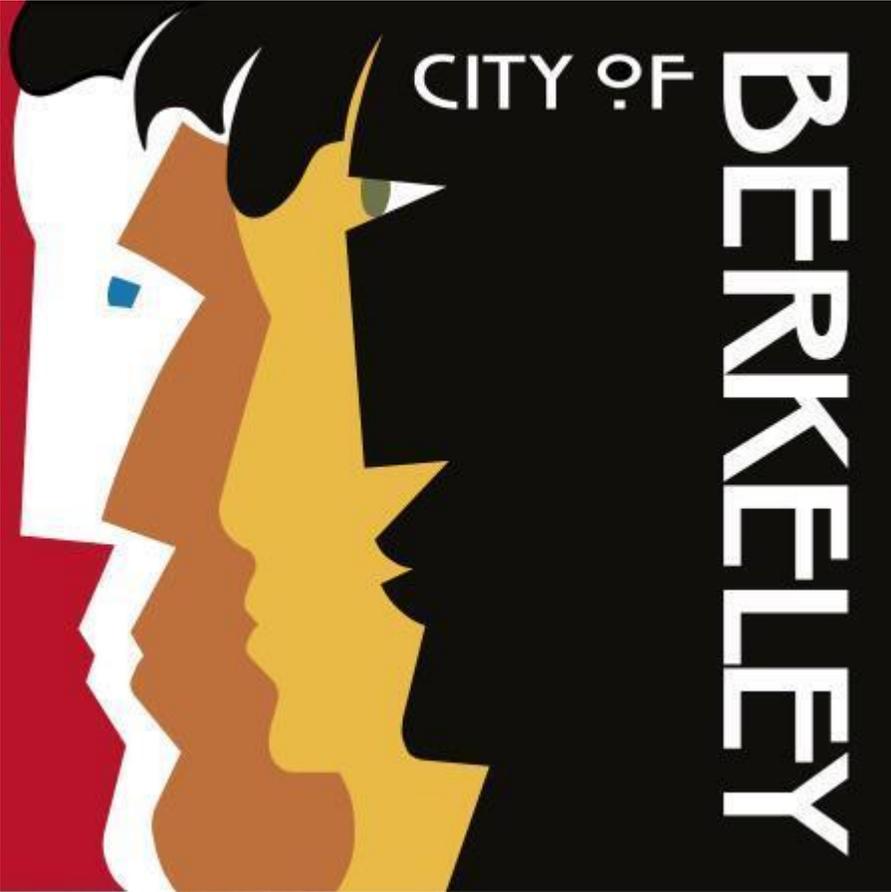


COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS ARTS & CULTURE BALLOT MEASURE

Special City Council Meeting
July 30, 2024

AGENDA

- On June 14th the Council gave direction to proceed with a community survey regarding a potential arts & culture ballot measure
- This evening the Council will receive the presentation of the results of the community survey; and
- Provide direction to staff on whether to prepare final language for City Council approval or decide not to place the measure on the November 2024 ballot



