Alameda Voter Views of Potential Finance Mechanisms

Key Findings of a Survey Conducted February 2-13, 2022

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220-6272

Survey Methodology

Dates	February 2-13, 2022
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2022 Voters in the City of Alameda
Total Interviews	480
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) ±4.9% at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) ±6.9% at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	Telephone Calls Email Invitations
Data Collection Modes	Telephone Interviews Online Interviews
Languages	English, Spanish and Chinese

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

Survey Goals

- Update views of the City's overall direction and ratings for particular City departments

- Assess voters' priorities for community investments

- Identify potential revenue measure mechanisms that may be able to achieve the level of support needed for passage in a future election

- Determine support for a police oversight commission measure

Key Numbers
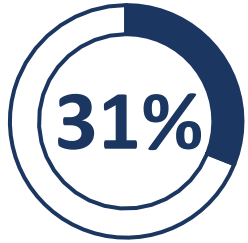
31% Think the City is headed in the "right direction" – down 11 points from 2020
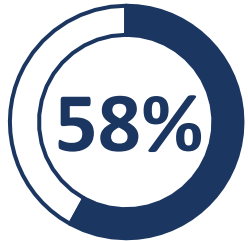
58% Approve of Alameda City government overall
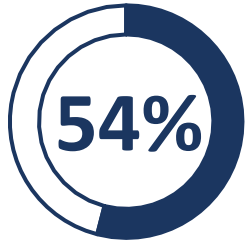
54% See a need for additional funding to provide City services
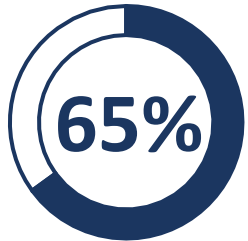
65% Support the creation of an independent police oversight commission

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Voter Mood and Perceptions of the City

More voters are divided on the direction of the City than ever before, and just three in ten say things are headed in the right direction.

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?

■ Right Direction   ■ Mixed/Don't Know   ■ Wrong Track

	Right Direction	Mixed/Don't Know	Wrong Track
February 2022	31%	45%	24%
January 2020	42%	37%	21%
June 2018	55%	17%	28%
January/February 2018	59%	18%	22%
July 2017	57%	18%	25%
December 2015	59%	19%	22%
June 2008	61%	17%	22%

Q1.
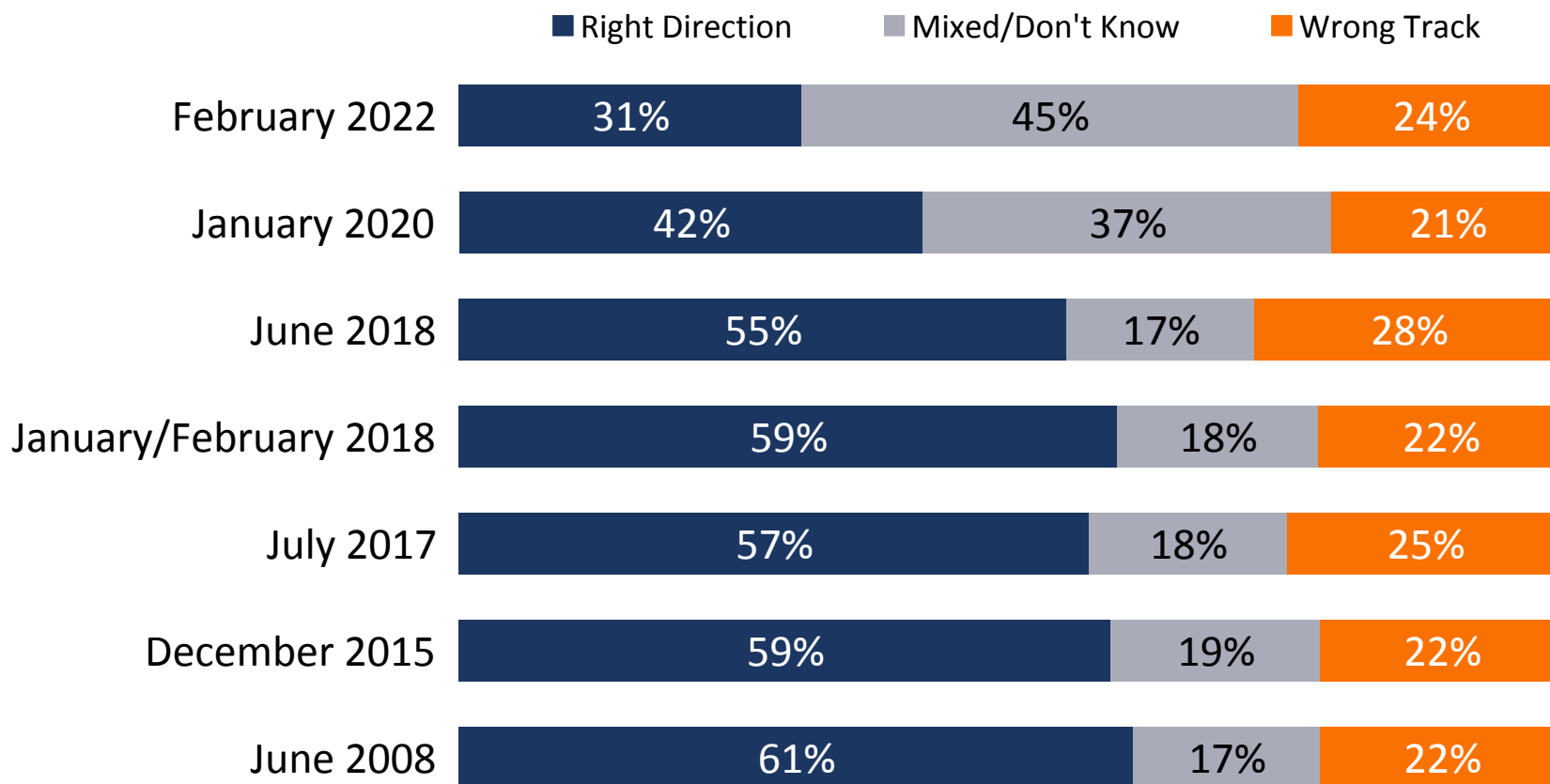
Majorities approve of Alameda's city government, overall; half approve of the City's management and elected officials.

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.

■ Strng. Appr.   ■ Smwt. Appr.   ■ Don't Know   ■ Smwt. Disappr.   ■ Strng. Disappr.

