

FIRE TAX SURVEY

PREPARED FOR THE
CITY OF BELVEDERE

PRESENTED BY
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8/31/2023





PURPOSE OF STUDY

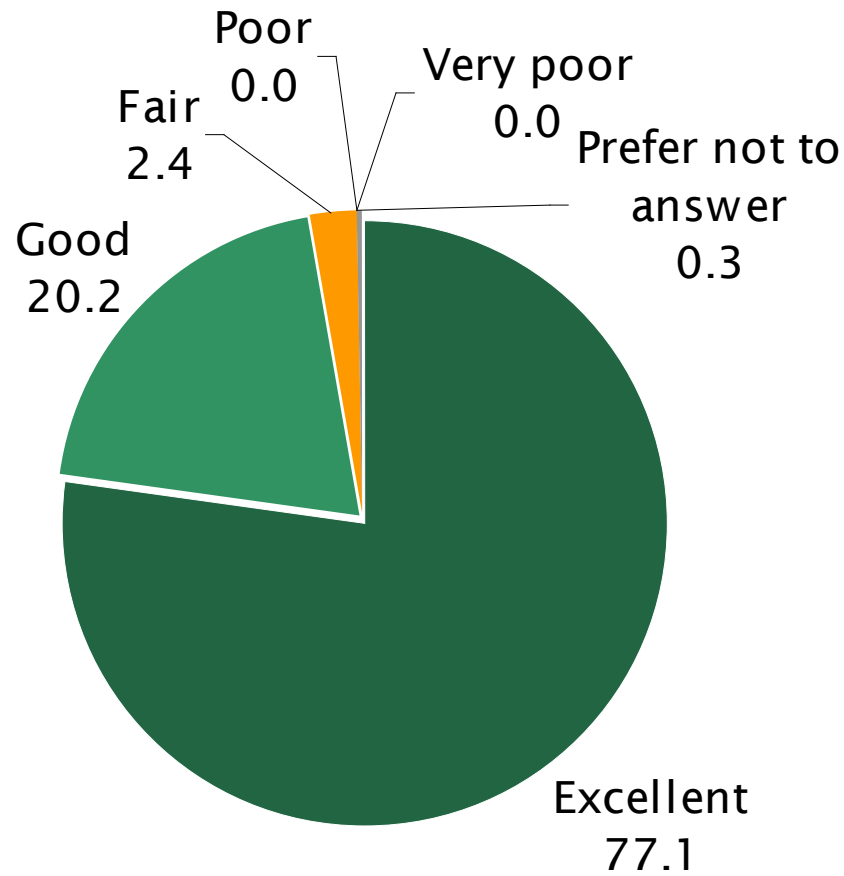
- Determine if a fire tax increase measure is feasible
- Identify how to create a measure consistent with community priorities
- Gather information needed for communications & outreach



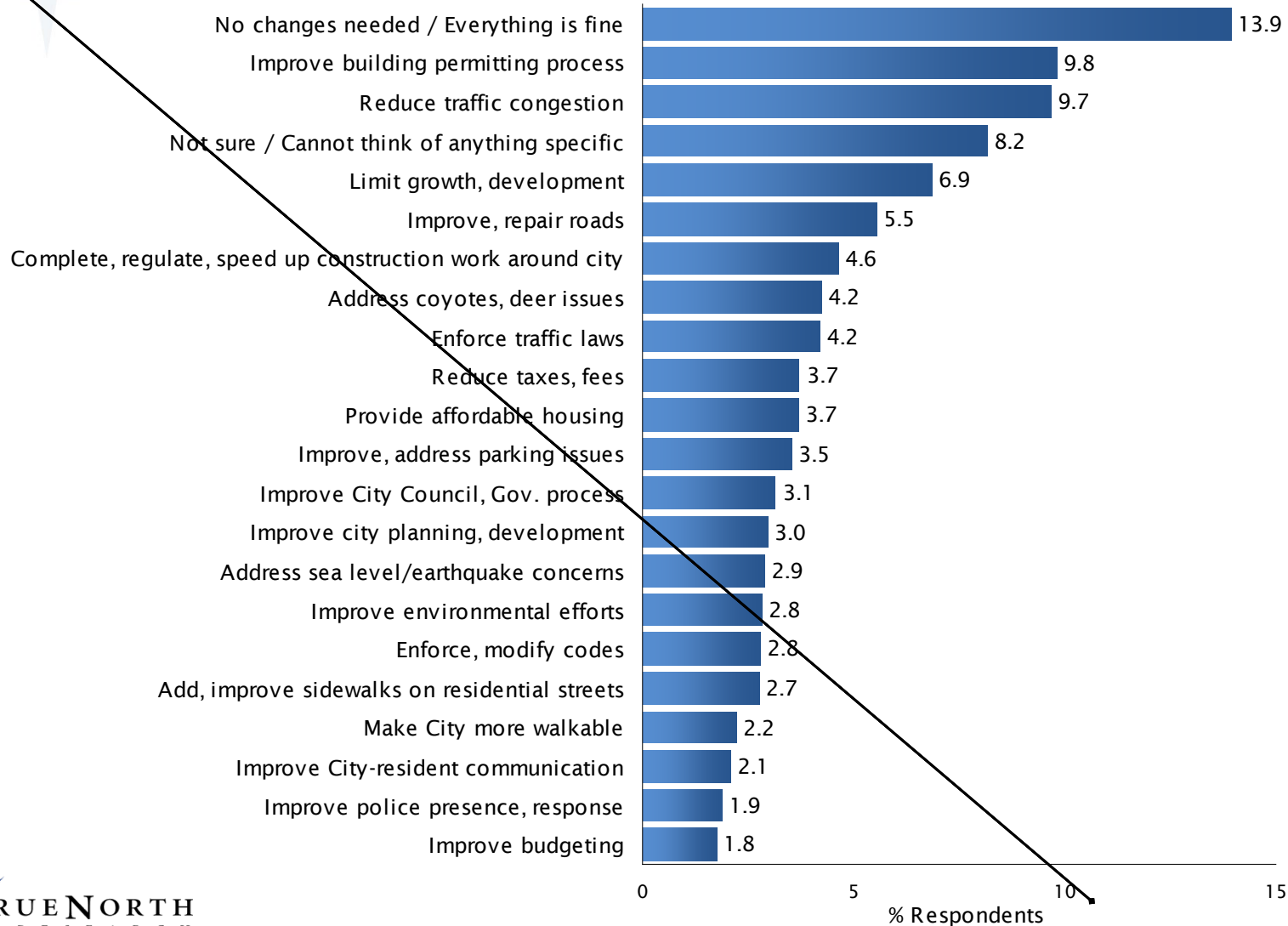
METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