City of Berkeley

Findings from a community survey of 500
likely 2024 voters

June 27-30, 2024

Methodology

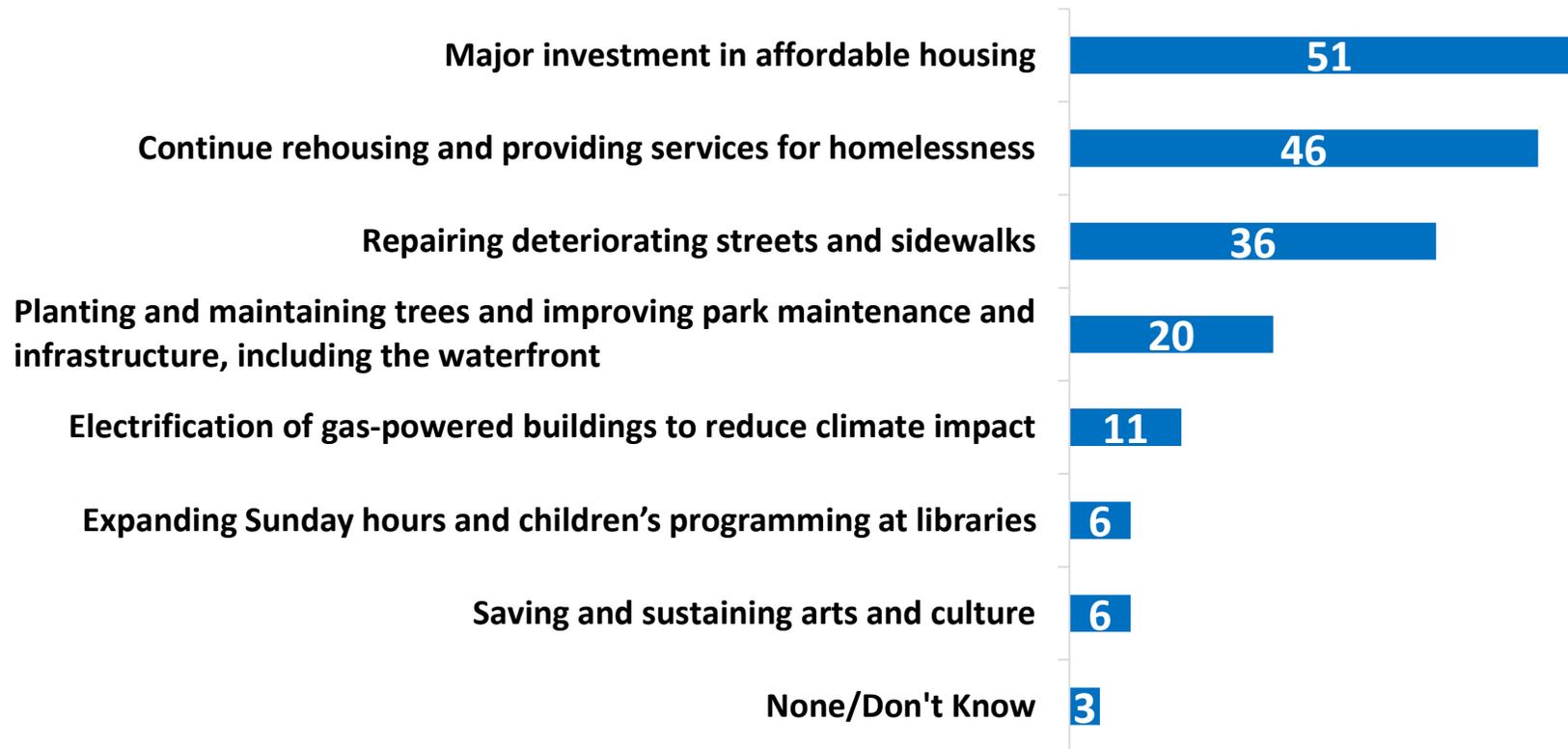
- Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by live telephone interview and text-to-online.
- The survey reached a total of 500 likely November 2024 election voters in Berkeley, California.
- The survey was conducted June 27 - 30, 2024.
- Data were weighted slightly by gender, region, region and gender, age, race, race and gender, party registration, homeownership, and education to reflect the expected demographic composition of likely general election voters in Berkeley.
- The margin of error for the full sample is +/-4.4%.



Context

The highest priorities for Berkeley voters are investment in affordable housing and services for homelessness. Other major priorities include repairing deteriorating streets and sidewalks, and planting and maintaining trees and improving park maintenance. Saving and sustaining arts and culture is relatively lower-priority issue for most voters.

Top Issues in the City of Berkeley



Q3. Now I'm going to read some different issues that have been identified as important needs in the city of Berkeley. If you had to choose, which one or two of the following would be the highest priority for you personally in the city of Berkeley? [RANDOMIZE] [ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES]

