



Survey of Likely November 2020 Voters
Conducted for AC Transit
Research Report
Conducted May 2020

Methodology

- ▶ Survey of likely November 2020 voters in the AC Transit service district
- ▶ Conducted May 19 – 24, 2020
- ▶ Mixed mode telephone and email-to-web methodology:
 - Telephone interviews were conducted by trained, professional interviewers; landlines and mobile phones included
 - Email invitations were sent with link to web survey
- ▶ 1,200 interviews; overall margin of error ± 2.83 percentage points
- ▶ A split sample methodology was used to test different bond amounts; 400 interviews per sample, margin of error ± 4.9 percentage points per sample
- ▶ The survey was available in English, Chinese, and Spanish
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with the following:

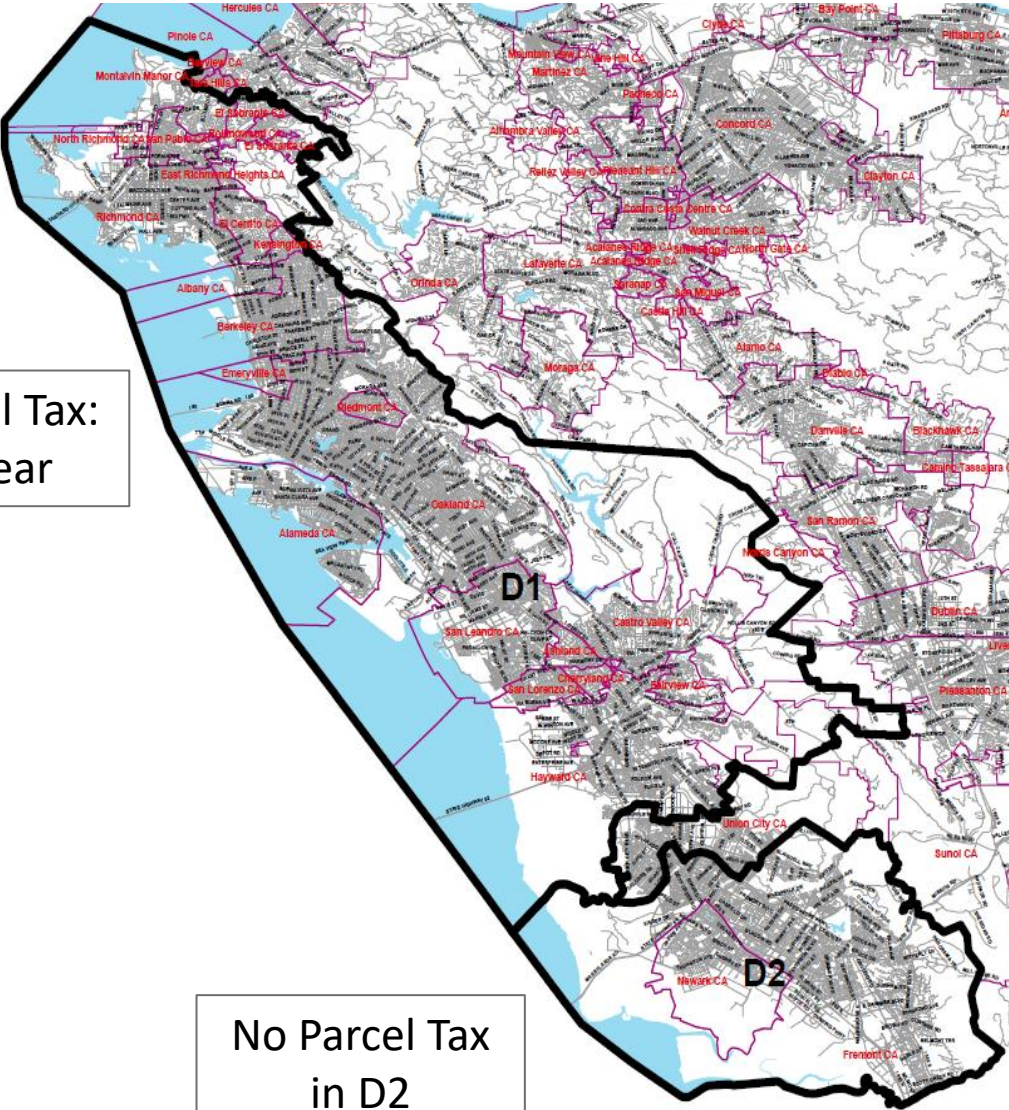
Methodology	Dates	Universe	Sample Size	Margin of Error	EMC #
Phone	September 14-23, 2015	Likely Nov. 2016 Voters	806	± 3.45 percentage points	15-5747
Phone	February, 2014	Likely Nov. 2014 Voters	811	± 3.44 percentage points	14-5142
Phone	May 21-24, 2012	Likely Nov. 2012 Voters	818	± 3.43 percentage points	12-4643
Phone	December 8-15, 2009	Likely Nov. 2010 Voters	807	± 3.45 percentage points	09-4184

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

Context and Timing

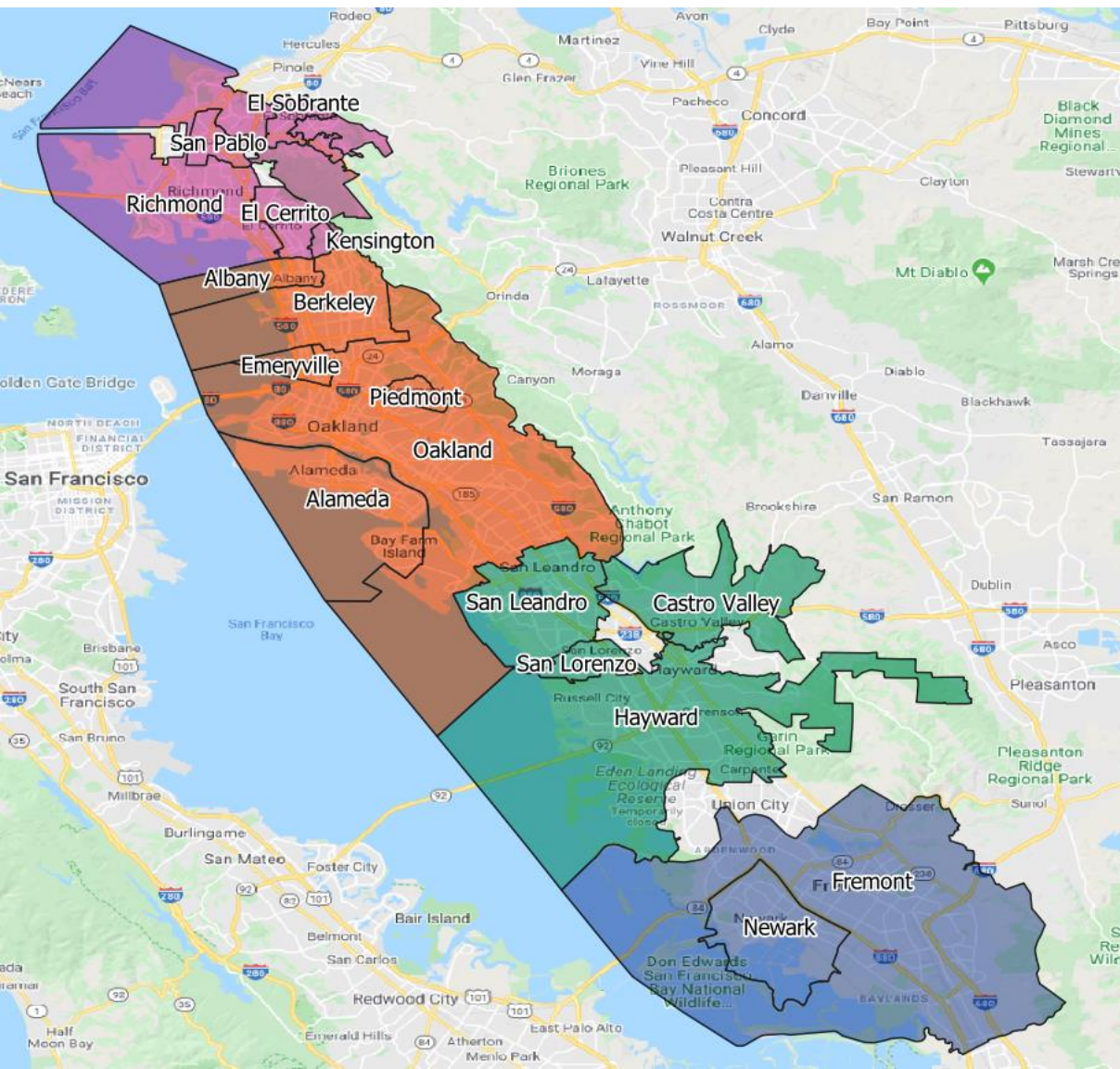
- ▶ Conducted during week 10 of the Coronavirus Shelter-in-Place period.
- ▶ Businesses were closed, over 90,000 people had died from the pandemic nationally, and over 30 million had lost their jobs within the prior five weeks.
- ▶ California and the Bay Area were being lauded for their proactive response.
- ▶ Right before the data collection period, the state of California announced the beginning of Stage 2; allowing gradual reopening of lower-risk workplaces.
- ▶ This survey was conducted prior to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, which has led to national demonstrations around racial justice.

Special Transit Service District Breakdown



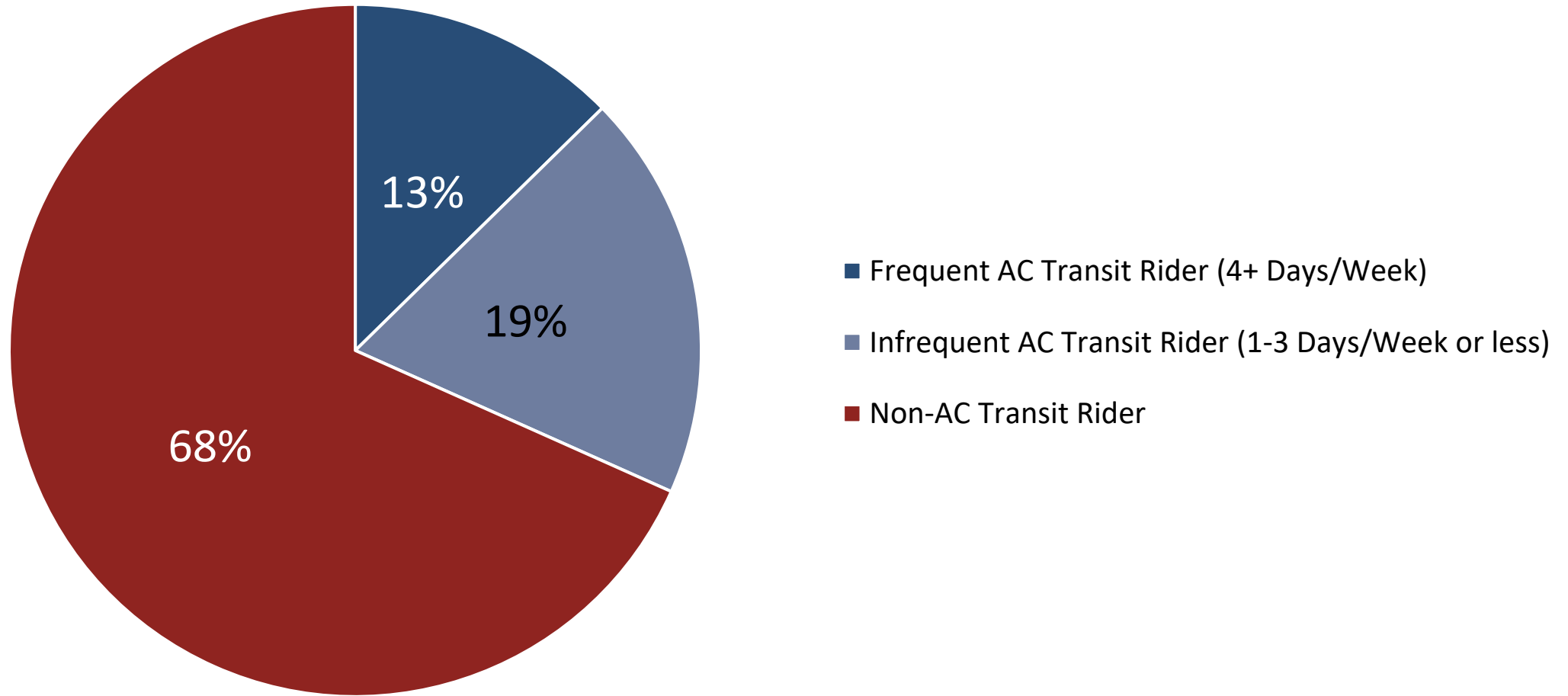
Area	Registered Voters	% of Registered Voters	Survey Sample Size	Margin of Error
Entire District	845,401	100%	1,200	±2.83
District 1	713,312	86%	1,033	±3.05
District 2	132,089	14%	167	±7.58

