



**City of Scottsdale Priorities
Survey Report
*December 2023***

Research Overview

- ▶ EMC Research worked with City of Scottsdale staff and the Protect and Preserve Scottsdale Task Force on a research effort designed to understand community priorities related to the Preserve, as well as the current opinions of Scottsdale residents around the City's fiscal environment
- ▶ This research involved two phases:
 - A statistically valid survey, open only to invited Scottsdale voters using random sample methodology
 - A public, open participation feedback tool that any interested Scottsdale resident could participate in
- ▶ In total, 1,733 Scottsdale voters and residents participated in this research effort across the two phases

This report focuses on voter survey findings and highlights some comparisons between the two research populations. Additional open participation feedback results can be found in the appendix.

Methodology: Voter Survey

- ▶ Part I of a two-phase research project
- ▶ Live telephone and online survey of registered voters in the City of Scottsdale
 - Phone interviews were conducted in English by trained, professional interviewers; landlines and mobile phones included (160n)
 - Email and text invitations were sent with link to web survey (240n)
- ▶ Survey conducted October 19-25, 2023
- ▶ 400 interviews; overall margin of error ± 4.90 percentage points
- ▶ *All slides referring to voter survey results are indicated in green*

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Key Findings: Public Open Participation Feedback

- ▶ Part II of a two-phase research project
- ▶ Opt-in online questionnaire open to Scottsdale residents
 - Distributed by the City and administered through the Polco platform, which the City uses to gain feedback and insights from city residents about issues that affect them
- ▶ Conducted October 27 - November 19, 2023
- ▶ Available in English and Spanish
- ▶ 1,333 interviews
- ▶ *All slides referring to open participation results are indicated in purple*

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Key Findings: Voter Survey

- ▶ Voters are optimistic about Scottsdale's direction and the overall quality of life in the city.
- ▶ They see City parks and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as a contributor to Scottsdale's high quality of life, and most voters are willing to invest tax dollars to maintain them.
- ▶ That said, there is some tax sensitivity, with around four-in-ten voters expressing hesitancy around the City's use of tax dollars.
- ▶ A majority of voters believe the City needs additional funding to maintain, improve, and operate parks and recreational sites and facilities, and rate many aspects as high priorities for funding.
- ▶ Voters respond positively to the overall idea of funding the Preserve and other Scottsdale parks and recreation facilities without increasing the tax rate. Most voters also see the more specific mechanisms of replacing an expiring tax and expanding the allowable uses of another tax as good ideas, but enthusiasm declines after they learn more about the specifics.

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Key Findings: Public Open Participation Feedback

- ▶ Overall, the open participation respondents hold similar sentiments to voters and are positive about the quality of life in Scottsdale. Similarly, this group sees the value in parks and facilities and believes they should be supported by taxes.
- ▶ Respondents to the open participation research were more likely to express uncertainty when rating the conditions of the Preserve and City parks.
- ▶ Priorities for open participation respondents were largely similar to voters' opinions.
- ▶ Like voters, those who participated in the open participation research are in favor of maintaining parks and facilities and believe funding them through replacing and expanding the existing taxes is a good idea. However, when exposed to more information about mechanisms, support softens.

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Profile of Research Respondents

Gender

	<u>Voter Survey</u>	<u>Open Participation</u>
Male	48%	50%
Female	52%	45%

Age

	<u>Voter Survey</u>	<u>Open Participation</u>
18-29	15%	1%
30-39	12%	4%
40-49	12%	9%
50-64	26%	31%
65+	35%	55%

Ethnicity

Identify as...	<u>Voter Survey</u>	<u>Open Participation</u>
White	80%	87%
Black	1%	0%
Hispanic	3%	2%
Asian	3%	1%
Else	14%	10%

Region

	<u>Voter Survey</u>	<u>Open Participation</u>
North	56%	62%
South	44%	38%

Housing Status

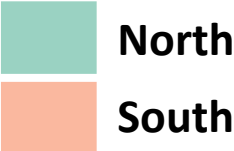
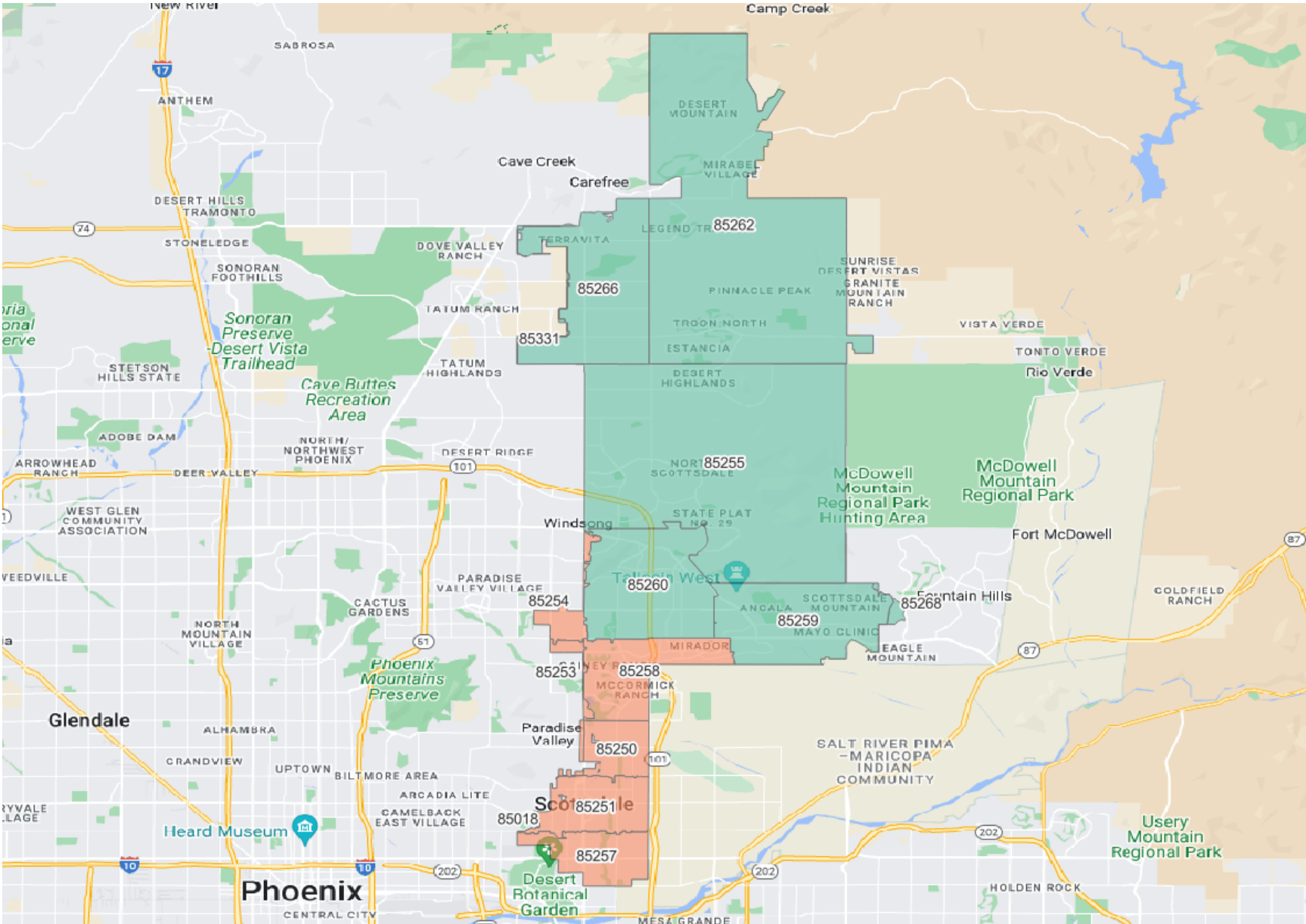
	<u>Voter Survey</u>	<u>Open Participation</u>
Own/buying	72%	95%
Rent/leasing	23%	3%

Residency Duration

	<u>Voter Survey</u>	<u>Open Participation</u>
<2 Years	5%	3%
2-5 Years	21%	14%
6-10 Years	17%	18%
11-20 Years	22%	22%
>20 Years	36%	42%

Voter survey respondents generally match the overall voter demographics of Scottsdale, whereas open participation feedback reflects those who chose to respond and is not representative of Scottsdale residents as a whole

Scottsdale Region Breakdown



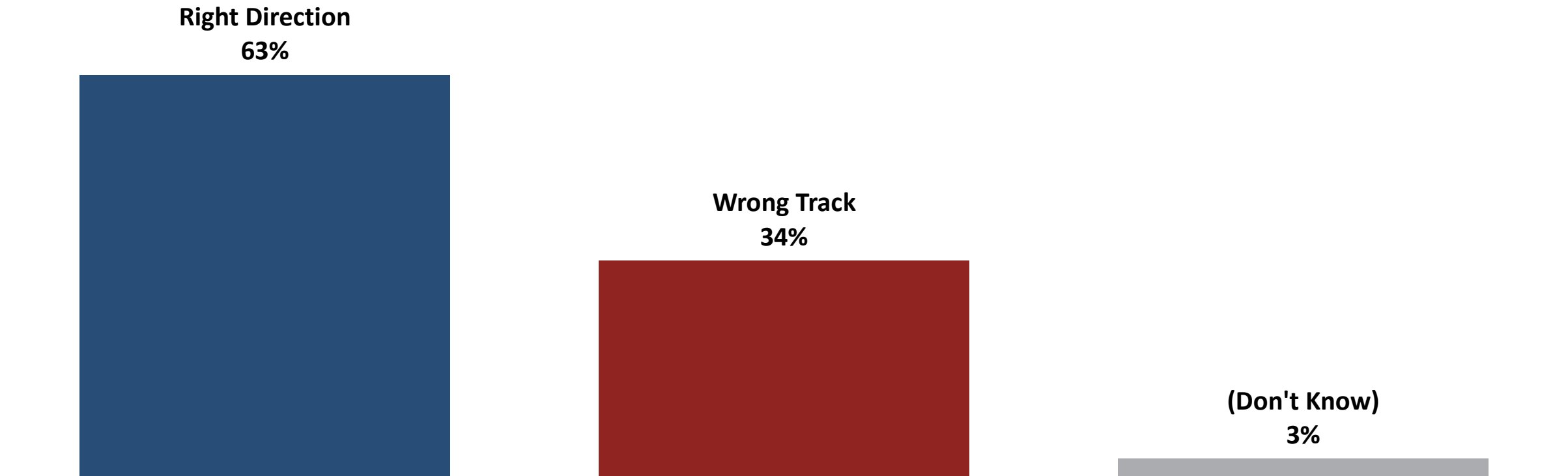


Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track

Voters in Scottsdale are optimistic about the city's direction.

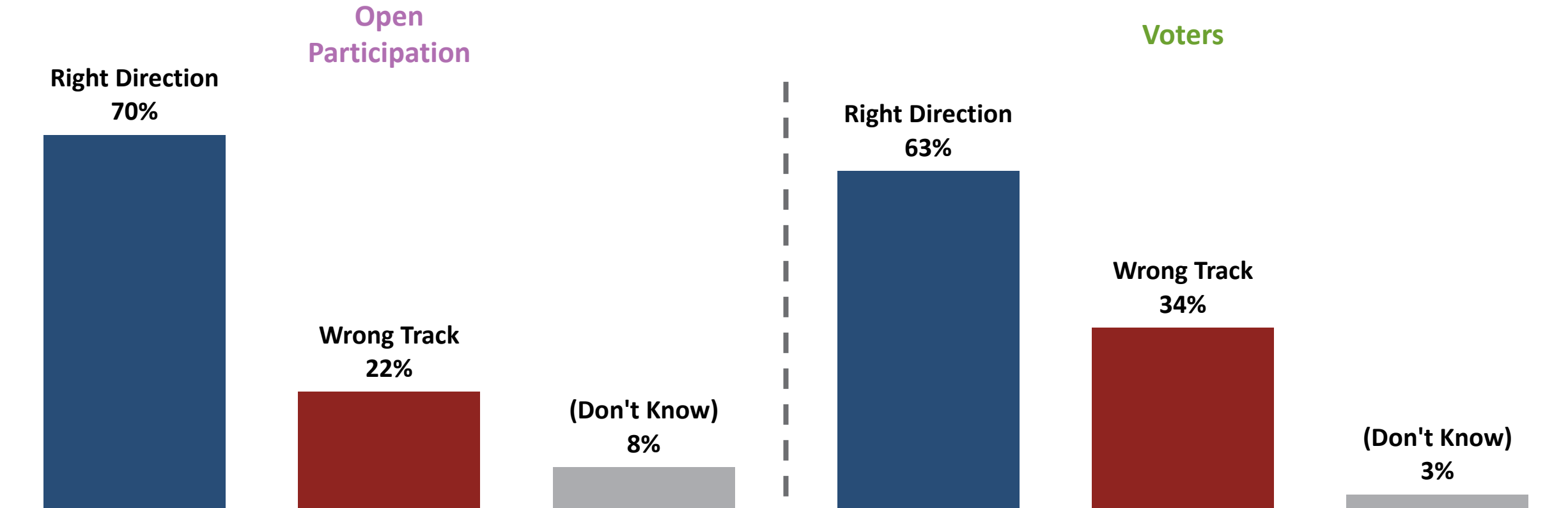
Do you feel that things in the City of Scottsdale are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



Right Direction/Wrong Track

Open participation respondents are also optimistic about the city's direction.

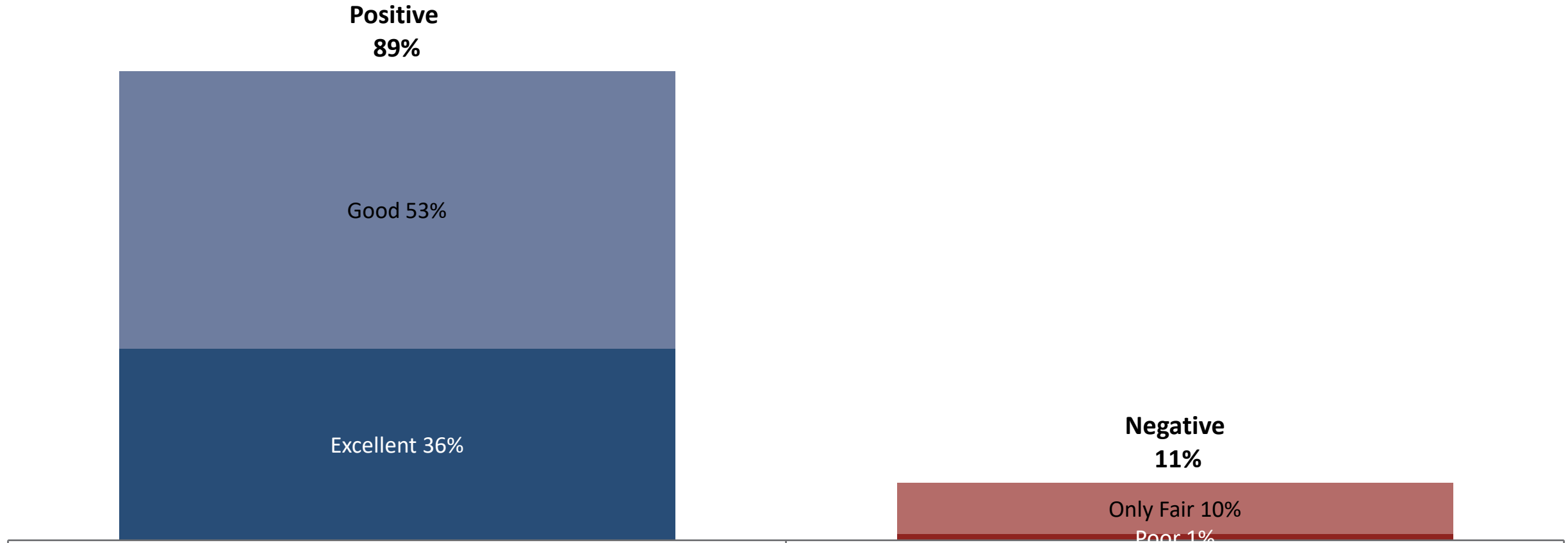
Do you feel that things in the City of Scottsdale are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?



Quality of Life Rating

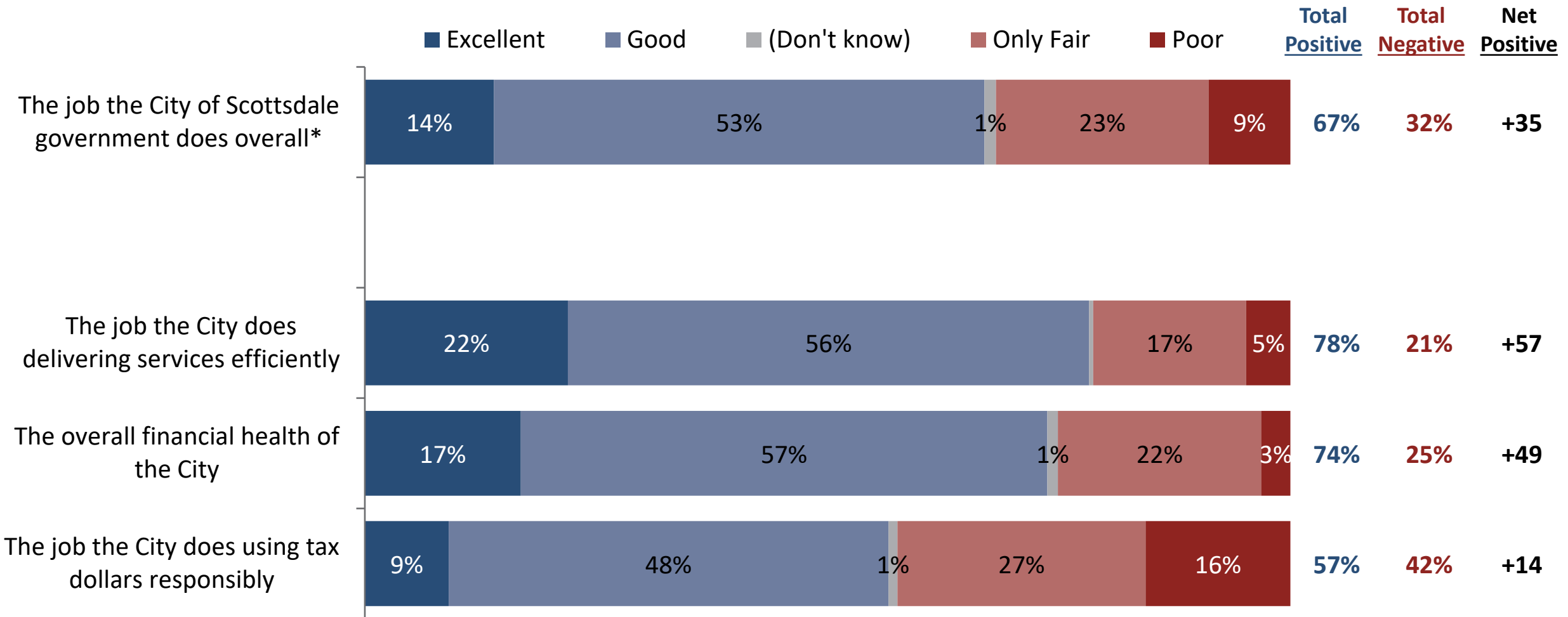
Almost nine-in-ten Scottsdale voters rate the city's quality of life positively, with three-in-ten rating it excellent.

