

Voter Support for a Potential South Placer County Transportation Measure






Results of a Study

Conducted September 27-October 3, 2023

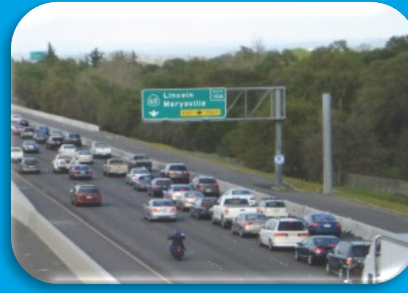


OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Specifics and Methodology

Dates	September 27-October 3, 2023
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2024 Voters in Lincoln, Rocklin and Roseville
Total Interviews	631
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews

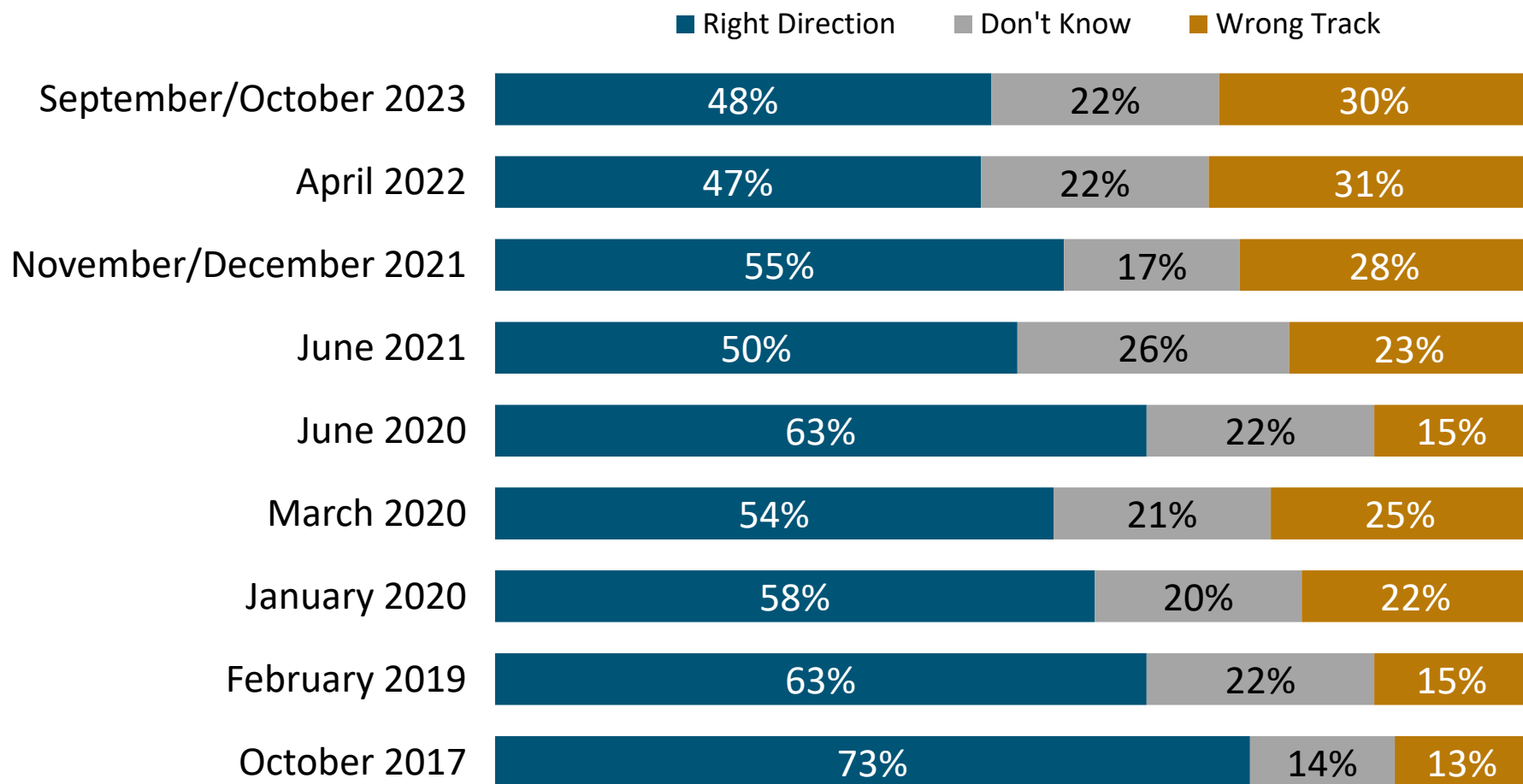
(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)



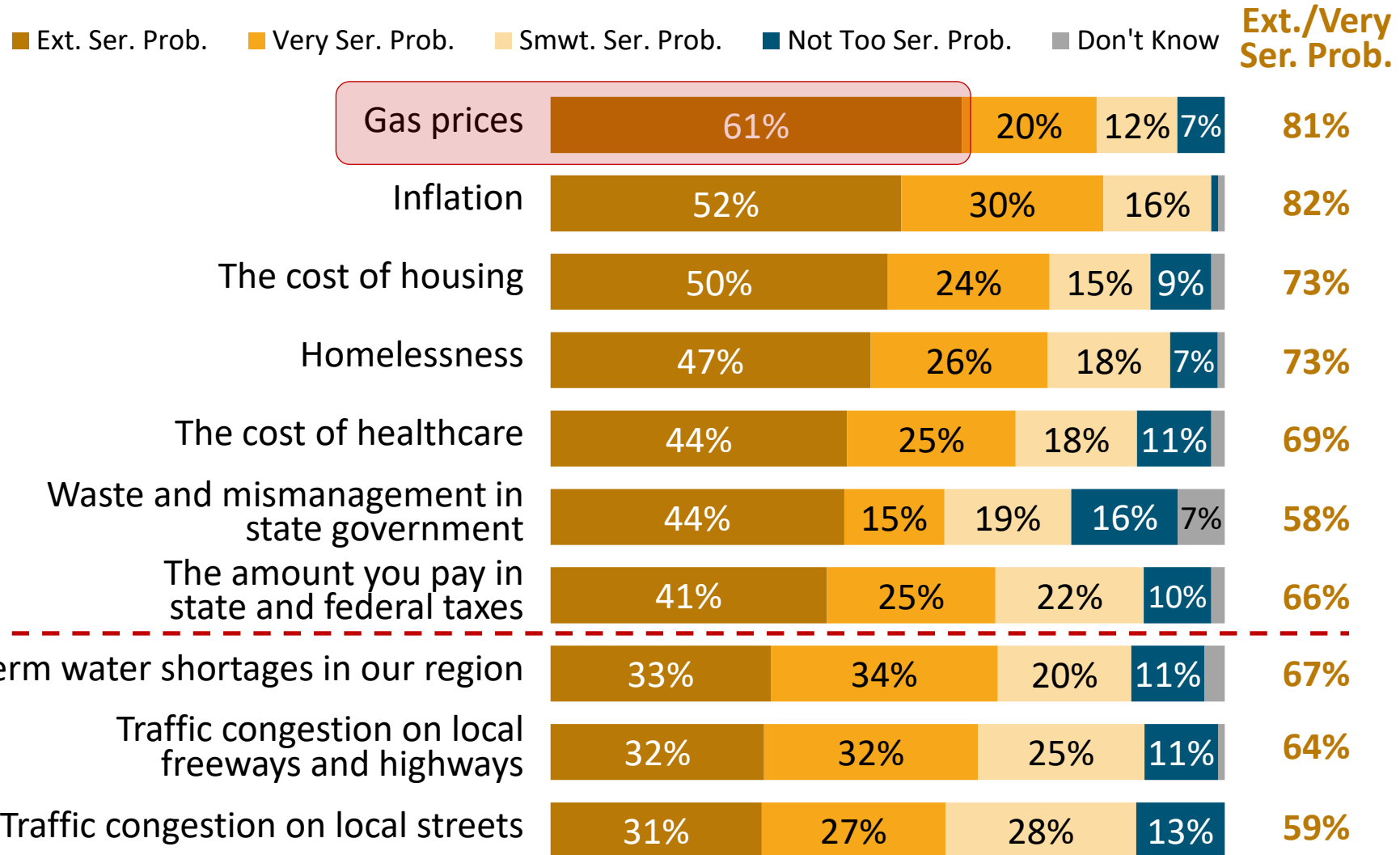
Issue Context

Voters appear modestly optimistic about the region's future, but still less optimistic than pre-pandemic.

Do you think things in Placer County are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

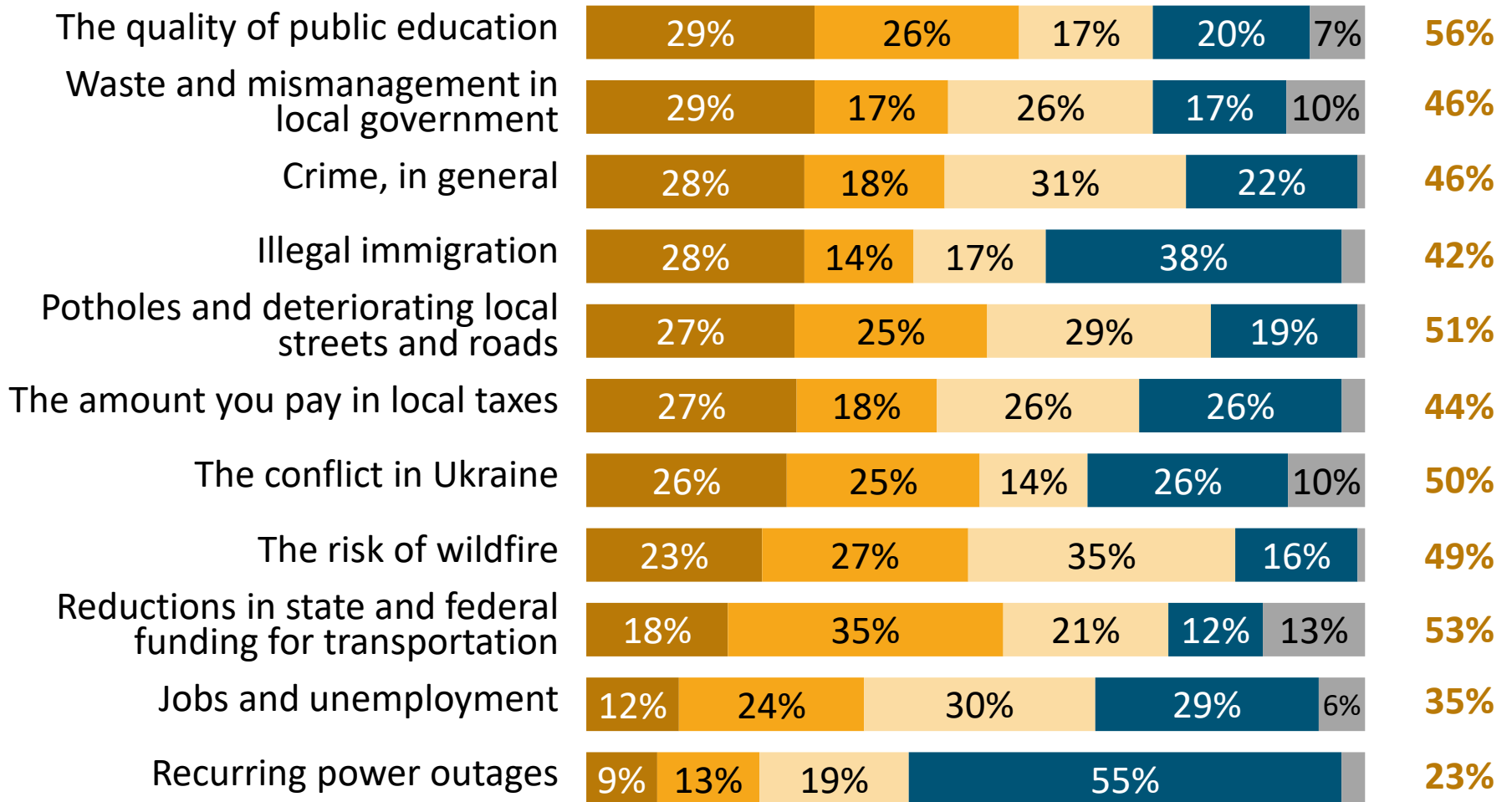


Cost of living issues tend to dominate voters' local concerns, especially gas prices.



Few are particularly concerned with the local economy.

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



Among issues that are more concerning since 2022, freeway/highway traffic is now back to pre-pandemic levels.

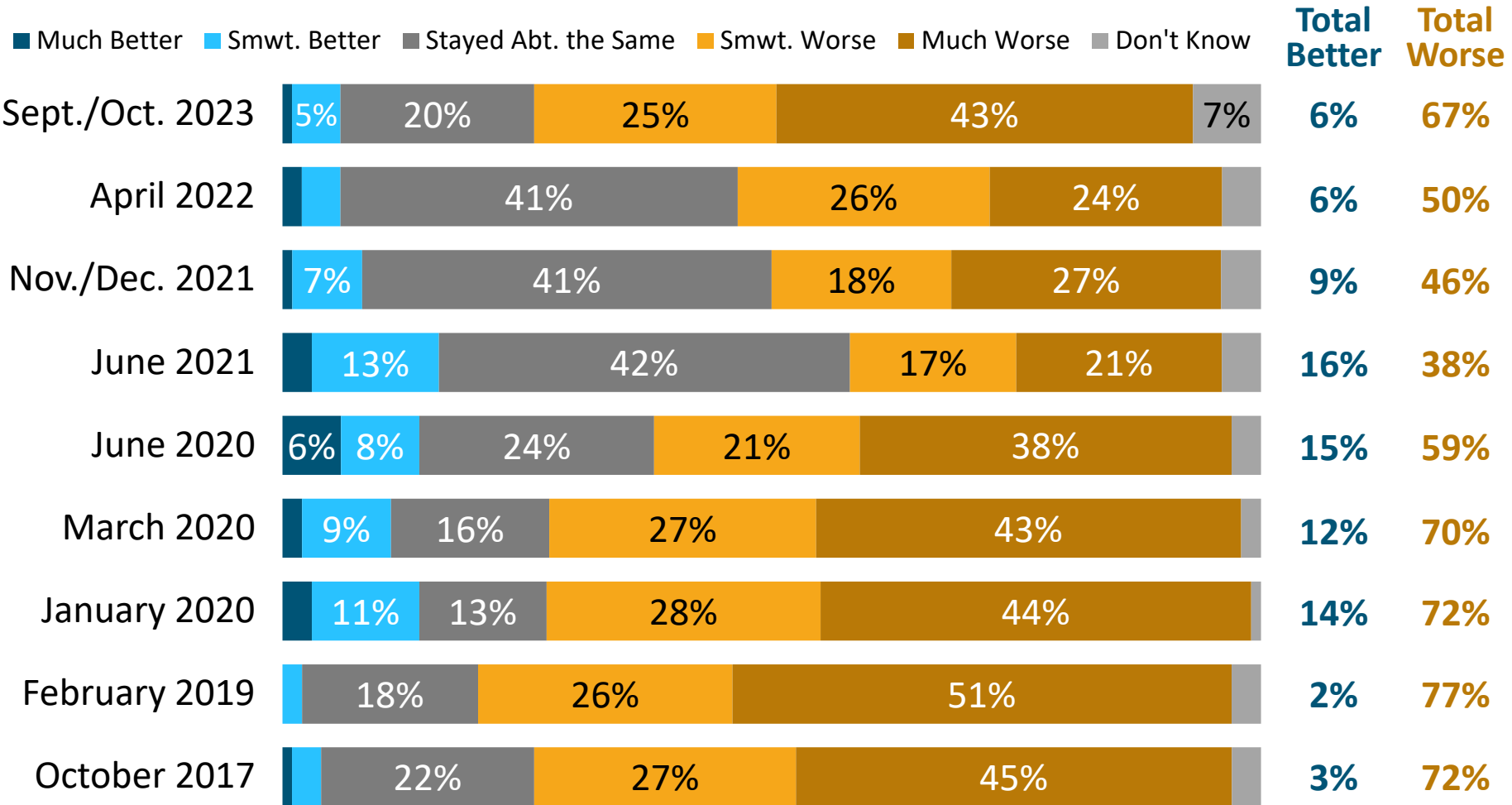
Issue (Extremely/Very Serious Problem)	Oct. 2017	Feb. 2019	Jan. 2020	March 2020	June 2020	June 2021	Nov./Dec. 2021	April 2022	Sept./Oct. 2023	Difference (April 2022-Sept./Oct. 2023)
Potholes and deteriorating local streets and roads	35%	43%	41%	39%	38%	32%	40%	33%	51%	+18%
Reductions in state and federal funding for transportation	31%	43%	45%	46%	42%	40%	35%	36%	53%	+17%
Traffic congestion on local streets	--	47%	54%	52%	33%	45%	38%	42%	59%	+17%
Jobs and unemployment	22%	21%	17%	23%	39%	31%	32%	22%	35%	+13%
The amount you pay in state and federal taxes	43%	52%	56%	56%	58%	54%	54%	54%	66%	+12%
Traffic congestion on local freeways and highways	58%	67%	63%	66%	55%	55%	58%	53%	64%	+11%
Gas prices	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	74%	81%	+7%
The quality of public education	28%	37%	39%	38%	42%	41%	35%	49%	56%	+7%
The cost of healthcare	57%	67%	63%	60%	64%	60%	55%	62%	69%	+7%
Inflation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	76%	82%	+6%
The cost of housing	--	54%	57%	56%	49%	63%	69%	67%	73%	+6%