Regional Breakdown



Area	Registered Voters	% of Registered Voters	Survey Sample Size	Margin of Error
Entire District	845,401	100%	1,200	±2.83
Contra Costa	95,995	11%	149	±8.03
Alameda North	410,559	49%	648	±3.85
Alameda Central	206,764	24%	236	±6.38
Alameda South	132,083	16%	167	±7.58

Ridership Among District Voters



Key Findings

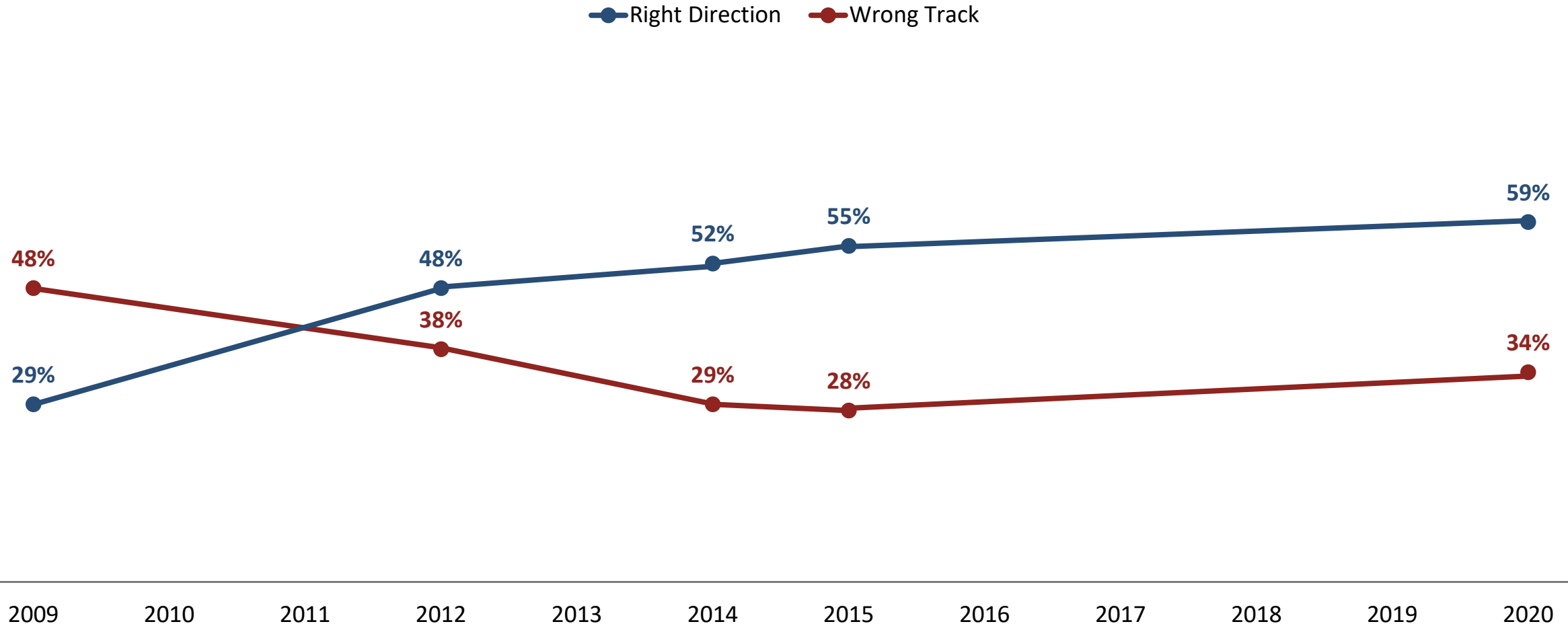
- ▶ In the midst of COVID-19 and shelter-in-place, voters feel positive about the direction of the Bay Area. However, they are widely concerned about the pandemic, and two in five anticipate an impact on their personal finances.
- ▶ Voters believe in public transit as part of the solution for the Bay Area's transportation problems, and believe AC Transit needs additional funding.
- ▶ A districtwide bond measure for AC Transit is short of the two-thirds support needed to succeed. Those living in Special Transit Service District 1 are more supportive of a bond measure, but not overwhelmingly so.
- ▶ Additional information about what a bond would do does increase support, but it remains below two-thirds.
- ▶ The most compelling information about the measure centers supporting high-quality, reliable public transit service for the people who need it, and improving local air quality.
- ▶ There is some evidence of cost sensitivity, with the more modest sized bond amounts receiving slightly higher support.
- ▶ Messaging critical of a measure is effective at undermining support.



Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track

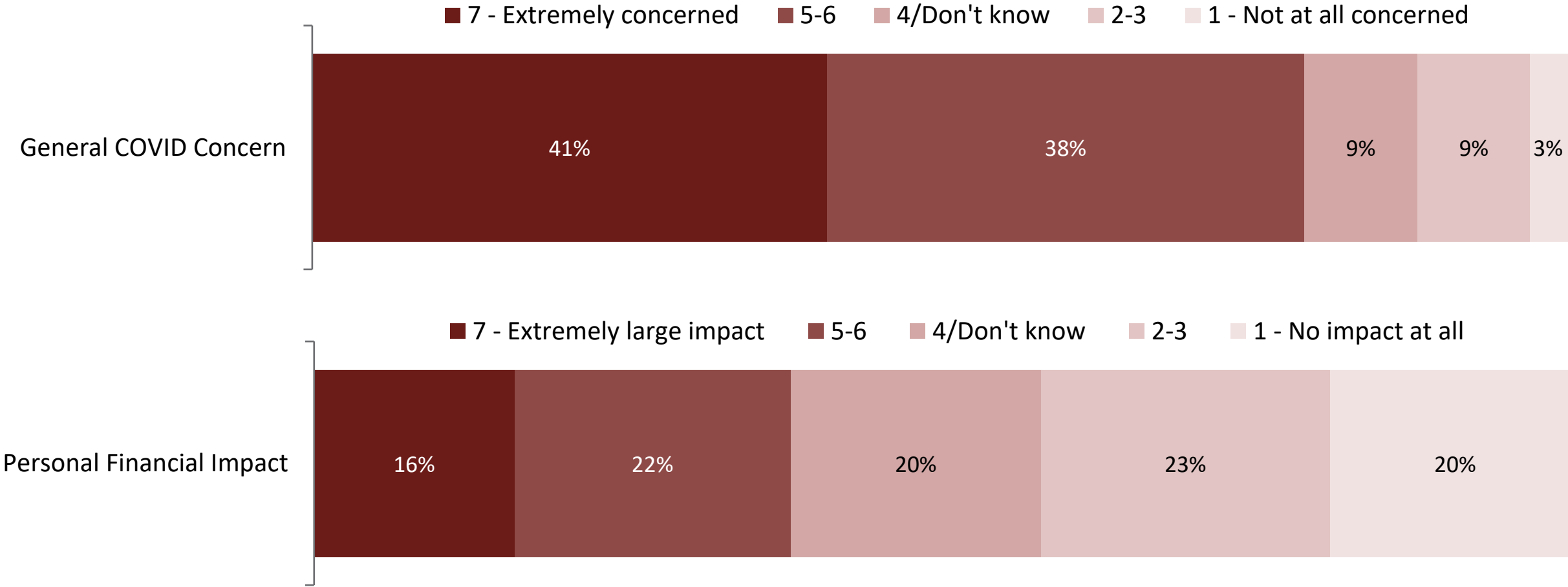
With California and Bay Area leaders receiving national attention for an effective response to the Coronavirus, voter sentiment on the direction of the Bay Area is largely positive.



Q4. 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?

COVID-19 Concerns

Voters are very concerned about Coronavirus, and many feel it will have a near term financial impact on their household.

