2022-23 City of Oakland Budget Priorities Survey

Key Findings from a Survey of Oakland Residents Conducted December 15, 2022 to January 8, 2023

FM3 RESEARCH | OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

320-1052

Survey Specifics and Methodology

Dates	December 15, 2022-January 8, 2023
Survey Type	Multi-modal Resident Survey
Research Population	Adult Residents of Oakland
Total Interviews	1,270
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) ±3.1% at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) ±4.0% at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Postcard Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Survey Tracking	2020-21, 2018, 2017, 2015 (voters only), 2005, 2002 and 2000
Languages	English, Spanish and Chinese

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

Why Oakland Regularly Conducts This Survey

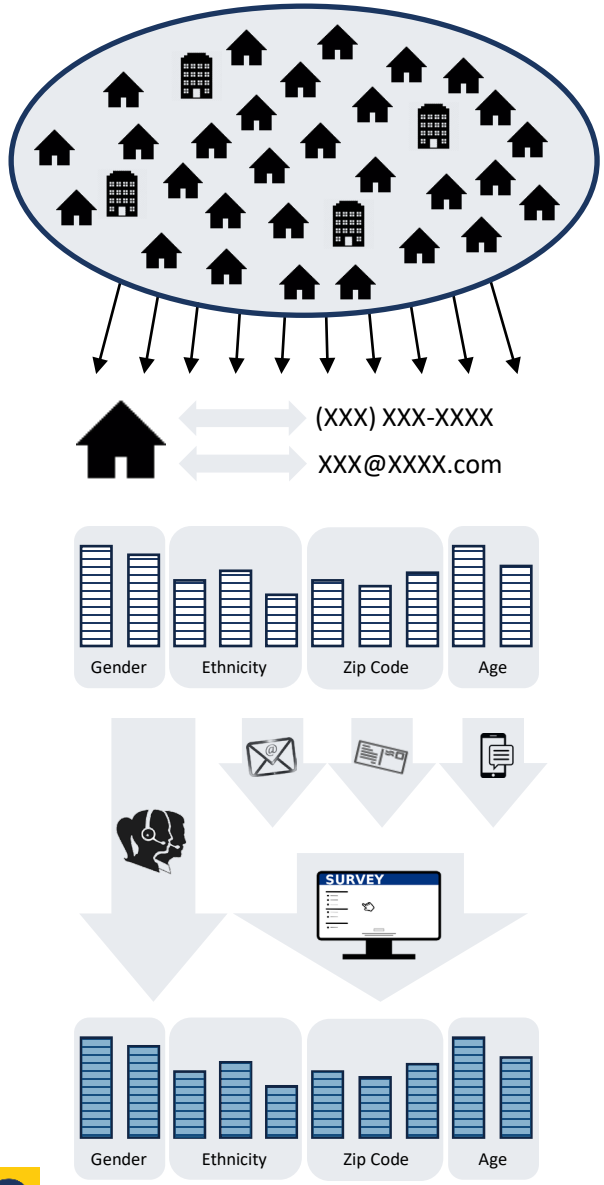
Why We Conduct a Budget Survey

- The Budget Survey is conducted at the direction of the City's Consolidated Fiscal Policy (CFP).
- The CFP directs the City to conduct a statistically valid survey to assessing the public's concerns, needs and priorities prior to the development of the biennial budget.
- It further states that the poll should be representative of Oakland's diverse population in terms of race and ethnicity, income, neighborhood, age, homeownership/renter-ship and other characteristics.
- The CFP states that the Budget Survey is basis and tool for the Mayor and Council to begin discussing priorities for the coming biennial budget cycle.

Types of Survey Questions

- The survey's scope and questions were written at the direction of the City's Budget Advisory Commission (BAC) with support from City staff.
- Demographic questions to ensure a representative sample and to enable analysis by different sample subgroups.
- General questions about life in Oakland and impressions of City government and the services it provides.
- Budget questions:
  - What should be the City's top budget priorities?
  - Awareness of the City's budget situation
  - Reactions to potential service cuts to balance future budgets
  - Prioritizing select Reimaging Public Safety Task Force recommendations that would require additional budget allocations
  - What can be done to make Oakland feel safer?

FM3's Address-based Survey Approach



FM3 acquired a list of residential addresses in the City of Oakland.

FM3 pulled a random sample of those addresses, and using public and commercial databases, matched phone numbers and email addresses to residents living at those addresses.

FM3 used demographic data from the US Census and geographic data from the list of addresses to set quotas, ensuring that respondents in the sample reflected the overall, adult residential population.

FM3 contacted residents by phone, email, postcard, and text, completing phone interviews and inviting email/postcard/text recipients to take the survey online.

FM3 completed online and telephone interviews with residents sufficient to fill each quota.

Profile of Survey Respondents

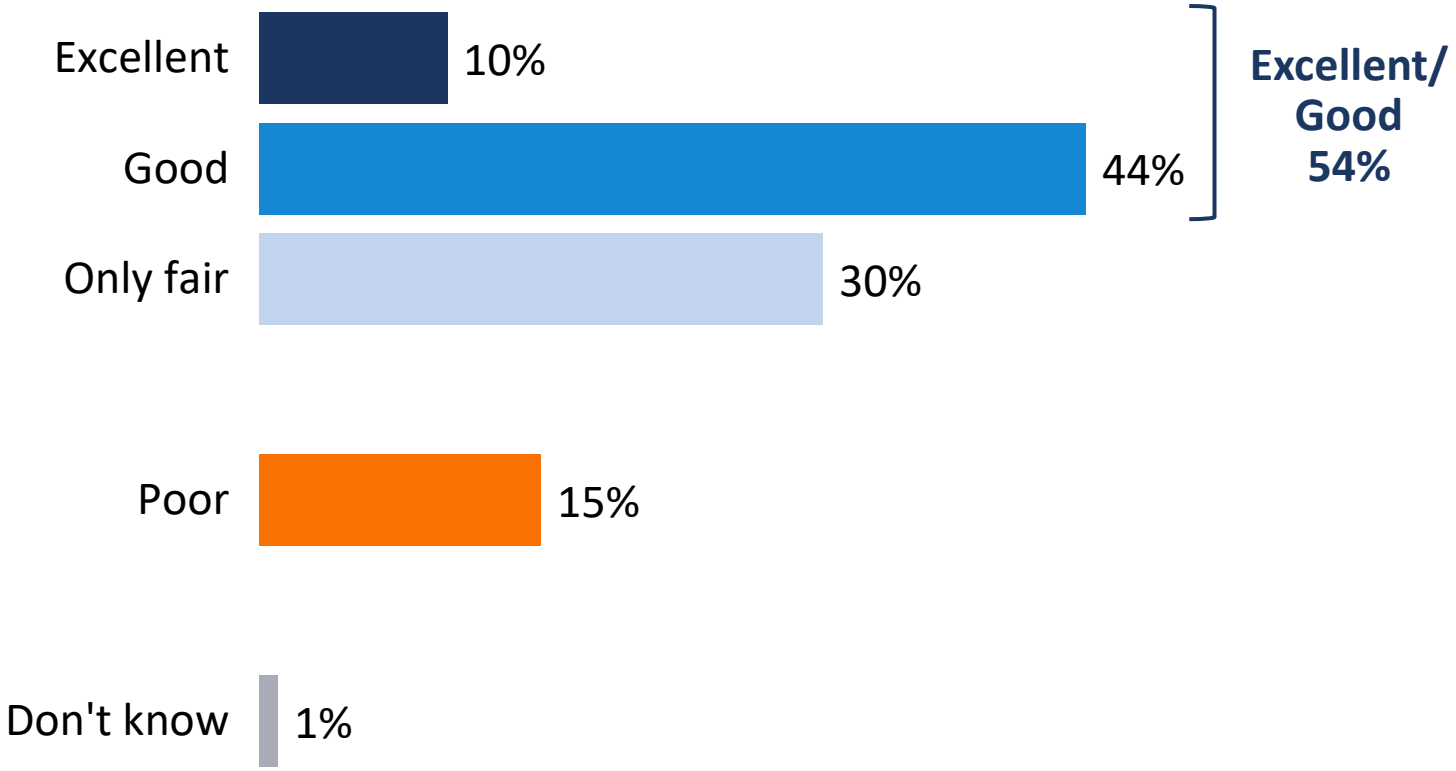
- The sample was designed to reflect US Census data for Oakland adults (ages 18+) by age, gender, Council District, race/ethnicity, and homeowner/renter.
- When response rates were slightly higher for any particular group, data were weighted to match the demographics of residents 18+ in the community.
- Data were also weighted to ensure each split sample was representative.

Demographic Group	%
Male	46%
Female	50%
Ages 18-49	*59%*
Ages 50+	*41%*
White residents	30%
Latino residents	26%
Asian/Pacific Islander residents	21%
African American/Black residents	21%
Homeowners	*41%*
Renters	*50%*