Homelessness continues to be a growing concern.

Issue (Extremely/Very Serious Problem)	Oct. 2017	Feb. 2019	Jan. 2020	March 2020	June 2020	June 2021	Nov./Dec. 2021	April 2022	Sept./Oct. 2023	Difference (April 2022-Sept./Oct. 2023)
Homelessness	--	54%	58%	59%	52%	59%	55%	69%	73%	+4%
Waste and mismanagement in local government	47%	42%	43%	48%	37%	40%	38%	42%	46%	+4%
Illegal immigration	32%	45%	43%	35%	32%	36%	39%	38%	42%	+4%
The amount you pay in local taxes	29%	33%	37%	44%	37%	42%	43%	41%	44%	+3%
Waste and mismanagement in state government	47%	60%	54%	59%	49%	58%	49%	57%	58%	+1%
Crime, in general	--	--	--	--	--	37%	32%	46%	46%	0%
Recurring power outages	--	--	29%	30%	27%	29%	22%	24%	23%	-1%
Long-term water shortages in our region	41%	49%	50%	57%	50%	69%	69%	71%	67%	-4%
The risk of wildfire	--	--	--	--	--	65%	50%	54%	49%	-5%
The conflict in Ukraine	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	68%	50%	-18%

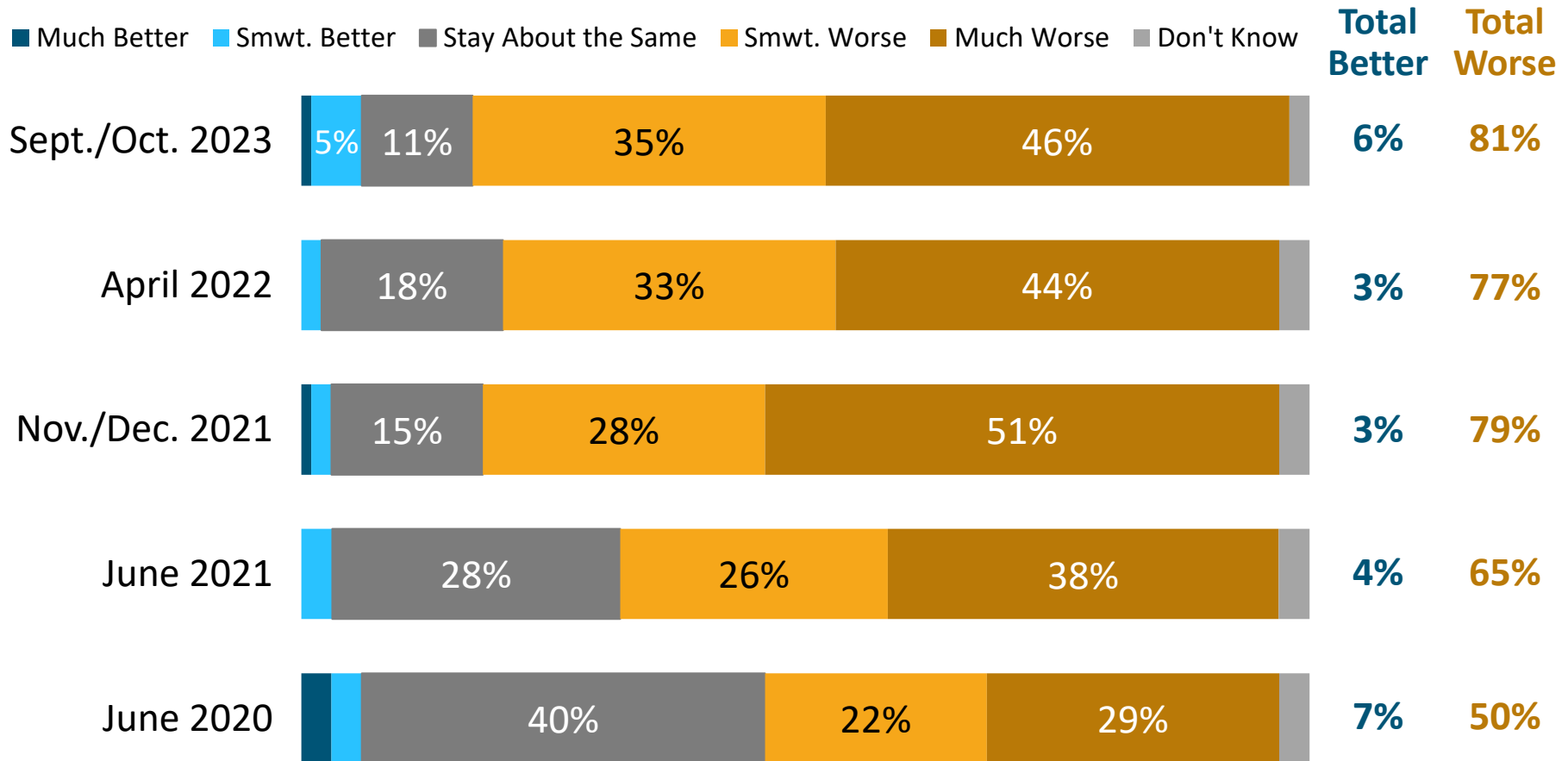
Two-thirds of voters feel traffic congestion is now worse than before the pandemic.

Thinking specifically about traffic, do you feel local traffic congestion has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same compared to before the coronavirus pandemic?



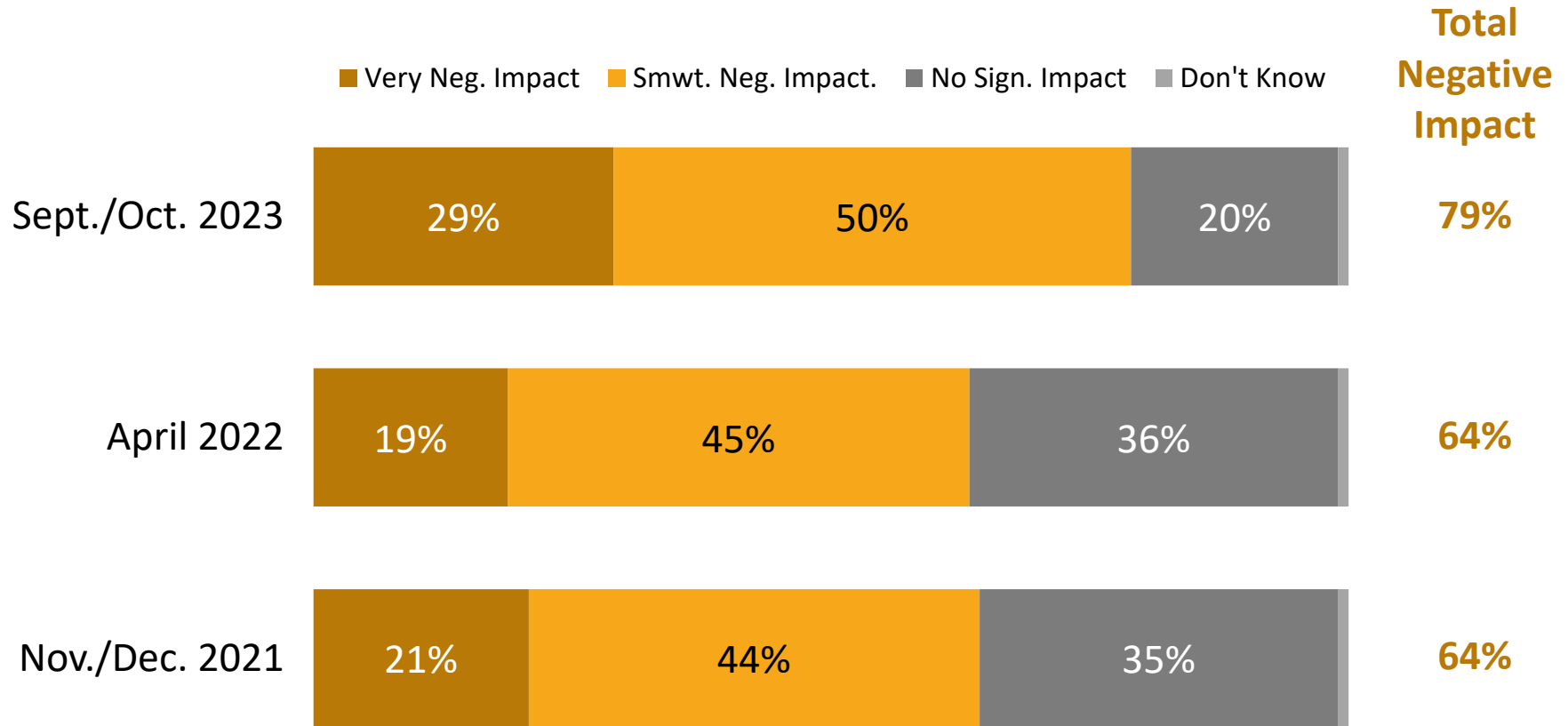
And an overwhelming majority feel it will be worse in two years.

Do you feel that local traffic congestion will eventually be better, worse, or stay about the same two years from now?



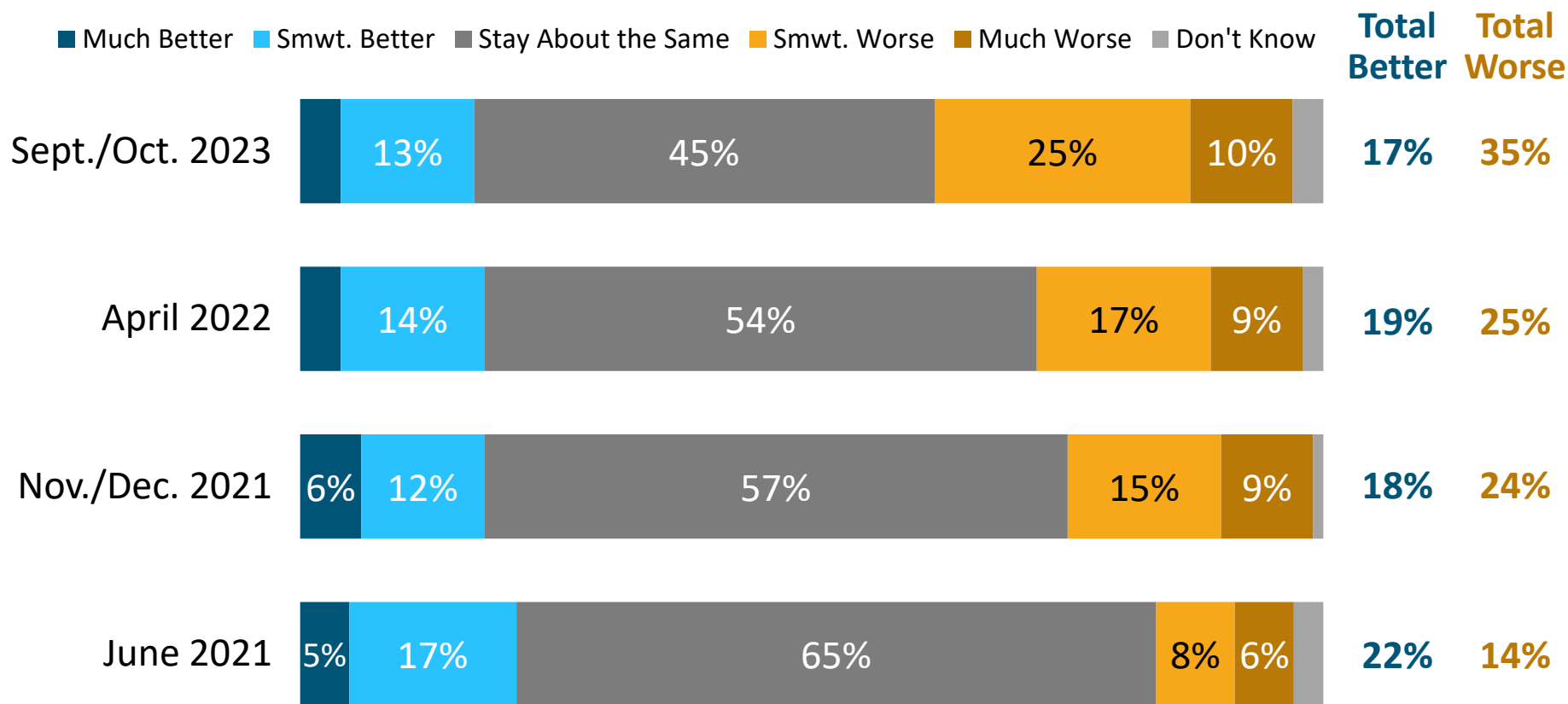
And a similar percentage feel traffic has a negative impact on their quality of life.

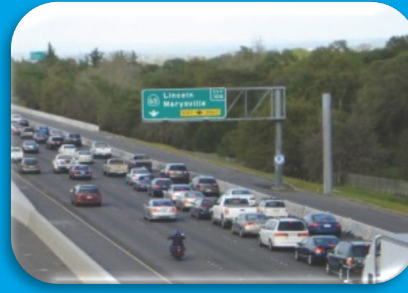
Do you feel that local traffic congestion has a negative impact on your quality of life or no significant impact on your quality of life?



