



CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION AGENDA

6:00 PM - Tuesday, May 23, 2023
via Videoconference and In Person

Please Note: The City Council will meet in person as well as via Telephone/Video Conference

Telephone:1-669-444-9171 / Webinar ID: 840 9416 5045

<https://losaltosca.gov.zoom.us/j/84094165045?pwd=b3JHMzloYjZLeDgzWXV3R1I4b1RSdz09>

Passcode: 852751

TO PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON: Members of the public may also participate in person by being present at the Los Altos Council Chamber at Los Altos City Hall located at 1 N. San Antonio Rd, Los Altos, CA

TO PARTICIPATE VIA VIDEO: Follow the link above. Members of the public will need to have a working microphone on their device and must have the latest version of ZOOM installed (available at <https://zoom.us/download>). To request to speak, please use the “Raise hand” feature located at the bottom of the screen.

TO PARTICPATE VIA TELEPHONE: Members of the public may also participate via telephone by calling the number listed above. To request to speak, press *9 on your telephone.

TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS: Prior to the meeting, comments on matters listed on the agenda may be emailed to PublicComment@losaltosca.gov. Emails sent to this email address are sent to/received immediately by the City Council. Please include a subject line in the following format:

PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM ## - MEETING DATE STUDY SESSION

Correspondence submitted in hard copy/paper must be received by 2:00 PM on the day of the meeting to ensure distribution prior to the meeting. Correspondence received prior to the meeting will be included in the public record. .

Public testimony will be taken at the direction of the Mayor, and members of the public may only comment during times allotted for public comments.

AGENDA

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

1. Results of the Updated Community Priorities Survey
2. Receive presentation on management of the Los Altos Heritage Orchard

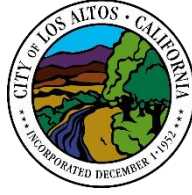
No written materials provided for this item.

ADJOURNMENT**SPECIAL NOTICES TO THE PUBLIC**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Altos will make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk 72 hours prior to the meeting at (650) 947-2610.

Agendas Staff Reports and some associated documents for City Council items may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.losaltosca.gov/citycouncil/online/index.html>. Council Meetings are televised live and rebroadcast on Cable Channel 26.

On occasion the City Council may consider agenda items out of order.



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: May 23, 2023

Subject Results of the Updated Community Priorities Survey

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment(s):

1. Godbe Research Presentation of Survey Results

Initiated by:

City Council

Previous Council Consideration:

The City Council formed a Neighborhood Public Safety Facility Subcommittee and has had various meetings associated with this topic.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact in receiving this report.

Environmental Review:

Not applicable.

Summary:

- The City engaged its longtime polling professional Godbe Research to conduct an updated community priorities survey to evaluate resident opinions on the performance of the City, perception on quality of life, and a funding solution to support public safety services and facilities.
- Results indicated residents are very happy with the performance of the City (75%), are satisfied with quality of life (87%), but were split on supporting a potential ballot measure to support public safety services and facilities where support ranged from 45.8% to 50.2% in favor, within the margin of error for the survey for a 50% +1 requirement measure, and far below the 66.67% required for a special purpose measure.
- As a special purpose requirement measure is far below the threshold of viability, and the city has not come to agreement on whether or not the State's actions and national fiscal climate warrant a declaration of Fiscal Emergency, staff recommends the City Council decline placing a ballot measure at an upcoming election for voter consideration.
- Residents or other interested parties have the option of qualifying a public safety tax at a future election with a simple majority requirement, but this option is not open to government.

Reviewed By:

City Manager

GE

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

JE



Subject: Results of the Updated Community Priorities Survey

Discussion:

The City engaged long-time polling professional Godbe Research to conduct an updated community priorities survey to evaluate resident opinions on the performance of the City, quality of life, constituent priorities, and a potential funding solutions to address public safety services and facilities. Surveys were completed in March and April of 2023 and included a survey instrument of 21 minutes and was offered in both internet and telephone formats. 407 interviews were completed to achieve results that were statistically valid.

The following services were top of mind for residents in the survey:

- Upgrading Fire Stations to accommodate modern firefighting and life-saving emergency medical equipment;
- Updating police/ fire stations to ensure operations during an emergency/rapid emergency response time; and
- Providing a police mental health response team for non-violent 911 calls, including suicide prevention, homelessness, and substance abuse
- Providing a modern and earthquake safe emergency dispatch center to ensure communications between police, fire, and paramedics remain operational in a disaster.

The thematic elements below tracked closely with the services that scored the highest in the survey, which were centered on emergency response, neighborhood safety, and local control:

- **Emergency 911 response times:** *For victims of heart attacks, strokes, accidents and other emergencies, seconds can be the difference between life and death. ...[We must]...help ensure fast emergency response times.*
- **Emergency Communications:** [We must]... update and maintain police facilities and technology so we can maintain 9-1-1 dispatch, crime fighting and investigation services, keep neighborhoods safe, and ensure operations during an emergency
- **Updates for Emergency Operations:** *Los Altos fire stations have not had adequate updates. ...[and need additional funding to]...ensure that they are operational during earthquakes, wildfires, and storms.*
- **Local Control for Local Needs:** Los Altos [must have] control over local funds for local needs - allowing Los Altos to be self-reliant and requiring that our tax dollars be spent for Los Altos residents. No funds can be taken by Sacramento.



Subject: Results of the Updated Community Priorities Survey

The ballot question recommended by Godbe research should the city elect to move forward:

To improve public safety services/ facilities, such as:

- **upgrading fire stations/ life-saving medical equipment;**
- **ensuring operations during emergencies/ rapid response;**
- **providing response team for non-violent 911 calls;**
- **ensuring earthquake safe dispatch center can remain operational in a disaster;**
- **maintaining neighborhood police patrols;**

shall the City of Los Altos measure be adopted adjusting the existing utility users tax to a 7% rate, until ended by voters, providing an additional \$3,100,000 annually, that cannot be taken by Sacramento, including oversight?

For comparison, the ballot question as tested in the survey was:

To improve public safety services/ facilities, such as:

- updating fire stations to ensure operations during an emergency;
- maintaining neighborhood police patrols;
- providing safe/ secure police facilities;
- meeting seismic standards at police/ fire stations; and
- ensuring police operations back-up power during storms;

shall the City of Los Altos measure be adopted adjusting the existing utility users tax to a 7 percent rate, until ended by voters, providing an additional \$3.1 million dollars annually, that cannot be taken by Sacramento, including oversight?

The potential measure was also tested with a Parcel Tax mechanism, which and similarly started and stayed within a 50%+1 margin of error after information was shared, but was more volatile in response to factual information. Neither option tested above the margin of error for a 2/3 majority that would be required for the City to place a special tax on an election. The 50%+1 threshold would only be presented as an option for the City if a general purpose measure was placed on a regularly scheduled municipal election ballot. A general, non-special tax was not tested and should not be considered.

Residents or other interested parties maintain the ability to qualify a special tax for a ballot measure on an election at the 50%+1 threshold.



Subject: Results of the Updated Community Priorities Survey

Additional information on ballot measures and description of the types of taxes can be found at:
www.losaltosca.gov/electioninfo

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council receive the presentation and report from Godbe Research on the results of the commissioned survey.



GODBE RESEARCH
Gain Insight



City of Los Altos:
Highlights of Community Priorities and Potential Revenue
Measure Feasibility Survey
April 2023

Overview and Research Objectives

The City of Los Altos commissioned Godbe Research to conduct a survey of local voters with the following research objectives:

- Gauge the public's satisfaction with the quality of life, as well as perceptions of the City's provision of services and effective management of taxpayer funds;
- Gauge opinion on the future direction of the economy;
- Assess hypothetical support for a parcel tax measure or UUT measure to improve public safety services and facilities with funding that cannot be taken by the State;
- Identify respondent priorities;
- Test the influence of informational and critical statements on potential support; and
- Identify demographic and/or voter behavioral characteristics to validate the representativeness of the sample.

