



Hybrid Telephone/Email-to-Web Survey of Likely November 2020 Voters in the City of Chico, California

Final – September 2019

Methodology

- ▶ Mixed-mode survey of likely November 2020 voters in the City of Chico
- ▶ Voters were contacted for phone interviews via landline and cell phone, and to complete a web version of the survey via email invitation
- ▶ Conducted Sept. 19 – 30, 2019
- ▶ 400 interviews; overall margin of error ± 4.9 percentage points

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Key Findings

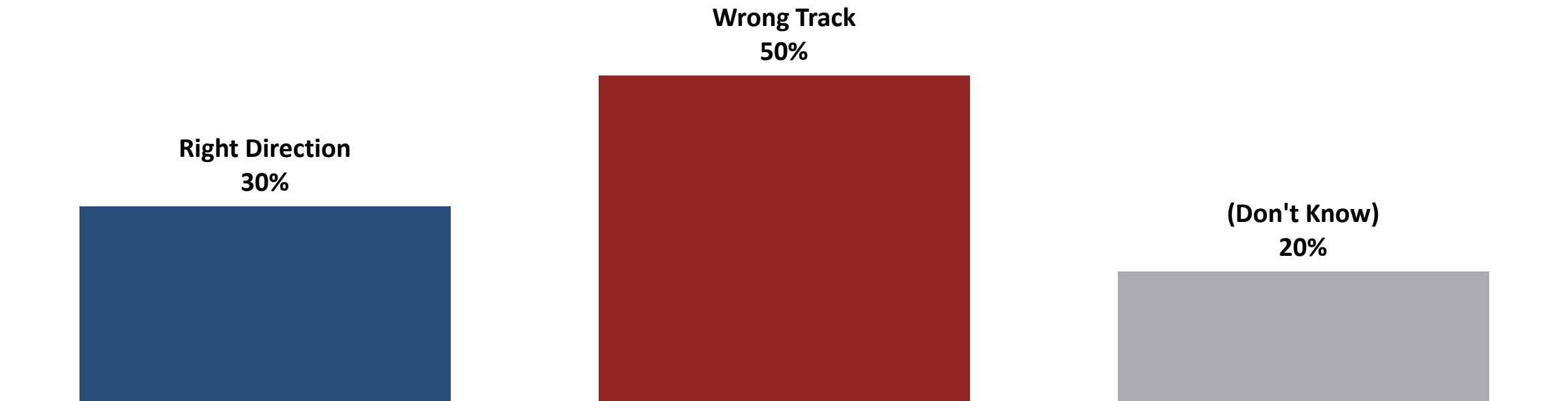
- ▶ Chico voters express concerns about a variety of issues facing the City, and prioritize protecting emergency response, fixing potholes, and maintenance of city streets, storm drains and sidewalks.
- ▶ The vast majority identify a need for additional funding for Chico.
- ▶ Support today for a 1% sales tax measure is above the majority threshold.
- ▶ Providing funding to keep Chico safe and protect the local quality of life in the wake of the 2018 Camp Fire and all of its impacts is a particularly compelling reason to support a sales tax measure.
- ▶ Support for a sales tax measure fluctuates over the course of the survey, but remains well above 50% throughout.



Issue Environment

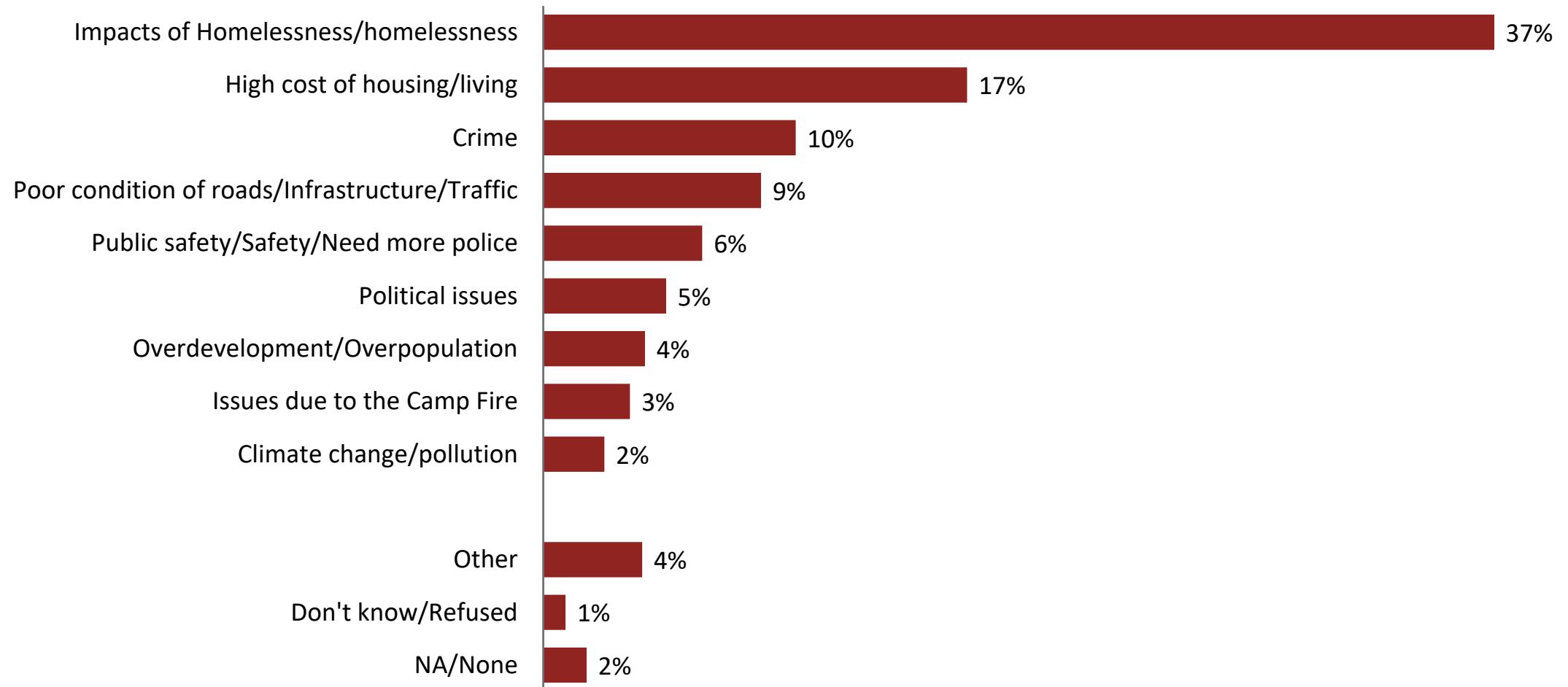
Right Direction/Wrong Track

Half of likely November 2020 voters are pessimistic about the direction of things in Chico.