However, one-third of voters are concerned about their future finances, concerns that continue to grow.

Over the next year, do you expect that your household's financial circumstances will generally: get better, get worse, or stay about the same?

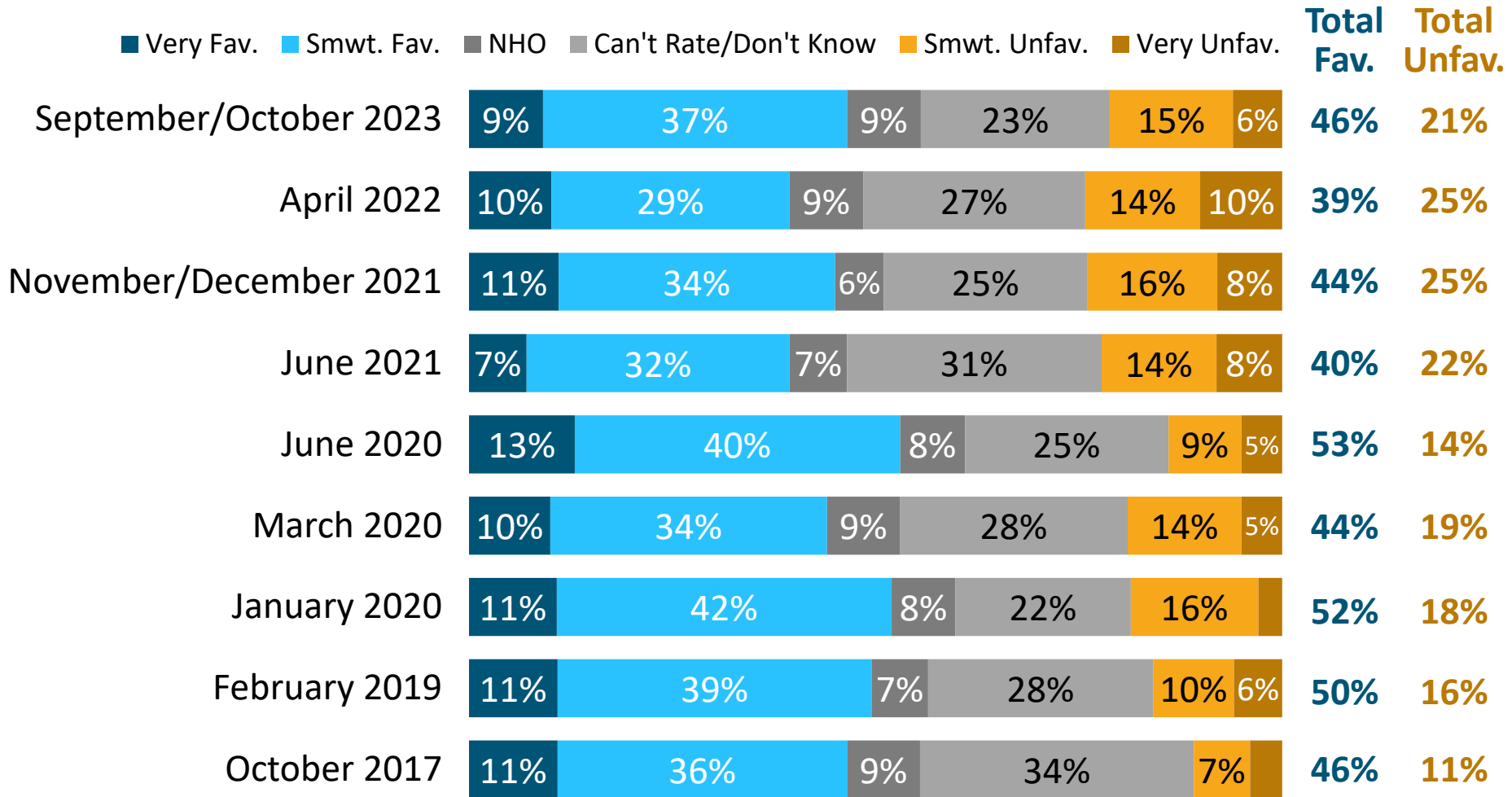




Views of Local Government

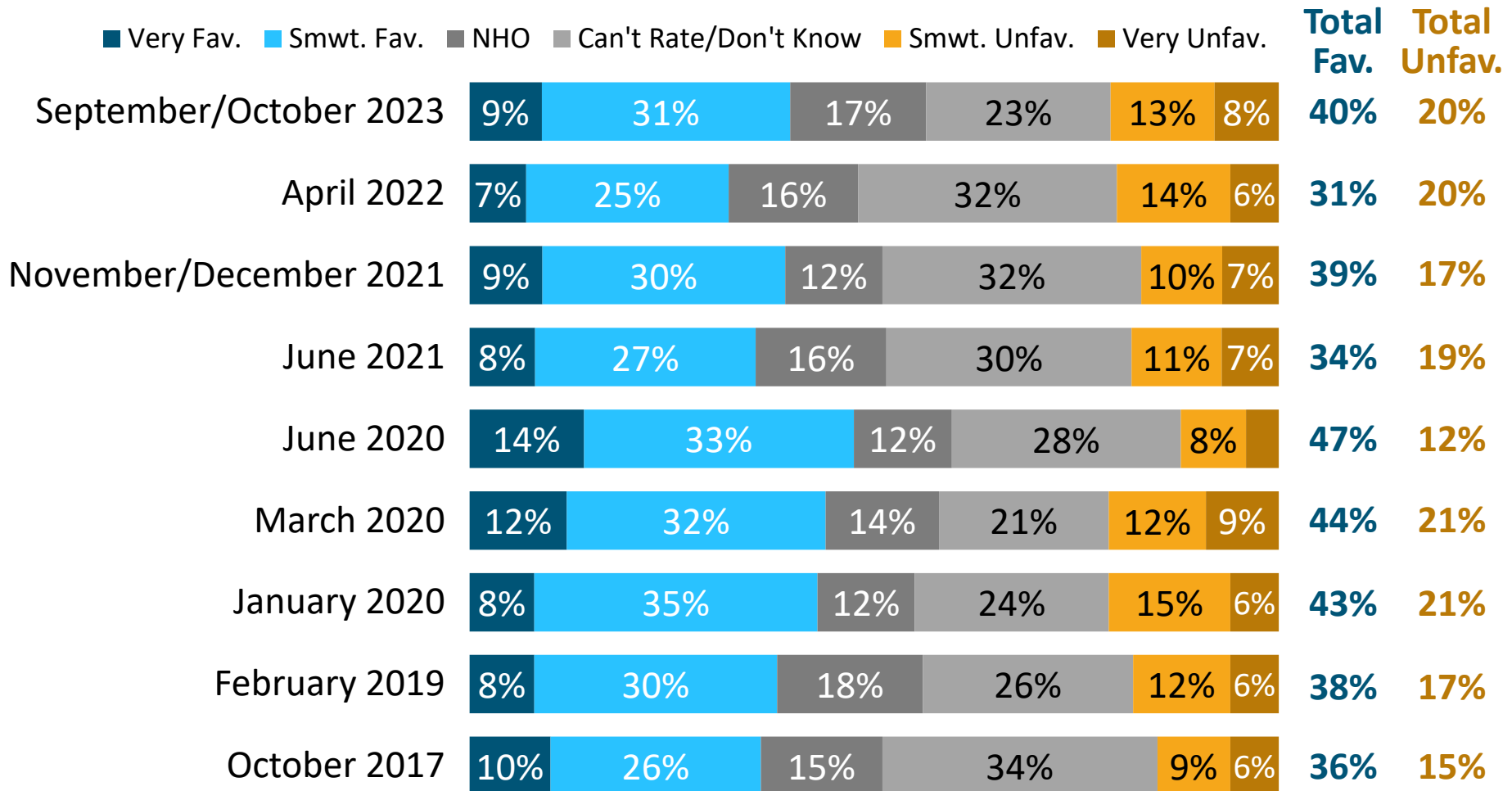
Views of the Board of Supervisors are somewhat similar as in recent years.

The Placer County Board of Supervisors



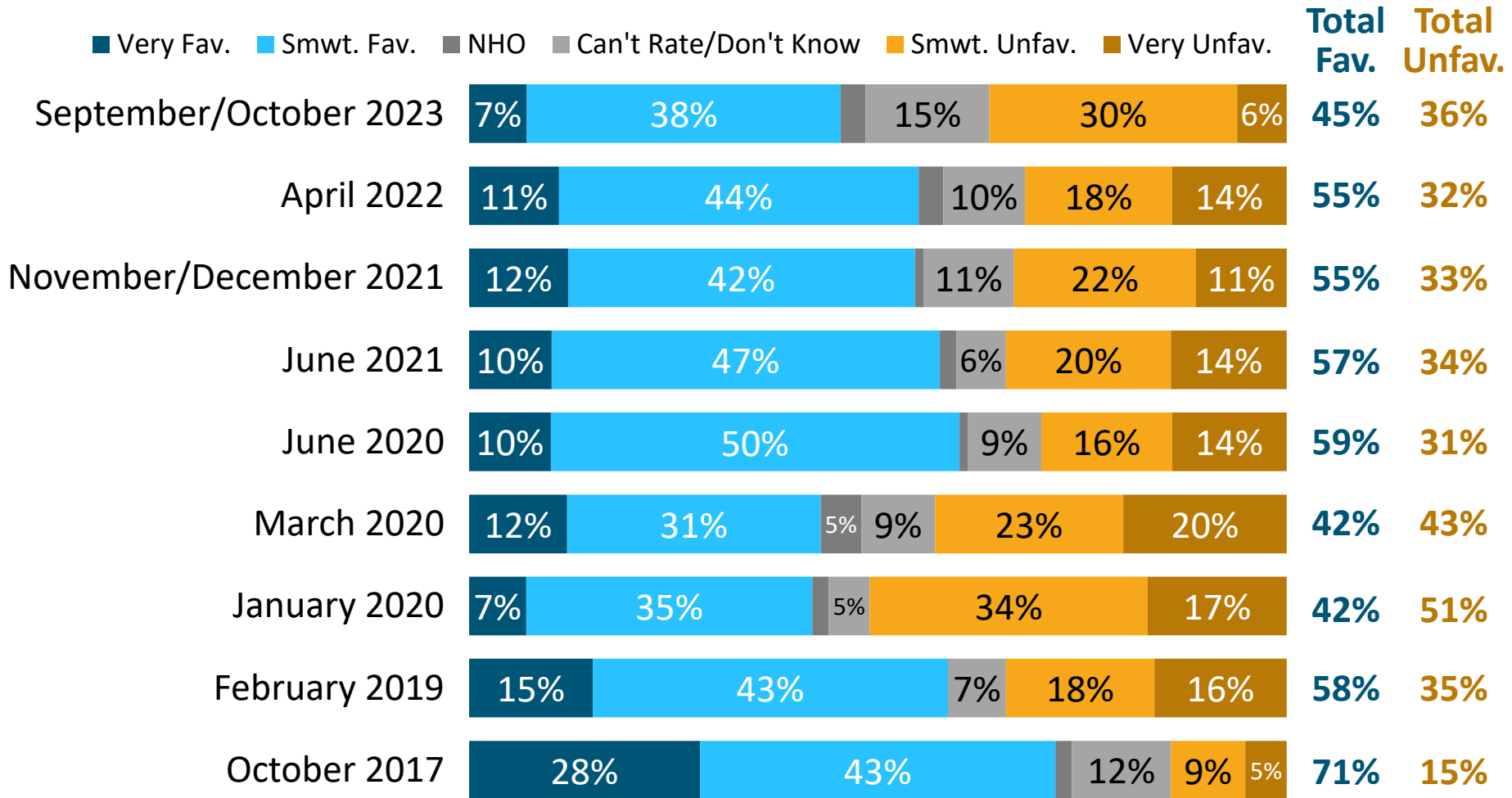
The PCTPA continues to be viewed generally favorably, but isn't well-known.

The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency



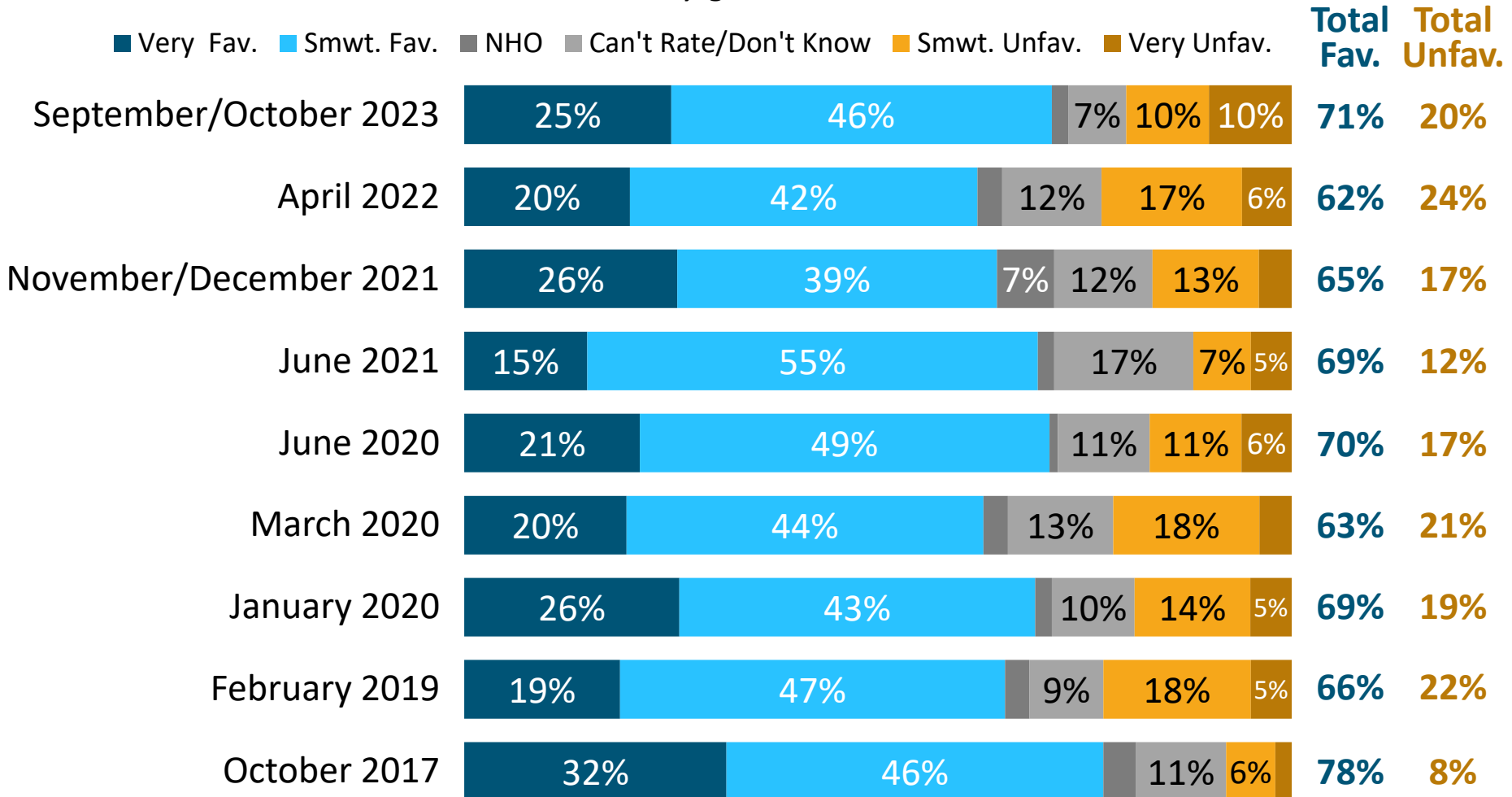
Views of Lincoln's city government are slightly less favorable than last year.

