

Voter Support for a Potential Placer County Transportation Sales Tax Measure





Key Findings of a Survey Conducted:
June 2-10, 2021

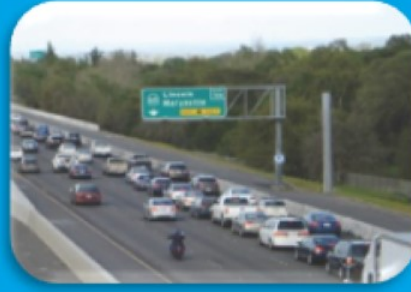


OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

220-6079

Survey Specifics and Methodology

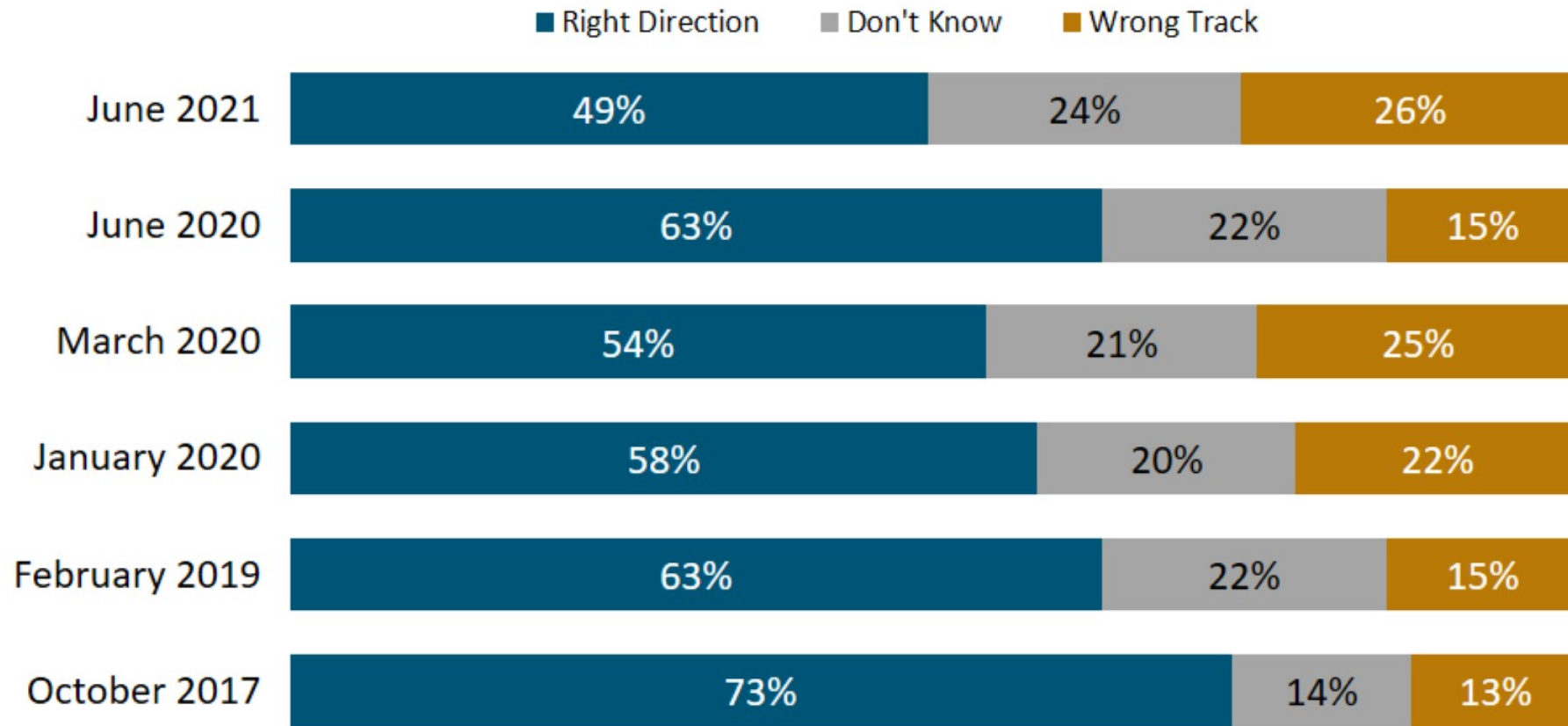
Dates	June 2-10, 2021
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2022 Voters in Placer County Oversamples in Auburn, Colfax, Loomis and North Lake Tahoe
Total Interviews	844 (600 Countywide)
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Survey



Views of Life in Placer County

Voters are less optimistic about the County's direction than they were pre-pandemic.

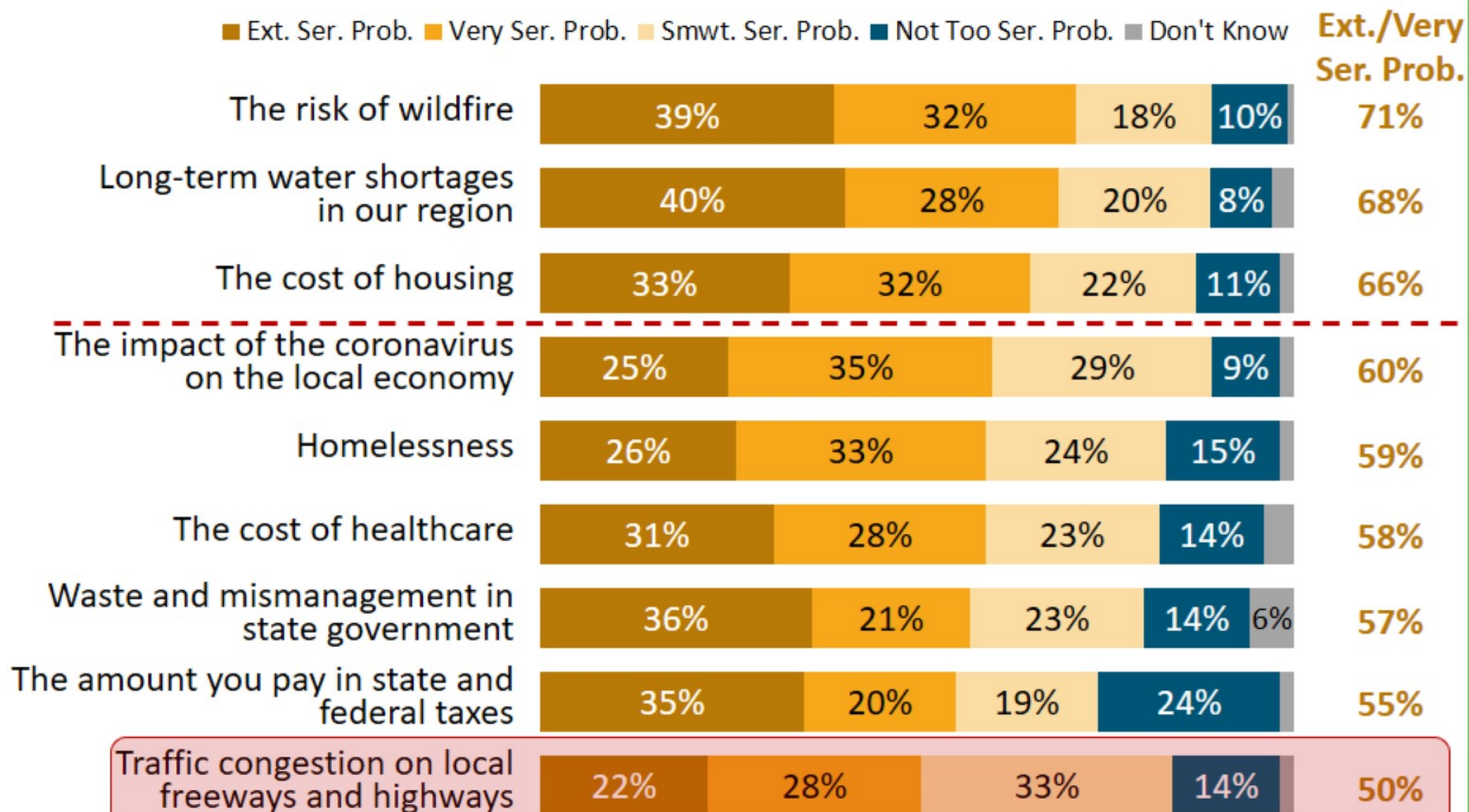
Do you think things in Placer County are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



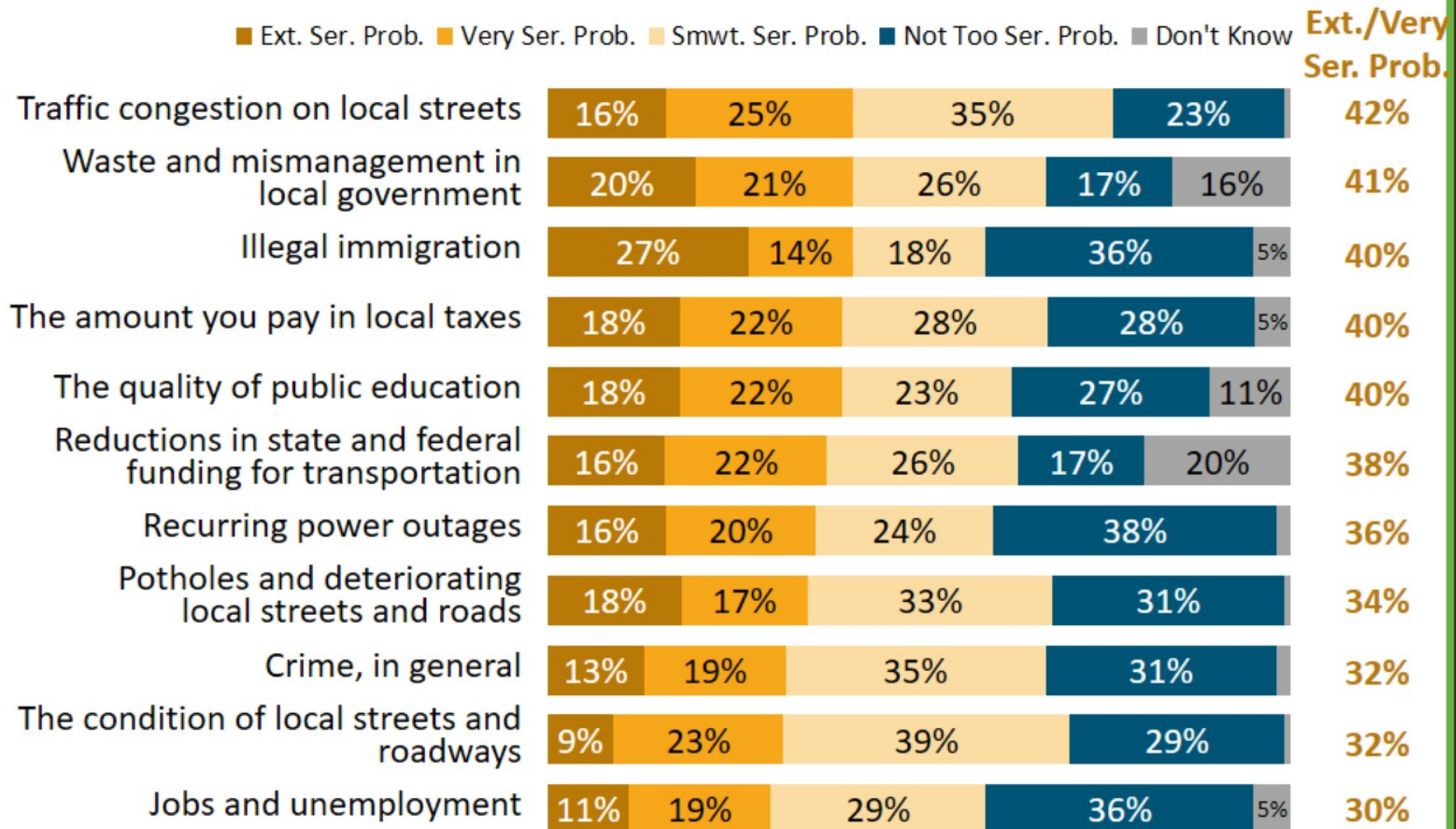
Optimists and Pessimists

- Voters disproportionately optimistic about the direction of Placer County tended to college-educated and male, skewing slightly younger, Democratic and independent.
- Voters disproportionately pessimistic about the direction of Placer County tended to women and Republicans without college degrees, as well as older Republicans and younger women.

The top local concerns of voters are wildfire, drought and housing costs.

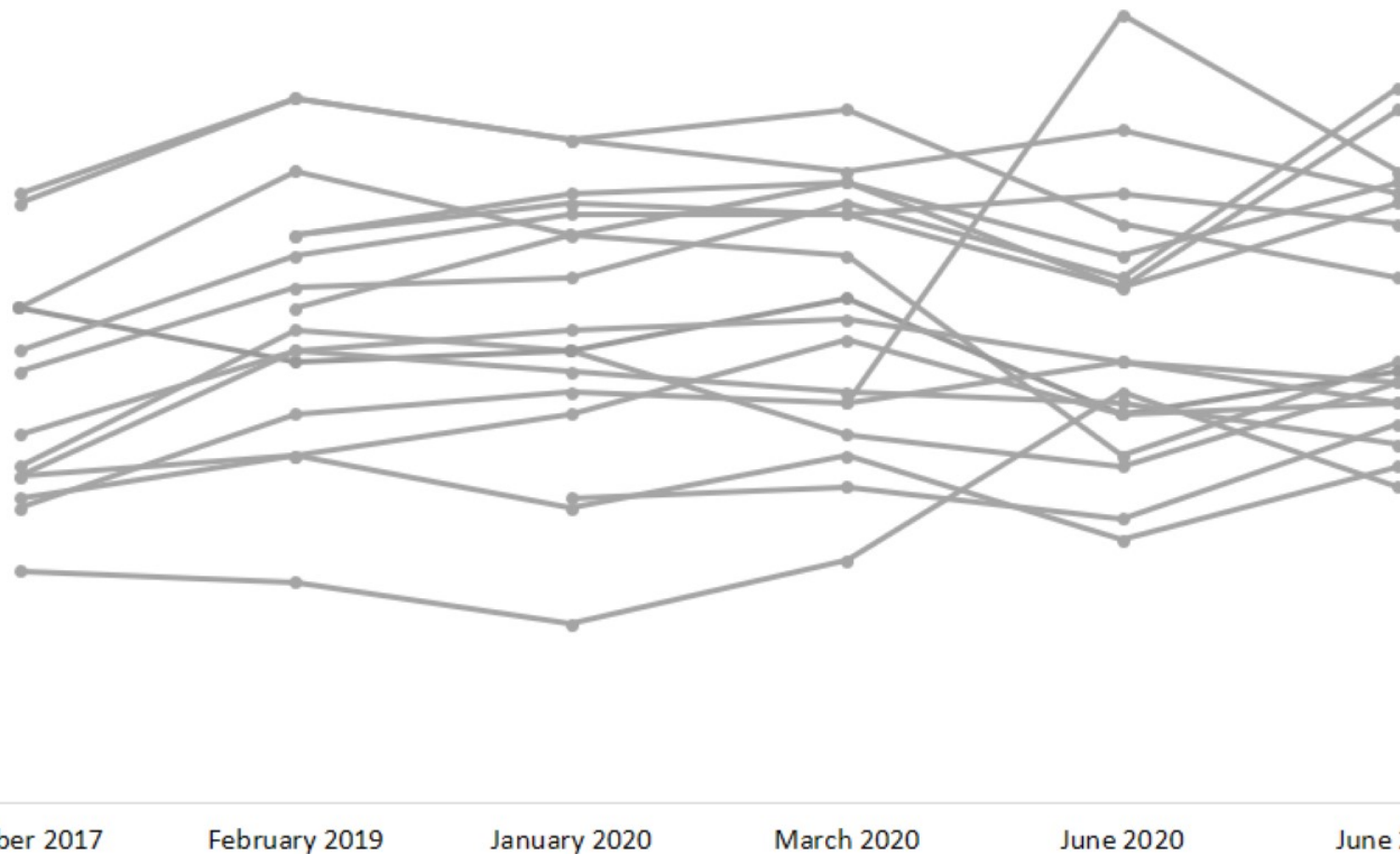


Road conditions are a lesser concern, but 40% see the local tax burden as a pressing issue.



