



Staff Report 23-348



**Survey of Likely November 2024 Voters
Conducted for AC Transit
Summary Report for AC Transit Board Retreat
August 30, 2023**

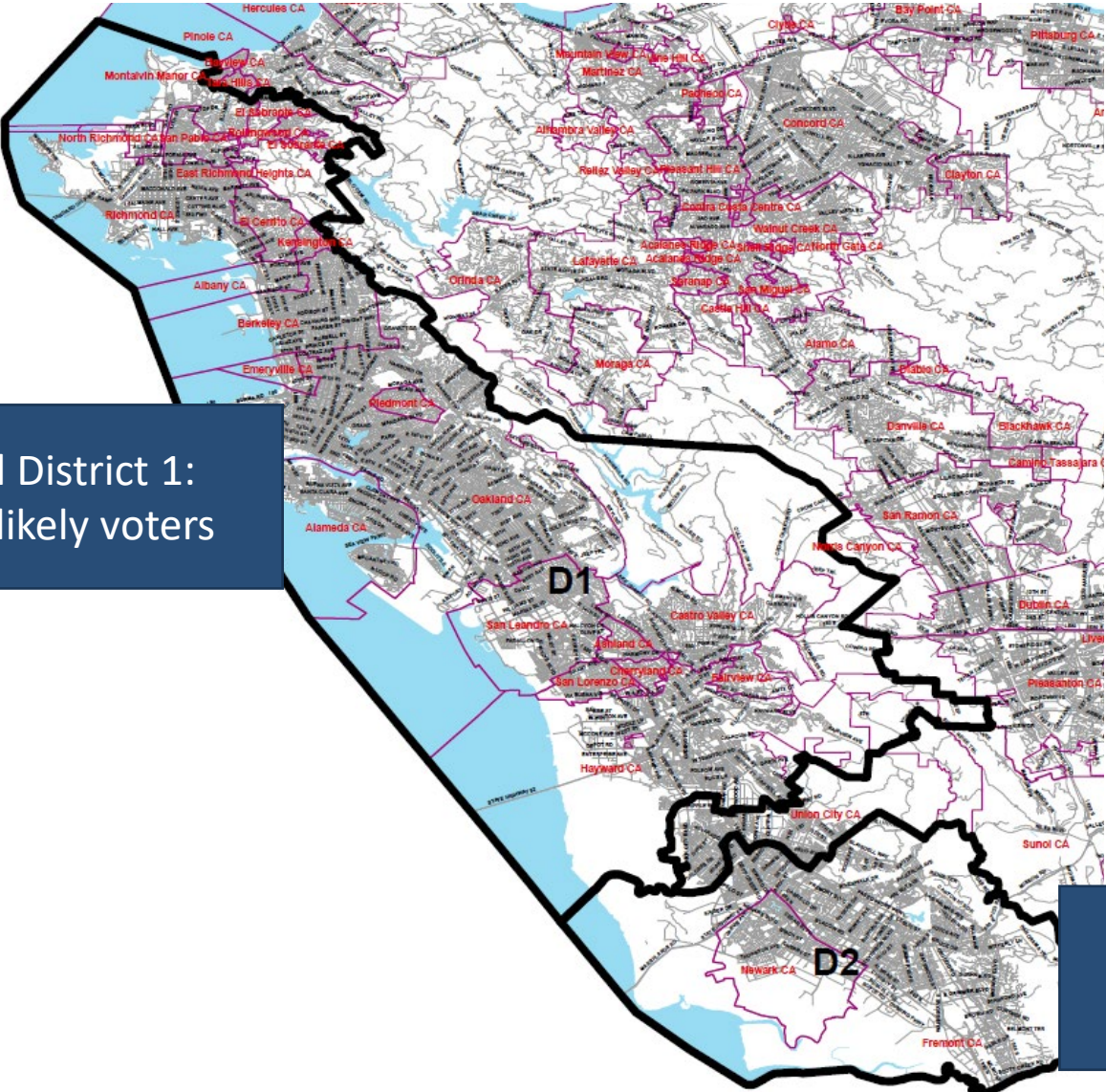
Survey Methodology

- ▶ Survey of likely November 2024 voters in the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District
 - Voted in at least one of the last three statewide elections (Primary 2022, Special 2021, General 2020), or new registrant.
- ▶ Conducted July 17-24, 2023
- ▶ Mixed mode survey using a combination of telephone and online interviews, in English, Chinese, and Spanish
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with prior surveys conducted for the District
- ▶ Split sample design used to measure independent support for two different parcel tax amounts (\$8 or \$6 per month)

	Entire Sample <i>margin of error</i>	\$8/month ballot question <i>margin of error</i>	\$6/month ballot question <i>margin of error</i>
Districtwide	800 interviews <i>± 3.5 pct pts</i>	400 interviews <i>± 4.9 pct pts</i>	400 interviews <i>± 4.9 pct pts</i>
Special District 1	600 interviews <i>± 4.0 pct pts</i>	300 interviews <i>± 5.7 pct pts</i>	300 interviews <i>± 5.7 pct pts</i>
Special District 2	200 interviews <i>± 6.9 pct pts</i>	100 interviews <i>± 9.8 pct pts</i>	100 interviews <i>± 9.8 pct pts</i>

