



Community Perspectives on Potential Ethics Reform Ballot Measure

The Issue

- The City of Merced Charter has not been updated in over a decade.
- Over the last decade, there have been dramatic changes in how government operates, community expectations and needs, and the overall environment.
- Our City seeks to ensure that we continue to evolve as our community does, including making sure important guiding documents like the Charter stay up to date.

Key Survey Highlights of an Independent Study Conducted June 1-6th by FM3 Research

- City of Merced residents are extremely interested in Ethics Reform. City staff recommend continued planning for a potential March measure with the Advisory Charter Review Committee.
- A Public Safety Bond needs additional preparation and assessment for a potential November 2020 timeline.

Survey Methodology

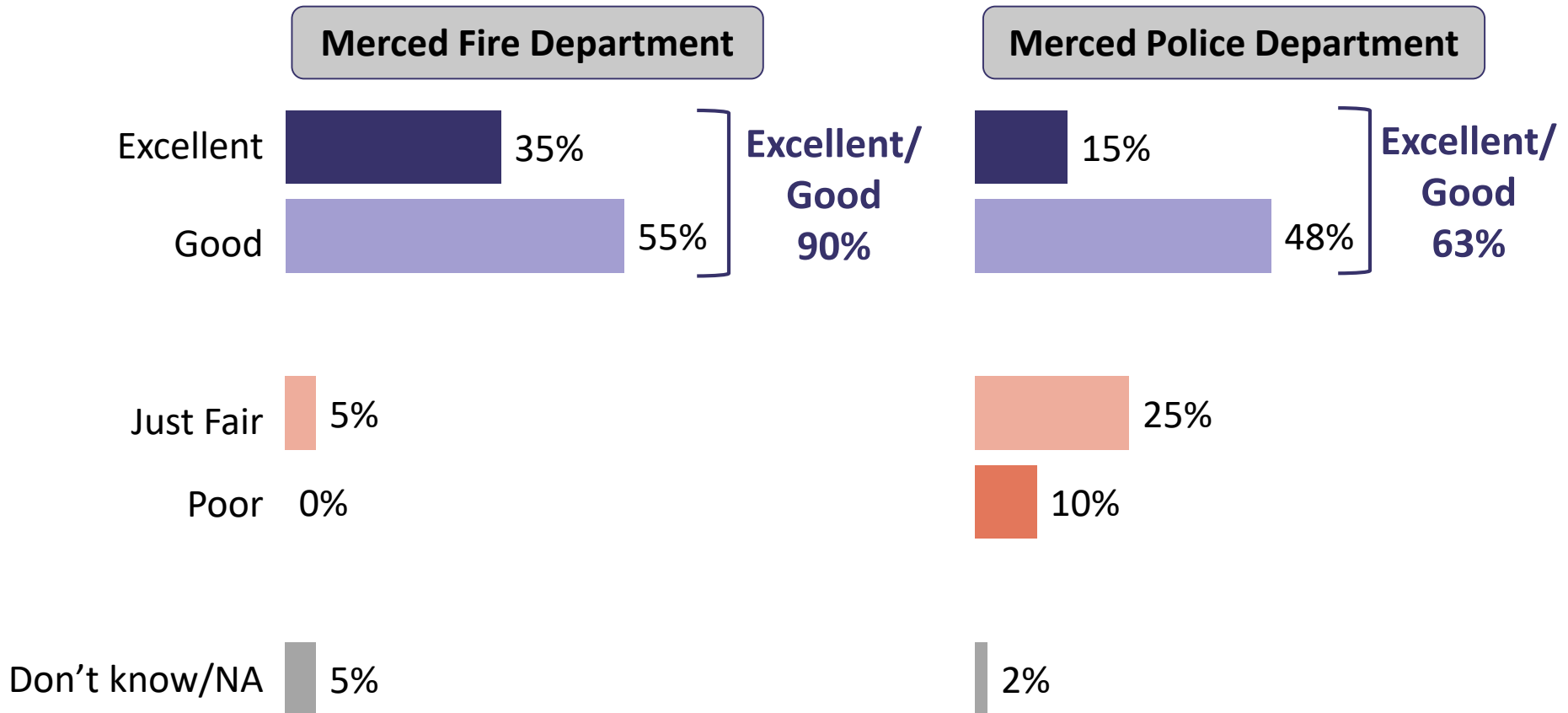
- 440 telephone interviews with voters likely to cast a ballot in March 2020 in the City of Merced
- Interviews conducted June 1-6, 2019
- Interviews in English and Spanish online, on landlines and cell phones
- Margin of sampling error of +/- 4.9% at the 95% confidence interval
- Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding



