



# THE INDEX V

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Fall 2023



**THE CHAMBER**

seattle metropolitan chamber of commerce



# Methodology

- Mixed-mode (live phone, email-to-web, and text-to-web) survey of Registered Voters in the City of Seattle
- Conducted September 14 – 24, 2023
- 700 completed interviews; effective margin of error:  $\pm 3.9$  points
- Data weighted by key demographic variables to accurately reflect the Registered Voter population
- Where available, results are compared to the survey of Seattle Registered Voters, conducted Spring 2023

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



# Research Notes

- The sample universe for The Index is All Registered Voters (ARV), not Likely Voters (LV), because the focus is on tracking attitudes over time, not on modeling and analyzing the opinion environment for a specific election.
  - The Registered Voter universe is younger, more progressive, more likely to be renters, more likely to be new to the city, and more likely to be people of color.
- Six-in-10 Seattle voters identify as Democrats, making them the primary driver of overall opinion on all survey questions.

# Summary



- *The Index has leveled off after back-to-back increases, primarily due to increased voter concern about public safety.*
  - *The Index is now at 4.23 on a 0-to-10 scale – compared to 4.20 in the spring.*
  - *Overall optimism is statistically unchanged (33% right direction / 63% wrong track), as is voter perception of quality of life compared to 4 years ago (12% Better / 19% Same / 68% Worse).*
  - *Most ratings and attitudes are unchanged since the spring, with the exception of public safety related issues where concern is up across the board.*
  - *Concern about public safety (48%; +20 points) is at its highest level since The Index began in the fall of 2021 and is now tied with homelessness as the issue voters are most frustrated or concerned about.*
  - *Concerns about affordability have fallen slightly, but roughly 1-in-5 voters still cite it as a top concern.*
- *Despite the setback on public safety, most voters still say they are proud to call themselves a Seattleite and a majority agree that they are optimistic about the future of this region.*



# Summary



- *Voter concern about public safety is evident throughout the survey.*
  - *“Addressing violent crime” (88%) has displaced “closing encampments” as the top action voters feel would most improve quality of life – and 3 of the top 4 actions are public safety related. Nearly two-thirds of voters (63%) say “addressing violent crime” would have “very significant impact.”*
  - *More than 8-in-10 say “helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns” (86%) and “addressing property crime like theft and car break ins” (81%) would improve quality of life with a majority saying these actions would have a “very significant impact” on quality of life.*
  - *Two-thirds of Seattle voters say that “hiring more police officers” and “addressing racially biased policing” would improve quality of life.*
  - *Three-in-four voters agree that “hiring more police officers should be an immediate priority of the City” with a majority of voters indicating they “strongly agree.”*
  - *Six-in-ten voters continue to say they feel less safe in their own neighborhood than they did two years ago, nearly a third say they would feel unsafe visiting downtown during the day and two-thirds say they would feel unsafe visiting downtown at night.*

# Summary



- *In two new questions, Seattle voters overwhelmingly agree (81%), with 61% strongly agreeing, that the City's hands off approach to illegal public drug use is impeding downtown's recovery. And two thirds disagree, with 51% strongly disagreeing, that drug use laws should not be enforced until underlying causes are addressed.*
- *Voters continue to recognize that downtown Seattle is central to the region's economy, 85% agree they're worried about downtown's future, and only 14% say they're optimistic about downtown's economic future.*
- *Nearly two-thirds of voters (63%) continue to be concerned about their personal financial situation given current economic conditions and 6-in-10 think Seattle's taxes are too high for the level of services the city provides.*
- *Two-thirds do not trust the city on spending and most (84%) do not think the city has an effective plan to address critical issues.*



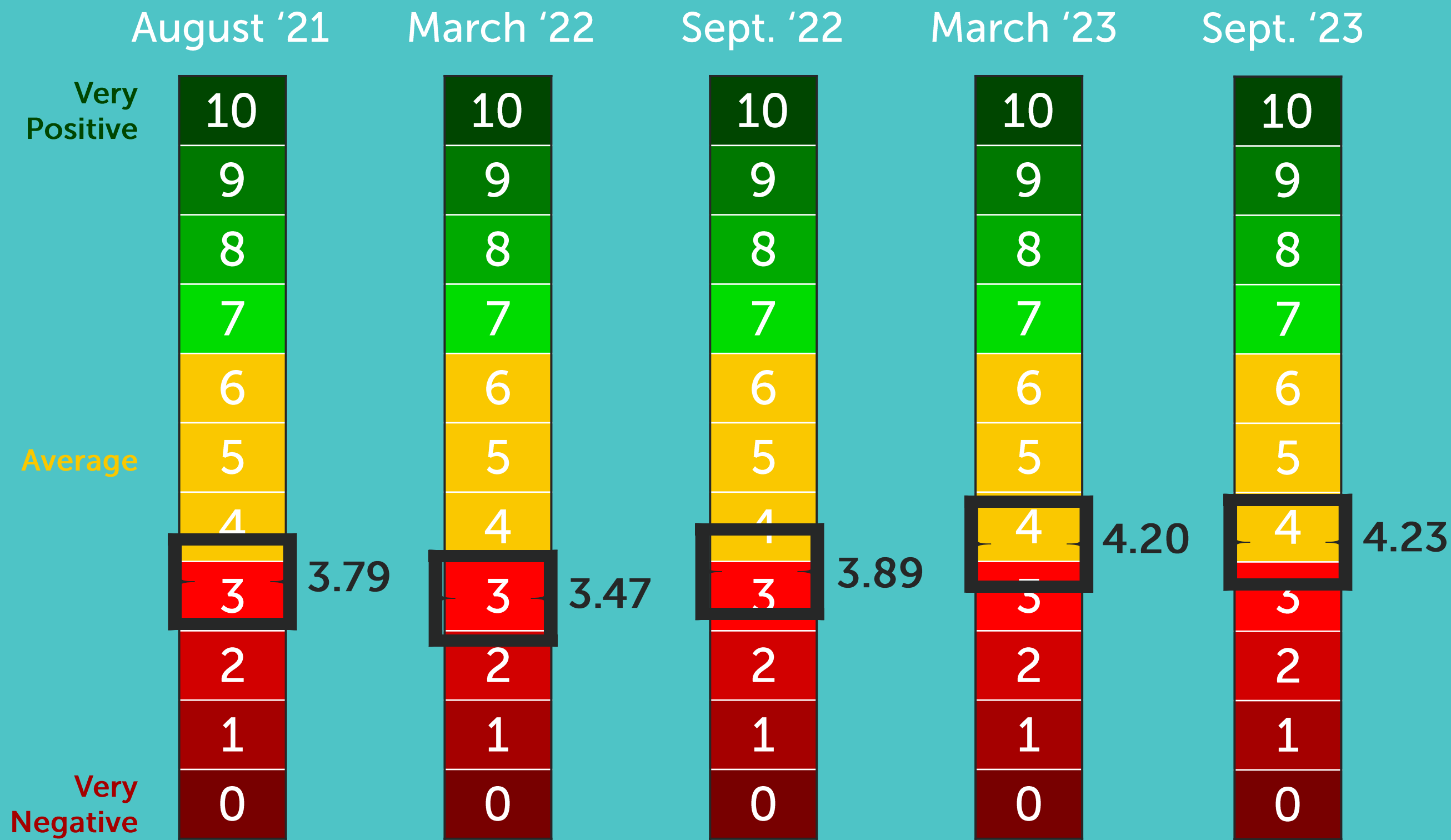


# Quality of Life



# Quality of Life: The Index

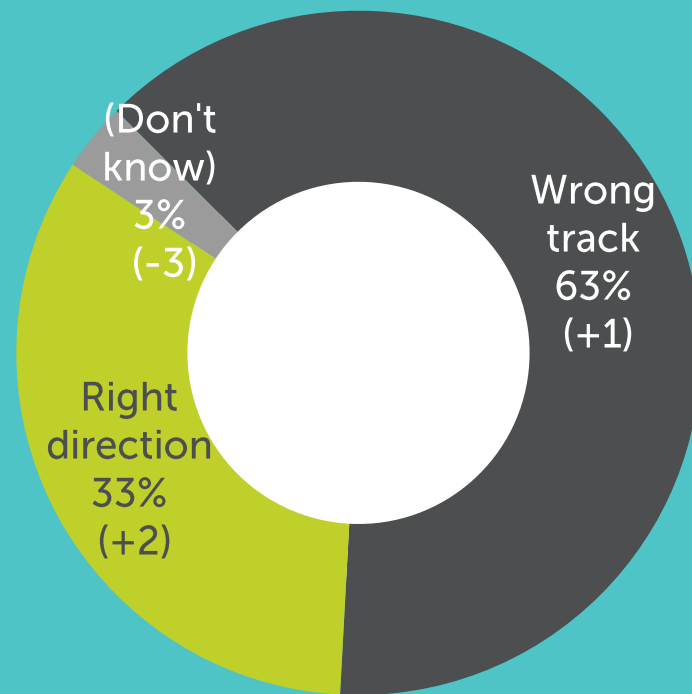
- After back-to-back increases, The Index is statistically unchanged from the spring survey.
- The Index aggregates the following quality of life survey questions:
  - Right Direction/Wrong Track
  - Quality of life compared to 4 years ago
  - Actively considered leaving Seattle
  - Optimism about the region’s future
  - Perception of safety
  - Concern about Downtown’s future
  - Likelihood to visit Downtown for activities other than work
- The Index does not include measures of local government or elected leaders.



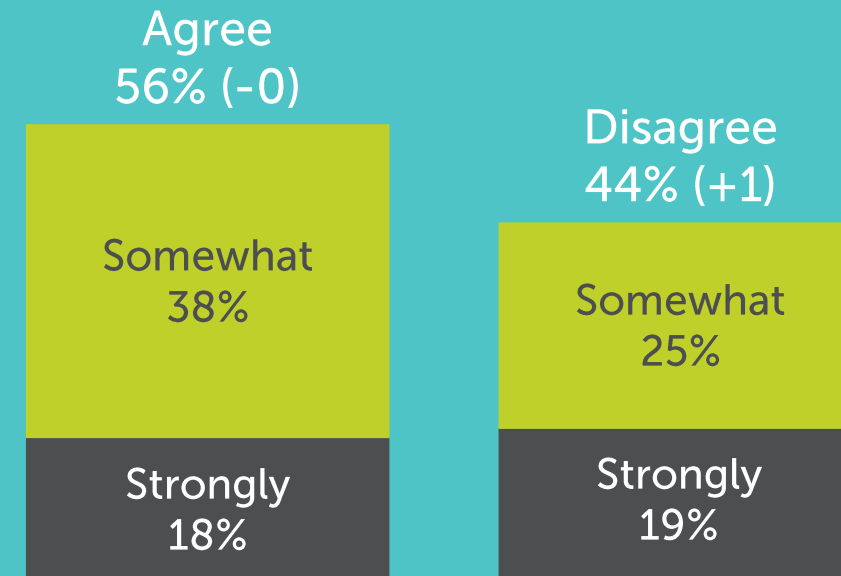


# Quality of Life: By the Numbers

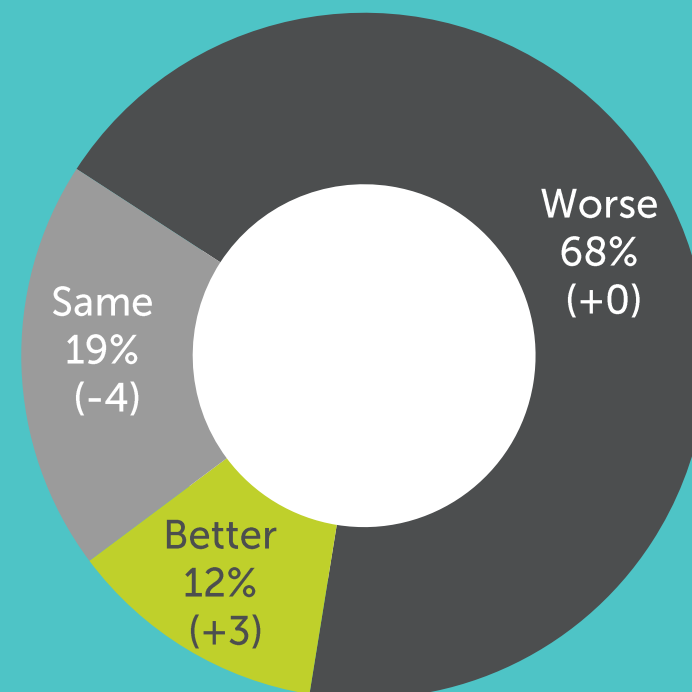
"Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?"



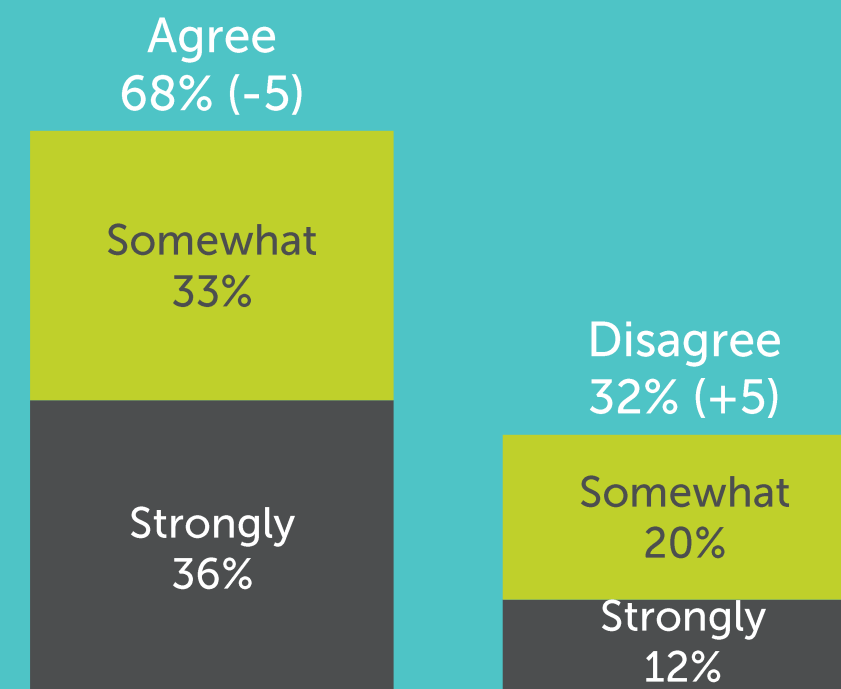
"I'm optimistic about the future of this region."



"Do you think the overall quality of life in Seattle is better, the same, or worse than it was 4 years ago?"



"I'm proud to call myself a Seattleite."

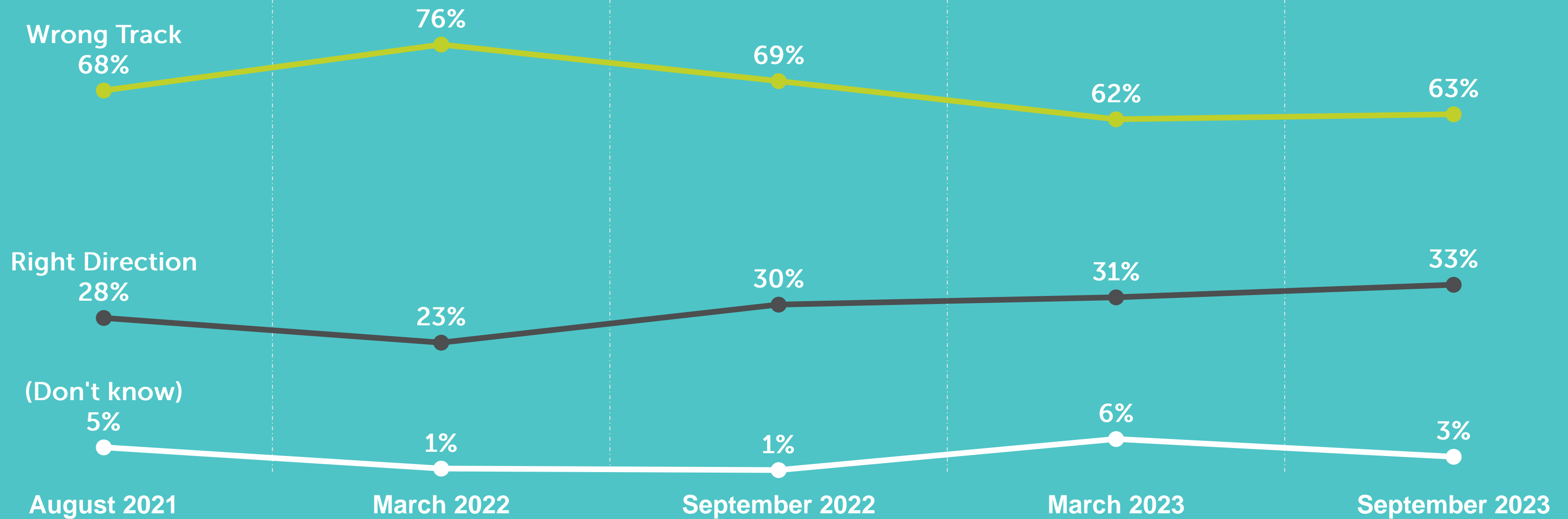


*After improving for two consecutive surveys, optimism about the city and the region has flattened out as has the trend on overall quality of life.*



# Right Direction/Wrong Track Trend

“Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?”

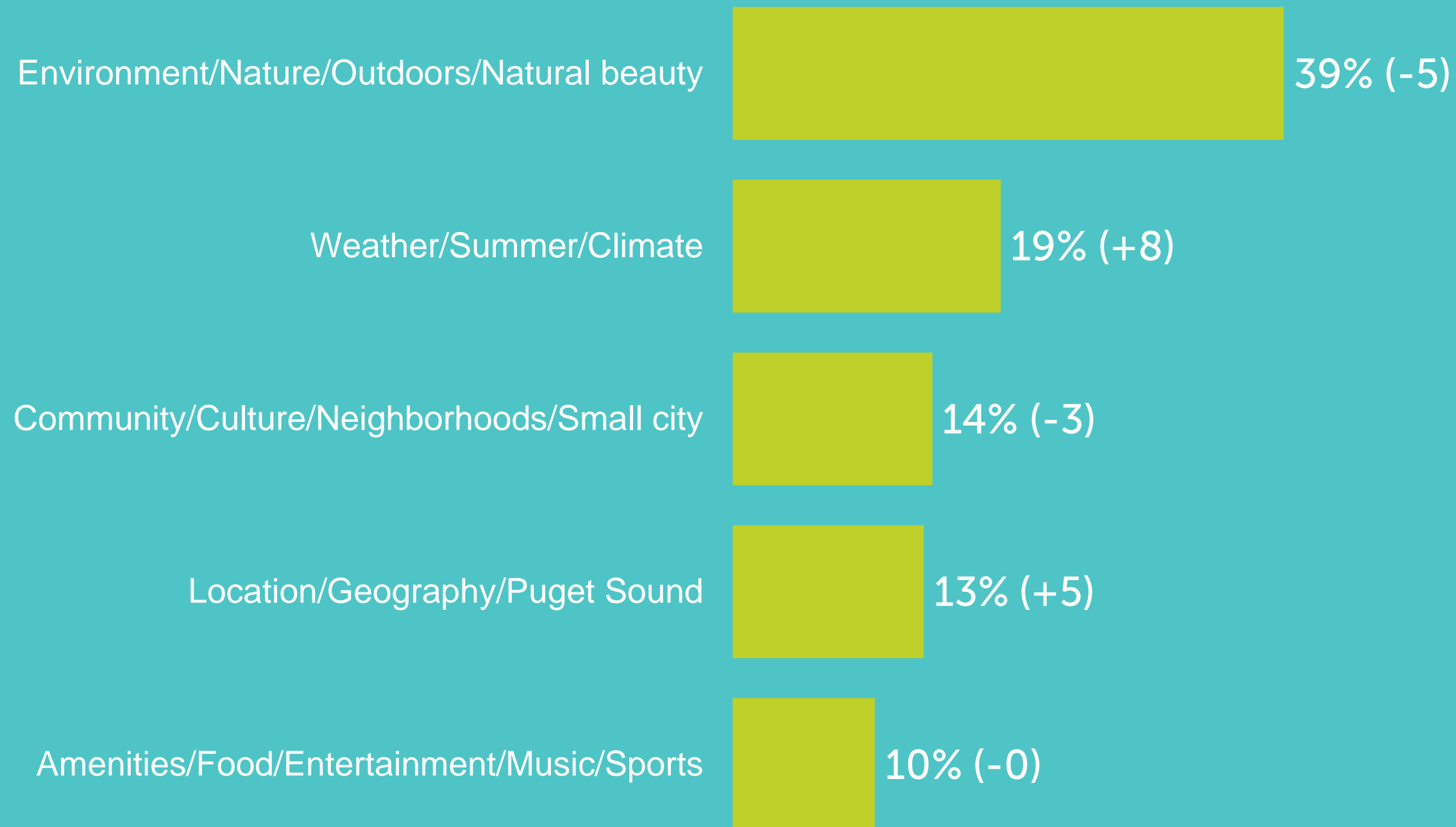






# Best Thing About Living in Seattle

“What is the best thing about living in Seattle?”



*Things related to being outdoors – the natural beauty, the environment, and climate – are what people like best about living in Seattle.*





# Top Concerns

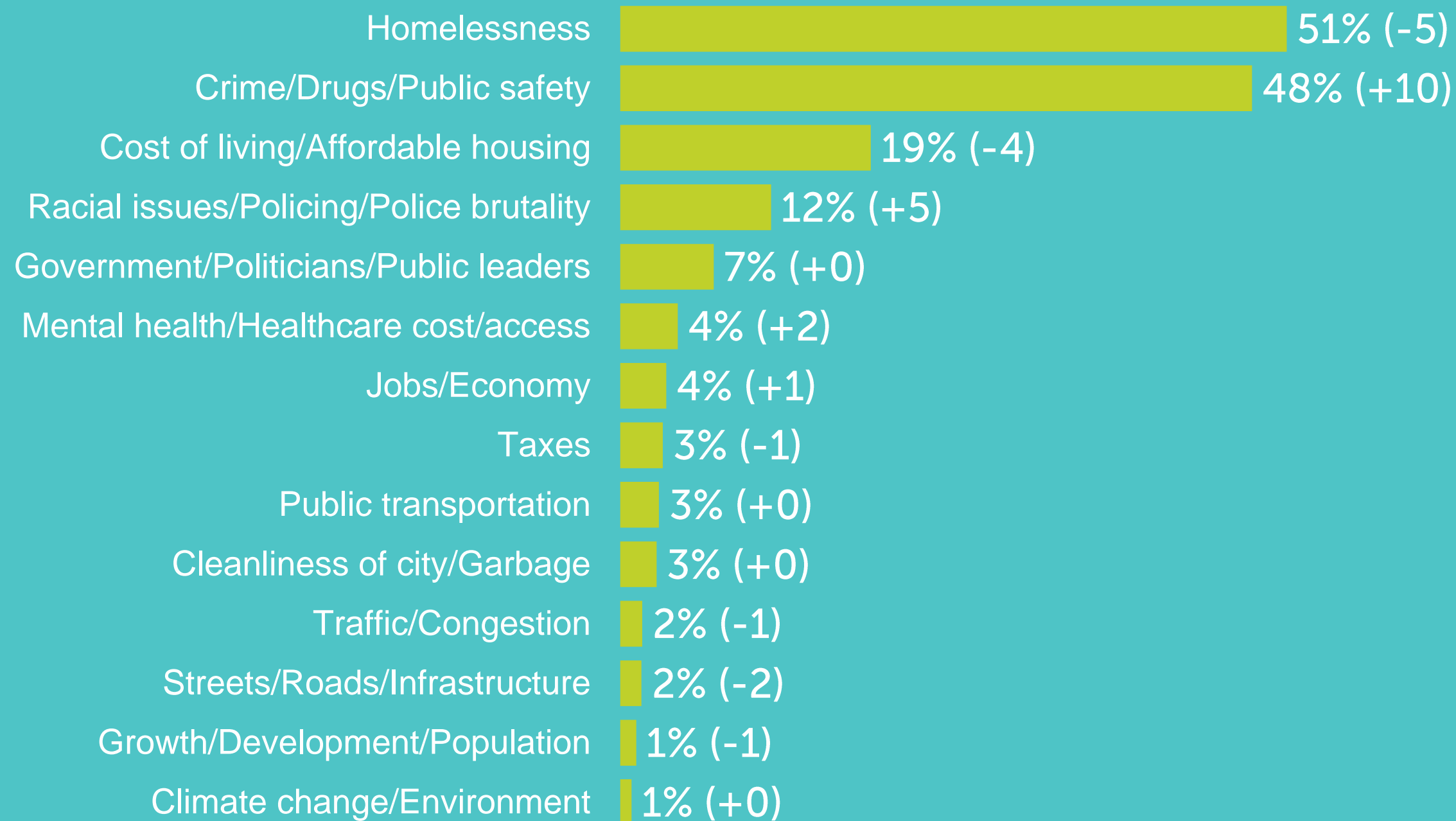






# Top Concerns

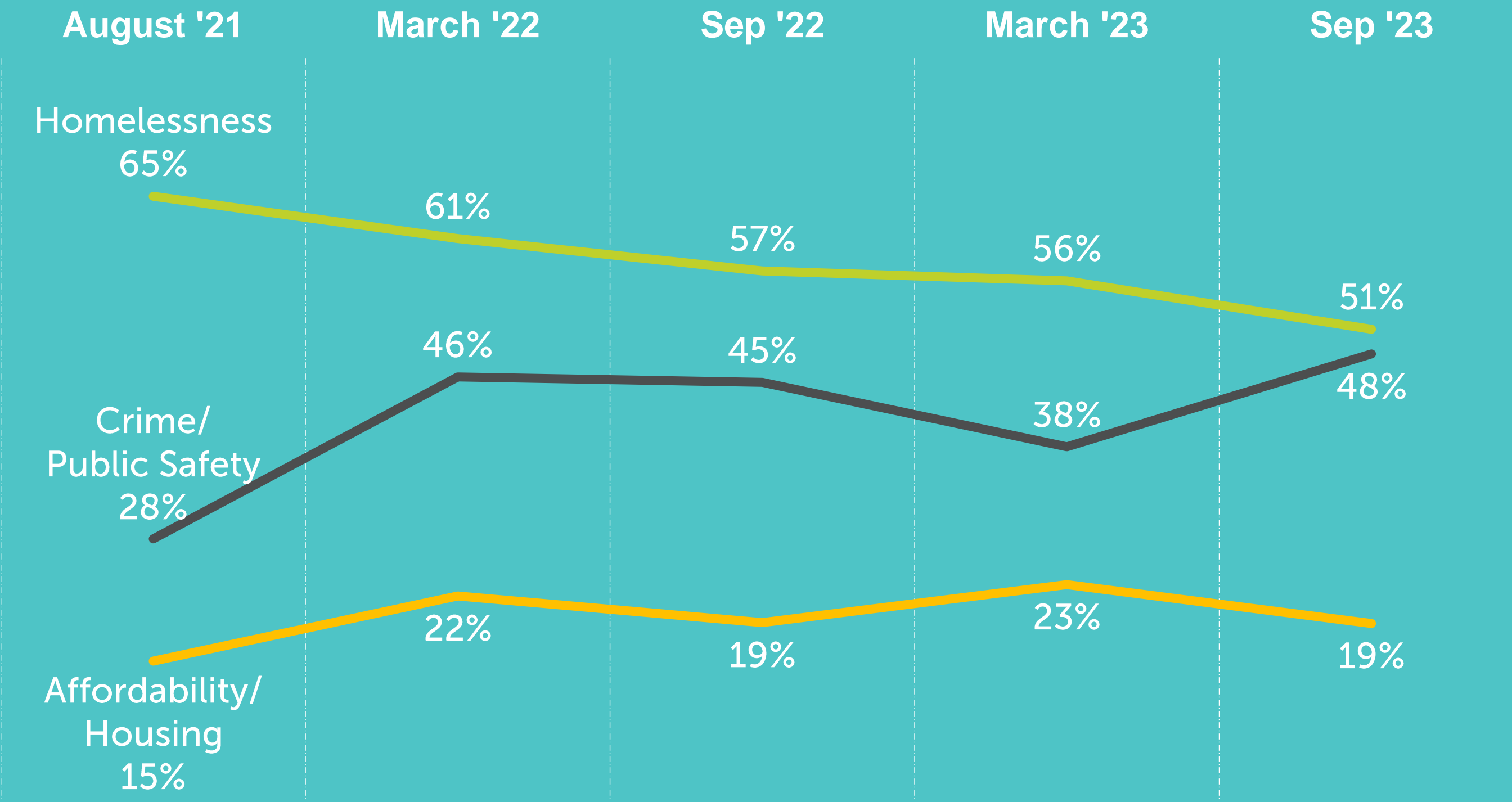
“What are the issues facing Seattle that you are most frustrated or concerned about?”



*Homelessness and Public Safety continue to be the top concerns for Seattleites.*



# Top Three Concerns - Trend



*After a drop in the spring, concerns about public safety are on the rise again and are now on a par with concerns about homelessness. Affordability concerns are relatively flat.*



# Improving Quality of Life





# Improving Quality of Life

“How much impact do you think each of the following would have on improving quality of life in Seattle?”



