



City of Loveland

April 2019 Survey

Methodology

New Bridge Strategy conducted a survey among N=300 residents of the City of Loveland, Colorado, who are likely to weigh in on issues regarding funding this November.

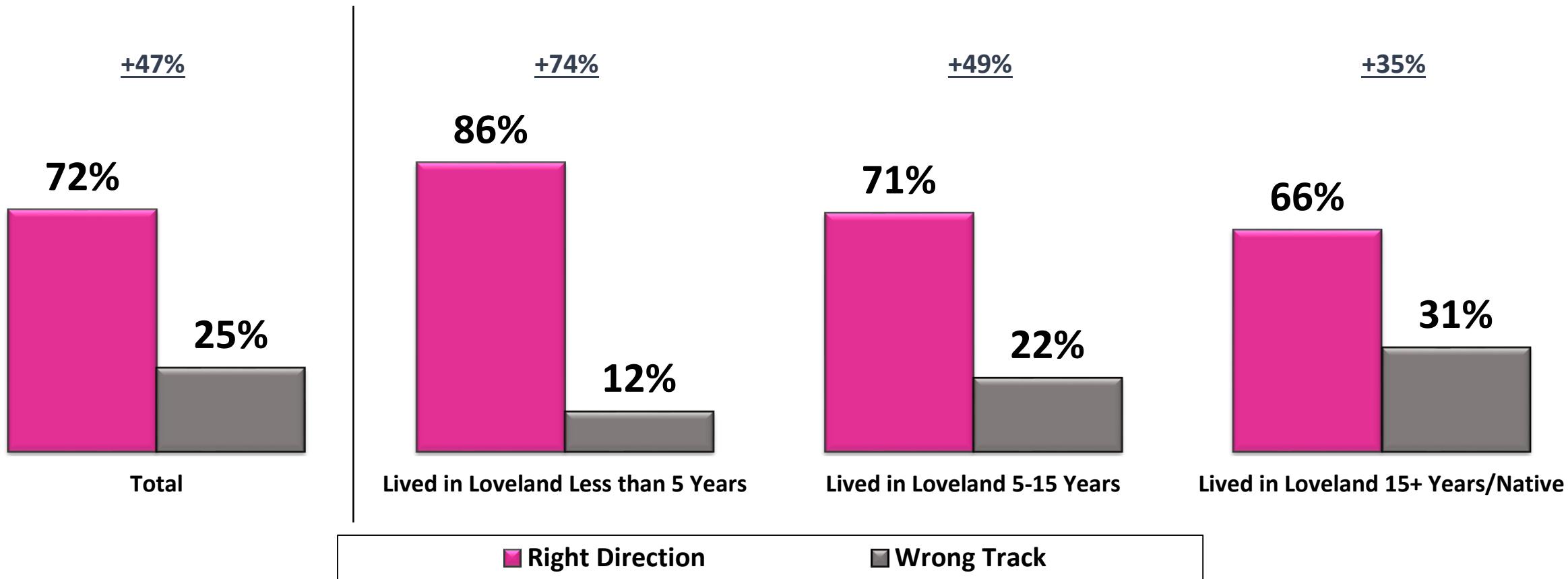
Interviews were conducted April 6-10, 2019, and were distributed proportionally throughout the city. Respondents are demographically representative of those likely to participate in an election in November.

The overall margin of error is +5.66% for the overall sample and will vary for sub-groups.



Political Environment

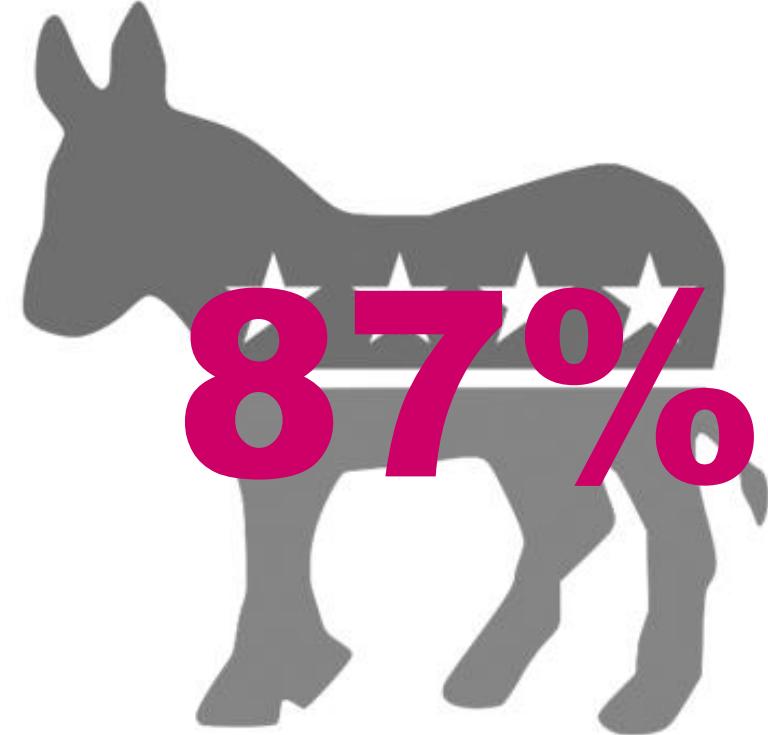
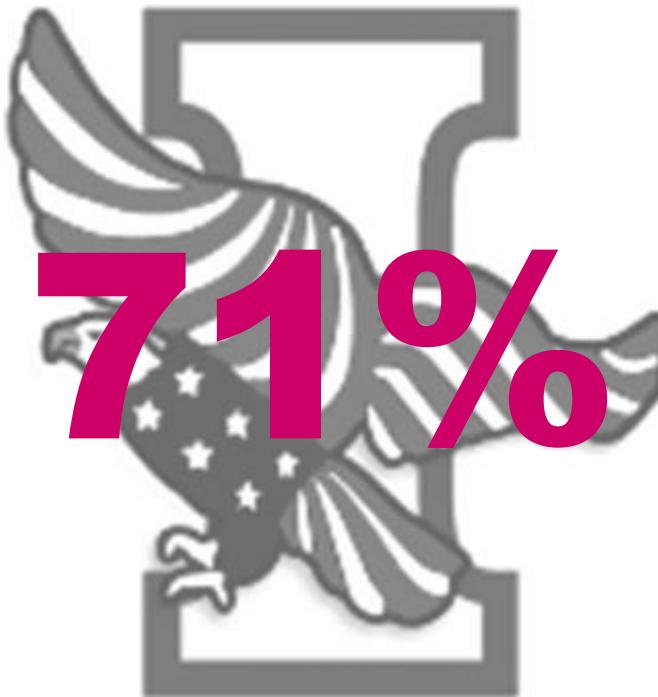
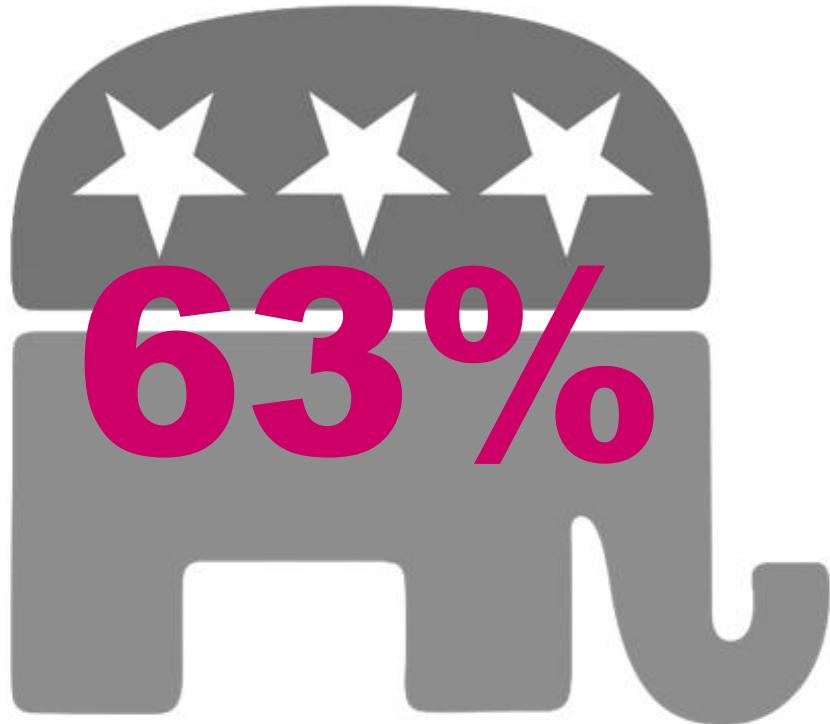
Nearly three-quarters of Loveland residents are optimistic about the direction of the city. Newcomers are even more optimistic.



Do you feel things in Loveland are generally going in the right direction today, or do you feel things have gotten off on the wrong track?

Majorities across the political spectrum are upbeat about the direction of Loveland.

