



*Invest in California's Future*



# Highlights of Merced Survey

*Highlights of a Citywide Survey  
Conducted June 3-12, 2022*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY

# Survey Specifics and Methodology

<b>Dates</b>	June 3-12, 2022
<b>Survey Type</b>	Dual-mode Voter Survey
<b>Research Population</b>	Likely November 2022 Voters in the City of Merced
<b>Total Interviews</b>	444
<b>Margin of Sampling Error</b>	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 6.6\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
<b>Data Collection Modes</b>	<div>  Telephone Interviews </div> <div>  Online Interviews </div>
<b>Languages</b>	English and Spanish

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

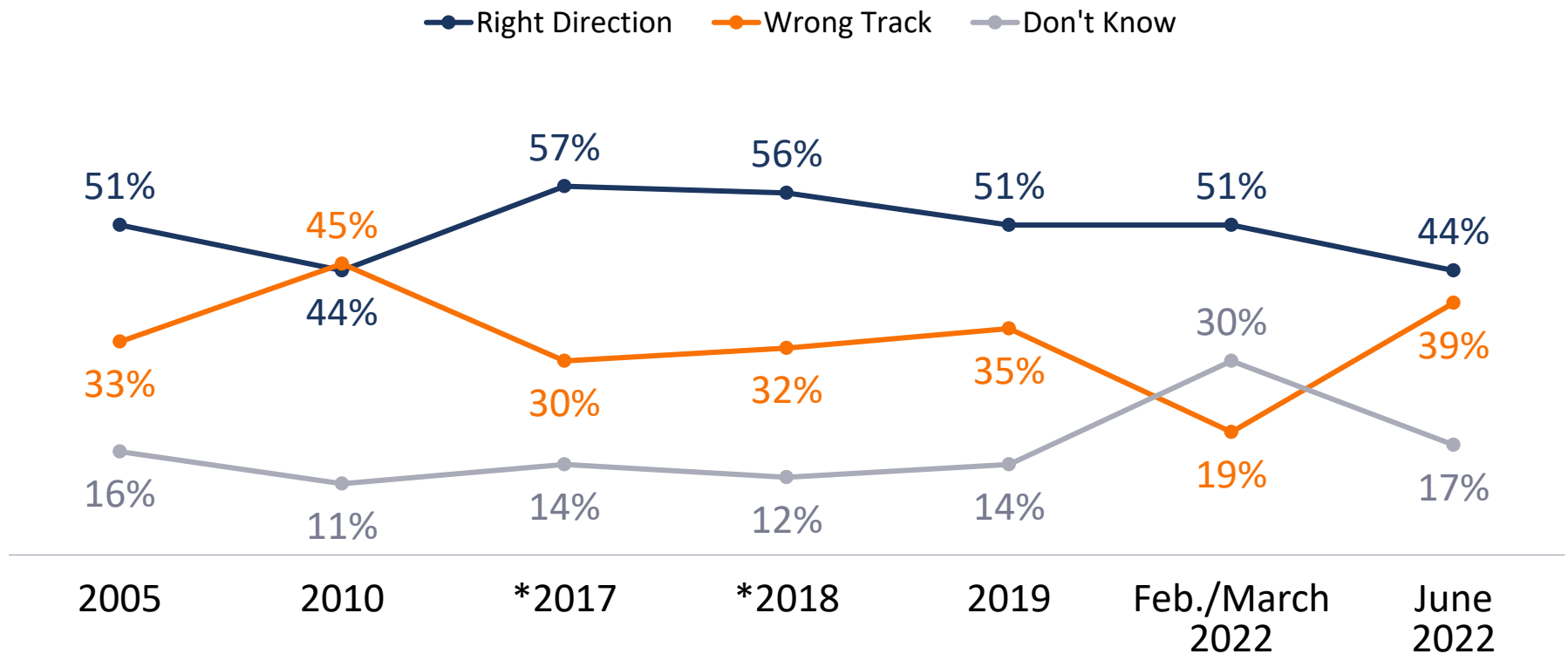


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# Views of Life in Merced

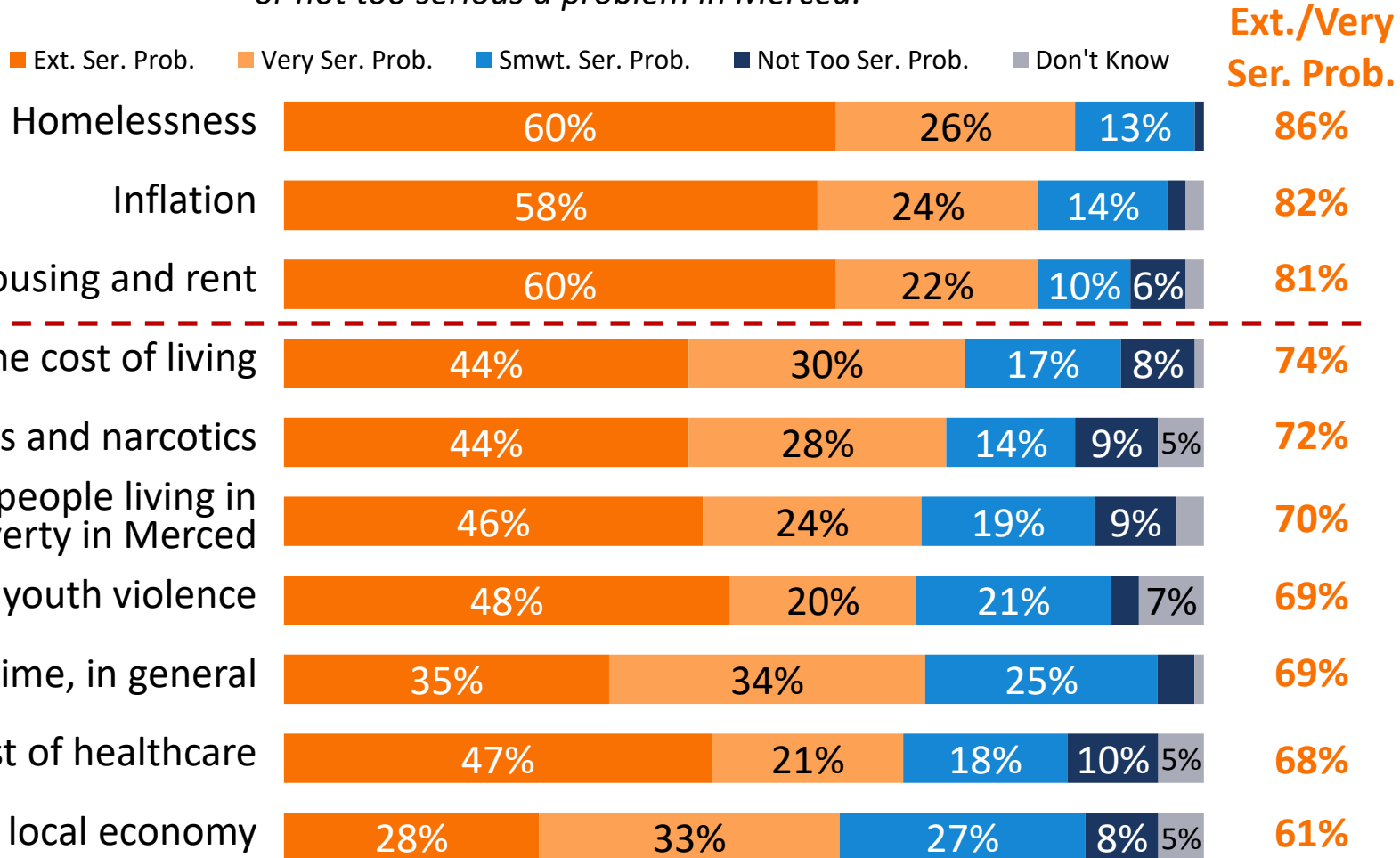
# Respondents appear concerned about the direction of Merced.

*Would you say that things in the City of Merced are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are seriously off on the wrong track?*



# Homelessness, inflation and the cost of housing were seen as very acute problems.

*I am going to read you a list of issues some people say may be problems in Merced. Please tell me 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.*



# Taxes, traffic, and growth ranked lowest on the list of concerns.

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

Ext./Very  
Ser. Prob.