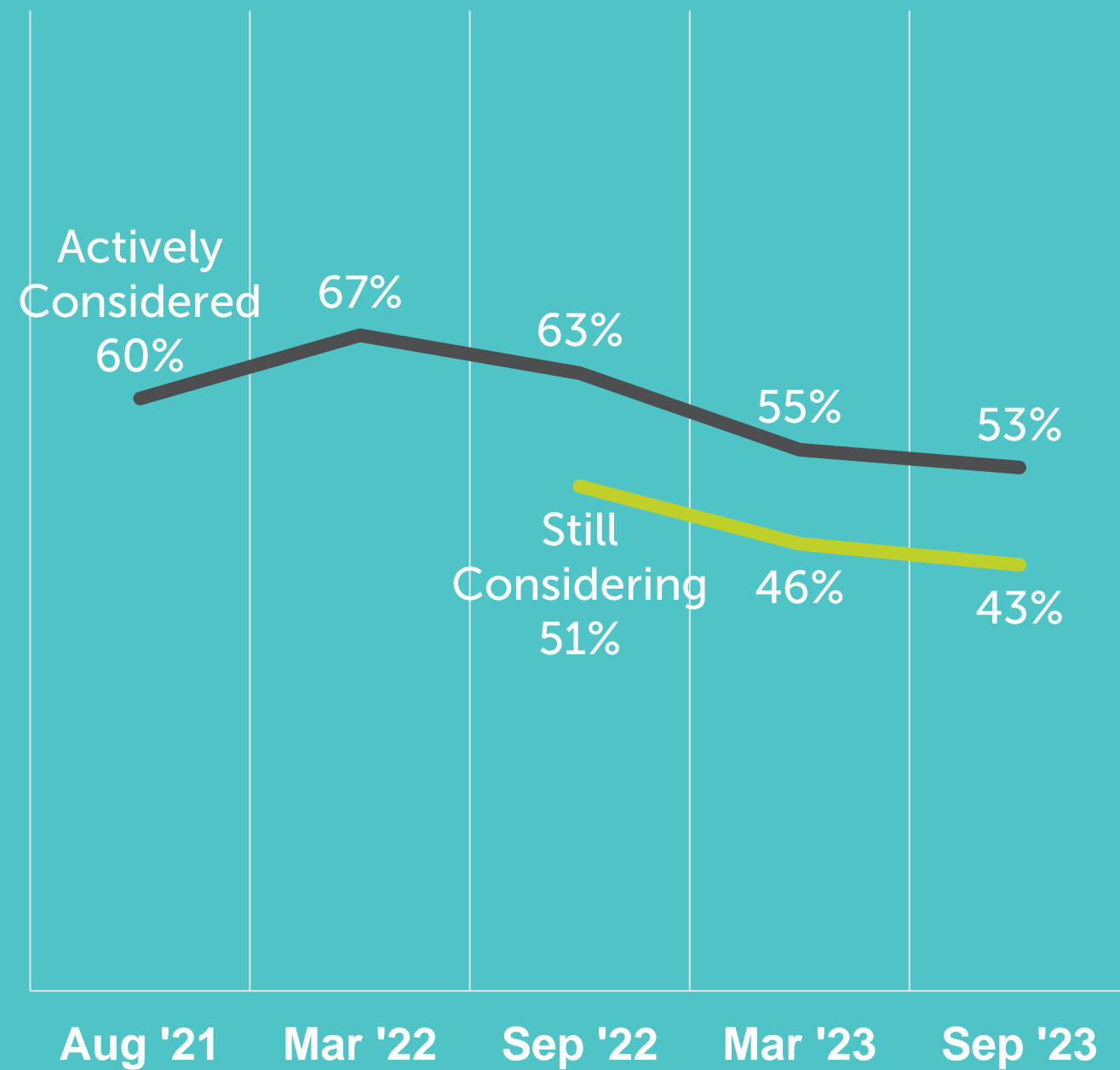
*Addressing violent crime has displaced closing encampments as the action that voters feel would have the most impact on improving quality of life. Three of the top four items are public safety related.*



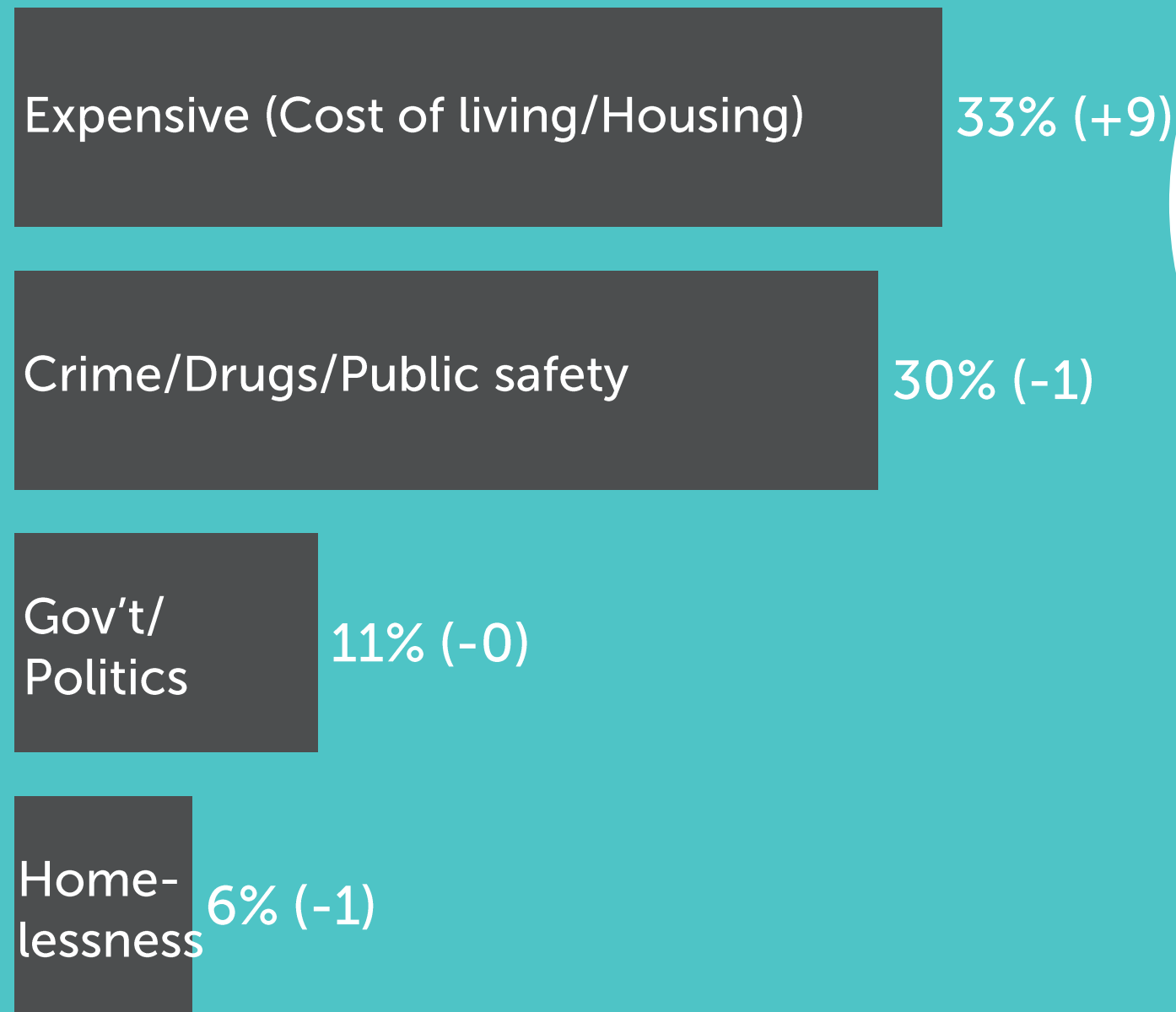


# Leaving Seattle

"Have you actively considered moving out of Seattle?" (IF YES) "And are you still actively considering moving out of Seattle?"



"What is the main reason you have considered moving?"  
*(Among those who have considered moving)*



Green box



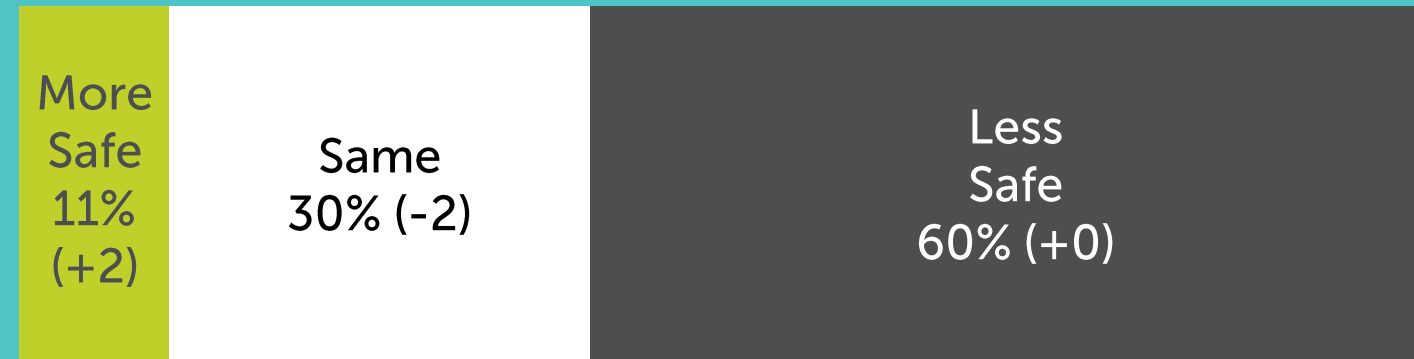
# Public Safety



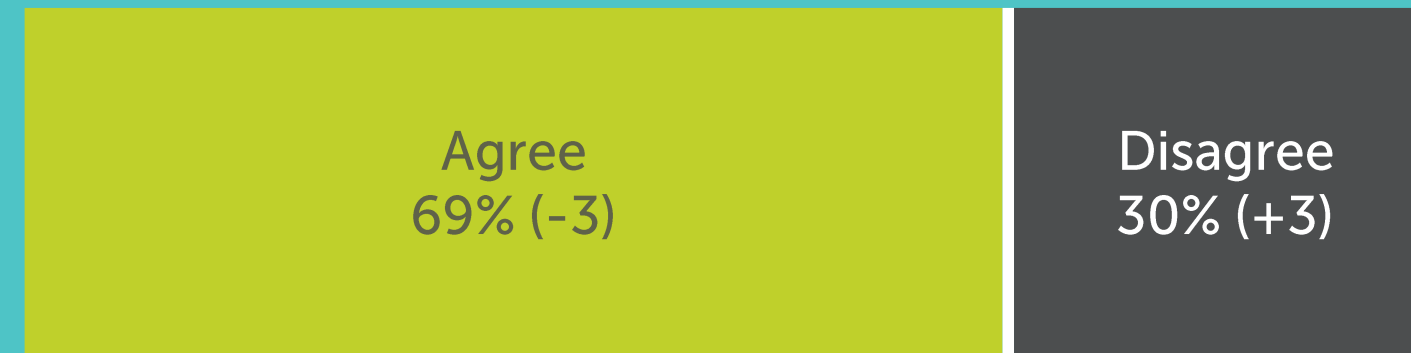


# Public Safety Downtown

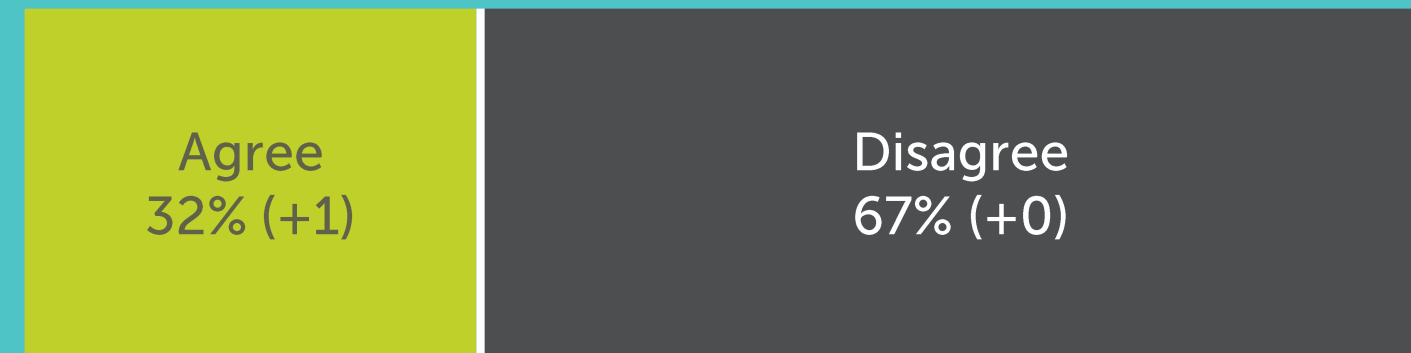
"Thinking about safety in your neighborhood, including property crime and violent crime, would you say you feel more safe or less safe than you did two years ago?"



"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle during the day"



"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle at night"



*A majority of Seattle voters continue to say they are feeling less safe in their own neighborhoods. One-in-three don't feel safe visiting downtown during the day and two-thirds say they would not feel safe visiting downtown at night.*

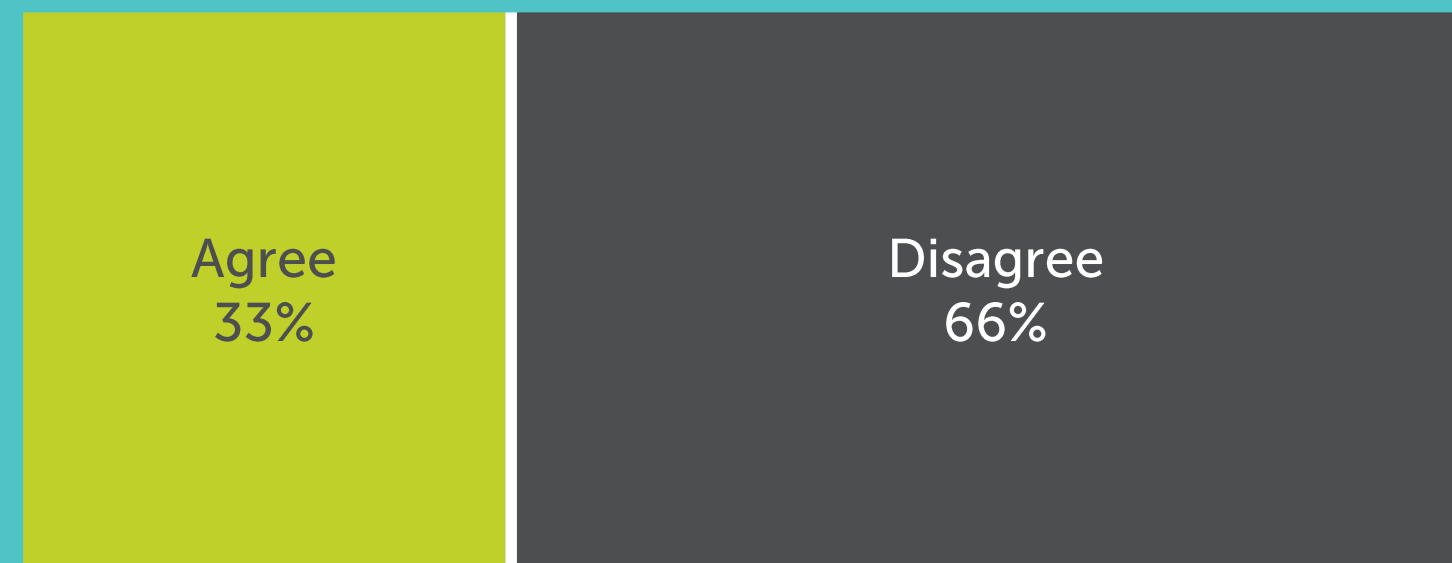


# Public Drug Use

"Seattle's hands-off approach to people using illegal drugs like fentanyl and meth in public is contributing to rampant street crime and is making it much harder for our city to recover"



"We should not enforce laws against public use of illegal drugs like fentanyl and meth until we first address the underlying issues driving addiction like economic inequality, lack of opportunity, and inadequate treatment options"



*In two new questions, Seattle voters overwhelmingly agree, with 61% strongly agreeing, that the City's hands off approach to illegal public drug use is impeding downtown's recovery. And two thirds disagree, with 51% strongly disagreeing, that drug use laws should not be enforced until underlying causes are addressed.*





# Illegal Public Drug Use

Now I'd like to read you a set of statements. Please tell me which one is closest to your opinion.

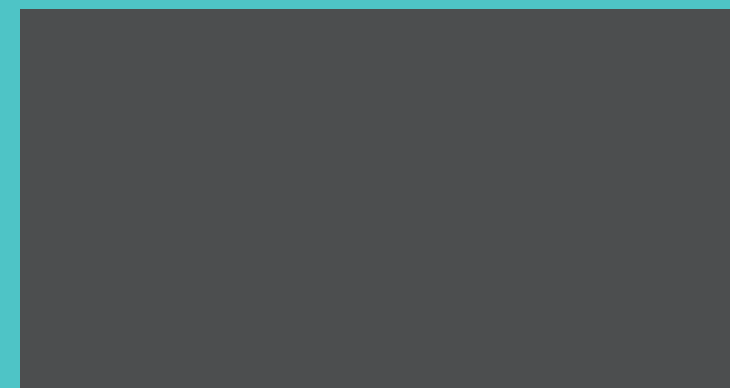
Statement A: The City's hands off approach to public drug use is making our city unsafe. Illegal drug users need to be offered treatment first, but if they refuse, they need to be arrested and prosecuted.

Statement B: Arresting people for addiction is a return to the failed War on Drugs approach. It is not the solution to our current crisis and has repeatedly been shown to do more harm than good. People should never be arrested for addiction.

Prosecute if  
refuse  
treatment  
71%



Never  
arrest  
27%

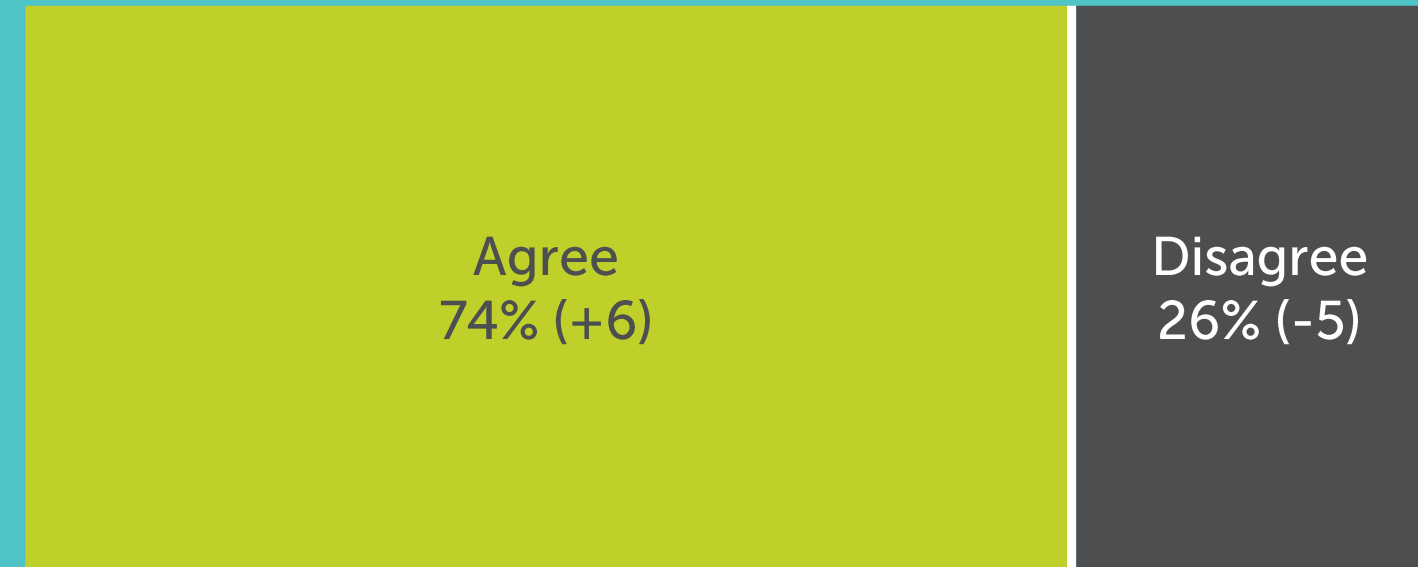


*In another new question, by a 44-point margin Seattle voters say illegal drug users need to be arrested and prosecuted if they refuse treatment rather than left alone because arresting people for addiction is wrong and ineffective.*

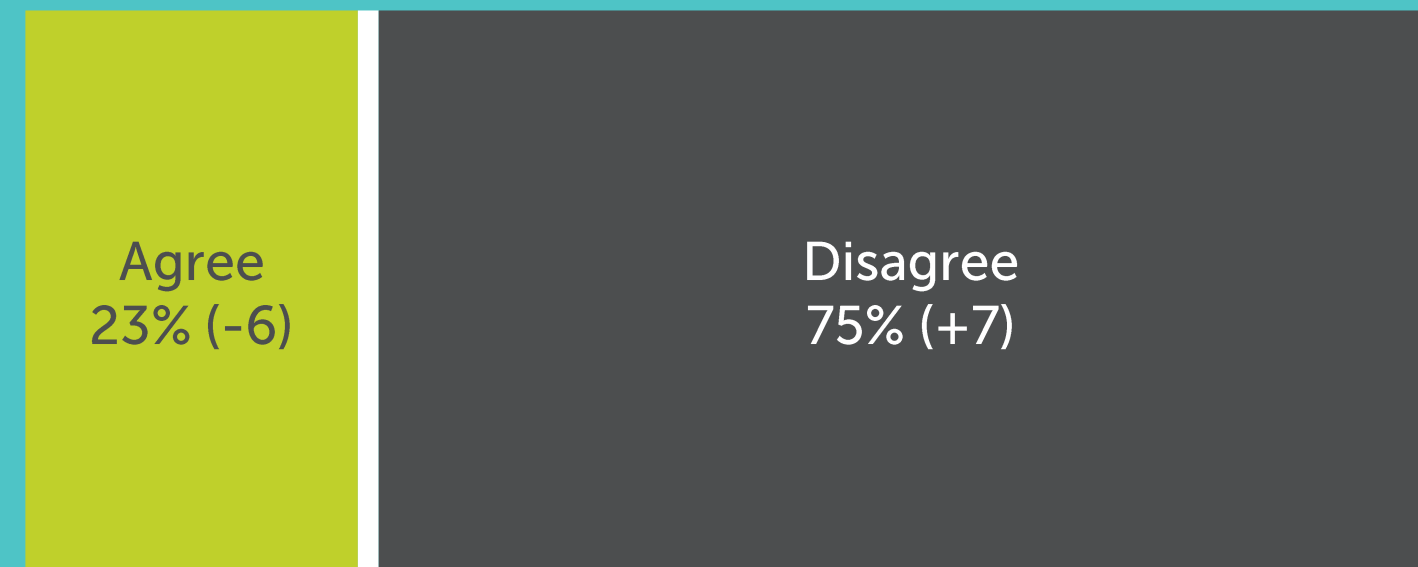


# Addressing Public Safety

"Hiring more police officers should be an immediate priority for the City"



"I trust the Seattle City Council to reform the Seattle Police Department without endangering public safety"



*A strong majority continue to agree the hiring more police officers needs to be an immediate priority and three quarters now say they DO NOT trust this City Council to reform SPD.*



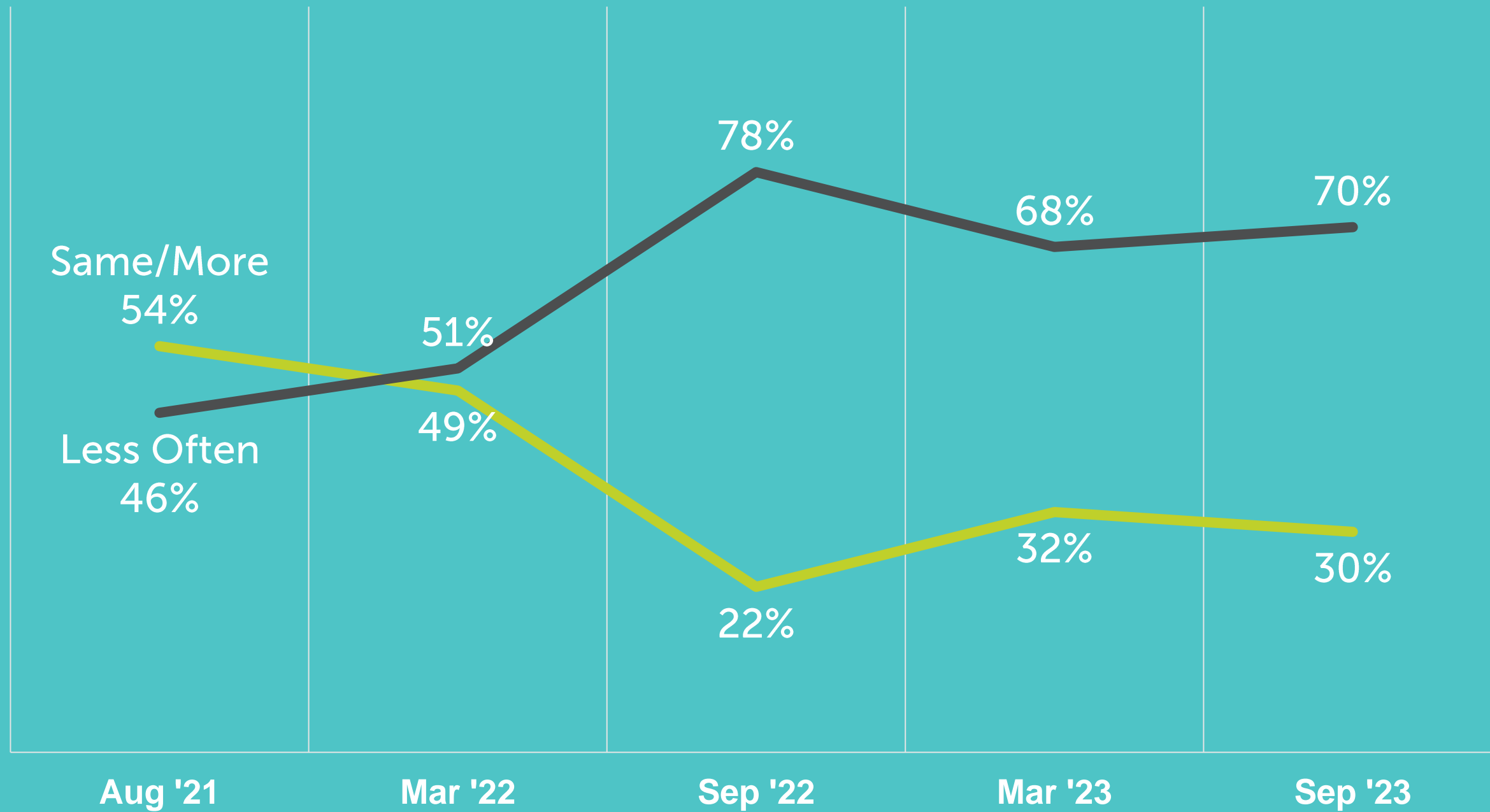
# Downtown & Economic Recovery





# Visiting Downtown

“And currently, for activities other than work, are you visiting downtown Seattle more, less, or about the same as you did before the pandemic?”