Impressions of Life in Oakland and City Government

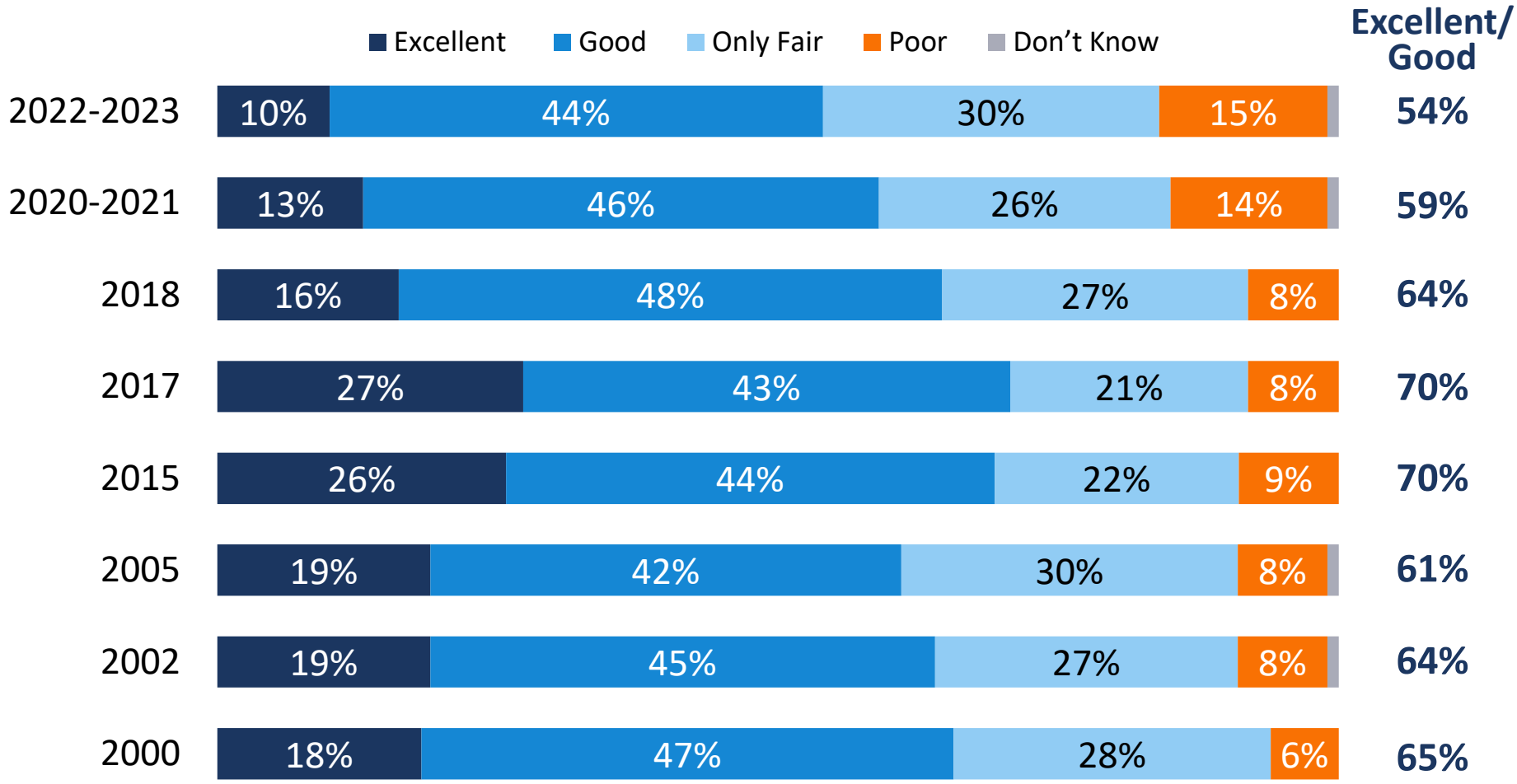
While a majority of Oakland residents feel Oakland is an "excellent" or "good" place to live…

Generally speaking, how would you rate Oakland as a place to live: is it an excellent place to live, a good place, only fair, or a poor place to live?



Q1.

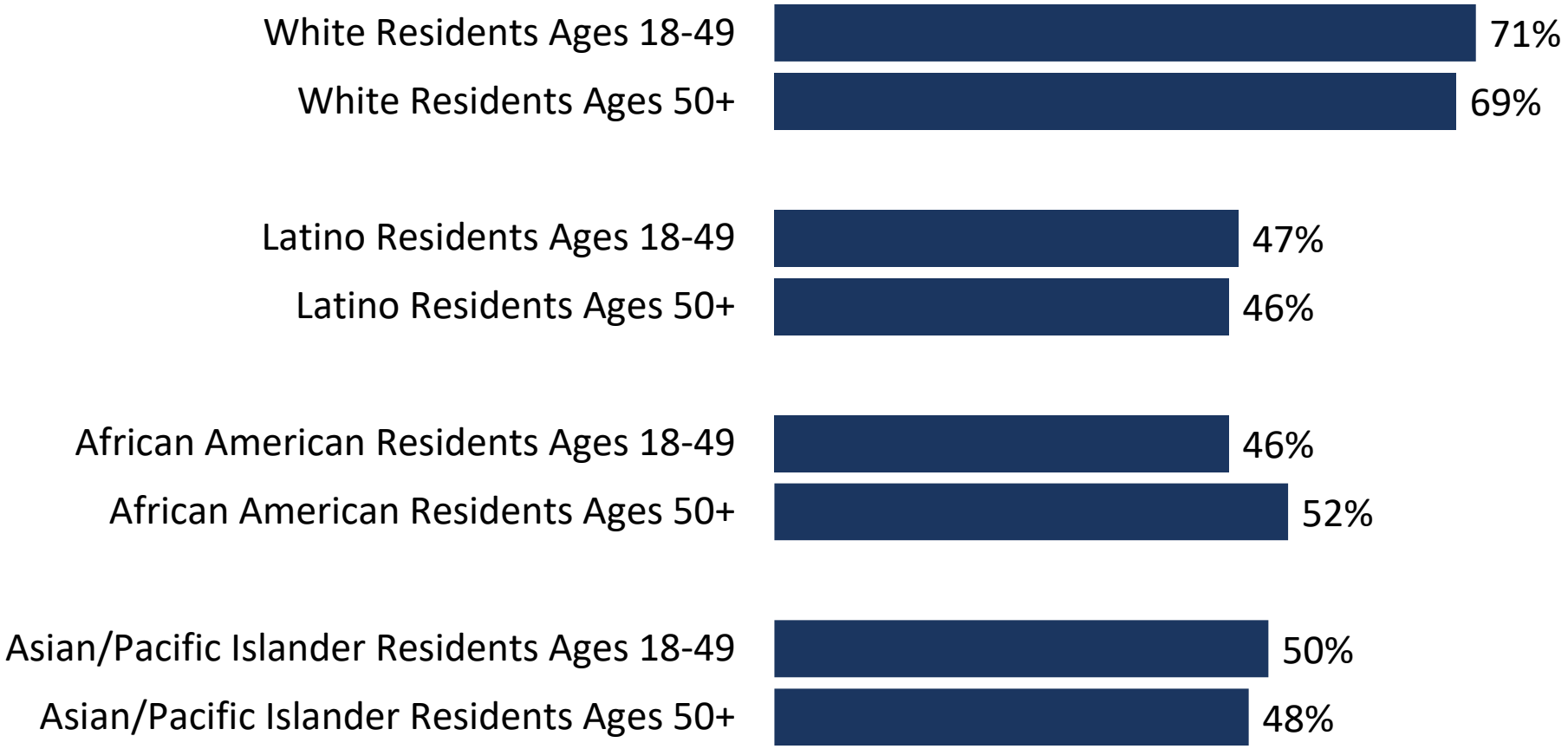
…this is the lowest share since surveying began more than 20 years ago.



Q1. Generally speaking, how would you rate Oakland as a place to live: is it an excellent place to live, a good place, only fair, or a poor place to live?

White residents have much more positive views than residents of color, regardless of age.

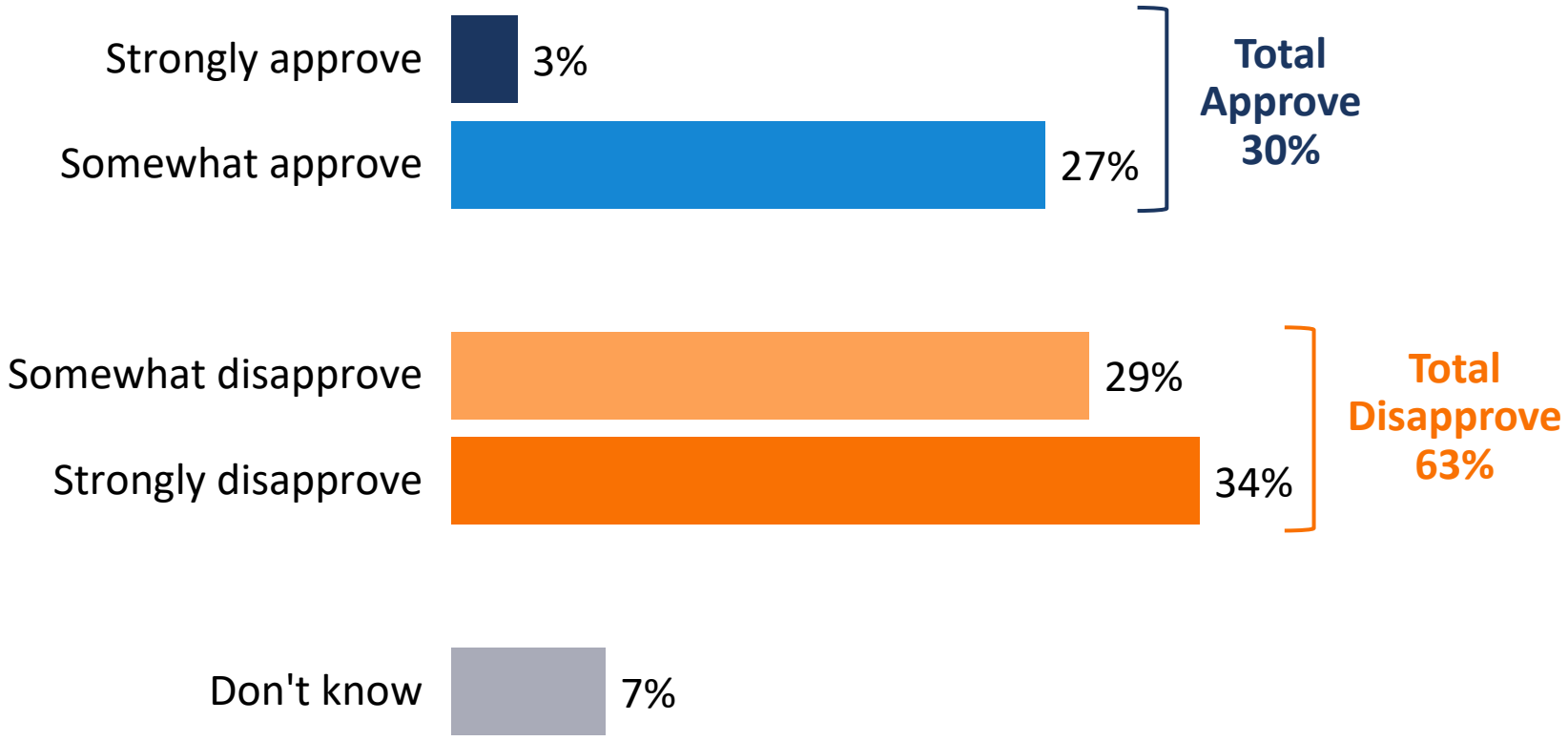
Oakland is an Excellent/Good Place to Live by Ethnicity by Age



Q1. Generally speaking, how would you rate Oakland as a place to live: Is it an excellent place to live, a good place, only fair, or a poor place to live?

