



Pinole Voter Attitudes Toward a Charter Amendment Measure

Key Findings of a Citywide Survey Conducted May 13-22, 2022



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY



Public Introduction of Subject Matter Experts

- The Lew Edwards Group is in its 25th year of service providing award-winning Lead Consulting fiscal sustainability, communications and ballot measure services to hundreds of public agencies statewide
 - Catherine Lew is the Co-Founder of LEG
 - Robert Dempsey is the LEG Project Manager assigned to Pinole
- FM3 Research conducts hundreds of surveys and focus groups annually to public agencies throughout California on a broad range of policy, communications, and ballot measure needs
 - Curtis Below is an FM3 Partner and COO
 - Lucia Del Puppo is a Vice President and Researcher assigned to this project






Project Objectives

- Conduct a comprehensive, statistically valid survey to determine current constituent viewpoints on their service priorities, satisfaction, and perspectives on a potential charter measure/RPPT
 - This is a balanced, objective study – not a “push poll”
- Conduct thorough preparation for undertaking a highly tailored study to the City of Pinole:
 - Reviewed City budget reports, Council minutes, and background
 - Interviewed City Council members to determine key items to evaluate—*thank you for your time and perspectives!*
 - Convened a number of planning sessions with City staff
- Report back on the results and the key considerations the Council should consider in deciding whether to place this item on the November 2022 ballot.

Introduction of Key Survey Highlights

- Congratulations! In a very polarized environment, the City of Pinole receives very high satisfaction and job performance ratings
- Overall quality of life ratings are in the high 80 percentiles
- Satisfaction with safety, infrastructure, streets and roads, and COVID response are essentially all at two-thirds
- By a ratio of 2 to 1, a plurality approve of the City's management of its finances
- Unfortunately, these positive, strong ratings also appear to affect respondent views on the need for a Charter/RPTT measure, affecting the viability of this approach
 - The measure components do not reach the threshold needed for passage on the third ballot test

Survey Specifics and Methodology

Dates	May 13-22, 2022
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2022 Voters in the City of Pinole <i>(Residents from the voter file with vote histories suggesting they would likely participate in this November's election.)</i>
Total Interviews	335
Margin of Sampling Error	±5.4% at the 95% Confidence Level (full sample) ±7.6% at the 95% Confidence Level (half sample)
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Languages	English and Spanish

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

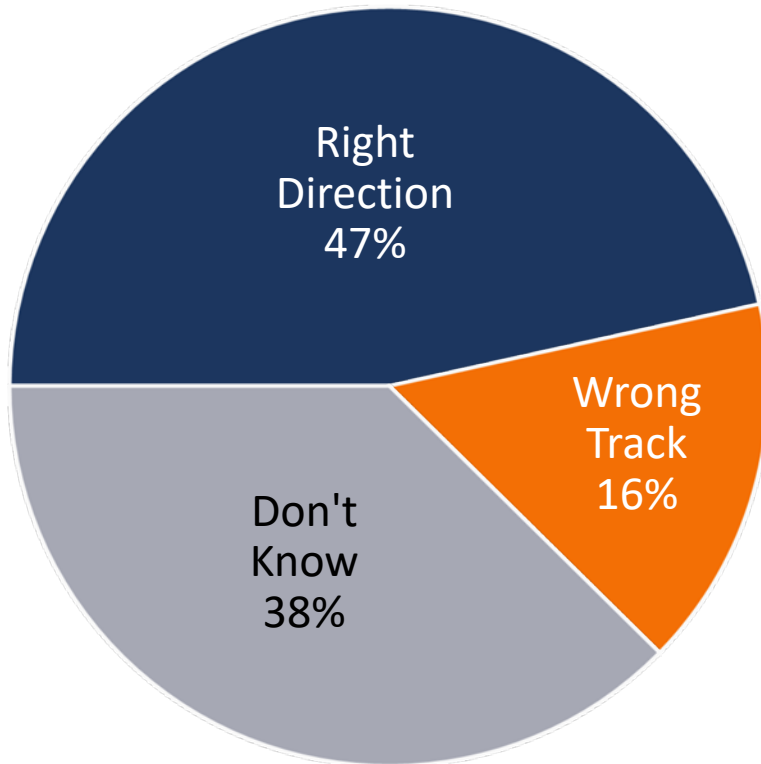


Views of Life in Pinole

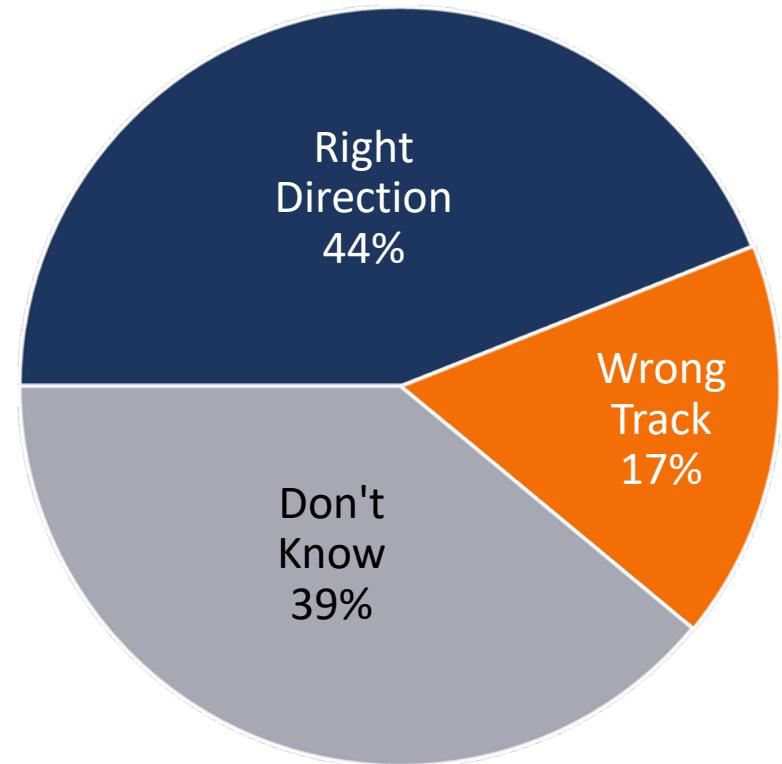
By more than a two-to-one ratio, respondents were more optimistic than pessimistic about the direction of Pinole.

Would you say that things in the City of Pinole are generally going in the right direction or do you feel that things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

