

# Caltrain State and Federal Legislative Update

JPB AMP Meeting  
February 26, 2025



# Federal

- **Federal Workforce Reductions**
  - Thousands of federal employees, especially probationary employees, have been fired
  - At least 85 FTA employees were impacted, 8 in Region 9.
- **Temporary Pause on All Regulatory Activities**
  - On Jan 20, Executive Order (EO) “Regulatory Freeze Pending Review” issued which pauses ongoing regulatory activities, including proposed and recently published rules, until an administration official is in place to review and approve.
- **Appropriations and Appointments**
  - President Trump announced Steven Bradbury as the nominee for DOT Deputy Secretary.
  - Bradbury is a veteran DOT official. Committee confirmation vote scheduled for Feb 27
  - Continuing Resolution through March 14, 2025
- **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**
  - The Senate EPW Committee is holding a hearing today to receive an update on IIJA implementation.

# Federal

- **Federal Investigation into California High-Speed Rail**
  - On Feb 20, US DOT Secretary Duffy announced a federal compliance investigation into the CA High-Speed Rail Project
- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations**
  - On Feb 19, the CEQ submitted a pre-publication [interim final rule](#) rescinding its NEPA regulations.
- **Federal Funding Uncertainty**
  - A Temporary Restraining Order is still in effect regarding the EOs that require federal funding freezes, including freezing funds from the IIJA.
  - Courts are considering a preliminary injunction.
  - FTA is processing grants as of right now.
- **New Federal Grants Policy**
  - Jan 29 DOT memo outlines new policy regarding federal loans, grants, and other assistance.
  - The Secretary also directed the DOT general counsel to investigate how DOT can unilaterally renew existing grant agreements to ensure compatibility with EOs.

# State

- **Legislative Update**

- Feb 21 was the deadline to introduce bills for consideration in the first year of the two-year session.
- The Assembly requires spot bills to be amended by March 17 and the Senate by March 26.
- Continuing to work with partners on Caltrain's regenerative braking issue legislation
- On Feb 4, Caltrain CEO Bouchard and Caltrain staff traveled to Sacramento to meet with state legislators and administration

- **Budget Update**

- As part of the FY25-26 budget, Senators Wiener and Arreguin are leading effort to secure an additional \$2 billion to address transit needs

- **CTC Elects New Leadership**

- At its January 2025 business meeting, the California Transportation Commission elected Darnell Grisby as its Chair and Clarissa Falcon as its Vice Chair
- Effective March 1

- **CalSTA Holds Eighth Transit Transformation Task Force Meeting**
  - The State's Transit Transformation Task Force met Feb 5.
  - The meeting included discussion on the process and timeline for completing the Task Force's report to the Legislature by October 30, 2025, and afforded Task Force members the opportunity to review the draft staff report on recommendations for fleet and asset management transit system oversight and reporting and further discuss options for additional transit funding.

# AB 1372 (Papan) – Caltrain Energy Bill (Sponsor)

- **AB 1372 (Papan) Electricity: electrified commuter railroads: regenerative braking: net energy.**
  - Caltrain sends about 23% of the energy we consume back to the grid.
  - Caltrain currently receives no compensation for this energy.
  - AB 1372 is a spot bill and we are working with our energy partners and Assemblymember Papan's office to ensure Caltrain can receive fair credit for the energy it produces.
  - Any savings on energy bills through receiving credit for energy sent back to the grid is not included in the strategic financial plan projections and would directly lower Caltrain's future operating deficit.

# SB 71 - Recommend Support

- **SB71 (Wiener) CEQA Exemptions for Transit Projects – *Recommend Support***
  - Would indefinitely extend the CEQA exemptions for transit and transportation projects established under SB 922 (Wiener, 2022), removing the current January 1, 2030 sunset date.
  - Will add additional project types to the list of exemptions including ferry terminals, transit operations analysis and bus stops and shelters.
  - Co-Sponsored by the California Transit Association.
  - Caltrain previously supported SB 922, as well as AB 2503 (Lee, 2024), which added to the list of statutory exemptions an exemption for zero-emission rail.

# AB 394 - Recommend Support

- **AB 394 (Wilson) Transit Safety – *Recommend Support***
  - Would enhance the safety and security of California’s public transportation systems by strengthening protections for transit operators, employees, and passengers.
  - Would apply enhanced penalties for assaults to all transit employees, as well as updated provisions for trespass violations on transit systems.
  - Would empower agencies to seek court-issued prohibition orders against those convicted of assault or trespass.
  - Promotes safer transit environments for transit riders and employees alike.
  - Co-Sponsored by the California Transit Association, ATU, Teamsters and SMART



# Regional Measure - MTC Poll

- MTC Polling Results ([Full Results Here](#))

*The measures start above a majority, but the 9-county two-tax Hybrid is weaker.*

**1A: ½ Cent Sales Tax  
(4-county)**

Yes  
57%

No  
43%

**Hybrid: ½ Cent Sales + Parcel Taxes  
(9-county)**

Yes  
51%

No  
49%

**Variable: 1/2 - 7/8 Cent Sales Tax  
(4-county)**

Yes  
56%

No  
44%

# Regional Measure – MTC Poll



## Initial Support by County

Table shows percent "Yes"	<b>1A: ½ Cent Sales Tax</b> 57% Yes 4-County	<b>Hybrid: ½ Cent Sales + Parcel Taxes</b> 51% Yes 9-County	<b>Variable: 1/2 - 7/8 Cent Sales Tax</b> 56% Yes 4-County
Alameda <i>MoE ±6.2 p.p. for each model</i>	61%	55%	59%
Contra Costa <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p. for each model</i>	53%	51%	54%
San Francisco <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p. for each model</i>	55%	54%	58%
San Mateo <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p. for each model</i>	59%	53%	52%
Santa Clara <i>MoE ±5.7 p.p.</i>		50%	
North Bay (Napa, Marin, Solano, Sonoma) <i>MoE ±6.9 p.p.</i>		44%	



# EMC Presentation on Caltrain Polling

**Caltrain**



**Survey of Likely Voters  
Regarding Potential Caltrain  
Revenue Measures**  
*Executive Summary Presentation  
February 2025*

# Methodology

- ▶ Online-only survey of likely voters in Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties
- ▶ Survey conducted January 8-23, 2025
- ▶ 1,500 interviews; overall margin of error  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points
- ▶ Split sample employed to test three different revenue measure models (a sales tax and two different parcel tax amounts)
  - 500 interviews conducted per sample; margin of error  $\pm 4.4$  percentage points
- ▶ Survey invitations sent via SMS and Email; Survey offered in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with previous Caltrain voter surveys:

*Methodology	Dates	Universe	Sample Size	Margin of Error
Phone and Online	June 11 – 18, 2020	Likely Nov. 2020 Voters	1,255	$\pm 2.8$ percentage points
Phone and Online	March 25 – April 1, 2019	Likely Nov. 2020 Voters	1,416	$\pm 2.6$ percentage points

*While the online-only sample is comparably representative of voters as prior surveys, please note that online respondents are less likely to give an undecided response and tend to be slightly more negative than telephone respondents.*

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

# Survey Context and Timing

The survey was conducted during the leadup to and directly following President Trump's inauguration on January 20 and ensuing executive orders. Other events related to this, such as protests in California and around other areas of the country, also occurred during the data collection period. Additionally, destructive wildfires in Southern California occurred throughout the entire data collection period.

