

# Summary of Survey



## City of Merced Local Funding Measure Survey






*Highlights of Key Findings from a Citywide Voter Survey  
Conducted November 30 – December 7, 2025*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY



# Survey Methodology

Dates	November 30 – December 7, 2025
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2026 Voters in the City of Merced
Total Interviews	410
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 6.9\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Survey Tracking	2005, 2010, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2022
Languages	English & Spanish

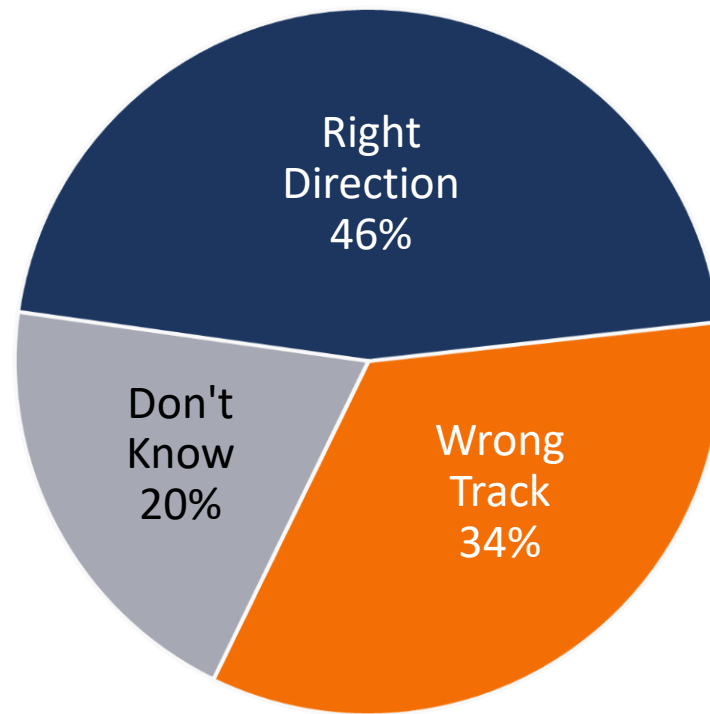
*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*



# Perceptions of Life in Merced

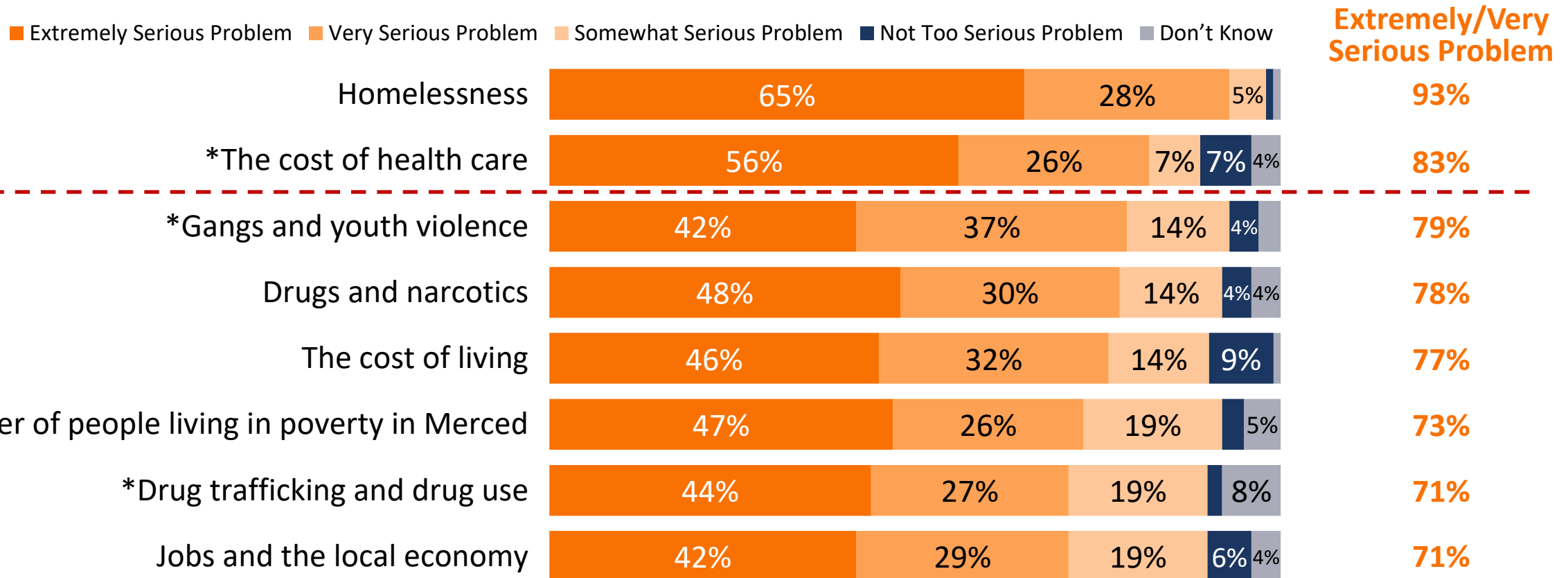
# A plurality said they feel the City optimistic about where Merced is headed.

*First, would you say things in the City of Merced are headed in the right direction, or do you feel they are off on the wrong track?*