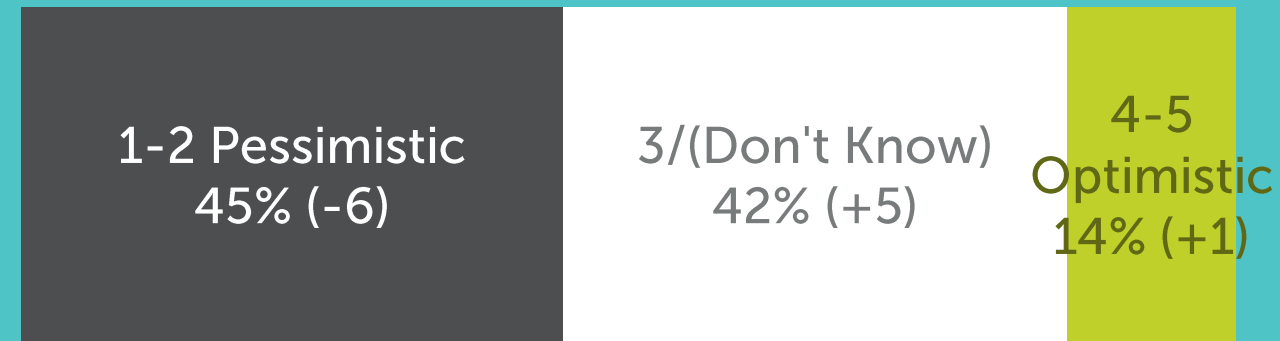
*After a 10-point increase in the percentage of people saying they visit downtown the same or more than pre-pandemic, reported visitation has leveled off.*



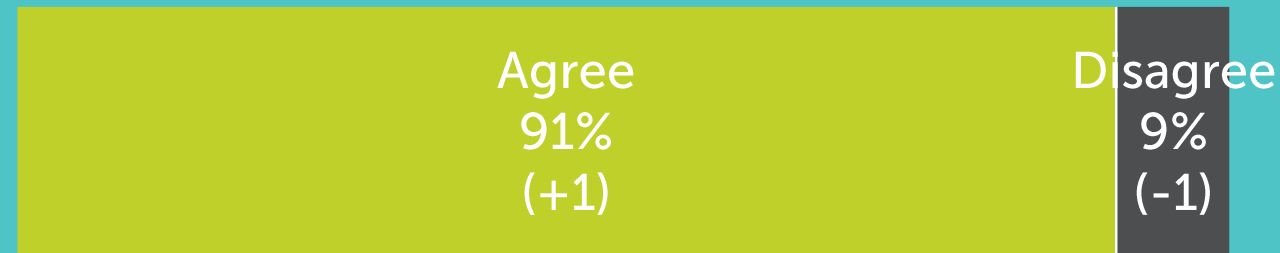


# Downtown & Economic Recovery

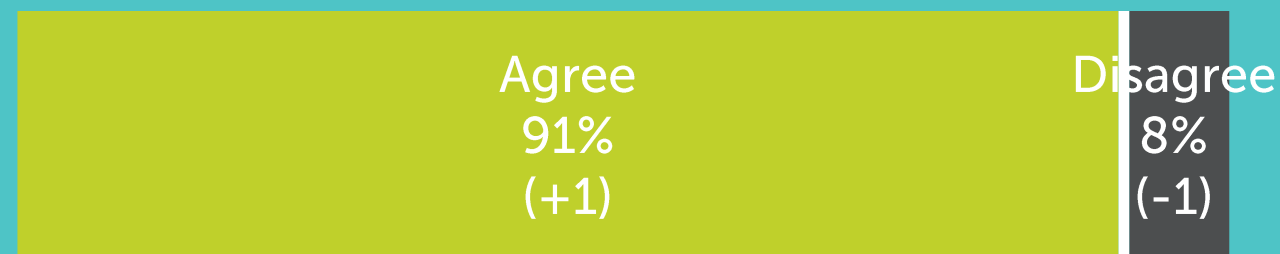
Using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very pessimistic, and 5 being very optimistic, how do you feel about the downtown Seattle economy?



"Downtown Seattle cannot fully recover until the homelessness and public safety problems are addressed"



"A thriving downtown Seattle is critical to our region's economic recovery"



"I'm worried about the future of downtown Seattle"



*Voters continue to overwhelmingly agree that a thriving downtown is critical to our regional economy and that downtown cannot fully recover until homelessness and public safety are addressed.*

*Most also say they are worried about downtown's future and only 14% are optimistic about the downtown Seattle economy.*



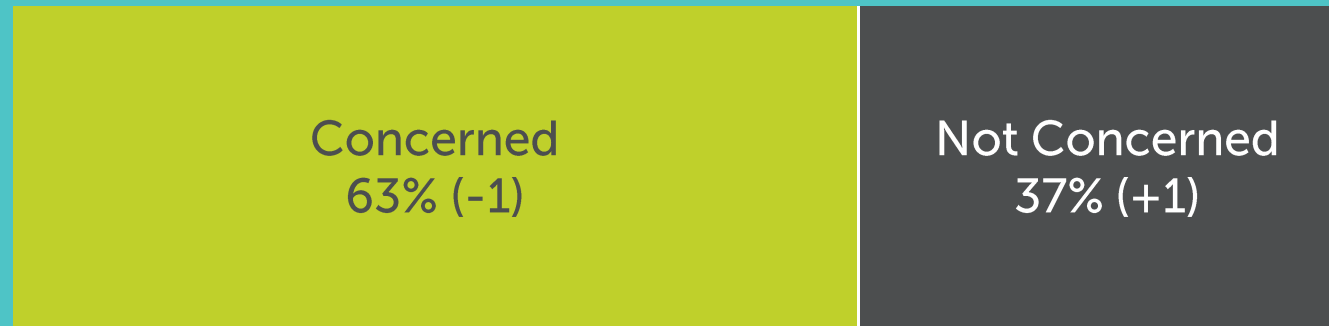
# Taxes & Spending





# Taxes & Spending

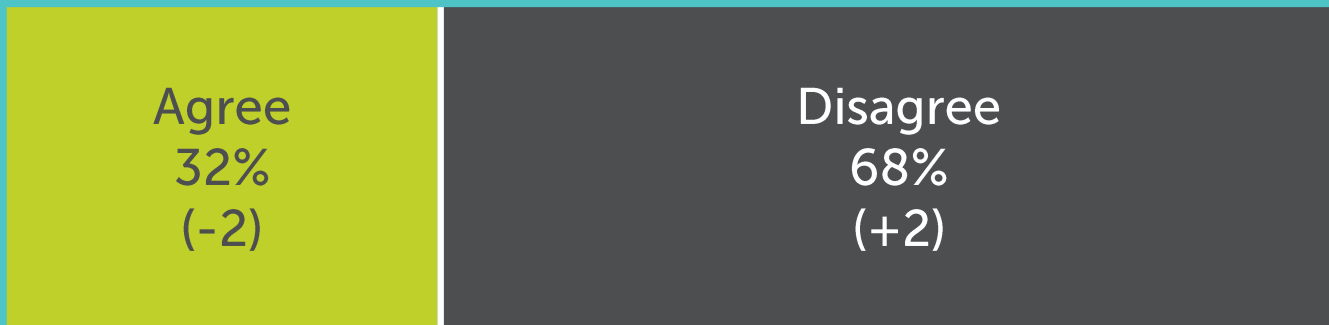
"How concerned are you about your personal financial situation given current economic conditions?"



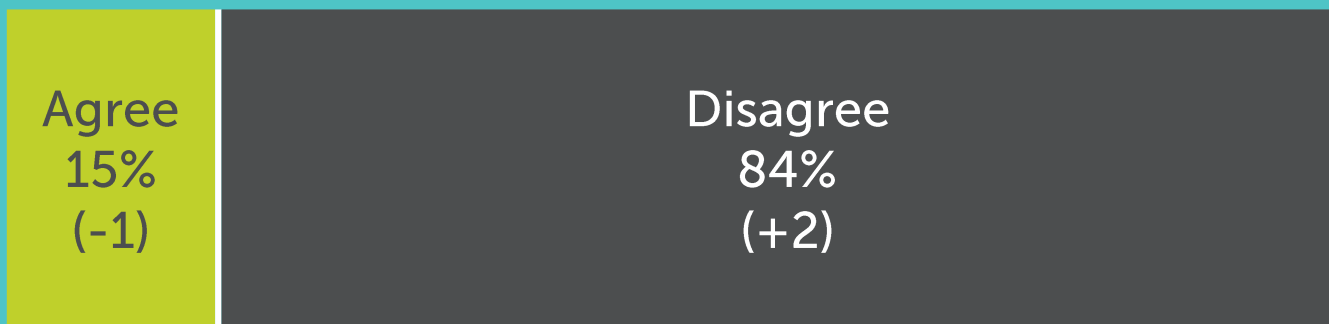
"Would you say that taxes in Seattle are too high, too low, or about right for the level of services the city provides?"



"I trust the city of Seattle to spend my tax dollars responsibly"



"I trust that the City has an effective plan to address the critical issues facing our city like homelessness, affordability, and public safety."



*Nearly two-thirds of voters remain concerned about their personal financial situation and 6-in-10 think local taxes are too high for the level of services the city provides.*

*Voters continue to distrust the city on spending and very few trust that the city has an effective plan to address critical issues.*





# Growth & Housing







# Addressing Housing Affordability

"I support the building of new housing in my neighborhood"



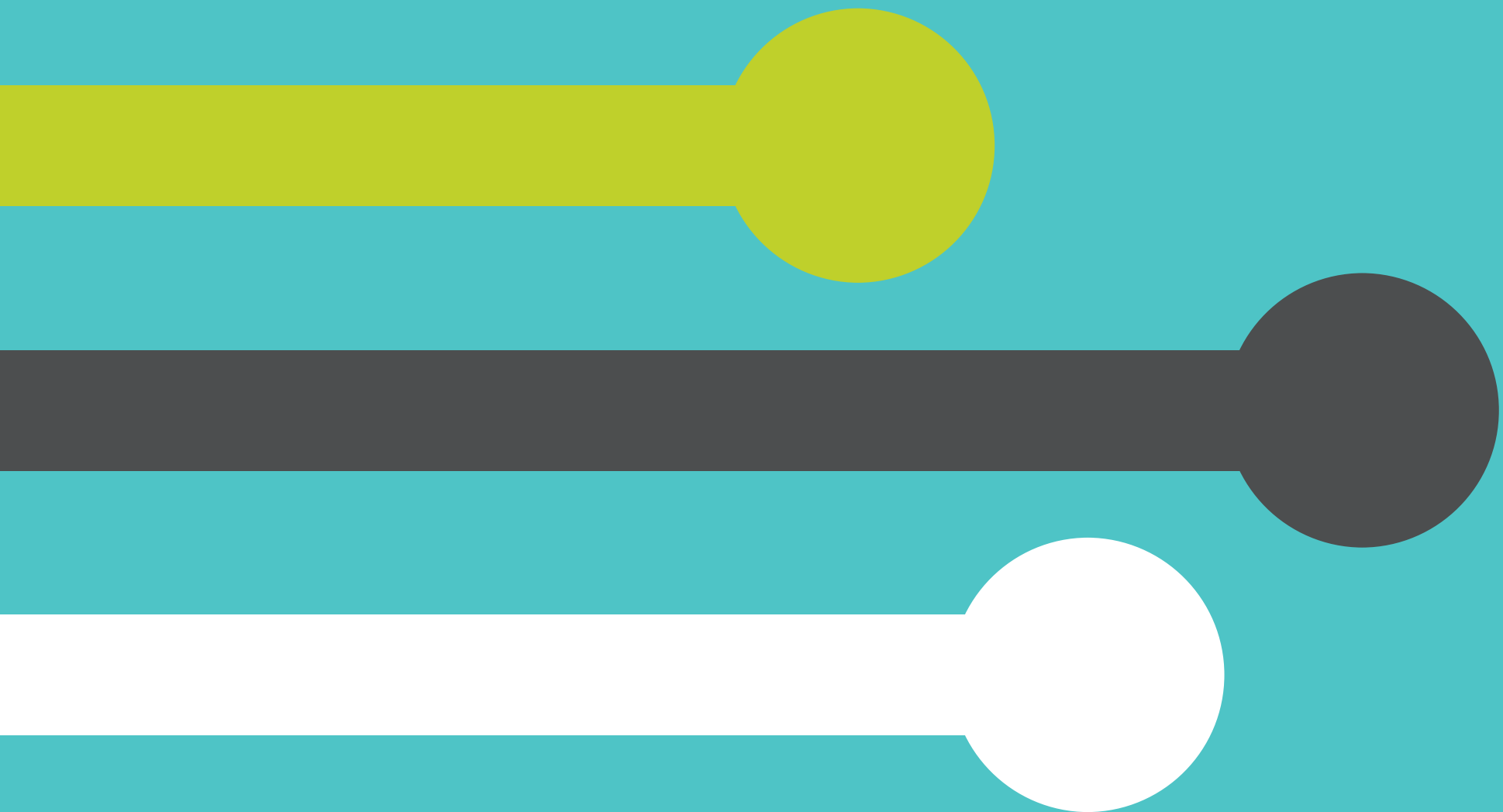
"All things considered, growth and development has been a positive for my area"



*Despite being divided on the overall impacts of growth, a strong majority of Seattle voters continue to say they support the building of new housing in their neighborhood.*

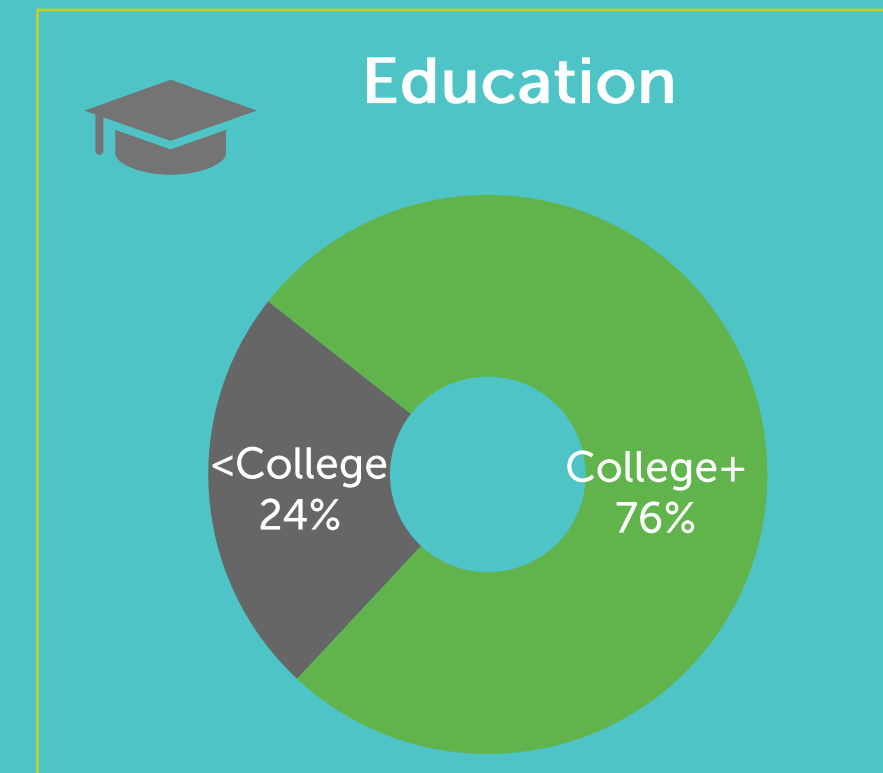
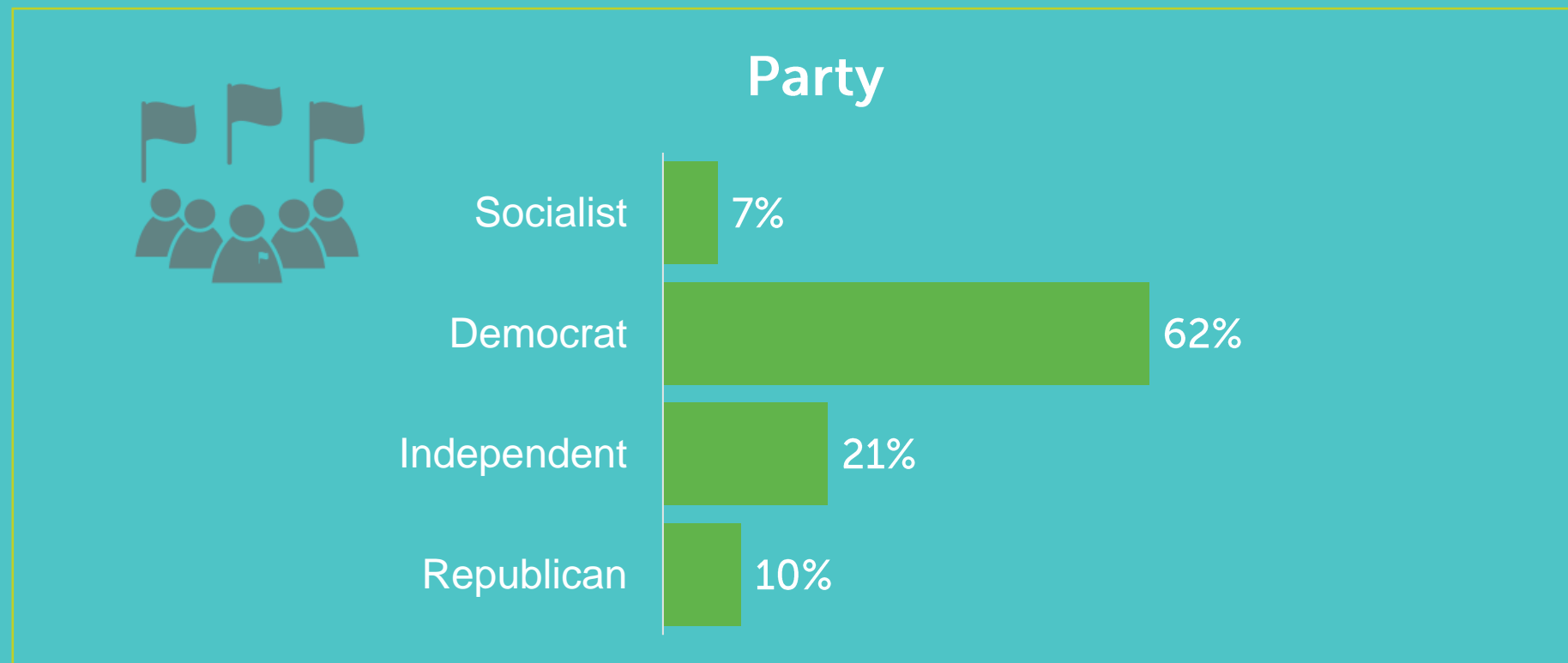
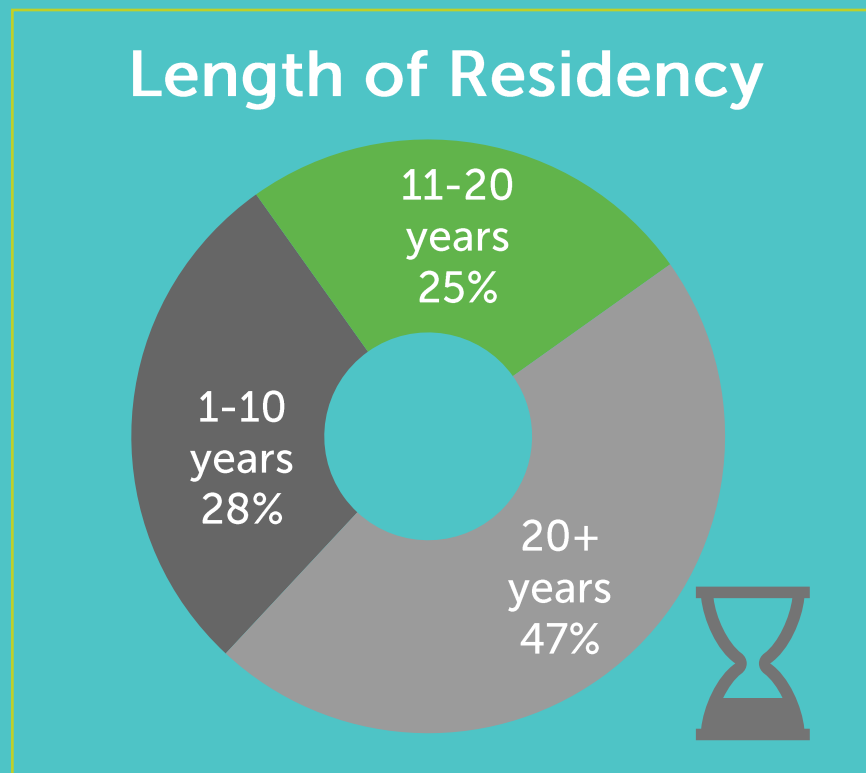
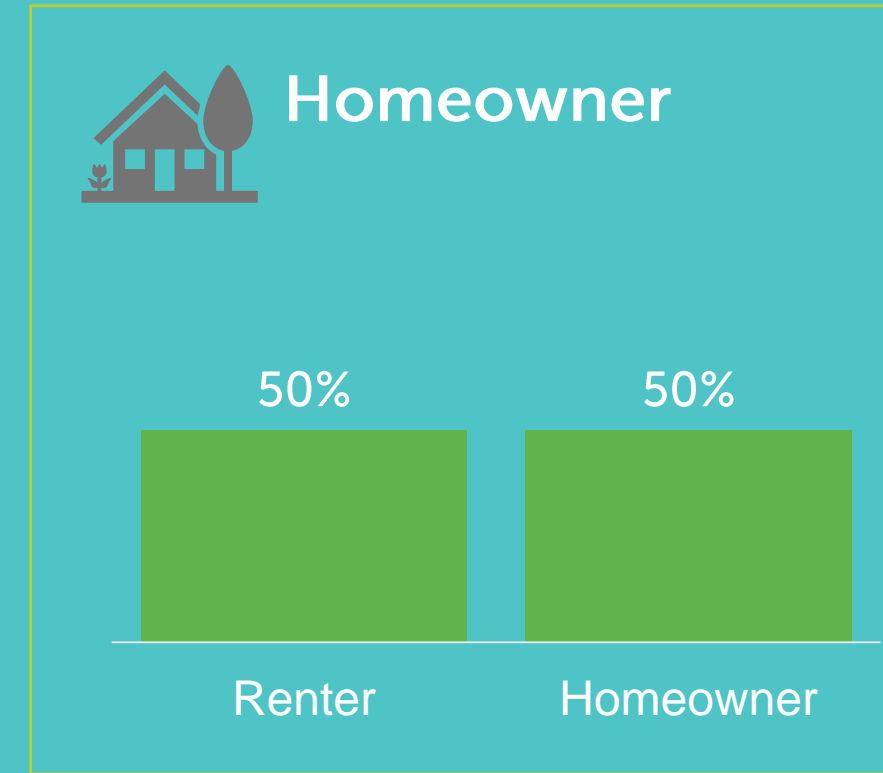
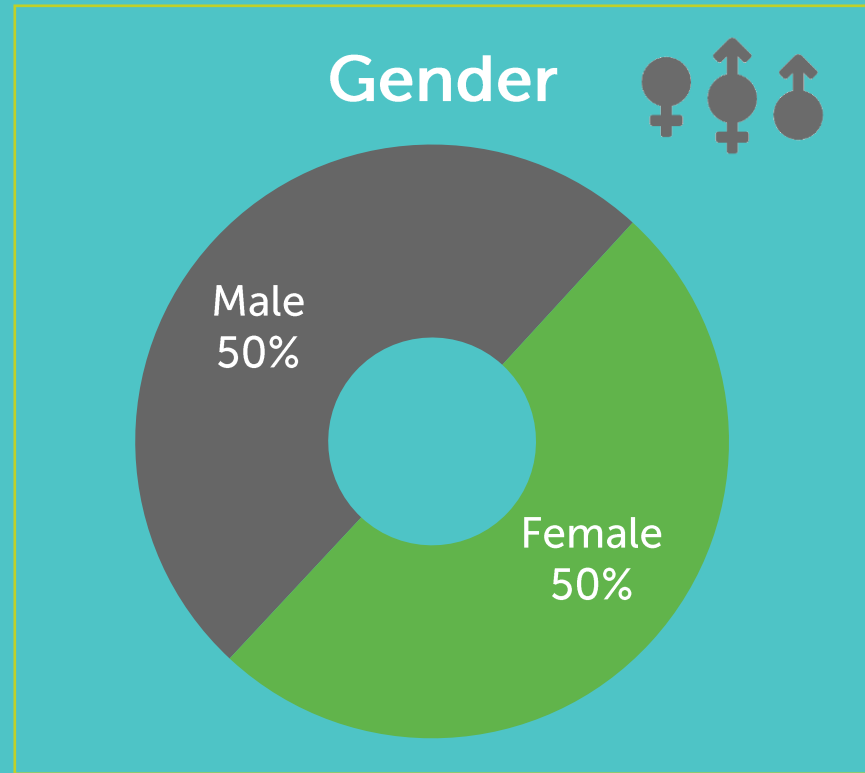
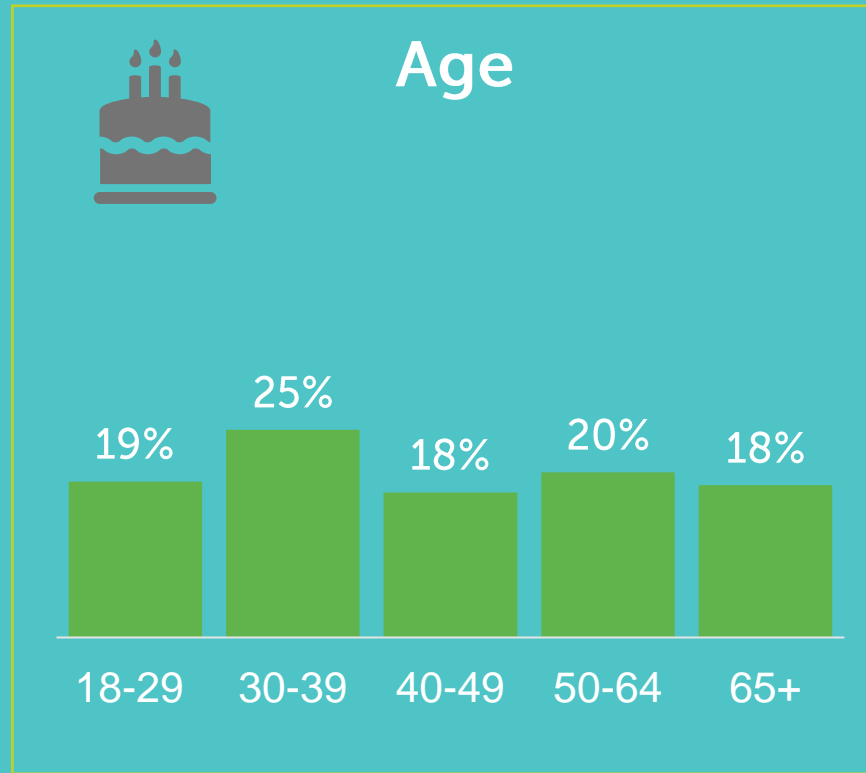


# Subgroup Data





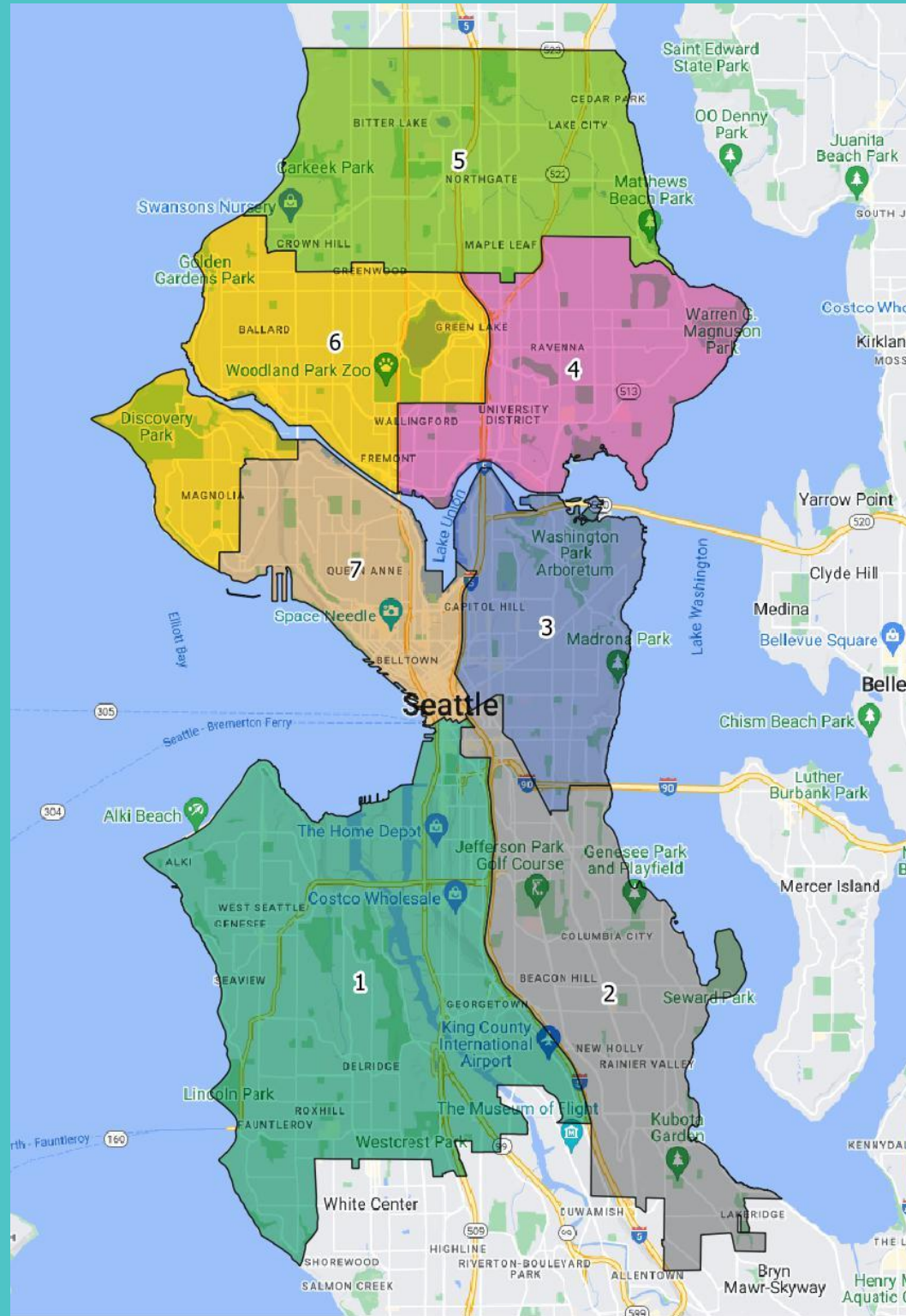
# Respondent Profile





# Seattle Regions

- Results weighted to the proportional share of voters in each District

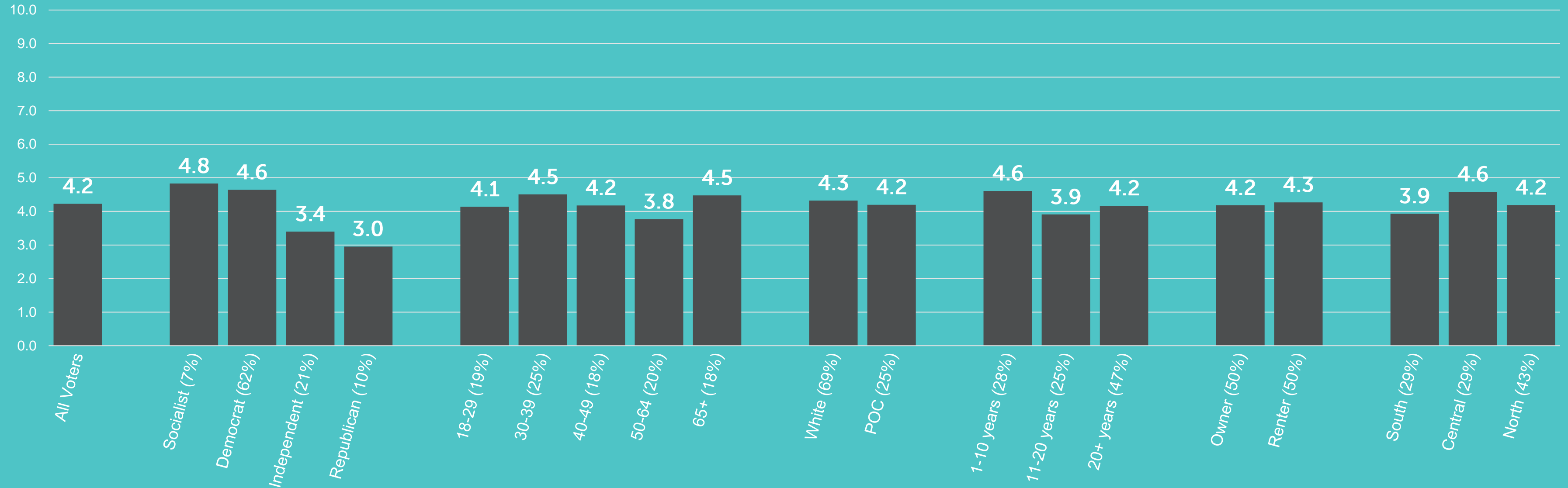


Region	Districts	Weighted %
North Seattle	4, 5 and 6	43%
Central Seattle	3 and 7	29%
South Seattle	1 and 2	29%



