



Seattle Dept. of Transportation Levy Baseline Survey

Prepared for Steering Committee Briefing 1.9.24

- ▶ Survey of voters in Seattle
- ▶ Mixed-mode telephone and email/text-to-web methodology:
 - Phone interviews conducted by trained, professional interviewers; landlines and mobile phones included
 - Email and text invitations were sent with a link to an online survey
- ▶ Conducted December 12 – 20, 2023
- ▶ 1,000 interviews; overall margin of error ± 3.1 percentage points
 - A split sample methodology was used to test two different levy amounts; margin of error for each split is ± 4.4 percentage points
 - Split A: \$1.2B, n = 500
 - Split B: \$1.7B, n = 500

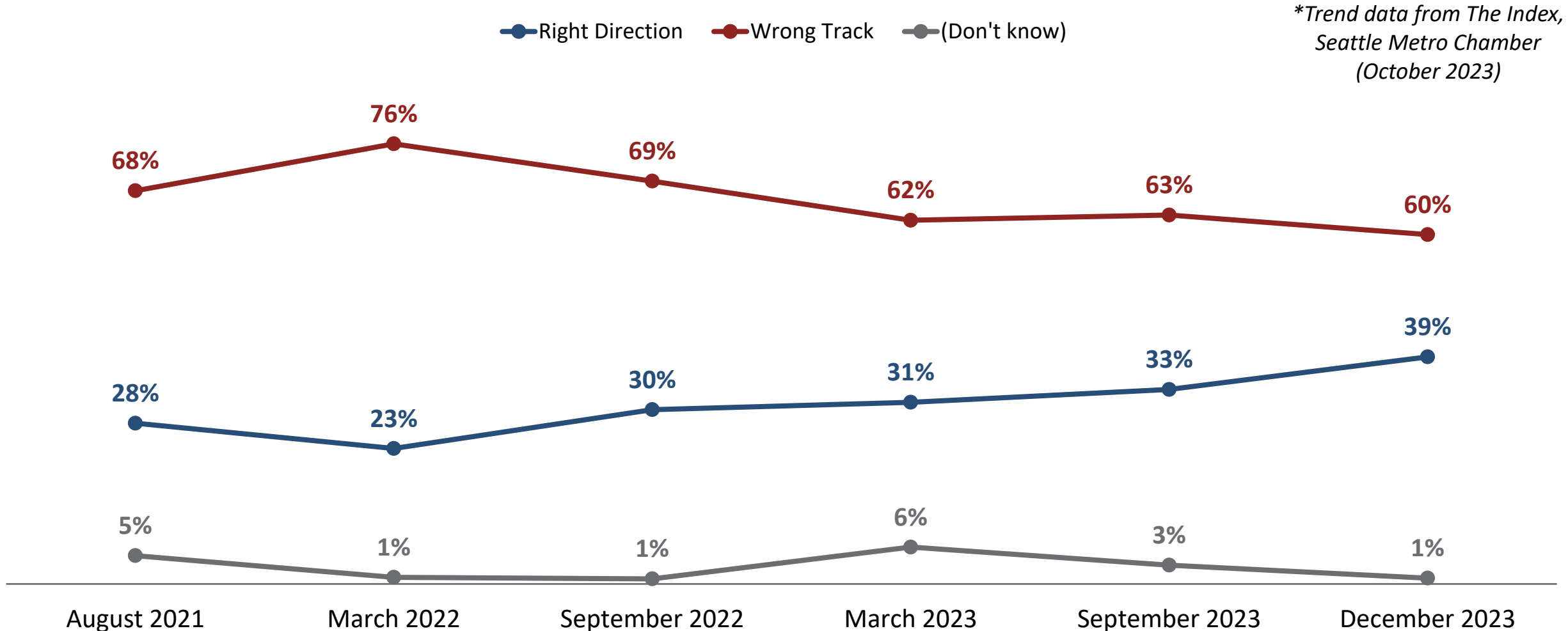
Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.



Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track Trend

A majority of Seattleites continue to be pessimistic about the city's direction, but attitudes are slowly improving.



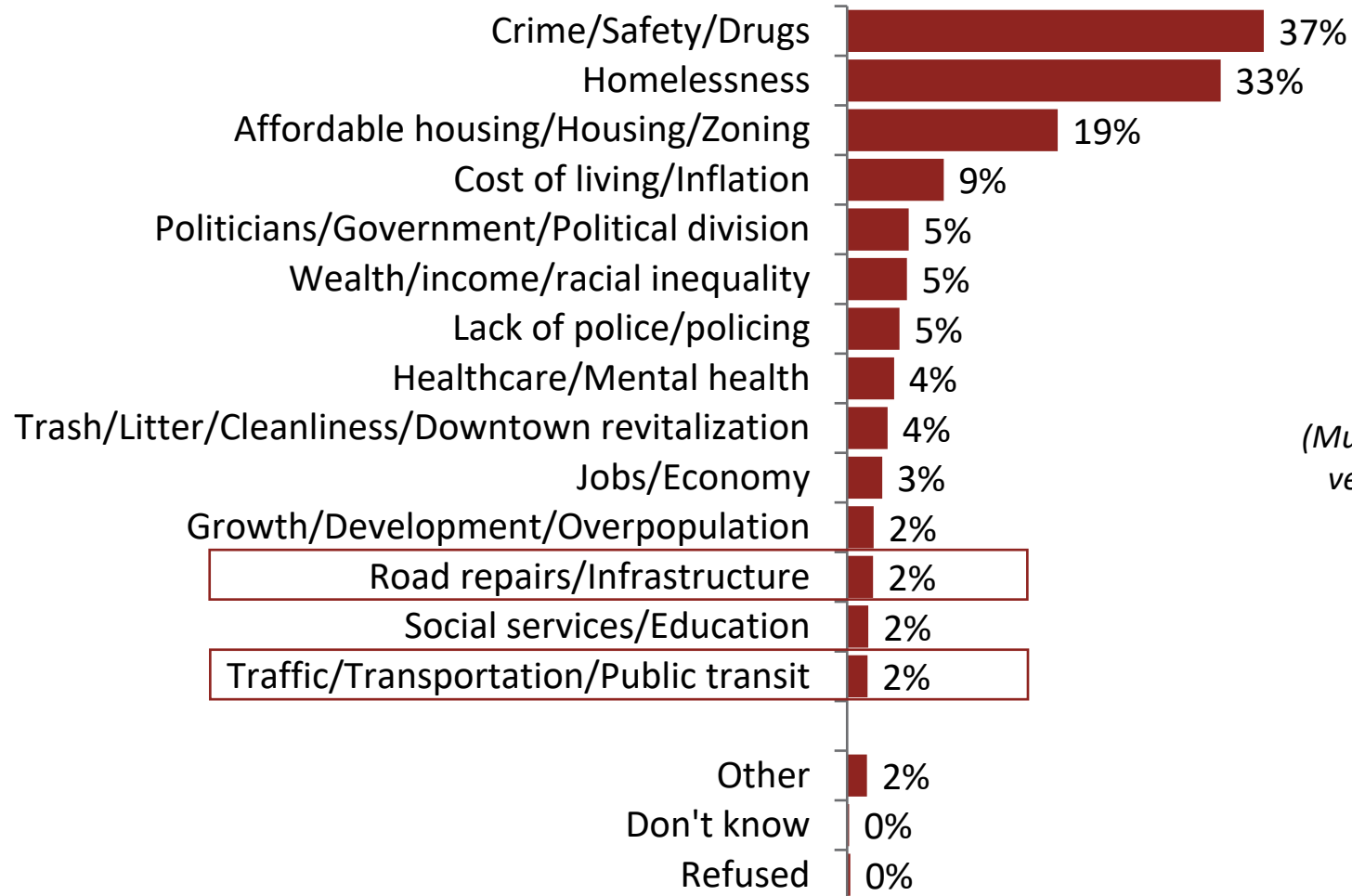
**Trend data from The Index, Seattle Metro Chamber (October 2023)*

Q3. Do you feel things in Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

Most Important Problem

Public safety, homelessness, and housing affordability dominate top-of-mind concerns, eclipsing other issues.

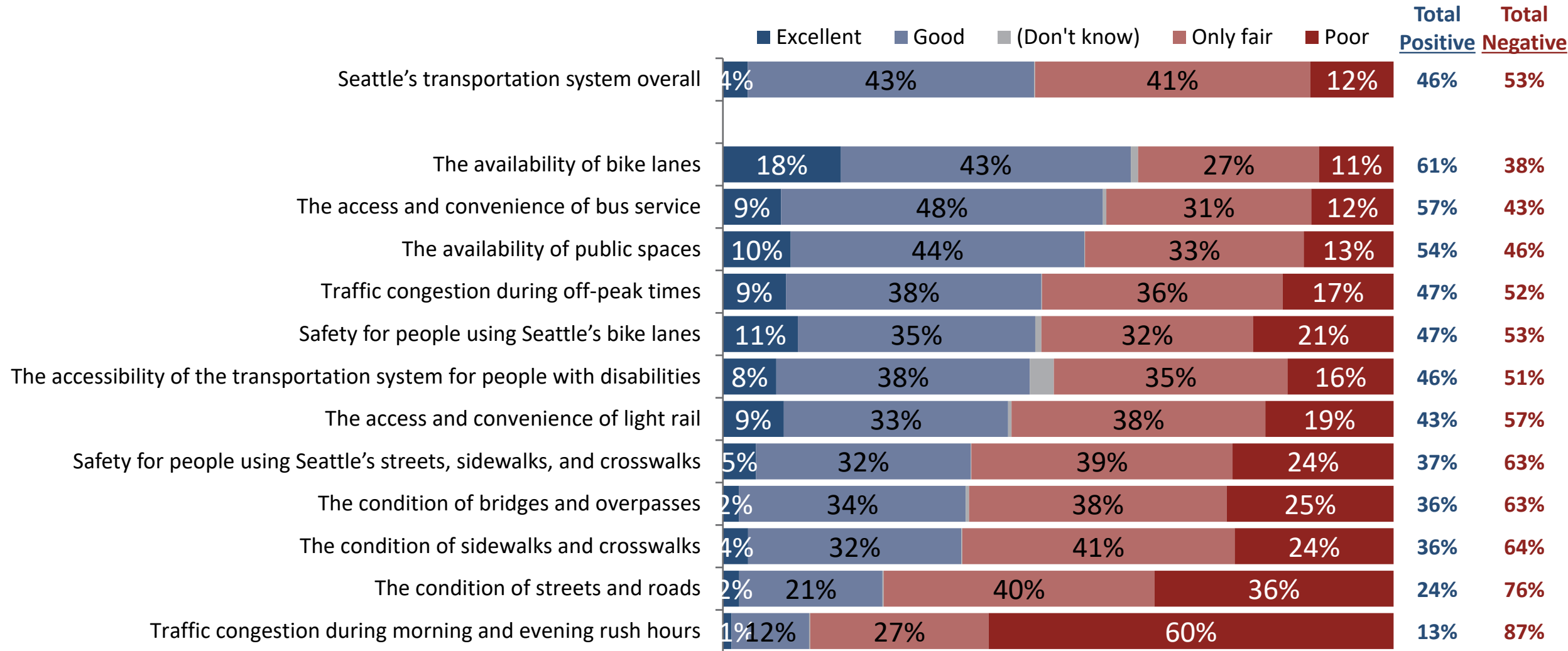
What do you think is the most important problem facing Seattle today?



