



East Palo Alto Voter Attitudes Toward a Potential Infrastructure Bond Measure

Key Findings of a Citywide Survey Conducted April 2-16, 2024
Council Presentation








OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

External 2024 Dynamics

- Statewide Climate and Education Bonds are on the ballot
- The Taxpayer Protection & Government Accountability Act is no longer on the ballot
- Prop 5 (ACA 1/10) continues to be refined, and its viability remains uncertain
- In general, voters nationally, statewide and regionally are in a polarized, pessimistic mood
- Recent national events and perception of the candidates for POTUS mean a real possibility that Democratic turnout can be affected, affecting the potential viability of bond and tax measures
- Against this backdrop, unfortunately neither EPA Bond tested reaches two thirds viability above the Margin of Error on the third ballot test

Survey Methodology

Dates	April 2-16, 2024
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2024 Voters in East Palo Alto
Total Interviews	406
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	December 2015 Voter Survey
Languages	English and Spanish

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

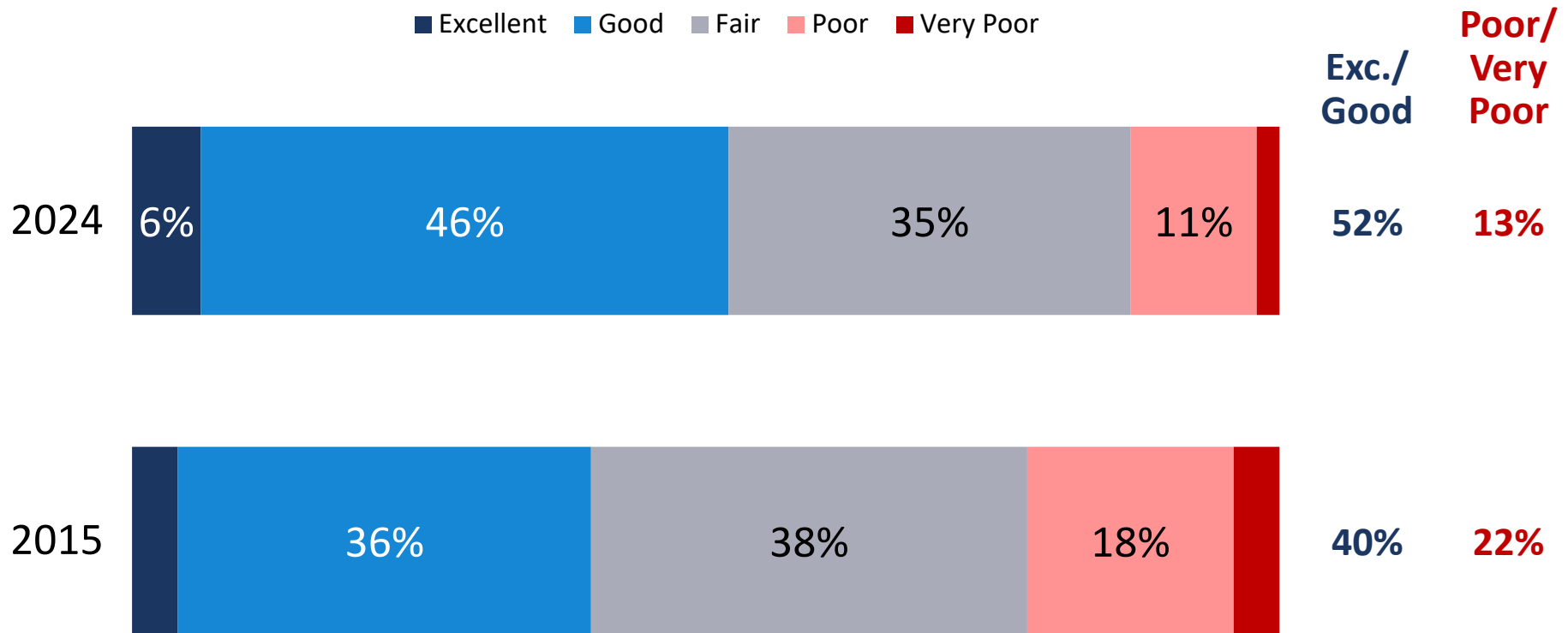


Electoral Context

A majority now feels that their quality of life is “excellent” or “good.”

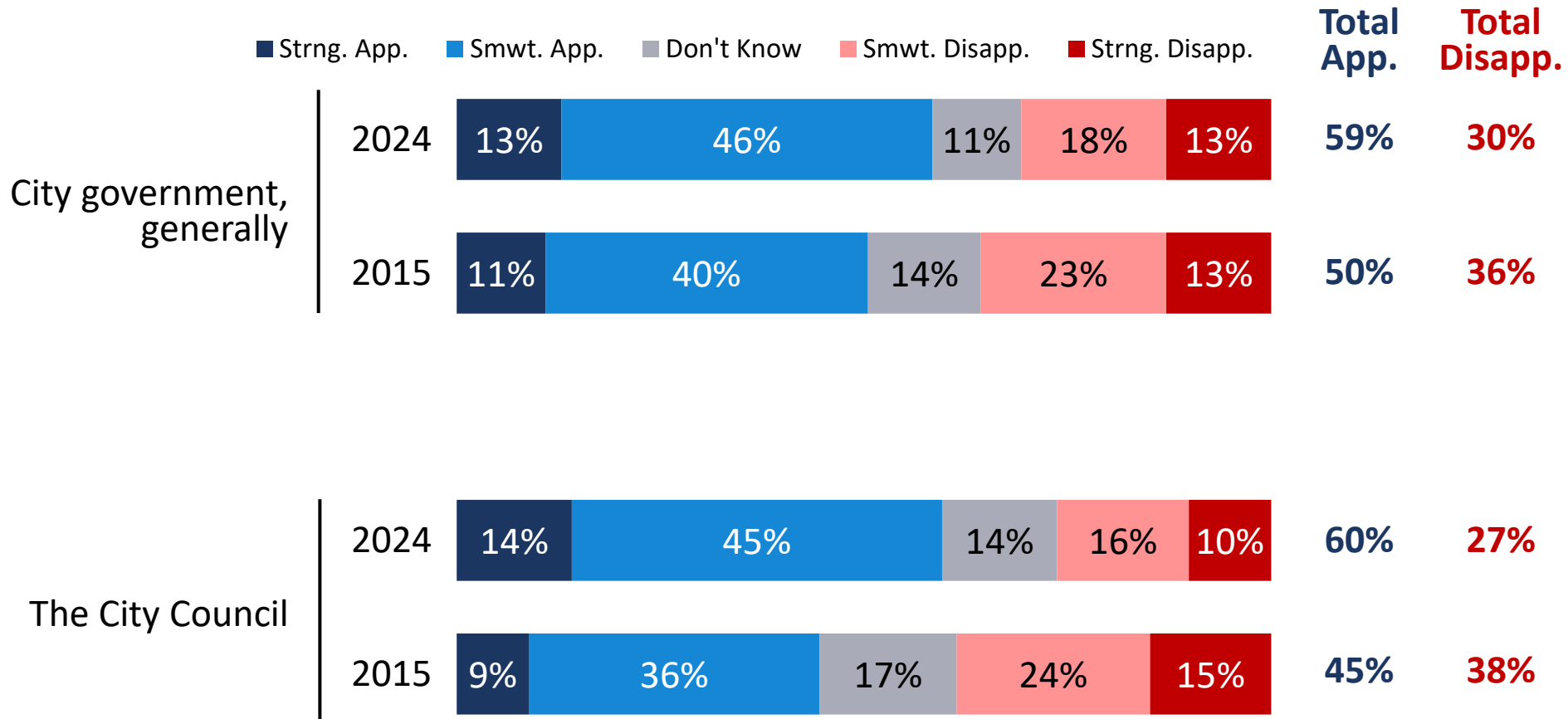
*How would you rate the overall quality of life in East Palo Alto?
Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