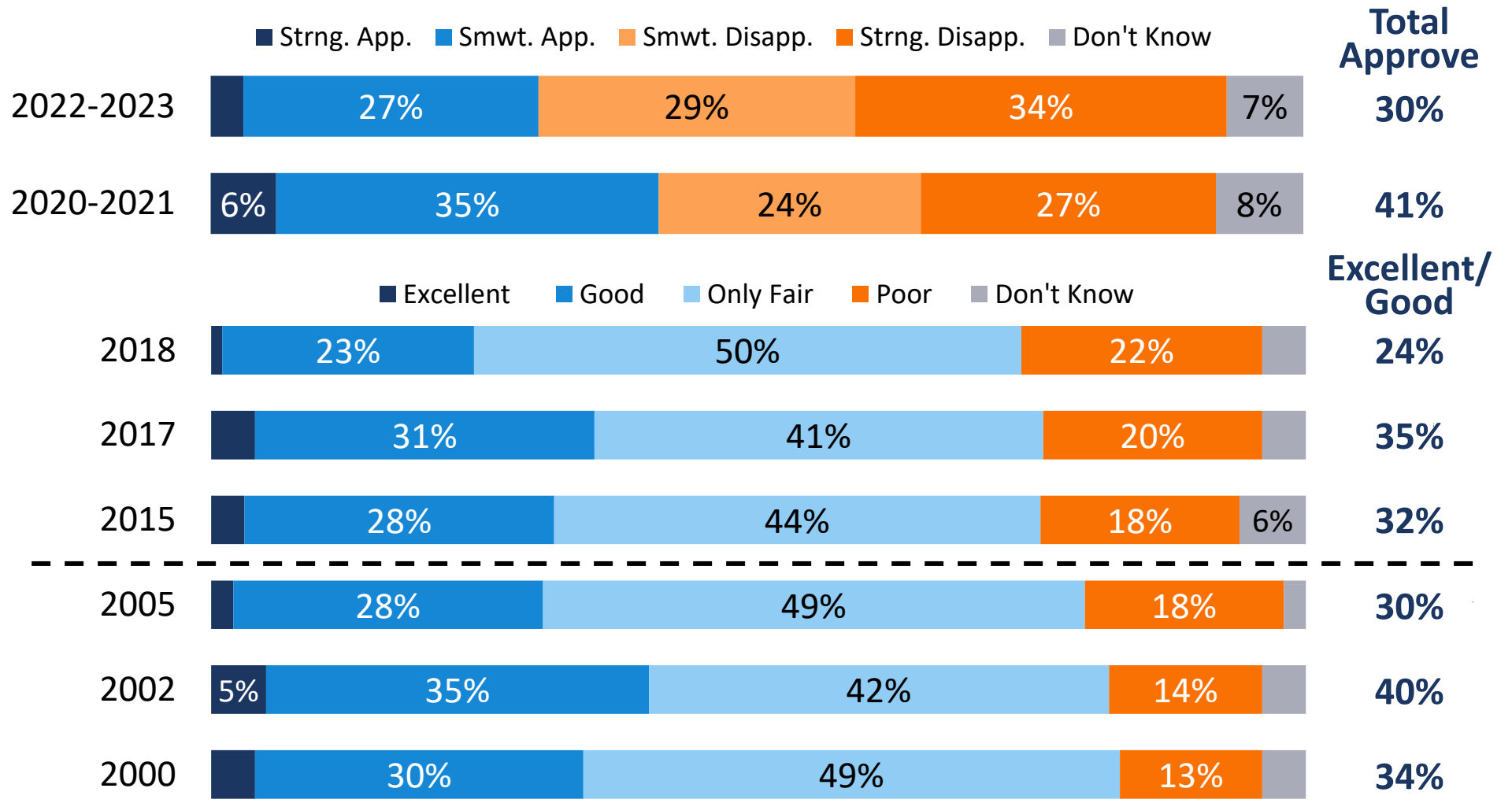
Nearly two-thirds of residents disapprove of the City's provision of services.

Do you approve or disapprove of the overall job being done by Oakland City government in providing services to the people who live here?



Q2.

The approval rating is notably lower than in the last survey.



Q2. Do you approve or disapprove of the overall job being done by Oakland City government in providing services to the people who live here?
Previous Year's Survey Language: How would you rate the overall job being done by Oakland City government in providing services to the people who live here: excellent, good, only fair or poor?

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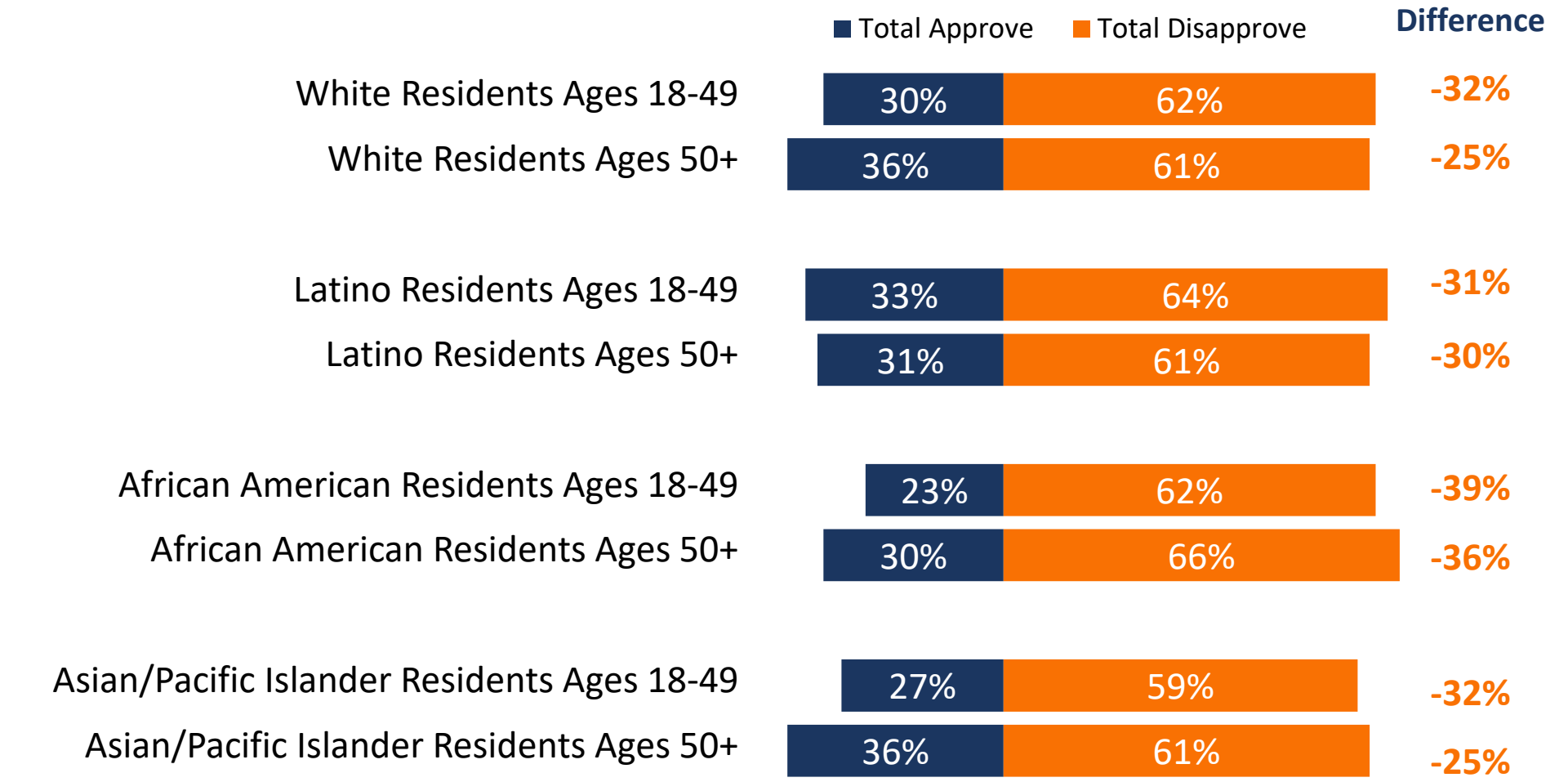
Unlike the quality-of-life ratings, residents' disapproval with city services was consistent across different ages and racial/ethnic groups.

Approval Rating by Ethnicity by Age



Q2. Do you approve or disapprove of the overall job being done by Oakland City government in providing services to the people who live here?

Budget Priorities

Sample Verbatim Responses on Top Budget Priorities

In the upcoming 2-year budget, what are the 2 most important issues facing Oakland residents that you would like to see prioritized in the City government budget?

Homes to unhoused people and community-based solutions to violence

Housing, crime and the homelessness issue

Children's education and lower the cost of rent

Public safety overall from gun violence, safe streets from vehicle crashes. Housing, both affordable and unhoused.

Keep the parks and streets and sidewalks clean. Gun control.

Parks, graffiti, streets and homelessness. Clean up the trash, plant more trees.

The city is a dump and the police don't do their jobs.

I would say making the streets safer. Partly doing something about the car break ins. Also I'd like something done with the homeless people, finding them homes. Improving walking down the streets in Oakland. And I also think encouraging businesses.