How would you rate the overall quality of life in Scottsdale?



Scottsdale Job Ratings

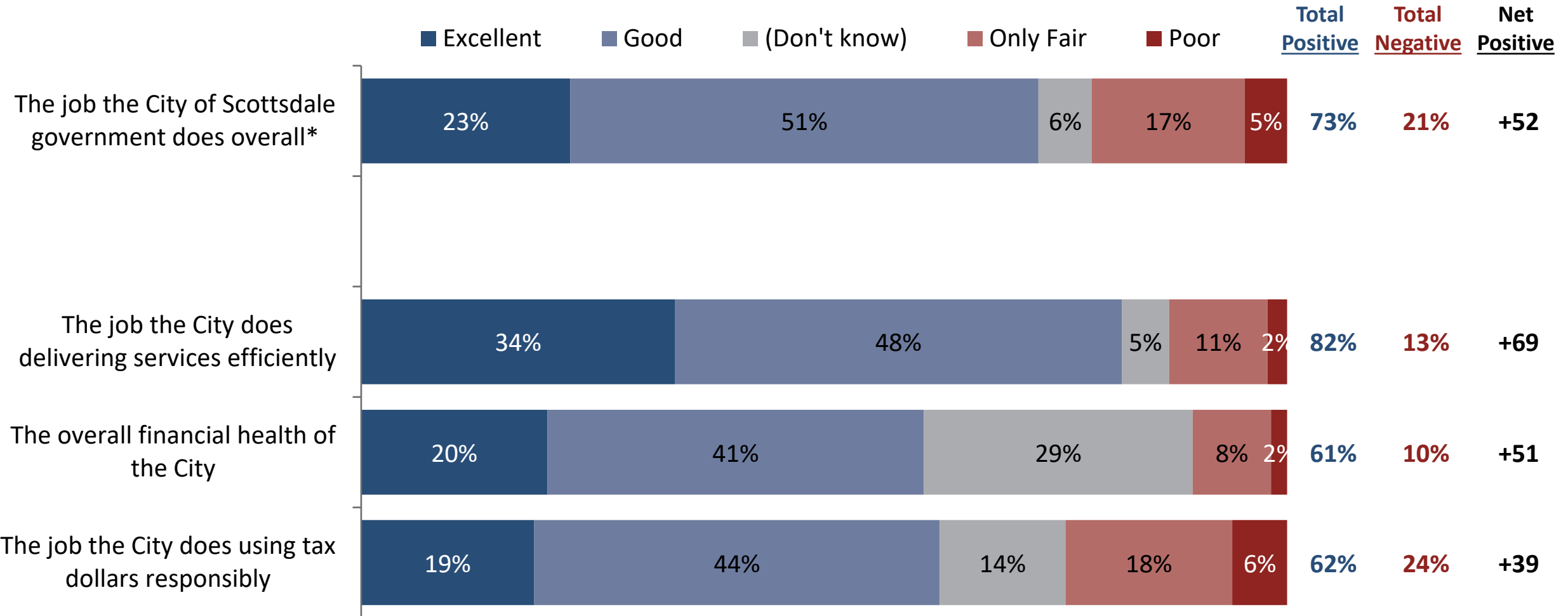
Scottsdale voters rate city government and the financial health of the city positively, yet intensity is low. While a majority rate “the job the City does using tax dollars responsibly” favorably, positive intensity is the lowest, and it has the most negativity.



Q3-7. Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate each of the following.
 *Always asked before other questions

Scottsdale Job Ratings

A majority of open participation respondents also rate Scottsdale positively on each item, though many are unsure about the City's finances.



Q5-8. Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate each of the following.

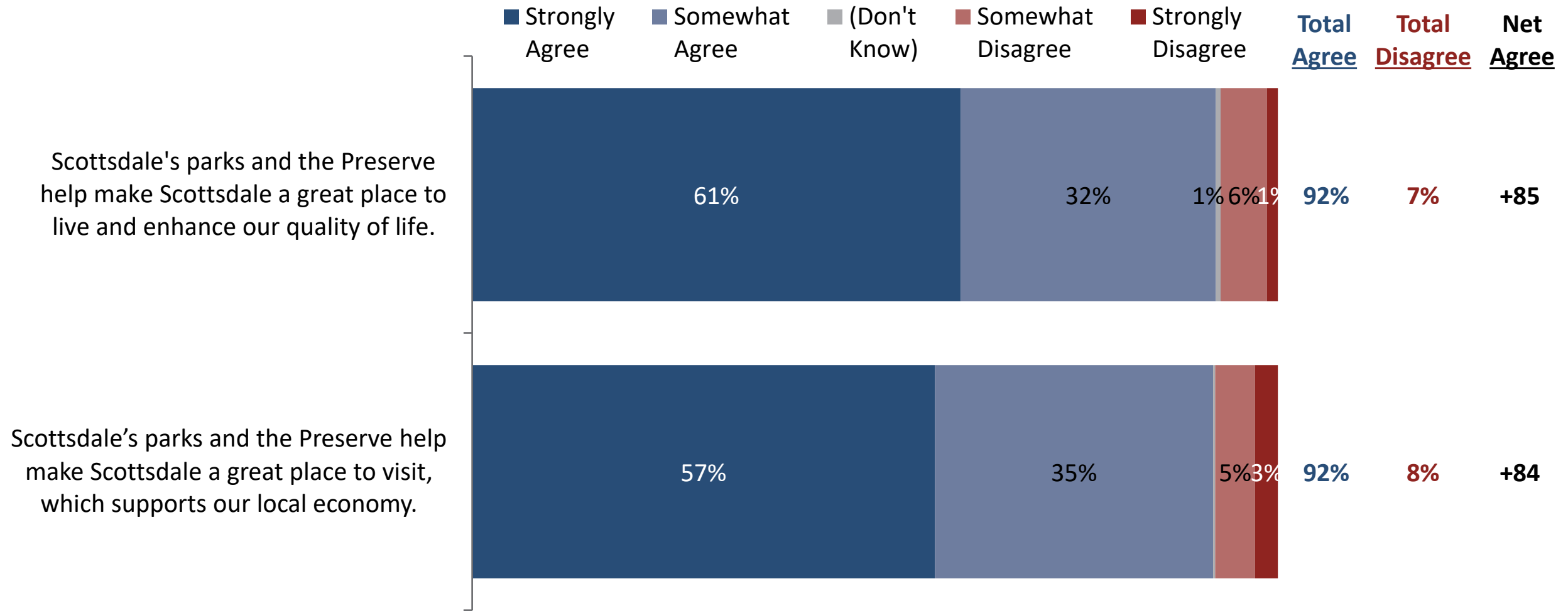
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Open Spaces and Parks Attitudes and Use

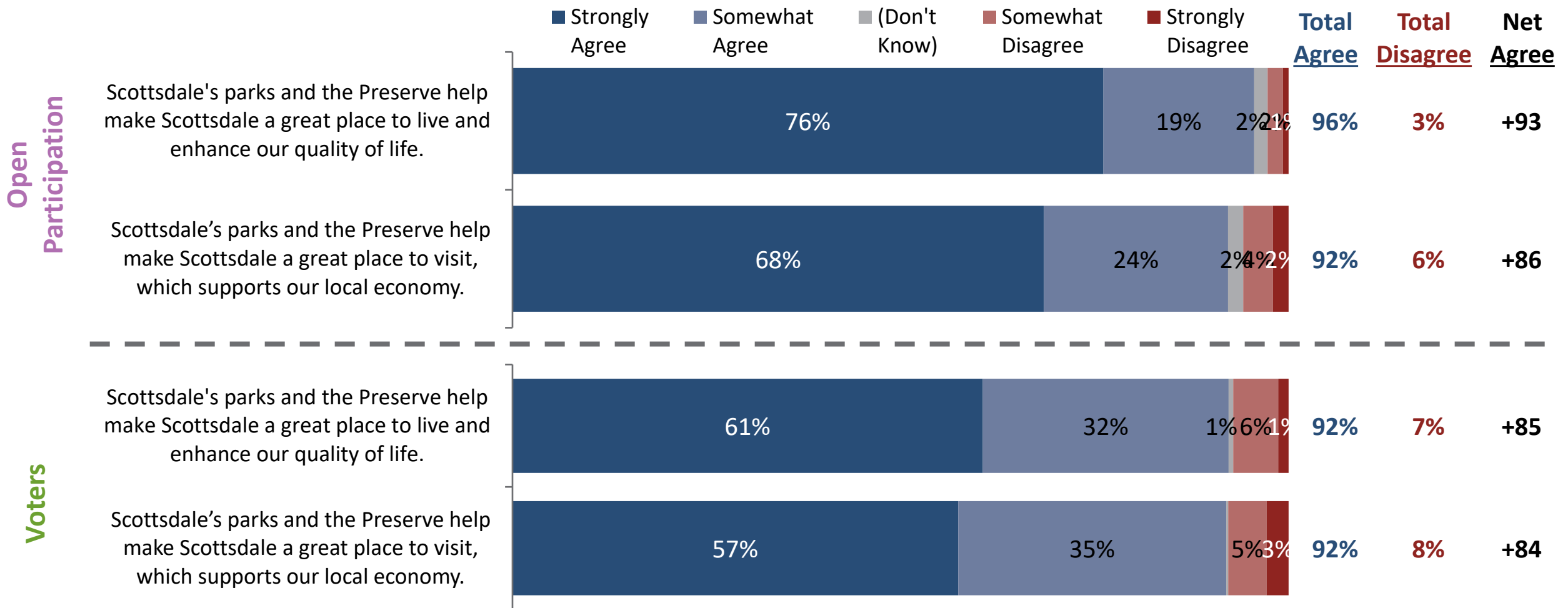
Scottsdale Parks Attitudes

Voters overwhelmingly agree that Scottsdale's parks and the Preserve improve quality of life and the local economy.



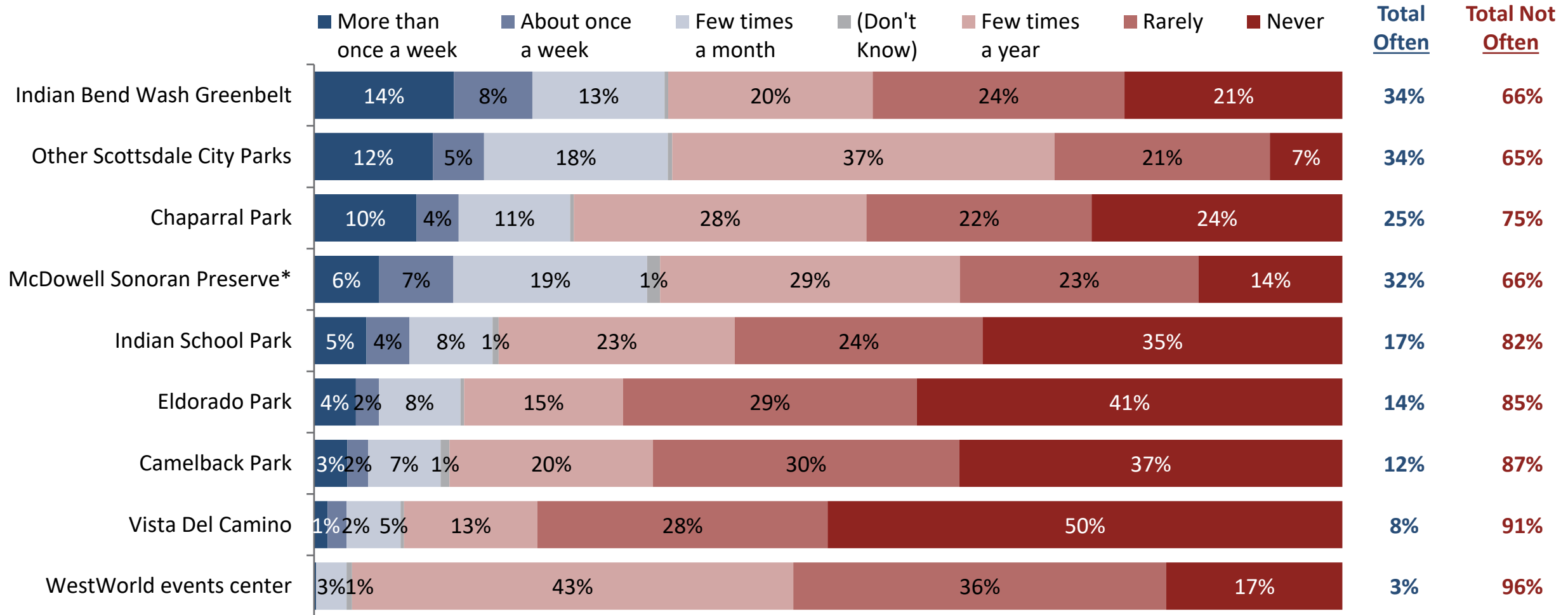
Scottsdale Parks Attitudes

Nearly all open participation respondents are supportive of Scottsdale's parks and see value in them for both quality of life and the local economy.



Open Spaces and Parks Visit Frequency

The Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt and the Preserve are among the most popular spaces, while the WestWorld events center is the least visited.



Q45-53. The following is a list of Scottsdale open spaces, parks, and recreational spaces. On average, how frequently do you or your family visit each one? *List included to help respondents identify qualifying trailheads

Overall Visit Frequency

Two-thirds of Scottsdale voters report visiting a park or other facility at least monthly, and just under half report visiting one at least once week a week.

At least weekly: Visited one of the parks or facilities at least weekly

At least monthly: Visited one of the parks or facilities at least monthly

Less than monthly: Visited one of the parks or facilities less than monthly

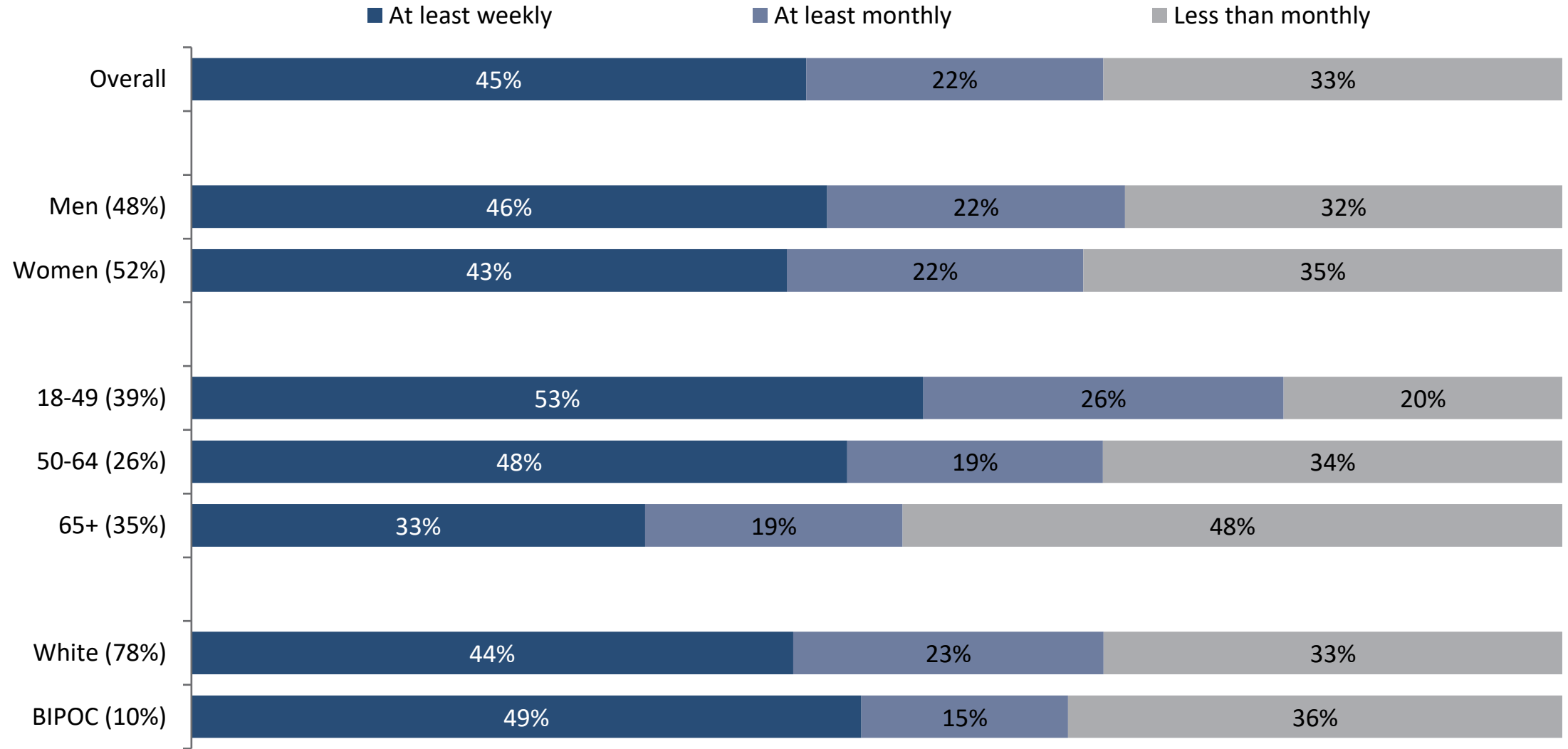
At least weekly
45%

At least monthly
22%

Less than monthly
33%

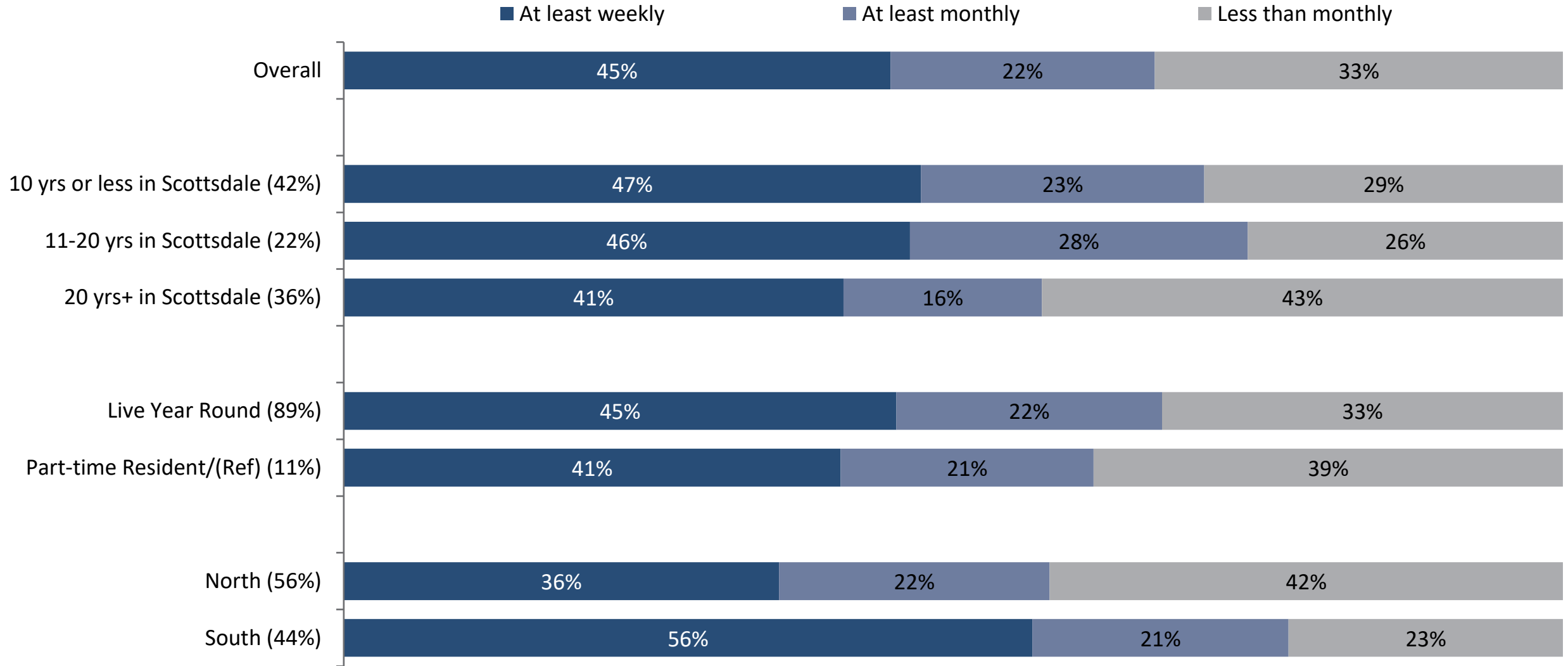
Visit Frequency by Subgroups

Voters in the southern part of the city and younger voters use parks more frequently than other groups.



