



# Lake Mills Area School District

Community Survey Report

June 3, 2024

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**Our mission is to help educational leaders gather, organize, and use data to make strategic decisions.**



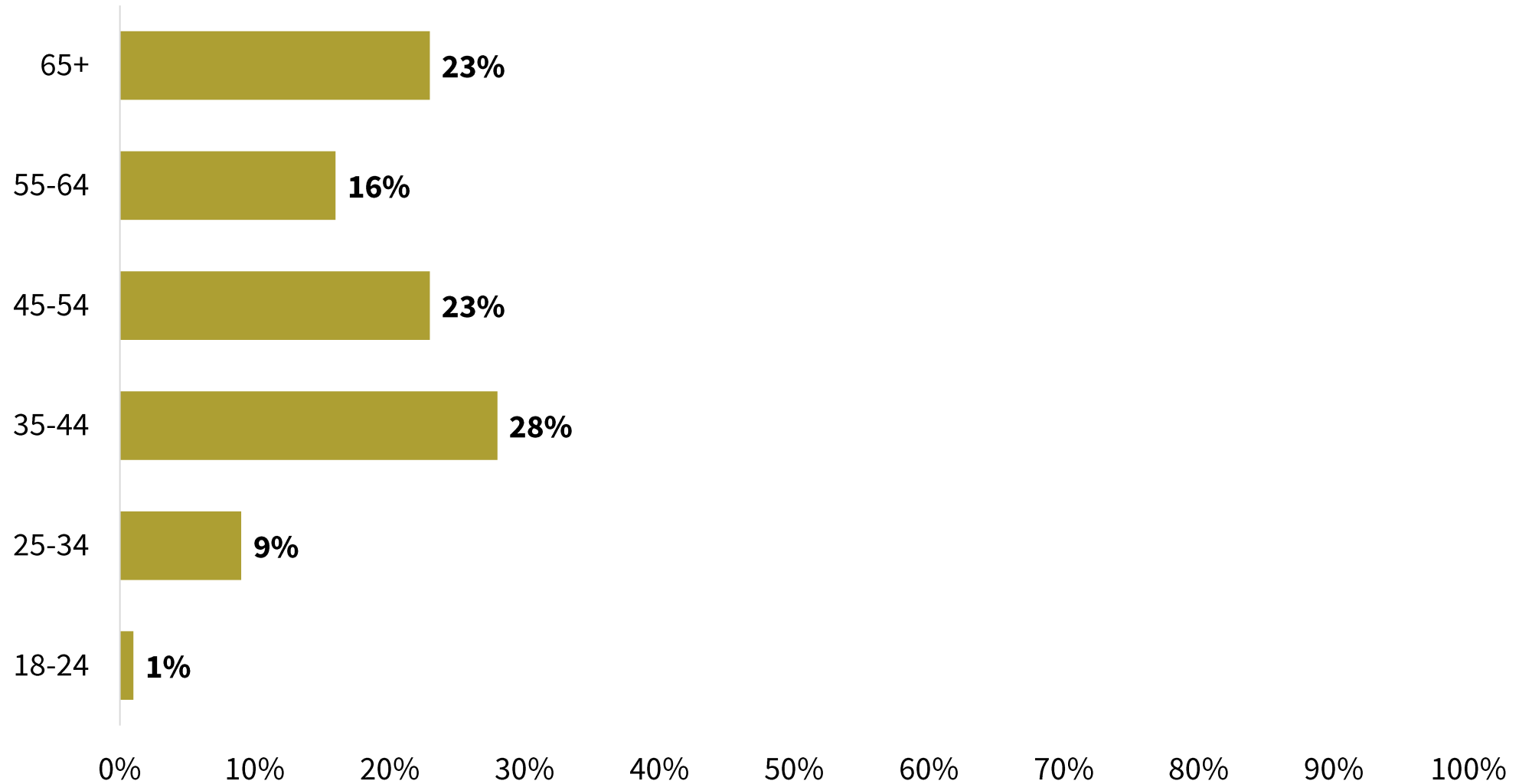
- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted over **10,000** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **900** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

# Survey Information

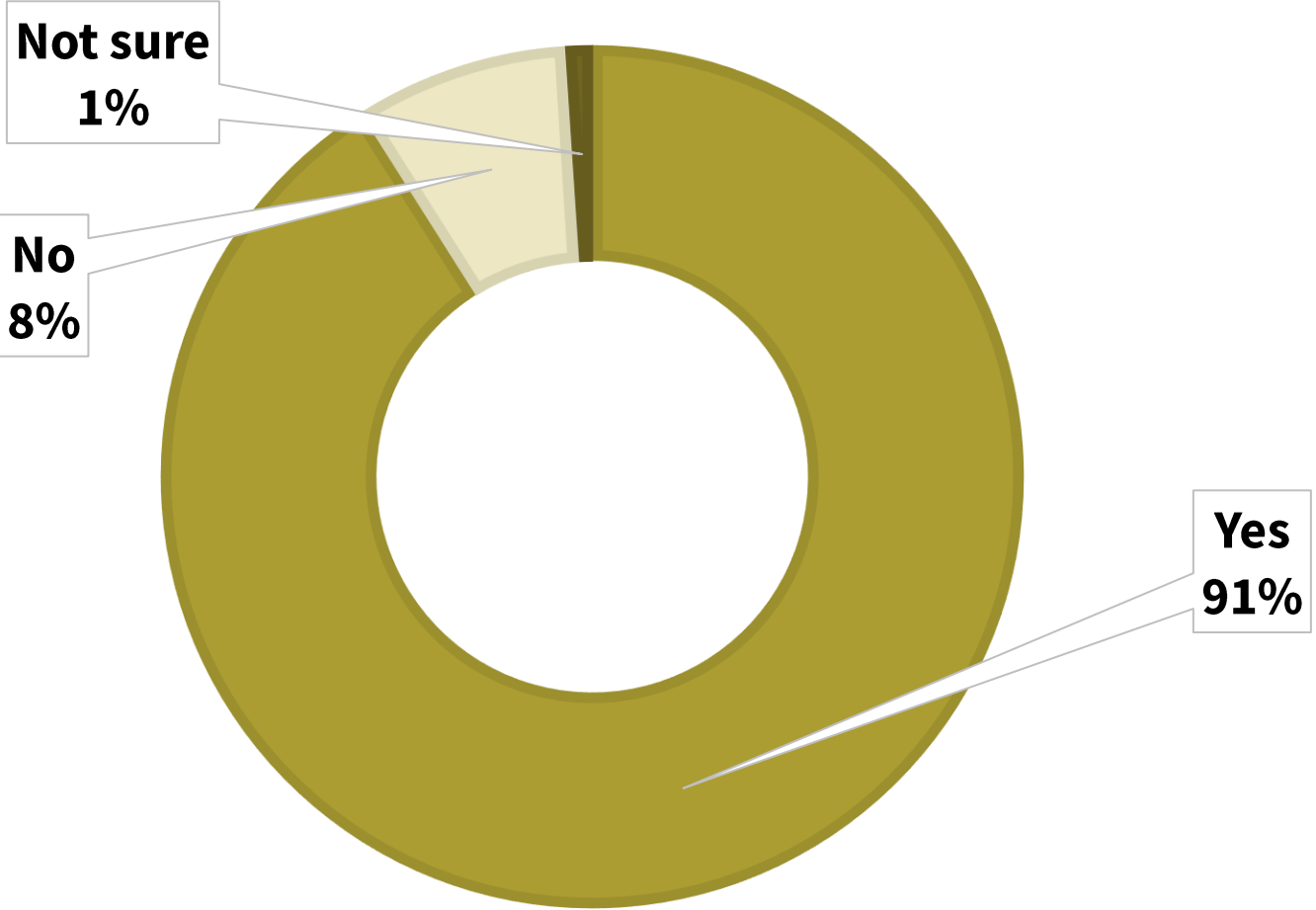
- **May 6, 2024** survey deadline
- **1,105** total respondents
  - Most of any of the five surveys done since 2012
- **25.2%** response rate
- **+/- 3.01%** statistical margin of error



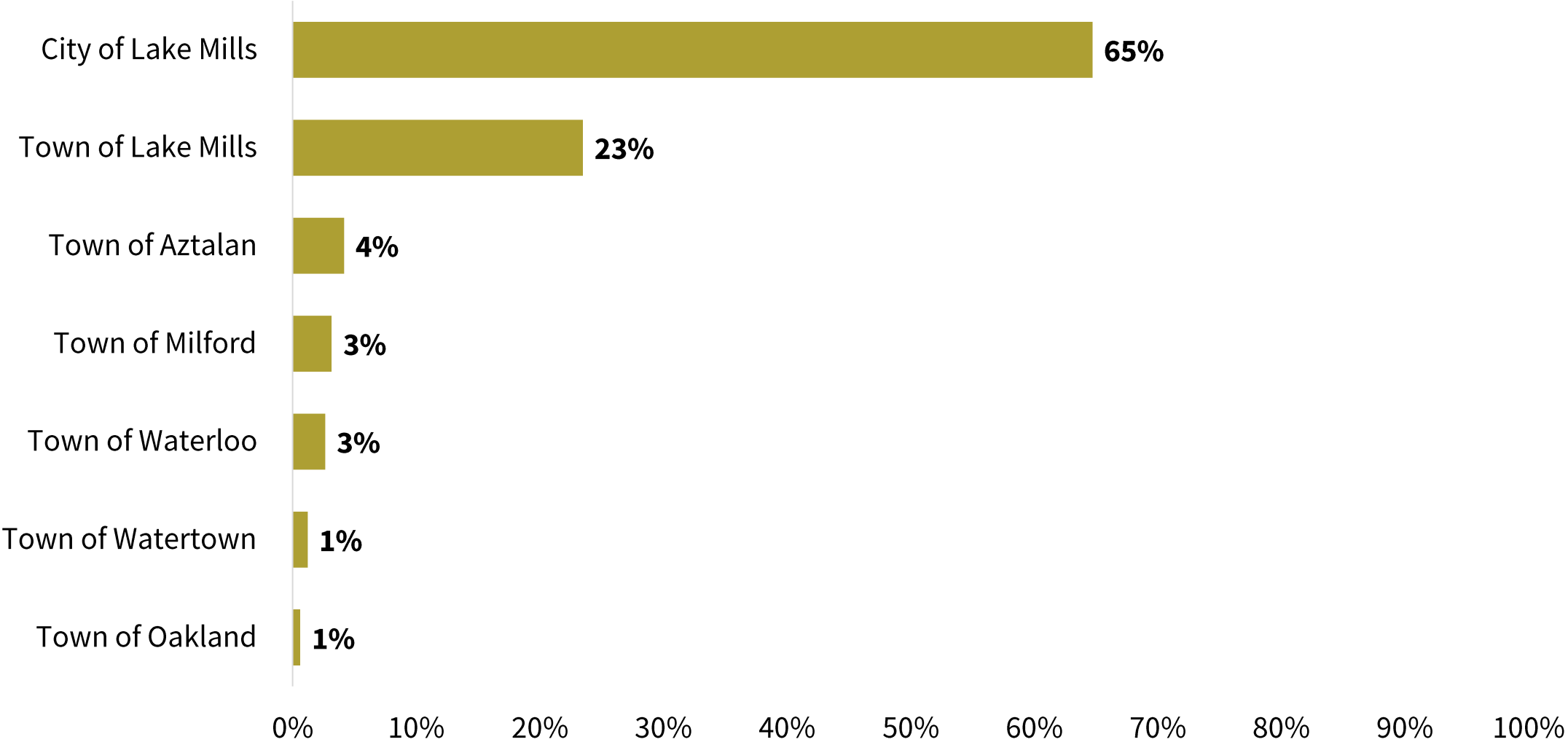
# What is your age?