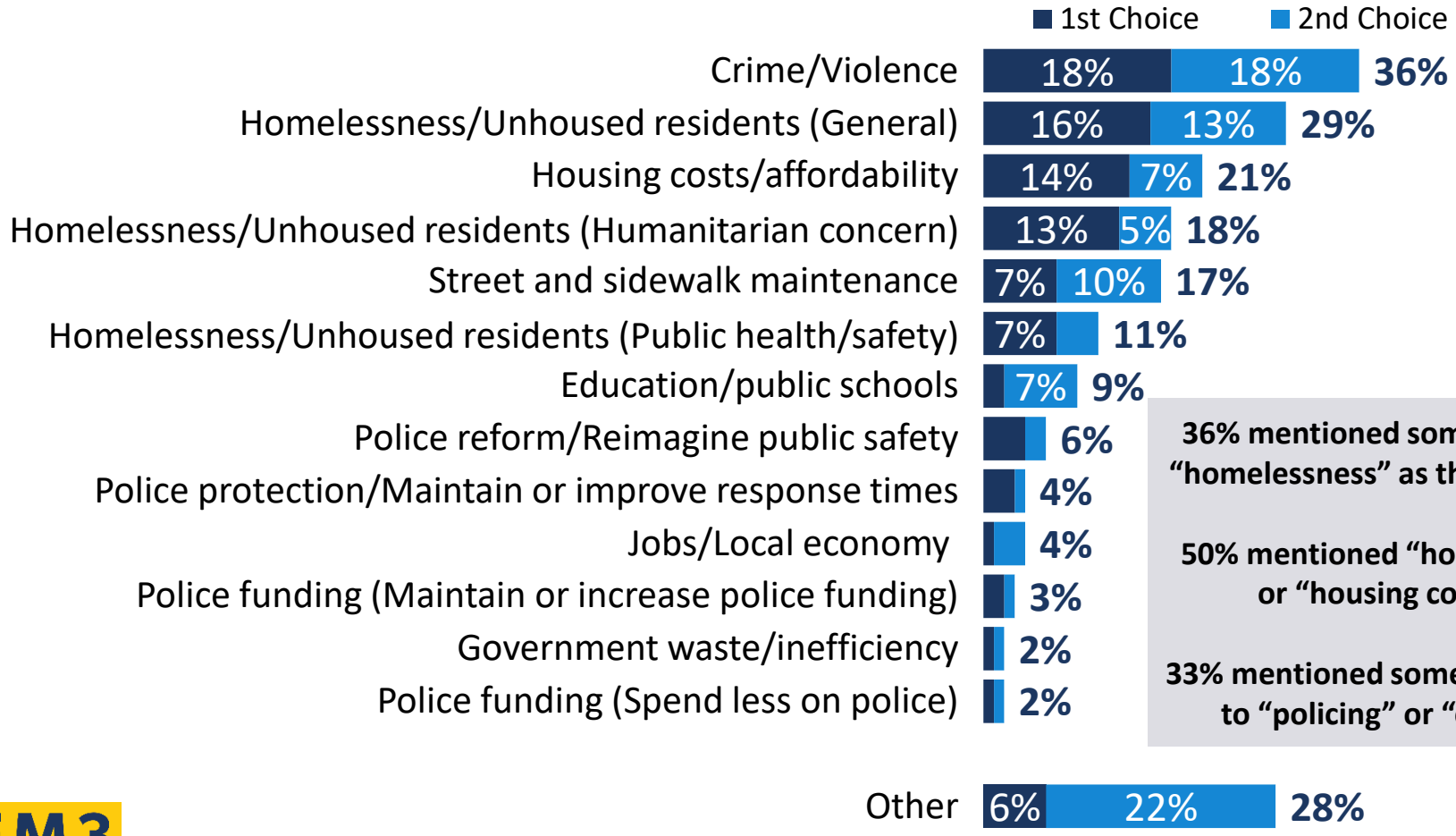
Infrastructure - drainage, roads, sidewalks... Crime and blight.

Q3.

The top three categories of budget priorities related to crime, homelessness and housing costs; streets/sidewalks and education .

In the upcoming 2-year budget, what are the 2 most important issues facing Oakland residents that you would like to see prioritized in the City government budget?

(Open-Ended; Total 2% and Above Shown)



36% mentioned some version of "homelessness" as their 1st choice

50% mentioned "homelessness" or "housing costs" 1st

33% mentioned something related to "policing" or "crime" 1st

Q3.

Homelessness remains the most-urgent problem to address in the budget as seen by residents.

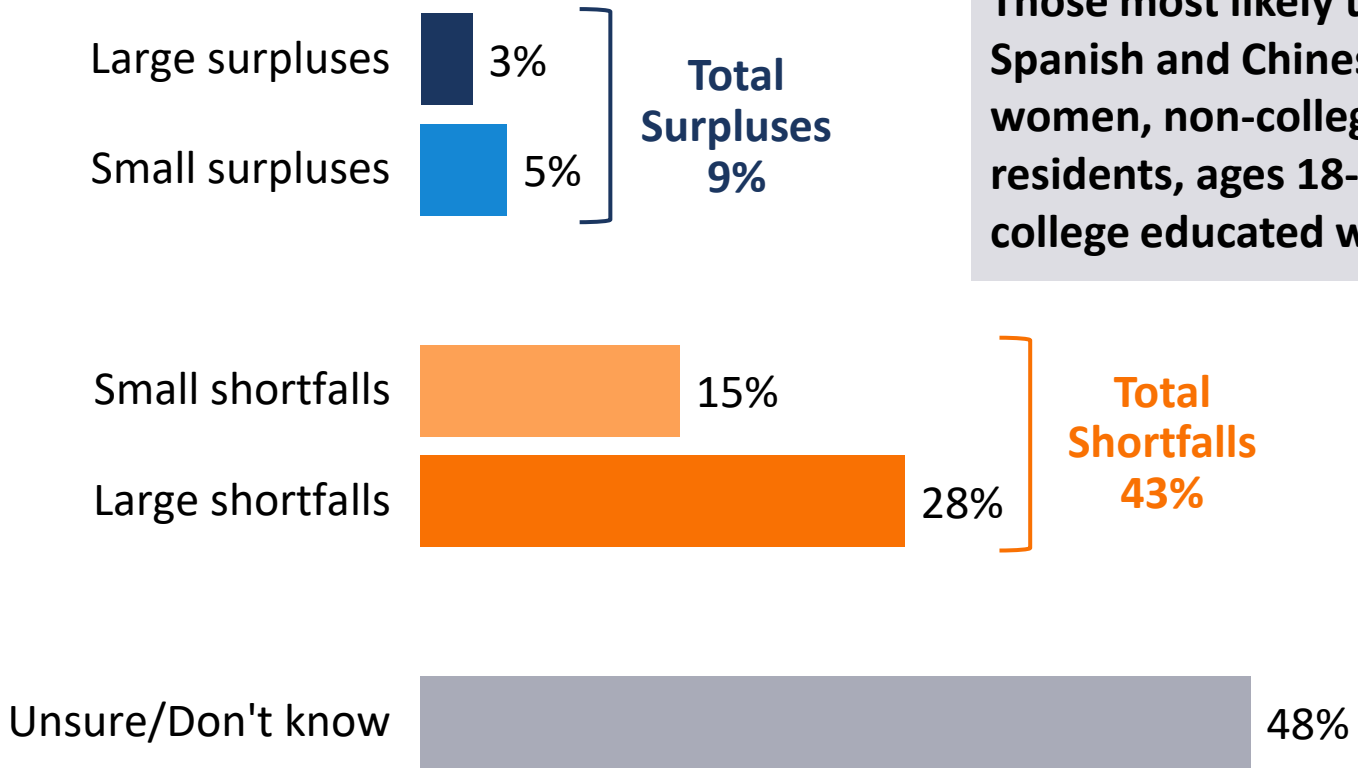
(1st Choice; 2022-2023 3% and Above Shown)

Issue	2000	2002	2005	2015-16	2016-17	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23
Homelessness (Any reference)	3%	4%	2%	2%	7%	22%	32%	36%
*Crime/Violence	19%	26%	22%	20%	15%	11%	10%	18%
*Housing costs/affordability	8%	12%	5%	10%	26%	25%	20%	14%
*Street and sidewalk maintenance	3%	4%	4%	8%	7%	6%	14%	7%
Education/Public schools	33%	14%	35%	17%	12%	10%	10%	9%
Jobs/Local Economy	5%	3%	4%	7%	4%	0%	4%	4%

Q3. In the upcoming 2-year budget, what are the 2 most important issues facing Oakland residents that you would like to see prioritized in the City government budget?

Nearly half of residents were unsure of whether the City is projecting budget shortfalls or surpluses.

Over the next several years, do you think the City is projecting budget surpluses or shortfalls?



Those most likely to be unsure are Spanish and Chinese speakers, API women, non-college educated API residents, ages 18-29, and non-college educated women.

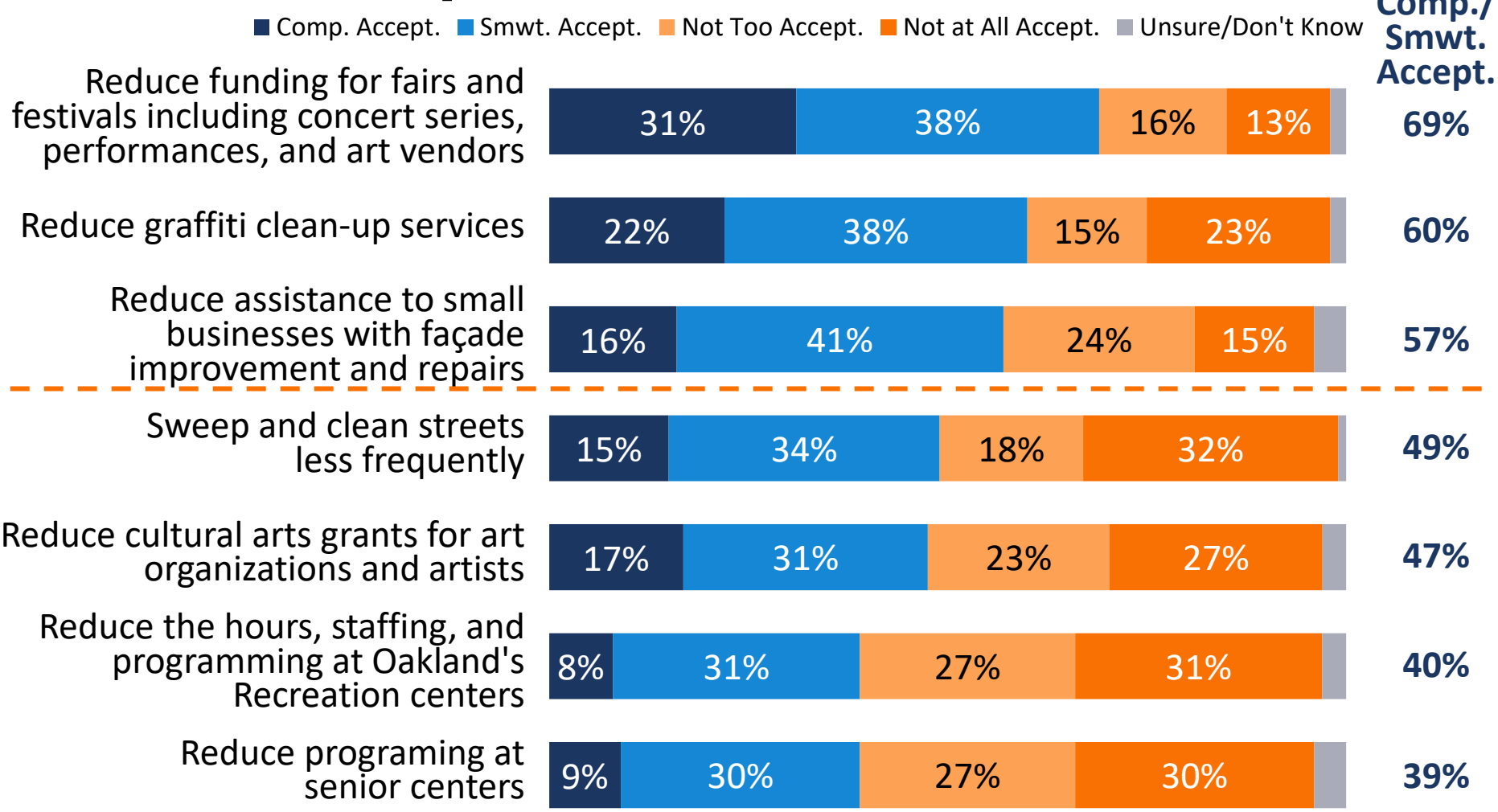
Q4.

