

The Pulse of Oakland 2026

*Key Findings of a Citywide Survey
Conducted October 10-18, 2026*



OPINION
RESEARCH
& STRATEGY

Survey Methodology

Dates	October 10-18, 2026
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voters Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2026 Voters in the City of Oakland
Total Interviews	720 Interviews Citywide
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) $\pm 3.7\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) $\pm 5.2\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews
Survey Tracking	2016-2025

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

Key Findings

1. Oakland voters are **more optimistic about the direction of the city** than they have been in nearly a decade, and are increasingly likely to **express pride about living in Oakland**.
2. The issues of **homelessness**, the **city's financial stability**, and the **cost of living and housing** are among the top concerns for voters.
3. **Two-thirds view Mayor Lee favorably** and a similar number say they will vote for her in November.
4. **Evaluations of local government continue to be negative**, but are trending in a more positive direction.
5. A plurality feel like **public safety and crime are getting better** and feelings of safety are improving.
6. As in prior years, a majority continue to favor **increasing police officers** and are **supportive of adopting a range of public safety technologies**, with civilian oversight.
7. Evaluations of **Oakland's economy are trending positively but remain negative**, with voters saying the downtown economy is not vibrant and that Oakland is not a good place to start a business.
8. Voters are **widely supportive of encouraging companies to locate in Oakland**, including through tax incentives.
9. **Sporting, cultural, and entertainment events are important to Oakland's economy** and many voters have attended an event or dined out in Oakland in the past year.

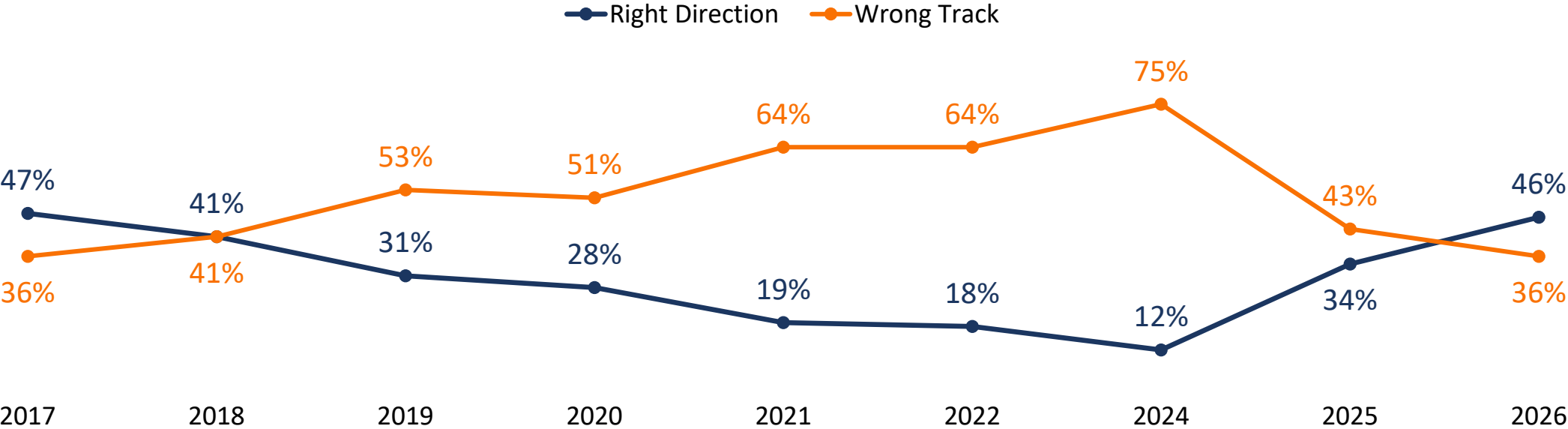




Views of Life in Oakland

Optimism about the direction of the city is at its highest level since 2017.

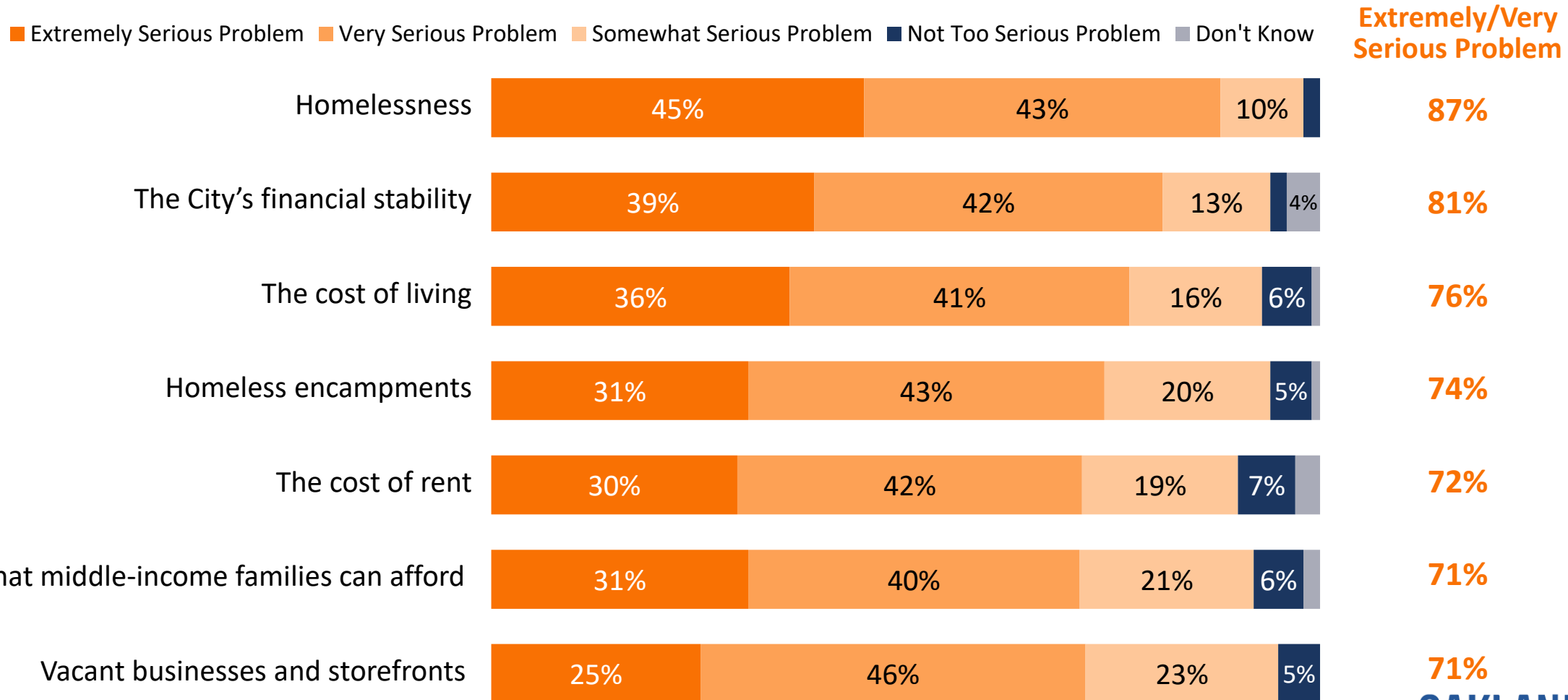
First, would you say things in Oakland are headed in the right direction, or do you feel they are off on the wrong track?



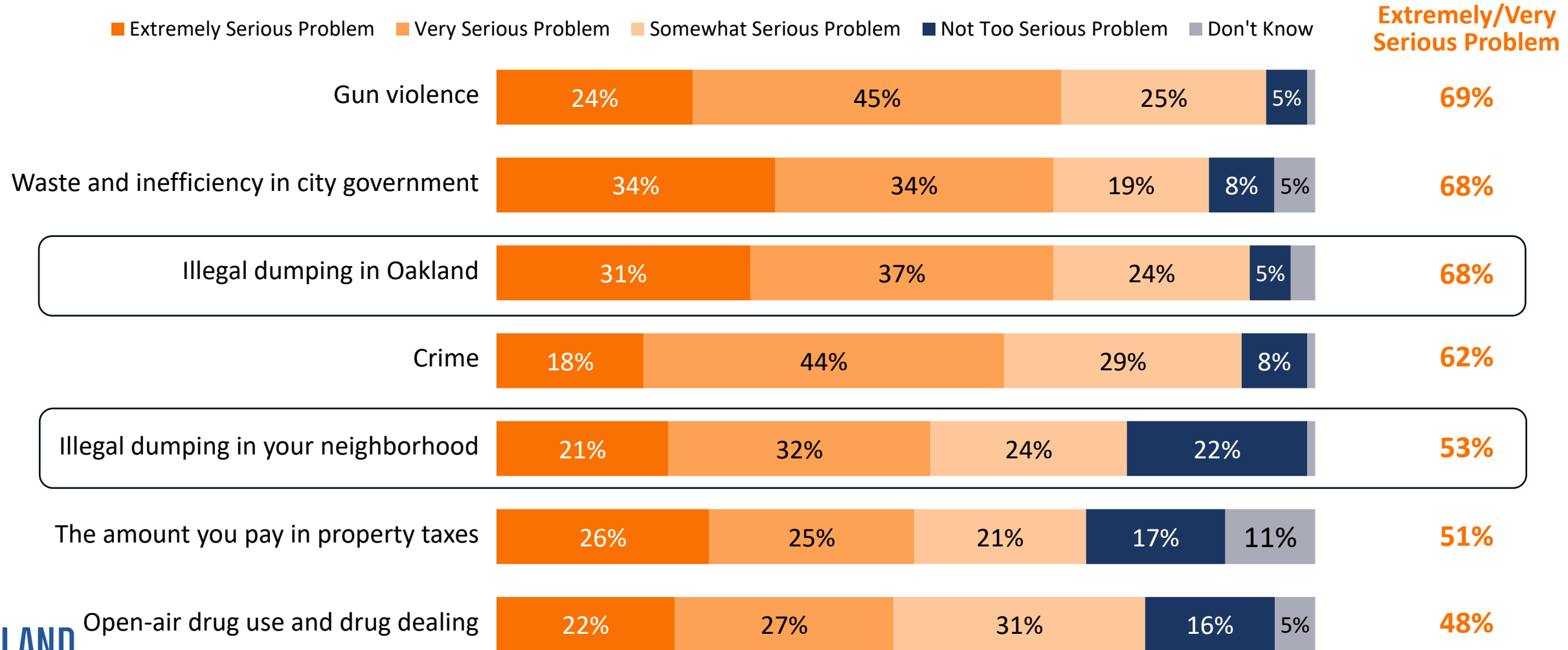
Direction	City Council District						
	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	District 7
Right Direction	43%	43%	42%	47%	58%	41%	58%
Wrong Track	29%	40%	49%	29%	31%	47%	30%

Homelessness, financial stability, and the cost of living are seen as the top problems facing the city.

Next, here is a list of things that some people say may be problems facing Oakland. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Oakland.



Voters are more likely to view illegal dumping in Oakland as a serious problem than in their neighborhood.



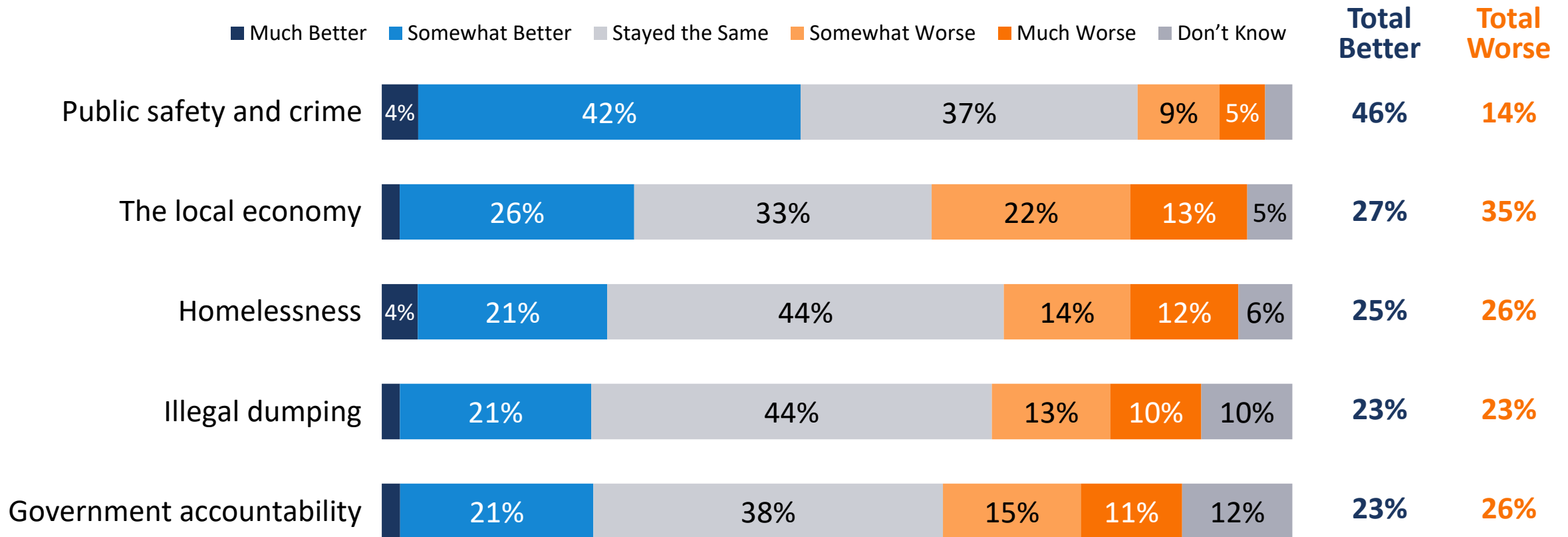
Relative to previous years, concern about gun violence has declined notably.

Problem	Extremely/Very Serious Problem									
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025	2026	Difference (2025-2026)
The amount you pay in property taxes	33%	36%	49%	48%	43%	49%	47%	47%	51%	+4%
The City's financial stability	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	79%	81%	+2%
Waste and inefficiency in city government	--	--	--	--	--	--	74%	67%	68%	+1%
The cost of rent	76%	79%	82%	75%	78%	76%	70%	72%	72%	0%
Vacant businesses and storefronts	--	--	--	--	--	--	69%	72%	71%	-1%
The cost of living	65%	75%	80%	78%	66%	77%	70%	78%	76%	-2%
Illegal dumping in your neighborhood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	55%	53%	-2%
Homelessness	92%	91%	96%	97%	94%	97%	95%	90%	87%	-3%
Homeless encampments	--	82%	90%	86%	88%	89%	85%	77%	74%	-3%
A lack of housing that middle-income families can afford	77%	84%	80%	83%	75%	81%	75%	74%	71%	-3%
Crime	45%	45%	54%	58%	77%	88%	84%	70%	62%	-8%
Open-air drug use and drug dealing	--	--	--	--	--	--	62%	57%	48%	-9%
Illegal dumping in Oakland	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	78%	68%	-10%
Gun violence	--	--	--	--	--	97%	86%	82%	69%	-13%

Q13. Next, here is a list of things that some people say may be problems facing Oakland. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Oakland. Split Sample

Pluralities say public safety and crime are getting better.

Next, here are some issues that Oakland city government has been working to address. For each one, please indicate if you think this issue is getting much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, or much worse in the last few months. If you think it has stayed the same, you can select that option.



