



The Index





Methodology

- Mixed-mode (live phone, email-to-web, and text-to-web) survey of Registered Voters in the City of Seattle
 - More than 6-in-10 Seattle voters identify as Democrats, making them the primary driver of overall opinion on all survey questions.
 - 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.
- Conducted April 27 – May 3, 2026, 2025
- 700 completed interviews; effective margin of error: ± 3.9 points
- Data weighted by key demographic variables to accurately reflect the Registered Voter population
- Where applicable, results are compared to previous Index surveys



Seattle Headlines

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY & TRUST

KCRHA Audit Exposes Financial Irregularities

- The forensic audit of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) was the most high-profile story of this period.
- The audit revealed serious financial irregularities raising significant concerns about how local government spending is tracked and managed. The issue expanded beyond a single agency, raising broader questions about systemic oversight gaps and accountability structures.
- City and county officials described the findings as “egregious mismanagement” and a “failed experiment” with some leaders called for the agency to be dismantled entirely.
- News stories discussed creating stronger oversight, including proposals for an independent inspector general to investigate all public spending. Seattle leaders called for additional audits of city homelessness programs to ensure similar issues were not occurring elsewhere.
- Stories about Sound Transit’s projected \$34.5 billion funding shortfall highlighted challenges in long-term financial planning and raised additional concerns about public agency accountability, fiscal responsibility, and trust.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Policing & Surveillance Debates Intensify Across City

- Crime and public safety remained a core issue in the news.
- Late April saw multiple reports about armed robberies, shootings, a stabbing, and domestic violence incidents across Seattle.
- Mayor Wilson paused expansion of surveillance cameras pending a data and privacy audit reinforcing concerns about transparency, governance, and public trust.

JOBS & LOCAL ECONOMY

Tech Layoffs & Rising Costs Shake Seattle’s Economy

- There were multiple stories about major tech and other employers laying off workers or moving operations out of Seattle.
- Stories covered rising costs for Seattle businesses, tax policy changes, companies potentially relocating workers or shifting investments, investors and entrepreneurs considering moving out of Washington, and office footprints shrinking in Seattle.

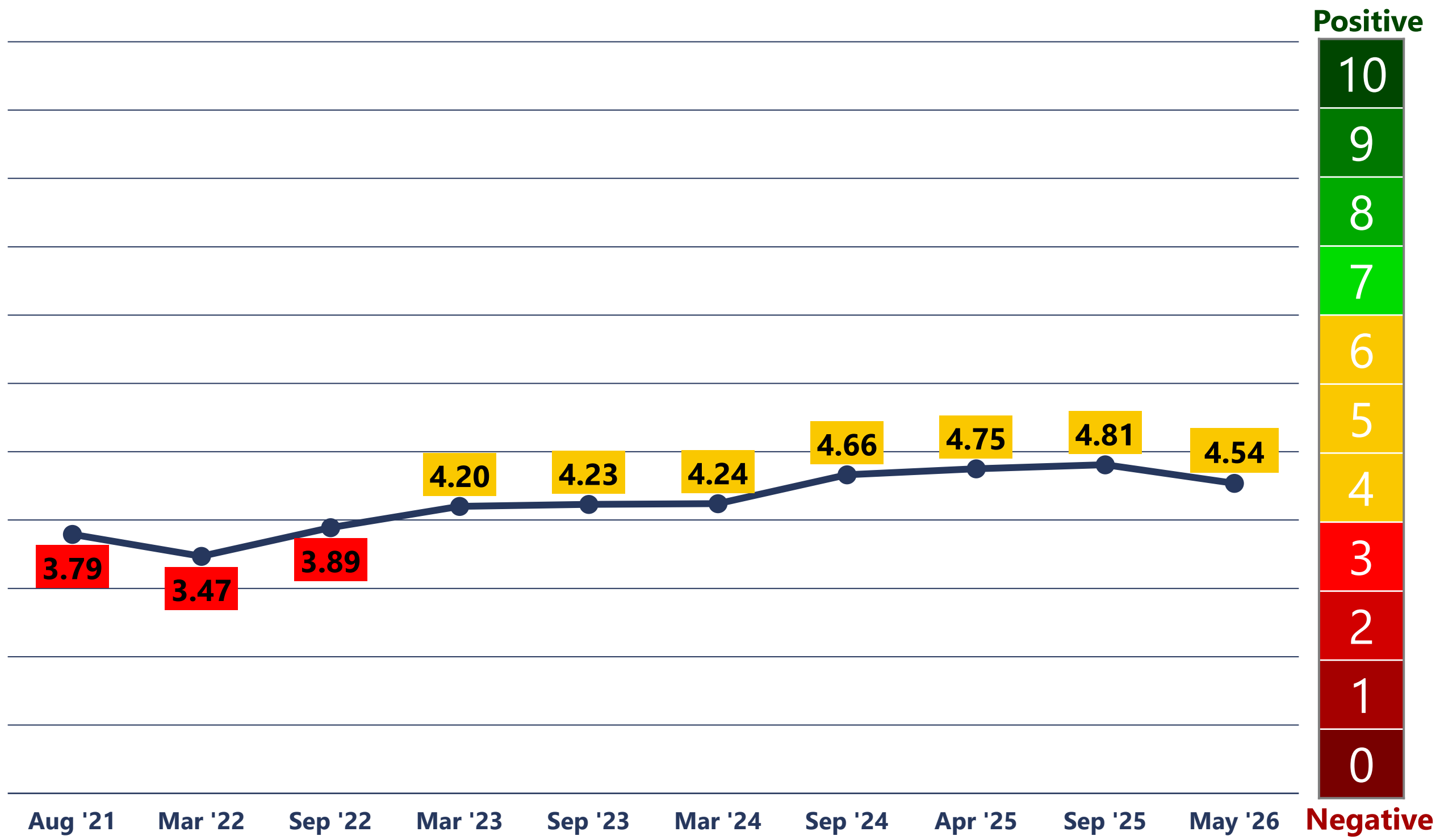
HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Mayor’s Housing Strategy Pushes Faster, Denser Development Across Seattle

- There were multiple stories about the expansion of tiny home villages and RV safe-lots. Copperleaf Northgate, a 235-unit affordable housing development opened.
- There were also multiple stories covering residents’ concerns about the impact of tiny home villages and encampments on neighborhoods.



The Index



The Index aggregates the following quality of life questions:

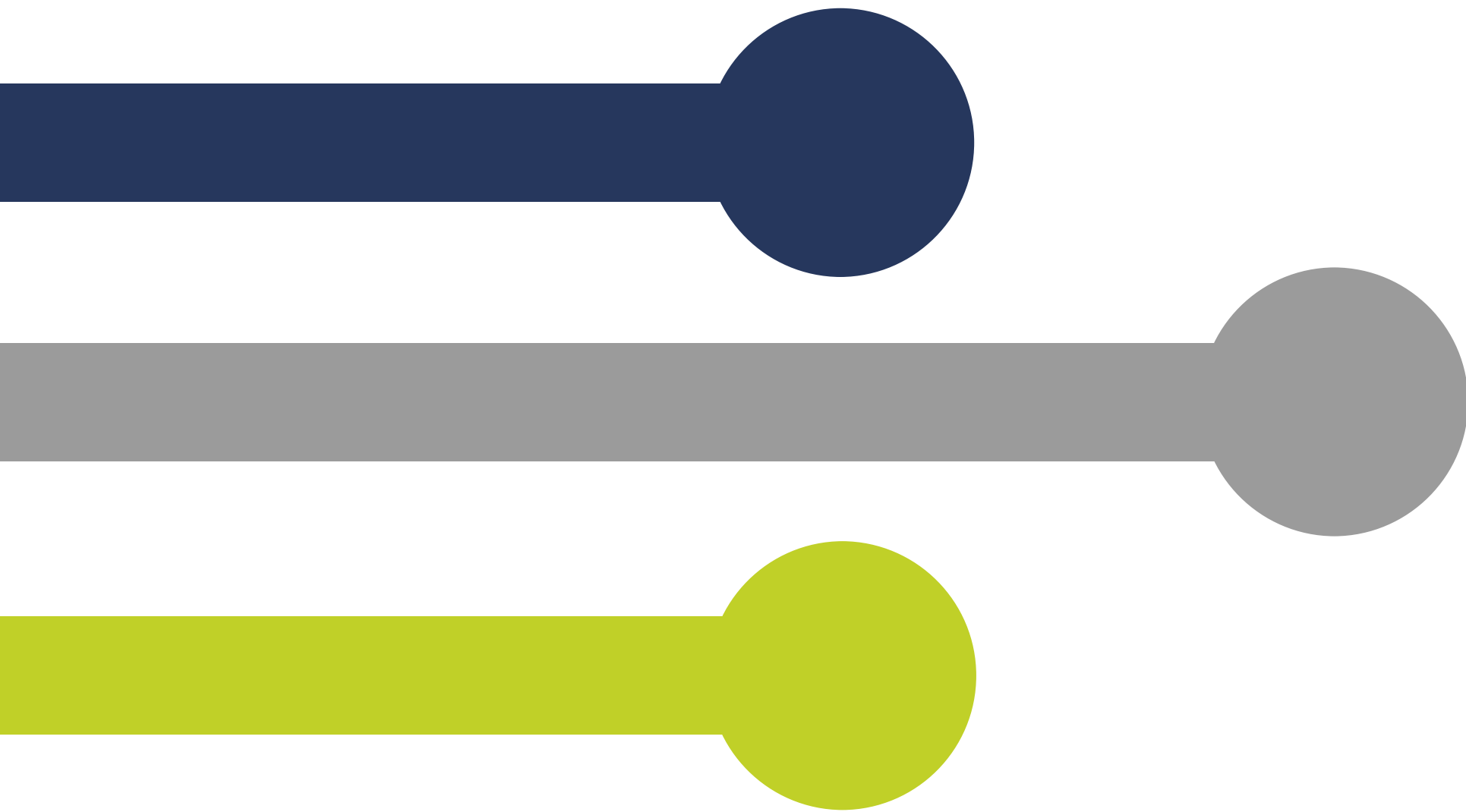
- Optimism about the city's direction
- Quality of life (better, worse, or same)
- Actively considered leaving Seattle
- Optimism about the region's future
- Perception of safety Downtown
- Concern about Downtown's future
- Likelihood to visit Downtown compared to last year

The Index does not include measures of local government or elected leaders.

After a long period of steady gains, The Index has dropped to its lowest level in two years.



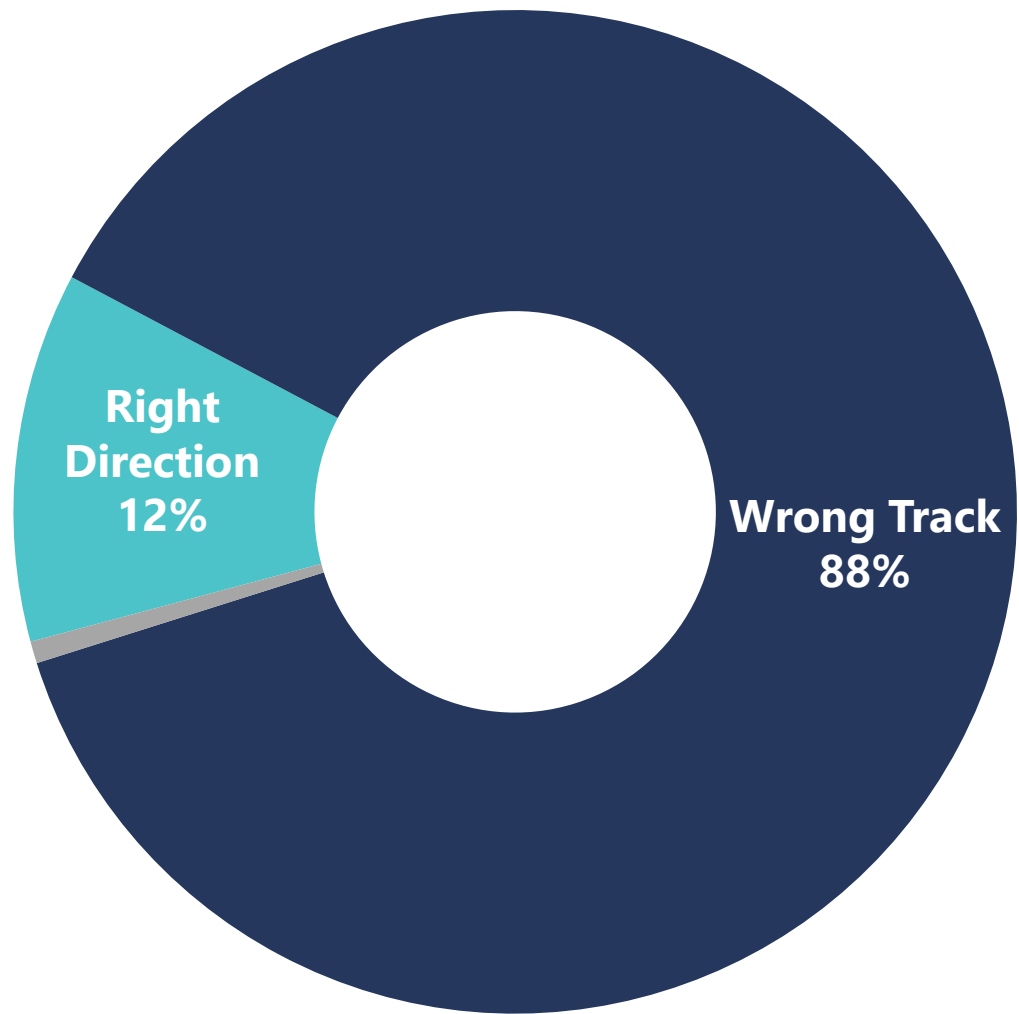
National Environment



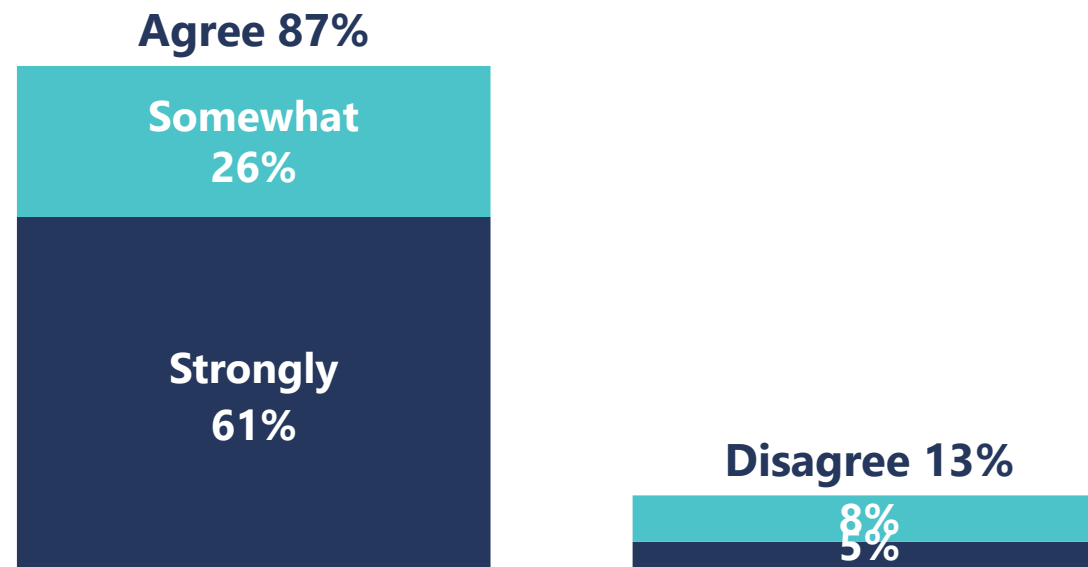


National Environment

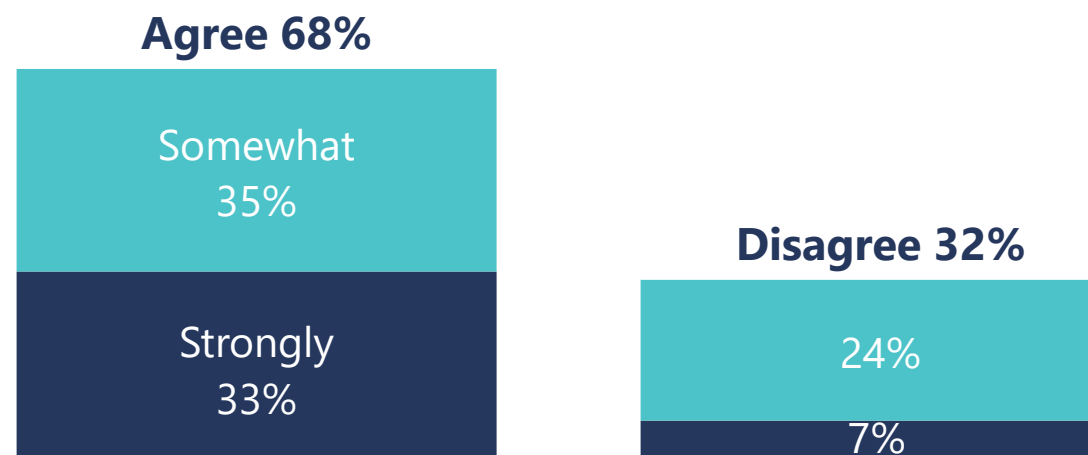
“Do you feel that things in the U.S. are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?”



“I am worried that national economic policies will lead to a recession.”



“I'm concerned about my personal financial situation given current economic conditions.”



Seattle voters continue to view the national environment very negatively - and most are concerned about a recession which is driving concerns about voters' own personal financial situation. Six-in-ten voters are strongly concerned that national economic policies will lead to a recession.



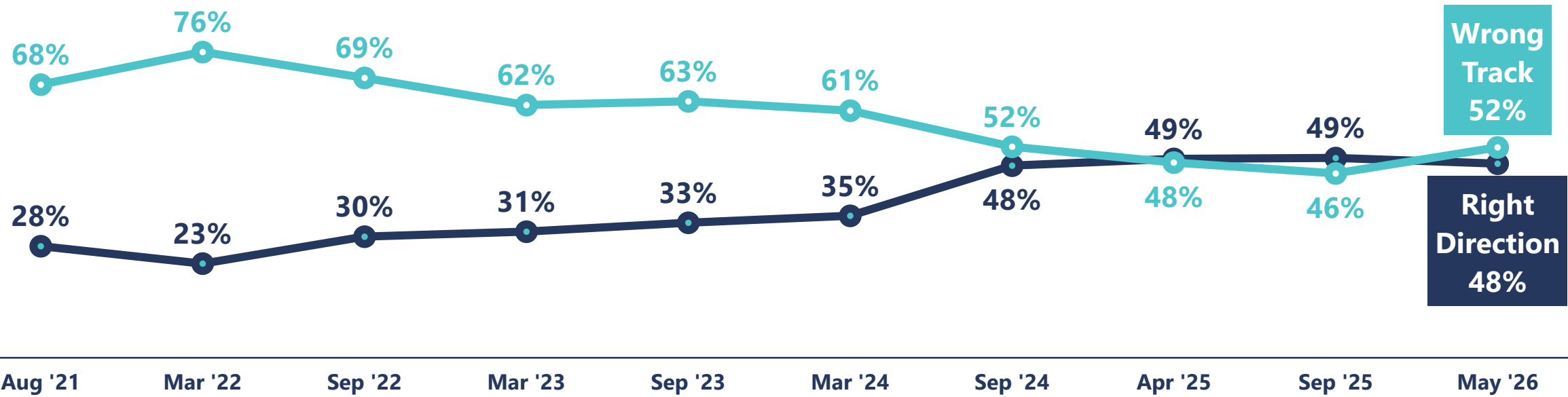
Local Environment



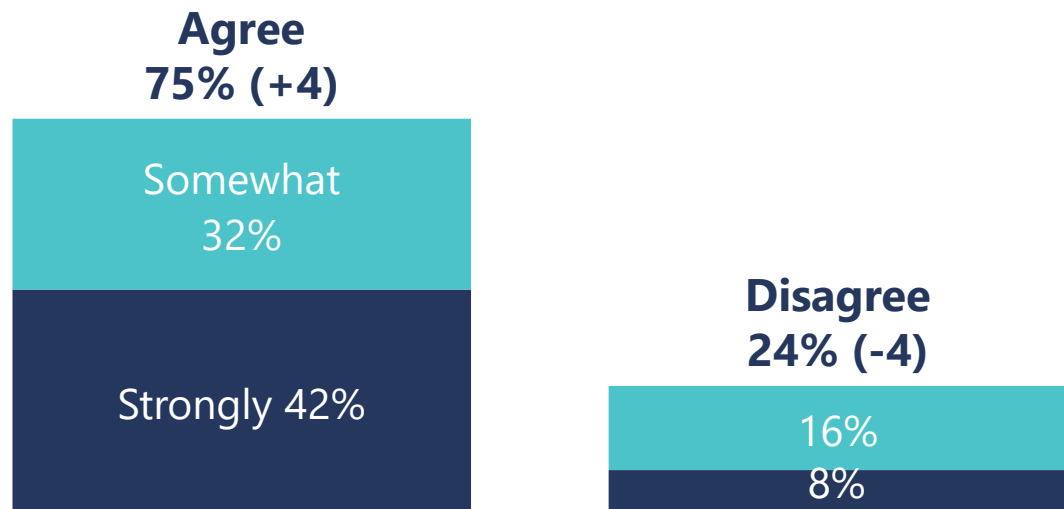


Optimism About Seattle's Direction

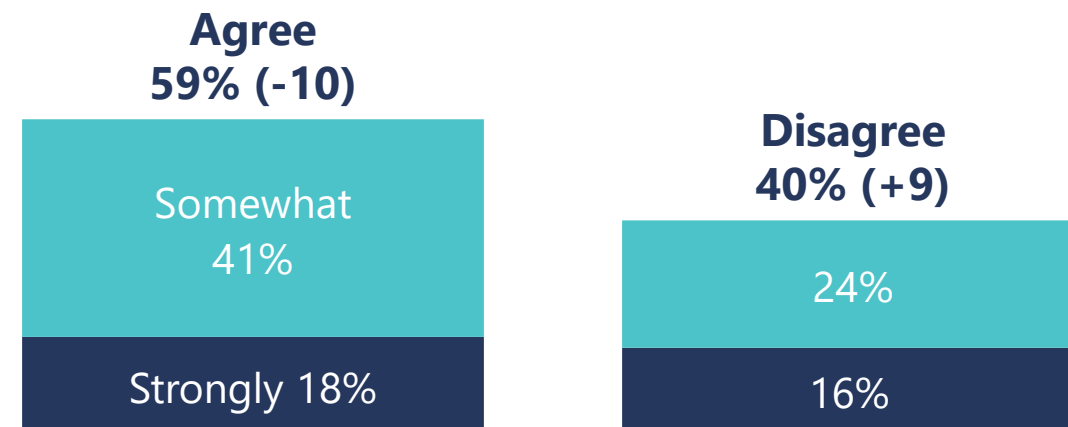
"Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?"



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



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

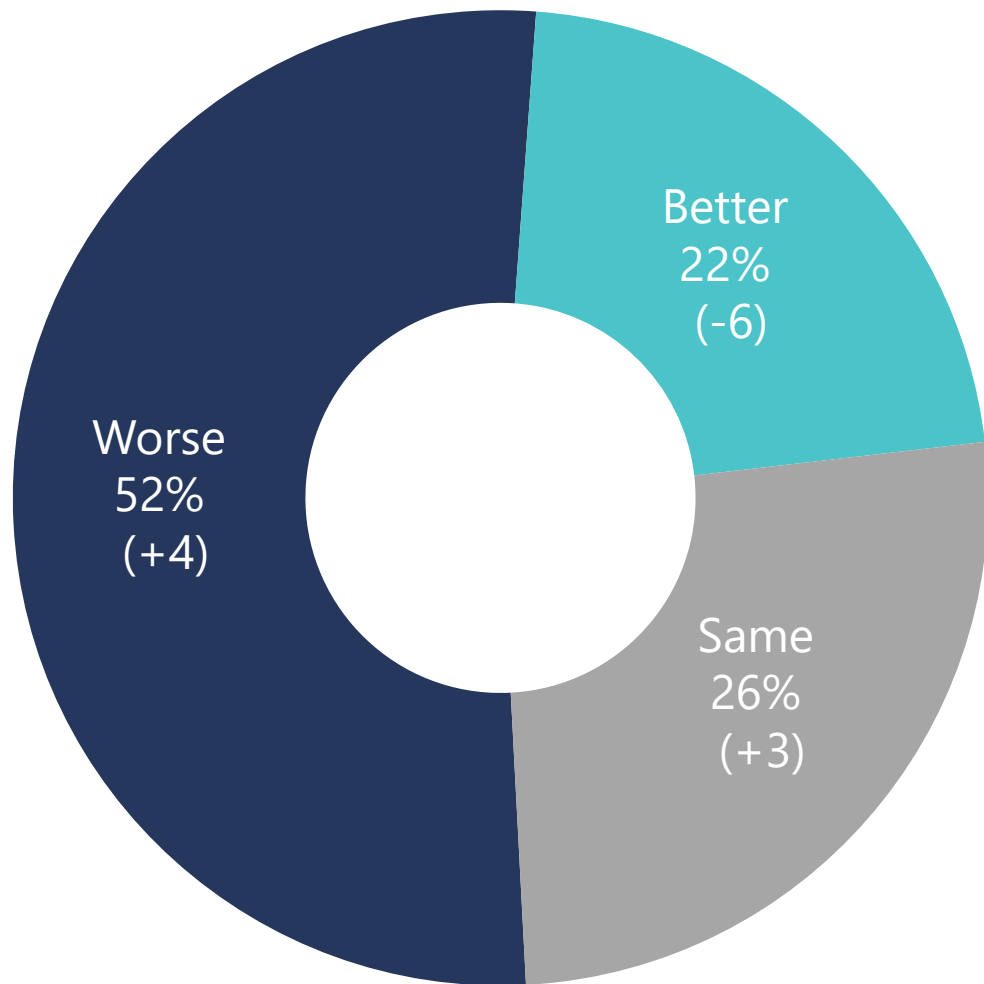


Voters remain divided on the overall direction of the city, but optimism has leveled off and for the first time since March of 2022 the percentage of Seattle voters who think the city is pretty seriously off on the wrong track has increased. Concern about the future of downtown and the region has also increased.