## Protests planned throughout Bay Area ahead of Trump's inauguration

Anti-Trump groups are holding protests and marches in San Jose, San Francisco and Alameda

**LA wildfires could clobber California economy as state recovers from a pandemic recession**

## Trump signs slew of executive actions after being sworn in

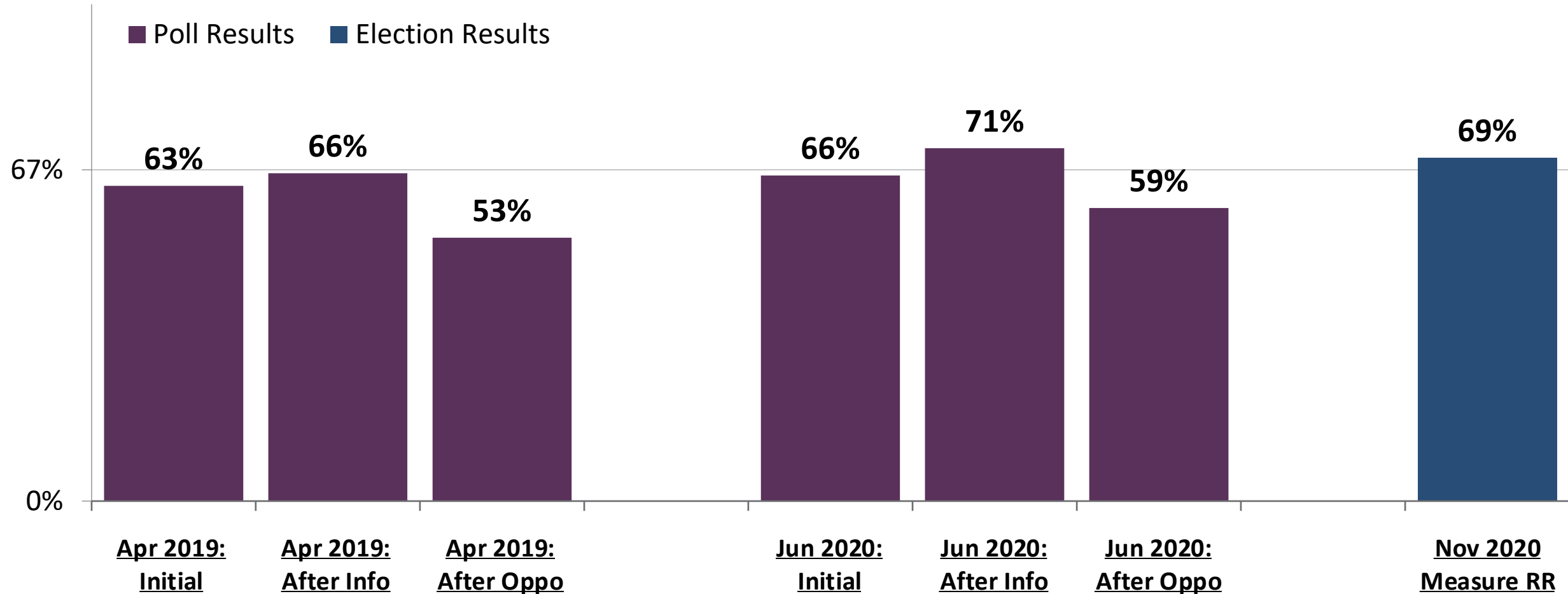
Updated 5:05 AM EST, Tue January 21, 2025

**California wildfires: Firefighters battle to contain blazes while thousands wait to return home**

# Historical Polling and Elections

## 3-County 1/8 Cent Sales Tax Measure for Caltrain

**% Yes**



\*Passage threshold 66.67%

# Key Findings

- ▶ **Voters recognize the need for increased funding for transit**, think that sustaining and improving Caltrain service is important, and overwhelmingly have a favorable view of Caltrain.
- ▶ While most voters rely on driving and do not use transit regularly, **more than eight in ten** have a favorable opinion of Caltrain, and over half have recently seen or heard something about Caltrain.
- ▶ **Voter optimism is growing but** these poll results reveal high levels of voter pessimism and tax hesitancy, indicating a **challenging environment** for a tax measure at this time.
- ▶ For a measure to have an opportunity to succeed, it will be essential for voters to believe that the measure would **result in transit improvements** that would provide better access to jobs and reduce traffic congestion. Reassuring voters that the funds will be spent as promised will be important to ease concerns about accountability.





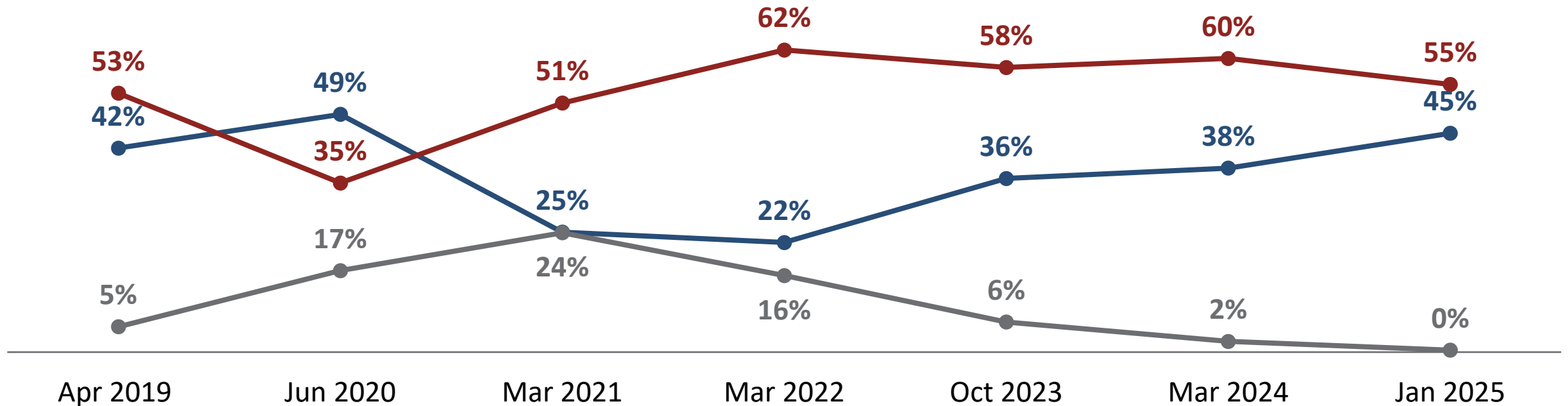
**Issue Environment**

# Right Direction/Wrong Track Trend Over Time

*Voter optimism is showing gradual improvement over the past several years.*

## Do you feel that things in the Bay Area are...

● Generally going in the right direction ● Pretty seriously off on the wrong track ● (Don't know/Refused)



Q3. Do you feel that things in the Bay Area are...

