



THE INDEX VI

Spring 2024



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 March 5 – 14, 2024
- 700 completed interviews; effective margin of error: ± 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 Fall 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 held steady at 4.24 on a 0-to-10 scale (compared to 4.23 in the fall) as have most measures with a few notable exceptions:*
 - *Homelessness and public safety remain voters top concerns, but concerns about affordability are on the rise, with one-in-four voters now listing it as a top concern. There has been a similar increase in people saying they have considered leaving Seattle and the top reason these voters give for thinking about leaving is affordability.*
 - *Concern about police bias and misconduct is down and trust in the City Council on police reform has grown significantly but is still very low.*
 - *As voters continue to be concerned about their personal financial situation and about city taxes, the belief that the city already has enough money to address important priorities has grown.*
- *A majority of Seattleites remain optimistic about the future of this region and three-quarters say they are proud to call themselves Seattleites, mentioning the natural beauty and the environment as the best things about living in Seattle.*

Summary



- On a number of questions, Seattle voters make it clear that they want the City to focus on the basics:
 - Nearly two-thirds (63%) say they are concerned about their personal financial situation and 6-in-10 think taxes are too high for the level of services the city provides.
 - Most voters do not believe the City has an effective plan to address fundamental issues like homelessness, affordability, and public safety.
 - Voters continue to distrust the city on spending, and most voters believe Seattle already has enough money to address important priorities.
 - By a 90% to 9% margin, voters agree that the City should “focus on the funding the basics like filling potholes, maintaining parks, and addressing public safety.”
 - By a 69% to 30% margin, voters say focus on maintaining the infrastructure we have rather than focusing on bold initiatives like more bike lanes and street redesigns and amenities.
 - By a 76% to 23% margin, voters say the City should work to offset the budget deficit by reducing non-critical spending while protecting vulnerable residents, rather than by raising taxes to maintain current spending levels.

Summary



- *The actions voters think would have the most impact on improving quality of life (“a very significant impact”) also reflect a voters’ desire to focus on basic responsibilities, including homelessness/ encampments and a variety of public safety issues.*
 - *More than 8-in-10 Seattleites say helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns would improve quality of life in Seattle.*
- *Voter support for increased density – in their own neighborhood - remains strong and in a new question, six-in-ten Seattleites agree that more construction of retail and commercial spaces should be allowed in their neighborhood.*
- *Voters continue to recognize that downtown is central to the region’s economy, 80% agree they’re worried about downtown’s future, and only 14% are optimistic about downtown’s economic future. Safety is a key reason voters have concerns about Downtown, with only a third saying they would feel safe visiting at night. And safety related concerns are the top reason Seattleites say they aren’t visiting Downtown more often.*
- *A majority continue to say they feel less safe in their own neighborhoods compared to two years ago.*

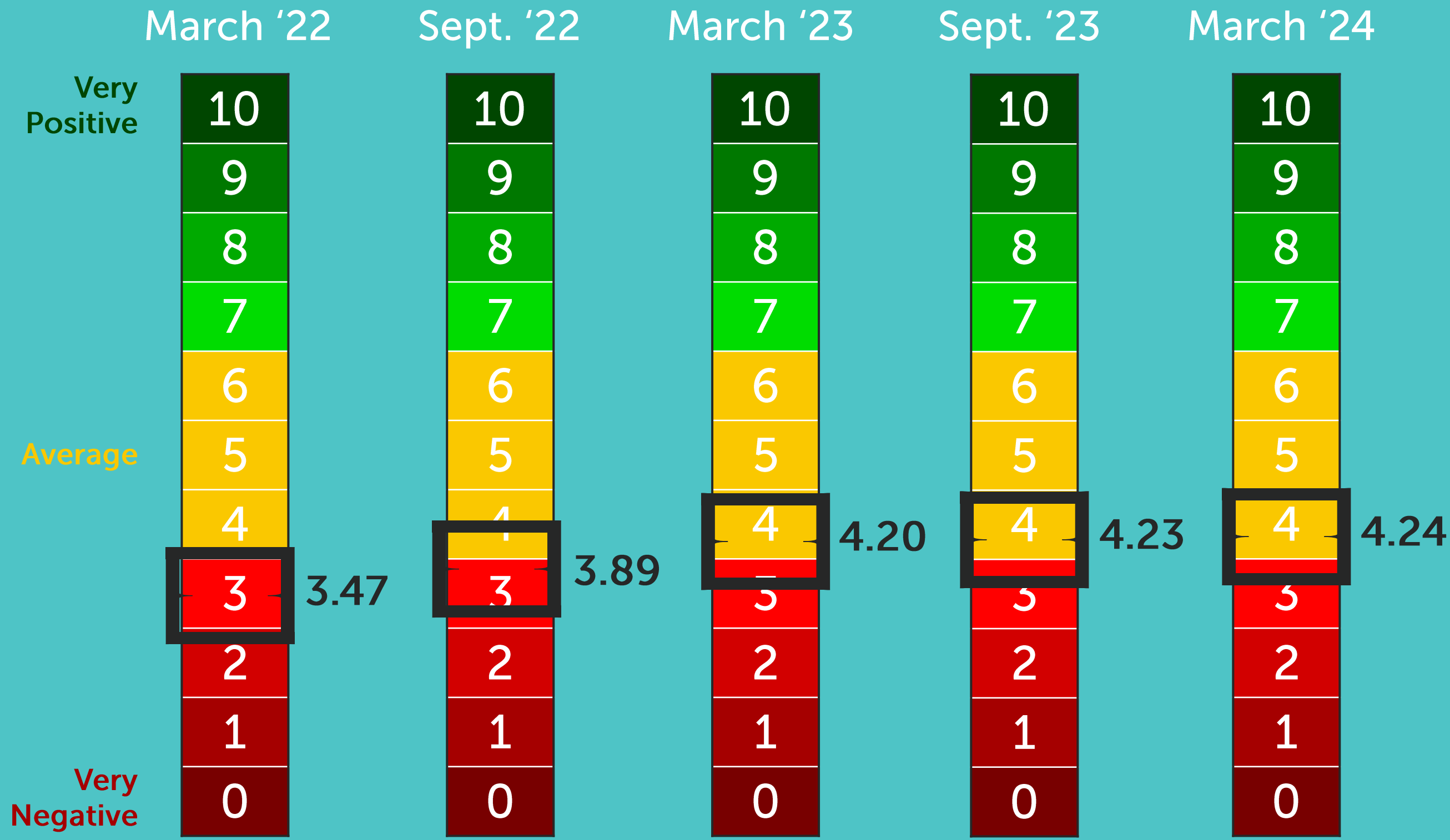
Quality of Life





Quality of Life: The Index

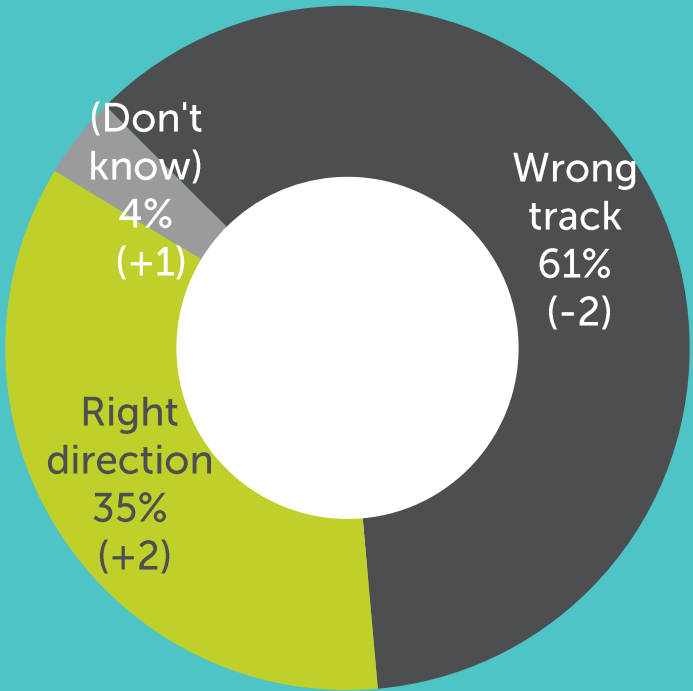
- The Index has stabilized in the past year.
- The Index aggregates the following quality of life survey questions:
 - Right Direction/Wrong Track
 - Quality of life compared to 4 years ago
 - Actively considered leaving Seattle
 - Optimism about the region’s future
 - Perception of safety
 - Concern 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.



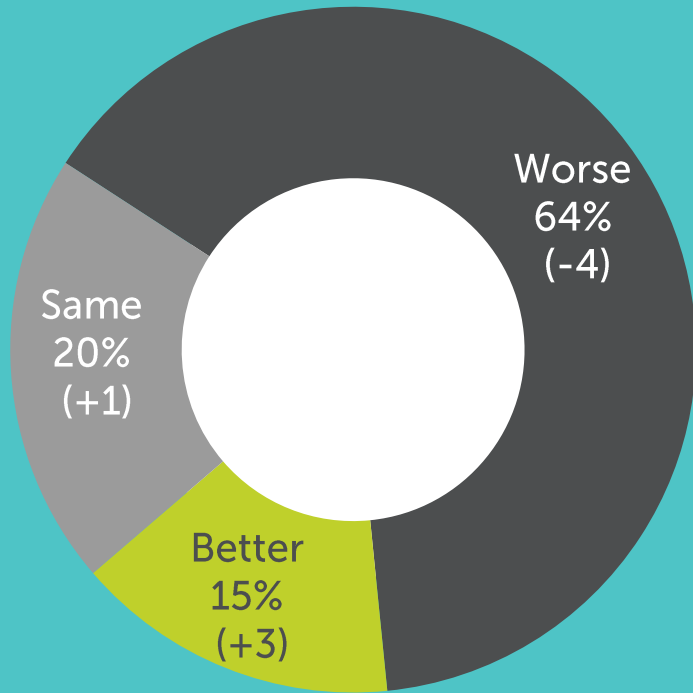


Quality of Life: By the Numbers

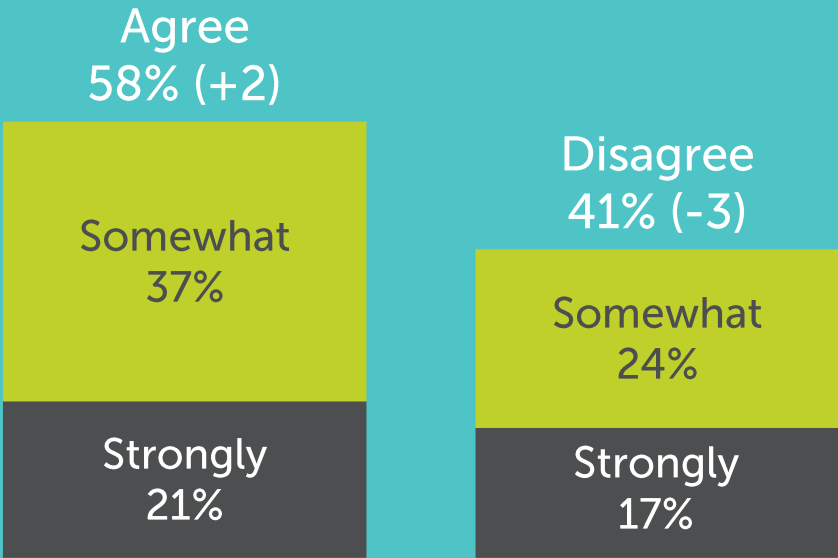
"Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?"



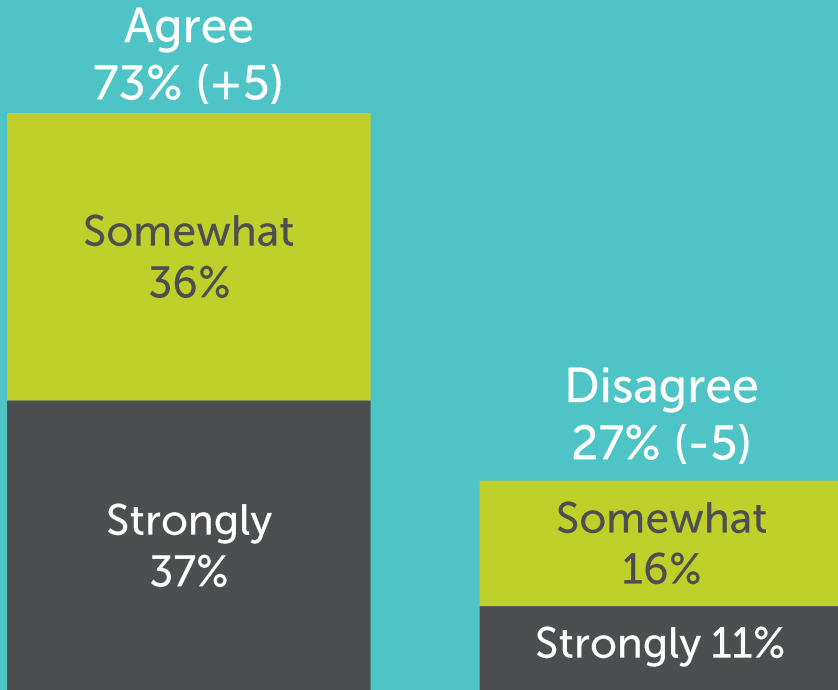
"Do you think the overall quality of life in Seattle is better, the same, or worse than it was 4 years ago?"



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



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

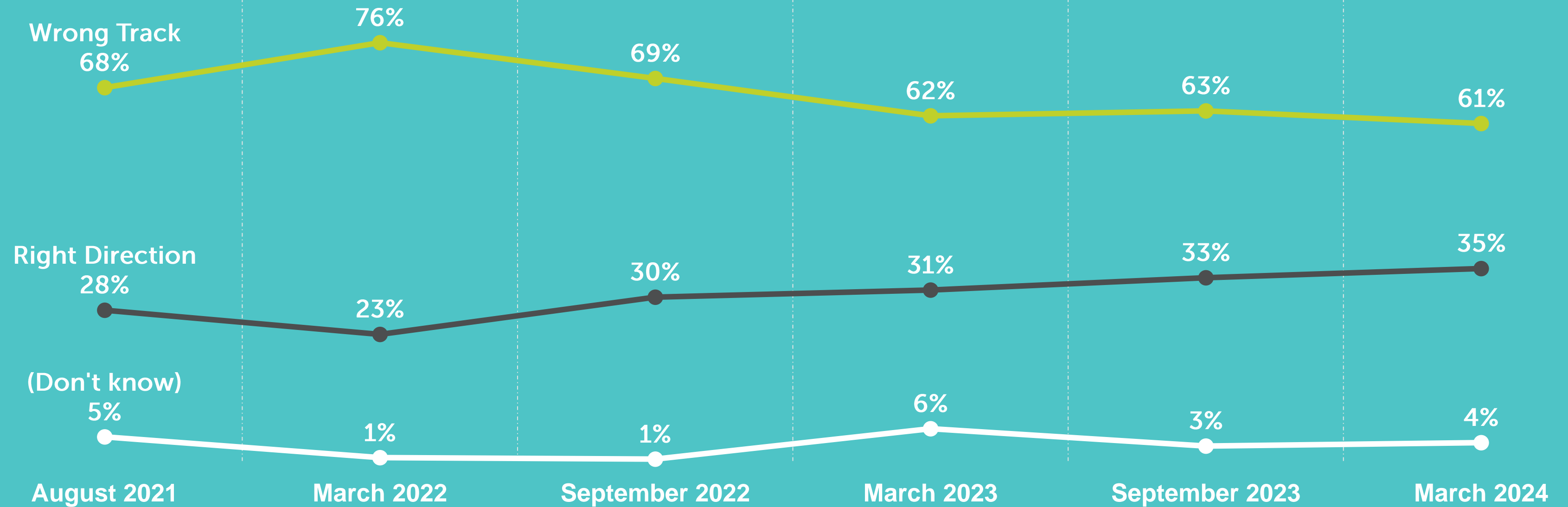


Quality of life attitudes have generally held steady since the fall. And despite broader pessimism, a majority remain optimistic about the future of this region and three-quarters say they are proud to call themselves Seattleites.



Right Direction/Wrong Track Trend

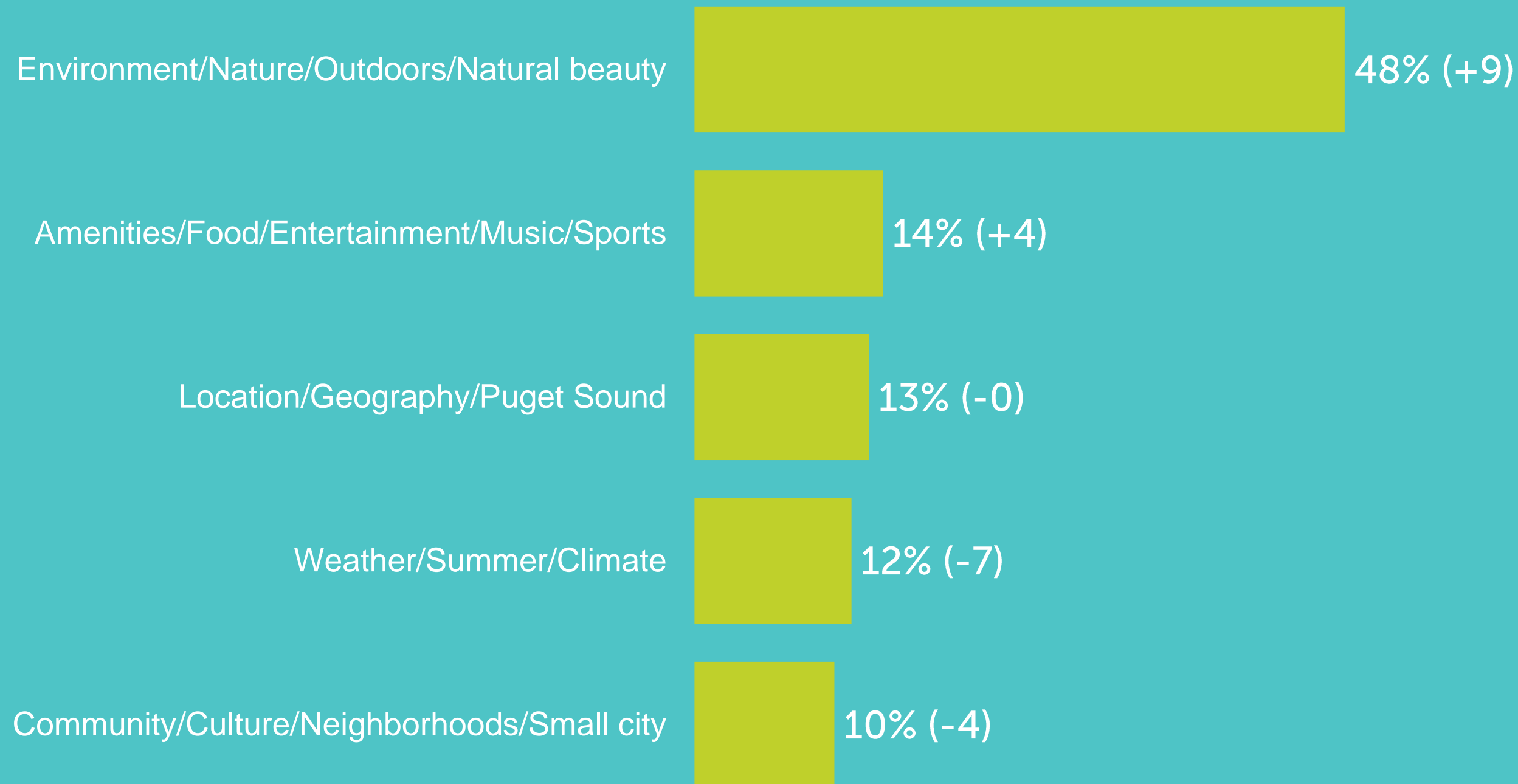
"Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?"





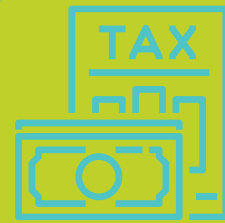
Best Thing About Living in Seattle

"What is the best thing about living in Seattle?"



The outdoors – the natural beauty, the environment, and climate – continue to be what people like best about living in Seattle.

Back to Basics

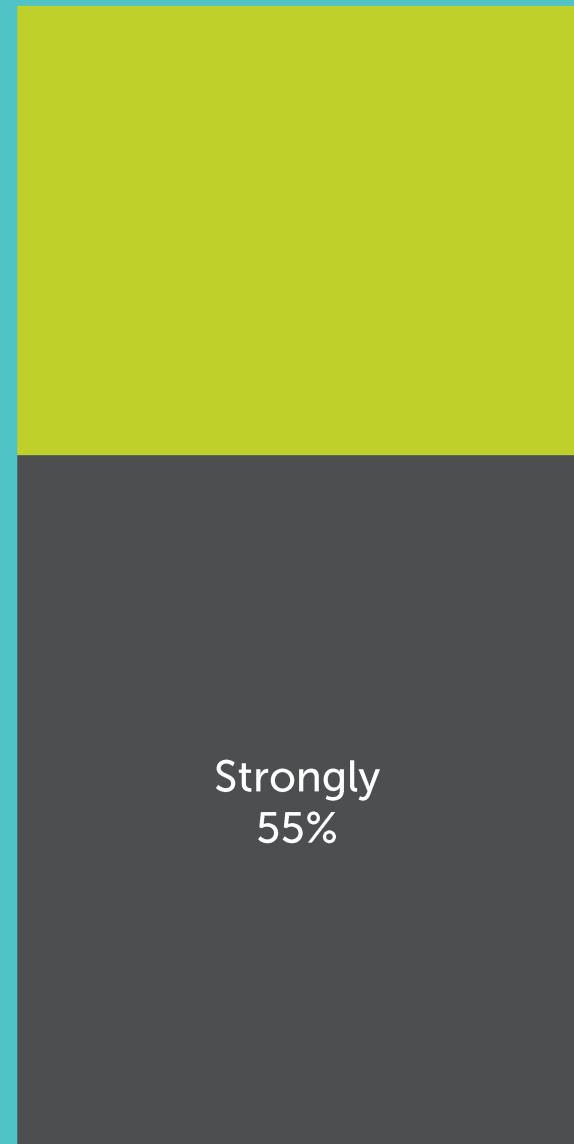




Focus on the Basics

The City of Seattle should focus on the funding the basics like filling potholes, maintaining parks, and addressing public safety.

Agree
90%



Disagree
9%



Strongly 2%

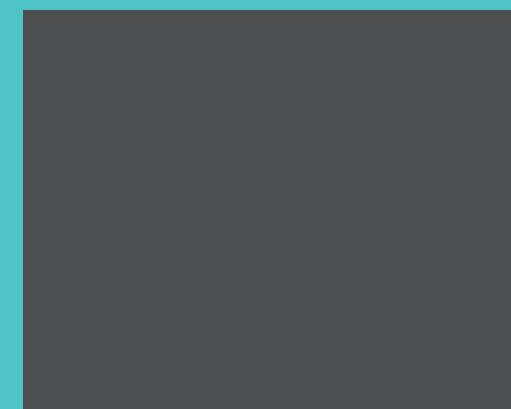
The city should focus on basics like maintaining the infrastructure we have, including bridge maintenance, filling potholes, and paving streets.

69%



The city should focus on bold initiatives like building more bike lanes & trails, redesigning streets to calm traffic, and installing street amenities like trees and benches.

30%



*In two different questions
Seattleites make it abundantly
clear that they want the City to
focus on the basics right now, both
broadly speaking and on
specifically on infrastructure
investments.*



Back-to-Basics Budgeting

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

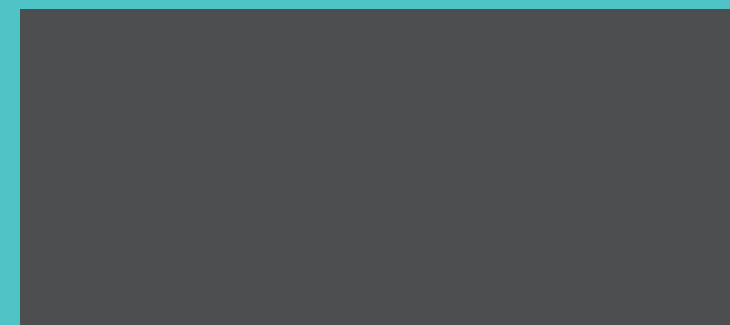
Statement A: The city should work to offset the deficit by prioritizing government basics, supporting our city's most vulnerable residents, and reducing non-critical spending before considering tax increases.

Statement B: The city should maintain the spending levels and programs in place today and raise new taxes to cover this estimated \$230 million deficit.

Reprioritize within
existing means
76%



Raise taxes to
address deficit
23%



By more than a 3-to-1 margin voters say the City should work to offset the budget deficit by prioritizing basics and supporting vulnerable residents rather than by raising taxes.



Taxes & Spending

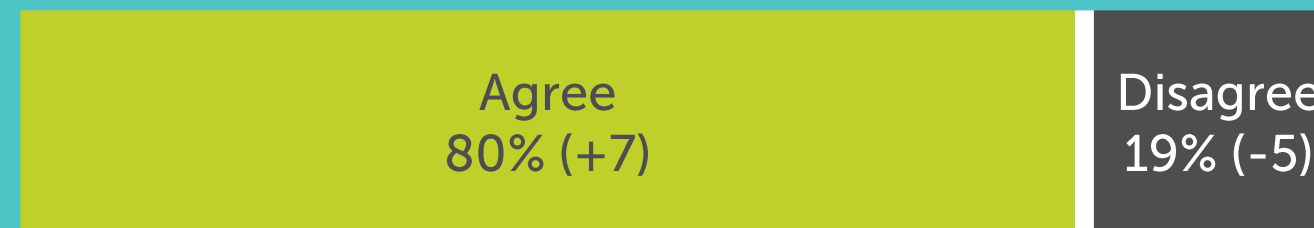
"How concerned are you about your personal financial situation given current economic conditions?"



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



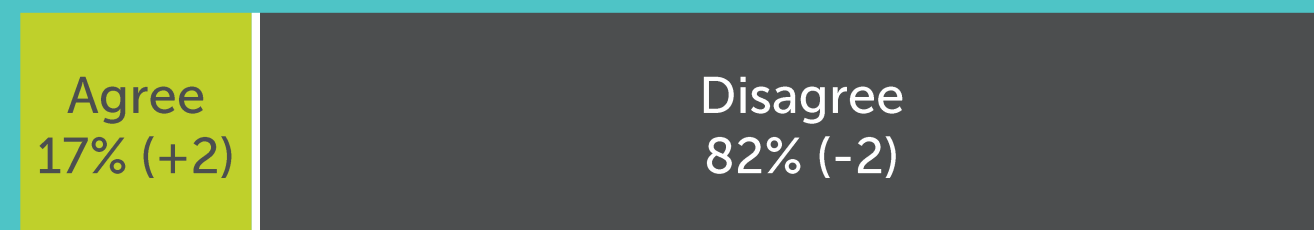
"The City of Seattle has enough money to address important priorities; they just need to spend it more effectively." *



"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."



* Last asked in August 2021 as: "The City of Seattle has enough money to address homelessness; they just need to spend it more effectively."



Voters remain concerned about their personal financial situation and three-in-five voters say taxes are too high.

Voters continue to distrust the city on spending, they don't think the city has a plan, and they increasingly believe the city already has enough money to address important priorities.

