



The Index



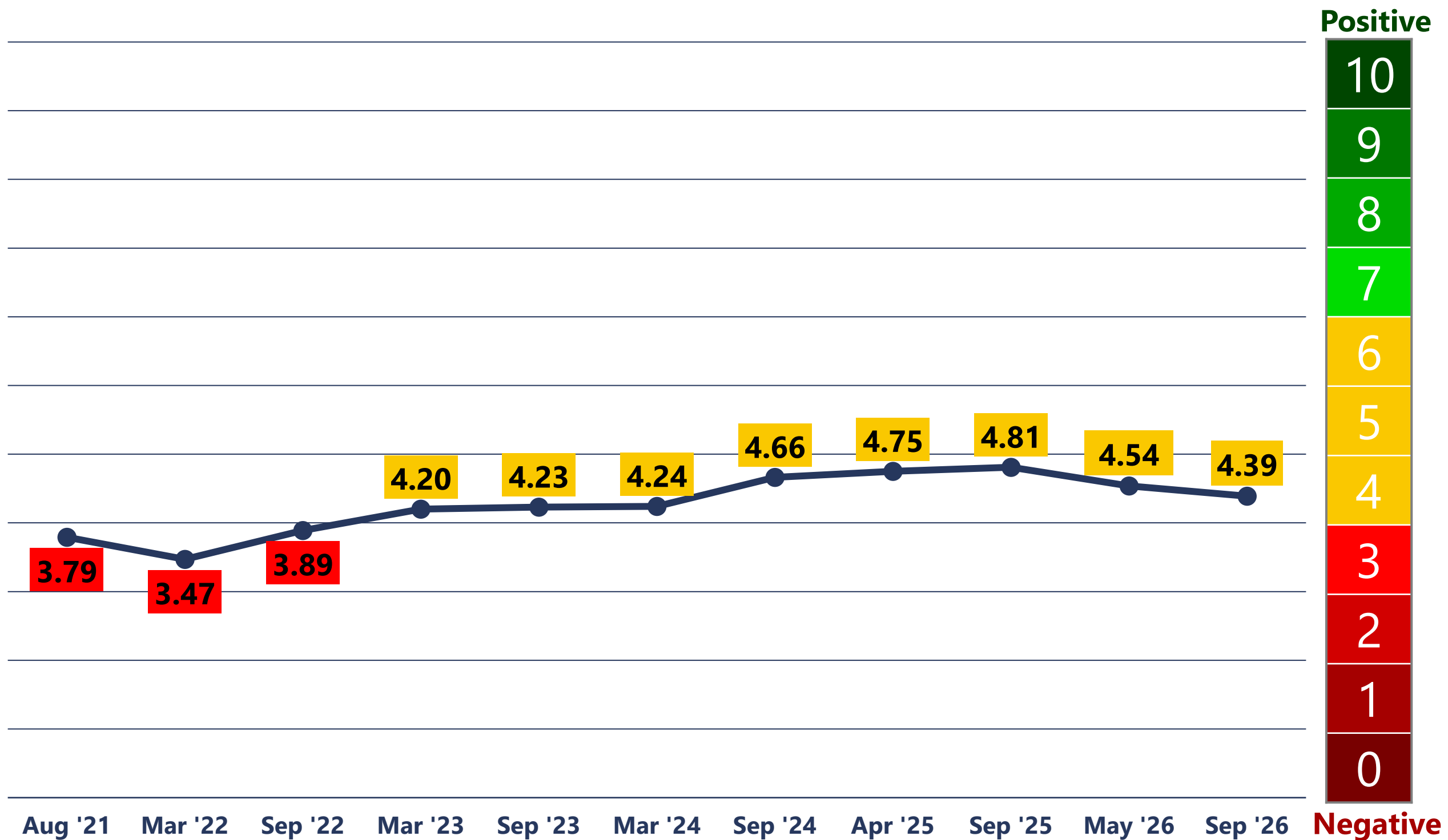


Methodology

- 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 September 23 – October 1, 2026
- 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



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 declined for the second time in 2026.



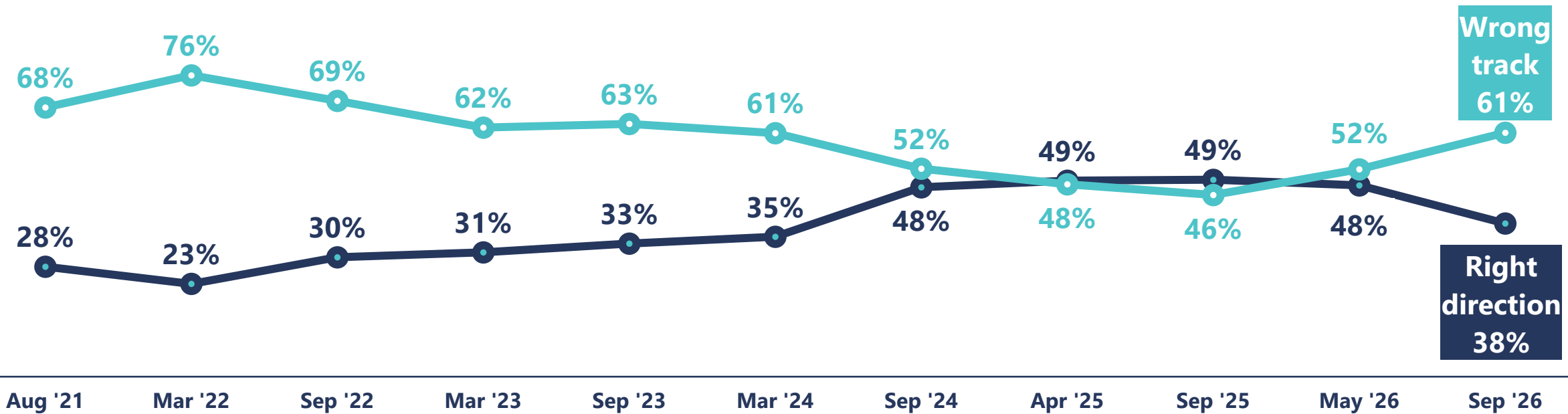
Local Environment





Direction of the City

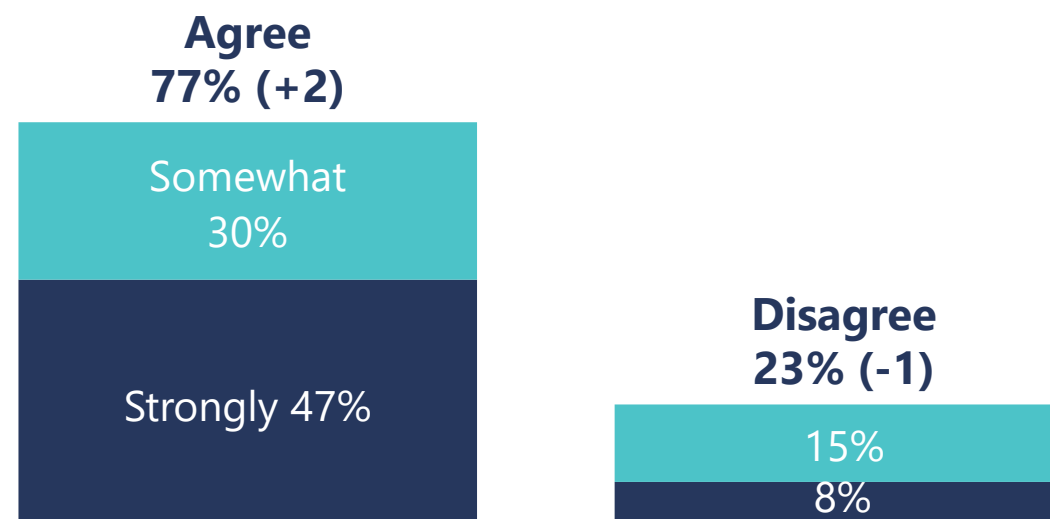
“Do you feel that things in the city of Seattle are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?”



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



“I’m worried about the future of downtown Seattle.”



After a period of relative stability, six-in-ten of Seattle voters now think the city is pretty seriously off on the wrong track.

A majority of voters continue to believe that quality of life in Seattle is getting worse and concern about the future of downtown remains very high.



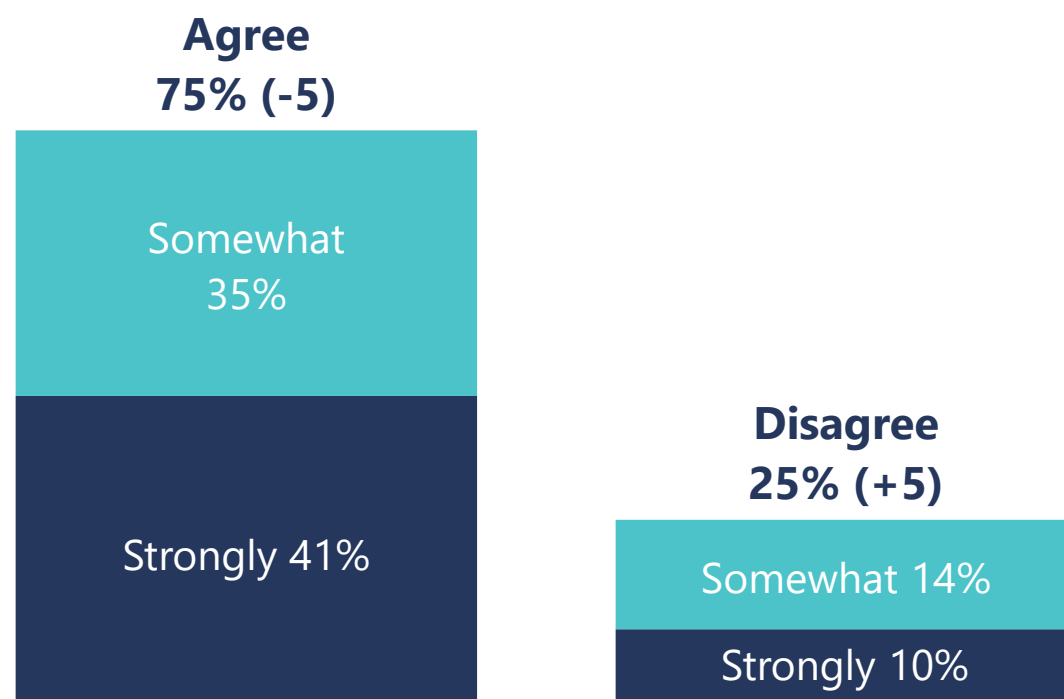
Optimism

Seattle feels like it is losing the positive momentum on public safety and quality of life that we saw during the soccer World Cup this summer

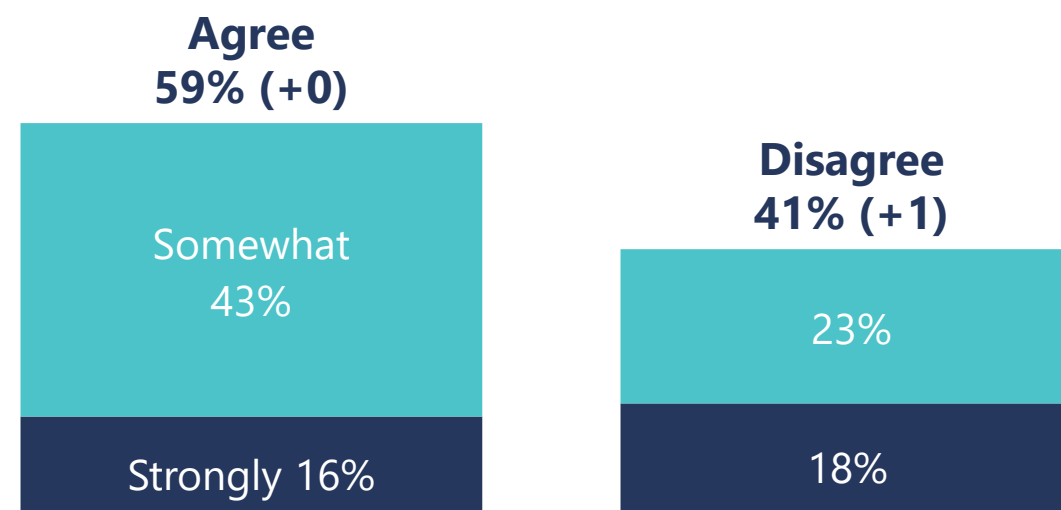
New



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



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

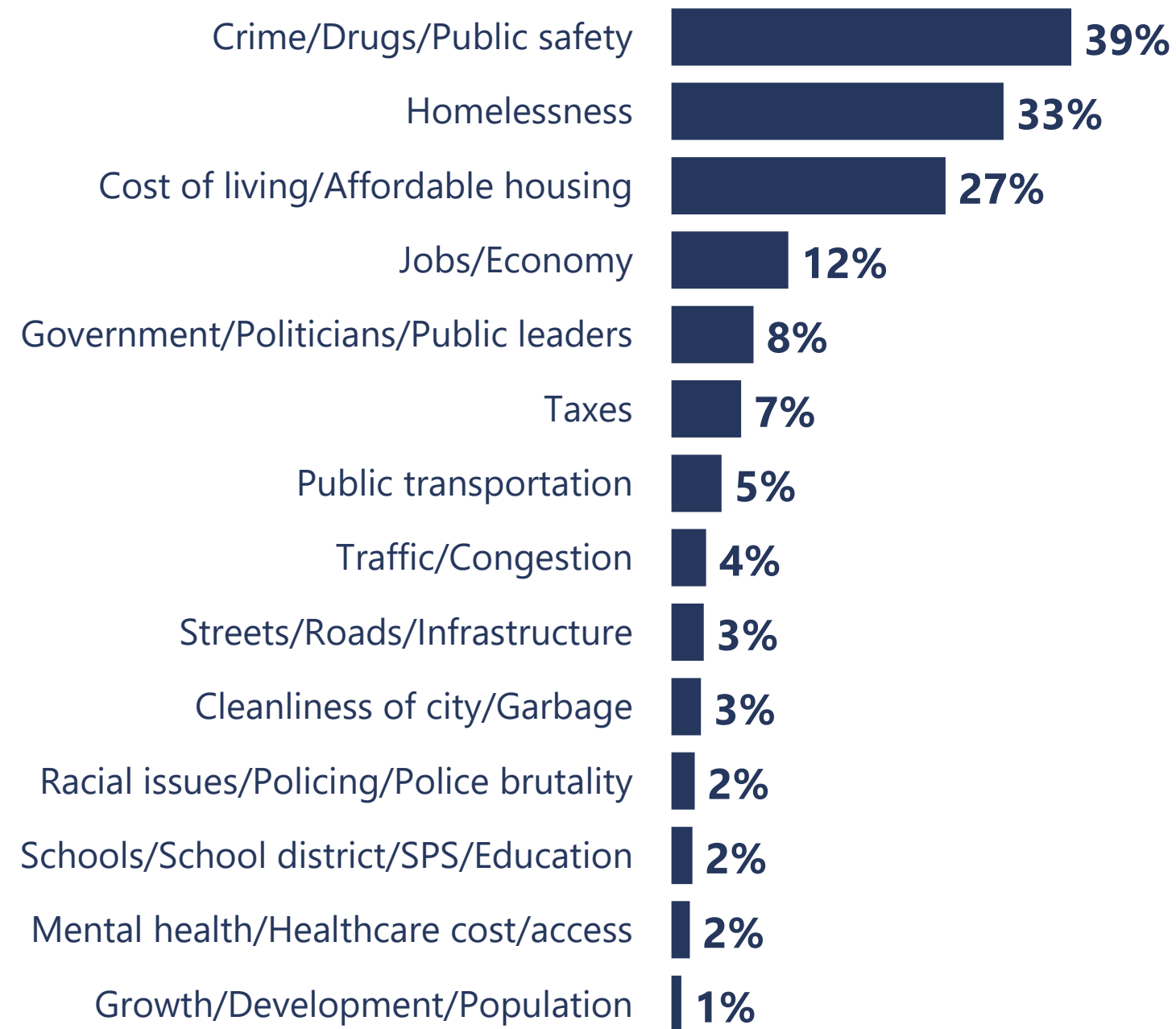


Two-in-three voters say they are concerned Seattle is losing momentum post-World Cup, but despite this pessimism about the current direction of the city, most voters say they are proud to call themselves a Seattleite and voters remain optimistic about the future of the region.



Top Concerns

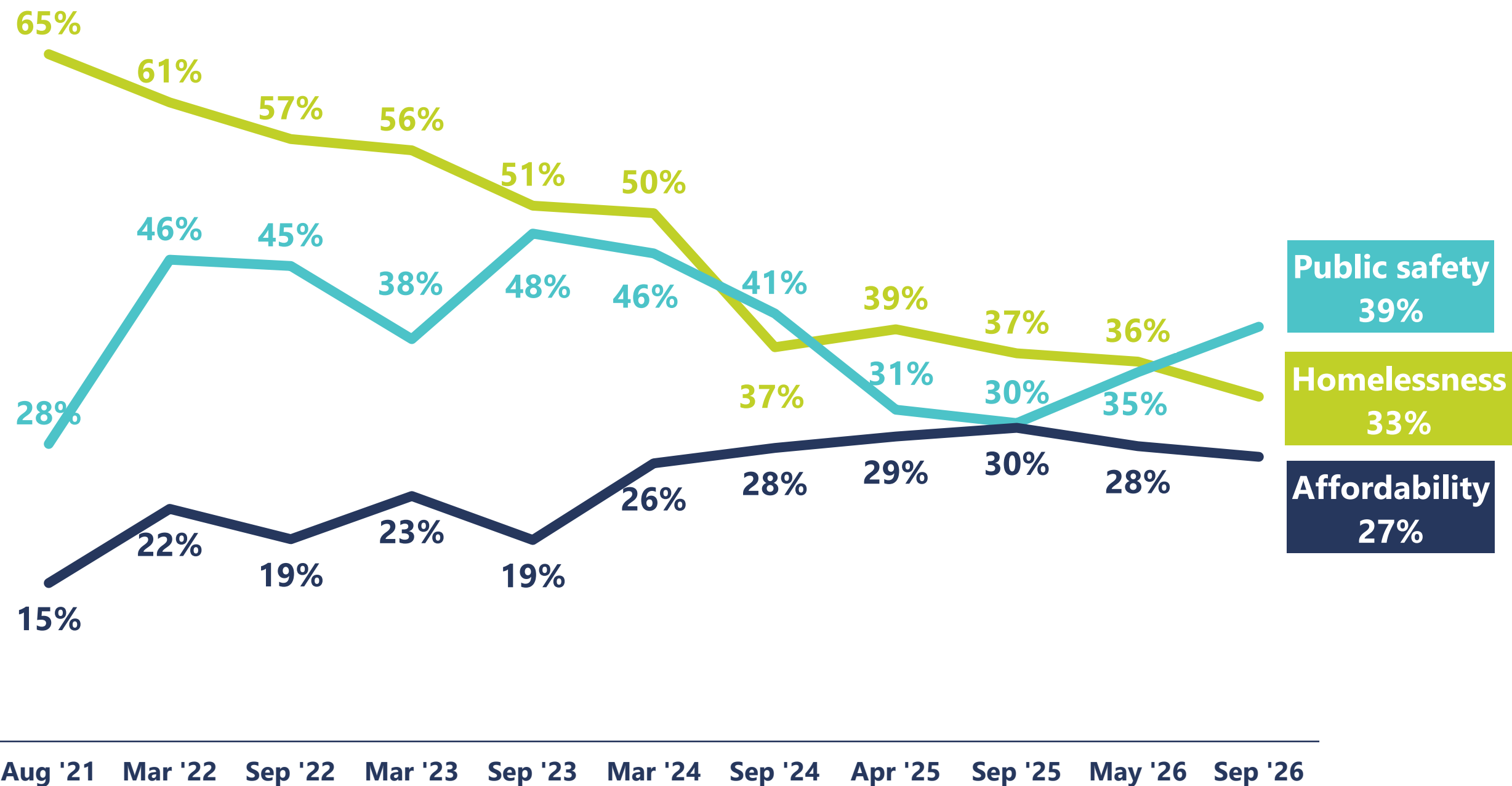
“What are the issues facing Seattle that you are most frustrated or concerned about?”



Voters' concern about crime and public safety has surpassed concerns about homelessness.



Top Concerns - Trend

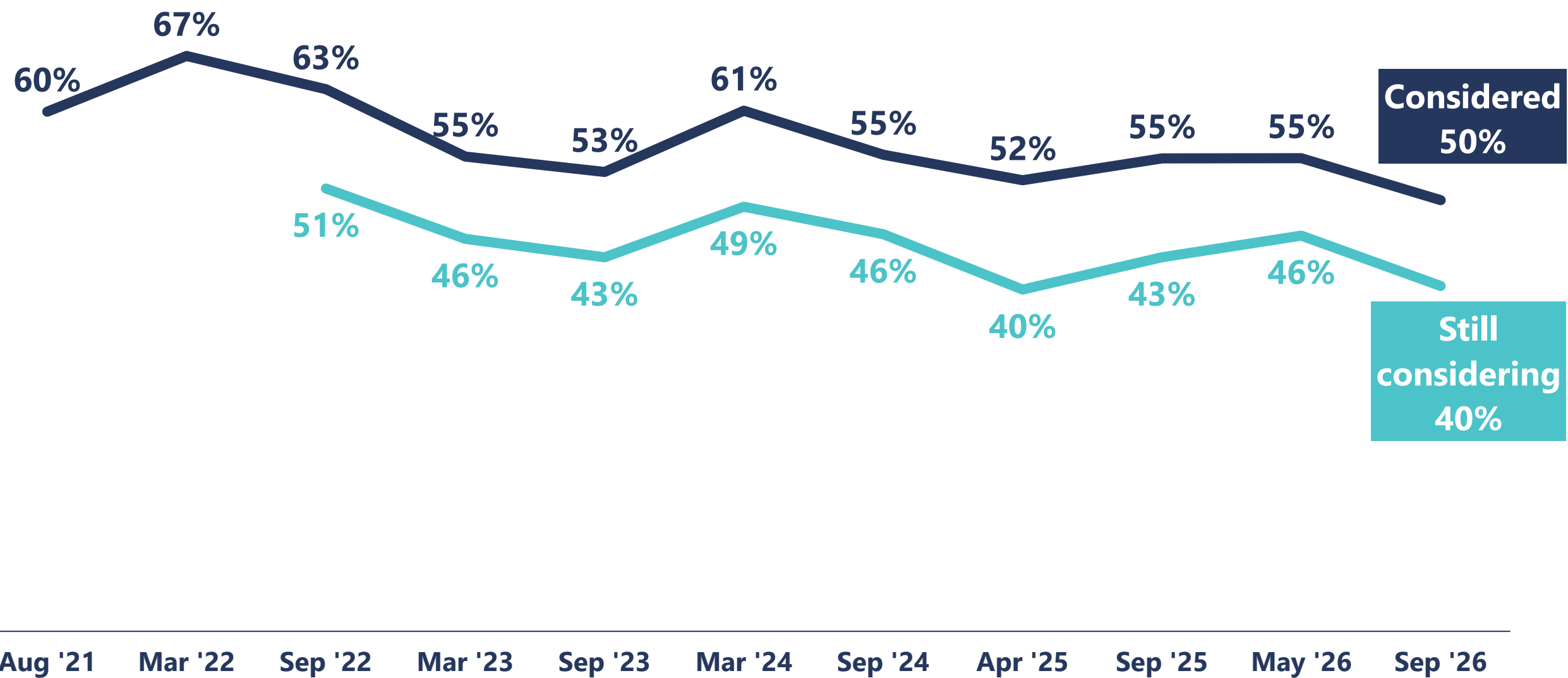


Concern about public safety has increased again and is now voters' top concern. Concerns about homelessness are down slightly and concerns about affordability are flat.



Leaving Seattle

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



Again, despite increasing concern about the City's direction. The percentage of voters who say they have or are still actively considering moving out of the city are at all time lows for The Index.



Economy & Business Environment





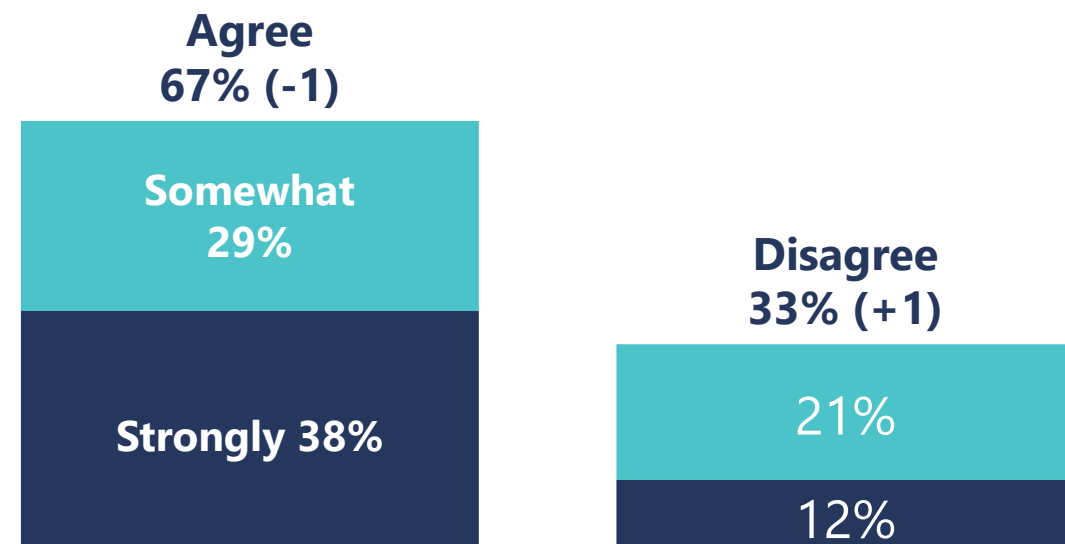
Economy

"Do you think Seattle's economy is getting stronger, weaker, or is staying the same?"

