

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jennifer Ott, City Manager

Date: July 2, 2024

Supplemental Memo regarding: Adoption of Resolution Determining that the Public Interest and Necessity Demand the Acquisition, Construction and Improvement of Municipal Improvement Projects Constituting Public Infrastructure of the City, and their Financing Through the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds; [Requires four affirmative votes] and Introduction of Uncodified Ordinance Ordering the Submission of a Proposition Incurring Bonded Indebtedness to the Qualified Voters of the City of Alameda at the General Municipal Election to Be Held on November 5, 2024, for the Purpose of Financing the Cost of the Acquisition, Construction and Improvement of Certain Municipal Improvement Projects Constituting Public Infrastructure of the City. [Requires four affirmative votes] This action is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project as defined by the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15378 (b) (4). (City Manager 10021030)

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

This memo is being provided to supplement the staff report already published for the July 2, 2024 City Council meeting.

If the Resolution determining the public interest for a General Obligation Bond is adopted tonight, City staff will return to the City Council at its July 16, 2024 meeting with the attached presentation that includes the results of the opinion poll and the attached draft ballot language. While this information is not included in the staff report for the July 2 City Council meeting, City staff believe it may be of interest to the Council and community members in consideration of tonight's agenda item.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Henry, Communications Director

Exhibits:

1. Alameda Bond Measure Tracking Poll Analysis Presentation
2. Alameda Bond Measure Draft Ballot Language

DRAFT








Updating Alameda Voter Views of a Potential Bond Measure

Key Findings of a Survey Conducted June 5-16, 2024



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Methodology

Dates	June 5-16, 2024
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2024 Voters in Alameda
Total Interviews	442
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	2008, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2023 Surveys
Languages	English, Spanish and Chinese

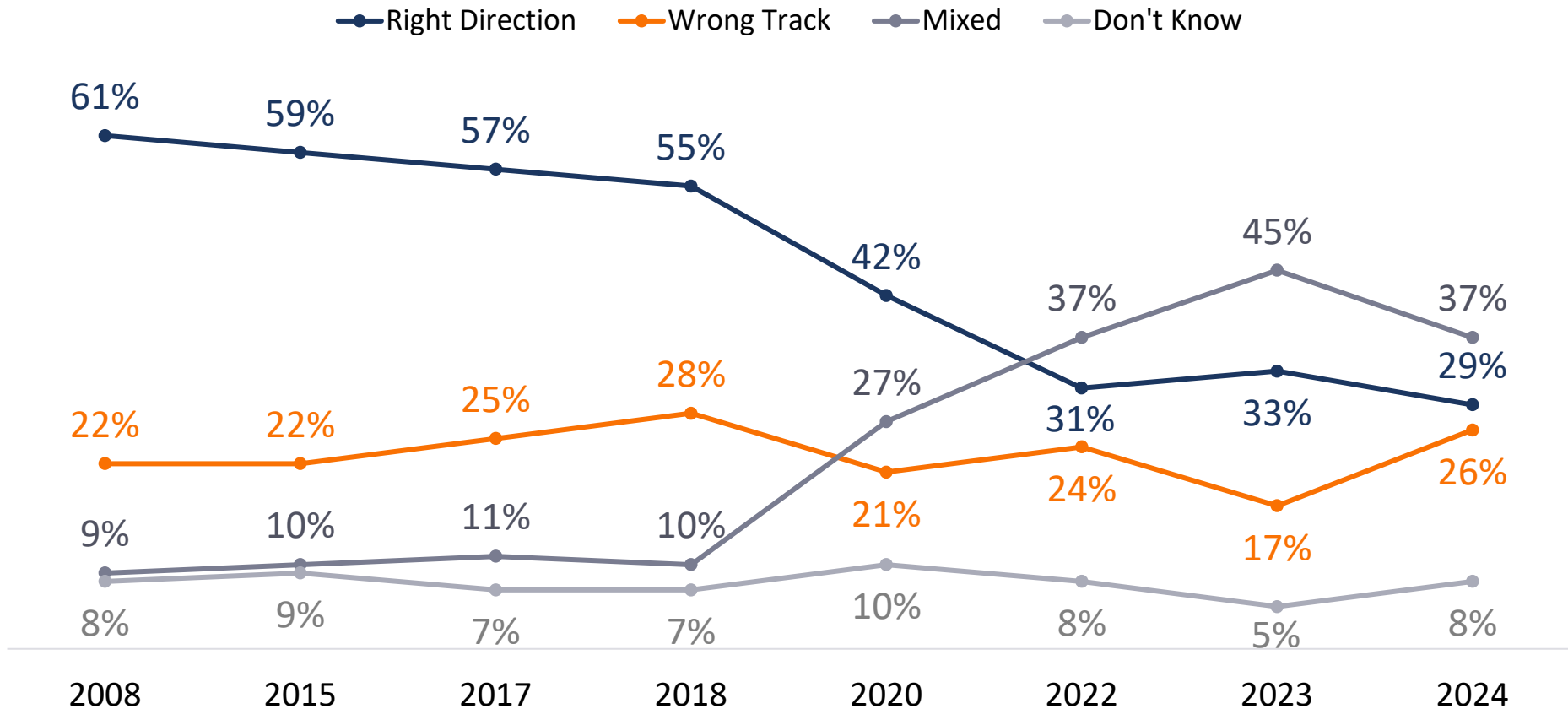
(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)