# Quality of Life - The Index

Quality of Life Index  
March 2023



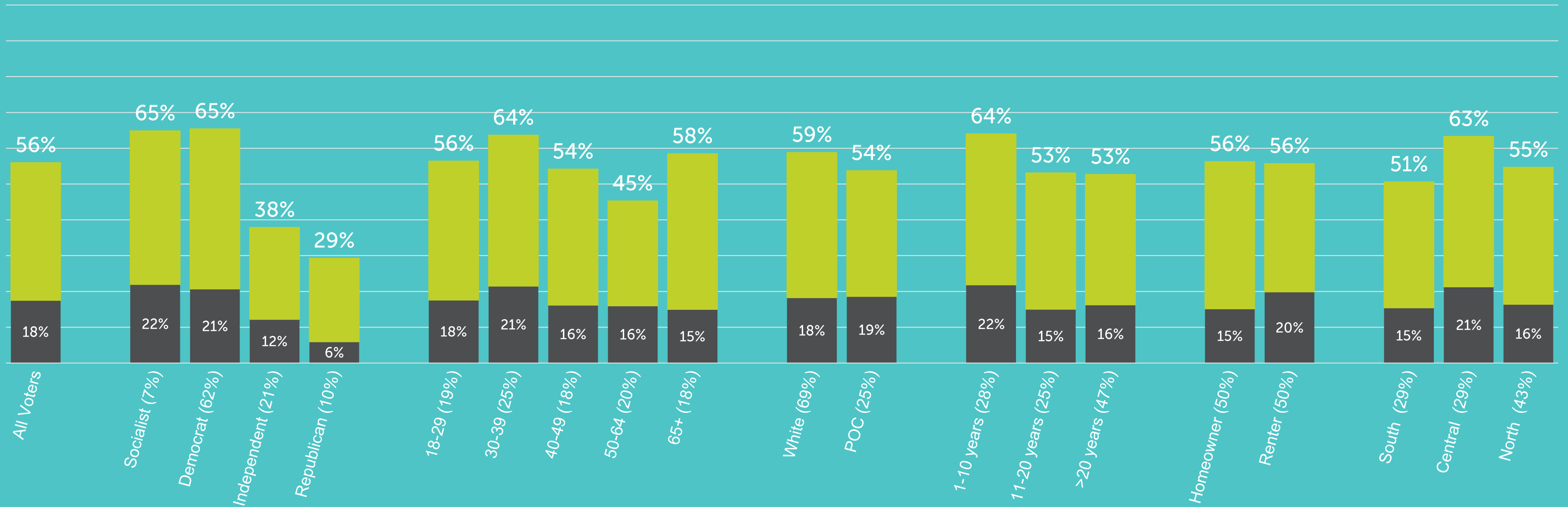
*Partisan identification is the strongest driver of quality of life attitudes with less liberal voters being more negative on quality of life.*



# Optimism

## Optimistic About Future of The Region

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



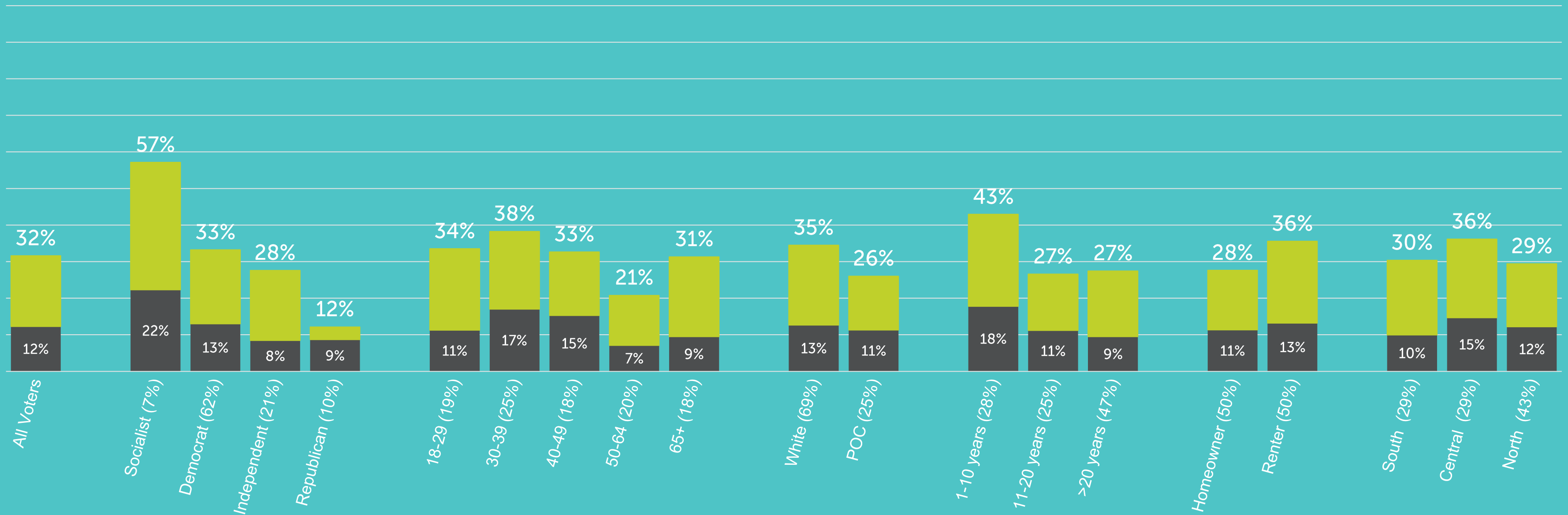
A majority of voters in most subgroups are optimistic about the region's future. Independents and Republicans are much less optimistic than other groups.



# Quality of Life

## Quality of Life Compared to 4 Years Ago

■ Better ■ Same



*Self-identified socialists are the only subgroup where a majority think quality of life has not declined over the past four years. Newer residents are more optimistic than long term residents.*

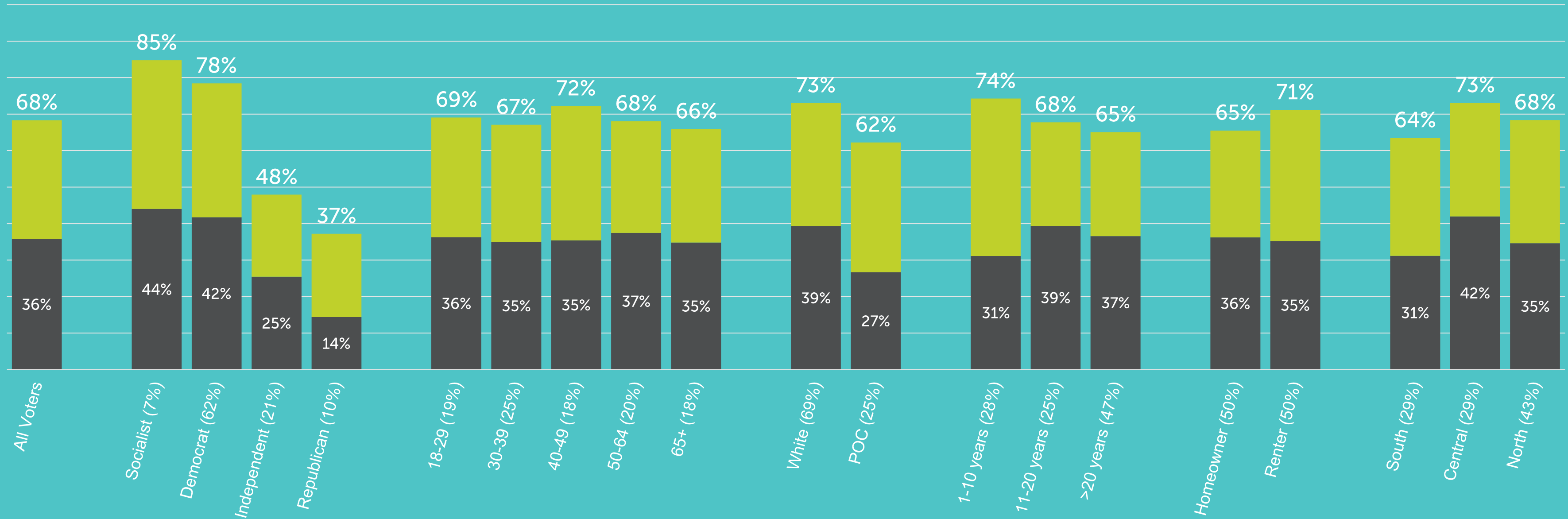




# Proud to Call Myself a Seattleite

## Proud to Call Myself a Seattleite

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



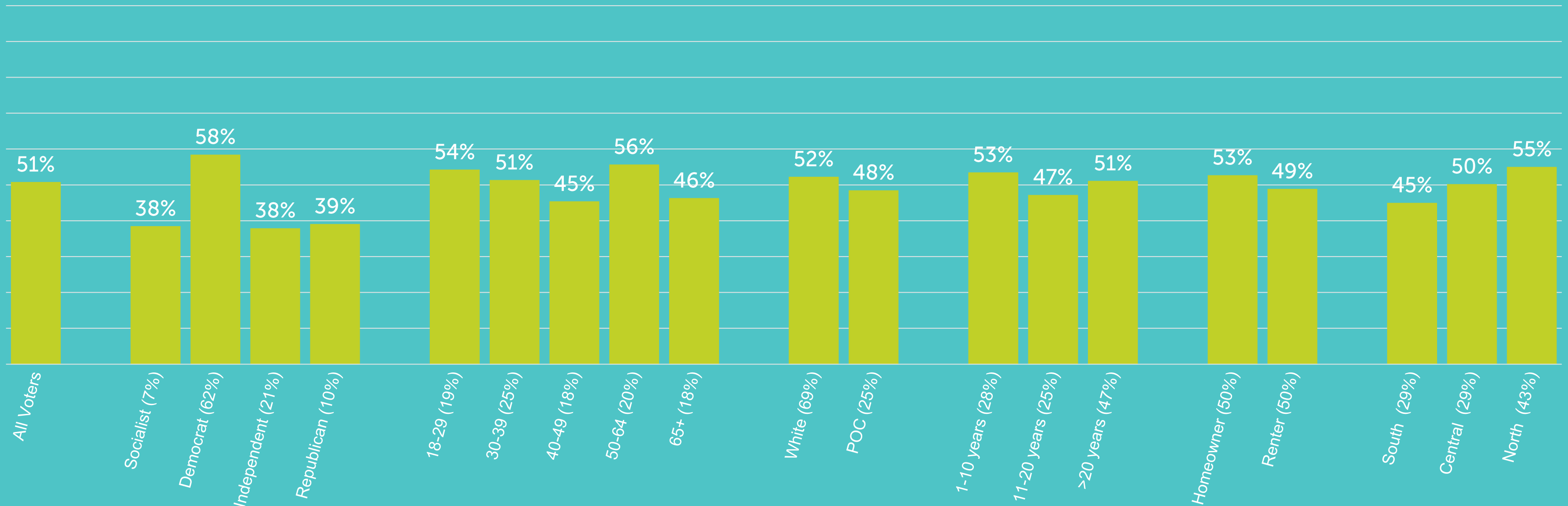
*A strong majority of voters in every subgroup except Independents and Republicans say they are proud to call themselves Seattleites.*





# Top Concerns - Homelessness

“What are the issues facing Seattle that you are most frustrated or concerned about?”  
(% Mentioning Homelessness)

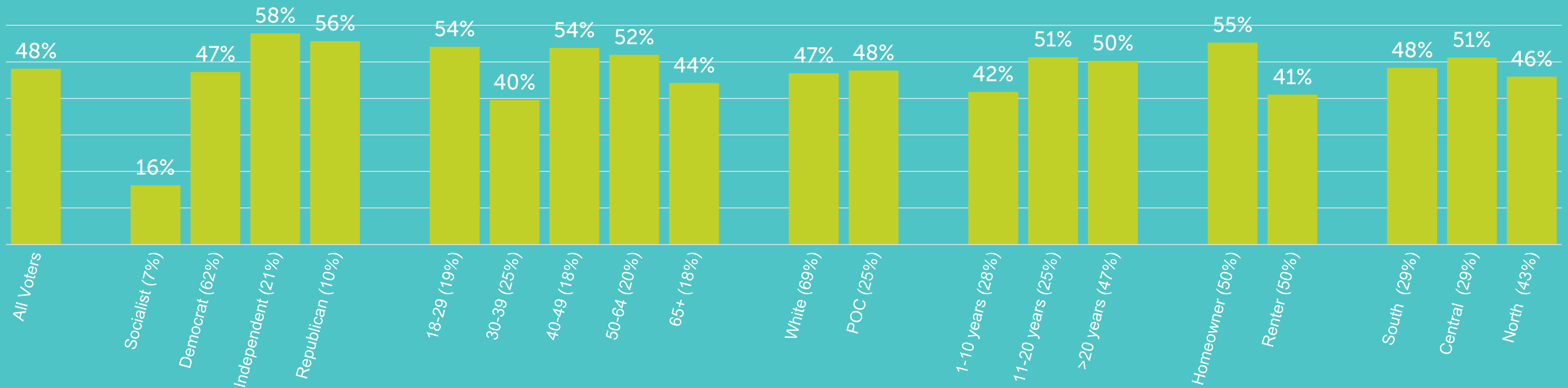


*Democrats are much more likely than other partisans to mention homelessness as a top concern.*



# Top Concerns - Public Safety

"What are the issues facing Seattle that you are most frustrated or concerned about?"  
(% Mentioning Crime, Drugs, or Public Safety)



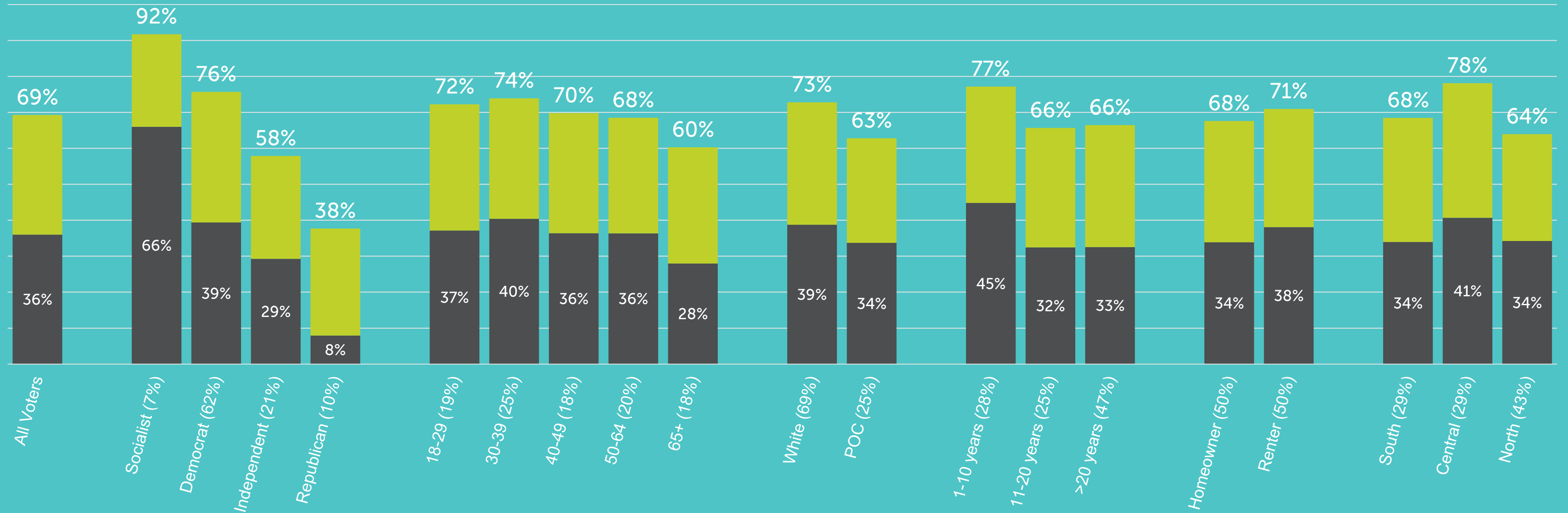
*Socialists are the most significant outlier on concern about public safety. There is little difference in concern by region or ethnicity.*



# Safety Downtown: Daytime

## Would Feel Safe Visiting Downtown During the Day

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



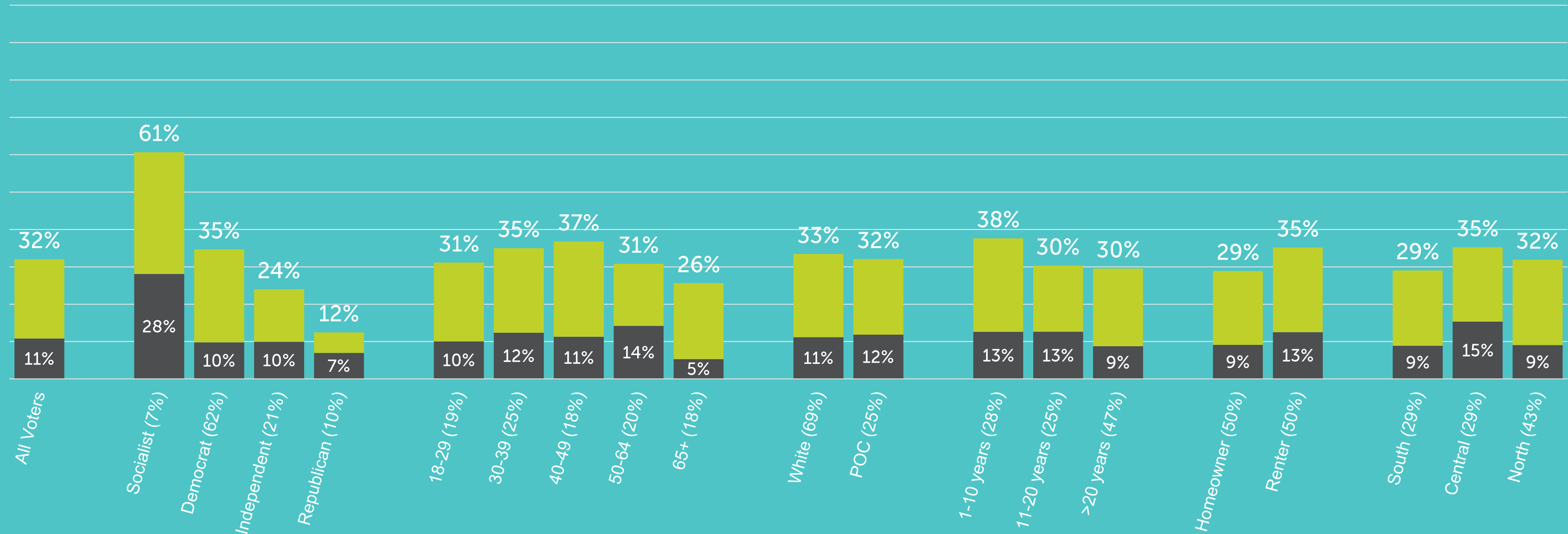
*A majority of voters in every subgroup except Republicans say they would feel safe visiting downtown during the day.*



# Safety Downtown: Nighttime

## Would Feel Safe Visiting Downtown at Night

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



*Socialists are the only subgroup where a majority say they would feel safe visiting downtown at night.*

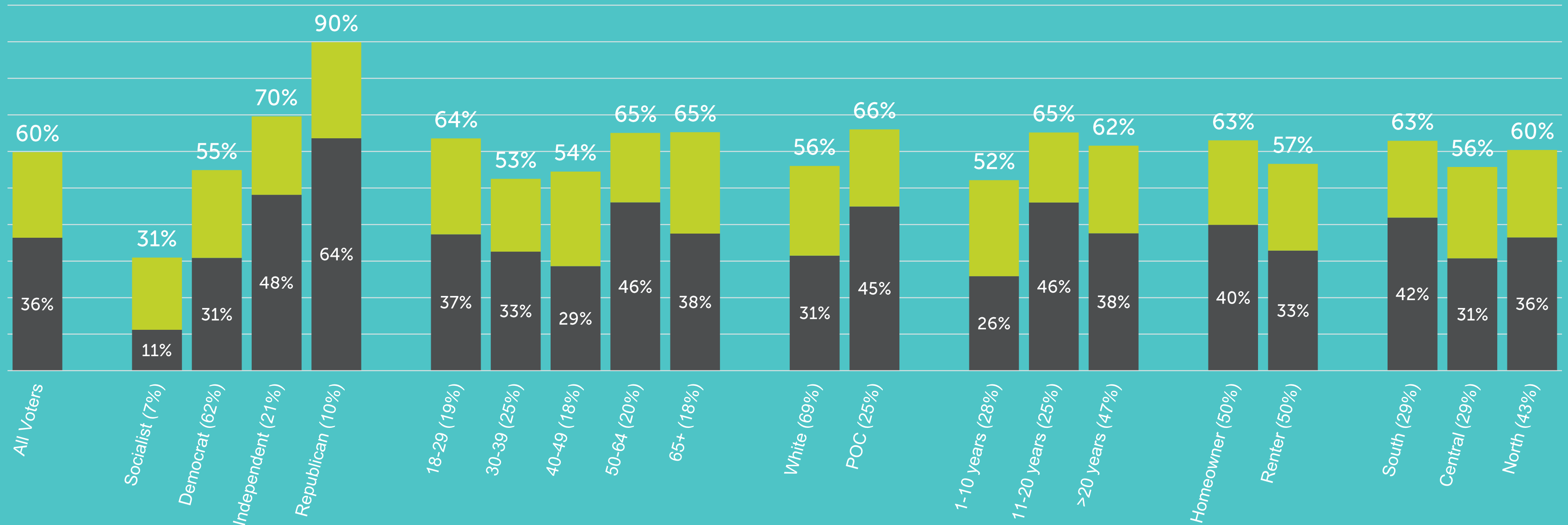




# Safety in Own Neighborhood

## Feel Less Safe in Own Neighborhood than Two Years Ago

■ Much Less Safe ■ Somewhat Less Safe



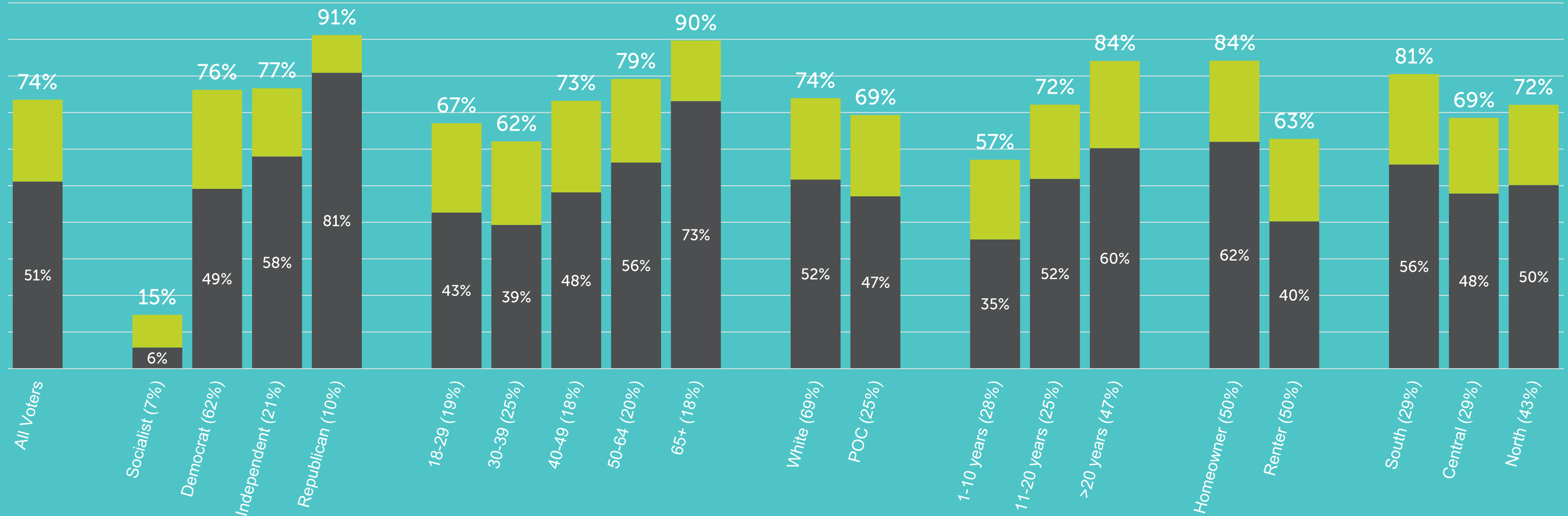
*Roughly 6-in-10 voters in all three regions of the city say they feel less safe in their own neighborhood than they did two years ago. Partisan identification is a strong driver of attitudes about neighborhood safety.*



# Prioritize Hiring More Officers

## Prioritizing Hiring More Police Officers

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



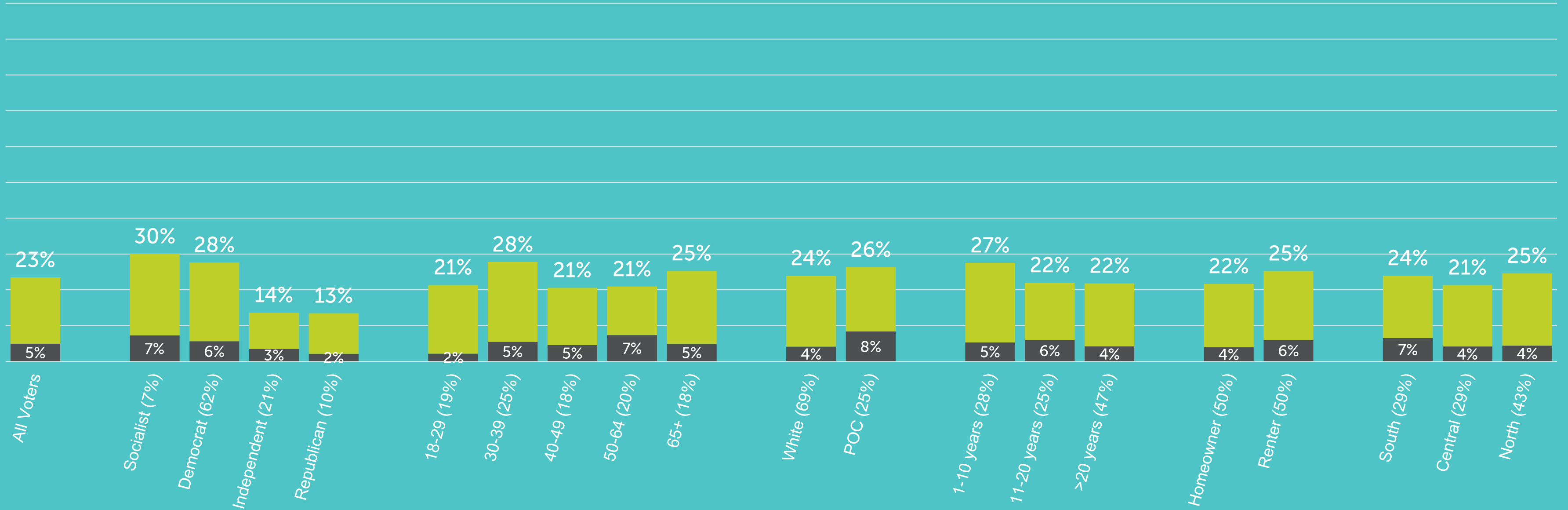
*A strong majority of voters in every subgroup except Socialists say the city should immediately prioritize hiring more officers.*



# Trust Council to Reform SPD

## Trust City Council to Reform SPD without Endangering Public Safety

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



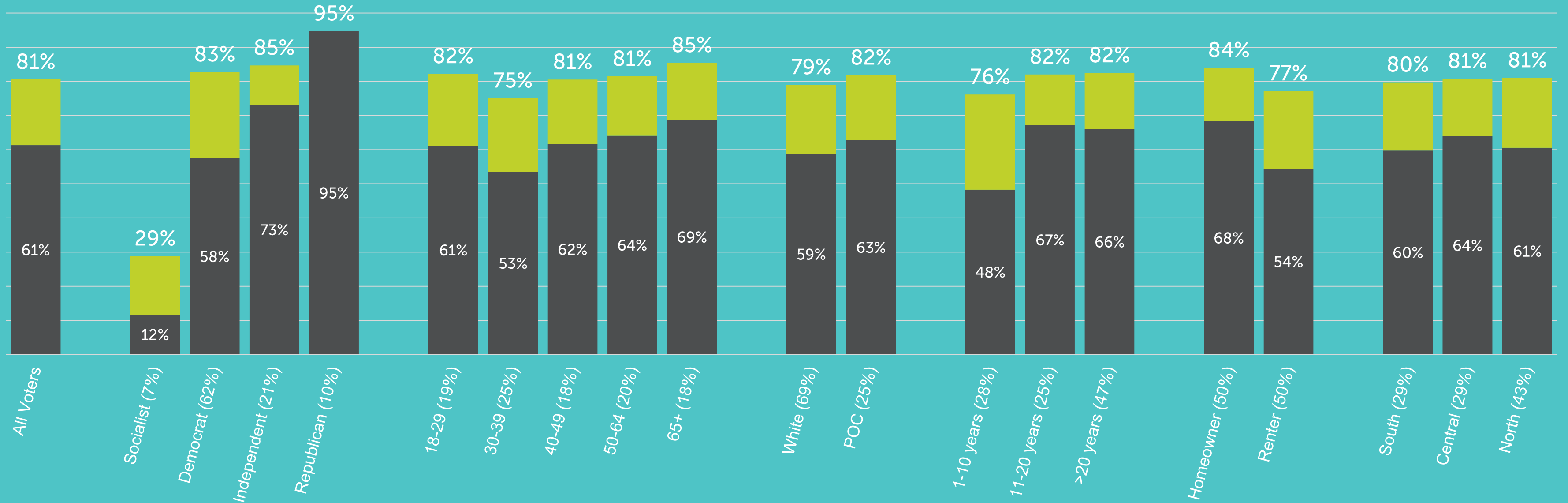
*Very few voters trust the City Council to reform SPD without endangering public safety.*



# Hands-Off Approach Contributing to Crime

## Seattle's Hands-Off Approach Contributing to Crime

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



Three-quarters or more of voters in every subgroup except Socialists think Seattle's hands off approach to illegal public drug use is contributing to street crime and making it harder for the city to recover.