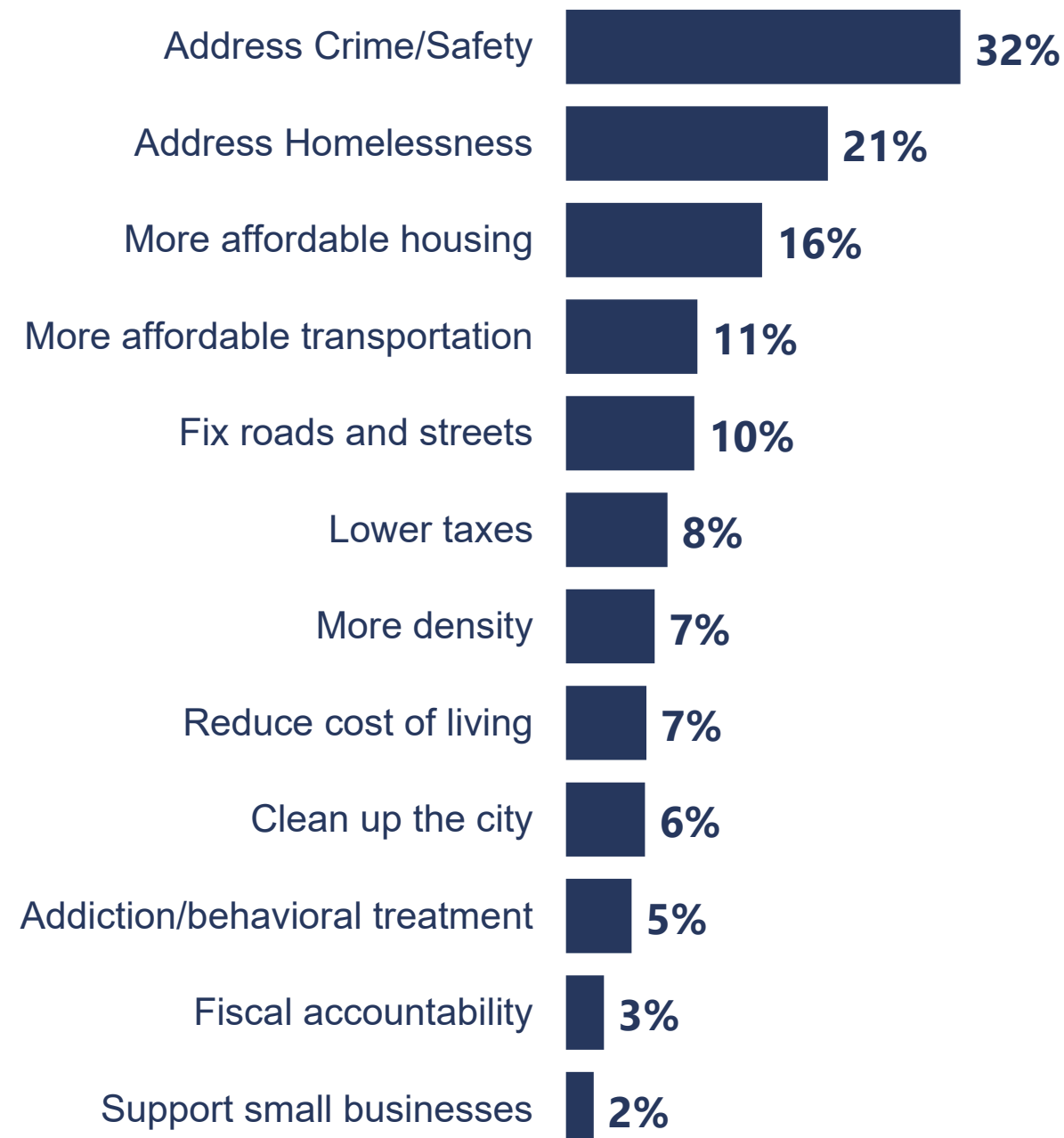


Quality of Life

“Do you think the overall quality of life in Seattle is getting better, is the same, or is getting worse?”



“What one or two things should the City be doing to improve quality of life here?”

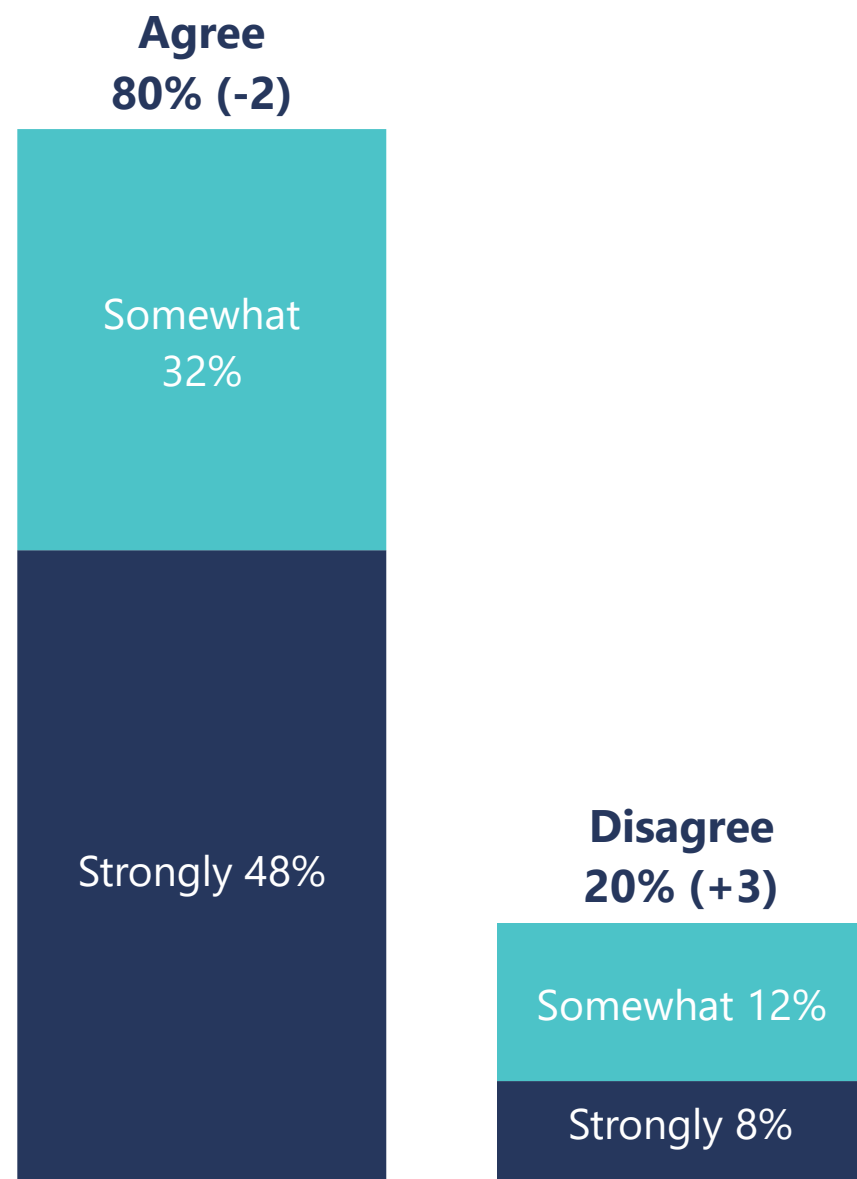


Voters are also divided over whether or not quality of life in Seattle is improving, with half saying quality of life is getting worse. When asked what the city should be doing to improve quality of life, addressing public safety, homelessness, and affordability are the top mentions. More than a third of voters mention cost related issues (housing, transportation, general cost of living)

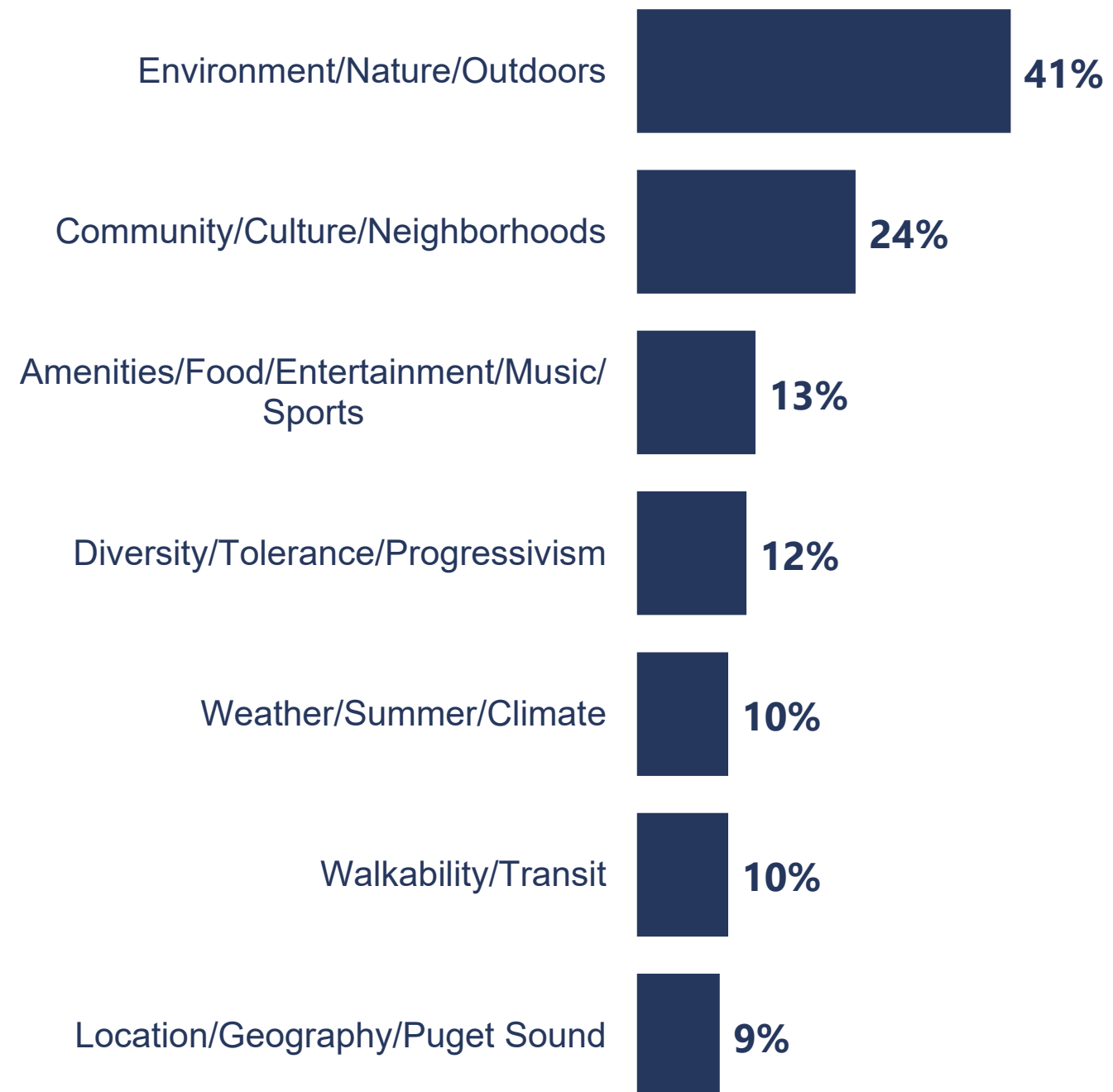


Best Thing About Living in Seattle

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



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

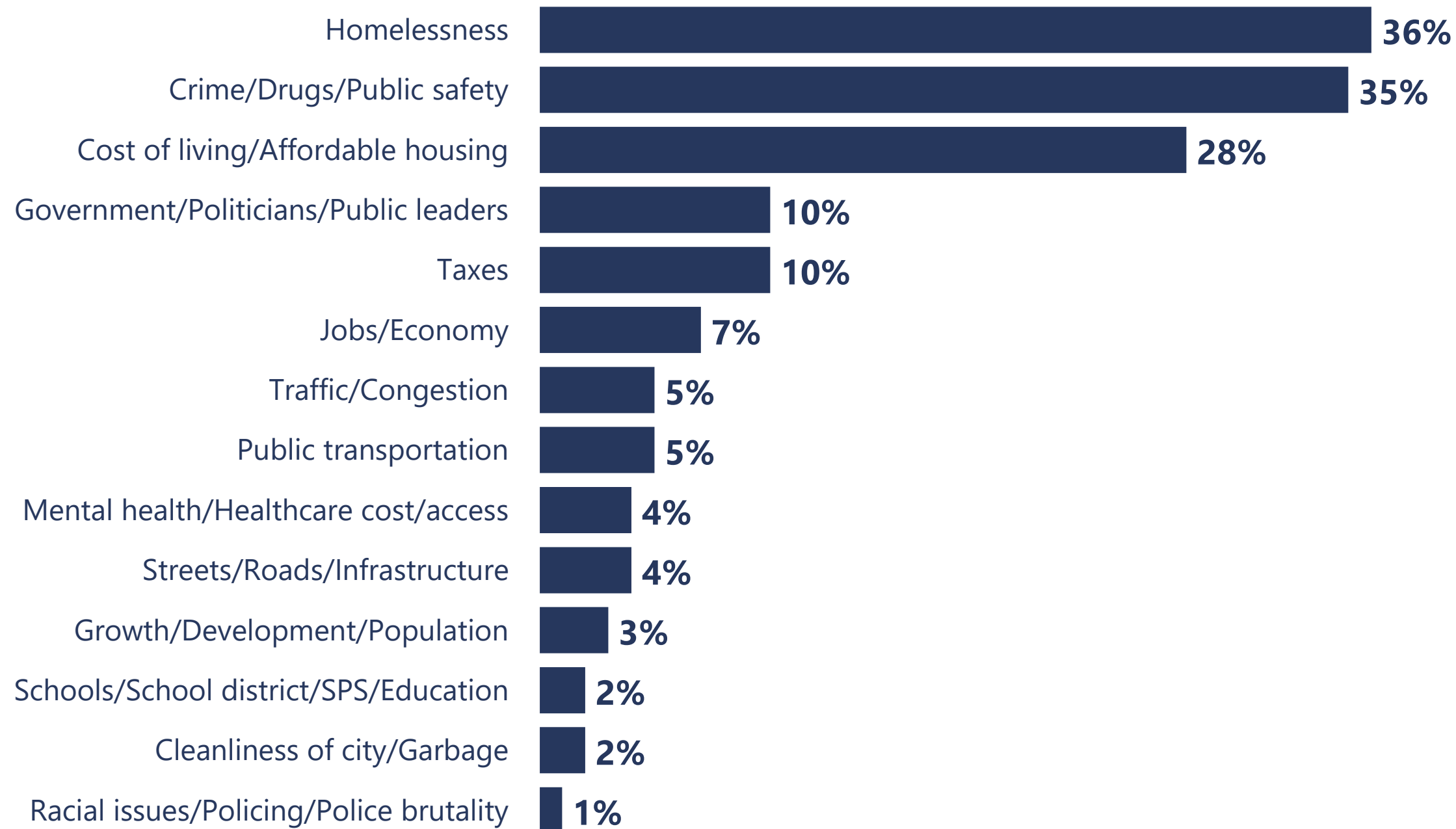


Despite increasing pessimism, most voters continue to agree that they are proud to call themselves a Seattleite. Seattle's natural beauty continues to be the thing people like best about living in Seattle.



Top Concerns

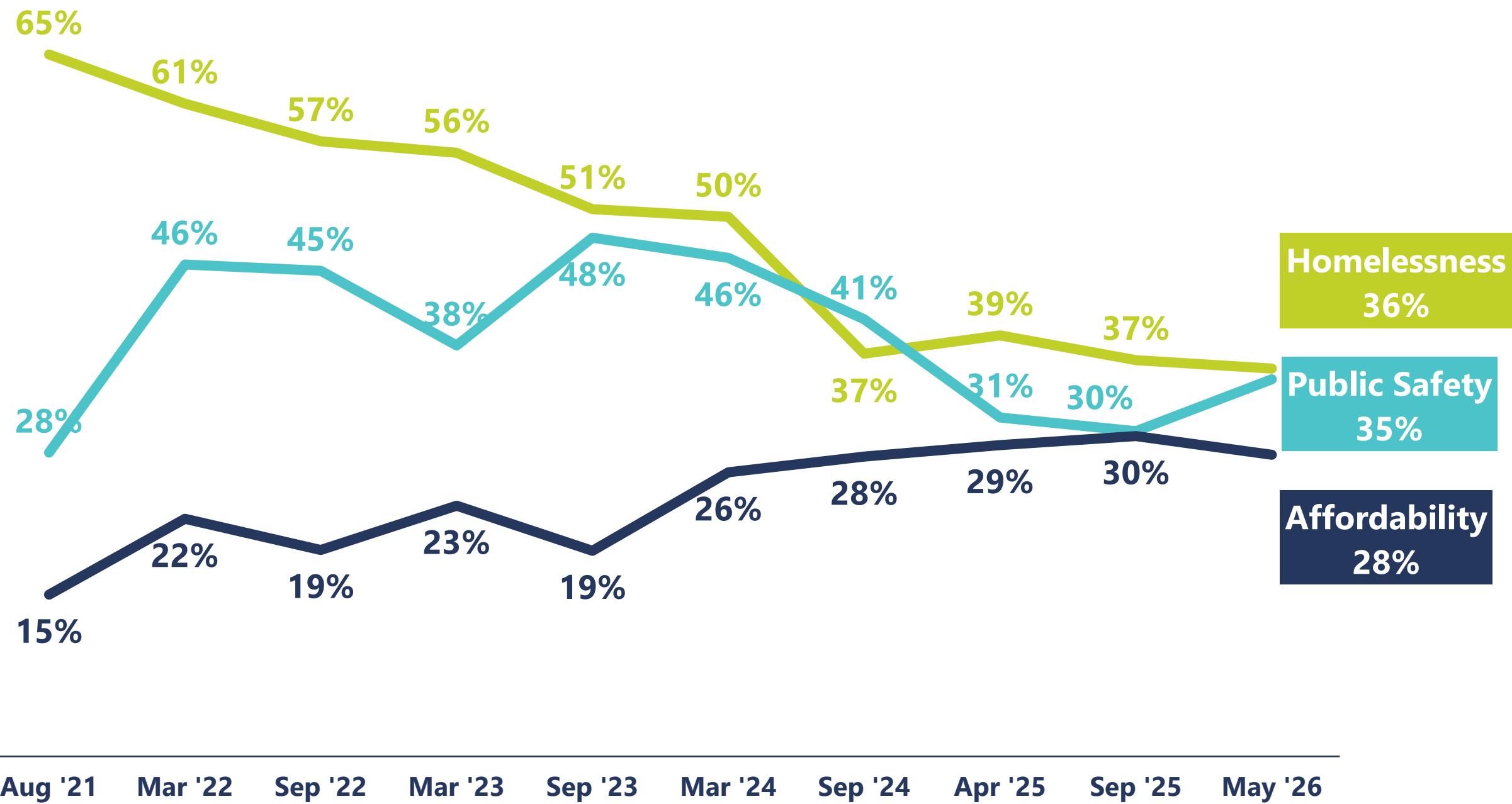
“What are the issues facing Seattle that you are most frustrated or concerned about?”



Voters' top concerns remain the same – homelessness, public safety, and affordability.



Top Three Concerns - Trend



After declining over the last two years, concern about public safety is on the rise again, while concerns about homelessness and affordability are unchanged from September of 2025.



Priorities for City Leadership

“There are a number of things City leaders can focus on to improve quality of life in Seattle. For each, please tell me how important it is to you for the City leaders to focus on that issue.”
(1=not at all important / 7=extremely important)

		Extremely Important
Taking care of the basics like filling potholes and maintaining our parks and local transportation infrastructure.	6.1	46%
Maintaining progress on public safety and reducing street disorder by continuing to shut down open-air drug markets.	5.8	57%
Helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns	5.8	45%
Protecting local jobs & small businesses in this uncertain economic environment by lowering the cost to start and run a business in Seattle.	5.7	40%
Continuing to reduce the number of homeless encampments.	5.7	50%
Incentivizing businesses to create family wage jobs here so that our local economy stays resilient in the face of national economic uncertainty.	5.3	33%
Aggressively standing up to the Trump Administration, including joining lawsuits against the administration when the federal gov't overreaches.	5.1	47%
Hiring more police officers to reduce emergency response times and improve public safety.	4.9	35%
Streamlining permitting for tiny home villages/increasing limit from 100-150 homes per village to provide more transitional shelter for the homeless.	4.9	27%
Updating zoning laws/permitting to allow for more housing across the city, even if it means more types of housing in SFH neighborhoods.	4.9	33%
Protecting core progressive values like social justice, equity, and inclusivity	4.6	30%



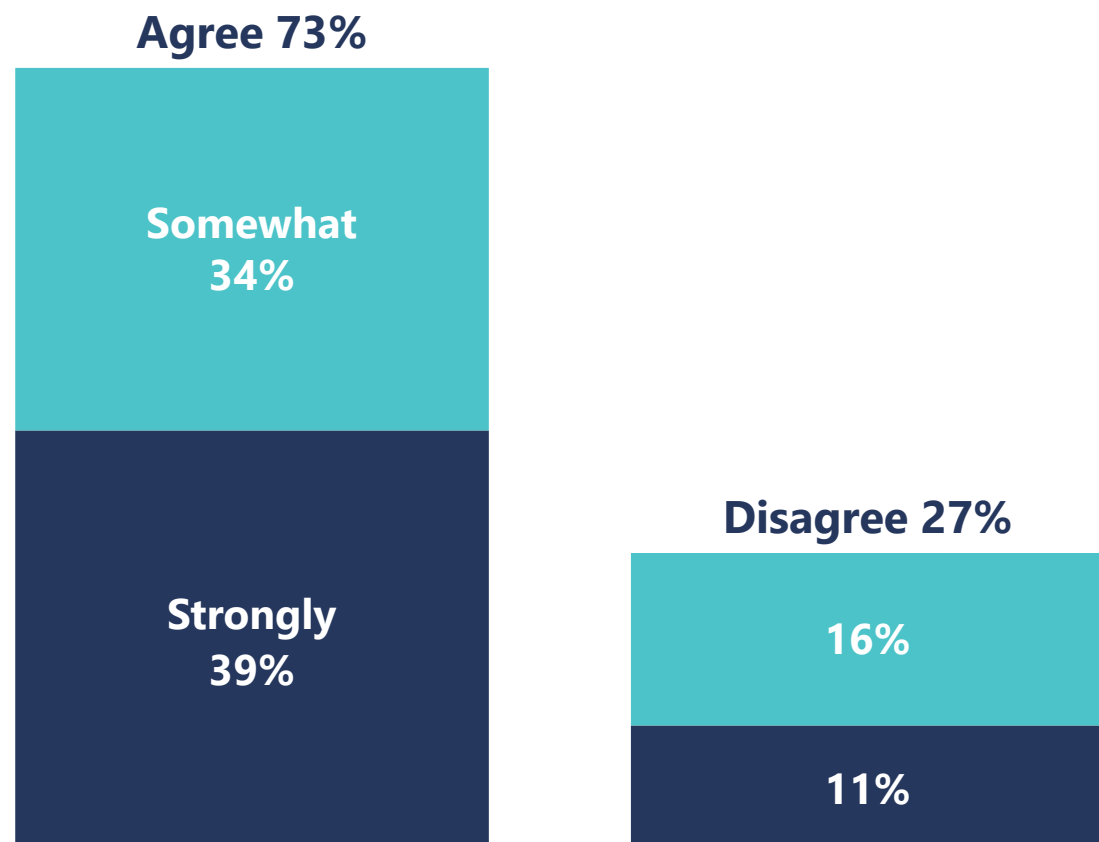
Voters' top priorities for city leaders continue to be: 1) focus on the basics, 2) maintain progress on public safety, 3) help local small businesses and protect local jobs, and 4) reduce encampments. Public safety and encampments generate the most intensity.

Two of voters' top four priorities – and 3 of the top 6 – are about protecting jobs and the local economy.

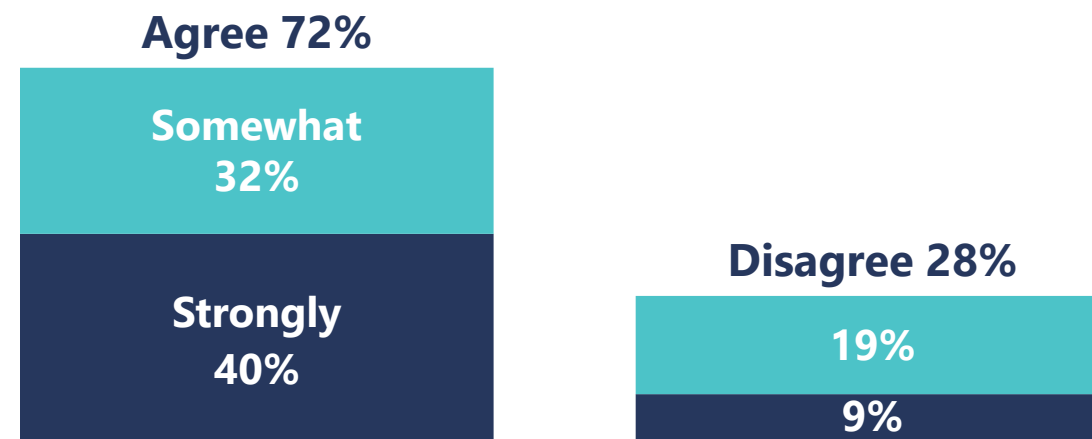


Protecting Seattle's Economy & Local Jobs

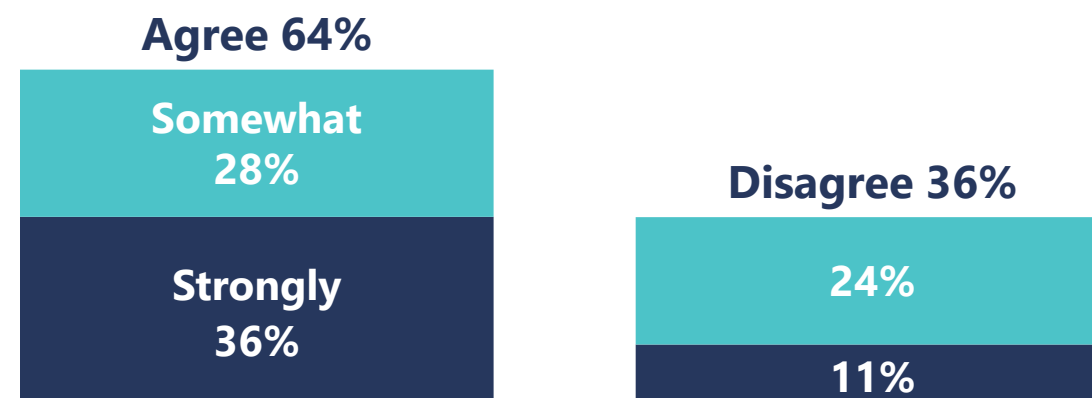
"Large businesses are essential to our city's success. They generate more than half of City tax revenue, create good-paying jobs, bring people back downtown, and support thousands of small businesses that rely on the foot traffic, investment, and activity they generate. When businesses grow here, we get more jobs and more revenue without raising taxes; when they leave, the burden shifts to the rest of us."