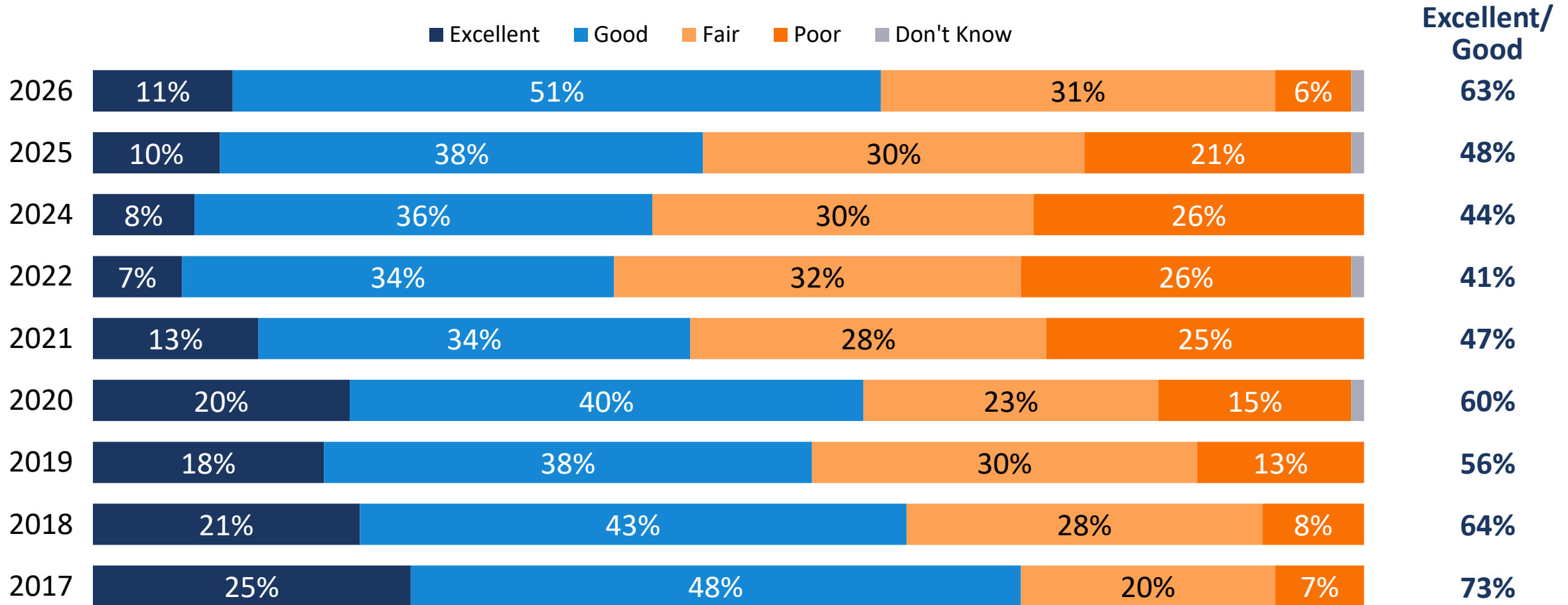
Relative to 2025, the sense that the economy and public safety are getting better has increased.

Issue	Total Better		
	2025	2026	Difference
The local economy	18%	27%	+9%
Public safety and crime	40%	46%	+6%
Government accountability	19%	23%	+4%
Illegal dumping	22%	23%	+1%
Homelessness	25%	25%	0%

The percentage who say illegal dumping has gotten worse dropped from 37% in 2025 to 23% in 2026.

Three in five rate Oakland as an excellent or good place to live, a notable improvement since 2025.

Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate Oakland as a place to live ?

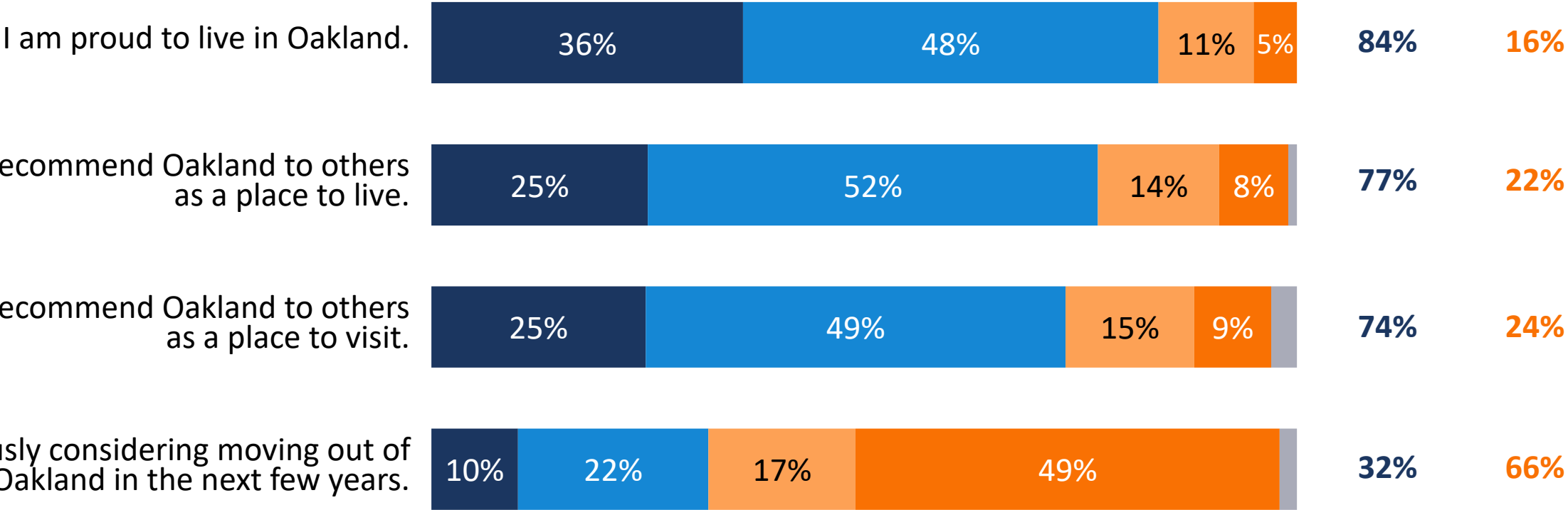


More than four in five say they are proud to live in Oakland and broad majorities would recommend Oakland as a place to live and as a place to visit.

Next, here are some more statements about Oakland. For each, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Don't Know

Total Agree **Total Disagree**

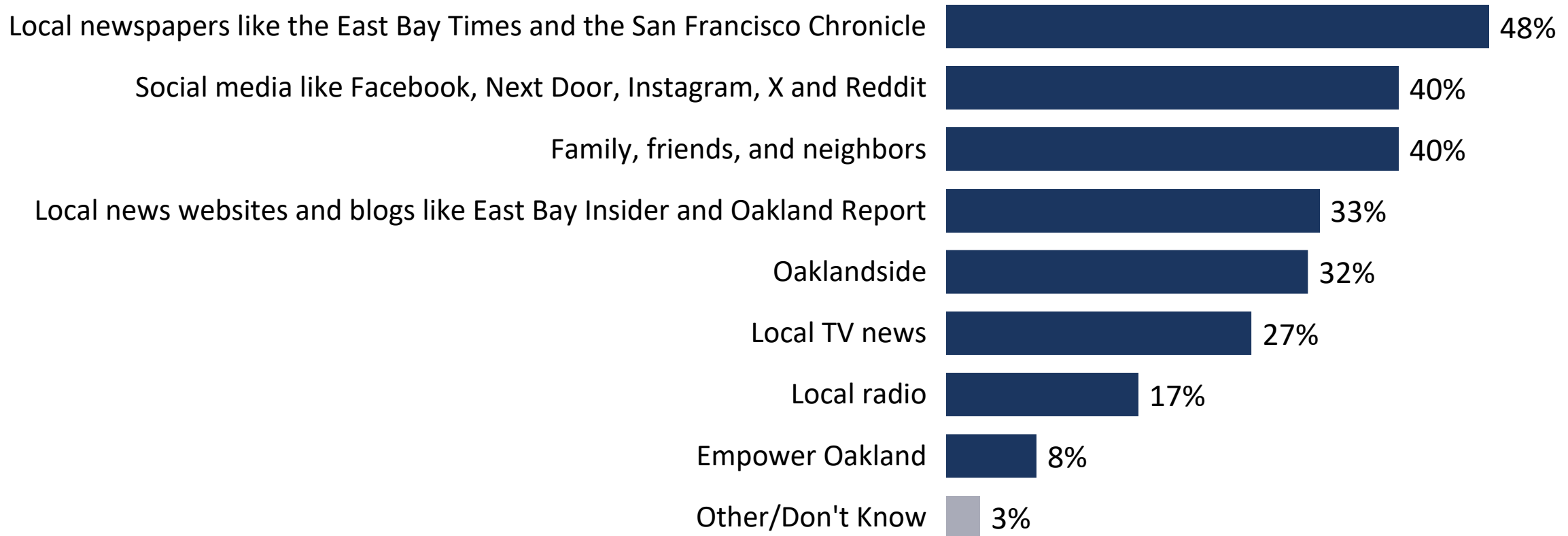


Attitudes toward life in Oakland mirror pre-pandemic views.

Statement	Total Agree									
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	2025	2026	Difference (2025-2026)
I would recommend Oakland to others as a place to live.	77%	77%	65%	64%	59%	56%	53%	61%	77%	+16%
I would recommend Oakland to others as a place to visit.	85%	84%	77%	70%	69%	60%	52%	59%	74%	+15%
I am proud to live in Oakland.	90%	92%	82%	79%	73%	77%	73%	74%	84%	+10%
I am seriously considering moving out of Oakland in the next few years.	--	--	--	--	--	52%	49%	47%	32%	-15%

Local newspapers, social media, and word of mouth are the top sources of news for Oakland voters.

*Which of the following is your primary source of information about Oakland?
(Multiple Responses Accepted)*





Views on the Upcoming Election

Mayor Lee leads the first choice vote in the race for Mayor, with two-thirds support.

*Next, in November there will be an election for Mayor of Oakland.
Who would be your first choice if the candidates were:*



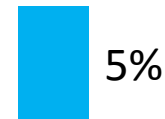
Barbara Lee, Mayor, City of Oakland



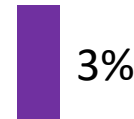
Mindy Ruth Pechenuk, Educator/Researcher



Brenda F. Grisham, Business Owner



Julius Robinson, Community Investment Executive



Someone else/Undecided



Wang leads the race in Council District 2 by more than two to one.

If the election for City Council were held today, who would you vote for if the candidates were:

(Asked of Those in City Council District 2 Only)



Charlene Wang, City Councilmember, District 2



48%



Nate Adams, Community Organizer



20%

Someone else/Undecided



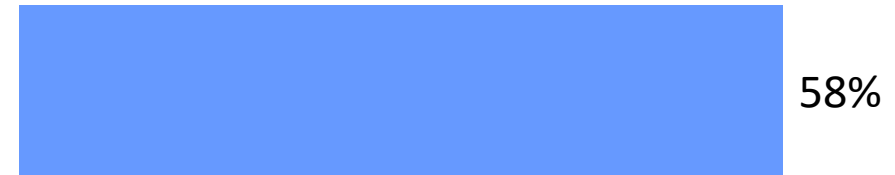
32%

Jenkins is backed by a majority of voters in the race for District 6.

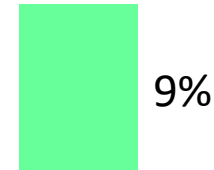
*If the election for City Council were held today, who would you vote for if the candidates were:
(Asked of Those in City Council District 6 Only)*



Kevin E. Jenkins, City Council President



Nancy S. Sidebotham, Tax Preparer

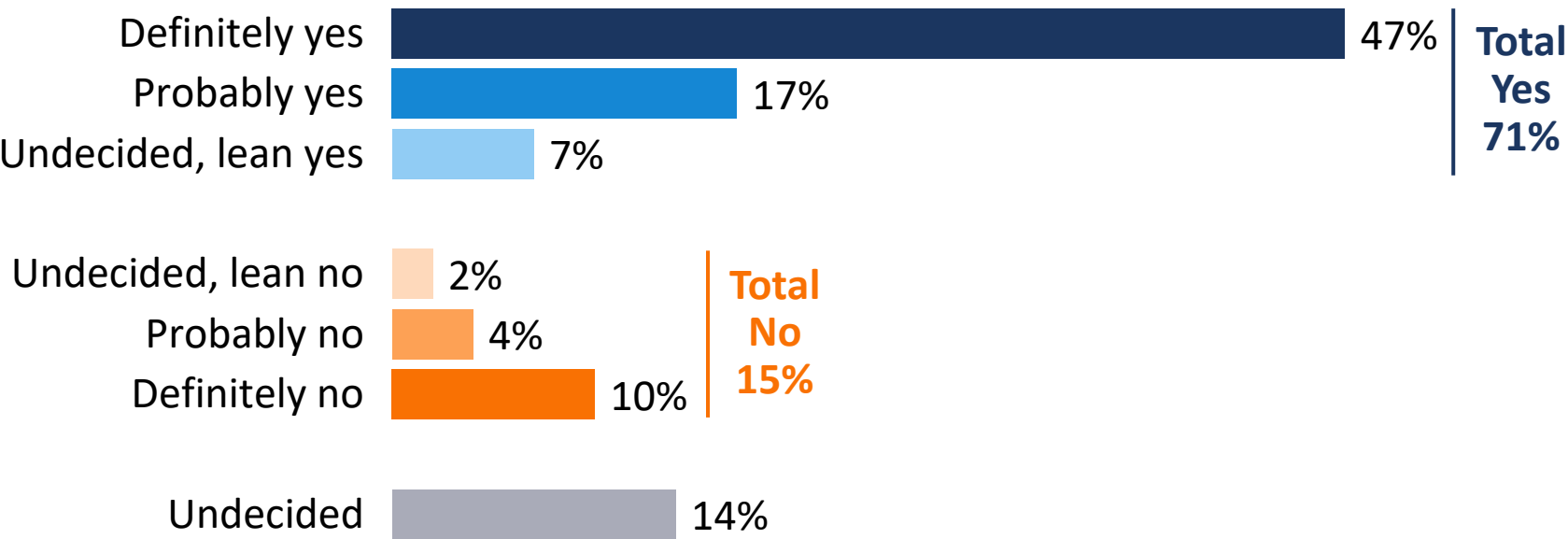


Someone else/Undecided



Seven in ten voters say they will vote in favor of Measure EE.

Shall the measure to amend Oakland's City Charter to, among other things, (1) make the Mayor the City's chief executive with a legislative veto, (2) empower the Council to override vetoes, confirm appointments of certain directors, and appoint an Independent Budget and Legislative Analyst, (3) affirm Councilmembers' right to acquire information from other City officials, (4) require Councilmembers to work full-time, and (5) empower the Public Ethics Commission to set salaries for all City elected officials using similar formulas, be adopted?



Support for the measure is strongest among progressive and liberal voters.