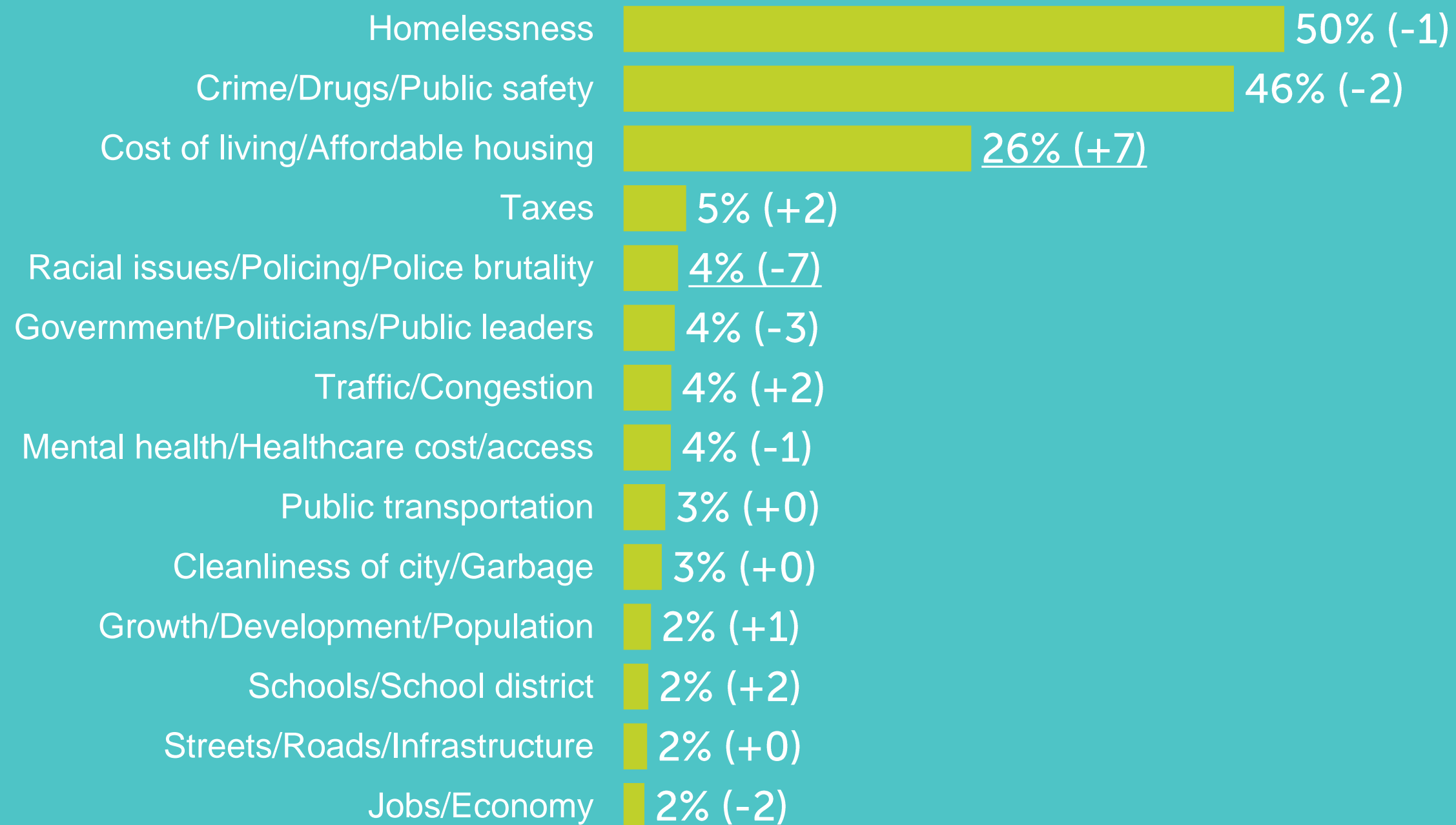
Top Concerns



Top Concerns



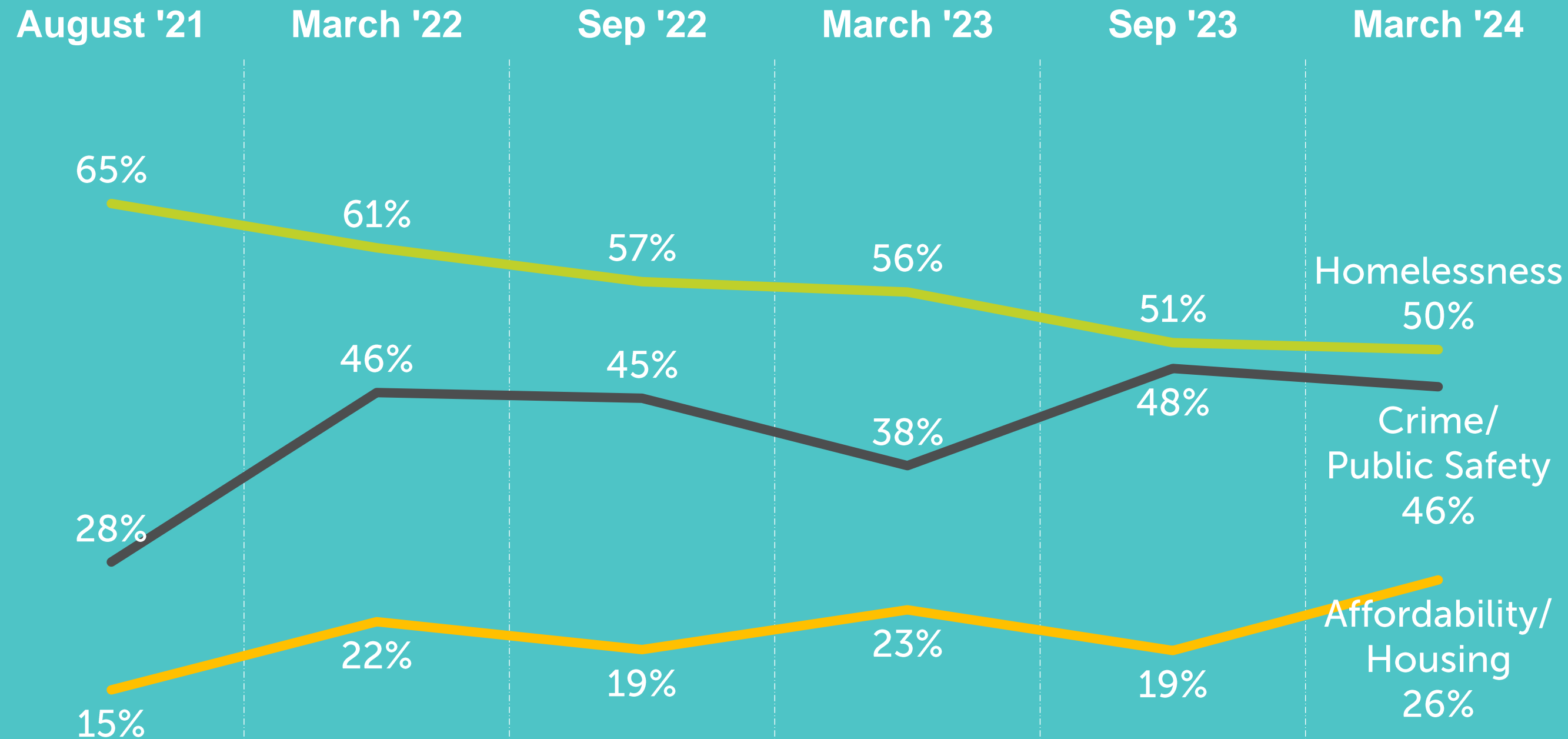
“What are the issues facing Seattle that you are most frustrated or concerned about?”



Homelessness and public safety remain voters' top concerns, with cost of living seeing a significant jump since the fall and concerns about police bias/misconduct declining.



Top Three Concerns - Trend

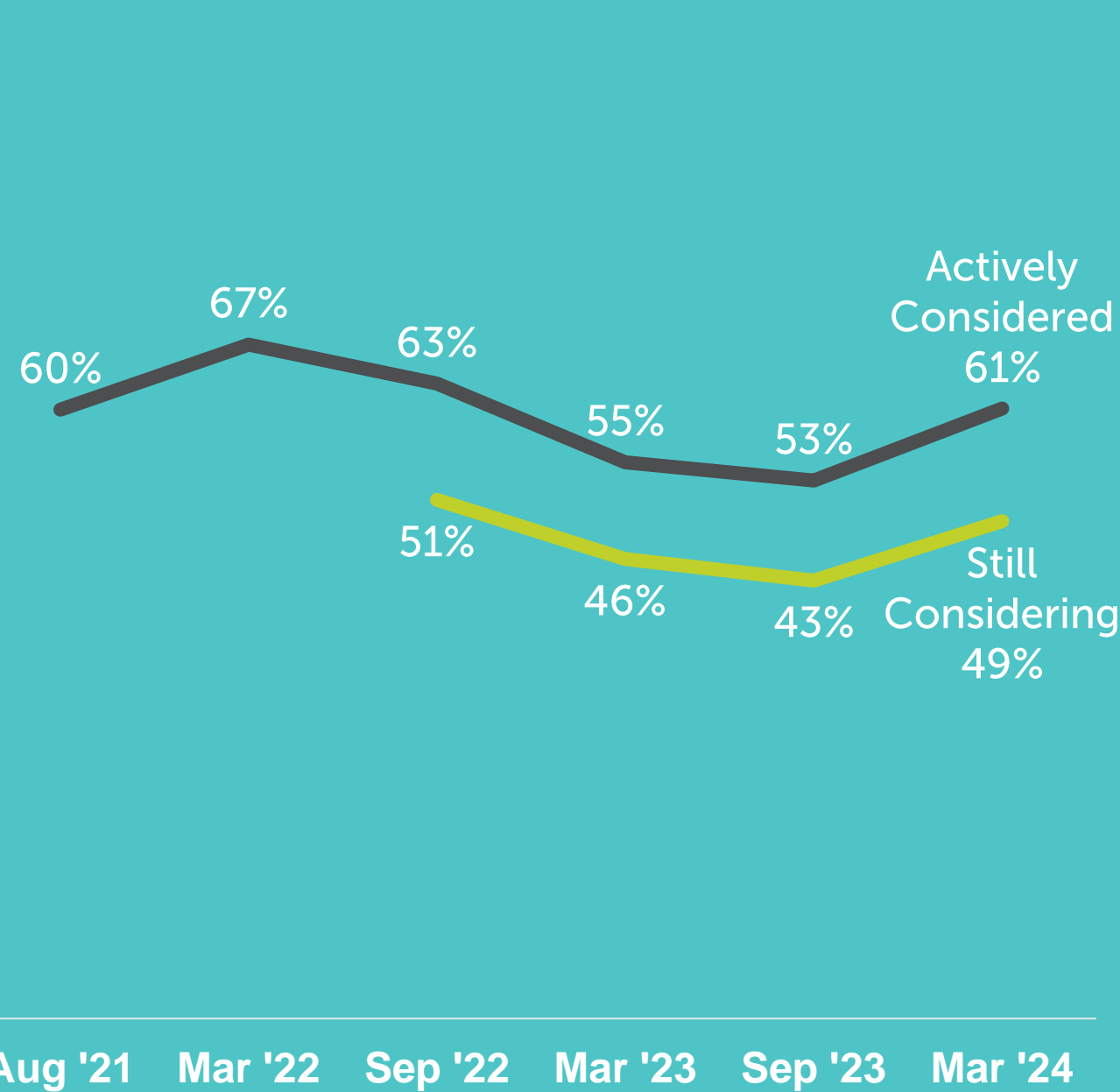


Homelessness and public safety have been the top concerns in every installment of The Index. Affordability concerns have increased and are now at their highest level in 2½ years.

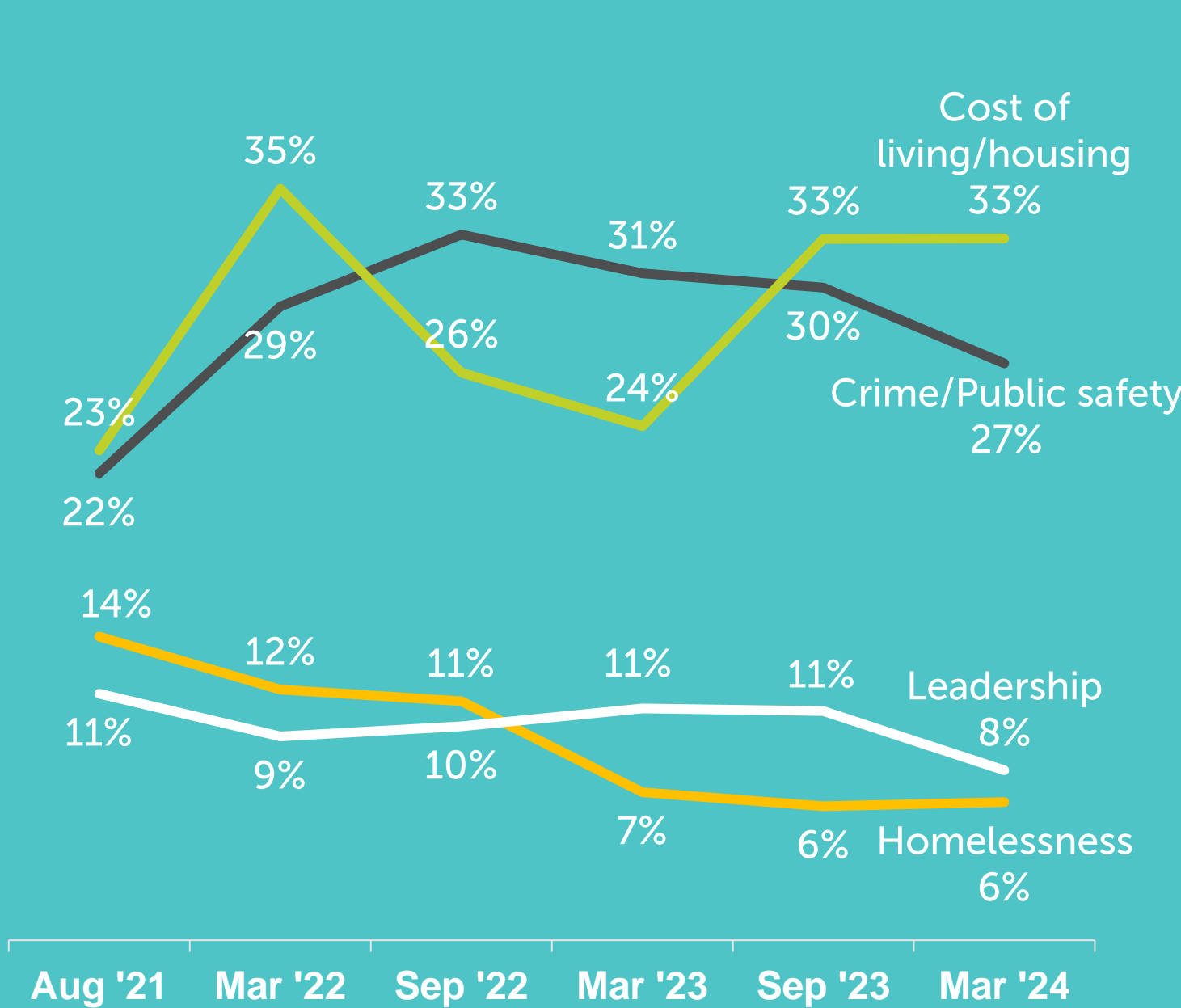
Leaving Seattle



"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)



There has been a spike in people who say they have considered leaving Seattle and cost of living/housing remains the top reason Seattleites have considered moving, followed by public safety.

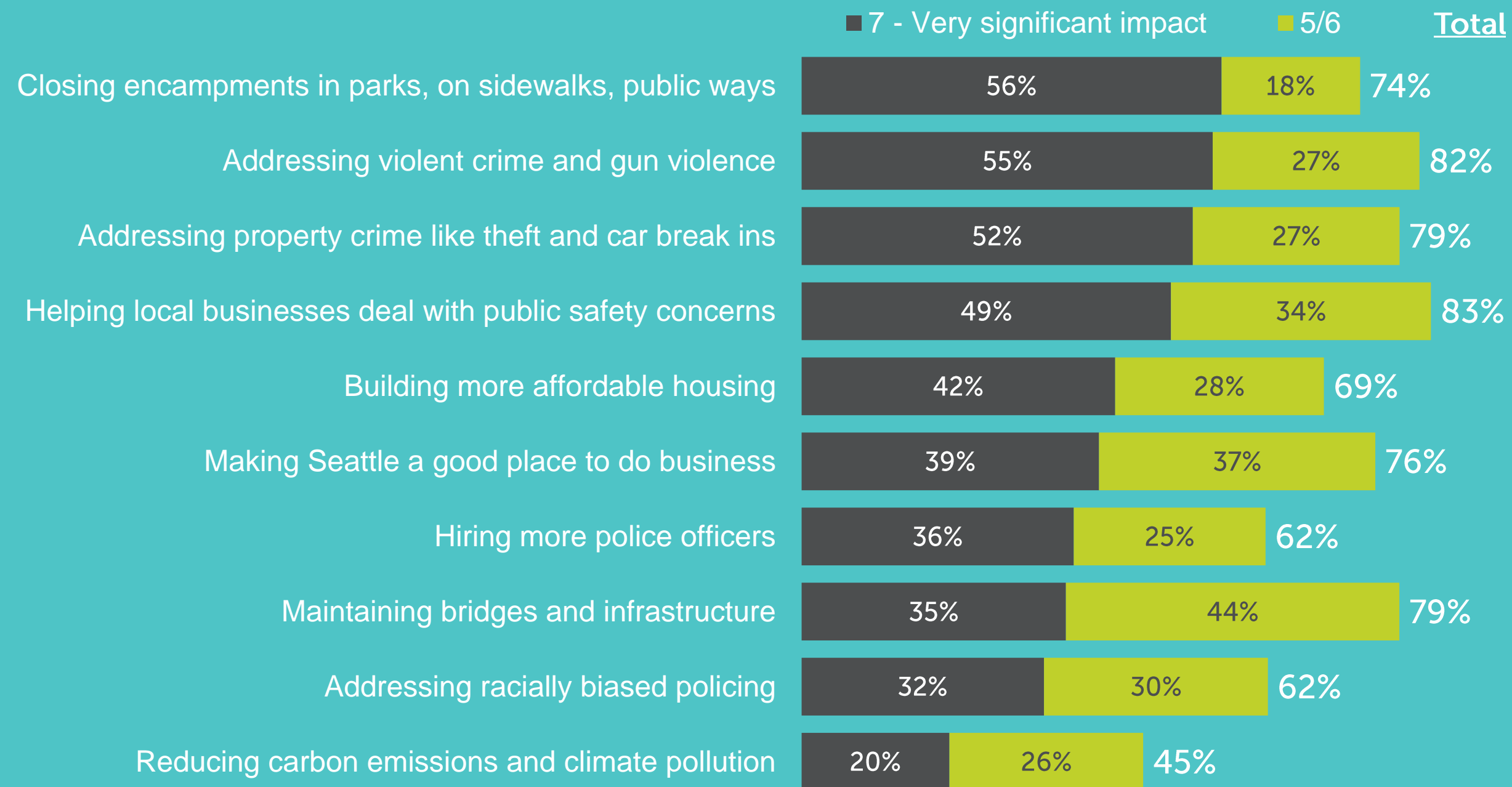
Improving Quality of Life





Improving Quality of Life

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



Looking at the actions voters think would have the most impact on improving quality of life (“very significant impact”), closing encampments and addressing a variety of public safety issues are at the top of the list.

Public Safety



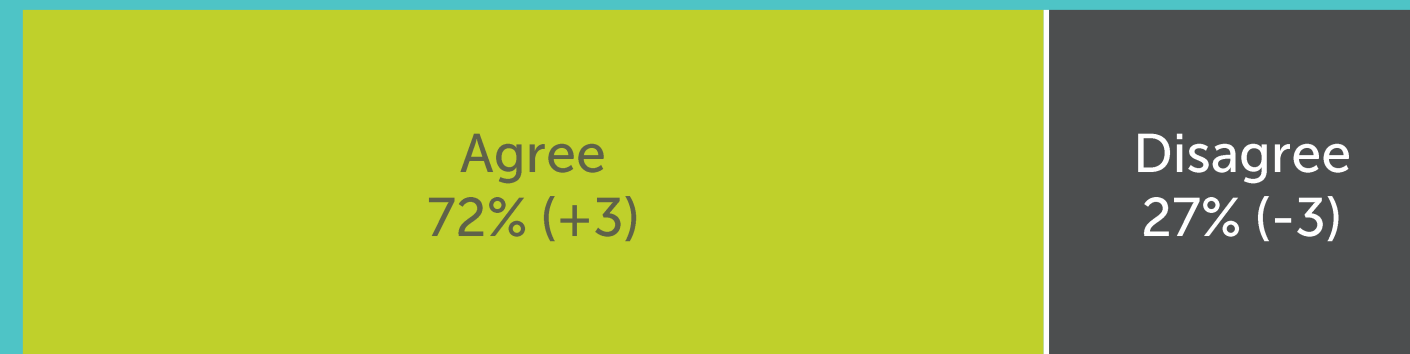


Safety in Neighborhoods & Downtown

"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 feel 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.



Addressing Public Safety

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

Agree
69% (-5)

Disagree
30% (+4)

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

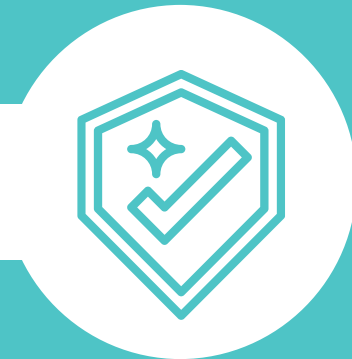
Agree
33% (+10)

Disagree
65% (-10)

A strong majority continue to agree the hiring more police officers needs to be an immediate priority for the City. Voters are more likely than in the past to say they trust the City Council to reform SPD, but two-thirds still disagree.



Growth & Housing





Development in Your Neighborhood

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

Agree
58%
(+5)

Disagree
41%
(-6)

"I support the building of a wider variety of housing in my neighborhood" *

Agree
69%
(+0)

Disagree
31%
(+1)

"We should allow the construction of more retail and commercial spaces in my neighborhood"

Agree
60%

Disagree
40%

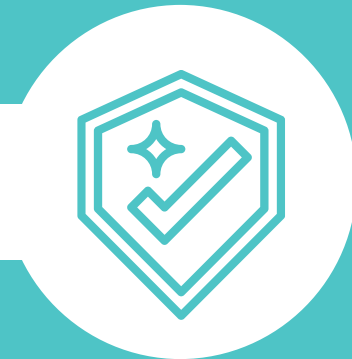


Nearly 6-in-10 now say that growth has been a positive for their area.

A strong majority of voters support building of a "wider variety" of housing in their own neighborhoods and in a new question, three-in-five agree that more construction of retail and commercial spaces should be allowed in their neighborhood.

* Asked as "I support the building of new housing in my neighborhood" in previous surveys.

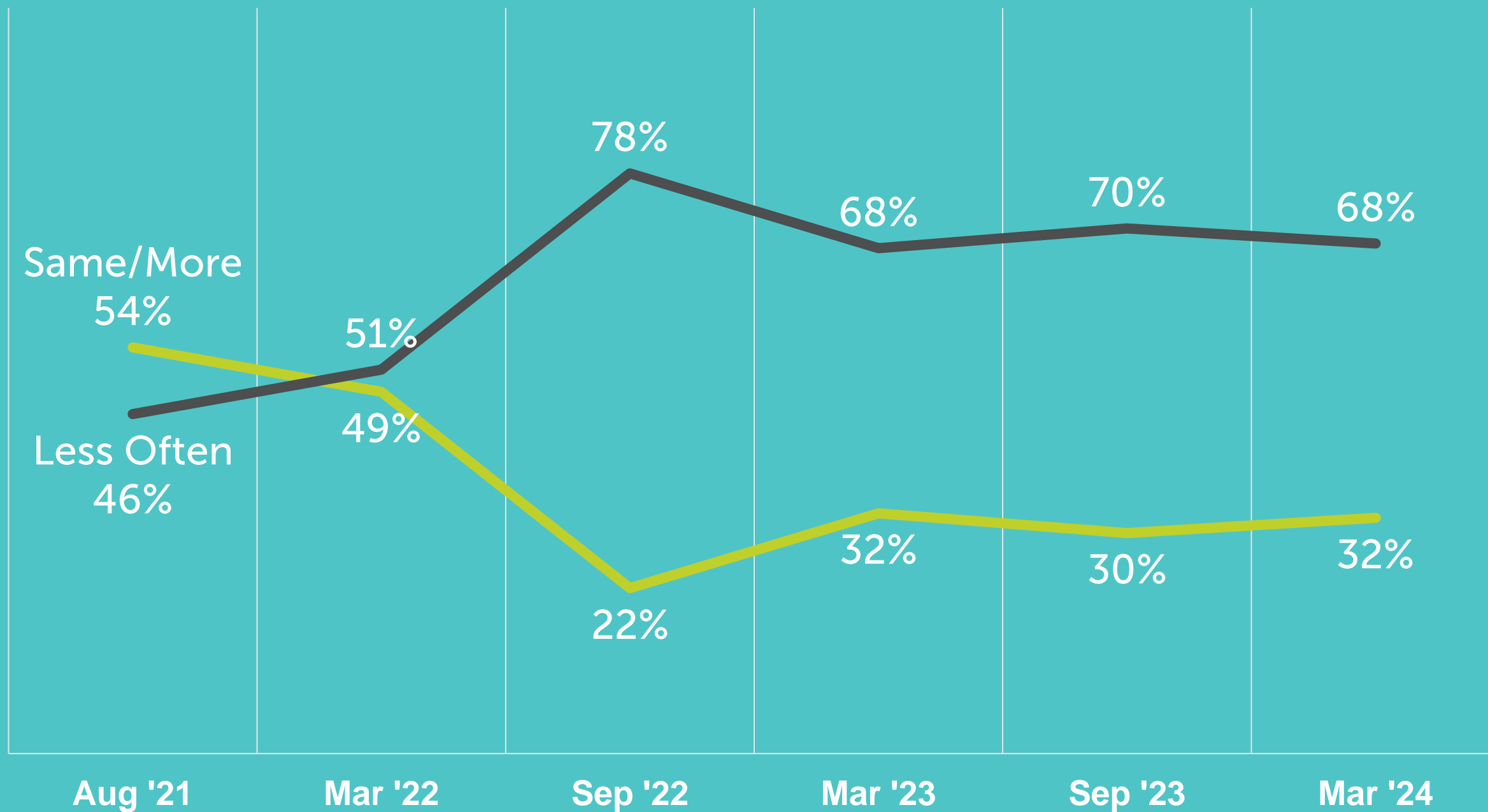
Downtown & Economic Recovery





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?"