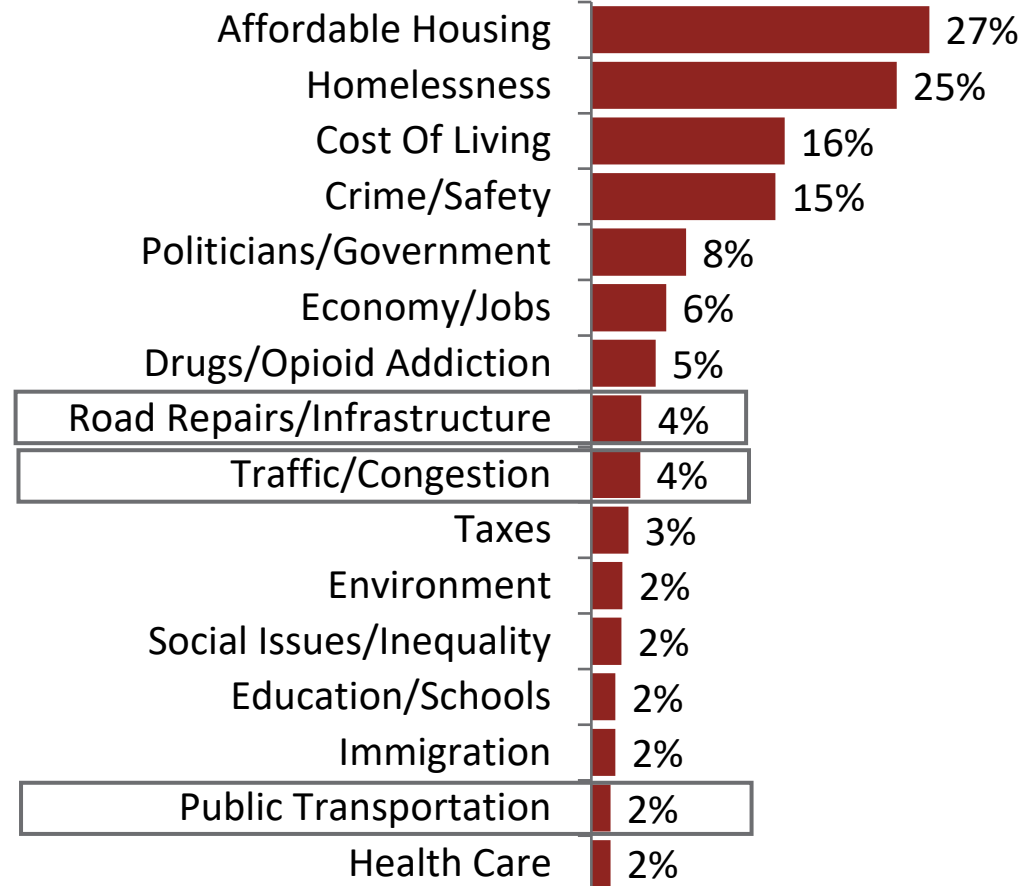
Note: Changes in methodology may impact year-over-year comparisons, especially the proportion of "Don't know" responses.

# Most Important Problems

*Affordability, homelessness, and crime are top-of-mind concerns for voters. Concern is much lower about transportation issues.*

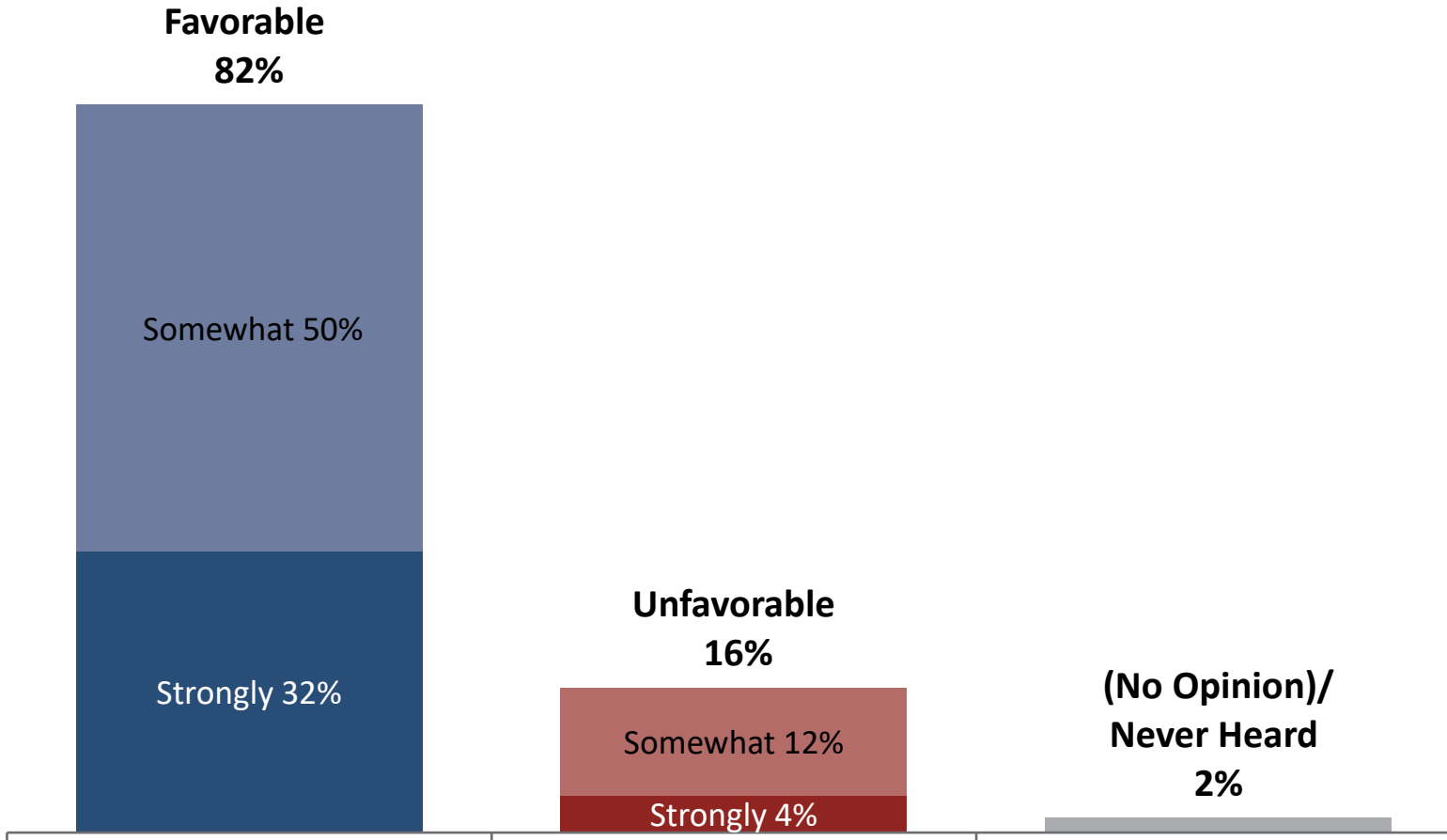
## What do you think is the most important problem facing your area today?

*(Open-ended question; verbatim responses coded into categories shown; multiple responses accepted)*



# Caltrain Favorable Rating

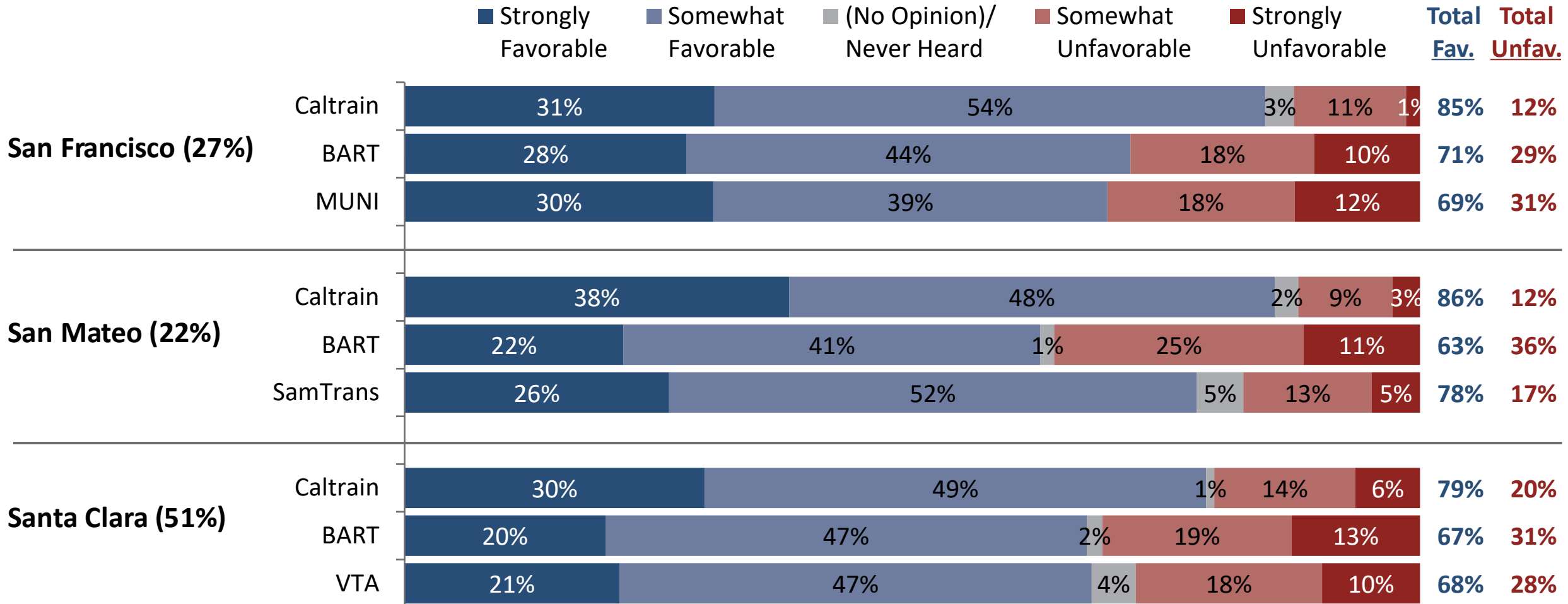
*Eight in ten voters have a favorable opinion of Caltrain, with frequent riders the most favorable.*



