

Date: July 29, 2022

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: **Charter Amendment and Ballot Measure Polling Results**

In anticipation of the November 1, 2022 election, the City sought to survey voters and gauge support for several City Charter Amendment measures that may be placed on the ballot. This is a standard practice for public agencies while they are in the research stage of whether to invest time and resources to place items before voters for consideration. To do so, the City contracted with FM3 Research, a policy-oriented opinion research firm based in California, to perform a survey of likely voters in Long Beach.

Data was collected through telephone and online interviews July 2 through July 10, 2022. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish. In total, 898 likely November 2022 voters in the City of Long Beach were surveyed. Four potential measures were tested in the survey. For each one, survey respondents were presented with a mock ballot summary and asked to vote. Additionally, voters received pro and con arguments about each measure and were then asked to vote a second time.

- **Charter Amendment - Police Oversight Commission**

A solid majority of Long Beach voters support amending the City Charter to establish a seven-member Police Oversight Commission, with 63% of those surveyed initially indicating that they would vote yes to approve the Charter Amendment. Following statements from supporters and opponents of this Charter Amendment, six in ten (60%) continue to vote in favor and one-third (33%) oppose.

- **Charter Amendment – Merge Long Beach Gas, Water, and Sewer Utilities**

By a margin of three to one, Long Beach voters initially favor a Charter Amendment to merge Long Beach gas, water, and sewer utilities into a single publicly-owned utility. Based on the mock ballot summary, with 62% of Long Beach voters support merging the City's utilities, 21% in opposition, and 17% undecided. After statements for and against this proposed merger, six in ten (60%) voters remain in favor, while opposition increases to 33% and the proportion who are undecided falls 10-points to 7%.

- **Charter Amendment – Consolidation of Municipal and Statewide Elections**

Most Long Beach voters support amending the City Charter to consolidate municipal elections with statewide primary and general elections. Initially, 60% vote in favor based on the mock ballot summary and two in ten are opposed (19%) and undecided (21%). With additional information based on statements from supporters and opponents, 68% vote in favor of aligning the dates of city elections with those of statewide primary and general elections and nearly one in four oppose this change to the Long Beach City Charter.

The items above are all being actively considered by the Long Beach City Council to place before voters for the November 2022 election. That decision will be before the City Council on August 9, 2022 in a public meeting on whether to advance these to the ballot for voter consideration.

Consideration of an Infrastructure Bond for Streets

During this polling, the City Manager also requested to test whether there was sufficient support to consider a measure to address the City's infrastructure. The City Council has long put a high priority on fixing streets and roads in the worst condition. While significant street work has been funded using Measure A infrastructure dollars, it does not meet the outstanding need. Most cities fund street repair using a property tax-based infrastructure bond. However, in Long Beach, the last successful property tax bond was approved in the 1960s. As City Manager, the Council has asked me to identify ideas to address our streets and roads. While we will be proposing a significant bond measure in the FY 23 Proposed Budget funded by Measure A, additional resources are needed to meet public expectations. As a result, City staff requested the firm survey whether voters would support funding a large investment in the streets and roads in the worst condition. This has not been an item put before the Mayor and City Council for discussion - this was initial research to determine if it is something we as a City should consider to address our demand for street repair. Unlike in other states, in California a super-majority is needed to pass City infrastructure bonds funded by property tax.

- Bond Measure – Street and Road Safety Repair

The survey results show that there does not appear to be sufficient support among Long Beach voters to pass a \$500 Million bond measure to repair local streets and roads. A 54% majority votes yes to approve this bond measure after receiving the mock ballot summary; however, this is well below the two-thirds (67%) threshold needed to pass this proposal if it is placed on the ballot by the City Council. Further, following the pro and con statements, support declined 10-points to 44% and opposition rose 14-points to nearly half, 48%.

If you have any questions, please contact Assistant City Manager Linda Tatum at (562) 570-6916.

