

# Humboldt County Voter Views of a Potential Ballot Measure






*Key Findings of a Survey Conducted July 8-14, 2024*



OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY



# Survey Methodology

<b>Dates</b>	July 8-14, 2024
<b>Survey Type</b>	Dual-mode Voter Survey
<b>Research Population</b>	Likely November 2024 Voters in Humboldt County
<b>Total Interviews</b>	649
<b>Margin of Sampling Error</b>	(Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
<b>Contact Methods</b>	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
<b>Data Collection Modes</b>	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
<b>Survey Tracking</b>	Comparisons to Research from 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2023

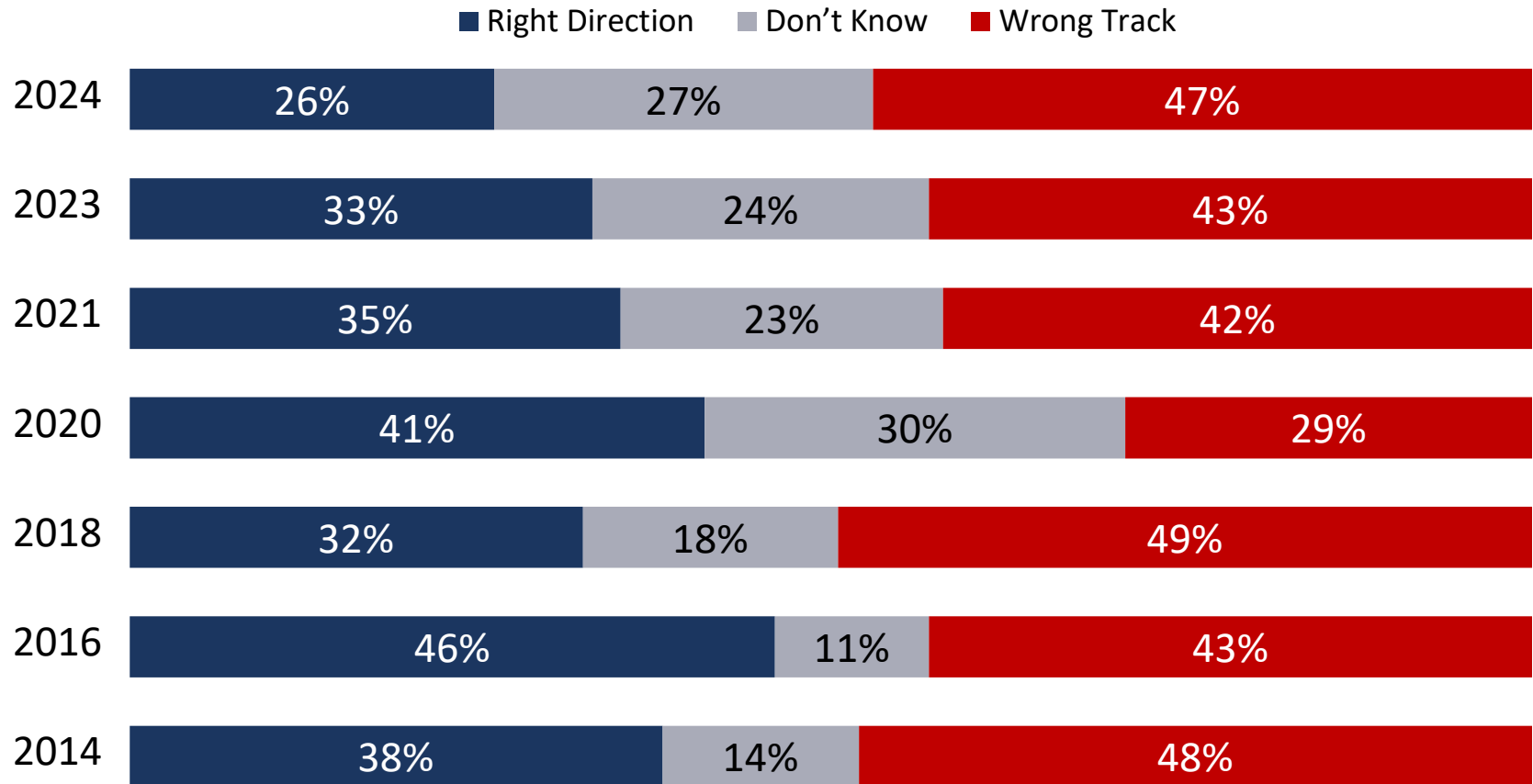
*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*



