



Turlock Community Issues Survey

*Survey Conducted:
February 3-9, 2020*



FAIRBANK, MASLIN,
MAULLIN, METZ
& ASSOCIATES

Methodology

- ✓ 525 completed survey interviews with Turlock residents likely to vote in November 2020
- ✓ Conducted February 3-9, 2020
- ✓ Interviews conducted online and by cell phone/landline telephone
- ✓ Survey available in English and Spanish
- ✓ Overall Margin of Error: $\pm 4.9\%$



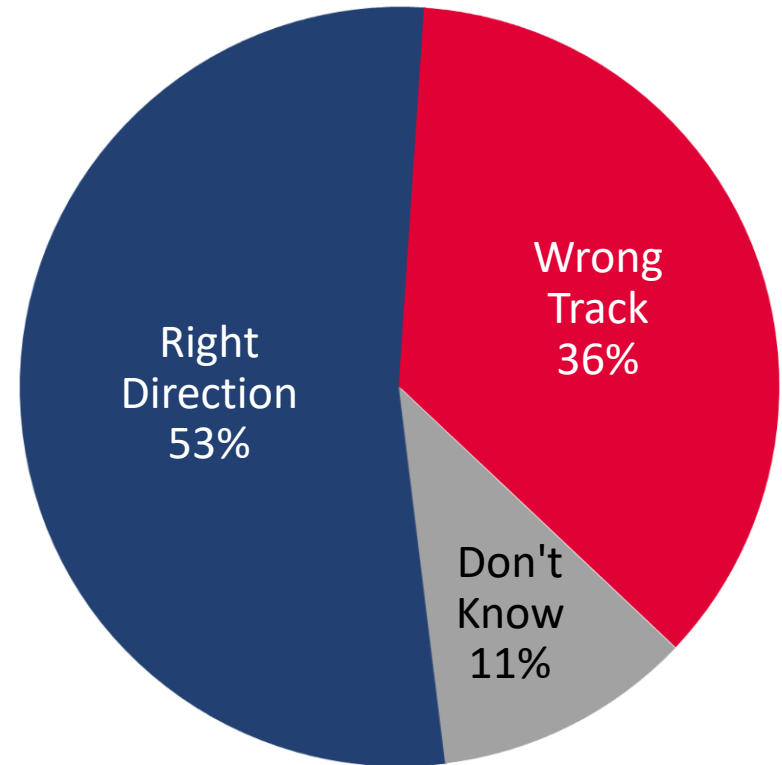
General Community Attitudes

A majority of respondents have positive opinions about the direction of their neighborhood, but fewer are optimistic about the direction of the city overall.

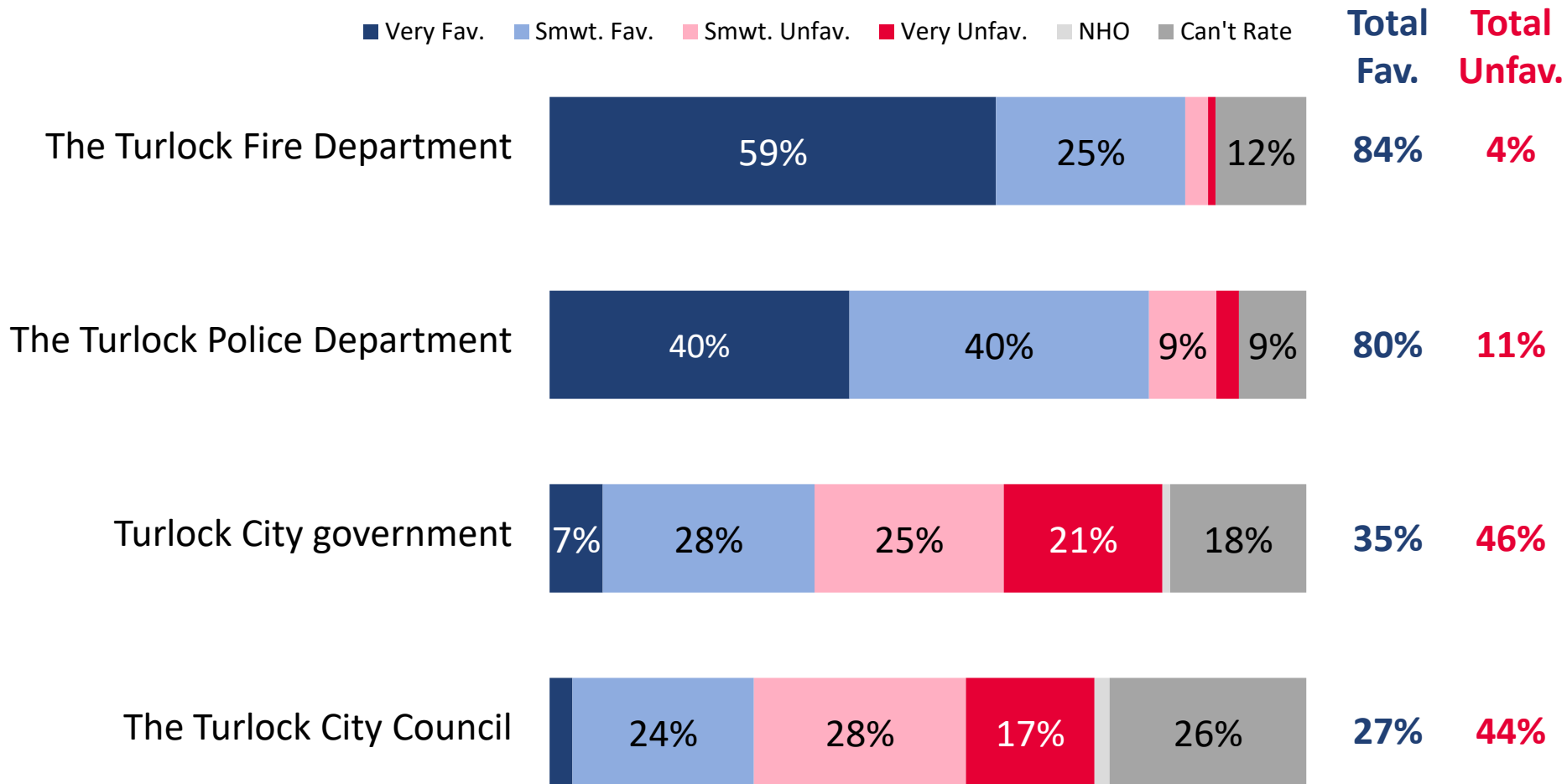
The City of Turlock



Your Local Neighborhood

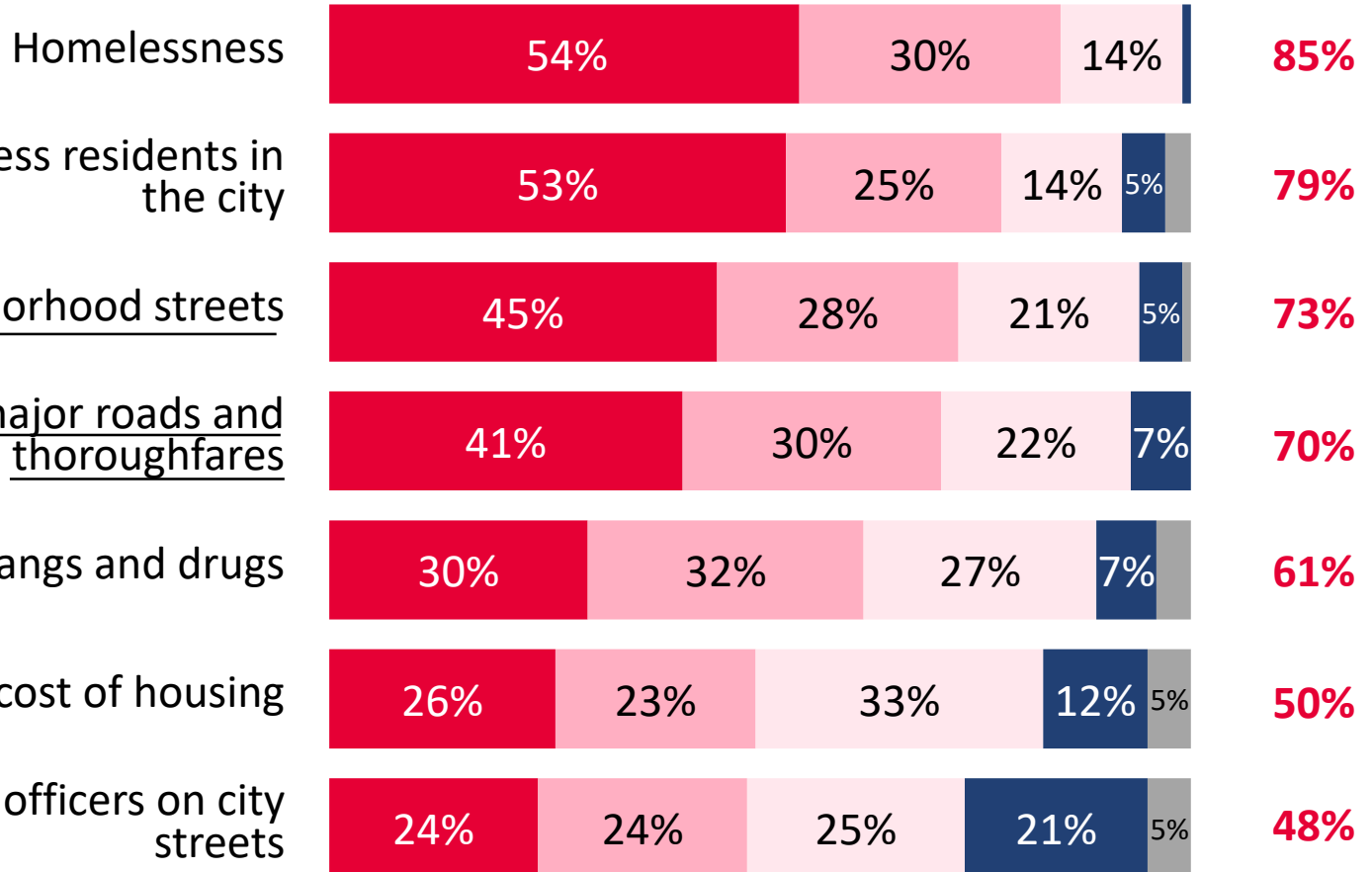


Voters have very favorable opinions of local public safety agencies, but have less favorable views of City government and the City Council.



Homelessness, road conditions and crime are considered to be the most serious problems.