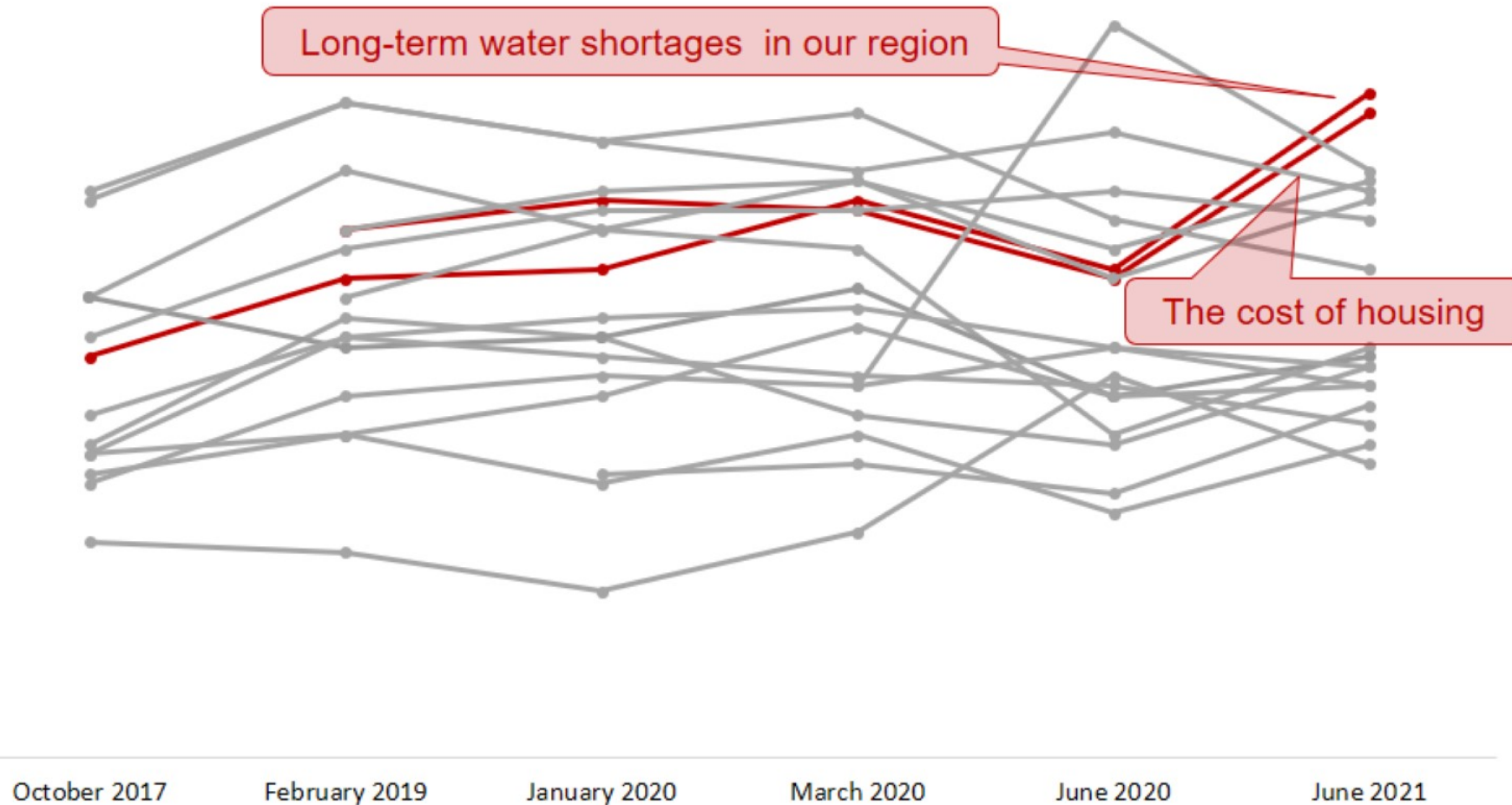
Many of these concern levels have stayed relatively steady in recent years.

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



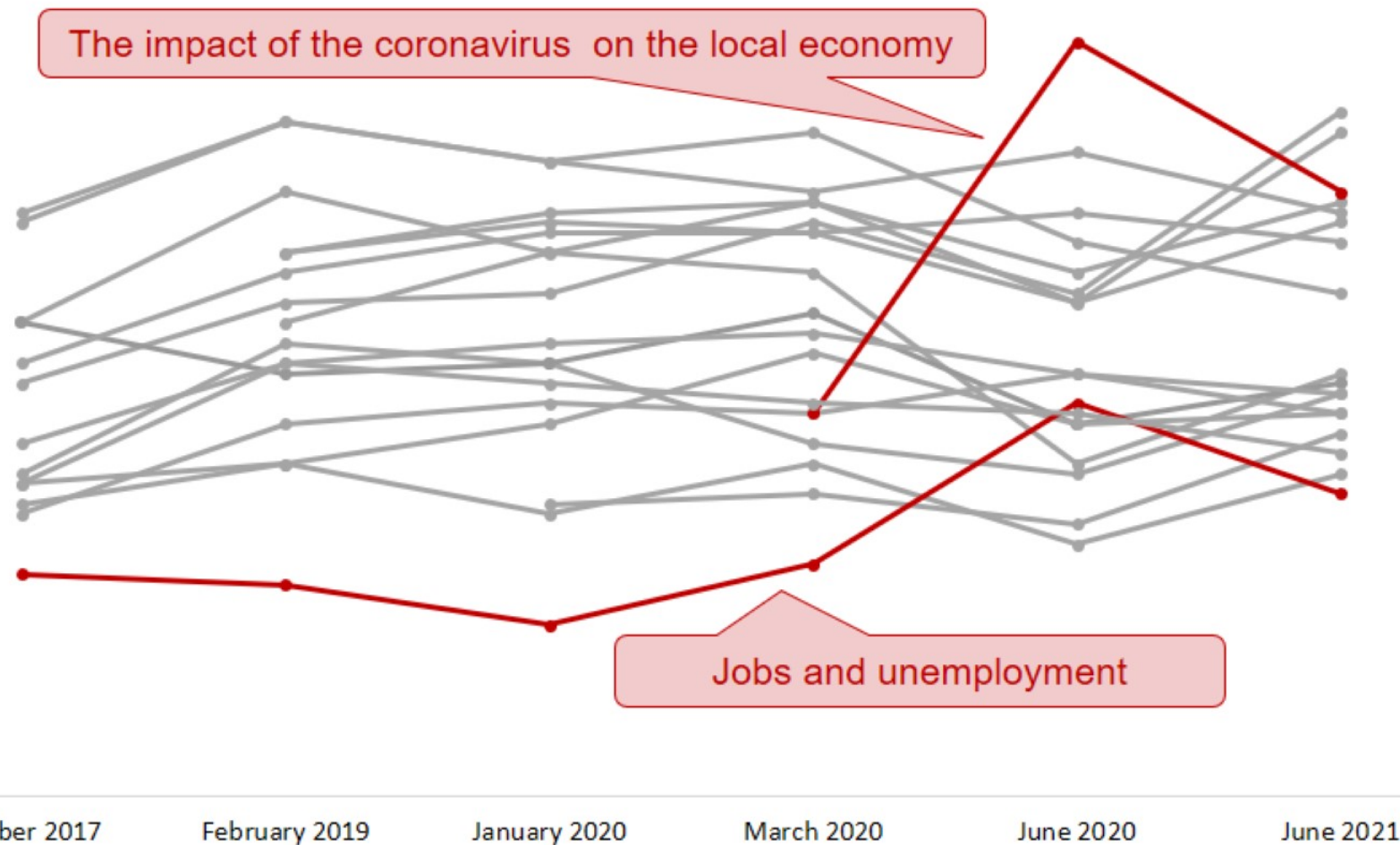
Drought and housing costs have jumped up as concerns in the past year.

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



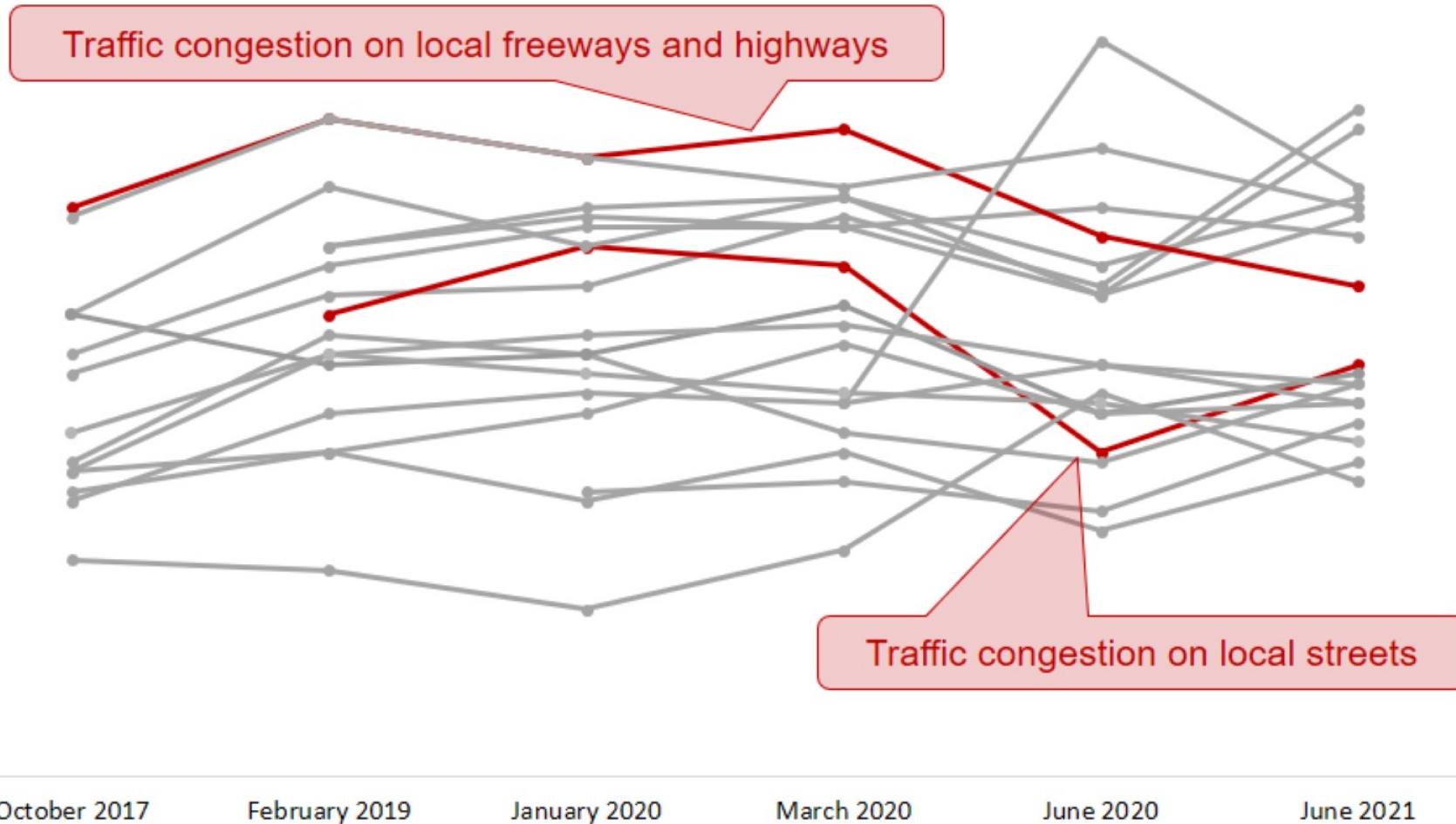
Economic concerns have clearly been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic...

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



...and, it appears, so have concerns about traffic congestion.

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



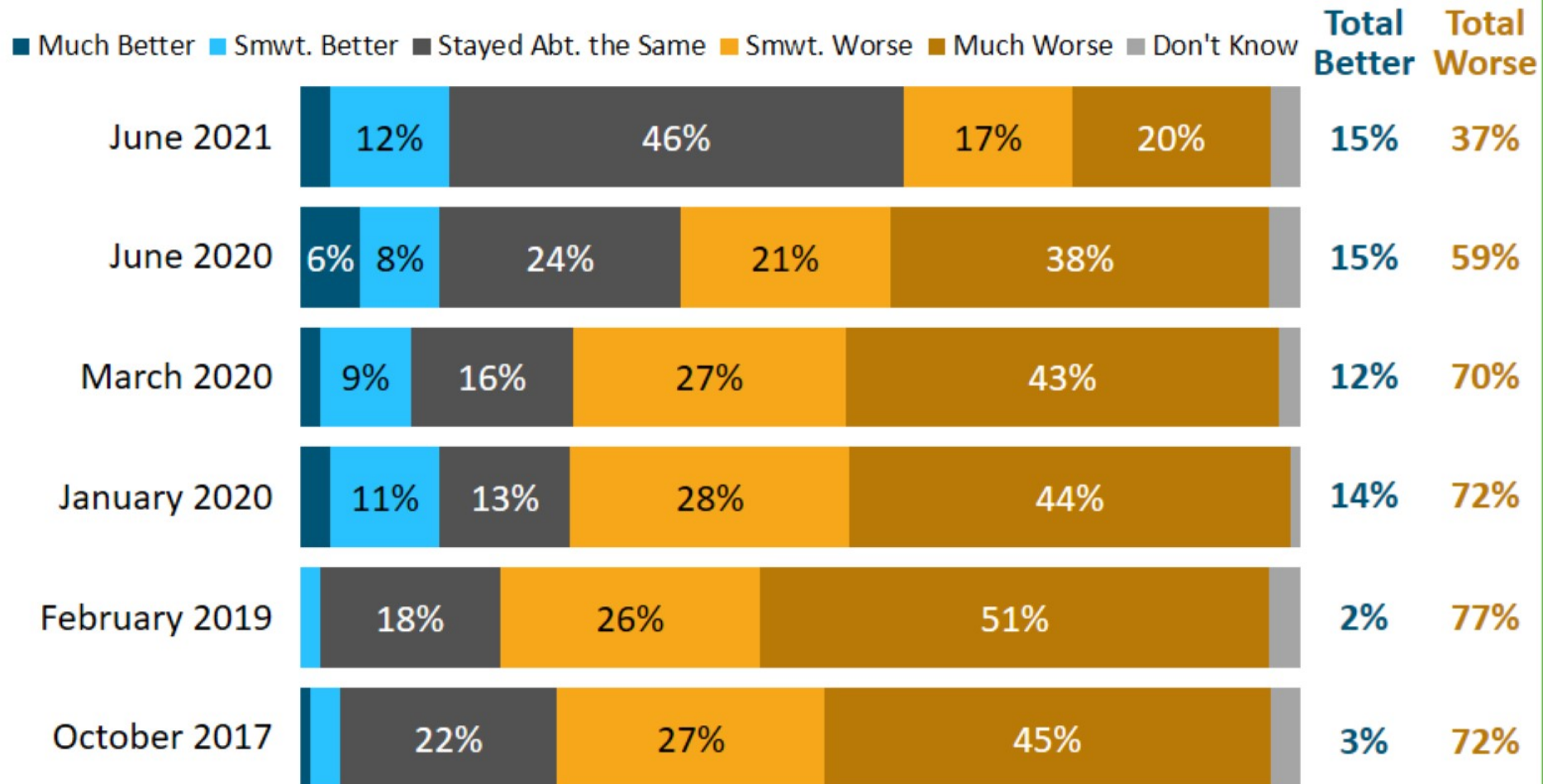
Digging Deeper into Perceptions of Traffic Congestion

- 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.

June 2021	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?
June 2020	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?
Prior Surveys	Thinking specifically about traffic congestion, do you feel it has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same over the past couple of years?

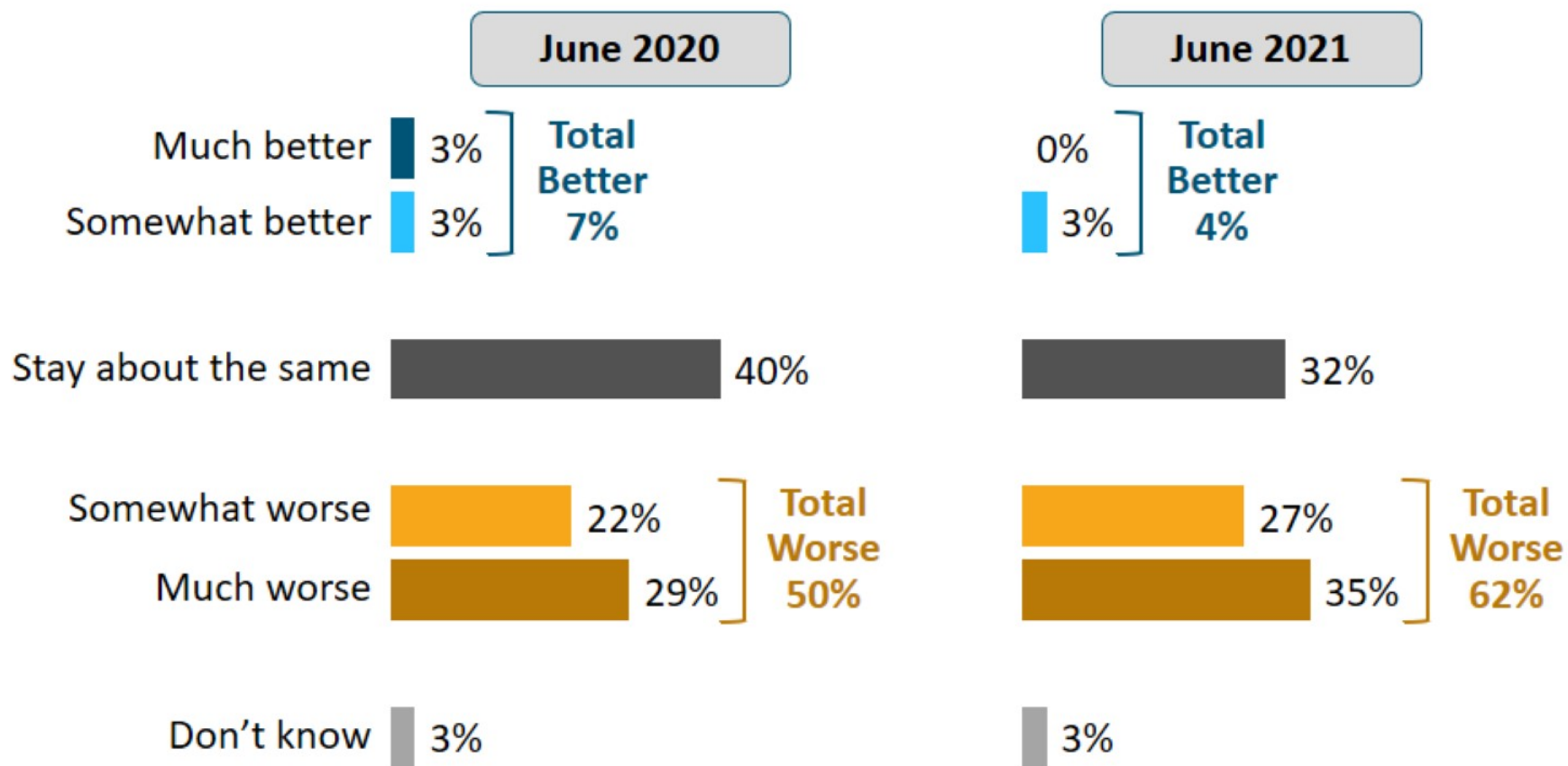
The trend of continually worsening traffic perceptions was interrupted by the pandemic.

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?



However, majorities assume traffic congestion will get worse in the future.

When the economy fully recovers in the future, do you feel that local traffic congestion will eventually be better, worse, or stay about the same as it was before the coronavirus outbreak?