# Is your primary residence in the Lake Mills Area School District?



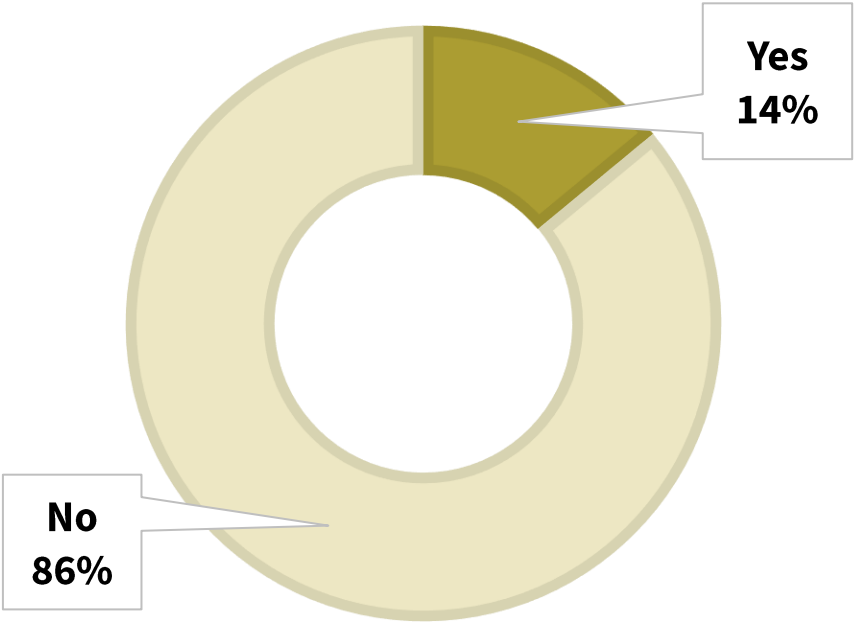
# In which municipality do you live?



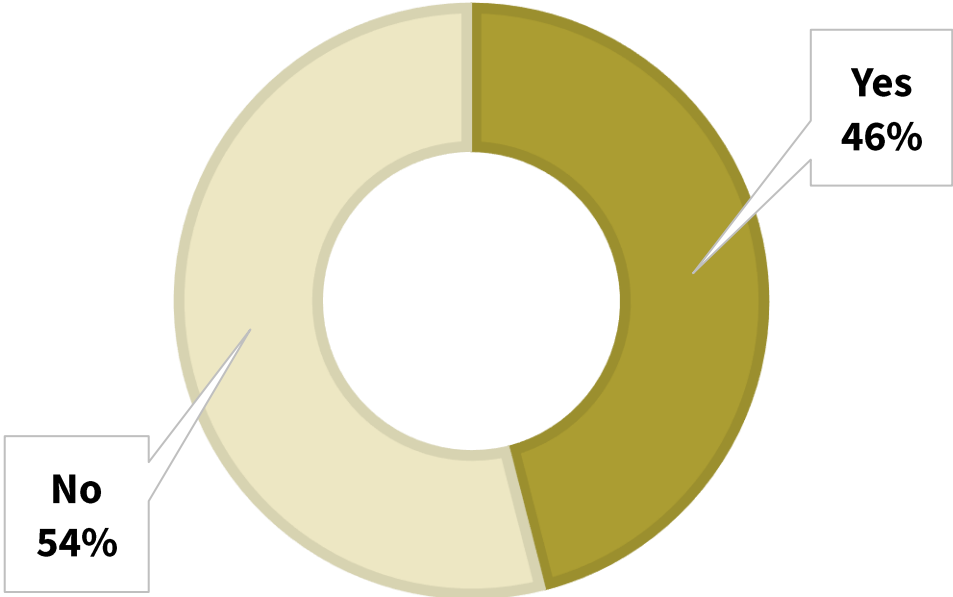
# Respondent Information



Are you an employee of the Lake Mills Area School District?



Do you have children attending a school in the District?





# Facility Challenges

In 2018, voters in our school district approved a referendum focused on the high school. Some of the projects included updating and expanding career and tech ed (“shop”), agriculture, and family & consumer science/culinary classrooms and labs. It also expanded the library.

Additional projects were not included at the time based on community feedback and the tax impact. Over the last year, the Community Advisory Team reviewed our remaining needs. These issues include:



# Facility Challenges (cont'd)

- Safety systems (such as fire alarms/panels, sprinklers, and the emergency paging systems) need to be replaced at the middle school and high school.
- Security systems (such as locks, keyless entries, and cameras) are outdated at all three schools.
- Components of the major building systems (such as plumbing, electrical, and heating/ventilation) at the middle and high schools are nearing the end of their useful life.
- Areas of our buildings do not meet today's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- The high school elevator is failing.
- Lighting districtwide is not energy efficient and causes higher utility costs.
- High school music and special education classrooms are too small and outdated.
- The high school auditorium lacks appropriate sound and lighting equipment for performances.
- The cafeteria is original to the 1962 area of the high school and is too small.
- The high school kitchen is too small and is not next to the receiving area.
- Gym space is lacking for school use, as well as youth recreation and community use.
- The bus barn is in a congested area (creating safety concerns between vehicles and pedestrians) and requires repairs (dirt floors, aging garage doors, and lack of security systems).



# Facility Challenges (cont'd)

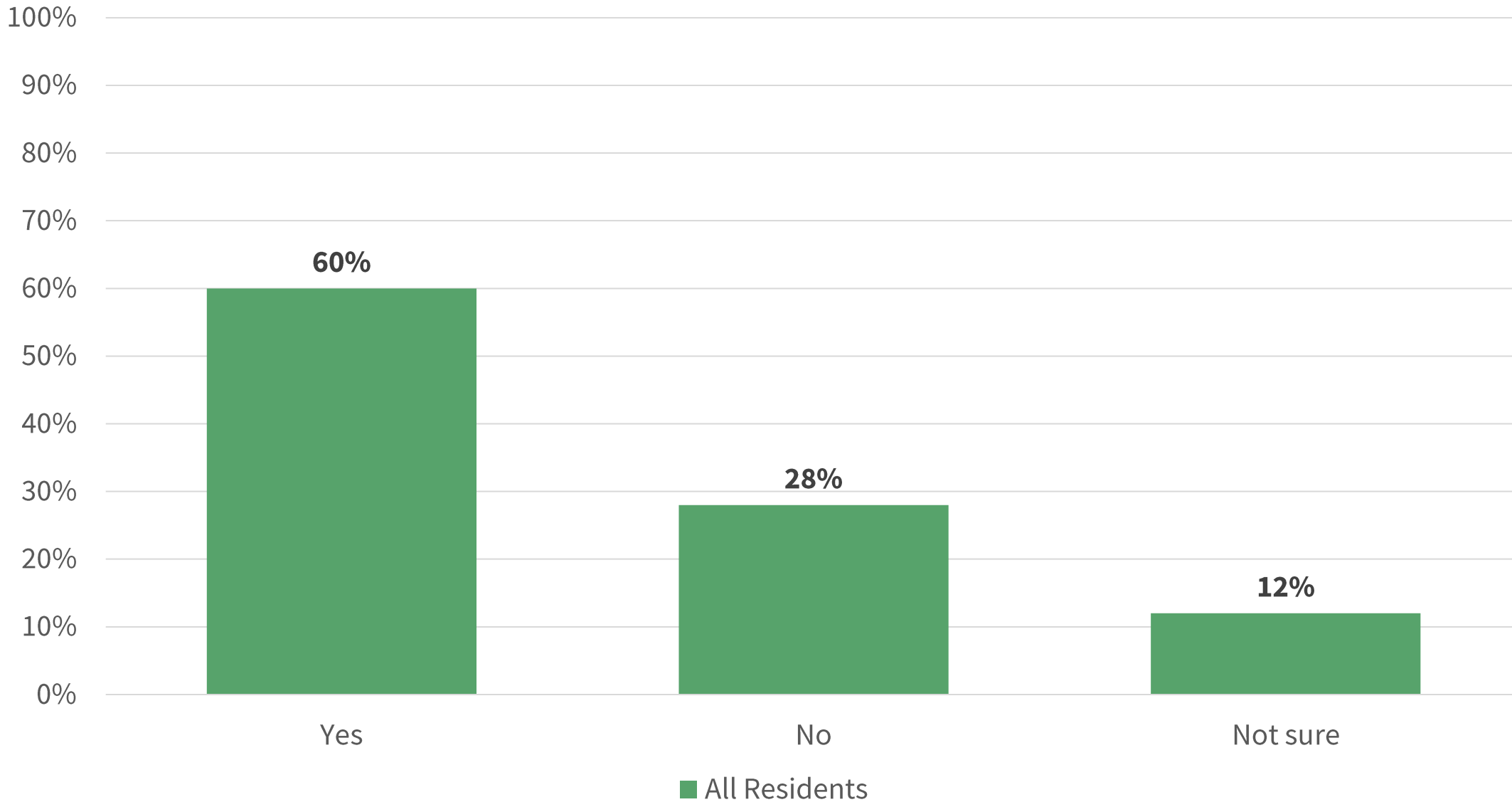
In addition, the elementary school lacks age-appropriate spaces for four-year-old kindergarten (4K). When this school was built, other community spaces served these students. However, since that time, these partners no longer have room/appropriate spaces.