November 2019*

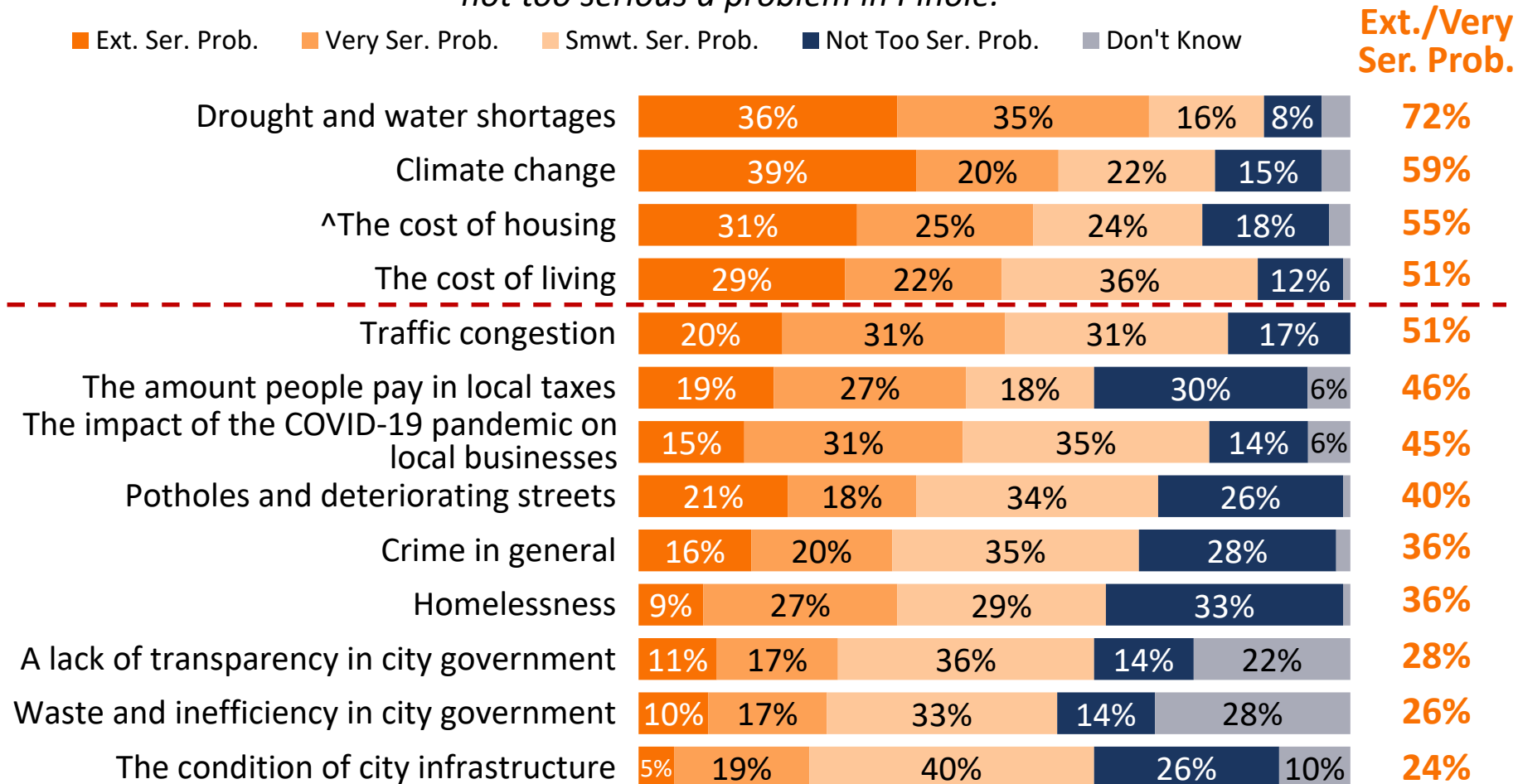


May 2022



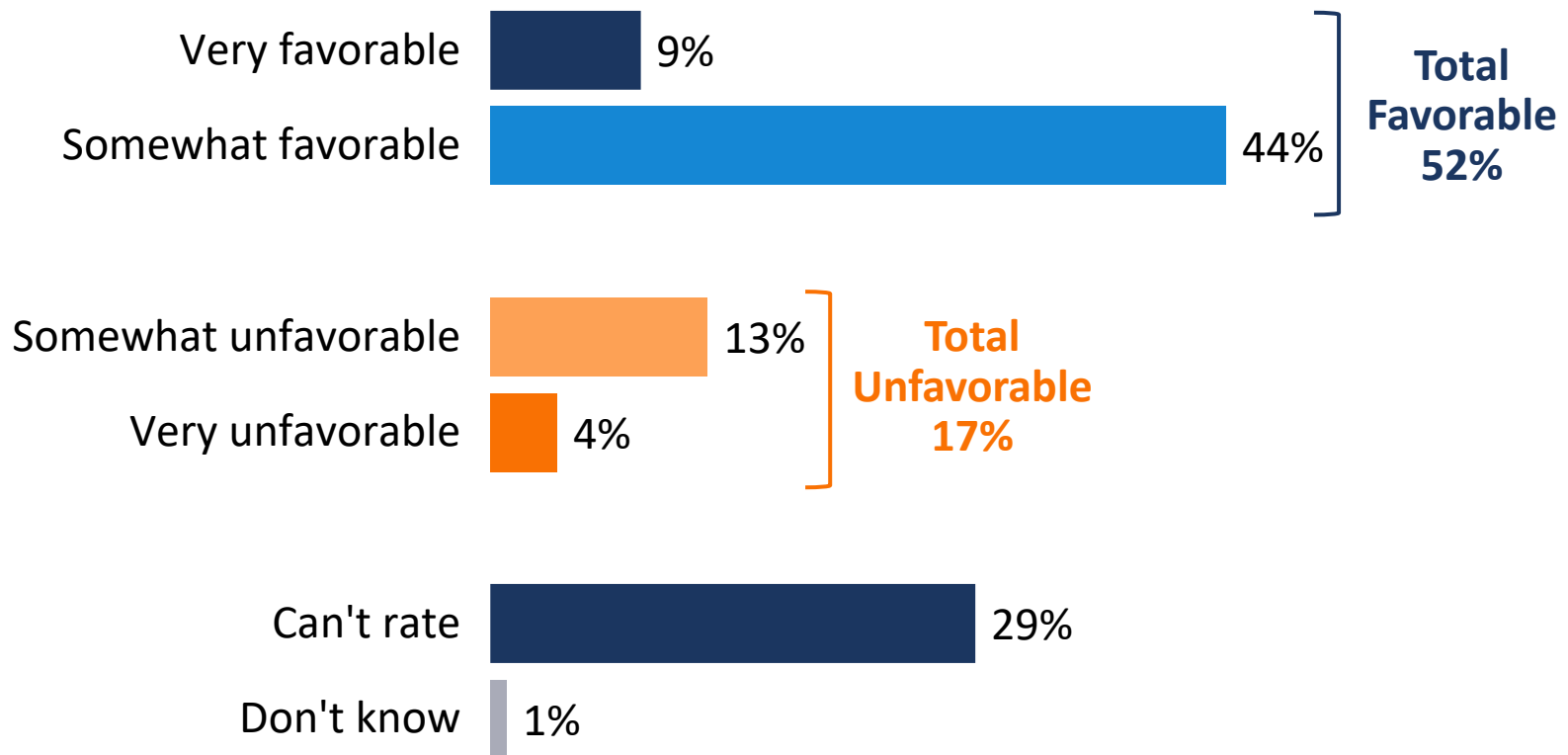
Drought and water shortages were the top concerns, followed by cost-of-living challenges.

I'd like to read you a list of issues that some people say may be local problems. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Pinole.



