

August 22, 2022

TO: Interested Parties

FR: Strategies 360 Research

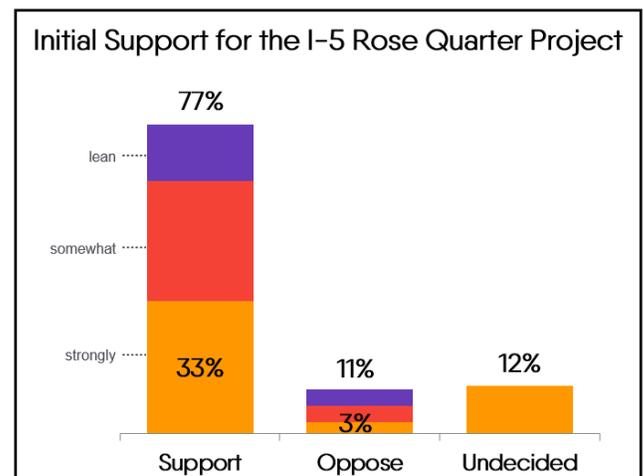
RE: Public Attitudes toward the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project

To better understand public awareness of and support for the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project, Strategies 360 conducted a survey of 624 adults in the Portland metro area. Interviews were conducted June 13-21, 2022. In addition to sampling from all demographic areas, data was also weighted to reflect the demographic proportions of the area based on Census data. The margin of error for a survey of 624 interviews is  $\pm 3.9\%$  at the 95% confidence level for each individual sample. The margin of error is higher for subsamples.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Initial support for the Project is strong.** More than three-quarters (77%) of adults in the area support the project, including 33% who *strongly* support the project.

With more detail on the exact scope and goals of the Project, support remains steady at 76%. Another 8 in 10 say they would feel safe driving on I-5 through the Rose Quarter once improvements are made. Crucially, nearly all Portland-area residents (86%) feel the most important goal of the Project is rooted in mobility - "to improve safety, manage congestion, improve travel time reliability, provide multiple transportation options and connect communities and job centers across the region."



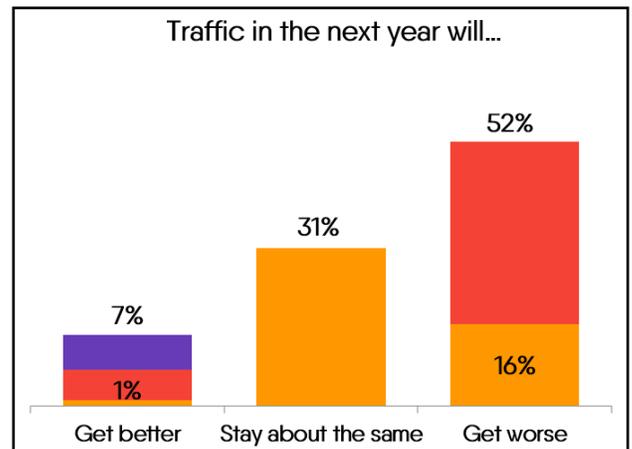
**Building full shoulders along I-5 and building auxiliary lanes are the most popular improvements**, though majorities also believe that new bike and pedestrian paths, building a highway cover, and relocating the I-5 southbound on-ramp from NE Broadway to NE Wheeler Avenue are also good ideas for the area. Indeed, the auxiliary lanes are seen as a key component of the improvements. And more than 2-in-3 (69%) feel that a highway cover will have a positive impact on the surrounding community.

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**Traffic is a major pain point for Portland metro area residents.** Nearly a third (32%) feel that traffic has gotten worse compared to pre-pandemic levels and more than half (52%) only expect it to get worse in the next year. Another third (31%) expect traffic to stay about the same. Very few anticipate any improvement in the near future.

**Worsening traffic is felt most keenly by Clackamas County residents, people of color, and lower-income residents.** These groups are all likelier than the average resident to say traffic has gotten worse recently. And majorities expect traffic to stay as bad as it is now or keep getting worse.

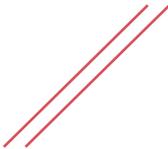
The problem of traffic in the area leads nearly all to believe that a project to address traffic and congestion in the Rose Quarter is vital. Eighty-six percent say a project like this is important.



# PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE I-5 ROSE QUARTER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

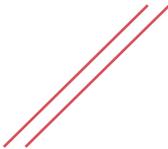
**Key Findings from Public Opinion Research  
June 2022**





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# Survey Methodology

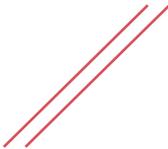
Strategies 360 conducted an online survey of **624 adults** in Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties, Oregon.

Interviews were conducted **June 13-21, 2022**. The margin of error for a survey of **624** interviews is **±3.9%** at the 95% confidence level for each individual sample. The margin of error is higher for subsamples.

Other sources of error not accounted for by the stated statistical margin of error include, but are not limited to, question wording, question order, coverage bias, and response bias.

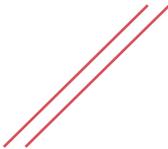


**KEY FINDINGS:**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: LANDSCAPE

- **Housing and crime have surged to the top of Portland residents' concerns this year.** More than half (53%) and nearly half (47%) of all adults in the area say that housing and crime respectively are the most important issues facing the Portland metro area today.
- **Traffic is a comparatively lower concern (it's the top issue for 13% of residents), but most (86%) believe it is important to undertake a project to address congestion and traffic in the Rose Quarter area.** Traffic breaks into the top three most important issues for older residents and higher-income residents.
- **Not only is traffic a concern right now, but residents only expect things to worsen.** Nearly a third say that traffic has gotten worse compared to pre-pandemic levels and more than half say it will get worse in the next year. Additionally, most say they feel safe when driving on I-5 through the Rose Quarter, but intensity is very low (61% total, 14% who feel *very safe*).
- **Most are familiar with the Rose Quarter area.** Familiarity is highest for those living in Multnomah County, higher-income residents, and younger residents. Residents' familiarity with the area has decreased since 2020, largely driven by lower awareness among higher-income residents (though they remain more familiar than others), older residents, and those outside of Multnomah County.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PROJECT SUPPORT

- **Initial support for the Rose Quarter Improvement Project is strong. More than three-quarters (77%) support the project, up 16 points from 2020.** This includes a third (33%) who *strongly* support the project.
  - Initial support is highest among middle-income residents (81% support) and those already familiar with the project area (80%).
- **After being shown a supporting and opposing statements about the project, support dips slightly, but remains in the majority (77% support to 70% support).** Losses are driven primarily by Persuadable targets, and those who are unfamiliar with the area and travel through it less frequently. The opposing argument is least persuasive among Clackamas County residents (-2), frequent travelers through the area (-2), and middle-income residents (-3).
- **Once given a brief summary of the exact project improvements and goal of the project, attitudes greatly improve.**
  - 80% of respondents say they will feel safe driving on I-5 through the Rose Quarter once the improvements are made. This is a 19-point improvement from the 61% who said they currently feel safe driving on I-5 through the Rose Quarter.
  - And final support for the project reaches 76%, including 30% who *strongly* support it. Additional information brings unfamiliar residents and persuadables back up to majority or near majority support.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: COMPONENTS AND GOALS

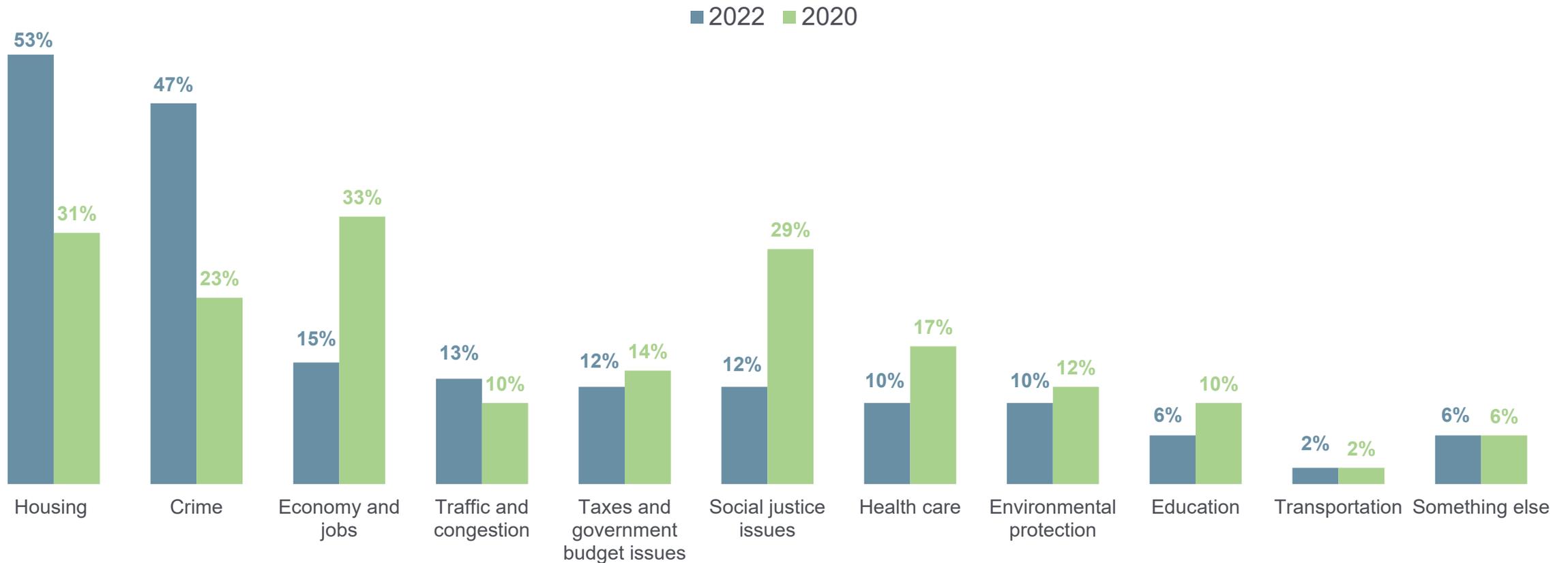
- **Shoulders and auxiliary lanes are the most popular components of the Project.** Though majorities also believe that new bike and pedestrian paths, building a highway cover, and ramp relocation are also good ideas.
- **Learning more about the auxiliary lanes boosts support to 78%**, regaining ground lost after hearing the opposing side's arguments.
- **More than two-thirds feel that a highway cover will have a positive impact** on the surrounding community.
- **Mobility remains the most important goal to emphasize with residents**, but additional goals can be highlighted depending on the audience.
  - Younger residents (age 18-34) slightly prefer **Transparency**, which centers making decisions in an open and inclusive way. Additionally, **Greenhouse Gas Emissions** and **Local Business** are just as important to this group as **Mobility**.
  - **Mobility** is the top message among people of color, followed closely by **Greenhouse Gas Emissions** and **Local Business**.