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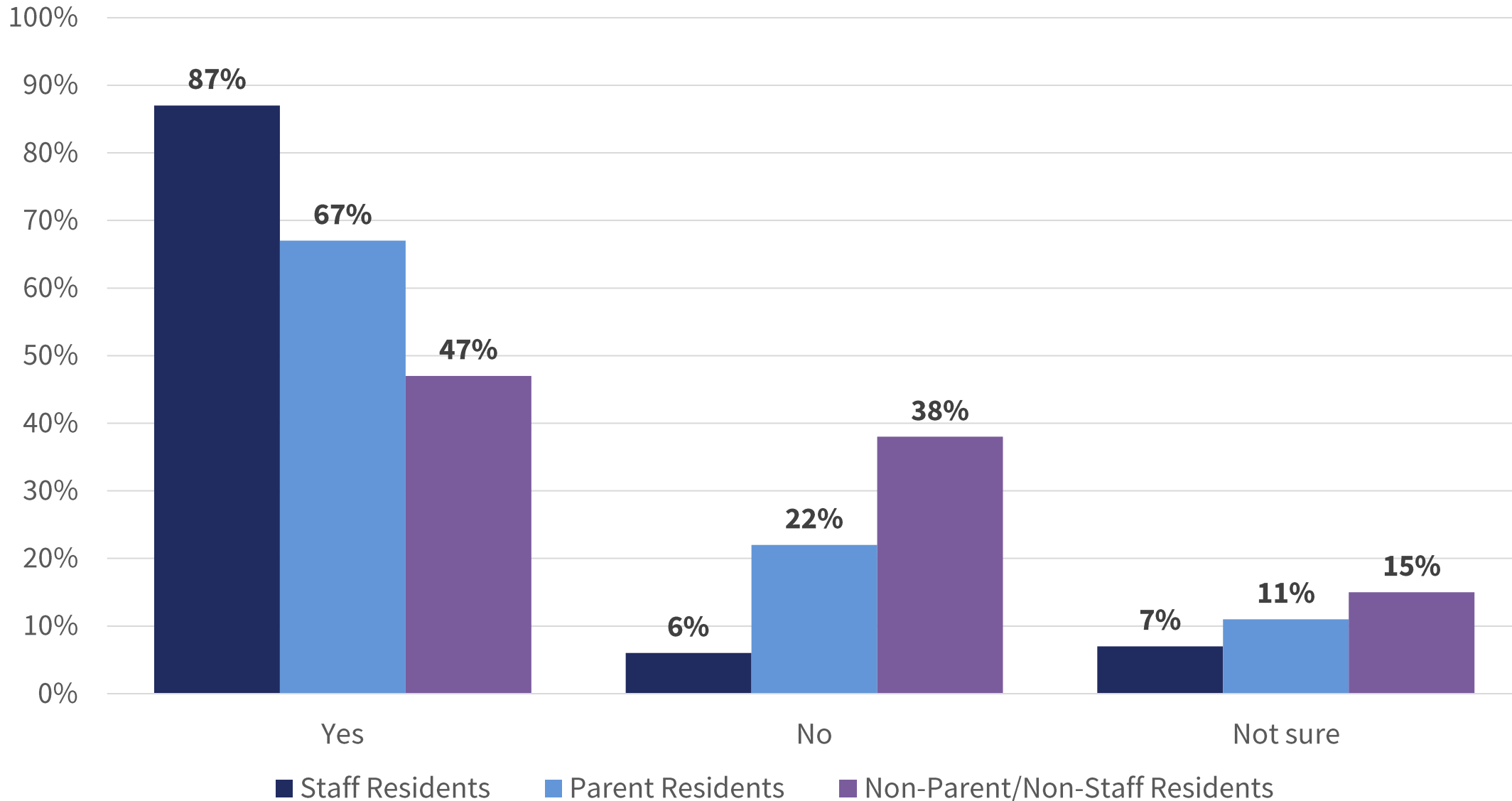
These needs are too expensive to pay for from the District's annual budget. To pay for them, a majority of Lake Mills area voters would need to approve a capital (facilities) referendum, which allows the District to take out a loan (issue debt).



# Should the District pursue a capital referendum to address the facility needs? *(Residents)*



# Should the District pursue a capital referendum to address the facility needs? (*Residents*)



# Base Plan

## High School:

1. Expand classrooms to better serve students receiving special education services by renovating underused space.
2. Reconfigure the main entrance to improve security.
3. Update the cafeteria and replace kitchen plumbing.
4. Renovate the band and choir rooms.
5. Replace the lower-level gym with a new, larger gym, which frees up other gym space for youth recreation and the broader community.
6. Replace lighting and sound equipment in the auditorium.
7. Relocate the bus barn.



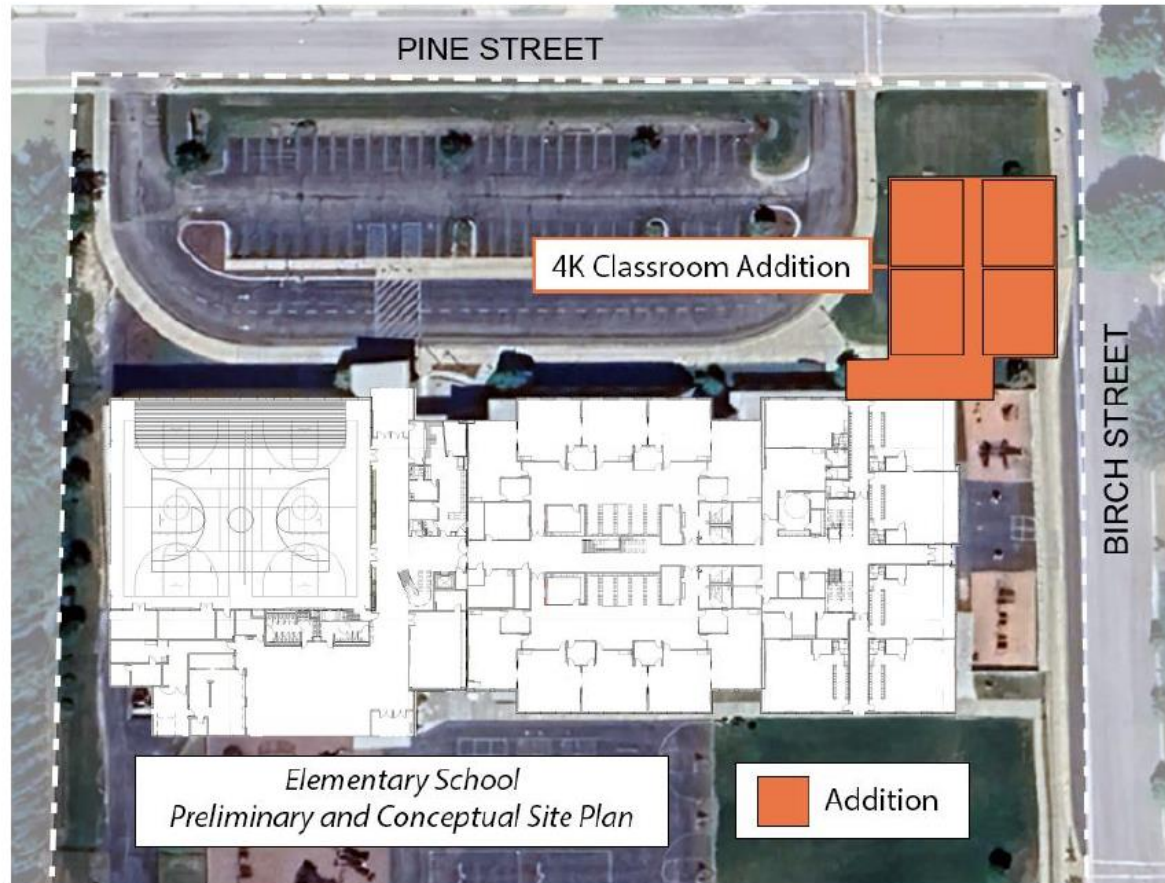
# Base Plan (cont'd)

## Middle School:

- ✓ Renovate the main office to improve nursing and confidential parent-staff meeting areas.
- ✓ Improve the library to better support STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) courses.
- ✓ Update basketball, soccer, and greenspace areas with more age-appropriate equipment.

In addition, this plan would:

- ✓ Add four four-year-old kindergarten classrooms to the **elementary school**.
- ✓ Update major building systems **throughout the District** (such as plumbing, electrical, and heating/ventilation) as needed.



(To get more information or view additional images of the potential projects, please visit our website.)

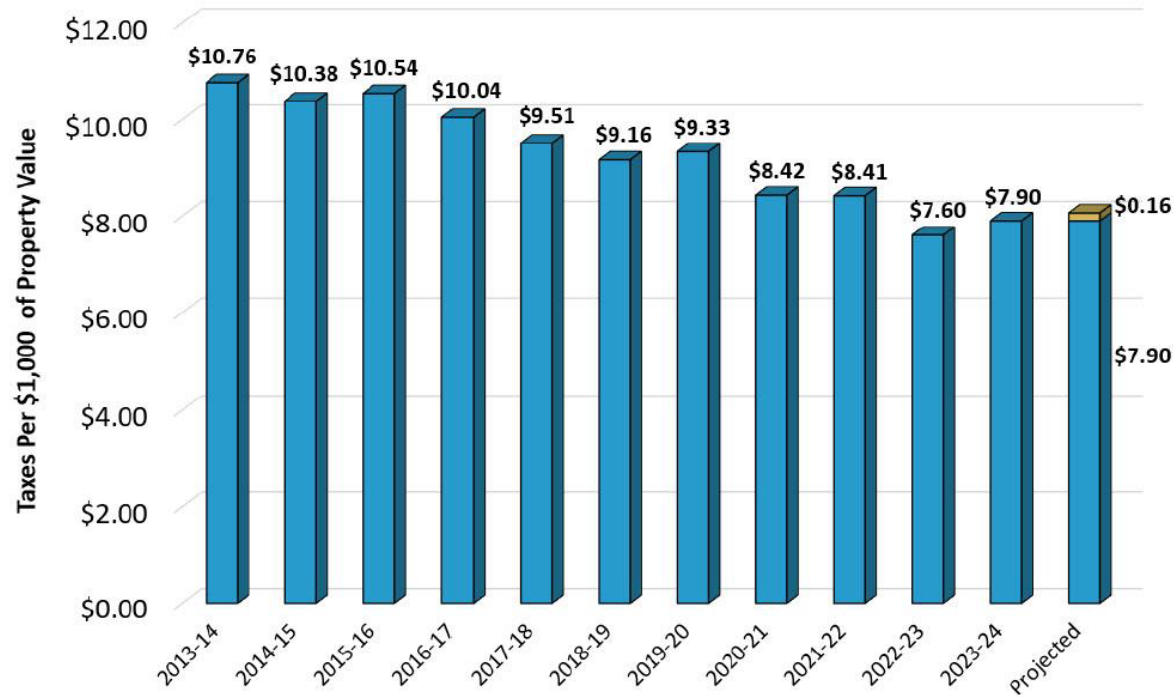


# Base Plan Funding Support



The District has pre-paid and refinanced debt from past building projects to reduce interest expenses and the debt portion of school taxes in future years. This lowers the property tax impact of any new spending. The chart below shows the tax mill rate trend and the impact of a \$51.2 million referendum.