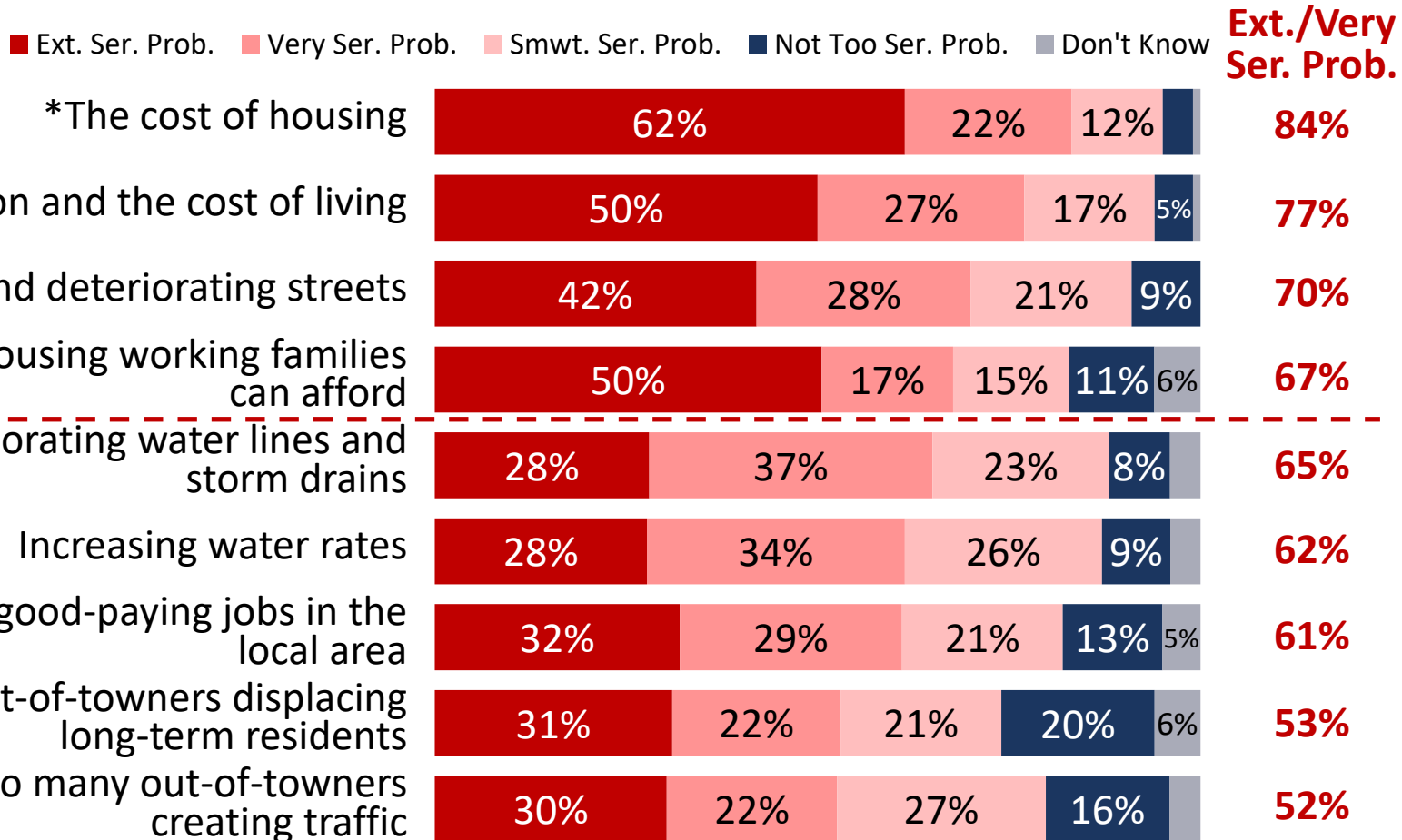
Voters also more broadly approve of City government and Council than in 2015.

I'm going to read you a short list of public institutions in East Palo Alto. Please tell me whether, overall, you approve of the job they are doing, or disapprove of the job they are doing.



Housing costs, inflation, potholes, and housing are key concerns for East Palo Alto voters.

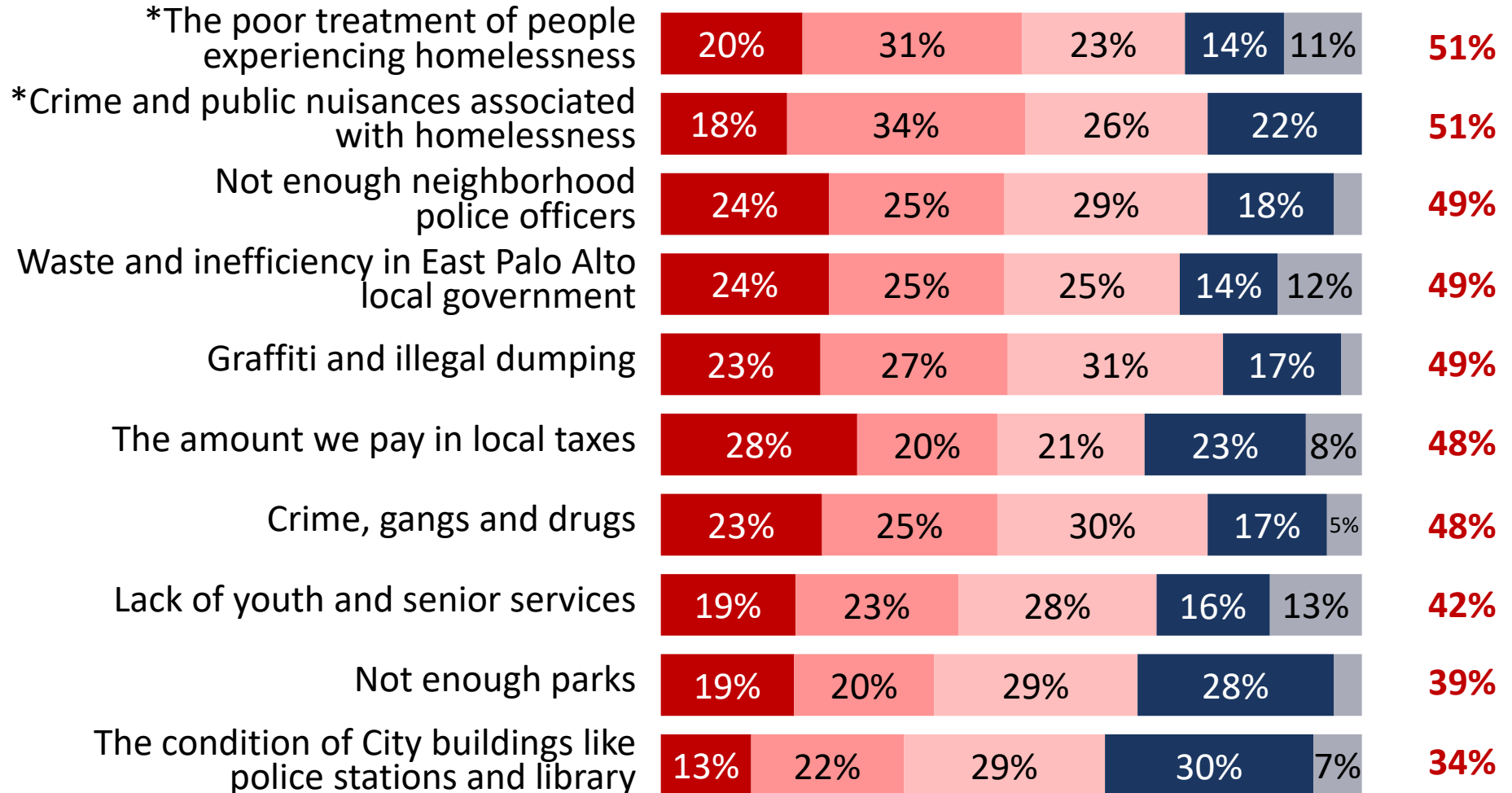
I'd like to read you a list of issues that some people say may be local problems. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in the City of East Palo Alto.



Lack of parks or the condition of City buildings are relatively low-ranking concerns.

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

Ext./Very
Ser. Prob.

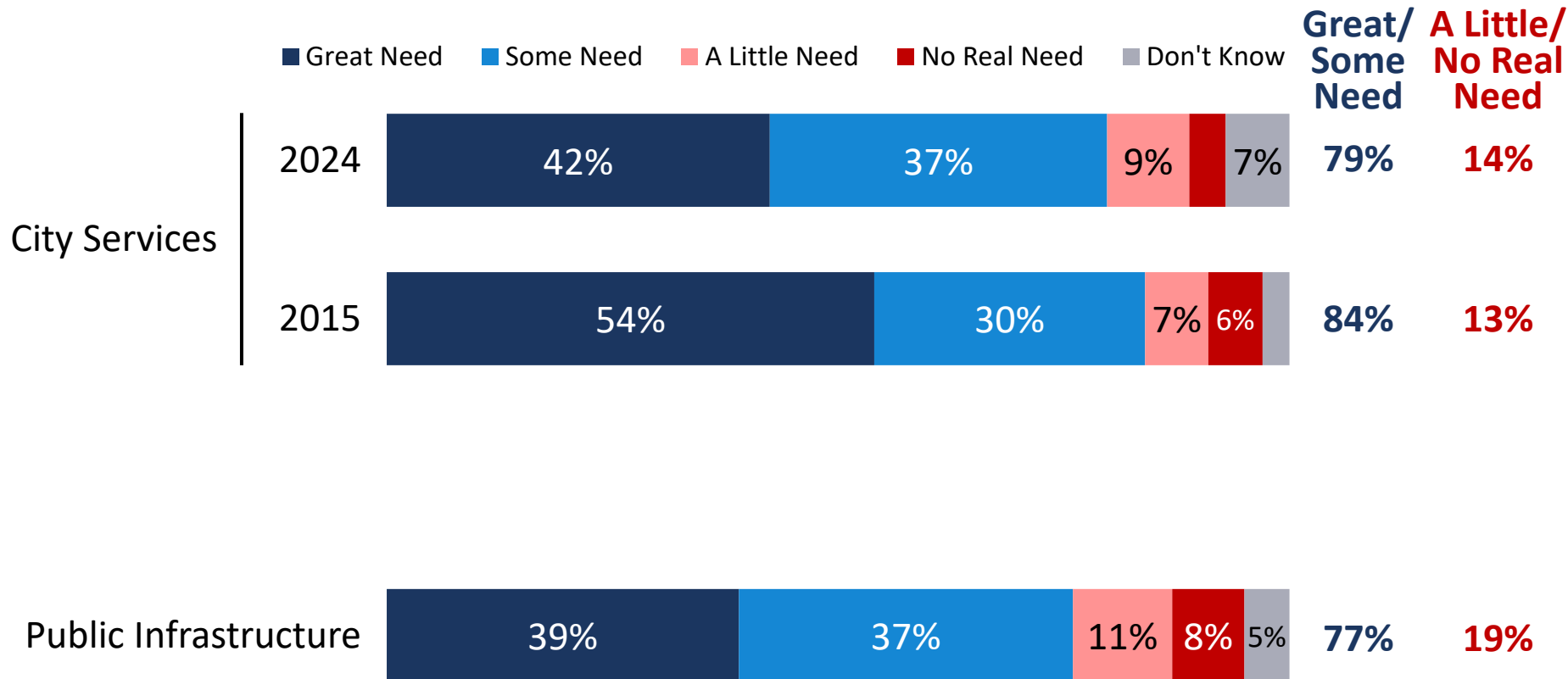


Housing costs have become a much more urgent concern, while worry about crime has receded.

