

6/9/26

ITEM No. 10



Tax Measures Feasibility Survey
County of Monterey
Unincorporated Areas
Executive Summary
June 9, 2026

Methodology

- ▶ Survey of likely November 2026 voters in Unincorporated Monterey County
- ▶ Survey conducted April 27 – May 4, 2026 in English and Spanish
- ▶ Mixed mode telephone and web (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
- ▶ 500 interviews; overall margin of error ± 4.4 percentage points
 - Split Sample: 250n interviews in each split, MOE = ± 6.2 percentage points
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with the following:

Methodology	Dates	Universe	Sample Size	Margin of Error	EMC #
Mixed mode web/phone	May 16 – 23, 2024	Likely Nov. 2024 Voters	600 overall 195n in uninc. areas*	Overall: ± 4.0 % points Uninc.: ± 7.0 % points	24-9333

**Throughout, results from 2024 are shown only among respondents in unincorporated Monterey County*

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

Key Findings

- ▶ Voter mood is similar to 2024, with most voters in unincorporated Monterey County aware of the County's need for additional funding, but relatively high sensitivity to taxes.
- ▶ Currently, a transient occupancy tax (TOT) increase is supported by about six-in-ten voters in the county, above the majority threshold for passage.
- ▶ A dedicated property transfer tax (PTT) on single-family sales over \$10 million is more divisive, with about half of voters initially supportive. Support increases when voters are given more information, but does not reach the two-thirds majority needed for passage of a special tax.
- ▶ Both measures show some vulnerability to general opposition around government spending, but most voters do not believe the measures would deter tourists or home buyers.

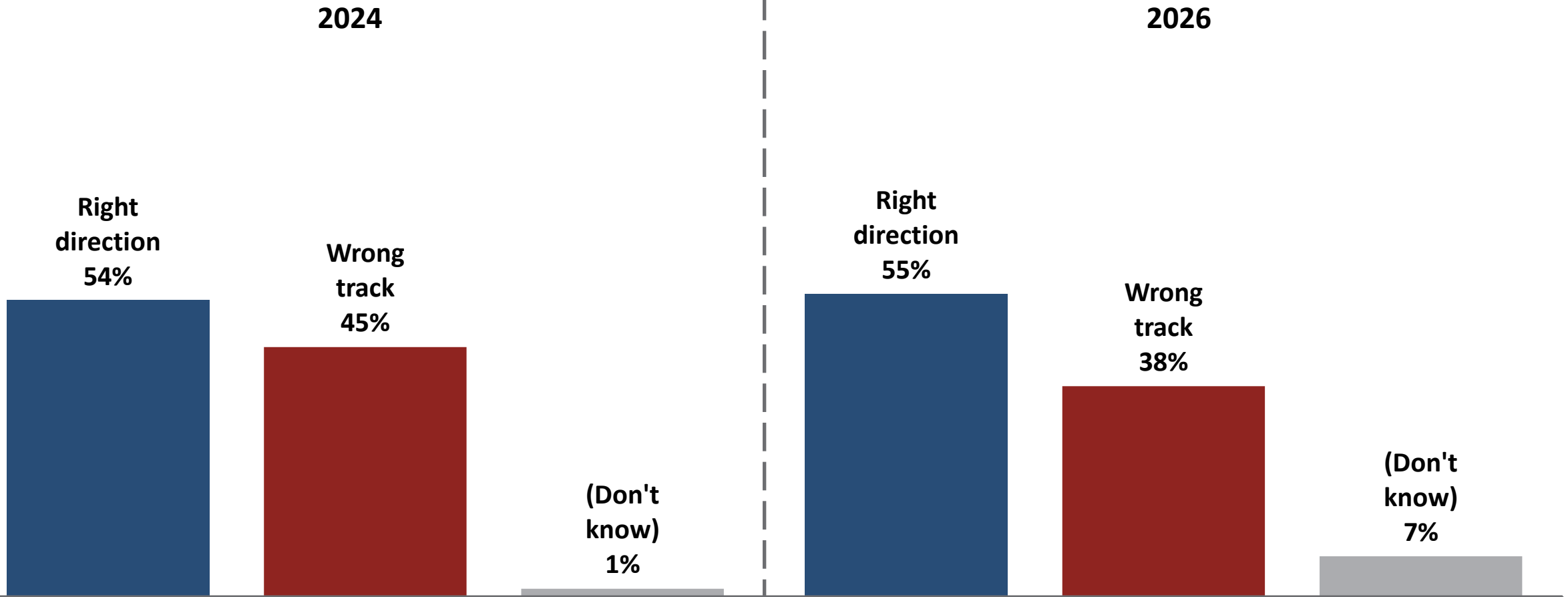


Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track

Just over half of voters in unincorporated Monterey County are optimistic about the direction of the county.