Voter Mood and Perceptions of the City

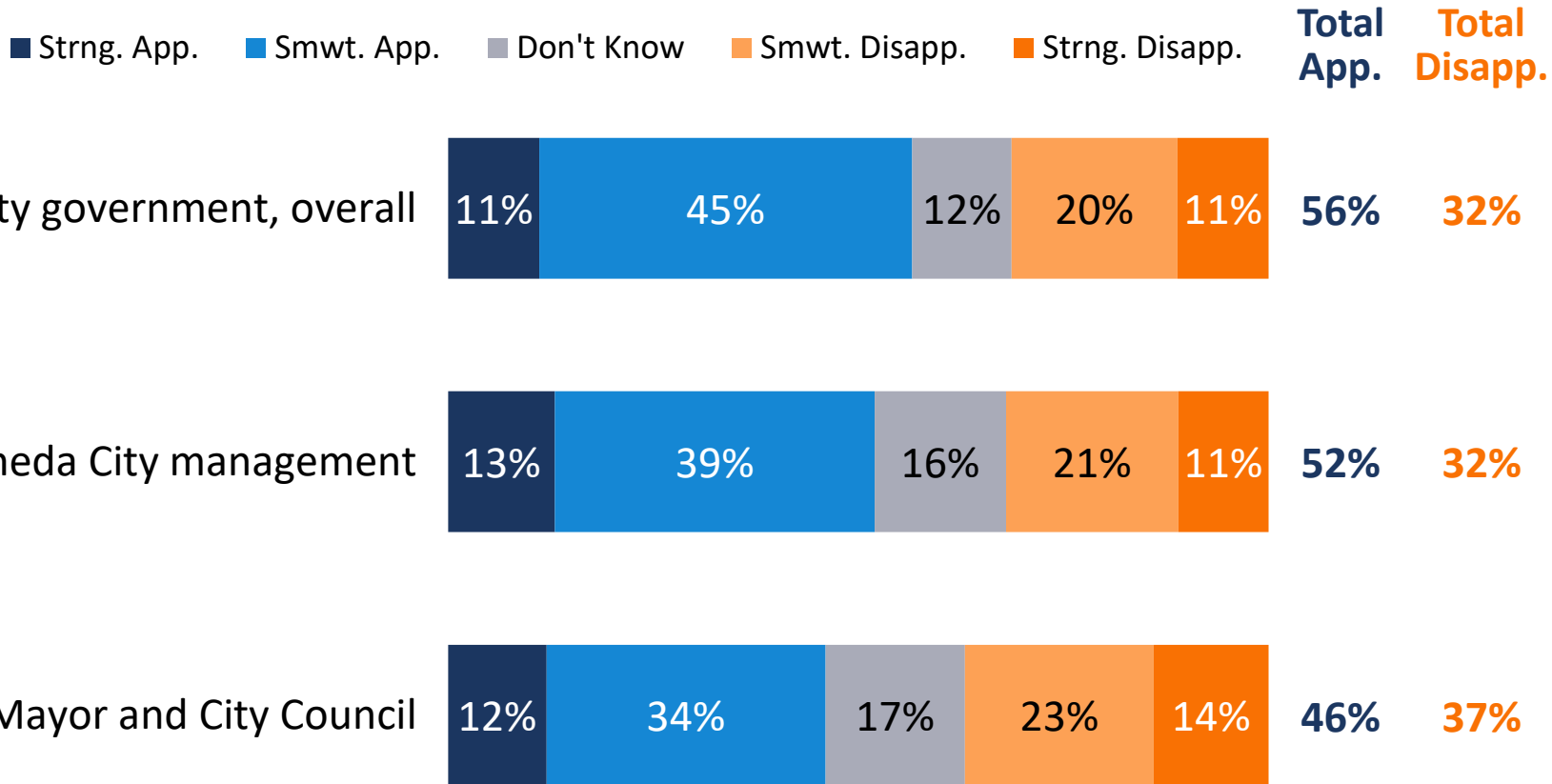
Post-pandemic, voters continue to have more mixed views of life in Alameda.

Would you say that things in the City of Alameda are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



Majorities approve of the job city government is doing, though few hold strong opinions.

*I am going to read you a brief list of public officials and agencies.
Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the job each is doing.*

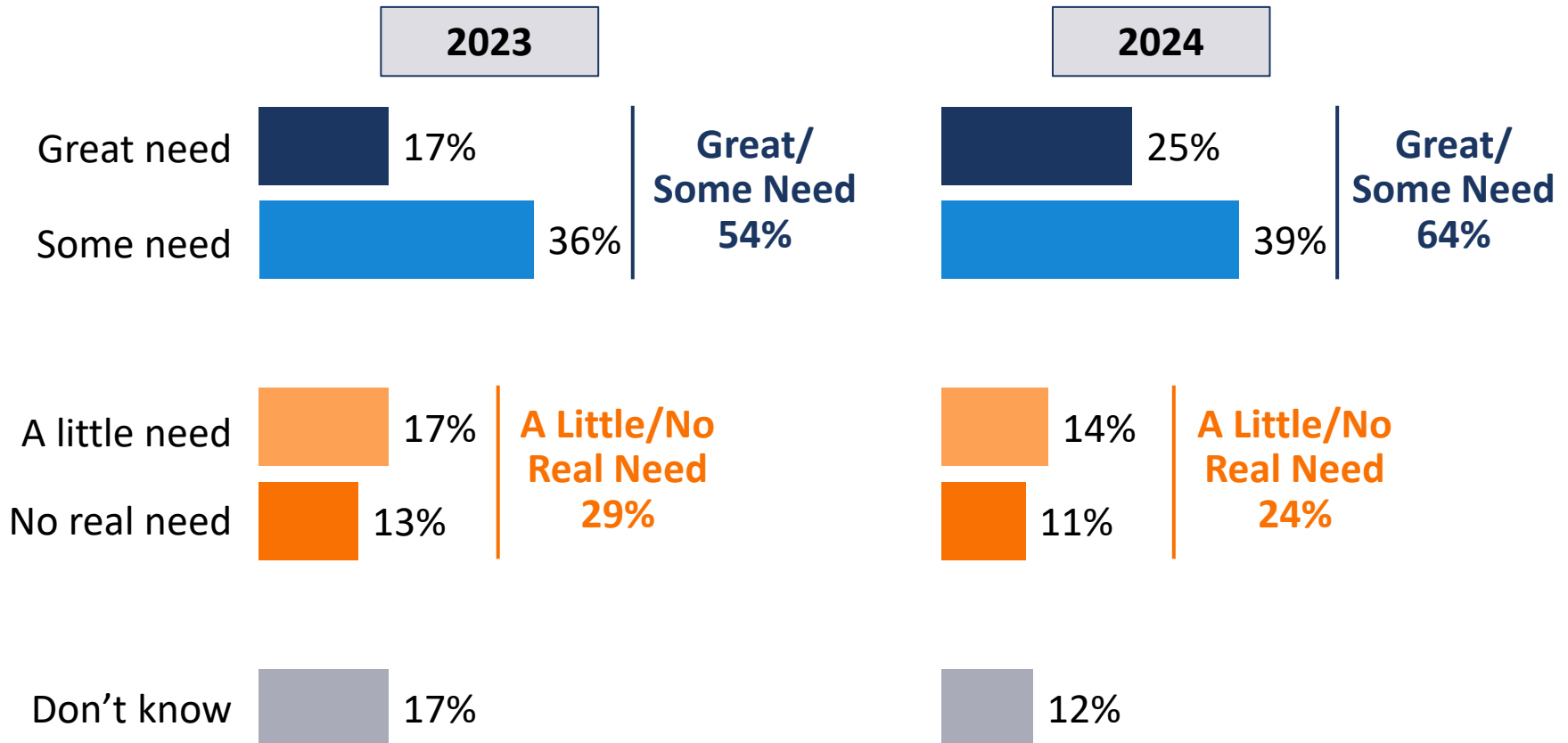


These numbers have generally held steady in recent years.

Public Official/Agency	Total Approve						
	2017	2018	2020	2022	2023	2024	Difference (2023-2024)
Alameda City government, overall	64%	60%	61%	58%	59%	56%	-3%
Alameda City management	59%	54%	54%	50%	55%	52%	-3%
Alameda Mayor and City Council	58%	51%	52%	48%	51%	46%	-5%

Impressions about the City's infrastructure funding needs have increased since last year.

Would you say that to maintain and improve public infrastructure the City of Alameda has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding?