ATTACHMENT

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City of Long Beach Charter Amendments Ballot Measure Issues Survey

*Summary of Findings from a Survey of
Likely November 2022 City of Long Beach Voters*



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Specifics and Methodology

Dates	July 2-10, 2022
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2022 voters in the City of Long Beach
Total Interviews	898
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 3.5\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Languages	English & Spanish

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



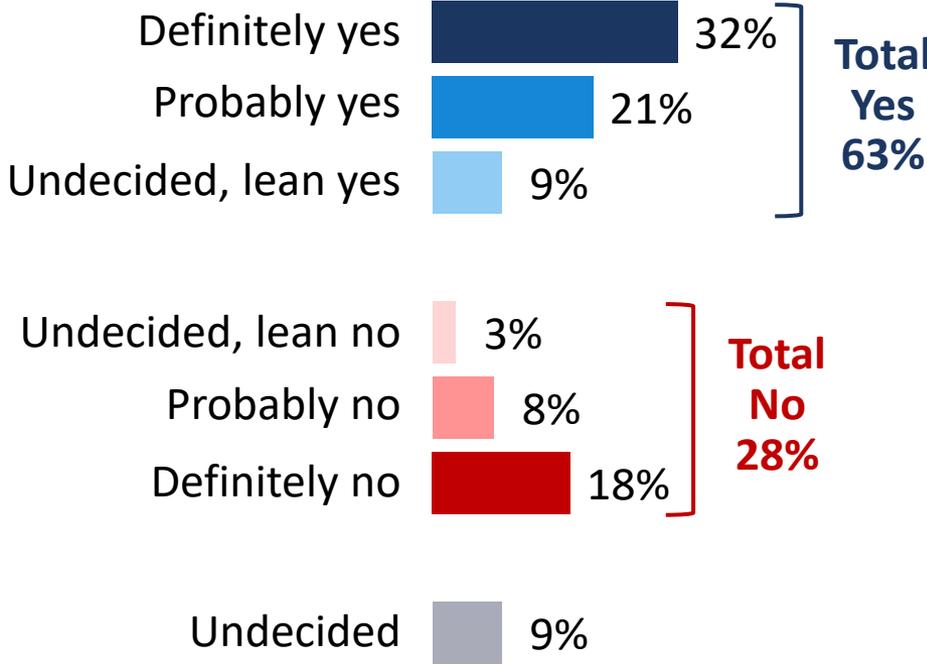
Citizen Police Complaint Commission Charter Amendment



More than six in ten support amending the City Charter to establish the Police Oversight Commission, but support is soft with one in ten only “leaning yes”.

Citizen Police Complaint Commission Charter Amendment. Shall the City Charter of Long Beach be amended and restated to establish a Police Oversight Commission and add a Director of Police Oversight, to redesign the City’s police oversight and accountability through modified practices, including, but not limited to, a Director of Police Oversight with authority to audit Police Department complaint investigations, review major uses of force incidents, and make recommendations on Police Department operations, policies, procedures, and trainings, and a Police Oversight Commission to provide feedback to Police Oversight Director, and which would replace the current Citizen Police Complaint Commission?

If there were an election today, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?