Drug trafficking and drug use

33%

26%

22%

5%

14%

59%

A lack of recreation programs  
for youth

30%

23%

24%

14%

9%

54%

The condition of local parks

21%

21%

23%

29%

6%

41%

How quickly police and fire respond  
to 911 calls

28%

11%

19%

27%

15%

40%

Inefficiency and waste in Merced City  
government

20%

18%

32%

10%

20%

38%

The amount of local taxes people pay

20%

17%

27%

28%

8%

37%

Traffic congestion on local streets  
and streets

18%

18%

32%

32%

36%

Too much growth and development

16%

7%

18%

54%

6%

23%

# Concern about 911 response times has nearly doubled since March.

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

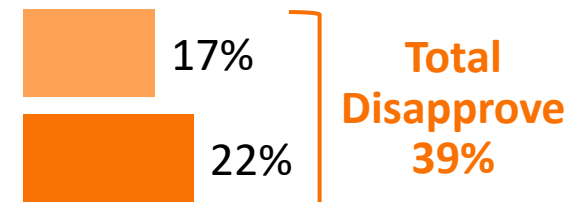
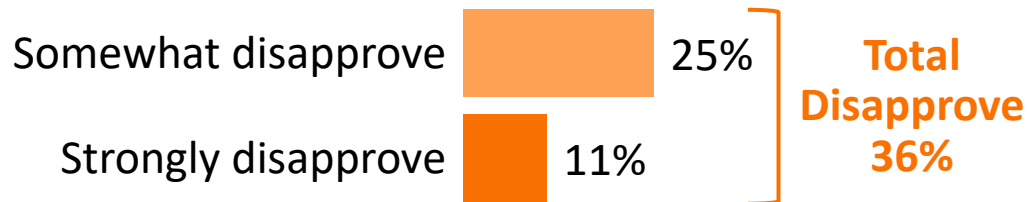
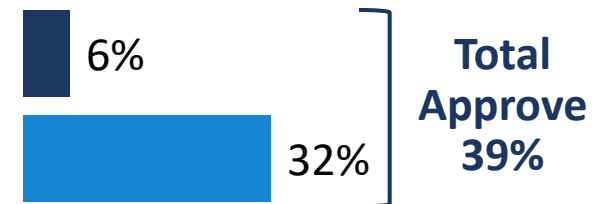
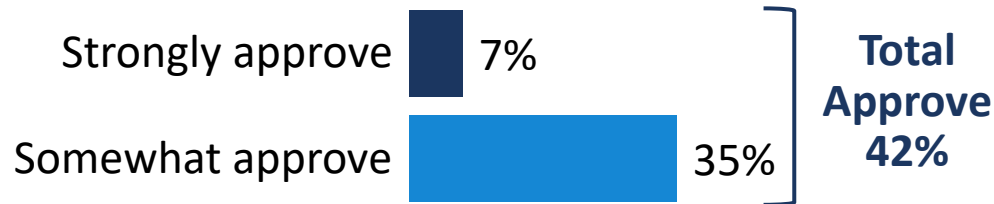
Issue	2005	2010	2017	2019	Feb./ March 2022	June 2022	Difference (Feb./March 2022- June 2022)
How quickly police and fire respond to 911 calls	--	--	26%	34%	22%	40%	<b>+18%</b>
The cost of health care	72%	51%	59%	67%	58%	68%	<b>+10%</b>
*The cost of living	--	--	--	50%	65%	74%	<b>+9%</b>
Jobs and the local economy	66%	92%	66%	68%	54%	61%	<b>+7%</b>
The condition of local parks	16%	12%	23%	43%	35%	41%	<b>+6%</b>
Drugs and narcotics	--	--	65%	78%	67%	72%	<b>+5%</b>
A lack of recreation programs for youth	43%	33%	52%	53%	53%	54%	<b>+1%</b>
Traffic congestion on local streets and roads	--	44%	30%	37%	35%	36%	<b>+1%</b>
Gangs and youth violence	86%	78%	56%	80%	69%	69%	<b>0%</b>
Inefficiency and waste in Merced City government	34%	36%	29%	39%	38%	38%	<b>0%</b>
The amount of local taxes people pay	34%	34%	33%	36%	37%	37%	<b>0%</b>
Too much growth and development	48%	27%	19%	15%	23%	23%	<b>0%</b>
Crime, in general	69%	66%	65%	61%	70%	69%	<b>-1%</b>
Homelessness	--	--	78%	90%	89%	86%	<b>-3%</b>
The number of people living in poverty in Merced	--	--	72%	77%	74%	70%	<b>-4%</b>
Drug trafficking and drug use	75%	75%	64%	69%	69%	59%	<b>-10%</b>

# Respondents were split on the City's financial management, much like earlier in 2022.

*Do you generally approve or disapprove of the City of Merced's financial management?*

February/March 2022

June 2022



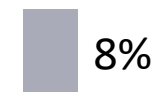
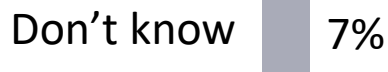
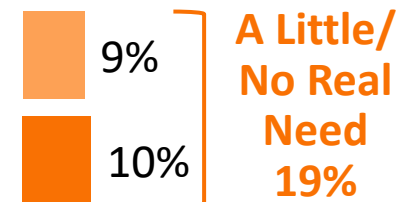
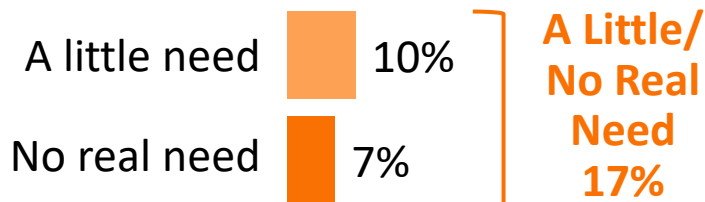
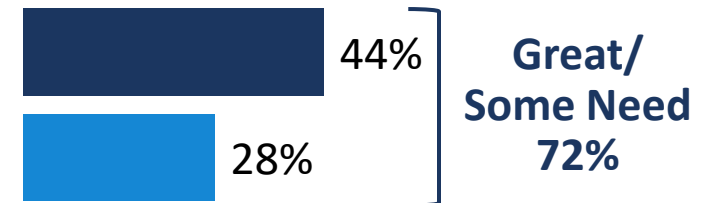
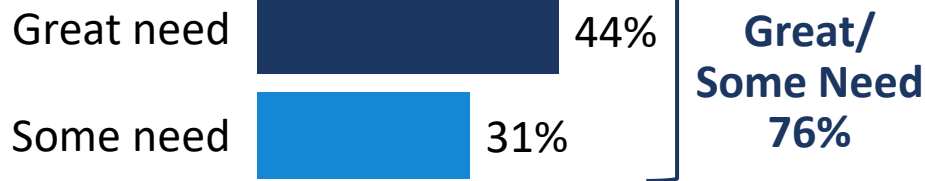