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Voters in the southern part of the city and younger voters use parks more frequently than other groups.

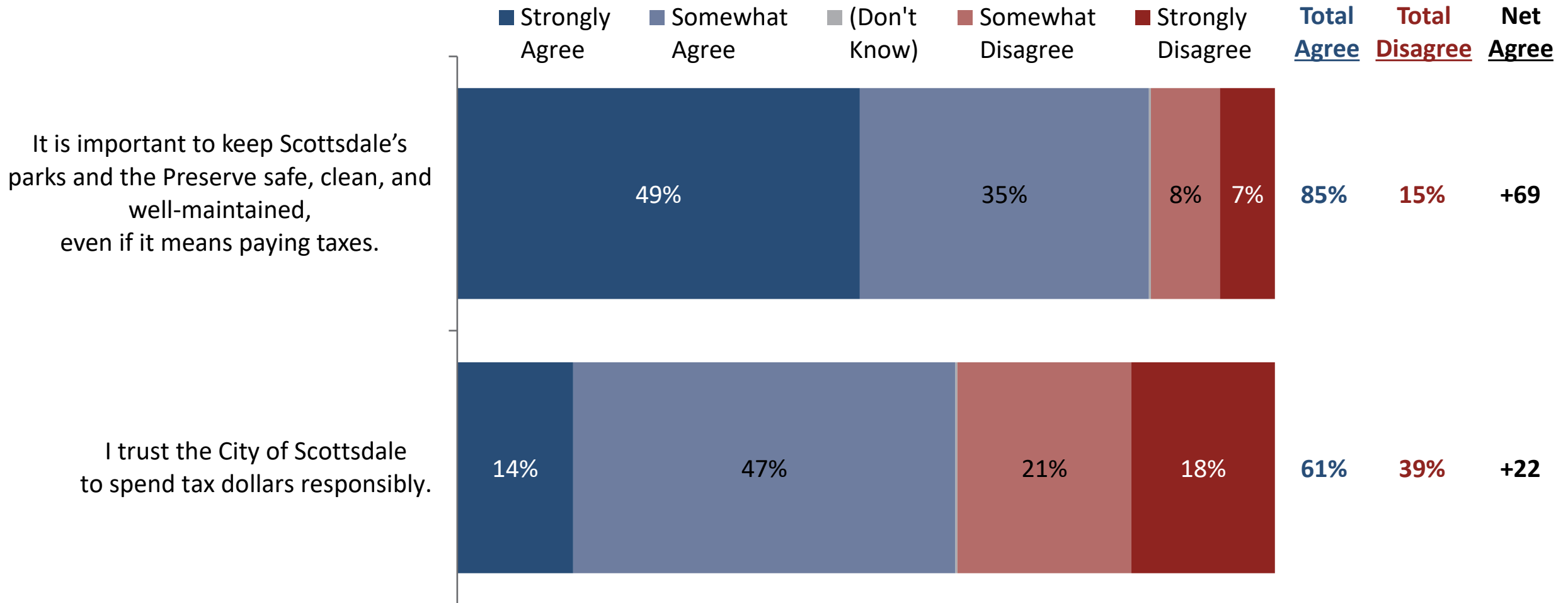




Open Spaces and Parks Funding Attitudes

Values Around Parks and Taxes

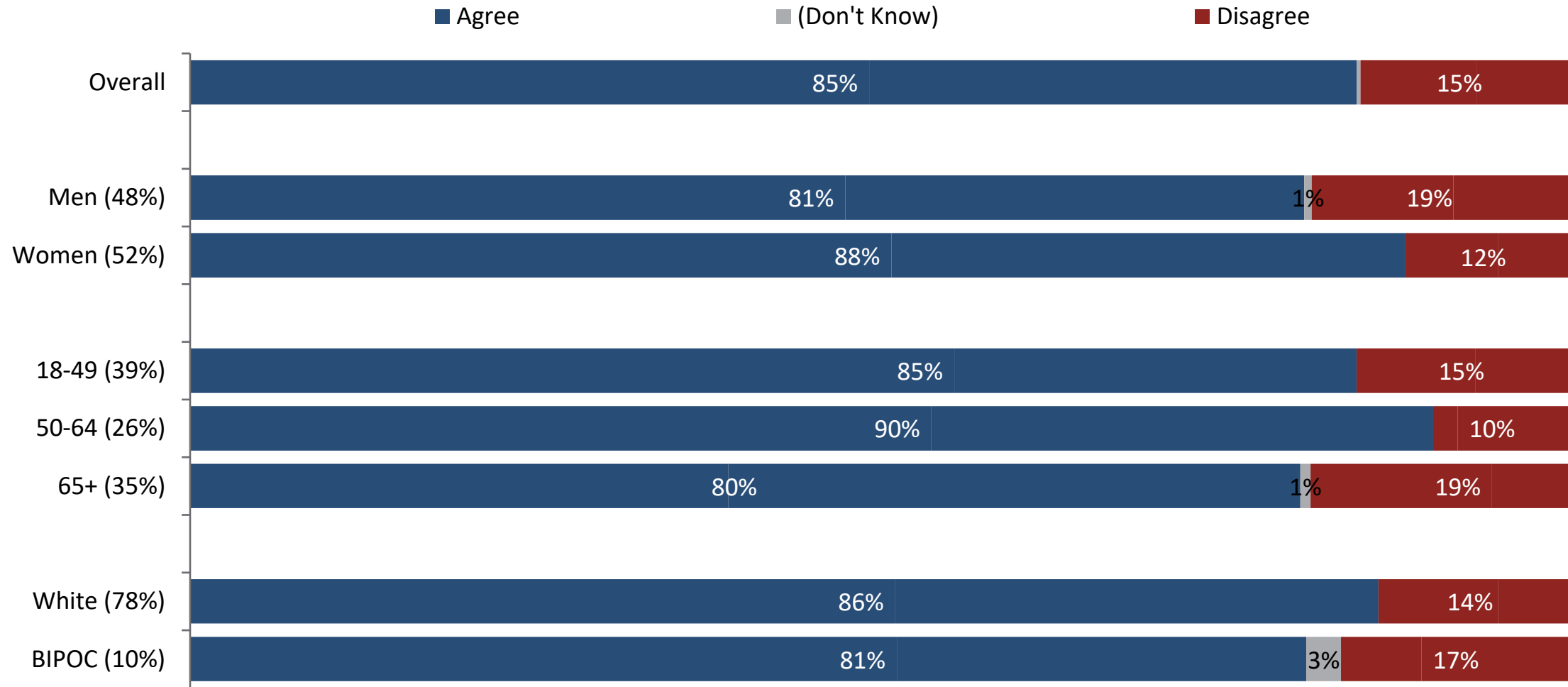
In keeping with their positive views of the value of parks and open spaces, most voters agree that they are important to maintain with taxes. However, fewer trust the City to spend tax dollars responsibly, showing some tax sensitivity.



Important to Fund Parks/Preserves by Subgroups

Voters under age 65 show the highest positive intensity toward funding park maintenance

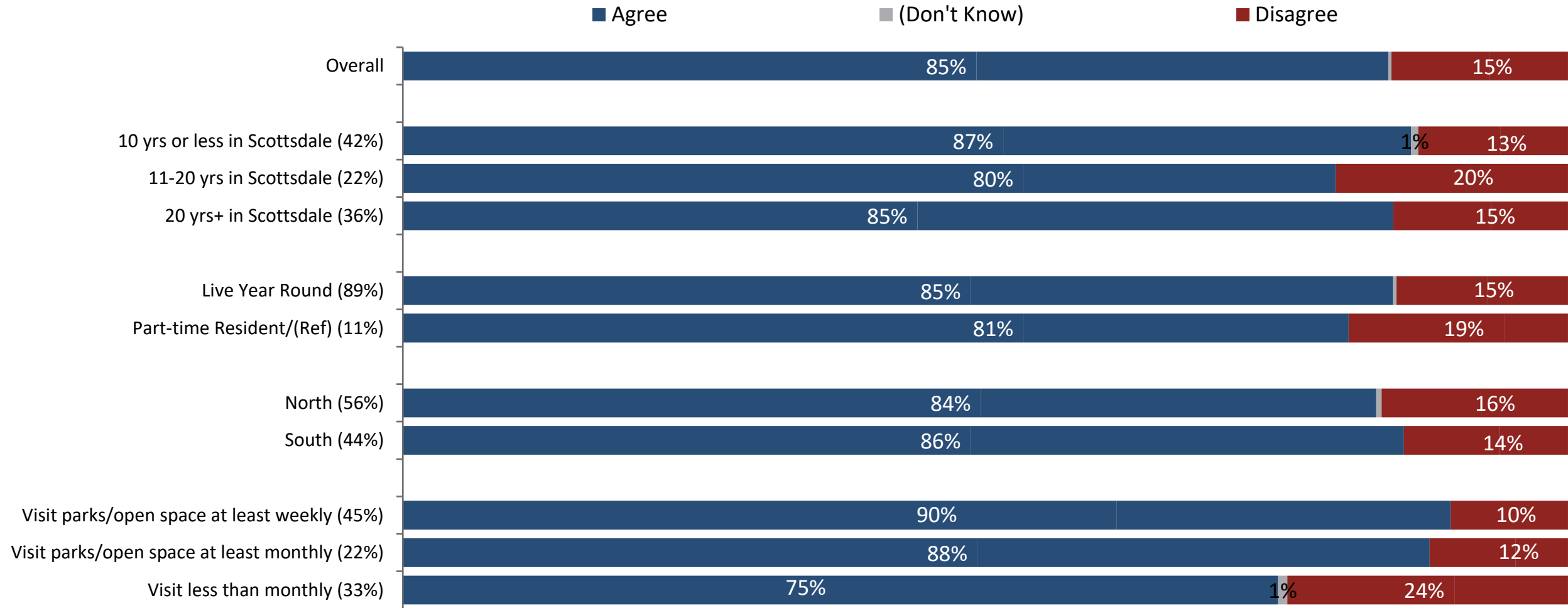
It is important to keep Scottsdale's parks and the Preserve safe, clean, and well-maintained, even if it means paying taxes.



Important to Fund Parks/Preserves by Subgroups

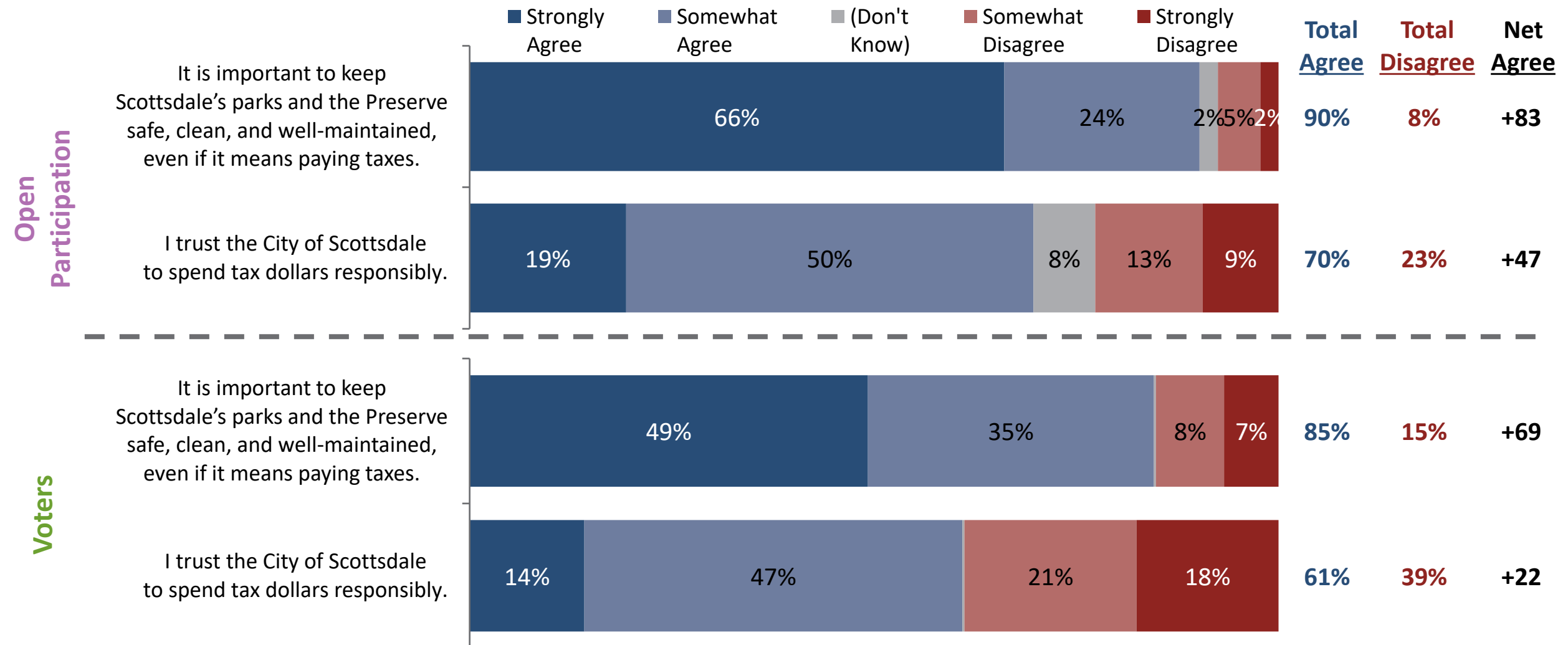
Frequent parks users are the most positive about financially supporting them.

It is important to keep Scottsdale's parks and the Preserve safe, clean, and well-maintained, even if it means paying taxes.



Values Around Parks and Taxes

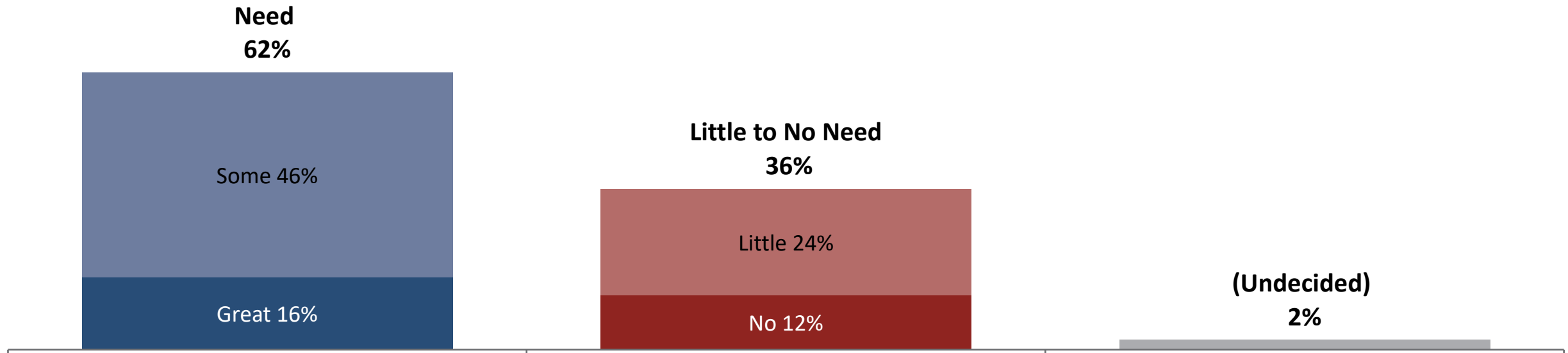
Most open participation respondents strongly agree that it is worth paying taxes to maintain Scottsdale's parks and facilities. Agreement is less intense on trust in the City, but the vast majority trust in the City's use of tax dollars.



Perceived Need for Funds

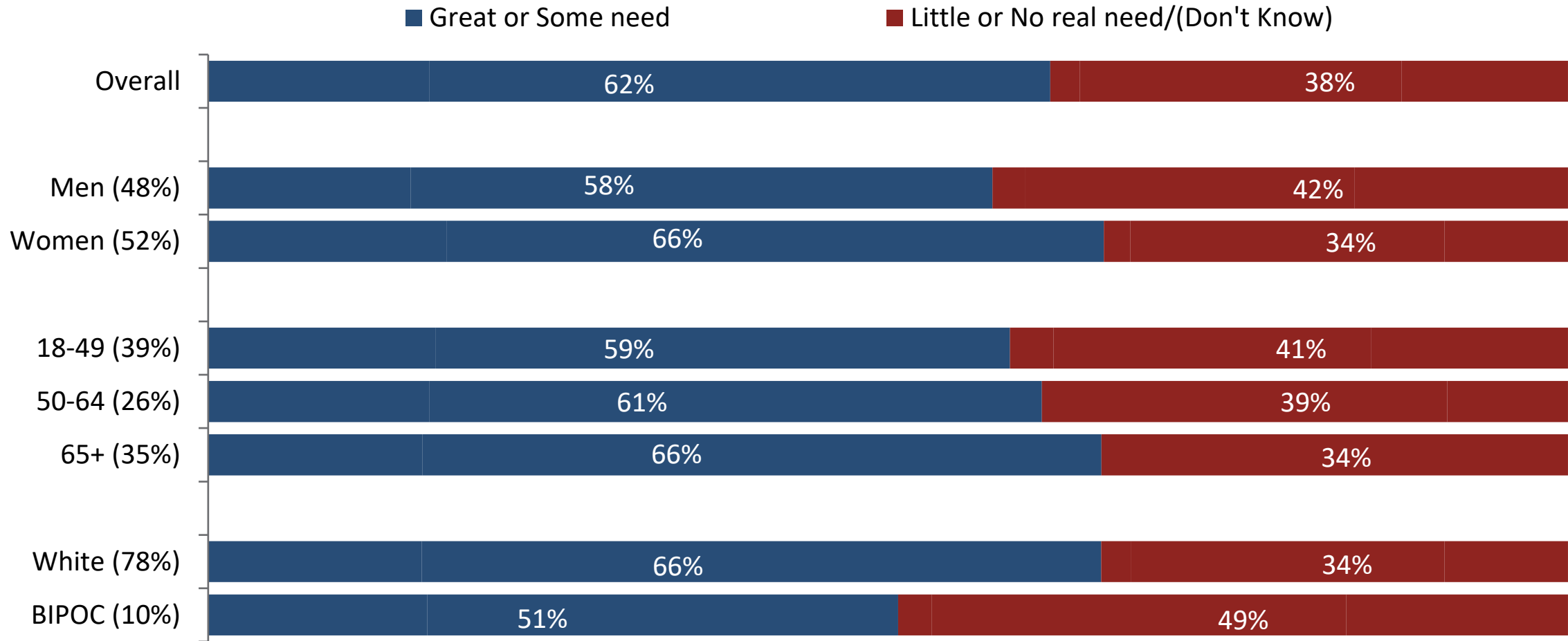
*About three-fifths of Scottsdale voters believe the City needs funding for their parks and recreational sites and facilities.
Intensity is low on both ends of the spectrum.*

As you may know, the City of Scottsdale owns a number of parks and recreational sites and facilities, including City parks, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt, and the WestWorld events center. How would you rate the City of Scottsdale's need for more funding to maintain, improve, and operate these sites and facilities?



