



# San Francisco Transportation Sales Tax Reauthorization Feasibility Survey Report

May 2022

Prepared for the San Francisco  
County Transportation Authority



# Survey Methodology

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- ▶ Survey of likely November 2022 Voters in San Francisco
- ▶ Survey conducted March 29 – April 4, 2022
- ▶ 1,329 interviews; margin of error  $\pm 2.7$  percentage points
- ▶ Mixed-mode telephone (cell and landline), email, and text-to-web methodology
- ▶ For all modes, the survey was available in English, Chinese, and Spanish

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

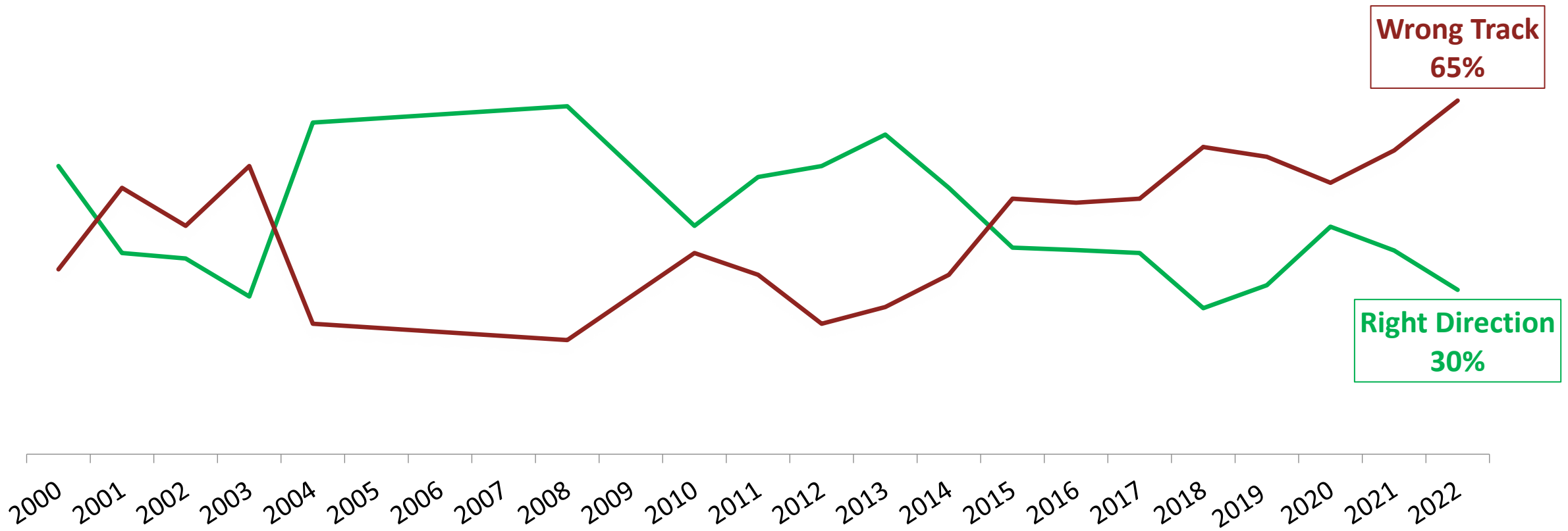
# Key Findings

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- ▶ While voters are more focused on homelessness, public safety, and housing affordability, they do recognize the importance of continuing to invest in transit and transportation improvements in San Francisco.
- ▶ A transportation sales tax reauthorization measure is currently supported by about two-thirds of likely voters, right at the threshold needed to succeed.
- ▶ Voter interest is highest in enhancing pedestrian safety, repairing roads, improving Muni and other local transit systems, and supporting transit for vulnerable populations.
- ▶ While voters believe continued transportation investments are important to support the City's pandemic recovery and fight climate change, they also have some concerns about taxes and confidence in local government.