"Businesses are closing down or leaving Seattle for nearby cities because the cost of doing business has gotten too high here."



"I don't feel like City leaders are doing enough to make Seattle a good place to do business."

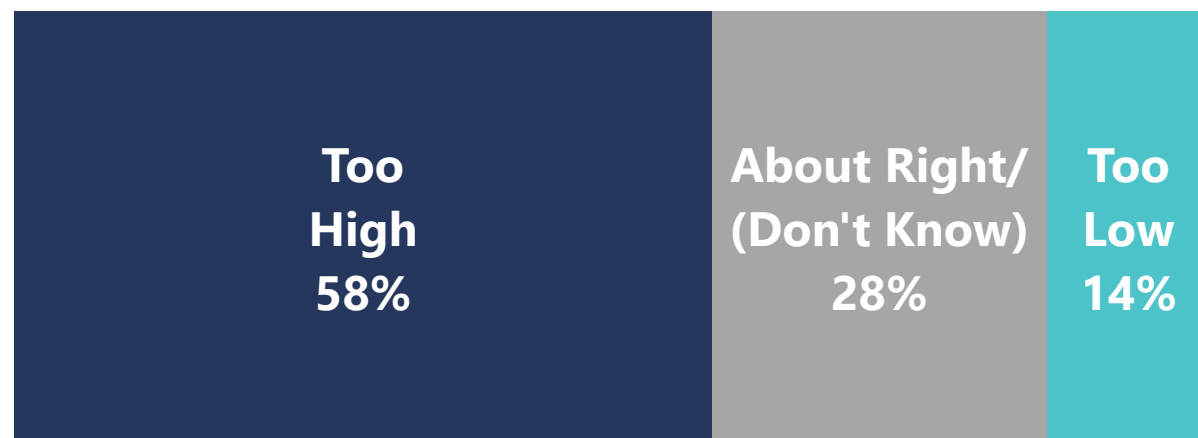


Voters overwhelmingly recognize that Seattle's large businesses are essential to the city's success and they want City leaders to do more to make Seattle a good place to do business because they are concerned that our local economy is at risk from businesses are closing or leaving due to the high cost of doing business here.

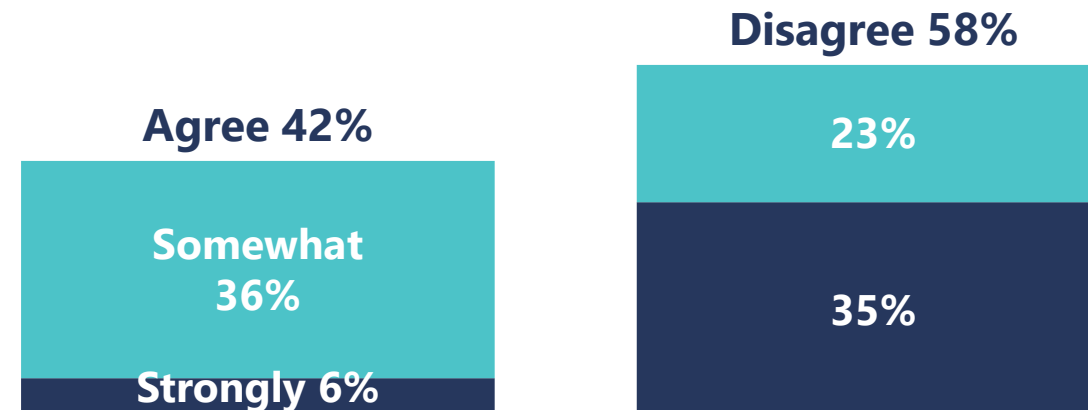


Taxes & City Regulations

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



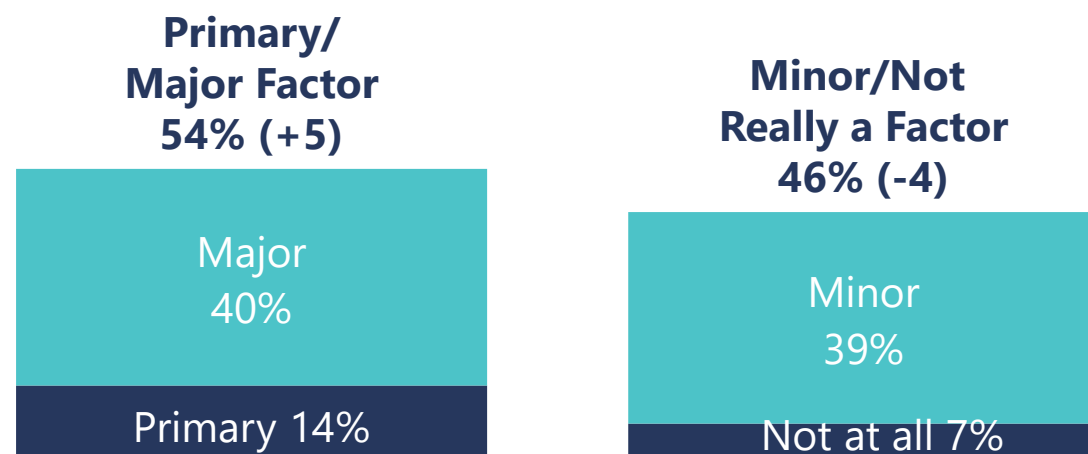
"I trust the City to spend my tax dollars responsibly."



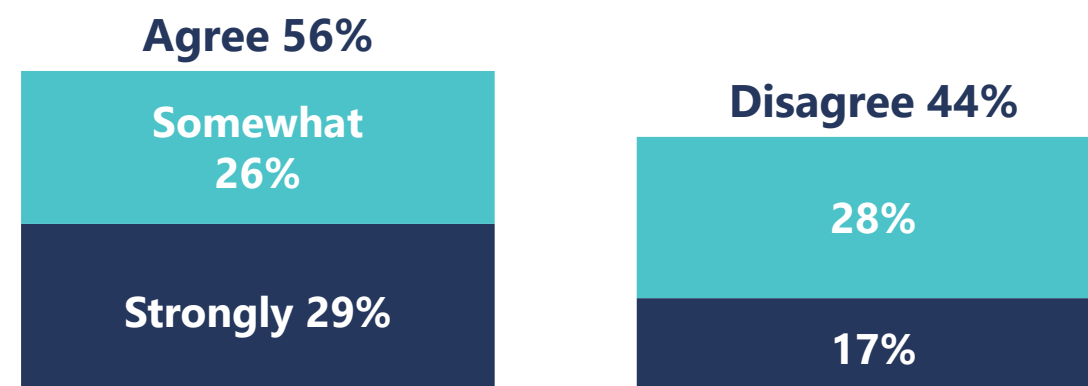
Six-in-ten voters believe taxes in Seattle are too high for the services provided and 6-in-10 do not trust the city to be fiscally responsible.

A majority believe city taxes/regulations are a primary or major factor in Seattle's high cost of living and that higher business taxes will just lead to an even higher cost of living.

"Would you say city regulations and taxes are one of the primary causes of Seattle's high cost of living, they are a major factor, a minor factor, or not really a factor at all?"



"If we continue to increase taxes on large businesses, companies will just pass the cost of these new taxes on to customers, resulting in an even higher cost of living in Seattle."





City Budget Deficit & Taxes

“Over the last few years, the city has raised new taxes to fund new programs and initiatives. Now the city is facing an estimated \$150 million budget shortfall for next year. Which of these two options best represents your view of what the city should do to address the deficit:

Some say despite years of tax increases, spending has increased even faster with little progress on critical issues like homelessness, affordability, and public safety. They say instead of taxing residents and businesses even more, the City needs to deliver better results with the tax money they already have.

Others say this budget shortfall is primarily driven by things beyond the City’s control including declining tax revenues, inflation, federal spending cuts, and increasing demand for city services. They say we need to find additional progressive tax revenue to maintain services so our city’s most vulnerable don’t suffer.”

**Deliver Results
57%**



**Increase
Progressive Taxes
42%**



By a 15-point margin Seattle voters want the city to address the budget shortfall by being more fiscally responsible rather than by increasing progressive taxes.

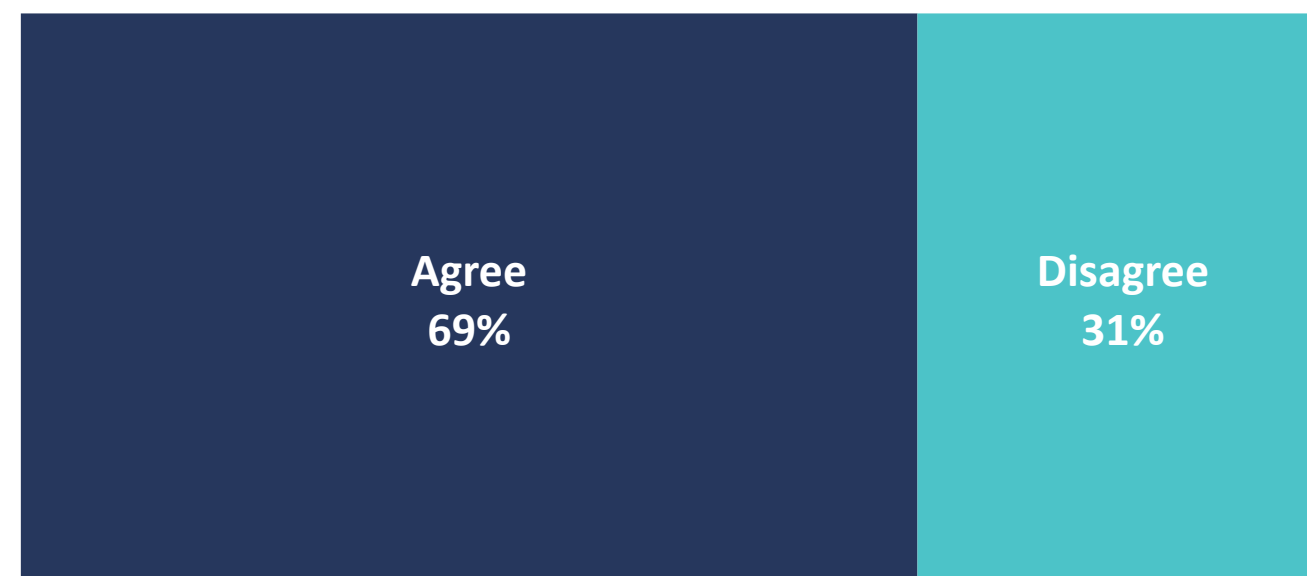


Growth & Housing

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



Building more housing will help slow down Seattle's increasing housing costs.



A majority of voters continue to agree that overall, growth has been a positive for their area and two thirds agree that building more housing will help with Seattle's housing affordability crisis.



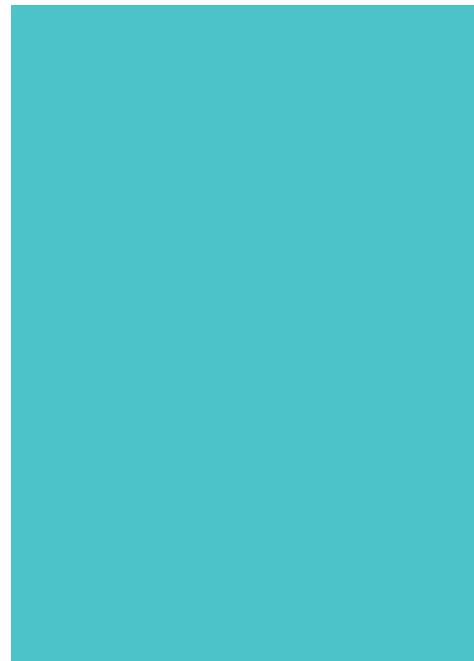
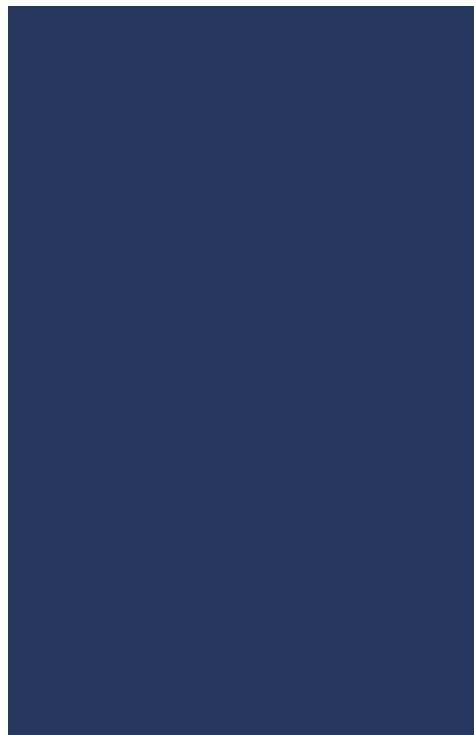
CCTV/SODA Effectiveness

September 2025

“Recently passed laws, such as installing closed circuit cameras to capture real-time information about crime on our streets and keeping people out of areas where they have previously committed crimes, are making Seattle safer and reducing crime.”

Agree
51%

Disagree
46%



May 2026

“Recent laws like adding street cameras to help track crime and restricting people from returning to places where they’ve committed crimes are making Seattle safer and reducing crime.”

Agree
51%

Disagree
48%

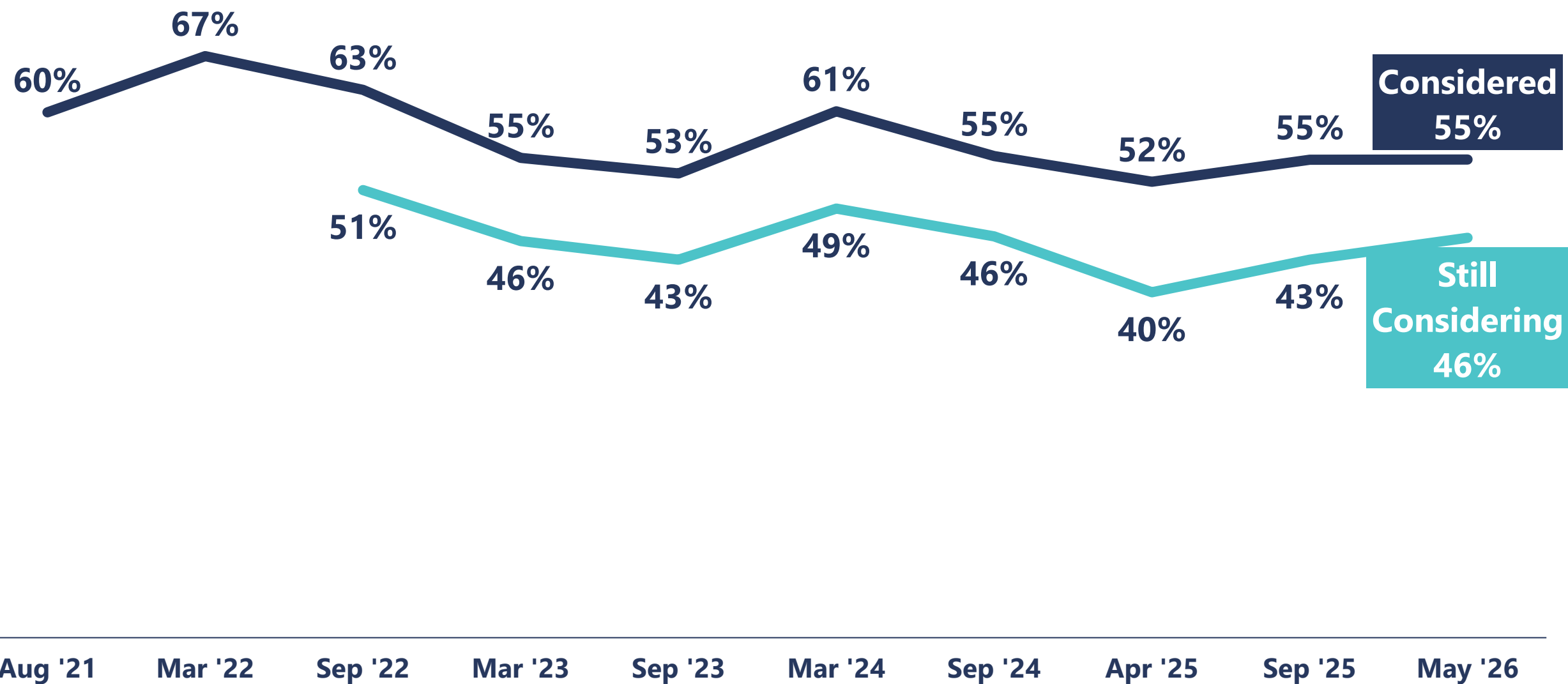


Seattle voters remain divided over the effectiveness of street cameras and laws that restrict individuals from returning to areas where they have committed crimes.



Leaving Seattle

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

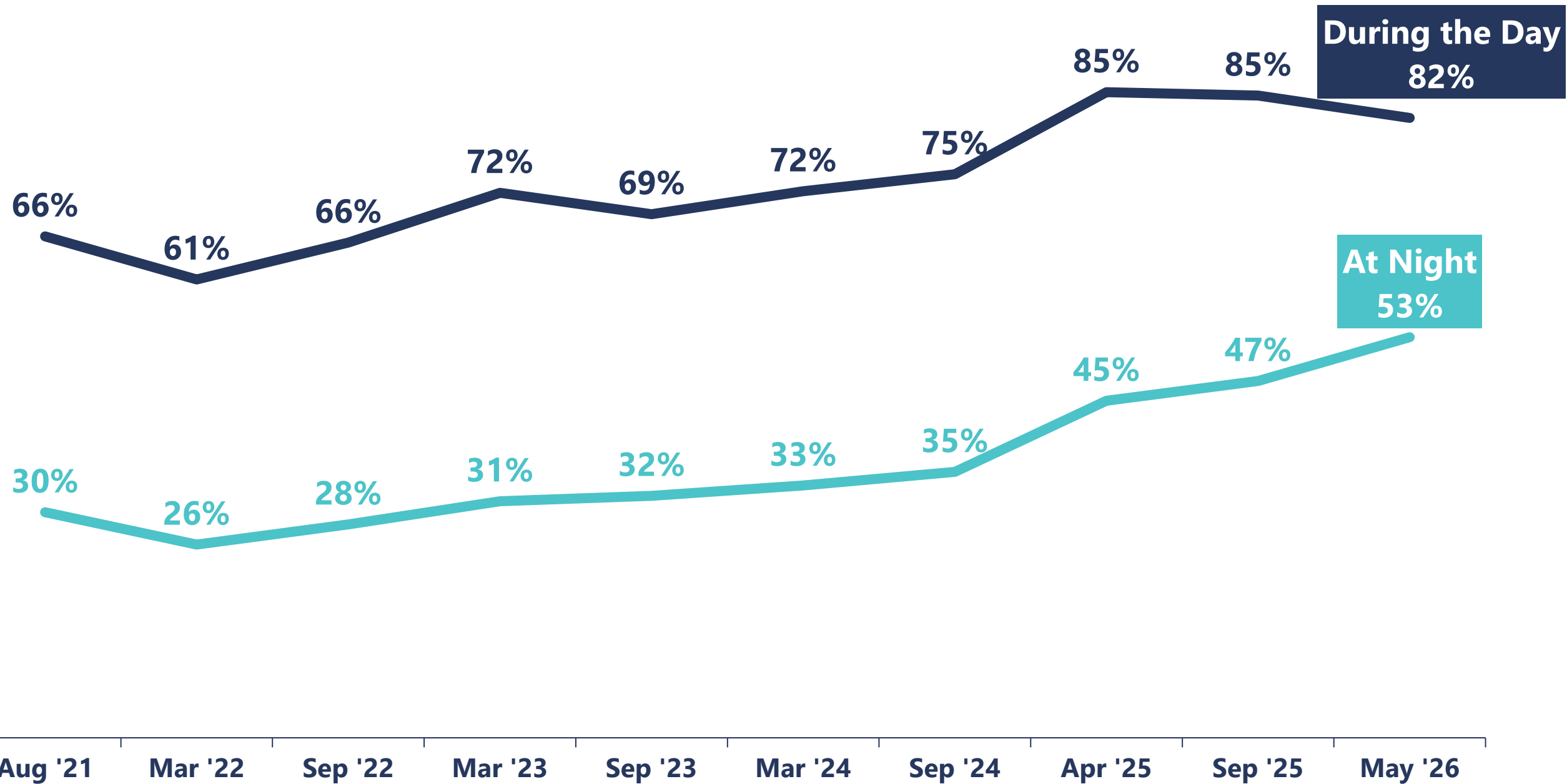


Over half of Seattle voters continue to report having considered moving out of the city and most of these voters say they are still actively considering moving.



Visiting Downtown

I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle...
[during the day/at night].

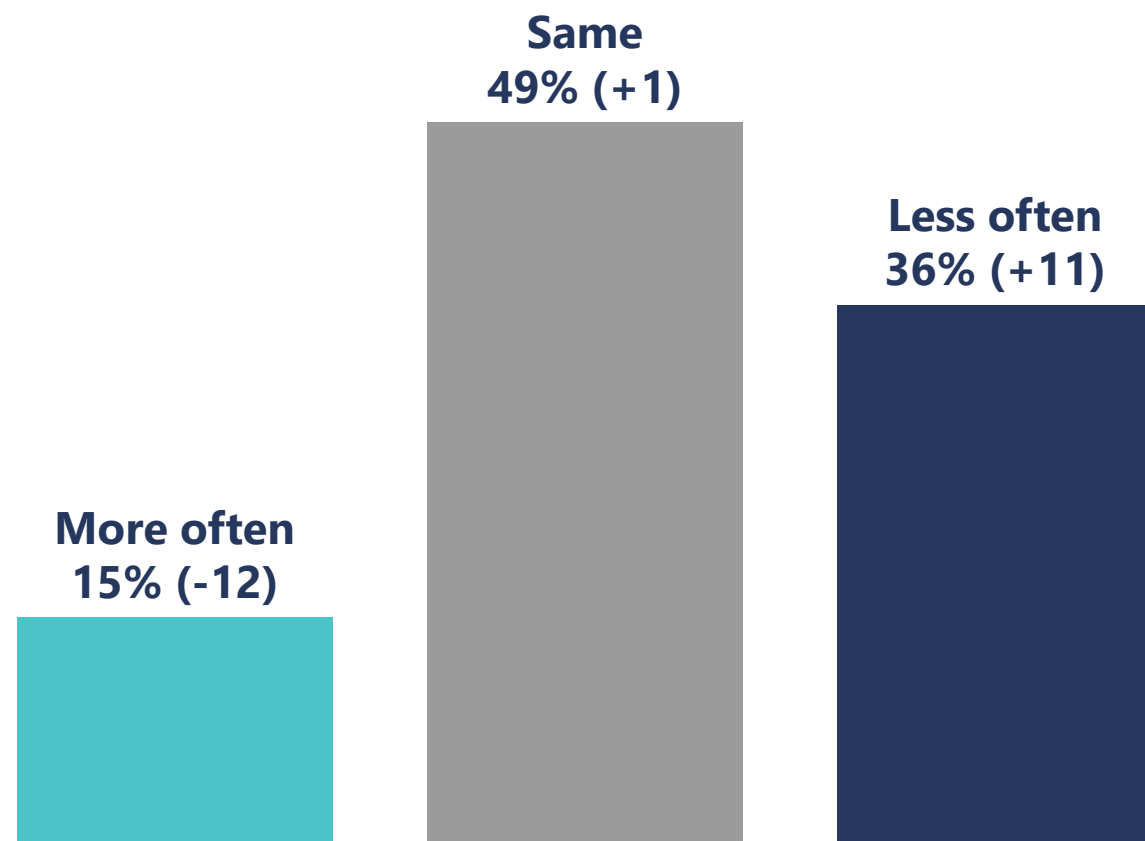


Most voters continue to say they would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle during the day and the percentage of voters who say they would feel safe visiting downtown at night has been steadily increasing.

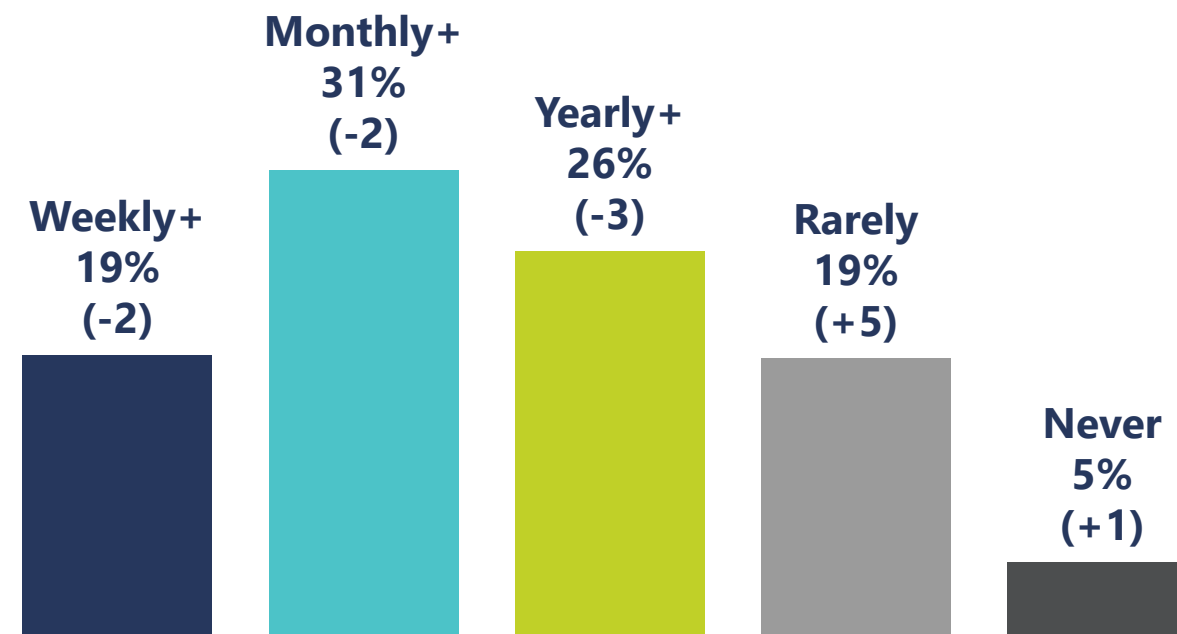


Visiting Downtown

“Are you coming downtown more or less often than last year?”