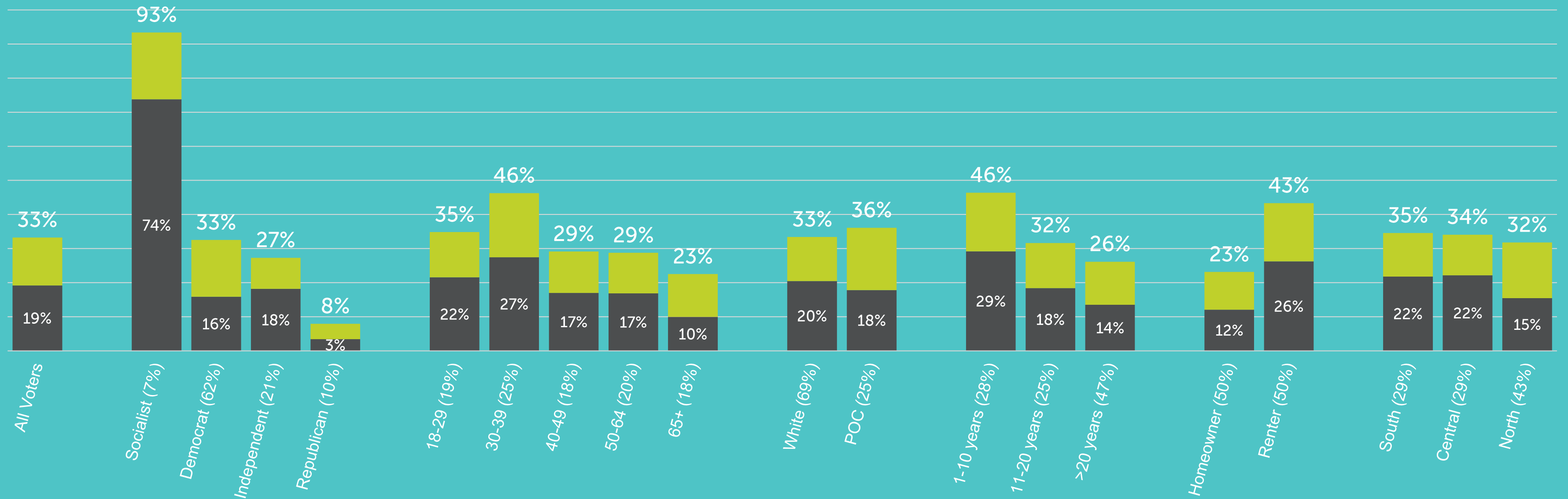




# Must Address Underlying Issues First

## Address Underlying Issues Causing Addiction before Enforcement

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



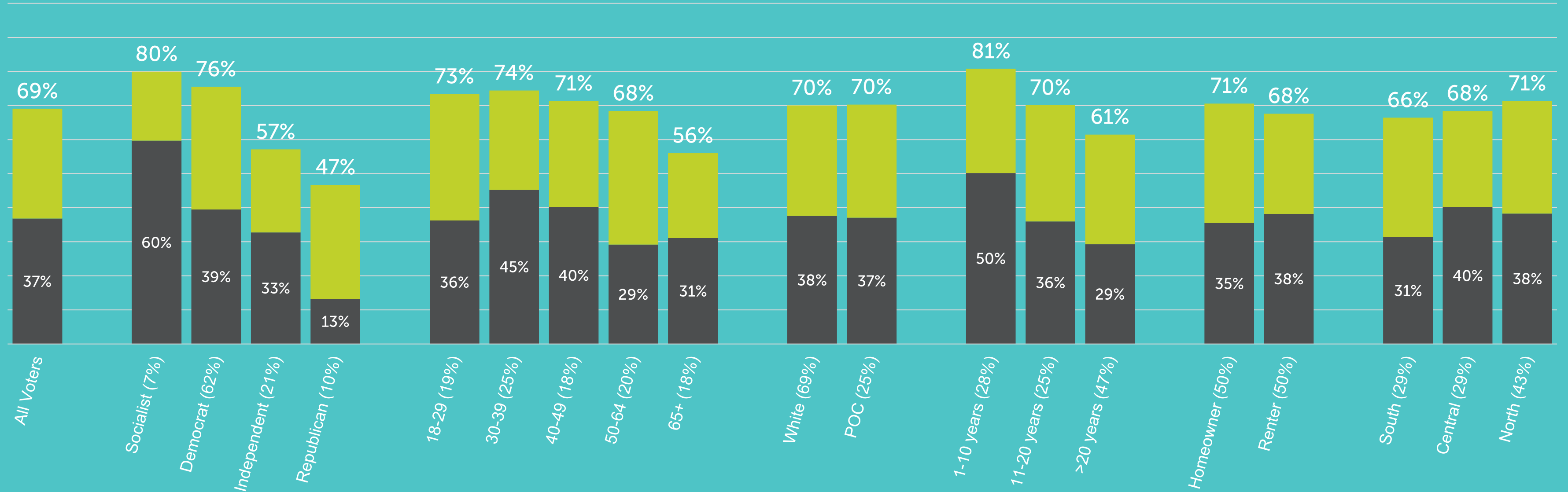
*Only Socialists agree that laws against public drug use should NOT be enforced until the underlying conditions contributing to addiction are addressed.*



# New Housing in Your Neighborhood

## Support New Housing in Your Neighborhood

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

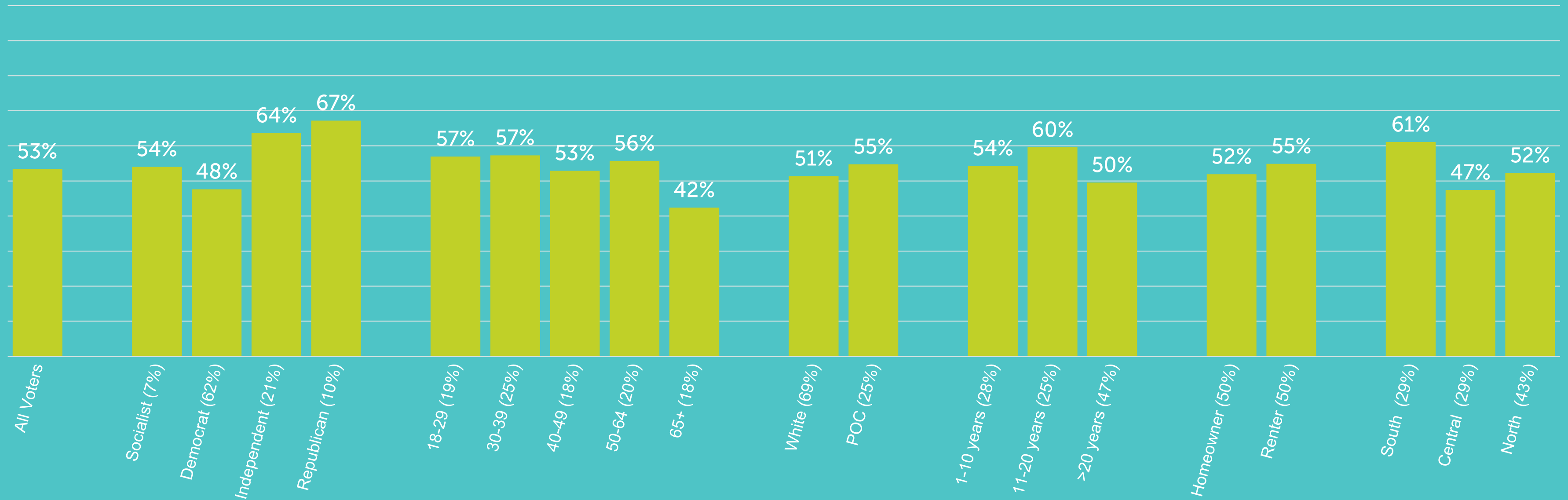


*A majority of voters in most subgroups agree that they would support additional housing in their neighborhood and there is no difference in support between homeowners and renters.*



# Actively Considered Moving

## Actively Considered Moving



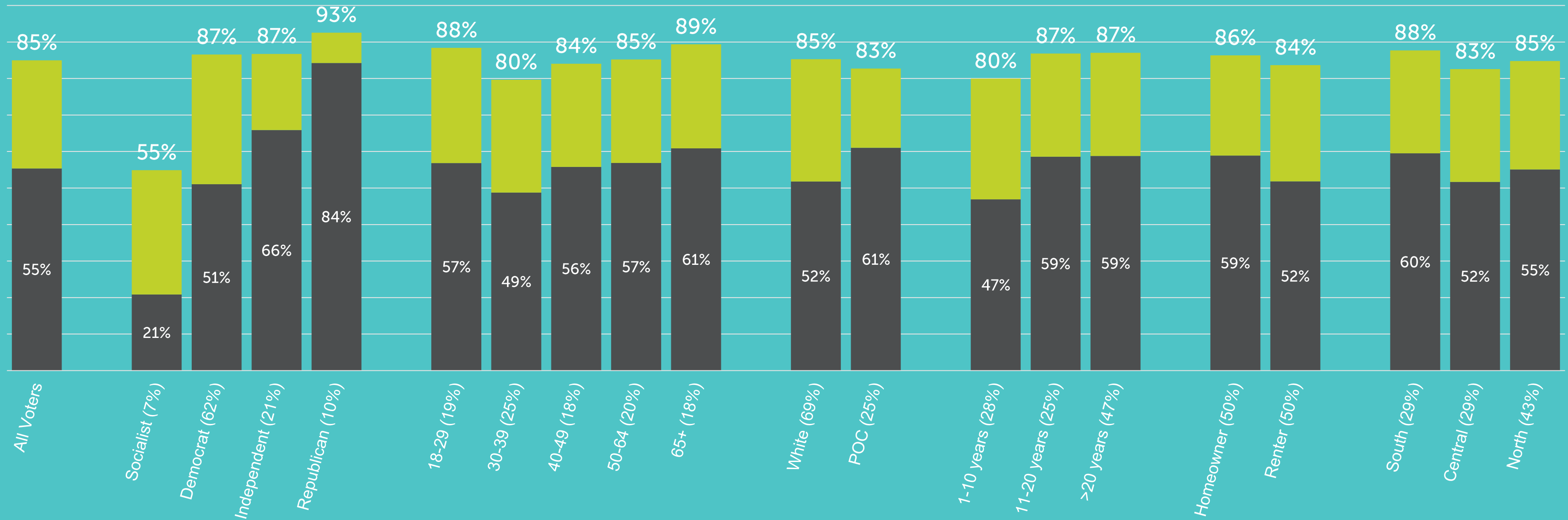
Voters of all stripes say they have considered leaving Seattle.



# Worried About Downtown

## Worried About Downtown's Future

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



*A majority of voters in every subgroup say they are worried about downtown's future. Socialists are the least worried.*

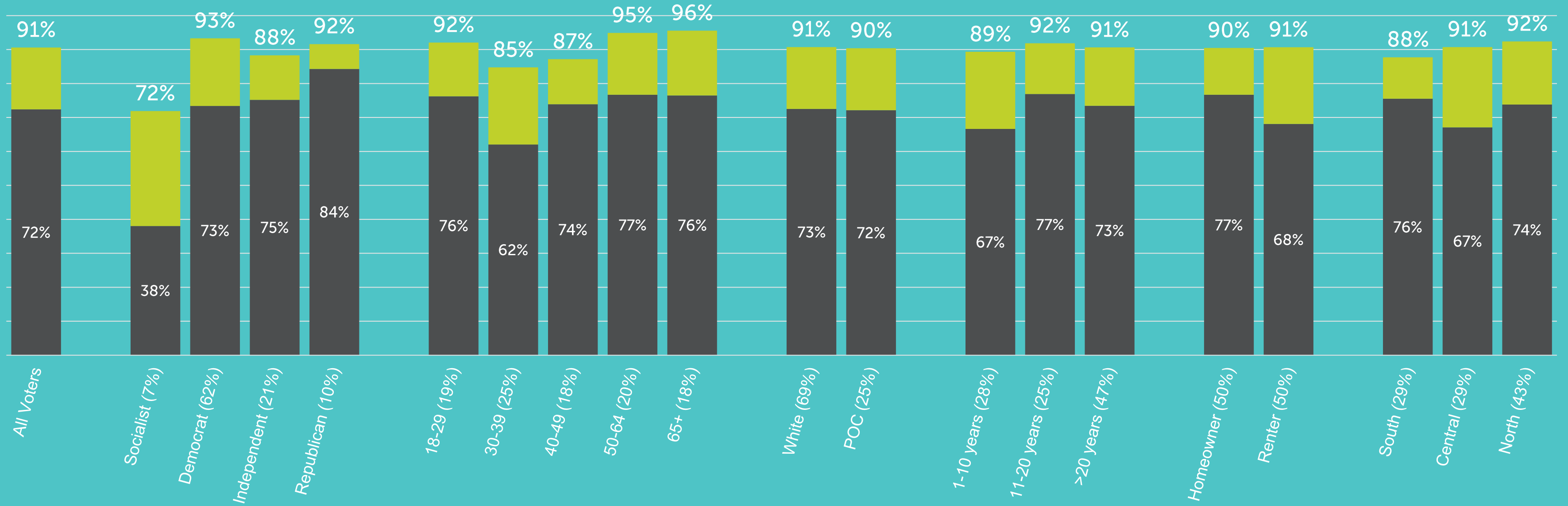




# Downtown & Economic Recovery

Downtown Cannot Fully Recover Until Homelessness & Public Safety Addressed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

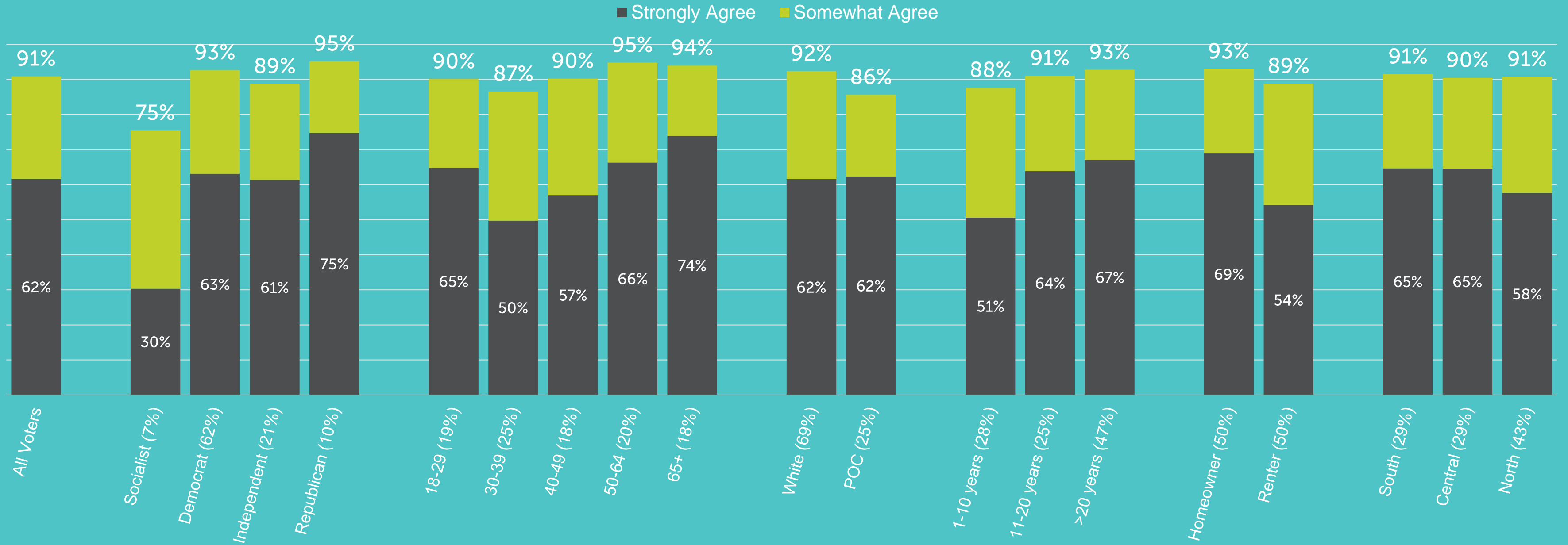


A strong majority of voters in every subgroup – including nearly three-quarters of Socialists – agree that downtown cannot fully recover until homelessness and public safety are addressed.



# Downtown Role in Regional Recovery

A Thriving Downtown Seattle is Critical to our Region's Economic Recovery



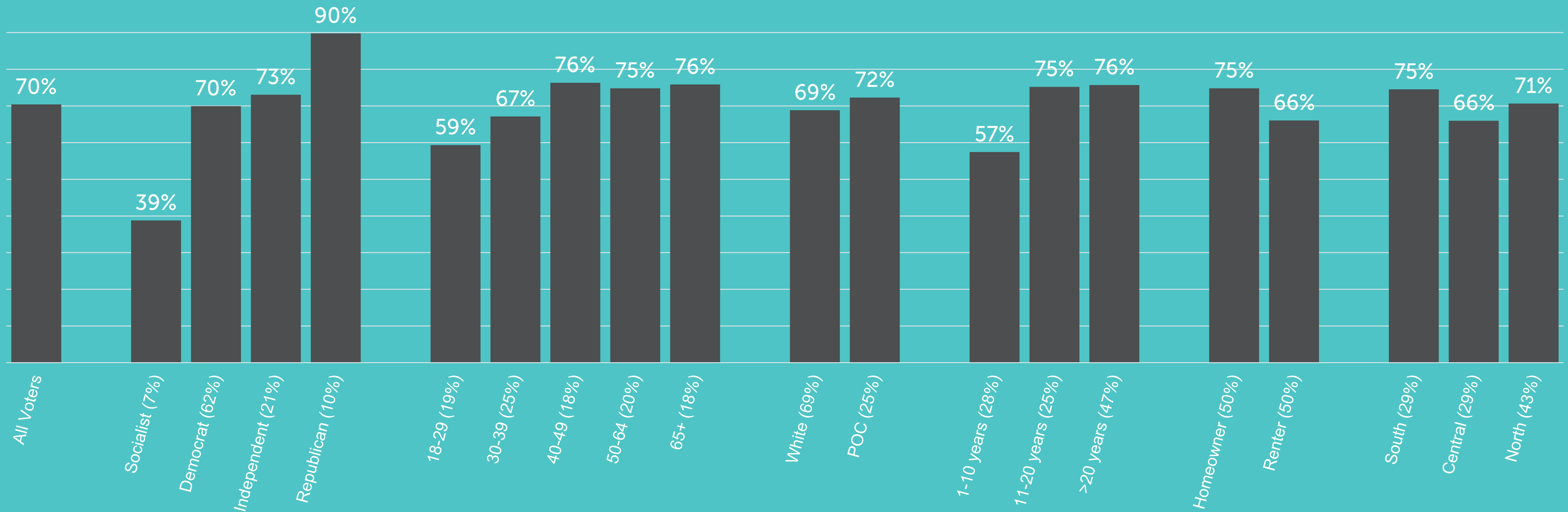
A majority of voters in every subgroup – including nearly three-quarters of Socialists – agree that downtown is critical to our region's economic recovery.



# Visiting Downtown

## Visiting Downtown for Non-Work Activities

■ Visit Less Often



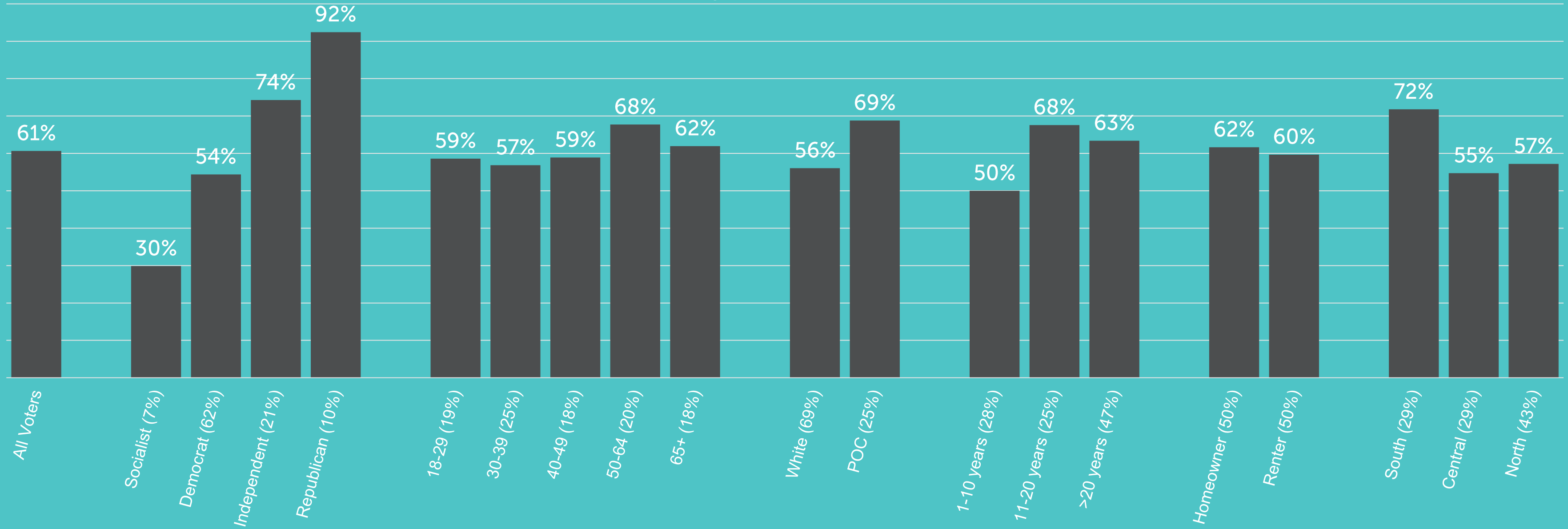
Most voters say they are visiting downtown less often for non-work activities than they did pre-pandemic.



# Taxes in Seattle

## Taxes in Seattle

■ Too High for Service Level



*A majority of voters in every subgroup except Socialists say that taxes in Seattle are too high for the level of services the city provides.*

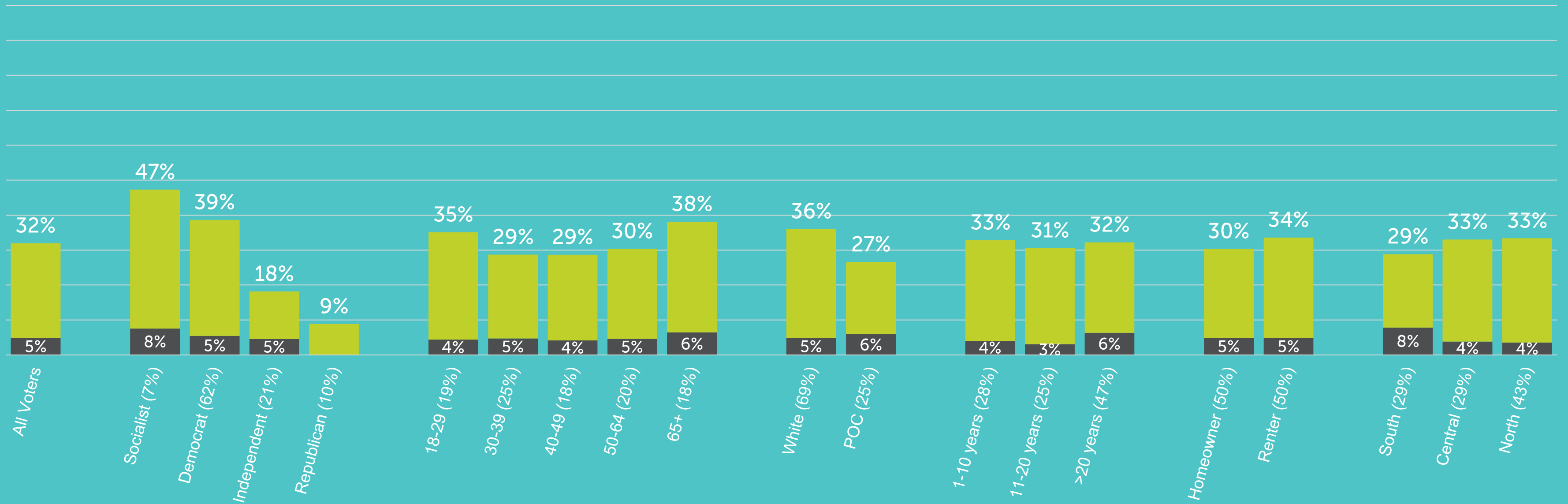




# Trust on Spending

## Trust City on Spending

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



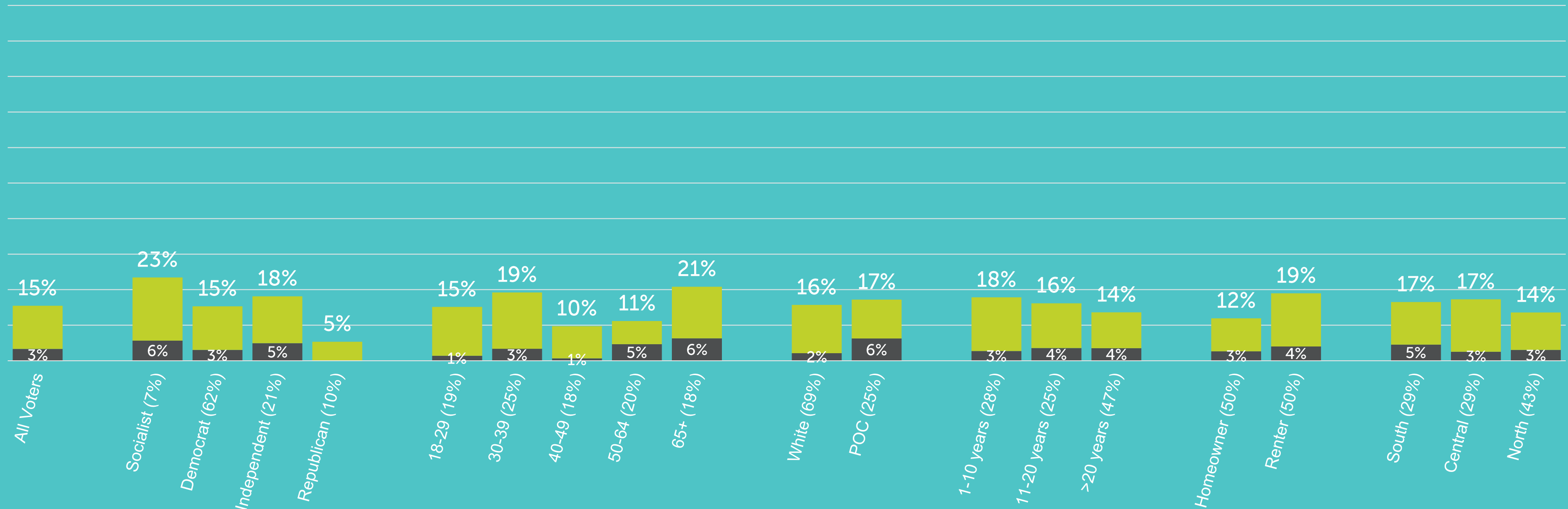
*Few voters trust the city on spending.*



# Trust The City Has An Effective Plan

Trust that the City has an effective plan to address the critical issues facing our city

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



Across subgroups voters do NOT believe that the city has an effective plan to address critical issues.