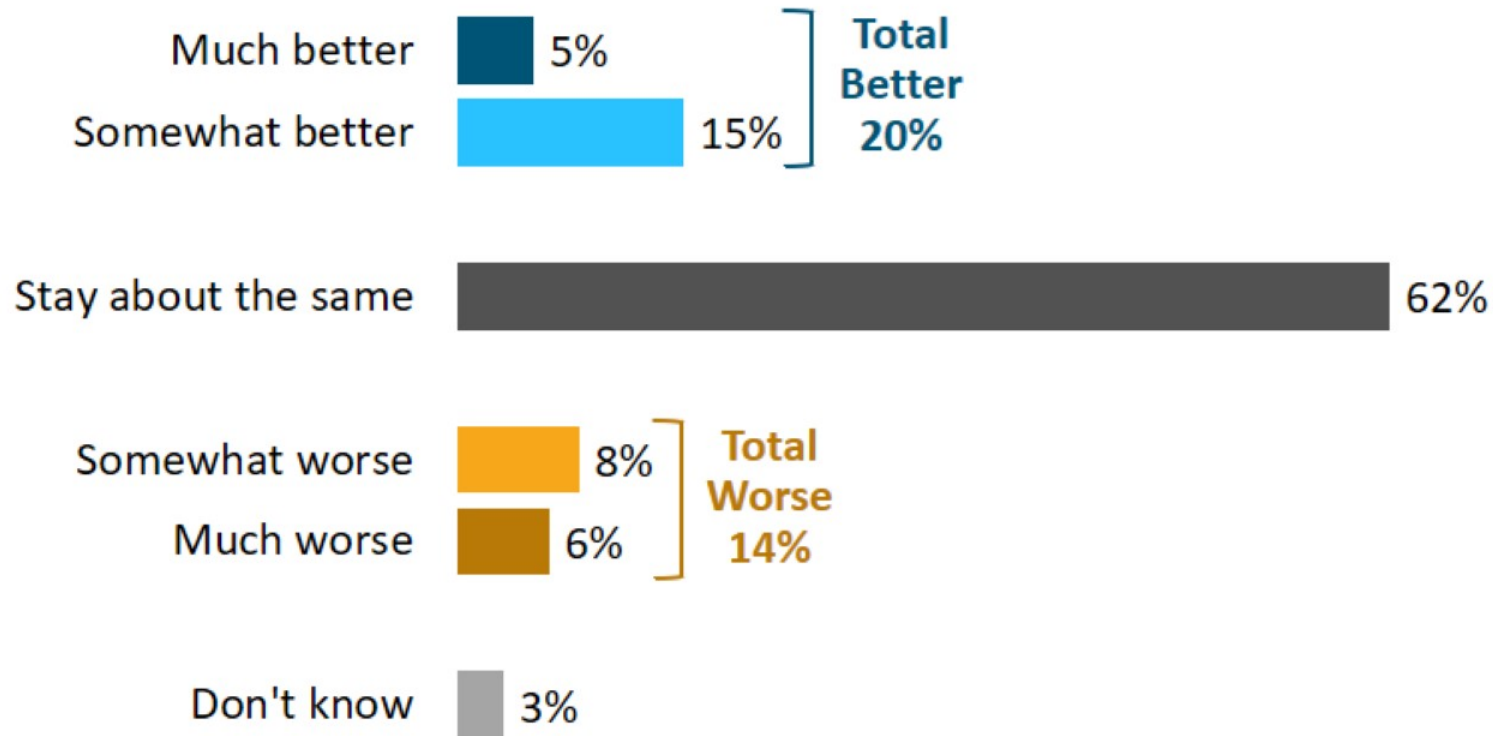


Future pessimism about traffic congestion is most acute in Lincoln, Roseville, Auburn and North Lake Tahoe.

Response	All Voters	City/Town							
		Roseville	Rocklin	Lincoln	Auburn	Loomis	Colfax*	North Lake Tahoe	Other Unincorp.
Total Better	4%	4%	6%	3%	0%	5%	9%	7%	3%
Stay About the Same	32%	30%	36%	12%	35%	52%	47%	21%	39%
Total Worse	62%	64%	51%	84%	61%	37%	43%	70%	55%

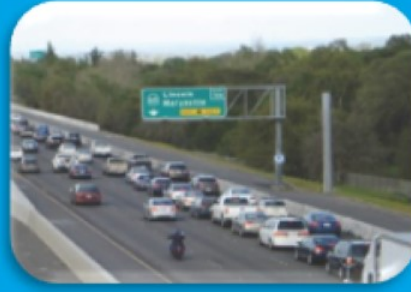
Three in five feel their personal finances will stay about the same over the next year.

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



This sentiment is broadly held across the County.

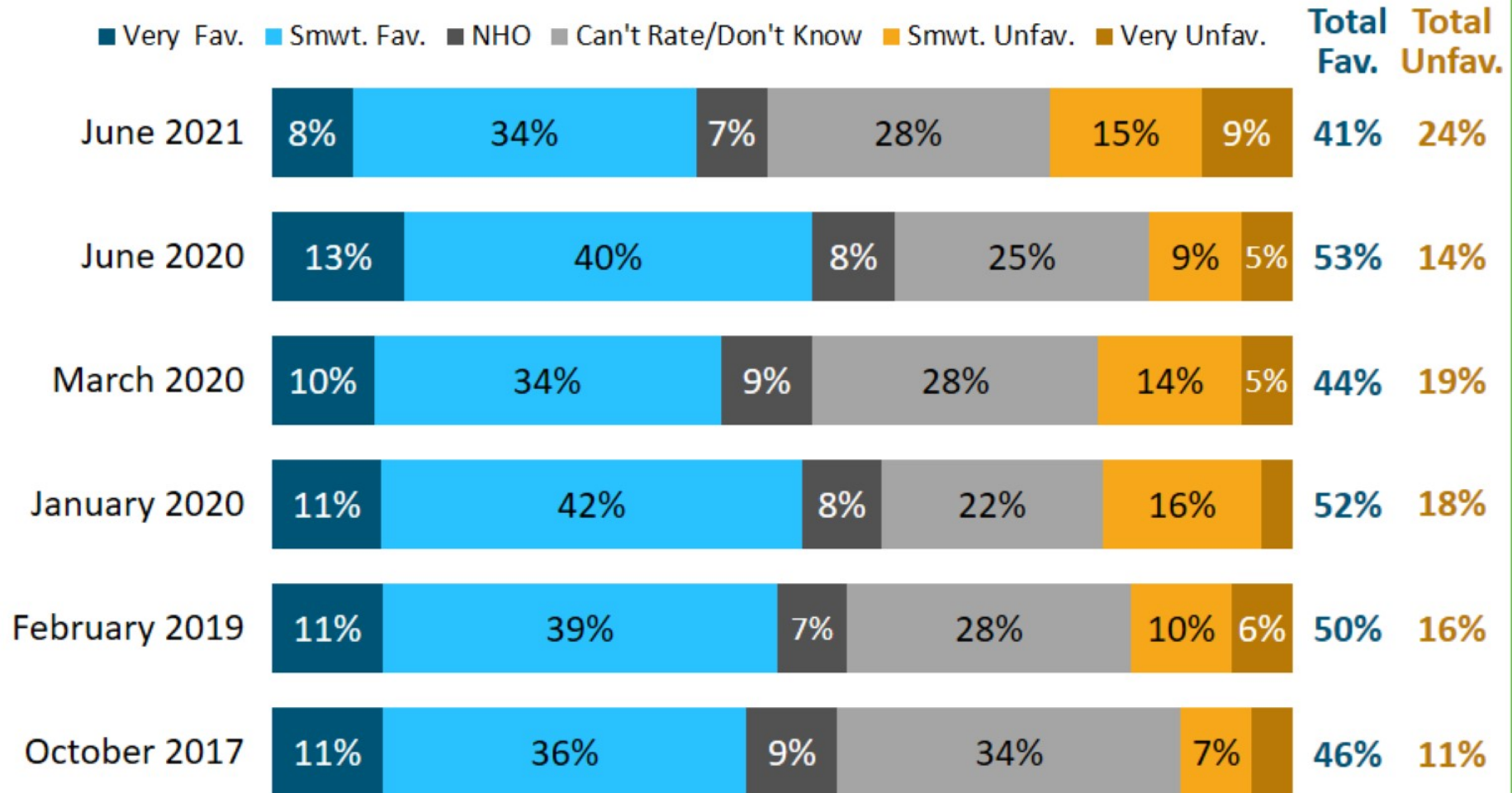
Response	All Voters	City/Town							
		Roseville	Rocklin	Lincoln	Auburn	Loomis	Colfax*	North Lake Tahoe	Other Unincorp.
Total Better	20%	25%	17%	19%	24%	12%	23%	14%	16%
Stay About the Same	62%	57%	67%	67%	58%	72%	70%	71%	63%
Total Worse	14%	15%	11%	12%	15%	11%	7%	13%	17%



Views of Local Government

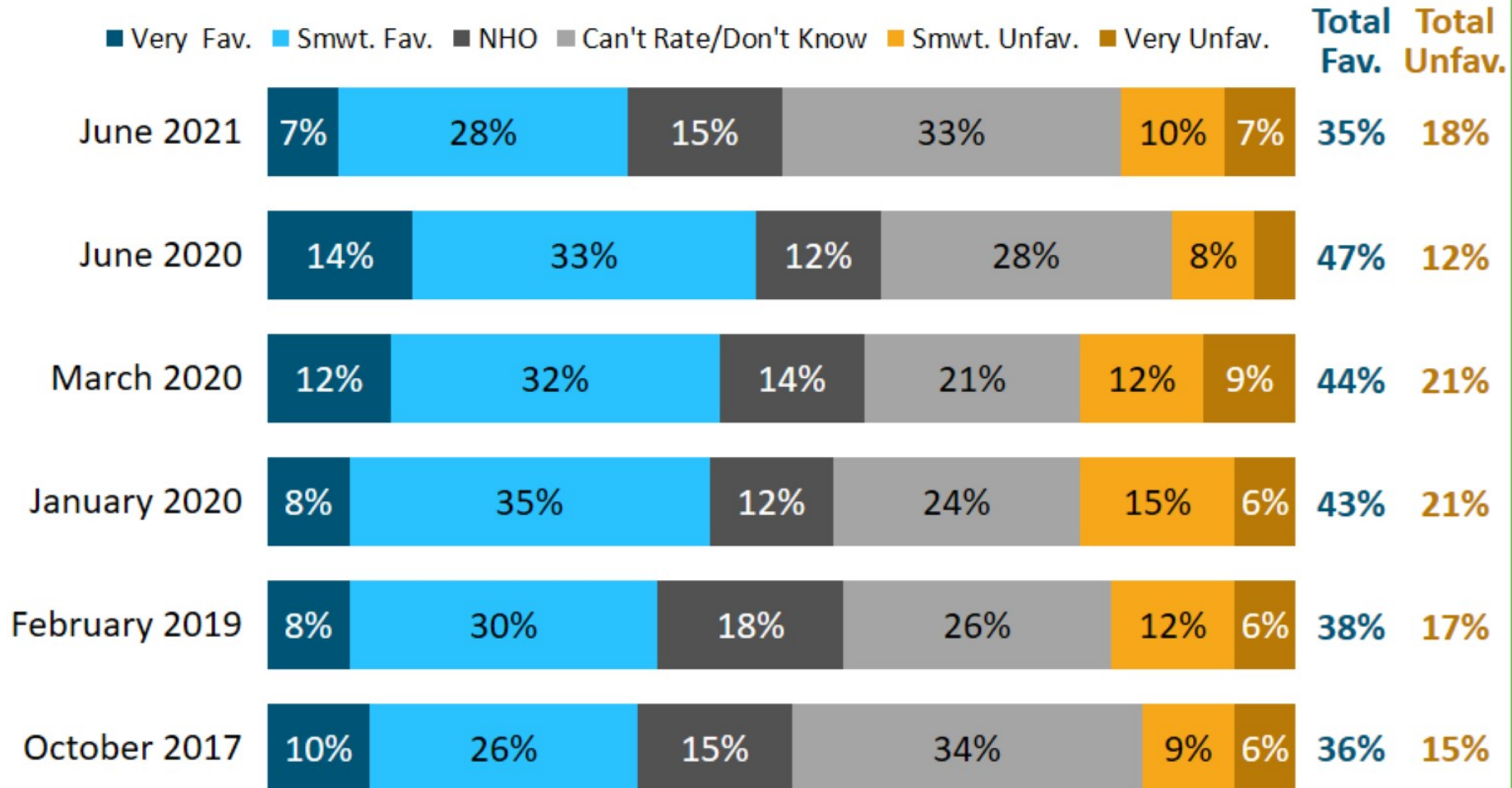
Opinions of the Board are somewhat less positive, but are generally similar to past years.

The Placer County Board of Supervisors



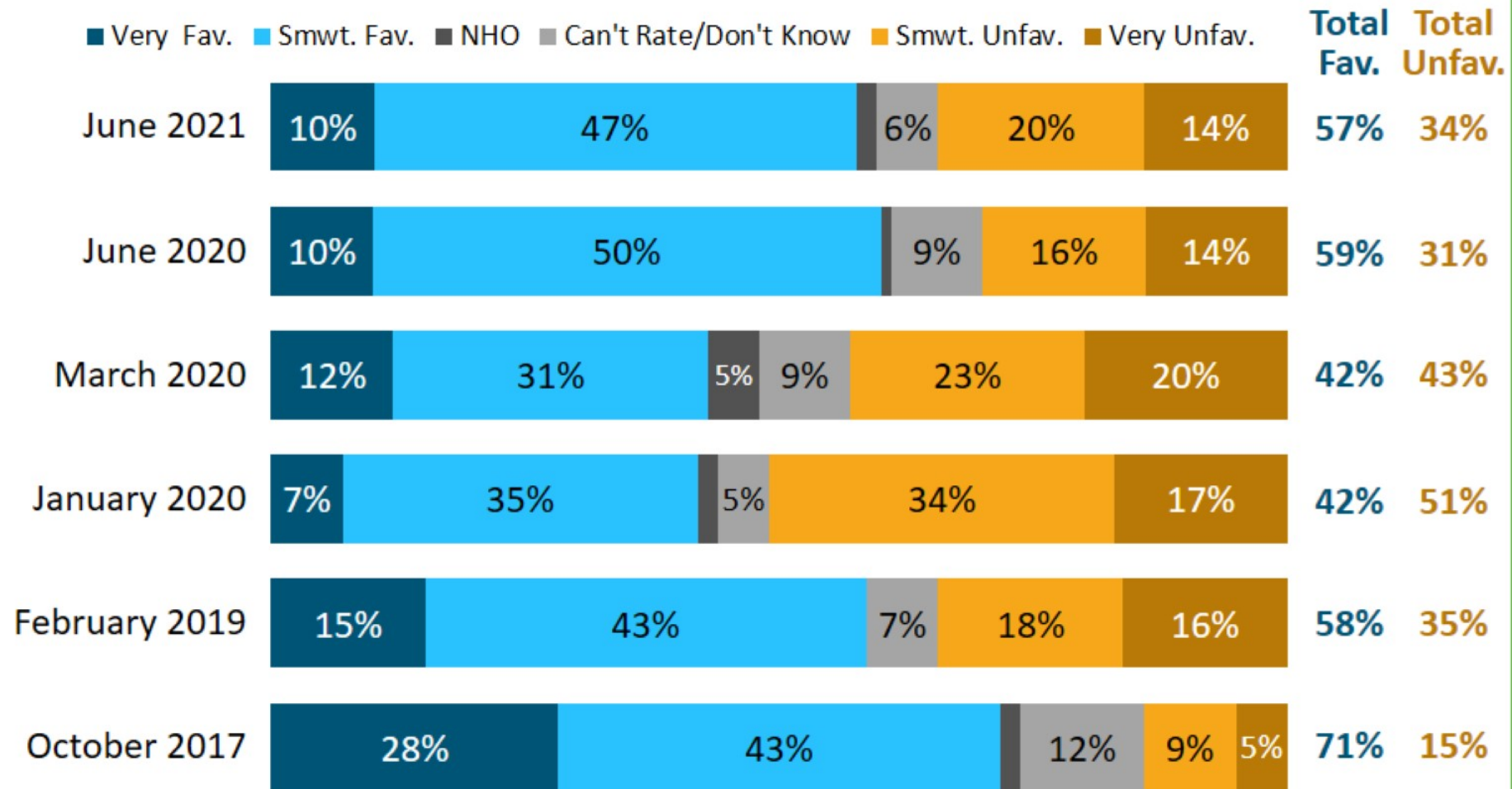
The same pattern holds for perceptions of PCTPA.