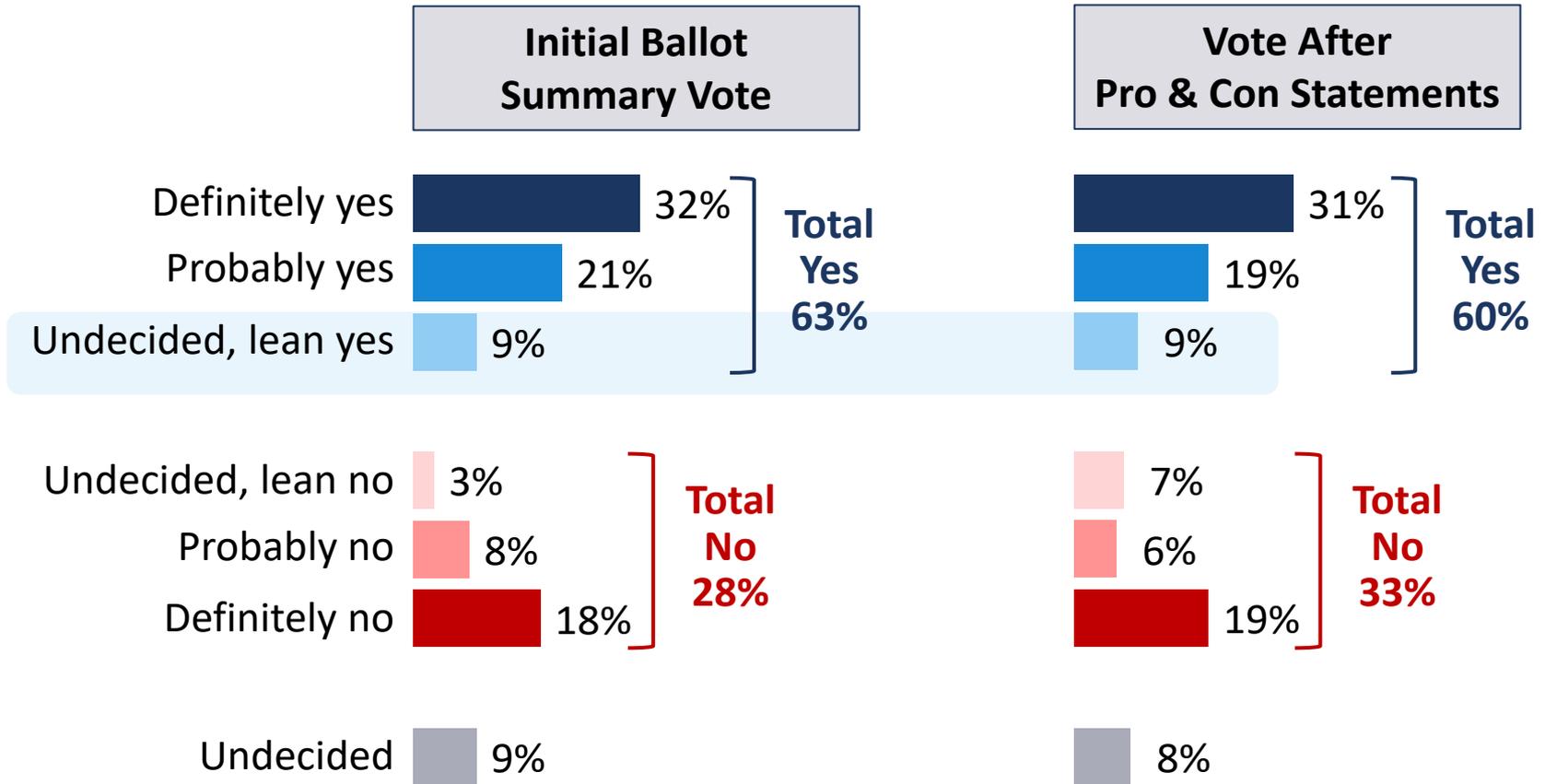
Statements for and against the Police Oversight Commission Charter Amendment

Supporters say this measure will reform the Citizens Police Complaint Commission to give it more authority and independence to conduct oversight and review of the Long Beach Police Department. The Director of the Commission is required to audit police investigations carried out by internal affairs, can investigate allegations against high-ranking police officials and examine high-profile incidents, and increase transparency to hold officers accountable for misconduct and abuse.

Opponents say this measure is the latest example of how Long Beach politicians have put so-called criminal justice reform policies ahead of public safety. Gun violence, burglaries and property crimes have increased dramatically over the past several years, and now our neighborhoods, parks and schools are less safe. Instead of providing our local police officers with the resources and support they need to reduce crime, this Charter Amendment will only create more bureaucracy for an organization that can only recommend and not directly oversee the Police Department.

Q4. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the **Citizen Police Complaint Commission Charter Amendment** measure was on the ballot, would you vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?

Long Beach voters continue to favor the Charter Amendment, which includes one in ten who remain leaning toward voting yes on the measure.



Q2. If there were an election today, do you think you would vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?

Q4. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the **Citizen Police Complaint Commission Charter Amendment** measure was on the ballot, would you vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?