“Thinking about downtown Seattle, including areas like Pioneer Square, the International District, and Pike Place Market, how often do you typically visit downtown for activities other than work?”



Most voters (64%) still say they are visiting downtown the same or more often than last year, but the percentage who say they are visiting less often is up 11 points.

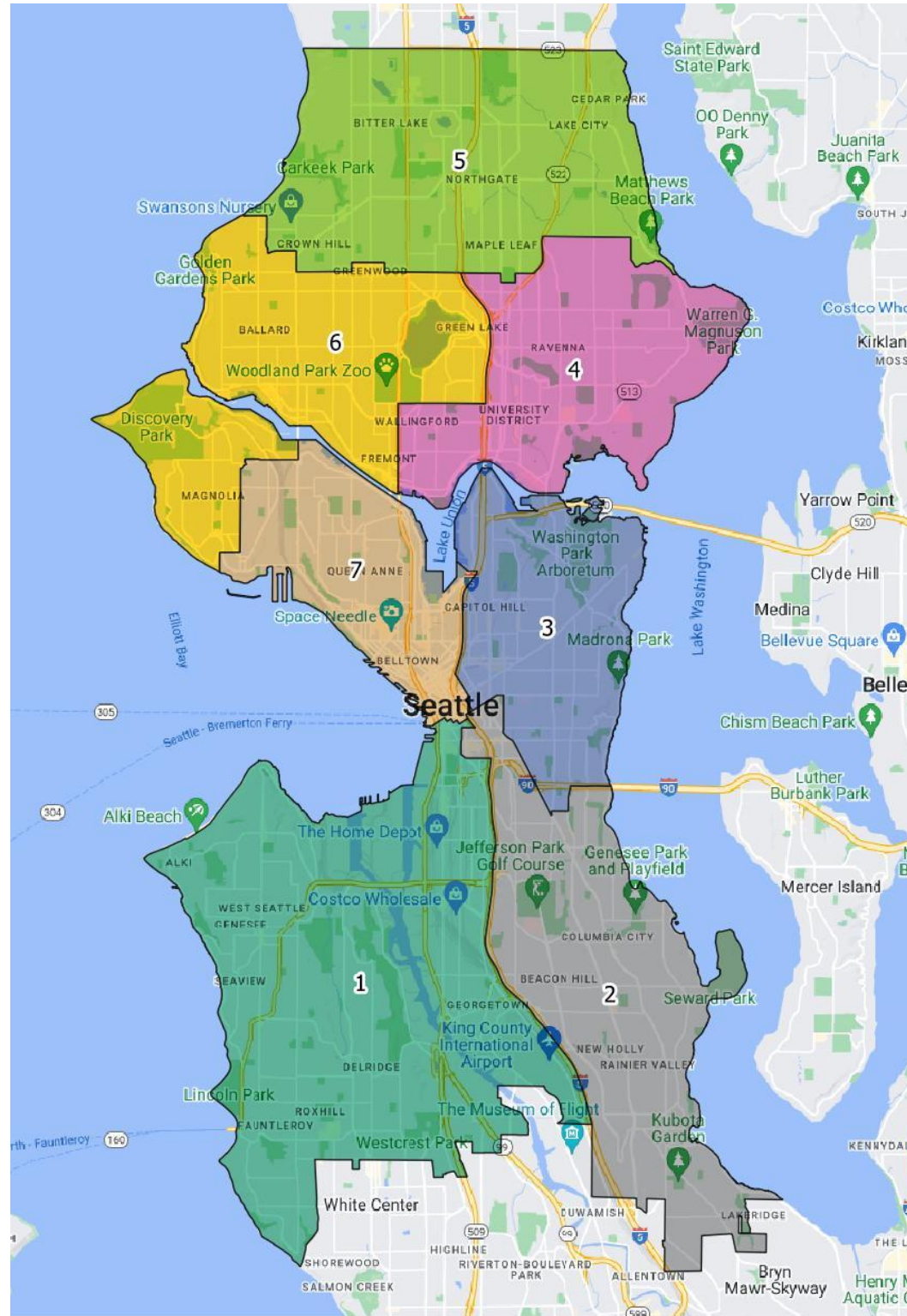


Appendix





Regions

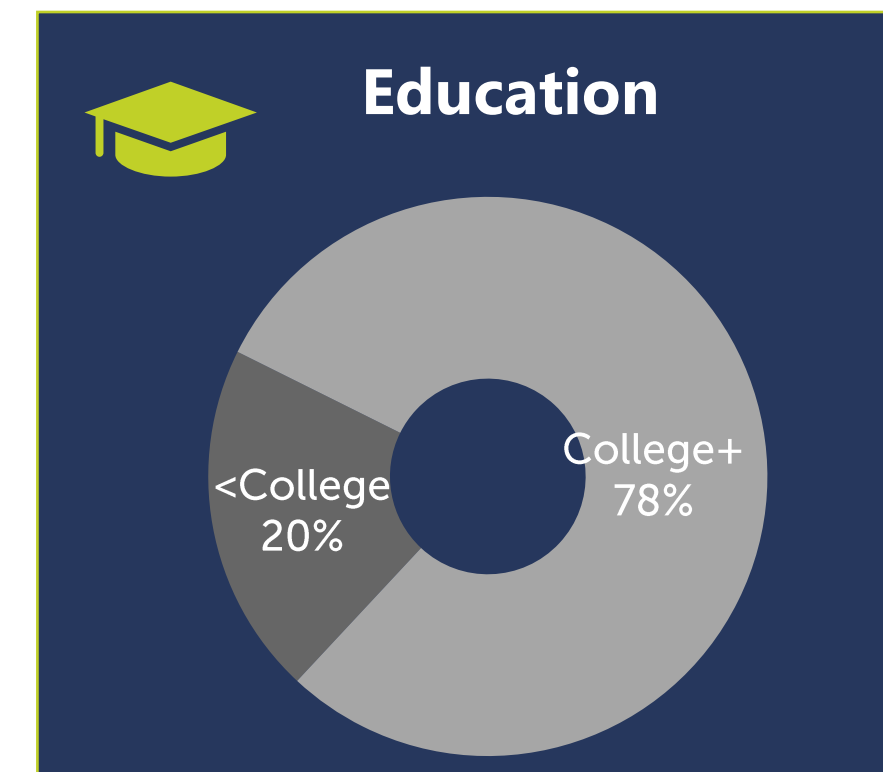
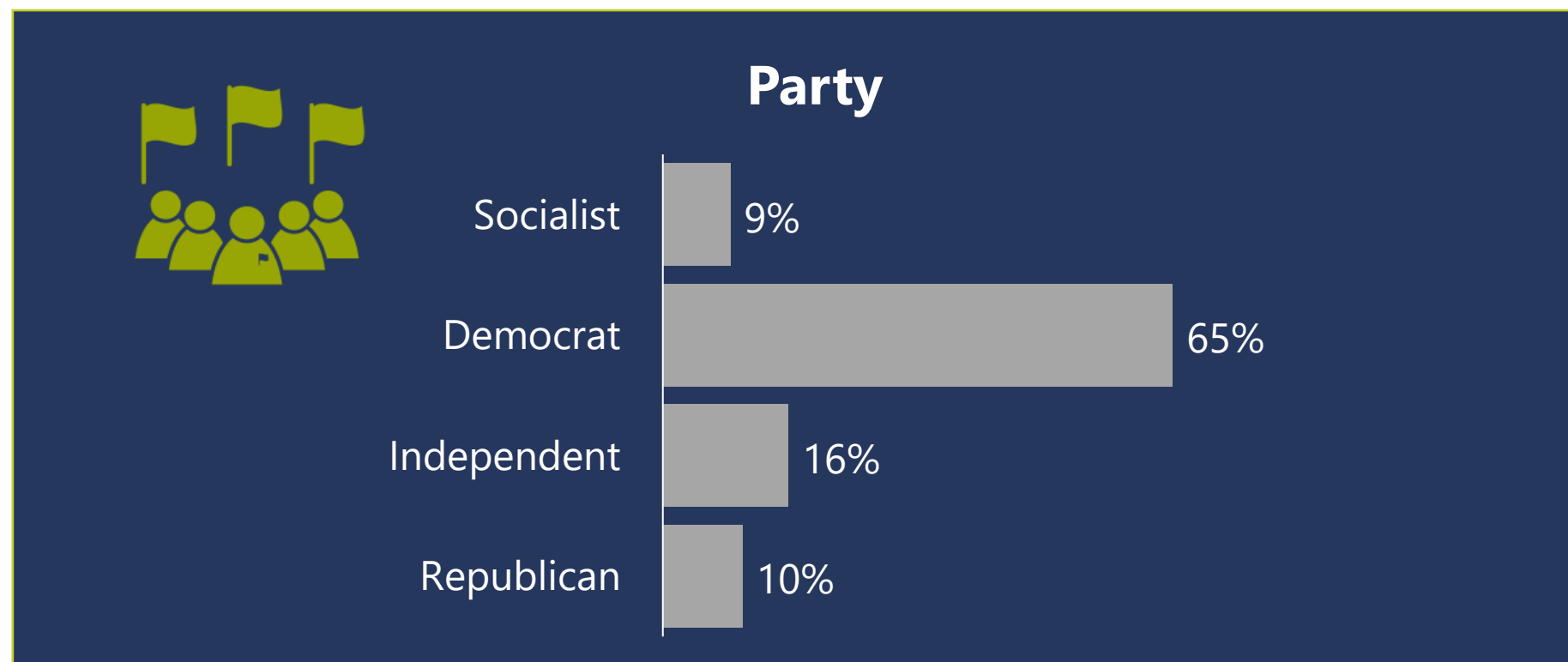
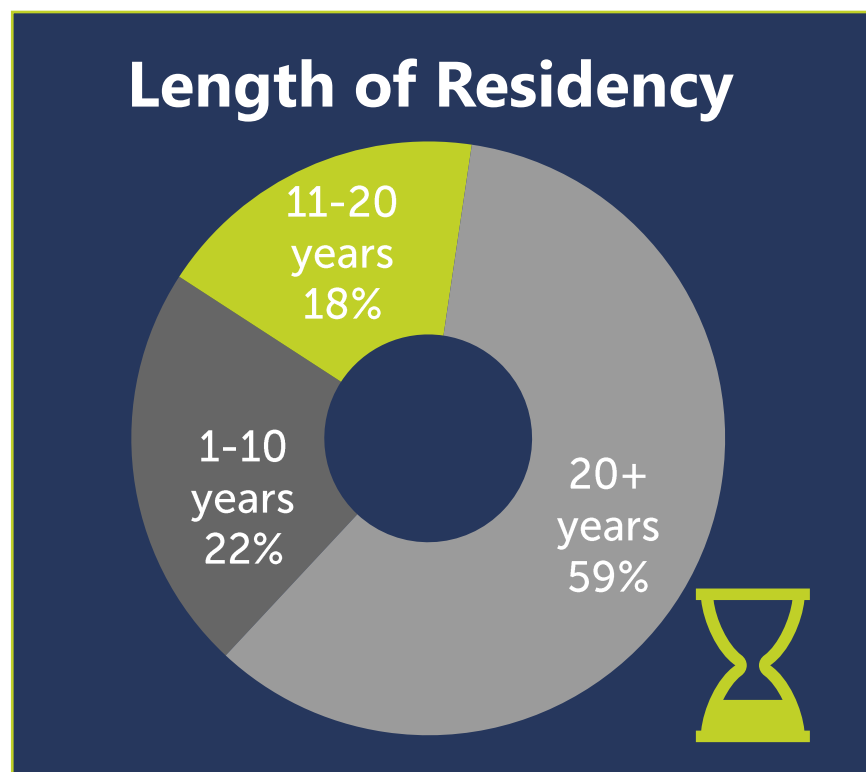
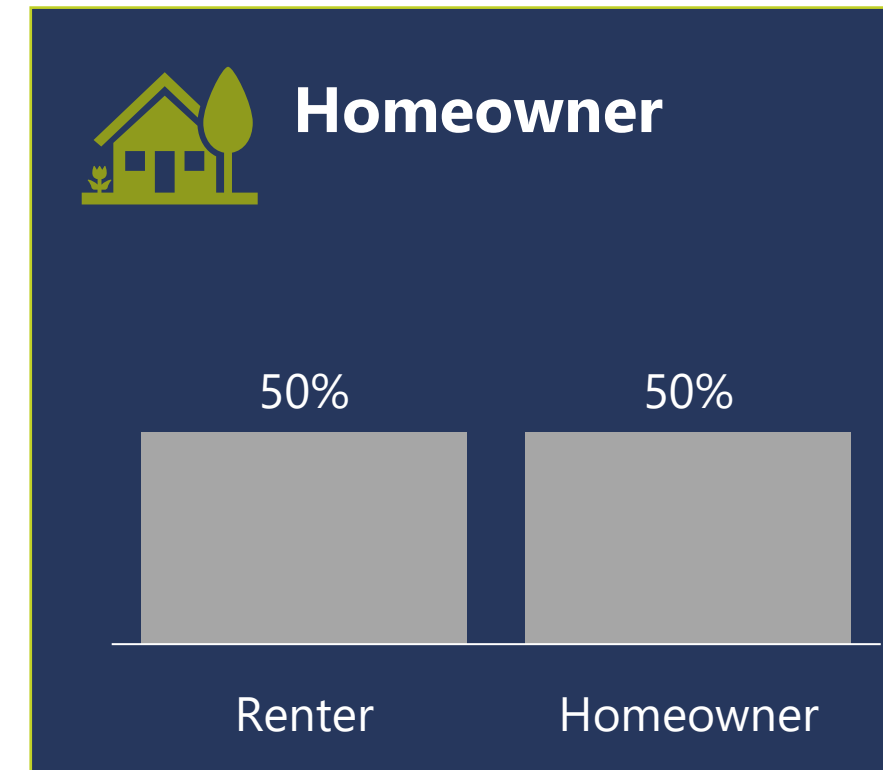
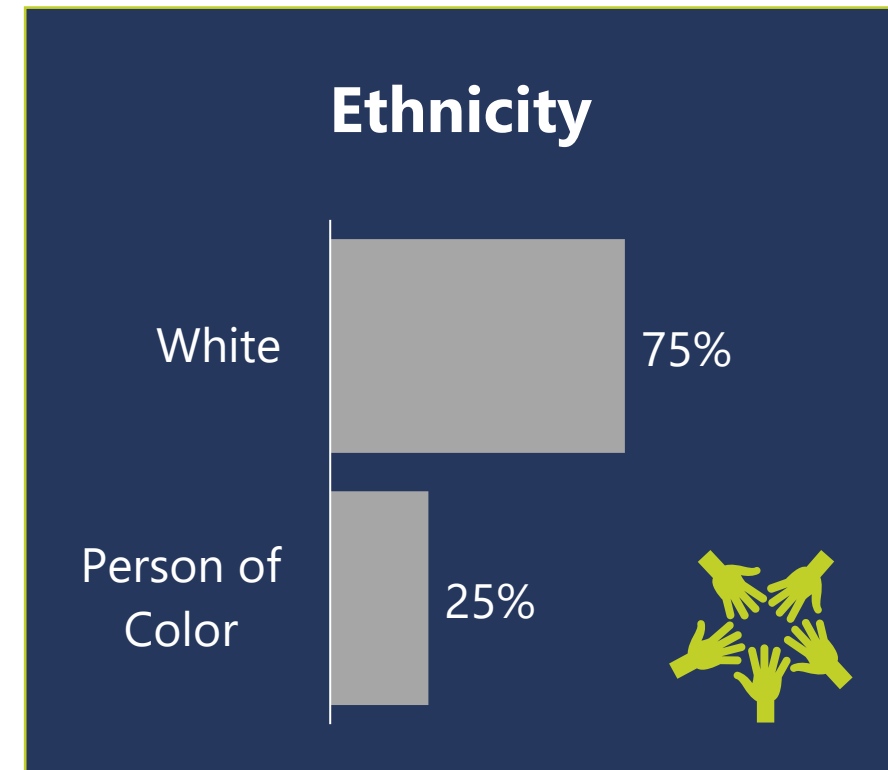
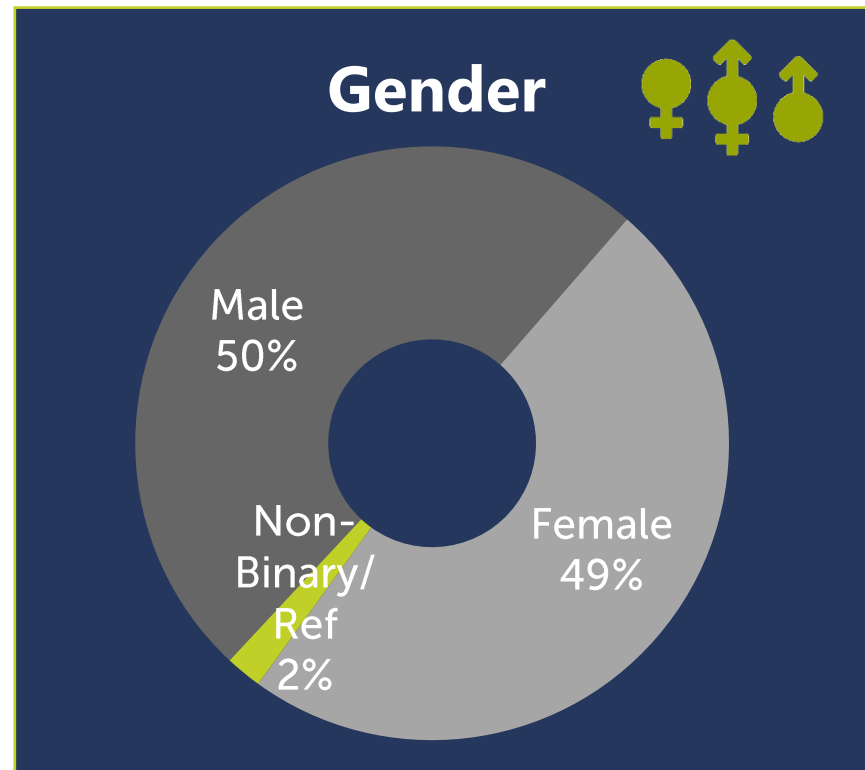
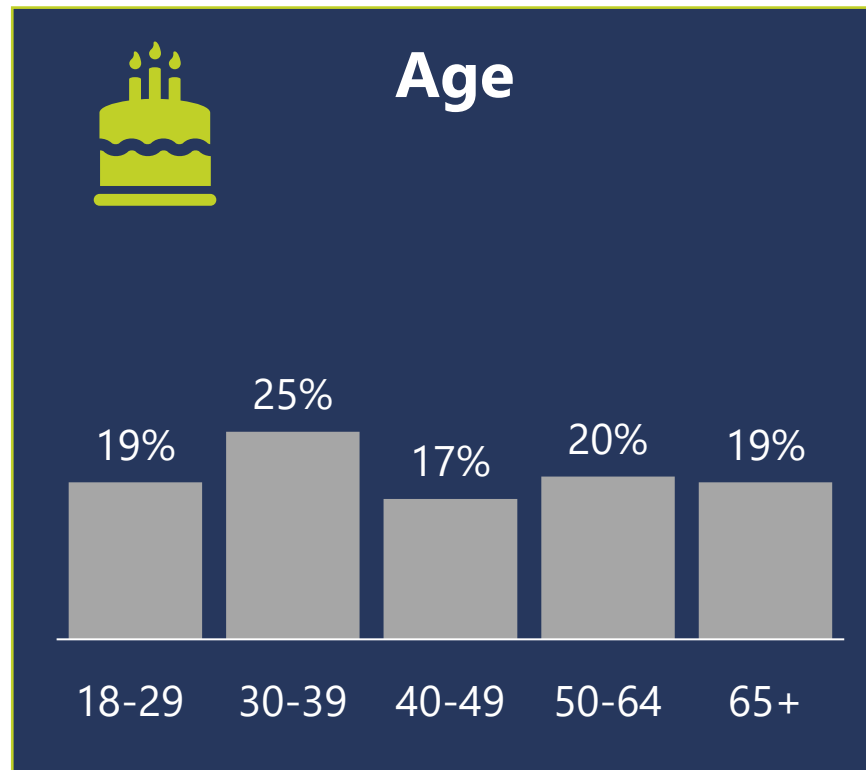


Region*	Districts	Weighted %
North Seattle	4, 5 and 6	43%
Central Seattle	3 and 7	29%
South Seattle	1 and 2	29%

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



Respondent Profile



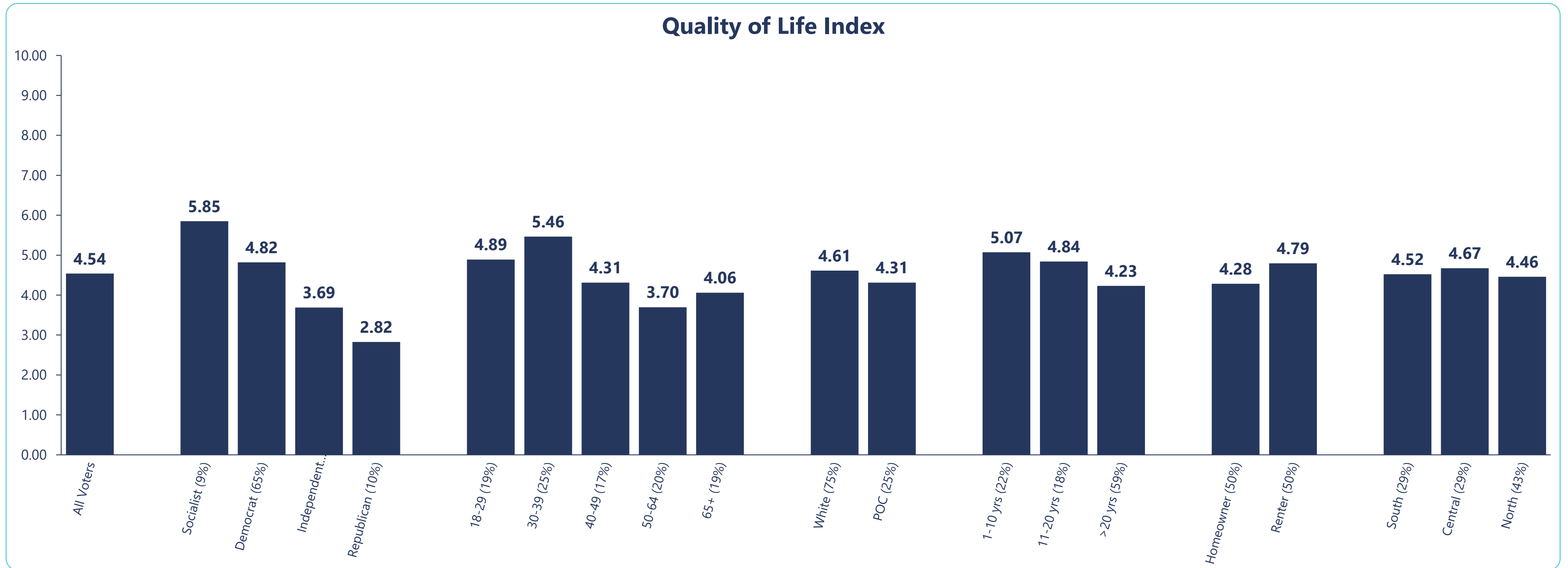


Subgroup Data





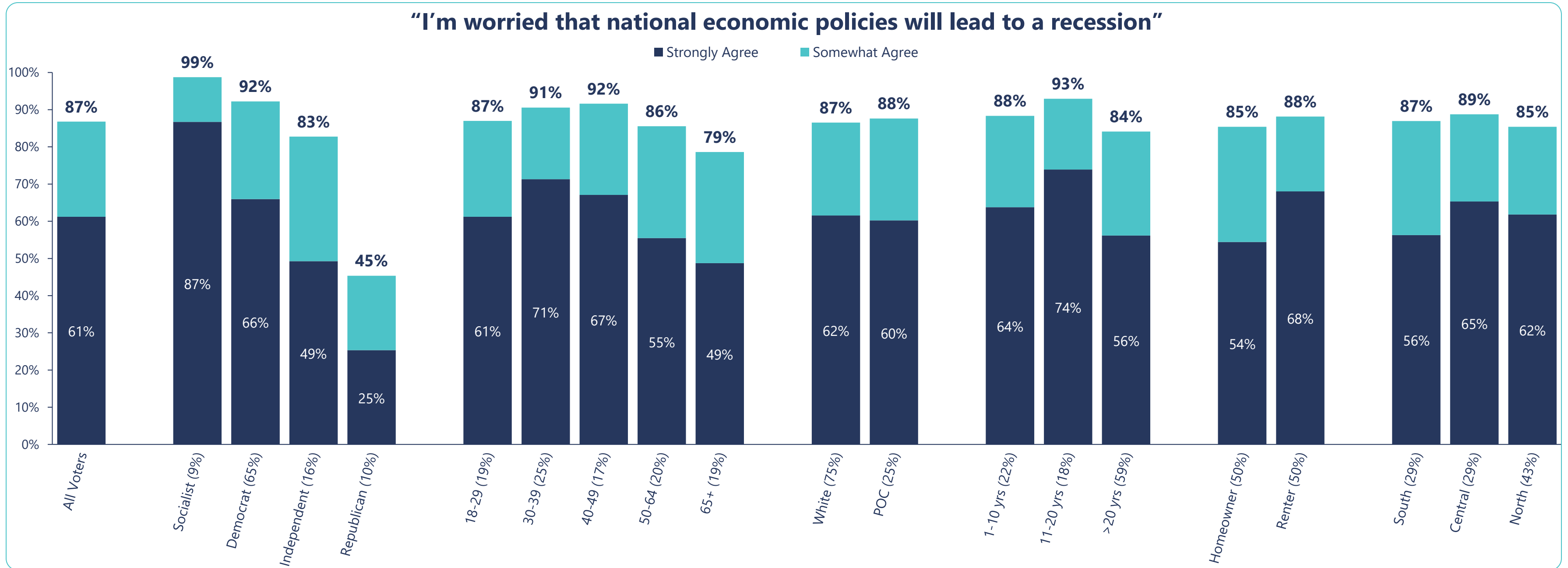
The Index



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



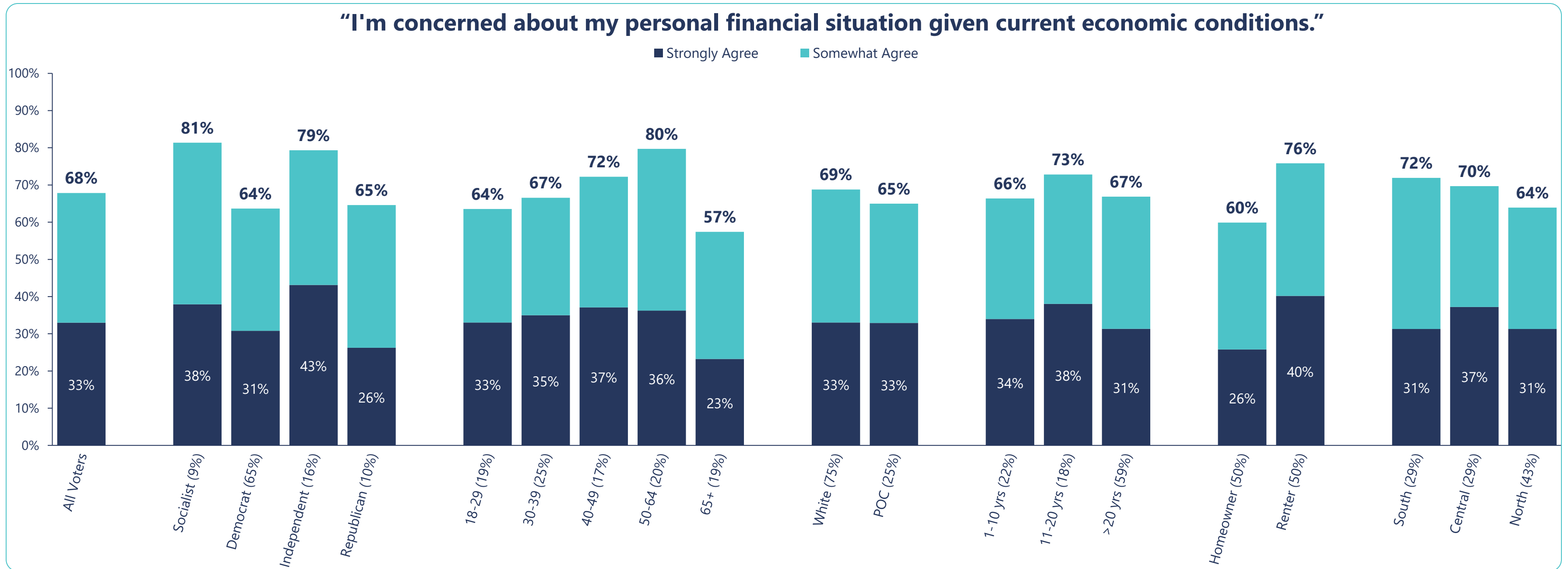
Concern About Recession



The vast majority of voters are concerned about national economic policy leading to a recession, including nearly half of Republicans.



