








# San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency 2023 Community Survey

*Key Findings of a Study Conducted February 10-20, 2023*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY

# Survey Methodology

<b>Dates</b>	February 10-20, 2023
<b>Survey Type</b>	Dual-mode Voter Survey
<b>Research Population</b>	San Francisco Voters
<b>Total Interviews</b>	884
<b>Margin of Sampling Error</b>	±3.5% at the 95% Confidence Level
<b>Contact Methods</b>	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
<b>Data Collection Modes</b>	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
<b>Languages</b>	English, Spanish & Chinese

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



# Perceptions and Use of Muni

# Three in five approve of the SFMTA and Muni's performance, regardless of which name is used.

*I am going to mention a few organizations within City government. Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the job they are doing.*

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

**Total Appr.** **Total Disappr.**



The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, also known as SFMTA



**63%** **32%**



The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, also known as Muni



**62%** **34%**



BART



**58%** **27%**



Caltrain



**46%** **13%**



^San Francisco city government








**35%** **59%**

**71% of riders approve of the job being done by SFMTA compared to 48% of non-riders.**

# Approval ratings for Muni have declined slightly, while those for SFMTA have remained consistent.

Total Approve

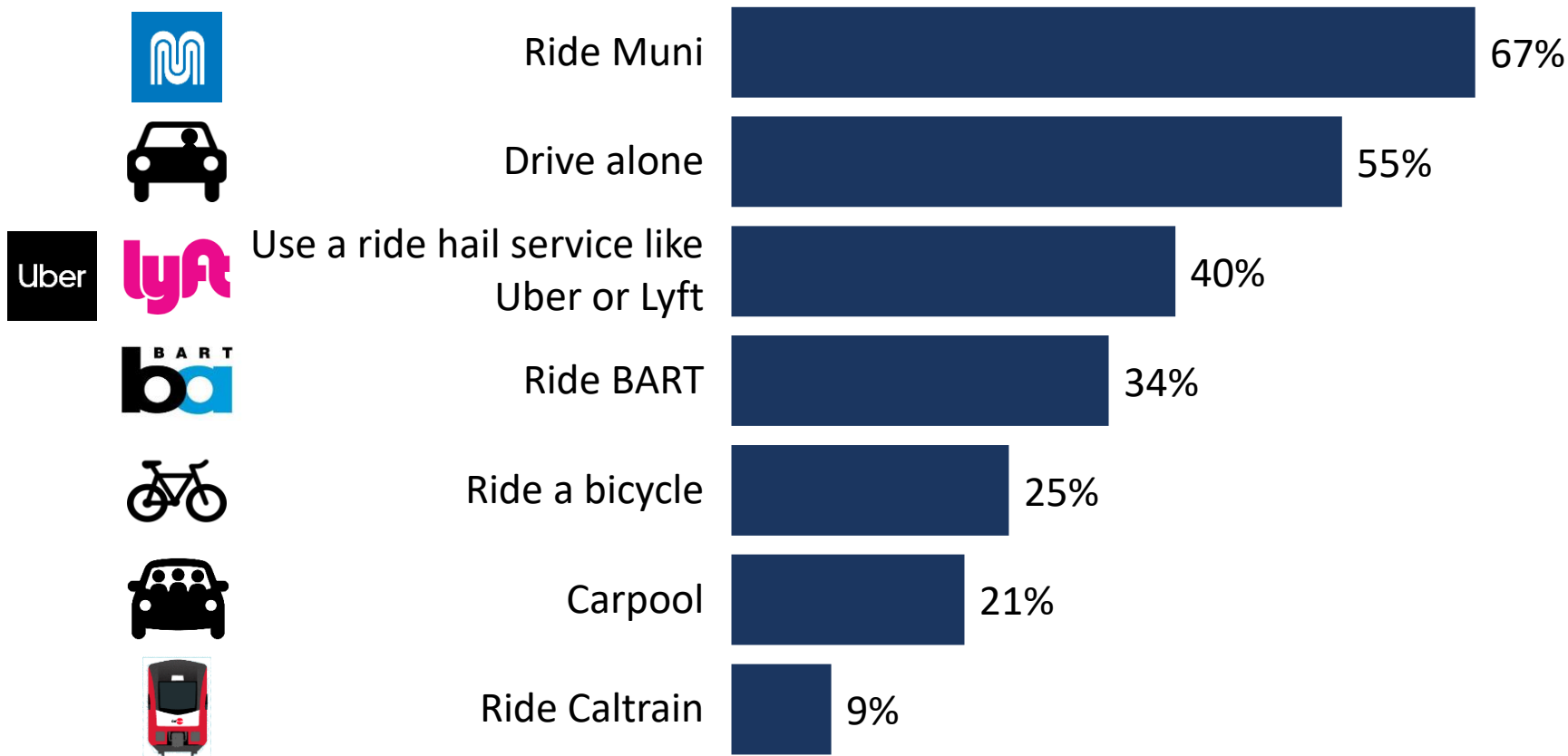
Person/Organization		2021	2023	Difference
	The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, also known as SFMTA	64%	63%	-1%
	BART	60%	58%	-2%
	Caltrain	49%	46%	-3%
	The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, also known as Muni	69%	62%	-7%
	^San Francisco city government	59%	35%	-24%

71% of riders approve of the job being done by SFMTA compared to 48% of non-riders.

Q1. I am going to mention a few organizations within City government. Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the job they are doing.  
 ^Not Part of Split Sample

# Two-thirds of respondents ride Muni at least 2-3 times per week.

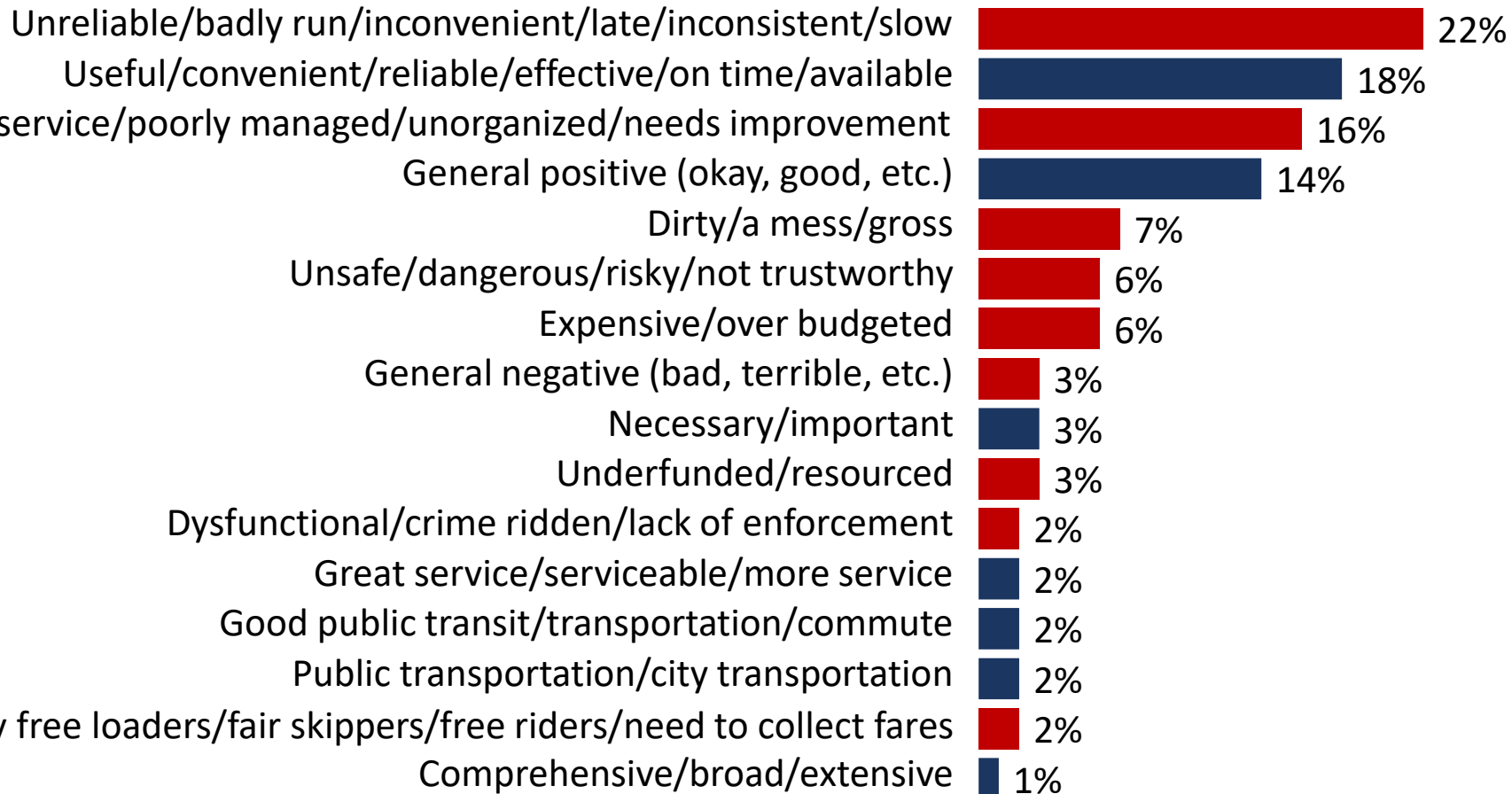
*Do you regularly, at least 2 or 3 times per week, use any of the following modes of transportation? By that I mean for any purpose, including commuting to school or work, running errands, or recreation.*



# Respondents describe SFMTA as both unreliable and slow and as useful and convenient at similar rates.

*If you had to describe the SFMTA or Muni in 1 or 2 of your own words, how would you describe it?*

*(Open-ended; Asked of Half Sample Only, n=442)*



# Verbatim Comments Describing Muni

Mostly convenient, but not totally dependable

It is dirty, drivers are rude, rules are not enforced. It is becoming more inconvenient by the day.

A comprehensive public transportation system. I live on the F line and I thought that making Market Street only for transportation vehicles would improve scheduled service.

Not really convenient, especially for seniors with mobility issues.

Necessary and useful, could be more efficient.

I ride Muni daily and mostly I'm happy with it.

Underfunded but good.

Undersupported, underappreciated.

Dysfunctional, unreliable and corrupt.

Unsafe!!! I've been riding Muni since 1991 and it has never been this scary!! Get the cops on every bus.