Perceived Need for Funds by Subgroups

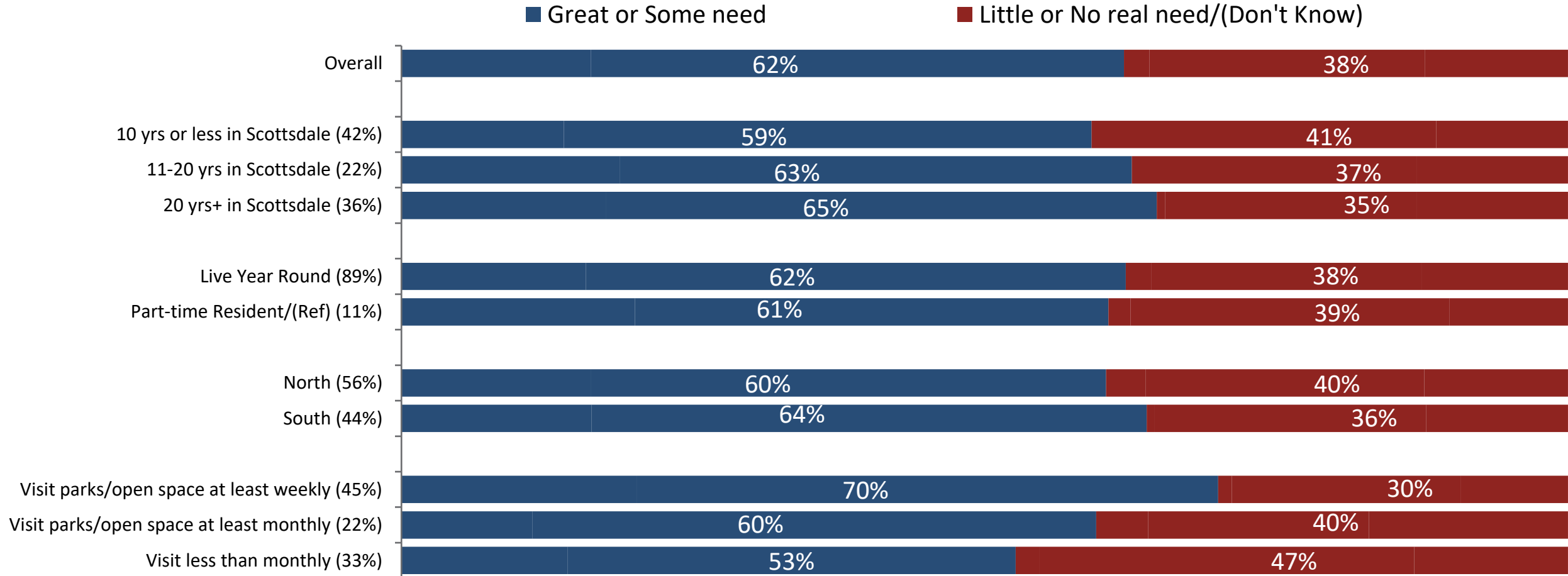
Belief that there is a need for more funding is generally positive, but varies across different demographic facets.



Q8. As you may know, the City of Scottsdale owns a number of parks and recreational sites and facilities, including City parks, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt, and the WestWorld events center. How would you rate the City of Scottsdale's need for more funding to maintain, improve, and operate these sites and facilities?

Perceived Need for Funds by Subgroups

Those who visit Scottsdale open spaces and parks weekly are most likely to believe the city needs more funding for these facilities. Those who visit less than monthly are more likely to believe there is little to no need for additional funding.

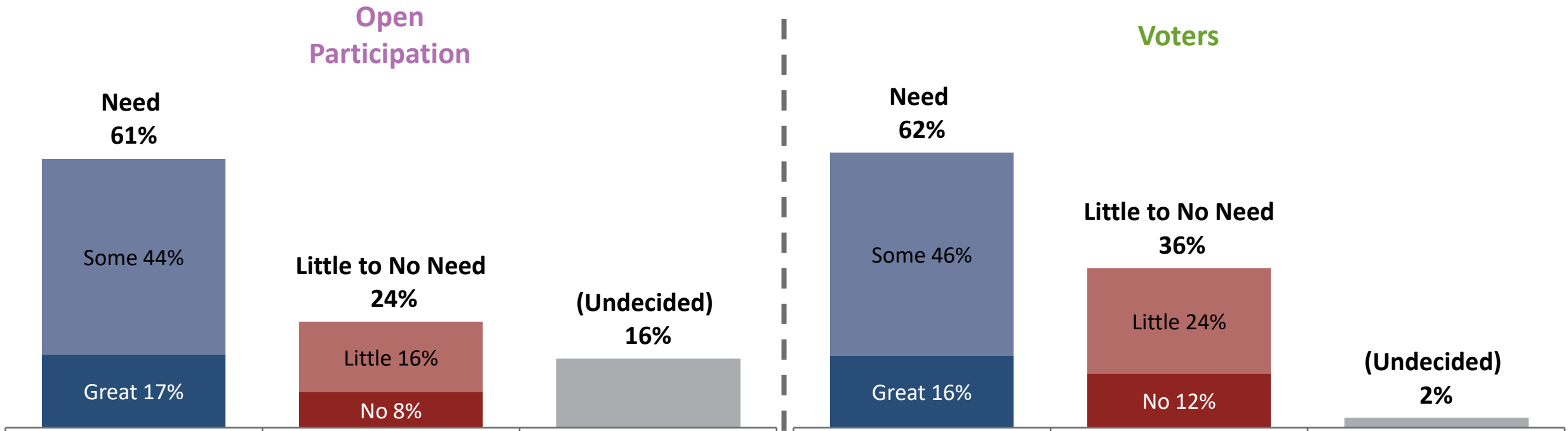


Q8. As you may know, the City of Scottsdale owns a number of parks and recreational sites and facilities, including City parks, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt, and the WestWorld events center. How would you rate the City of Scottsdale's need for more funding to maintain, improve, and operate these sites and facilities?

Perceived Need for Funds

Almost two-thirds of open participation respondents believe the City needs funding for their parks and recreational sites and facilities. Intensity is low on both ends of the spectrum, similar to voters' sentiments.

As you may know, the City of Scottsdale owns a number of parks and recreational sites and facilities, including City parks, the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt, and the WestWorld events center. How would you rate the City of Scottsdale's need for more funding to maintain, improve, and operate these sites and facilities?

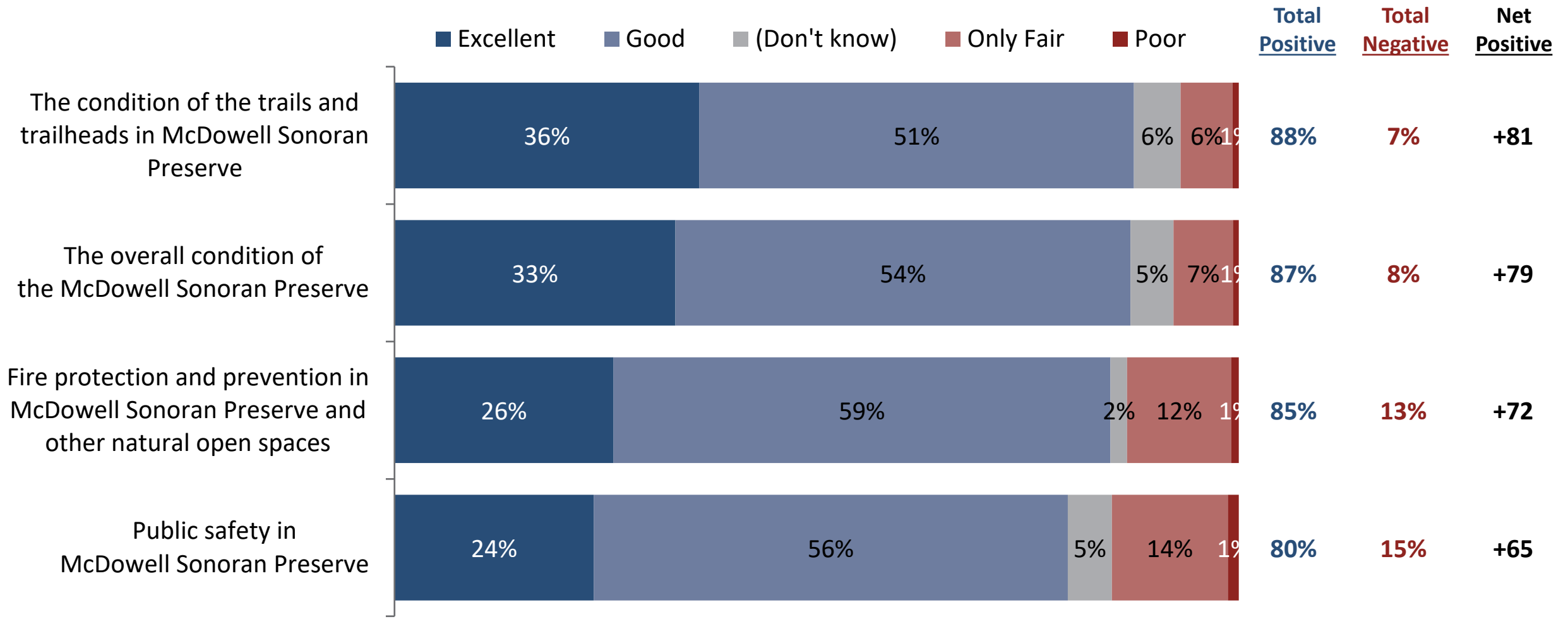




Open Spaces and Parks Priorities

Ratings – McDowell Sonoran Preserve

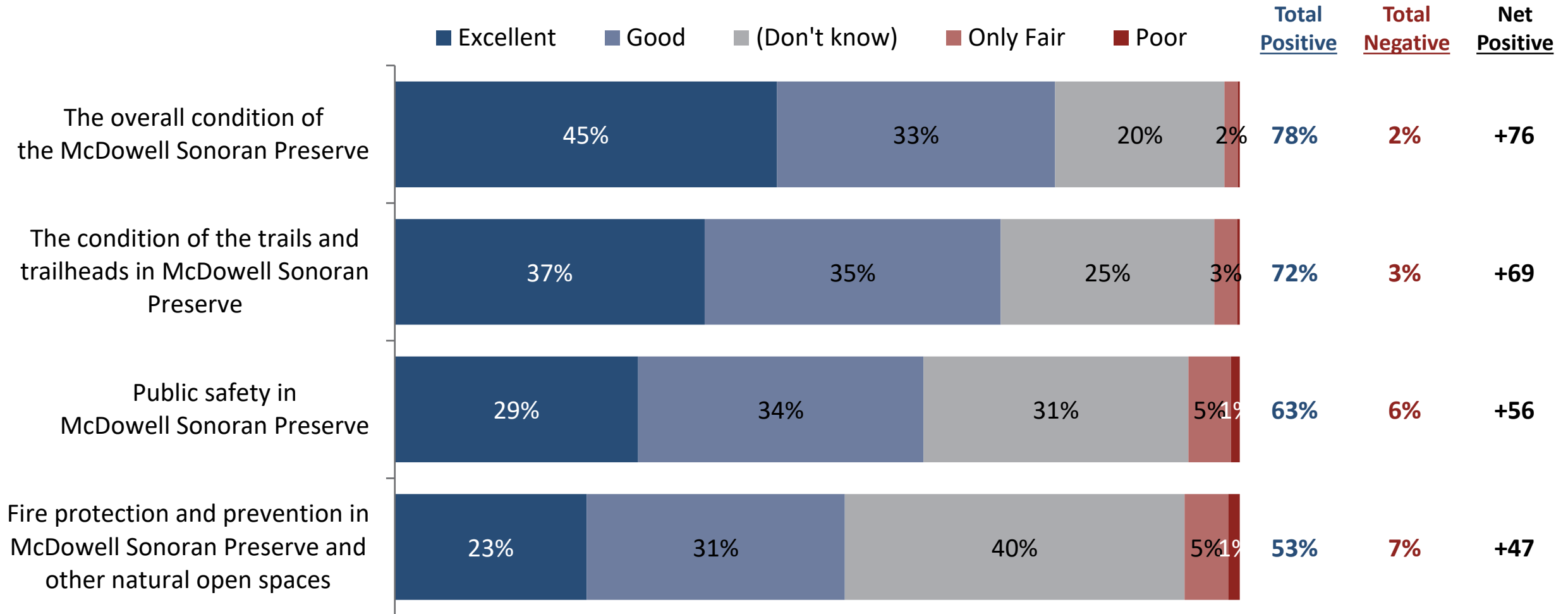
Voters feel positive about the condition of the Preserve. While fire protection and public safety are rated highly overall, intensity is lower than for the conditions of trails and trailheads and the Preserve’s overall condition.



Q9-20. Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate each of the following in Scottsdale?

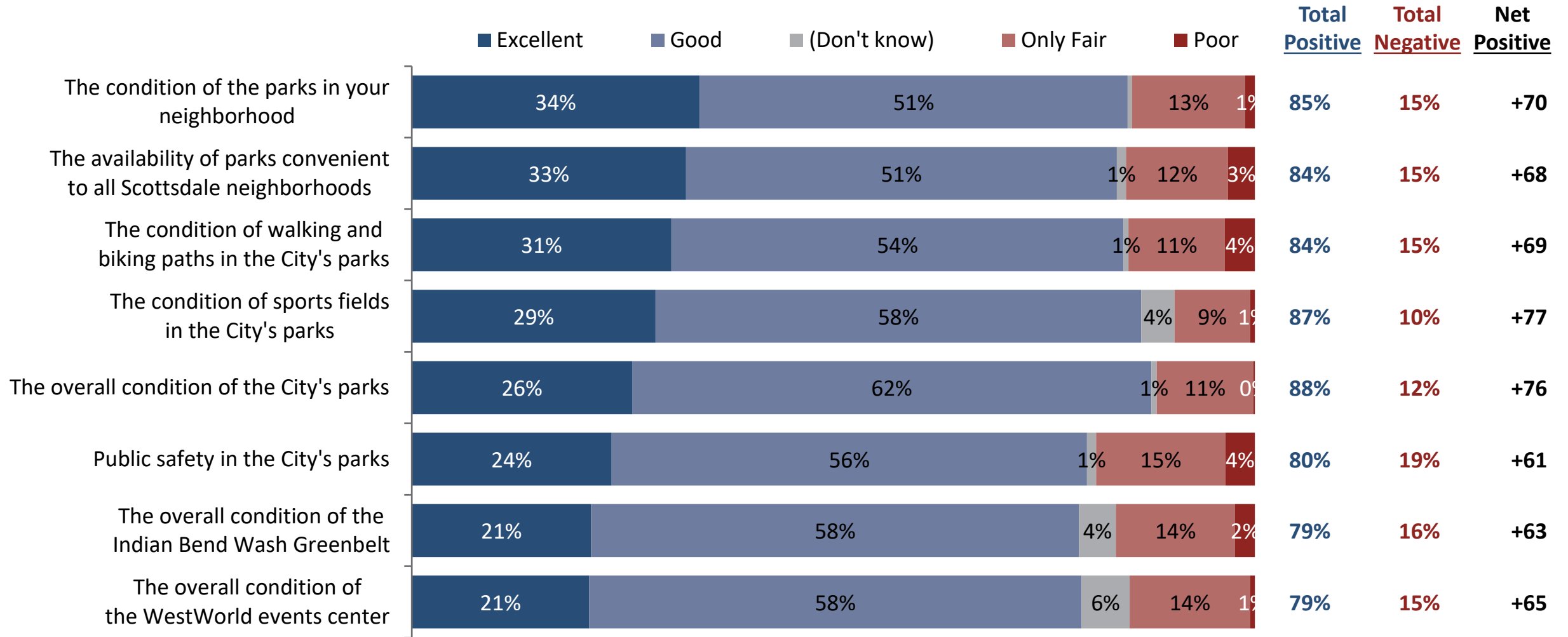
Ratings – McDowell Sonoran Preserve

Open participation respondents are positive about the condition of the Preserve overall. Two-fifths express uncertainty about the fire protections currently in place in the Preserve.



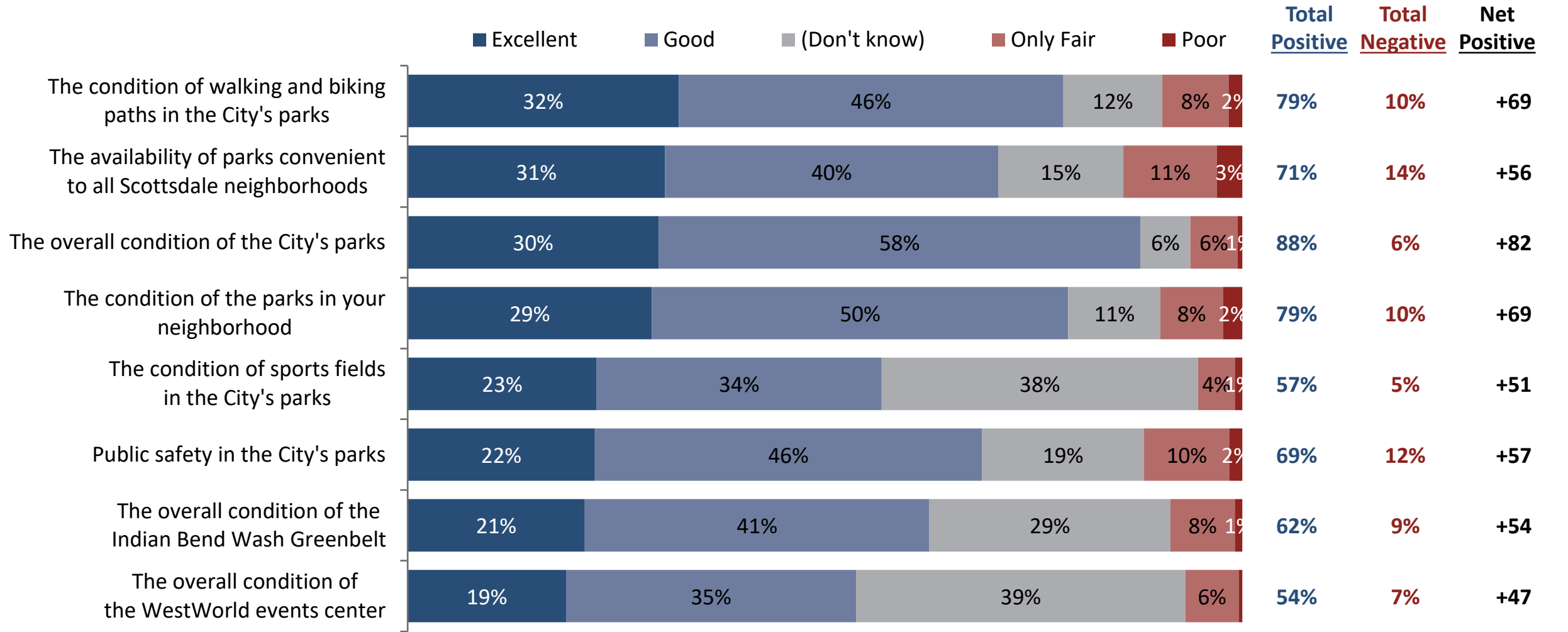
Ratings – City Parks and Other Facilities

The conditions of Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt and WestWorld are rated positively, though with lower positive intensity than other items tested.