Methodology Overview

- Data Collection Landline (39), cell (64), text to online (286), and email to online (18) interviewing
- Universe 19,473 likely November 2024 voters
- Fielding Dates March 22 through March 30, 2023
- Interview Length 21 minutes
- Sample Size n=407
- Margin of Error $\pm 4.81\%$ Likely November 2024 voters (March 2024 subset $\pm 5.46\%$)

The data have been weighted to reflect the actual population characteristics of likely voters in the City of Los Altos in terms of their gender, age, and political party type.

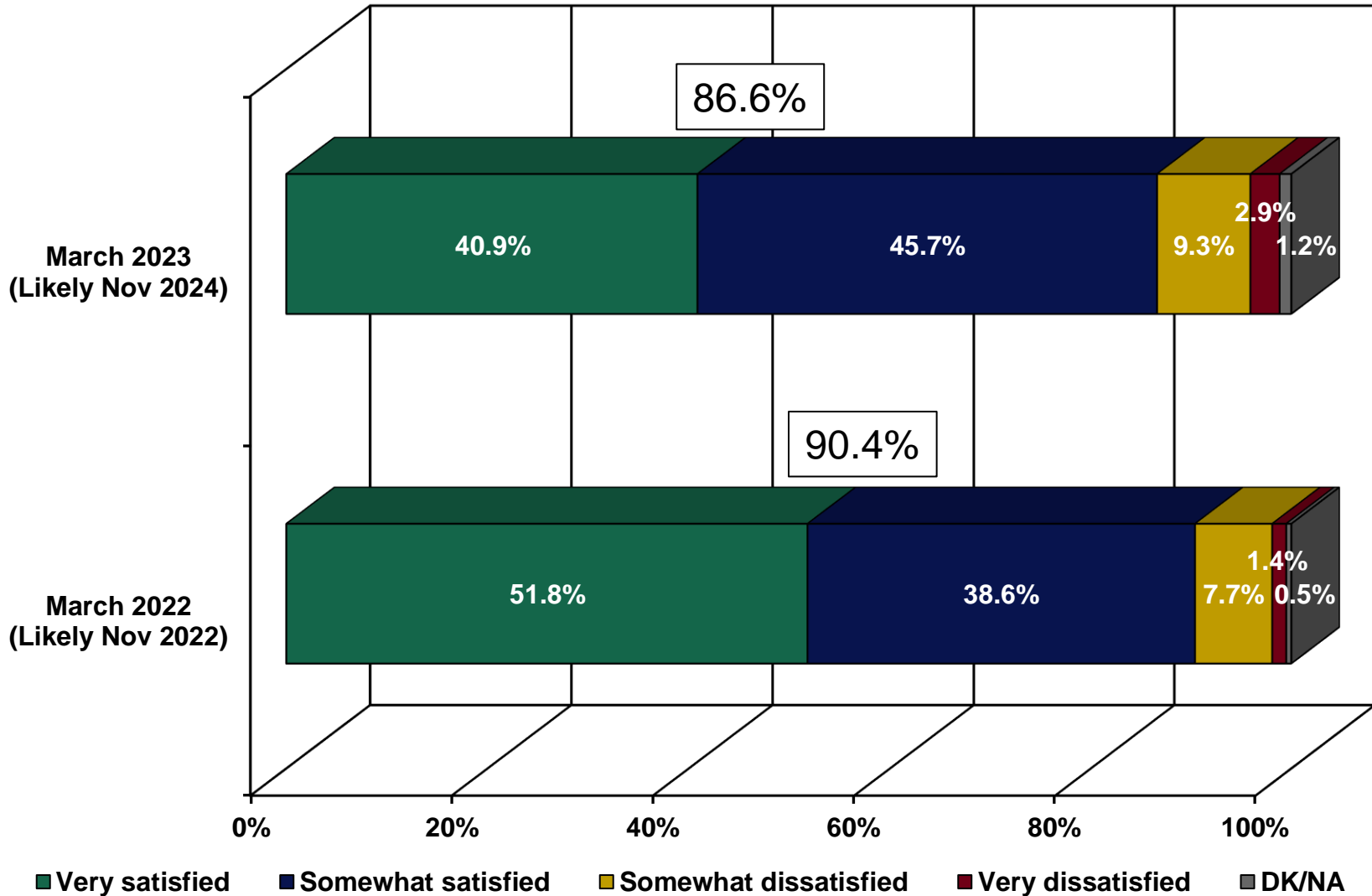


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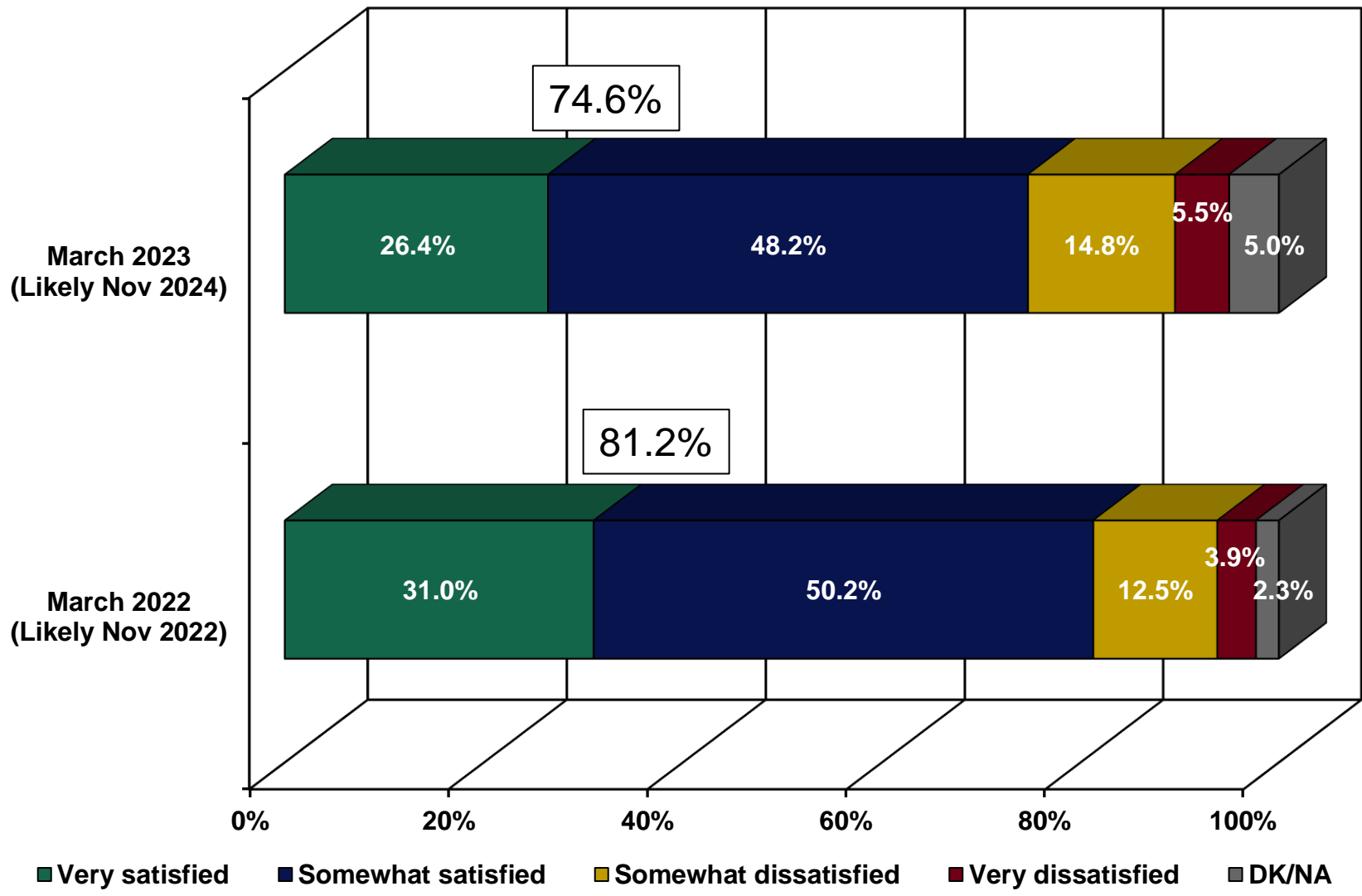