# LANDSCAPE

Housing and crime have surged to the top, while economic and social justice issues have declined in relative importance.

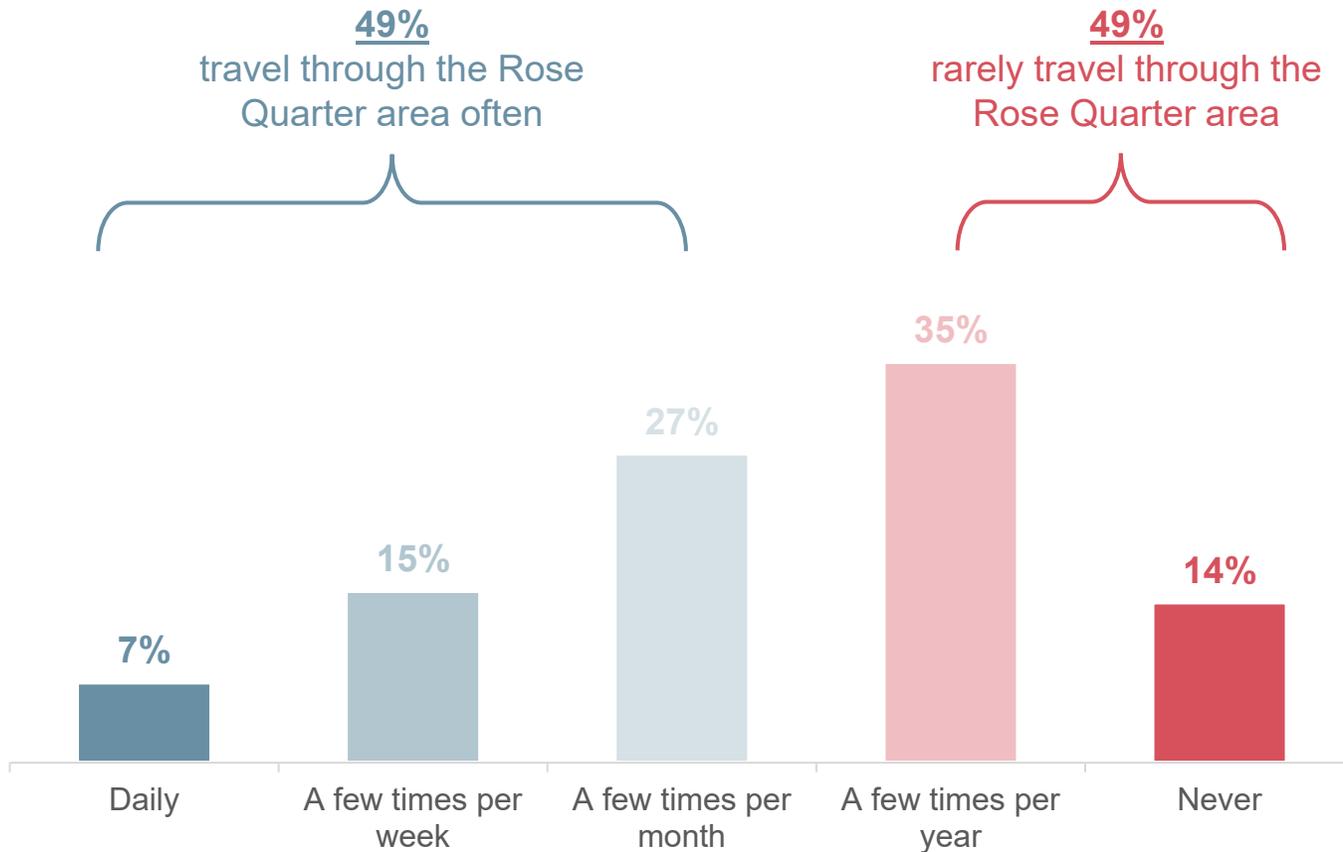
### Top issues facing the Portland Metro Area\*



\*Besides responding to COVID-19, what else would you say are the most important issues facing the Portland metro area today? You may select up to two.

About half of adults in the area are frequent travelers through the Rose Quarter, most typically those living in Multnomah County, younger residents, and people of color.

### Travel frequency\*

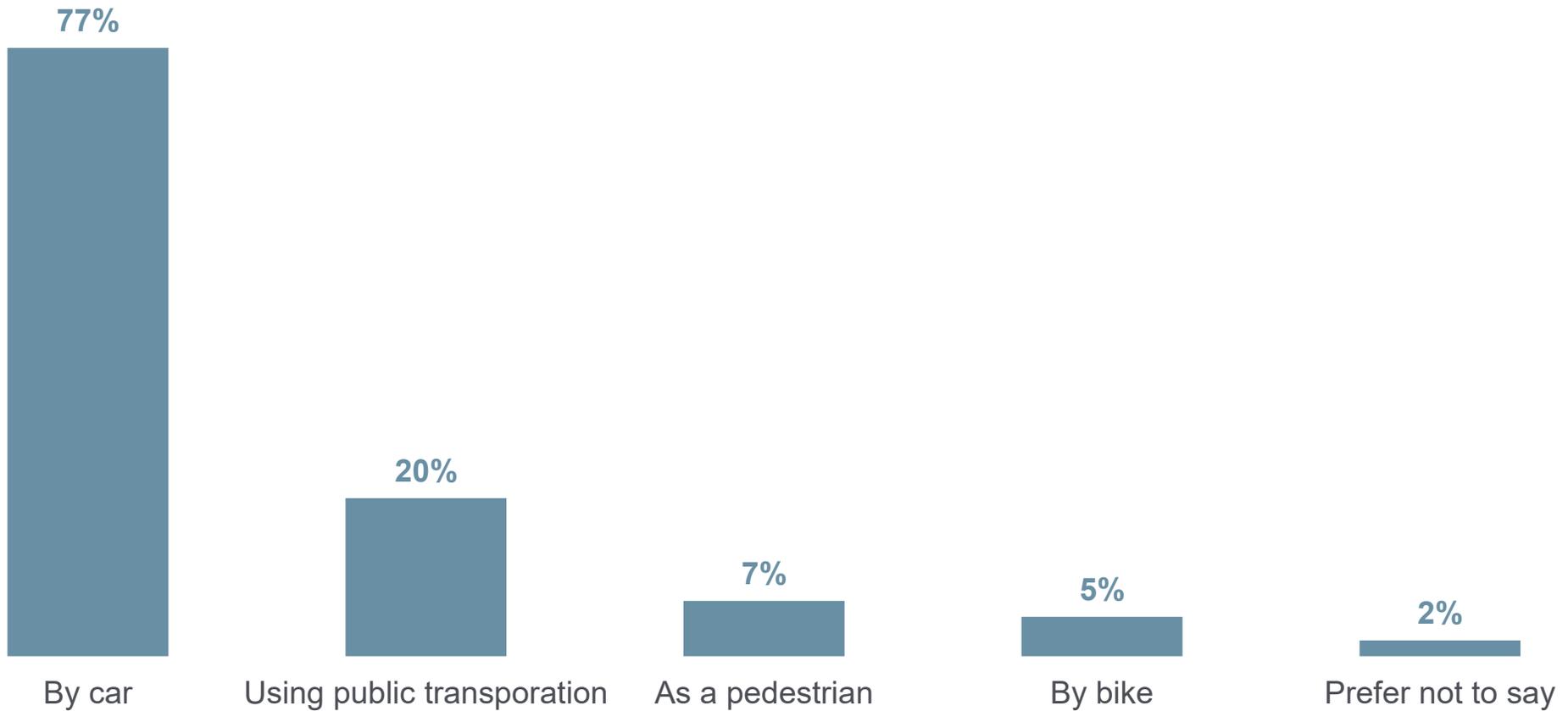


	Frequently	Rarely/Never
Total	49	49
<50	60	38
50+	37	61
White	48	52
POC	55	39
HHI <\$50K	45	52
HHI \$50-100K	50	50
HHI \$100K+	54	46
Multnomah	64	35
Washington	35	62
Clackamas	39	59
Base	54	46
Persuadable	43	53

\*How often do you drive, walk, bike, or use public transportation through the Rose Quarter area?