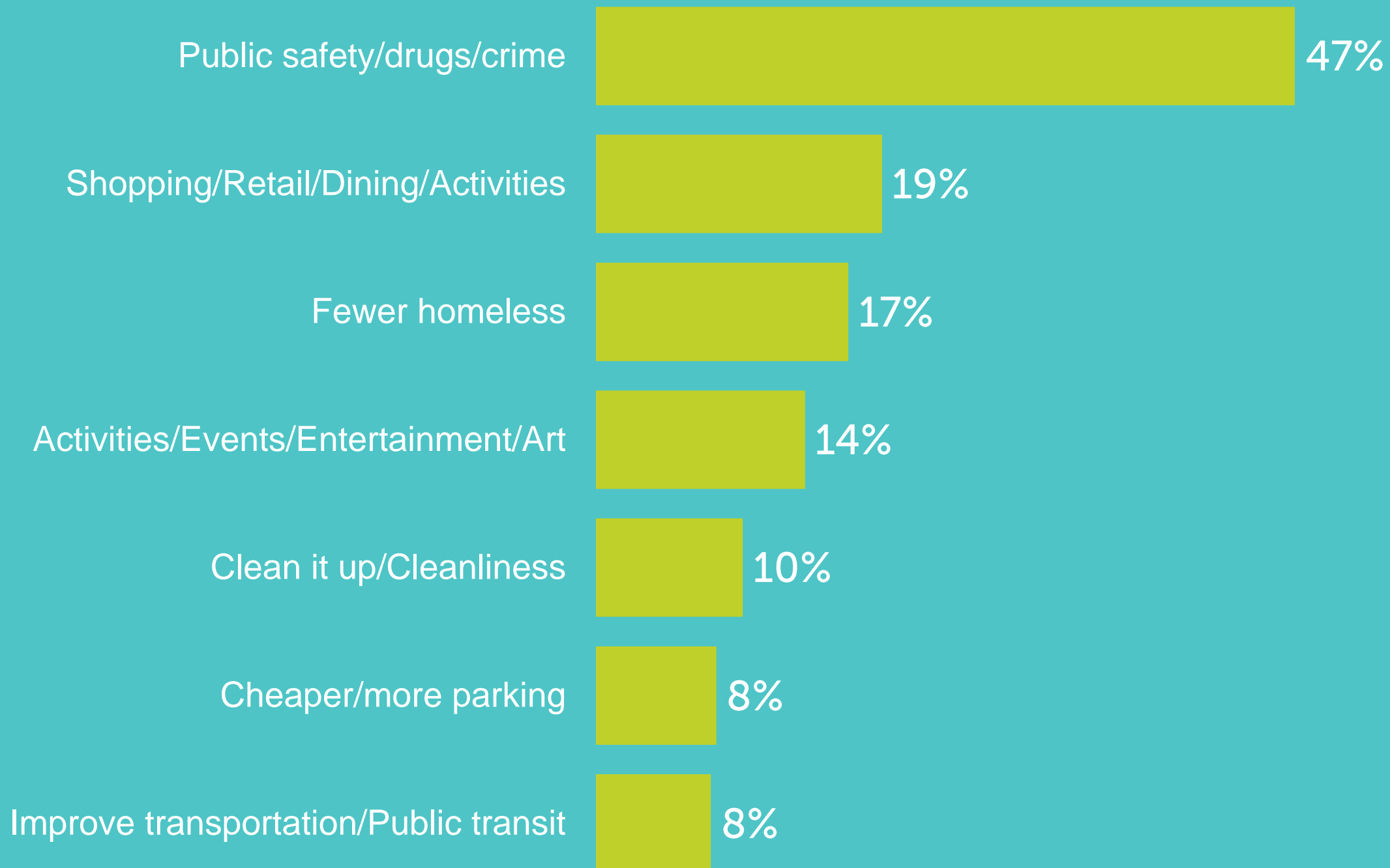


Reported downtown visitation has remained steady since last year.



Downtown Visitation

“What would lead you to visit downtown Seattle more often?”

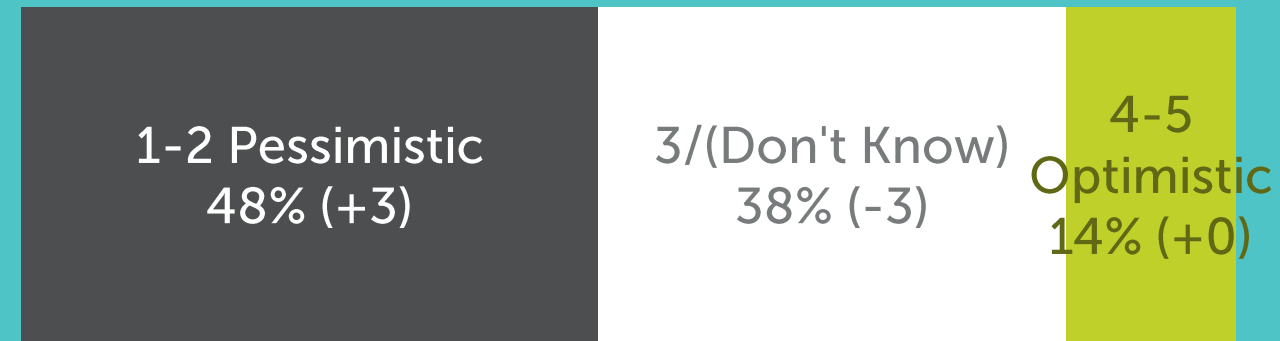


Public safety related concerns are the main reason Seattleites are not visiting Downtown more often.



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"



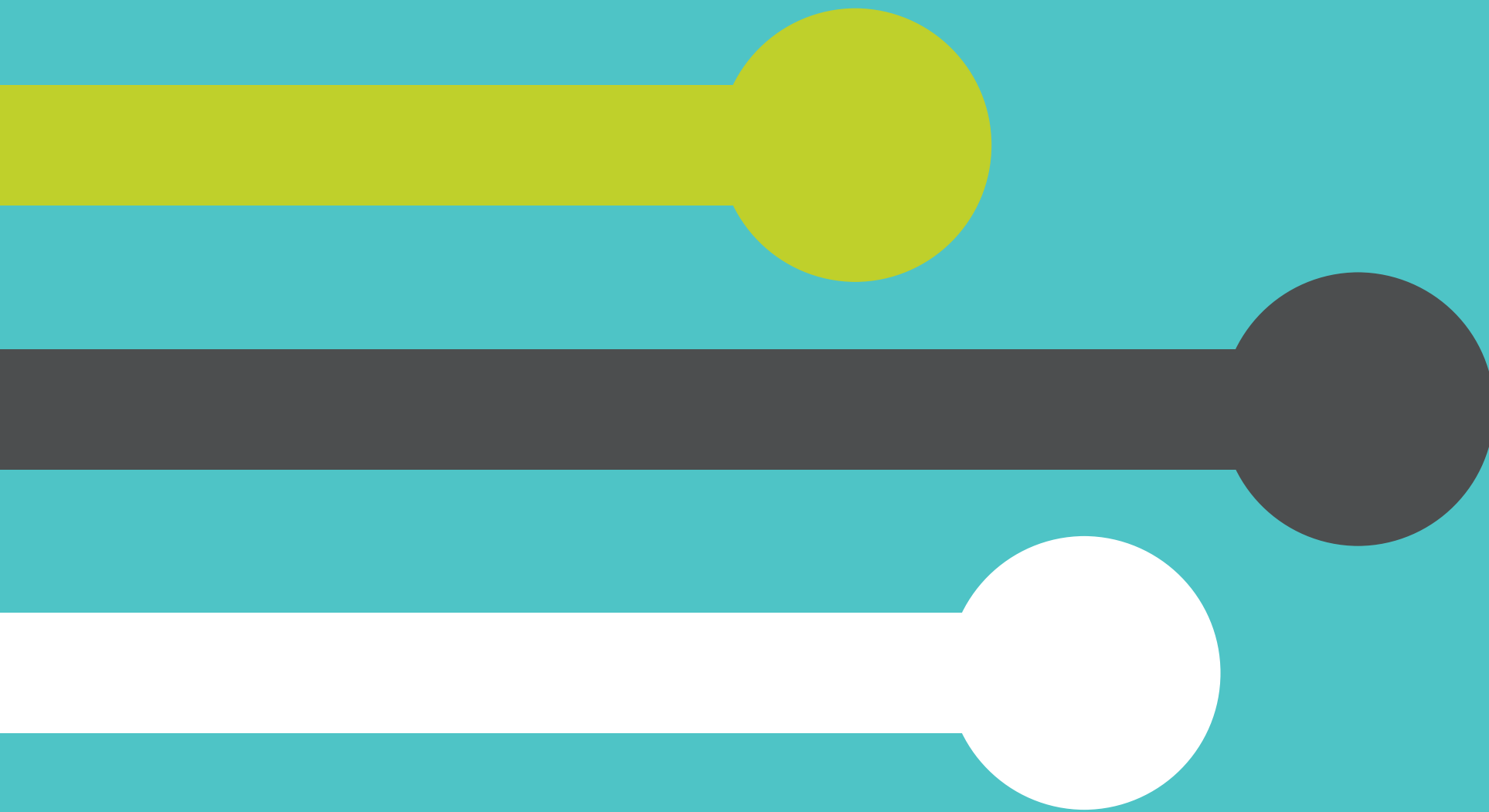
"I'm worried about the future of downtown Seattle"



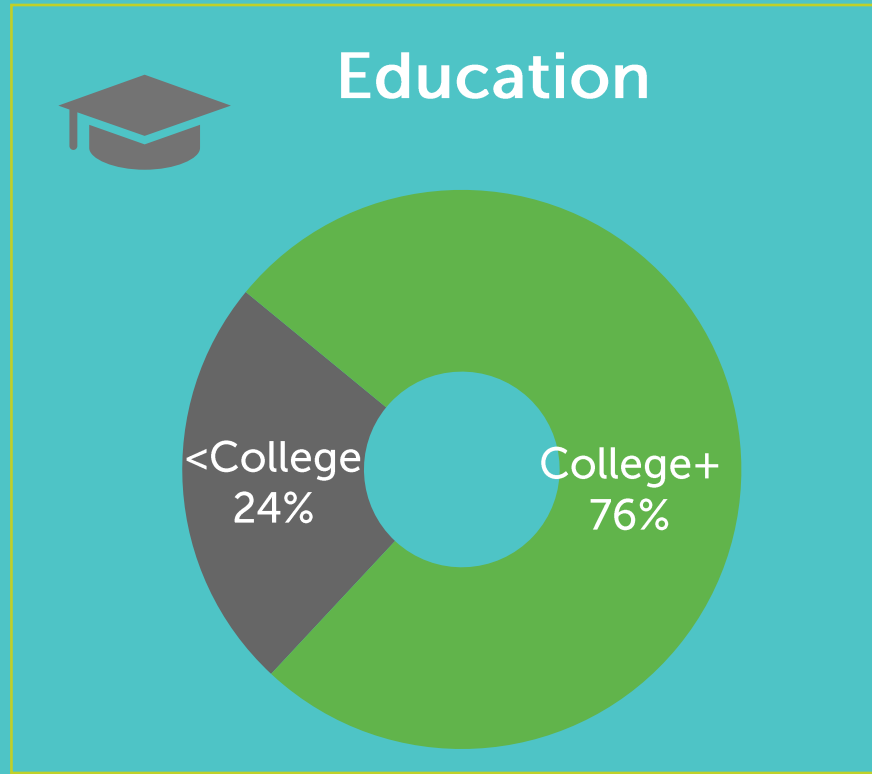
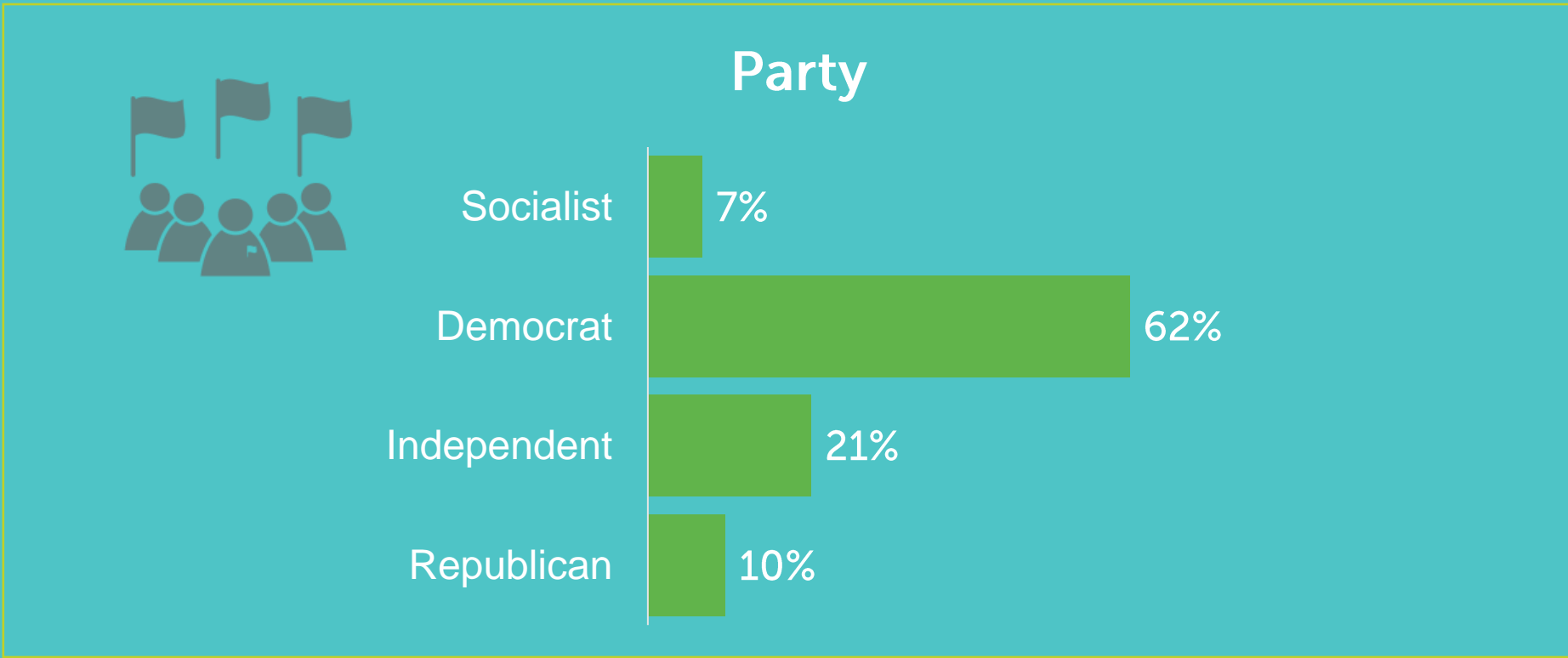
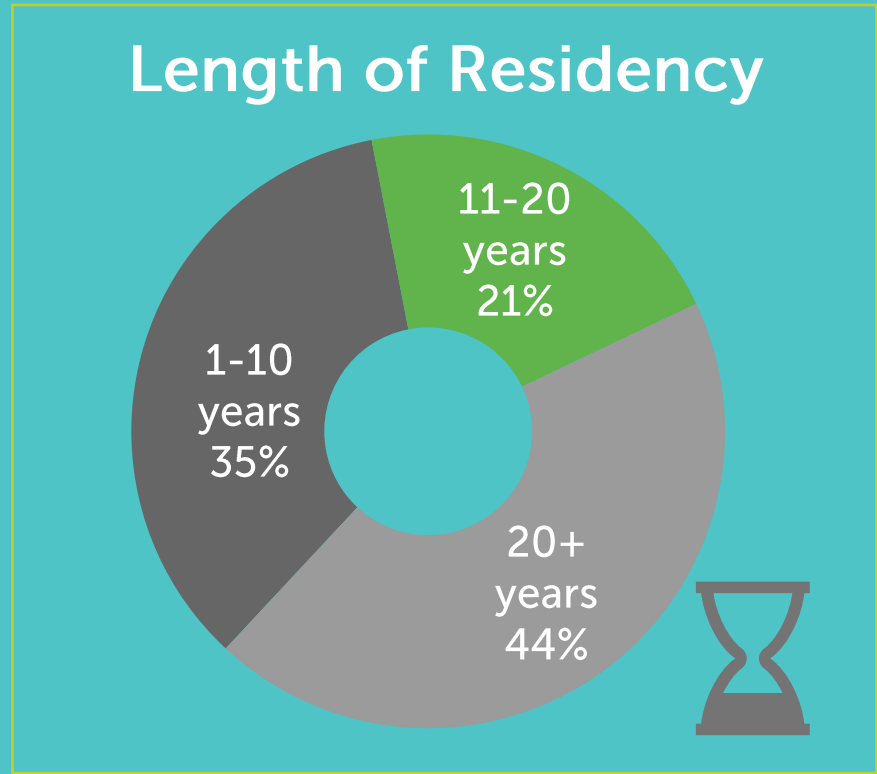
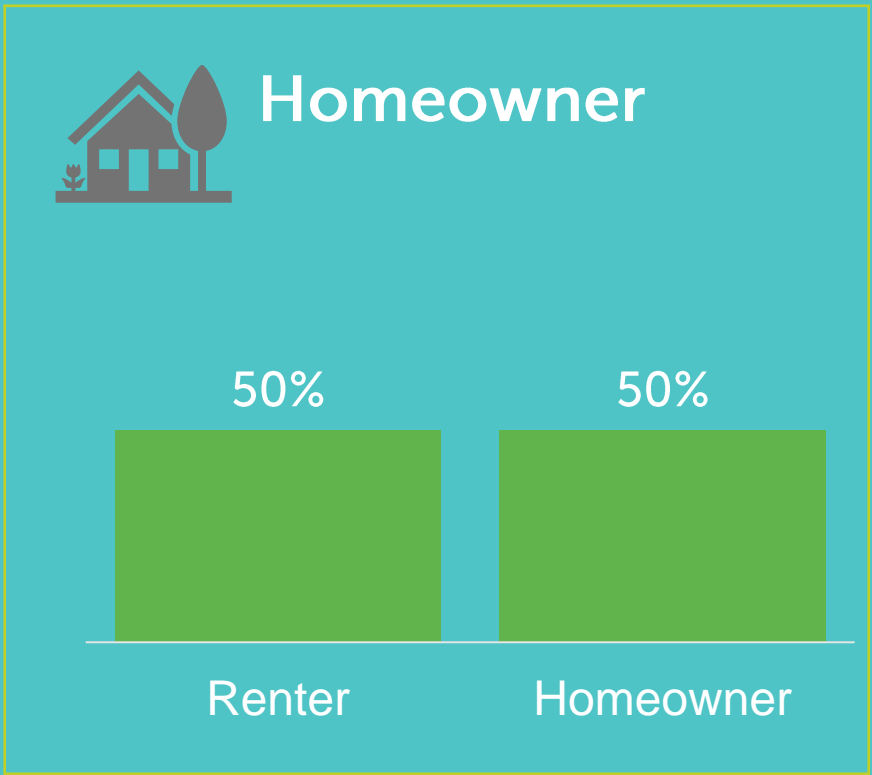
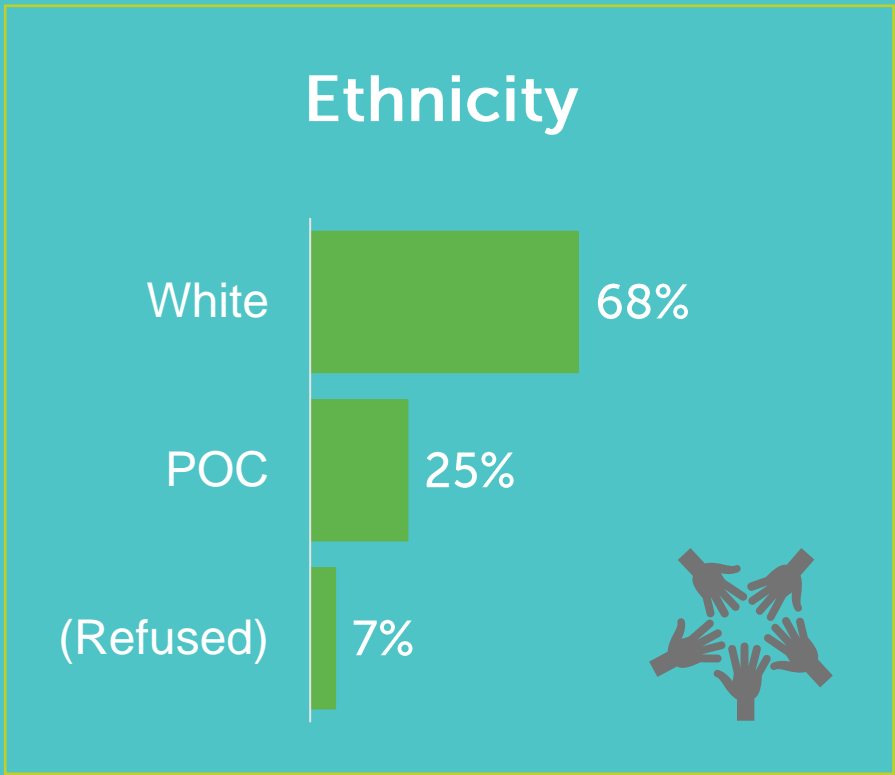
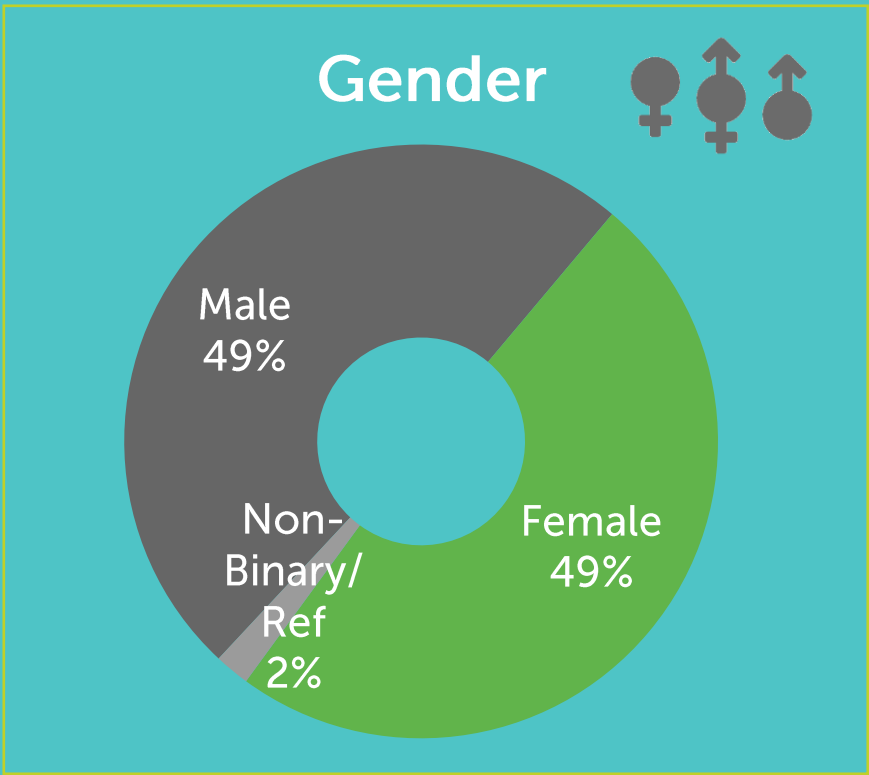
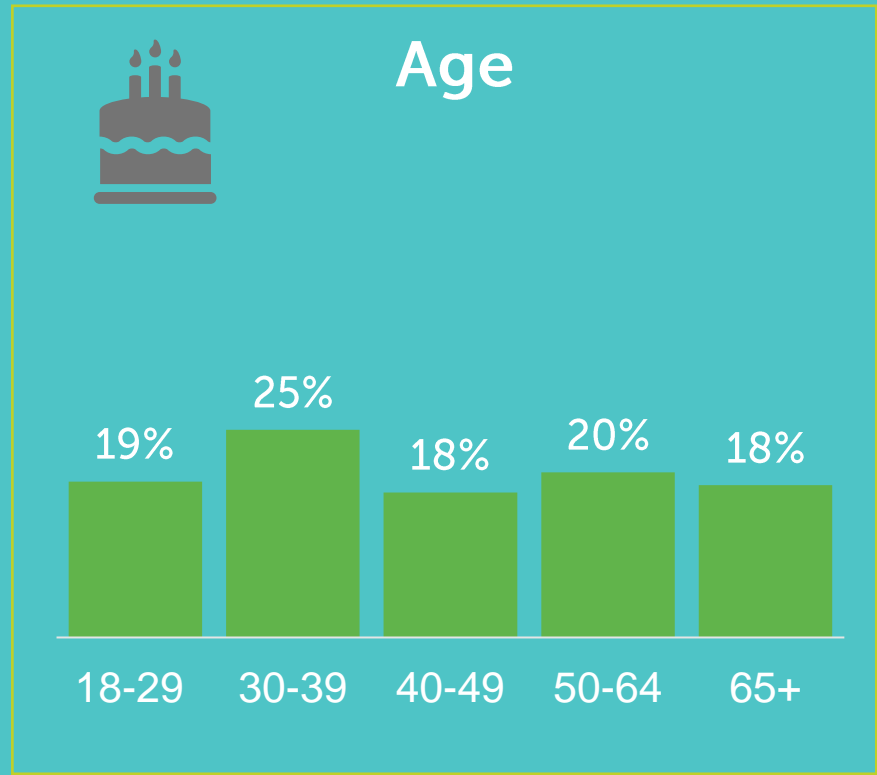
Voters continue to overwhelmingly agree that a thriving downtown is critical to our regional economy and that downtown cannot fully recover until homelessness and public safety are addressed.

Most also say they are worried about downtown's future and voters remain uncertain about the downtown Seattle economy.

