



Mono County Voter Survey Report

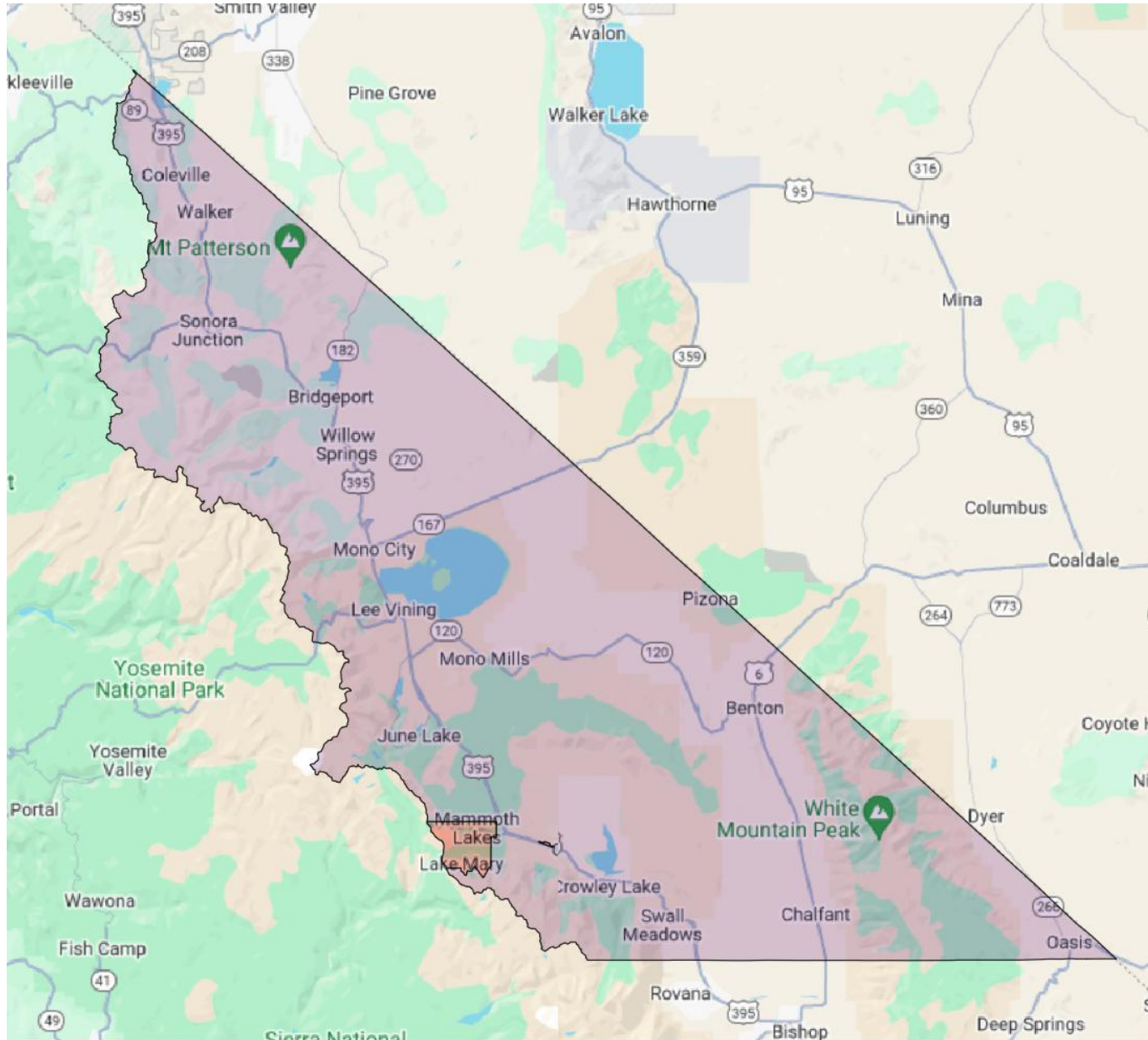
Presented to Mono County Board of Supervisors
July 9, 2024

Methodology

- ▶ Survey of a random sample of likely voters in Mono County, including the incorporated Town of Mammoth Lakes
- ▶ Survey conducted June 20 – 30, 2024
- ▶ 285 completed interviews; overall margin of error ± 5.8 percentage points
- ▶ Interviews were conducted both by telephone (using both landlines and cell phones) and online (using both emails and text messages). All interviews were conducted in English.

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

Region



Region	% of Likely Voters
Unincorporated Mono County	50%
Mammoth Lakes	50%

Key Findings

- ▶ The electorate is in a generally positive mood, and awareness of need for additional funding for county services is strong.
- ▶ A transient occupancy tax (TOT) increase is currently supported by about six in ten voters in the county, comfortably above the require majority threshold.
- ▶ Housing affordability is by far the top concern among county voters, and the messages that focus on that are among the most compelling, particularly when described as workforce housing.
- ▶ Public safety, public health, road maintenance, and parks are also of interest to voters.
- ▶ There is also interest in hearing about accountability components built into the funding mechanism, and how the measure will be paid by visitors without increasing taxes on local residents.
- ▶ Support for the measure does increase with additional information, but it also shows some vulnerability to opposition, indicating the importance of communicating with the public so they understand what is at stake.



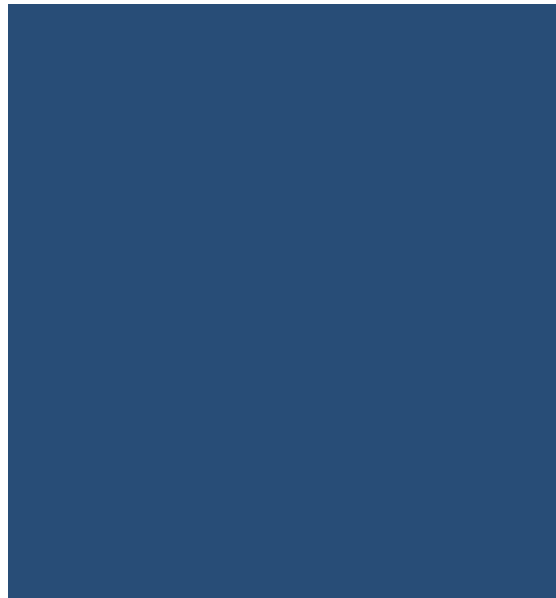
Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track

Voters are generally optimistic about the direction things are going.

