



# Voter Support for a Potential South Placer County Transportation Sales Tax Measure



**Key Findings of a Survey Conducted:  
November 30-December 5, 2021**



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY

220-6273

# Survey Specifics and Methodology

<b>Dates</b>	November 30-December 5, 2021
<b>Survey Type</b>	Dual-mode Voter Survey
<b>Research Population</b>	Likely November 2022 Voters in South Placer County
<b>Total Interviews</b>	632
<b>Margin of Sampling Error</b>	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
<b>Data Collection Modes</b>	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews

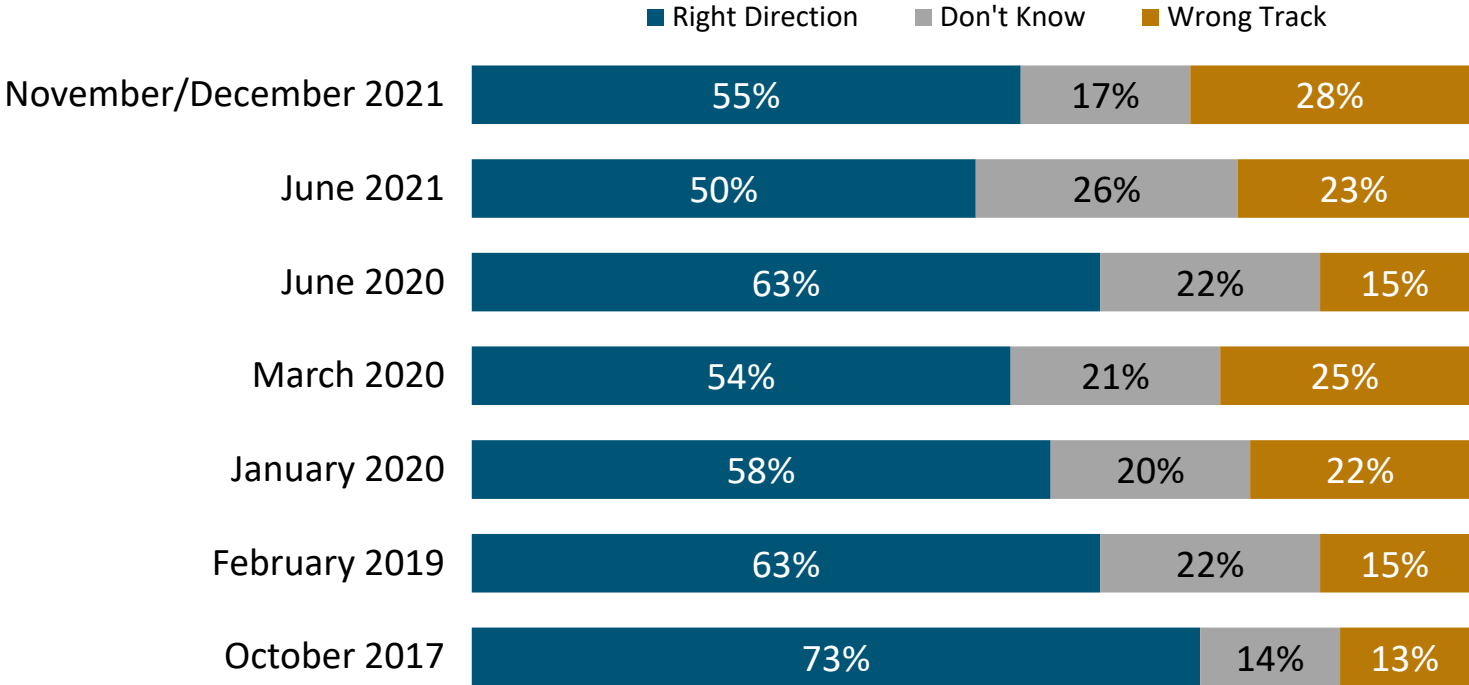
*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*



# Views of Life in Placer County

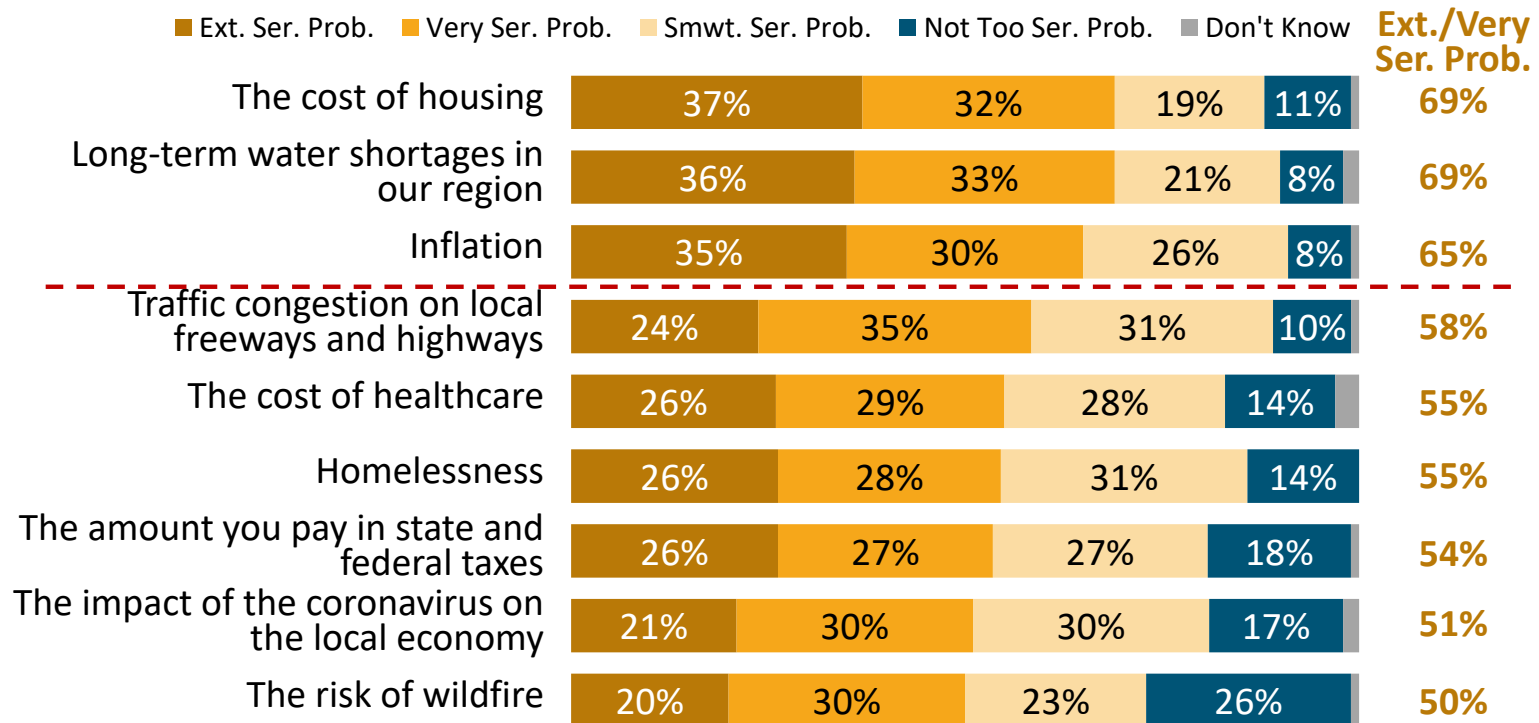
# Voters are slightly more optimistic about the direction of the County than they were this summer.

*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?*

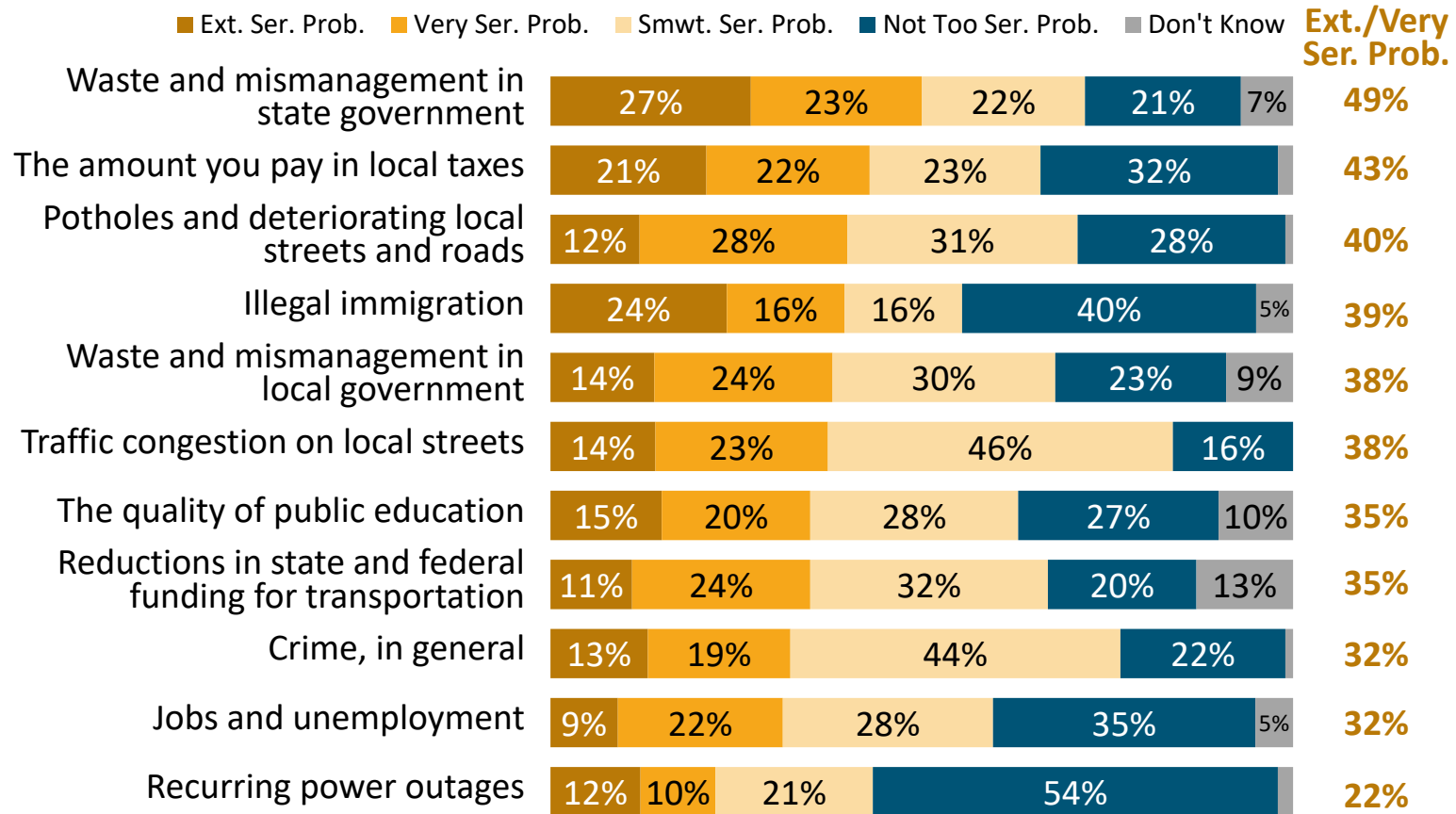


# The cost of housing, water shortages, and inflation are perceived as the most serious problems facing the area.

*I'd like to read you a brief list of issues that could be problems for people living in your local area. Please tell me whether you personally consider it to be an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or a not too serious problem at all for people living in your area.*



# Crime, unemployment, and power outages are least concerning.



Q4. I'd like to read you a brief list of issues that could be problems for people living in your local area. Please tell me whether you personally consider it to be an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or a not too serious problem at all for people living in your area.  
Split Sample

## Traffic on local freeways has risen slightly as a concern, but not to pre-pandemic levels.

*(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)*

Issue	Oct. 2017	Feb. 2019	Jan. 2020	March 2020	June 2020	June 2021	Nov./Dec. 2021	June 2021-Nov./Dec. 2021 Difference
Potholes and deteriorating local streets and roads	35%	43%	41%	39%	38%	32%	40%	+8%
Traffic congestion on local freeways and highways	58%	67%	63%	66%	55%	55%	58%	+3%
The cost of housing	--	54%	57%	56%	49%	63%	69%	+3%
Illegal immigration	32%	45%	43%	35%	32%	36%	39%	+3%
Jobs and unemployment	22%	21%	17%	23%	39%	31%	32%	+1%
Long-term water shortages in our region	41%	49%	50%	57%	50%	69%	69%	0%
The amount you pay in state and federal taxes	43%	52%	56%	56%	58%	54%	54%	0%
The amount you pay in local taxes	29%	33%	37%	44%	37%	42%	43%	-1%
*Waste and mismanagement in local government	47%	42%	43%	48%	37%	40%	38%	-2%

Q4. I'd like to read you a brief list of issues that could be problems for people living in your local area. Please tell me whether you personally consider it to be an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or a not too serious problem at all for people living in your area.  
Split Sample