Appendix



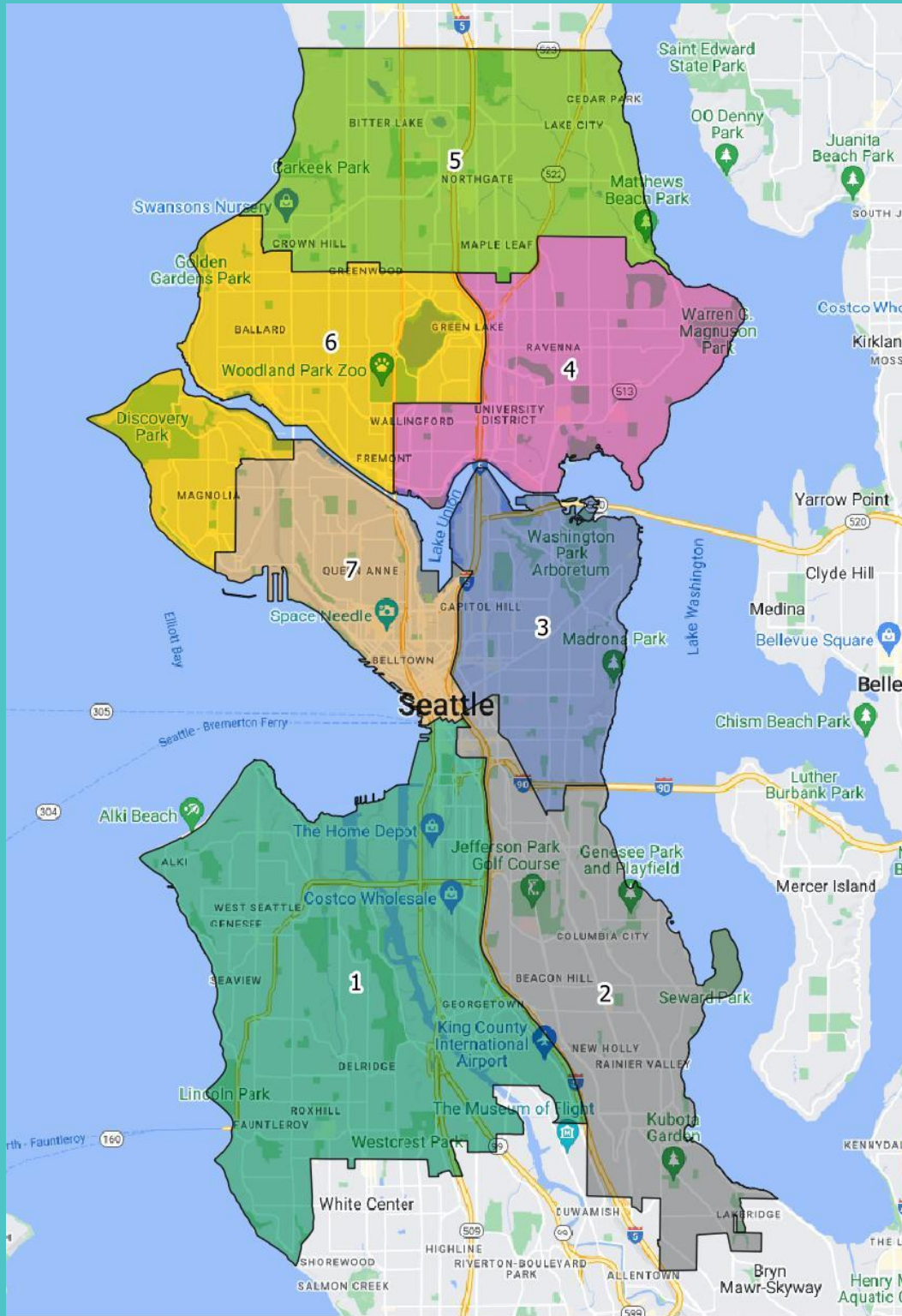
Respondent Profile



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%

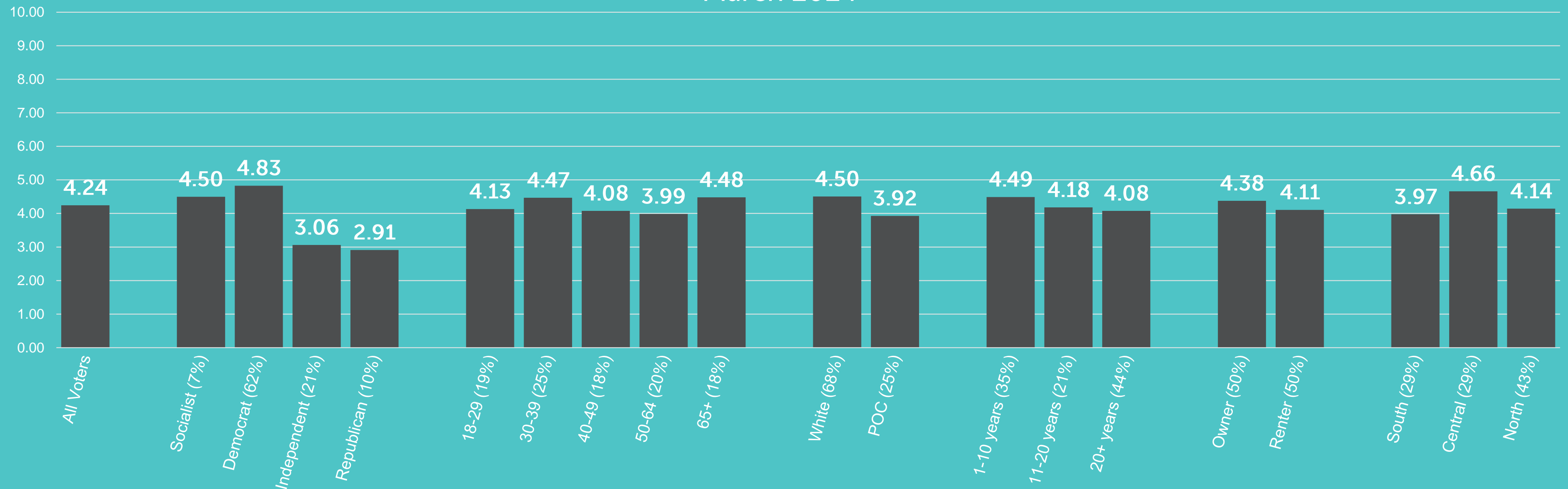
Subgroup Data





Quality of Life - The Index

Quality of Life Index March 2024



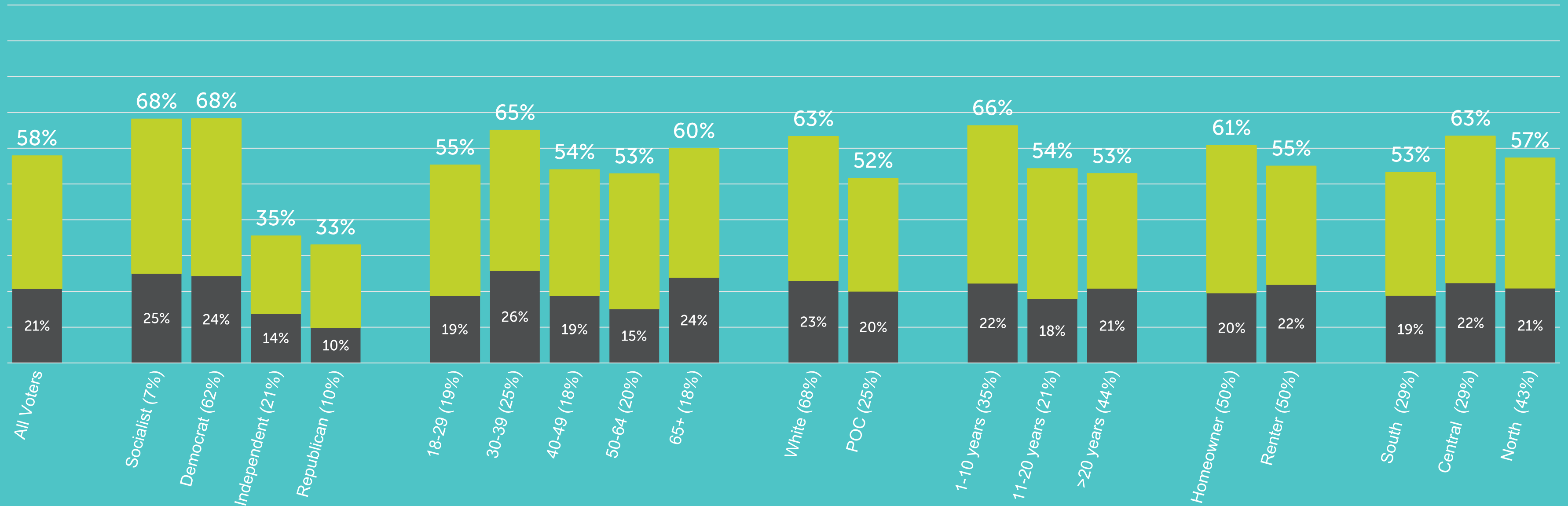
Partisan identification is the strongest driver of quality of life attitudes with less liberal voters being more negative on quality of life.

Optimism



Optimistic About Future of The Region

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



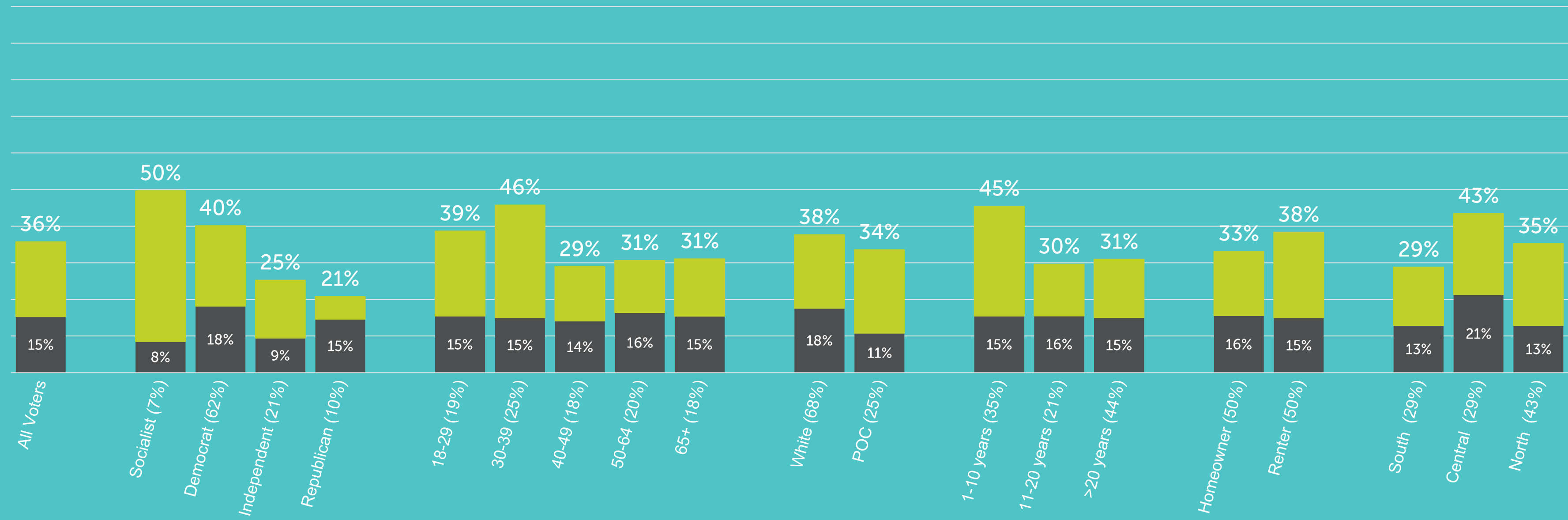
A majority of voters in most subgroups are optimistic about the region's future. Independents and Republicans continue to be much less optimistic than other groups.



Quality of Life

Quality of Life Compared to 4 Years Ago

■ Better ■ Same



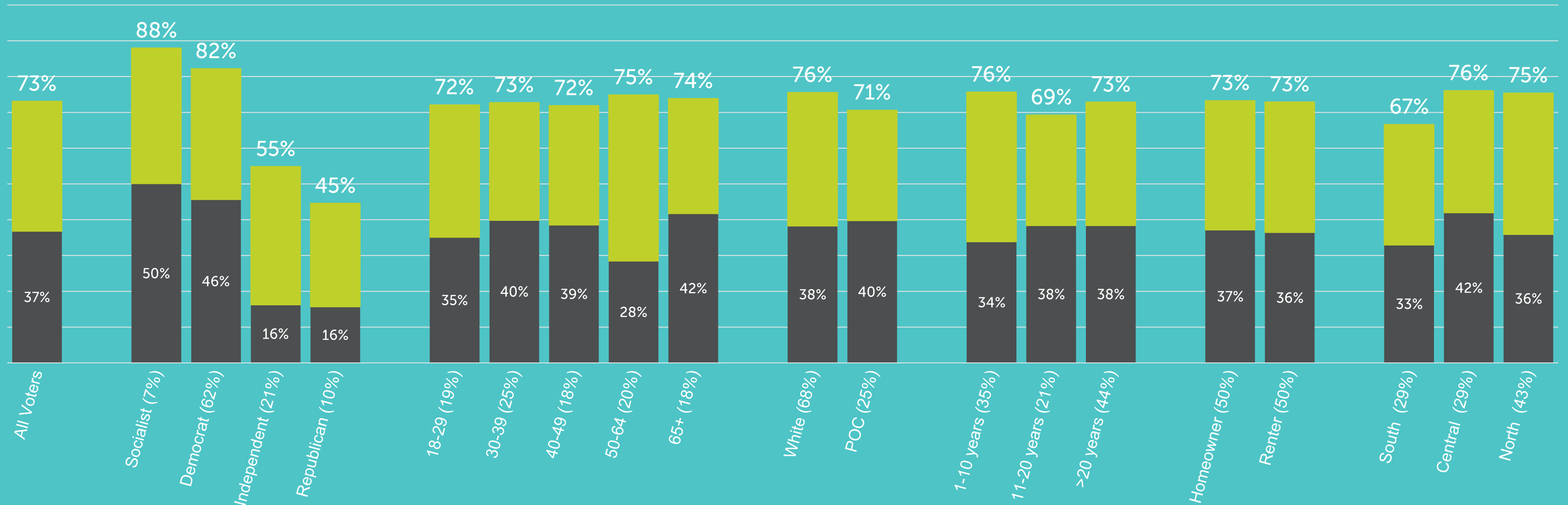
More liberal voters and newer residents to Seattle are most likely to say quality of life is the same or better compared to four years ago.



Proud to Call Myself a Seattleite

Proud to Call Myself a Seattleite

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

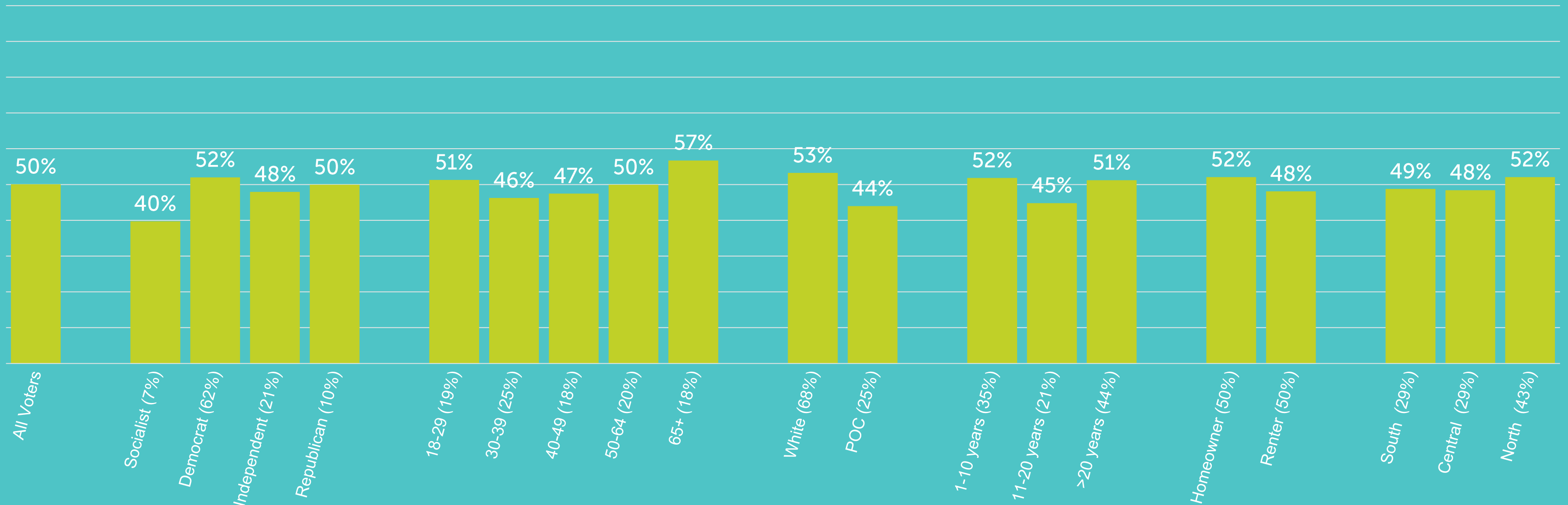


Republicans are the only major subgroup where less than a majority say they are proud to call themselves a Seattleite.



Top Concerns - Homelessness

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

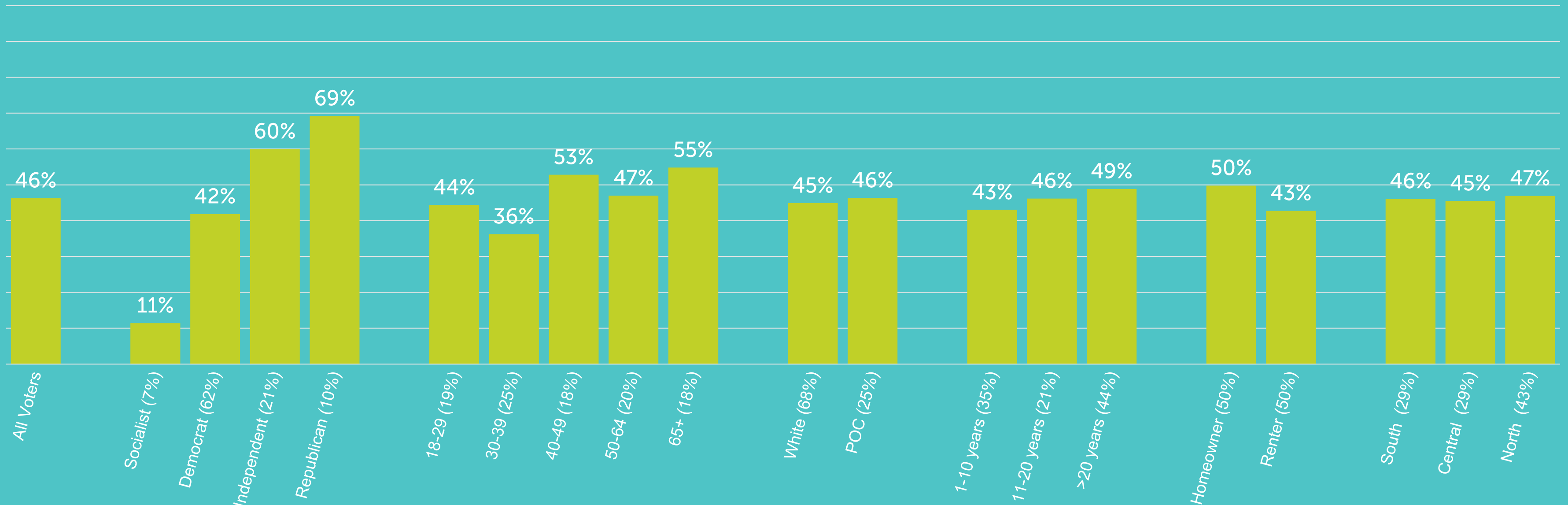


Mentions of homelessness as a top concern are fairly steady across major subgroups, with Socialists mentioning it the least.



Top Concerns - Public Safety

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



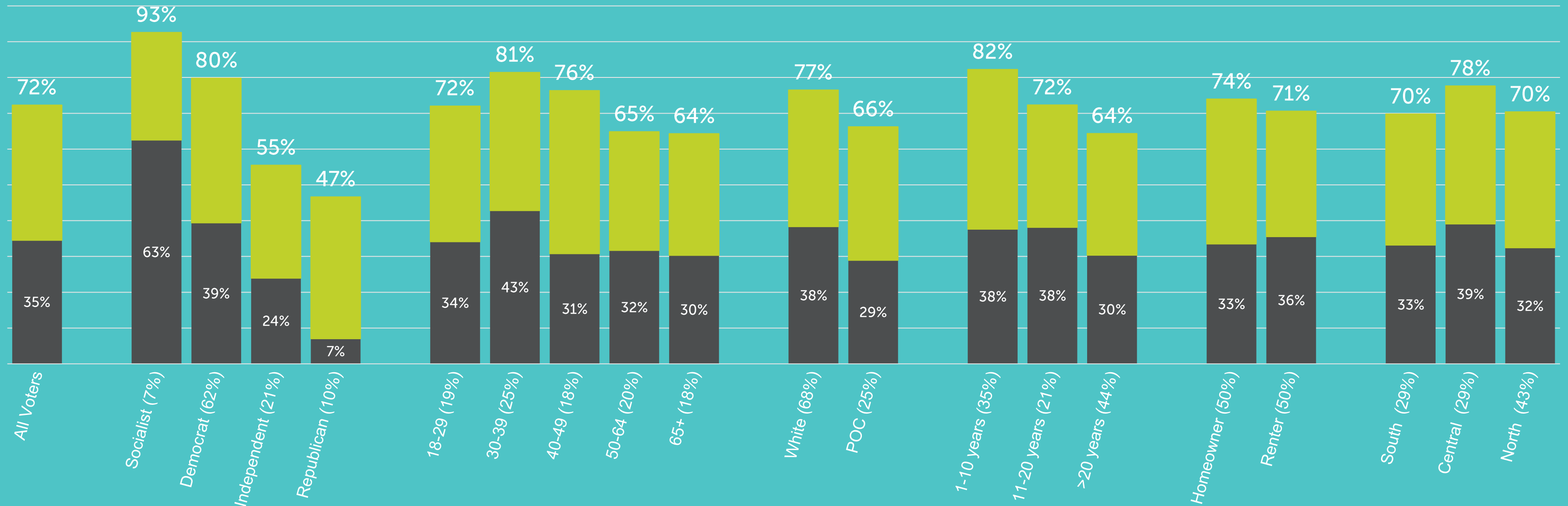
More conservative voters are much more likely to name Public Safety as a top concern.



Safety Downtown: Daytime

Would Feel Safe Visiting Downtown During the Day

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



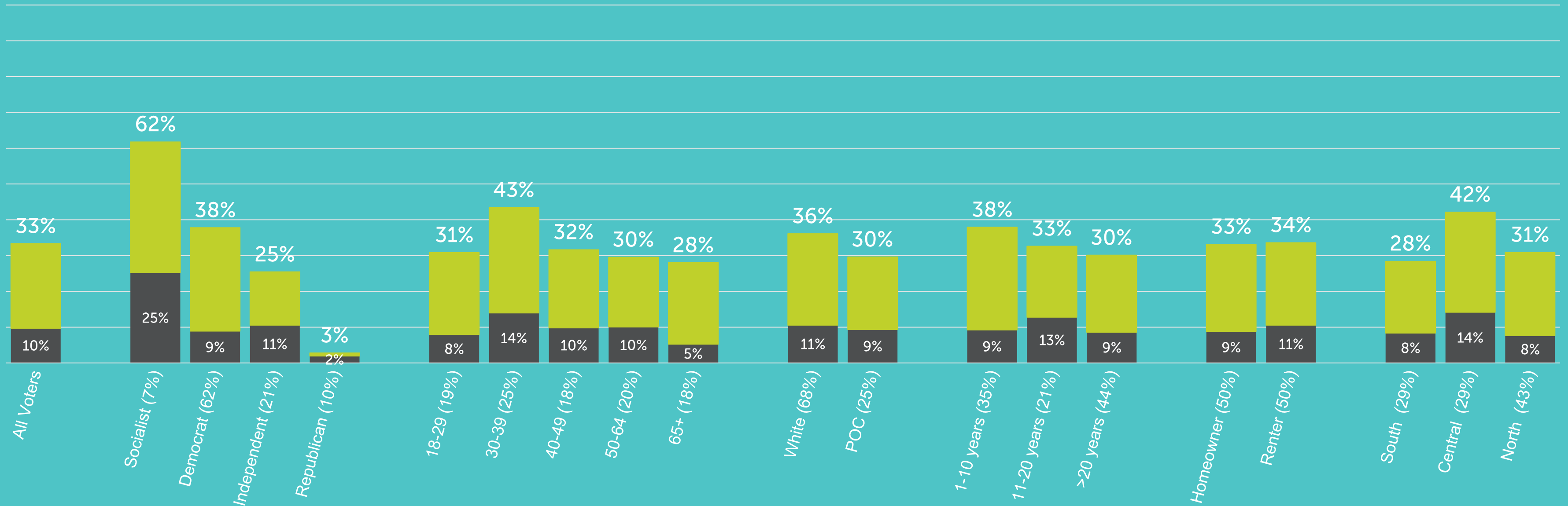
A majority of voters in every subgroup except Republicans say they would feel safe visiting downtown during the day.



Safety Downtown: Nighttime

Would Feel Safe Visiting Downtown at Night

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



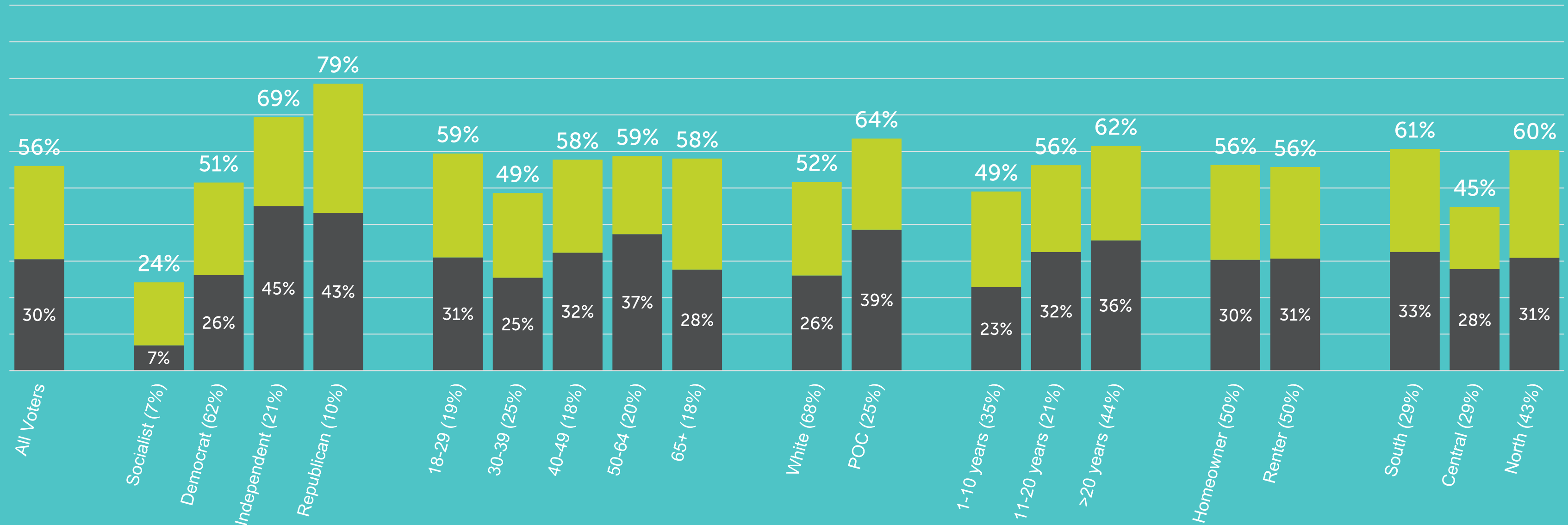
Socialists are the only subgroup where a majority say they would feel safe visiting downtown at night.