Do you feel that things in Mono County are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

**Right Direction
61%**



**Wrong Track
34%**



**(Don't Know)
5%**

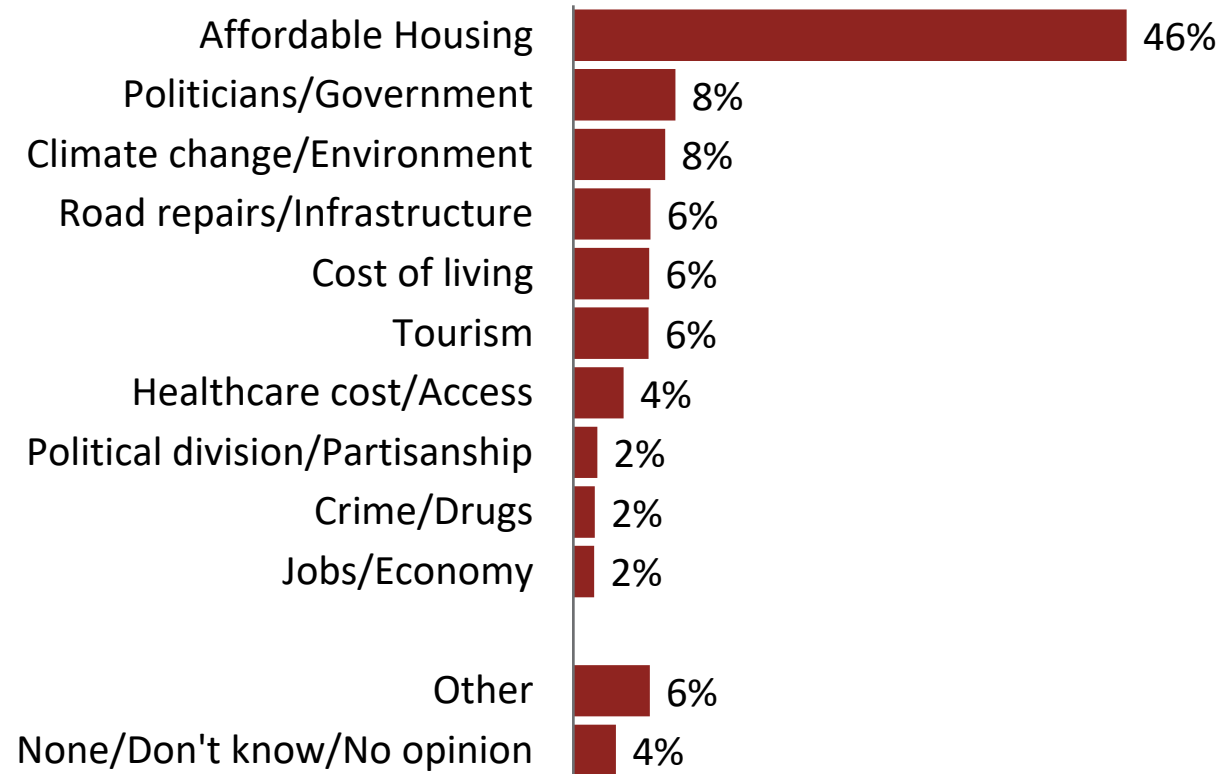


Most Important Problem

Housing affordability is by far the top concern among voters in the county.

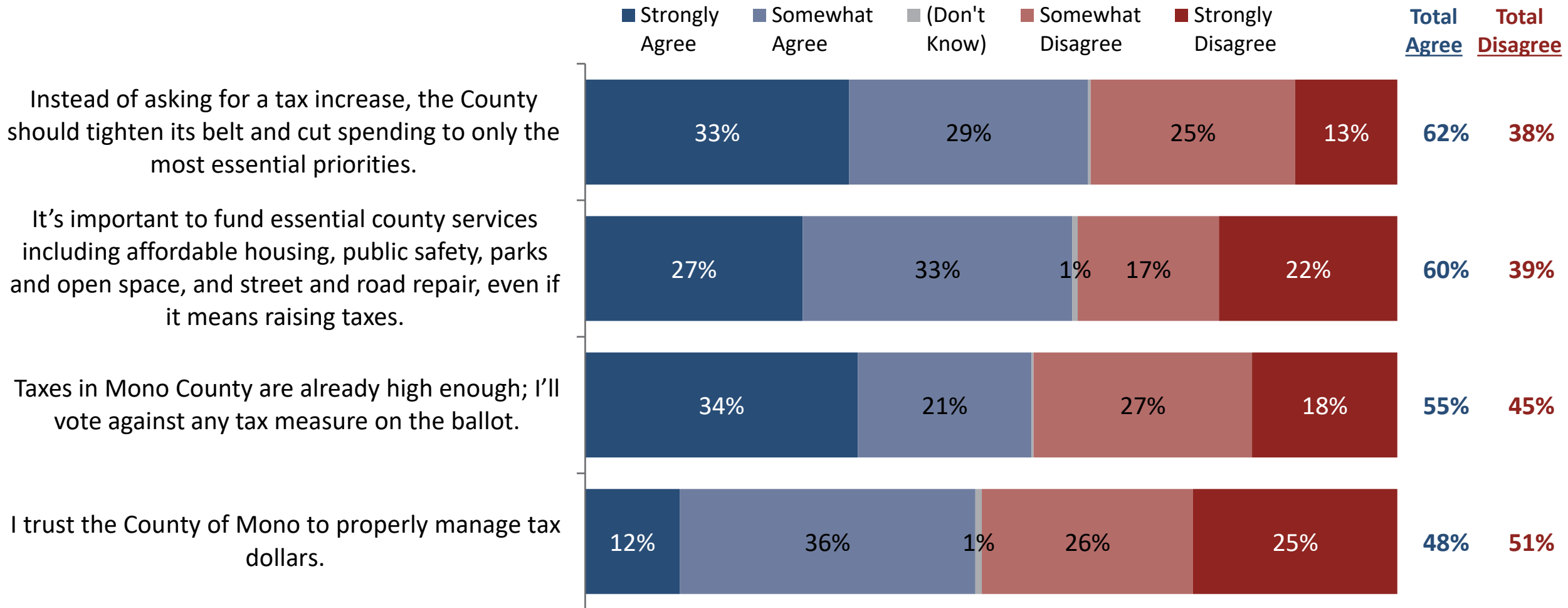
What do you think is the most important problem facing Mono County today?