(Multiple responses accepted; verbatim responses coded into categories shown)

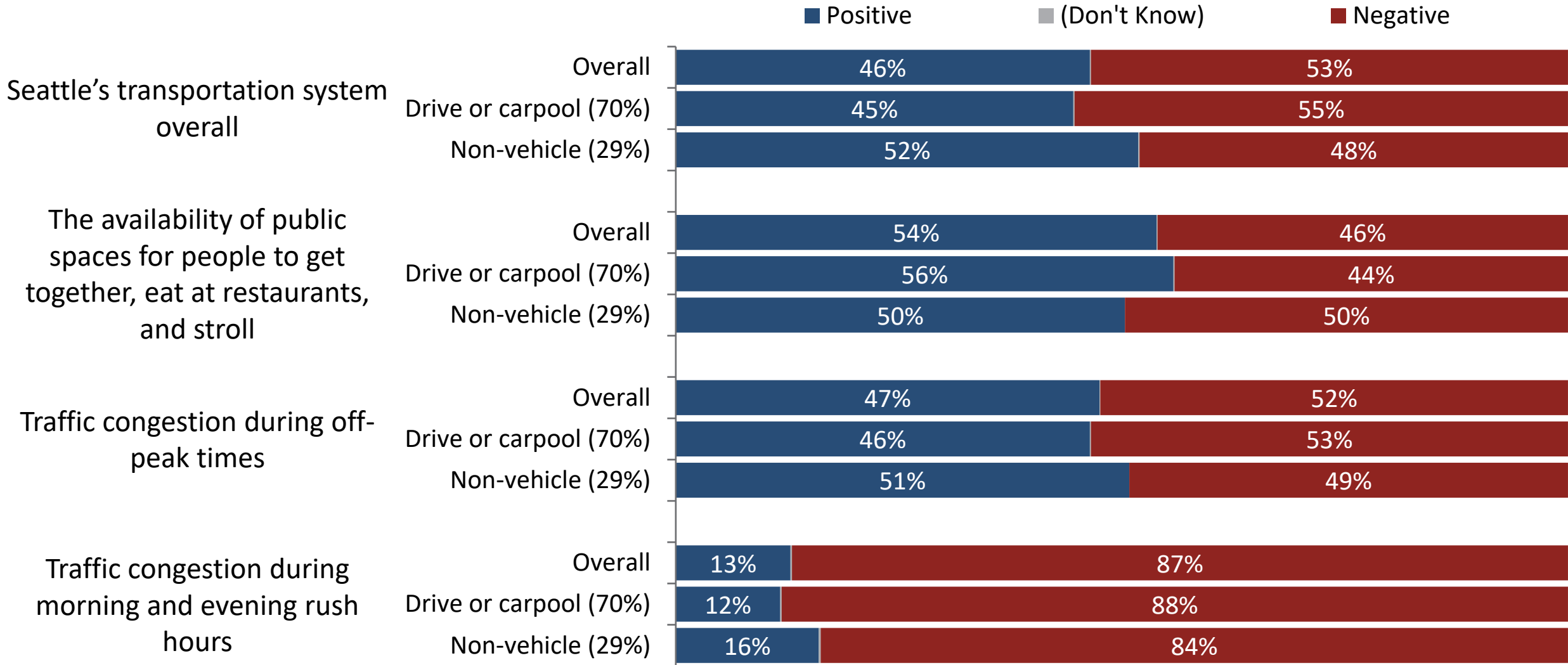
Transportation Ratings

Several aspects of the city's transportation system are rated negatively by a majority, but most of the ratings are good/only fair.



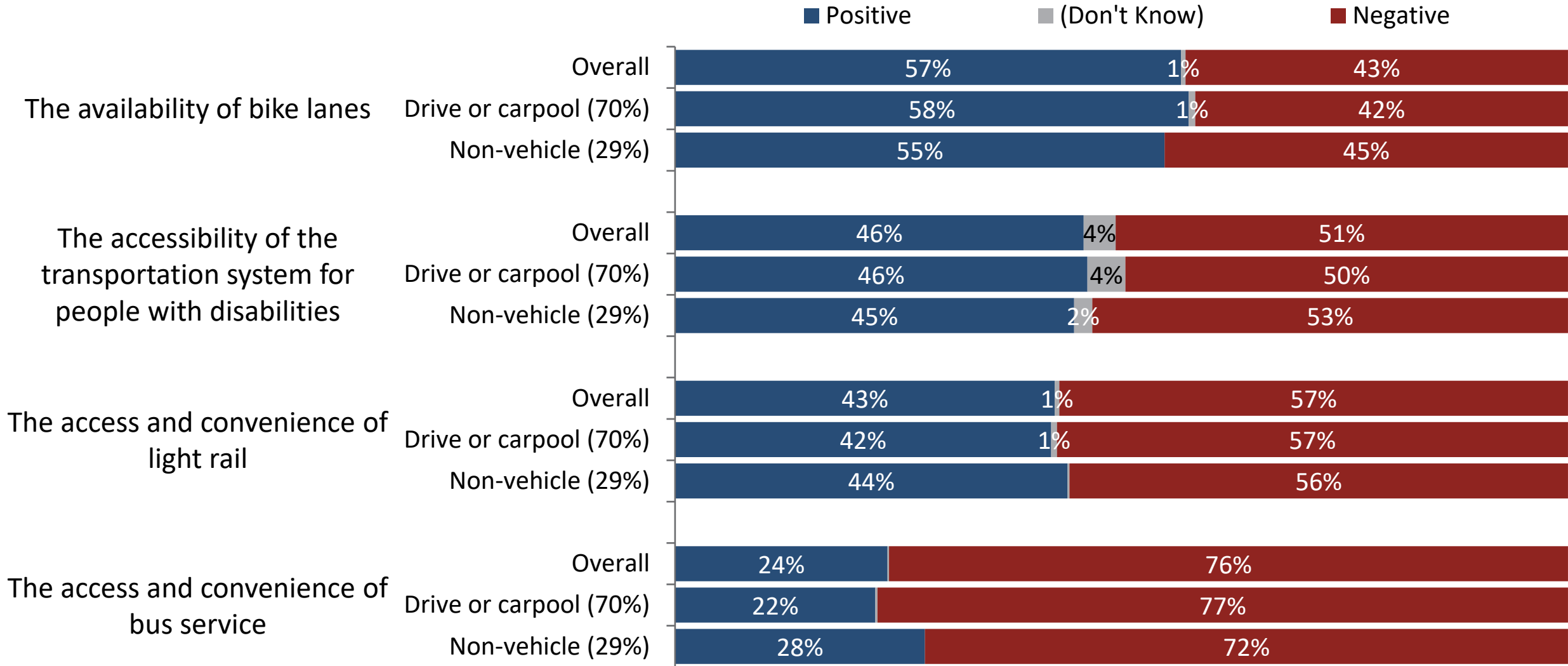
Q11-23. These questions focus on elements of Seattle's transportation system. Please rate each item on a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor.

System and Traffic Ratings



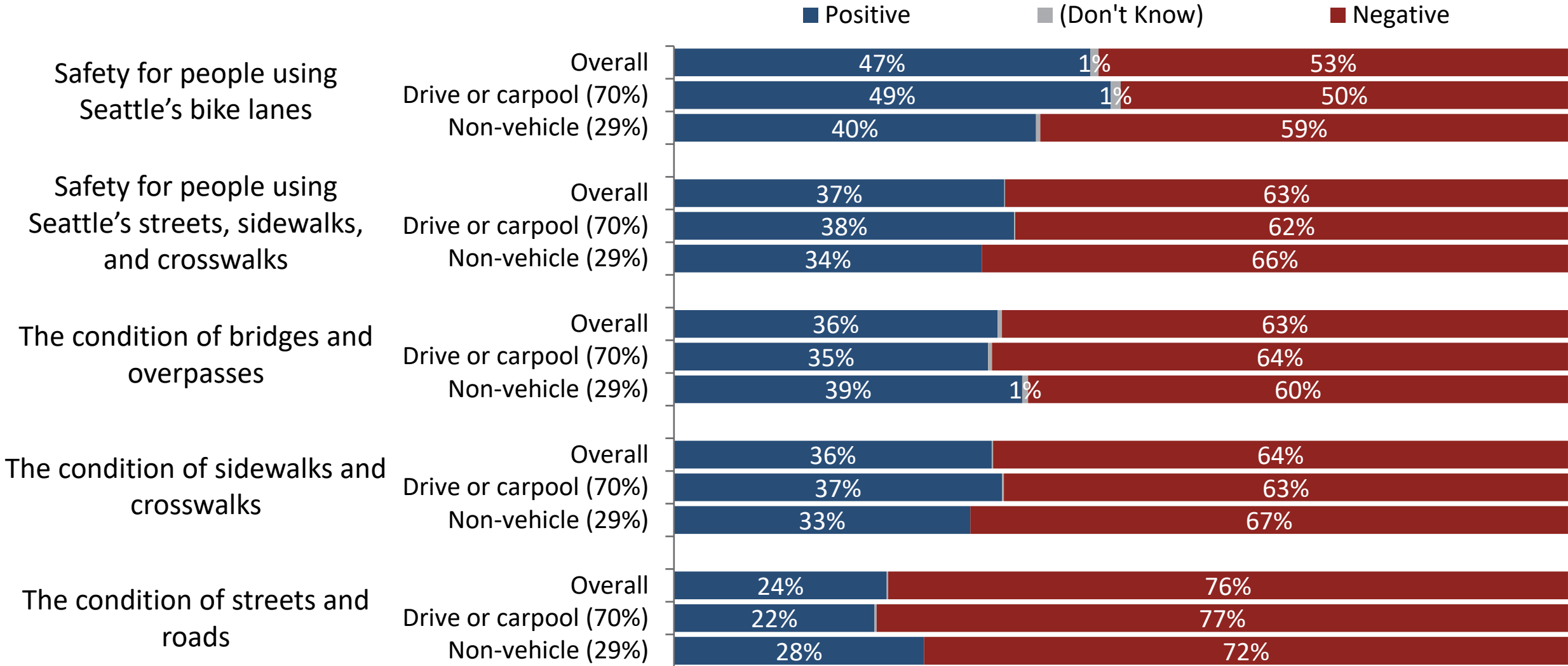
Q11/12/18/19. These questions focus on elements of Seattle's transportation system. Please rate each item on a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor.