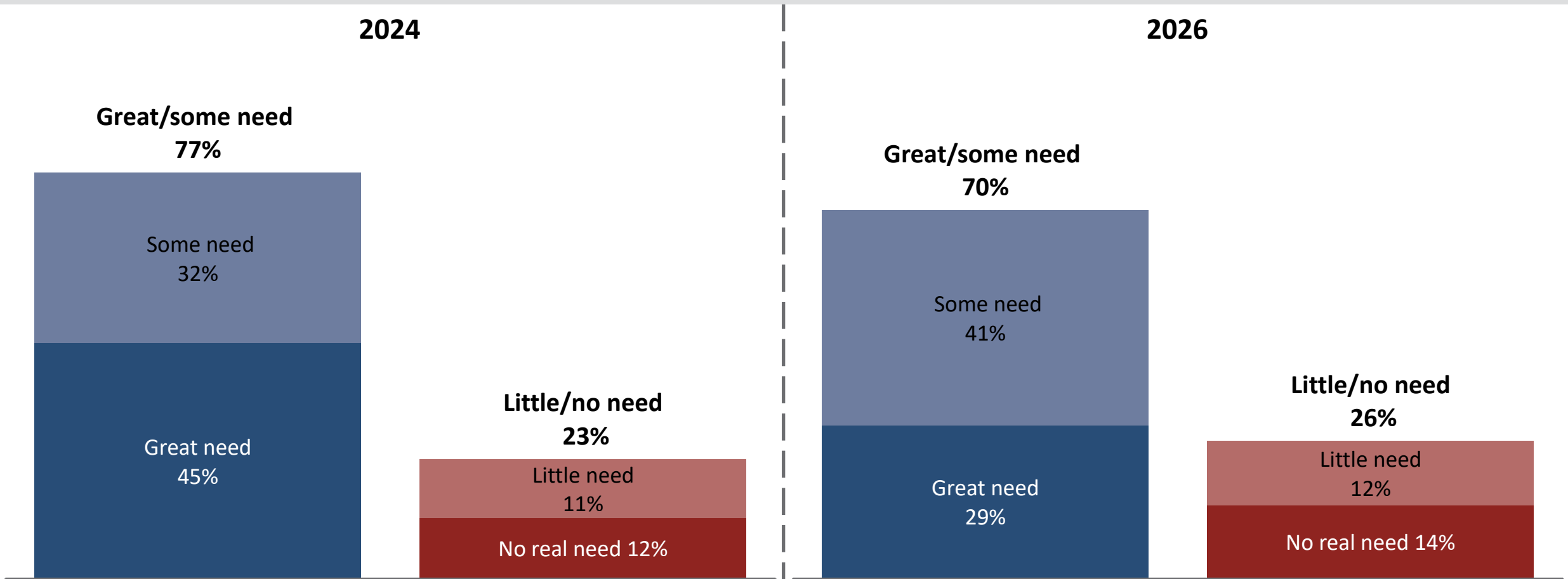
Do you feel that things in Monterey County are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



Need for Funds for County Services

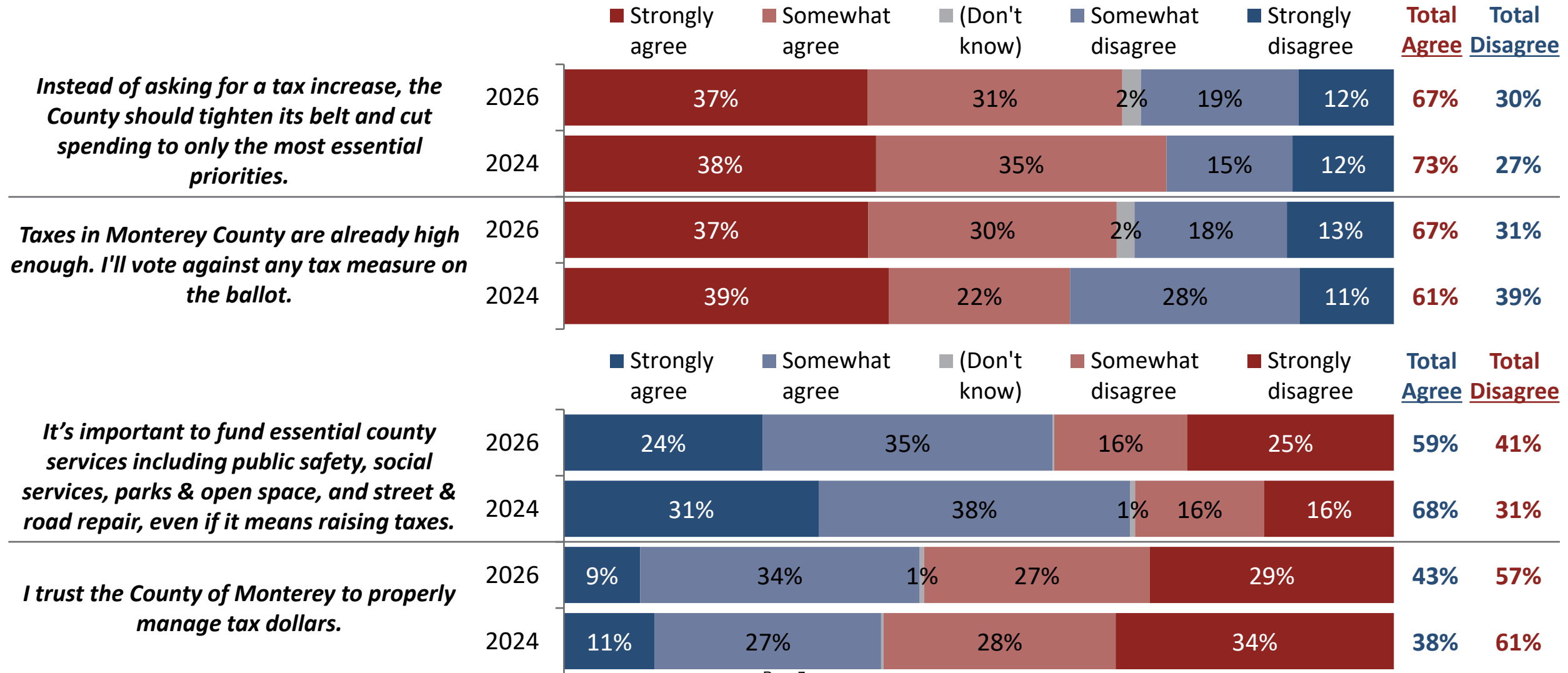
Most voters continue to be aware of the County's need for funds for services.