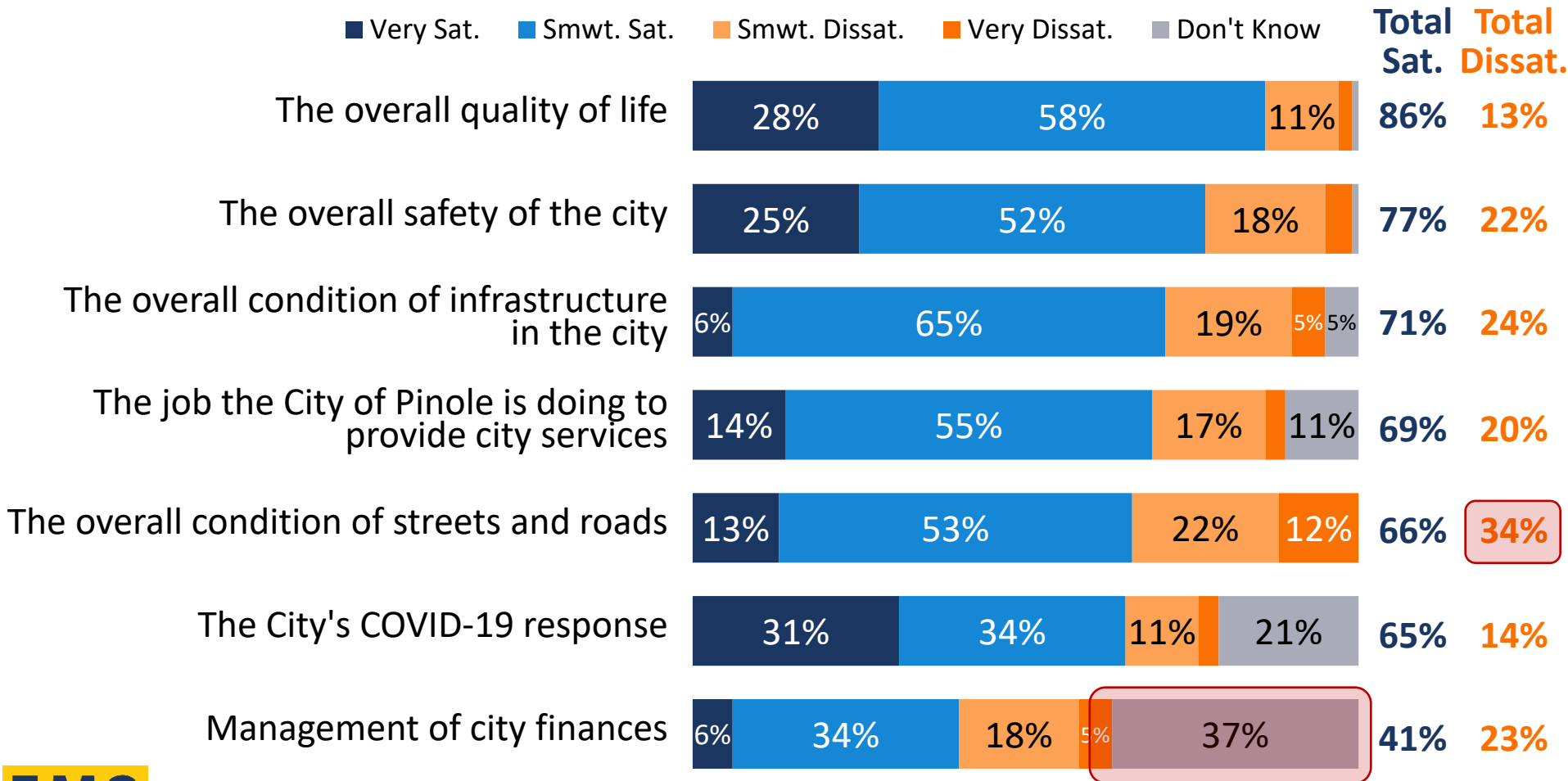
A majority expressed favorable opinions of Pinole's city government.

*Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Pinole city government, overall?
If you can't rate them, you can tell me that too.*



They were highly satisfied with a number of aspects of life in Pinole and city services.

Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with each of the following in Pinole?



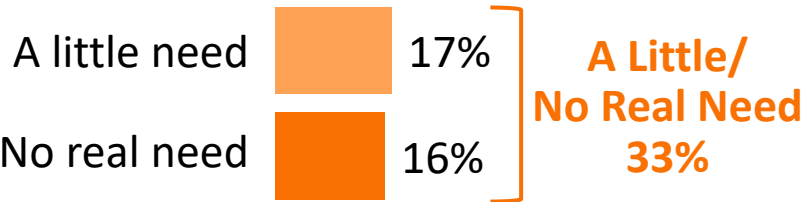
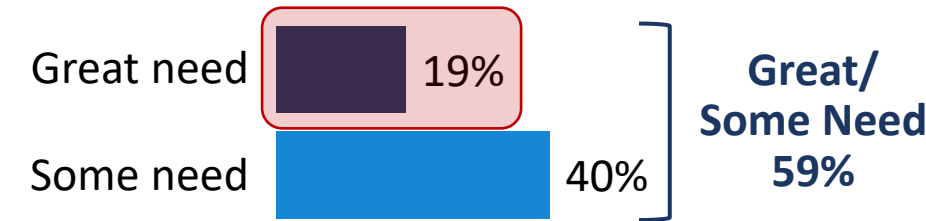
Overall satisfaction with aspects of life have changed little since 2019.

(Total Satisfied)

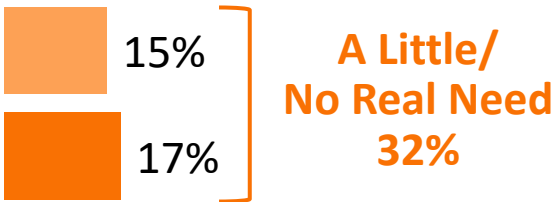
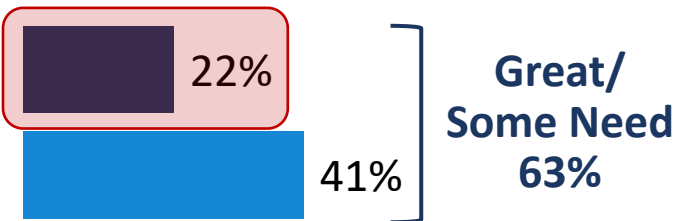
Aspect of Life in Pinole	November 2019*	May 2022	Difference
Management of city finances	41%	41%	0%
The overall safety of the city	81%	77%	-4%
The job the City of Pinole is doing to provide city services	73%	69%	-4%
The overall quality of life	91%	86%	-5%

A majority saw a need for funding for city services and for infrastructure, but few saw 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 the level of city services that residents of Pinole need and want?

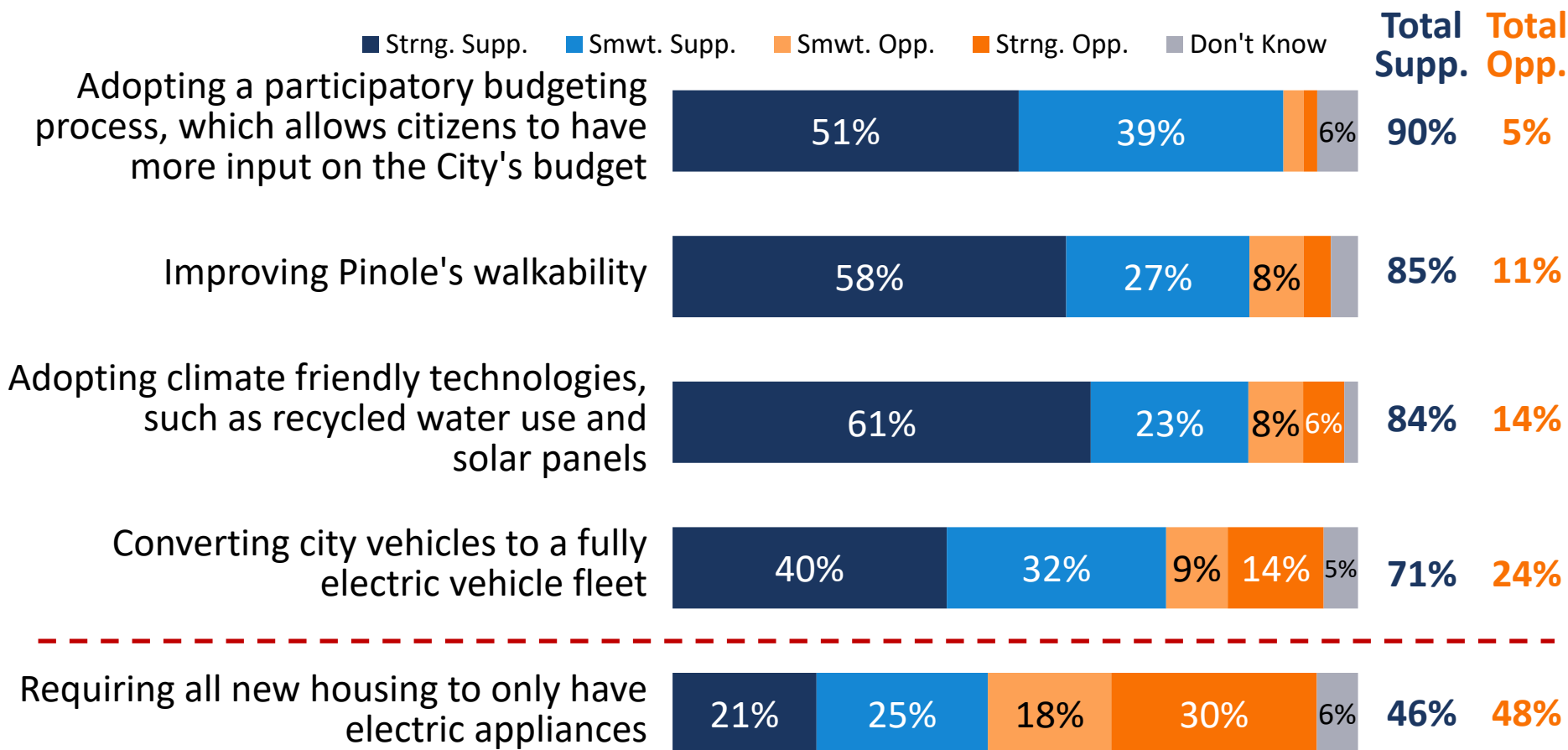


In your personal opinion, do you think there is a great need, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funds to maintain and improve Pinole’s infrastructure?