- **How did we select voters to survey?**
 - Stratified & Clustered Random Sample of likely November 2024 voters
 - Ensures balanced, representative sample of likely voters
- **How did we recruit participation?**
 - Personalized mail, email, text, and telephone calls
 - PINs to restrict access and ensure one complete per respondent
- **How were voters able to share their opinions?**
 - Secure, PIN-protected website that scales to the device
 - Telephone (land line or mobile)
- **What was the sample size?**
 - 261 completed interviews
 - Overall margin of error of $\pm 5.5\%$ @ 95% level of confidence

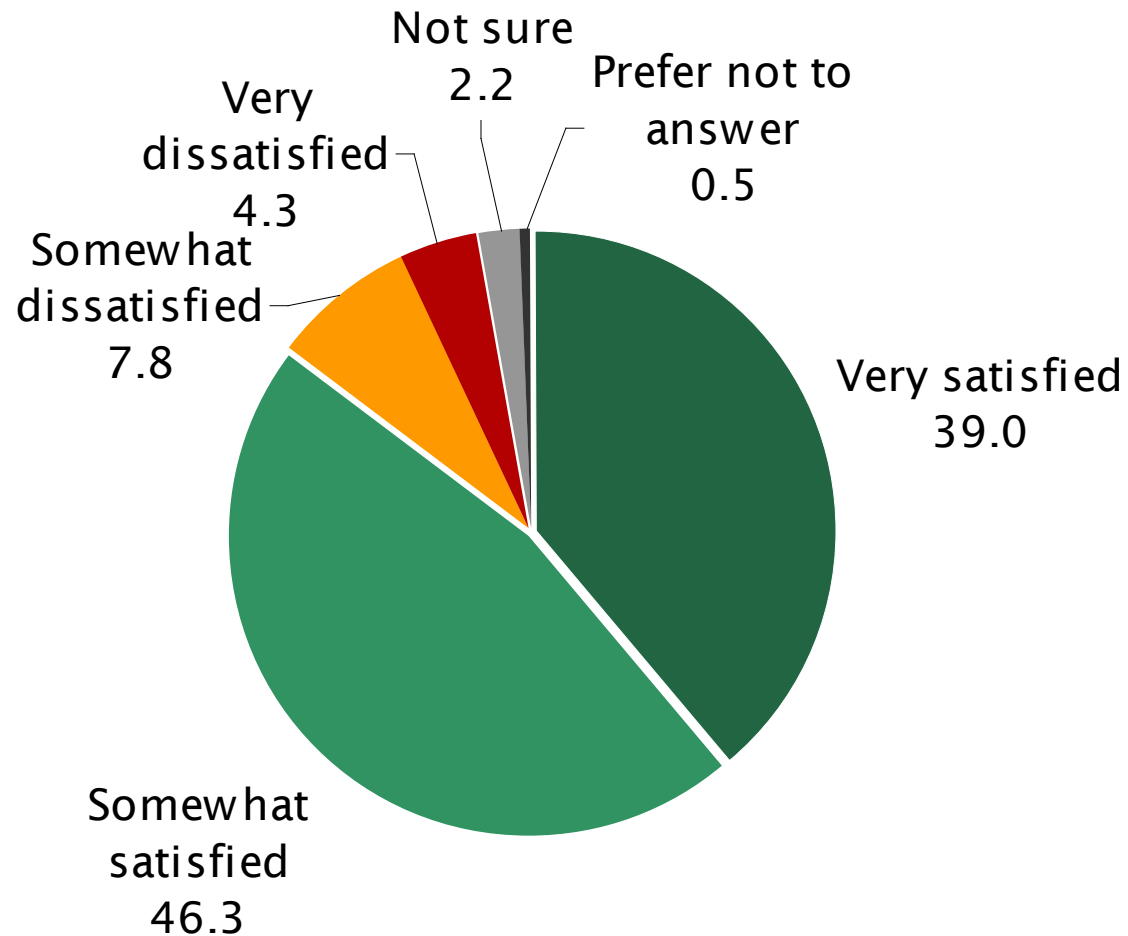
QUALITY OF LIFE



CHANGES TO IMPROVE CITY



OVERALL SATISFACTION





INITIAL BALLOT TEST

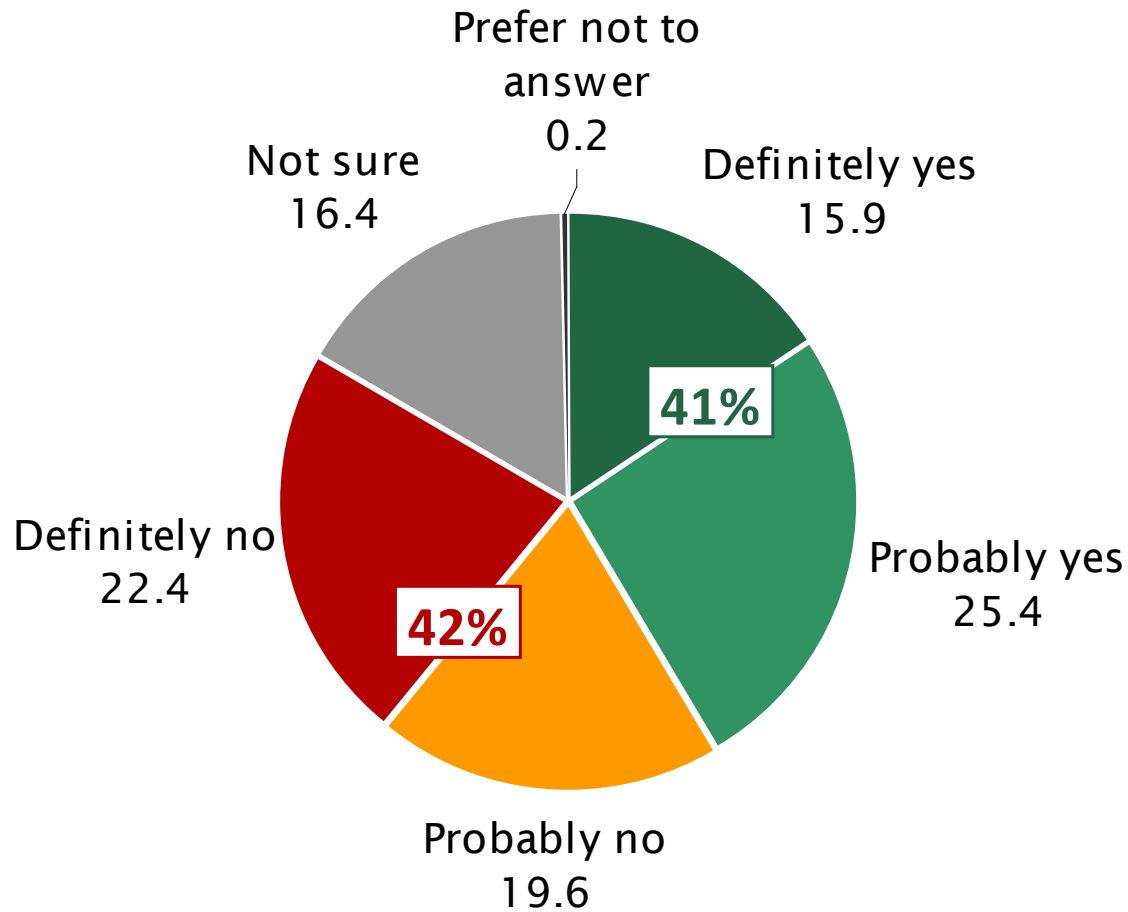
To provide funding exclusively for:

- Fire protection and fire prevention services
- Emergency medical and paramedic services
- Quick responses to 9-1-1 emergencies
- And 24-hour ambulance services