# Wildfire has decreased the most as a concern since the summer.

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

Issue	Oct. 2017	Feb. 2019	Jan. 2020	March 2020	June 2020	June 2021	Nov./Dec. 2021	June 2021-Nov./Dec. 2021 Difference
Homelessness	--	54%	58%	59%	52%	59%	55%	-4%
The cost of healthcare	57%	67%	63%	60%	64%	60%	55%	-5%
Crime, in general	--	--	--	--	--	37%	32%	-5%
Reductions in state and federal funding for transportation	31%	43%	45%	46%	42%	40%	35%	-5%
The quality of public education	28%	37%	39%	38%	42%	41%	35%	-6%
*The impact of the coronavirus on the local economy	--	--	--	38%	75%	57%	51%	-6%
Traffic congestion on local streets	--	47%	54%	52%	33%	45%	38%	-7%
Recurring power outages	--	--	29%	30%	27%	29%	22%	-7%
*Waste and mismanagement in state government	47%	60%	54%	59%	49%	58%	49%	-9%
The risk of wildfire	--	--	--	--	--	65%	50%	-15%

Q4. I'd like to read you a brief list of issues that could be problems for people living in your local area. Please tell me whether you personally consider it to be an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or a not too serious problem at all for people living in your area.  
Split Sample \*Wording Differs Slightly in Previous Surveys



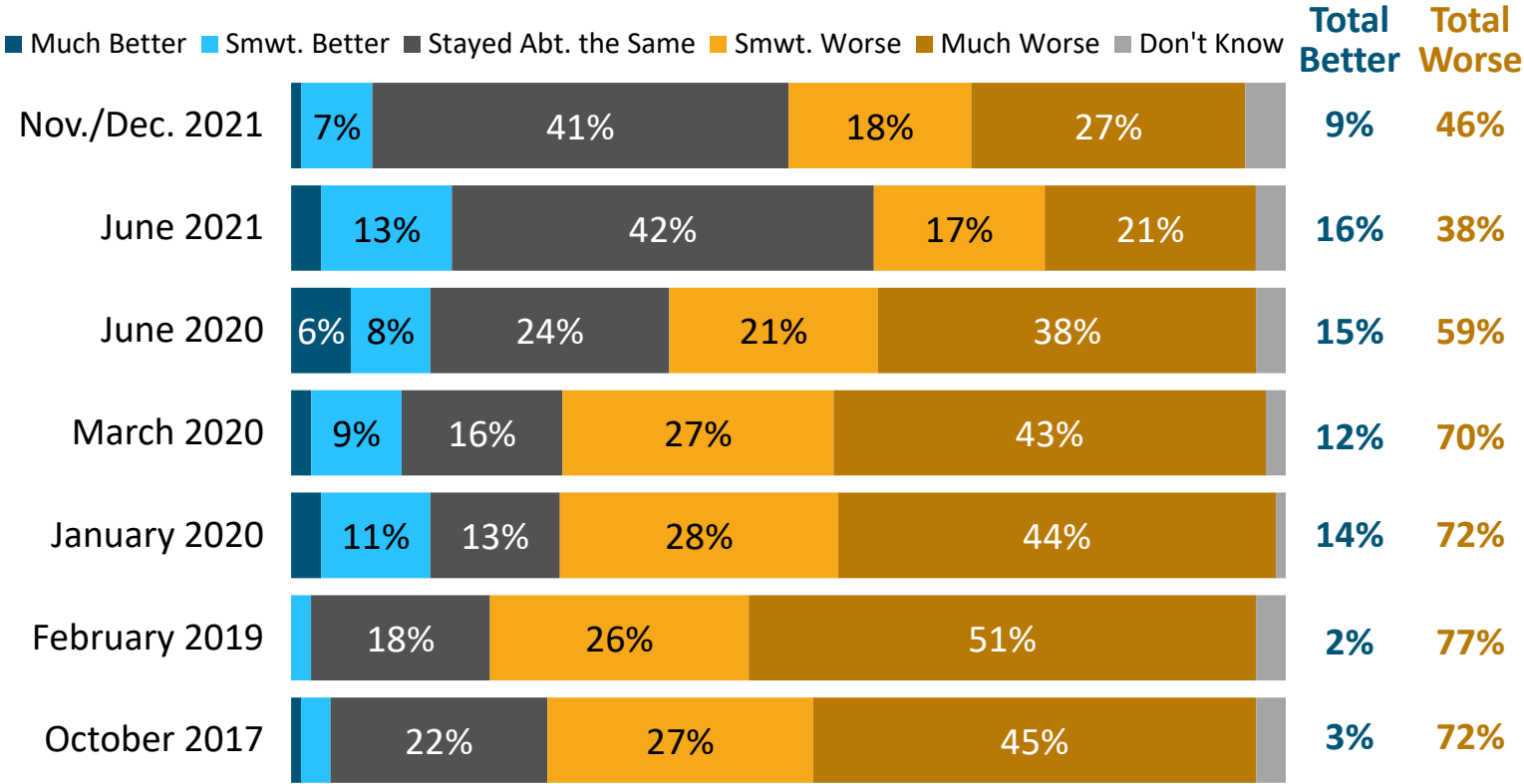
# Digging Deeper into Perceptions of Traffic Congestion

- In each survey we have included a general question about whether voters feel traffic congestion has generally gotten better, worse or stayed the same in recent years.
- The coronavirus pandemic required us to amend this question in the past two surveys, as well as include prospective questions about future traffic congestion.

<b>June 2021 and November/December 2021</b>	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?
<b>June 2020</b>	Thinking specifically about traffic congestion—and putting aside the impact of stay-at-home orders over the past couple of months—do you feel it has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same over the past couple of years?
<b>Prior Surveys</b>	Thinking specifically about traffic congestion, do you feel it has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same over the past couple of years?

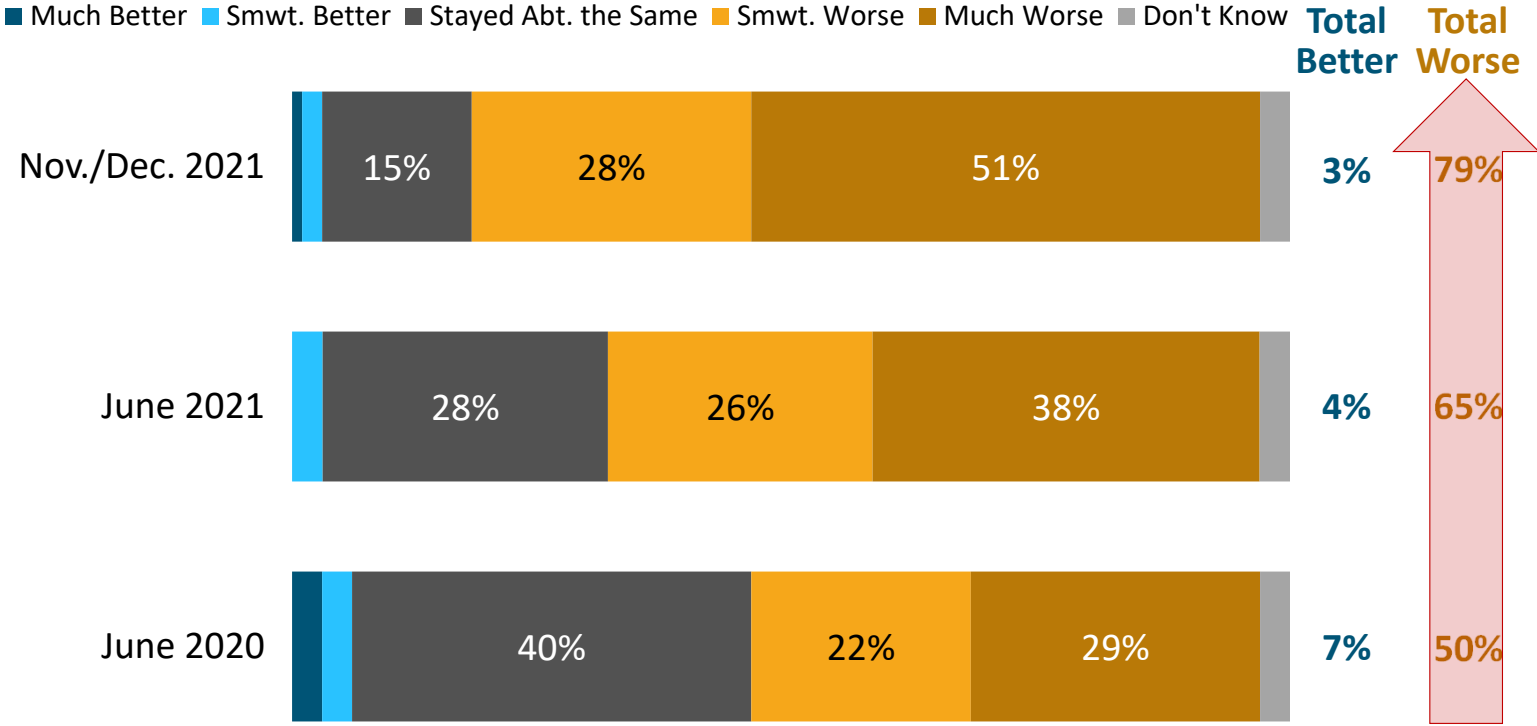
# A plurality say traffic is worse than it was pre-pandemic, creeping up from this summer.

*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?*



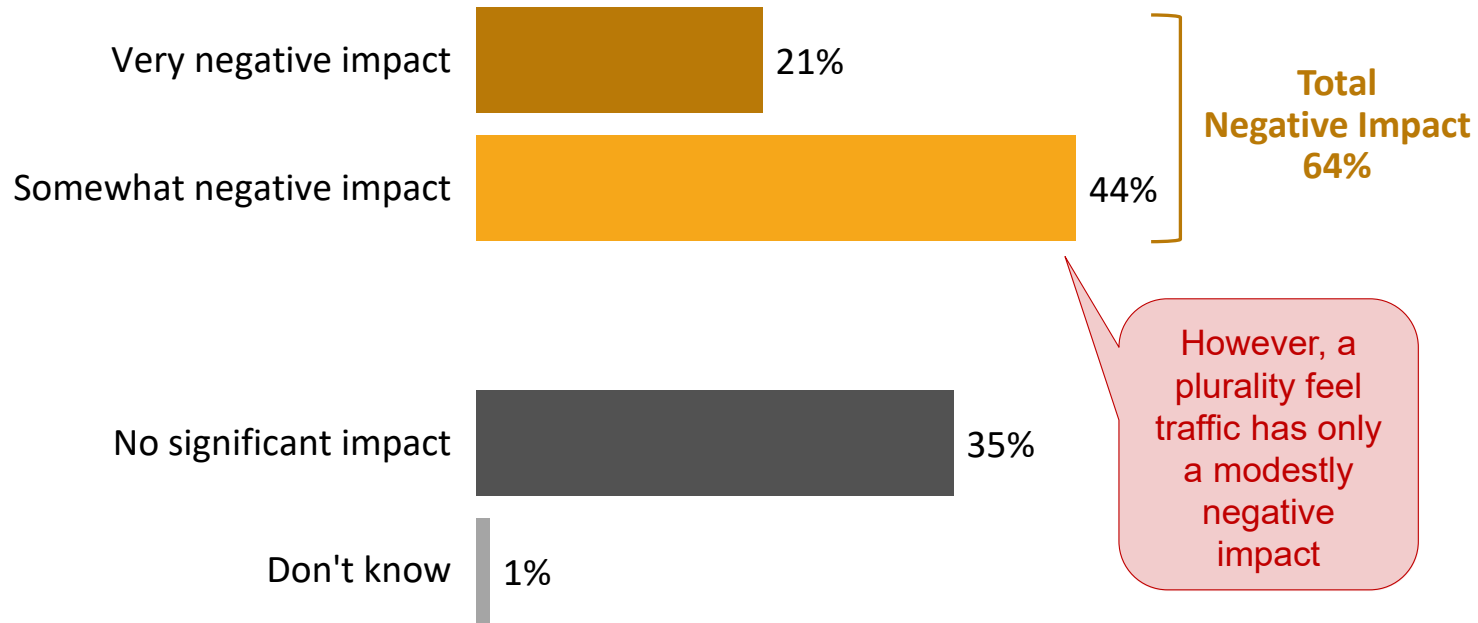
# Four in five say that traffic will be worse two years from now.

