



THE CHAMBER

seattle metropolitan chamber of commerce



THE INDEX

March 2022

Table of Contents

Methodology	3
Research Notes	4
Respondent Profile & Seattle Regions	5
Summary	7
Quality of Life	10
Top Concerns	18
Homelessness	23
Public Safety	29
Housing	34
Downtown/Economic Recovery	39
Police reform	46
Taxes & Spending	51
Childcare	60





Methodology

- Mixed-mode (live phone and text-to-web) survey of Registered Voters in the City of Seattle
- Conducted March 13 – 20, 2022
- 700 completed interviews; effective margin of error: ± 3.9 points
 - 100 interviews per City Council District
- 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 August 18 -25, 2021

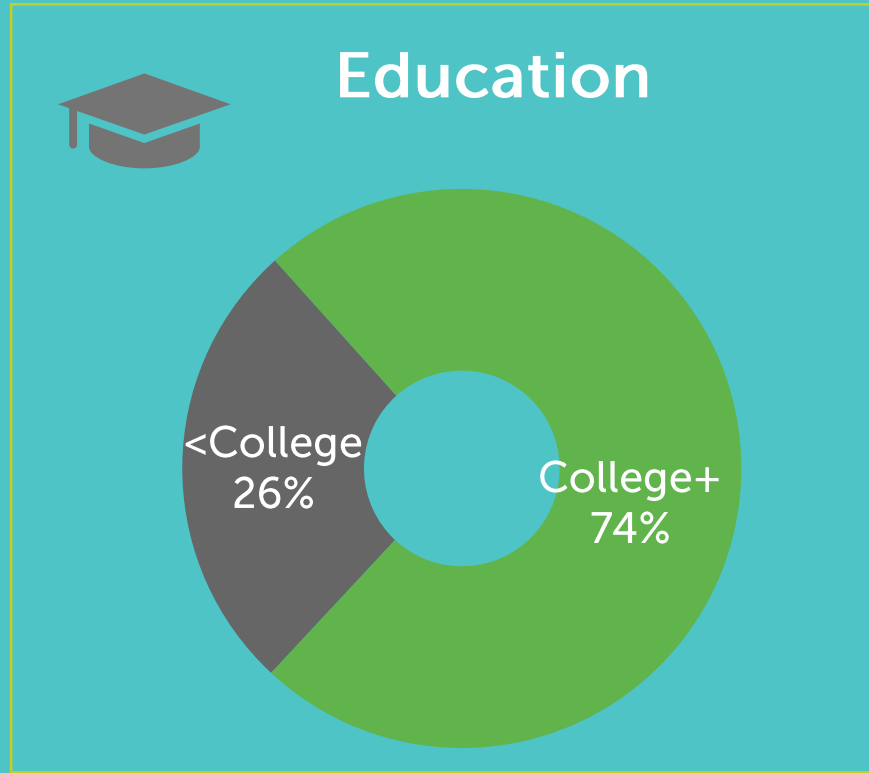
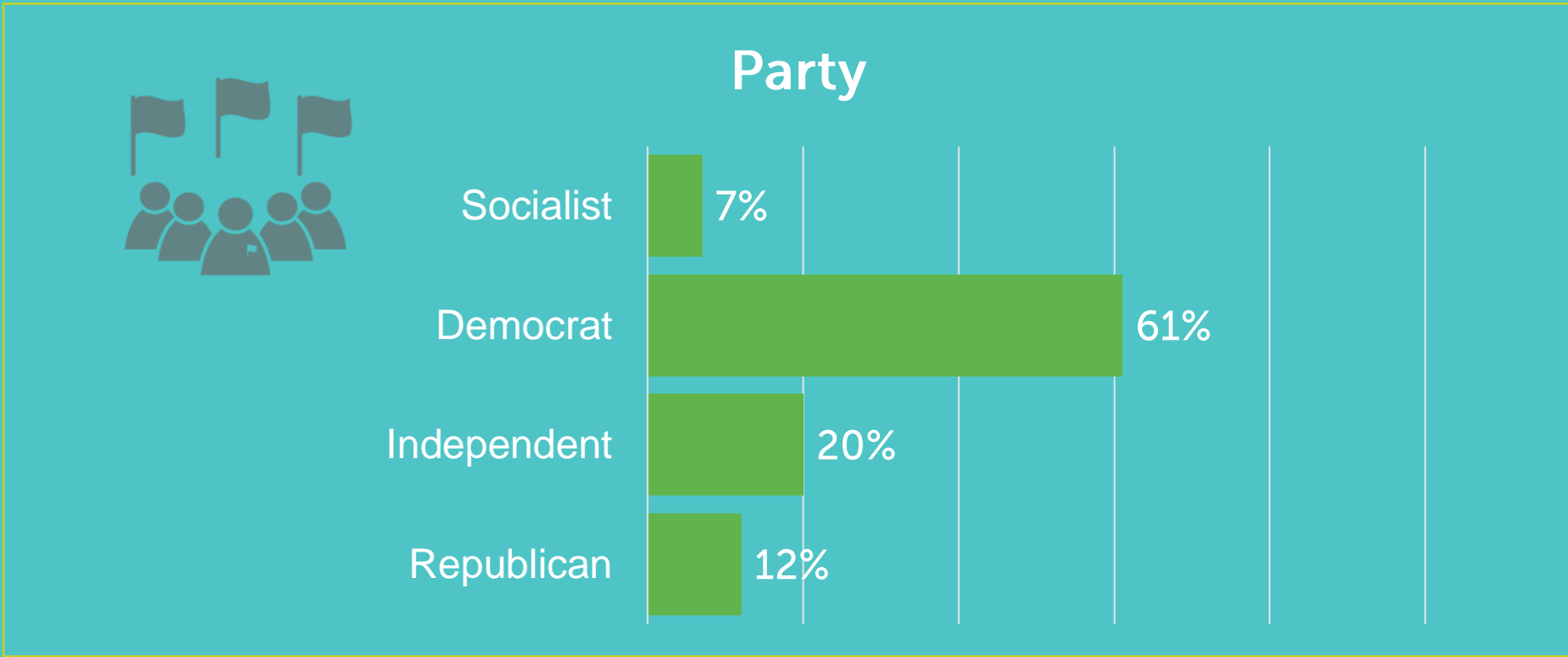
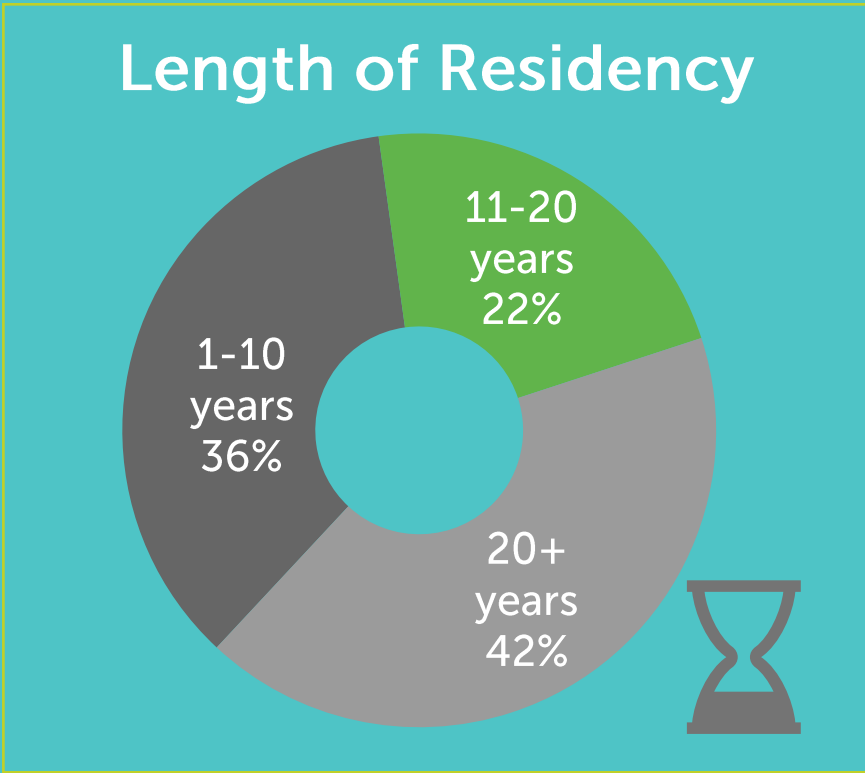
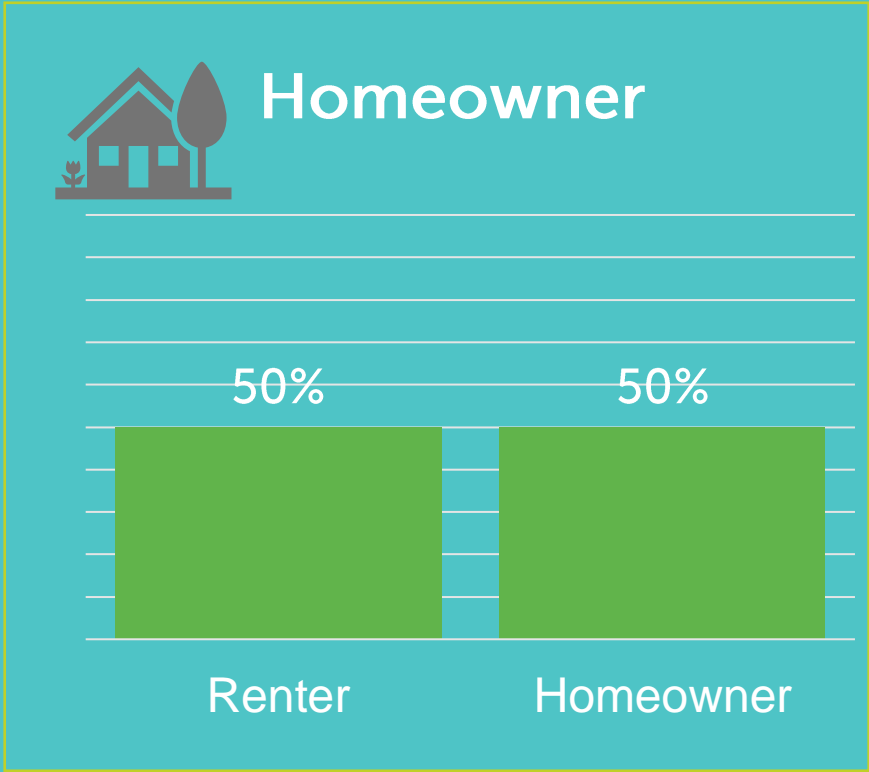
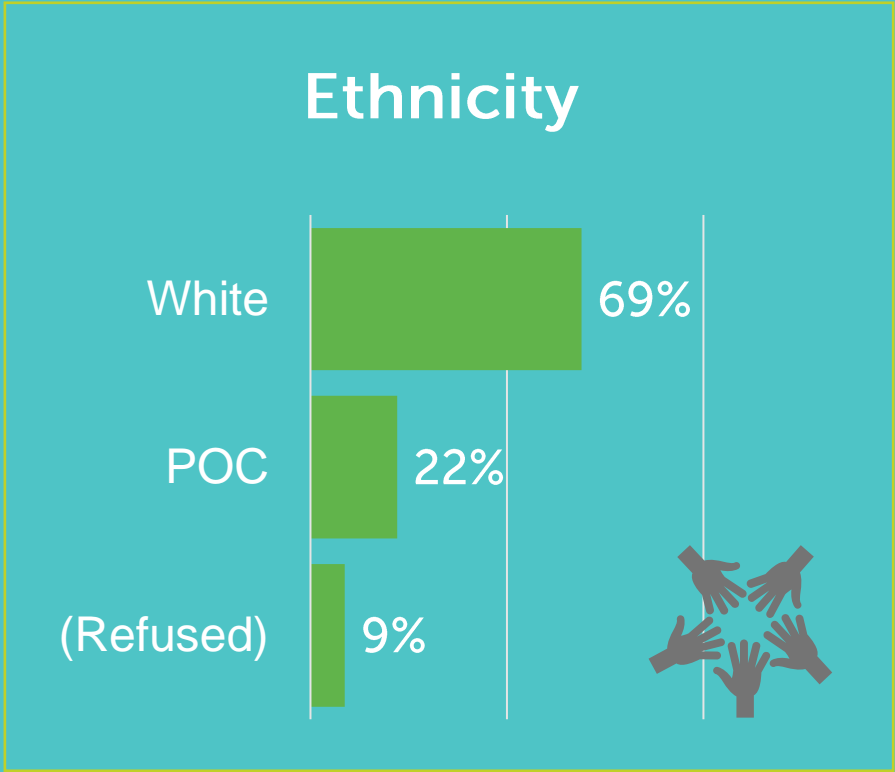
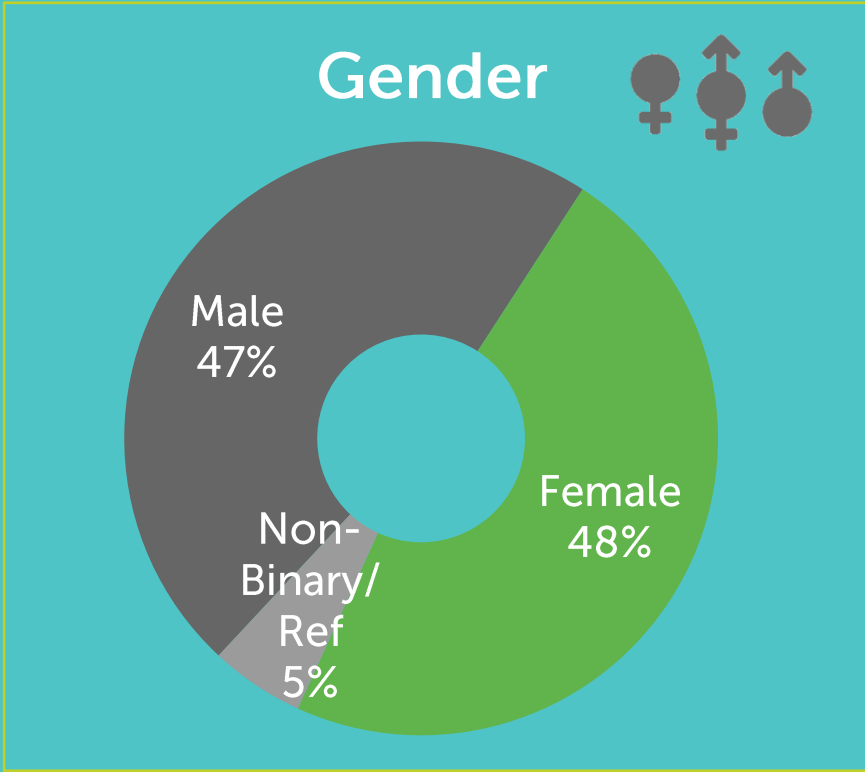
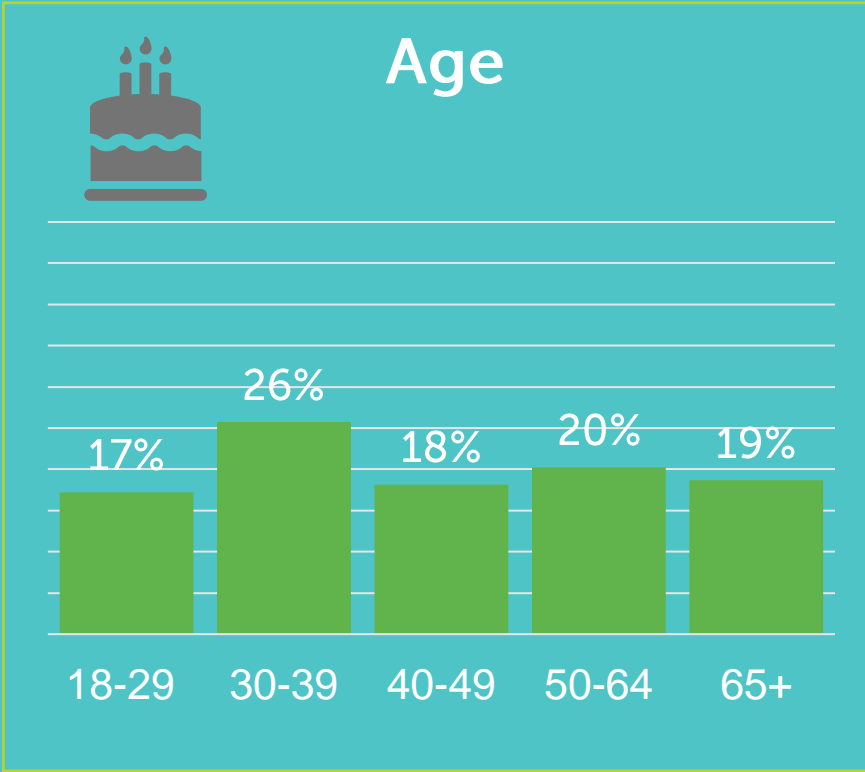
*Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.



