









# Sutter Creek Survey

*Key Findings of a Survey of Sutter Creek Voters  
Conducted March 15-April 7, 2024*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY

# Survey Methodology

Dates	March 15-April 7, 2024
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Sutter Creek Voters
Total Interviews	279
Margin of Sampling Error	±5.9% at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	<div>     </div> <div> Telephone Calls Email Invitations Postcard Invitations Text Invitations </div>
Data Collection Modes	<div>   </div> <div> Telephone Interviews Online Interviews </div>

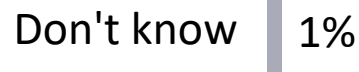
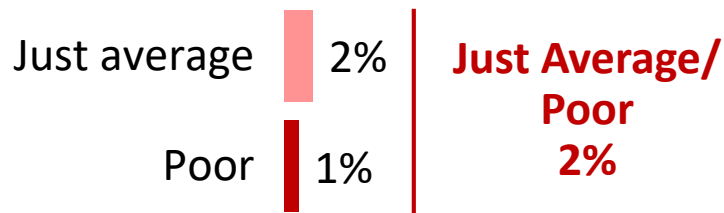
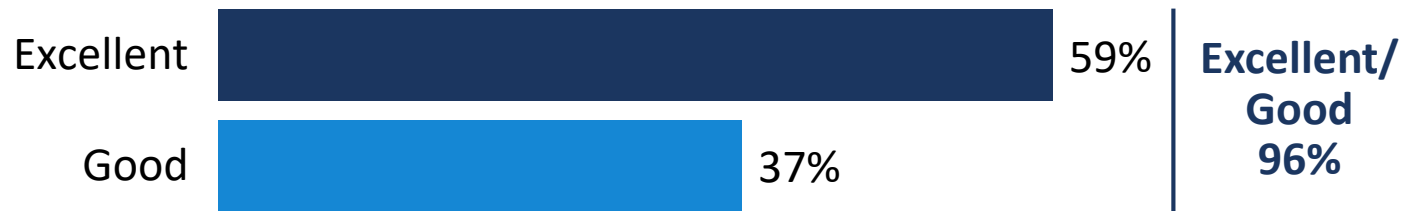
*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*



# Political Context

# Sutter Creek voters are very happy with their quality of life.

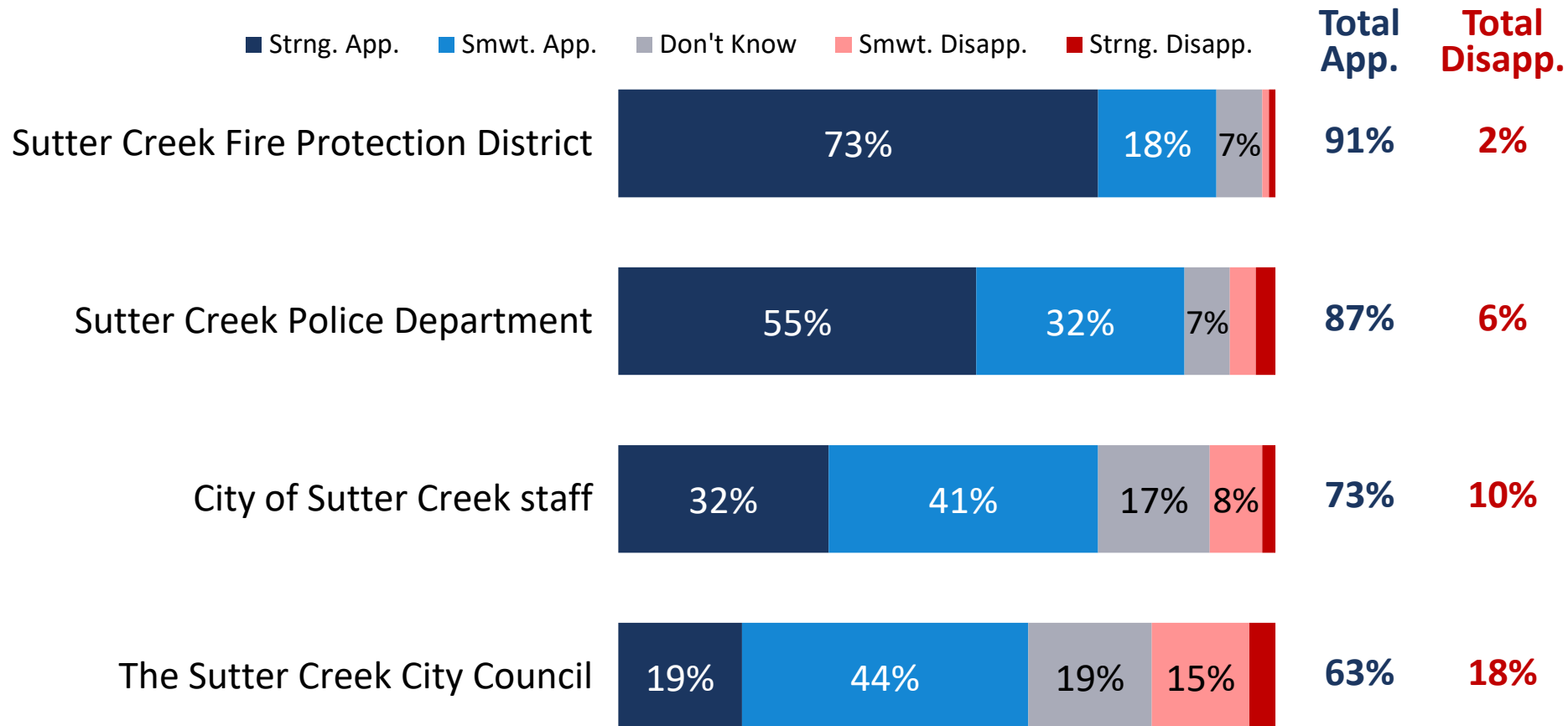
*Generally speaking, how would you rate Sutter Creek as a place to live: is it an excellent place to live, a good place to live, just average, or poor place to live?*



