



City of Morro Bay  
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# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Scott Collins, City Manager**

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**Dec. 6, 2019**

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***MORRO BAY RESIDENTS HIGHLY VALUE PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES  
AND WANT TO MAINTAIN CITY SERVICES***

Morro Bay, CA – The City of Morro Bay recently conducted a Community Issues Survey with its long-time public opinion research firm -- Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz and Associates (FM3)-- to assess current public views on City services and priorities. The results show residents highly value the Morro Bay Fire, Police and Recreation and Parks Departments and other essential services and want those services they value, maintained.

The survey found that 90% of respondents had favorable opinions of the City's local Fire Department and 77% had favorable views of the City's local Police Department.

Said City Manager Scott Collins, "Morro Bay has our own, locally controlled Police and Fire Departments and our residents have told us that they prefer it this way. The City is currently striving to preserve our local Police and Fire Departments and other essential City services, in order to maintain our community's quality of life."

Other local priorities identified by respondents included:

- ✓ Maintaining 24/7 911 emergency response
- ✓ Maintaining 24/7 paramedic services
- ✓ Keeping beaches, public areas and public restrooms safe and clean
- ✓ Protecting Morro Bay's financial stability
- ✓ Requiring public disclosure of all spending
- ✓ Keeping the harbor and waterfront clean and safe
- ✓ Maintaining City infrastructure

"We appreciate the community support and recognition of the Fire Department in these survey results," said Morro Bay Fire Chief Steve Knuckles, " Most residents aren't aware that nearly 70% of calls to the Morro Bay Fire Department are related to emergency rescue and medical emergencies and we are working to preserve our local Morro Bay Fire Department so our skilled, local firefighter-paramedics continue to respond to local life-threatening emergencies."

For questions regarding survey methodology, contact Adam Sonenshein with FM3 Research at (310) 828-1183.

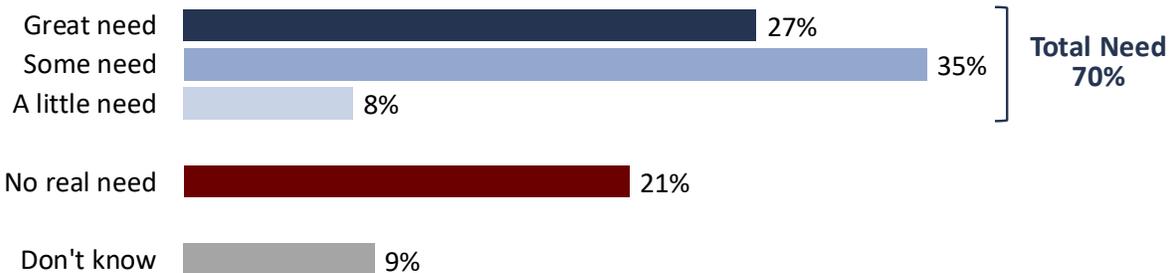
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**TO** Interested Parties  
**FROM** FM3 Research  
**RE:** Results of a Survey of City of Morro Bay Residents  
**DATE** December 3, 2019

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of Morro Bay residents regarding community satisfaction and priorities.<sup>i</sup> Key findings from the survey include:

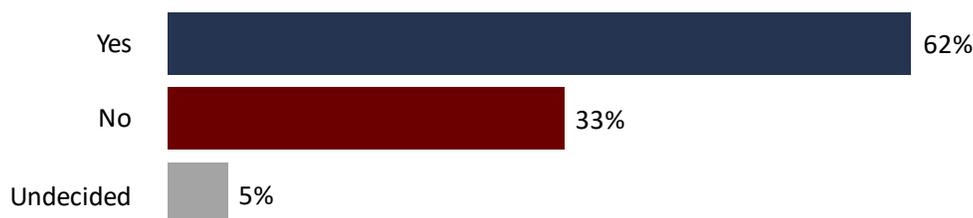
**Seven-in-ten respondents perceive that the City of Morro Bay needs additional funding.** Seventy percent of respondents indicated that the City has either a “great need,” “some need,” or “a little need” for additional funding. By contrast, just 21 percent perceive that the City has “no real need” for additional funding (**Figure 1**).

**Figure 1: Morro Bay’s Need for Additional Funding**



**More than six-in-ten respondents would support a local simple majority requirement (50+1%) one-cent sales tax ballot measure for the City of Morro Bay based on a potential ballot question tested in the survey<sup>ii</sup>.** Based on the initial response to the potential ballot question, 62 percent of respondents indicated they would vote “yes” in support of the measure, meeting the majority-vote threshold required for passage and outside the survey’s margin of error. Thirty-three percent would vote “no” against the measure, while five percent of respondents were undecided (**Figure 2**).

**Figure 2: Opinions on Local Morro Bay Sales Tax Ballot Measure**



**Respondents prioritize funding for maintaining public safety services, keeping beaches and other public areas clean and safe, and maintaining the City’s financial stability, among other programs and projects.** More than eight-in-ten respondents believe that public safety priorities such as “maintaining 24/7 paramedic services” (87%), “maintaining 24/7 911 emergency response” (87%), “maintaining 24/7 police services” (82%) and “maintaining fire protection services” (82%) are “extremely important” or “very important” to fund. Other high priorities include “keeping beaches, public areas and public restrooms safe and clean” (85%), “responding to emergencies at the Morro Bay Harbor” (79%) and “keeping beaches, the harbor and waterfront clean and safe” (79%). Residents also clearly prioritize “protecting Morro Bay’s financial stability” (83%) and “preventing the City of Morro Bay from needing to declare bankruptcy” (80%). **Figure 3** below lists these and other services, programs and projects which survey respondents considered to be the most important to fund.

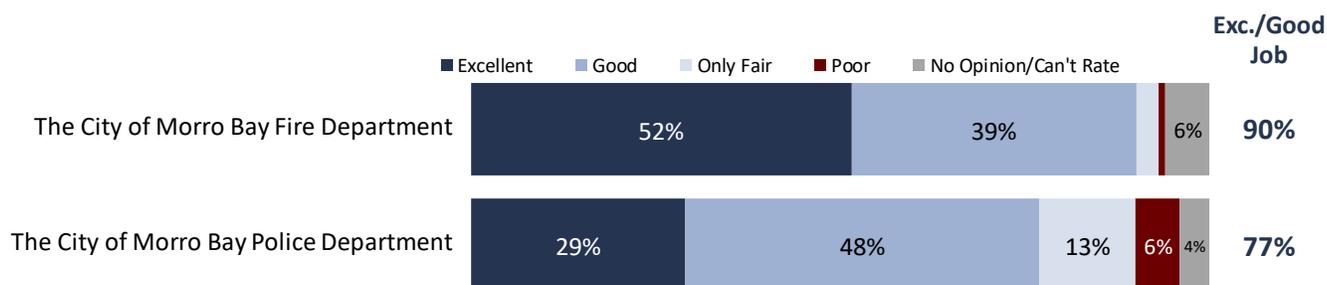
**Figure 3: Highest Priorities for Morro Bay Respondents**

Priorities	% “Extremely” or “Very Important”
Maintaining 24/7 paramedic services	87%
Maintaining 24/7 911 emergency response	87%
Keeping beaches, public areas and public restrooms safe and clean	85%
Protecting Morro Bay’s financial stability	83%
Maintaining 24/7 police services	82%
Maintaining fire protection services	82%
Preventing the City of Morro Bay from needing to declare bankruptcy	80%
Responding to emergencies at the Morro Bay Harbor	79%
Keeping beaches, the harbor and waterfront clean and safe	79%
Retaining and attracting local businesses	75%
Maintaining the current level of City services	74%
Maintaining the condition of Morro Bay Harbor piers, docks and ramps	74%
Maintaining disaster preparedness	73%
Helping ensure children have safe places to play	73%

Priorities	% "Extremely" or "Very Important"
Qualifying for state matching funds to improve the intersection of Highways 1 and 41	71%
Preserving natural areas	71%
Maintaining City infrastructure	69%
Maintaining the Morro Bay Harbor Patrol	69%
Upgrading outdated lifesaving equipment such as cardiac monitors, defibrillators and jaws of life	67%
Providing safe routes to neighborhood schools	65%
Addressing homelessness	65%

**Respondents have very favorable views of the performance of Morro Bay’s public safety departments.** One of the reasons Morro Bay residents so strongly prioritize maintaining funding for local public safety services is that they have very favorable views of their local Fire Department and Police Department. Nine-in-ten respondents rated the performance of the Morro Bay Fire Department as “excellent” or “good,” and just one percent of respondents rated the Fire Department’s performance as “poor.” Similarly, more than three-quarters of respondents rated the Morro Bay Police Department’s performance as “excellent” or “good” and just six percent described it as “poor” (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Ratings of the Performance of Morro Bay’s Local Public Safety Departments**



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<sup>i</sup> **Survey Methodology:** From October 28<sup>th</sup> – November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019, FM3 completed 326 interviews online and via landline and cellular telephones with Morro Bay residents with a voting history that makes them likely to vote in the November 2020 election. The survey was available in English and Spanish. Results have a margin of sampling error of  $\pm 5.4\%$  at the 95% confidence interval. Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

<sup>ii</sup> The ballot question tested in the survey read as follows: “MORRO BAY PUBLIC SAFETY/ ESSENTIAL SERVICES PROTECTION MEASURE. To protect City of Morro Bay’s financial stability, local property values and services, including, preventing elimination of Morro Bay Police/Fire Departments, while maintaining 24/7 paramedics and 911 emergency response, senior/youth/general services; repairing streets/potholes; keeping beaches, public areas safe/clean; retaining/attracting businesses; shall the measure establishing a 1¢ sales tax providing \$2,000,000 annually until ended by voters be adopted, requiring independent audits, public oversight, all funds used locally?”