**Lake Mills Area School District**  
*Tax Mill Rate & Referendum Impact*

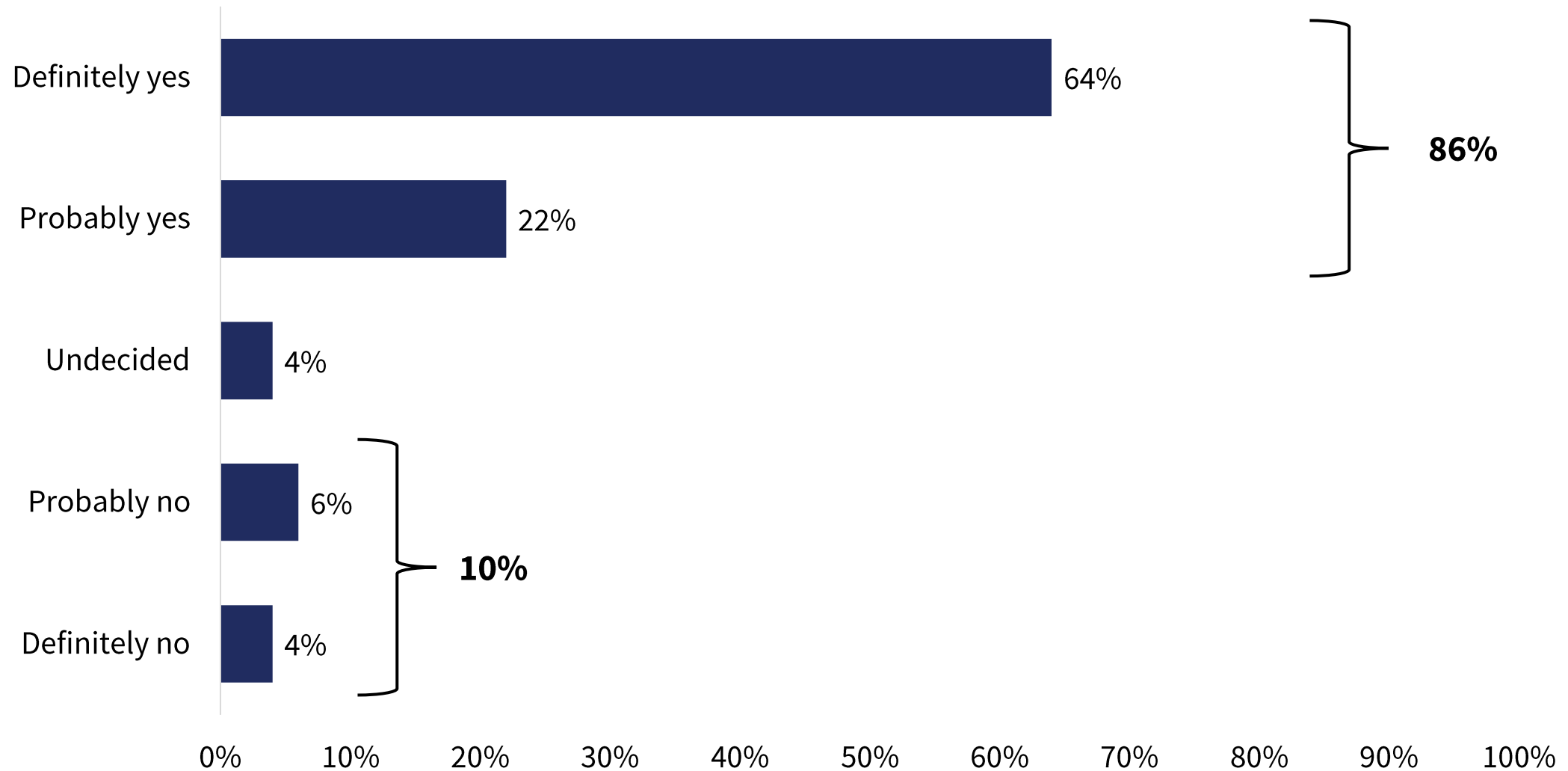


**If a majority of local voters approve the base plan, the tax mill rate would increase by \$0.16 and remain below the 2021-22 level.**

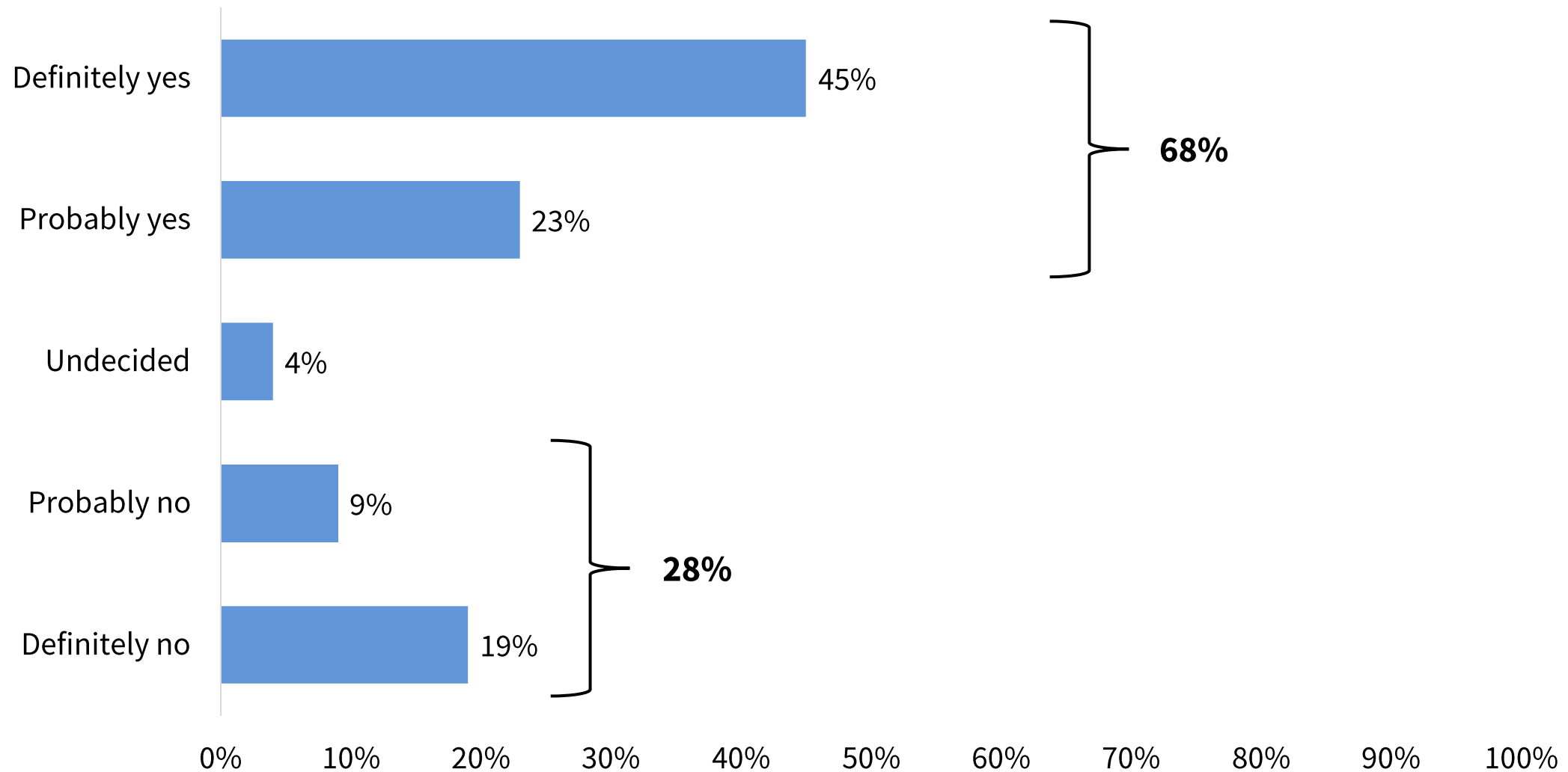
Approval would increase the mill rate by \$0.16, representing an annual tax increase of \$16 for every \$100,000 of property value. Financing estimate assumes a 20-year repayment for each borrowing over the next three years at interest rates ranging from 5.25-5.50%



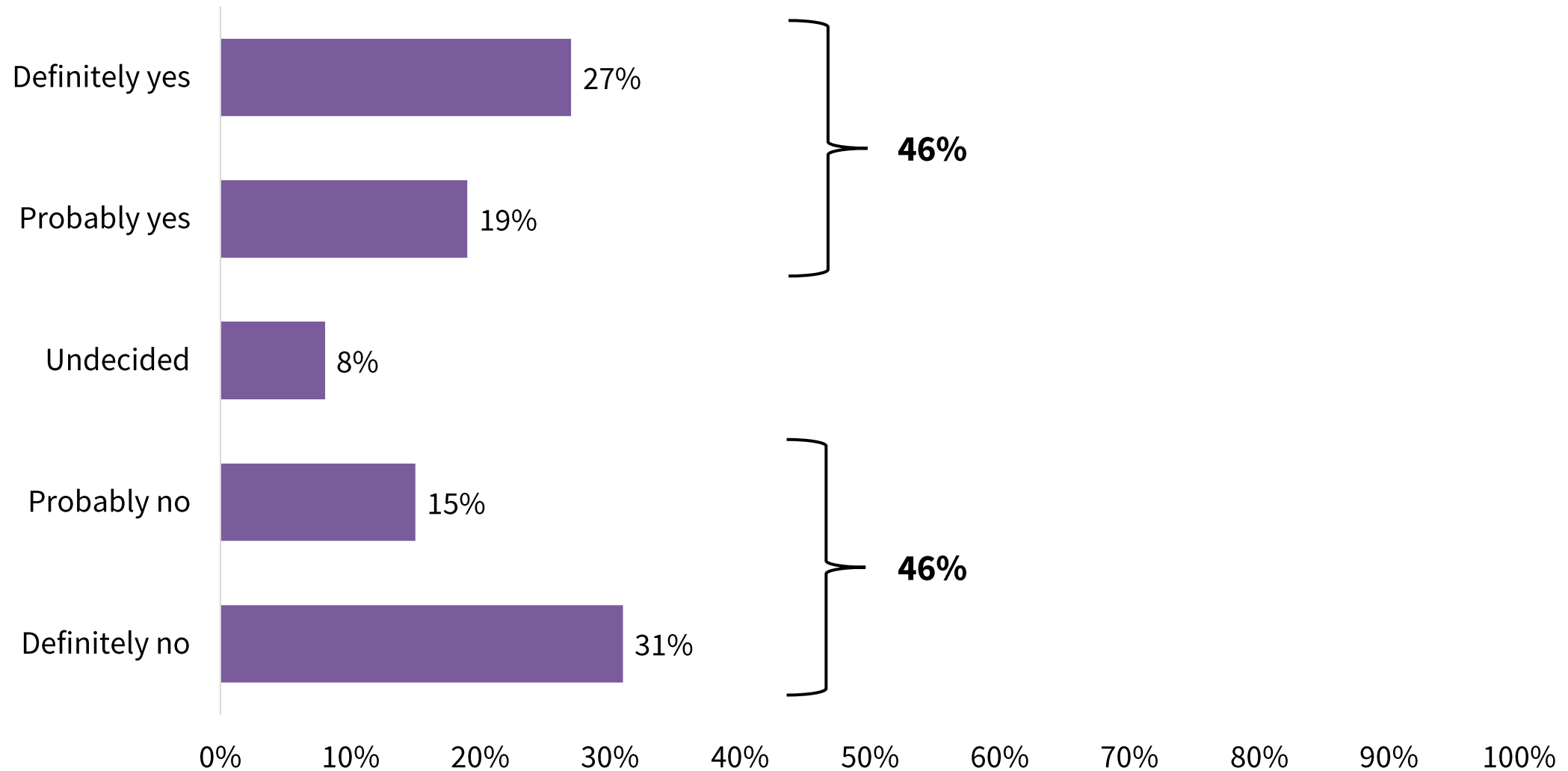
# Would you support a \$51.2 million referendum to fund the base plan? (*Staff Residents*)



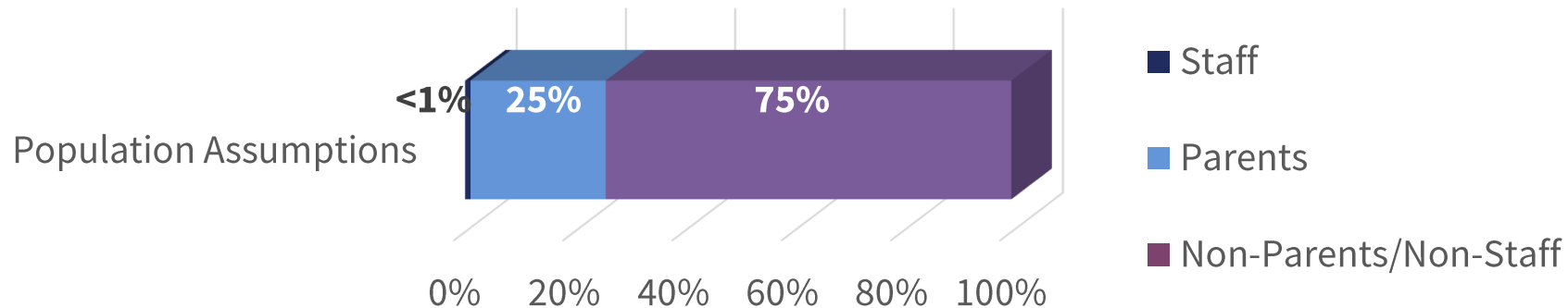
# Would you support a \$51.2 million referendum to fund the base plan? (*Parent Residents*)