Issue	Extremely/Very Serious Problem		
	2015	2024	Difference (2015-2024)
*The cost of housing	66%	84%	+18%
Increasing water rates	54%	62%	+8%
Not enough parks	33%	39%	+6%
Potholes and deteriorating streets	65%	70%	+5%
*Too many out-of-towners displacing long-term residents	49%	53%	+4%
The amount we pay in local taxes	44%	48%	+4%
Deteriorating water lines and storm drains	67%	65%	-2%
A lack of good-paying jobs in the local area	67%	61%	-6%
Waste and inefficiency in East Palo Alto local government	55%	49%	-6%
*Too many out-of-towners creating traffic	59%	52%	-7%
Not enough neighborhood police officers	62%	49%	-13%
Lack of youth and senior services	55%	42%	-13%
Graffiti and illegal dumping	63%	49%	-14%
*A lack of housing working families can afford	82%	67%	-15%
Crime, gangs and drugs	71%	48%	-23%

More than three-quarters believe that there is a “great need” or “some need” for new funding.

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 (SPLIT SAMPLE A: City services) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: public infrastructure) that residents of the City of East Palo Alto need and want?





Reactions to a Potential Infrastructure Bond

Hypothetical Bond Measure Language

Two-thirds Vote Threshold

City Facilities

East Palo Alto City Infrastructure Measure.

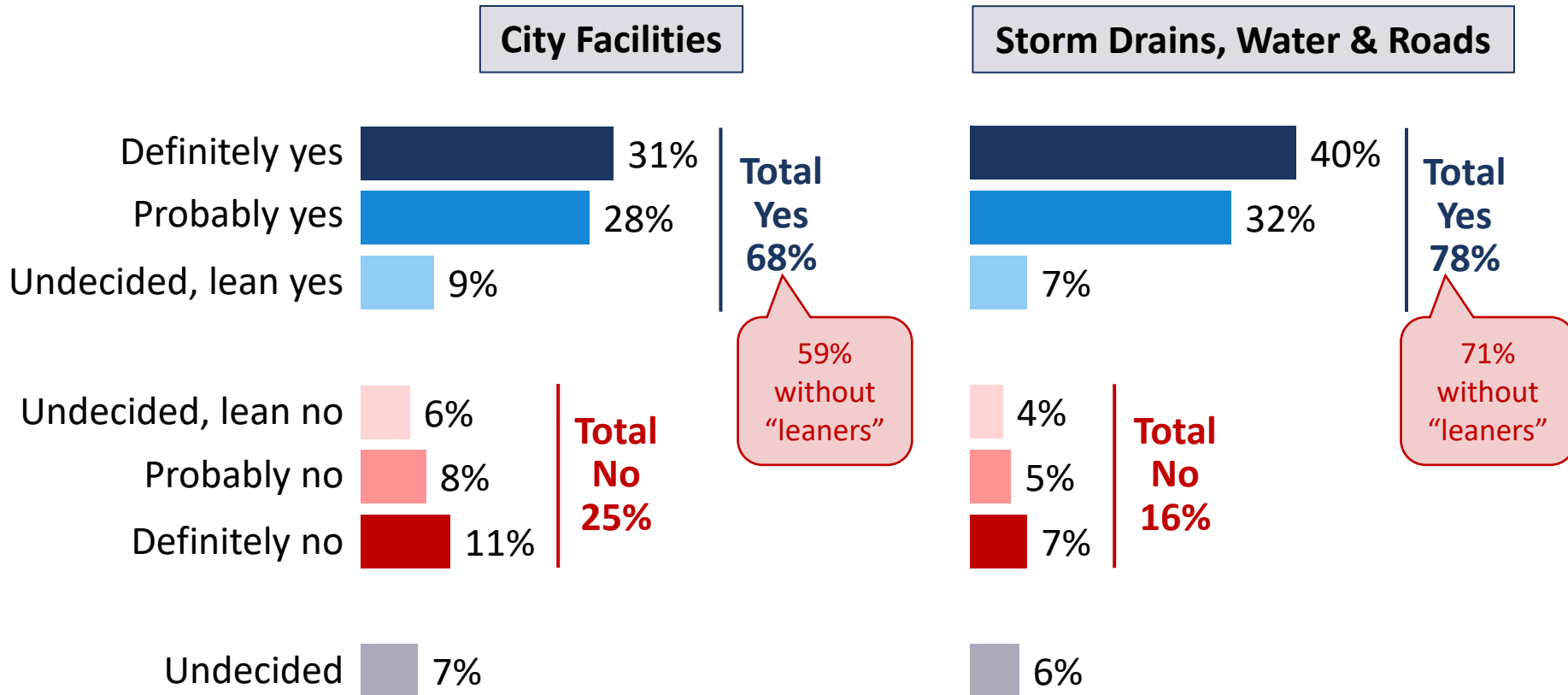
To provide updated library facilities for residents, teens and children; consolidate city services at a single civic center; build a new police station to improve public safety; and address deteriorating electrical/heating/cooling systems and leaky roofs, shall the City of East Palo Alto issue \$90,000,000 in bonds with an average levy of \$75 per \$100,000 of assessed value, generating approximately \$5,900,000 annually while bonds are outstanding, requiring independent oversight and published audits?

Storm Drains, Water & Roads

East Palo Alto Storm Drains, Drinking Water, and Roads Repair Measure.

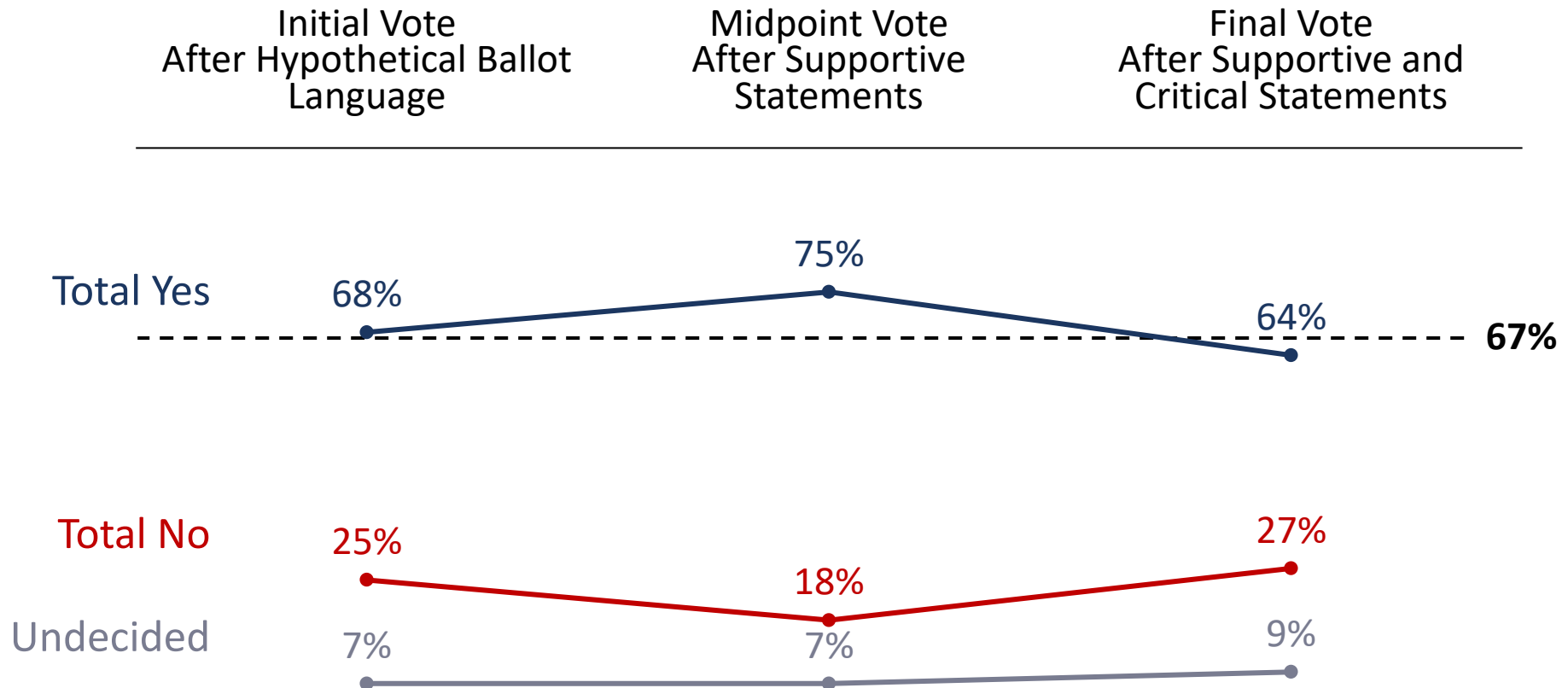
To repair aging storm drains to prevent flooding and keep trash out of the Bay; replace deteriorating pipes/install storage tanks to ensure reliable delivery of drinking water; and repair streets, roads and potholes, shall the City of East Palo Alto issue \$90,000,000 in bonds with an average levy of \$75 per \$100,000 of assessed value, generating approximately \$5,900,000 annually while bonds are outstanding, requiring independent oversight and published audits?