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



Tax Sensitivity and Trust

While there is relatively high tax sensitivity, a majority of voters continue to say it is worth raising taxes for county services.





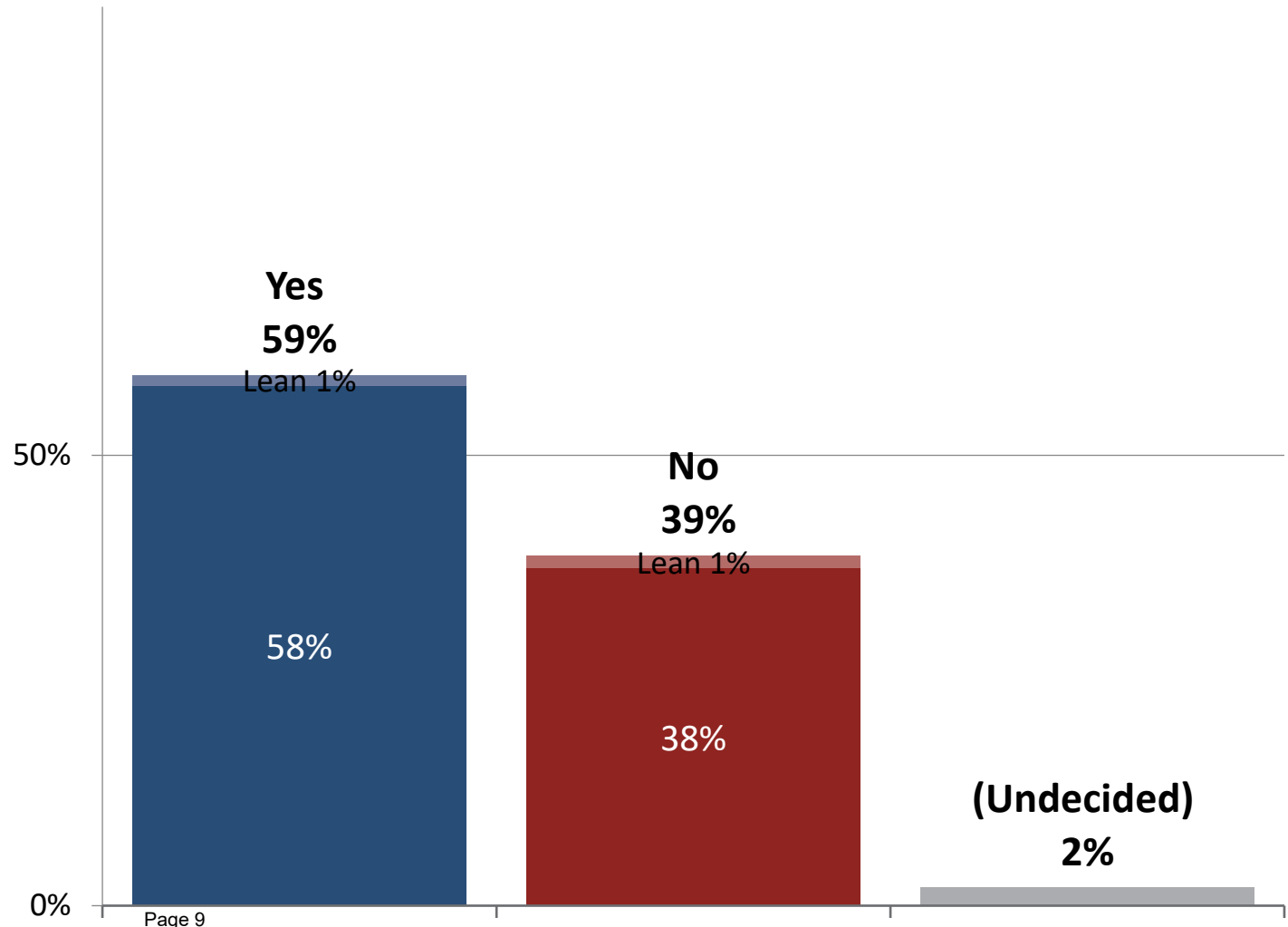
Ballot Measures

TOT Initial Vote

Initial support for a TOT increase is above the majority threshold.

Next, you will see a measure that may appear on the ballot in Monterey County. The measure reads:

To fund essential County of Monterey services, including street maintenance and pothole repair; programs to reduce homelessness; water and sewer infrastructure maintenance; healthcare; improved public safety and emergency services; libraries, County parks, and recreation facilities; job skill development programs, and other general county services, shall the County of Monterey increase its existing Transient Occupancy Tax in unincorporated areas from 10.5% to 12.5%, paid only by hotel/lodging guests, providing approximately \$7,600,000 annually, until ended by voters?

