







# Portland Vibrant Communities Levy Feasibility Survey

*Key Findings of a Survey Conducted July 17-25, 2024*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY

# Survey Methodology

<b>Dates</b>	July 17-25, 2024
<b>Survey Type</b>	Dual-mode Voter Survey
<b>Research Population</b>	Likely May 2025 Voters in Portland
<b>Total Interviews</b>	664
<b>Margin of Sampling Error</b>	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.8\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
<b>Contact Methods</b>	 Telephone Calls  Text Invitations
<b>Data Collection Modes</b>	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
<b>Survey Tracking</b>	Comparisons to 2020 and 2023 Surveys

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

# Summary Findings

- A Portland Vibrant Communities levy increase can be viable in a May 2025 election if voters learn more about the service cuts entailed if they levy expires or even continues at the existing rate.
  - In principle, more than two-thirds see at least some need for additional parks and recreation funding.
  - Given the choice, more Portland voters want to increase the levy to avoid service cuts than want to either let the levy expire or maintain the current levy rate with service reductions.
  - The addition of arts to the levy – even paired with the potential removal of the Arts Tax – slightly depresses support.
- Voters are broadly satisfied with Portland Parks & Recreation services.
- Their top priorities for parks funding include water quality, trees and wildlife habitat, as well as wildfire prevention, clean restrooms, and maintaining programs for kids and families experiencing poverty.
- As we have seen in prior rounds of research, Portlanders especially value trees, water quality, and the continued availability of natural spaces as the city grows and changes.

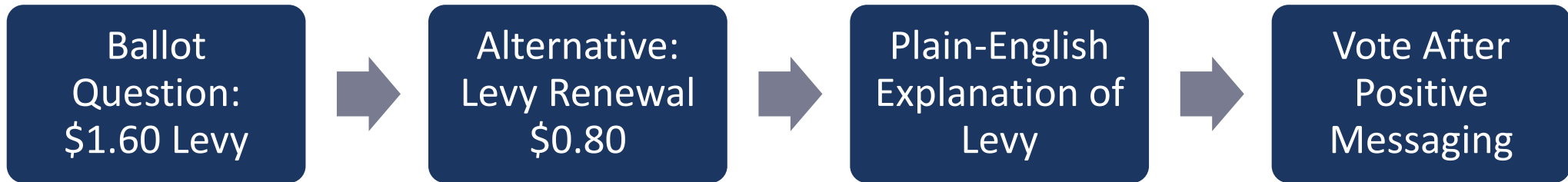
# The levy measure without arts funding has broader support at each point in the survey.

*+/-5.8% Margin of Error*

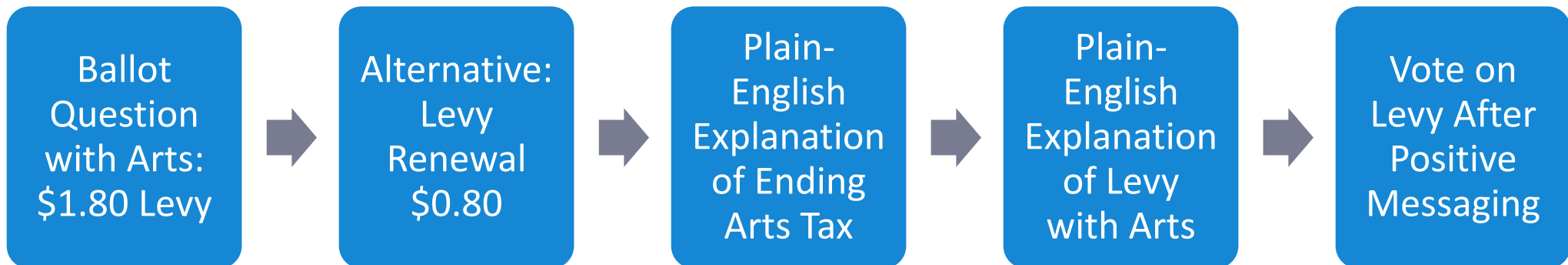
Vote	Parks Only		Parks and Arts	
	Total Yes	Total No	Total Yes	Total No
Initial Vote	54%	41%	45%	50%
After Information	64%	28%	61%	34%
After Household Impact and Positive Messages	60%	35%	52%	42%