% Right Direction

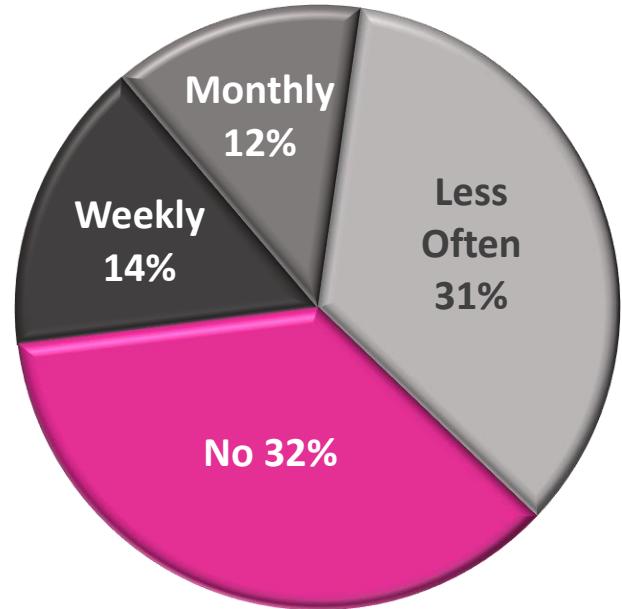


Do you feel things in Loveland are generally going in the right direction today, or do you feel things have gotten off on the wrong track?

Two of three households have visited the library, with half using the rec center. Usage of the museum is predictably less frequent.

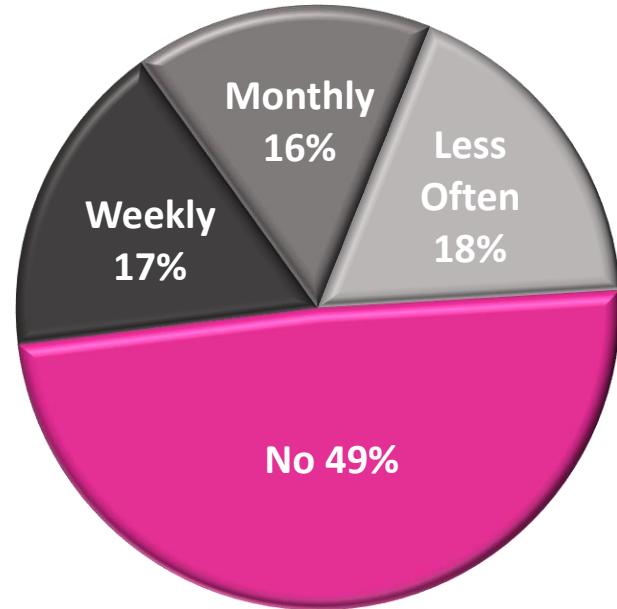
Visited the Loveland Public Library

Total Yes: 67%



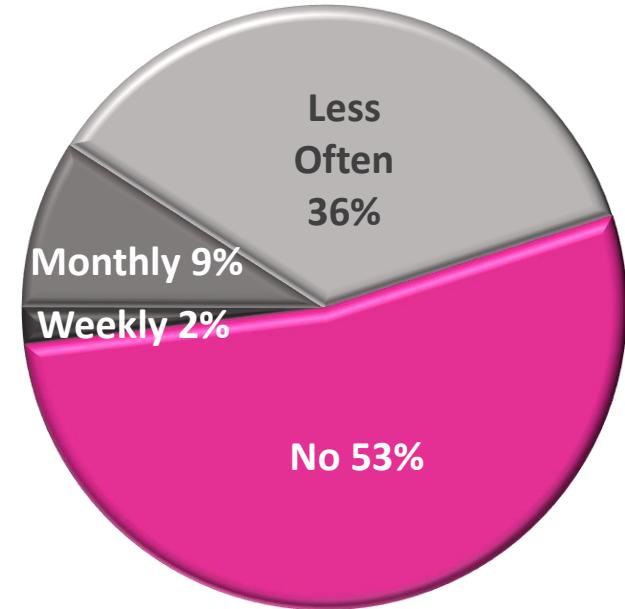
Used the city recreation center in some way from taking a class or program, or participating in a sport there

Total Yes: 50%



Visited the Loveland Museum

Total Yes: 46%



Thinking back over the past year, please tell me if you or other members of your household have done any of the following activities in your local area.



Ballot Measures

We tested two versions of the ballot measure...

Simple Ballot Measure^

Shall City of Loveland taxes be increased not more than ten million five hundred thousand dollars annually in the first fiscal year of collections, and by whatever amounts are raised annually thereafter, from an additional temporary sales and use tax of not more than one-half of one percent to be imposed beginning January 1, 2020, for the purpose of funding:

- Widening of and improvements to Eisenhower Boulevard/US 34,
- Completion of the final phase of Taft Avenue improvements,
- Construction of a new community recreation center in Northwest Loveland,
- A replacement of Fire Station 3 on South Wilson Avenue,
- Renovation of Fire Station 5 on Knobcone Drive,
- Renovation and expansion of the Loveland Museum,
- A new full service branch library in Northwest Loveland,
- Pedestrian and bicycle underpasses along the City's recreation trails

...With all spending subject to an annual independent audit published on the City's website and provided these increased taxes shall be collected for NOT more than 21 calendar years.

Descriptive Ballot Measure^^

Shall City of Loveland taxes be increased not more than ten million five hundred thousand dollars annually in the first fiscal year of collections, and by whatever amounts are raised annually thereafter, from an additional temporary sales and use tax of not more than one-half of one percent to be imposed beginning January 1, 2020, for the purpose of funding:

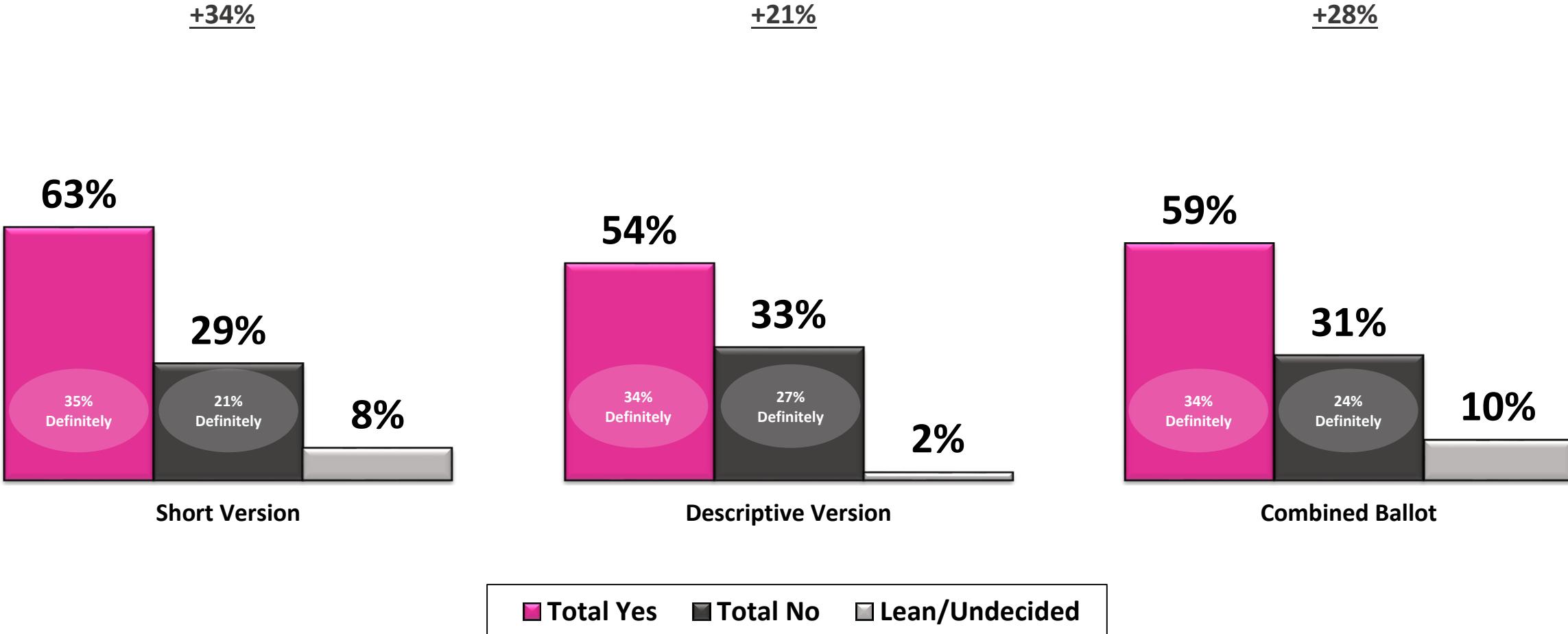
- Improving driver and pedestrian safety and relieving traffic congestion by widening and improving US 34, that is Eisenhower Boulevard, and Taft Avenue and installing a new traffic signal at the Taft and Eisenhower intersection;
- Improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety by creating more underpasses to allow safe crossings at major roads and more people to walk or bike to where they need to go;
- Expanding opportunities for families and local residents to participate in recreation programs, swim lessons, senior fitness, sports, and exercise and healthy living programs by adding a recreation center in the northwest area of the city;
- Improving fire response times, addressing safety issues for first responders, and allowing for new firefighting technology by replacing Fire Station 3 at South Wilson Avenue and improving Fire Station 5 on Knobcone Drive;
- Expanding and improving the Loveland Museum, including a children's area, expanded exhibit spaces, a 200-seat auditorium, and space for educational and community events; and
- Reducing overcrowding at the city's existing library and improving access to library programs, services and materials for residents of all ages by providing a new branch library in the northwest area of the city;

...with all spending subject to an annual independent audit published on the City's website and provided these increased taxes shall be collected for NOT more than 21 calendar years.