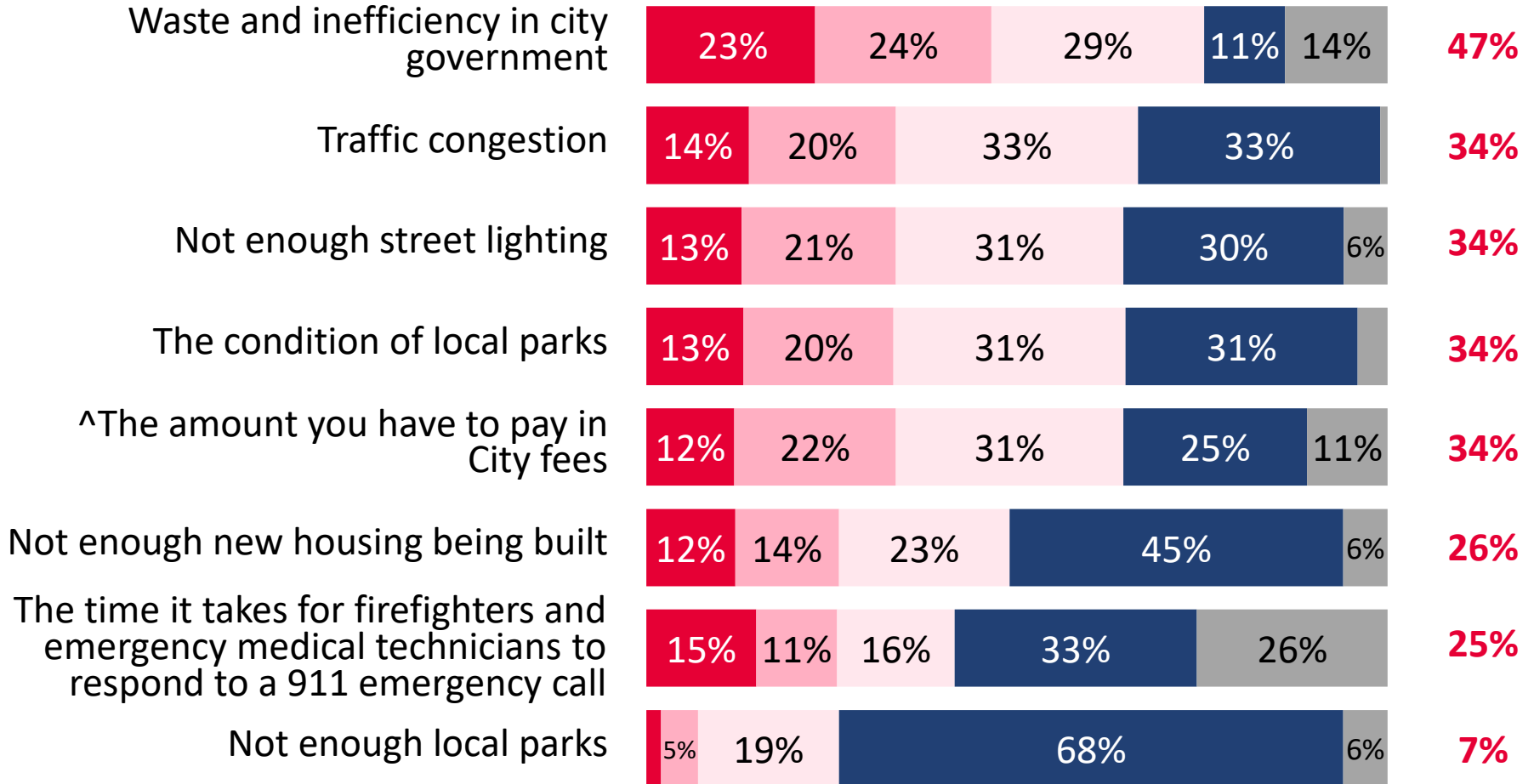
■ Ext. Ser. Prob. ■ Very Ser. Prob. ■ Smwt. Ser. Prob. ■ Not Too Ser. Prob. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Ser. Prob.**



Continued

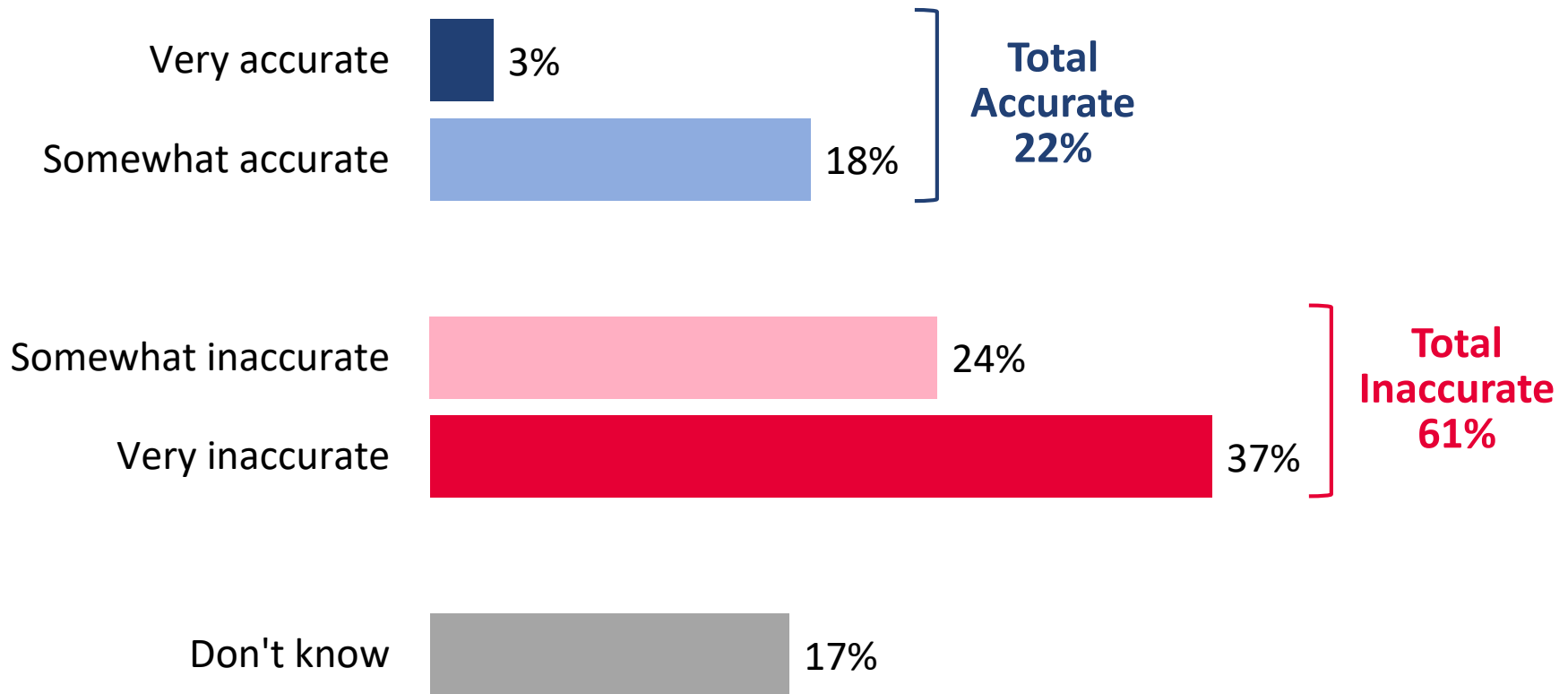
■ Ext. Ser. Prob. ■ Very Ser. Prob. ■ Smwt. Ser. Prob. ■ Not Too Ser. Prob. ■ Don't Know

Ext./Very Ser. Prob.



More than six-in-ten voters do not believe the City's finances are well-managed.

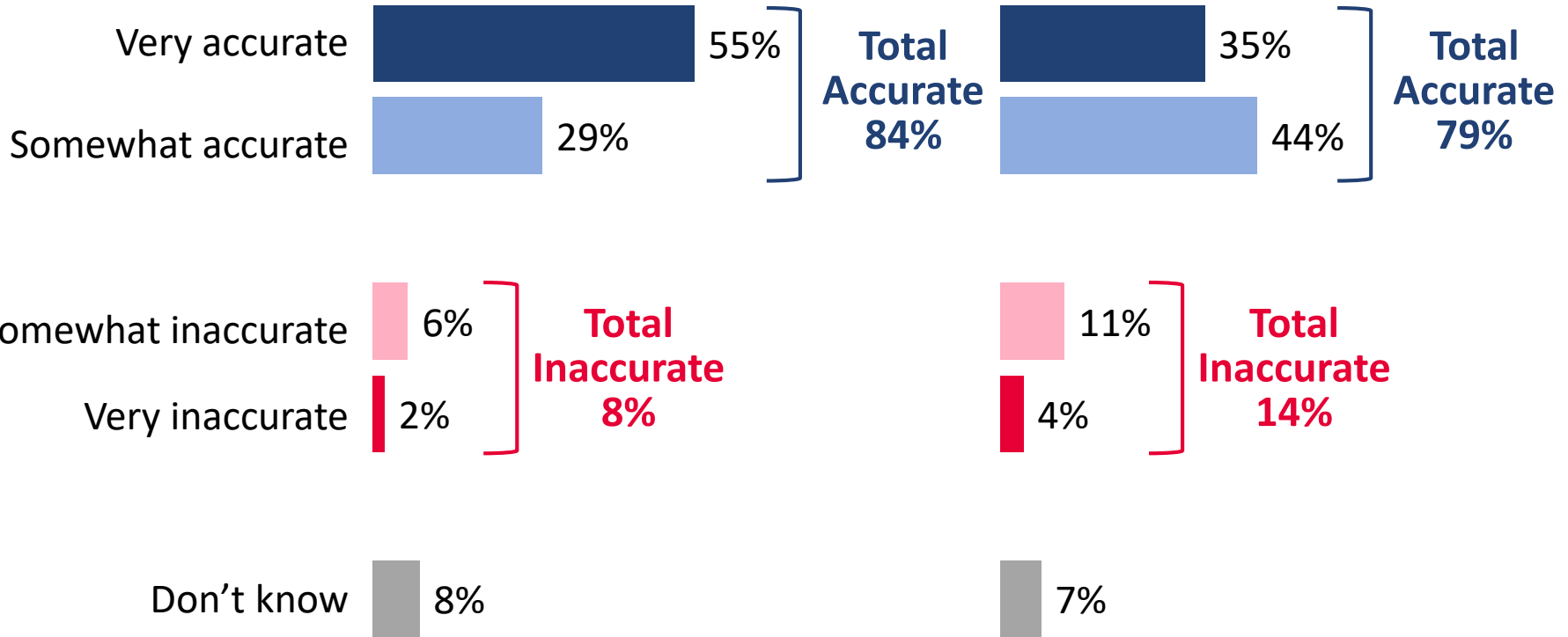
The City of Turlock's finances are generally well-managed



Voters believe the population of Turlock has grown substantially in recent years and will continue to grow over the next few years.