# Would you support a \$51.2 million referendum to fund the base plan? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)



# Additional Analysis: Would you support a \$51.2 million referendum to fund the base plan?

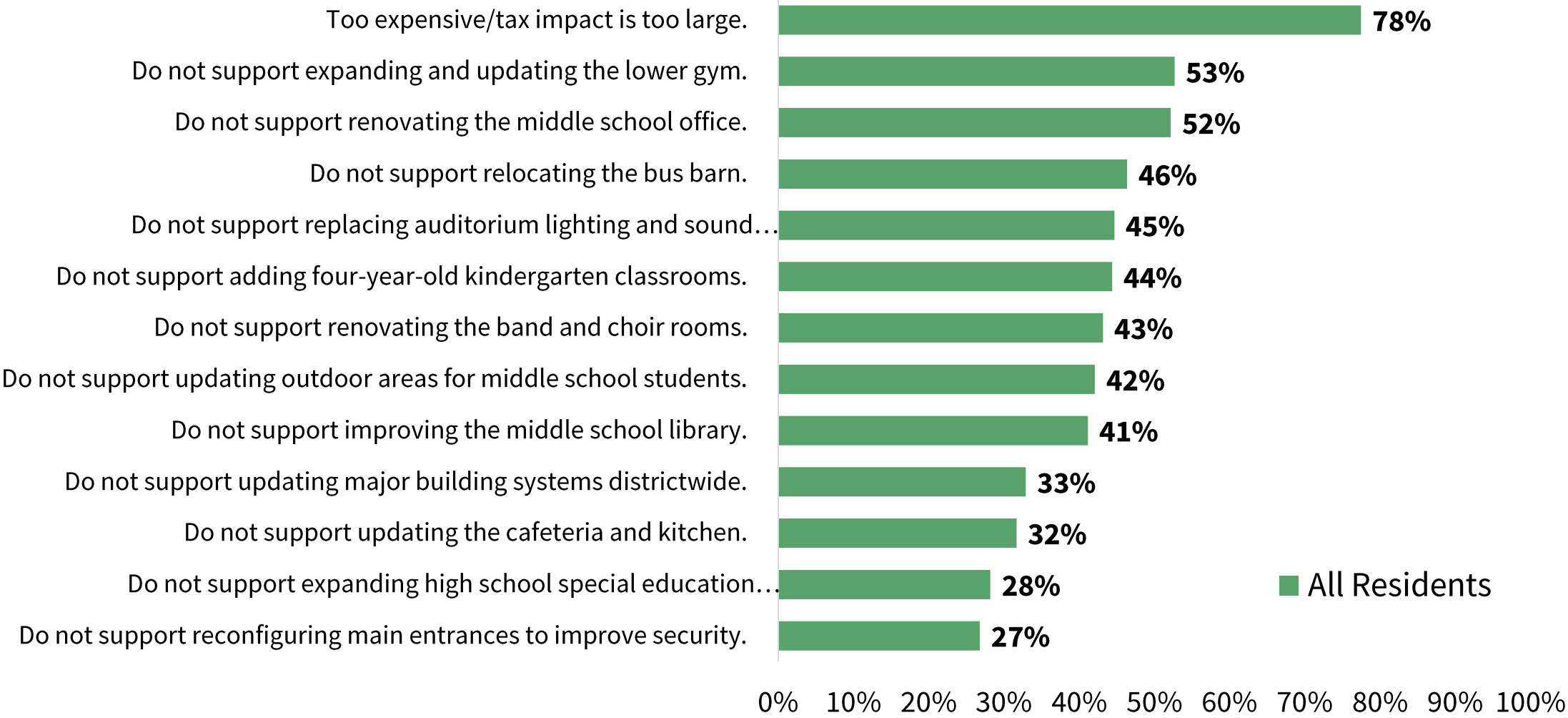


Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes*:

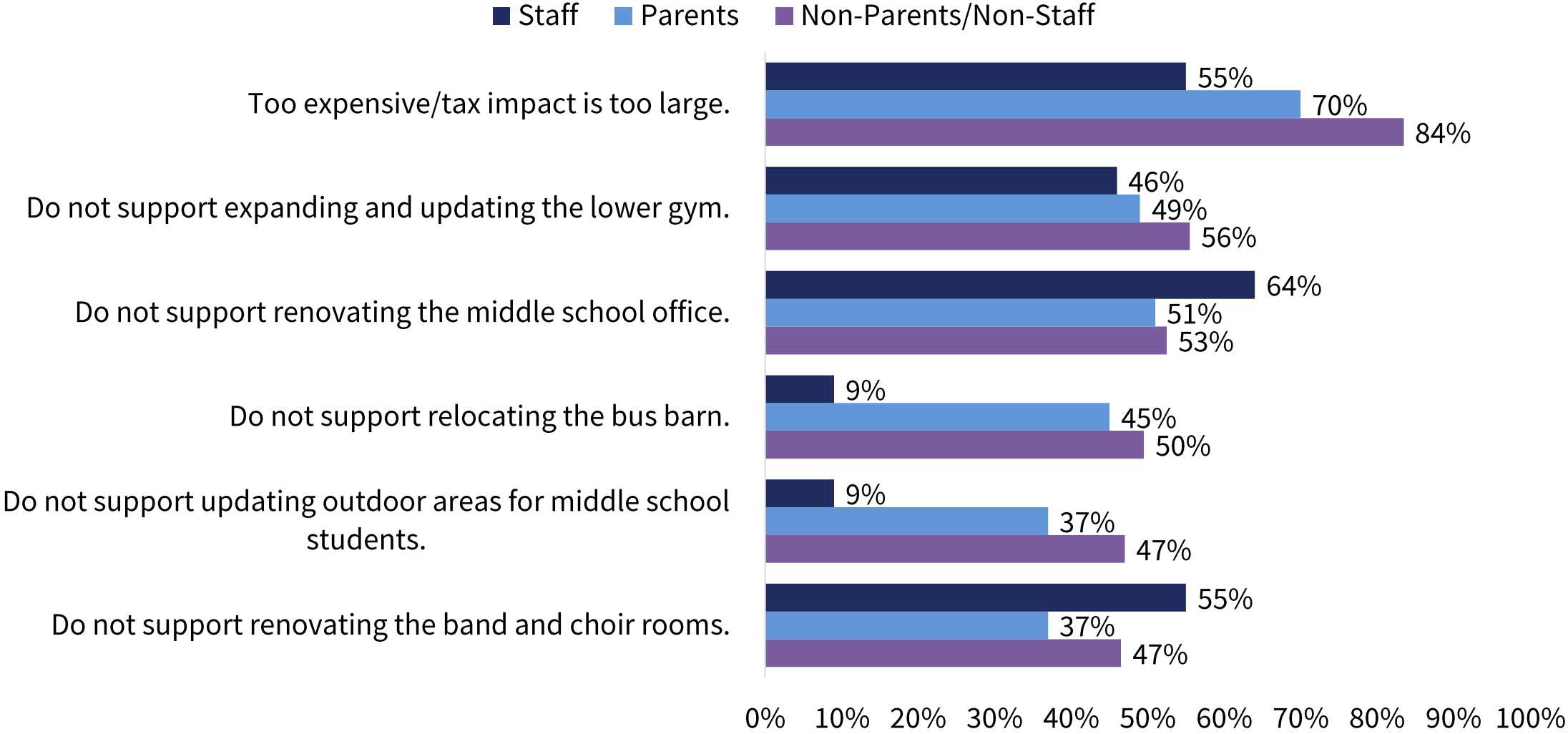
$$0.25 (68\%) + 0.75 (46\%) = \underline{\underline{51.5\%}}$$



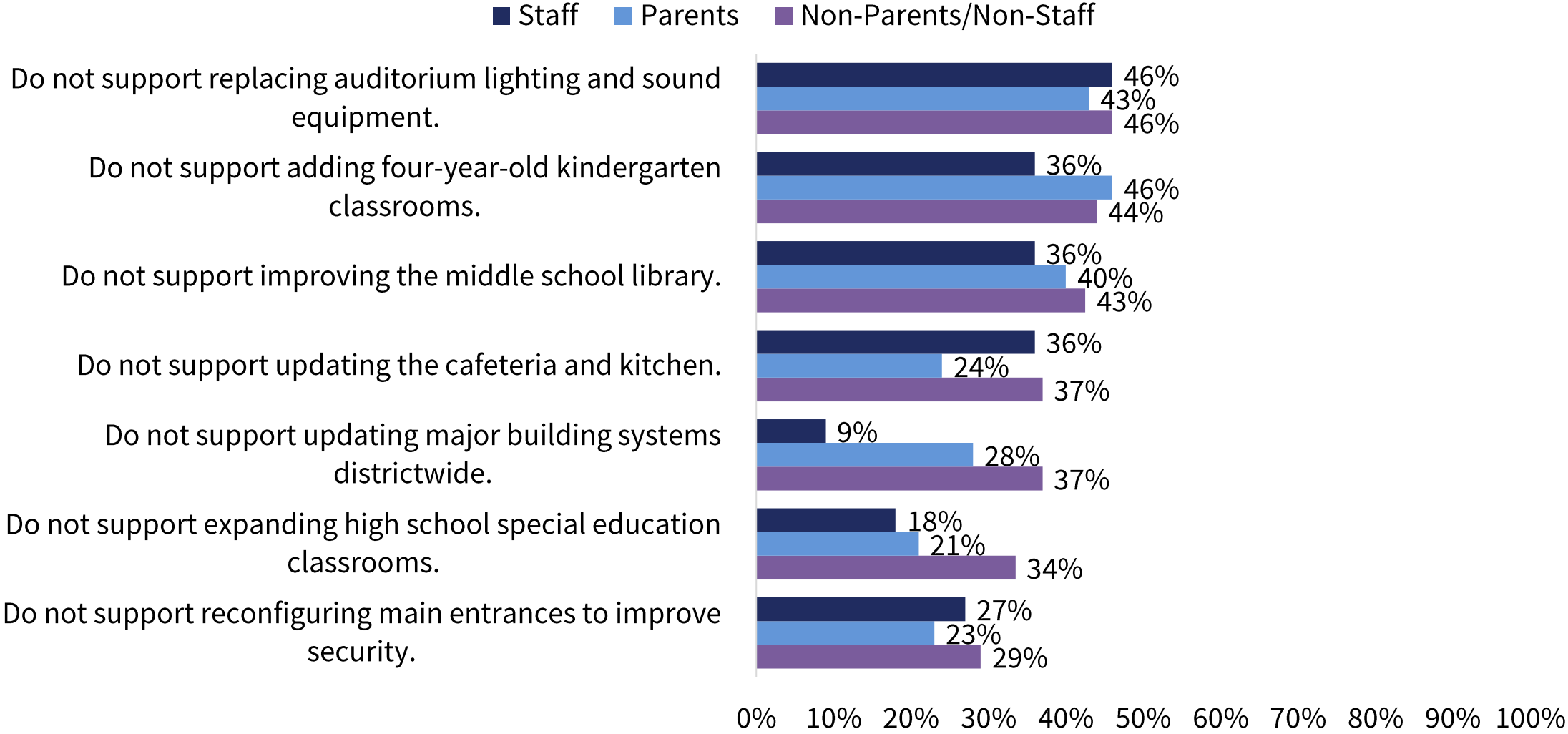
# If you chose “Probably no” or “Definitely no,” why? (Select all that apply.) – Residents



# If you chose “Probably no” or “Definitely no,” why? (Select all that apply.) – Residents



# If you chose “Probably no” or “Definitely no,” why? (Select all that apply.) – Residents



# Additional Projects

The following projects are part of the long-range facilities plan. By completing them at the same time, it would create construction efficiencies and be less expensive than separate projects in the future.