Most travel through the area by car, while 1 in 5 tend to use public transportation.

### Rose Quarter travel method\*

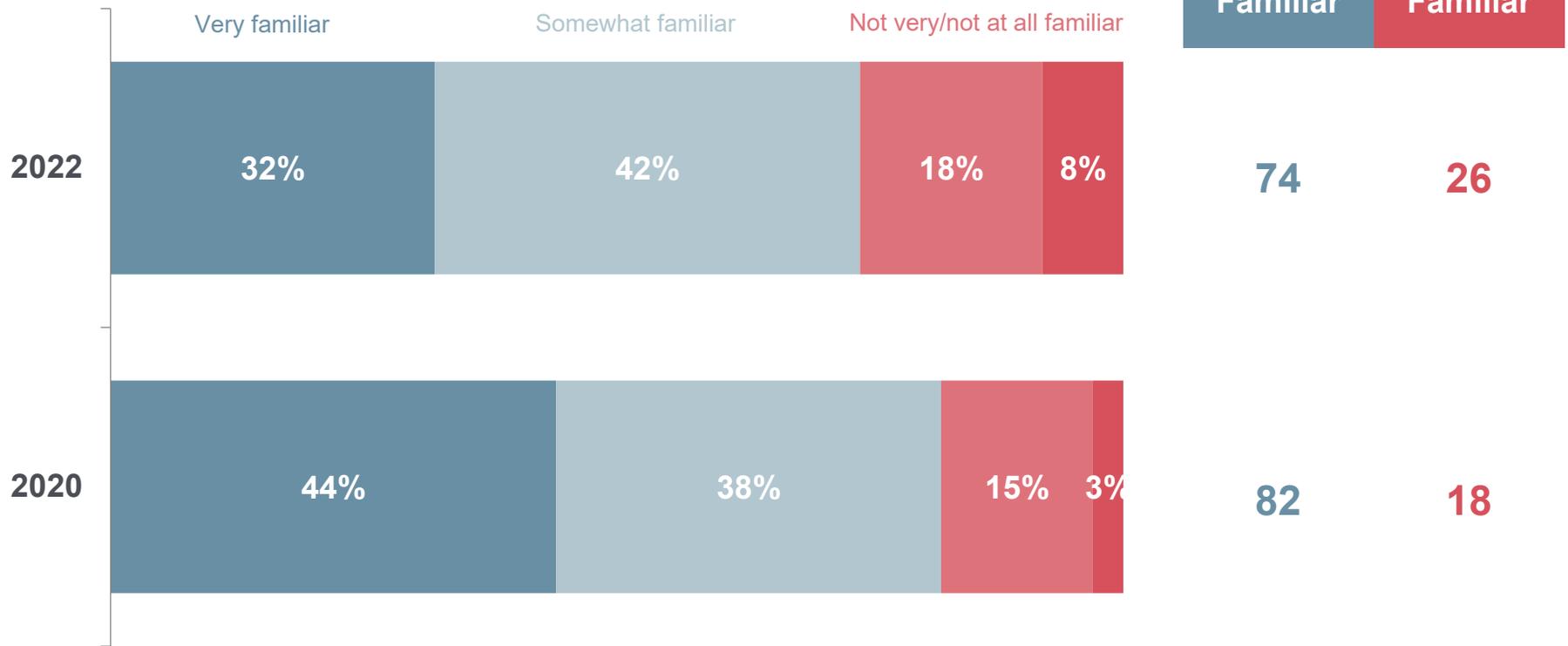
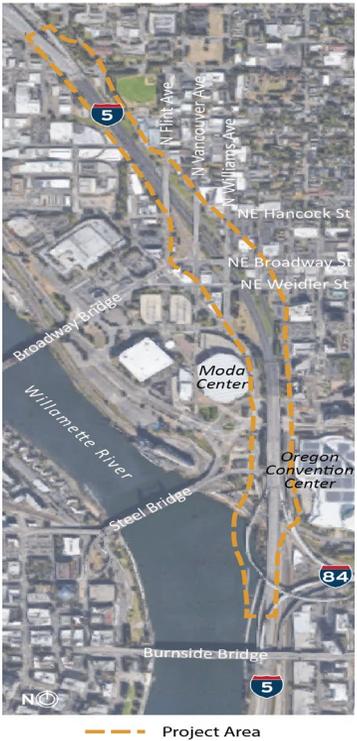


\*And how do you tend to most frequently travel through the Rose Quarter?

Most are familiar with the project area.

### Familiarity with project area\*

Very familiar | Somewhat familiar | Not very familiar | Not at all familiar

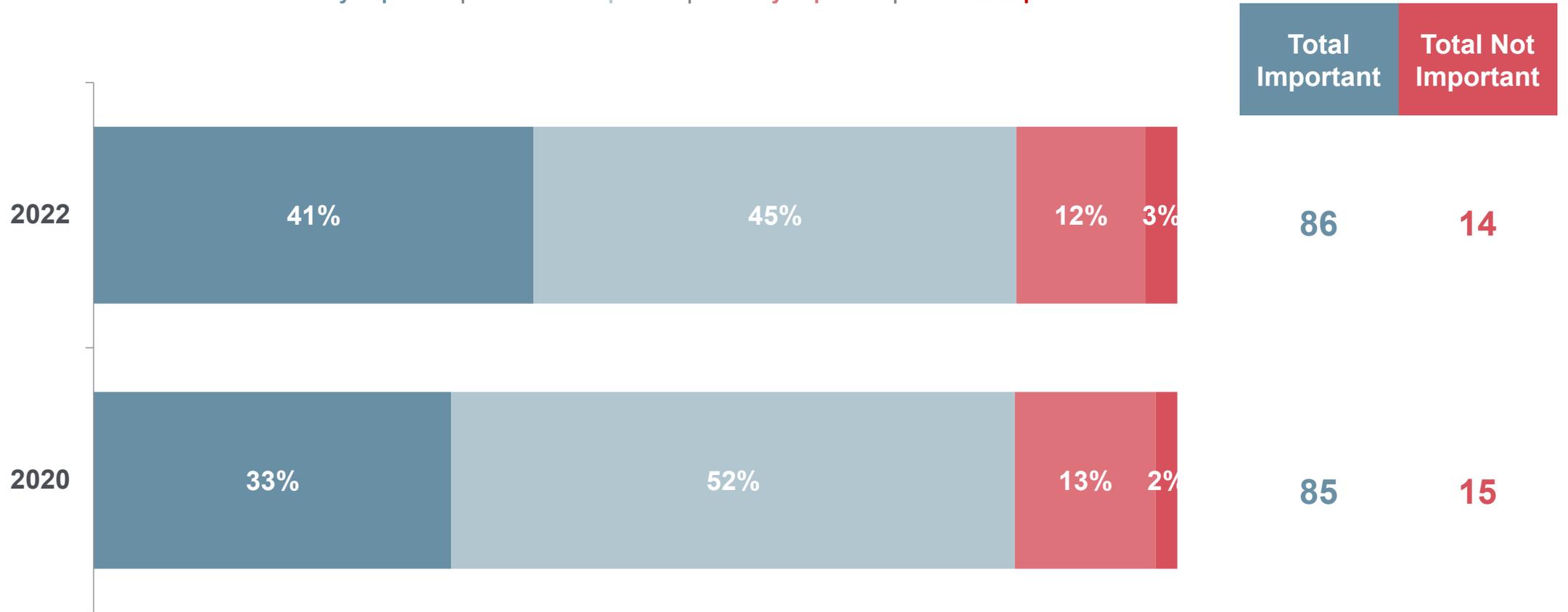


\*The dotted yellow line in the map below shows the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project Area. How familiar, if at all, are you with this area?

Despite fluctuations in familiarity, the perceived importance of a project to address traffic remains steady, including more people who believe it is *very important*.

