



Sunnyvale






Sunnyvale City Voter Attitudes Towards Potential Charter Amendment Measures

Key Findings from a Citywide Measure Conducted April 1-9, 2026



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Methodology

Dates	April 1-9, 2026
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2026 Voters in the City of Sunnyvale
Total Interviews	602
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Survey Tracking	2018, 2022 & 2024
Languages	English, Spanish & Chinese

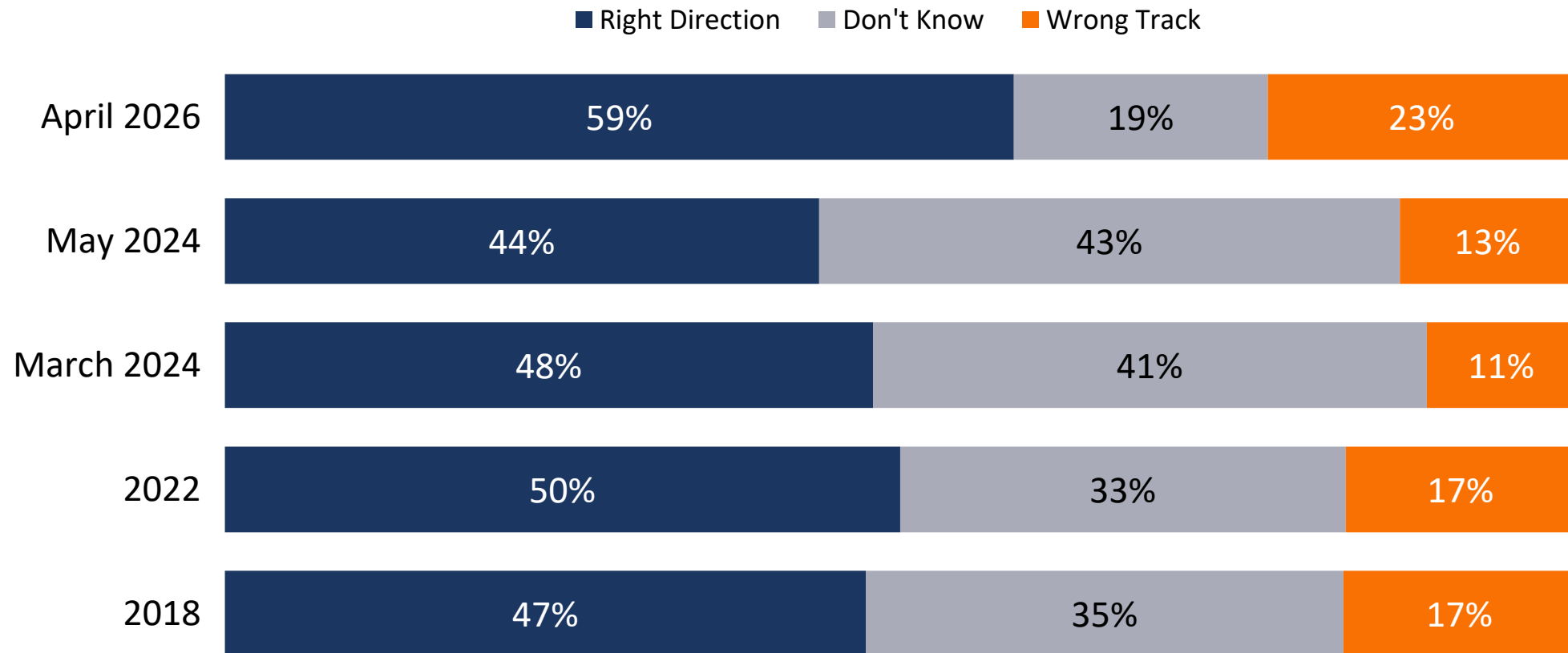
(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)



Perceptions of Life in Sunnyvale

Voters are more optimistic about where things are headed in Sunnyvale than they have been in recent years.

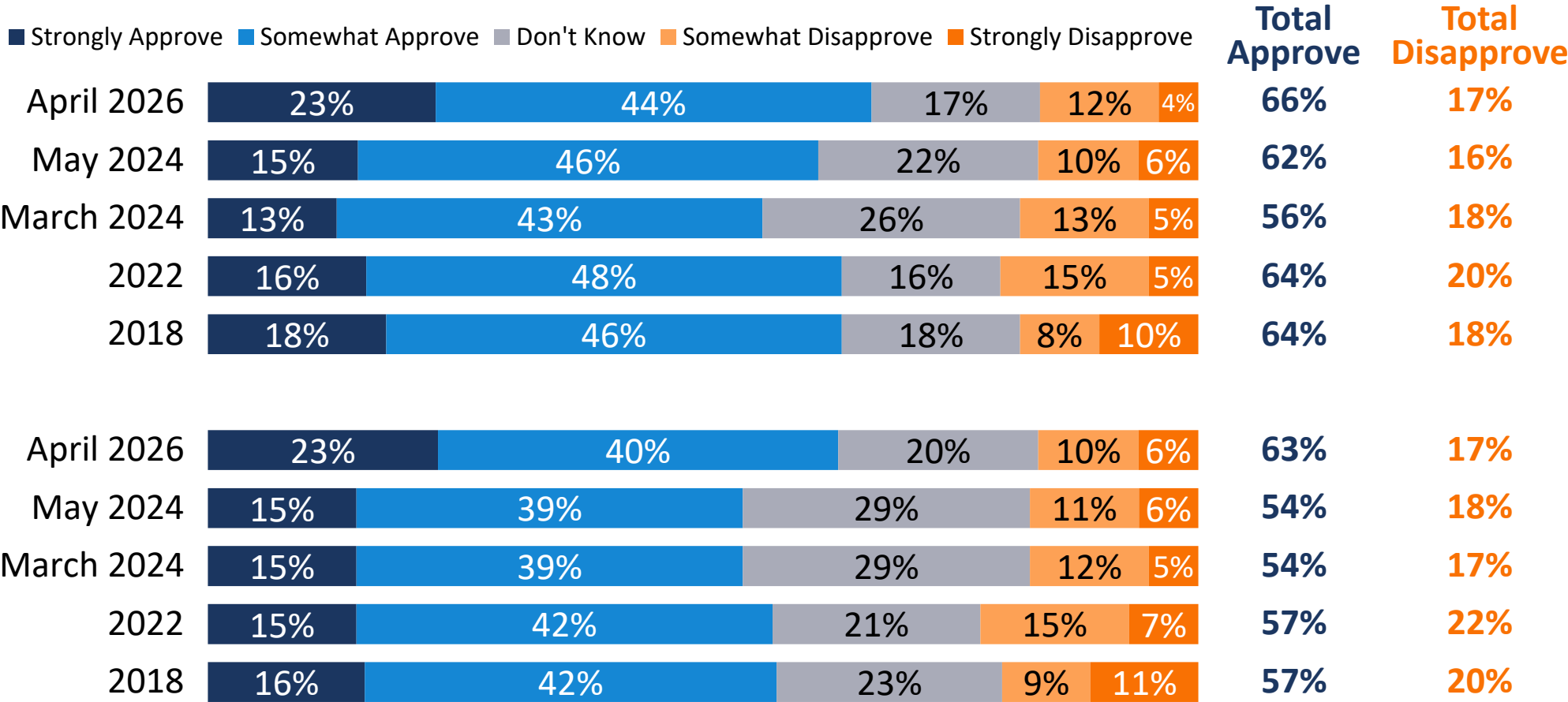
Would you say things in Sunnyvale are headed in the right direction, or do you feel they are off on the wrong track?



More also approve of the overall City government and the City Council.

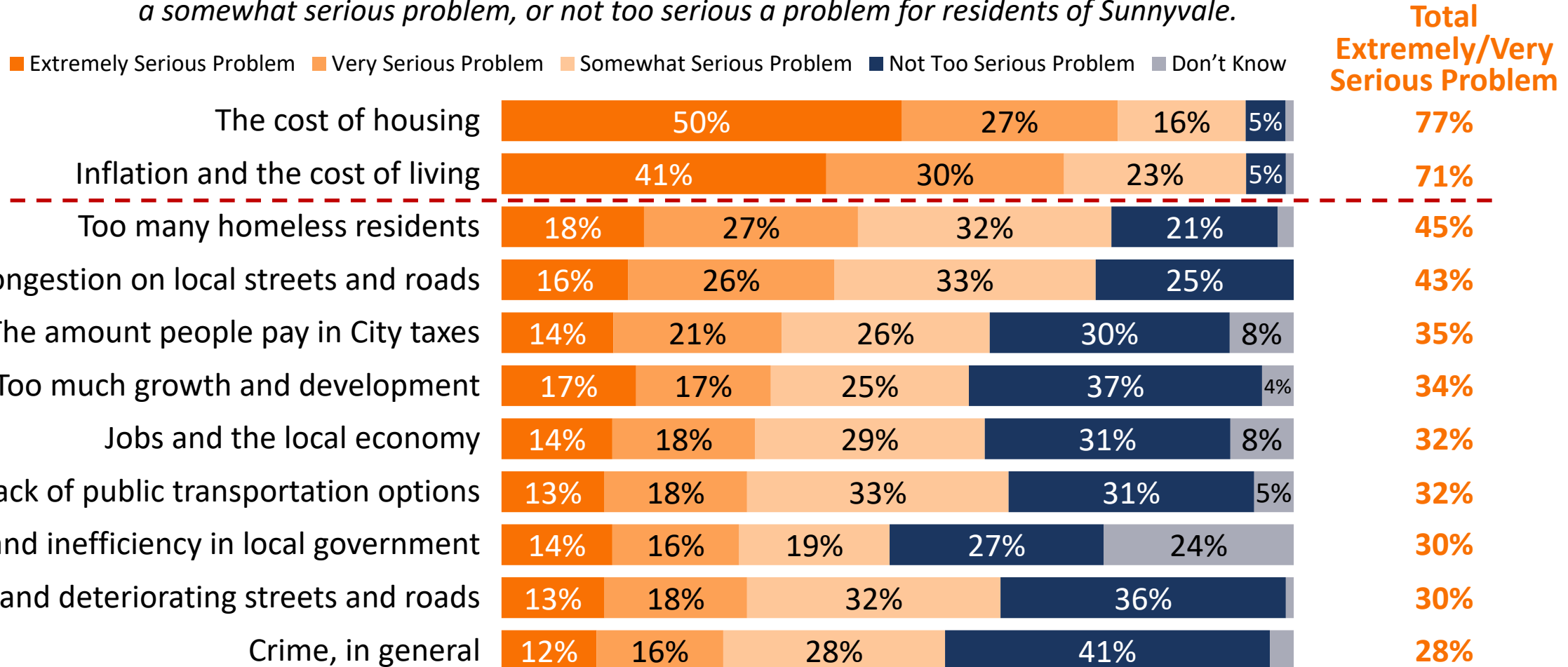
Next, please indicate whether you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the job that each of the following are doing.

Sunnyvale City Government overall



Voters are most concerned with issues related to the cost of living.

Next, please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems facing Sunnyvale. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Sunnyvale.