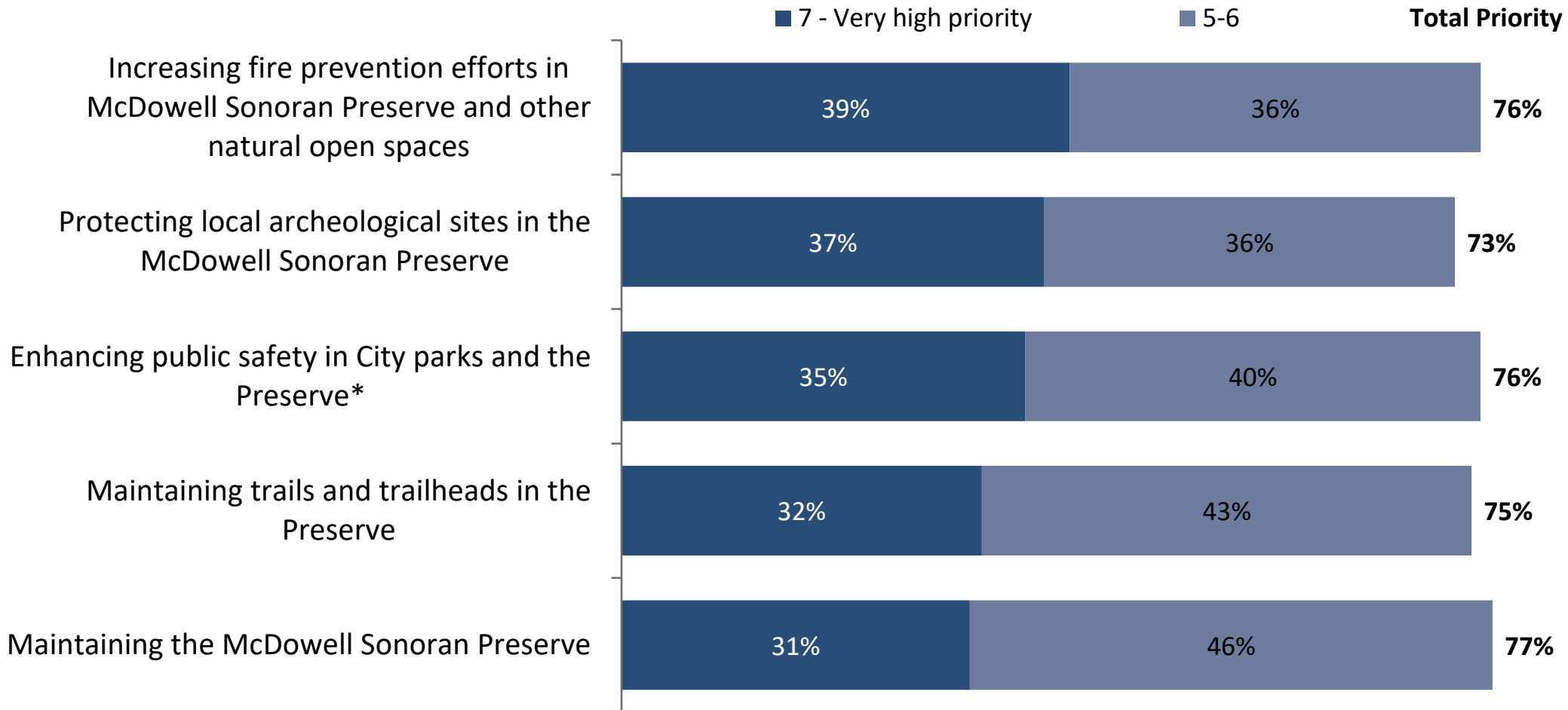
Ratings – City Parks and Other Facilities

Walking and biking paths are the most intensely positively rated of the city park facilities among open participation respondents. More than eight-in-ten say the overall condition of the City's parks is positive.



Priorities – McDowell Sonoran Preserve

While all have similar total priority ratings, improvements specific to ecological and fire prevention efforts are more likely to be a very high priority among voters than maintaining the Preserve overall.

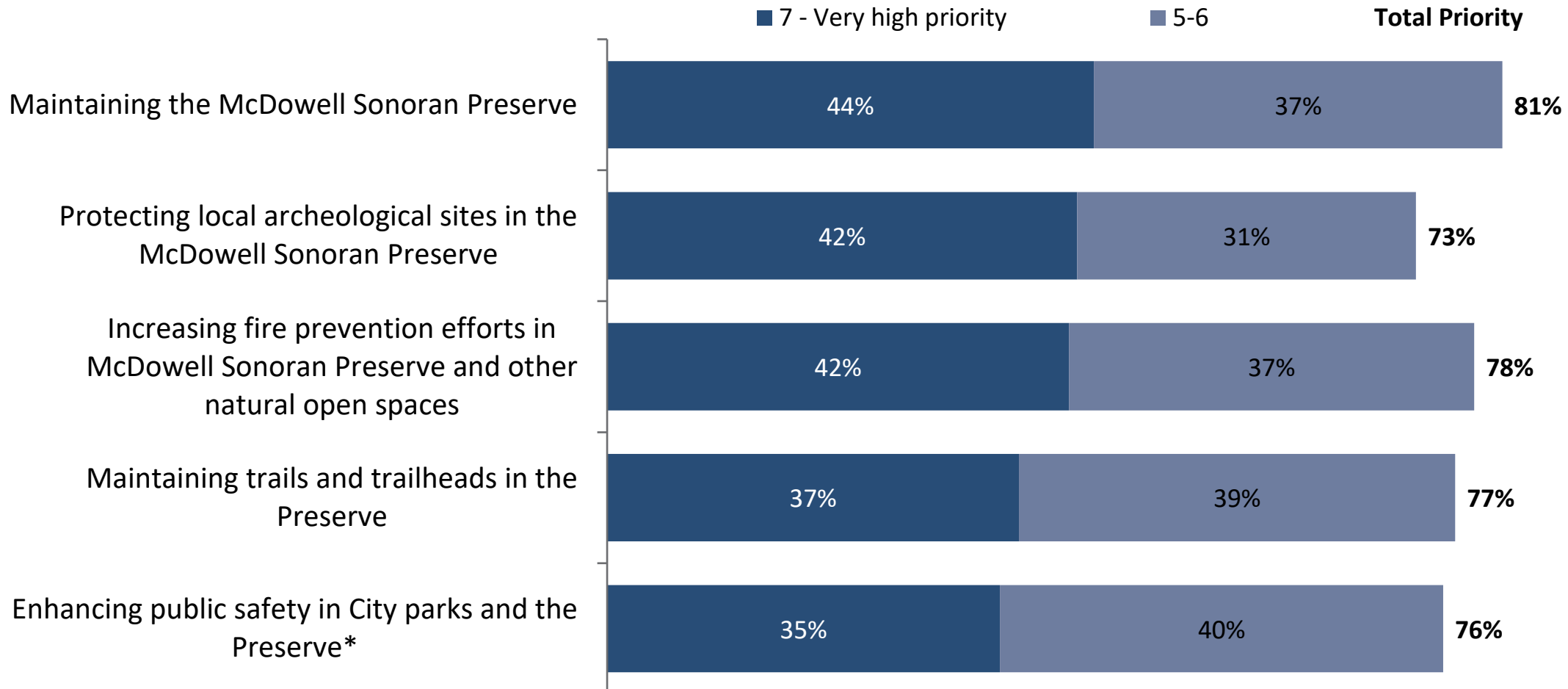


Q21-36. Thinking about the funding the City has for parks and open space in the City of Scottsdale, please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 to 7.

* Shown on both Preserve priorities slide and City parks priorities slide

Priorities – McDowell Sonoran Preserve

Maintaining the preserve is a priority for most open participation respondents. The specific projects with the highest intensity include protecting archeological sites and increasing fire prevention.

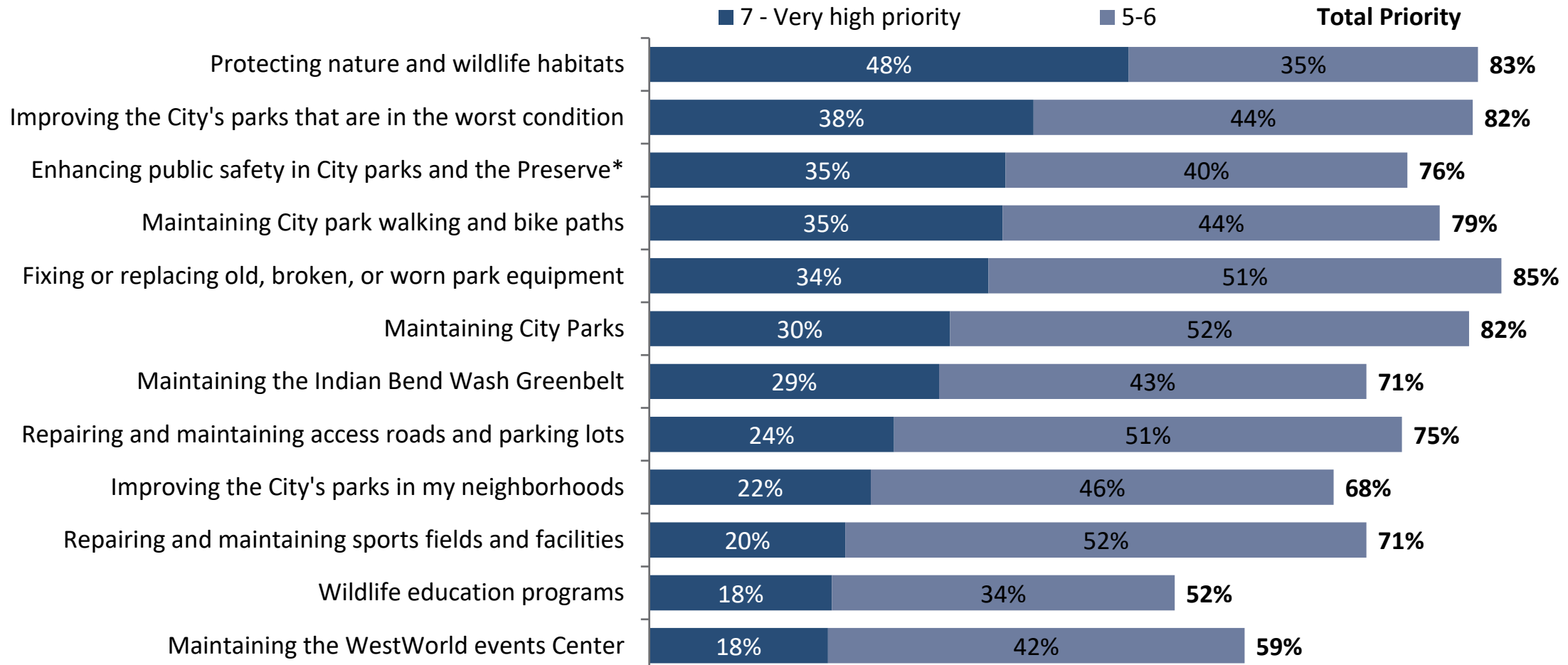


Q22-37. Thinking about the funding the City has for parks and open space in the City of Scottsdale, please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 to 7.

* Shown on both Preserve priorities slide and City parks priorities slide

Priorities – City Parks and Other Facilities

Improving City parks in the worst condition and ecological and public safety improvement efforts are among the highest rated priorities among voters. WestWorld and wildlife education programs have the lowest intensity and overall priority rating.

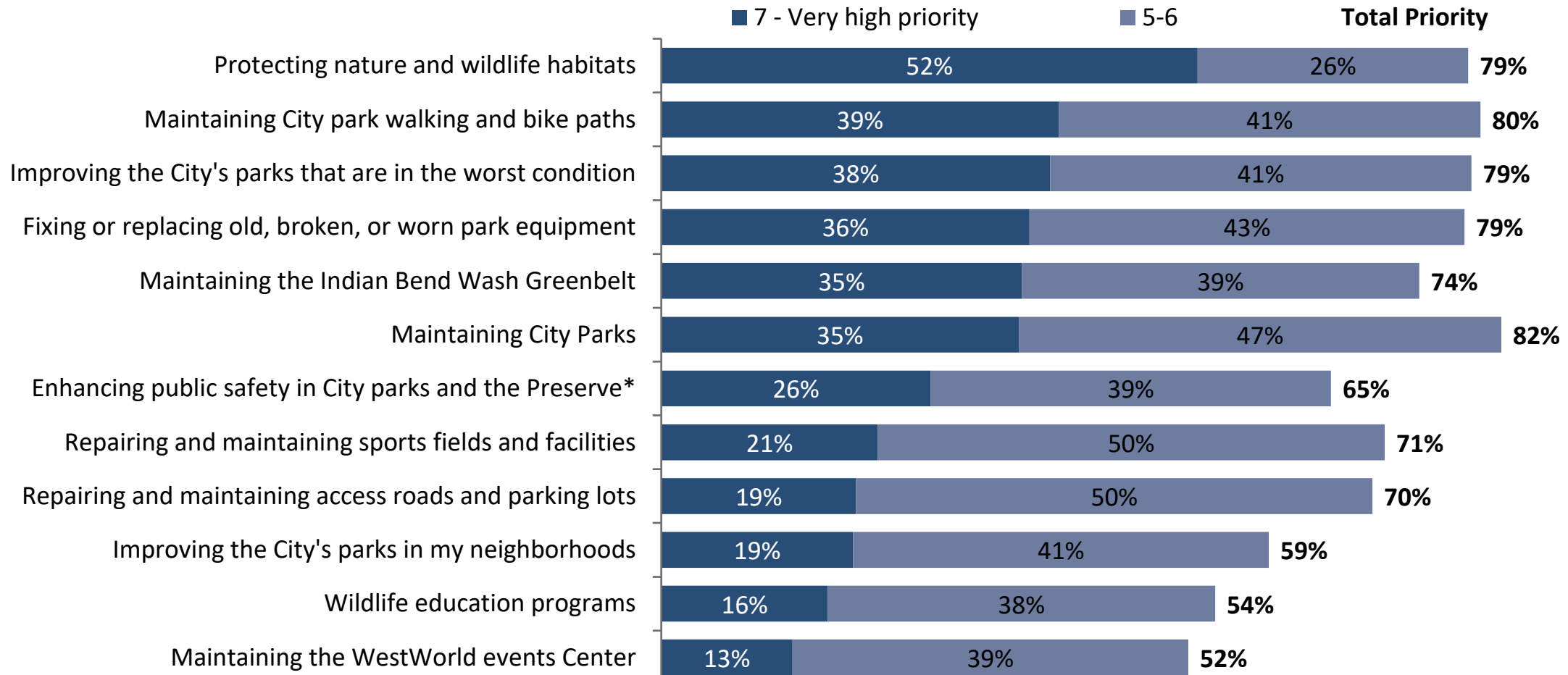


Q21-36. Thinking about the funding the City has for parks and open space in the City of Scottsdale, please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 to 7.

* Shown on both Preserve priorities slide and City parks priorities slide

Priorities – City Parks and Other Facilities

Protecting nature and wildlife is a very high priority for more than half of open participation respondents. Like voters, WestWorld and wildlife education programs have the lowest intensity and overall priority rating for this group.



Q21-36. Thinking about the funding the City has for parks and open space in the City of Scottsdale, please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 to 7.

* Shown on both Preserve priorities slide and City parks priorities slide



Potential Funding Mechanisms for Parks and the Preserve

Funding Mechanism Caveats

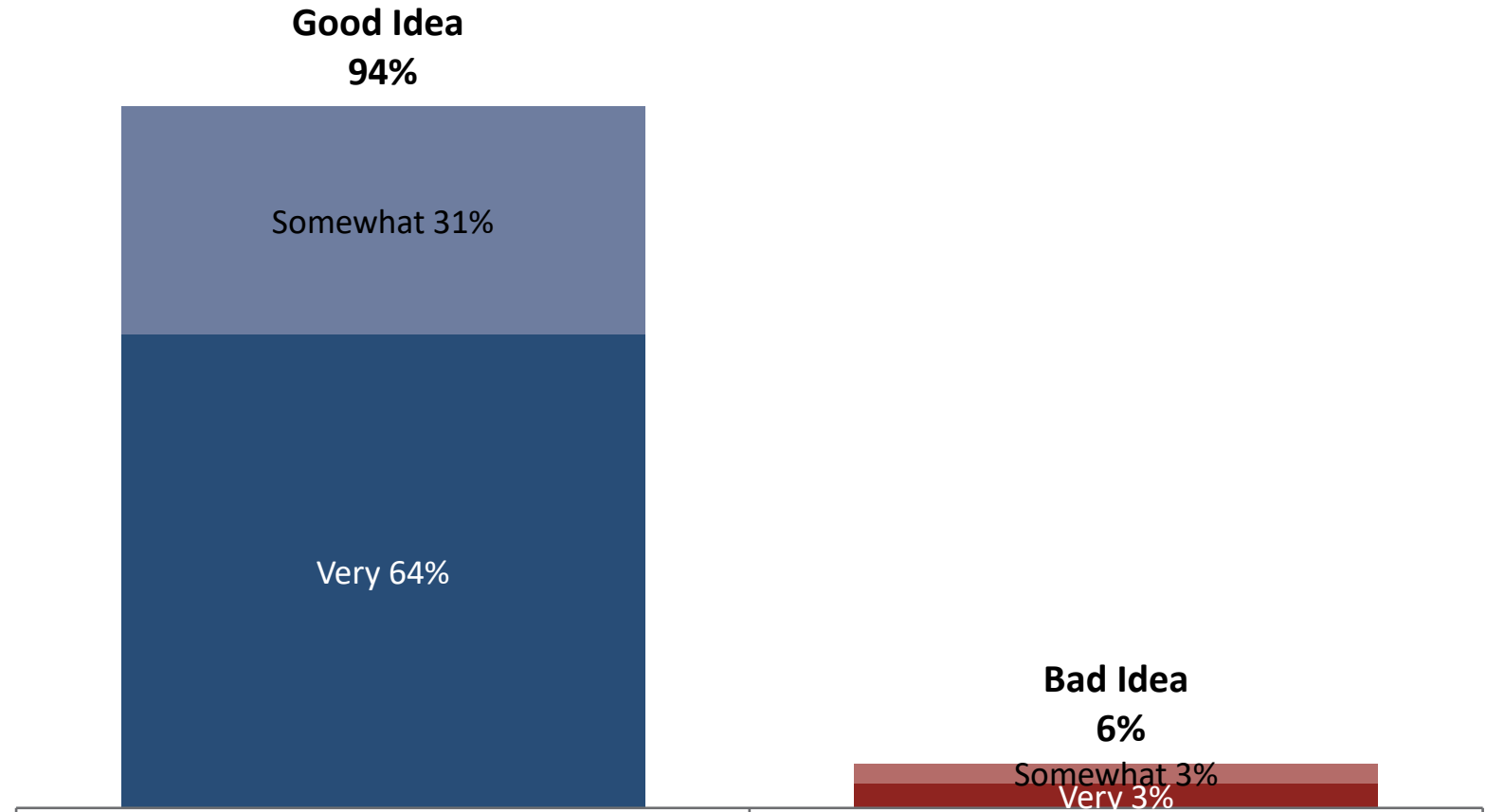
- ▶ The final section of the survey was designed to provide information on how voters react to the questions being considered by the City and Task Force around potential funding mechanisms.
- ▶ It is important to bear in mind that the questions asked were not directly designed to measure the potential feasibility of any specific approach or potential measure.
- ▶ The results of the questions in this section should be taken in context of the rest of the survey as a potential indication of how interested Scottsdale voters may be in a solution to the City's funding challenges around parks and the Preserve, but should not be used to project anything specific about potential revenue measure feasibility.