The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency



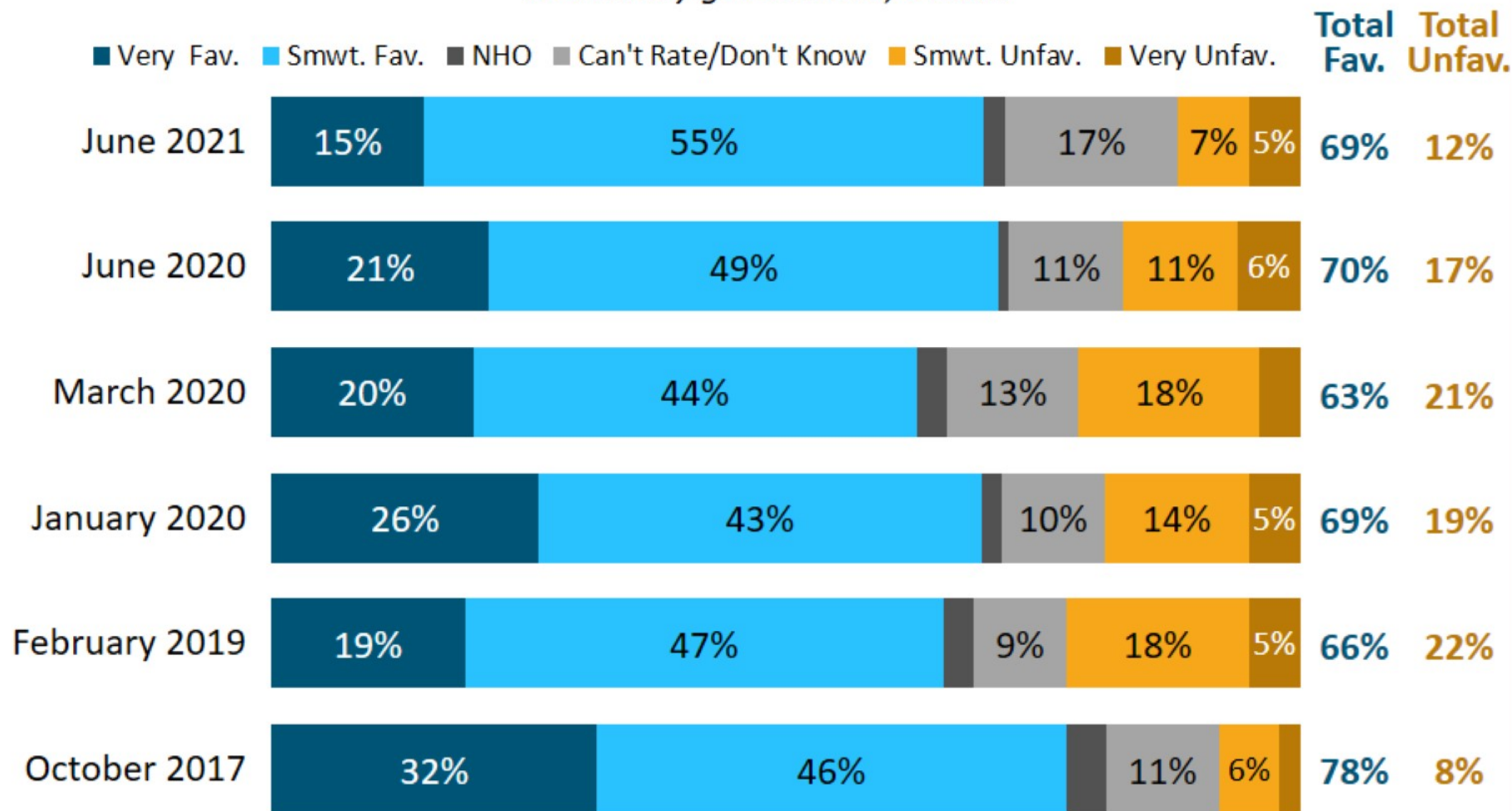
Views of Lincoln city government are similar to where they were a year ago.

**Lincoln city government, overall*



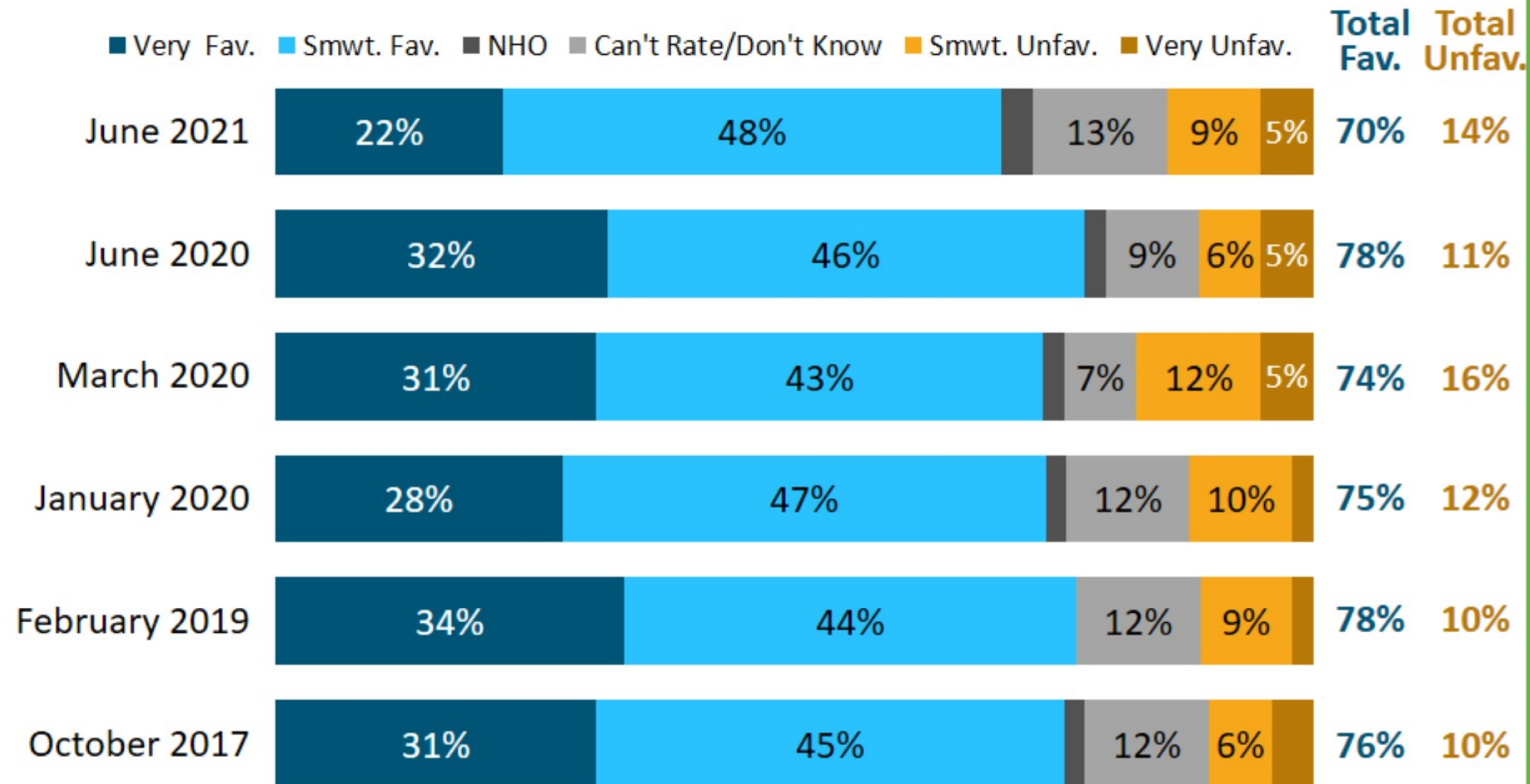
Views of Rocklin city government have been holding steady in recent years...

**Rocklin city government, overall*

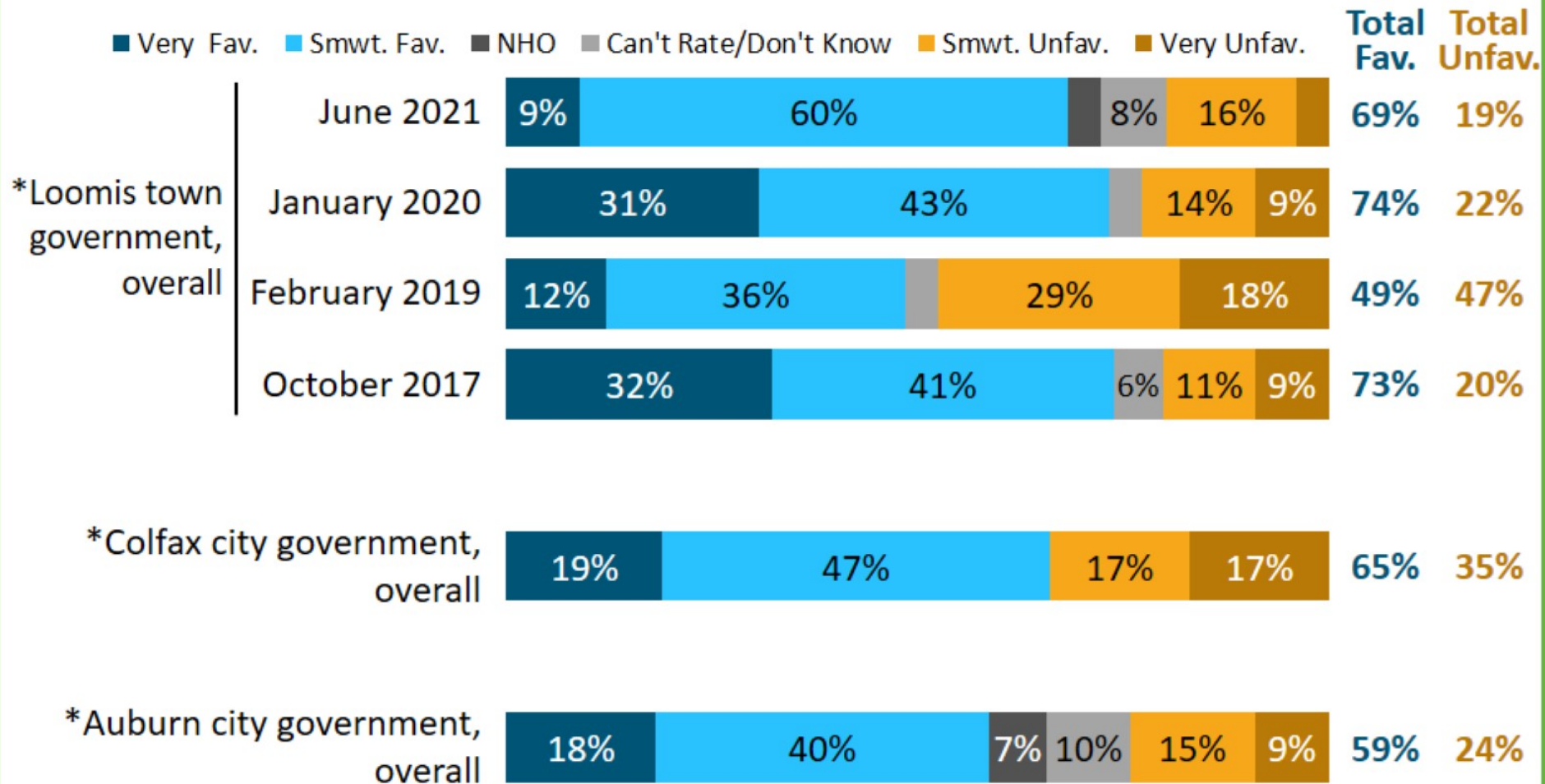


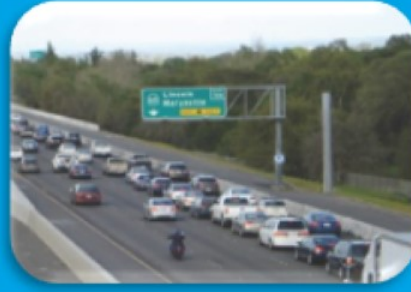
...as have views of Roseville's city government.

**Roseville city government, overall*



Views of city/town governments in Auburn, Loomis and Colfax are all positive.





Support for a Potential Transportation Sales Tax Measure

Ballot Language Tested

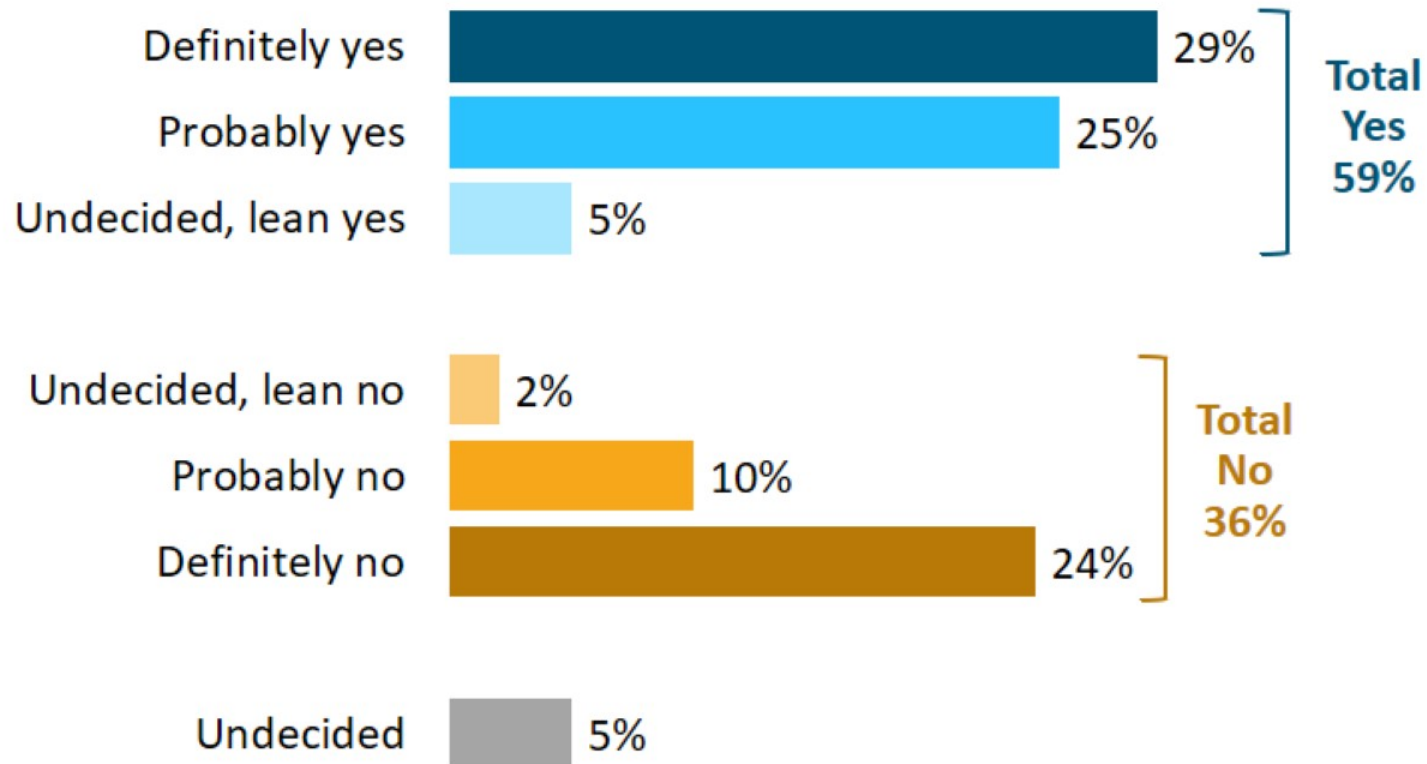
We tested the same hypothetical 75 words and measure title, but split sampling the position of “to create local jobs” to better assess the impact of that language.

Placer County Traffic Relief and Economic Recovery Plan. Shall a measure **to create local jobs**, reduce traffic congestion, and make transportation investments countywide, including: completing 80/65 improvements; widening Highway 65; improving emergency responder access by reducing traffic congestion/fixing bottlenecks; and funding for local road repair; by establishing a ½ cent sales tax raising approximately \$44,000,000 annually for 30 years, with independent audits, citizens’ oversight, and increasing eligibility for state/federal matching funds, be adopted?

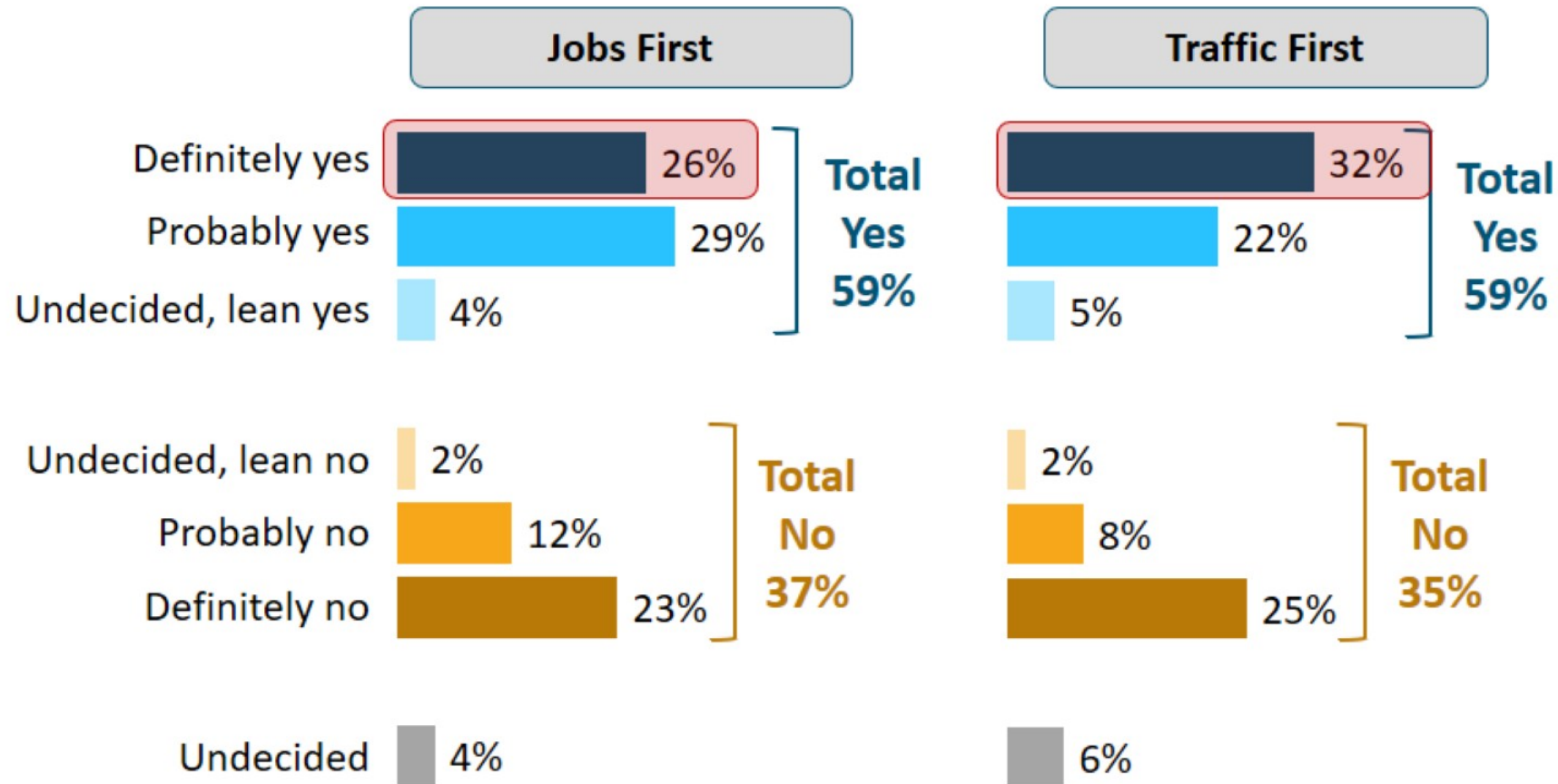
Placer County Traffic Relief and Economic Recovery Plan. Shall a measure to reduce traffic congestion, and make transportation investments countywide, including: completing 80/65 improvements; widening Highway 65; improving emergency responder access by reducing traffic congestion/fixing bottlenecks; and funding for local road repair; and **to create local jobs** by establishing a ½ cent sales tax raising approximately \$44,000,000 annually for 30 years, with independent audits, citizens’ oversight, and increasing eligibility for state/federal matching funds, be adopted?