Most Important Problem Facing Chico

Concerns about homelessness and its impacts are top of mind for Chico voters. Cost of living, public safety, and roads are also commonly mentioned issues.



Most Important Problem Verbatims

There are a wide variety of issues that are concerning to voters in Chico.

“Homelessness. It has destroyed the downtown area, as well as the parks.”

“The cost of housing is too expensive, whether you are renting or buying.”

“I think people not having houses, the homelessness, is a real issue because people should have places to live that are safe.”

“The transient community is dangerous and constantly causing problems in our community.”

“Traffic, lack of improvements in road painting lanes, such as Park Ave., Highway 99, turn lanes... should be longer, and adjusted for the 20K more people in our community. Pot holes filled...”

“The cost of housing is too expensive, whether you are renting or buying.”

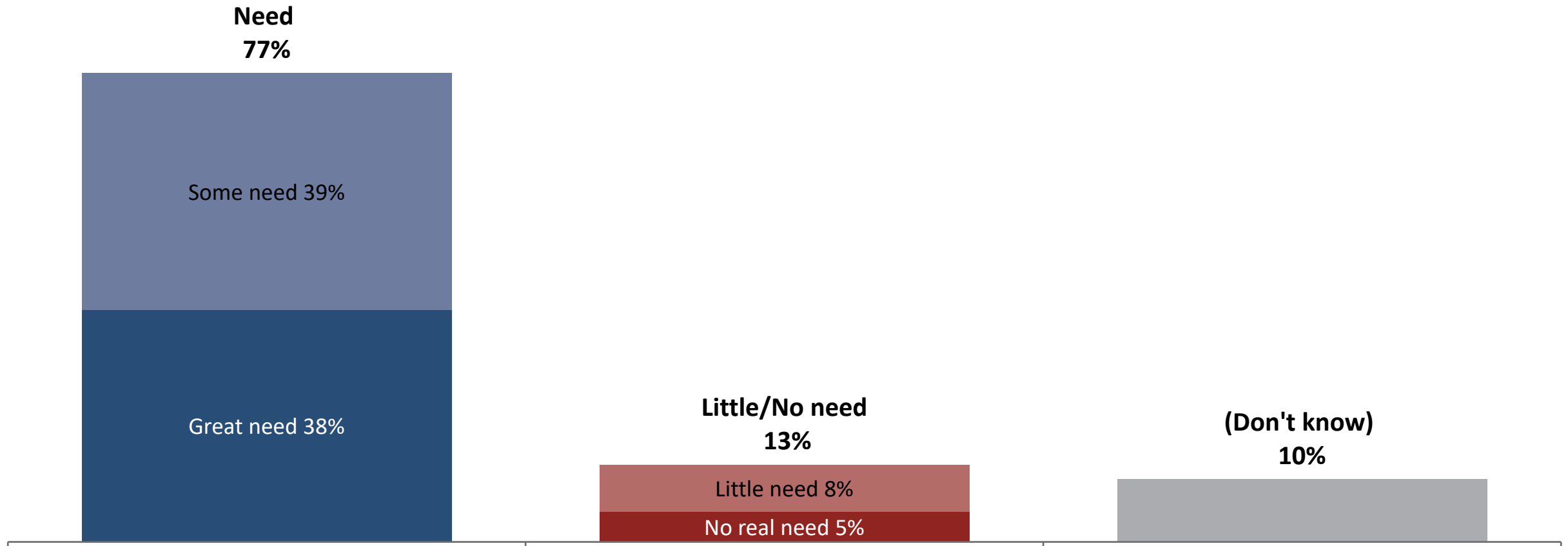
“The city has to balance the budget so there is always money for city services like police, fire and EMS.”

“Deal[ing] with aftermath of the Camp Fire, like finding places for people to live.”

“The roads are really bad right now. There are many potholes all over the streets.”

Perception of Need for Funding

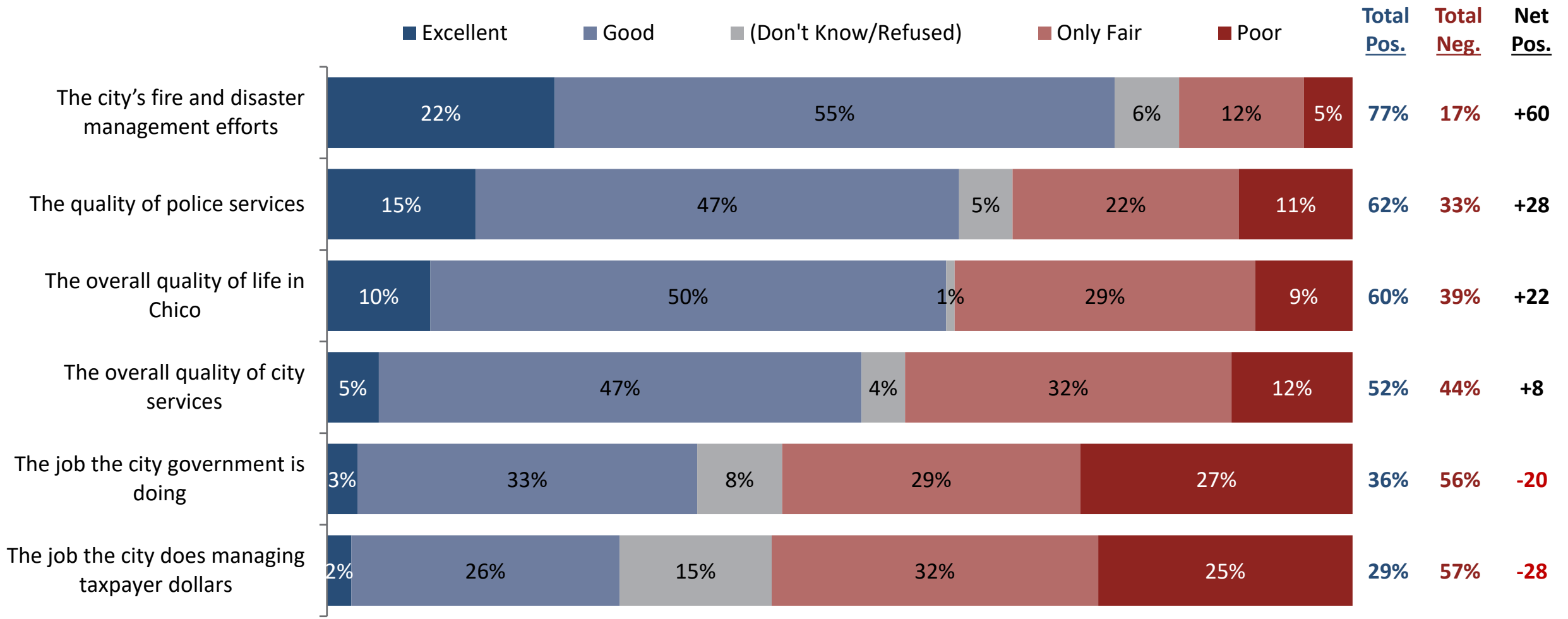
The vast majority see a need for additional funding for Chico, with more than one-third saying the City has a “great need.”