(Open-ended question; verbatim responses coded into categories below)



Tax Sentiments

While voters recognize the importance of funding essential county services, tax hesitancy is high.



Q14.- Q17. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

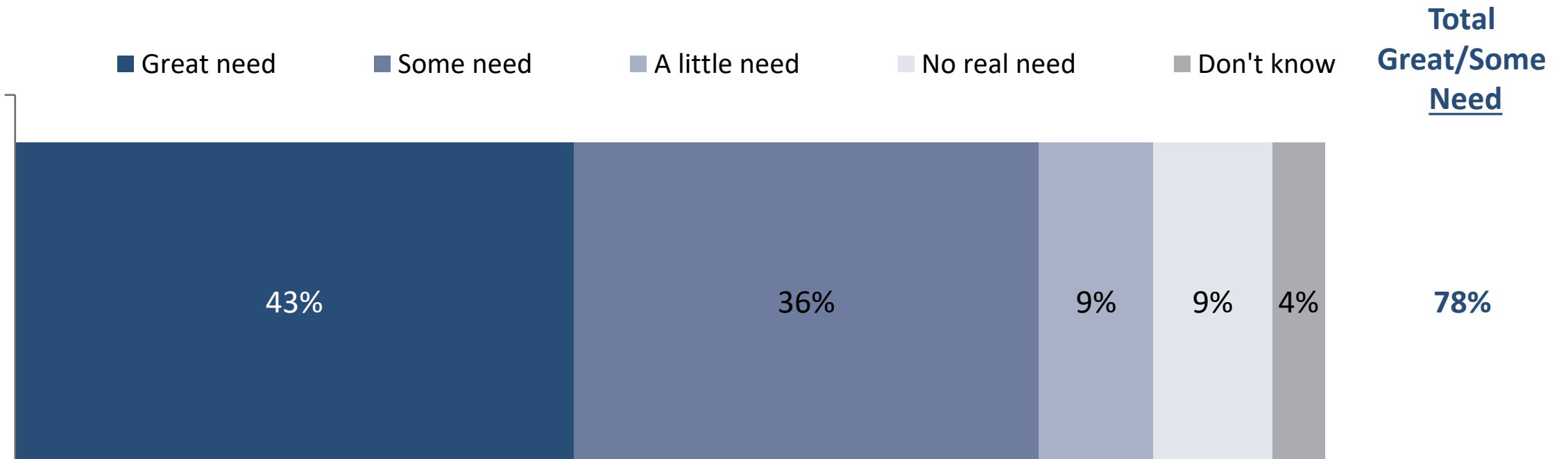


Potential TOT Ballot Measure

Perceived Need for More Money

Nearly eight in ten voters say there is at least “some need” for more money for county services.

Would you say that Mono County has a great need for more money, some need for more money, little need for more money, or no real need for more money for county services including affordable housing, public safety, parks and open space, and street and road repair?