New

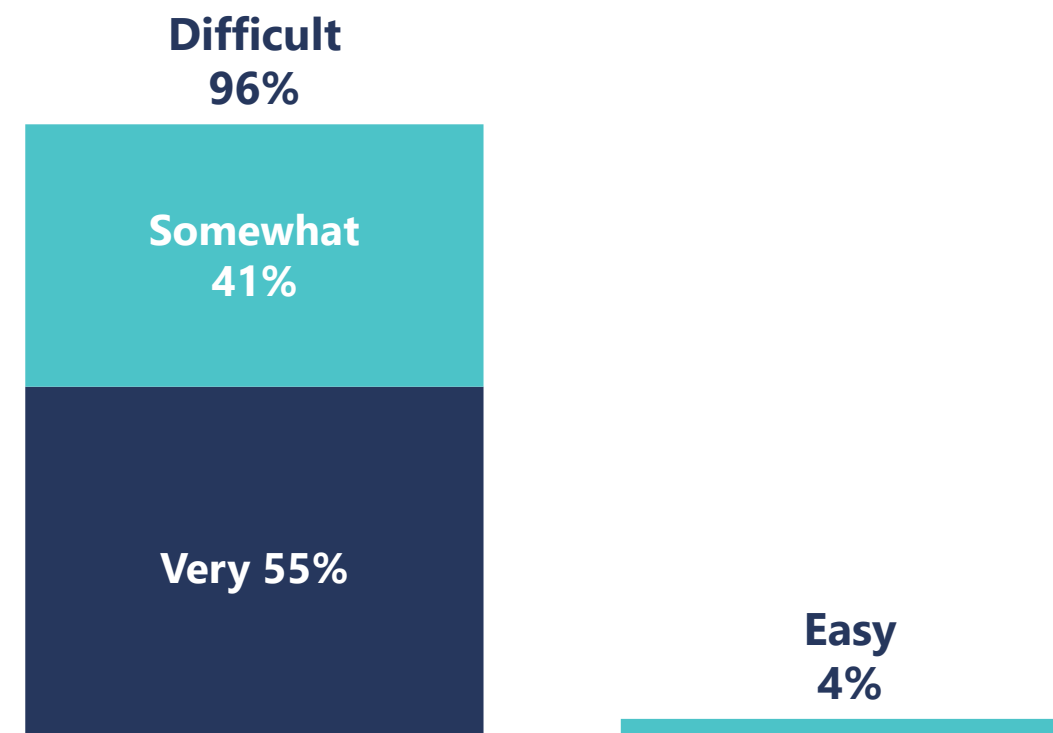


"I'm concerned about my personal financial situation given current economic conditions."



"How easy or difficult do you think it is for middle-class families to afford to live in Seattle?"

New



Two-thirds of voters think that Seattle's economy is getting weaker and that translates directly into concern about their own personal financial situation.

Unsurprisingly, virtually all voters think it's difficult for middle-class families to afford to live in Seattle and a majority say it is very difficult.



Business Environment

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

Agree
71% (-1)

Disagree
27% (--)

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

Agree
66% (+2)

Disagree
33% (-3)

"How easy or difficult do you think it is for a small business to afford to operate in Seattle?"

New

Difficult 95%

Somewhat
41%

Very 55%

Easy 5%

"How confident are you that the City has an effective plan in place to strengthen our local economy by making Seattle a good place to start and grow a business."

New

Not Confident
71%

36%

Confident
27%

25%
Very 2%

Not at all
35%



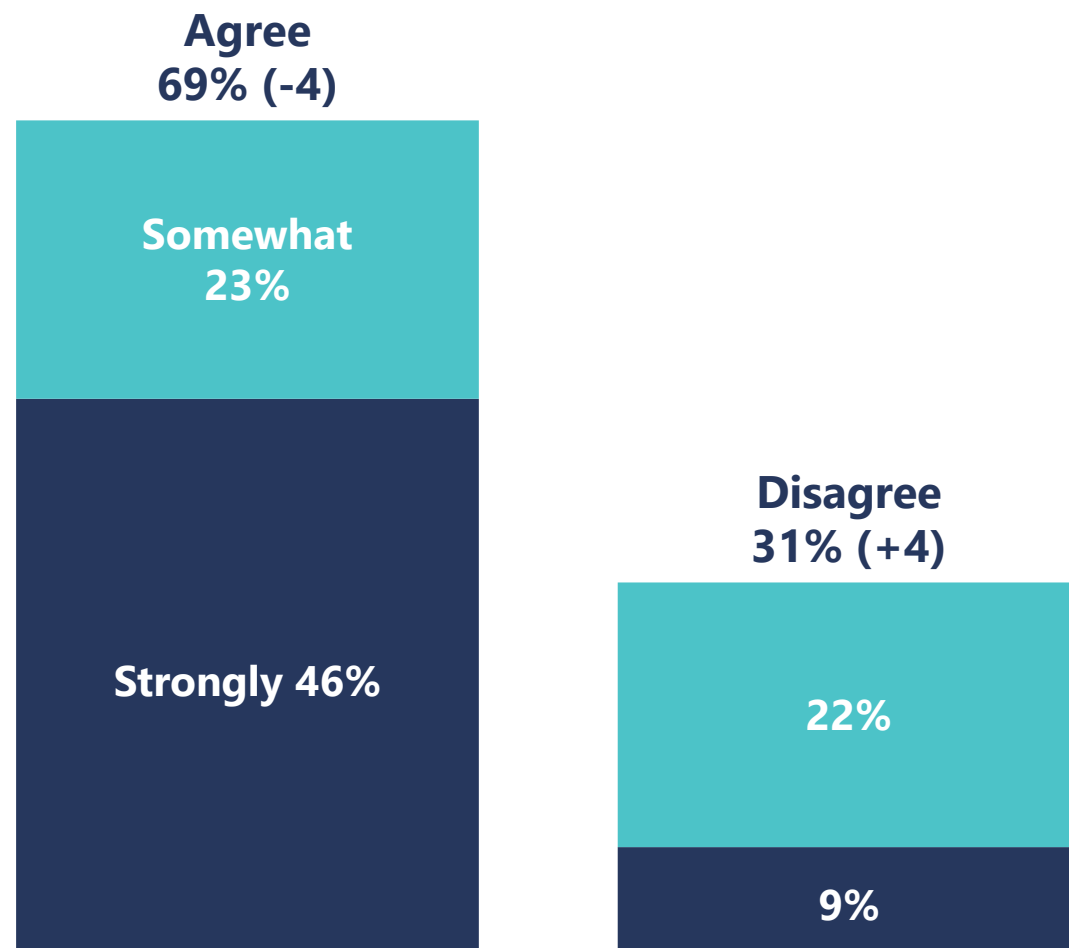
Seven-in-ten voters believe that high costs are forcing local businesses to move or close, and two-thirds say City leaders are not doing enough to make Seattle a good place to do business.

Voters also overwhelmingly believe that it is difficult for small businesses to afford to operate in Seattle and only 27% are confident that the City has a plan to make Seattle a good place to start and grow a business.



Large Businesses

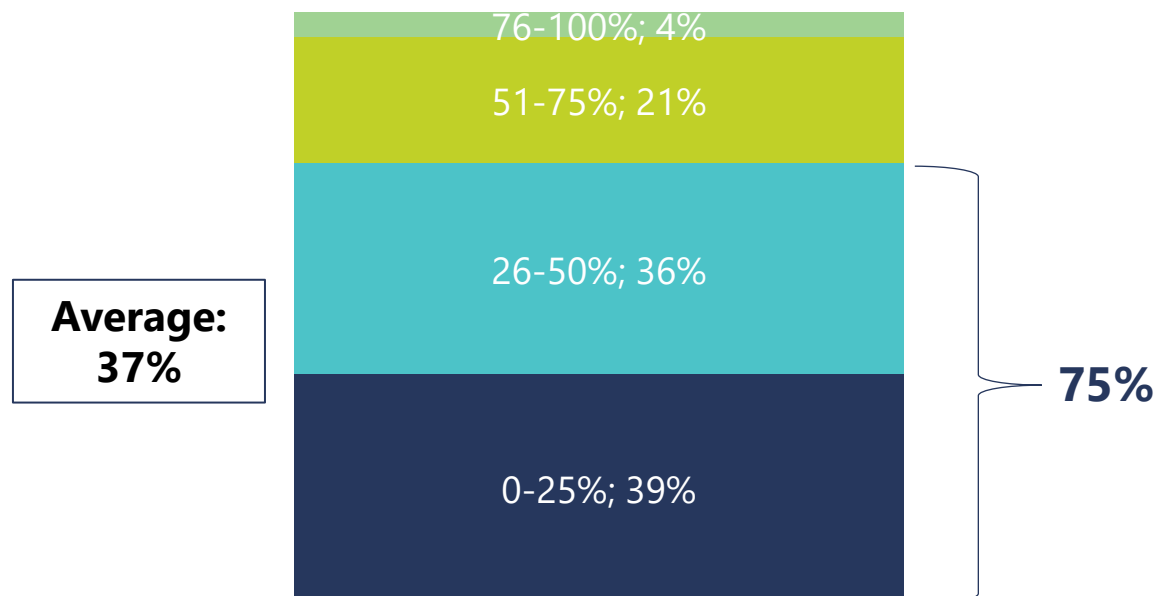
"Large businesses are essential to our city's success. They generate more than half of City tax revenue, create good-paying jobs, bring people back downtown, and support thousands of small businesses that rely on the foot traffic, investment, and activity they generate. When businesses grow here, we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



"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."



"What percentage of the City's total taxes do you think are paid by large businesses in Seattle?"



Voters continue to recognize the essential role large businesses play in Seattle's success and 6-in-10 voters agree that higher business taxes will result in a higher cost of living for them.

Three-quarters of Seattle voters think large businesses pay 50% or less of the City's total taxes, with the average estimate at 37%.



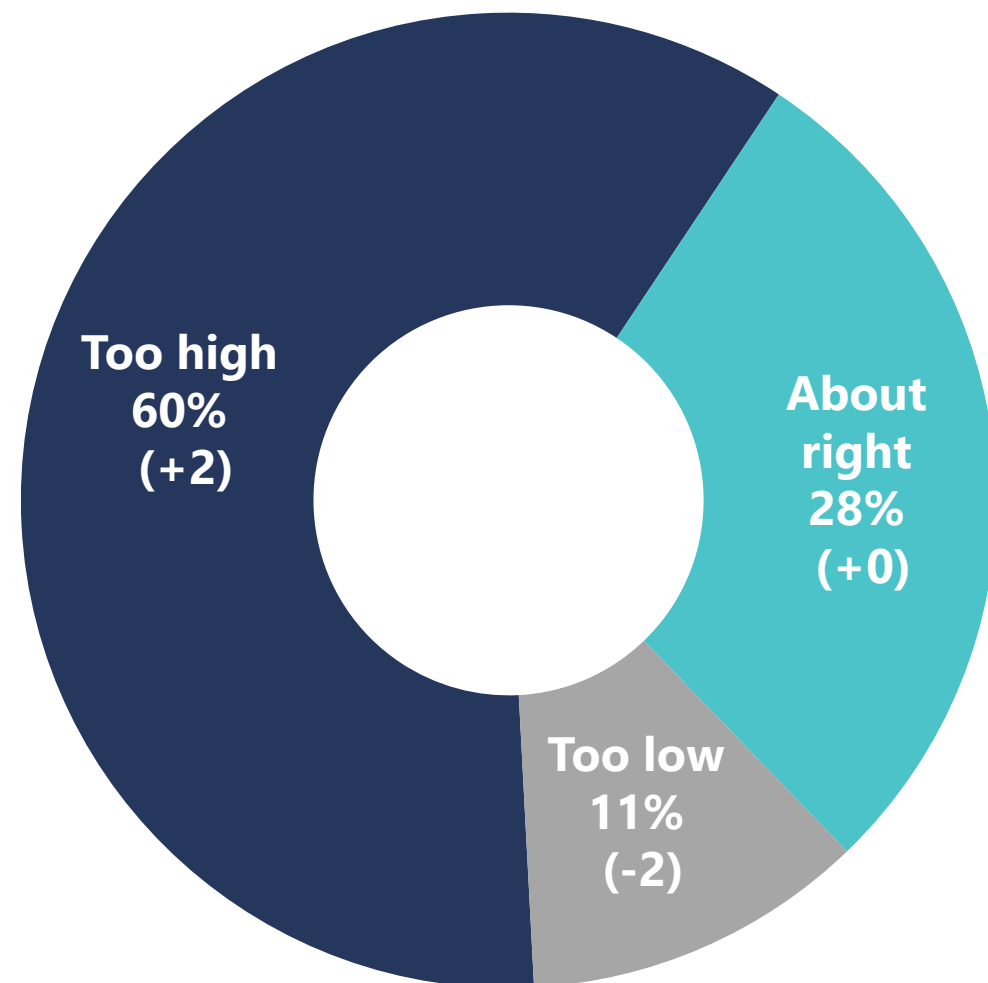
City Taxes and Spending



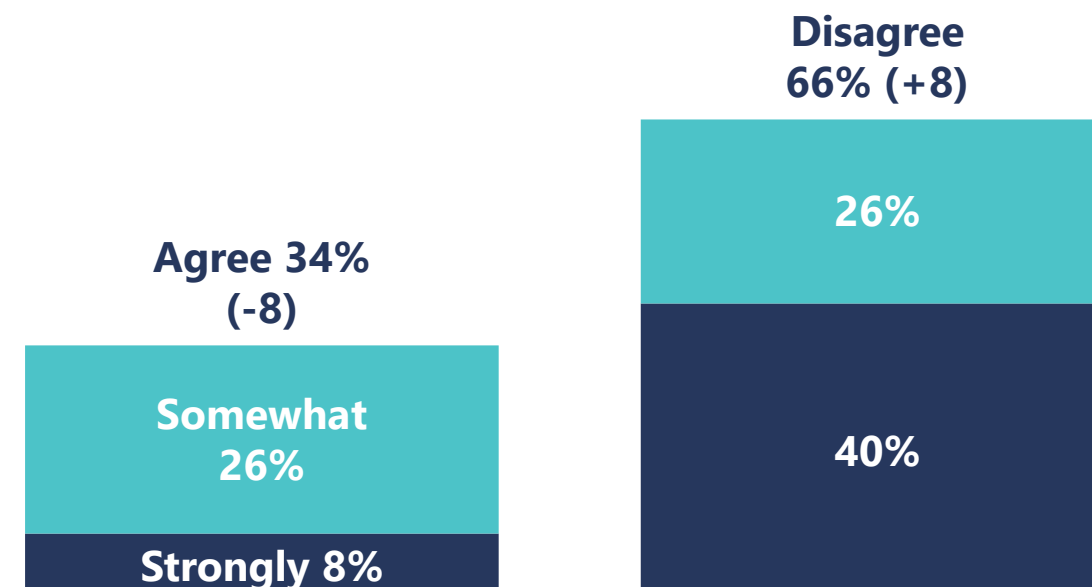


Taxes & City Spending

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

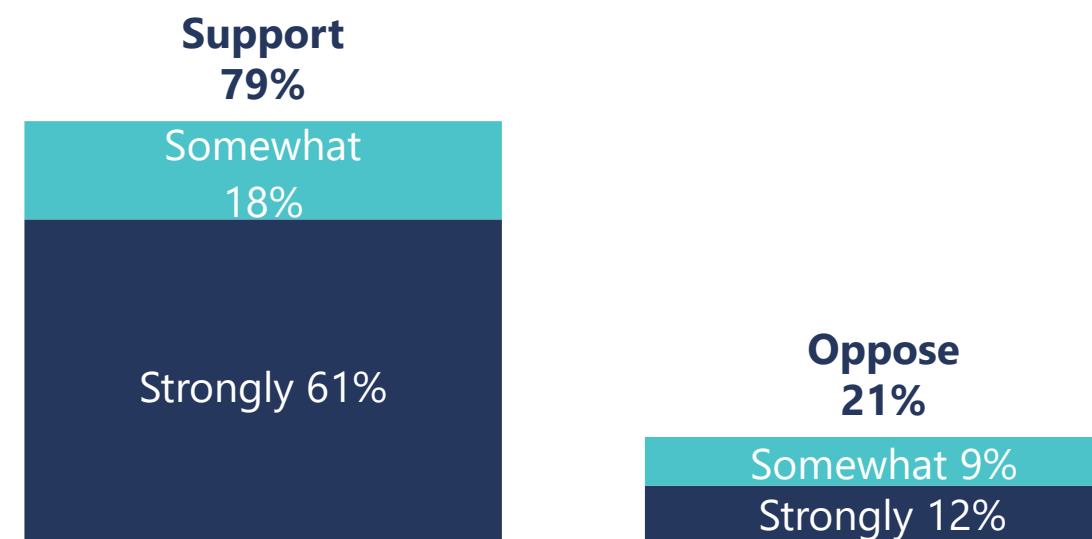


"I trust the City to spend my tax dollars responsibly."



"Require the City to demonstrate that existing spending is producing results before asking residents or employers to pay more in taxes."

New



Six-in-ten voters now believe that taxes in Seattle are too high for the level of services provided and two-thirds do not trust the City to be fiscally responsible with their tax dollars. Trust on spending is down a net 16 points from last May. Eight-in-ten Seattle voters support requiring the City to demonstrate that existing spending is working before increasing taxes.



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/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.”

Some/Others 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.

Increase
progressive taxes
42% (--)

Deliver results
58% (+1)



By a 16-point margin Seattle voters want the City to deliver better results from existing revenues rather than increasing progressive taxes to address the budget shortfall.



Priorities for City Leadership





Policy Priorities

“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)

Continuing to shut down open-air drug markets	6.2 (+0.4)	Extremely Important (7) 72% (+14)
Taking care of the basics like filling potholes and maintaining our parks and local transportation infrastructure	6.1 (-0.0)	51% (+5)
Helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns	6.0 (+0.2)	56% (+11)
Continuing to reduce the number of homeless encampments	5.8 (+0.1)	57% (+7)
Protecting local jobs and small businesses in this uncertain economic environment by lowering the cost to start and run a business in Seattle	5.6 (-0.1)	40% (-0)
Doing more to keep existing employers in Seattle and attract new employers and jobs	5.5 (n/a)	42% (n/a)
Incentivizing businesses to create family wage jobs here in Seattle so that our local economy stays resilient in the face of national economic uncertainty	5.4 (+0.0)	35% (+3)
Hiring more police officers to reduce emergency response times and improve public safety	5.1 (+0.2)	44% (+9)
Updating Seattle’s zoning laws and expediting permitting to allow for more housing across the city, including duplexes and triplexes in many single-family residential neighborhoods	5.0 (+0.1)	30% (-3)
Protecting core progressive values like social justice, equity, and inclusivity	4.6 (-0.1)	31% (+1)



Shutting down open-air drug markets is now voters’ top priority and nearly three-quarters give it the highest possible importance rating – a 14-point increase since May.

Three of voters’ top 4 priorities are public safety related and 4 of the top 7 are related to helping local businesses.



Growth & Housing

"I support building more housing near transit and commercial areas, even if it changes the character of those neighborhoods."

Agree
76%

Disagree
24%

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

Agree
64% (-5)

Disagree
36% (+5)

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

Agree
58% (--)

Disagree
42% (--)



Three-quarters of Seattle voters support building more housing near transit and commercial areas, even if it changes the character of those neighborhoods; nearly two thirds agree that building more housing will help with Seattle's housing affordability crisis; and a majority continue to agree that overall, growth has been a positive for their area.



9-1-1 Response Times

“Require the City to make it a top priority to meet its seven-minute response time standard for Priority One 9-1-1 calls, publicly report when those standards are not met, and redirect spending and resources to meet that standard if response times exceed the seven-minute standard by 2 minutes or more.”

New

Support
85%

Somewhat
32%

Strongly
53%

Oppose
15%

Somewhat
12%
Strongly 4%



Large majorities support making seven-minute 911 response times a top priority



Confidence in City Leadership

“How confident are you that the City has an effective plan in place...”

New

to reduce homeless encampments

Confident
15%

Not confident
85%

to improve public safety in Seattle

Confident
24%

Not confident
75%



Most voters are not confident that the City has a plan in place to reduce homeless encampments or to improve public safety.



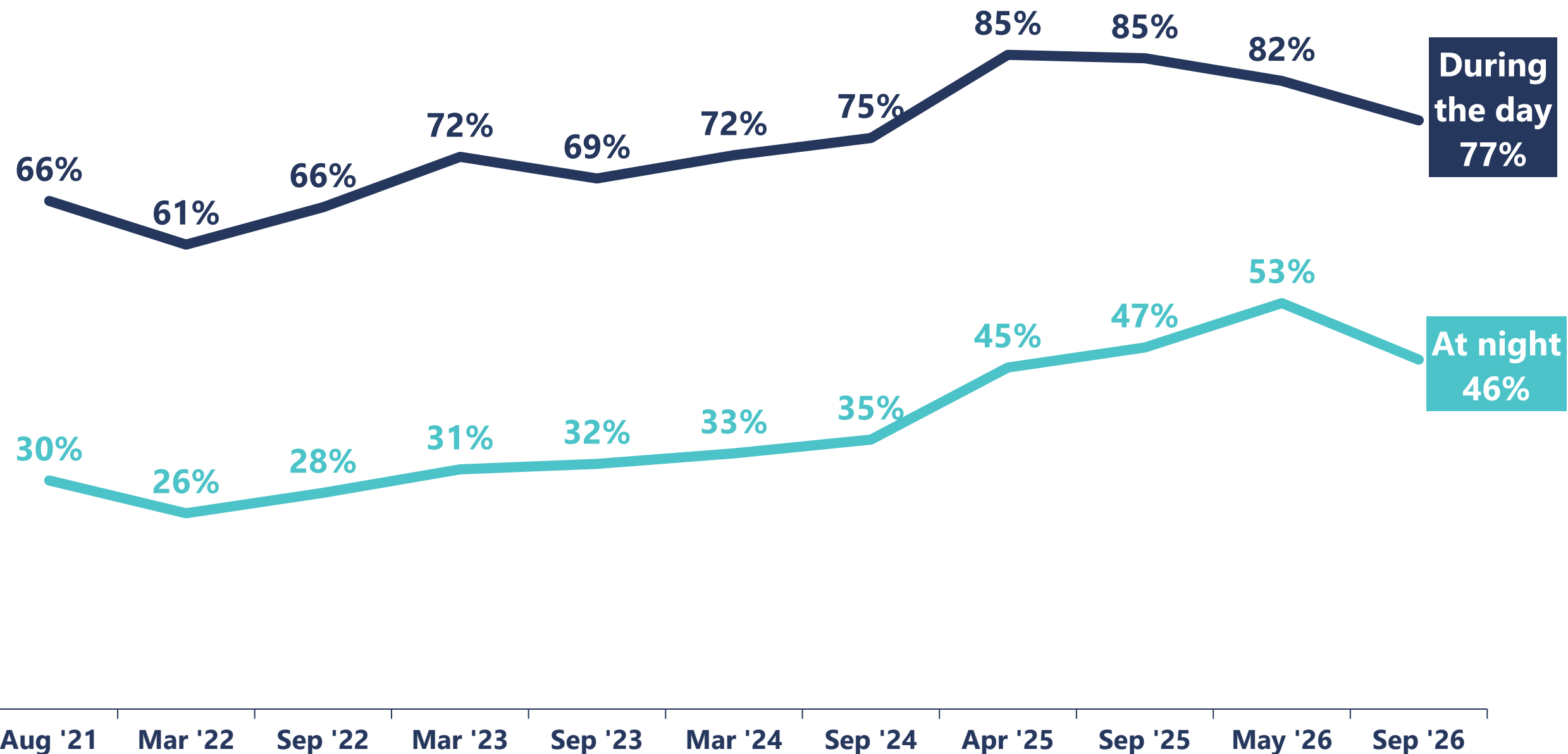
Visiting Downtown





Visiting Downtown

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

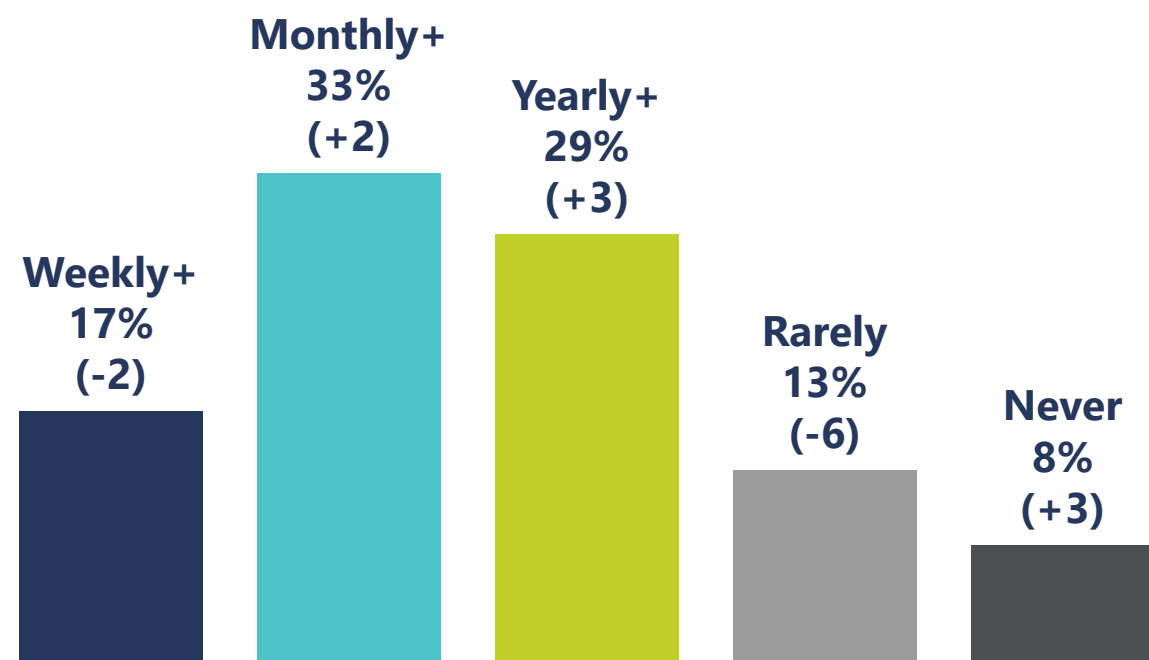


Voters are feeling less safe visiting downtown than they were in May, both during the day (-5) and at night (-7).