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

Special Transit Service Districts



Special District 1:
83% of likely voters

Special District 2:
17% of likely voters

Key Findings

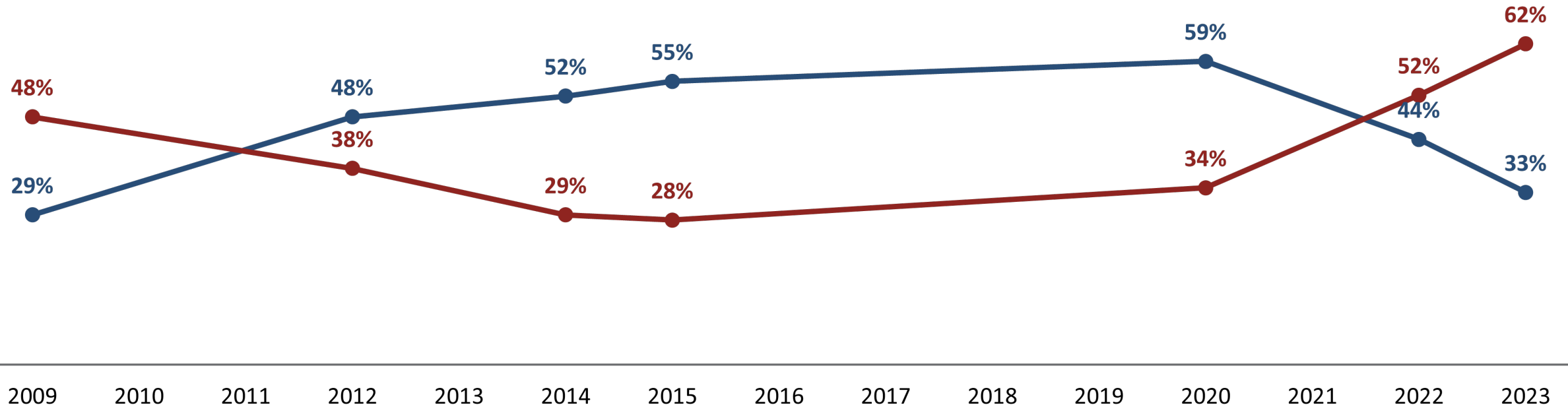
- ▶ Support for a parcel tax measure for AC Transit is currently **lower than the required two-thirds threshold (67%) needed to pass**.
 - A measure for \$6 per month is supported by 58% of AC Transit District likely voters, and a measure for \$8 per month garners support from 54% of likely voters.
- ▶ Providing additional information boosts support by only a few points for each measure, but messaging in opposition is effective at dropping support to below initial levels, suggesting that a **revenue measure for AC Transit would be extremely difficult to pass in 2024**.
- ▶ While District voters strongly believe **high-quality public transit is important for everyone** in the community, there is a significant amount of **sensitivity to tax increases**.
- ▶ **Service for seniors/people with disabilities, improving safety, and keeping fares reasonable** are all top priorities for District voters.
- ▶ There's also strong interest in requiring **independent oversight** in a potential revenue measure to ensure the money can only be used to improve transit.

Right Direction/Wrong Track

Six in ten voters in the District feel the Bay Area is going in the wrong direction, a decline since the 2022 survey.

Do you feel that things in the Bay Area are generally going in the right direction or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

● Right Direction ● Wrong Track



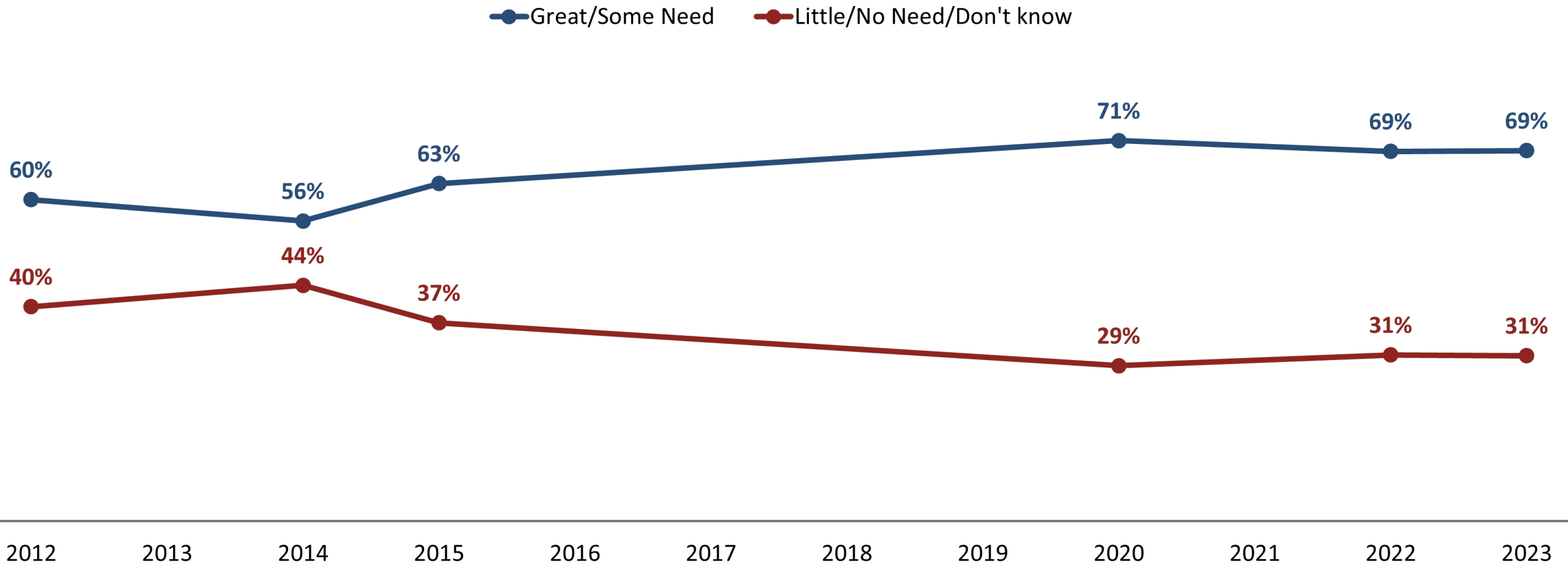
Q3. Do you feel that things in the Bay Area are generally going in the right direction or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

Prior data from earlier voter surveys of similar methodology, sample size, and margin of error.