Respondents offered very strong support for participatory budgeting, improving walkability and adopting most climate-friendly policies.

Here is a series of policies the City of Pinole could considering adopting. Please tell me if it is something you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose.





Introducing a Potential Charter Amendment and RPTT Establishment Measure

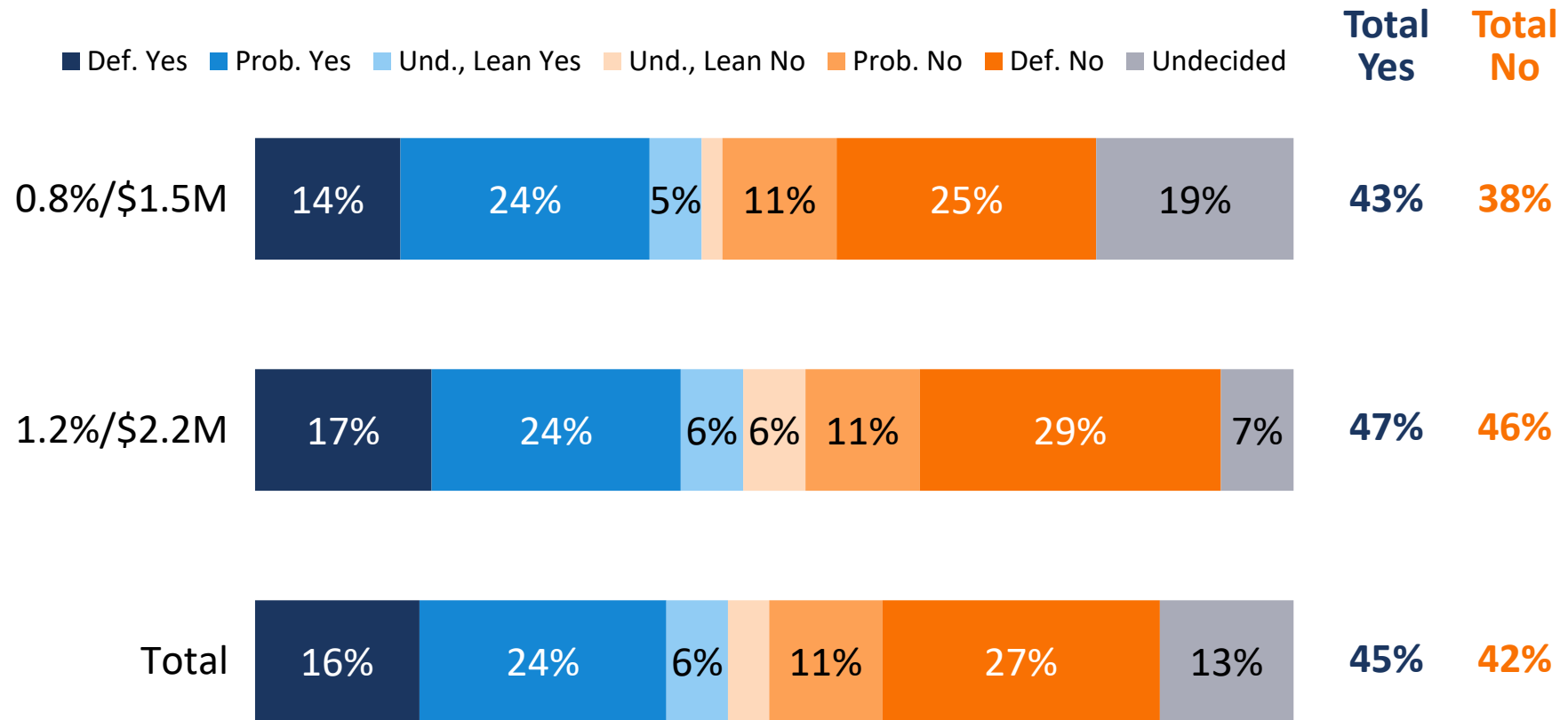
Potential Ballot Language Tested

(Approved by legal; 50% + 1 vote threshold)

To expand locally controlled funding for general government use, such as maintaining public safety, repairing potholes/streets; disaster preparedness; keeping public areas safe/clean; shall a measure be adopted establishing Pinole as a Charter City for the sole purpose of enacting a **(SPLIT SAMPLE E: 0.8%) (SPLIT SAMPLE F: 1.2%)** real property transfer tax (paid only by buyers/sellers of property at the time of sale), generating approximately **(SPLIT SAMPLE E: \$1,500,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE F: \$2,200,000)** annually until ended by voters, requiring annual audits, and no funds for Sacramento?

Respondents were initially split on the proposed charter amendment and RPTT measure; the rate made little difference in responses.

Do you think you would vote “yes” or “no” on this measure?



Respondents across gender and partisan lines were split on the measure, with Democrats and independents close to 50% support.

Demographic Group	Total Yes	Total No	Undecided
All Voters	45%	42%	13%
Gender			
Men	43%	47%	10%
Women	47%	38%	15%
Party			
Democrats	47%	41%	13%
Independents	48%	34%	18%
Republicans	35%	59%	6%
Party by Gender			
Democratic Men	40%	49%	11%
Democratic Women	51%	35%	15%
Independent Men	57%	32%	10%
Independent Women	39%	39%	22%
Republican Men	36%	58%	7%
Republican Women	34%	61%	5%

Those in their 30's and younger independents were most likely to vote "yes."

Demographic Group	Total Yes	Total No	Undecided
Party by Age			
Democrats Ages 18-49	47%	39%	13%
Democrats Ages 50+	46%	42%	12%
Independents Ages 18-49	65%	21%	14%
Independents Ages 50+	38%	42%	20%
Republicans Ages 18-49	32%	68%	0%
Republicans Ages 50+	37%	53%	10%
Age			
18-29	36%	39%	25%
30-39	60%	32%	8%
40-49	44%	49%	7%
50-64	44%	43%	13%
65-74	39%	51%	11%
75+	48%	32%	19%

Support among white respondents and those with four-year college degrees reached 50%.

Demographic Group	Total Yes	Total No	Undecided
Education			
Some College or Less	43%	41%	16%
Four-year College or More	50%	40%	10%
Residence			
Homeowners	47%	43%	11%
Renters	48%	29%	23%
Race/Ethnicity			
Whites	52%	35%	13%
Latinos	35%	39%	26%
African Americans	39%	61%	0%
Asians/Pacific Islanders	40%	48%	12%
All Voters of Color	39%	46%	15%