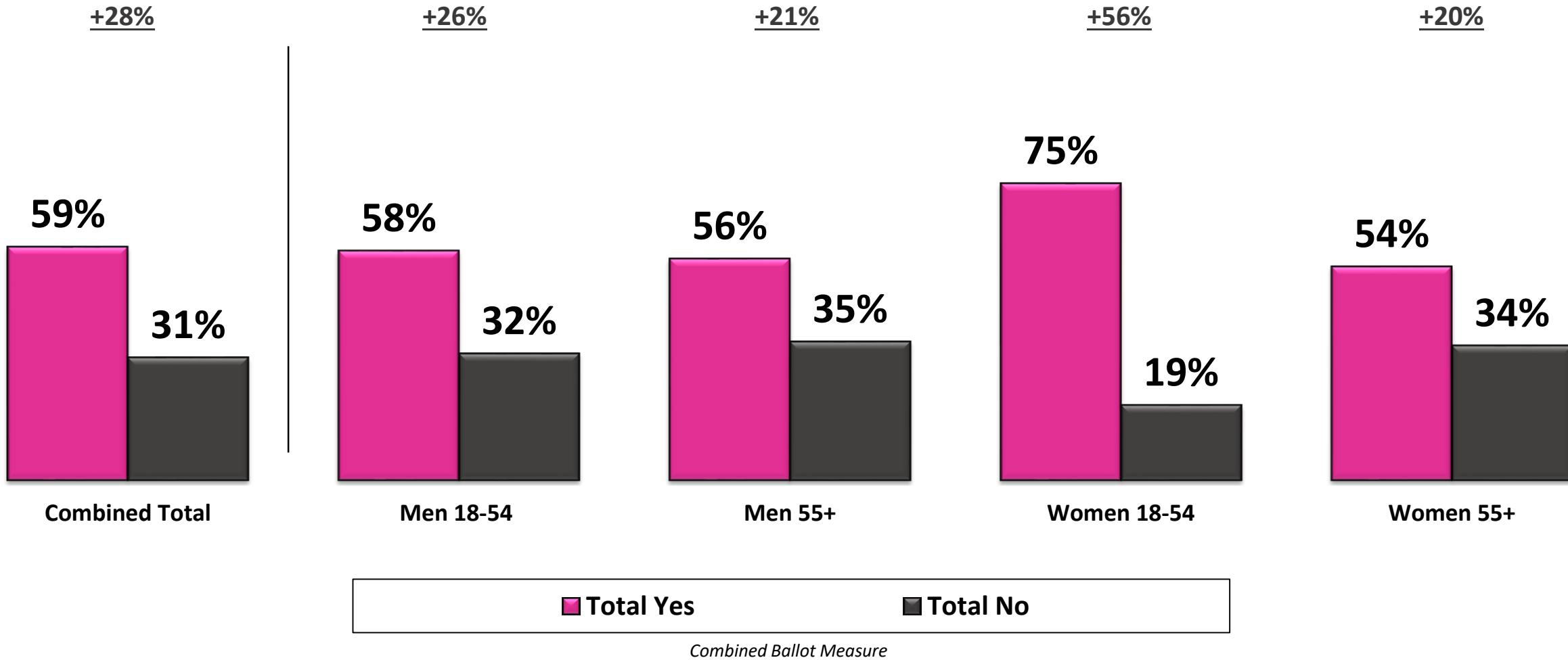
[^]Split Sample A, N=152

^{^^}Split Sample B, N=148

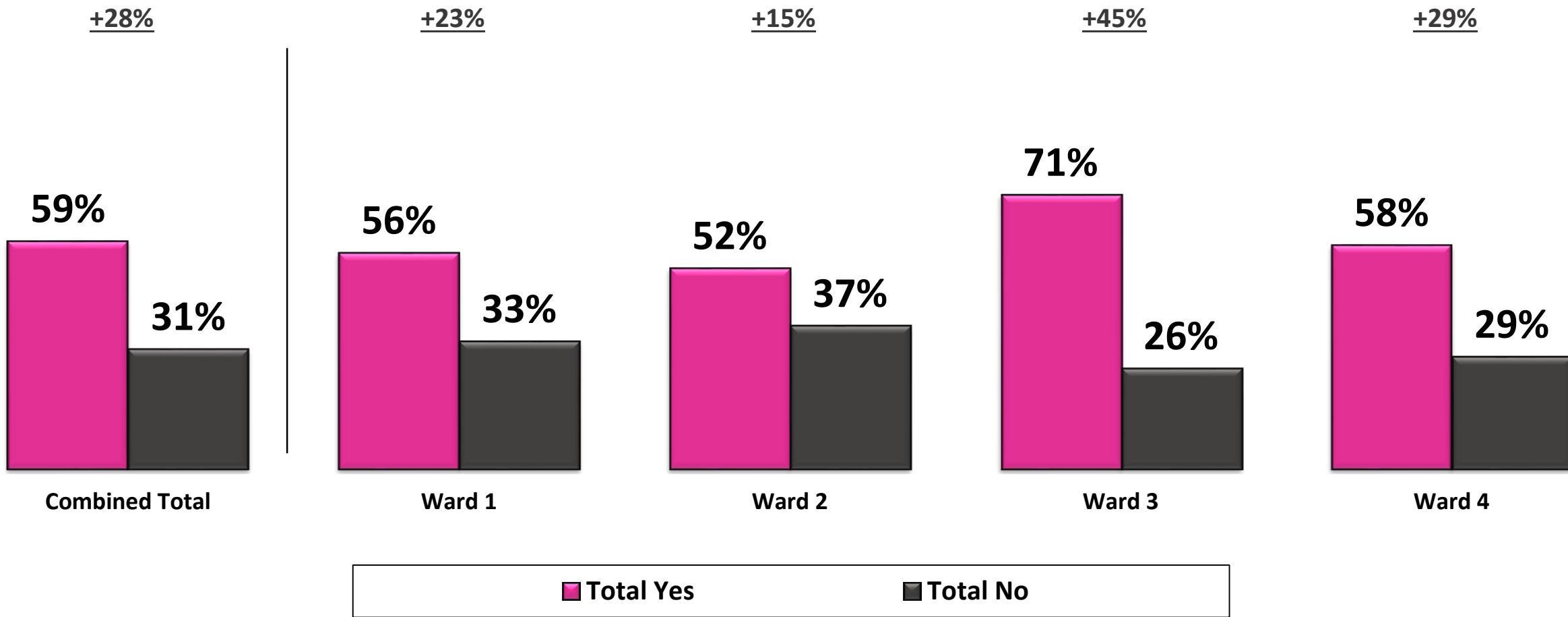
In this phone survey, the brief version resonated better overall, although intensity is essentially the same in support.