Perceived Need for Funding

Seven in ten likely voters in the District feel you have at least some need for additional funding.

Would you say that AC Transit has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding?



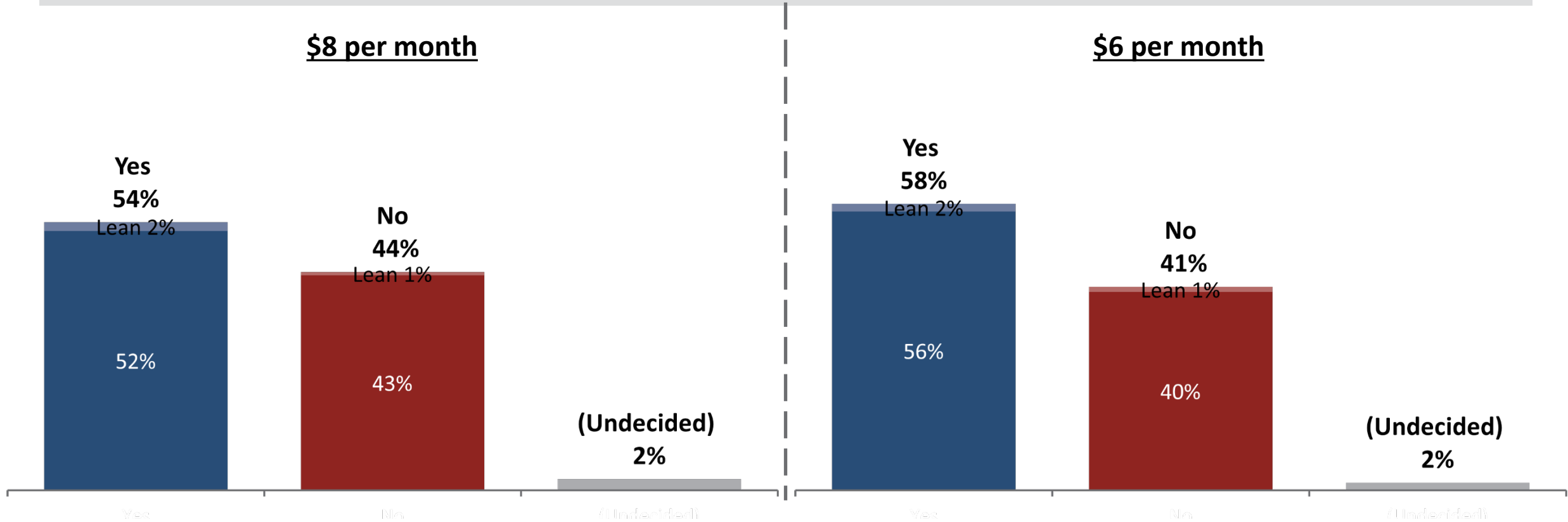
Q4. As you may know, you live in the AC Transit Service area. AC Transit runs the public bus system in your area. Would you say that AC Transit has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding?

Prior data from earlier voter surveys of similar methodology, sample size, and margin of error.

Potential Revenue Measure – Initial Vote

Support for a revenue measure is below the two-thirds threshold needed for passage; the difference between support for the higher or lower amount tested is not statistically significant.

To prevent drastic cuts and preserve essential local public transportation services, including those for youth, commuters, seniors, and people with disabilities, shall the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, or AC Transit, be authorized to levy a tax of [**\$8 / \$6**] per parcel, per month, for the next 6 years, raising [**\$40 / \$30**] million annually, with independent oversight and all money spent locally?



Q5. In November 2024, there may be a measure on the ballot that reads as follows... If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

Who Transit Benefits

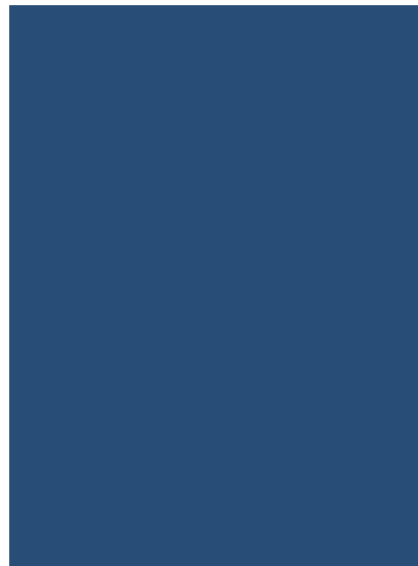
Seven in ten feel high-quality bus service benefits everyone, even non-riders.

Having high-quality, reliable bus service in this area benefits everyone, even people who don't ride it.

Having high-quality, reliable bus service in this area really only benefits those who ride it.