	Strng. Appr.	Smwt. Appr.	Don't Know	Smwt. Disappr.	Strng. Disappr.	Total Appr.	Total Disappr.
Alameda City government, overall	7%	51%	13%	18%	11%	**58%**	**29%**
Alameda Mayor and City Council	7%	42%	20%	18%	14%	**48%**	**31%**
Alameda City management	7%	43%	21%	16%	13%	**50%**	**29%**

Q2.
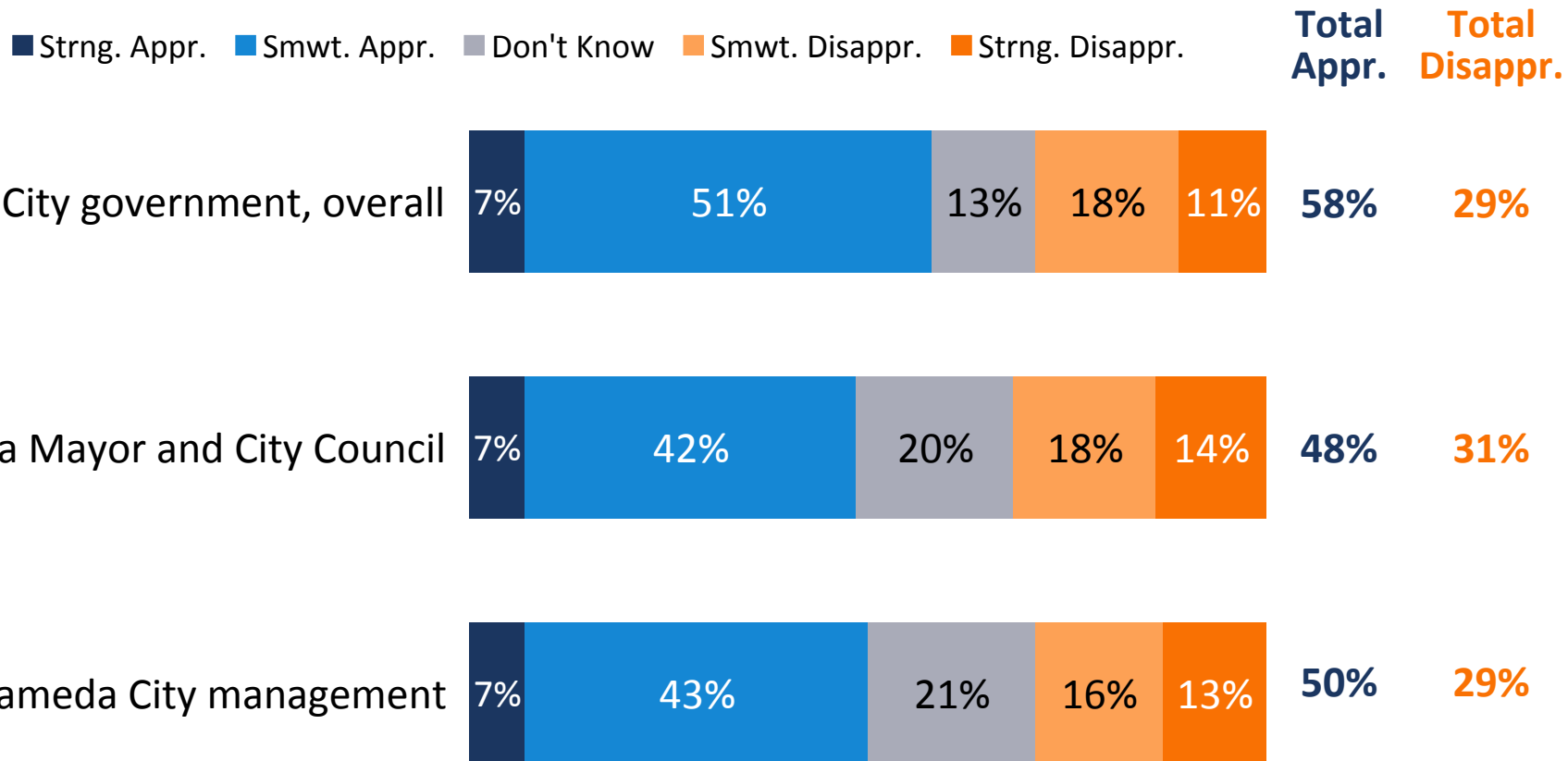
Broad shares give high marks to the City for the quality of its park facilities and fire services.

I am going to ask you about some specific services that the City of Alameda provides. Please tell me whether you think the City is doing an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job in providing that service. If you have no opinion or don't know about a particular function of government that I mention to you, you can tell me that too.

Legend: ■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Only Fair ■ Poor ■ No Opin./Don't Know

Exc./Good

Service	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	No Opin./Don't Know	Exc./Good
Quality of park facilities	26%	55%	12%			81%
Quality of fire services	34%	39%	6%		20%	73%
Quality of recreation programs	16%	44%	11%		26%	60%
Level of neighborhood safety	12%	45%	27%	14%		56%
Quality of library programs for children...	18%	36%	9%		34%	54%
Quality of street maintenance	12%	42%	29%	17%		54%
Quality of customer service at the library	24%	28%	5%		42%	52%
Quality of police services	11%	36%	28%	14%	12%	47%
City's management of budget...		16%	21%	14%	45%	20%

Q4.
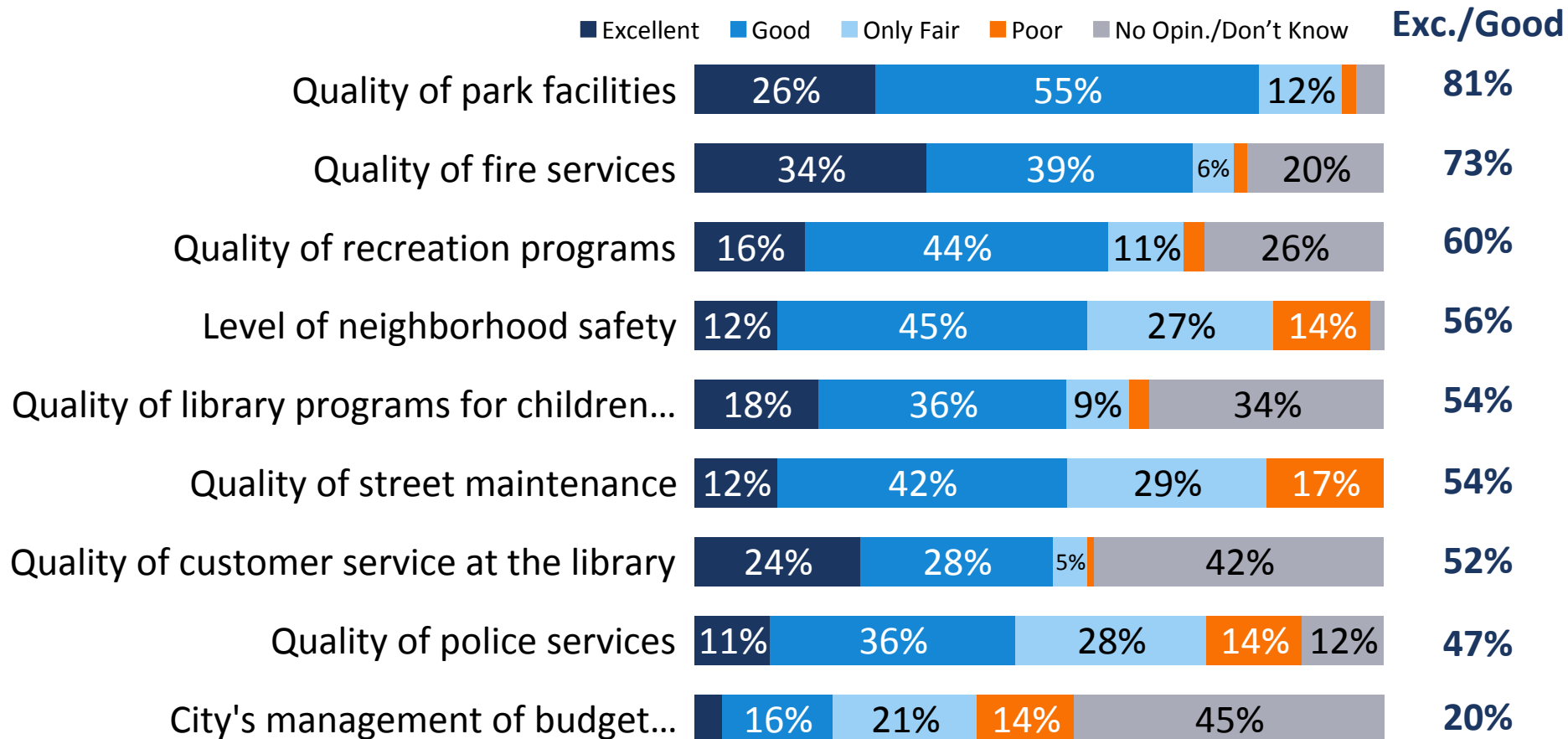
Ratings for police services, neighborhood safety, and library services have declined.