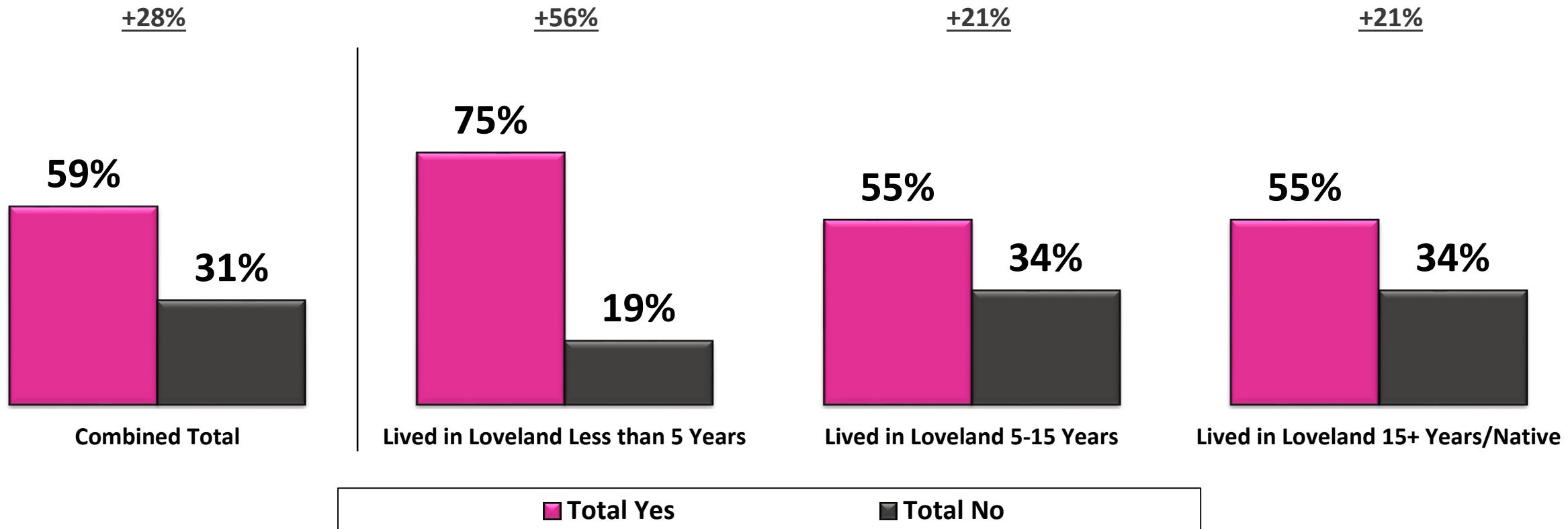
Younger women make up the backbone of support for the ballot measure.



Residents in Ward 3 are significantly more supportive than the rest of Loveland.

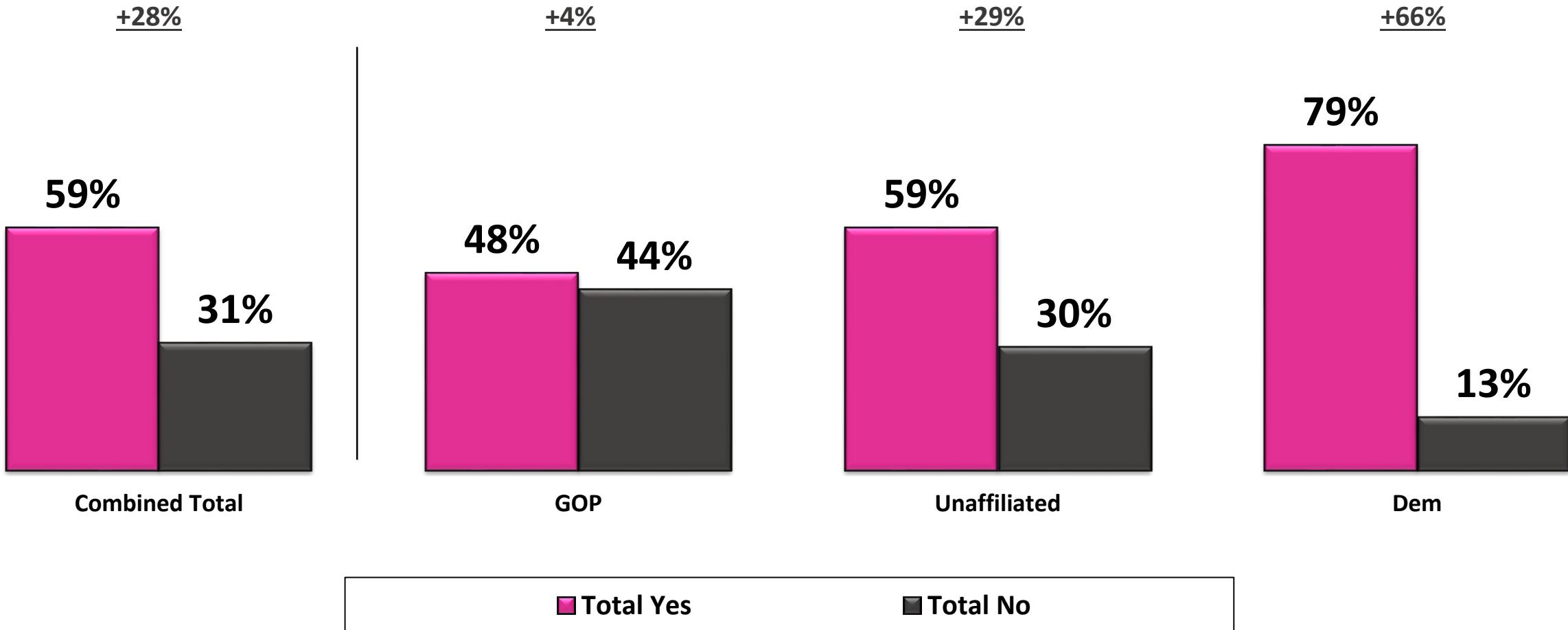


The newest residents are the most enthusiastic for the proposal.

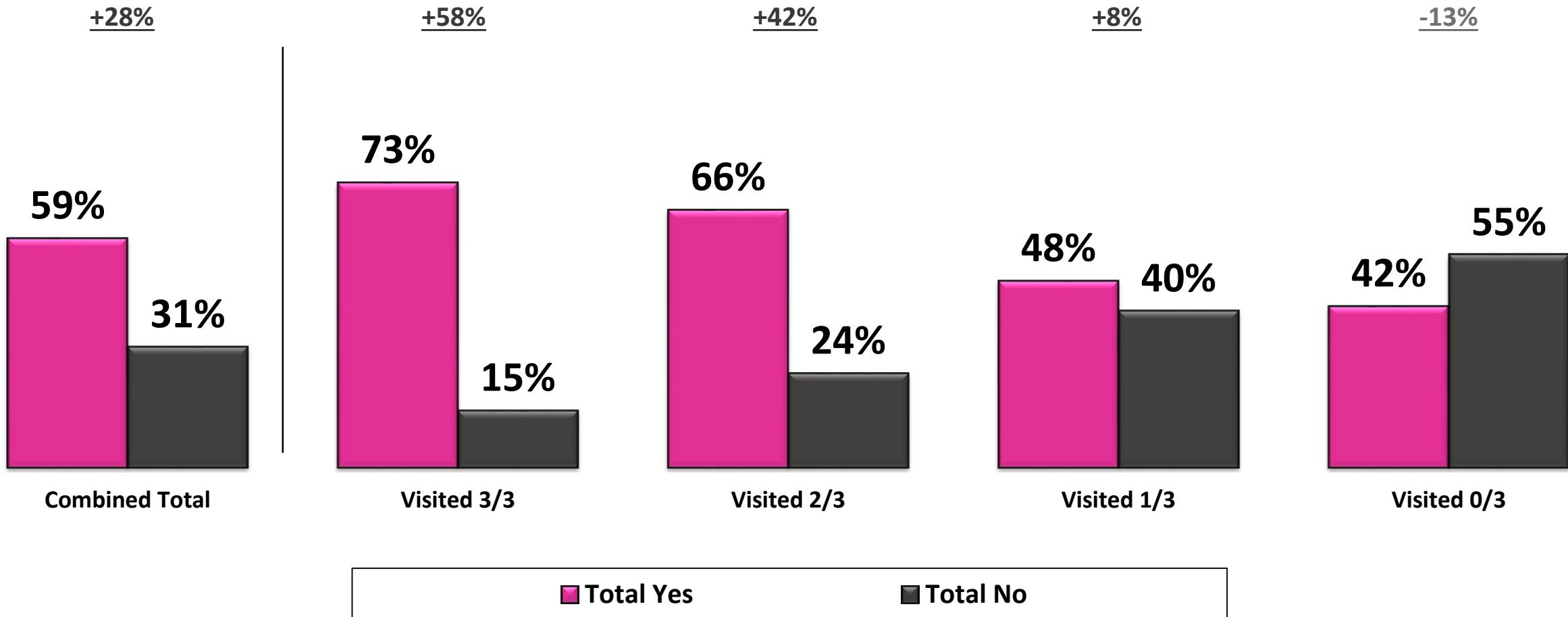


Combined Initial Ballot Measure

Democrats support the initiative by a wide margin. A plurality of Republicans support it.