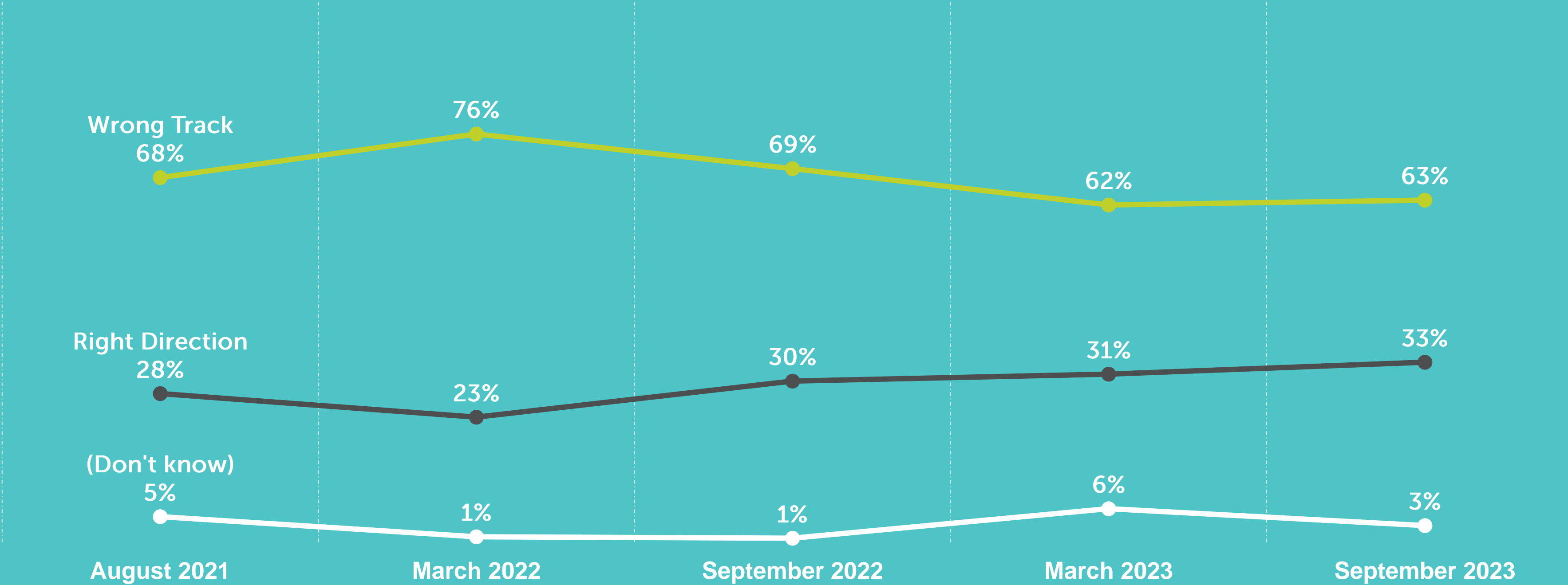


# Trend Data



# Right Direction/Wrong Track Trend

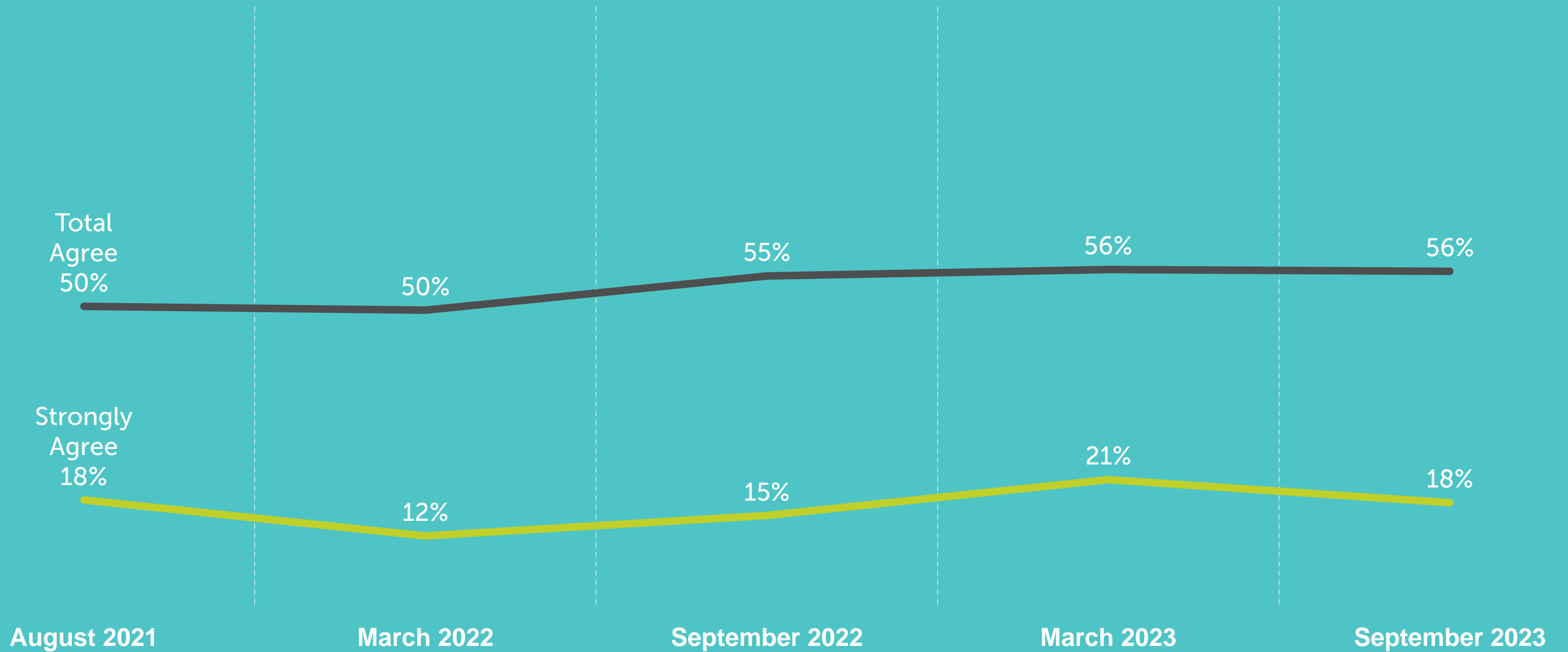
“Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?”





# Agree/Disagree Trend

"I'm optimistic about the future of this region"

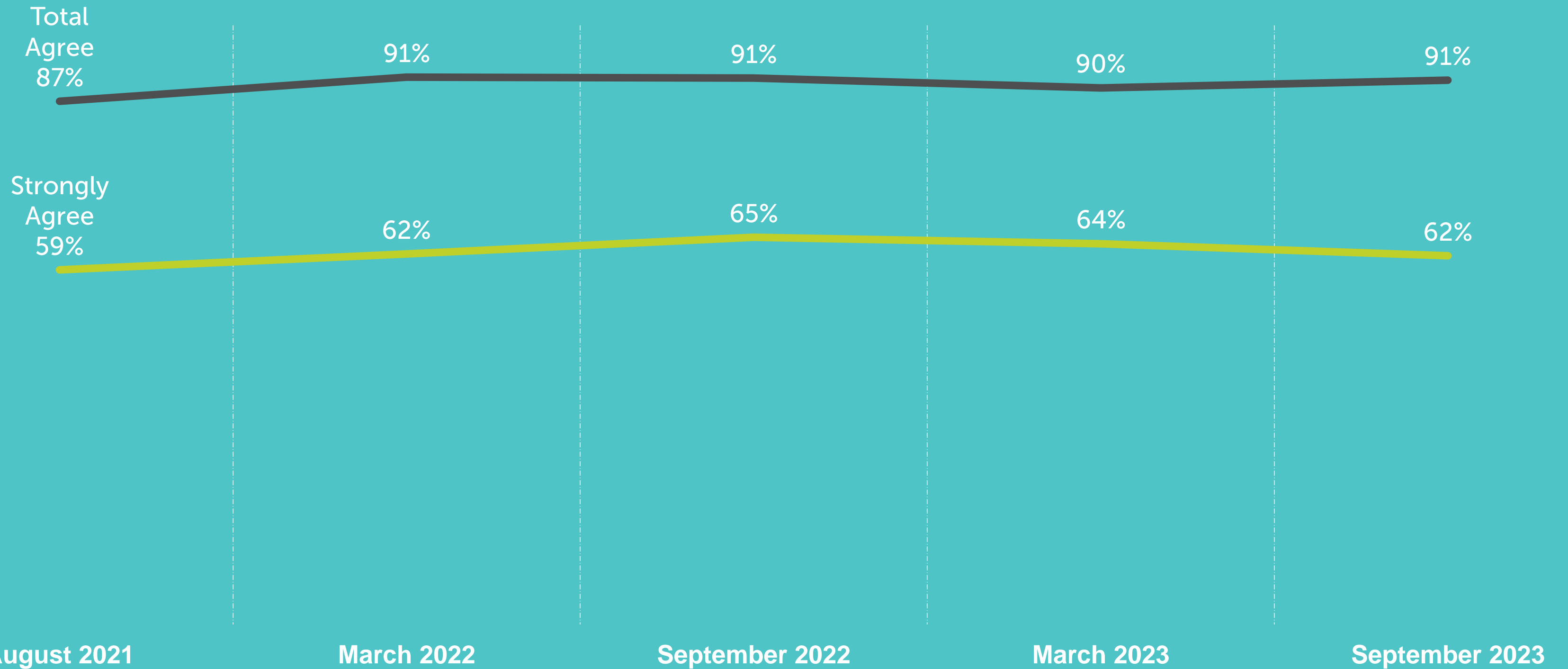






# Agree/Disagree Trend

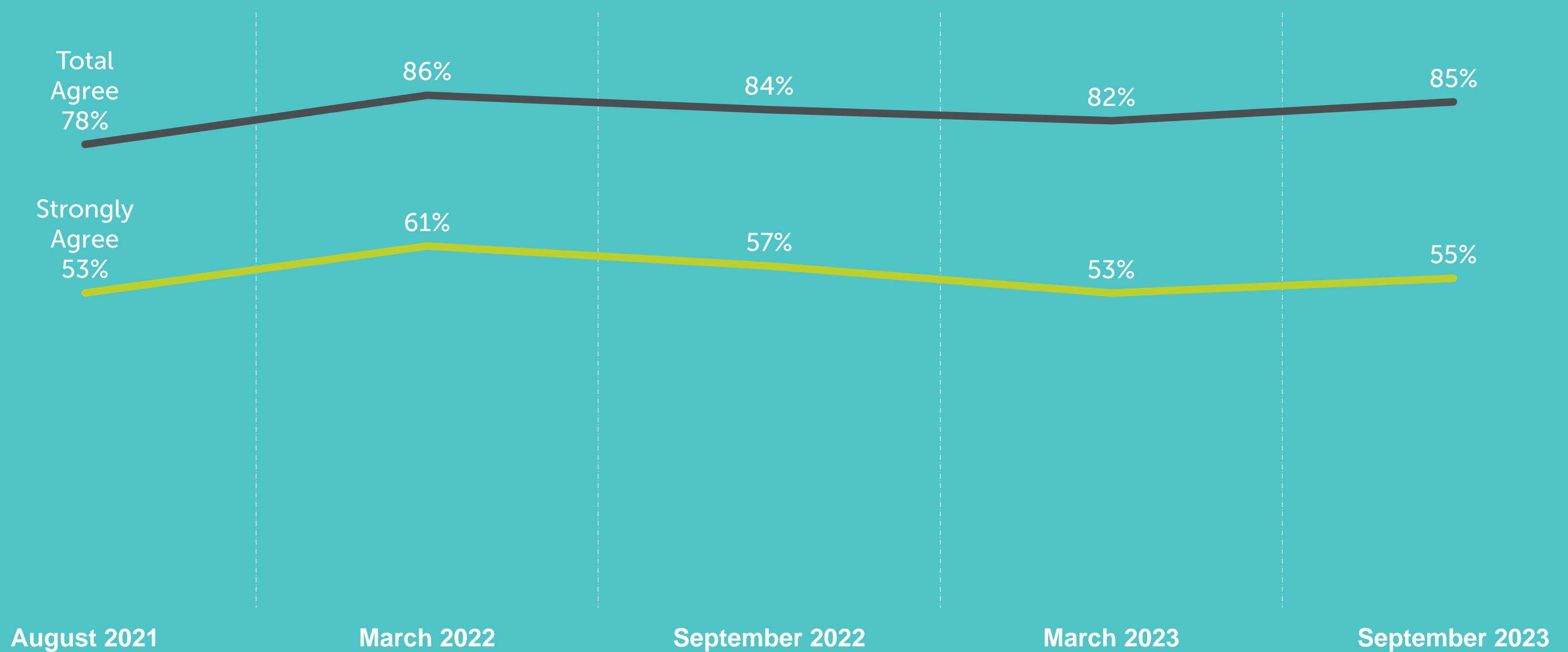
"A thriving downtown Seattle is crucial to our region's economic recovery."





# Agree/Disagree Trend

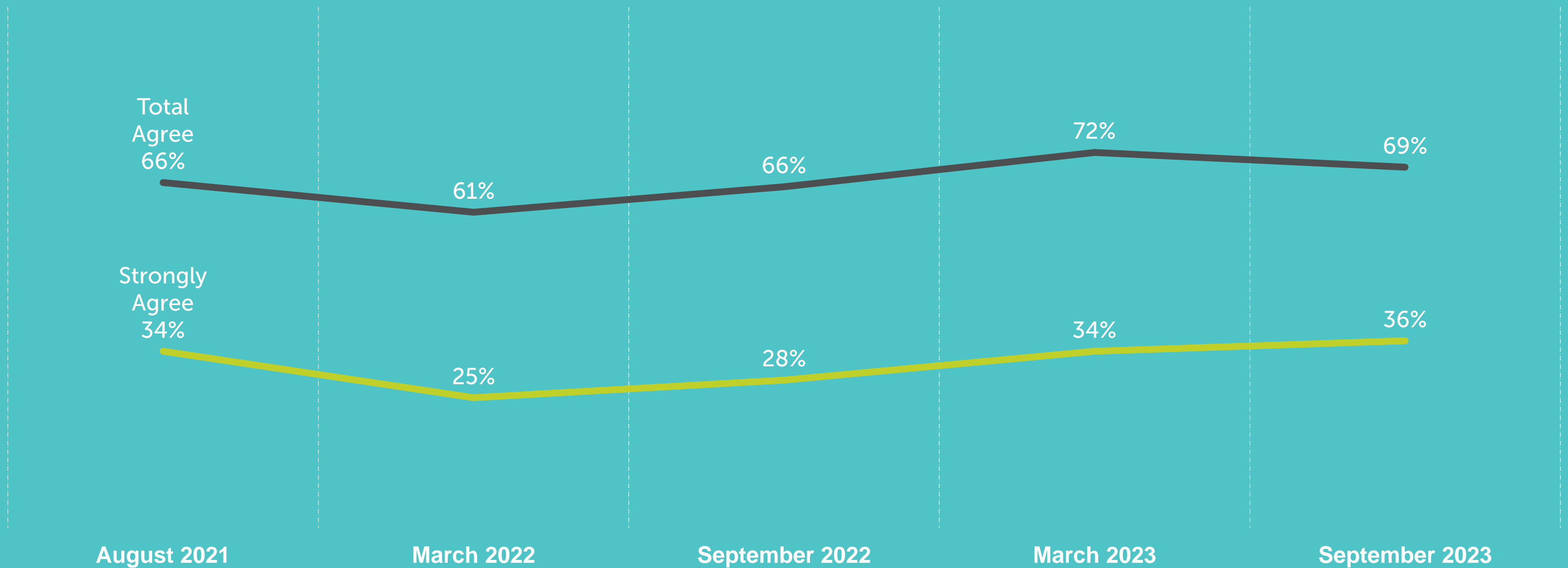
"I'm worried about the future of downtown Seattle."





# Agree/Disagree Trend

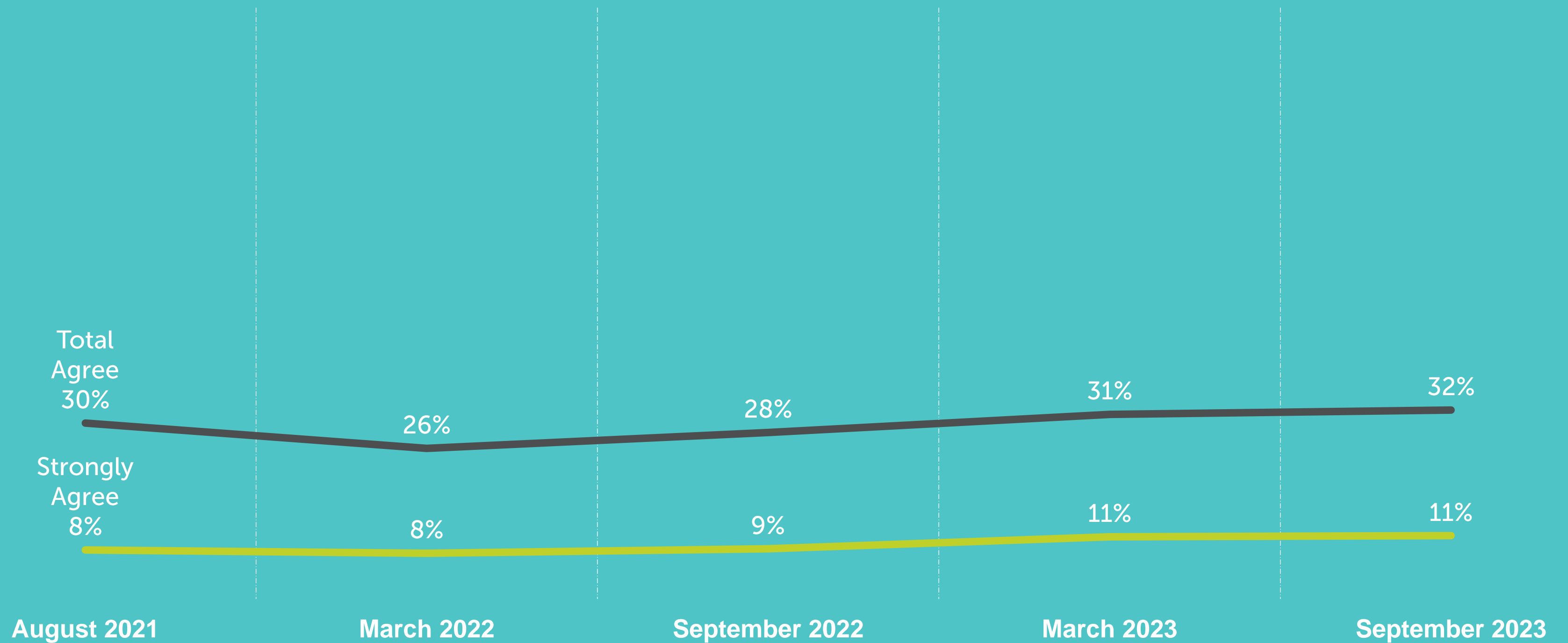
"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle during the day."





# Agree/Disagree Trend

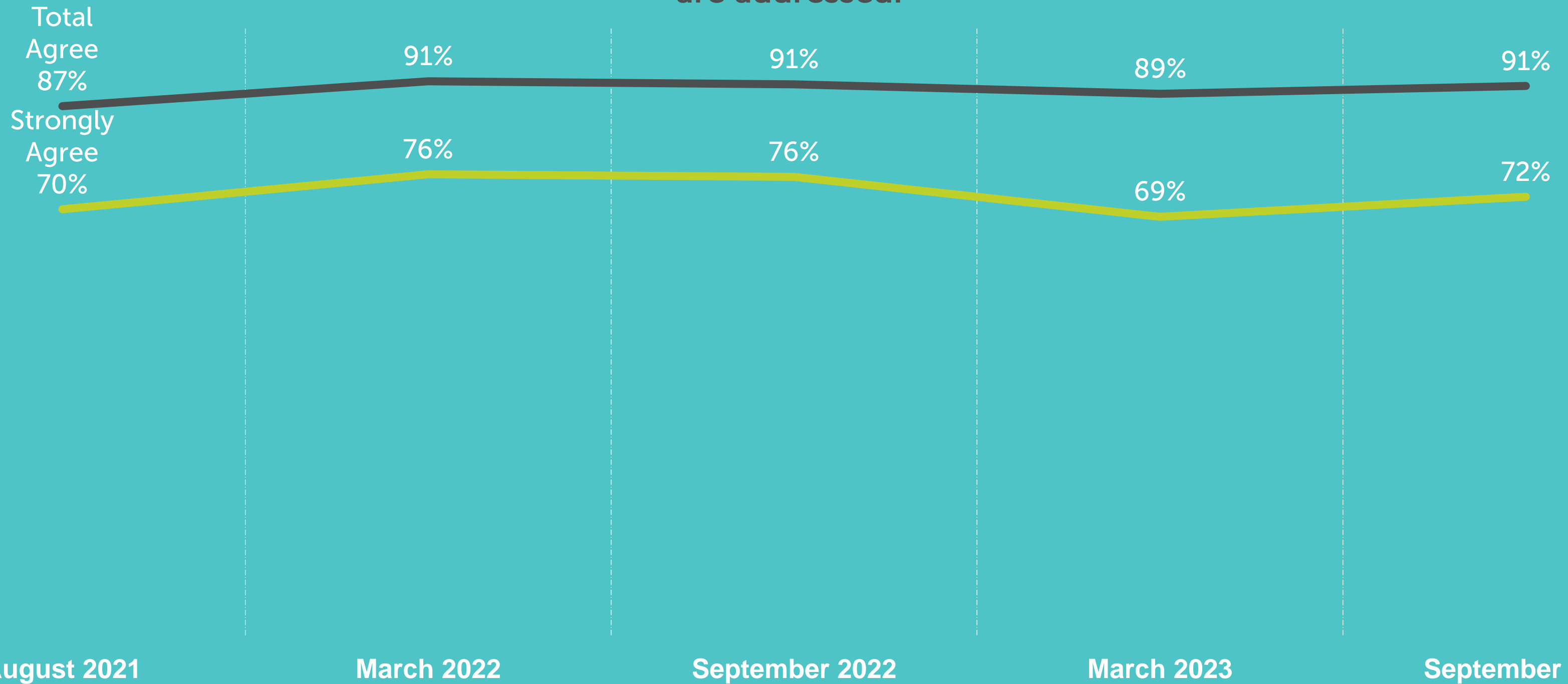
"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle at night."





# Agree/Disagree Trend

“Downtown Seattle cannot fully recover until the homelessness and public safety problems are addressed.”

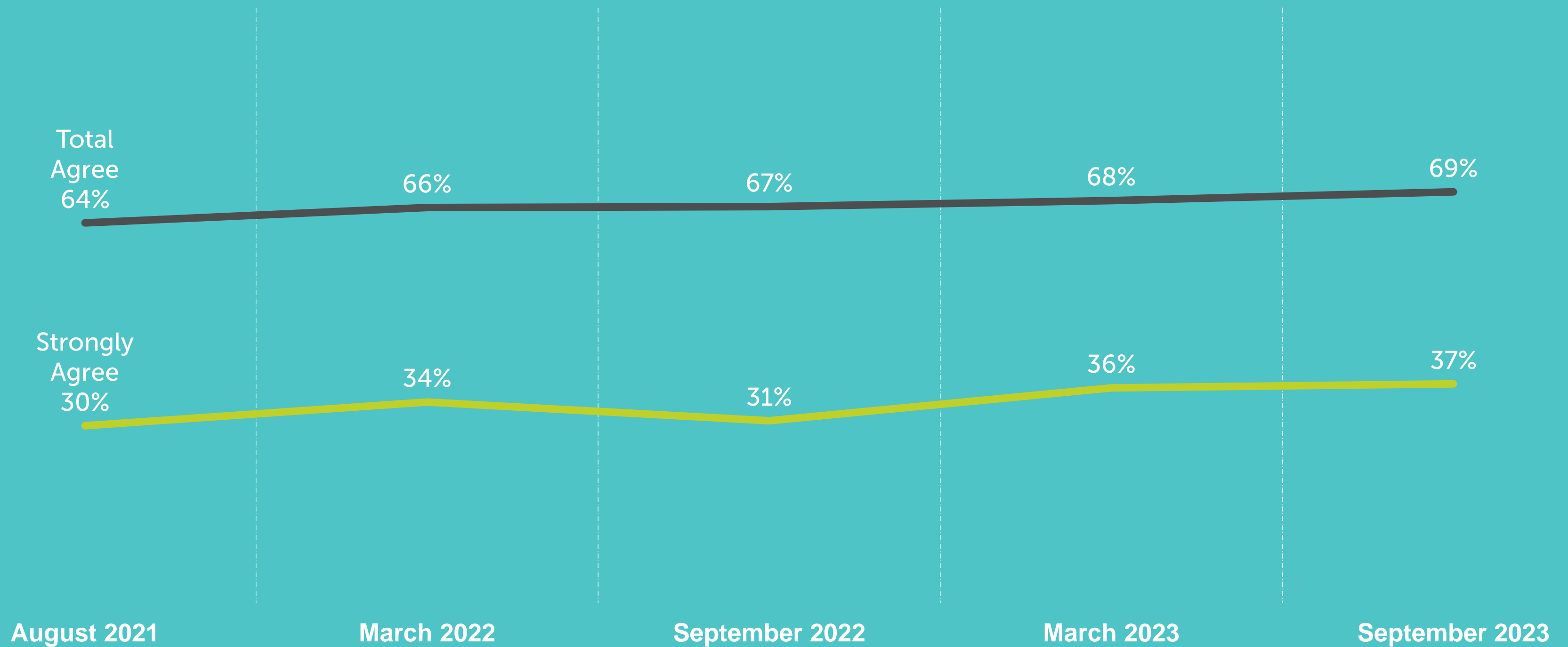






# Agree/Disagree Trend

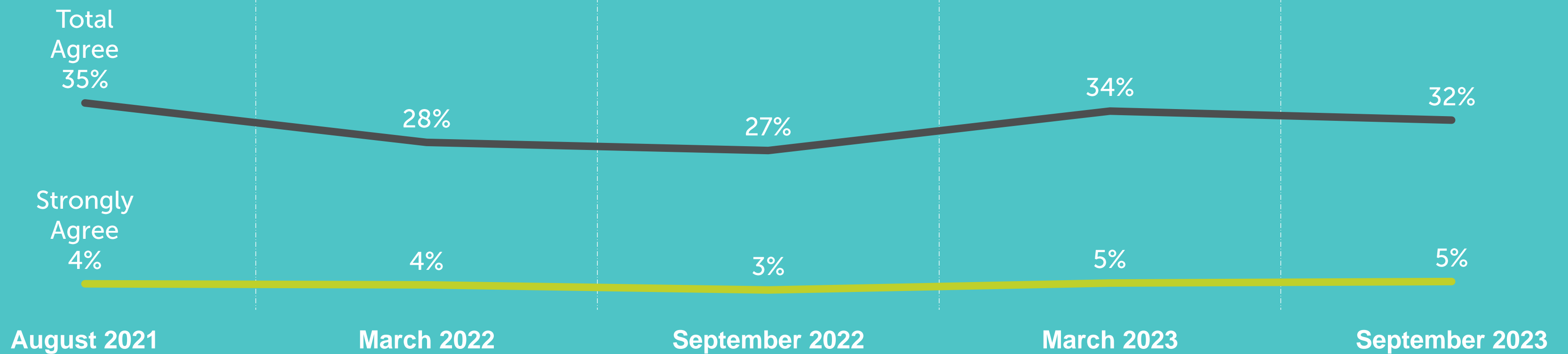
"I support the building of new housing in my neighborhood."