Demographic Group	Total Yes	Total No	Undecided
All Voters	71%	15%	14%
Ideology			
Progressives	78%	8%	14%
Liberals	74%	14%	13%
Moderates	65%	20%	15%
Conservatives	38%	45%	17%
City Council District			
District 1: Zac Unger	64%	19%	18%
District 2: Charlene Wang	79%	13%	9%
District 3: Carroll Fife	71%	17%	12%
District 4: Janani Ramachandran	72%	14%	14%
District 5: Noel Gallo	71%	14%	15%
District 6: Kevin Jenkins	68%	15%	17%
District 7: Ken Houston	76%	13%	11%



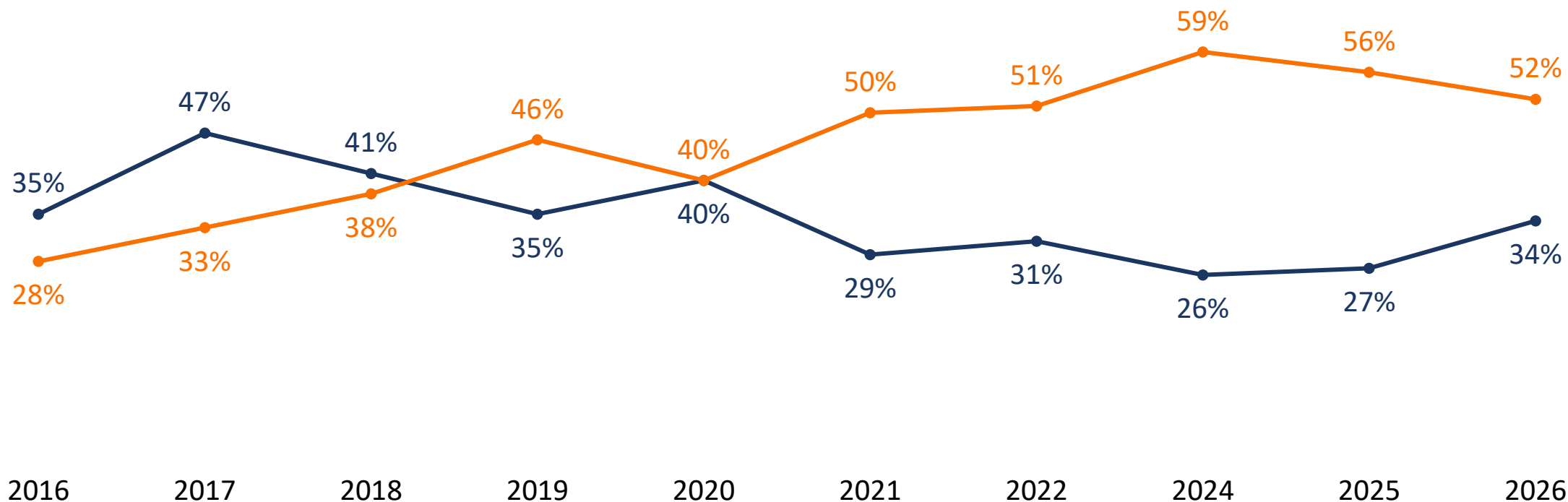
Attitudes Toward City Government

Views of the Council have improved modestly since 2025.



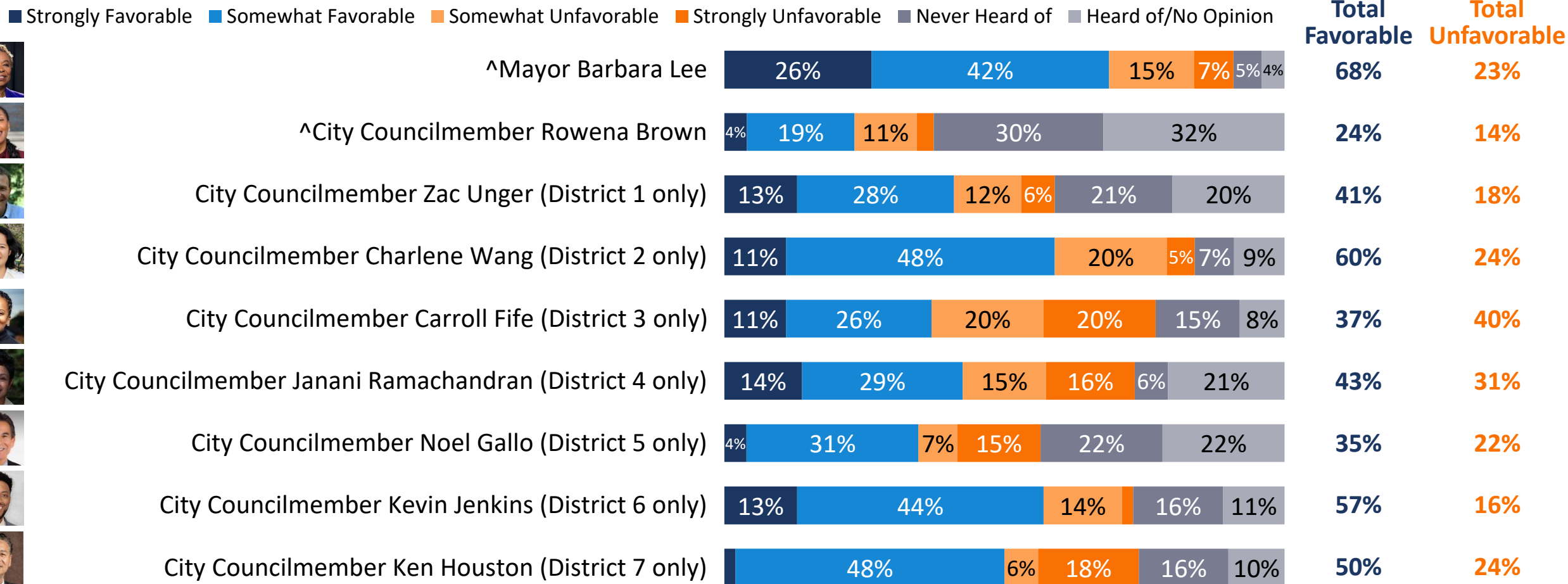
The Oakland City Council

—●— Total Favorable —●— Total Unfavorable



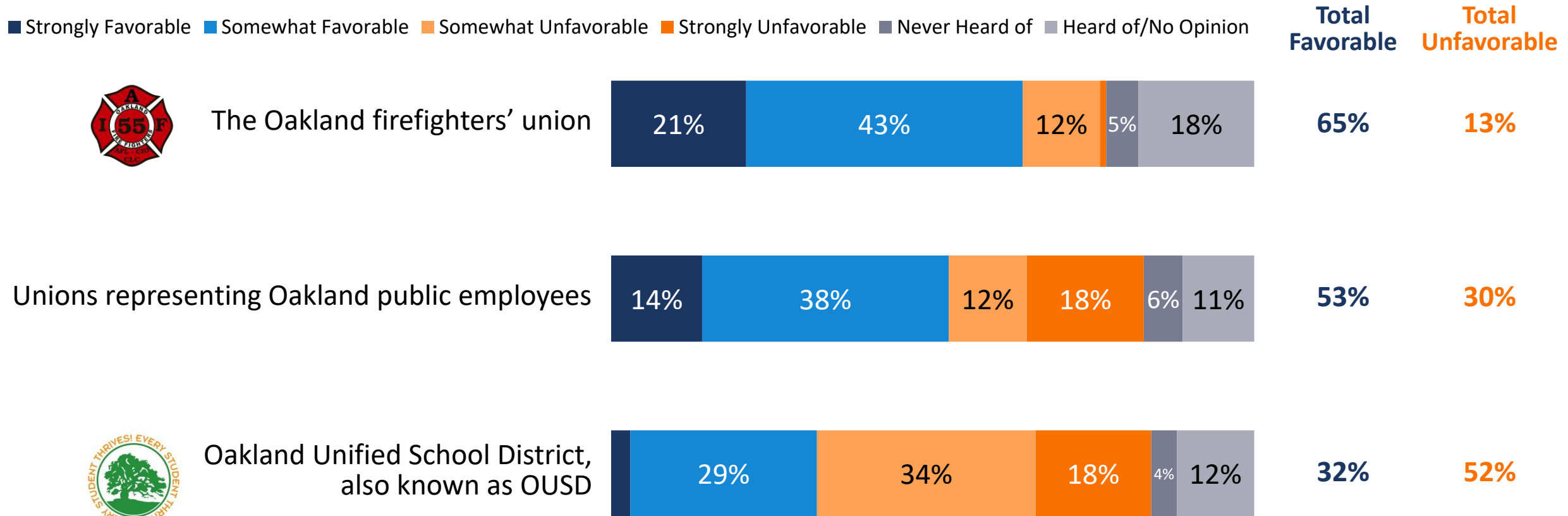
Two-thirds of voters view Mayor Lee favorably.

Next, here is a list of people and organizations active in public life. For each one, please indicate if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or strongly unfavorable opinion of that person or organization. If you have never heard of one, please say so.



Voters have favorable view of the firefighters' union and public employee unions; opinions of OUSD are net negative.

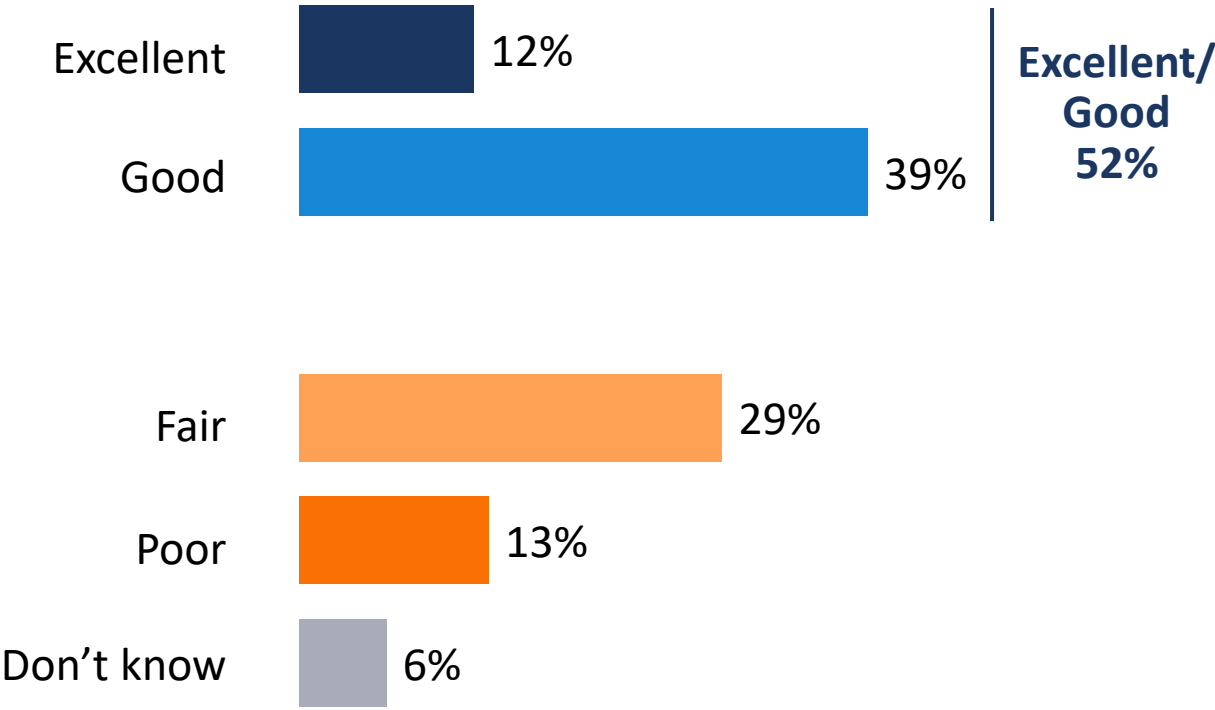
Next, here is a list of people and organizations active in public life. For each one, please indicate if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or strongly unfavorable opinion of that person or organization. If you have never heard of one, please say so.



A majority of voters say Mayor Lee is doing an excellent or good job.



Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the overall job Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee is doing?



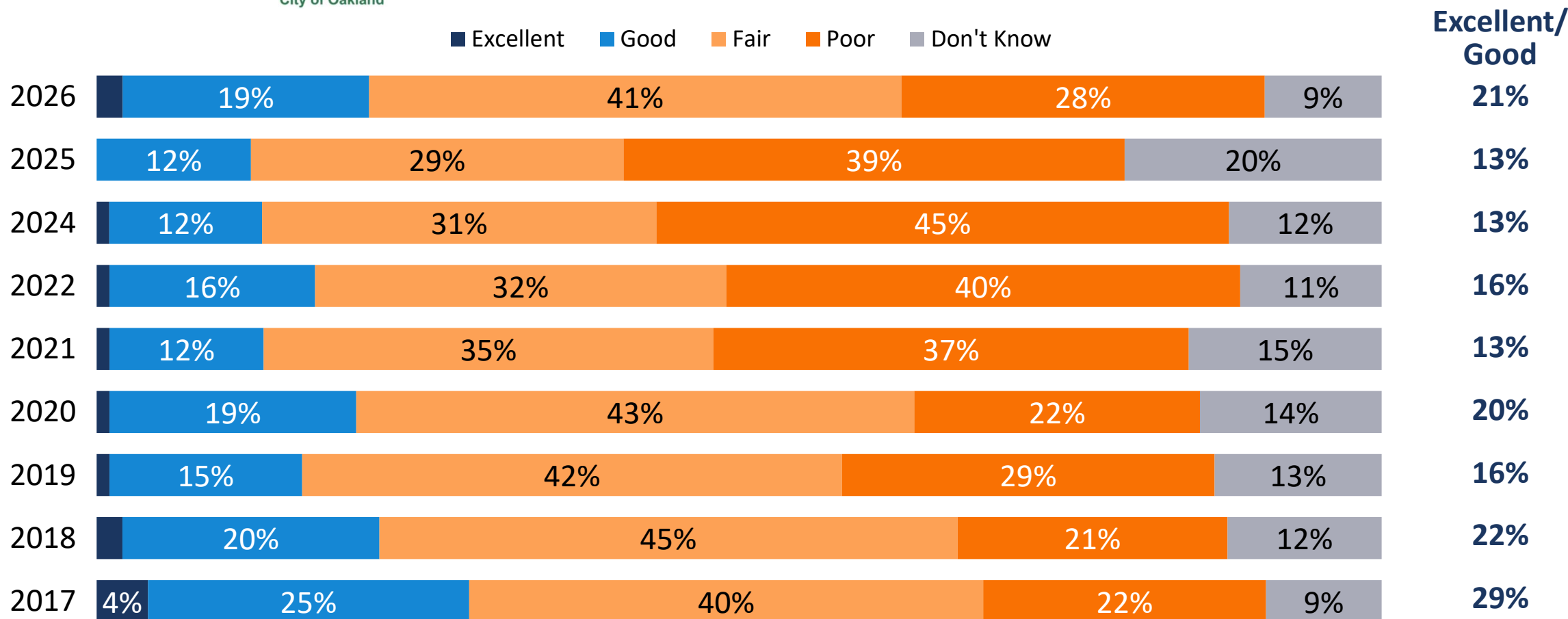
Mayor	Year	Favorability	Job Rating		
			Exc./ Good	Only Fair	Poor
Barbara Lee	2026	68%	52%	29%	13%
	2025	61%	36%	22%	26%
Sheng Thao	2024	16%	9%	22%	63%
Libby Schaaf	2022	35%	28%	24%	42%
	2021	35%	23%	25%	47%
	2020	44%	32%	30%	29%
	2019	45%	32%	29%	34%
	2018	53%	36%	35%	25%
	2017	61%	45%	33%	30%
	2016	53%	42%	32%	15%

A plurality say the Council is doing a “fair” job.



First, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the overall job the Oakland City Council is doing?