A measure focused on water and road repairs has support from nearly four in five voters; the facilities measure has support from seven in ten.



Support for the city facilities measure increases with supportive information but falls below two-thirds after criticisms.

City Facilities Measure
 $\pm 6.9\%$ Margin of Error



The storm drains, water, and roads measure starts with broad support but ends within the margin of error.

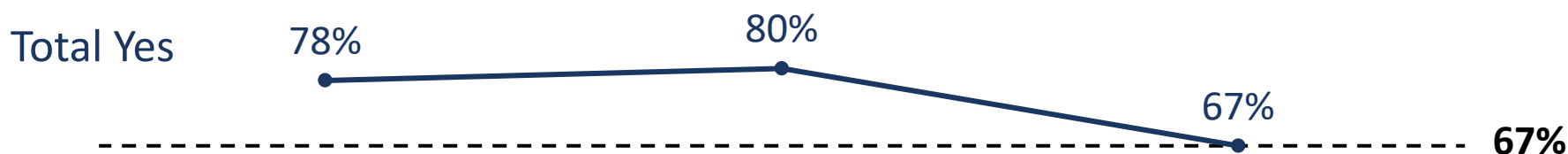
Storm Drains, Water & Roads Measure

±6.9% Margin of Error

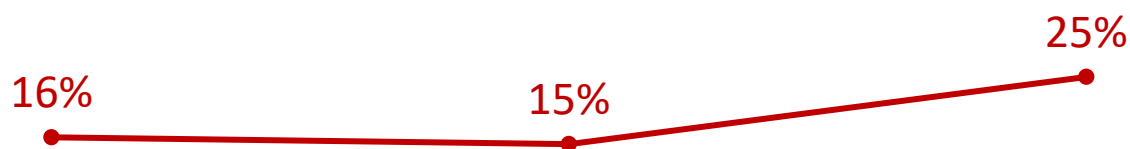
Initial Vote
After Hypothetical Ballot
Language

Midpoint Vote
After Supportive
Statements

Final Vote
After Supportive and
Critical Statements



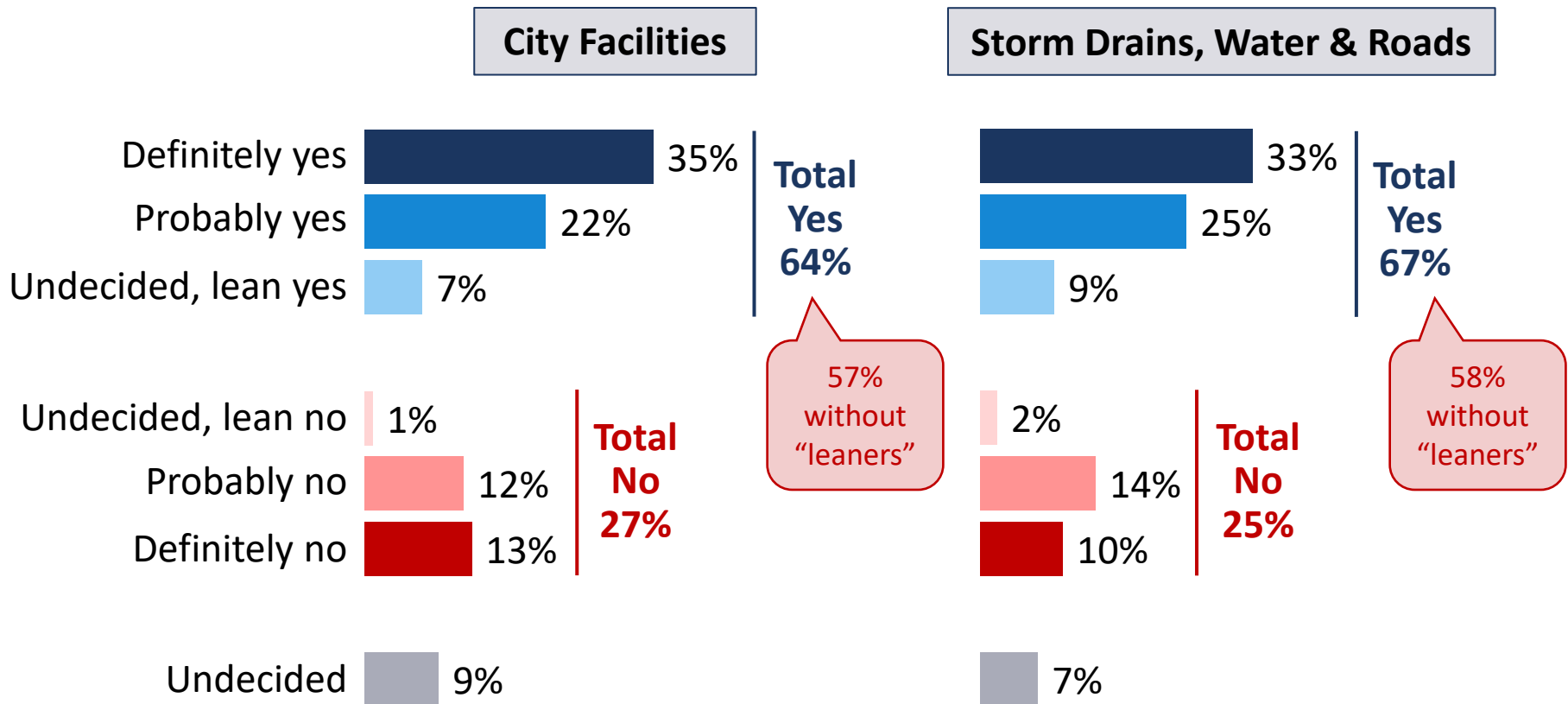
Total No



Undecided



Final votes on both measures are just at, or below, the two-thirds required to pass.