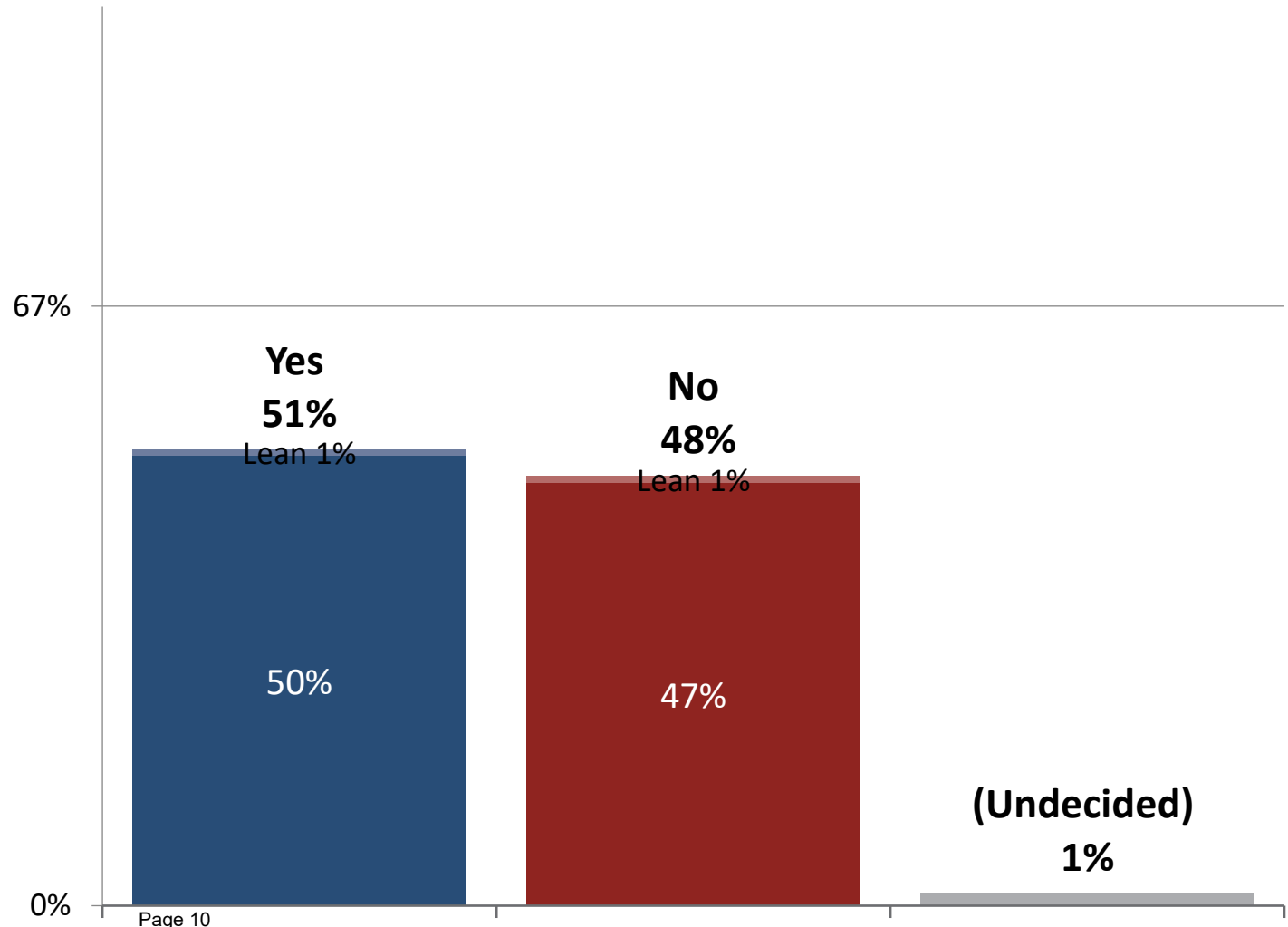


PTT Initial Vote

Support for the property transfer tax measure is just around fifty percent, well under the two-thirds threshold needed for a special tax.

Next, you will see a measure that may appear on the ballot in Monterey County. The measure reads:

To fund programs to create housing that is affordable for Monterey County families, teachers, first responders, and other local workers; provide first-time homebuyer down-payment assistance; and preserve existing housing that is affordable for middle-income workers; shall the County of Monterey measure enacting a 3% property transfer tax in unincorporated Monterey County only on single-family residential property sales over \$10,000,000, generating about \$6,000,000 in local funding annually until ended by voters, with independent audits, be adopted?