	Fav.	Unfav.	(No Opinion)/ Never Heard
Overall	82%	16%	2%
Monthly+ Caltrain Riders (12%)	91%	8%	1%
Occasional Caltrain Riders (41%)	84%	15%	1%
Caltrain Non-Riders (47%)	78%	20%	2%

# Transit Favorable Ratings by County

*Most voters have a positive view of their county's largest transit agencies, with Caltrain often receiving the highest overall and most intense favorable ratings.*

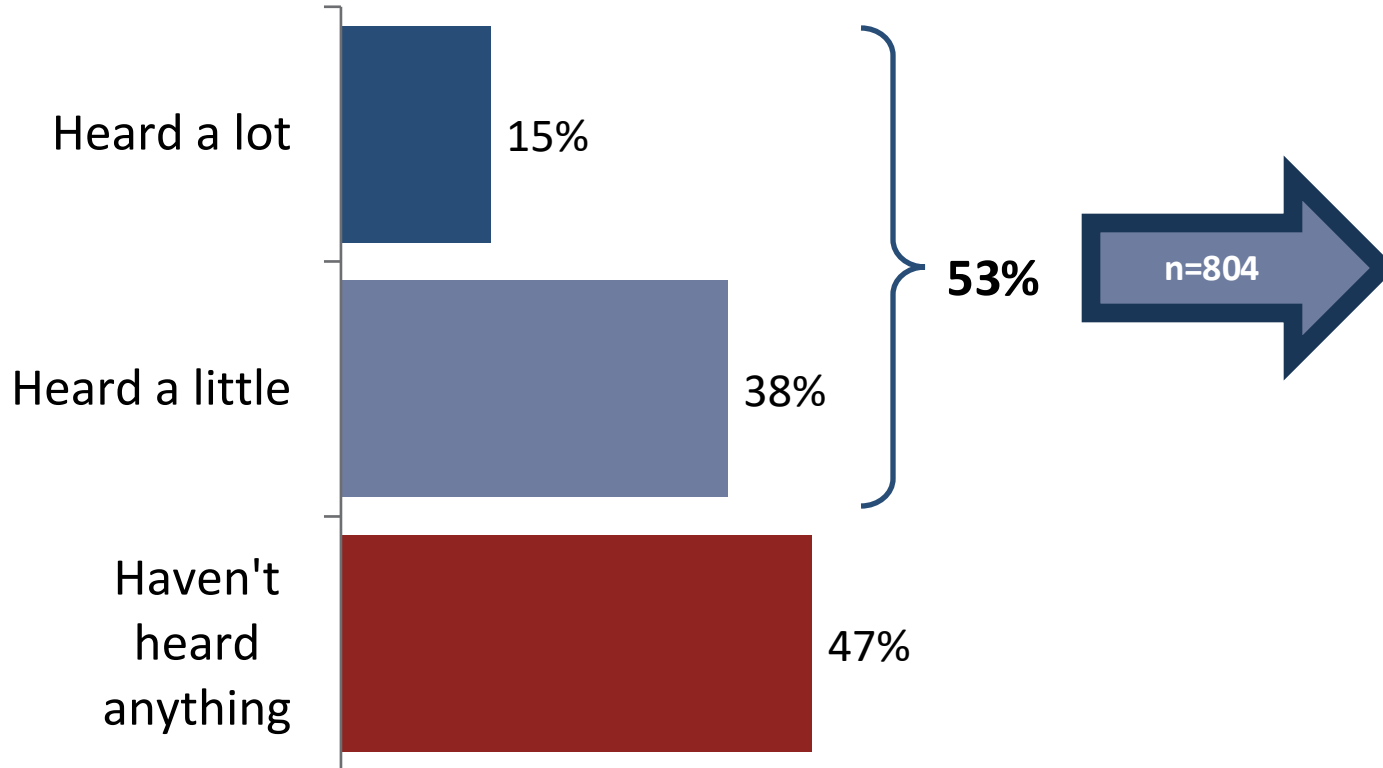


Q5.- Q9. \*County specific transit agencies only asked among respective County Voters  
 San Francisco 405n MoE=±4.9% points; San Mateo 330n, MoE=±5.4% points; Santa Clara 765n ±3.5% points

# Caltrain Awareness

Just over half have heard or seen something about Caltrain recently, with most of those mentioning electrification.

## Have you heard or seen anything recently about Caltrain?



## What have you heard or seen?

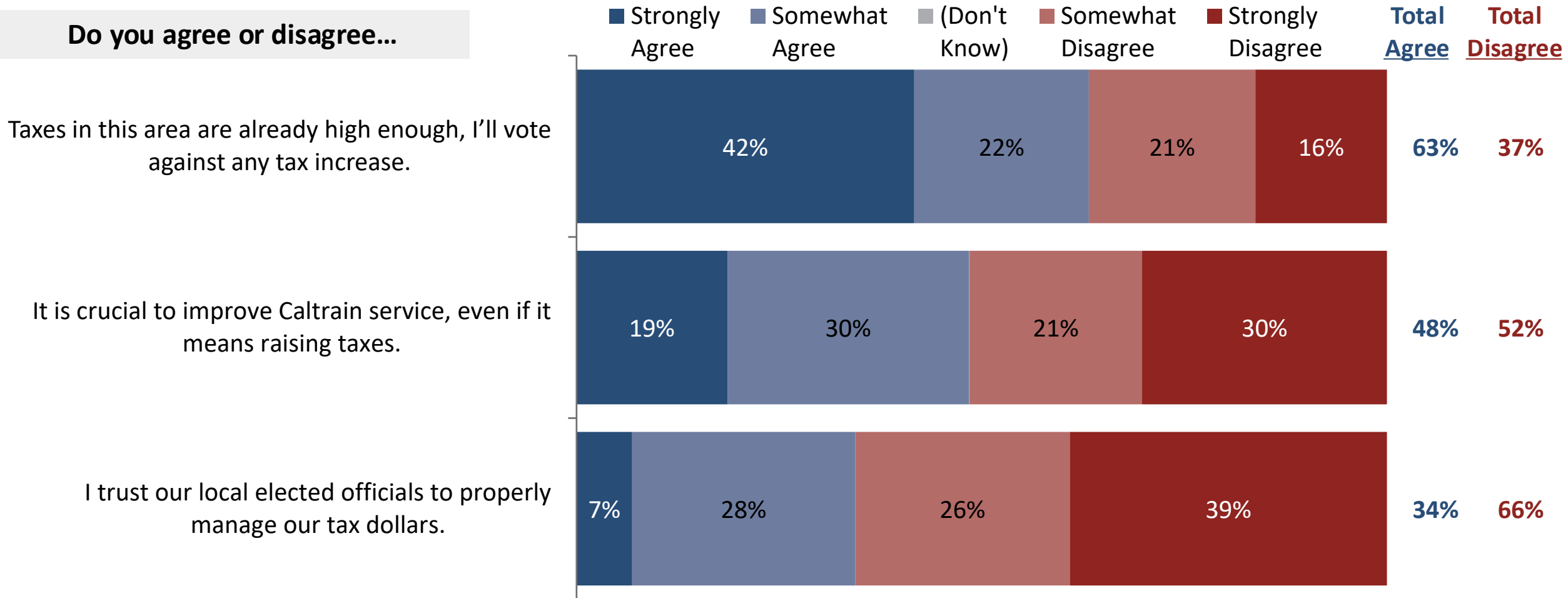
(Open end; verbatim responses coded into categories below; responses above 2% shown)