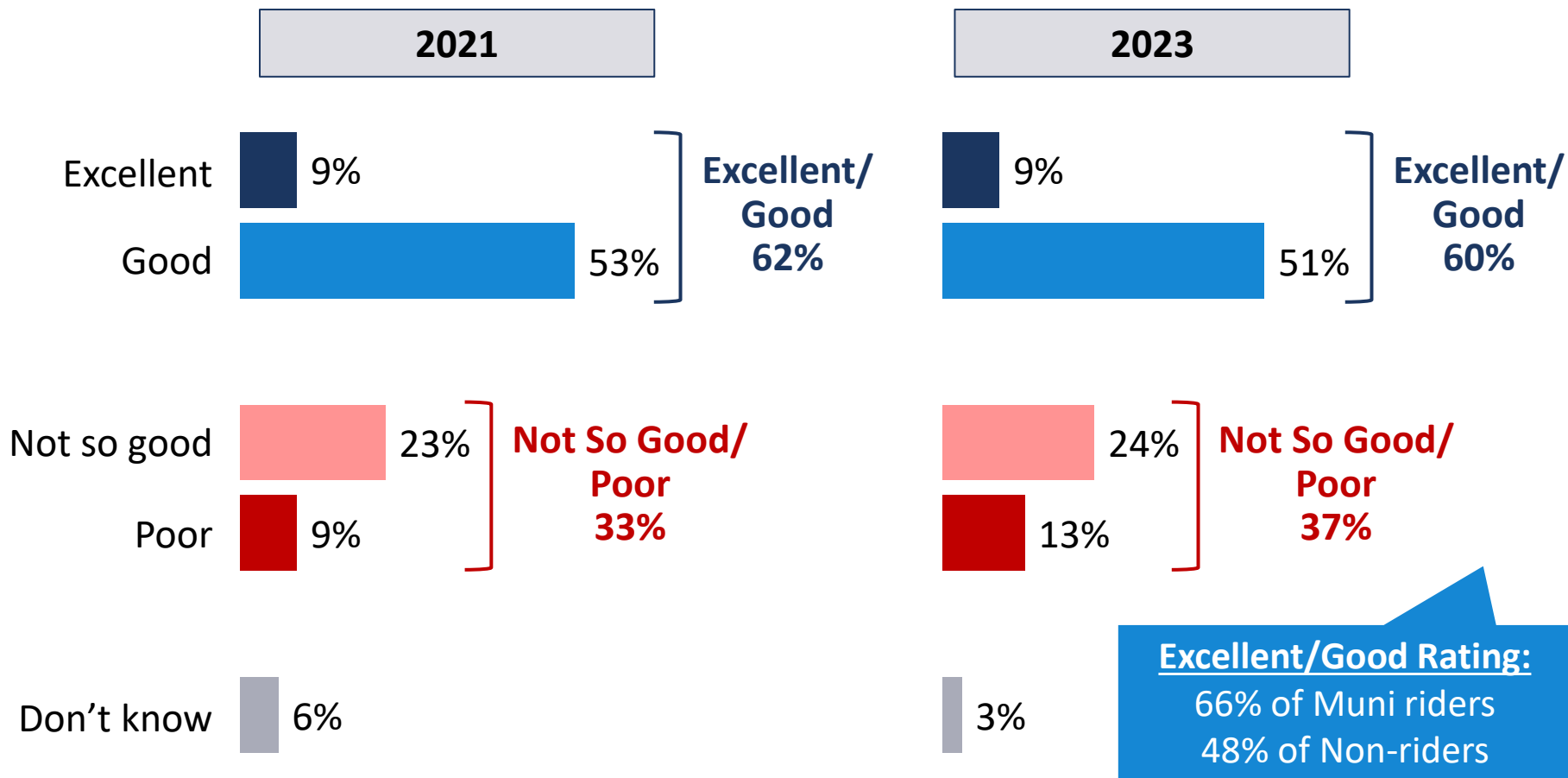
Very expensive for most people. Better than most large cities.

More functional than most other big cities.



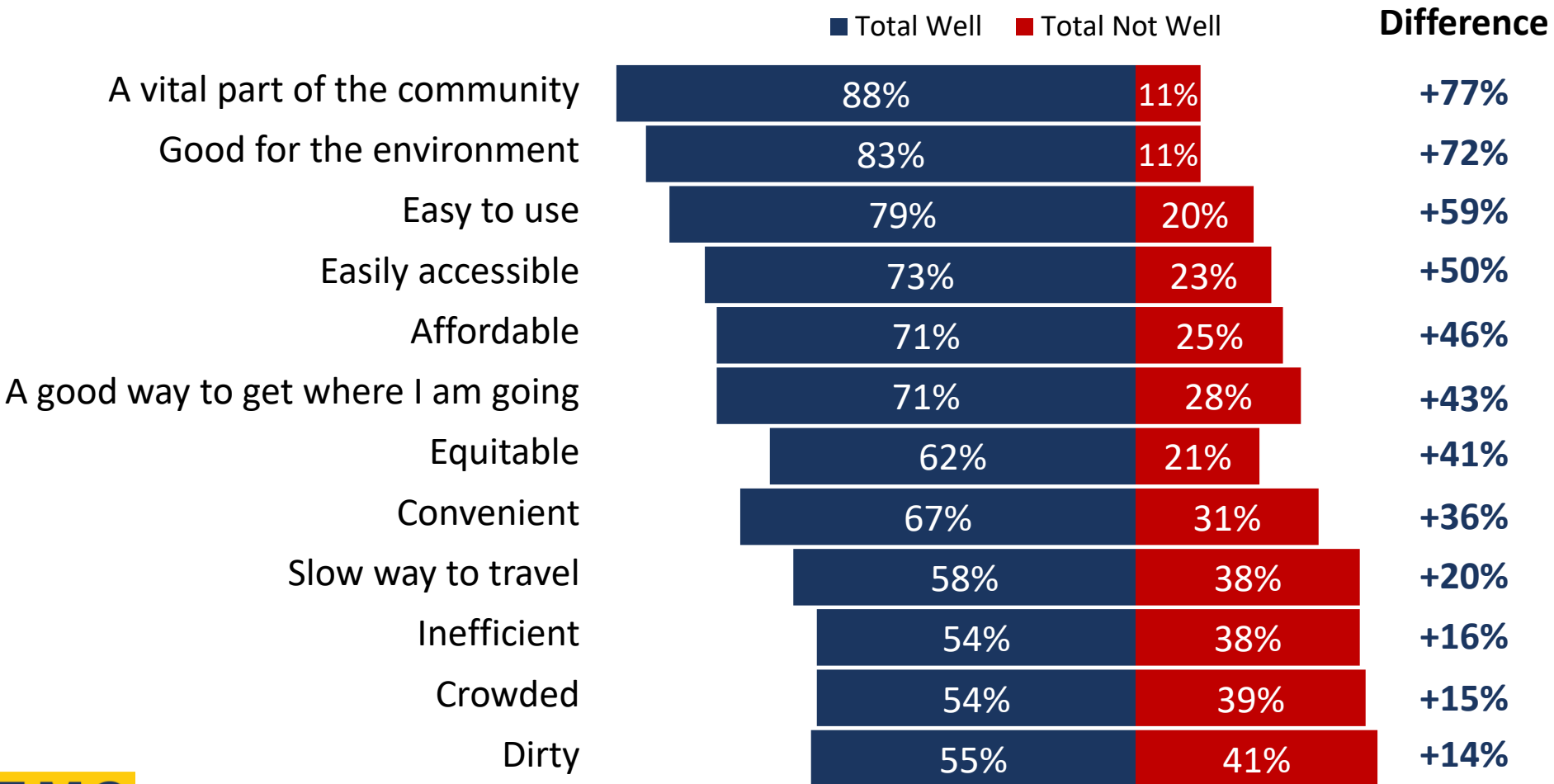
# Three in five say Muni service is at least “good,” but few say it is “excellent.”

*How would you rate the quality of Muni’s service— is it excellent, good, not so good or poor?*

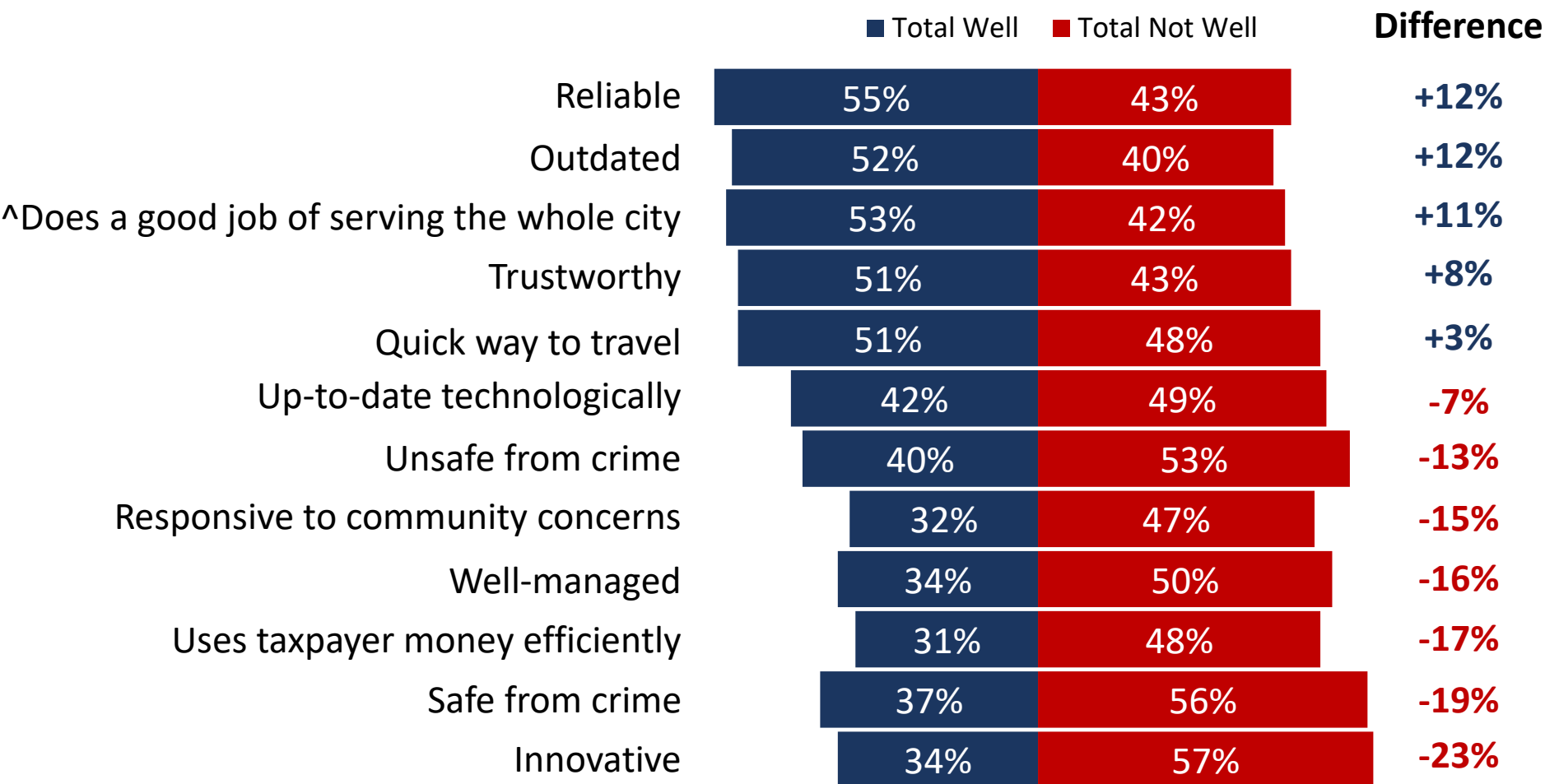


# SFMTA is seen as “a vital part of the community,” “good for the environment” and “easy to use.”

*Here is a series of words and phrases that someone might use to describe SFMTA and Muni. Please tell me if it describes SFMTA and Muni as an organization very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not at all well.*