Three in five indicated they would vote “yes” on a measure, with similar levels of intensity.

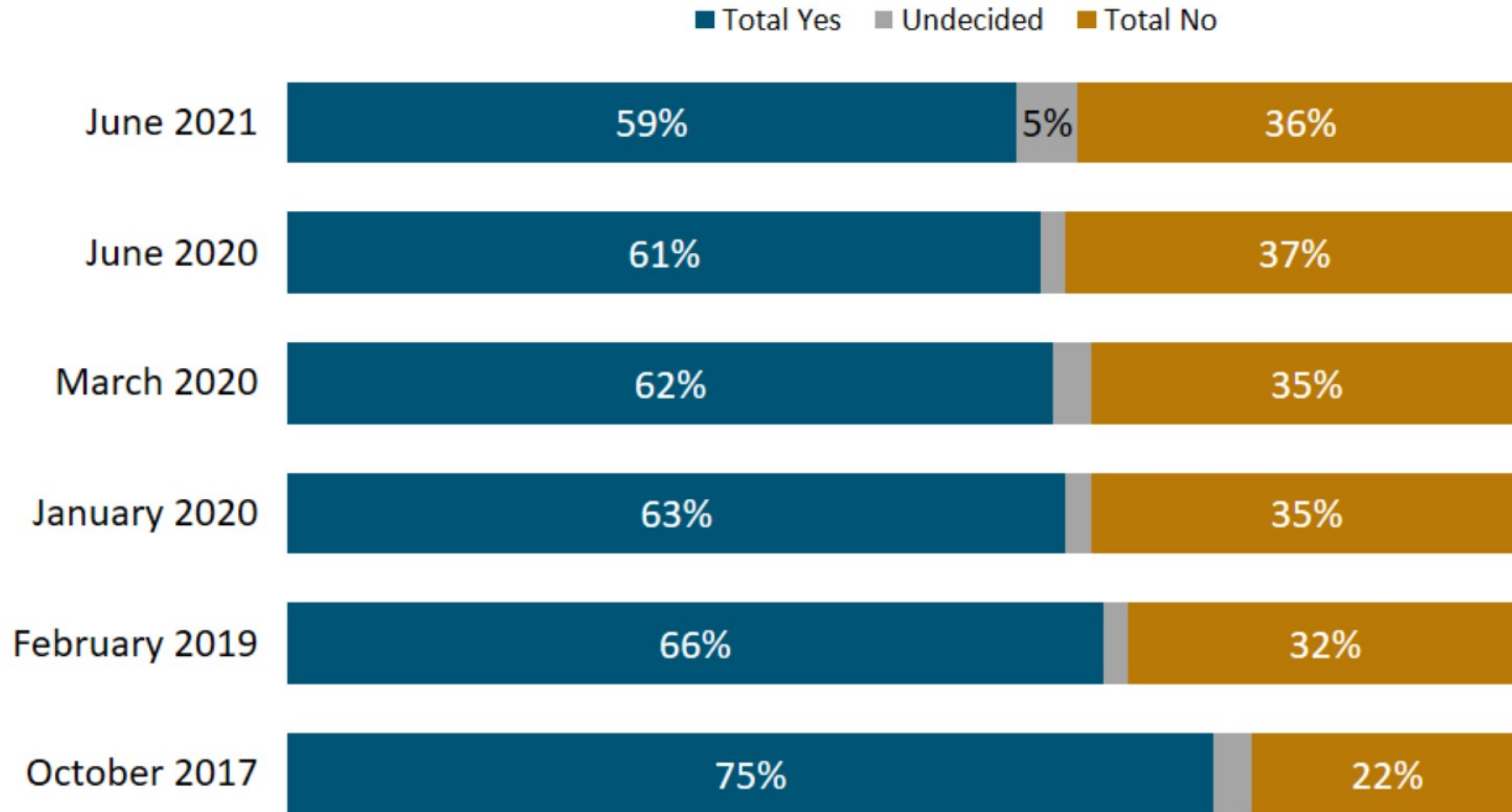
Based on this description, do you think you would vote “yes” or “no” on this measure?



There was little aggregate difference in the wording order, but slightly more intensity for the version highlighting traffic relief first.



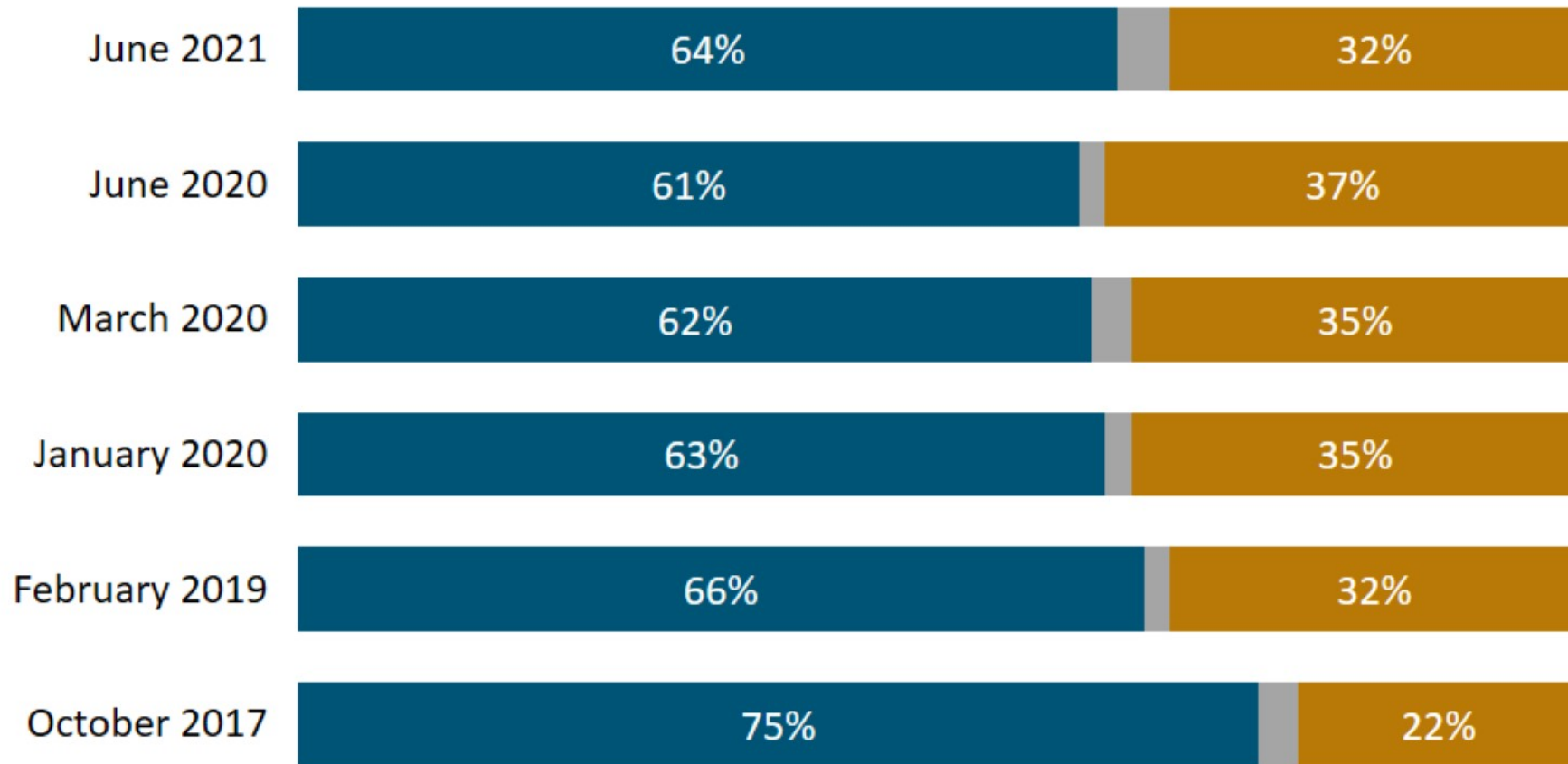
This looks similar, but lower, to the support levels within the District from last June.



However, if we narrow the recent results to only the District, support is up a few points (and opposition down).

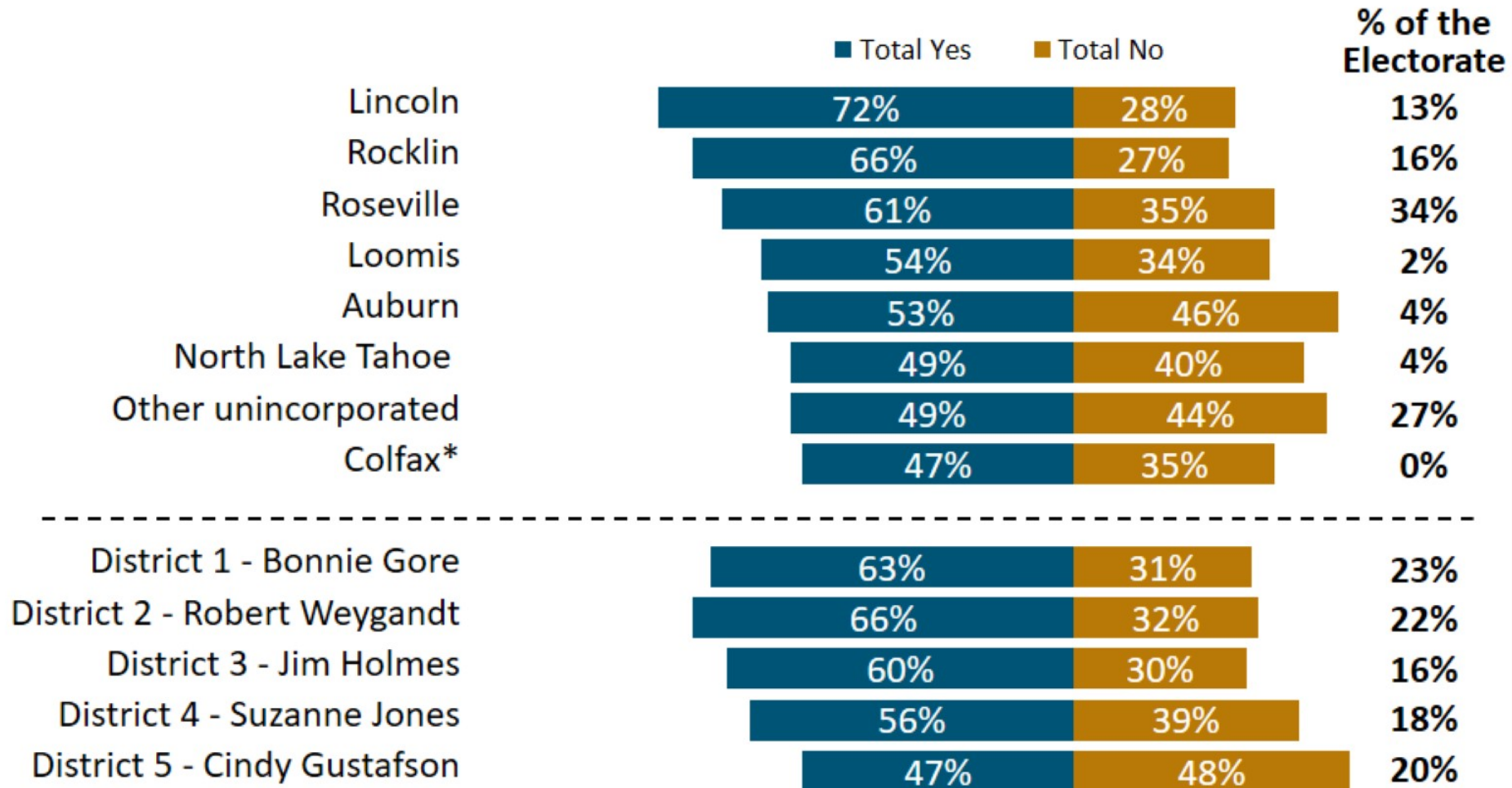
District Boundaries Only

■ Total Yes ■ Undecided ■ Total No



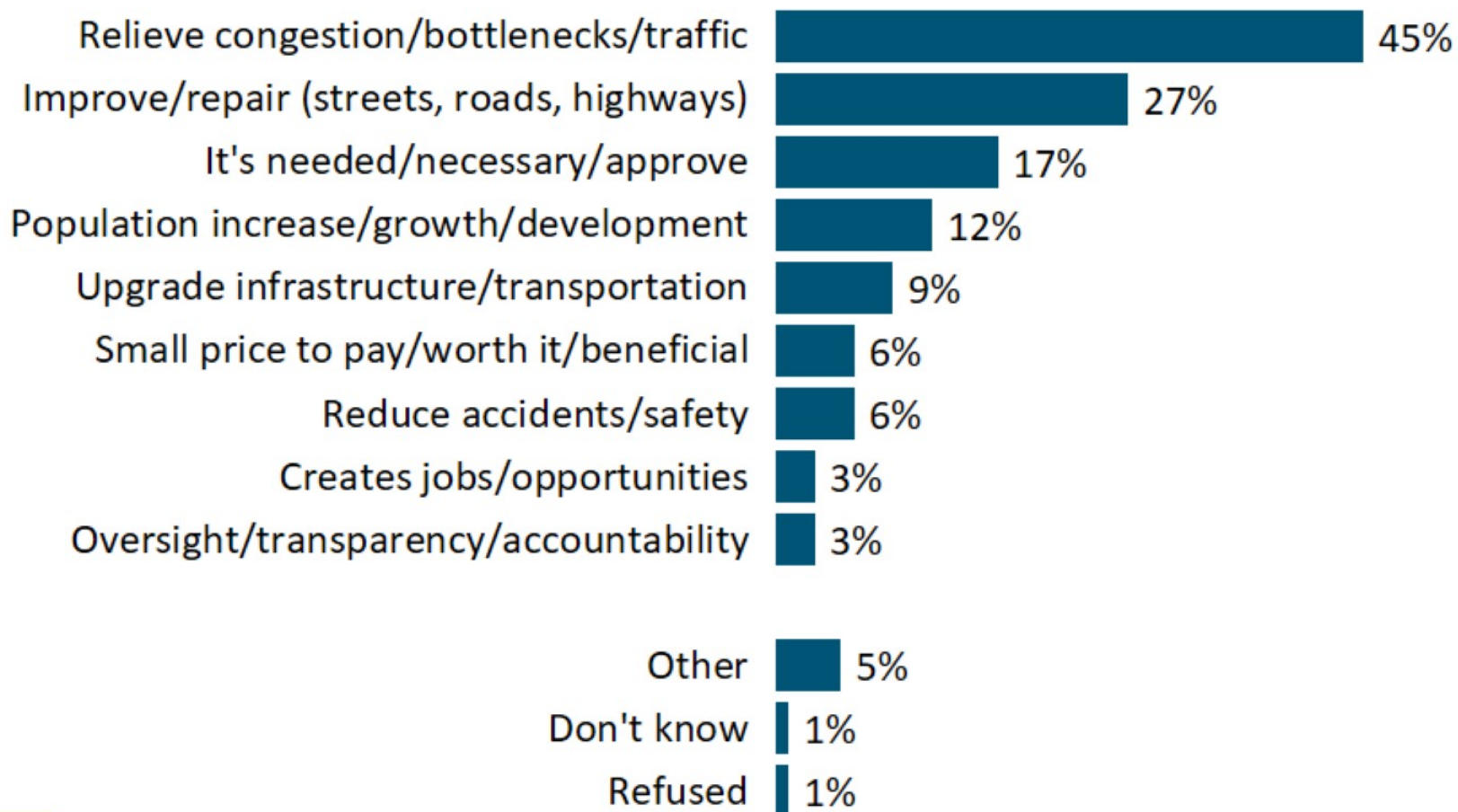
Support is highest in Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville.

