cap — generating approximately **(SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$2,100,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE D: \$3,400,000)** annually until ended by voters for general government use, and requiring independent audits and all funds used locally?

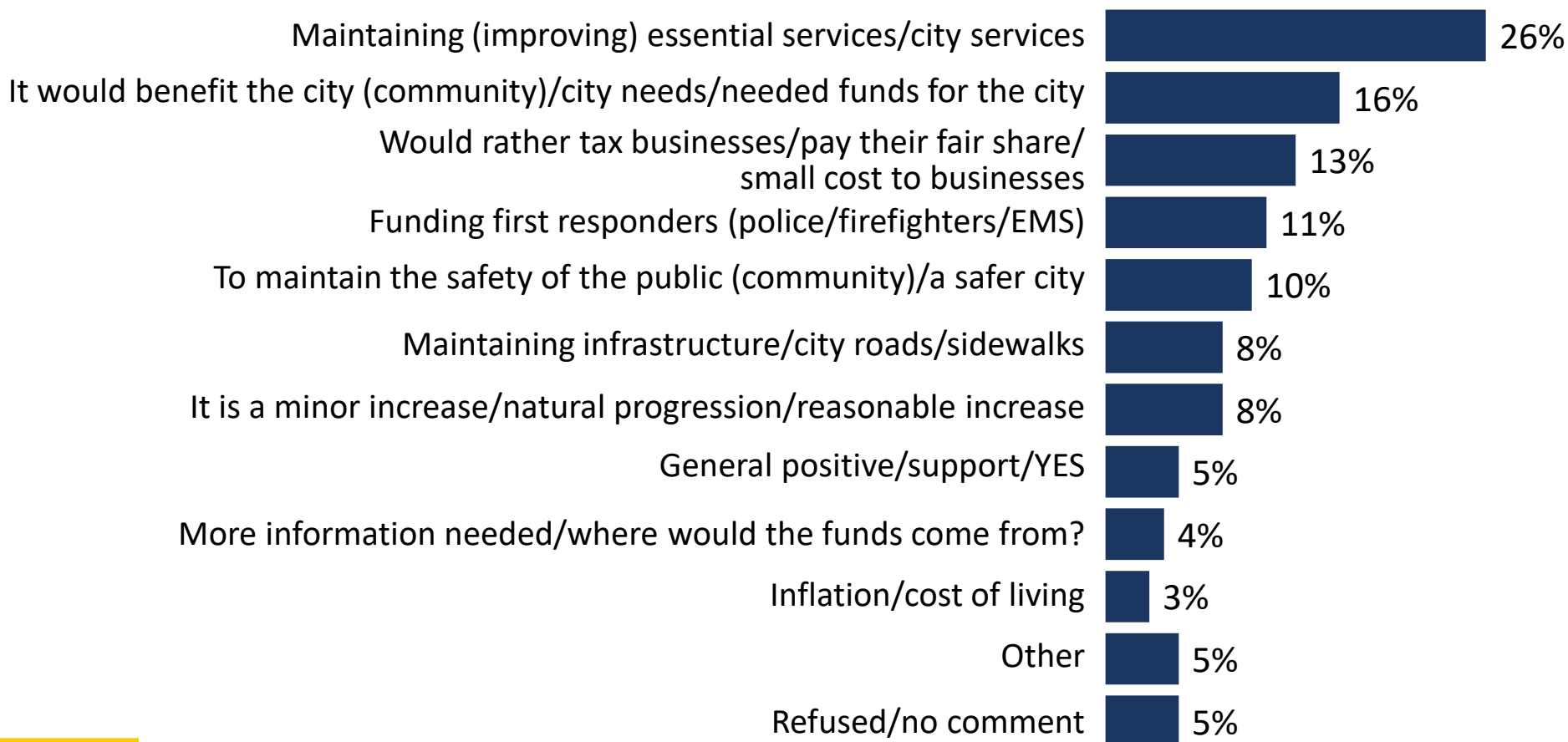
While a majority expressed support at the 0.3% rate, there was more ambivalence at the 0.225% rate.



“Yes” voters indicated support for funding services and benefiting the city.