The population of Turlock has grown substantially in recent years

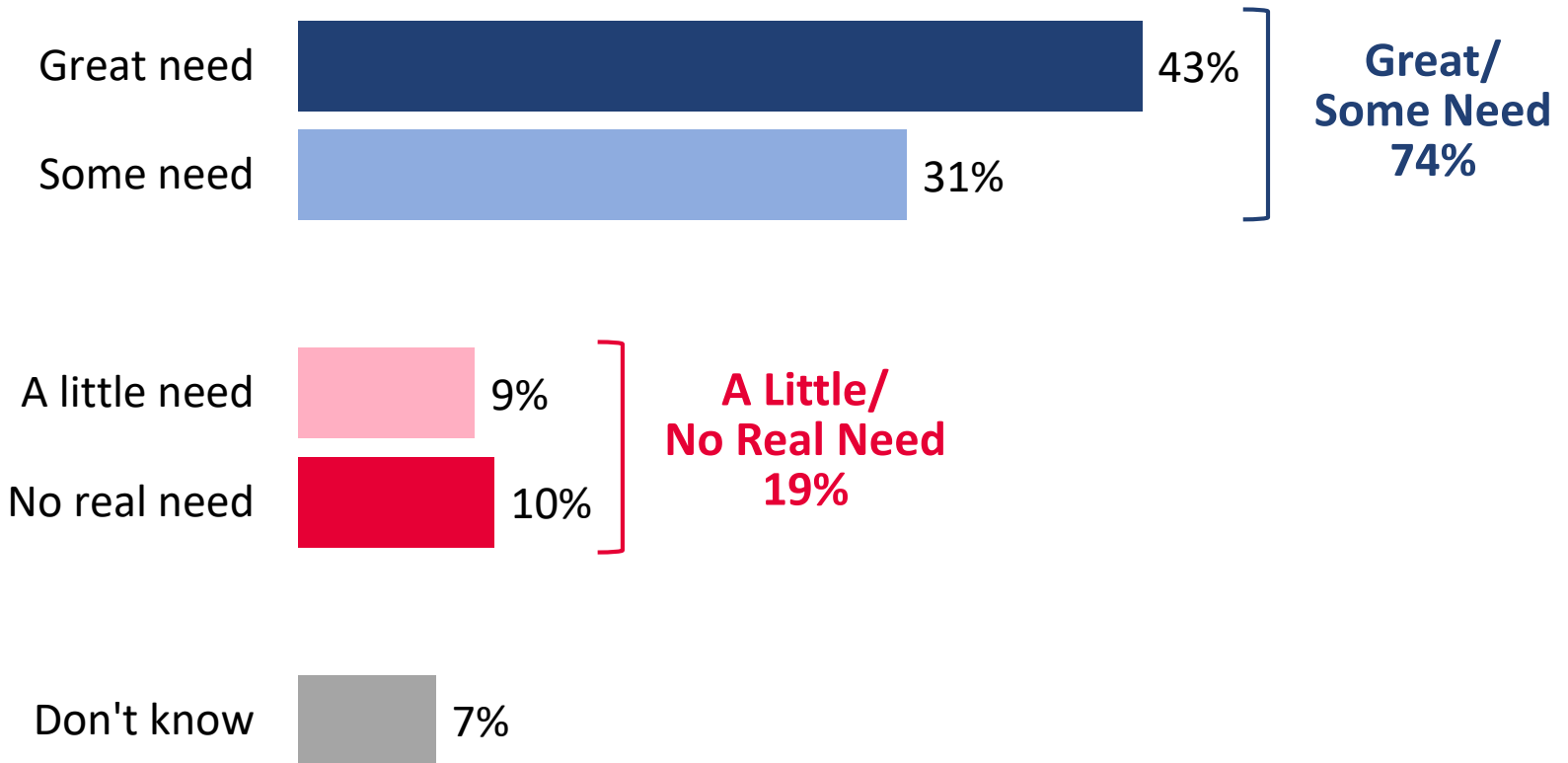
The population of Turlock will grow substantially over the next few years





Attitudes on a Potential Sales Tax Measure

More than seven-in-ten voters believe the City has at least "some" need for additional funding to provide City services.

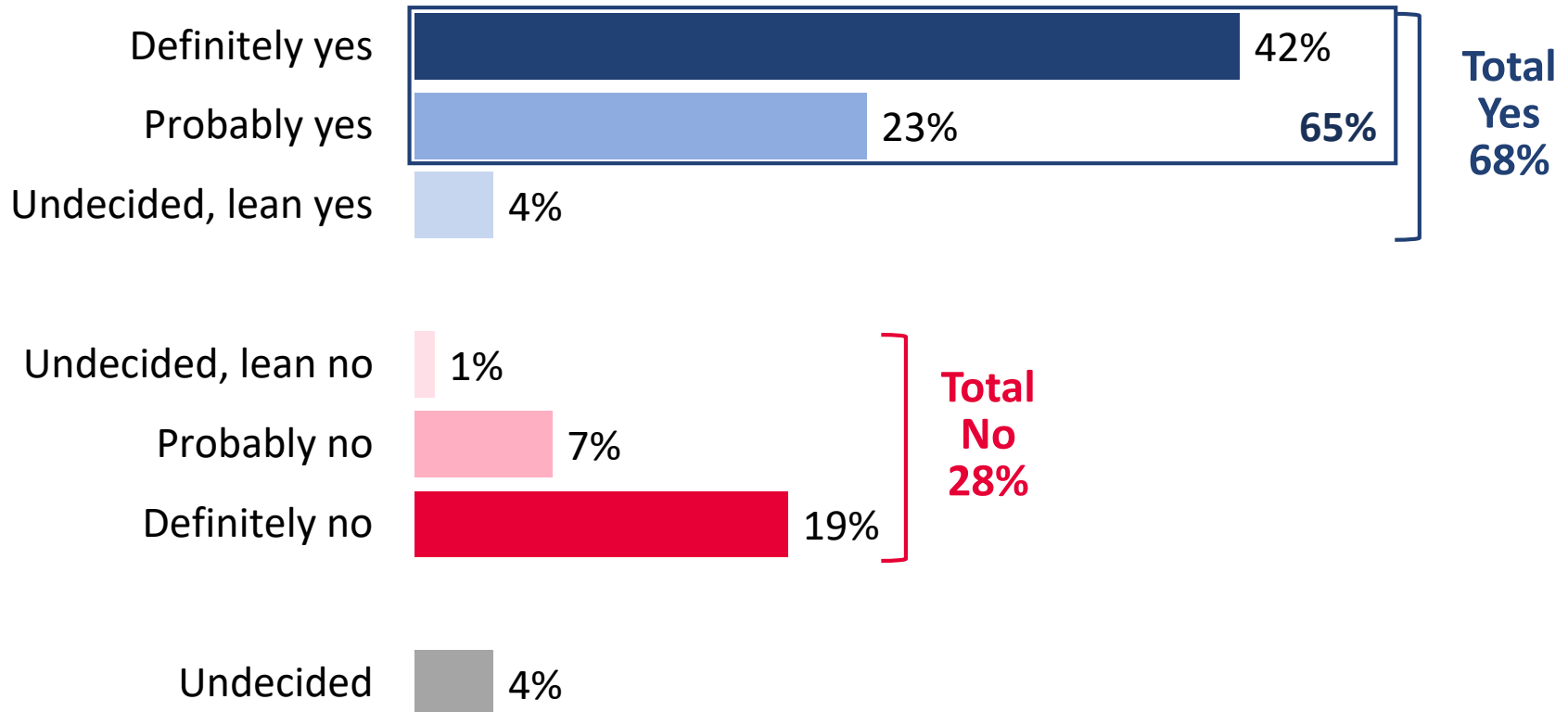


Draft Ballot Measure Tested in the Survey

TURLOCK PUBLIC SAFETY/COMMUNITY SERVICES MEASURE.

Shall the measure to maintain police/fire protection, emergency medical response, anti-gang/drug programs; keep parks/public areas safe/clean; address homelessness/vagrancy; repair streets, potholes, sidewalks; retain/attract local businesses; maintain youth/after-school and senior programs, other general services, by establishing a 1¢ sales tax providing approximately \$15,000,000 annually until ended by voters, requiring audits, citizens oversight, public disclosure of spending, all funds used locally, be adopted?

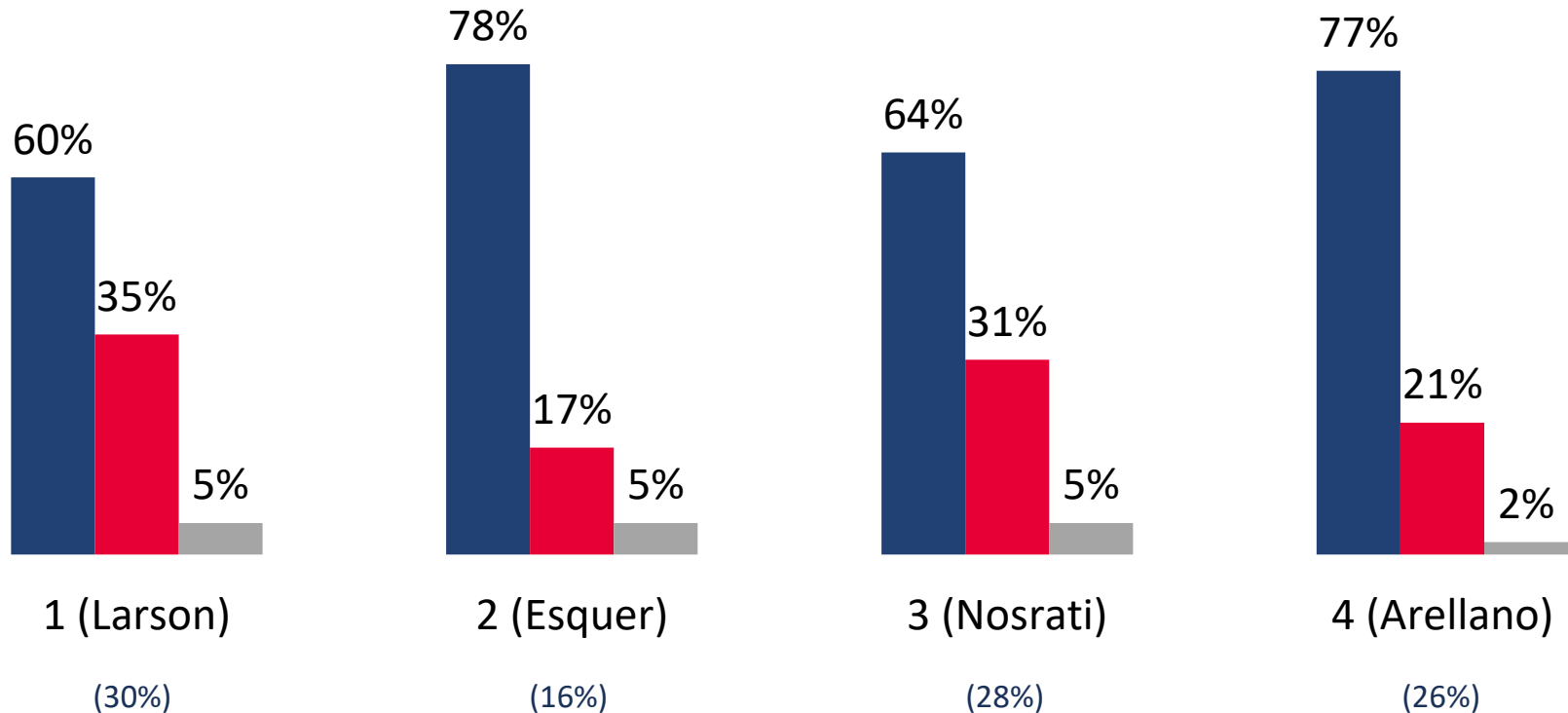
Nearly seven-in-ten voters support the potential sales tax measure on the initial reading.