Key Findings

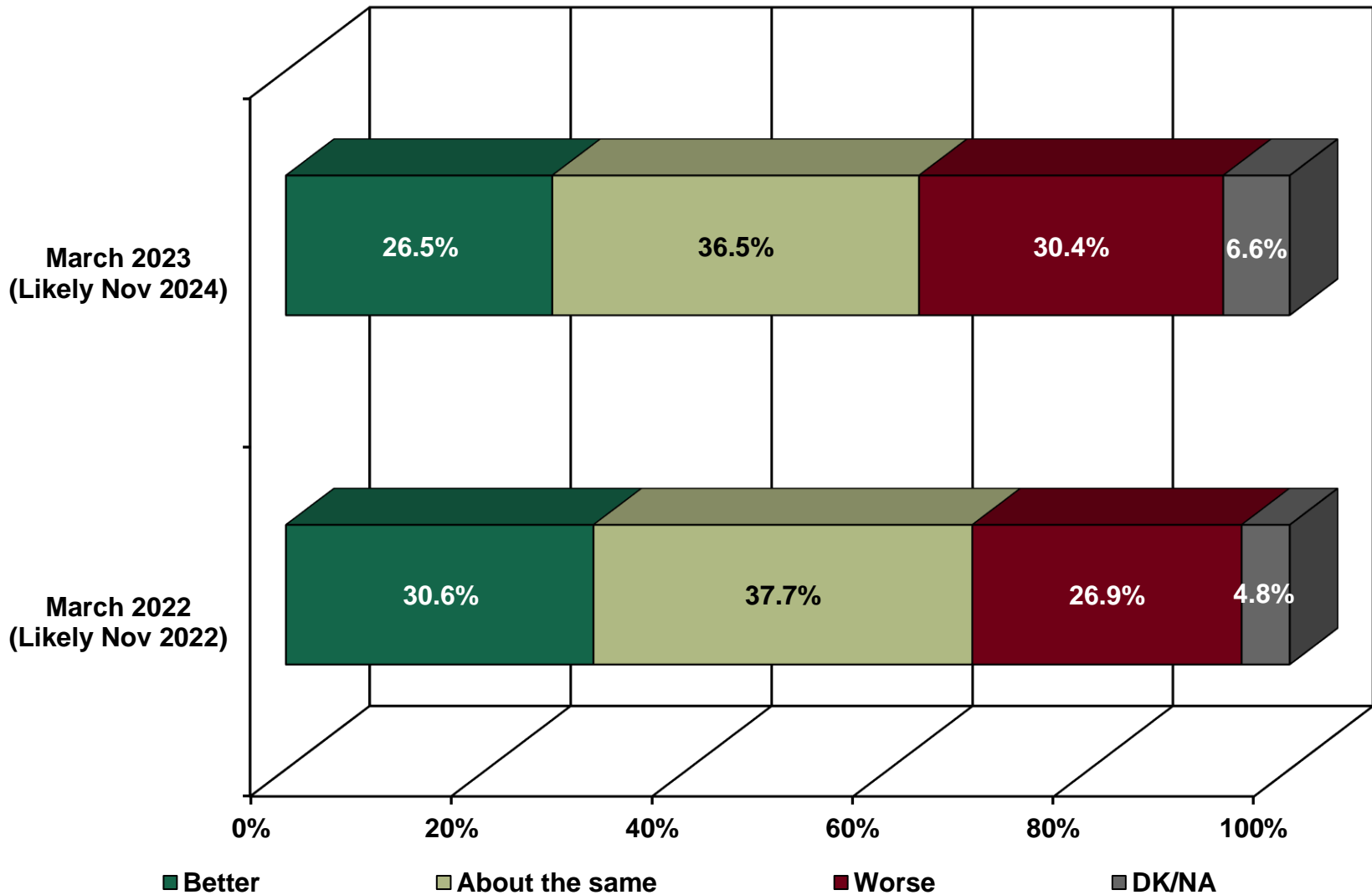
Satisfaction With Overall Quality of Life in the City



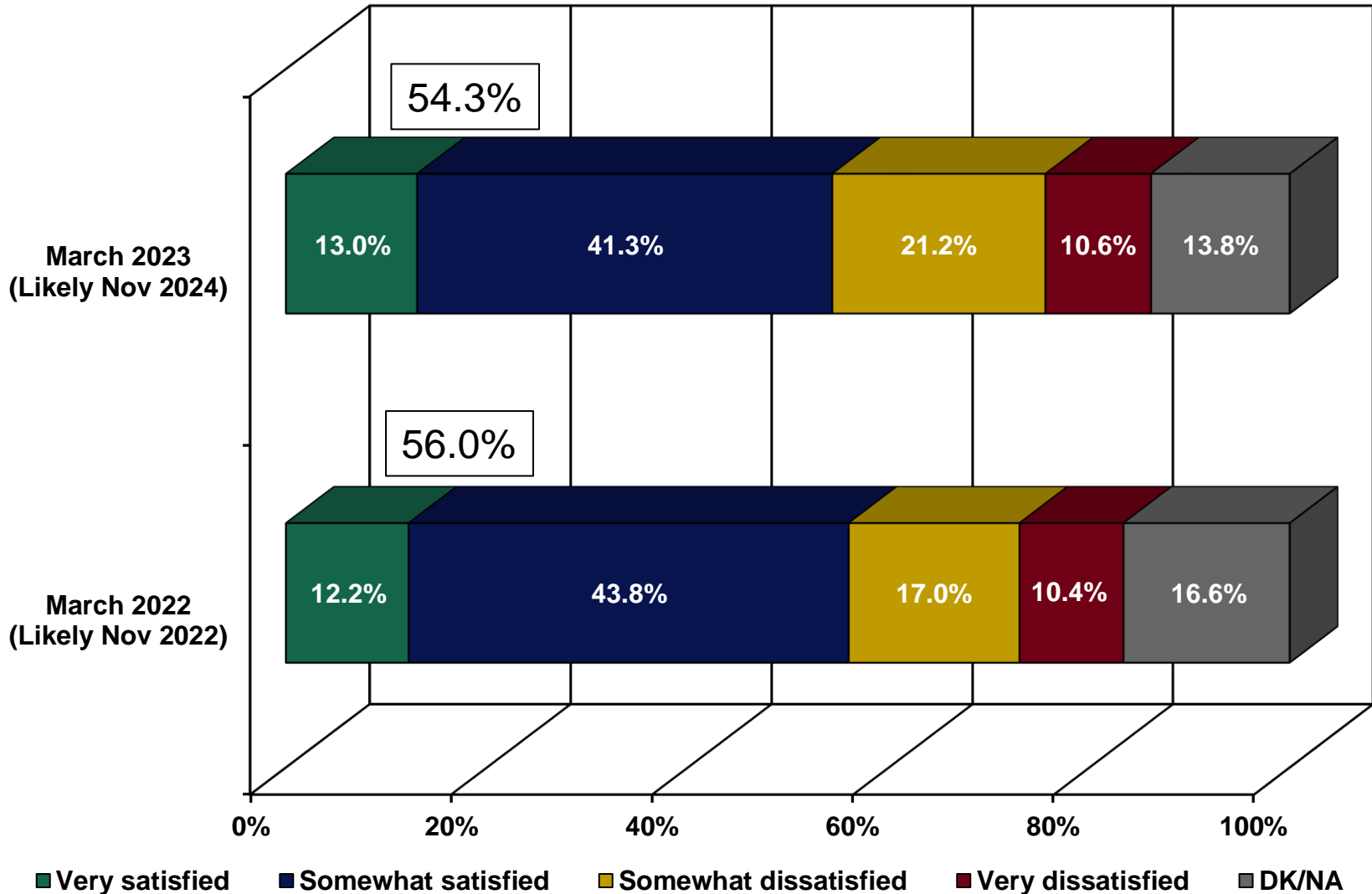
Satisfaction With Provision of City Services