Explanation of Amendment Measure Testing

Survey Approach and Structure

- Respondents were presented with four potential Charter Amendments:
 1. Public works contracting
 2. City Manager claims management authority
 3. City Council vacancies
 4. Council/Mayor compensation
- Each was presented in a block of questions related to that amendment—with the blocks presented in random order—so that respondents were asked about all four amendments.
 - Short summary and vote
 - Explanation and revote
 - Pro and con statements and a revote
 - An open-ended question (only for the first block presented)

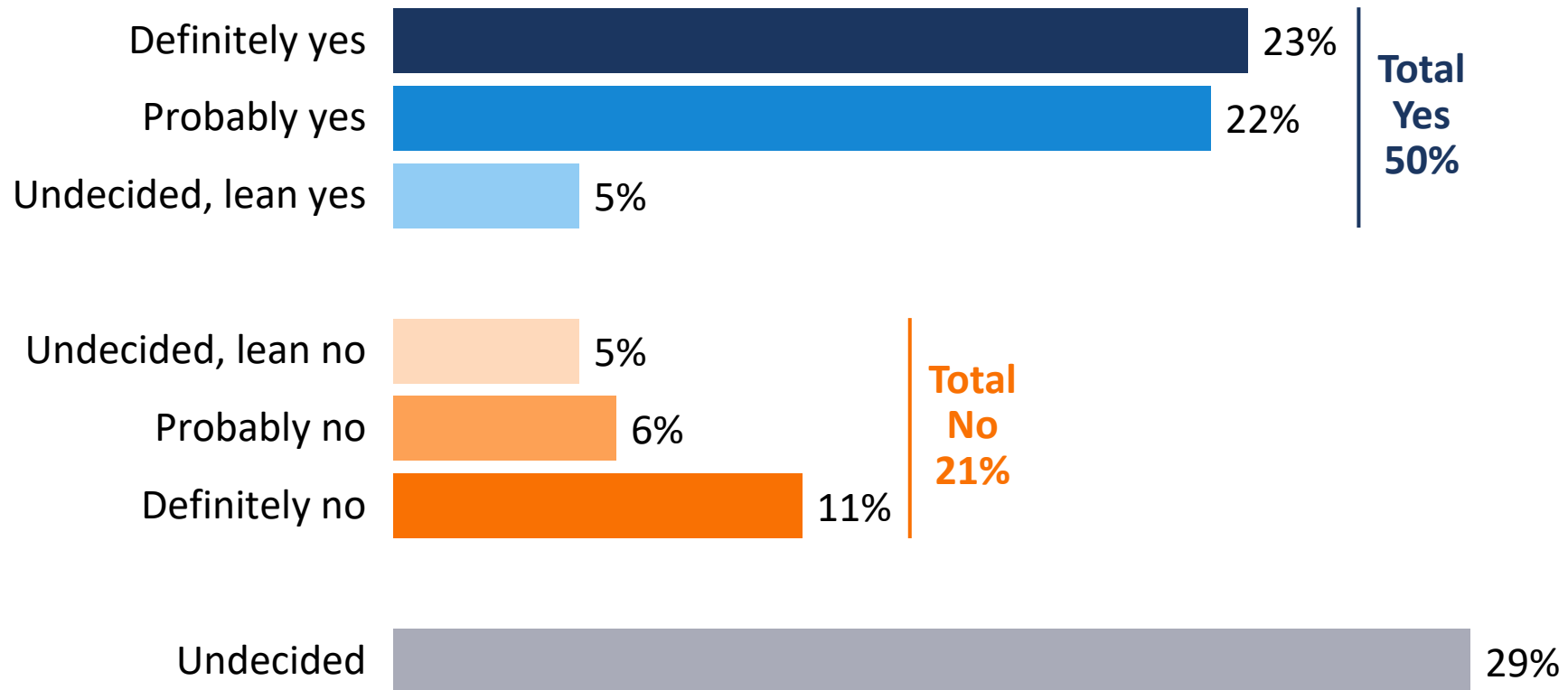


Amendment #1: Public Works Contracting

Half of voters expressed support for a measure expanding the public works contractor selection options.

Public Works Contracting Amendment

The **FIRST/NEXT** Sunnyvale Charter Amendment would let the City Council use any contracting method allowed under California state law to select contractors to complete Sunnyvale public works construction projects.



Potential Charter Amendment Explanation

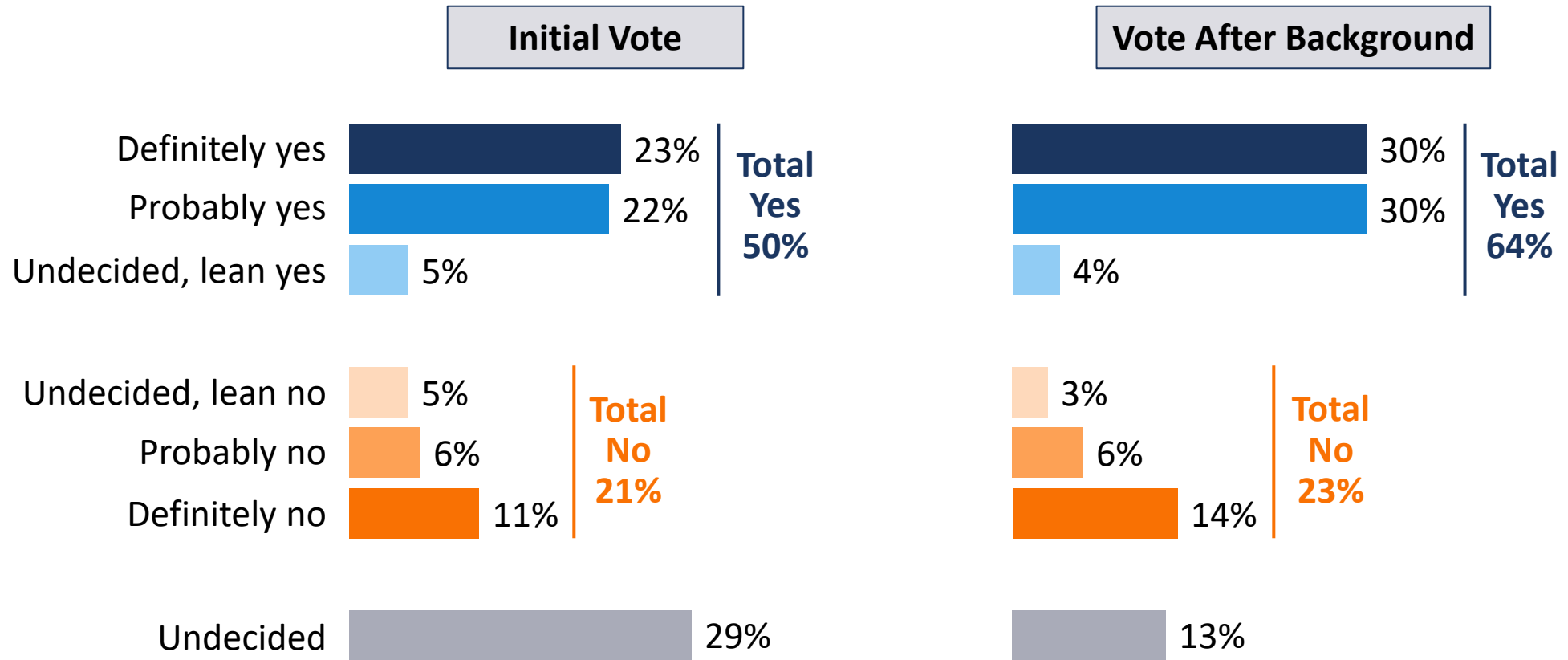
Public Works Contracting Amendment

The Sunnyvale City Charter currently requires competitive bidding for public works construction contracts, which means the City must use the lowest qualified bidder for construction projects after completing all design work first. This traditional process is called “design-bid-build.”

Another option, called “design-build,” allows the City to hire one company to handle both design and construction, and select that company based on overall value — not just the lowest price. This method is allowed under California law but not currently under Sunnyvale’s charter.

Support increased after the explanation, with little change in the opposition.

Public Works Contracting Amendment



Q4. Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

Q5. Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment that would let the City Council use any contracting method allowed under California state law to select contractors to complete Sunnyvale public works construction projects?

Pro and Con Arguments for the Potential Charter Amendment

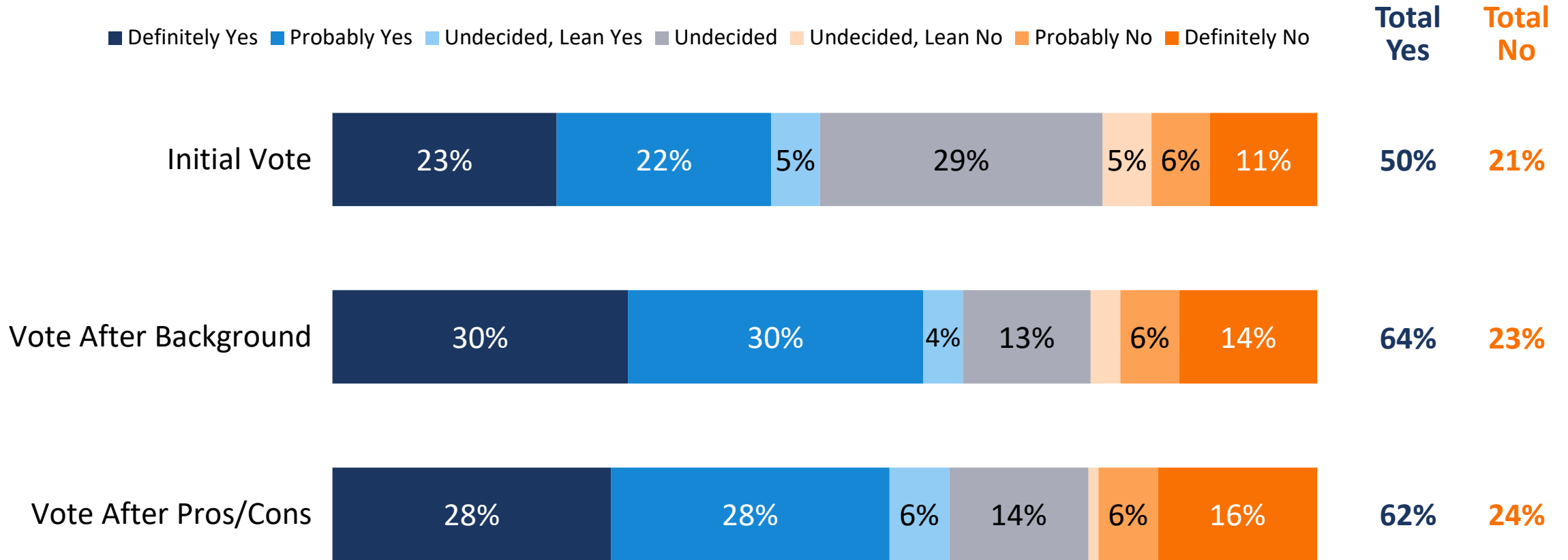
Public Works Contracting Amendment

Supporters say this Charter Amendment would update Sunnyvale's approach to delivering capital improvement projects while keeping oversight, transparency, and accountability. The City Council could still choose the lowest-cost responsible bidder, but would also have the flexibility to choose the best contracting approach for each public works project. For example, using “design-build,” with one firm designing and building a project, can improve coordination and help avoid delays and costly changes. This Amendment would let the City use other public works contracting methods allowed by state law in the future without needing to change the Charter in the future.

Opponents say that using design-build means the City will no longer prioritize cost when selecting contractors, potentially costing Sunnyvale millions of dollars more for each major project.

Total levels of support and opposition changed little after pro and con arguments.

Public Works Contracting Amendment



Q4. Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

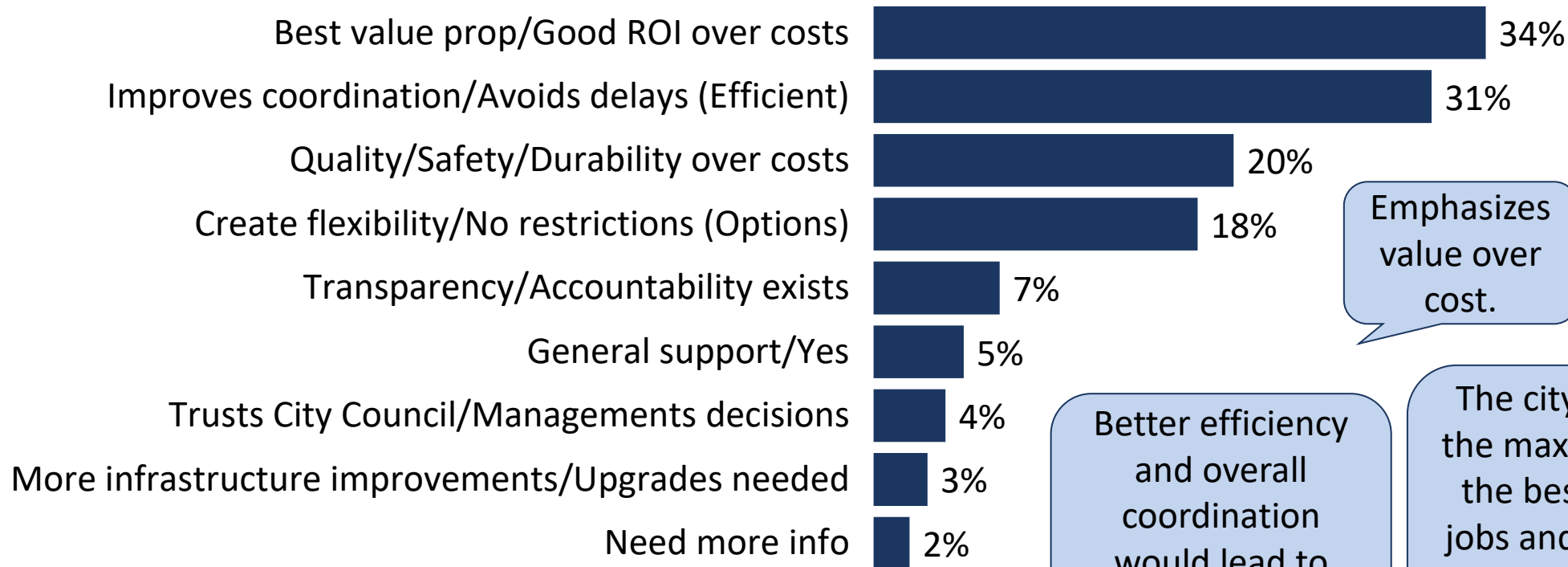
Q5. Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment that would let the City Council use any contracting method allowed under California state law to select contractors to complete Sunnyvale public works construction projects?