**Across every major demographic, 90% or more rate their quality of life as “excellent” or “good.”**

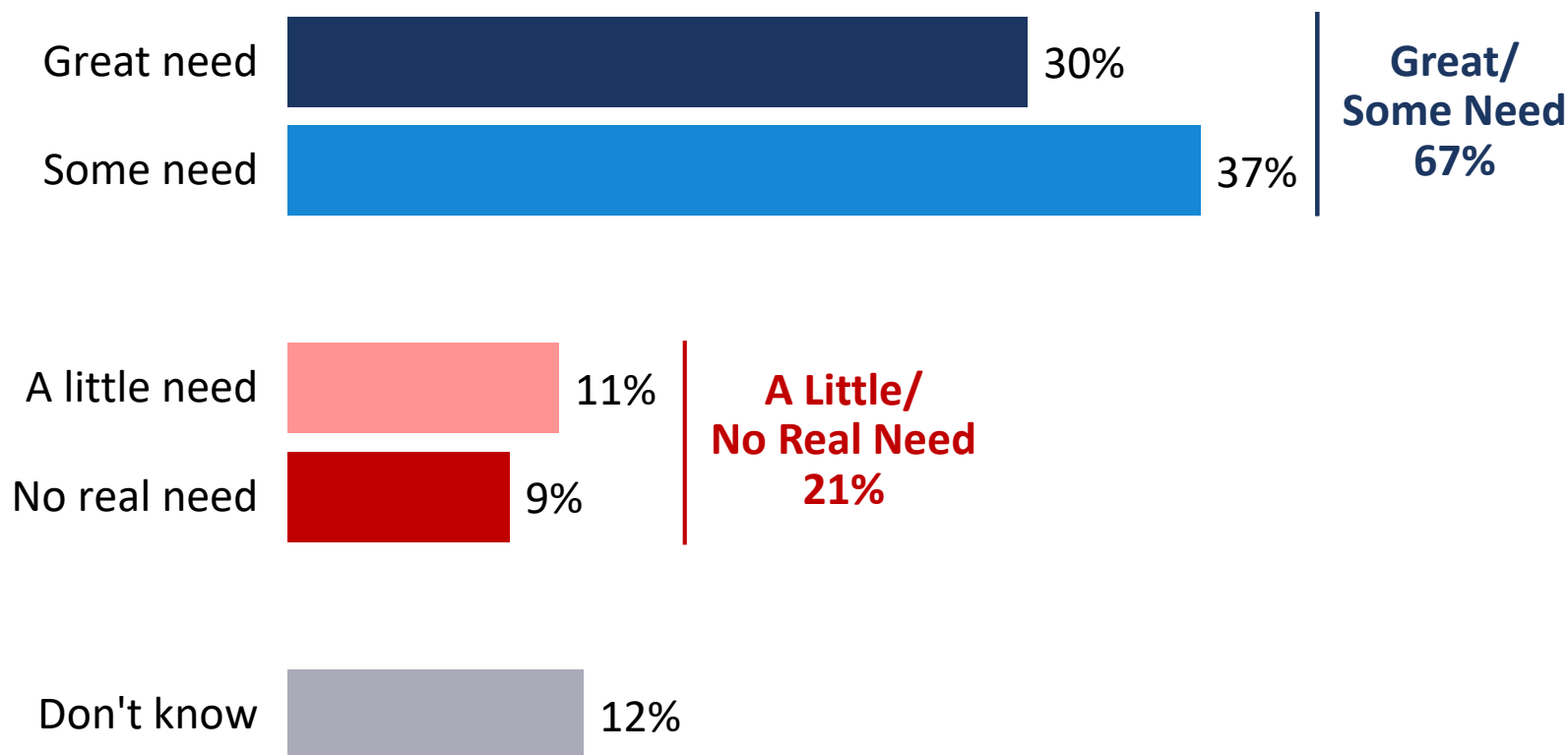
# They also broadly approve of their police department and the city generally.

*I am going to read you the names of a few organizations active in public life.  
Please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the job being done by that organization.*



# Two-thirds see a “great need” or “some need” for additional funding for City services.

*Generally speaking, would you say that Sutter Creek has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding for City services?*





# **Views of a Measure**

# Hypothetical Measure Language Tested

*50% +1 Vote Threshold*

**Sutter Creek Essential Services Measure.** To maintain essential services in Sutter Creek, such as:

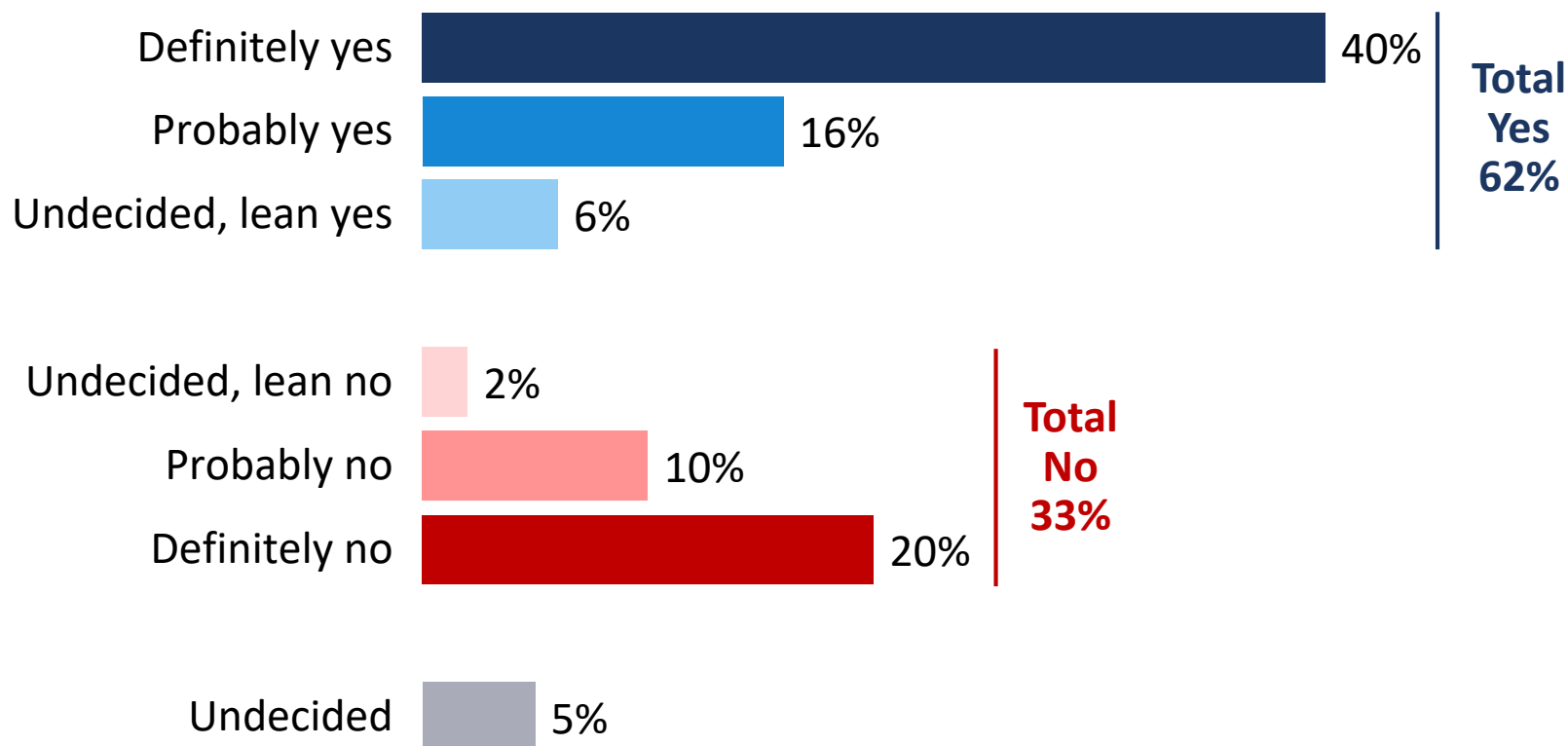
- maintaining rapid emergency response;
- attracting and retaining qualified officers for police patrols and crime prevention;
- repairing potholes, repaving roads;
- repairing aging stormwater systems to prevent flooding and water pollution;
- and for general government purposes,

shall the City of Sutter Creek's measure be adopted establishing a 1.5¢ sales tax providing approximately \$870,000 annually until ended by voters, requiring public spending disclosure, audits, all funds used locally?



# Three in five support the measure based on ballot language alone, with two in five saying they would “definitely” vote yes.