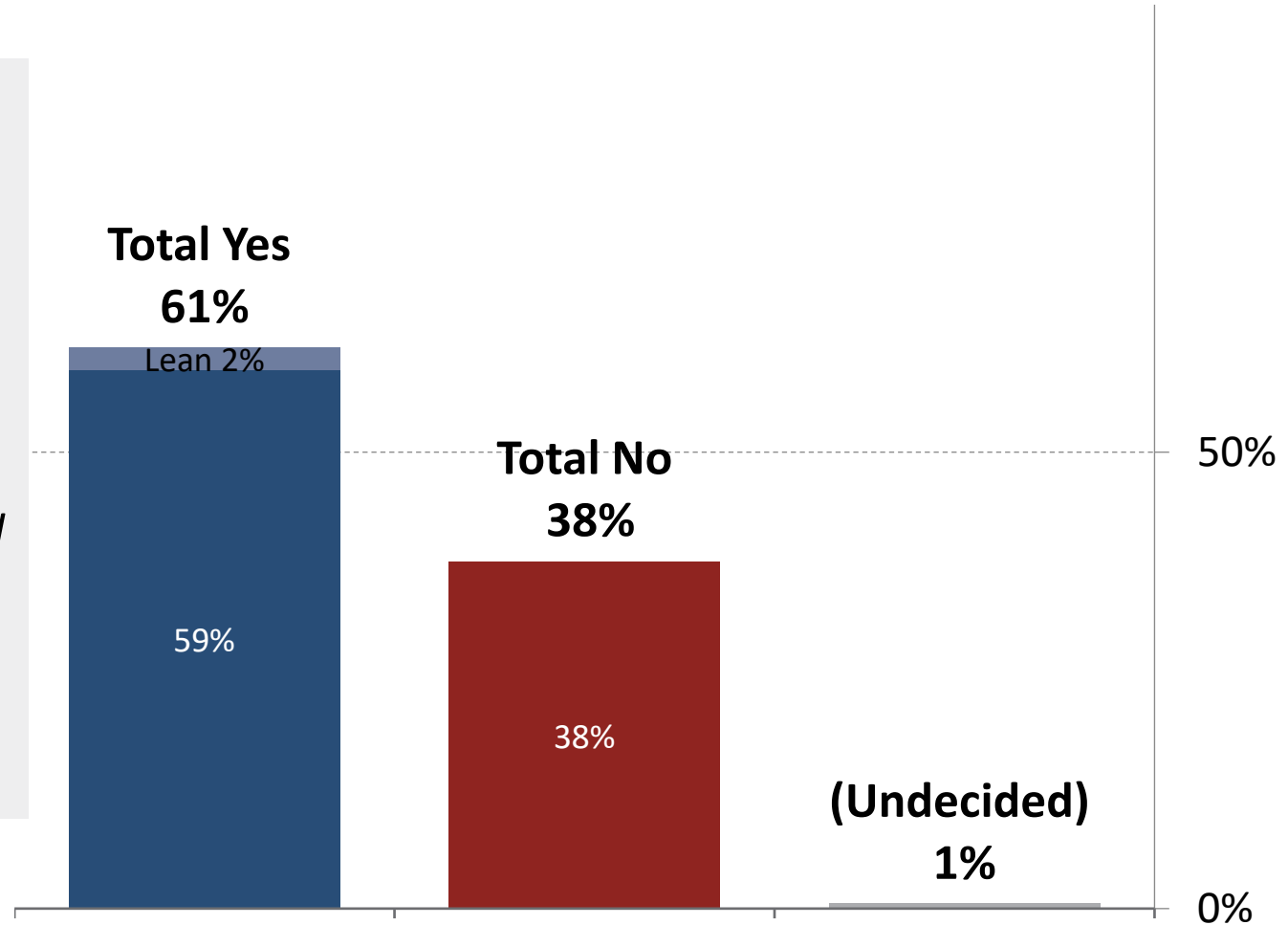


Q5. Would you say that Mono County has a great need for more money, some need for more money, little need for more money, or no real need for more money for county services including affordable housing, public safety, parks and open space, and street and road repair?

TOT: Support Today

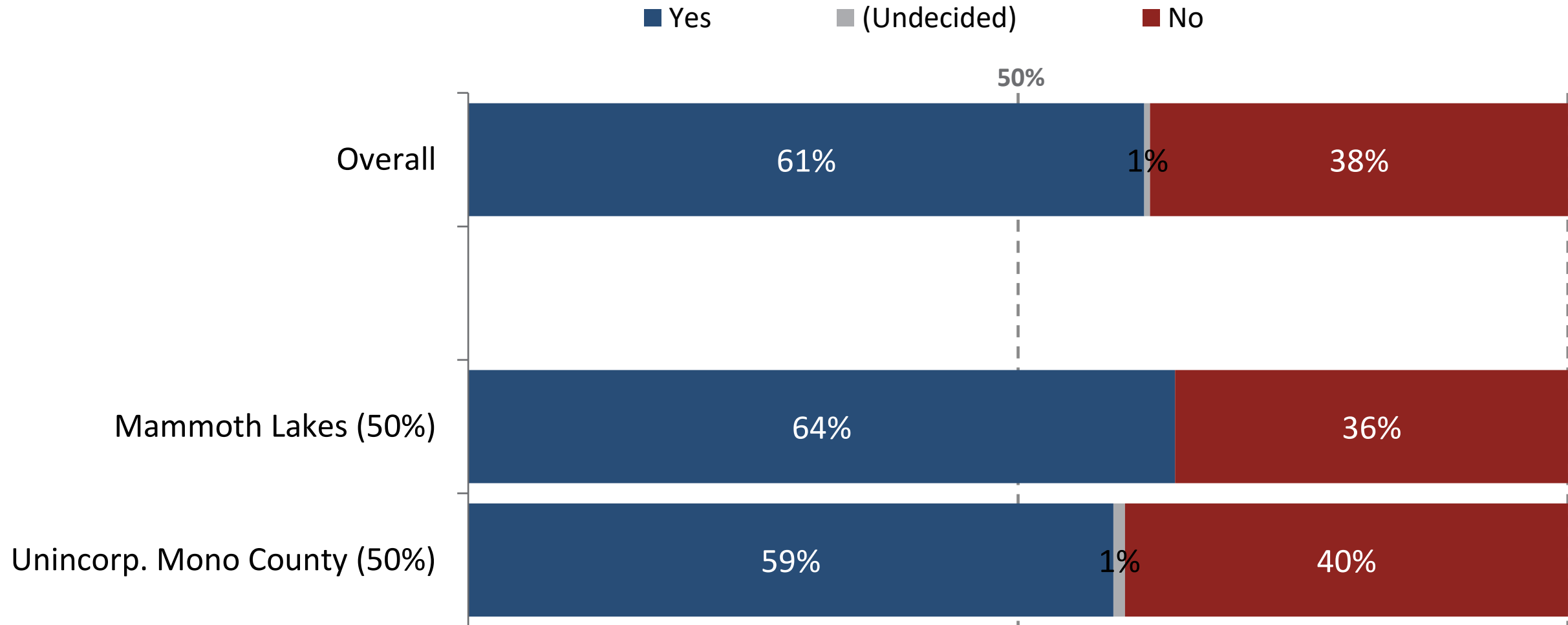
Support for the measure starts above the 50% passage threshold, with 61% saying they'd vote yes on the measure if the election were held today.

To fund essential Mono County services, including affordable housing; public safety and emergency services; street maintenance and pothole repair; county parks; public health and healthcare; programs to reduce homelessness; and other general government use; shall Mono County increase its existing Transient Occupancy Tax from 12% to 15% paid only by hotel and short-term rental guests in unincorporated Mono County, providing approximately an additional \$1,100,000 annually, subject to annual public review and audits, until ended by voters?