Both/Neither/Don't Know

72%



27%

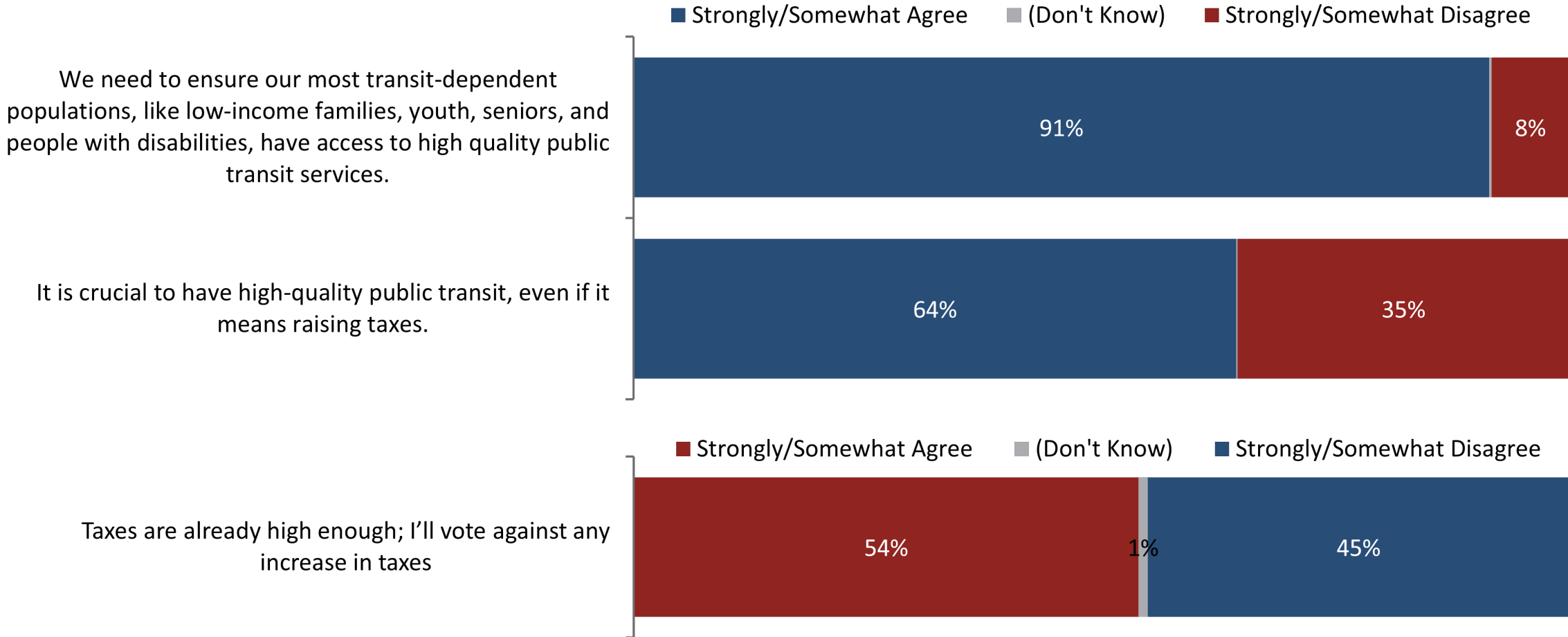


1%



Transit and Tax Attitudes

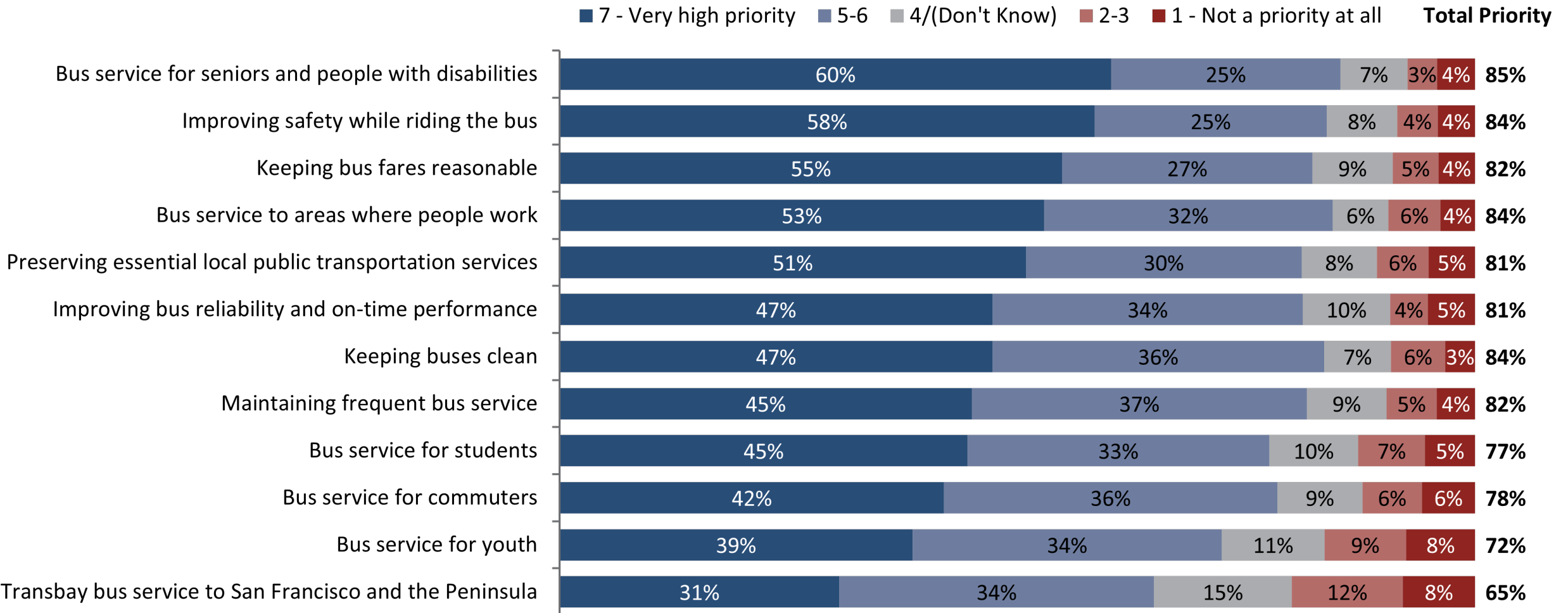
Just under two-thirds of respondents feel high-quality public transit is worth a tax increase, and more than half are generally inclined to oppose any increase in taxes.



Q18-20. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Measure Priorities

Preserving service for all riders, especially seniors and people with disabilities, improving safety, and keeping fares reasonable are top priorities for voters.