Long Beach Water and Gas Consolidation Charter Amendment

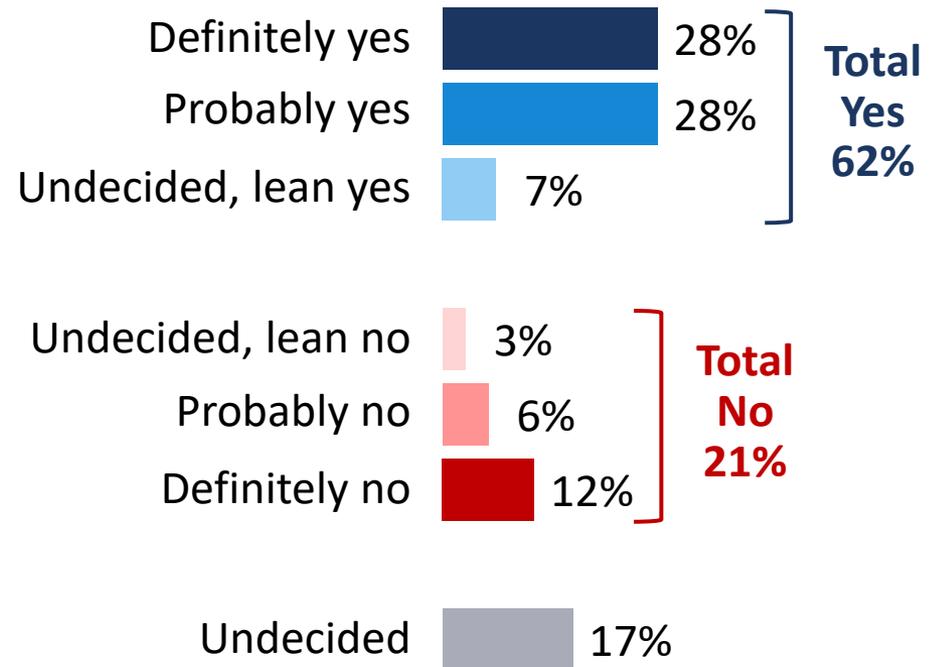


By a three to one margin, Long Beach voters favor the Charter Amendment to consolidate the city's utility service providers into a single entity.

Long Beach Water and Gas Consolidation.

Shall the City Charter be amended to merge the existing water, sewer and gas utilities into a single publicly-owned utility, governed with a utility-focus by the existing independent Water/Utility Commission; eliminate duplicative costs by consolidating like operations, improve customer service efficiency with increased flexibility in sharing of staffing/equipment, reduce impacts to streets through coordinated utility pipeline street repairs; and achieve cost savings through greater economies of scale?

If there were an election today, do you think you would vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?



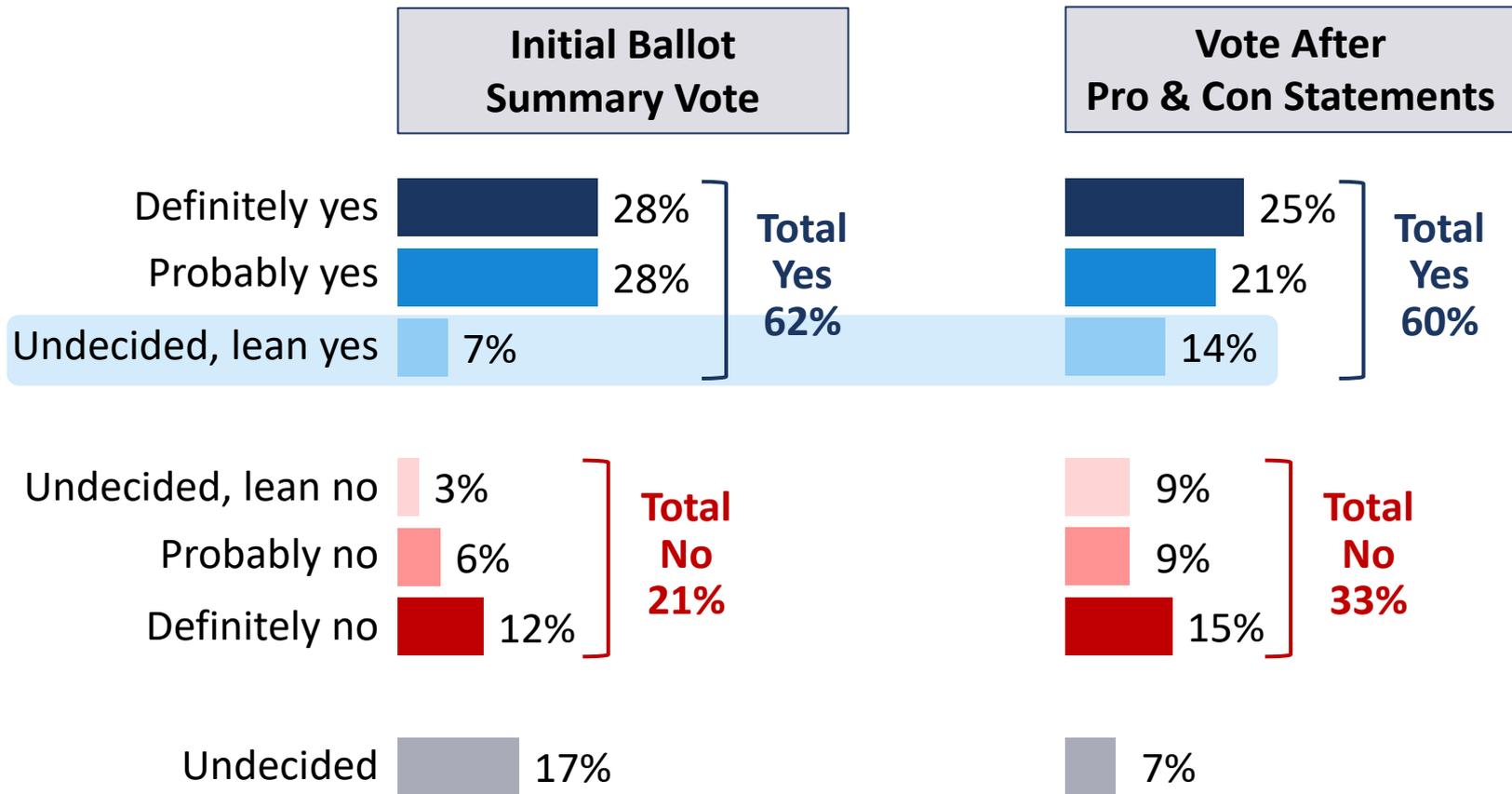
Statements for and against the Long Beach Water and Gas Consolidation Merger Charter Amendment