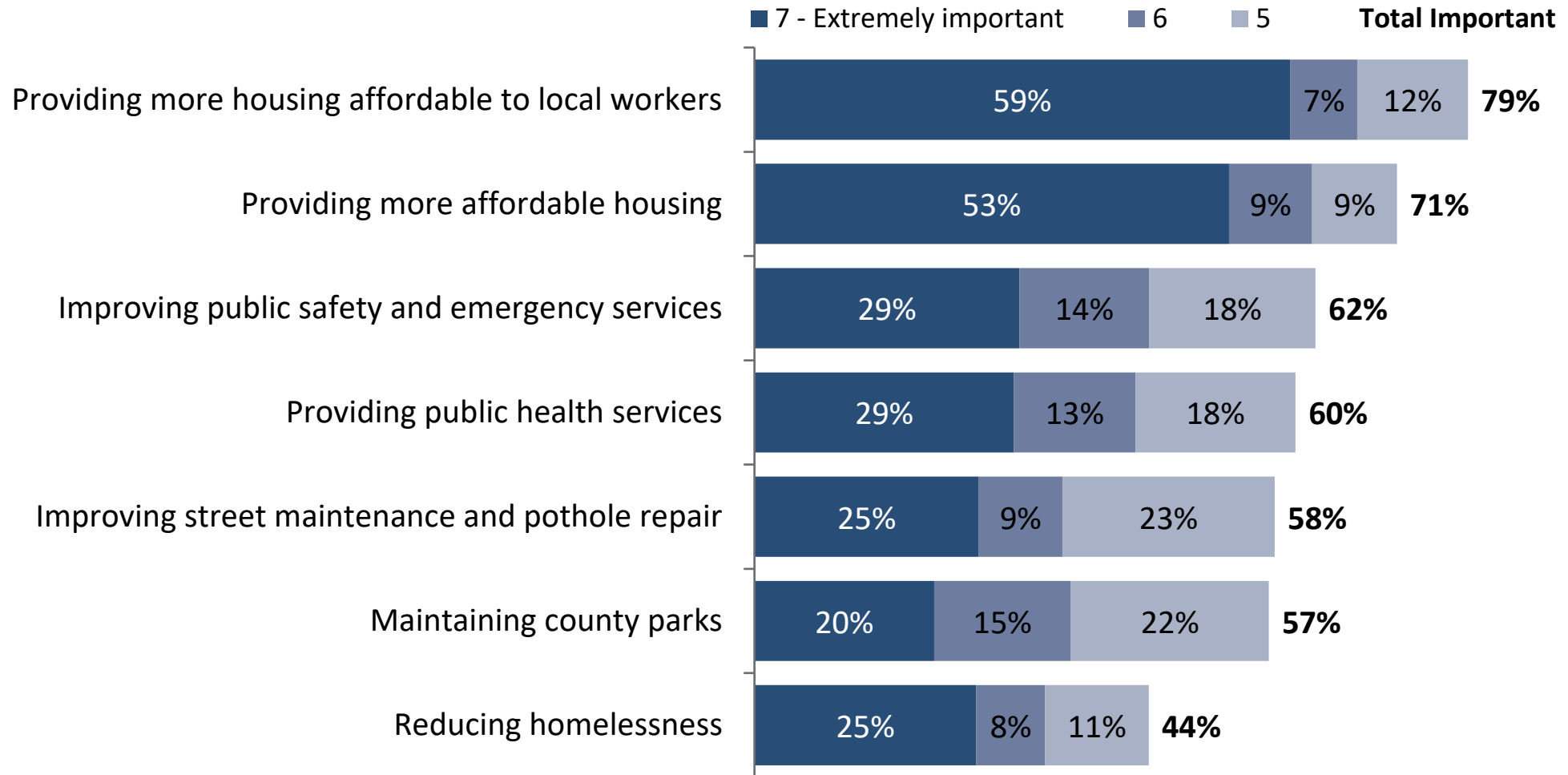
TOT: Support Today by Region

Voters in Mammoth Lakes are somewhat more supportive of the measure than those in other areas of the County.



Potential Components

Priorities around providing more affordable and workforce housing are of much greater importance to voters than other county programs.



Q7.- Q13. I'm going to read you a list of projects and programs this ballot measure could support. After each one, please rate how important that project is to you, using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all important, and 7 means extremely important.

Additional Information

The most compelling pieces of information about the measure are about the fact that visitors will be paying the tax and the impacts on access to housing affordable for local workers. Voters are also interested in learning about accountability.

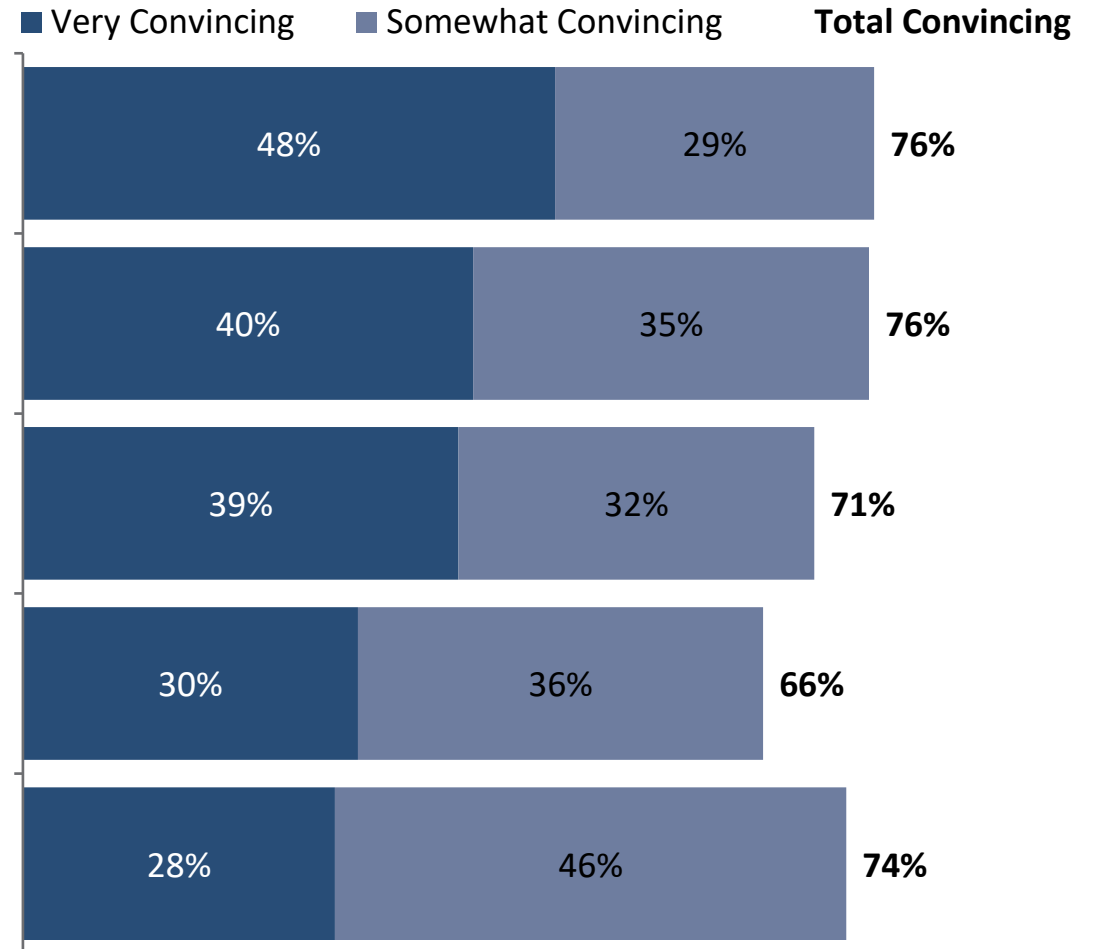
Every year, thousands of visitors visit Mono County, using our roads and highways, straining our public safety services, and impacting our fragile wildlife habitats and open spaces. This measure would **only be paid by these visitors**, helping to offset their impact without increasing taxes on local residents.