(Excellent/Good)

Public Official/ Agency	July 2017	January 2020	February 2022	Δ Between Jan. 2020 & Feb. 2022
Quality of street maintenance	57%	49%	54%	+5%
Quality of park facilities	80%	78%	81%	+3%
Quality of fire services	81%	74%	73%	-1%
Quality of library programs for children and adults	65%	59%	54%	-5%
Quality of recreation programs	70%	65%	60%	-5%
City's management of budget and finances	32%	26%	20%	-6%
Level of neighborhood safety	81%	65%	56%	-9%
Quality of customer service at the library	66%	68%	52%	-16%
Quality of police services	78%	68%	47%	-21%

Q4. I am going to ask you about some specific services that the City of Alameda provides. Please tell me whether you think the City is doing an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job in providing that service. If you have no opinion or don't know about a particular function of government that I mention to you, you can tell me that too.

Housing costs are a top worry; broad majorities are concerned about climate change and traffic safety.

I'd like to read you some problems facing the City of Alameda that other people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or a not too serious problem in Alameda.

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

Ext./Very Ser. Prob.

Problem	Ext. Ser. Prob.	Very Ser. Prob.	Smwt. Ser. Prob.	Not Too Ser. Prob.	Ext./Very Ser. Prob.
The cost of housing	36%	31%	24%	8%	67%
A lack of housing affordable for working families	35%	27%	22%	14%	61%
^Climate change	36%	22%	24%	17%	58%
Traffic safety on local streets and roads	24%	34%	22%	18%	58%
Traffic and congestion on local streets and roads	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%
Lack of adequate shelter for people who are homeless	31%	26%	21%	20%	57%
^Crime	27%	24%	26%	21%	51%
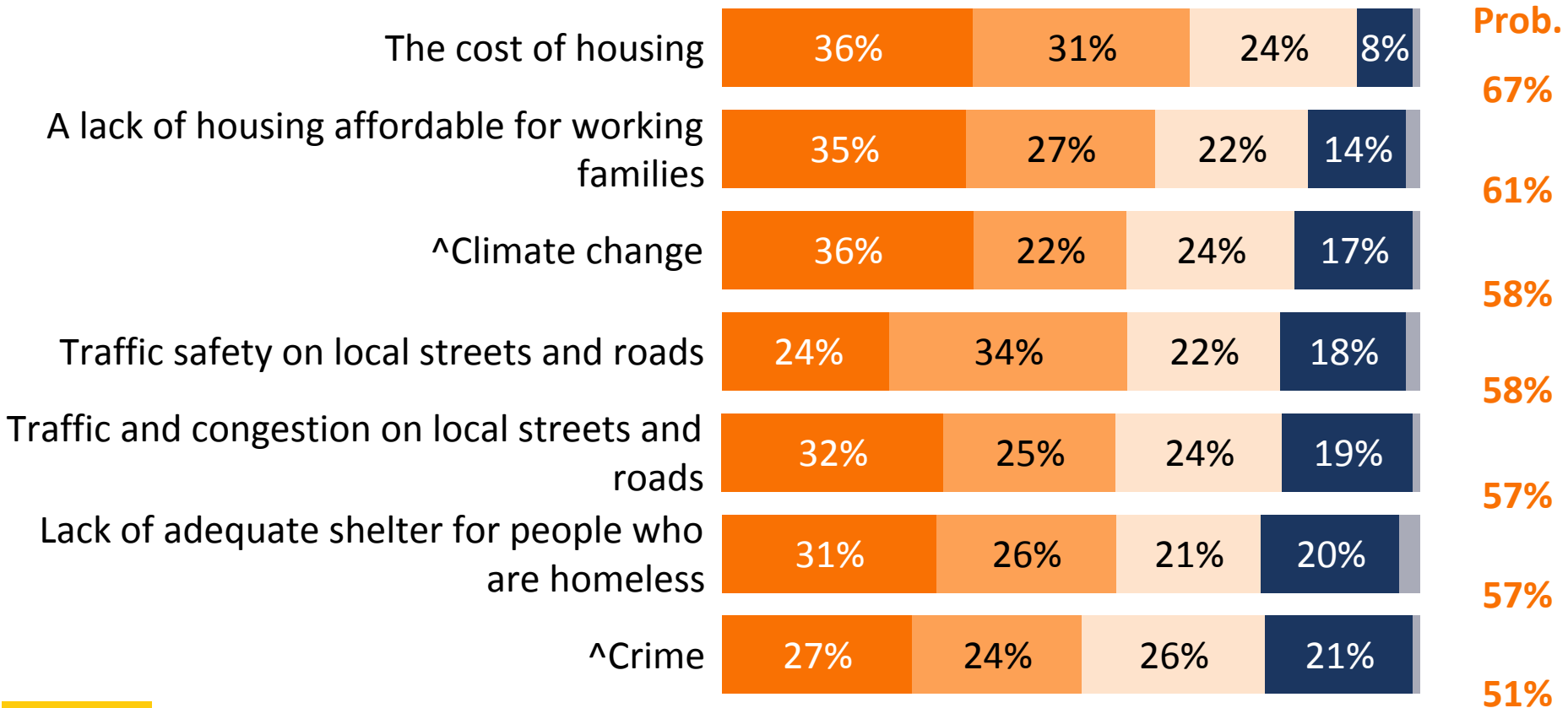
Relatively few are concerned about City tax rates and waste in local government.

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

Ext./Very Ser. Prob.