### Perceptions of project importance\*

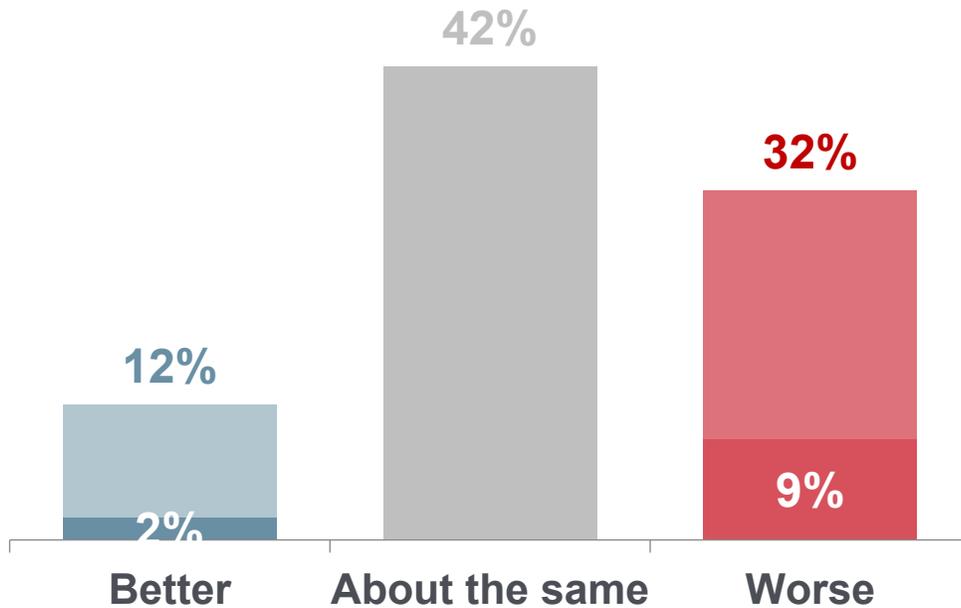
Very important | Somewhat important | Not very important | Not at all important



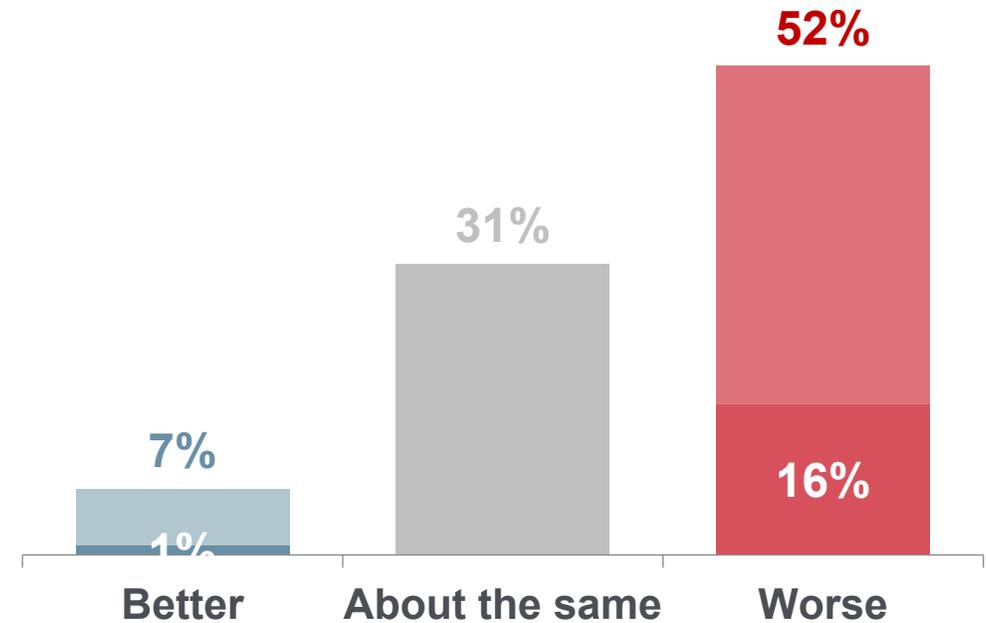
\*In your opinion how important is it to undertake a project to address congestion and traffic in this area?

Nearly a third say traffic has gotten worse and a majority believe it will get worse in the next year.

Perceptions of traffic post-COVID\*



Traffic in the next year\*\*



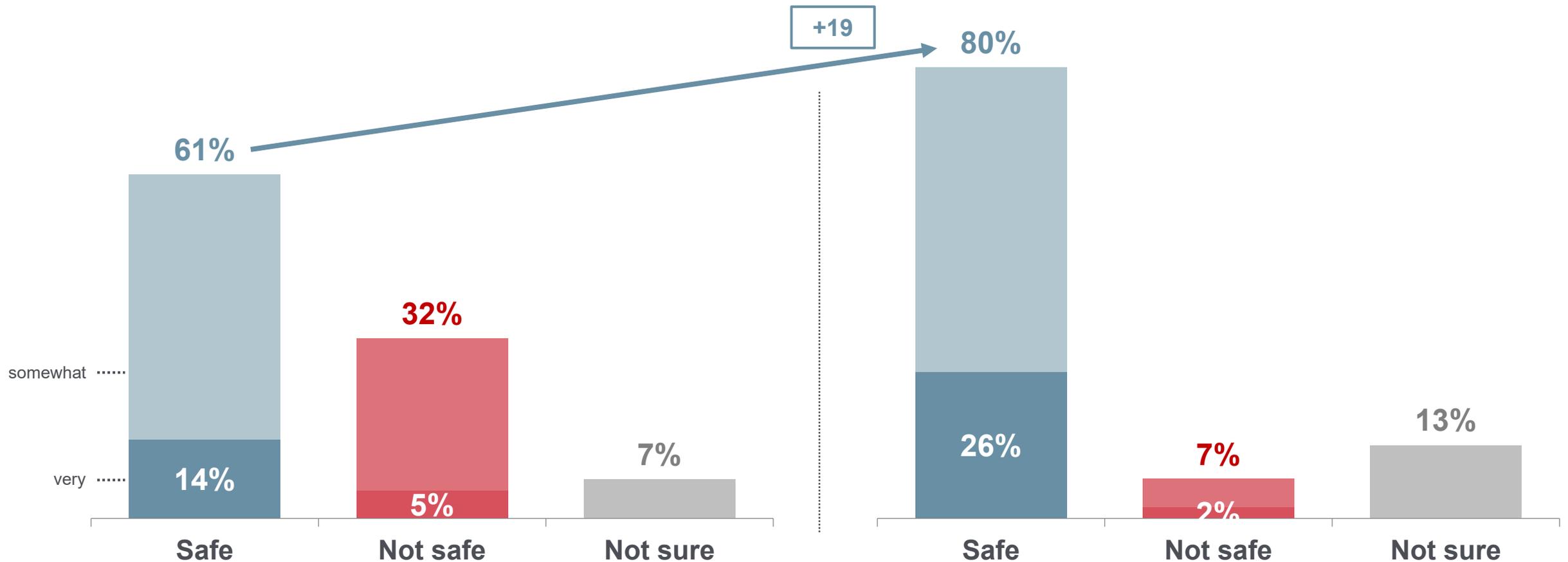
14 \*In your experience, is traffic in this area better, worse, or about the same now compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic?

\*\*Do you expect traffic in this area to get better or worse in the next year, or will it stay about the same?

Most feel at least somewhat safe driving on I-5 through the Rose Quarter, though the feeling is soft. After learning more about the improvements being made to the road, 8 in 10 say they would feel safe driving on I-5 through the Rose Quarter.