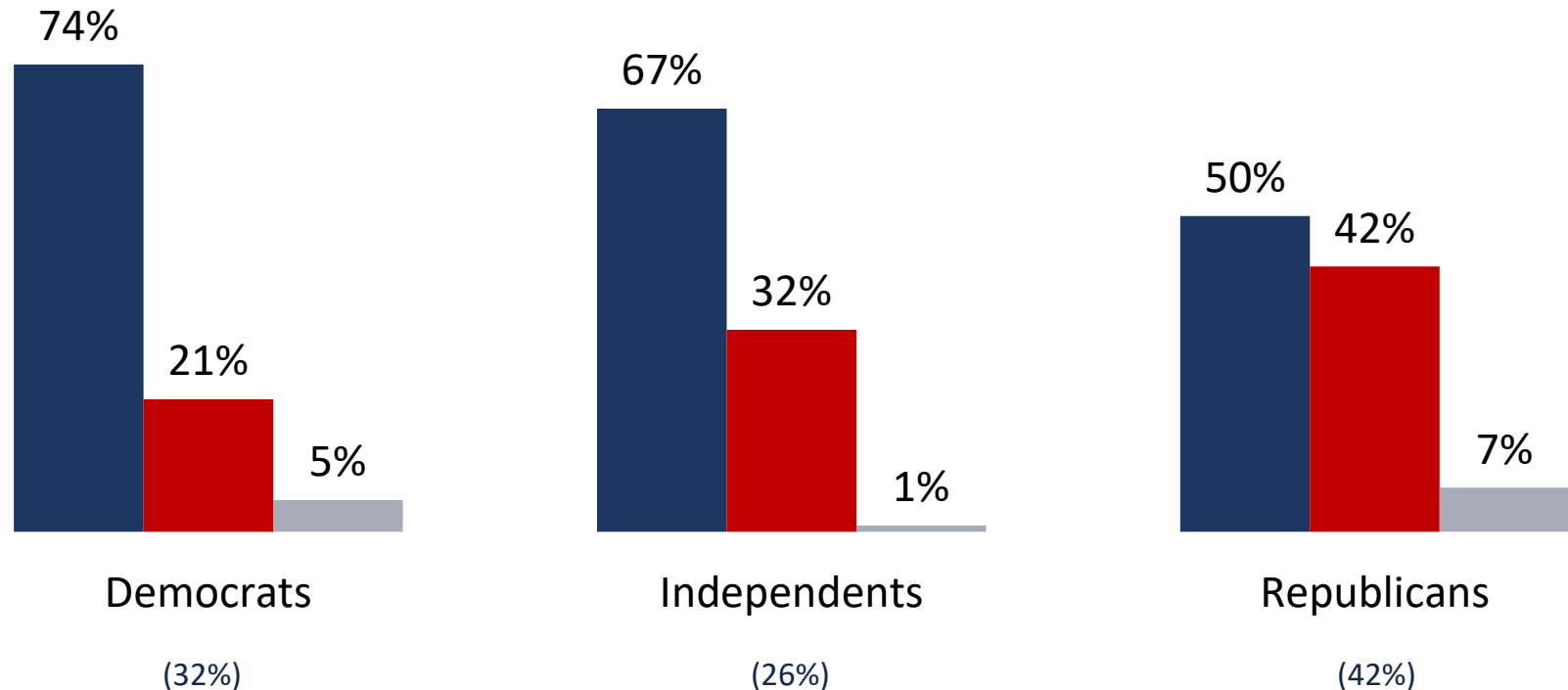
*50% +1 Vote Threshold;  $\pm 5.9\%$  Margin of Error*



# Three-quarters of Democrats and two-thirds of independents support the measure; GOP voters are split.

*Initial Vote by Party*

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



(% of  
Sample)

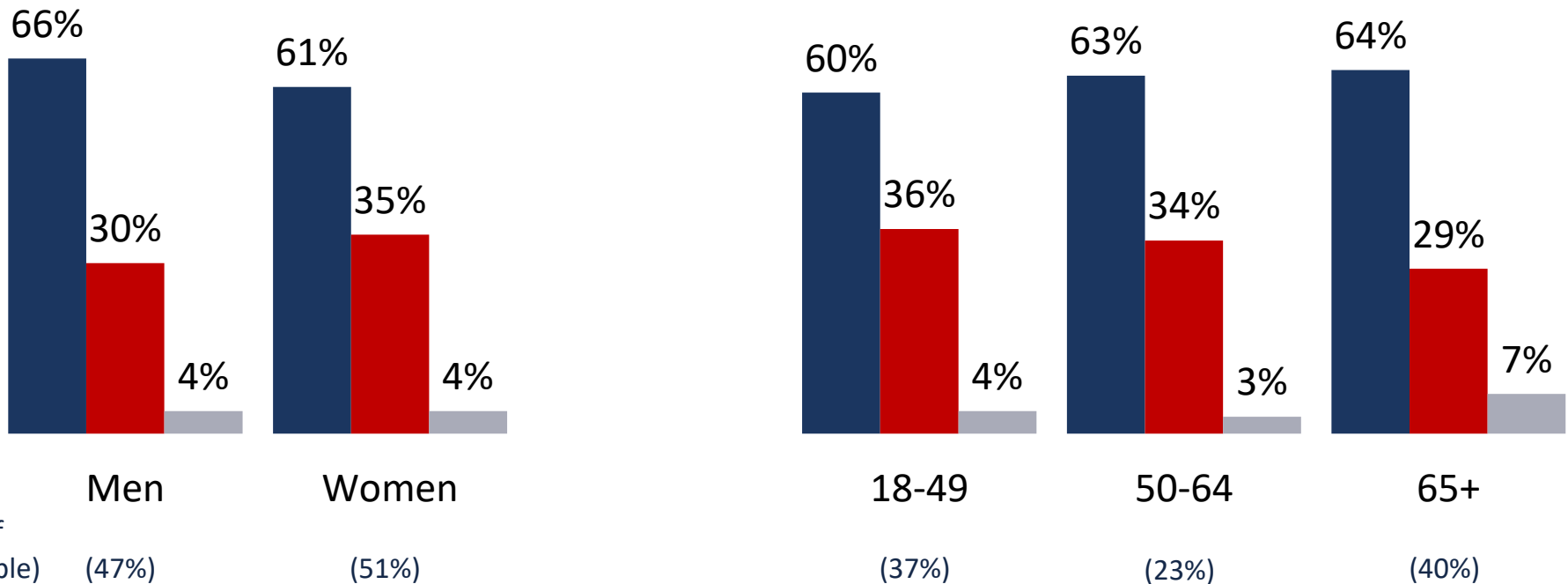
# Three in five support the measure across gender and age.

*Initial Vote by Gender & Age*

■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided

Gender

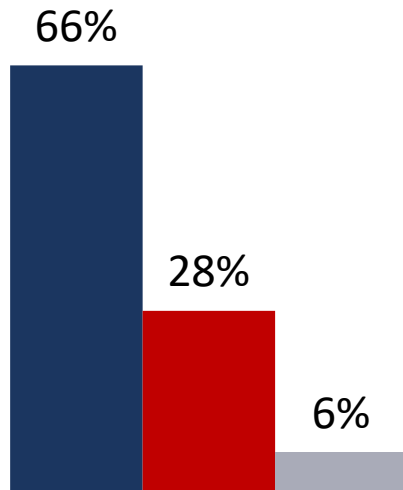
Age



# White voters are more likely to support a measure than voters of color.

*Initial Vote by Race/Ethnicity*

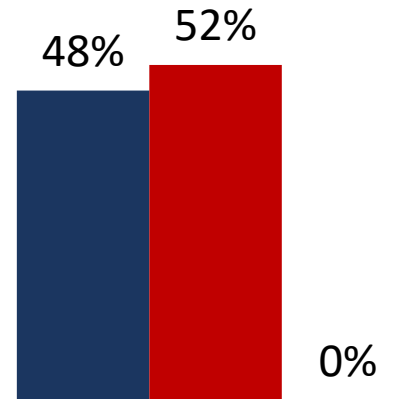
■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



White Voters

(80%)

(% of  
Sample)