**Lincoln city government, overall*



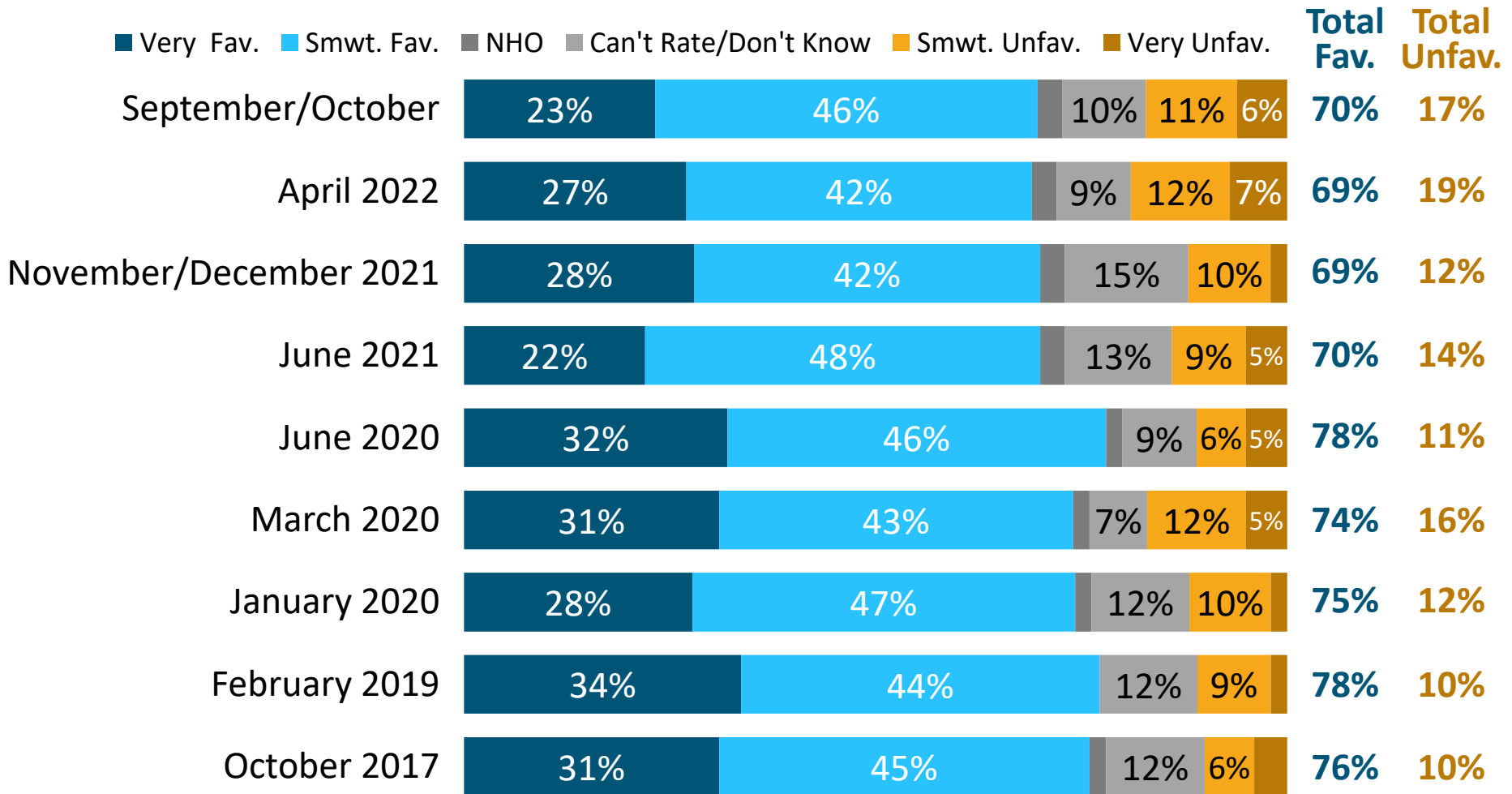
Voters are slightly more positive about Rocklin's city government.

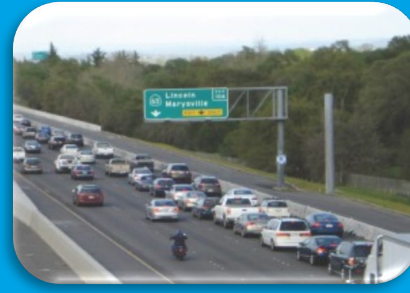
**Rocklin city government, overall*



Views of Roseville's city government are holding steady.

**Roseville city government, overall*





Support for a Potential Transportation Measure

Ballot Language Tested in Split Samples

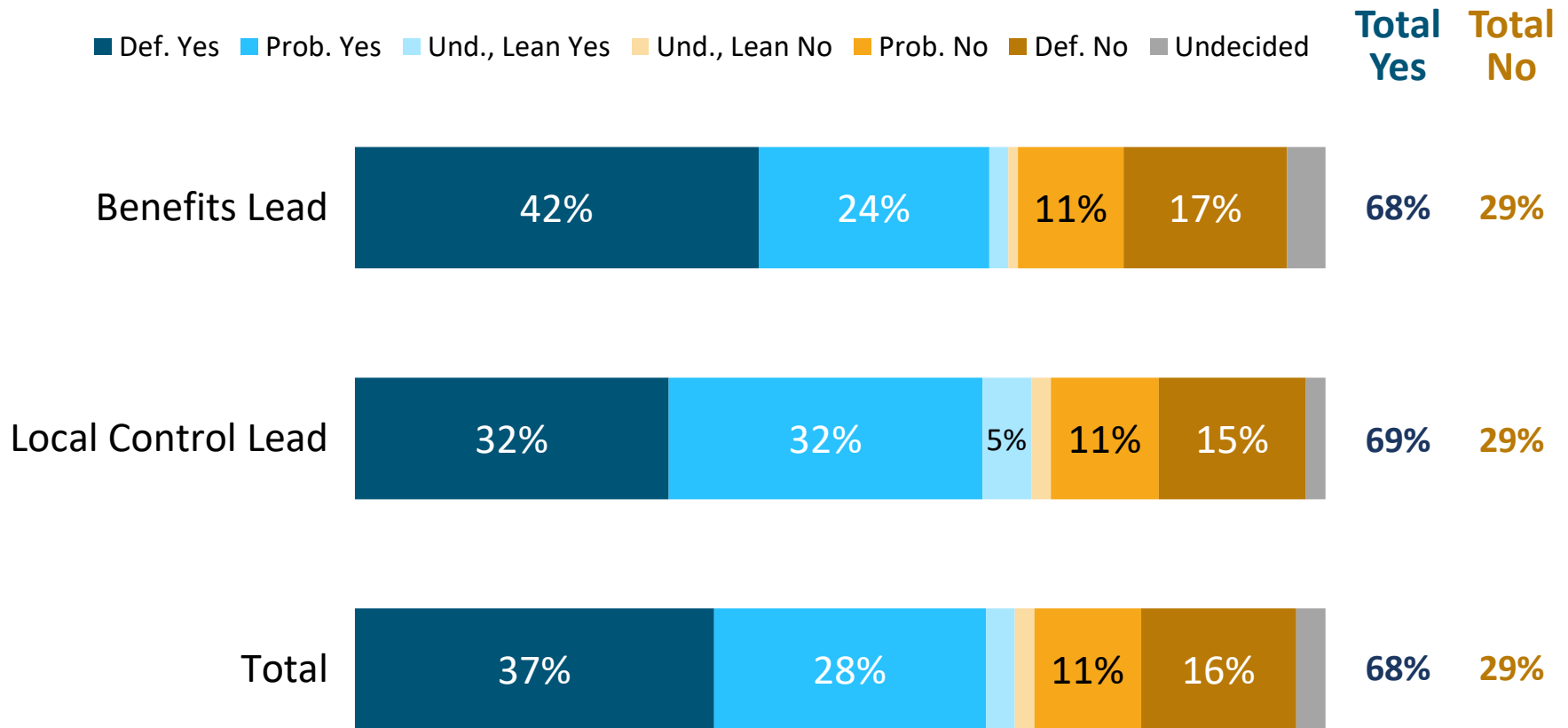
(BENEFITS LEAD)

South Placer Traffic Relief Plan. Shall a measure to reduce traffic congestion and build transportation projects in Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville — including widening Highway 65; fixing the 80/65 Interchange; repairing local roads; guaranteeing more State transportation matching funds; and authorizing bond financing — by establishing a ½¢ sales tax that cannot be taken by the State and would raise approximately \$41,000,000 annually over 30 years, with independent audits and a citizens' oversight committee, be adopted?

(LOCAL CONTROL LEAD)

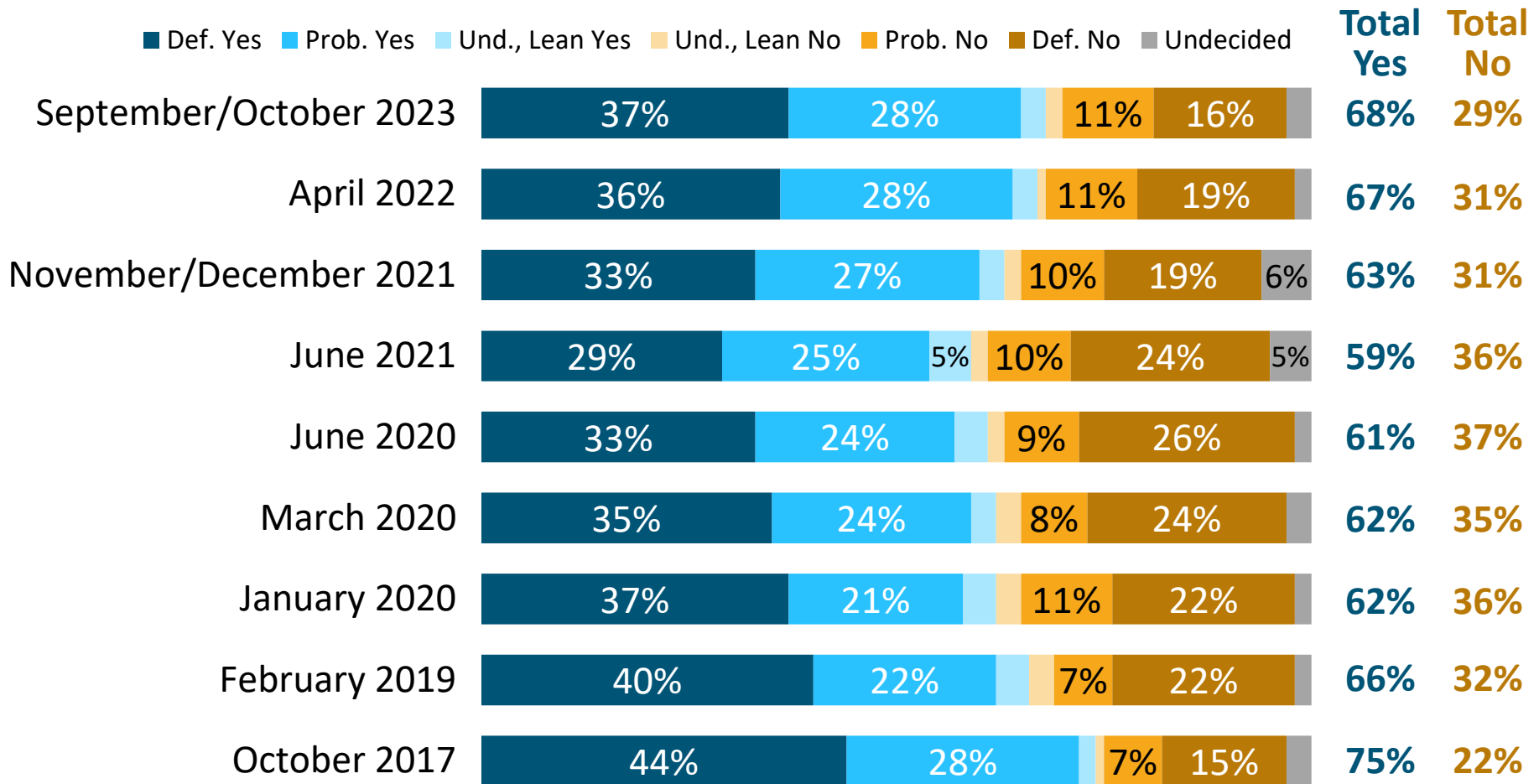
South Placer Traffic Relief/ Local Control Plan. Shall a measure that generates local funding that cannot be taken by the State to reduce traffic congestion and build transportation projects in Lincoln, Rocklin and Roseville — including widening Highway 65; fixing the 80/65 Interchange; repairing local roads; guaranteeing State transportation matching funds; and authorizing bond financing — by establishing a ½¢ sales tax that raises approximately \$41,000,000 annually over 30 years, with independent audits and a citizen's oversight committee, be adopted?

The initial vote totals were virtually identical—and both reached two-thirds—though there was more intense support for the benefits lead language.