At least sixty percent of voters in each Council District initially support the measure.

Initial Vote by City Council District

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



(% of Sample)

1 (Larson)

(30%)

2 (Esquer)

(16%)

3 (Nosrati)

(28%)

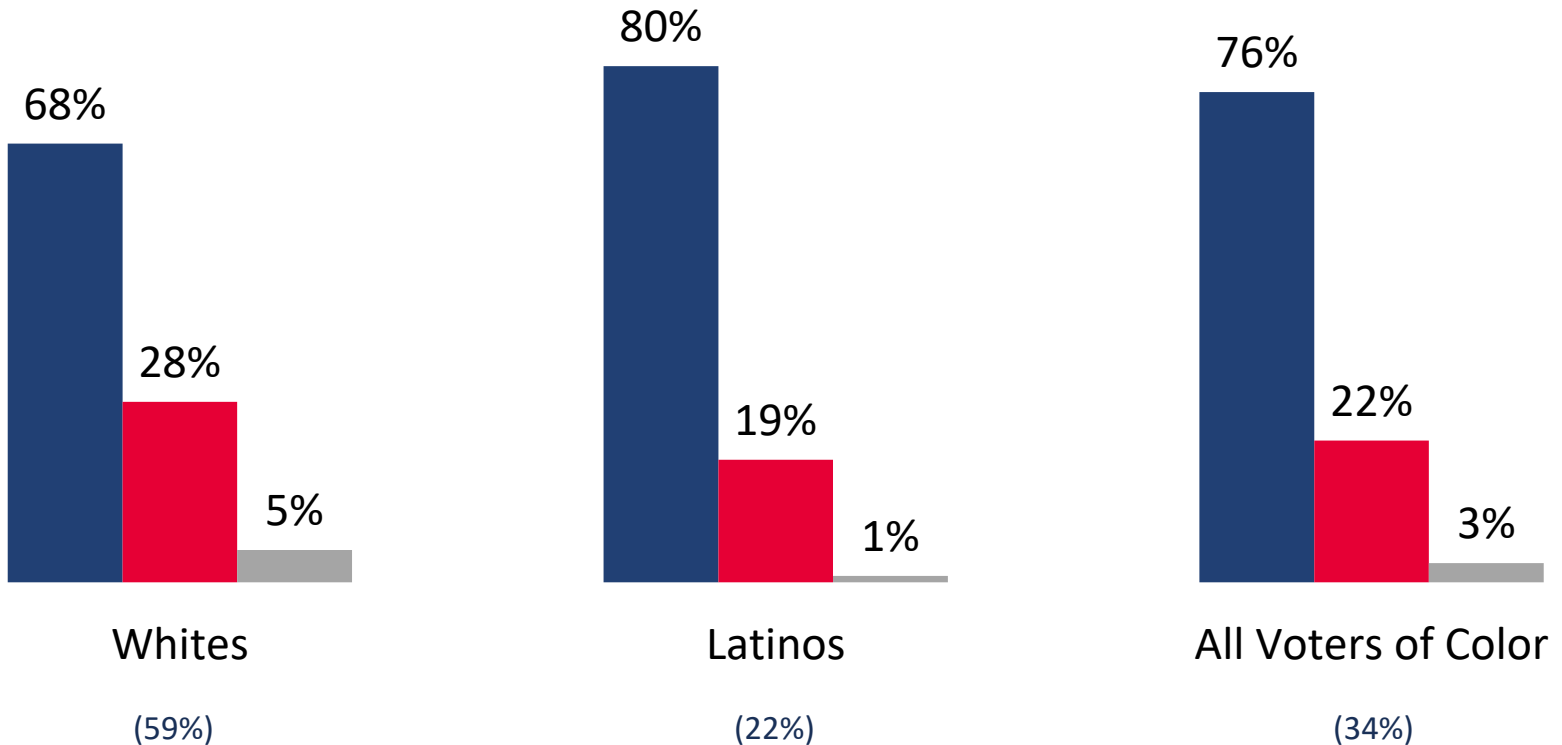
4 (Arellano)

(26%)

There is strong support for the measure across racial and ethnic lines.

Initial Vote by Race/Ethnicity

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

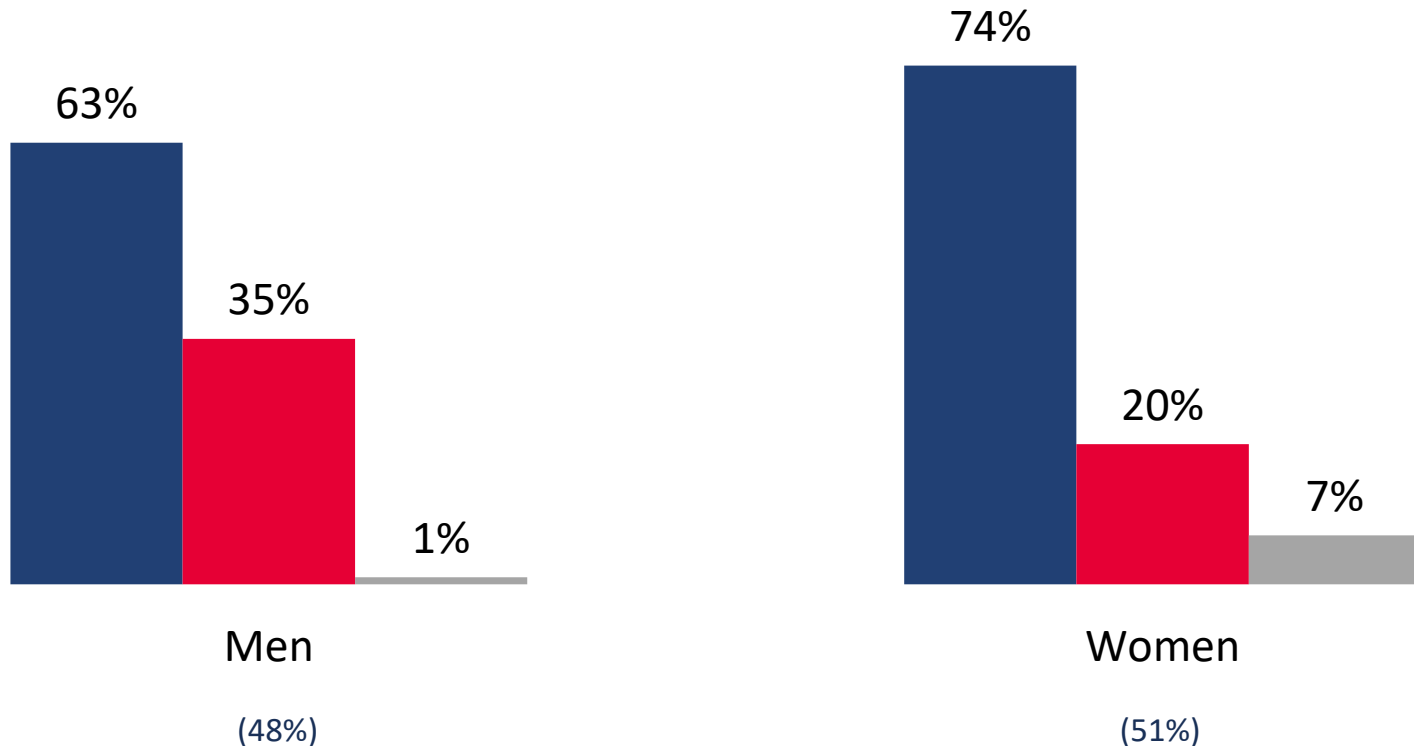


(% of Sample)

Both men and women support the measure, with stronger support from women.

Initial Vote by Gender

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

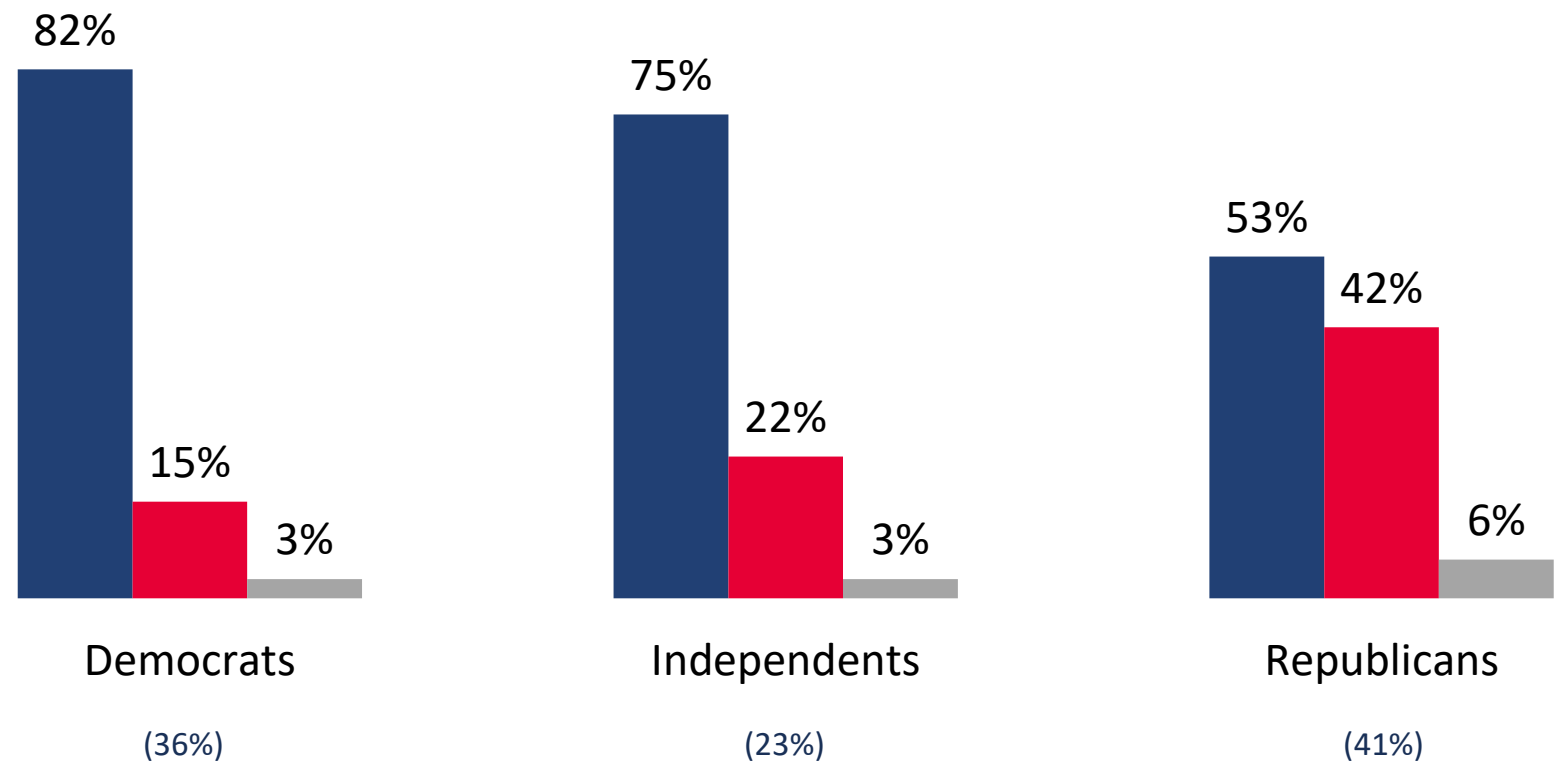


(% of Sample)

Democrats and independent voters overwhelmingly support the measure, as do a majority of Republicans.