Opinion on Future Direction of Economy



Satisfaction With the City's Spending of Public Funds





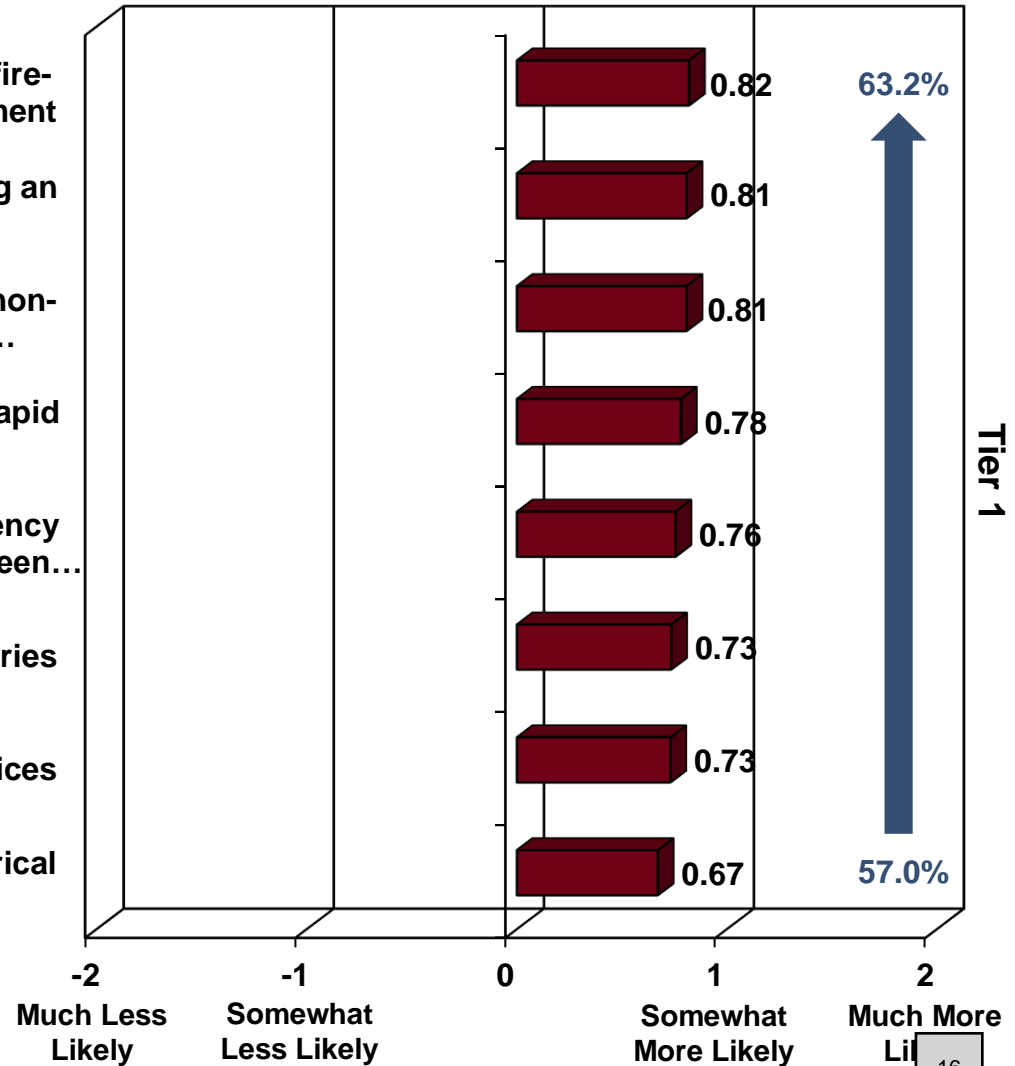
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Respondent Priorities

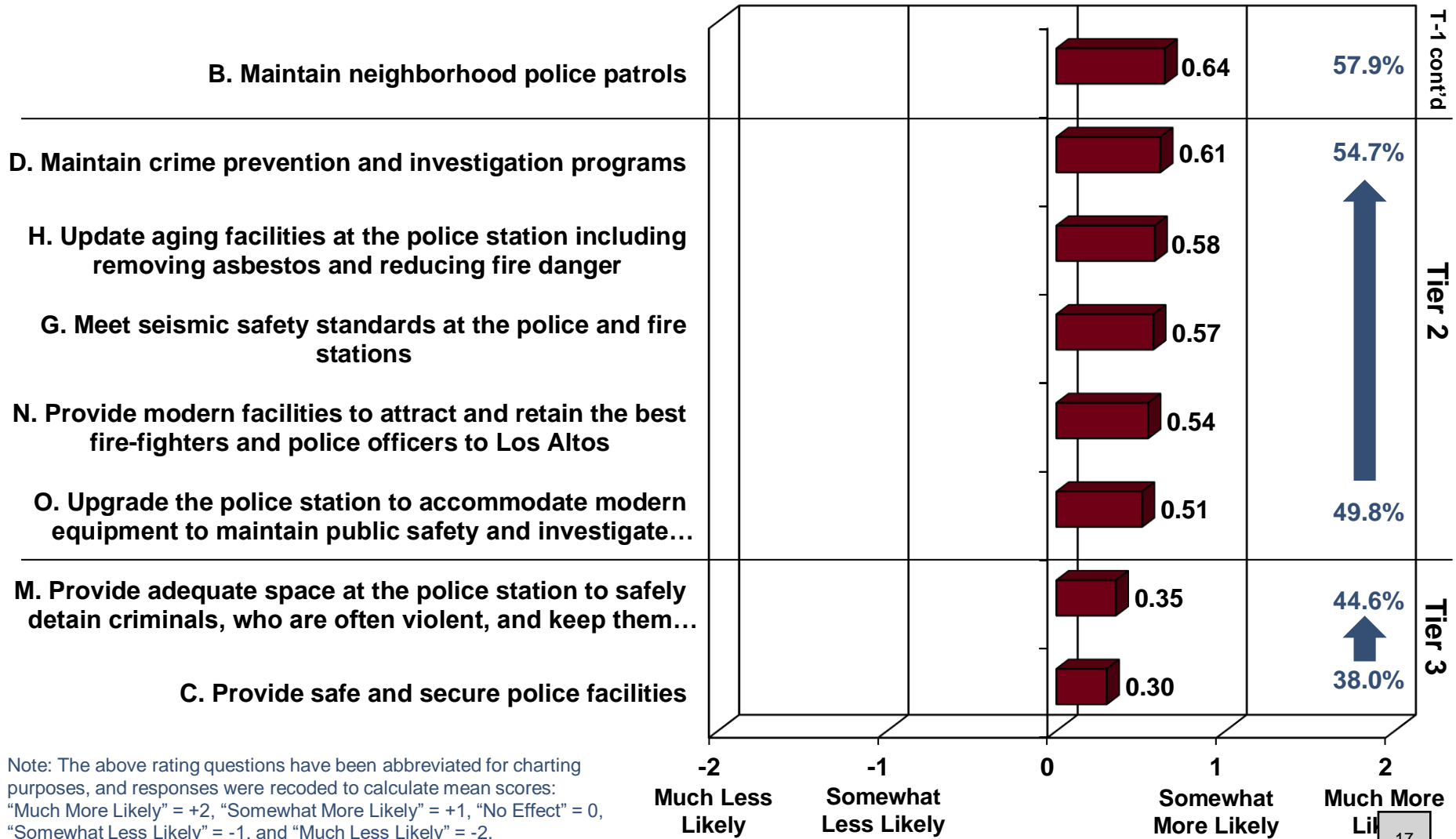
Respondent Priorities I

- L. Upgrade fire stations to accommodate modern fire-fighting and life-saving emergency medical equipment**
- A. Update fire stations to ensure operations during an emergency**
- I. Provide a police mental health response team for non-violent 911 calls, including suicide prevention,...**
- K. Upgrade police and fire stations to ensure rapid emergency response times**
- J. Provide a modern and earthquake safe emergency dispatch center to ensure communications between...**
- P. Provide technology to prevent burglaries**
- E. Maintain fire protection services**
- F. Repair failing fire station roofs, and HVAC and electrical systems**



Note: The above rating questions have been abbreviated for charting purposes, and responses were recoded to calculate mean scores: "Much More Likely" = +2, "Somewhat More Likely" = +1, "No Effect" = 0, "Somewhat Less Likely" = -1, and "Much Less Likely" = -2.

Respondent Priorities II



Note: The above rating questions have been abbreviated for charting purposes, and responses were recoded to calculate mean scores: "Much More Likely" = +2, "Somewhat More Likely" = +1, "No Effect" = 0, "Somewhat Less Likely" = -1, and "Much Less Likely" = -2.