Response	%
Electrification	47
New/upgraded trains	15
New/expanded schedules	7
Expanding service area	6
Faster trains/Shorter commute times	5
Infrastructure development/Construction	5
Good service	5
News/Social media	4
Crime/Safety	4
Slow/late trains	3
Budget/Spending	3

# Taxes and Public Transit

*Tax hesitancy is high and trust in elected leaders is low.*

## Do you agree or disagree...

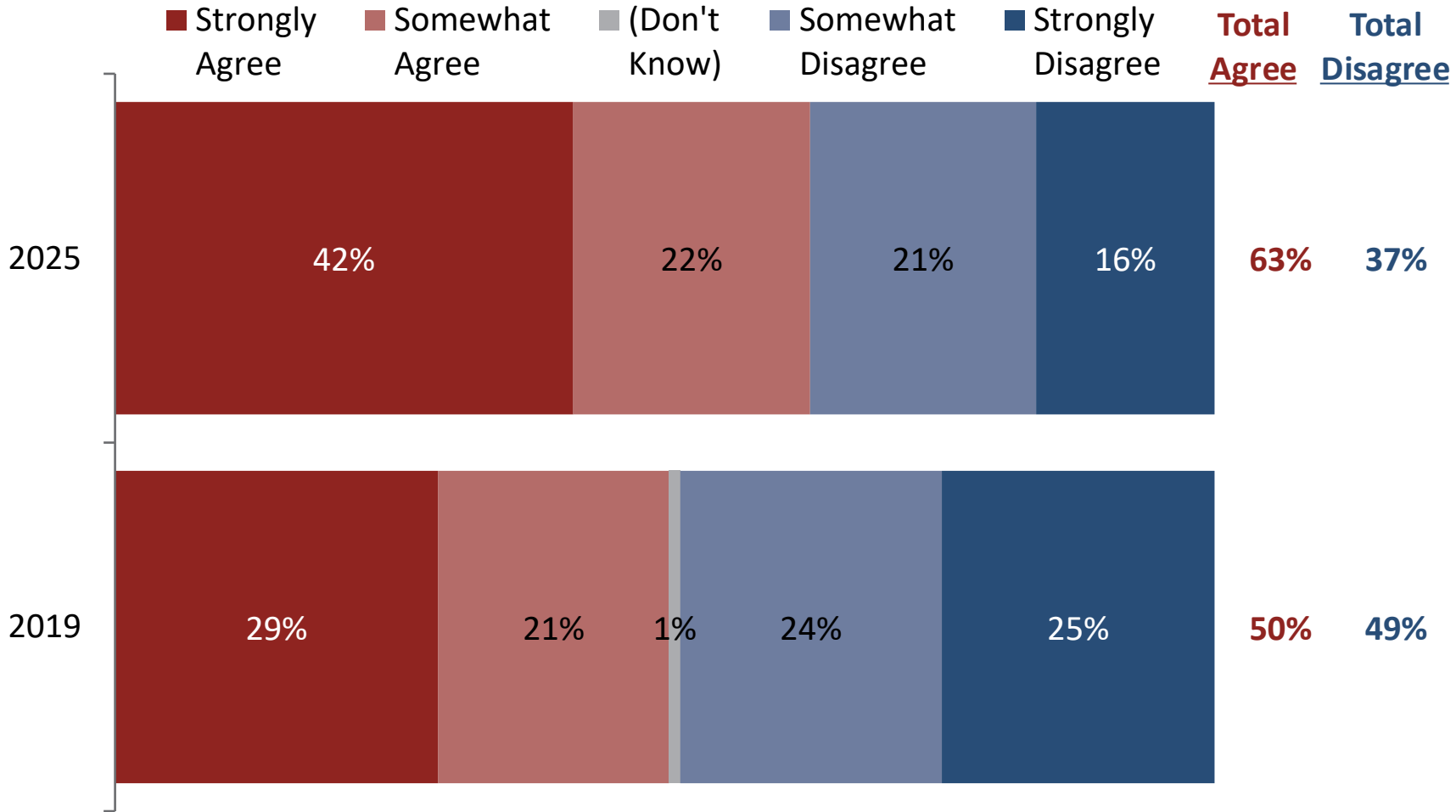


# Tax Attitudes Over Time

*Tax sensitivity has increased since 2019.*

Do you agree or disagree...

Taxes in this area are already high enough, I'll vote against any tax increase.

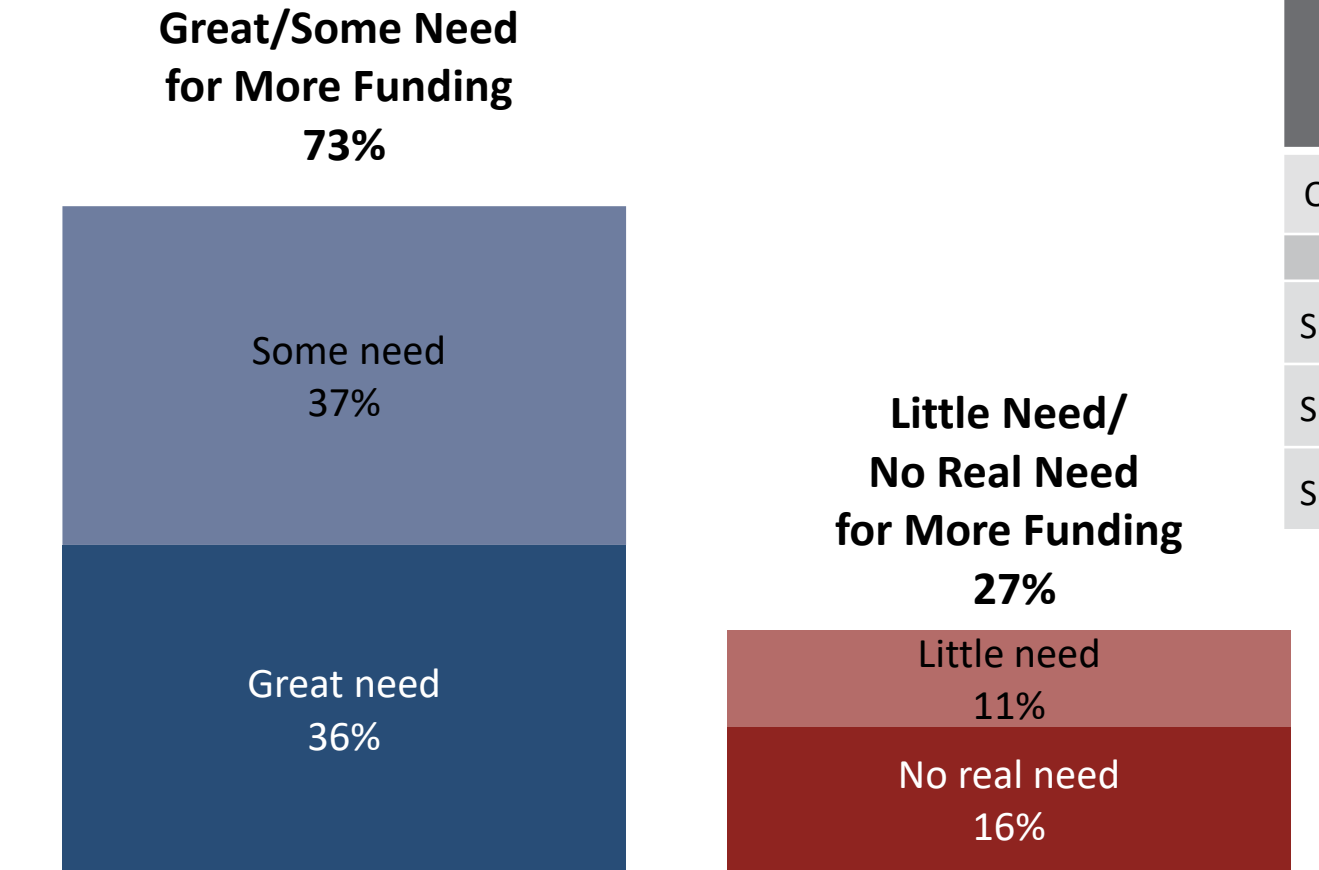




# Need for Public Transit Funding

Over 70% of voters believe public transit needs more funding across all counties in the District.