Q6. Taking into account these statements, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment that would let the City Council use any contracting method allowed under California state law to select contractors to complete Sunnyvale public works construction projects?

Supporters cited the benefits of improving contract value and project efficiency.

Public Works Contracting Amendment

*In a few words of your own, why would you vote YES on this measure?
(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation; Asked of Yes Voters Only)*



Emphasizes value over cost.

Freeing up restrictions on government processes can improve both cost and speed of actions.

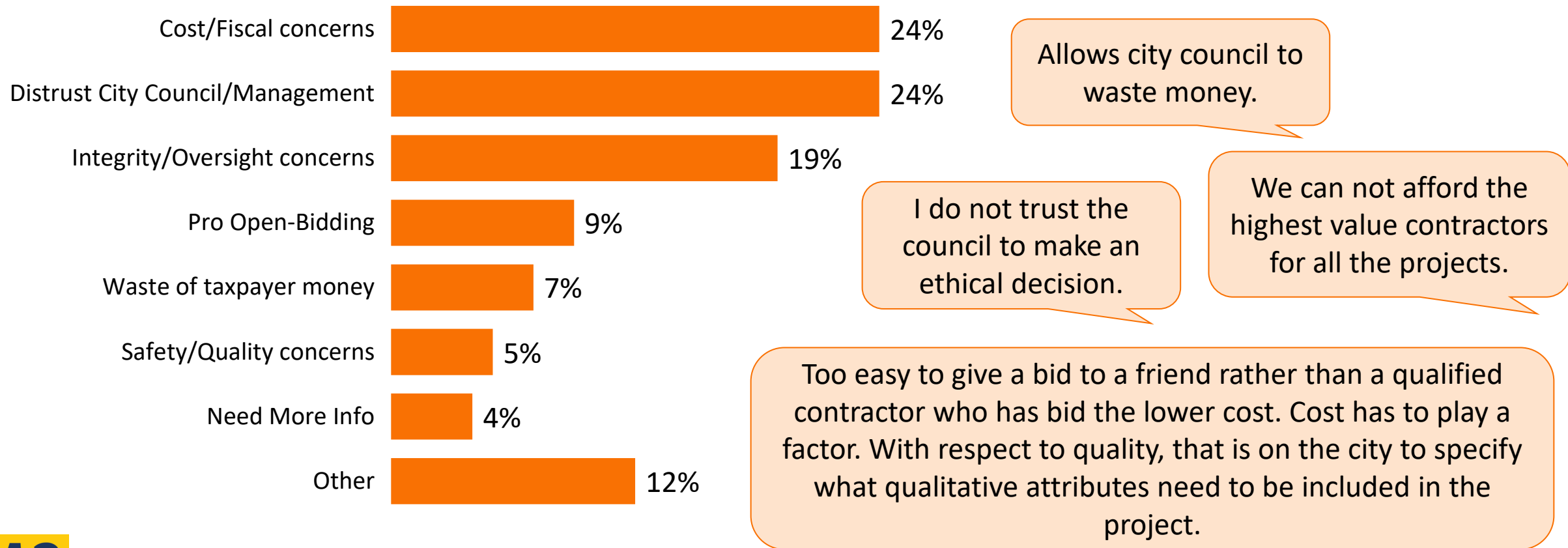
Better efficiency and overall coordination would lead to better results.

The city council should have the maximum flexibility to get the best contractors for the jobs and I trust them to make decisions with cost, quality and efficiency in mind.

Opponents were concerned about oversight and cost overruns.

Public Works Contracting Amendment

*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **NO** on this measure?
(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation; Asked of No Voters Only)*



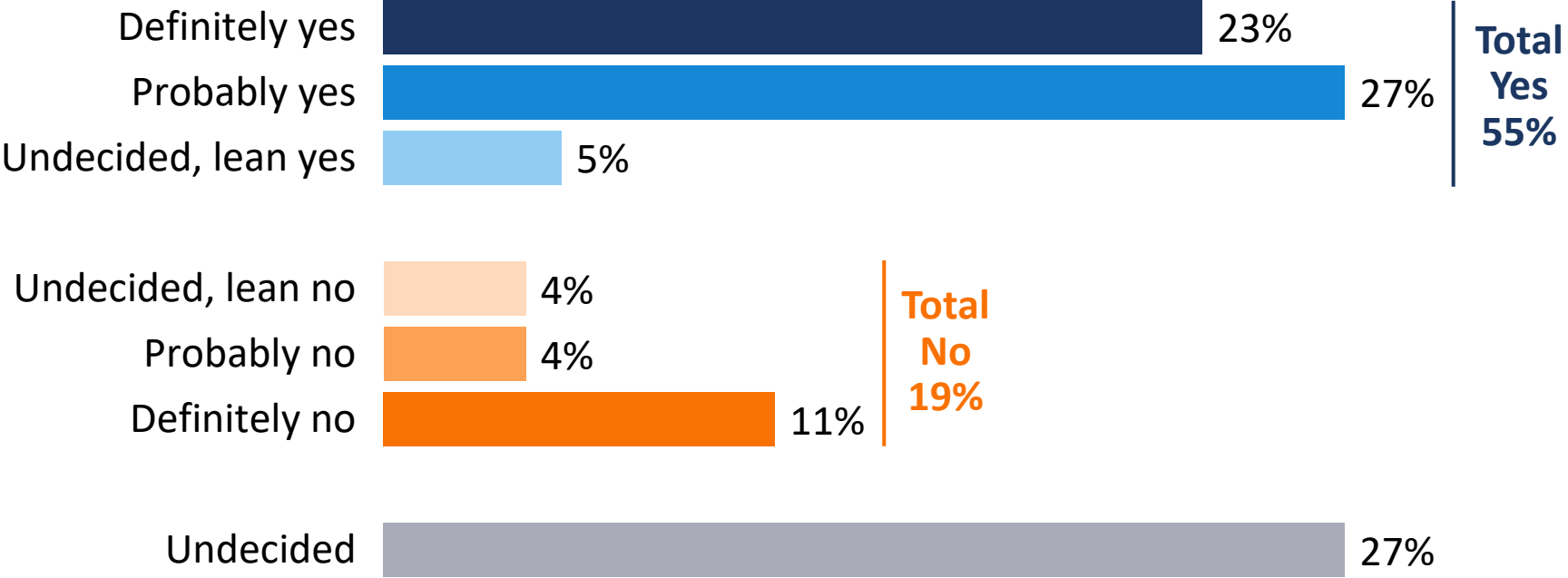


Amendment #2: City Manager Claims Settlement Authority

A majority of voters expressed support for the City Council setting the City Manager’s legal claims settlement amount.

City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment

The **FIRST/NEXT** Sunnyvale Charter Amendment would allow the City Council to establish a maximum dollar amount under which the City Manager would have authority to settle legal claims against the City.



Potential Charter Amendment Explanation

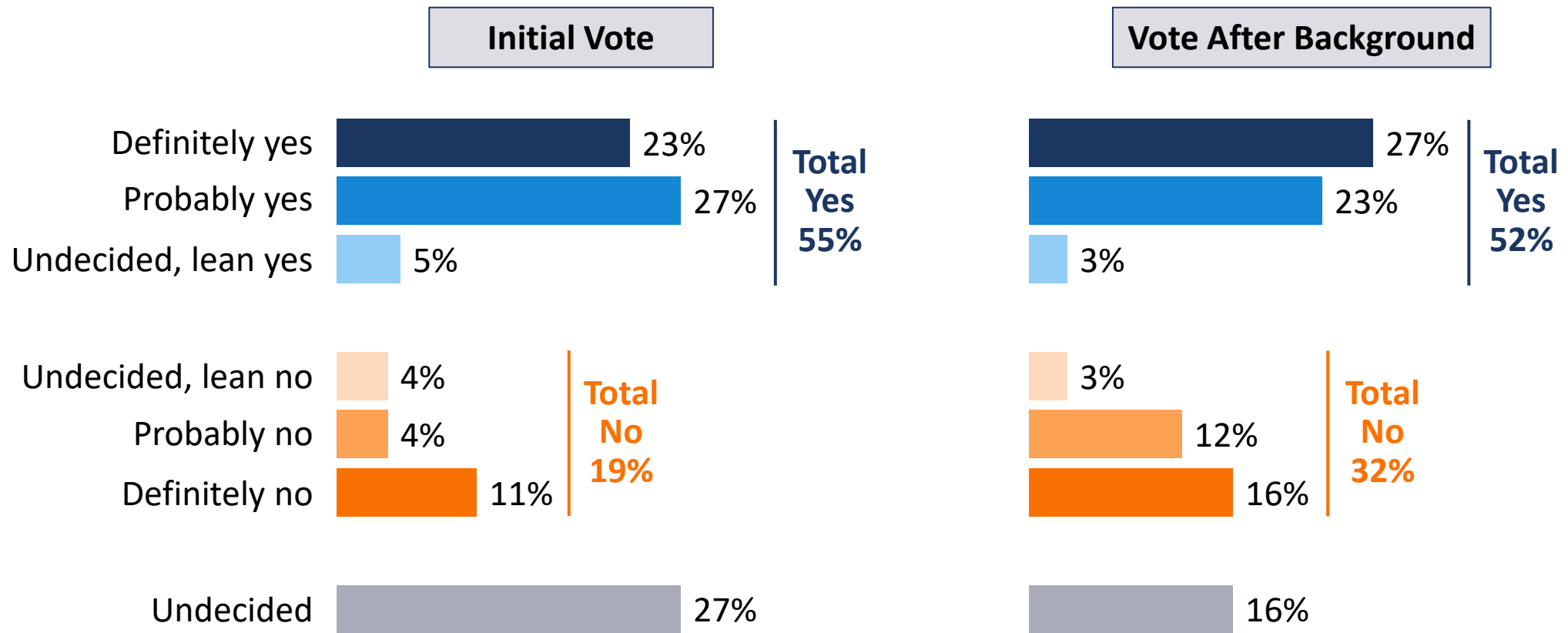
City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment

Currently, Sunnyvale's City Manager may settle claims against the City up to \$50,000 without City Council approval. The City Council must approve potential settlements over \$50,000 and that limit has not changed in almost 40 years. State law does not allow city councils to change this limit unless their charters allow it. In comparison, the City Manager can approve city contracts up to \$250,000 without City Council approval.

This amendment would enable the City Council to increase the City Manager's settlement authority to exceed \$50,000.

Opposition increased after an explanation, though a slim majority continued to indicate they would vote yes.

City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment



Q8. Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

Q9. Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment allowing the City Council to establish a maximum dollar amount under which the City Manager would have authority to settle legal claims against the City?

Pro and Con Arguments for the Potential Charter Amendment

City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment

Supporters say that the current \$50,000 threshold has not changed since at least 1989 and has not kept up with inflation. This limit means that the City Council must approve even routine settlements, consuming staff time for preparation and Council time for review and approvals. This Charter Amendment empowers the City Council to set the City Manager's settlement authority and helps make city government run more efficiently by freeing up staff time for higher priority issues and allowing the City to respond to and resolve claims more efficiently.