# Respondents most often say that “safe from crime” and “innovative” do *not* describe SFMTA and Muni well.



# Perceptions of Muni management, responsiveness and trustworthiness have worsened.

*Total Well*

Word/Phrase	2021	2023	Difference
Inefficient	51%	54%	+3%
*Quick way to travel	48%	51%	+3%
Good for the environment	82%	83%	+1%
Outdated	51%	52%	+1%
Affordable	71%	71%	0%
Easy to use	83%	79%	-4%
A vital part of the community	92%	88%	-4%
Dirty	60%	55%	-5%
Safe from crime	42%	37%	-5%
Easily accessible	78%	73%	-5%
Innovative	40%	34%	-6%
Convenient	74%	67%	-7%
Reliable	62%	55%	-7%
Uses taxpayer money efficiently	38%	31%	-7%
^Does a good job of serving the whole city	63%	53%	-10%
Well-managed	44%	34%	-10%
Responsive to community concerns	42%	32%	-10%
Crowded	66%	54%	-12%
Trustworthy	63%	51%	-12%
Up-to-date technologically	55%	42%	-13%

# Riders have more positive views than non-riders, particularly in terms of Muni as a good way to get where they are going.

*Total Well*

Word/Phrase	All Respondents	Non-Riders	Riders
A vital part of the community	88%	79%	93%
Good for the environment	83%	77%	87%
Easy to use	79%	67%	85%
Easily accessible	73%	65%	76%
Affordable	71%	69%	72%
A good way to get where I am going	71%	50%	83%
Convenient	67%	57%	71%
Equitable	62%	55%	66%
Slow way to travel	58%	64%	55%
Reliable	55%	48%	58%
Dirty	55%	64%	51%
Crowded	54%	42%	60%

# Muni riders are more positive about the job it does connecting the city and are more likely to say it is a quick way to travel.

Total Well

Word/Phrase	All Respondents	Non-Riders	Riders
Inefficient	54%	62%	50%
Does a good job of serving the whole city	53%	41%	59%
Outdated	52%	59%	47%
Trustworthy	51%	44%	54%
Quick way to travel	51%	35%	60%
Up-to-date technologically	42%	38%	43%
Unsafe from crime	40%	35%	43%
Safe from crime	37%	31%	41%
Well-managed	34%	26%	38%
Innovative	34%	29%	36%
Responsive to community concerns	32%	27%	35%

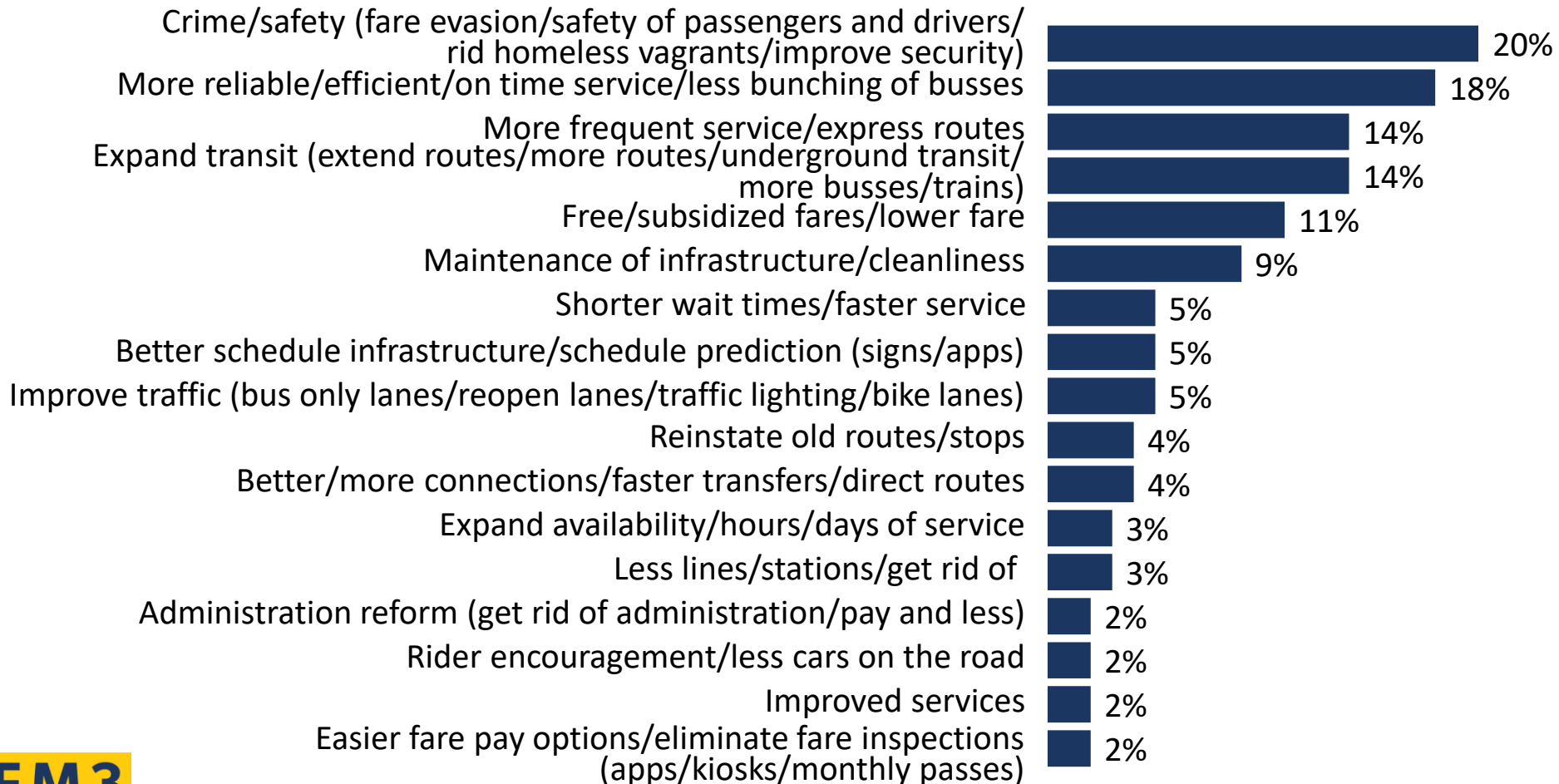


# Project Priorities

# Respondents most want to see crime addressed and improved reliability and frequency.

*What's the most important change you would like to see made to Muni and transportation in San Francisco?*

*(Open-ended; Asked of Half Sample Only, n=442)*





# Verbatim Comments Describing Priorities

I wish Muni was more connected in the city. I can get to most places, but usually have to make a lot of transfers for some neighborhoods.

Routes and timing are genuinely terrible. It takes longer to get places on public transportation here than driving or even walking sometimes.

More efficient routes and faster transit time through rapid bus transit/dedicated lanes and redrafting of routes to reflect actual, recent traffic flow.

More light-rail line options.

Arrive on time and according to schedule.

I love Muni but sadly a small minority of poorly-behaved people ruin the experience for other passengers and trash Muni infrastructure. Dealing with these people is the #1 thing Muni could do to attract new passengers and improve the experience for existing riders.

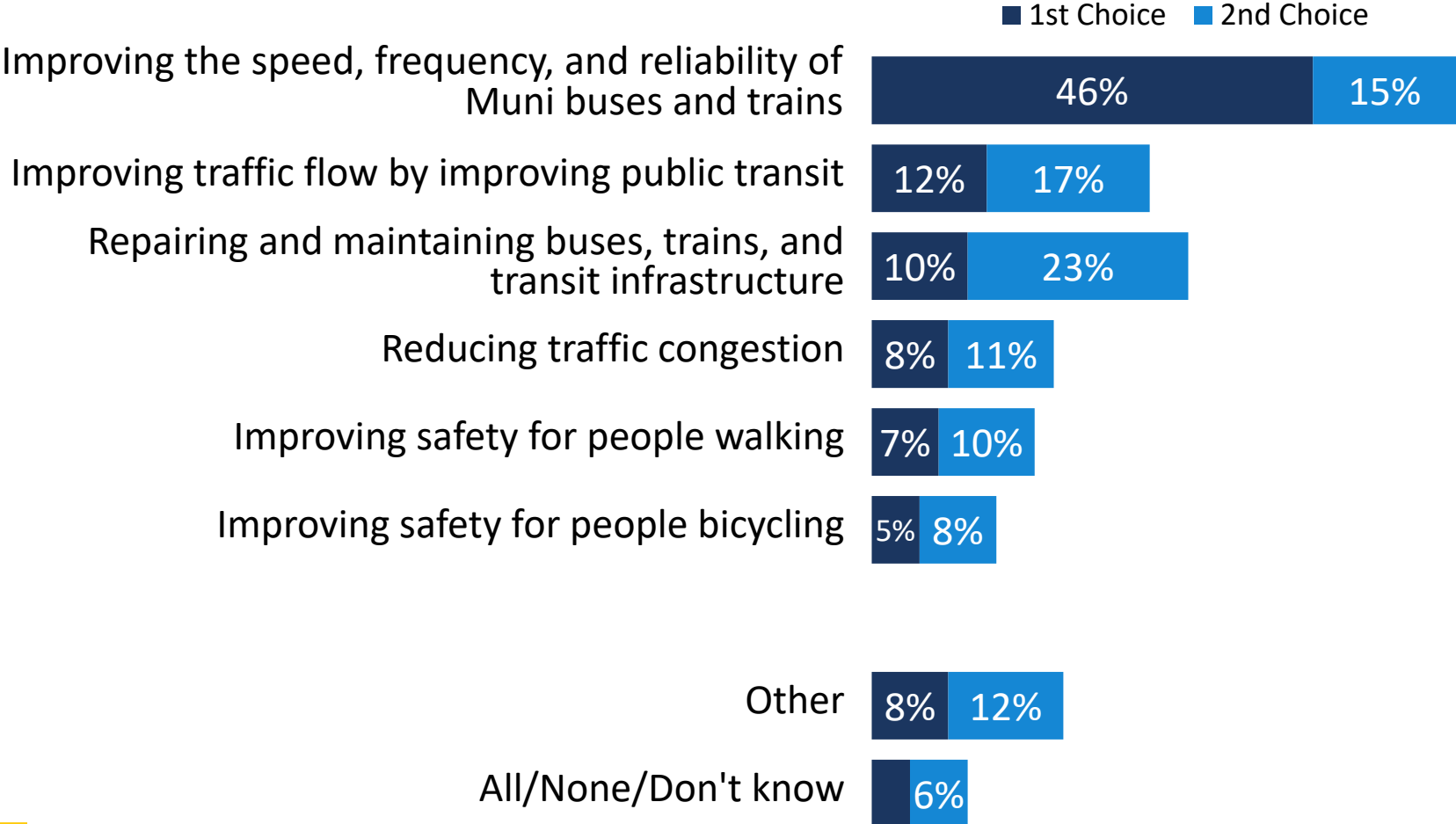
We need real-time schedules that work.