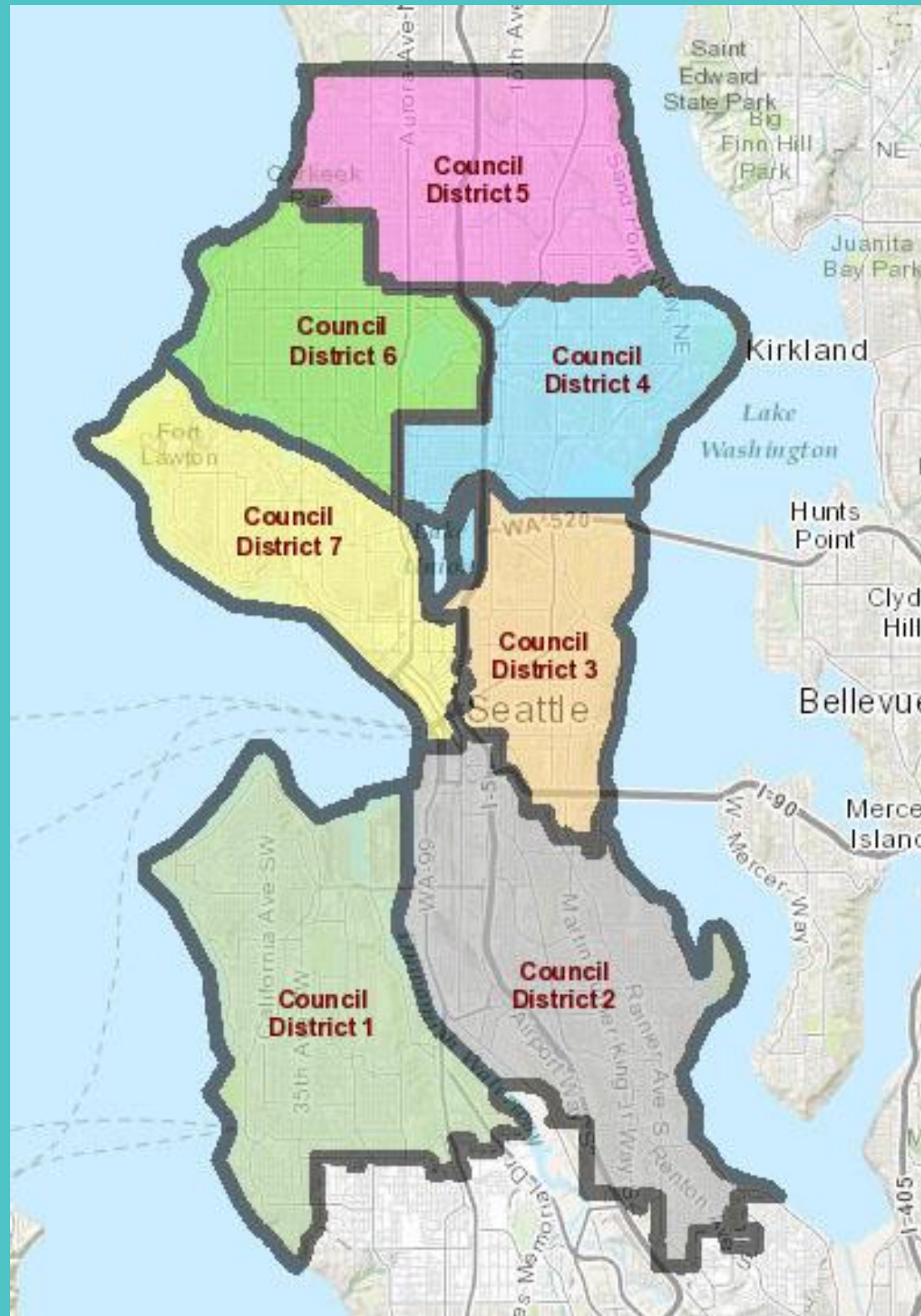
Research Notes

- 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-ten Seattle voters identify as Democrats, making them the primary driver of overall opinion on all survey questions

Respondent Profile



Seattle Regions



- 100 interviews in each City Council District
- Results weighted to the proportional share of voters in each District.

Region	Districts	Weighted %
North Seattle	4, 5 and 6	42%
Central Seattle	3 and 7	31%
South Seattle	1 and 2	28%

Summary



- *Seattle voters have grown even more pessimistic about the direction of the city and about overall quality of life, but voters are still guardedly optimistic about the region's future.*
- *Two-thirds of Seattle voters – including at least 6-in-10 voters in every major subgroup – have actively considered moving out of Seattle. Cost of living/housing affordability and public safety are the top reasons people have considered moving.*
- *Homelessness continues to be the top concern of Seattle voters, but there has been a dramatic increase in concerns about public safety with mentions from nearly half of Seattle Voters. Concerns about affordability have also increased.*
 - *A majority of voters in every subgroup mention homelessness as an issue they are “frustrated or concerned about.”*
 - *There is near-universal agreement on expanding state/regional partnerships to address homelessness and investing more in behavioral health and voters strongly prefer providing outreach and then closing encampments to a blanket “Stop the Sweeps” approach .*
 - *An increasing number of voters say that they would not feel safe visiting Downtown both during the day and at night, and three-quarters say their own neighborhood feels less safe compared to two years ago.*

Summary



- *The top five issues voters say would have the biggest impact on improving quality of life mirror their top concerns: addressing three different public safety issues – violent crime and gun violence, property crime, and public safety concerns facing local businesses – removing tent encampments, and maintaining bridges and infrastructure.*
- *Voters continue to support increased density with near universal support for making it easier to build housing in transit/commercial areas, and supermajority support for more housing in their neighborhood and for changing regulations to support more density in SFH zones.*
- *Most voters are concerned about Downtown's future and concern has increased. Voters continue to overwhelmingly agree that Downtown is important to the region's economic recovery, and that addressing homelessness and public safety issues is essential for Downtown's recovery.*
 - *A majority of voters say they will visit Downtown LESS OFTEN for non-work activities than they did pre-pandemic and that percentage has increased since 2021.*

Summary



- *Voters do not trust the city council on police reform and they strongly prefer an approach that includes fundamental reform and hiring more officers rather than an approach that focuses on defunding the police and de-criminalizing non-violent misdemeanors.*
- *Nearly 6-in-10 Seattle voters think local taxes are too high for the level of services the city provides and a growing supermajority of voters DO NOT trust the city to spend their tax dollars responsibly. However, despite declining trust and increasing concern about taxes, Seattle voters are still open to investing more to address their top concern, homelessness.*
 - *After hearing information about the city's budget deficit, by a 2-to-1 margin voters would prefer prioritizing the basics while protecting the city's most vulnerable rather than increasing taxes to maintain spending and cover the deficit.*
- *By an 11-point margin voters think increasing access and opportunity is a more effective path to wider prosperity than increasing taxes and redistribution. Most self-identified Socialists and a narrow majority of renters and voters aged 30-49 support increased taxes/redistribution over increased access/opportunity.*
- *Voters continue to overwhelmingly agree that Seattle does not have enough affordable, quality childcare.*

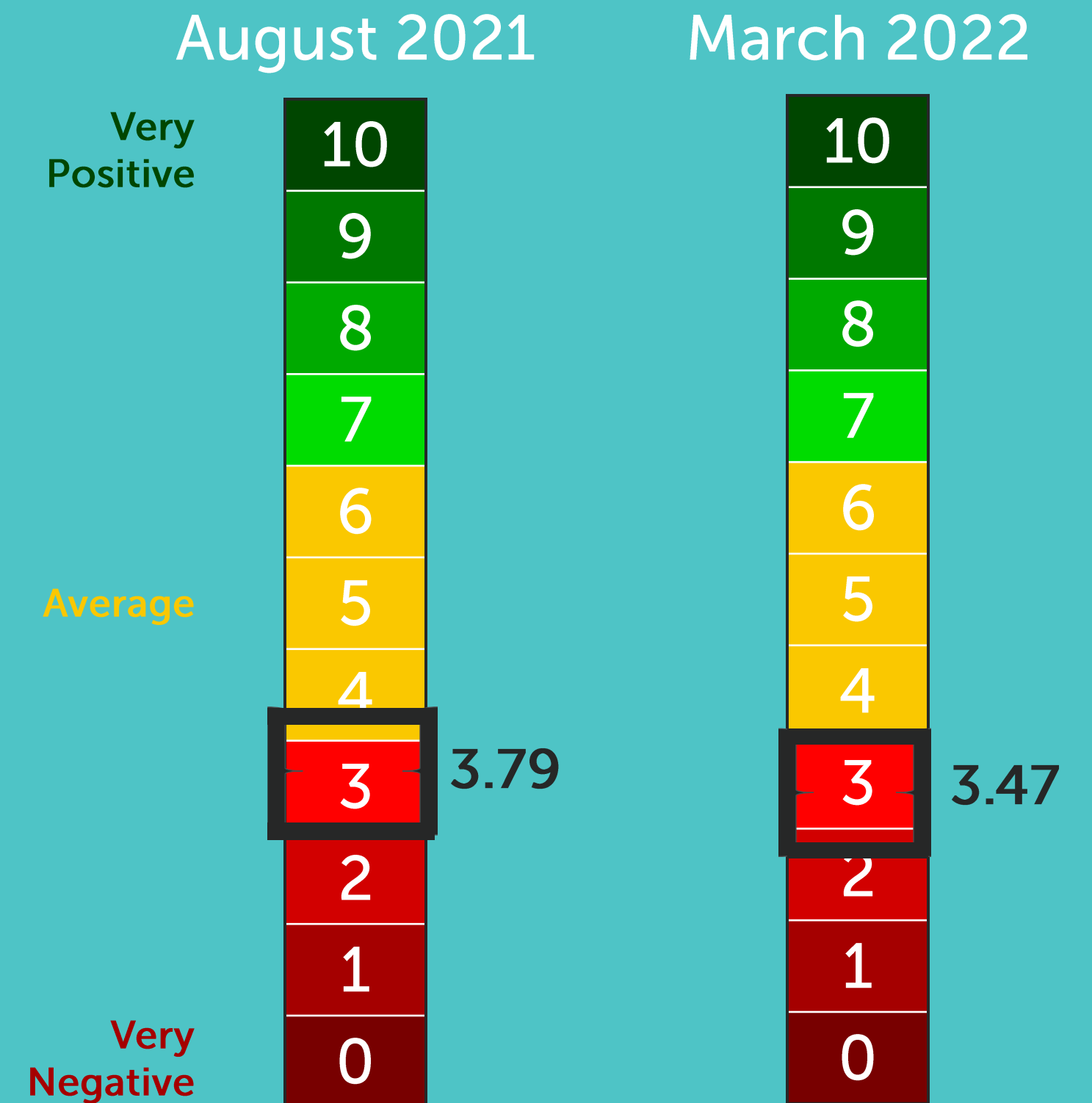


Quality of Life



Quality of Life Index

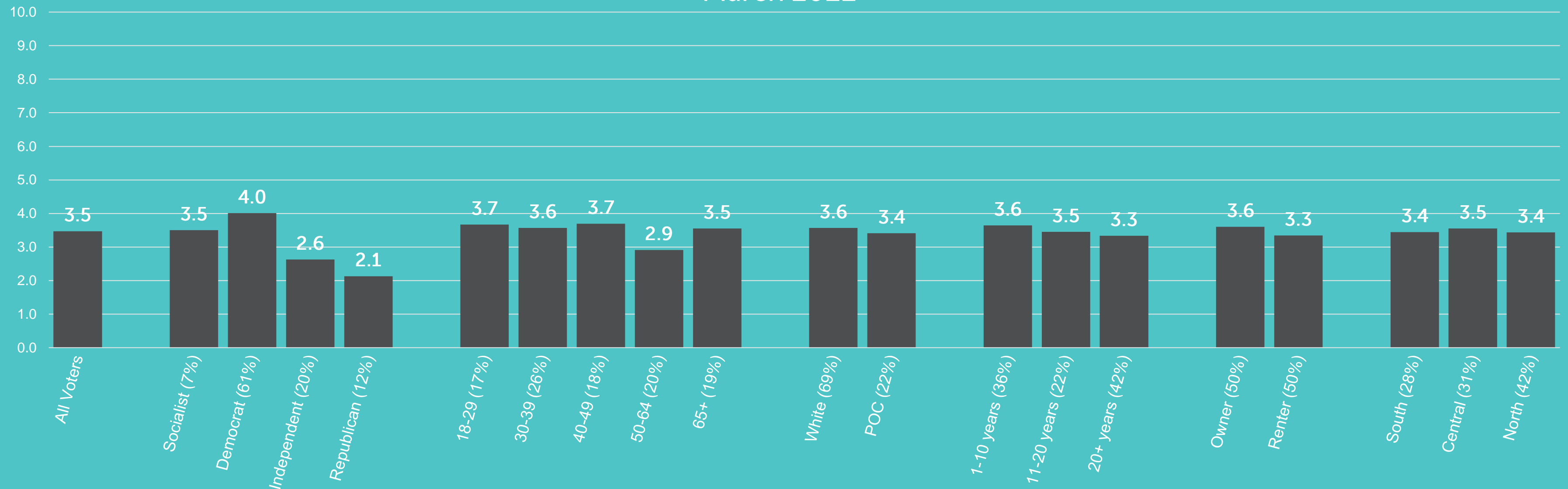
- The Quality of Life Index aggregates multiple survey questions about quality of life:
 - Right Direction/Wrong Track
 - Quality of Life compared to 4 years ago
 - Actively considered moving out of Seattle
 - Optimistic about the region’s future
 - Perception of safety
 - Concern about Downtown’s future
 - Likelihood to visit Downtown for activities other than work
- The Index does not include any measures related to voter perceptions of Seattle’s government or elected leaders





Quality of Life - The Index

Quality of Life Index
March 2022

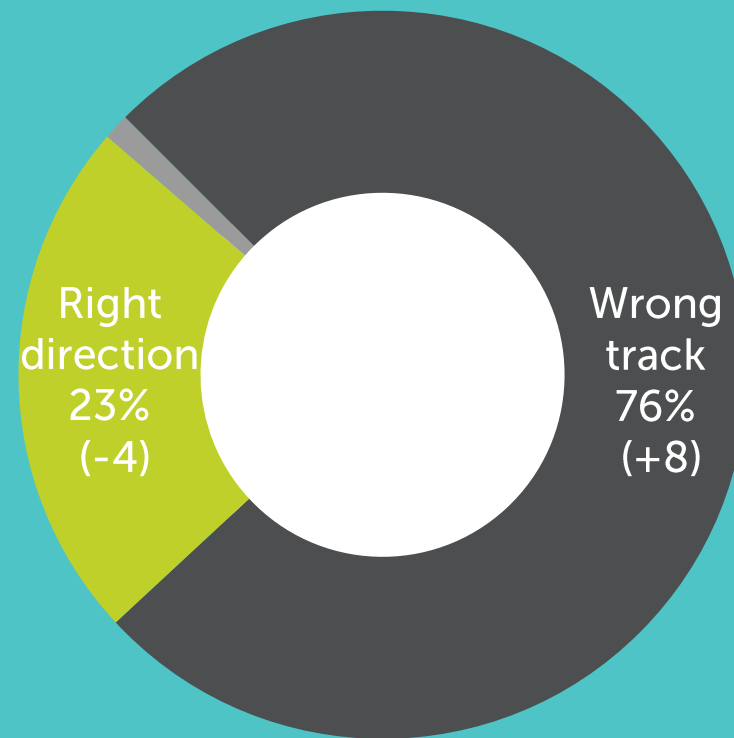


The Quality of Life Index is negative in every subgroup. Independents and Republicans give the lowest ratings, but even among Democrats the Quality of Life Index is very weak and well below the midpoint.