Initial Vote by Party

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

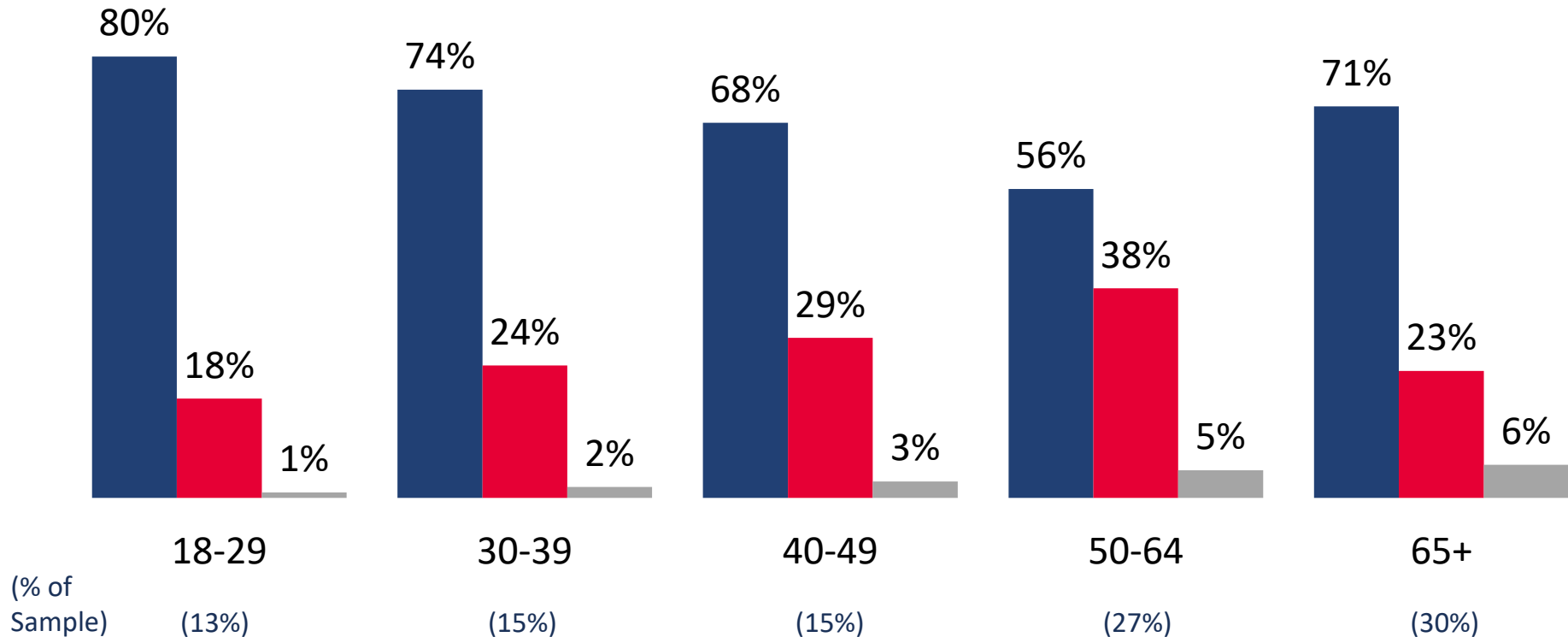


(% of Sample)

Support crosses the age spectrum, with the strongest support from voters under 40.

Initial Vote by Age

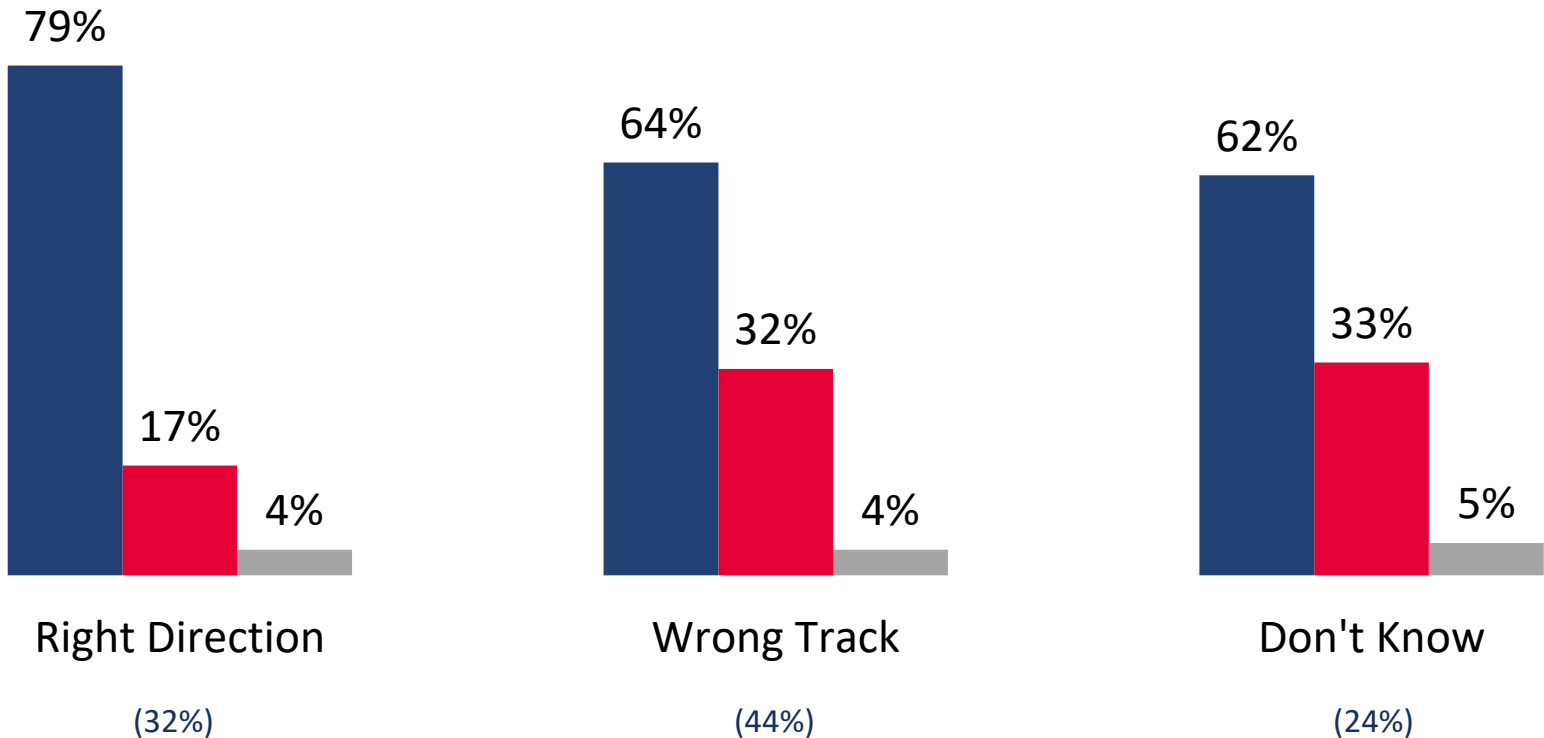
■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



Voters who think the City is headed in the right direction are more likely to support the measure, but support is also high among voters who think the City is headed on the wrong track or don't know.

Initial Vote by City Direction

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

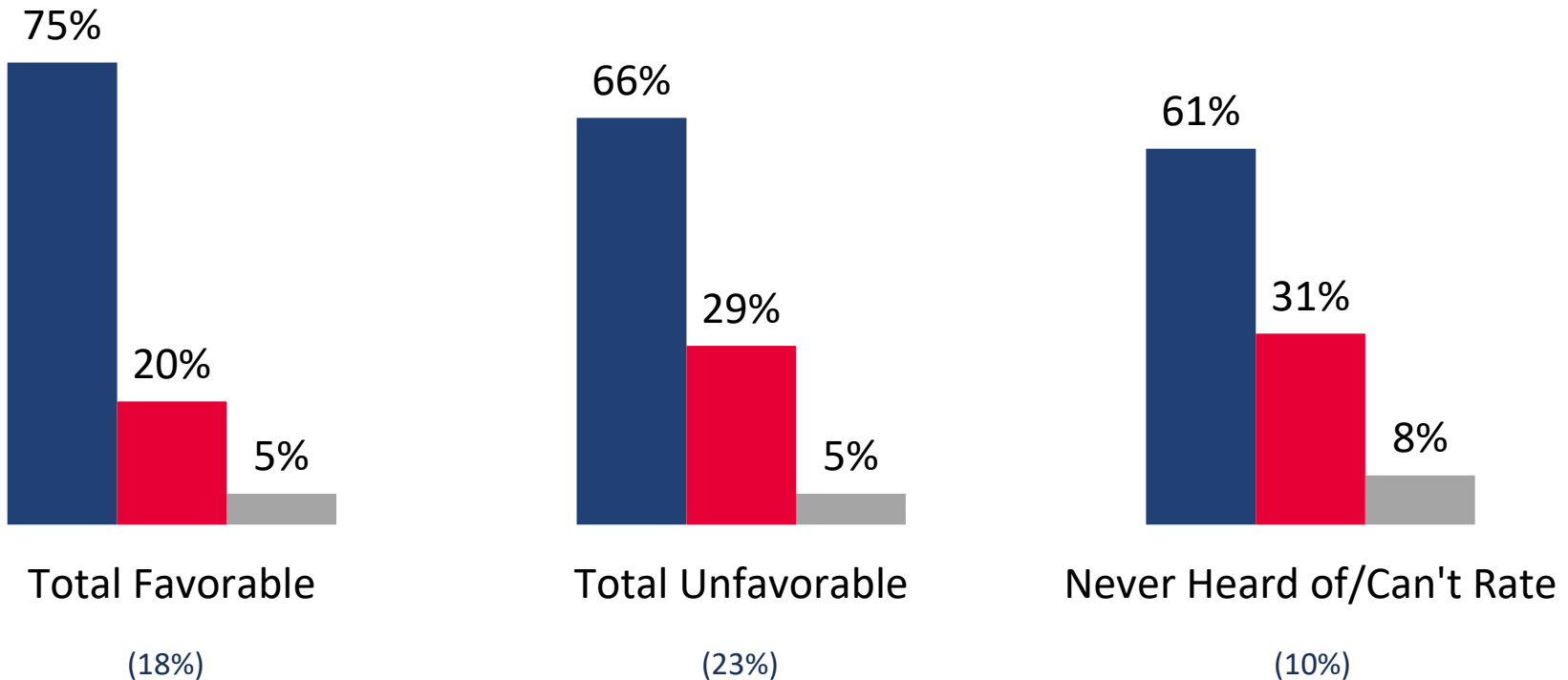


(% of Sample)

Ratings of the performance of City government are not a very big factor in opinions of the measure overall.