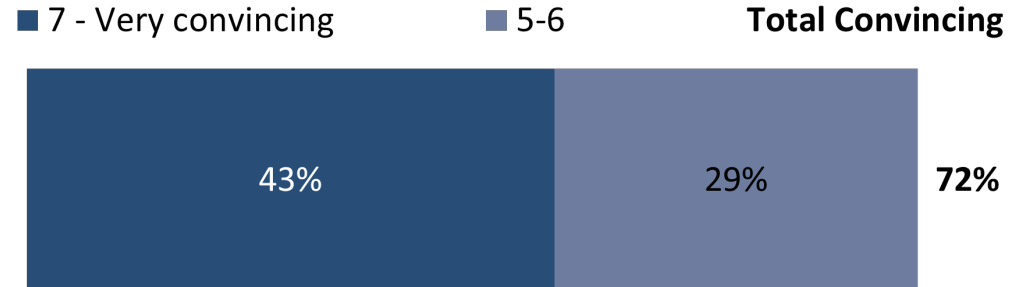


Q6-17. Next, I'm going to read you a list of things that an AC Transit revenue measure could pay for. After each one, please tell me how high of a priority that item should be.

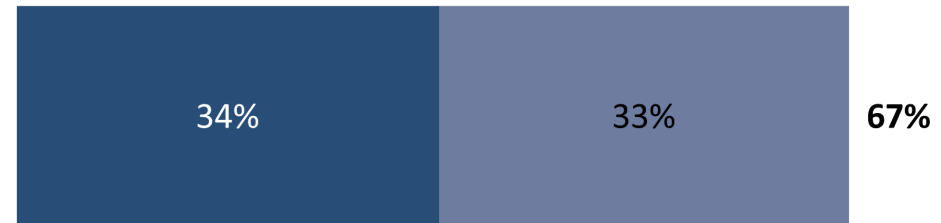
Top Support Messages

Preventing cuts to lifeline services, keeping fares reasonable, and describing the oversight requirements are all compelling pieces of information about a measure.

Many of our most vulnerable populations, including seniors, low-income residents, and people with disabilities, rely on AC Transit every day to get groceries, visit the doctor, and get to work and school. Without this measure, **AC Transit may be forced to make cuts to these critical lifeline transit services** for people that don't have other ways to get around.



This measure will allow AC Transit to **keep fares reasonable** for all riders, including seniors, youth, commuters, and people with disabilities.



This measure **requires independent oversight** to ensure the money continues to be used only to preserve and improve transportation services in our local communities and cannot be taken by the state.



Q22-30. Next, I'm going to read you some statements from people who support the measure for AC Transit. After each statement, please tell me how convincing it is as a reason to vote for the measure.

Top Opposition Messages

The most effective messaging against a measure focuses on questions around the mechanism, not the value of supporting public transit.

■ 7 - Very convincing ■ 5-6 Total Convincing

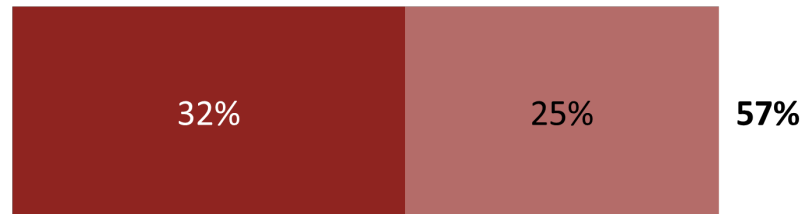
They say this measure would only be in place for six years, but what happens after that? This is raising our taxes just to put a band-aid on their broken budget, and in six years they will have to come back to ask for more. We should look for a long-term solution that doesn't punish taxpayers for AC Transit's budget failures.



We are already paying \$96 a year for AC Transit, and now they want to add another tax for another **[\$96 /\$72]** a year on top of that. **[\$192 / \$168]** a year is just too much.



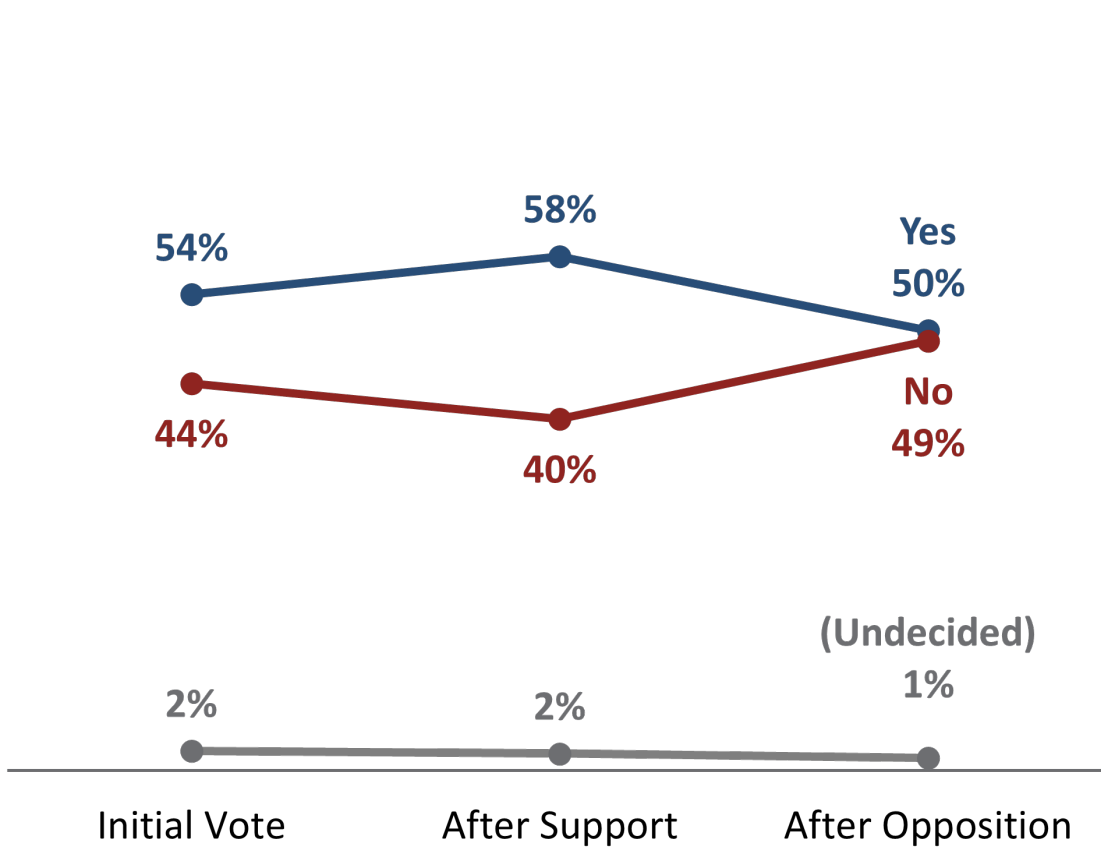
Our taxes are already high in the Bay Area and many families are also struggling with day-to-day expenses thanks to skyrocketing inflation. We need to tackle more important issues like affordable housing and homelessness before we raise taxes for AC Transit.