# Overall Context

# Like many areas of California, voters are pessimistic about the County's overall direction.

*Would you say things in Humboldt County are going in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?*

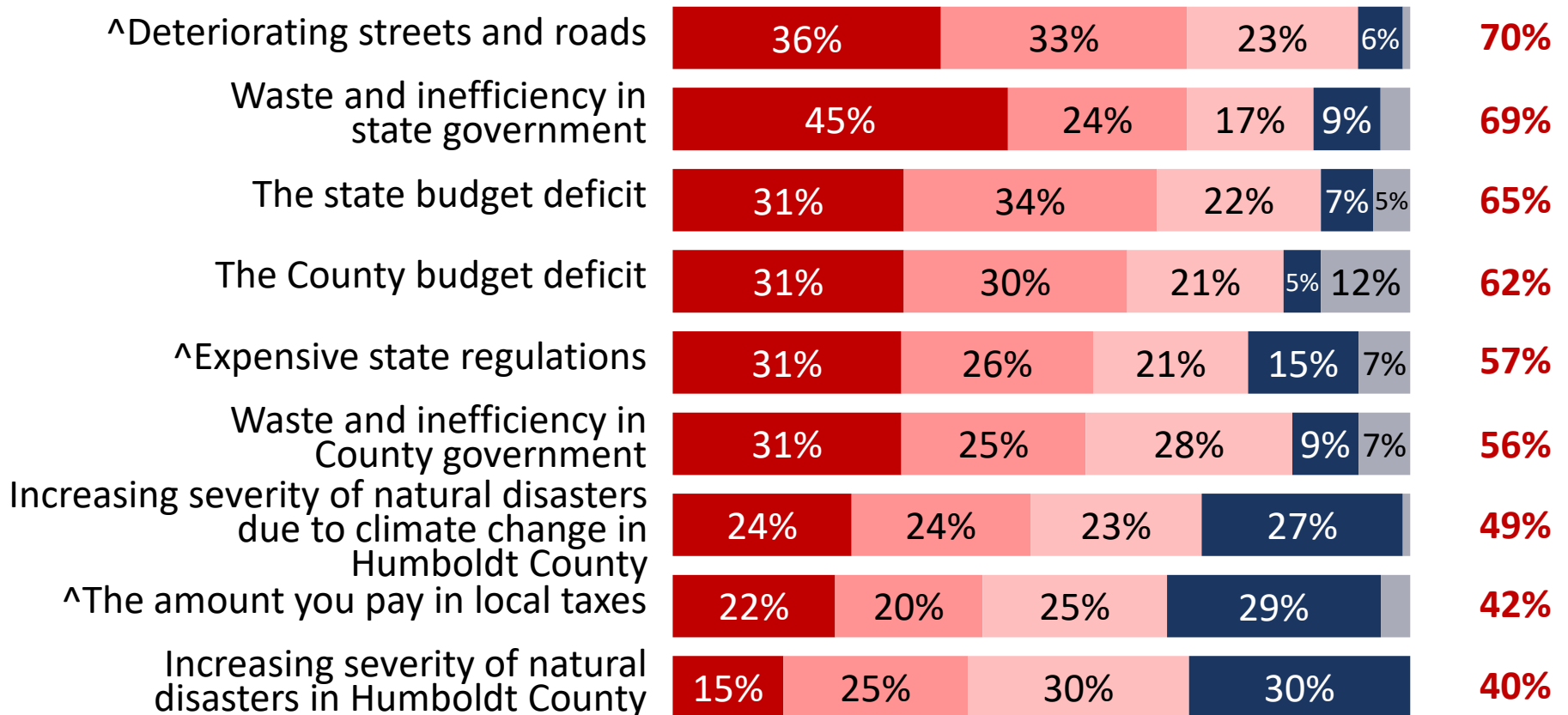


# Seven in ten see road conditions as an “extremely” or “very serious problem.”

I’m going to read you a list of issues, and I’d like you to tell me how serious a problem you think each one is in Humboldt County. Please tell me whether you consider it to be an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for people who live in Humboldt County.