Transportation Access Ratings



Q14/23/21/20. These questions focus on elements of Seattle's transportation system. Please rate each item on a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor.

Safety and Infrastructure Condition Ratings

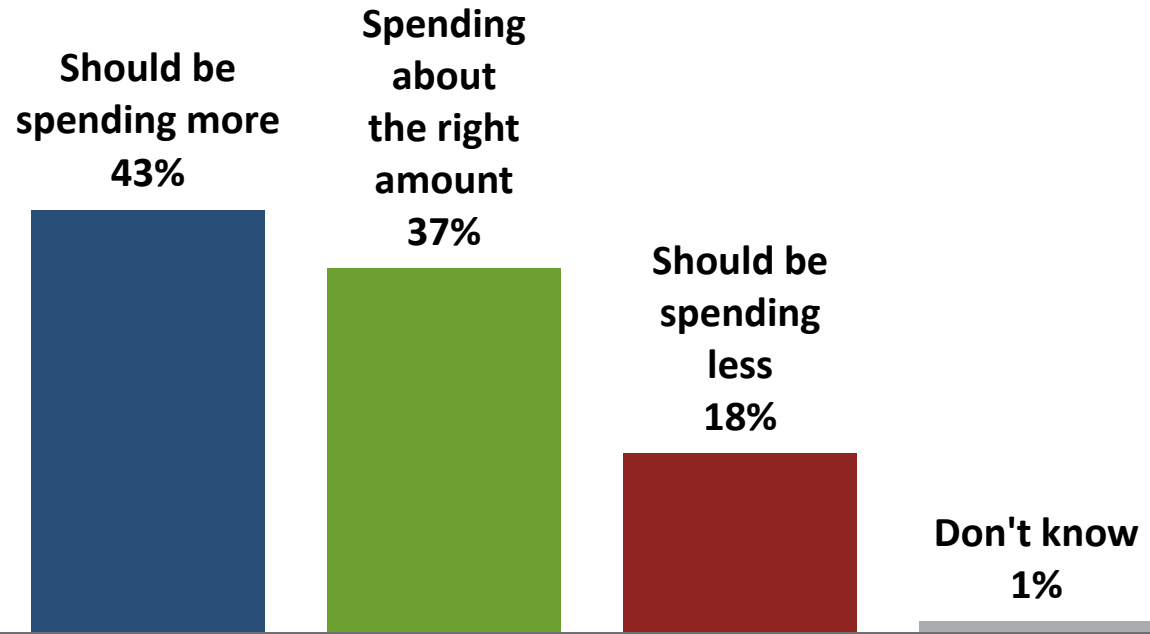


Q17/16/15/13/12. These questions focus on elements of Seattle's transportation system. Please rate each item on a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor.

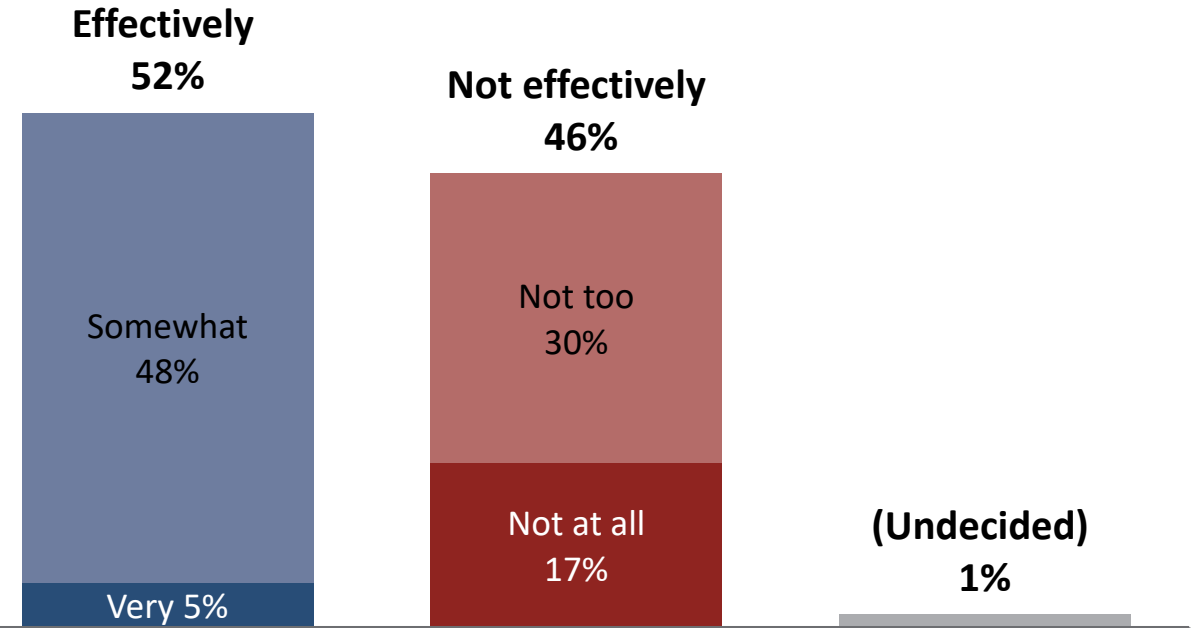
Transportation Funding Attitudes

A plurality think more money should be spent on transportation while a third thinks around the right amount is being spent. The vast majority rate SDOT's spending effectiveness in the middle "Somewhat Effective/Not Too Effective".

The amount currently spent on transportation in Seattle



Effectiveness of money currently spent by SDOT



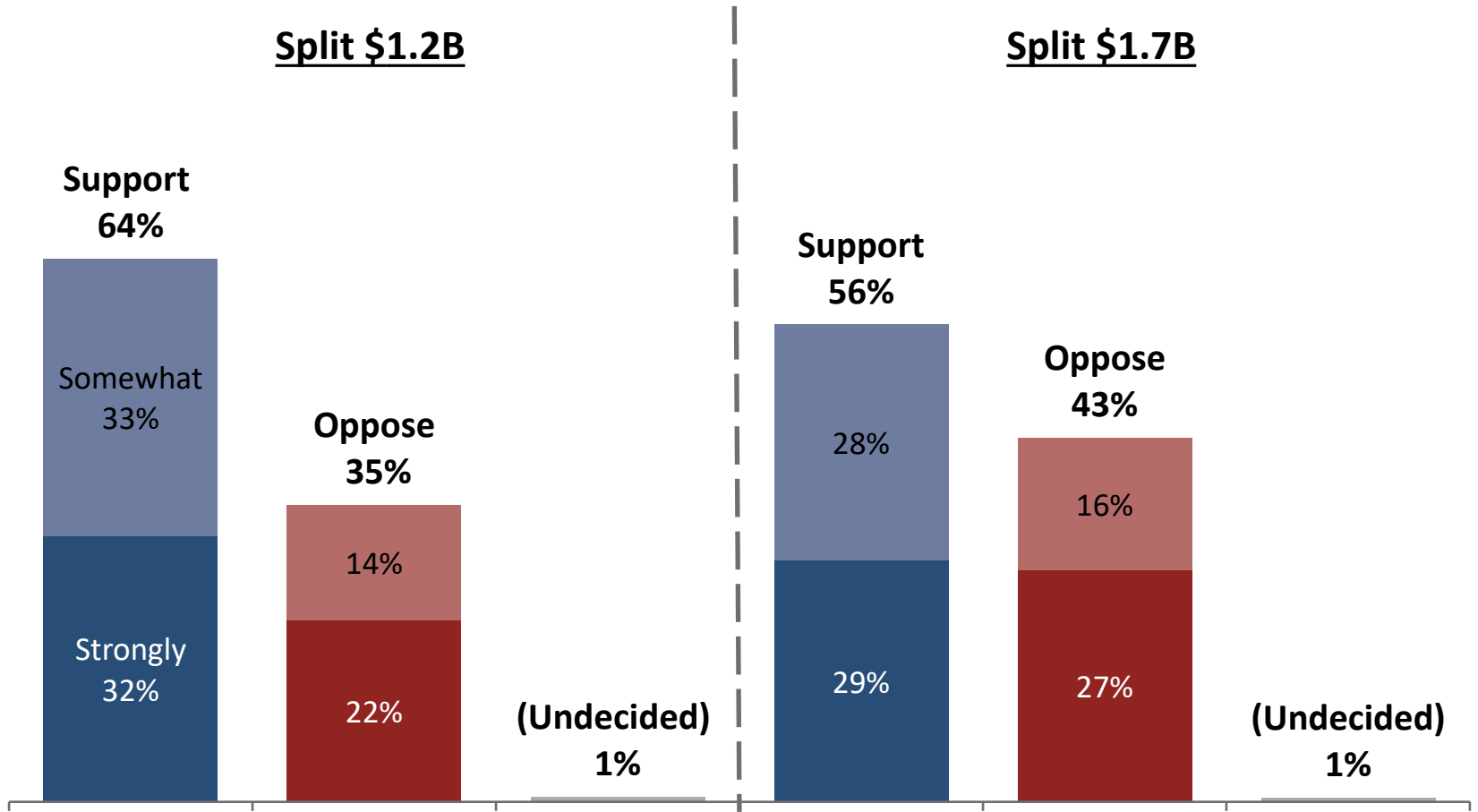


Seattle Transportation Levy

Initial Support

A majority say they would support a measure renewing and expanding Seattle’s transportation levy at both amounts tested, although around half of the support is in the softer “somewhat” category. Support for \$1.2B is close to two-thirds.