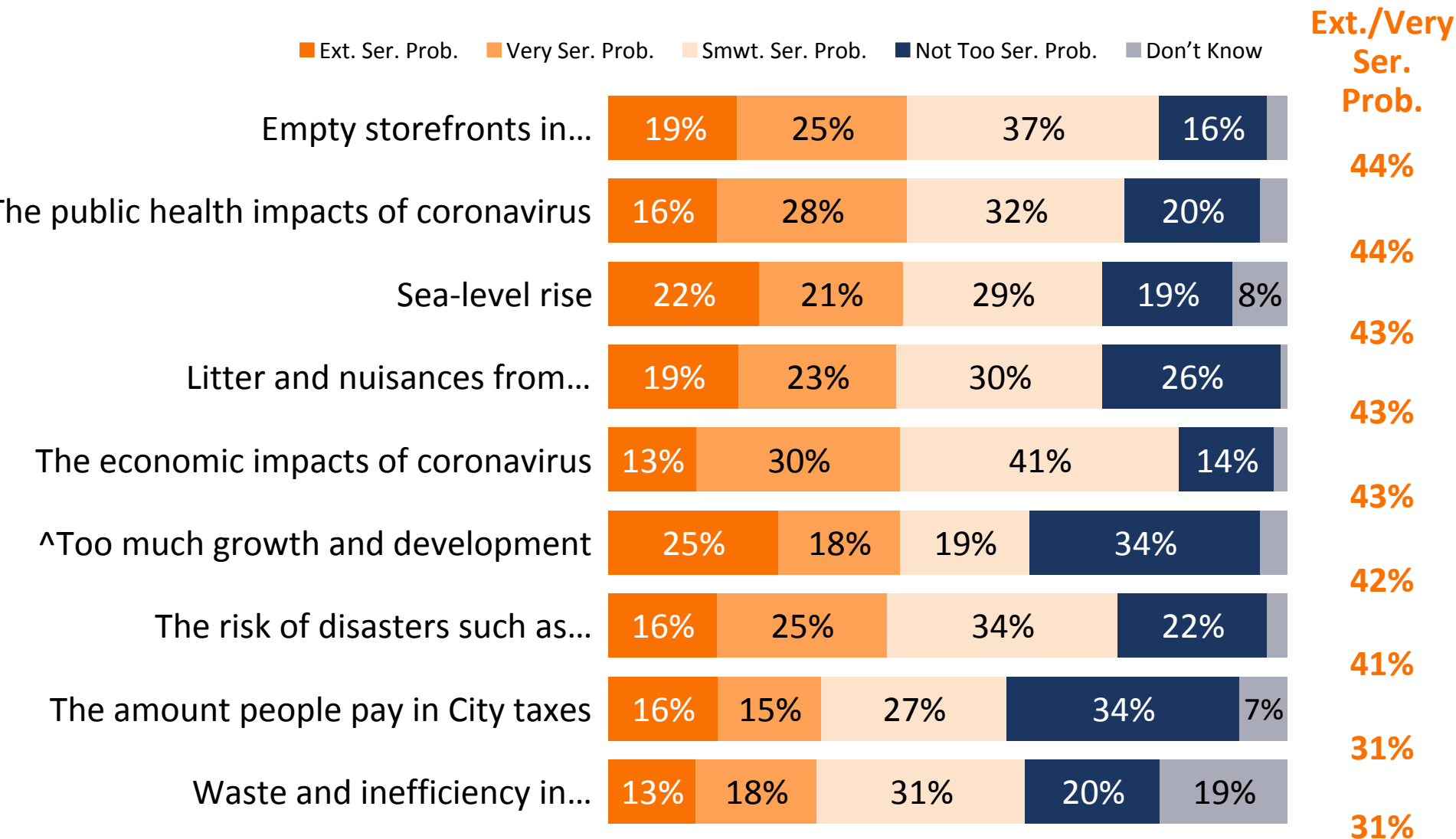| Problem	Ext. Ser. Prob.	Very Ser. Prob.	Smwt. Ser. Prob.	Not Too Ser. Prob.	Don't Know	Ext./Very Ser. Prob.
Empty storefronts in…	19%	25%	37%	16%		44%
The public health impacts of coronavirus	16%	28%	32%	20%		44%
Sea-level rise	22%	21%	29%	19%	8%	43%
Litter and nuisances from…	19%	23%	30%	26%		43%
The economic impacts of coronavirus	13%	30%	41%	14%		43%
^Too much growth and development	25%	18%	19%	34%		42%
The risk of disasters such as…	16%	25%	34%	22%		41%
The amount people pay in City taxes	16%	15%	27%	34%	7%	31%
Waste and inefficiency in…	13%	18%	31%	20%	19%	31%

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Q3. I'd like to read you some problems facing the City of Alameda that other people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or a not too serious problem in Alameda. ^Not Part of Split Sample

Concern about crime and traffic safety have increased in the last two years.

(Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

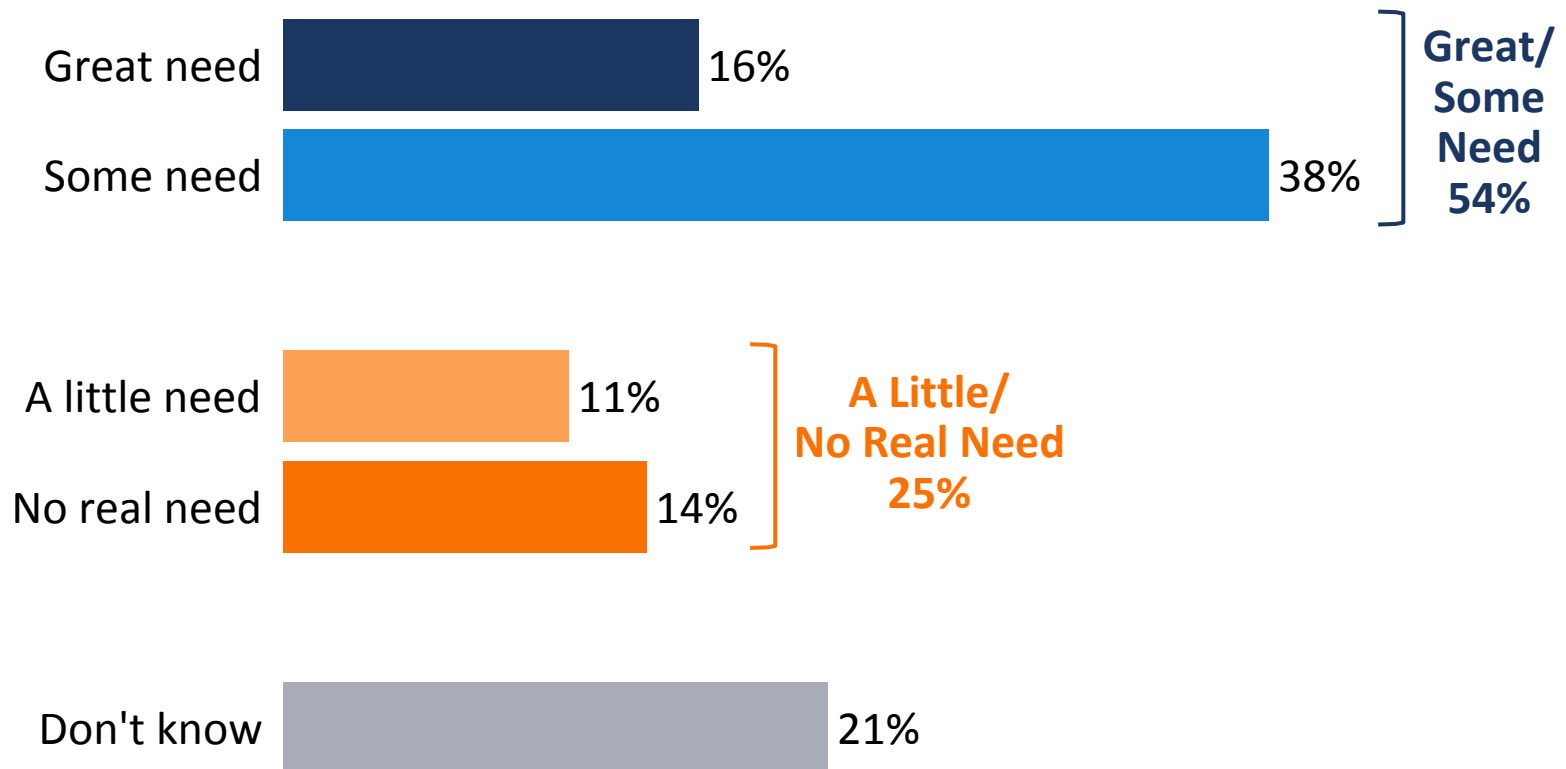| Problem	June 2008	Dec. 2015	July 2017	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2022	Δ Between Jan. 2020 & Feb. 2022
^Crime	28%	9%	17%	36%	51%	+15%
Traffic safety on local streets and roads	--	--	--	45%	58%	+13%
Traffic and congestion on local streets and roads	27%	47%	60%	52%	57%	+5%
Litter and nuisances from homeless encampments	--	--	--	41%	43%	+2%
^Too much growth and development	--	38%	47%	40%	42%	+2%
The risk of disasters such as floods or earthquakes	--	--	--	40%	41%	+1%
Lack of adequate shelter for people who are homeless	--	--	--	57%	57%	0%
^Climate change	--	--	49%	59%	58%	-1%
The amount people pay in City taxes	32%	15%	26%	33%	31%	-2%
Waste and inefficiency in local government	43%	18%	23%	33%	31%	-2%
The cost of housing	55%	69%	73%	71%	67%	-4%
A lack of housing affordable for working families	--	--	68%	67%	61%	-6%
Sea-level rise	--	--	42%	53%	43%	-10%