Initial Ballots



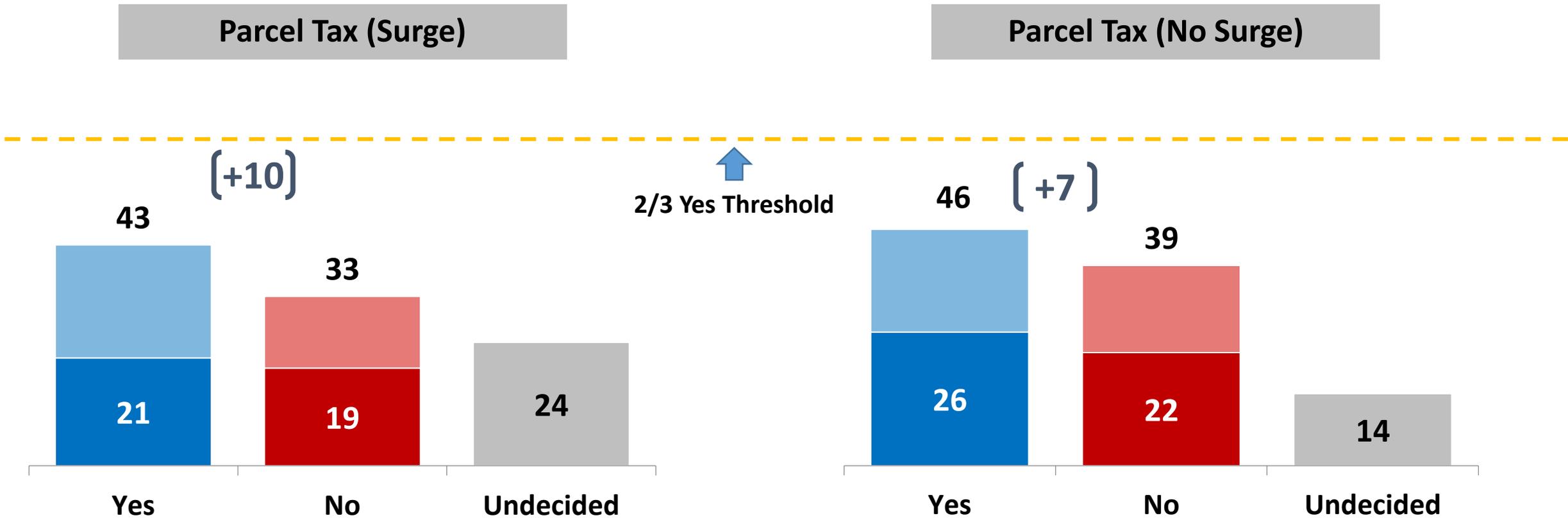
Text of Ballots – Parcel Tax

This is a version of the ballot measure that would provide funding for arts and culture organizations through a parcel tax:

[SURGE] Shall the measure creating a special parcel tax to fund performing arts organizations, including downtown theaters and music, dance, and theater organizations, at a rate of \$0.06 per square foot of improvements for the first three years, generating \$5 million annually, and \$0.04 per square foot of improvements thereafter, generating \$3.4 million annually until repealed, which rate may be increased annually for inflation, with citizen oversight and exemptions for low-income households and others, be adopted?

[NO SURGE] Shall the measure creating a special parcel tax to fund performing arts organizations, including downtown theaters and music, dance, and theater organizations, at a rate of \$0.04 per square foot of improvements, generating \$3.4 million annually until repealed, which rate may be increased annually for inflation, with citizen oversight and exemptions for low-income households and others, be adopted?

Initially, support for both versions of the parcel tax is well below the 2/3 threshold needed to pass. The version with a temporary surge in rates has more undecided votes, while the version without a surge has more voters choosing Yes or No, but remains far short of the 2/3 threshold for passage.



2/3 Yes Threshold

Both Ballots Split-Sampled

- Yes – not so strongly/lean yes
- No – not so strongly/lean no
- Yes – strongly
- No – strongly