Supporters say an independent analysis of consolidating Long Beach utility services shows it would reduce costs for residents and businesses through streamlined and more efficient service. Consolidating utility services under one department will allow for better planning and a more effective response in the event of an emergency, including earthquakes or other natural disasters.

Opponents say Long Beach water and gas have always operated separately, providing quality service to residents and businesses. Los Angeles's consolidated Department of Water and Power has been plagued with accusations of fraud, wasteful spending and overbilling customers. Instead of changing something that works, the City should focus on reducing crime and addressing homelessness.

*Q7. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the **Long Beach Water and Gas Consolidation** measure to amend the City Charter was on the ballot, would you vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?*

Following the statements, total support remains at six in ten, but the yes vote softens and opposition increases by 12-points.



Q5. If there were an election today, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?

Q7. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the **Long Beach Water and Gas Consolidation** measure to amend the City Charter was on the ballot, would you vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?



City of Long Beach Municipal Elections Charter Amendment

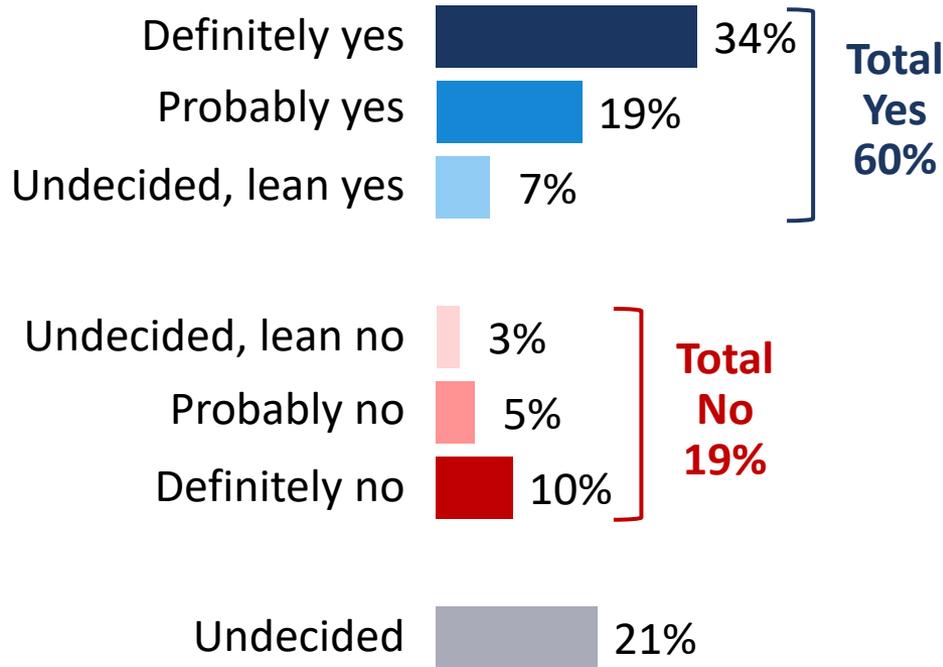


There is solid voter support for a Charter Amendment that would align Long Beach city elections with California's primary and general elections.