*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **YES** on the measure?*

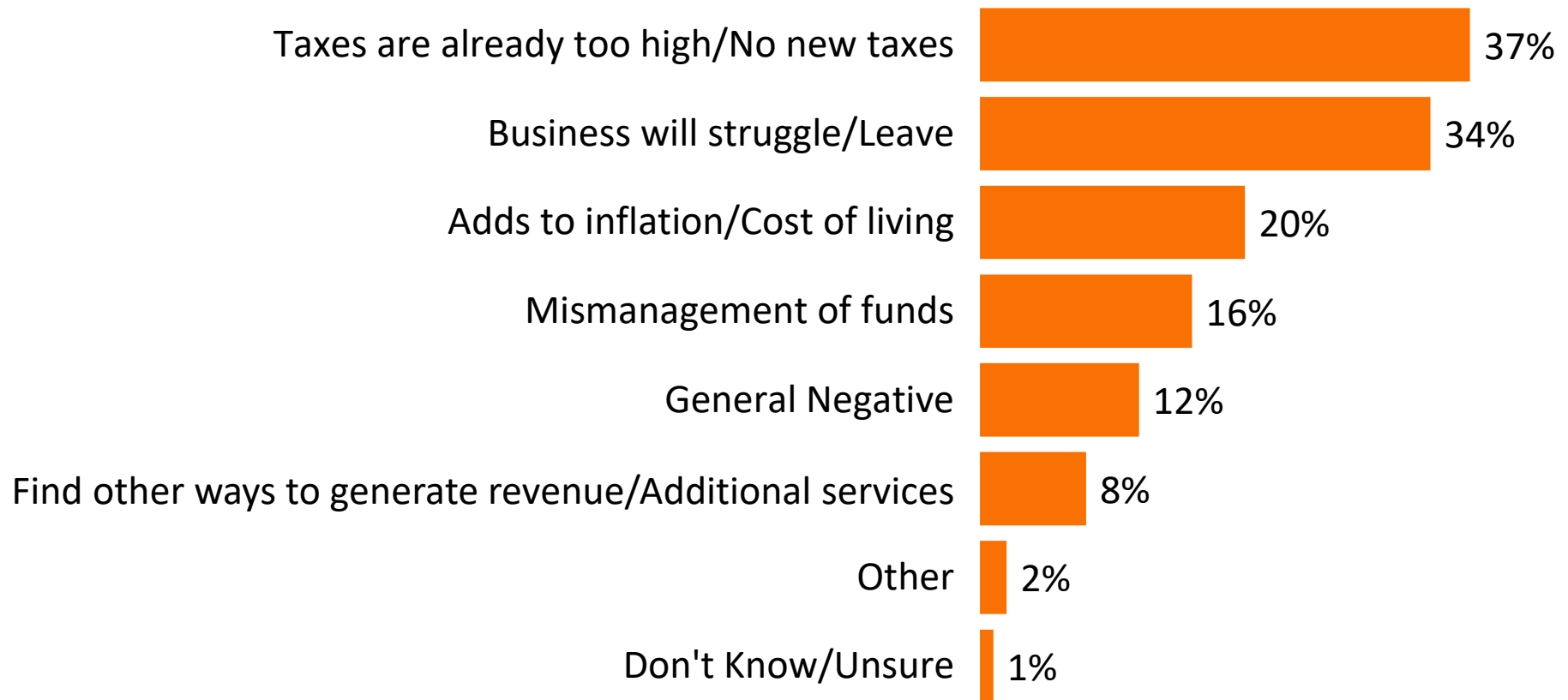
(Open-ended; Asked of Yes Voters Only, n=175)



The “no” vote was driven by anti-tax sentiment and concern that it will push out businesses.