Views of a Bond Measure

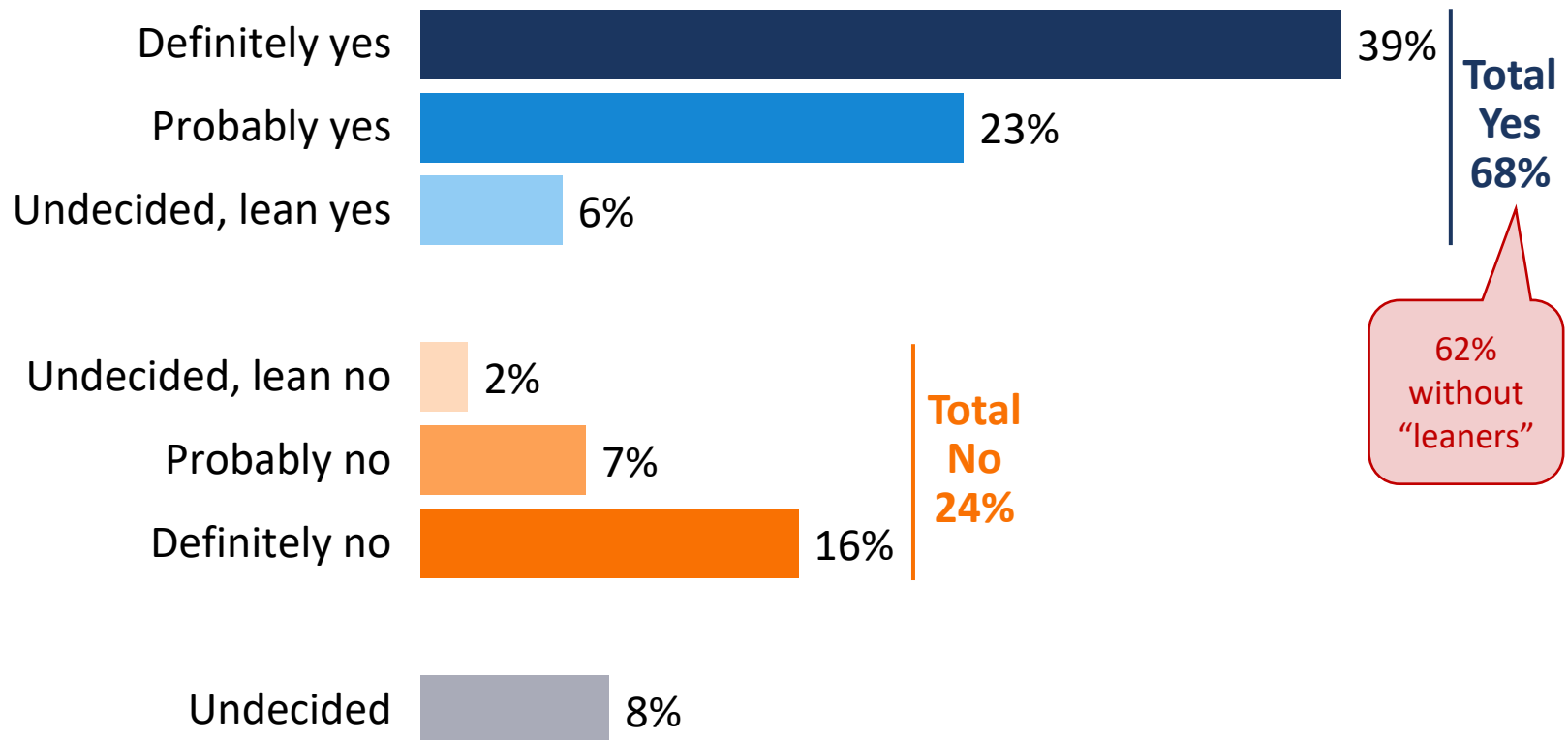
Hypothetical Ballot Language

(Two-thirds Vote Threshold)

City of Alameda Infrastructure Repair/Flood Safety Measure.

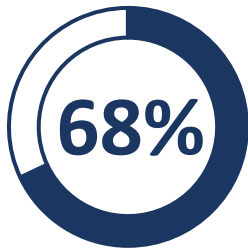
To prevent flooding of tubes/shorelines/Bay Farm Island; address sea-level rise; upgrade bridges to withstand major earthquakes; repave streets to prevent deterioration; repair potholes/sidewalks; improve traffic flow/safety for people who walk/bike, shall the City of Alameda measure issuing \$150,000,000 in bonds with an average levy of \$29 per \$100,000 of assessed value, generating approximately \$19,500,000 annually while bonds are outstanding, requiring public disclosure/independent audits, be adopted?

Initial support—based only on the hypothetical ballot language—is right at two-thirds.



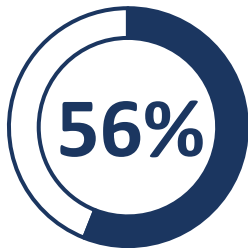
Support is higher than for prior versions tested last year.