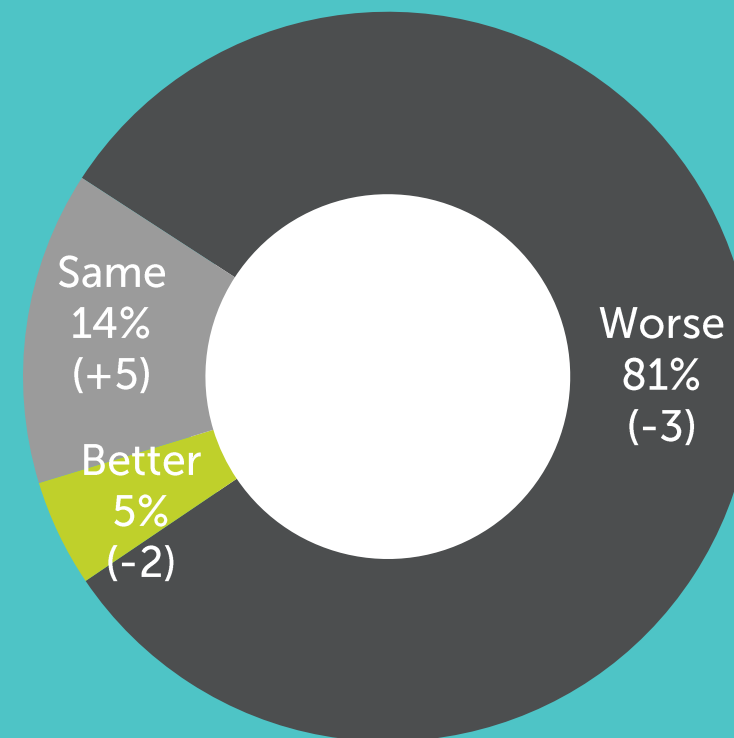


Quality of Life: By the Numbers

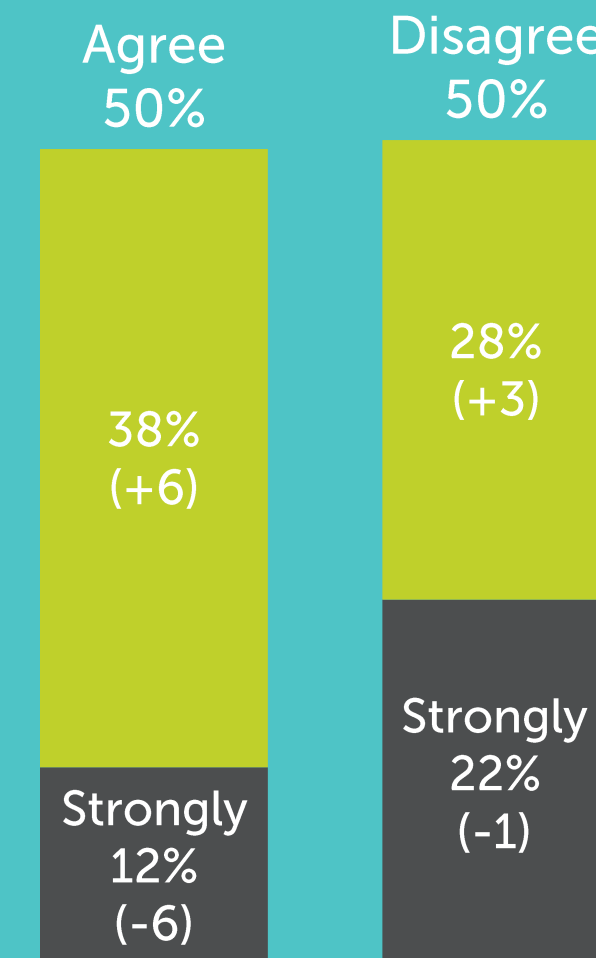
"Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?"



"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."



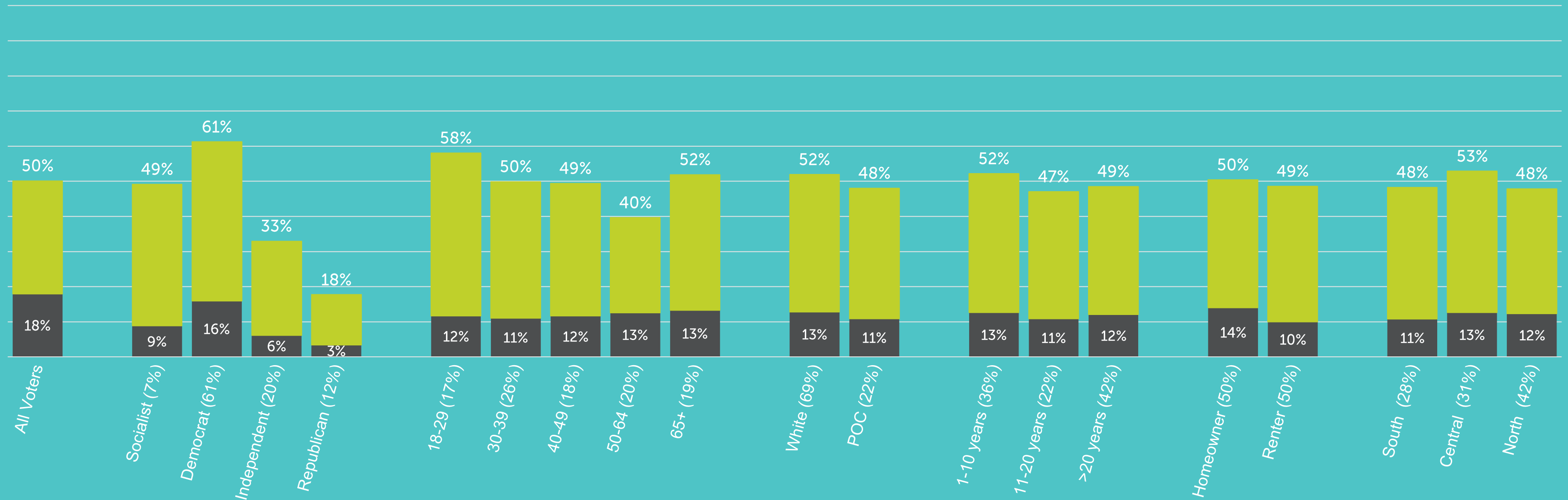
Seattle voters have grown even more pessimistic about the direction of the city and overall quality of life, but voters are still guardedly optimistic about the region's future.

Optimism



Optimistic About Future of The Region

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



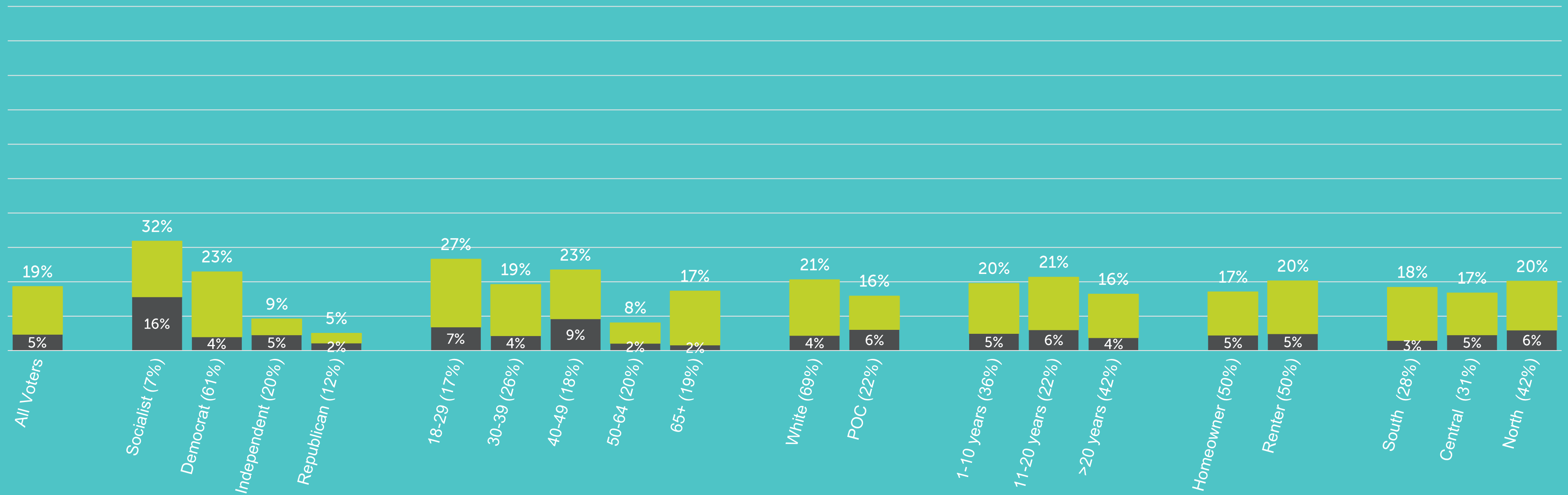
Democrats and younger voters are the most optimistic about the future of the region although very few are strongly optimistic. Very few Independents and Republicans are optimistic about the future of this region.



Quality of Life

Quality of Life Compared to 4 Years Ago

■ Better ■ Same



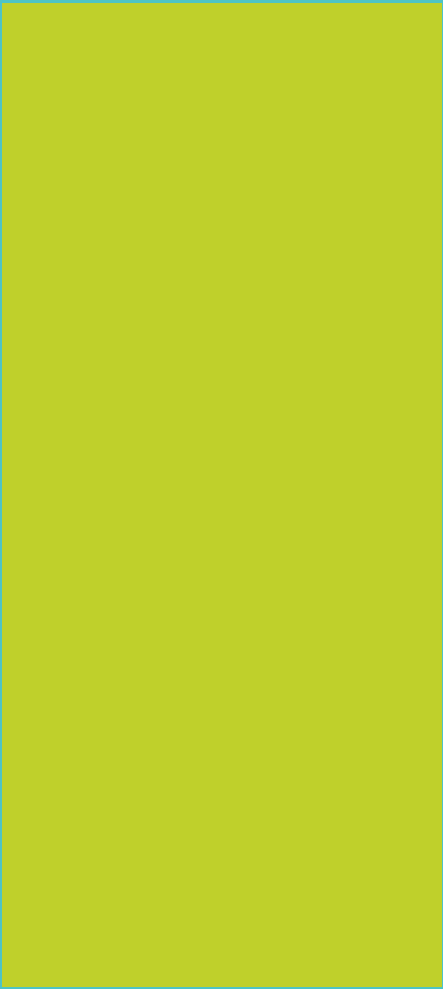
A supermajority in all subgroups think that the quality of life in the city has gotten worse compared to 4 years ago. Socialists are somewhat more likely to say that quality of life has gotten better or remained the same than other subgroups.



Leaving Seattle

"Have you actively considered moving out of Seattle?"

Yes
67% (+7)



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

Cost of Living/Housing

35%
(+12)

Crime/Public Safety

29%
(+8)

Homelessness

12%
(-2)

Gov't/Politics

9%
(-2)

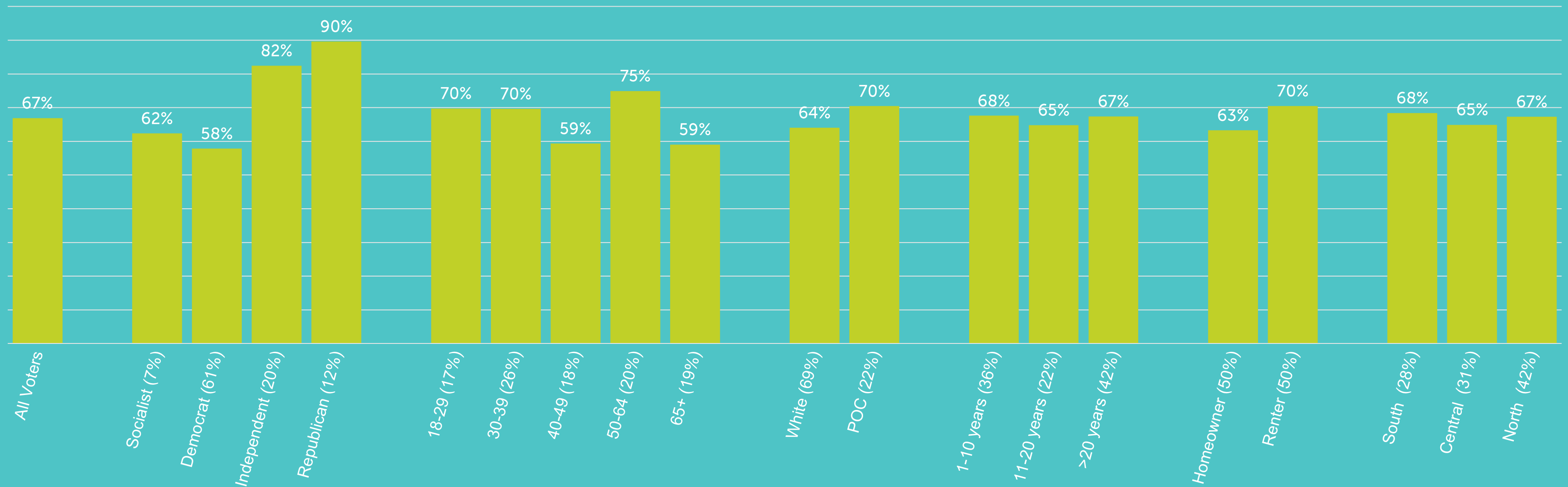


Two-thirds of Seattle voters have actively considered moving out of Seattle. Cost of living/housing affordability and public safety are the top reasons people have considered moving.



Actively Considered Moving

Actively Considered Moving



A strong majority of voters in every subgroup say they have actively considered leaving Seattle. Republicans and Independents are the most likely to say they have considered moving



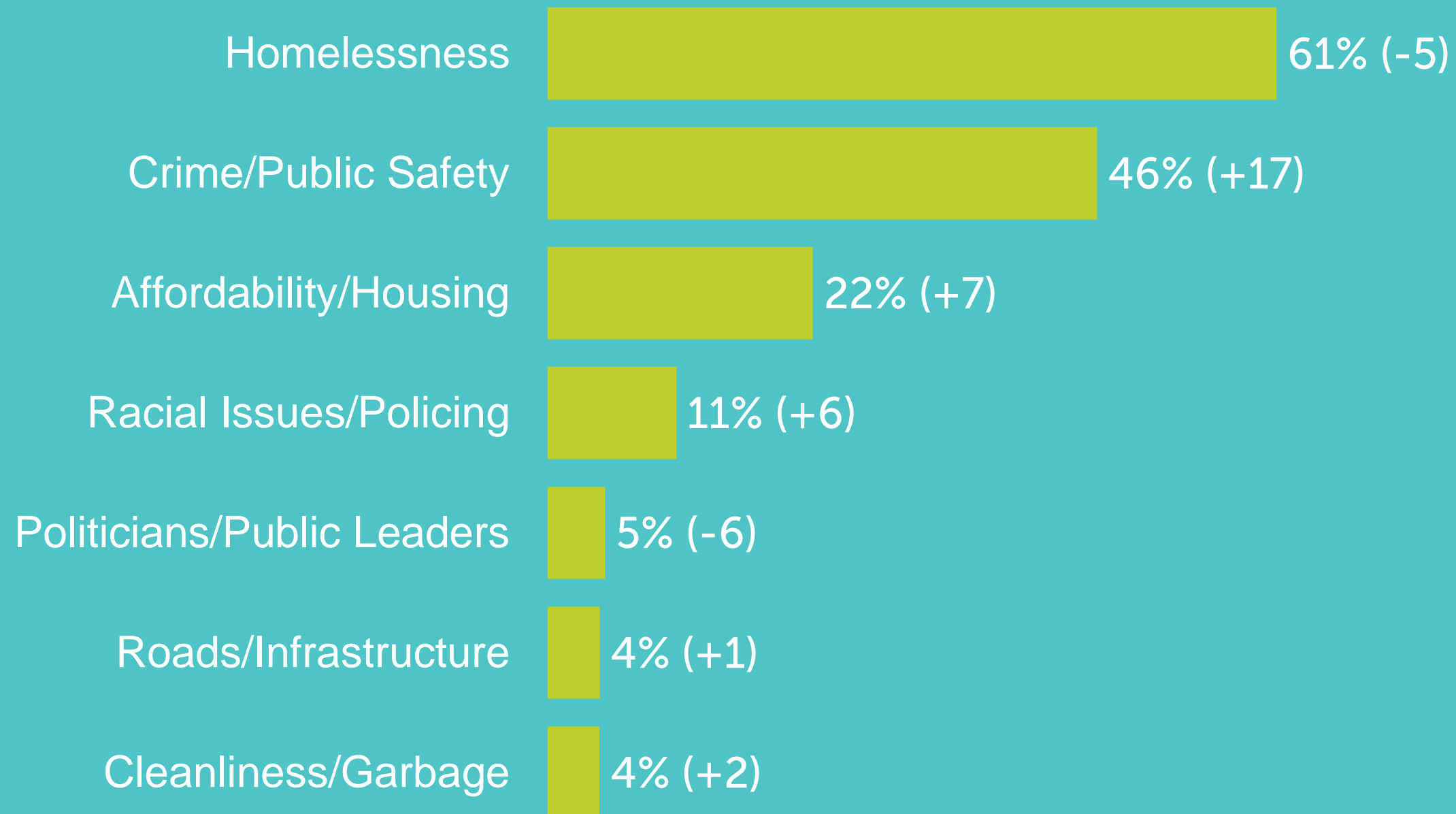
Top Concerns



Top Concerns



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



Homelessness continues to be the top concern of Seattle voters, but there has been a dramatic increase in concerns about public safety. Concerns about affordability have also increased.



Top Concerns - Homelessness

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

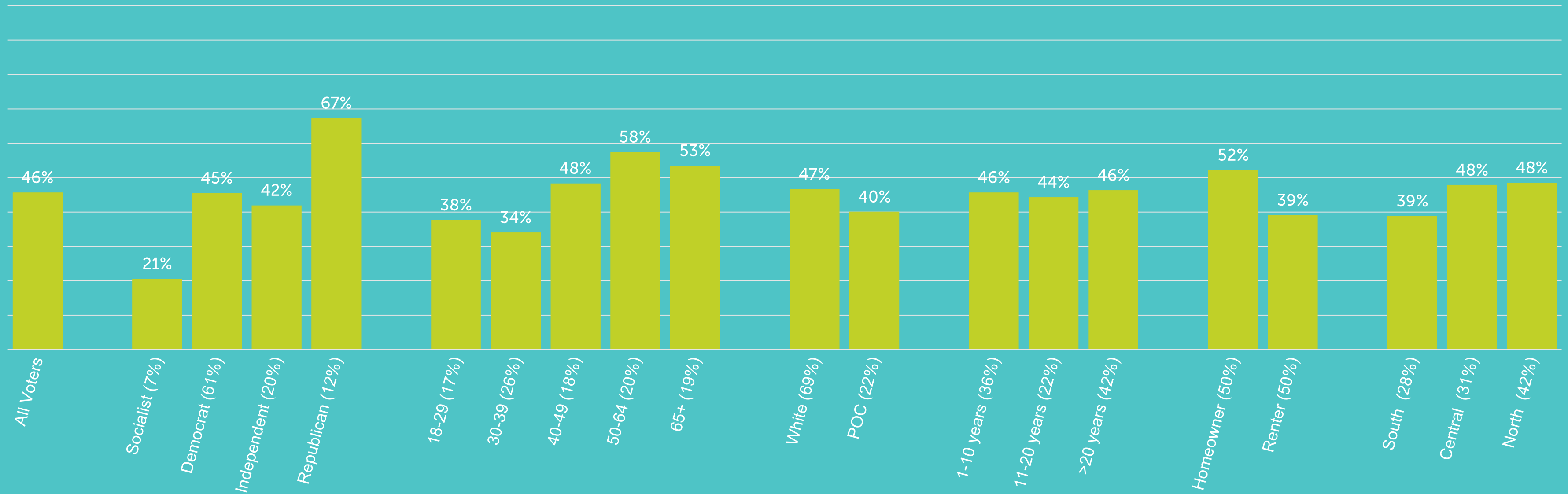


Homelessness is the top concern across the board and is mentioned by at least half of voters in every subgroup.