Address use of services by those with mental illness, who are often creating biological hazards and disrupting experience.

Direct service from the Outer Richmond district to the Ferry Building and to Caltrain.

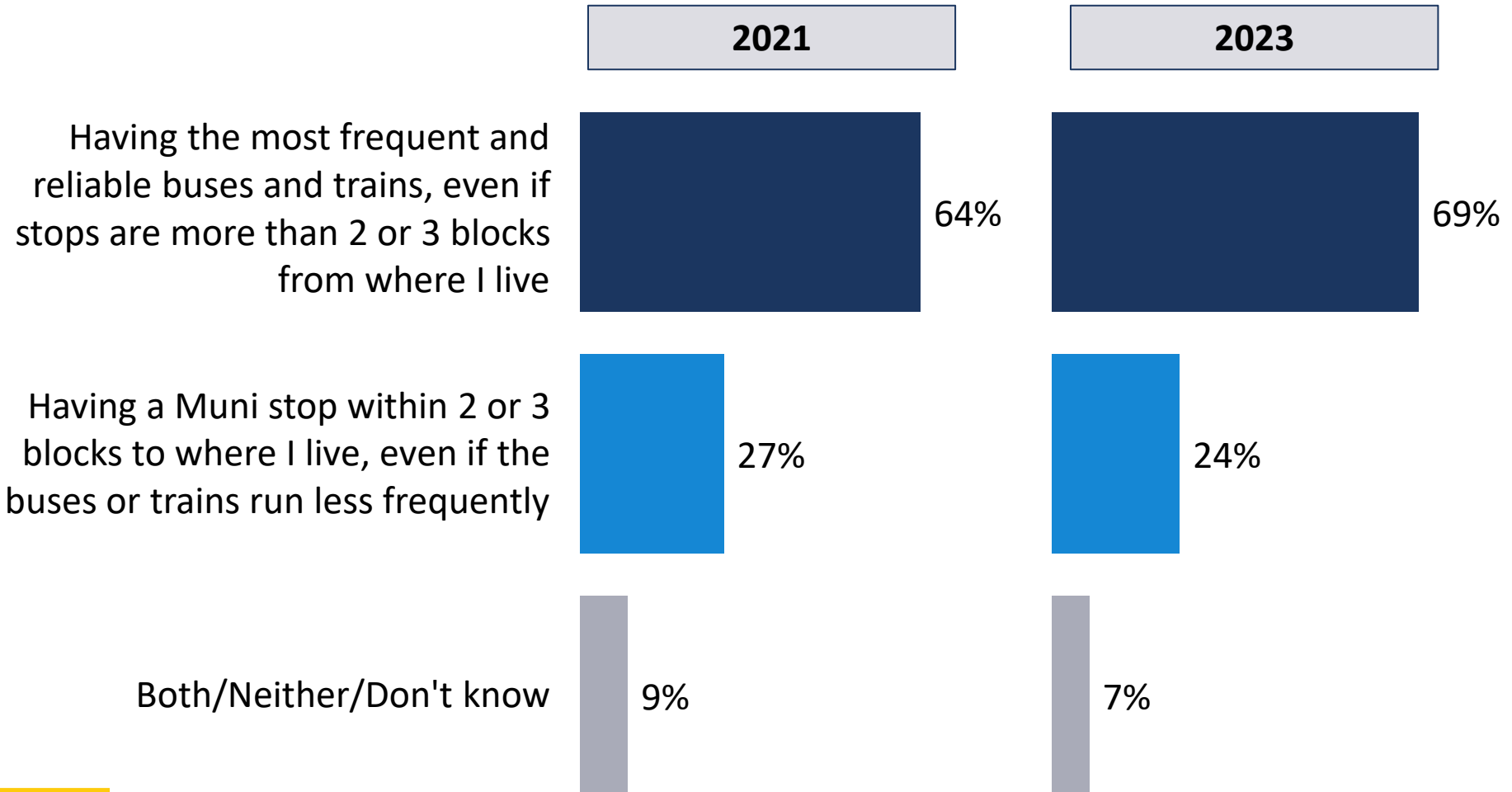
# Improving the speed, frequency and reliability of Muni buses is respondents' highest priority for the agency.

*I'm going to read you some different transportation goals for San Francisco.  
Please tell me which one should be the highest priority.*



# Respondents still overwhelmingly prefer having frequent, reliable transit over having stops close to their home.

*I am going to read you a pair of statements about Muni.  
When thinking about improving Muni service, which is more important:*



# This preference cuts across ethnic groups and income levels.

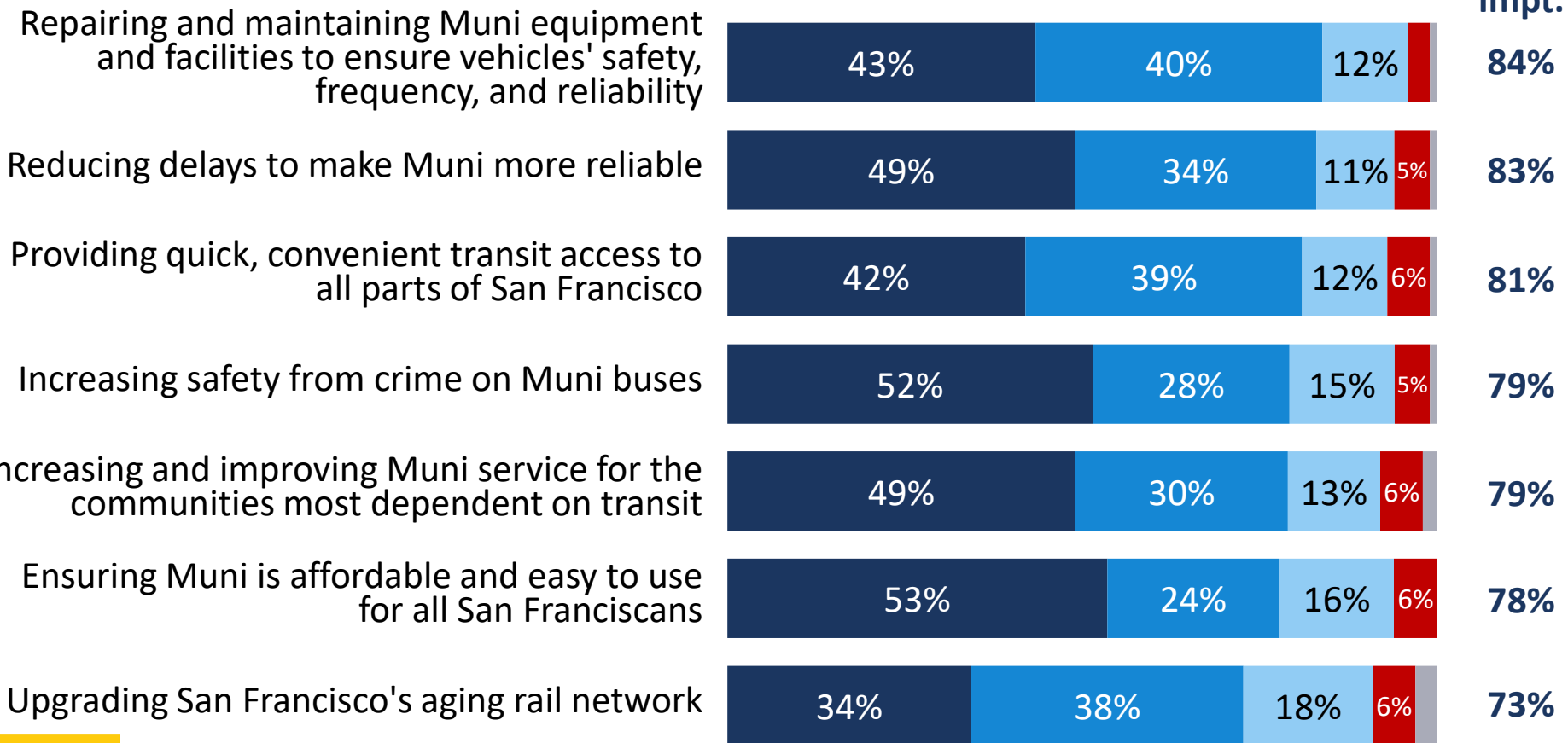
Demographic Group	Having the most frequent and reliable buses and trains, even if stops are more than 2 or 3 blocks from where I live	OR	Having a Muni stop within 2 or 3 blocks to where I live, even if the buses or trains run less frequently
<b>All Voters</b>	<b>69%</b>		<b>24%</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Whites	73%		20%
Chinese	66%		26%
All Asians/Pacific Islanders	69%		25%
African Americans	60%		40%
Latinos	69%		23%
<i>All Voters of Color</i>	<i>67%</i>		<i>27%</i>
<b>Household Income</b>			
<\$52,500	58%		33%
\$52,500-\$100,000	66%		28%
\$100,000-\$175,000	76%		18%
\$175,000-\$200,000	79%		12%
\$200,000+	76%		19%