# Right Direction/Wrong Track: San Francisco

*Voters in San Francisco are not in a particularly positive mood, which is consistent with other local polling.*



Q2. Do you feel that things in San Francisco are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

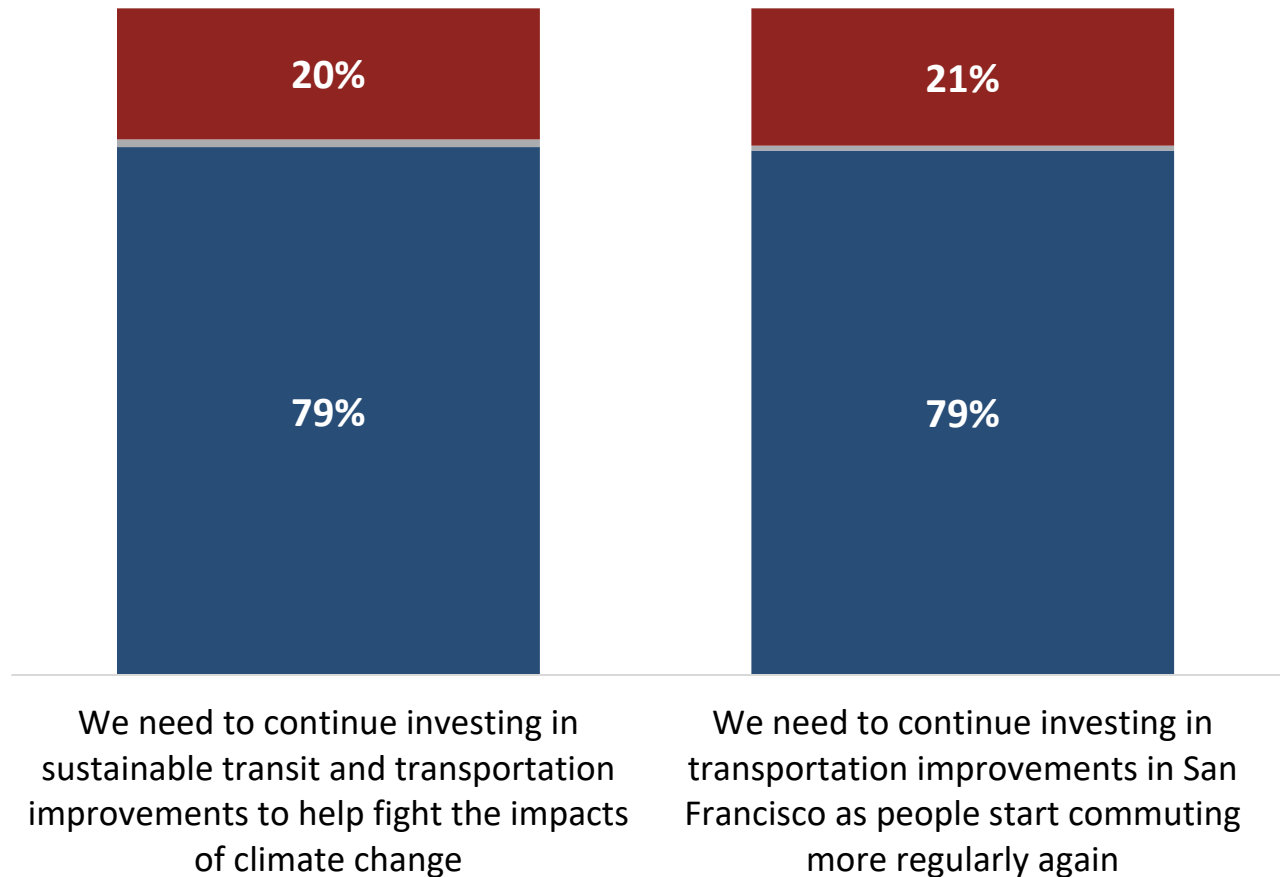
# Prioritizing Transportation Investments

*While transportation and public transit aren't the top-of-mind issues voters are most concerned about, almost 80% see the need to continue investing in transportation improvements.*

**What do you think is the most important problem facing San Francisco today?**  
*(open-ended question, top responses shown)*