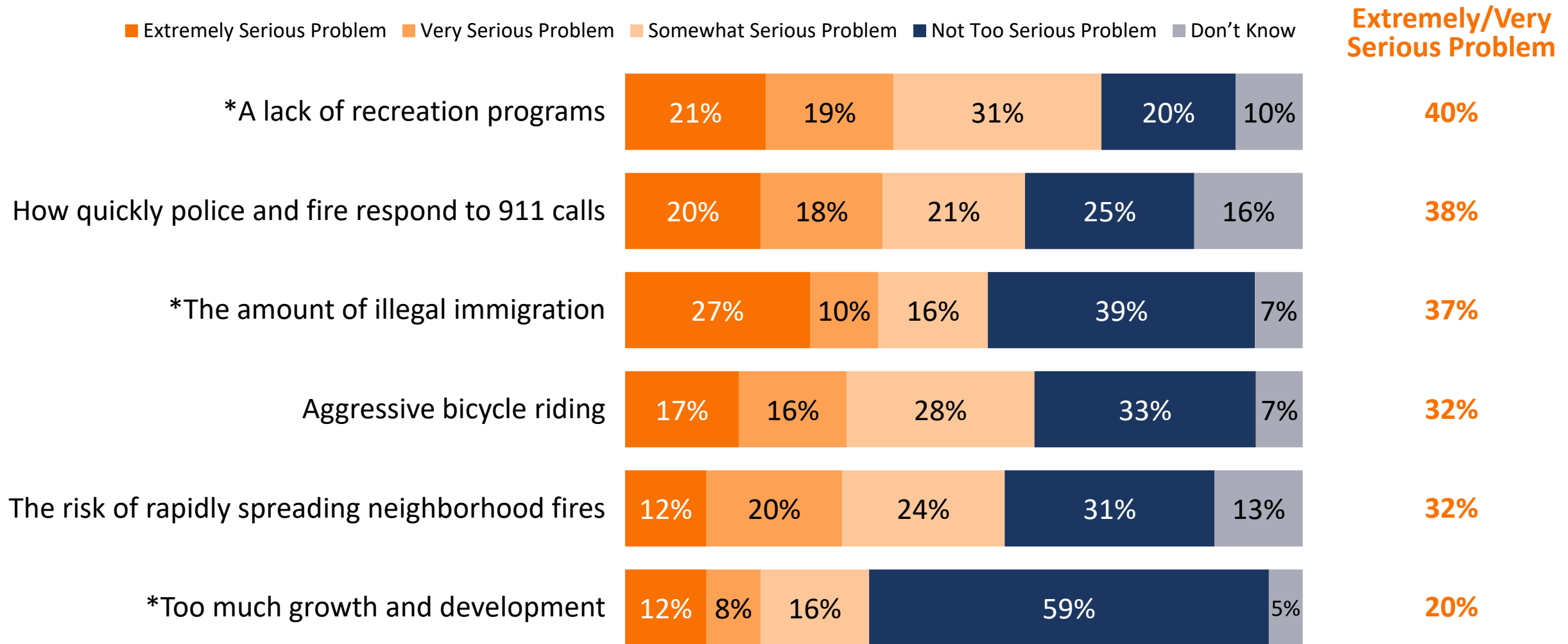


# The top two most pressing issues to voters were homelessness and the cost of healthcare.

*Next, please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems in the City of Merced. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Merced.*

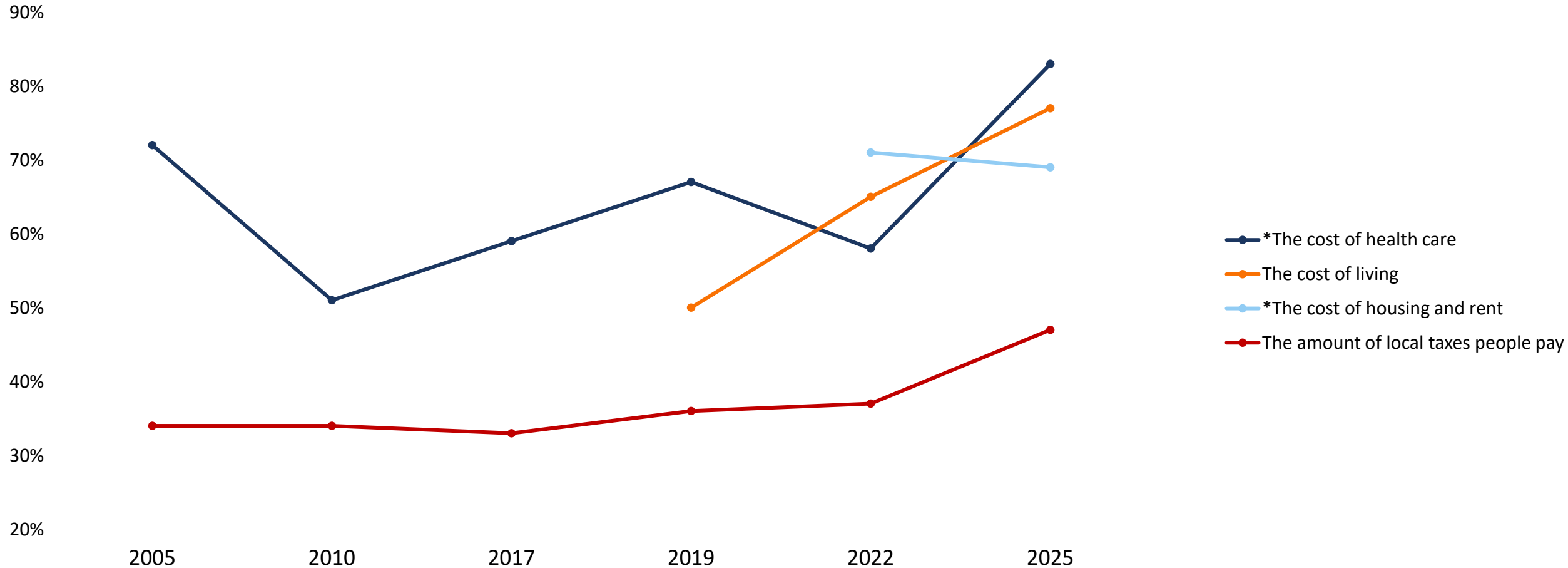


# Few were concerned about too much growth and development.



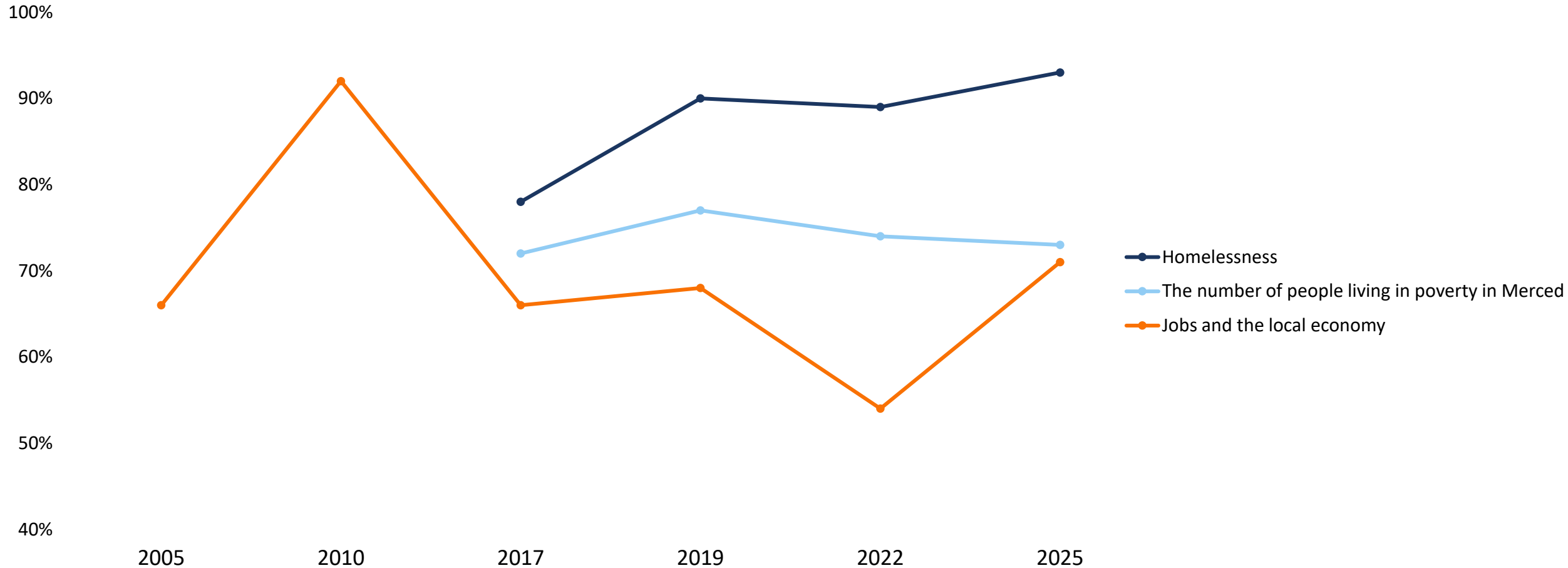
# Voters have become more concerned about cost-of-living issues in recent years.