# City of Morro Bay Issues Survey

*Survey Conducted:  
October 28-November 7, 2019*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY



# Survey Methodology

Conducted a Dual Mode Survey, online, by cell, and landline between October 28- November 7, 2019



Surveys were completed by a random sample of 326 voters registered in the City of Morro Bay who are likely to vote in the November 2020 election



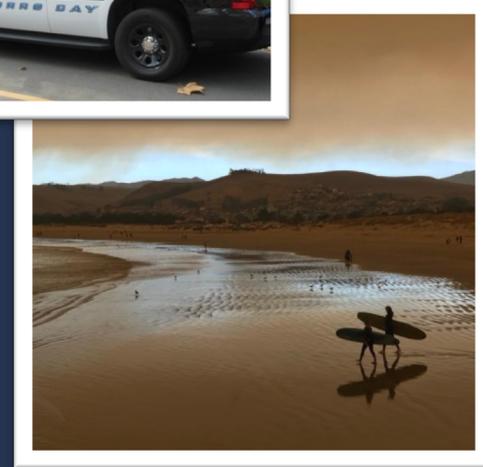
Overall margin of error for whole sample:  $\pm 5.4\%$ ; margin of error for subsamples will be larger



Survey available in English and Spanish

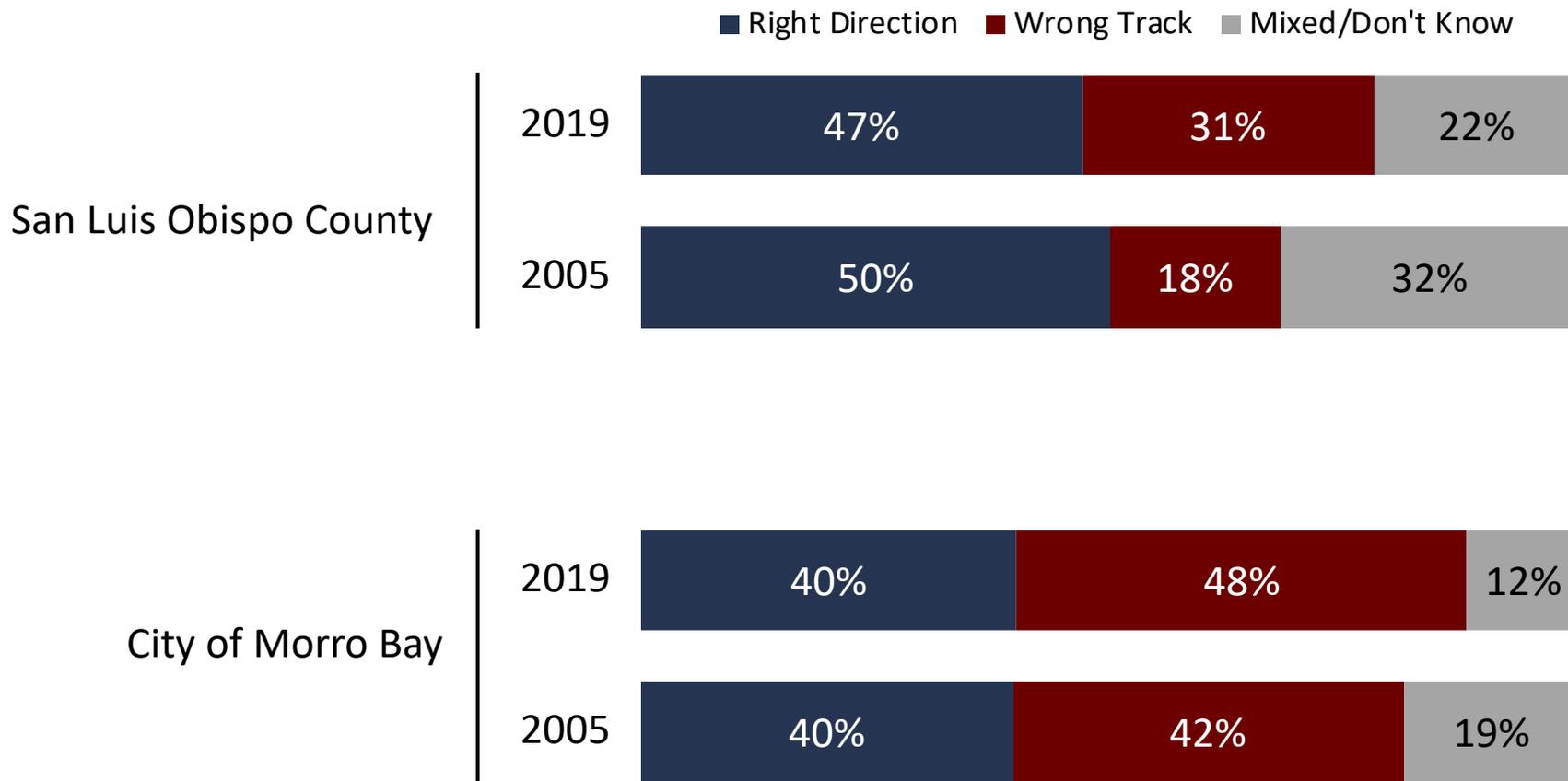


Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding



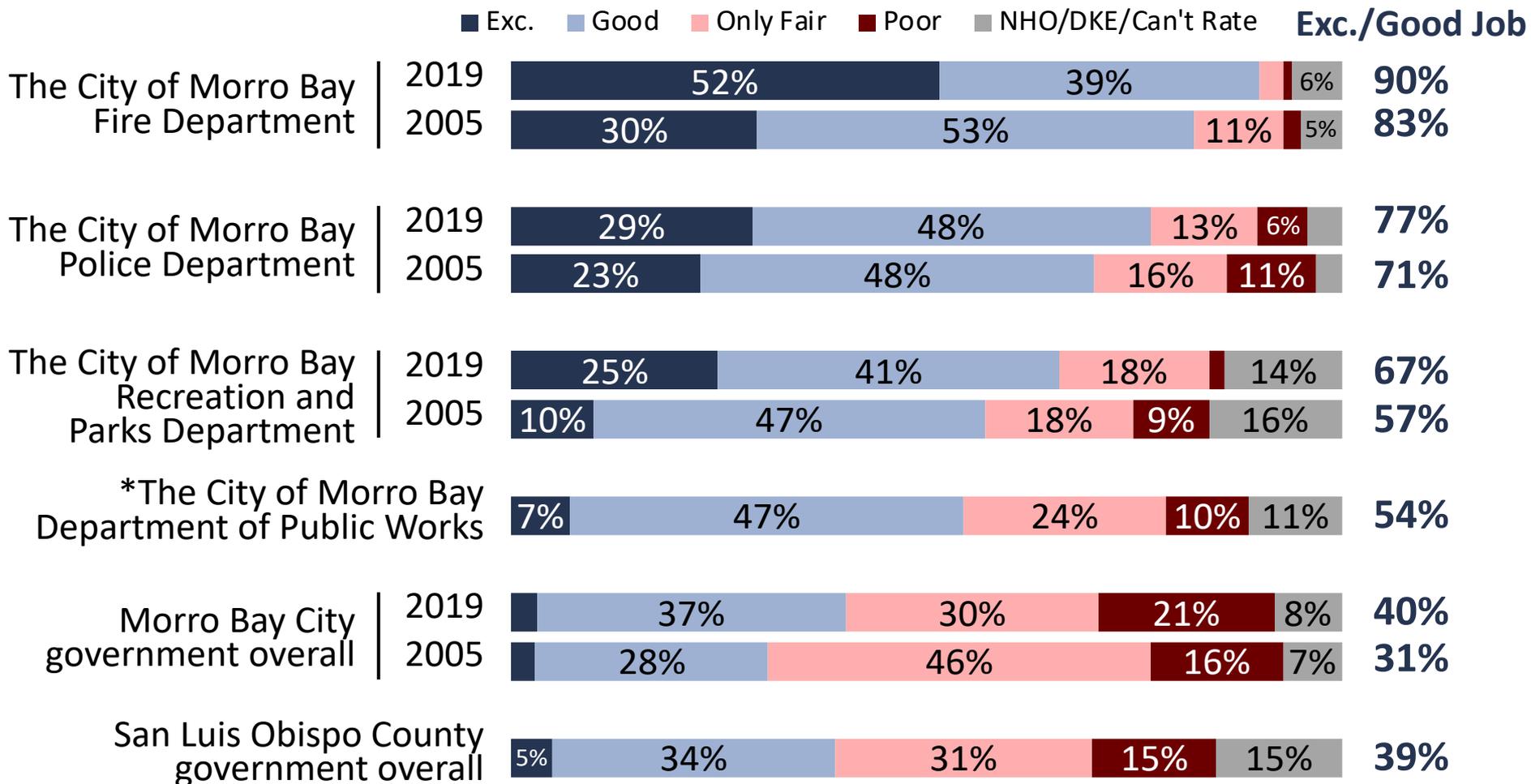
# Community Perceptions

# Opinions on the direction of the City and the County



# Voters have positive impressions of local public safety departments

(Ranked by Excellent/Good Job)