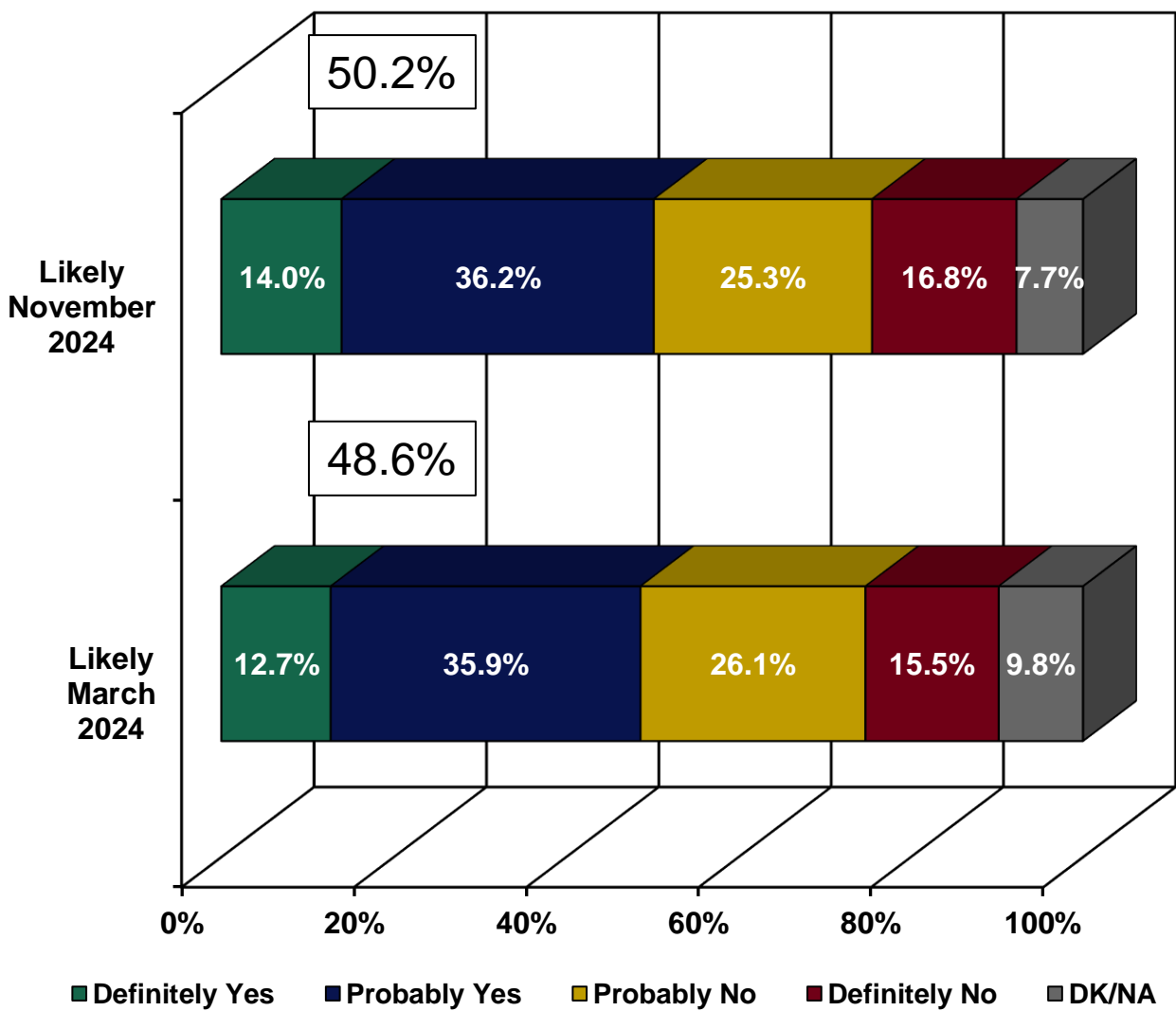


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Interest in Funding Solutions

Initial Hypothetical Support for Parcel Measure Ballot Question Reviewed By City Attorney

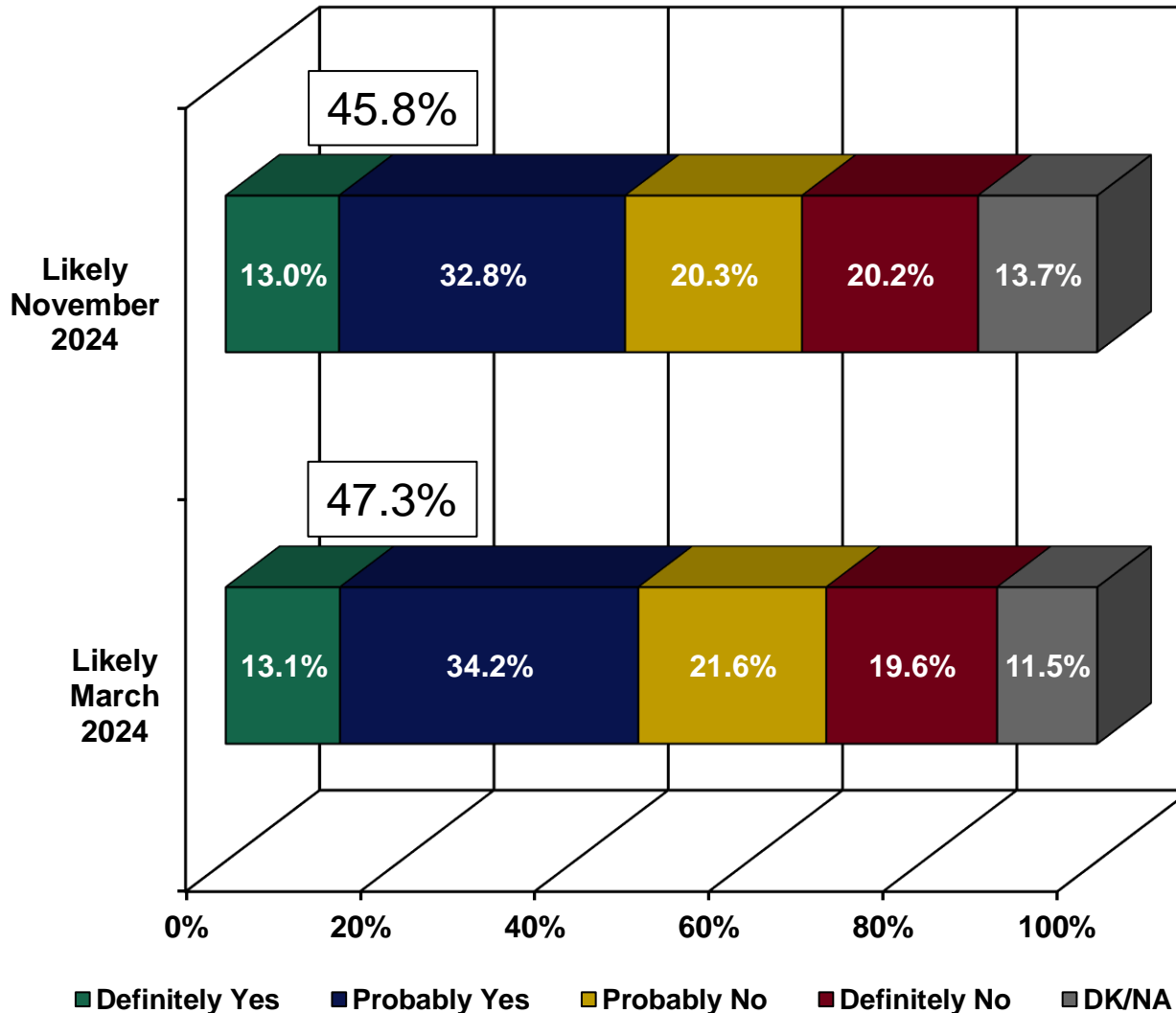


To improve critical public safety services/ facilities, such as:

- updating fire stations to ensure operations during an emergency;
- maintaining neighborhood police patrols;
- providing safe/ secure police facilities;
- meeting seismic safety standards at the police/ fire stations; and
- ensuring back-up power for police operations during storms/ shutdowns;

shall the City of Los Altos measure be adopted establishing a \$275 parcel tax, until ended by voters, providing an additional \$3.1 million dollars annually, that cannot be taken by Sacramento, including citizen oversight?