# However, there was still a broad perceived need for funding for city services.

*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?*

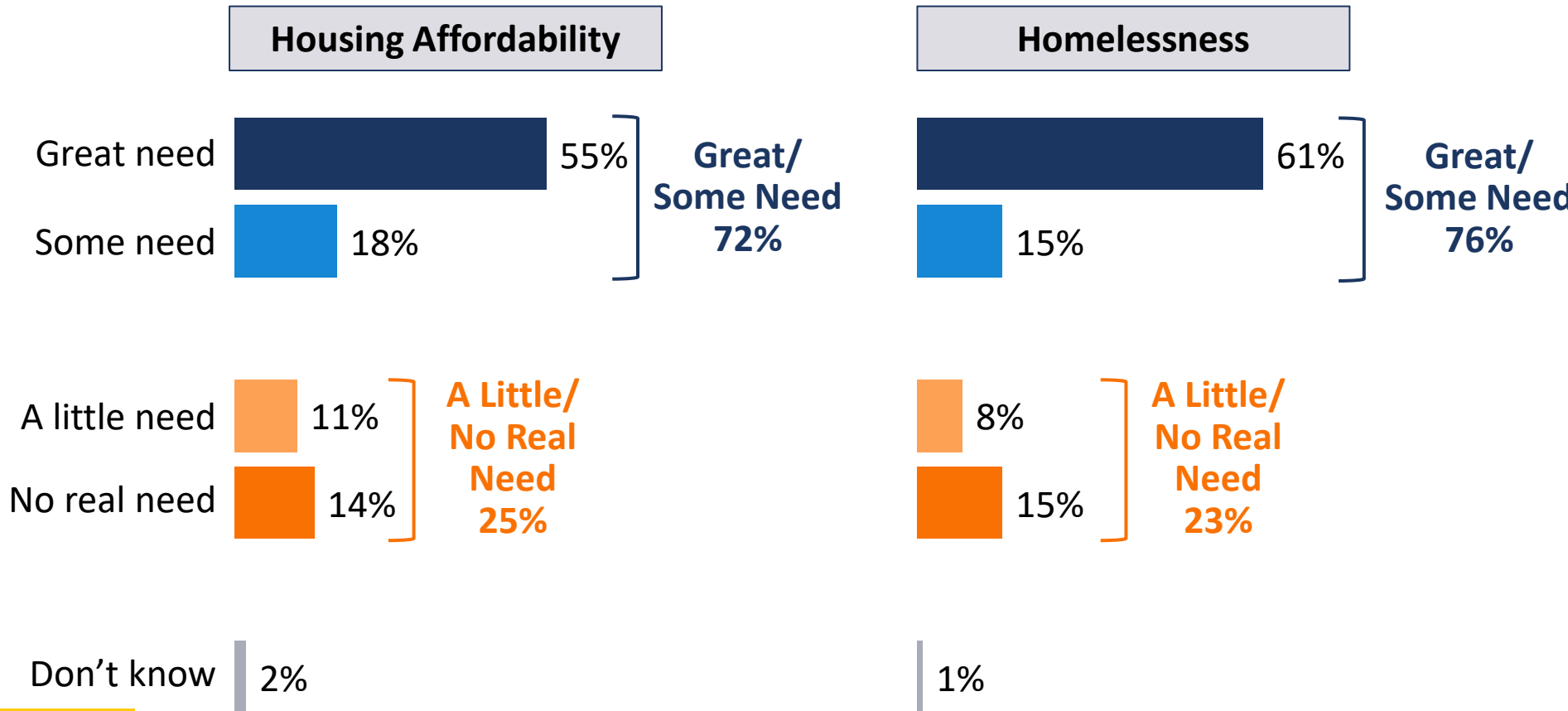
February/March 2022

June 2022



# Three-quarters also see a need for funds to address housing affordability and homelessness, with more slightly more intensity around address homelessness.

*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 address (SPLIT SAMPLE A: housing affordability) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: homelessness) in the City of Merced?*