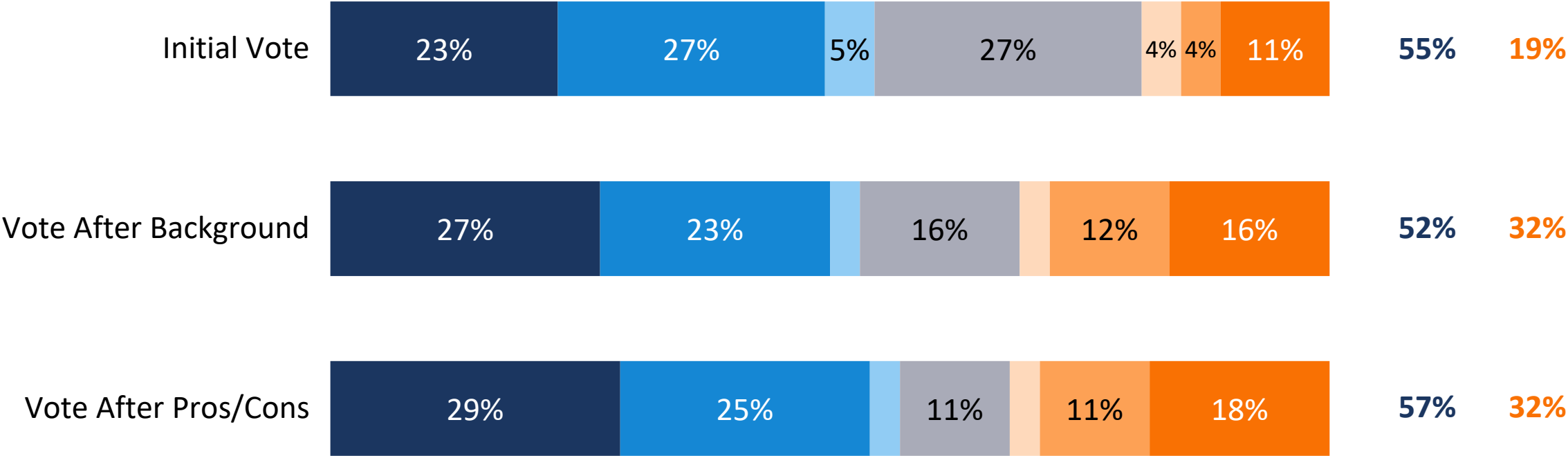
Opponents say that legal settlements over \$50,000 are substantial and should still require the oversight and approval of the City Council.

Support increased after pro and con arguments, while opposition held steady.

City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment

■ Definitely Yes
 ■ Probably Yes
 ■ Undecided, Lean Yes
 ■ Undecided
 ■ Undecided, Lean No
 ■ Probably No
 ■ Definitely No

Total Yes **Total No**



Q8. Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

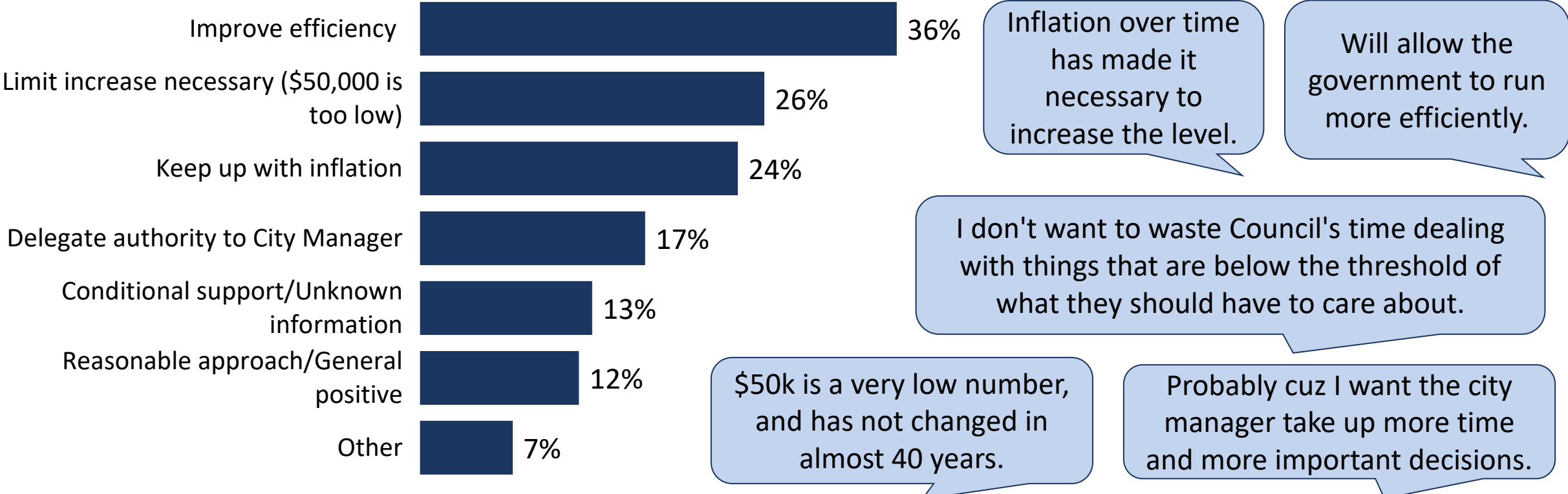
Q9. Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment allowing the City Council to establish a maximum dollar amount under which the City Manager would have authority to settle legal claims against the City?

Q10. Taking into account these statements from supporters and opponents, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment allowing the City Council to establish a maximum dollar amount under which the City Manager would have authority to settle legal claims against the City?

Improved efficiency was the primary driver of support among yes voters.

City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment

*In a few words of your own, why would you vote YES on this measure?
(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation; Asked of Yes Voters Only)*

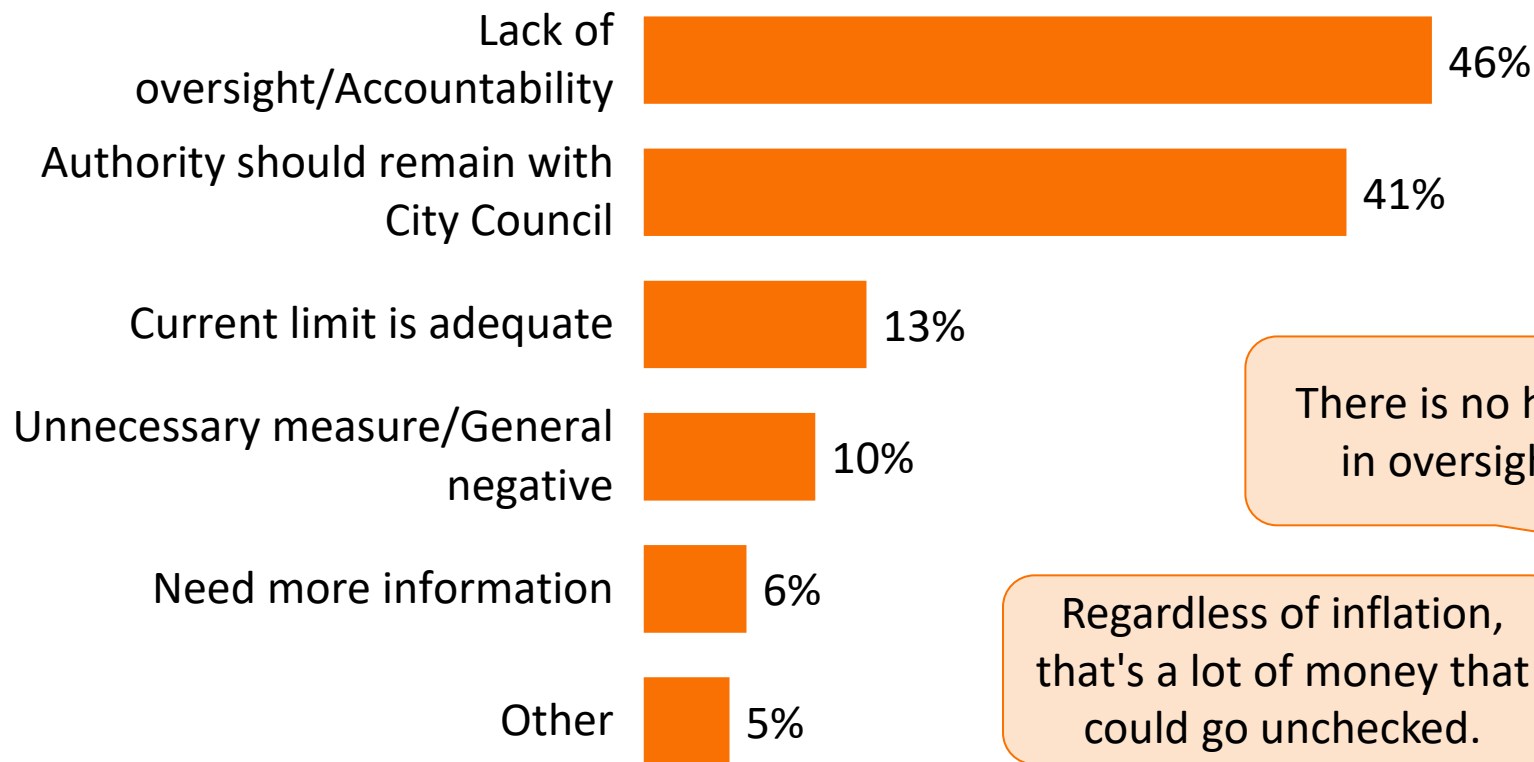


Opponents cited a lack of oversight and a desire to see the City Council continue to exert authority.

City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment

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

(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation Asked of No Voters Only)



\$50,000 is still a lot of money. How many of these settlements does the city have that the council does not have time for them?

There is no harm in oversight.

I'd vote no because it gives too much power to one person and reduces oversight.

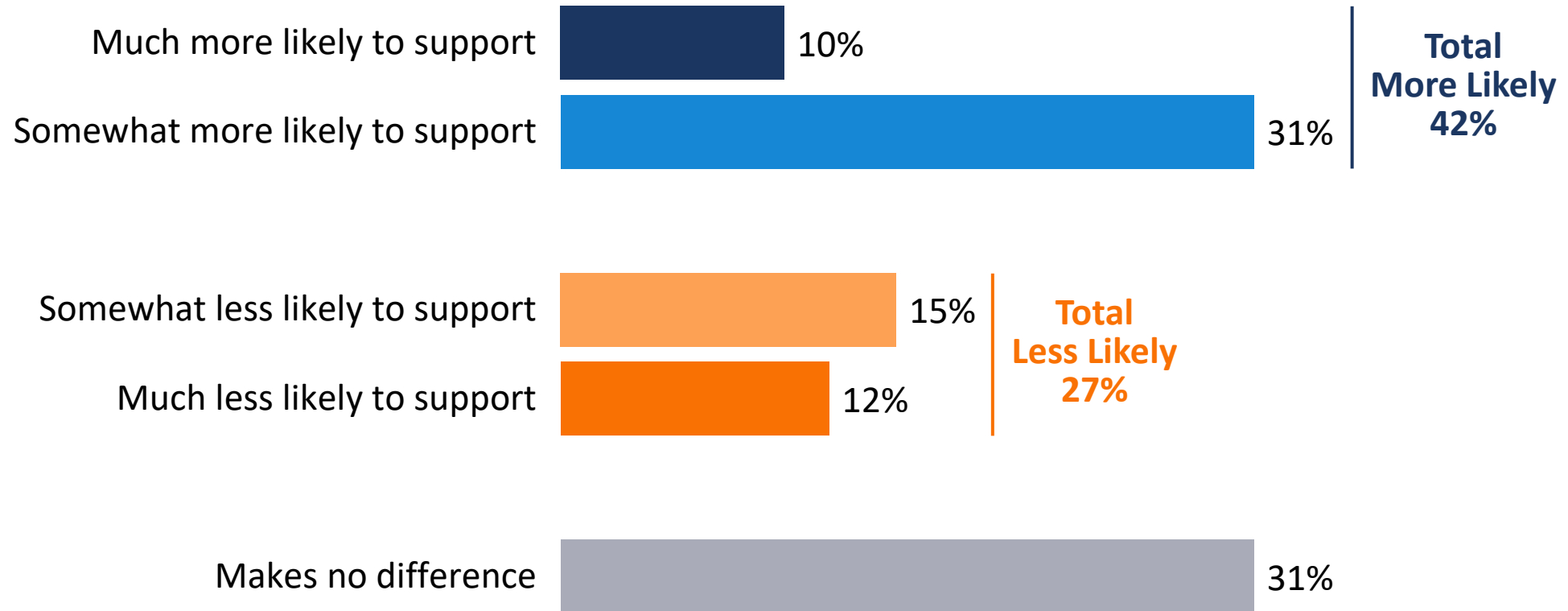
Regardless of inflation, that's a lot of money that could go unchecked.

\$50k is substantial and one person deciding could lead to corruption.

Presenting a potential settlement amount consistent with contracting authority was generally viewed favorably.