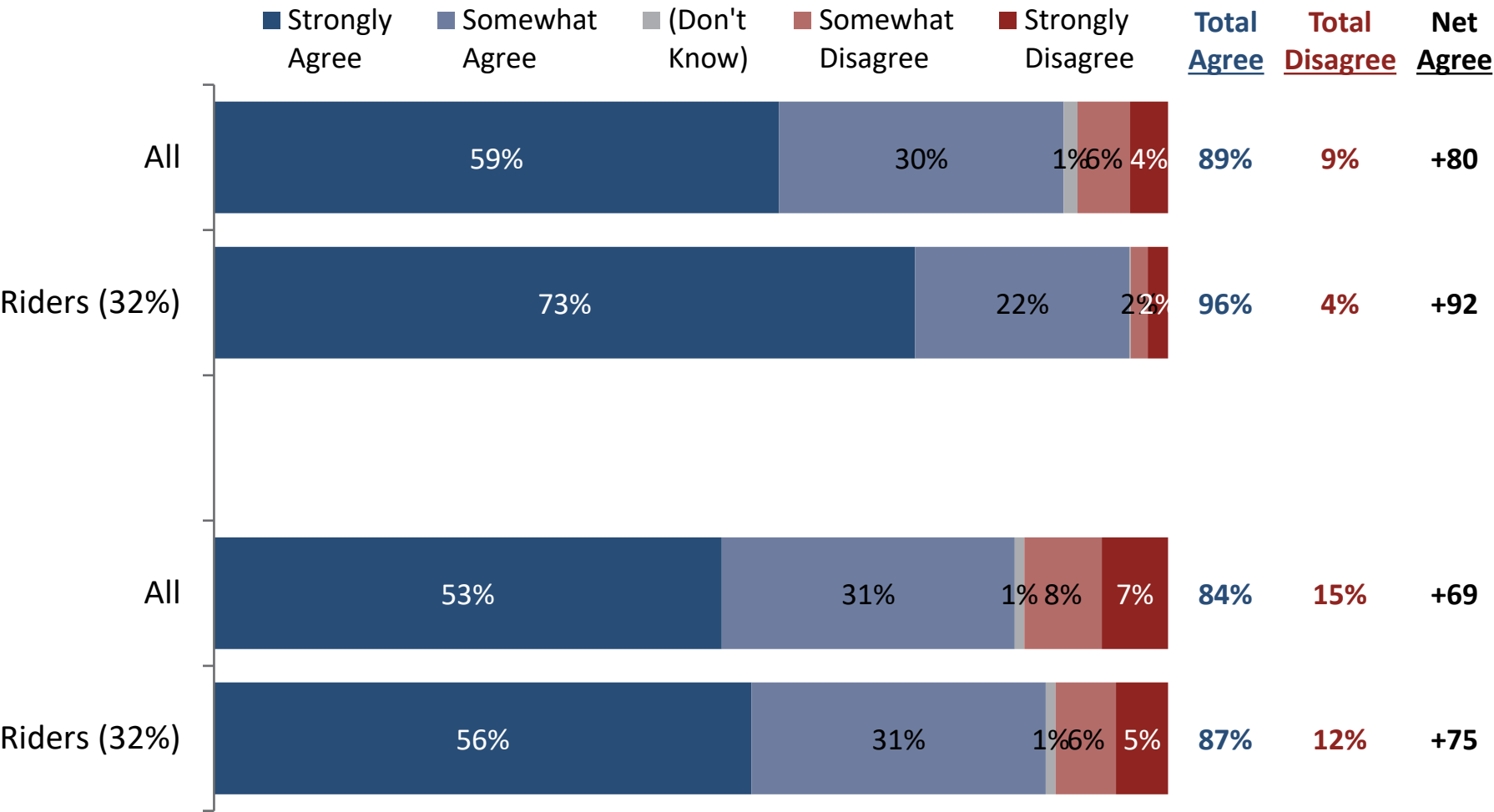


Transit Attitudes

Both AC Transit riders and non-riders see the value in frequent, reliable, and safe public transit, though intensity is greater among riders. Nearly all voters believe the transition to zero-emission buses is important to improve Bay Area air quality.

Frequent, reliable, and safe public transit is essential to addressing the Bay Area’s transportation challenges

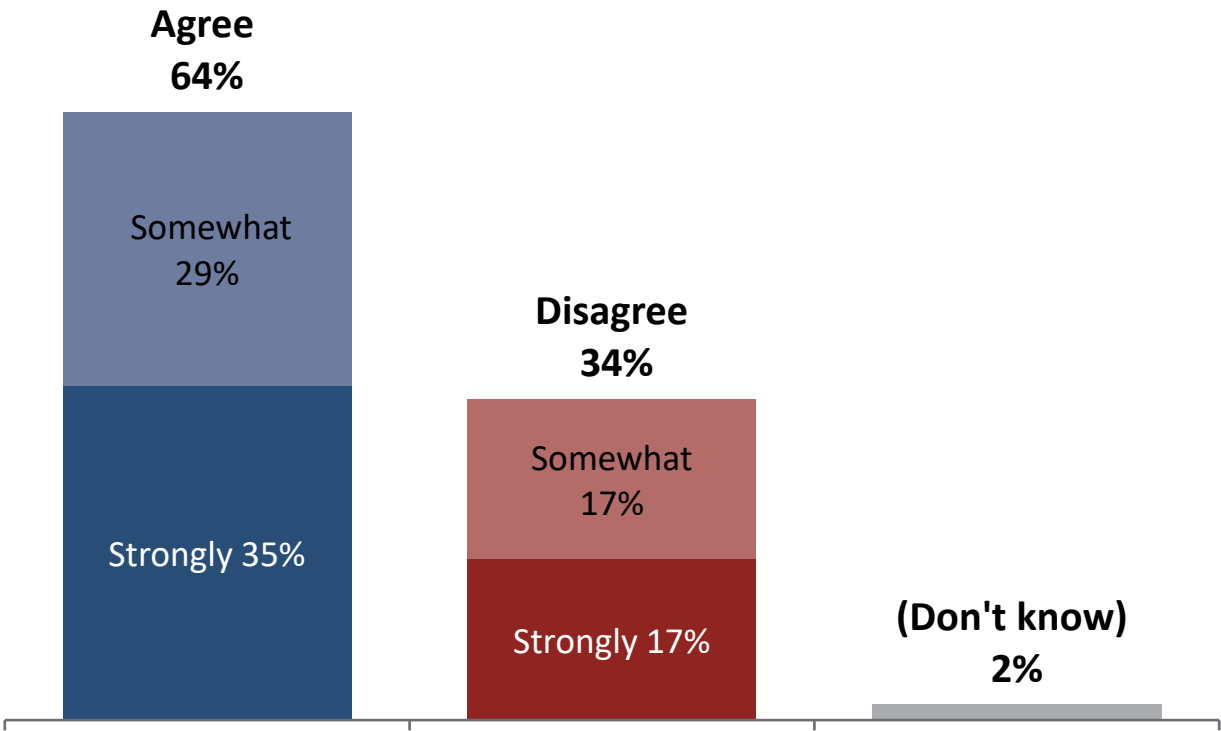
Converting from diesel to zero-emission buses is essential to improve air quality in the Bay Area



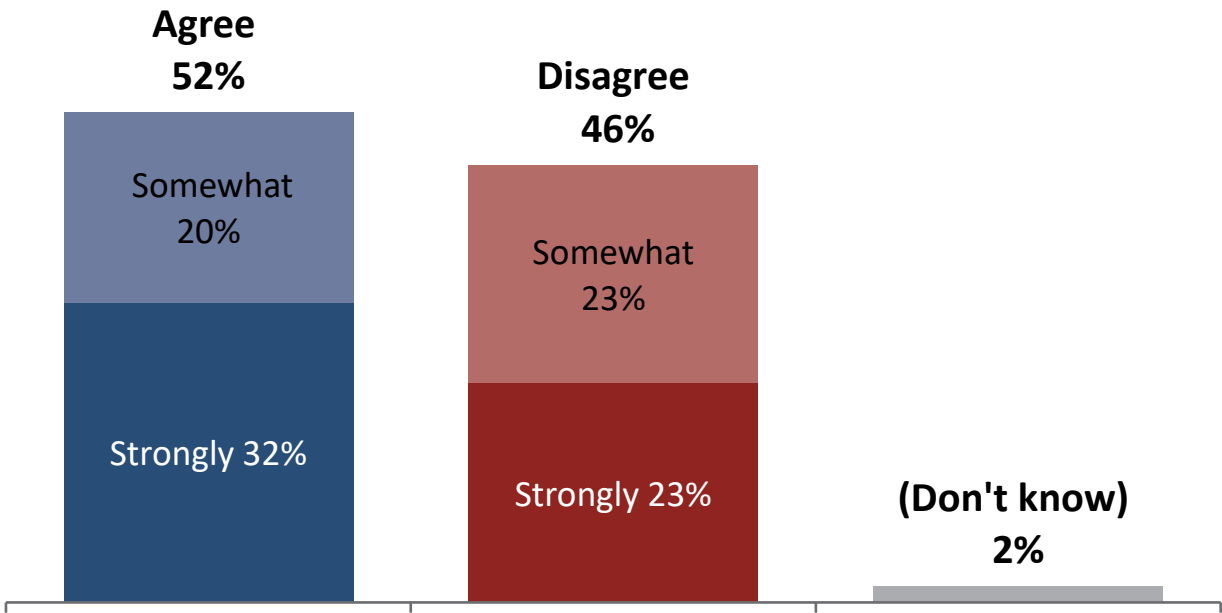
Tax Attitudes

While nearly two in three voters agree it is crucial to have high-quality public transit even if it means raising taxes, half are inclined to reject any tax increase.

It is crucial to have high-quality public transit, even if it means raising taxes



Taxes are already high enough; I'll vote against any increase in taxes



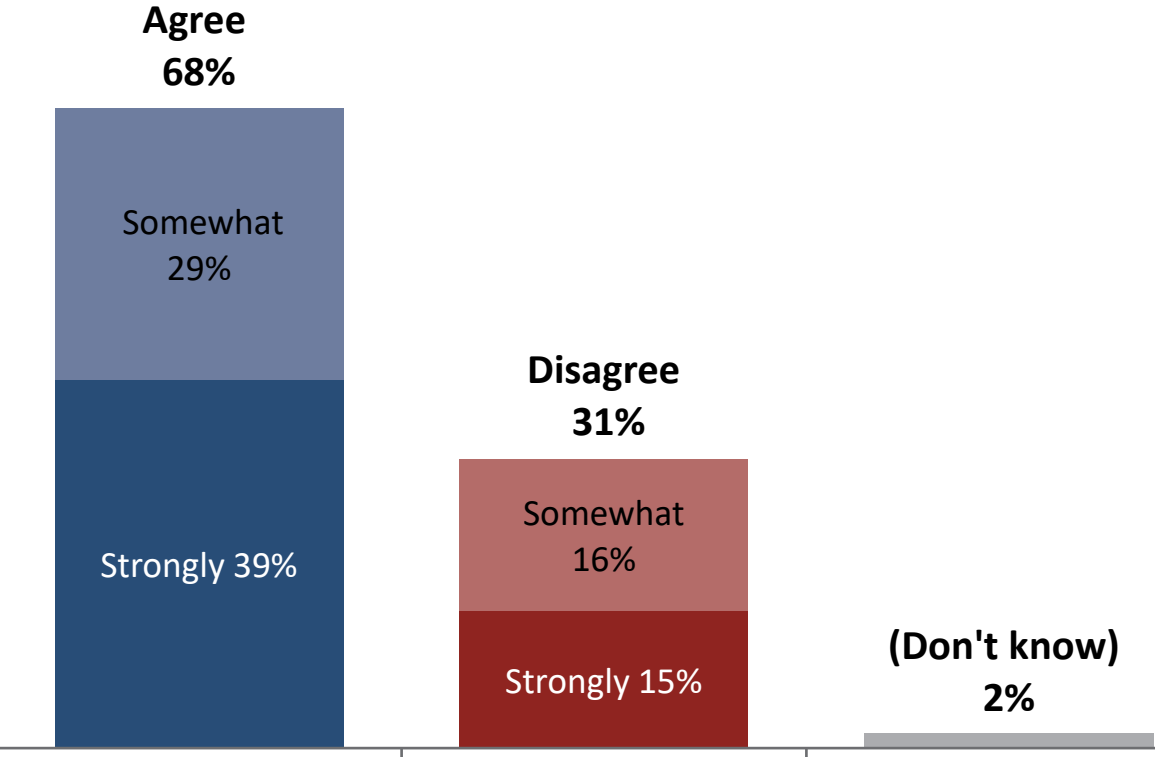
Q23-24. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Tax Attitudes: STSD 1