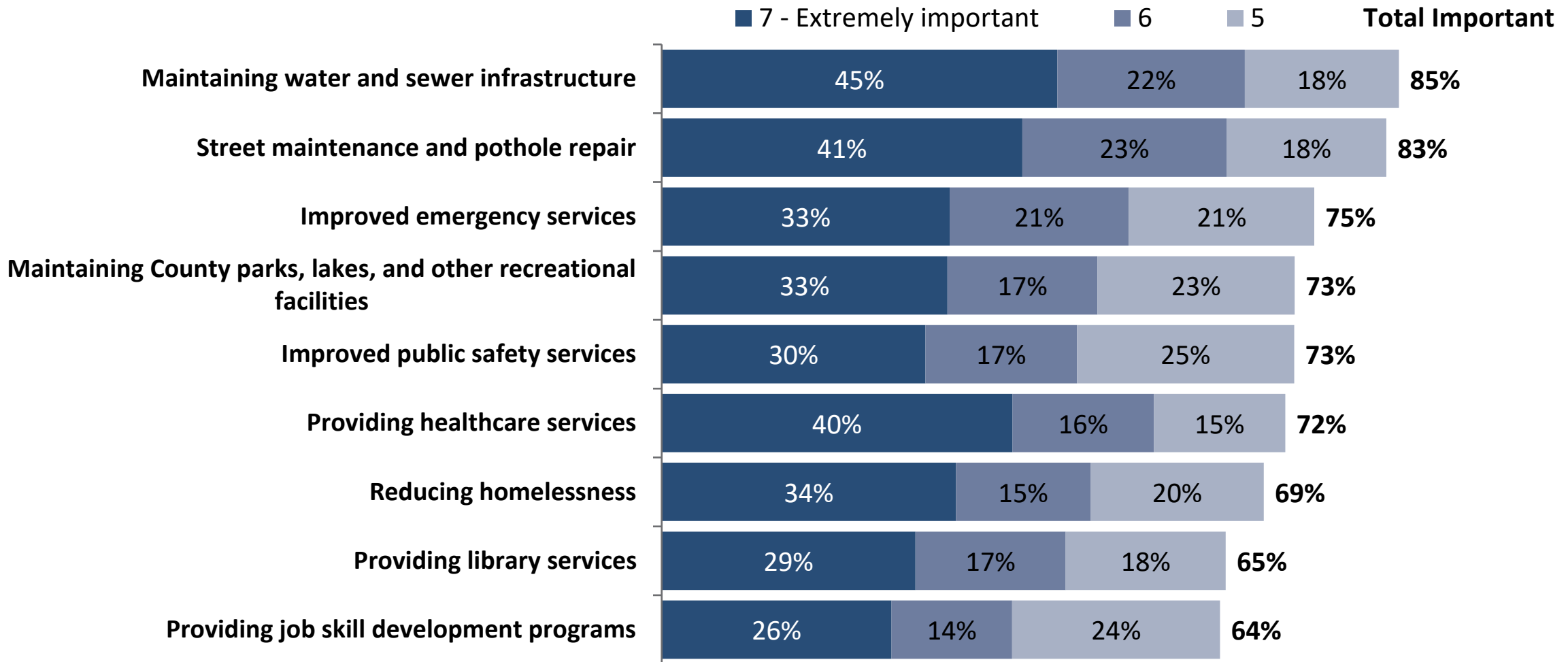




Funding Priorities and Additional Information

TOT Project Importance

All tested items that the TOT measure could support are important to at least 6-in-10 voters. Water and sewer infrastructure and street maintenance rise to the top, with over 80% of voters rating each as important.

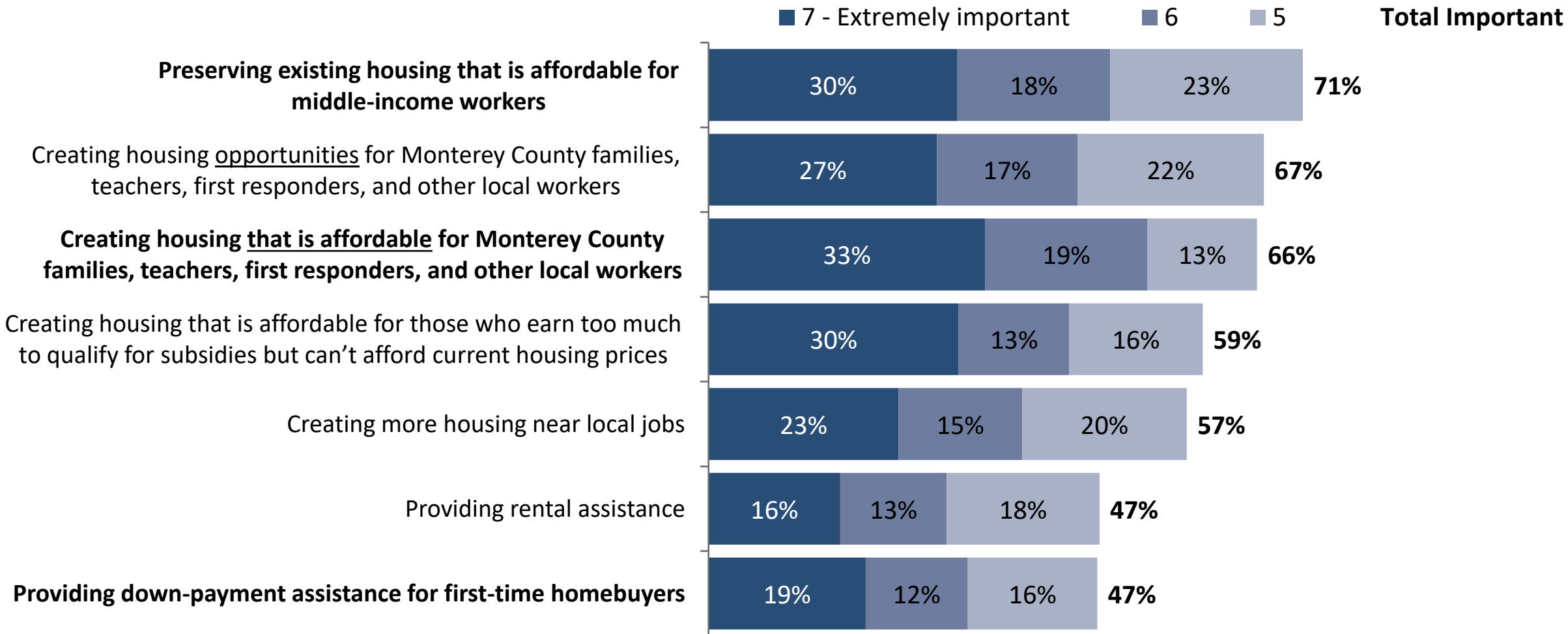


Q13-21. Next you will be asked about a list of projects and programs these ballot measures could support. After each one, please rate how important that project is to you.

Page 12 ***Bolded items included in tested ballot language**

PTT Project Importance

“Creating housing opportunities” language performs very similarly to “Creating housing that is affordable,” but intensity on the latter is higher. Providing down payment or rental assistance is important to less than half of voters.



Q22-28. Next you will be asked about a list of projects and programs these ballot measures could support. After each one, please rate how important that project is to you.

Page 13 ***Bolded items included in tested ballot language**

Additional Measure Information

Information about oversight is convincing to 70% of voters. For the TOT, offsetting tourism impacts is quite convincing. For the PTT, avoiding displacement of seniors, helping workers live near jobs, and displacement consequences are compelling.