Q6. Would you say that the City of Chico has a great need for more money, some need for more money, little need for more money, or no real need for more money?

City Service Ratings

The City receives good ratings for fire and disaster management and police services, but many are not as positive about the job city government is doing.



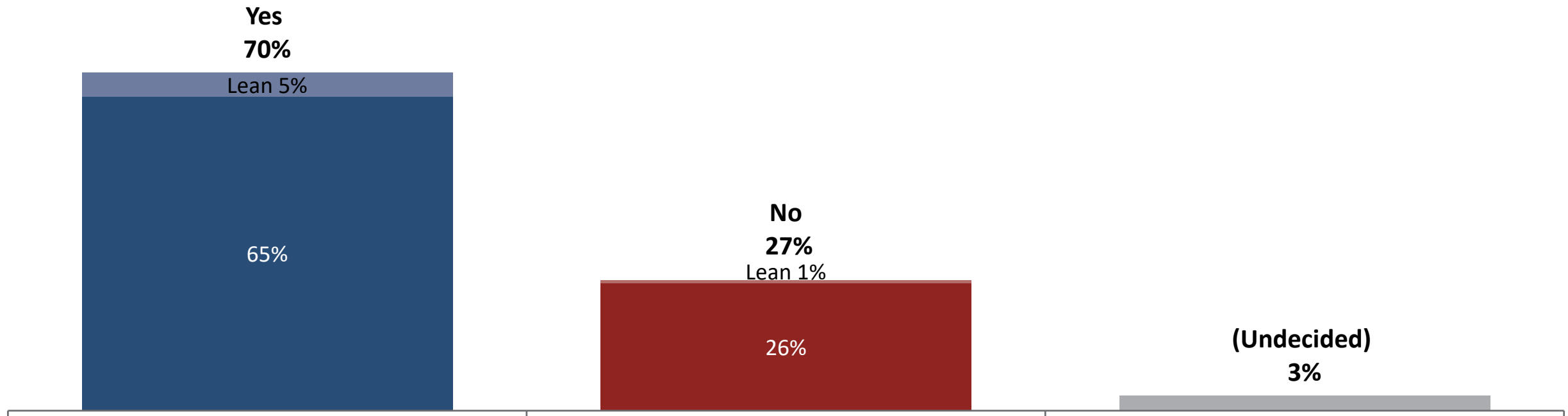


Potential Sales Tax Measure

Initial Vote: General Sales Tax Measure

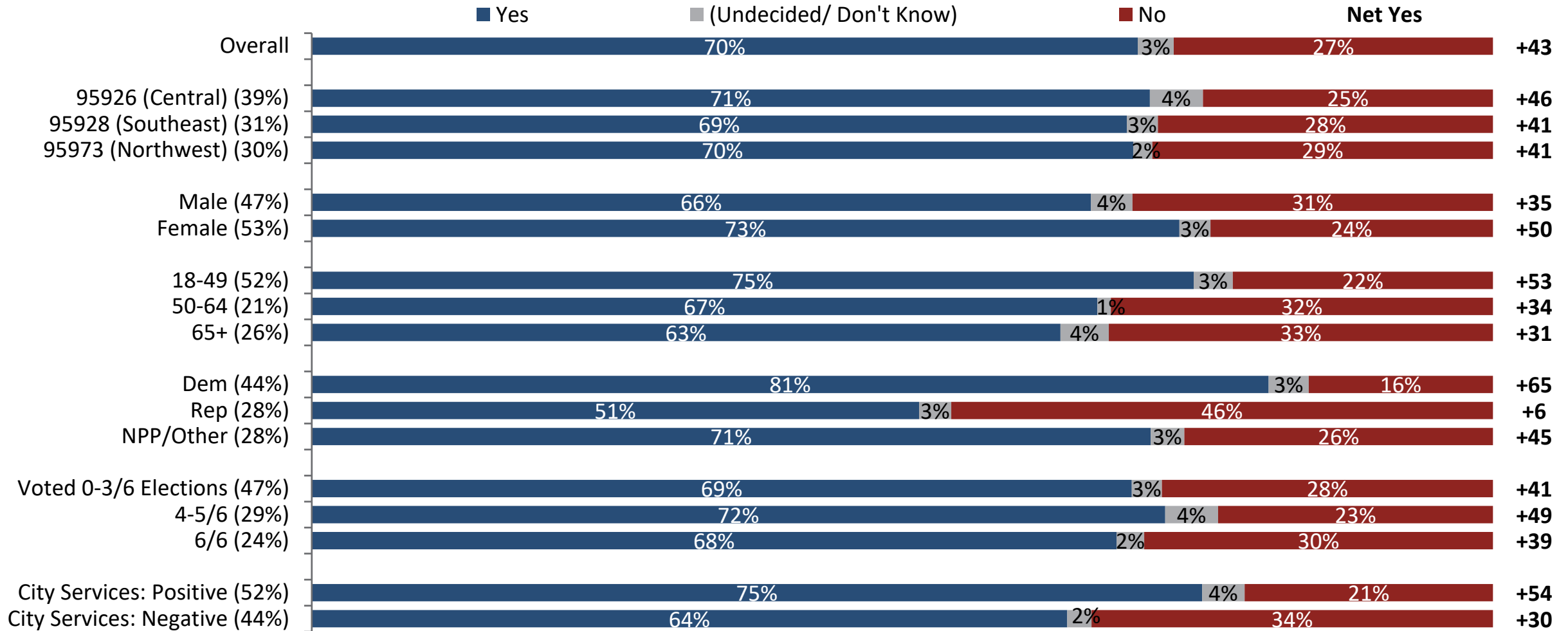
There is strong support for a sales tax measure in Chico.