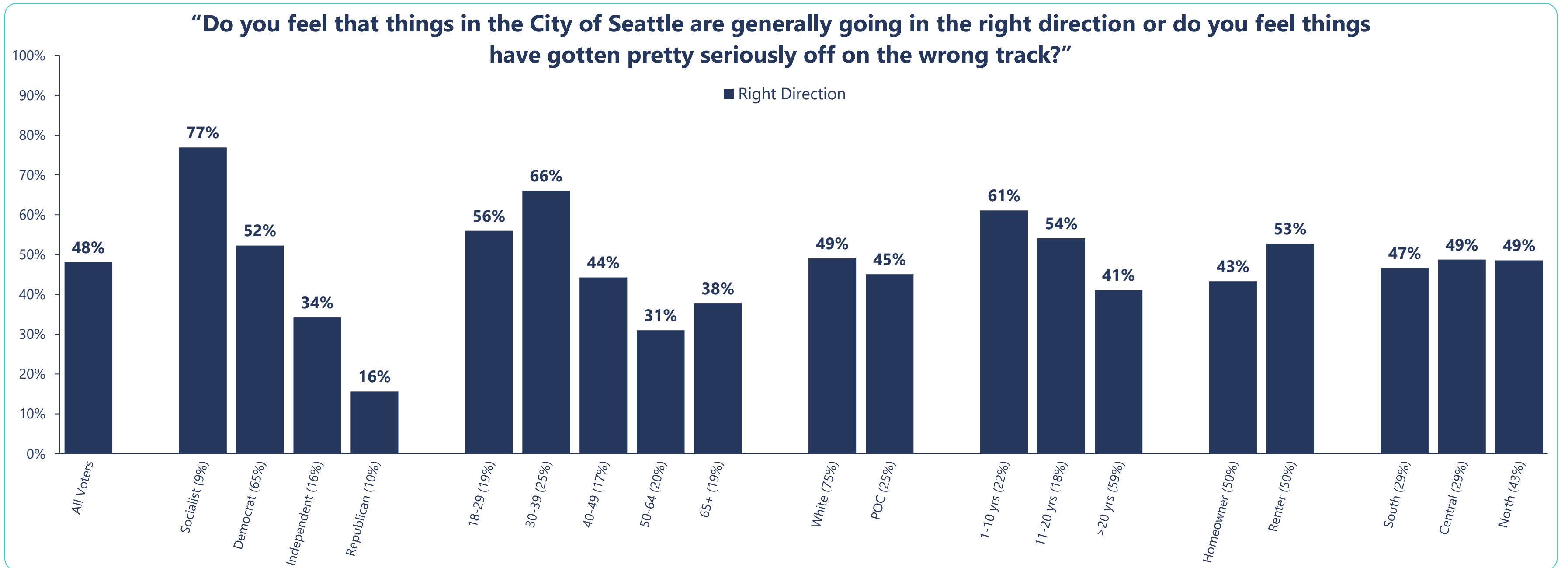
Concern About Personal Finances



Strong majorities of voters across subgroups are concerned about their personal finances.



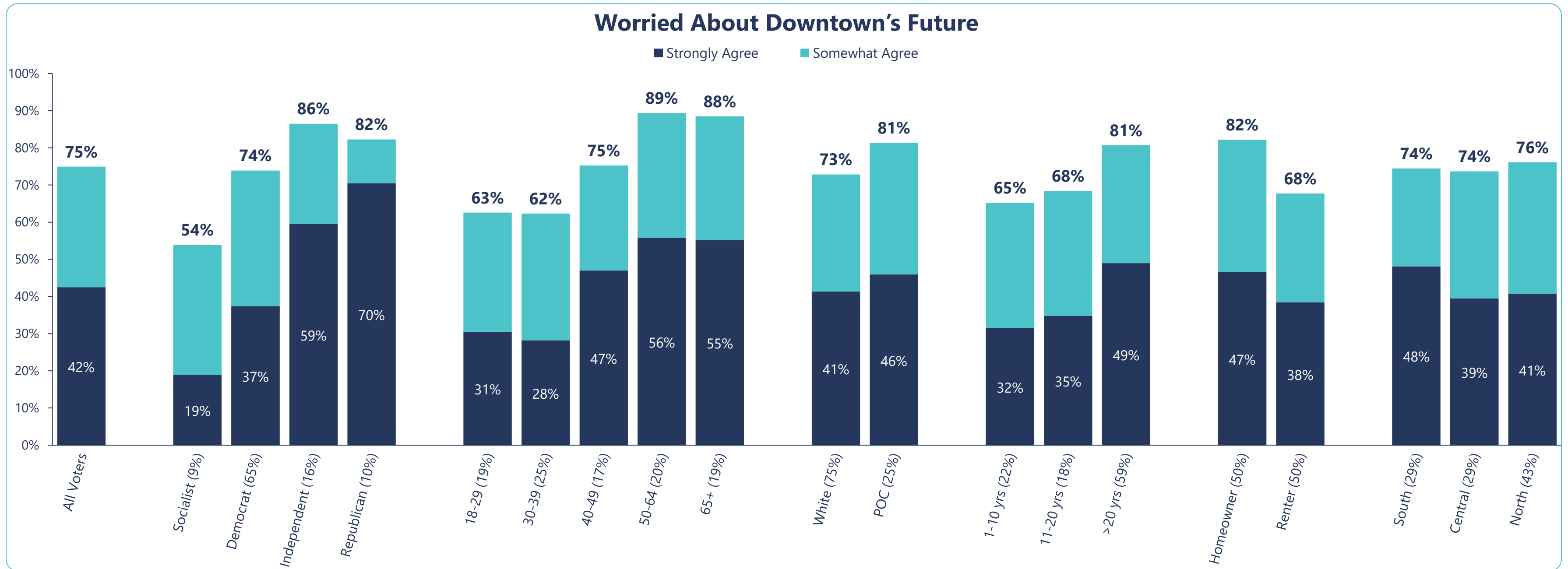
Optimism About Seattle



More liberal voters, younger voters, and newer residents are much more optimistic about the direction of Seattle.



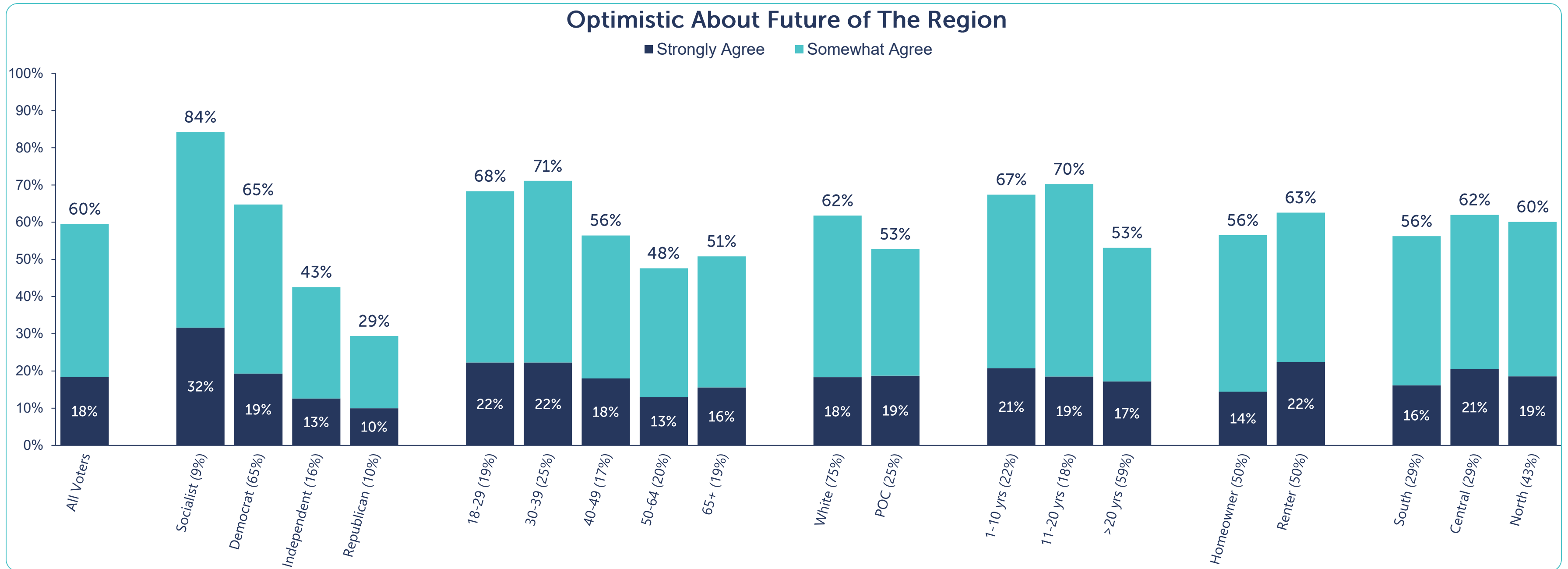
Worried About Downtown



Socialists, younger voters, and newer residents are less worried about downtown's future.



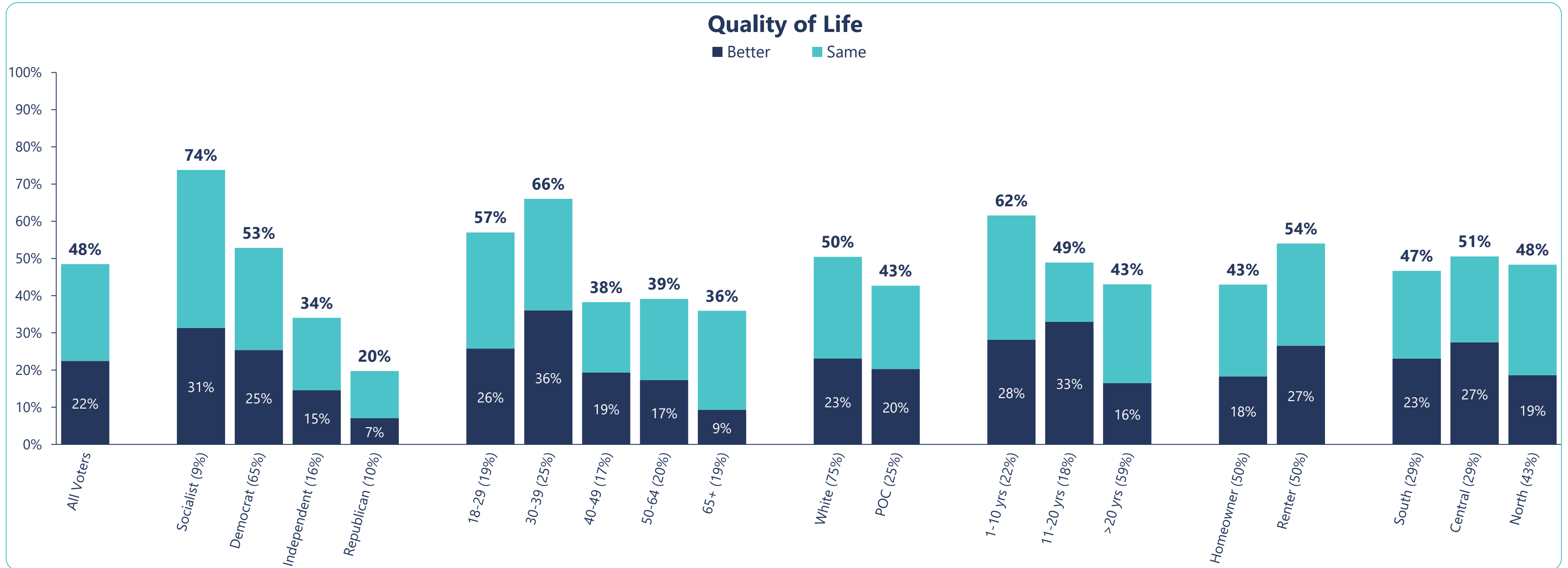
Optimism About the Region



Optimism about the future of the region is highest among more liberal voters, younger voters, and newer residents.



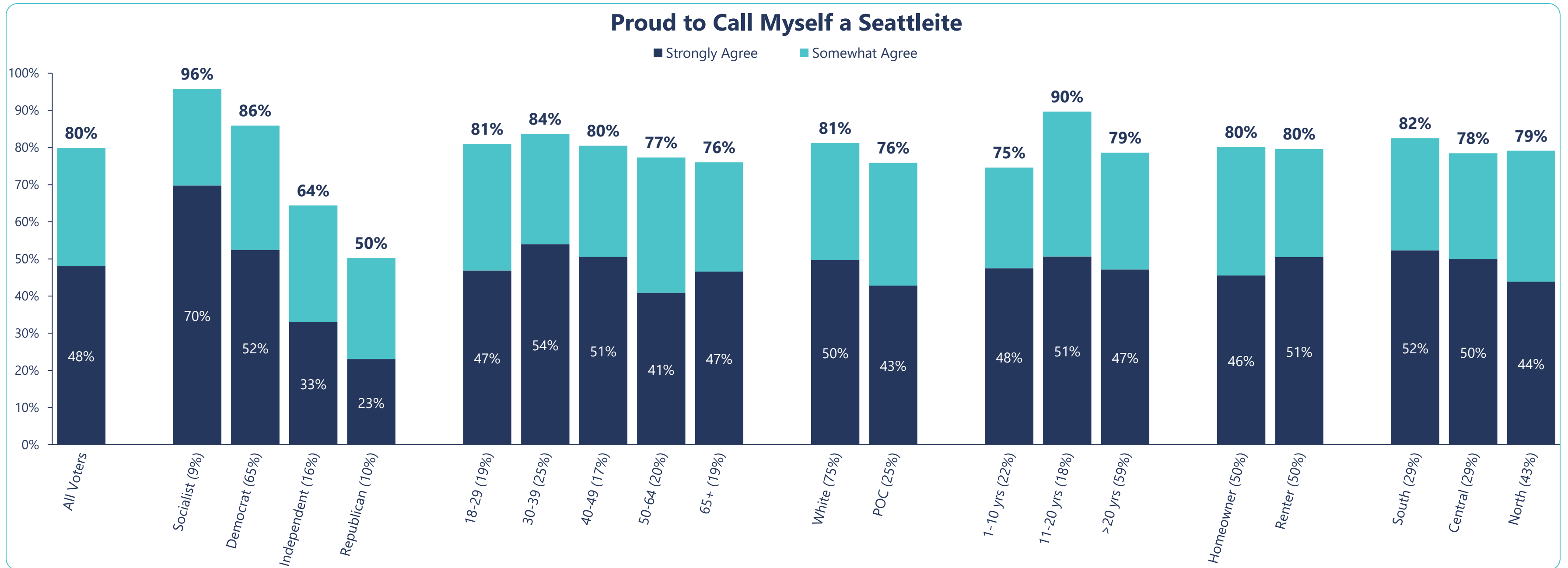
Quality of Life



Socialists, younger voters, and those who are newer to the city are most likely to say quality of life has gotten better.



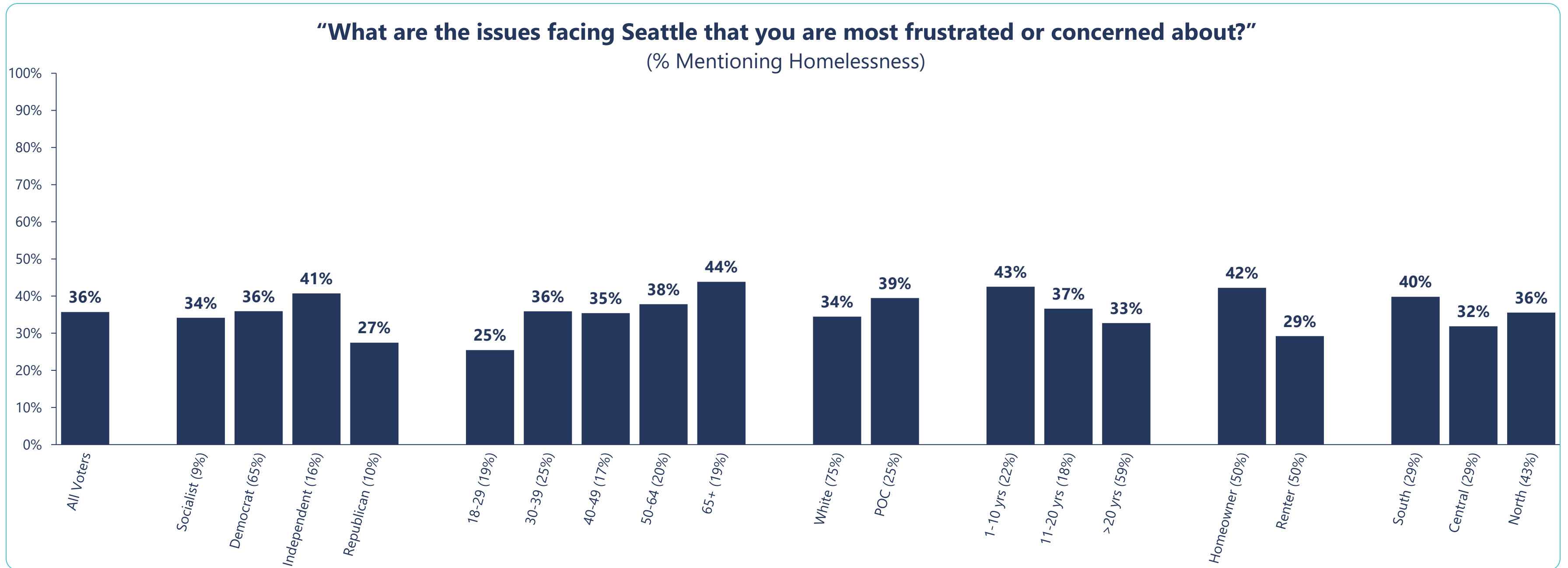
Proud to Call Myself a Seattleite



A majority across all subgroups say they are "proud to call [themselves] a Seattleite."



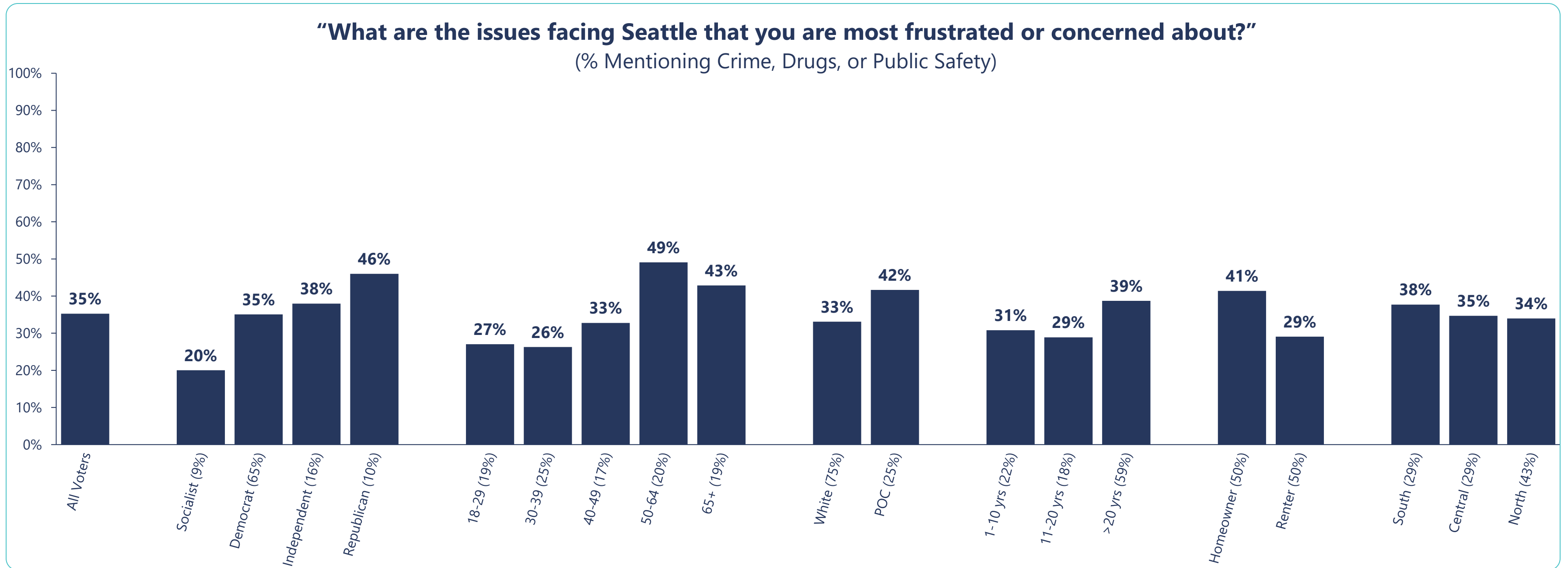
Top Concerns - Homelessness



Age is the strongest driver of concern about homelessness.



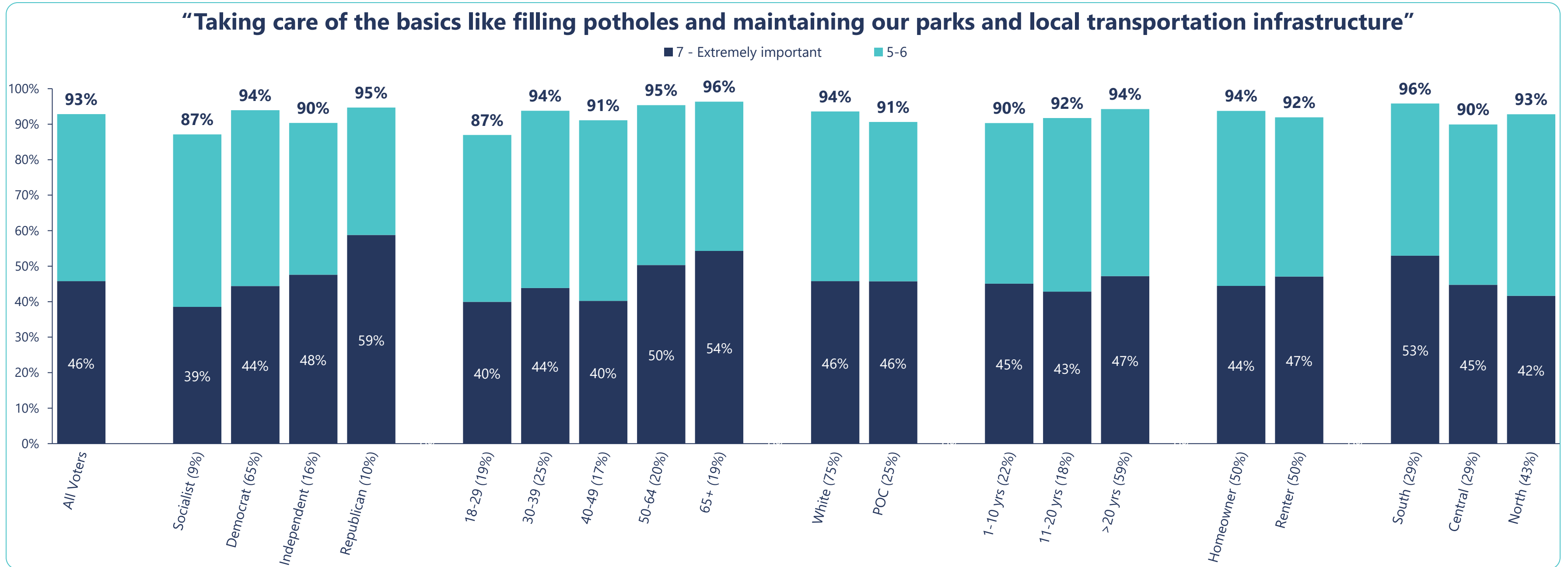
Top Concerns - Public Safety



Age and partisan identification are the strongest drivers of concern about public safety.