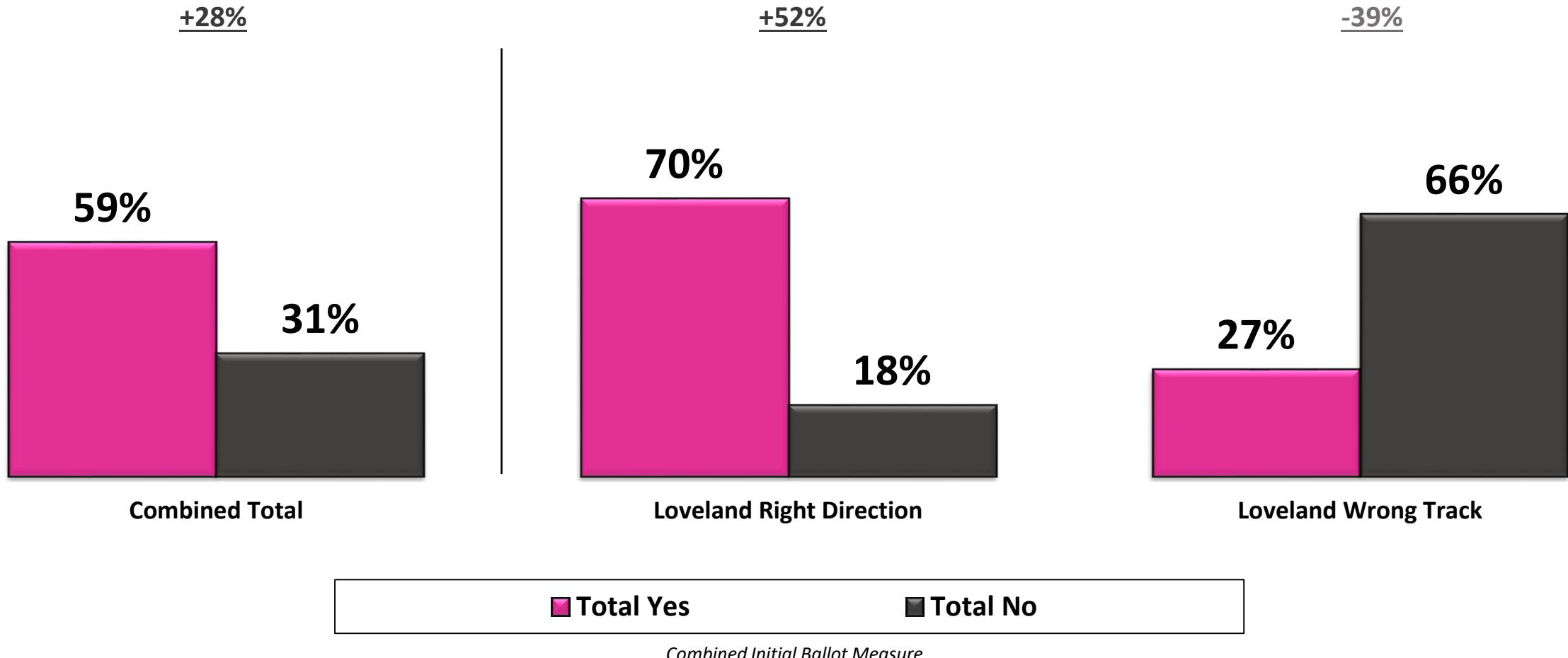


Naturally, those who use the rec center, library, and museum are more supportive of the measure than those who use none.



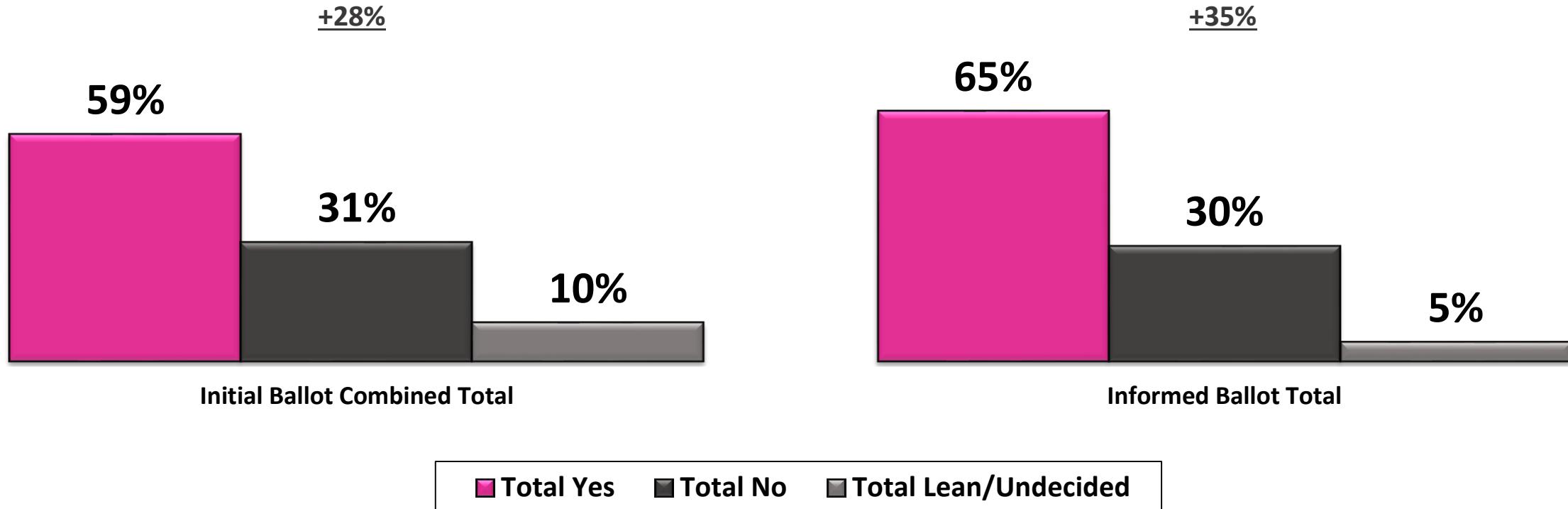
Combined Initial Ballot Measure

The ballot measure is divided along lines of the city direction.



Support for the ballot measure grows by six points after residents hear the average tax cost per household.

And, if residents approve this measure, it would raise taxes on the average household in Loveland by less than 31 dollars per year. Knowing that, would you then vote Yes in support of the ballot measure or vote No against it?





Refining the Measure

Of the proposed projects, the overall goal, roads and fire are deemed the most important.

<i>Importance of Projects: Ranked by Extremely/Very Important</i>	Extremely Important	Extremely / Very Important
Maintaining our quality of life and the safety of our community.	37%	77%
Widening and improving US 34, that is Eisenhower Boulevard , from Boise Avenue to Rocky Mountain Avenue to relieve traffic congestion and improve driver and pedestrian safety.	34%	72%
Improving driver and pedestrian safety and relieving traffic congestion by widening and improving US 34, that is Eisenhower Boulevard , and Taft Avenue.^^	28%	68%
Improving emergency response times, addressing safety issues for first responders, and allowing for new firefighting technology by replacing Fire Station 3 at South Wilson Avenue and improving Fire Station 5 on Knobcone Drive.	27%	68%
Replacing Fire Station 3 at South Wilson Avenue and improving Fire Station 5 on Knobcone Drive to improve emergency response times, address safety issues for first responders, and allow for new firefighting technology.	28%	59%
Widening Taft Avenue from 11th Street to Westshore Drive and installing a new traffic signal at the Taft and Eisenhower intersection to improve driver safety.	23%	54%

Now, there are a number of specific things which MIGHT be funded if a proposal is placed on the ballot in the future. Keeping in mind that it is difficult for everything to be equally important, please tell me how important each one of these is to you personally. Some of these may sound similar, so please listen carefully and then tell me is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not very important to ensure funding is dedicated to that purpose?

^Split Sample A, N=152

^^Split Sample B, N=148

The improvements to the museum are viewed as less important.

<i>Importance of Projects: Ranked by Extremely/Very Important</i>	Extremely Important	Extremely/ Very Important
Improving driver safety by widening Taft Avenue from 11th Street to Westshore Drive and installing a new traffic signal at the Taft and Eisenhower intersection.	18%	54%
Improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety by creating more underpasses to allow safe crossings at major roads, thereby allowing more people to walk or bike to where they need to go.	16%	50%
Expanding opportunities for families and local residents to participate in recreation programs, swim lessons, senior fitness, youth and adult athletics and team sports, and exercise and healthy living programs by adding a recreation center in the northwest area of the city.^^	14%	46%
Providing a new library in the northwest part of the city that reduces overcrowding at the existing library and provides a full range of programs, services and materials for residents of all ages.^\wedge	12%	45%
Providing a new recreation center in the northwest part of the city, providing additional recreation space, leisure and lap pools, and exercise and sport court space, in order to help relieve overcrowding at the existing recreation center.^\wedge	13%	41%
Reducing overcrowding at the city's existing library and improving access to library programs, services and materials for residents of all ages by providing a new branch library in the northwest area of the city.^\wedge	12%	35%
Expanding and improving the Loveland Museum , including a children's area, expanded exhibit spaces, a 200-seat auditorium, and space for educational and community events.	9%	25%

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^\wedge Split Sample A, N=152

^^Split Sample B, N=148

Even the users of the facilities place a lower priority on those initiatives compared to the roads and fire projects.