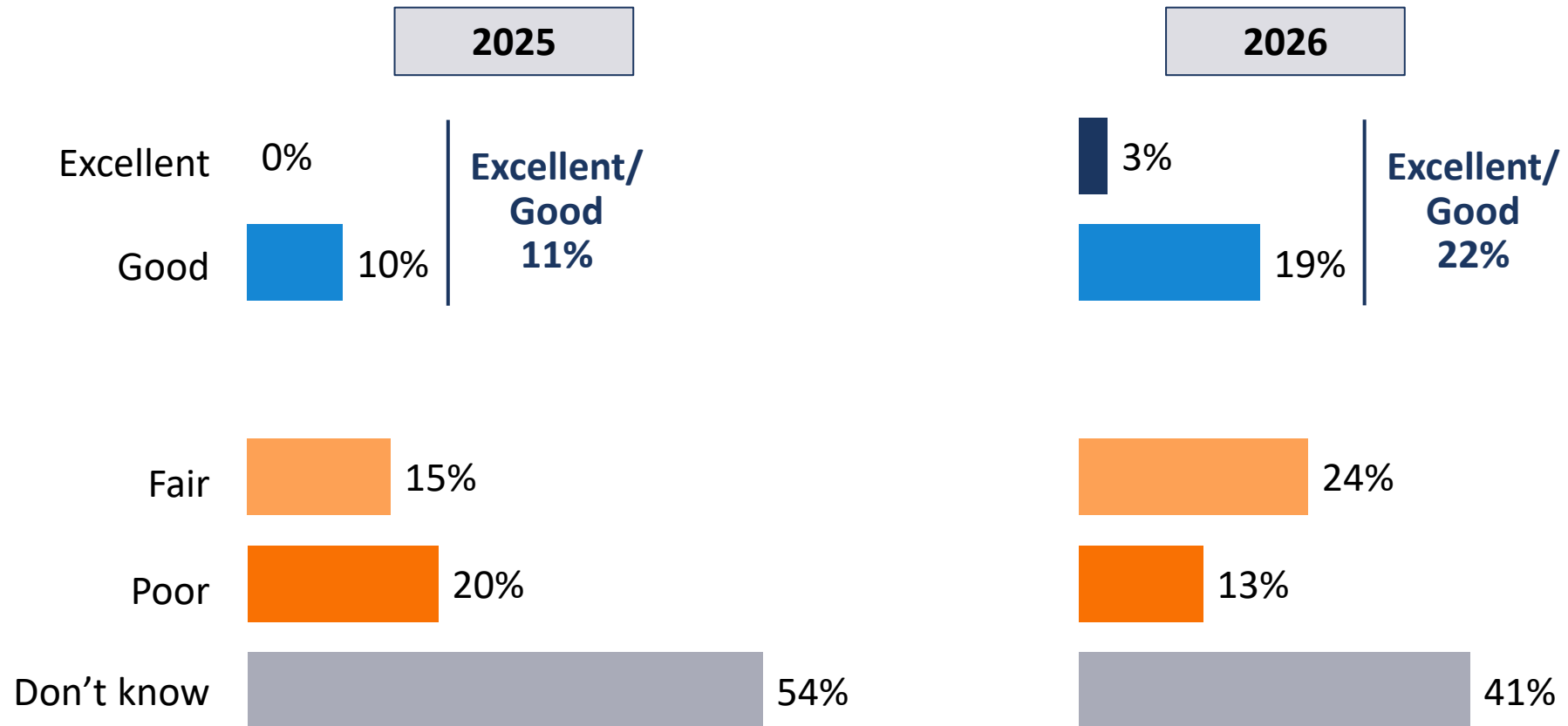
■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor ■ Don't Know



The Council President's job rating has also improved in the last year.

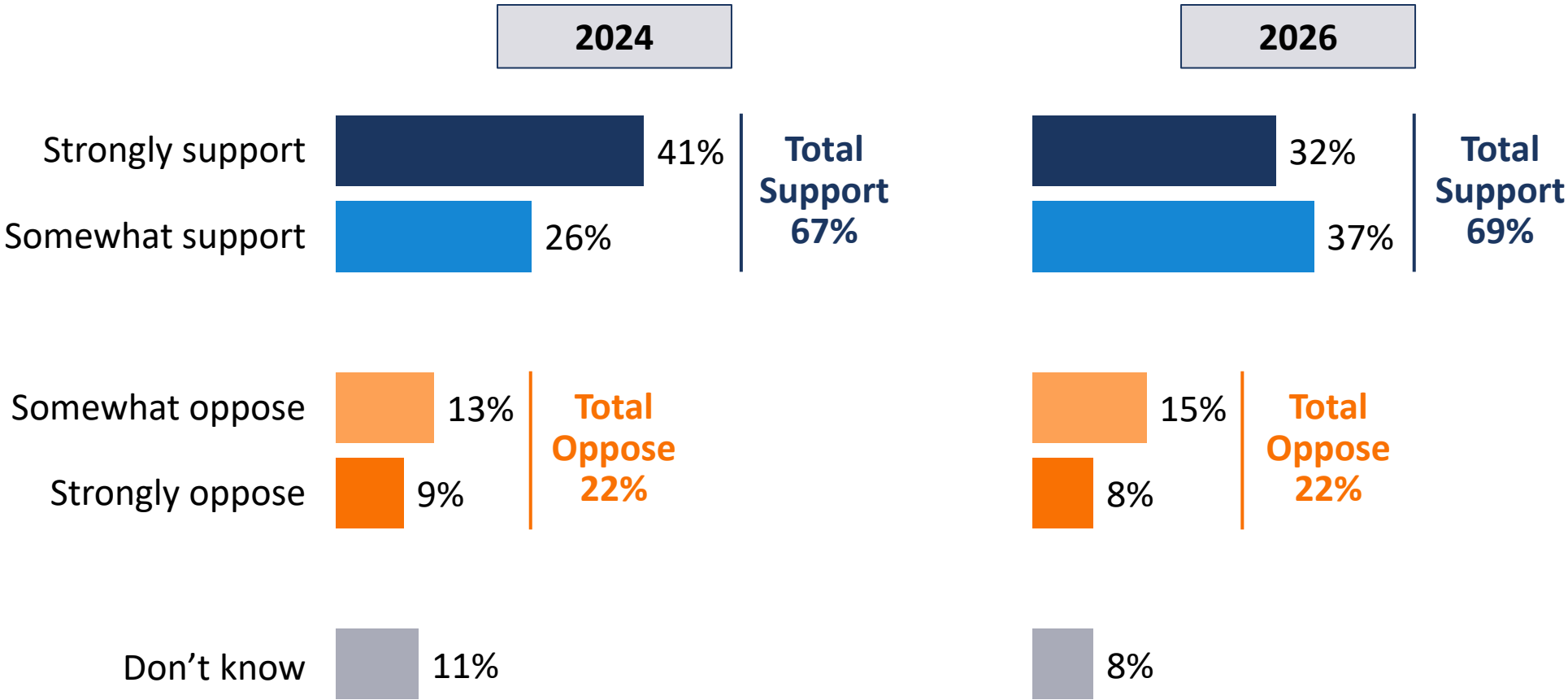


Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the overall job Council President Kevin Jenkins is doing?



Voters continue to offer widespread support for requiring city employees to return to office full-time.

Next, some people have proposed that city government employees should be required to return to working in person full-time in City Hall. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

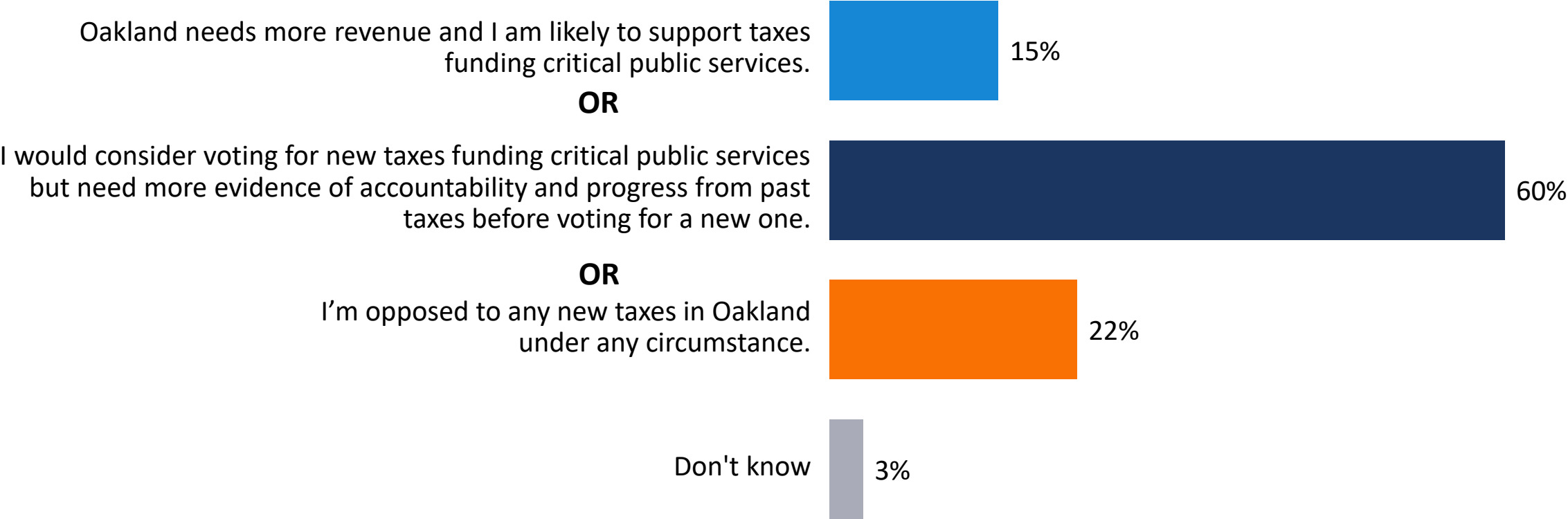




Attitudes Toward Revenue Measures

A majority is supportive of additional funding for city services, with most wanting to see evidence of accountability.

Oakland is facing a budget shortfall and some people have proposed increasing taxes to increase revenue and fund city services. The next few questions are about taxes and revenue measures.



Majorities of progressive, liberal, and moderate voters are willing to consider revenue measures.

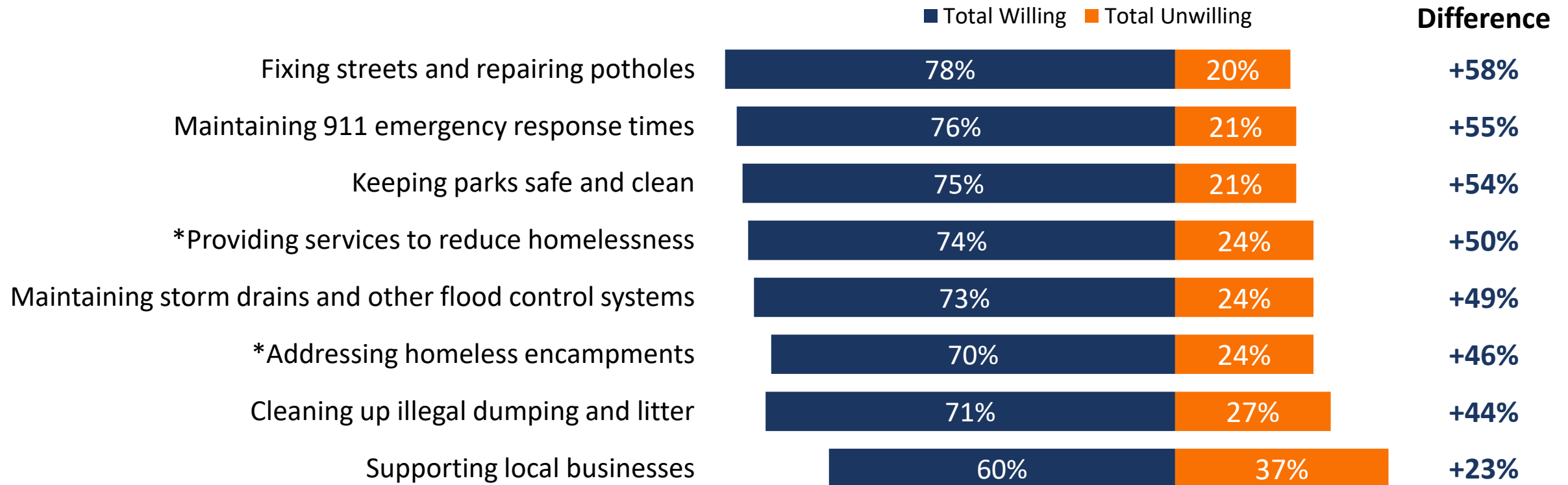
Demographic Group	Likely to Support Taxes	Consider Taxes With Accountability	Opposed to New Taxes	Don't Know
All Voters	15%	60%	22%	3%
Party				
Democrats	17%	63%	18%	3%
Independents	14%	57%	28%	1%
Republicans	0%	38%	62%	0%
Ideology				
Progressives	28%	58%	13%	1%
Liberals	11%	70%	15%	4%
Moderates	11%	52%	34%	2%
Conservatives	4%	31%	63%	2%
Race/Ethnicity				
White Voters	21%	59%	19%	1%
Latino Voters	8%	71%	16%	5%
African American Voters	12%	58%	28%	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters	13%	63%	23%	1%
All Voters of Color	11%	63%	23%	3%

A majority of voters across City Council Districts are willing to consider additional taxes for public services.

Demographic Group	Likely to Support Taxes	Consider Taxes With Accountability	Opposed to New Taxes	Don't Know
Residence				
Homeowners	15%	60%	23%	1%
Renters	15%	61%	19%	4%
City Council District				
District 1: Zac Unger	20%	52%	25%	3%
District 2: Charlene Wang	12%	72%	13%	3%
District 3: Carroll Fife	21%	57%	17%	5%
District 4: Janani Ramachandran	20%	48%	31%	1%
District 5: Noel Gallo	10%	62%	24%	4%
District 6: Kevin Jenkins	3%	75%	21%	1%
District 7: Ken Houston	10%	71%	16%	2%

Voters are willing to pay a modest amount more in taxes to fund critical city services.

Next, here are some potential spending areas and public services that could be funded through a modest increase in taxes. For each one, please indicate how willing you would be to pay a modest amount more in taxes to fund this service: very willing, somewhat willing, somewhat unwilling, or very unwilling.



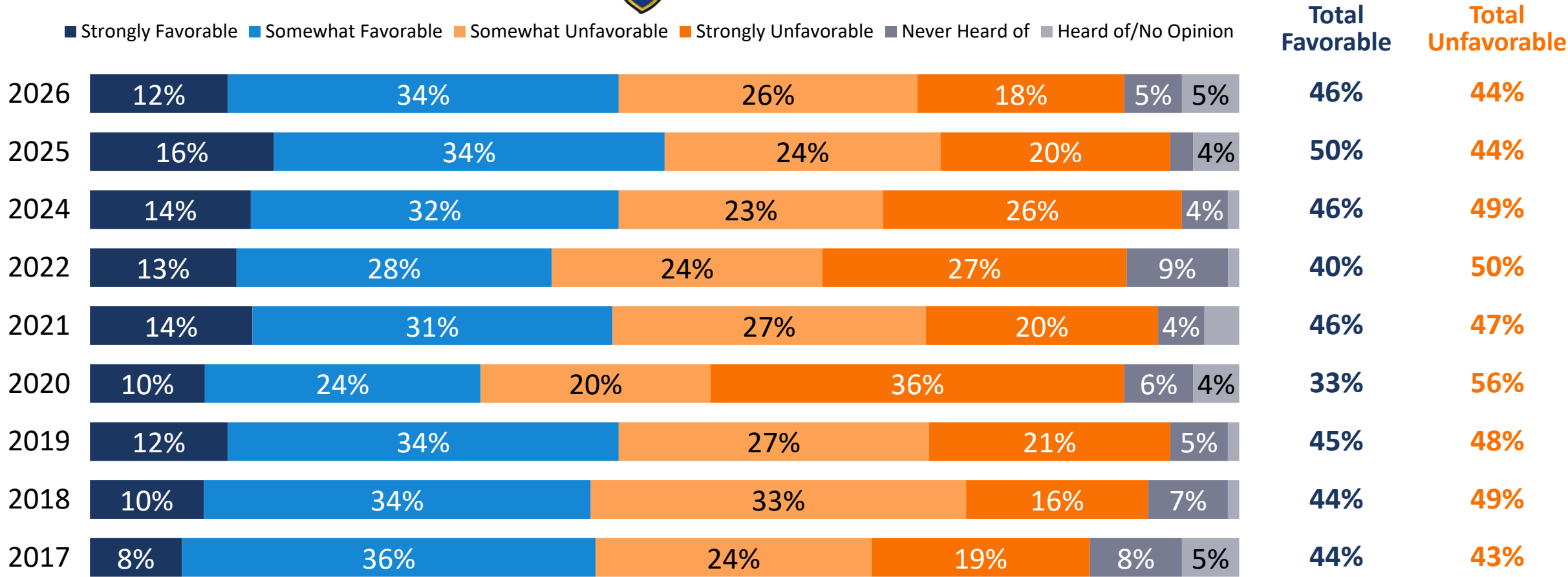


Views on Public Safety

Oakland Police officers' favorability rating has remained consistent over time.