# **Proposed Measures for Measure C Renewal and Housing**

# Comprehensive Renewal Measure Including Housing

*Question reviewed by City Attorney: Half Sample; 50% Threshold*

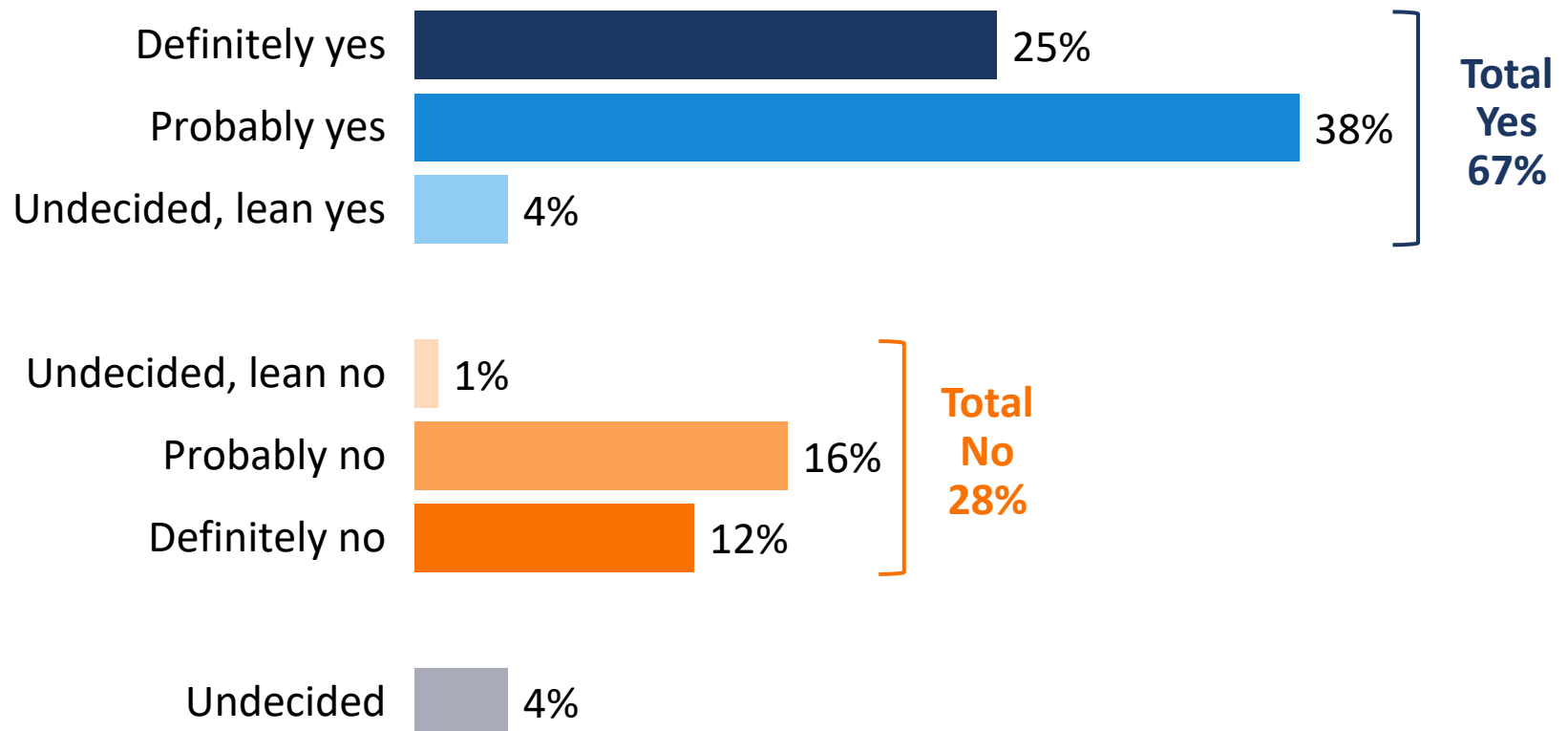
## **City of Merced Vital Services Renewal/Housing Measure.**

Shall a measure to maintain local services, such as 911 fire/police/medical/natural disaster response; community policing/gang prevention programs; youth services/job training; pothole repair; other general city services, and provide funding for affordable housing/addressing homelessness by renewing an existing voter-approved sales tax at the 1¢ rate, until ended by voters, providing approximately \$13,000,000 annually, with citizen oversight, financial audits, all funds local, be adopted?