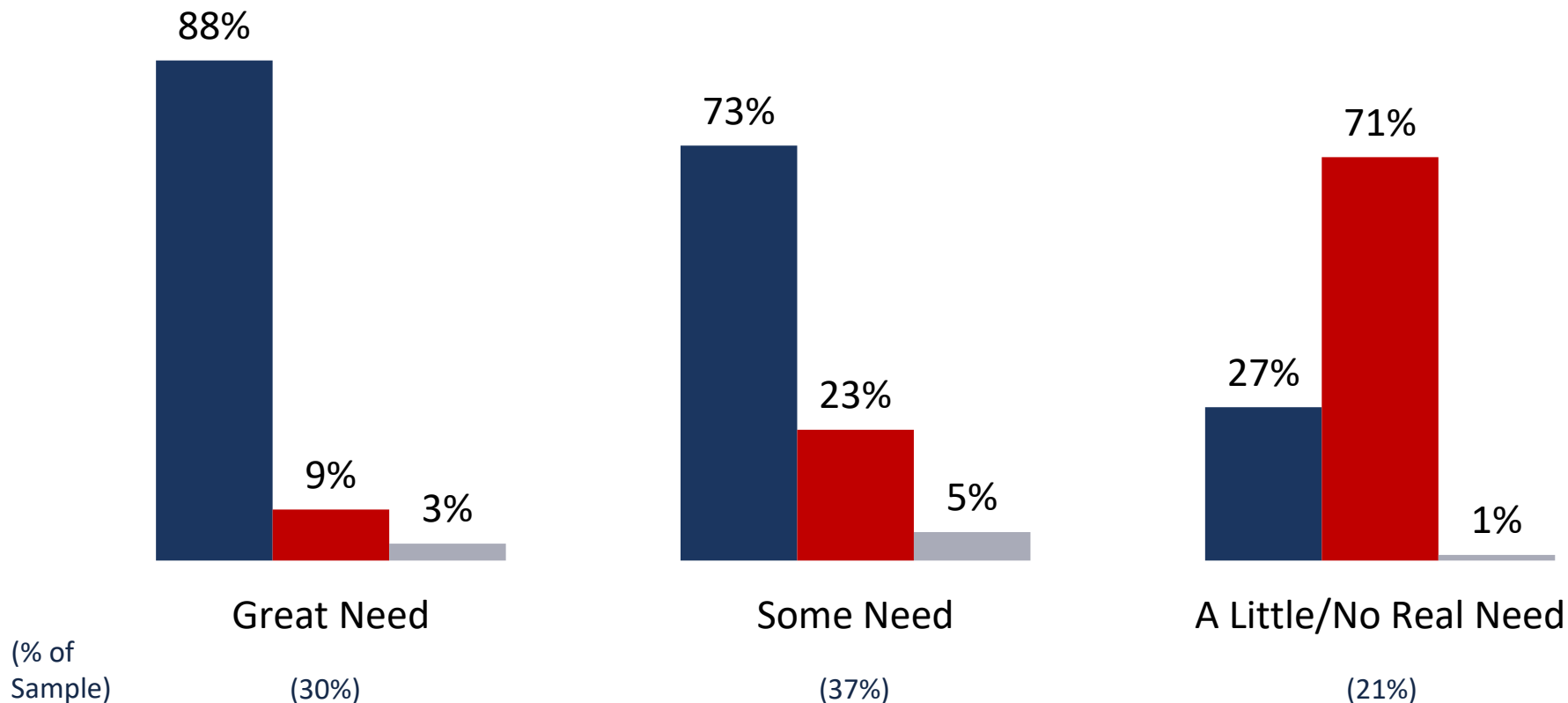
All Voters of Color

(15%)

# Those who see “great” or “some need” for additional funding are broadly supportive.

*Initial Vote by Funding Need*

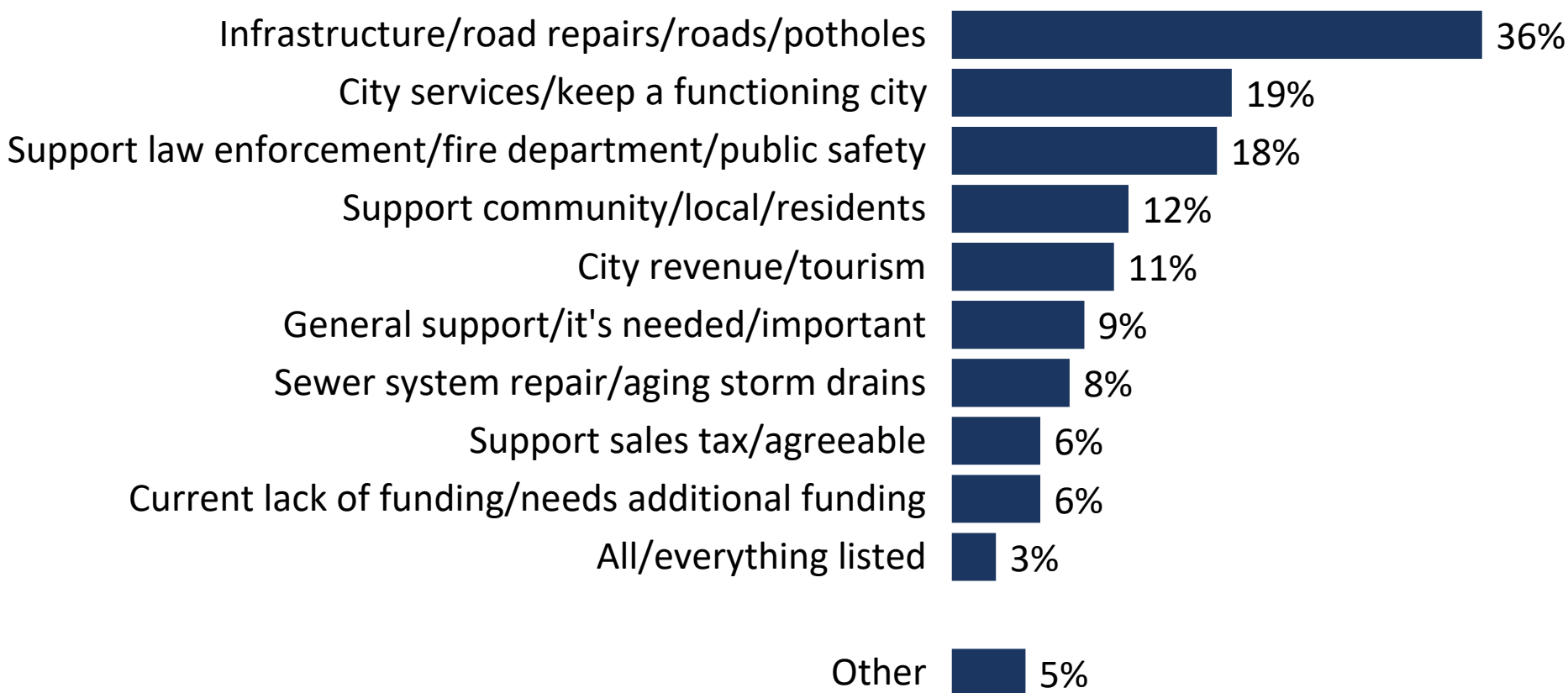
■ Total Yes ■ Total No ■ Undecided



# Supporters of a measure want to see infrastructure repairs and to protect public safety.

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

*(Open-ended; Asked of "Yes" Voters Only, n=174)*



# Verbatim Responses from Supporters

Funds are needed for improvements to keep our community safe, enjoyable and competitive.

This is an old town with old systems that need repair and maintenance to prevent basic problems from repeatedly occurring.

As long as the money is spent wisely, it could benefit our surroundings.

Potholes are getting very out of hand. In a town that depends on tourism, this is a detriment and dangerous for people who walk through the historic center's side streets to enjoy them.

I want Sutter Creek to remain safe. increasing policing is very important for that to happen. Also to maintain our fire department it is necessary. The potholes in Sutter Creek streets are horrible.

We need to maintain quality services, and voters in this county are not often supportive of these measures.