# Perceived issues/problems facing Morro Bay

(Ranked by Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

■ Ext. Ser. Prob. ■ Very Ser. Prob. ■ Smwt. Ser. Prob. ■ Not a Prob. ■ Don't Know

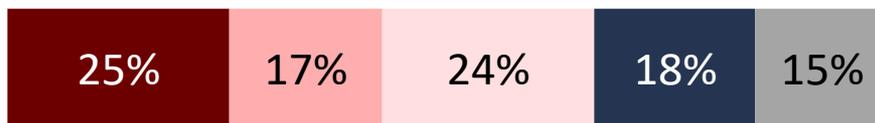
**Ext./Very Serious Problem**

The cost of housing



**60%**

^Waste and inefficiency in Morro Bay City government



**43%**

The number of homeless individuals in Morro Bay



**43%**

The amount you have to pay in taxes



**31%**

^The quality of streets and roads in Morro Bay



**30%**

The lack of ability to respond to multiple 911 emergency medical or fire calls simultaneously

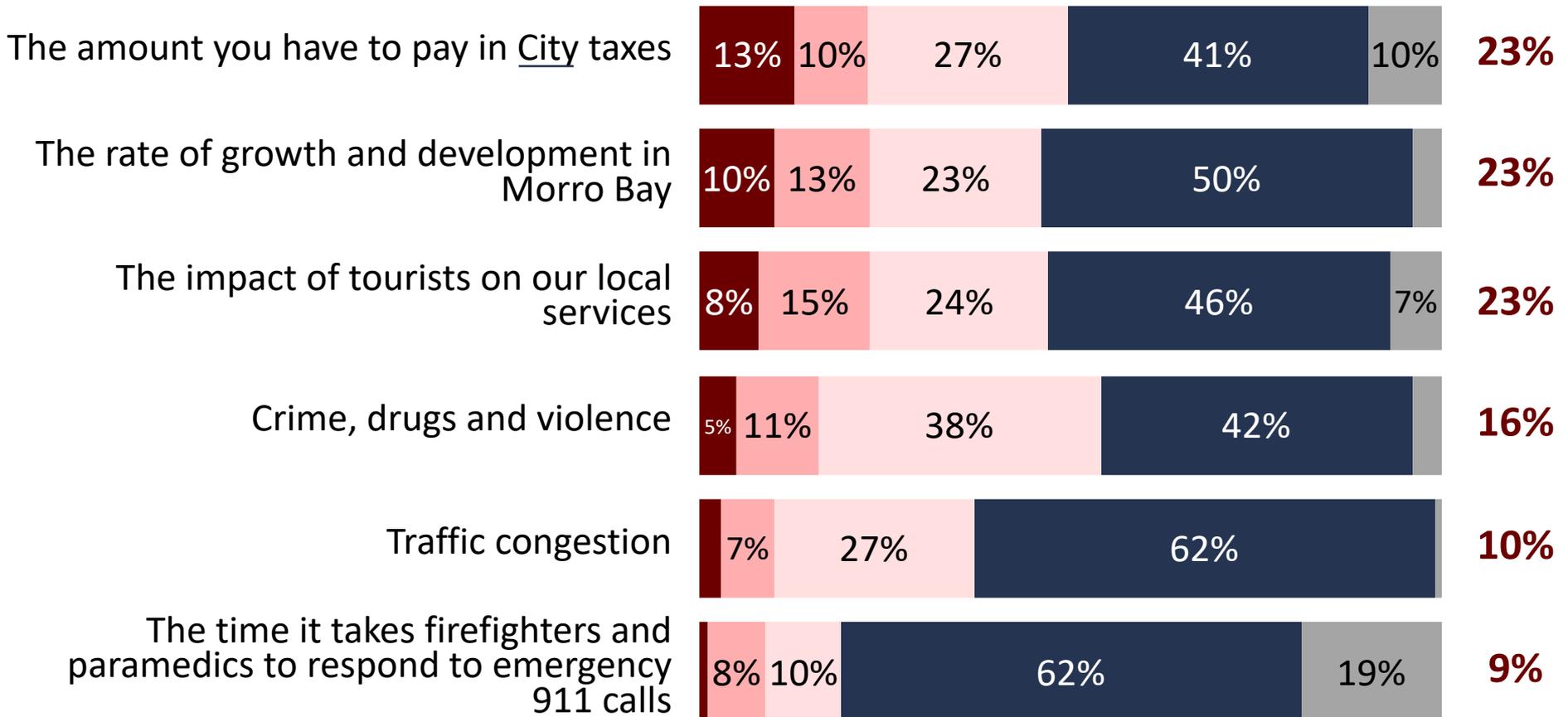


**27%**

# Continued

(Ranked by Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

■ Ext. Ser. Prob. ■ Very Ser. Prob. ■ Smwvt. Ser. Prob. ■ Not a Prob. ■ Don't Know **Ext./Very Serious Problem**