Oakland Police Officers

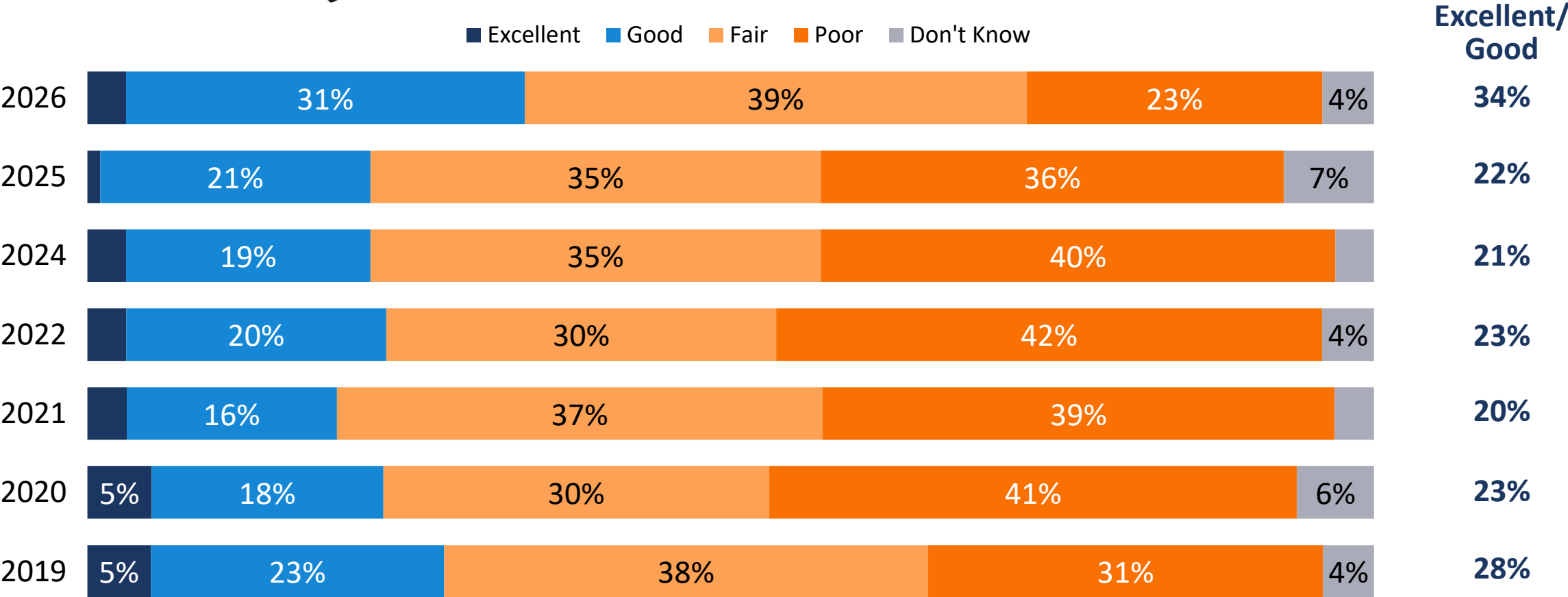


However, evaluations of the job they are doing have improved.



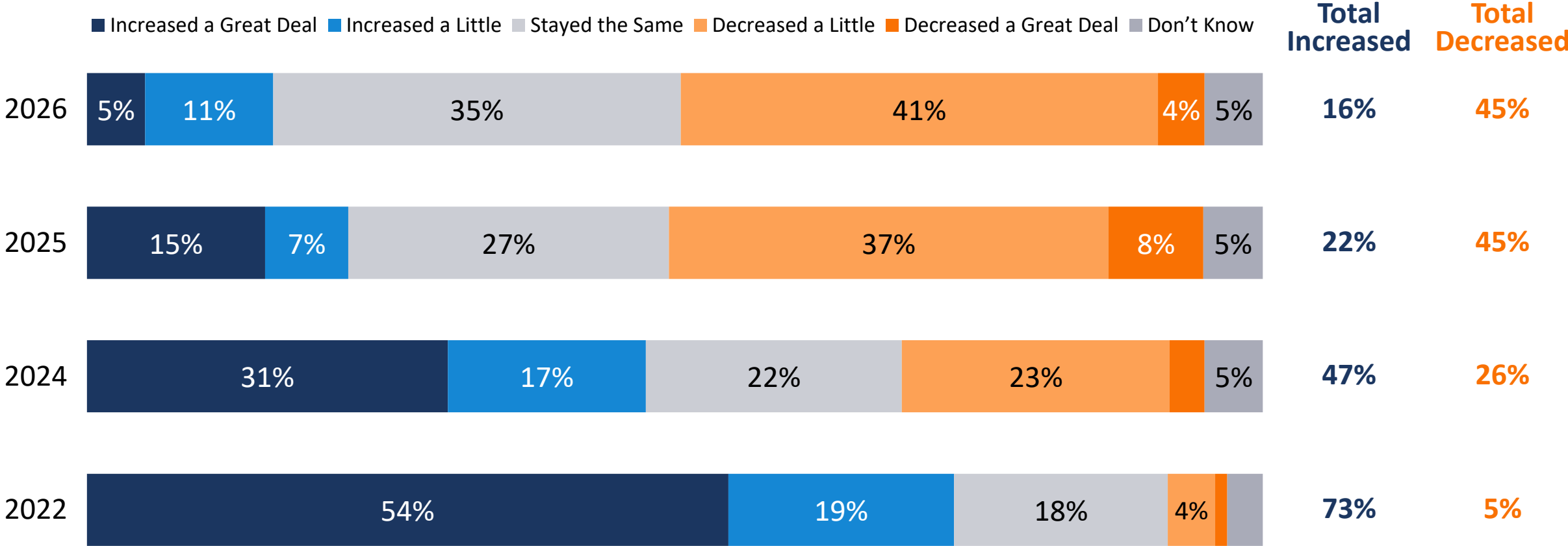
Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the overall job the Oakland Police Department is doing?

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair ■ Poor ■ Don't Know



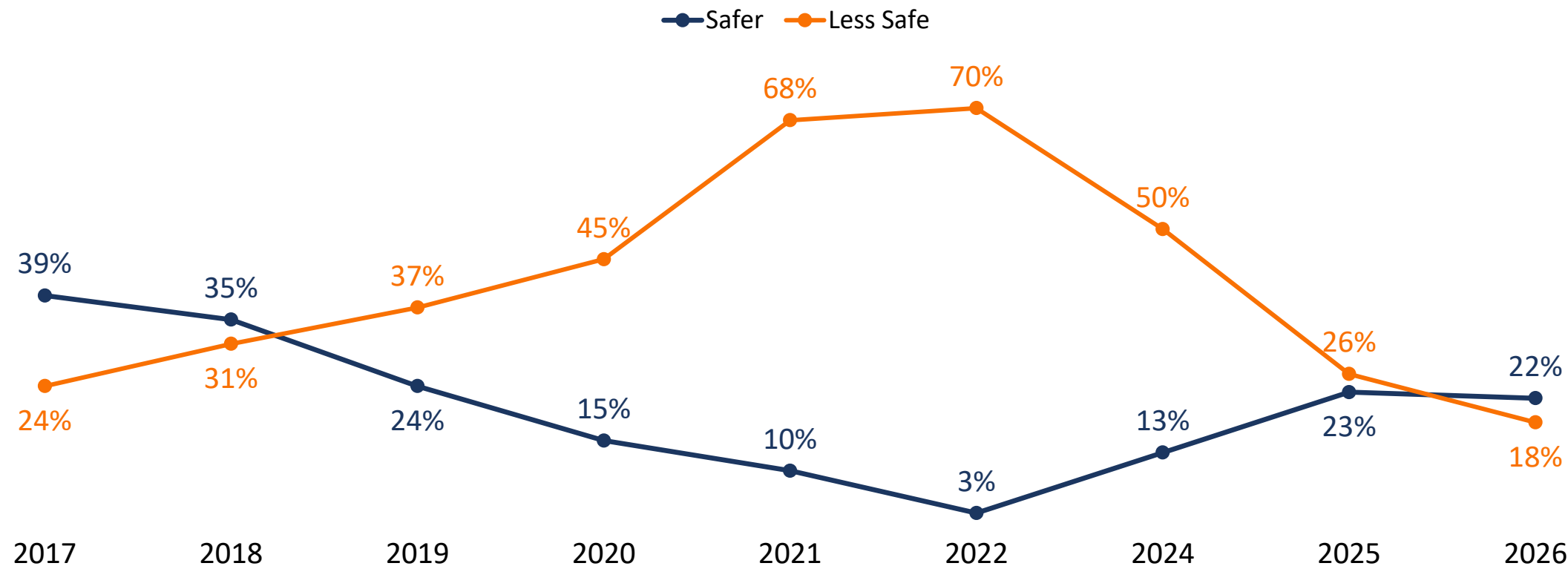
A plurality of voters continues to say crime has decreased and fewer say that it has increased, relative to recent years.

In the past year, do you think crime and violence in Oakland have increased, decreased or stayed the same?



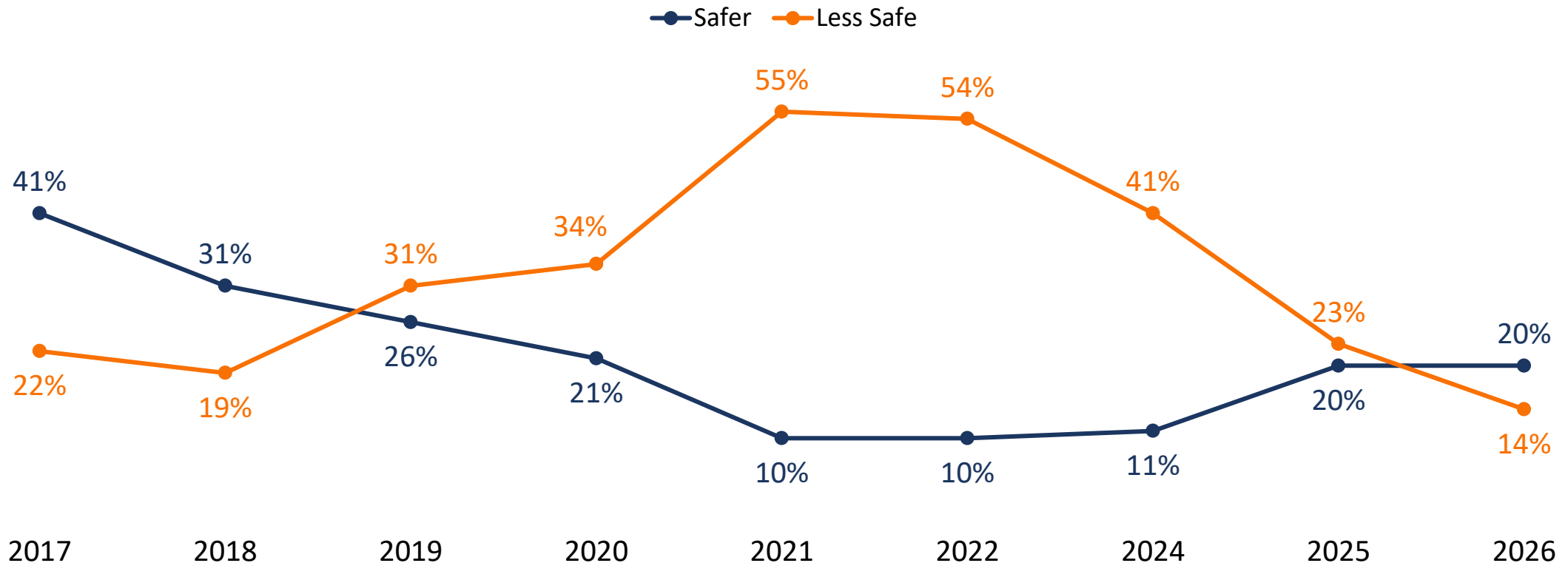
The proportion who say they feel “less safe” in Oakland than a year or two ago continues to decline.

Would you say you feel safer today in Oakland than you did a year or two ago, or would you say you feel less safe?



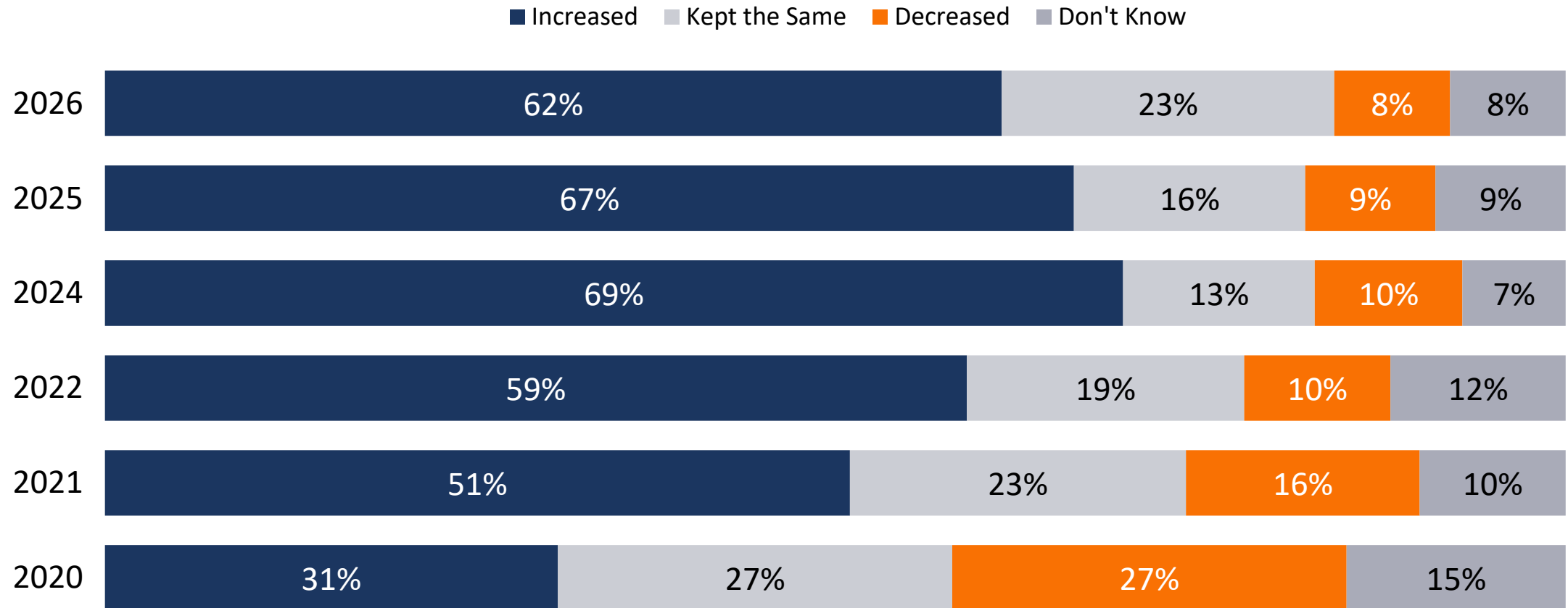
Voters are also less likely to say they feel “less safe” in their neighborhoods.