Top Concerns - Public Safety

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

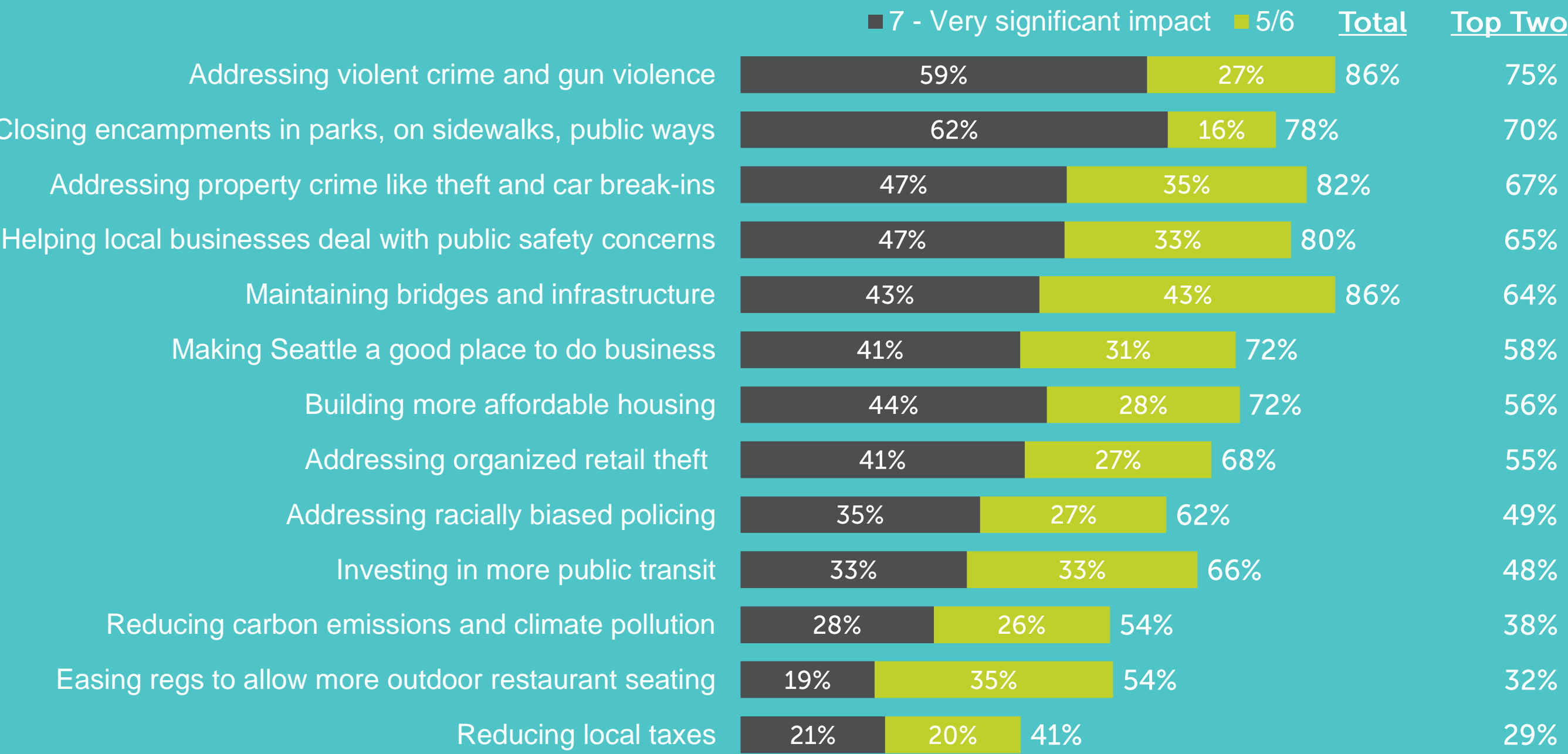


Republicans are the most concerned about public safety and Socialists are the least concerned. In two subgroups with significant overlap, older voters and homeowners are more concerned than younger voters and renters. Voters in South Seattle are less concerned about public safety than voters in Central and North Seattle.



Improving Quality of Life

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



Voters say addressing public safety and removing encampments would have the biggest impact on improving quality of life, followed by maintaining bridges and infrastructure.



Homelessness





Tent Encampments

[REMOVE ENCAMPMENTS]

We should provide outreach and offer shelter and services to individuals before closing encampments, but we also need to stop enabling those who refuse services and camp illegally and remove encampments in city right of ways, parks, sidewalks, and other public areas.



Provide
Outreach &
Remove
Encampments
86%



By a 73-point margin voters would rather provide outreach AND remove illegal encampments than stop all sweeps.

[STOP THE SWEEPS]

We need to stop all sweeps immediately. Being unhoused is not a crime and no individual should be moved unless they agree to alternative shelter or housing.



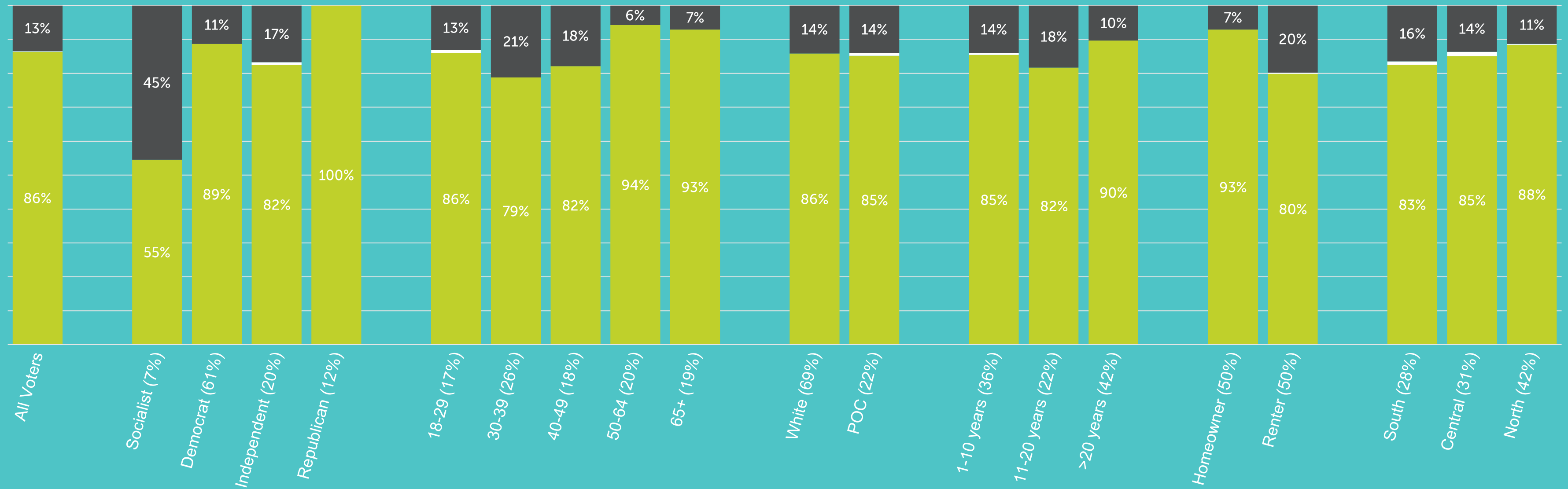
Stop The
Sweeps
13%



Tent Encampments

Tent Encampment Attitudes

■ Remove Encampments ■ Stop the Sweeps

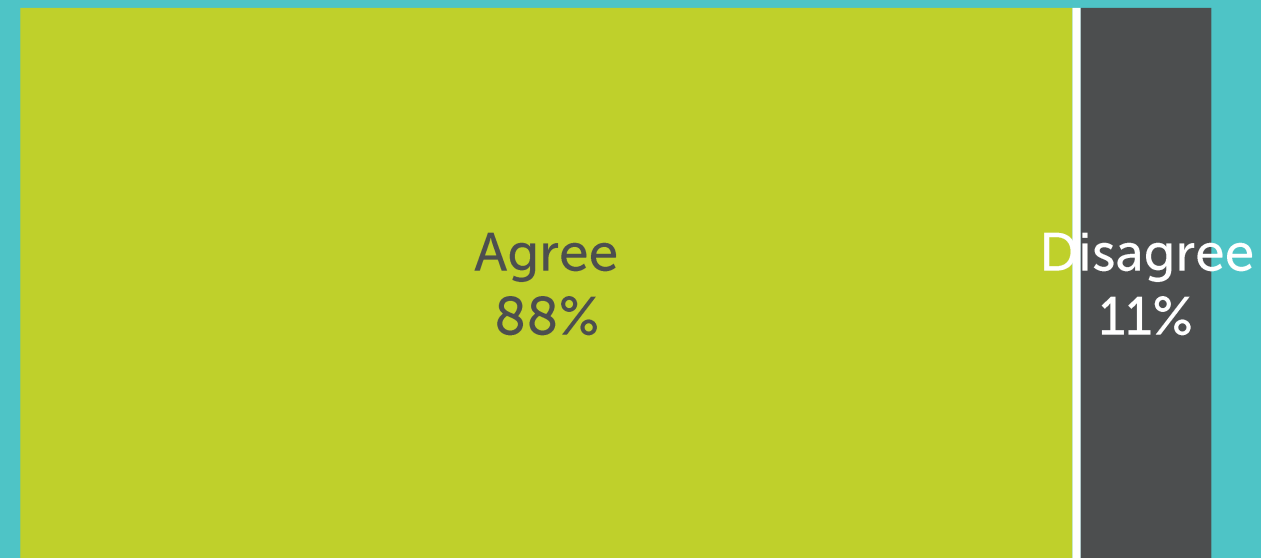


Most voters overwhelmingly agree that we should provide outreach AND remove encampments rather than banning all sweeps. Self identified Socialists are the only subgroup that is divided on this issue.



Addressing Homelessness

"We need to expand state and regional partnerships to address the issues underlying homelessness"



"We need to invest more in behavioral health programs and services to address the issues underlying homelessness"



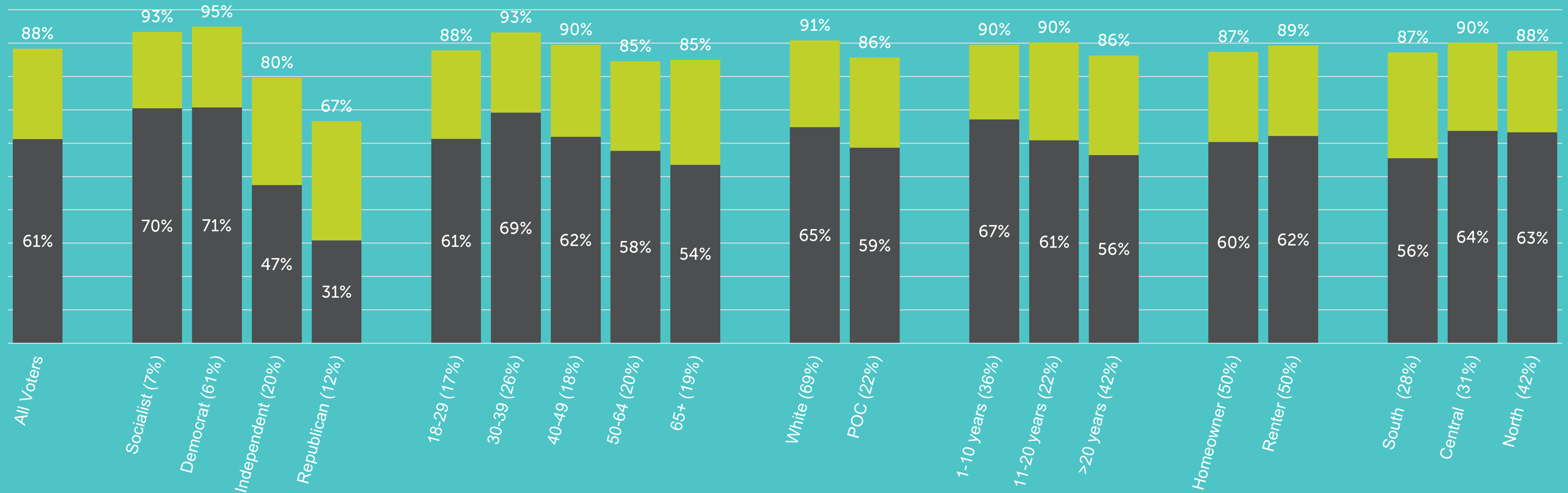
There is near-universal agreement that state and regional partnerships need to be expanded and we need to invest more in addressing issues underlying homelessness.



Expand State and Regional Partnerships

Expand Partnerships to Address Underlying Issues

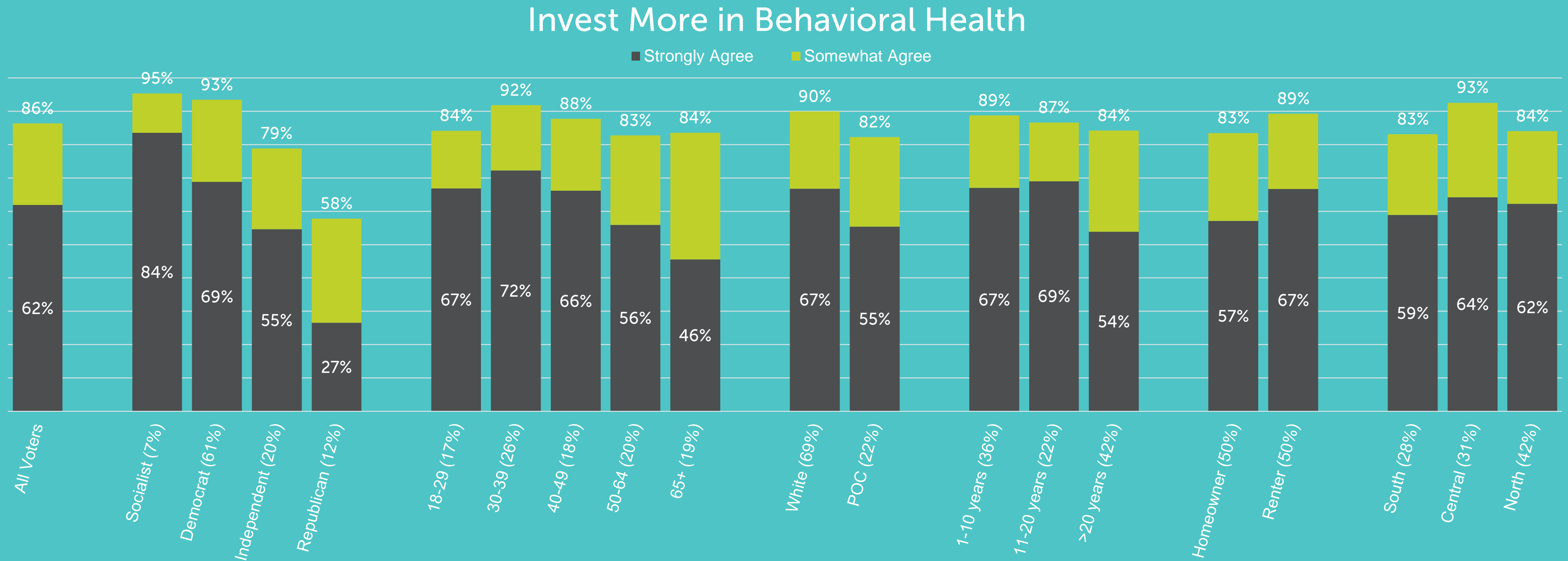
■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



A supermajority of in all subgroups agree that the City needs to expand state and regional partnerships to address homelessness.



Invest More in Behavioral Health



There is overwhelming support for investing more in behavioral health to address homelessness. Support is lower among Republicans but still includes a strong majority.