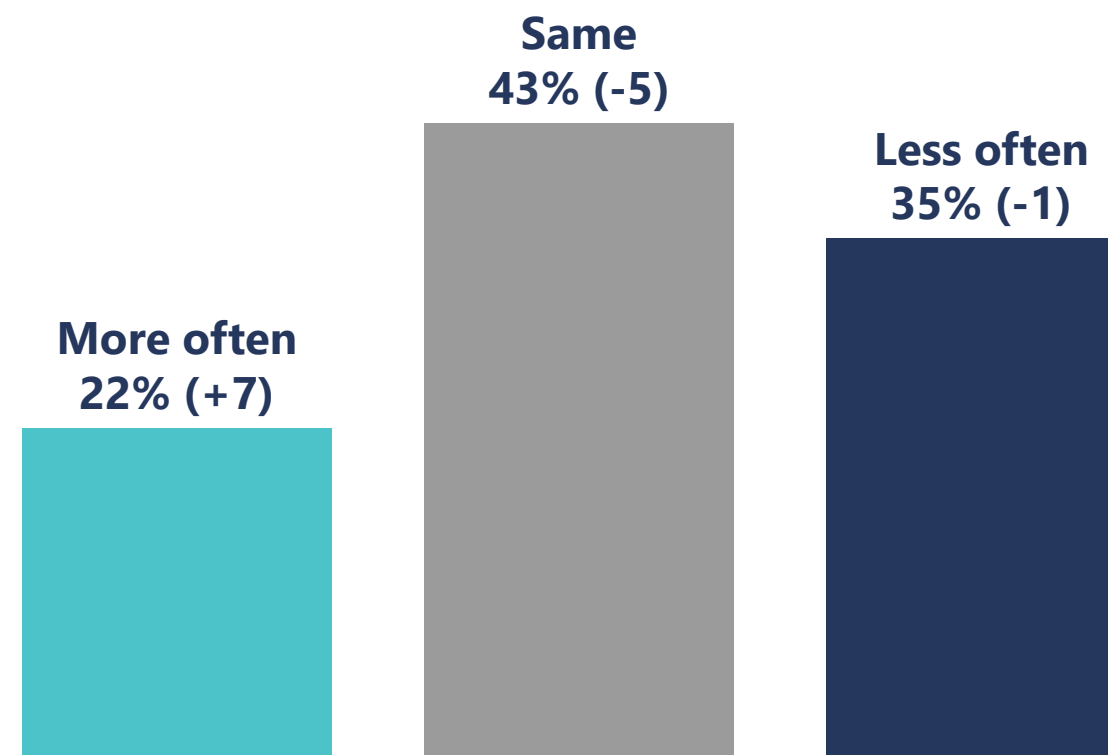


Visiting Downtown

“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?”



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

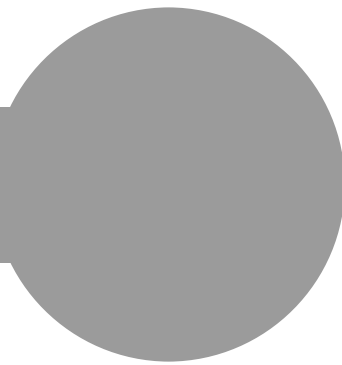
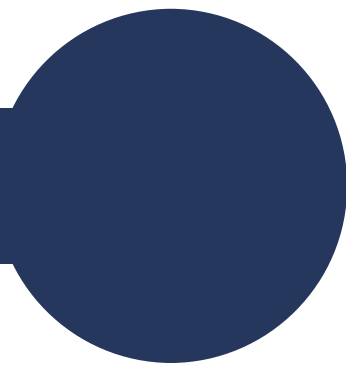


Half of Seattle voters say they go downtown at least once a month.

Following summer months, the percentage of those who say they've been visiting downtown more increased.

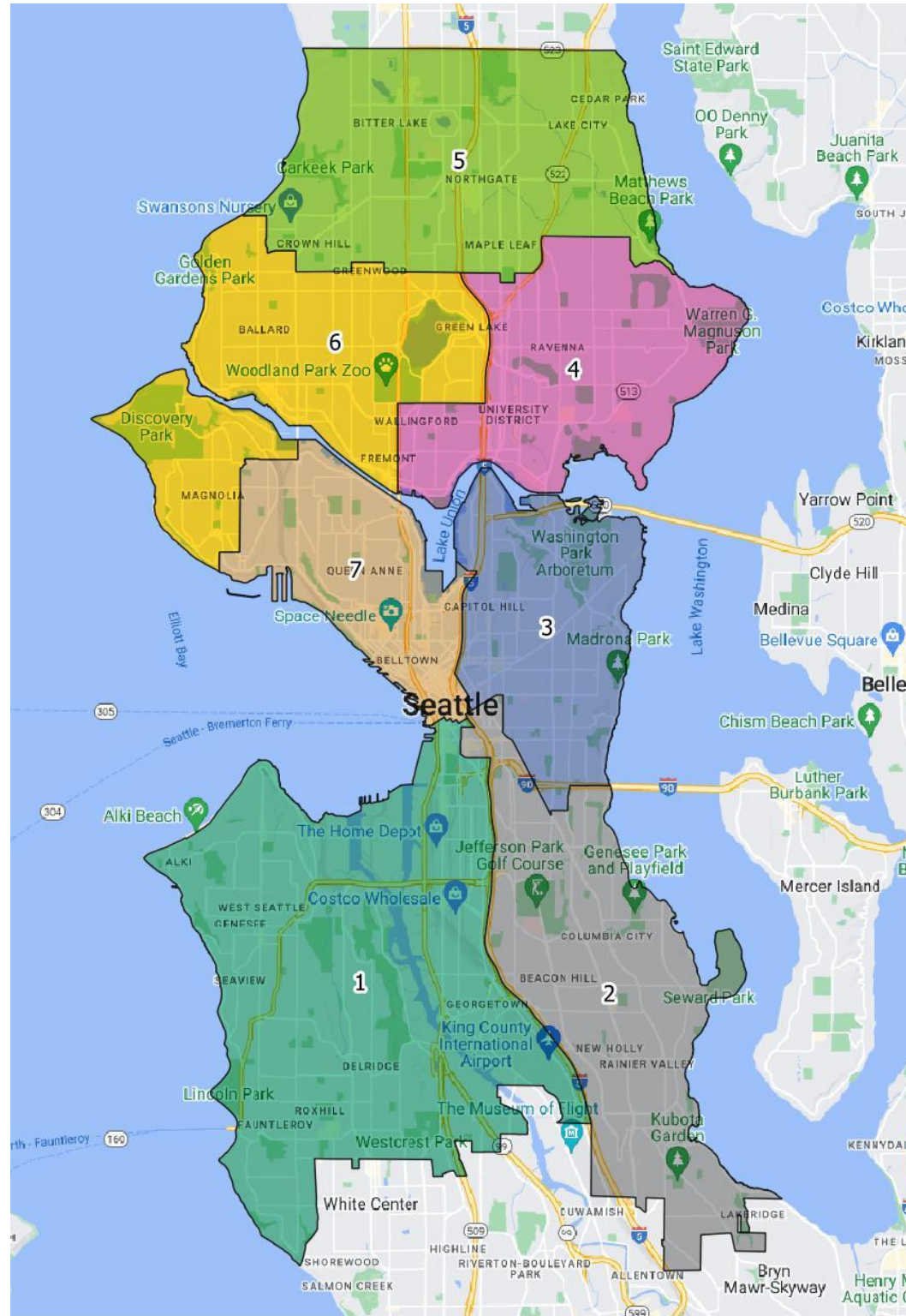


Appendix





Regions



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

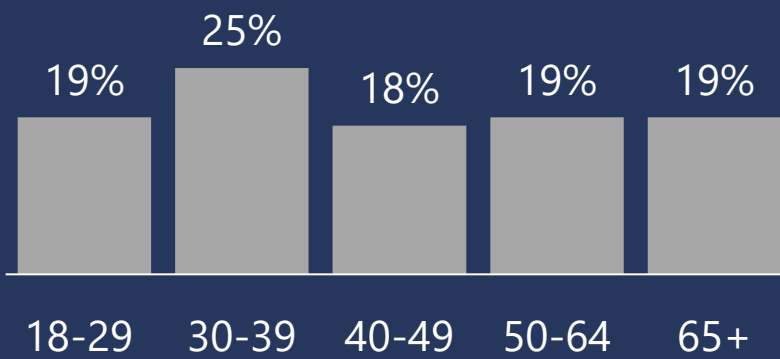
*Results weighted to the proportional share of voters in each District



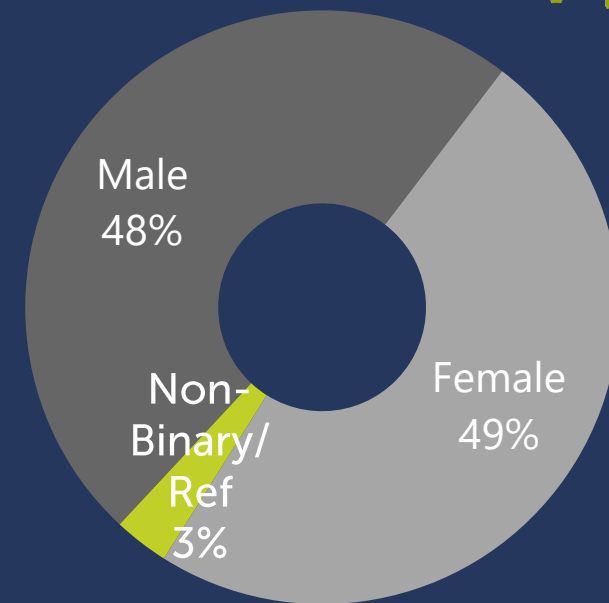
Respondent Profile



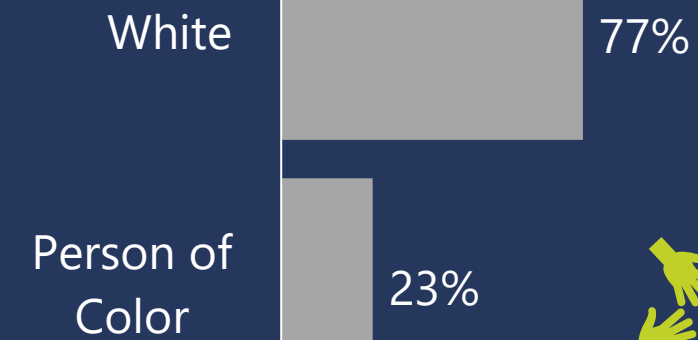
Age



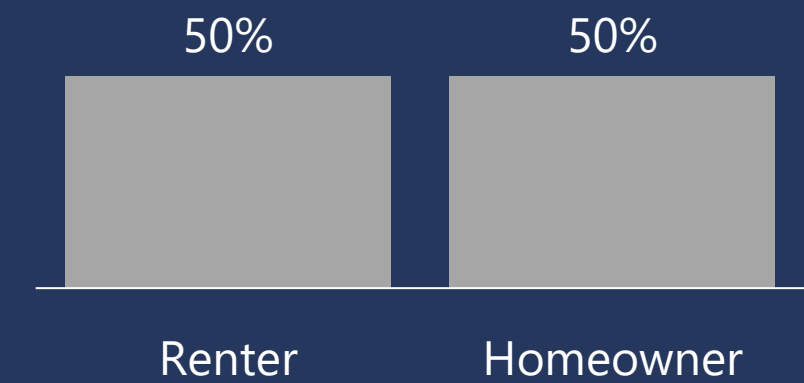
Gender



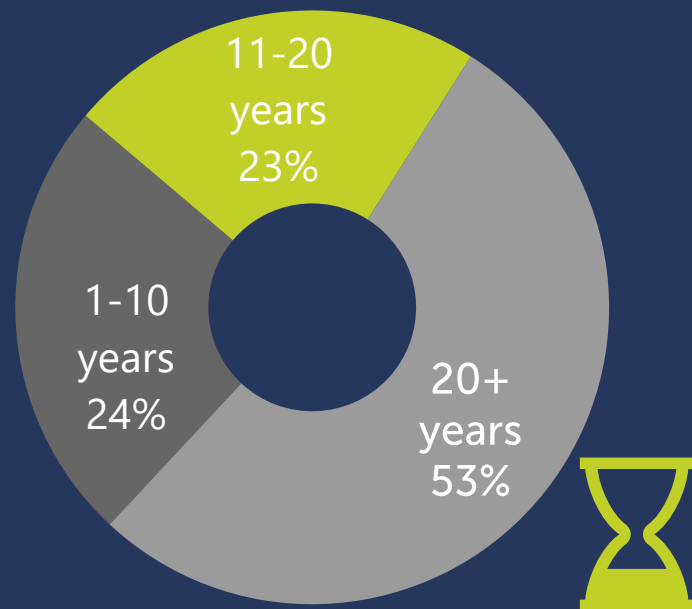
Ethnicity



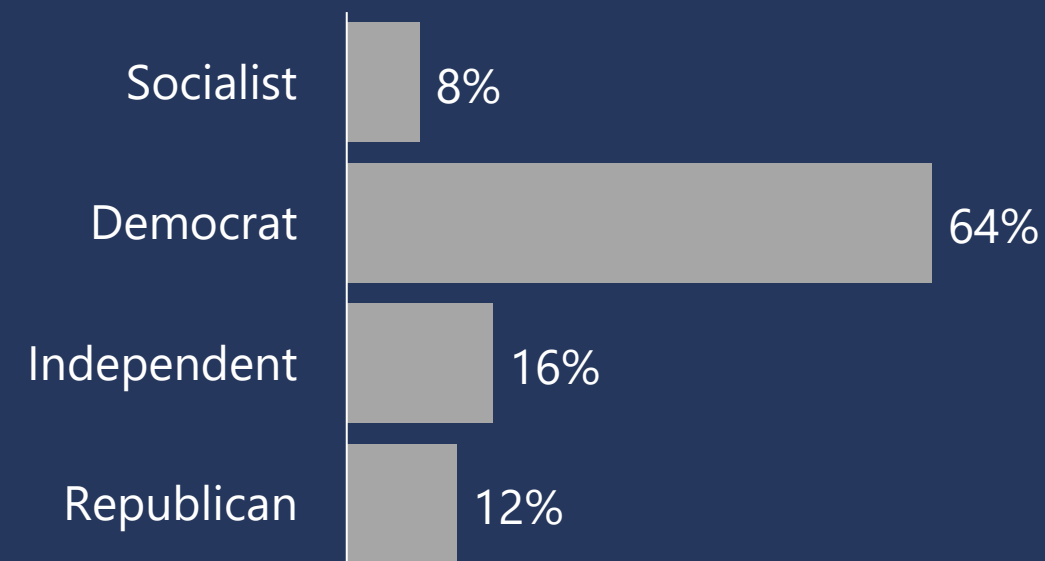
Homeownership



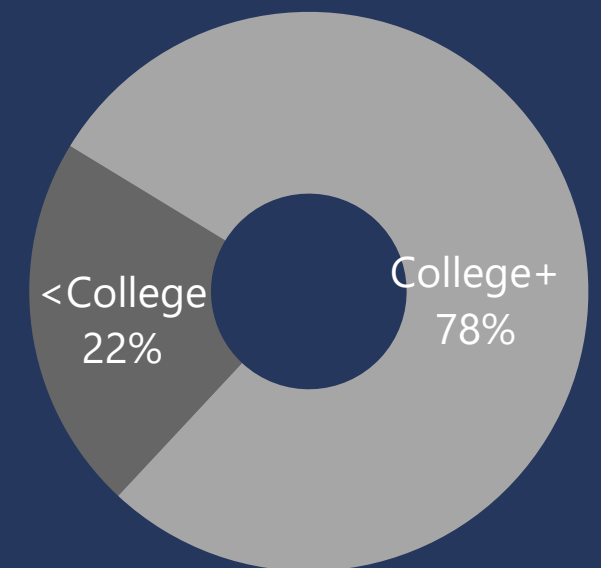
Length of Residency



Party



Education



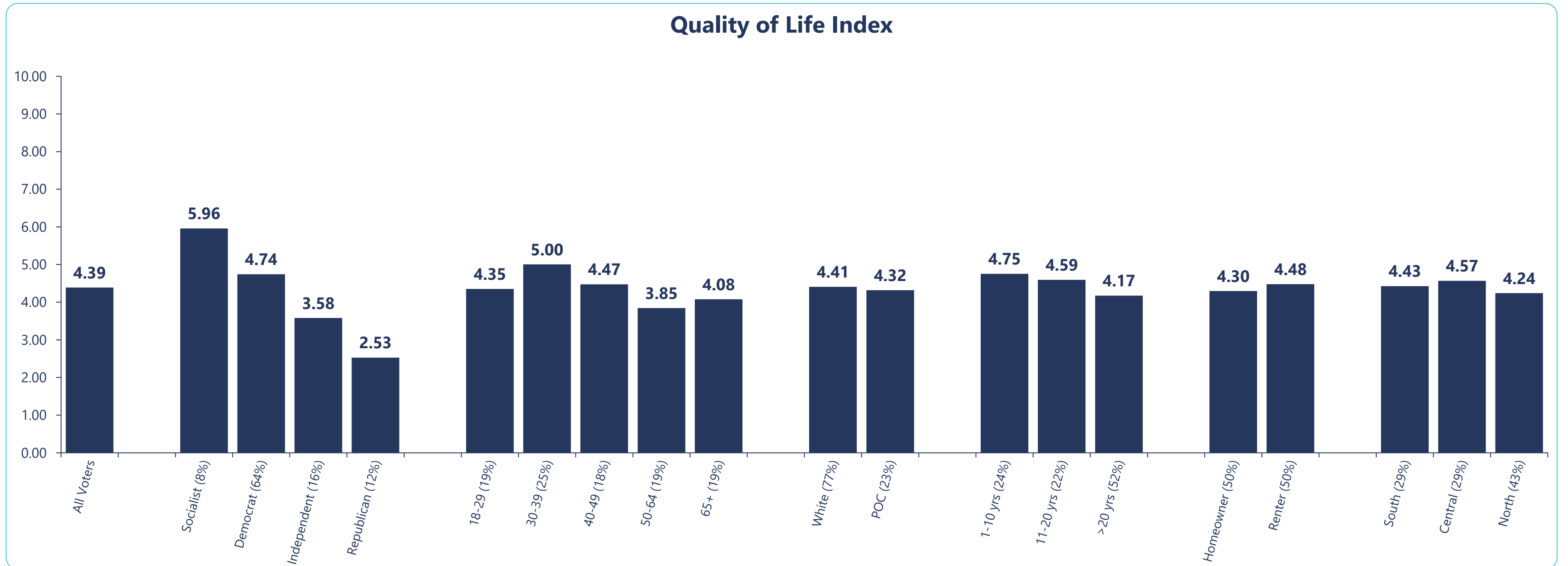


Subgroup Data





The Index

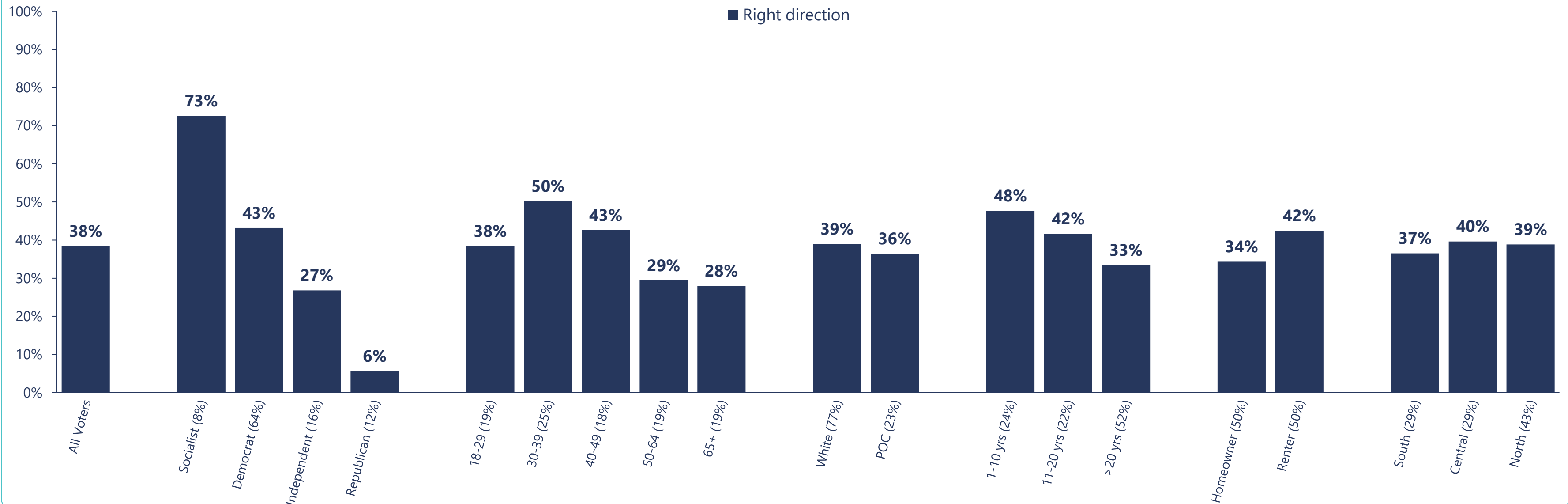


The overall quality-of-life Index is below the midpoint in every subgroup except self-identified Socialists.



Direction of the City

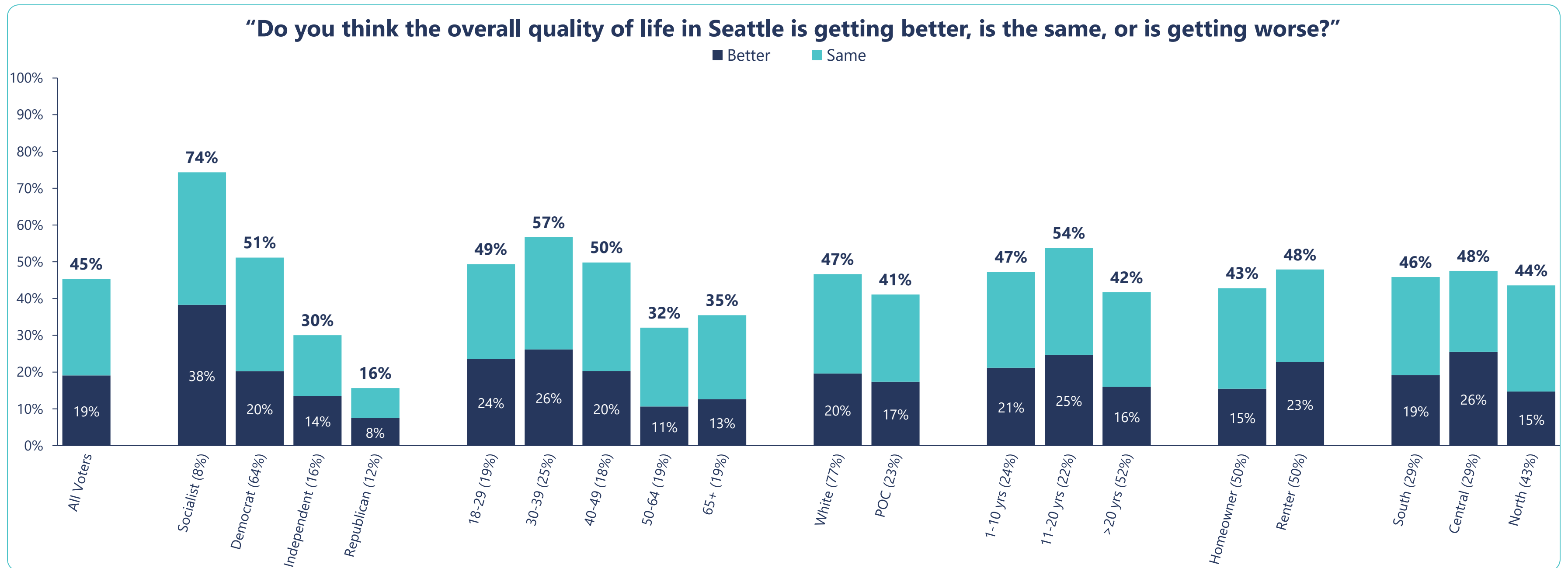
“Do you feel that things in the City of Seattle are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?”