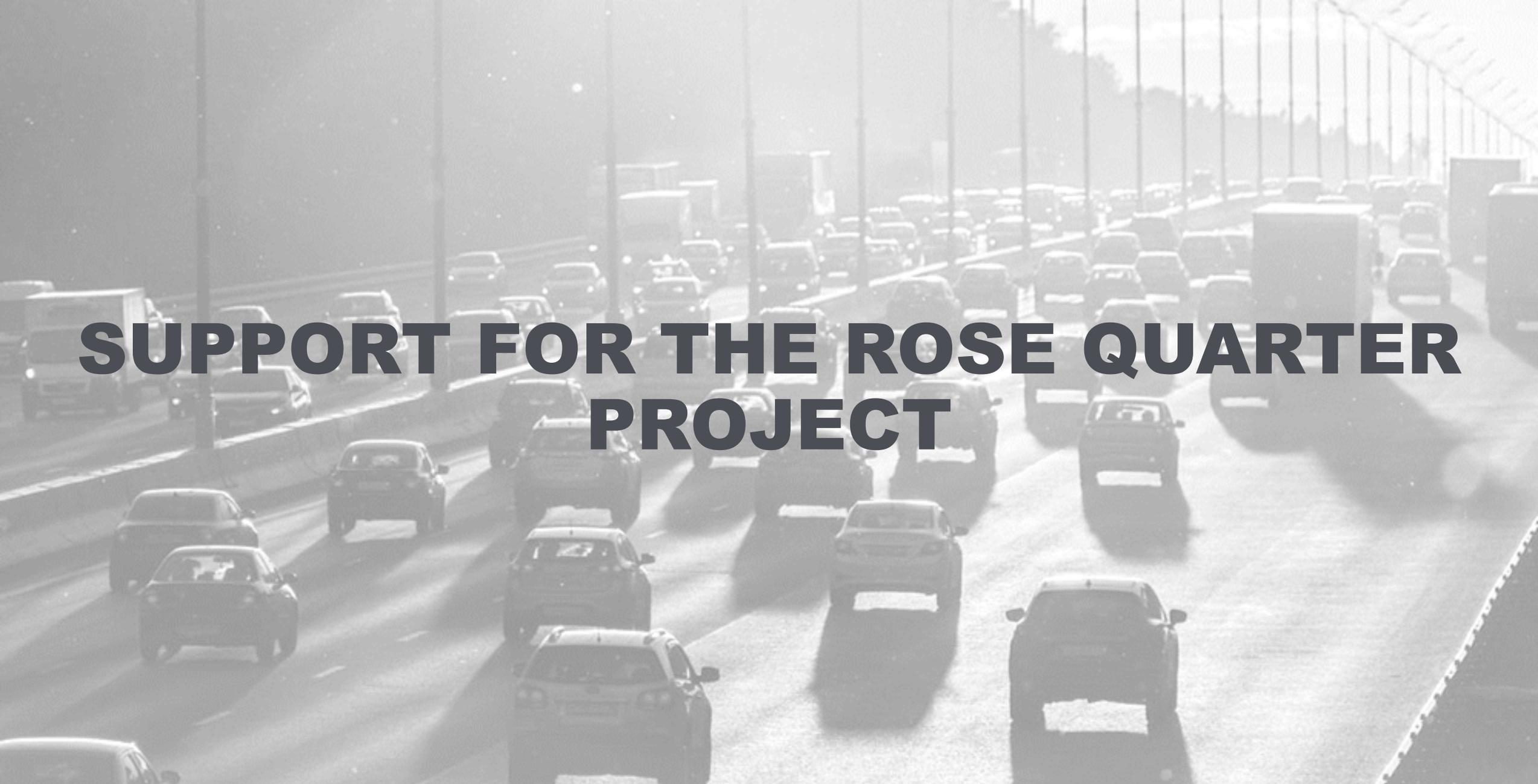
Initial Perception of Safety\*

Informed Perception of Safety\*\*



\*In general, how safe do you feel when driving on I-5 to travel through the Rose Quarter area?

\*\*Here is more information about the proposed change to the I-5 through the Rose Quarter. Once these improvements are made, please indicate how safe you would feel when driving on I-5 to travel through the Rose Quarter area?



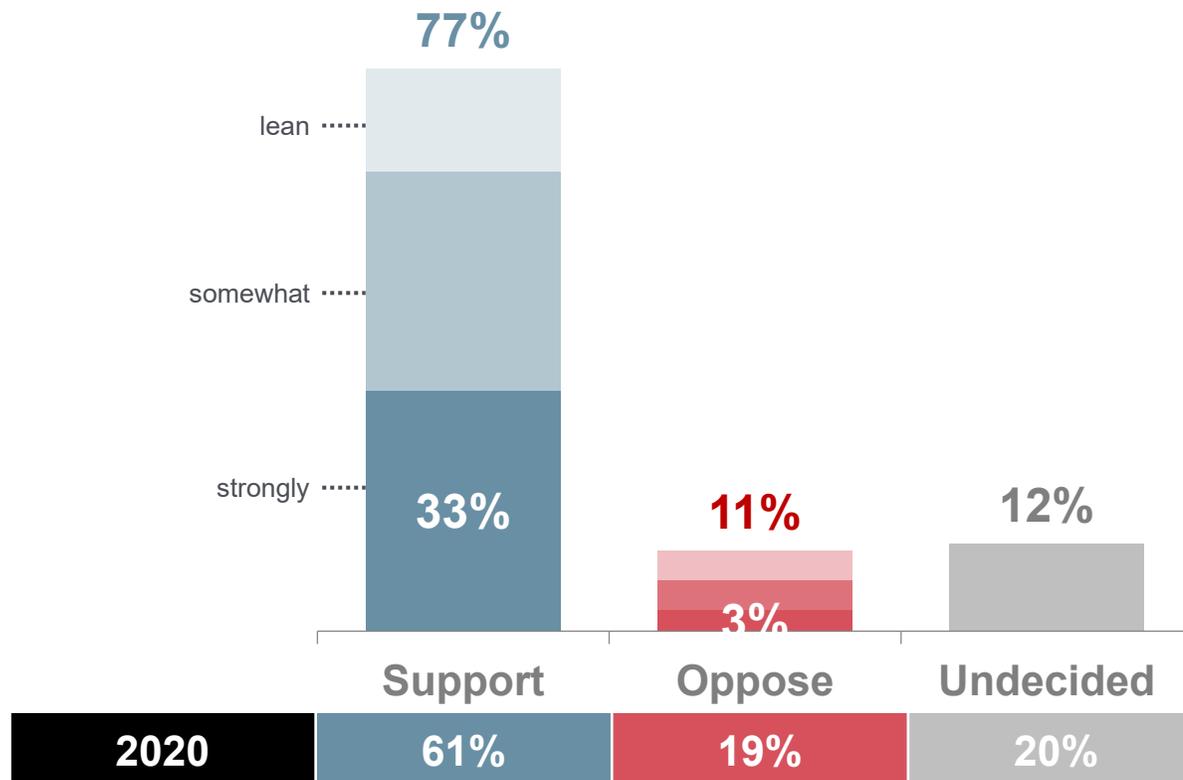
# **SUPPORT FOR THE ROSE QUARTER PROJECT**

Initial support for the project is high, at 77%.

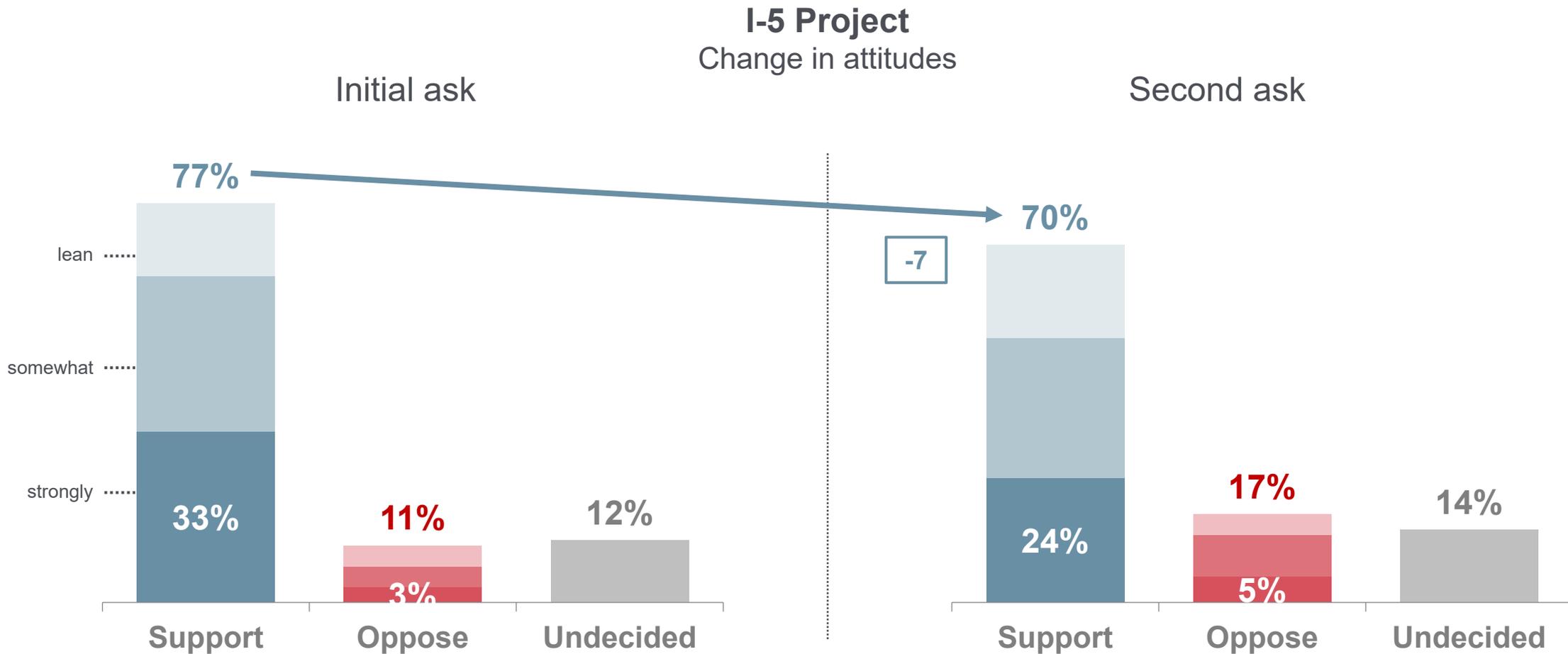
## Initial Support for Rose Quarter Improvement Project

This would be a project to address traffic congestion and safety on I-5 in the Rose Quarter in Portland along a 1.8 mile stretch between I-84 and I-405. This is the State's top bottleneck and has the highest crash rate of any interstate within Oregon. The project adds new ramp-to-ramp lanes (also known as auxiliary lanes that connect one entrance ramp to the next exit ramp) and adds full shoulders to I-5 to improve traffic flow and reduce frequent crashes.