## Music Areas and Kitchen/Cafeteria

- The base plan updates these areas but does not expand them.
- The high school music classrooms, cafeteria, and kitchen are too small.
- The kitchen also serves as the primary food production space for our entire district.
- The receiving area is not next to the kitchen and not appropriately secured, which creates safety concerns when deliveries are made.

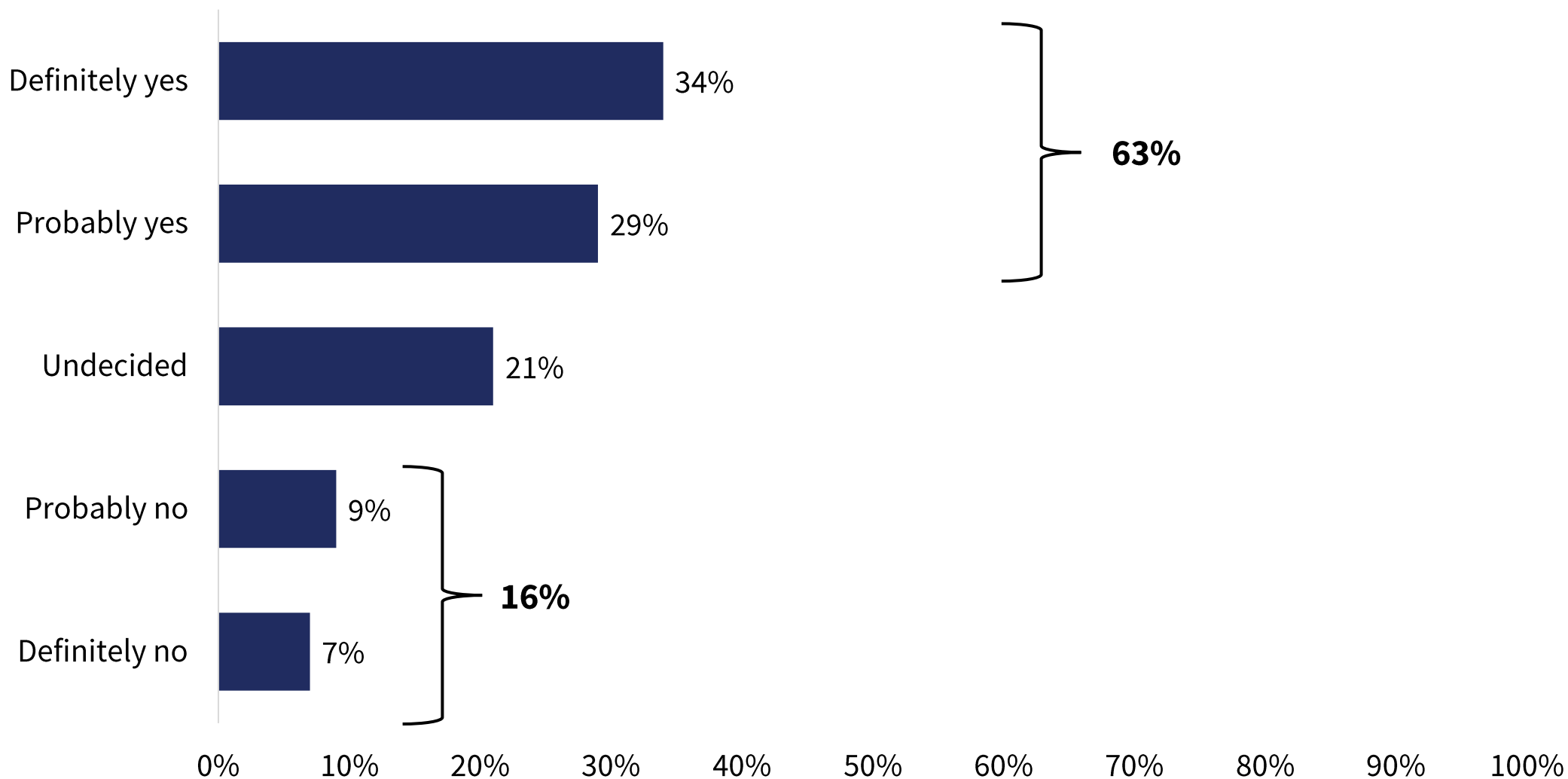
This project would build a kitchen and cafeteria with an adjacent receiving area. The band and choir rooms would be expanded into the current kitchen/cafeteria. **Estimated cost: \$15.2 million**

*\* The reduction in the debt portion of school taxes (described on page 4) is being applied to the base plan. Therefore, these projects have a higher tax impact.*

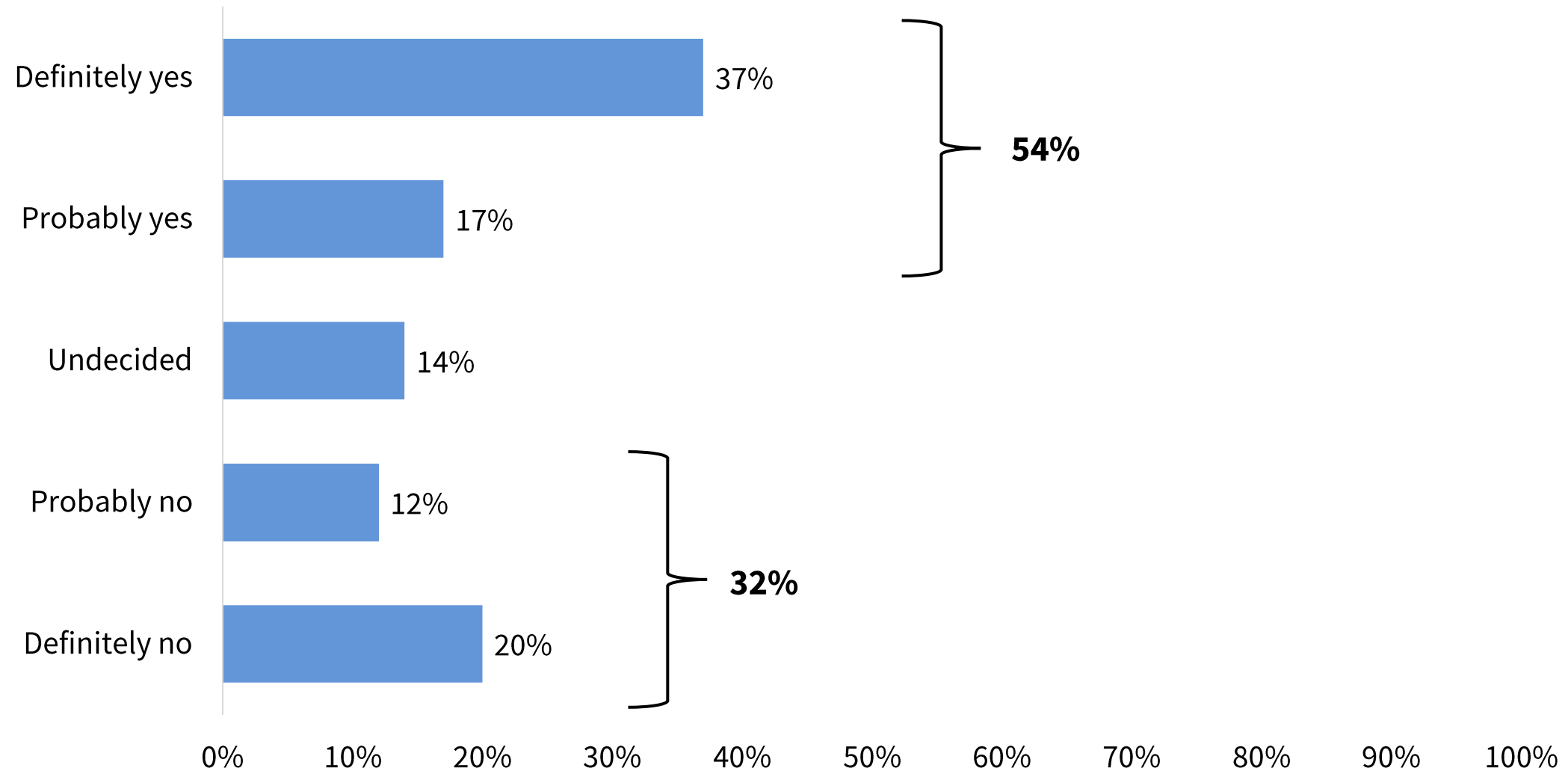




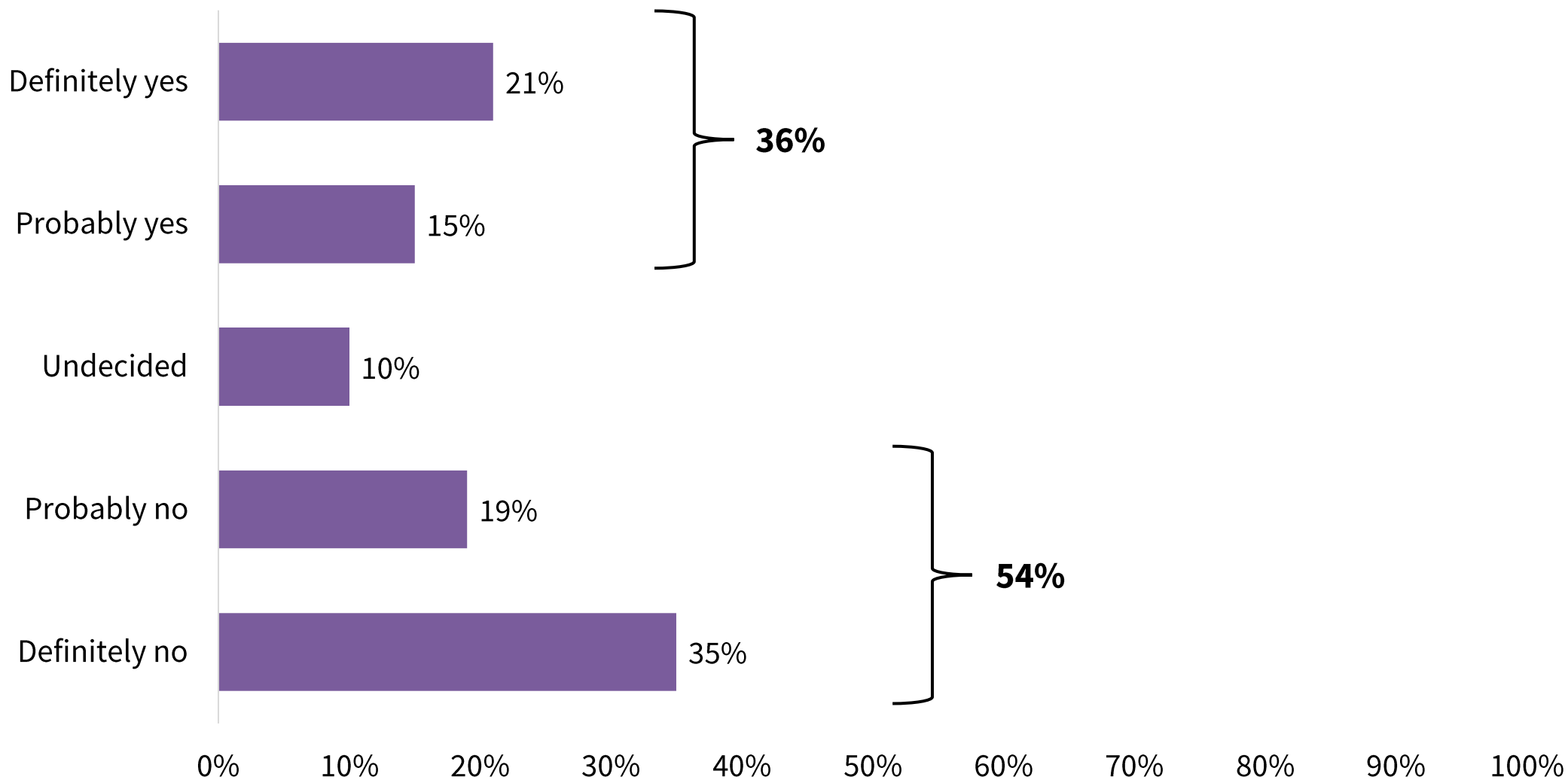
# Would you support expanding the referendum by \$15.2 million to pay for the music, cafeteria, and kitchen project? (*Staff Residents*)