## Would you say that public transit in your area has...?



	Great/Some Need	Little/No Real Need
Overall	73%	27%
San Francisco (27%)	77%	23%
San Mateo (22%)	73%	27%
Santa Clara (51%)	71%	29%



**Potential Revenue Measure**

# Revenue Measure Wording

*Each survey respondent heard or read only one version of the transportation revenue measure, assigned at random.*

## [Split A] Sales Tax: 1/8 cent

To sustain and improve Caltrain service, support the regional economy, make Caltrain more affordable/accessible, relieve traffic, improve road crossing safety, reduce pollution, improve transit connections, increase frequency, support electrified train service, and reduce travel times between Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties, shall the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's resolution levying a **30-year 1/8 cent sales tax with a detailed expenditure plan and audits, providing an estimated \$124,000,000 annually** for Caltrain, be adopted?

## [Split B] Parcel Tax: 5 cents/Sq. Ft.

To sustain and improve Caltrain service, support the regional economy, make Caltrain more affordable/accessible, relieve traffic, improve road crossing safety, reduce pollution, improve transit connections, increase frequency, support electrified train service, and reduce travel times between Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties, shall the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's resolution levying a **30-year tax of 5 cents per square foot of building area, with a detailed expenditure plan and audits, providing an estimated \$124,000,000 annually** for Caltrain, be adopted?

## [Split C] Parcel Tax: 9 cents/Sq. Ft.

To sustain/improve Caltrain service, support the regional economy, relieve traffic, **help extend Caltrain to downtown San Francisco**, improve road crossing safety, reduce pollution, improve transit connections, increase frequency, support electrified train service, and reduce travel times between Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties, shall the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's resolution levying a **30-year tax of 9 cents per square foot of building area, with a detailed expenditure plan and audits, providing an estimated \$223,000,000 annually** for Caltrain, be adopted?

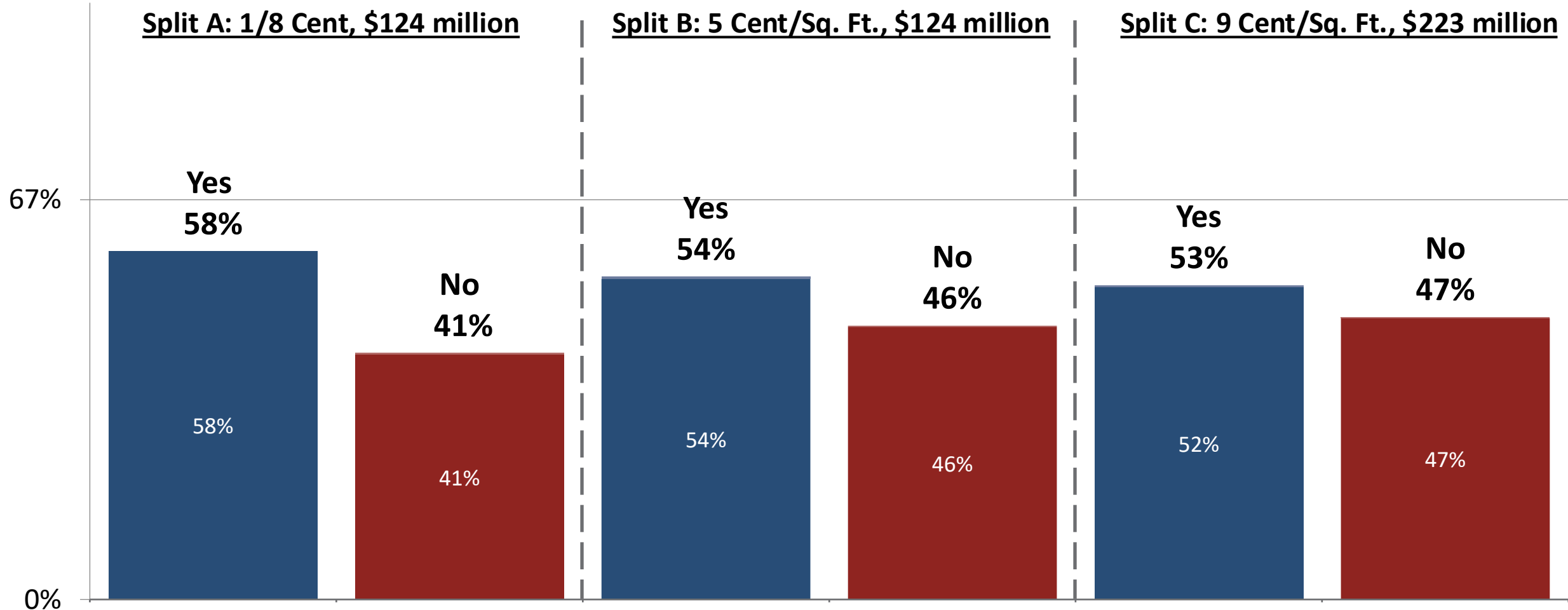
Q13. \*Sample size for each split = 500n, MoE=±4.4 % points

\*Sample size for each split in each county: San Francisco 135n MoE=±8.4 % points;

San Mateo 110n, MoE=±9.3 % points; Santa Clara 255n ±6.1 % points

# Revenue Measure: Initial Support

*Initial support for the revenue measures tested for Caltrain is well below two-thirds for any of the models tested. Given the margin of error, there are not statistically significant differences in support.*



Q13. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

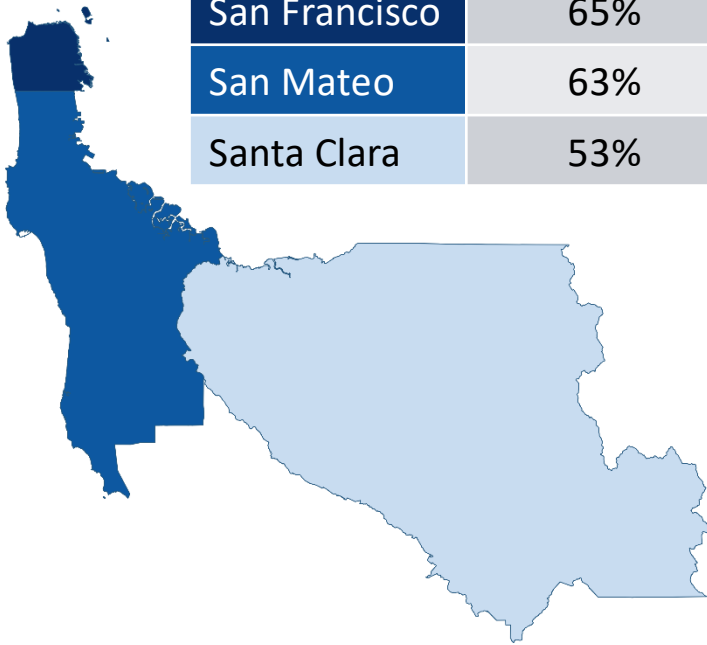
\*Sample size for each split = 500n, MoE=±4.4 % points