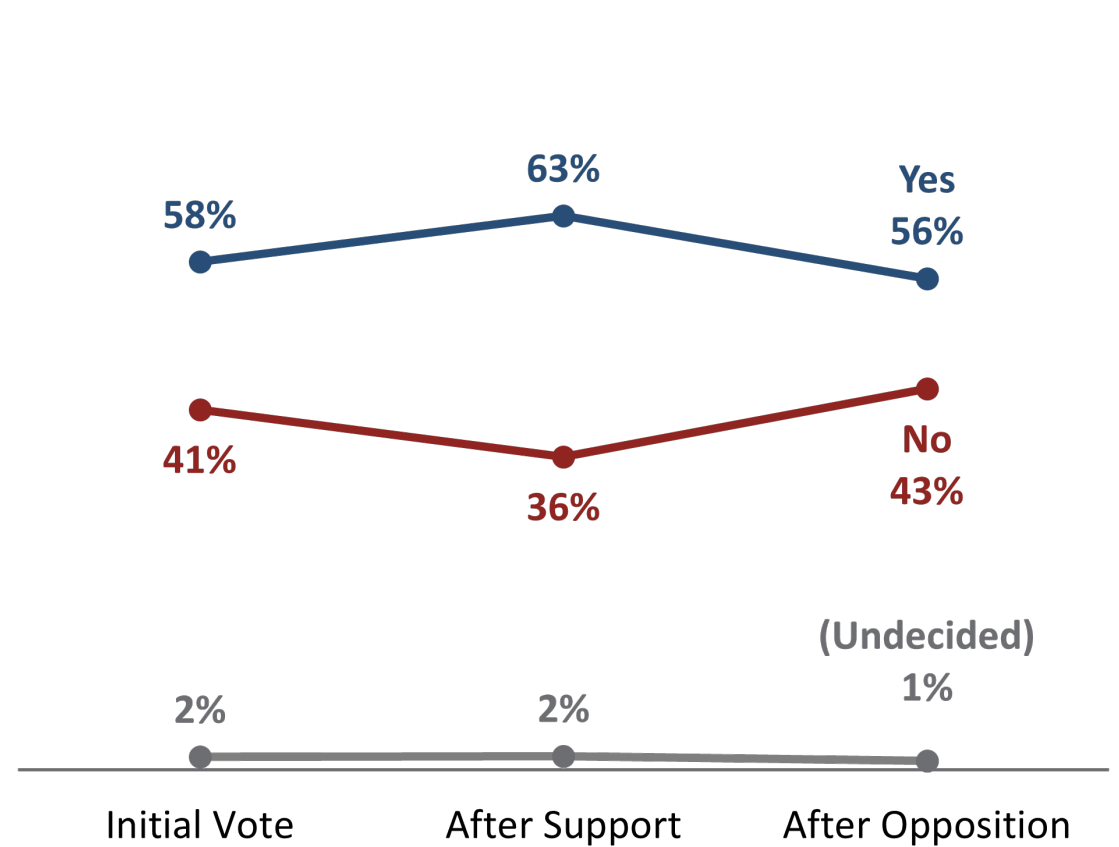
Vote Progression

While providing information about a measure does boost support for a measure, opposition messaging is even more effective at undermining measure support.

\$8 per month



\$6 per month



Q5/31/39. Now, given everything you've heard, I'd like to read you the measure again... If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?