*(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)*



# Concerns about the economy and poverty have remained steadily high.

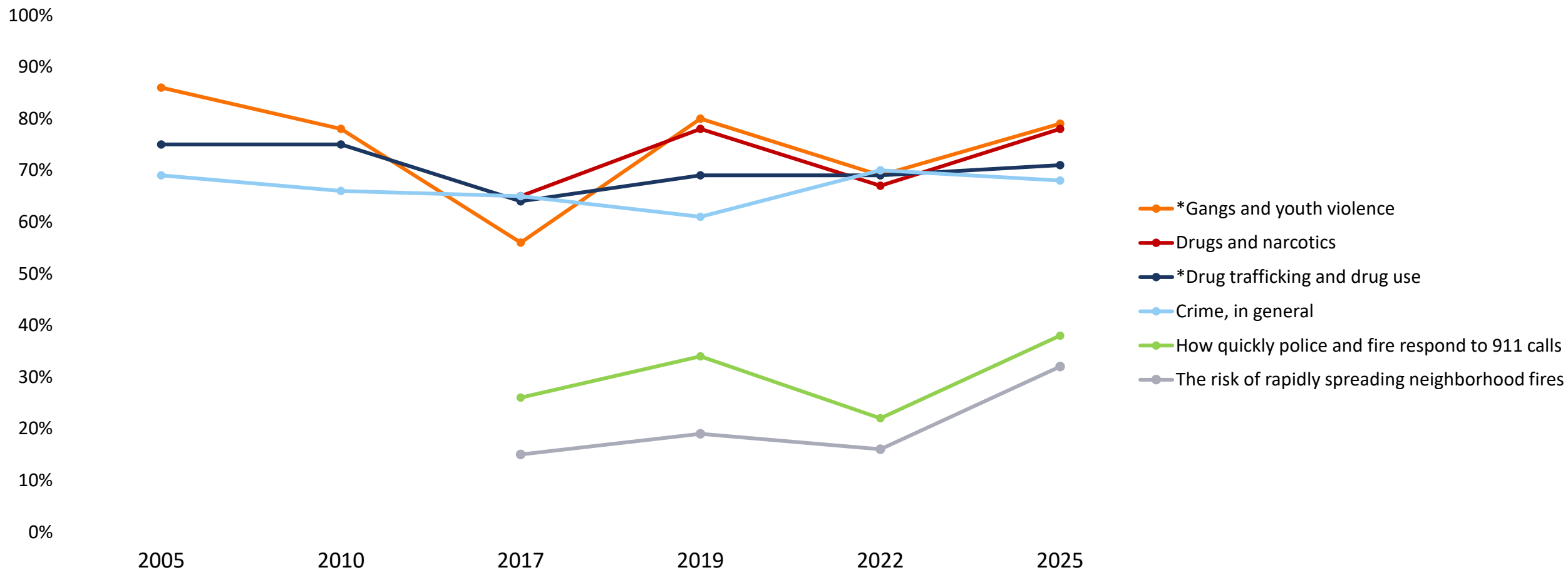
*(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)*





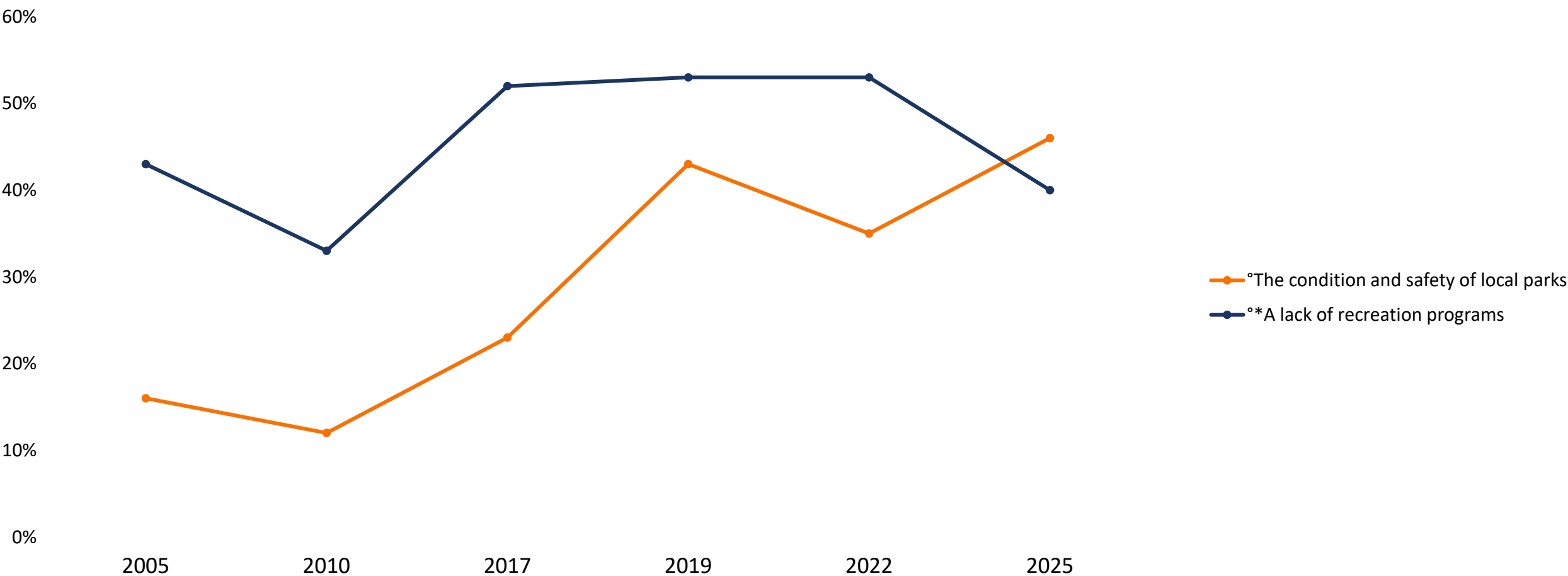
# Concerns about public safety have held constant, with the highest for issues related to gangs and drugs.