# Revenue Measure: Initial Support by County

*San Francisco voters are the most supportive across most of the measures tested.*

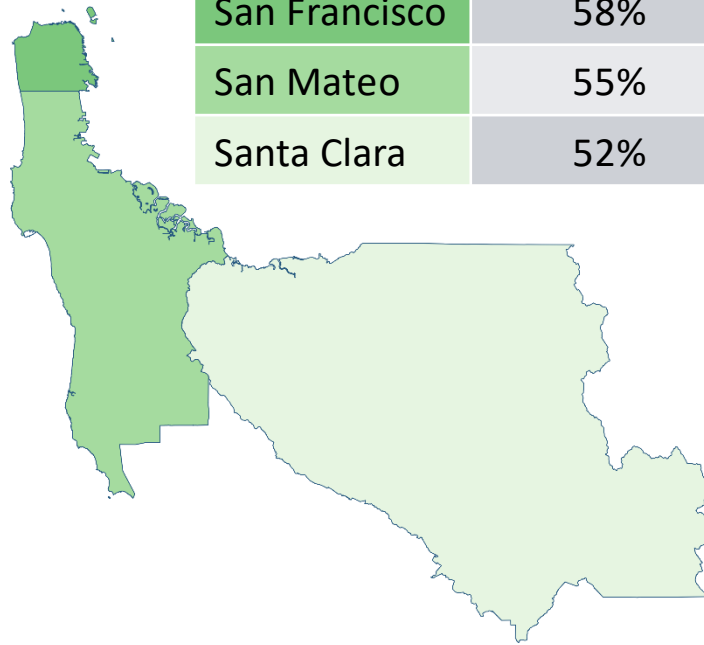
## [Split A] Sales Tax: 1/8 cent

County	% Total Yes
San Francisco	65%
San Mateo	63%
Santa Clara	53%



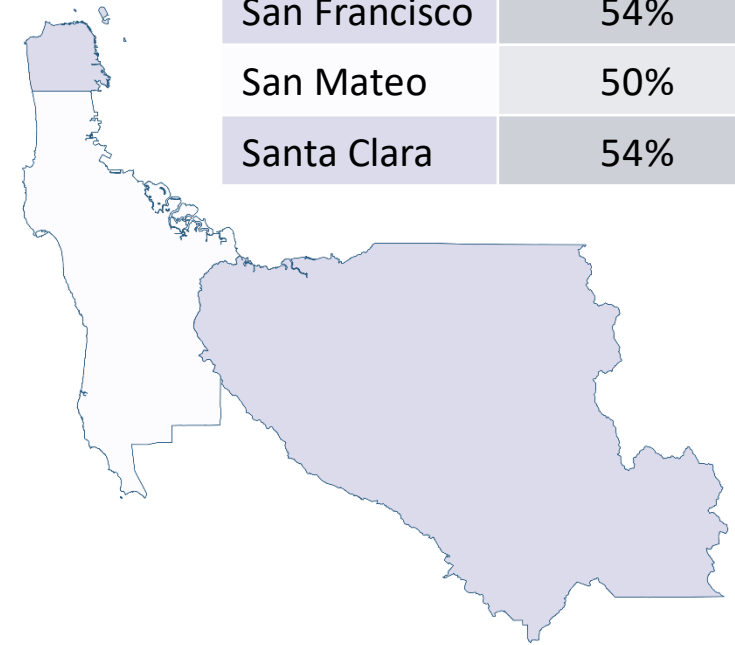
## [Split B] Parcel Tax: 5 cents/Sq. Ft.

County	% Total Yes
San Francisco	58%
San Mateo	55%
Santa Clara	52%



## [Split C] Parcel Tax: 9 cents/Sq. Ft.

County	% Total Yes
San Francisco	54%
San Mateo	50%
Santa Clara	54%



Q13. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

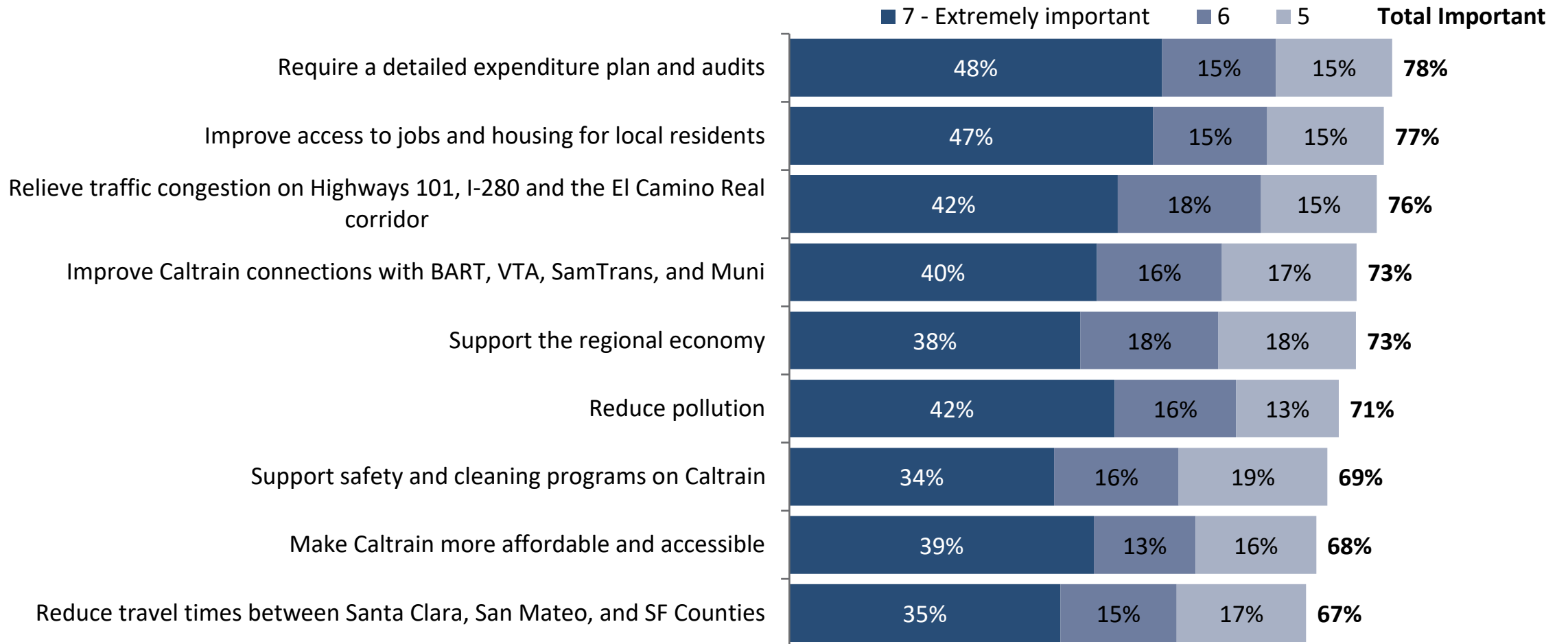
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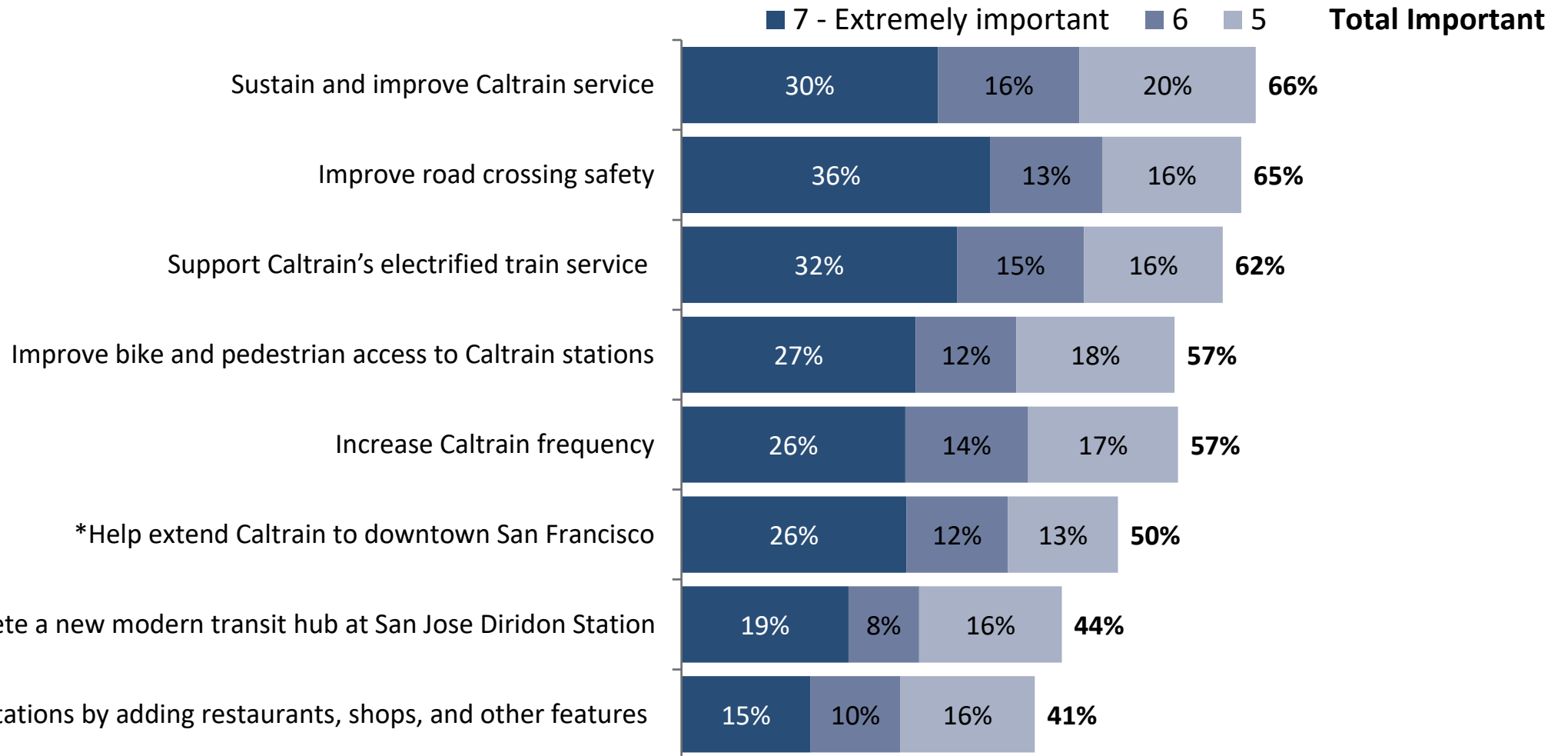
# Importance of Components