# Agree/Disagree Trend

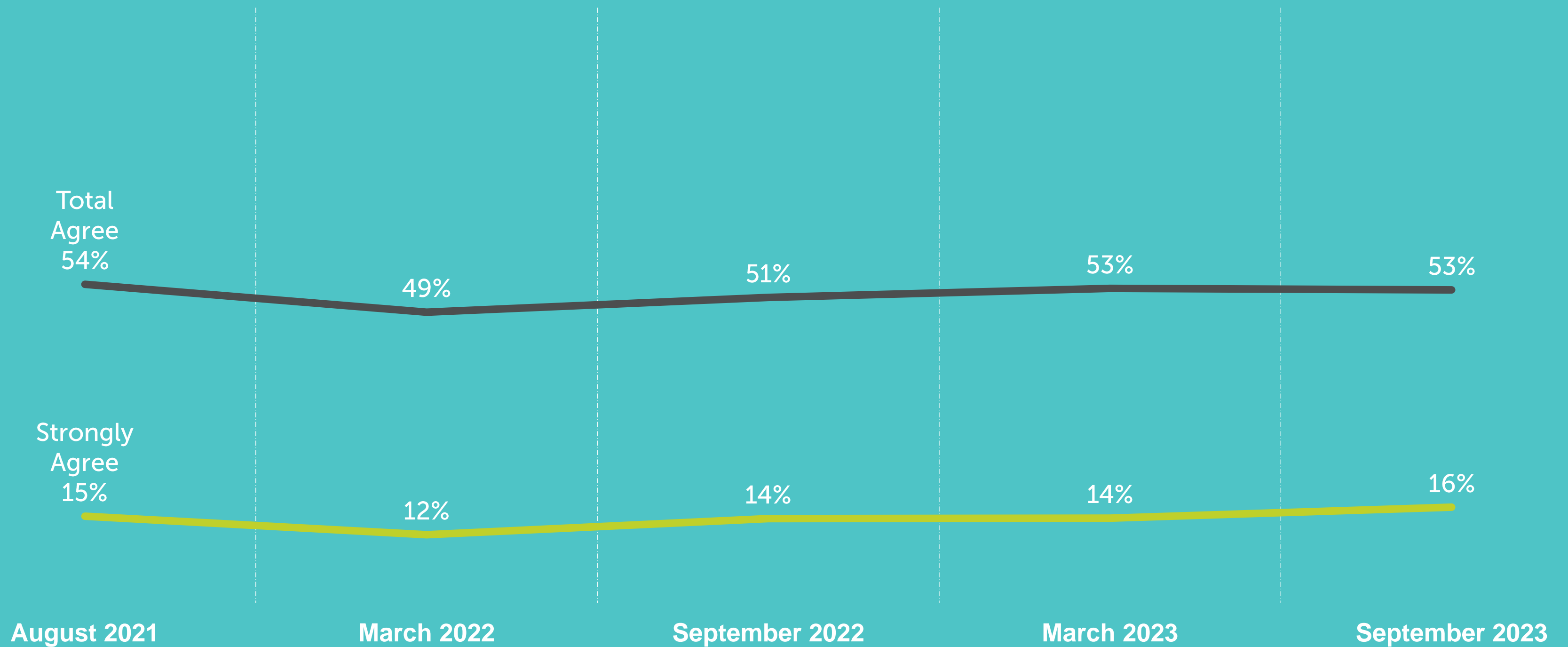
"I trust the City of Seattle to spend my tax dollars responsibly."





# Agree/Disagree Trend

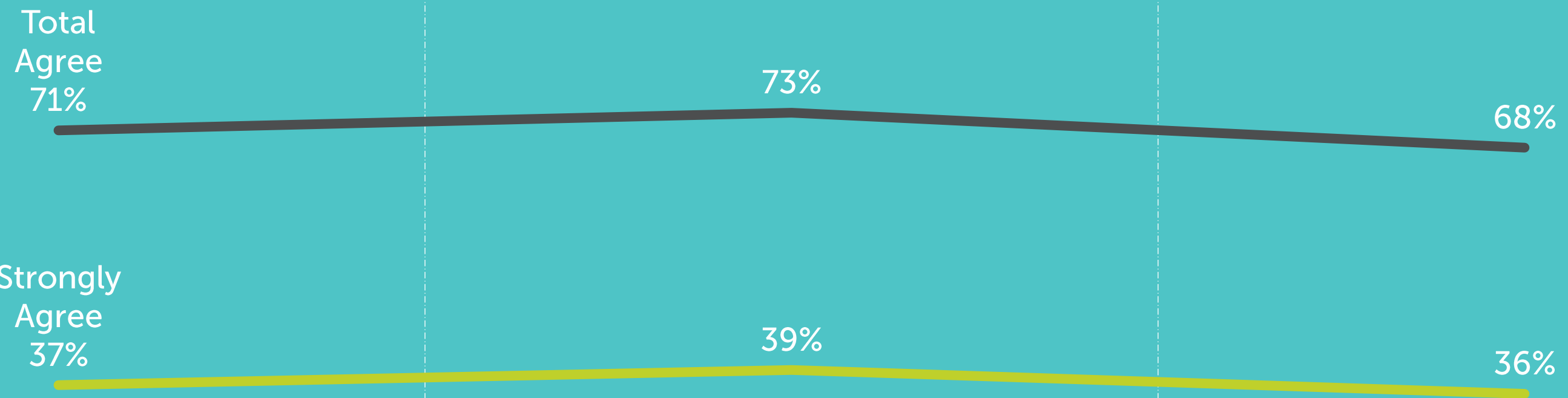
"All things considered, growth and development has been a positive for my area."





# Agree/Disagree Trend

"I'm proud to call myself a Seattleite."



September 2022

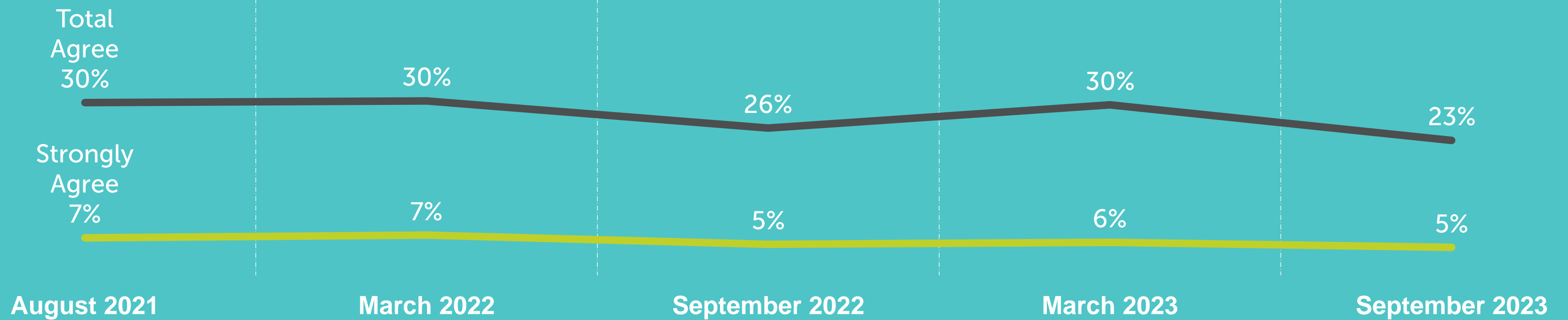
March 2023

September 2023



# Agree/Disagree Trend

"I trust the Seattle City Council to reform the Seattle Police Department without endangering public safety."

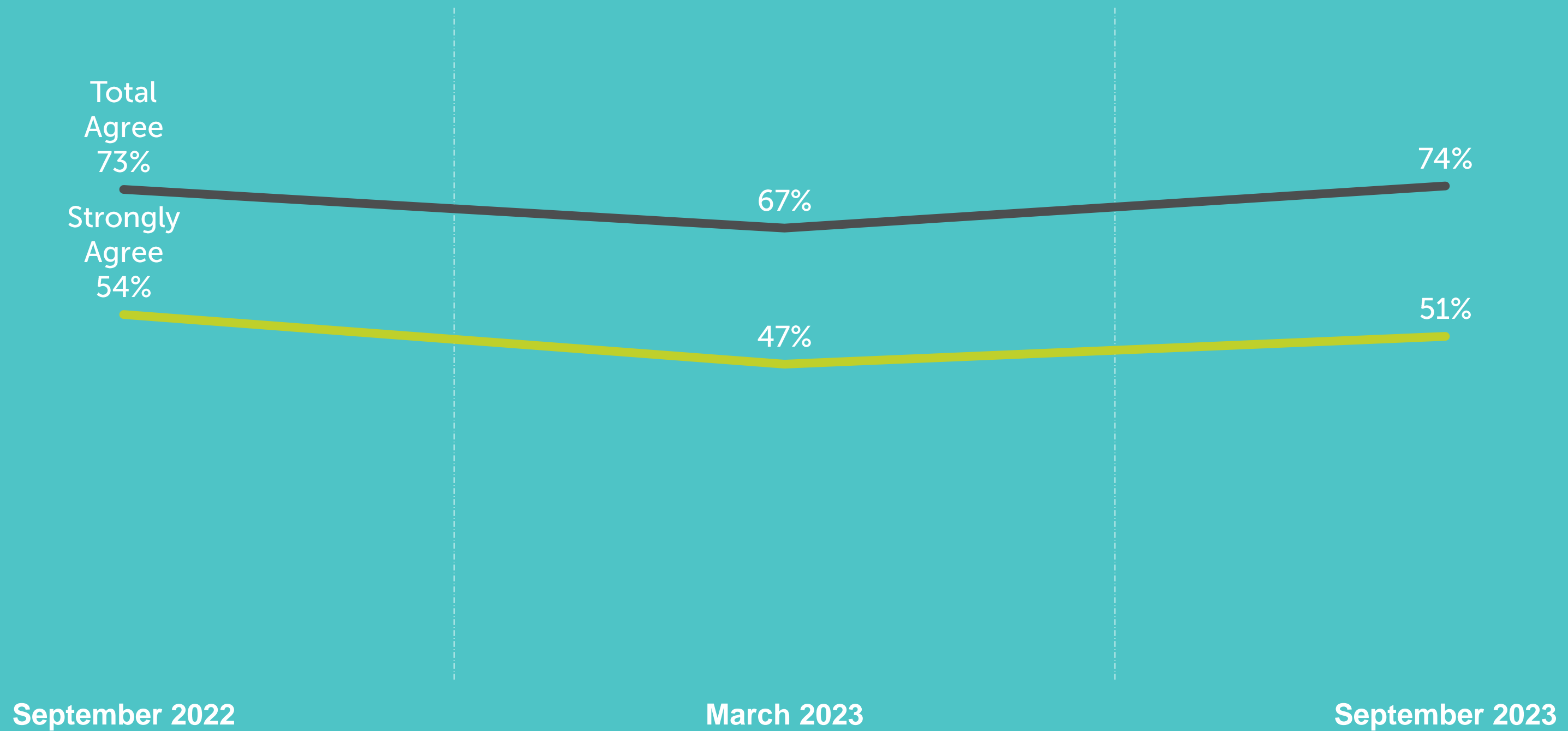






# Agree/Disagree Trend

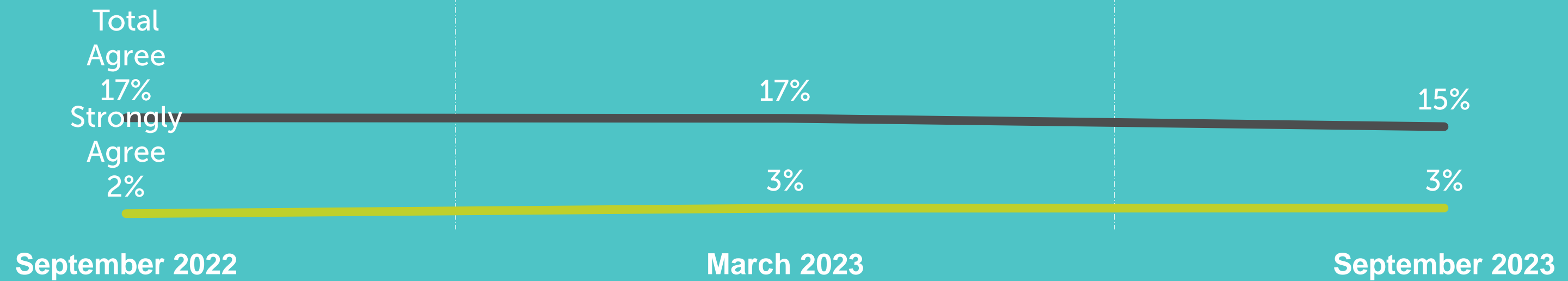
“Hiring more police officers should be an immediate priority for the City.”





# Agree/Disagree Trend

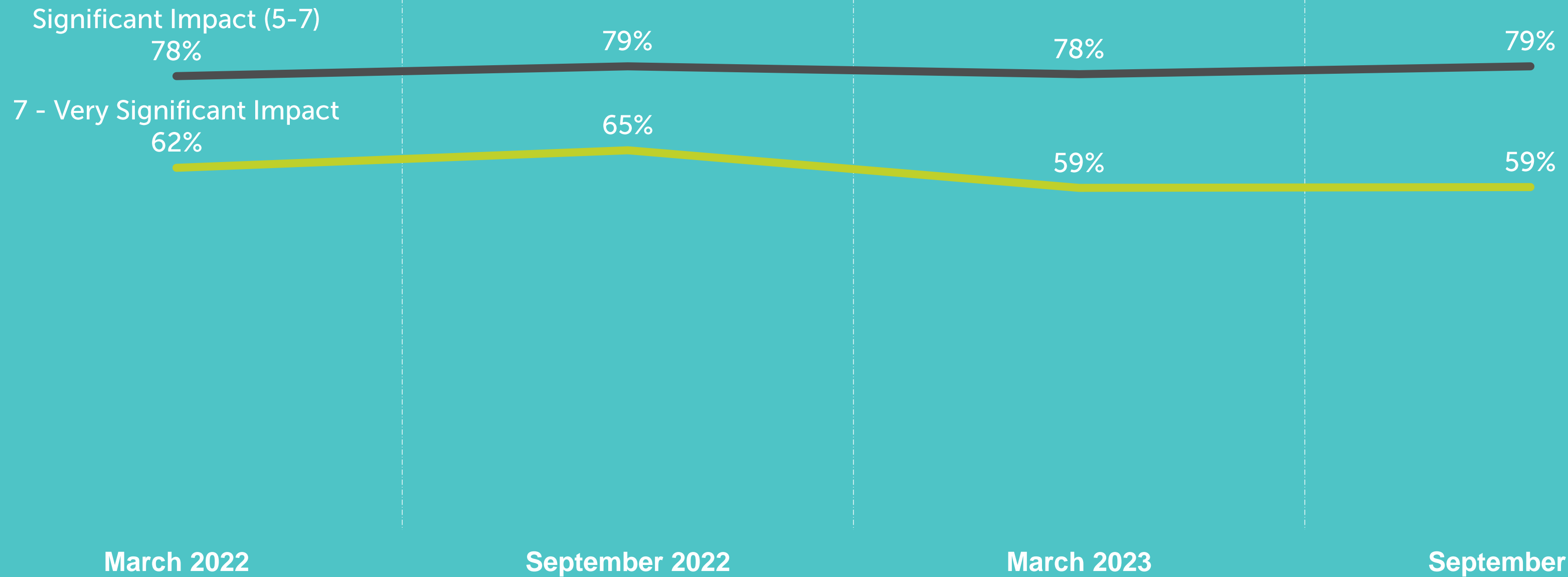
“I trust that the City has an effective plan to address the critical issues facing our city like homelessness, affordability, and public safety.”





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

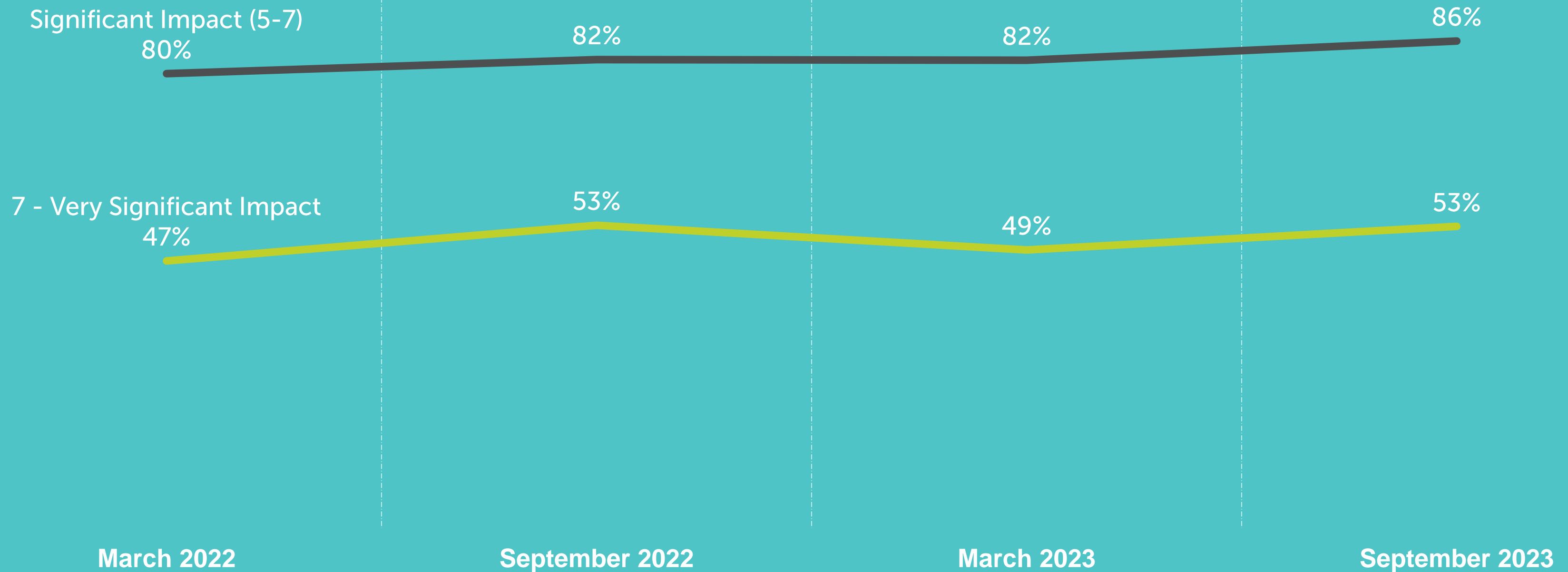
Impact on Quality of Life: "Closing encampments in parks, on sidewalks, and on other public right of ways."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

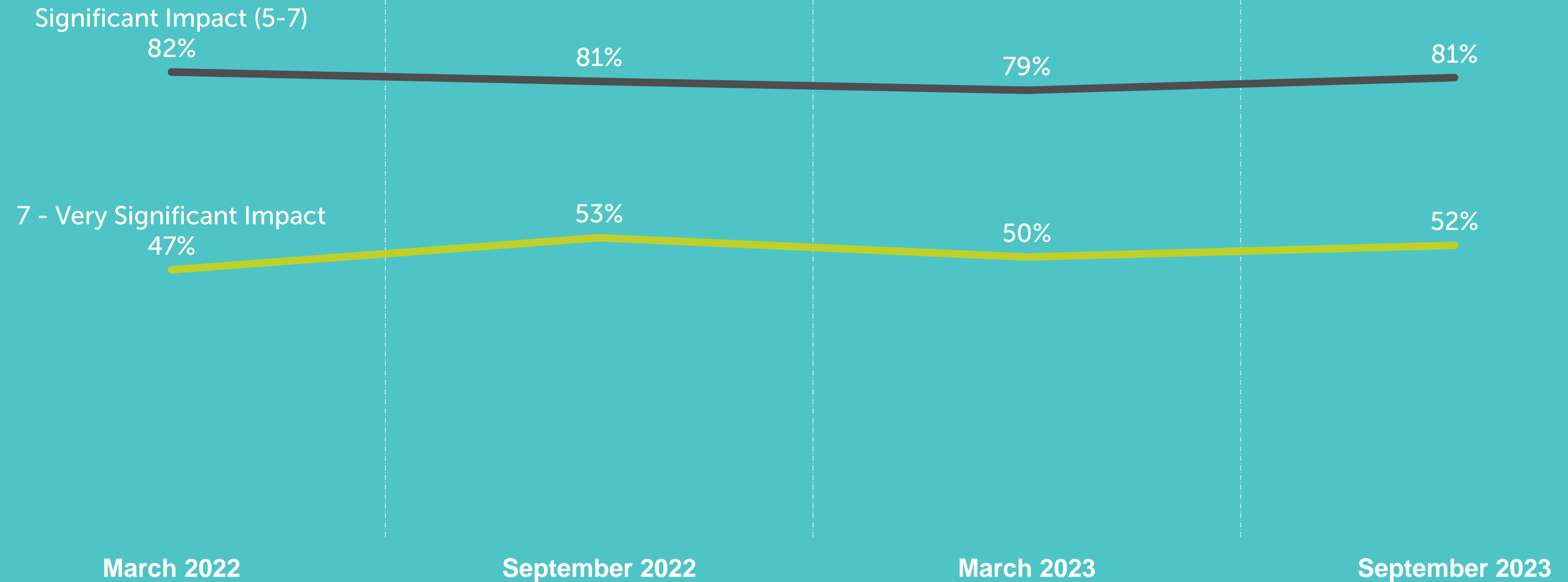
Impact on Quality of Life: "Helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

Impact on Quality of Life: "Addressing property crime like theft and car break ins."

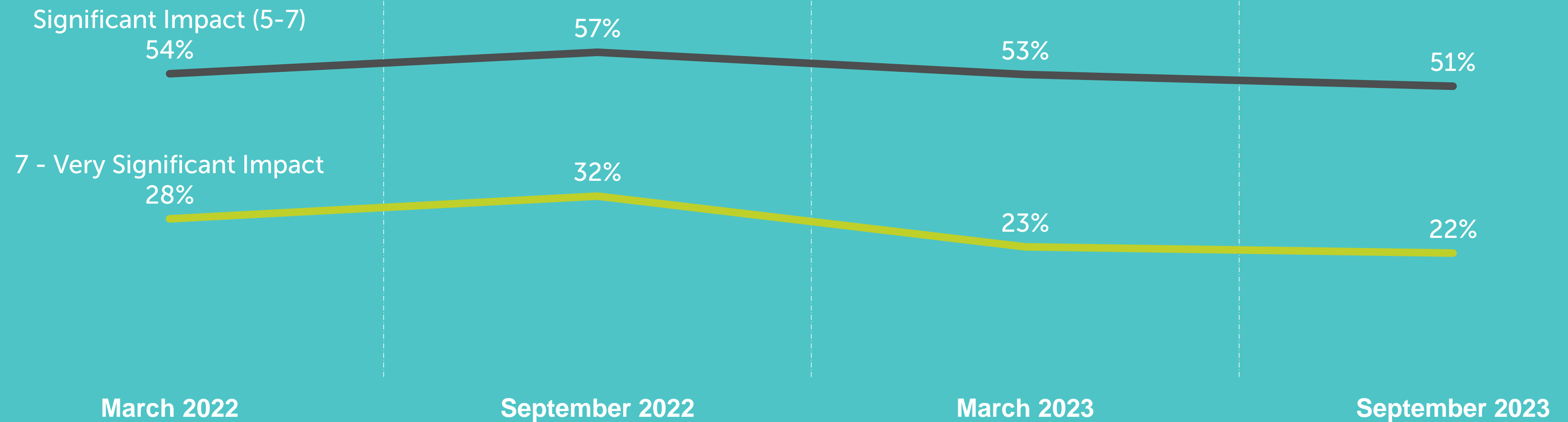






# Quality of Life Impact Trend

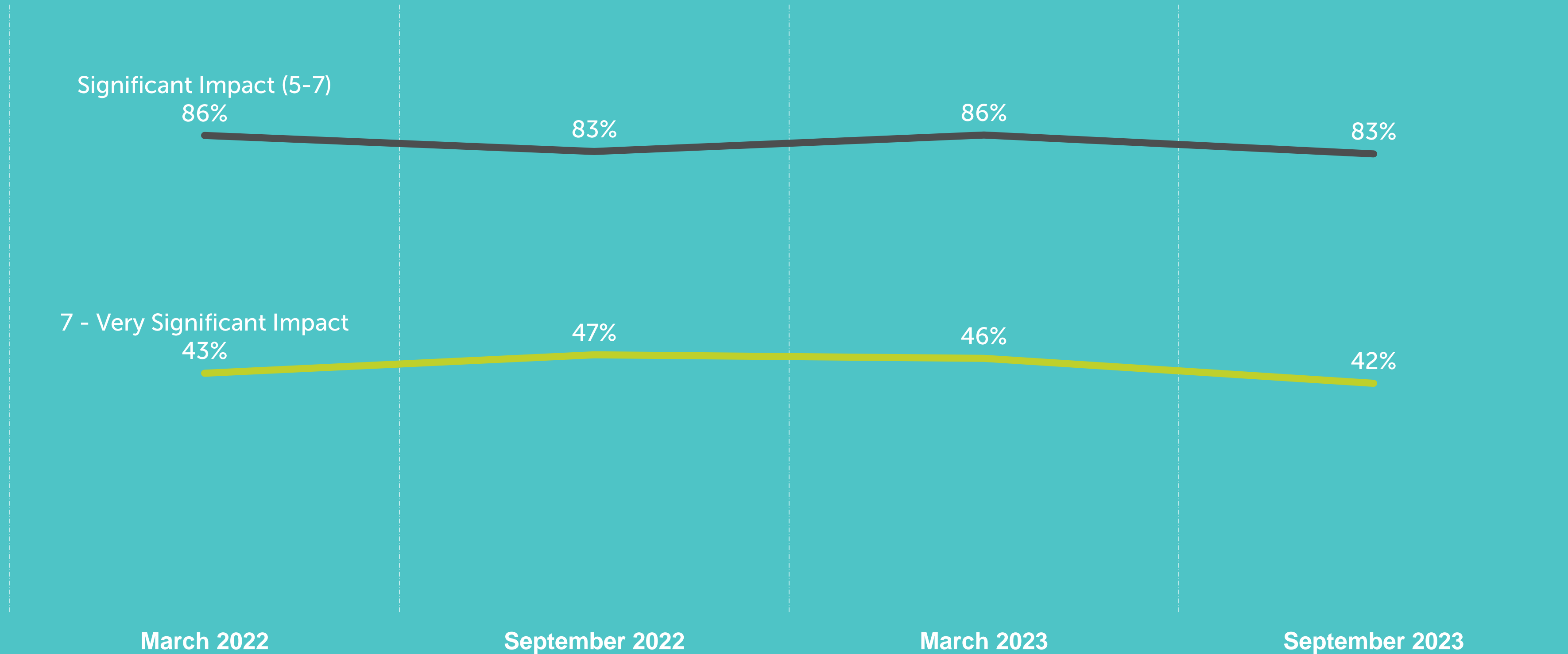
Impact on Quality of Life: "Reducing carbon emissions and climate pollution."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

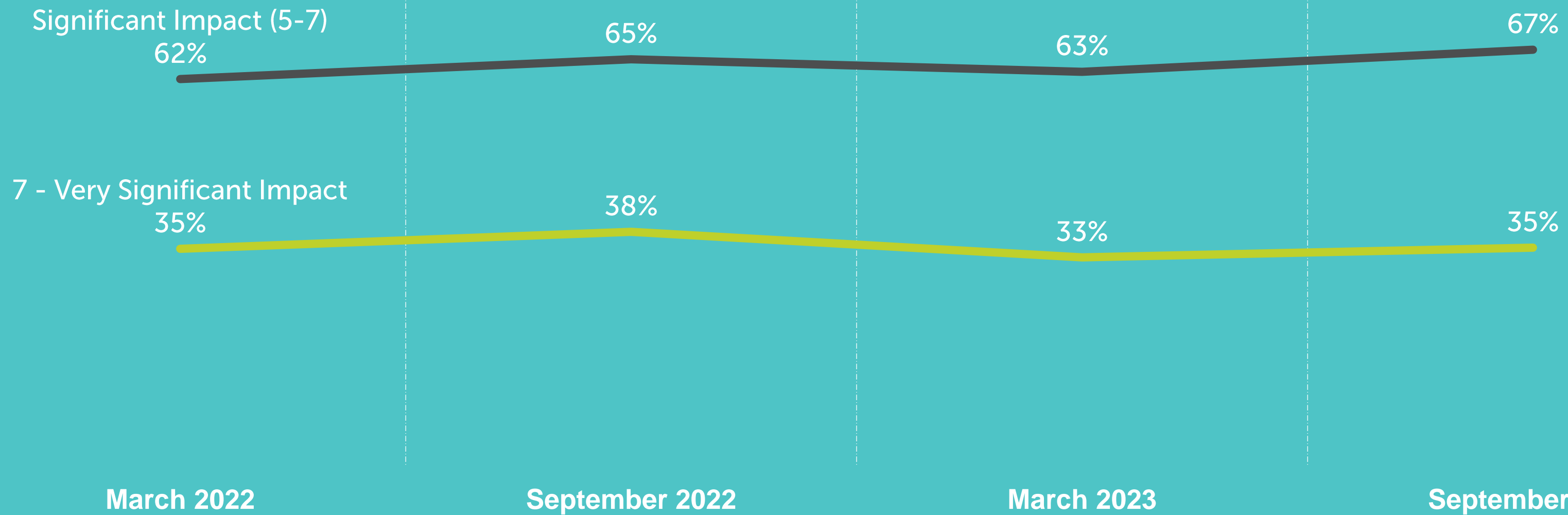
Impact on Quality of Life: "Maintaining bridges and infrastructure."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