This measure will apply to visitors staying in **short-term rental homes** and condos, making sure all visitors to our area are paying their fair share for using county services.

This measure will enable **essential workers** like teachers, emergency responders, public works workers, and service workers to live in the communities they serve by creating **housing that they can afford**, instead of forcing them to move hundreds of miles away due to the high cost of housing here.

This measure will increase the current hotel and short-term rental tax rate by 3% only in unincorporated Mono County **matching what the rate will be in the Town of Mammoth Lakes**.

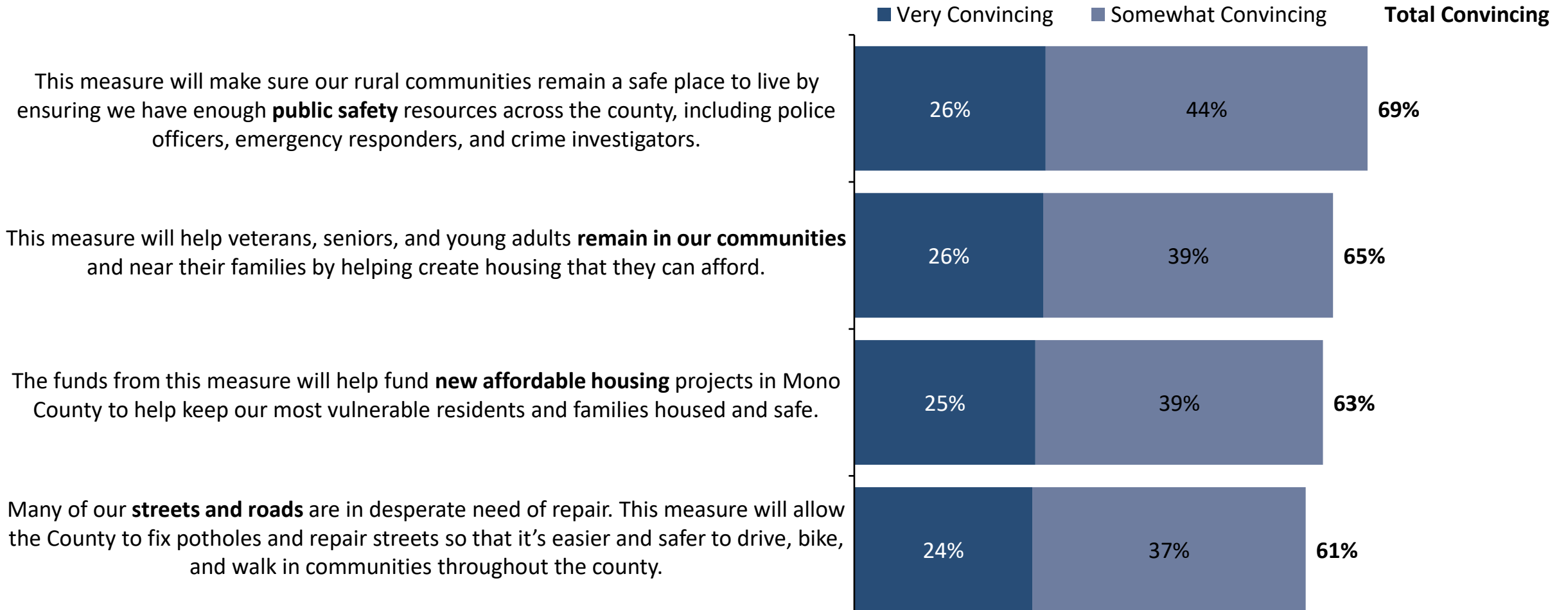
All funds from this measure will be **spent here in Mono County** and included in annual independent financial audits and public reports.



Q18.- Q26. Next I'd like to read you statements from people who support the potential tax measure for Mono County. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote for the measure – very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing.