Taking Care of Basics

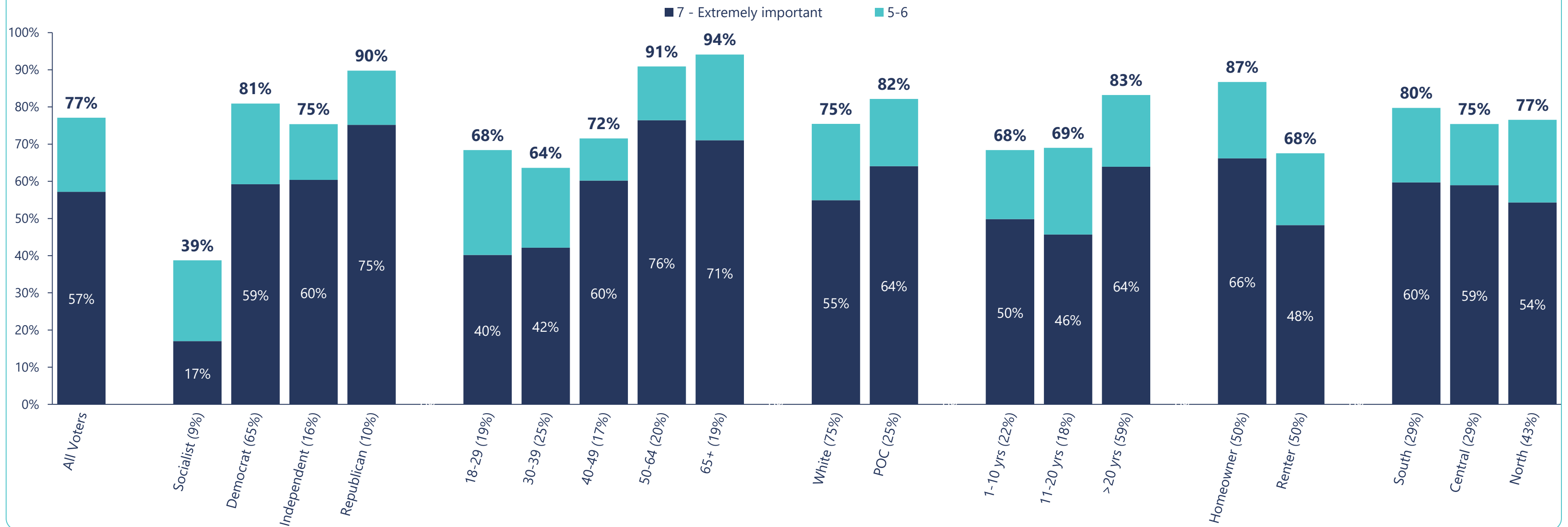


Most voters think it's important for city leaders to focus on taking care of the basics.



Shutting Down Drug Markets

“Maintaining progress on public safety and reducing street disorder by continuing to shut down open-air drug markets.”

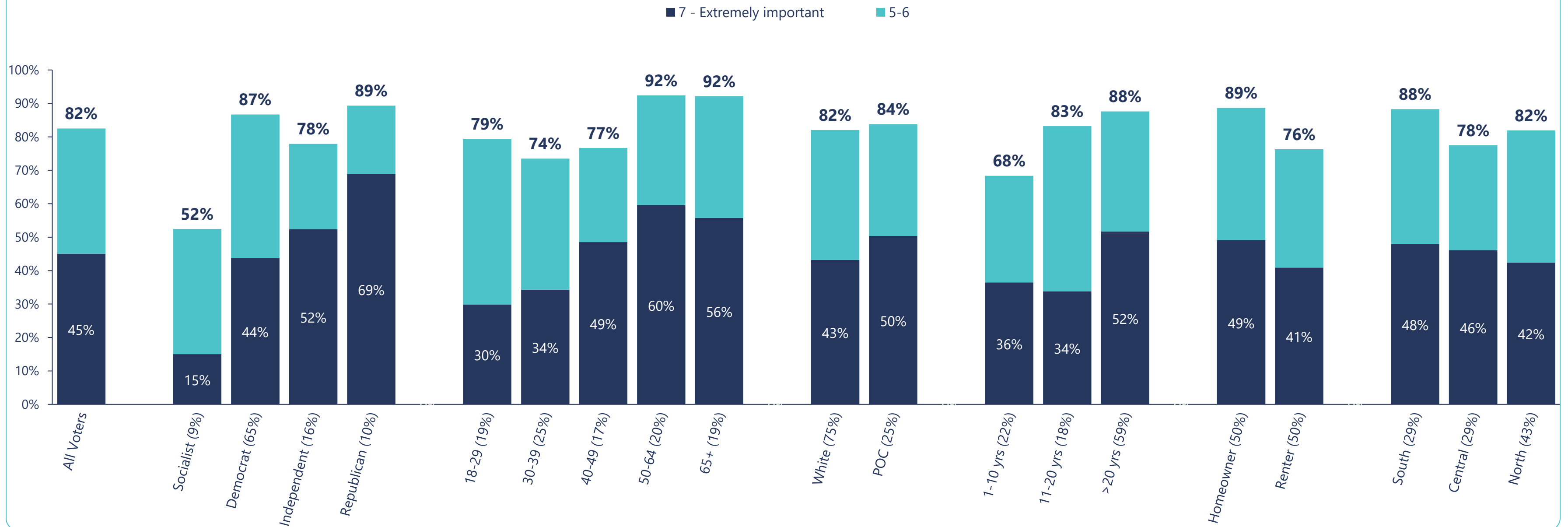


A majority of voters in all key subgroups, except Socialists, say shutting down open air drug markets is important.



Helping Local Businesses w/Public Safety

“Helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns.”

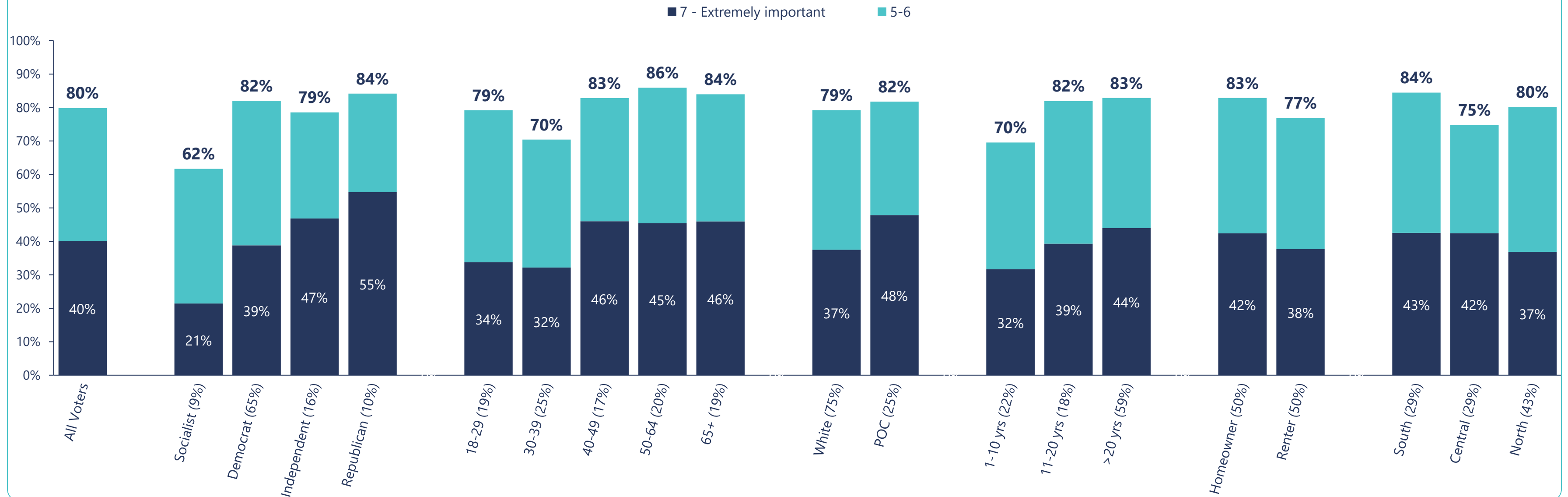


A majority of voters in all subgroups think it important to help local businesses deal with public safety concerns.



Protecting Local Jobs & Small Businesses

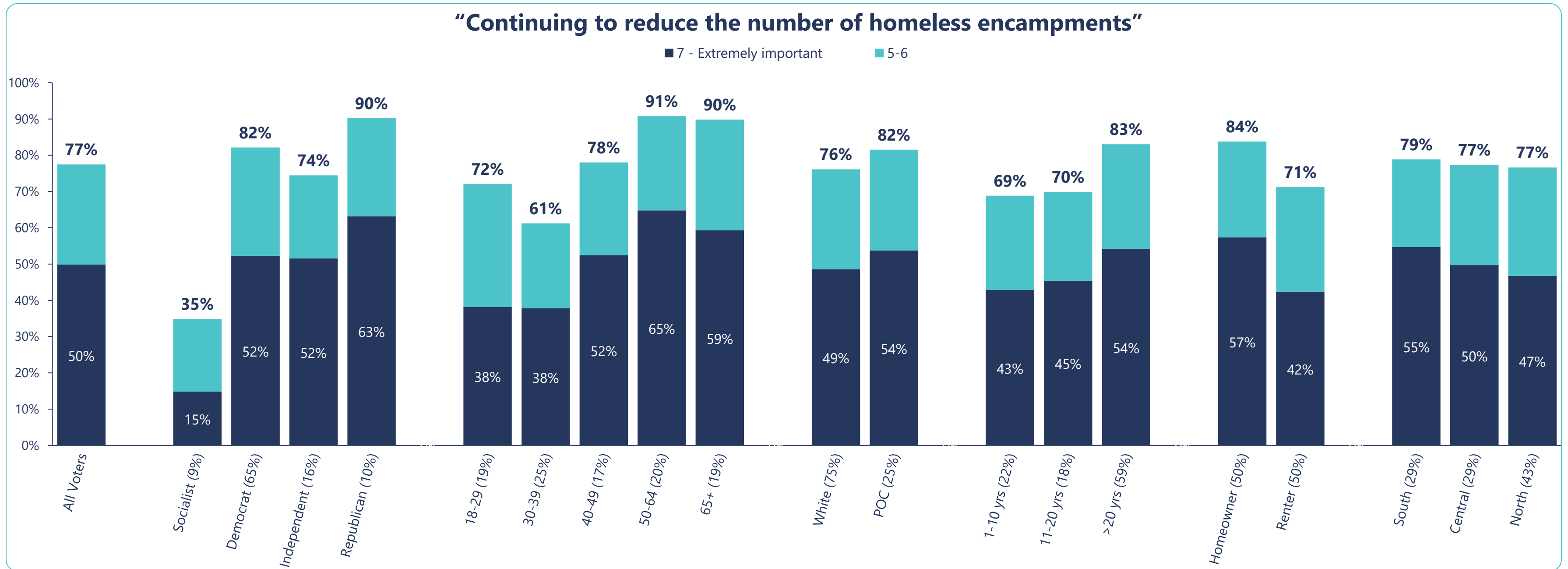
“Protecting local jobs and small businesses in this uncertain economic environment by lowering the cost to start and run a business in Seattle.”



A majority of voters in all subgroups think it important to protect local jobs and small businesses.



Reducing Encampments

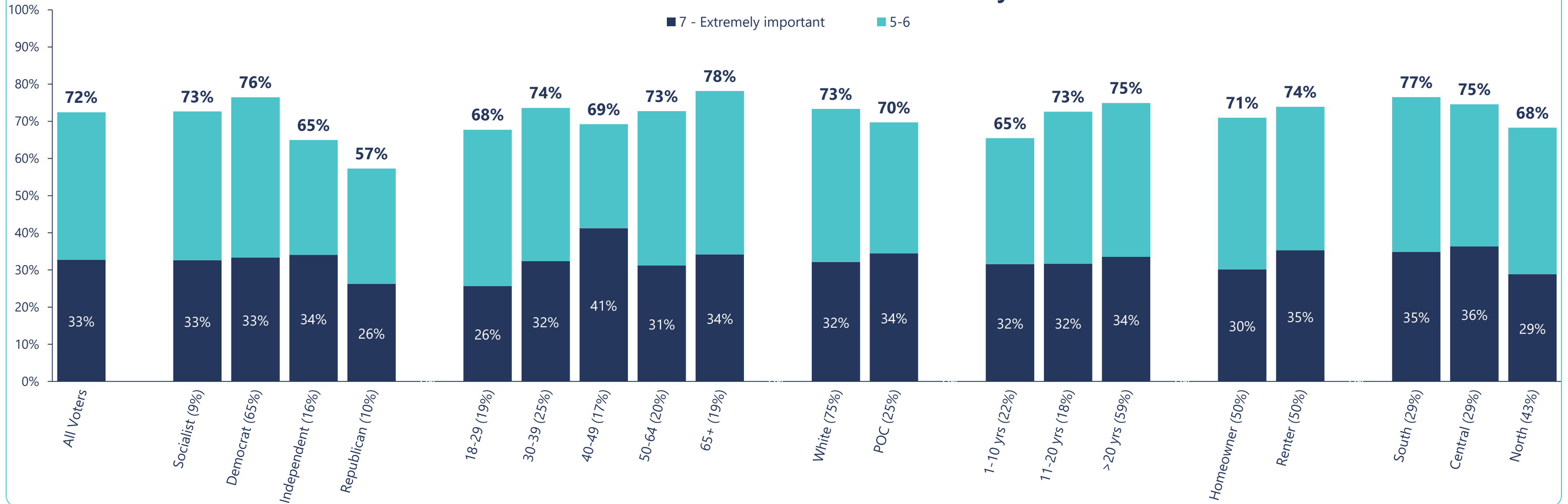


Socialists are the only subgroup where a majority do not prioritize continuing to reduce the number of encampments.



Creating Family Wage Jobs

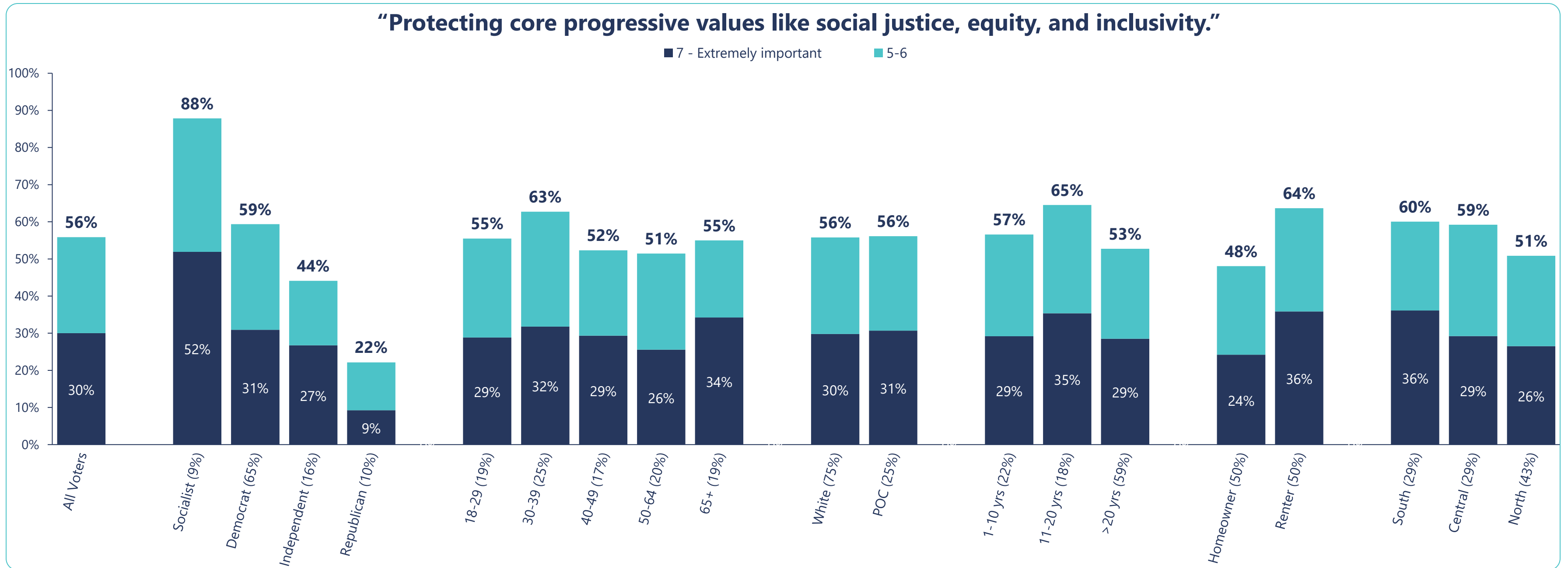
“Incentivizing businesses to create family wage jobs here in Seattle so that our local economy stays resilient in the face of national economic uncertainty.”



Voters of all stripes think it's important to incentivize family wage jobs here in Seattle.



Protecting Progressive Values

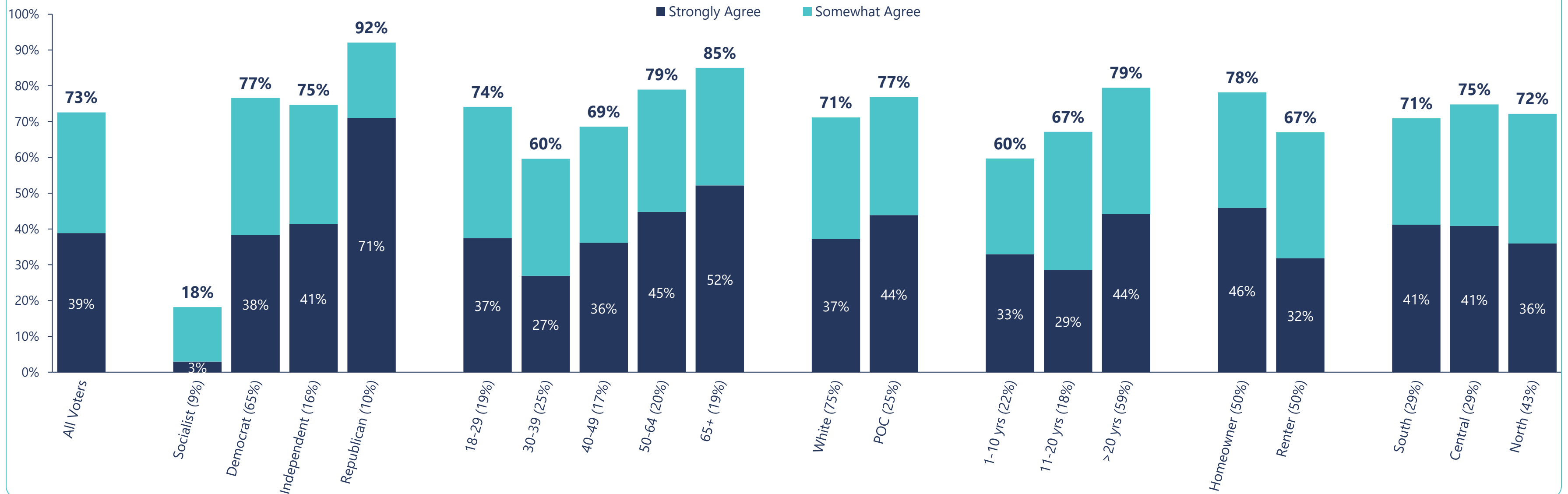


Partisan affiliation is the strongest driver in prioritizing protecting Seattle’s core progressive values.



Importance of Large Businesses

“Large businesses are essential to our city’s success. They generate more than half of City tax revenue, create good-paying jobs, bring people back downtown, and support thousands of small businesses that rely on the foot traffic, investment, and activity”

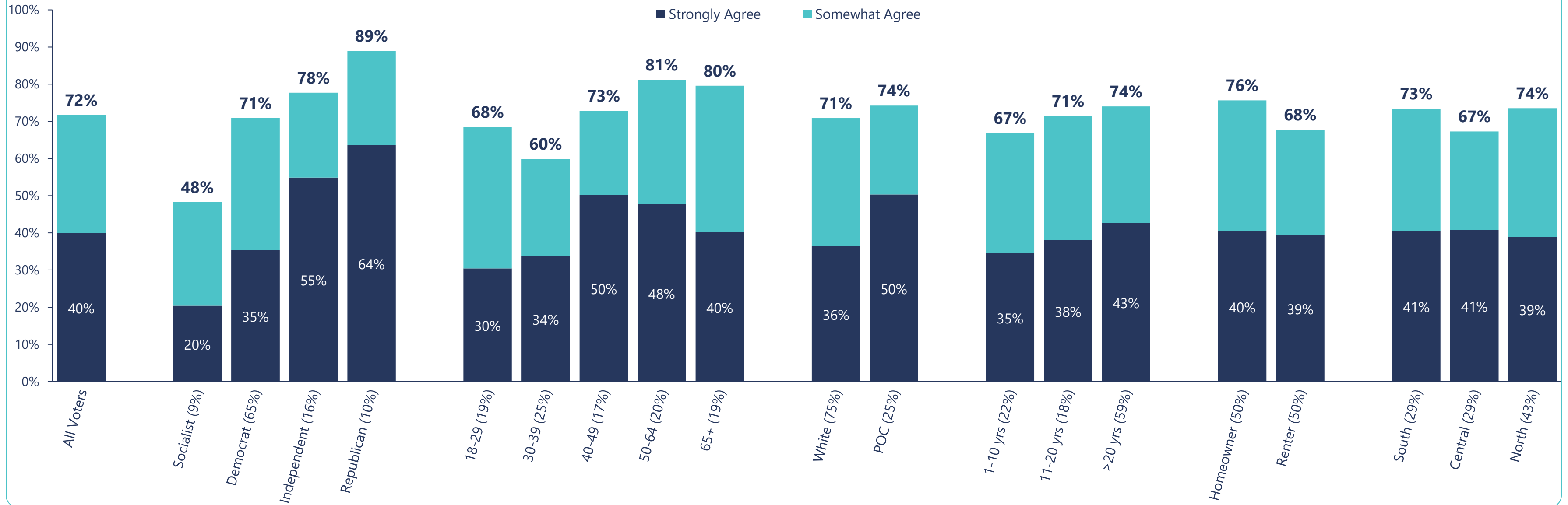


Majorities in every key subgroup except Socialists believe that large businesses are essential to Seattle’s success.



Cost of Doing Business

“Businesses are closing down or leaving Seattle for nearby cities because the cost of doing business has gotten too high here”

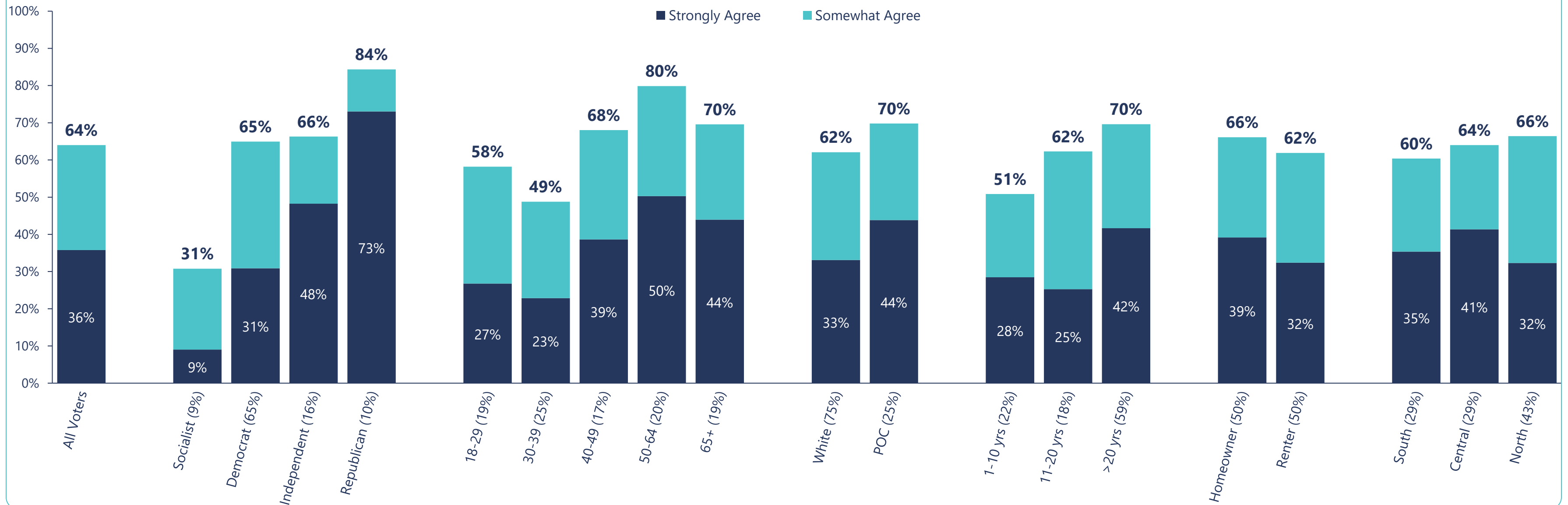


Majorities across most subgroups agree that costs are forcing businesses out of Seattle.



Making Seattle a Good Place for Business

“I don't feel like City leaders are doing enough to make Seattle a good place to do business.”

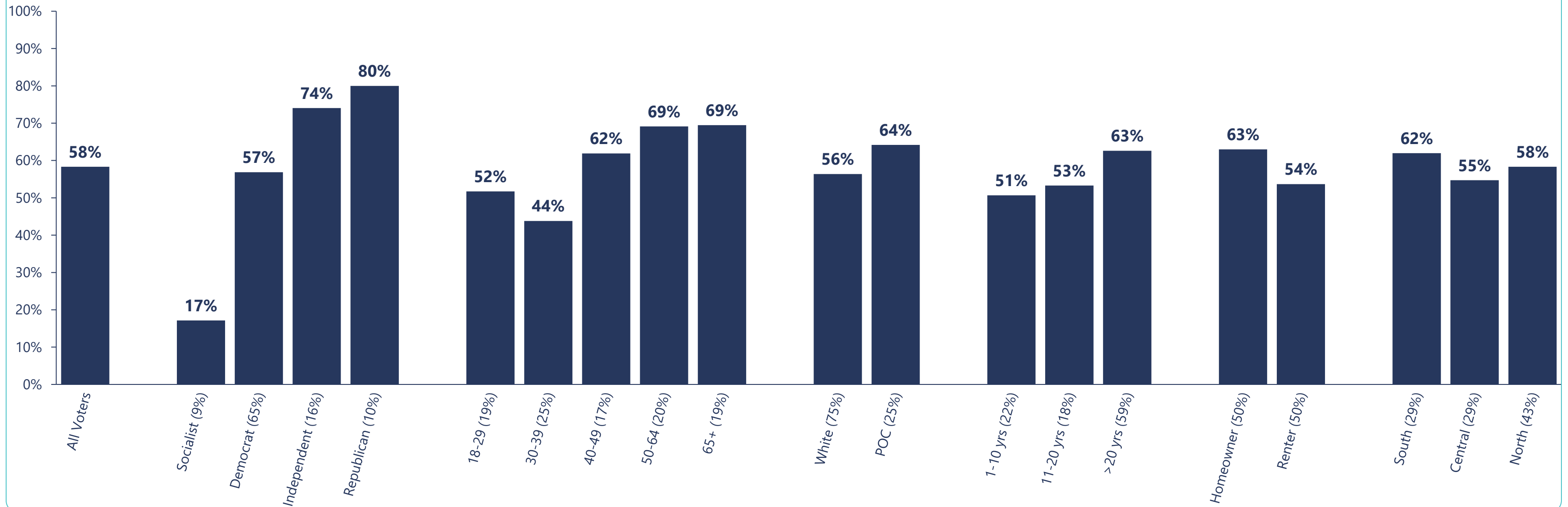


Majorities in most subgroups – except Socialists - want Seattle leaders to do more to make Seattle a good place to do business.