*(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)*



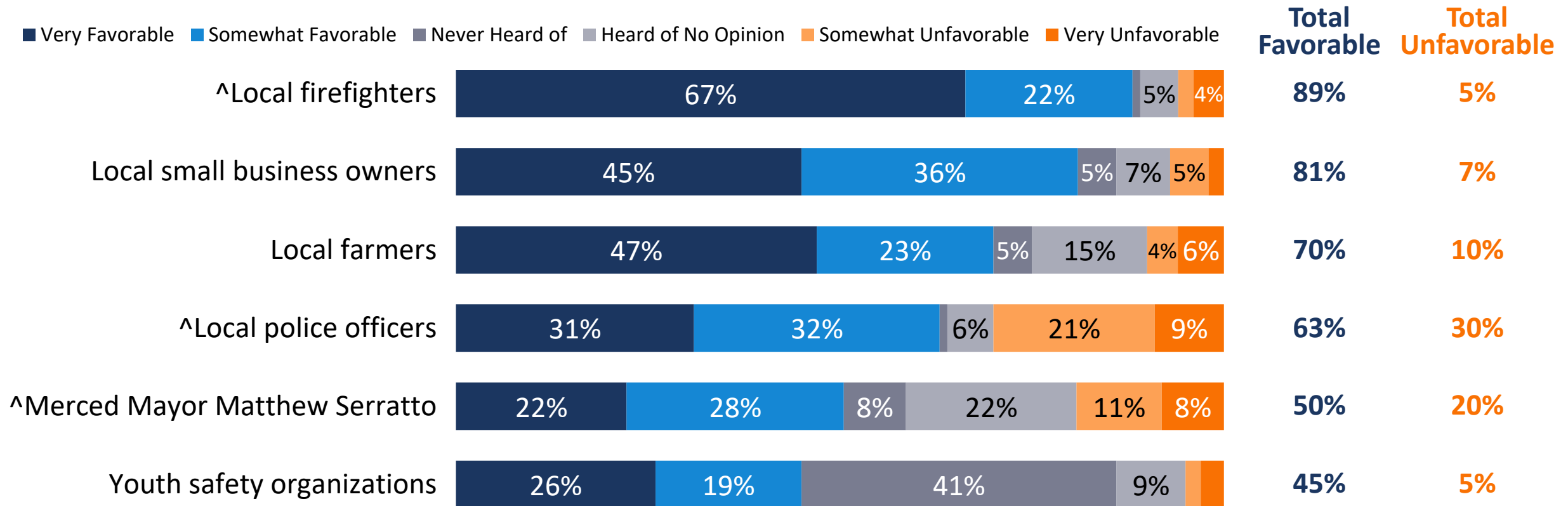
# Concerns about parks' condition and safety have increased, with concerns about insufficient rec programs now top of mind.

*(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)*



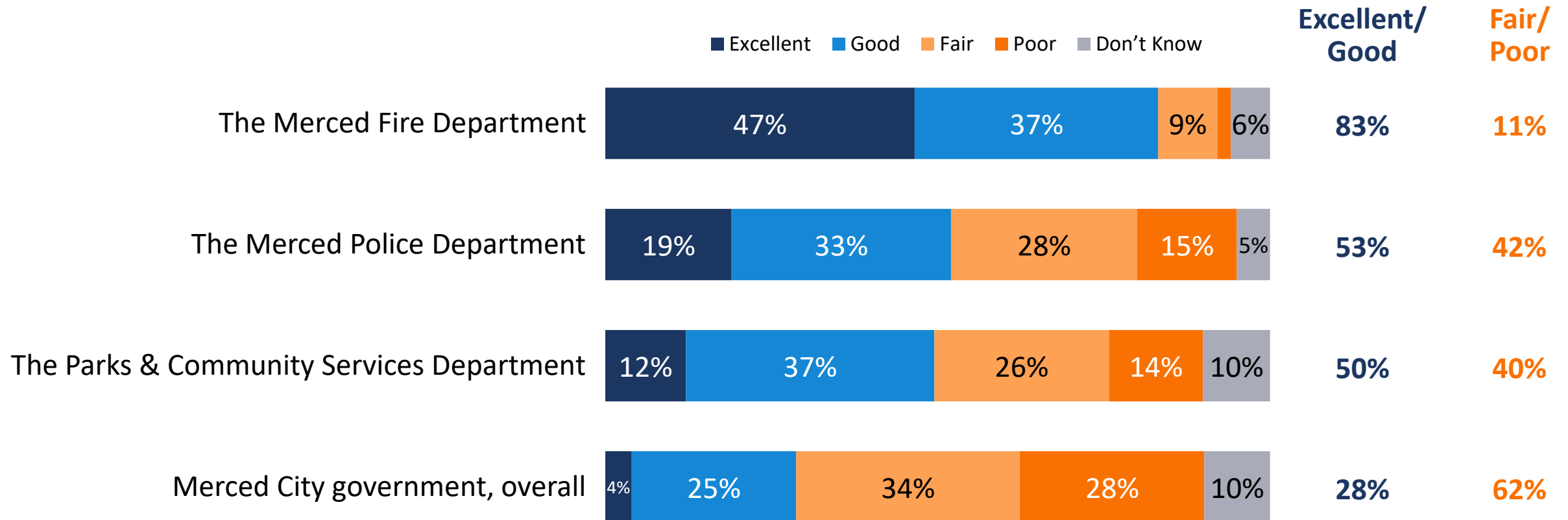
# Local firefighters, small business owners, and local farmers are viewed favorably.

*Next, here are some names of people and organizations active in public life.  
For each one, please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of that person or organization.*



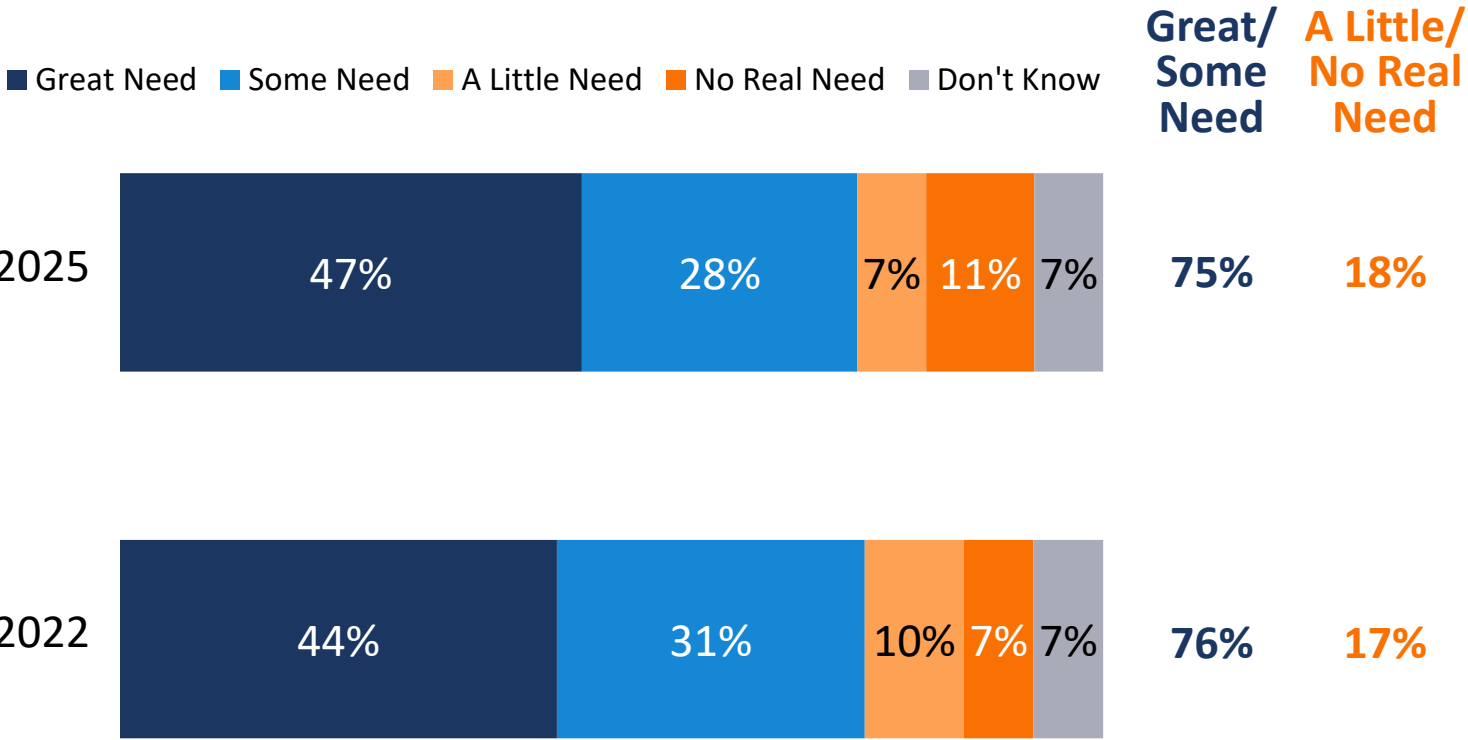
# Voters gave the Fire Department high job ratings.