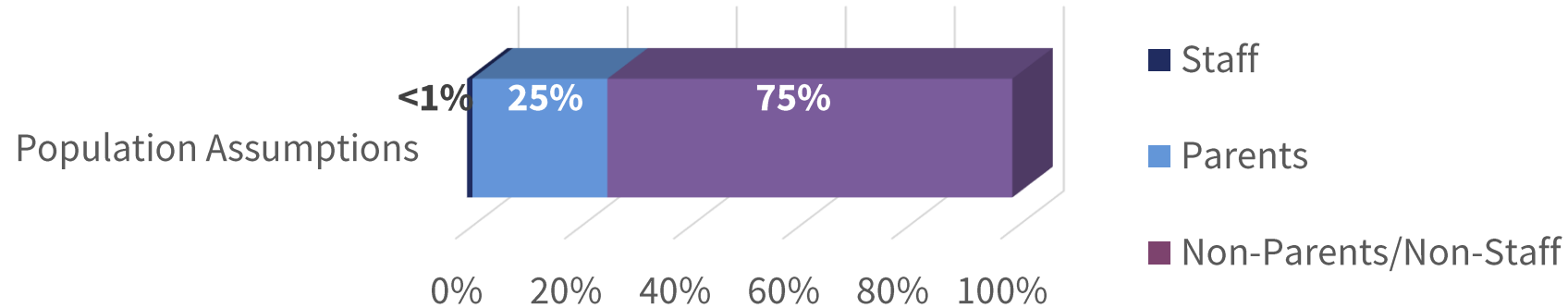
# Would you support expanding the referendum by \$15.2 million to pay for the music, cafeteria, and kitchen project? (*Parent Residents*)



# Would you support expanding the referendum by \$15.2 million to pay for the music, cafeteria, and kitchen project? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)



**Additional Analysis:** Would you support expanding the referendum by \$15.2 million to pay for the music, cafeteria, and kitchen project?



Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes*:

$$0.25 (54\%) + 0.75 (36\%) = \underline{\underline{40.5\%}}$$



# Additional Projects (cont'd)



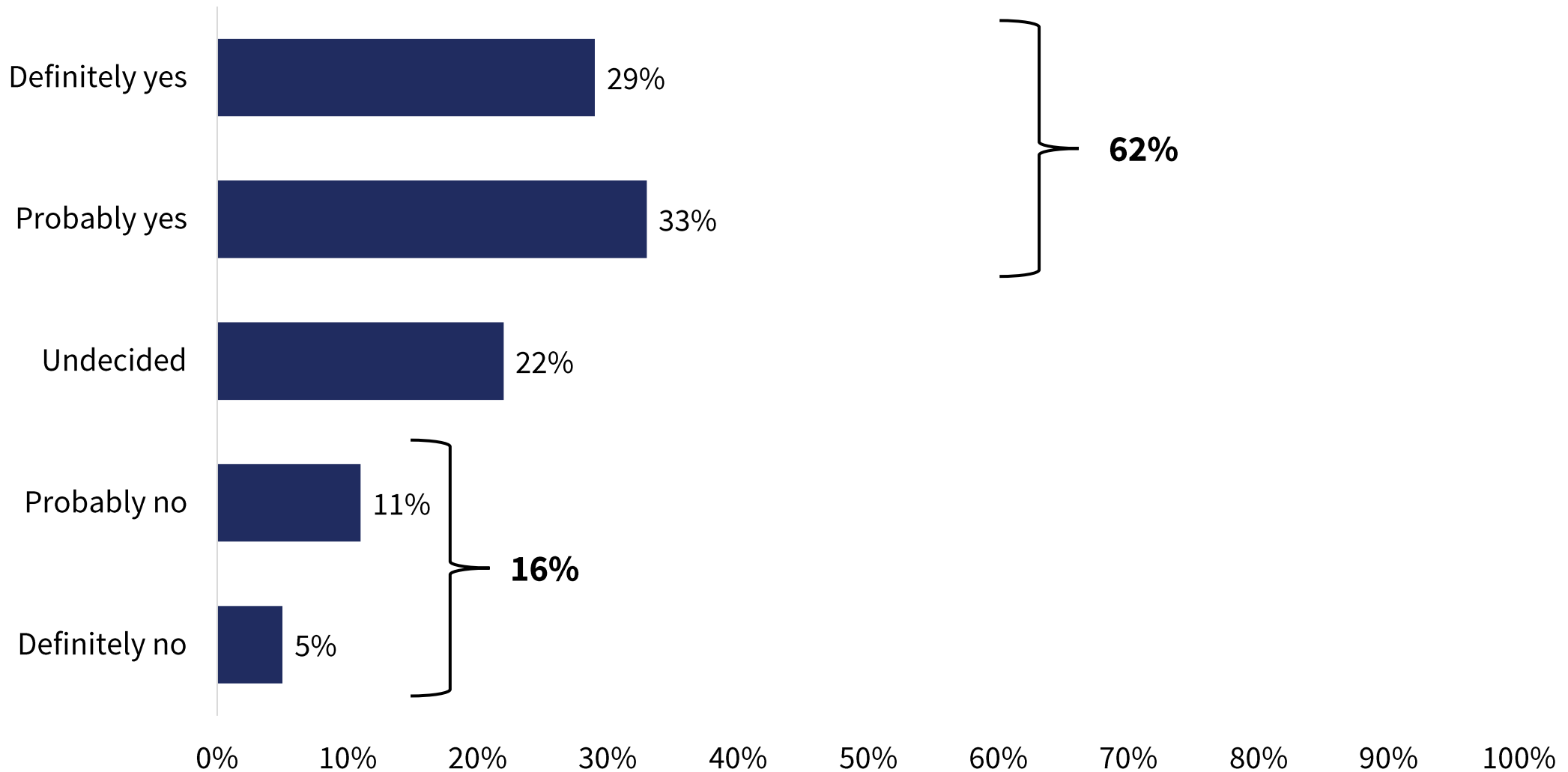
## Outdoor Athletics

- The middle school tennis courts are only used for recess because they are crumbling.
- The Campus Field does not drain properly, limiting use in poor weather.
- The baseball field's location at the middle school (Campus Field) limits greenspace/playground areas for those students. The varsity softball field is at Rotary Park. Both locations require high school student-athletes to travel, creating safety concerns and supervision challenges.
- High school parking (especially ADA spaces) is limited.

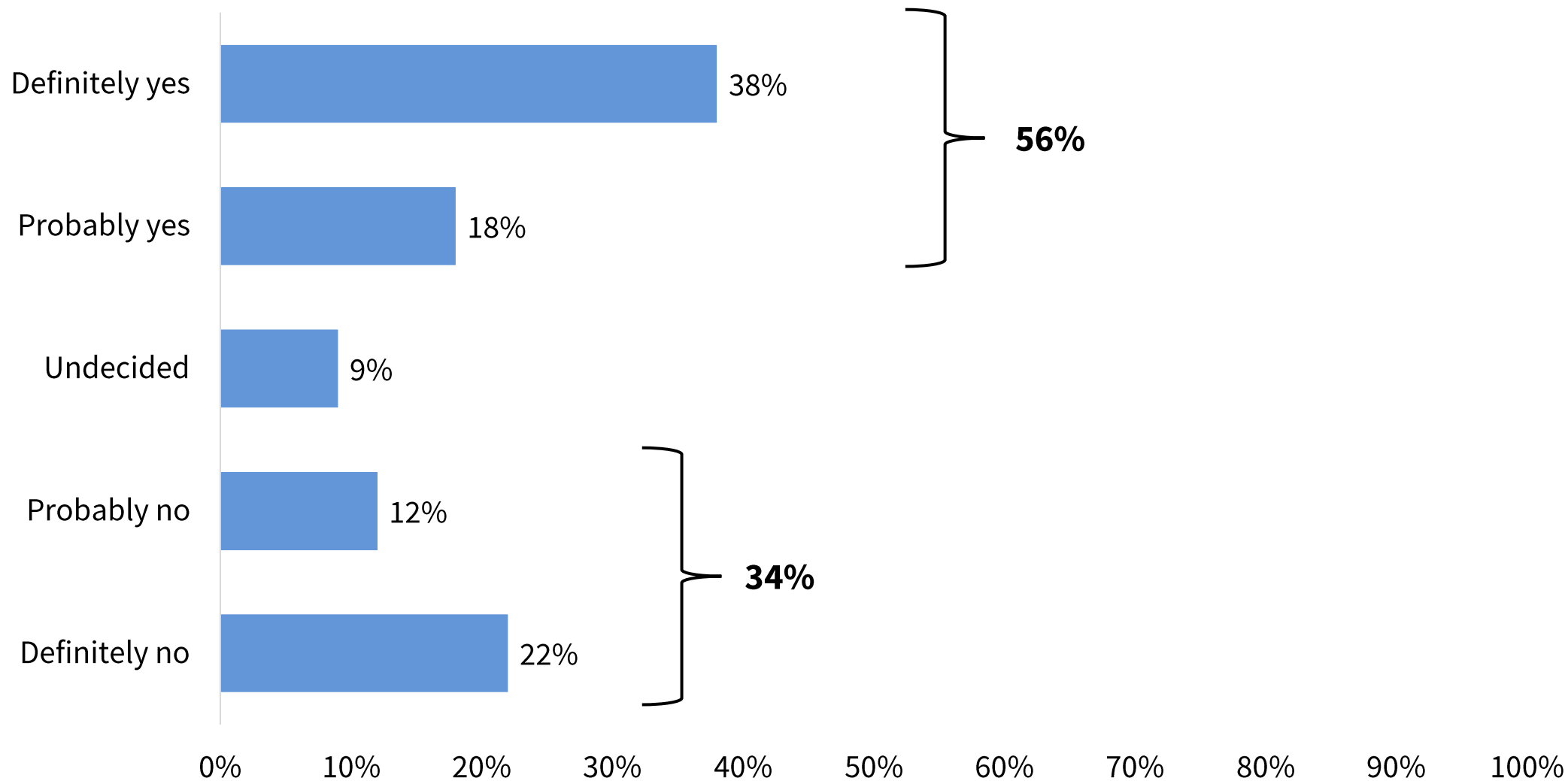
This project would resurface high school tennis courts, convert the middle school tennis courts into playgrounds, improve drainage at Campus Field, and expand parking. It would also build baseball and softball fields at the high school. ***Estimated cost: \$6.7 million***