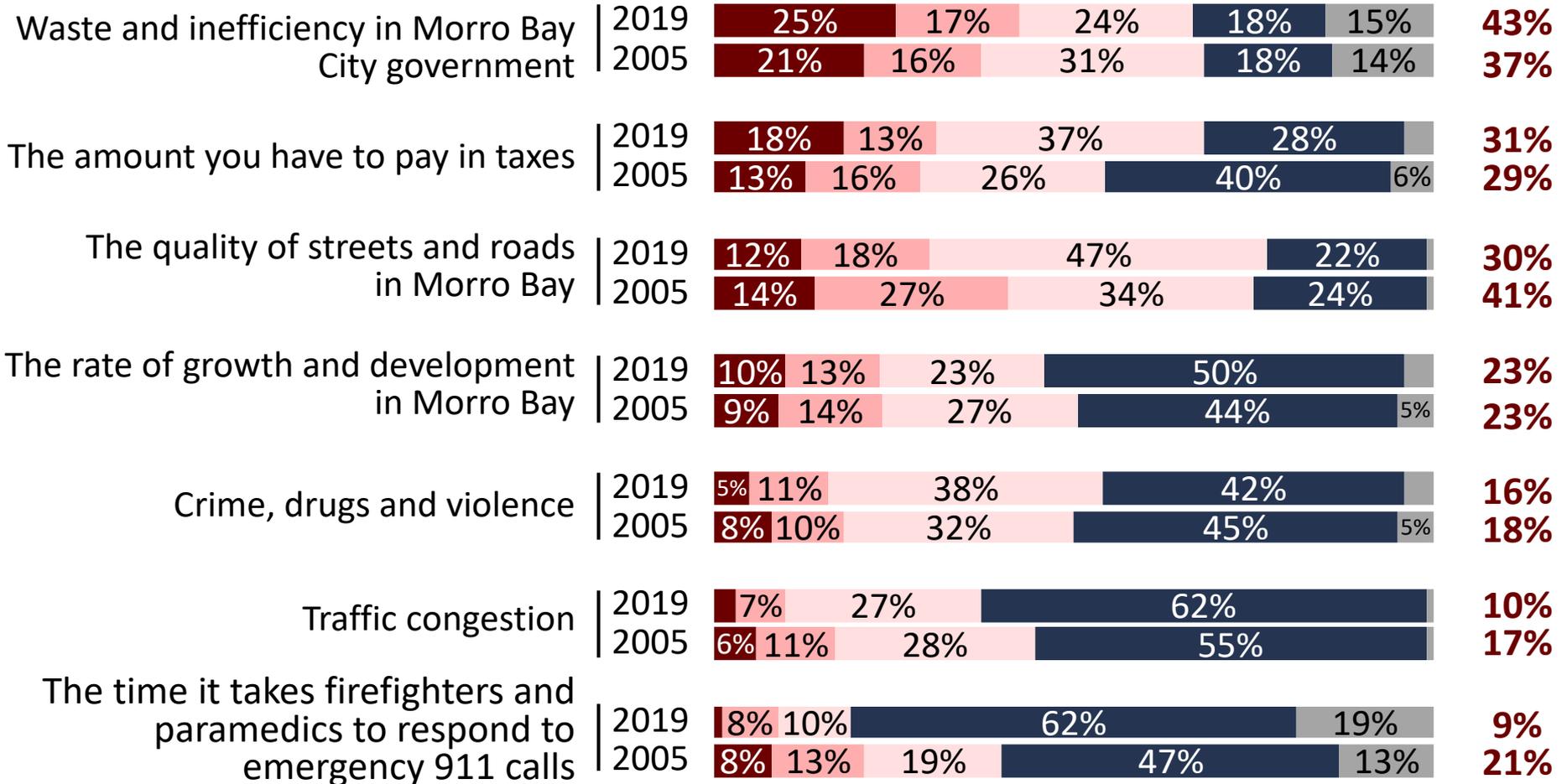


# Comparisons of perceived issues since 2005

(Ranked by Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

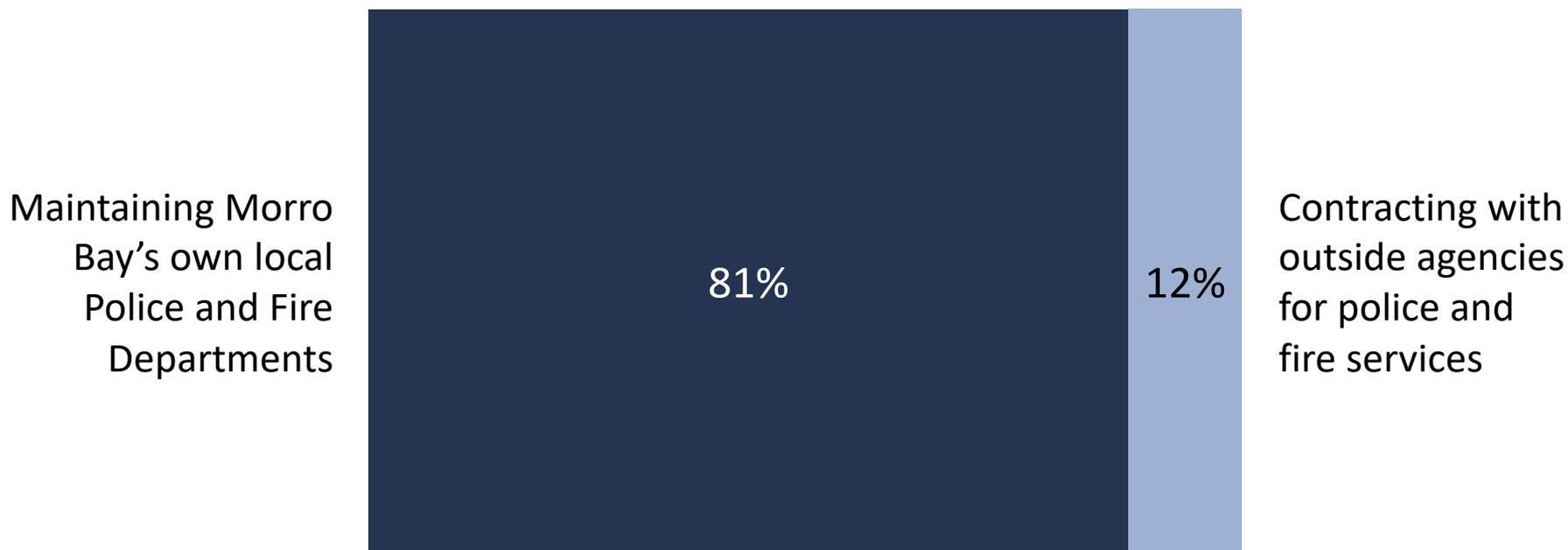
■ Ext. Ser. Prob. ■ Very Ser. Prob. ■ Smwt. Ser. Prob. ■ Not a Prob. ■ Don't Know

**Ext./Very Serious Problem**

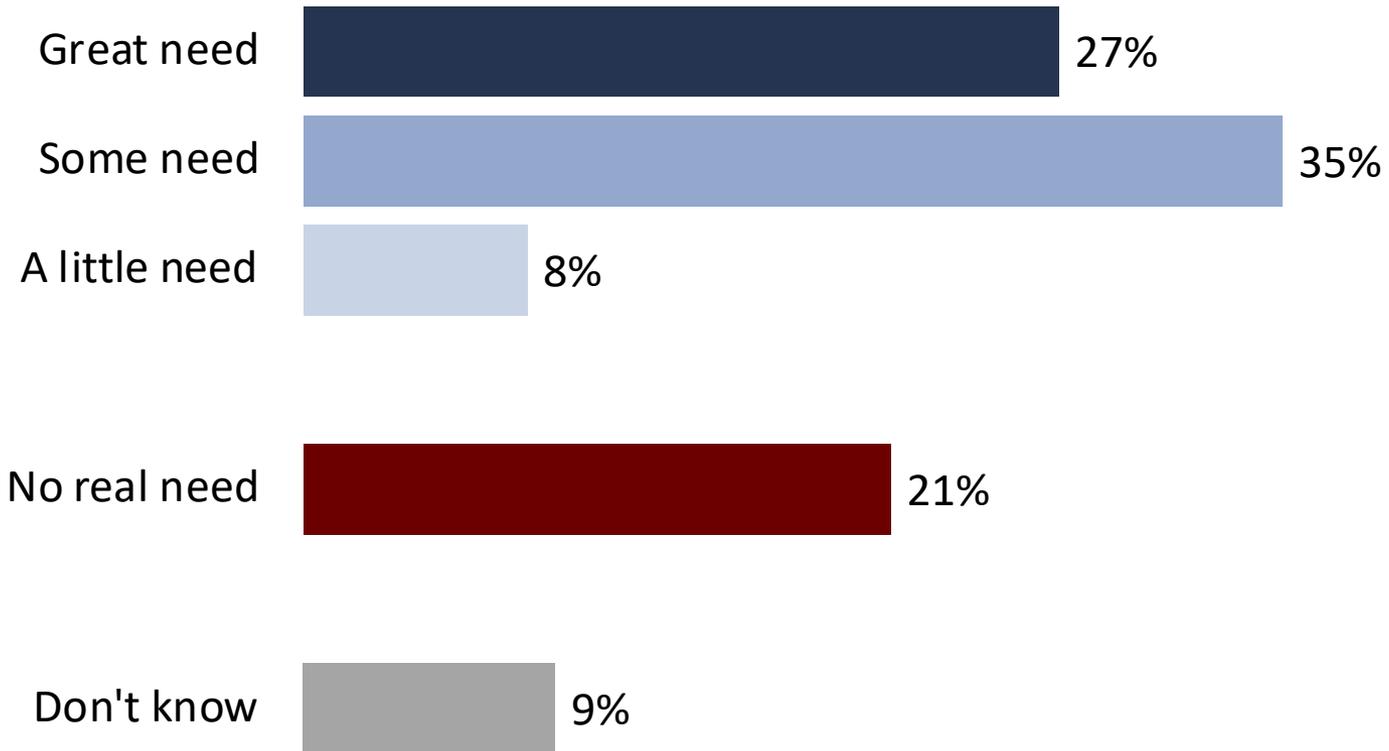


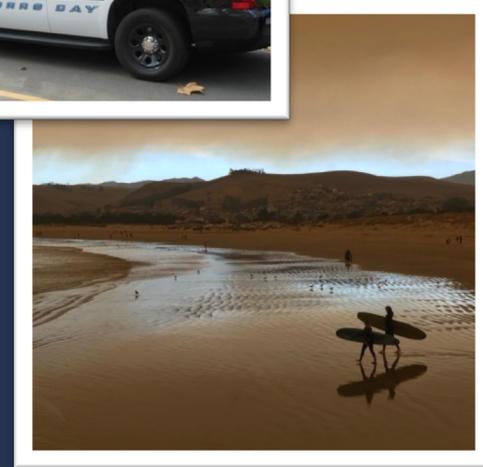
I'd like to switch gears for a moment and read you a brief list of issues that could be problems for people living in Morro Bay. Please tell me whether you personally consider it to be an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not a problem at all for people living in Morro Bay.