Would you say you feel safer today in your neighborhood than you did a year or two ago, or would you say you feel less safe?



At the same time, more than three in five think the number of police officers in Oakland should be increased.

Next, do you think the number of police officers in the Oakland Police Department should be increased, kept the same, or decreased?

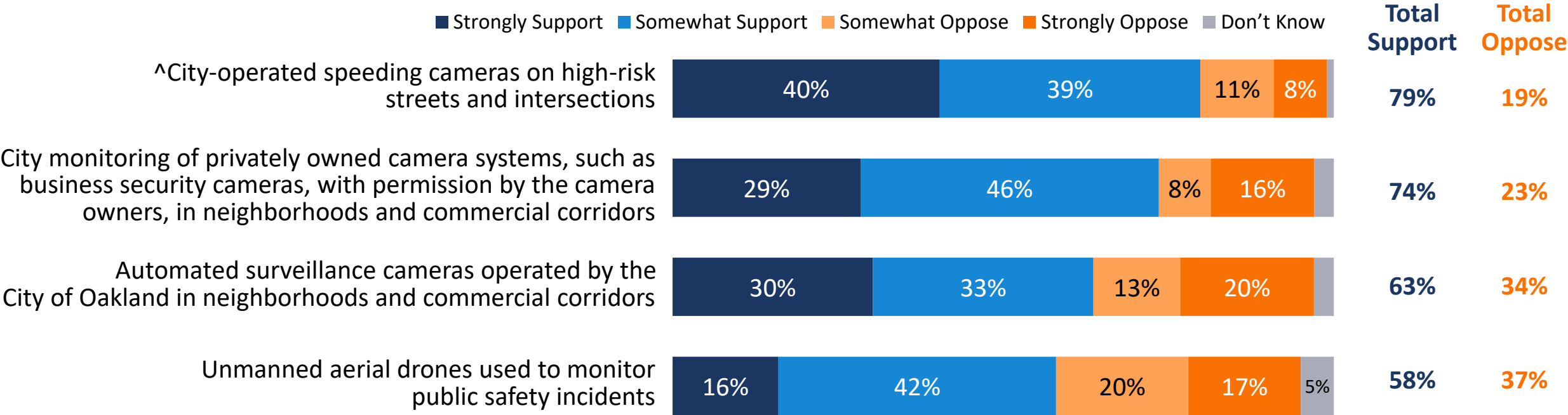


This sentiment is widely shared across the electorate.

Demographic Group	Increased	Kept the Same	Decreased
All Voters	62%	23%	8%
Age			
18-49	51%	31%	9%
50-64	62%	19%	11%
65+	83%	11%	1%
Residence			
Homeowners	65%	22%	6%
Renters	55%	26%	11%
Race/Ethnicity			
White Voters	62%	19%	7%
Latino Voters	48%	40%	10%
African American Voters	68%	21%	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander Voters	53%	31%	12%
<i>All Voters of Color</i>	60%	28%	8%
Ideology			
Progressives	47%	17%	18%
Liberals	60%	32%	3%
Moderates	76%	16%	5%
Conservatives	69%	27%	0%

Voters are widely supportive of city-operated speeding cameras and monitoring of camera systems, with owner permission.

Next, here is a list of public safety technologies that other communities have adopted to enhance public safety and support investigations. For each one, please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose Oakland police using these technologies with civilian oversight.



Attitudes toward automated surveillance cameras and unmanned aerial drones have remained consistent since 2025; support for city monitoring of privately owned cameras with owner permission has increased from 67% in 2025.

Majorities across ideology support speeding cameras.

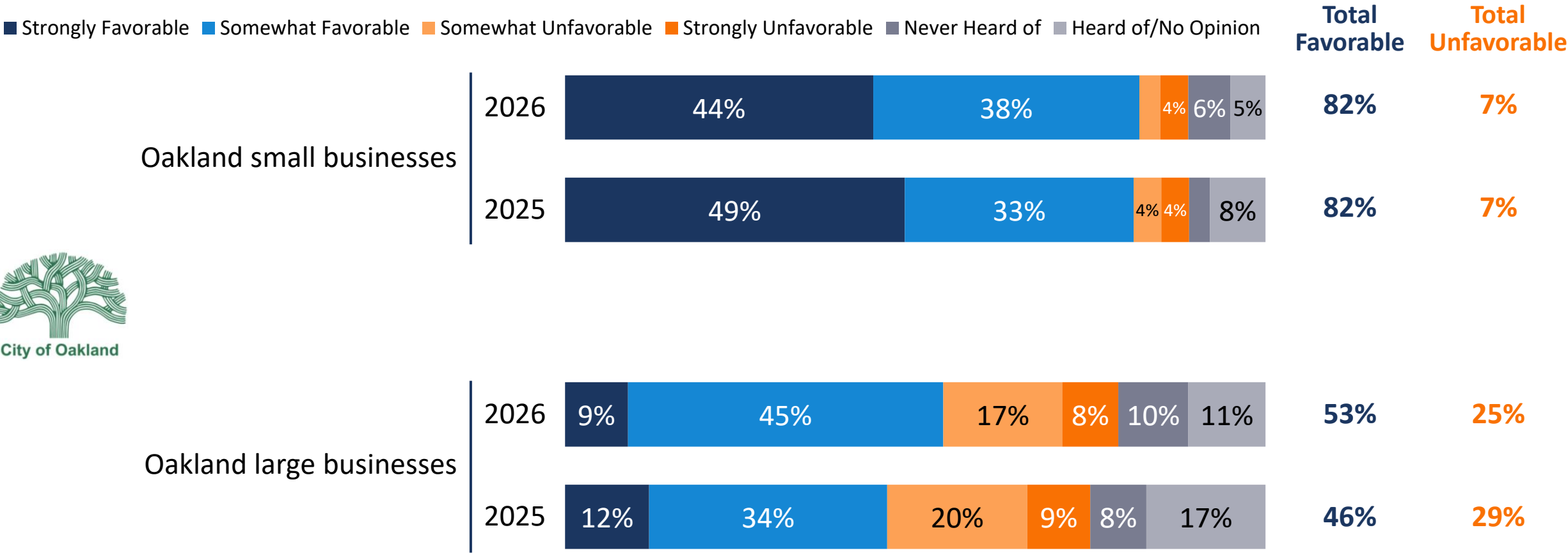
Public Safety Technology	Total Support				
	All Voters	Ideology			
		Progs	Libs	Mods	Cons
^City-operated speeding cameras on high-risk streets and intersections	79%	74%	84%	76%	92%
City monitoring of privately owned camera systems, such as business security cameras, with permission by the camera owners, in neighborhoods and commercial corridors	74%	56%	83%	77%	96%
Automated surveillance cameras operated by the City of Oakland in neighborhoods and commercial corridors	63%	32%	70%	85%	84%
Unmanned aerial drones used to monitor public safety incidents	58%	26%	61%	74%	100%



Views on the Oakland Economy

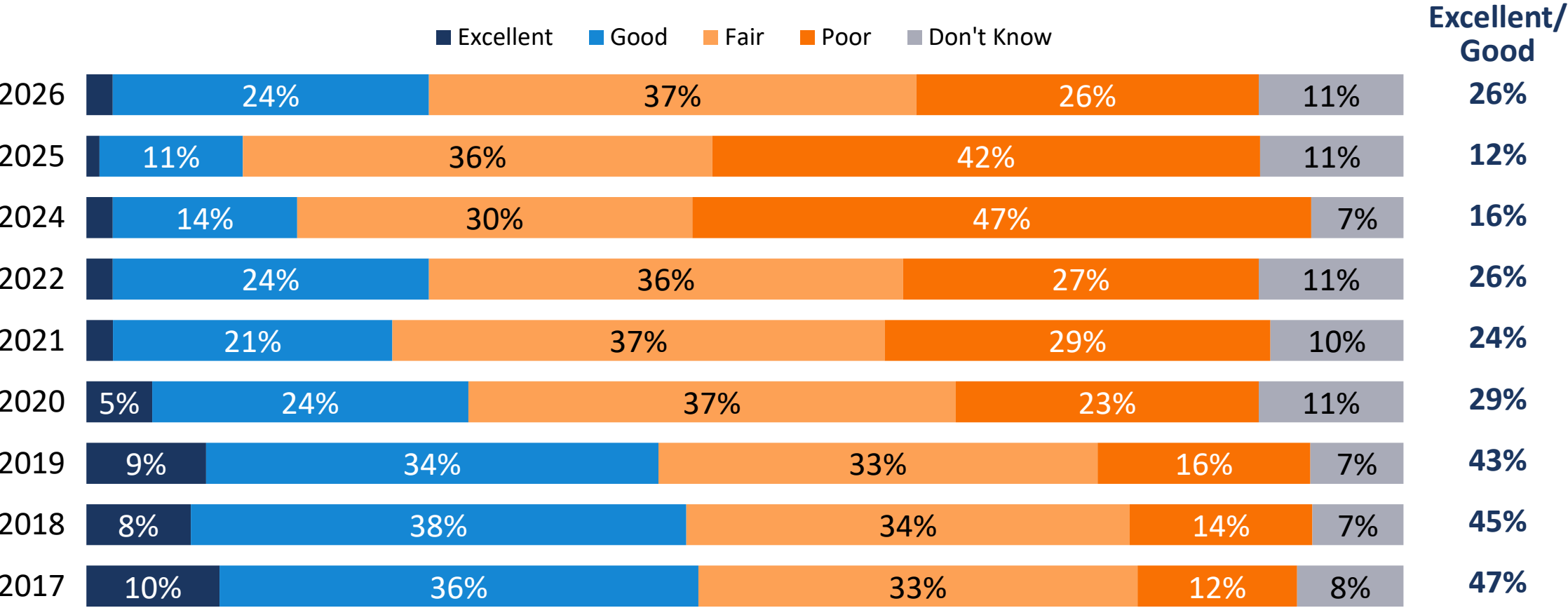
Voters view small businesses very favorably.

Next, here is a list of people and organizations active in public life. For each one, please indicate if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or strongly unfavorable opinion of that person or organization. If you have never heard of one, please say so.



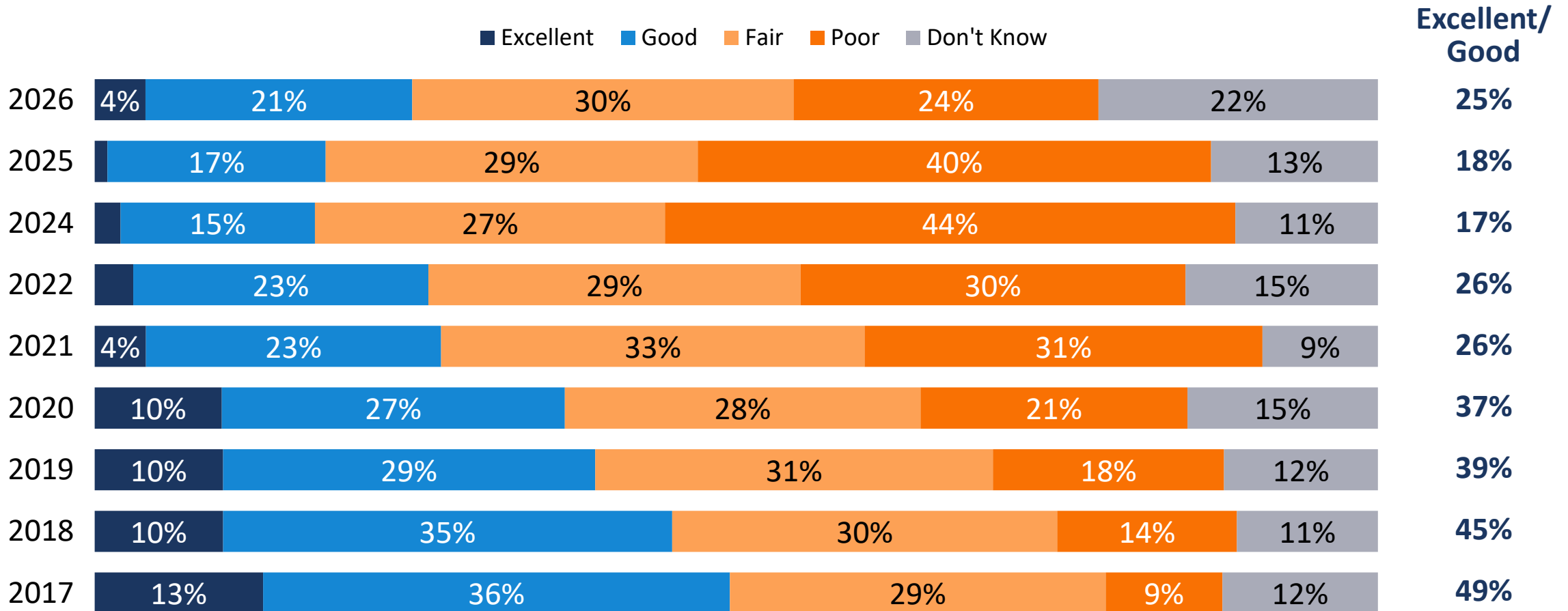
Approximately one-quarter rate the City's economic growth as excellent or good.

First, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the City's current economic growth?



Similarly, one-quarter say Oakland is a good place to start or grow a business.