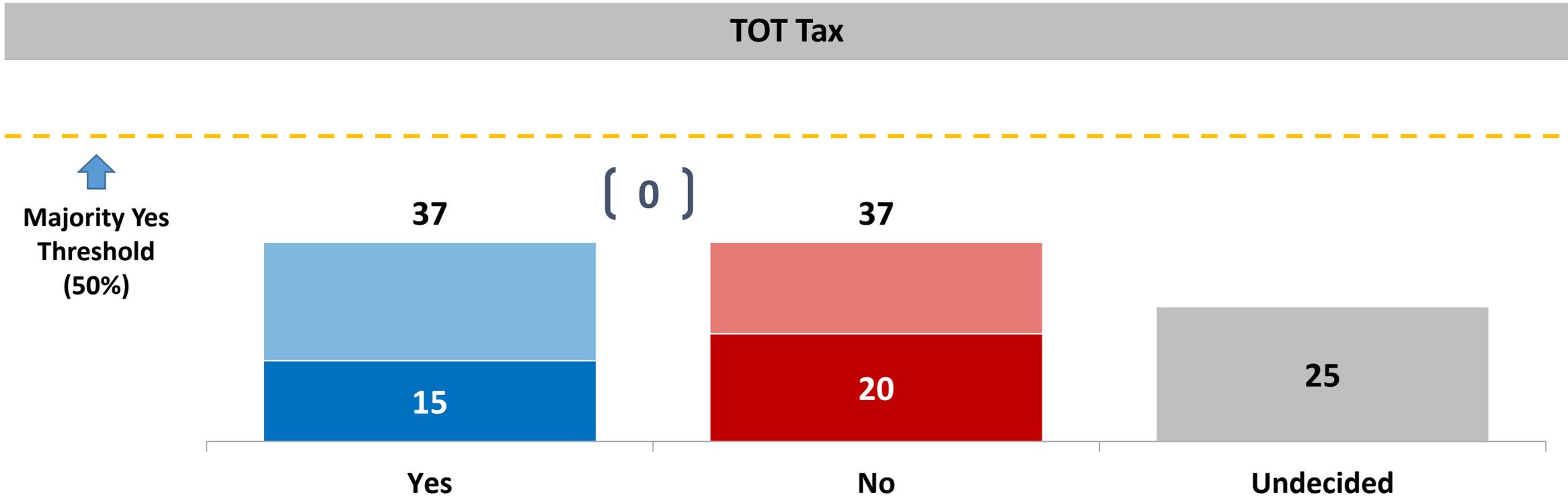
Q4/5. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And is that Yes/No strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?

Text of Ballot – TOT Tax

Here is a different version of the ballot measure that would provide funding for arts and culture organizations through an increase in the existing transient occupancy tax on hotels:

Shall the measure raising funds for general municipal purposes; increasing the transient occupancy tax from 12% to 14%; generating an estimated \$850,000 annually until repealed; clarifying applicable definitions and updating collection and reporting methods; and establishing the Arts Panel of Experts to recommend programs to support the arts, be adopted?

Initially, the transient occupancy tax (TOT) is tied, falling below the majority support threshold needed to pass, with a quarter of voters undecided.



↑
Majority Yes
Threshold
(50%)

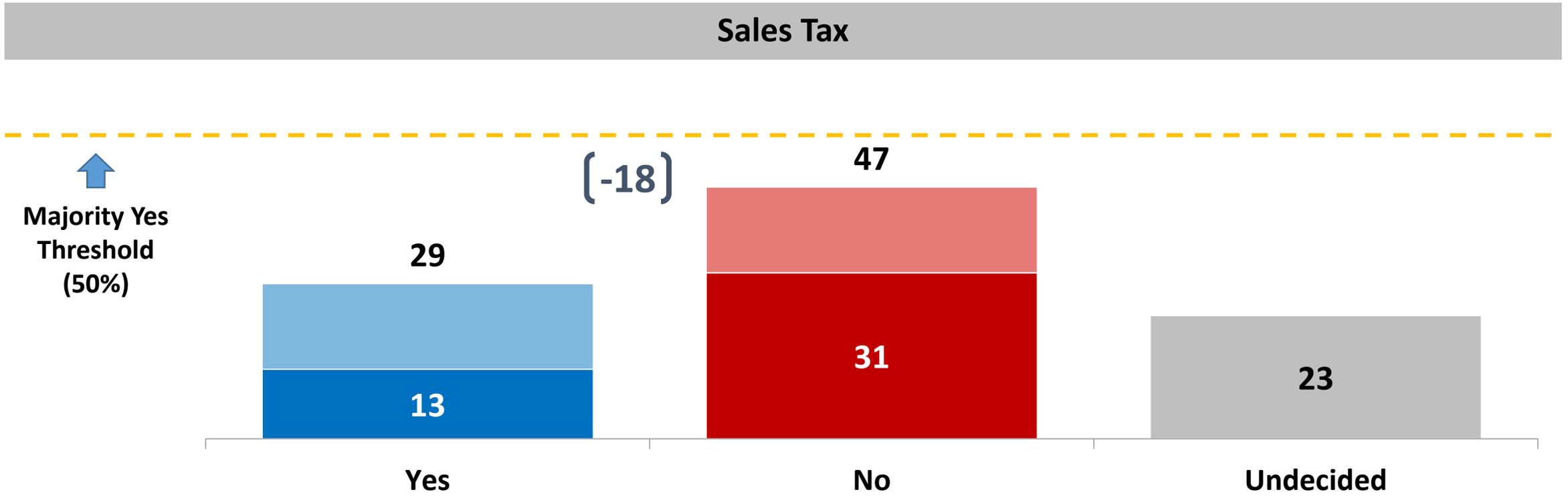
Q6. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And is that Yes/No strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?