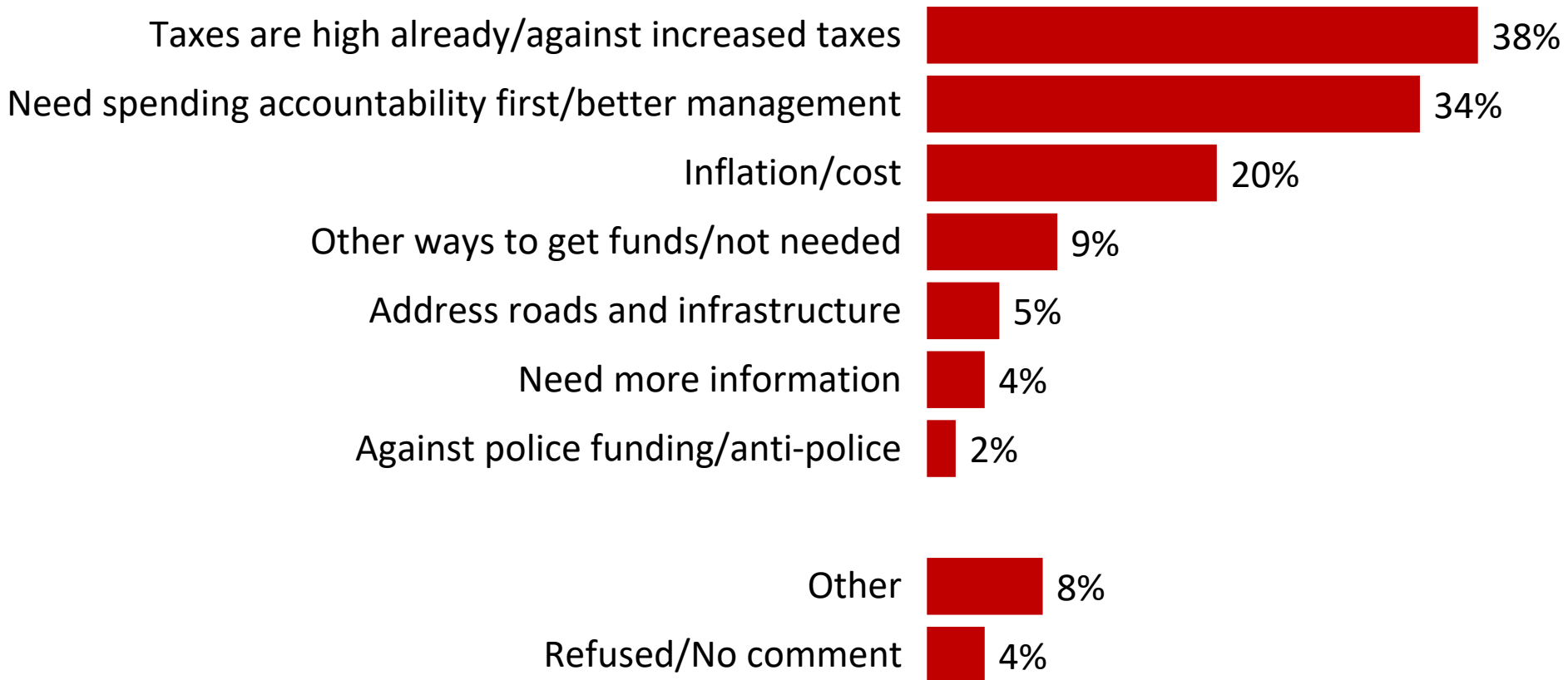
I am happy to pay extra to improve the community.

Dire need of money, paid by tourists.

# Opponents are against tax increases or feel that the funds would be misspent.

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

*(Open-ended; Asked of "No" Voters Only, n=91)*





# Verbatim Responses from Opponents

Better planning and fiscal management will do the job. Higher taxes always brings unintended consequences. If all problems are solved with higher taxes when does the well run dry. Higher taxes is just an answer to previous fiscal irresponsibility.

People cannot afford to live as it is, government needs to find a new way instead of squeezing money out of its local citizens. We live here too. It's not just tourists who will be paying this fee.

Everything in California is too expensive.

Because nothing ever gets fixed. I pay more and more every year for the sake of fixing roads and potholes and EMT services and nothing has changed. The money never goes to what they say it will.

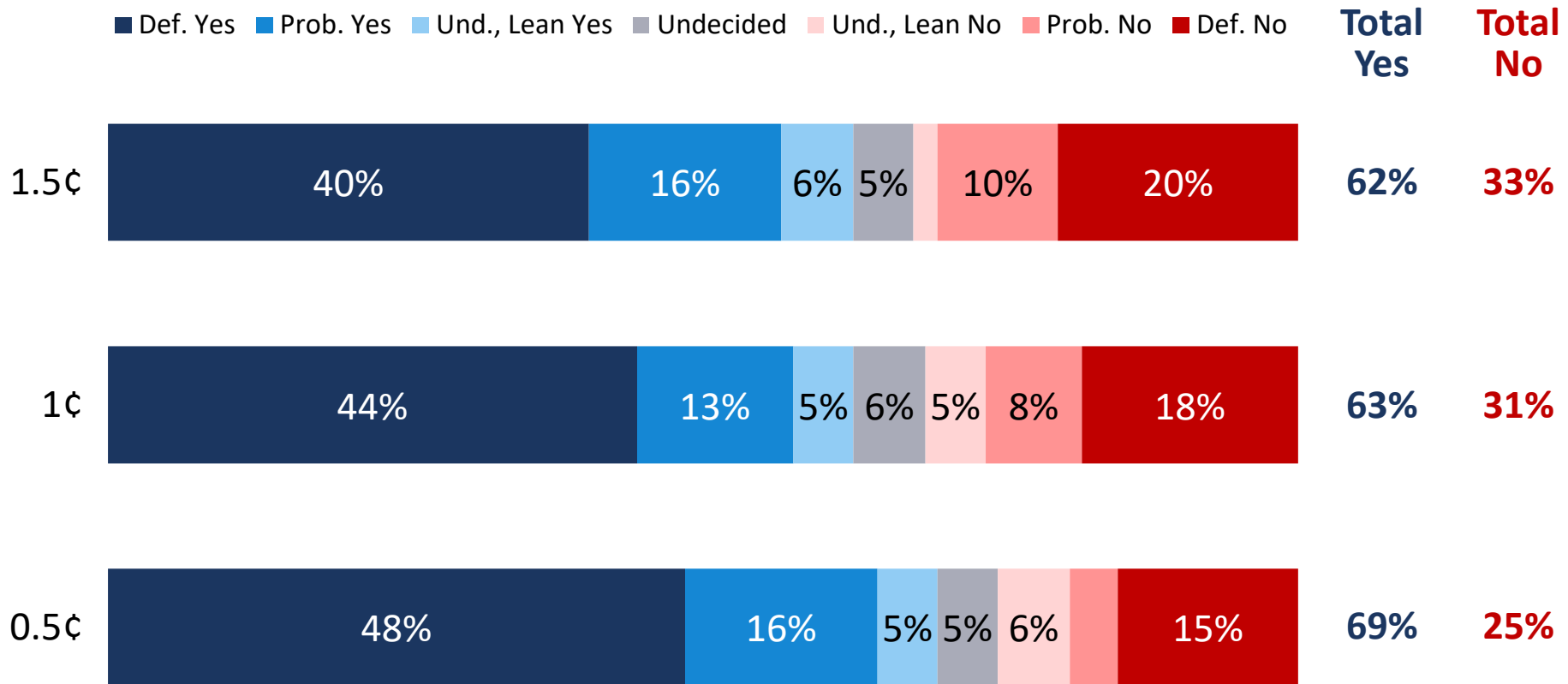
I would vote no the raise in the sales tax is too high and I think the money will not be used properly.

Generally I am against tax increase and I am a business owner and my customers will see price increases.

Inflation is killing the population on fixed income.

# A half-cent sales tax has support from nearly seven in ten voters.

Suppose the measure I just described were for \_\_\_\_\_ rather than 1.5¢.  
In that case, would you vote yes or no?