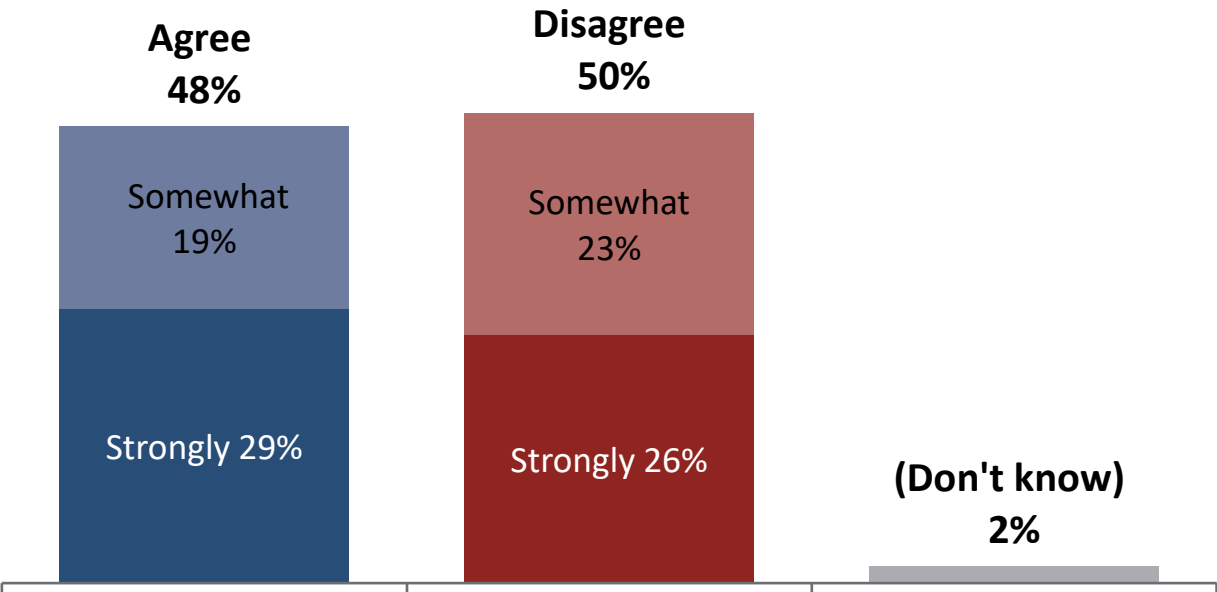
Even among voters just in Special Transit Service District 1, nearly half are inclined to reject any tax increase.

STSD 1 only:
n=1,033

It is crucial to have high-quality public transit, even if it means raising taxes



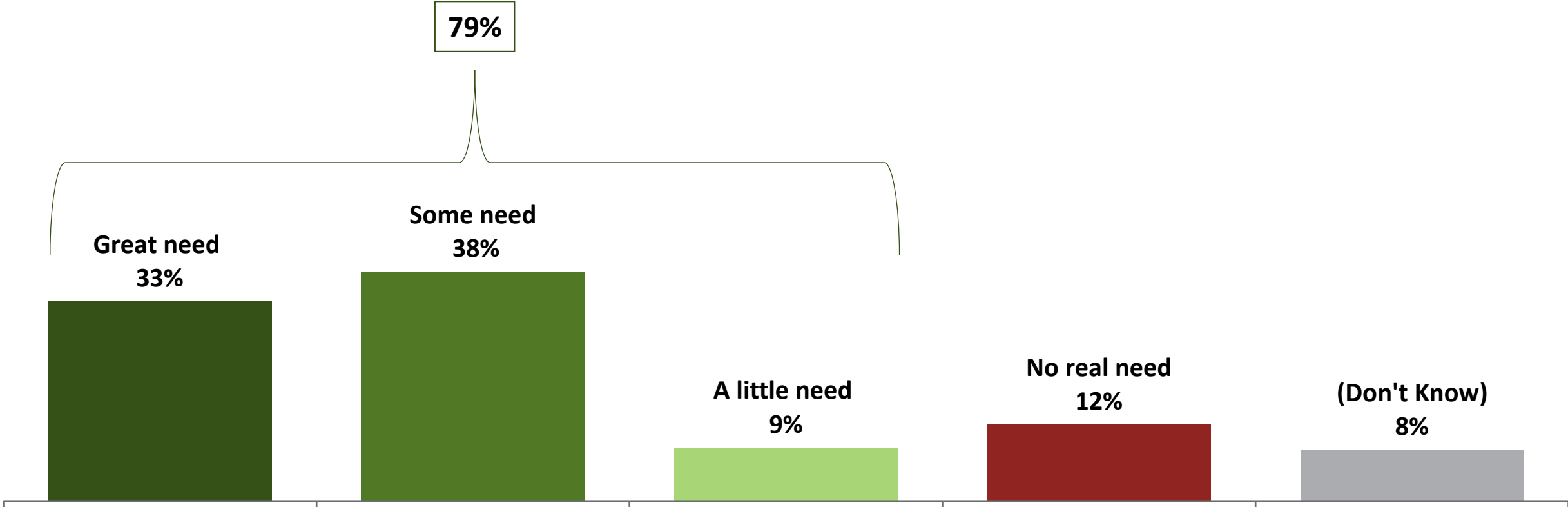
Taxes are already high enough; I'll vote against any increase in taxes.



Q23-24. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

AC Transit Perceived Need for Funding

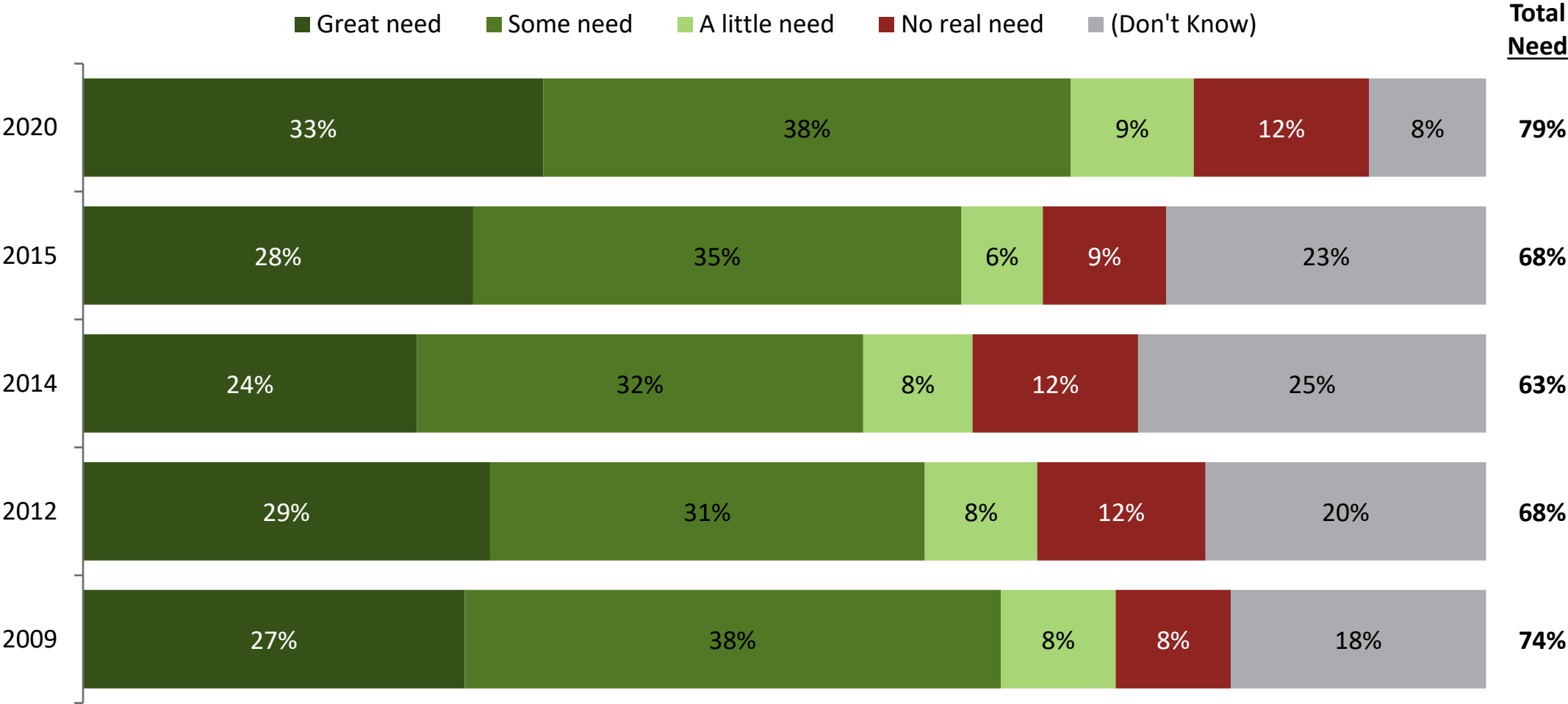
Voters perceive that AC Transit has an additional need for funding, with eight in ten saying there is at least a little need.



AC Transit Perceived Need for Funding Tracked

Over six in ten voters have consistently indicated that AC Transit has a need for additional funding.

Note: The 2020 survey was the first with an online component



Q6. As you may know, you live in the AC Transit District. 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?



Potential Bond Measure

Ballot Question Tested

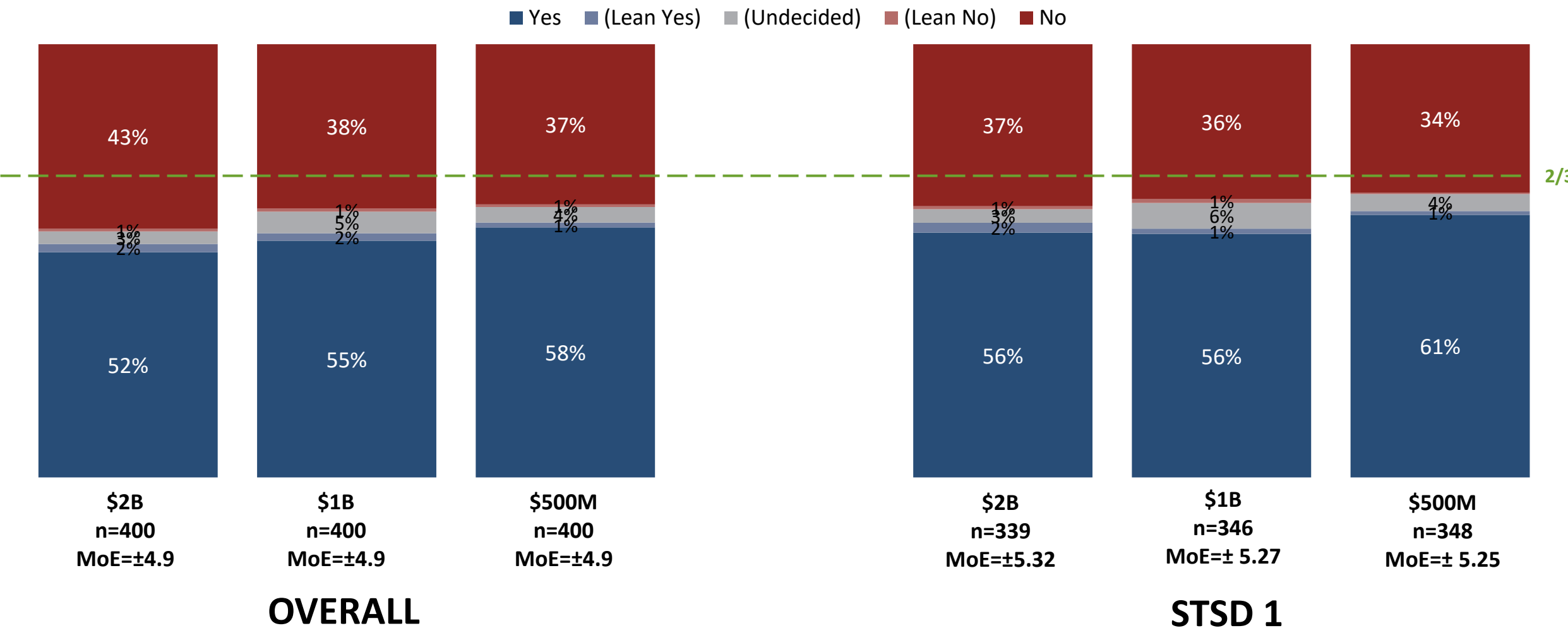
*A split sample methodology was used to test three different bond amounts:
\$2 billion, \$1 billion, and \$500 million*

To continue providing essential public transit service, enhance safety and reliability, improve local air quality, and meet state environmental regulations by supporting conversion to an all-zero-emissions bus fleet by upgrading AC Transit maintenance facilities and equipment, shall the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District issue **[\$2 billion/\$1 billion/\$500 million]** in bonds at legal rates, raising approximately **[\$72 million/\$36 million/\$18 million]** annually while bonds are outstanding, at an estimated **[\$32/\$16/\$8]** per \$100,000 of assessed property valuation, with taxpayer oversight, audits, and all funds benefitting AC Transit?