# Two-thirds were supportive of a Measure C renewal that included funding for housing.

## Half Sample: Measure C Renewal With Housing

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



# Measure C Renewal and Housing Affordability Measures

*Questions reviewed by City Attorney: Half Sample*

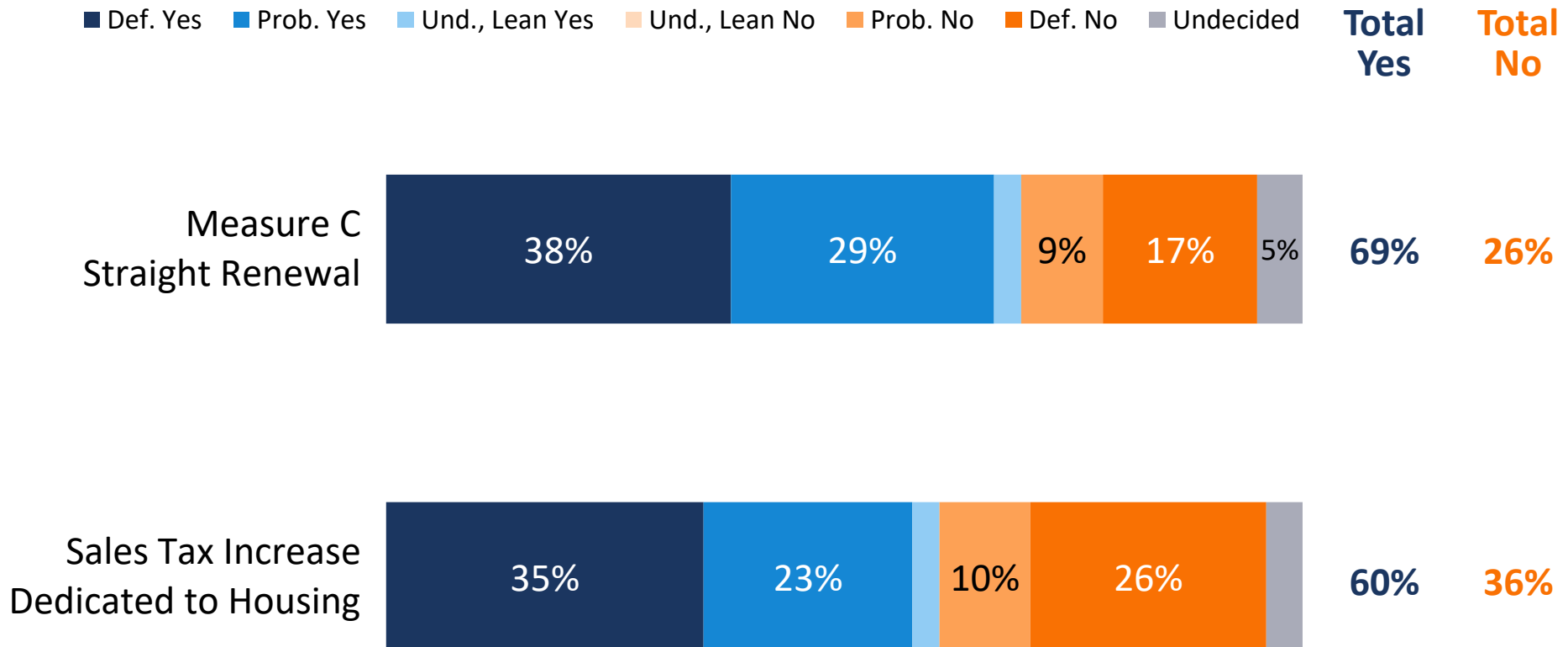
*50% Threshold*

**City of Merced Vital Services Renewal Measure.** Shall a measure to maintain local services—without raising current tax rates—such as 911 fire/police/medical/natural disaster response; community policing/gang prevention programs; youth services/job training; pothole repair; housing/homeless services; and other general city services, by renewing an existing voter-approved ½¢ sales tax, until ended by voters, providing approximately \$6,500,000 annually, with transparency, independent audits, all funds local, be adopted?

*67% Threshold*

**City of Merced Housing Affordability Fund Measure.** Shall a measure to provide city funding for affordable housing options for city residents/working families; such as creating affordable housing with State matching funds; providing rental and first-time homebuyer assistance; addressing homeless encampments; and providing services to get residents off local streets, by enacting a voter-approved ½¢ sales tax, until ended by voters, providing approximately \$6,500,000 annually, with citizen oversight, independent audits, all funds local, be adopted?

# When split into two half-cent measures, support for the renewal was consistent, but the dedicated housing measure did not reach two-thirds.





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# Funding Priorities



# Respondents prioritized fire response, 911 emergency response, preventing gang activity and homeless services.

*I am going to read you a list of ways in which the funds generated by this measure could be spent and provisions that could be included. Please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?*

**Ext./Very Impt.**

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

Responding quickly to neighborhood fires

53%

34%

10%

87%

Protecting and maintaining 911 police response times

52%

30%

14%

83%

^Preventing gang activity in the city

54%

27%

13%

5%

82%

Providing services to get homeless residents off local streets

46%

34%

12%

6%

80%

Creating jobs and job training programs for young people

53%

25%

14%

7%

78%

Providing affordable housing options to working families

51%

26%

14%

9%

78%

# Three-quarters said that addressing homeless encampments ad supporting after-school activities are very important priorities.

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

Ext./Very  
Impt.

Addressing homeless encampments



77%

Supporting after school activities and youth programs that prevent crime and drug use