City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment

Would you be more likely or less likely to support this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment if it resulted in the City Manager having settlement authority up to \$250,000 — matching their contracting signing authority — without Council approval, or would it make no difference to you?



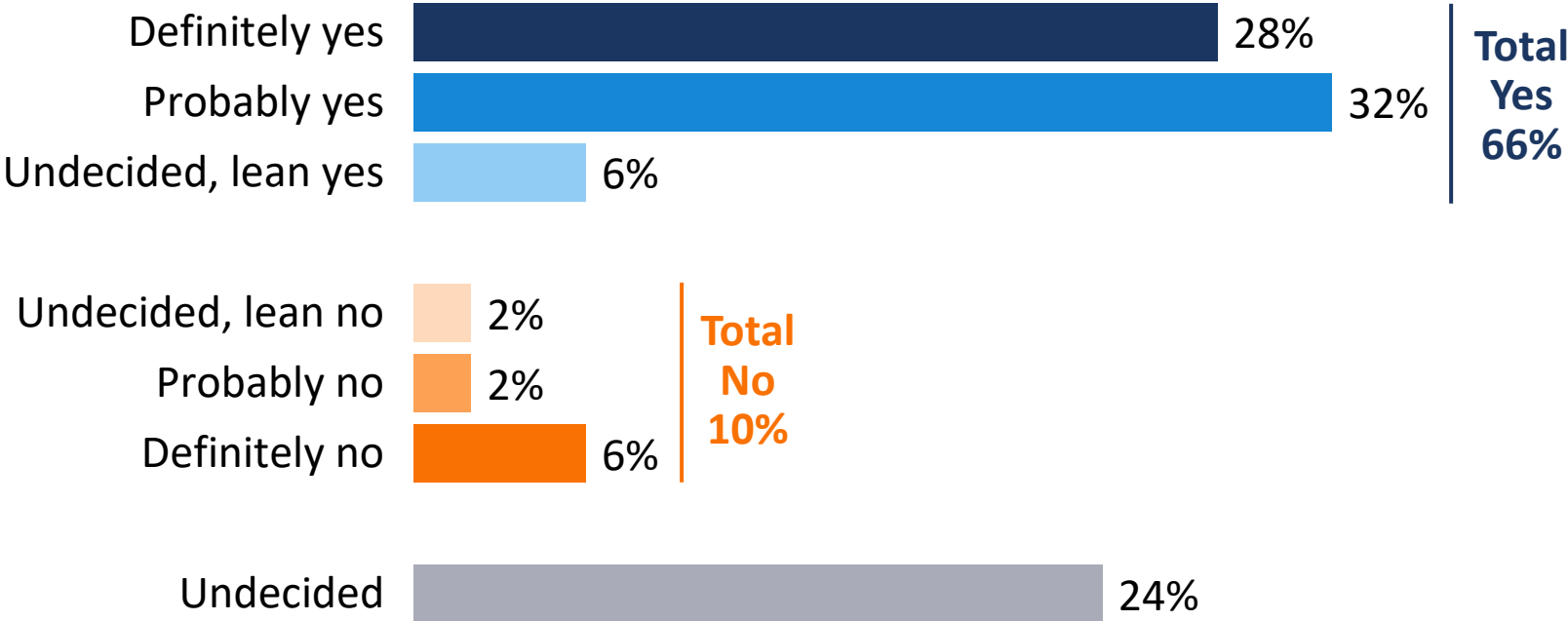


Amendment #3: City Council Vacancies

Two-thirds of voters expressed initial support for an amendment filling Council vacancies in November of even years.

City Council Vacancies Amendment

The **FIRST/NEXT** Sunnyvale Charter Amendment would establish that residents appointed to fill a City Council vacancy serve until the next general municipal election held in November of even-numbered years.



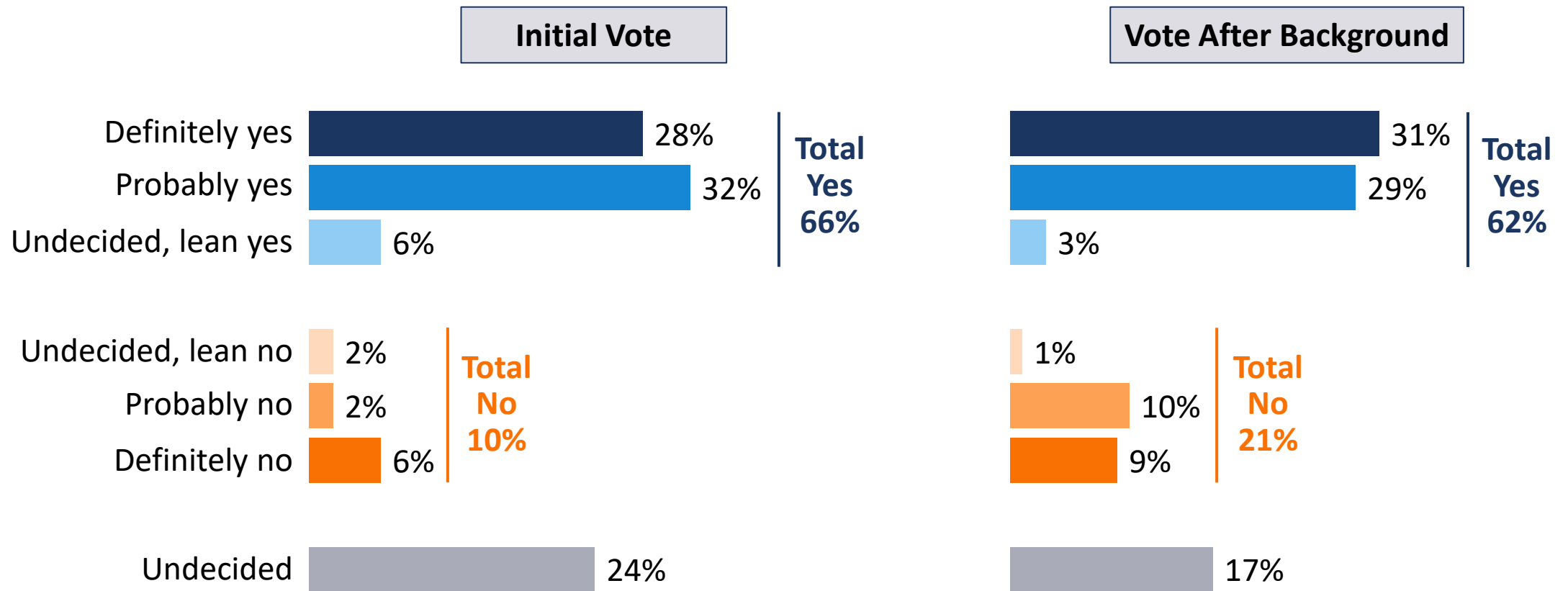
Potential Charter Amendment Explanation

City Council Vacancies Amendment

Right now, when someone is appointed to a vacancy on the City Council, the Charter requires the City to hold an election to fill the remainder of that vacated seat's term at the next statewide election. This election could be a primary election in March or June of an even-year, a general election in November of an even-year, or a special statewide election. In some cases, this requirement could lead to two elections for the same seat in a single year.

Opposition increased slightly after an explanation, though more than three in five continued to indicate they would vote yes.

City Council Vacancies Amendment



Q13. Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

Q14. Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment establishing that residents appointed to fill a City Council vacancy serve until the next general municipal election held in November of even-numbered years?

Pro and Con Arguments for the Potential Charter Amendment

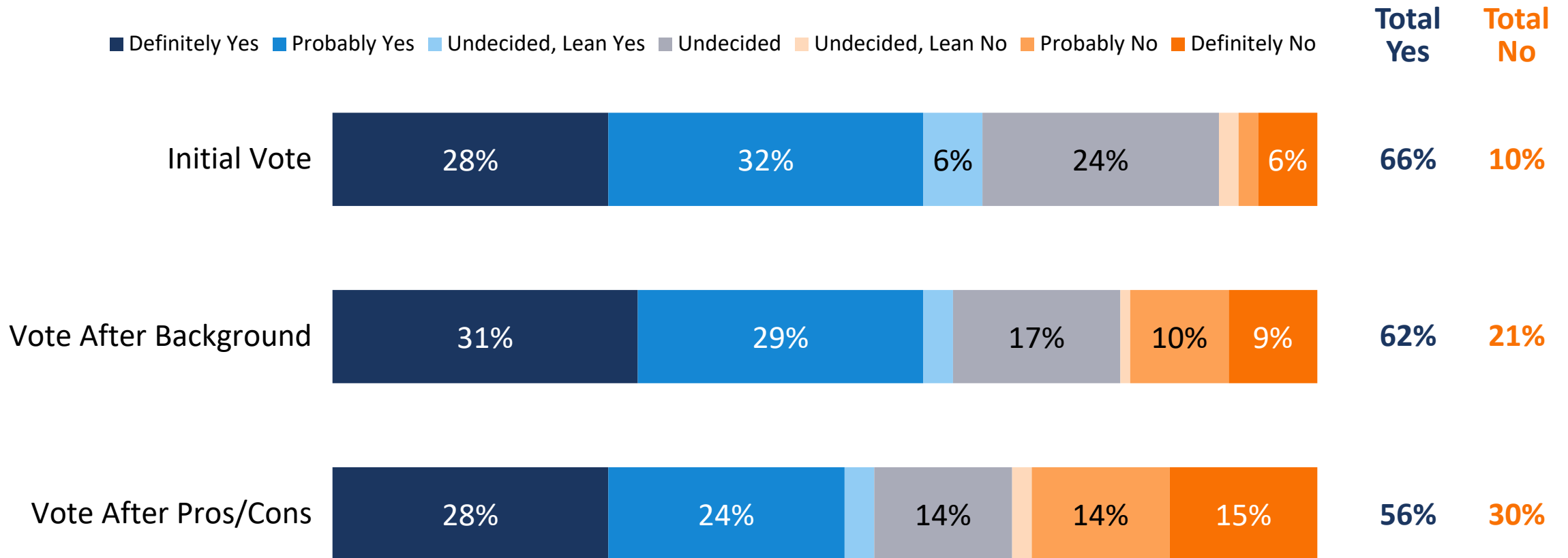
City Council Vacancies Amendment

Supporters say the current system for filling City Council vacancies can be expensive, and disruptive to City Council functions. In some cases, it could require two elections for the same seat in one year — costing the City more money and forcing candidates to run two campaigns. It could also result in several different people holding the same seat within a single year. This proposed change to fill vacancies in even-year November elections, when the City normally elects city councilmembers, would simplify the process and reduce costs for the City and candidates.

Opponents say waiting until November of even years to hold elections for City Council vacancies means that unelected officials could be voting on major issues facing the City for nearly two years before voters get a say in who represents them. Given how many attacks we're facing on democracy as a nation, we should be looking for ways to be more democratic and not less democratic. And because voters approved the current system for filling City Council vacancies less than 10 years ago, we do not need to change the current system.

Support decreased—and opposition increased—after pro and con arguments, though a majority would still vote yes.

City Council Vacancies Amendment



Q13. Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

Q14. Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment establishing that residents appointed to fill a City Council vacancy serve until the next general municipal election held in November of even-numbered years?