Shall an ordinance to fund essential city services such as preserving the number of on-duty police officers and fire fighters, protecting 911 emergency response times, maintaining and repairing streets, sidewalks and Bidwell Park, and funding other general services and essential activity, by establishing a 1 percent sales tax, providing approximately \$18,000,000 annually until ended by voters, subject to annual audits, with all funds staying local, be adopted?



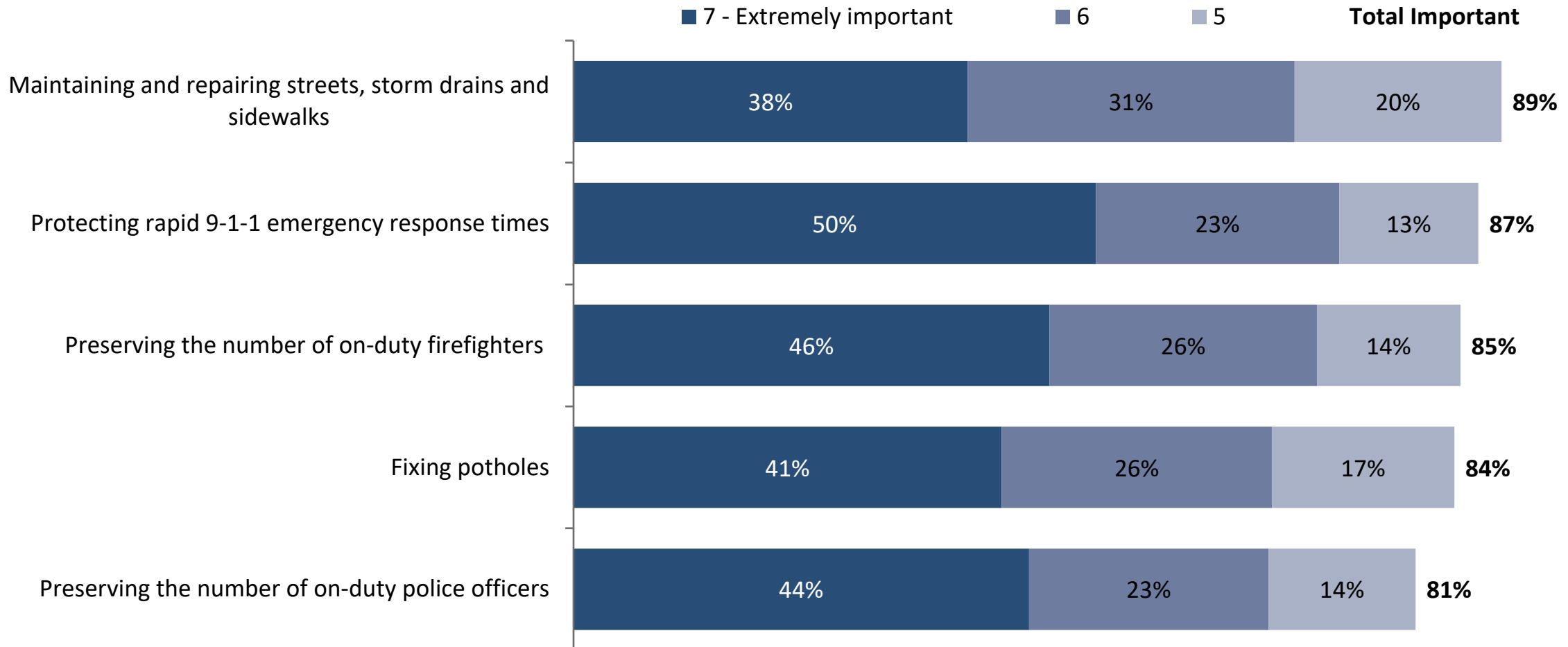
Initial Vote: General Sales Tax Measure

There is widespread support for a sales tax across demographic subgroups.



Priorities

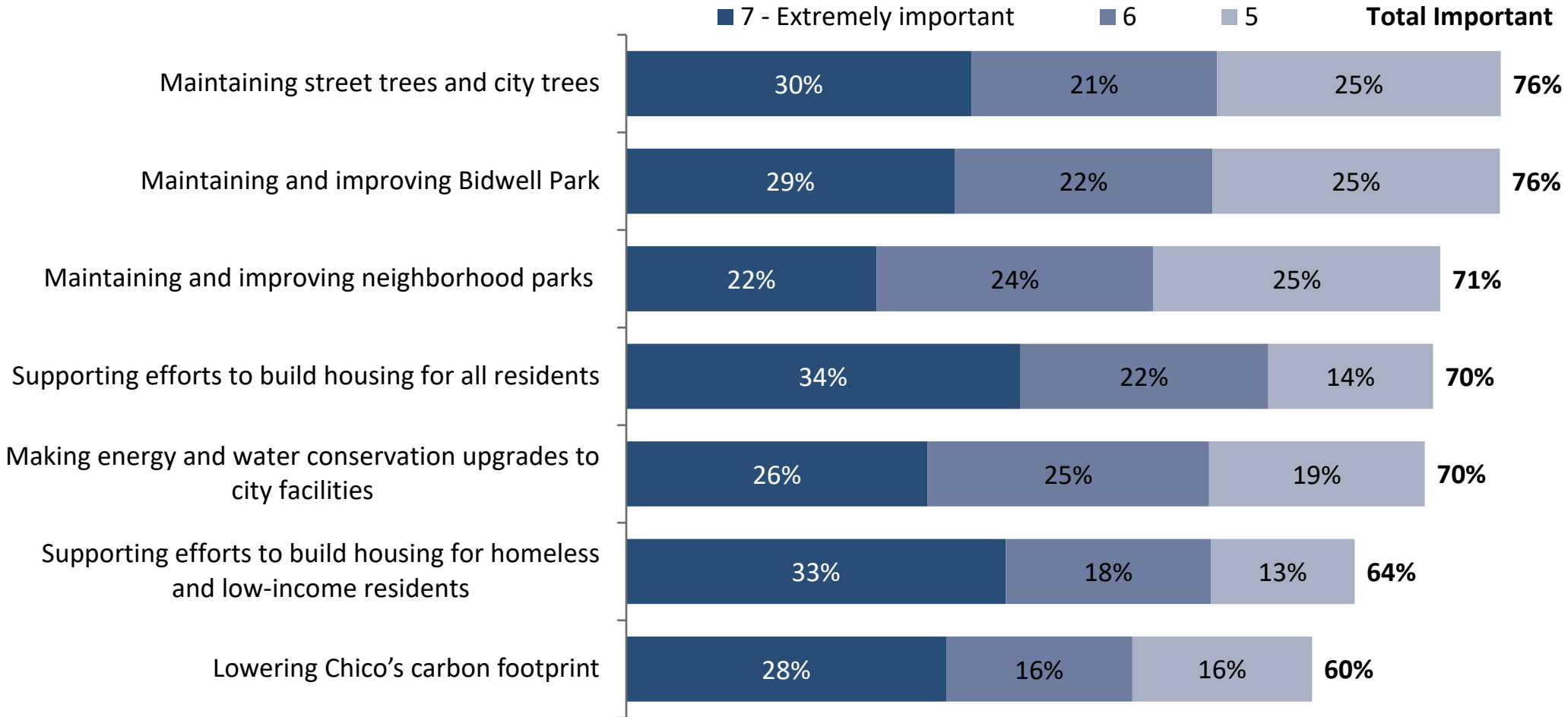
Voters place particular importance on street repair and maintenance, protecting 911 response times, and preserving the number of firefighters and police officers in Chico.