Funding Maintenance and Improvements Consideration

An overwhelming super-majority of Scottsdale voters believe funding Scottsdale parks and recreation facilities without increasing the tax rate is a good idea, with about two-thirds responding that it would be a very good idea.

The City of Scottsdale is facing a shortfall in the funding needed to maintain and improve the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and other city parks and recreation facilities and is looking for ways to fund those needs.

If the City found a way to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other city parks and recreation facilities without increasing the tax rate, would you say this is a very good idea, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea?

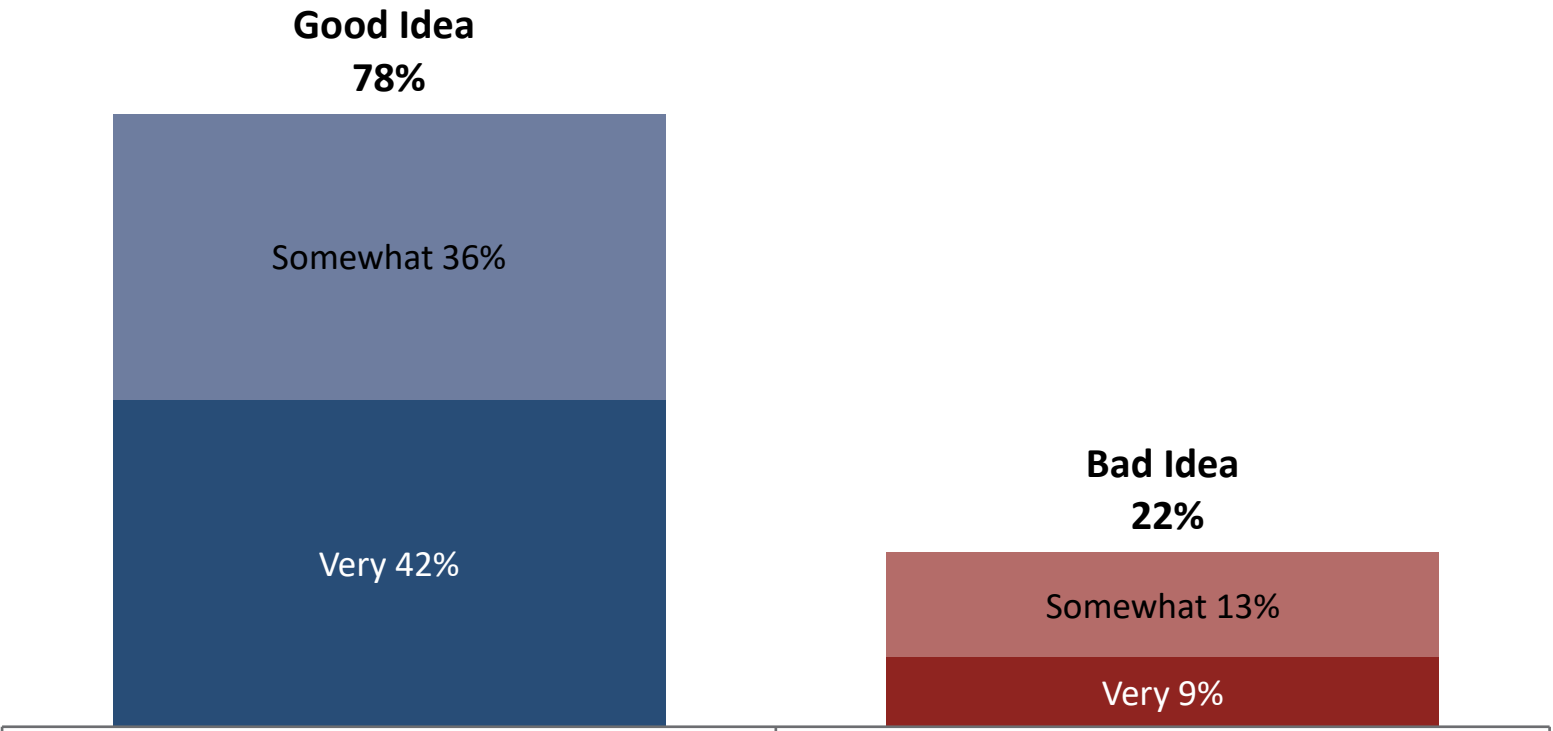


Replacing Expiring Tax Consideration

Once faced with the idea of adopting a new tax for maintenance and improvement to replace the expiring tax, a majority still say that it would be a “good idea,” though the proportion indicating it is a very good idea decreases.

As you may know, voters in the City of Scottsdale approved two taxes for land purchases and access improvements for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the first of which is set to expire next year. The City may consider replacing this expiring tax with a new tax for the same amount to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities.

Do you think it is a very good idea, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea for the City to replace the expiring tax with a new tax for the same amount to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities?

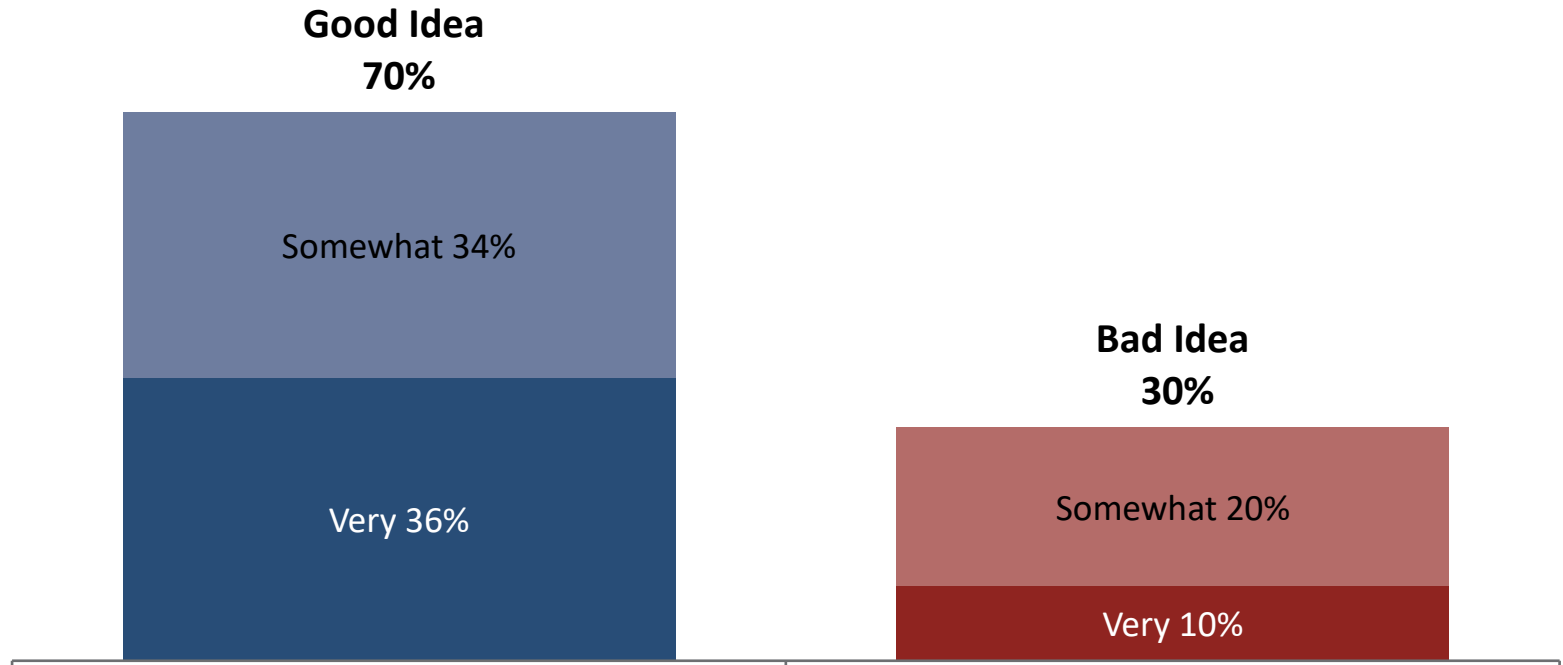


Expanding Allowable Uses Consideration

Scottsdale voters similarly believe it is a good idea to expand the allowable uses for the second tax that has yet to expire, yet overall voters saying it is a good idea continue to drop and negativity increases.

The second tax for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is not expiring yet, but it currently can only be used for land purchases and limited improvements for the Preserve. In addition to the replacement tax I just told you about, the City is considering whether to expand the allowable uses for the funds from this second tax to include maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities.

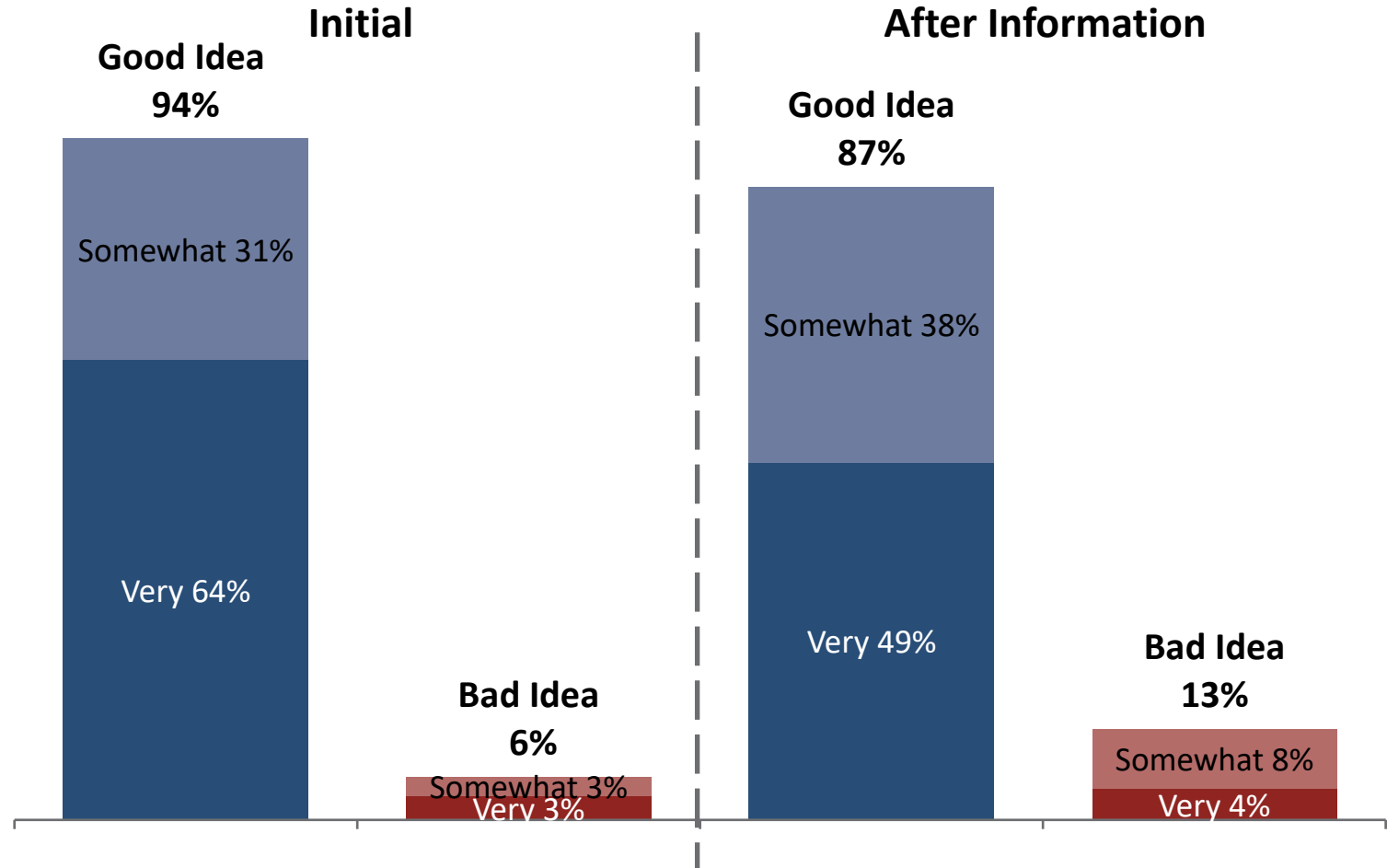
Do you think it is a very good idea, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea for the City to expand the allowable uses for the funds of the second tax to include maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities?



Final Consideration

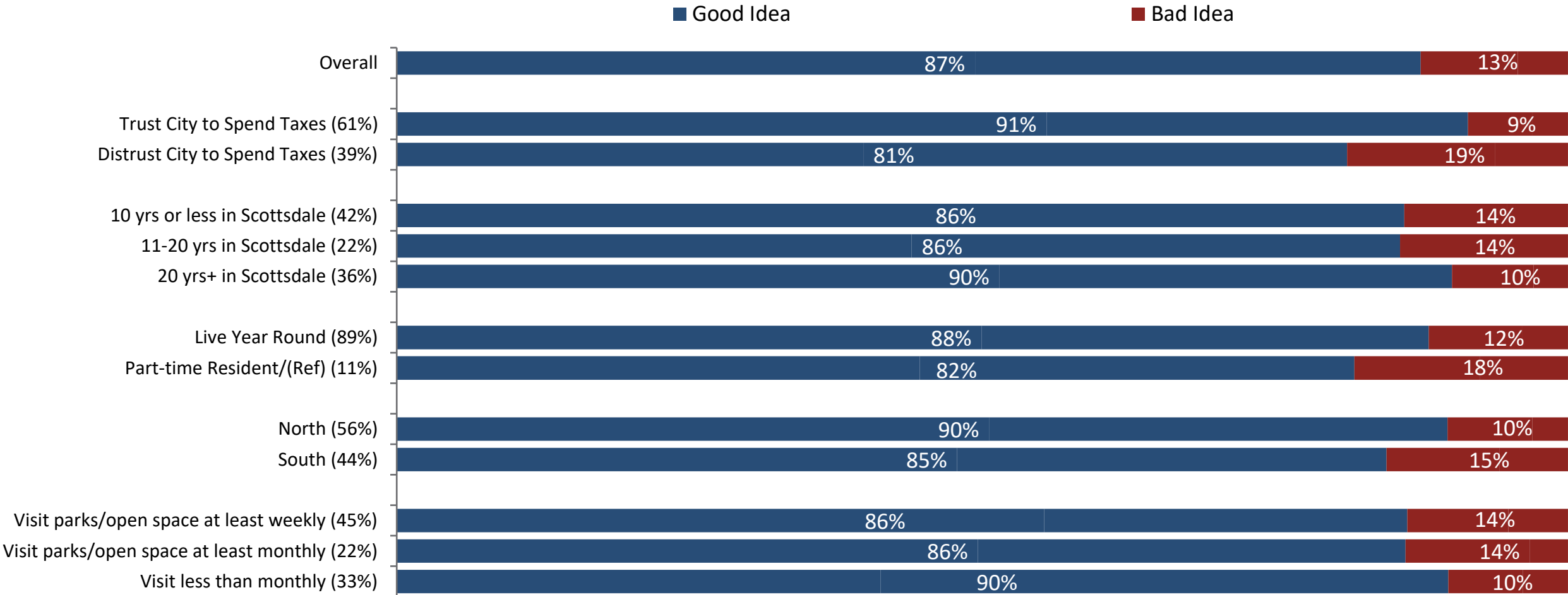
After hearing about both potential funding mechanisms, voters continue to overwhelmingly believe it is a good idea to fund City's parks and recreational spaces without increasing the tax rate, but intensity decreases after they learn more.

After hearing everything, do you think it is a very good, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea for the City to take these actions to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other city parks and recreation facilities without increasing the tax rate?



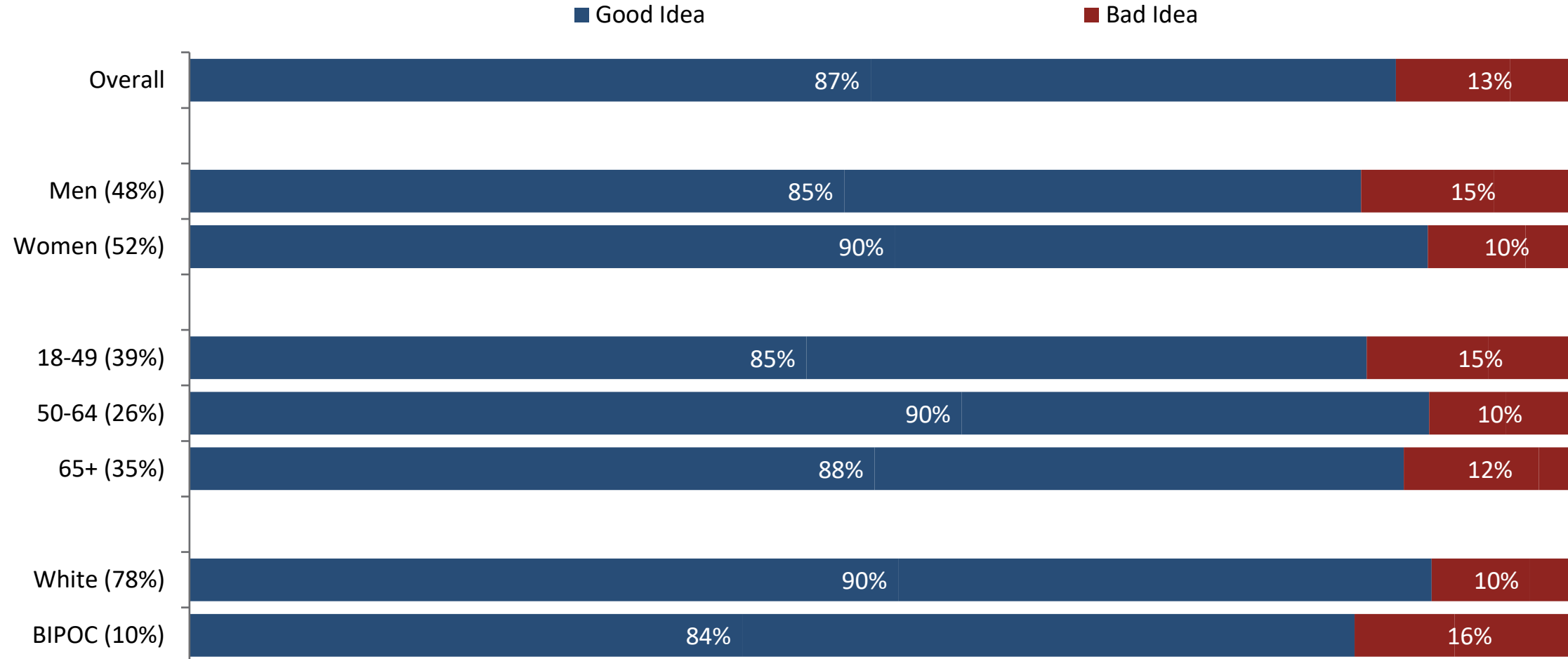
Final Consideration by Subgroups

Voters who say they distrust the city to spend taxes responsibly show less intense positivity towards the potential funding mechanisms and more negativity overall.