City of Long Beach Municipal Elections Charter Amendment.

Shall the City Charter of Long Beach be amended to realign the City's primary and general election dates with the State's primary and general election dates held in even-numbered years, and make other related and technical changes to City election procedures?

If there were an election today, do you think you would vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?



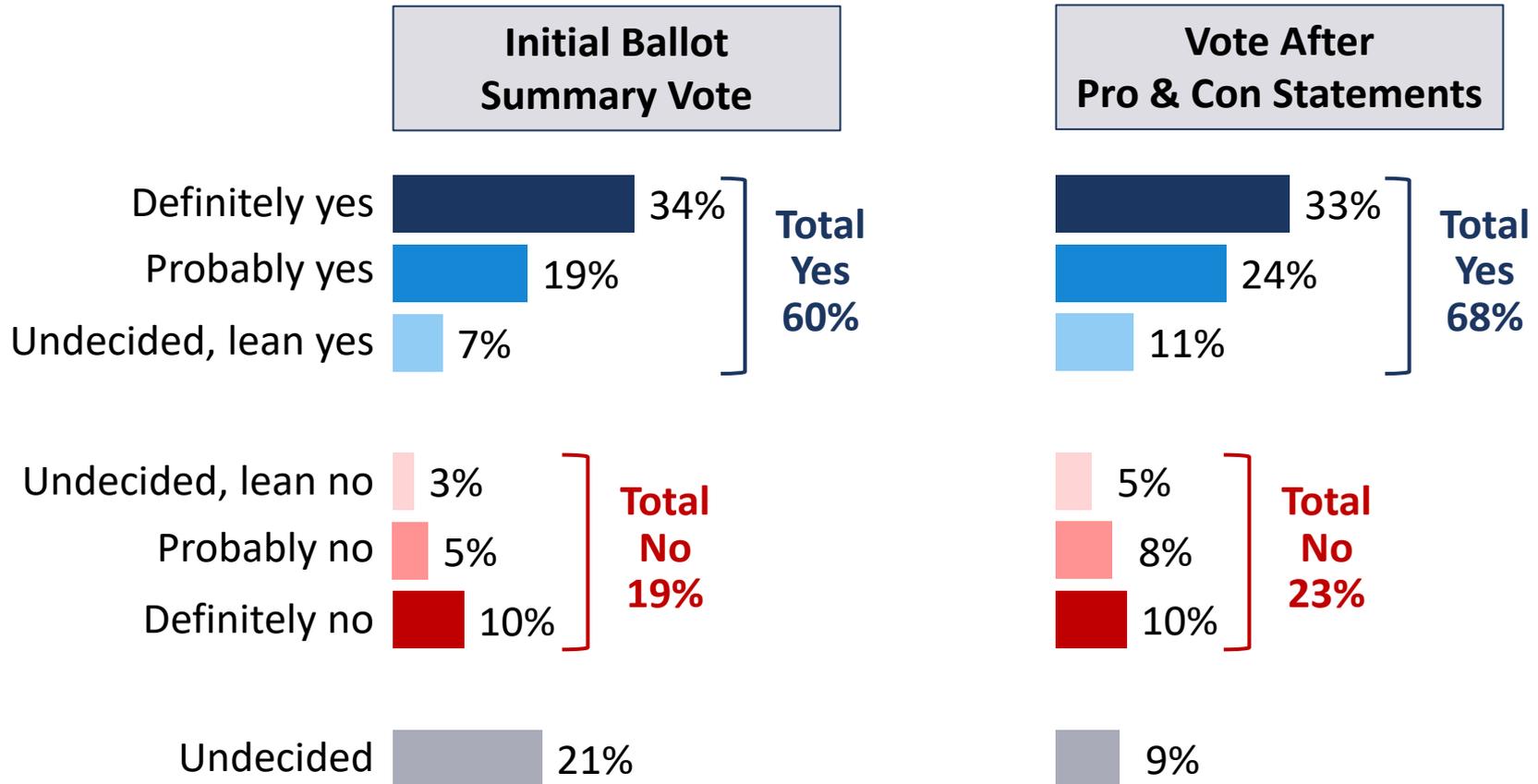
Statements for and against City of Long Beach Municipal Election Charter Amendment

Supporters say this measure will increase voter turnout in Long Beach elections by holding them at the same time as elections for President, Governor, Congress and major statewide ballot measures. If more vote in City elections, Long Beach officials will pay more attention to residents and our concerns, and help to reduce the influence special interests have in City Hall.