Optimism about the direction of Seattle is generally low, with Socialist voters as an exception.



Quality of Life

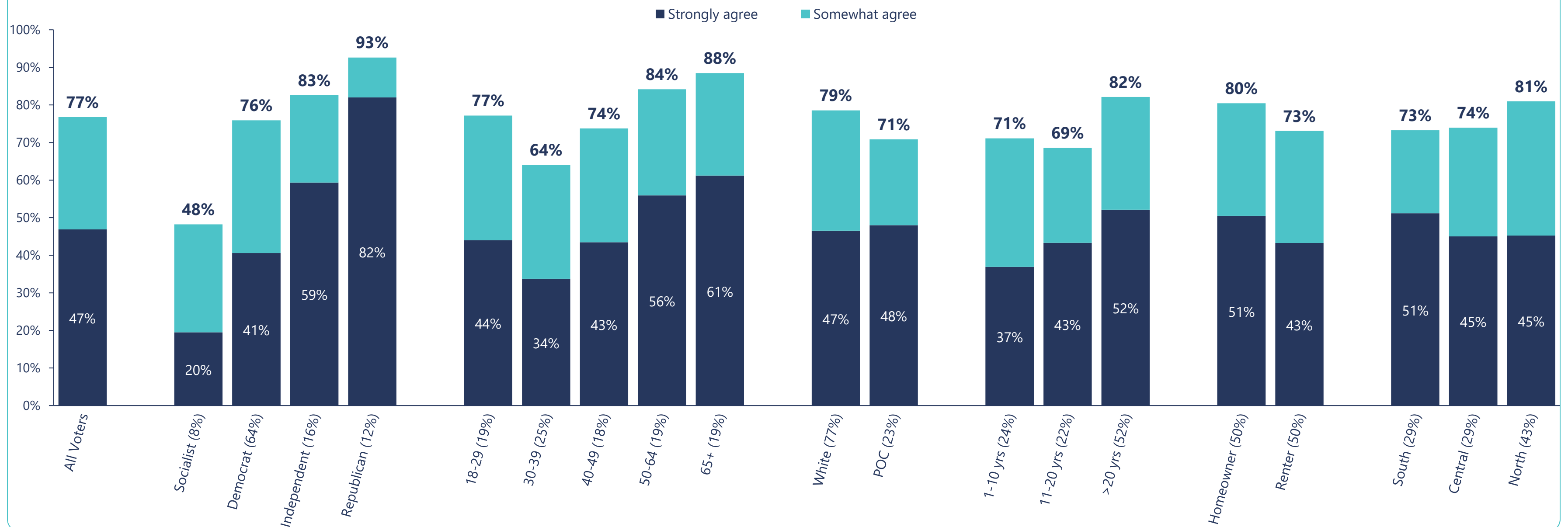


Party identification has the strongest impact of perceptions of quality of life in Seattle. Younger voters are more optimistic than older voters about quality of life.



Worried About Downtown

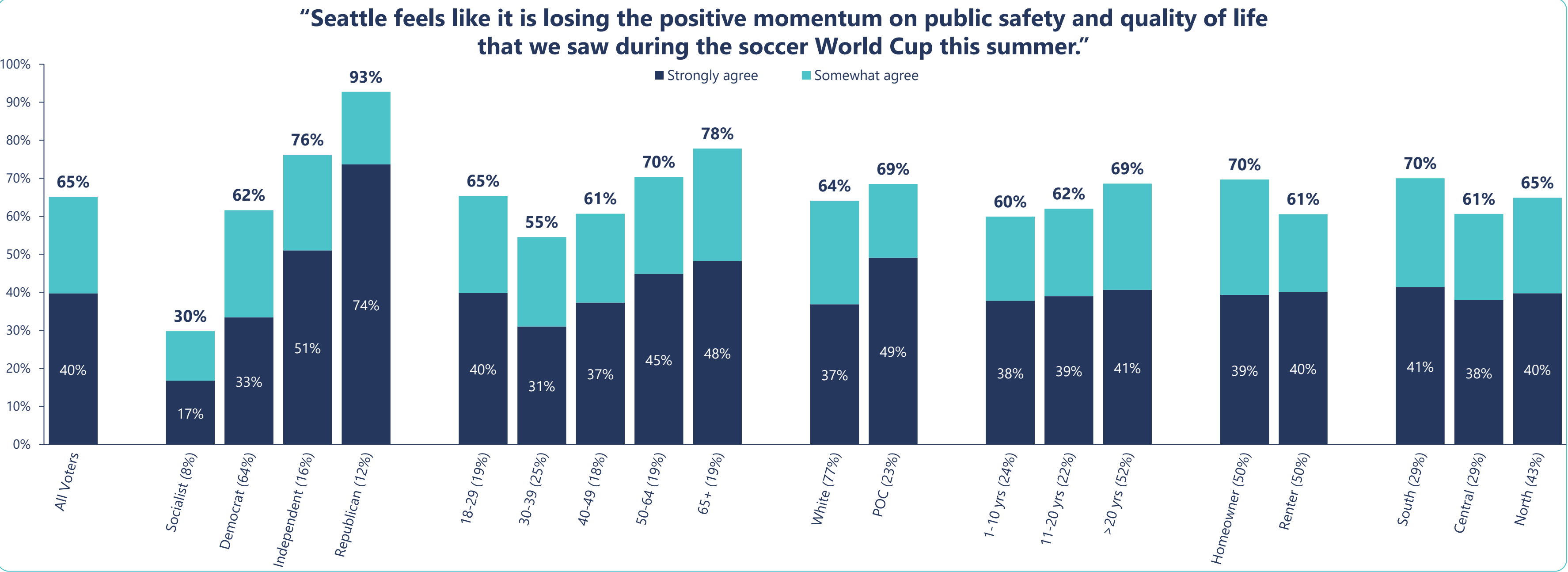
"I'm worried about the future of downtown Seattle."



Concern about the future of downtown is particularly intense among Independents and Republicans, those above the age of 50, those who have resided in Seattle the longest, and those who live in Northern Seattle.



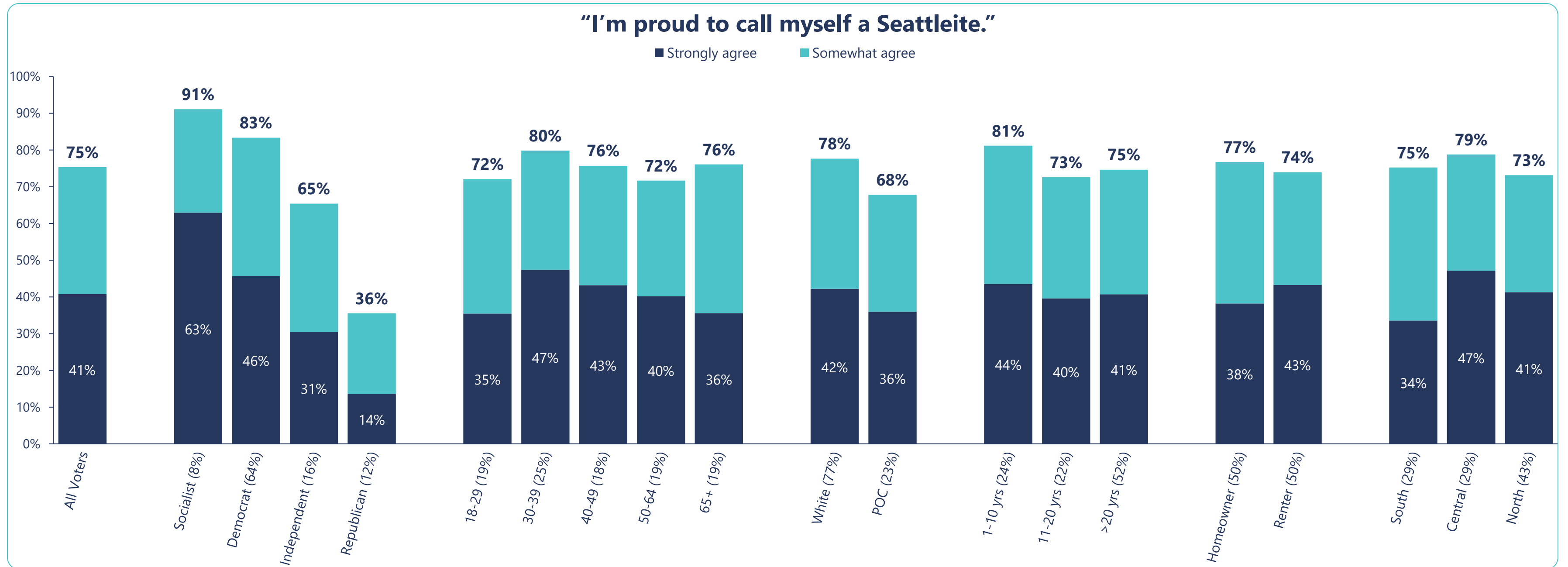
Seattle's Progress



Most voter subgroups share the perception that the progress made on public safety and general quality of life has stalled after the summer.



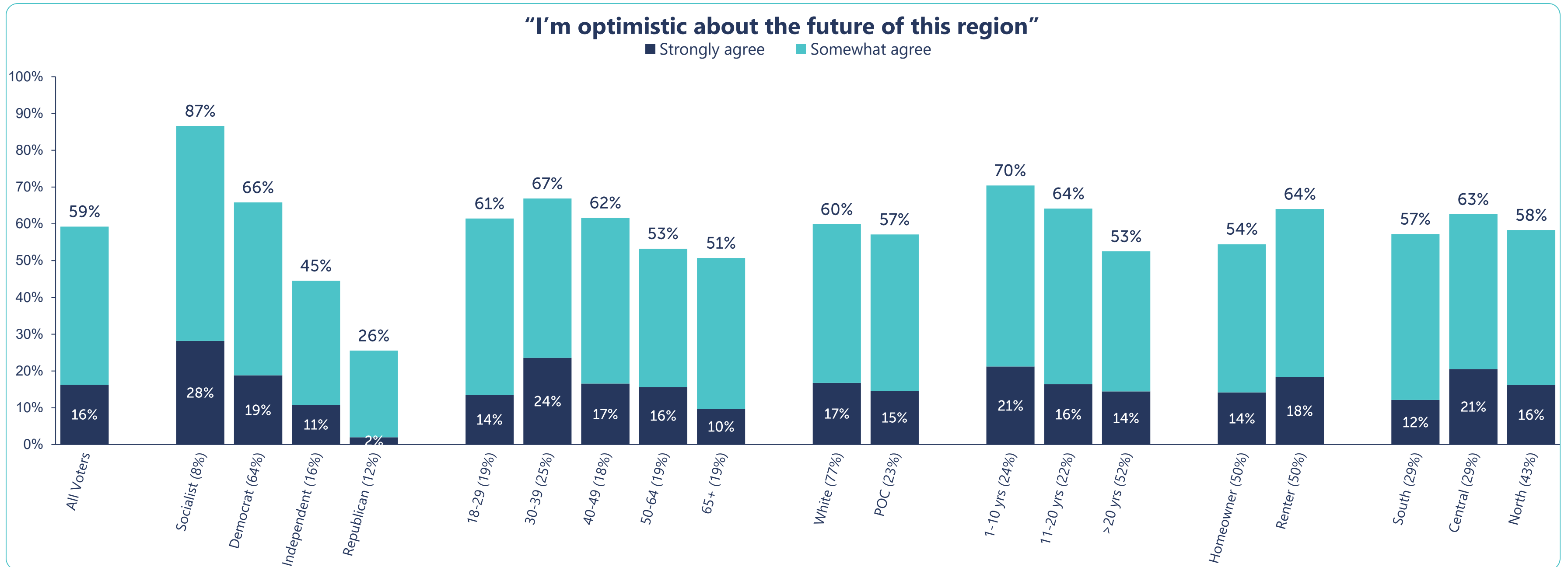
Proud to Call Myself a Seattleite



With the exception of Republicans, strong majorities of all subgroups say they are “proud to call [themselves] a Seattleite.”



Optimism About the Region



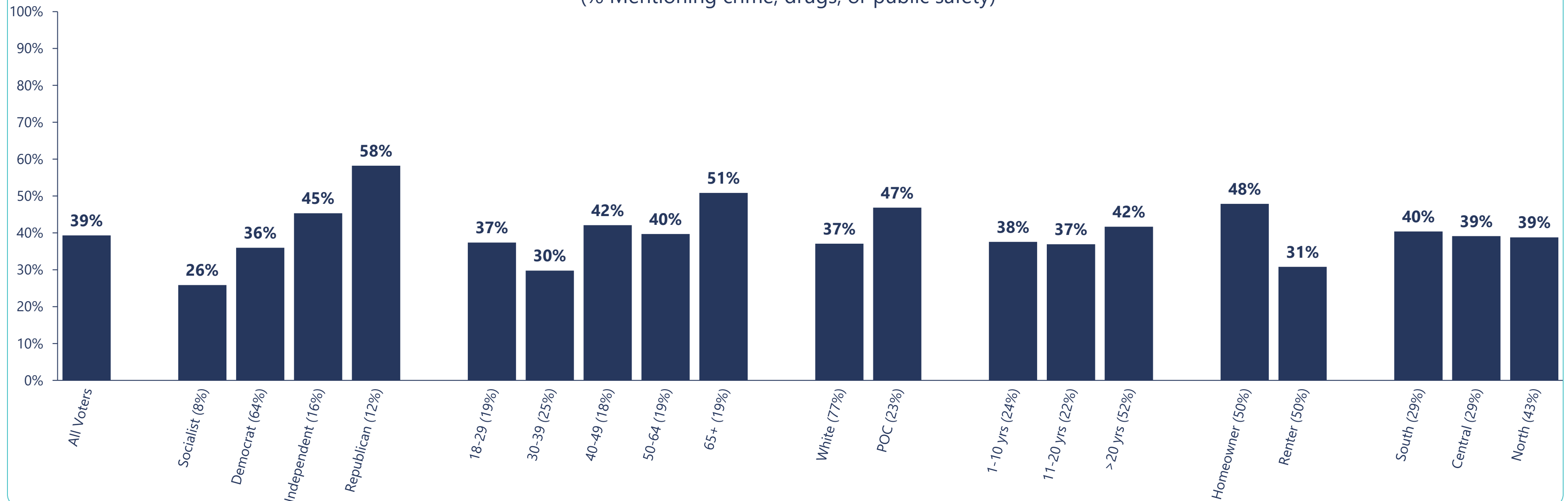
Optimism about the future of the region is highest among more liberal voters, those below 50, and newer residents - although positive intensity ("strongly agree") is low across the board.



Top Concerns - Public Safety

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

(% Mentioning crime, drugs, or public safety)

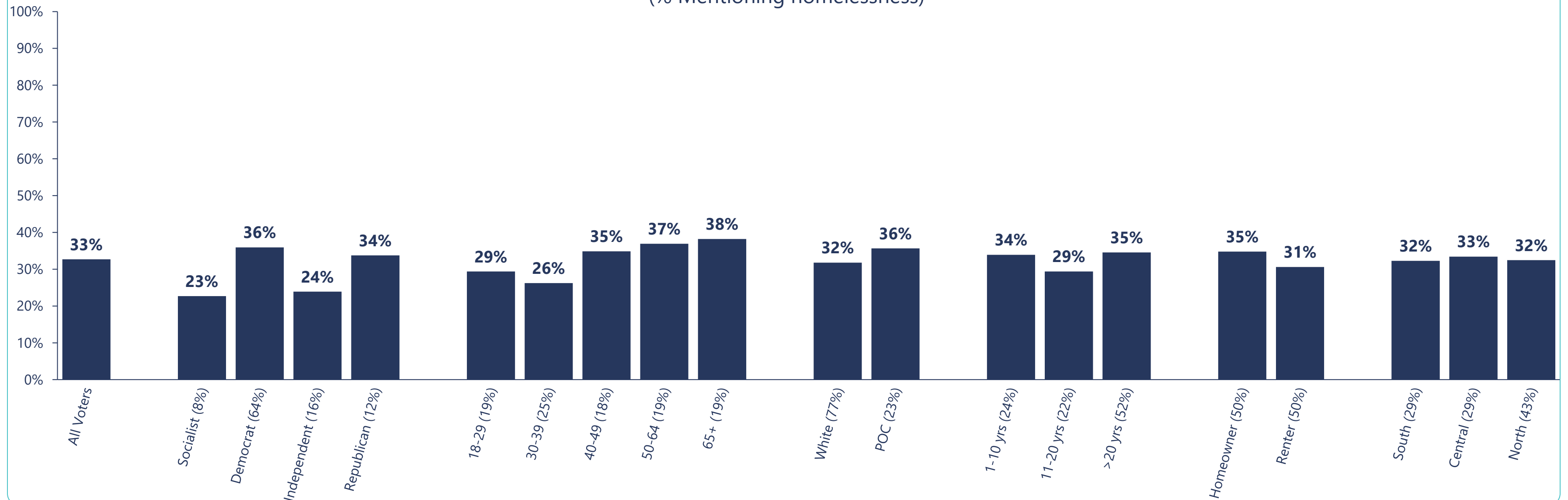


Age and partisan identification are the strongest drivers of concern about public safety.



Top Concerns - Homelessness

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

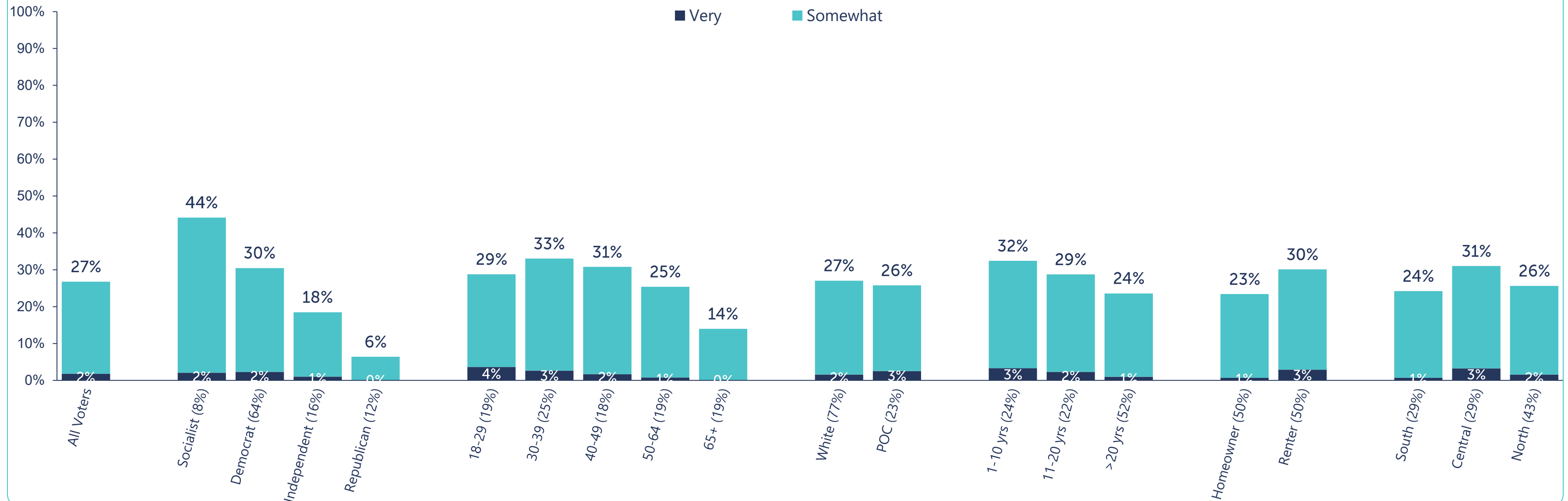


Concern about homelessness is moderately high across subgroups.



Confidence in Economic Plan

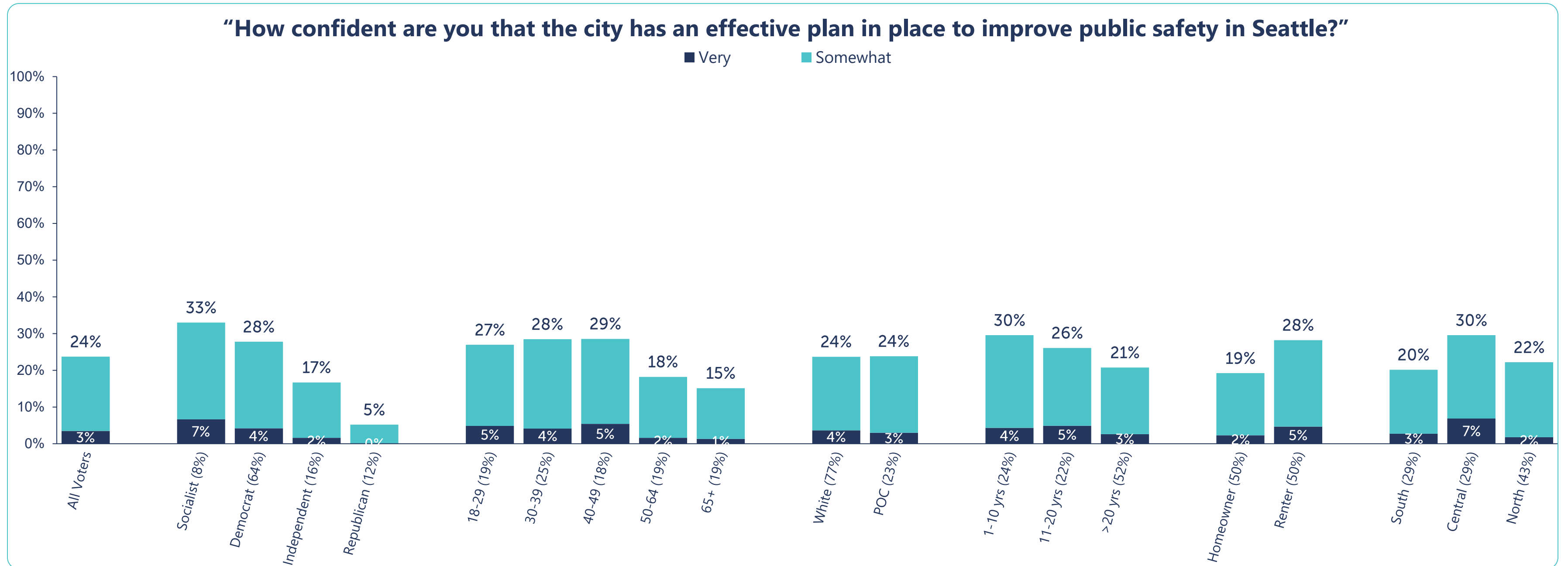
“How confident are you that the city has an effective plan in place to strengthen our local economy by making Seattle a good place to start and grow a business?”



Almost no voters express strong confidence that the city has an effective plan to strengthen the local economy.