Taxes in Seattle

Taxes Too High for Level of Service

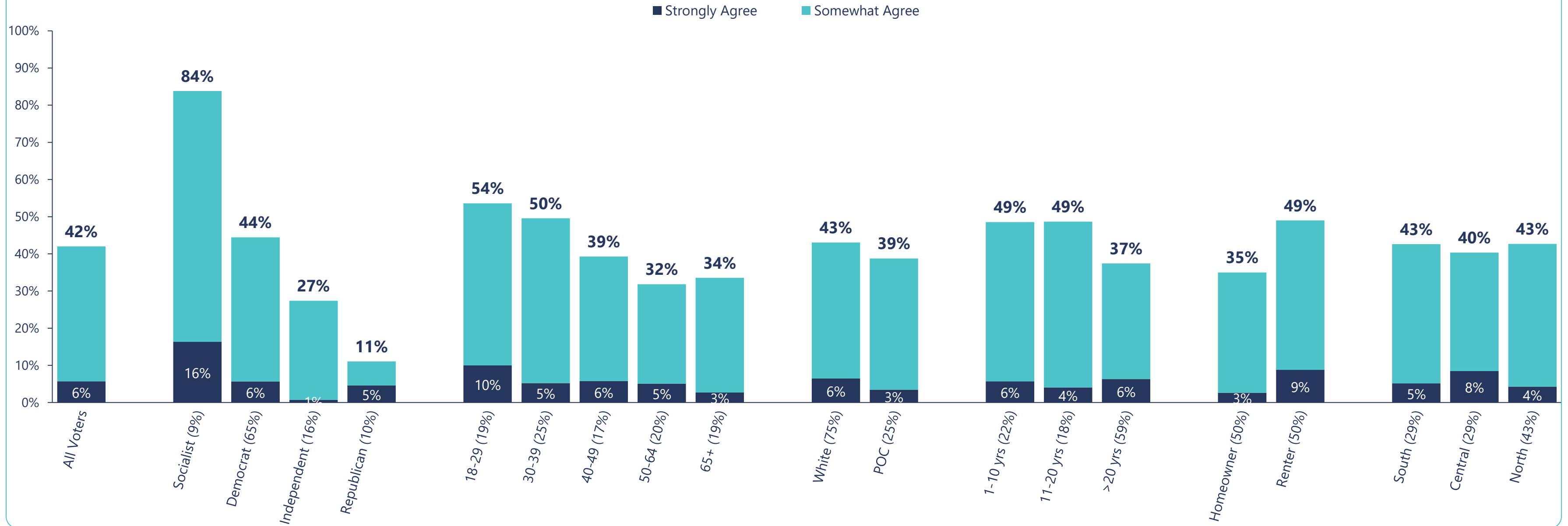


Non-Socialists, older voters, more long-term residents, and people of color are more likely to say Seattle taxes are too high for the level of services the city provides.



Trust City on Spending

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

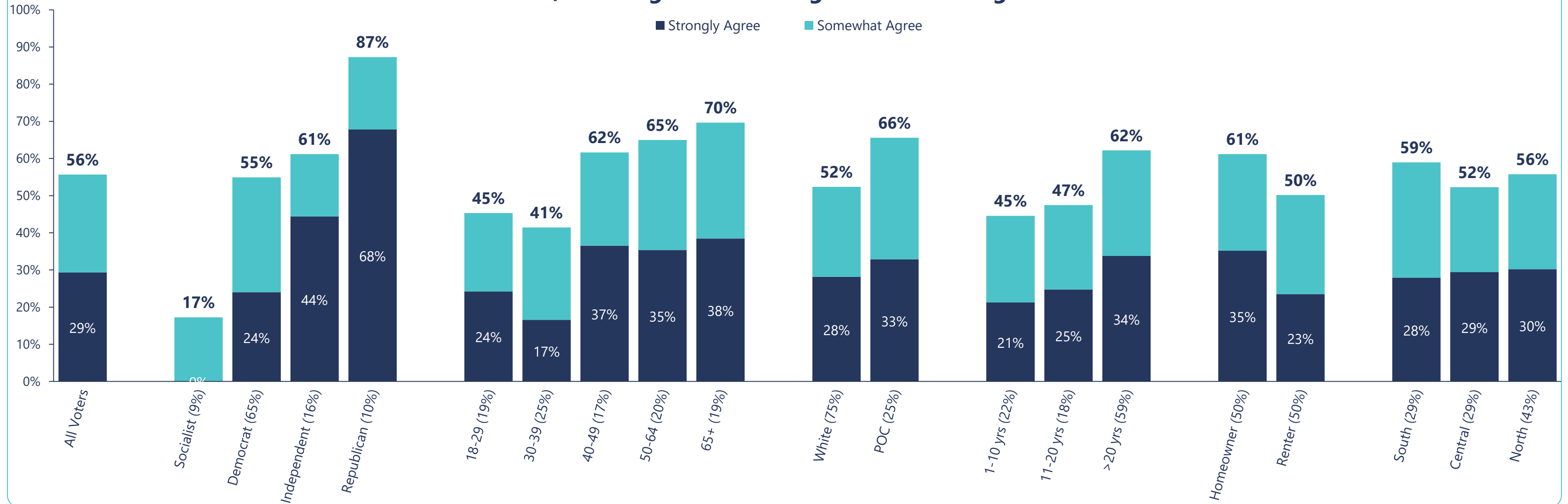


Socialists are the only group where a strong majority trust the city on spending.



Impact of Higher Business Taxes

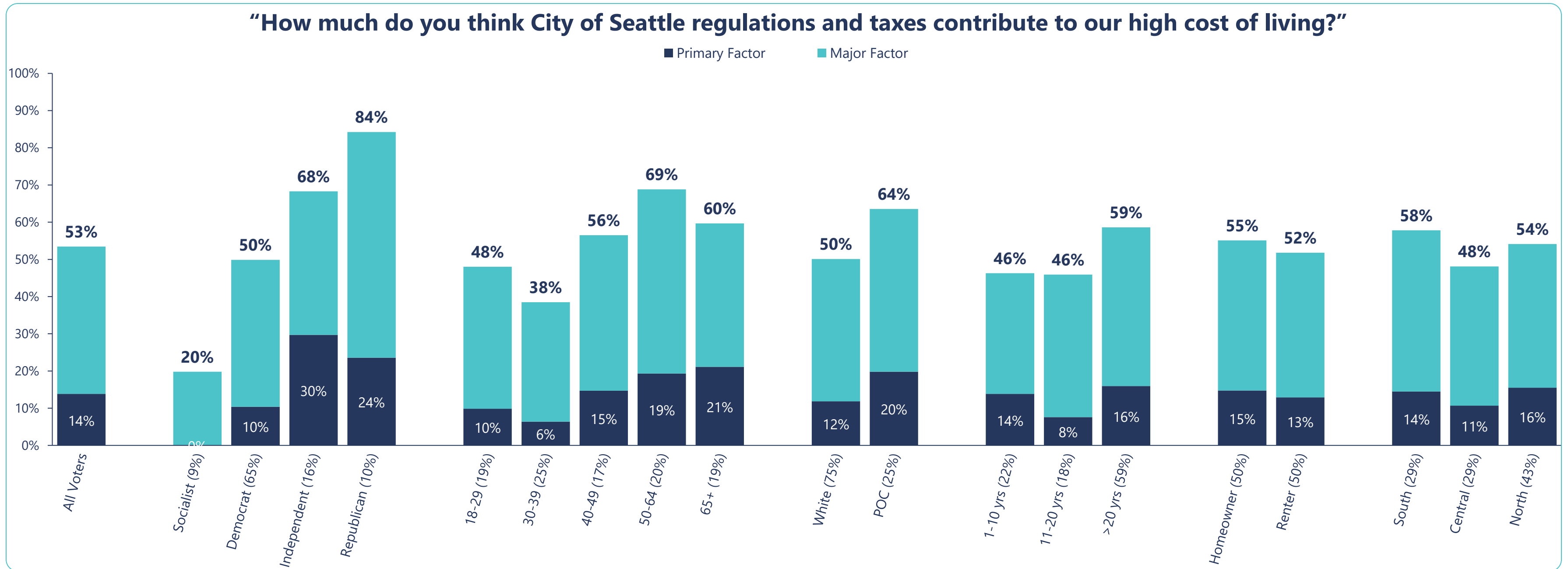
“If we continue to increase taxes on large businesses, companies will just pass the cost of these new taxes on to customers, resulting in an even higher cost of living in Seattle.”



Socialists, younger votes, and newer residents are less likely to believe higher business taxes will lead to a higher cost of living.



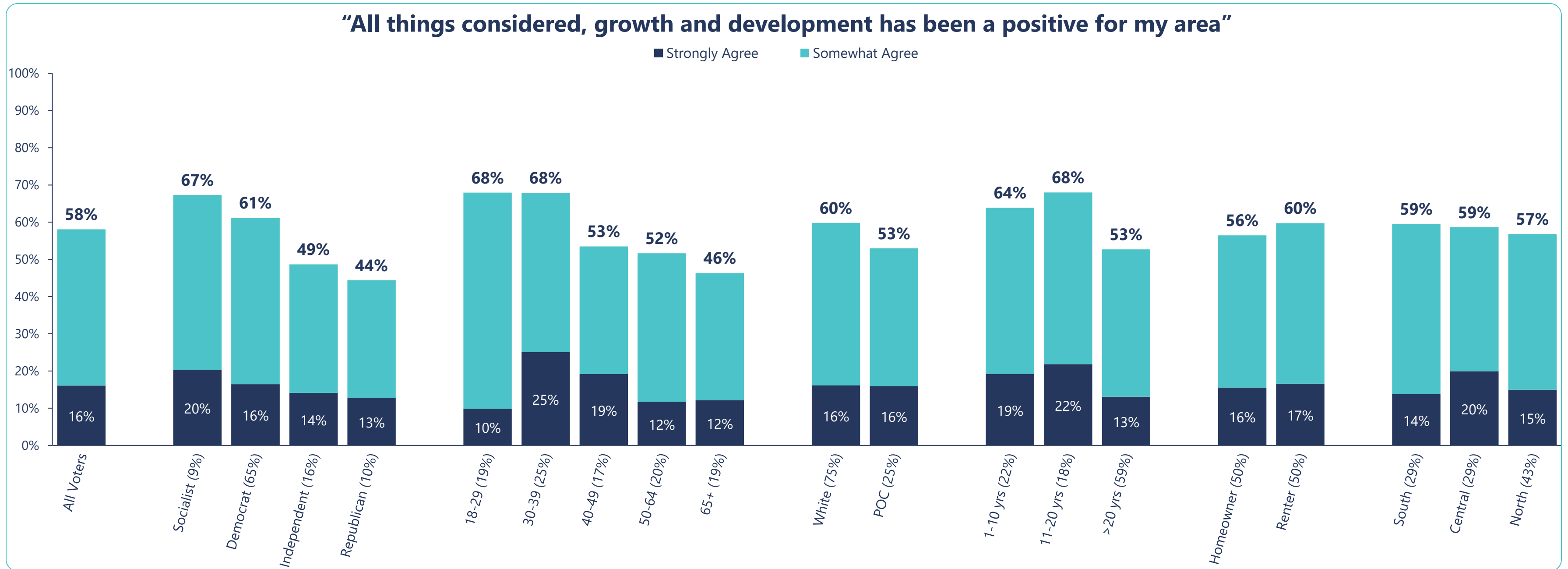
Cost of Living



Partisan identification is the biggest driver of whether one believes Seattle regulations and taxes are the primary or major factor contributing to high cost of living. Older voters, people of color and long term residents are more likely to blame the city.



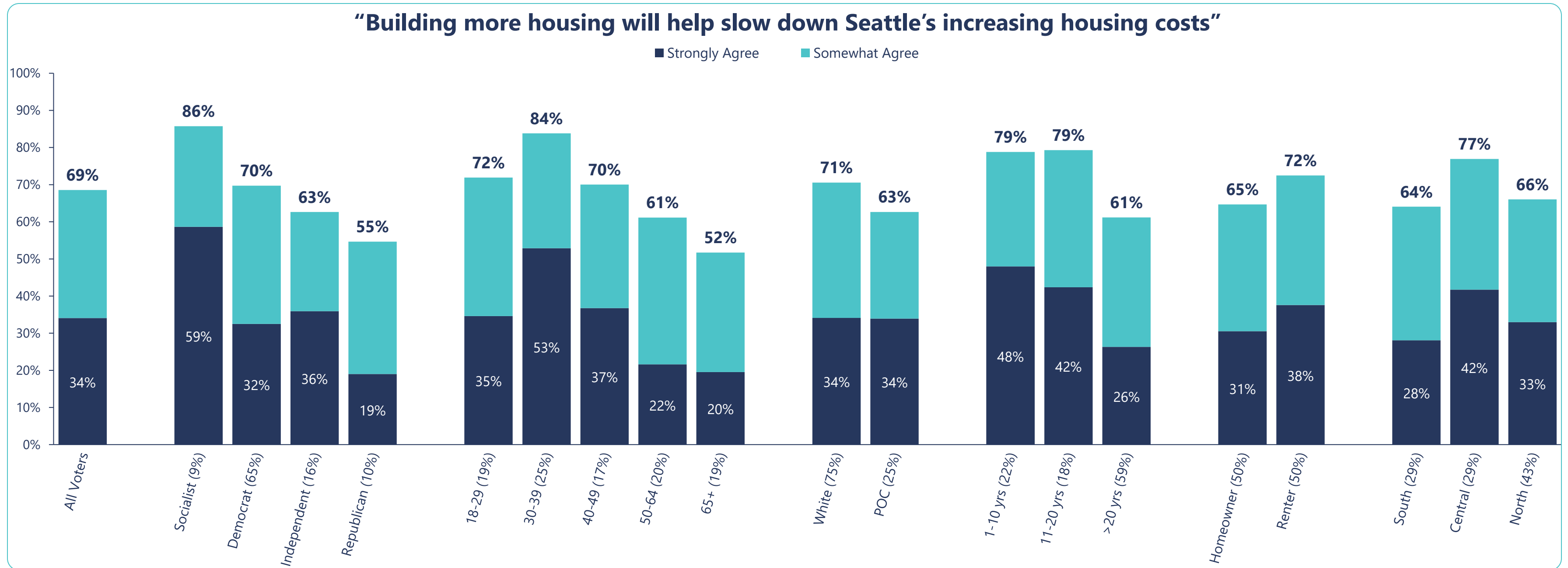
Growth and Development



Left leaning voters, along with younger voters who are newer to the city, are also the most positive about growth.



Building Additional Housing

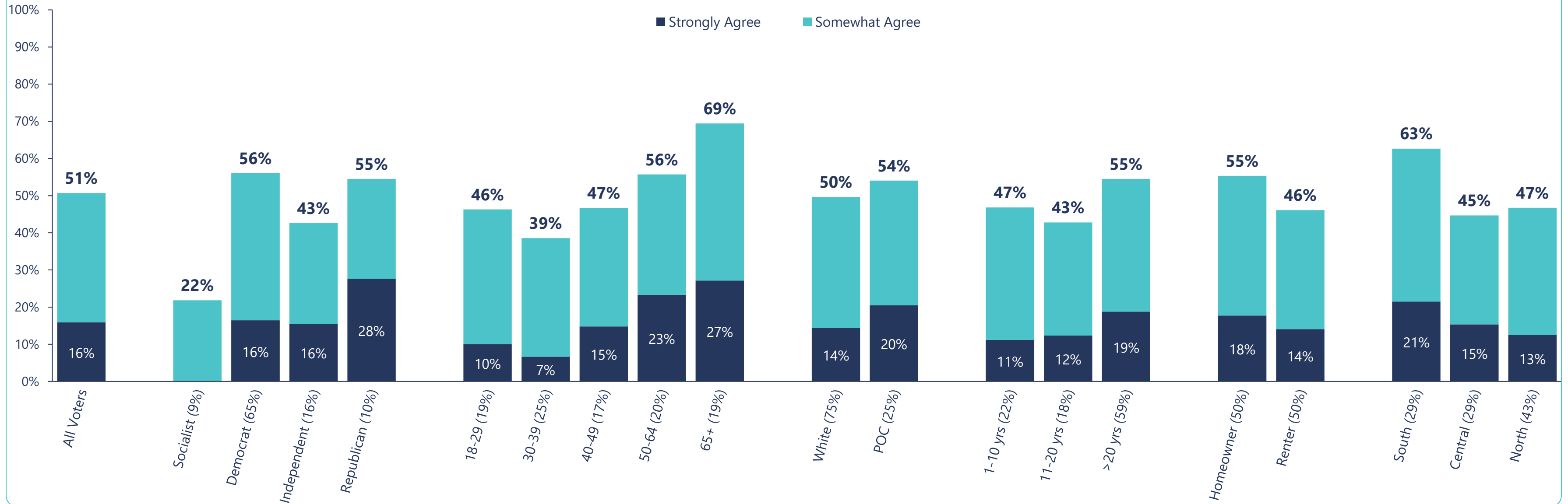


More liberal and younger voters are more likely to agree that building more housing will slow down increasing housing costs.



CCTV Cameras

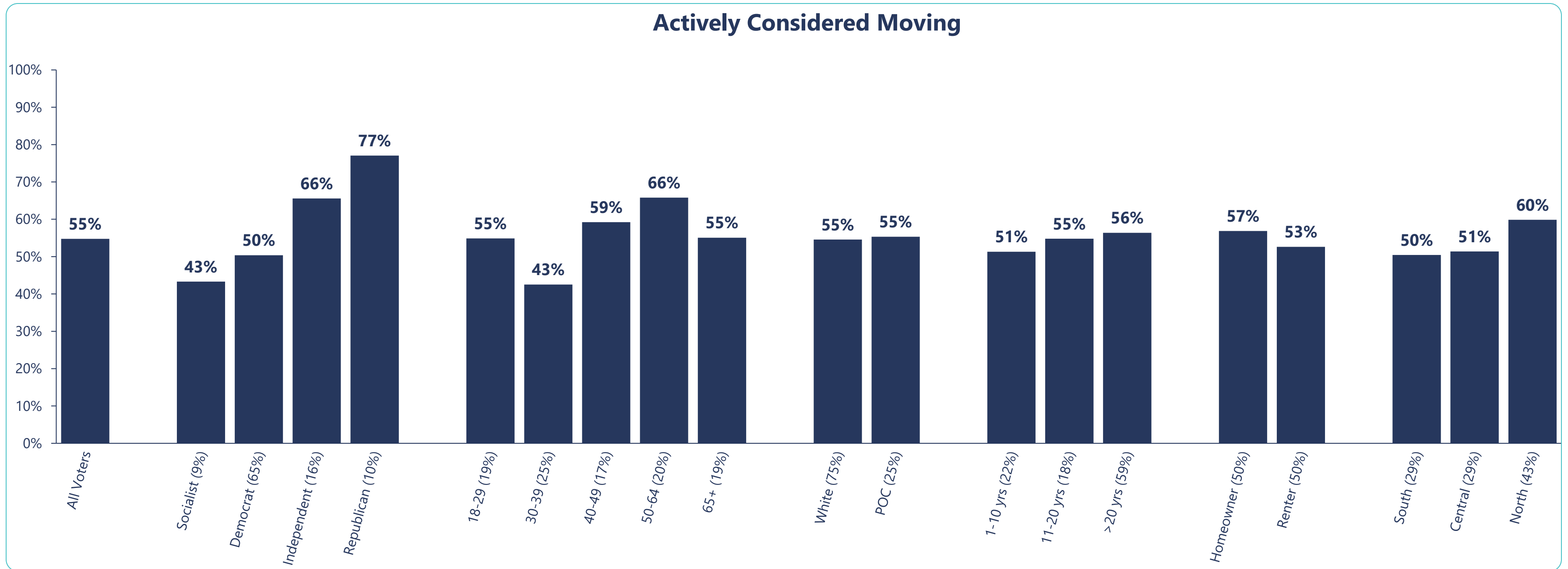
“Recent laws like adding street cameras to help track crime and restricting people from returning to places where they’ve committed crimes are making Seattle safer and reducing crime.”



Older voters and voters in South Seattle are the strongest supporters of CCTV cameras.



Considered Moving

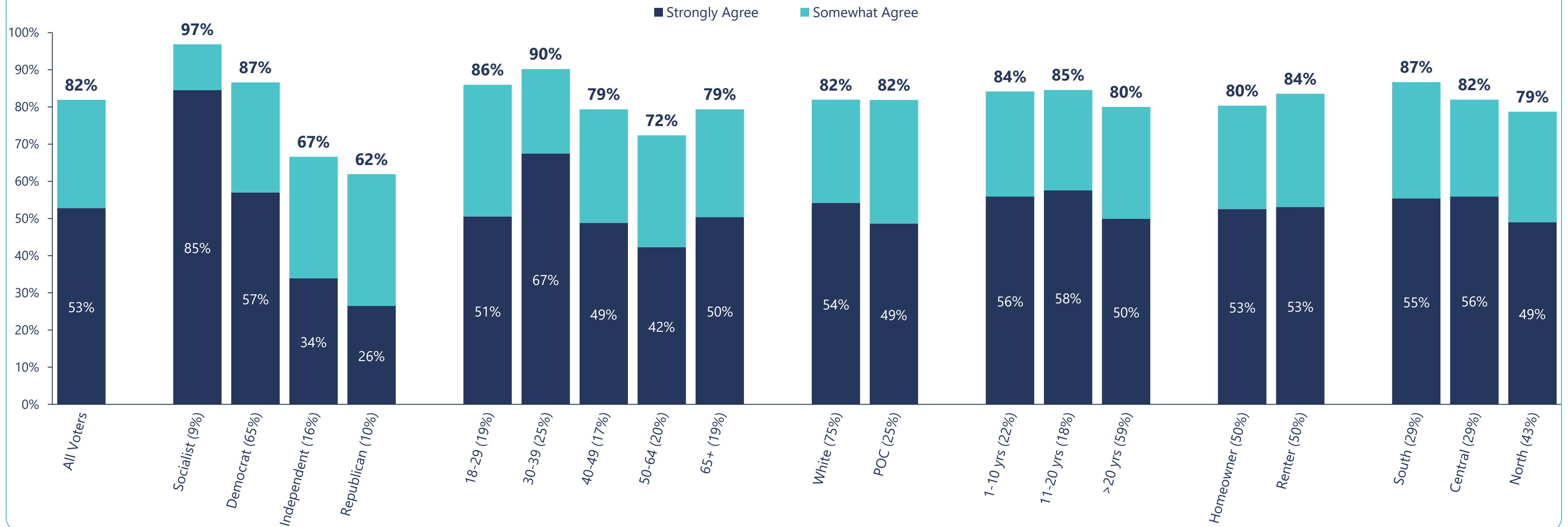


Voters of all kinds report having considered leaving Seattle. Independents and Republicans are the most likely to have actively considered moving.



Safety Downtown: Daytime

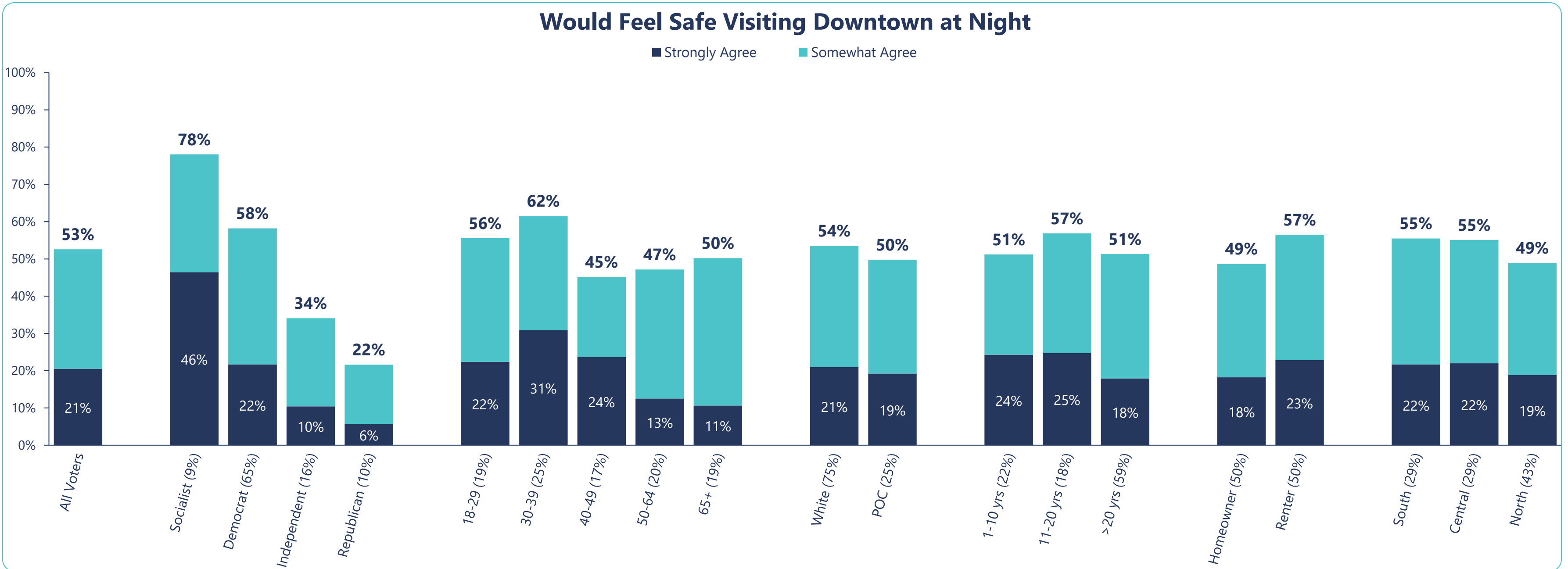
Would Feel Safe Visiting Downtown During the Day



A strong majority of each subgroup, even Republicans, feel safe visiting downtown during the day.