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



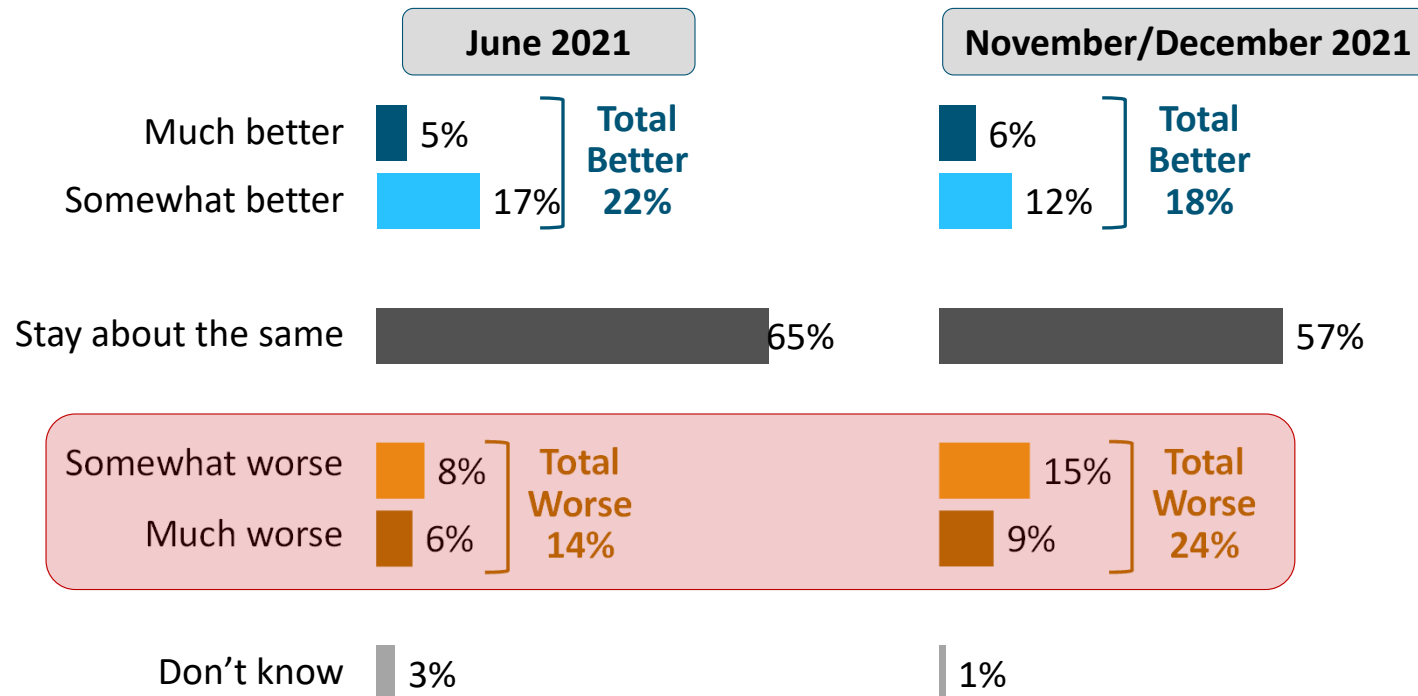
# More than three in five say traffic negatively impacts their quality of life.

*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?*



# Most say their financial circumstances will stay the same in the coming year.

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

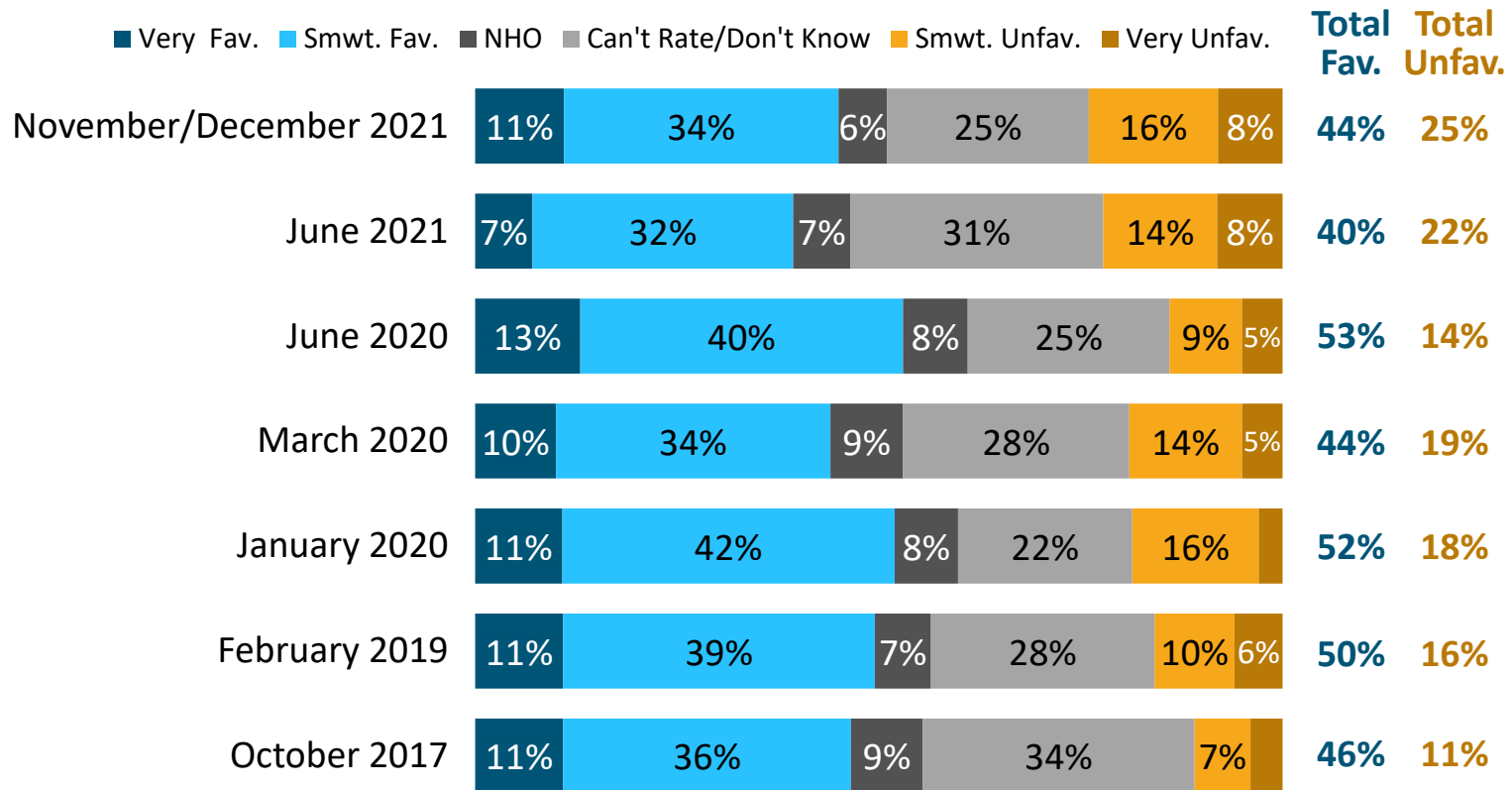




# Views of Local Government

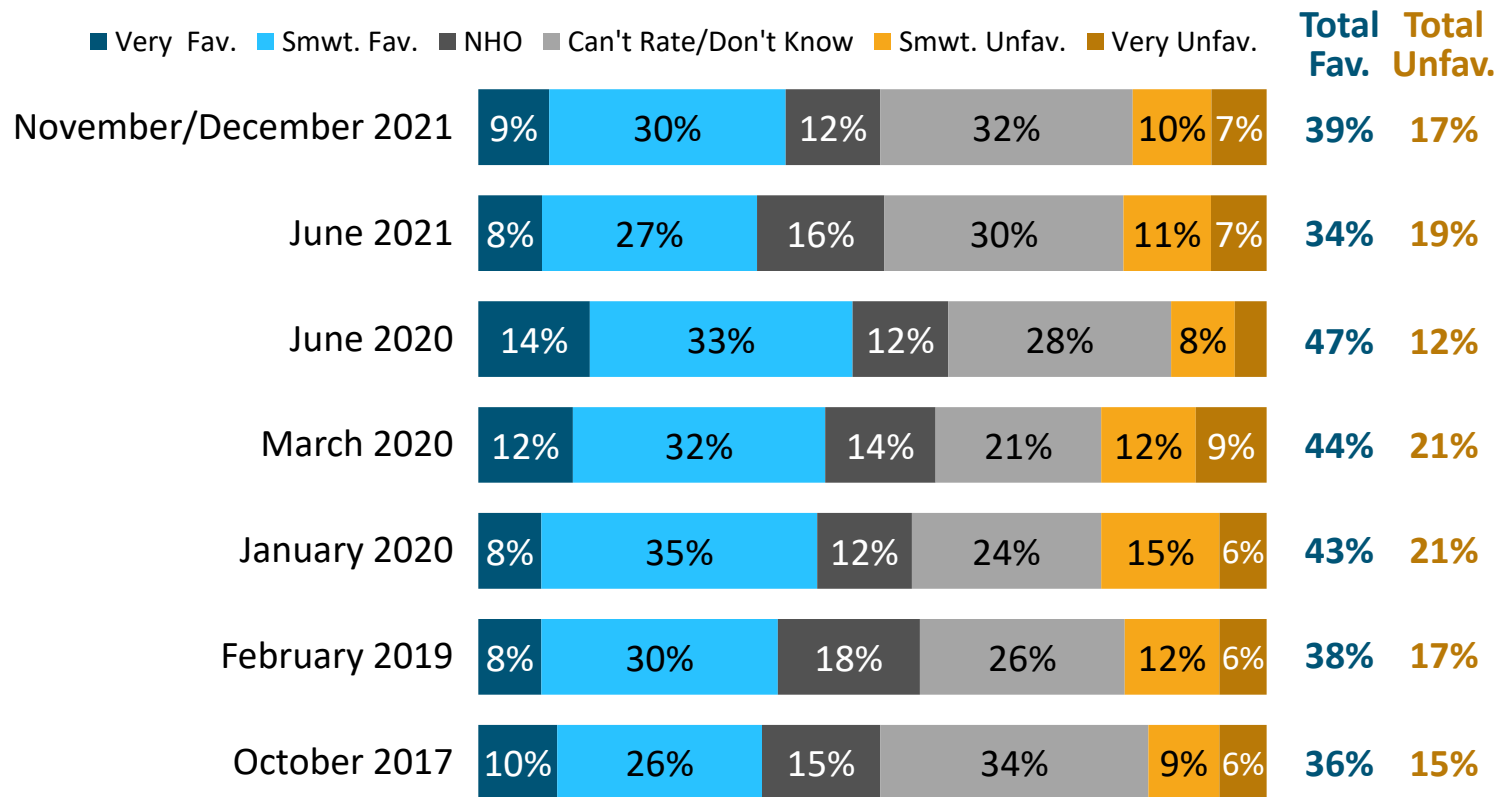
# Voters' views of the Board of Supervisors have remained stable since this past summer.

*The Placer County Board of Supervisors*



# Respondents have a net positive view of PCTPA.

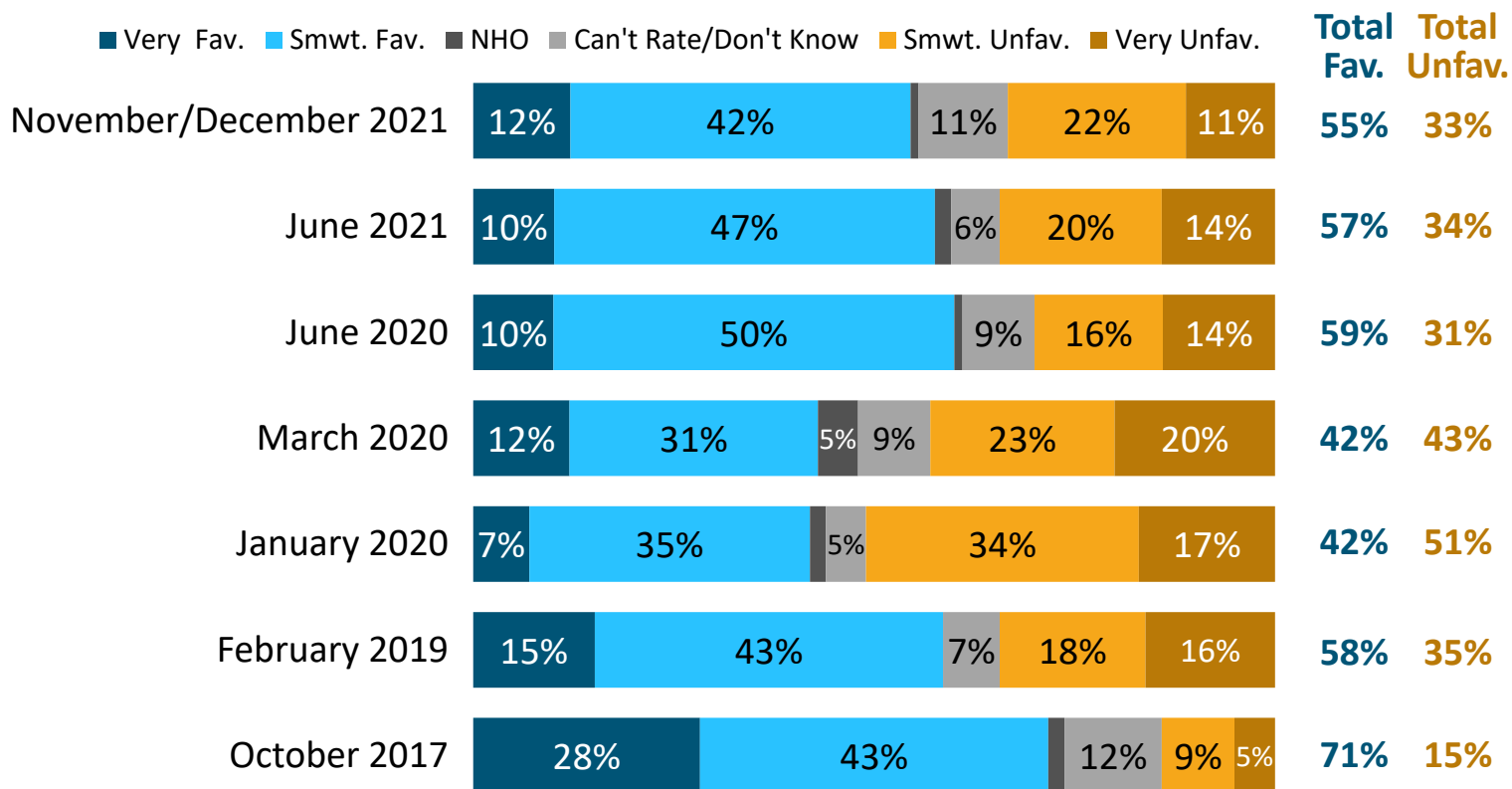
The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency





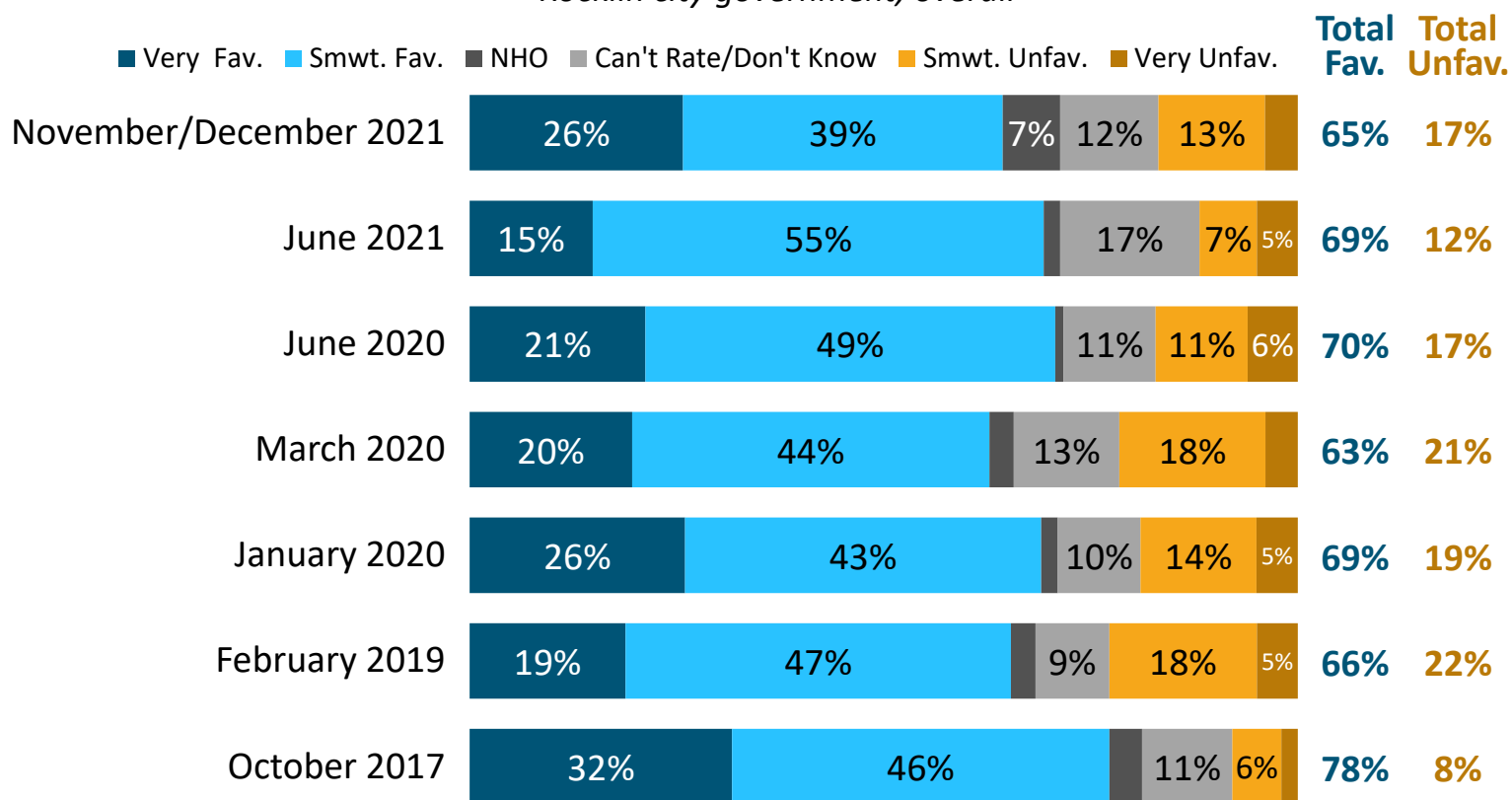
# Lincoln voters continue to have a majority positive view of their city government.

*\*Lincoln city government, overall*



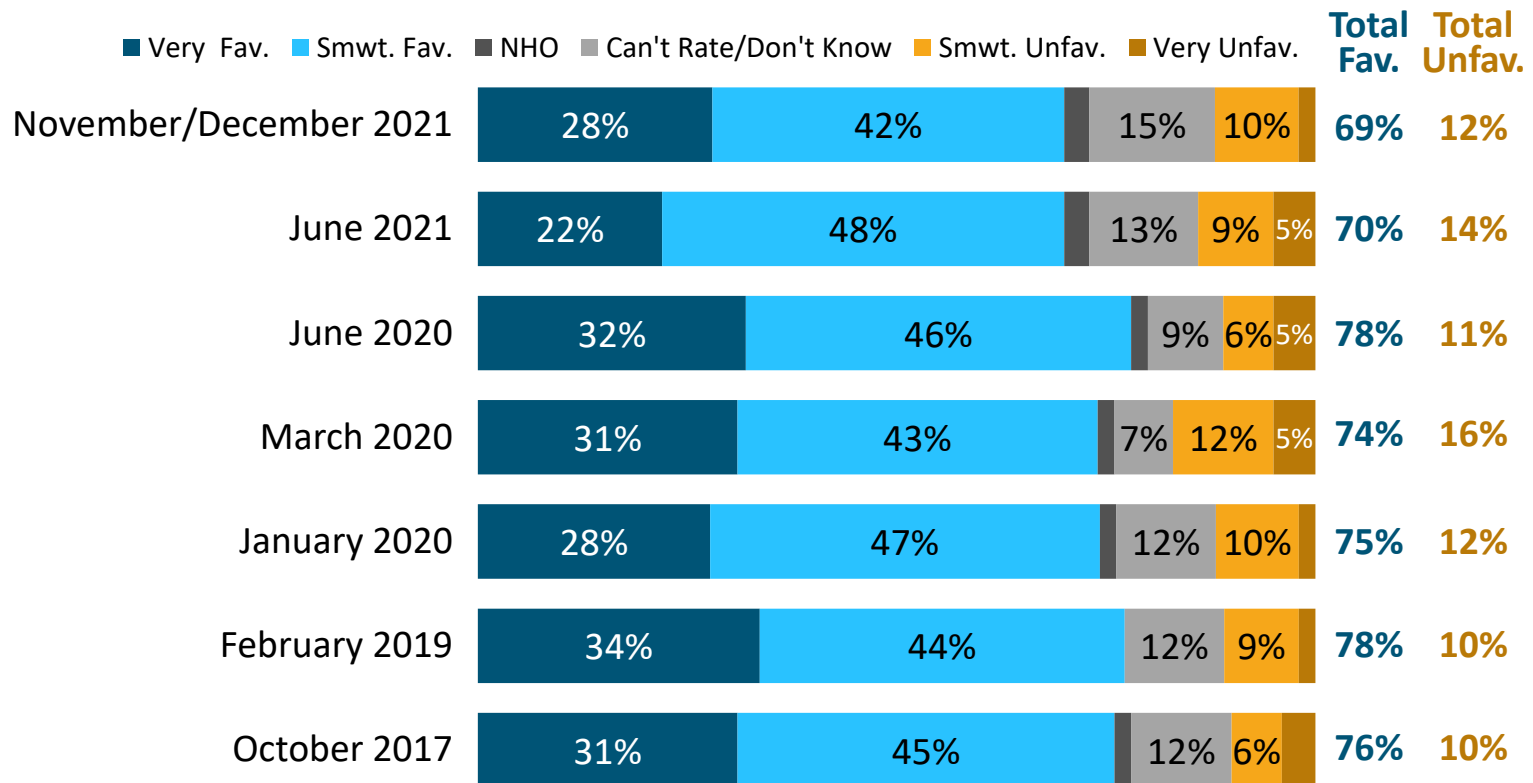
# Two-thirds of Rocklin voters have a favorable view of city government.

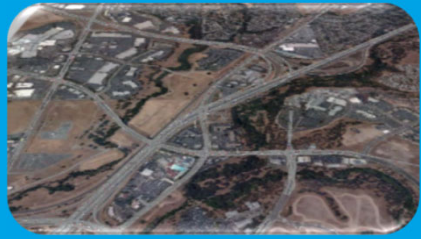
*\*Rocklin city government, overall*



# Views of Roseville government continue to be favorable.

*\*Roseville city government, overall*





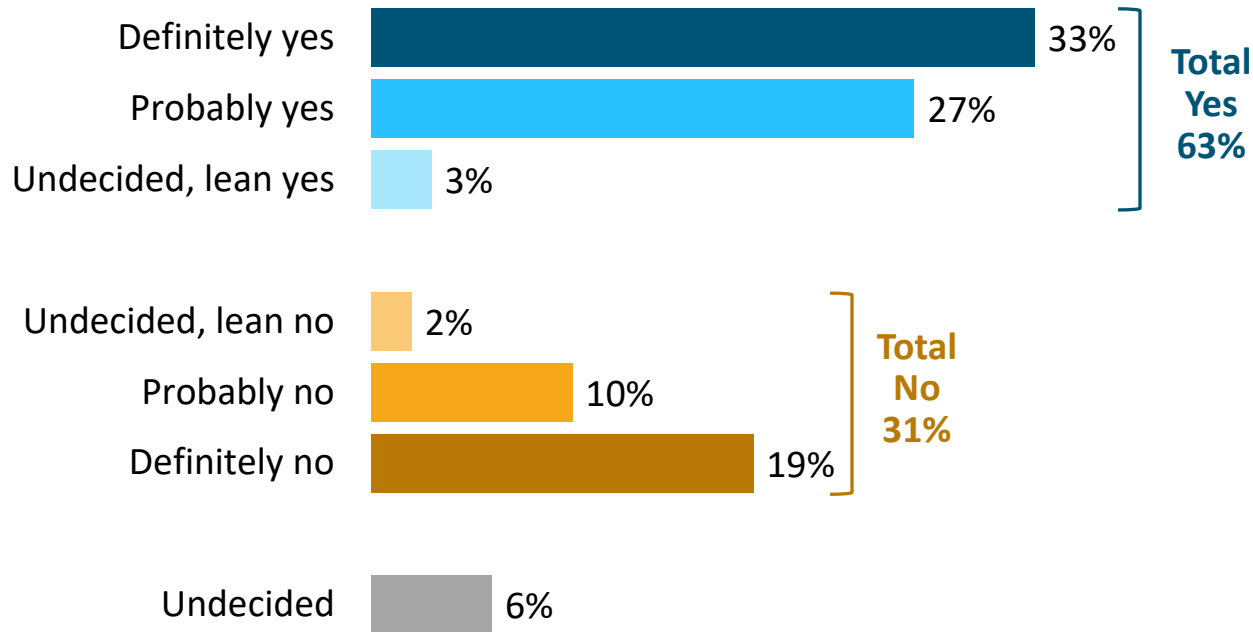
# Support for a Potential Transportation Sales Tax Measure