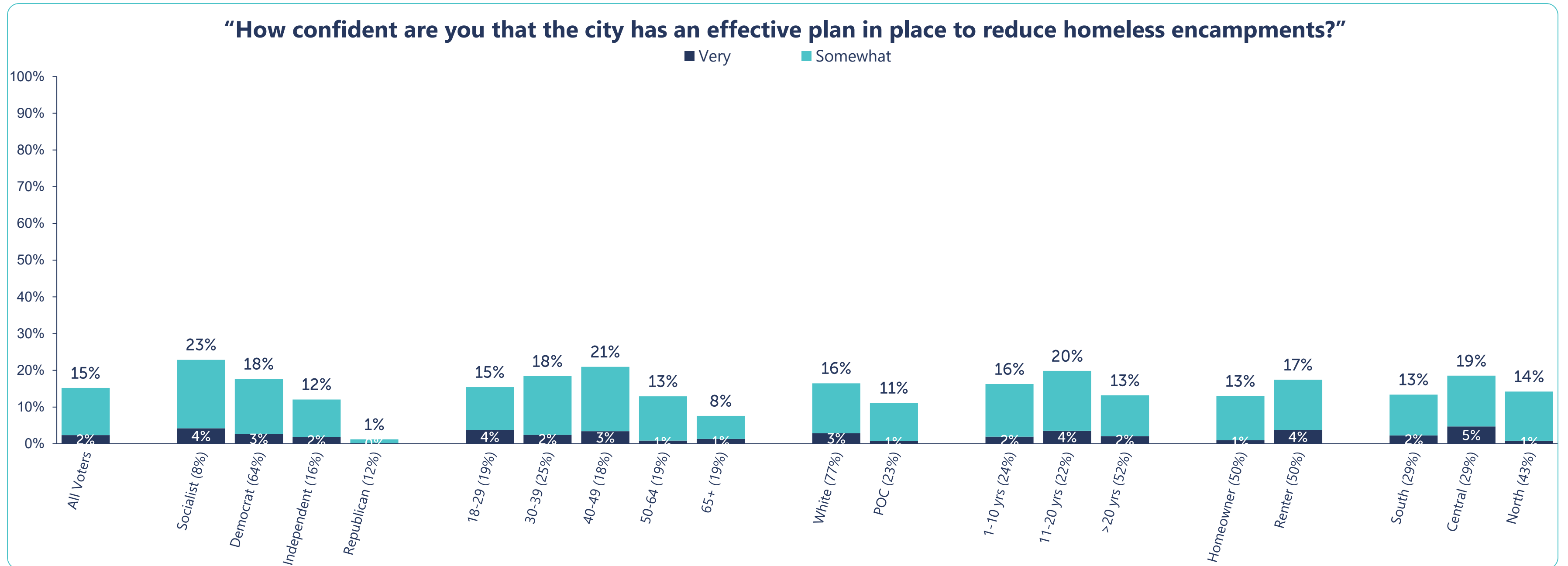
Confidence in Public Safety Plan



Most voters are not confident that the City has an effective plan in place to improve public safety - strong confidence is in the single digits.



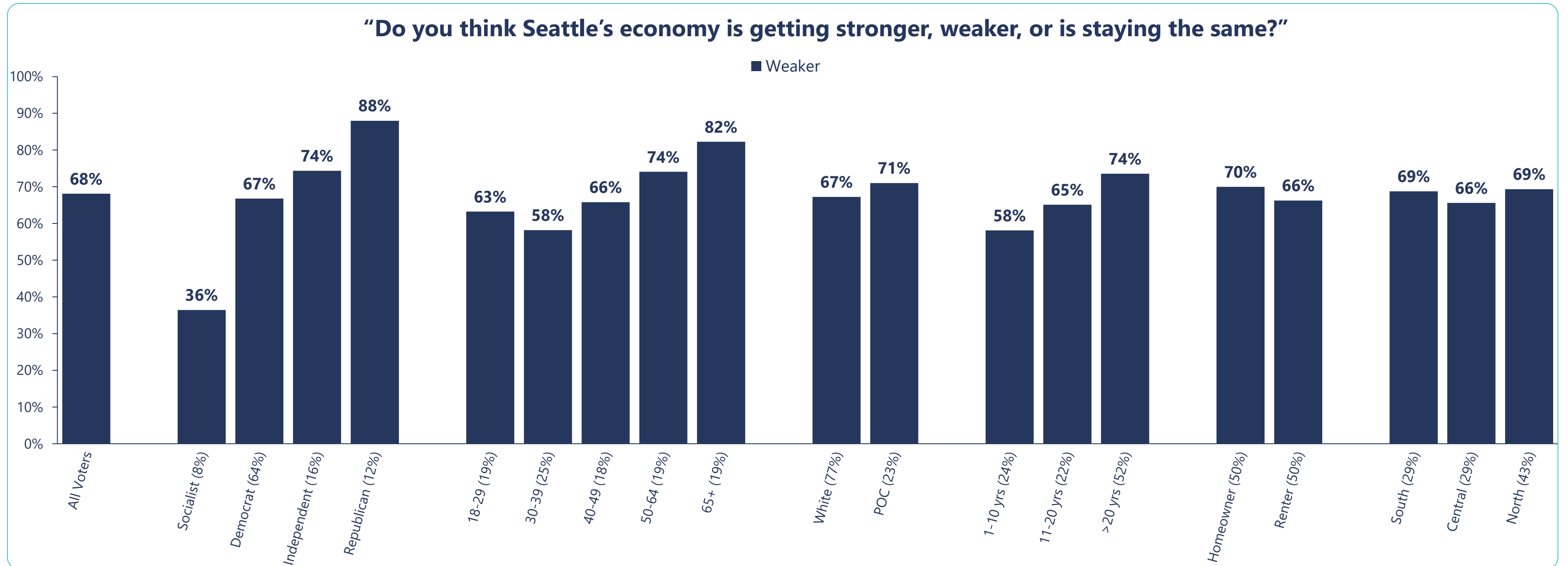
Confidence in Encampment Plan



Most voters are not confident that the City has an effective plan to reduce homeless encampments - strong confidence is in the low single digits.



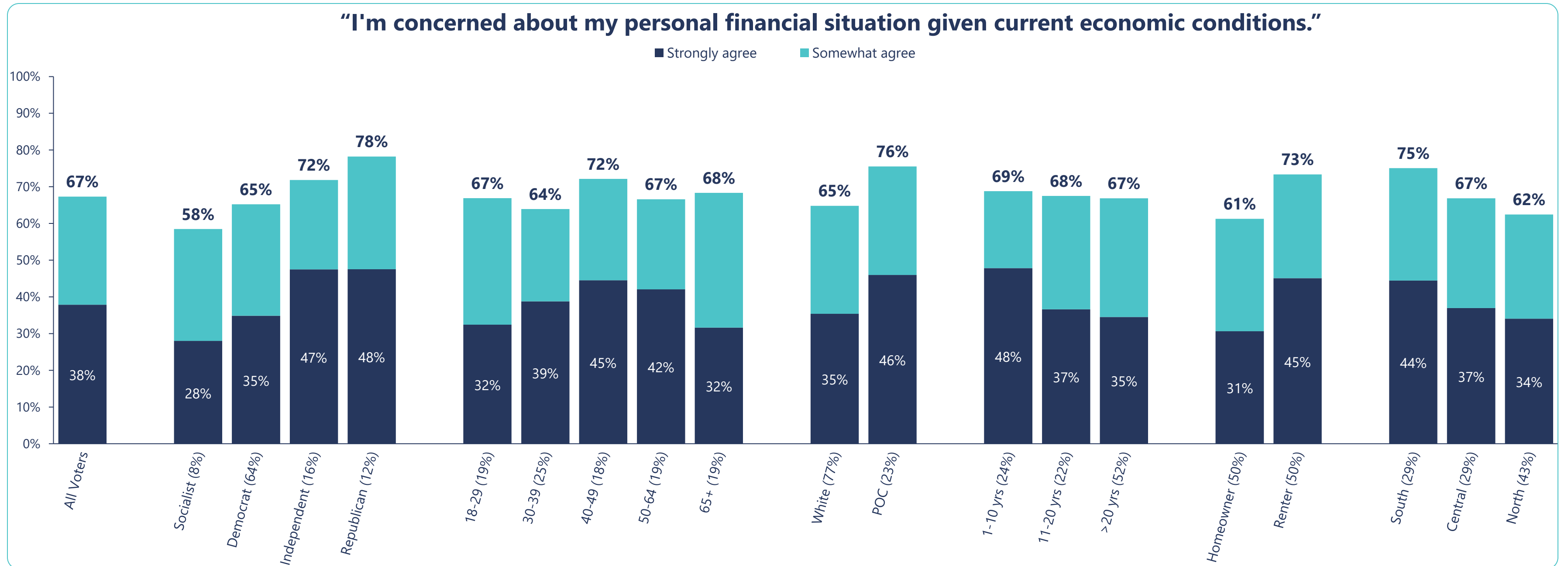
Seattle's Economy



Strong majorities in every major subgroup except Socialists believe Seattle's economy is getting weaker.



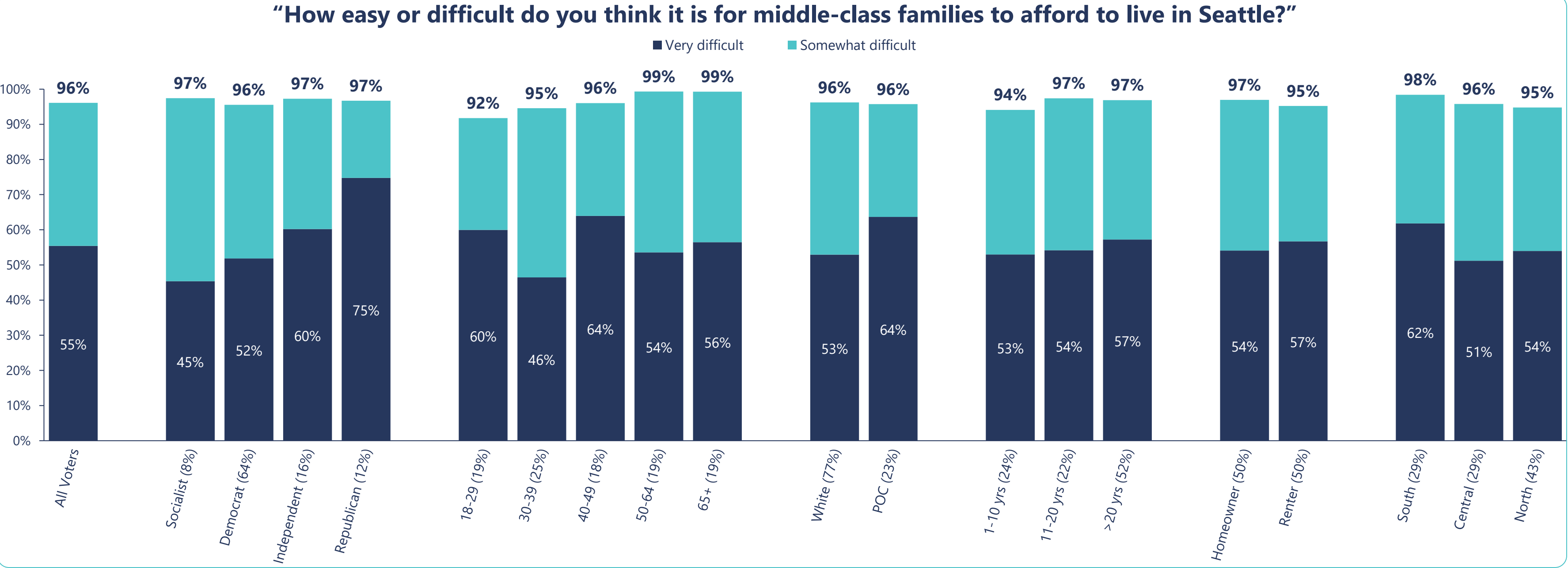
Concern About Personal Finances



Voters across the board are concerned about their personal finances.



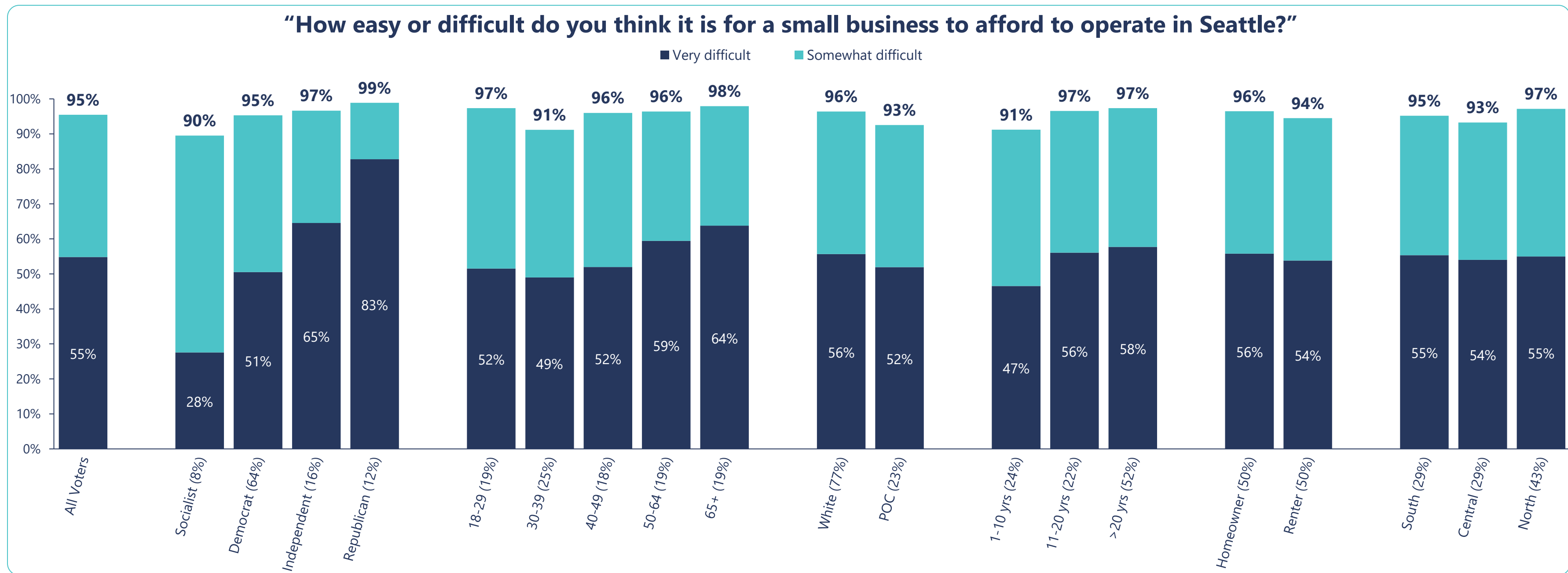
Seattle's Affordability for Families



Virtually every voter in every subgroup believe it is difficult for middle-class families to afford to live in Seattle.



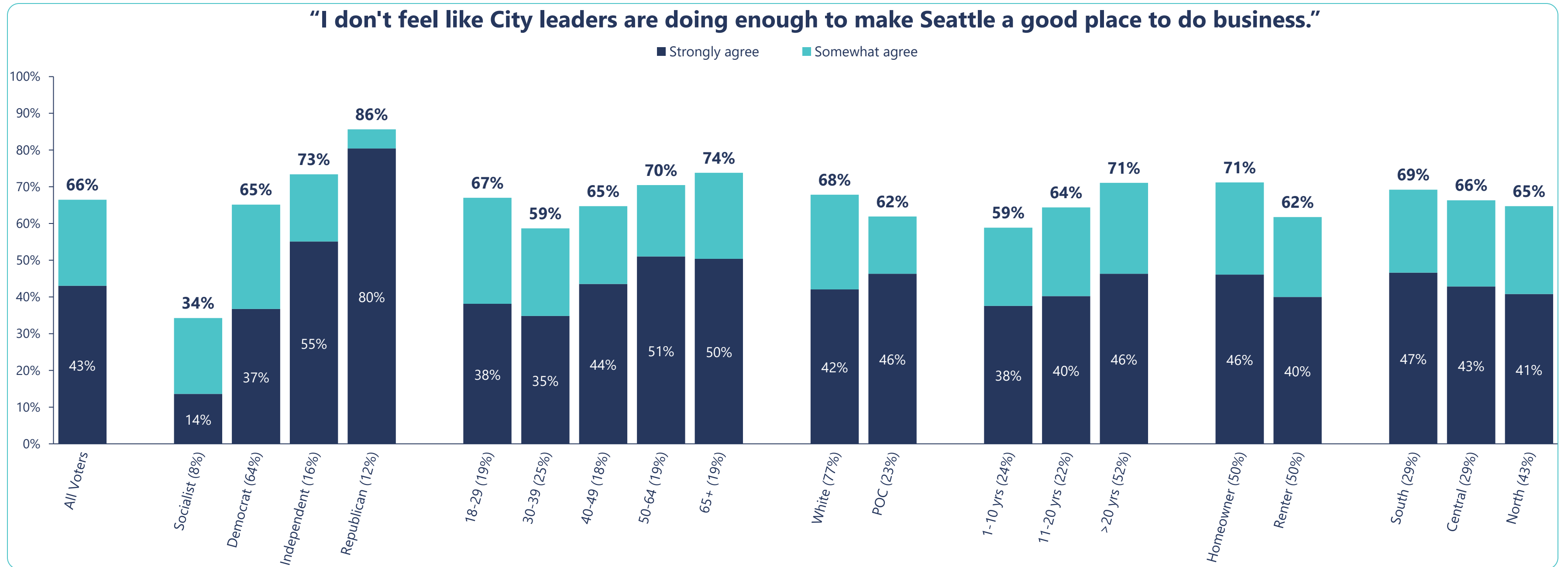
Seattle's Affordability for Businesses



The perception that it is difficult for small businesses to afford to operate in Seattle is universal.



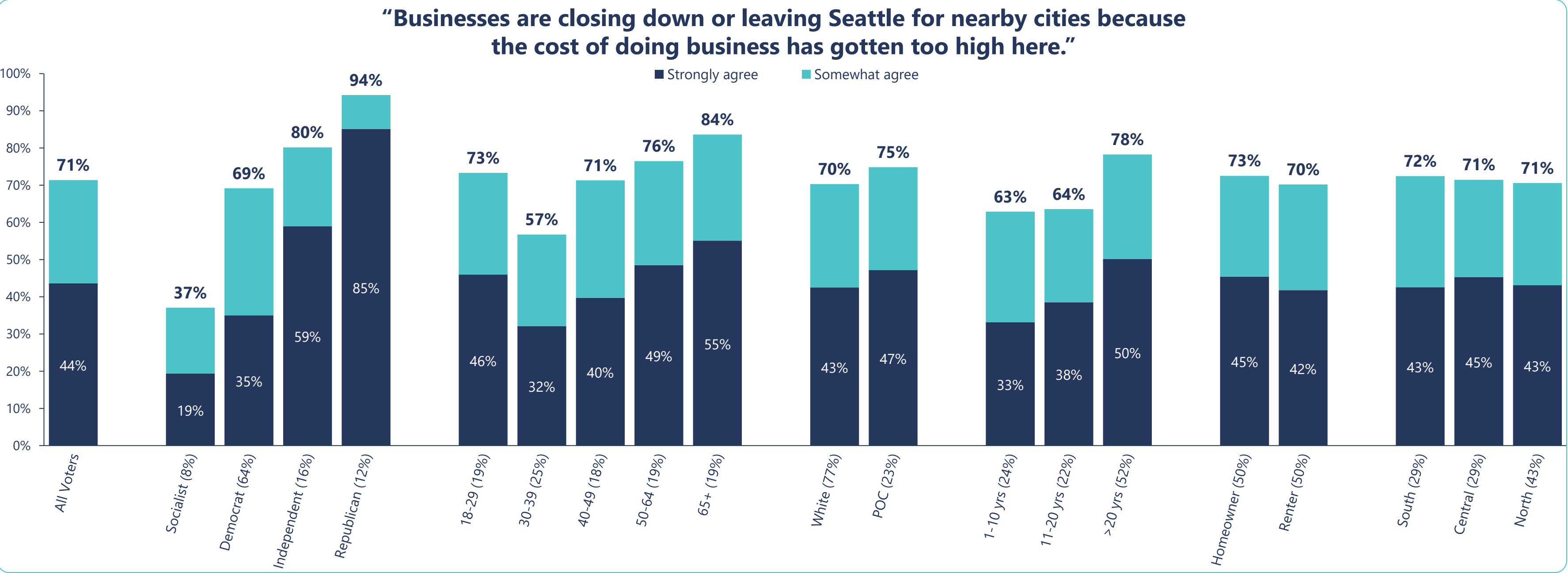
Making Seattle a Good Place for Business



Supermajorities in every major subgroup except Socialists feel that City leadership is not doing enough to make Seattle a good place to do business.



Cost of Doing Business

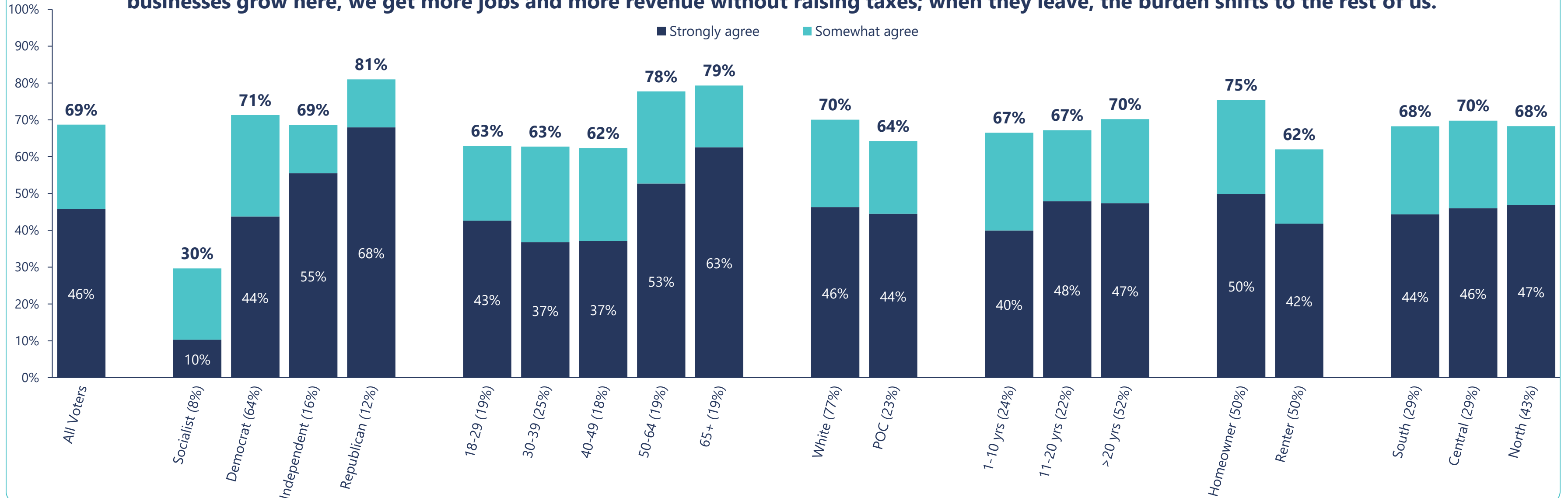


Majorities across all subgroups except Socialists agree that high costs are forcing businesses out of Seattle.



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 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.

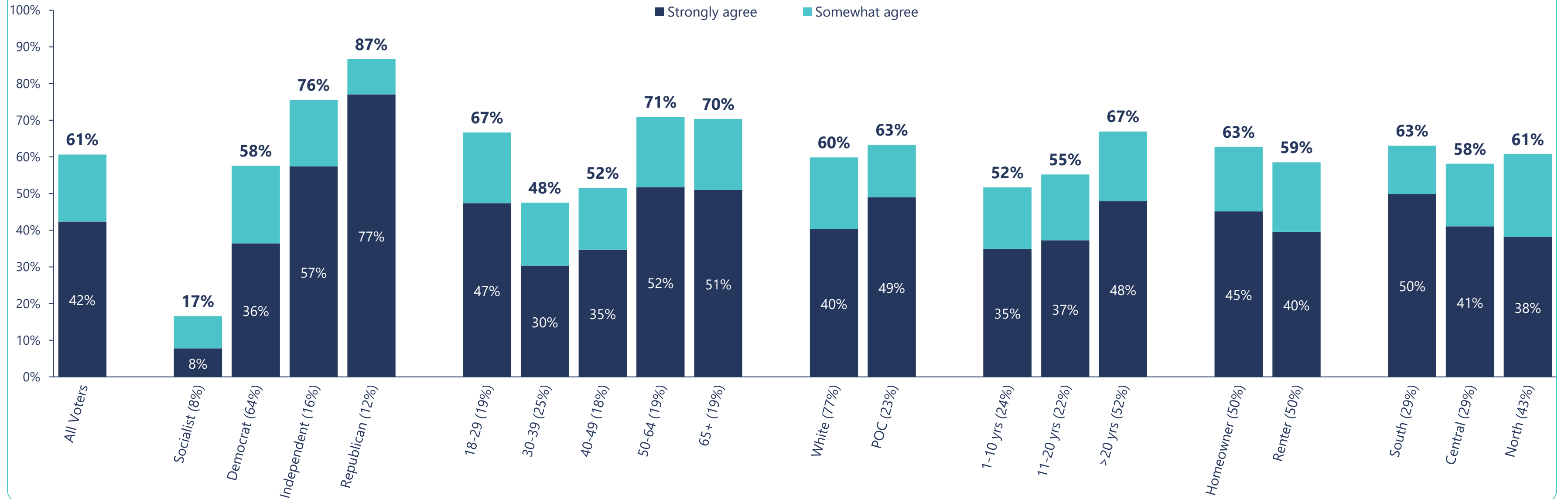


Supermajorities in every major subgroup except Socialists recognize the critical role large businesses play in Seattle's success.