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

**Ext./Very Ser. Prob.**



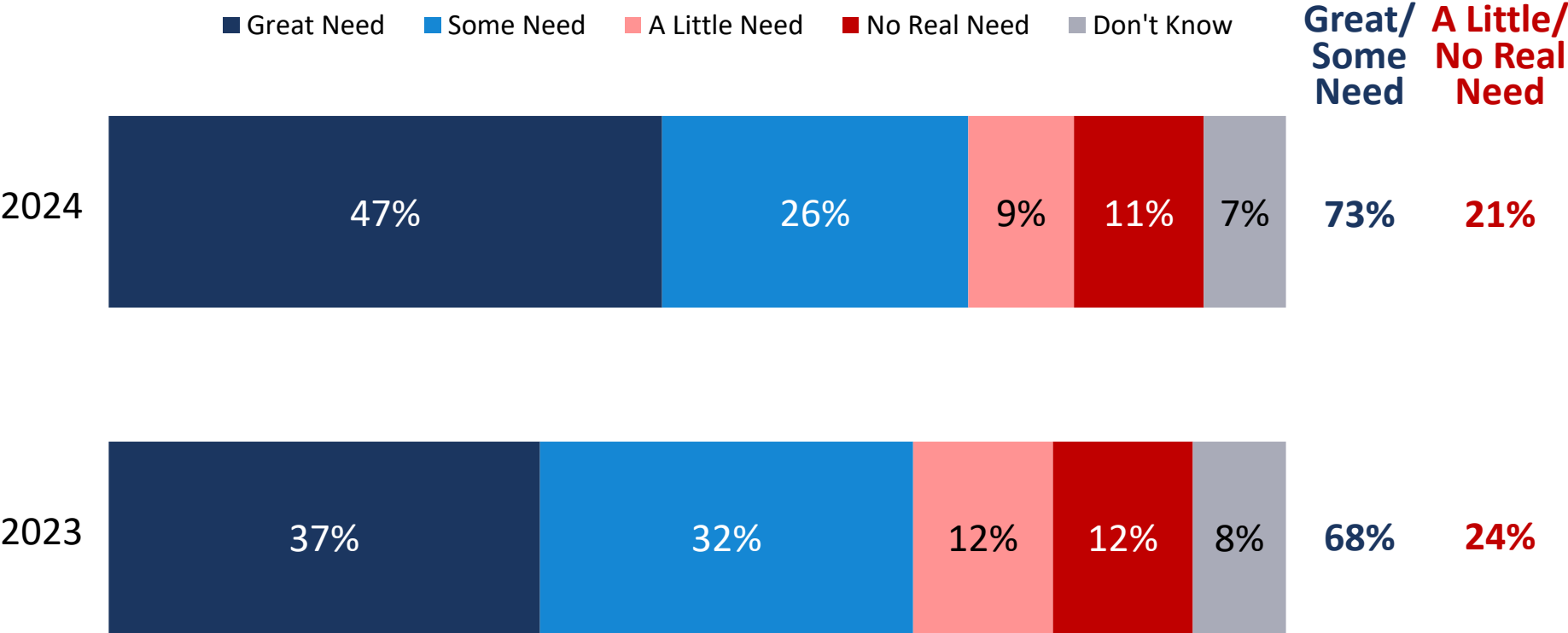
# The share who sees road conditions as a serious problem has grown sharply in the last year.

Issue	Extremely/Very Serious Problem		
	2023	2024	Difference (2023-2024)
Deteriorating streets and roads	57%	70%	<b>+13%</b>
The amount you pay in local taxes	37%	42%	<b>+5%</b>

*I'm going to read you a list of issues, and I'd like you to tell me how serious a problem you think each one is in Humboldt County. Please tell me whether you consider it to be an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for people who live in Humboldt County.*

# Nearly three-quarters believe the county needs additional roads funding.

*Would you say that to repair and maintain local streets and roads, the County of Humboldt has a great need for additional funding, some need, a little need, or no real need for additional funding?*