Opponents say if we move Long Beach City elections to the same time as those for statewide offices and ballot measures, local concerns will be drowned out and important neighborhood issues will be ignored. Keeping city elections separate will help to ensure that local issues get the attention they deserve and residents have a chance to make their voices heard.

*Q9. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the **City of Long Beach Municipal Elections Charter Amendment** was on the ballot, would you vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?*

After the statements, total support increases to two-thirds – notably, “definitely yes” is three times the “definitely no” vote.



Q8. If there were an election today, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?

Q9. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the **City of Long Beach Municipal Elections Charter Amendment** was on the ballot, would you vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?



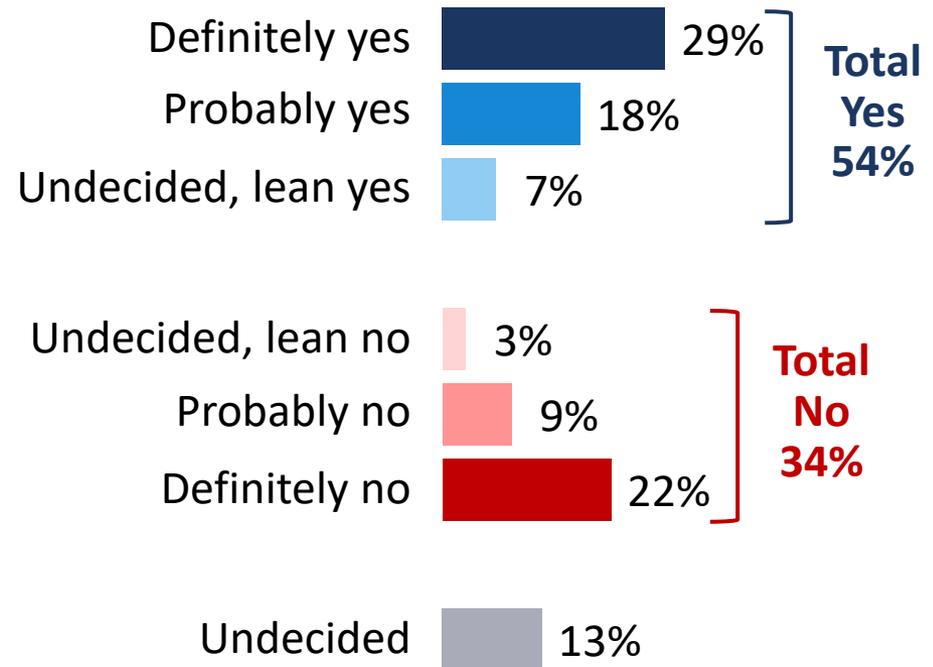
Long Beach Street and Road Safety/Repair Bond Measure



A majority vote in favor of a road and street improvement bond, but this is far below the two-thirds threshold needed for passage.

Long Beach Street and Road Safety/Repair Measure. Should Long Beach residents authorize bonds to fix every residential street in poor or worse condition by repairing potholes/repaving roads to improve safety, and all funds restricted to streets, curbs, gutters, and repairing drainage by approving \$500,000,000 in bonds, at an annual cost of \$40.39 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation, generating \$100,000,000 annually while bonds are outstanding, with annual independent audits and oversight committee expenditure reviews?

If there were an election today, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it?