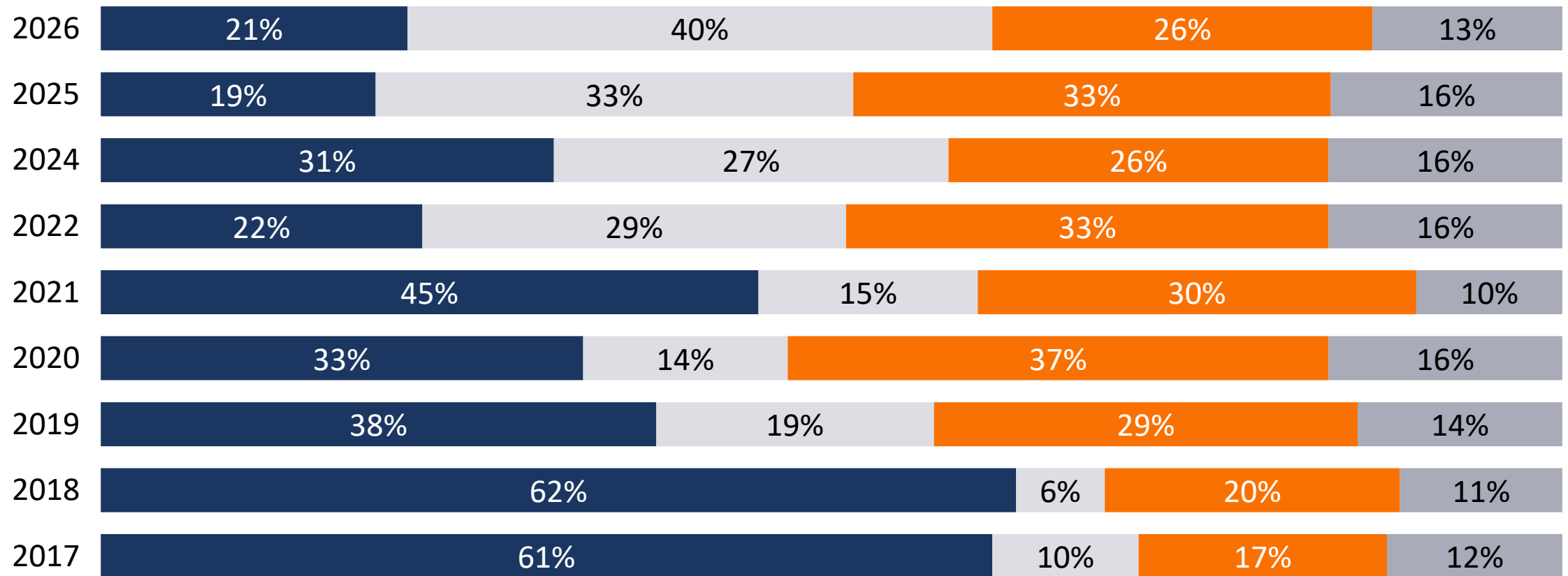
First, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate Oakland as a place to start or grow a business?



Two in five expect Oakland's economy to remain stable over the next year.

Do you think Oakland's economy will be better or worse one year from now?

■ Better ■ About the Same ■ Worse ■ Don't Know



Voters widely agree that having more small and large companies locate in Oakland benefits the economy.

Next, here are some statements about Oakland businesses and the Oakland economy. For each, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Don't Know

Total Agree **Total Disagree**

Having more small retailers and restaurants locate in Oakland is good for our economy because it creates jobs and tax revenue.



95% **4%**

Having more large companies locate in Oakland is good for our economy because it creates jobs and tax revenue.



92% **7%**

Having more technology companies locate in Oakland is good for our economy because it creates jobs and tax revenue.



79% **19%**

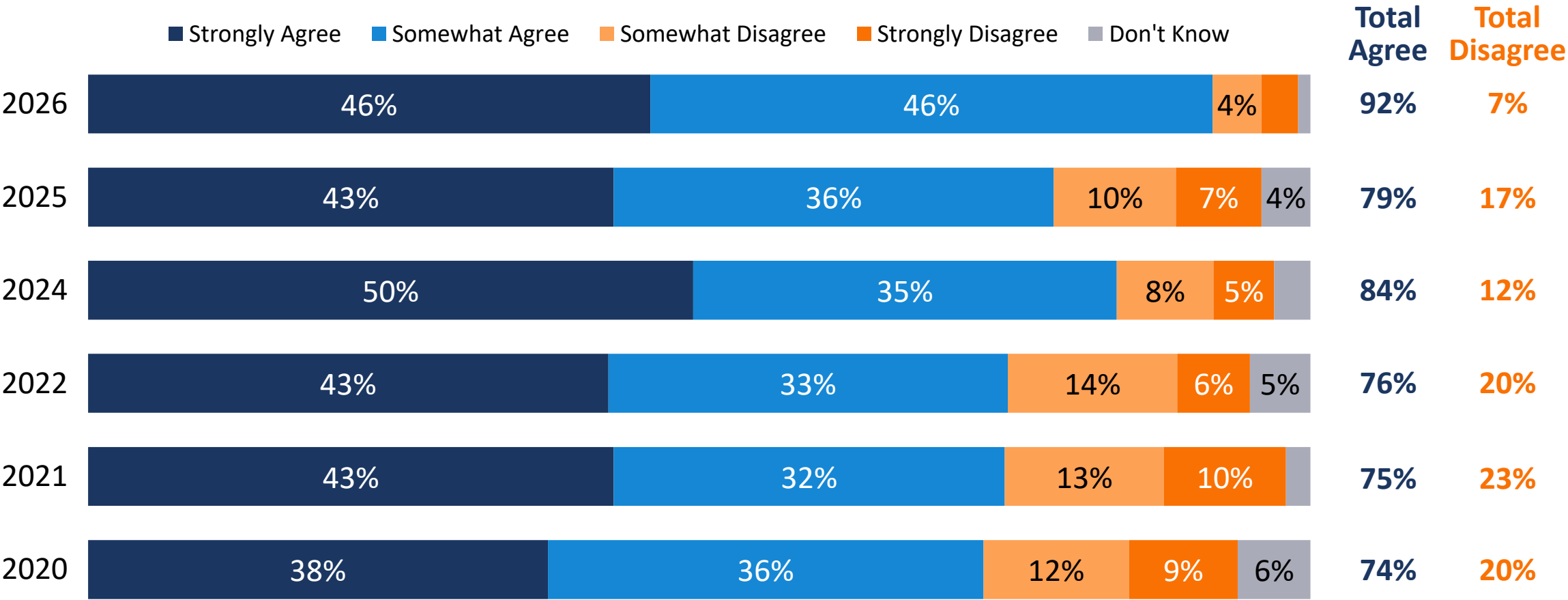
Having more AI companies locate in Oakland is good for our economy because it creates jobs and tax revenue.



55% **39%**

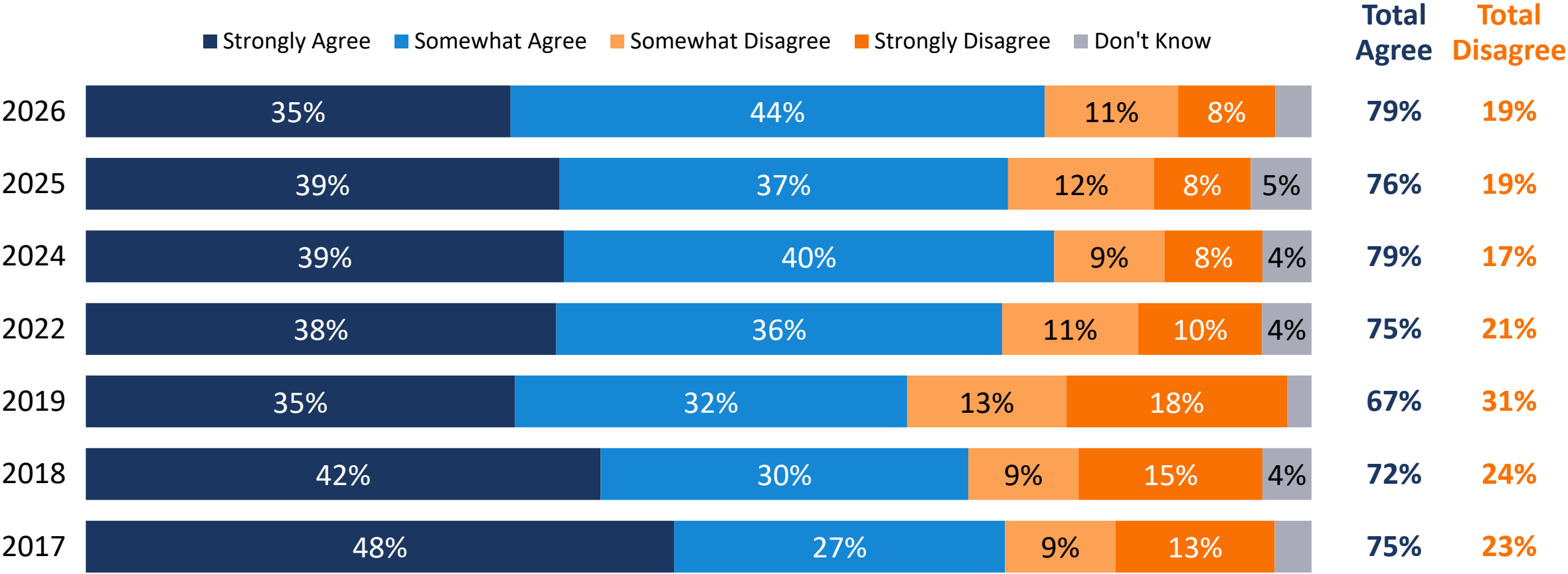
Nine in ten agree that having more large companies creates jobs and tax revenue.

Having more large companies locate in Oakland is good for our economy because it creates jobs and tax revenue.



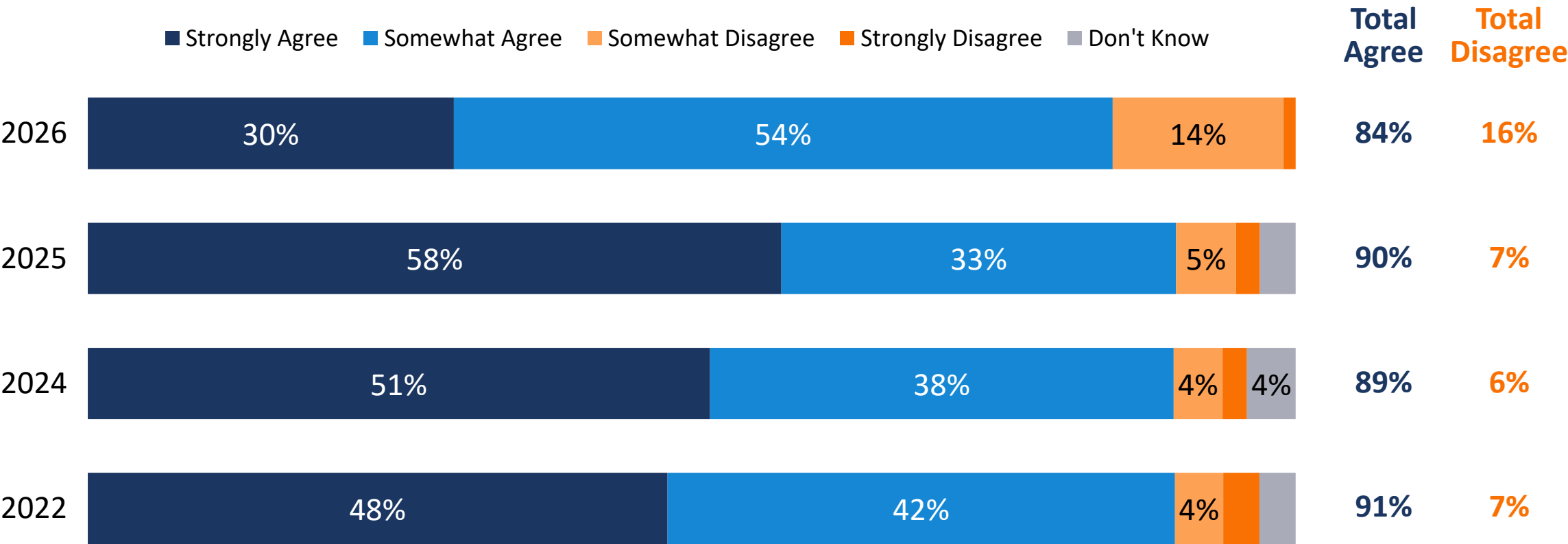
Nearly four in five say the same with respect to technology companies.

Having more technology companies locate in Oakland is good for our economy because it creates jobs and tax revenue.



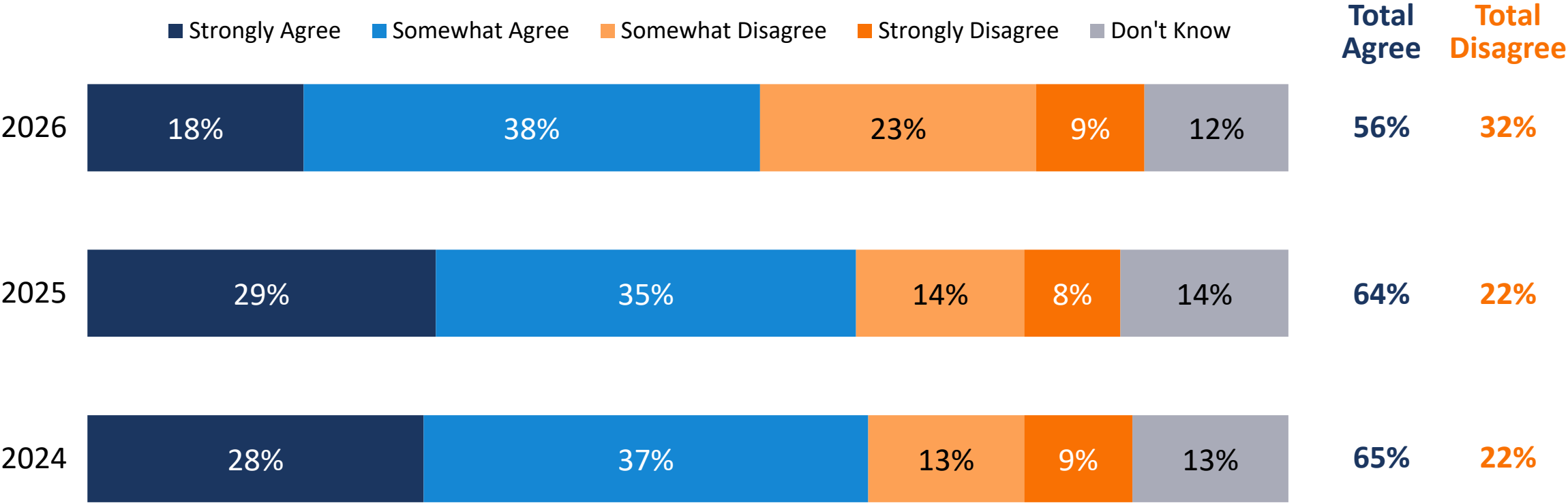
More than four in five say Oakland city government has a responsibility to help local business succeed.

Oakland city government has a responsibility to help local business succeed.



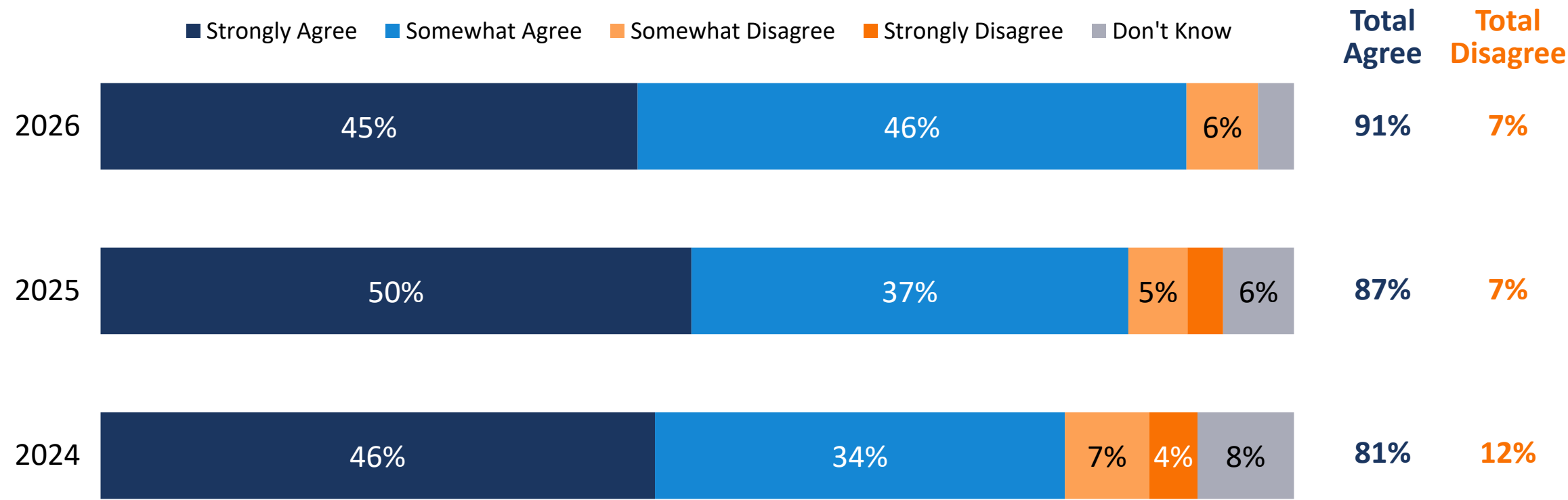
A majority agree that employers need tax incentives to grow their business here.