Spending and Investment Priorities

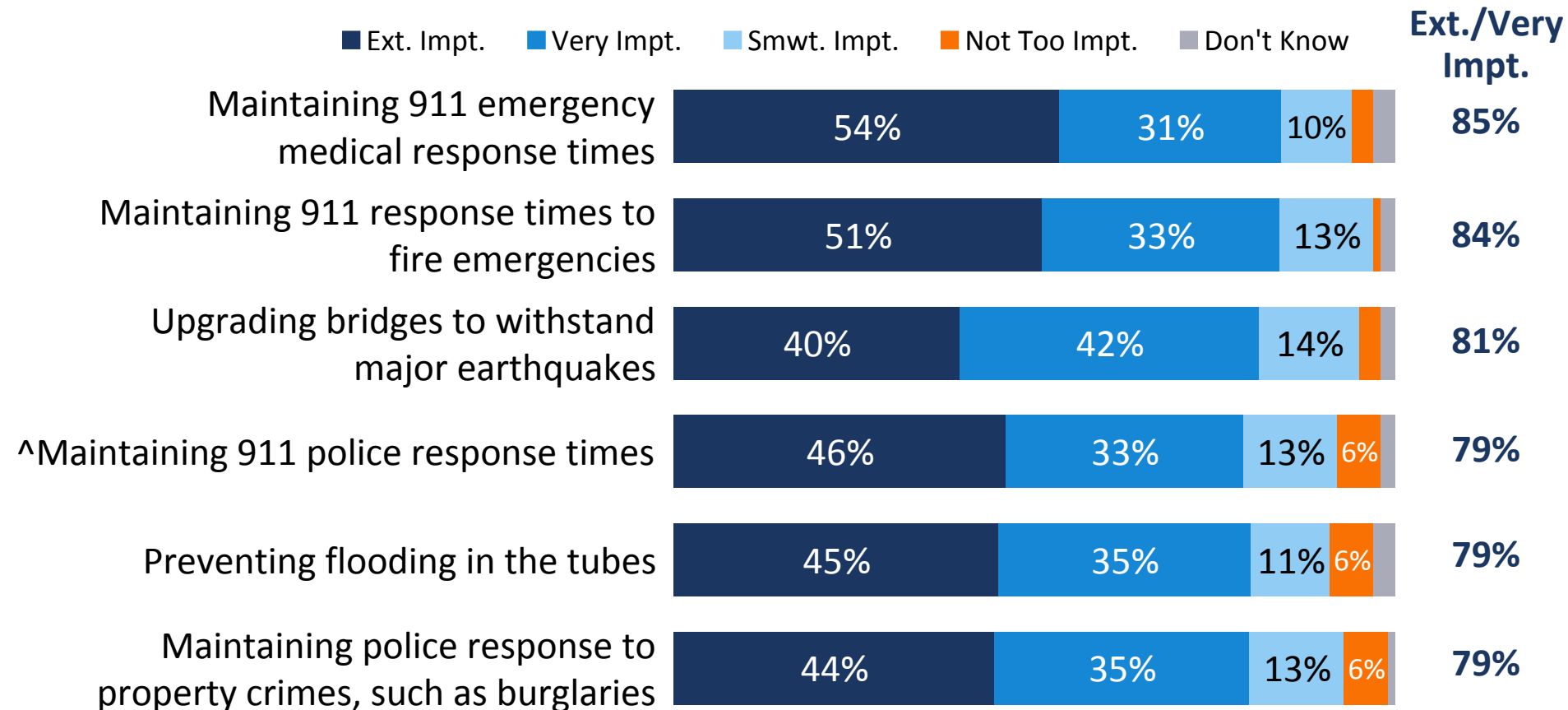# A majority of Alameda voters see at least some need for additional funding for city services.