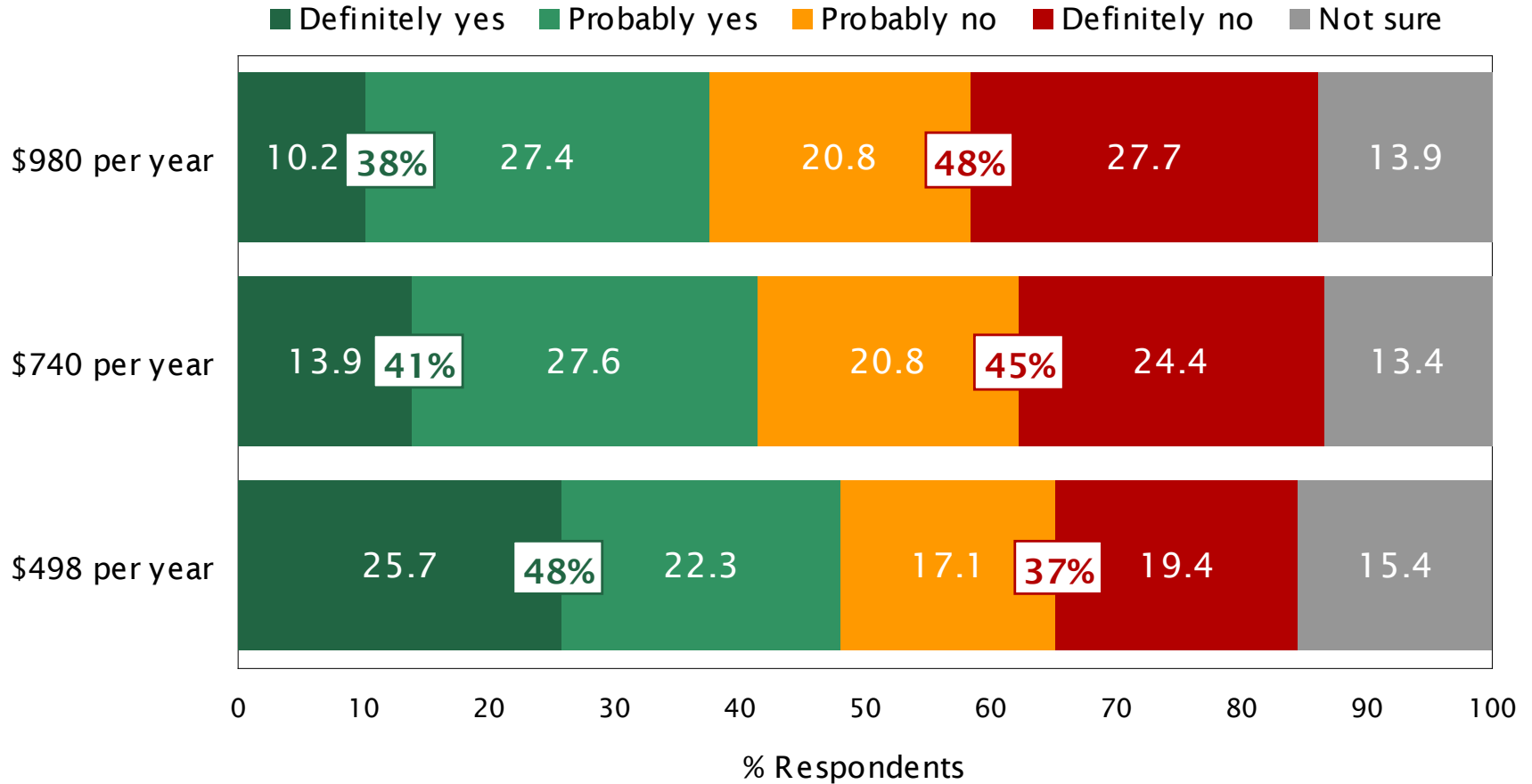
shall the City of Belvedere's fire protection measure levying \$980 annually per residential unit (with other rates as described in the voter pamphlet) be adopted, raising approximately one million dollars per year until ended by voters, with annual adjustments, independent oversight, and all money locally-controlled? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?