*First, please consider some different aspects of Merced's City government. For each one, please indicate whether you feel they are doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job in providing services and taking care of the needs of local residents.*



# Large majorities continue to feel the City has a need for additional funding.

*Next, 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 Merced residents need and want?*



More Likely to Say "Great Need"
Independent Women
High/Vocational School Educated
Ages 30-39
Independents Ages 18-49
West Merced Region
City Council District 2
Household Income <\$75,000
Non-College Educated Women
Women Ages 18-49
Independents
Central Merced Region
City Council District 3



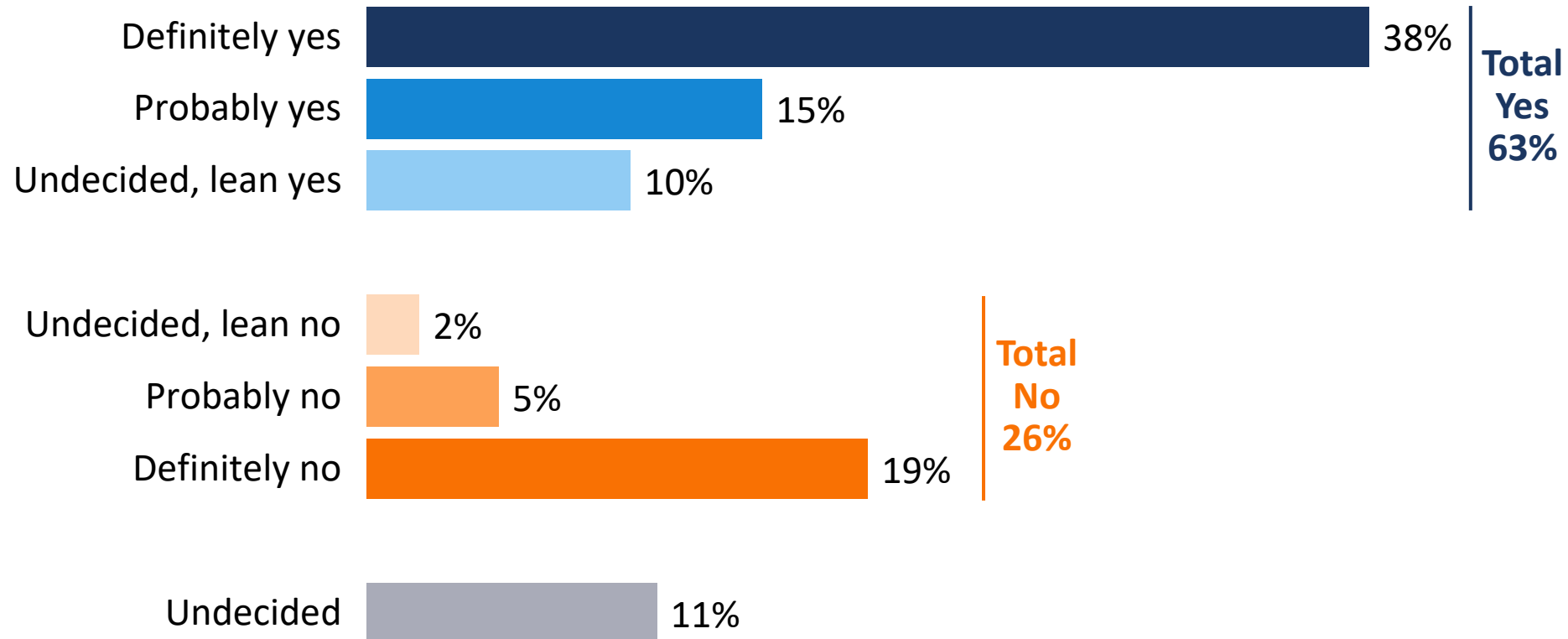
# **Initial Reactions to a Potential General-Purpose Sales Tax Measure**

# Conceptual General-Purpose Sales Tax Measure Ballot Language

*General-Purpose; 50%+1 Vote threshold; City Attorney-approved language*

**City of Merced Vital Services Protection Measure.** Shall a City of Merced measure to maintain local services, such as 911 fire/police/medical/natural disaster response; neighborhood safety programs; youth services; street/pothole repair; addressing homelessness; safe/clean parks/public areas; and other general city services and address federal/state cuts, by establishing a 1¢ sales tax, providing approximately \$18,000,000 annually until ended by voters, with public disclosure, independent audits, with citizen oversight, all funds for Merced, be adopted?