Initial Hypothetical Support for UUT Measure Ballot Question Reviewed By City Attorney



To improve public safety services/ facilities, such as:

- updating fire stations to ensure operations during an emergency;
- maintaining neighborhood police patrols;
- providing safe/ secure police facilities;
- meeting seismic standards at police/ fire stations; and
- ensuring police operations back-up power during storms;

shall the City of Los Altos measure be adopted adjusting the existing utility users tax to a 7 percent rate, until ended by voters, providing an additional \$3.1 million dollars annually, that cannot be taken by Sacramento, including oversight?



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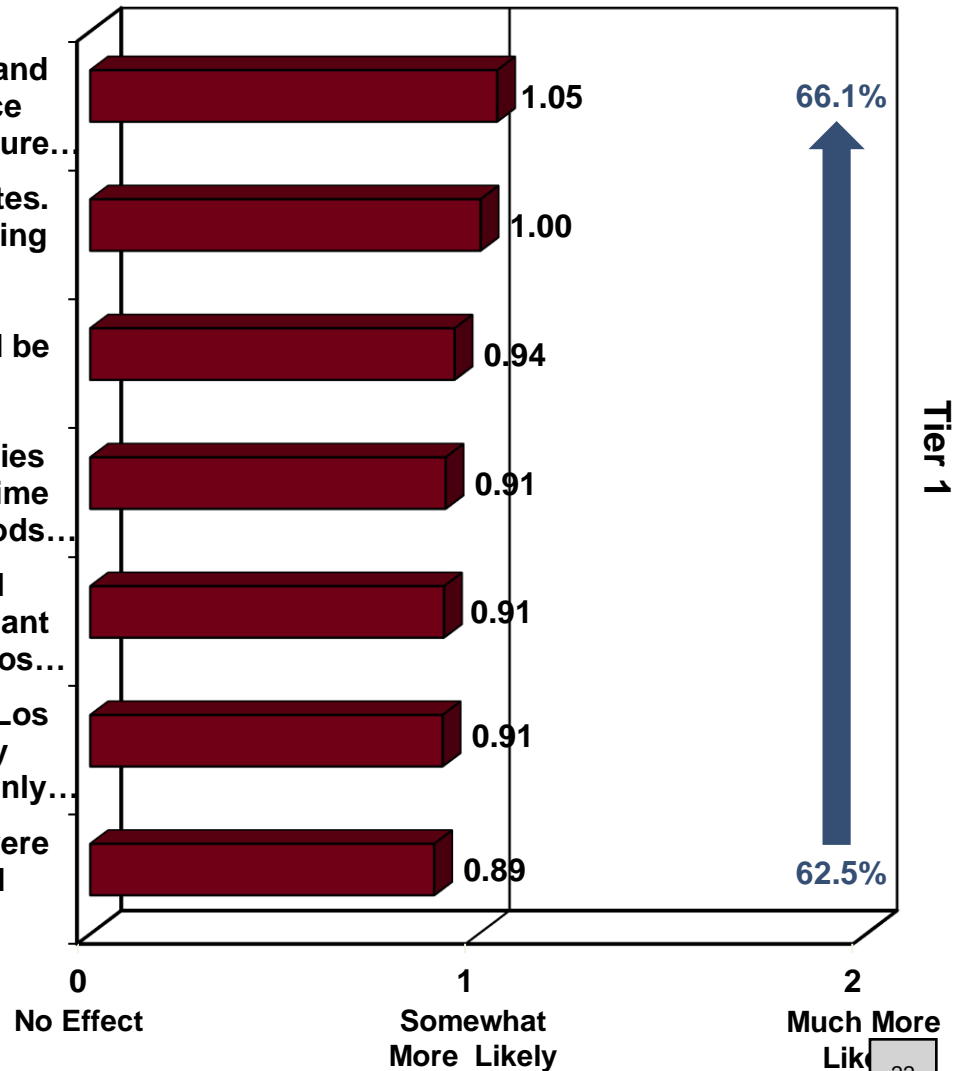


Impact of Information

Informational Statements I

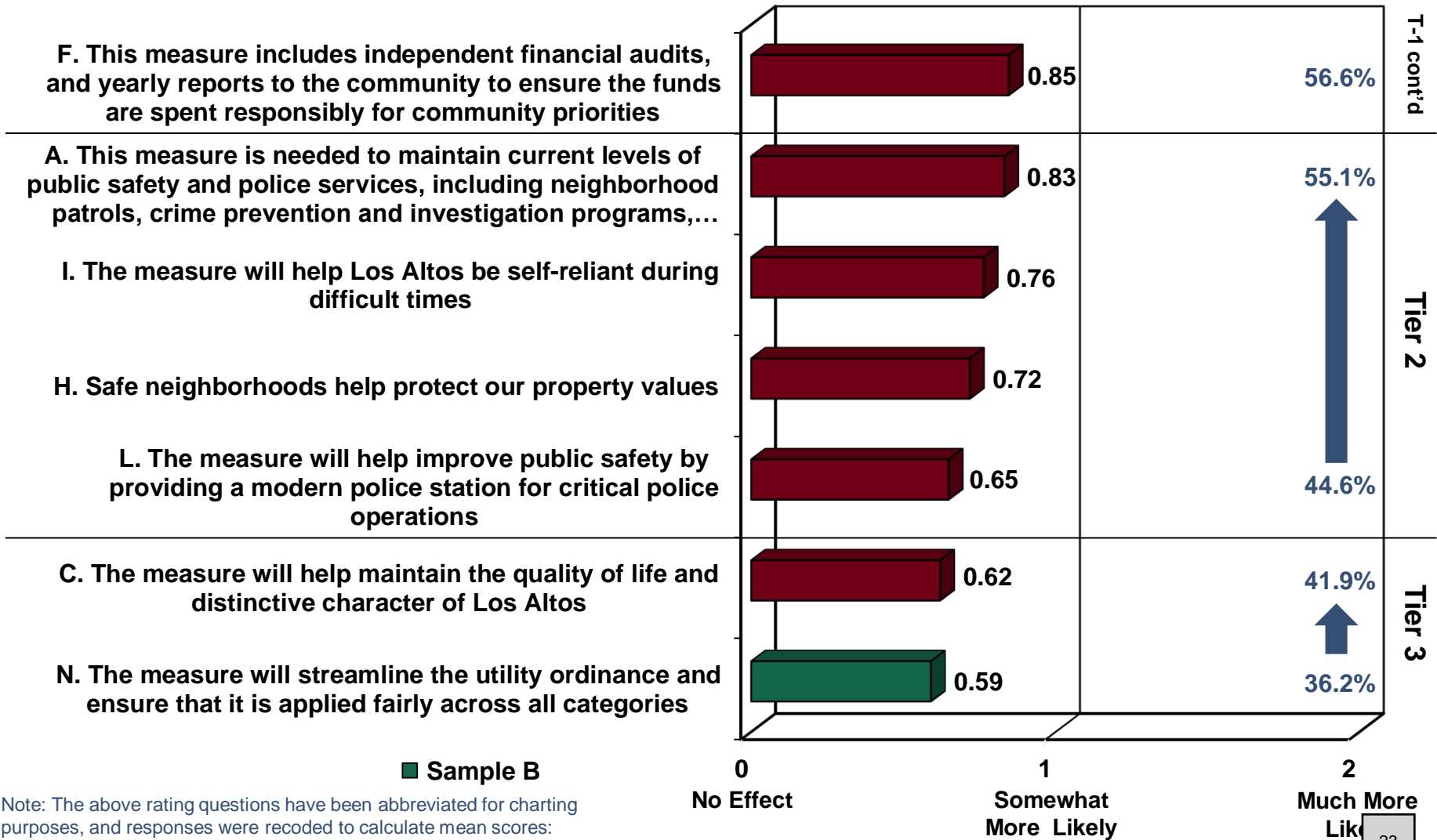
- J. For victims of heart attacks, strokes, accidents and other emergencies, seconds can be the difference between life and death. This measure will help ensure...**
- B. Los Altos fire stations have not had adequate updates. This measure will ensure that they are operational during earthquakes, wildfires and storms**
- D. None of the money raised by the measure would be used for City administrator salaries**
- K. The measure will update and maintain police facilities and technology so we can maintain 9-1-1 dispatch, crime fighting and investigation services, keep neighborhoods...**
- E. The measure will give Los Altos control over local funds for local needs - allowing Los Altos to be self-reliant and requiring that our tax dollars are spent for Los Altos...**
- G. This measure will continue the high standards in Los Altos for fiscal accountability and transparency by requiring that any money generated must be spent only...**
- M. The measure will repair and update facilities that were built more than 60 years ago, and only had minimal maintenance**