This project will improve local streets and build new and wider sidewalks, offering greater visibility, protection and access to people walking, rolling and biking through the Rose Quarter area. It also will create connections across I-5 for people driving, biking, and walking, including a new highway cover with new land on top of I-5 for buildings up 3 stories, with an option for up to 6 stories for additional cost.



After hearing from supporters and opponents of the project, support dips by 7 points.



**\*Supporters say** this will reduce congestion, making travel safer, more efficient, and decreasing stop and go traffic at Oregon's top bottleneck, where average speeds have dropped to below 45 miles per hour. Furthermore, the daily economic impact of delayed vehicles on regional freeways in the Portland area in 2019 was \$1.2 million. Adding auxiliary lanes to give drivers more time and space to merge and adding full shoulders for disabled vehicles and emergency responders is expected to reduce frequent crashes by up to 50% and make travel on I-5 more reliable, saving drivers nearly 2.5 million hours of travel time per year. Additionally, this project creates new connections across I-5, including a buildable highway cover that creates new land for neighborhood street connections and redevelopment opportunities. The project also maximizes contracting opportunities for small businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals through the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, and will support wealth generation in the Black community. Drivers and community members will both benefit from the improved traffic flow and increased safety, connection, and business.

**Opponents say** this will increase demand and bring more cars to the area increasing greenhouse gas emissions and worsening air quality in the area. Forty percent of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation, and we can't meet our reduction goals without making it easier to get around without an automobile. Freeways are also massively expensive, and rob our city, region and state of the funding necessary to build better bus lanes, fix up potholed roads, and invest in more dangerous sections of highways that frequently harm and kill Oregonians biking, walking and driving. ODOT should first implement tolls or congestion price tolling on the Rose Quarter section of I-5, and invest in more frequent, reliable transit, to fix the congestion problem. Now that you have heard from both sides, please indicate if you would generally support or oppose this project?

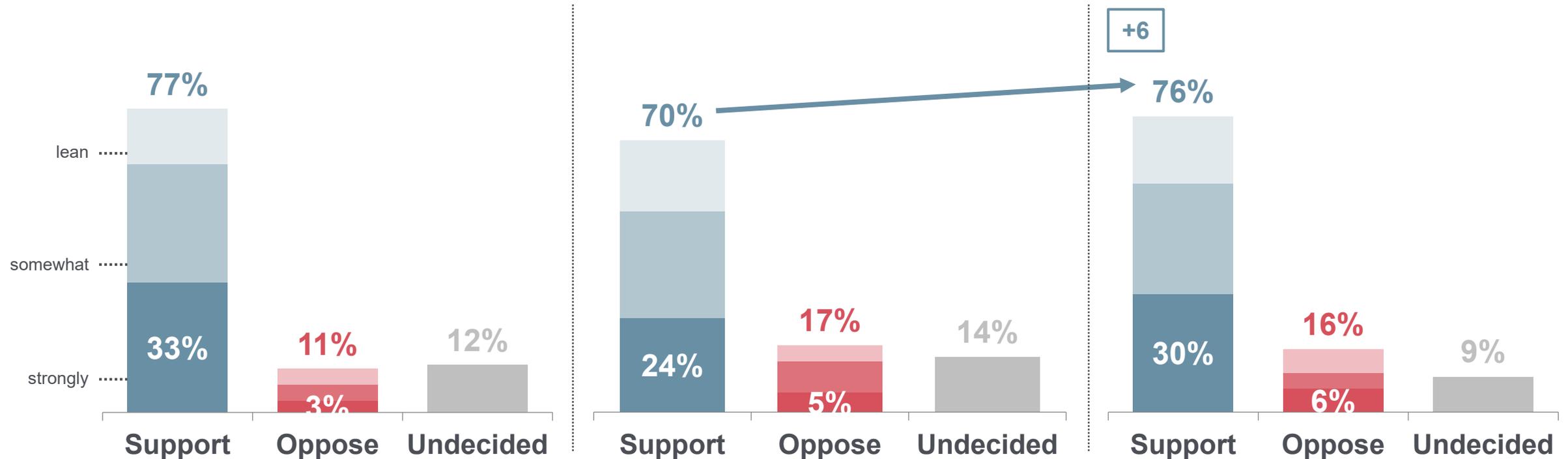
Support for the Project regains lost ground after residents learn more about the specific components and goals.

### I-5 Project Change in attitudes

Initial ask

Second ask

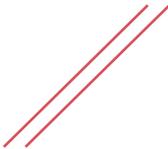
Final ask



\*Now that you have learned more about this project, please indicate if you would generally support or oppose the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project.



# PROJECT COMPONENTS



Respondents were given information about specific items that may be part of the I-5 Project.

**[SHOULDERS]** Building full shoulders along I-5 for disabled vehicles to move out of traffic and for emergency responder use.

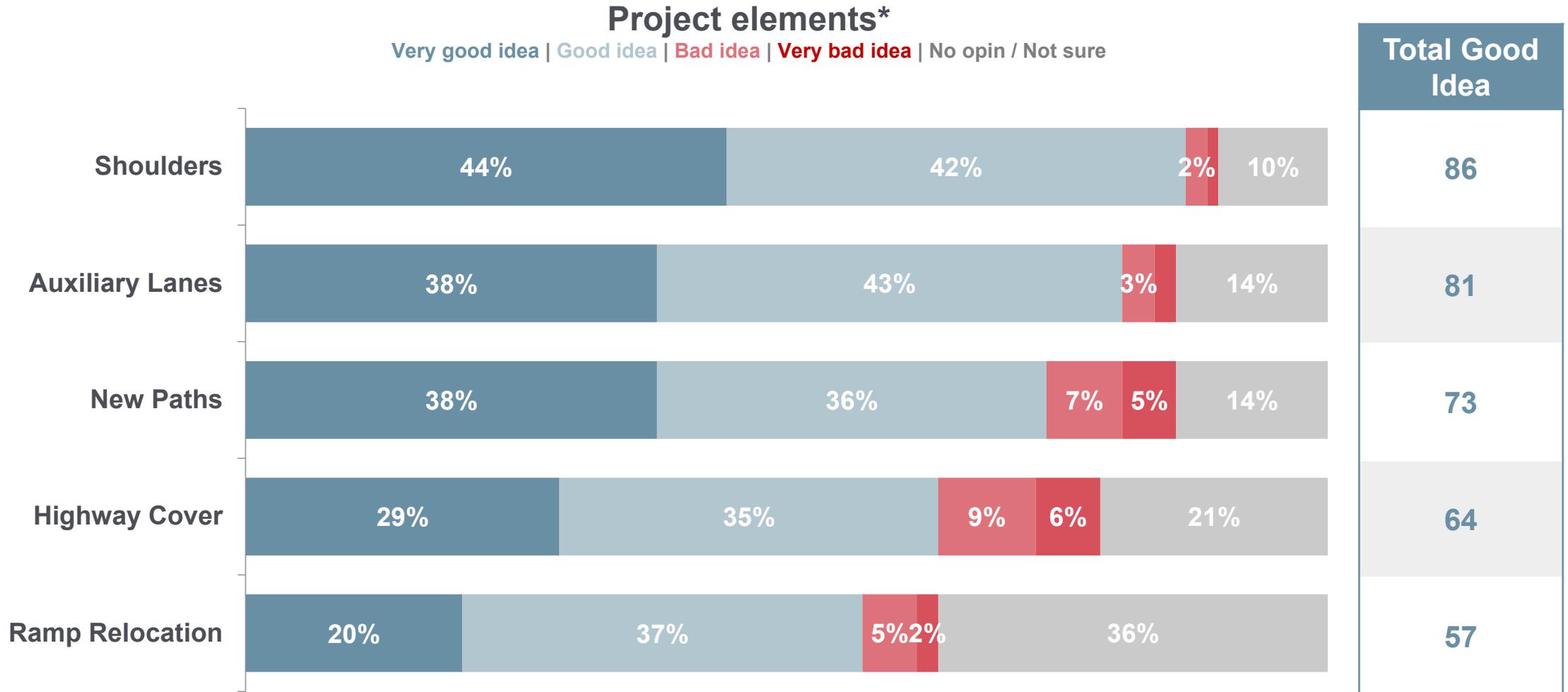
**[AUXILIARY LANES]** Building new ramp-to-ramp lanes, also called auxiliary lanes, to allow drivers to enter and exit the highway without merging through traffic.

**[NEW PATHS]** Creating new pedestrian and bike facilities around the Broadway/Weidler interchange, including wider sidewalks and upgraded bike lanes.

**[HIGHWAY COVER]** Building a cover over I-5 to provide space for additional roads and sidewalks, separated bike lanes, and new buildable land for community spaces.