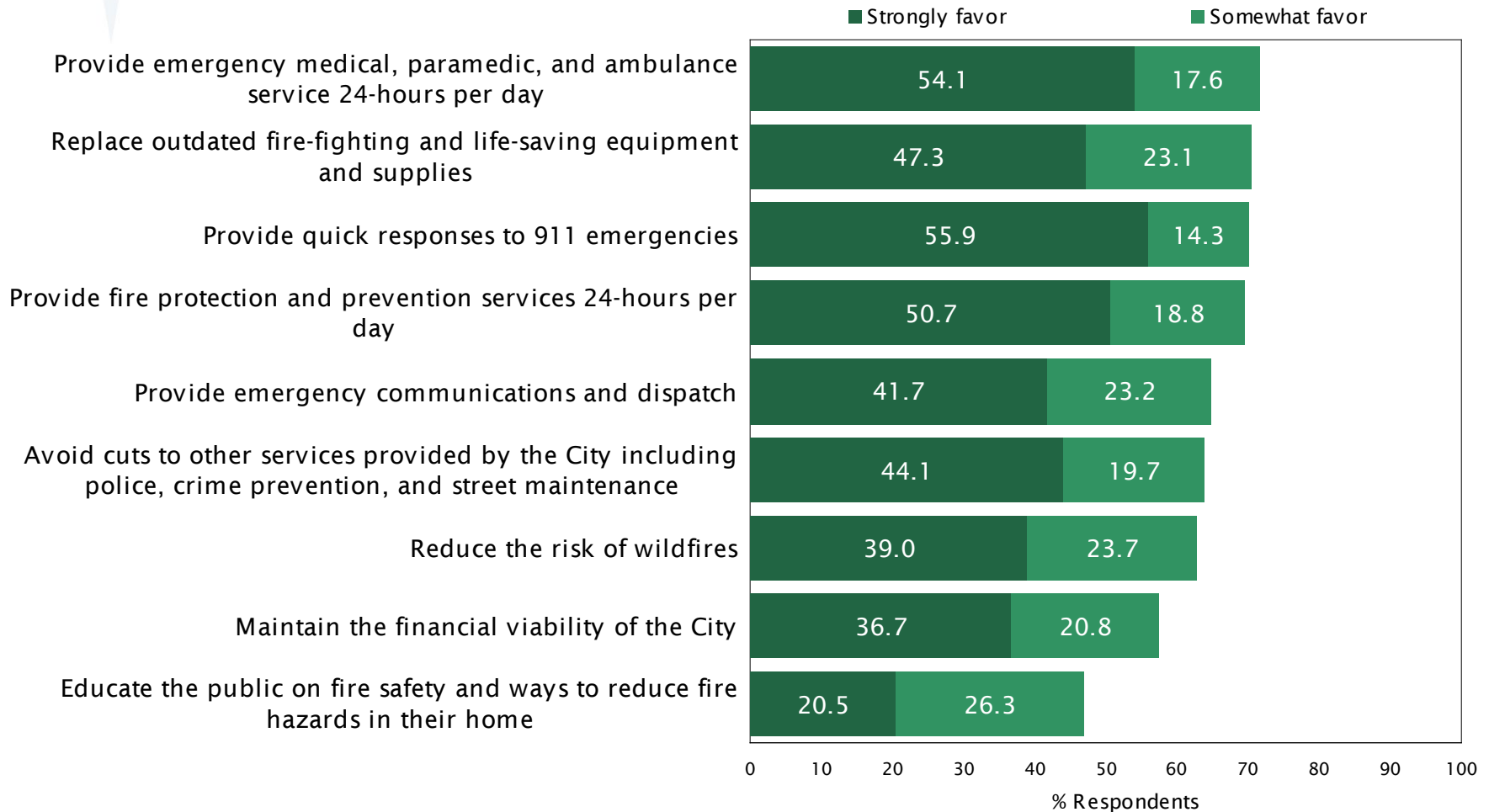
INITIAL BALLOT TEST



TAX THRESHOLD



PROJECTS & SERVICES



POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

In 1980, voters approved a Fire Tax to pay for full-time professional fire protection, emergency medical services; over time, cost of providing these services has increased to the point where the fire tax covers just half of cost of services

Fast emergency response times for 911 calls are critical for saving lives; measure will ensure that we have fire fighters, police officers, dispatchers, paramedics needed to respond quickly to 911 emergencies

All money raised by measure will be used to fund fire protection, emergency medical services here in Belvedere; by law, it can't be taken away by State, used for other purposes

When you need emergency care, you need it fast; seconds can mean the difference between life, death; measure will ensure you, your family continue to have rapid access to adv life-saving medical care when you need it most

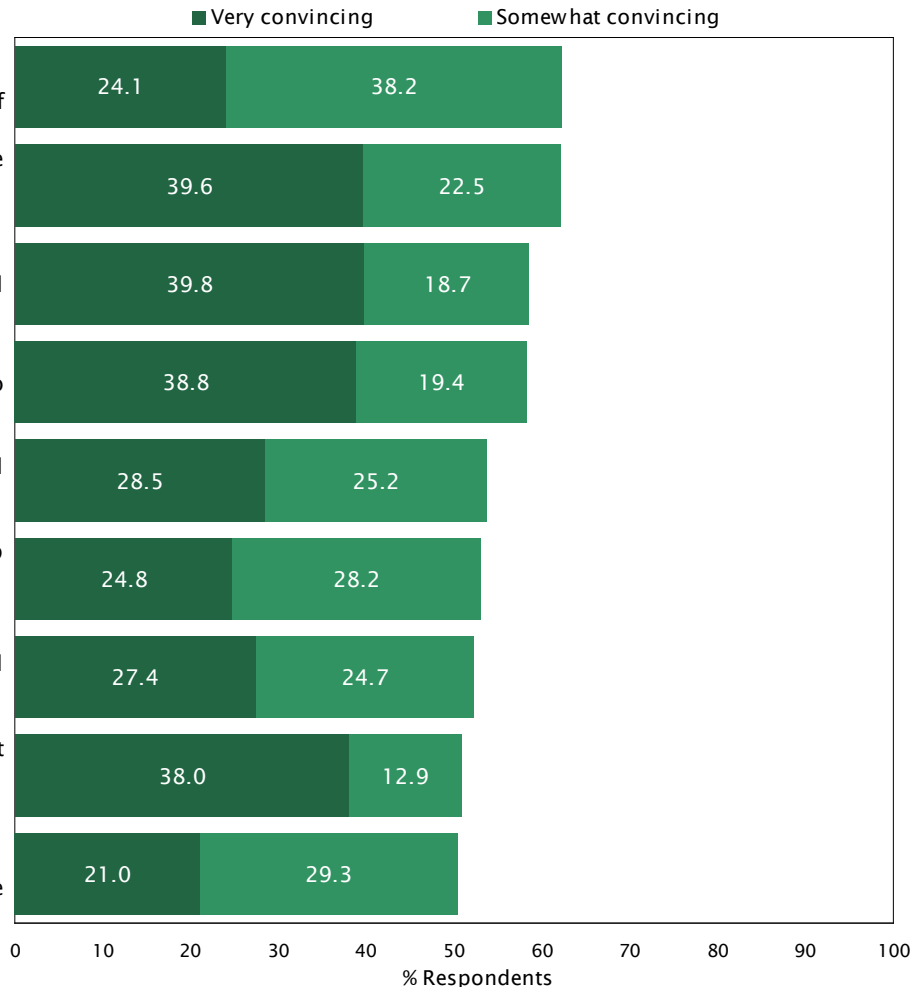
Measure is needed to cover costs of fire protection services in full, avoid additional cuts to police, street maintenance, other services in future