Evaluating Budget Trade-Offs

(Background Provided to Respondents)

The City of Oakland is currently projecting $100 million budget shortfalls over the next several years, meaning the Mayor, City Council, and City Administration will need to identify services to reduce in order to balance the City's budget. To help Oakland officials make these difficult decisions, please consider the following potential budget and service reductions and indicate how acceptable it would be to you personally if that reduction was made to help balance the City's budget: completely acceptable, somewhat acceptable, not too acceptable, or not at all acceptable.

Residents were most open to reducing spending on fairs, graffiti clean up, and cosmetic improvements for small businesses.



Q5. To help Oakland officials make these difficult decisions, please consider the following potential budget and service reductions and indicate how acceptable it would be to you personally if that reduction was made to help balance the City's budget: completely acceptable, somewhat acceptable, not too acceptable, or not at all acceptable. Split Sample

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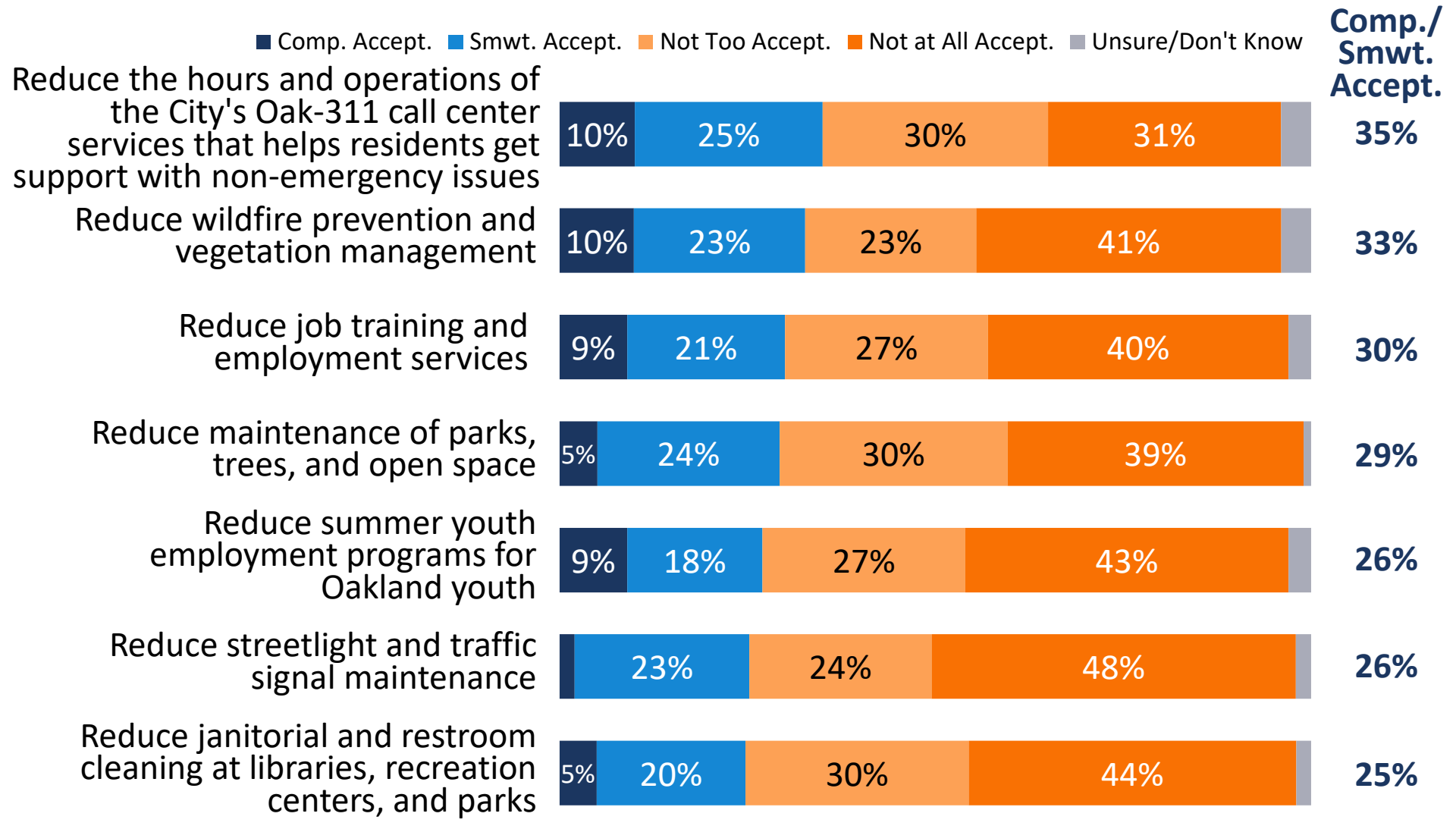
Fewer than two in five felt reductions to fire prevention and parks maintenance were acceptable.



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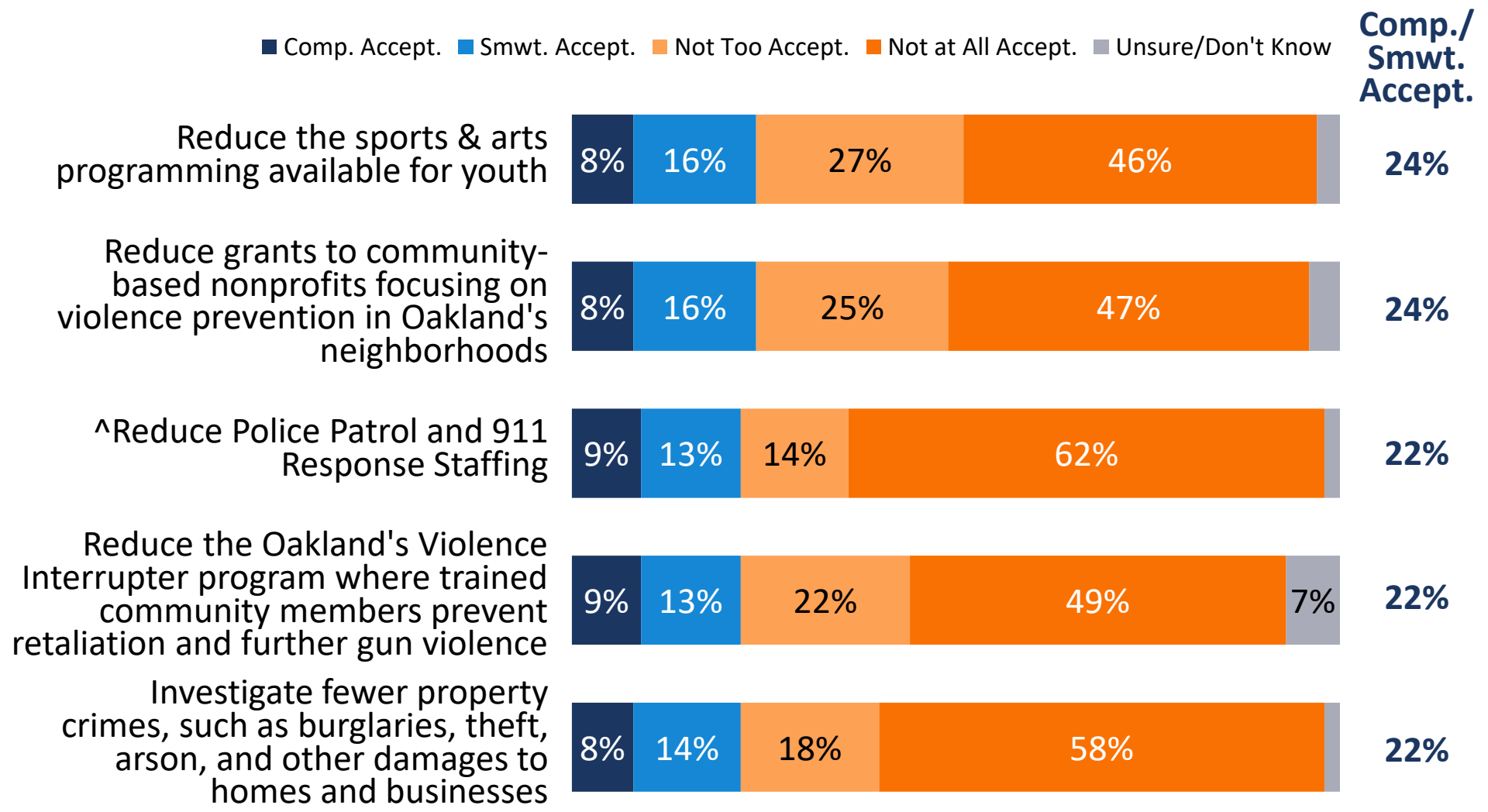
Majorities said reducing police patrols and property crime investigation was "not at all acceptable."