# Survey Approach

## *Half-Sample: Parks Only*



## *Half-Sample: Parks and Arts*



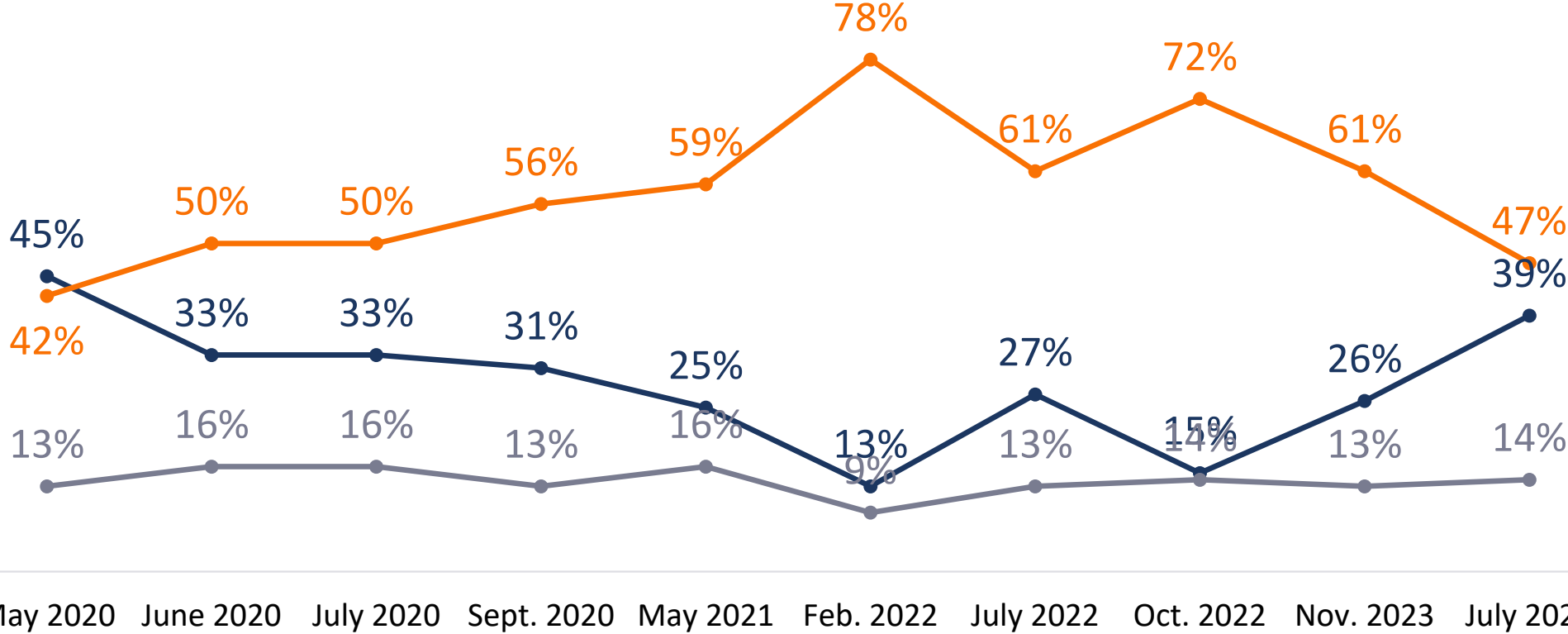


# Political Context

# Nearly half believe the city is off on the wrong track – as low as that figure has been since 2020.

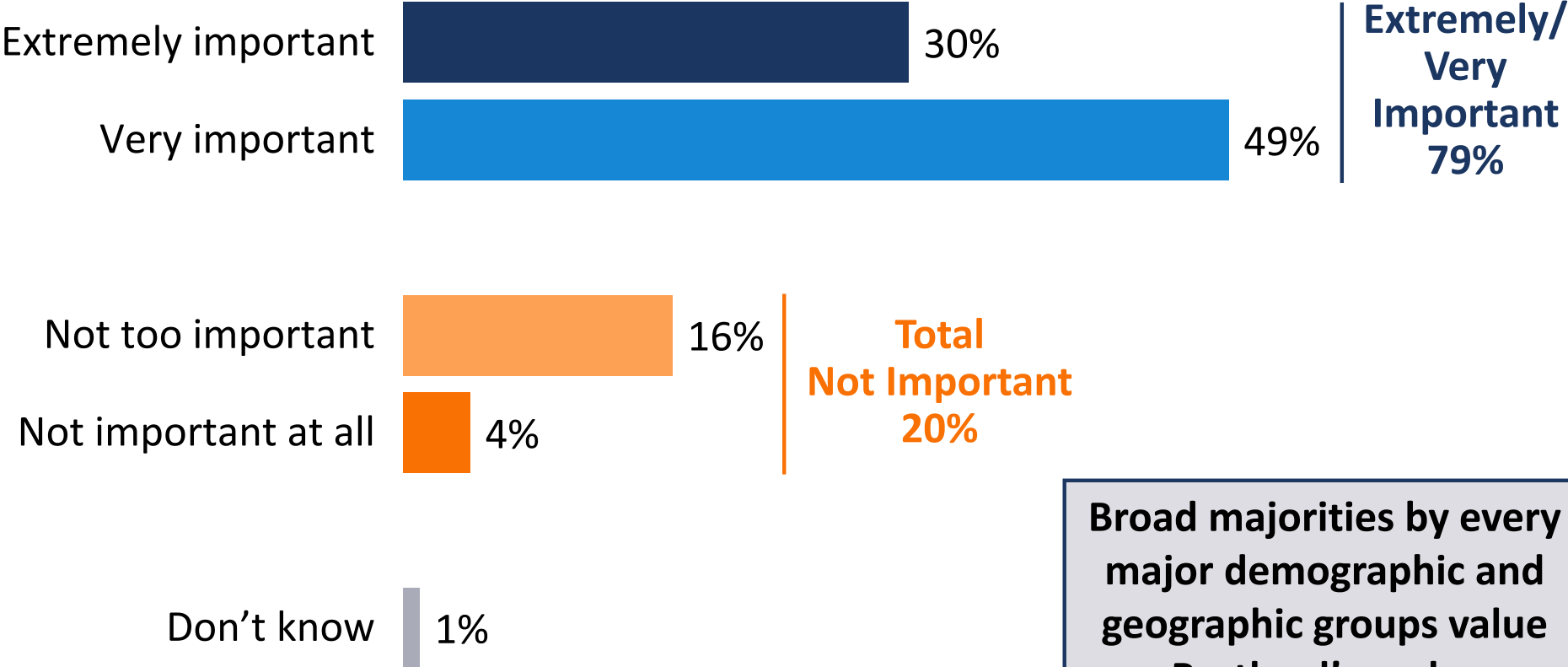
*Would you say that things in Portland are generally headed in the right direction, or are they pretty seriously off on the wrong track?*

— Right Direction — Wrong Track — Don't Know



# Four in five say that Portland's parks are "extremely" or "very important" to their quality of life.

*How important are Portland's parks to your quality of life?*



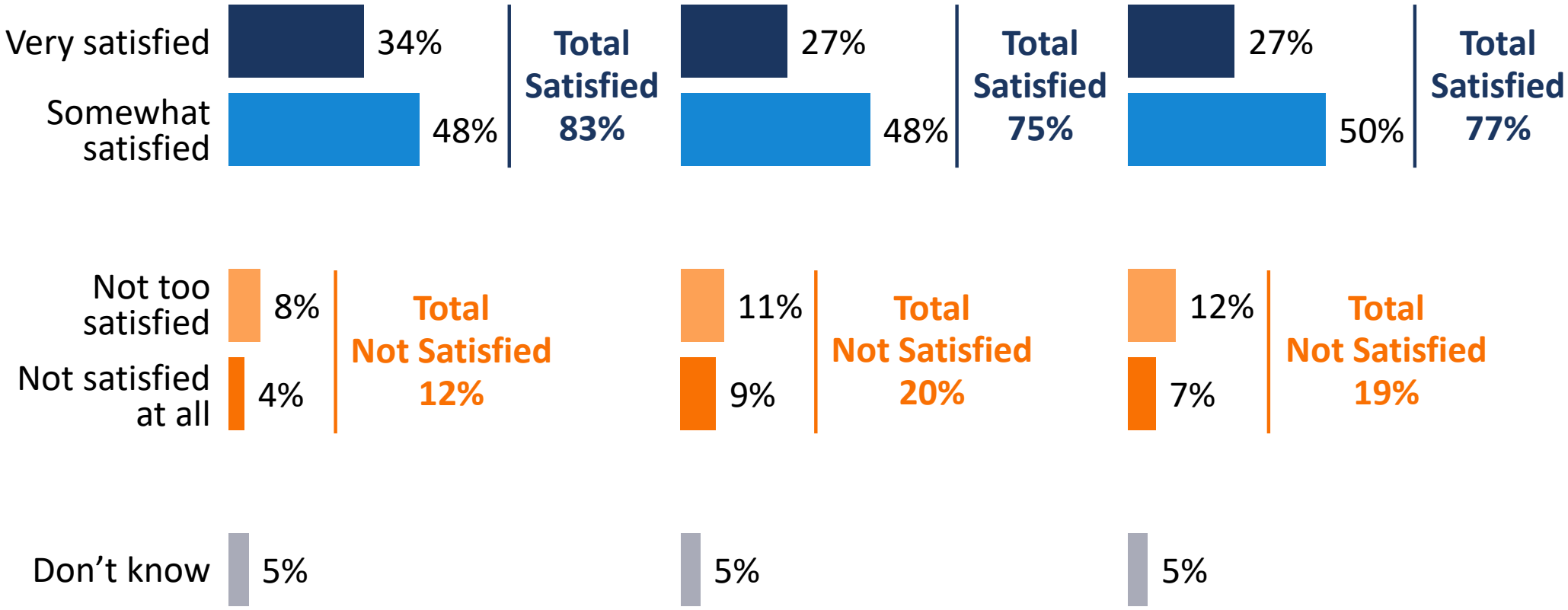
**Broad majorities by every major demographic and geographic groups value Portland's parks.**



# Three-quarters are satisfied with the quality of Portland Parks & Recreation services.

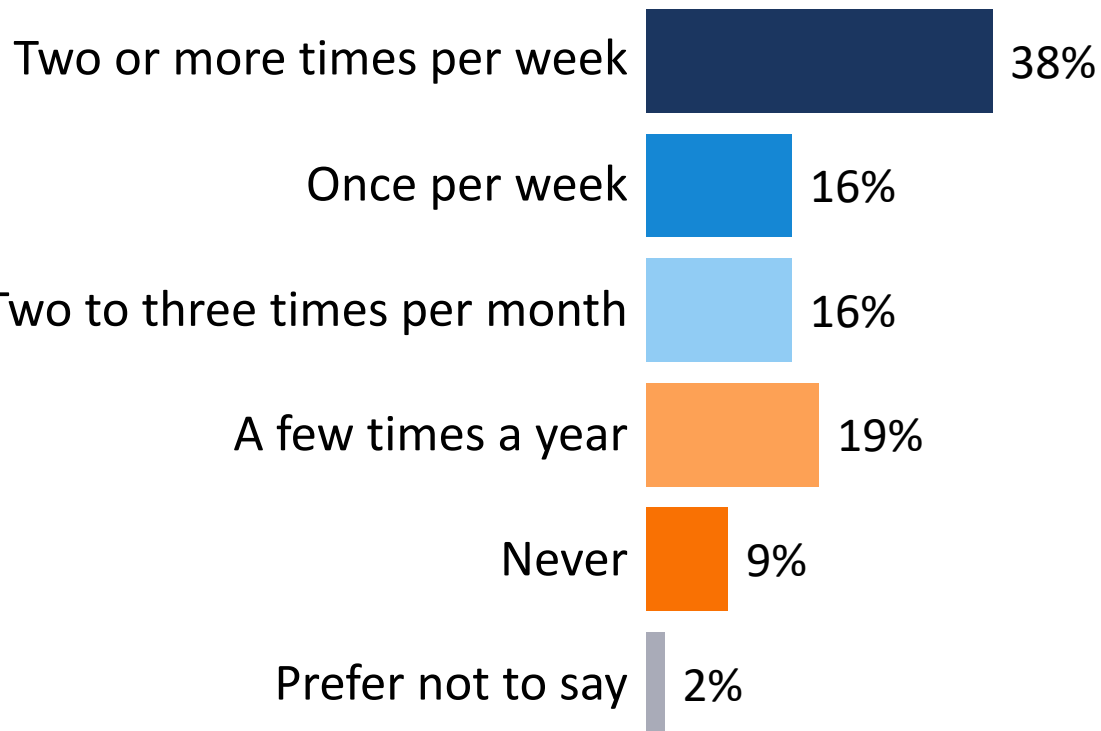
*Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the quality of services provided by Portland Parks & Recreation?*