Final Consideration by Subgroups

After hearing about both potential funding mechanisms, voters across demographics are largely enthusiastic.

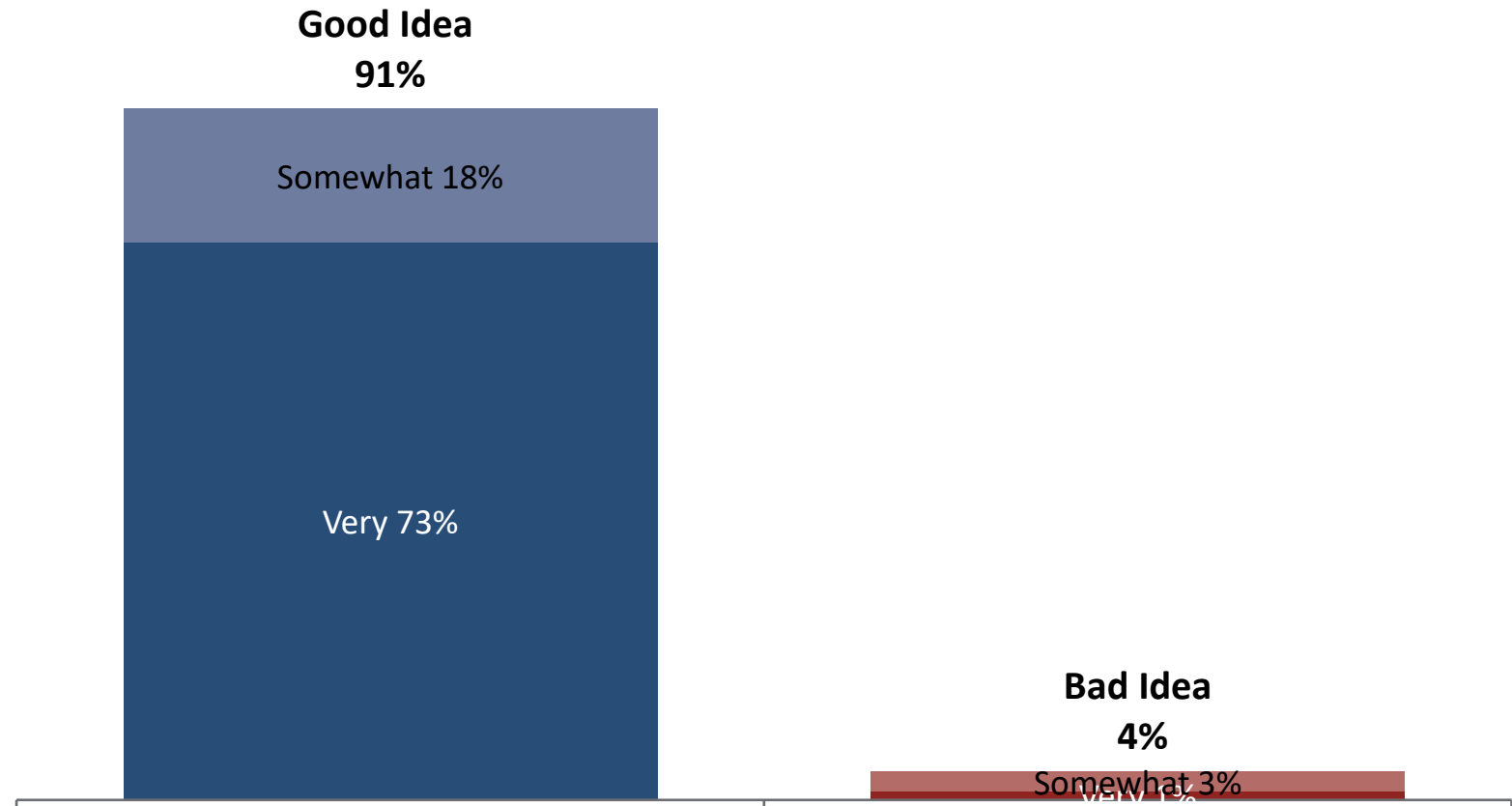


Funding Maintenance and Improvements Consideration

Nearly three quarters of open participation respondents are very supportive of the idea of funding maintenance for the Preserve and other city recreation facilities.

The City of Scottsdale is facing a shortfall in the funding needed to maintain and improve the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and other city parks and recreation facilities and is looking for ways to fund those needs.

If the City found a way to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other city parks and recreation facilities without increasing the tax rate, would you say this is a very good idea, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea?

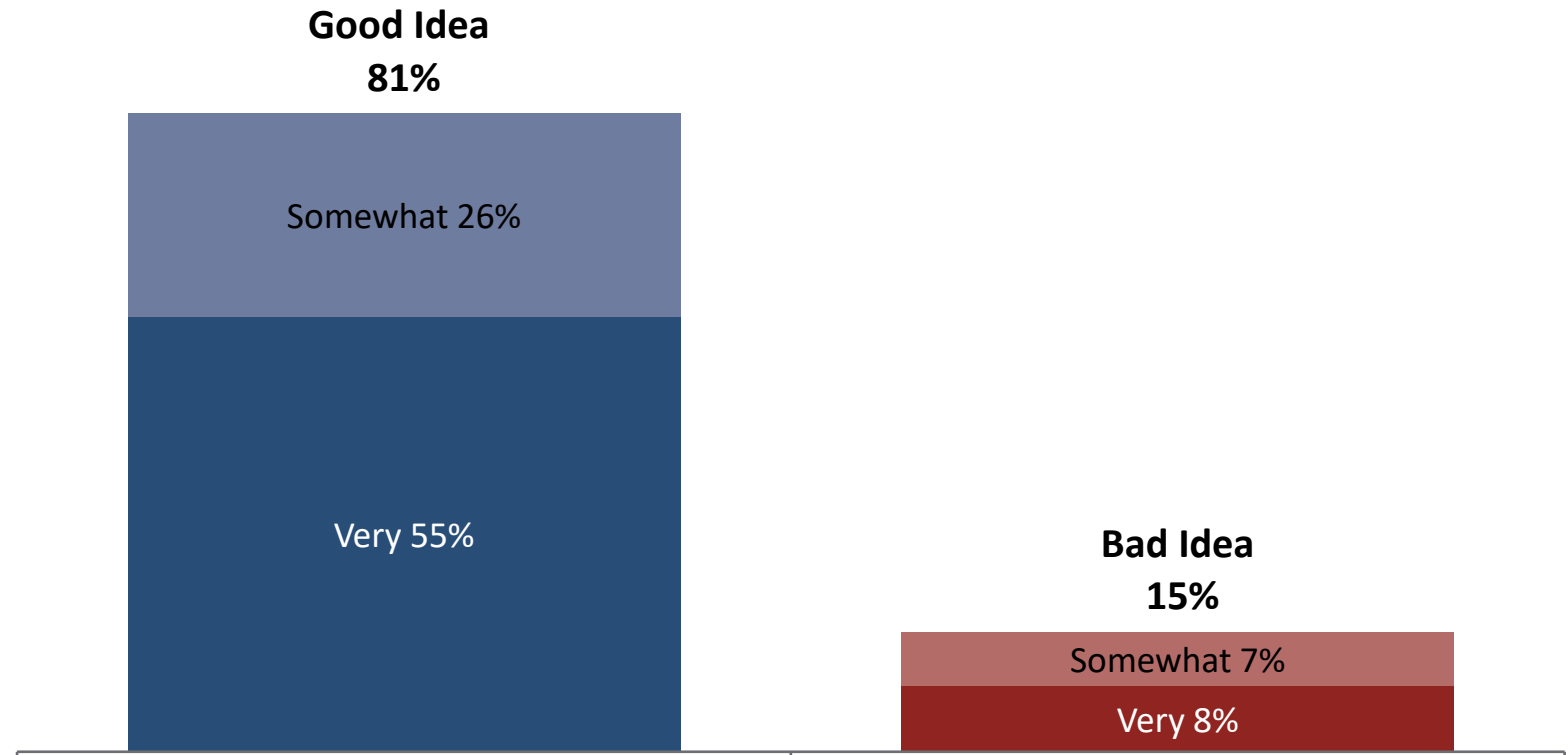


Replacing Expiring Tax Consideration

A majority of open participation survey still say that it would be a “good idea” to fund maintenance through a new tax, but those saying it is a bad idea increases and positive intensity drops considerably.

As you may know, voters in the City of Scottsdale approved two taxes for land purchases and access improvements for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, the first of which is set to expire next year. The City may consider replacing this expiring tax with a new tax for the same amount to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities.

Do you think it is a very good idea, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea for the City to replace the expiring tax with a new tax for the same amount to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities?

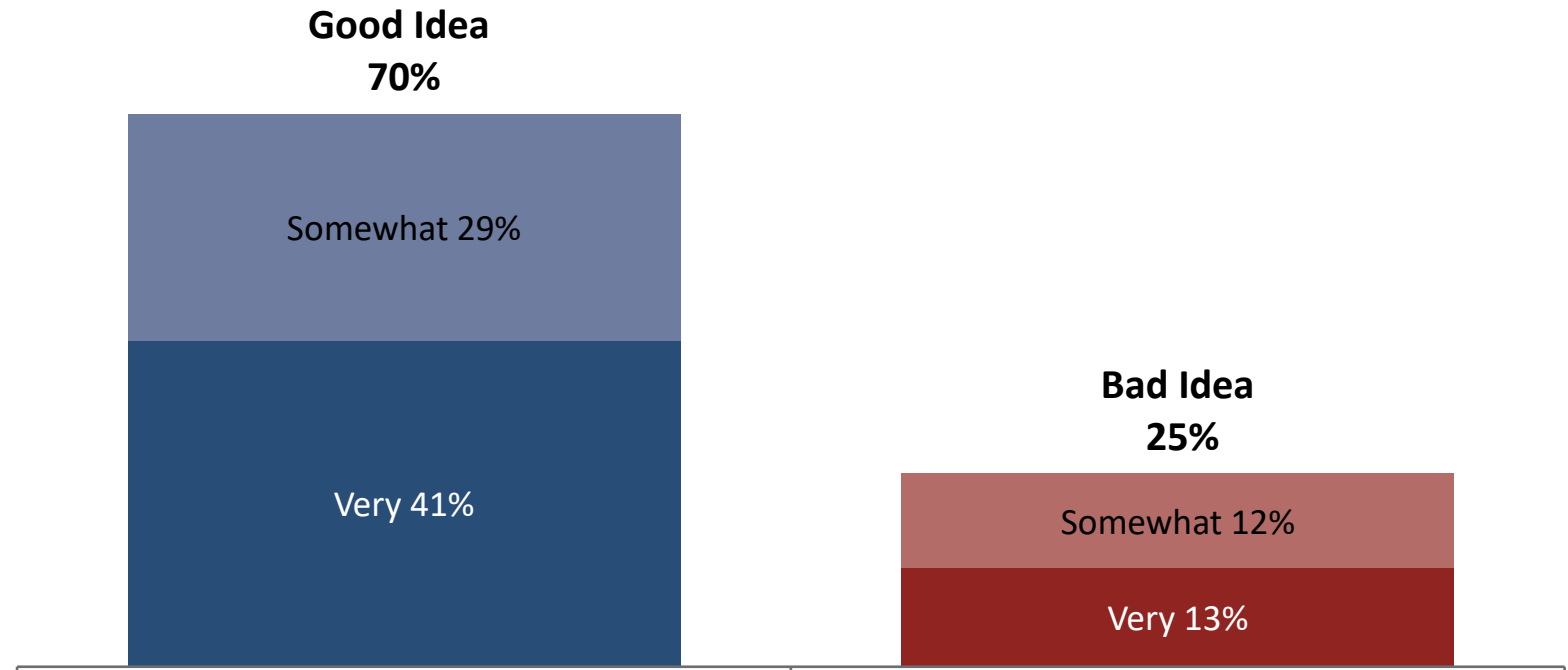


Expanding Allowable Uses Consideration

Once given more information about expanding the uses for the existing, non-expiring, tax, open participation respondents continue to display more negativity, though a majority still indicate it is a good idea overall.

The second tax for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve is not expiring yet, but it currently can only be used for land purchases and limited improvements for the Preserve. In addition to the replacement tax I just told you about, the City is considering whether to expand the allowable uses for the funds from this second tax to include maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities.

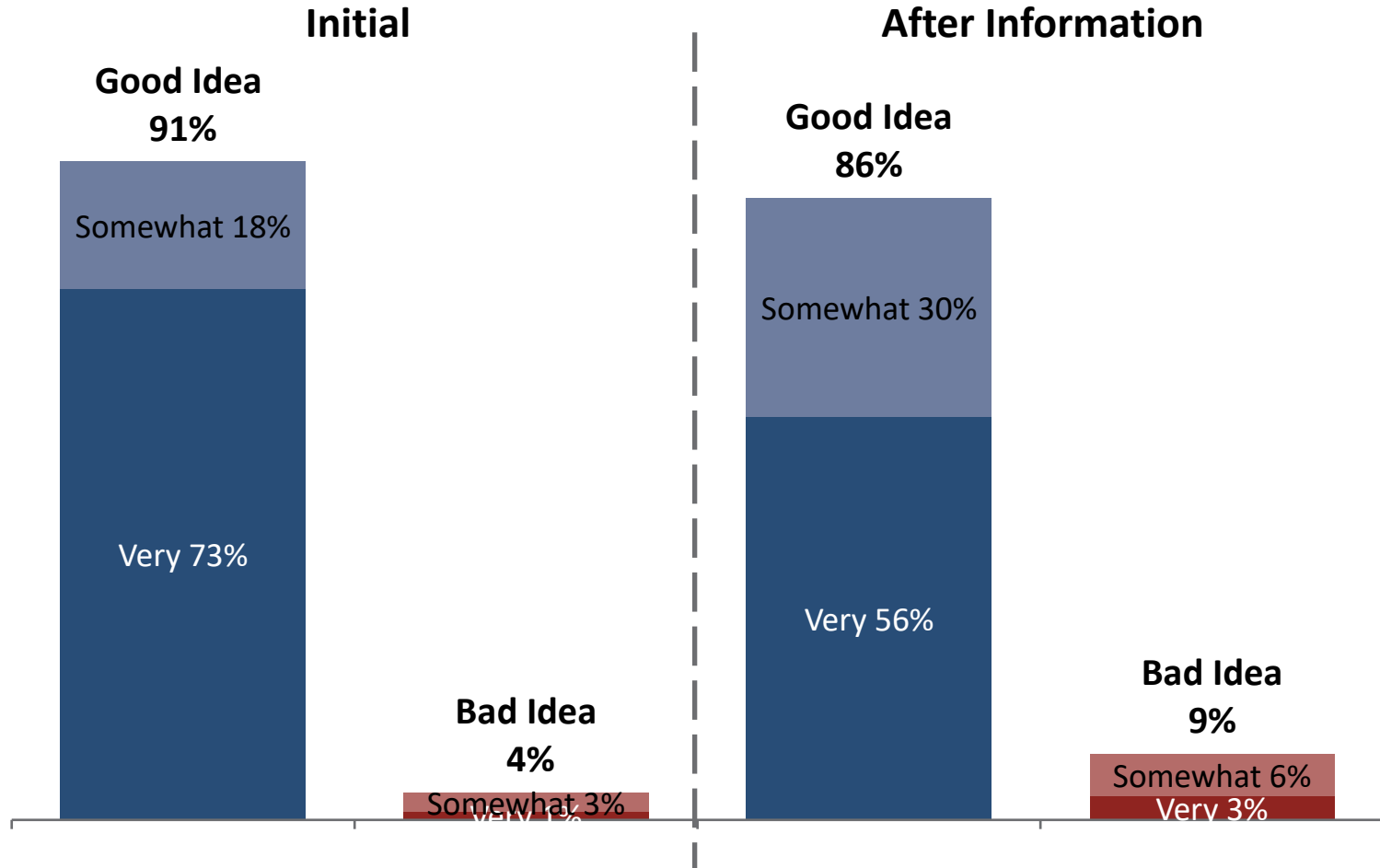
Do you think it is a very good idea, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea for the City to expand the allowable uses for the funds of the second tax to include maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other parks and recreation facilities?



Final Consideration

While both potential funding mechanisms are viewed positively by open participation respondents, intensity decreases after they are given more information.

After hearing everything, do you think it is a very good, a somewhat good idea, a somewhat bad idea, or a very bad idea for the City to take these actions to fund maintenance and improvements to the Preserve and other city parks and recreation facilities without increasing the tax rate?

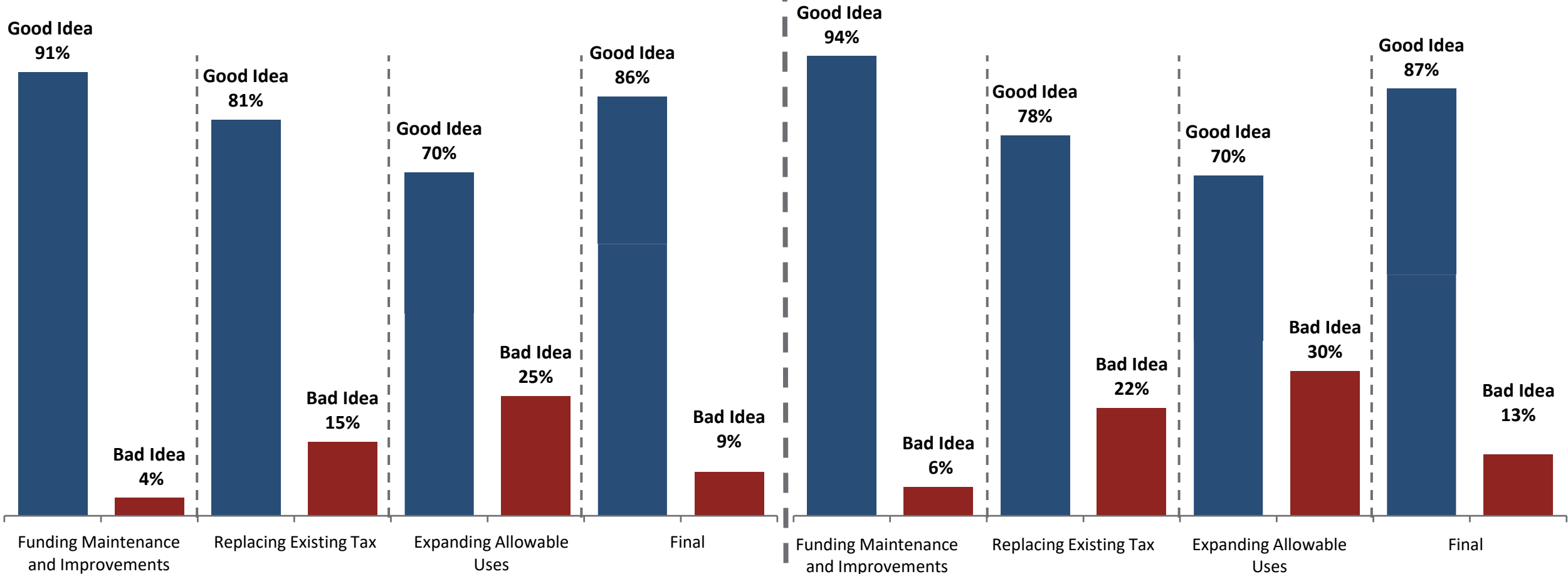


Final Consideration

Both survey groups show similar changes in opinion when given additional information.