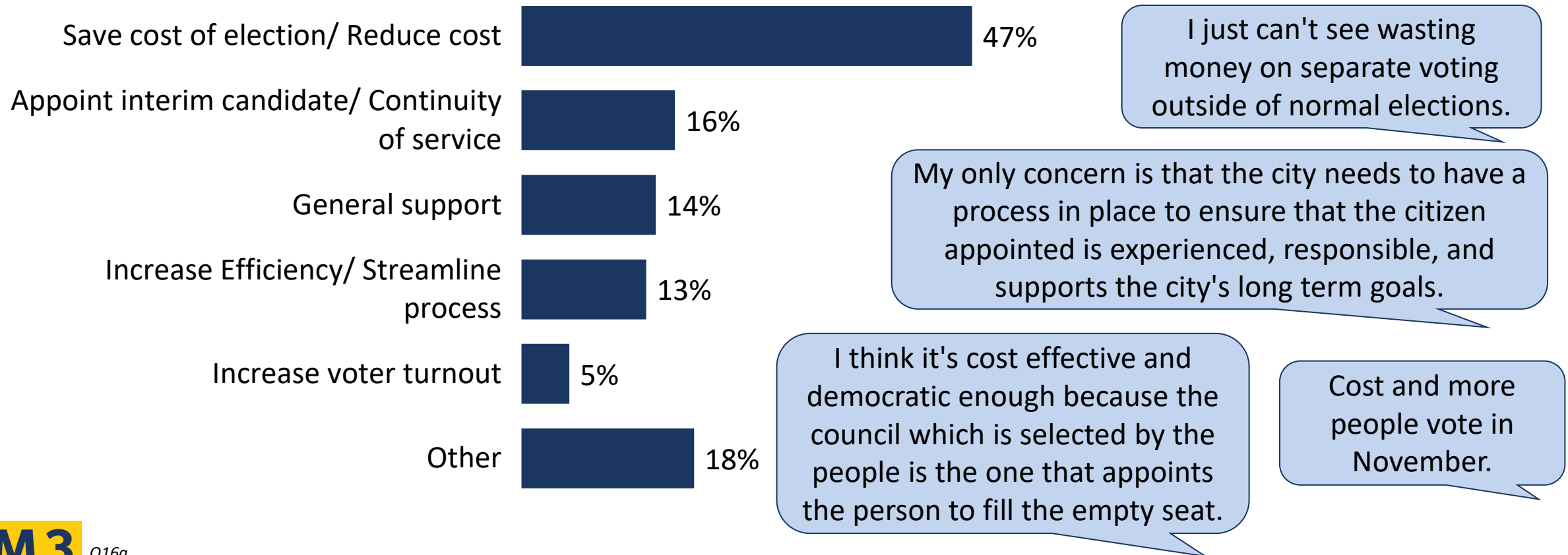
Q15. Taking into account these statements from supporters and opponents, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment establishing that residents appointed to fill a City Council vacancy serve until the next general municipal election held in November of even-numbered years?

The primary rationale for support was reducing costs.

City Council Vacancies Amendment

In a few words of your own, why would you vote YES on this measure?

(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation; Asked of Yes Voters Only)

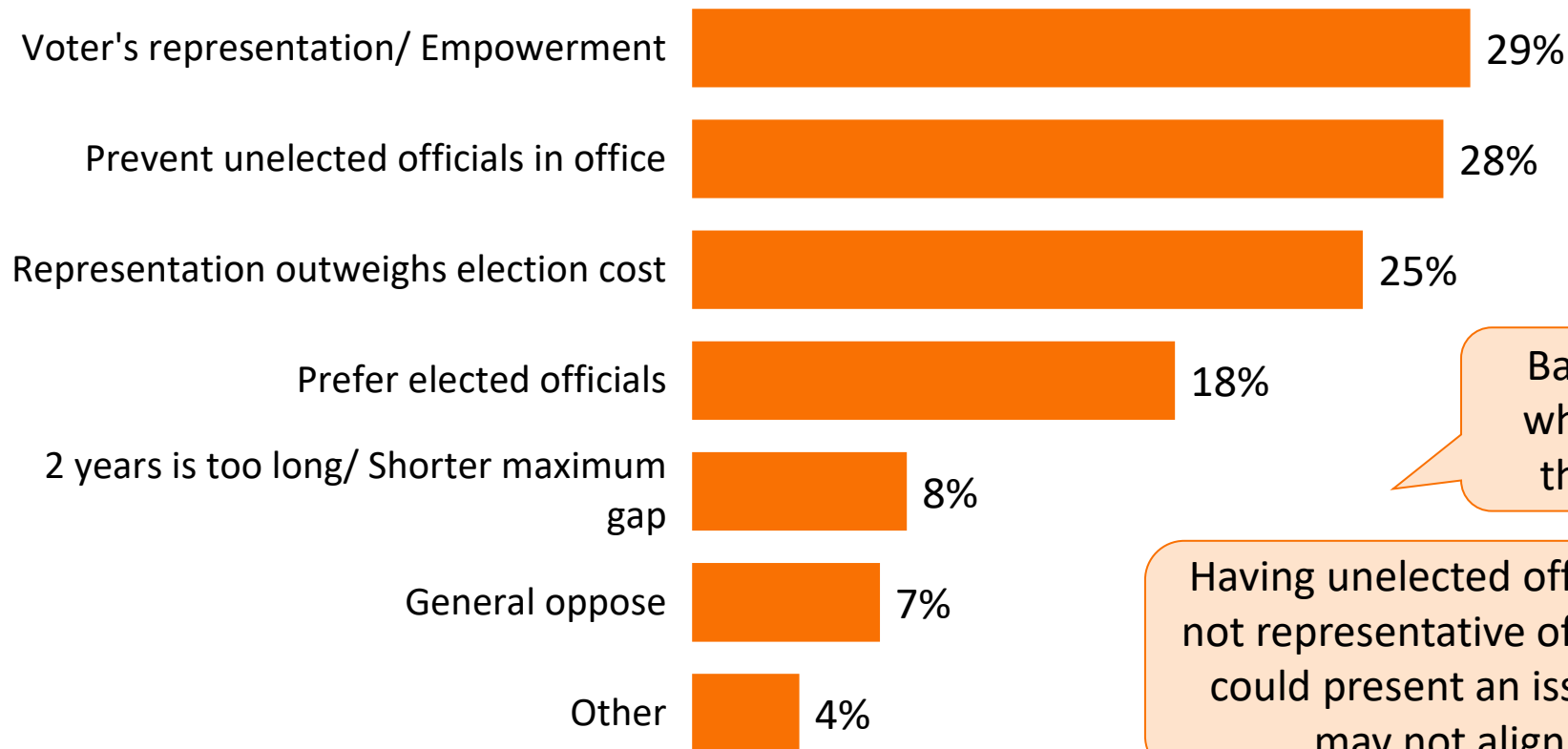


While opposition rationales varied, there appeared to be a theme of concern about representation.

City Council Vacancies Amendment

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

(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation; Asked of No Voters Only)



Elections should not wait just to save money.

I do not want unelected officials making decisions.

Basically we have no say on who gets appointed. One of the mayor's main donors?

Having unelected officials in office for a prolonged time is not representative of how the residents voted. As stated it could present an issue when policy is being voted on. It may not align with how the residents voted.

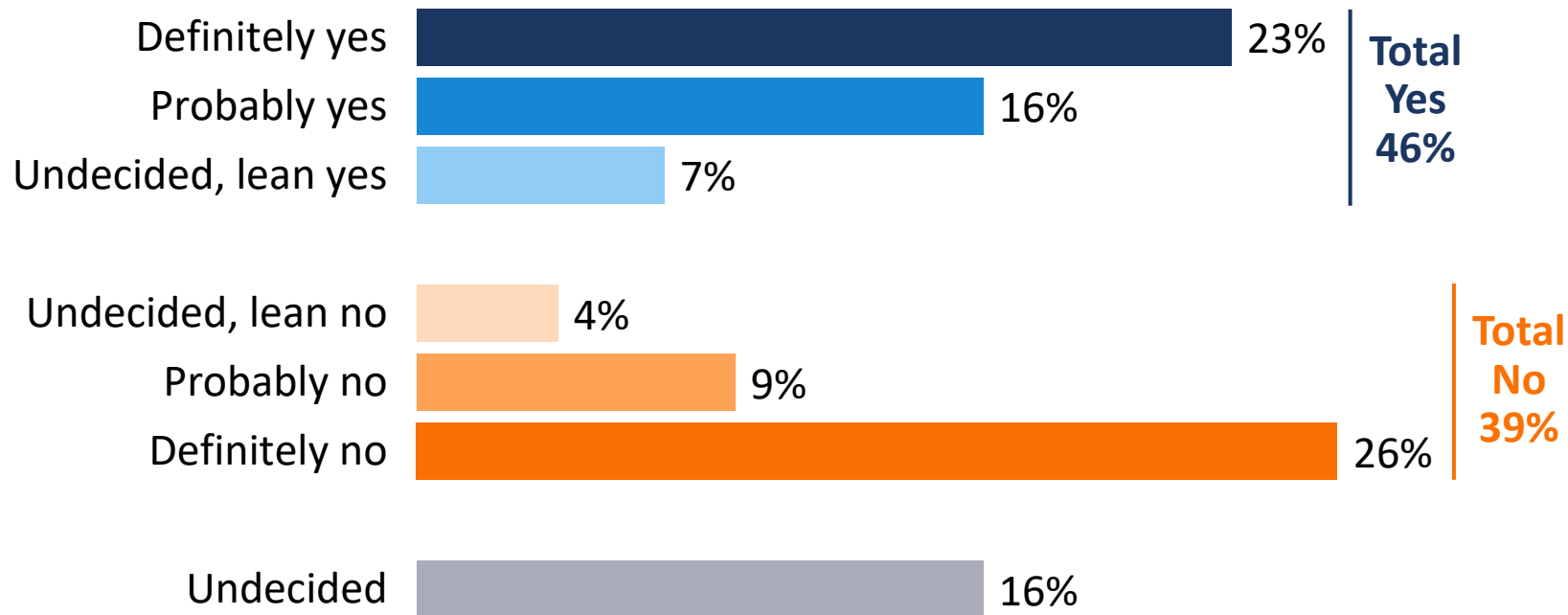


Amendment #4: Council/Mayor Compensation

A plurality expressed support for increasing the compensation of Sunnyvale's elected officials.

Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment

The **FIRST/NEXT** Sunnyvale Charter Amendment would increase salaries to **(SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$6,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$5,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$4,000)** per month for city councilmembers and **(SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$9,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$7,500) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$6,000)** per month for the mayor.



Respondents were only asked about one level of increases, though for the next several slides those responses are combined for reporting purposes.

Differences in the levels are broken out later in this presentation

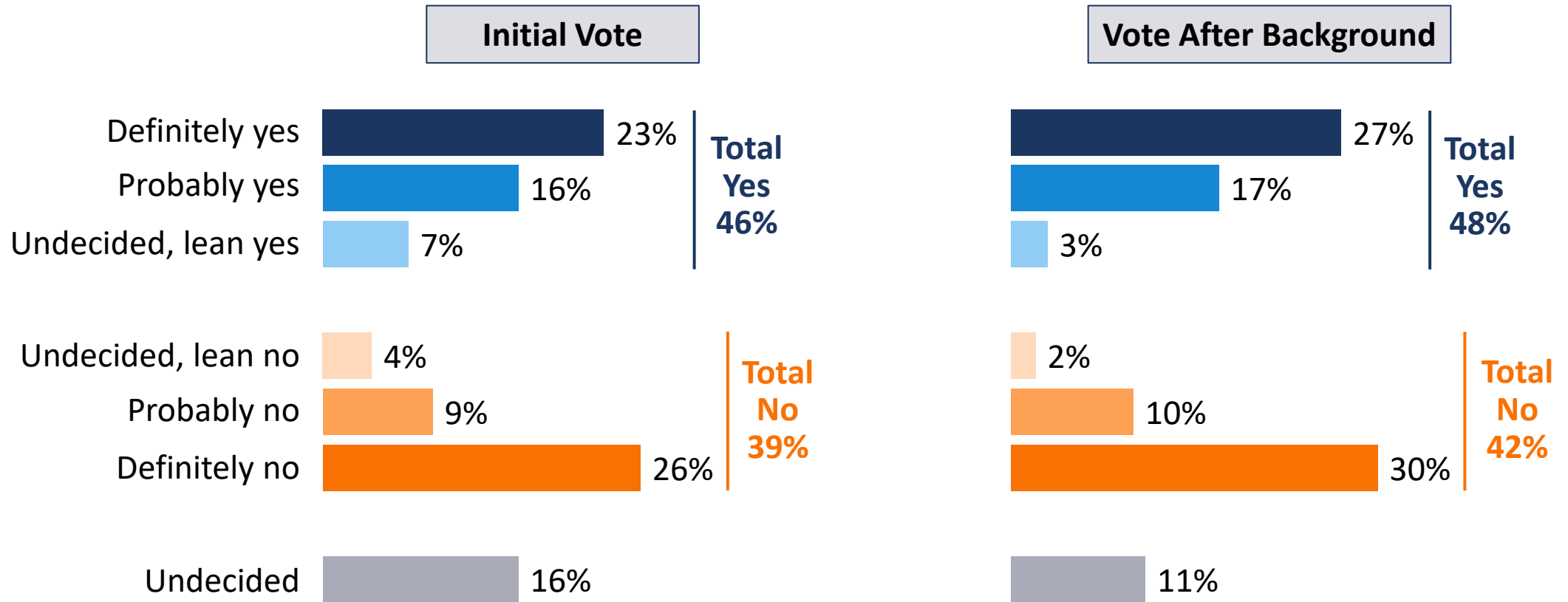
Potential Charter Amendment Explanation

Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment

Starting in 2012, voters set monthly salaries for city councilmembers at \$2,089 and for the mayor at \$2,785, both annually adjusted to account for inflation by no more than five percent. Today, those monthly salaries are \$3,100 for city councilmembers and \$4,238 for the mayor.