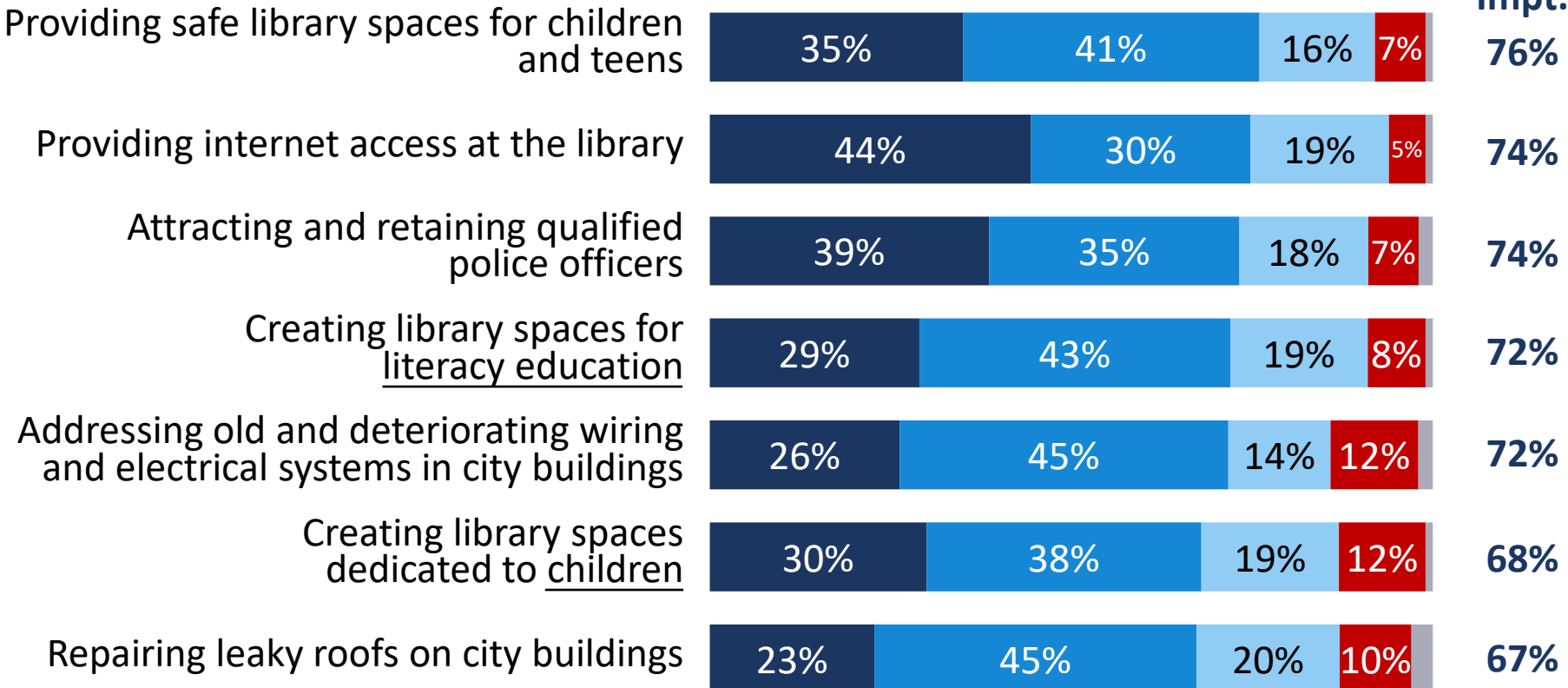


Investment Priorities: City Facilities Bond

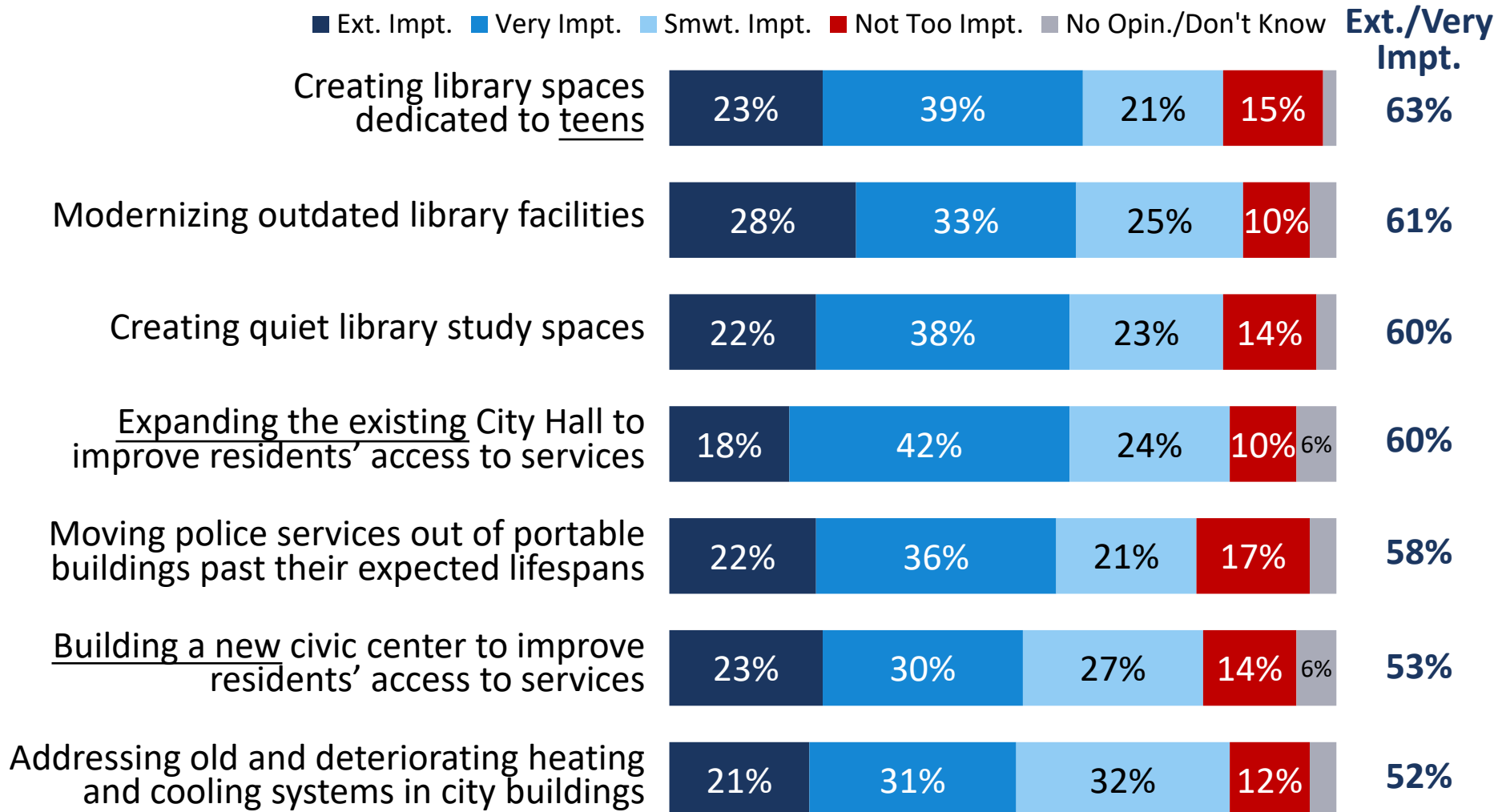
Voters' top priorities include library access, police officers, and repairing electrical and roofs.

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

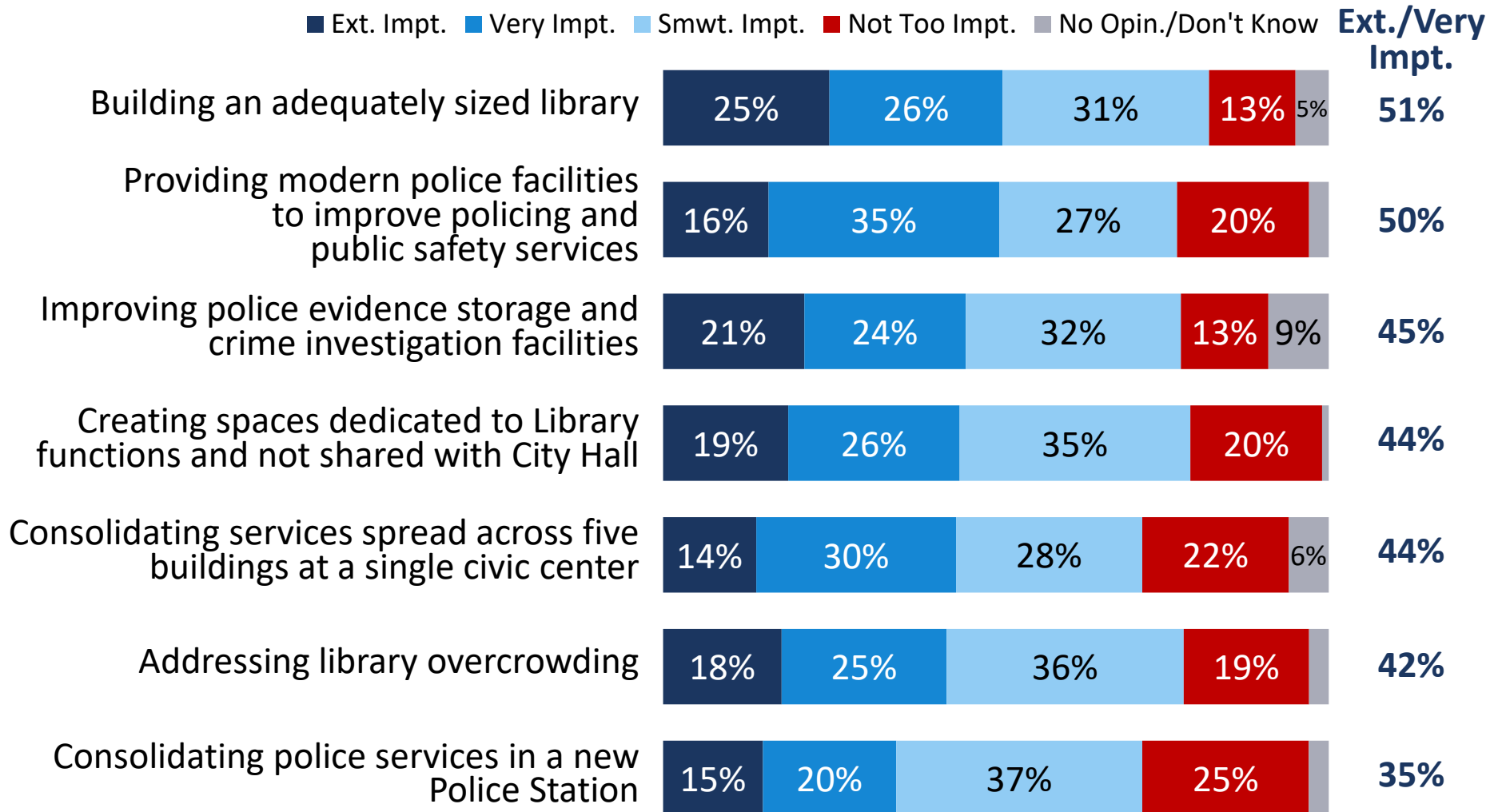
■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ No Opin./Don't Know **Ext./Very Impt.**



Majorities also broadly value modernizing the library and getting police out of portables.