Impact of Higher Business Taxes

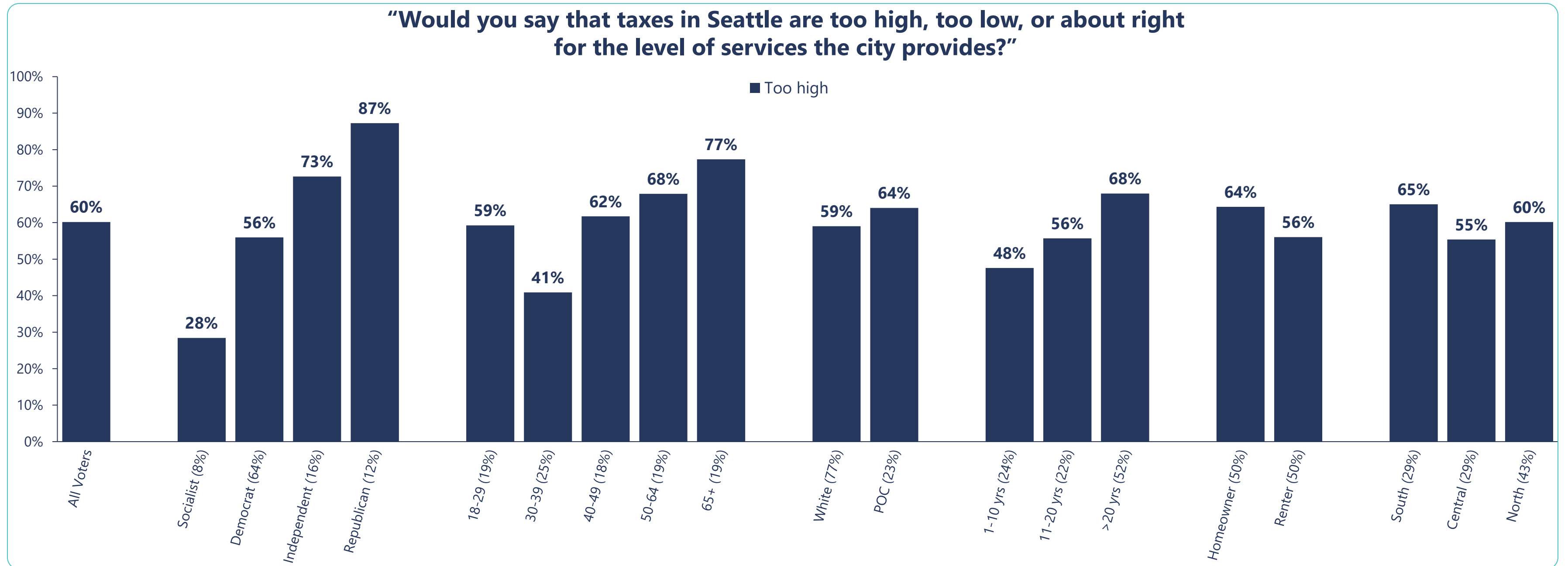
“If we continue to increase taxes on large businesses, companies will just pass the cost of these new taxes on to customers, resulting in an even higher cost of living in Seattle.”



Majorities across most voter subgroups believe that higher business taxes will lead to a higher cost of living.



Taxes in Seattle

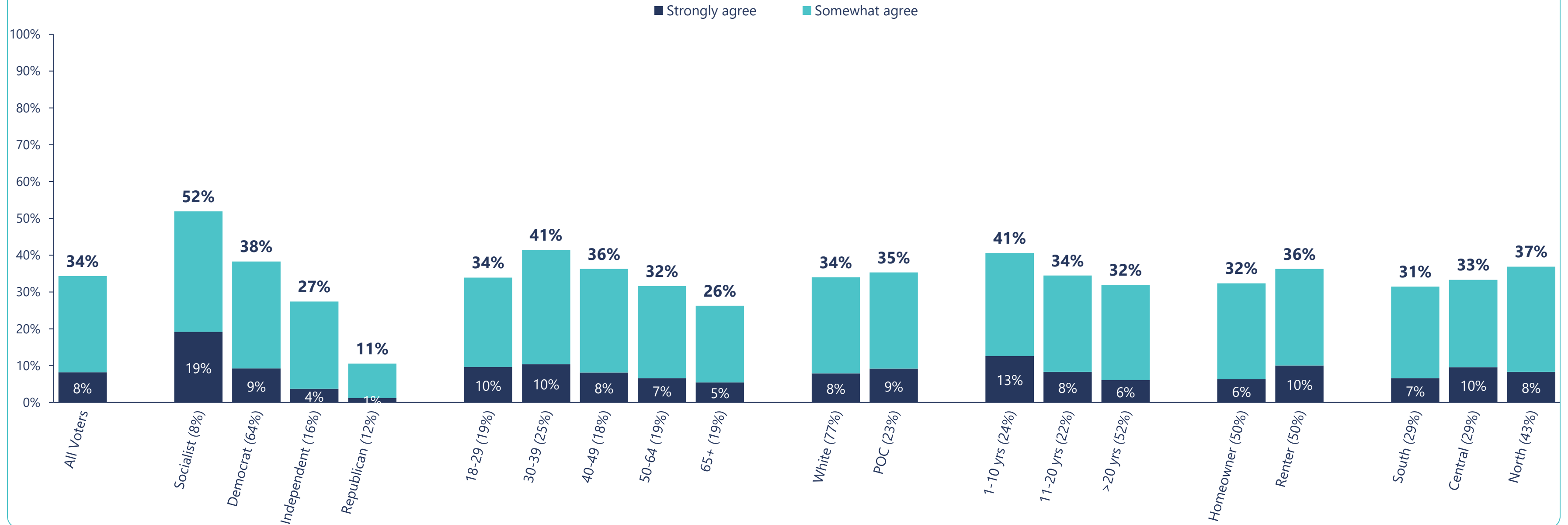


A majority of voters in most subgroups believe Seattle taxes are too high for the level of services the city provides.



Trust City on Spending

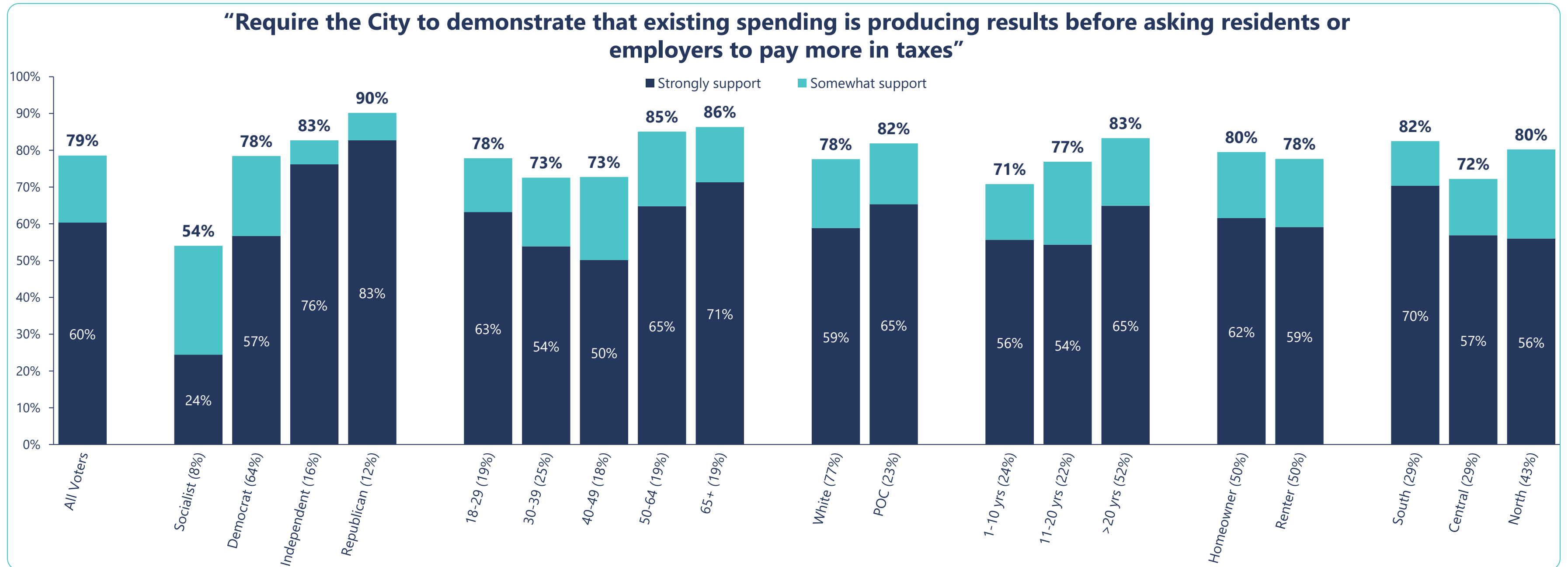
"I trust the City to spend my tax dollars responsibly."



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



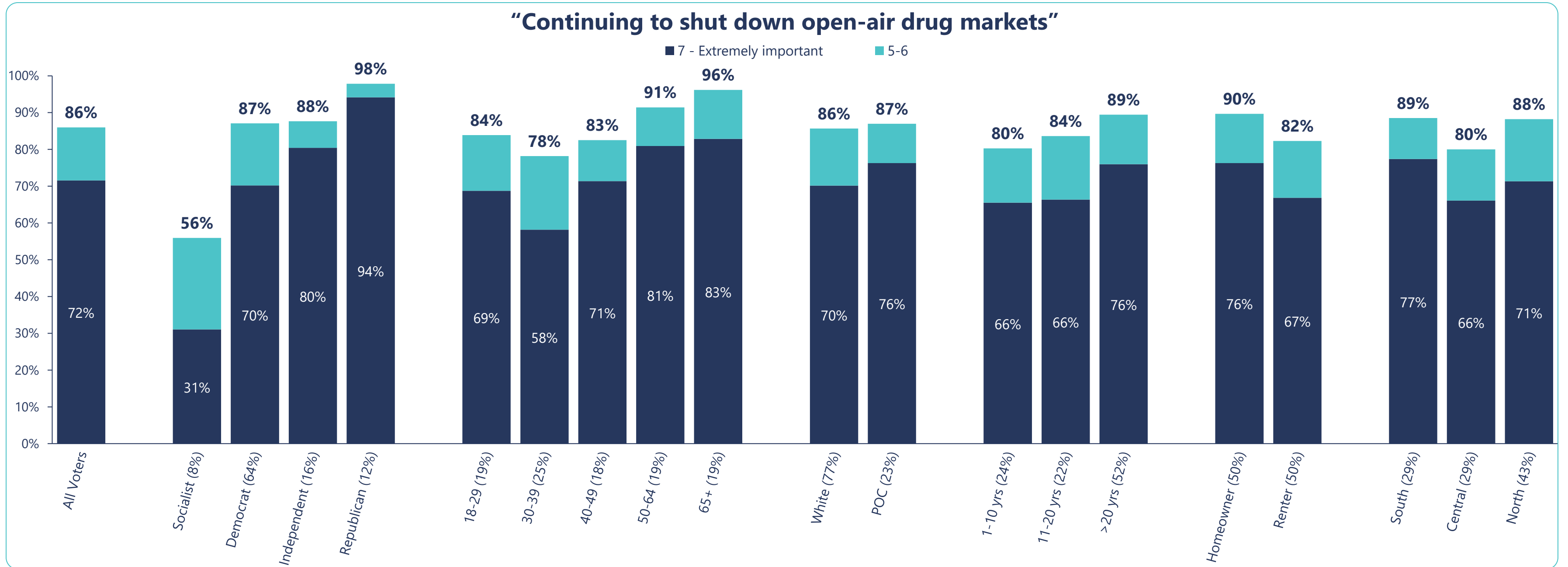
City Spending Policy



A majority in all key voter subgroups – including Socialists - support requiring the City to demonstrate results with the current levels of funding before passing new taxes.



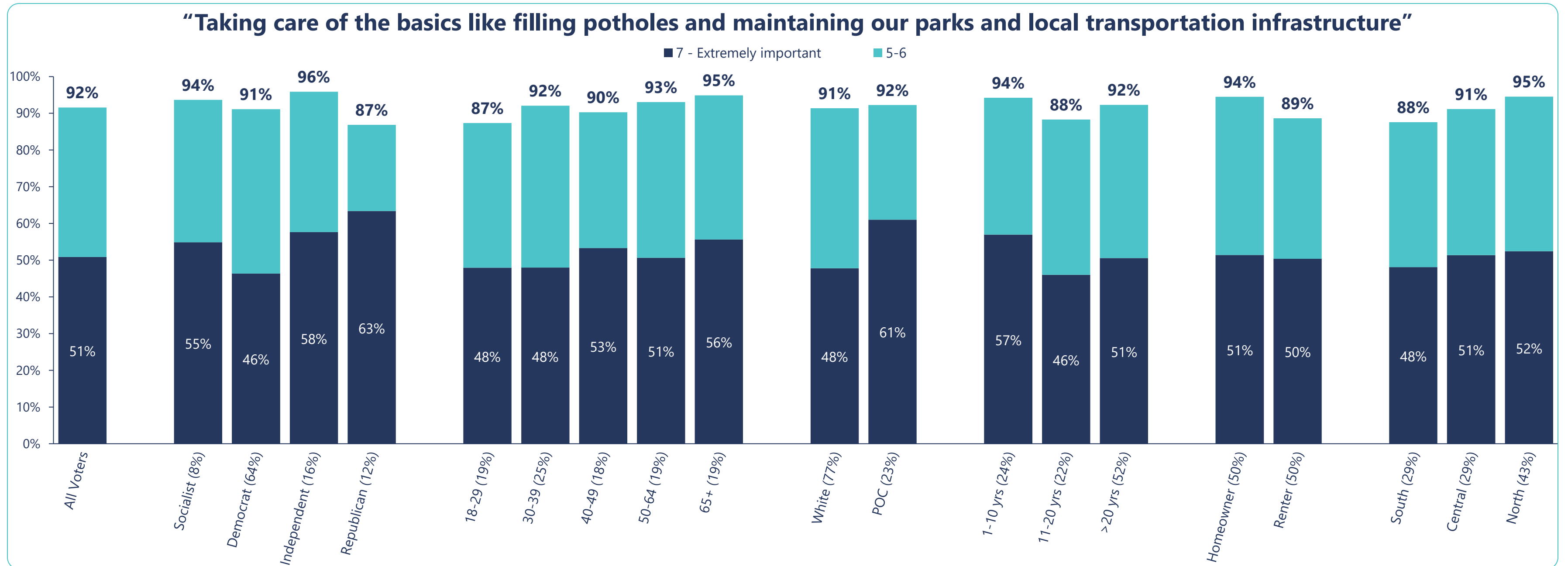
Shutting Down Drug Markets



A majority of voters in all key subgroups, including Socialists, say that shutting down open air drug markets is important. And strong majorities in all subgroups except Socialists say it is "extremely important."



Taking Care of Basics

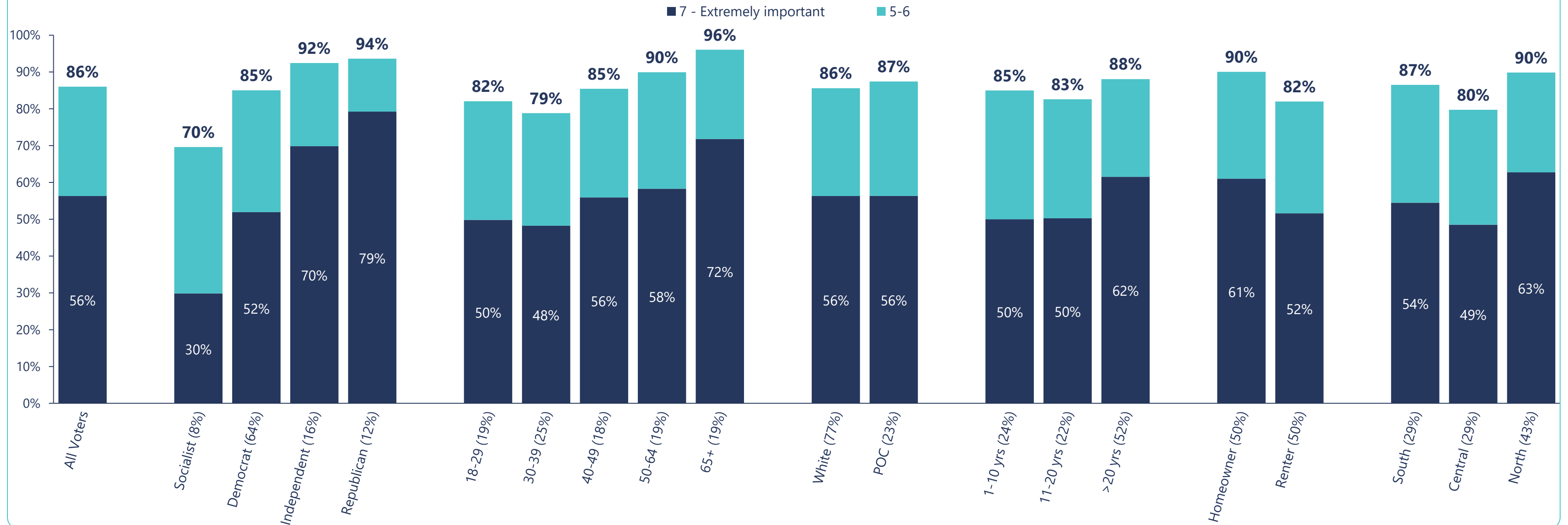


Virtually all voters think it's important for City leaders to focus on taking care of the basics.



Helping Local Businesses w/Public Safety

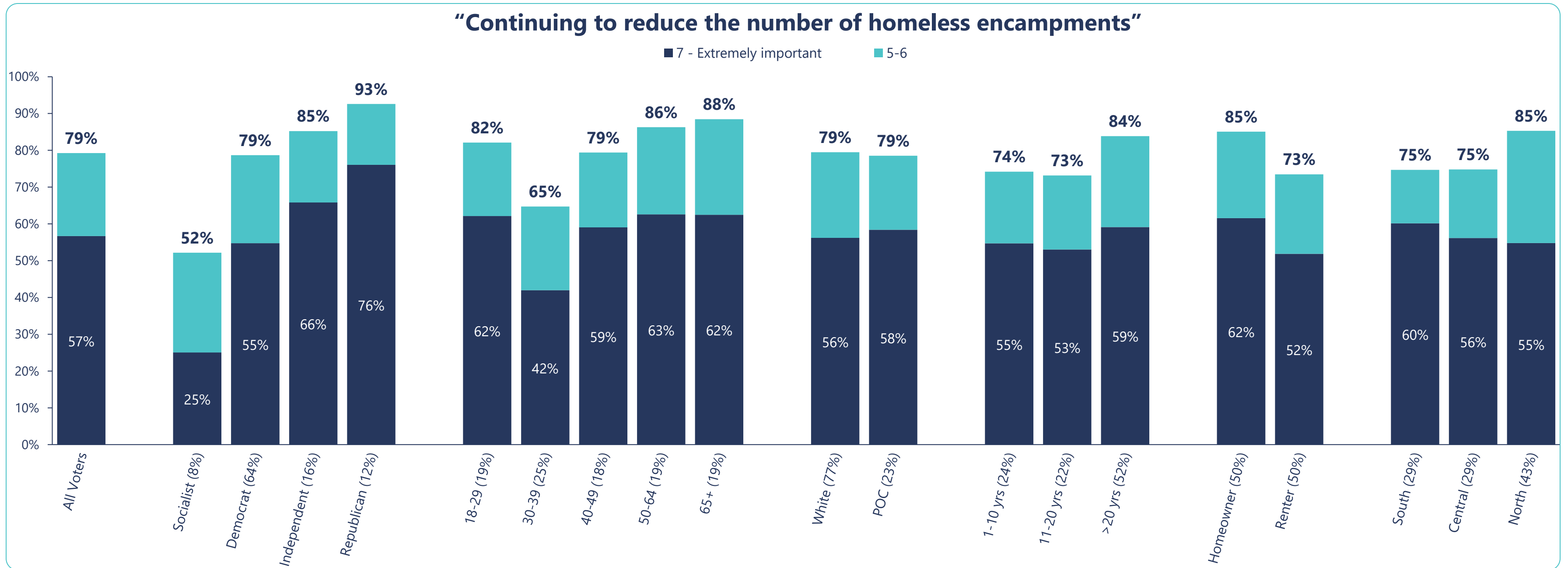
“Helping local businesses deal with public safety concerns.”



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



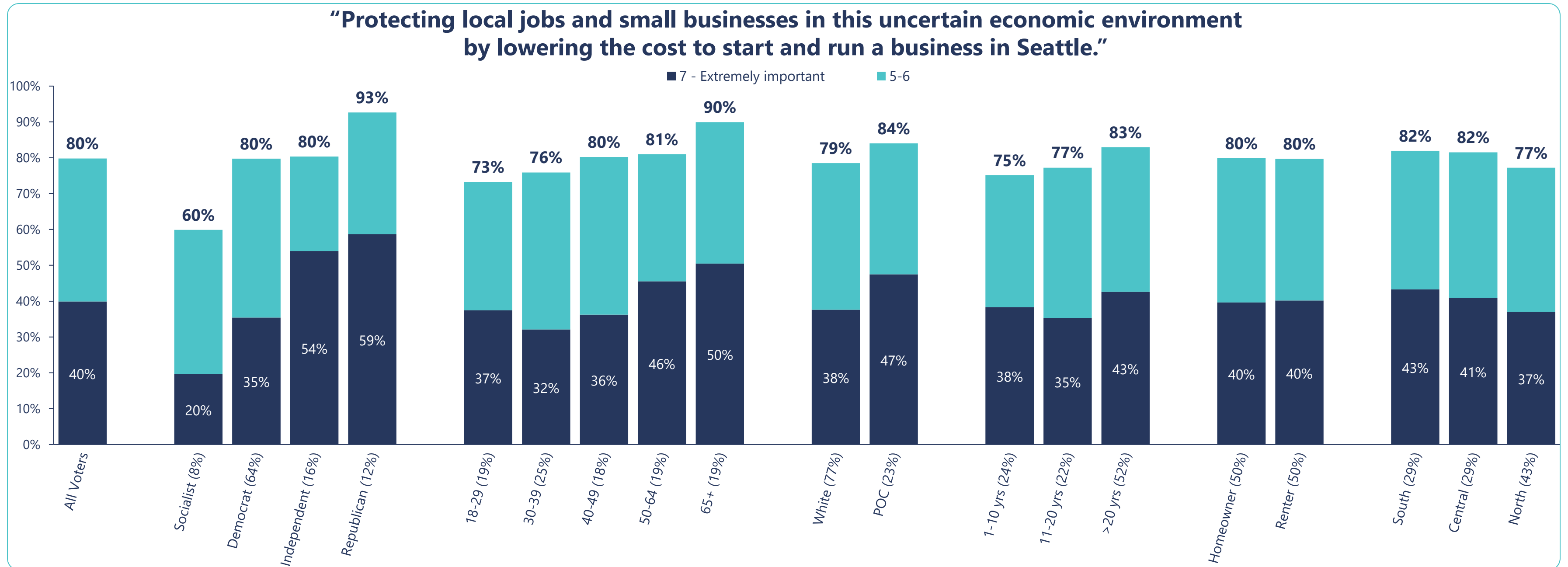
Reducing Encampments



Continuing to reduce the number of encampments is a priority for a majority of voters in all key subgroups.



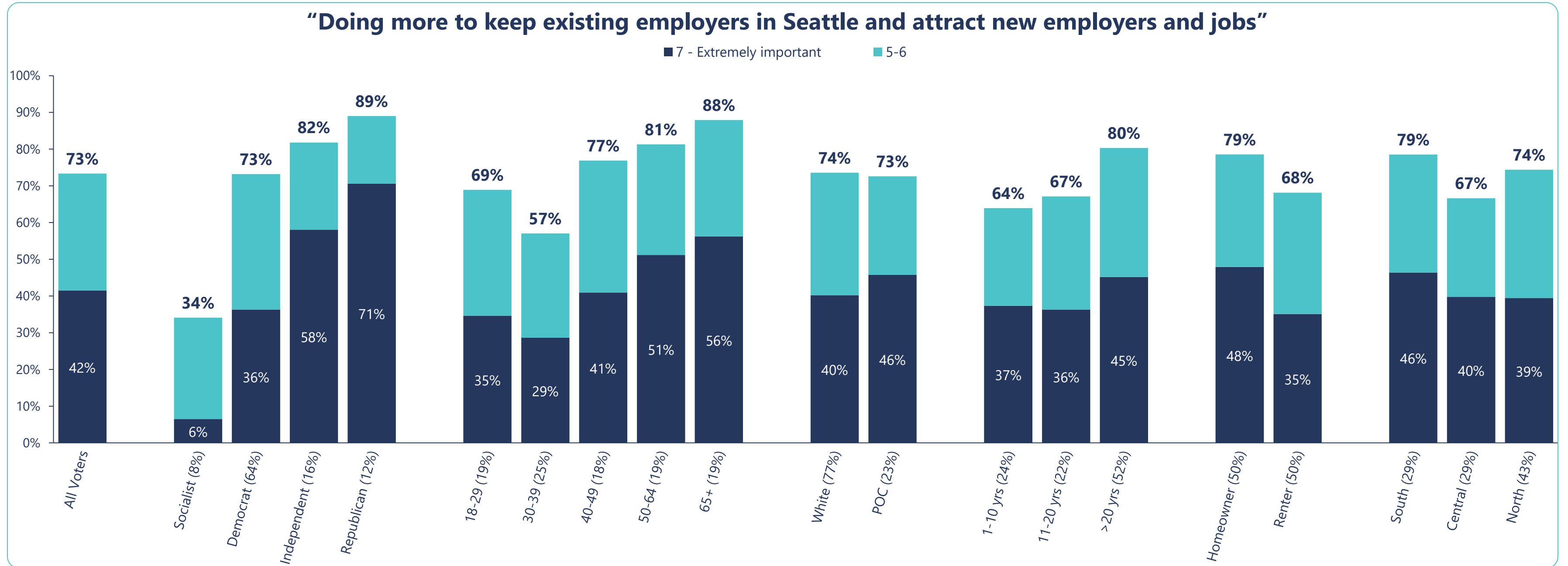
Protecting Local Jobs & Small Businesses



A majority of voters in all subgroups think it important to protect local jobs and small businesses by lowering the cost to start and run a business.