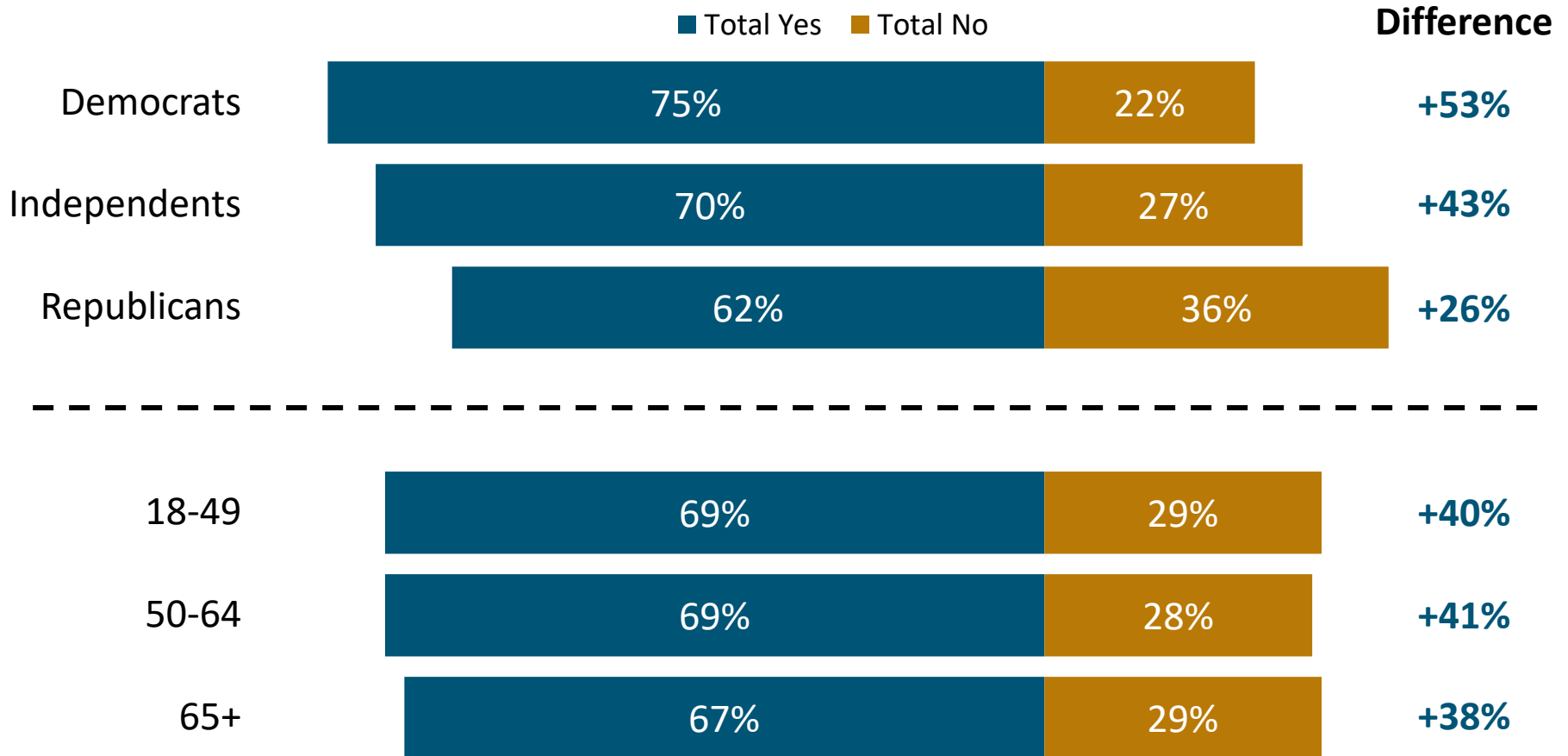
Combined for historical comparisons and to use the full sample for some analysis

Support is marginally higher than seen last year, with the highest “yes” total since 2017.



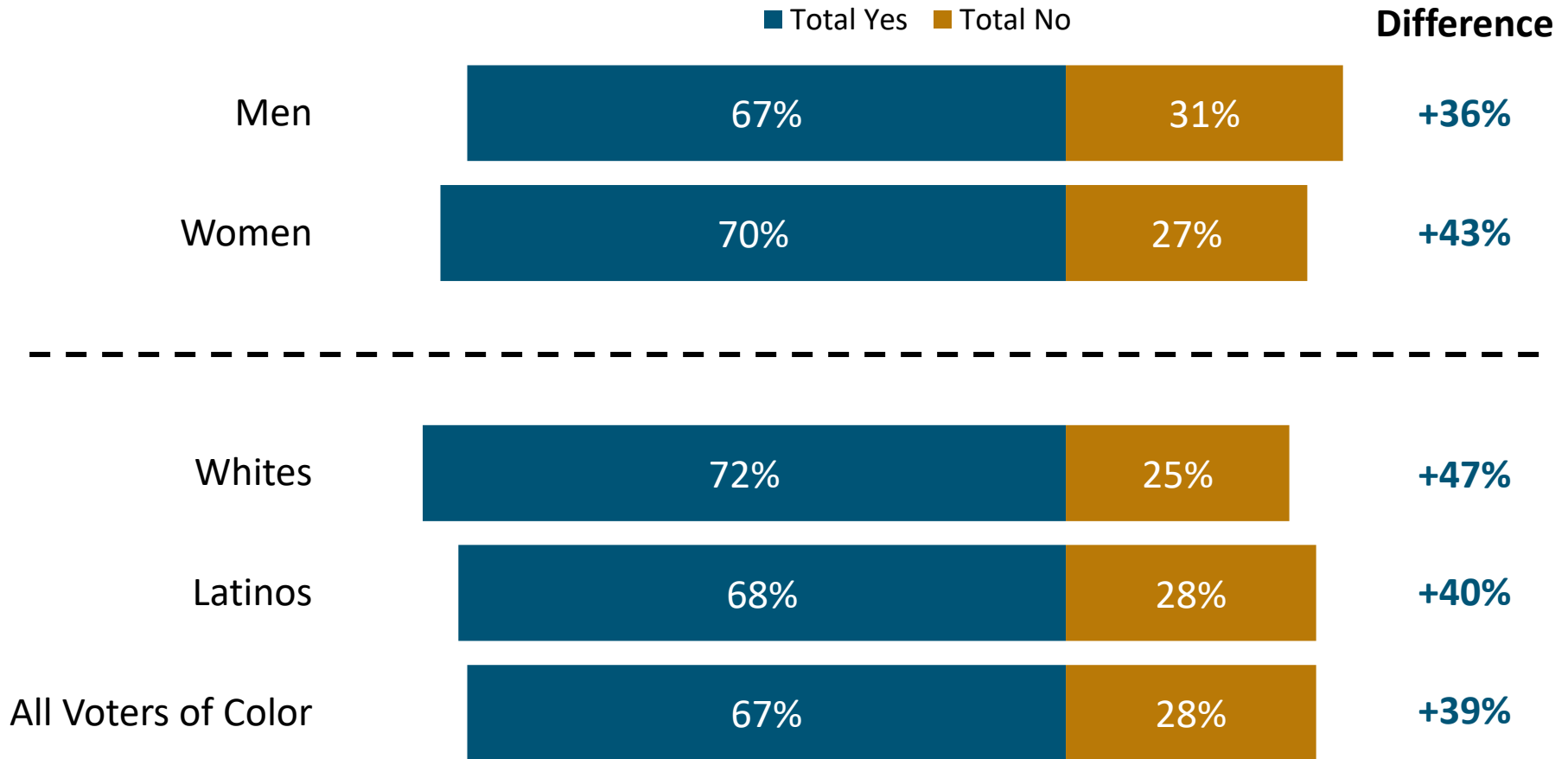
Majorities of Democrats, independents and Republicans expresses support; there was no difference by age.

Initial Vote by Party & Age



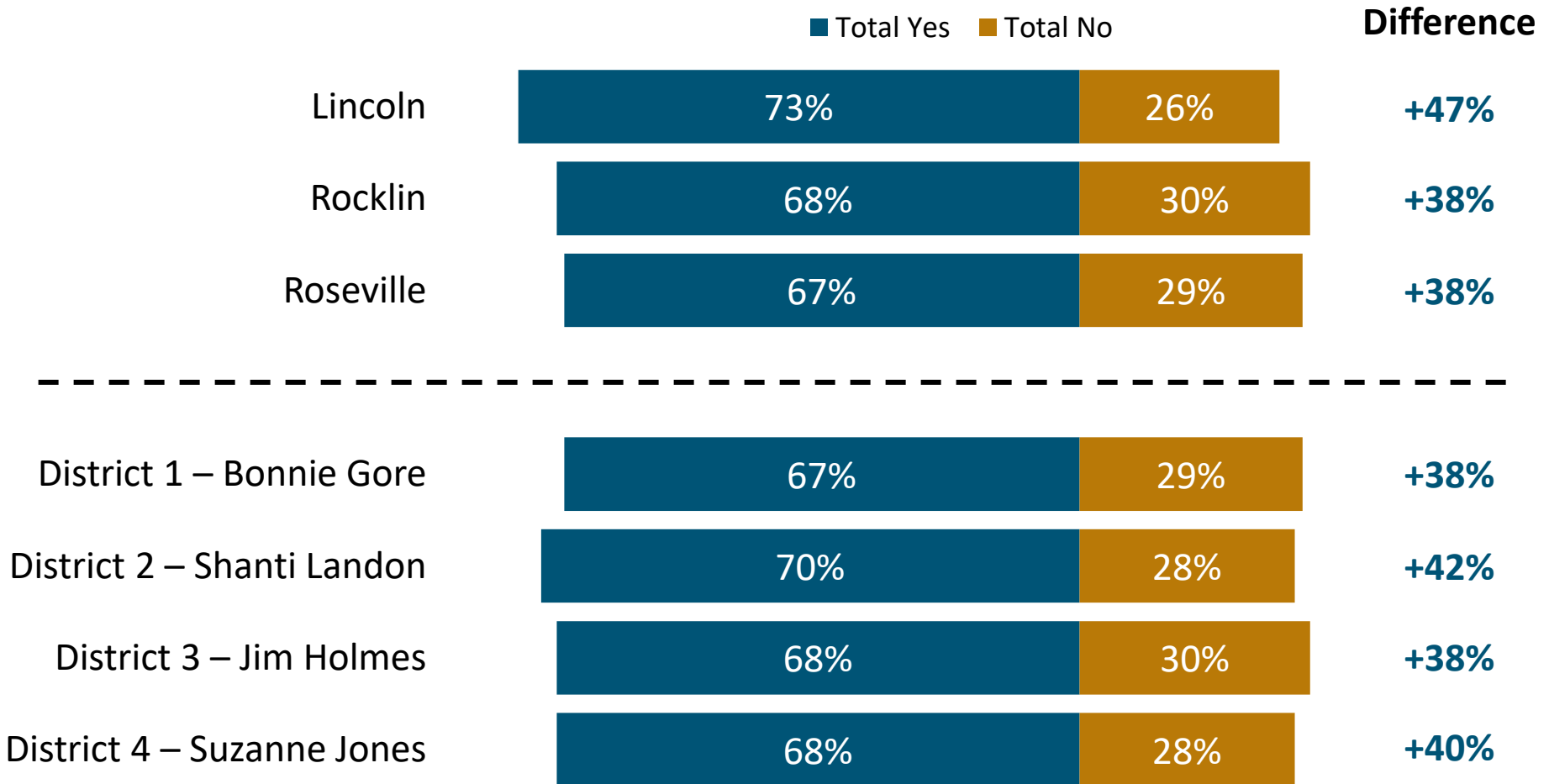
Differences were modest by gender and by ethnicity.

Initial Vote by Gender & Ethnicity



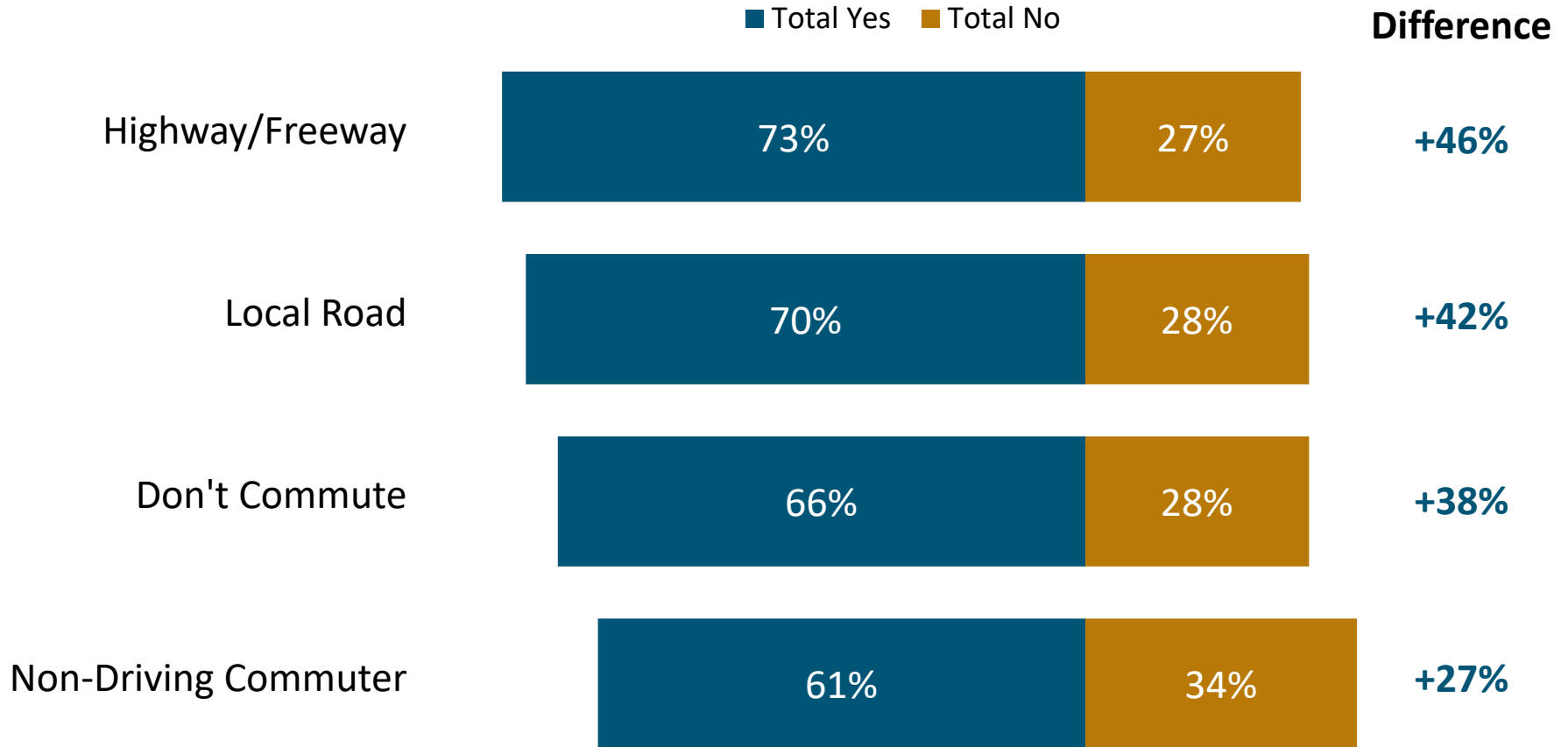
Support is generally consistent by geography, though somewhat higher in Lincoln.