<i>Importance of Projects: Ranked by Extremely/Very Important (Rank Among Projects in Parenthesis)</i>	Total Yes Used Library	Total Yes Used Rec Center	Total Yes Used Museum
Expanding opportunities for families and local residents to participate in recreation programs, swim lessons, senior fitness, youth and adult athletics and team sports, and exercise and healthy living programs by adding a recreation center in the northwest area of the city. ^{^^}	55% (8 th)	56% (10 th)	56% (10 th)
Providing a new library in the northwest part of the city that reduces overcrowding at the existing library and provides a full range of programs, services and materials for residents of all ages. [^]	53% (10 th)	53% (11 th)	58% (9 th)
Providing a new recreation center in the northwest part of the city, providing additional recreation space, leisure and lap pools, and exercise and sport court space, in order to help relieve overcrowding at the existing recreation center. [^]	44% (12 th)	60% (7 th)	45% (11 th)
Reducing overcrowding at the city's existing library and improving access to library programs, services and materials for residents of all ages by providing a new branch library in the northwest area of the city. [^]	44% (11 th)	40% (12 th)	43% (12 th)
Expanding and improving the Loveland Museum , including a children's area, expanded exhibit spaces, a 200-seat auditorium, and space for educational and community events.	30% (13 th)	32% (13 th)	38% (13 th)

Now, there are a number of specific things which MIGHT be funded if a proposal is placed on the ballot in the future. Keeping in mind that it is difficult for everything to be equally important, please tell me how important each one of these is to you personally. Some of these may sound similar, so please listen carefully and then tell me is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not very important to ensure funding is dedicated to that purpose?

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^{^^}Split Sample B, N=148

Loveland residents are evenly divided on how to financially structure the taxes to pay for the projects.

In order to fund these eight community projects, the city is considering one of two options.

If you had to choose, which one would you prefer –

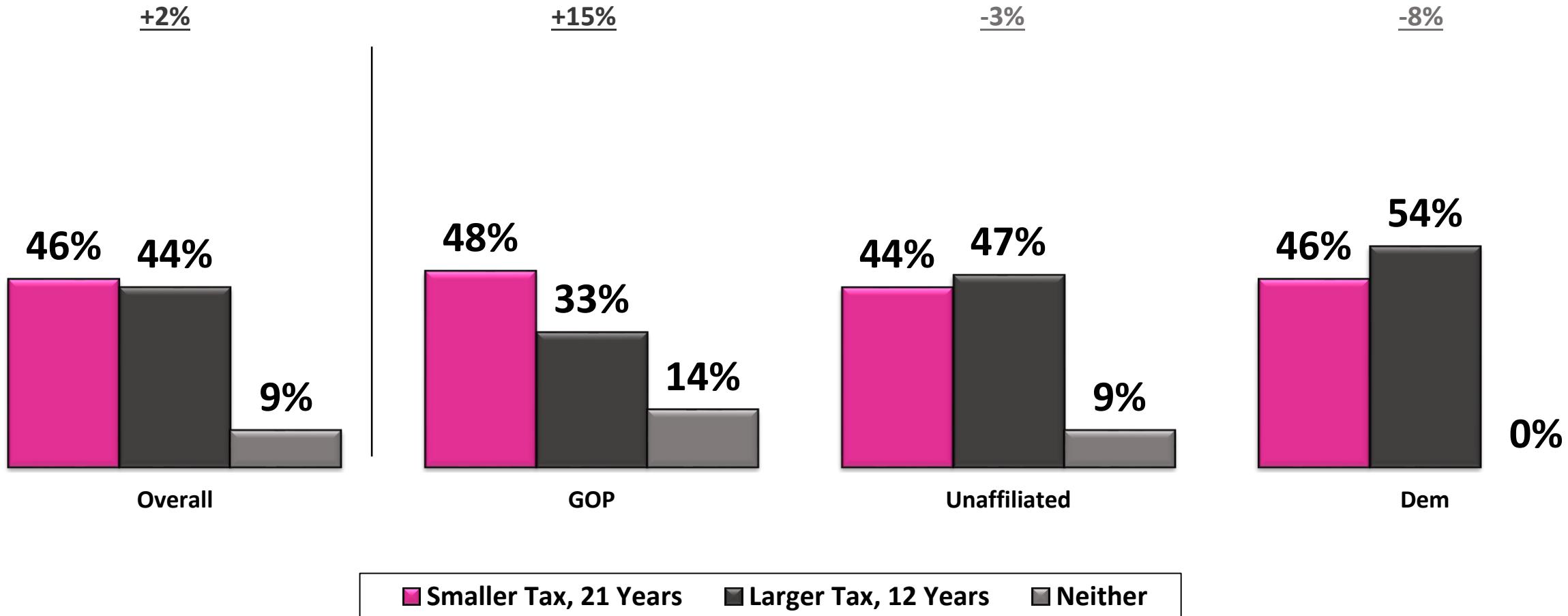
A smaller half-cent tax that
ends in 21 years

46%

A larger one-cent tax that ends
in 12 years

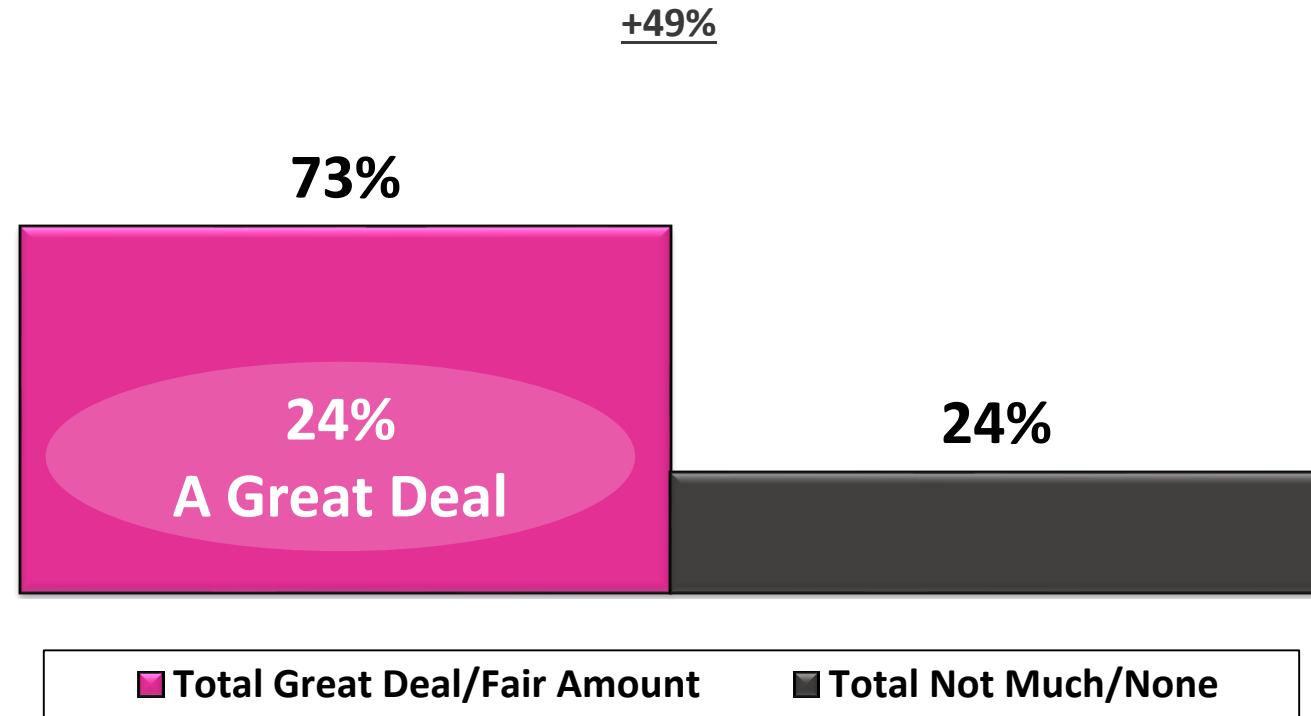
44%

Independents and Democrats favor the higher, but shorter tenured tax.