# Repairing and maintaining Muni equipment and reducing delays are the top priorities for service.

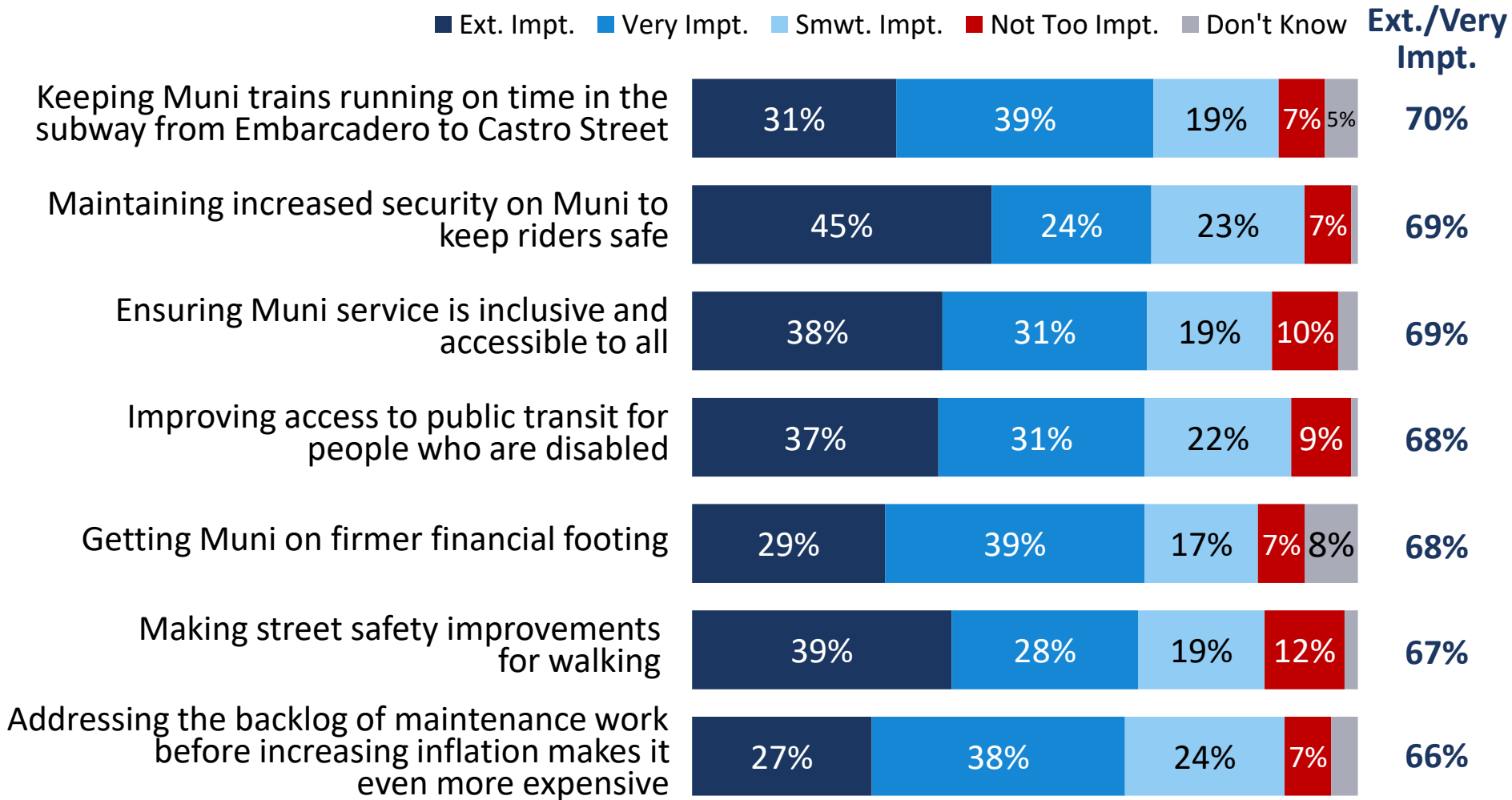
*I am going to read you a list of projects SFMTA might prioritize in the future to improve service to San Franciscans. Please tell me how important of a priority each project should be for Muni: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important?*

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

**Ext./Very Impt.**



# Keeping trains running on time, maintaining security and ensuring service is inclusive are also highly important.

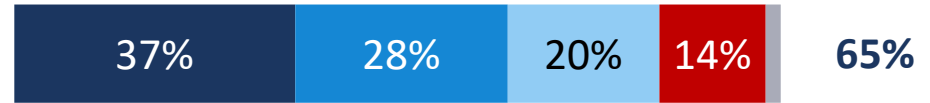


Q9. I am going to read you a list of projects SFMTA might prioritize in the future to improve service to San Franciscans. Please tell me how important of a priority each project should be for Muni: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample

# Safer sidewalks, real-time displays and improving the flow of traffic are similar in importance.

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

Constructing safer sidewalks and road crossings to improve safety for people walking.



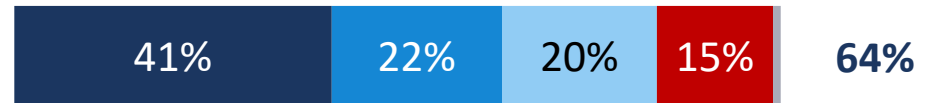
Improving Muni's real-time update digital displays



Improving the flow of traffic



Expanding reduced fares for seniors and low-income residents



Adding Muni service



Protecting Muni infrastructure from flooding caused by sea level rise and storms

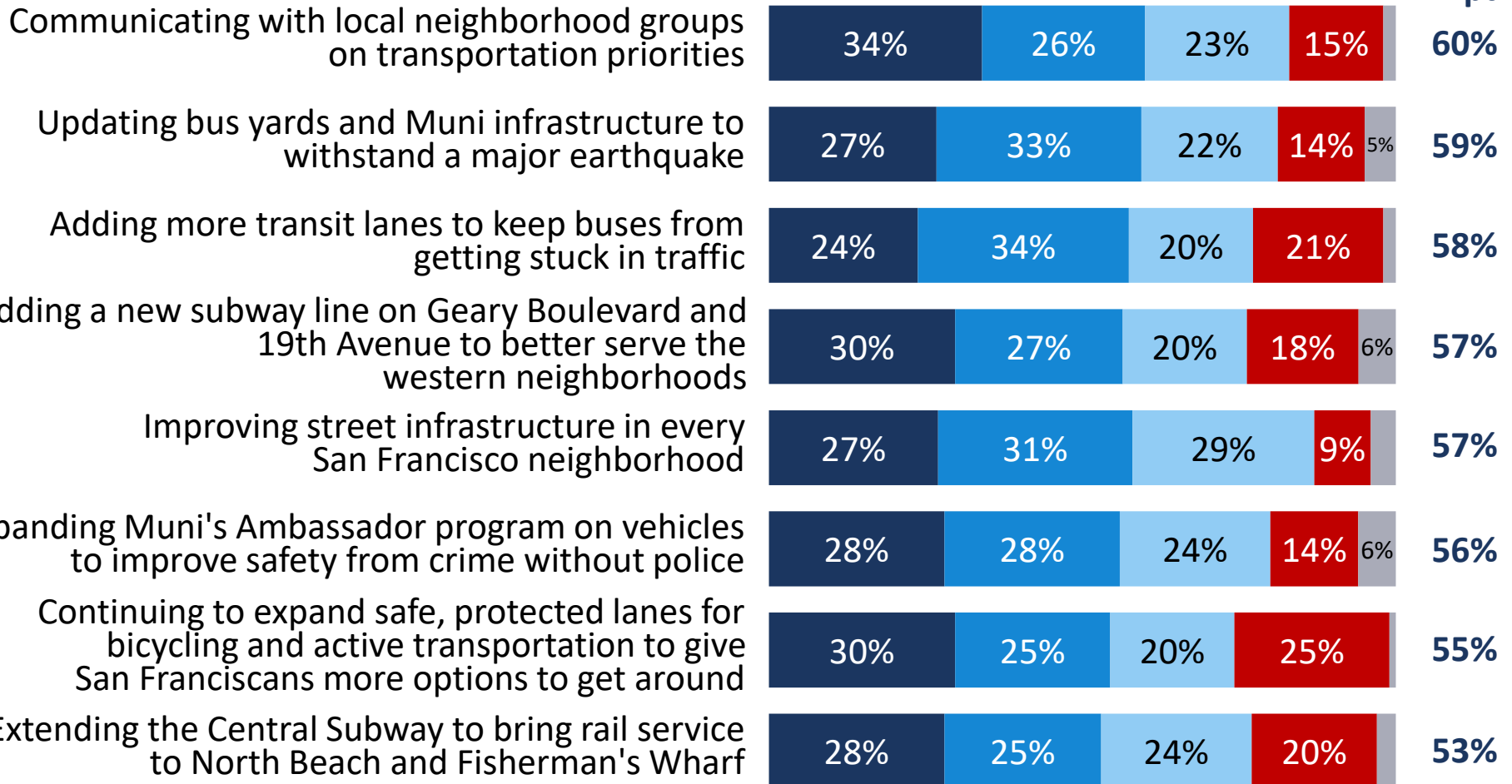


Upgrading traffic signals to give priority to emergency vehicles to reduce response times



# Three in five say communicating with neighborhood groups is important.

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

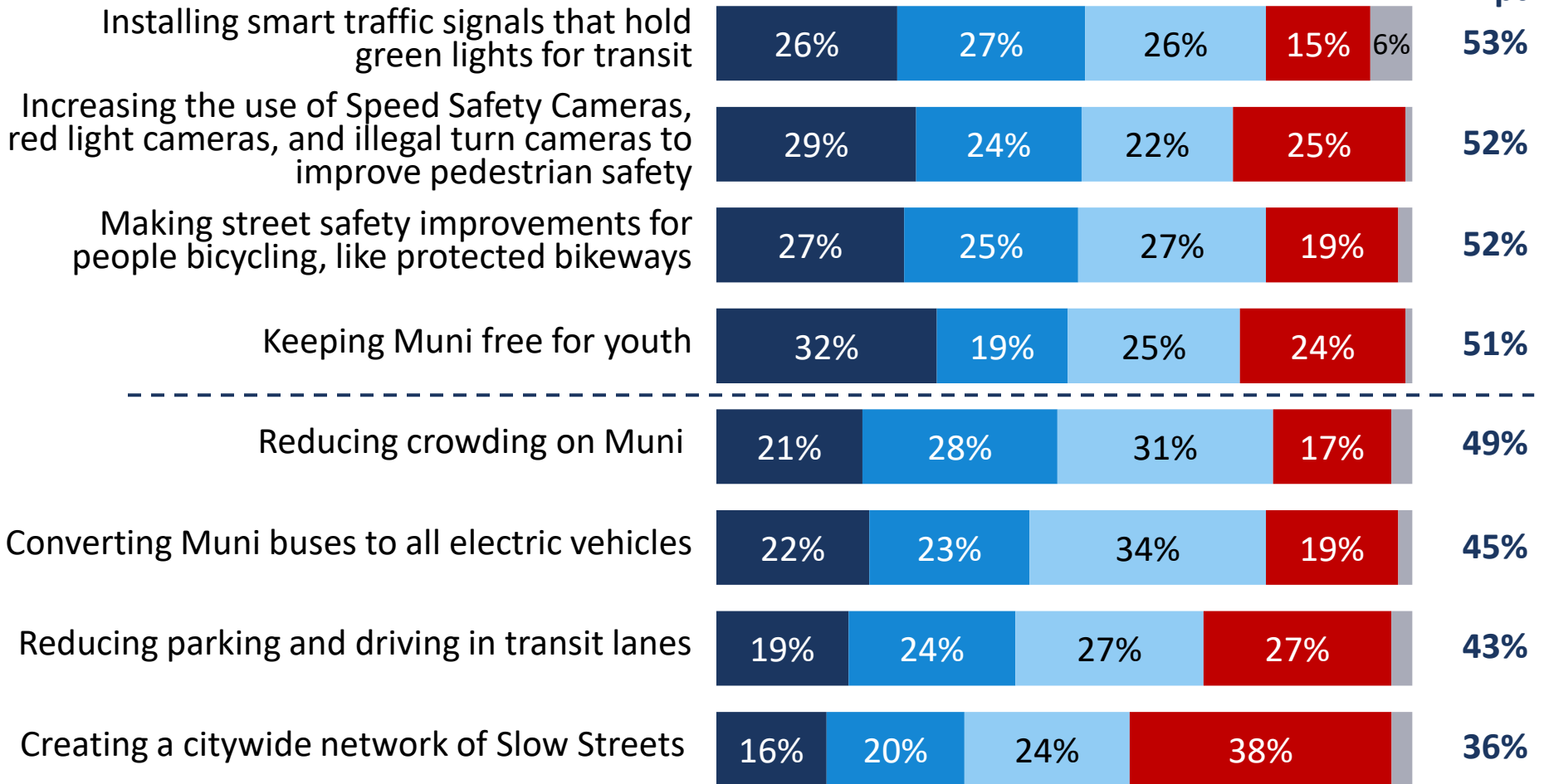


Q9. I am going to read you a list of projects SFMTA might prioritize in the future to improve service to San Franciscans. Please tell me how important of a priority each project should be for Muni: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample



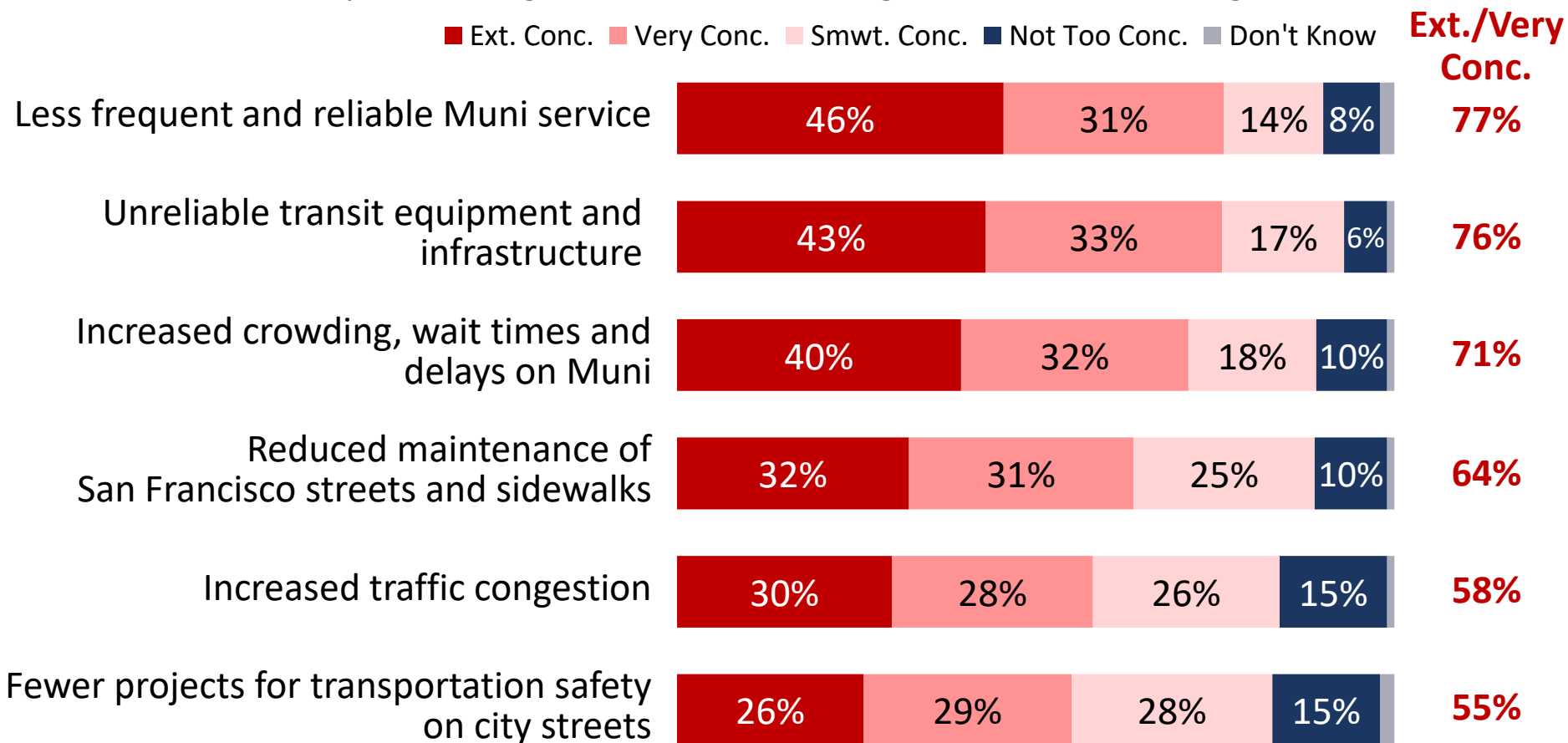
# Reducing parking in transit lanes and expanding Slow Streets are the lowest priorities.

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



# The most concerning outcomes of SFMTA cuts would be less frequent service and unreliable equipment.

*I am going to read you a list of potential outcomes if SFMTA and Muni does not receive additional funding. Tell me if it is extremely concerning, very concerning, somewhat concerning, or not too concerning.*

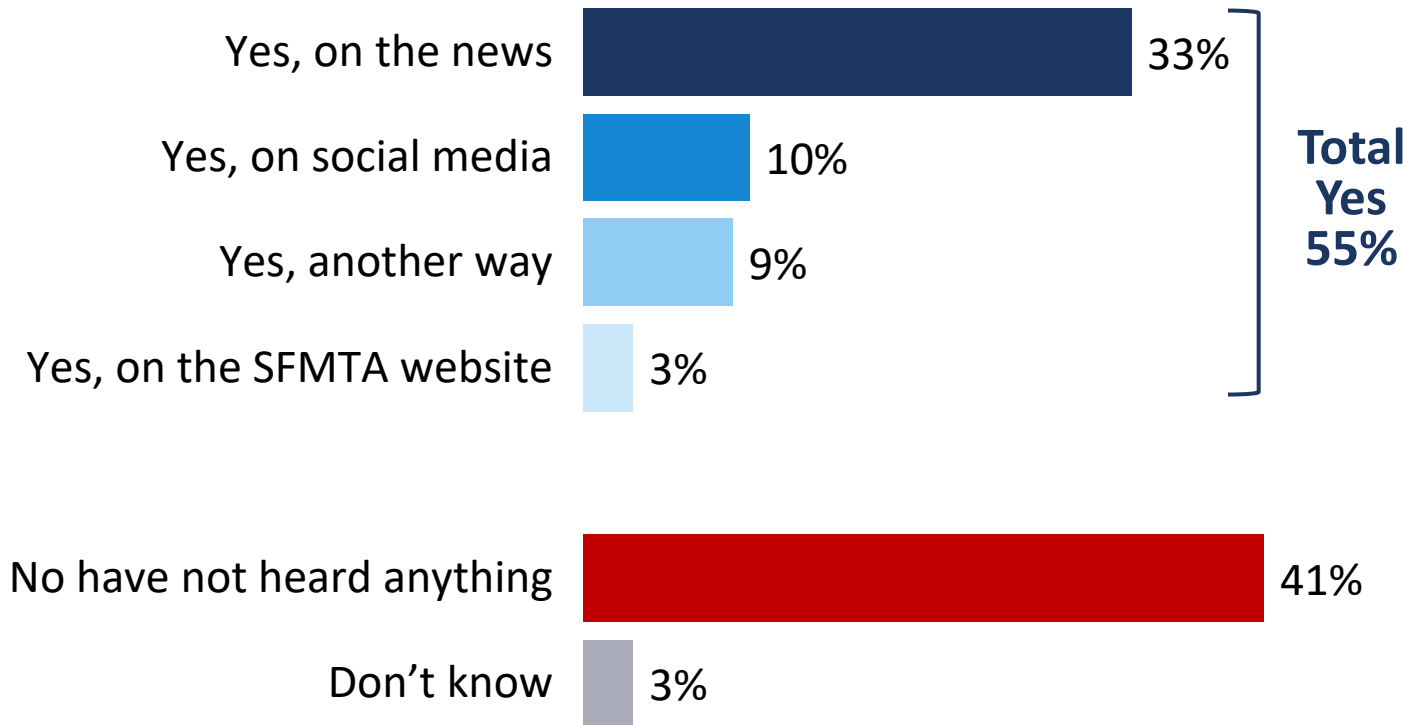




# Support for Funding Muni

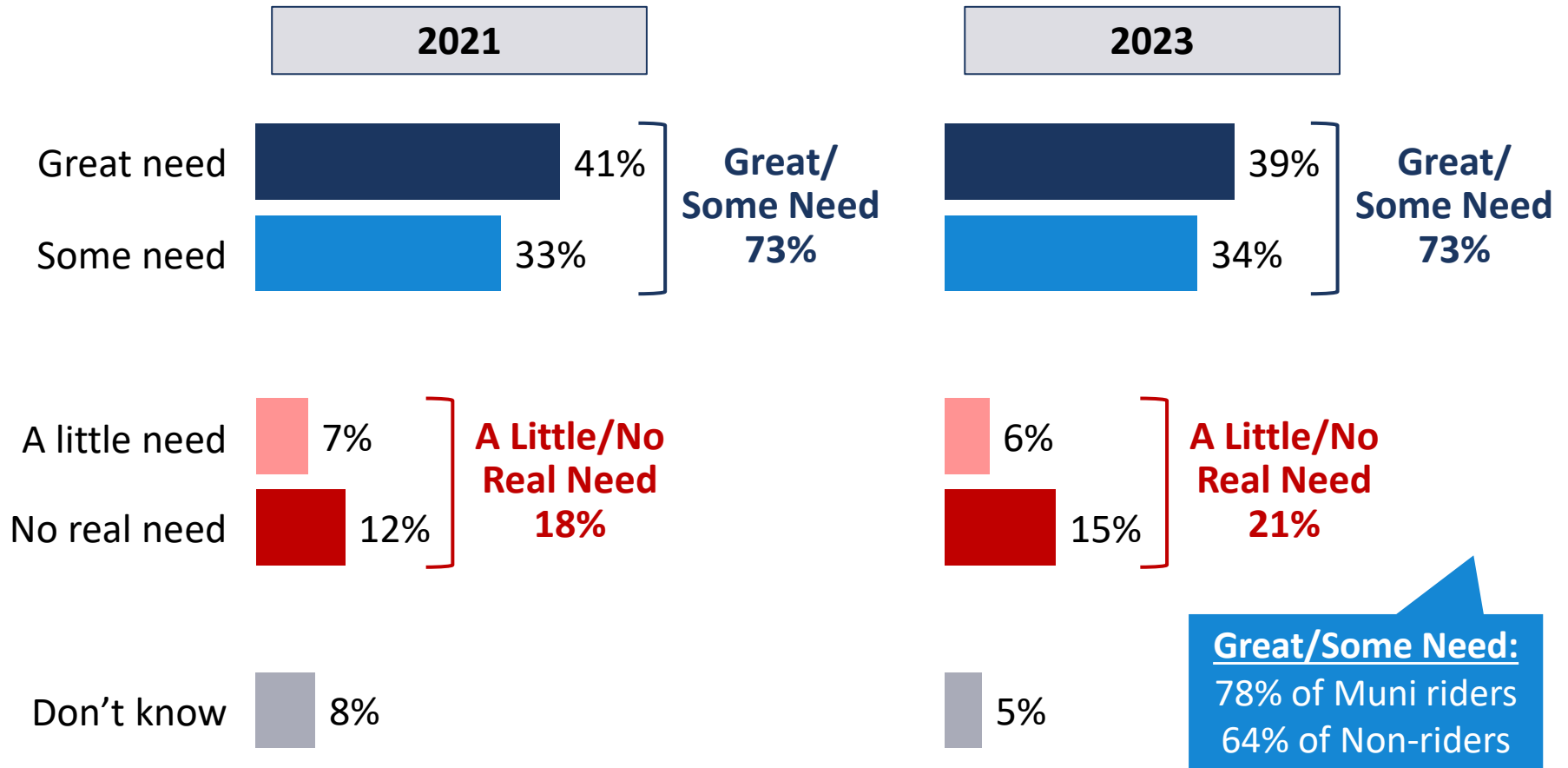
# A majority have heard about Muni's funding needs in the news or online.