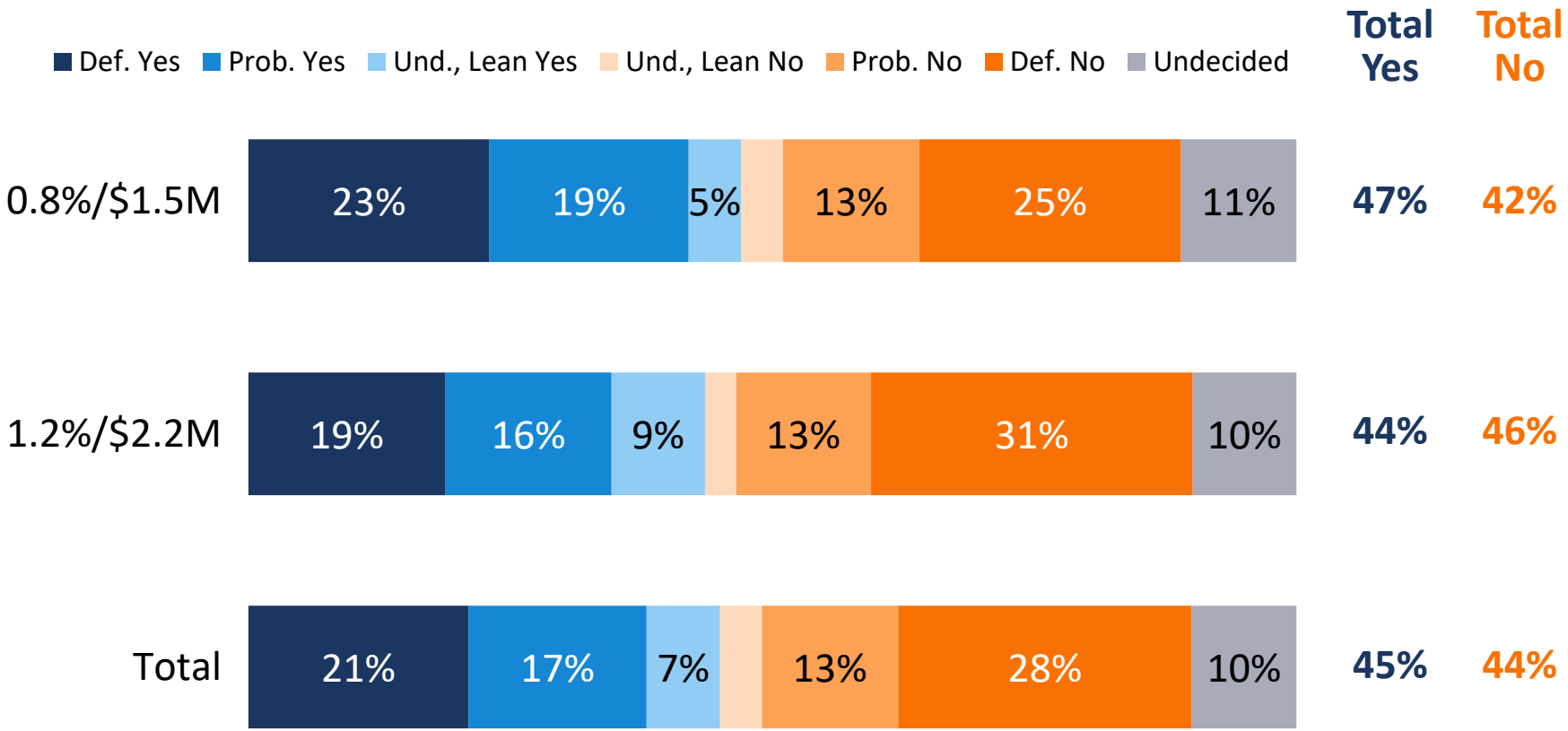
Additional Information Provided

As you may know, some cities in California are organized under general laws of the State of California, while others are governed by a charter adopted by local voters, which is a bit like a constitution for the city. Cities that are organized under general law have less independence and must follow state law, while those that have their own charter may adopt their own procedures for municipal affairs, including a city's form of government, election procedures, processes for passing local laws, and more control over local revenue generation. Many other cities in the Bay Area are charter cities.

This measure would establish Pinole as a charter city but only for the limited purpose of providing the City with more control over how local revenue is generated. It would not provide Pinole with any of the other powers charter cities have. Specifically, it would allow Pinole to establish a **(SPLIT SAMPLE E: 0.8%) (SPLIT SAMPLE F: 1.2%)** real property transfer tax to fund general city services that is only paid by buyers and sellers of property at the time of sale and would have no impact on the annual taxes paid by current property owners.

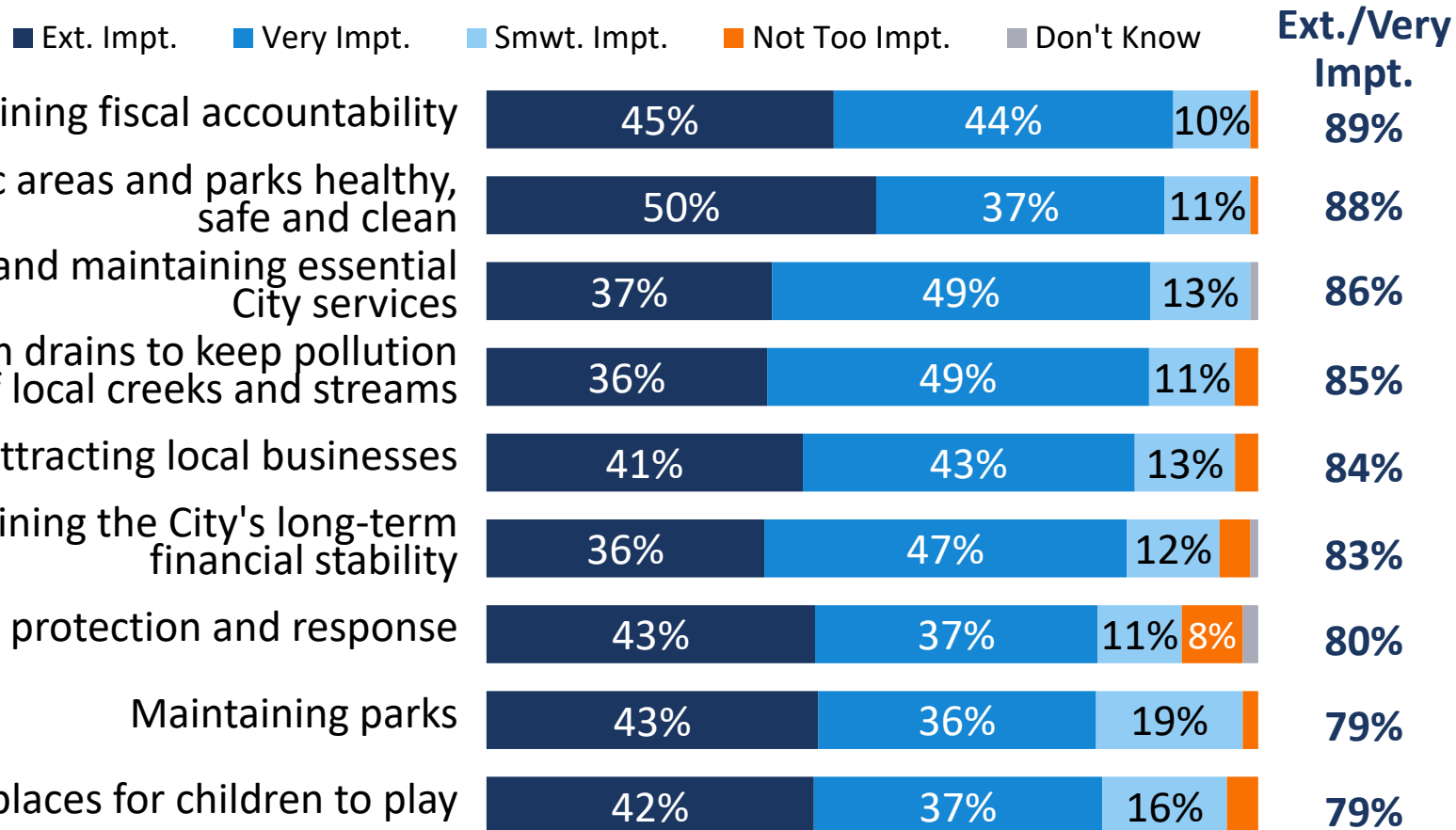
After a “plain English” explanation, respondents were still split but the “definite yes” vote grew.

Do you think you would vote “yes” or “no” on this measure?



Maintaining fiscal accountability and keeping public areas safe and clean were the most important priorities of the measure.

I am going to read you a list of ways in which funds generated by a ballot measure could be spent. please tell me how important that item is to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important.

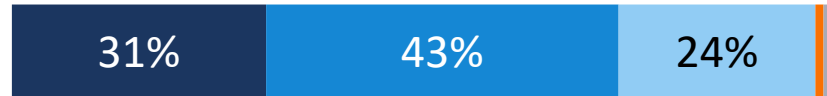


Three-quarters said maintaining youth programs and preventing funds from being taken by Sacramento was very important.