Q14-Q25. I'm going to read you a list of items that could be funded with a revenue measure for Chico. After each one, please rate how important that item is to you.

Priorities

All projects tested are priorities to most. Housing for all residents garners a slightly more positive reaction than housing for homeless and low-income residents.

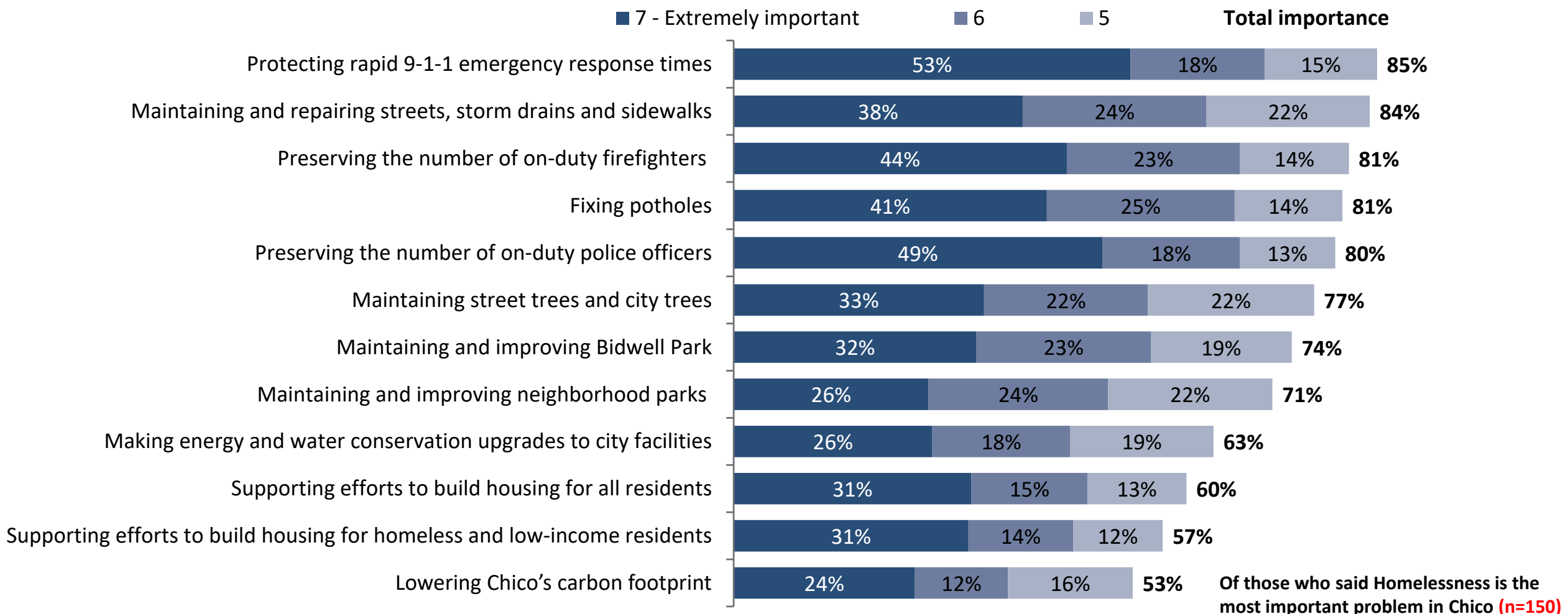


Q14-Q25. I'm going to read you a list of items that could be funded with a revenue measure for Chico. After each one, please rate how important that item is to you.