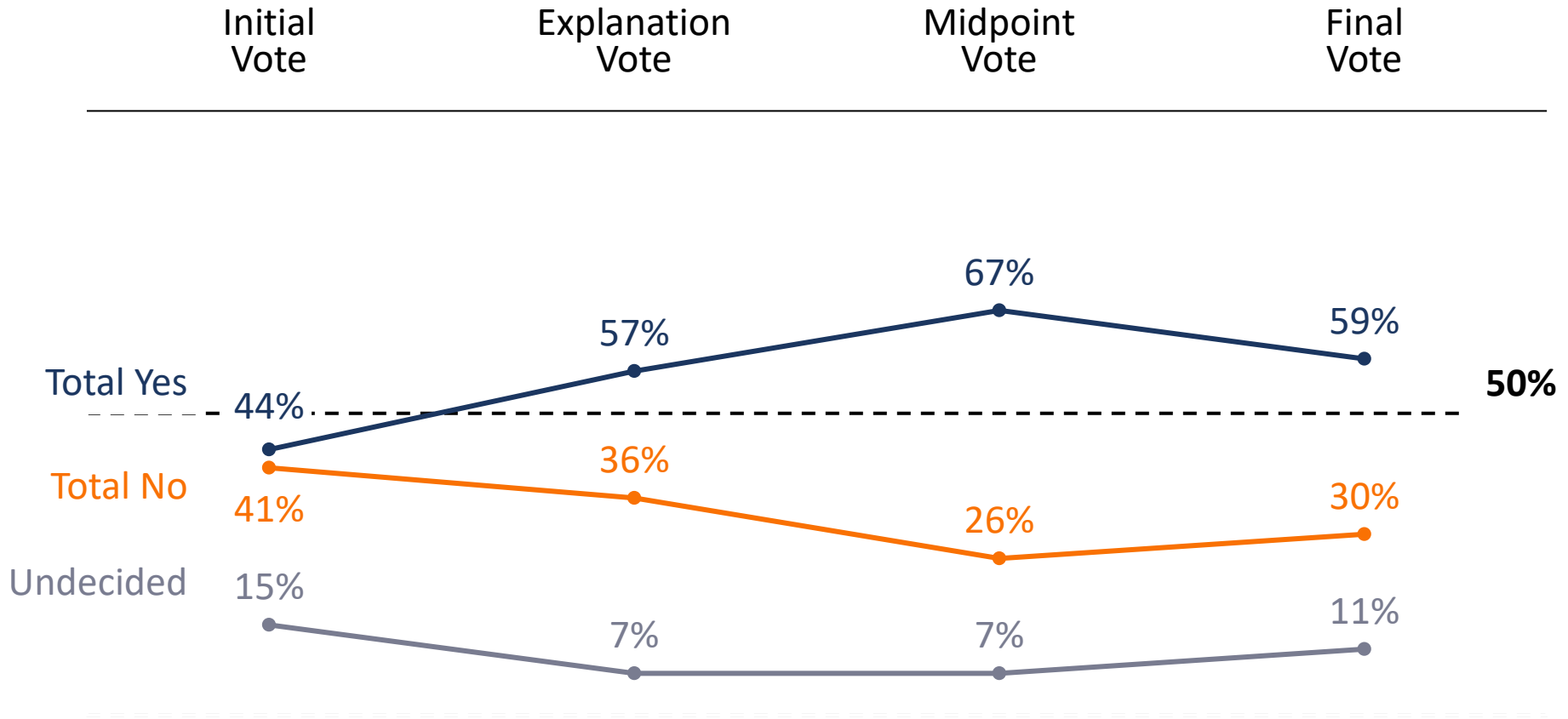
*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **NO** on the measure?*

(Open-ended; Asked of No Voters Only, n=125)