2024

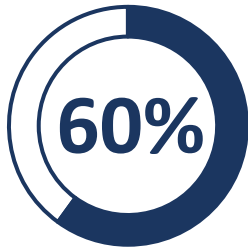


Infrastructure Repair and Flood Safety \$150MM Bond

2023



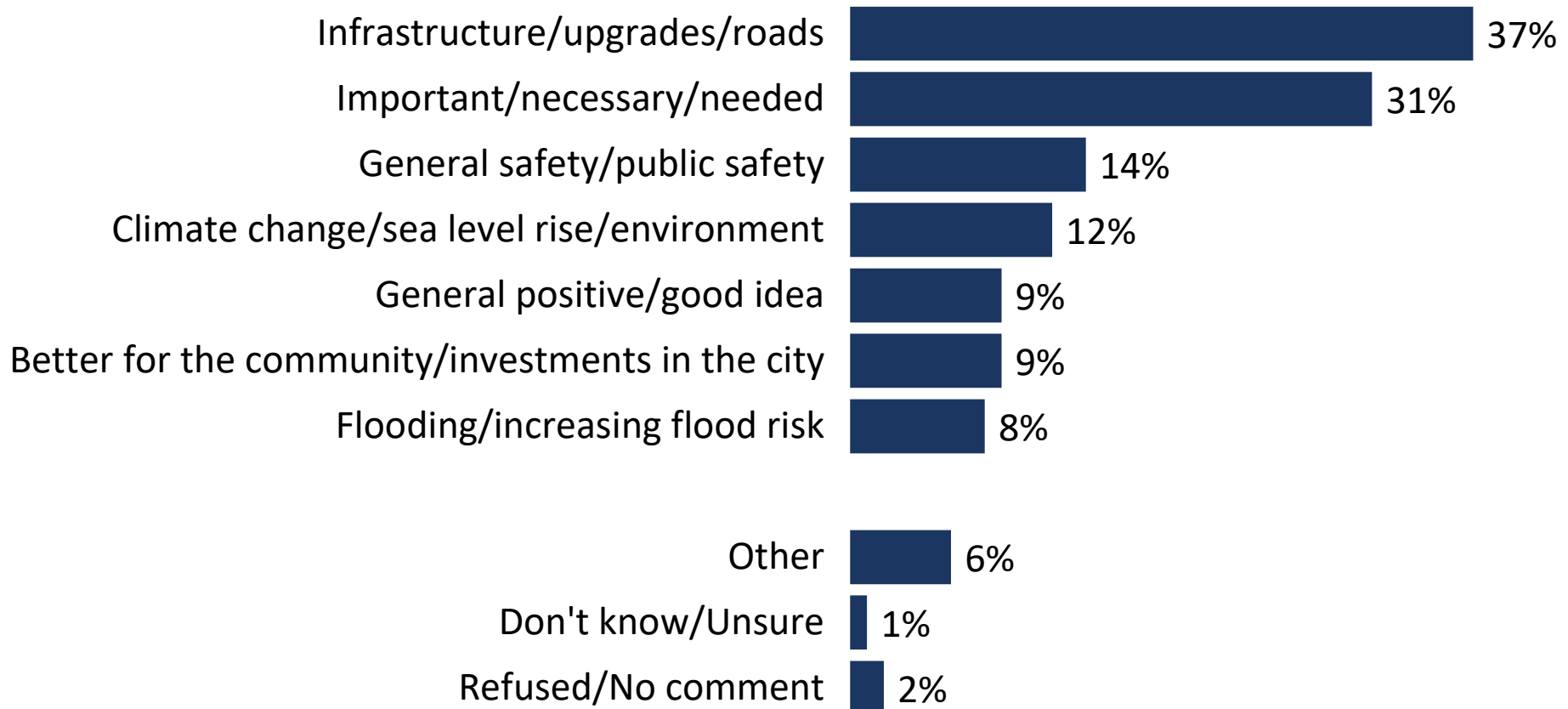
Broad-based Infrastructure Repair \$150MM Bond



Safety, Emergency, and Climate Emphasis \$150MM Bond

Many rationales for support mentioned roads or were more general in nature.

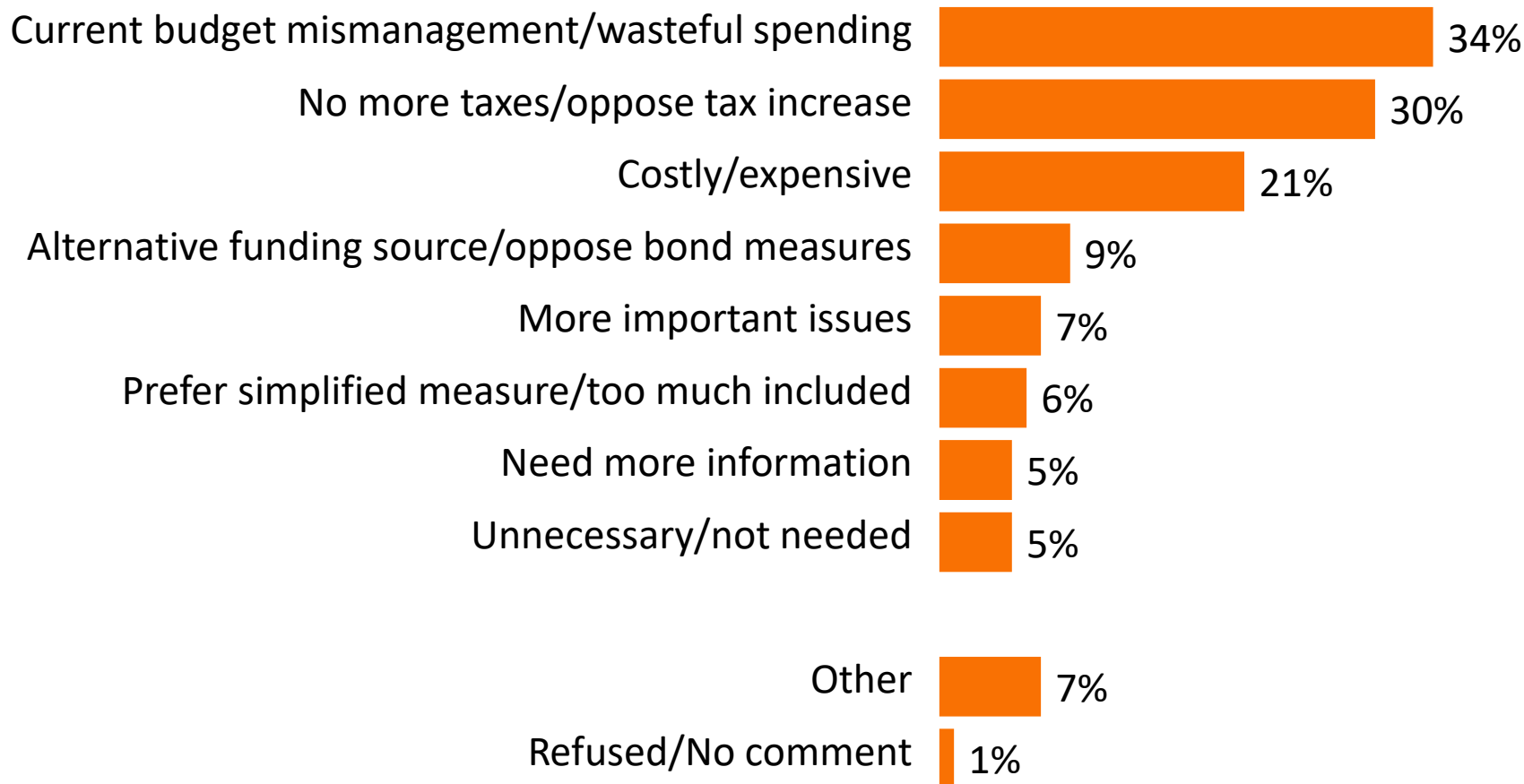
*In a few words of your own, why did you vote **YES** on this measure?
(Open-ended; Asked of Yes Voters Only, n=300)*