## Ballot Language Tested

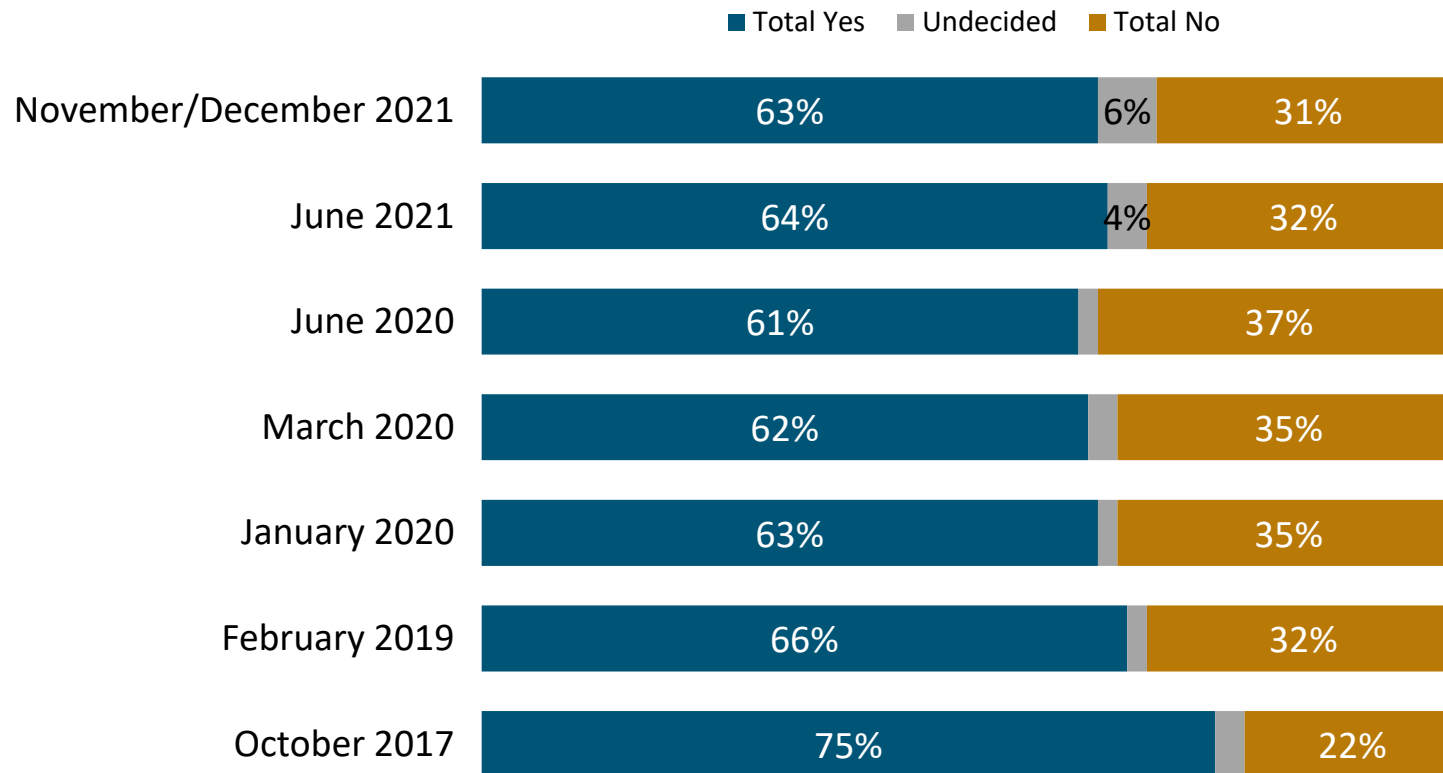
**South Placer Traffic Relief Plan.** Shall a measure to reduce traffic congestion and make transportation investments in Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville, including: completing 80/65 improvements; widening Highway 65; improving emergency responder access and wildfire evacuation by reducing traffic congestion/fixing bottlenecks; and funding local road repair; by establishing a ½-cent sales tax raising approximately \$41,000,000 annually for 30 years, with independent audits, citizens' oversight, and increasing eligibility for state/federal matching funds, be adopted?

# Three in five say they will vote "yes" on the proposed measure, just a few points short of the measure's two-thirds vote threshold.

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

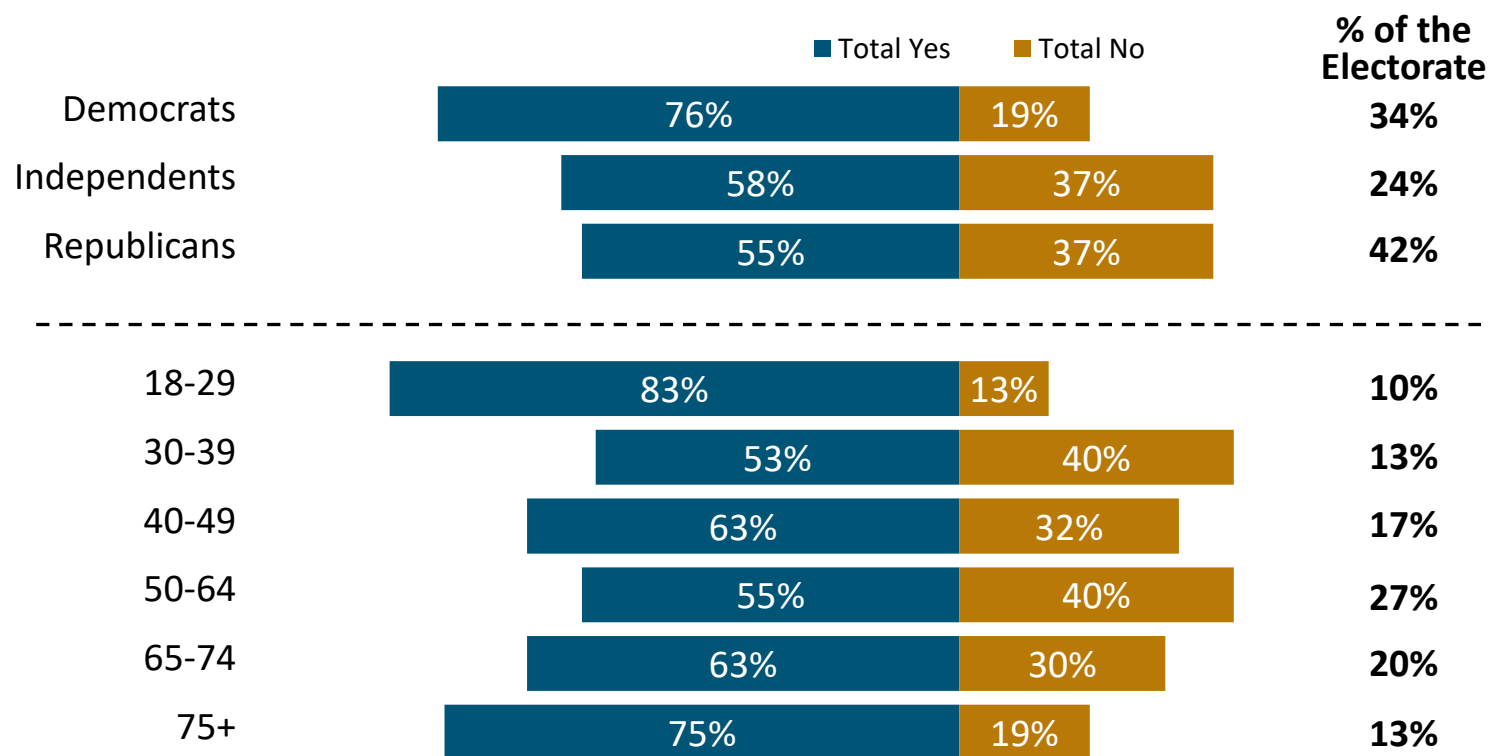


## Support has remained consistent from this past summer.



# Democrats and voters under 30 are most likely to vote “yes.”

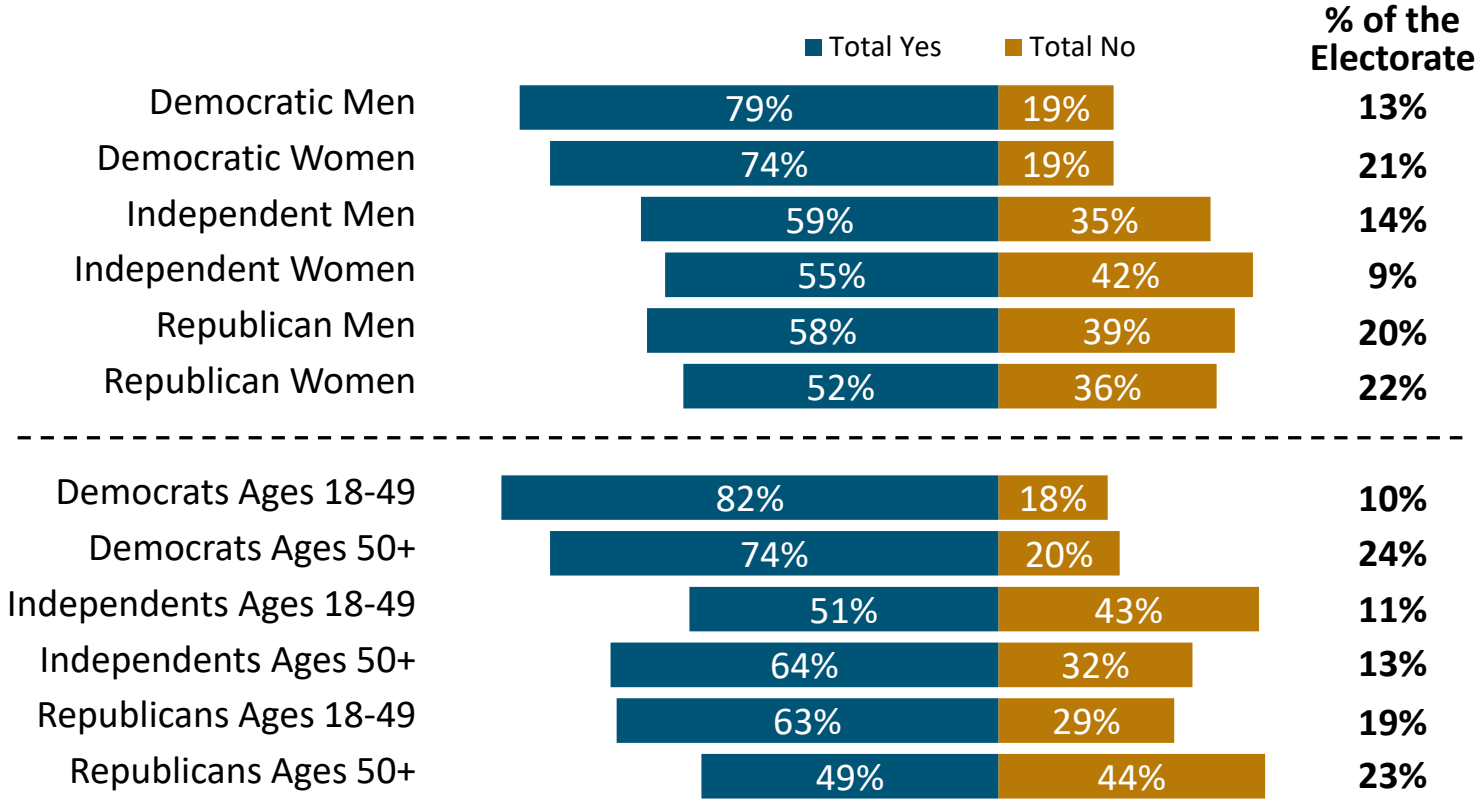
By Party & Age





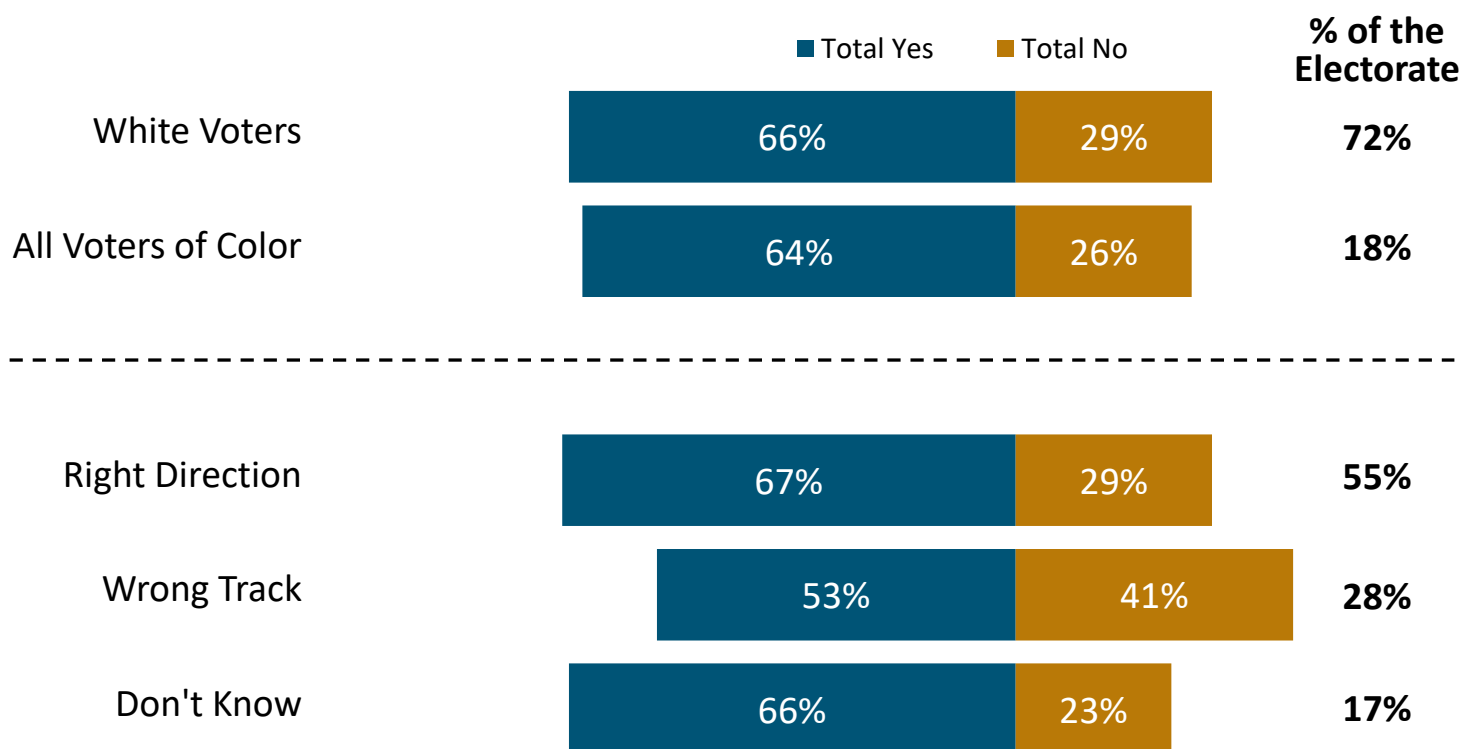
# Democratic men are especially supportive.