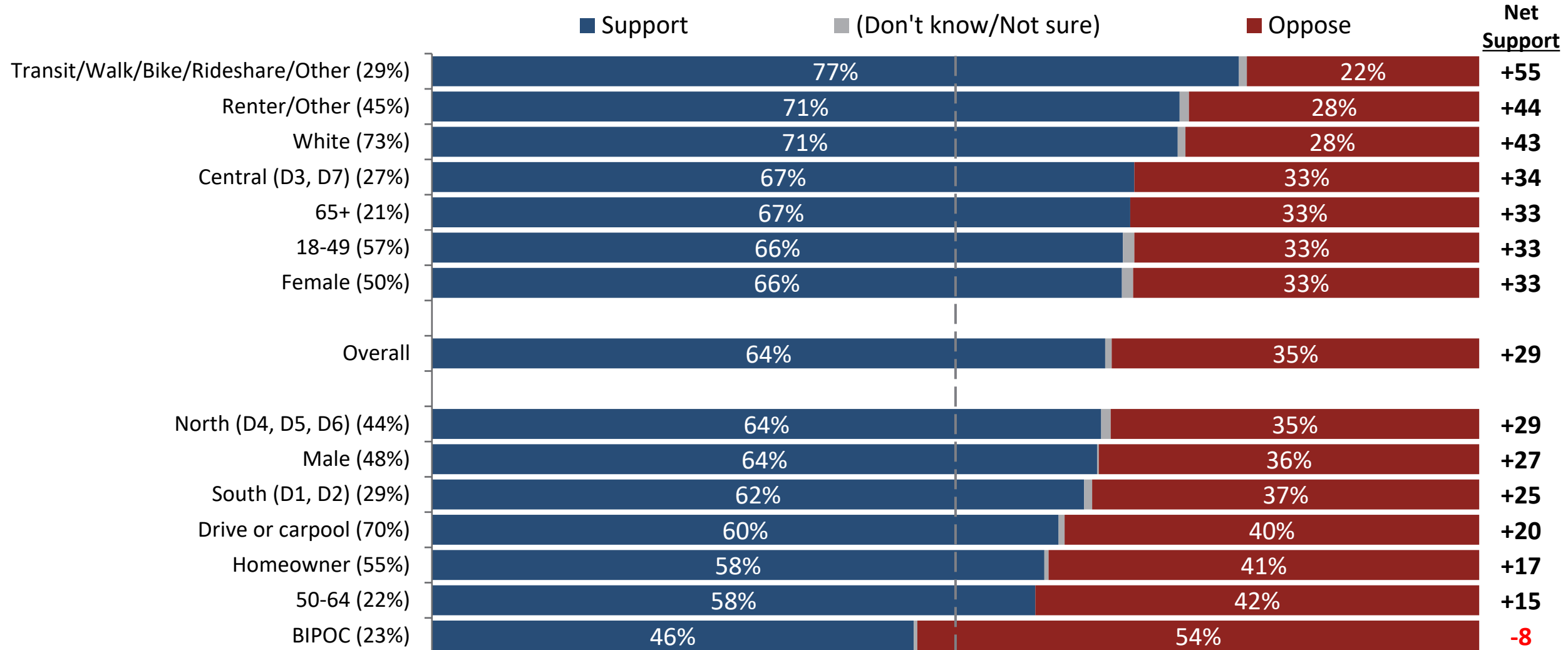
This measure concerns replacing funding for citywide transportation maintenance and improvements. If approved, it would renew and expand an expiring transportation levy. Funding from this measure would help maintain and modernize our streets and bridges; improve safety for drivers and pedestrians; and reduce our impact on the environment. It authorizes a regular property tax increase within legal limits, allowing maximum new collections of **(SPLIT A: \$135 million in 2025 and \$1.2 billion SPLIT B: \$200 million in 2025 and \$1.7 billion)** over eight years. The 2025 total regular tax limit would be **(SPLIT A: \$0.43/\$1,000 SPLIT B: \$0.64/\$1,000)** of assessed value, including approximately **(SPLIT A: \$0.08/\$1,000 SPLIT B: \$0.29/\$1,000)** of assessed value in additional taxes.



Q7. Next November there may be a measure on the ballot in Seattle that reads as follows...
Would you support or oppose this measure?

Initial Support by Subgroup - \$1.2B

Support for the smaller levy amount is above 50% across almost all demographics.

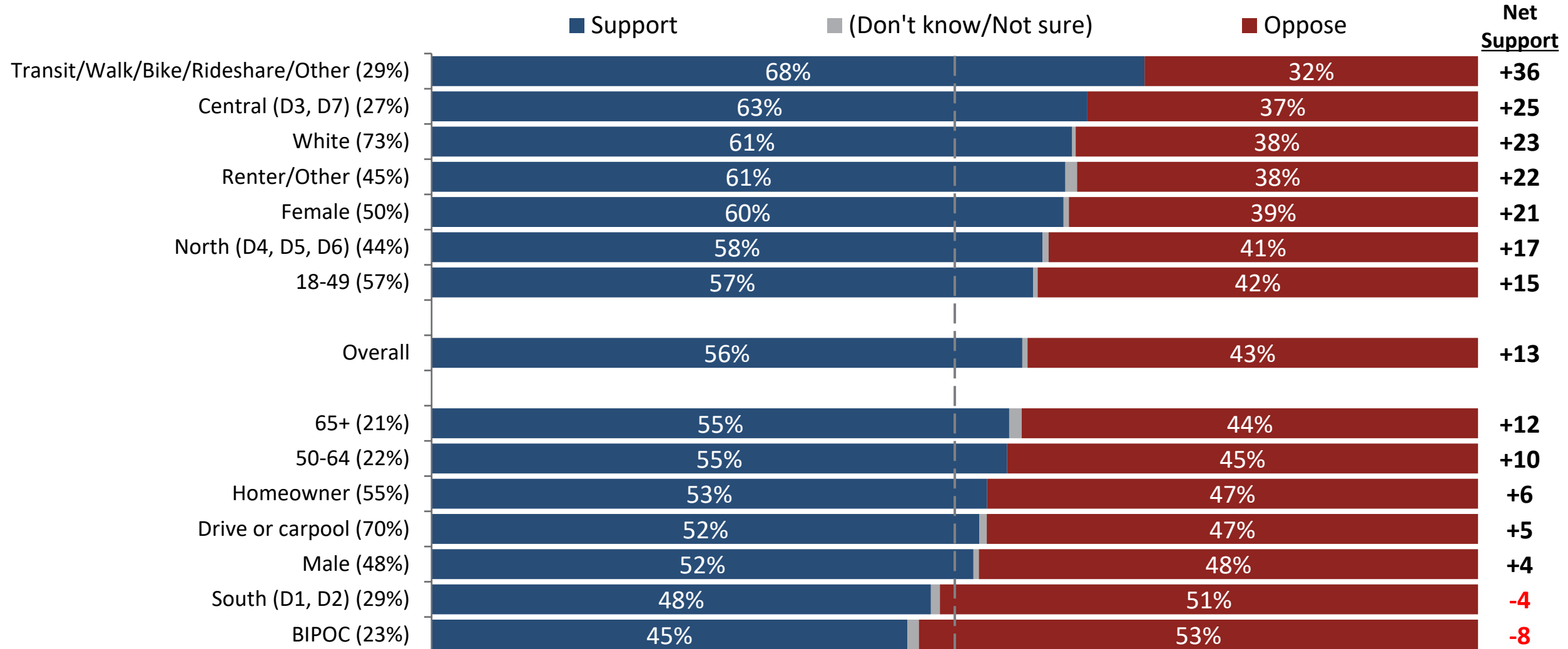


Q7. Next November there may be a measure on the ballot in Seattle that reads as follows...
Would you support or oppose this measure?

50%

Initial Support by Subgroup - \$1.7B

While support is lower for the larger levy, support levels by demographic group are stacked similarly to the \$1.2B levy.



Q7. Next November there may be a measure on the ballot in Seattle that reads as follows...
Would you support or oppose this measure?

50%

Impact of Cost Information

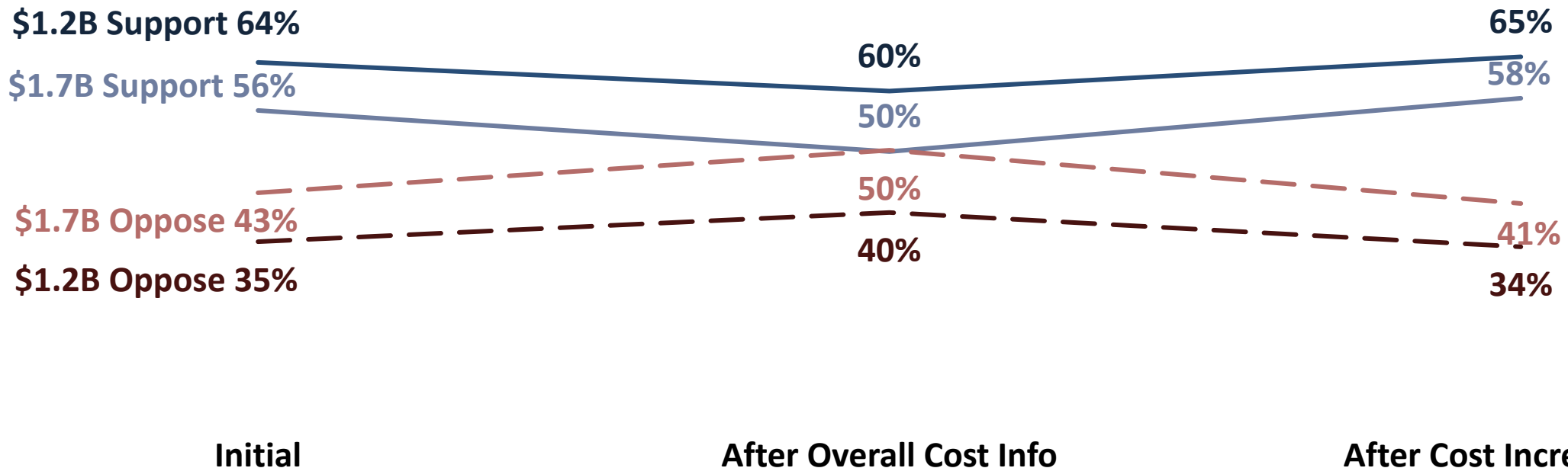
We tested two different measures of the cost of the levies.