Safety in Own Neighborhood

Feel Less Safe in Own Neighborhood than Two Years Ago

■ Much Less Safe ■ Somewhat Less Safe



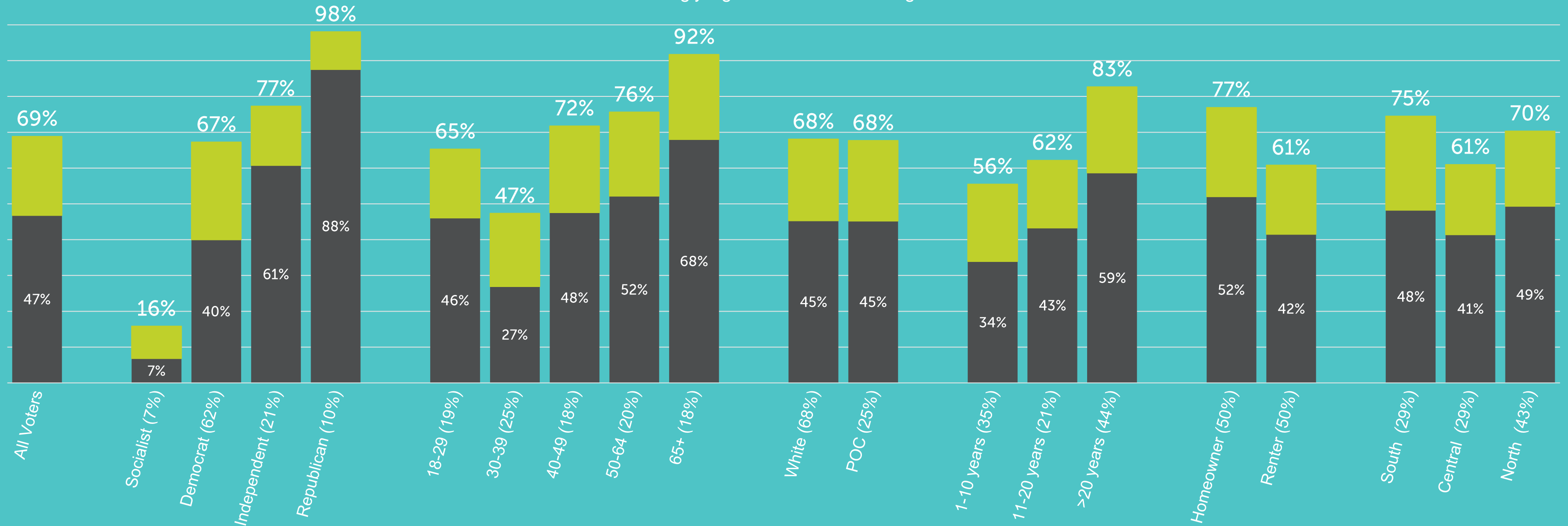
Partisan identification is a strong driver of attitudes about neighborhood safety. Those in the Central region of the city are the only geographic area where less than a majority say they feel less safe than two years ago.



Prioritize Hiring More Officers

Prioritizing Hiring More Police Officers

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



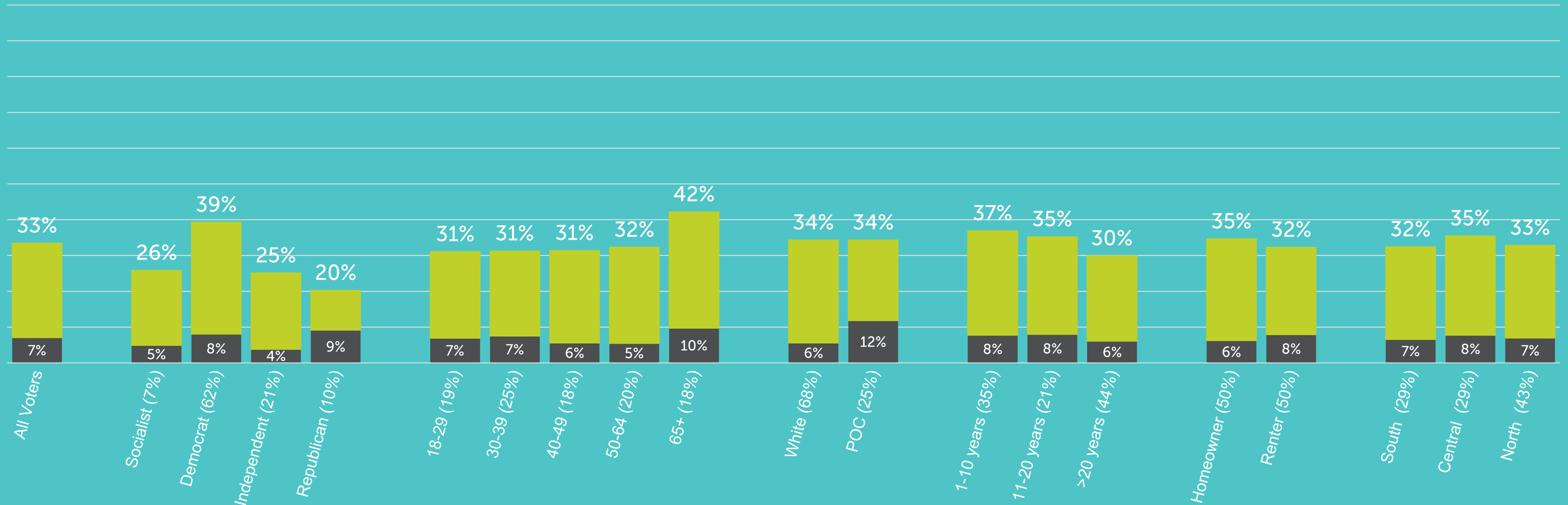
A strong majority of voters in every subgroup except Socialists say the city should immediately prioritize hiring more officers.



Trust Council to Reform SPD

Trust City Council to Reform SPD without Endangering Public Safety

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



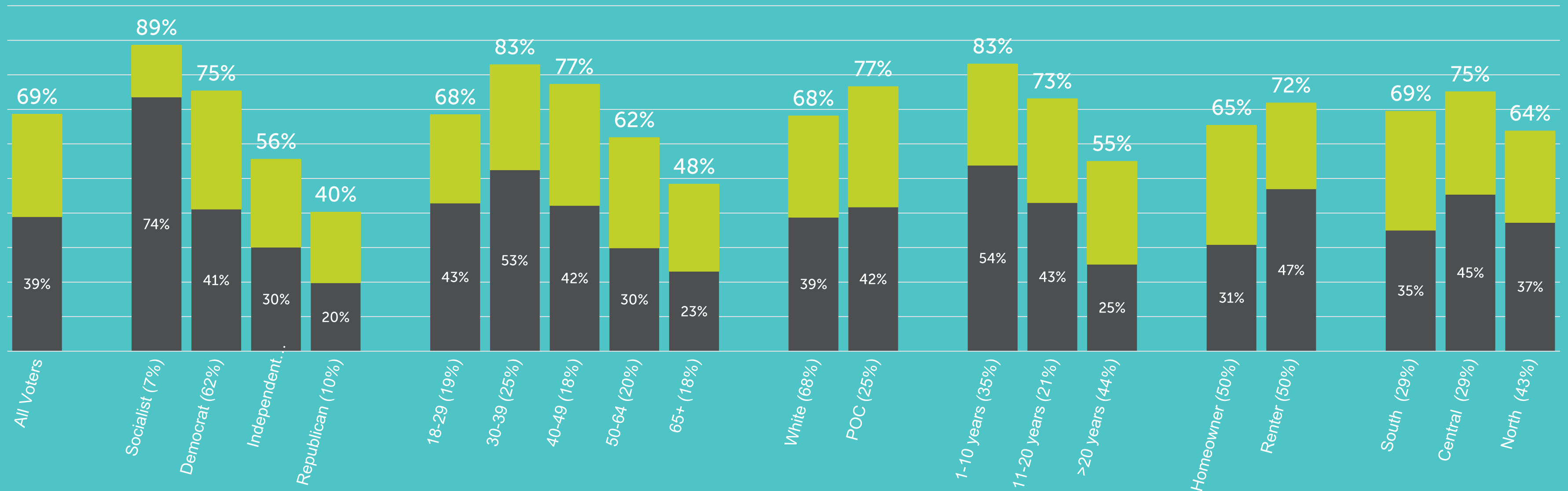
Very few voters trust the City Council to reform SPD without endangering public safety.



Variety of Housing in Your Neighborhood

Support Wider Variety of Housing in Your Neighborhood *

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



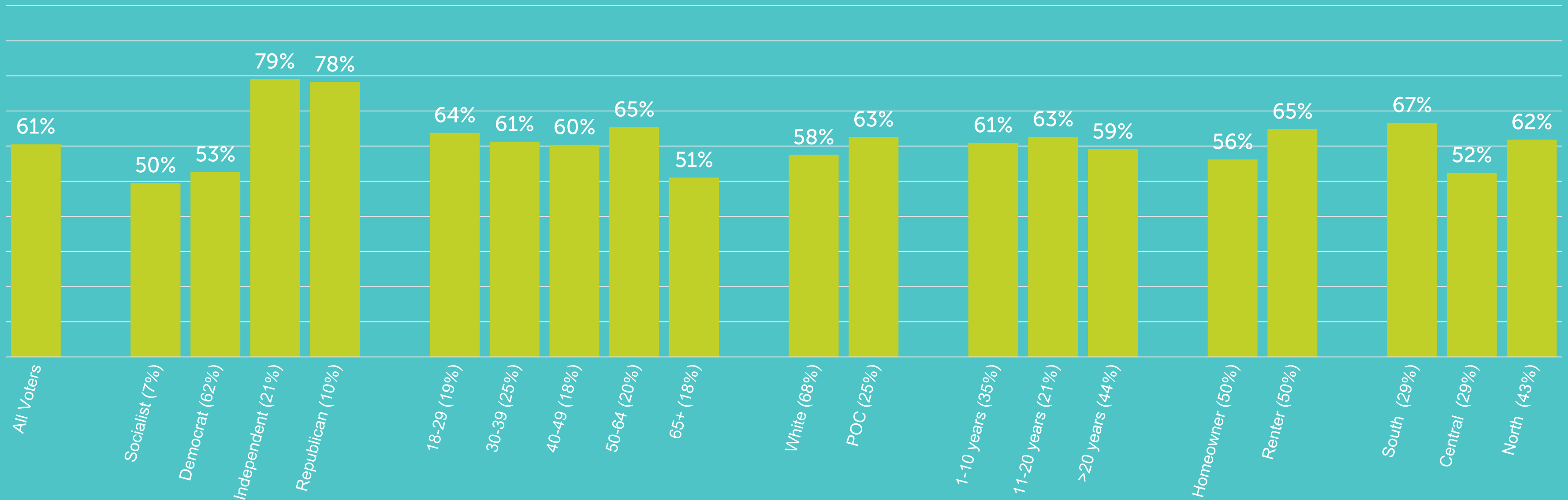
Support for a wider variety of housing in neighborhoods differs by partisanship and age. Renters are more likely to support building a wider variety, but two-thirds of homeowners are also in support.

* Previously asked as: "I support the building of new housing in my neighborhood"



Actively Considered Moving

Actively Considered Moving



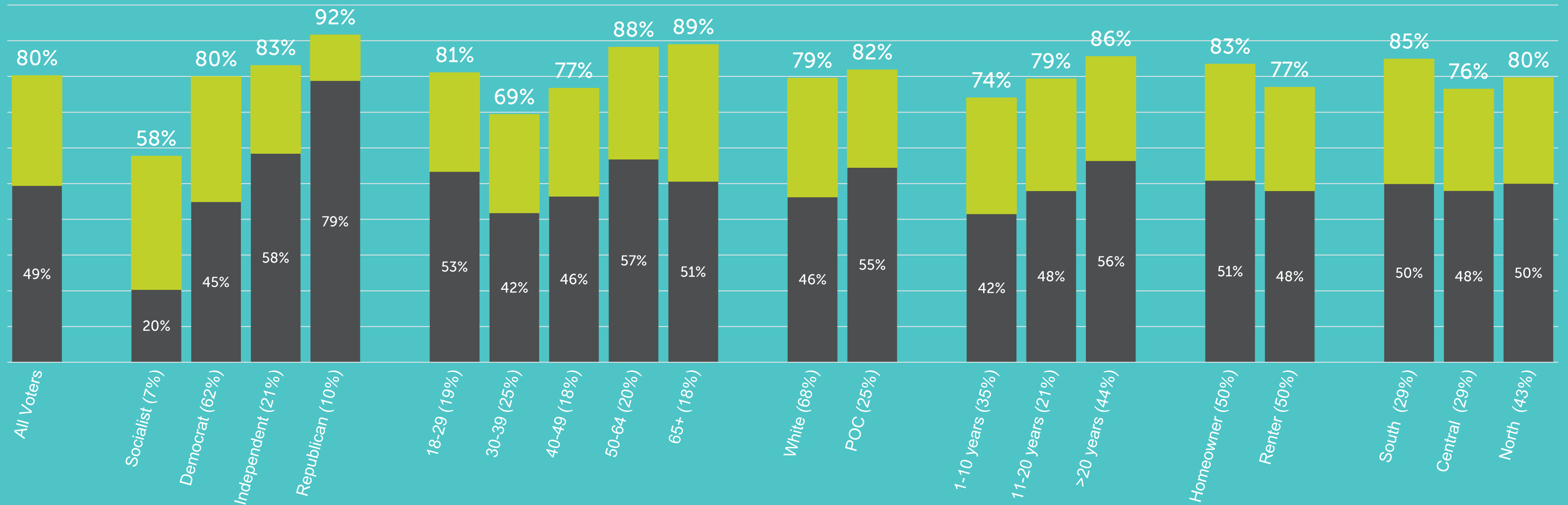
Voters of all stripes say they have considered leaving Seattle.



Worried About Downtown

Worried About Downtown's Future

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

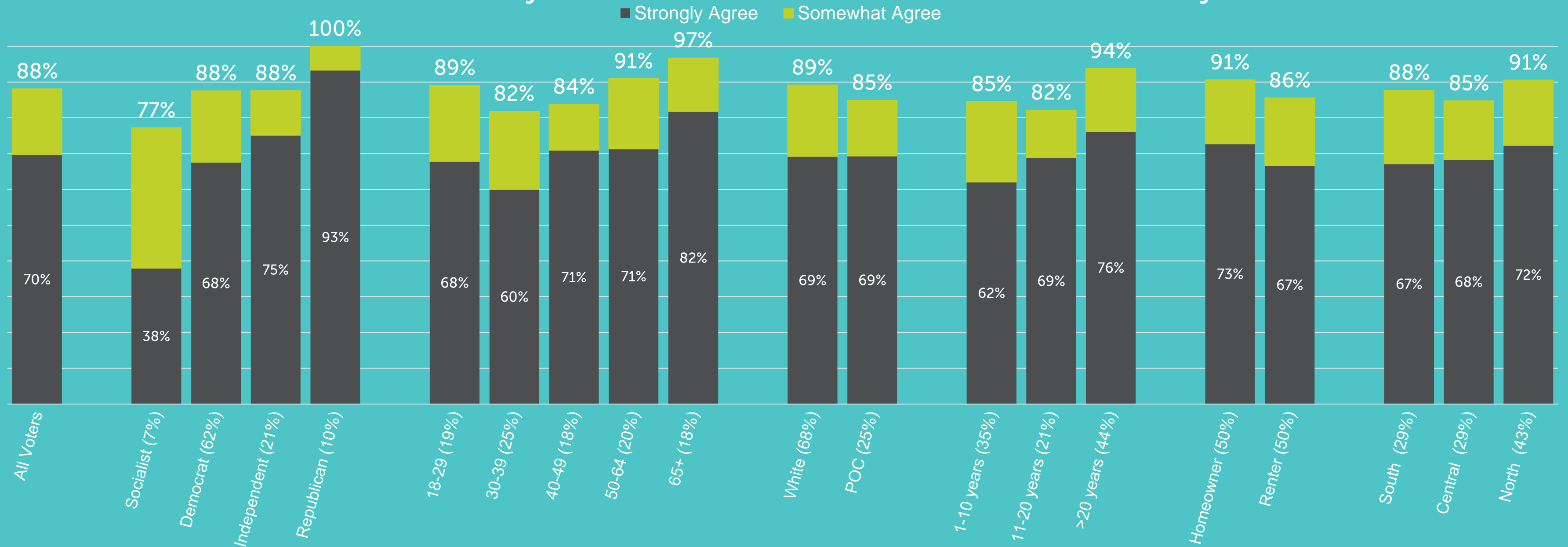


A majority of voters in every subgroup say they are worried about downtown's future. Socialists are the least worried. Those in the Central region, which includes downtown, are slightly less worried than voters in other parts of the city.



Downtown & Economic Recovery

Downtown Cannot Fully Recover Until Homelessness & Public Safety Addressed



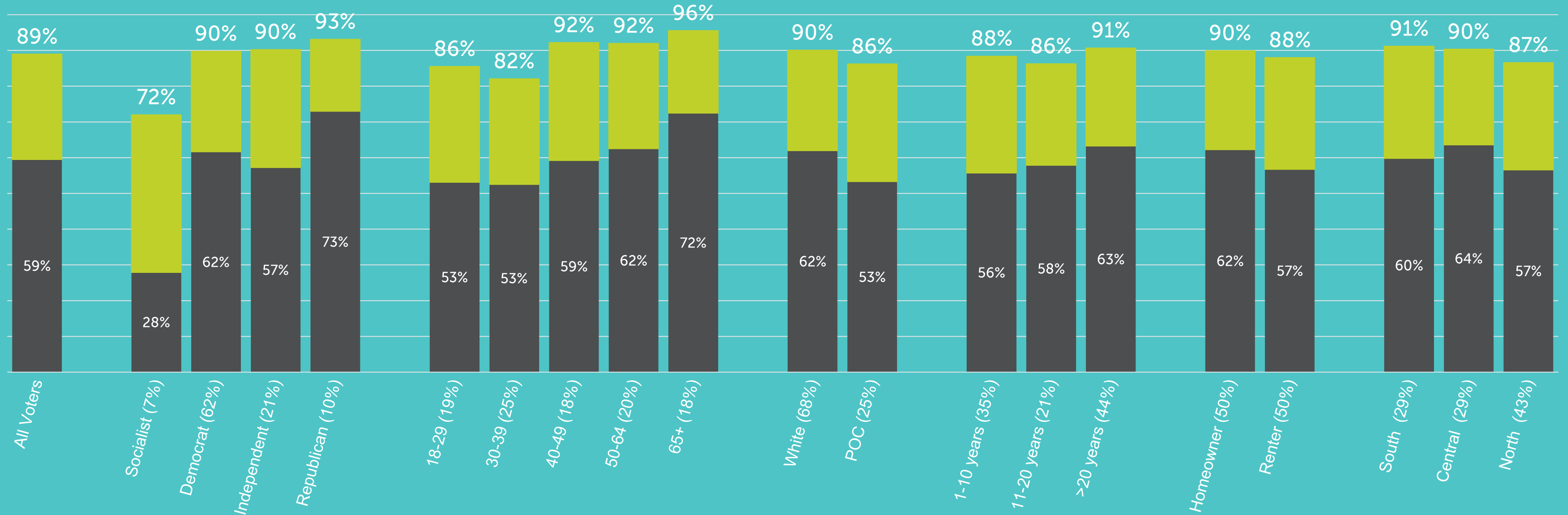
A strong majority of voters in every subgroup – including nearly three-quarters of Socialists – agree that downtown cannot fully recover until homelessness and public safety are addressed.



Downtown Role in Regional Recovery

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

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



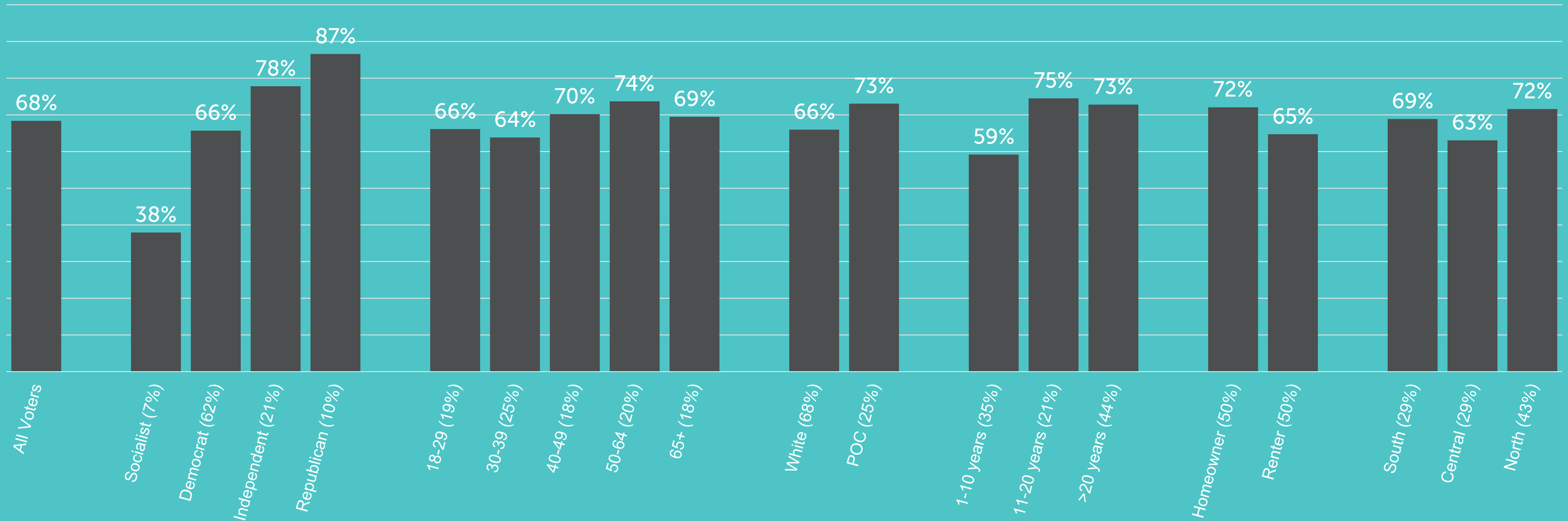
A majority of voters in every subgroup – including nearly three-quarters of Socialists – agree that downtown is critical to our region's economic recovery.



Visiting Downtown

Visiting Downtown for Non-Work Activities

■ Visit Less Often



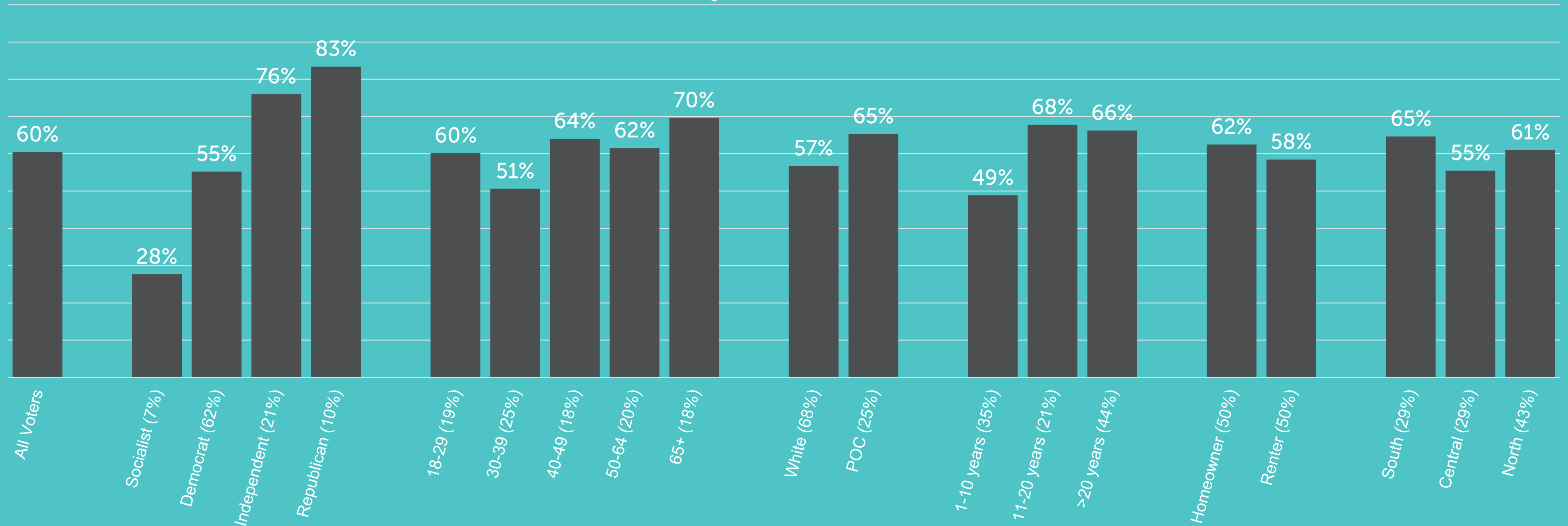
Most voters say they are visiting downtown less often for non-work activities than they did pre-pandemic.



Taxes in Seattle

Taxes in Seattle

■ Too High for Service Level



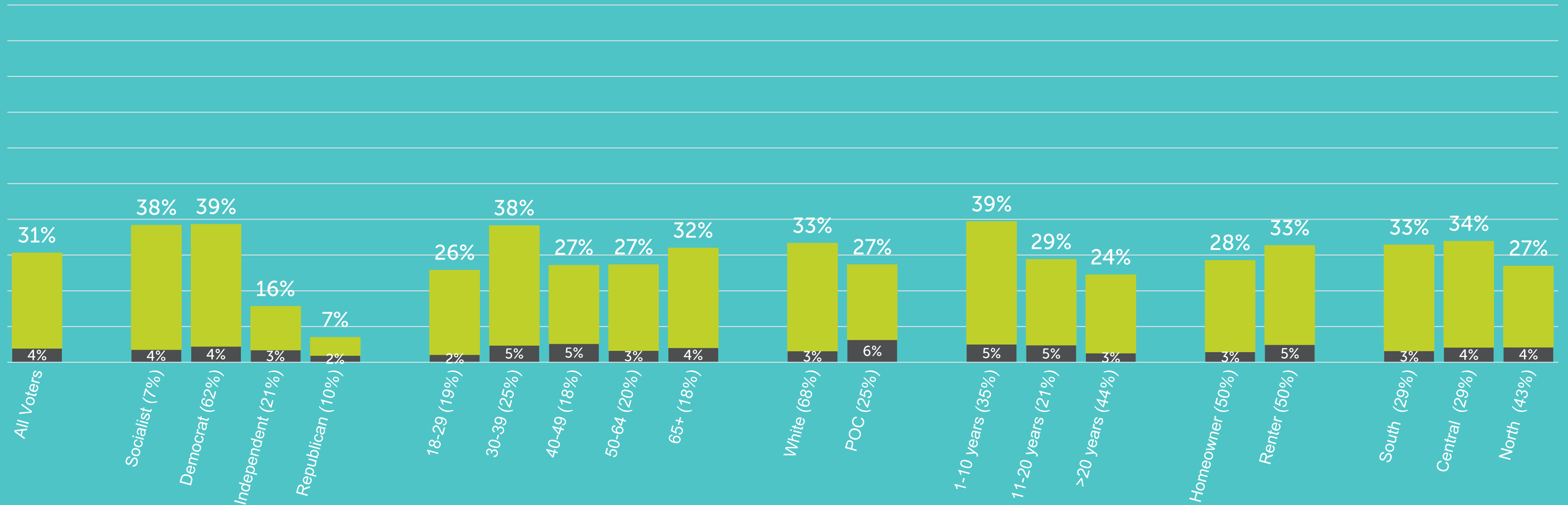
A majority of voters in every subgroup except Socialists say that taxes in Seattle are too high for the level of services the city provides.