Initial Vote by City/Town & Supervisorial District

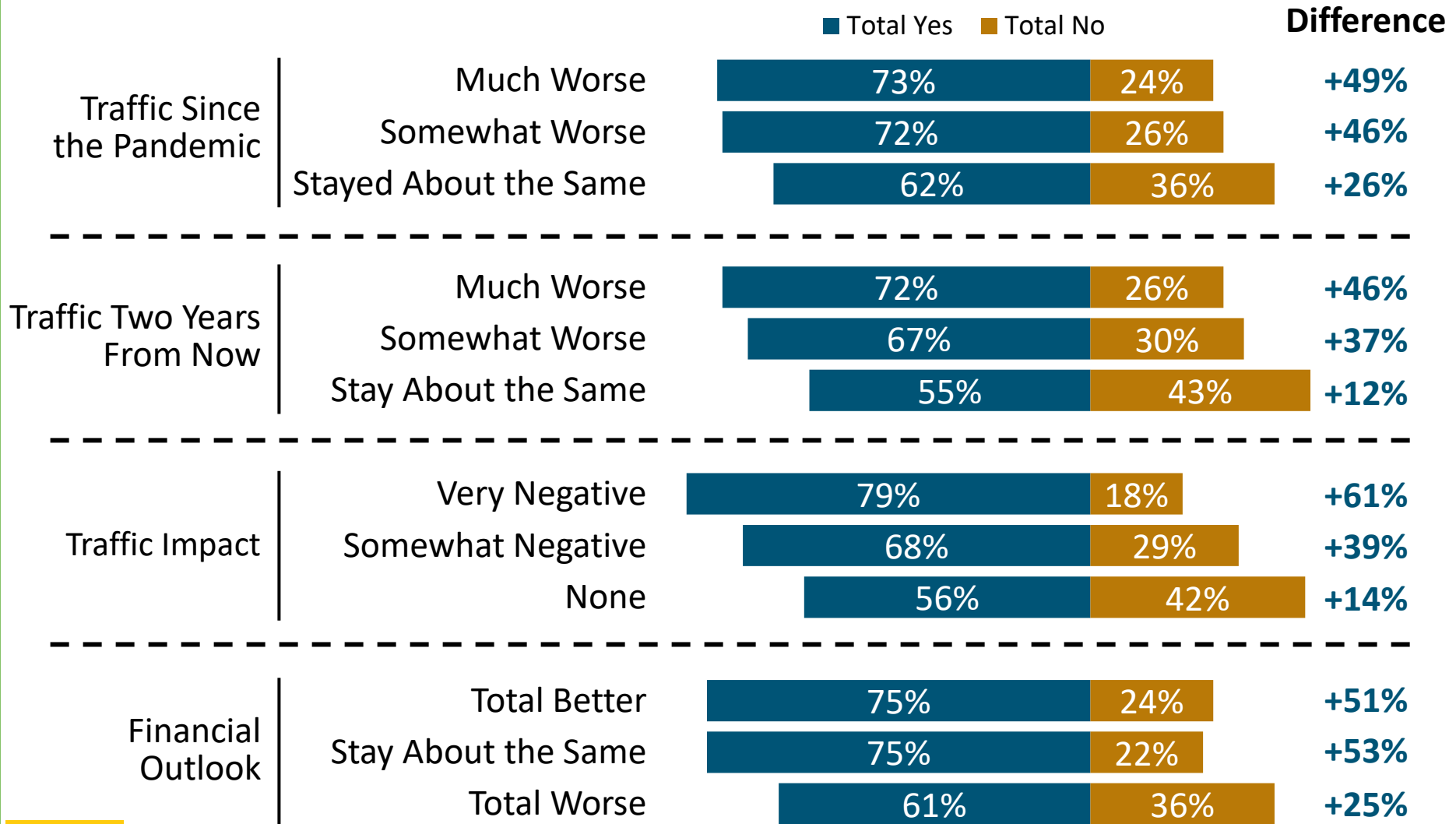


Those who commute on local highways or freeways are most supportive.

Initial Vote by Commute Method

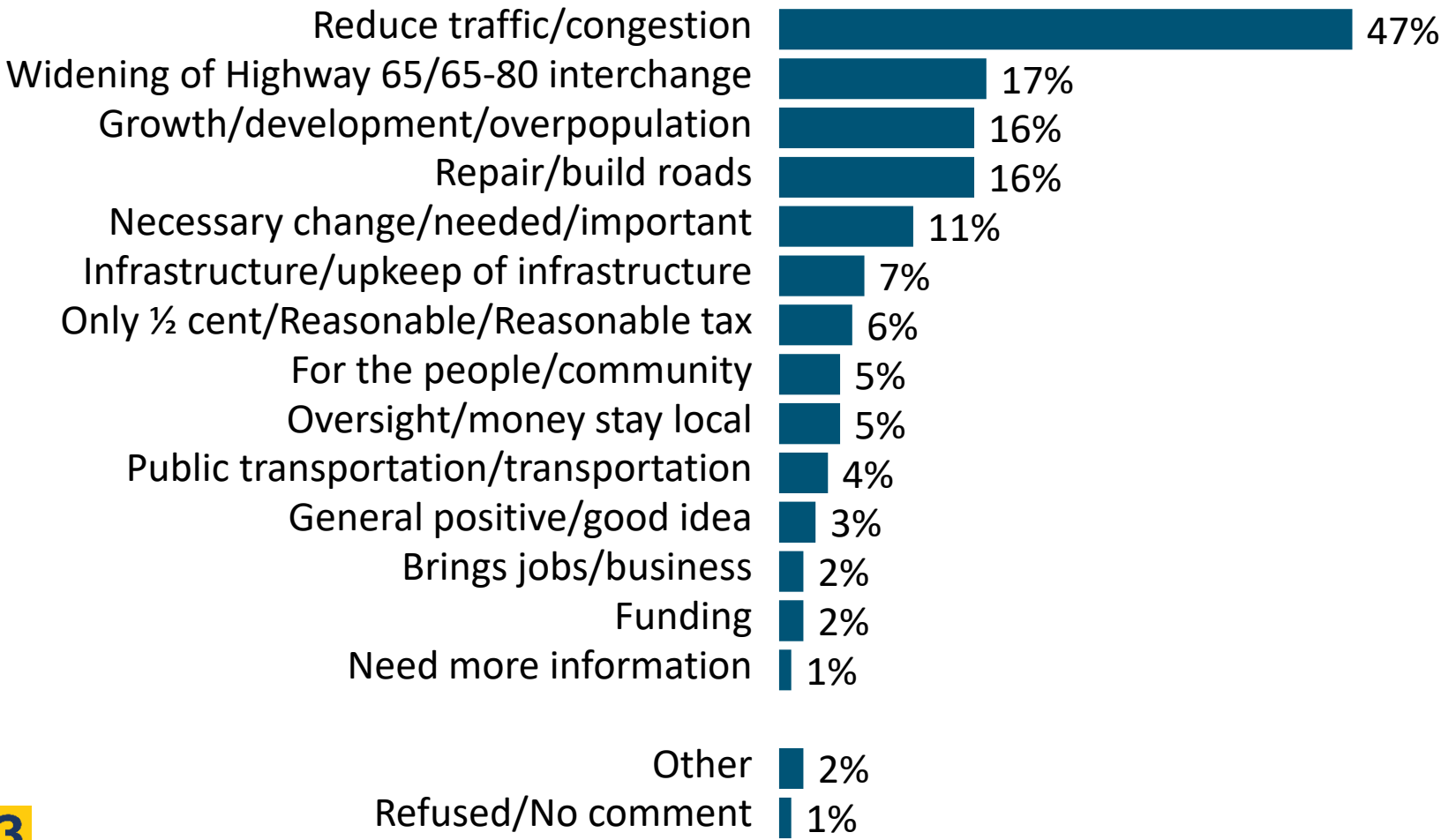


Initial Vote by Traffic & Financial Outlook



Supporters cite the general need to reduce traffic congestion as a primary rationale.

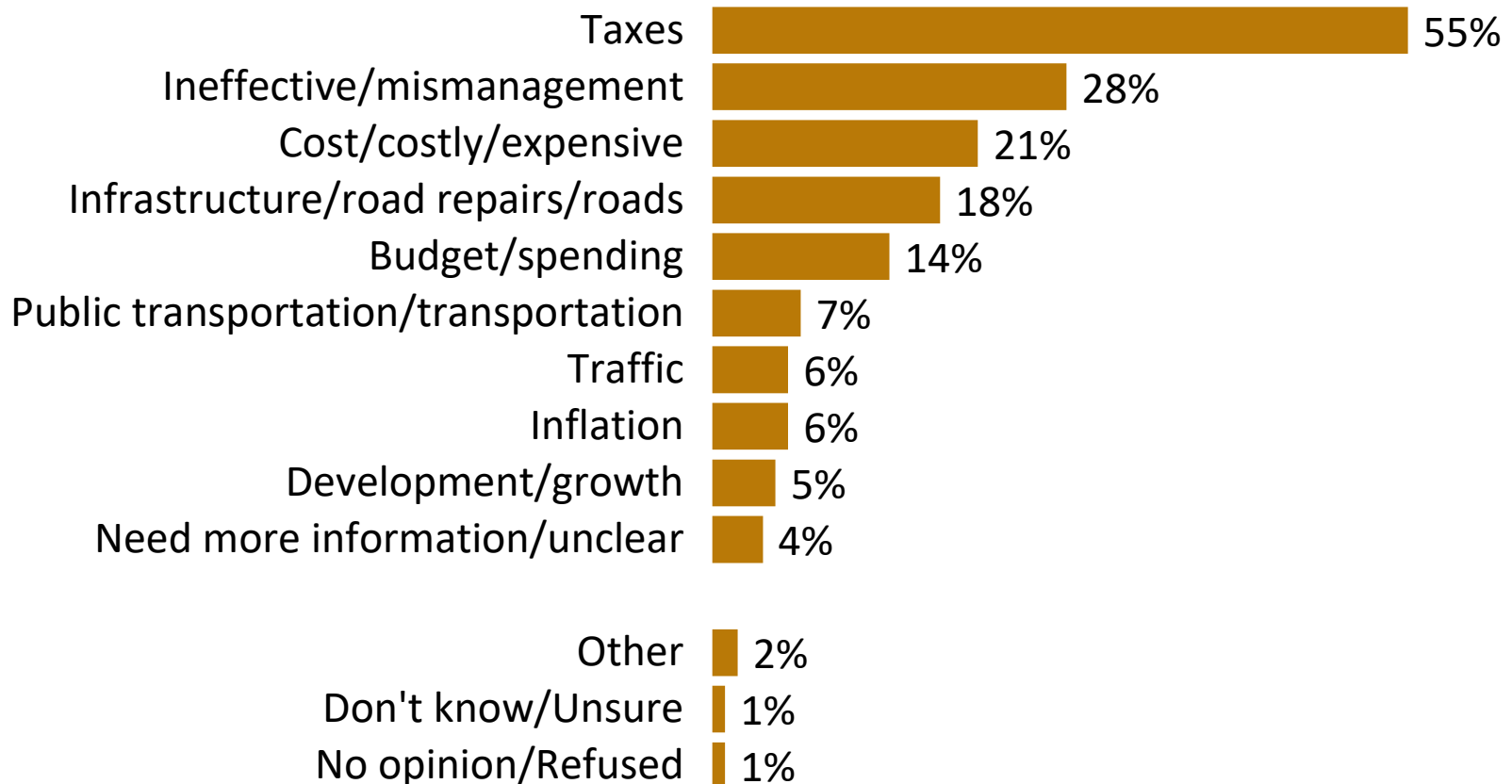
*In a few words of your own, why would you vote YES on this measure?
(Open-ended; Asked of Yes Voters Only, n=432)*

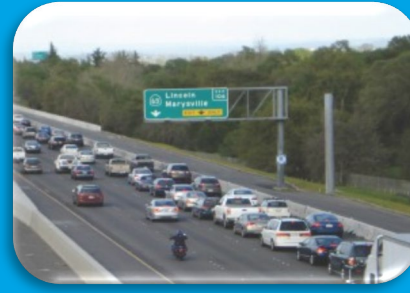


Opponents are primarily concerned about increasing taxes and mismanagement.

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

(Open-ended; Asked of No Voters Only, n=181)





The Impact of Pro and Con Arguments

Supportive Message

Traffic congestion is back to 112 percent of 2019 levels, especially in and around the 80/65 Interchange and on Highway 65. And the number of cars will only increase as our population grows, leading to even greater traffic gridlock. This means that if we don't invest now in projects to better manage traffic flow, the problem will only get worse.

That's where this measure comes in. No one likes raising taxes, but this measure is a critical and necessary part of a long-term plan to address traffic congestion now and into the future. First of all, it will focus funding on improving the 80/65 Interchange and widening Highway 65, the two most important bottlenecks everyone agrees we need to address. Additionally, it will also have some funding to address traffic congestion into the future with other projects and services that will get people out of their cars during rush hour, as well as some funding for basic transportation needs like local road repairs.

The best part of this measure is that it generates locally controlled funds that cannot be taken by the State and are dedicated to local transportation and congestion relief projects in Lincoln, Rocklin and Roseville. This measure will cost residents (**SPLIT SAMPLE A ONLY:** less than one dollar a day) (**SPLIT SAMPLE B:** about 10 dollars a month) and it will make it possible for South Placer County to receive its fair share of once-in-a-lifetime matching funds, which would otherwise go to counties in the Bay Area or Southern California. Furthermore, this measure has strong taxpayer safeguards to ensure the money is spent as promised, including an independent citizens' oversight committee; annual independent audits; and an annual public report to taxpayers.

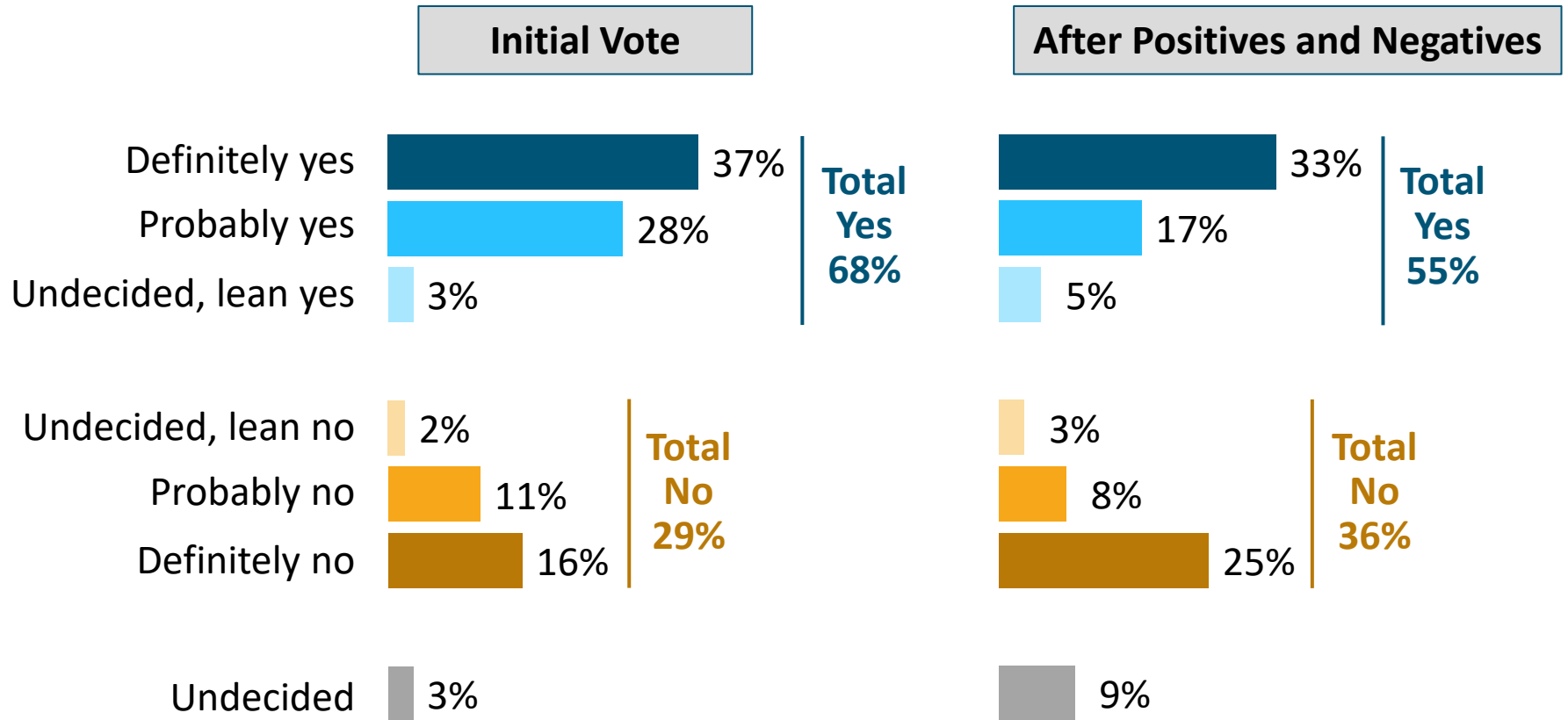
Opposition Message

Every election we are asked to pay more in taxes at the local, county, and state level for many different issues including public safety, libraries, parks, and schools. We simply can't afford to pay more, especially now with inflation and the high cost of living, specifically for housing and healthcare.