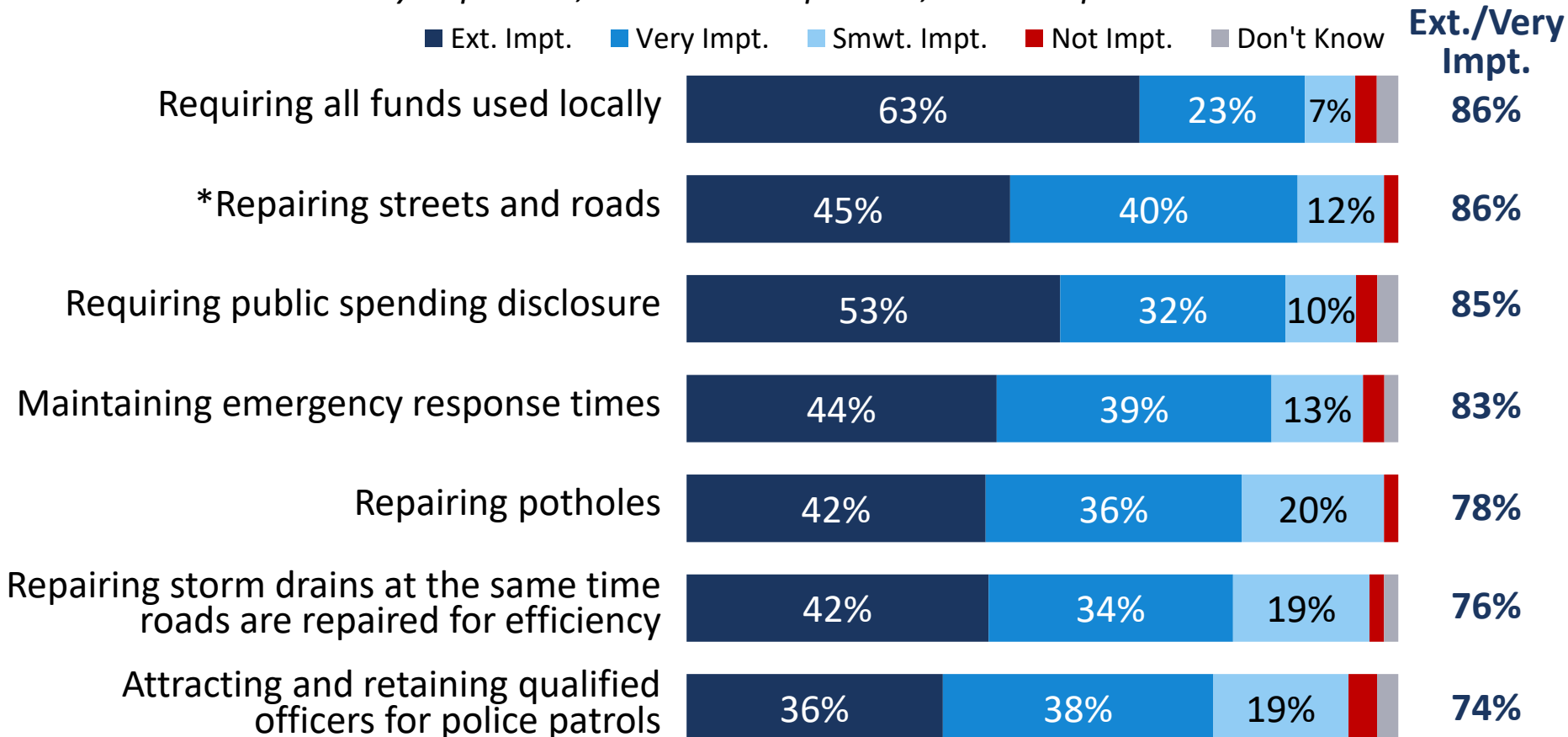




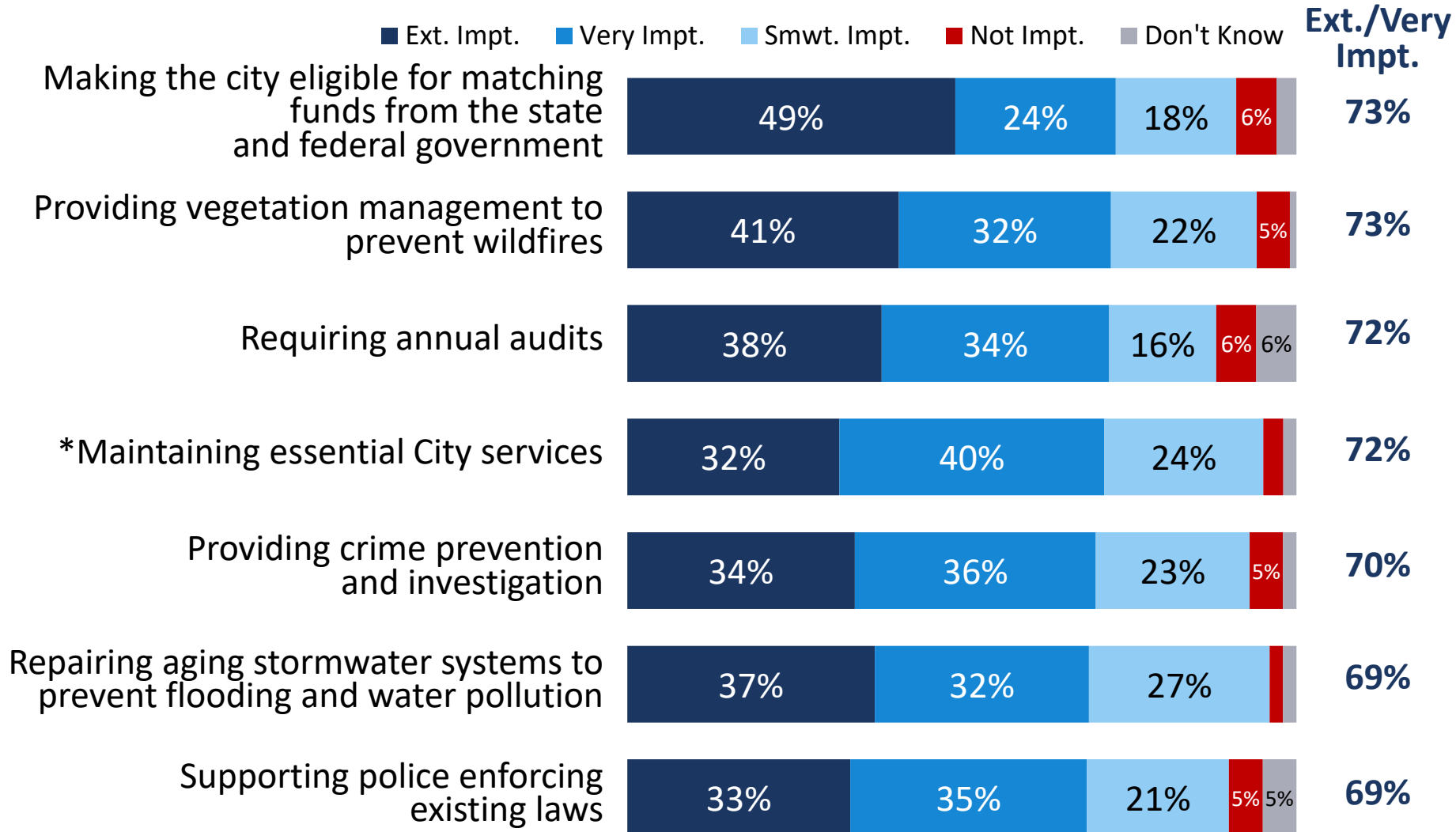
# **Voter Priorities**

# Voters' top priorities include road repairs and maintaining emergency response times.

*I am going to read you a list of specific projects that might be funded by this measure. Please tell me how important it is to you that that project be funded: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important.*



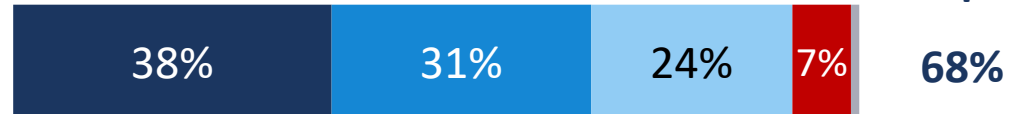
# Seven in ten or more also value wildfire prevention and crime investigation.