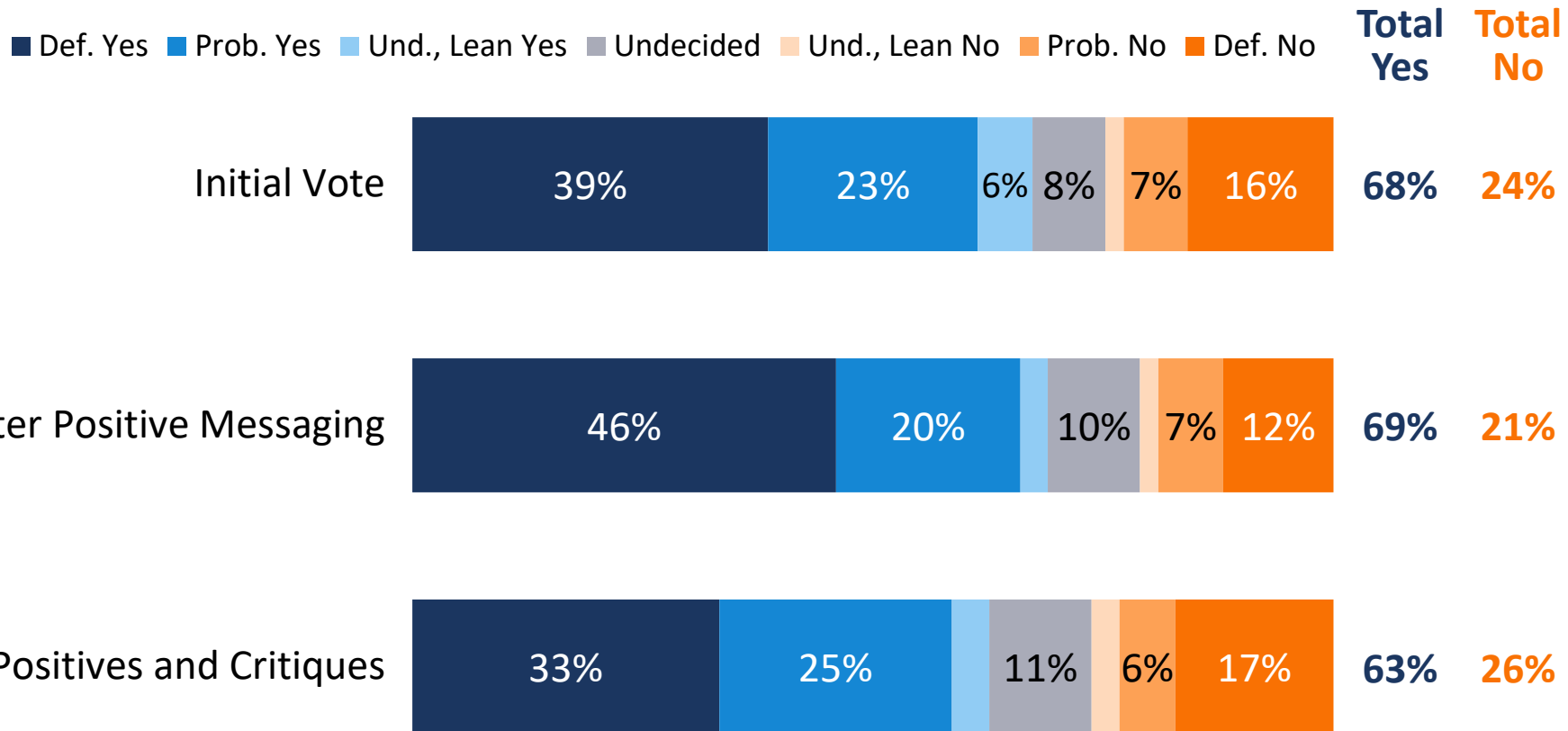
Opposing rationales focused on perceived financial mismanagement and objections to taxes/bond costs.

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

(Open-ended; Asked of No Voters Only, n=108)



Support intensified after positives, but fell below two-thirds after criticisms.



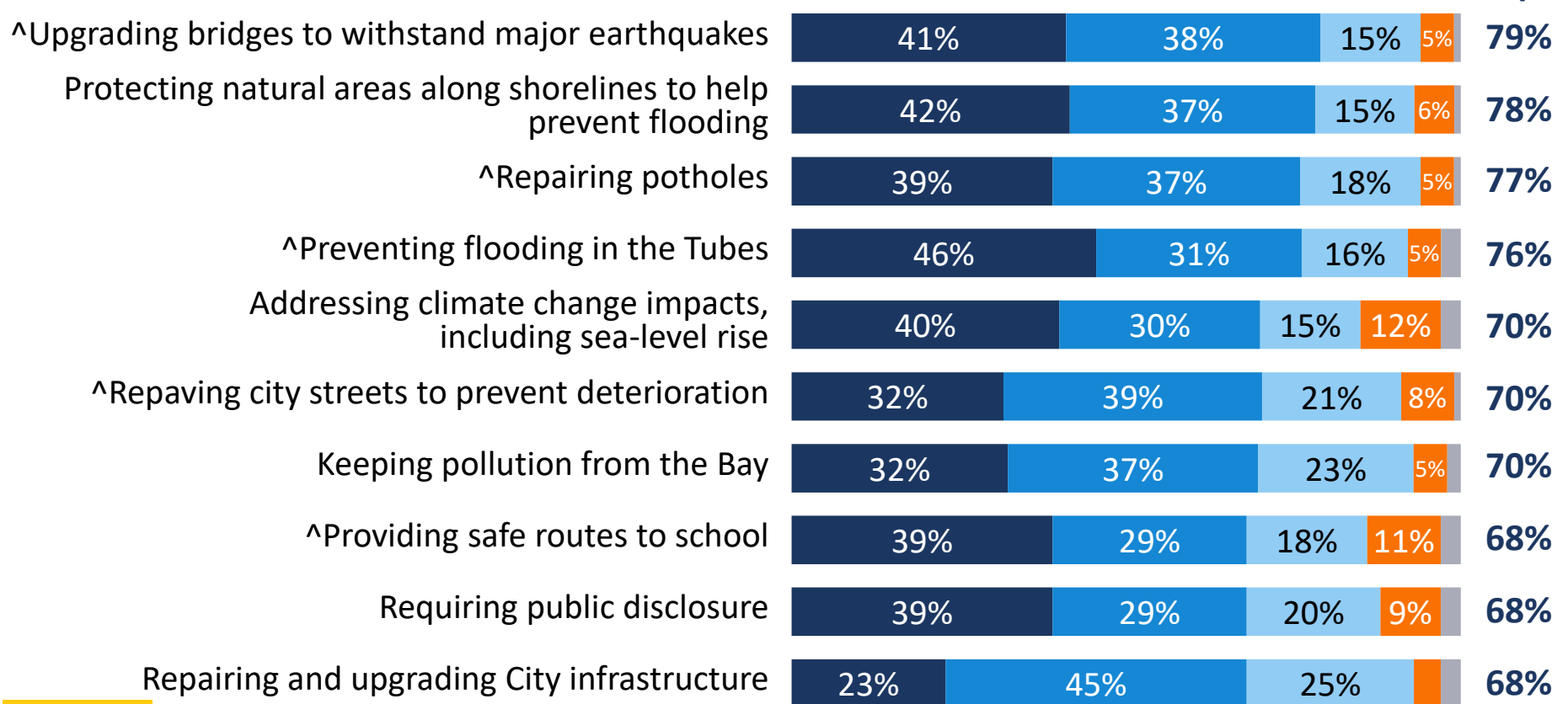


Spending and Investment Priorities

Preparing for earthquakes and flooding—and fixing potholes—are top investment priorities.