Text of Ballot – Sales Tax

This is a version of the ballot measure that would provide funding for arts and culture organizations through a new city sales tax:

Shall the measure raising funds for general municipal purposes; imposing a 0.5% sales tax, estimated to generate an additional approximately \$920,000 annually until repealed; and establishing the Arts Panel of Experts to recommend programs to support the arts, be adopted?

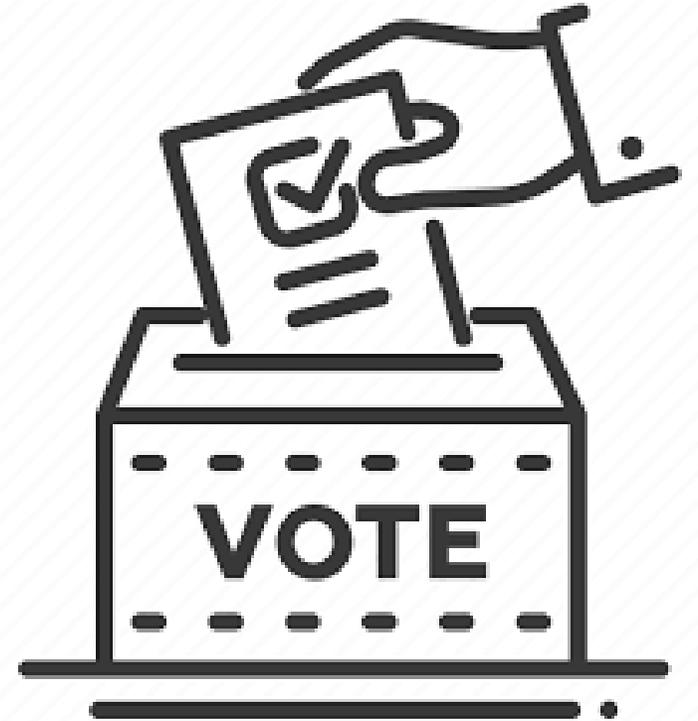
The sales tax measure is deeply unpopular, falling 21 points short of a majority.



Yes – not so strongly/lean yes
Yes – strongly
No – not so strongly/lean no
No – strongly

Q7. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And is that Yes/No strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?