Special Transit Service Districts

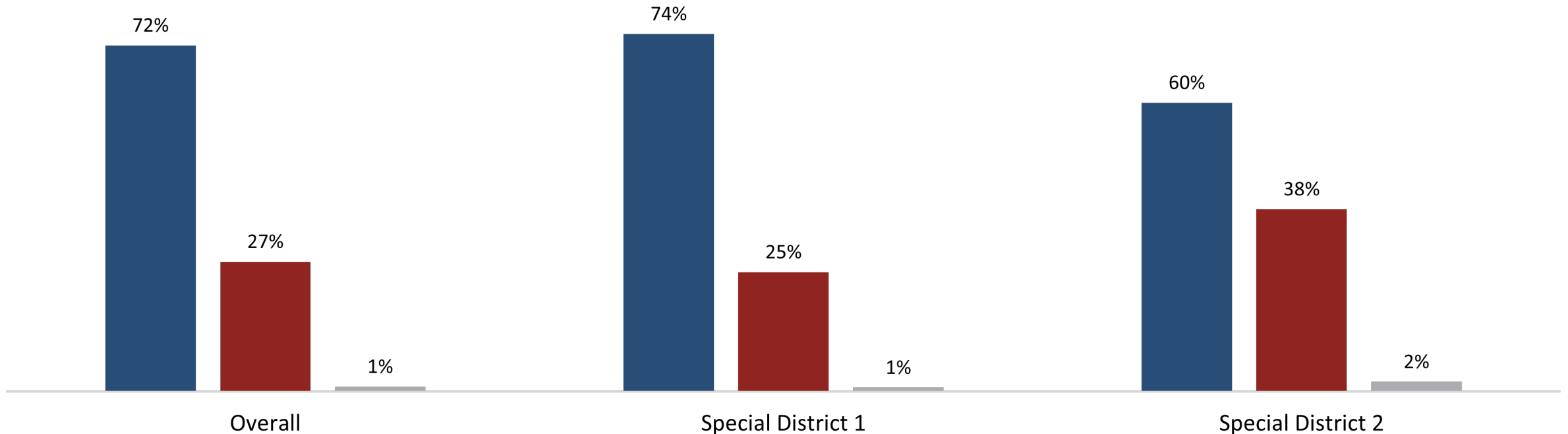
Who Transit Benefits by District

Voters in Special District 2 are more likely to agree that transit only benefits those who use it.

Having high-quality, reliable bus service in this area benefits everyone, even people who don't ride it.

Having high-quality, reliable bus service in this area really only benefits those who ride it.