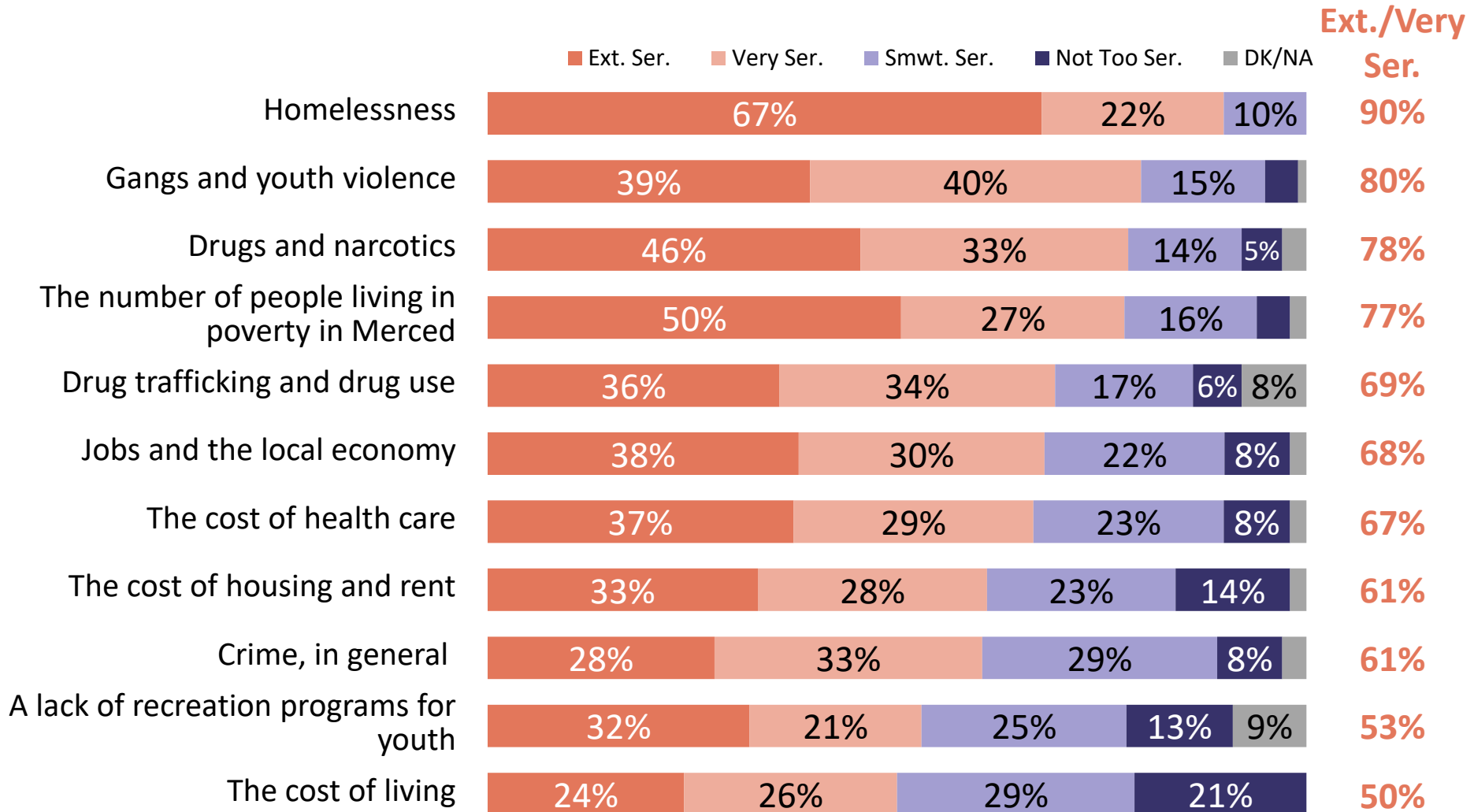


Issue Context and Views of the City

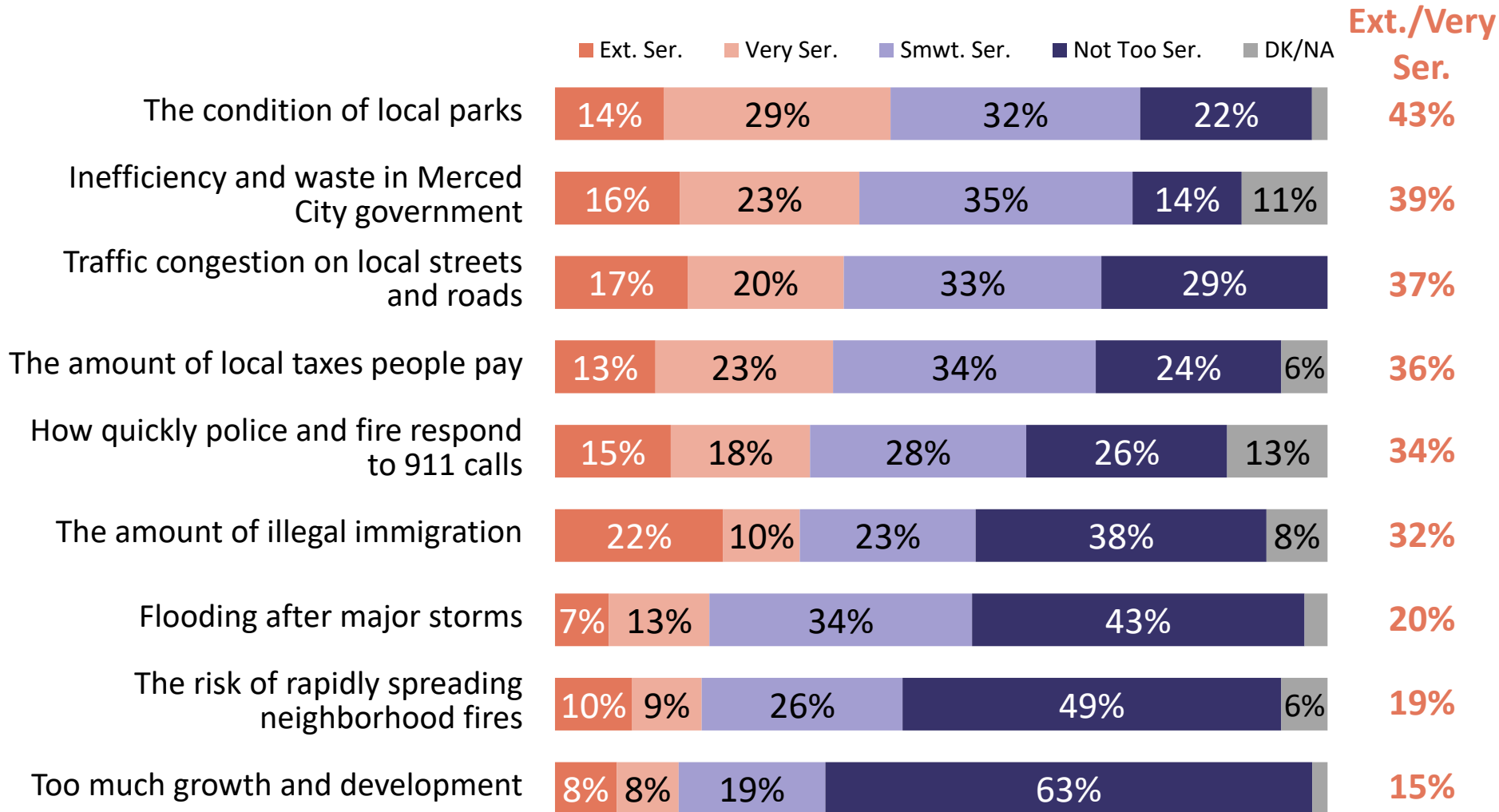
Strong percentages have very positive views of the job being done by Merced Police & Fire.



Homelessness is seen as a top concern, followed by gangs, drugs and poverty.