But here we go again. And none of this should be a surprise, with the unchecked rate of growth and development in our region. These development projects keep popping up with little accountability to whether our community can actually support more people. What we really need is better planning by local officials, less sprawling development, and more public transportation options.

And with the historical federal infrastructure bill and the State's always large budget, this tax simply isn't needed. Especially since we already pay billions of dollars in gas taxes that are supposed to pay for our roads and freeways, including a state gas tax that increased by 12 cents a gallon not all that long ago. Our local officials need to make sure every single penny we pay in transportation taxes is spent wisely before asking us for a new tax, and that also includes making sure developers pay to build the infrastructure that supports their money-making development deals, not taxpayers.

Combining both versions, support dropped to 55% after presenting pro and con arguments, a dynamic consistently observed in past research.

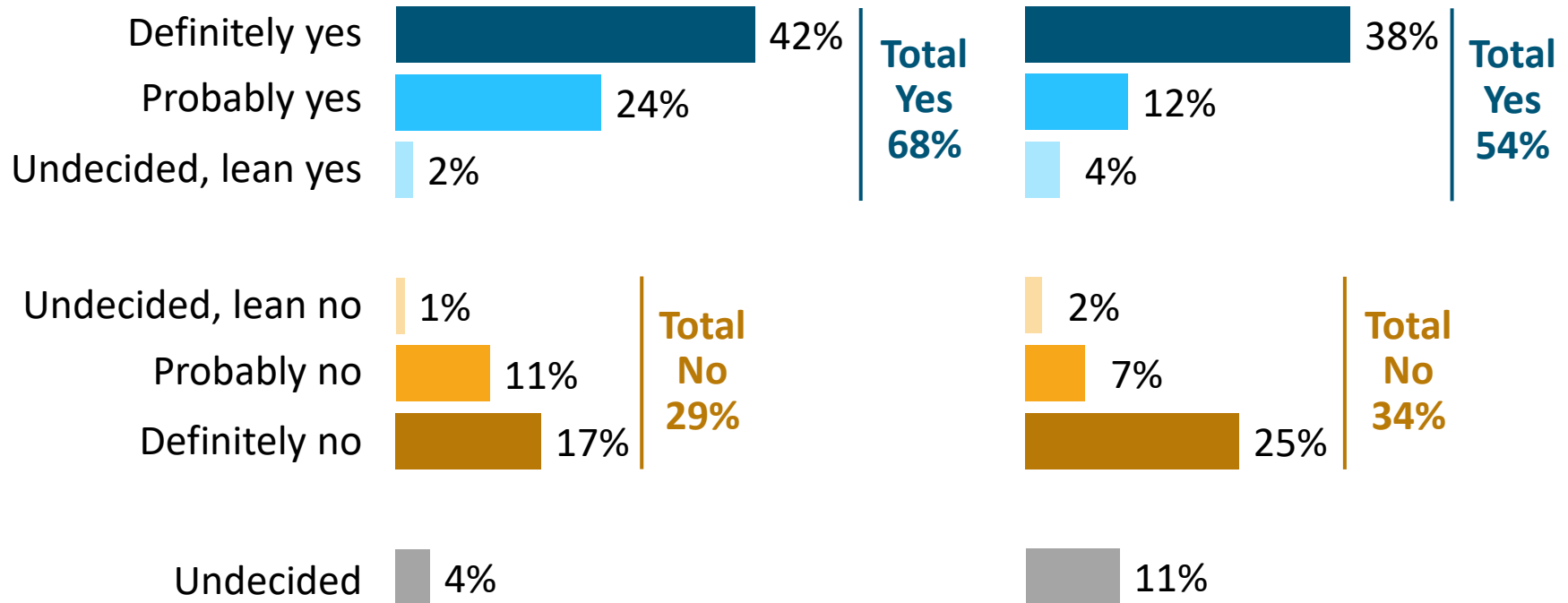


This was also the case for the version of the ballot language leading with benefits...

Benefits Lead

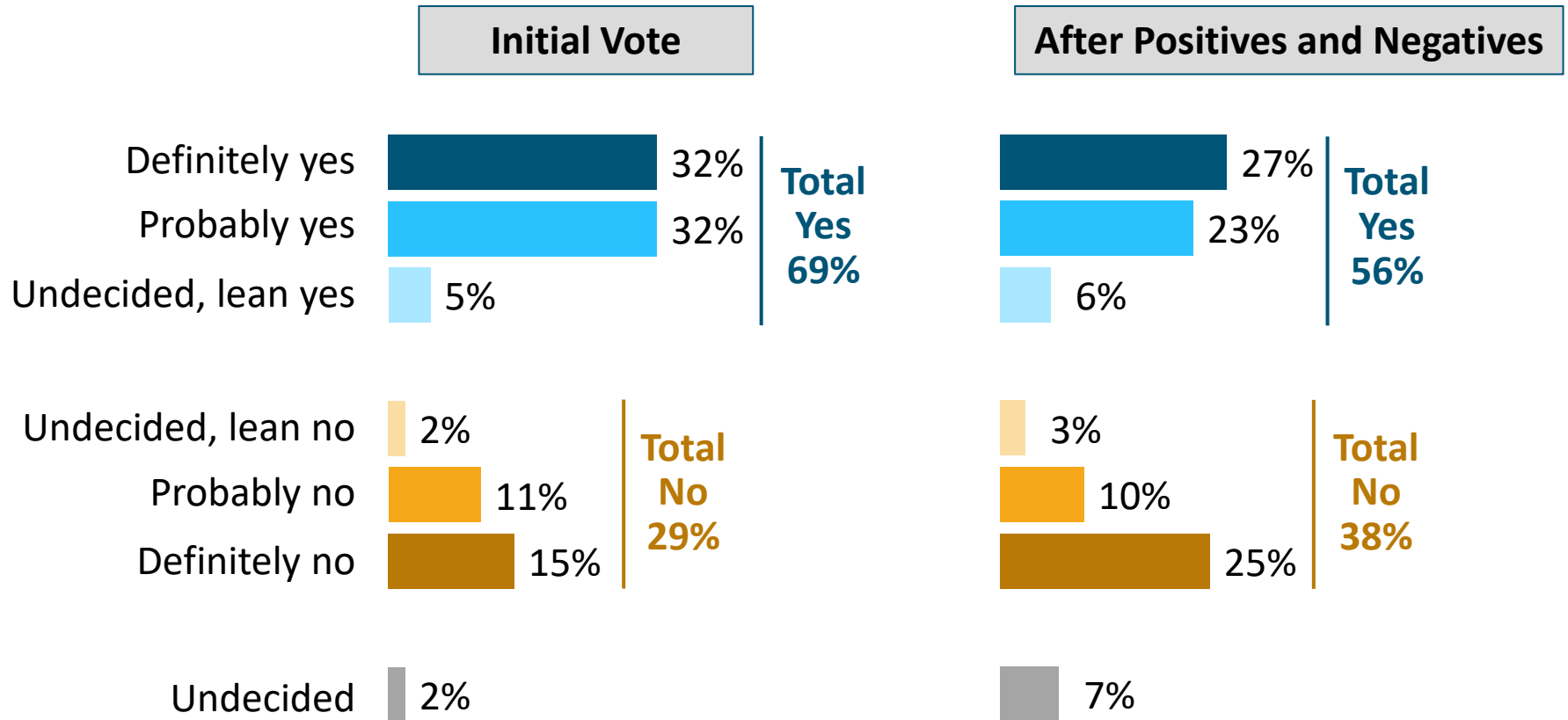
Initial Vote

After Positives and Negatives

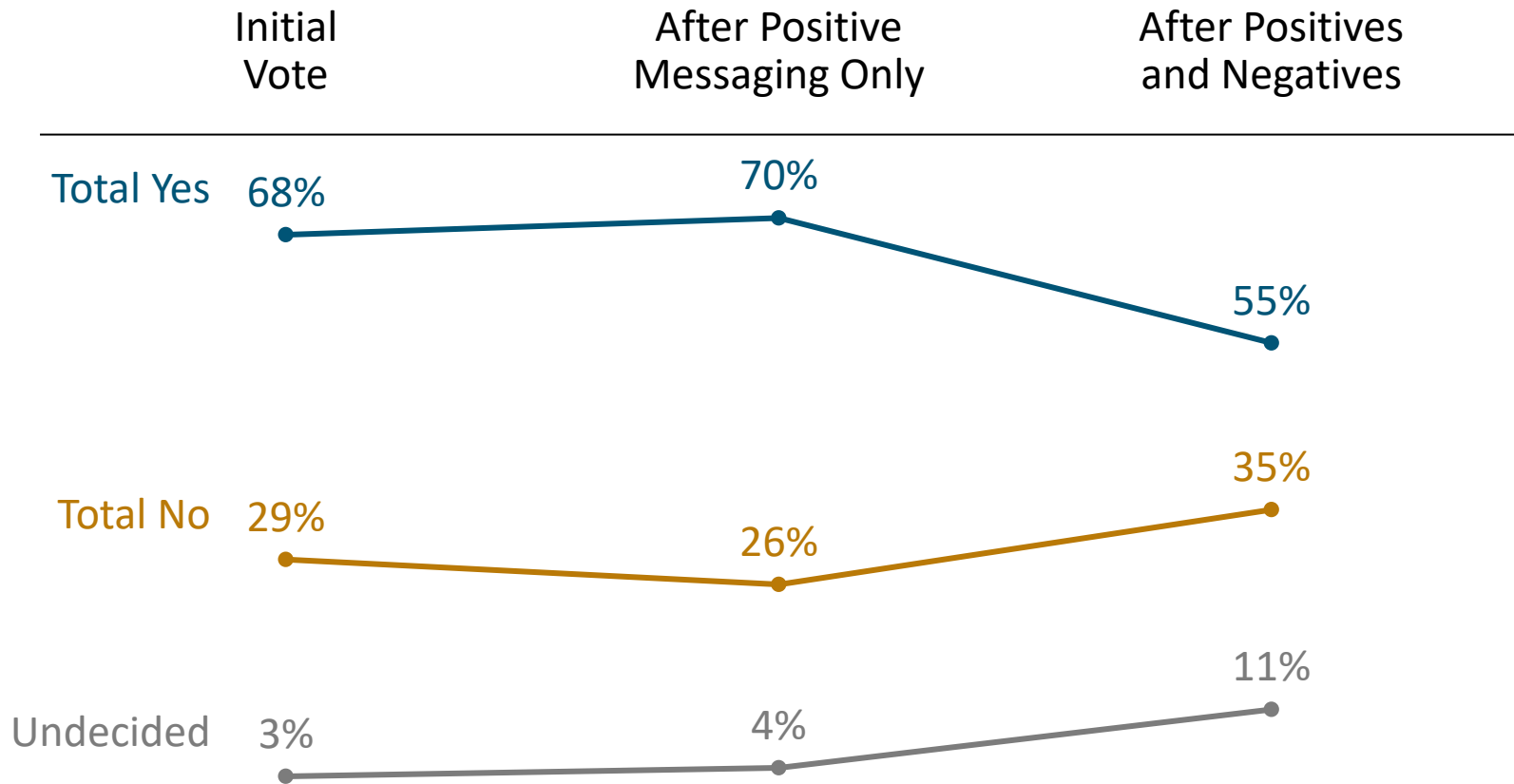


...and the local control lead, though the intensity of support was lower than for the benefits lead.

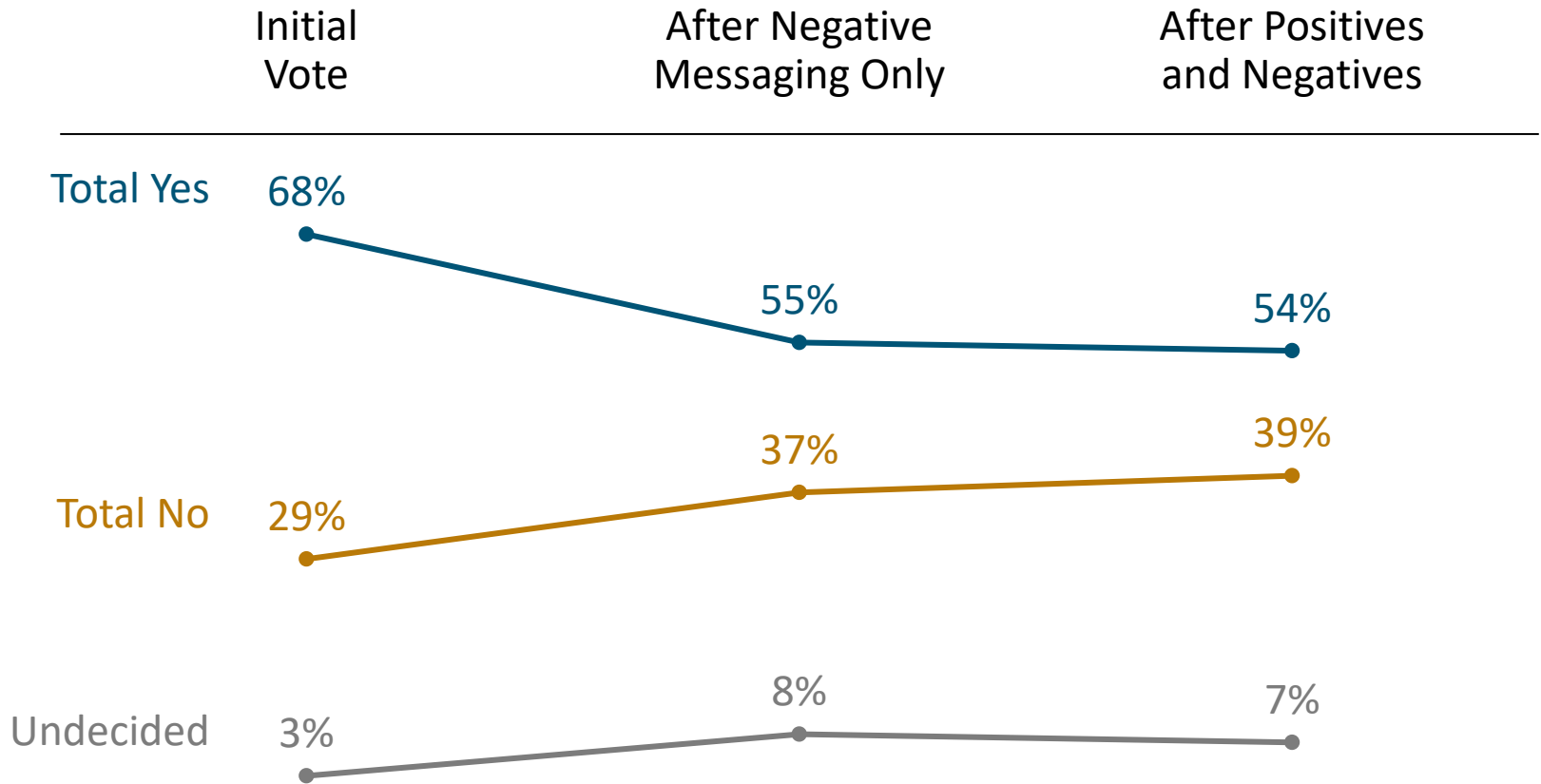
Local Control Lead

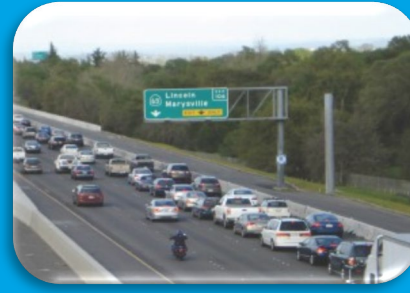


Combining versions, there was a modest increase in support after only presenting positive arguments...