Additional Information *(continued)*

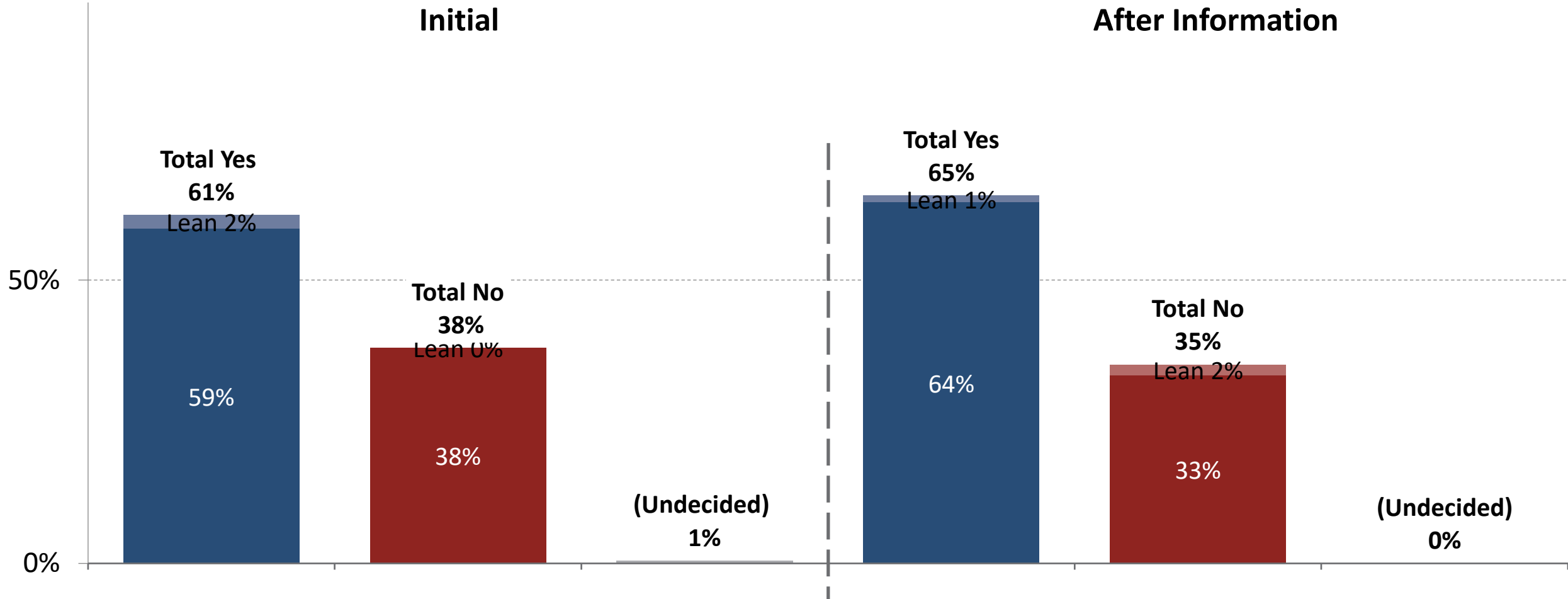
While all information was compelling to a majority of voters, other county programs draw less interest than housing affordability improvements.



Q18.- Q26. Next I'd like to read you statements from people who support the potential tax measure for Mono County. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote for the measure – very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing.

TOT: Support After Information

Support for a measure grows after voters hear additional information.

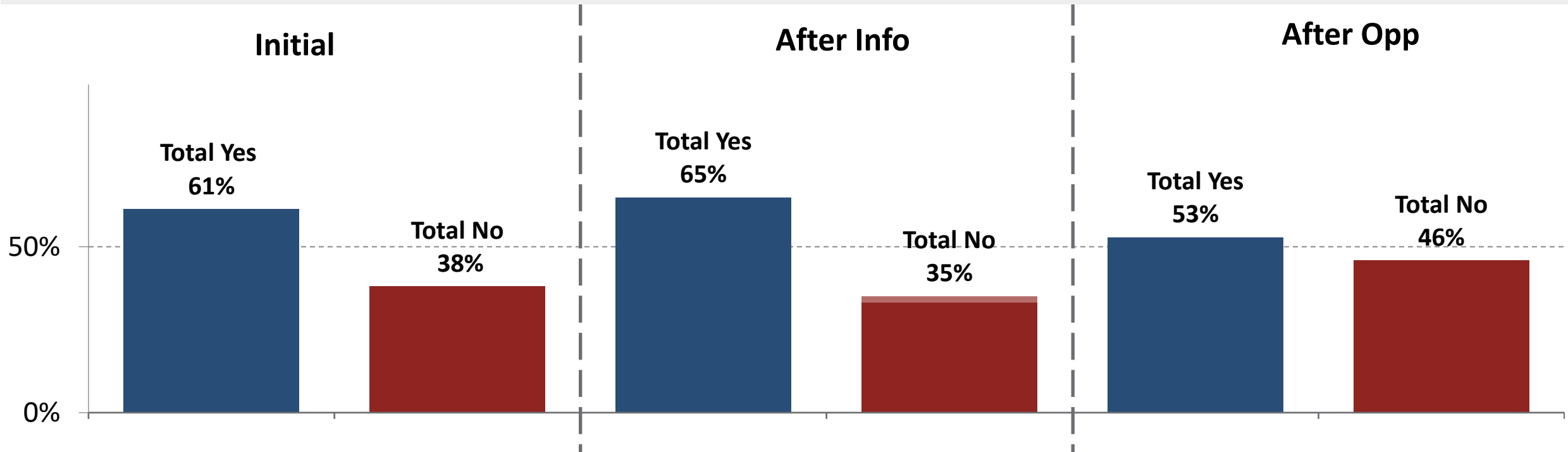


Q6./Q27. Now that you have heard more information about the measure, if the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

TOT: Vote Progression

The measure does show some vulnerability to a general opposition statement, bringing it close to the threshold.

Opponents of this measure say we should not support this unnecessary tax. With three tax increases on our local ballots this year, in addition to state revenue measures, it's all just too much at a time when families are already struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living. This money just goes into the county's general fund, meaning the government can spend it however they want without any accountability. If we pass this tax increase, it will drive away the visitors we depend on to support our local restaurants, shops, and hotels, devastating the local economy and the families that live here.



Q6./Q27./Q28. Now, after everything you have heard, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject the potential tax measure for Mono County?