Response grouping	% of responses
Homelessness	39%
Crime/public safety	21%
Affordable housing	14%
Poverty/high cost of living	4%

■ Strongly/Somewhat Agree   ■ Don't Know   ■ Strongly/Somewhat Disagree

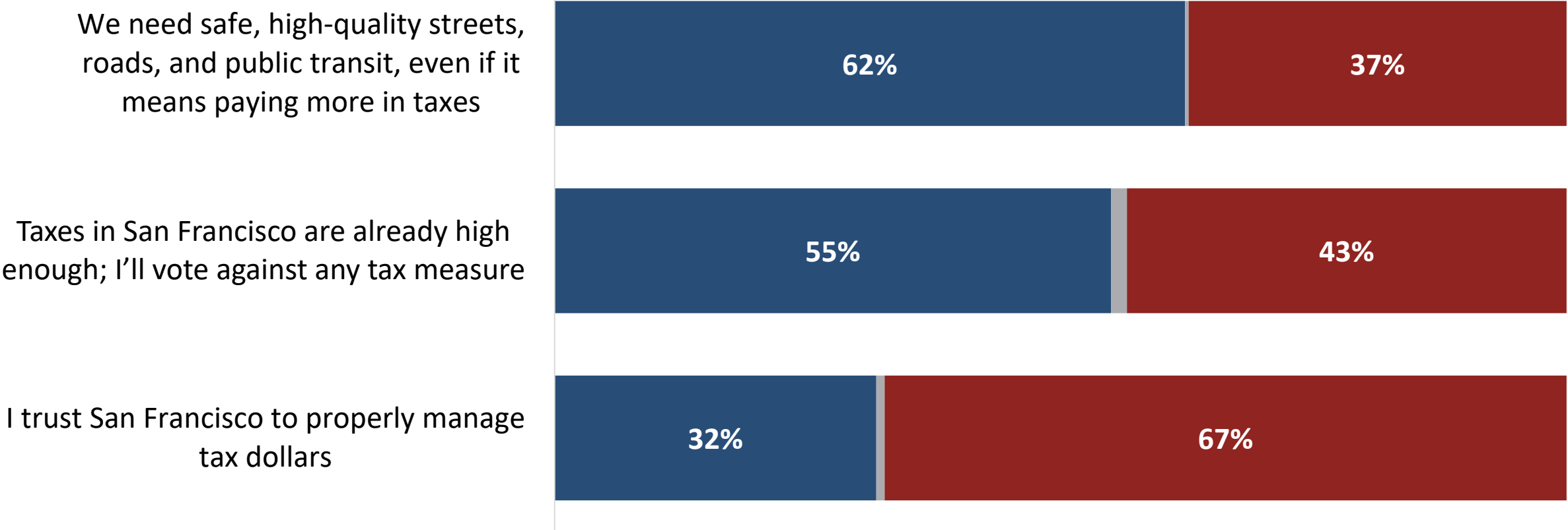


Q3. What do you think is the most important problem facing San Francisco today?  
 Q15-16. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

# Tax Attitudes

*While over 60% agree safe-high quality streets, roads, and public transit are worth paying taxes for, support for taxes in general and confidence in government are low.*