Storms, fires, and growth and too much development are not seen as major problems.





Attitudes Toward Potential March 2020 Measures

Hypothetical Ballot Language Tested

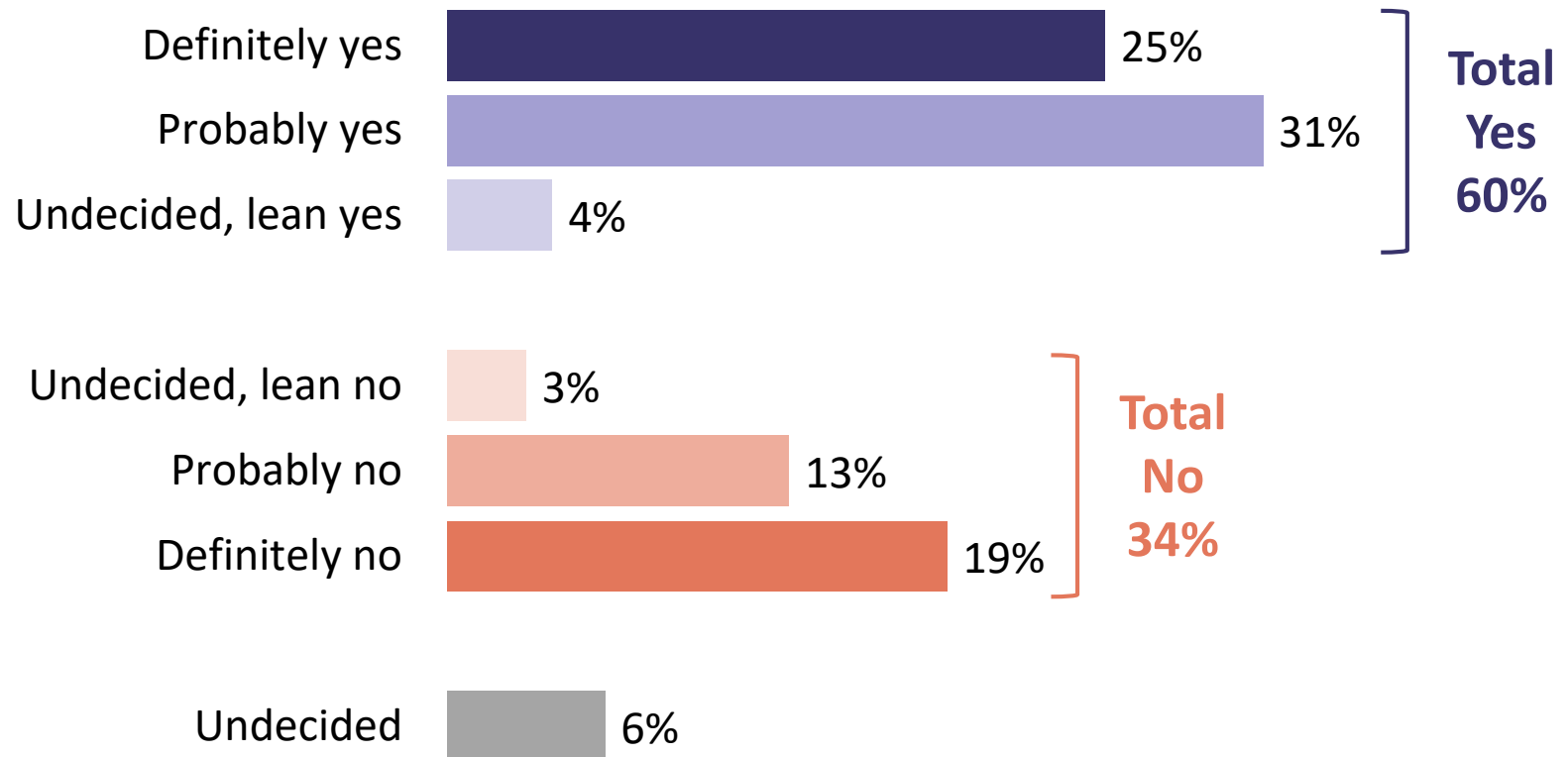
(Two-thirds Vote Threshold)