Trust on Spending

Trust City on Spending

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



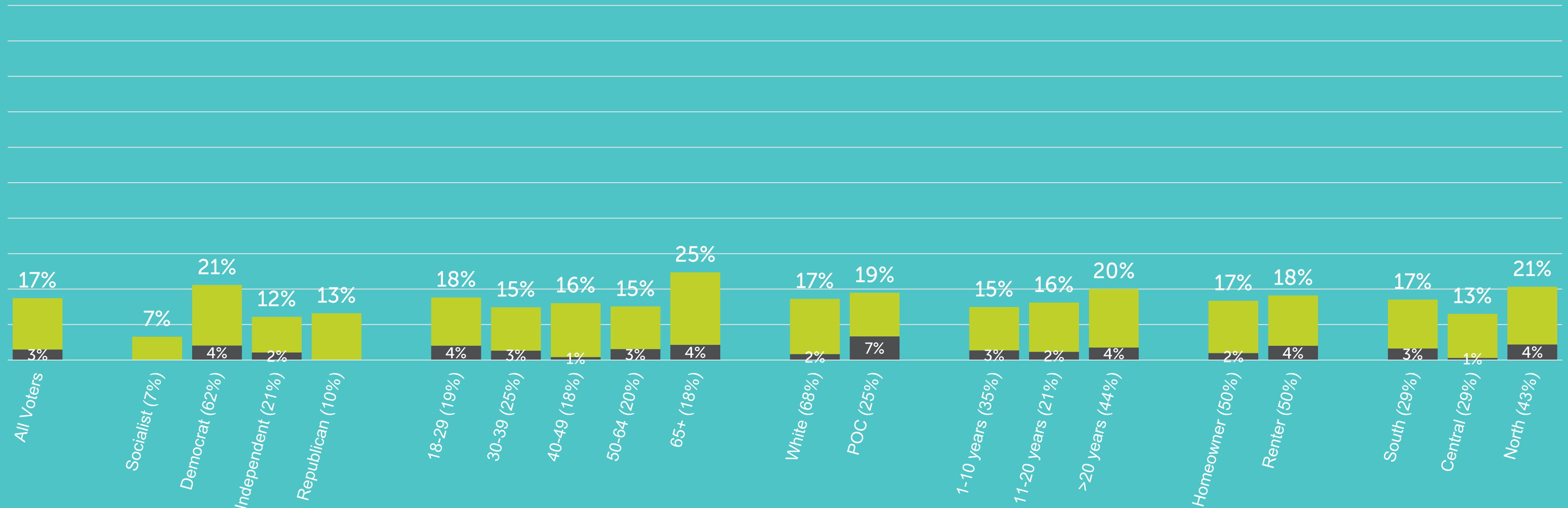
Few voters trust the city on spending.



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



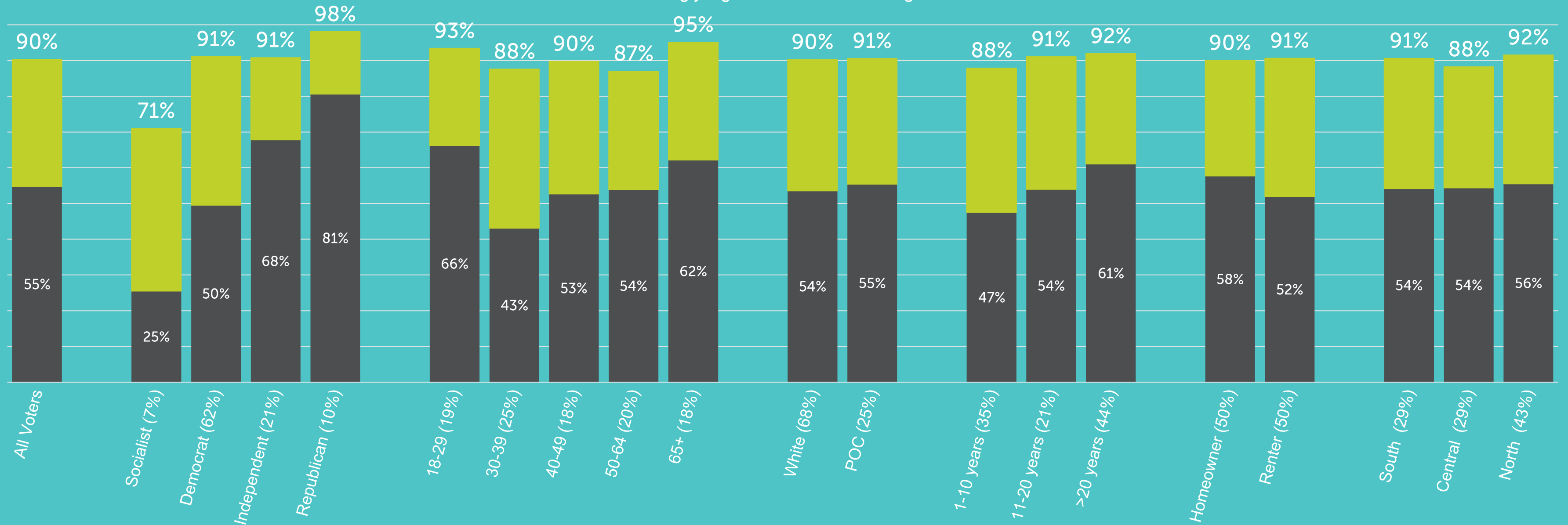
Across subgroups voters do NOT believe that the city has an effective plan to address critical issues.



Focusing on the Basics

The City should focus on funding the basics

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



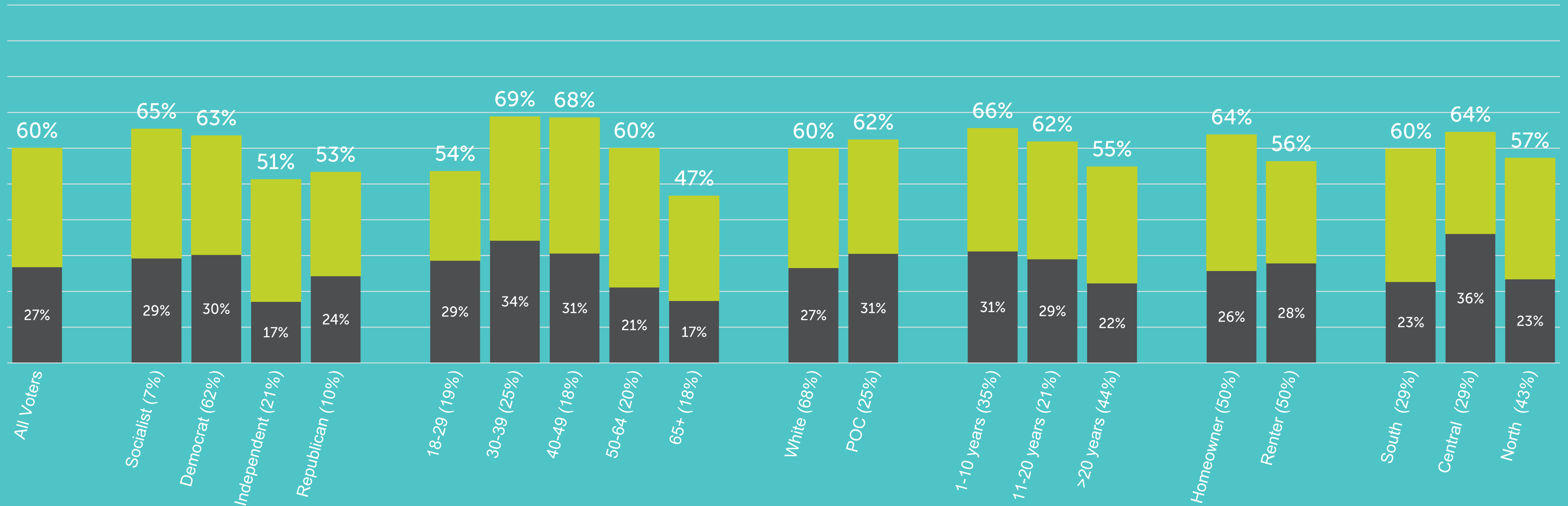
All subgroups agree that the City should focus on funding the basics and supporting vulnerable communities.

More Retail/Commercial in your Neighborhood



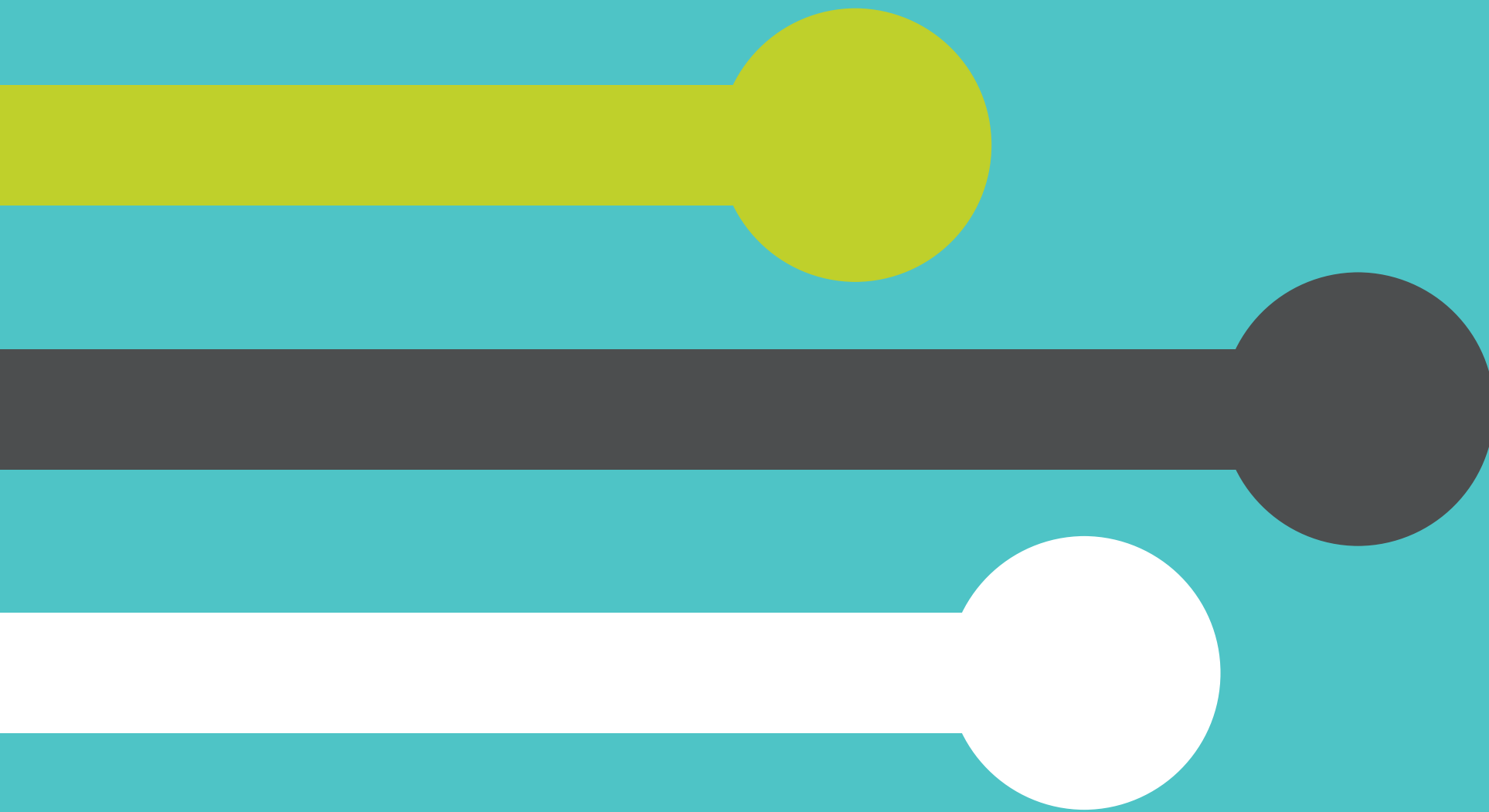
Should allow more retail and commercial spaces in your neighborhood

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



A majority of all key subgroups say we should allow the construction of more retail and commercial spaces in their neighborhood.

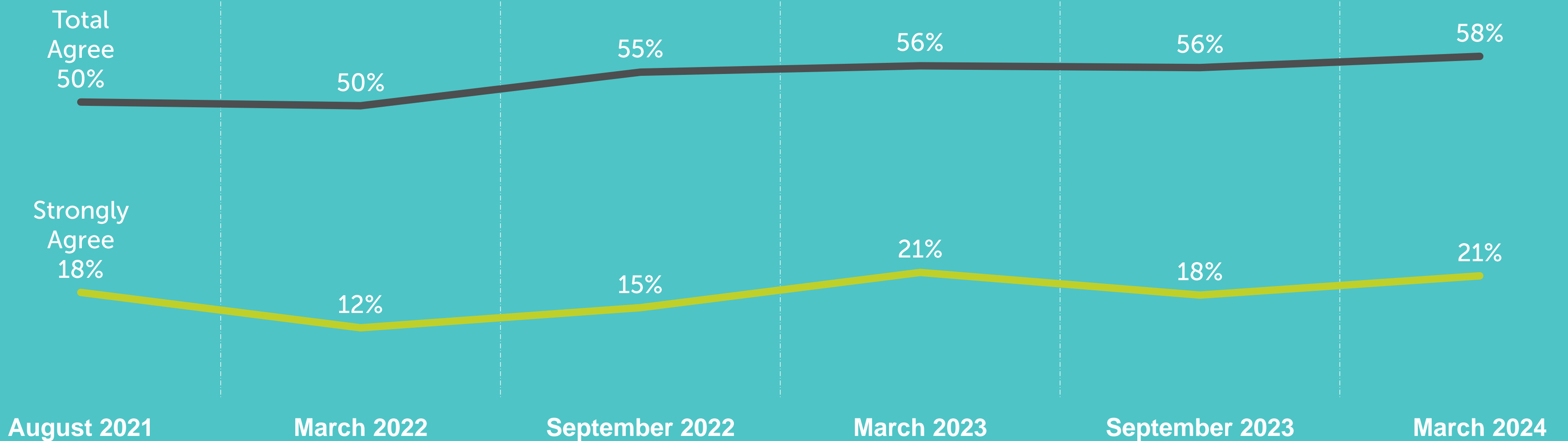
Trend Data





Agree/Disagree Trend

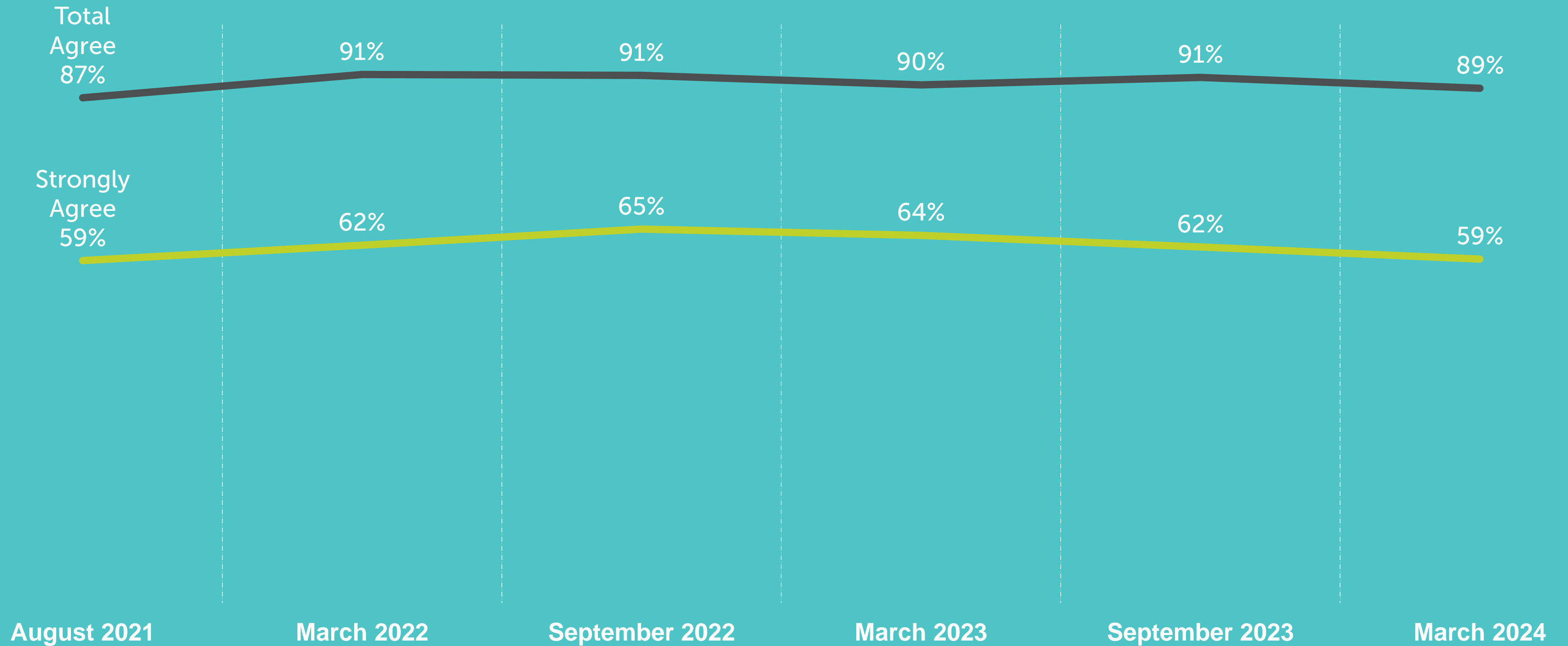
"I'm optimistic about the future of this region"





Agree/Disagree Trend

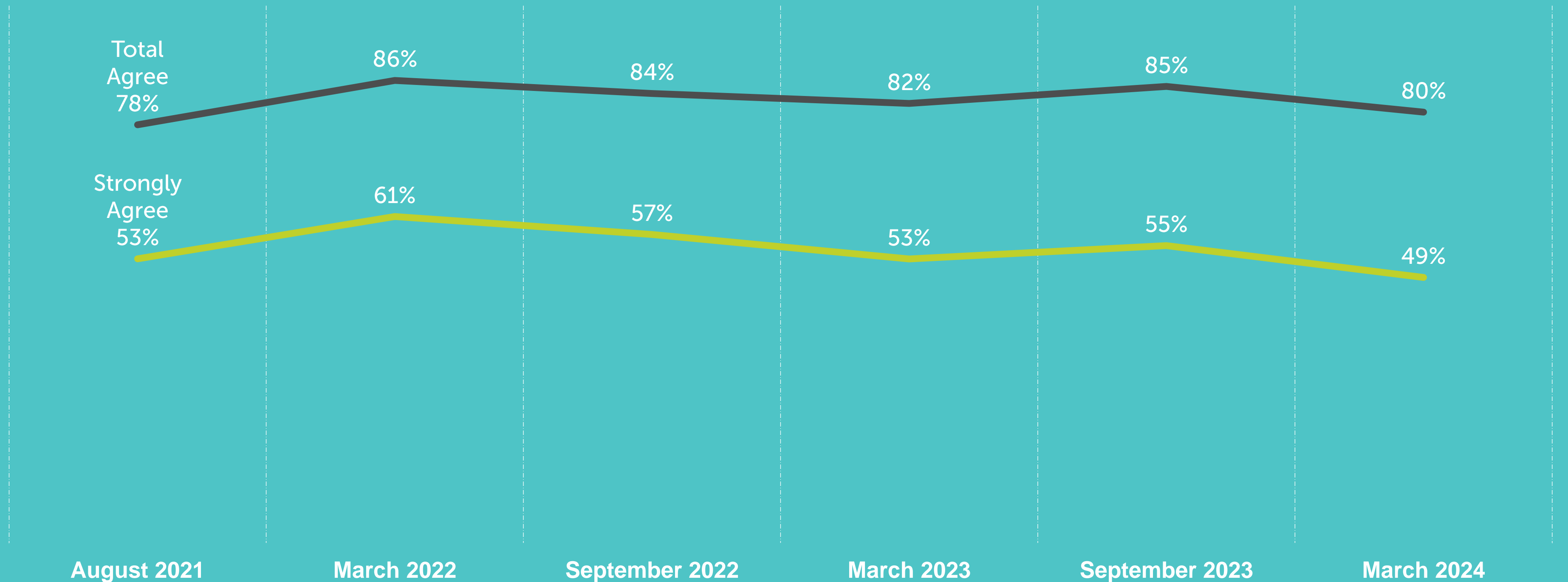
"A thriving downtown Seattle is crucial to our region's economic recovery."





Agree/Disagree Trend

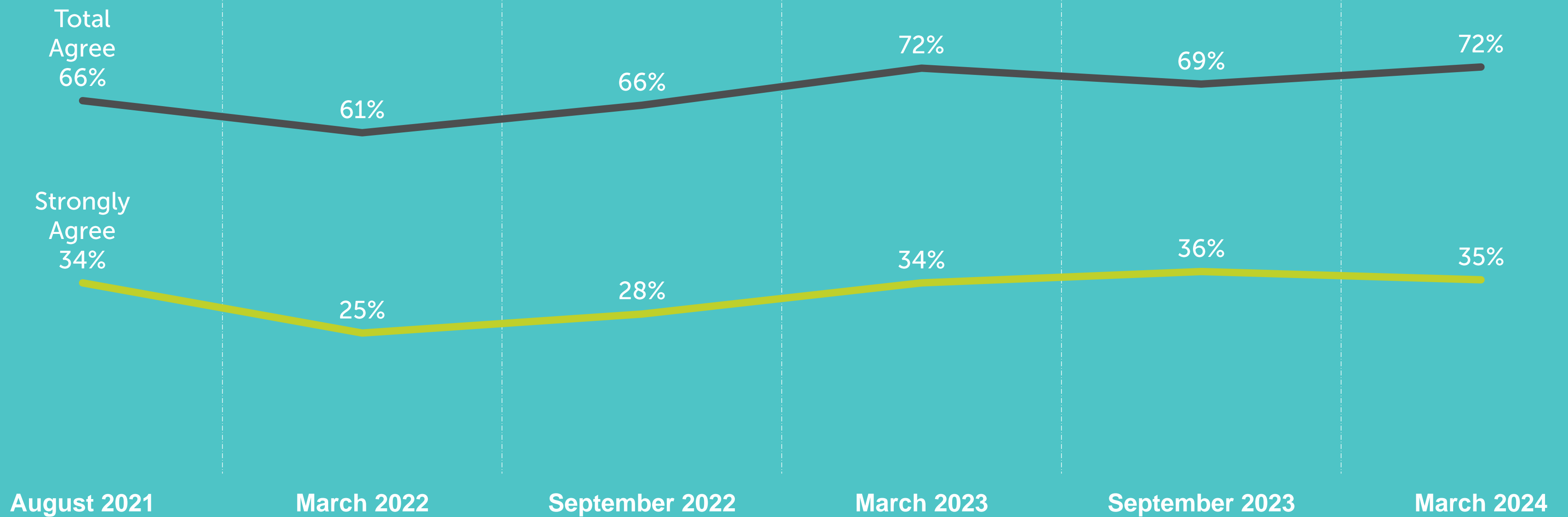
"I'm worried about the future of downtown Seattle."





Agree/Disagree Trend

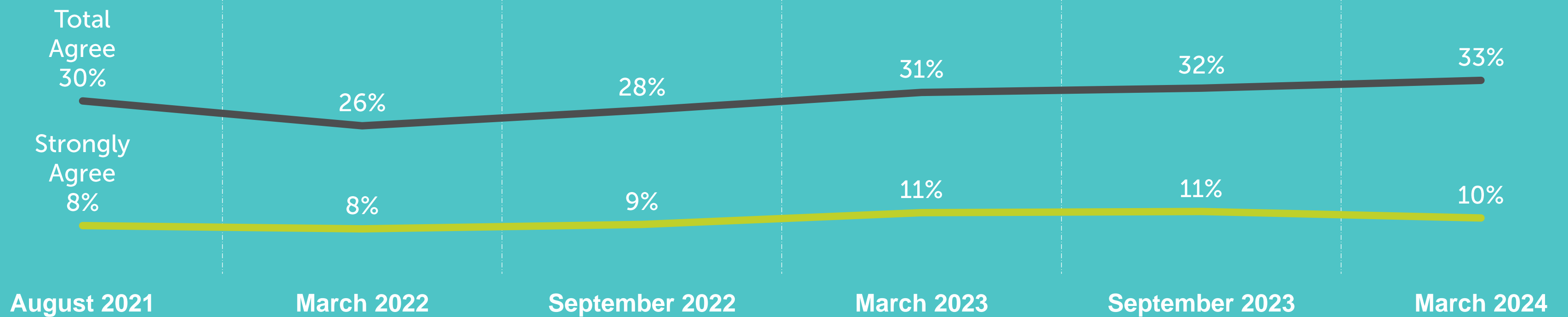
"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle during the day."





Agree/Disagree Trend

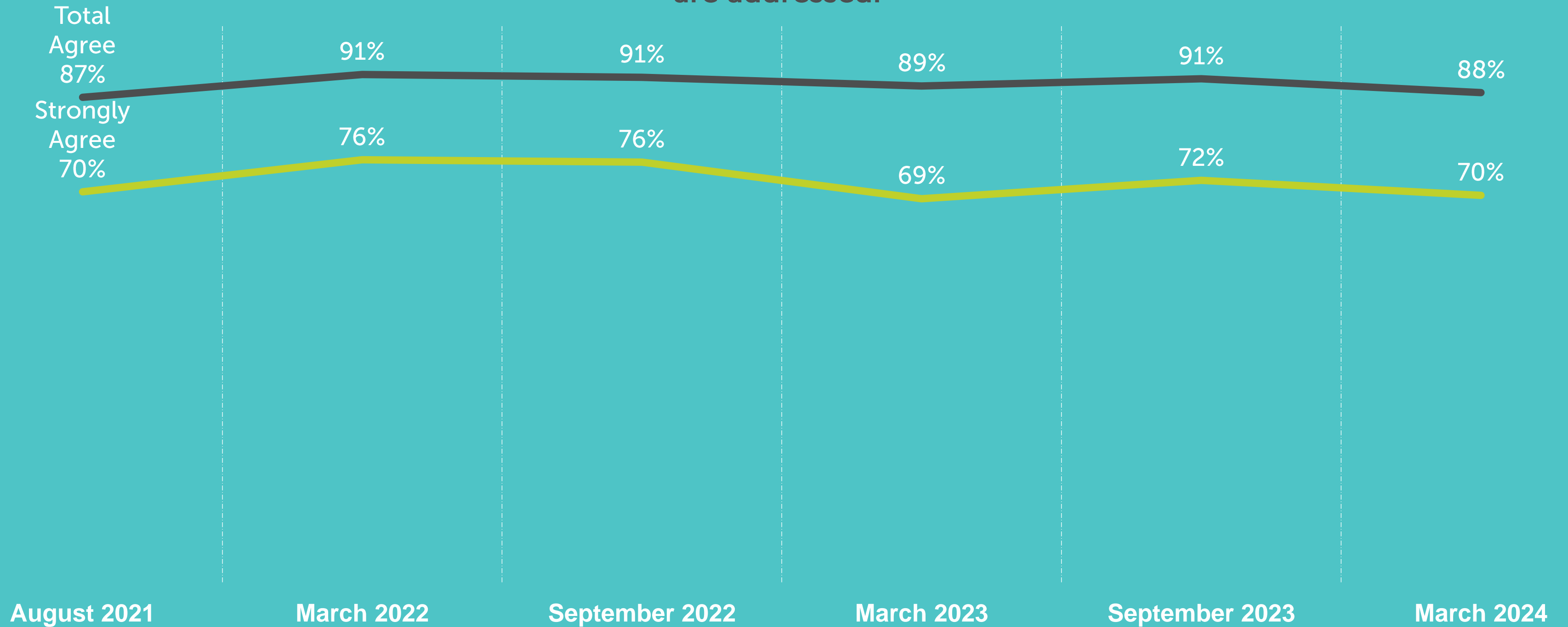
"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle at night."