# **Views of a Ballot Measure**

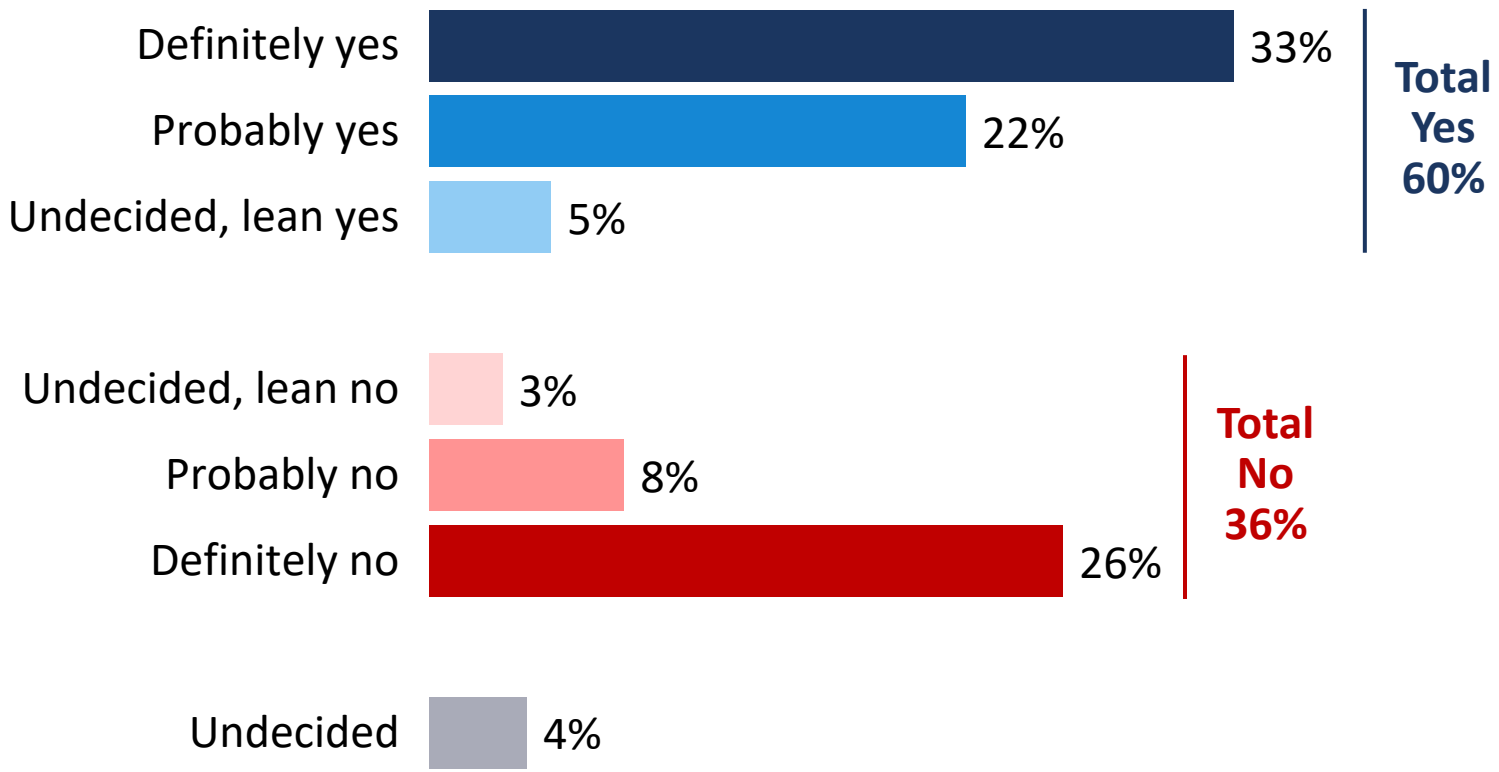
# Conceptual Measure Language Tested

*50 +1 % Threshold*

**Humboldt County Roads, 911 Emergency Response and Disaster Preparedness Measure.** To maintain response times and prepare for natural disasters — including earthquakes/fires/floods — by repairing deteriorating County roads; maintaining evacuation routes; maintaining bus services; becoming eligible for state/federal roads funding, shall a measure enacting a **(HALF SAMPLE: half-cent) (HALF SAMPLE: one-cent)** sales tax, for general government purposes, generating approximately **(HALF SAMPLE: \$12,000,000) (HALF SAMPLE: \$24,000,000)** annually until ended by voters, with citizens' oversight, annual audits, public disclosure, all funds used locally, be adopted?