May/June 2020      November 2023      July 2024

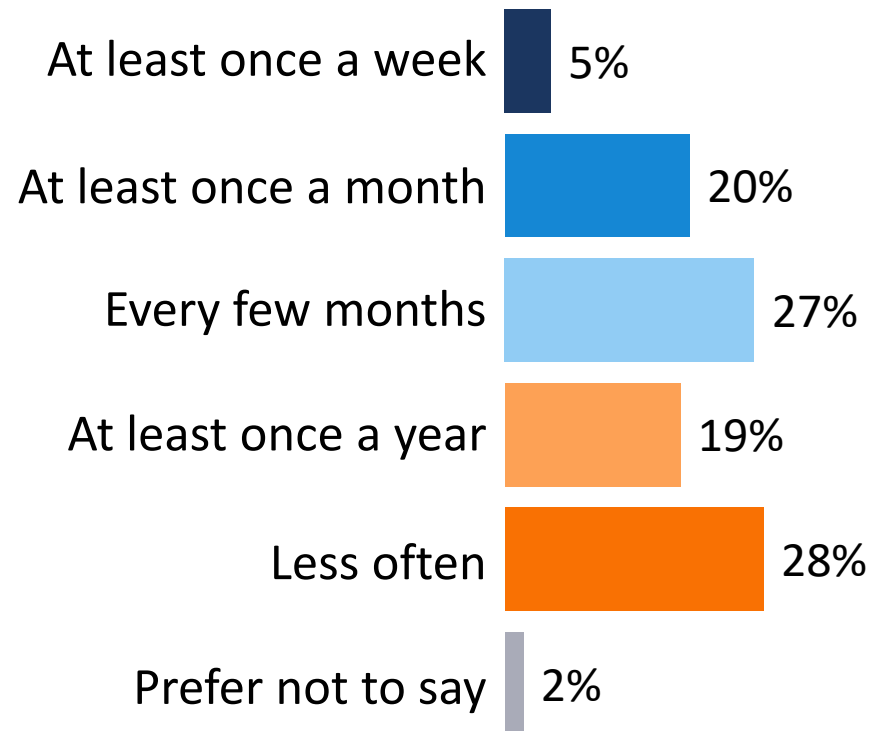


# Majorities of Portland voters visit parks, trails or community centers at least weekly.

## Park, Community Center, Pool, Trail or Natural Area Visitation



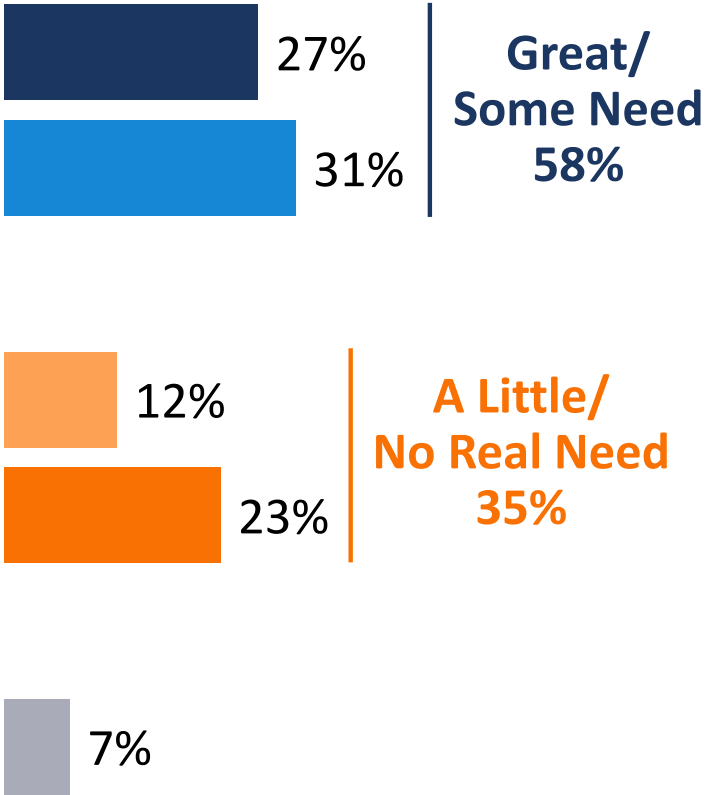
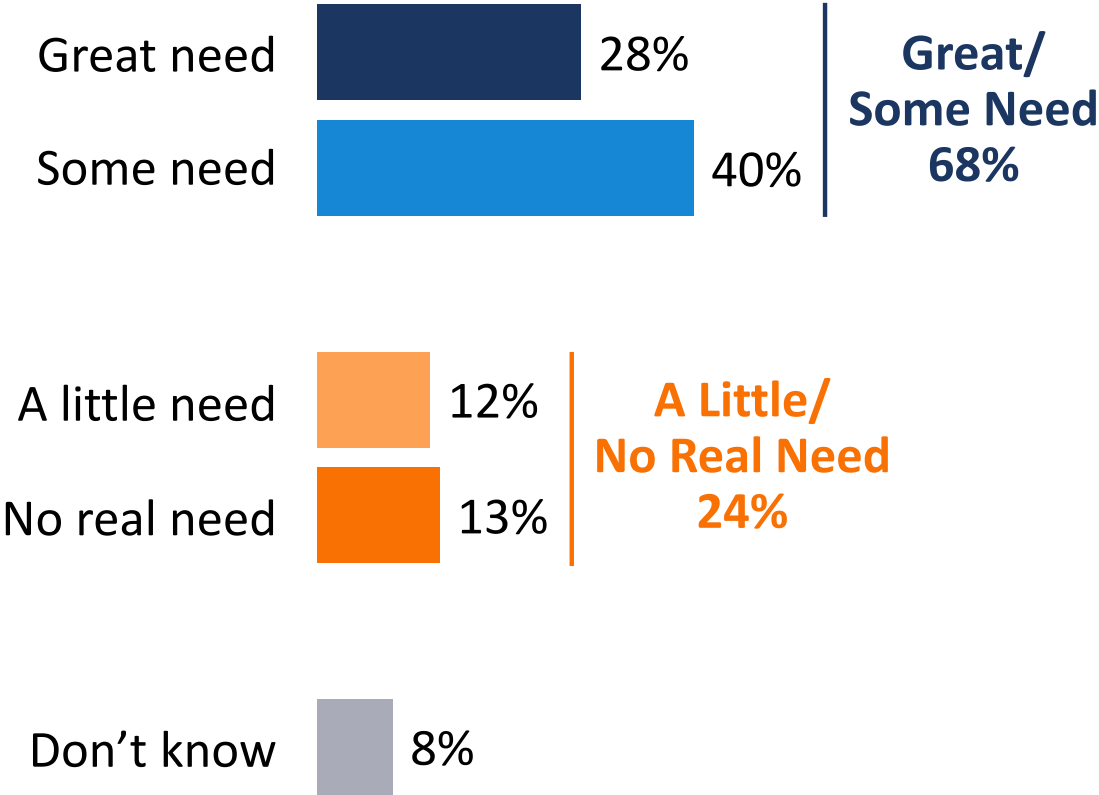
## Arts and Cultural Visitation



# More than two-thirds see a need for additional parks funding; a majority sees a need for more arts funding.

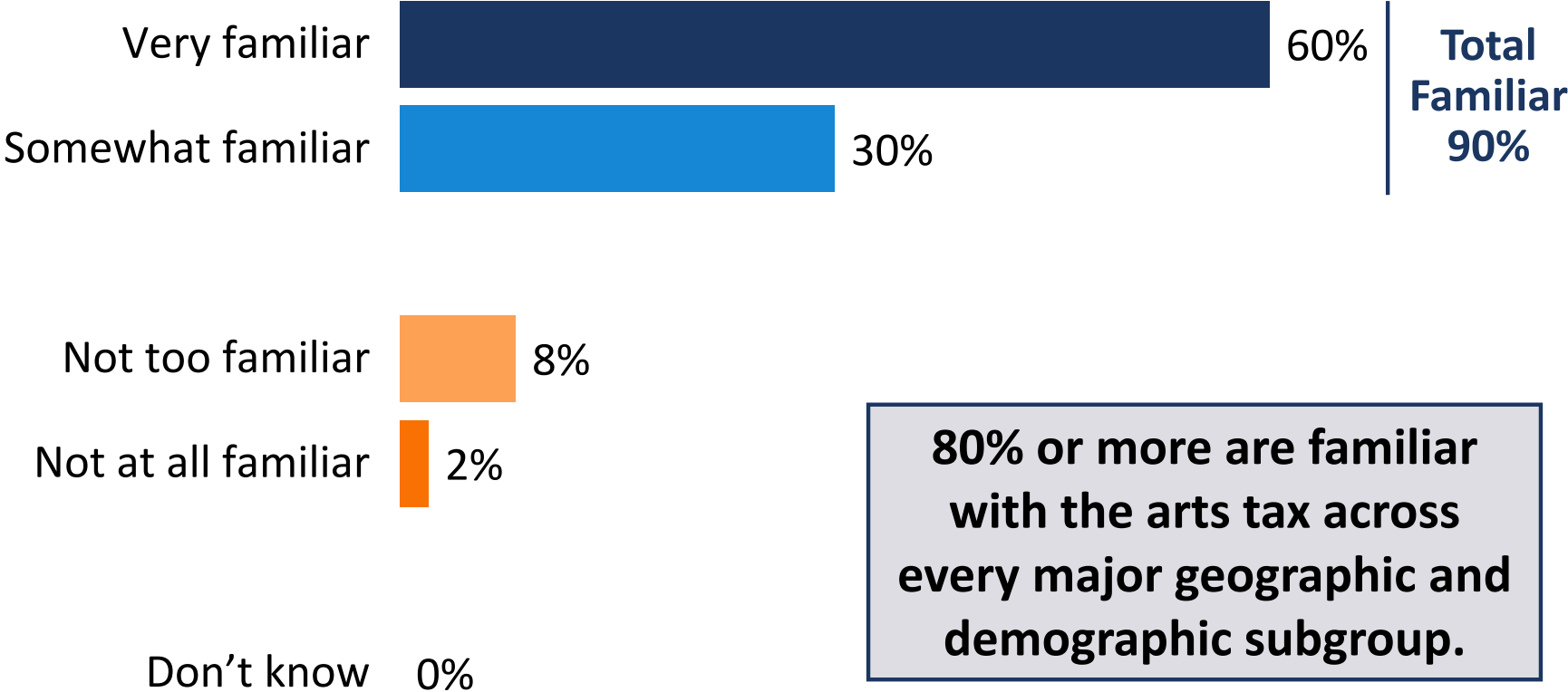
*In your personal opinion, would you say that to maintain parks and recreation services, Portland has a great need, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding?*