By Party by Gender & Party by Age



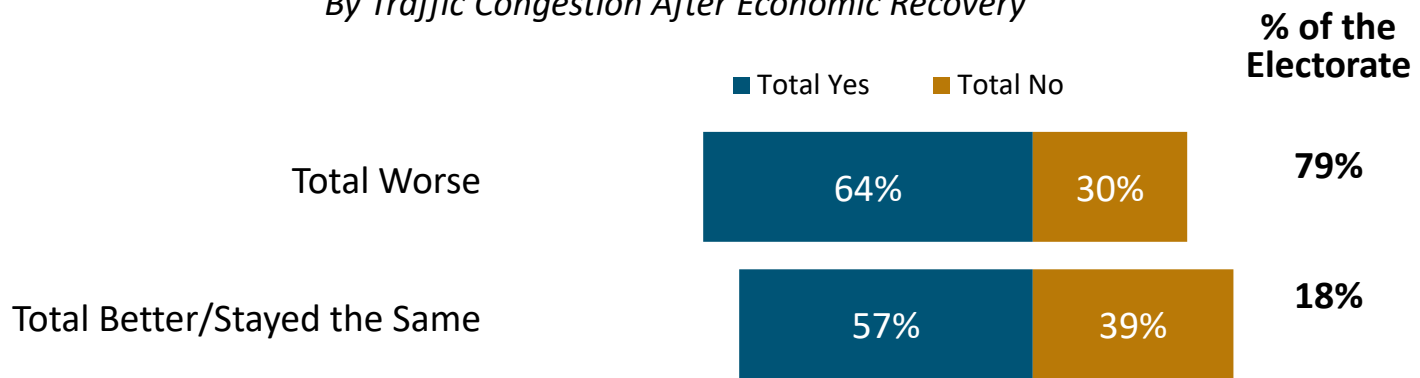
# White voters and voters of color support the measure at similar rates.

By Race/Ethnicity & County Direction



# Perceptions that traffic is worsening lead to slightly stronger support.

## By Traffic Congestion After Economic Recovery



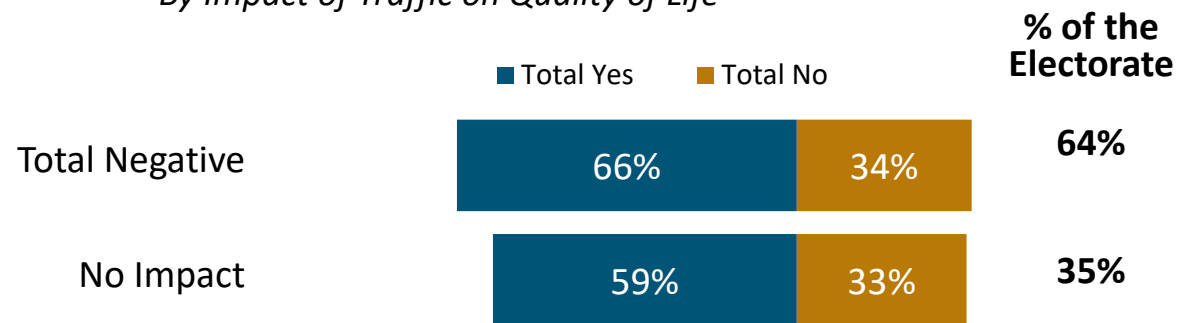
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## By Traffic Compared to Pre-Pandemic



# Those who think traffic affects life negatively are more likely to vote "yes;" as are those with optimistic views of their future financial outlook.