Initial Vote: Overall & STSD1 Comparison

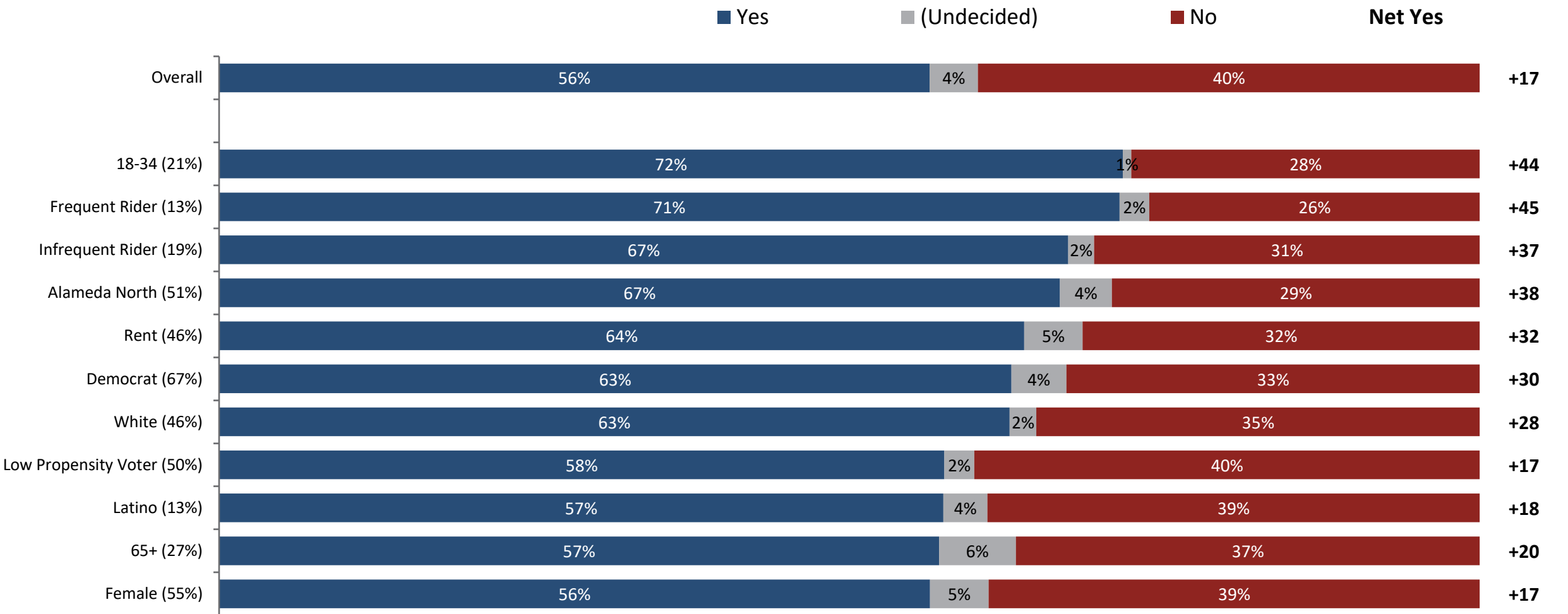


All three bond amounts tested are currently short of the two-thirds threshold needed for passage. While support is higher in STSD 1, it is still below two-thirds.



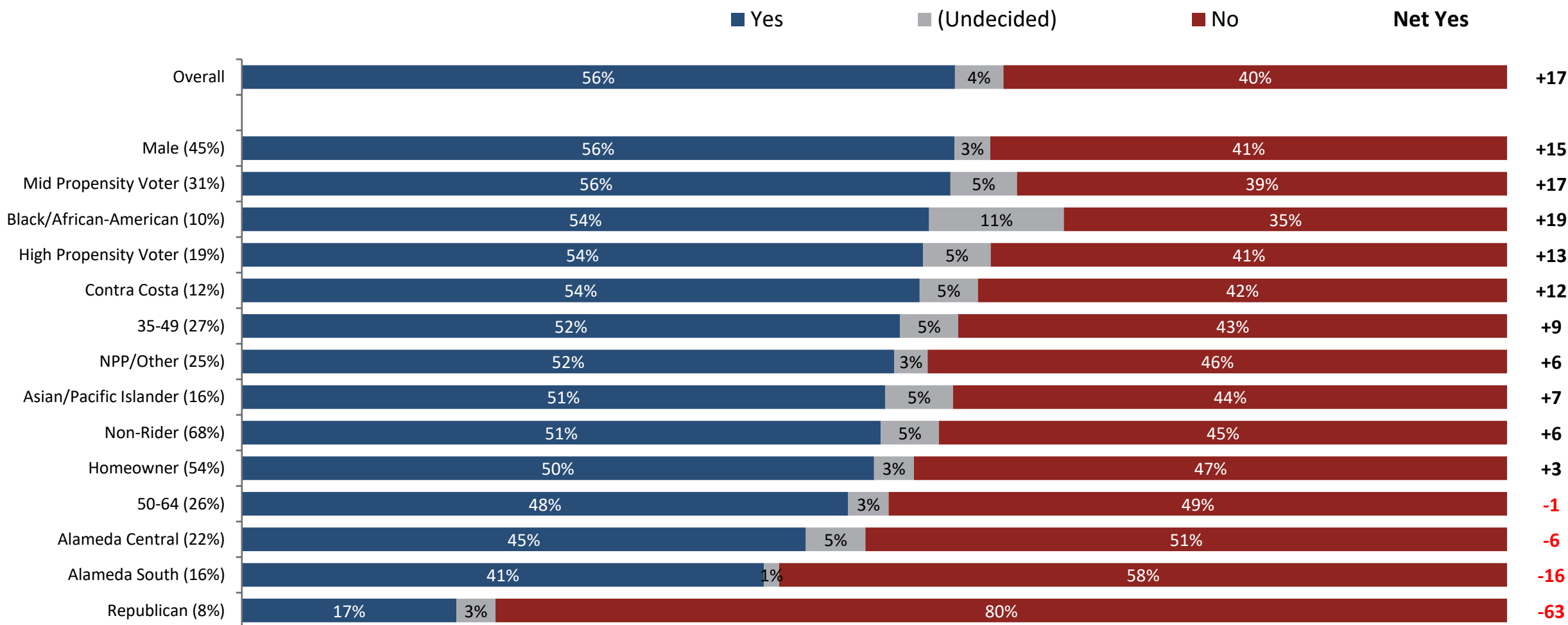
Combined Initial Vote: More Supportive Subgroups

Young voters and AC Transit riders are the most supportive of a bond. Support is also high in Northern Alameda County.



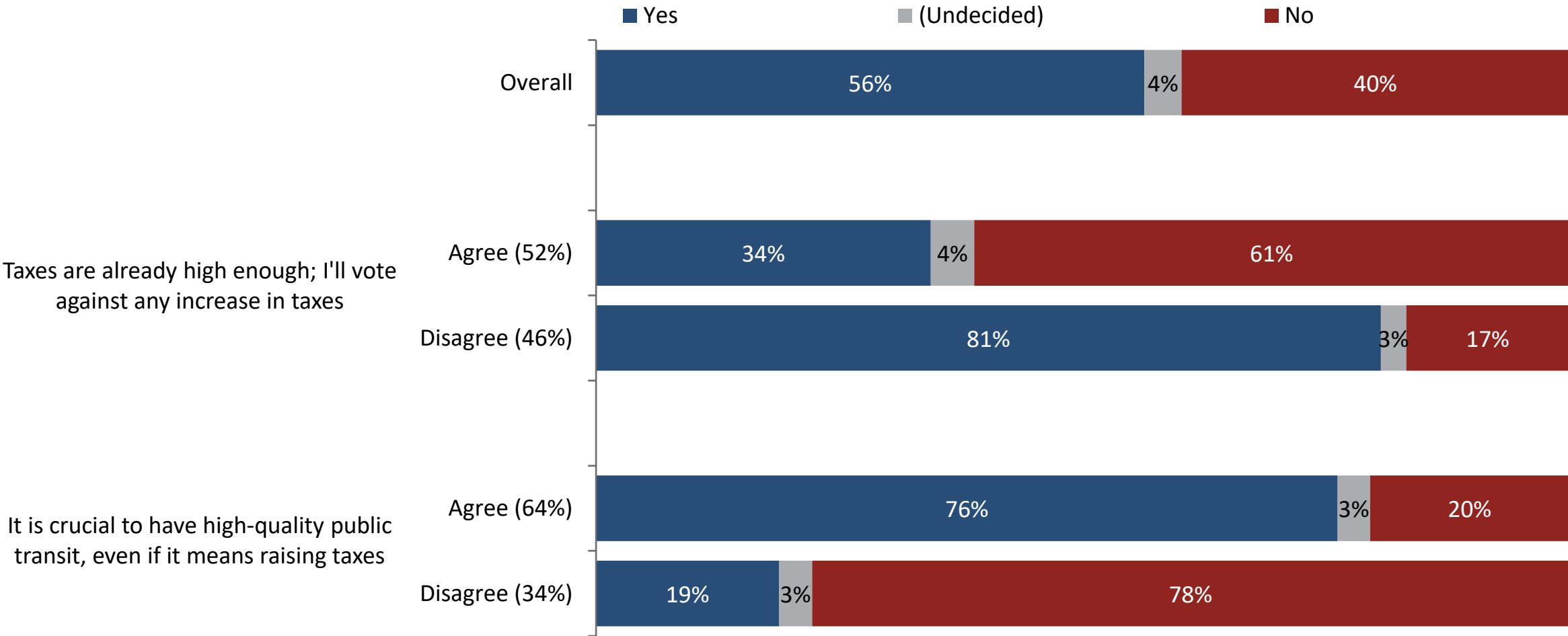
Combined Initial Vote: Less Supportive Subgroups

The least supportive groups are Republicans and those in Central and Southern Alameda County.



Initial Vote by Tax Attitudes

Three-quarters of those who feel high-quality transit is worth raising taxes are supportive of a measure.