CITY OF MERCED FIRE/EMERGENCY RESPONSE/POLICE FACILITIES UPGRADE MEASURE.

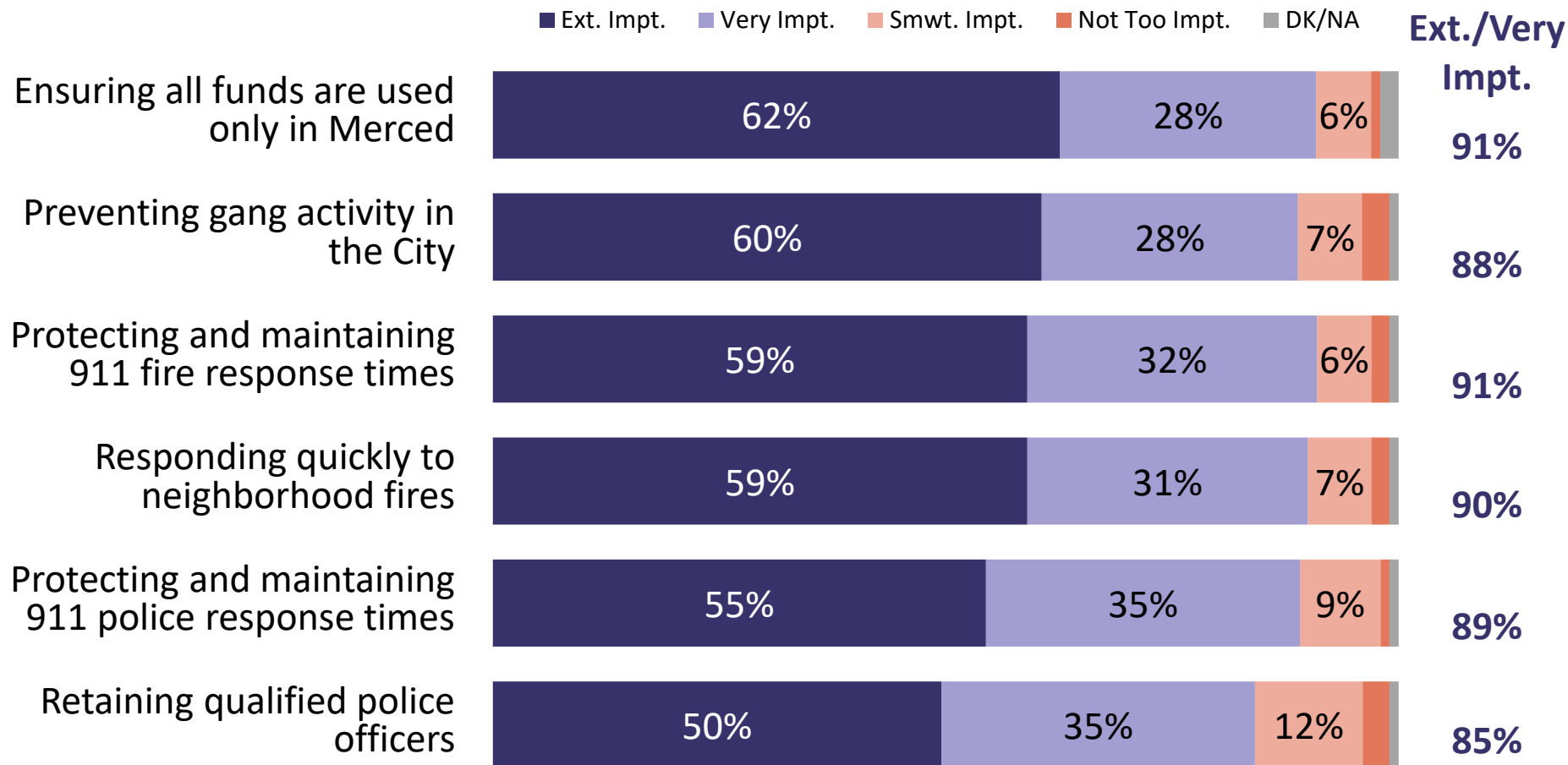
To reduce gang violence; maintain fast firefighter/emergency response times, prevent violent crime, retain experienced police/neighborhood patrols by installing modern 911 dispatch technology, upgrading Firefighter/Police/Emergency Operations Center and emergency response vehicle maintenance facilities,

Shall Merced issue \$43 million in general obligation bonds, at legal rates, collecting approximately \$58 per \$100,000 of assessed value (about \$3 million) annually for 30 years requiring oversight/ audits, all funds used locally?