*\* The reduction in the debt portion of school taxes (described on page 4) is being applied to the base plan. Therefore, these projects have a higher tax impact.*

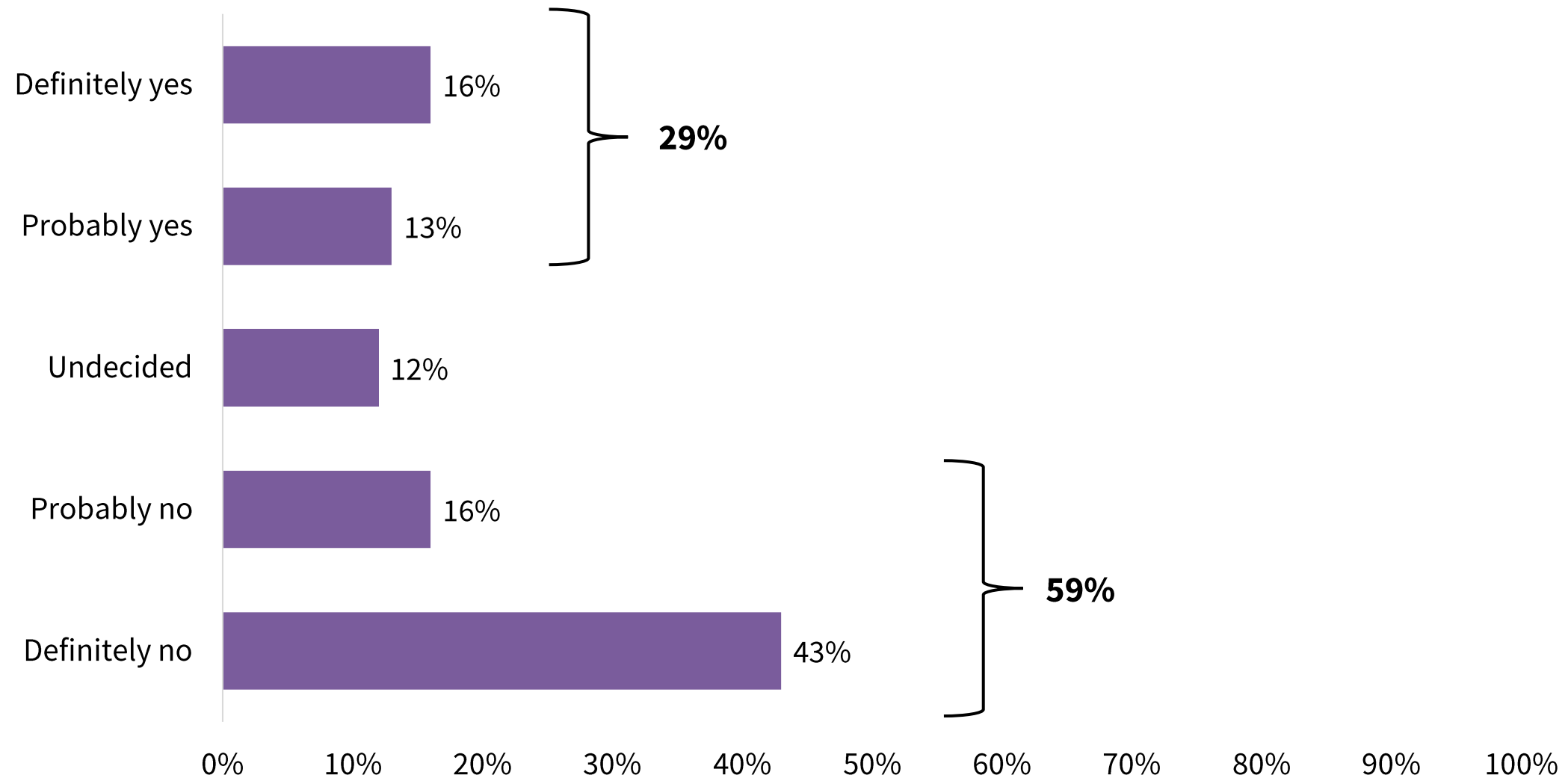
# Would you support expanding the referendum by \$6.7 million to pay for the outdoor athletics project? (*Staff Residents*)



# Would you support expanding the referendum by \$6.7 million to pay for the outdoor athletics project? (*Parent Residents*)

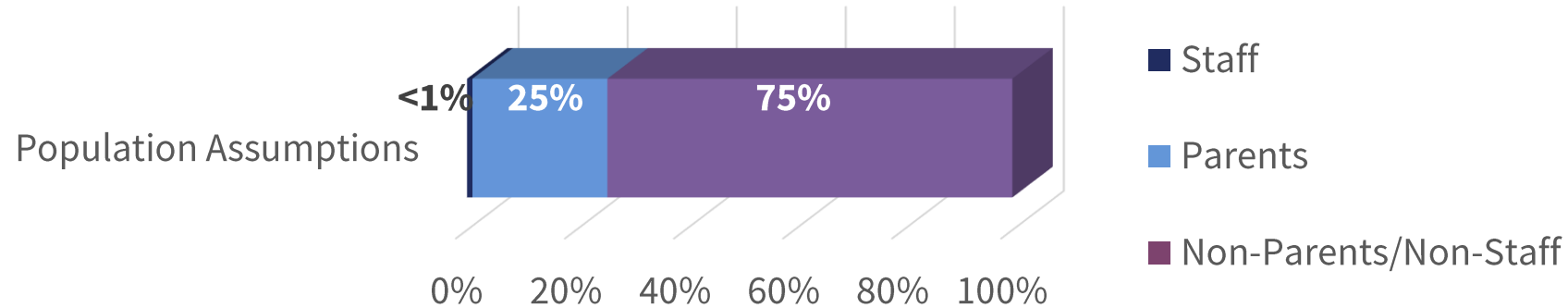


# Would you support expanding the referendum by \$6.7 million to pay for the outdoor athletics project? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)





# **Additional Analysis:** Would you support expanding the referendum by \$6.7 million to pay for the outdoor athletics project?



Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes*:

$$0.25 (56\%) + 0.75 (29\%) = \underline{\underline{35.8\%}}$$



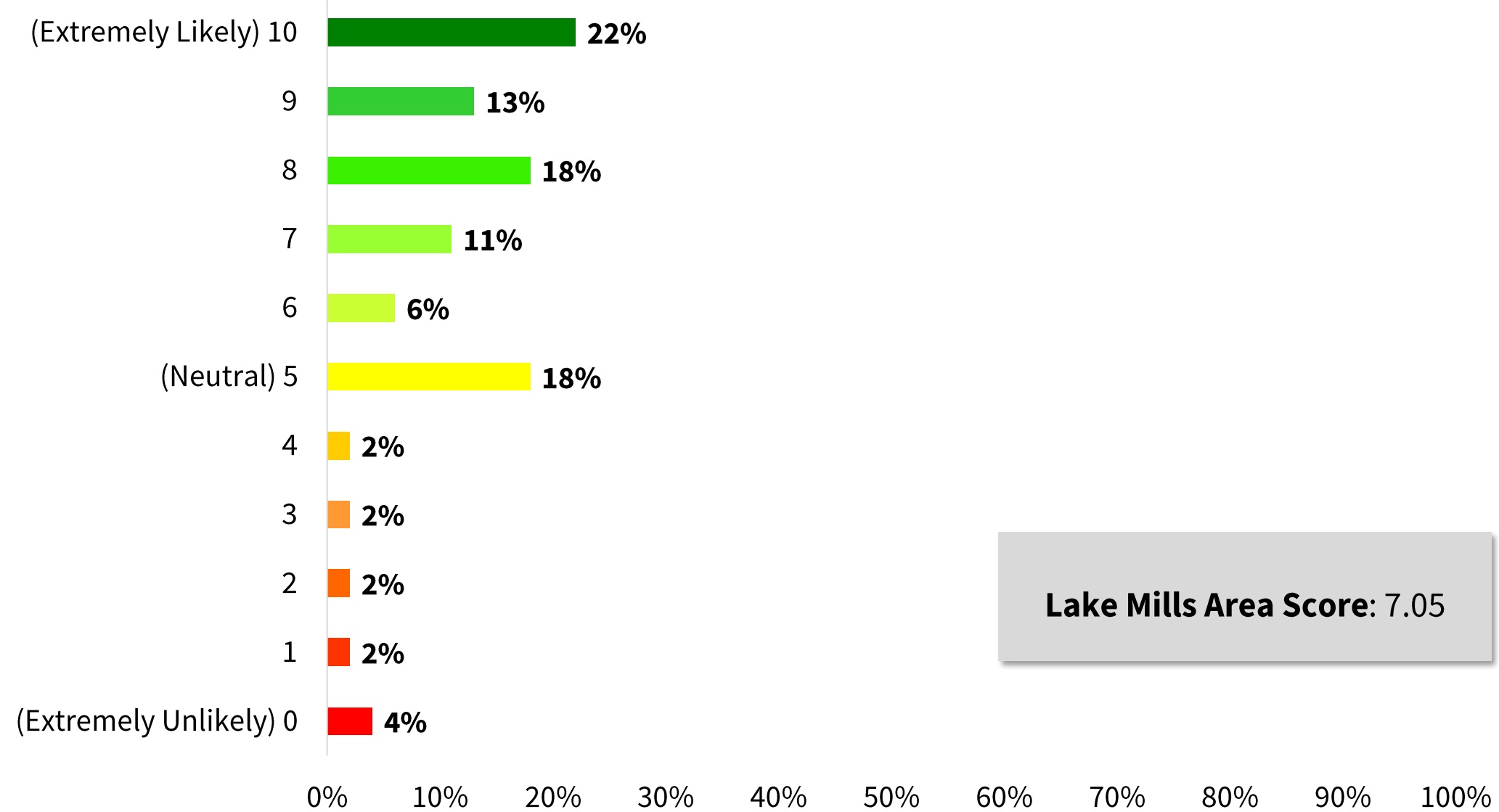
# How is the District doing in each of the following areas?

*Great = 4, Good = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1*



Item	Percent “Great” or “Good”	Average
Delivering a high-quality education	79%	3.05
Keeping the public informed	69%	2.85
Managing funds appropriately	60%	2.61
Building pride in the community	78%	3.05

# On a scale of 0 – 10, how likely would you be to recommend the District to a friend or family member?





# What did we learn?

- Of the projects tested, only the base plan had majority support (51.5% weighted).
- If a referendum for the base plan were held today, the outcome would be too close to call.

## Next steps?

- There is enough support to consider taking a plan to referendum in November and allowing voters to decide.
- School districts are allowed two referendum questions per calendar year.
- In general, support tends to increase when total cost and tax impact decrease.



# SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

*Measuring what matters*

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