By City/Town & Board of Supervisors



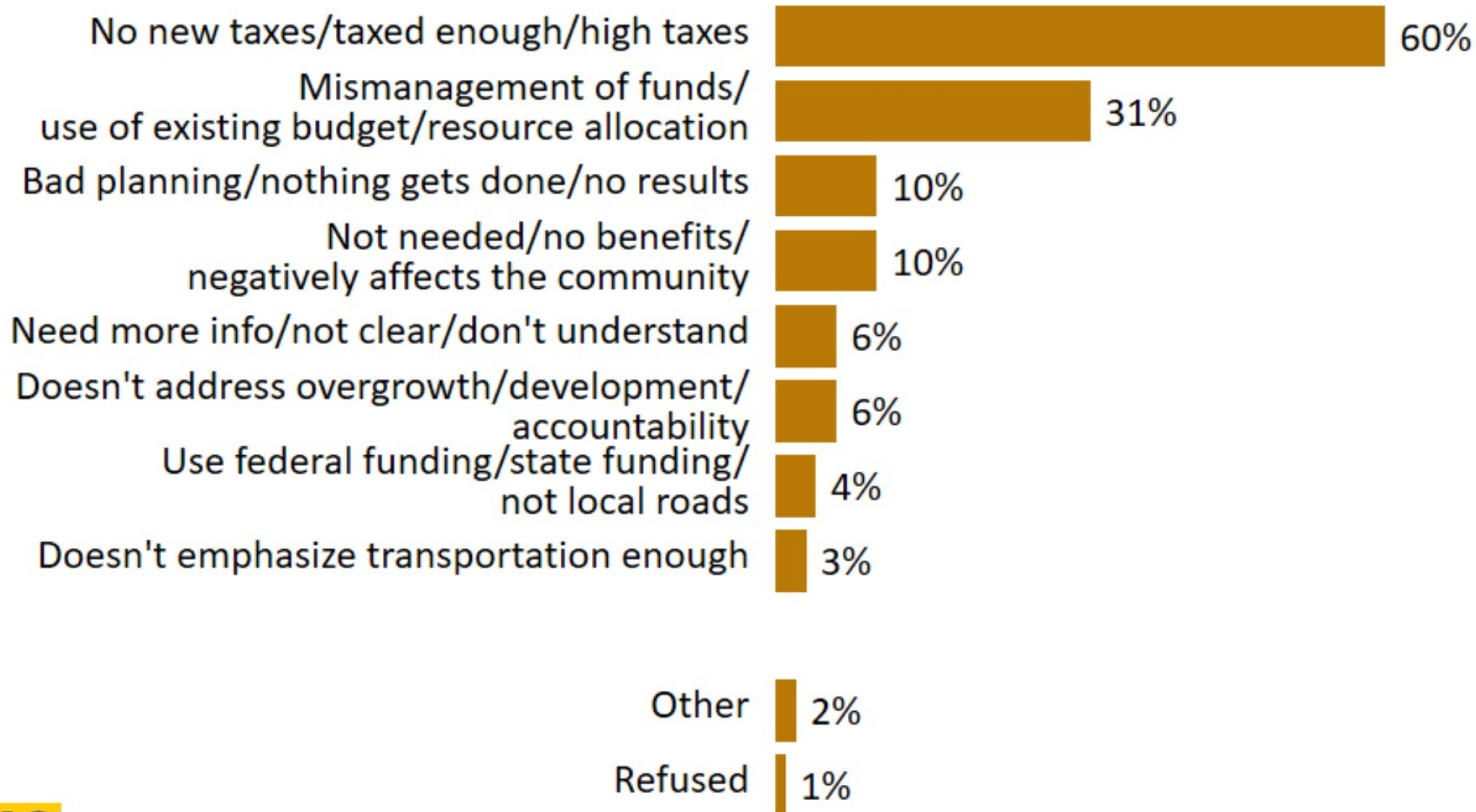
For supporters, it's primarily about relieving traffic congestion.

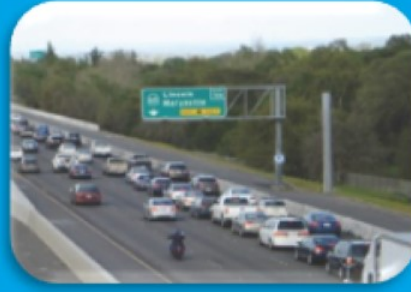
*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **YES** on this measure?
(Open-ended; Asked of Yes Voters Only; n=498)*



For opponents, it's primarily about taxes.

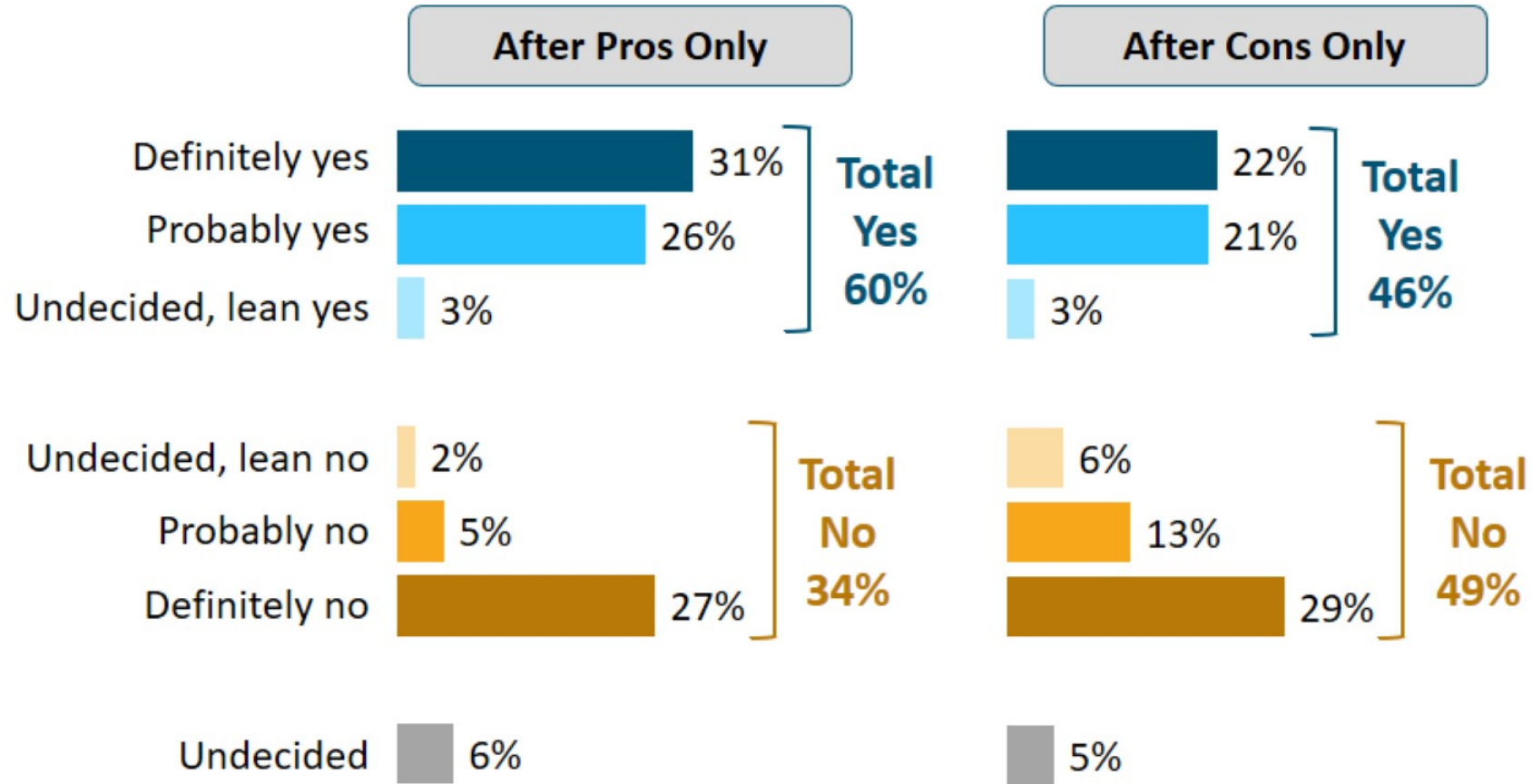
*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **NO** on this measure?
(Open-ended; Asked of No Voters Only; n=304)*



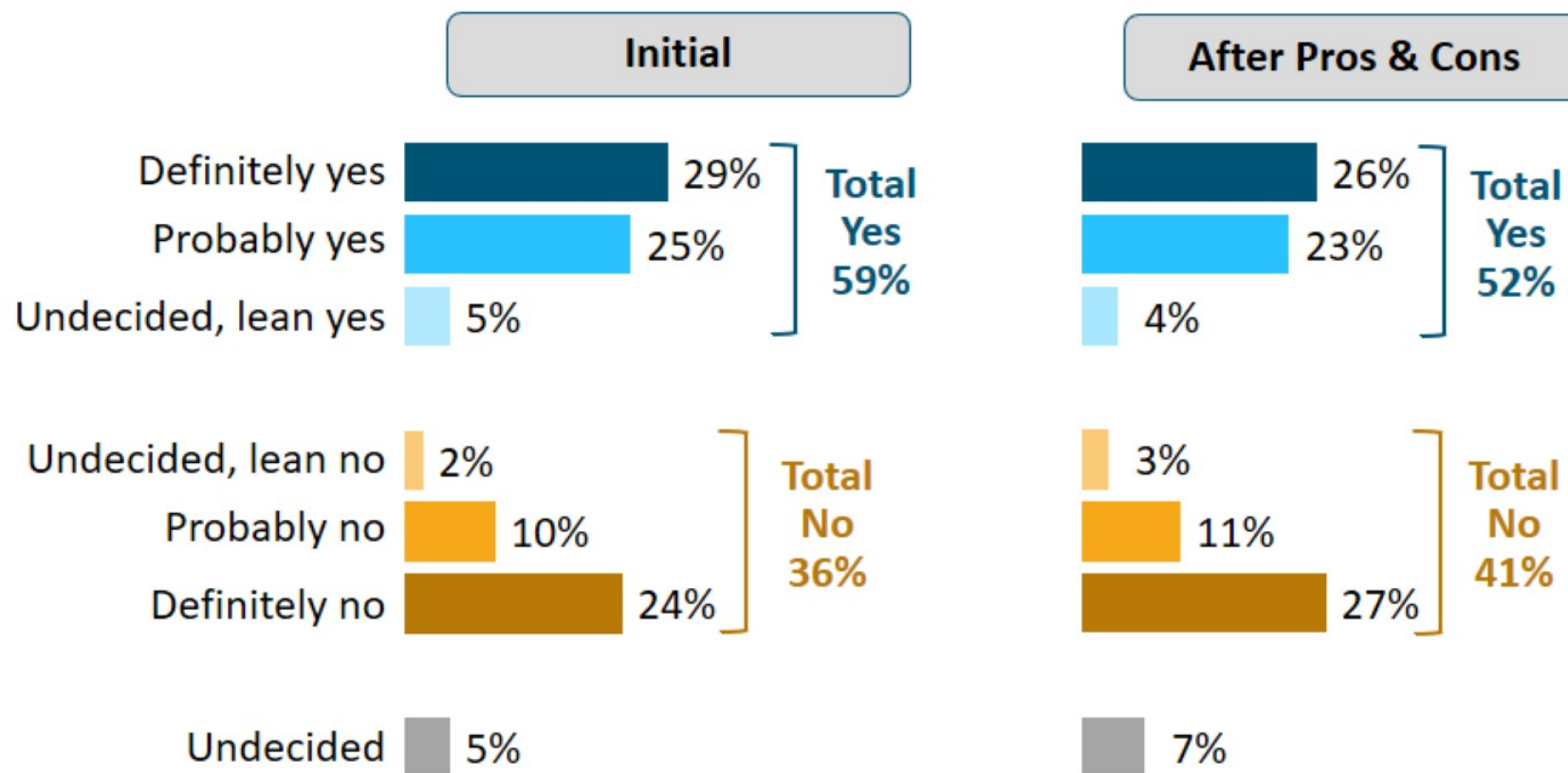


The Impact of Pro and Con Arguments

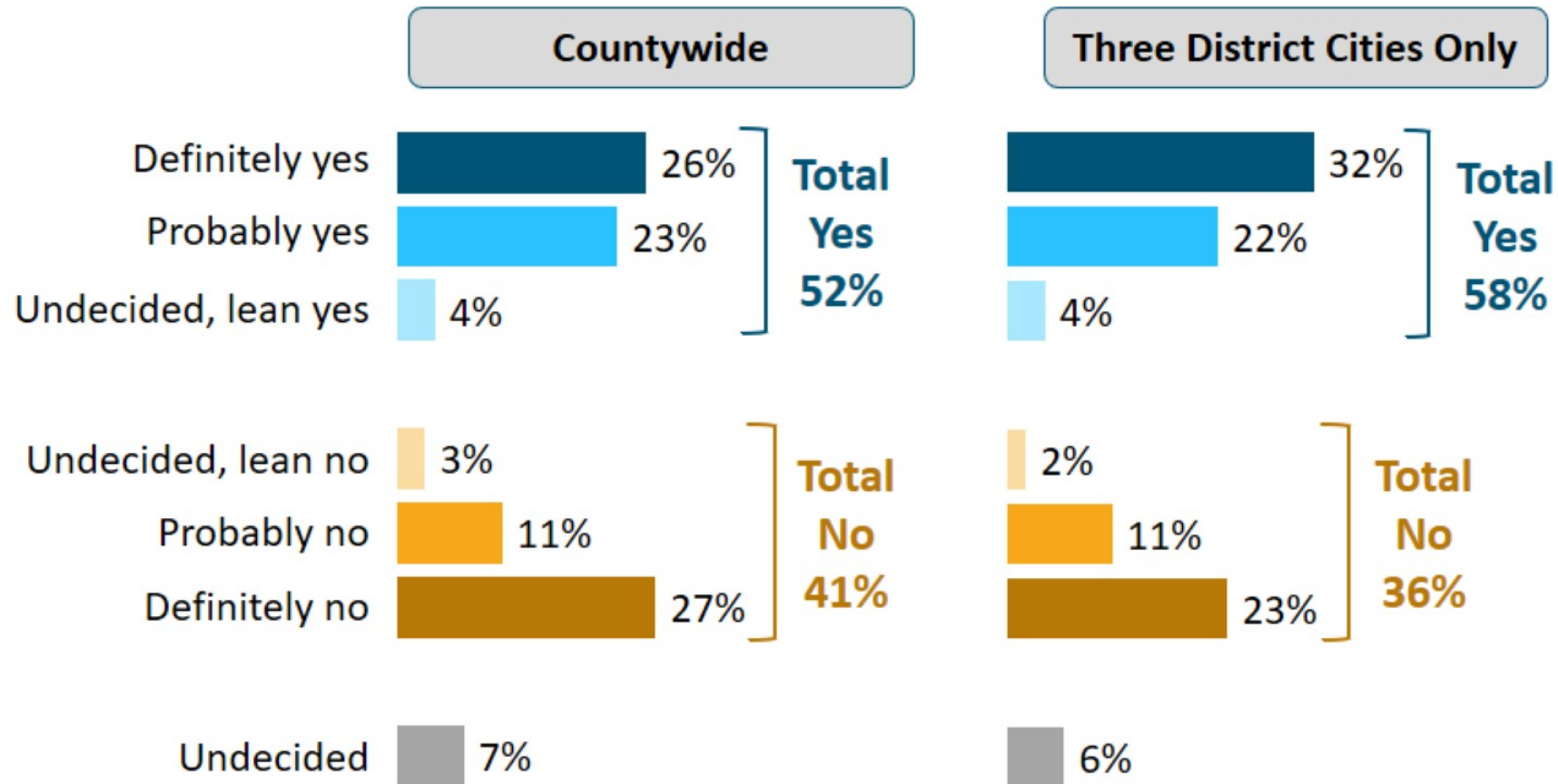
Support hit a ceiling of 60% "yes" and a floor of 46% "yes"...

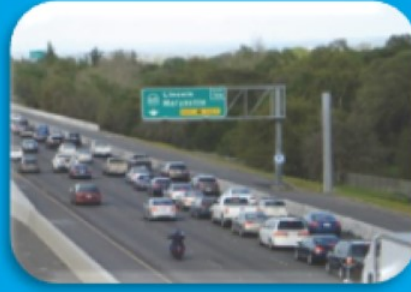


...but dropped in aggregate after respondents heard both pro and con arguments.



However, final support was notably higher in just Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln.



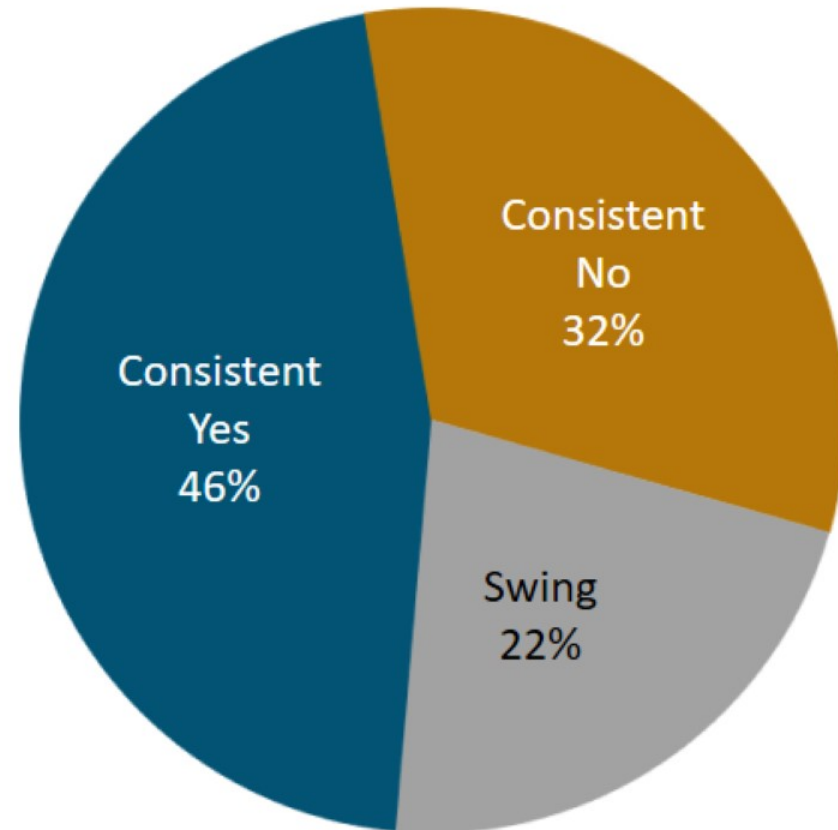


Segmenting the Electorate

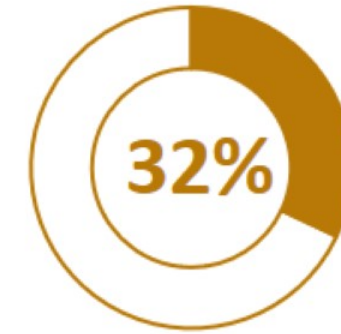
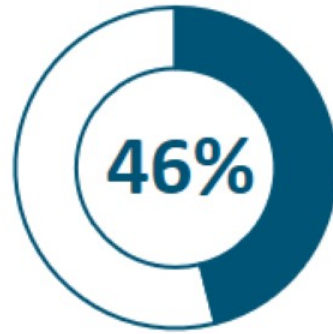
Segmenting the Electorate by Vote Consistency

- ❖ **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.