Informed Ballots

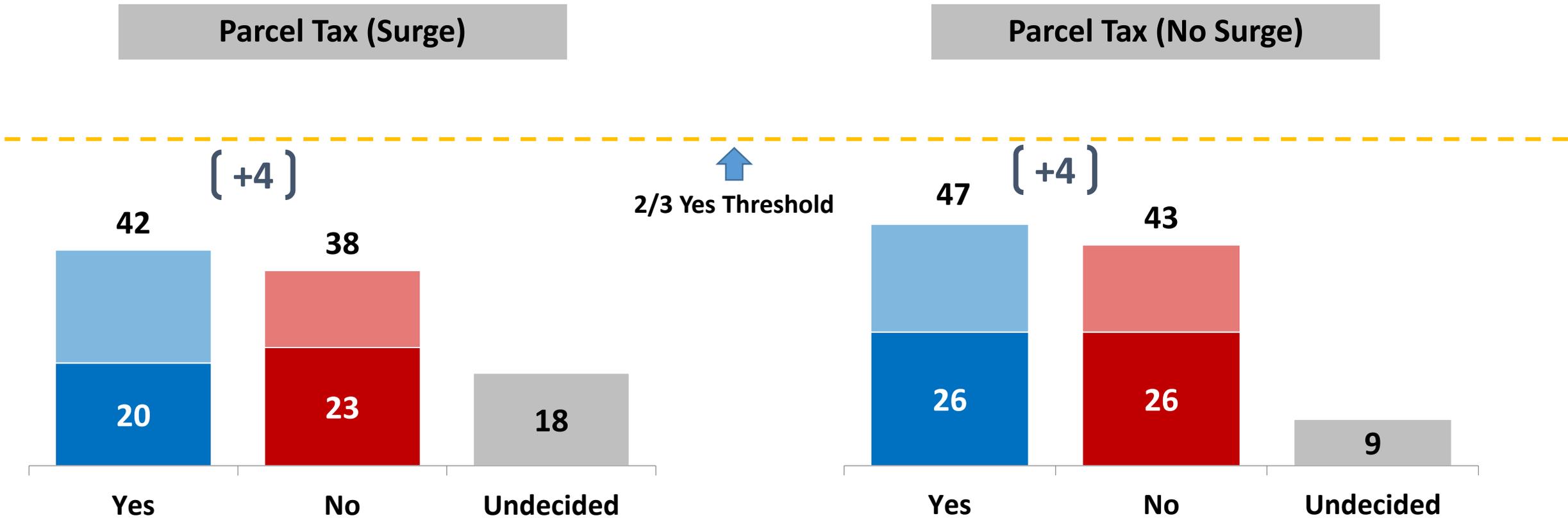


Arts Tax: Supporter/Opponent Statements

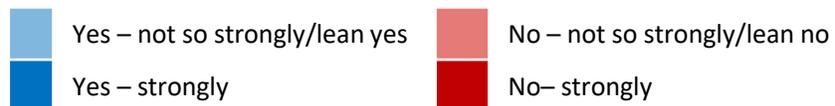
Supporters say that in the wake of the pandemic, Berkeley is at risk of losing many of its arts organizations if rescue funding is not made immediately available, and over the long run, arts and cultural organizations will need ongoing City support, given the costs of sustaining performing arts non-profits in the Bay Area's expensive market. This funding is essential to rescue and sustain some of Berkeley's performing arts and cultural institutions, in the downtown and every neighborhood. Berkeley is a city defined by our commitment to the arts and culture, and if we don't support arts organizations when they need us most, we may lose some of them forever.

Opponents say that Berkeley taxpayers keep getting soaked for more and more increases with little to show for it, driving away residents and businesses. We funded streets, and the streets are still a mess. We funded housing, and housing costs are worse than ever. This measure has no sunset clause and will cost taxpayers millions more dollars to benefit private organizations which should be supported by donors and the people who attend their events, not the rest of us in Berkeley. We need to look more closely at this high-tax, high-cost city government, cut wasteful and unnecessary spending, and let non-profit organizations fundraise on their own without taxpayer subsidies.

On the re-ballot after messaging, support for both versions of the parcel tax is stagnant while opposition increases by several points – indicating that undecided voters are more likely to shift to the No side when they hear equal messages both for and against the measure.