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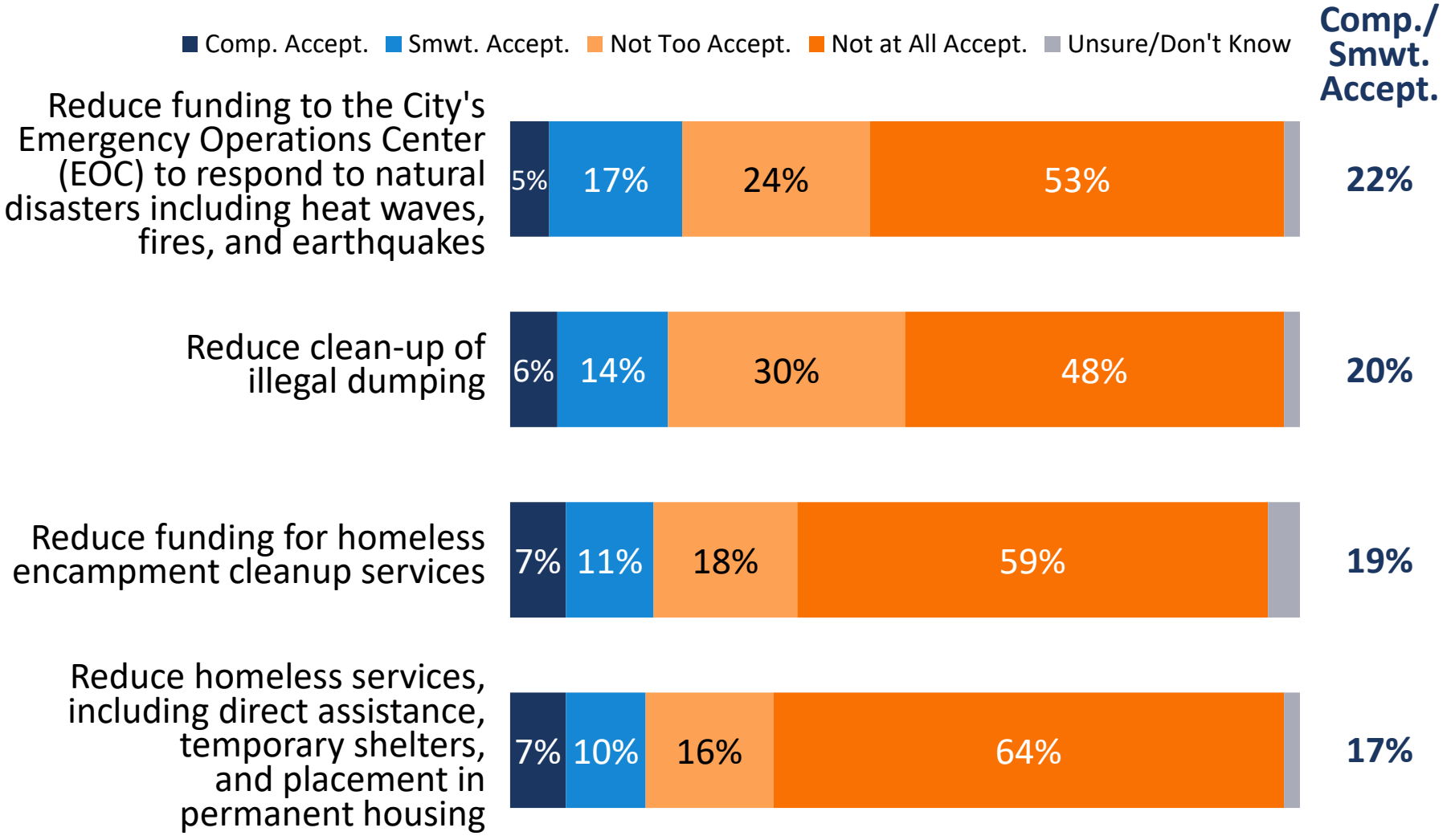
Three in five said reductions to services for the unhoused were "not at all acceptable."



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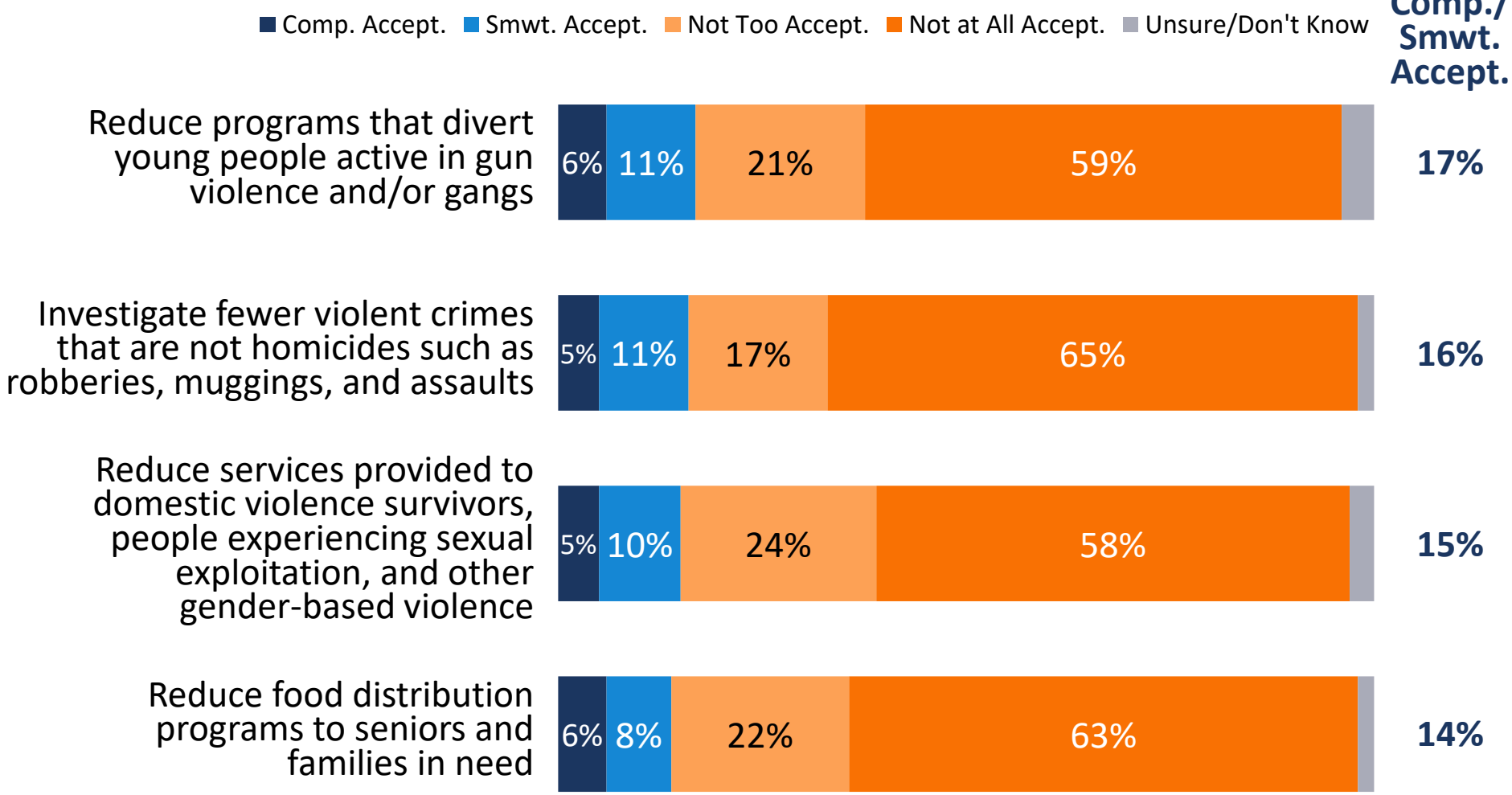
The least-acceptable reductions include victim services, violent crime investigation, and food distribution.



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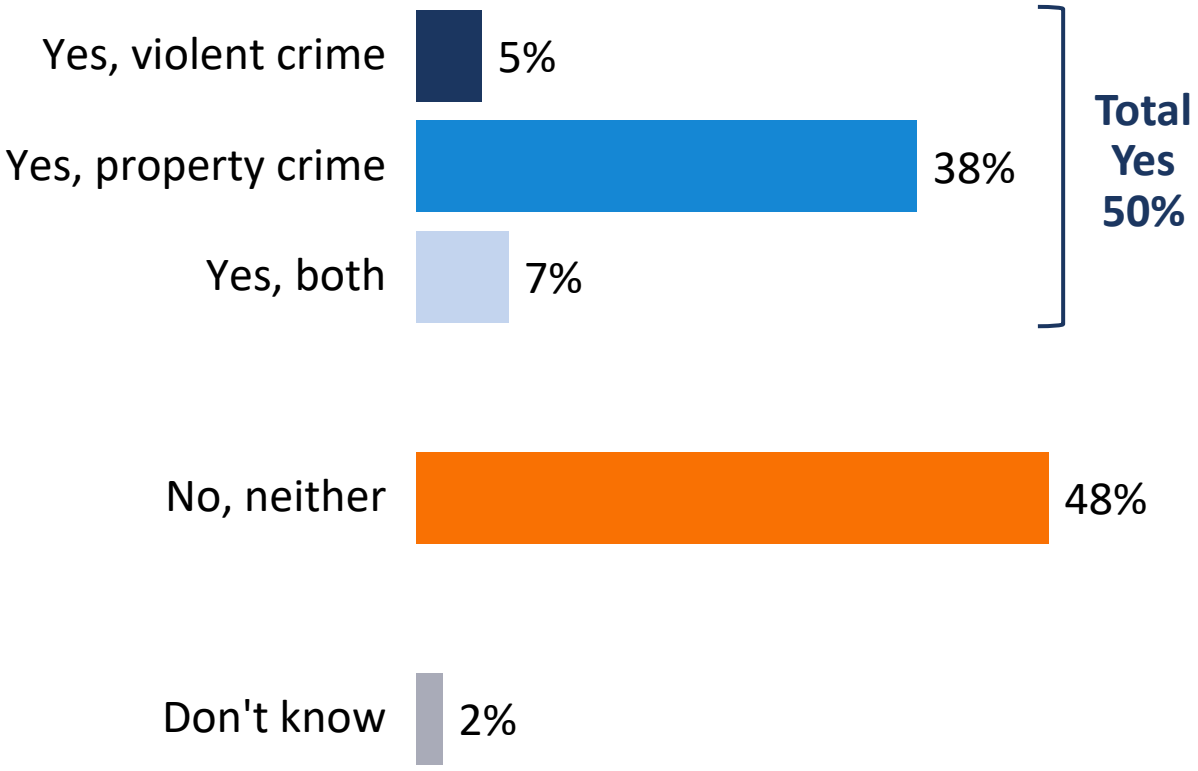
Group	Top 3 "Completely or Somewhat Acceptable" to Cut	Top 3 "Not At All Acceptable to Cut"
White Residents Ages 18-49	• Fairs and festivals (77%) • Graffiti clean up (73%) • Small business façade improvements (66%)	• Homeless services (84%) • Food distribution programs (73%) • Domestic violence services (66%)
White Residents Ages 50+	• Fairs and festivals (80%) • Small business façade improvements (75%) • Cultural art grants (62%)	• Police/911 response staffing (79%) • Investigating violent crime (70%) • Homeless services (68%)
Latino Residents Ages 18-49	• Fairs and festivals (74%) • Graffiti clean up (73%) • Small business façade improvements (66%)	• Food distribution programs (65%) • Domestic violence services (61%) • Police/911 staffing & youth anti-violence (60%)
Latino Residents Ages 50+	• Fairs and festivals (64%) • Graffiti clean up (48%) • Small business façade improvements (45%)	• Police/911 response staffing (75%) • Investigating violent crime (70%) • Streetlights/traffic signals (69%)
African American Residents Ages 18-49	• Graffiti clean up (57%) • Small business façade improvements (55%) • Parks/trees/open space maintenance (44%)	• Homeless services (75%) • Food distribution programs (70%) • Domestic violence services (69%)
African American Residents Ages 50+	• Fairs and festivals (52%) • Small business façade improvements (48%) • Street maintenance (45%)	• Youth anti-violence programs (79%) • Investigating violent crime (77%) • Police/911 staffing & property crime (76%)
Asian/Pacific Islander Residents Ages 18-49	• Fairs and festivals (89%) • Graffiti clean up (76%) • Senior centers (69%)	• Investigating violent crime (69%) • Investigating property crime (65%) • Homeless encampment clean-up (63%)
Asian/Pacific Islander Residents Ages 50+	• Fairs and festivals (75%) • Cultural arts grants (66%) • Sports and arts programming (65%)	• Police/911 response staffing (72%) • Investigating property crime (66%) • Investigating violent crime (56%)