# They are less likely to intensely value disaster preparation, parks or city facility maintenance.

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

\*Repaving streets and roads



Preparing for natural disasters such as floods or fire



\*Repairing sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety and access for people with disabilities



Maintaining parks



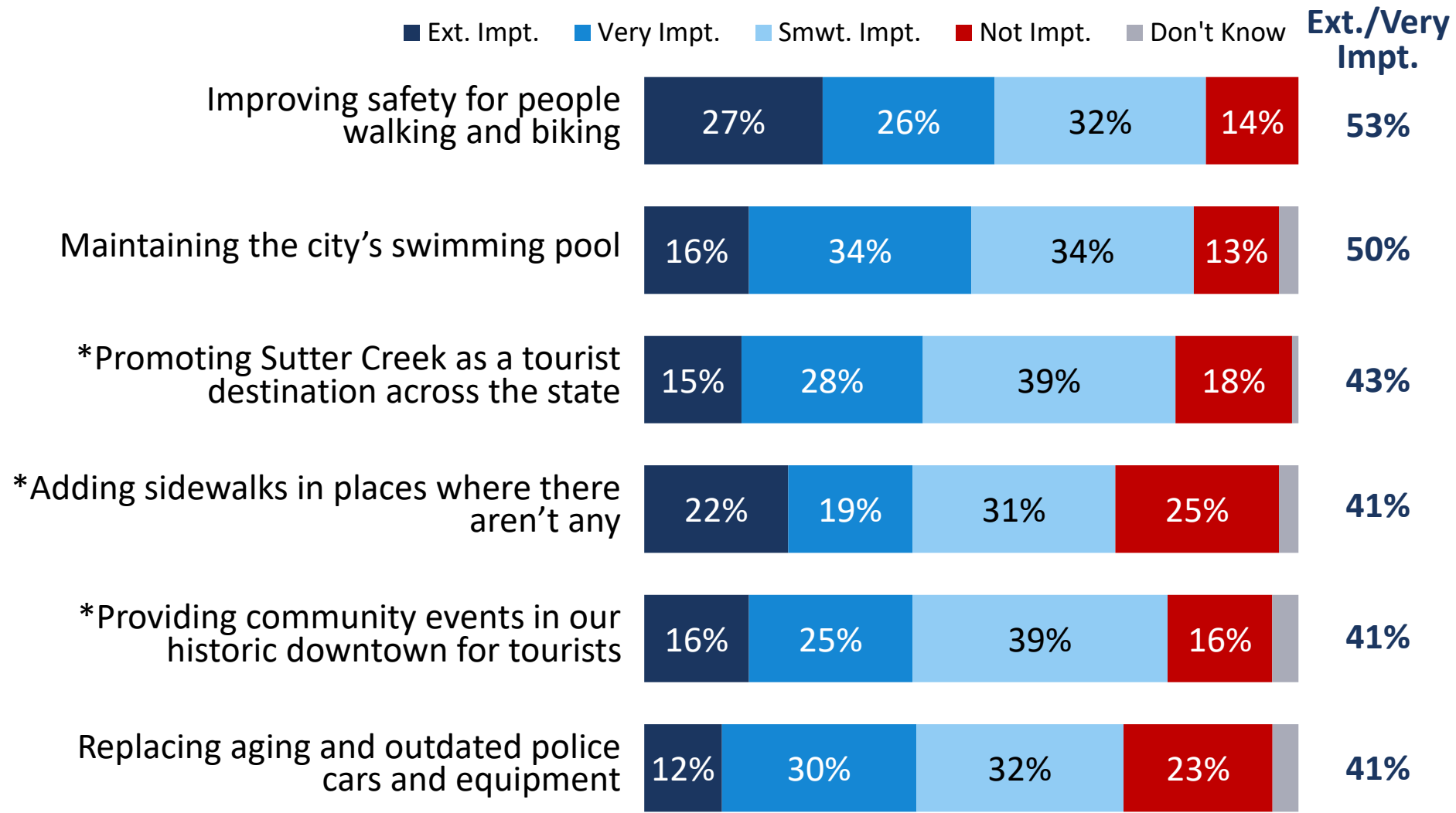
\*Improving essential City services



Improving and maintaining city facilities



# Relatively speaking, their lowest priorities include replacing police cars and supporting tourism.





# Messaging



# Messaging in Favor of a Measure

## Ranked by Very Convincing

47%	<b>(ALL AT ONCE)</b> Sutter Creek has roads and streets that are rated "failing" or have sinkholes and potholes. And our stormwater and sewer systems are from the 1940s. This measure would provide the funding needed to repair these roads and the stormwater and sewer systems beneath them at the same time, saving construction costs and reducing noise and disruption.
44%	<b>(ACCOUNTABILITY)</b> This measure includes strict accountability provisions such as public disclosure of all spending and annual independent financial audits. These fiscal safeguards will ensure that funds from this measure will be used efficiently, effectively and as promised.
44%	<b>(MATCH)</b> This measure will help make Sutter Creek eligible for state and federal matching funds and grants that will otherwise go to other cities like Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles.
40%	<b>(EXEMPTIONS)</b> Essential purchases like groceries and prescription medicine are exempt from the cost of this measure to ensure it is not a burden to those on fixed or limited incomes.
39%	<b>(TOURISTS)</b> Most of the cost of this measure will be paid by tourists who visit our community and use our infrastructure — so it's only fair that they pay part of their share. This locally controlled funding will <u>only</u> be used in Sutter Creek for the essential services we need.

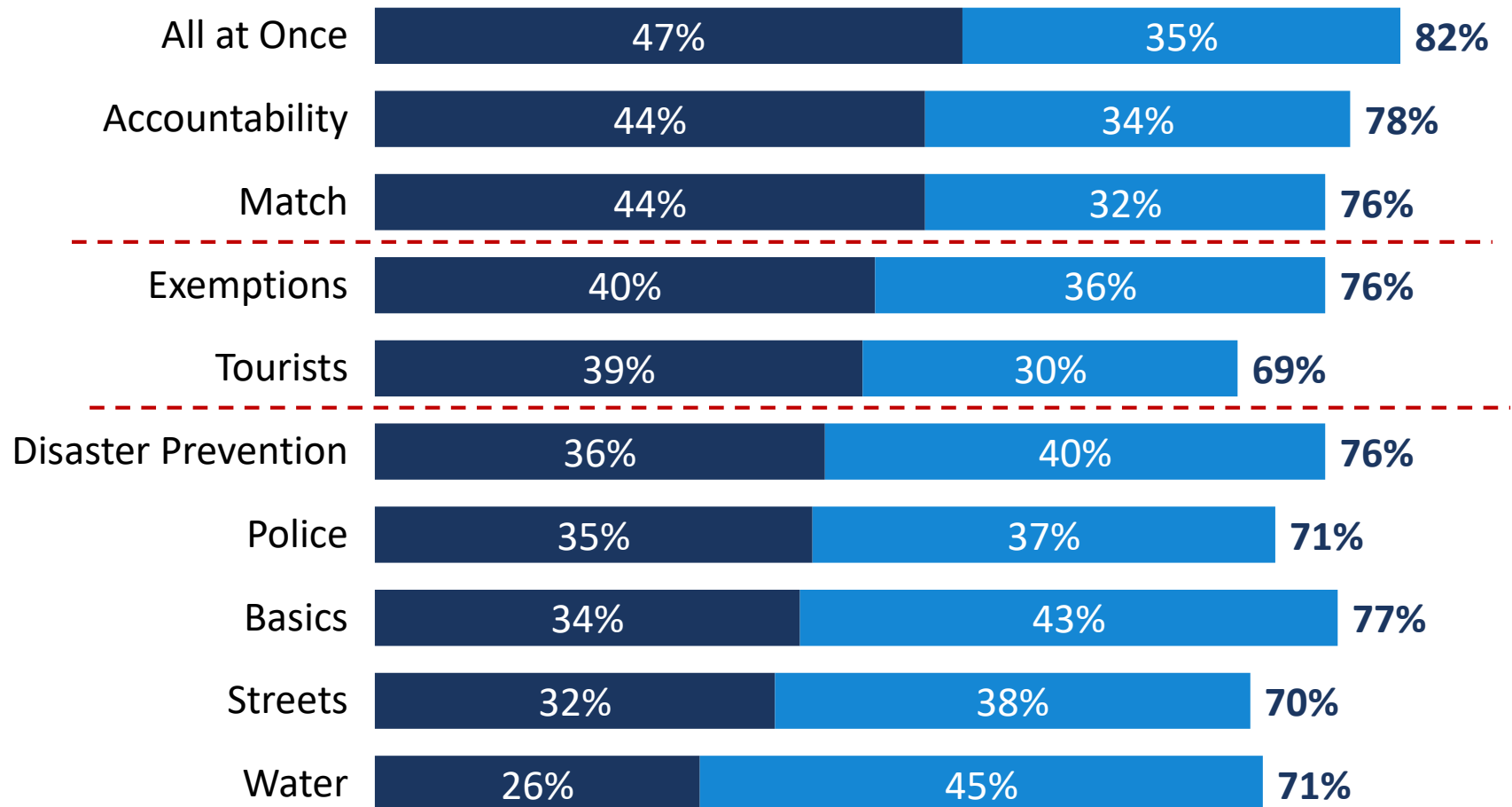
# Messaging in Favor of a Measure; Continued