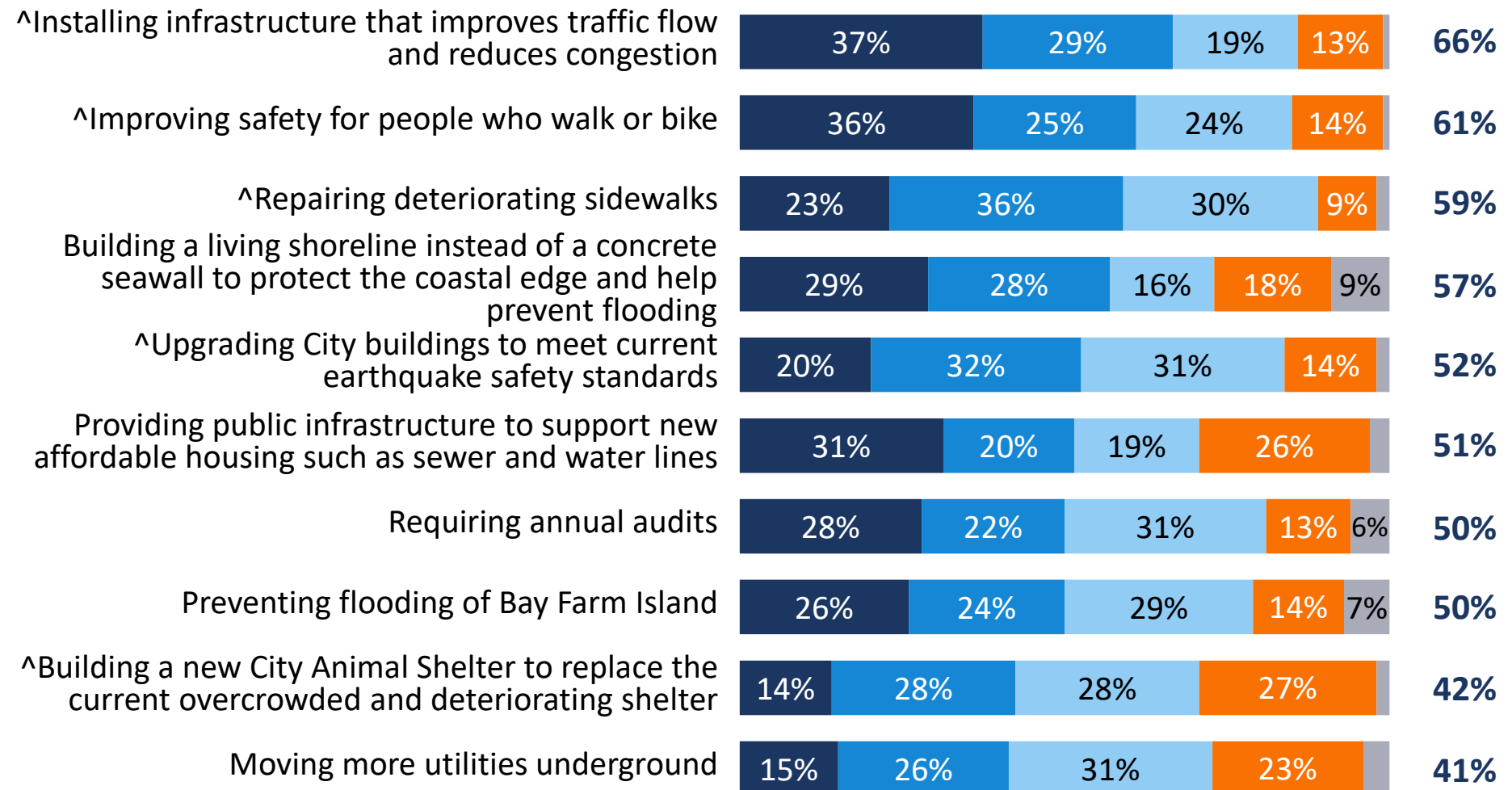
I am going to read you a list of ways in which any additional funding provided to the City of Alameda could be spent. Please tell me how important each project or element would be to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important.

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



Moving utilities underground and building a new animal shelter were lower-tier priorities.

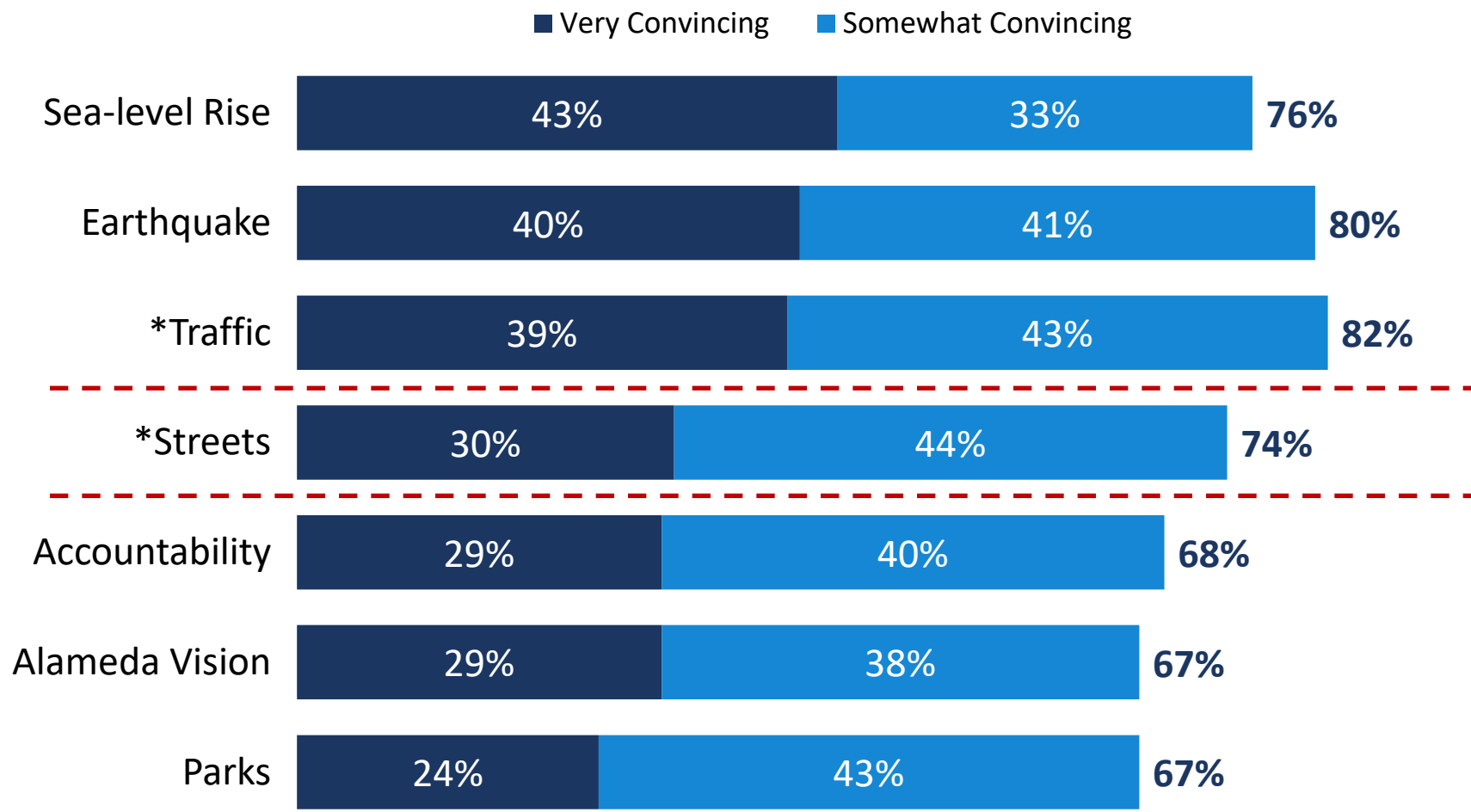
■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Impt.**





Supportive and Critical Statements

Similar rationales were the most compelling, as well as addressing local traffic and pedestrian safety.