*Have you heard anything about SFMTA and Muni's funding needs?*



# Nearly three-quarters still think SFMTA and Muni are in need of additional funds.

*Do you think there is a great need, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funds to improve the SFMTA and Muni's transportation and public transit system in San Francisco?*



# Hypothetical Bond Ballot Language Tested

## Detailed Version (*Half Sample*)

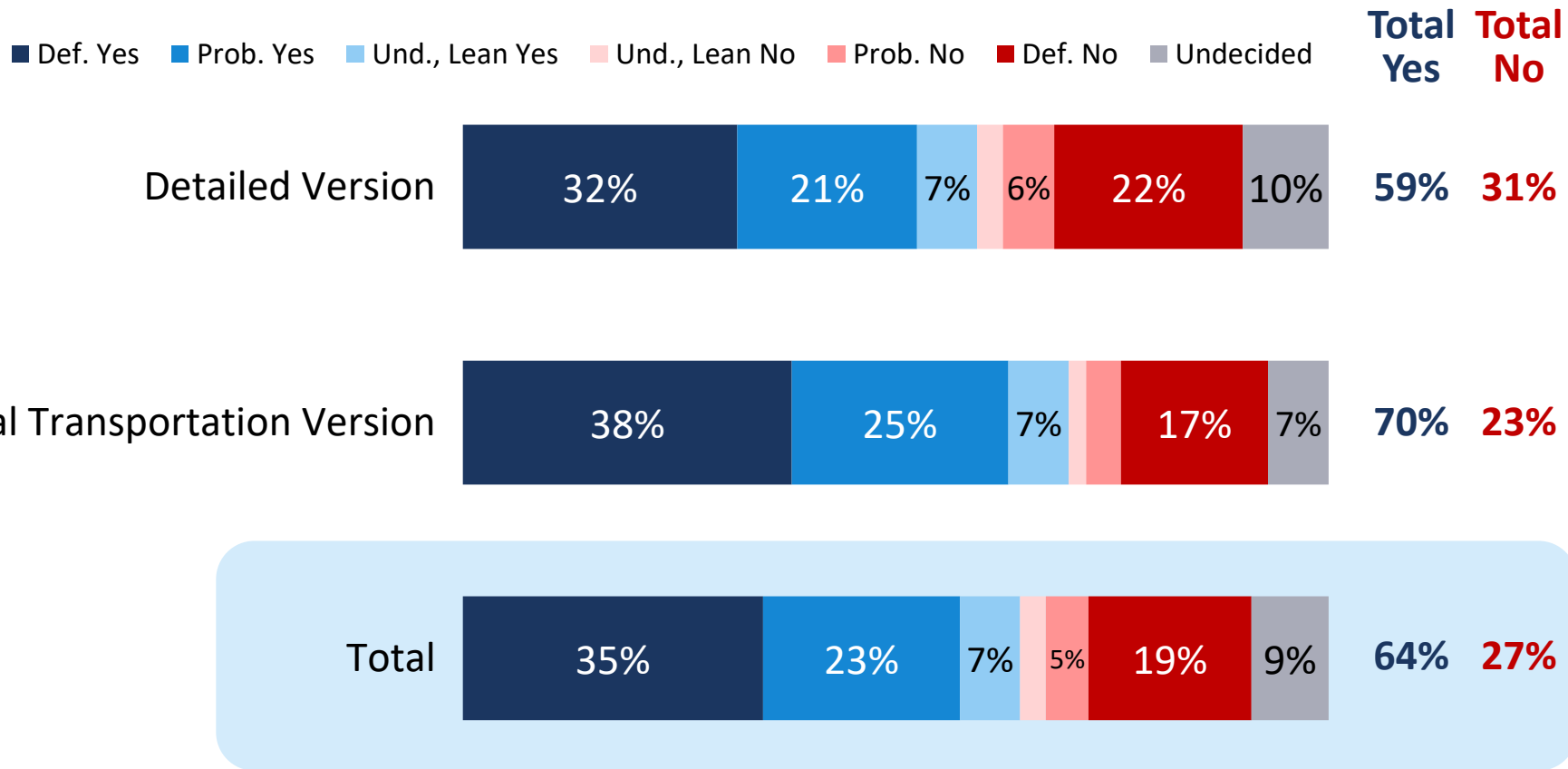
To increase Muni's safety, reliability and frequency, reduce delays, improve disabled access, improve service for communities most dependent on transit, reduce traffic congestion, and improve transportation safety and 911 response times by repairing, constructing and improving aging Muni equipment, facilities and bus yards, and constructing and redesigning streets and sidewalks, and to pay related costs; shall the City and County of San Francisco issue \$400 million in general obligation bonds for 30 years, with an estimated average tax rate of \$0.010/\$100 of assessed property value, providing \$30 million annually, subject to citizen oversight and independent audits?

## General Transportation Version (*Half Sample*)

To reduce traffic congestion, fix potholes, repair sidewalks, improve pedestrian safety, improve 911 response times, protect transit infrastructure from sea level rise, repair, construct and improve aging transportation infrastructure, facilities and bus yards, and to pay related costs; shall the City and County of San Francisco issue \$400 million in general obligation bonds for 30 years, with an estimated average tax rate of \$0.010/\$100 of assessed property value, providing \$30 million annually, subject to citizen oversight and independent audits?