*Voters would like to know there are requirements attached to the measure for audits and a detailed plan, and they prioritize broad outcomes like improved access to jobs and housing, traffic congestion relief, better transit connections, and support for the regional economy.*



# Importance of Components (Cont.)

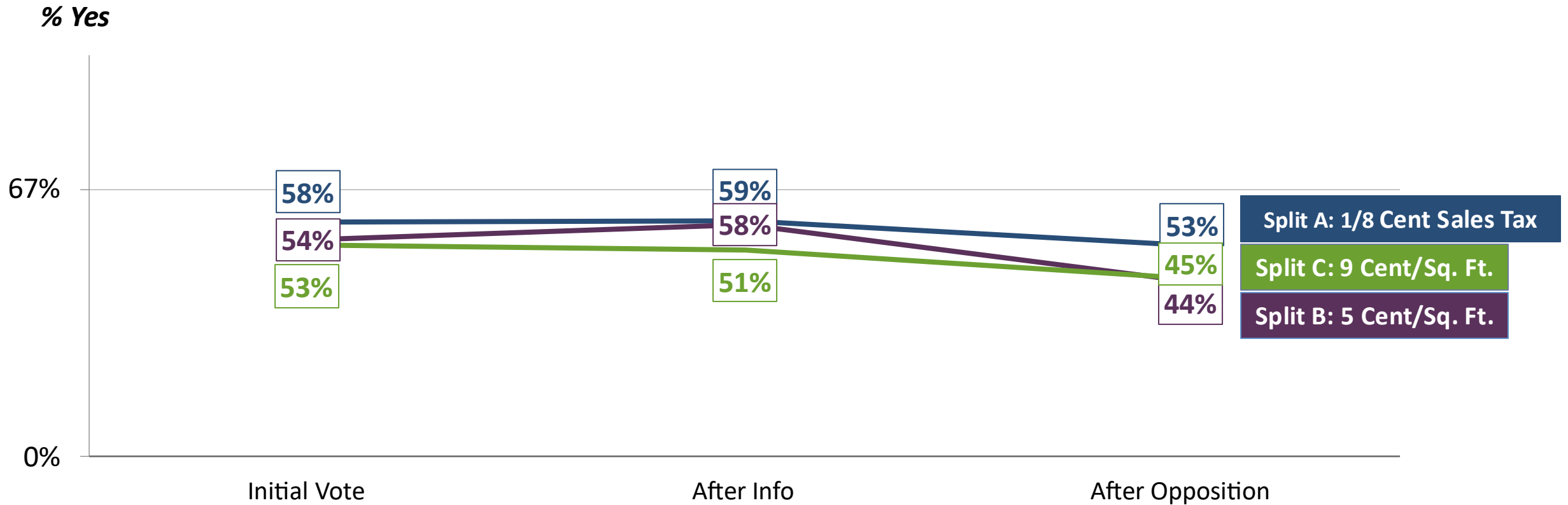
*Other components are also important, although less so.*



**Note:** \*Split C only

# Revenue Measure: Vote Progression

*Providing additional information about a measure does not significantly impact support, but opposition messaging is damaging.*



Q48. Opponents of the potential Caltrain measure say...

After reading this, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a 1/8 sales tax/tax of 5 cents per square foot of building area/tax of 9 cents per square foot of building area for Caltrain?



# Key Findings

- ▶ **Voters recognize the need for increased funding for transit**, think that sustaining and improving Caltrain service is important, and overwhelmingly have a favorable view of Caltrain.
- ▶ While most voters rely on driving and do not use transit regularly, **more than eight in ten** have a favorable opinion of Caltrain, and over half have recently seen or heard something about Caltrain.
- ▶ **Voter optimism is growing but** these poll results reveal high levels of voter pessimism and tax hesitancy, indicating a **challenging environment** for a tax measure at this time.
- ▶ For a measure to have an opportunity to succeed, it will be essential for voters to believe that the measure would **result in transit improvements** that would provide better access to jobs and reduce traffic congestion. Reassuring voters that the funds will be spent as promised will be important to ease concerns about accountability.



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# Caltrain Polling - Key Takeaways

- Caltrain has a very high favorability rating (82%) and the highest favorability rating of any major transit system in any of the counties that we operate in.
- Over 70% of people agree that transit has a need for funding.
- 76% of people say relieving traffic congestion on Highways 101, I-280, and El Camino Real is a major priority.
- Sales tax polls better than parcel tax.
- Polling for Caltrain 1/8 cent sales tax is close to 2/3rds in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties.
- This Poll represents one point in time and a lot can change.
- With Caltrain's high favorability rating, it would likely be an asset to any transit funding measure effort.



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