The first provided a total for the average homeowner. This information drops support for both levy amounts.

The second clarified that this proposal is a renewal, and with this information support for both levy amounts recovers.

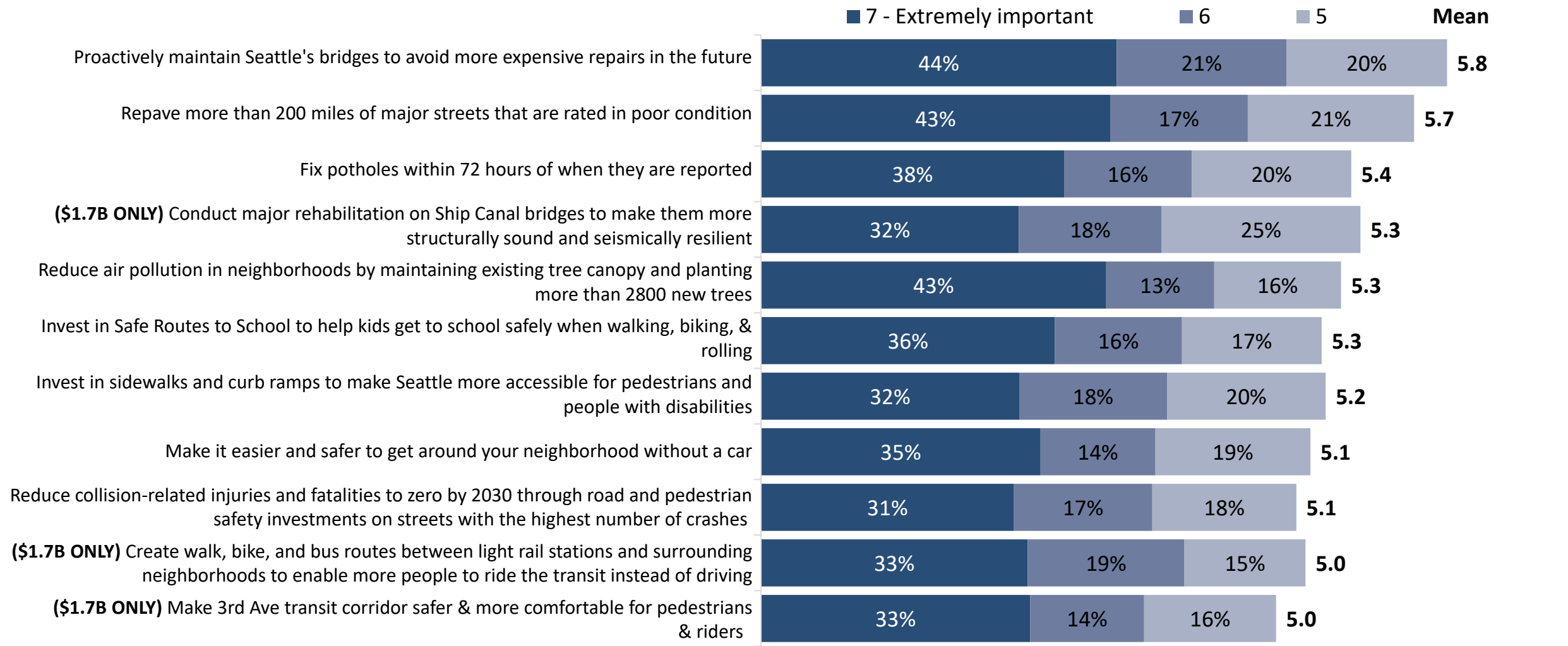
This measure will cost the owner of an \$866,000 home, which is the median in Seattle, about **(SPLIT \$1.2B: \$370 SPLIT \$1.7B: \$555)** a year which is about **(SPLIT \$1.2B: \$30 SPLIT \$1.7B: \$45)** a month.

Because this measure is not a new tax, and only renews and expand the existing levy, the actual cost increase for the owner of an \$866,000 home will be about **(SPLIT \$1.2B: \$75 SPLIT \$1.7B: \$255)** more a year, which is about **(SPLIT \$1.2B: \$6 SPLIT \$1.7B: \$21)** a month.



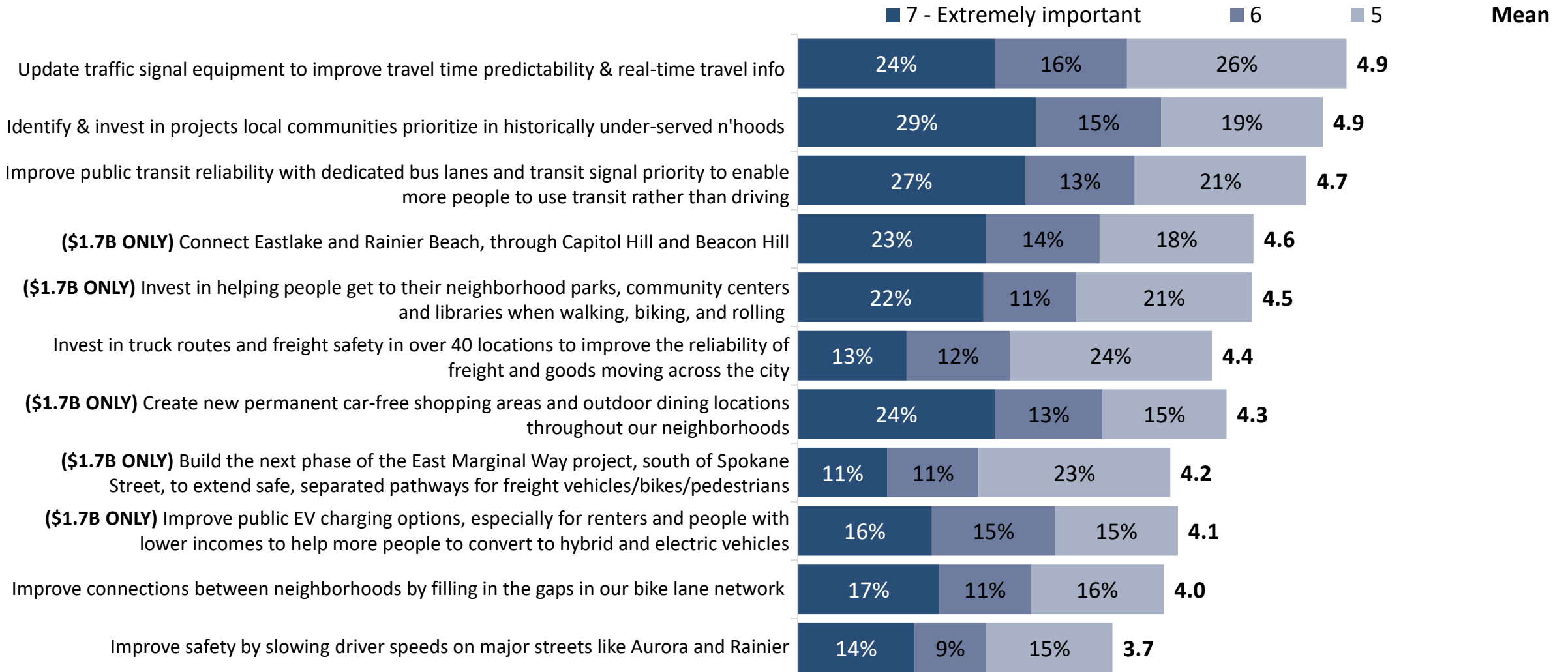
Transportation Priorities – Top Tier

These items are all seen as important, many maintenance items are at the top, followed by climate, safety, and car-free travel



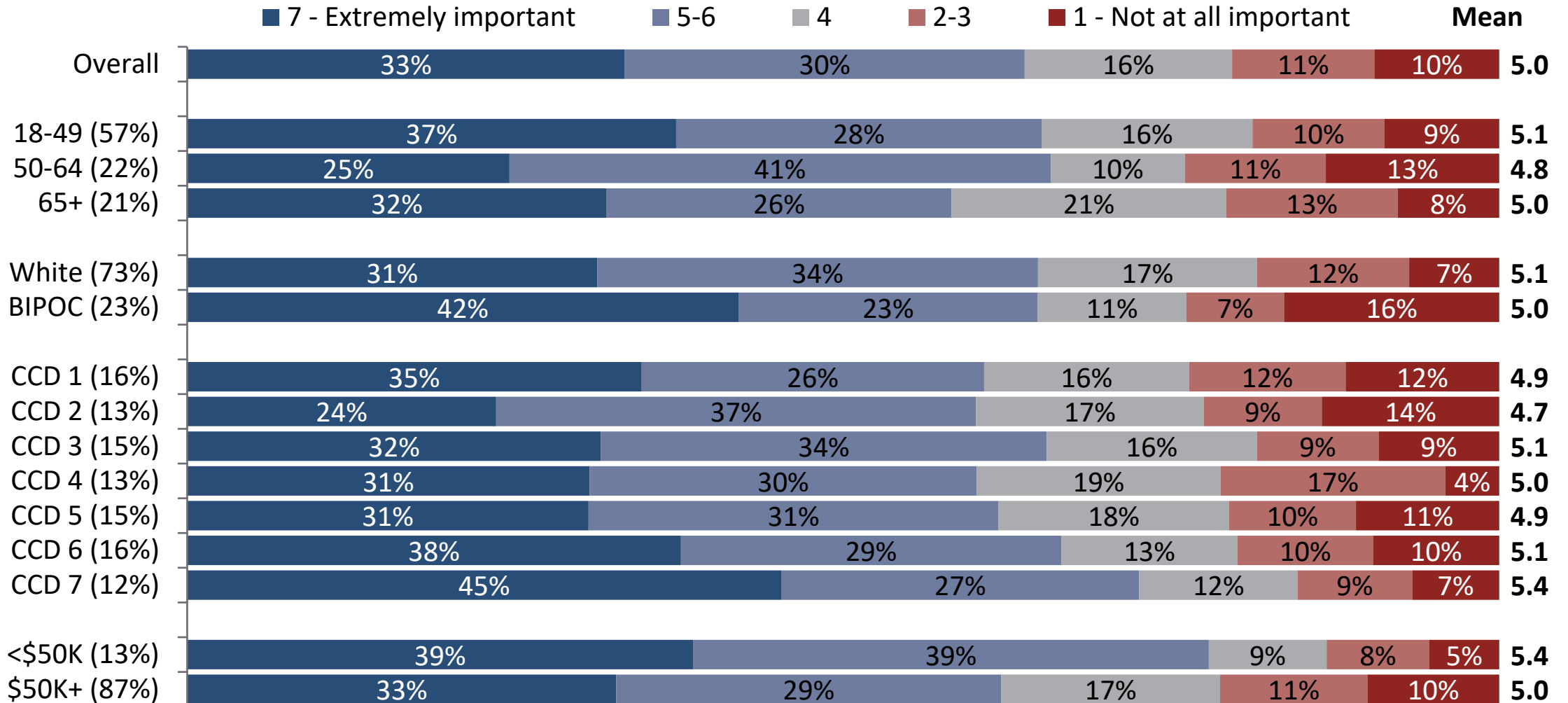
Transportation Priorities – Second Tier

These items are increasingly less important, including many of the items in the larger levy.