Public Safety Investments

Half of residents reported being a victim of crime in recent years; for most, it was property crime.

Have you been the victim of a crime in Oakland in the past 5 years?



Violent crime victims are disproportionately the housing insecure, unemployed, and low-income residents.

Property crime victims are disproportionately ages 40-49, Latinos ages 50+, high-income residents, and residents of Police Districts 1, 2 and 5.

Q17.

Sample Verbatim Responses on Improving Safety

In a few words of your own, what would make you feel safer living in Oakland?

More police patrols and violence interrupters. More immediate assistance and management of mentally ill homeless people.

If when I called about a problem the police showed soon, and not in 3 days.

Less crime and homeless, and slower traffic on city streets.

Reduced crime including car and home break-ins.

More of a community-first feeling. Less feelings like people have to take care of themselves first because they can't count on community. More opportunities.

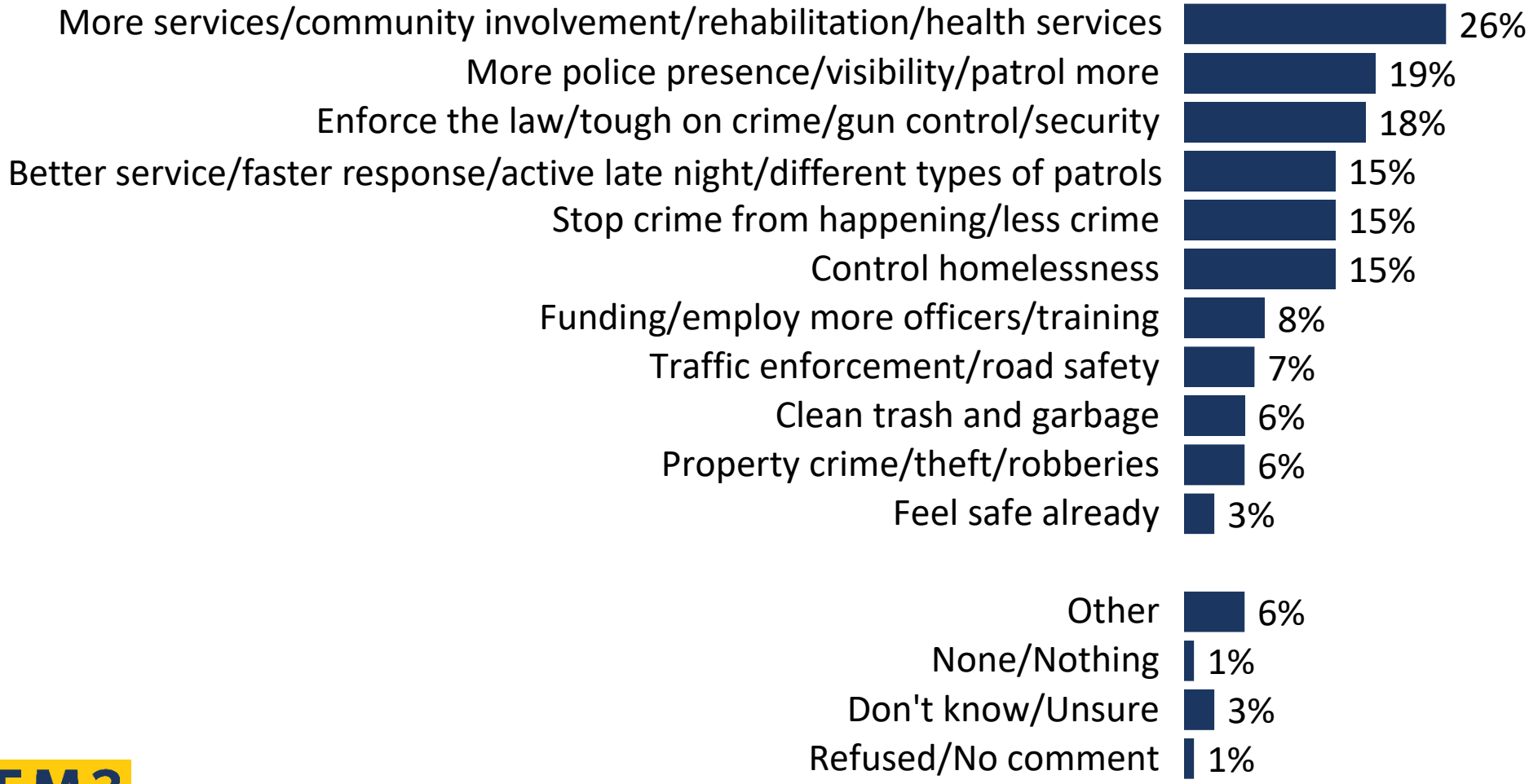
Programs for boys and girls. If there were better schools.

If I felt like criminals were actually being caught and jailed and the police department was actually visible and accountable and well-staffed, I would feel safer.

I would feel safer if there were educational and cultural opportunities for Black and brown youth, including living wage job programs to focus on beautifying Oakland and new affordable housing especially in the flatlands, east and west Oakland.

Residents report that more services and more police visibility would make them feel safer.

In a few words of your own, what would make you feel safer living in Oakland?
(Open-Ended; Total 3% and Above Shown)



Q7.

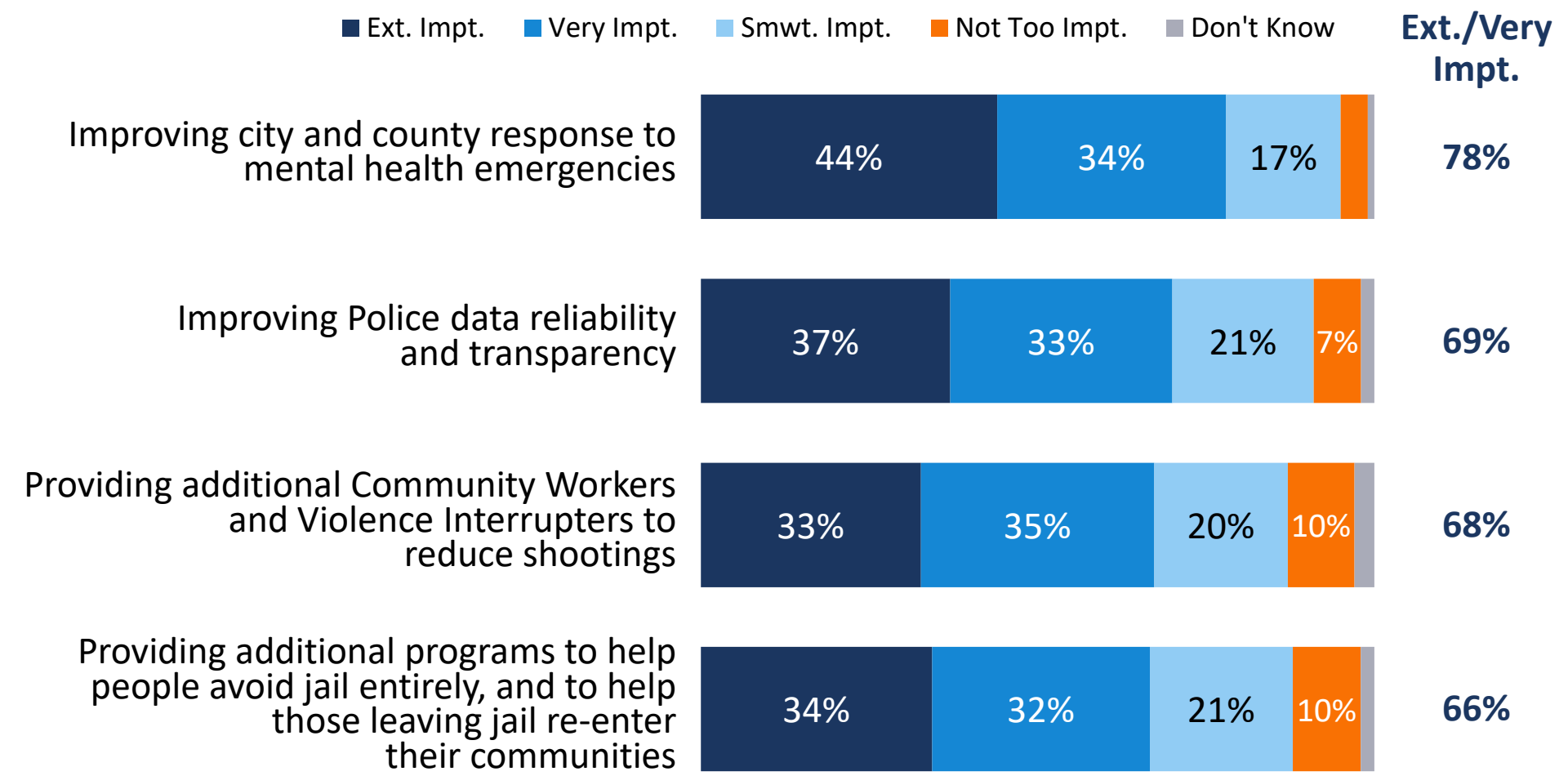
Residents heard or read information about public safety in the Oakland budget and the Reimagining Task Force.