*By Impact of Traffic on Quality of Life*

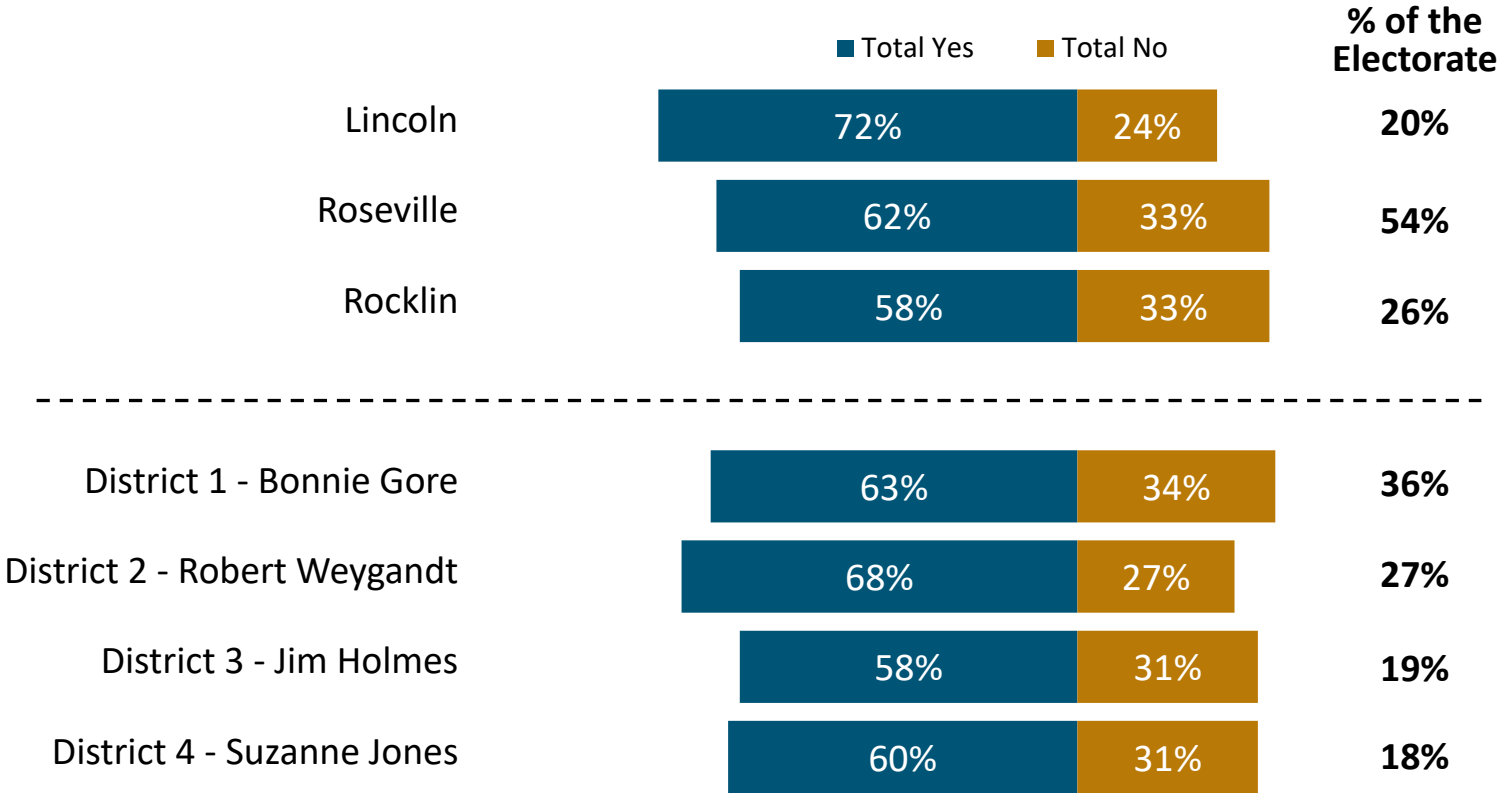


*By Financial Outlook Over Next Year*



# Voters in Lincoln offer the strongest support for the measure.

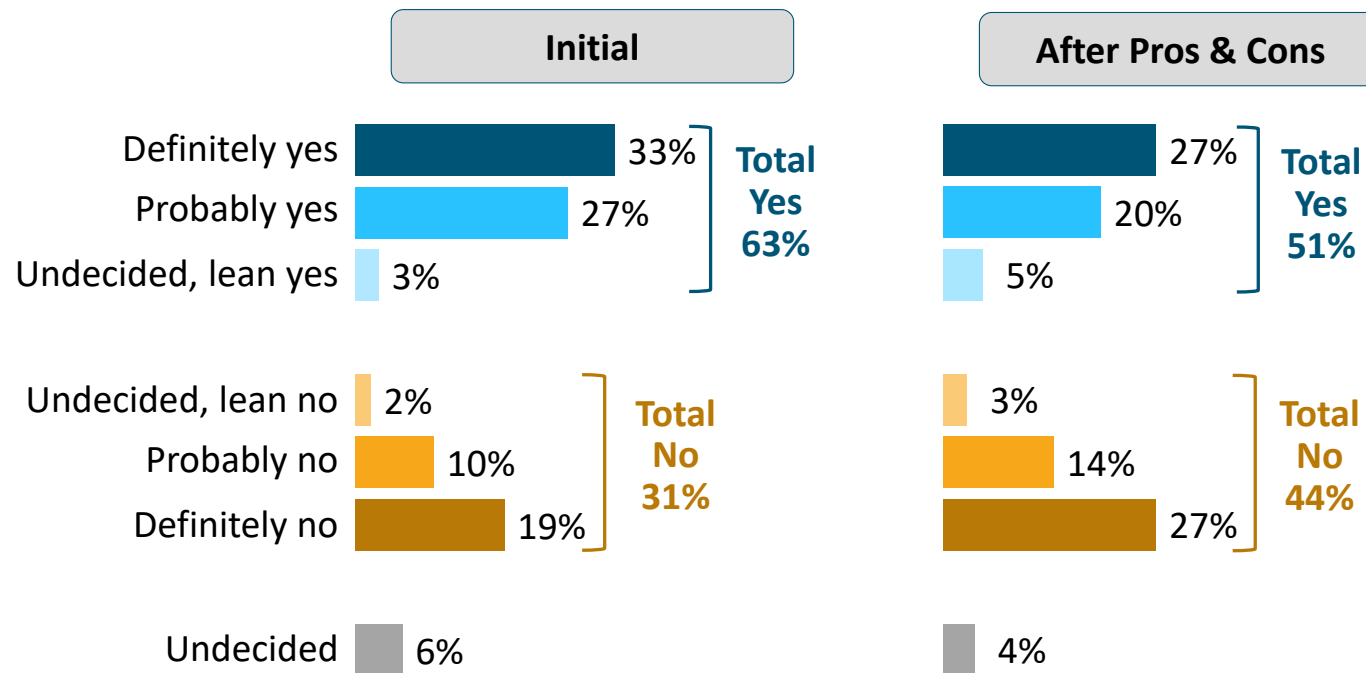
By City/Town & Board of Supervisors



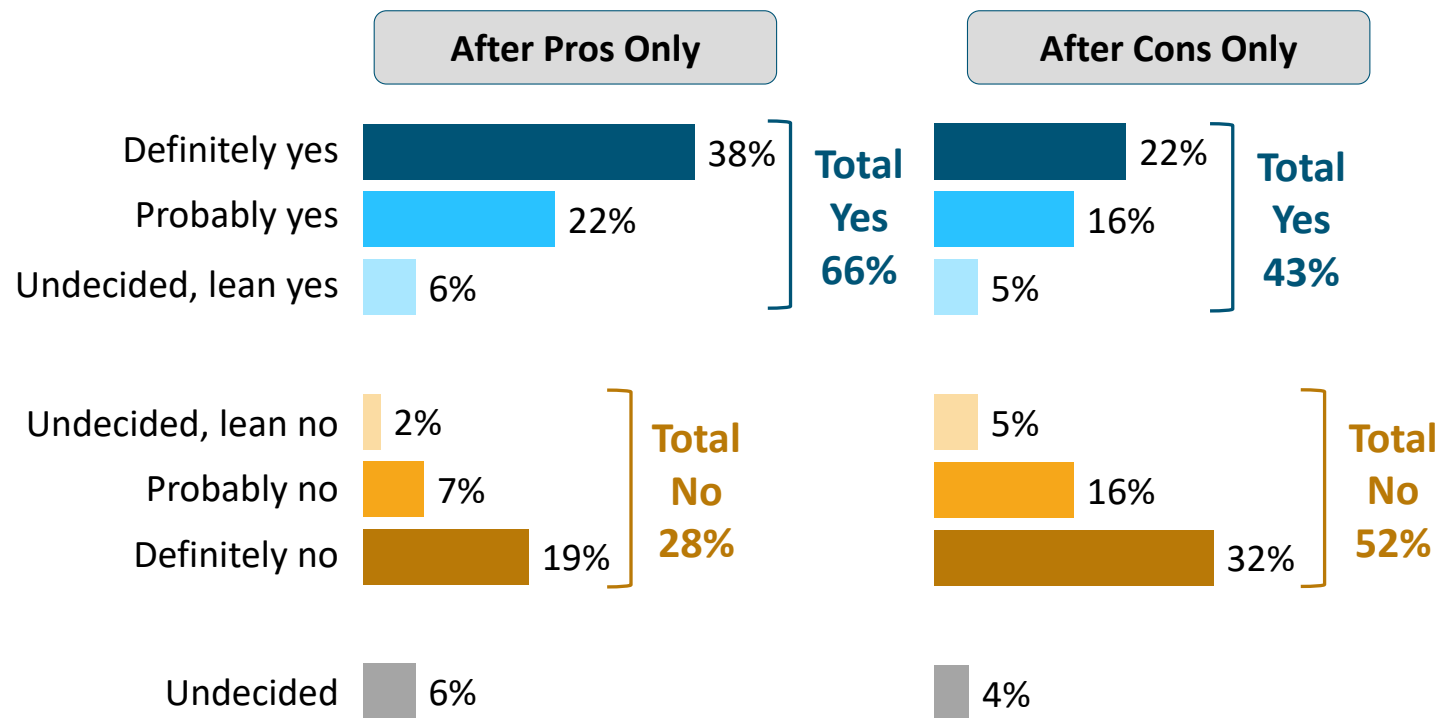


# The Impact of Pro and Con Arguments

# After an exchange of messaging support declines by 12 percentage points.



# In isolation, positive messages raise support to the two-thirds level.

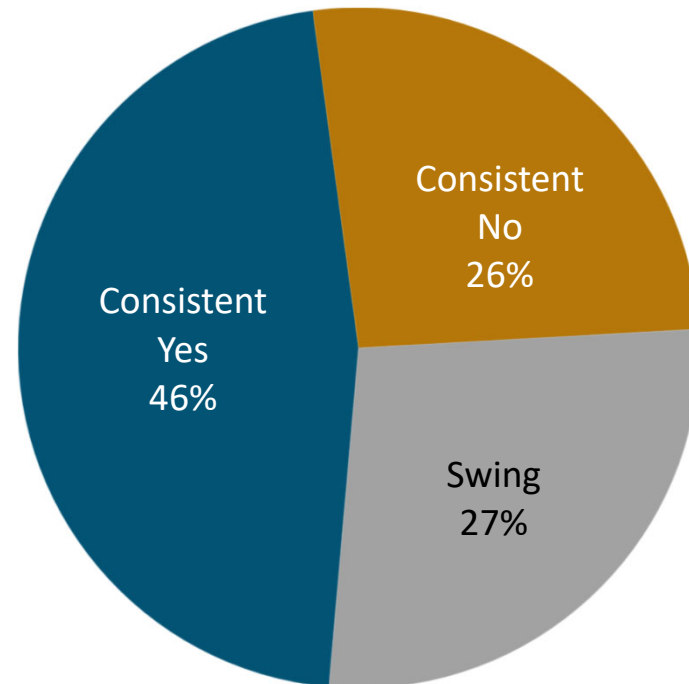




## Segmenting the Electorate by Vote Consistency

- ❖ **Consistent Yes:** Voters who consistently indicated they would vote “yes” on the measure
- ❖ **Consistent No:** Voters who consistently indicated they would vote “no” on the measure
- ❖ **Swing:** Voters who do not fall into any of the other categories – remaining consistently undecided or switching positions

The following slide shows demographic groups that *disproportionately* fall into one category or the other.

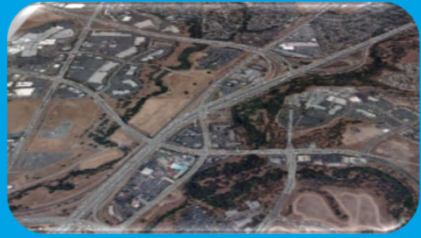


# Support continues to hold in the 60s.

## Comparing Votes in Past Surveys

Survey	Initial "Yes" Vote	"Yes" After Only Positives	Final "Yes" Vote after Pros/Cons
<b>Roseville, Rocklin, and Lincoln</b>			
Nov/Dec 2021	63%	66%	51%
June 2021	64%	64%	58%
June 2020	61%	62%	54%
March 2020	62%	65%	56%
January 2020	63%	65%	56%
<b>South Placer County</b>			
February 2019	66%	73%	60%
October 2017	75%	76%	68%
<b>All of Placer County</b>			
<b>Measure M Outcome</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
October 2016	59%	N/A	N/A
September 2016	69%	70%	61%
February 2016	63%	63%	53%
May 2015	61%	61%	58%
June 2014	61%	60%	55%

Last survey before placement



# Pro & Con Arguments

# Messages in Favor of the Measure

*Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing*

**(HIGHWAY 65)** Highway 65 is getting worse every year, and is now backed up for several hours each day. This measure provides funds to widen Highway 65 from 2 lanes in each direction to 4 all the way to Lincoln, relieving growing congestion on a key backbone for South Placer County.

**(I-80 ALTERNATIVES)** This measure will reduce traffic congestion on Interstate 80 by providing commuters new alternatives when traveling west from South Placer County. These include widening Baseline Road from 2 to 4 lanes, and building a new expressway called the Placer Parkway linking Highway 65 at Whitney Ranch Parkway to Highway 99 north of the Sacramento Airport.

**^(TRAFFIC - GENERAL)** Traffic congestion is back to 112% of 2019 levels and once again threatens our quality of life. Time stuck in traffic takes away from time better spent at home with family and friends. Plus, as our population grows, the number of cars will increase, leading to greater traffic gridlock. If we don't invest now in projects to better manage traffic flow, the problem will only get worse.

**(80/65 INTERCHANGE)** Traffic comes to a crawl in and around the 80/65 interchange at almost all hours of the day, and it has become one of the most dangerous interchanges in the region. We need this measure to complete all phases of improvements to the interchange in all directions to both improve traffic flow and reduce congestion, and make the interchange safer to save lives.

**(MATCHING FUNDS)** With the recent passage of a historic federal infrastructure plan, there are going to be large amounts of funding available for much-needed transportation improvements if the County provides local funds. This measure will make it possible for South Placer County to receive its fair share of these once-in-a-lifetime matching funds, which would otherwise go to counties in the Bay Area or Southern California.

# Messages in Favor of the Measure (Continued)

*Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing*

**(LONG-TERM PLAN)** This measure is a critical part of a long-term plan to address traffic congestion now and into the future. It will both address current freeway and highway hot spots and future regional growth by expanding the capacity of our major roads and highways and public transportation options for local residents and commuters.

**(EMERGENCY RESPONDERS)** Many of South Placer County's streets, highways, and freeways are backed up with traffic. These conditions not only make it hard for emergency responders to reach people in a crisis quickly or transport them to a hospital but will make wildfire evacuations more challenging. Investing in our transportation system is also an investment in our safety.

**(NO BAILOUT/SELF-RELIANCE)** Placer County residents know that we can't count on the state or federal government to bail us out. Time and time again, we have seen federal and state relief plans favoring big cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco. This measure keeps local tax dollars in our community, taking care of ourselves, and addressing local priorities, such as relieving traffic congestion and creating local jobs.

**^(NON-COMMUTER BENEFITS)** Even if you do not regularly commute in your car, we all suffer from traffic congestion. Cars spillover onto local surface streets and emergency responders take longer to respond. This measure will help make sure our local freeways and highways keep traffic flowing, benefiting commuters and non-commuters, alike.

# Messages in Favor of the Measure (Continued)

*Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing*

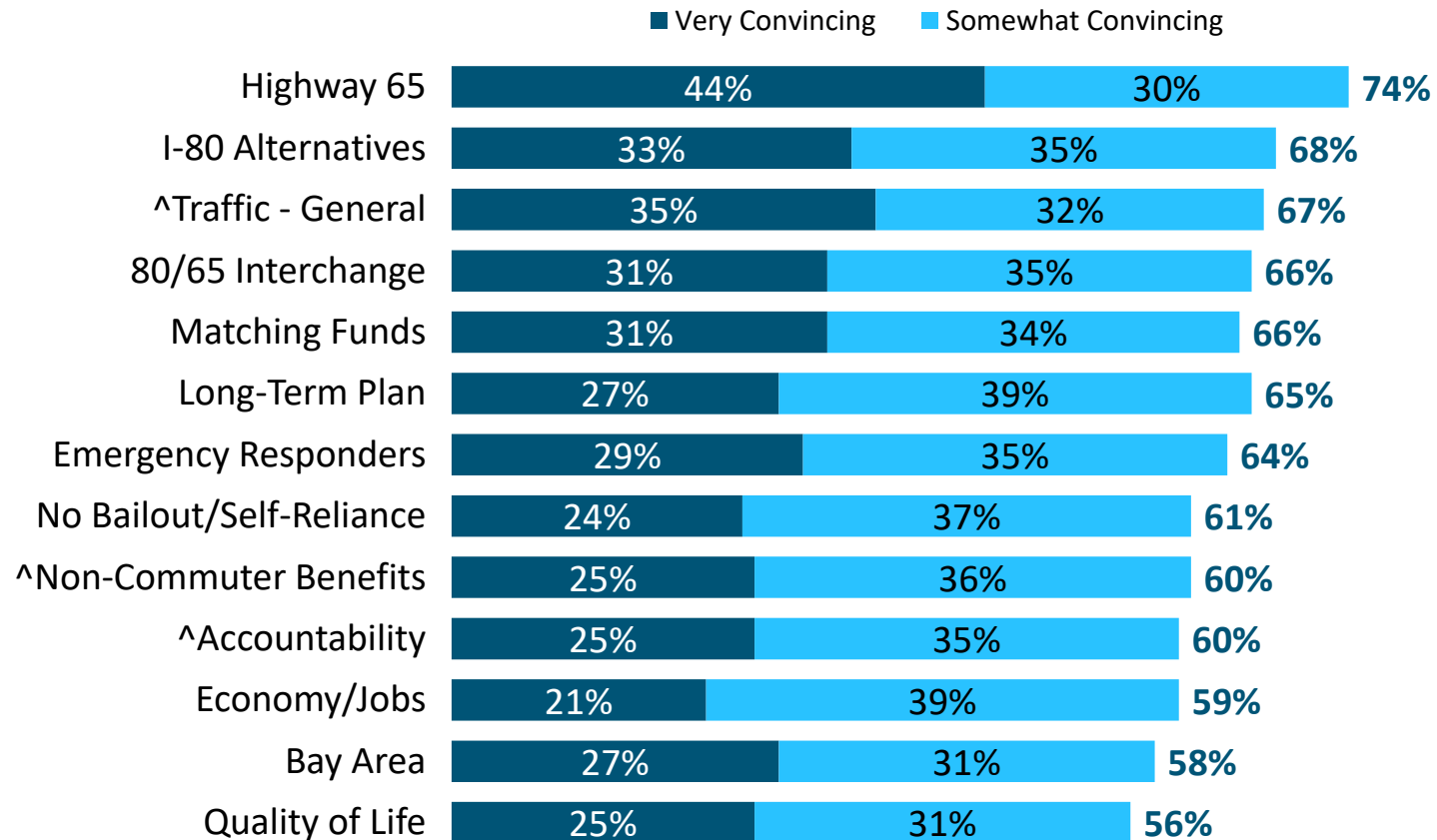
^(**ACCOUNTABILITY**) This has strong taxpayer safeguards to ensure the money is spent as promised, including an independent citizens' oversight committee; annual independent audits; and an annual public report to taxpayers. Additionally, 99% of the funds must be spent directly on transportation projects, and the tax will automatically expire after 30 years and cannot be extended without another vote.

(**ECONOMY/JOB**S) A properly functioning and well-maintained transportation system is a key component of a strong economy with high-quality jobs. And we have seen the downside of our traffic problems, with congestion causing several companies to relocate out of South Placer. We need to invest in our roads and infrastructure to protect existing businesses and encourage new ones to locate here.

(**BAY AREA**) Bay Area residents continue to move to Placer County, something that has only accelerated during the coronavirus pandemic. State laws prevent us from limiting this growth, so we need measures like this to address the inevitable traffic congestion and keep our freeways and highways from becoming snarled like the Bay Area.

(**QUALITY OF LIFE**) Sitting in traffic is stressful and frustrating for all of us, and those wasted minutes and hours add up. Without taking action now, traffic congestion is going to start seriously impacting our quality of life, if it hasn't already. We need this measure to protect our quality of life and ensure that we can spend time on things far more important than sitting in our cars.

# The message describing Highway 65 improvements resonates the strongest.



# Messages in Opposition to the Measure

*Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing*

^(**GAS TAX/VLF**) We already pay billions of dollars in gas taxes that are supposed to pay for our roads and freeways. Plus, the state just recently increased the gas tax by 12 cents a gallon and increased the vehicle license fee specifically to fund more road repairs. They need to make sure every single penny we pay in transportation taxes now is spent wisely before asking us for a new tax.

(**FEDERAL/STATE FUNDS**) With the recently passed, historic federal infrastructure bill and the State's recently announced \$31 billion budget surplus, this tax simply isn't needed. We should see how much of those federal and state funds we can get for transportation projects before raising local taxes.

^(**DEVELOPERS**) Developers continue to build out South Placer County with little accountability to whether a community can actually support more people. They should be the ones paying to build the infrastructure that supports their money-making development deals, not taxpayers.

^(**POOR GROWTH PLANNING**) None of our traffic congestion should have been a surprise, especially given the unchecked rate of growth and development in our region. Instead of taxing residents even more, what we really need is better planning by local officials, less sprawling development, and more public transportation options.



## Messages in Opposition to the Measure (Continued)

*Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing*

**(USE EXISTING FUNDS)** Given the amount of money we already pay in local taxes, NAME OF RESPONDENT'S CITY and the County simply need to tighten their belts, work together and do a better job with the taxpayer dollars they already have.