# Voters overwhelmingly prefer to maintain Morro Bay's local public safety departments instead of contracting out.



# Seven-in-ten voters believe the City has a need for additional funding.





# Opinions on Potential Local Funding Measure

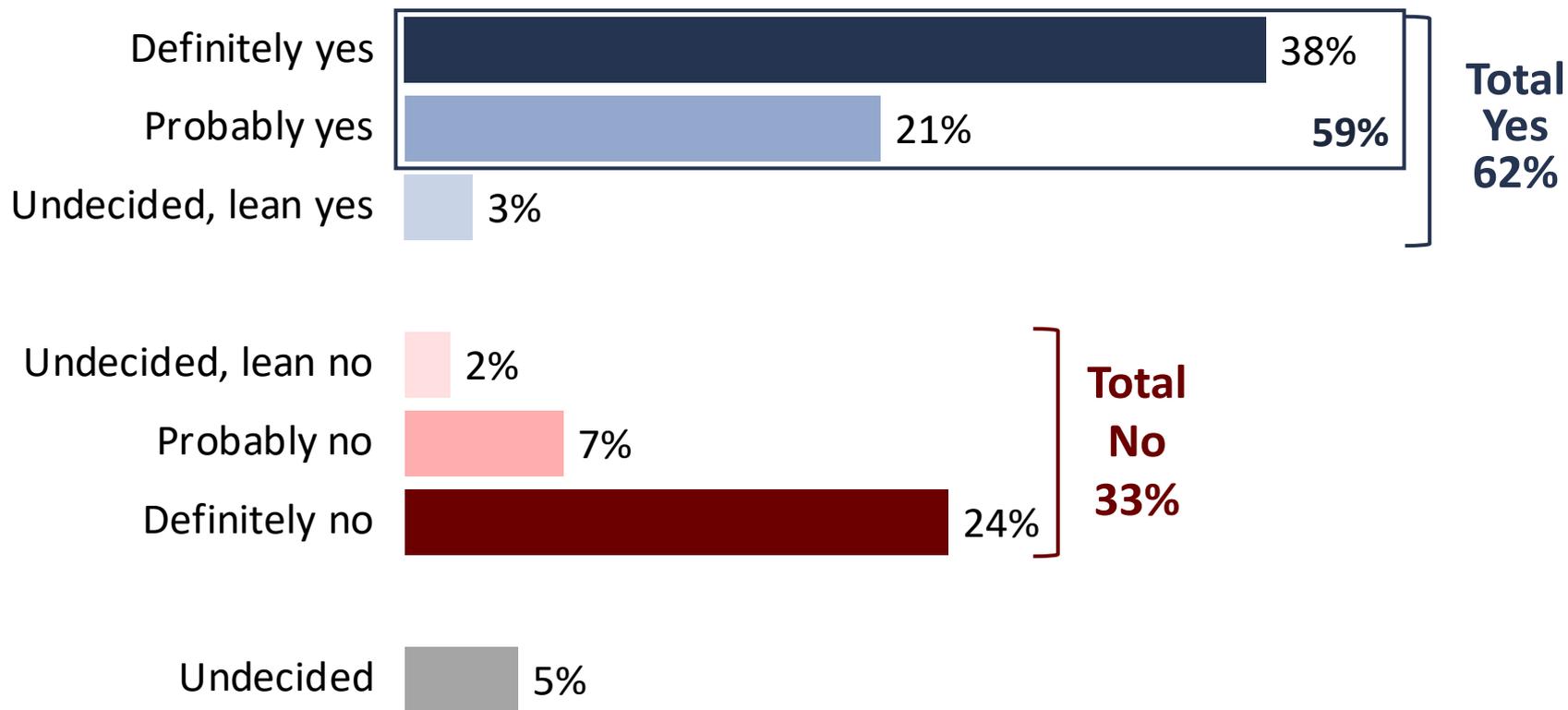
# Potential Ballot Language for a Local Funding Measure

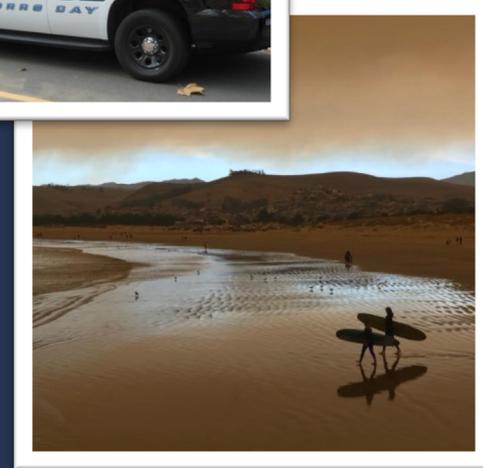
## MORRO BAY PUBLIC SAFETY AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES PROTECTION MEASURE

To protect City of Morro Bay's financial stability, local property values and services, including, preventing elimination of Morro Bay Police and Fire Departments, while maintaining 24/7 paramedics and 911 emergency response, senior, youth and general services; repairing streets and potholes; keeping beaches, public areas safe and clean; retaining and attracting businesses; shall the measure establishing a 1¢ sales tax providing \$2 million annually until ended by voters be adopted, requiring independent audits, public oversight, all funds used locally?