A new police station or creating a single civic center are the least-urgent priorities.

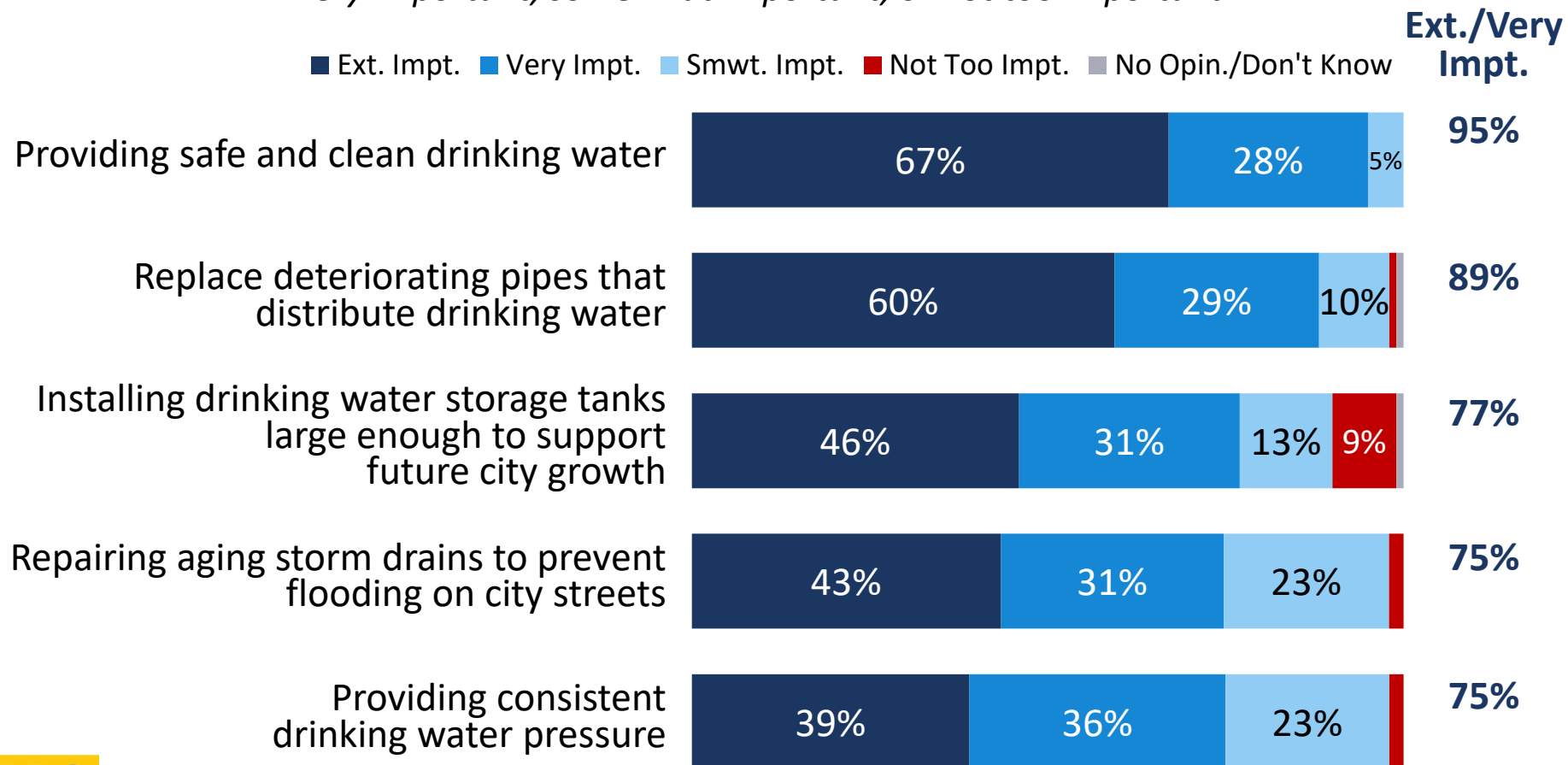




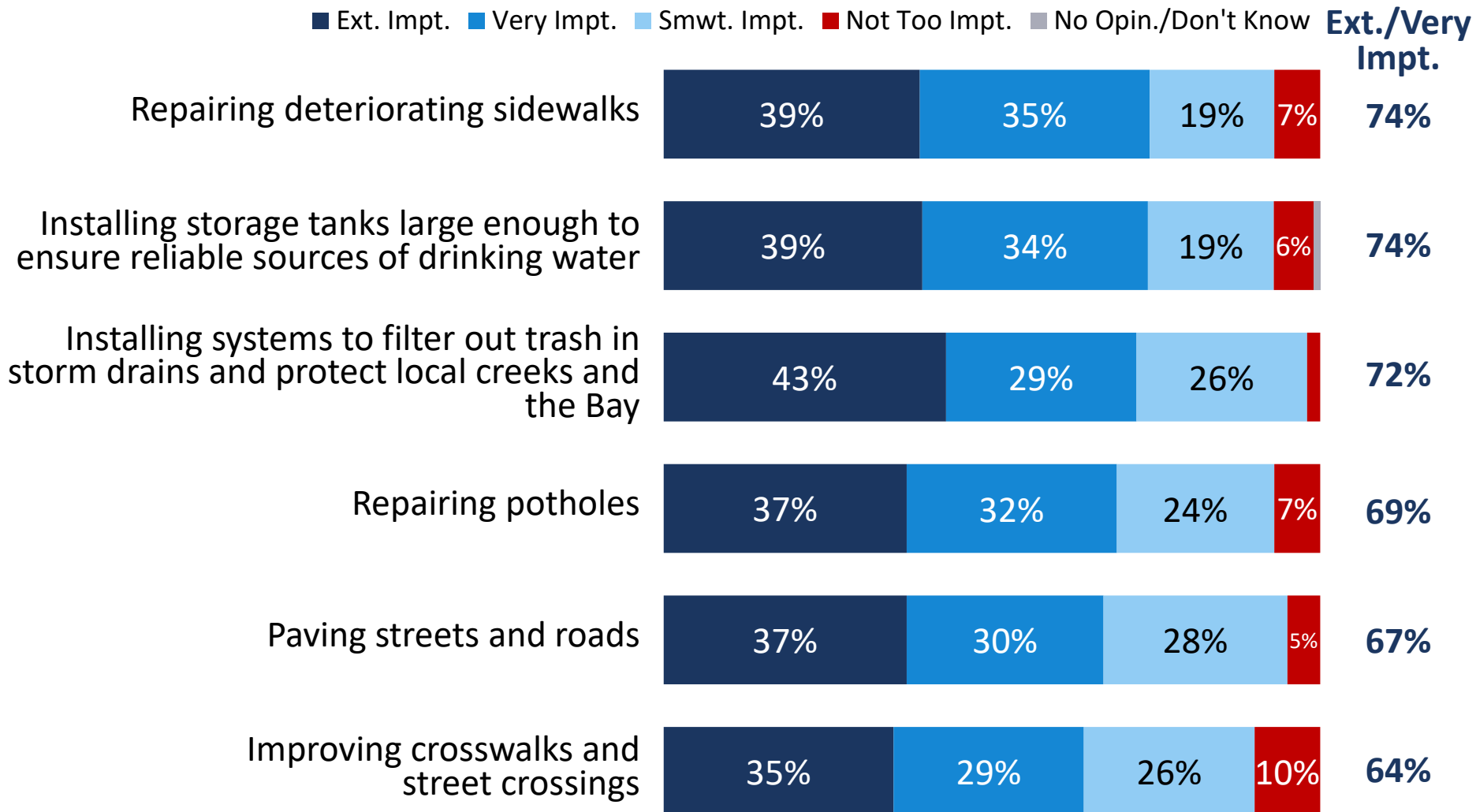
Investment Priorities: Storm Drains, Water, and Roads Bond

On the bond measure, clean drinking water and replacing pipes and tank are high priorities.

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



Repairing sidewalks and potholes are also valuable priorities to two-thirds or more.