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

Ext./Very Impt.

Maintaining youth programs



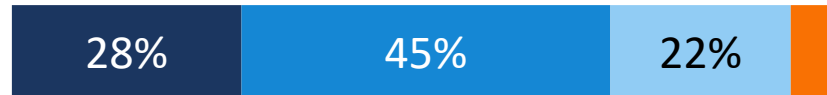
74%

Preventing funds from being taken by Sacramento



73%

Repairing broken and deteriorating sidewalks



72%

Maintaining the number of police officers patrolling neighborhood streets



71%

Improving 911 emergency response times



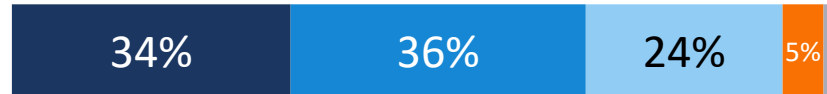
70%

Keeping funds local



70%

Maintaining crime prevention programs



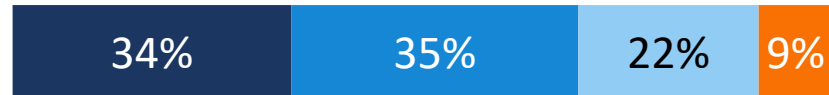
70%

Fighting climate change and repairing potholes were middle-tier priorities for measure spending.

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

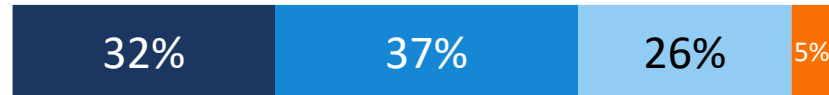
Ext./Very
Impt.

Fighting climate change on the local level



69%

Repairing potholes, streets, and roads



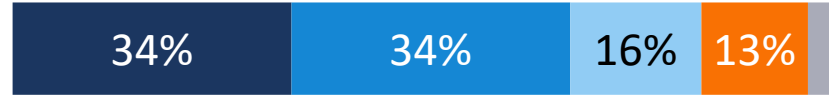
69%

Improving safe routes to school



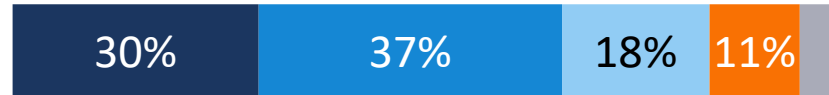
68%

Preventing cuts to police services



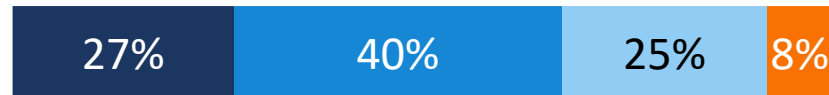
68%

Improving Pinole's disaster preparedness



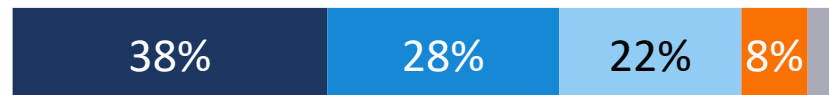
67%

Maintaining senior programs



67%

Maintaining after-school programs



66%

Voters see revitalizing Old Town, installing EV chargers and funding pensions as least important.

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

**Ext./Very
Impt.**

Upgrading park facilities

26%

34%

27%

9%

59%

Upgrading the senior center

18%

38%

32%

9%

56%

Hiring additional city staff to improve the quality of services for residents

18%

36%

35%

7%

54%

Revitalizing Old Town

23%

26%

29%

20%

49%

Installing electric vehicle chargers

13%

33%

36%

17%

46%

Providing funding for public employee pensions

15%

25%

39%

19%

40%



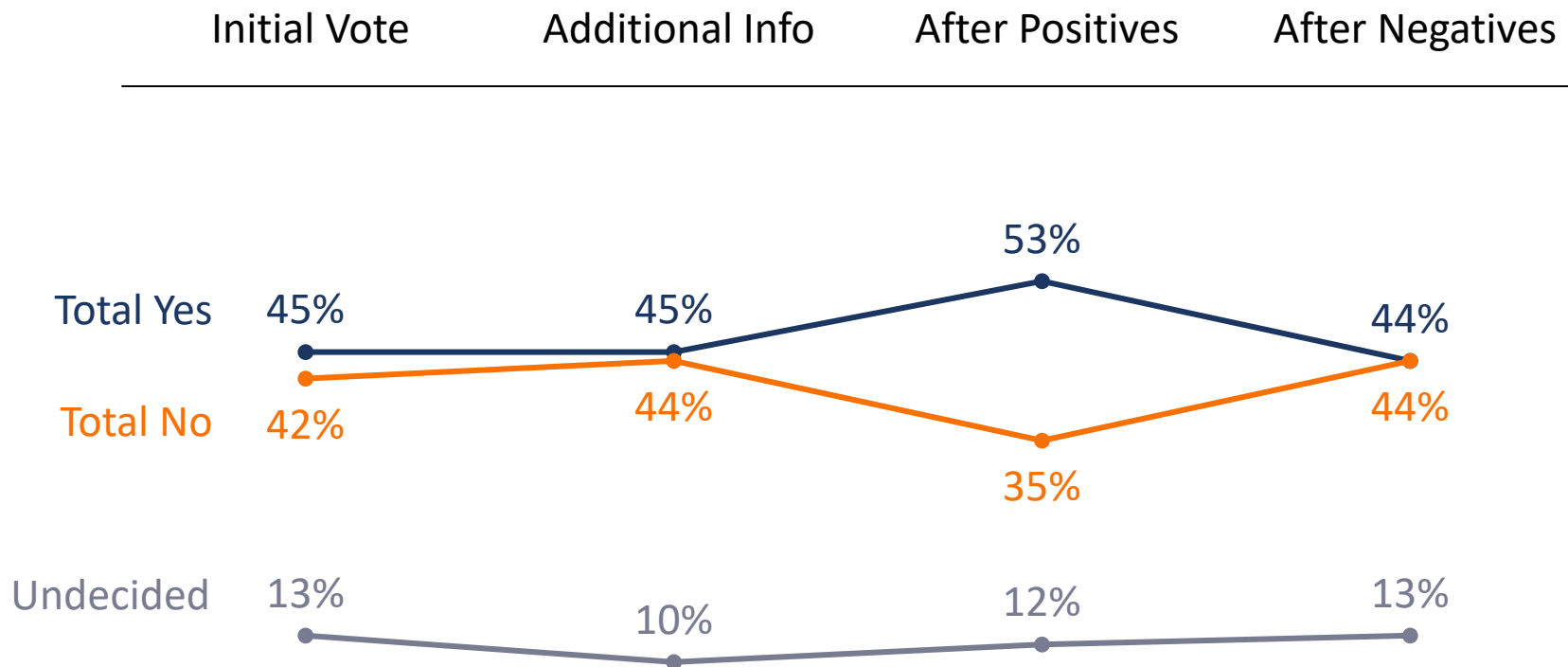
The Impact of Supportive and Critical Statements

Supportive and Critical Statements

- Supportive statements included that the measure would include accountability provisions; that this measure puts more control in Pinole's hands, but in a narrow manner limited in scope to establishing a RPTT; that it would help maintain various services, including police, road repairs, and senior services; that it would help address the City's \$100 MM infrastructure needs; and that it would help maintain Pinole's quality of life.
- Critical statements included that Californians are taxed enough; that the cost of living is out of control; that it would make homebuying even more expensive; that the City should tighten its belt and find funds elsewhere; that the RPTT would last forever and give the City a blank check to spend the funds on anything; and that the RPTT puts too much of a burden on seniors and homeowners on fixed incomes.