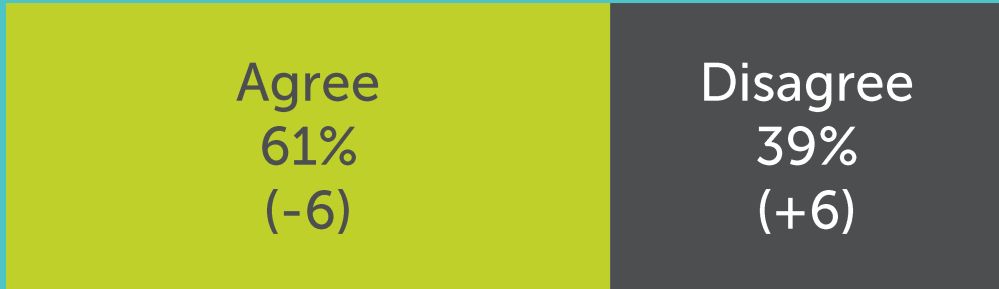
Public Safety



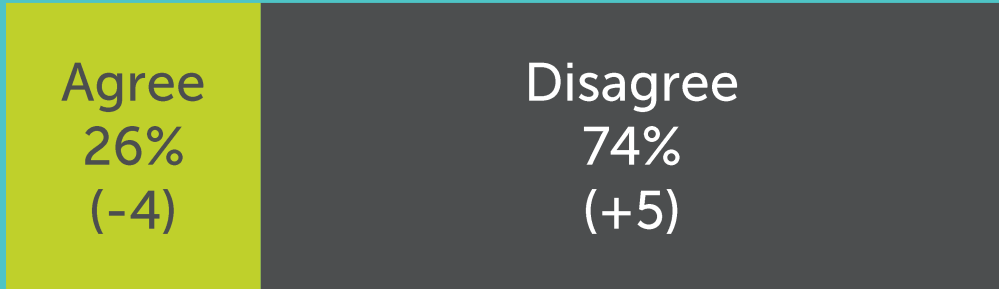
Public Safety



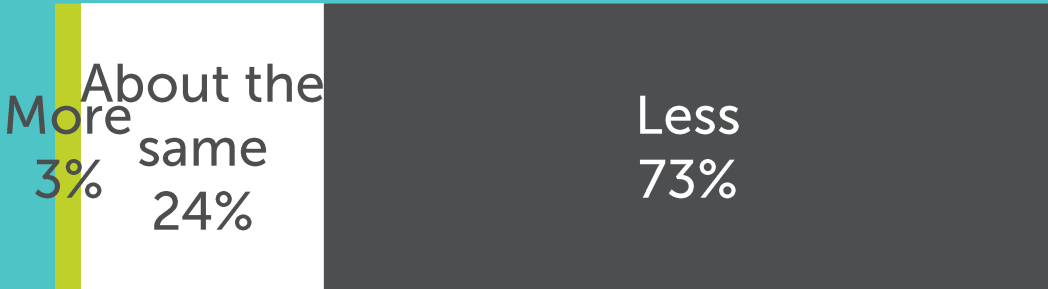
"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle during the day"



"I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle at night"



"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? "



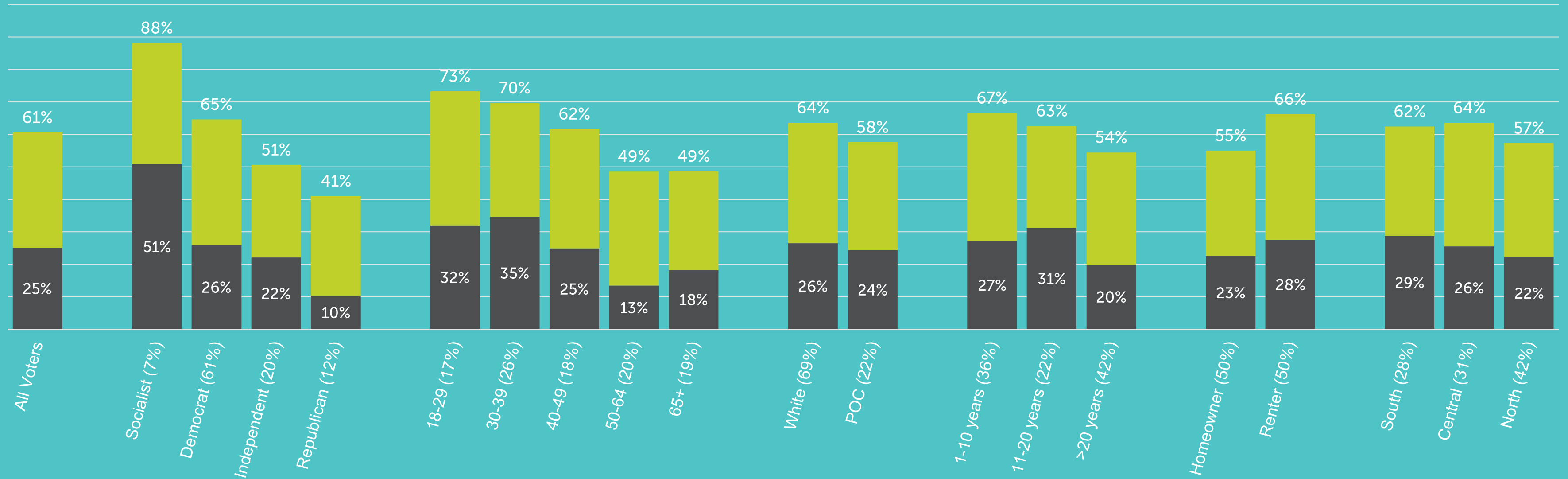
An increasing number of voters say that they would not feel safe visiting Downtown both during the day and at night, and three-quarters say their own neighborhood feels less safe compared to two years ago.



Safety Downtown: Daytime

Would Feel Safe Visiting Downtown During the Day

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



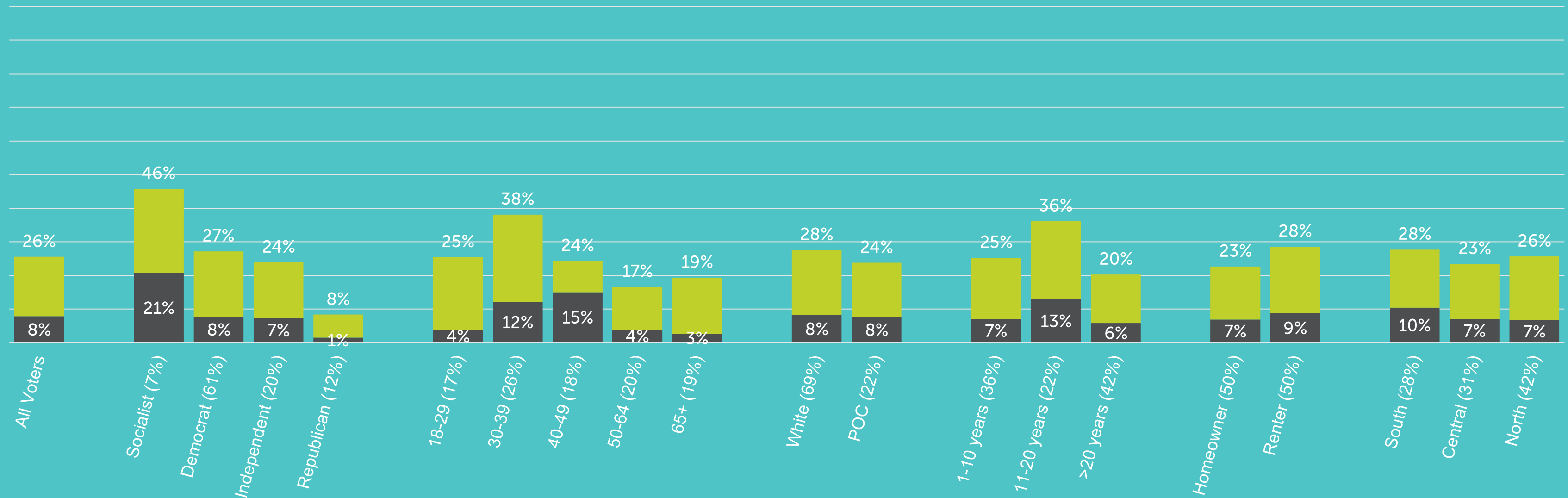
Half or more in all subgroups, except Republicans, say they would feel safe visiting Downtown during the day. Most Socialists agree that they would feel safe.



Safety Downtown: Nighttime

Would Feel Safe Visiting Downtown at Night

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



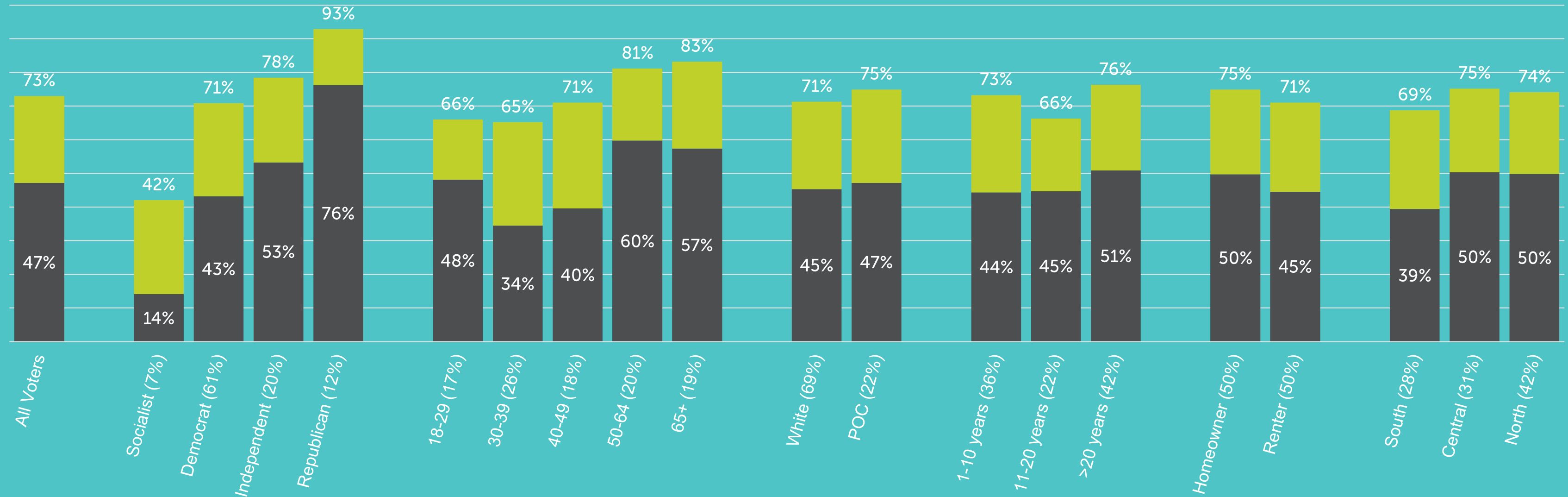
With the exception of Socialists, very few voters in any subgroup agree that they would feel safe visiting Downtown at night, and almost none strongly agree that they would feel safe.



Safety in Own Neighborhood

Feel Less Safe in Own Neighborhood

■ Much Less Safe ■ Somewhat Less Safe



A super majority in every subgroup, except Socialists, say they feel less safe in their own neighborhood than they did two years ago, and many say they feel much less safe.

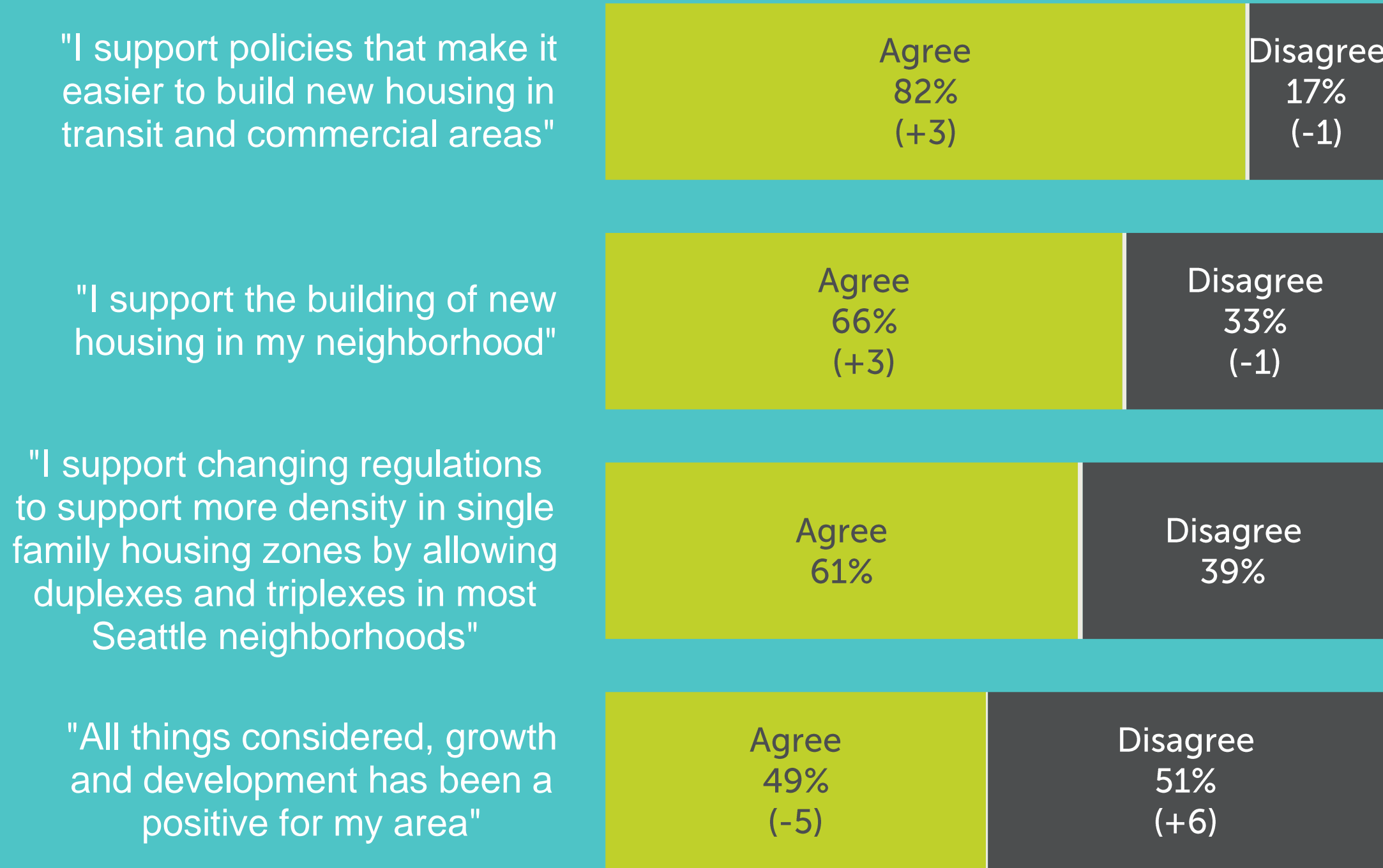


Housing





Housing/Growth



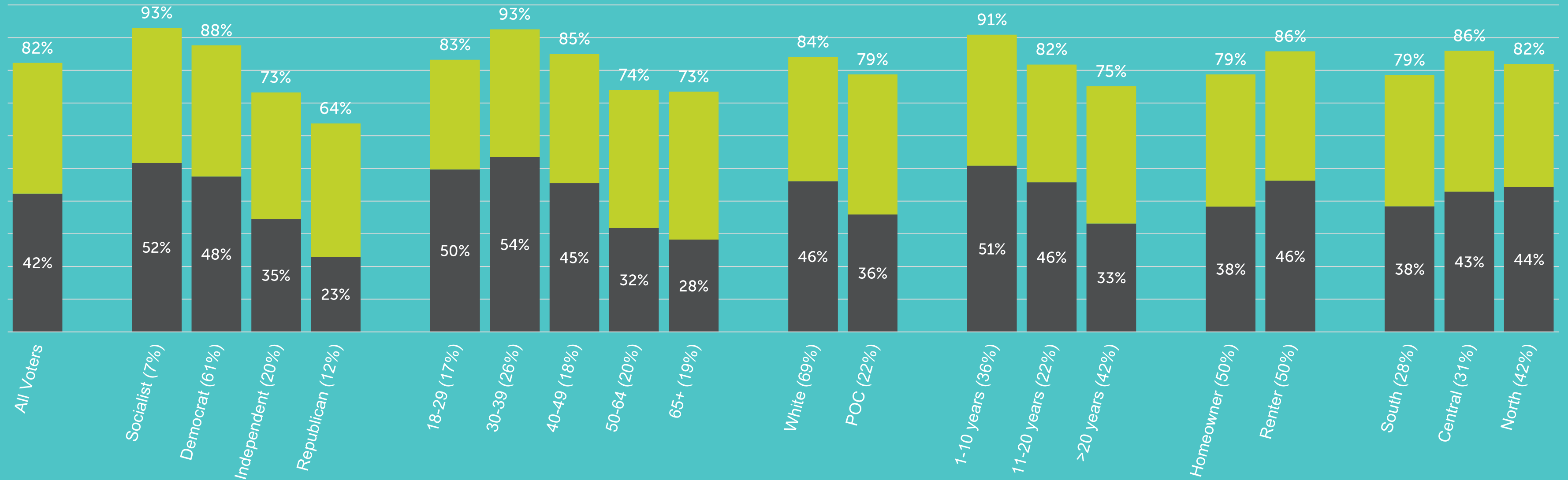
Voters continue to support increased density but are more divided now about the overall impact of growth and development on their area.