■ Strongly/Somewhat Agree    ■ Don't Know    ■ Strongly/Somewhat Disagree



Q12-14. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

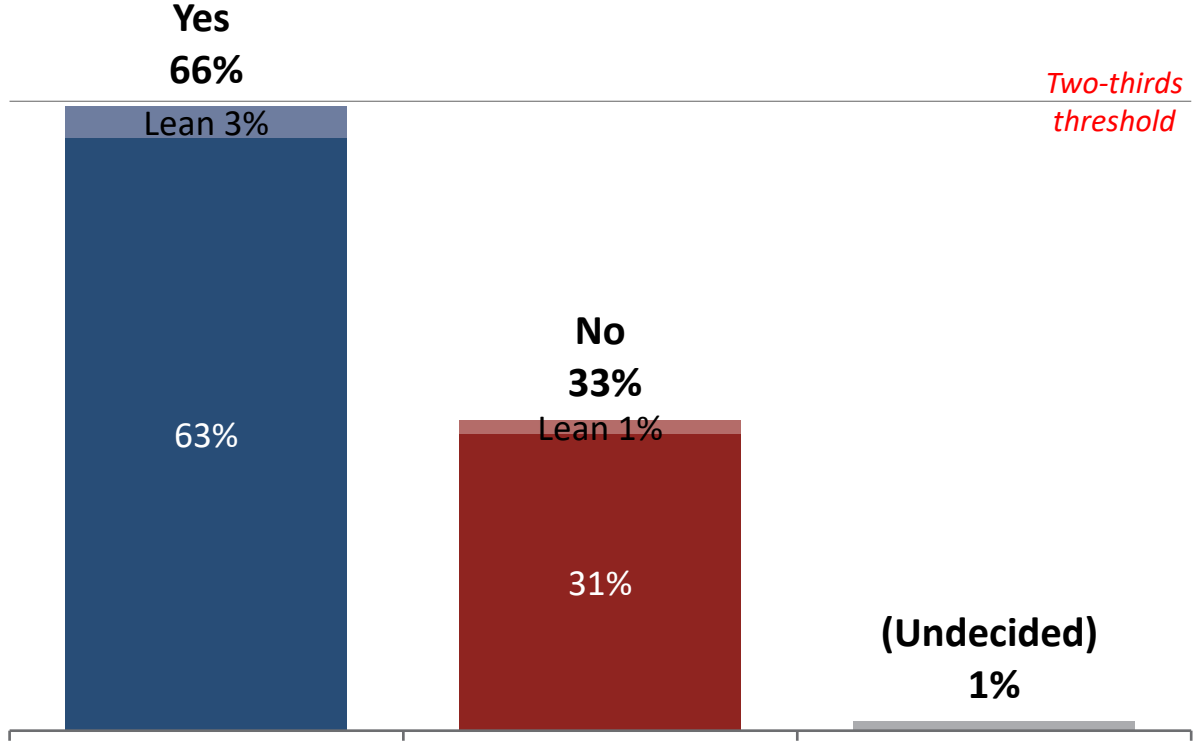
# Current Measure Vote

*Current support for a renewal of the transportation sales tax is within the margin of error of the two-thirds threshold.*

Shall the measure to implement a new Transportation Expenditure Plan directing transportation sales tax funds to:

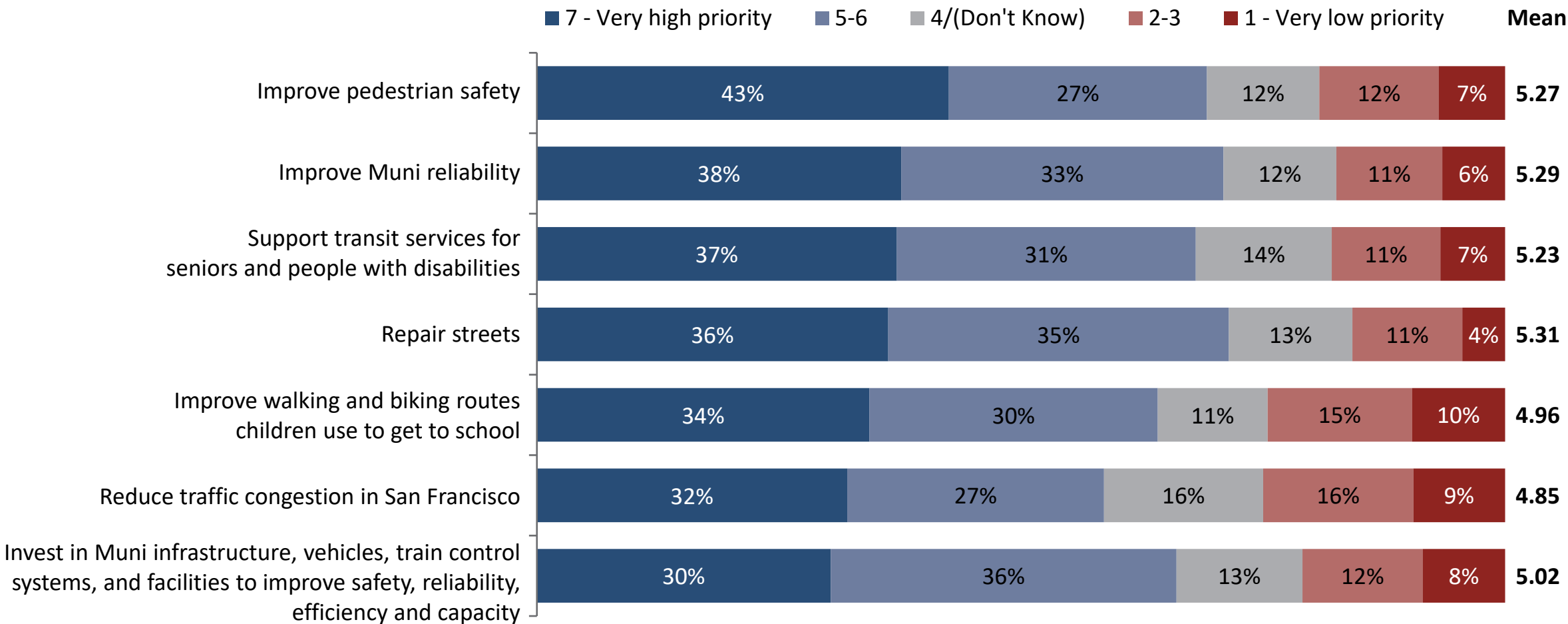
- Invest in new Muni infrastructure, vehicles, train control systems, and facilities to improve safety, reliability, capacity, and efficiency;
- Repair streets and upgrade traffic signals to improve safety;
- Maintain and enhance San Francisco BART and Caltrain facilities, vehicles, and systems;
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety; and
- Support transit services for seniors and people with disabilities;

by continuing the existing one-half percent sales tax for 30 years, raising approximately \$100 million annually, subject to independent audits and oversight, be adopted?



# Transportation Improvement Priorities

*Improvements to pedestrian safety, Muni reliability, transit for dependent populations, and road repair are the highest priorities for voters.*