Fostering Job Opportunities

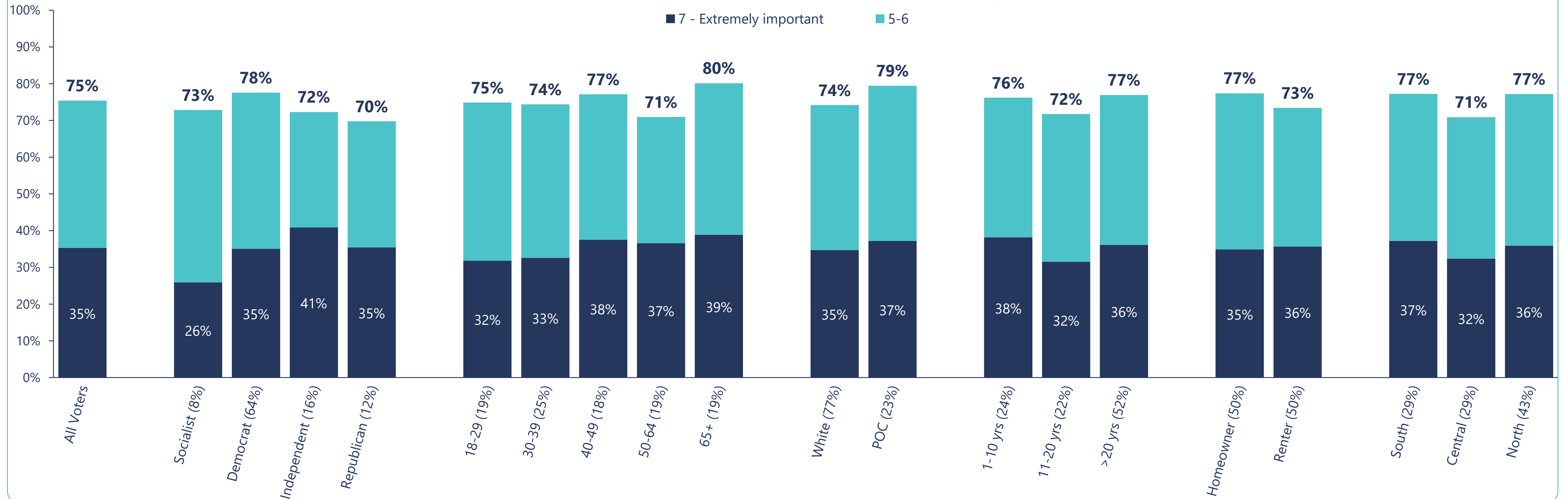


Strong majorities in every subgroup except Socialists say it is important for City leaders to do more to keep existing jobs and attract new employers to Seattle.



Creating Family Wage Jobs

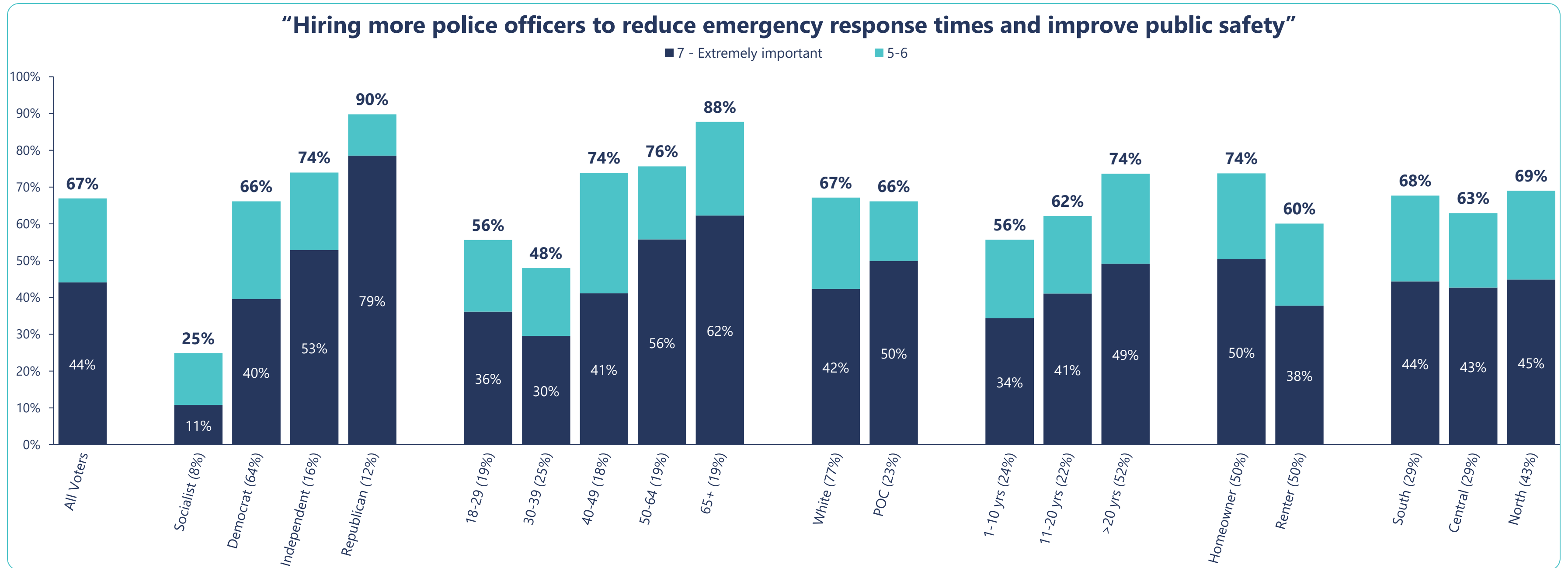
“Incentivizing businesses to create family wage jobs here in Seattle so that our local economy stays resilient in the face of national economic uncertainty.”



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



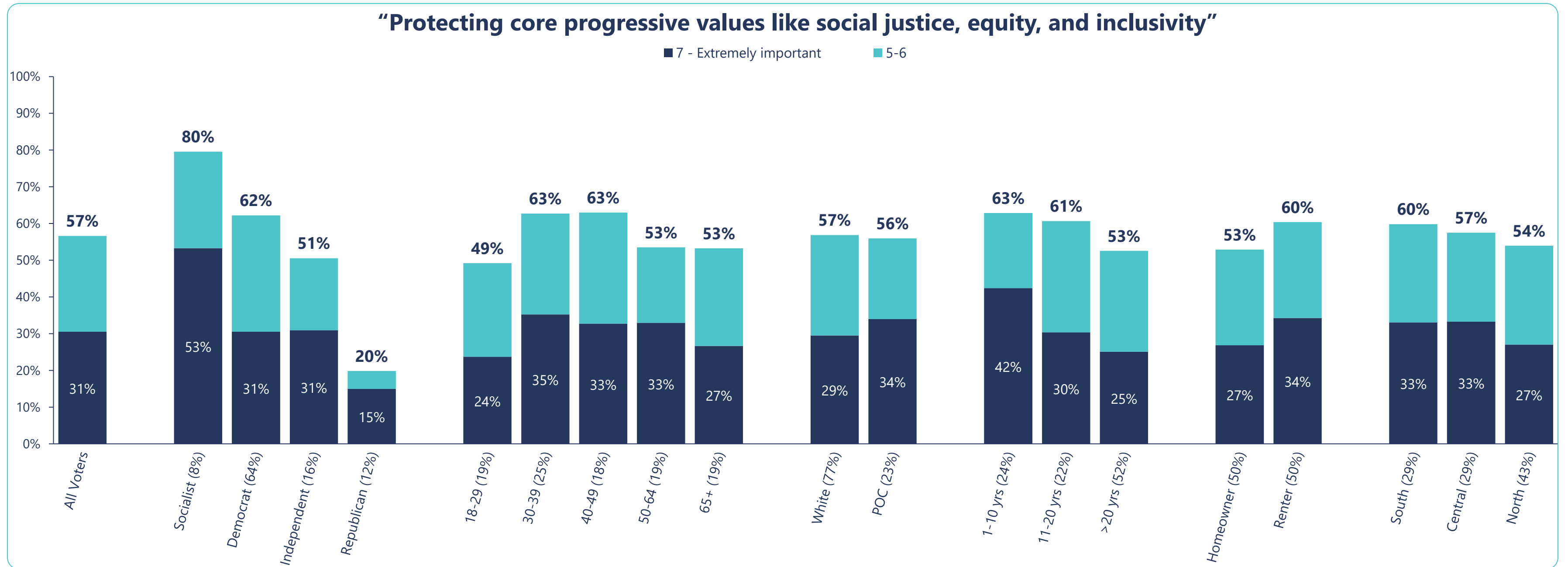
Hiring More Police Officers



Except for Socialists, hiring more officers is important to majorities across most subgroups.



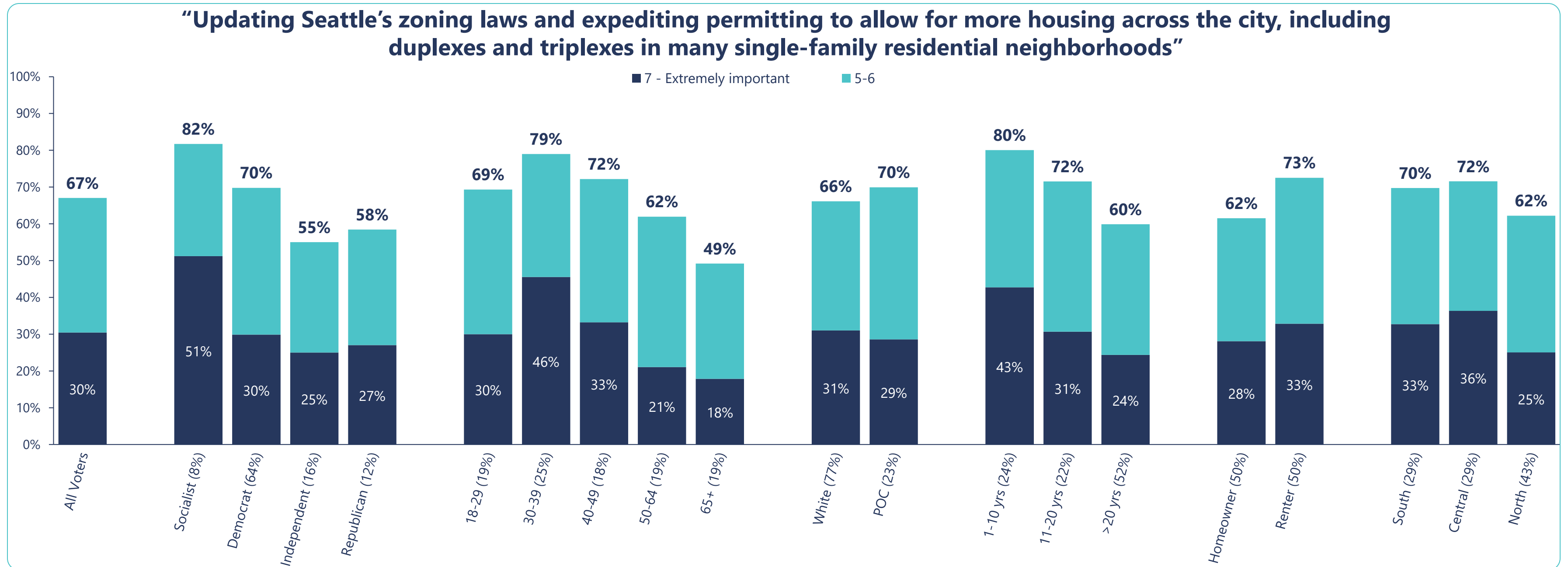
Protecting Progressive Values



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



Updating Zoning Laws

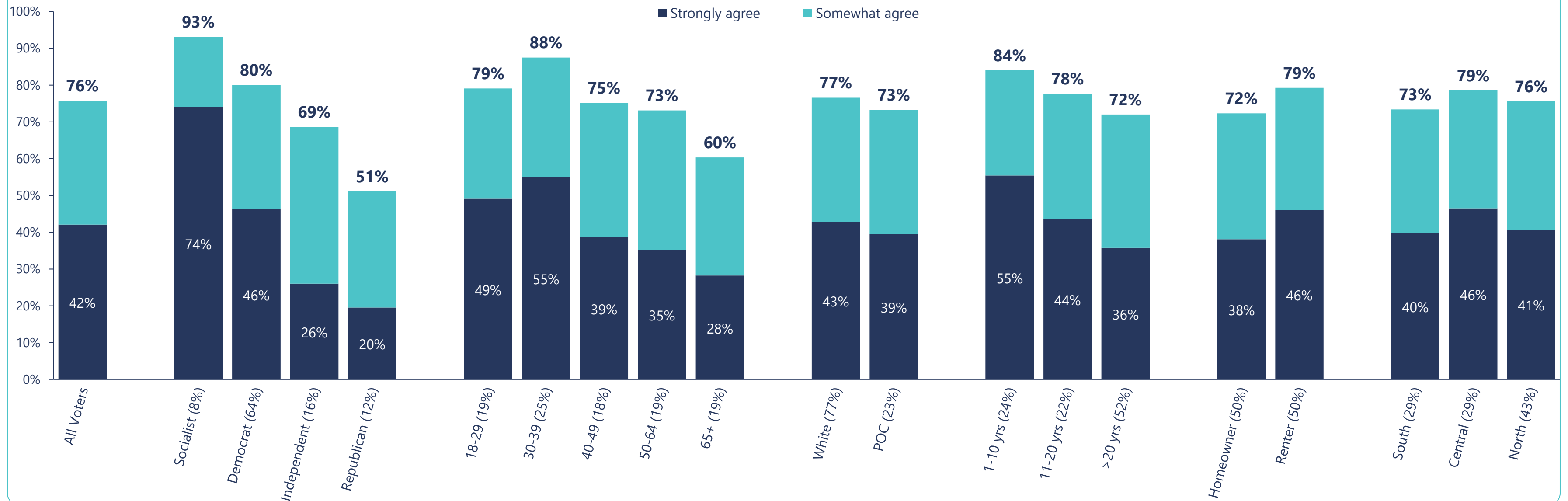


With the exception of voters above the age of 65, a majority of voters in key subgroups – including homeowners – support Updating Seattle’s zoning laws and expediting permitting.



Building More Housing Near Transit

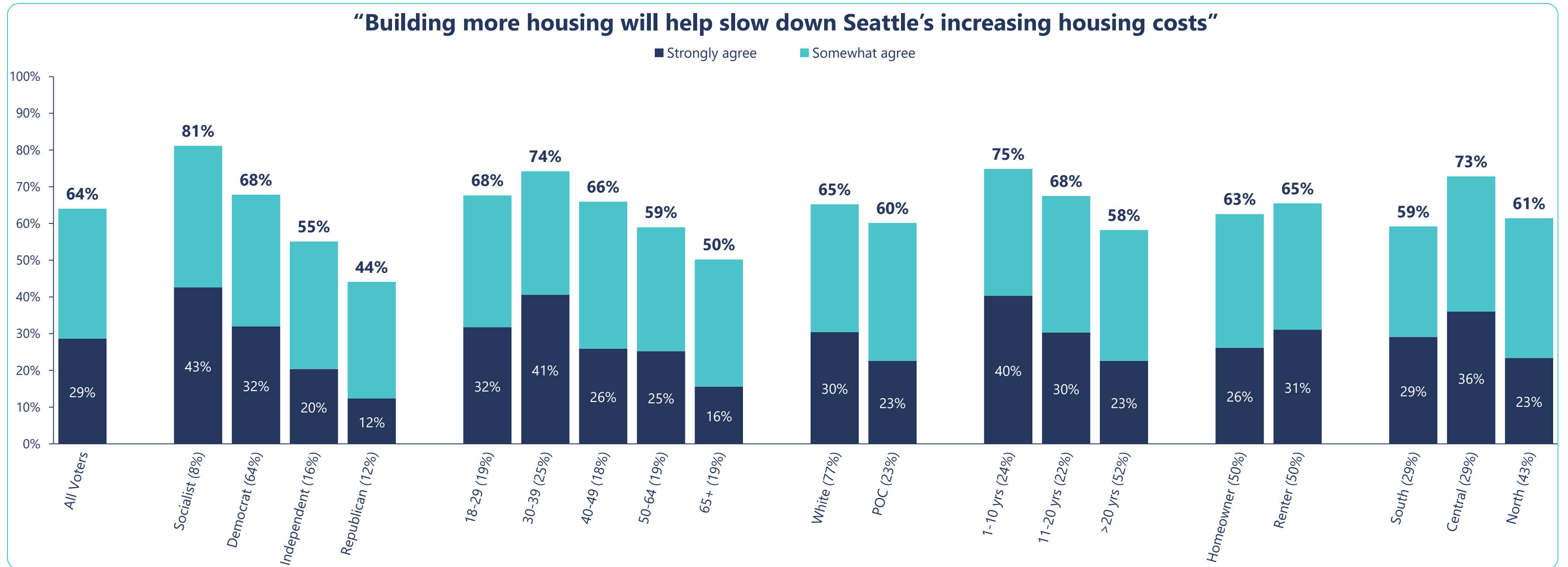
"I support building more housing near transit and commercial areas, even if it changes the character of those neighborhoods."



Strong majorities across most subgroups – including homeowners - support building more housing near transit and commercial areas, even if it changes the character of those neighborhoods.



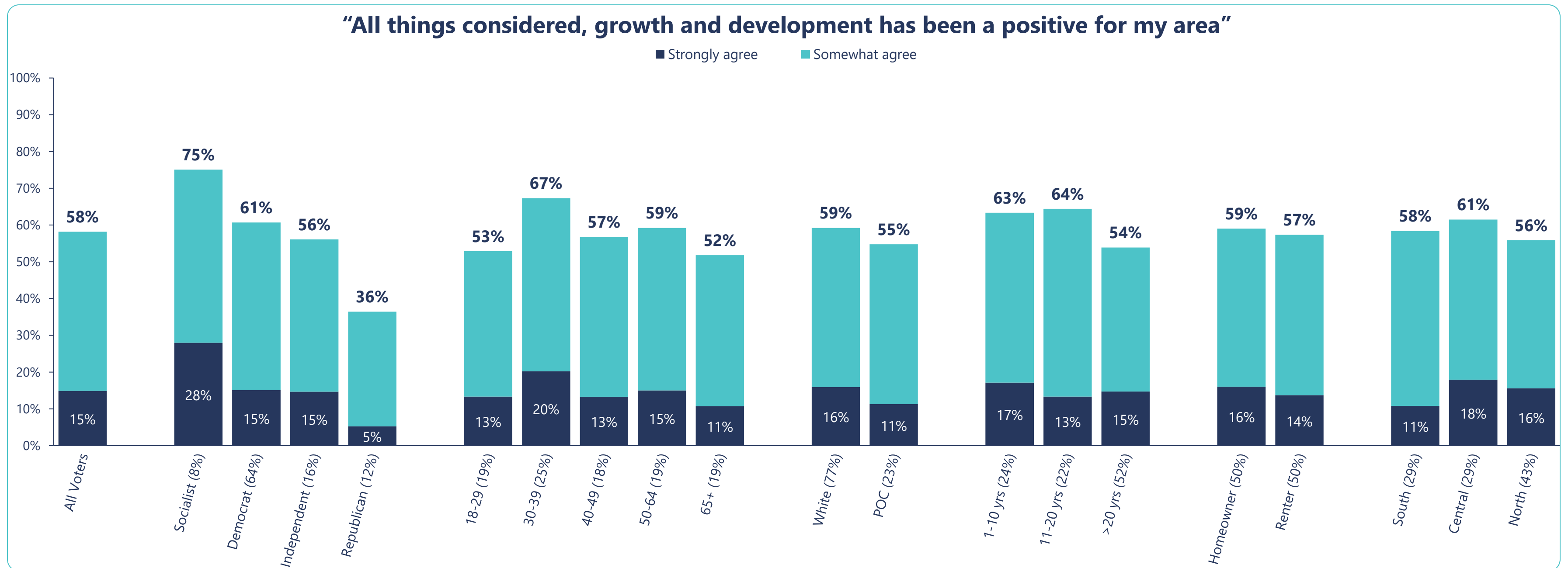
Building Additional Housing



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



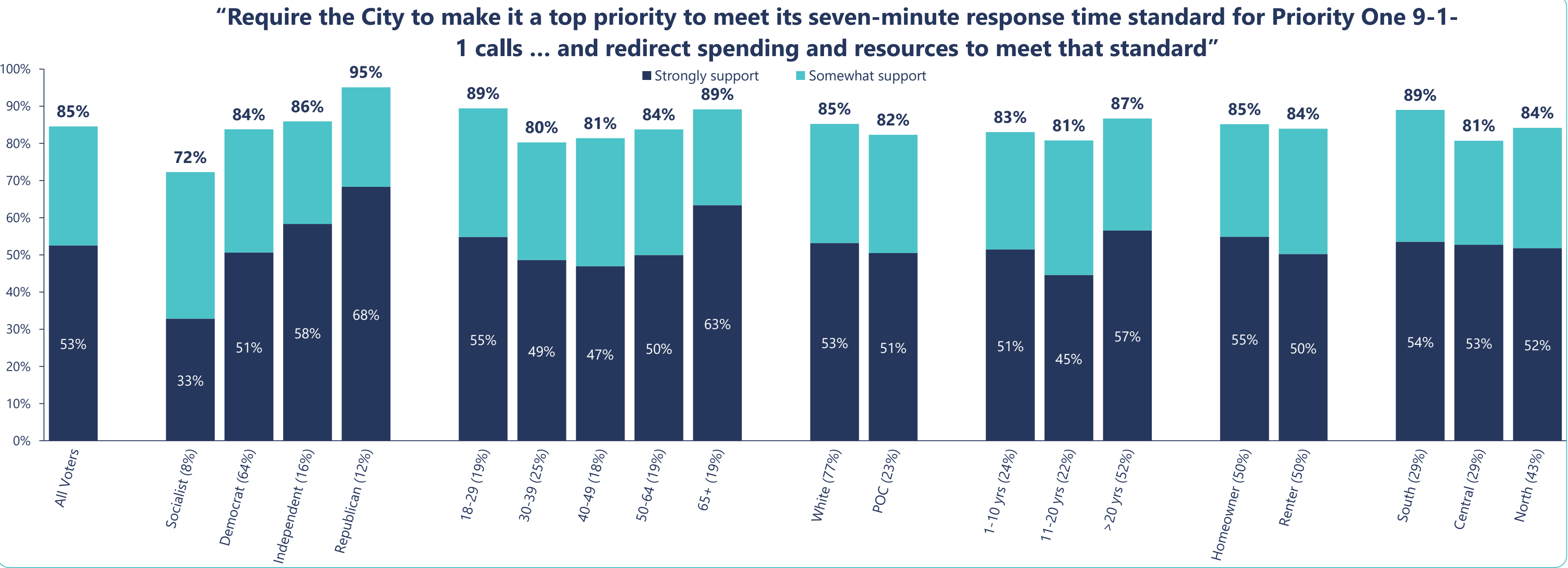
Growth and Development



A majority in all subgroups - except Republicans - feel that overall growth has been a positive for their area.