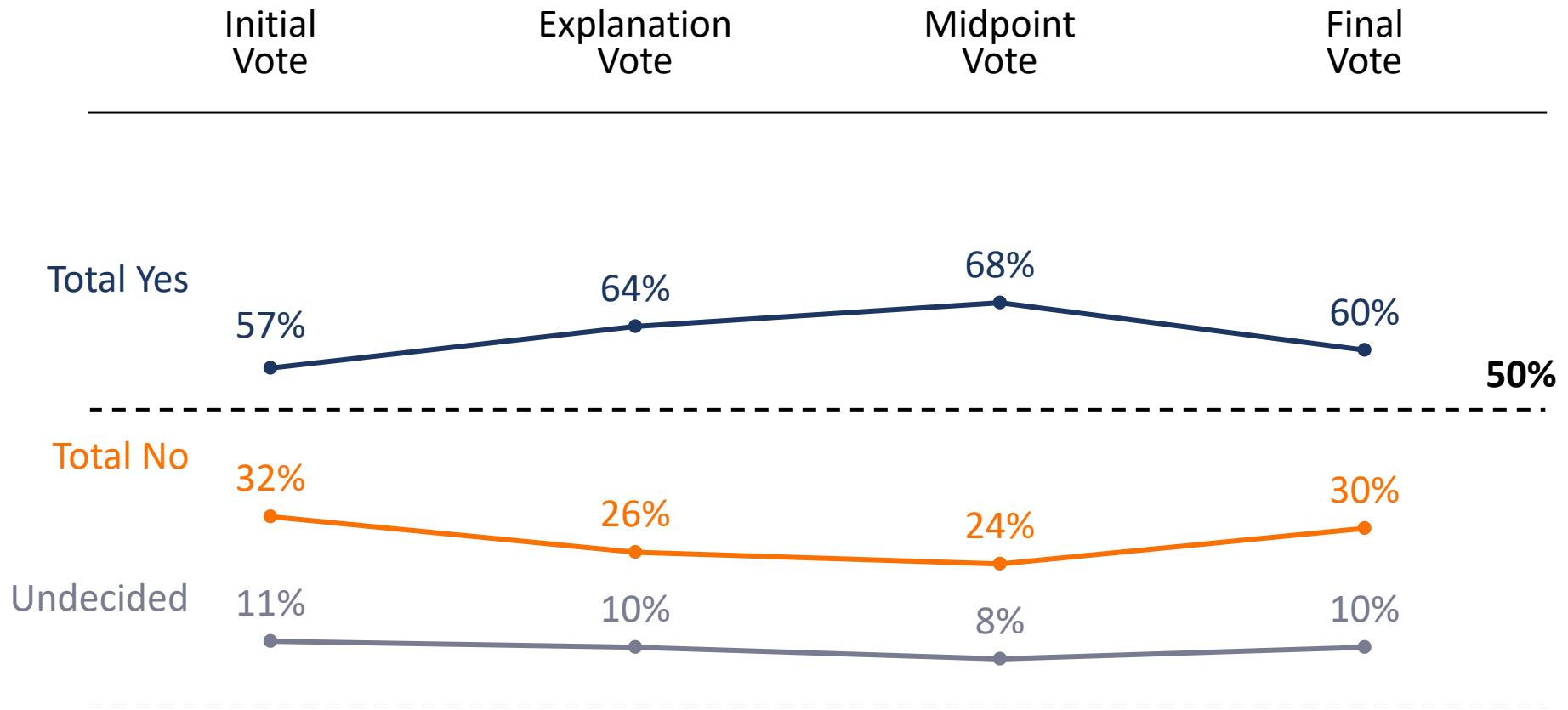
Support for the 0.225% tax rate exceeded 50% as voters learned more.

0.225% Tax Rate (8% MOE)