Housing in Transit/Commercial Areas

Support Policies to Make it Easier to Build in Transit/Commercial Areas

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



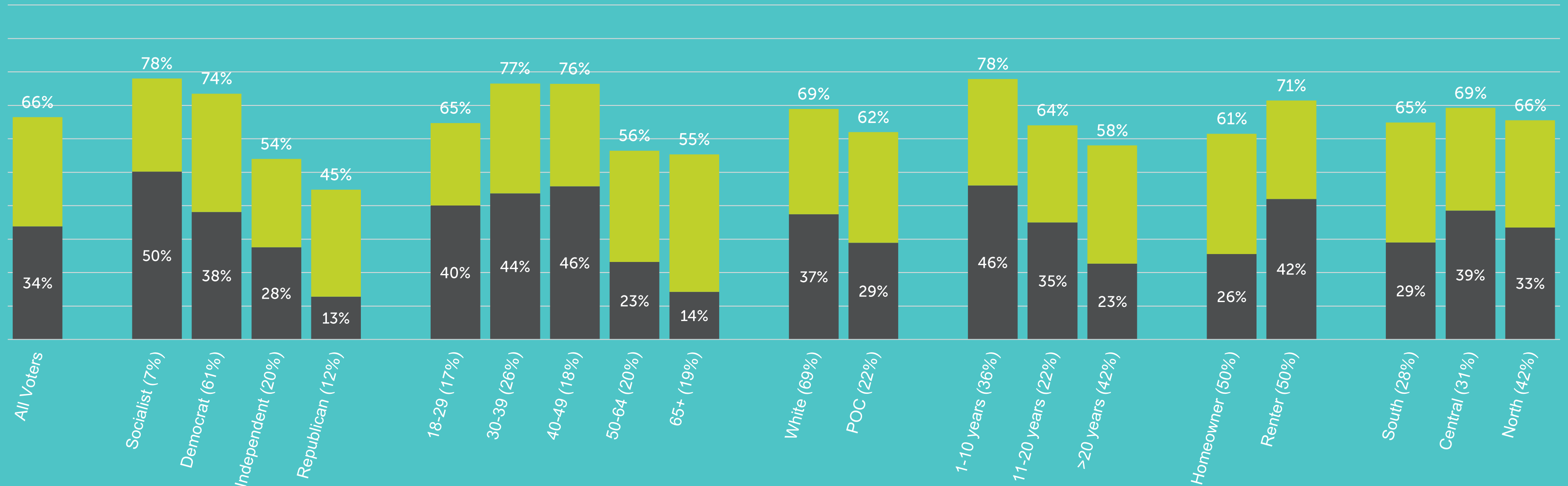
Support for policies that make it easier to build new housing in commercial and transit areas is strong across subgroups.



New Housing in Your Neighborhood

Support New Housing in Your Neighborhood

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



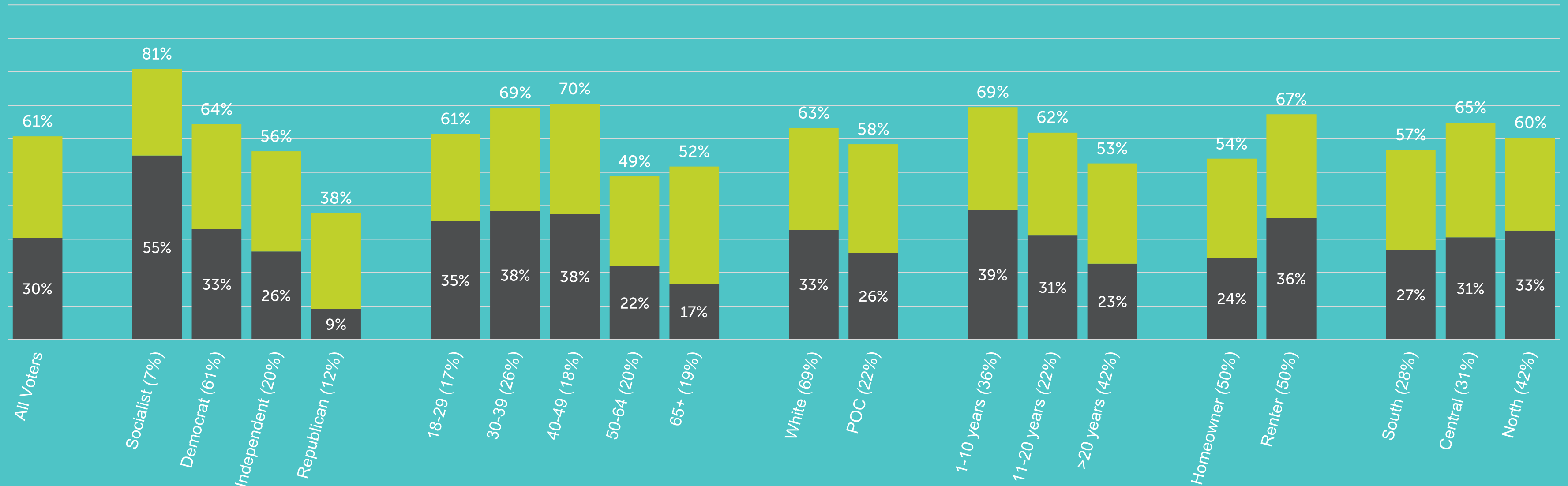
While less popular than new housing in transit/commercial areas, majorities in all subgroups except Republicans support new housing in their neighborhood. Older voters are less supportive than younger voters and homeowners are less supportive than renters.



Increased Density in SFH Zones

Support Regulations to Allow More Density in SFH Zones

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



Similarly all subgroups except Republicans support easing regulations to make it easier for new housing to be built in single-family neighborhoods, with similar patterns among older and younger voters and homeowners and renters.



Downtown/ Economic Recovery





Downtown/Economic Recovery

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

Agree
91%
(+4)

Disagree
8%

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

Agree
91%
(+4)

Disagree
8%

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

Agree
86%
(+8)

Disagree
14%

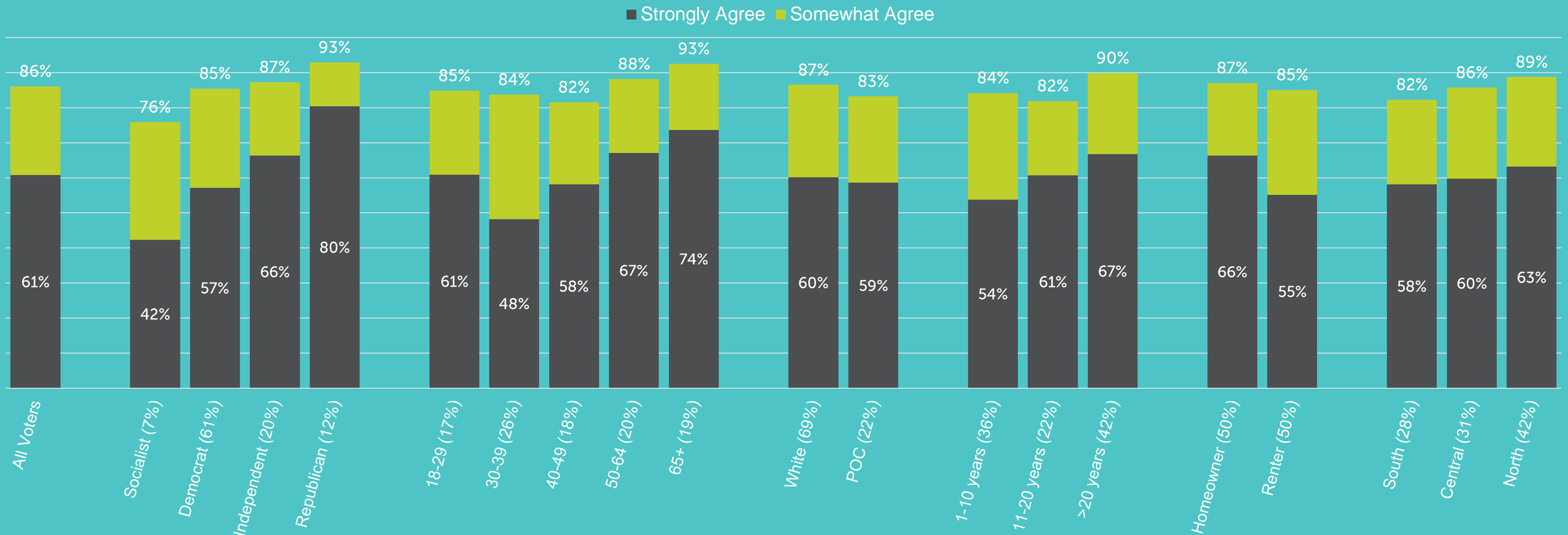


Voters continue to be in near-universal agreement that addressing homelessness and public safety issues is essential for Downtown's recovery, and that Downtown is important to the region's economic recovery. The level of concern about Downtown's future has increased.



Worried About Downtown

Worried About Downtown's Future



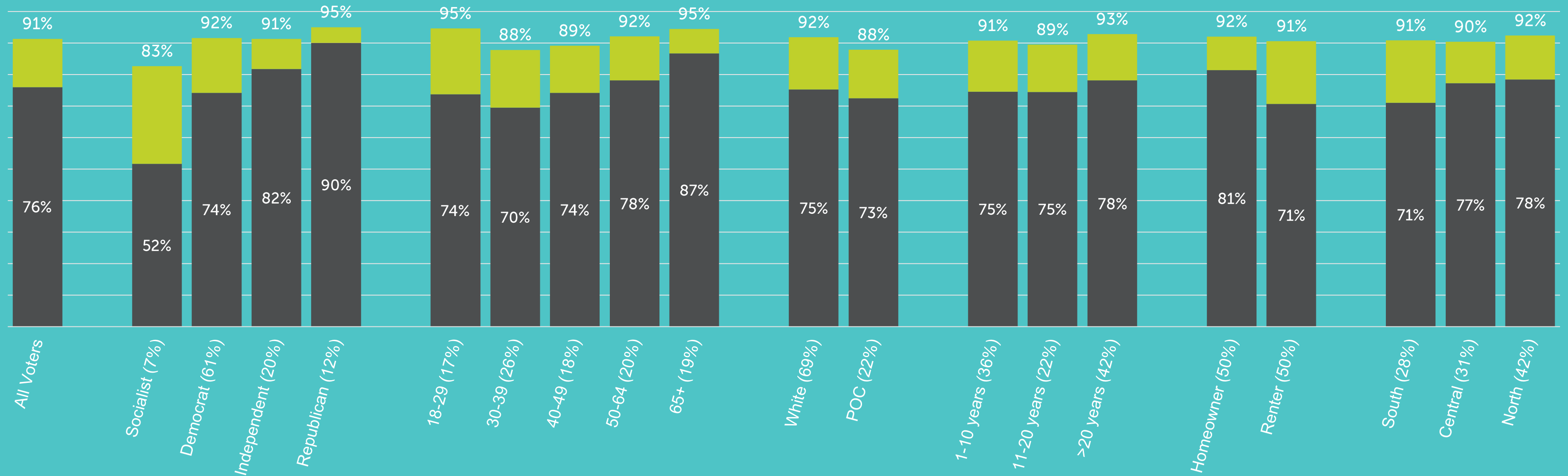
Concern about Downtown's future is extremely high across all subgroups and in all areas of the city.



Downtown/Economic Recovery

Downtown Cannot Fully Recover Until Homelessness/Public Safety Addressed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

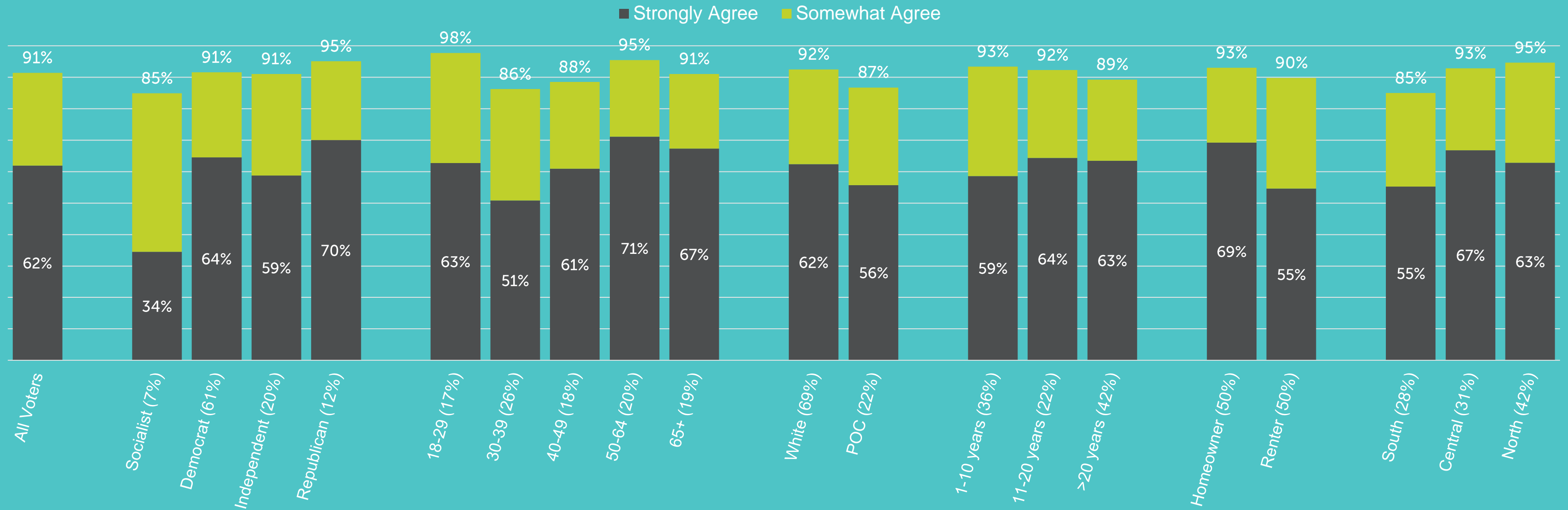


Across all subgroups most voters agree that downtown cannot full recover until homelessness and public safety are addressed.



Downtown Role in Regional Recovery

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

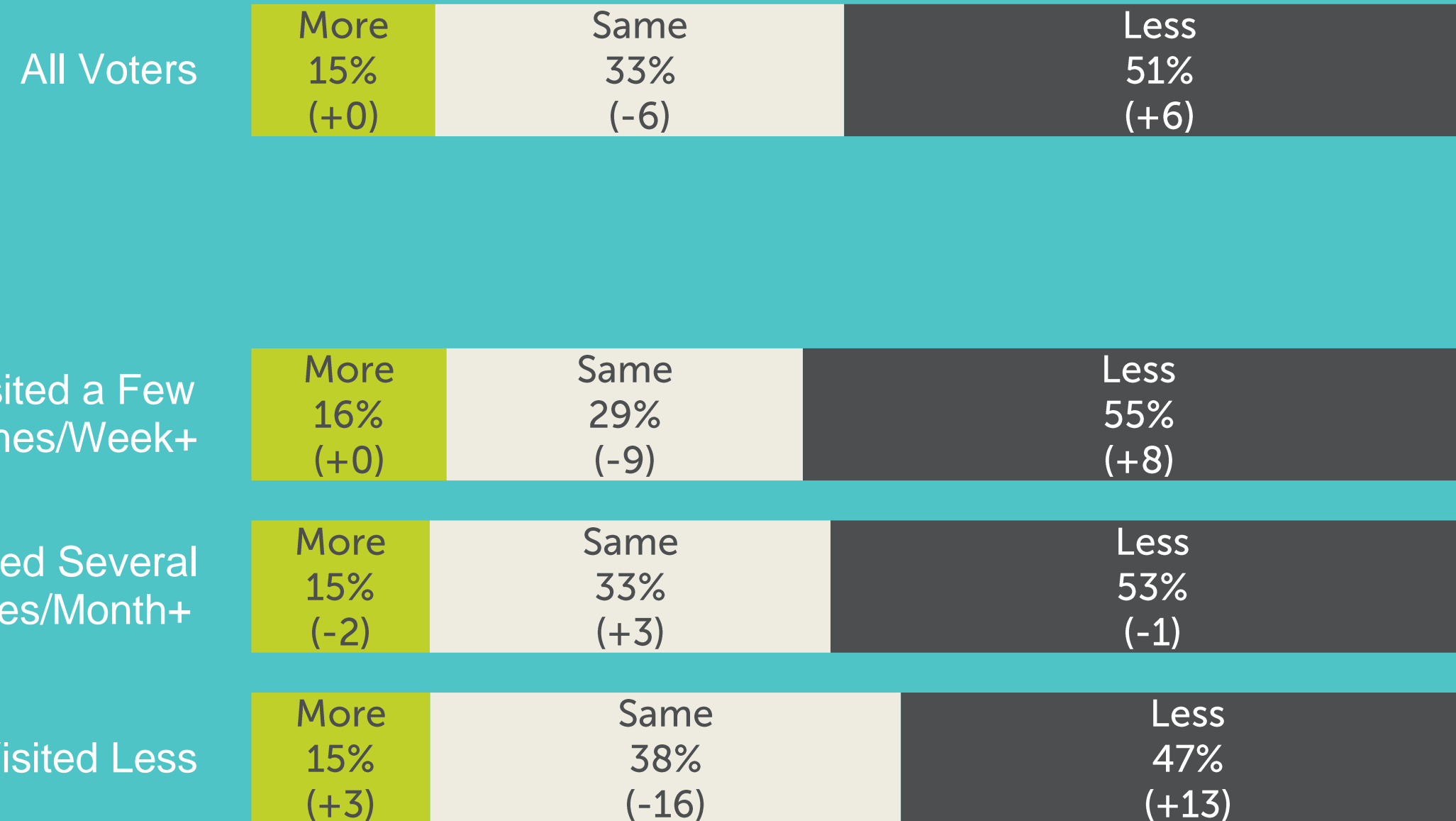


Across all subgroups most voters agree that downtown cannot full recover until homelessness and public safety are addressed.