*Would you say that to provide funding for arts education and programs, Portland has a great need, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding?*



# Portland voters are very familiar with the Arts Education and Access Income Tax.

*How familiar are you with the Portland Arts Education and Access Income Tax, also known as the Arts Tax, which is \$35 per adult resident per year?  
(Asked of Parks + Arts Half-Sample Respondents Only)*





# **Views of a Vibrant Communities Levy Measure**

# Voters heard one of two versions of a levy – with and without funding for arts added to parks.



## Parks Only, \$1.60

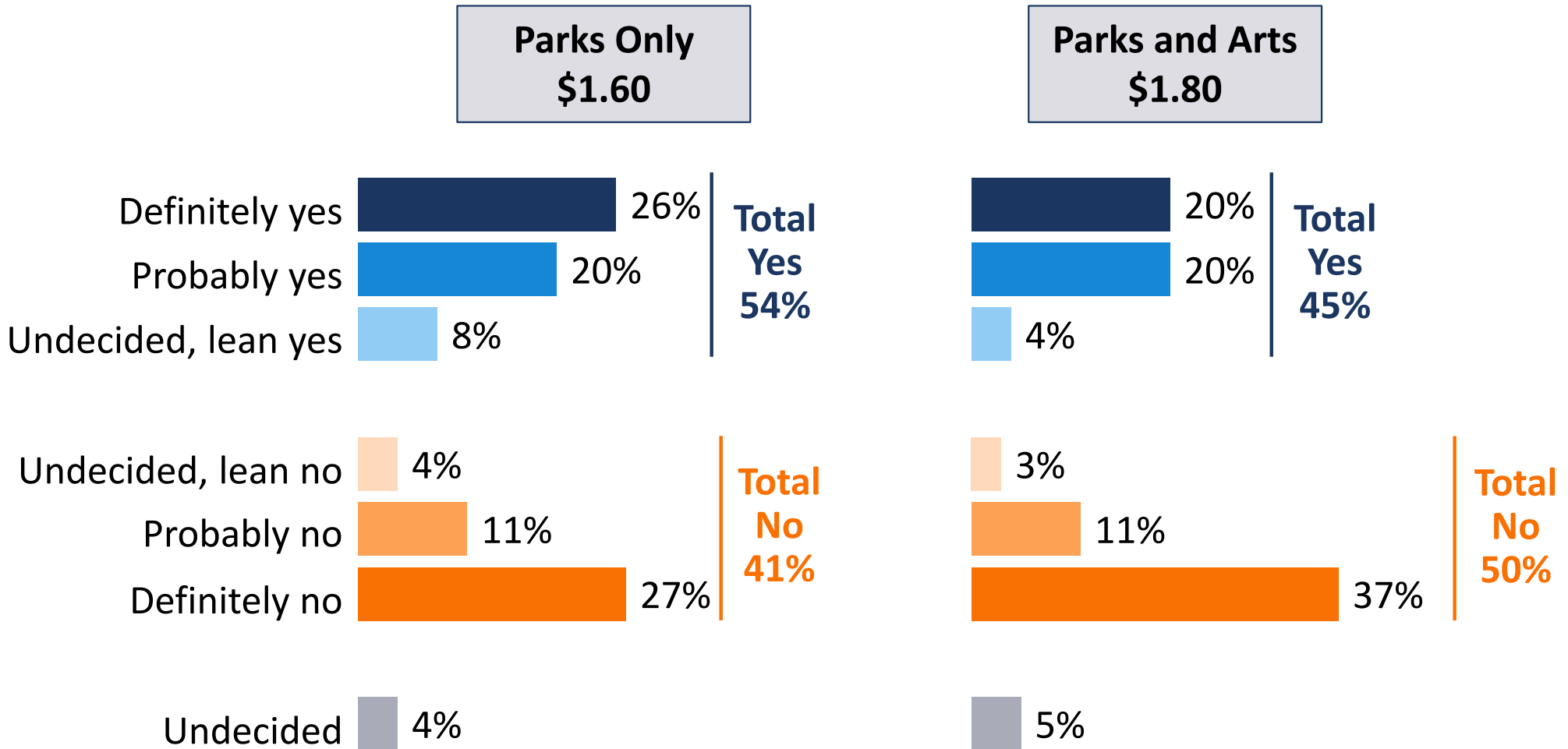
**Protect parks, nature, water, recreation through five-year operating levy.** Shall Portland deliver parks, nature, water, wildfire prevention, recreation; 5-year levy, \$1.60 per \$1,000 assessed value, beginning 2026? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than 3%.

## Parks and Arts, \$1.80

**Protect parks, nature, water, recreation, arts through five-year levy.** Shall Portland deliver parks, nature, wildfire prevention, recreation, arts; 5-year operating levy, \$1.80 per \$1,000 assessed value, beginning 2026? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than 3%.