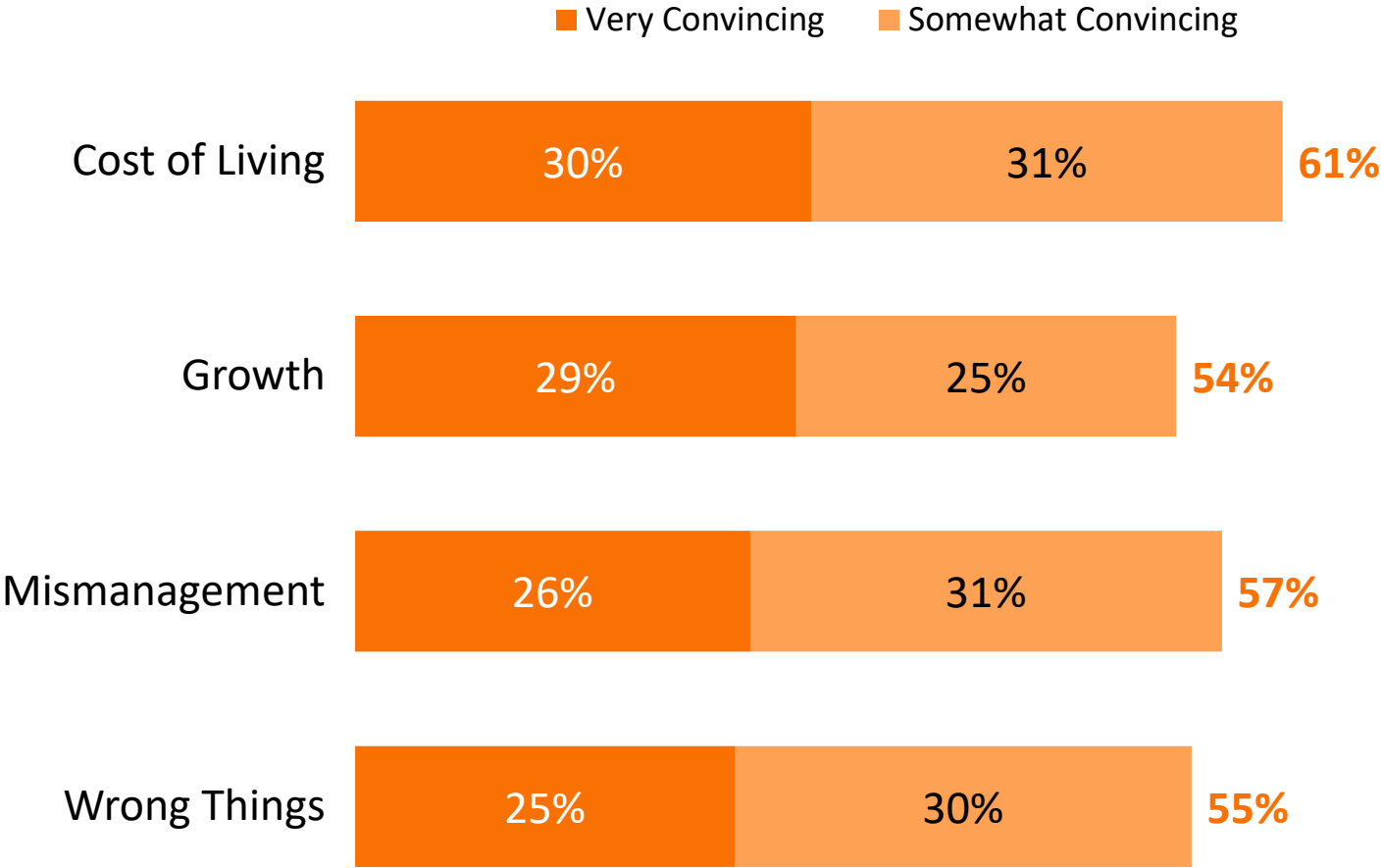


Statements in Support of a Bond Measure

Ranked by Very Convincing

43%	(SEA-LEVEL RISE) With the sea-level steadily rising around Alameda and increasingly severe winter storms, it is absolutely critical for the future of our city to plan accordingly. We need this measure to fund projects along our shorelines and in the Tubes to protect our streets, homes, and businesses from storm surges and flooding.
40%	(EARTHQUAKE) Our city's infrastructure, including bridges, is aging and does not meet current earthquake safety standards. This measure would provide the funding needed to ensure that our community is prepared for the next major earthquake.
39%	*(TRAFFIC) This measure will invest in upgrading our roads and sidewalks to ensure that people can get where they need to go quickly and safely — whether they drive, walk, or bike. That includes investments in pothole repairs; safe routes to school; sidewalk repairs for people with disabilities, seniors, and families; and improvements to signal timing to break up traffic bottlenecks.
30%	*(STREETS) Roads and neighborhood streets across Alameda are in need of repairs and improvements — 29% are currently rated as "poor" or "failed." This measure will help fix potholes and repave streets - making preventative road repairs before they become more costly.
29%	(ACCOUNTABILITY) This measure will be subject to tough fiscal accountability requirements, including full public review of all spending and independent financial audits, to ensure that the money is spent consistent with community priorities.
29%	(ALAMEDA VISION) Our high quality of life comes from things like our safe streets and neighborhoods; plentiful parks and open spaces; and vibrant, local business districts. This measure is a critical part of a longer-term vision for Alameda that will help maintain the critical infrastructure needed to support robust and sustainable city services.
24%	(PARKS) Alameda's 21 community and neighborhood parks are an important part of what makes living here special. This measure will help repair and upgrade our parks and playgrounds, so they remain safe and clean for our residents to enjoy.

The most compelling criticism centered on raising taxes during a time of an increasing cost of living.



Statements Opposing a Bond Measure

Ranked by Very Convincing

30%

(COST OF LIVING) The cost of living and inflation in the Bay Area is out of control, with many families and seniors being priced out of our community by the cost of rent and other basic needs. We simply can't afford to raise taxes and make it even more expensive to live here.