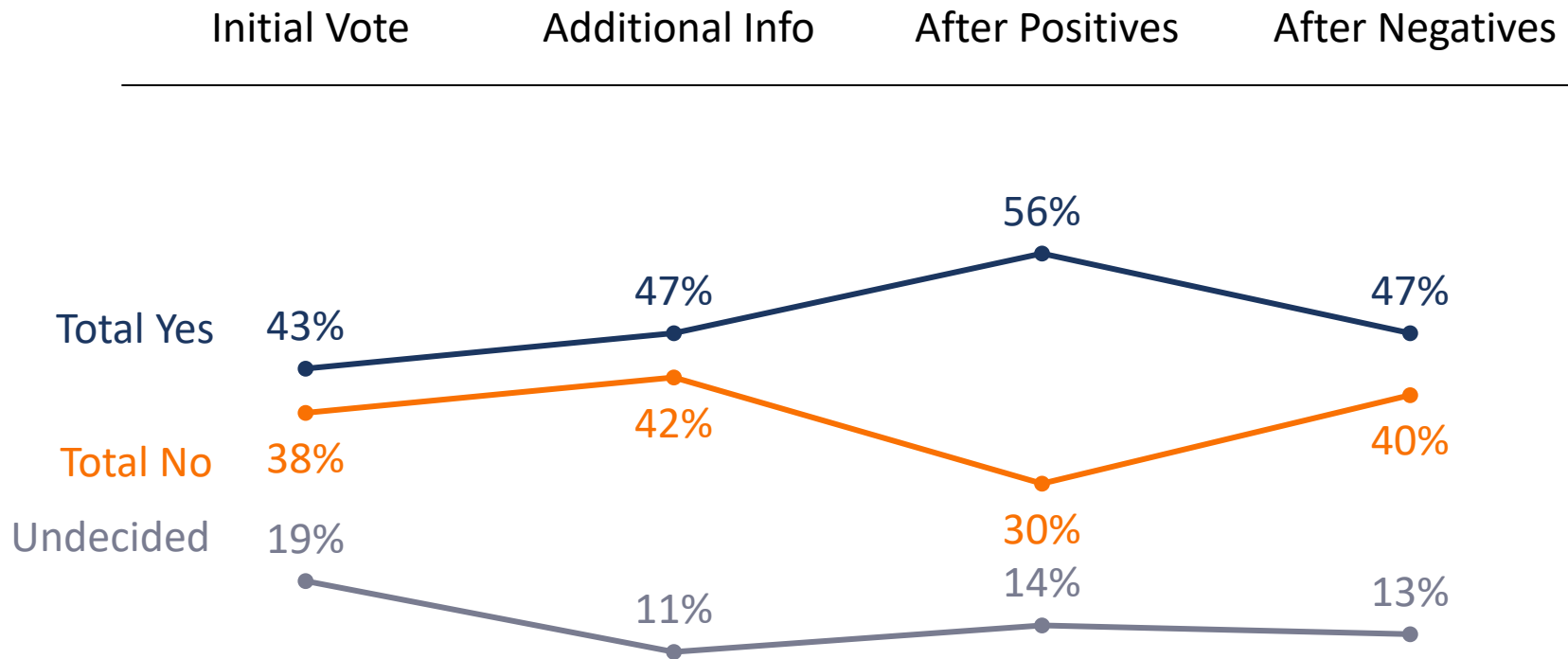
After hearing supportive statements in isolation, support rose above 50% but fell after criticisms. (Note high water mark is within Margin of Error)

Total



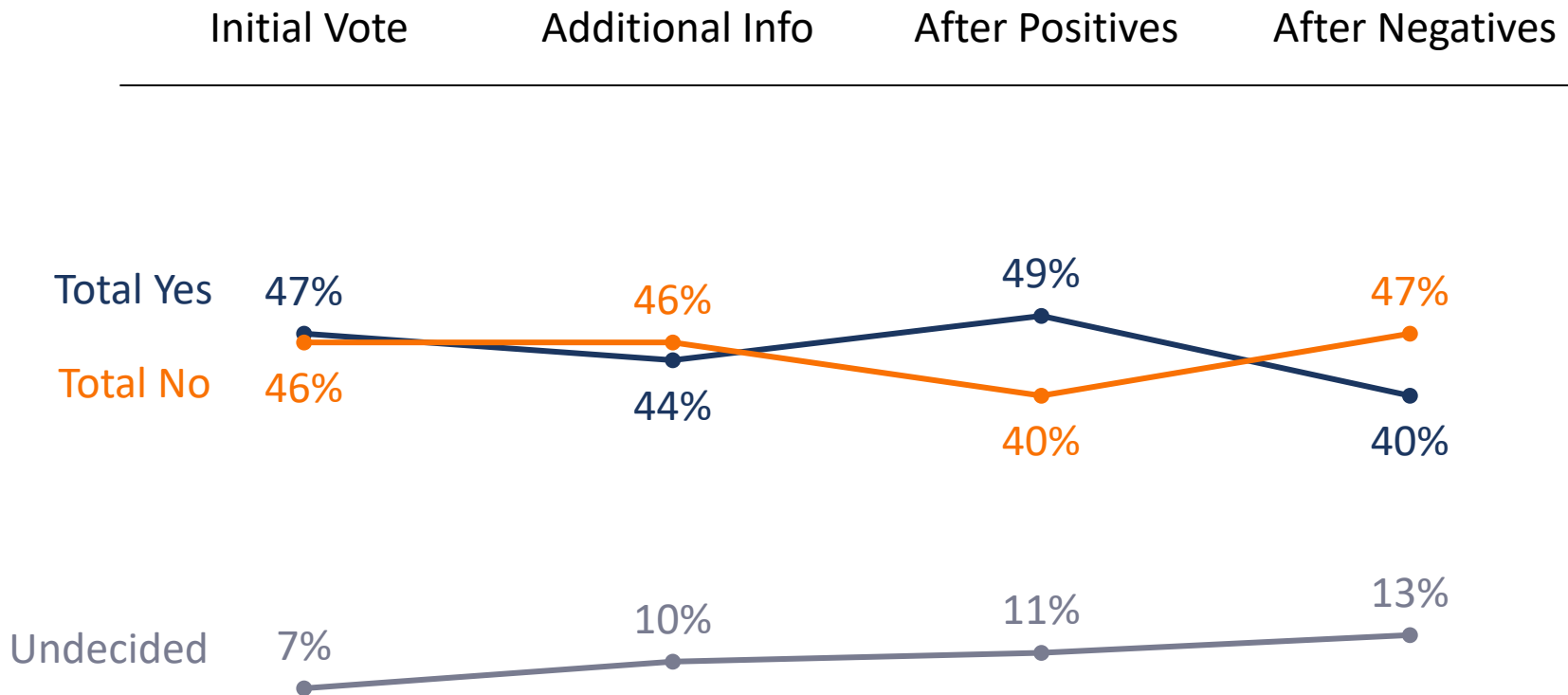
The lower tax rate reached 56% support after supportive statements, but also fell after criticisms.

0.8%/\$1.5M



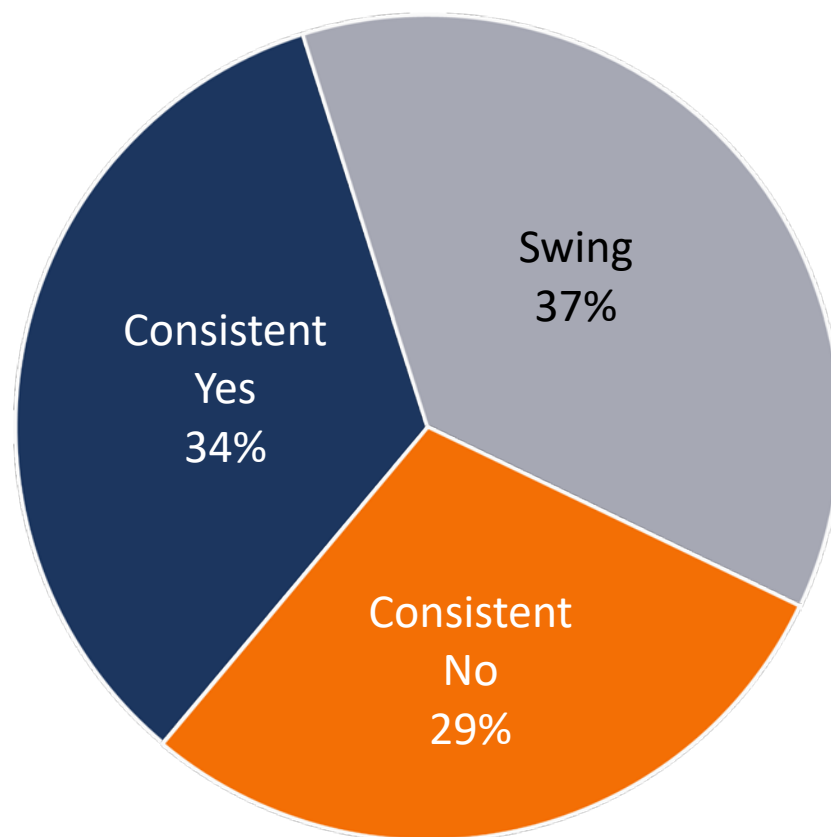
The higher tax rate never reached the 50% threshold, with a plurality opposed after criticisms.