Initial Vote by City Government Performance

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

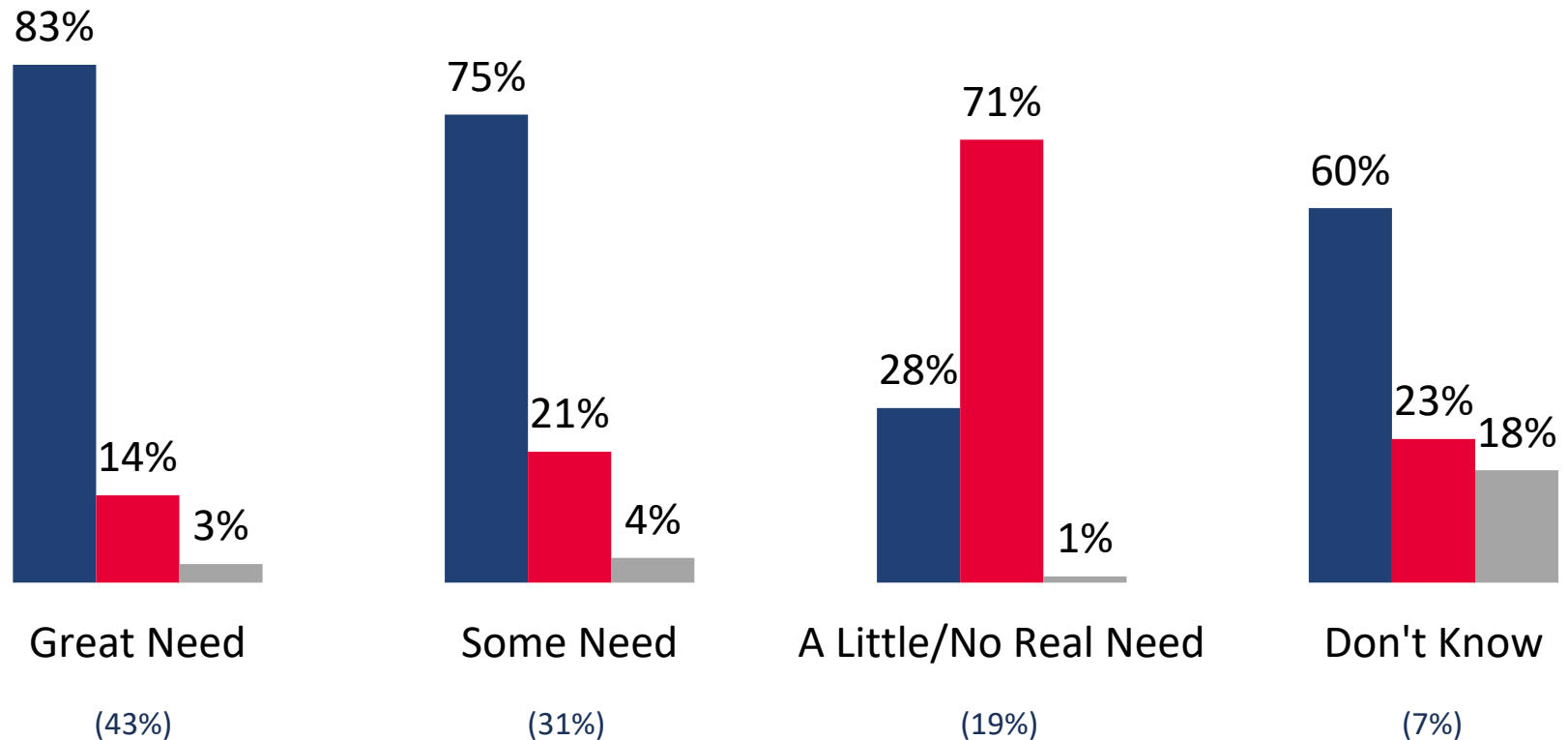


(% of Sample)

There is an extremely strong connection between opinions on the City's need for additional funding and support for the measure.

Initial Vote by City Need for Funding

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

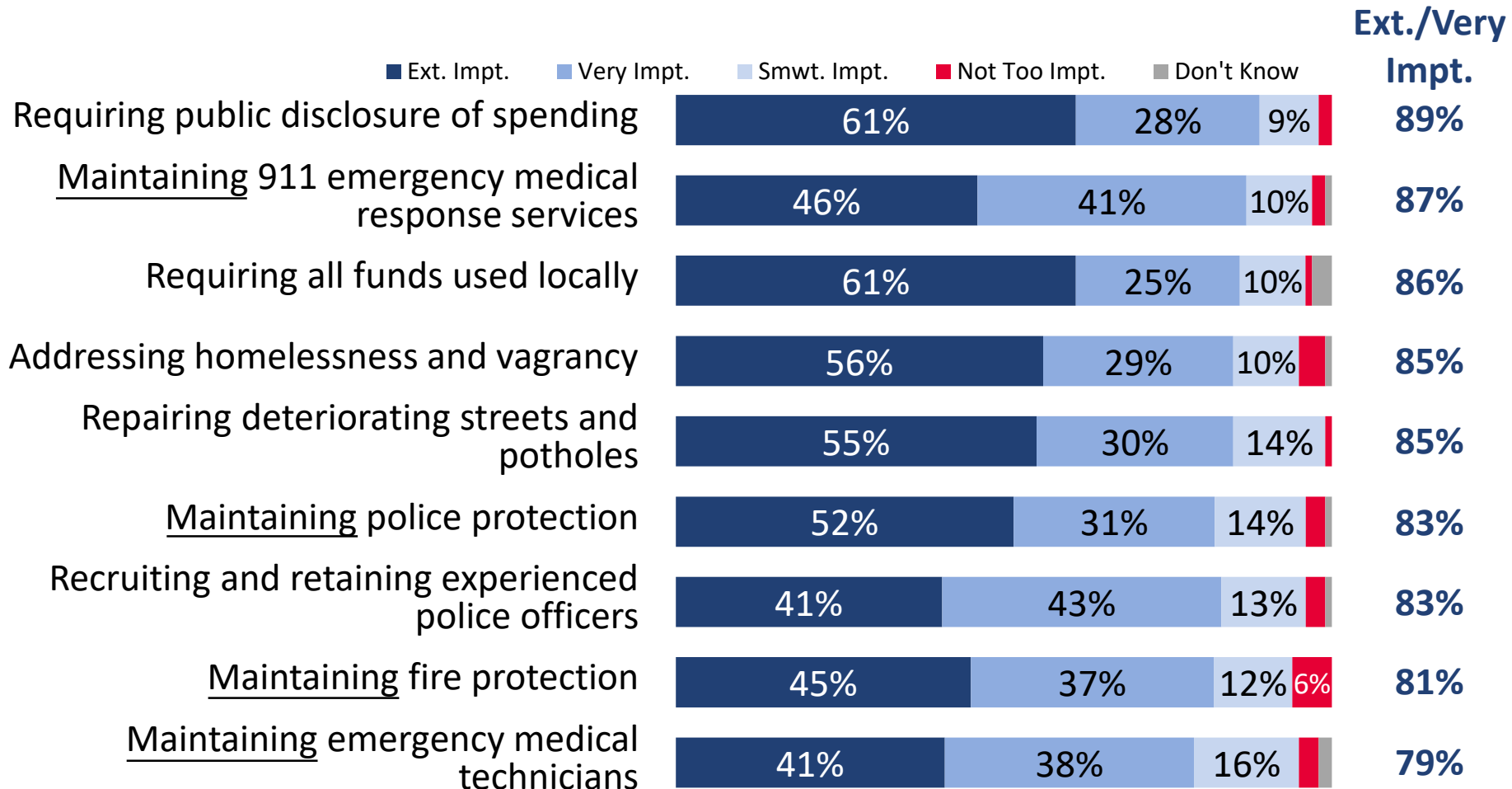


(% of Sample)



Ballot Measure Elements

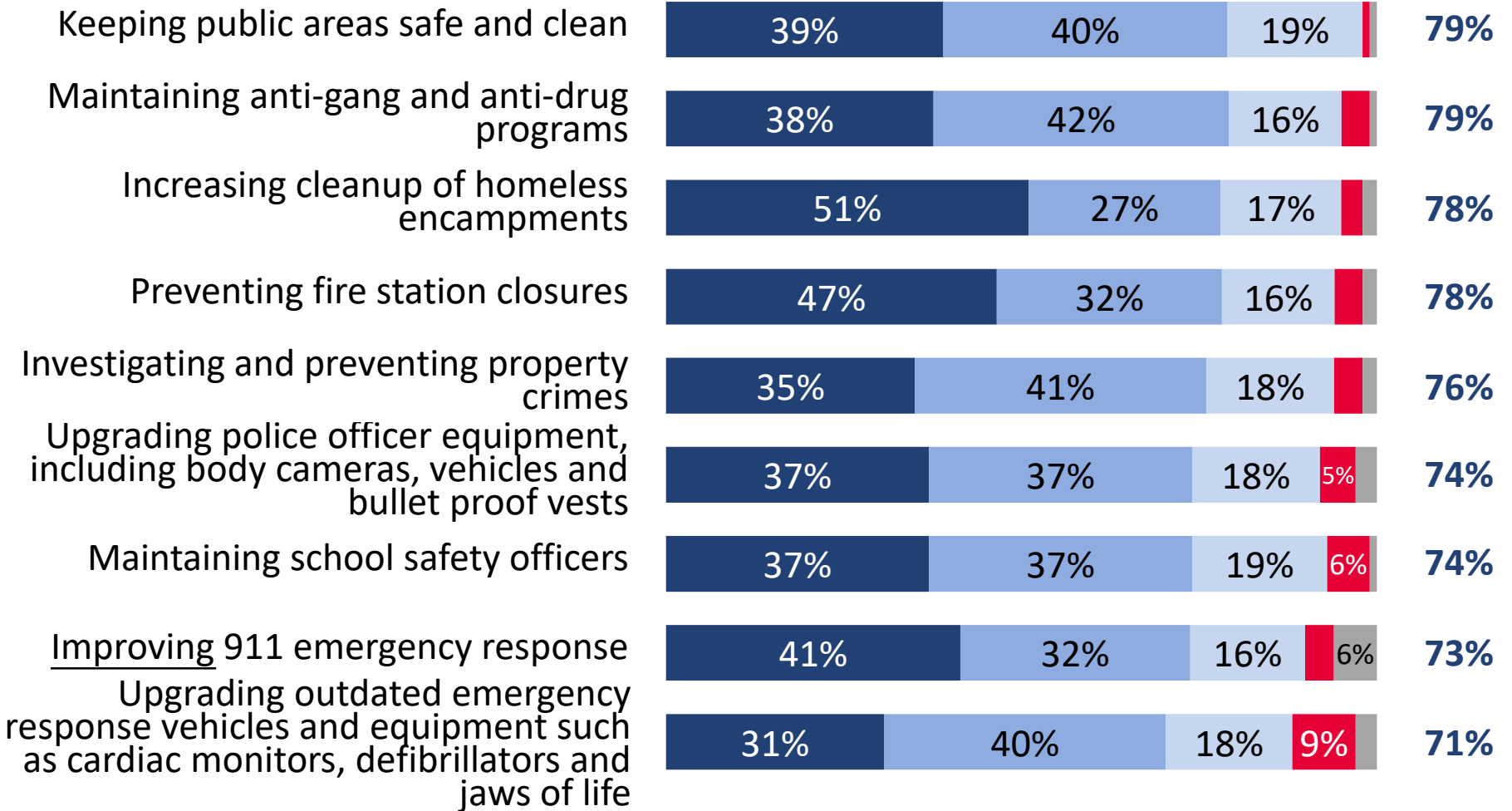
The top priorities for the measure include maintaining 911 response, addressing homelessness, repairing streets, maintaining public safety and fiscal accountability.