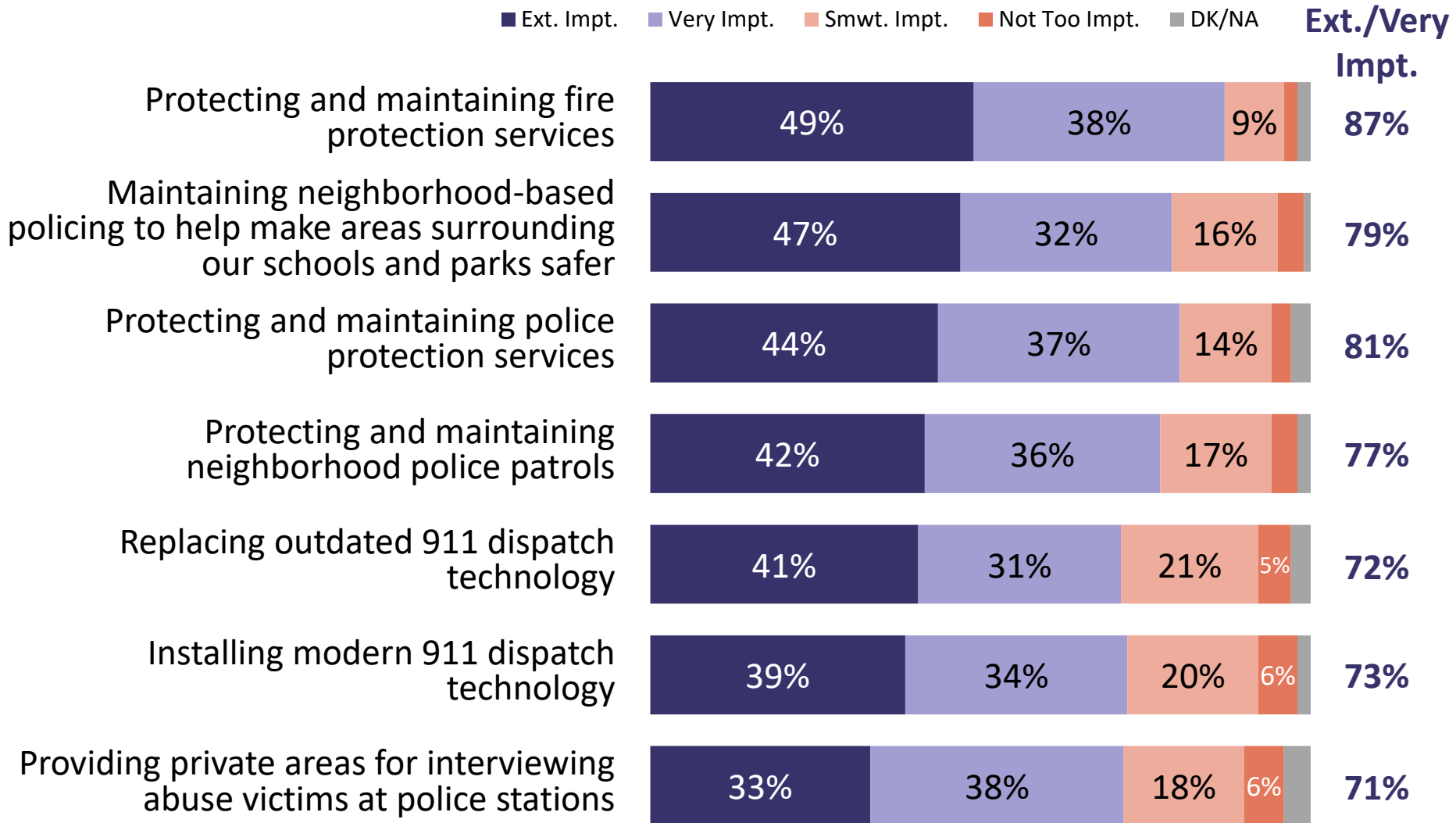
A potential public safety bond does not currently reach the 2/3rds requirement threshold necessary for a March measure