Priorities Among Those Who Cite Homelessness Issue



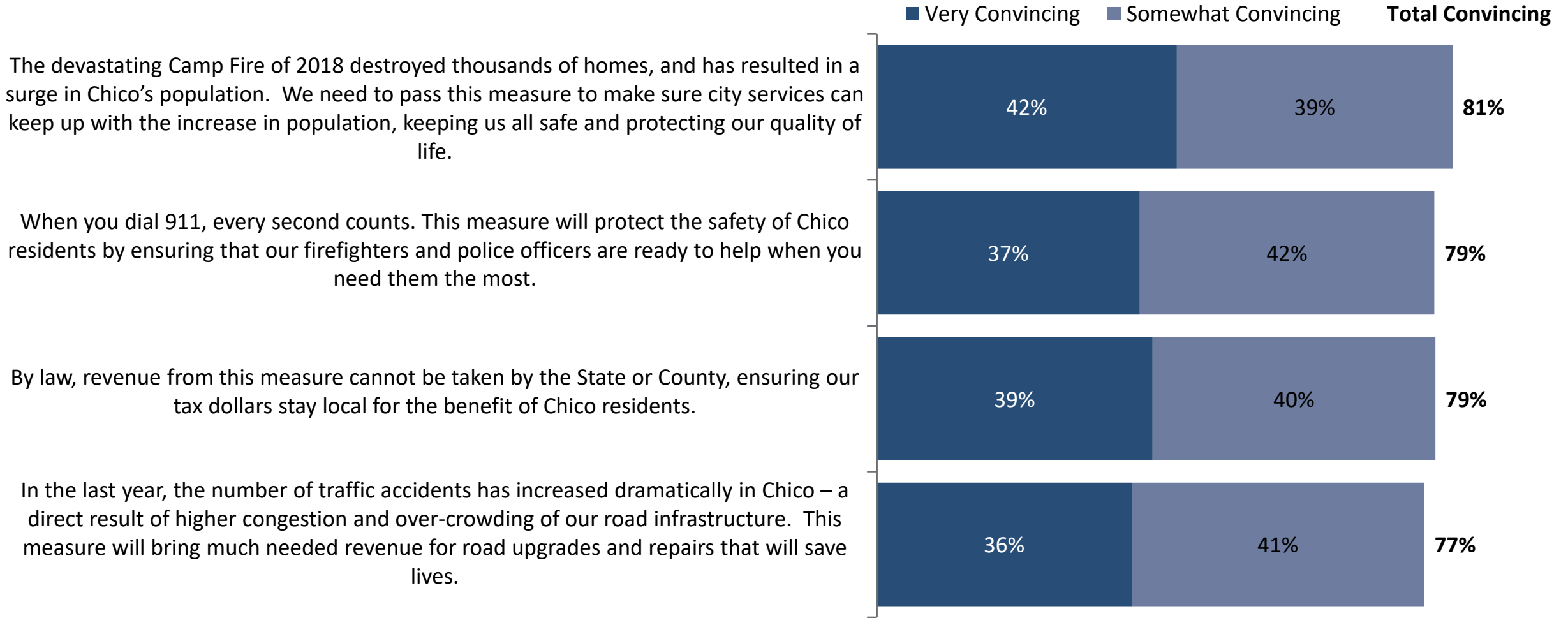
Of those voters mentioning homelessness as the most important problem for Chico to address, high importance is put on rapid 911 response times and preserving on-duty police and fire fighters. Street quality issues are also a top priority.



Q14-Q25. I'm going to read you a list of items that could be funded with a revenue measure for Chico. After each one, please rate how important that item is to you.

Additional Messaging

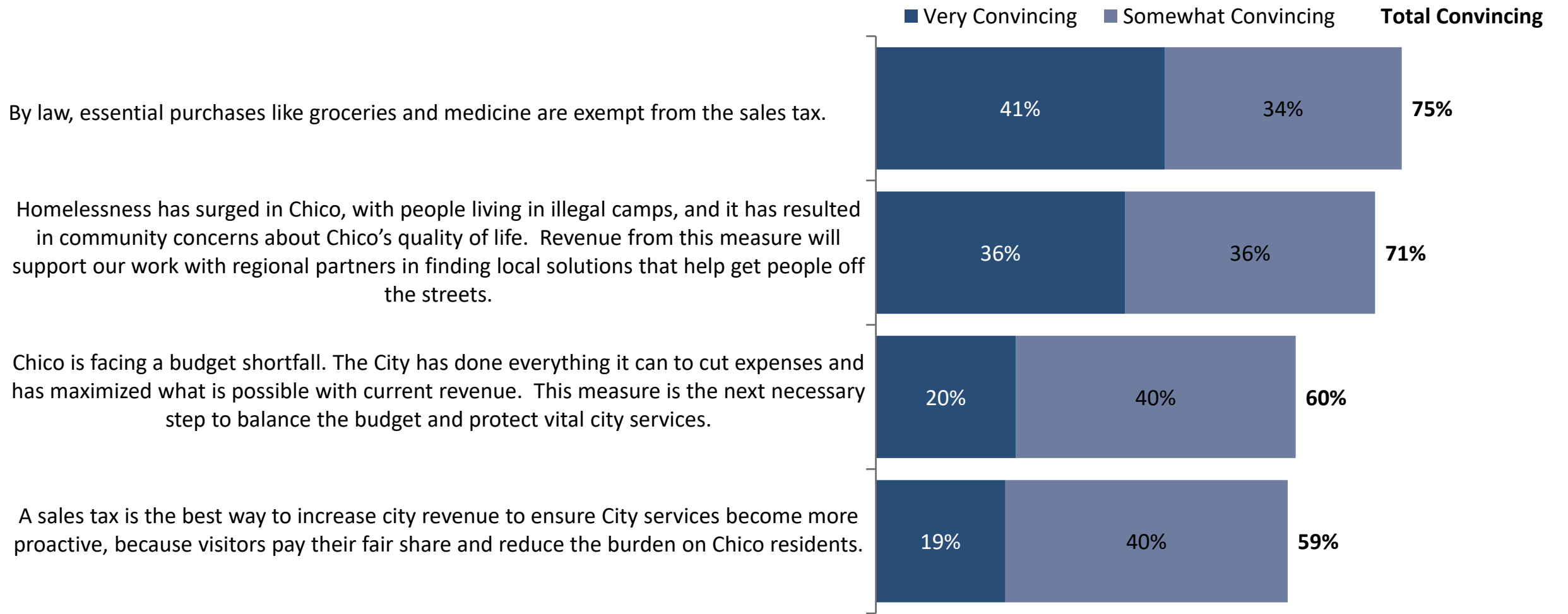
Voters are receptive to messaging in support of the measure – most notably that the measure is needed after the 2018 Camp Fire to keep Chico safe and protect the local quality of life.



Q26-Q33. , I’d like to read you statements from people who SUPPORT the Chico City Services Measure. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote FOR the measure.

Additional Messaging

Providing for road upgrades and supporting efforts to ease homelessness are themes that resonate widely. Emphasizing that this is the only way to avoid a budget shortfall, or that it is paid by visitors as well as residents, is less compelling.