Q. I am now going to read you a list of possible projects, features, and provisions that might be included in this City of Turlock ballot measure. Regardless of how you feel about this measure, please tell me how important it is to you personally that each provision or use of funds is included in the measure: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important. Split Sample

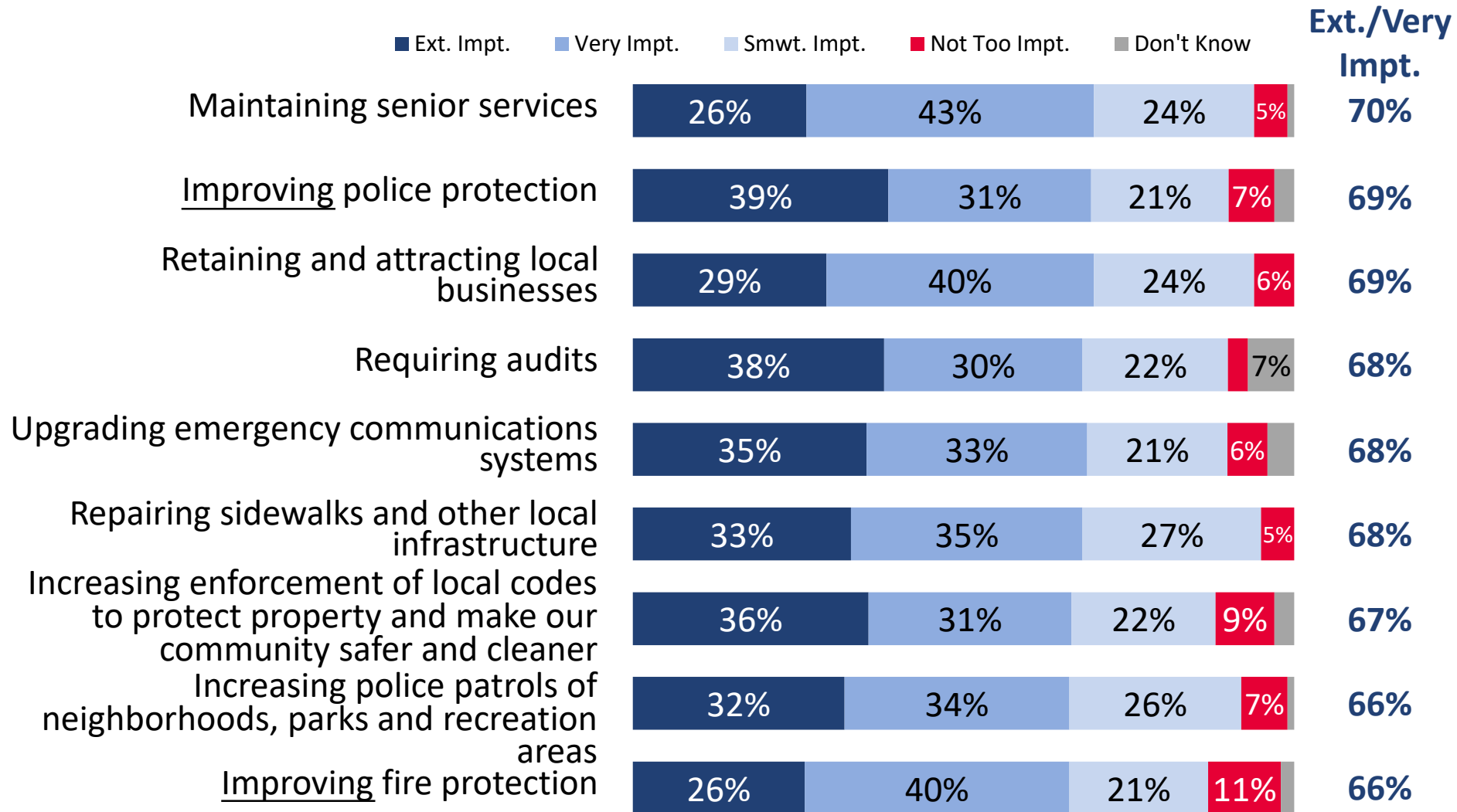
Keeping public areas safe and clean, maintaining anti-gang/drug programs, increasing cleanup of homeless encampments and preventing fire station closures are also important priorities.

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Impt. 79%**



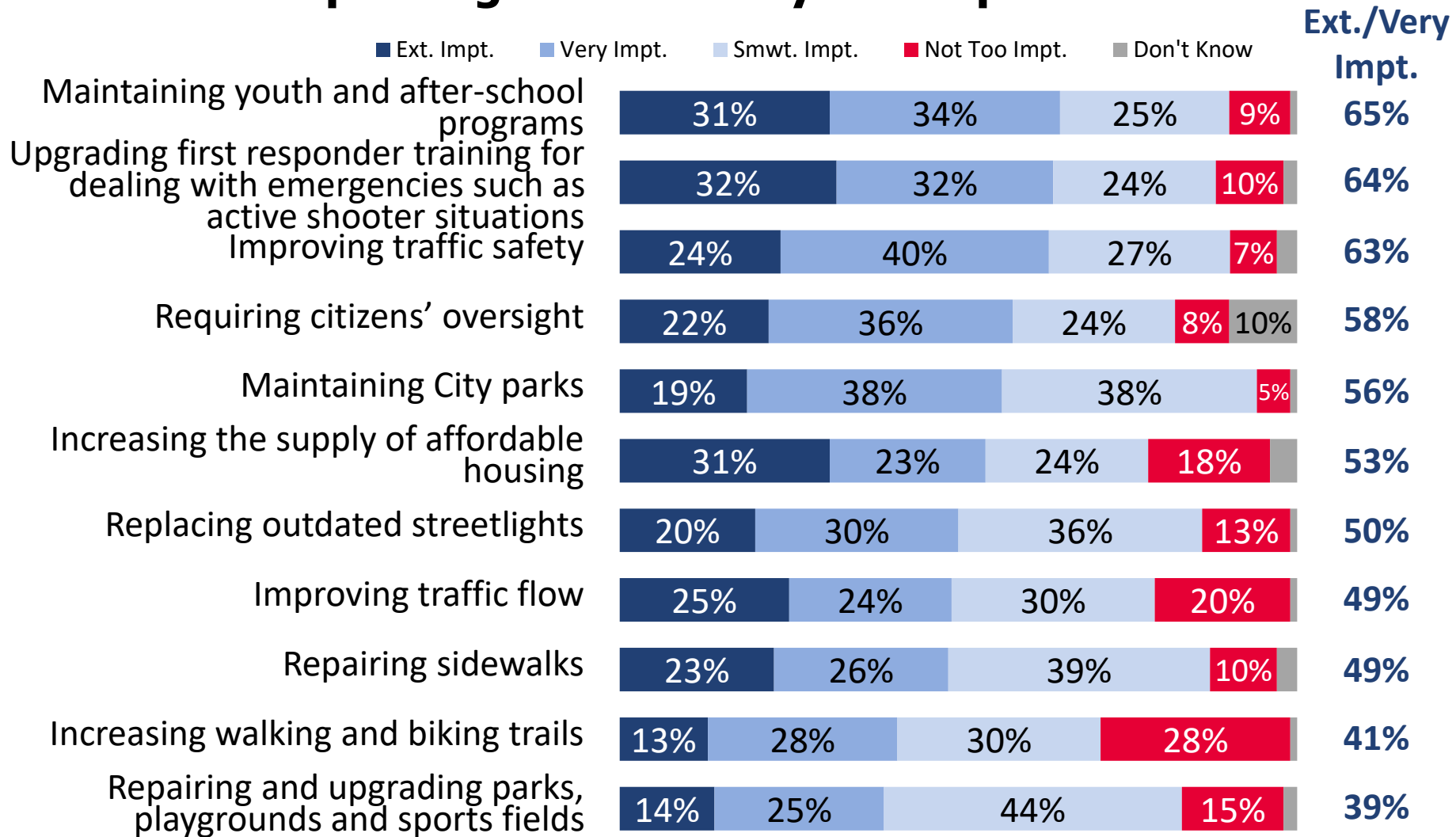
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Maintaining senior services and retaining and attracting local businesses are part of the next tier of priorities.



Q. I am now going to read you a list of possible projects, features, and provisions that might be included in this City of Turlock ballot measure. Regardless of how you feel about this measure, please tell me how important it is to you personally that each provision or use of funds is included in the measure: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important. Split Sample

Over six-in-ten voters think youth/after-school programs, first responder training for active shooters and improving traffic safety are important.



Q. I am now going to read you a list of possible projects, features, and provisions that might be included in this City of Turlock ballot measure. Regardless of how you feel about this measure, please tell me how important it is to you personally that each provision or use of funds is included in the measure: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important. Split Sample



Impact of Information

Informational Statements

(Not all statements were heard/read by all participants)

(ACCOUNTABILITY) This measure contains tough fiscal accountability by requiring annual independent financial audits, citizen oversight, and public disclosure of spending and ensures that all funds remain in Turlock and cannot be taken by the County or State government. These fiscal safeguards will make sure funds are used efficiently, effectively and as promised.

(CUTS) As a result of reduced federal, state and county funding, increased demand for City services and increased costs to provide services to residents, the City of Turlock faces a multi-million-dollar funding shortfall over the next few years. If this measure is not approved, the City may be forced to cut police and fire protection, emergency medical technicians, 911 emergency response, street and pothole repairs, afterschool programs, and other vital services.

(FIRE PROTECTION) In 2019, Turlock Firefighters responded to more than 7,000 calls for service, an all-time high for the city. However as emergency calls increased, Fire Department staffing actually decreased. Looking ahead, without this measure the City will have to cut additional firefighting positions which would force the closure of one of its four fire stations. This will drastically increase fire and emergency medical response times in that area of the city. In some instances, these times could double. This measure helps maintain effective fire and emergency medical response services to ensure residents receive the timely help they need in an emergency.