77%

Expanding violence prevention programs that keep youth out of trouble



76%

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



75%

^Providing services for people experiencing homelessness



73%

Increasing crime prevention efforts

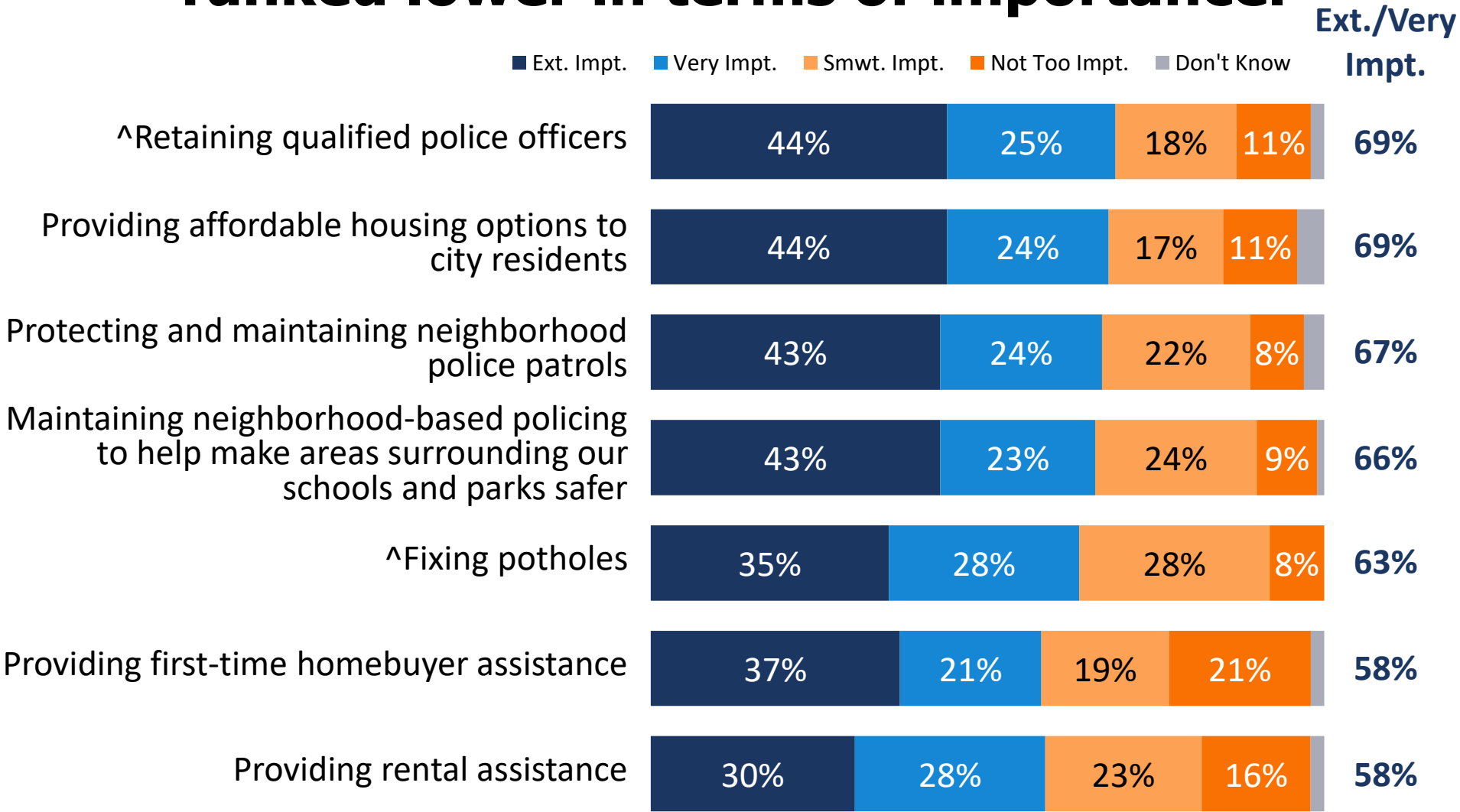


71%

I am going to read you a list of ways in which the funds generated by this measure could be spent and provisions that could be included. Please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

^Not Part of Split Sample

# Home-buyer assistance and rental assistance ranked lower in terms of importance.



I am going to read you a list of ways in which the funds generated by this measure could be spent and provisions that could be included. Please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

^Not Part of Split Sample



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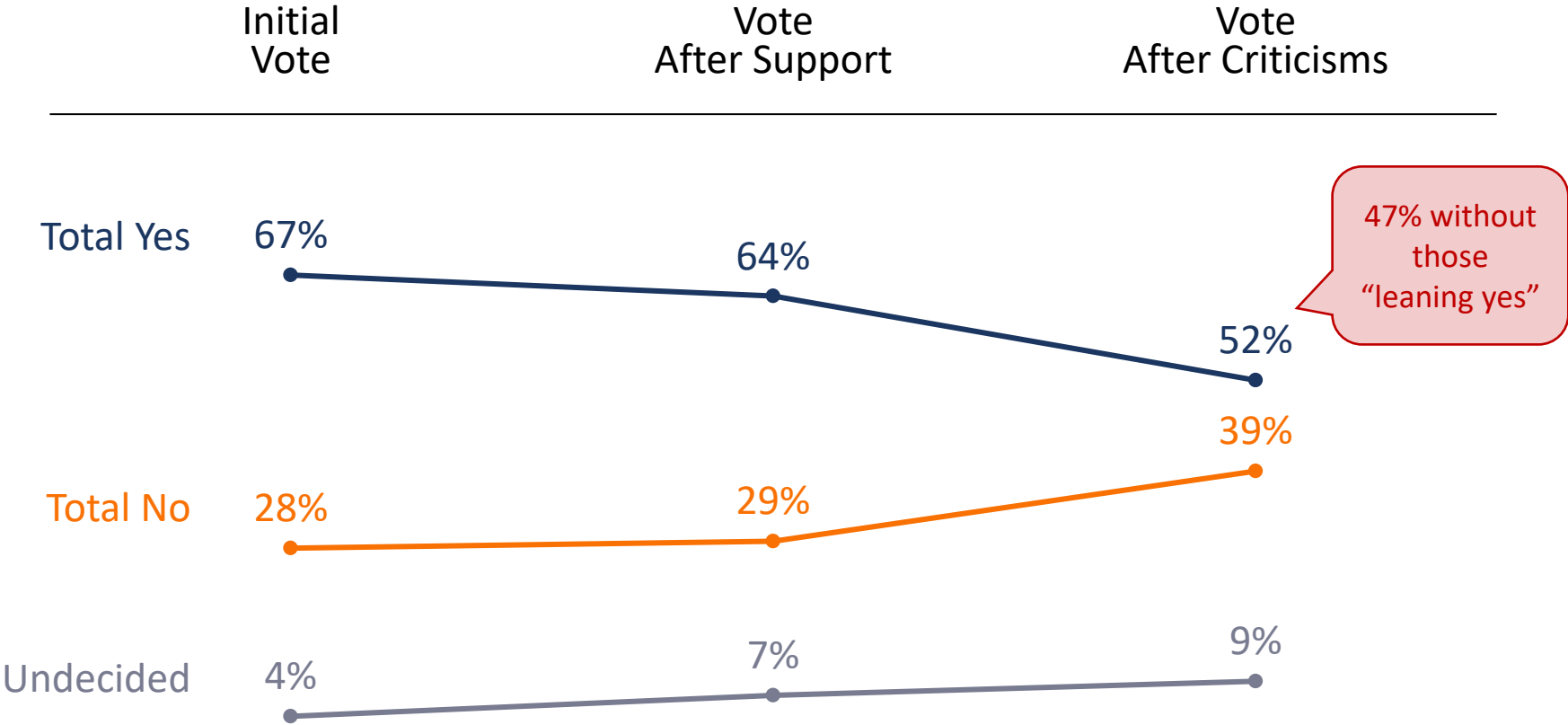
# The Impact of Information