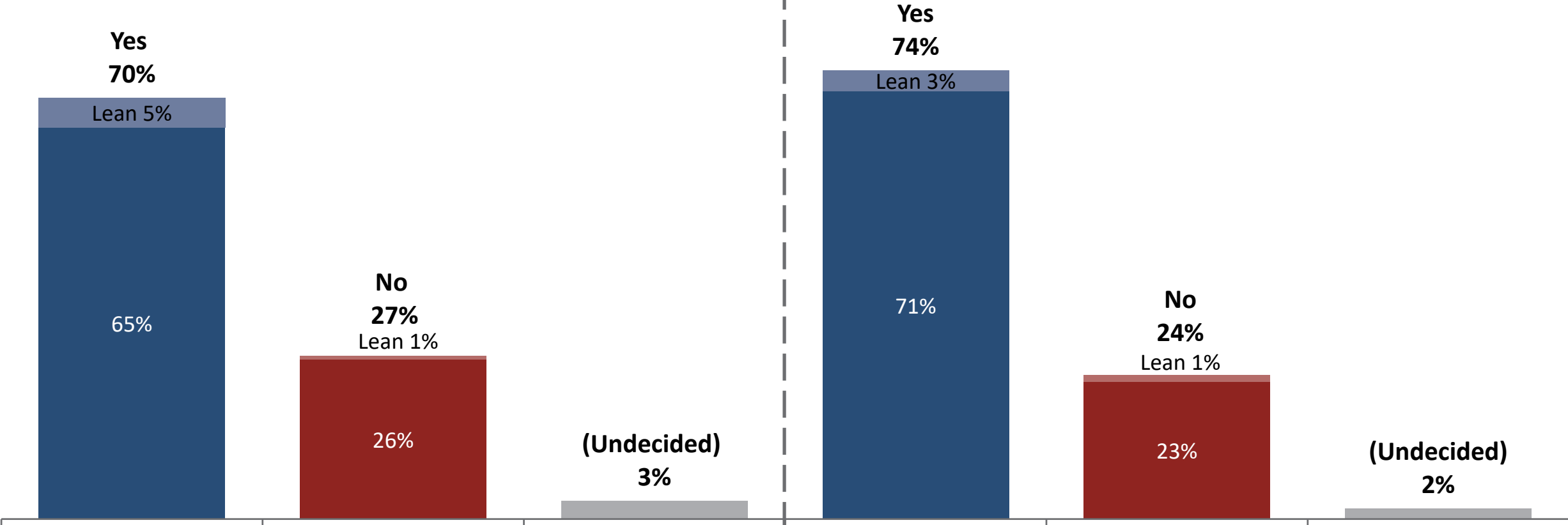
Q26-Q33. , I'd like to read you statements from people who SUPPORT the Chico City Services Measure. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote FOR the measure.

Vote After Information

After voters receive more information, support for the measure increases marginally.