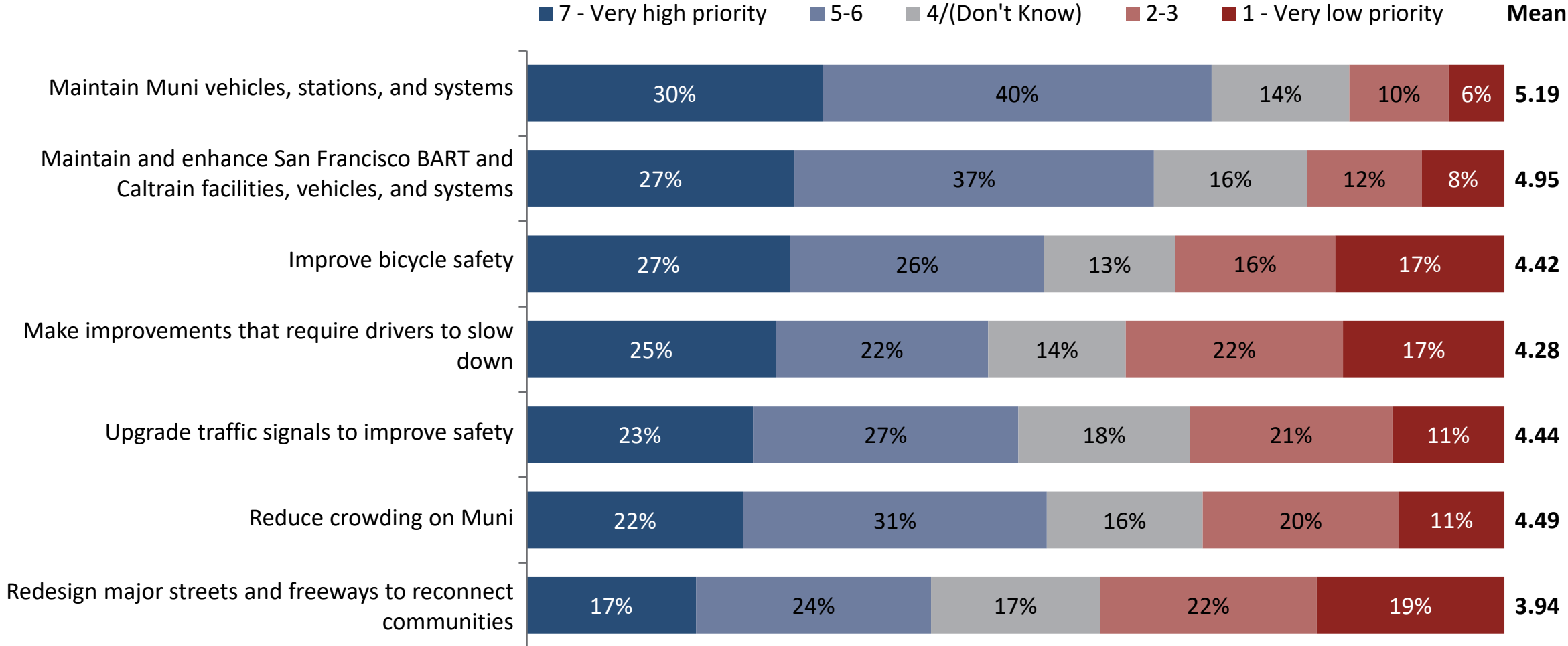


Q17-30. I'd like to read you a list of things a transportation improvement measure in San Francisco could pay for. Please rate each one using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you feel that item should be a very low priority for San Francisco and 7 means that you feel that item should be a very high priority for San Francisco.



# Transportation Improvement Priorities

*Transit maintenance is also a priority for voters; other priorities have narrower appeal.*



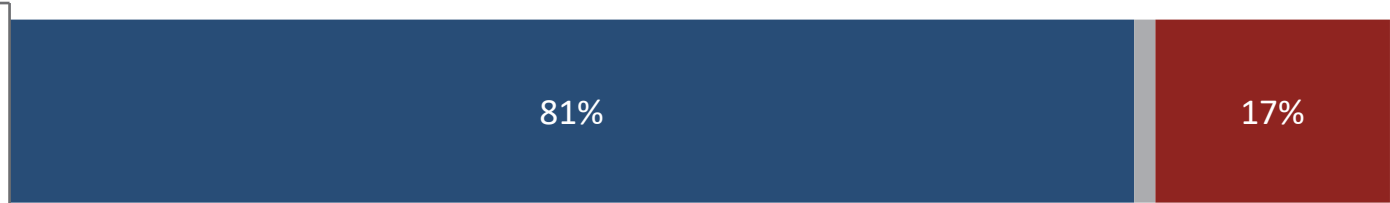
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# Additional Information

*Information about the measure's support for transit services for vulnerable populations, impact on air quality and climate programs, and funding for streets programs to improve road surfaces and safety is the most impactful, along with supporting economic recovery.*

■ Much/Somewhat more positive    ■ Don't know    ■ Much/Somewhat more negative

Many of San Francisco's most vulnerable populations depend on public transit to get around the City and the region, including low-income residents, seniors and persons with disabilities. This measure will help **continue providing critical transportation services to the people who rely on it** daily.



Forty percent of greenhouse gas emissions in San Francisco are due to transportation. This measure will help **fight climate change and improve San Francisco's air quality** by replacing polluting diesel buses with clean air vehicles, updating transit maintenance facilities, and making it easier and safer to get around the City without needing to drive.



This measure is a critical part of **supporting the City's recovery** from the pandemic economy, maintaining and supporting jobs while ensuring essential workers and others are able to get around reliably and easily.



This measure will provide funding for the City's **streets program**, including street resurfacing, pedestrian and bike safety improvements, crosswalk improvements, traffic calming to discourage speeding and unsafe driving, and safety education programs like Safe Routes to School.