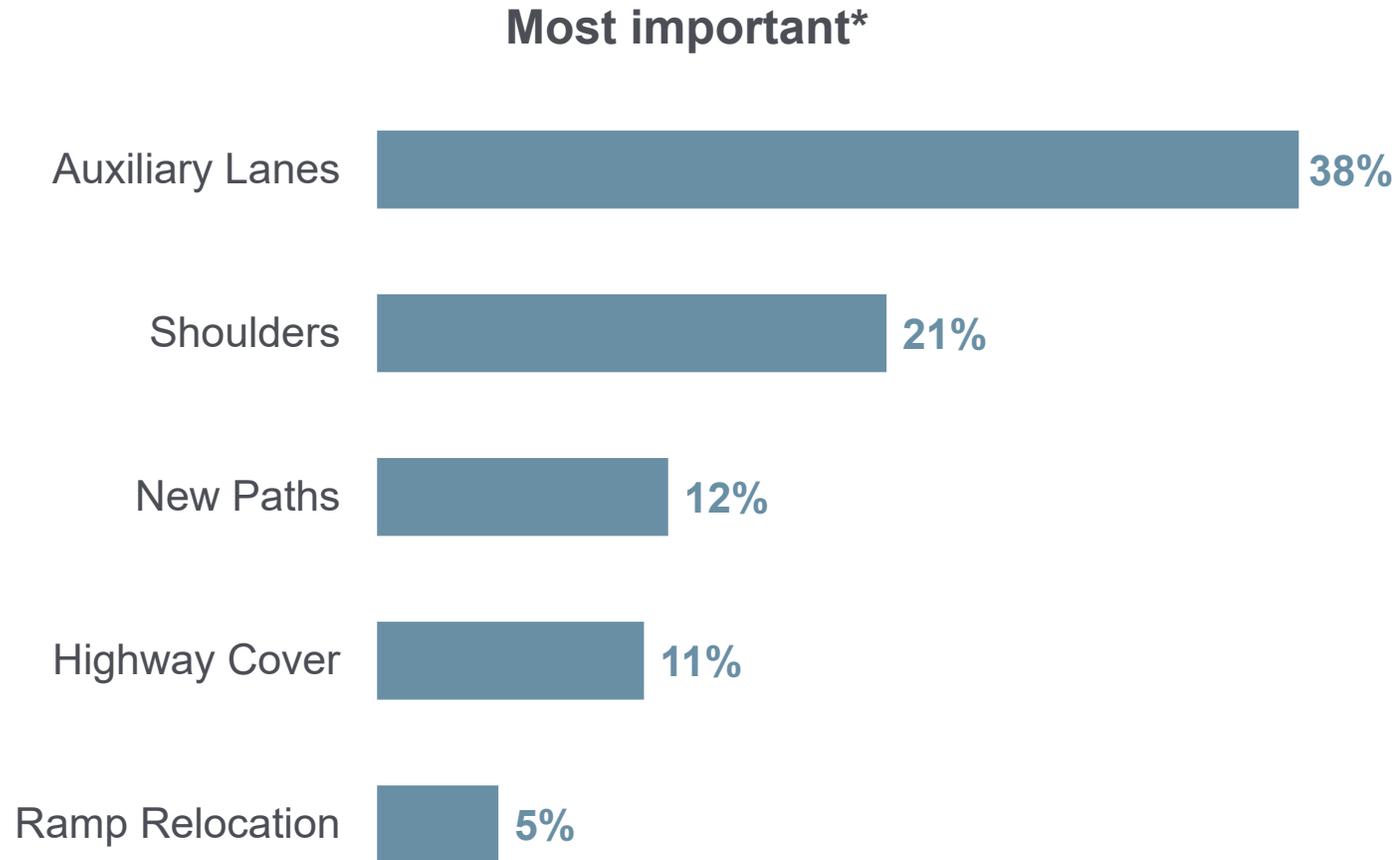
**[RAMP RELOCATION]** Relocating the I-5 southbound on-ramp from NE Broadway to NE Wheeler Avenue, which will concentrate the I-5 southbound ramps south of the Broadway and Weidler corridors.

Specific project components all perform well. Shoulders and auxiliary lanes are the most popular.



\*Here is a list of specific items that may be a part of the I-5 Project. Regardless of how you feel about the Project, please indicate whether you believe that each one is a very good idea, a good idea, a bad idea, or a very bad idea.

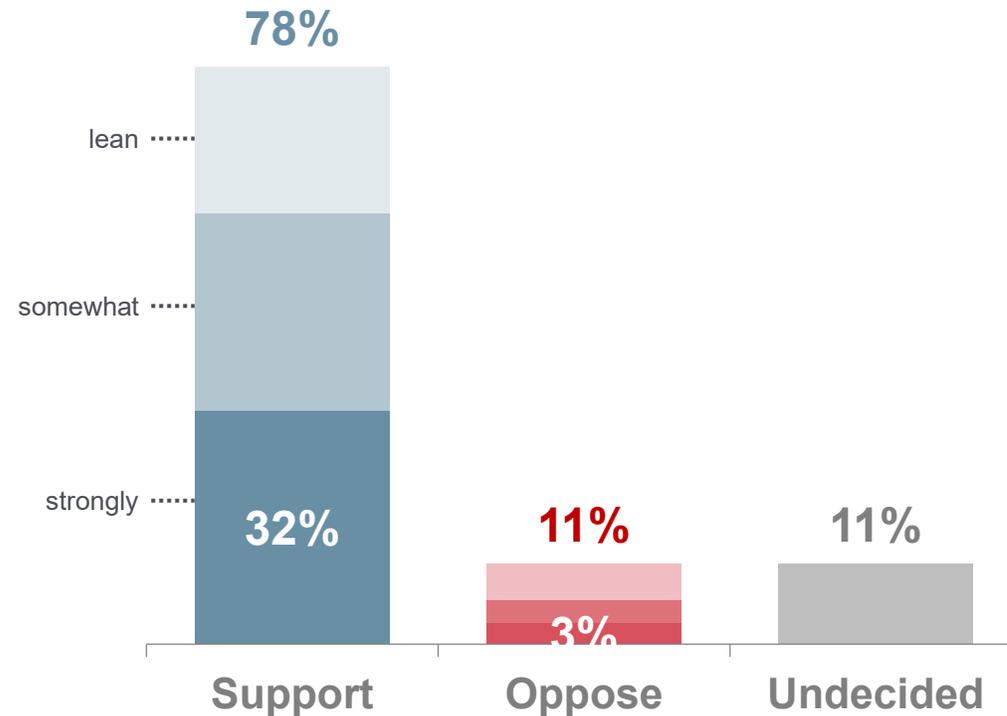
When asked to choose the top project component, auxiliary lanes edge ahead of widening shoulders.



# Support improves after learning more detail about a popular component of the Project.

## Auxiliary Lanes Impact\*

Let's focus on another specific part of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project – the auxiliary lanes. As a reminder, auxiliary lanes are new ramp-to-ramp lanes that connect highway on and off ramps so drivers can enter and exit the highway without merging into through traffic. The dense urban environment of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project area makes it costly and impractical to widen by adding more through-lanes. The Oregon Department of Transportation knows Portland can't build its way out of congestion. As Portland's population grows, road-use will grow as well. Auxiliary lanes are a cost-effective solution that creates better traffic flow with minimum use of additional land. The auxiliary lanes can be built on land primarily owned by ODOT.

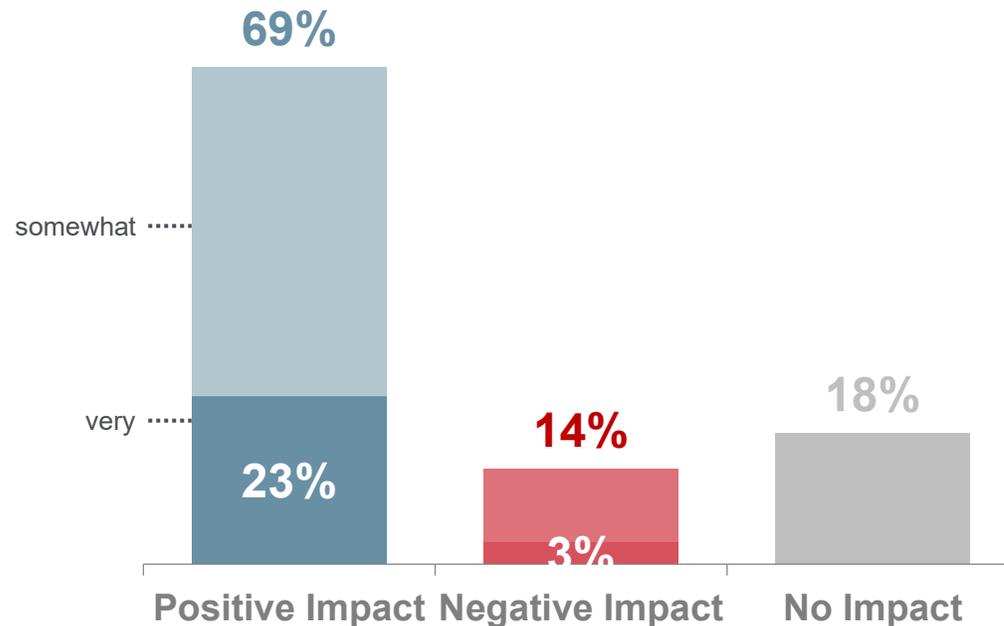


\* Knowing more about the benefits of auxiliary lanes as opposed to adding new through-lanes, how likely are you to support the Project?