Oakland employers need tax incentives to grow their businesses here.



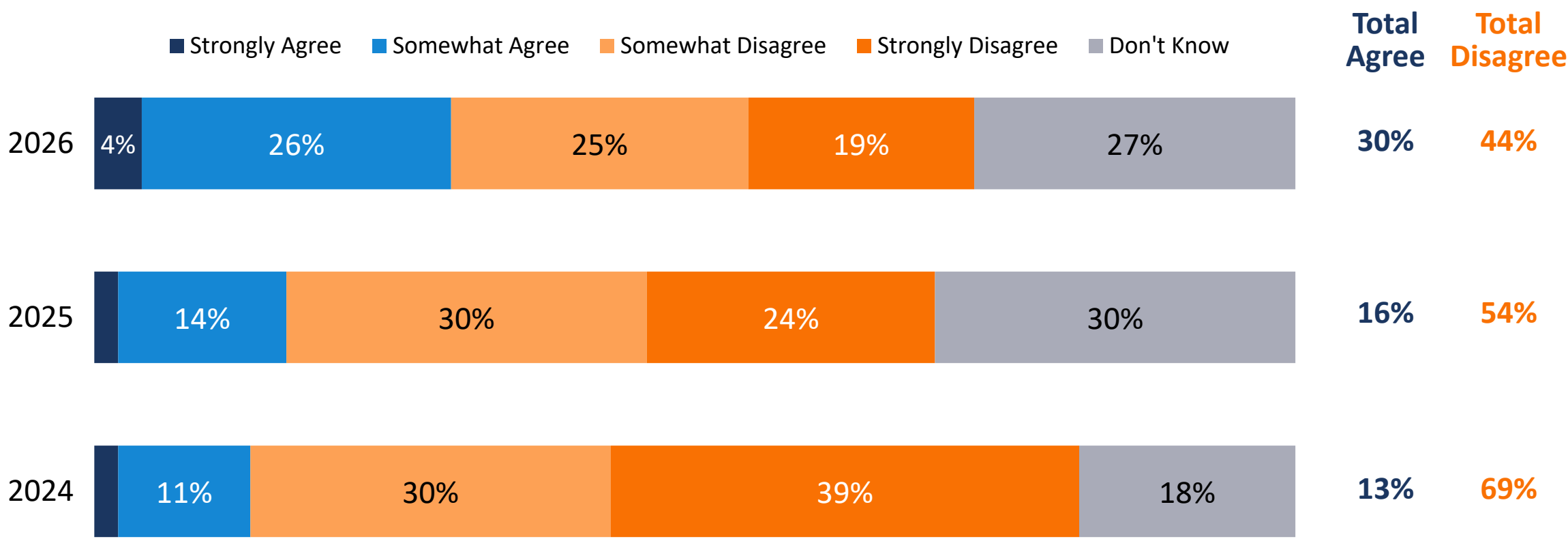
Nine in ten continue to say that making it easier to open businesses will help revitalize downtown.

Making it easier to open businesses will help revitalize downtown.



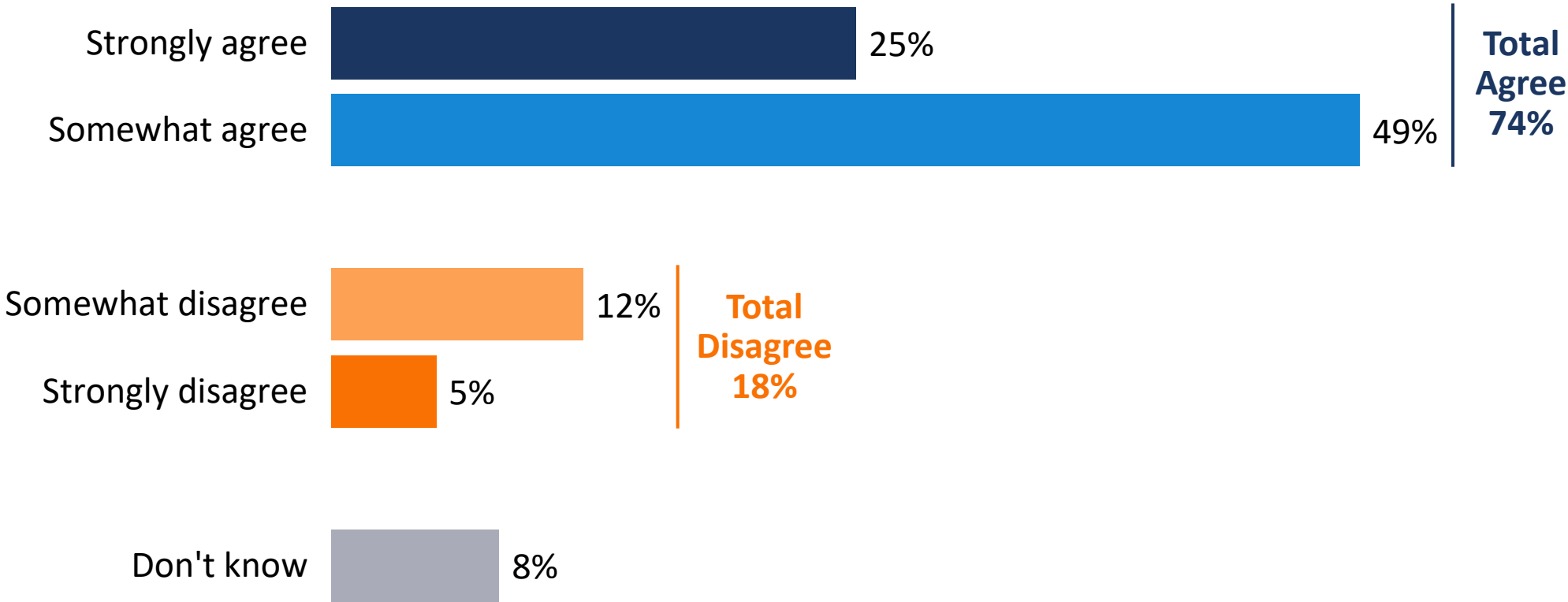
While perceptions are improving, a plurality don't agree that Oakland city government is doing a good job helping local businesses succeed.

Oakland city government is doing a good job helping local businesses succeed.



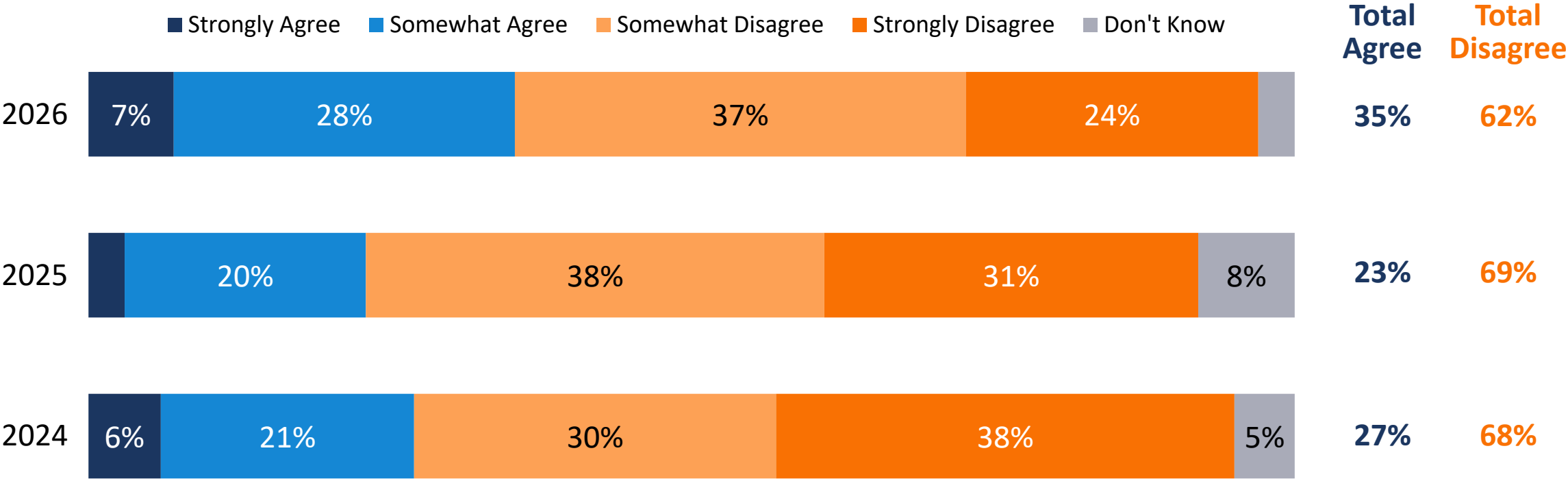
Three in four agree that more tax incentives will help attract businesses to Oakland.

Providing more tax incentives will help attract businesses to Oakland.



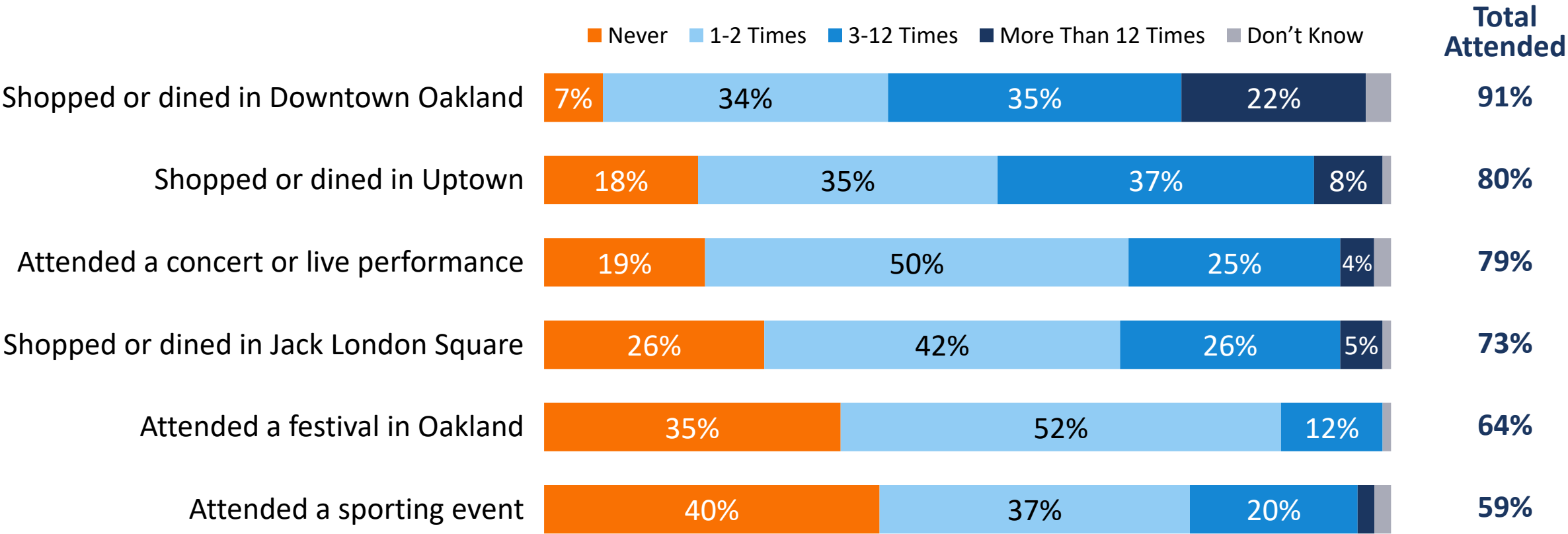
Voters are slightly more likely to view the downtown economy as vibrant than in prior years.

Downtown Oakland's economy is vibrant.



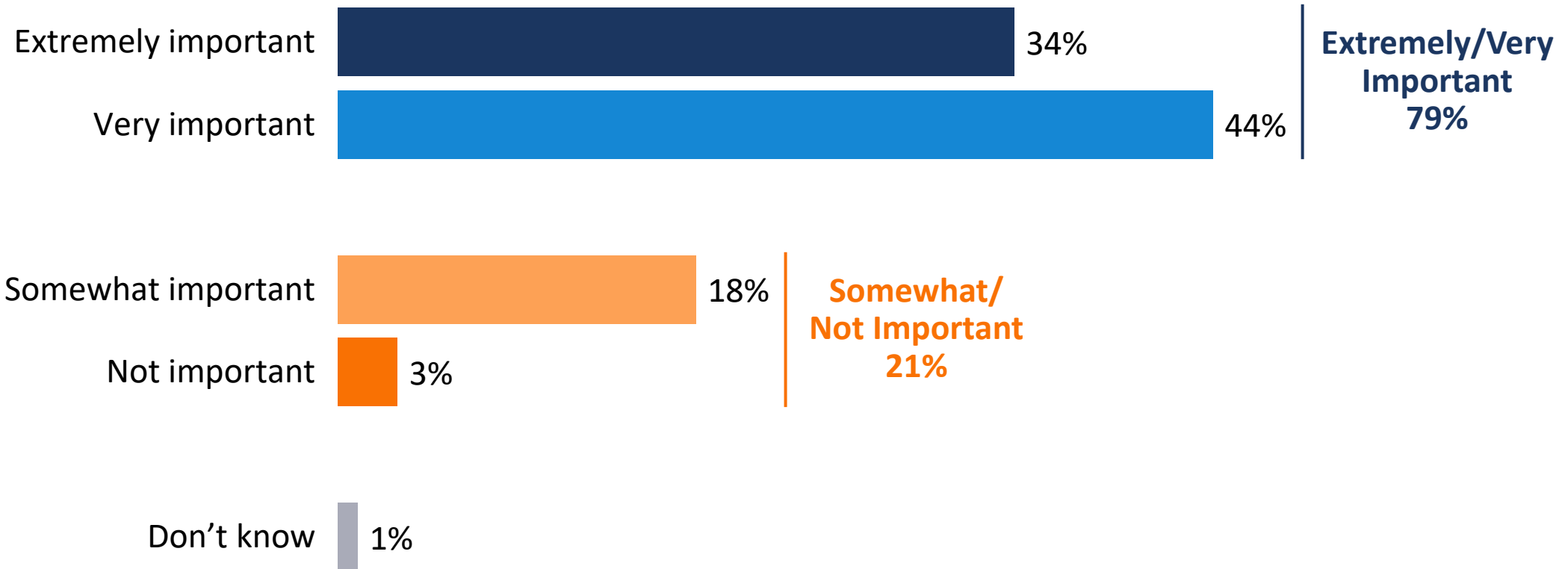
Oakland voters most commonly shopped or dined in Downtown Oakland or Uptown.

Next, in the last twelve months, about how many times do you think you or another household member has done each of the following activities?



Nearly four in five agree that sporting, entertainment, and cultural events are important for the Oakland economy.

Next, how important are sporting, entertainment, and cultural events for the Oakland economy, in your opinion?





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