Agree/Disagree Trend

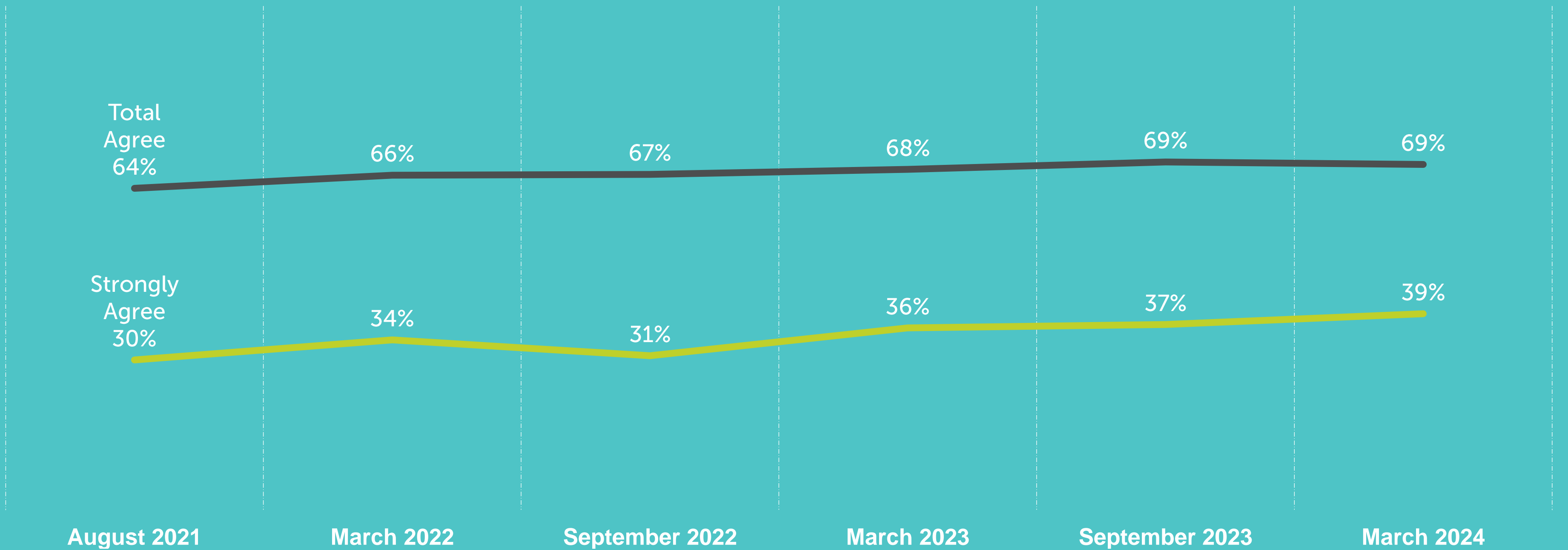
"Downtown Seattle cannot fully recover until the homelessness and public safety problems are addressed."





Agree/Disagree Trend

"I support the building of a wider variety of housing in my neighborhood." *

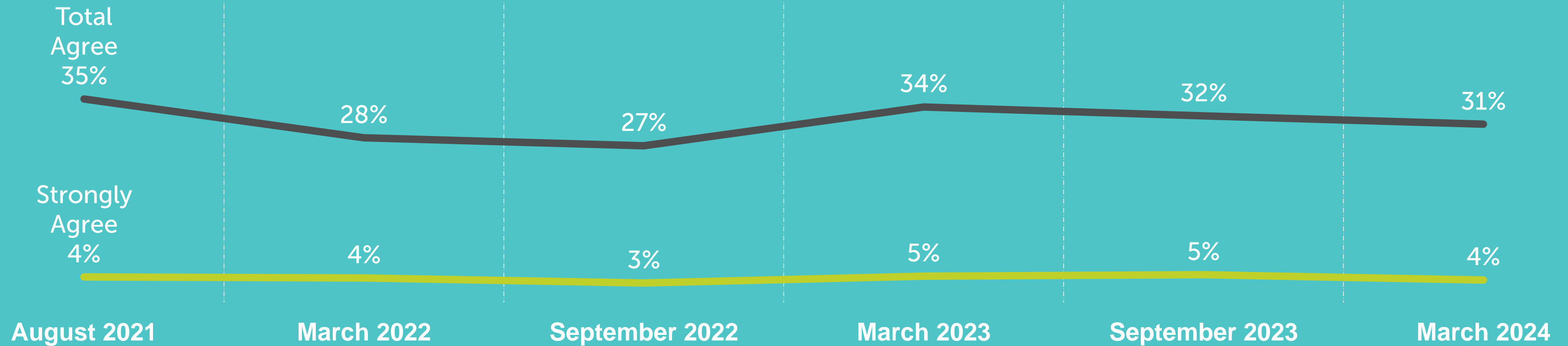


* Previously asked as: "I support the building of new housing in my neighborhood"



Agree/Disagree Trend

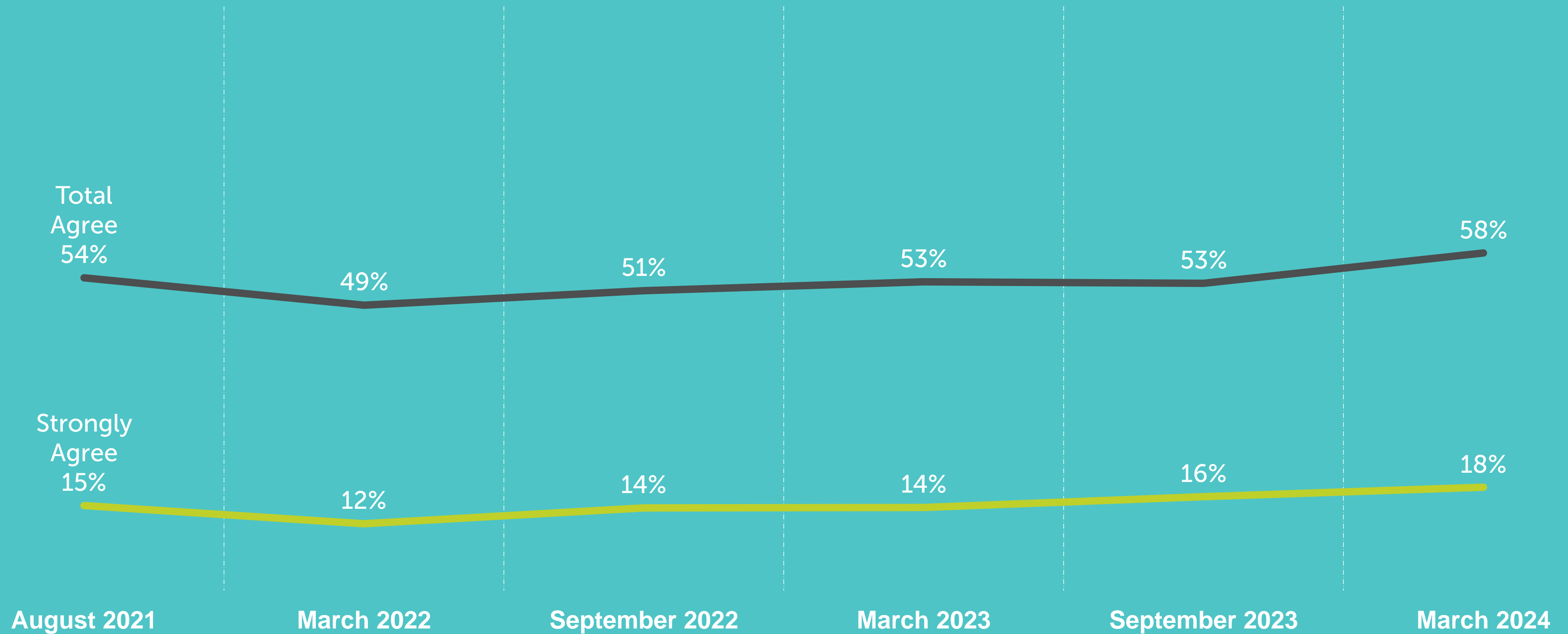
"I trust the City of Seattle to spend my tax dollars responsibly."





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."

Total
Agree
71%

73%

68%

73%

Strongly
Agree
37%

39%

36%

37%

September 2022

March 2023

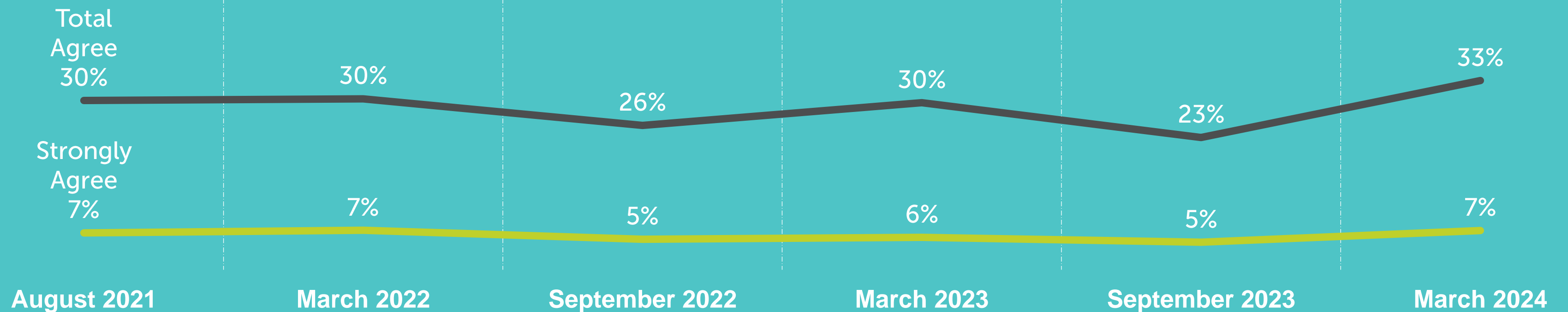
September 2023

March 2024



Agree/Disagree Trend

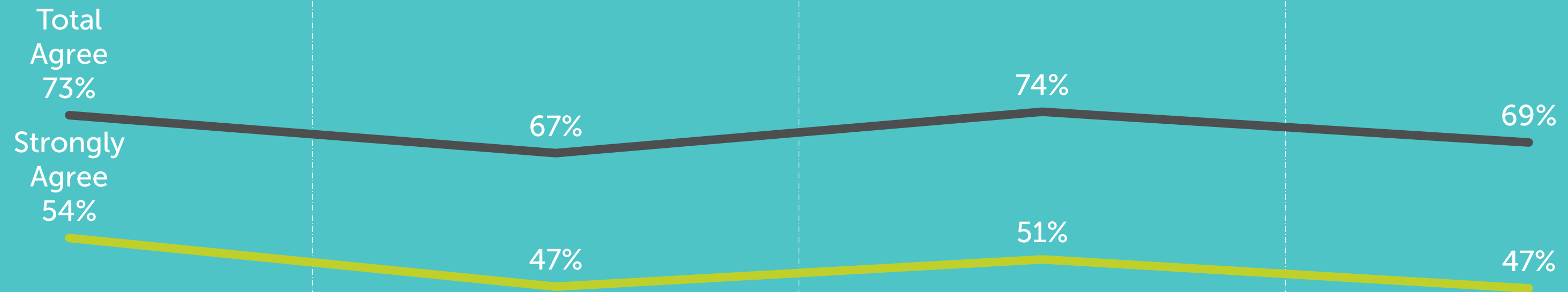
"I trust the Seattle City Council to reform the Seattle Police Department without endangering public safety."





Agree/Disagree Trend

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



September 2022

March 2023

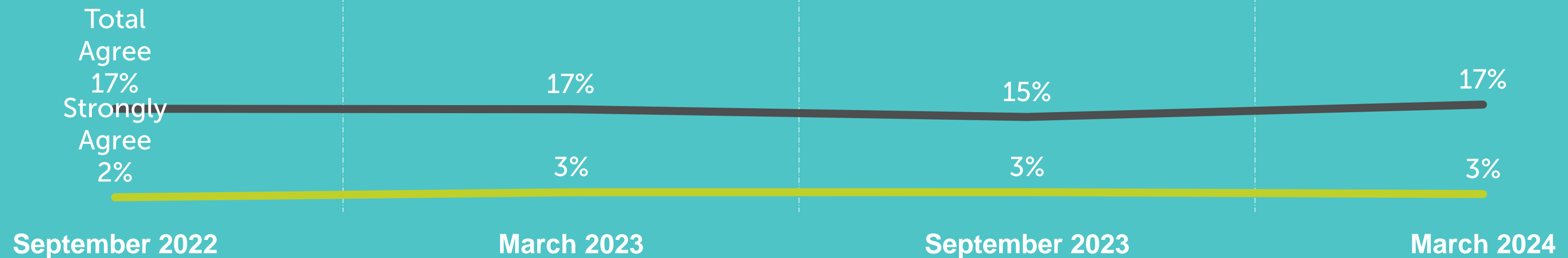
September 2023

March 2024



Agree/Disagree Trend

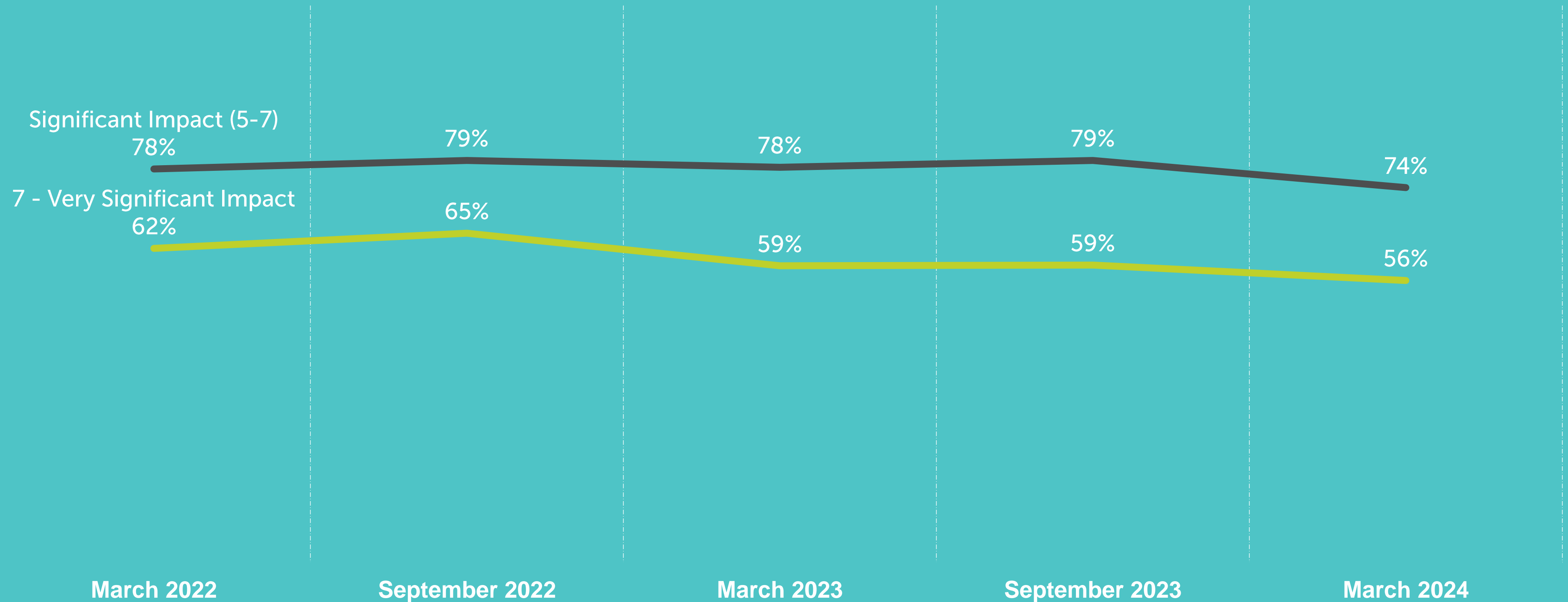
"I trust that the City has an effective plan to address the critical issues facing our city like homelessness, affordability, and public safety."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

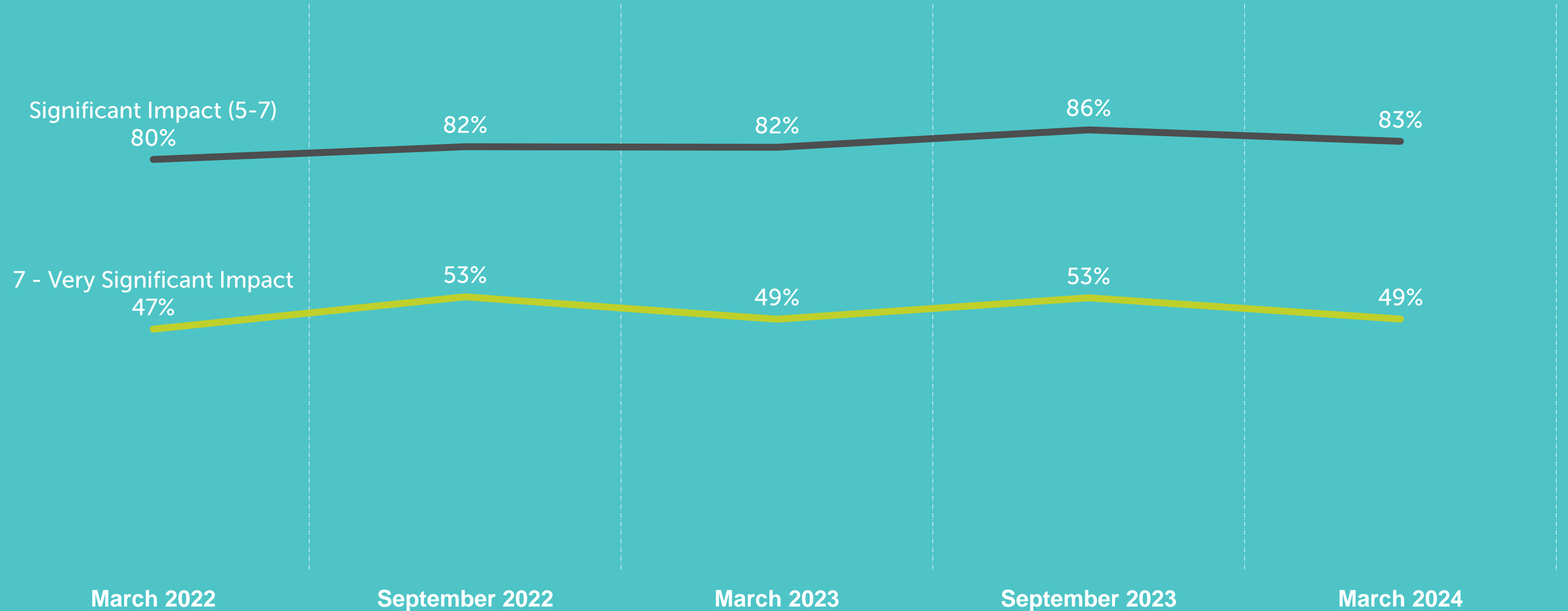
Impact on Quality of Life: "Closing encampments in parks, on sidewalks, and on other public right of ways."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

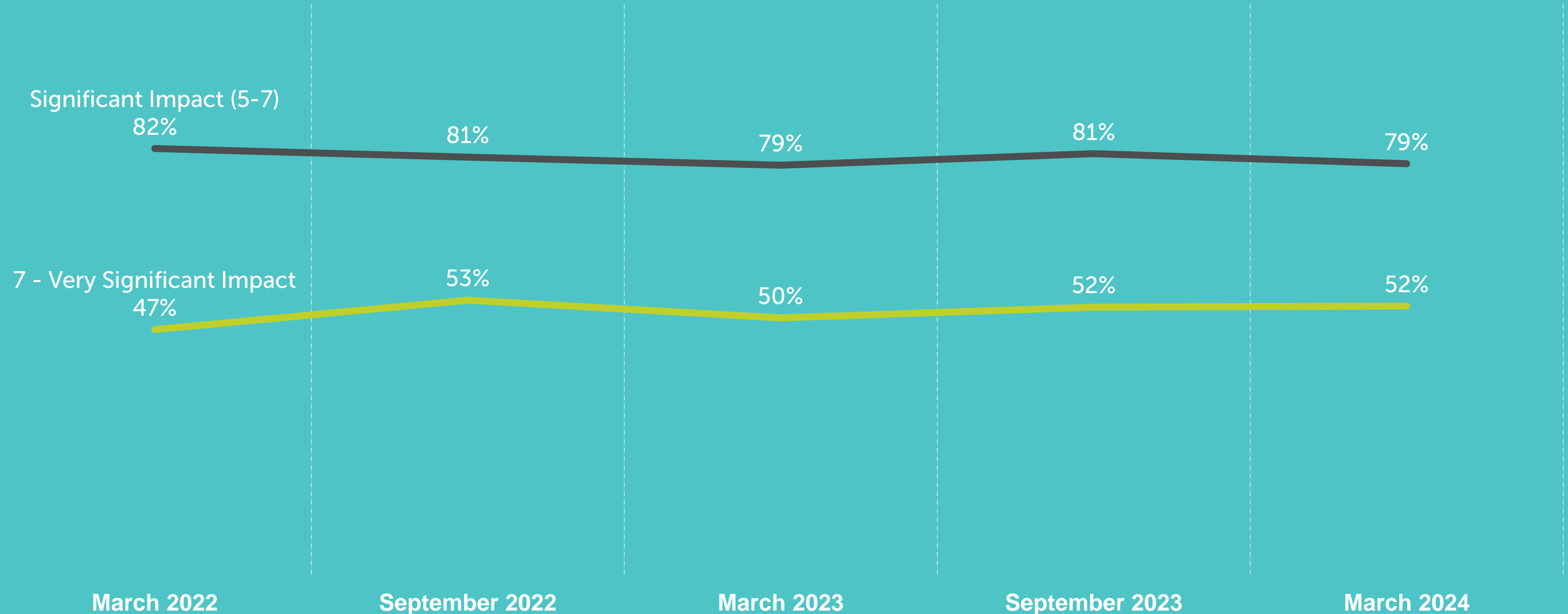
Impact on Quality of Life: "Helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

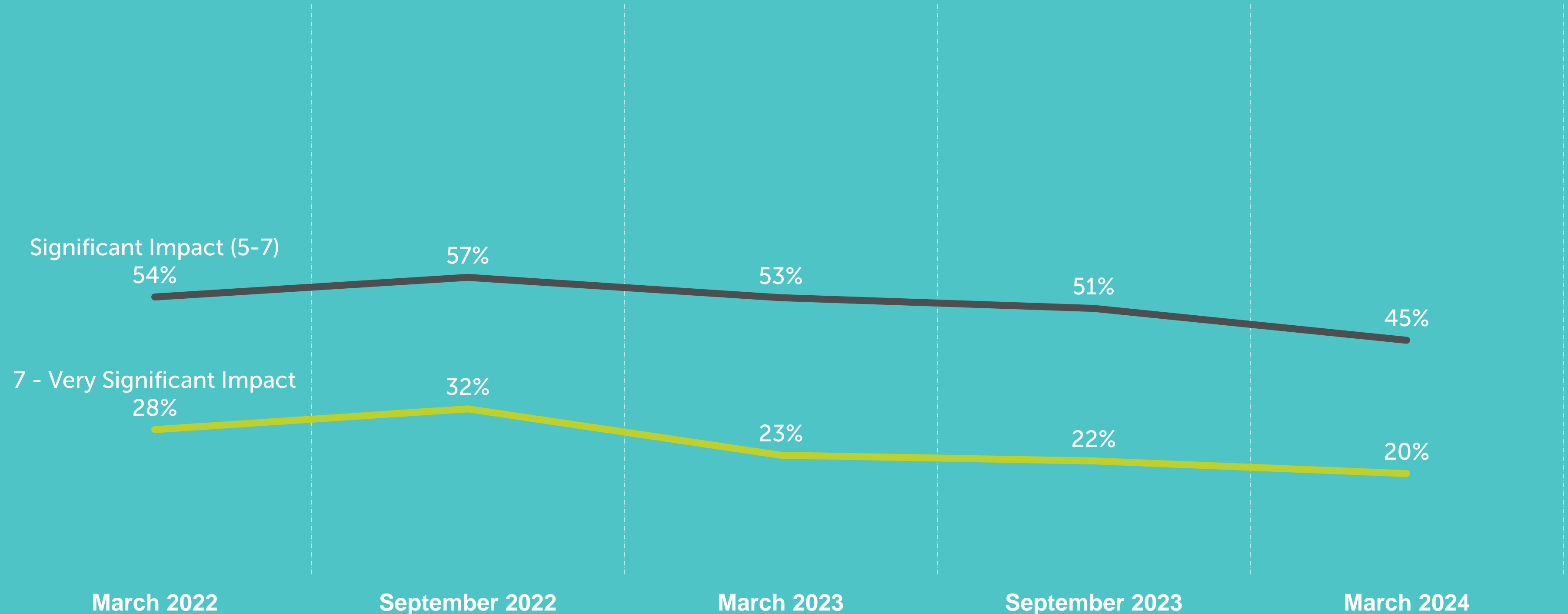
Impact on Quality of Life: "Addressing property crime like theft and car break ins."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

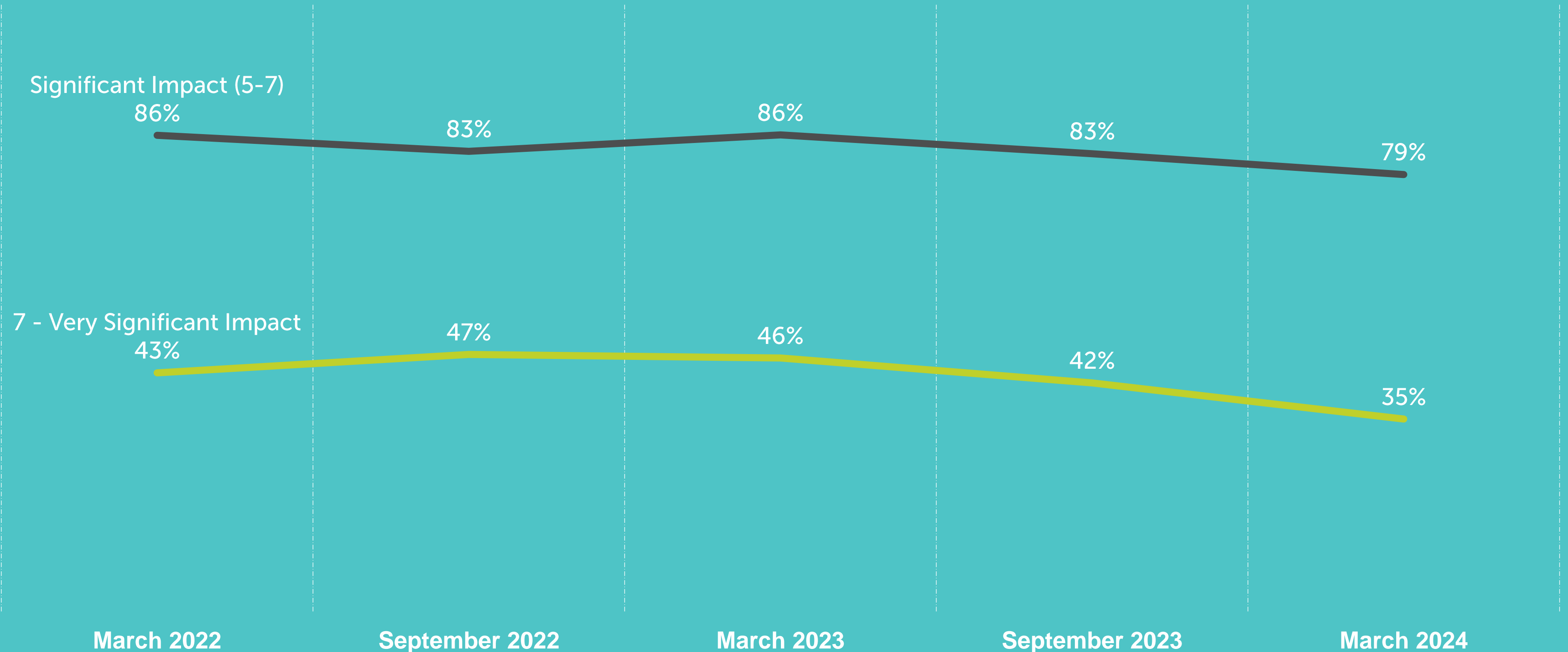
Impact on Quality of Life: "Reducing carbon emissions and climate pollution."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