# Sixty-three percent expressed support for the simple-majority requirement conceptual measure.





# Support was generally consistent by ethnicity.

Initial Vote by Race/Ethnicity

■ Total Yes ■ Total No

Difference

Whites



+34%

Latinos



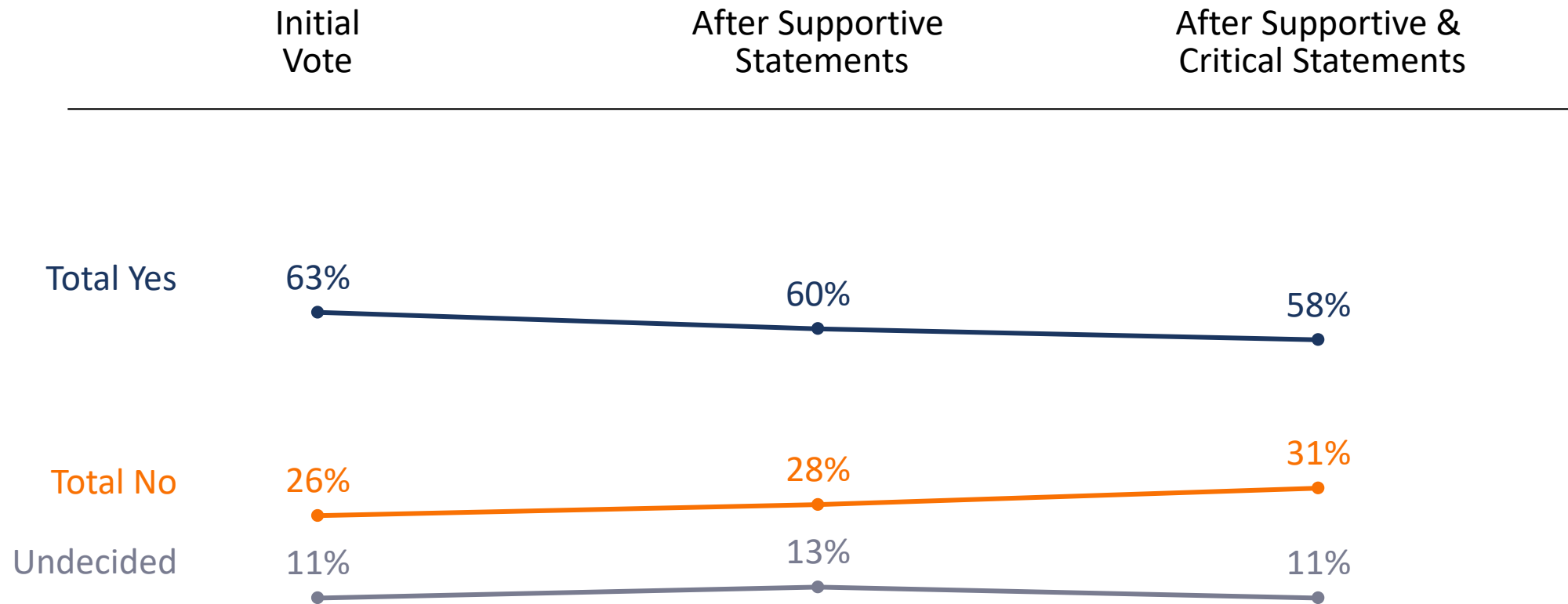
+38%

All Voters of Color



+41%

# There was little change in overall viability over the course of the survey for the simple majority requirement measure.





# Investment Priorities

# Top investment priorities included addressing homelessness, responding to emergencies, preventing gang activity, fixing potholes, and maintaining the City's quality of life.

*First, please consider some potential elements of this measure, including ways in which funds it generates could be spent. For each one, please indicate how important each one is to you personally, regardless of how you feel about the measure: either extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important.*

■ Extremely Important ■ Very Important ■ Somewhat Important ■ Not Too Important ■ Don't Know

**Extremely/Very Important**

\*Addressing homelessness

58%

36%

94%

Responding quickly to neighborhood fires

55%

35%

7%

90%

\*Preventing gang activity in the city

67%

22%

8%

89%

Maintaining the City's ability to respond to a natural or medical disaster

50%

36%

10%

4%

86%

\*Addressing homeless encampments

61%

25%

12%

85%

\*Protecting and maintaining 911 police response times

53%

31%

12%

84%

Fixing potholes

52%

32%

14%

84%

Maintaining Merced's local quality of life

50%

34%

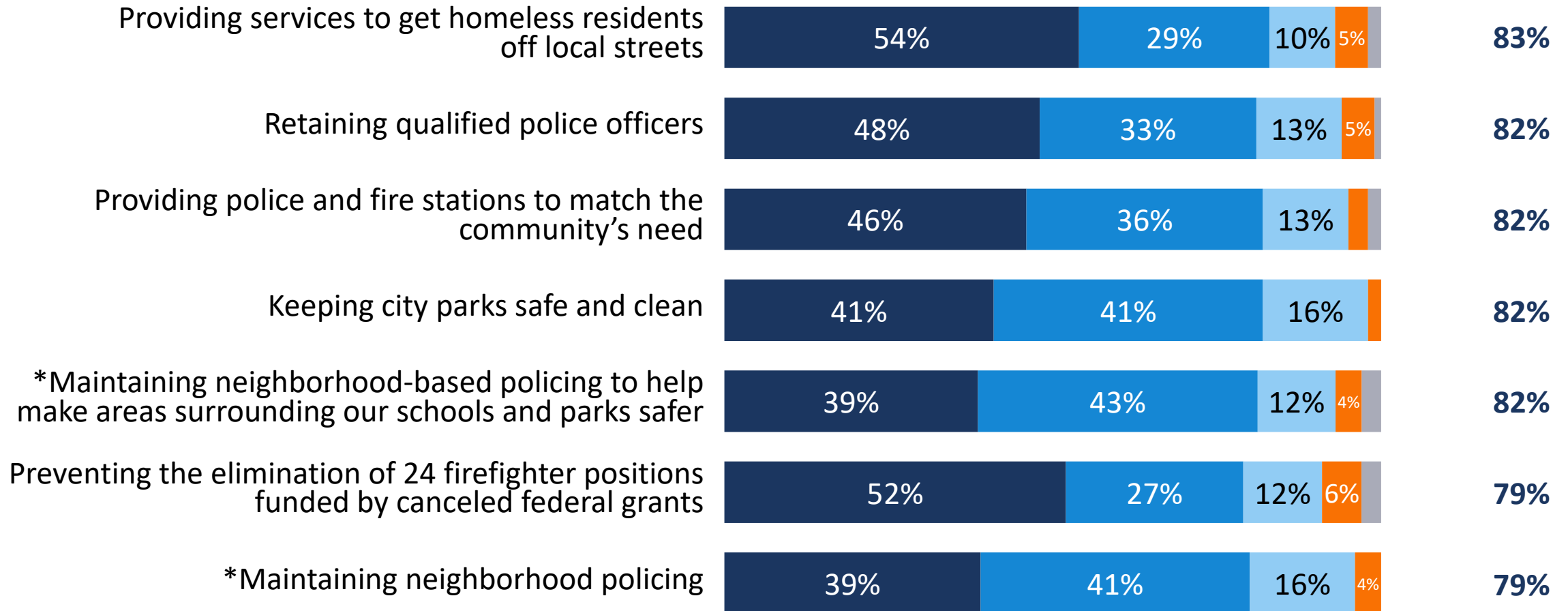
13%

84%

# Others with 50%+ “extremely important” helping homeless residents get off the streets and protecting firefighter positions.