Conclusions

Conclusions

- ▶ **A measure to increase the TOT appears feasible** for the November 2024 ballot given where support is today, although voters do display some reservations about increasing taxes.
- ▶ **Housing affordability** is county voters' top concern, and they are highly aware of the county's need for funding to address this and other issues.
- ▶ Describing the measure as being **paid primarily by tourists** and not by local residents may help to make it more resilient in the face of any potential opposition.
- ▶ If the County does place a measure on the ballot, voters are most interested in learning about the potential **benefits to local housing affordability**, as well as **accountability provisions** that ensure the funds are spent transparently and locally.
- ▶ **Informing voters of the basics of the measure**, including who pays it, what it will fund, and how the money will be controlled and visible will be a critical step as you approach the deadline to place a measure on the ballot.



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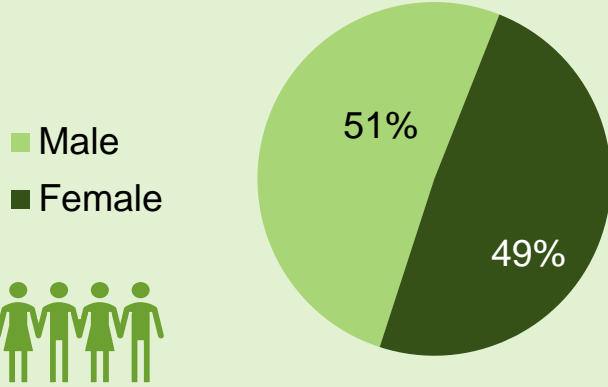
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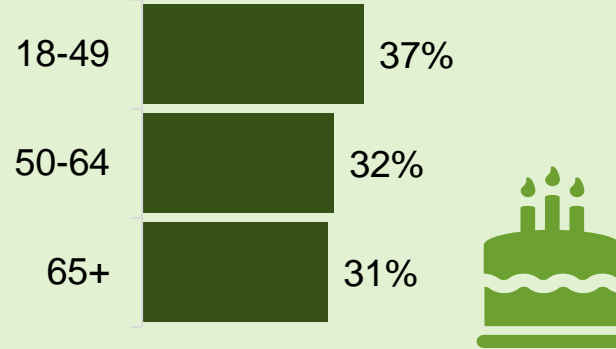
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Demographic Profile of Respondents

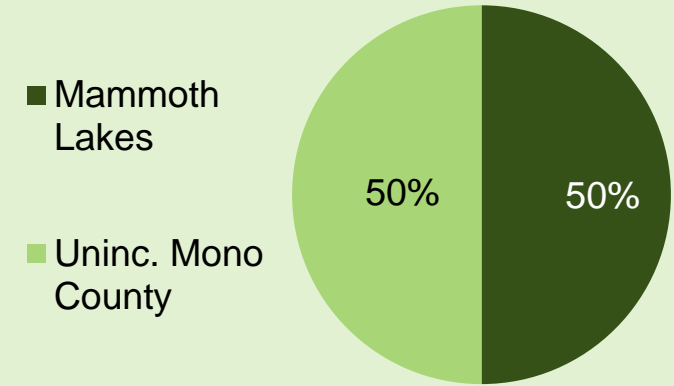
Gender



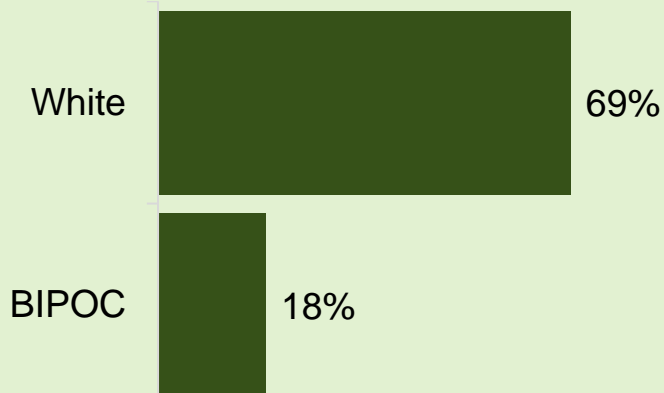
Age



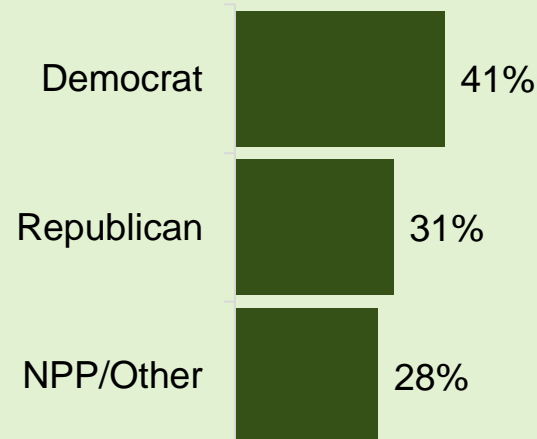
Geography



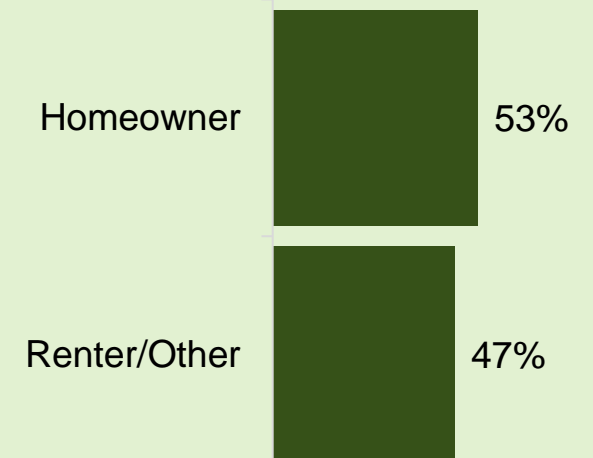
Ethnicity



Party Registration



Homeownership



**Demographics mirror the distribution of likely November 2024 voters*