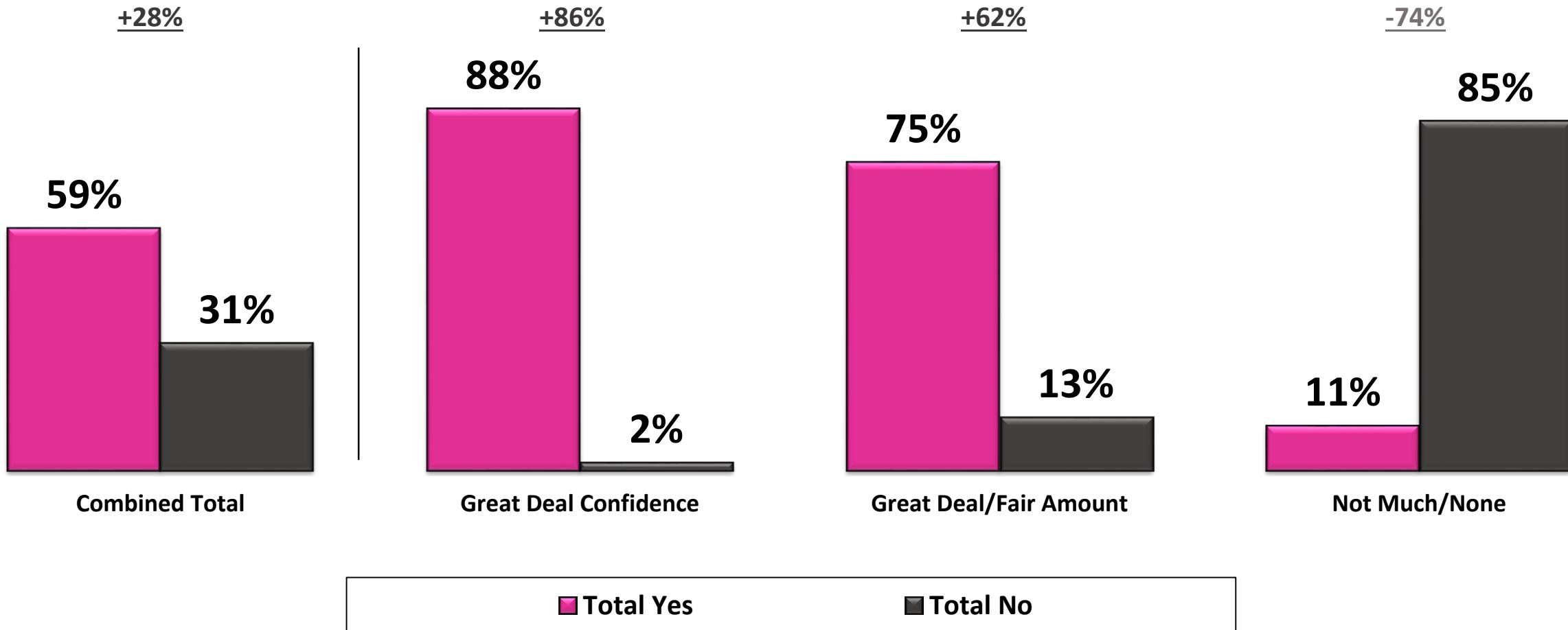
In order to fund these eight community projects, the city is considering one of two options. If you had to choose, which one would you prefer –

Residents clearly place a lot confidence in the City's ability to wisely spend funds from the proposal.



How much confidence do you have in the City of Loveland to spend the funds from this proposal wisely?

Support for the ballot measure is closely linked to confidence in the City to spend wisely.





Simulating the Discussion Regarding the Proposal

Residents find safety and a statement regarding past investments as the most convincing rationales in favor of the proposal.

Arguments in Favor of Proposal: Ranked by Very Convincing	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
Nothing is more important than our safety. This proposal includes vital projects to enhance public safety on our roads and for pedestrians. The improvements will also enhance emergency response times and help protect our first responders.^^	50%	83%
Loveland residents supported a similar sales tax about 35 years ago to fund our existing recreation center, public library, Civic Center Park and other important community assets. These projects were successfully completed on time and within budget and remain an important part of our community.^^	48%	68%
The outdated condition at some intersections and pedestrian crossings makes them unsafe for pedestrians and disabled residents. It's critical that these projects be addressed sooner rather than later.^^	45%	78%
Over the past 35 years, Loveland's population has more than doubled. It's no wonder the museum, library and recreation center are operating well beyond their design capacity. Expanding the museum and providing for additional library and recreation space is a fair and reasonable request.^	44%	76%

I am going to read you some arguments that people have made IN FAVOR OF this city funding proposal. After I read each one, please tell me whether the argument is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF a possible funding measure...

[^]Split Sample A, N=152

^{^^}Split Sample B, N=148

Talking about the tax itself or the city's financial management are not as compelling rationales in favor of the ballot measure.

Arguments in Favor of Proposal: Ranked by Very Convincing	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
Loveland has one of the lowest sales taxes in the region. Even with a half-cent increase, it will remain competitive with other Front Range cities. [^]	35%	72%
Out-of-town visitors pay about half of the sales tax in Loveland, which means that we can make these investments while funding less of the cost. ^{^^}	35%	72%
The sales tax proposal calls for strict accountability with an annual report detailing the use of proceeds posted on the City's website as well as public outreach meetings to provide updates on the community improvement projects. ^{^^}	35%	70%
The city has managed its financial resources wisely. It has streamlined city departments and cut millions from the budget during the great recession. However, sufficient resources are not available to address major community improvement projects. ^	17%	62%

I am going to read you some arguments that people have made IN FAVOR OF this city funding proposal. After I read each one, please tell me whether the argument is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF a possible funding measure...

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Key Distinctions

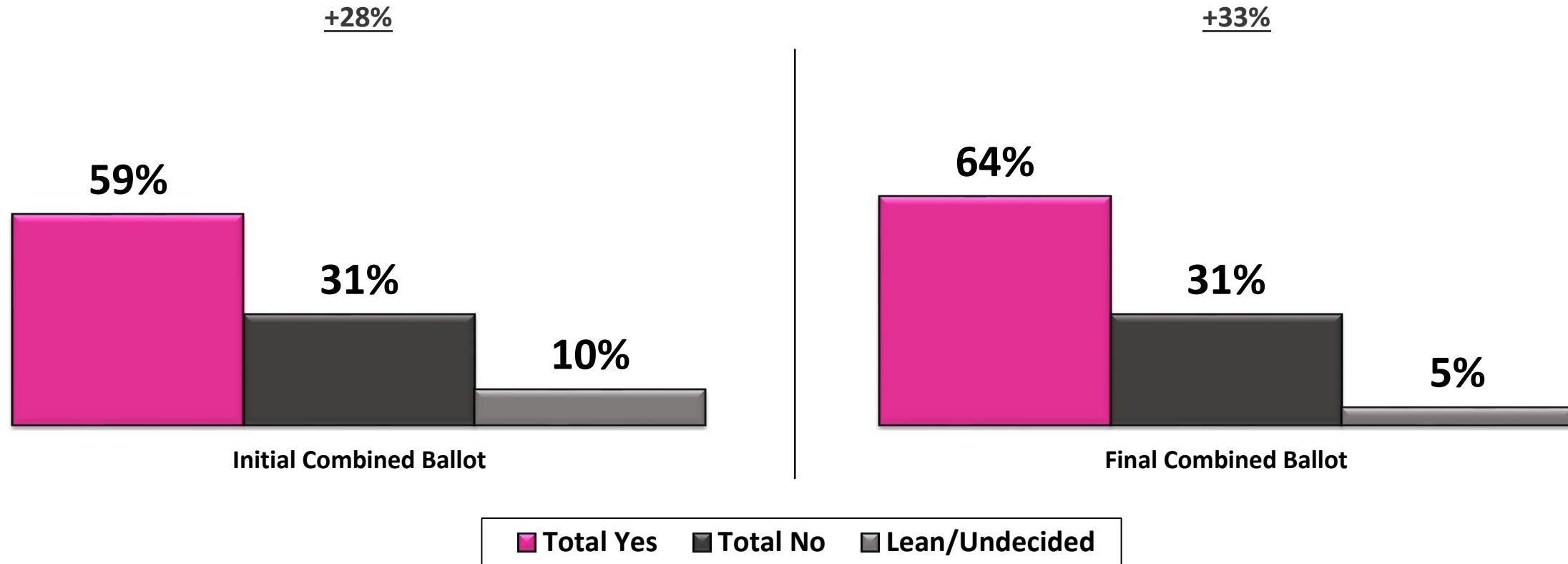
- Soft yes and undecided respondents are the sub-groups most likely to find the fact that visitors pay half the sales tax in the city as one of the most compelling rationales (#4).
- Republicans and unaffiliated respondents are more likely to find the context that residents 35 years ago made a similar investment that was well handled to be a compelling point.
- Younger women and newcomers are the only sub-groups that place a growth message as the most compelling, but they are already two of the most supportive sub-groups.

The rationales against the measure do not test as well as those in support of it.

Arguments in Opposition of Proposal: Ranked by Very Convincing	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
Our needs are due to growth not paying its way. A greater emphasis should be placed on developers helping fund community improvement projects rather than taking money from seniors on a fixed income and struggling families. [^]	33%	71%
Eight big projects are way too much to finance all at once. The city needs to scale back this proposal. ^{^^}	33%	61%
We simply cannot afford another tax increase. Voters approved more taxes for schools and a sales tax for the County just five months ago. ^{^^}	30%	55%
The City should not fund projects the private sector can address . For example, if there is demand for additional indoor recreation space, private health clubs should address these needs. ^{^^}	23%	43%
City government has more than enough money to take care of these needs , if they would just tighten their belt and reduce waste and administration. [^]	17%	46%
Increasing the sales tax in Loveland will hurt our small businesses and stores as people will go elsewhere to shop. [^]	10%	37%

I am going to read you some arguments that people have made IN OPPOSITION OF this city funding proposal. After I read each one, please tell me whether the argument is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote NO, IN OPPOSITION TO a possible funding measure...