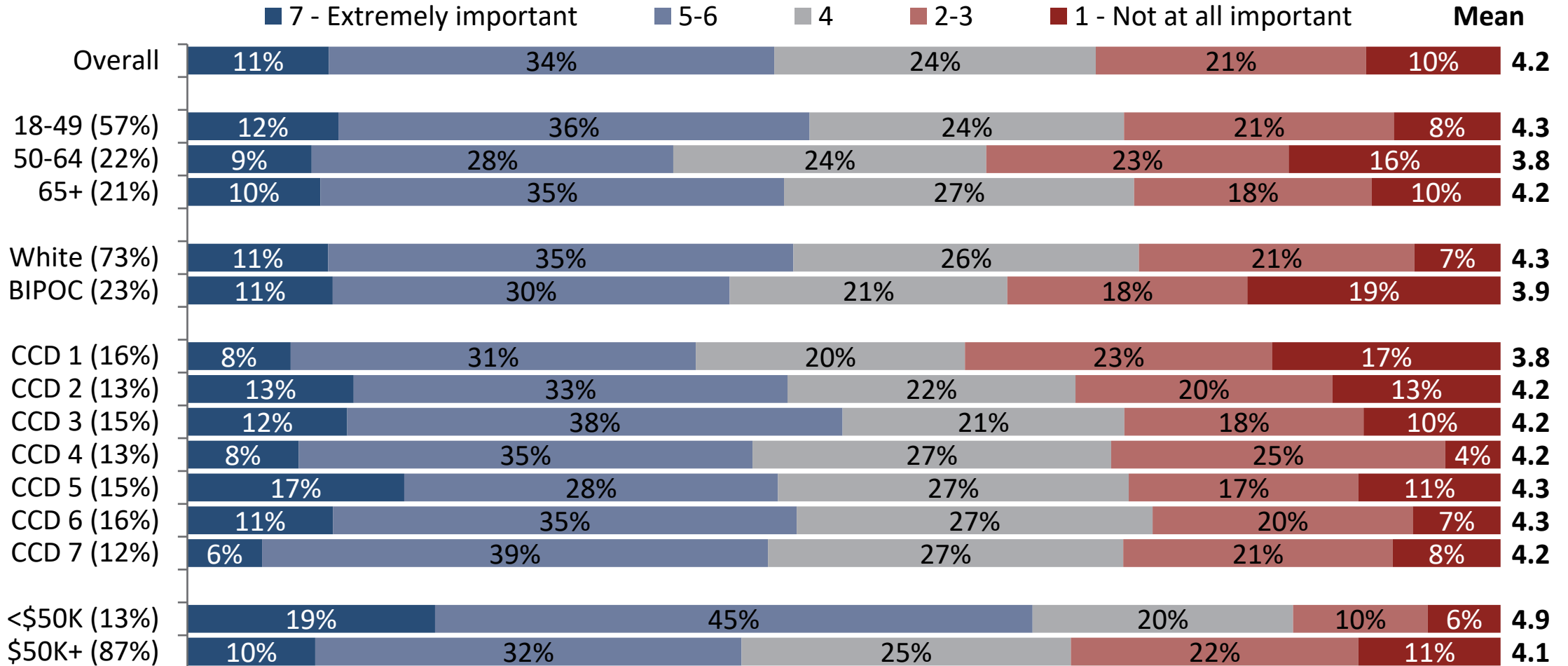
3rd Ave Priority by Subgroups

(\$1.7B only) Make the 3rd Ave transit corridor safer and more comfortable for pedestrians and transit riders



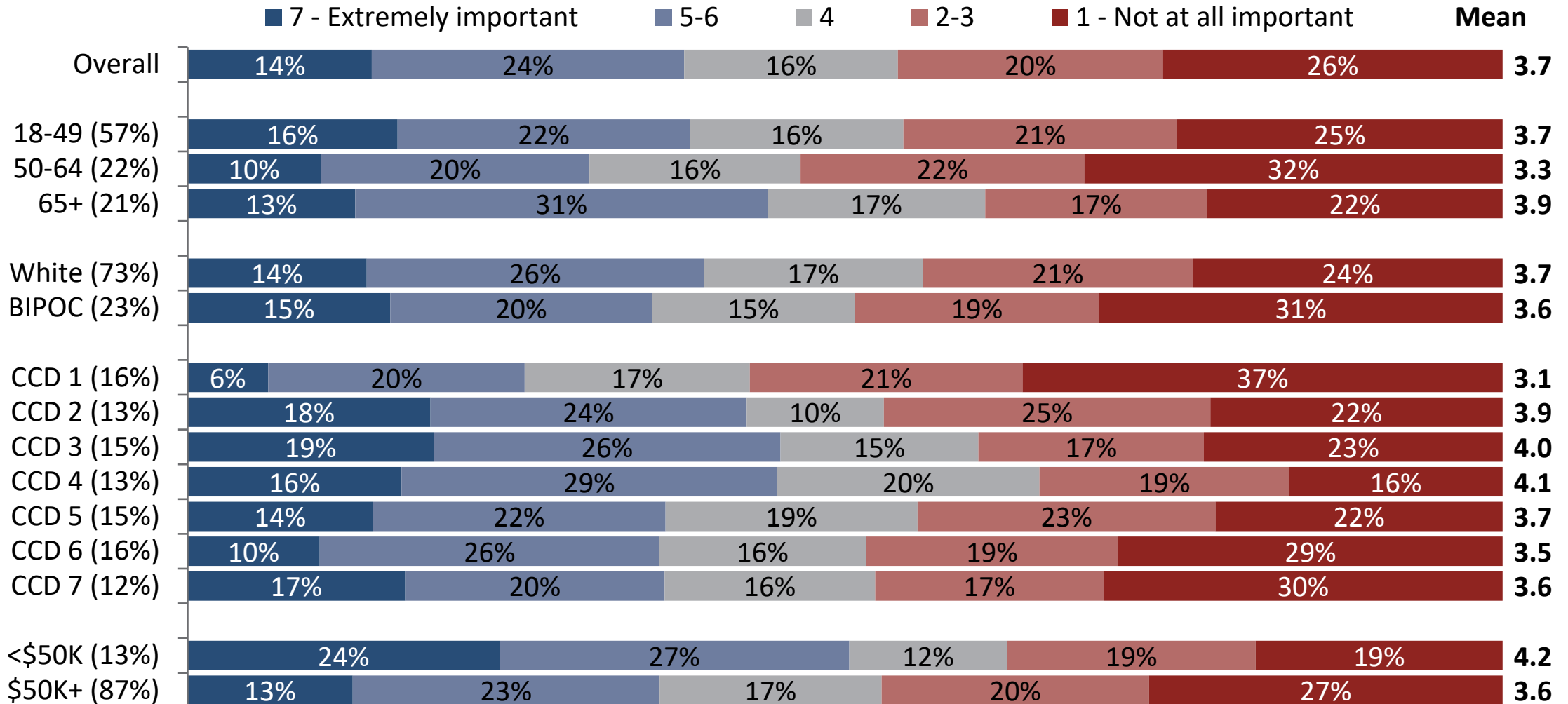
East Marginal Way Priority by Subgroups

(\$1.7B only) Build the next phase of the East Marginal Way project, south of Spokane Street, to extend safe, separated pathways for freight vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians



Aurora and Rainier Priority by Subgroups

Improve safety by slowing driver speeds on major streets like Aurora and Rainier

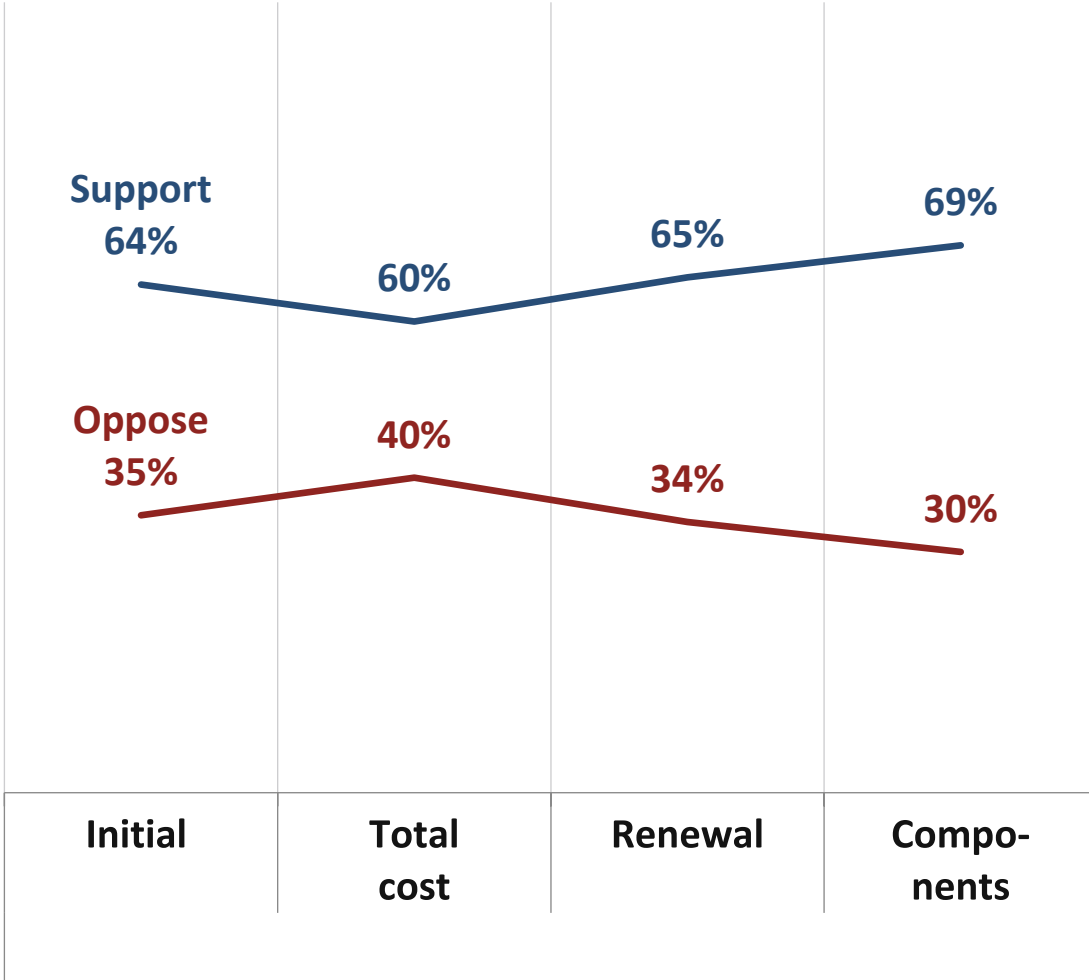


Support Progression – After Components

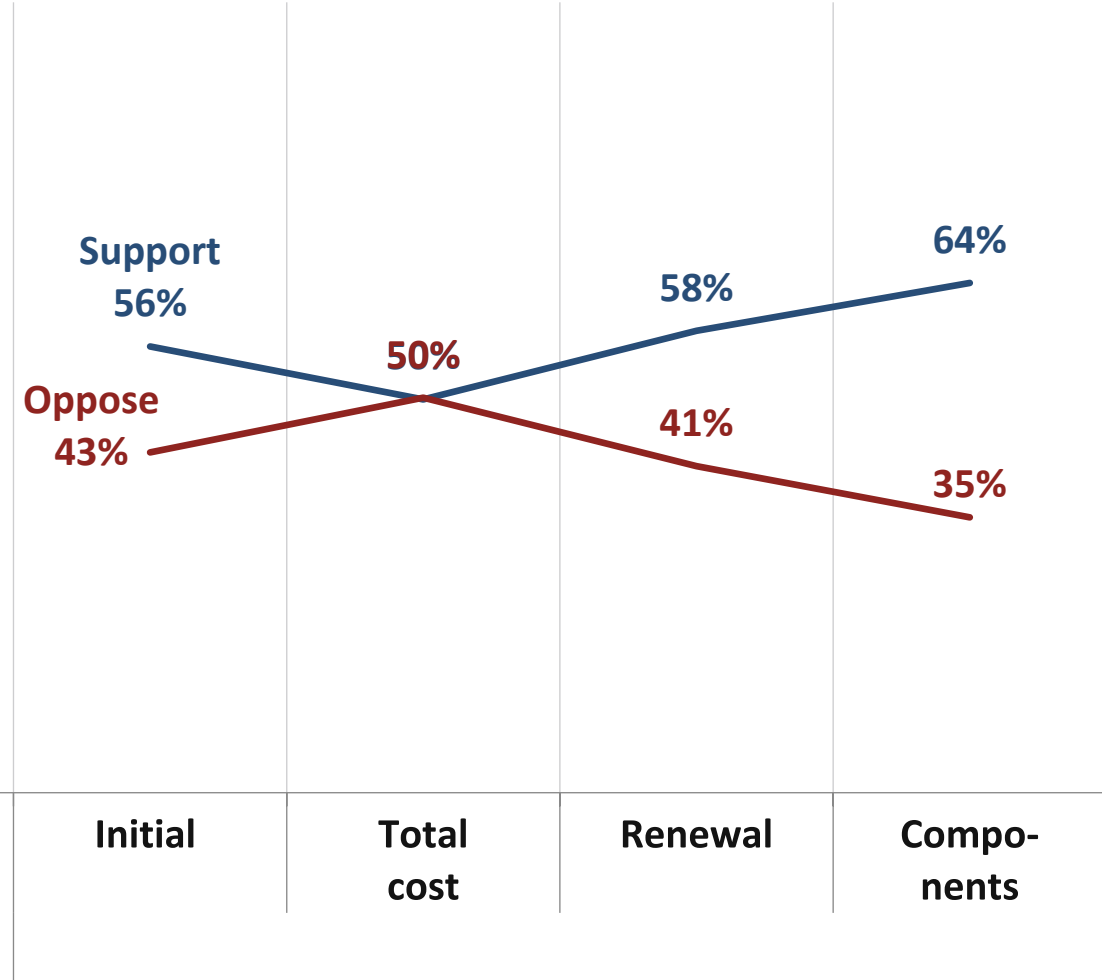


Support for both levy amounts increases after respondents hear what may be included in the package.

Split \$1.2B



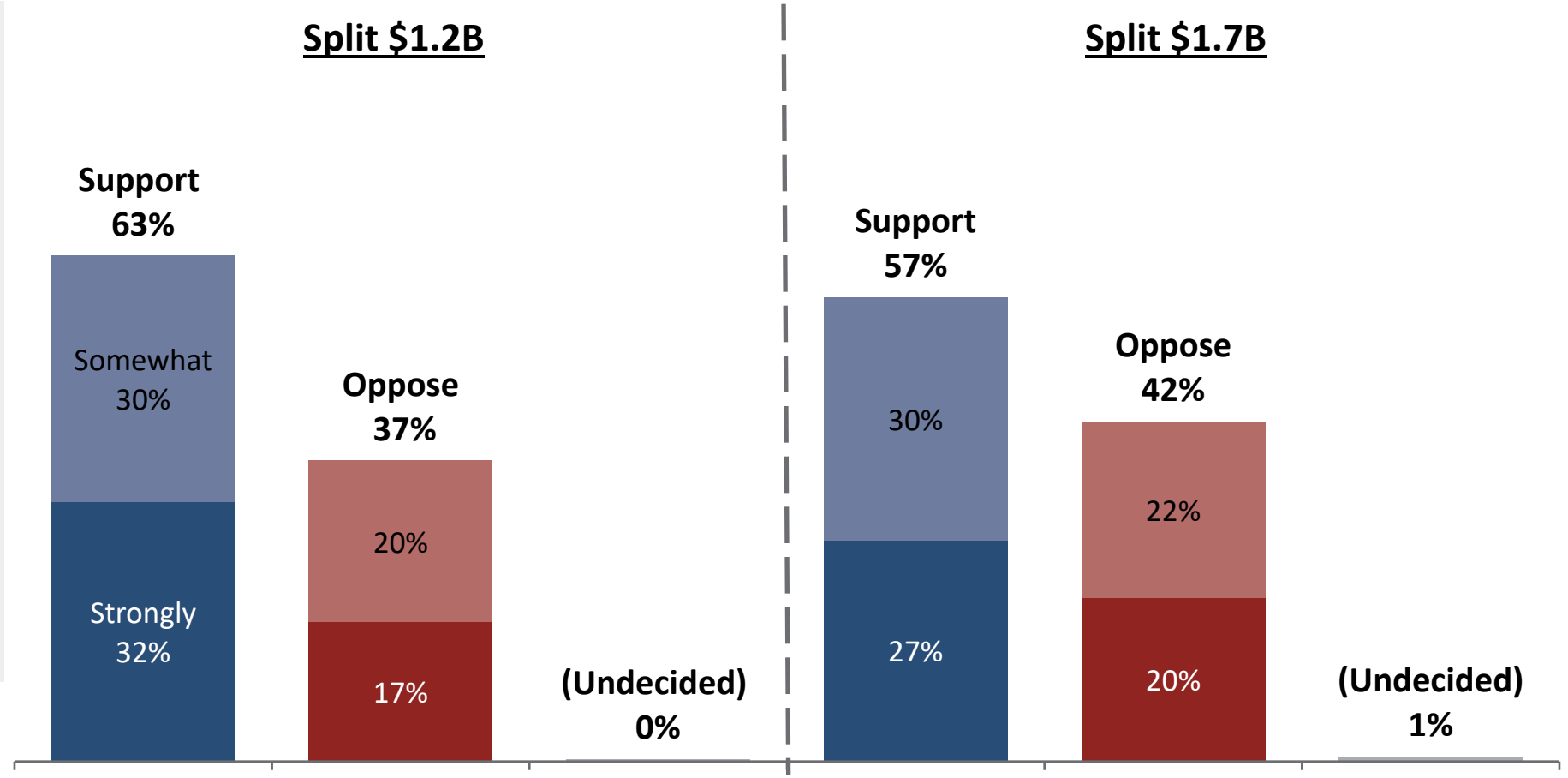
Split \$1.7B



Support After Opposition

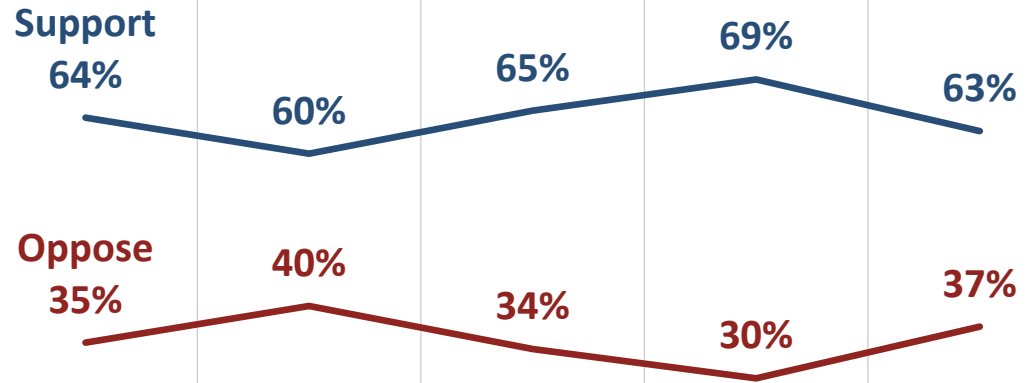
After hearing reasons to reject this measure, a majority of Seattleites continue to support each levy packages tested – though only about a quarter to a third strongly support the measure.

Some people say we should focus on other important needs like helping the homeless and reducing crime, instead of spending more money on transportation. They say our cost of living is extremely high, and the City of Seattle hasn't done a great job with the dollars we're already paying them for transportation. They say that we should probably skip approving this measure right now and allow for housing, food, fuel and other costs to go down—and government efficiency to increase.