Open Participation

Voters



Conclusions

- ▶ Both voters and the residents who responded to the open participation research see City parks and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve as contributors to Scottsdale's quality of life, and recognize the value of investing in open space and parks facilities.
- ▶ Both groups understand the need for funding to maintain, improve, and operate parks and recreational sites and facilities and express a willingness to fund parks and the Preserve through tax dollars.
- ▶ While enthusiasm declines when voters and residents hear more details about the specifics of possible funding mechanisms for parks and the Preserve, both groups endorse the idea of funding maintenance and improvements without raising taxes.



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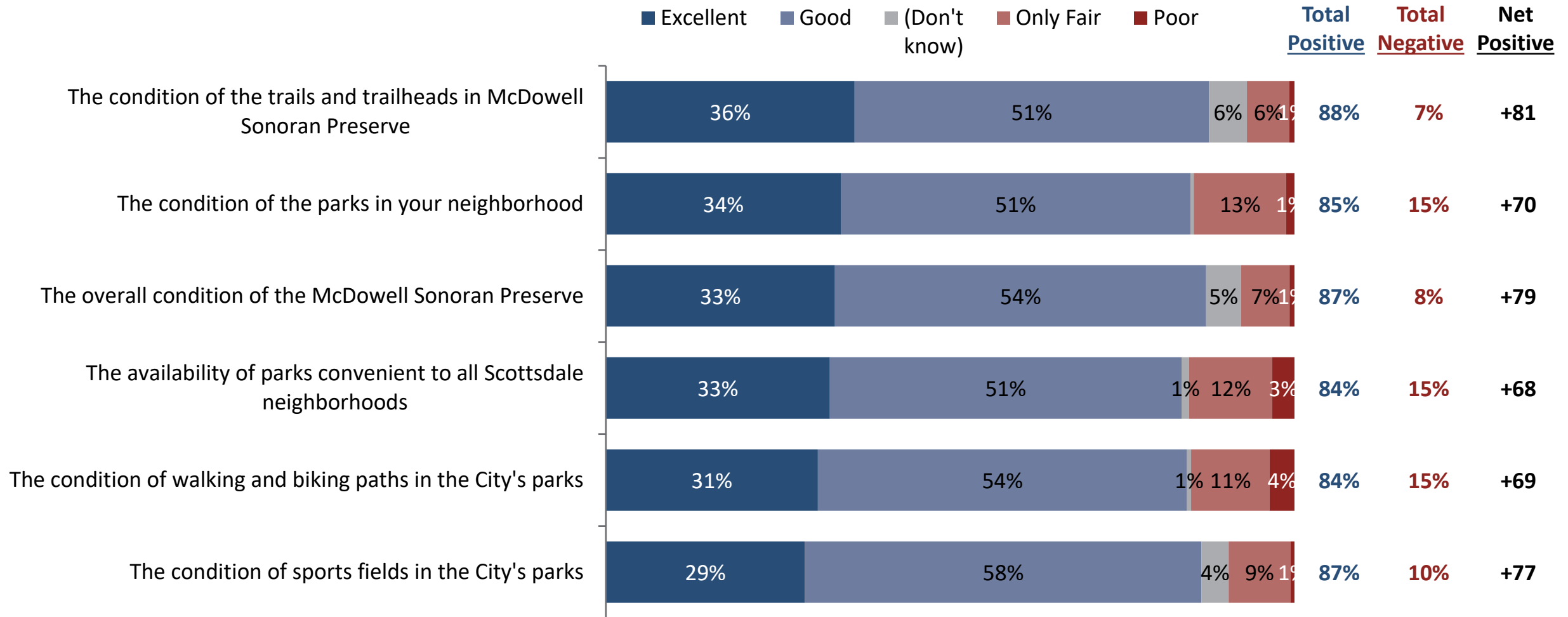
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**City of Scottsdale
Voter Survey Appendix**

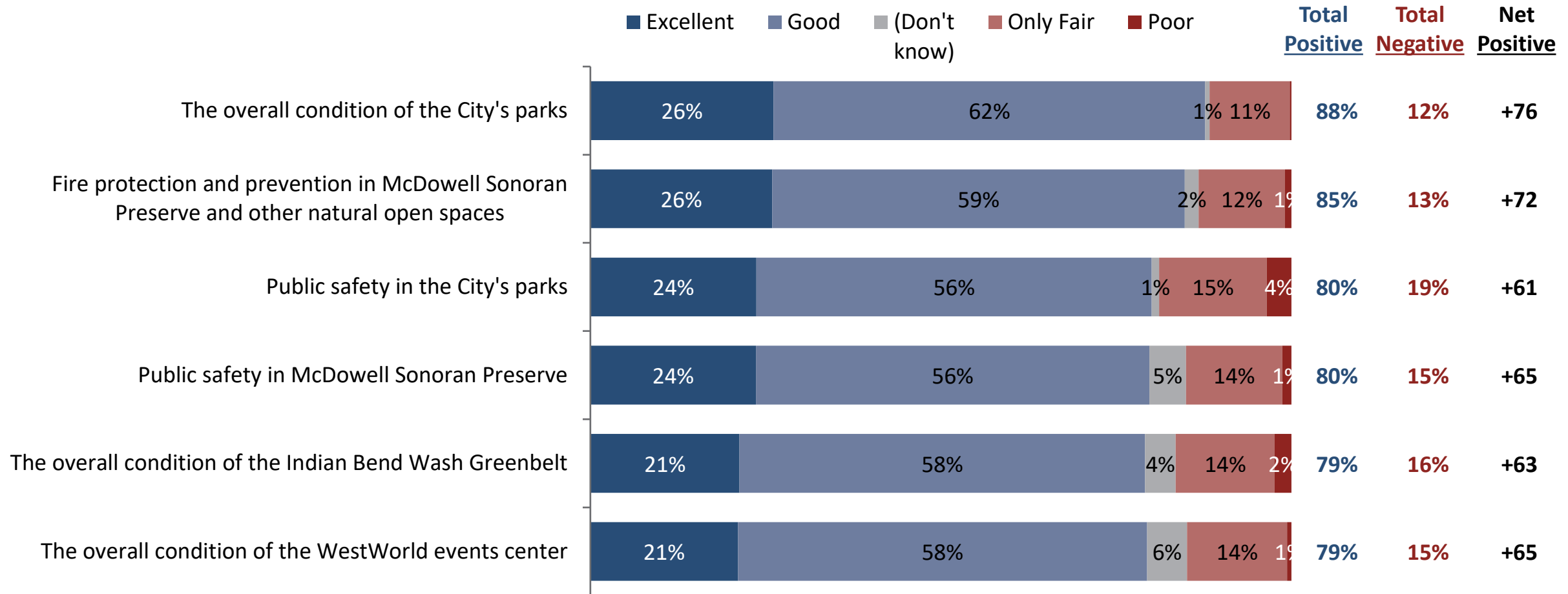
Scottsdale Parks Ratings

Scottsdale parks and recreational spaces receive positive ratings; however, intensity is low with statements with highest ratings are viewed as excellent by about a third of voters.



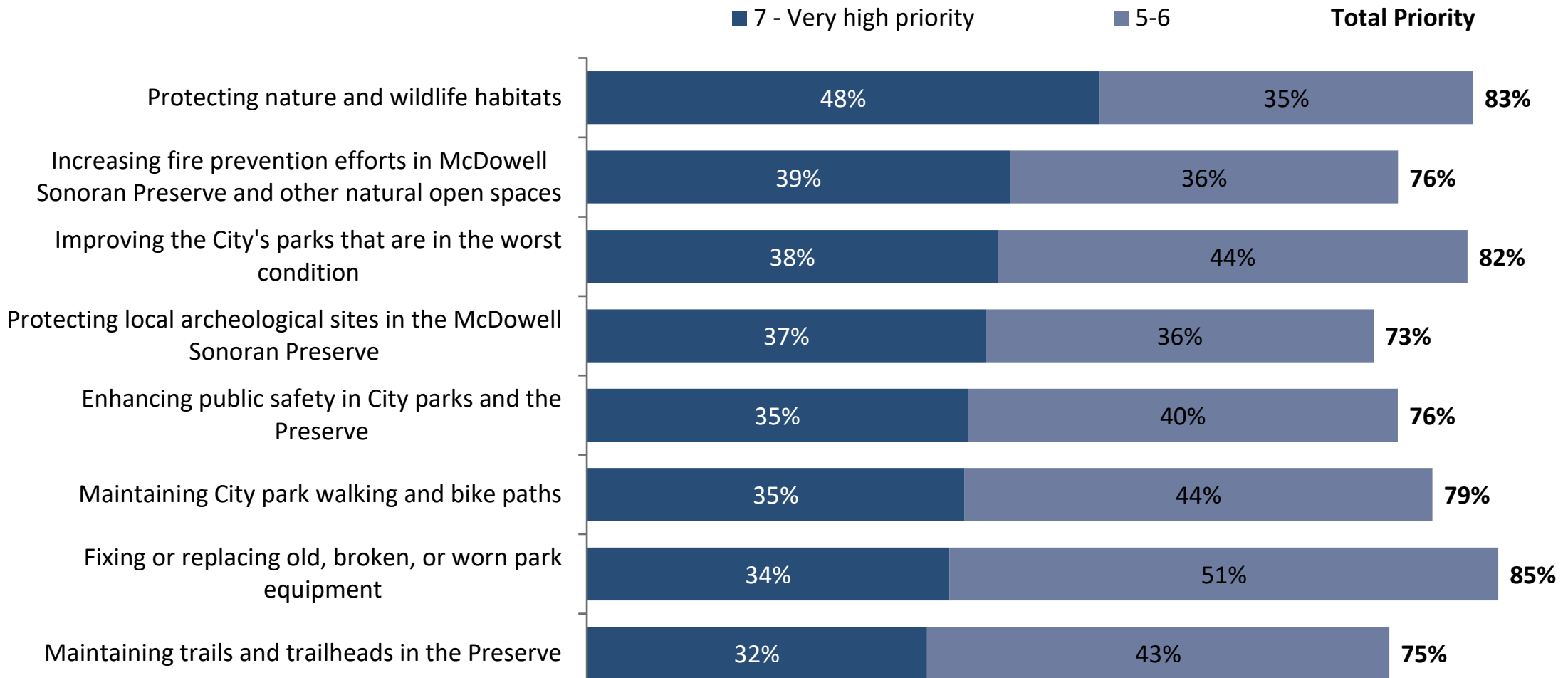
Scottsdale Parks Ratings

The second tier of statements are viewed as excellent by about a fourth of voters, while total positive rating is similar to the highest statements. Public safety in the Preserve and the overall condition of the Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt and Westworld have the lowest intensity.



Scottsdale Parks Priorities

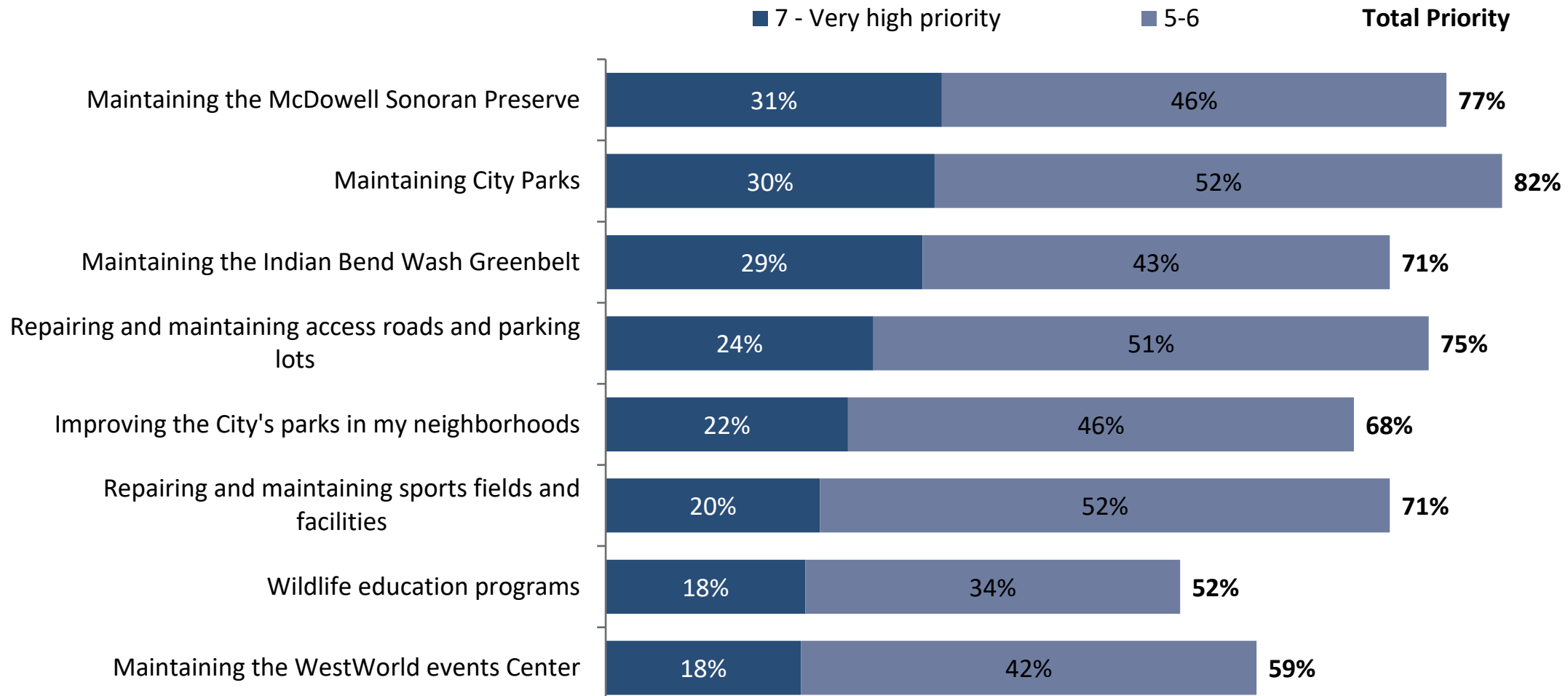
Ecological and fire improvement efforts across the City's parks and the Preserve are among the highest rated priorities.



Q21-36. Thinking about the funding the City has for parks and open space in the City of Scottsdale, please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you feel that item should be a very low priority for funding, and 7 means that you feel that item should be a very high priority for funding.

Scottsdale Parks Priorities

Maintenance efforts are a few of the less intense priorities



Q21-36. Thinking about the funding the City has for parks and open space in the City of Scottsdale, please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you feel that item should be a very low priority for funding, and 7 means that you feel that item should be a very high priority for funding.



City of Scottsdale
Open Participation Appendix

Quality of Life Rating

Positivity about the quality of life in Scottsdale is high, with almost half saying it is excellent.

How would you rate the overall quality of life in Scottsdale?

Positive
91%

Good 45%

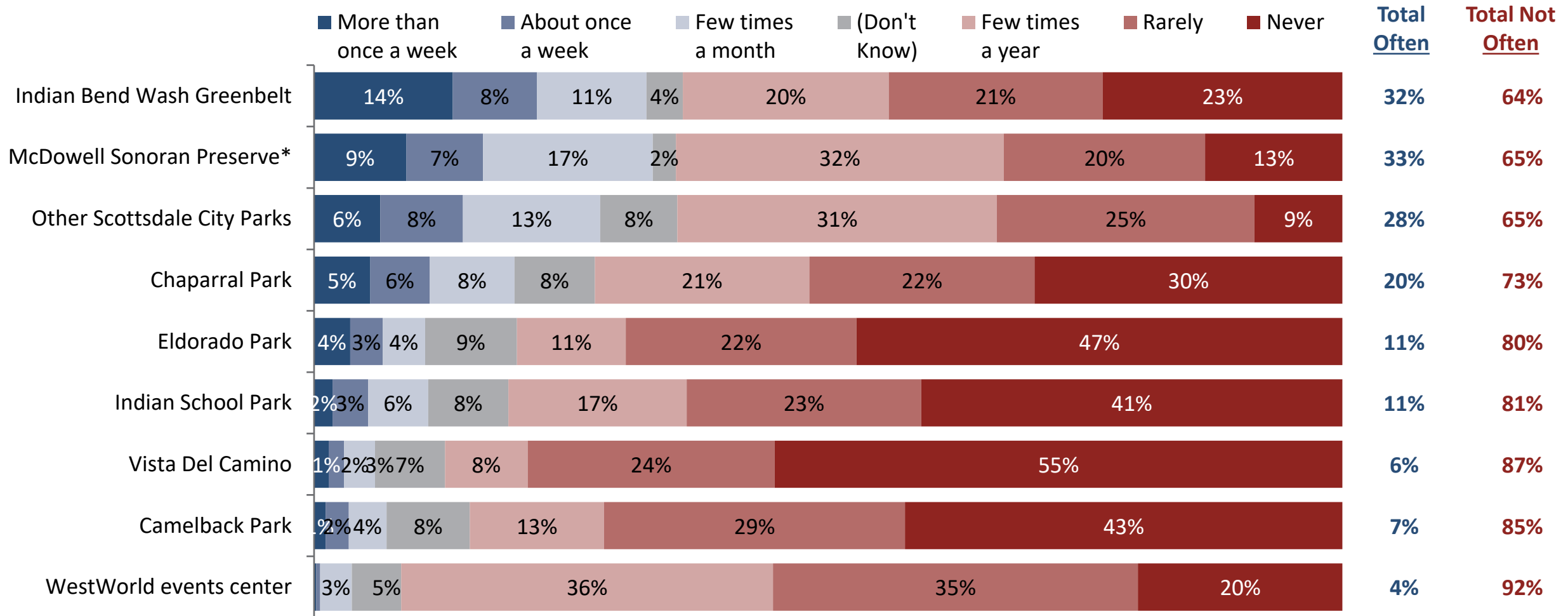
Excellent 46%

Negative
7%

Only Fair 6%
Poor 1%

Open Spaces and Parks Visit Frequency

Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt is the top visited park, followed by the preserve.



Q46-54. The following is a list of Scottsdale open spaces, parks, and recreational spaces. On average, how frequently do you or your family visit each one? *List included to help respondents identify qualifying trailheads

Overall Visit Frequency

Almost half of open participation survey respondents visit a park or facility at least weekly.

At least weekly: Visited one of the parks or facilities at least weekly

At least monthly: Visited one of the parks or facilities at least monthly

Less than monthly: Visited one of the parks or facilities less than monthly

At least weekly
47%

At least monthly
22%

Less than monthly
31%