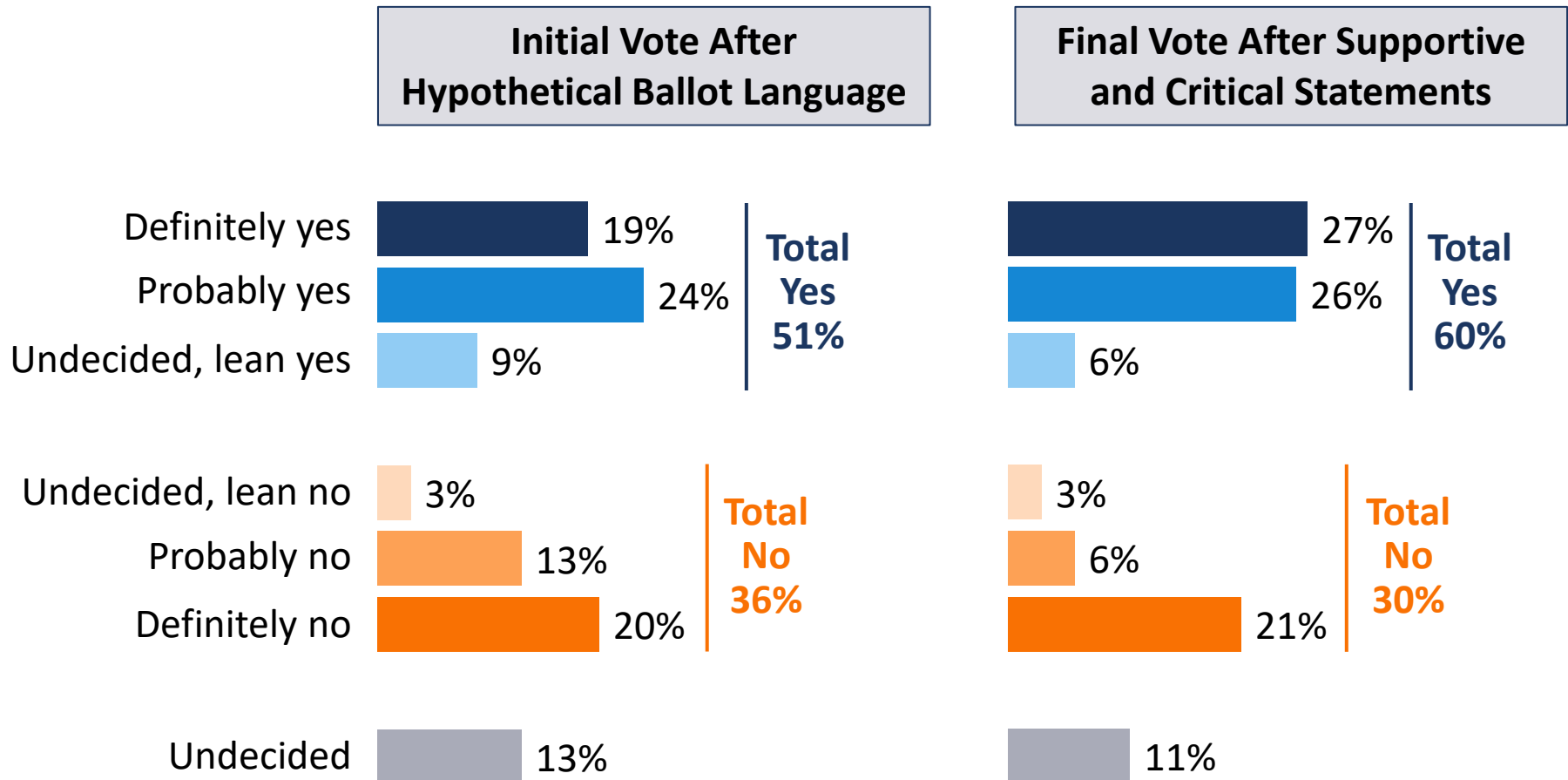


Support for the 0.3% tax rate was above 50% throughout the survey.

0.3% Tax Rate (8% MOE)