■ Sample B



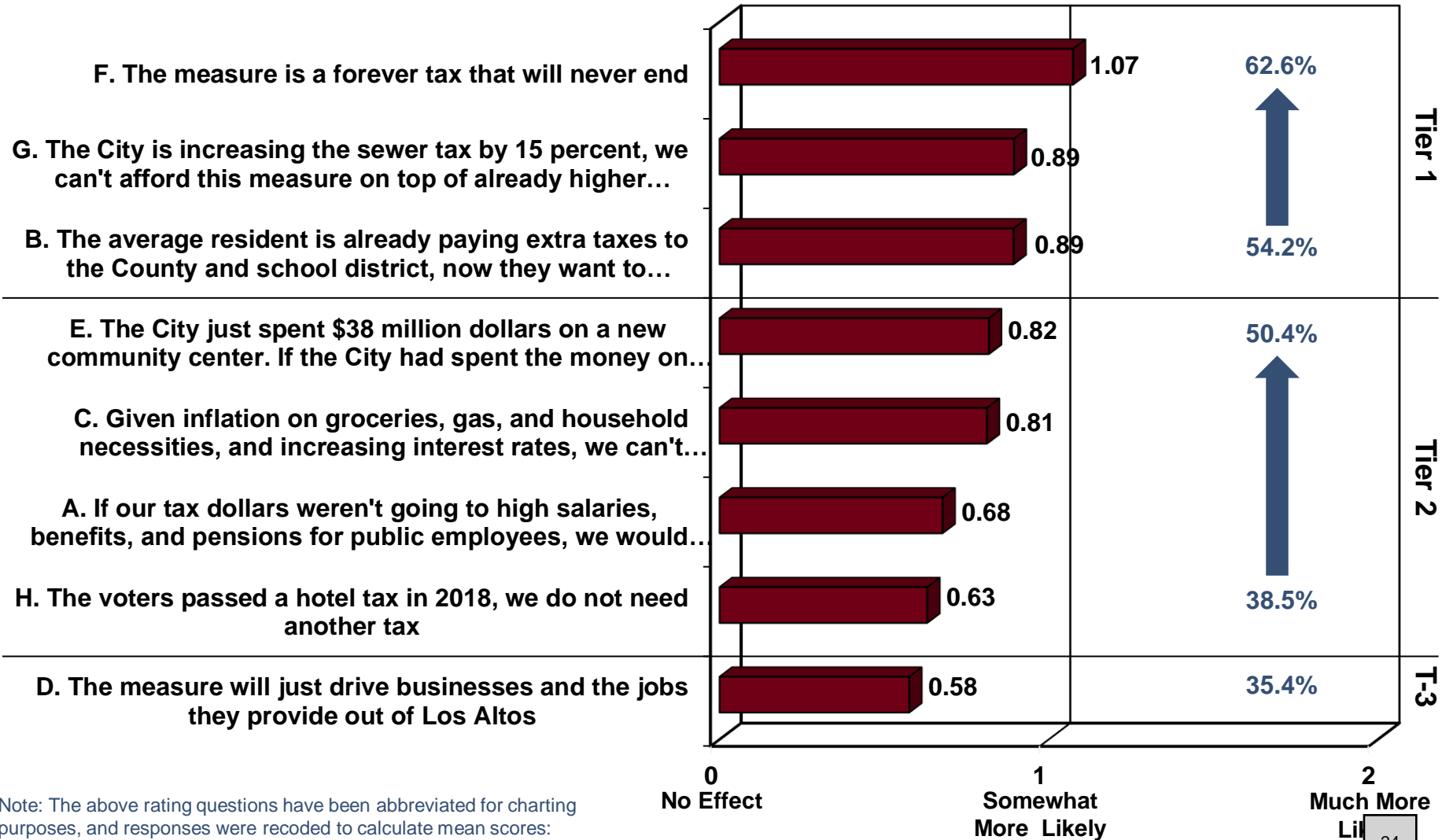
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Informational Statements II



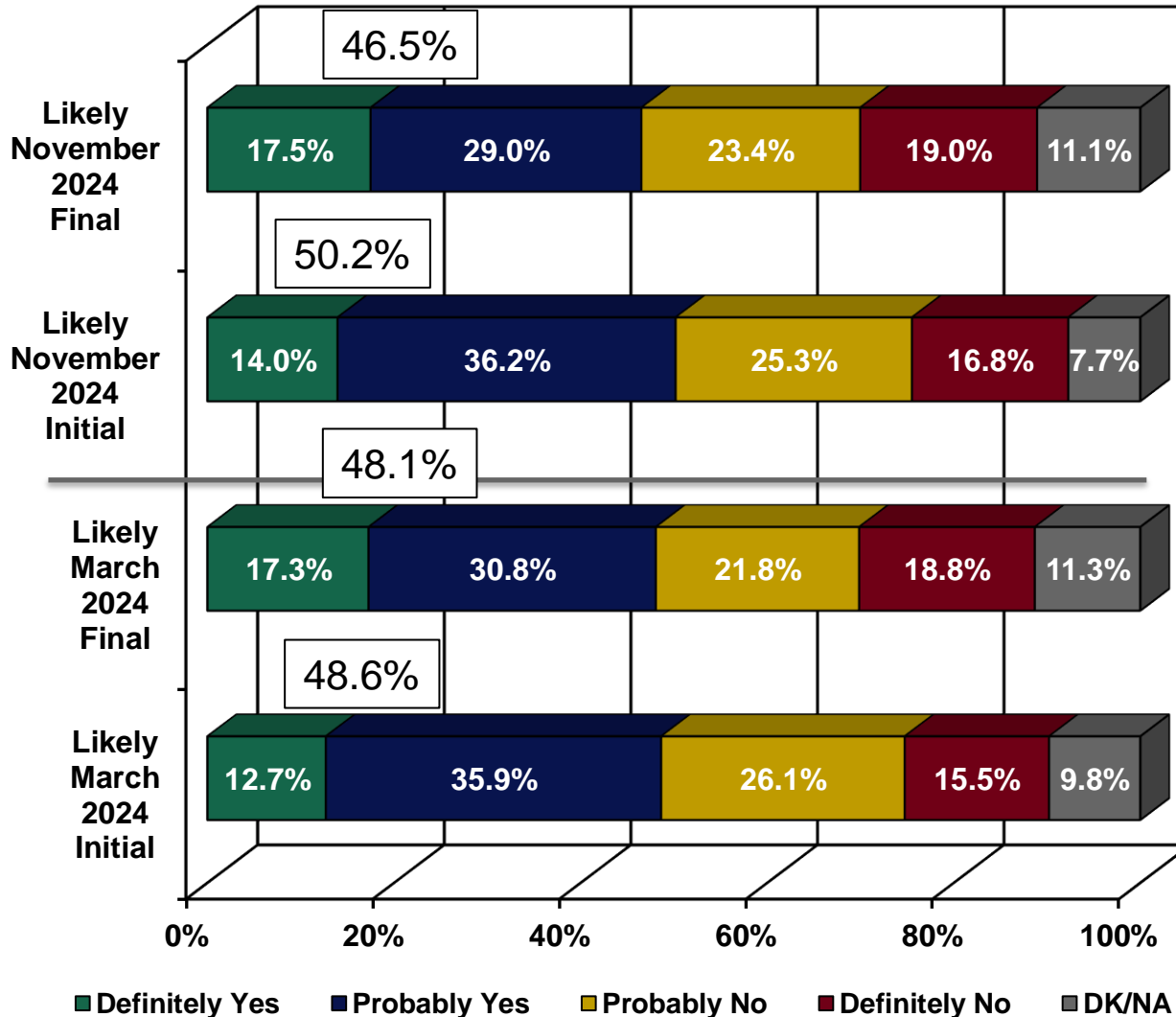
Note: The above rating questions have been abbreviated for charting purposes, and responses were recoded to calculate mean scores: "Much More Likely" = +2, "Somewhat More Likely" = +1, and "No Effect" = 0.