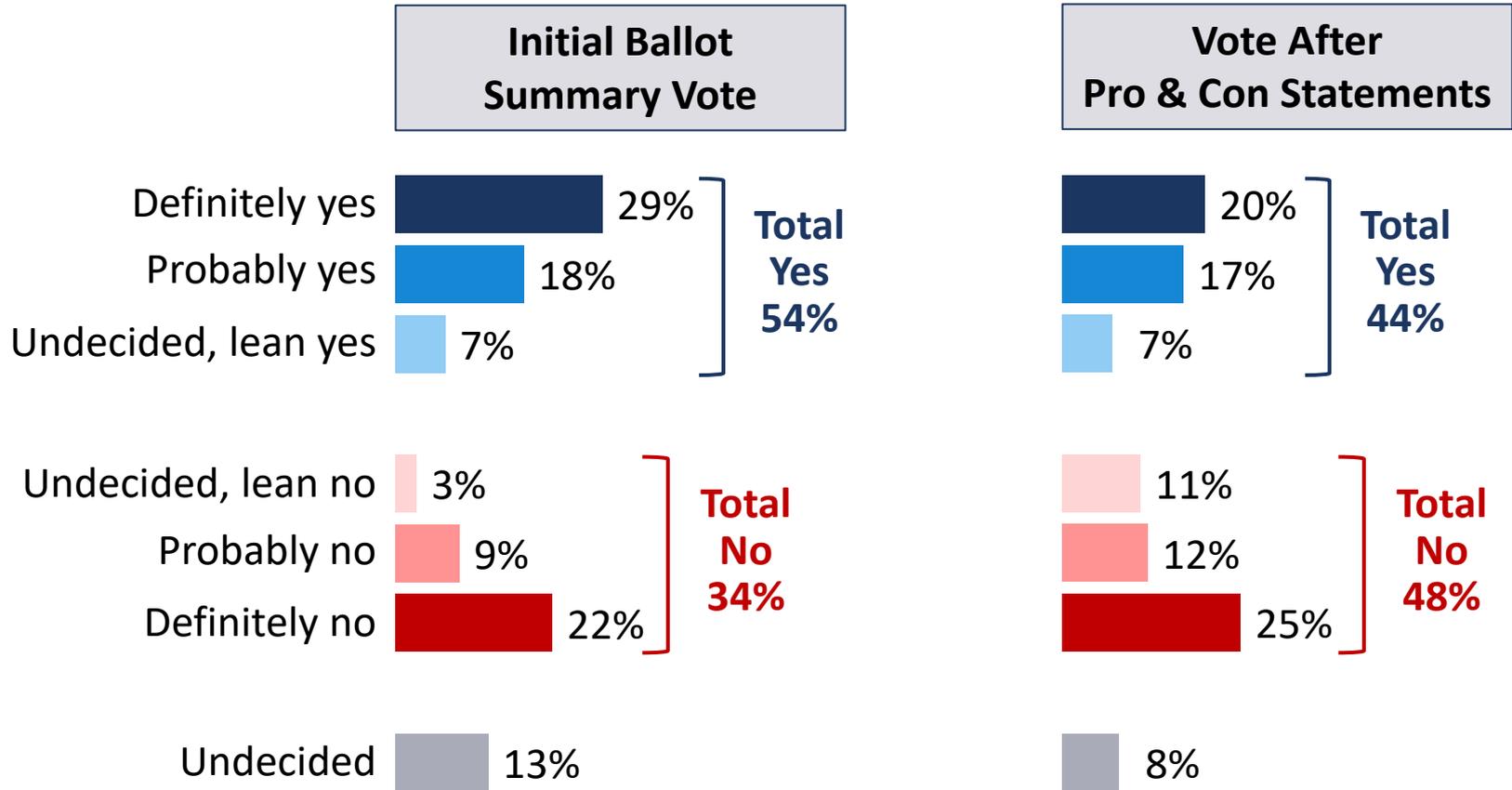
Statements for and against the Long Beach Street and Road Safety/Repair Bond Measure

Supporters say an independent analysis found more than 200 miles of Long Beach streets and roads are in Very Poor or Poor condition, and it has been 60 years since the City issued bonds to fund a comprehensive roads repair program. Passing this measure provides a dedicated source of funds to fix streets in every community, and frees up other sources of revenue to upgrade community centers, neighborhoods libraries and police and fire stations to improve Long Beach residents' quality of life and protect public safety.

Opponents say Long Beach voters have already approved several local sales tax increases in recent years that City politicians promised us would be used to fix potholes and repair our streets. With food and gas prices at all-time highs and inflation rising many working families and seniors on fixed incomes are barely getting by, and we can't afford a bond measure that will raise property taxes on Long Beach residents.

Q11. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the Long Beach Street and Road Safety/Repair Measure was on the ballot, would you vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?

Following these statements there is a net 24-point swing in the vote as support declines 10-points and opposition to the bond measure increases 14-points.



Q10. If there were an election today, do you think you would vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?

Q11. Having heard this information, if the election were held today, and the **Long Beach Street and Road Safety/Repair Measure** was on the ballot, would you vote "yes" in favor of this measure or "no" to oppose it?