As you may know, 38% of the City's budget general fund is allocated to police services. However, there are many potential budget items that can have an impact on community safety and in 2020, the City Council created a task force to reimagine Oakland's public safety system. The goals were to increase community safety through alternative responses to calls for assistance, and investments in programs that address the root causes of violence and crime along with the goal of reducing the Oakland Police Department budget allocation. The task force came up with 151 recommendations and we'd like to ask you about some of the higher priority recommendations that would have budget implications.

I am going to read you a list of some specific Task Force recommendations that would cost the City additional money to adopt. While this may be challenging given the City's projected budget shortfalls, understanding the community's priorities can still be very helpful with the City's planning.

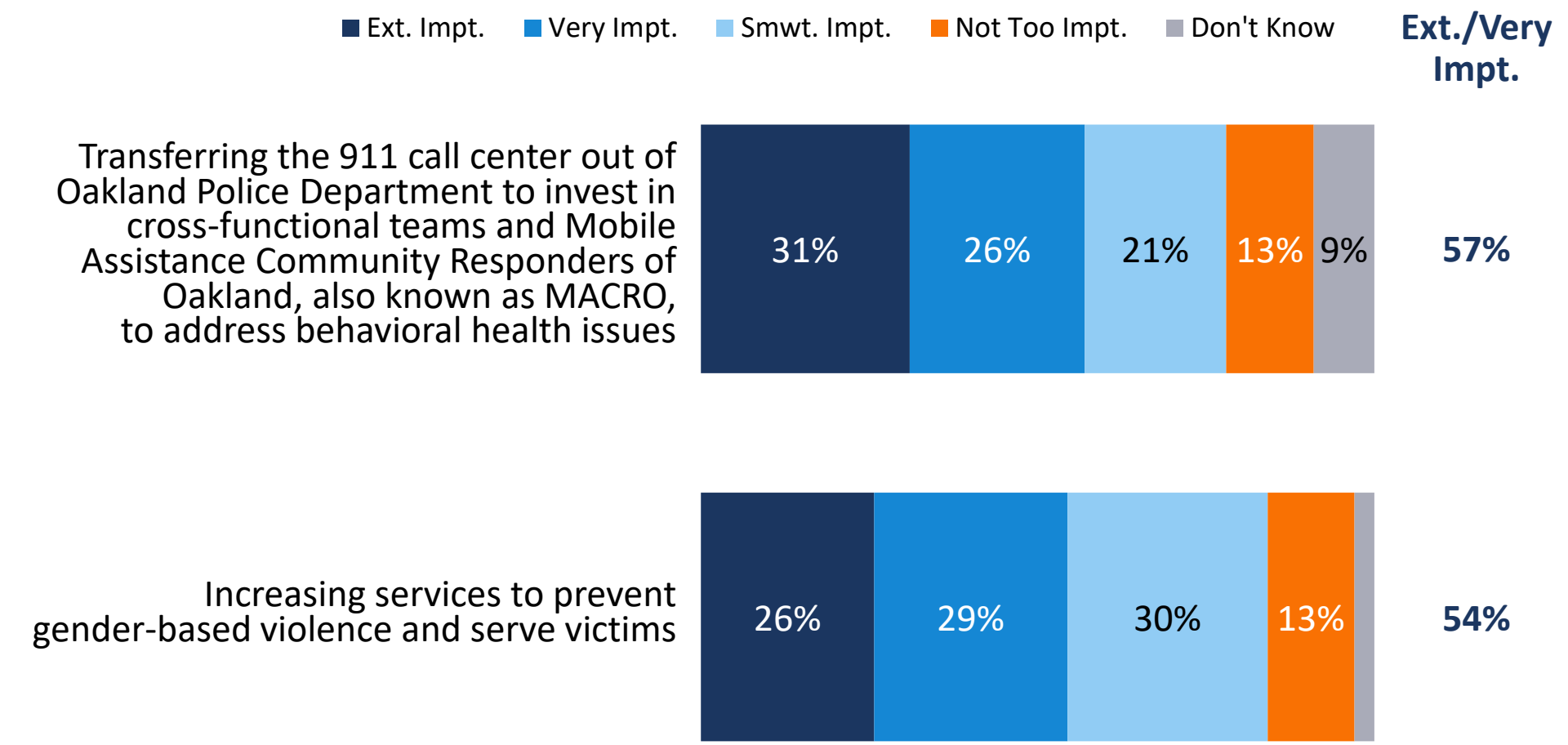
Q6. Please tell me whether you think it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important for the City to identify the resources necessary to adopt that recommendation.

Residents' top-ranking recommendation was improved mental-health response.



Q6. Please tell me whether you think it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important for the City to identify the resources necessary to adopt that recommendation.

Majorities rate transferring 911 calls out of the Police Department as important, but with less intensity than other recommendations.

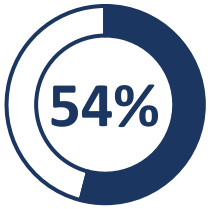


Q6. Please tell me whether you think it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important for the City to identify the resources necessary to adopt that recommendation.

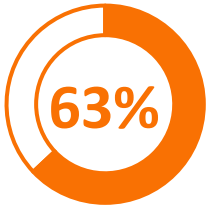
Group	Top 3 "Extremely or Very Important"	Top 3 "Not Too Important"
White Residents Ages 18-49	• Mental health emergencies (82%) • Avoid jail/re-enter from jail (77%) • Additional community workers (68%)	• Increasing gender-based violence services (19%) • Transferring 911 call center (17%) • Additional community workers (17%)
White Residents Ages 50+	• Mental health emergencies (82%) • Additional community workers (68%) • Police data reliability/transparency (67%)	• Transferring 911 call center (13%) • Avoid jail/re-enter from jail (13%) • Increasing gender-based violence services (12%)
Latino Residents Ages 18-49	• Mental health emergencies (77%) • Police data reliability/transparency (73%) • Additional community workers (61%)	• Additional community workers (14%) • Increasing gender-based violence services (13%) • Transferring 911 call center (12%)
Latino Residents Ages 50+	• Mental health emergencies (80%) • Police data reliability/transparency (71%) • Additional community workers (61%)	• Transferring 911 call center (19%) • Avoid jail/re-enter from jail (19%) • Increasing gender-based violence services (13%)
African American Residents Ages 18-49	• Mental health emergencies (83%) • Avoid jail/re-enter from jail (71%) • Additional community workers (69%)	• Increasing gender-based violence services (16%) • Police data reliability/transparency (15%) • Additional community workers (14%)
African American Residents Ages 50+	• Mental health emergencies (85%) • Additional community workers (78%) • Police data reliability/transparency (76%)	• Increasing gender-based violence services (13%) • Transferring 911 call center (11%) • Police data reliability/transparency (5%)
Asian/Pacific Islander Residents Ages 18-49	• Additional community workers (71%) • Mental health emergencies (70%) • Police data reliability/transparency (69%)	• Increasing gender-based violence services (13%) • Avoid jail/re-enter from jail (11%) • Transferring 911 call center (10%)
Asian/Pacific Islander Residents Ages 50+	• Police data reliability/transparency (77%) • Mental health emergencies (72%) • Additional community workers (60%)	• Avoid jail/re-enter from jail (22%) • Increasing gender-based violence services (16%) • 911 call center & community workers (10%)

Conclusions

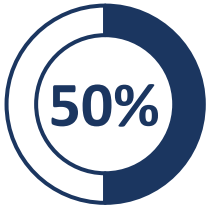
Key Numbers: Big Picture Takeaways



Feel Oakland is an “excellent” or “good” place to live, and while a majority, is down five points from the last budget survey



Disapprove of the overall job being done by City government in providing services, an 11-point increase from the last budget survey



Say homelessness or housing costs is their top priority for the City budget

Summary: It’s clear that perceptions of the quality of life, though still positive overall, have continued to decline. Broad majorities also disapprove of City government’s work providing services. Residents clearly want the City to focus on housing and homelessness, with crime and violence also ranking as a key concern.

Key Numbers: Budget Tradeoffs

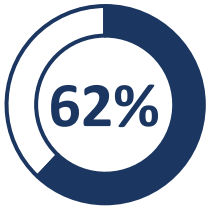
3 The number of city services (out of 27) at least 50% of residents said were “completely” or “somewhat acceptable” to reduce

18 The number of city services (out of 27) that more than two-thirds of residents said were “not too” or “not at all acceptable” to reduce

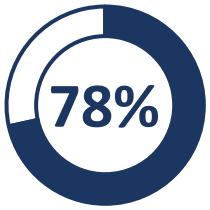
9 The number of services (out of 27) that majorities said were “not at all acceptable” to reduce in the City budget

Summary: Residents do not have much enthusiasm for budget cuts resulting in service reductions. While this is challenging in making budget decisions, likely driven by low satisfaction with overall current service levels. Relatively speaking, they are most comfortable with reductions to fairs and festivals, graffiti removal, and small-business façade repair. They are least comfortable with reductions to crime-victim services and investigation, as well as support for people experiencing food insecurity and services for people who are unhoused.

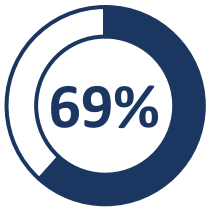
Key Numbers: Policing and Public Safety



Feel it is “not at all acceptable” to reduce police patrols and staffers responding to 911 calls to address the City’s budget shortfall



Feel it is “extremely” or “very” important to improve city and county response to mental health emergencies



Feel it is “extremely” or “very” important to fund improvements to police data transparency despite the budget shortfall

Summary: Residents clearly value additional services to address mental-health emergencies and prevent crime and see “safety” as including many facets beyond crime and policing. At the same time, broad majorities find cuts to police patrols, 911 response and crime investigation “completely unacceptable.” With crime and violence significant concerns, residents currently favor a mix of approaches to these complex problems.

For more information, contact:

FM3 RESEARCH | OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

1999 Harrison St., Suite 2020
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone (510) 451-9521
Fax (510) 451-0384

Curt Below
Curt@FM3research.com

Miranda Everitt
Miranda@FM3research.com