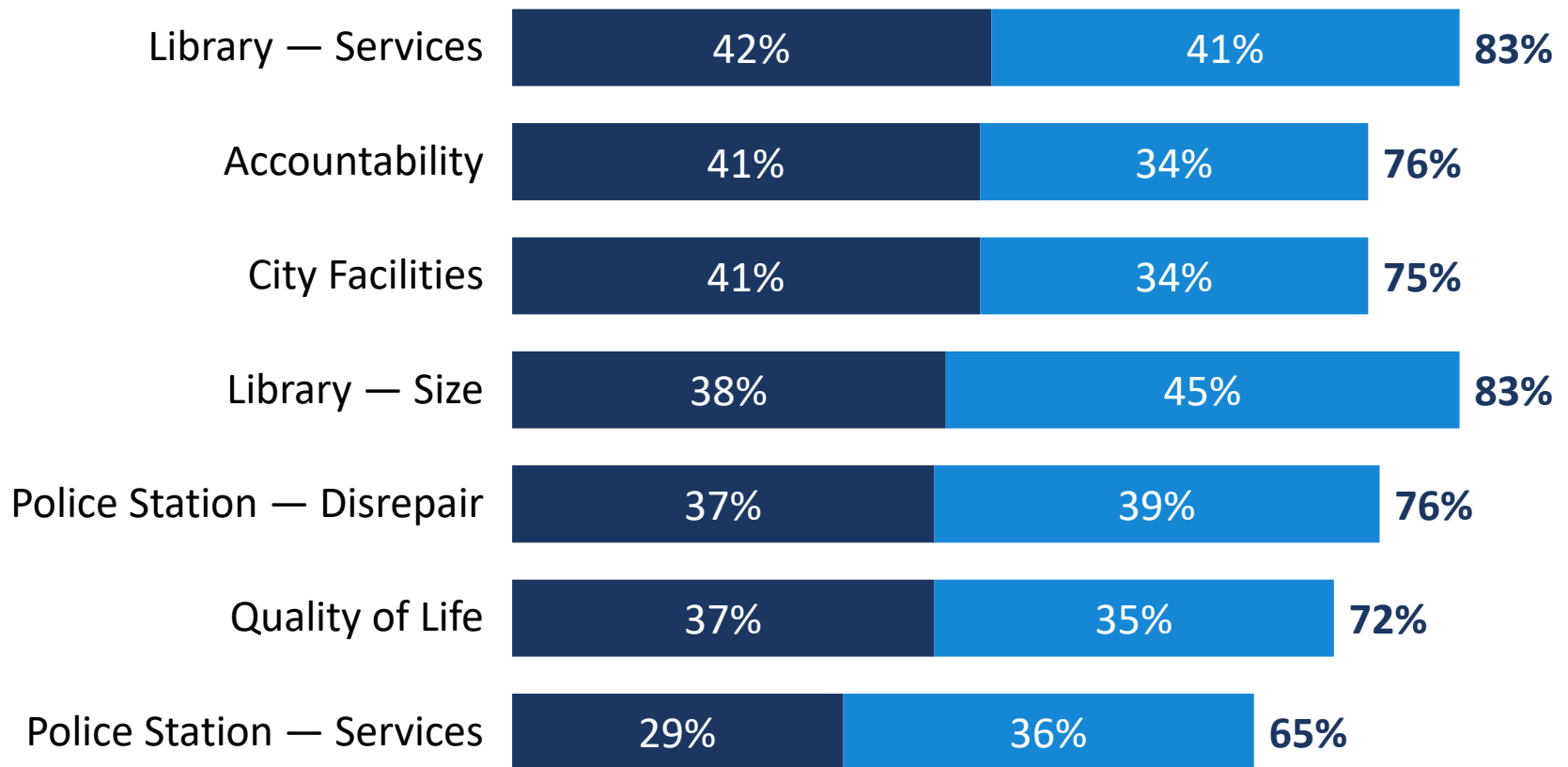


Supportive & Critical Statements

Messaging focused on libraries and the state of city facilities, as well as accountability, are the most compelling in favor of the facilities measure.

City Facilities Measure

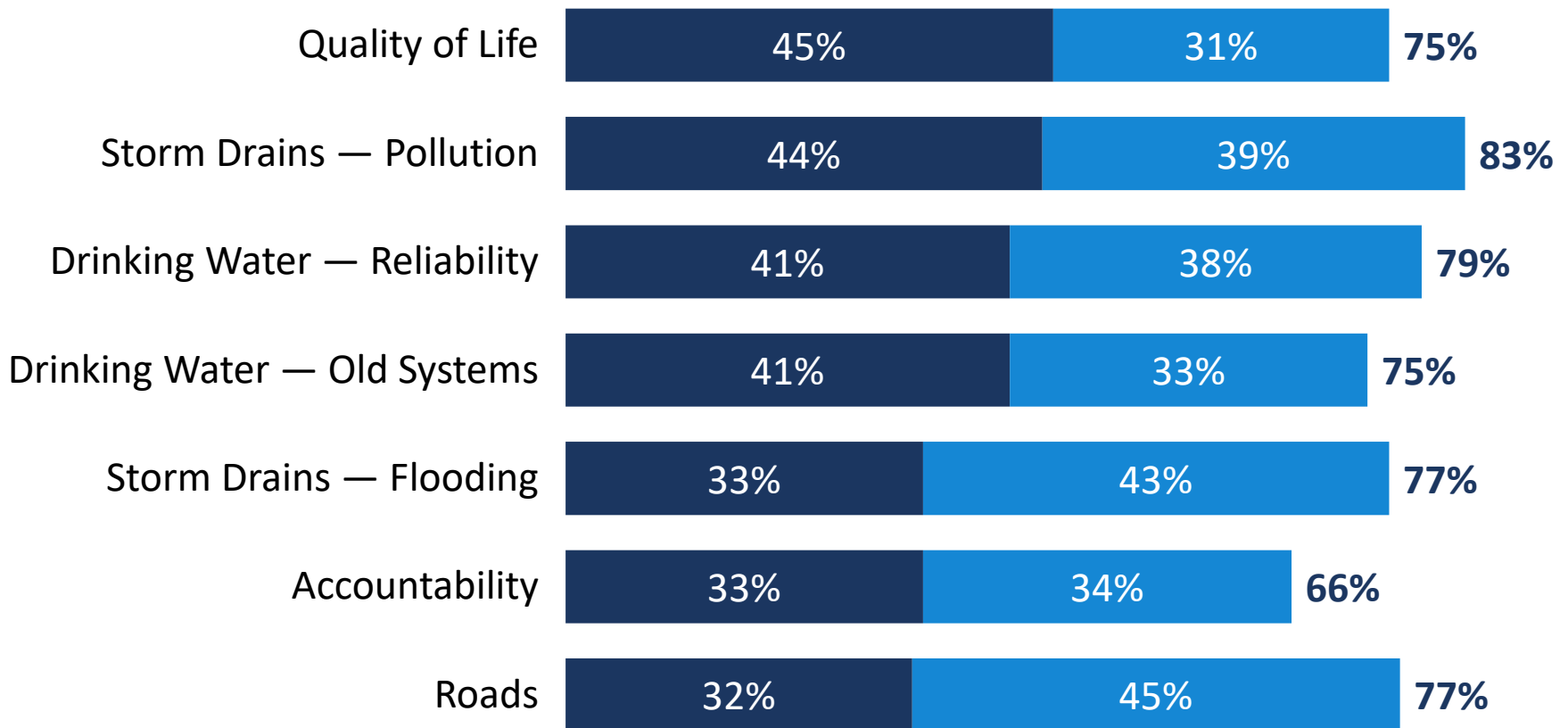
■ Very Convincing ■ Somewhat Convincing



For the infrastructure measure, quality of life, pollution prevention and drinking water quality are key themes in favor.

Storm Drains, Water & Roads Measure

■ Very Convincing ■ Somewhat Convincing



Supportive Statements

Ranked by Very Convincing

44%

(STORM DRAINS — POLLUTION) This measure will help keep pollution from flowing into local creeks and the Bay. It will make much needed repairs and improvements to our storm drain system, including systems for capturing trash that would otherwise spill into these natural areas.

42%

(LIBRARY — SERVICES) This measure would create spaces dedicated to adults, teens and children in our city's library, and expand the breadth of books and other materials available to residents. It will help improve literacy, provide safe places for kids to study, and give all residents more opportunities to learn.

41%

(DRINKING WATER — RELIABILITY) This measure will upgrade pipes, pumps, and storage systems to ensure that when you turn on a faucet in East Palo Alto, safe, clean drinking water always flows freely with consistent water pressure.

41%

(CITY FACILITIES) Many key city services are currently spread over five different buildings — many of which have old and faulty heating and cooling systems — making it hard for residents to figure out where to go. This measure will enable the City to put these critical services under one City Hall roof, making it easier for residents to access and more efficient for the City to provide.

Continued

Ranked by Very Convincing

41%	(DRINKING WATER — OLD SYSTEMS) East Palo Alto's system of pipes, pumps, and storage facilities that distribute drinking water to our homes and businesses are deteriorating. We need to measure to repair and upgrade these systems before they start failing and are even more expensive to replace.
41%	^(QUALITY OF LIFE) We need this measure to continue improving our local quality of life. Many aspects of life here in the city have improved in recent years, and now it is time to make investments in our public infrastructure to make East Palo Alto an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.
38%	(LIBRARY — SIZE) After collecting feedback from the community, it is clear that our local library is simply old and far too small for a growing community of our size. The libraries in other similarly sized cities in San Mateo County all have libraries at least three times larger. We need this measure to provide East Palo Alto with an adequately sized library comparable to others in our region.
37%	(POLICE STATION — DISREPAIR) Many police services are scattered at different buildings, some of which were never intended to be permanent and are now falling apart with deteriorating wiring, heating and cooling systems, and leaky roofs. This measure will help create one single police station for all police services in a building that will be less costly to maintain.

