City of Kirkland
Aquatics Center Measure Survey
February 2024

**Brief Background on Opinion Research and Methodology**

Random Sampling

George Gallup said that doing a survey with a random sample was like tasting soup – if the soup is well stirred, you can get a good sense of the flavor in a spoonful, and you don't have to eat the whole pot.

▸ Random: not unpredictable, a known and equal likelihood of selection.

▸ If sampling is random, responses will fall within a known margin of error.

▸ We achieve this through multiple components:
Reducing survey bias
Making multiple attempts to reach respondents
Replacing respondents with a random selection
Monitoring results against a known universe
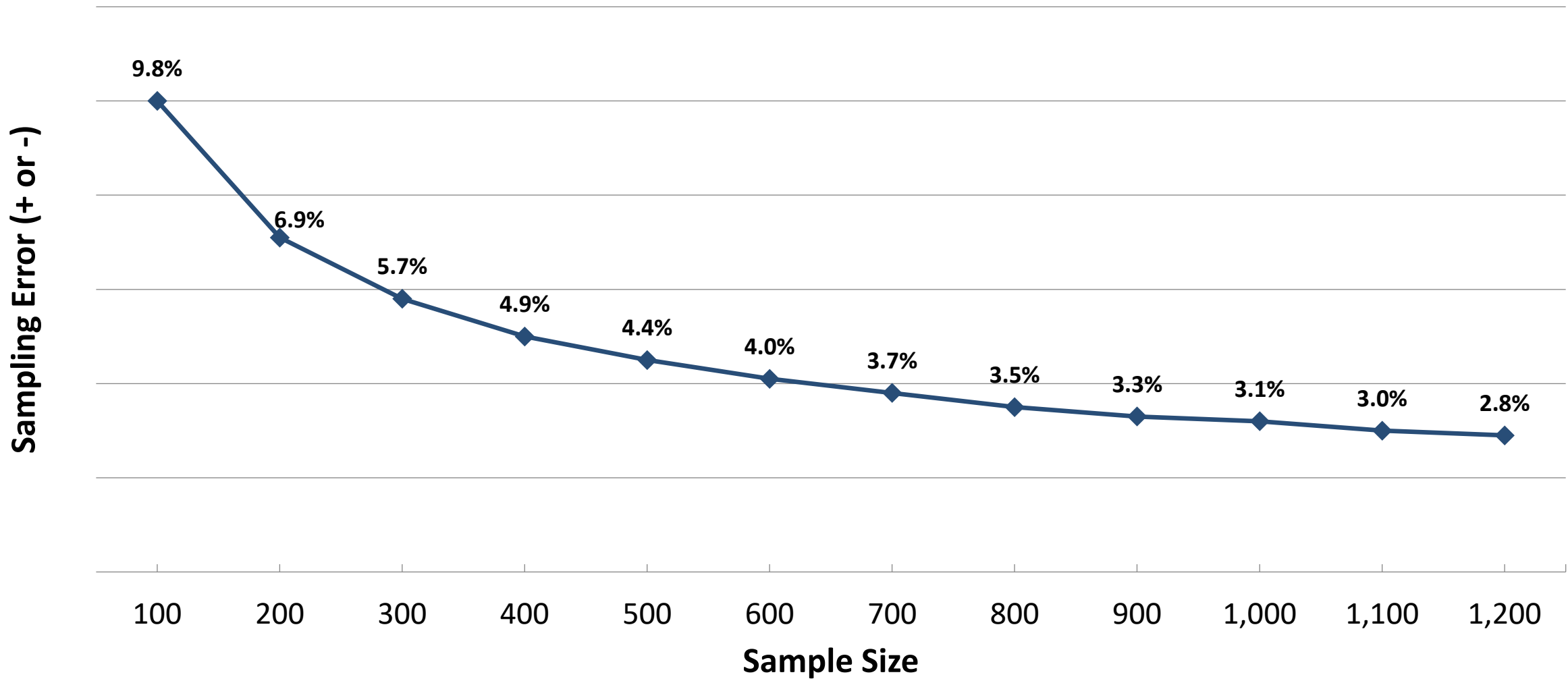Weighting final results when necessary