## Ranked by Very Convincing

36%	<b>(DISASTER PREVENTION)</b> Smart planning and preparation before a flood, major storm or wildfire is a better investment than costly emergency response and clean-up afterward. By investing in preparation and planning now, we can help avoid costly clean-up and loss of lives and property.
35%	<b>(POLICE)</b> Sutter Creek is fortunate to have its own police force, ensuring quicker response times than if we relied on the County. This measure would provide the funding needed for Sutter Creek to continue to attract and retain qualified police officers to staff neighborhood patrols, preventing crime and improving response times.
34%	<b>(BASICS)</b> This measure would invest in the basic, essential city services that our community needs, including providing police patrols, repairing roads, maintaining stormwater systems, and keeping our parks clean and safe.
32%	<b>(STREETS)</b> This measure will improve the safety of Sutter Creek's streets and sidewalks. By repairing roads and preventing potholes, it will reduce damage to vehicles, improve traffic flow, and help to prevent dangerous collisions.
26%	<b>(WATER)</b> This measure will help prevent flooding and protect water quality in the creeks that are the heart of our community by improving our aging stormwater systems.

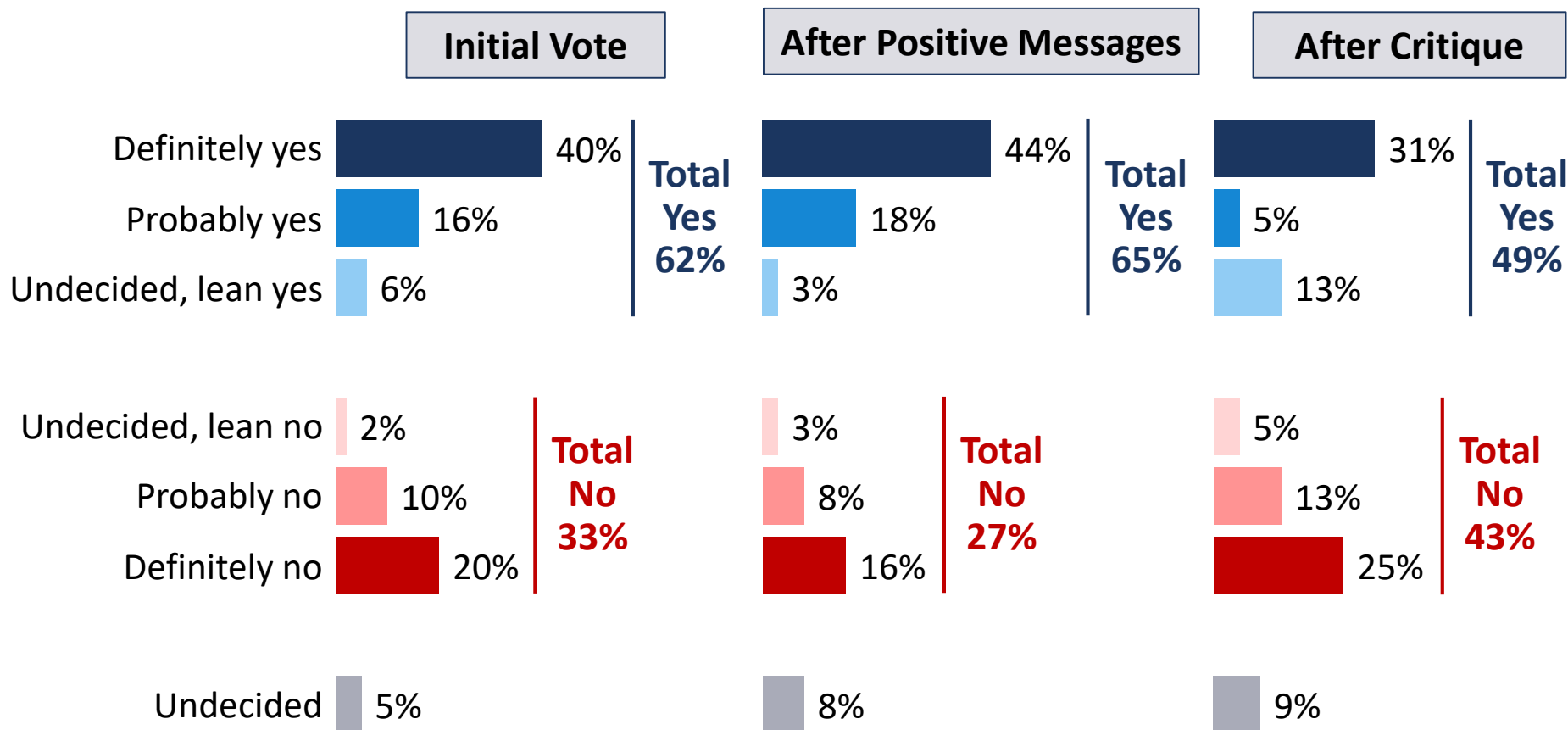
# Matching funds, accountability and the ability to repair storm drains and roads at once are powerful messages in favor.

■ Very Convincing ■ Somewhat Convincing



Q8. Here are some statements from people who support the measure. Please tell me whether you find it very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not convincing as a reason to vote yes.

# With messaging in favor, two-thirds back the measure; a critical message reduces support.



Q3. If the election were today, would you vote yes or no?

Q9. Having heard this, do you think you would vote yes or no on the Sutter Creek Essential Services Measure to establish a 1.5¢ sales tax to maintain emergency response, attract and retain police officers, and repair roads and stormwater, with public spending disclosure, audits and all funds used locally?

Q11. Having heard this, do you think you would vote yes or no on the measure?



# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- A measure to fund essential City services could be viable in November, but it faces a challenging path to success requiring voters to receive more information about the measure and no formal opposition.
  - Three in five say they would vote “yes” based on measure language alone – but that support declines after a brief critical message.
  - Two-thirds see at least “some need” for additional funding.
  - A lower tax increment enjoys broader and more intense support.
  - Requiring all funds to be used locally and spending disclosure are highly appealing accountability measures.
- Pothole and storm drain repairs, emergency response times, crime prevention and wildfire prevention are highly valued.
- Repairing storm drains as we repair roads is a highly appealing theme, as is the possibility of matching funds, and highlighting accountability.
- Voters in Sutter Creek are very pleased with their quality of life. They also broadly approve of their Police Department, City staff, and Council.

**For more information,  
contact:**



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