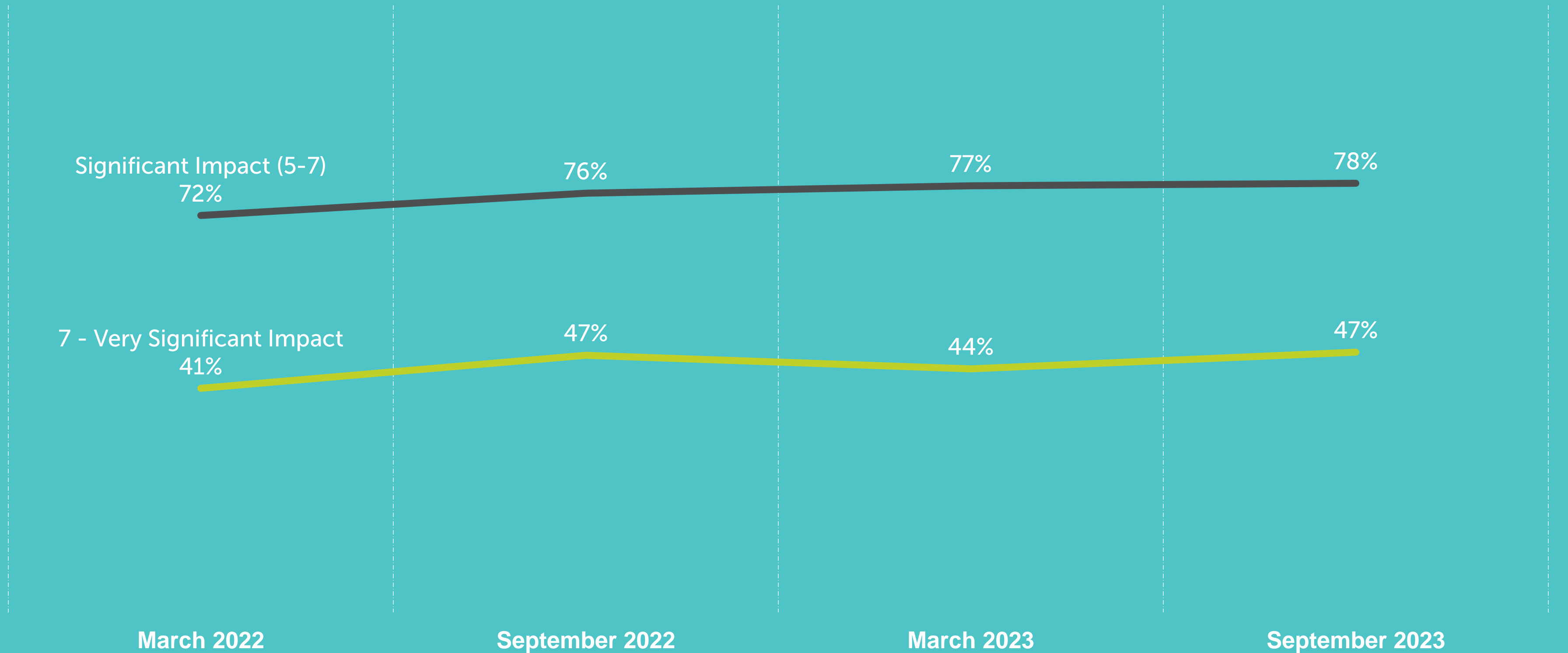
Impact on Quality of Life: "Addressing racially biased policing."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

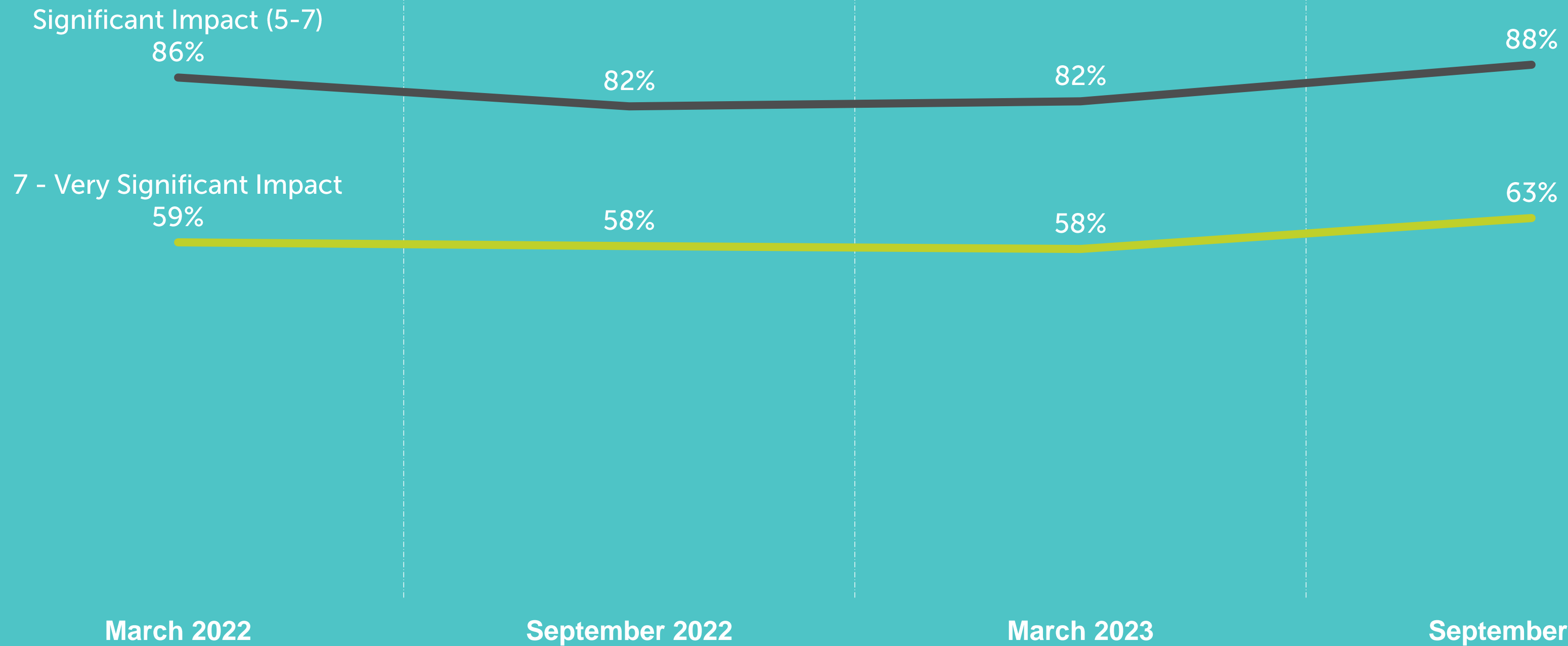
Impact on Quality of Life: "Making Seattle a good place to do business."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

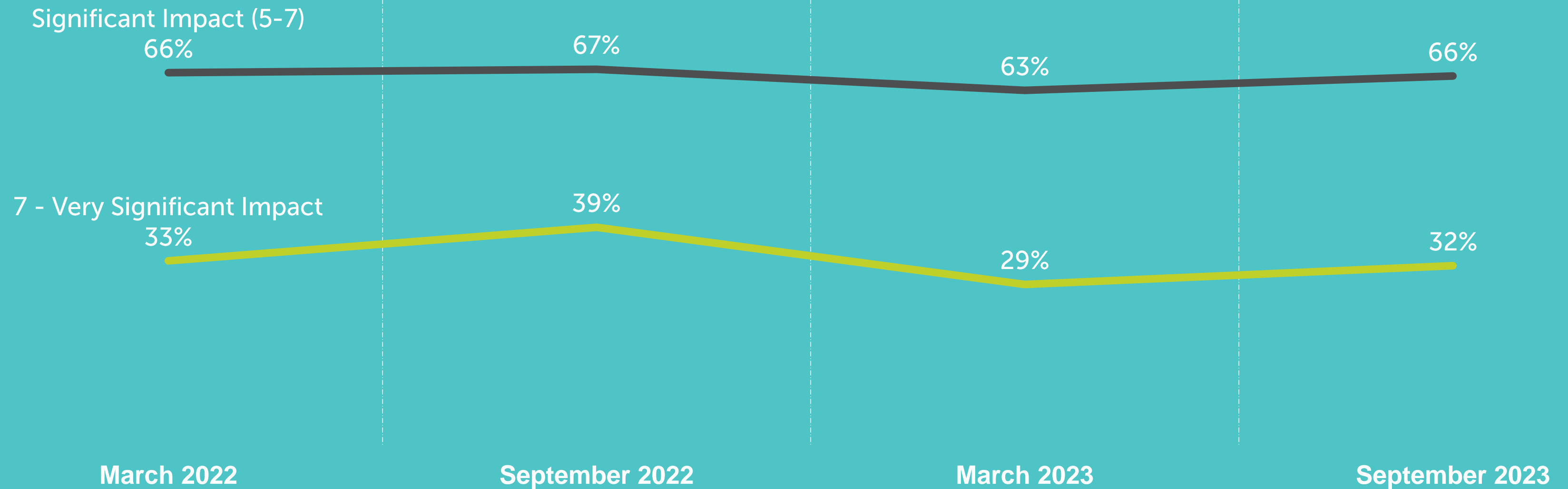
Impact on Quality of Life: "Addressing violent crime and gun violence."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

Impact on Quality of Life: "Investing in more public transit."

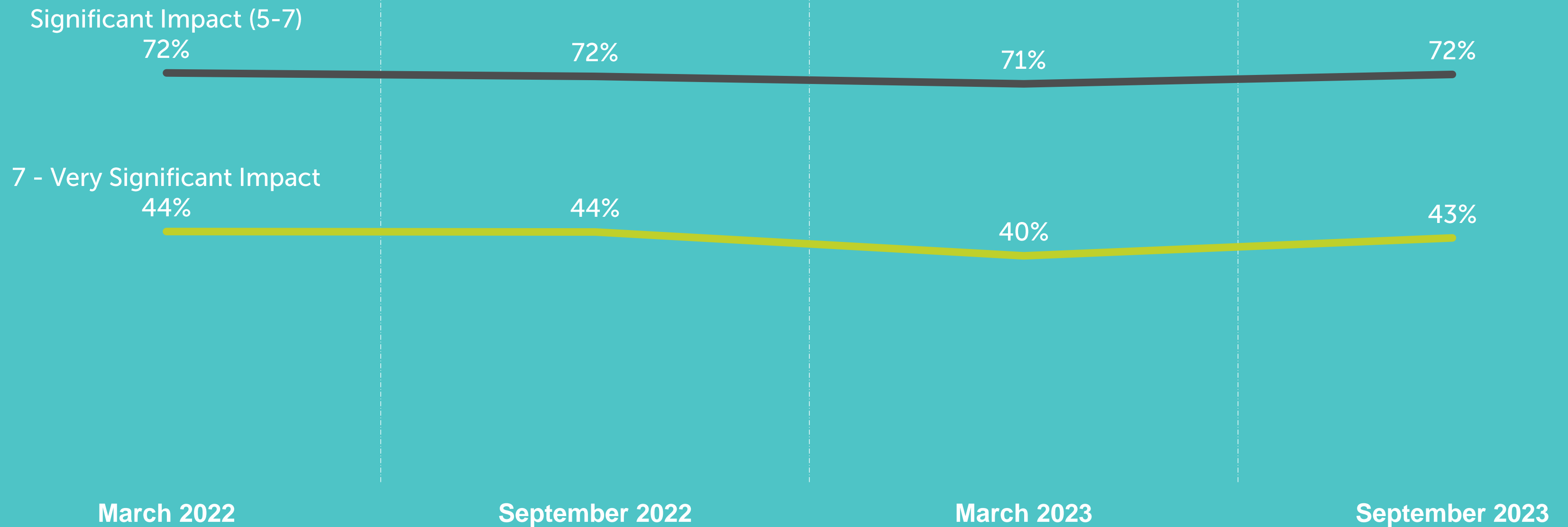






# Quality of Life Impact Trend

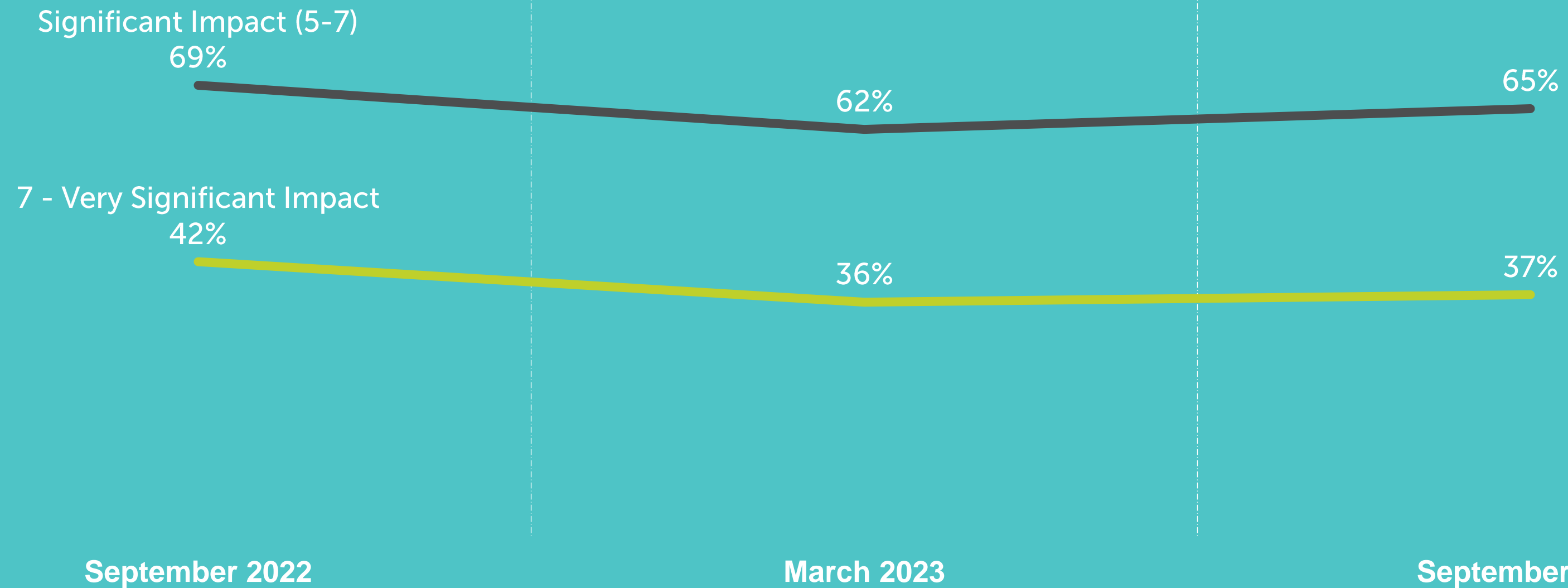
Impact on Quality of Life: "Building more affordable housing."





# Quality of Life Impact Trend

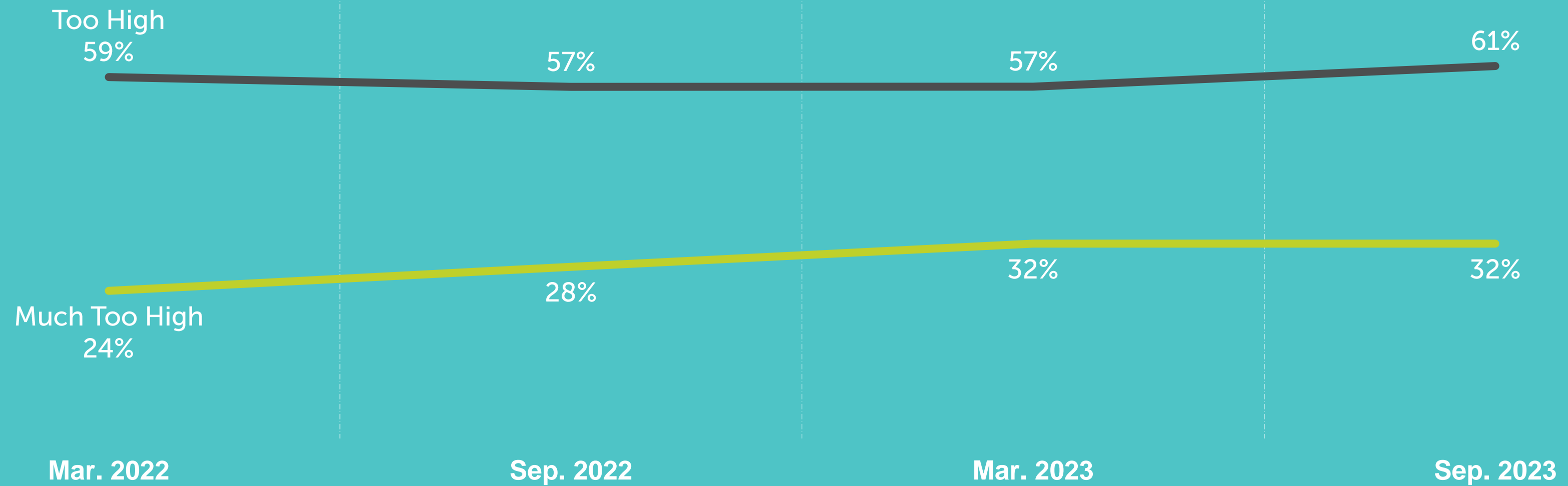
Impact on Quality of Life: "Hiring more police officers."





# Taxes in Seattle

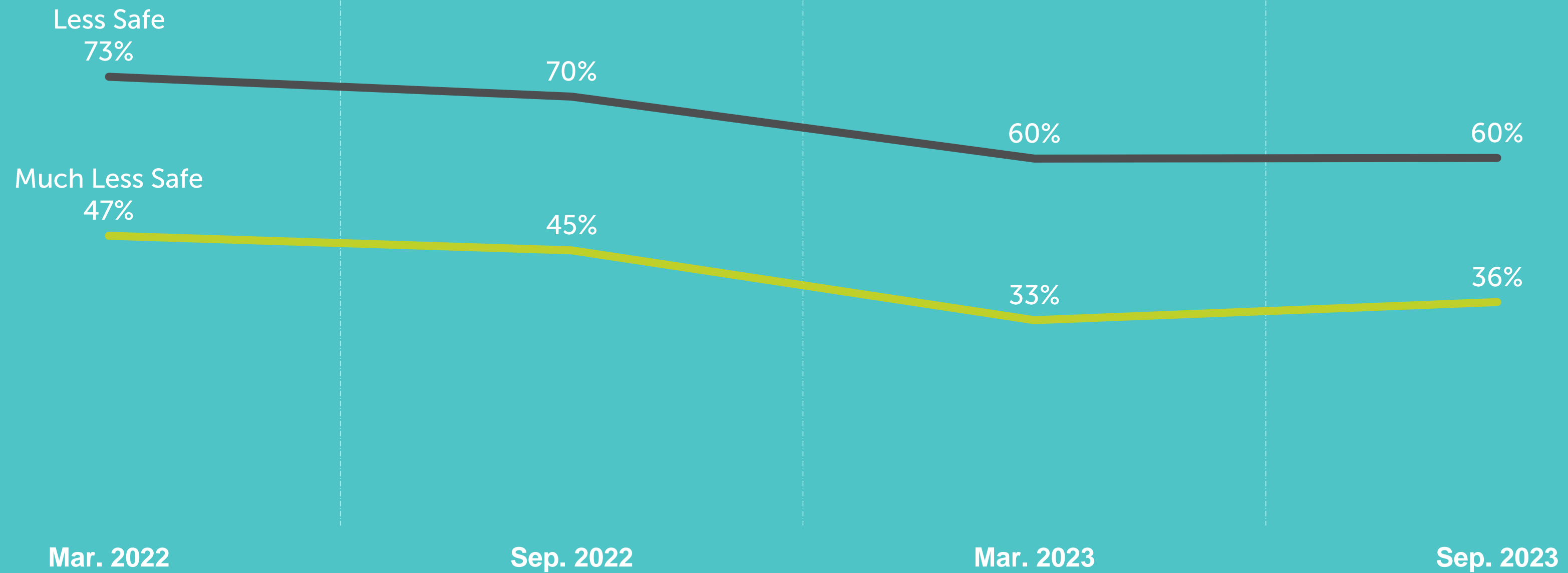
“Would you say that taxes in Seattle are too high, too low, or about right for the level of services the city provides?”





# Safety in Seattle

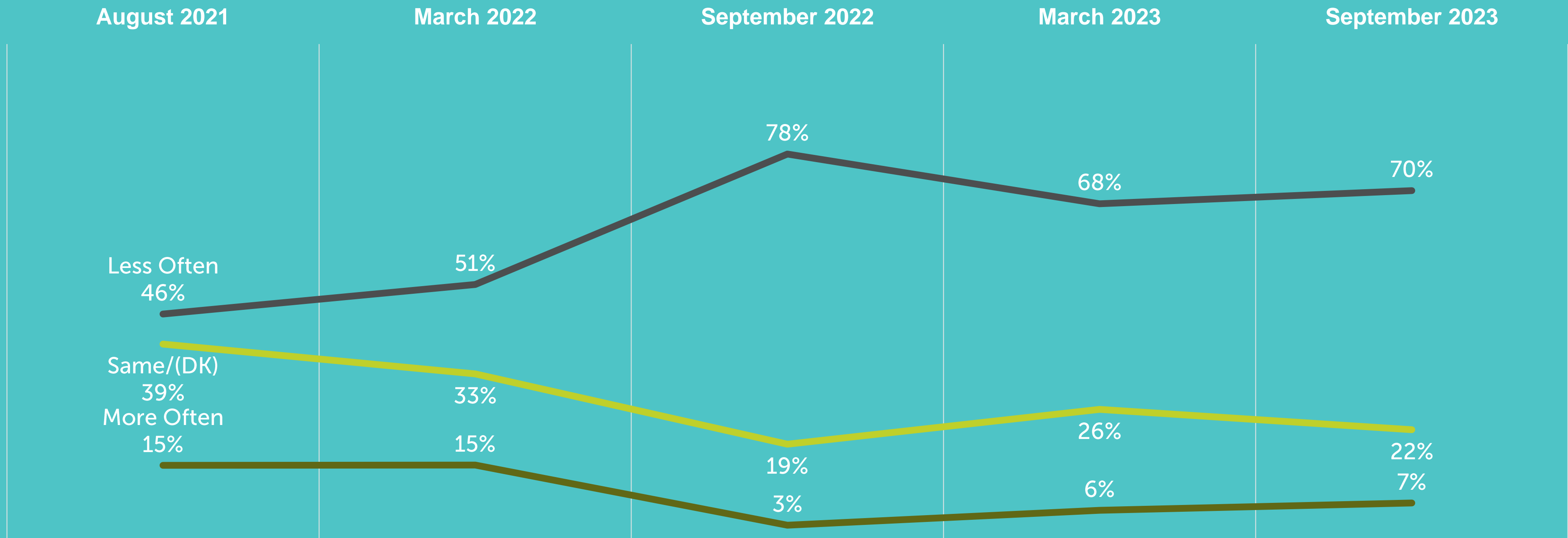
“Thinking about safety in your neighborhood, including property crime and violent crime, would you say you feel more safe or less safe than you did two years ago?”





# Downtown Seattle

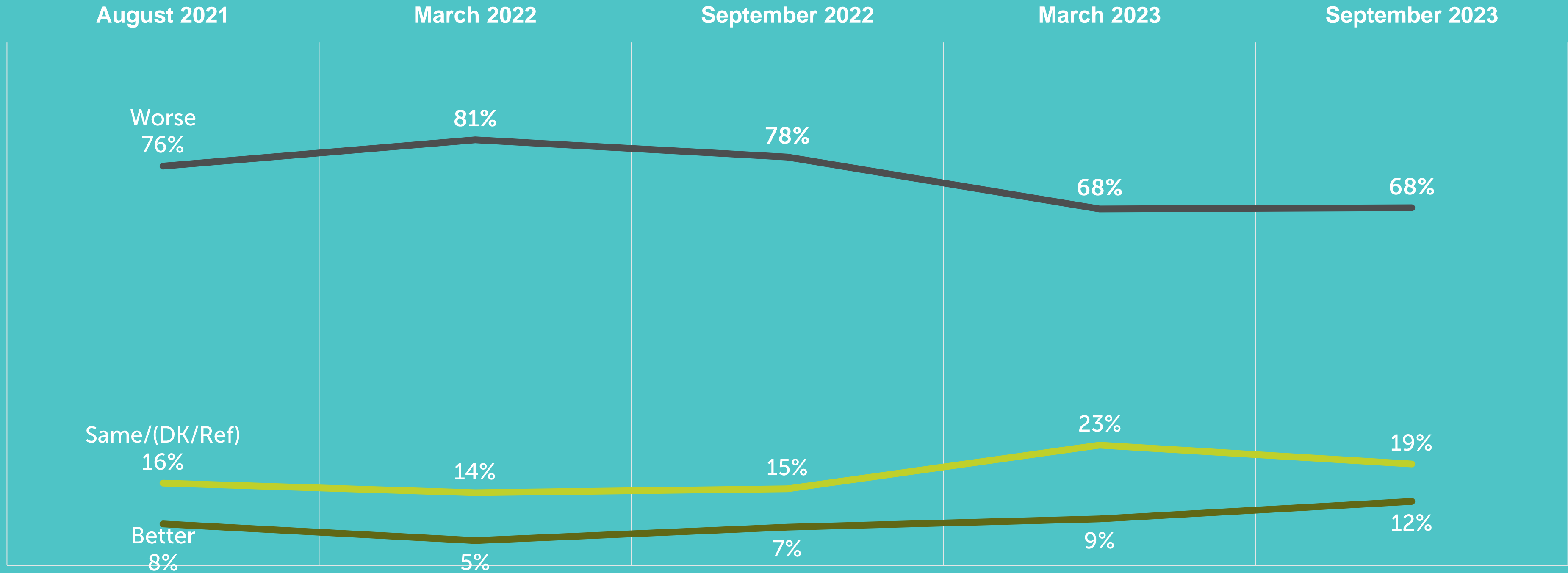
“And currently, for activities other than work, are you visiting downtown Seattle more, less, or about the same as you did before the pandemic?”





# Overall Quality of Life Trend

“Do you think the overall quality of life in Seattle is better, the same, or worse than it was 4 years ago?”

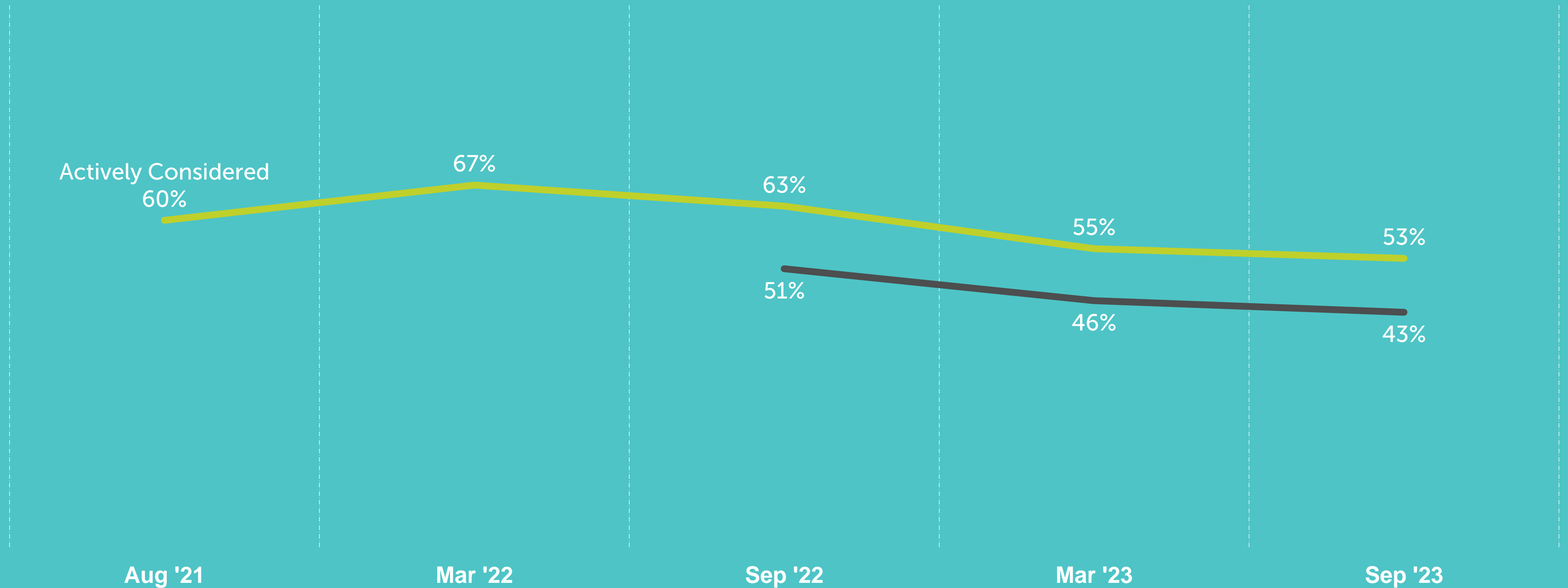






# Considered Moving Trend

"Have you actively considered moving out of Seattle?"  
(IF YES) "And are you still actively considering moving out of Seattle?"





# Reasons To Leave Trend

"What is the main reason you have considered moving?"