(GANGS) Gang-related crimes have expanded into our city including violent crimes, weapons, drug sales and human trafficking as the City has not had the resources to keep up with changes in state law that reduced jail time and led to the early release of career criminals. This measure allows the Turlock Police Department to restore its anti-gang, street crime and Special Investigations units that crack down on gangs and gang-related crime in our community to make it even safer.

Informational Statements

(Not all statements were heard/read by all participants)

(PUBLIC SAFETY) Due to population growth in Turlock, we are now 34 police officers below accepted standards for a city our size and crime was up 4% last year because the City did not have the resources to fully fund officer overtime payments, crime prevention and response programs that had led to reduced crime for three straight years. This measure will improve local public safety by allowing for proactive crime prevention, increasing traffic safety, and improving the 911 emergency response center so it can continue handling calls from our community during times of crisis.

(QUALITY OF LIFE) People choose to live in Turlock because it offers a better quality of life than other nearby communities. This measure will provide the local services that strengthen our community, improve property values and keep Turlock a more desirable, safe place to live, do business and raise a family.

(STREETS) Independent engineers gave the condition of Turlock's streets and roads a rating of 57 out of 100, which is nearly 10 points worse than five years ago. This measure will provide the funding needed to properly maintain our streets, which will make them safer for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists and will help reduce the need of drivers to make costly pothole-related car repairs. We need to address this infrastructure need now, rather than letting it worsen which will cost all of us more in the long run.

(YOUTH) Passing this measure will maintain City-funded after-school and summer recreational programs that serve thousands of local youth each year. Providing safe and supervised activities with access to tutoring and mentoring keeps children and at-risk youth off the streets, away from gangs and drugs, and out of trouble.

Opposition Messaging

(Not all statements were heard/read by all participants)

(BLANK CHECK) There is nothing in this ballot measure that requires any of the money to be used for public safety services or any of the other programs mentioned in the description. In reality the City can just use it to fund pet projects. We need to vote no on this blank check for City Hall.

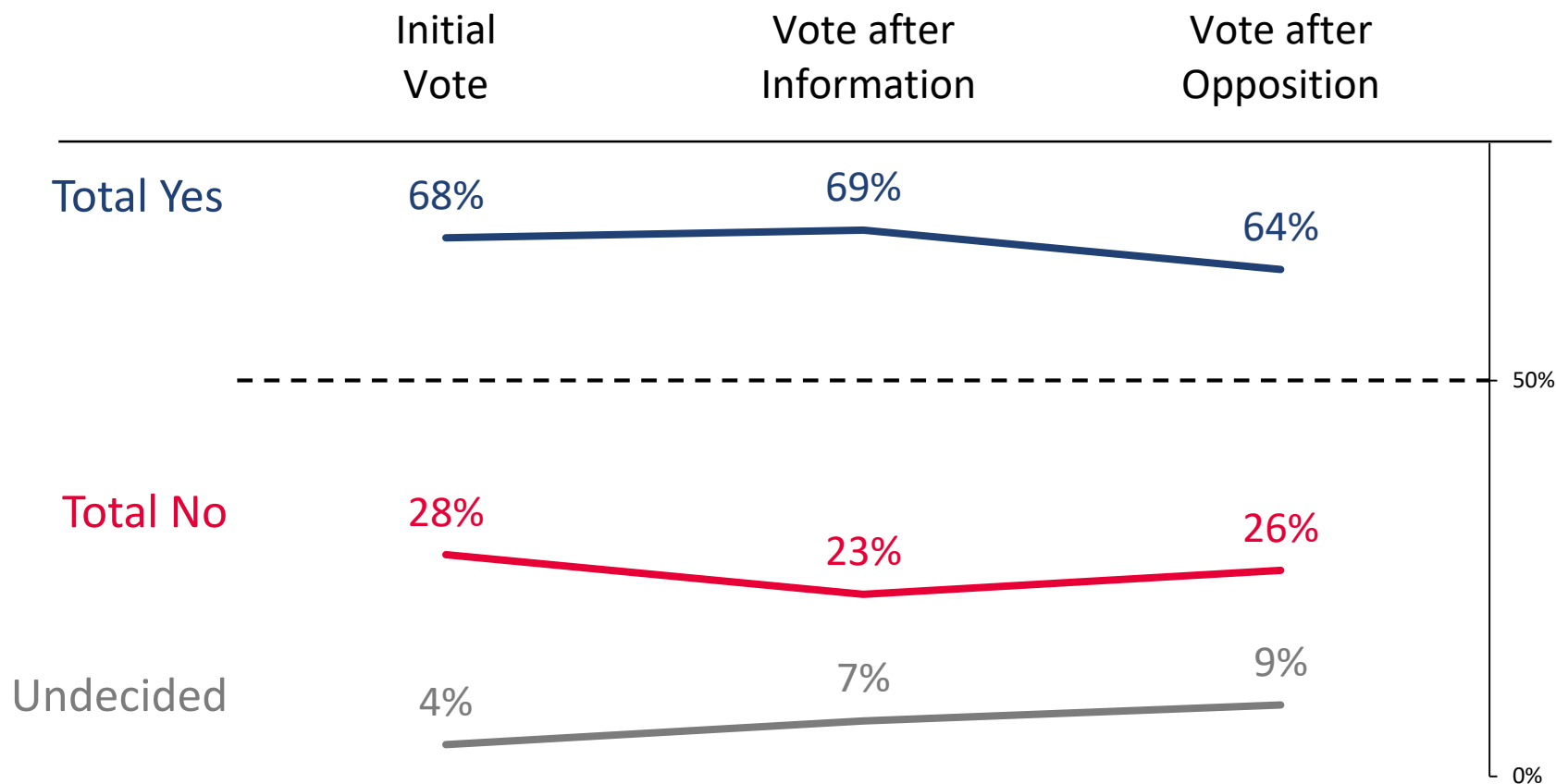
(BAD FOR GROWTH) Instead of raising taxes, the City should be working to bring in jobs and new economic activity to improve our community and make the City stronger. This measure does the opposite – it will drive away businesses and hurt our local economy.

(ENOUGH FUNDS) The City is sitting on a \$7 million reserve fund. The City should focus on using these funds first before asking residents for more money.

(TAXES) California homeowners were hit hard by the new federal tax law, the state's gas tax went up 12 cents and other state and local taxes are going up. We simply cannot afford to pay higher taxes right now, especially a sales tax that will hurt working families and seniors living on fixed incomes who are dealing with rising prices for housing, healthcare, gas and food.

(WASTE & PENSIONS) The City is in this budget mess because it wastes taxpayer money and provides overly generous salaries and pensions to City employees. Voting no will force the City to do a better job of managing its money, be more fiscally responsible and implement a pension reform plan.

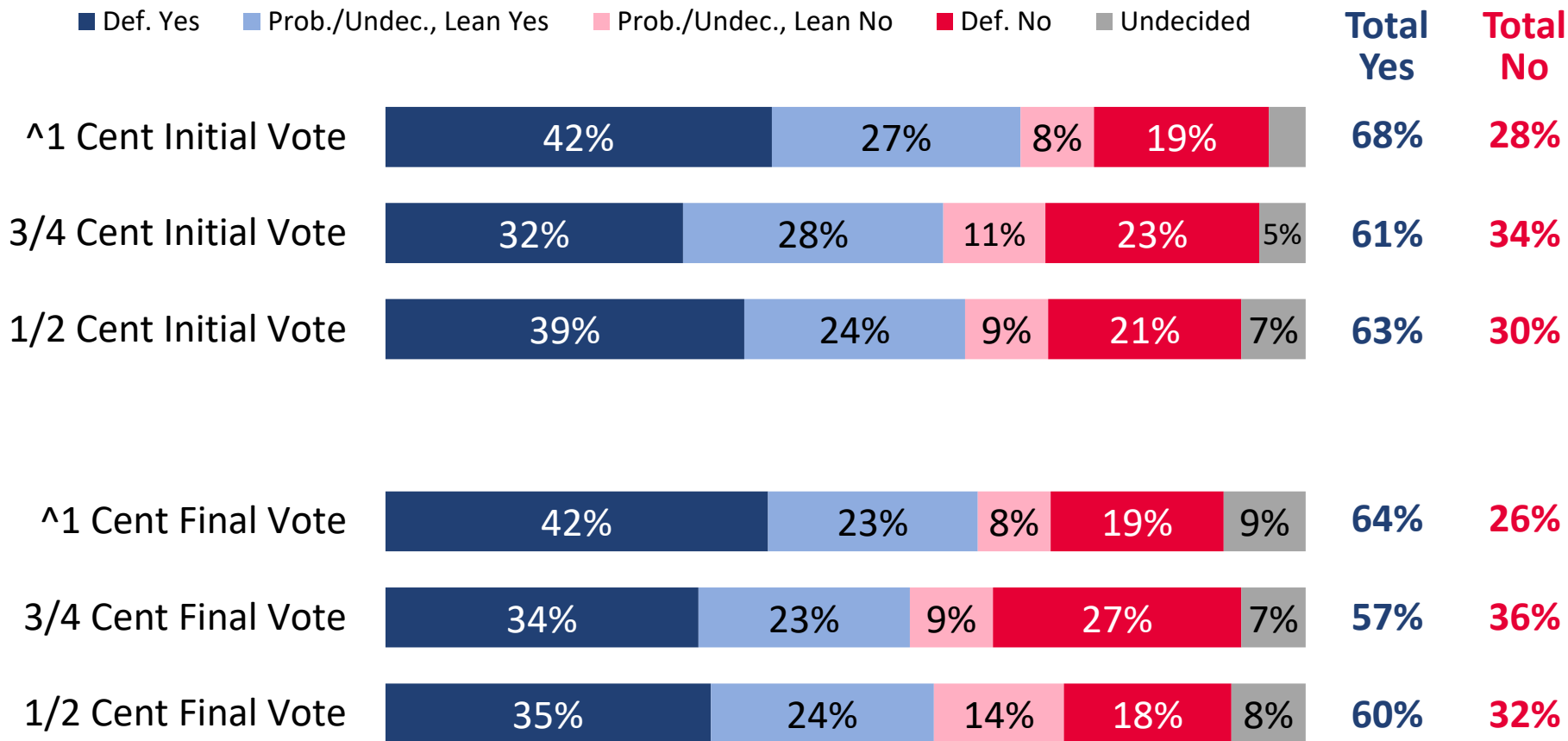
After opposition messages, support for the measure remains above the majority-vote threshold for passage.





Testing Variations in Sales Tax Rates

There was less support for the measure when voters considered it at a rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ cent or $\frac{1}{2}$ cent, both at the beginning and end of the survey.





Conclusions

Conclusions

- ✓ A one-cent general purpose sales tax is clearly viable for further planning for the November 2020 ballot. The initial vote is well above the majority vote threshold needed for passage and outside the survey's margin of error.
- ✓ There is also a strong sense that the City needs additional funds, which helps to explain why there was lower support for either the $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ cent options.
- ✓ Top priorities for residents include ensuring the City has the funds it needs to address crucial services such as homelessness, street repairs and maintaining public safety.
- ✓ The potential measure's fiscal accountability provisions, such as public disclosure of all spending and ensuring that all funding is used locally in Turlock, are also highly important.

For more information, contact:



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