Q31-37. Next I'd like to read you some additional information about a transportation improvement measure in San Francisco. After each one, please tell me it makes you more positive towards the measure, or more negative towards the measure.

# Additional Information *(continued)*

*There is support for sales tax as matching funds for grants and to deliver major capital projects.*

■ Much/Somewhat more positive    ■ Don't know    ■ Much/Somewhat more negative

By approving a new Transportation Expenditure Plan, this measure gives San Francisco **access to billions of dollars** in federal infrastructure funding, as well as other state and regional transportation funding. Without this measure, The City will have to find other ways to come up with this badly-needed funding, or go without critical transportation improvements.



This measure continues **critical investments in Muni**, including adding more transit priority lanes on roadways, upgrading Muni’s train control system, purchasing new Muni vehicles that are safer and more comfortable, and running longer trains to allow for more reliable and frequent service with less crowding.



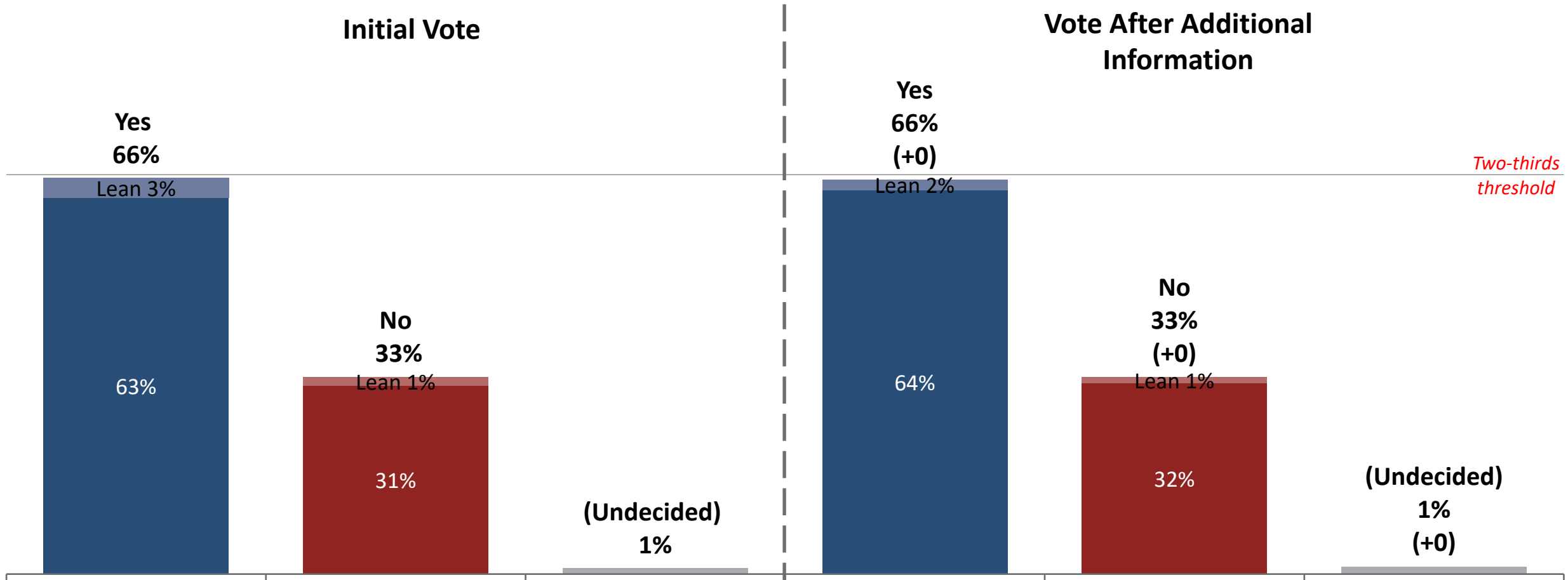
The current transportation sales tax has helped fund projects including the Transbay Transit Center, major roadways like Presidio Parkway, and critical neighborhood traffic safety programs. This measure will allow San Francisco to continue investing in the **next generation of transportation improvements**.