A short explanation changed opinions little.

Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment



Q17 (Total). Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

Q18 (Total). Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment increasing salaries to (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$6,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$5,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$4,000) per month for city councilmembers and (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$9,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$7,500) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$6,000) per month for the mayor?

Pro and Con Arguments for the Potential Charter Amendment

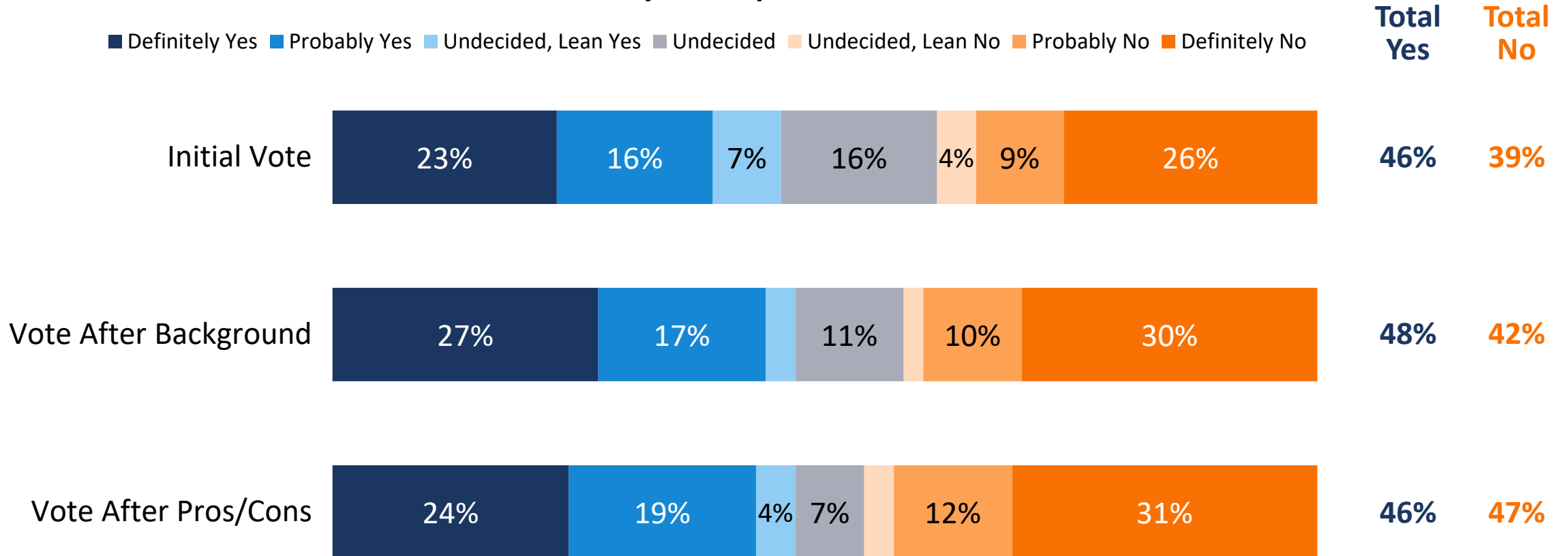
Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment

Supporters say that Sunnyvale faces a broad range of complex issues that require councilmembers to work at least 20 hours per week, and more for the mayor. Right now, councilmembers are paid about \$38,000 per year and the mayor is paid about \$51,000 per year, so most will need to have other jobs or sources of income to afford living in Sunnyvale. They say this makes it hard for people to run for elected office in Sunnyvale and challenging to attract candidates. This Amendment would help the City attract a broader range of candidates and pay them fairly for the time they spend serving Sunnyvale.

Opponents say that increasing the annual salaries for councilmembers to **(SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$72,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$60,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$48,000)** and for the mayor to **(SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$108,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$90,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$72,000)** is outrageous for part-time positions, especially in a time like this when the City is facing budget constraints. This amendment would increase the pay our councilmembers and mayors receive by tens of thousands of dollars — up to levels that are significantly higher than those in neighboring cities. Currently, Sunnyvale’s elected officials are already among the highest paid in Santa Clara County on top of the generous healthcare and retirement benefits they already receive. Serving as an elected official in Sunnyvale is an honor and a privilege, and we shouldn’t be encouraging people to become career politicians.

After pro and con arguments, voters were evenly divided, with more intensity among no voters.

Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment



Q17 (Total). Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

Q18 (Total). Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment increasing salaries to (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$6,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$5,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$4,000) per month for city councilmembers and (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$9,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$7,500) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$6,000) per month for the mayor?

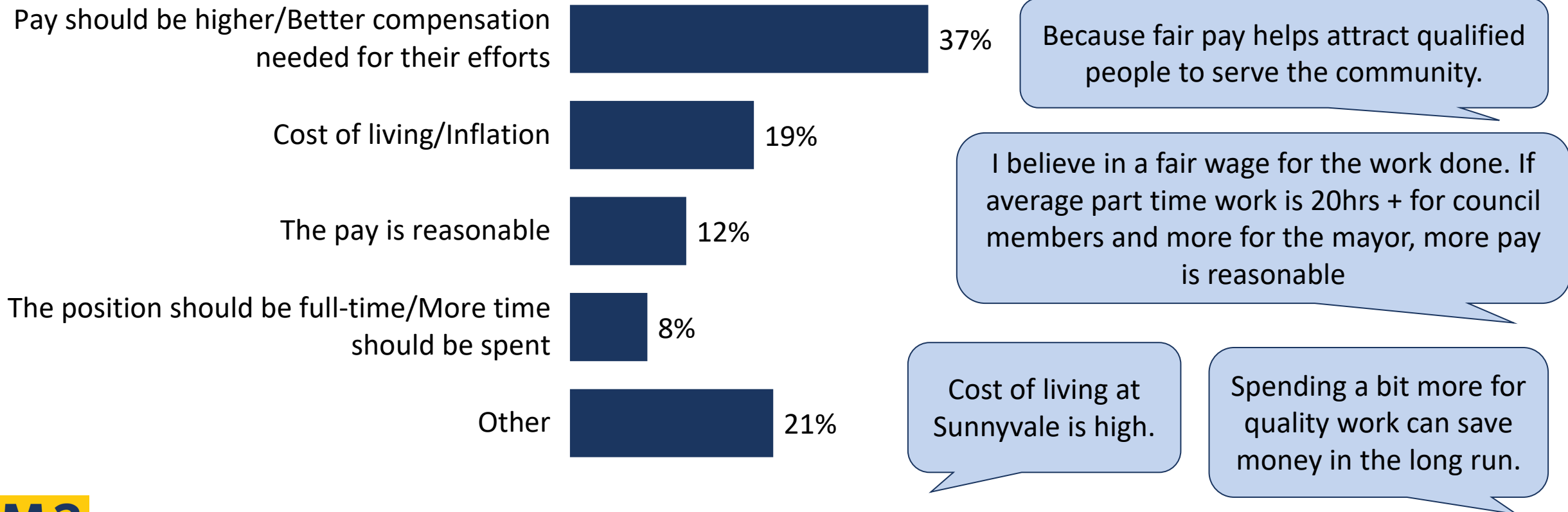
Q19 (Total). Taking into account these statements from supporters and opponents, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment increasing salaries to (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$6,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$5,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$4,000) per month for city councilmembers and (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$9,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$7,500) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$6,000) per month for the mayor?

Supporters cited a need to pay elected officials more for the time they devote to public service.

Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment

In a few words of your own, why would you vote YES on this measure?

(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation; Asked of Yes Voters Only)

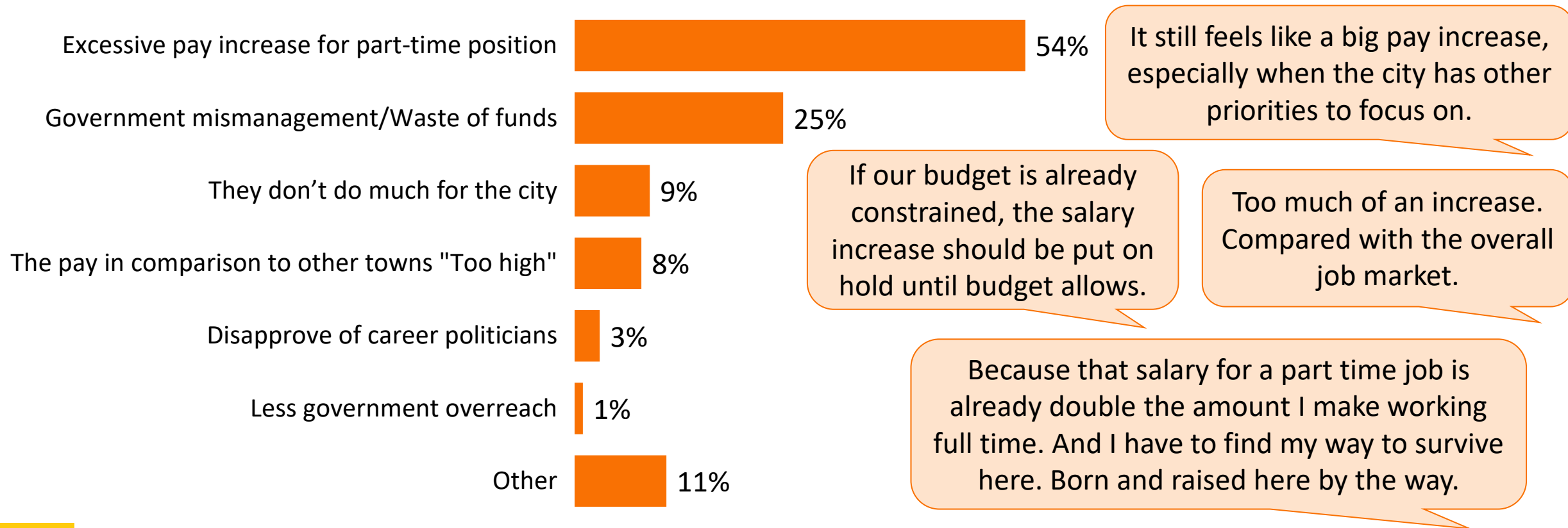


Opponents felt the proposed increase was excessive.

Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment

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

(Open-ended; Asked When Amendment First in Rotation; Asked of No Voters Only)



Reactions to the different increase amounts were somewhat minimal.

(MOE ±6.9%)

Amount	Total Yes		
	Initial Vote	Vote After Background	Vote After Pros/Cons
Council: \$6,000/Mayor: \$9,000 Per Month	43%	47%	44%
Council: \$5,000/Mayor: \$7,500 Per Month	48%	46%	51%
Council: \$4,000/\$6,000 Per Month	45%	50%	44%

Q17 (Split A, B & C). Do you think you would vote yes or no on this Sunnyvale Charter Amendment?

Q18 (Split A, B & C). Taking into account this background information, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment increasing salaries to (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$6,000)

(SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$5,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$4,000) per month for city councilmembers and (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$9,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$7,500) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$6,000) per month for the mayor?

Q19 (Split A, B & C). Taking into account these statements from supporters and opponents, do you think you would vote yes or no on a Sunnyvale Charter Amendment increasing salaries to (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$6,000)

(SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$5,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$4,000) per month for city councilmembers and (SPLIT SAMPLE A: \$9,000) (SPLIT SAMPLE B: \$7,500) (SPLIT SAMPLE C: \$6,000) per month for the mayor?



Conclusions

Majorities expressed support for three of the four potential amendments after pros and cons; the compensation amendment fell just short of 50%.

Vote	Total Yes			
	Public Works Contracting Amendment	City Manager Claims Settlement Authority Amendment	City Council Vacancies Amendment	Council/Mayor Compensation Amendment
Initial Vote	50%	55%	66%	46%
Vote After Background	64%	52%	62%	48%
Vote After Pros/Cons	62%	57%	56%	46%

Conclusions

- Voters were generally receptive to three of the four potential Charter Amendments.
 - The public works contracting amendment would require the most explanation.
 - Voters are generally fine changing the settlement claims authority.
 - Support for amending how City Council vacancies are filled started at the highest level of support, but declined after an exchange of pros and cons.
- Voters are more divided on an amendment increasing the compensation of the Mayor and City Council.
 - Though a plurality of voters would support this amendment in concept and after a brief explanation but consistently fell below 50%.
 - Opposition reaches the same levels of support after pros and cons.
 - There doesn't appear to be significantly different reactions to varying levels of compensation increase.