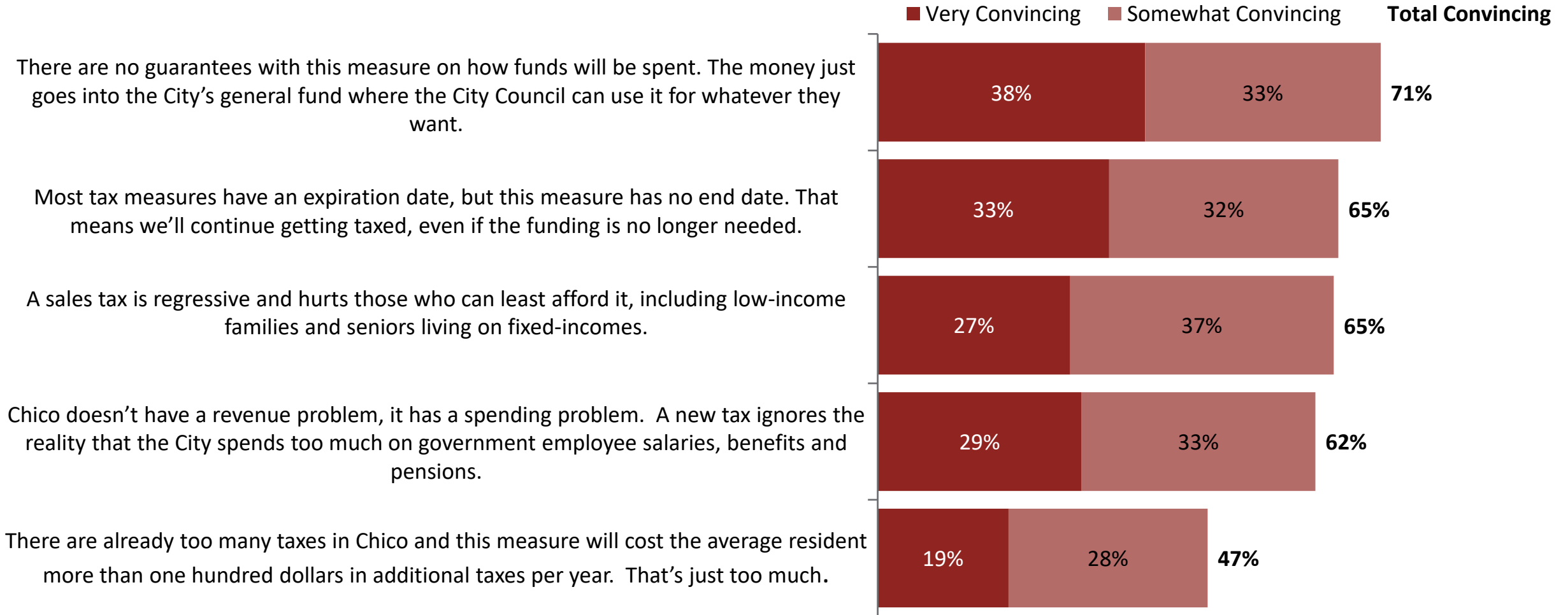
Initial Vote

Vote After Additional Information



Opposition Messages

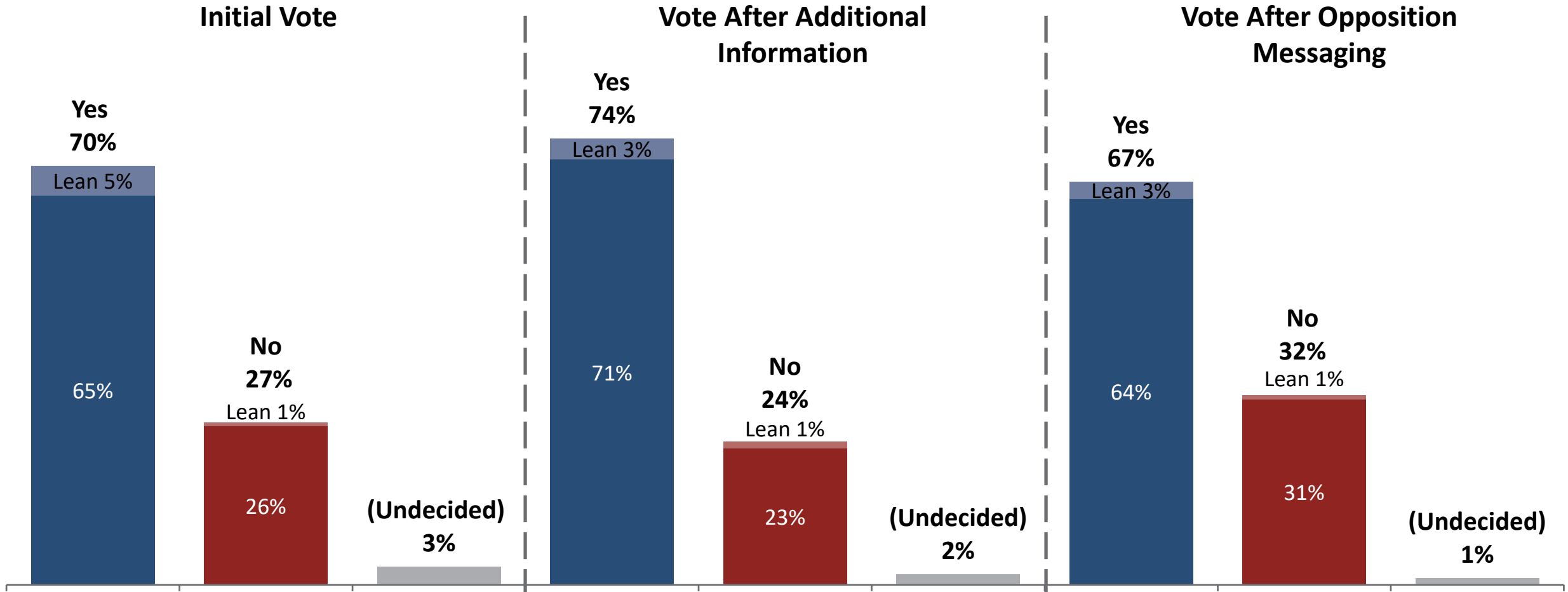
Voters find opposition messages compelling, particularly those that emphasize how the money goes to the City's general fund, and that there is no sunset.



Q35-Q39. Next, I'd like to read you statements from people who OPPOSE the Chico City Services Measure. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote AGAINST the measure

Vote After Opposition Messages

After opposition messaging, support falls but remains well above the majority threshold.

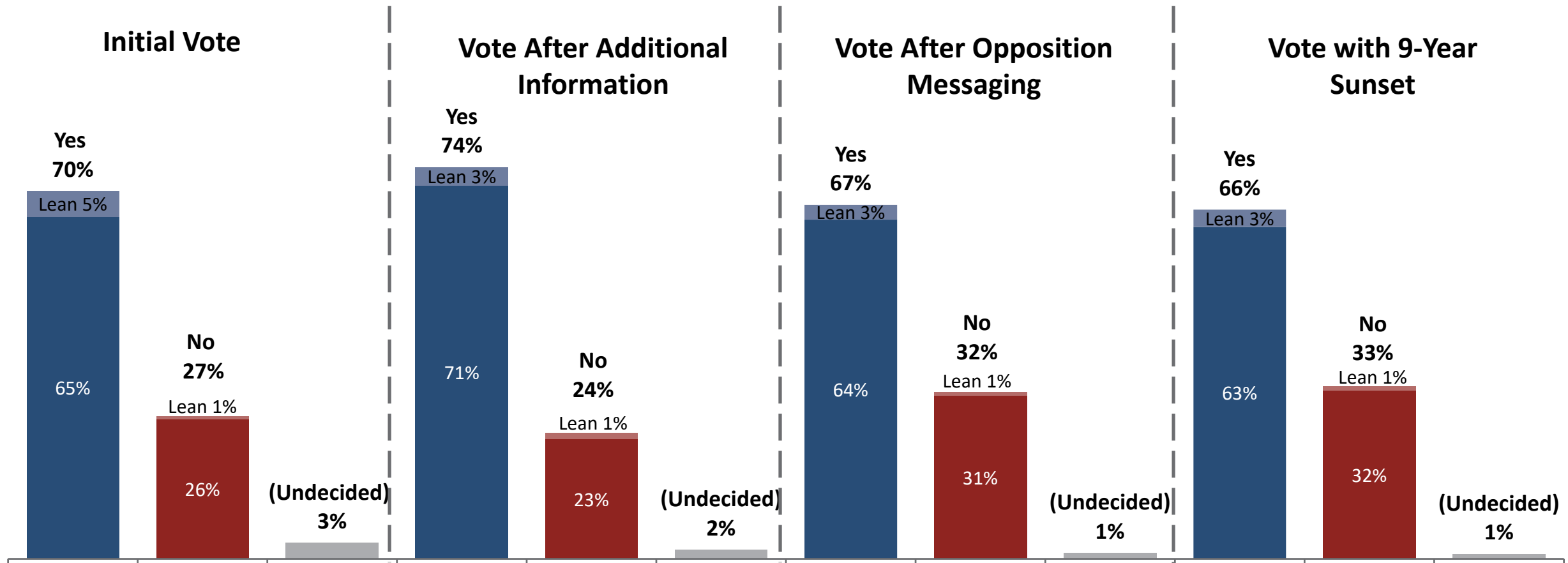


Q40. Now given everything you've heard, if the election were held today would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a 1 percent sales tax measure for Chico?

Vote with 9-Year Sunset

Adding a nine year sunset clause to this measure has little impact.

And what if the proposed sales tax were set to **expire after 9 years**, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a **1 percent sales tax** measure for Chico?



Q41. And what if the proposed sales tax were set to expire after 9 years, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a 1 percent sales tax measure for Chico?

Conclusions & Recommendations

- ▶ The City has a clear directive from voters – something must be done to deal with the surge in Chico’s population, protect public safety, and improve traffic and aging road infrastructure.
- ▶ A 1% sales tax measure appears feasible for the November 2020 ballot.
- ▶ Voter priorities align with the City’s priorities.
- ▶ Voters do express concerns about the city government, management of funding, and the fact that revenue from a sales tax measure will go into the general fund.
- ▶ Therefore, ensuring voters understand how revenue will directly address their priorities, including protecting public safety, providing roads updates, and supporting solutions to problems exacerbated by the Camp Fire, will be essential.



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