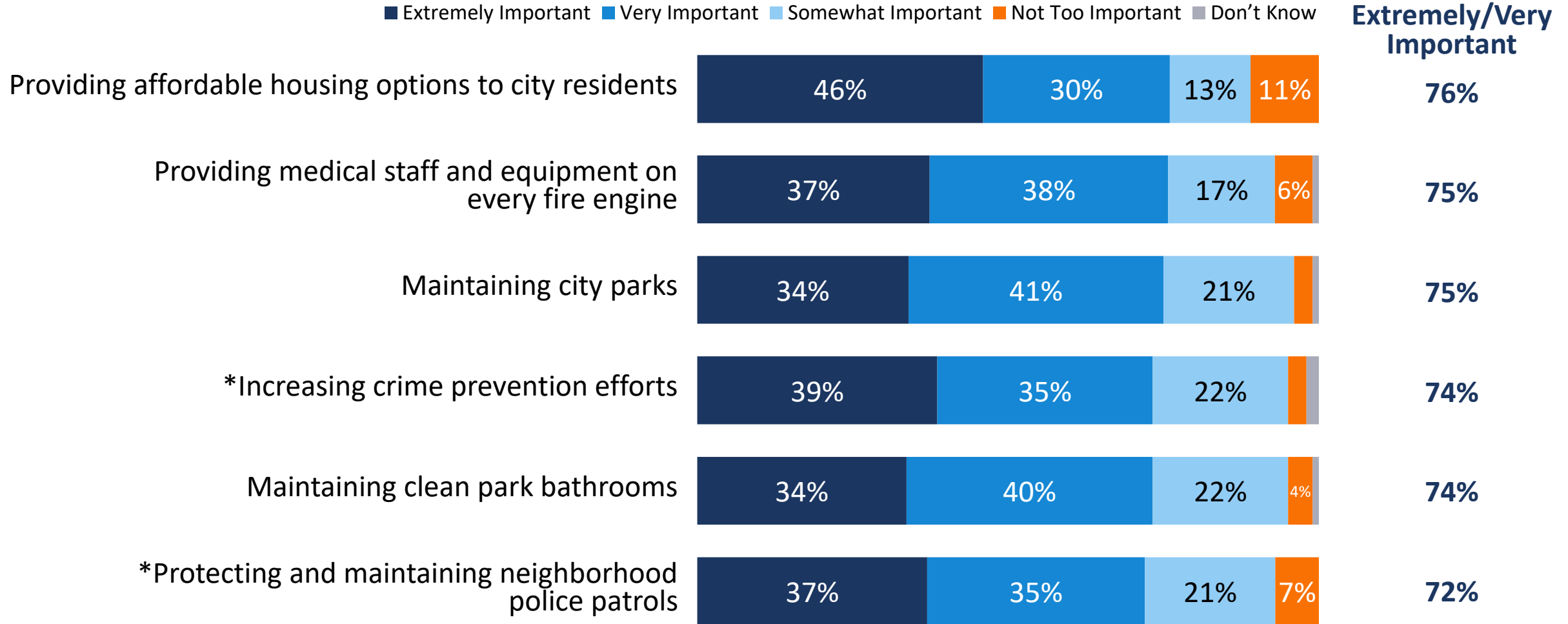
■ Extremely Important ■ Very Important ■ Somewhat Important ■ Not Too Important ■ Don't Know

**Extremely/Very Important**

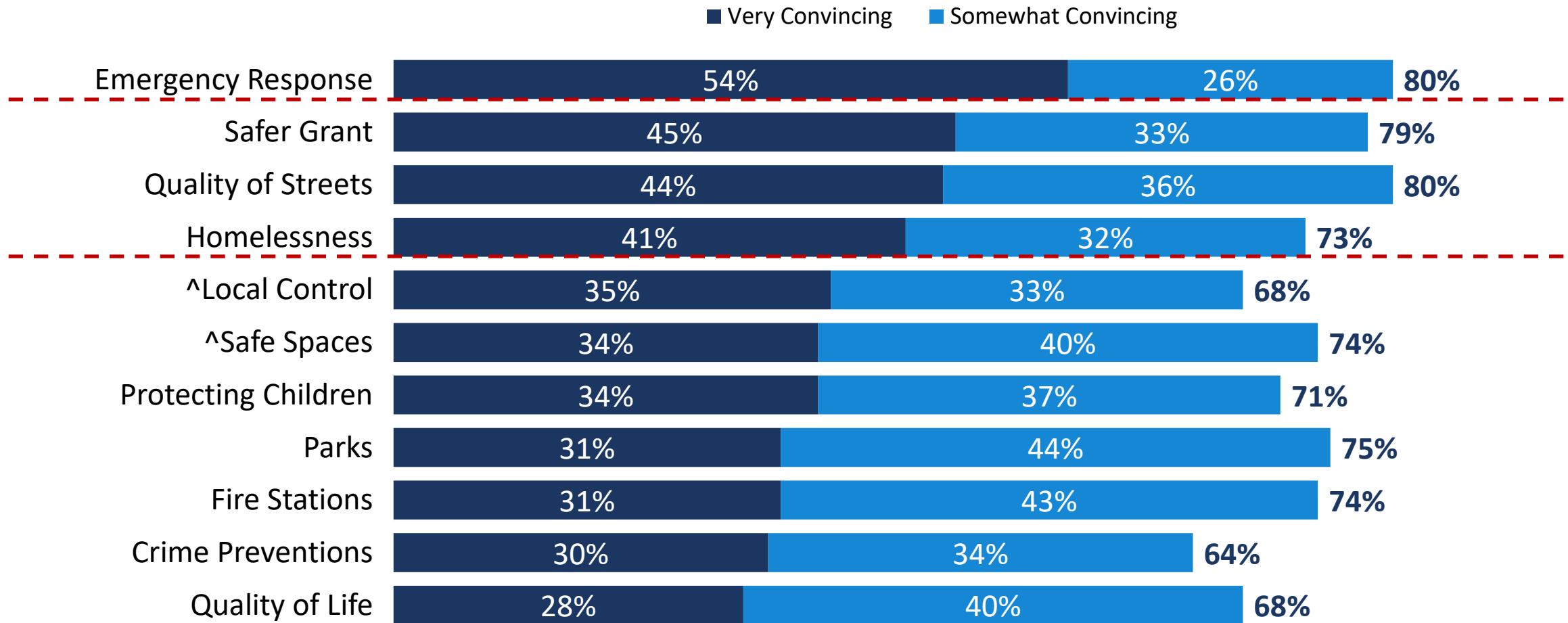


# Many also want parks to be maintained well, but with less intensity.

■ Extremely Important ■ Very Important ■ Somewhat Important ■ Not Too Important ■ Don't Know