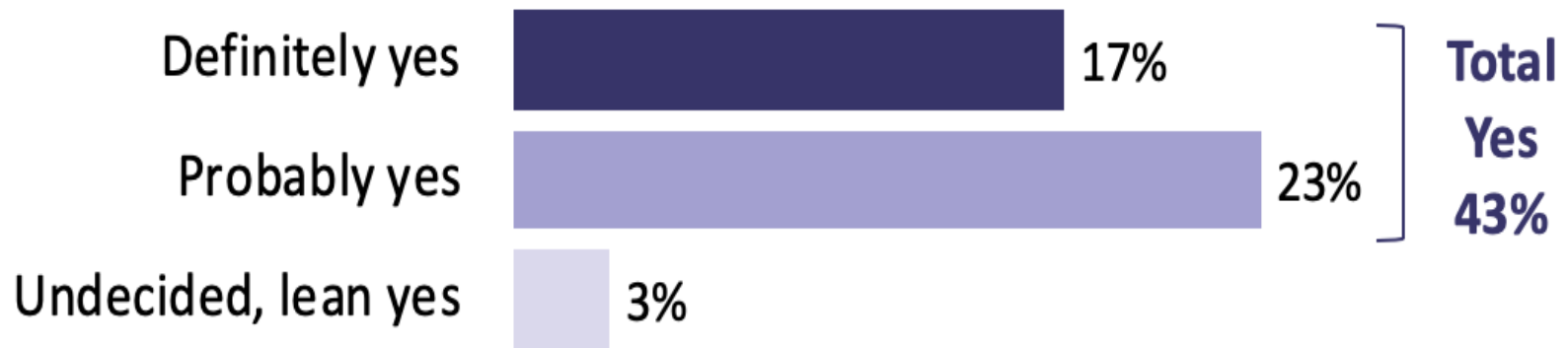
Keeping Taxpayer Dollars Local, and the Public Safety Outcomes of a Bond are Highly Desired by Residents



Direct 911 services impacted by a bond were also seen as important.



After hearing all sides of the issue, it is clear more time and community engagement is necessary





Attitudes Towards a Potential Ethics Reform Measure

Hypothetical Ballot Language Tested

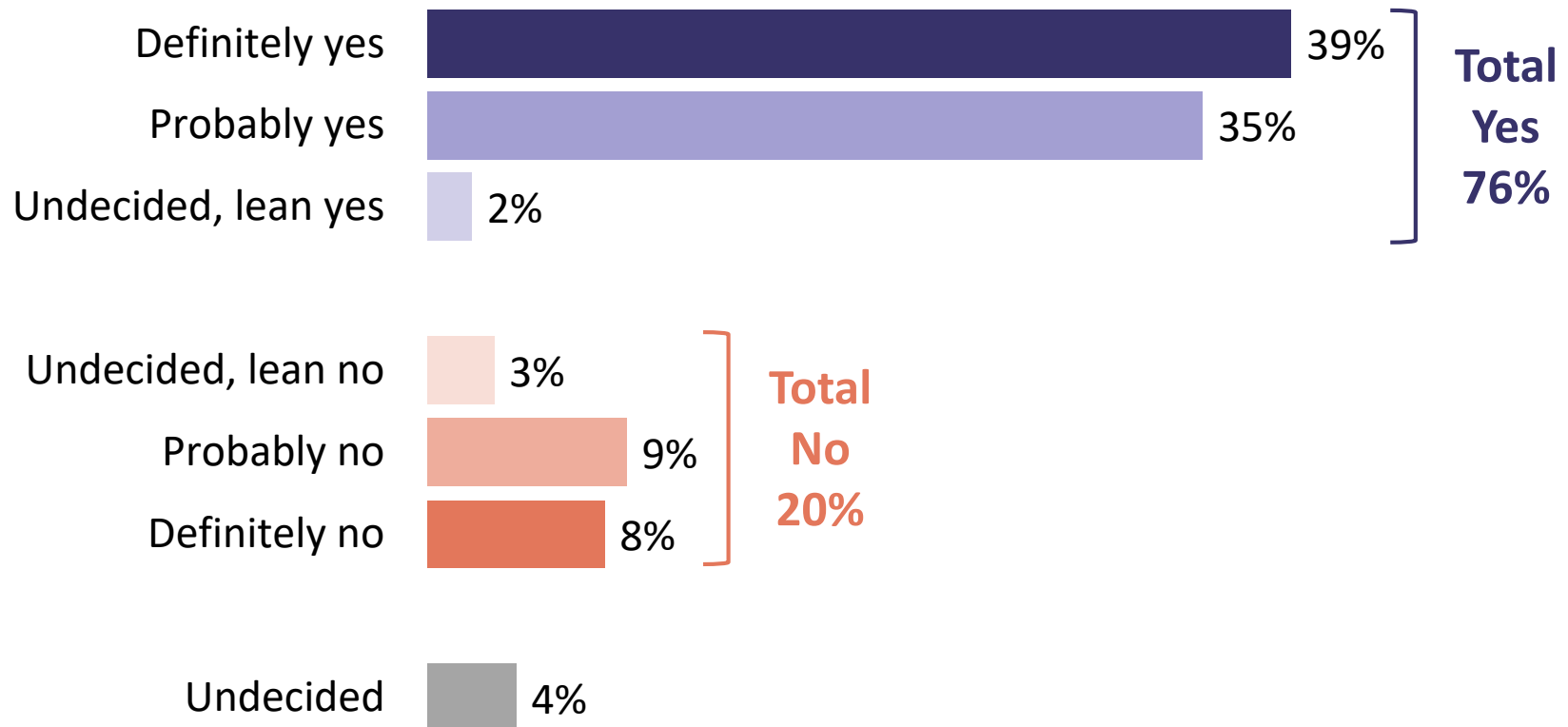
(Majority Vote Threshold)

CITY OF MERCED GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.