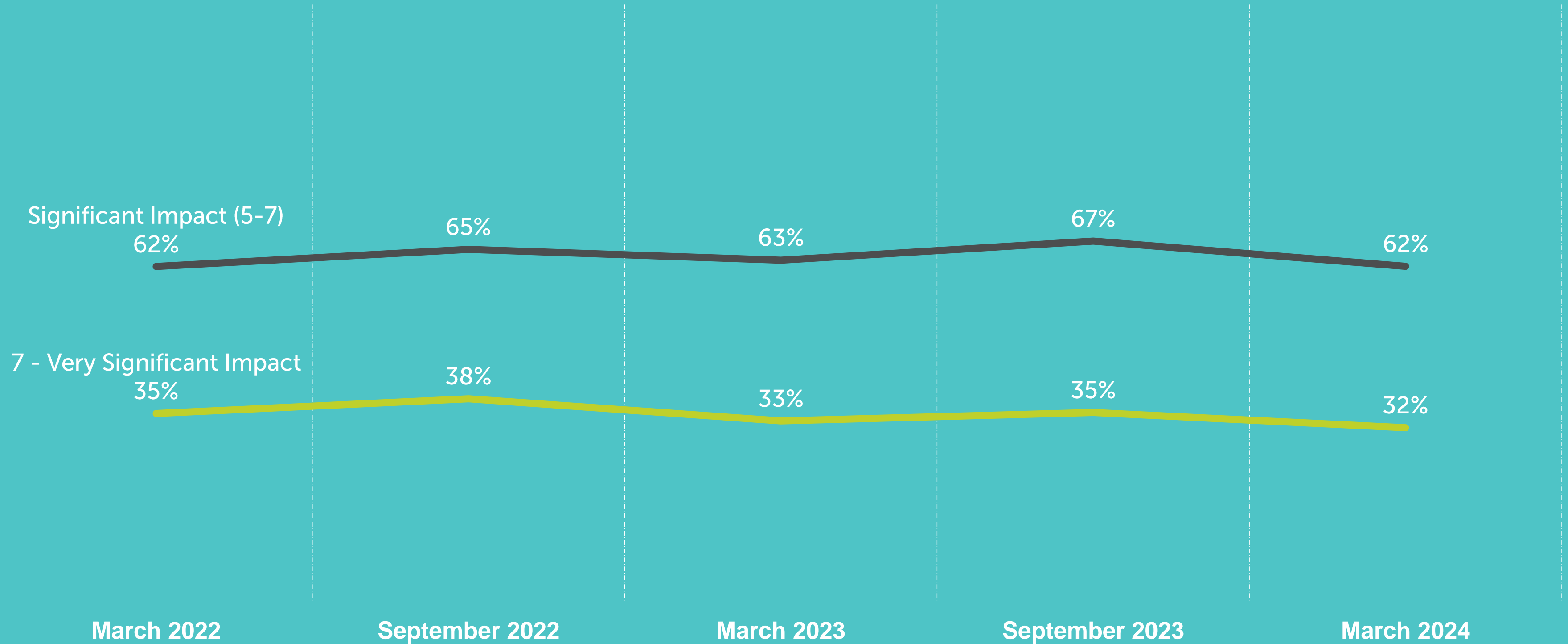
Impact on Quality of Life: "Maintaining bridges and infrastructure."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

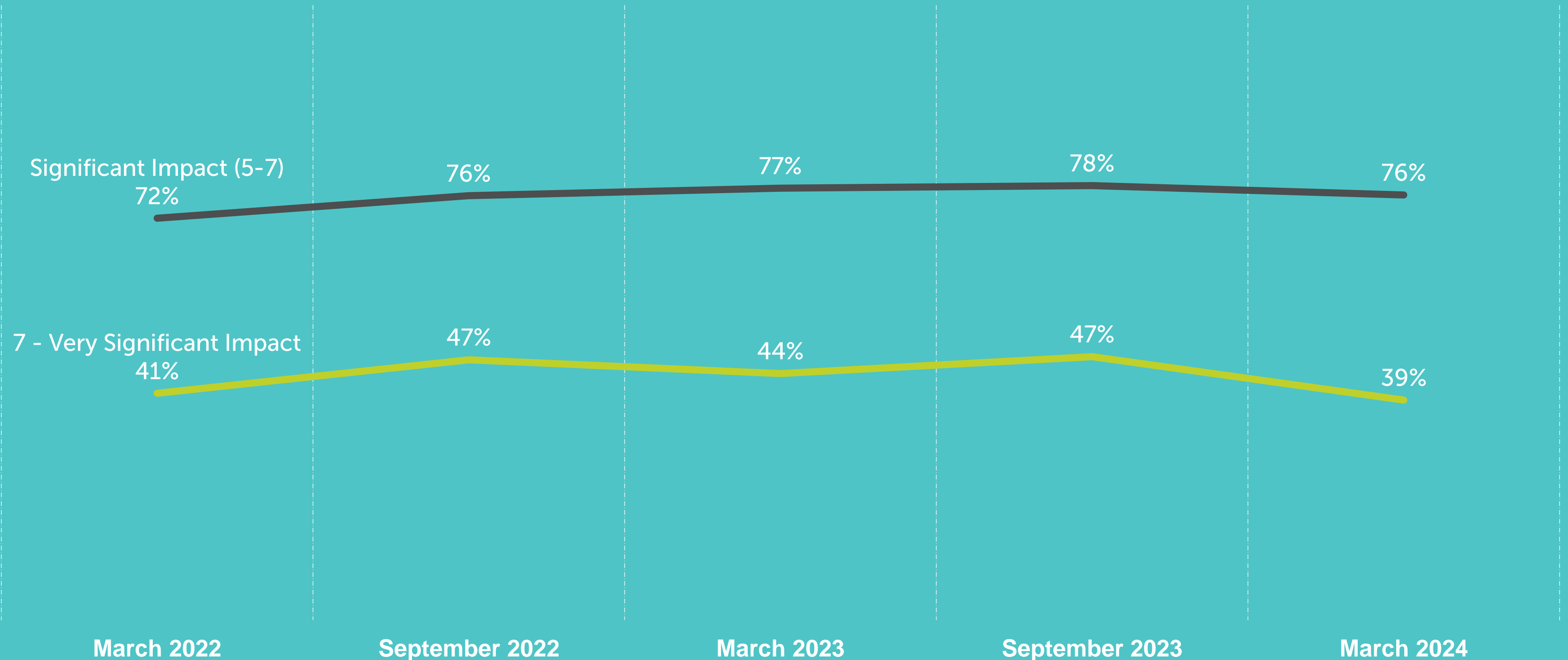
Impact on Quality of Life: "Addressing racially biased policing."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

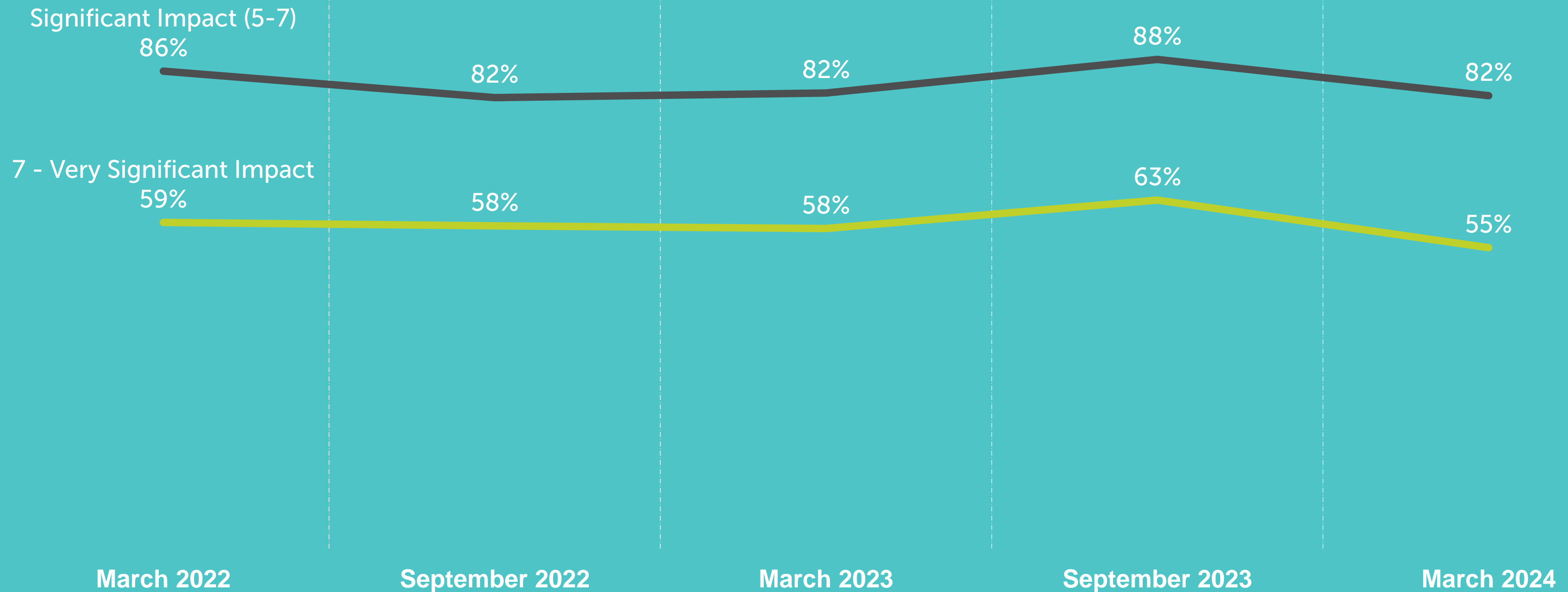
Impact on Quality of Life: "Making Seattle a good place to do business."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

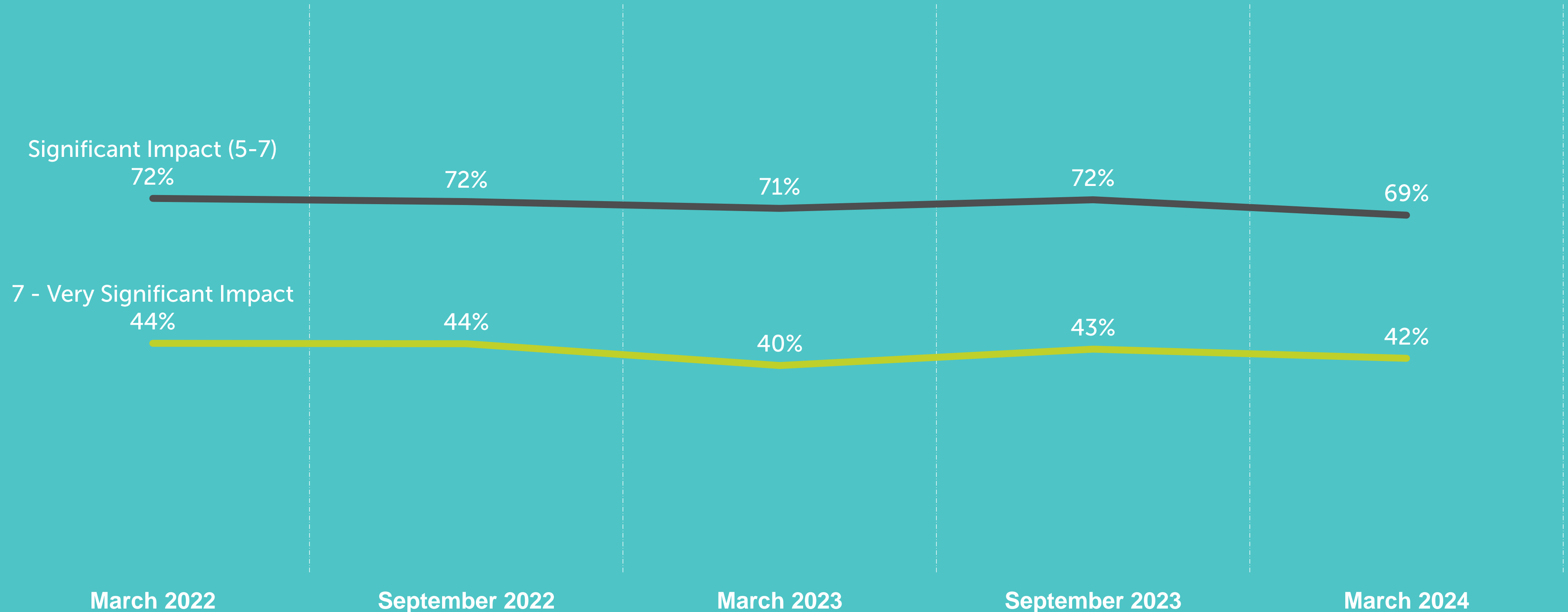
Impact on Quality of Life: "Addressing violent crime and gun violence."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

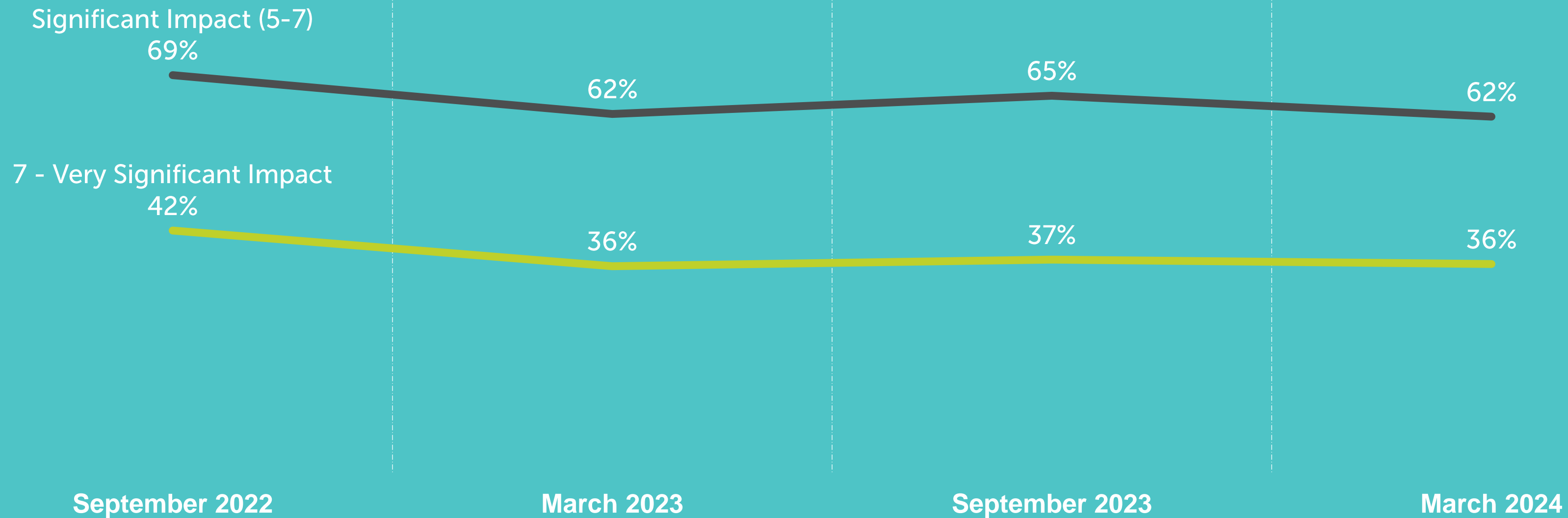
Impact on Quality of Life: "Building more affordable housing."





Quality of Life Impact Trend

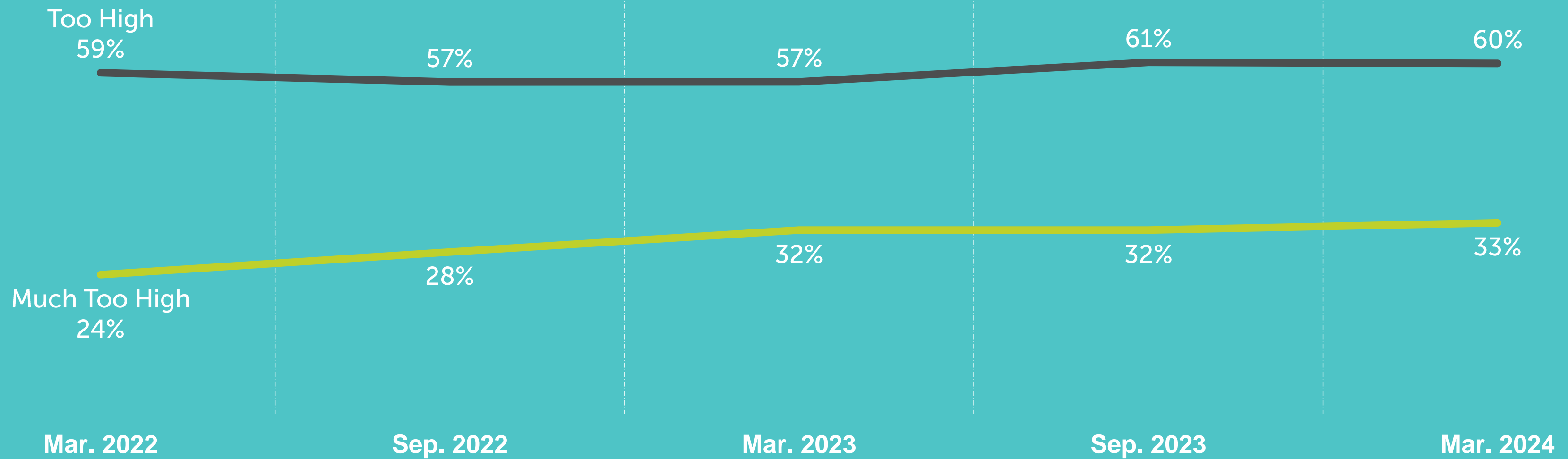
Impact on Quality of Life: "Hiring more police officers."





Taxes in Seattle

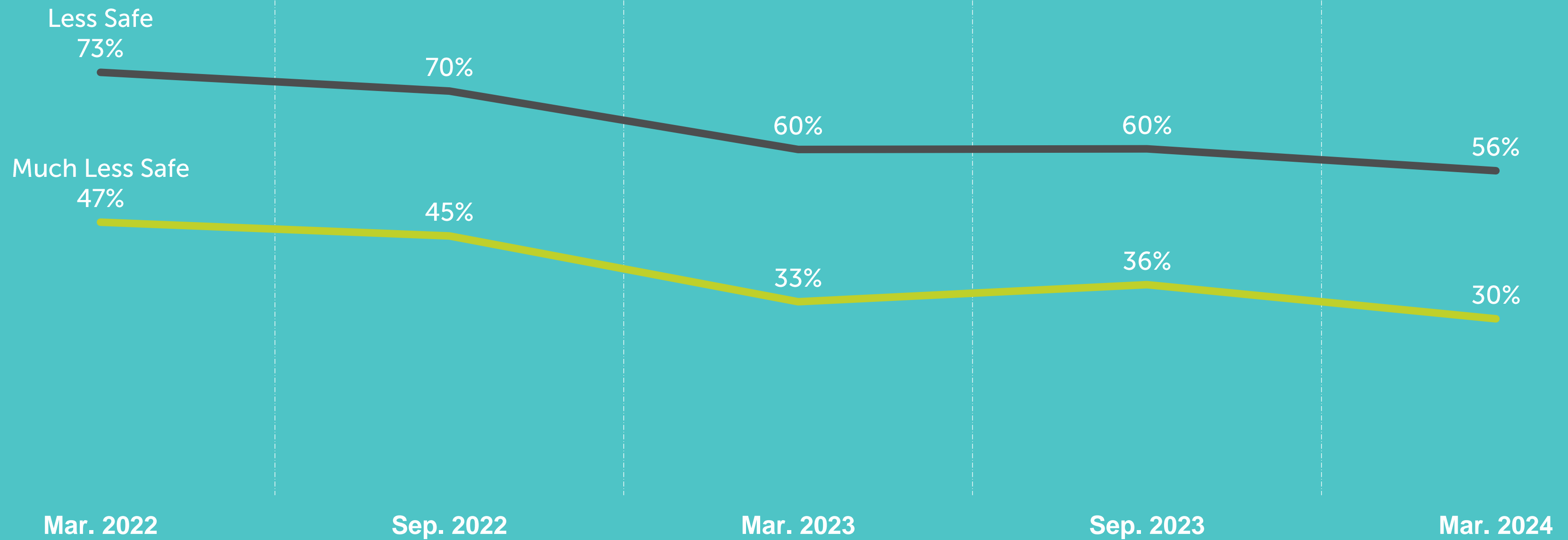
"Would you say that taxes in Seattle are too high, too low, or about right for the level of services the city provides?"





Safety in Seattle

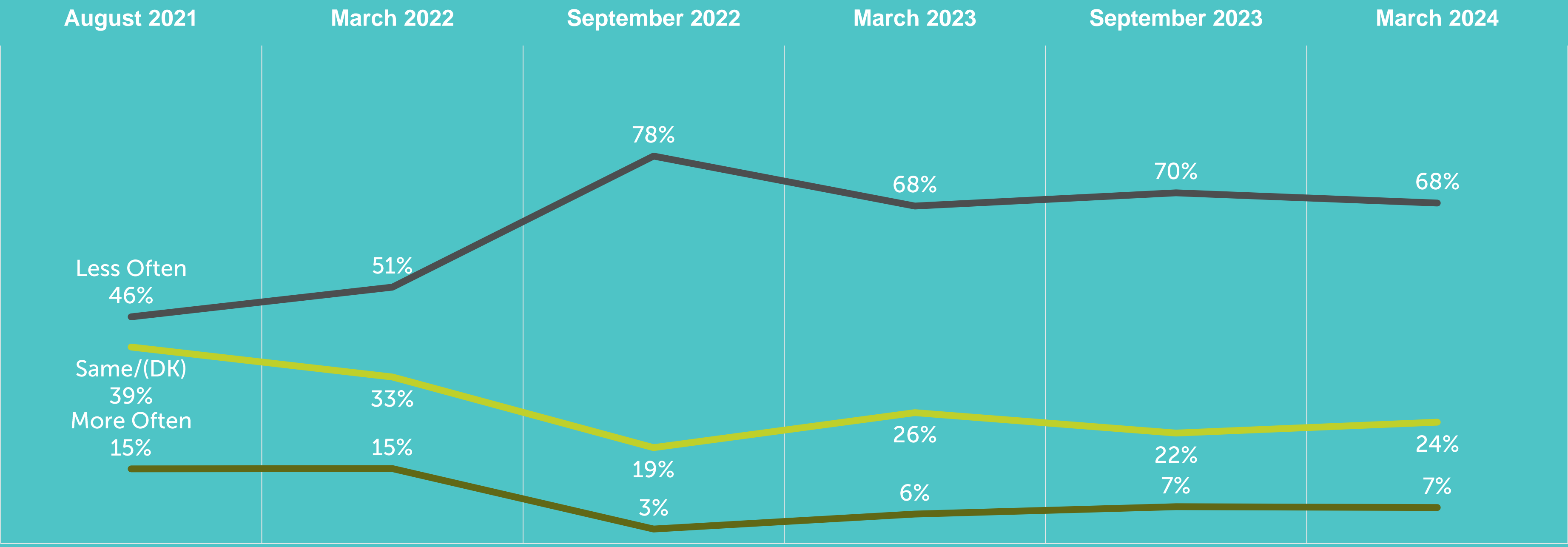
“Thinking about safety in your neighborhood, including property crime and violent crime, would you say you feel more safe or less safe than you did two years ago?”



Downtown Seattle



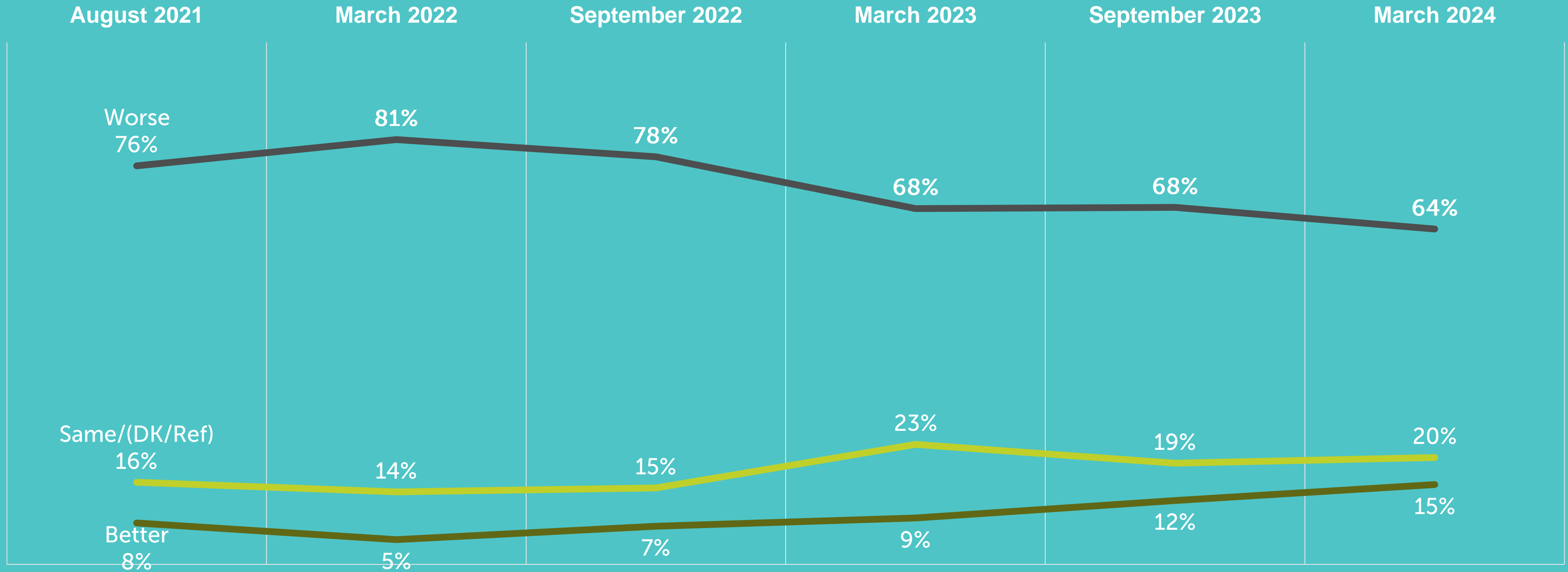
“And currently, for activities other than work, are you visiting downtown Seattle more, less, or about the same as you did before the pandemic?”





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?"





Reasons To Leave Trend

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