Seniors have most to gain from measure because they are the most likely group to need fast, life-saving emergency medical care; more than 70% of emergency calls in community are for emergency medical, ambulance service

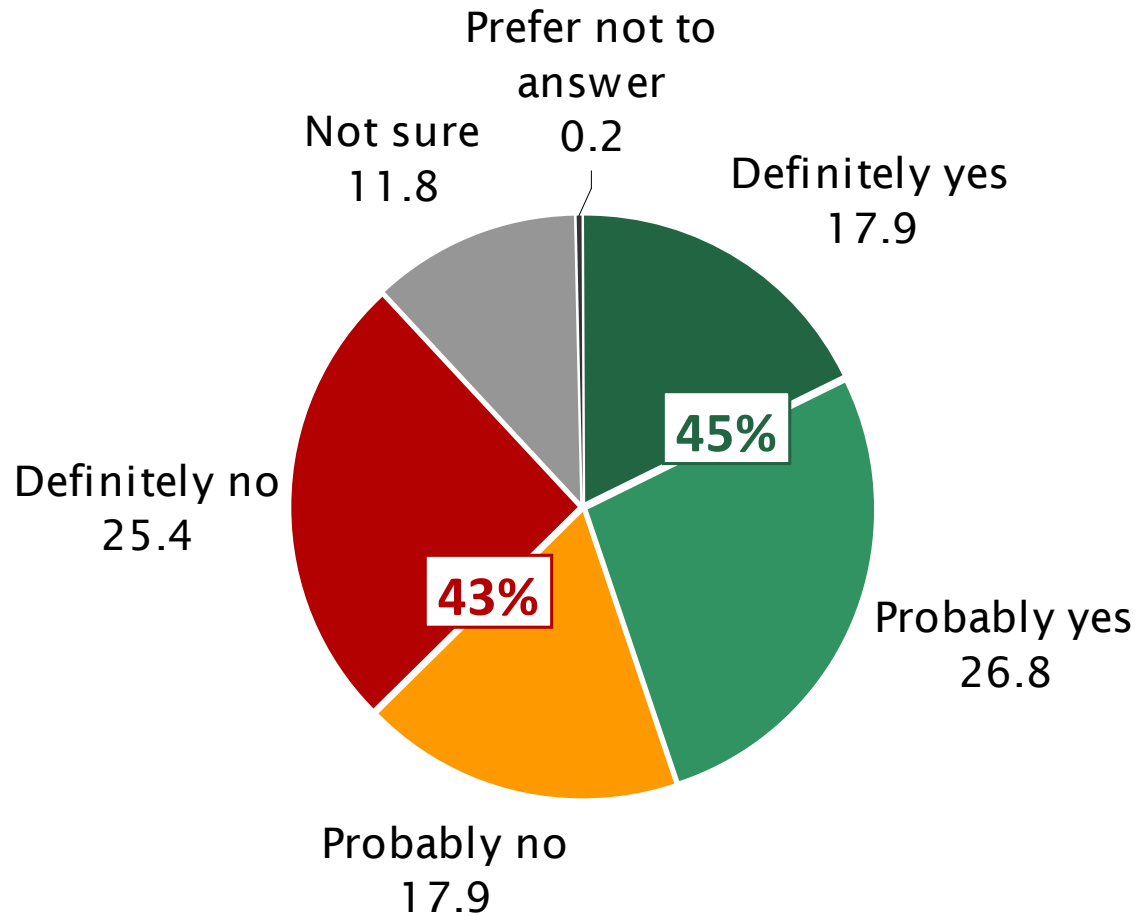
There will be a clear system of accountability incl independent oversight, annual reports to community to ensure that money is spent properly

Without measure, Belvedere may have to move to a part-time Police Dept where at certain times there will be no officer on duty in Belvedere ready to respond to burglaries, other emergencies