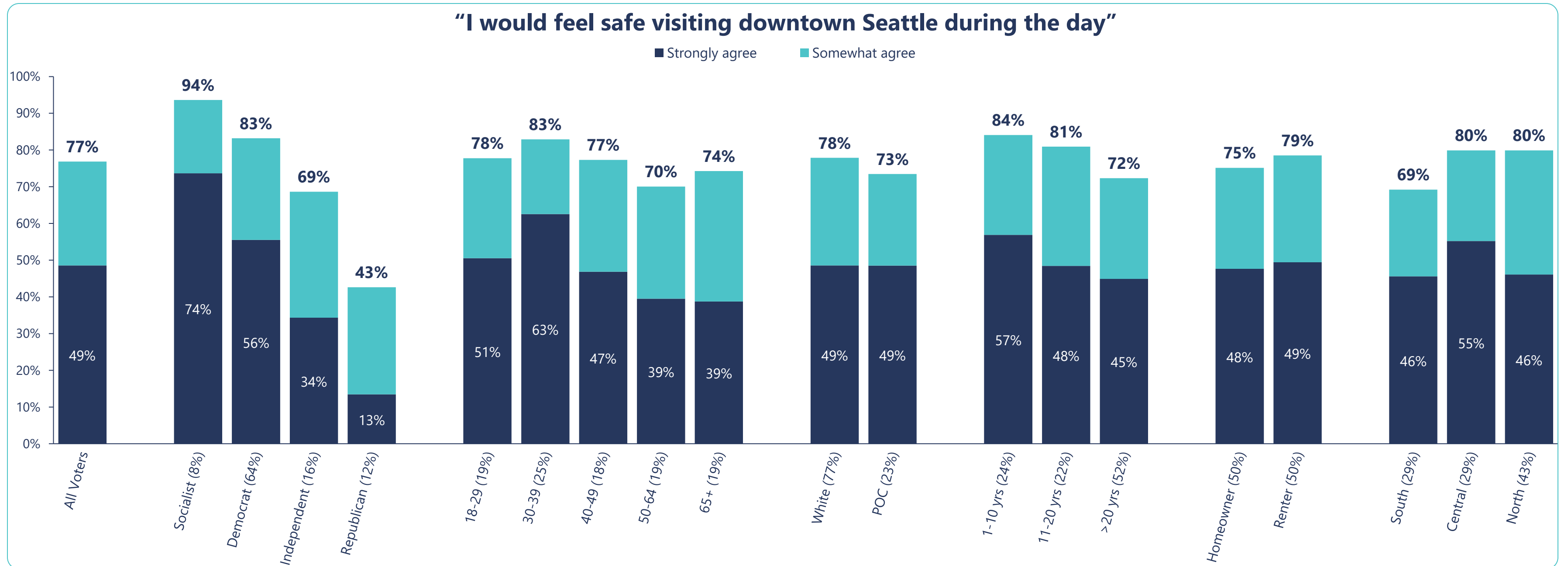
9-1-1 Response Time



Strong majorities support requiring the City to focus on improving 9-1-1 response times.



Safety Downtown: Daytime

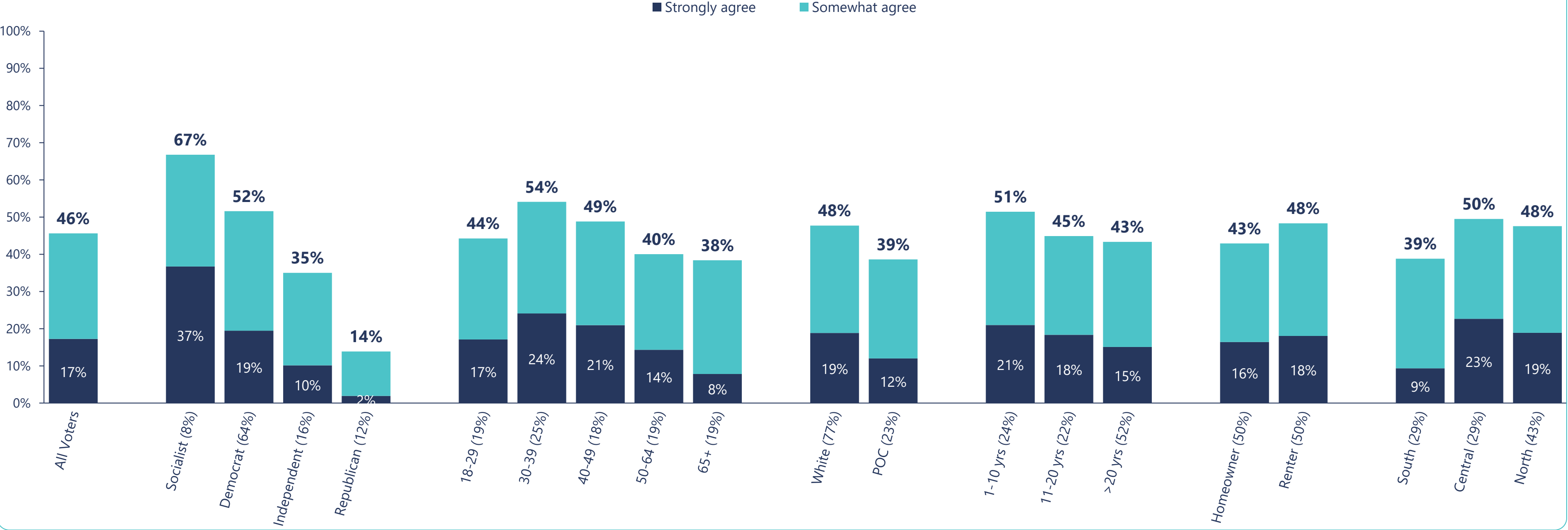


A strong majority in every major subgroup – except Republicans - feel safe visiting downtown during the day.



Safety Downtown: Nighttime

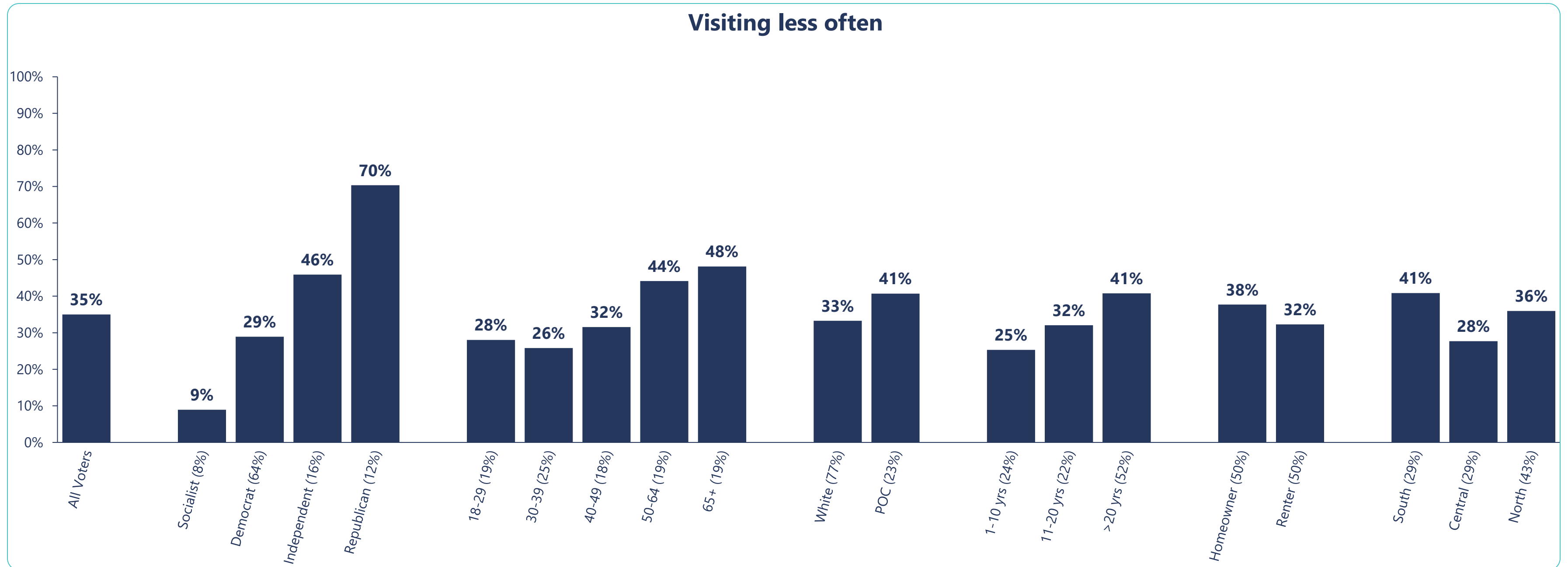
“I would feel safe visiting downtown Seattle at night”



Partisan ideology is the biggest driver of feeling safe visiting downtown at night.



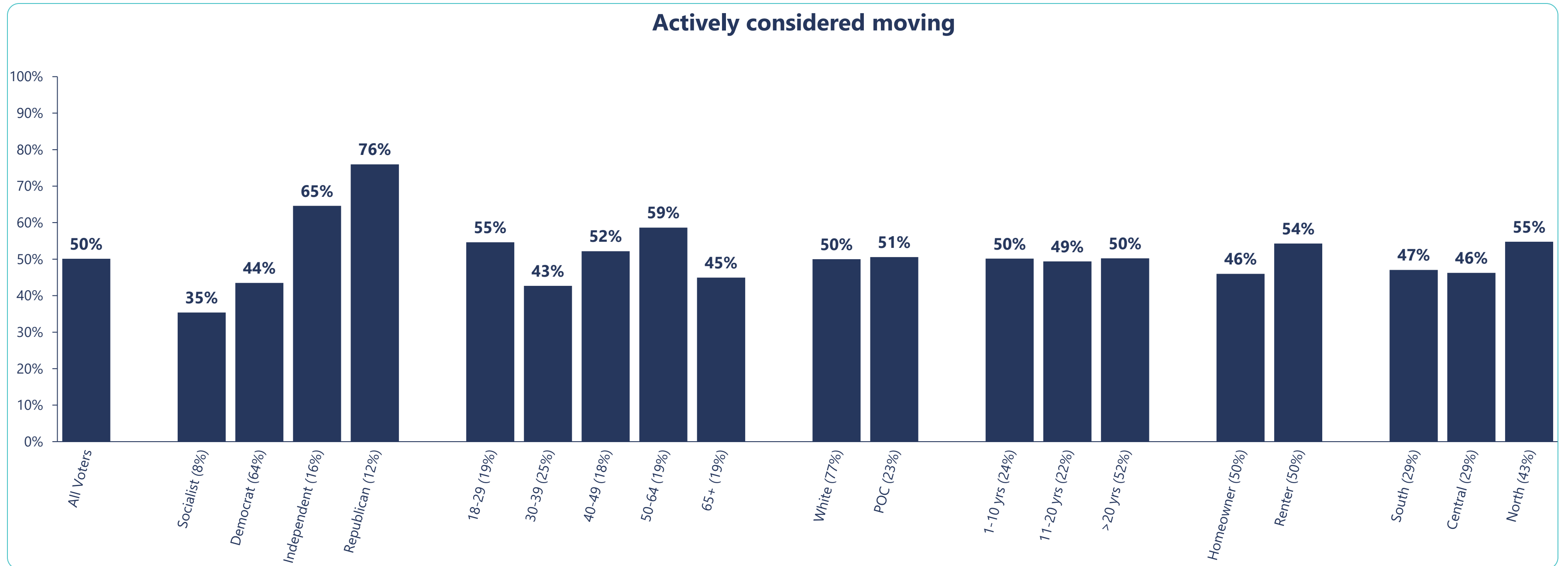
Visiting Downtown Less Often



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



Considered Moving



Independents and Republicans are the most likely to have actively considered moving.



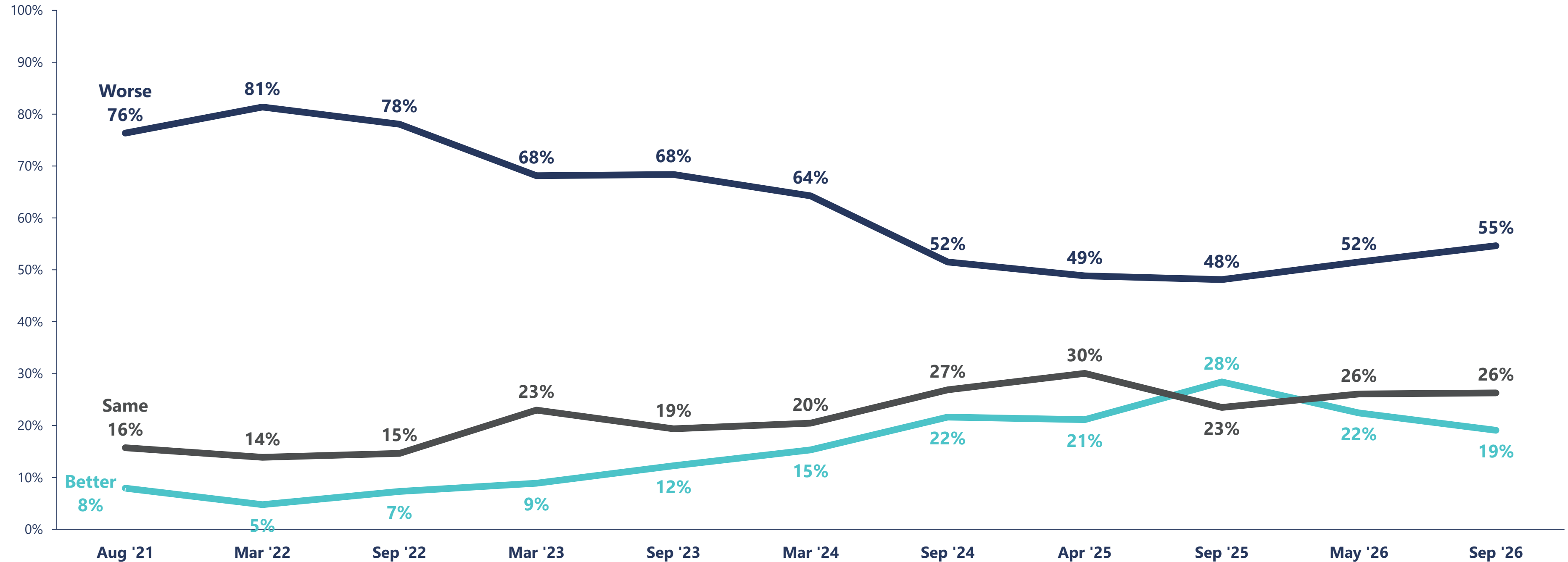
Trend Data





Quality of Life

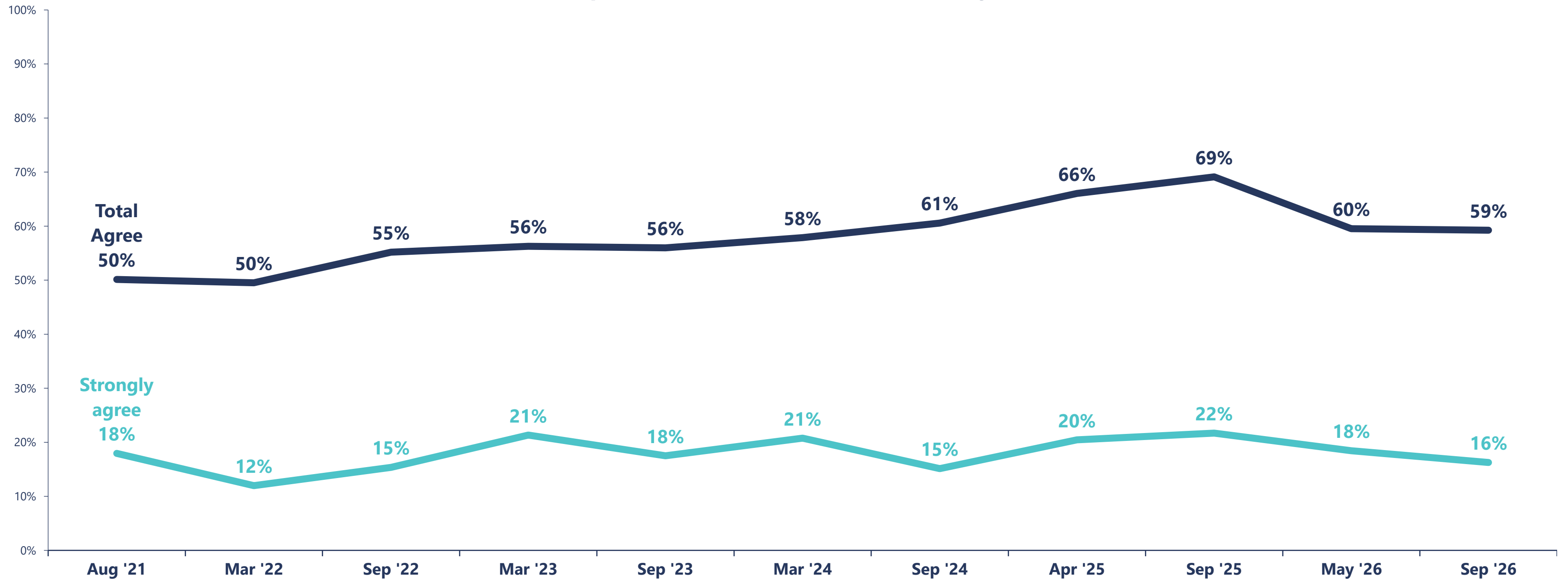
“Do you think the overall quality of life in Seattle is getting better, is the same, or is getting worse?”





Optimism About the Region

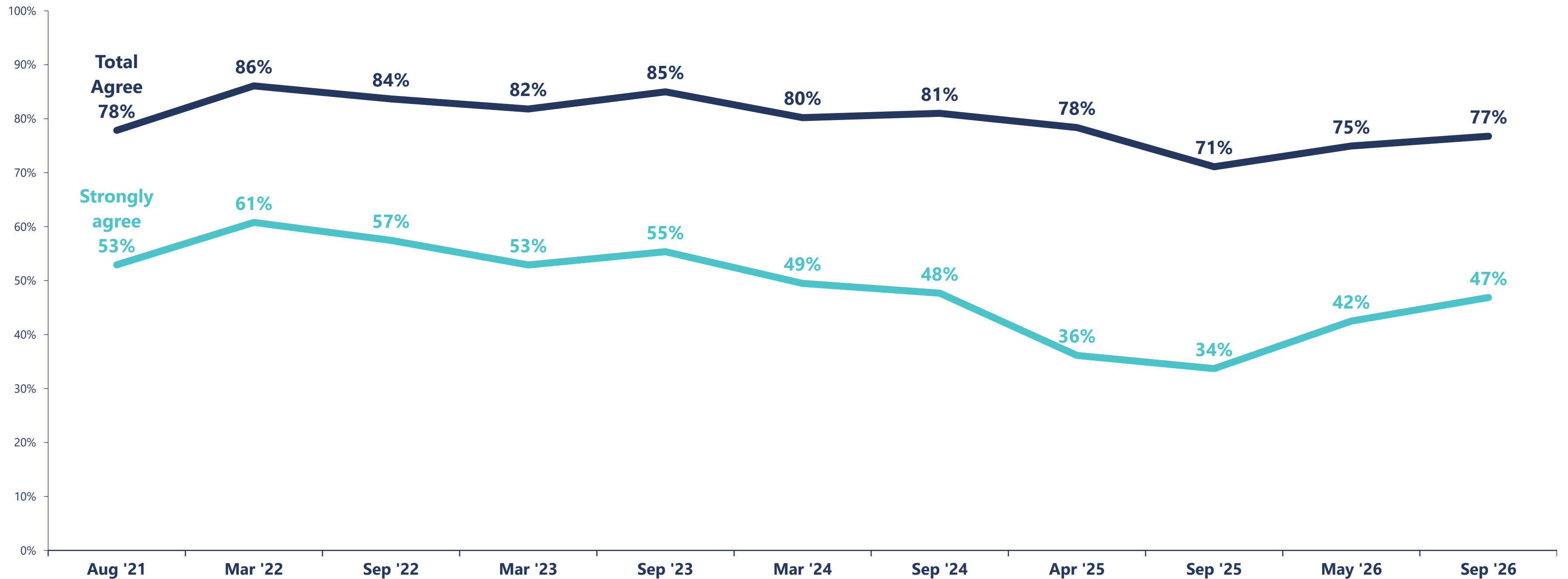
"I'm optimistic about the future of this region."





Worried About Future of Downtown

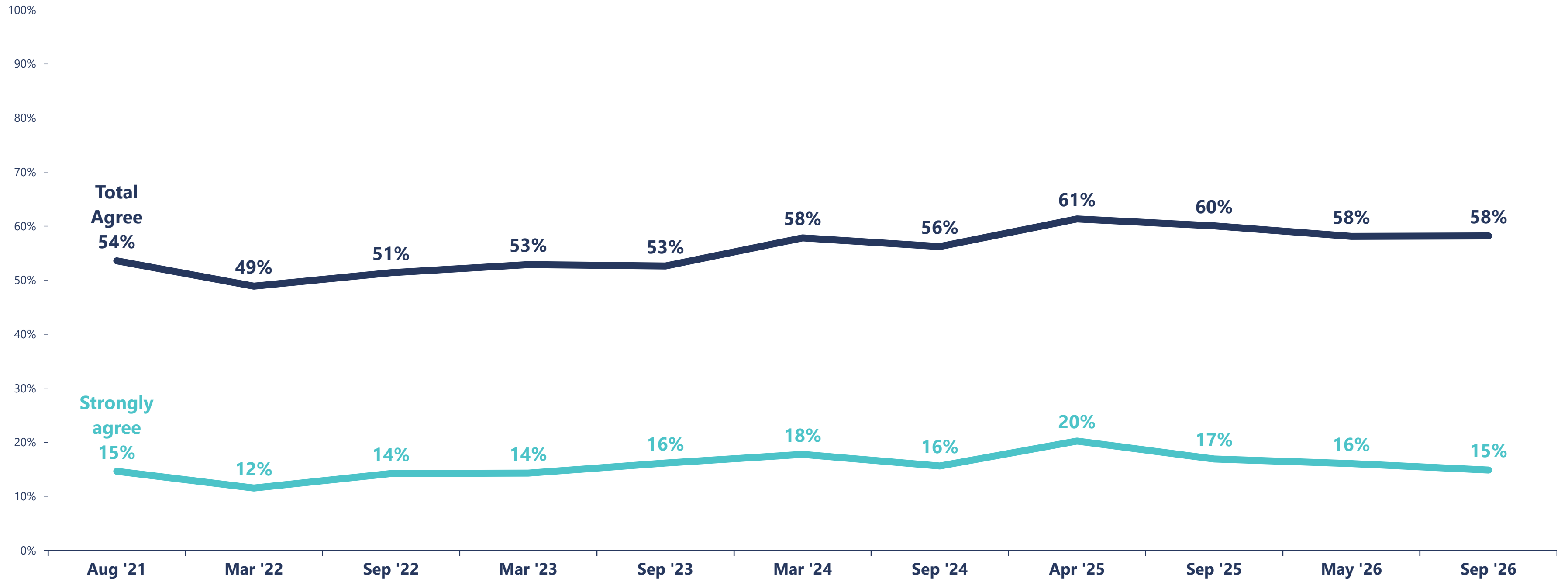
"I'm worried about the future of downtown Seattle."





Growth & Development

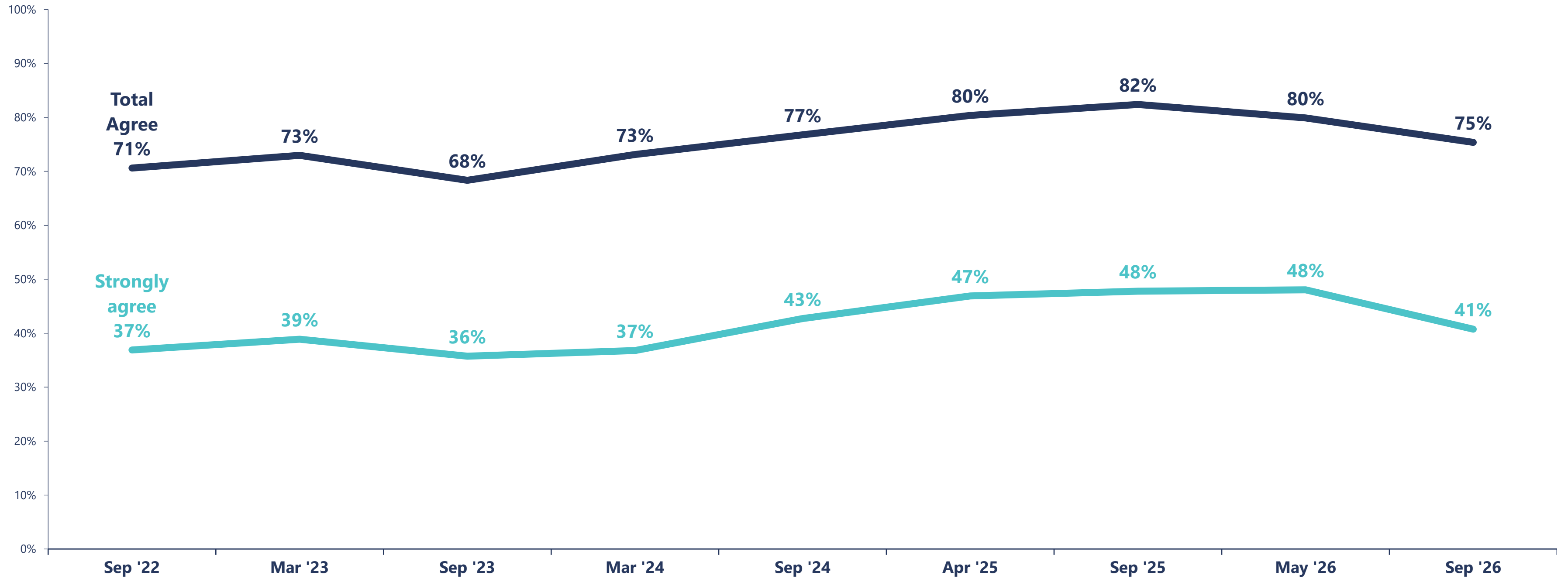
“All things considered, growth and development has been a positive for my area.”





Proud to be a Seattleite

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





Taxes

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