1.2%/\$2.2M



Vote Consistency

- ❖ **Consistent Yes:** Those who consistently indicated they would vote “yes” on the measure
- ❖ **Consistent No:** Those who consistently indicated they would vote “no” on the measure
- ❖ **Swing:** Those who do not fall into any of the other categories – remaining consistently undecided or switching positions





A Potential Infrastructure Bond Measure

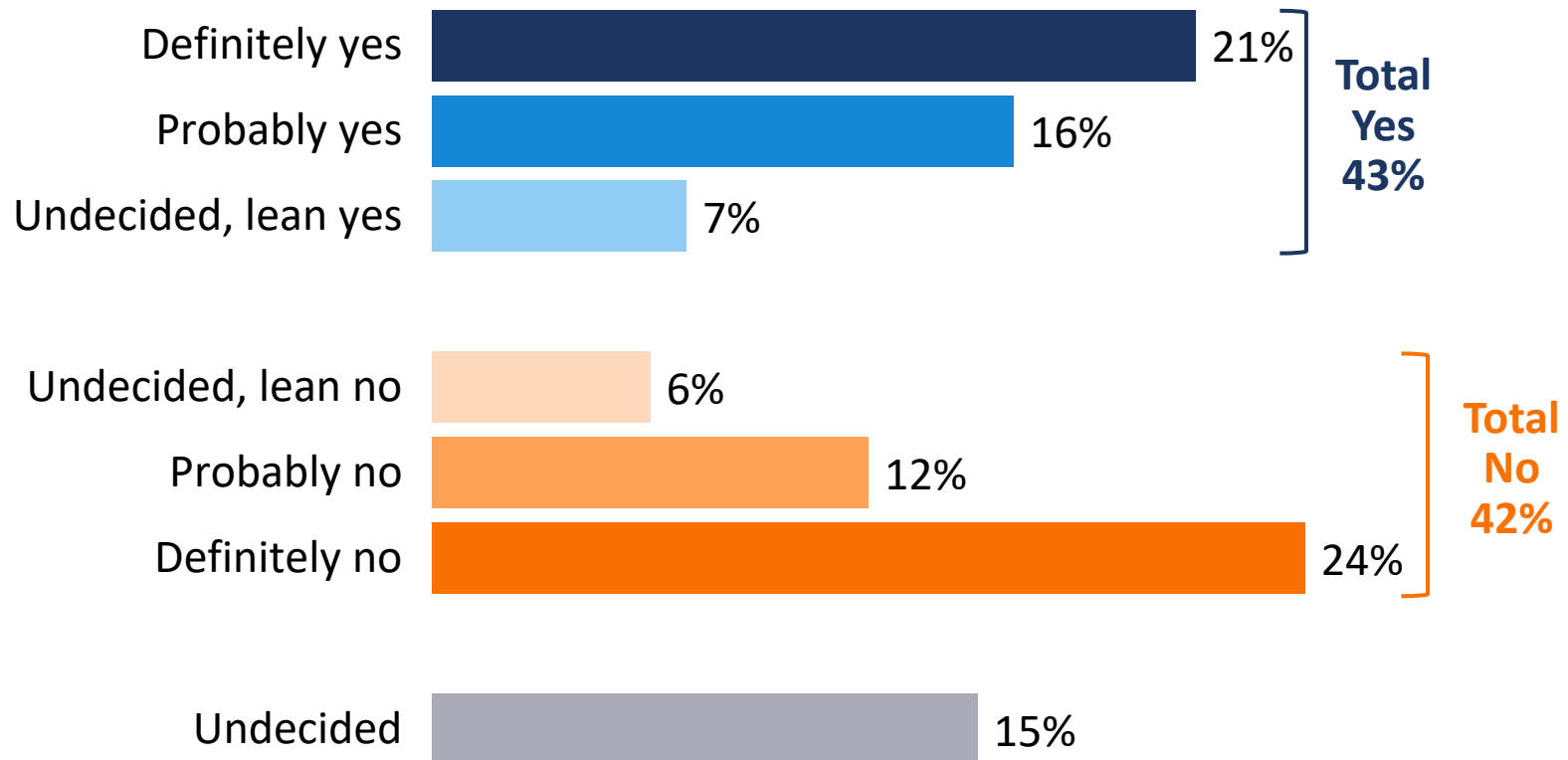
Potential Ballot Language Tested

(Approved by legal; two-thirds vote threshold)

CITY OF PINOLE ROAD AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEASURE.

To repair deteriorating streets and roads, fix potholes, address traffic, enhance safe routes to schools and pedestrian/bicyclist/driver safety, fix sidewalks, upgrade park facilities, and repair aging city infrastructure, shall the City of Pinole be authorized to issue \$35 million in bonds at legal rates, levying an estimated 7 cents per \$100 of assessed value, averaging \$2 million raised annually while bonds are outstanding, requiring independent citizen oversight, and annual audits?

Respondents were split on a potential bond measure, and nowhere near two-thirds.





Conclusions

Conclusions: Life in Pinole

- Pinole voters are highly satisfied with life in the City.
 - They say things are headed in the right direction by a two to one ratio;
 - A majority view city government favorably; and
 - Voters rate the city's safety and quality of life very highly.
- Drought and climate change are seen as the top problems in the area, while cost of living, cost of housing, (and to a lesser extent) traffic appear to be close second-tier concerns.
- A majority see a need for additional funding for city services and for infrastructure, but few say they see a “great need.”
- Voters are strongly supportive of adopting participatory budgeting and improving walkability.
- While they view climate change as a major problem and support adopting climate-friendly policies, they are divided on a policy requiring new homes to be fully electric.

Conclusions: Ballot Measure Viability

- An infrastructure bond does not appear viable at this point in time.
- Voters appear divided on a proposed charter amendment to levy a real property transfer tax, with more initial intensity among opponents than supporters.
- Support did eclipse the majority vote threshold for a lower tax rate after only supportive statements, but dropped appreciably in the face of criticism, with critical statements seen as more intensely compelling than supportive statements.
- With a generally content electorate that does not currently see additional funding as critical for the City, passing such a measure would likely be very challenging in 2022, especially when concerns about the rising cost of living are so intensely held.
- Success of a measure, now or in the future, will likely depend upon changing opinions of the need for funding, the kind of change of perception that often takes time and a coordinated education and communication effort.

Key Considerations for the City Council

- While it is true that some successful cities started lower in their initial tests than the City of Pinole's results show, they also ended at or above the MOE on the third ballot test by the end of their respective surveys
 - In order for LEG to recommend proceeding, a given City generally needs to be above the MOE on the third ballot test
- Other successful cities had lower satisfaction ratings, while Pinole's are very high, potentially affecting perceptions of the need for this approach
- While the City's tested measure does not meet LEG's criteria for placement on the ballot, should the Council wish to proceed, two factors are critical to consider:
 - Is proceeding at the lowest rate tested of interest?
 - Does community consensus exist to proceed?

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**For more information,
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