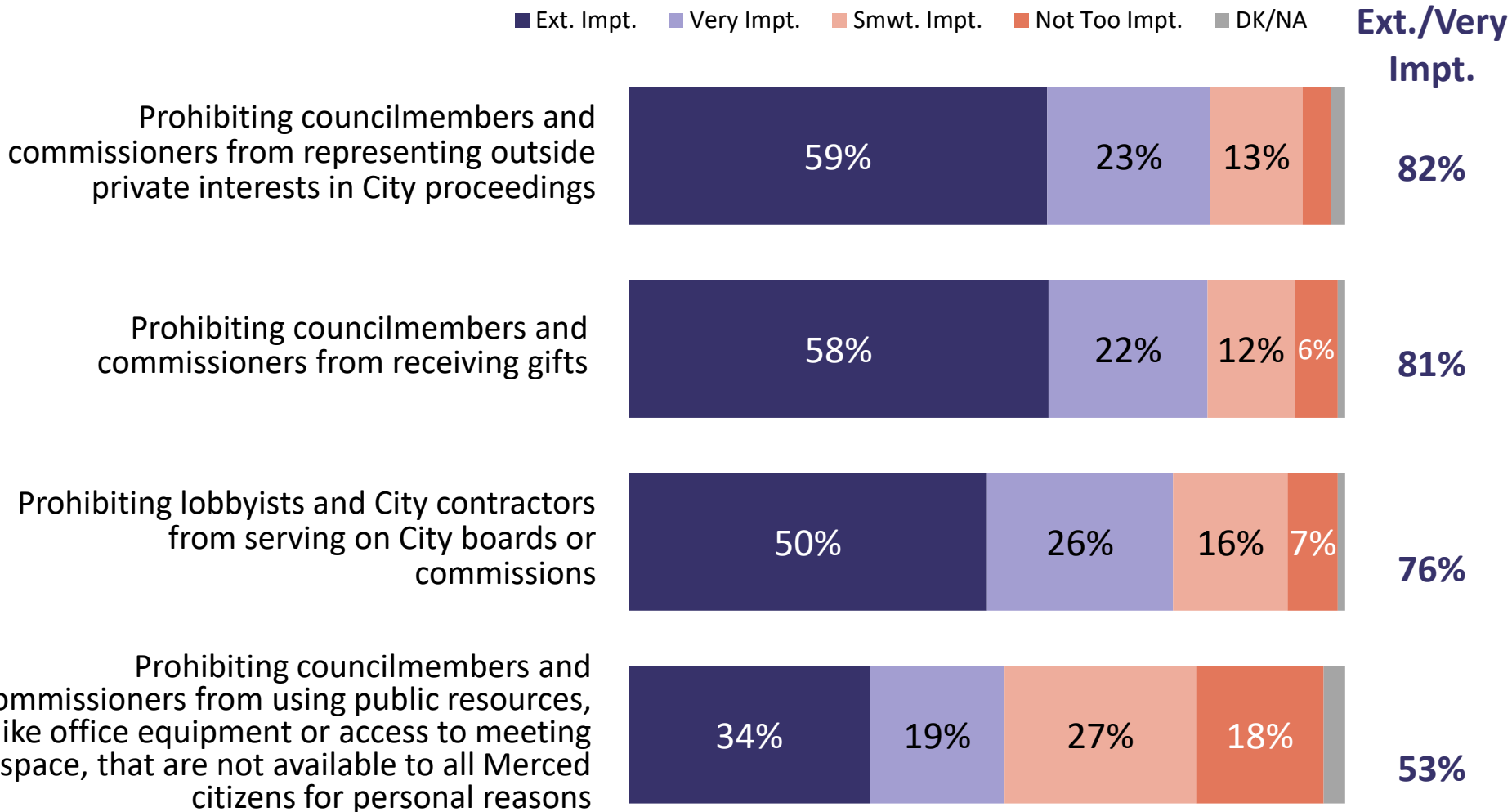
Shall the Merced City Charter be amended to:

- Prohibit councilmembers/Mayor from accepting gifts from lobbyists/ contractors;
- Impose ethics rules for elected official conduct;
- Impose a limit of two consecutive 4-year Mayoral terms;
- Enable use of available cash funds for public services/ financial stability;
- Prohibit lobbyists from serving on City commissions;
- Provide councilmembers/Mayor with a monthly \$600 stipend; and
- Establish a citywide citizens' tax accountability committee/ mandatory annual audits?