# A levy measure without the inclusion of arts has support from a slim majority.

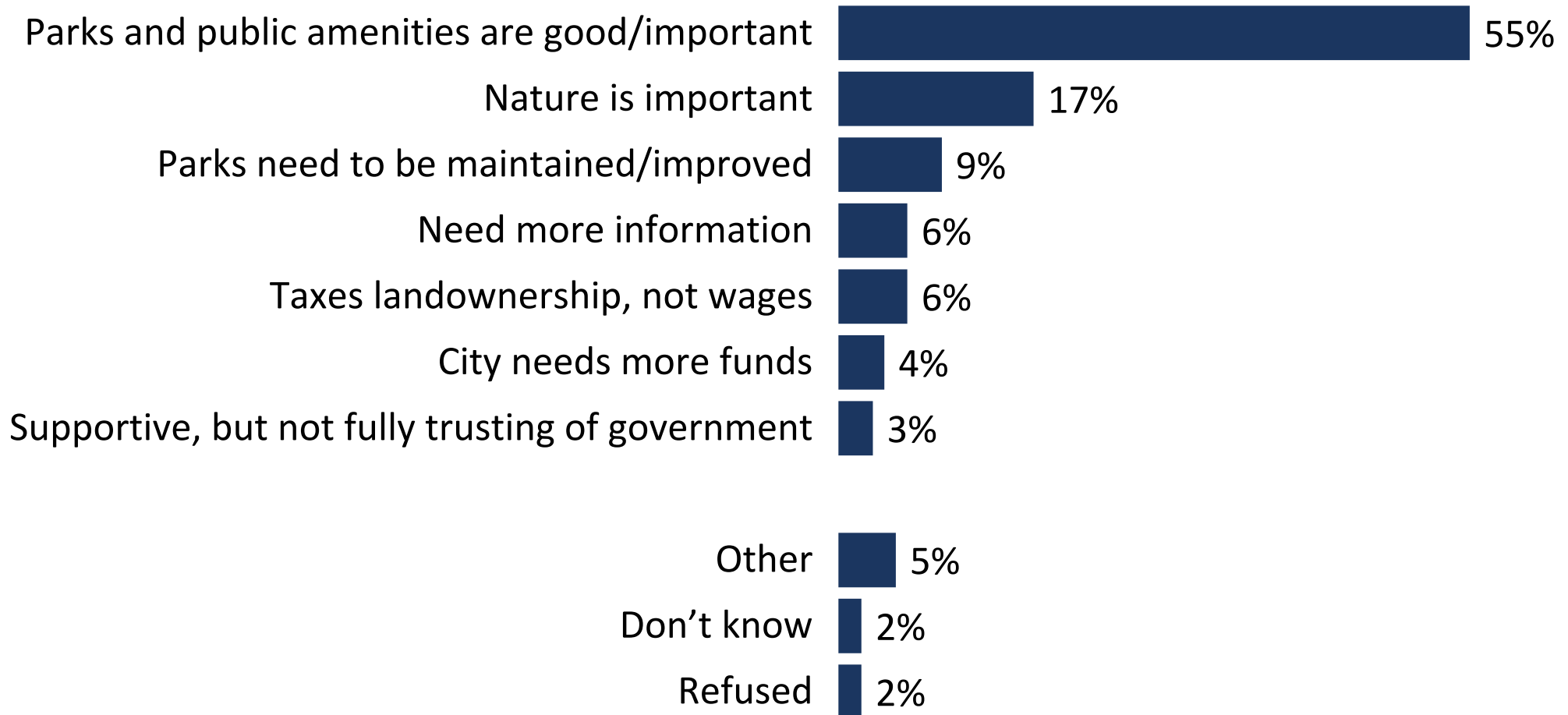
+/-5.8% Margin of Error



# Supporters of a levy generally value investments in parks and nature.

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

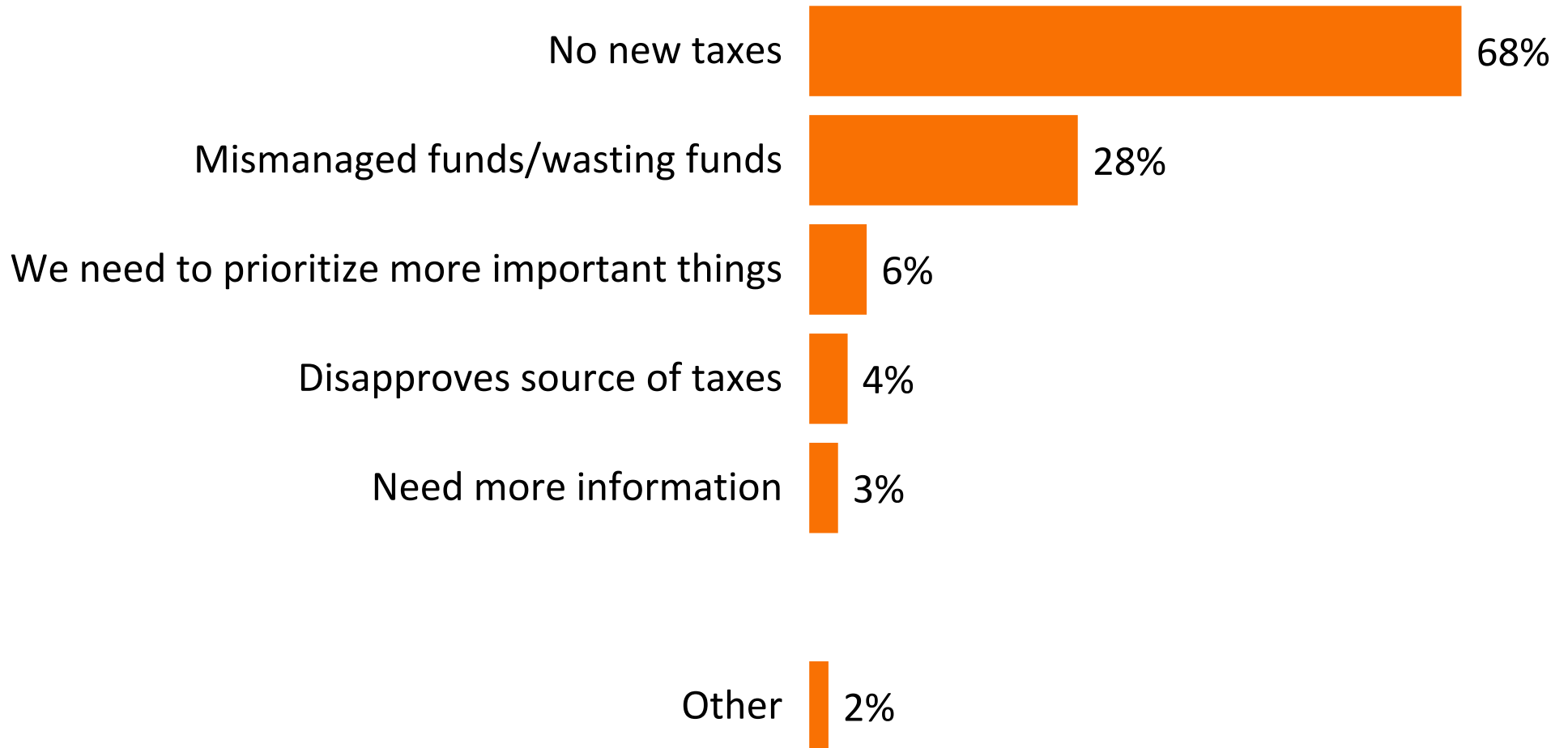
*(Open-ended; Asked of Yes Voters Only, n=330)*





# Opponents are against new taxes.

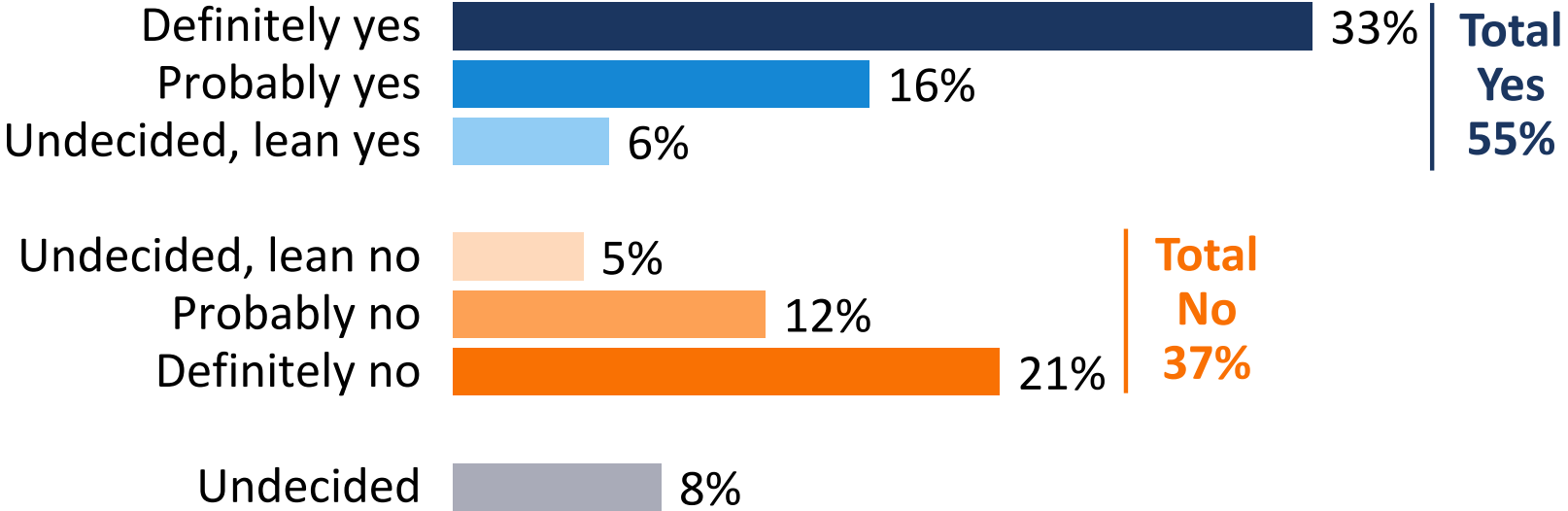
*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **NO** on this measure?  
(Open-ended; Asked of No Voters Only, n=303)*