Would you say that to provide city services in general, the City of Alameda has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding?
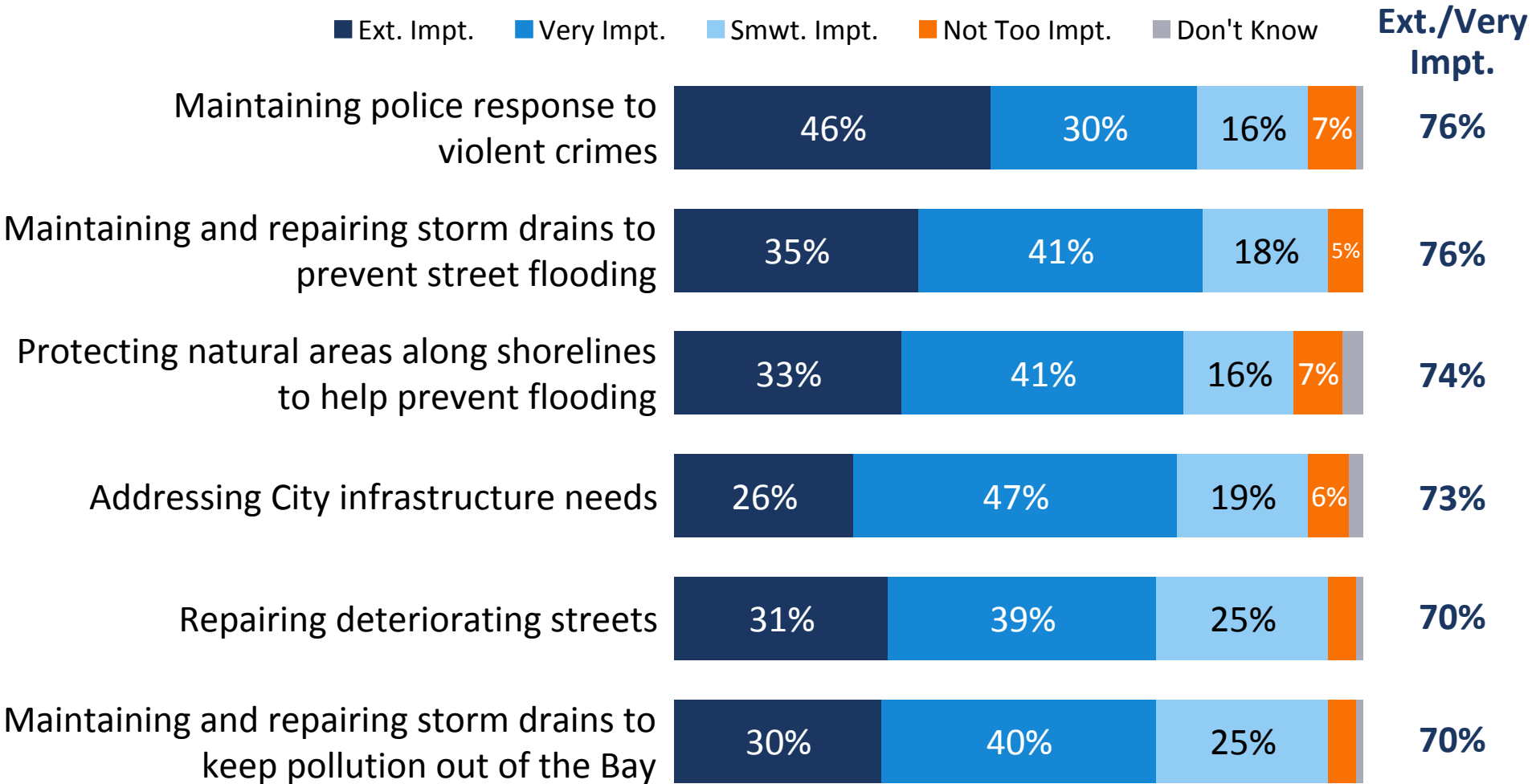
Great need ▮ 16%
Some need ▮ 38%

Great/ Some Need 54%

A little need ▮ 11%
No real need ▮ 14%

A Little/ No Real Need 25%

Don't know ▮ 21%

Q5.

Their highest priorities for funding include response times, bridge upgrades and flood prevention.

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.

Legend: ■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

Ext./Very Impt.

Item	Ext. Impt.	Very Impt.	Smwt. Impt.	Not Too Impt.	Ext./Very Impt.
Maintaining 911 emergency medical response times	54%	31%	10%		85%
Maintaining 911 response times to fire emergencies	51%	33%	13%		84%
Upgrading bridges to withstand major earthquakes	40%	42%	14%		81%
^Maintaining 911 police response times	46%	33%	13%	6%	79%
Preventing flooding in the tubes	45%	35%	11%	6%	79%
Maintaining police response to property crimes, such as burglaries	44%	35%	13%	6%	79%

Q6. ^Not Part of Split Sample

Seven in ten or more also rate infrastructure repairs and response to violent crime highly.

Legend: ■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

	Ext. Impt.	Very Impt.	Smwt. Impt.	Not Too Impt.	Ext./Very Impt.
Maintaining police response to violent crimes	46%	30%	16%	7%	**76%**
Maintaining and repairing storm drains to prevent street flooding	35%	41%	18%	5%	**76%**
Protecting natural areas along shorelines to help prevent flooding	33%	41%	16%	7%	**74%**
Addressing City infrastructure needs	26%	47%	19%	6%	**73%**
Repairing deteriorating streets	31%	39%	25%		**70%**
Maintaining and repairing storm drains to keep pollution out of the Bay	30%	40%	25%		**70%**

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Two-thirds or more value improving cyclist and pedestrian safety and preparing for disaster.

Legend: ■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

Category	Ext. Impt.	Very Impt.	Smwt. Impt.	Not Too Impt.	Ext./Very Impt.
Improving safety for people who walk or bike	36%	33%	20%	10%	69%
Addressing climate change impacts, including sea-level rise	36%	33%	19%	11%	69%
Repairing and upgrading City infrastructure	27%	41%	23%	5%	68%
Providing safe routes to school	41%	26%	19%	11%	67%
Better preparing for natural disasters such as flooding or earthquakes	36%	31%	26%		67%
Repairing potholes	36%	30%	30%		66%
Providing programs to make housing more affordable	40%	26%	19%	14%	65%
Improving traffic safety	33%	32%	25%	9%	65%

Q6. 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. Split Sample

Majorities value improving traffic flow and public transit and improving parks.

	Ext. Impt.	Very Impt.	Smwt. Impt.	Not Too Impt.	Don't Know	Ext./Very Impt.
Improving traffic flow	35%	29%	21%	15%		**64%**
Improving public transit to address traffic congestion	28%	36%	23%	12%		**64%**
Maintaining trees along city streets and in parks	16%	48%	29%	7%		**64%**
Repairing deteriorating sidewalks	24%	37%	30%	9%		**61%**
Providing programs for youth and young adults	23%	37%	28%	7%		**61%**
Improving park safety with lighting and pathways	18%	41%	29%	8%		**60%**
Maintaining the condition of neighborhood parks	21%	39%	36%			**59%**
Building seawalls to help prevent flooding	31%	27%	17%	18%	7%	**58%**

Q6. 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. Split Sample

A new Aquatic Center, upgraded playgrounds and athletic fields, and trees rank lower.

	■ Ext. Impt.	■ Very Impt.	■ Smwt. Impt.	■ Not Too Impt.	■ Don't Know	Ext./Very Impt.
Providing public infrastructure to support new affordable housing	33%	23%	20%	19%		**56%**
Upgrading City buildings to meet current earthquake safety standards	17%	37%	34%	10%		**54%**
Building new affordable housing	32%	19%	22%	25%		**50%**
Planting new trees along city streets and in parks	17%	28%	34%	21%		**45%**
Repairing and upgrading parks	14%	29%	46%	11%		**43%**
Repairing and upgrading City athletic fields and courts and its gym	17%	17%	44%	18%		**34%**
Upgrading playgrounds	6%	23%	44%	24%		**30%**
Building a new City Aquatic Center	7%	14%	29%	49%		**21%**

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Voters value affordable housing investments for a variety of key populations.