# Emergency response was a particularly compelling rationale for supporting a potential general-purpose measure





# **Reactions to Special Purpose (2/3's requirement) Funding Measures**



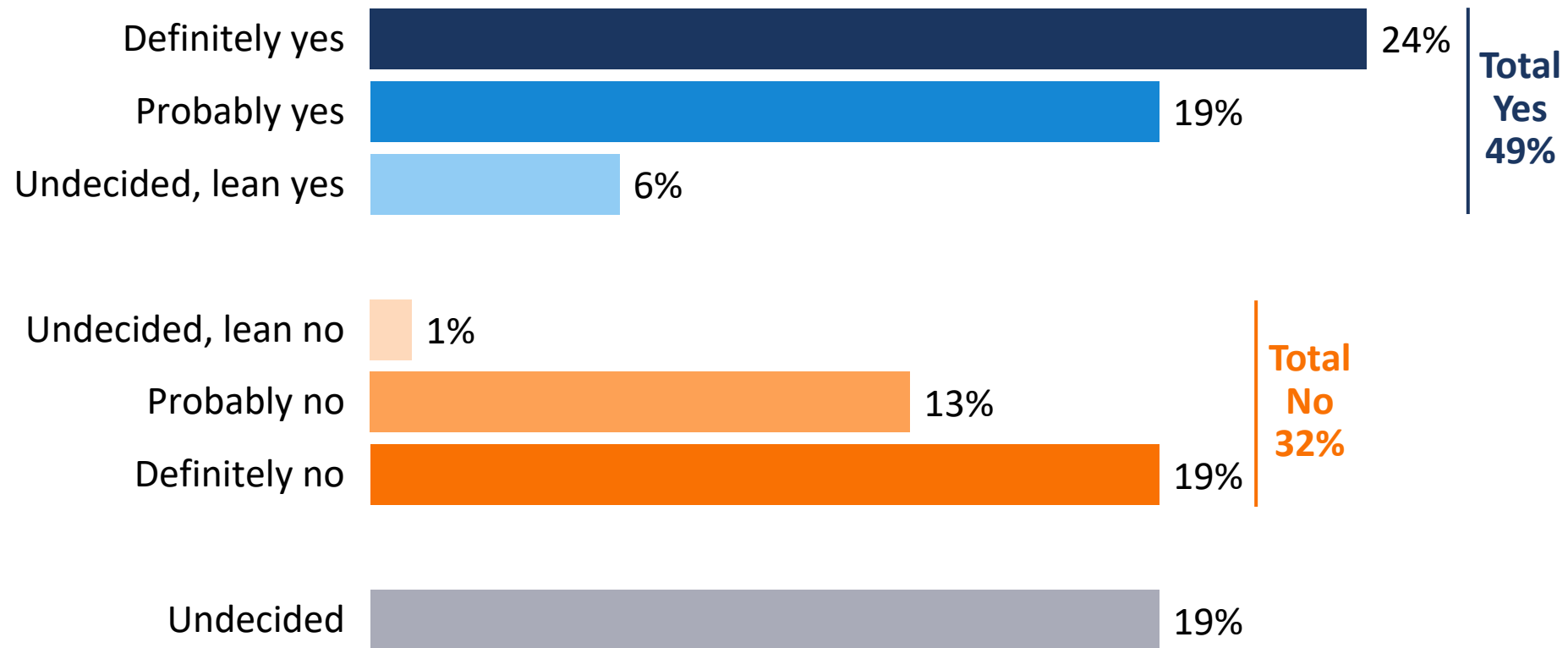
# Conceptual Public Safety Special-Purpose Tax Measure Ballot Language

*67% Vote threshold*

**City of Merced Public Safety Protection Measure.** Shall a measure to address federal budget cuts/state takeaways, maintain local public safety, such as maintaining 911 emergency police, fire, and medical response times; paramedics/medical staff/equipment on fire engines; neighborhood policing and gang prevention; and natural disaster response; by establishing 1¢ sales tax, providing approximately \$18,000,000 annually until ended by voters, with public disclosure, independent audits, with citizen oversight, all funds for Merced, be adopted?

# A 2/3's requirement public safety measure is not viable.

Margin of Error =  $\pm 6.9\%$



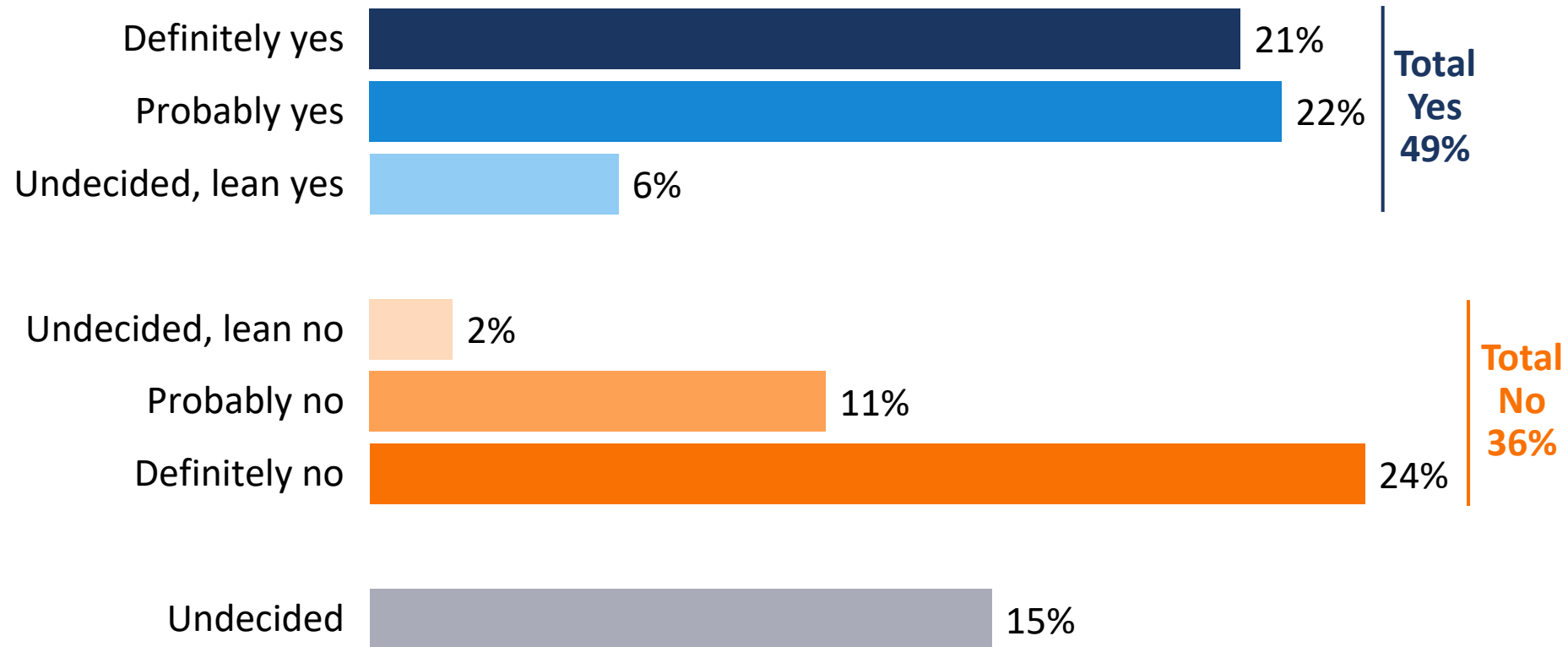
# Conceptual Parks Special Purpose Sales Tax Measure Ballot Language

*67% Vote threshold*

**City of Merced Safe/Clean Parks Measure.** Shall a measure to maintain/keep parks safe/clean; repair outdated/increasingly unusable playground equipment; upgrade deteriorating/dirty restrooms/recreation facilities; provide safe sports fields, trails, youth recreation programs; remove overgrown vegetation/weeds creating wildfire risks; provide bike paths; upgrade community centers, by establishing a ¼¢ sales tax providing \$4,500,000 annually until ended by voters, with public disclosure, independent financial audits, with citizen oversight, all funds local, be adopted?

# A 2/3's requirement measure dedicated to parks is not viable.

Margin of Error =  $\pm 6.9\%$





# Conclusions

## Potential Measure Viability

- A one-cent, general-purpose sales tax measure currently enjoys solid majority support (63%) from a November 2026 electorate.
- Many individual investment areas resonated strongly, including addressing homelessness, responding to emergencies, preventing gang activity, fixing potholes, and maintaining the City's quality of life.
- Taken together, a measure does appear potentially viable in this point in time.
- Special-purpose measures funding only public safety or only parks are well below their two-thirds requirement thresholds.



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