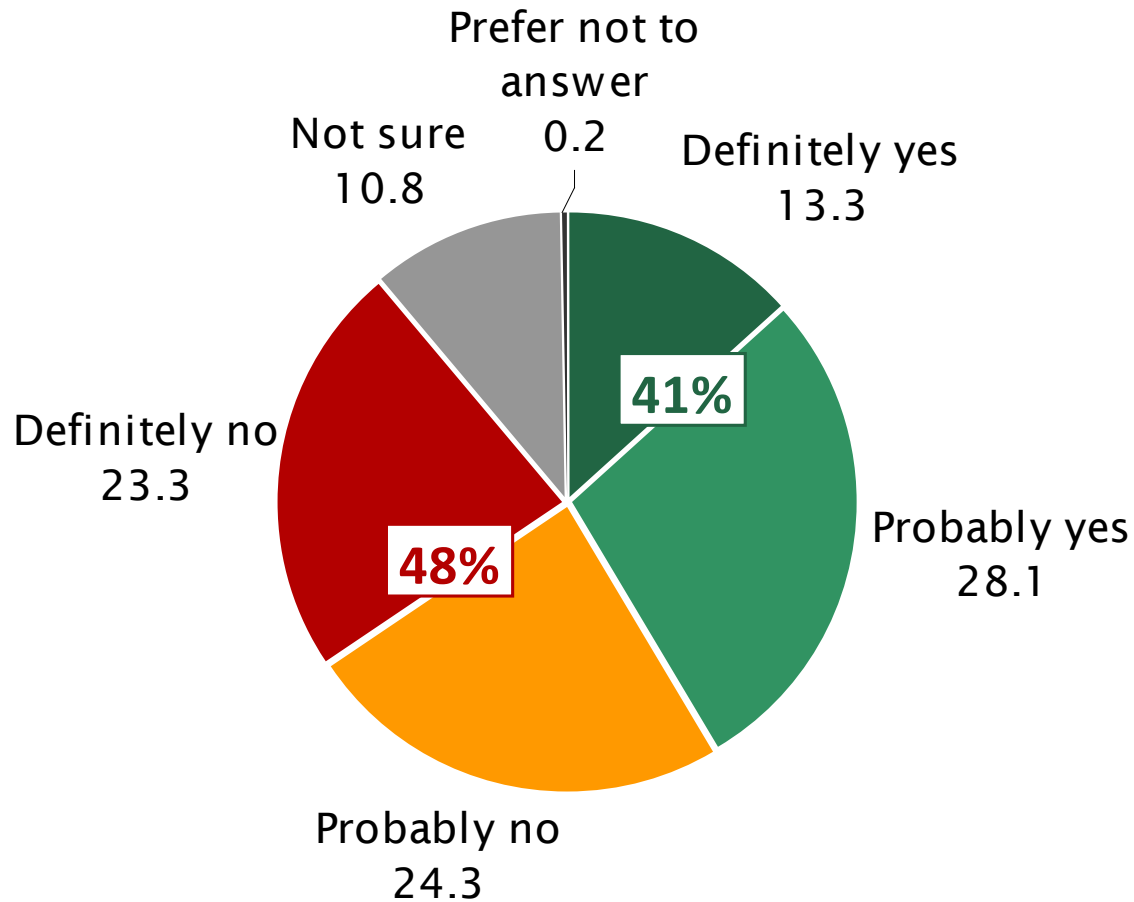
In order to pay for the additional cost of fire protection, EMS services, City has been forced to cut other service areas incl police protection, street maintenance



INTERIM BALLOT TEST



CLARIFYING 6% ESCALATOR



NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Property owners are already paying a fire tax, as well as multiple other taxes, bonds, assessments; now they want us to pay another tax for fire protection? Enough is enough; we can't afford to keep raising taxes

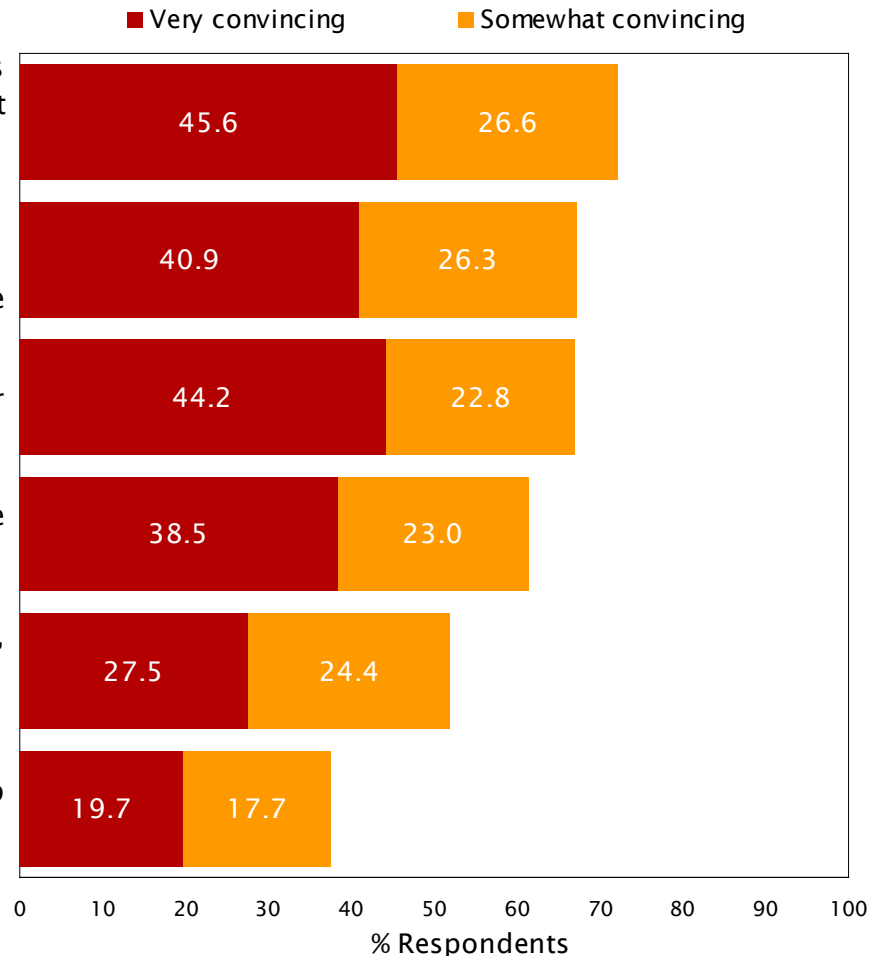
Community is already an expensive place to live, especially for young families, seniors, those on fixed incomes; passing tax will make it even less affordable