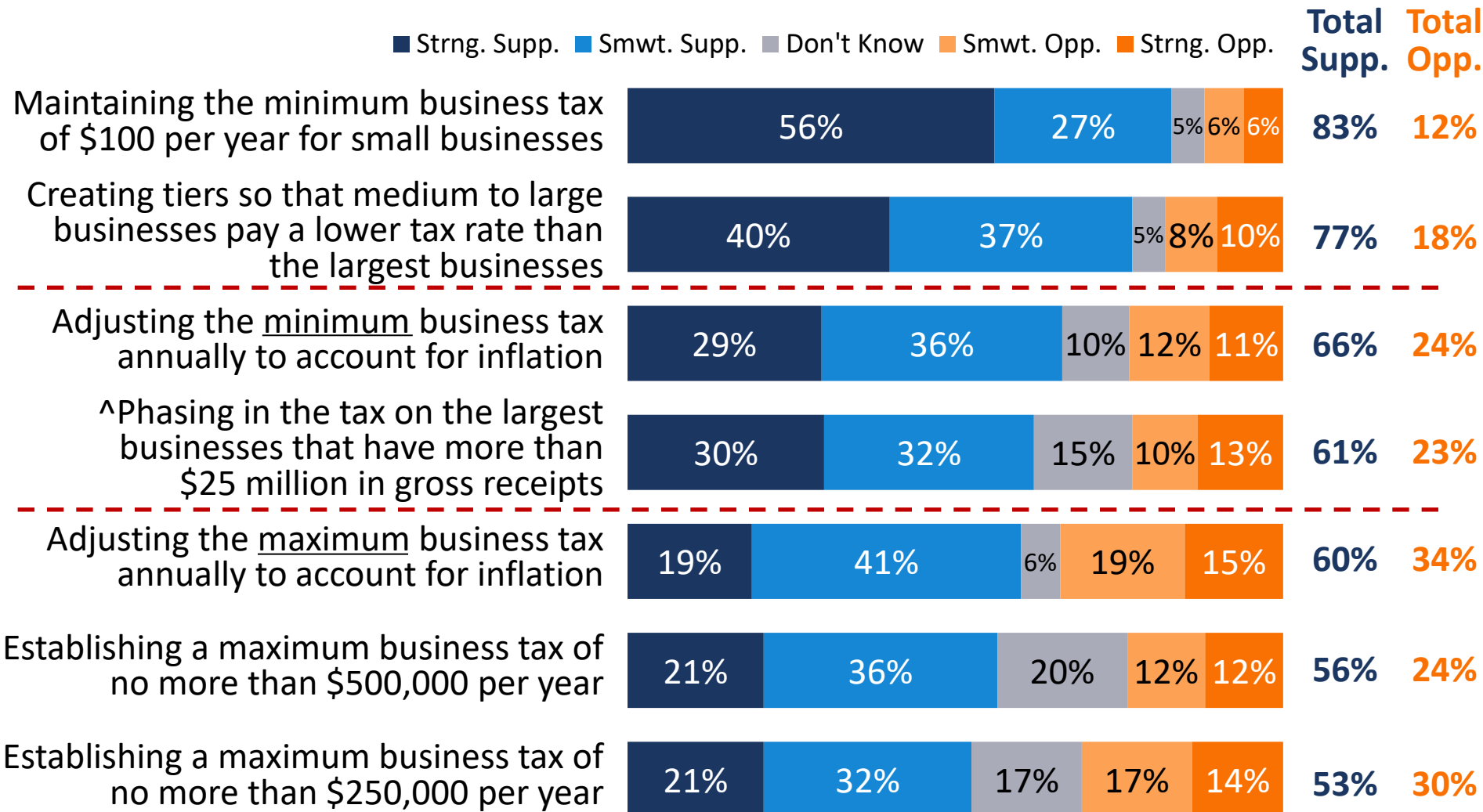
Combining rates, support increases to 60% after all information, but only one-quarter said they would “definitely” vote yes.