There are several specific populations that could be served by investments in affordable housing and housing supports. Please tell me how important each type of housing or service is to you: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important.

Legend: ■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smwt. Impt. ■ Not Too Impt. ■ Don't Know

	Ext. Impt.	Very Impt.	Smwt. Impt.	Not Too Impt.	Ext./Very Impt.
Helping domestic violence survivors…	42%	38%	16%	5%	79%
Helping homeless residents get out of…	42%	36%	14%	8%	77%
Providing programs to help residents who nee…	38%	38%	18%	5%	76%
Providing housing for homeless and…	37%	35%	17%	9%	72%
Providing supportive housing where homeless…	39%	32%	17%	10%	71%
Providing housing affordable for youth…	35%	34%	22%	7%	69%
Providing affordable housing for veterans	34%	35%	22%	7%	69%

Q7.

Assessing Revenue Measure Mechanisms

Only two of the two-thirds requirement approaches begin with bare two-thirds support.

Two-Thirds Requirement Measures

Legend: ■ Def. Yes ■ Prob. Yes ■ Undec., Lean Yes ■ Undecided ■ Undec., Lean No ■ Prob. No ■ Def. No

Measure	Def. Yes	Prob. Yes	Undec., Lean Yes	Undecided	Undec., Lean No	Prob. No	Def. No	Total Yes	Total No
^Issuing $95 million in bonds to fund major infrastructure projects	17%	33%	18%	7%	6%	8%	11%	68%	25%
^Establishing a real estate transfer tax for homes over $2 million to fund…	35%	20%	11%	6%	8%		16%	67%	30%
Issuing $95 million in bonds to fund building affordable housing	20%	23%	15%		14%	10%	17%	58%	41%
Establishing a property tax of 25 centsper square foot to fund building affordable…	17%	18%	15%		8%	12%	25%	51%	46%
Establishing a property tax of 12.5 cents per square foot to support programs make housin…	13%	15%	13%	5%	12%	10%	31%	41%	53%
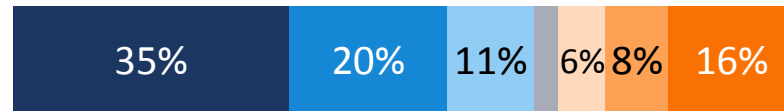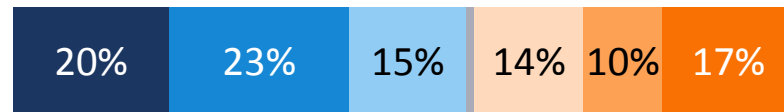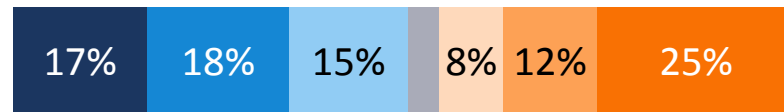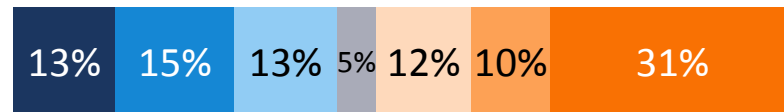
Q8 b, e, g, i, j. The City is considering placing a measure or measures on an upcoming ballot in a future election, though the final structures of these potential measures have not been developed. However, I am going to read to you a list of different approaches to raising funds the City is currently considering, and after I read each one, please tell me whether you would vote "yes" or "no" on that measure. ^Not Part of Split Sample

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All of the simple-majority requirement measures exceed 50%, but to varying degrees.

Simple Majority Requirement Measures

Legend: ■ Def. Yes ■ Prob. Yes ■ Undec., Lean Yes ■ Undecided ■ Undec., Lean No ■ Prob. No ■ Def. No

Measure	Def. Yes	Prob. Yes	Undec., Lean Yes	Undecided	Undec., Lean No	Prob. No	Def. No	Total Yes	Total No
Increasing the business license tax for medium and large businesses to fund general city services and bring the tax rate up to that of neighboring cities	22%	35%	14%		7%	7%	12%	70%	26%
^Establishing a tax on cannabis to fund general city services	34%	25%	10%	5%		7%	15%	69%	27%
^Increasing the transient occupancy tax, also known as a hotel tax, paid by hotel and Airbnb guests, from 10% to 14% to fund general city services	22%	33%	14%		6%	12%	9%	69%	27%
Increasing the business license tax to fund general city services and bring the tax rate up to that of neighboring cities	15%	23%	18%		8%	12%	19%	56%	40%
^Increasing the tax on natural gas to fund general city services and discourage its use in homes and businesses to address climate change	16%	24%	12%		11%	13%	22%	52%	45%

Q8 a, c, d, f, h. The City is considering placing a measure or measures on an upcoming ballot in a future election, though the final structures of these potential measures have not been developed. However, I am going to read to you a list of different approaches to raising funds the City is currently considering, and after I read each one, please tell me whether you would vote "yes" or "no" on that measure. ^Not Part of Split Sample

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The Impact of Pro and Con Arguments

Voters heard or read support and opposition messages applying to all measures.

Supporters say that now is the time for the City of Alameda pursue one or more ballot measures over the next few years to address a variety of critical issues. To begin with, a ballot measure could create locally controlled funding that will be used to address our backlog of infrastructure needs now, while interest rates are low and before construction costs rise even more. Repairing and maintaining our streets, protecting the Bay from pollution, and keeping our parks safe and clean will help maintain our quality of life. In addition to addressing those critical basic infrastructure needs, the City needs additional funding to address urgent, near-term problems like traffic safety and housing affordability and longer-term problems like sea-level rise caused by climate change. And all funds generated from any 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.

Opponents say the cost of living in the Bay Area is out of control, with many people being priced out of our community by the cost of rent and other basic needs. Additionally, the City has a windfall of tens of millions of dollars from the taxes generated by the booming housing market, and the state and federal governments are sending millions more to local cities. They should use that before coming to existing residents and struggling businesses to ask for more money. We simply can't afford any more tax increases for any reason.

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Q9. I will read you some statements from both supporters and opponents of the City placing a measure on the ballot to raise funds for Alameda city services, and then ask you again about each of the potential measures the City is considering.

The infrastructure retains two-thirds support, while other two-thirds requirement measures fall well short of the margin needed for passage after pros & cons.

Two-Thirds Requirement Measures

Measure	Initial Vote		Vote After Messaging	
	Total Yes	**Total No**	**Total Yes**	**Total No**
^$95 Million Infrastructure Bond	**68%**	25%	67%	26%
^RETT >$2 Million	**67%**	30%	62%	34%
$95 Million Housing Bond	**58%**	41%	57%	35%
Property Tax for Housing	**51%**	46%	50%	46%
Parcel Tax for Housing	**42%**	53%	35%	61%

Q8 & Q9. (b, e, g, i, j) The City is considering placing a measure or measures on an upcoming ballot in a future election, though the final structures of these potential measures have not been developed. However, I am going to read to you a list of different approaches to raising funds the City is currently considering, and after I read each one, please tell me whether you would vote "yes" or "no" on that measure. ^Not Part of Split Sample

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The tax on medium and large businesses, cannabis tax, and TOT measures retained strong support after pros & cons.