# Taken together, three in five support the measure, with one-third saying they would “definitely” vote yes.

Combined Results





# Respondent Priorities

# Voters find public disclosure and eligibility for state and federal funds important to their vote.

■ Much More Lkly. ■ Smwt. More Lkly. ■ No Diff. ■ Don't Know ■ Smwt. Less Lkly. ■ Much Less Lkly.

**Total  
More  
Lkly.  
80%**

**Total  
Less  
Lkly.  
4%**

^Public disclosure of all spending



Ensuring Humboldt County gets its fair share of state and federal funds for local needs



**79%**

**5%**

Becoming eligible for state and federal roads funding



**78%**

**7%**

Funds cannot be taken by the State



**73%**

**7%**

^All expenditures will be audited annually by an independent auditor



**70%**

**5%**

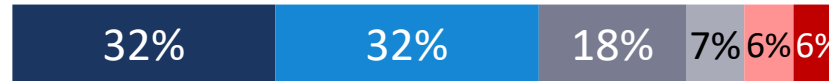
^Protecting Humboldt County from the impact of state budget deficits



**68%**

**6%**

Local control of all funds

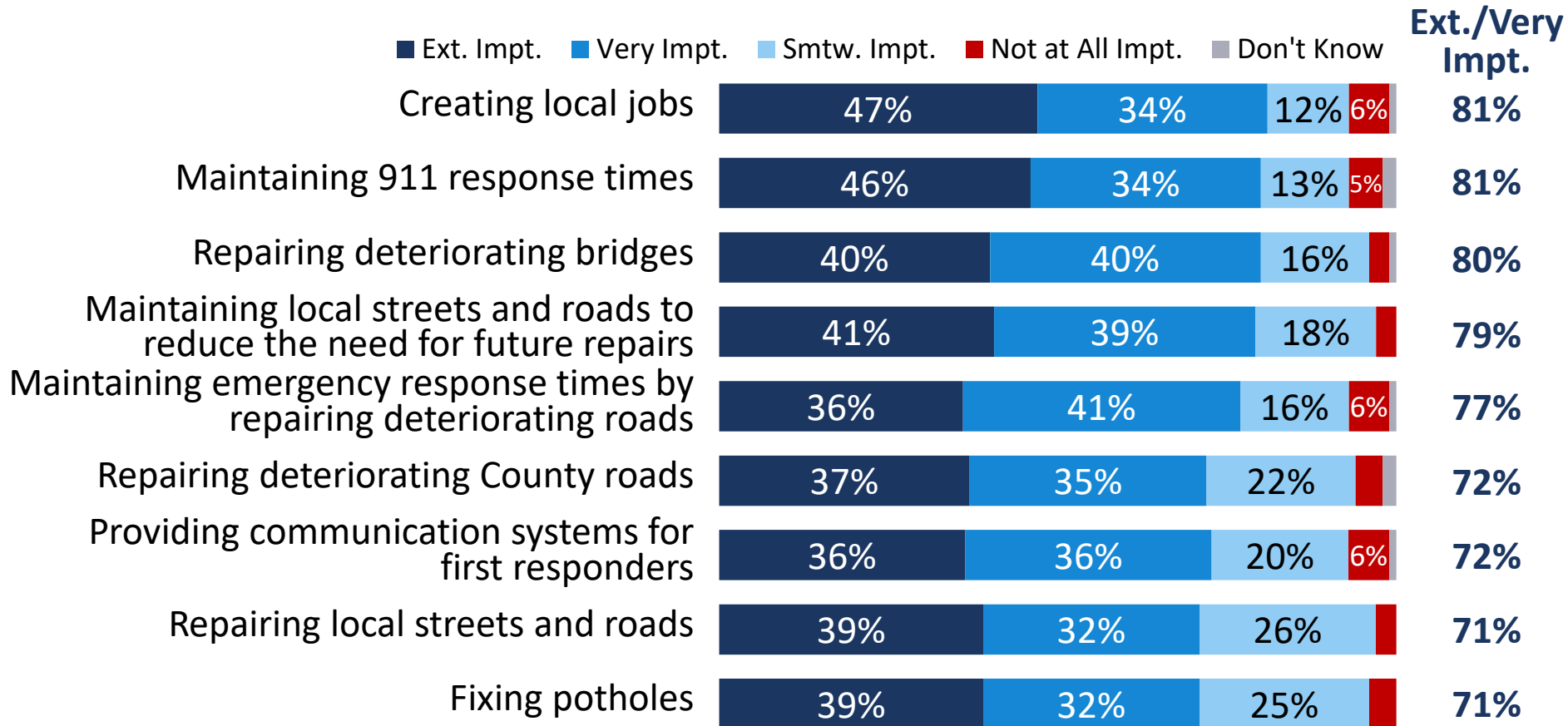


**64%**

**11%**

# They especially value creating local jobs, maintaining response times, and repairing streets.

*I am going to read you a list of ways in which the funds generated by any ballot measures could be spent in Humboldt County. Please tell me how important it is to you personally: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important.*



# Continued

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smtw. Impt. ■ Not at All Impt. ■ Don't Know

**Ext./Very Impt.**

Improving 911 response times



**69%**

Maintaining emergency evacuation routes



**68%**

Reducing emergency response times by repairing deteriorating roads



**68%**

Maintaining bus services for seniors, low-income people, and people with disabilities



**66%**

Providing public bus service for children getting to school



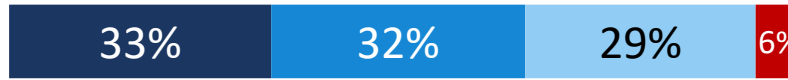
**66%**

Ensuring bus service during an emergency or natural disaster so those without cars can evacuate