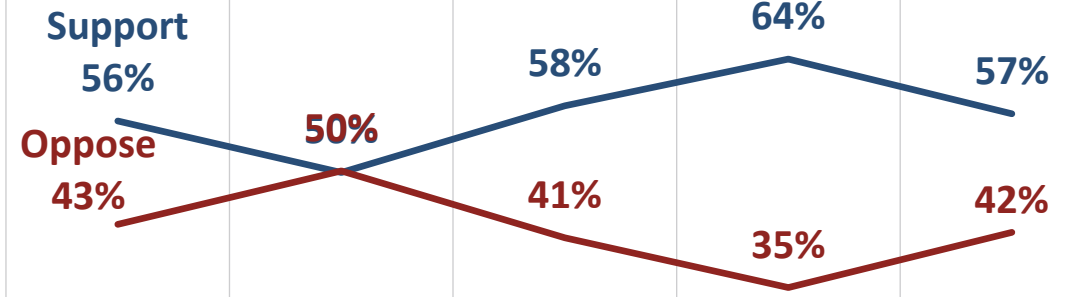
Full Progression

Split \$1.2B



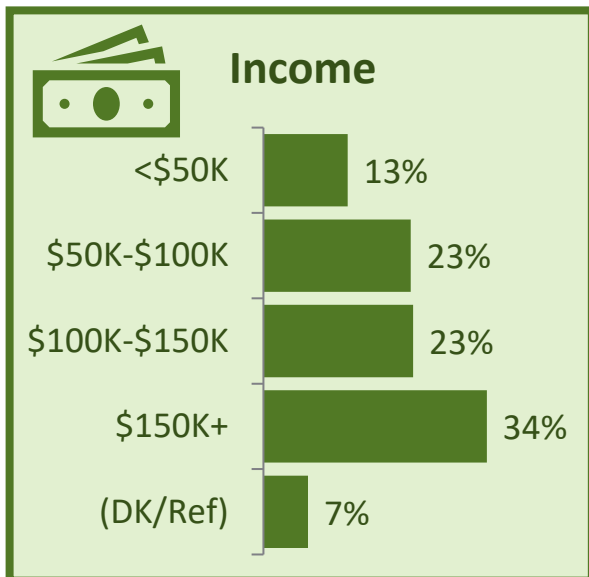
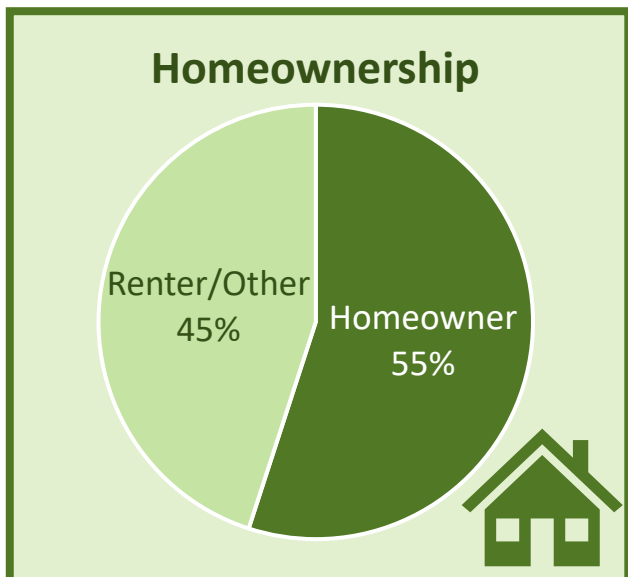
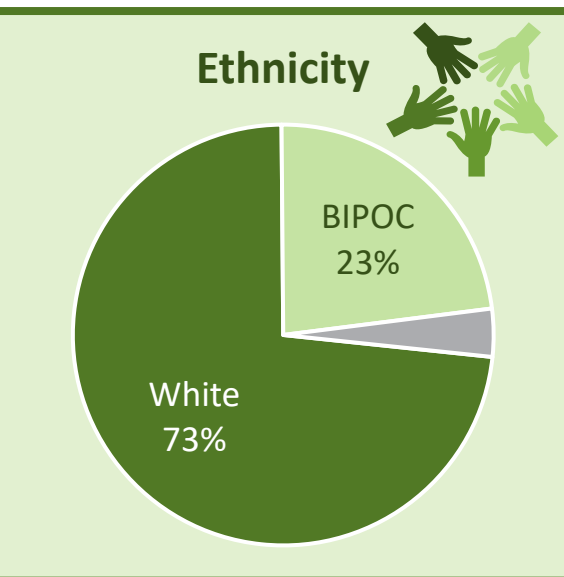
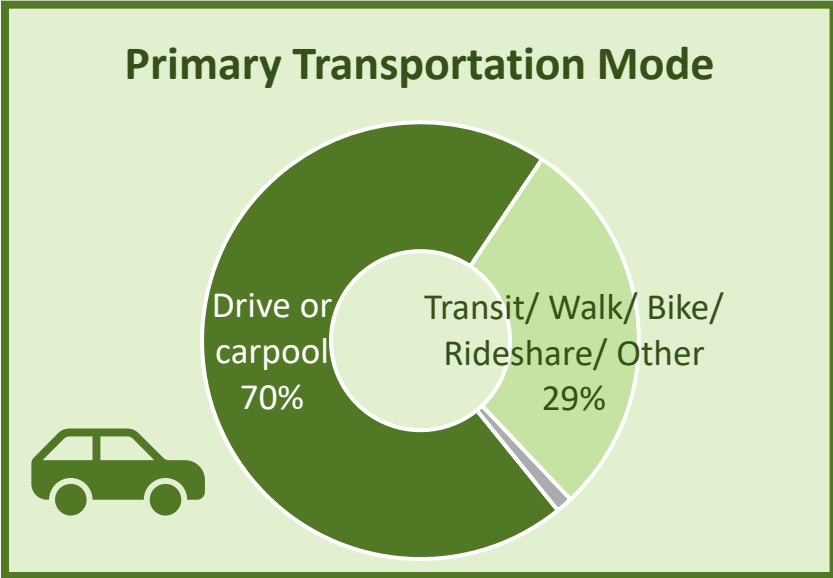
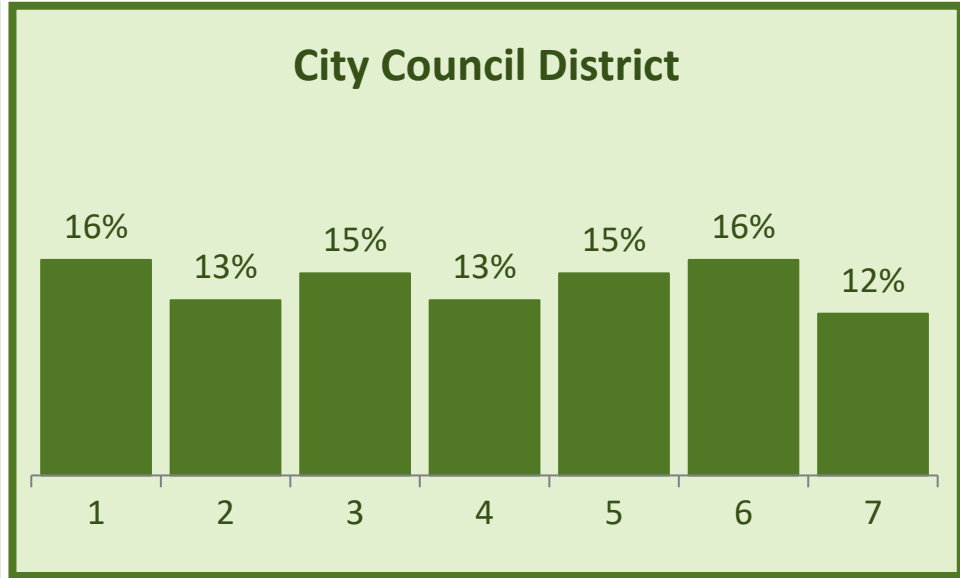
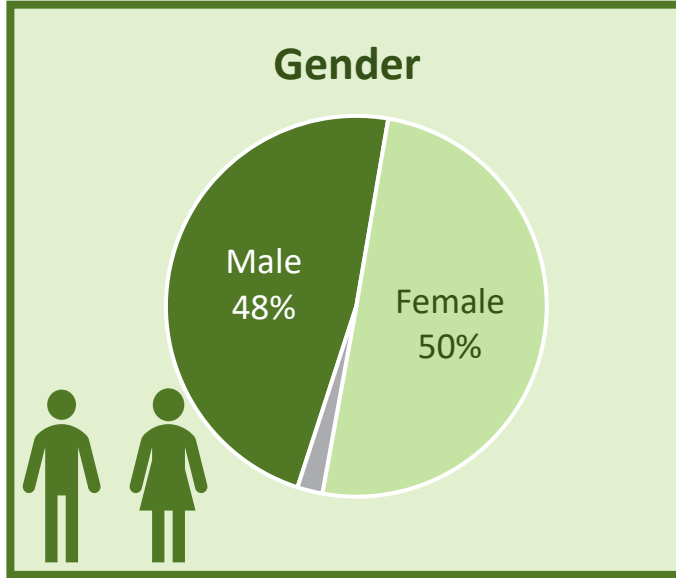
Initial Total cost Renewal Components Oppo

Split \$1.7B



Initial Total cost Renewal Components Oppo

Respondents' Demographic Profile



Conclusions

- ▶ Voters continue to be pessimistic about the direction of the city, driven by crime and homelessness. Transportation issues are not seen as important problems.
- ▶ Close to half recognize the need for additional funding for transportation in Seattle, and a slim majority thinks SDOT is spending effectively.
- ▶ The City's transportation system receives positive ratings for a few items, and average for most others. Only rush hour traffic congestion receives a strongly negative rating.
- ▶ Support for renewing and expanding Seattle's expiring transportation levy is a small to solid majority at both levy amounts tested.
 - However, half of initial support is in the softer "somewhat" category for both packages
 - Support for \$1.7 drops to 50% after voters hear its total cost to them.
- ▶ Many of the most important components in a potential package deal with maintenance and repair. Also among the most important items are those relating to tree cover, improved safety, and car free travel.
- ▶ Measure support drops after voters hear some reasons to reject it. While support remains above a majority, it is roughly evenly split between "strong" and "somewhat" support.



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