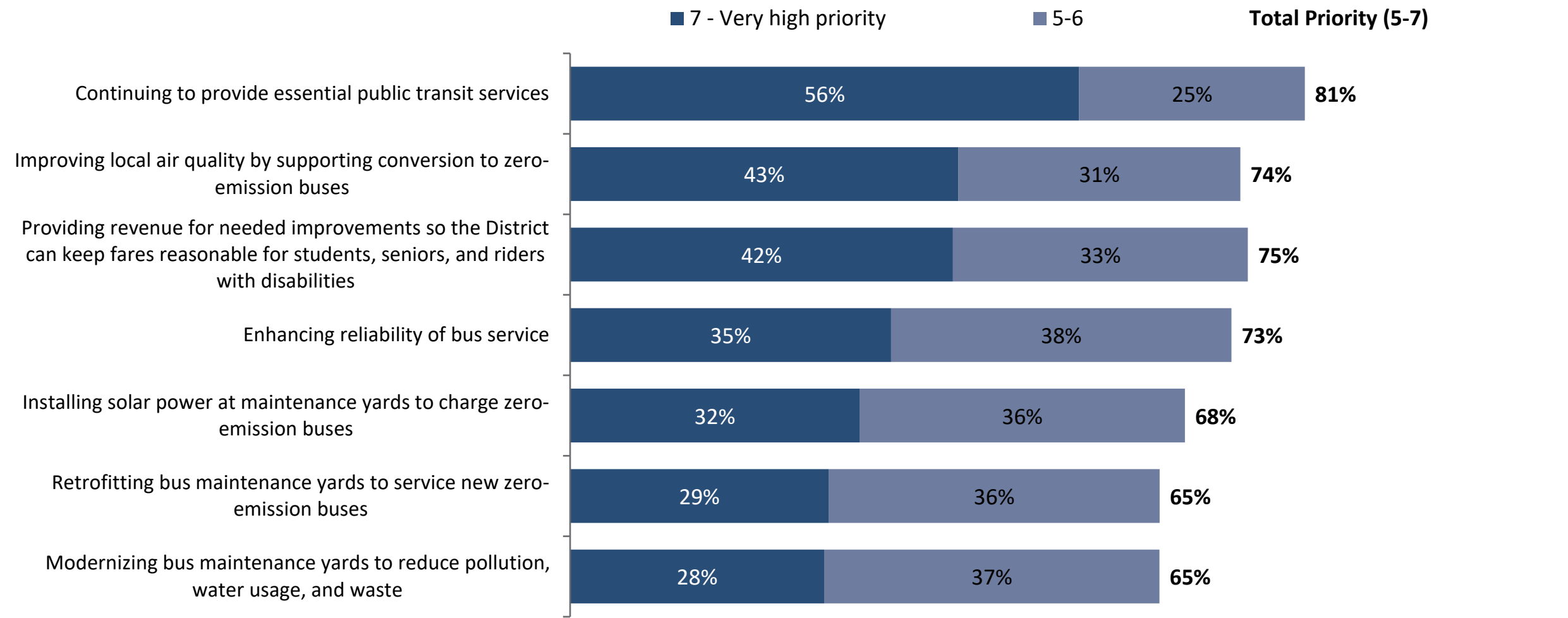




Bond Measure Components

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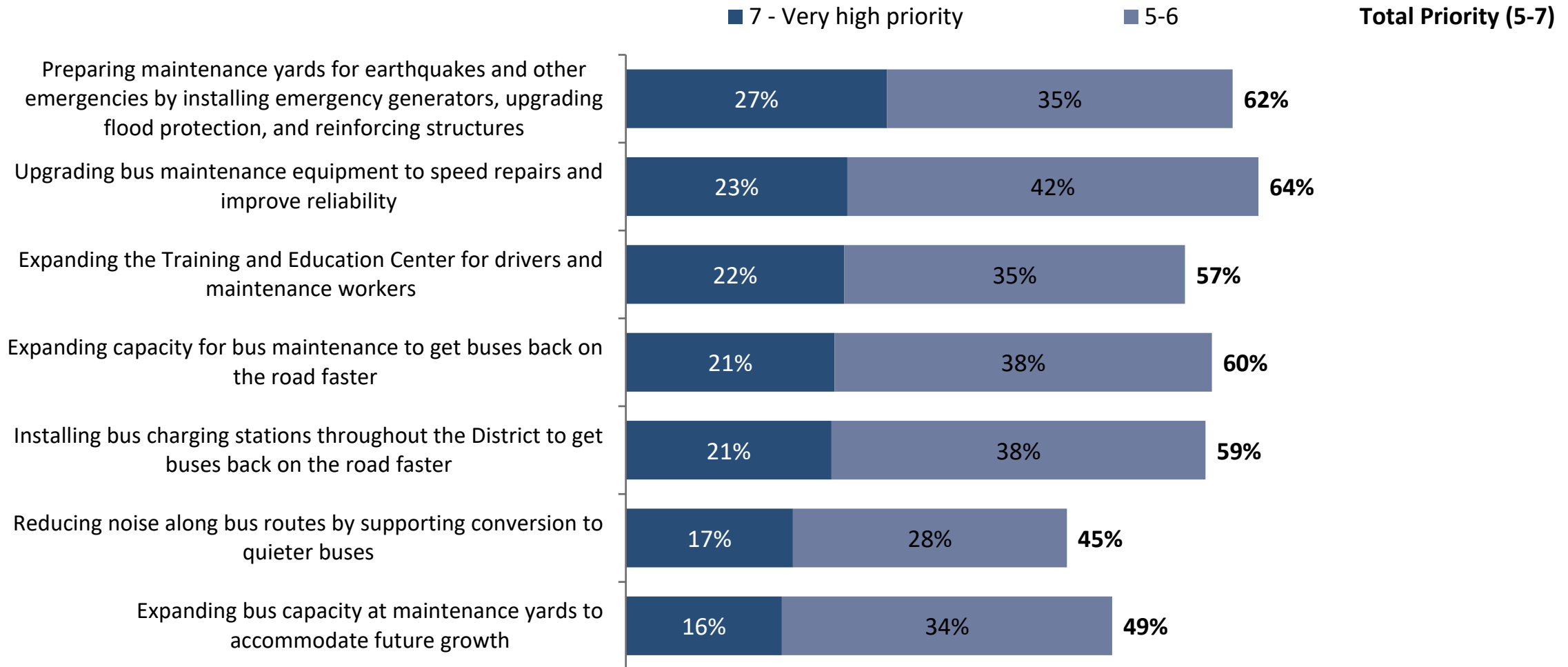
Voters prioritize that a bond would enable AC Transit to continue providing essential transit services while improving air quality, enhancing reliability, and keeping fares down. Specific bond projects have a narrower appeal.



Q8-21. I'm going to read you a list of things an AC Transit bond measure could pay for. For each one, please tell me how high a priority that item should be.

Bond Measure Components

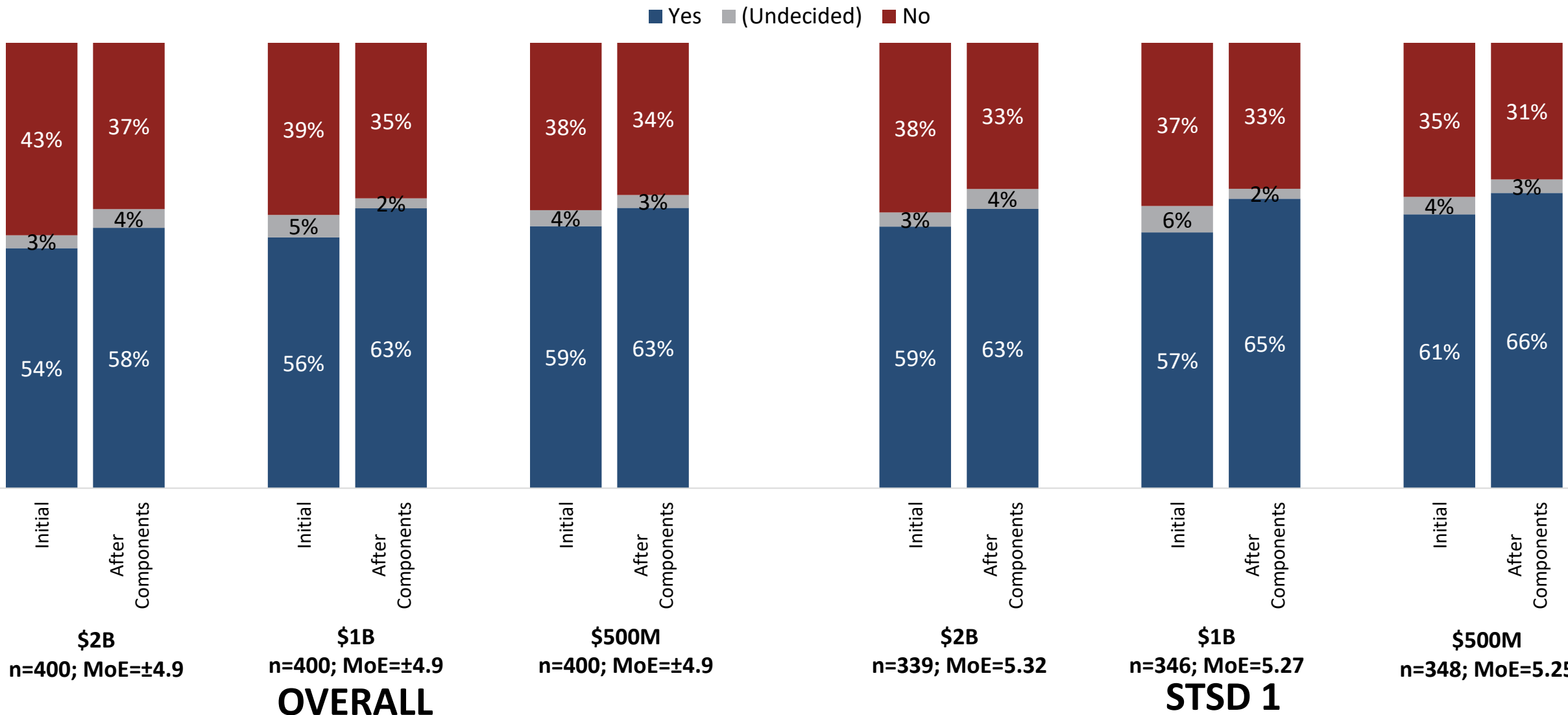
Other components are also a priority for a portion of voters, though with lower intensity.



Q8-21. I'm going to read you a list of things an AC Transit bond measure could pay for. For each one, please tell me how high a priority that item should be.

Vote after Components: Overall & STSD1 Comparison

Hearing what the bond could fund does drive support for the measure up.