29%

(GROWTH) By creating the infrastructure to support even more high-density housing, this measure will bring more people to Alameda. Our city streets, Tubes, and bridges are already snarled with traffic. The last thing we need is to spend taxpayer dollars to make the situation worse.

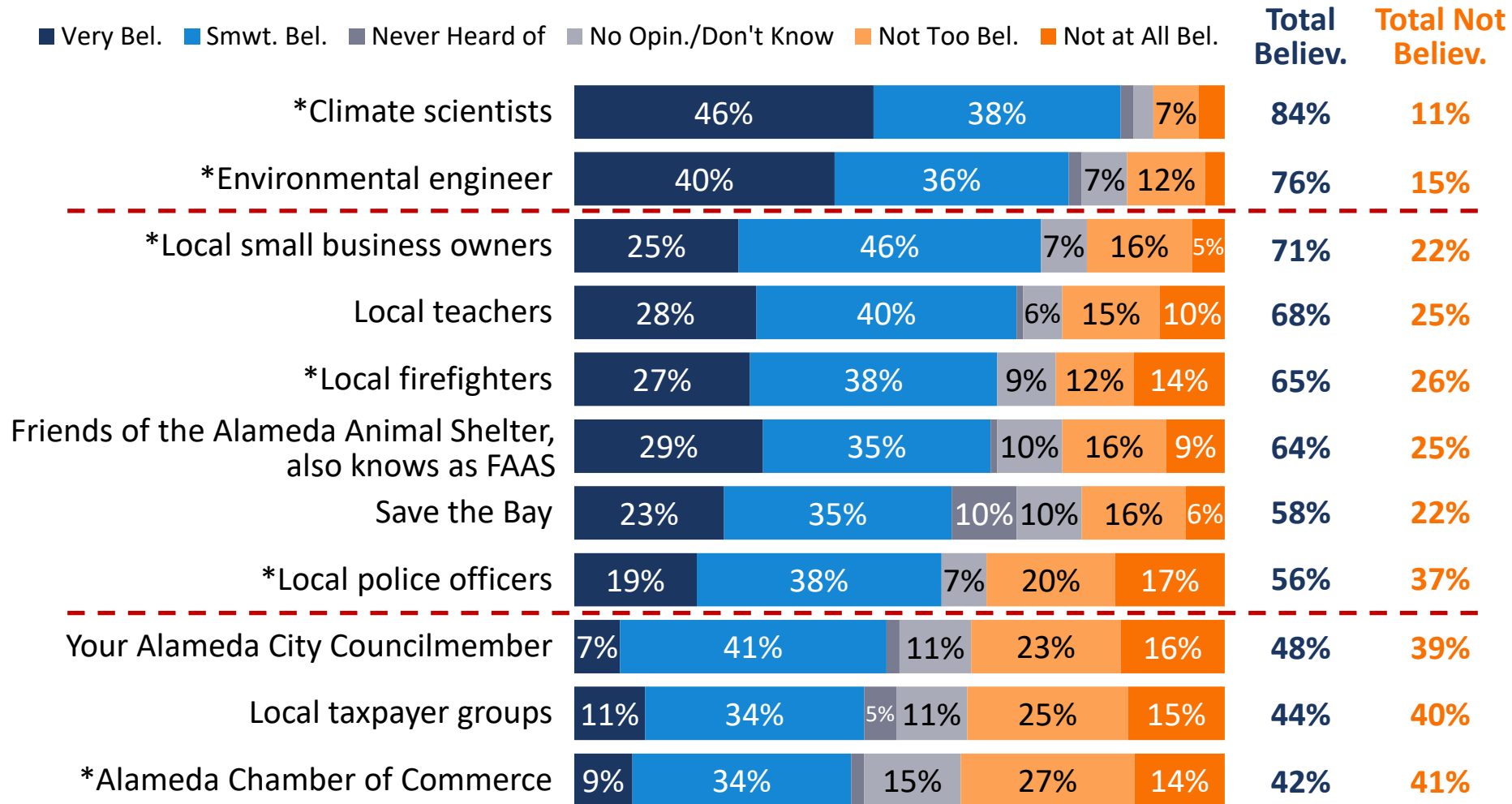
26%

(MISMANAGEMENT) None of the infrastructure needs should come as a surprise to the city. They should have been planning for them and setting aside funds for years. We don't need to raise taxes again and allow bureaucrats and politicians to fund their pet projects.

25%

(WRONG THINGS) This measure claims to be about earthquake and traffic safety, but the City plans to spend most of the money building brand new buildings for city workers. We're struggling with homelessness, housing costs, and crime — now is the wrong time for this measure.

Climate scientists and environmental engineers are seen as particularly credible voices on a bond.



Q11 a-e, g-l. I'm going to mention a list of individuals and organizations that may take a position on the ballot measure that we have been discussing. Please tell me if you feel that individual or organization would be very believable, somewhat believable, not too believable, or not at all believable if they spoke out on this measure. If you have never heard of an individual or organization, or if you don't have an opinion, please tell me that instead. *Split Sample



Conclusions

Conclusions – Electoral Context

- Voters have settled into a state of mind where the overall electorate is less optimistic about Alameda's future than it was pre-pandemic.
- Impressions of various levels of city government are generally positive, but also not quite as positive as they were pre-pandemic.
- There is an elevated perception that the City needs additional funding for public infrastructure, though slightly less than two-thirds hold that impression and it is not acutely felt.

Conclusions – Bond Measure Viability

- Support for a \$150MM infrastructure bond—with an emphasis on flood safety—appears to be hovering around its two-thirds vote threshold.
- Earthquake safety and street repairs/safety improvements also appear to resonate strongly.
- Support is higher than observed at the end of 2023.
- However, a ceiling of support doesn't appear to be much higher than the two-thirds threshold, and eclipsing that threshold requires the support of a handful of tentative “yes” voters.
- Were ACA 10 to pass—and apply to infrastructure bond measures as appears to be the case—viability at 55% vote threshold would look good for November, assuming the macro electoral and economic environment holds steady.
- In the absence of that certainty, a measure may very well still be viable, though it would have little margin for error and would require the emergence of a strong supportive effort from the community.

**For more information,
contact:**



**OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY**

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July 2, 2024

Draft GO Bond Ballot Language

City of Alameda Infrastructure Repair/ Flood Safety Measure. To prevent flooding of tubes/ shorelines/ Bay Farm Island; address sea-level rise; upgrade bridges/ facilities to withstand major earthquakes/ meet current standards; repave streets to prevent deterioration; repair potholes/ sidewalks; improve traffic flow/ safety for walkers/ bicyclists, shall the City of Alameda measure issuing \$150,000,000 in bonds with an average levy of \$29 per \$100,000 of assessed value, generating approximately \$9,500,000 annually while bonds are outstanding, requiring public disclosure/ independent audits, be adopted?	YES _____
	NO _____