Simple Majority Requirement Measures

Measure	Initial Vote		Vote After Messaging	
	Total Yes	**Total No**	**Total Yes**	**Total No**
Medium/Large BLT	**70%**	26%	64%	31%
^Cannabis Tax	**69%**	27%	67%	29%
^TOT	**69%**	27%	67%	28%
BLT	**56%**	40%	48%	48%
^Natural Gas UUT	**52%**	45%	48%	45%

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Police Oversight Measure

Two-thirds of voters said they would support an independent police oversight commission.

I am going to ask you about an entirely different ballot measure that some people have proposed in the City of Alameda. This measure would create an independent police oversight commission, with a group of residents appointed to review police policies, training, and other issues. Please tell me whether you would vote "yes" or "no" on that measure.

Definitely yes	32%	
Probably yes	24%	**Total Yes 65%**
Undecided, lean yes	8%	
Undecided, lean no	3%	
Probably no	3%	**Total No 27%**
Definitely no	21%	
Undecided	8%	

Q10.

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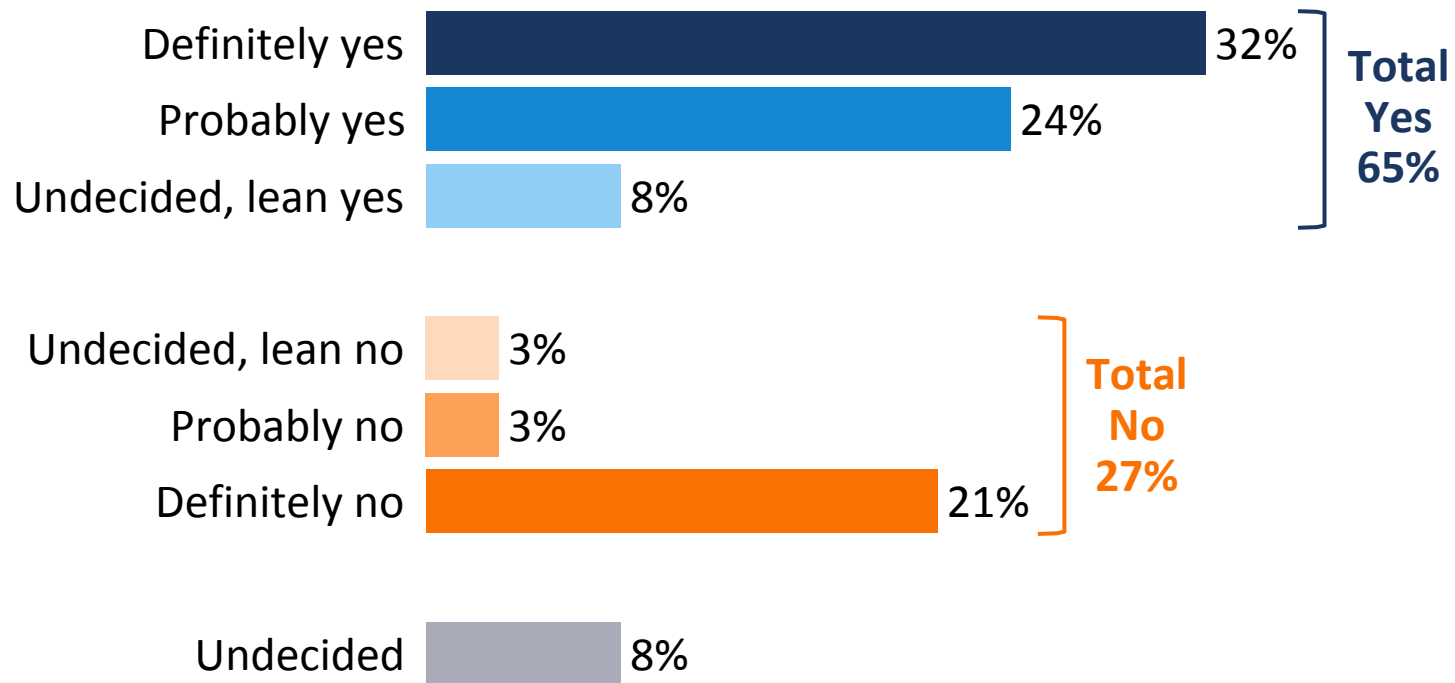
Conclusions

Overall Conclusions

- While Alamedans hold increasingly mixed views about the direction of the city, they overall approve of City government and management. They are more mixed in their views of the Mayor and City Council.

- Housing costs are a broadly shared concern. Notably, concern about traffic safety has increased over the last two years, as has concern about crime.

- A majority believes in principle that the City has "a great" need or "some" need for additional funding, though most say "some" rather than "great" – an indication that voters are unaware of the investments the City requires.

- Voters most highly prioritize investments in maintaining emergency response times, infrastructure upgrades, and preparation for and prevention of natural disasters including flooding and earthquakes.

- Specific to housing, voters highly value support for victims of domestic violence, housing and services for people who are homeless, and other key communities

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Ballot Measure Conclusions

- Mechanisms with a two-thirds vote threshold appear challenging for November 2022, evenly those addressing the high-priority issue of housing.
  - ♣ As concepts, a $95 million infrastructure bond and establishing a real estate transfer tax for home greater than $2 million start essentially at two-thirds, though only the bond stayed at that level after an exchange of pros and cons.

- However, three simple-majority measures begin with support from broad majorities, and retain that support after an exchange of pros and cons.

- These approaches include:
  - ♣ A business license tax for small and medium businesses in the city
  - ♣ A cannabis tax
  - ♣ A transient occupancy tax

- Notably, this survey tested these in a very limited fashion. These approaches may next merit further exploration, including testing voter reactions to potential 75-word ballot labels (which include the amount each would raise, accountability provisions, and the projects and services the measures would fund) and assessing the impacts of a more-robust set of pros and cons on support. In the case of a cannabis tax, a rate and mechanism would also need to be tested.

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Ballot Measure Cheat Sheet

Likely Viable in 2022	Borderline Viability	Not Currently Viable
• Increasing the business license tax for medium and large businesses to fund general city services and bring the tax rate up to that of neighboring cities	• Issuing $95 million in bonds to fund major infrastructure projects	• Issuing $95 million in bonds to fund building affordable housing
• Establishing a tax on cannabis to fund general city services	• Establishing a real estate transfer tax for homes over $2 million to fund affordable housing	• Establishing a property tax of 12.5 cents per square foot to support programs make housing more affordable
• Increasing the transient occupancy tax, also known as a hotel tax, paid by hotel and Airbnb guests, from 10% to 14% to fund general city services	• Increasing the business license tax to fund general city services and bring the tax rate up to that of neighboring cities	• Establishing a property tax of 25 cents per square foot to fund building affordable housing, and supporting programs to making housing more affordable
	• Increasing the tax on natural gas to fund general city services and discourage its use in homes and businesses to address climate change	

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& STRATEGY

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

Curt Below
Curt@FM3research.com

Miranda Everitt
Miranda@FM3research.com