...though positive arguments proved less effective if heard after negatives arguments.

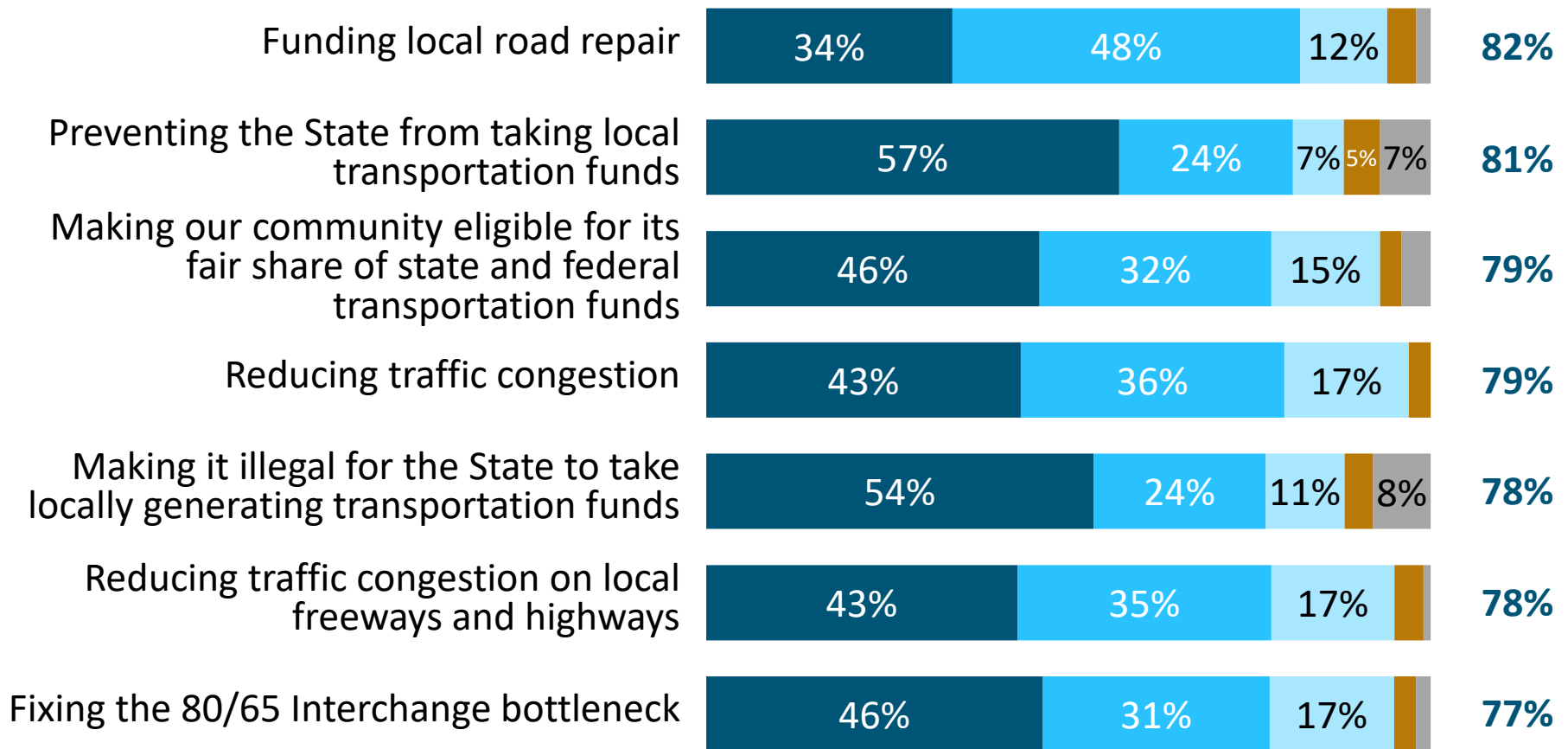




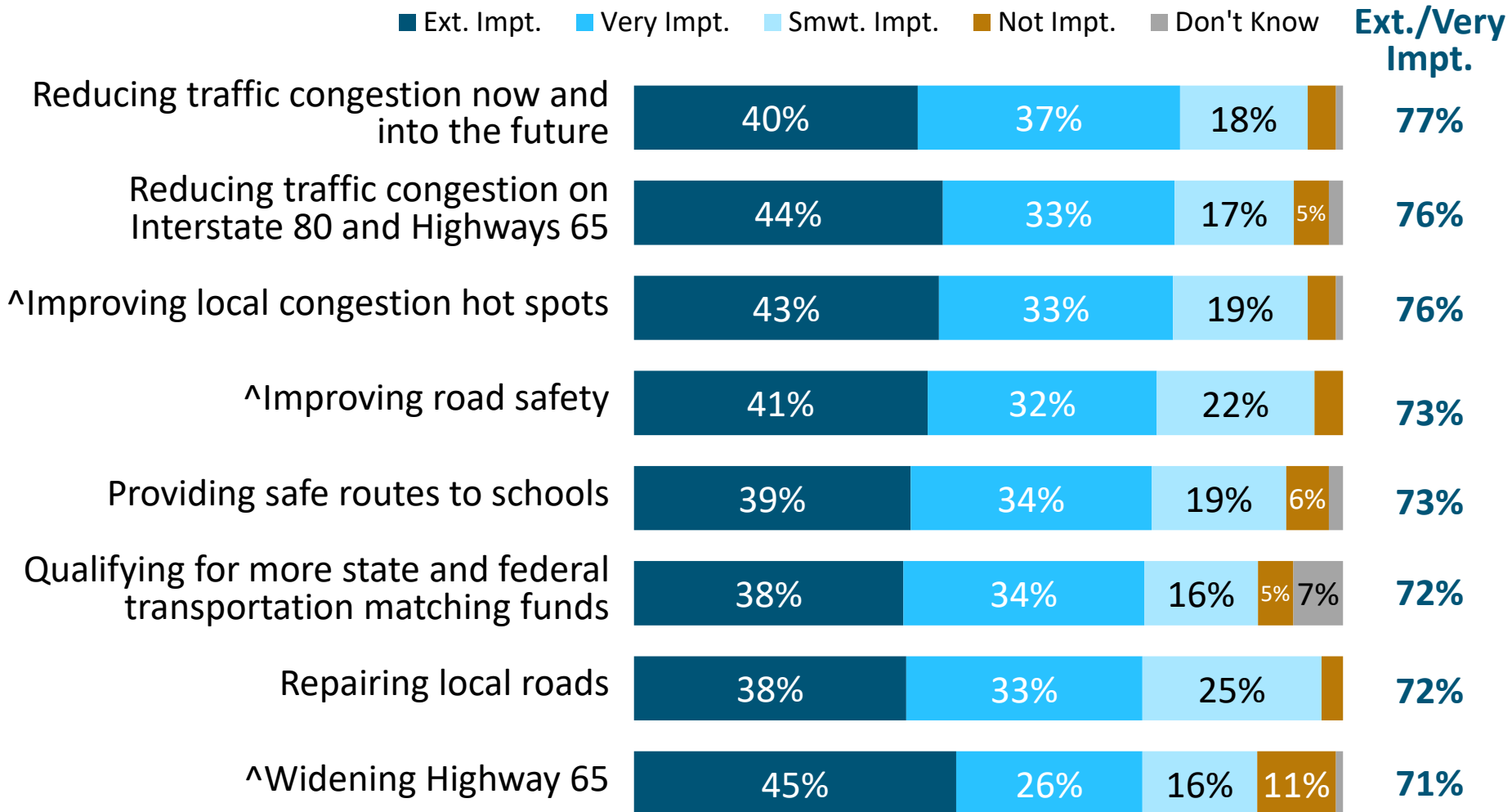
Spending Priorities

While funding local road repair is a top priority, it lacks the intensity of traffic congestion projects and protecting local funds/accessing State funds.

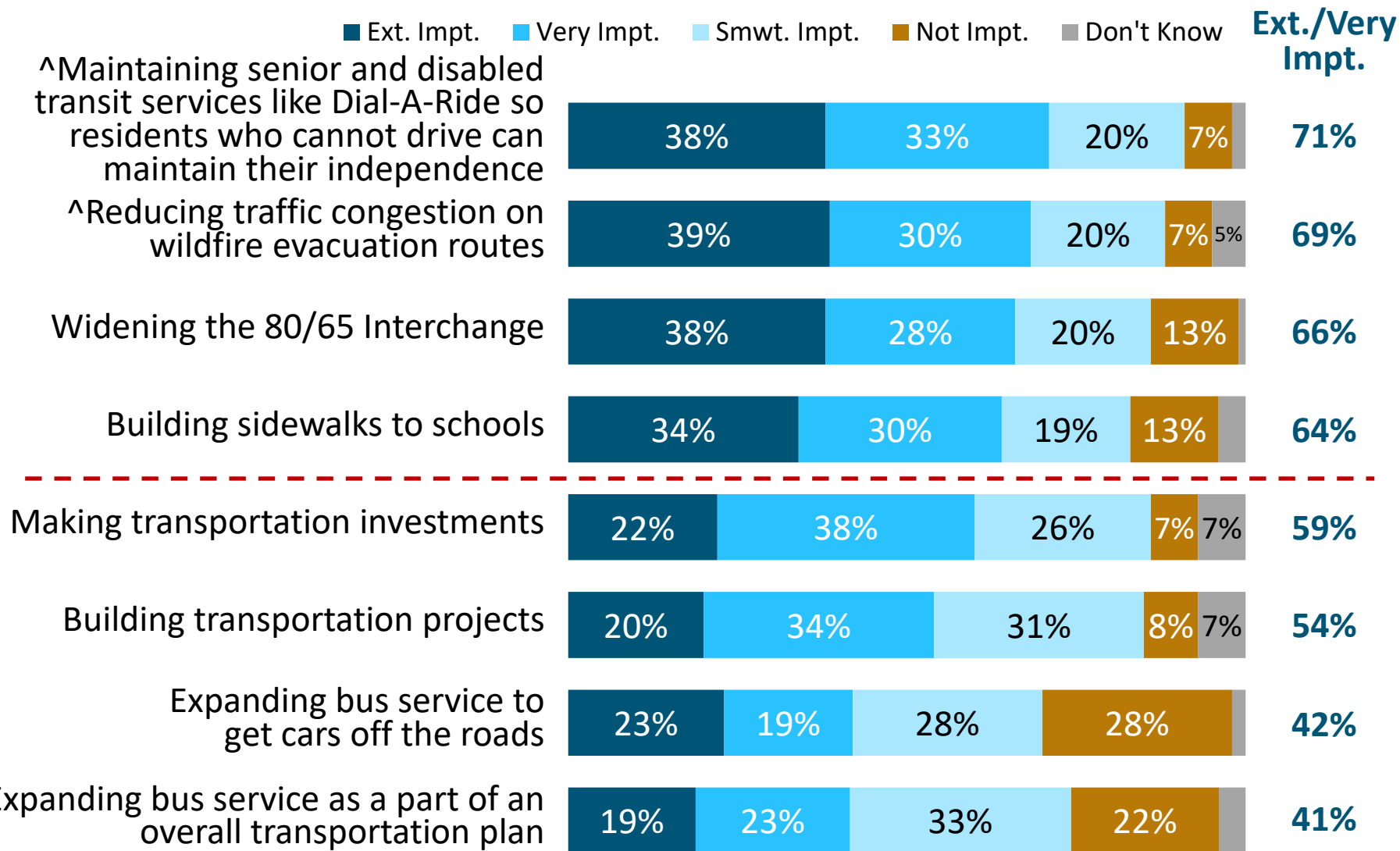
■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Impt. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Impt.**



Many of these projects and goals are prioritized similarly high.



Expanding bus service was seen as a lower priority, though majorities still see it as “somewhat” important.



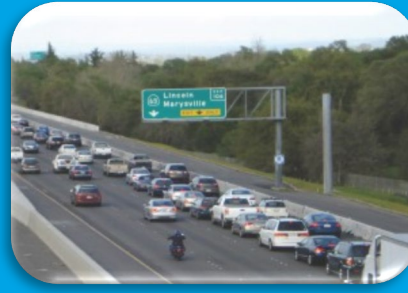
Meaningful differences in how respondents viewed similar projects and measure elements.

Project Element	Ext/Very Important	Difference
Fixing the 80/65 Interchange bottleneck	77%	11%
Widening the 80/65 Interchange	66%	
Funding local road repair	82%	10%
Repairing local roads	72%	
Providing safe routes to schools	73%	9%
Building sidewalks to schools	64%	
Making our community eligible for its fair share of state and federal transportation funds	79%	7%
Qualifying for more state and federal transportation matching funds	72%	

Less Meaningful Differences

(Split Sample MOE $\pm 5.7\%$)

Project (Extremely/Very Important)	Split A & B	Difference
Making transportation investments	59%	5%
Building transportation projects	54%	
Preventing the State from taking local transportation funds	81%	3%
Making it illegal for the State to take locally generating transportation funds	78%	
Reducing traffic congestion on local freeways and highways	78%	2%
Reducing traffic congestion on Interstate 80 and Highways 65	76%	
Reducing traffic congestion	79%	2%
Reducing traffic congestion now and into the future	77%	
Expanding bus service to get cars off the roads	42%	1%
Expanding bus service as a part of an overall transportation plan	41%	



Conclusions

Conclusions: Electoral Environment

- Voters are generally more optimistic than pessimistic about the where the County is headed but are still notably less optimistic than they were pre-pandemic.
- Many voters are very concerned about costs of living issues and specifically gas prices.
- And while only one-third worry that their personal finances will be worse in the upcoming future, that share continues to grow.
- While those dynamics create headwinds for a potential measure, a growing tailwind is concern about traffic congestion.
- Overall concerns about traffic are essentially back to where they were pre-pandemic; furthermore, large shares fear it will only get worse and has a negative impact and their quality of life.

Conclusions: Measure Viability

- The overall dynamic of support seen in this survey is similar to past surveys: initial strong majority support that falls into the mid-to-low 50s after pro and con arguments.
- However, the starting point of support is at its highest level—admittedly by just a few points—than it has been in years.
- Consequently, a potential measure is looking as strong as it has been since before the pandemic.
- One of the key factors will be whether voters continue to feel the impact of traffic congestion and whether that outpaces growing concern about economic factors and personal finances.
- Additionally, a measure will face challenging odds at the two-thirds level in the face of active and resourced opposition, though ACA 1 might help improve viability were it to pass this November.

For more information, contact:



OPINION
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