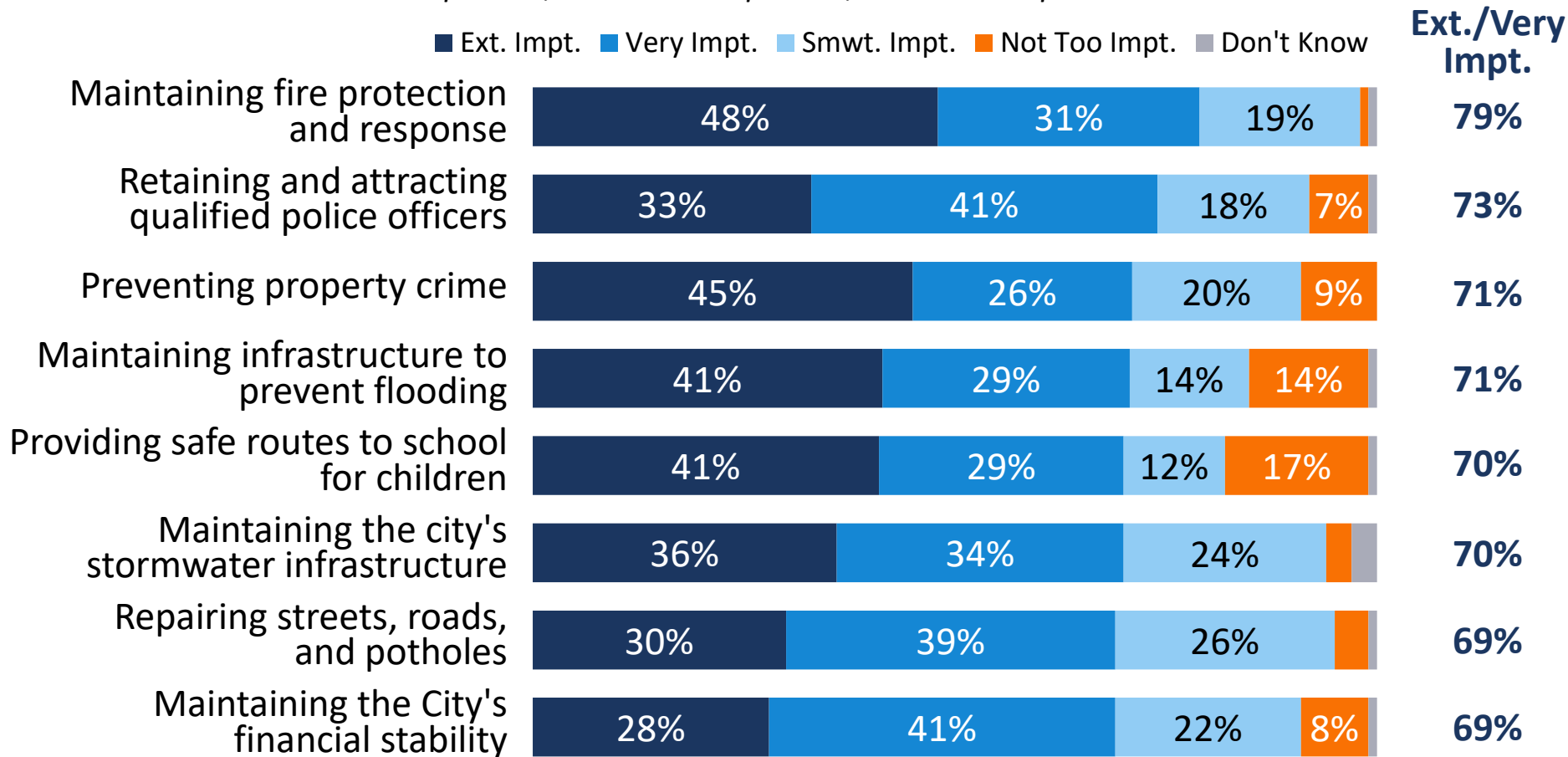
Measure Structure & Investment Priorities

Voters are most supportive of maintaining the \$100 minimum and creating tiers.