# Voters were next asked about a straight renewal with a 25% service cut, which a majority supports.

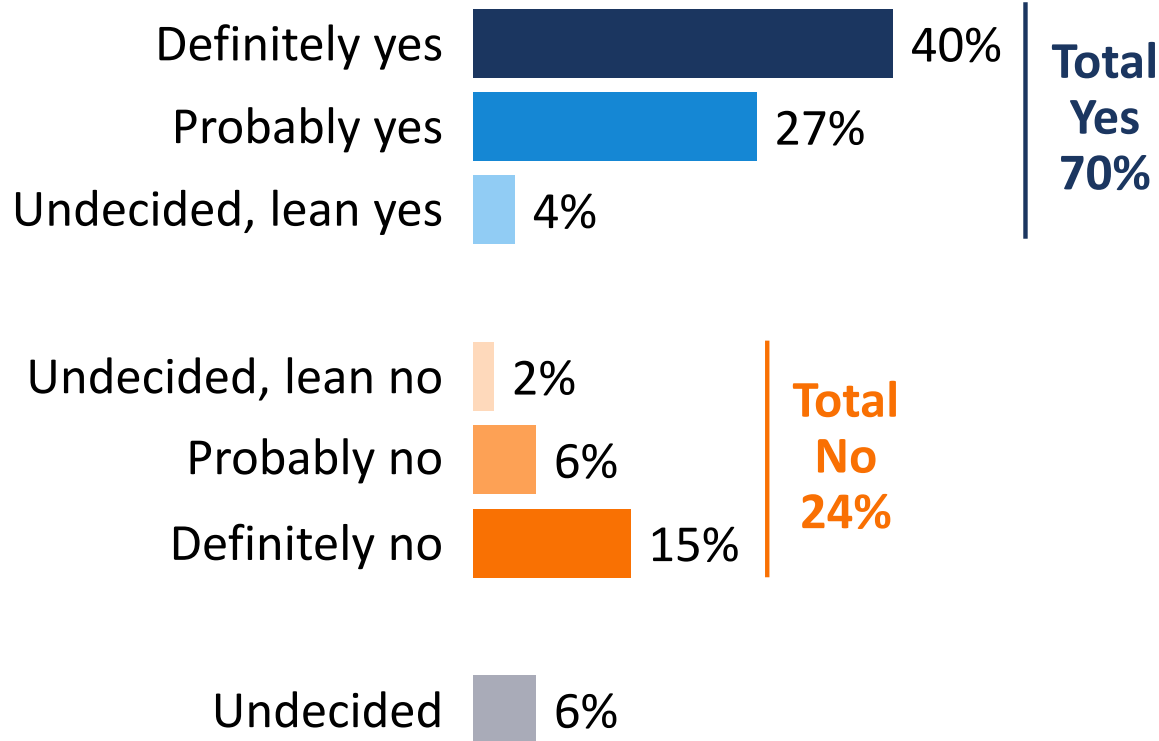
As you may know, the current Portland Parks levy is expiring after 2025. Because inflation and other factors have increased the cost of delivering services, continuing it at the current rate would require cutting programs and services. The measure you just learned about would increase the current rate to ensure that services could be provided at their current level.

If, instead of that approach, there were a measure to renew the existing Portland parks levy at its current rate of \$0.80 per \$1,000 assessed value, while cutting services by about 25%, would you vote yes or no?

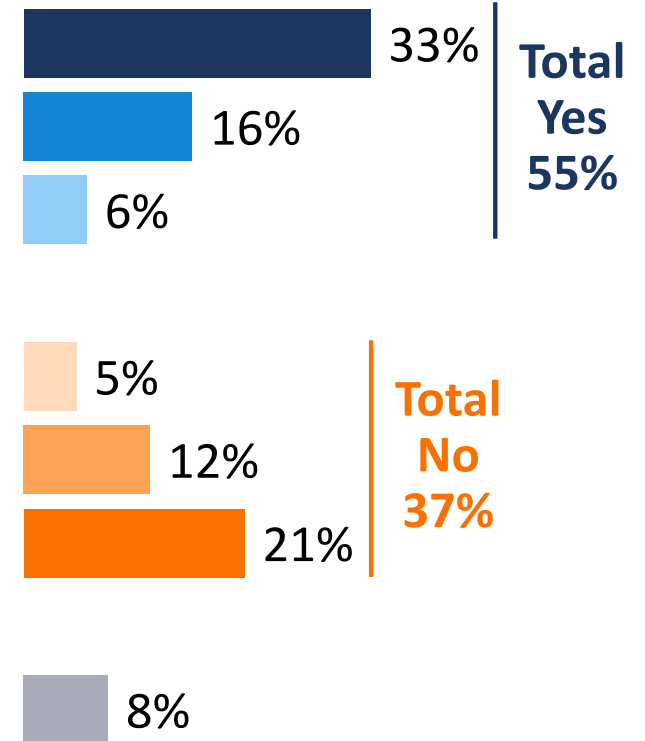


# Seven in ten supported a levy renewal in November based on ballot language alone – a cleaner test of viability than in this poll.

Renewal Label Alone  
Nov. 2023



Renewal With Explanation  
July 2024



# Prior Levy Polling and Actual Results

Poll Date	Structure	Amount per \$1,000 AV	Ballot Language Vote	Plain Lang. Vote
July 2024	Parks Only	\$1.60	54%	64%
July 2024	Parks and Arts	\$1.80	45%	61%
July 2024	Parks Only Renewal	\$0.80	--	55%
Nov. 2023	Parks Only Renewal	\$0.80	70%	76%
Nov. 2023	Parks and Fire	\$1.00	--	60%
<i>Nov. 2020</i>	<i>Parks Levy</i>	<i>\$0.80</i>	<b><i>64% Actual Vote</i></b>	
May 2020	Parks Only	\$0.80	54%	63%



# **Information About the Levy Measure**

# Voters next received a plain-language explanation of the levy.

This levy would increase the five-year operating levy to prevent cuts to Portland Parks & Recreation services and programs and to preserve and restore parks natural areas, water quality, trees and wildfire risk reduction. This includes keeping neighborhood parks clean and green; and providing life-saving swim lessons, fitness, arts, senior programs, environmental education, and a summer playground program serving free lunches to children in need.

**(ARTS HALF-SAMPLE ONLY:** It would also replace funding provided by the Portland Arts Tax, allowing that tax to end while providing ongoing funding for art teachers in public schools and grants to local arts and culture nonprofits.)

# This explanation lifts both versions of the measure, though the non-arts levy has much more intense support than the one that includes arts.

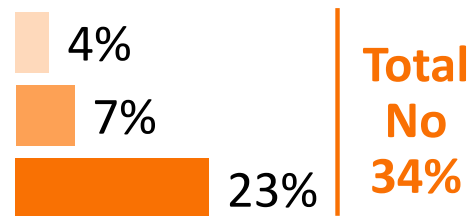
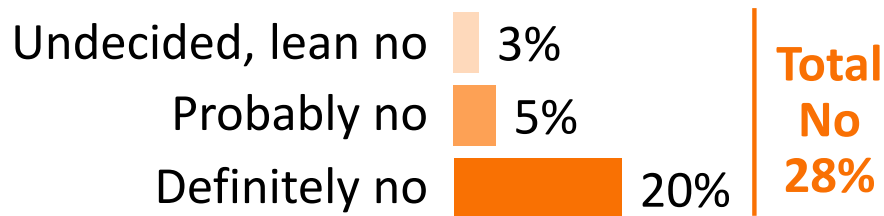
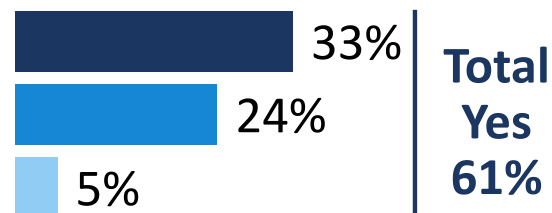
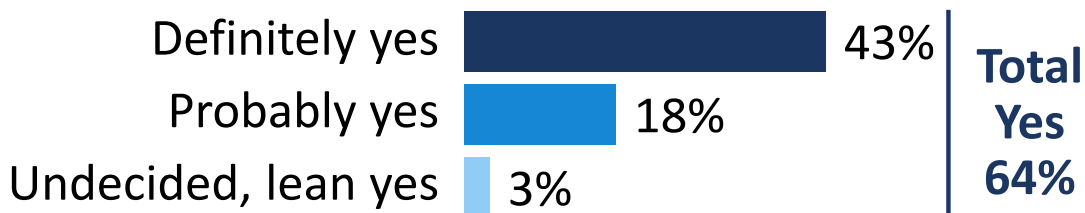
*+/-5.8% Margin of Error*