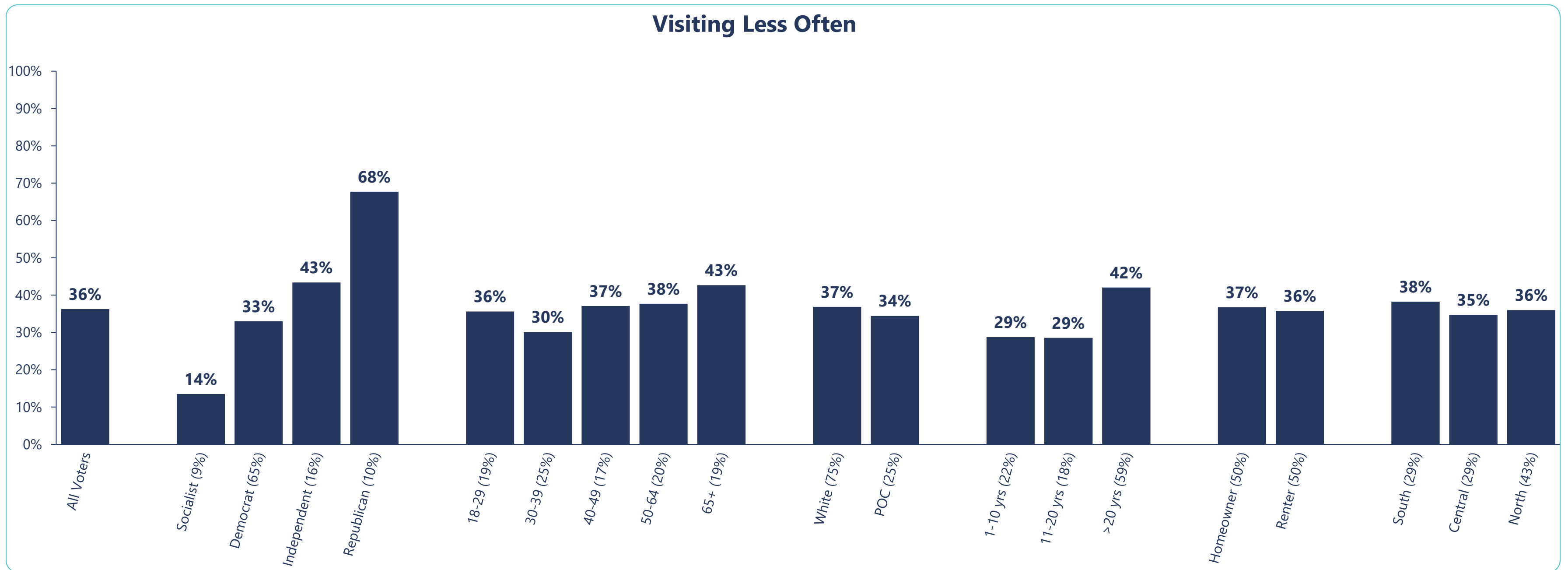
Safety Downtown: Nighttime



Partisan ideology is the biggest driver of feeling safe visiting downtown at night. Older voters and people of color are more likely to say they would not feel safe.



Visiting Downtown Less Often



Republicans and long-term residents are more likely to say they are visiting downtown less often.

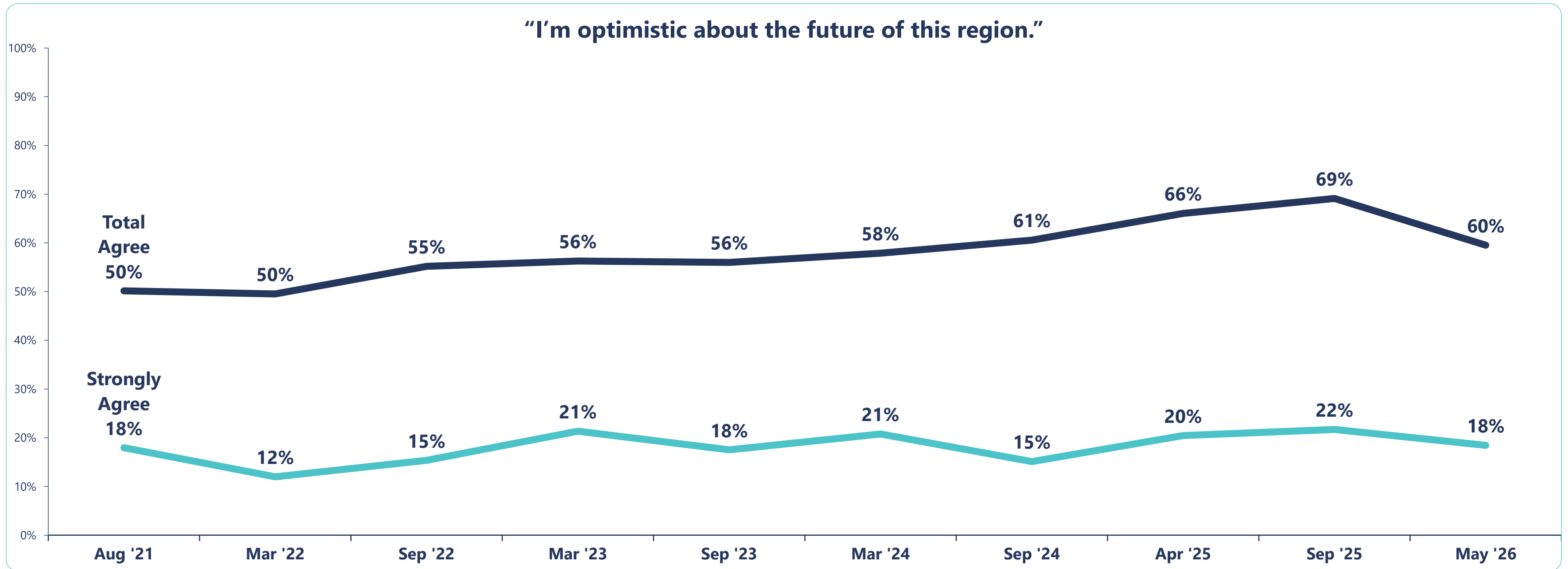


Trend Data





Optimism About the Region

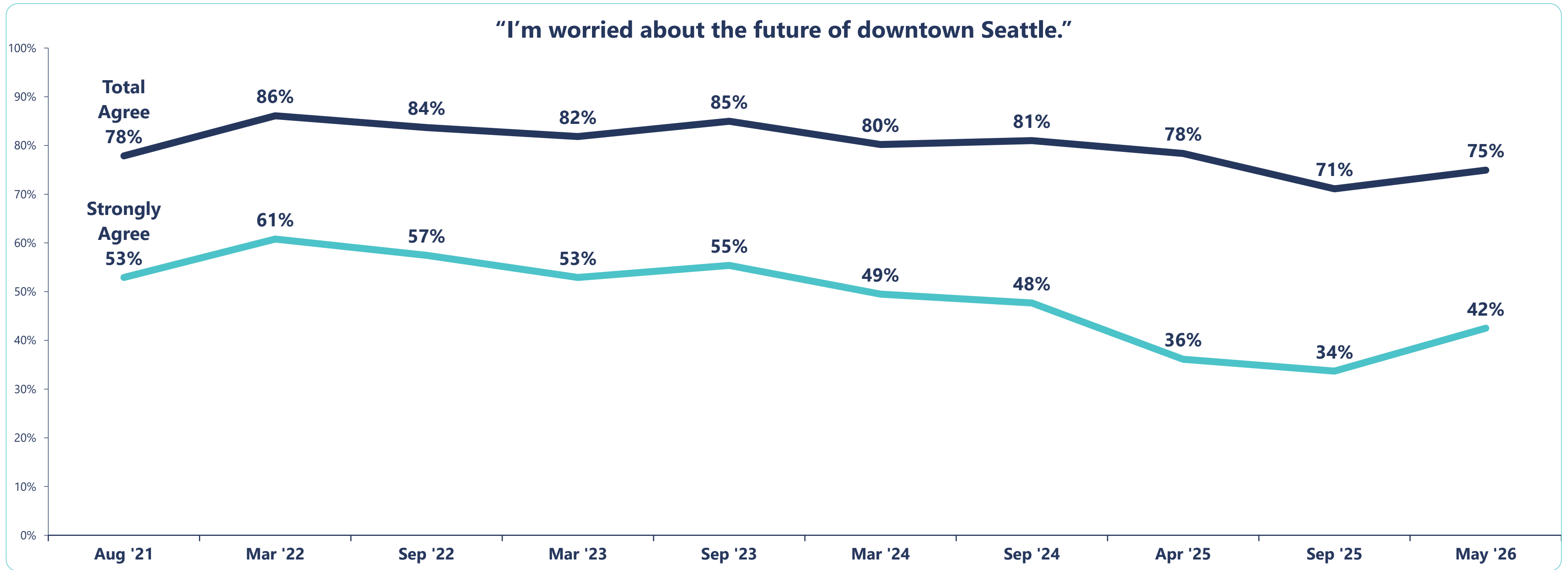


After a long period of steady gains, optimism about the future of the region has declined.



Worried About Future of Downtown

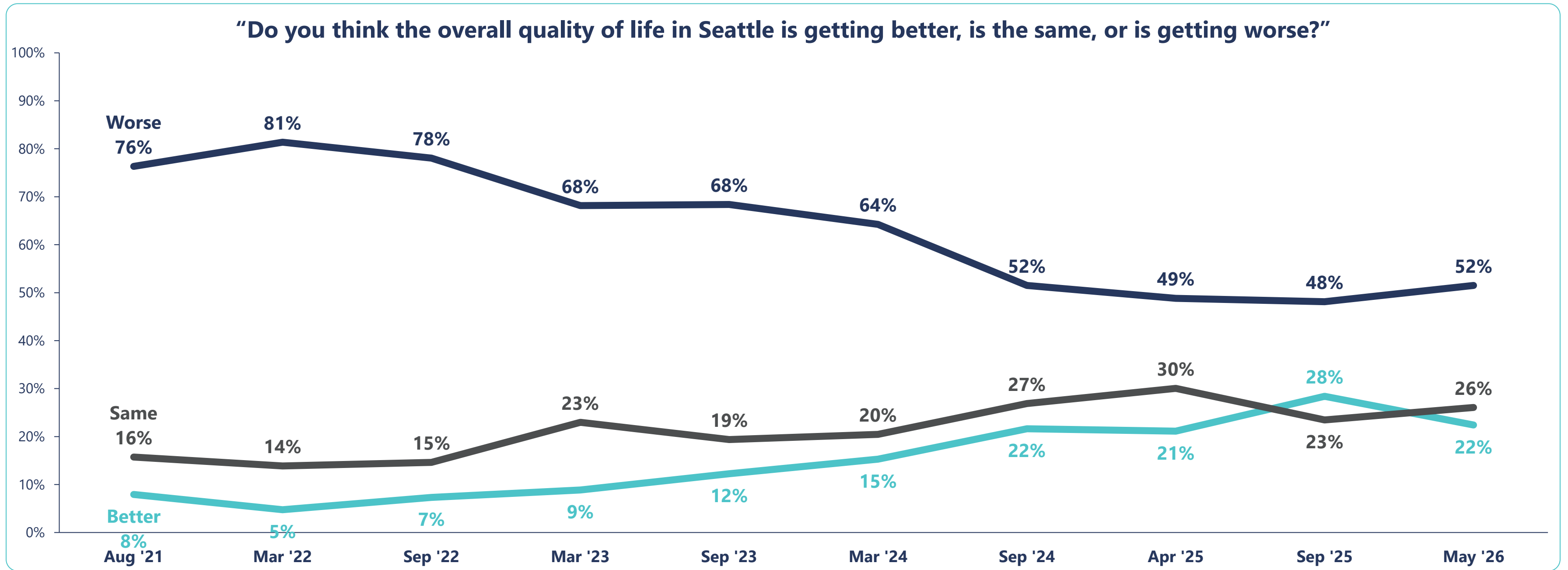
"I'm worried about the future of downtown Seattle."



After declining in spring and fall of last year concern about downtown is on the rise.



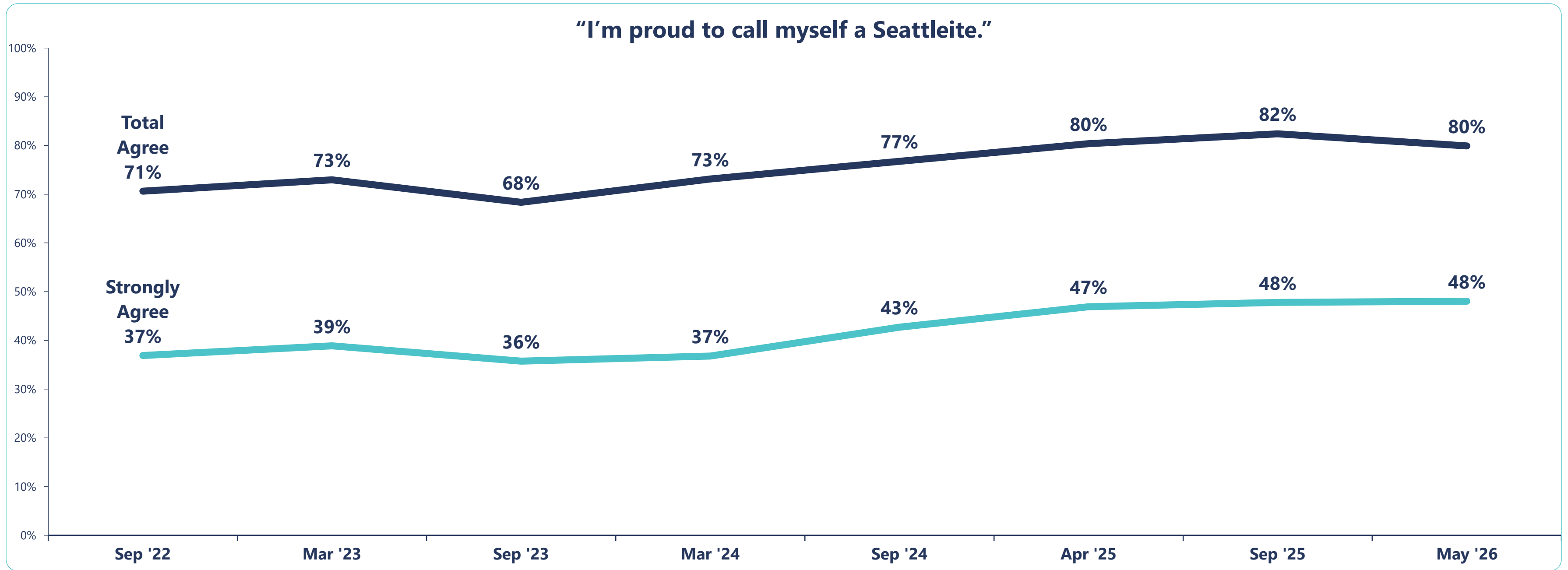
Quality of Life



A majority of voters now say they feel quality of life in Seattle is getting worse.



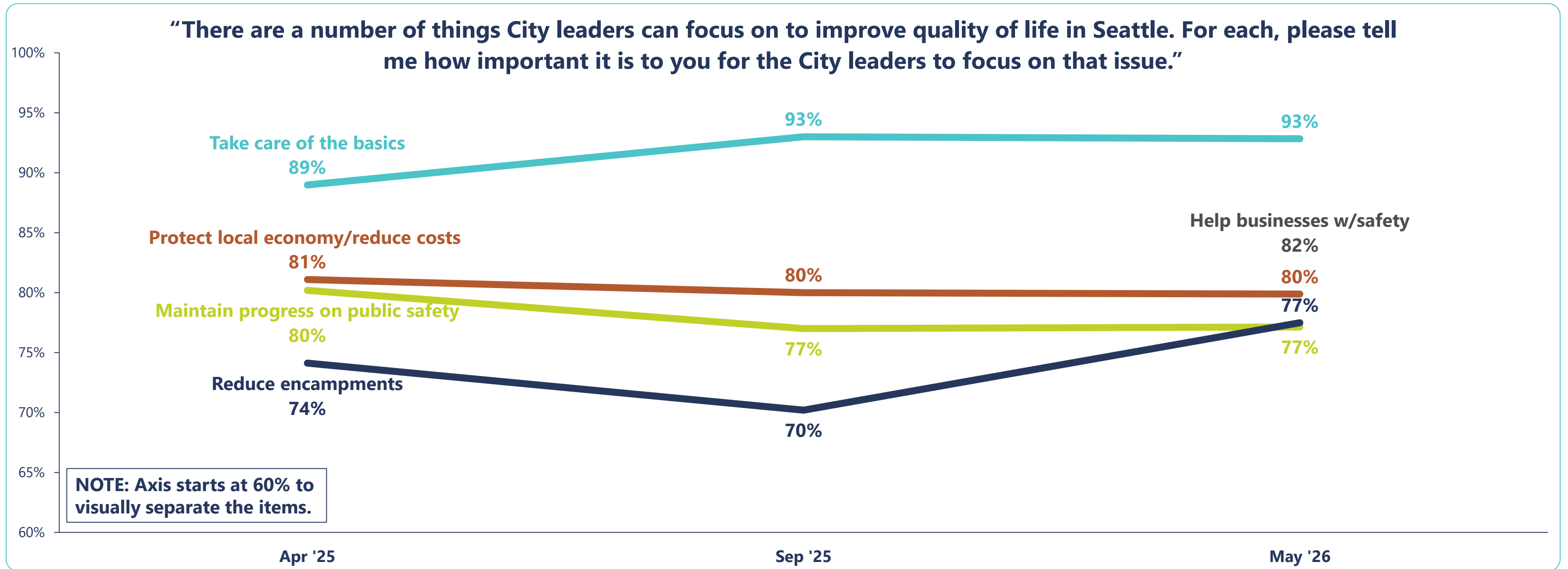
Proud to be a Seattleite



Most voters continue to be proud to call themselves Seattleites.



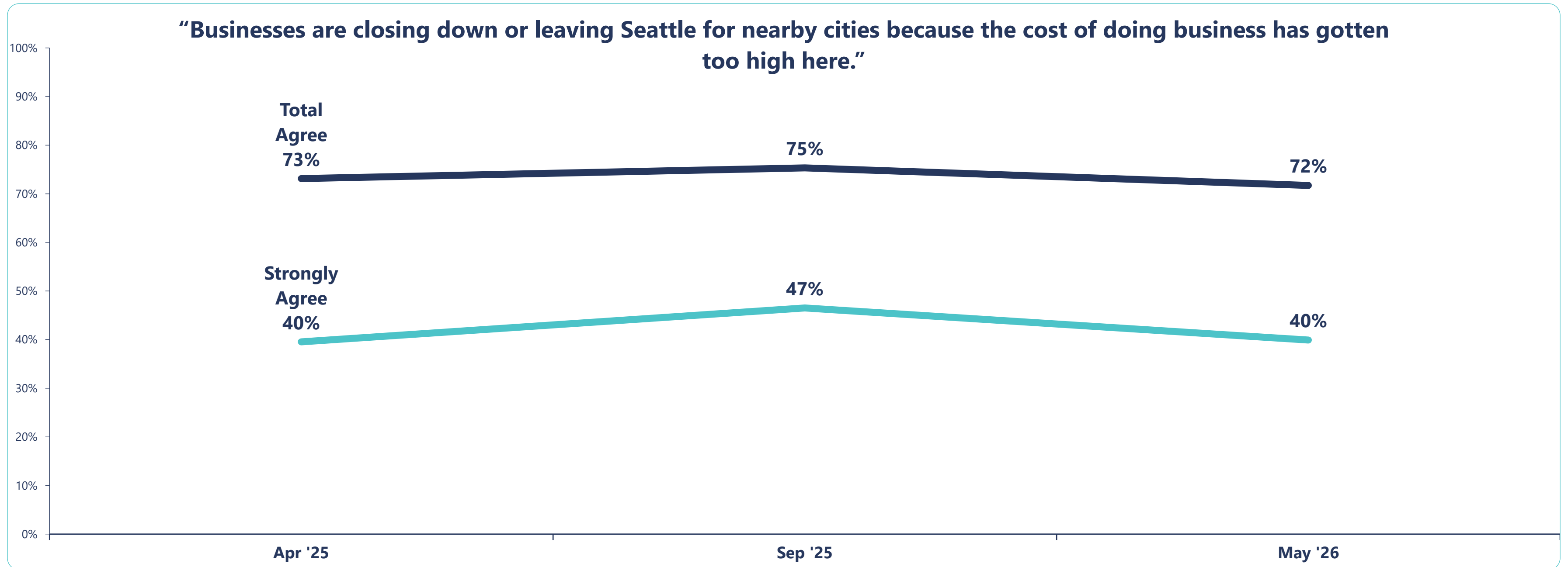
Top Priorities for City Leadership



Voters' top priorities for city leaders have remained consistent. Continuing to reduce encampments had the biggest increase (+7) in those saying it should be a priority. "Helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns" is a new item.



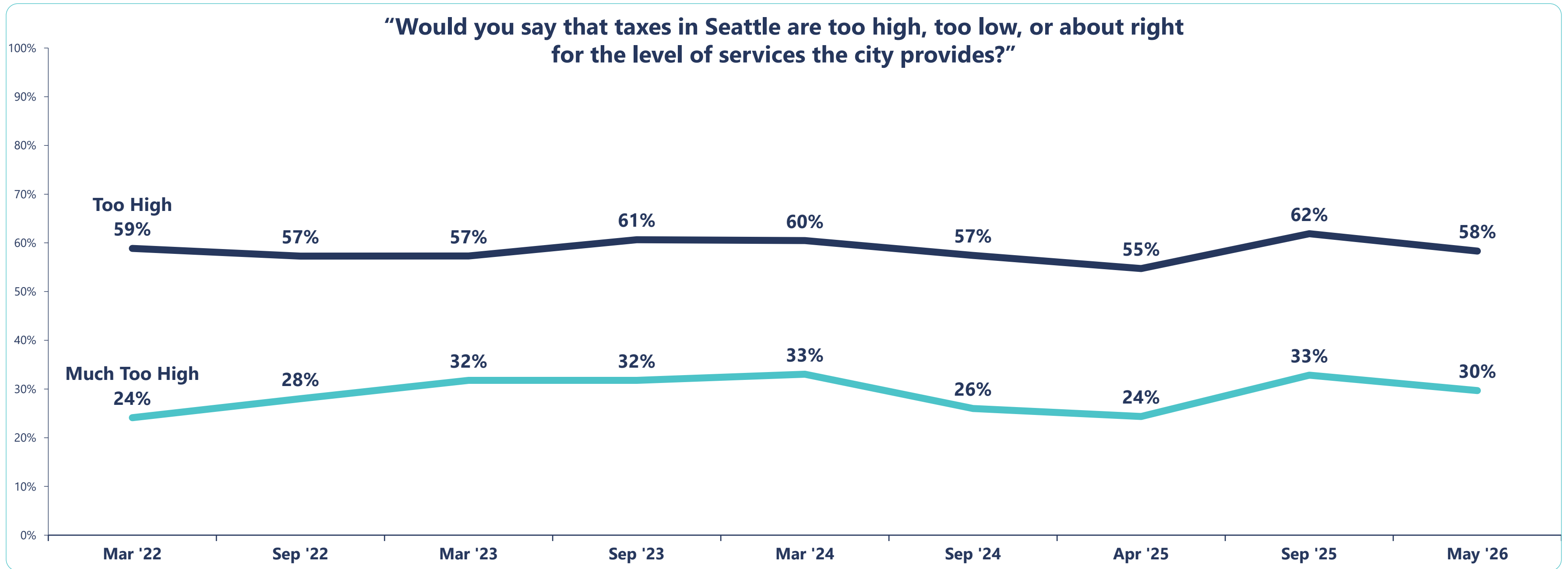
Business Leaving Due to Costs



Concern about businesses leaving Seattle due to high costs remains high, but after increasing last fall, intensity of concern has returned to its previous level .



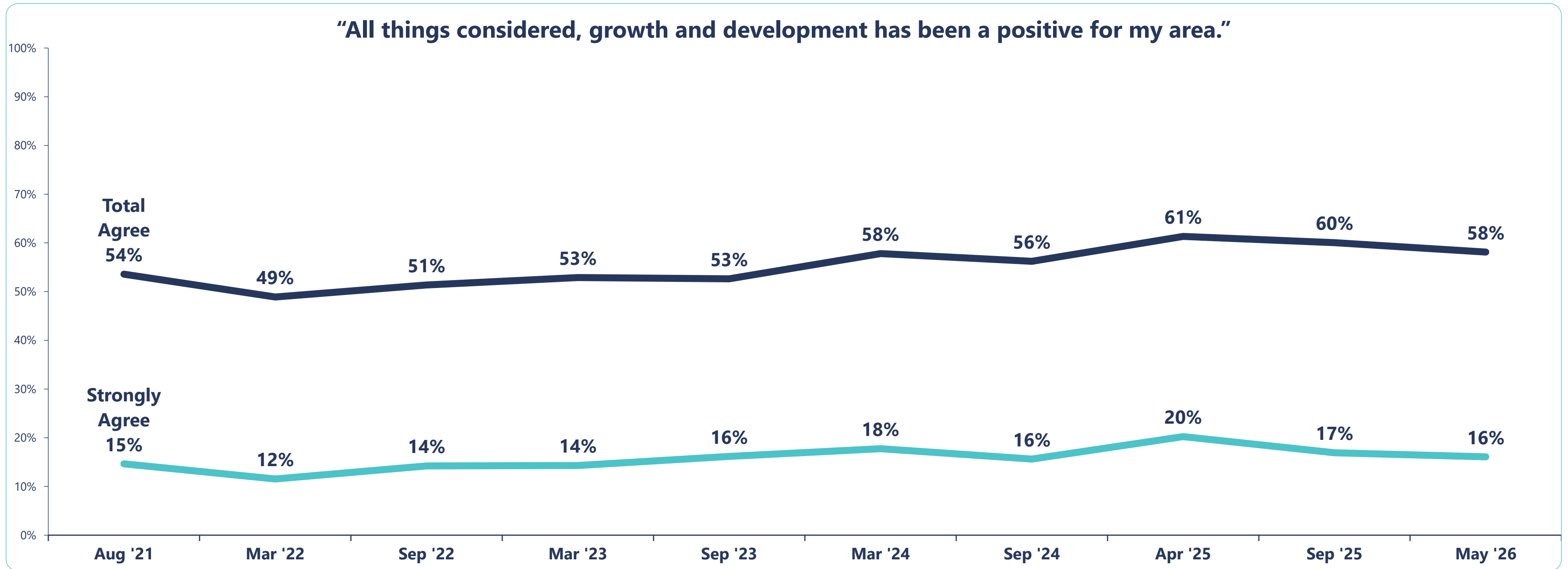
Taxes



There has been a slight decline in the percentage of voters who think taxes in Seattle are too high for the level of services the city provides.



Growth & Development



A majority of Seattle voters continue to view growth as positive for their area overall.