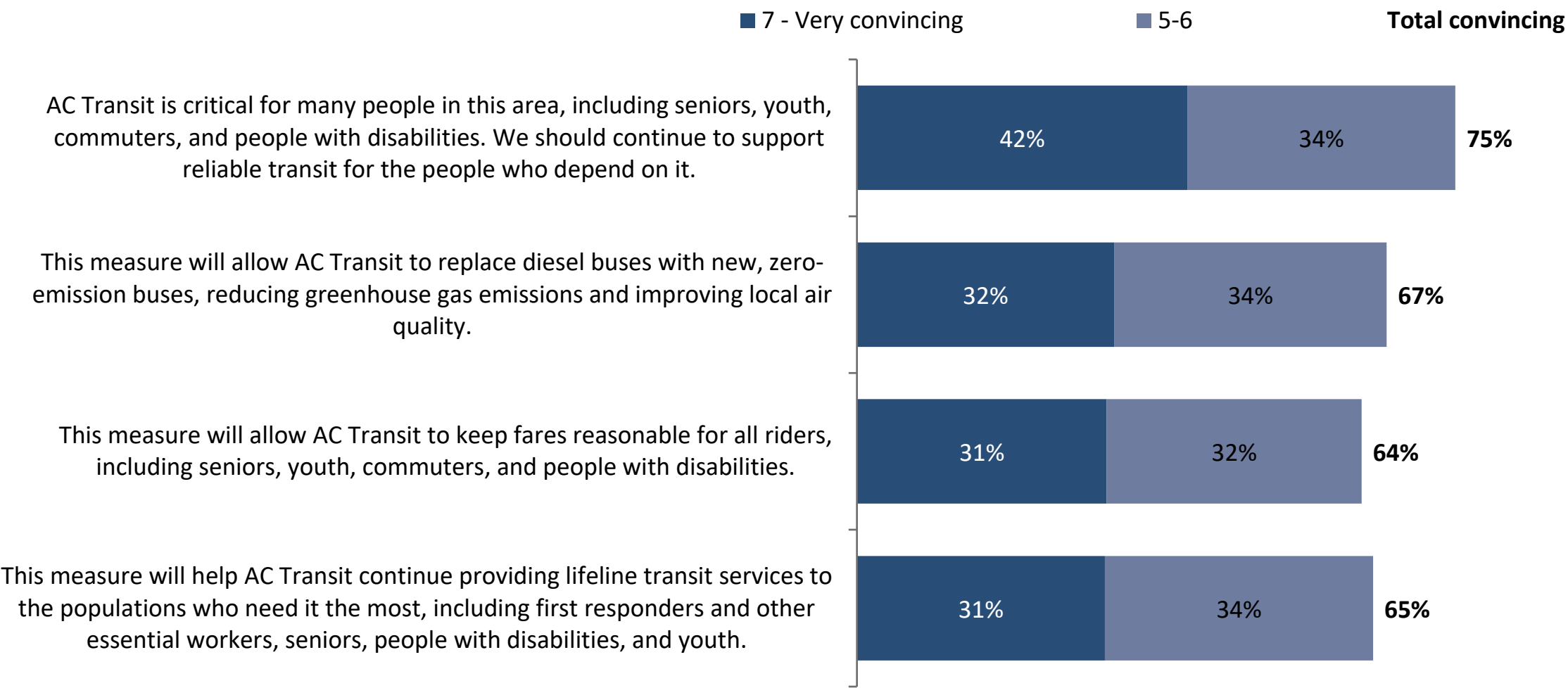




Additional Information

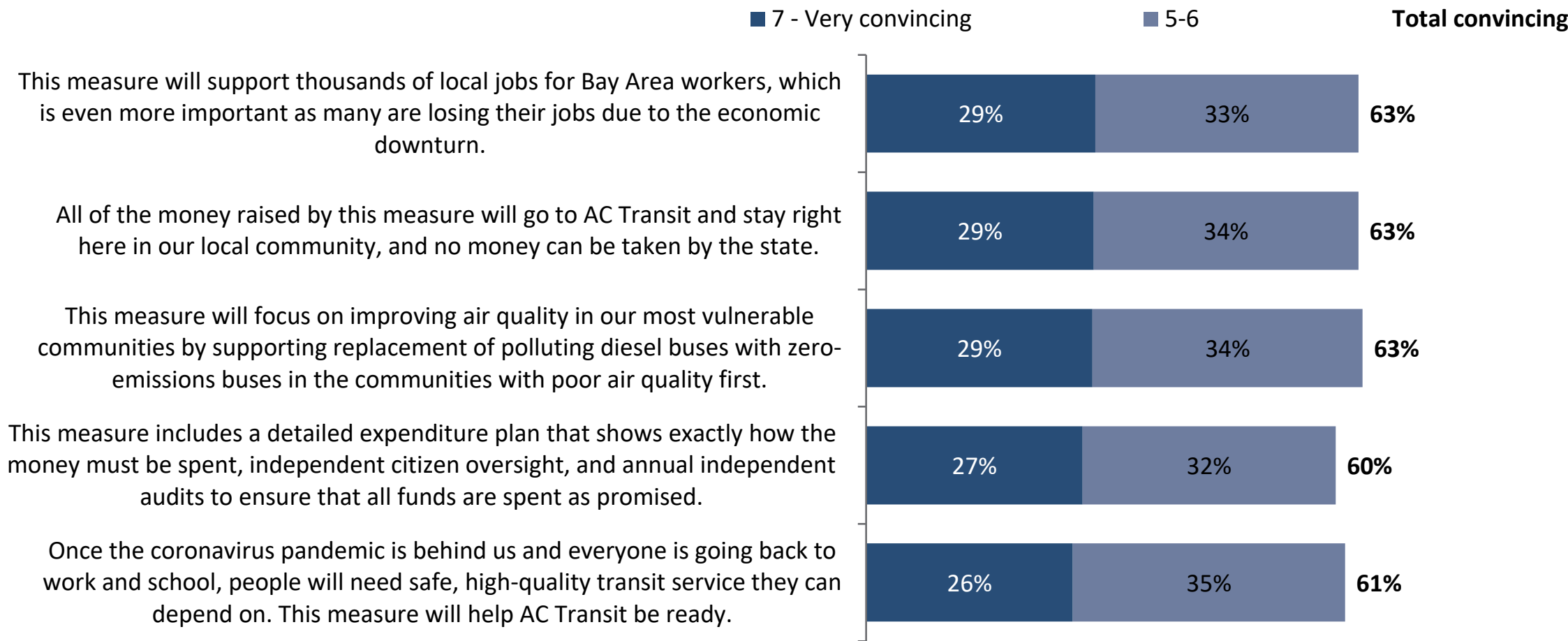
Bond Measure Information

Information about supporting critical lifeline transit service, improving air quality by replacing diesel buses, and keeping fares reasonable are the most resonant with District voters.



Bond Measure Information

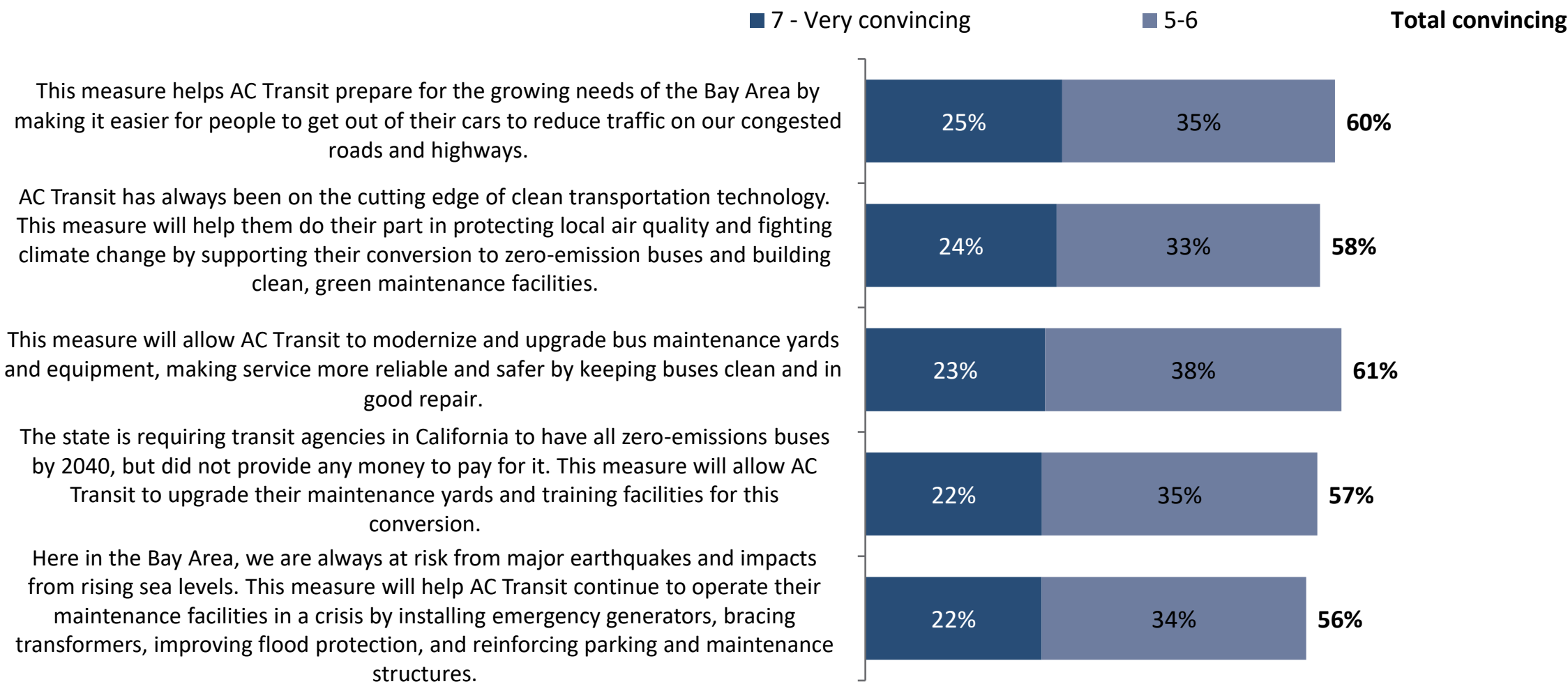
Supporting local jobs, tight fiscal controls and accountability, and prioritizing vulnerable communities are also compelling pieces of information. While six in ten like that the measure will help AC Transit be ready for a post-pandemic environment, intensity is low.



Q27-40. Now I am going to read you more information about the AC Transit bond measure. After each statement, please tell me how convincing it is as a reason to vote for the measure.

Bond Measure Information

More specific information about bond projects is less compelling, and relatively few are moved by the unfunded state mandate.



Q27-40. Now I am going to read you more information about the AC Transit bond measure. After each statement, please tell me how convincing it is as a reason to vote for the measure.