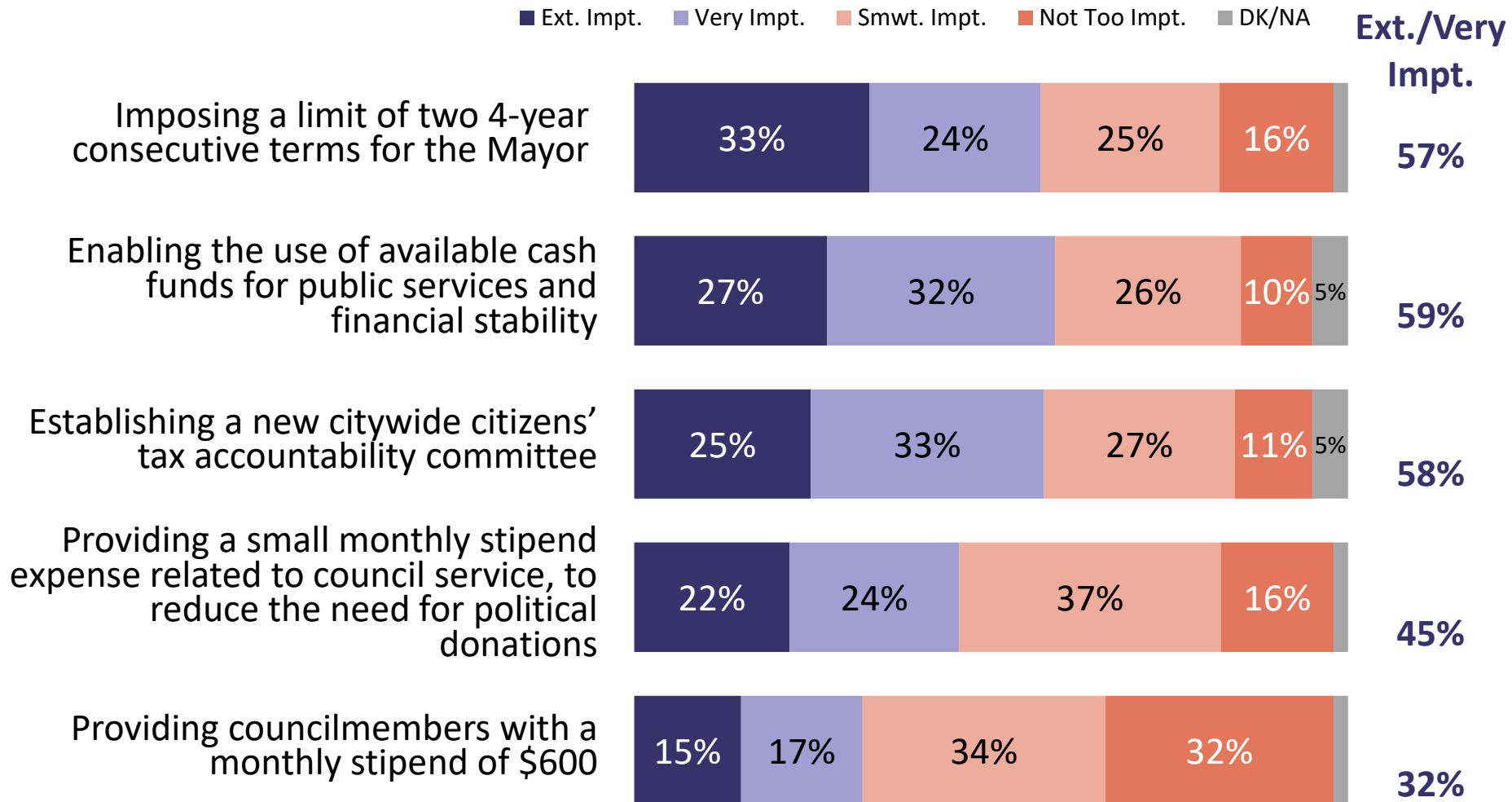
The Concept of an Ethics Reform Measure is Strongly Viable



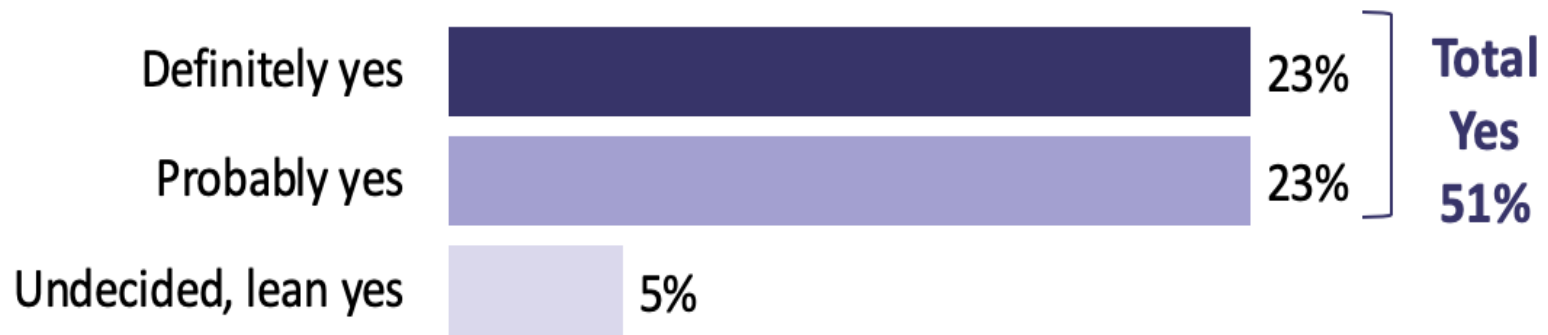
Provisions Limiting the Influence of Special Interests Received the Strongest Support.



Reforming the Mayor's Term and Updating Outdated Financial Provisions Are Also Popular, but Stipends Are Not and Jeopardize Viability



Addressing stipends at this time would be highly polarizing to the community and would drive support from our Ethics Reform Measure





Questions?