**Parks Only**



**Parks and Arts**



Undecided 7%

Undecided 5%



# **Voter Priorities and Willingness to Pay**

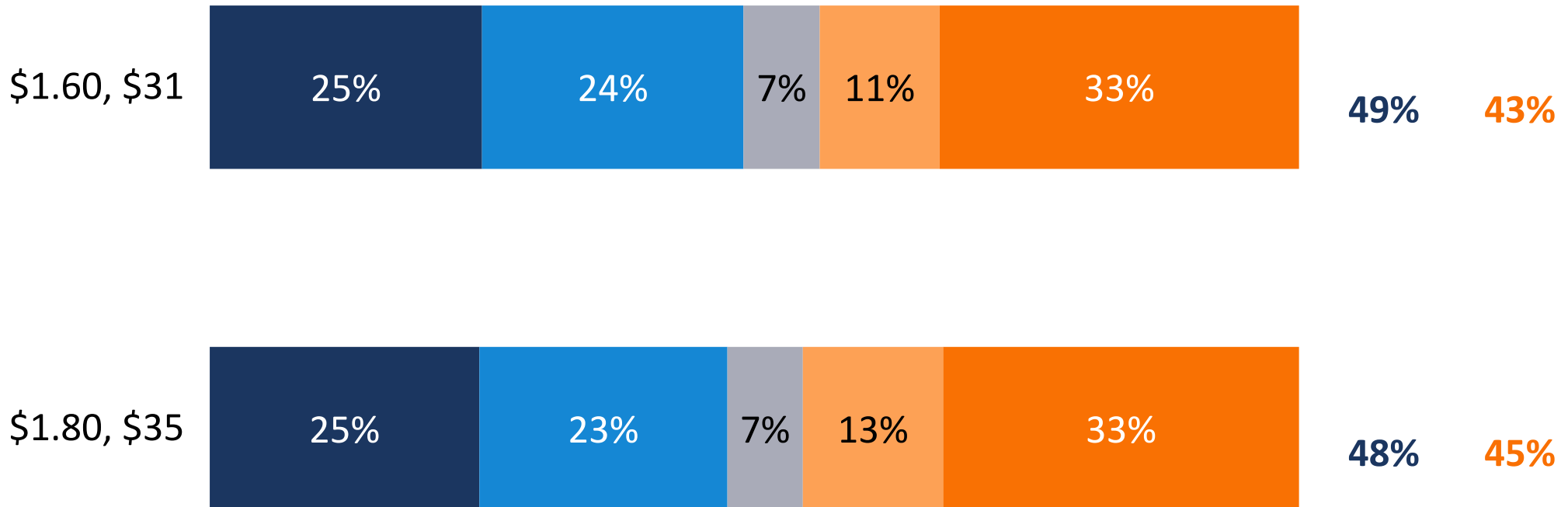


# Just looking at household impact cost, more voters are willing than unwilling to pay.

Would you be willing or unwilling to support a levy for Portland parks, nature, water, wildfire prevention, recreation, (**ARTS HALF-SAMPLE ONLY: arts**), and water if it were for \_\_\_ per \$1,000 assessed value, or \_\_\_ per month for the median residential homeowner?

■ Very Will. 
 ■ Smwt. Will. 
 ■ Don't Know 
 ■ Smwt. Unwill. 
 ■ Very Unwill.

Total Will.
Total Unwill.



# Given the choice, a plurality wants to increase the levy to avoid service cuts.

Please indicate which statement comes closest to your opinion — even if it's hard to decide.

■ Increase ■ Current Rate ■ Expire ■ Don't Know

We should increase the parks levy rate so that we can continue parks services, programs, and operational maintenance at current levels **47%**

**OR**

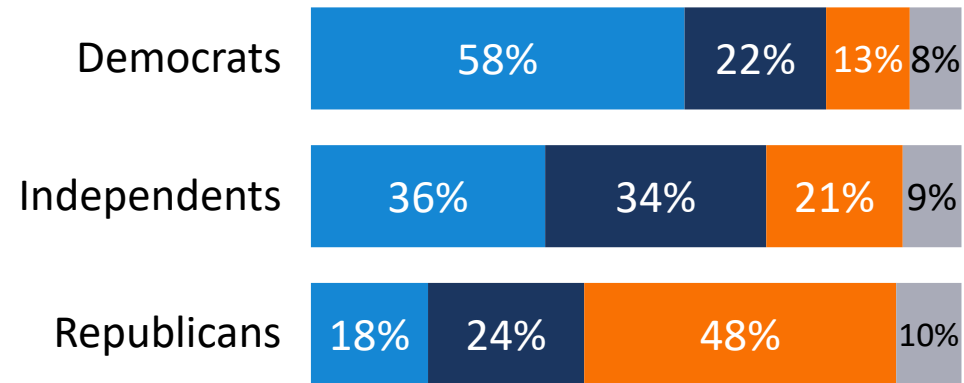
We should continue the parks levy at its current rate, even if that means cutting parks services, programs, and operational maintenance by 25% **26%**

**OR**

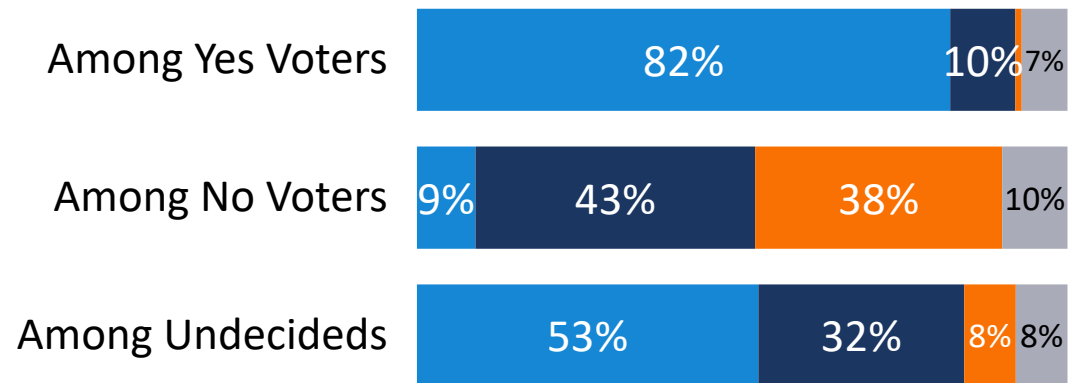
We should let the parks levy expire, even if that means cutting parks services, programs, and operational maintenance by half **18%**