[TOURISM–TOT] Every year, hundreds of thousands of visitors come to our area, adding to traffic gridlock and strain on public safety services and local natural habitats. The transient occupancy tax measure would be paid only by these visitors, helping to offset their impact without increasing taxes on local residents.

Response	Percentage
Very	37%
Somewhat	36%
Total Convincing	73%

[OVERSIGHT] Mandatory financial audits and yearly reports will ensure that all funds from these measures are spent right here in Monterey County for voter-approved purposes.

Response	Percentage
Very	38%
Somewhat	32%
Total Convincing	70%

(SAMPLE A ONLY: 250n) [SENIORS–PTT] Because of rising housing costs, longtime residents and seniors are increasingly unable to remain in the communities where they have spent their lives, forcing them to leave the neighbors and support networks they rely on.

Response	Percentage
Very	31%
Somewhat	37%
Total Convincing	68%

[NEAR JOBS–PTT] The people who make our region function—including teachers, registered nurses, hospitality workers, and public safety personnel—can no longer afford to live in the communities they serve, contributing to traffic congestion and reduced quality of life. We need more housing near jobs so these professionals can live where they work.

Response	Percentage
Very	32%
Somewhat	36%
Total Convincing	68%

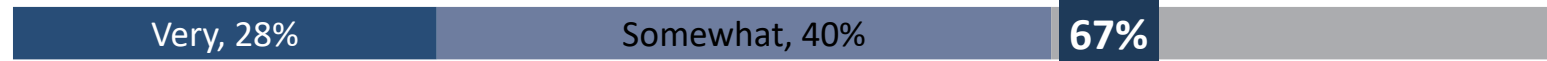
[CONSEQUENCES–PTT] We’re already seeing the consequences of families being priced out of our area in declining school enrollment and staffing shortages in our hospitals and local businesses. Without action to make homeownership more affordable for working families, we risk losing the people who sustain our communities and the character that makes this place unique.

Response	Percentage
Very	36%
Somewhat	30%
Total Convincing	67%

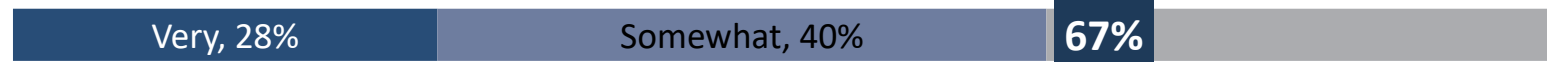
Additional Measure Information

That all funding generated by the PTT would be dedicated to housing is less compelling than other information.

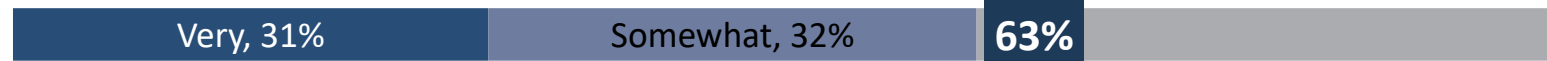
[OTHER COMMUNITIES–TOT] The transient occupancy tax measure would simply raise the tax rate for overnight visitors in the unincorporated areas to the same level it already is in many other local communities, including the cities of Monterey, Pacific Grove, and Seaside. **% Total Convincing**



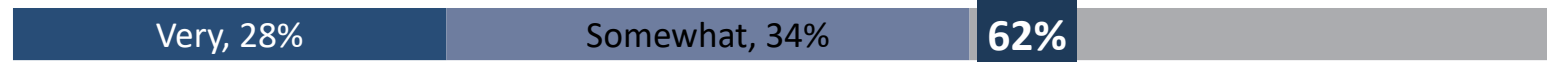
[LOCAL CONTROL] These measures would create a guaranteed source of local funding that, by law, cannot be taken by Sacramento, for our housing affordability crisis and vital county services, ensuring our tax dollars stay local for the benefit of Monterey County residents.



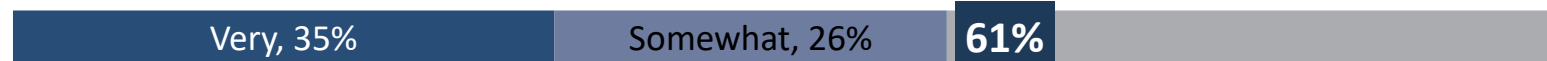
(SAMPLE B ONLY: 250n) [NEXT GENERATION–PTT] Many young adults who grow up here are unable to return after college because housing is unattainable for early and mid-career professionals. We need to take action so we don't lose out on the next generation of families and all they could contribute to our communities.



[BURDEN] These measures will help the County maintain critical services and everyday residents afford to live here without costing the average resident anything. Only those who book a hotel, motel or short-term rental in the unincorporated areas of the county; or those buying or selling single-family properties valued over \$10 million in those areas pay these taxes.



[PITCH IN–PTT] It's only fair to ask those who can afford luxury properties and second homes in our beautiful region to pitch in a fraction of their cost so that working families and year-round residents can afford to stay here.