Q31-37. Next I'd like to read you some additional information about a transportation improvement measure in San Francisco. After each one, please tell me it makes you more positive towards the measure, or more negative towards the measure.

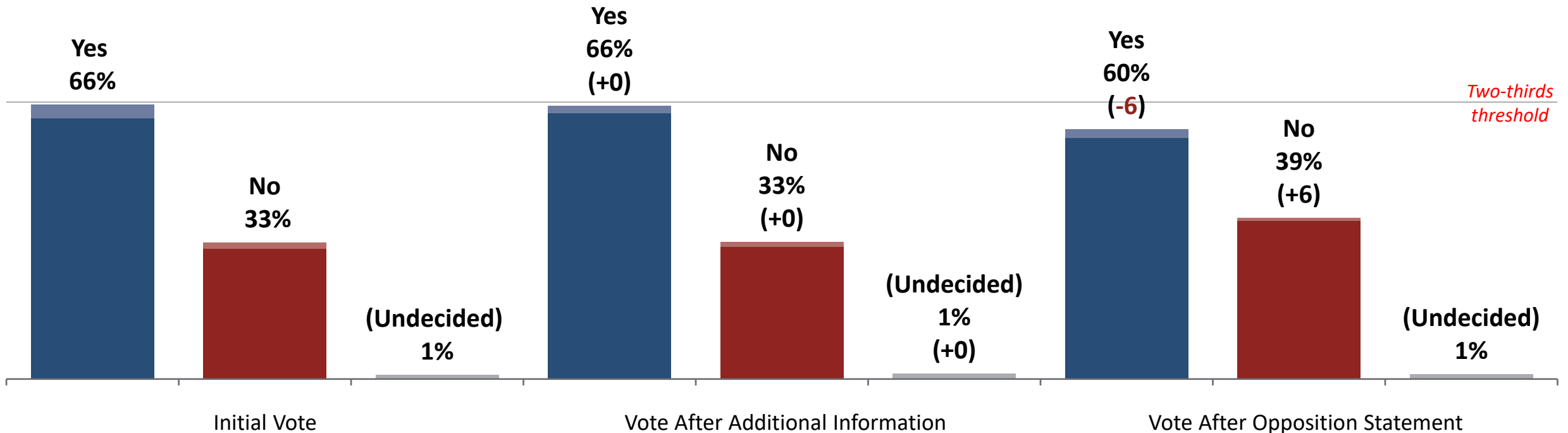
# Vote After Additional Information

*Few change their opinion of the measure upon learning more about it.*



# Final Vote

*Opponents of this measure say San Francisco is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and with local businesses just starting to recover, now is just not the right time for another tax measure, especially one that will spend so much on public transit when people just aren't going to commute like they did before. With existing transportation projects delayed and millions over budget, our transportation systems need to be held accountable before we vote to approve even more funding for them. Between the federal infrastructure bill and other recently-passed funding measures, there is already plenty of money going towards transit improvements in San Francisco —it's time to give San Francisco taxpayers a break.*



Q11/Q38/Q39. Finally, given everything you've heard, if the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject the half cent transportation improvement measure in San Francisco?

# Conclusions

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- ▶ The transportation sales tax renewal measure as presented in this poll shows a **potential for success**, as long as it is viewed as a **continuation of an existing tax** (not a tax increase) that allows for continued investment in transportation in San Francisco.
- ▶ The projects and programs the measure would fund are highly attractive to City voters, including **improvements to Muni and other transit services, air quality and climate change** impacts, and roads programs that incorporate **traffic congestion reduction, street repair, and pedestrian safety improvements**.
- ▶ Public education efforts should focus on this measure as a **continued investment in transportation and public transit** for San Francisco that will **support the city's economic recovery** and help **combat climate change**.
- ▶ Providing information on the potential for accessing **significant matching funds without requiring a tax increase** can help reinforce that this is a fiscally-responsible way to continue investing in transportation in San Francisco **without raising taxes on local residents**.



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