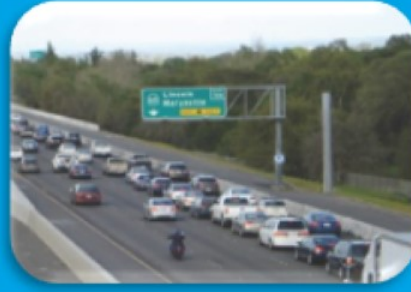


Demographic Profile of the Segments



Consistent Yes	Swing	Consistent No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Democrats• Latinos• Lincoln & Rocklin residents• Supervisor District 3• Voters of color• Ages 30-39 and 75+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High school educated• Independent women• Ages 18-29• Non-college educated women• Women ages 18-49• Republicans ages 18-49• North Lake Tahoe residents• Households with 3+ commuters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Republicans• Supervisor District 5• Auburn residents

These are groups disproportionately likely to fall into these categories. It does not mean that most of any of these groups are in a specific category; rather, they are more likely than your average respondent to be in that category.



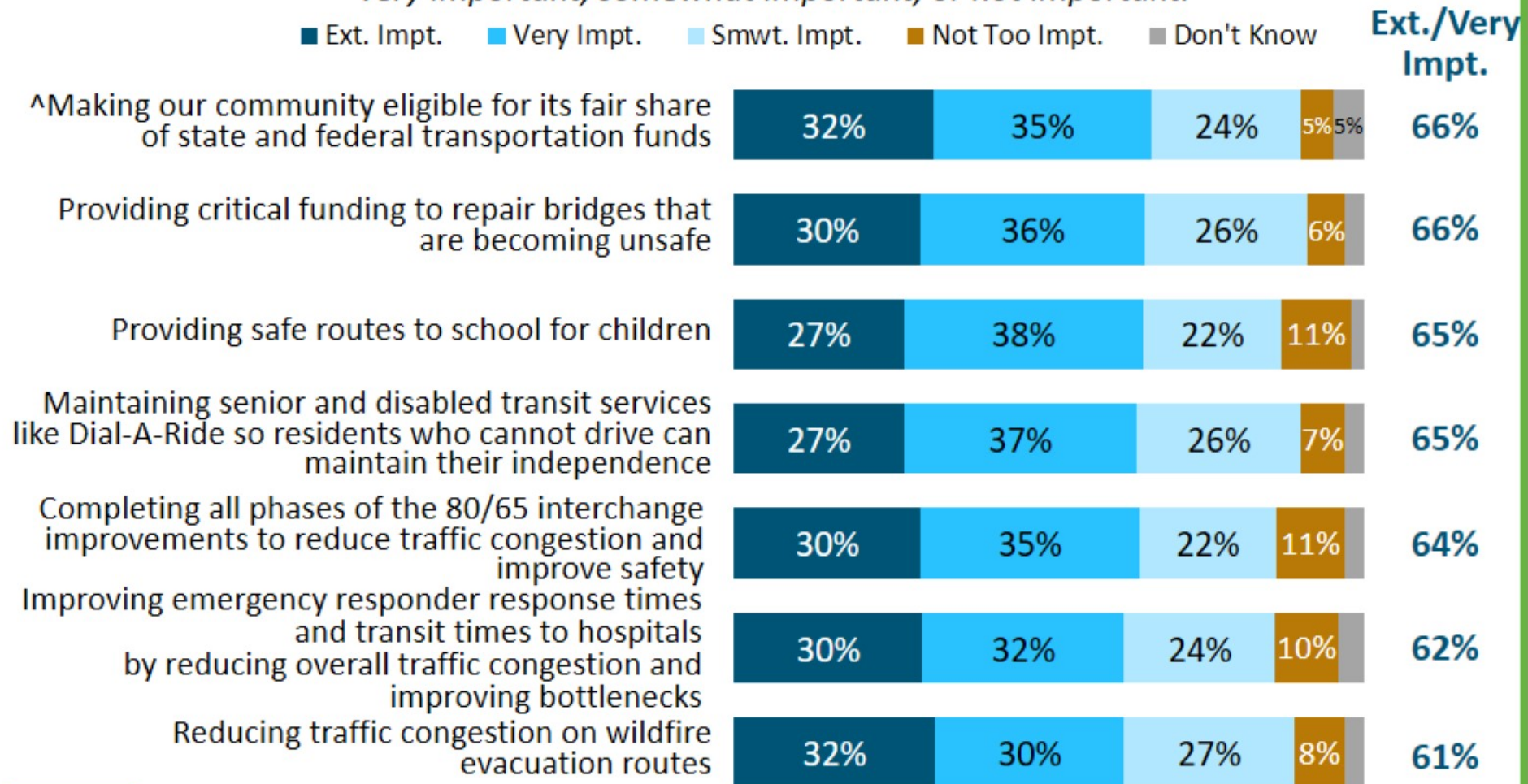
Spending Priorities

Putting Reactions to the Spending Priorities into Context

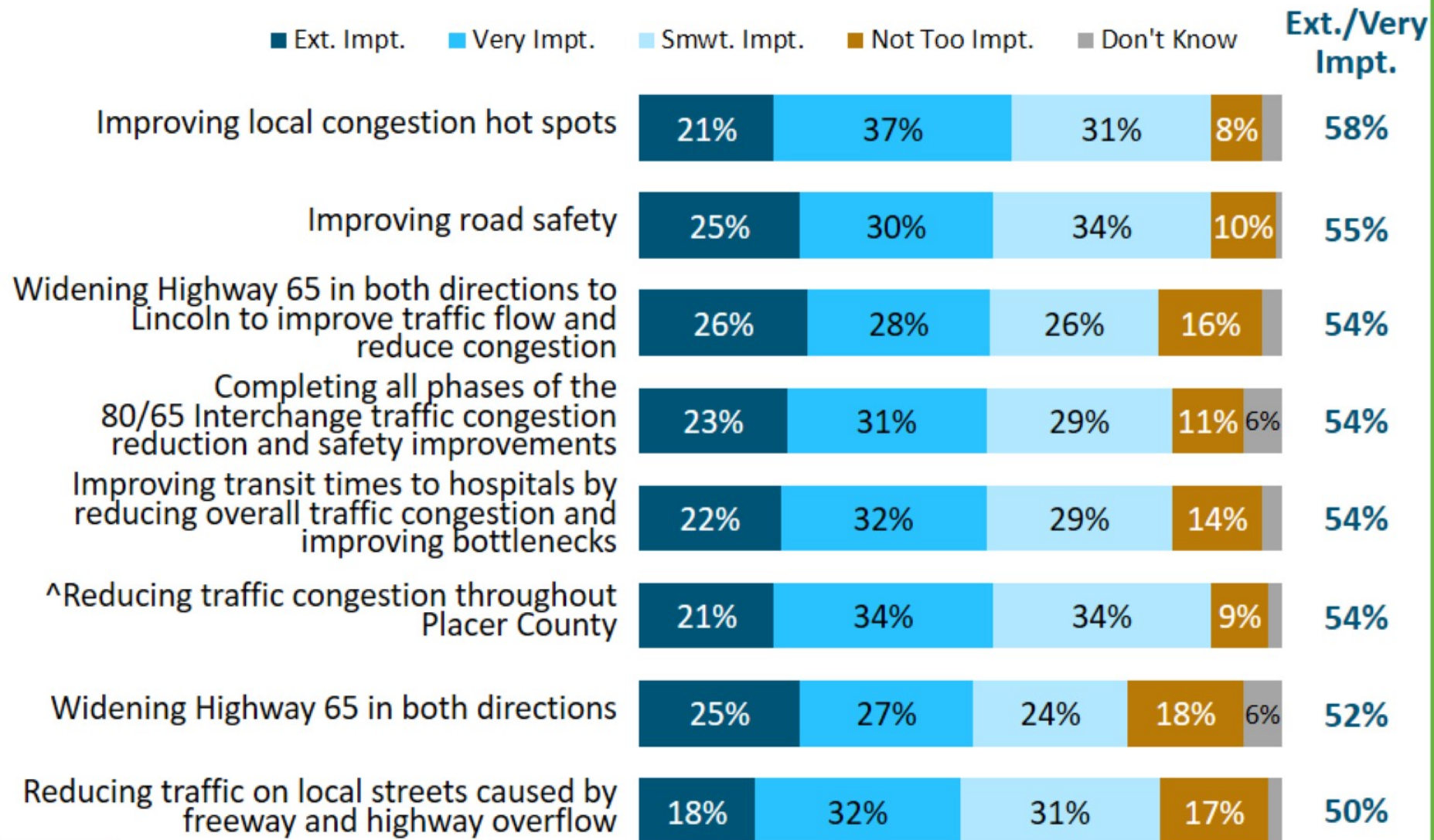
- In general, the combined “extremely” and “very important” numbers were 10+ points lower in this survey than when last assessed in March 2020.
- Spending areas specifically related to 80 and 65 were notably higher in the three-city District than countywide.

Most of the top priorities were not specifically about relieving traffic congestion.

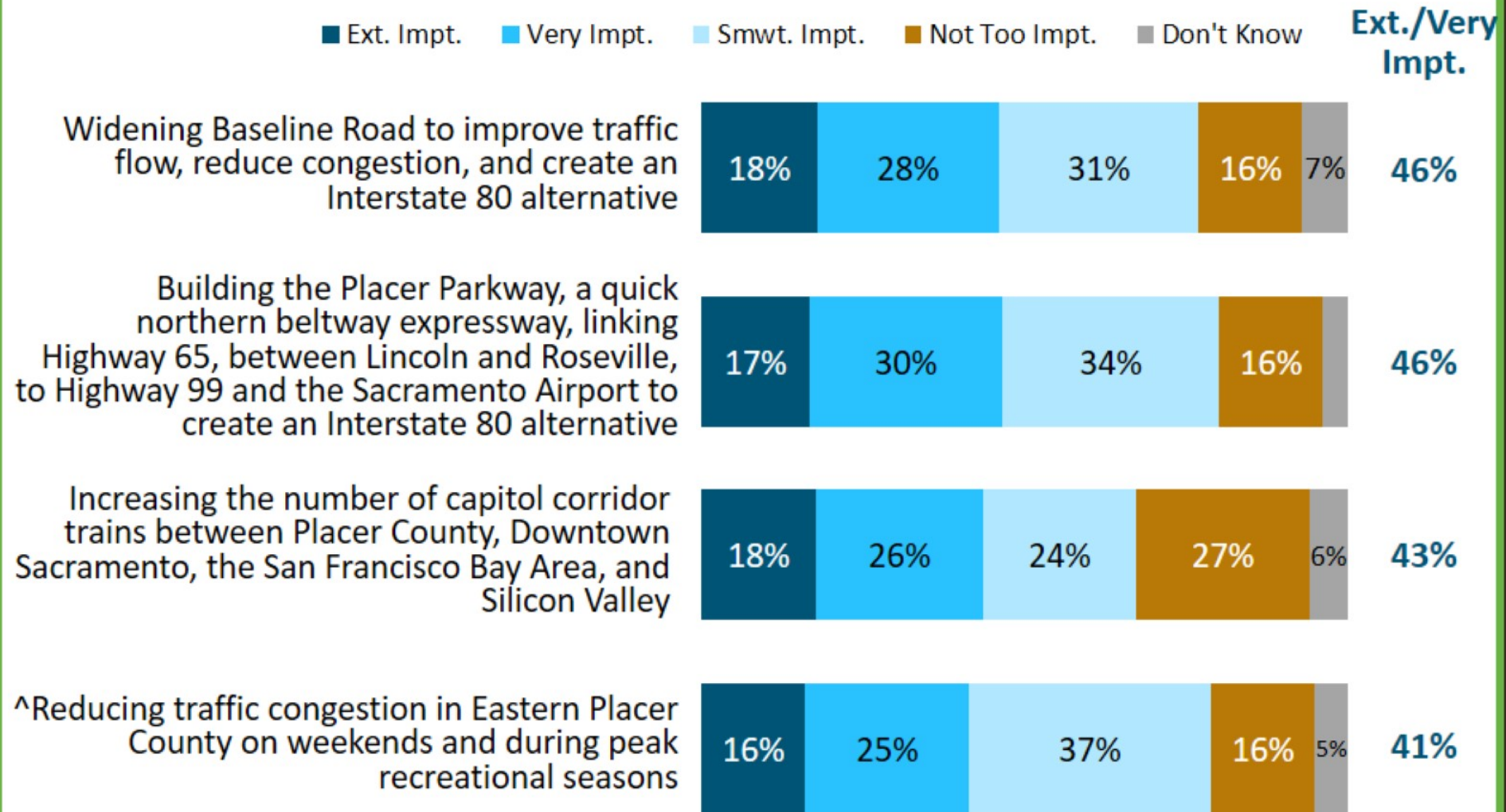
I'm going to read you a list of projects that may be built or implemented if it passes. Please tell me how important each project or objective is to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important.



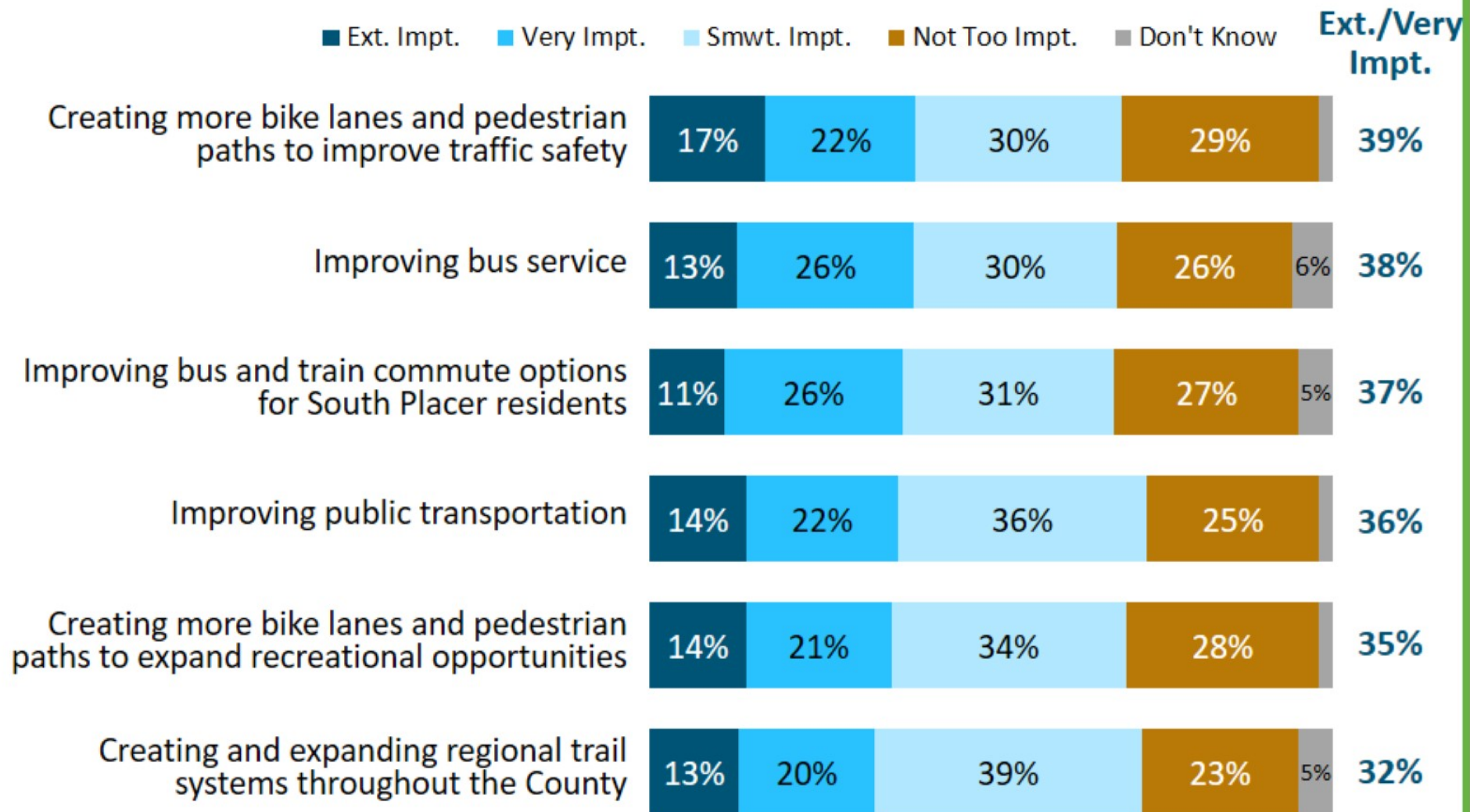
Traffic congestion relieve and many specific 80 and 65 projects were second tier.



Other specific projects were seen as lower priorities.