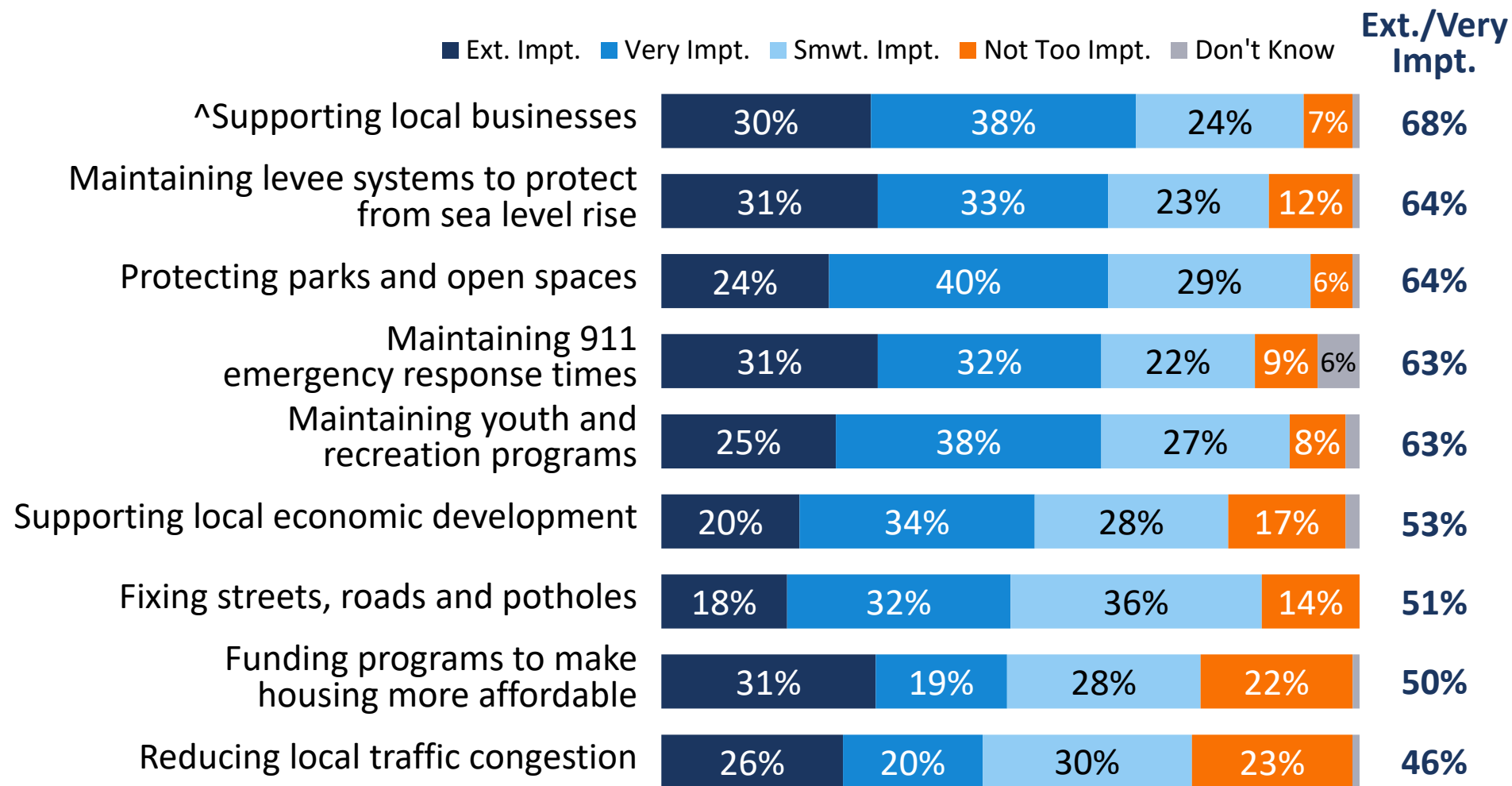


Many of voters' top investment priorities are related to public safety and infrastructure.

I am going to read you a list of City projects and programs. If additional funds were made available — either from the potential measure we discussed or from another source — please tell me how important increasing spending on each project or program would be to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important.



Supporting local economic development and road repairs were least likely to be “extremely important.”



Q9. I am going to read you a list of City projects and programs. If additional funds were made available — either from the potential measure we discussed or from another source — please tell me how important increasing spending on each project or program would be to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important. ^Not Part of Split Sample



Conclusions

Electoral Context

- Foster City voters are optimistic about the direction of their city and have a favorable view of city government.
- Additionally, few problems in the community are seen as very serious by a majority of voters, with the exceptions of the cost of housing—and more broadly—the cost of living.
- In that context, only two in five see a need for additional funding for city services.

BLT Measure Viability Factors

Polling Results indicate that a BLT modernization measure may be a viable ballot measure in the November 2024 General Election.

Perceptions of the City	Voters view City government favorably and feel optimistic about Foster City’s future.
Perceptions of Need	Approximately one in ten perceive that the City has a “great” need for additional funding.
Initial Vote (Total)	This is complicated by the differences in rates where the higher tax rate enjoyed a greater “yes” vote. However, the initial total “yes” vote for the 0.3% version suggests majority support for such a measure may exist at this point in time.
Initial Vote (Intensity)	Regardless of rate, there was only modest intensity in the initial “yes” vote.
Vote Movement	Support for measure increased after voters learned more about it and remained above 50% after presentation of rationales to oppose a measure.
Rates	By the end of the survey, support was very similar for both rates tested—both in aggregate and intensity—suggesting that those initial differences may have been artifacts of how respondents quickly interpreted the 0.225% rate and that voters might make their decision on other factors besides the tax rate.

**For more information,
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