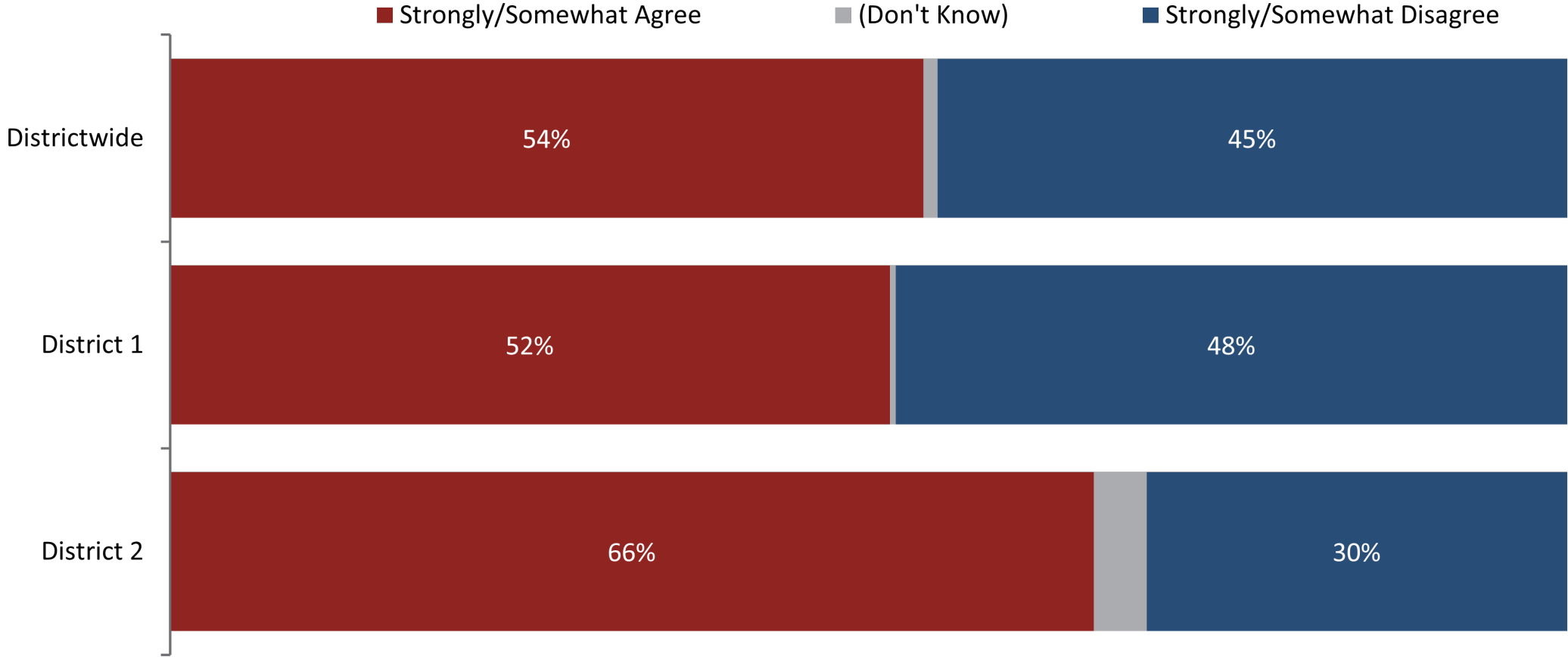
Both/Neither/Don't Know



Tax Attitude by District

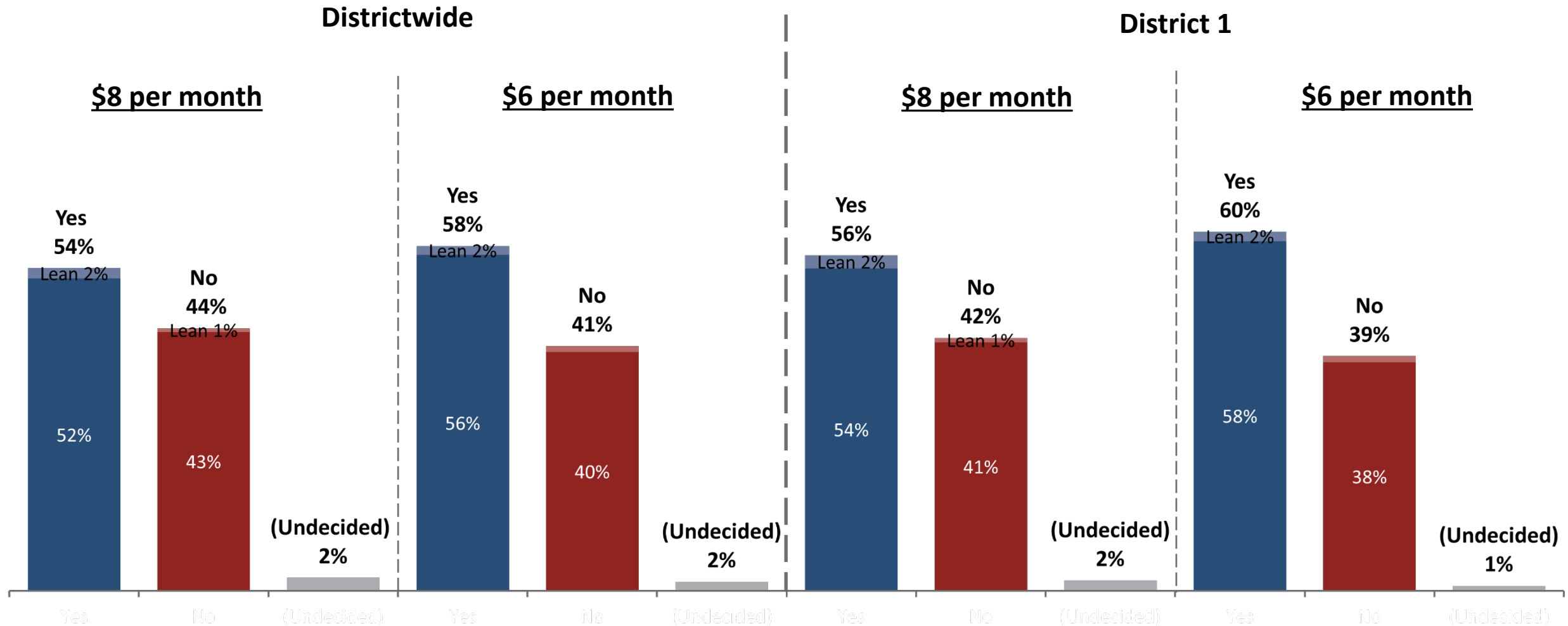
The voters in Special District 1 are significantly less tax-averse than those in District 2.

Do you agree or disagree: Taxes are already high enough; I'll vote against any increase in taxes.



Initial Vote – Districtwide vs. Special District 1

Support for a measure is slightly higher looking just at Special District 1 than the entire District.

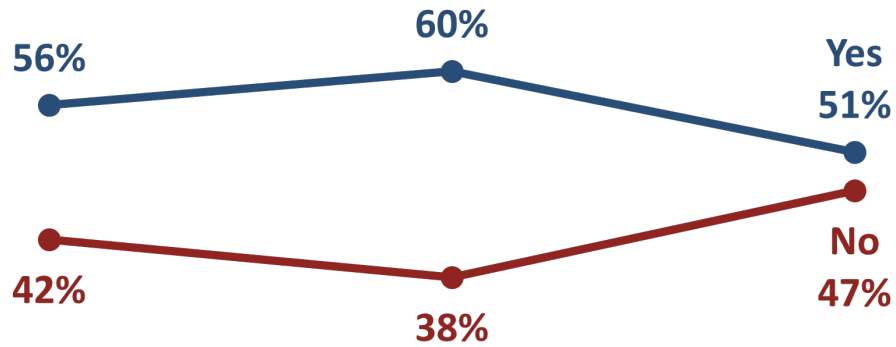


Q5/31. Now, given everything you've heard, I'd like to read you the measure again... If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

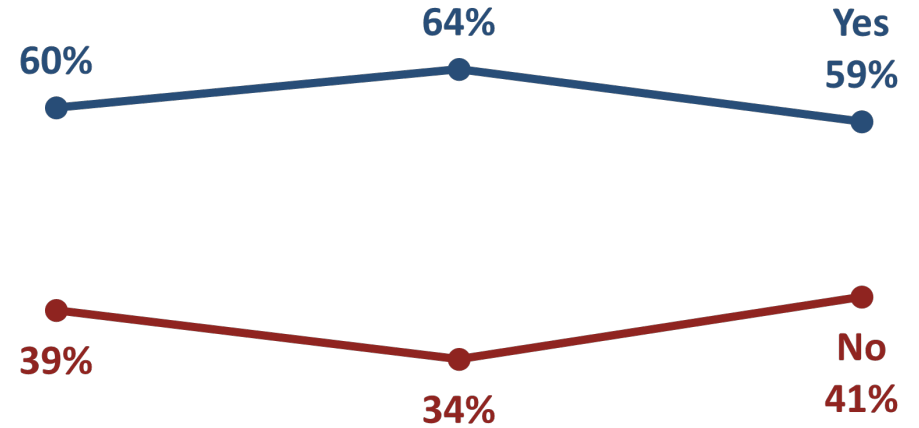
Vote Progression – Special District 1

Opposition messaging has a tangible impact in District 1, even for the lower monthly amount.

\$8 per month



\$6 per month



(Undecided)

2% 2% 2%

(Undecided)

1% 2% 1%

Initial Vote

After Support

After Opposition

Initial Vote

After Support

After Opposition

Q5/31/39. Now, given everything you've heard, I'd like to read you the measure again... If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

Conclusions

- ▶ These poll results show that **a revenue measure for AC Transit would be extremely difficult to pass in 2024.**
 - While the lower tax rate in the more tax-supportive part of the District receives the most support, it does not reach the two-thirds threshold at any point during the poll.
- ▶ Voters in the District do **believe in the value of public transit**; however, this belief is not enough to overcome current **concerns about taxes and the economy.**



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