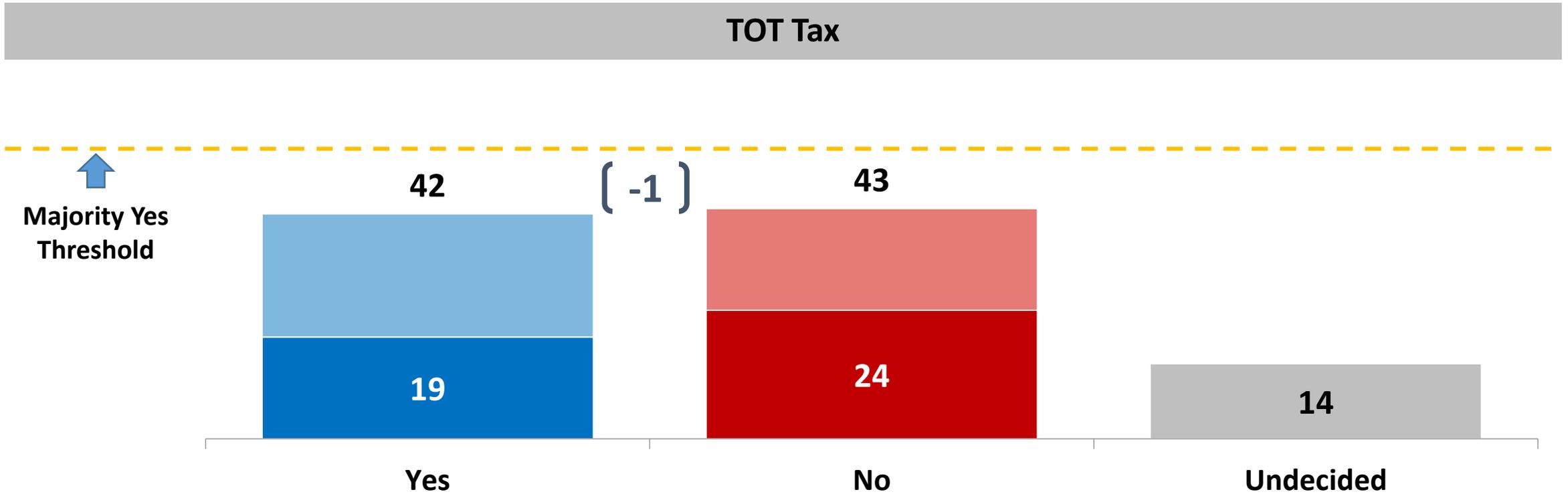


Both Ballots Split-Sampled



Q8/9. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And is that Yes/No strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?

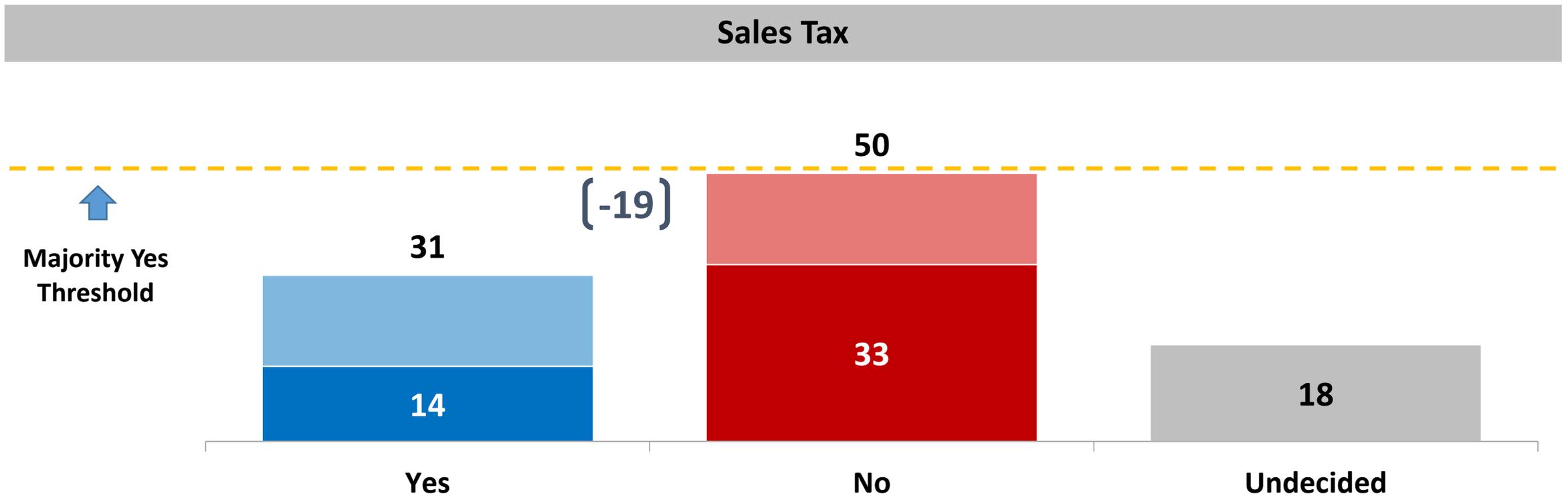
On the re-ballot of the TOT tax after messaging, undecided voters shift almost evenly towards both sides, leaving the measure still statistically tied but short of a majority.



■ Yes – not so strongly/lean yes
■ Yes – strongly
■ No – not so strongly/lean no
■ No – strongly

Q10. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And is that Yes/No strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?

On the re-ballot after messaging, the sales tax measure remains far short of a majority, with half of voters opposed.



Yes – not so strongly/lean yes
Yes – strongly

No – not so strongly/lean no
No – strongly

Q11. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure, or are you undecided? [IF YES/NO]: And is that Yes/No strongly or not so strongly? [IF UNDECIDED]: Well, to which side do you lean?

LRP

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