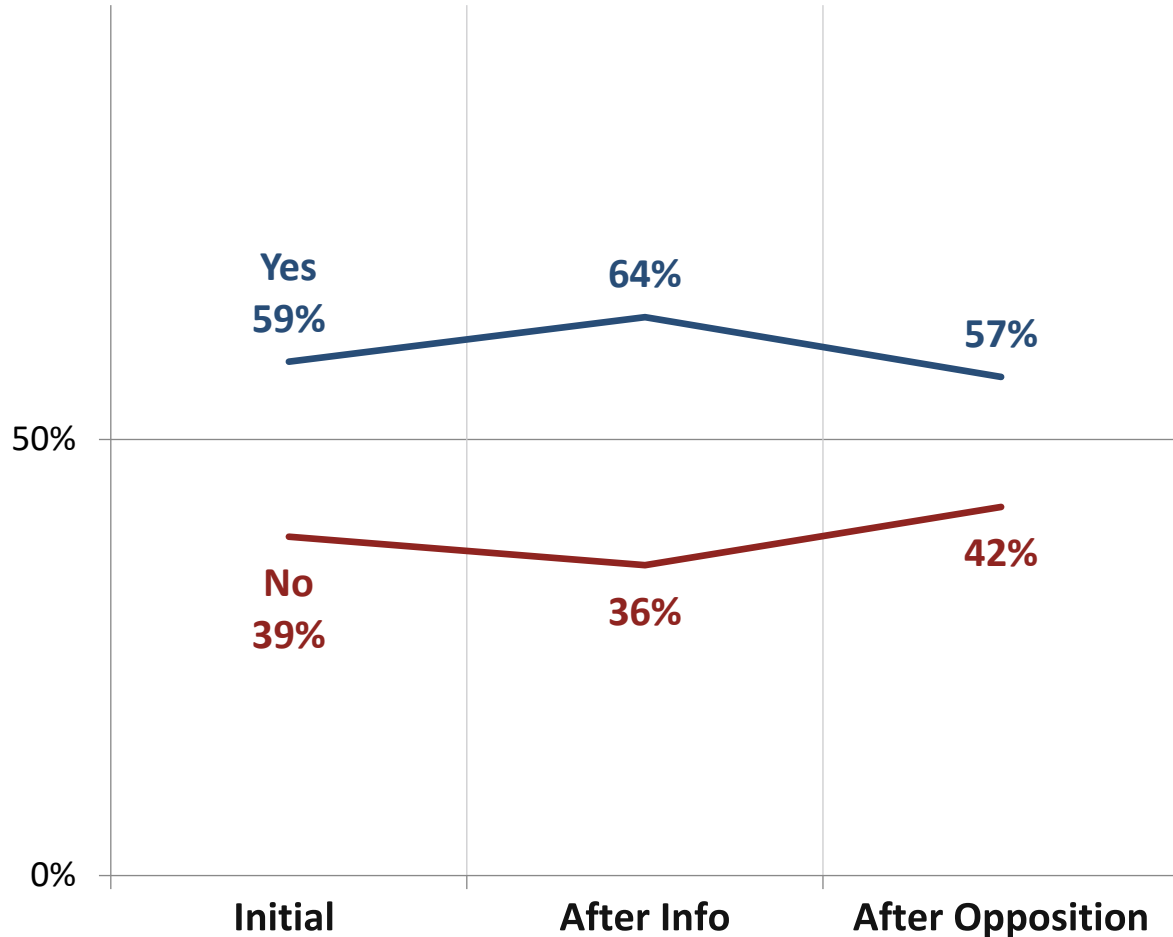
[DEDICATED FUNDING–PTT] All funding generated by the property transfer tax would go to voter-approved purposes helping solve our area's housing affordability crisis.