Curt Below

Curt@FM3research.com

Suzanne Brewster

Suzanne@FM3research.com

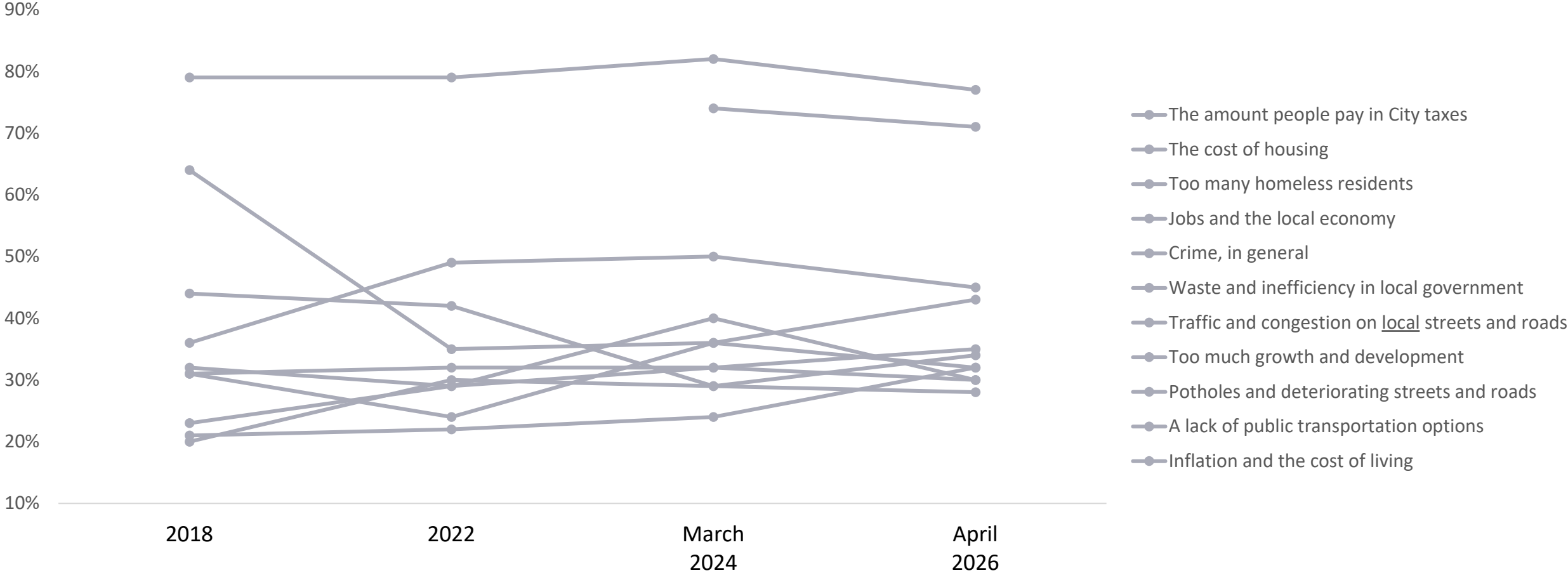


Appendix

Tracking Problems Facing Sunnyvale

We have several data points to track concerns about these issues going back to 2018...

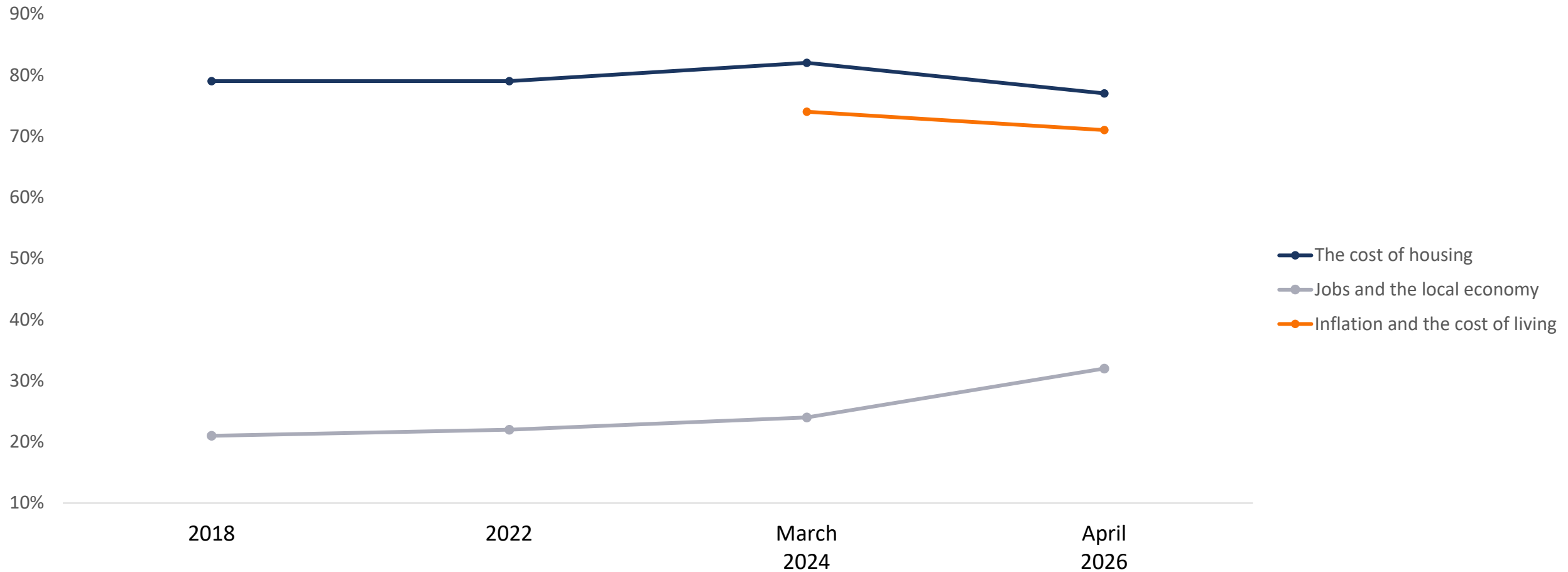
(Total Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



Q3. Next, please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems facing Sunnyvale. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Sunnyvale.

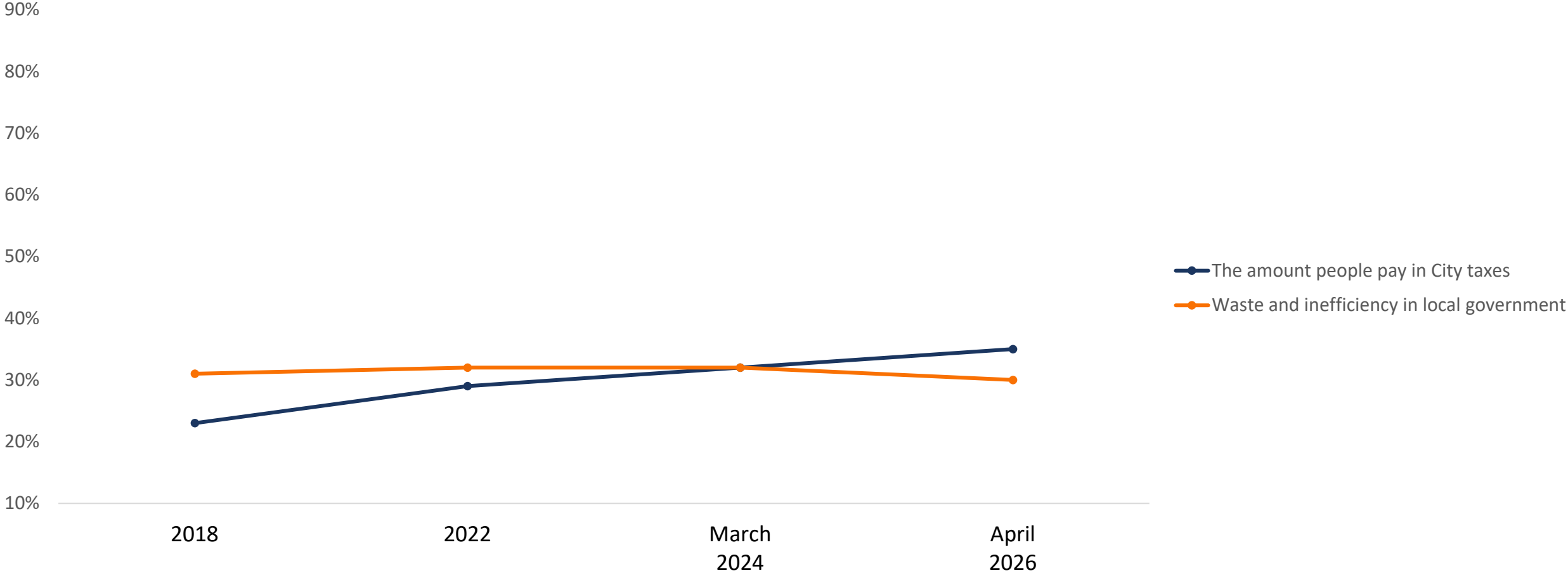
Cost of living concerns have been significantly high; the economy is still a low-level—but increasing—concern.

(Total Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



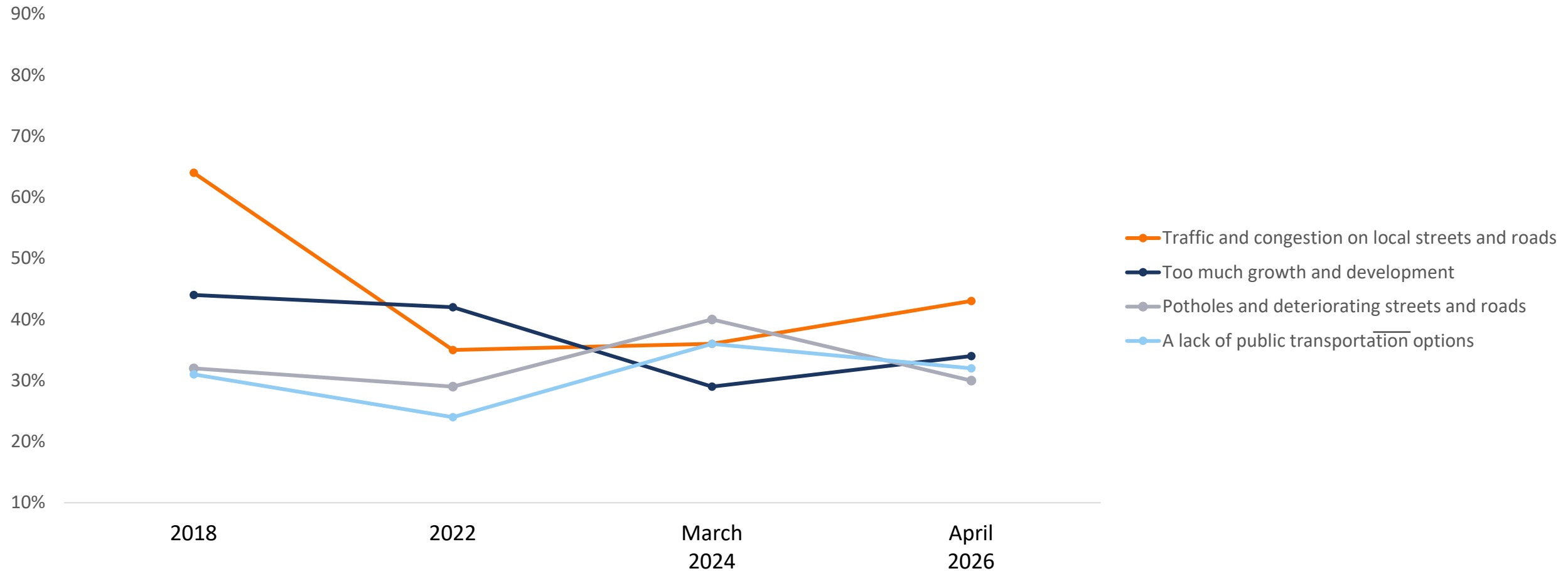
Concerns about local government have held steady, though city taxes concerns are trending up.

(Total Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



Concerns about traffic are still below pre-pandemic levels, while other transportation and growth concerns are relatively steady.

(Total Extremely/Very Serious Problem)



Concerns about crime and the number of homeless residents have held steady over the years.

(Total Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