After learning about the highway cover, more than 2 in 3 believe it will have a positive impact on the surrounding community.

### Highway Cover Impact\*

Let's focus more on one specific part of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project – the highway cover. Highway covers are concrete and steel platforms that span over the street that lies below it (in this case, I-5). Highway covers create more usable area around the streets where there is no land today. A highway cover re-connects the surrounding street grid that was broken up by the initial construction of the highway, providing developable space for buildings and creating a more continuous neighborhood. It creates opportunity for community activity spaces.





# PROJECT GOALS



## Respondents were shown 7 short statements about the goals of the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project.

**[MOBILITY FOCUSED]** Improve safety, manage congestion, improve travel time reliability, provide multiple transportation options, and connect communities and job centers across the region.

**[TRANSPARENCY]** Make decisions in an open and inclusive way that meets communities where they are. Bring together diverse backgrounds and expertise to provide input and ensure the Project addresses current and future transportation needs.

**[GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS]** Transportation emissions are Oregon's largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions. The Rose Quarter Improvement Project is one part of a statewide plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and toxins that are harmful to the environment and health of the surrounding communities by improving traffic flow and reliability on the highway and increasing transportation options for bicyclists and pedestrians.

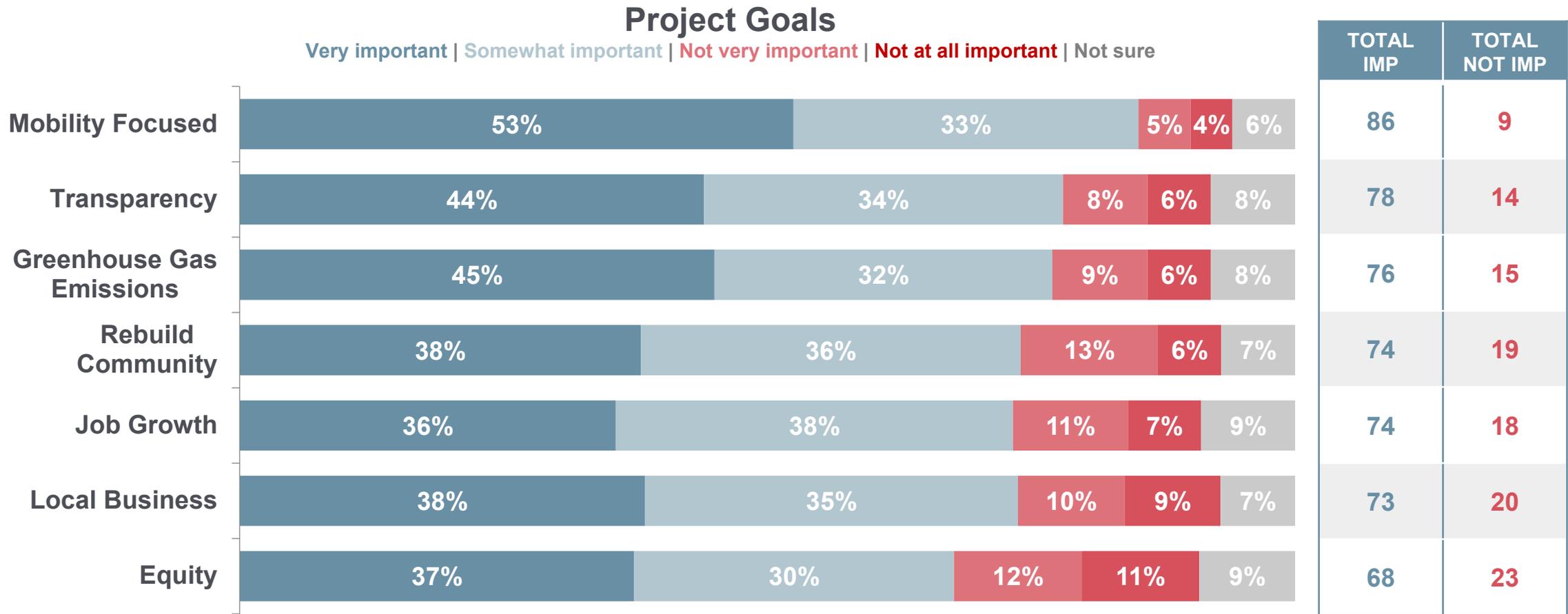
**[REBUILD COMMUNITY]** Rebuild and strengthen a sense of community in the Historic Albina and Rose Quarter areas, supporting local businesses to grow and thrive and encouraging former residents to return to the area.

**[JOB GROWTH]** Expand new job opportunities for disadvantaged business enterprises and a diverse workforce, through an estimated \$250 million in contracting opportunities.

**[LOCAL BUSINESS]** Support local businesses and those looking for work by investing in development opportunities that prioritize Black-owned businesses and create employment opportunities.

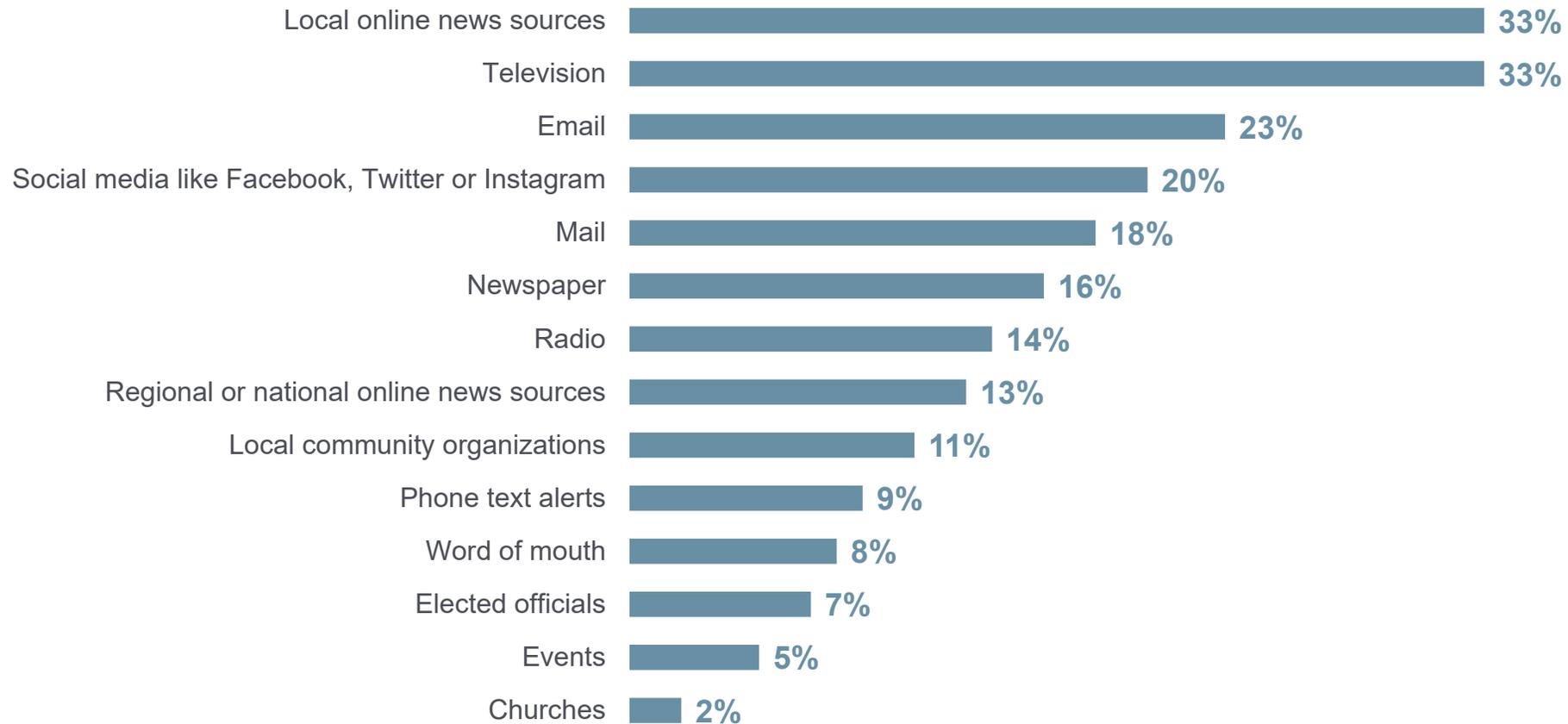
**[EQUITY]** Acknowledge current and historic harm done to Portland's Black community by centering the project on Black voices and working collaboratively with the Historic Albina Advisory Board and other partners to create a rejuvenated and reconnected neighborhood.

Each goal is well-received, but mobility is the most important, followed by transparency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



People prefer to get information about the Project through online news and television.

### Preferred information sources\*



\*From which of the following sources would you most prefer to receive information and updates about the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project? You may select up to three. (RANDOMIZE) (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)



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