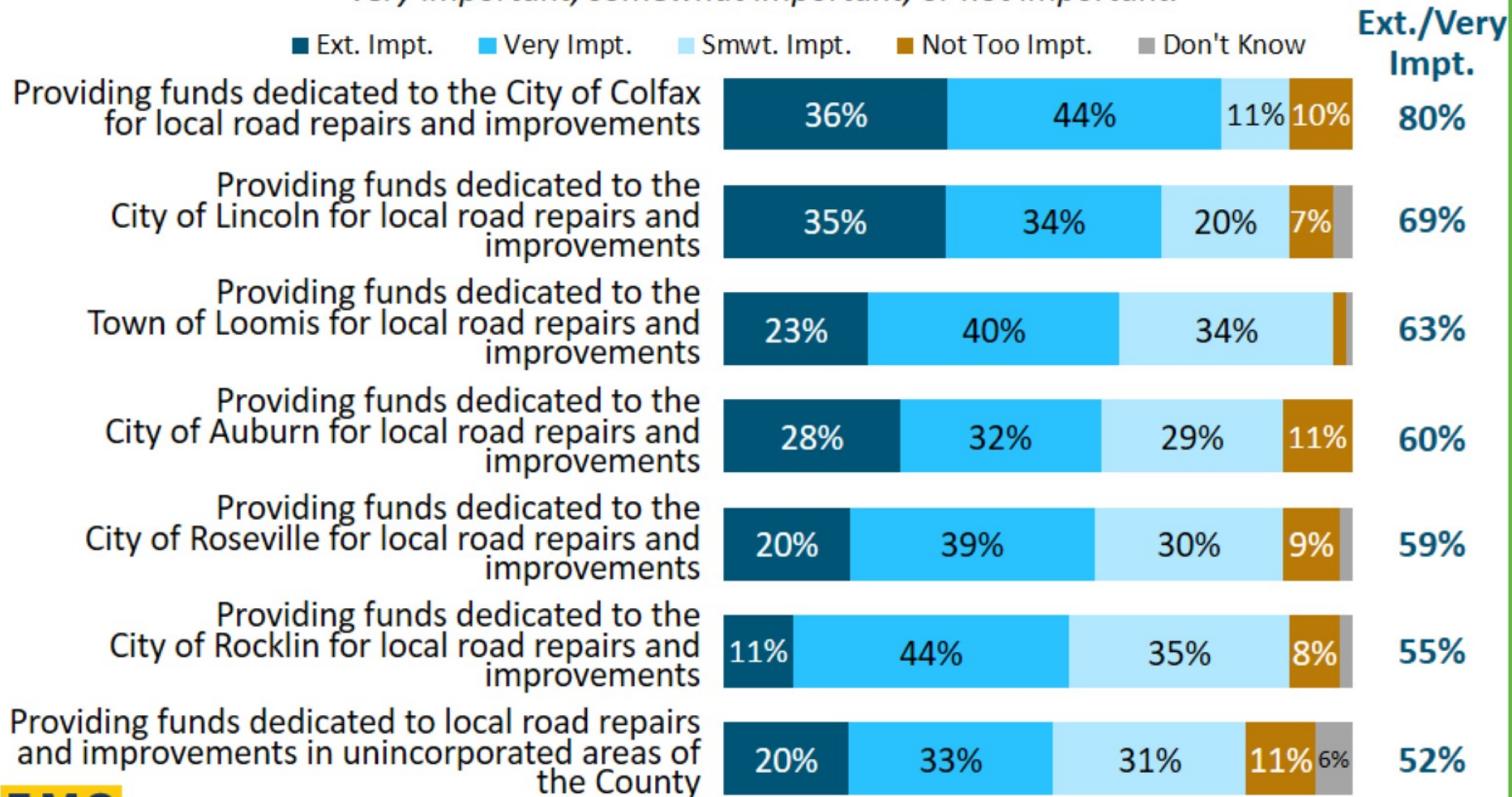


Transit and alternative transportation projects were among the lowest priorities.



Non-District cities/towns had more intensely positive reactions to local road repairs.

I'm going to read you a list of projects that may be built or implemented if it passes. Please tell me how important each project or objective is to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important.



Top Spending Priorities by Geography

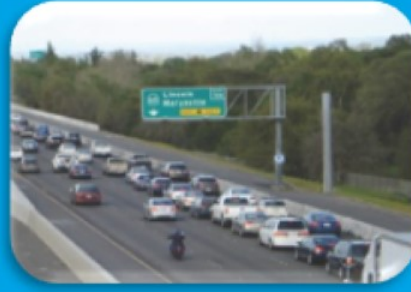
(At least 60% "Extremely/Very Important")

Countywide

Spending Area	Ext/Very Imp.
Making our community eligible for its fair share of state and federal transportation funds	66%
Providing critical funding to repair bridges that are becoming unsafe	66%
Providing safe routes to school for children	65%
Maintaining senior and disabled transit services like Dial-A-Ride so residents who cannot drive can maintain their independence	65%
Completing all phases of the 80/65 interchange improvements to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety	64%
Improving emergency responder response times and transit times to hospitals by reducing overall traffic congestion and improving bottlenecks	62%
Reducing traffic congestion on wildfire evacuation routes	61%

Three District Cities Only

Spending Area	Ext/Very Imp.
Completing all phases of the 80/65 interchange improvements to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety	72%
Providing critical funding to repair bridges that are becoming unsafe	67%
Making our community eligible for its fair share of state and federal transportation funds	66%
Providing safe routes to school for children	66%
Widening Highway 65 in both directions	64%
Maintaining senior and disabled transit services like Dial-A-Ride so residents who cannot drive can maintain their independence	64%
Improving local congestion hot spots	63%
Improving emergency responder response times and transit times to hospitals by reducing overall traffic congestion and improving bottlenecks	62%
Widening Highway 65 in both directions to Lincoln to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion	62%
Completing all phases of the 80/65 interchange traffic congestion reduction and safety improvements	61%



Pro & Con Arguments

Messages in Favor of the Measure

Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing

(TRAFFIC - GENERAL) Traffic congestion is back to 90% 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.

(ECONOMY/TRANSPORTATION) A properly functioning and well-maintained transportation system is a key component of a strong economy. We need to invest in our roads and infrastructure to protect existing businesses and encourage new ones to locate here.

^(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.

(EMERGENCY RESPONDERS) Many of South Placer County's streets, highways and freeways are backed up with traffic. These conditions make it hard for emergency responders to reach people in a crisis quickly or transport them to a hospital. Investing in our transportation system is also an investment in our safety.

(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.

Messages in Favor of the Measure; Continued

Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing

^(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) There are large amounts of state and federal funding available to California counties for much-needed transportation improvements if the County provides local funds. This measure will make it possible for Placer County to receive its fair share of matching funds, which would otherwise go to counties in the Bay Area or Southern California.

(NO BAILOUT/SELF-RELIANCE) Placer County residents know that we can't count on the state or federal government to bail us out. They're both out of money and any relief plans will favor 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.

(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.

Messages in Favor of the Measure; Continued

Ranked by % Very/Somewhat Convincing

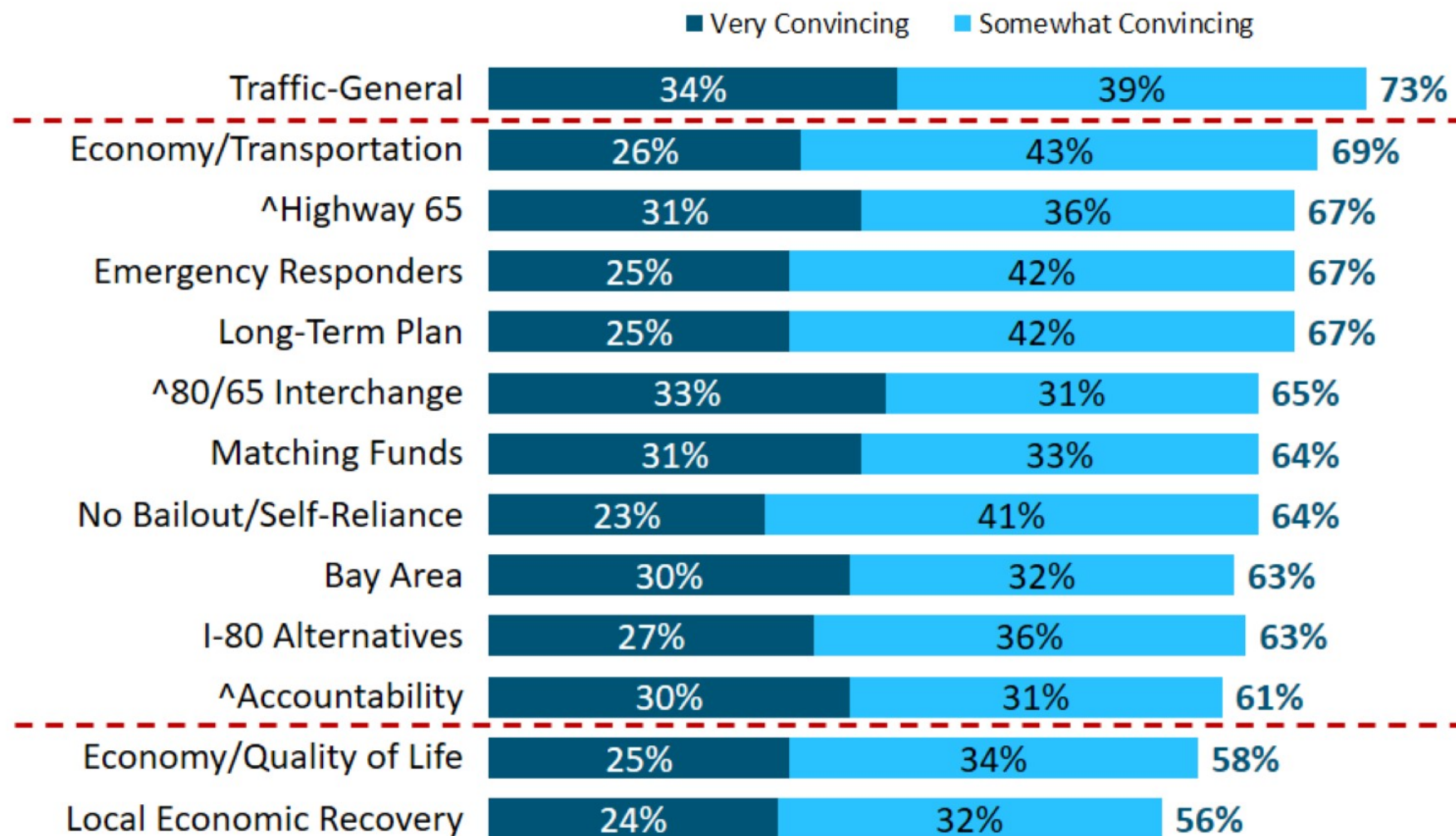
(I-80 ALTERNATIVES) This measure will reduce traffic congestion on I-80 by providing commuters new alternatives when traveling west from South Placer County. These include widening Baseline Road from two to four lanes, and building a new expressway called the Placer Parkway linking Highway 65 at Whitney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

^(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/QUALITY OF LIFE) A properly functioning and well-maintained transportation system is a key component of our high quality of life. As the County continues to grow, we need this measure to ensure that it is an attractive place to live, and for businesses and new jobs to locate here.

(LOCAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY) A local transportation measure has the potential to get those who lost jobs as a result of the coronavirus back to work. It's estimated that projects contained within the Placer County Traffic Relief and Economic Recovery Plan will pump over \$3 billion back into our local economy, generating 15,000 jobs, with hiring preferences for Placer County residents and veterans, and helping family, friends, and neighbors get back to work.

The general traffic argument, referencing a growing population, was most compelling.



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.

(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.

(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.

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, **(IF IN CITY: NAME OF RESPONDENT'S CITY** and the County simply need to tighten their belts, work together,) **(IF UNINCORPORATED: the County simply needs to tighten its belt)** and do a better job with the taxpayer dollars they already have.

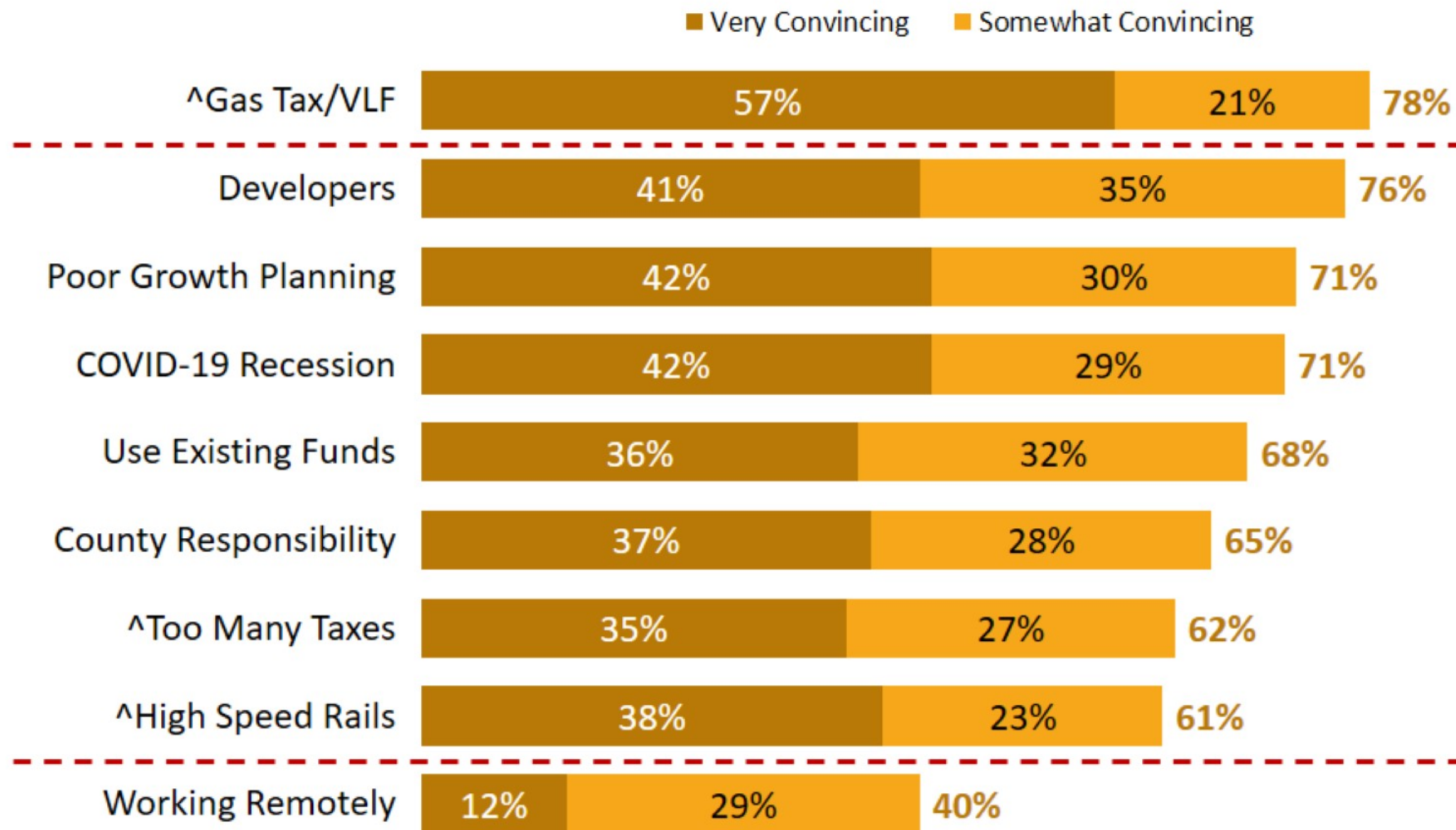
(COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY) Local politicians and bureaucrats have created a new layer of government in an attempt to pass virtually the same tax measure that failed a few years ago. This is the County's responsibility, and we don't need more government or taxes. And, with a budget of over \$1 billion, there's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

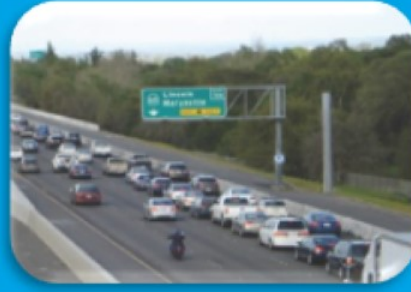
^(TOO MANY TAXES) Every election we are asked to pay more in taxes at the local, county, and state level for many different issues including public safety, libraries, parks, and schools. We simply can't afford to pay more.

^(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.

(WORKING REMOTELY) Many people were able to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic, something that will undoubtedly continue going forward. This measure simply isn't needed since we will have fewer people on our freeways and highways commuting with more people working remotely.

The gas tax argument continues to be the most compelling criticism of a measure.





Key Takeaways and Conclusions

Key Numbers: Electoral Context



View traffic congestion on local freeways and highways as an “extremely” or “very serious problem” (66% in March 2020)



Feel traffic congestion will be worse in the future after the local economy fully recovers



Feel their household’s financial situation will be “about the same” over the next year

Summary:

Traffic congestion is not seen as nearly a pressing issue as it was prior to the coronavirus pandemic and has been eclipsed by drought, wildfires, and housing costs as the biggest problems in Placer County. However, many feel it will get worse in the future and that their personal finances will probably be about the same a year from now.

Key Numbers: Measure Viability



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



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



Would currently vote “yes” for a measure in the District boundaries of Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln

Summary:

Support for a countywide measure appears has a lower ceiling of support compared to a measure in the three-city District, suggesting a countywide measure is not likely viable. However, support across the County is likely dampened by historically low levels of concern about traffic congestion. Consequently, a future survey when perceptions off traffic congestion presumably reached their pre-pandemic heights would be needed to better assess November 2022 viability.

For more information, contact:



FM3
RESEARCH

OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

1999 Harrison St., Suite 2020
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone (510) 451-9521
Fax (510) 451-0384

Curt Below

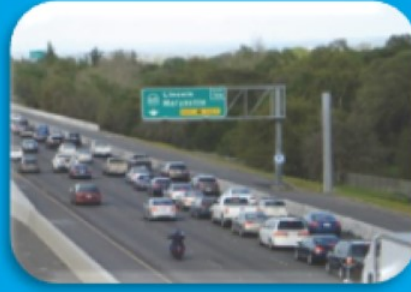
Curt@FM3research.com

Lucia Del Puppo

Lucia@FM3research.com

PCTPA Board Recommendation

- 1) Receive a presentation from staff and the consultant team on the June 2021 polling for a potential 2022 Countywide Transportation Sales Tax Measure
- 2) As this June 2020 polling supports only a South County District for the cities of Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln, direct staff to implement educational outreach in those cities through October 2021.
- 3) Direct staff to conduct a poll in the South County District in October 2021 to provide direction to staff if this June polling supports a 2022 or 2024 timeline for a potential transportation sales tax measure.



Appendix

Oversamples

600 interviews were conducted across the County, with supplemental interviews conducted in Auburn, Colfax, Loomis and unincorporated North Lake Tahoe (the eastern slope of Placer County) attempting to achieve close to a 10% - 12% margin of sampling error (MOE). Conducting interviews in the small community of Colfax was particularly challenging and results there should be viewed in that context.

City/Town/Region	MOE at the 95% Confidence Level
Countywide	±4.0%
Roseville	±6.9%
Rocklin	±9.8%
Lincoln	±10.3%
Auburn	±10.3%
Loomis	±12.2%
Colfax	±22.2%
Unincorporated North Lake Tahoe	±12.2%
Other Unincorporated	±7.1%