Critical Statements



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Informed Hypothetical Support for Parcel Measure Sample A



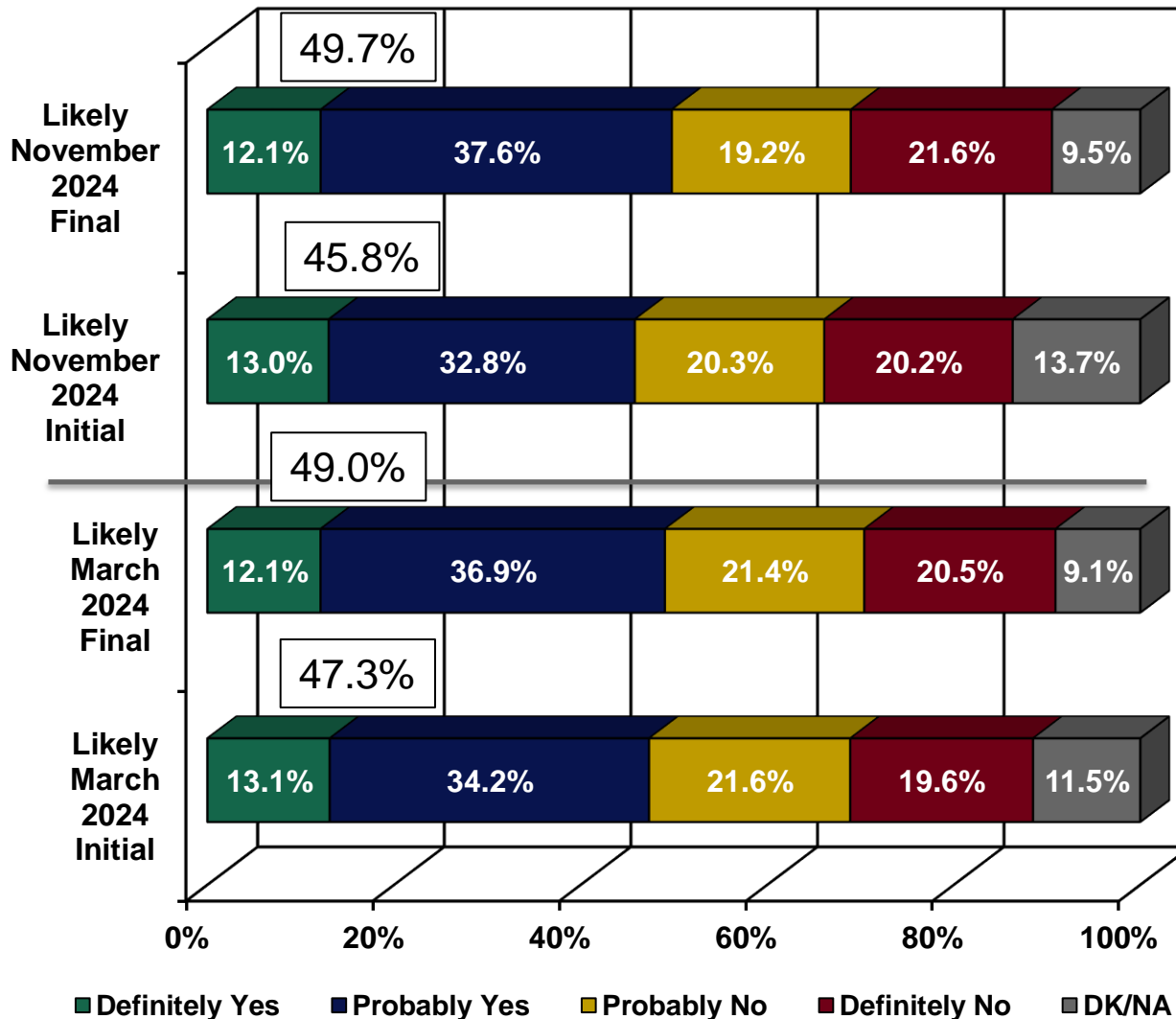
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Informed Hypothetical Support for UUT Measure

Sample B



To improve public safety services/ facilities, such as:

- updating fire stations to ensure operations during an emergency;
- maintaining neighborhood police patrols;
- providing safe/ secure police facilities;
- meeting seismic standards at police/ fire stations; and
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www.godberesearch.com

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Reno, NV 89521



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The following is public correspondence received by the City Clerk's Office after the posting of the original agenda. Individual contact information has been redacted for privacy. This may *not* be a comprehensive collection of the public correspondence, but staff makes its best effort to include all correspondence received to date.

To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

From: [Bill Hough](#)
To: [Public Comment](#); [City Council](#)
Subject: [External Sender]Public Comment, Study Session, May 23,, 2023
Date: Saturday, May 20, 2023 9:21:09 AM

It is no surprise that a tax increase to fund a new police station would not get enough "yes" votes to pass.

Residents are getting mixed messages from City Hall. Pleading poverty, the city wants a new police station while it doubles the sewer tax. At the same time, they plan is to spend public money on a new theater that should be privately funded.

Why not scrap funding for the theater and redirect that money to the new police station?

Bill Hough
Overtaxed resident

From: [Debbie Crouse](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Tanya Momi](#)
Subject: Heritage Orchard Restoration and maintenance
Date: Sunday, May 21, 2023 12:13:00 PM

Hello,

I'm putting a word in to support maintenance and restoration of the Los Altos Heritage Orchard. My requests are two-fold:

- 1) Make it an *immediate* priority to remove weeds. It's a bit of an embarrassment to the community while care for the orchard is debated.

- 2) Assign care for the orchard to The Los Altos History Museum and eliminate this gap in care. They have an excellent track record for caring for the History House and Agricultural Exhibit and have plans established for arranging for care of the orchard.

I support an overall plan of maintaining the orchard as a green space and place of SV history.

Best,

Debbie Crouse
1273 Windimer Dr.

From: [Tom Stevens](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Jane Packard](#); [Nancy Stevens](#); [Mary Popek](#); [Anne Roberts](#)
Subject: Orchard Restoration
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 8:36:45 AM

My wife and I would like to show our support for the Orchard Restoration project headed by Jane Packard. We believe that the orchard is a significant community asset that needs restoration and preservation. We are fortunate to have the leadership of Jane Packard and all of us should be willing to provide her the support she needs.

Thank you,

Tom & Nancy Stevens

From: [Pat Marriot](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT ORCHARD STUDY SESSION MAY 23, 2023
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 9:21:52 AM

Council Members:

I strongly support restoration and care of our Heritage Orchard. It often looks unkempt, full of weeds, which is a shame because it's at the entry point to our Downtown and Civic Center. I'd like to see it fully planted and cared for so we can be proud of preserving a small bit of the Valley of Heart's Delight.

With all the growth in the Bay Area, with all the new projects under the Housing Element, we should be grateful for this last plot of apricots.

Sincerely,

Pat Marriott

From: [Couture, Terri](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: study session ; Los Altos orchard May 23
Date: Sunday, May 21, 2023 8:59:10 AM

Dear Council members

I support restoration of the Los Altos Heritage Orchard. With its excellent track record in caring for the History House and Agricultural Exhibit, the Los Altos History Museum is well suited to take the lead on arranging for orchard care. The trees are a vital part of our history, not to mention all the healthy contributions trees give to our mental and physical health.

thank you Terri Couture & Fred Tuerk

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From: twoblddogs@aol.com
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Heritage Orchard Restoration
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 6:57:49 PM

To Whom It May Concern -

I am writing to offer my support for the restoration of the Los Altos Heritage Orchard. The Los Altos History Museum has an excellent track record in caring for and managing the Paul Smith History House and the Agricultural Exhibit. As such, it is well suited to take the lead on the continued care of the Los Altos Heritage Orchard,

Sincerely,
Lori Tuttle
Los Altos History Museum Volunteer (20+ years).

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)