Visiting Downtown

“Once things are completely open again, for activities other than work, do you think you will visit downtown Seattle more, less, or about the same as you did before the pandemic?”



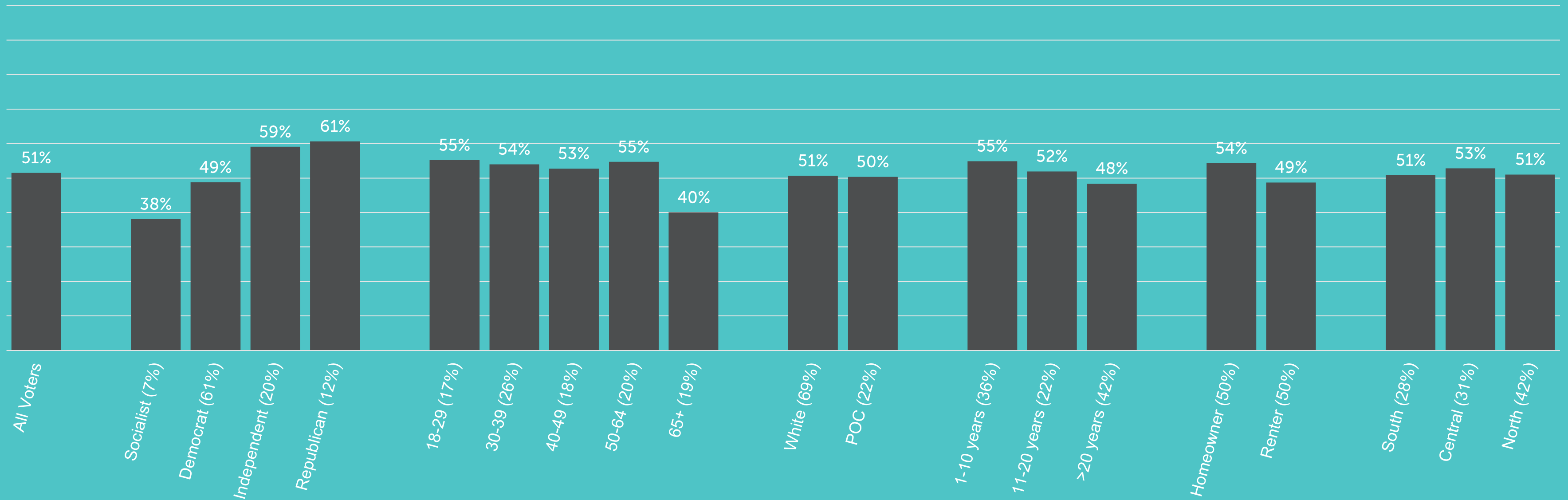
A majority of voters say they will visit Downtown less often for non-work activities than they did pre-pandemic and that percentage has increased since 2021.



Visiting Downtown

Visiting Downtown for Non-Work Activities

■ Will Visit Less Often



Roughly half of voters in most subgroups say they will visit Downtown less often for non-work activities than they did pre-pandemic.



Police Reform





Police Reform

[REFORM & HIRE]

Residents and small business are being left on their own to deal with theft, break-ins, and harassment.

We need to enact strong reforms and invest in alternative policing and sentencing programs, but we also need to hire more and better trained officers, put habitual offenders in jail, and step-up enforcement in places where crime is spiking.



Reform
& Hire
77%



[DEFUND & DECRIMINALIZE]

Our criminal justice system is fundamentally broken. We need to defund the police and decriminalize non-violent misdemeanors that punish people who are just trying to survive. We cannot arrest our way out of homelessness and poverty.



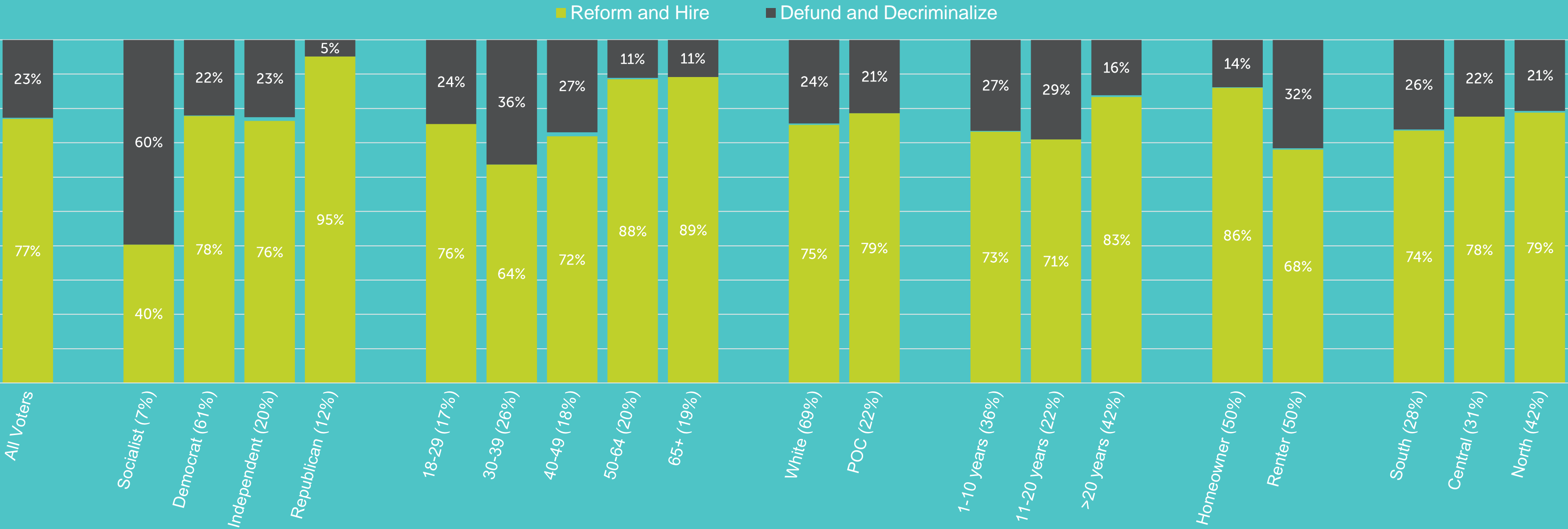
Defund &
Decriminalize
23%

By a 54-point margin voters would rather hire more officers AND enact strong reforms than defund the police and decriminalize non-violent misdemeanors.

Police Reform



Reform & Hire vs. Defund & Decriminalize



Most voters in all subgroups except Socialists overwhelmingly support reforming SPD while continuing to hire more police officers rather than defunding the police and de-criminalizing non-violent misdemeanors.

Police Reform



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



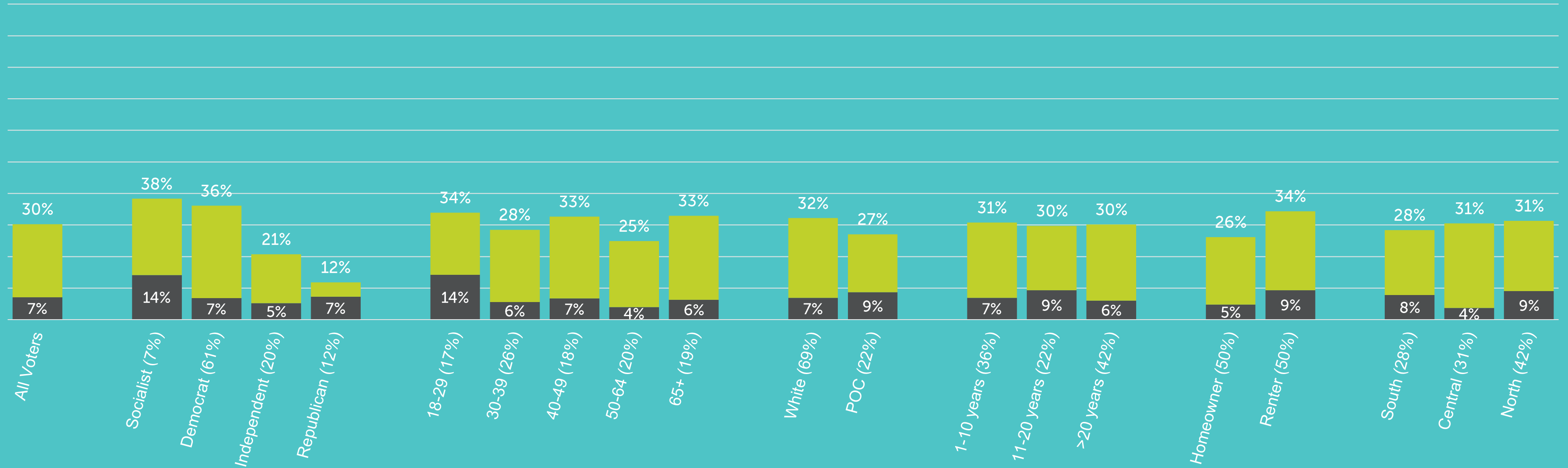
*Voters continue to distrust the City
Council on police reform.*



Trust City Council to Reform SPD

Trust City Council to Reform SPD without Endangering Public Safety

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



The City Council is not trusted on police reform by voters in any subgroup.



Taxes & Spending



City Budget Deficit

Over the last few years, the city increased spending to both grow and preserve services, and to help people impacted by the pandemic and economic downturn. Now the city is facing a \$150 million budget shortfall. Which of these two options best represents your view of what the city should do to address this deficit:

**[SUPPORT VULNERABLE/
FOCUS ON BASICS]**
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.



Support
Vulnerable/
Focus on
Basics
67%

[MAINTAIN SPENDING/INCREASE TAXES]
The city should maintain the spending levels and programs in place today and raise taxes to cover this \$150 million deficit.



Maintain
Spending/
Increase
Taxes
32%



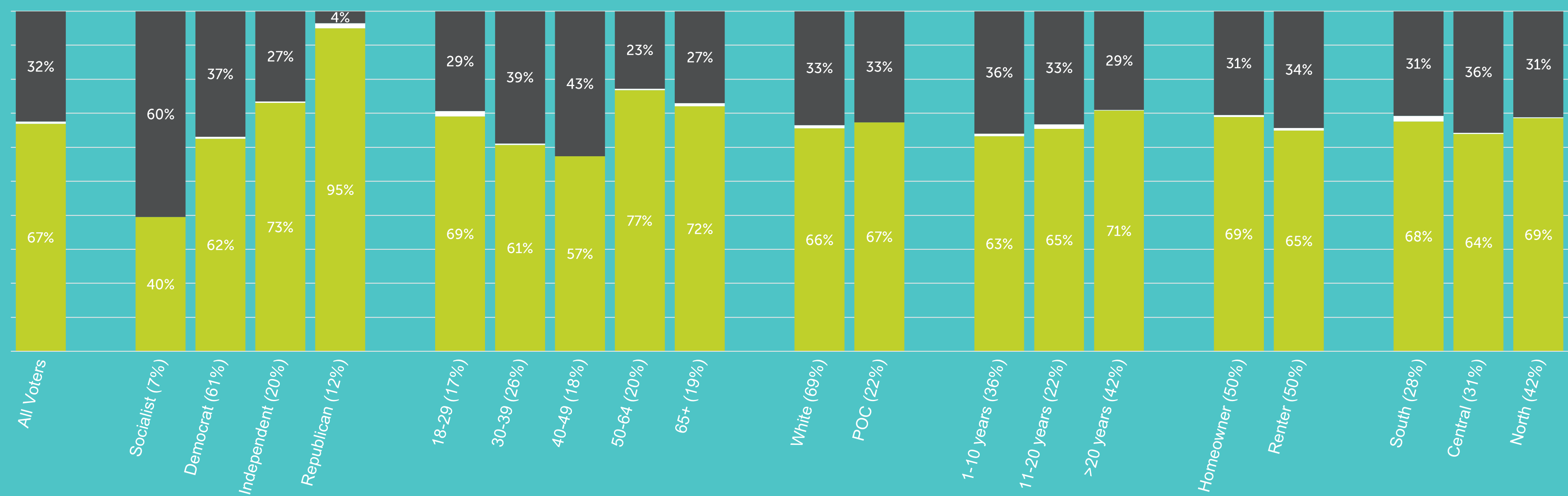
By a 35-point margin voters think the city should reduce spending and focus on the basics rather than maintaining spending and increasing taxes to cover the deficit.



City Budget Deficit

Focus on Basics vs. Increase Taxes

■ Focus on Basics ■ Increase Taxes



A majority in all demographic subgroups, except Socialists, favor focusing on the basics and reducing non-critical spending over increasing taxes to address the city’s budget deficit.

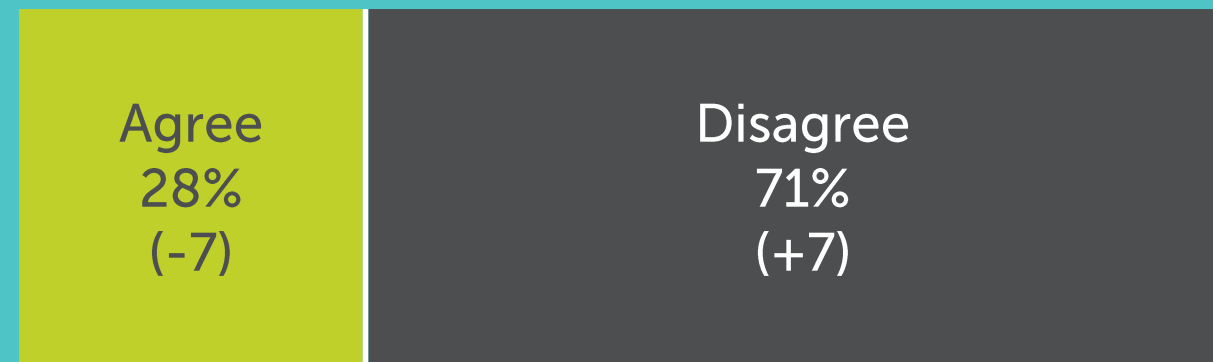


Taxes & Spending

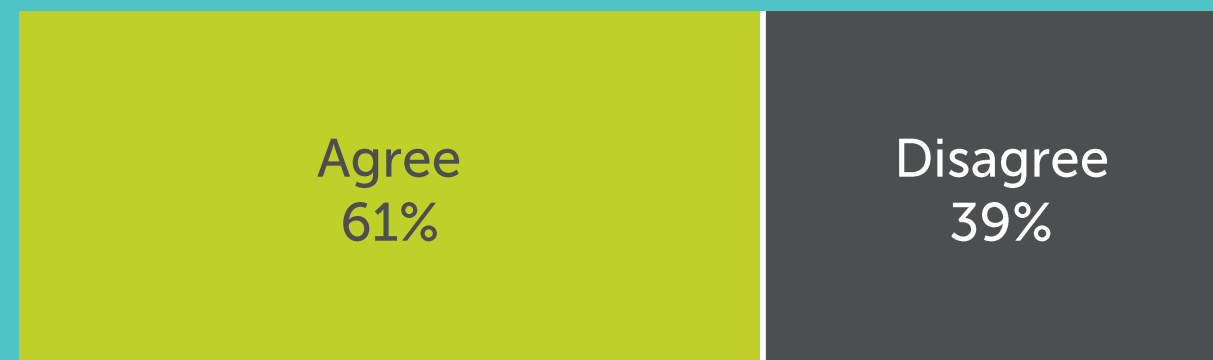
"Would you say that taxes in Seattle are too high, too low, or about right for the level of services the city provides"



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



"The City of Seattle needs more money to address homelessness"