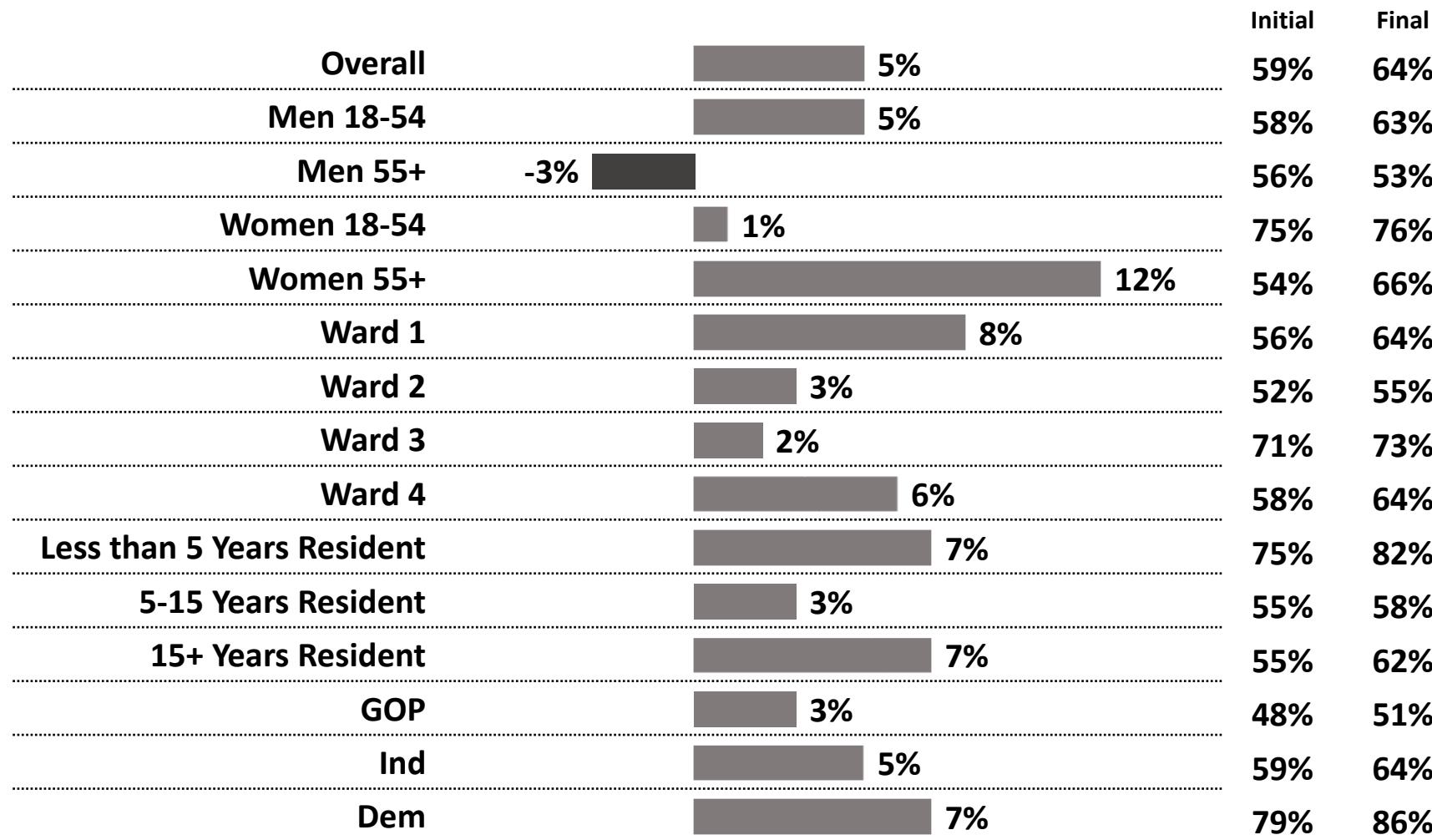
Support for the measure increases by five points on the final ballot.



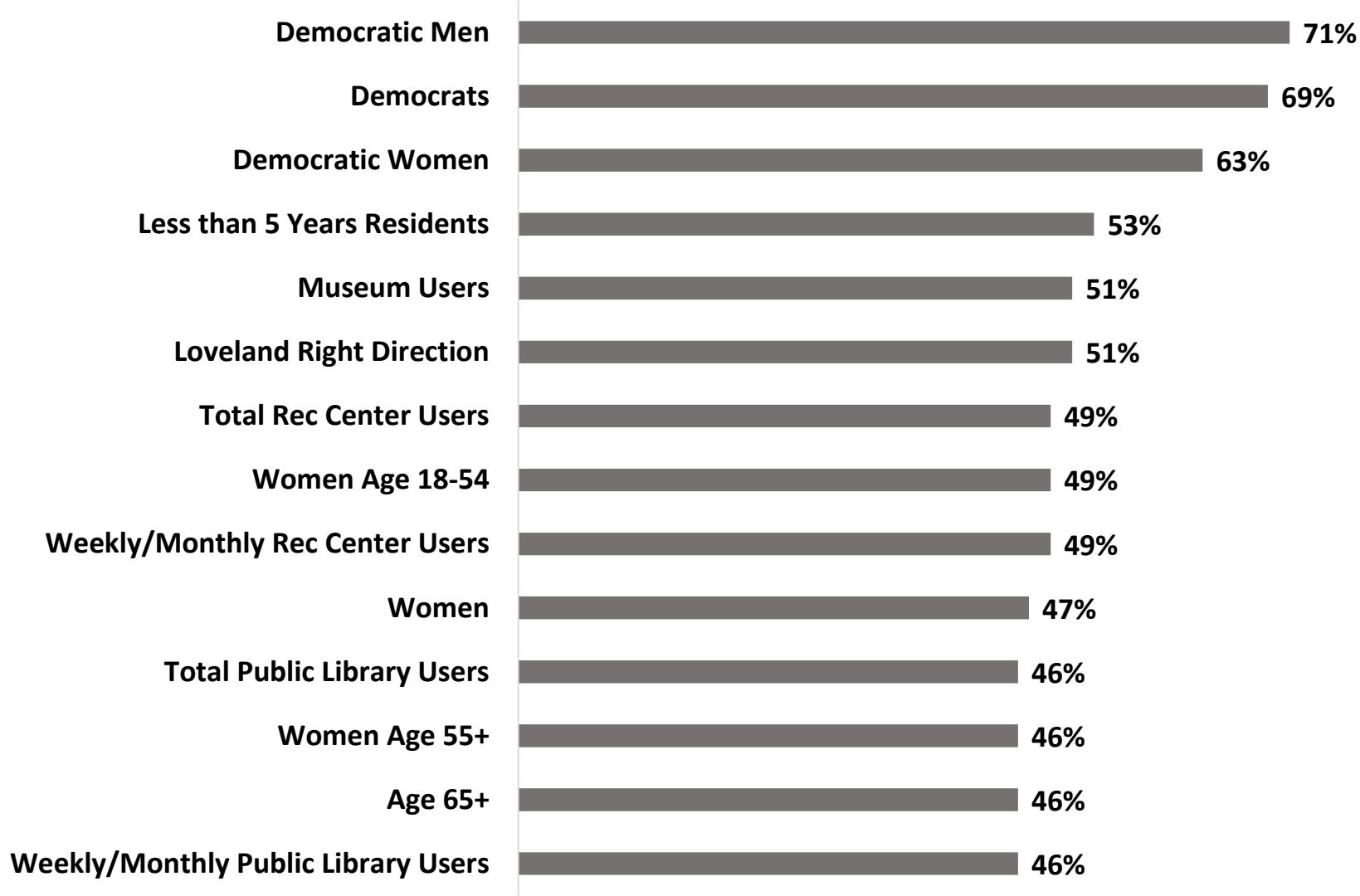
Now that you have heard a lot more about this let me ask you again If the election were being held today and the following proposal was on the ballot, would you vote YES or NO on a proposal that...

Older women support the measure by a 12 point wider margin after messaging.

Ballot Measure Gain from Initial to Final



Top Groups – Definitely Yes on Final Ballot





The Bottom Line

The Bottom Line

- There is significant support for a ballot measure to help fund major investments that contribute to “maintaining our quality of life and the safety of our community.” That said, it is important to note that the base of support for the measure in its current form lies among those who are using these amenities and newcomers.
- Residents are most focused on improving roads, improving emergency response times and addressing safety issues for first responders by making investments in fire stations.
- The rec center, library and museum are in a lower tier of priorities.

The Bottom Line

- Reinforcing safety - for drivers and pedestrians as well as the impact of fire stations for emergency response times – is the most compelling rationale in support. Among those more hesitant to support the tax increase knowing that half of the sales tax is paid for by visitors is helpful information as well.
- Emphasizing the increased demand on critical services is not as helpful given residents express concerns about growth and the existing tax burden.
- After hearing both sides, support increases somewhat, mostly with women 55 and older.



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