# Supportive and Critical Statements

- Statements supportive of the measures included that the funds generated would fund crime and gang prevention, emergency response; street repair and maintenance, homeless services, making housing more affordable, and maintaining the local quality of life; that the funds would be under local control, subject to oversight, and allow access to matching funds; and that the tax would not apply to necessities. For the straight Measure C renewal, there was also a statement clarifying that it would not increase tax rates.
- Statements critical of the measures highlighted the regressive nature of sales taxes; argued that existing taxes are already too high and that the cost of living keeps increasing; asserted that funds would be wasted on high salaries and pensions and the City already has enough money; noted that the taxes would last forever; and argued that the funds should go to services that benefit all residents and not handouts to homeless people. For the Measure C renewal with expansion, there was also a statement arguing that it was deceptively framed as a renewal when it is actually a sales tax increase.

**Support for the expanded Measure C renewal with housing remained above the 50% threshold throughout the survey with leans, although after critical statements support dropped within the margin of error and below 50% when “leans” are eliminated.**

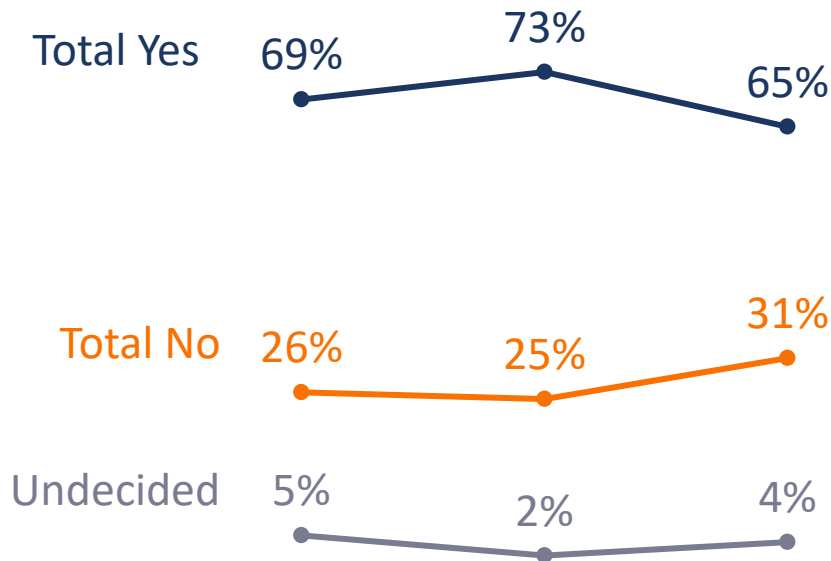
Half Sample: Measure C Renewal With Housing



# Support for a Measure C renewal without housing appeared consistently viable, while a dedicated sales tax fell below two-thirds after criticisms.

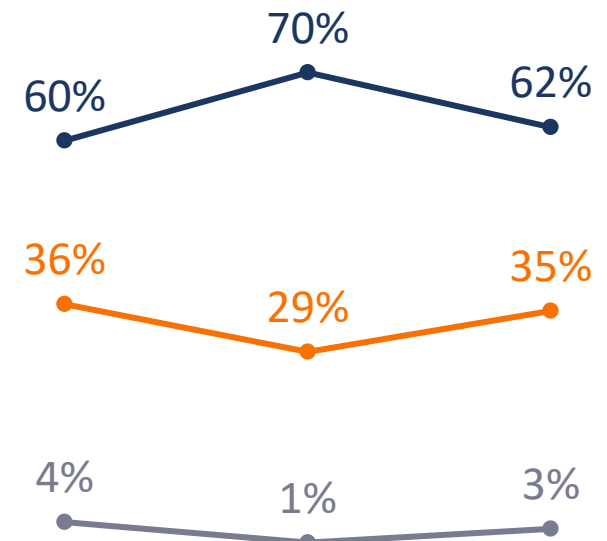
## Measure C Straight Renewal

Initial Vote      Vote After Support      Vote After Criticisms



## Measure Dedicated to Housing

Initial Vote      Vote After Support      Vote After Criticisms



# Support for a straight Measure C renewal until ended by voters was at similar levels earlier in 2022.

Measure C Straight Renewal  
(Feb/March 2022)

Initial Vote      Vote After Support      Vote After Criticisms

Total Yes      69%      73%      65%



A line chart with three data points connected by a dark blue line. The first point is at 69%, the second at 73%, and the third at 65%.

Total No      26%      25%      31%



A line chart with three data points connected by an orange line. The first point is at 26%, the second at 25%, and the third at 31%.

Undecided      5%      2%      4%



A line chart with three data points connected by a grey line. The first point is at 5%, the second at 2%, and the third at 4%.

Measure C Straight Renewal  
(June 2022)

Initial Vote      Vote After Support      Vote After Criticisms

68%      69%      66%



A line chart with three data points connected by a dark blue line. The first point is at 68%, the second at 69%, and the third at 66%.

26%      24%      27%



A line chart with three data points connected by an orange line. The first point is at 26%, the second at 24%, and the third at 27%.

6%      7%      7%



A line chart with three data points connected by a grey line. The first point is at 6%, the second at 7%, and the third at 7%.



**For more information,  
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