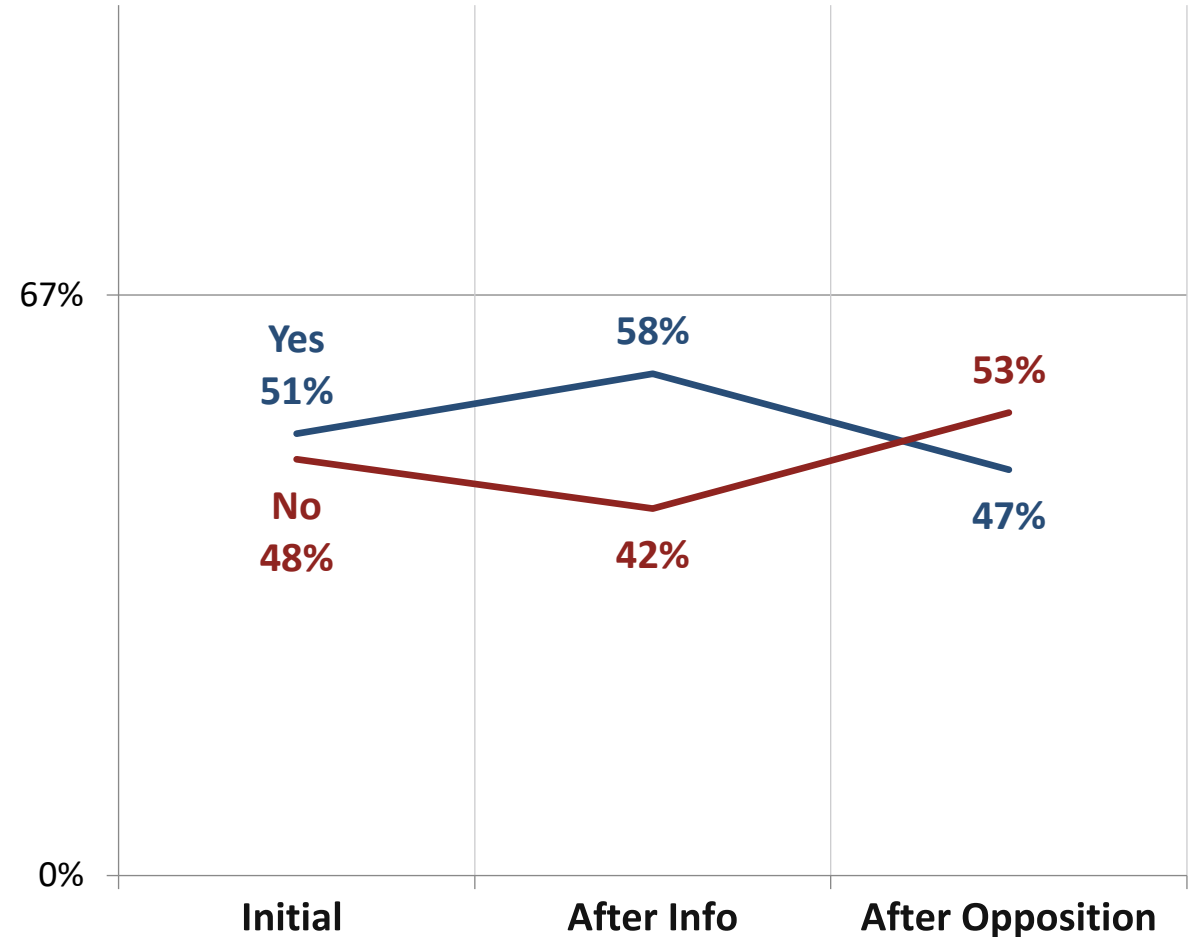
Support Progression

Support for both measures rises after more information about need, but is somewhat vulnerable to opposition.

Transient Occupancy Tax

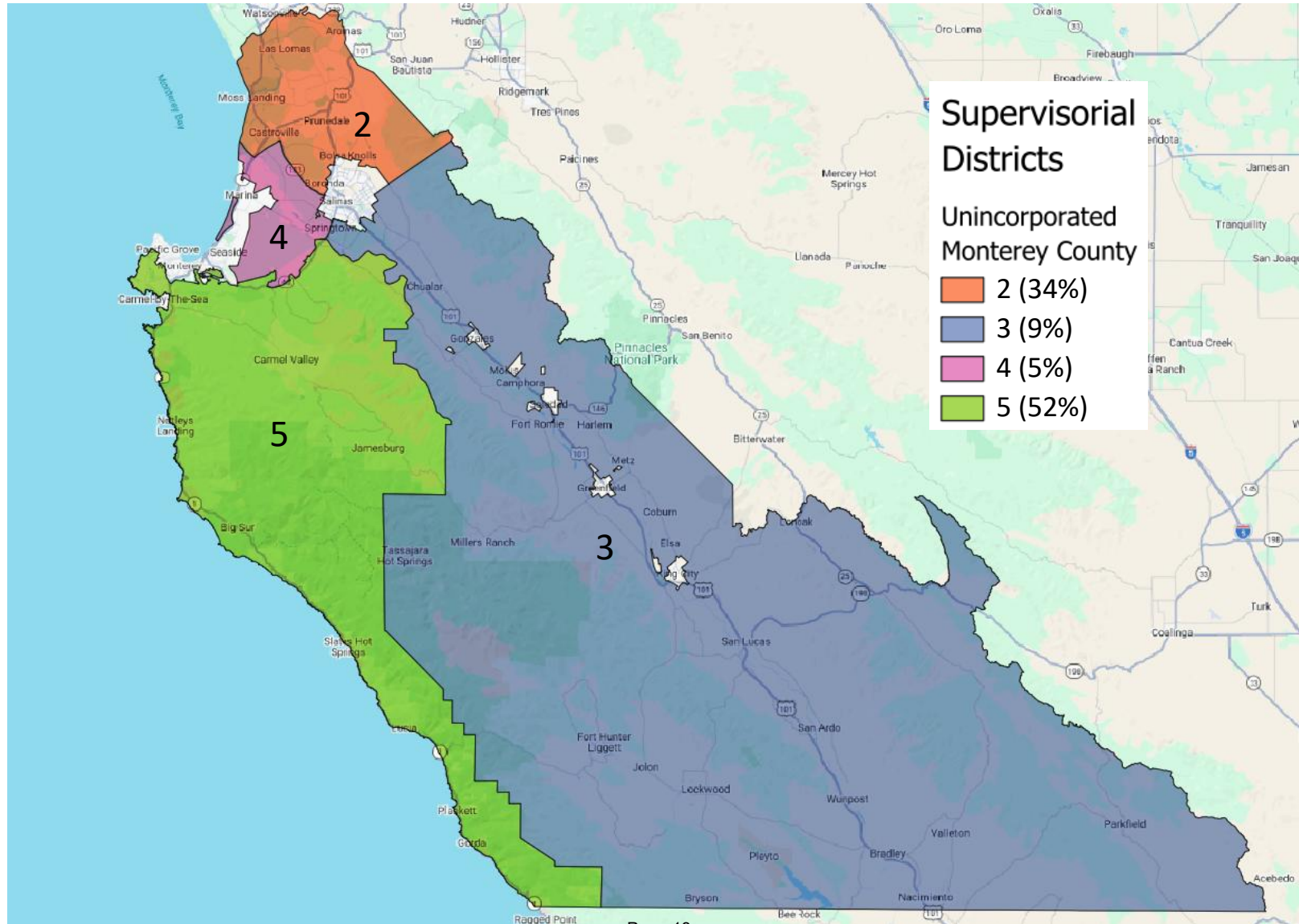


Property Transfer Tax



Conclusions

- ▶ A 2% increase in the transient occupancy tax in the unincorporated areas is currently supported by more than the half of voters needed.
- ▶ A dedicated property transfer tax (PTT) on single-family property sales over \$10 million faces a more difficult path. More education about the benefits of the measure is helpful, but support currently does not reach two-thirds even with more information.
- ▶ There was little impact on support based on which measure voters heard first—if anything, support for the PTT was at times marginally higher among those who heard about the TOT first.





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