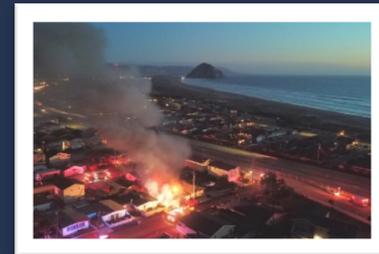


# Slightly more than six-in-ten voters initially support this potential simple majority requirement (50+1%) measure.

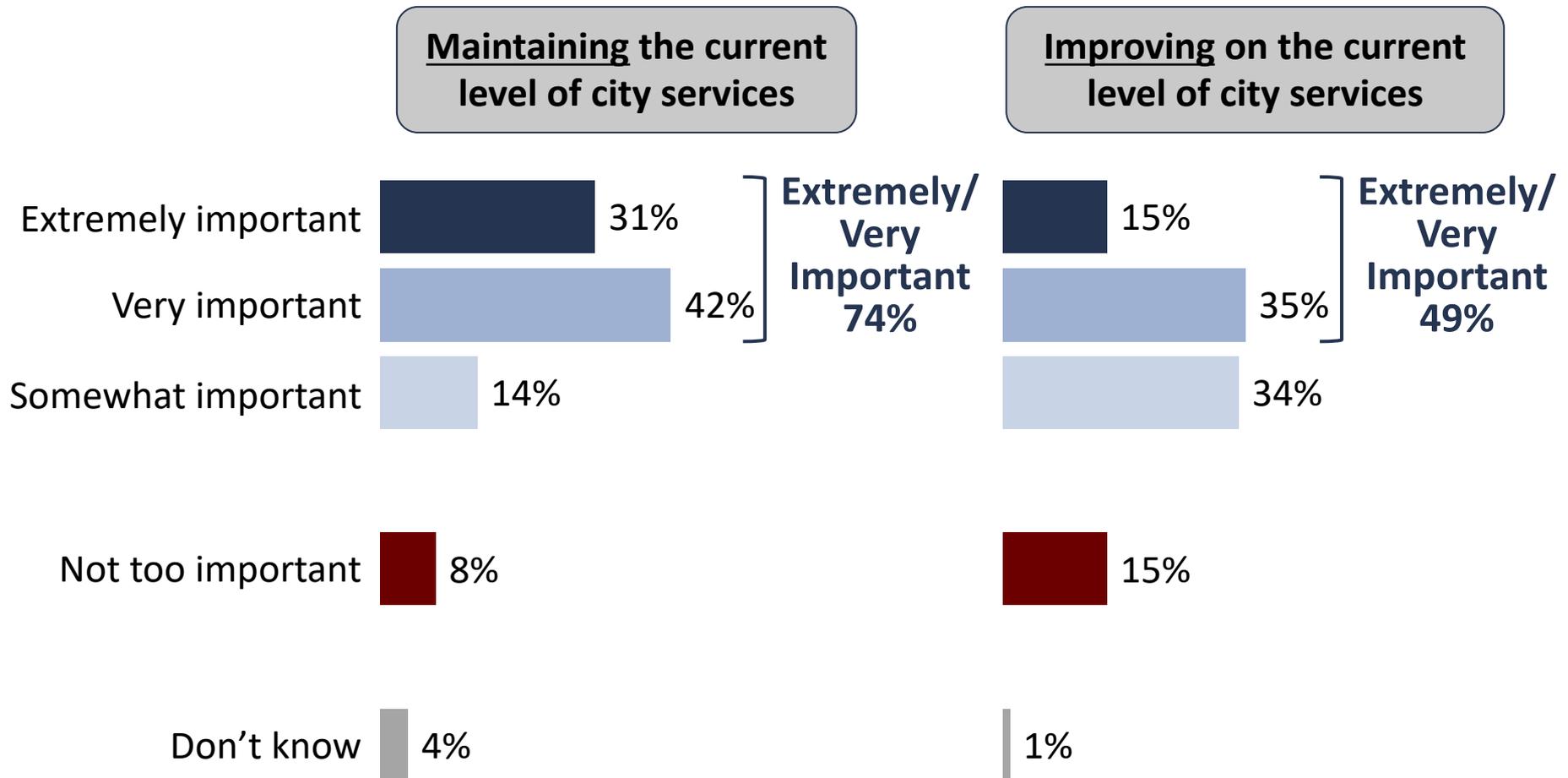




# Community Spending Priorities



# Much higher percentages rate the importance of maintaining essential city services over improving them.



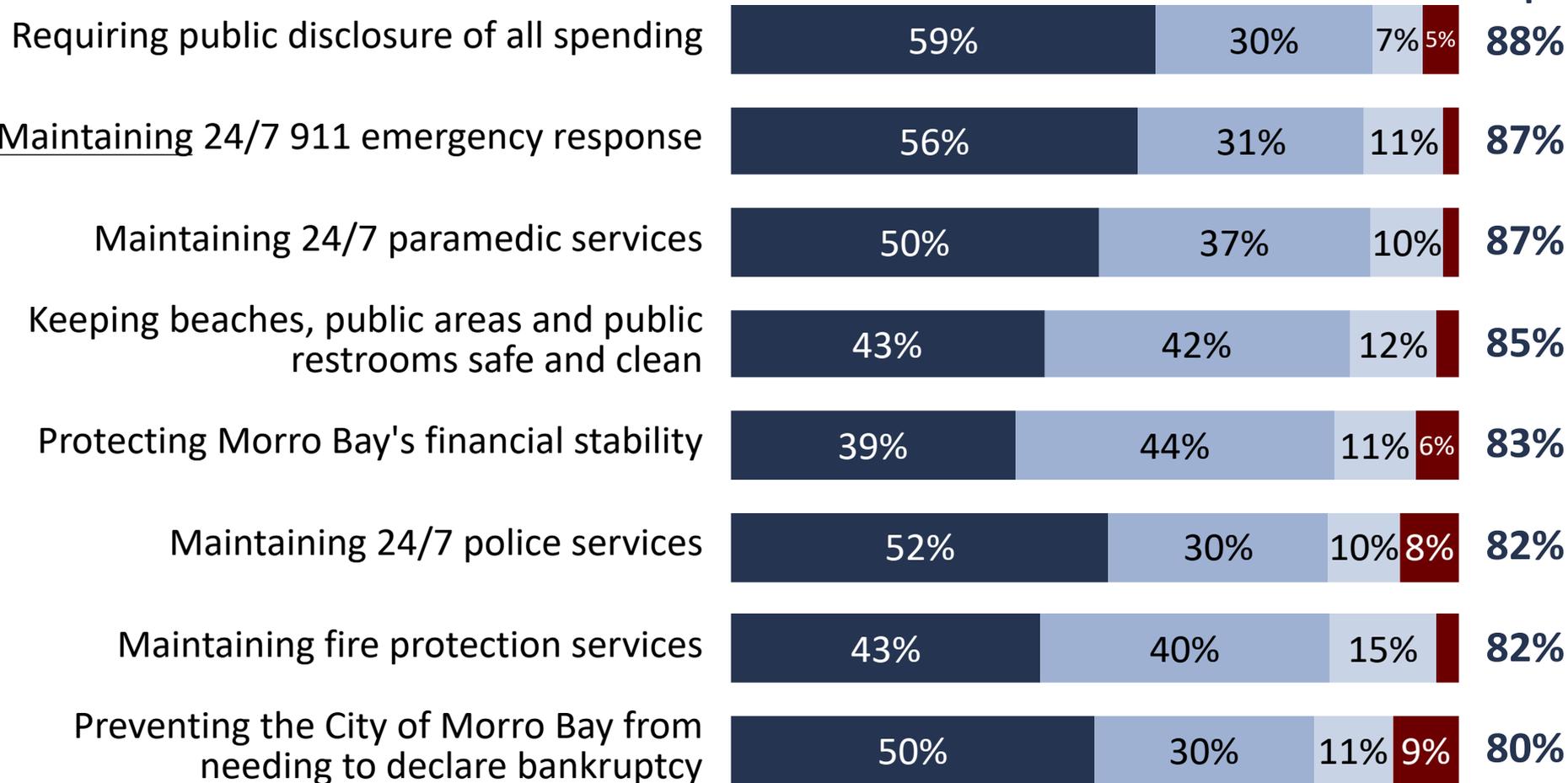
I am going to read you a list of possible programs and projects that might be funded by the local ballot measure we were discussing earlier, as well as accountability provisions that could be included. Regardless of your opinion of the measure, after I mention each one, please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample

# Voters rate public disclosure of spending and maintaining 911 emergency response among the top priorities of a potential funding measure.

(Ranked by Extremely/Very Important)

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

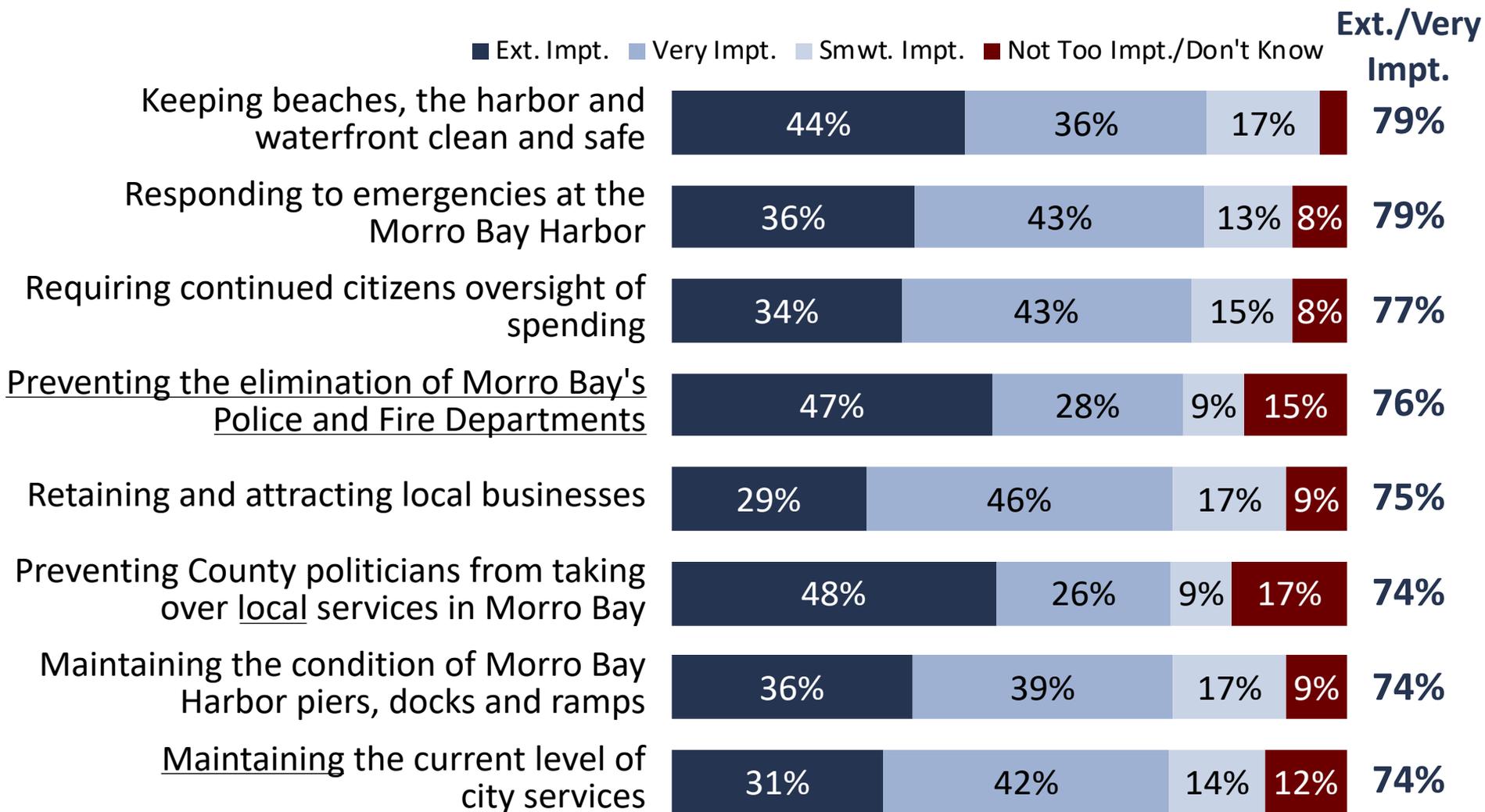
Ext./Very Impt.