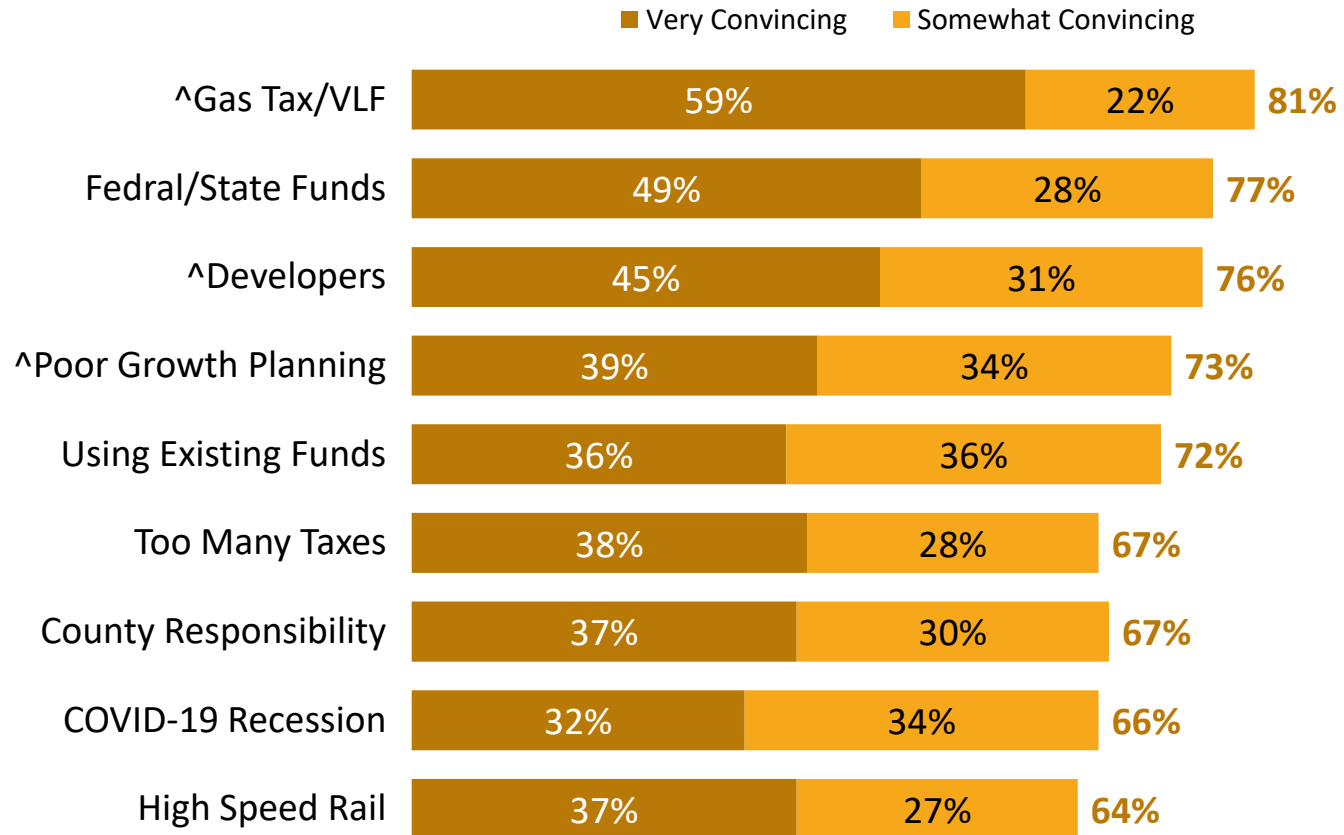
**(TOO MANY TAXES)** Every election we are asked to pay more in taxes at the local, county, and state level for many different issues including public safety, libraries, parks, and schools. We simply can't afford to pay more.

**(COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY)** Local politicians and bureaucrats have created a new layer of government in an attempt to pass virtually the same tax measure that failed a few years ago. This is the County's responsibility, and we don't need more government or taxes. And, with a budget of over \$1 billion, there's no reason Placer County can't find enough money to fund high-priority transportation projects.

**(COVID-19 RECESSION)** Our local economy is still recovering from the economic the impacts of the coronavirus. Now is not the time to raise taxes on people struggling to make ends meet.

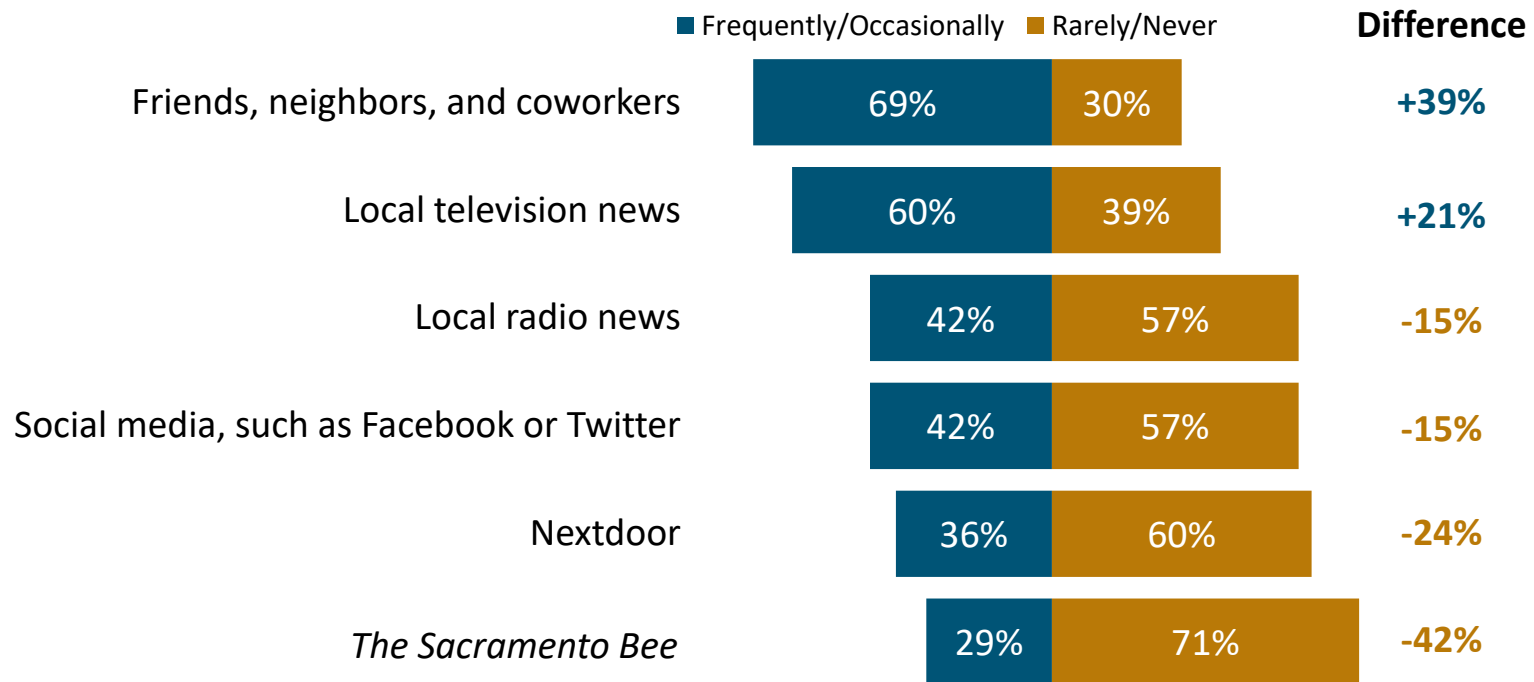
**(HIGH SPEED RAIL)** So much of our transportation funding is being wasted on high-speed rail. We should be spending that money on local projects and not costly boondoggles.

## Negatives describing the gas tax, federal funding, and developers' responsibility all resonate strongly.



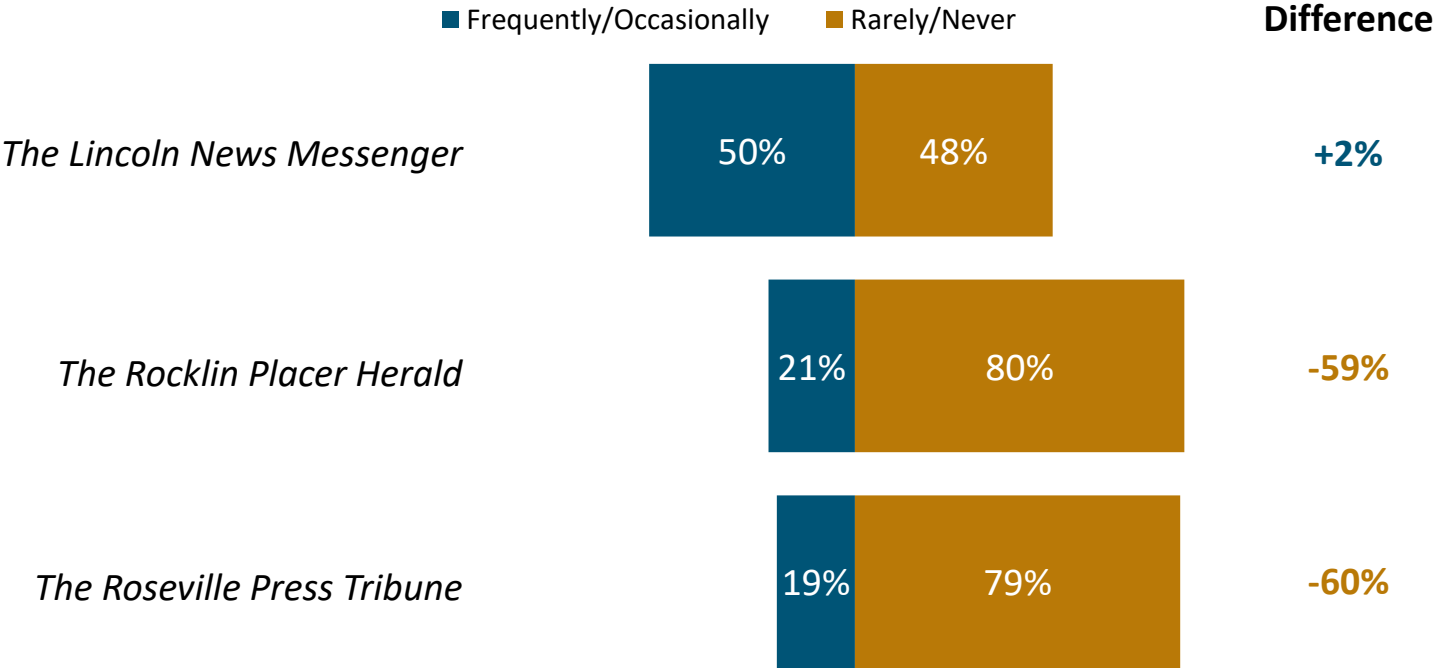
# Voters rely on word of mouth and local TV news the most as news sources.

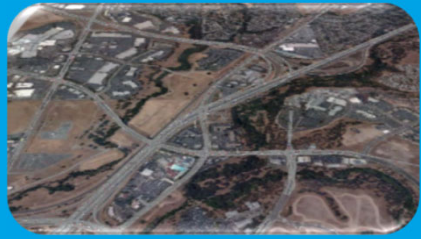
*I am going to read to you a list of different sources news and information about local issues. Please tell me how often you use that source of news and information to learn about local issues in South Placer County and your community, either frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never.*



# Lincoln voters read their local paper more often than Rocklin or Roseville residents do.

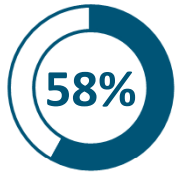
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# Key Takeaways and Conclusions

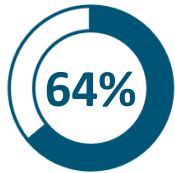
## Key Numbers: Electoral Context



View traffic congestion on local freeways and highways as an “extremely” or “very serious problem”



Think traffic congestion will be worse in the next two years

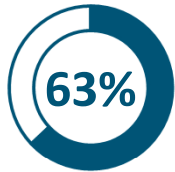


Say traffic congestion impacts their quality of life negatively.

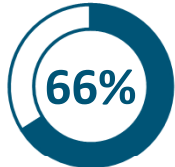
### Summary:

While traffic congestion is not the top problem in Southern Placer County, voters say that it is worsening. They say traffic will be worse in the next two years and a plurality say it is worse than it was pre-pandemic. But, increasing numbers (though still a minority) are concerned about their own economic prospects in the future, a trend to monitor.

## Key Numbers: Measure Viability



Would currently vote “yes” for a half-cent, transportation sales tax in Southern Placer County, short of two-thirds



Would vote “yes” for a measure after only being presented with arguments in favor of a measure



Would vote “yes” after hearing pro and con arguments

### Summary:

Initial support for the proposed measure is within the margin of error of the two-thirds threshold for passage, while the ceiling of support reaches exactly two-thirds. In turn, after a balanced exchange of messages, support falls well below the two-thirds level indicating that the presence of any organized opposition would be extremely harmful to the measure’s success.

**For more information, contact:**



**OPINION  
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