Top Bond Measure Information

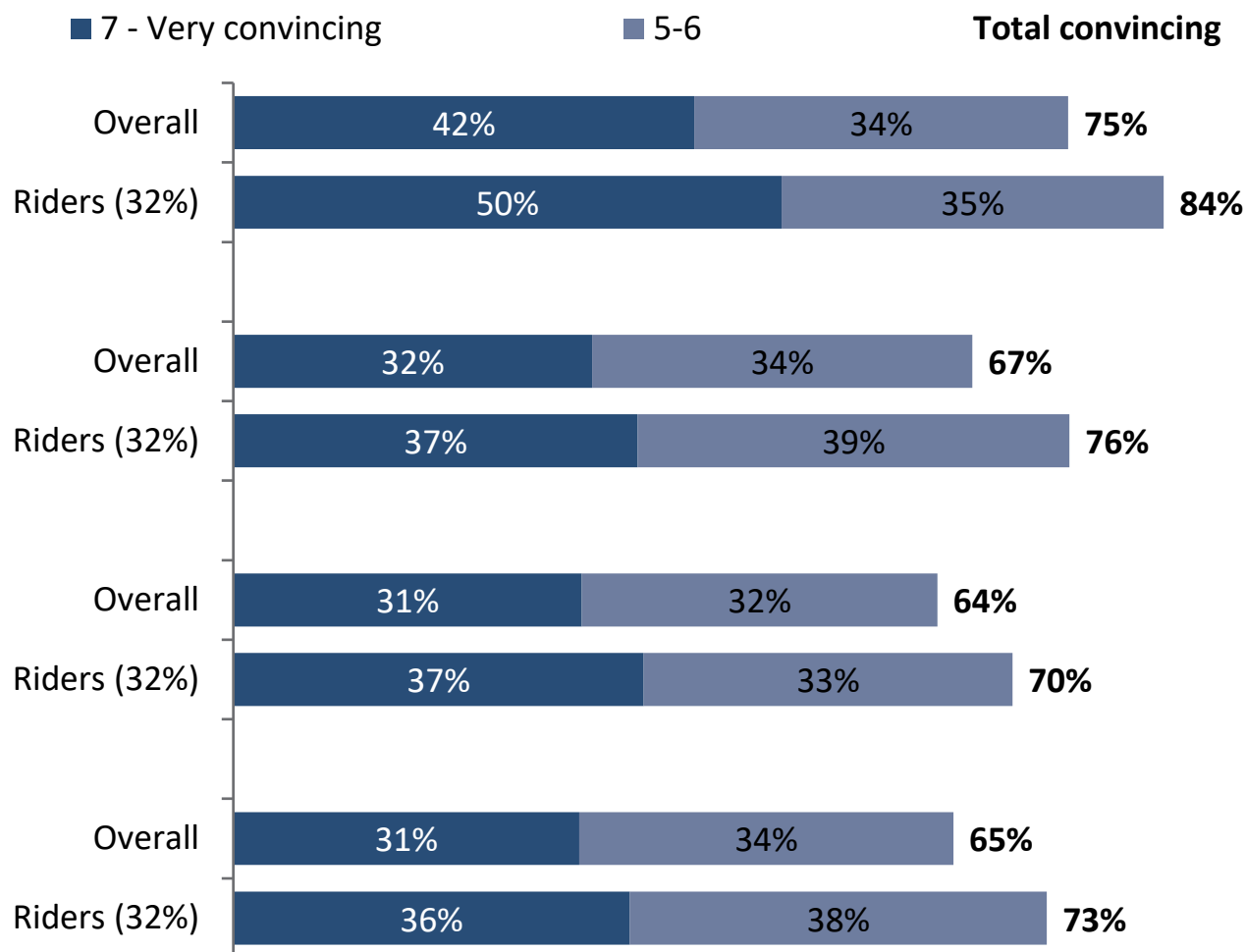
The top information is the same, regardless of ridership, though riders do have greater intensity.

AC Transit is critical for many people in this area, including seniors, youth, commuters, and people with disabilities. We should continue to support reliable transit for the people who depend on it.

This measure will allow AC Transit to replace diesel buses with new, zero-emission buses, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving local air quality.

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

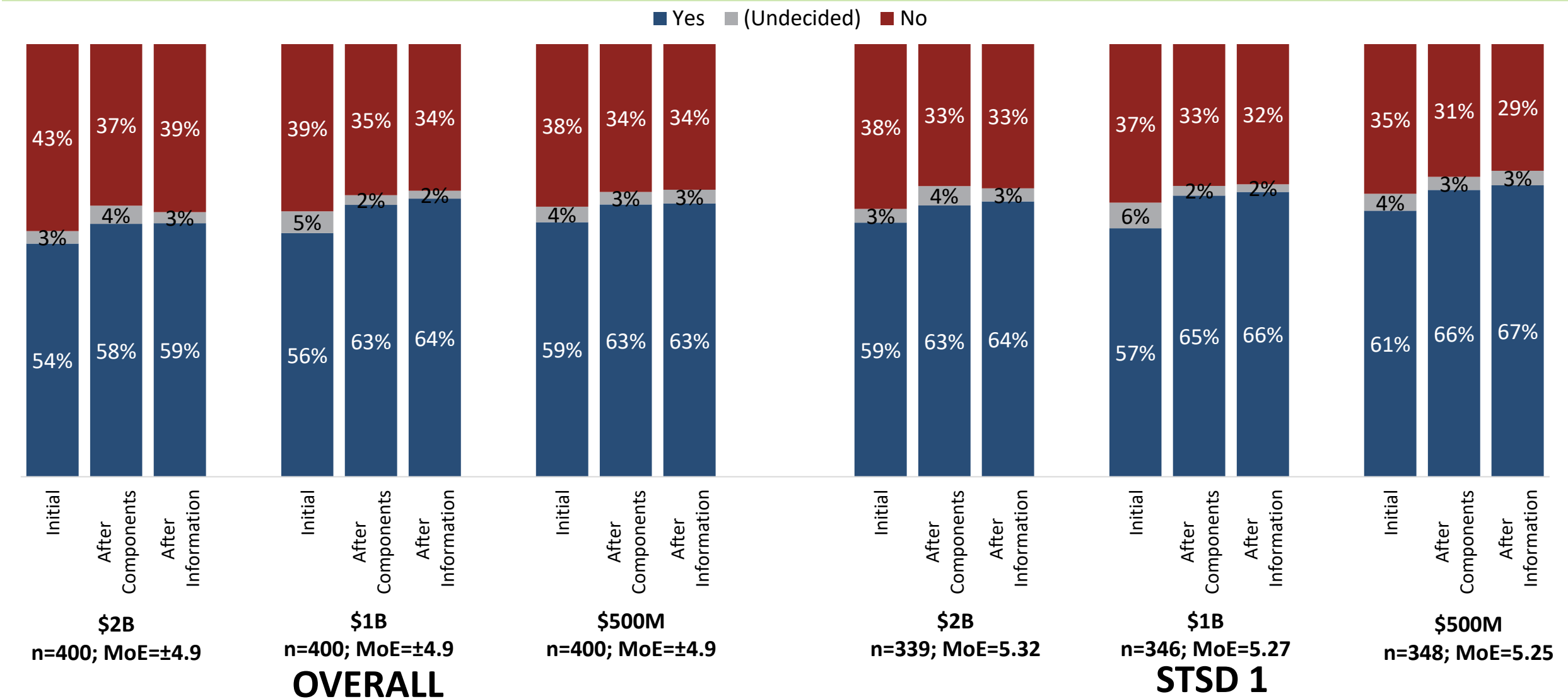
This measure will help AC Transit continue providing lifeline transit services to the populations who need it the most, including first responders and other essential workers, seniors, people with disabilities, and youth.



Q27-40. Now I am going to read you more information about the AC Transit bond measure. After each statement, please tell me how convincing it is as a reason to vote for the measure.

Vote after Information: Overall & STSD1 Comparison

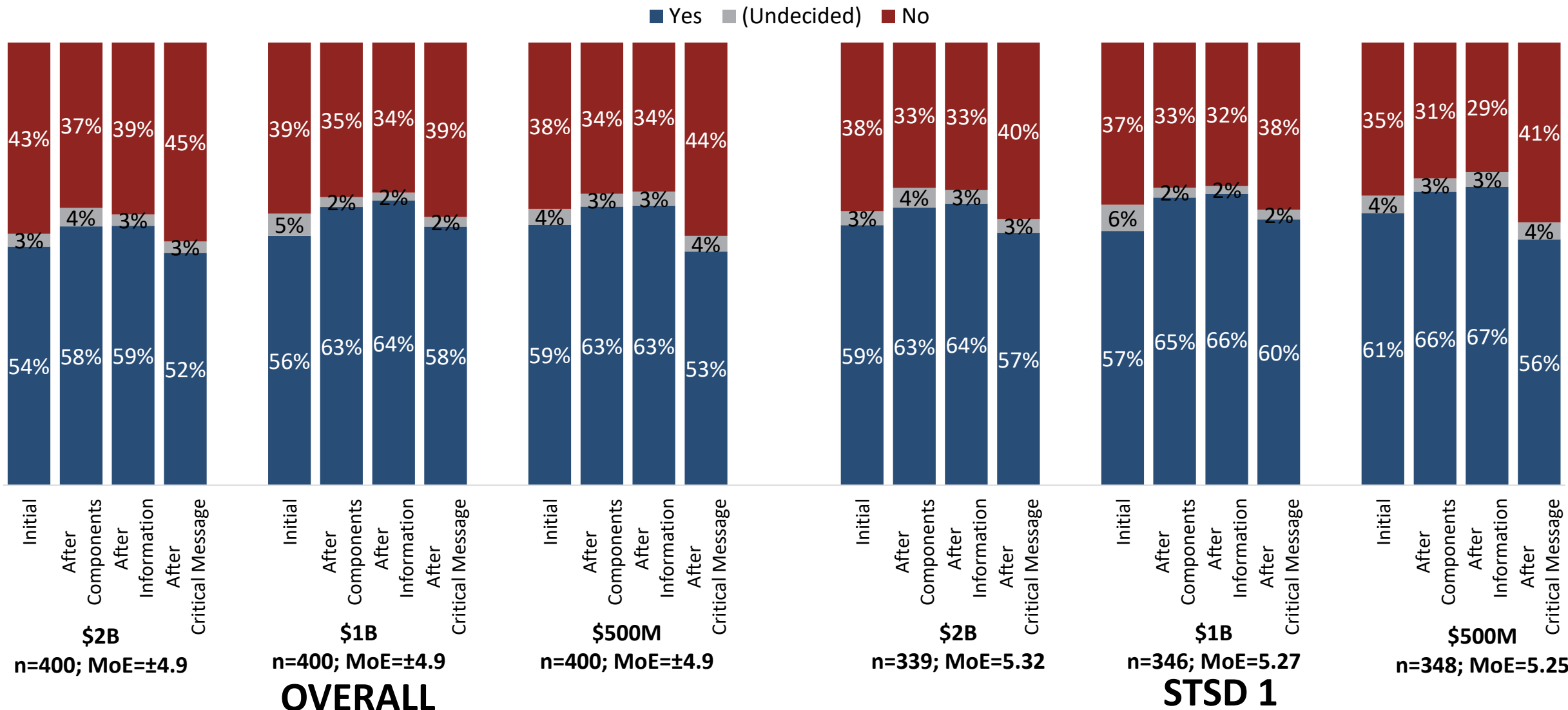
After information, support remains steady Districtwide. In Special Transit Service District 1, support nears two-thirds.



With coronavirus decimating the local economy and so many people losing jobs, some people say we just can't afford this new tax. We already pay AC Transit almost \$100 per year to subsidize bus service, and they already mismanage that. Asking us to pay millions more for a state environmental mandate is not fair. Even once the pandemic is over people aren't going to ride public transit like before; it is just too dangerous. This is a huge amount of money to waste on so few bus riders, when we will have more urgent needs for our roads and freeways as people get back to work. AC Transit just needs to make cuts and live within their means like the rest of us.

Vote after Critical Message: Overall & STSD1 Comparison

Any bond measure is vulnerable to opposition, both Districtwide and in STSD 1.



Conclusions/Recommendations

- ▶ Based on the poll results, a bond measure for AC Transit does not appear feasible for the November 2020 ballot.
- ▶ While voters do support AC Transit's mission and believe additional revenues are needed, those beliefs do not overcome their concerns about taxes and near-term financial consequences of the pandemic economy.
- ▶ The District should continue to evaluate the climate for a potential bond measure on a future ballot.
- ▶ This allows the District the time needed to educate the public on why a bond is needed in order for the District to continue providing quality transit for the people and communities that rely on it, as well as to gain the internal stakeholder alignment that will be necessary to place a measure on a future election ballot.



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