# The more general version of the ballot measure receives stronger support.

*Do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?*



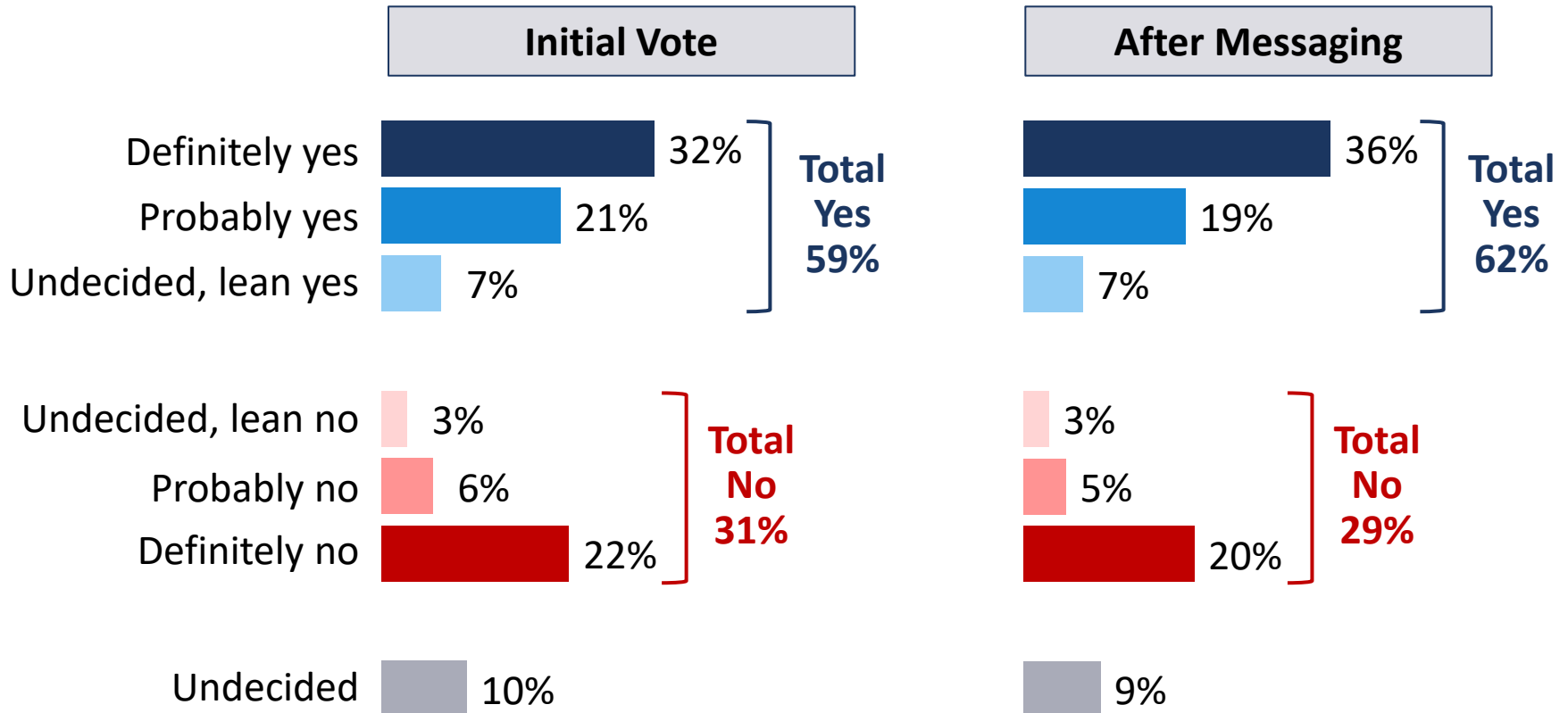


# Messaging



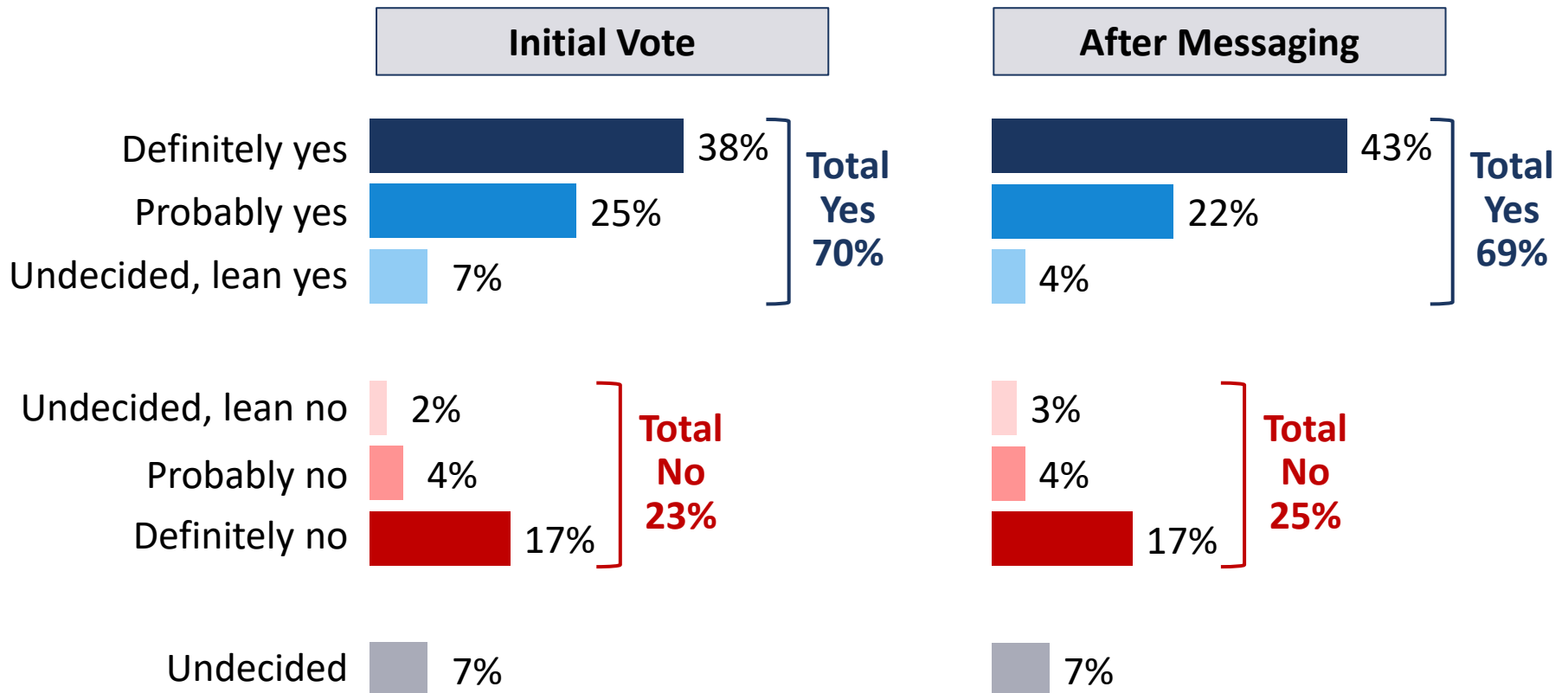
# Support for the detailed measure grows by three points after messaging...

**Detailed Version:** To increase Muni's safety, reliability and frequency, reduce delays, improve disabled access, improve service for communities most dependent on transit, reduce traffic congestion, and improve transportation safety and 911 response times by repairing, constructing and improving deteriorating Muni bus yards, facilities, transportation infrastructure and equipment, and constructing and redesigning streets and sidewalks.



# ...while support for the general language grows more intense, though not broader.

**General Transportation Version:** To reduce traffic congestion, fix potholes, repair sidewalks, improve pedestrian safety, improve 911 response times, protect transit infrastructure from sea level rise, and repair, construct and improve aging transportation infrastructure, facilities and bus yards.



# Messaging

*Ranked by Very Convincing*

40%	<b>(SUSTAINABILITY)</b> Strong public transit systems are one of the most important tools we have to fight climate change. We need to improve the reliability and speed of Muni service, invest in electric buses, and make San Francisco a safer place to walk and bike. This will help get cars off the road, reduce air pollution, and make San Francisco a more sustainable city.
37%	<b>(RECOVERY)</b> An affordable, reliable, and safe public transit system is a critical part of a thriving and equitable community. Investing in Muni service and expanding safe bike and pedestrian pathways is essential to ensuring everyone in the city can access jobs and get where they need to go easily, regardless of their income or neighborhood.
35%	<b>(EQUITY - TRANSIT)</b> San Francisco cannot be an equitable and just city if we don't fund transit. Seniors, people with disabilities, people of color, and low-income San Franciscans have the fewest transportation options and rely on Muni.
35%	<b>(5 MINUTE NETWORK)</b> This funding would build street and transit improvements that create a network of buses and trains that come every 5 minutes to provide quick, convenient access to all parts of San Francisco, including commercial districts, jobs, and housing.
34%	<b>^(FISCAL CLIFF)</b> Federal relief funds are much of what's keeping Muni running now. We've stretched out these funds for as long as possible, but they will run out by next year, leaving a large and growing deficit. Without additional funding, we face tough choices ahead about cuts to Muni service or other transportation improvement projects.
33%	<b>(MODERN RAIL)</b> Additional funding will help Muni Metro become a modern rail system that can better serve our growing communities and provide predictable, fast service that is reliable systemwide. It will update Muni Metro controls and infrastructure, improve reliability and reduce delays on the T Third, provide longer trains on the N Judah and K Ingleside, and provide higher quality service on the street level M Ocean View between West Portal and SF State/Parkmerced.

# Messaging (Continued)

Ranked by Very Convincing

31%

**(INFLATION/URGENCY)** Continuing to delay maintenance and repairs to Muni buses and our public transportation system will only increase costs in the long run, hurting service and making us a less equitable City. These funds will help the SFMTA repair our deteriorating public transportation system before rising inflation and interest rates make it completely unaffordable.

30%

**(FACILITIES)** Some Muni bus yards were built over a hundred years ago and will not withstand a major earthquake, which could interrupt service indefinitely. Bus yards are too small and outdated to accommodate our modern fleet, which slows down maintenance and service on a daily basis. Additional funds will help upgrade these sites to support reliable Muni service and a modern fleet of cleaner, healthier, battery electric buses.

28%

**^(SAFETY)** Without improvements to our public transportation system, lives will be put in danger; ambulances and fire trucks get stuck in traffic, there are safety risks for people walking and bicycling, and air pollution will get worse. Improving our transportation system will improve San Franciscans' quality of life and their safety.

27%

**(BUDGET)** Over the last 20 years the demands on San Francisco's transportation system have increased while revenues haven't kept up. This proposal would create a stable source of funding for San Francisco's transportation needs, reduce the ongoing budget shortfall and put SFMTA on the path to firmer financial footing for the future.

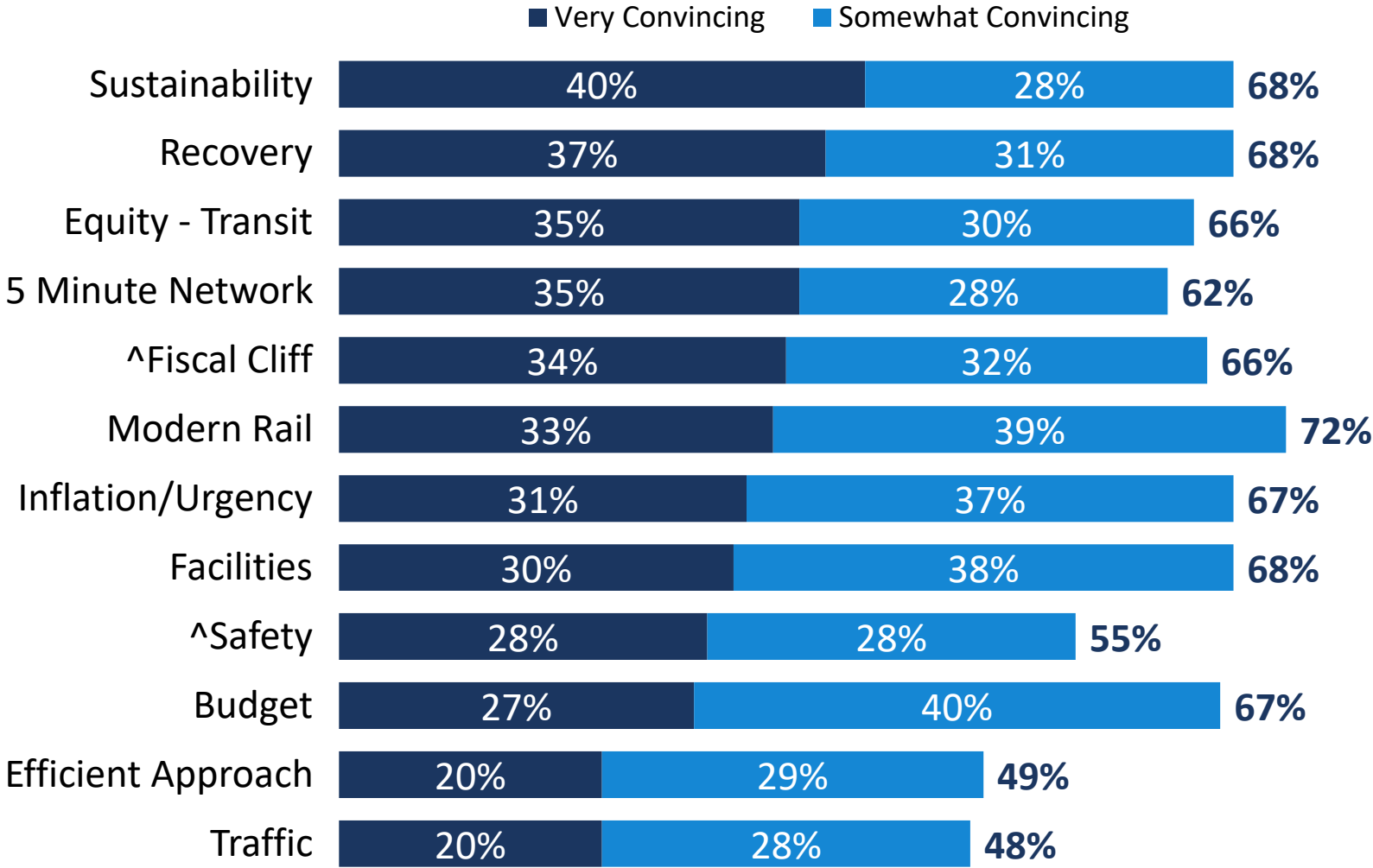
20%

**(EFFICIENT APPROACH)** In recent years SFMTA has worked with local neighborhoods to prioritize projects that are low-cost and have immediate benefits to San Franciscans. Additional funding would allow us to increase the number of these quick-build projects, ensuring we can respond to San Franciscans' input and deliver improvements quickly and use funds more efficiently.

20%

**(TRAFFIC)** Too many San Franciscans spend hours and hours in their cars every week - keeping them away from their loved ones and wasting precious free time. If we don't repair, upgrade, and improve public transportation, commute times will continue to worsen, trapping all of us in endless gridlock.

# The most convincing messages describe sustainability, investing in the community and equitable transit.



Q12. After hearing each statement in support of the proposed bond measure, please tell me whether you find it very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not convincing as a reason to support a funding proposal. ^Not Part of Split Sample

**For more information,  
contact:**



**OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY**

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