Continued

Ranked by Very Convincing

37%

^(ACCOUNTABILITY) This measure includes tough accountability provisions such as requiring annual independent audits and publishing of expenditure reports. These fiscal safeguards will ensure funds are used efficiently, effectively and as promised.

33%

(STORM DRAINS — FLOODING) Each time a major winter storm rolls through our community, our aging storm drain system is pushed to the edge of failure. We need this measure to make necessary repairs to the systems to prevent those storms from flooding neighborhood streets and business districts.

32%

(ROADS) This measure will help make repairs to our worst quality local streets and roads, throughout the city and in local neighborhoods. This means filling more potholes and repaving deteriorating streets before they crack and create new potholes.

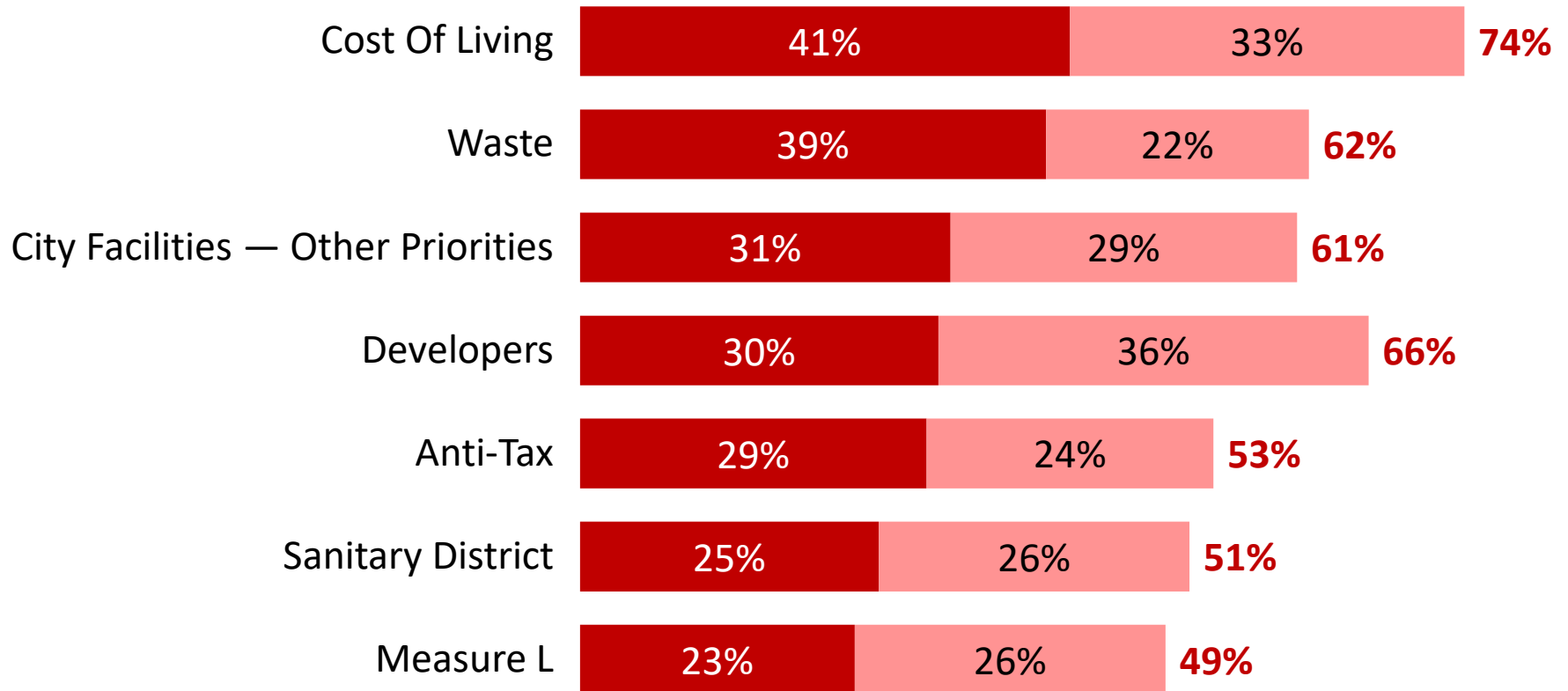
29%

(POLICE STATION — SERVICES) Many police services are scattered at different buildings, making it hard to store and keep track of crime scene evidence. This measure will put those facilities under one roof making it much easier to investigate crimes and maintain public safety.

On the facilities measure, cost of living is the most powerful critique.

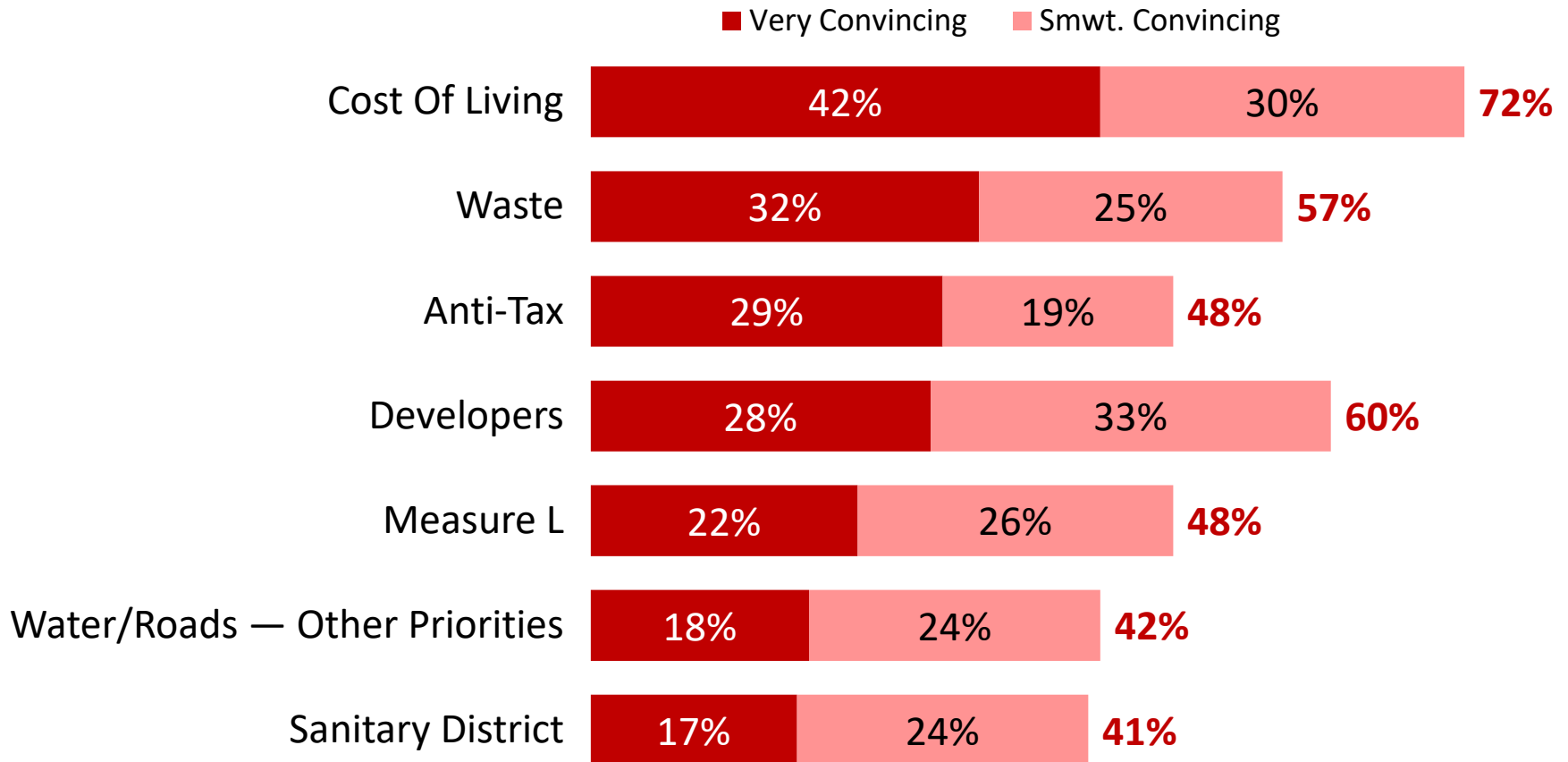
City Facilities Measure

■ Very Convincing ■ Somewhat Convincing



The same is the case for the infrastructure measure.

Storm Drains, Water & Roads Measure





Conclusions

Electoral Context & Viability

- Voters hold positive views about the local quality of life and city government.
- There is a strongly held belief that the city needs more money, both for services and public infrastructure.
- Voters' top concerns are the cost of living (especially the cost of housing) and road conditions. Storm drains, water lines, and water rates are in a second tier.
- There is no real concern about the condition of the police station or library. Crime concerns are more middle tier and have receded greatly as a concern in the last 10 years.
- Each potential measure begins with support exceeding two-thirds, but neither measure is above the MOE on the final ballot test.

**For more information,
contact:**



Curt Below

Curt@FM3research.com

Miranda Everitt

Miranda@FM3research.com



The Lew Edwards Group

Info@lewedwardsgroup.com