Don't know **8%**

## Party



## Initial Vote

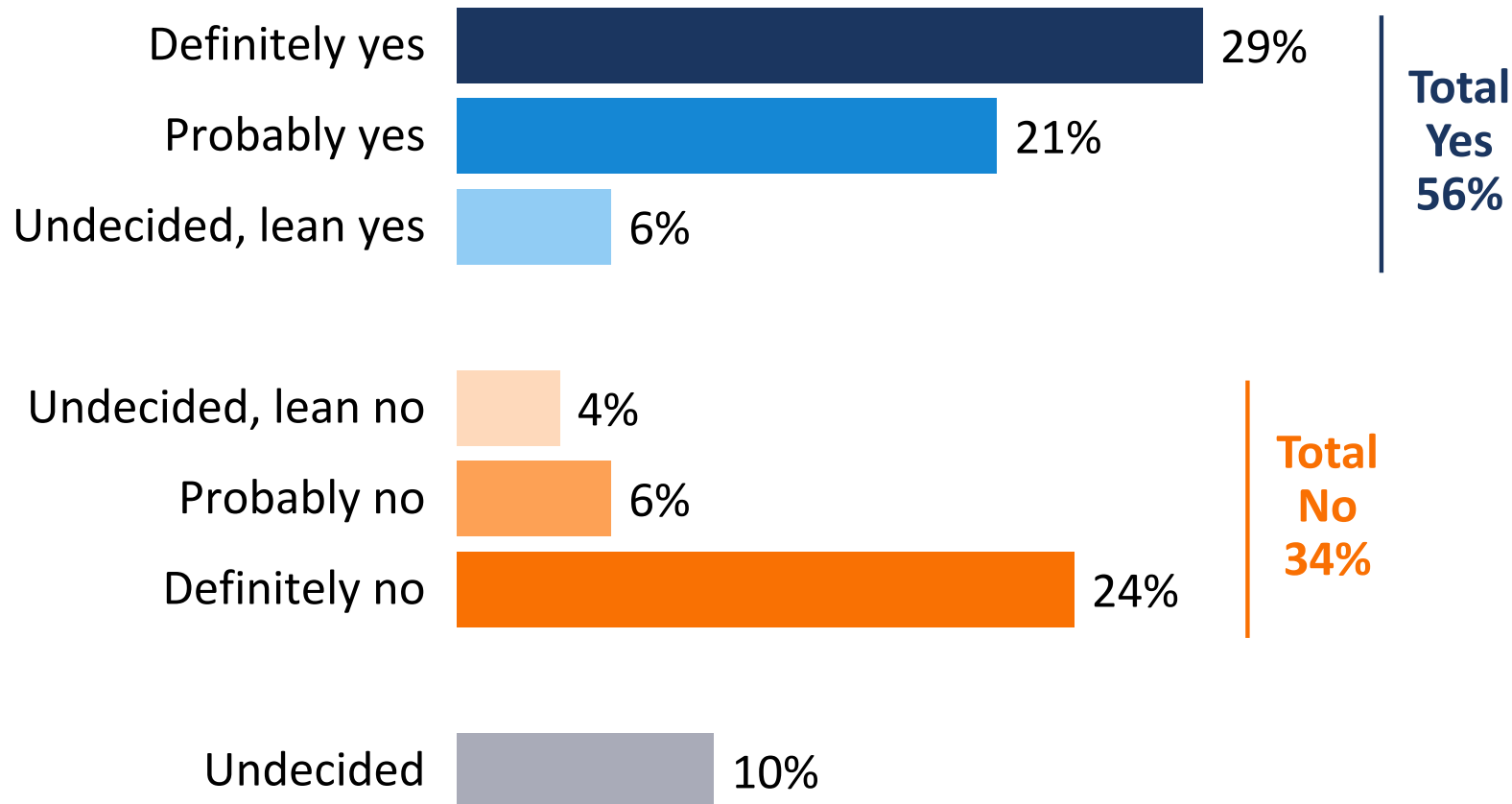




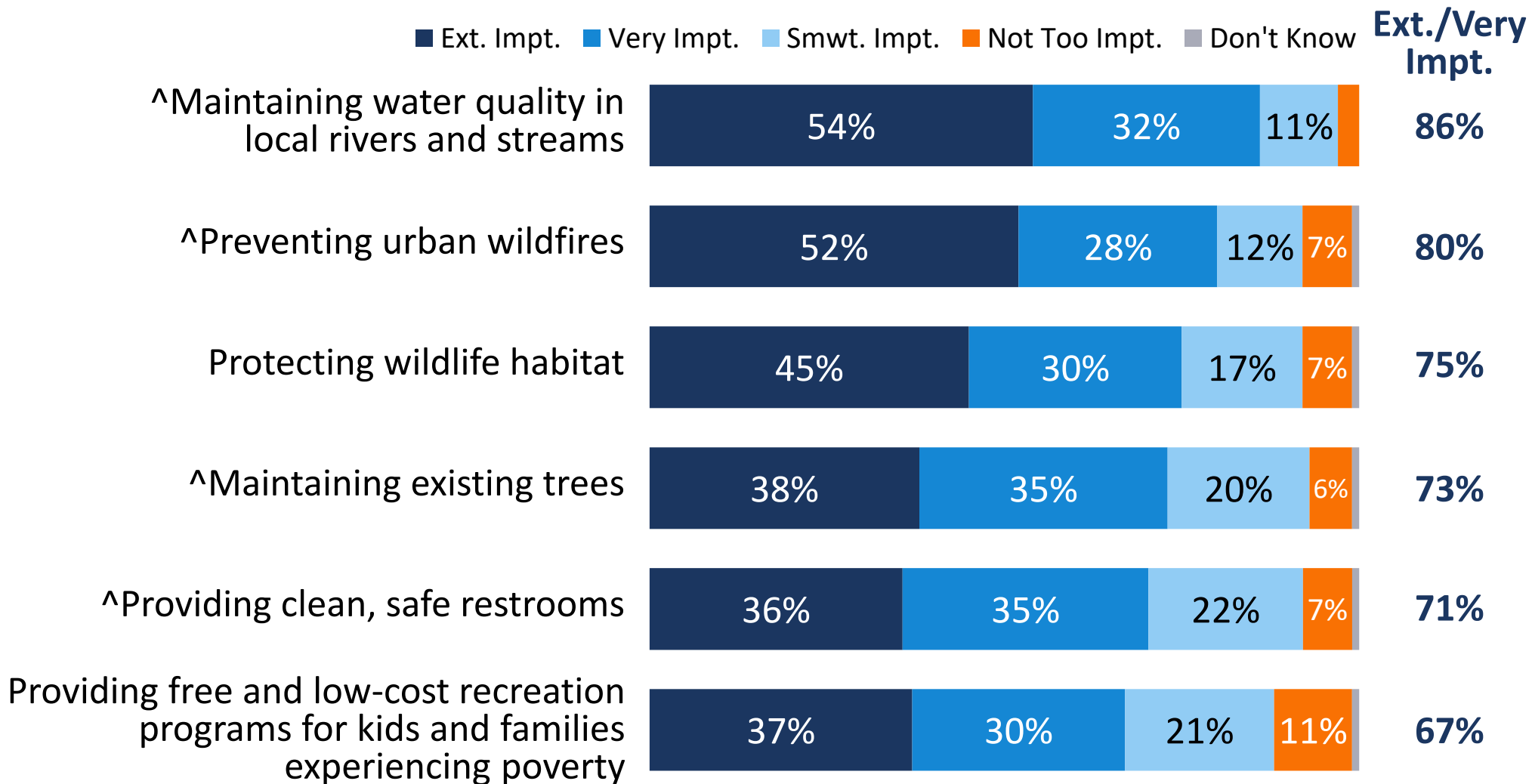
# A majority would support an increase that replaces the Arts Tax.

*Because the parks and arts tax levy would provide funding for the arts, there could be a companion measure on the ballot at the same time that would repeal the Arts Tax. If the Arts Tax was replaced, would you vote yes or no on the Parks Levy measure you learned about earlier with Arts added to it?*

*(Parks and Arts Half Sample Only, +/-5.8% Margin of Error)*



# Voters' top priorities for a measure include maintaining water quality, preventing wildfires and protecting wildlife habitat.

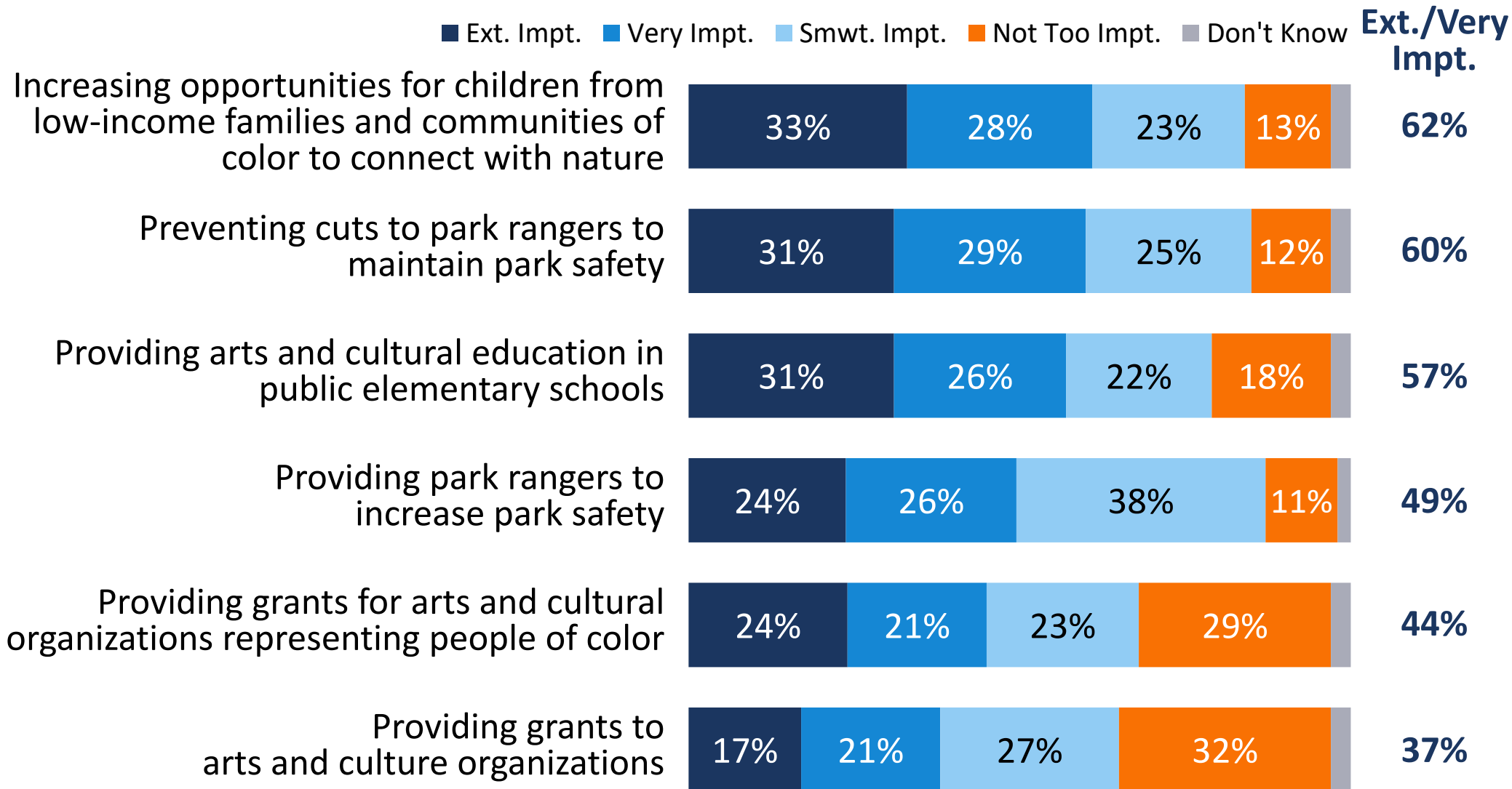


# Broad shares value field trips and senior programs, though with less intensity.

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



# Arts-focused items are less important, relatively speaking.



# The levy measure without arts funding has broader support at each point in the survey.

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