I am going to read you a list of possible programs and projects that might be funded by the local ballot measure we were discussing earlier, as well as accountability provisions that could be included. Regardless of your opinion of the measure, after I mention each one, please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample

# Continued

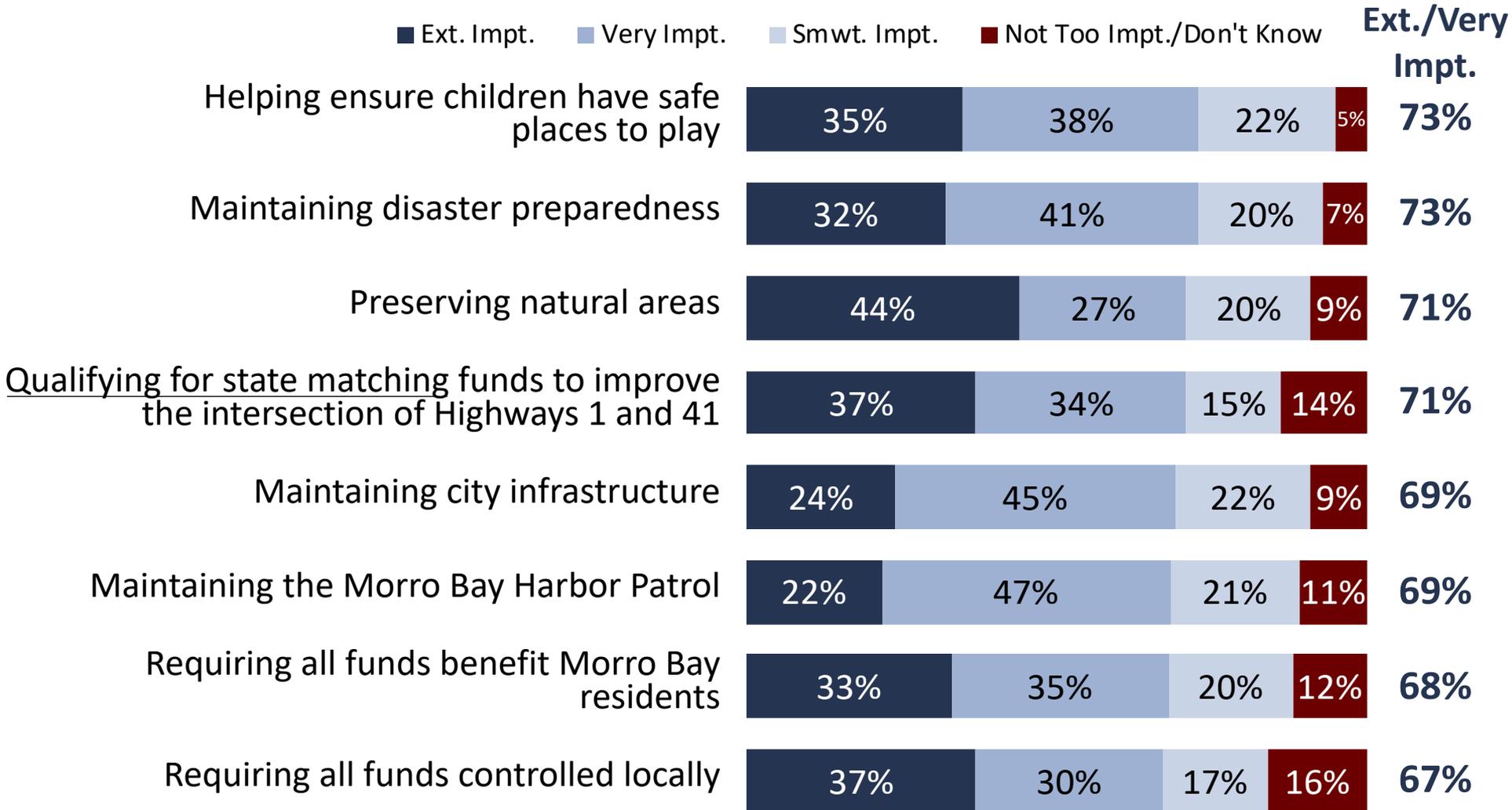
(Ranked by Extremely/Very Important)



I am going to read you a list of possible programs and projects that might be funded by the local ballot measure we were discussing earlier, as well as accountability provisions that could be included. Regardless of your opinion of the measure, after I mention each one, please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample

# Continued

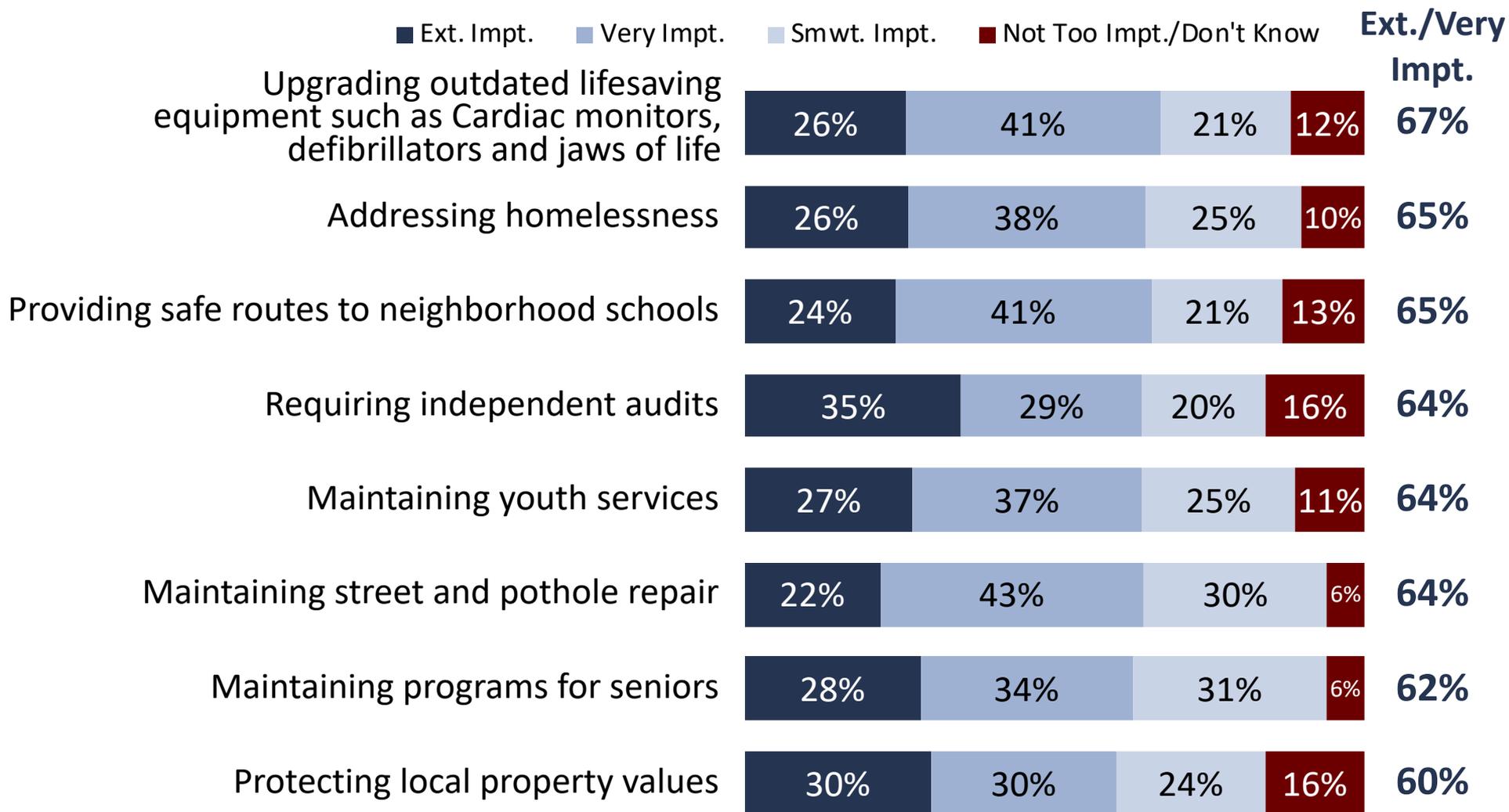
(Ranked by Extremely/Very Important)