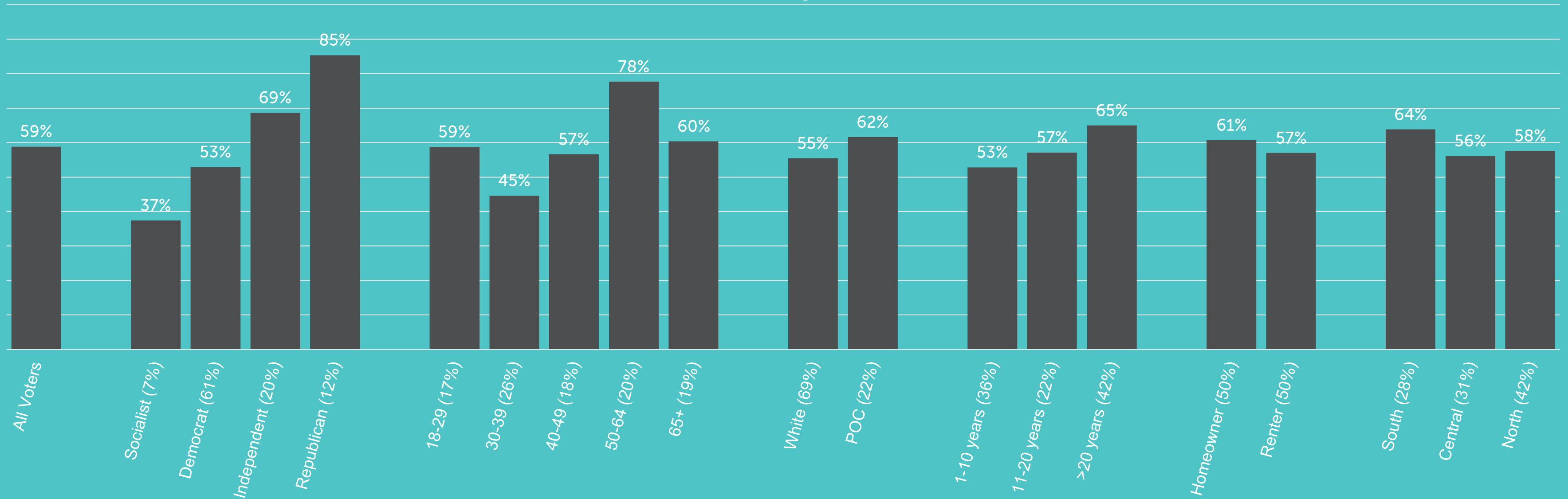
A majority of Seattle voters think local taxes are too high for the level of services the city provides and a growing supermajority of voters DO NOT trust the city to spend their tax dollars responsibly. However, despite declining trust and increasing concern about taxes, Seattle voters are still open to investing more to address homelessness



Taxes in Seattle

Taxes in Seattle

■ Too High



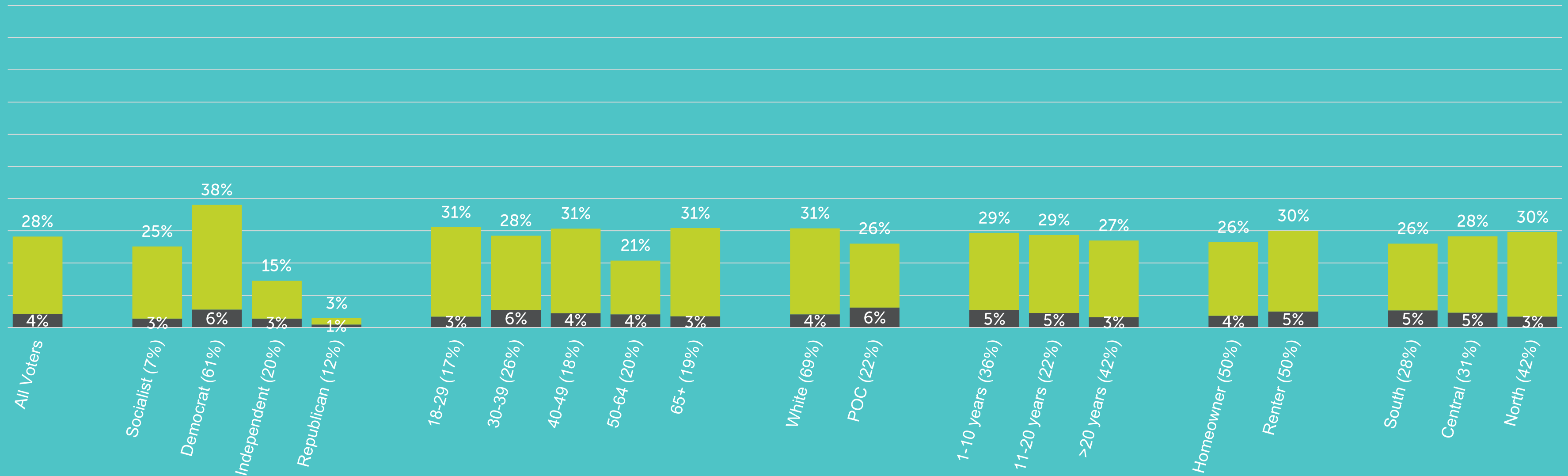
A majority of voters in most subgroups – including Democrats - feel that taxes in Seattle are too high for the level of service provided. Self-identified Socialists are an outlier.



Trust on Spending

Trust City on Spending

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



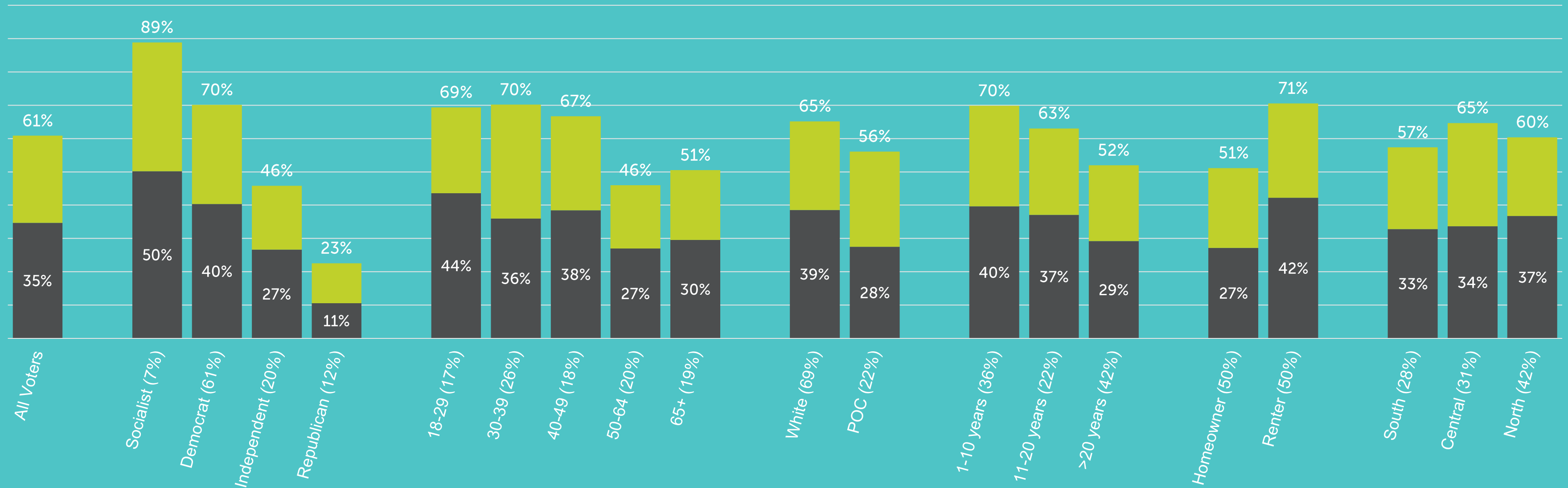
Regardless of the subgroup, there is very little trust that the city is spending voters' tax dollars responsibly.



Money to Address Homelessness

The City of Seattle needs more money to address homelessness

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



Democrats and Socialists, younger age groups, renters, and those newer to Seattle are the most likely to agree that the City needs additional funds to address homelessness.



Opportunity and Prosperity

[INCREASE ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY]

Wealth and prosperity are not problems in and of themselves – the issue is access. We need to rethink and reshape city policies to open pathways to opportunity for historically marginalized communities by investing in education and mentoring, expanding apprenticeships, making home ownership more attainable, and supporting minority-owned small businesses and neighborhoods to make sure Seattle's promise is real and open to everyone.



Increase
Access &
Opportunity
55%

[INCREASE TAXES & REDISTRIBUTION]

Too many people are being left behind as Seattle becomes wealthier and more expensive and income inequality becomes more extreme. We need to tax the wealthy and big corporations and redistribute that money to historically marginalized communities so they can share in Seattle's prosperity.



Increase
Taxes &
Redistribution
44%



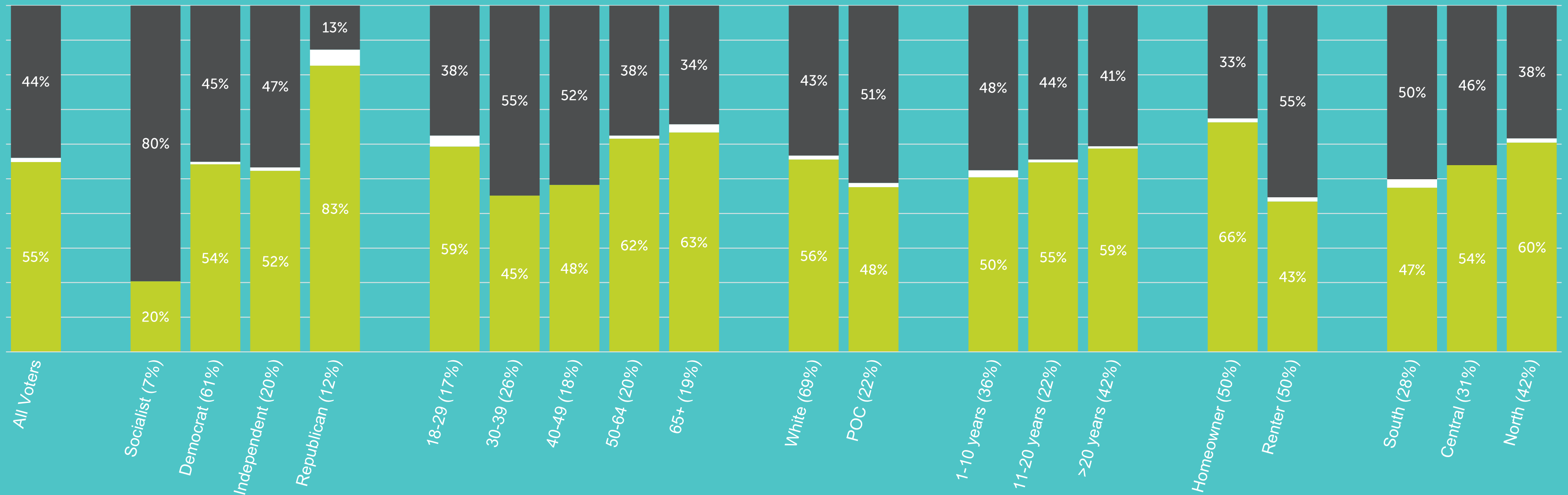
By an 11-point margin voters think increasing access is a more effective path to wider prosperity than increasing taxes and redistribution.



Opportunity and Prosperity

Increase Access vs. Increase Taxes

■ Increase Access ■ Increase Redistribution



Offering more opportunities to all rather than taxing the rich is a narrow majority position across most subgroups. Most Socialists and a narrow majority of renters and voters aged 30-49 support increased taxes and redistribution.



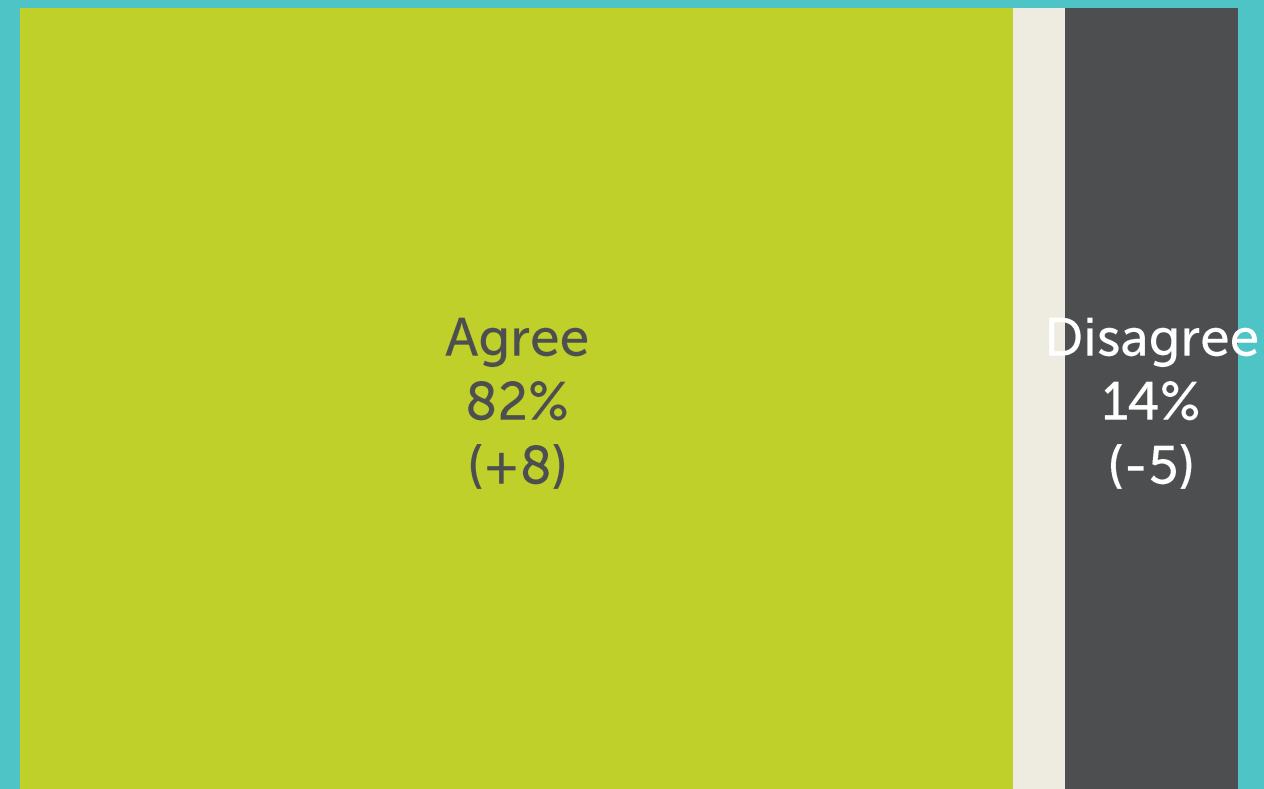
Childcare



Childcare



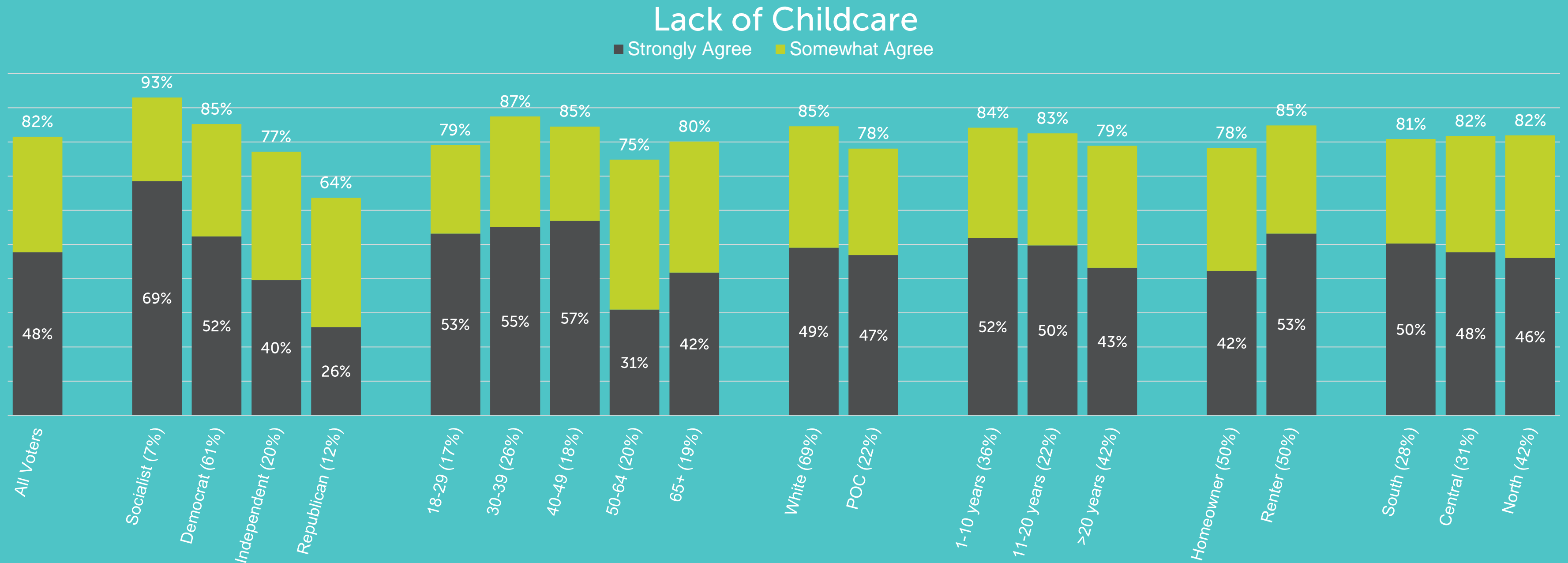
"Our region does not have enough affordable, high-quality childcare"



Voters continue to overwhelmingly agree that Seattle does not have enough affordable, quality childcare.



Lack of Affordable, Quality Childcare



A supermajority in all subgroups agree that the region does not offer enough affordable, high-quality childcare.