**64%**

Preparing for natural disasters



**64%**

Improving emergency evacuation routes



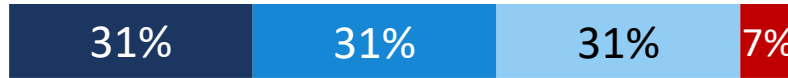
**63%**

Providing safe routes for children to walk or bike to school



**62%**

Improving roads in every part of the County

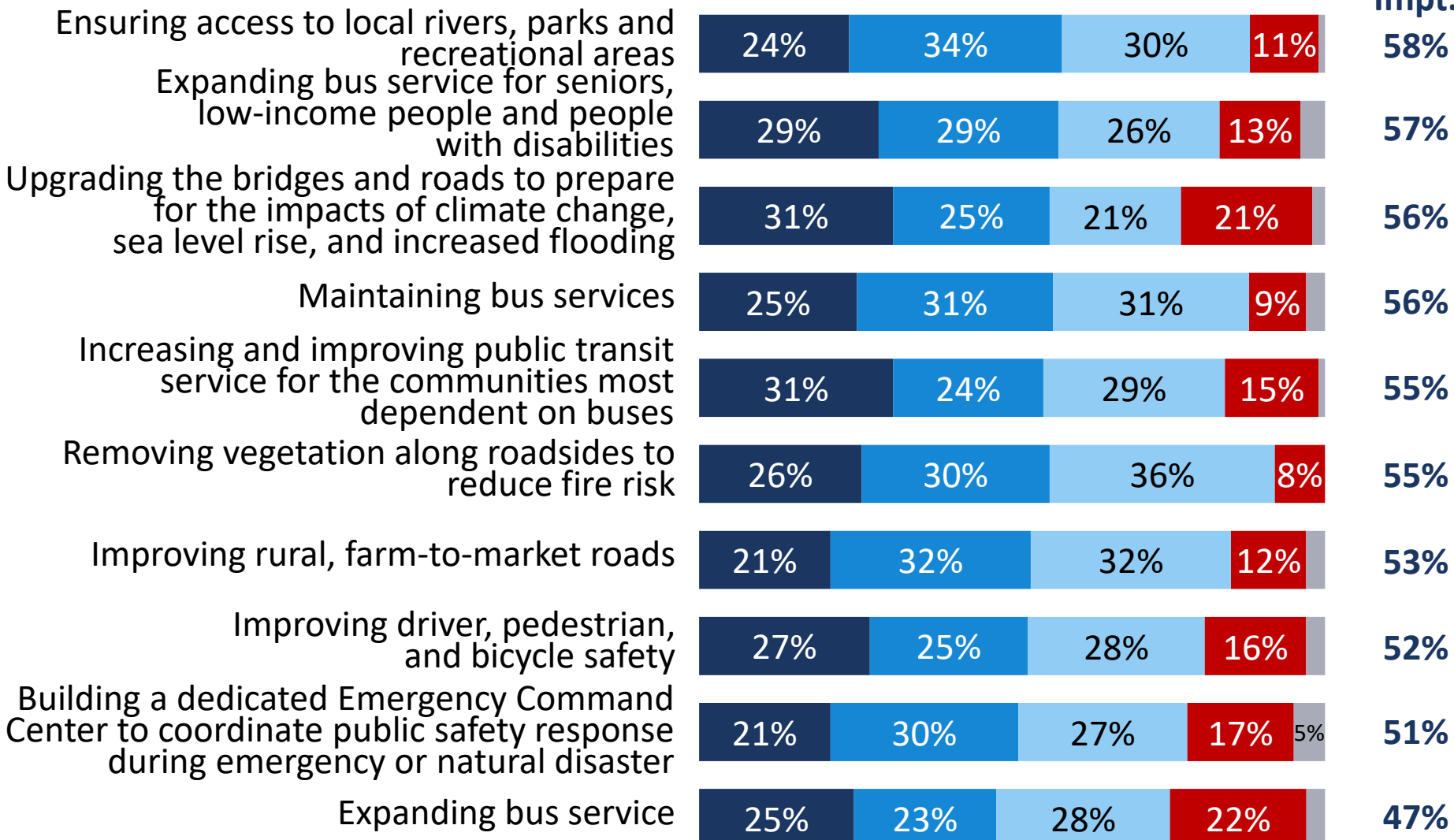


**62%**

# Continued

■ Ext. Impt. ■ Very Impt. ■ Smtw. Impt. ■ Not at All Impt. ■ Don't Know

**Ext./Very Impt.**





# **Information in Support of a Measure**

# Top Voter Concerns

## Ranked by Very Convincing

38%	<b>(FAIR SHARE)</b> Currently, nearly half of the counties in California, including San Francisco and Los Angeles, have passed transportation measures that give them access to billions in matching funds from the State and Federal Government that Humboldt County can't currently access. It's past time that OUR residents got the same benefits as the big cities in order to improve OUR local streets and roads.
38%	<b>^(DEFICIT)</b> The state is facing a \$46 billion deficit this year, and the Governor has proposed millions in funding cuts in Humboldt County that will severely reduce local services. All funds raised by this measure are legally required to stay in Humboldt County, ensuring local control and sufficient funds to address the needs of our local residents.
36%	<b>^(PCI)</b> A recent study found that we have some of the worst pavement conditions in the state – with more than 50% of County roads rated “poor” or “failed.” At current levels of funding, most County roads will be rated as “failed” by 2033 – including letting some turn back into gravel. This measure will help us clear the backlog of repair projects and keep our roads safe and well-maintained going forward.
35%	<b>(LOCAL CONTROL)</b> Over the past three decades, the state has taken over \$500 million in revenue from Humboldt County's budget. This measure provides our area with a guaranteed source of local funding that <u>cannot</u> be taken by the state and requires that our tax dollars are spent locally.
32%	<b>^(CHEAPER NOW)</b> Humboldt County has \$500 million in need for road repairs over the next 10 years. Delaying maintenance and repairs to our roads only increases costs in the long run – letting conditions worsen until roads have to be replaced entirely. This measure will help repair and maintain roads while construction costs are still relatively affordable.



# Conclusions

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- A general-purpose sales tax measure is viable in November if voters receive more information about it.
  - A half-cent or one-cent sales tax has support from around three in five voters based on measure language alone.
  - The intensity of support increases as voters learn more.
- Voters increasingly see street and road conditions as a serious problem facing the county.
- 73% see at least “some need” for additional funding.
- Maintaining 911 response times, repairing and maintaining local roads and bridges, and first-responder communication are key priorities.
- Public disclosure of how funds are spent, and ensuring the County gets its fair share of federal and state funding, are also important to voters.

**For more information,  
contact:**



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