I am going to read you a list of possible programs and projects that might be funded by the local ballot measure we were discussing earlier, as well as accountability provisions that could be included. Regardless of your opinion of the measure, after I mention each one, please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample

# Continued

(Ranked by Extremely/Very Important)



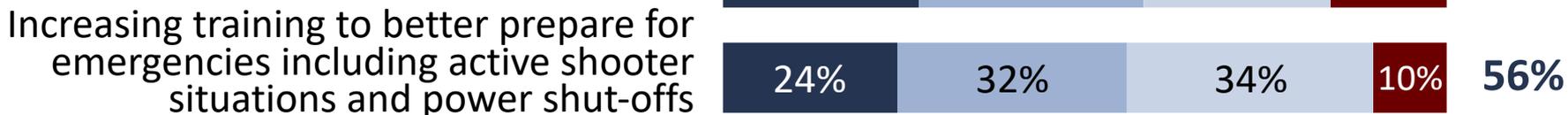
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# Continued

(Ranked by Extremely/Very Important)

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

**Ext./Very  
Impt.**



I am going to read you a list of possible programs and projects that might be funded by the local ballot measure we were discussing earlier, as well as accountability provisions that could be included. Regardless of your opinion of the measure, after I mention each one, please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? ^Not Part of Split Sample

# Continued

(Ranked by Extremely/Very Important)

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

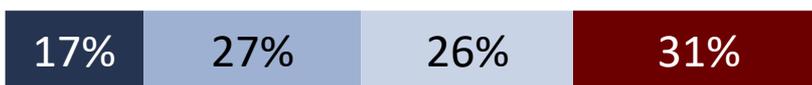
**Ext./Very  
Impt.**

Improving on the current level of city services



**49%**

Increasing enforcement of city laws on vacation rental units



**44%**

Rebuilding and staffing a fire station in North Morro Bay to provide rapid response to 911 calls from all parts of the city



**43%**

Adding new bike and pedestrian paths



**36%**

Rebuilding and staffing a fire station in North Morro Bay



**36%**

Replacing aging playground equipment



**31%**

Rebuilding the Surf Street stairs



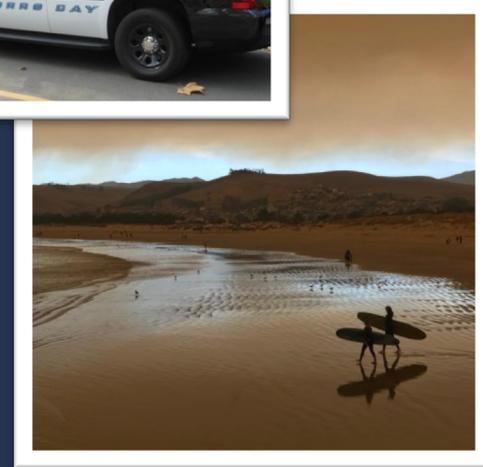
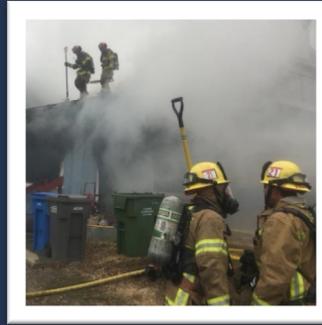
**28%**

Upgrading the Veterans Memorial Building



**26%**

*I am going to read you a list of possible programs and projects that might be funded by the local ballot measure we were discussing earlier, as well as accountability provisions that could be included. Regardless of your opinion of the measure, after I mention each one, please tell me how important that provision or use of funds is to you personally: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample*



# Opinions on Potential Harbor Parcel Tax



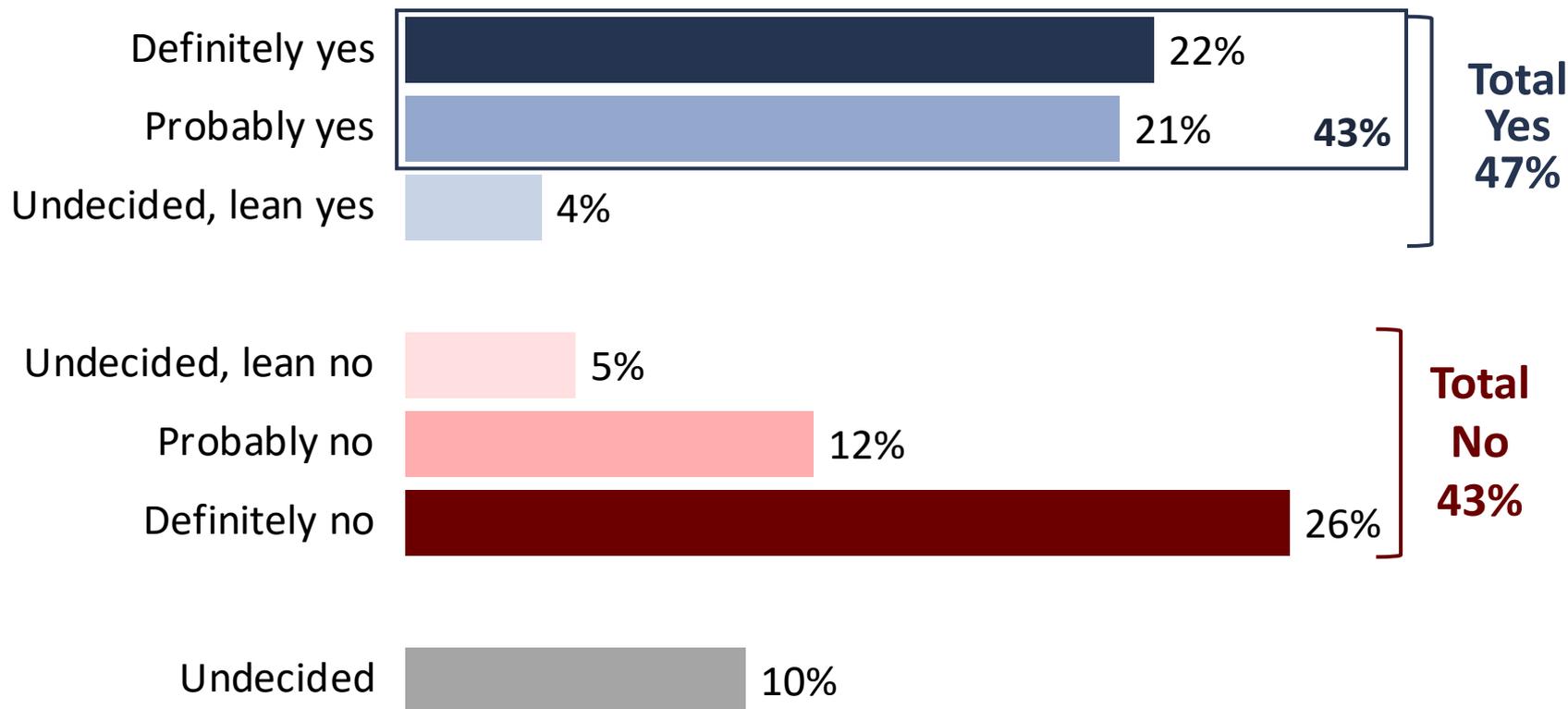
# Potential Ballot Language Tested in Survey

## MORRO BAY CLEAN AND SAFE HARBOR, BEACH AND WATERFRONT MEASURE

To keep Morro Bay's beaches, harbor and waterfront safe; reduce beach/waterfront pollution; maintain Morro Bay's Harbor Patrol, respond to boater emergencies, upgrade safety equipment; upgrade harbor piers, docks and ramps; shall the measure levying \$50 per commercial and residential parcel, providing \$200,000 annually, be adopted, requiring annual independent financial audits, citizens oversight, and all funds used locally to benefit Morro Bay residents?



# There is a lack of community support for this potential measure. Less than half of voters support the measure which requires a 2/3rds vote for passage.



**For more information, contact:**

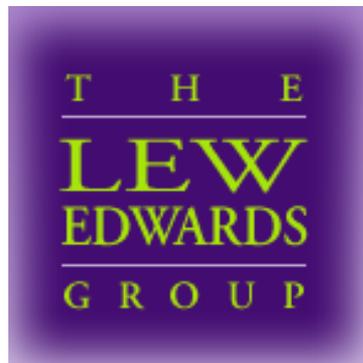


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