There is no expiration date on this tax - it will last forever

This measure allows the City Council to raise the tax rate every year without voter approval

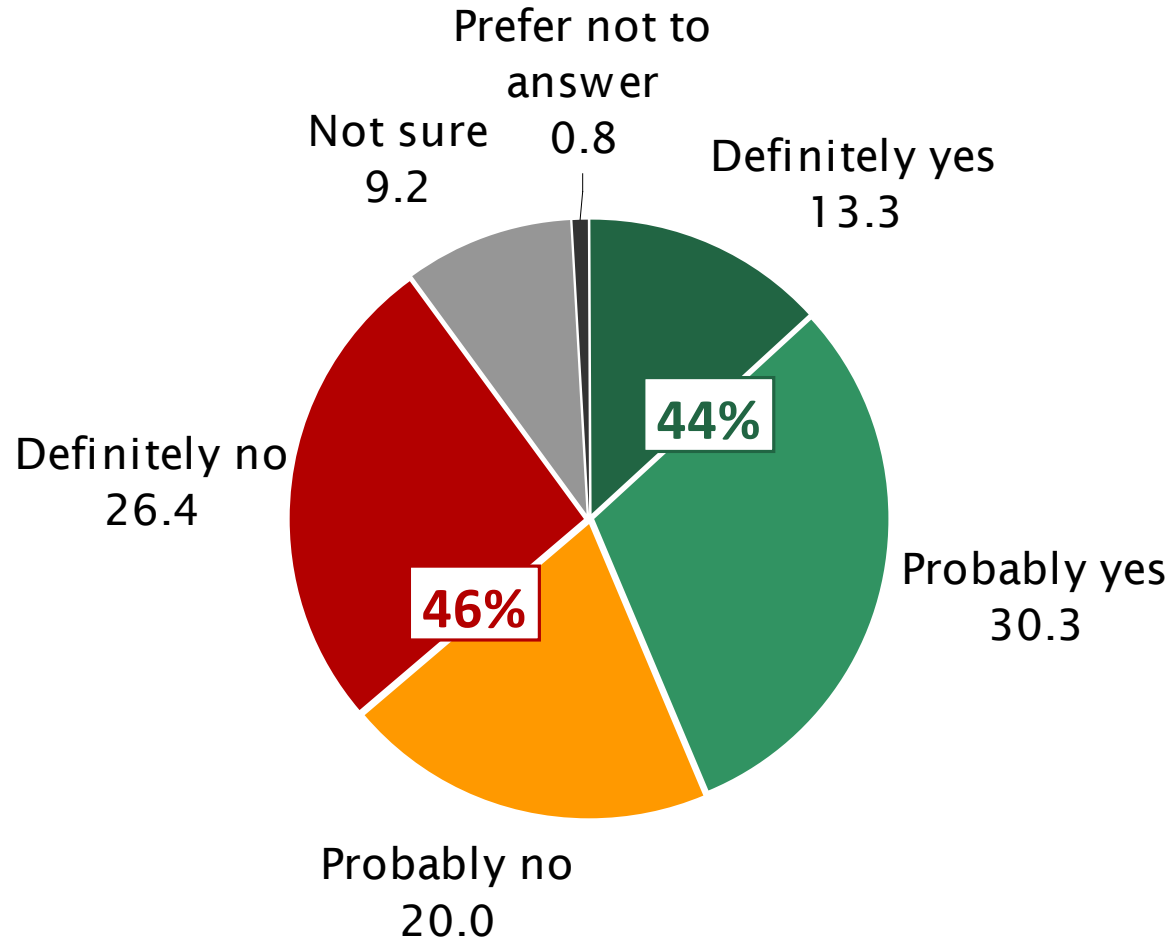
Landlords will pass the cost of this tax through to renters, dramatically increasing rents which are already unaffordable.

Fire fighters are making too much money in salary, pensions, benefits - that's the problem; they can't keep raising cost of services 6% year after year, expect that residents will agree to pay more taxes





FINAL BALLOT TEST





KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Support for the proposed fire tax increase falls well short of the required two-thirds supermajority for passage in the current environment.
- The proposed tax rate (\$980 per residential unit) is a sticking point, although even at \$498 per residential unit support does not reach a majority.
- There is a tendency for voters who do not support the measure to assume that a 'no' vote means the status quo will be maintained, which may be the case for fire/EMS, but not other services.
- To have a reasonable chance of reaching two-thirds support, the measure will need to have more modest tax impacts and voters will need to understand what is at stake.