Concentric Circles of Respondents: Example

Survey Sample

18+ Population

Subgroup
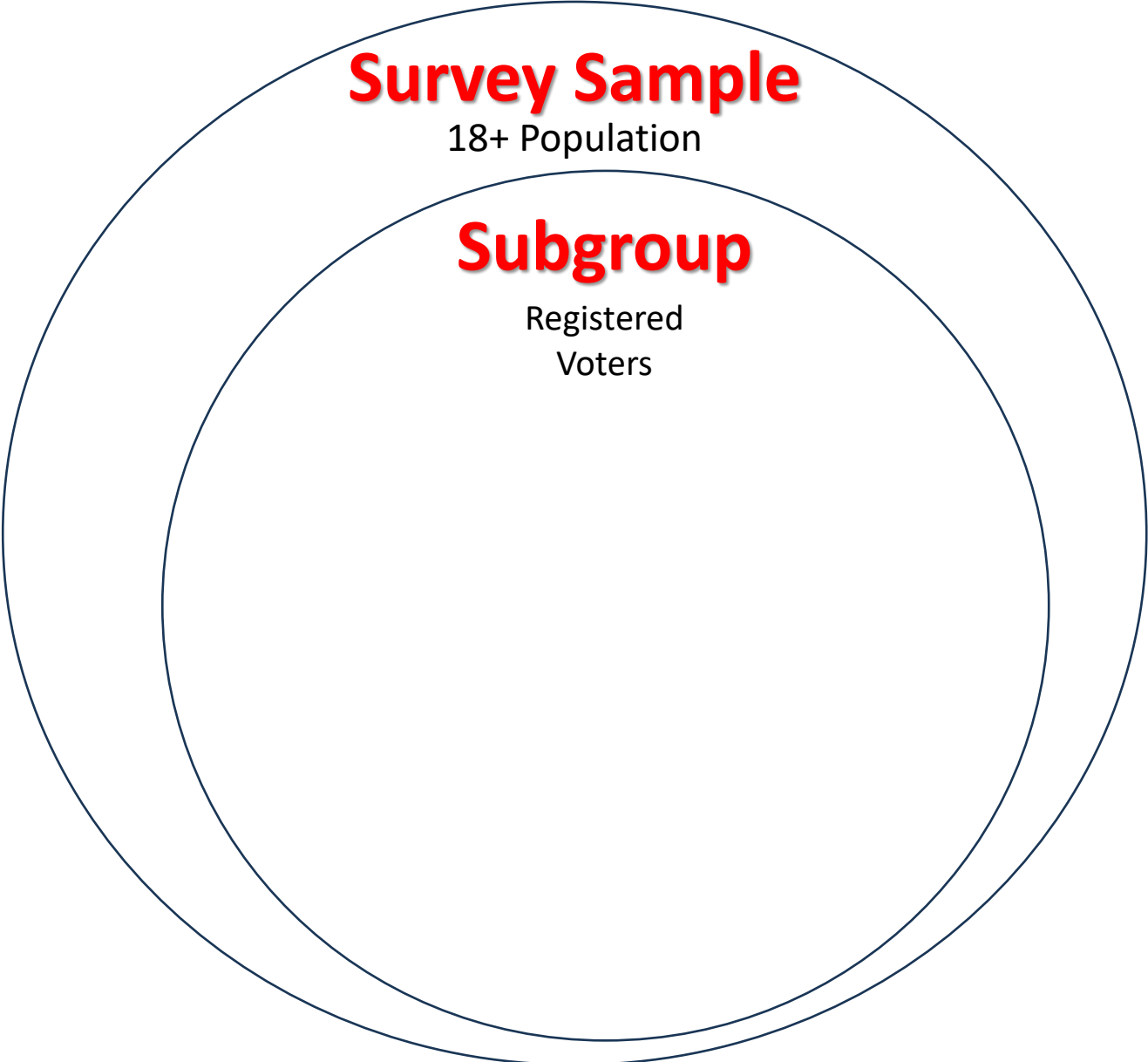
Registered
Voters

Group	Number of Surveys (n)	% Total
Adult Population	600	100%
Registered Voters	510	85%

Sample Size and Subgroup MoE

Methodology Overview

▶ Survey of residents in Kirkland, WA, conducted February 8-15, 2024

▶ Multimodal telephone, email-to-web, and text-to-web survey:

- Telephone interviews were conducted in English by trained, professional interviewers; landlines and mobile phones included
- Email and text invitations were sent with link to web survey
- Multiple attempts per respondent made

▶ Conducted 600 interviews; overall margin of error ±4.0 percentage points

- Among 600 overall interviews, 510 were among registered voters, with a voter margin of error of ±4.3 points

▶ Where applicable, results compared with the following:

Methodology	Dates	Universe	Sample Size	Margin of Error	EMC #
Telephone, Email- and Text-to-Web	April 20-24, 2023	18+ Residents in Kirkland	400	+4.9 percentage points	23-8874

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

Examples of Reducing Bias

▸ The introduction is intentionally generic; therefore if someone refuses they are not doing so based on the topic:

PHONE:

GREETING: Hello, my name is _____, may I speak with **(NAME ON LIST)**?
INTERVIEWER: NAME ON LIST ONLY
INTRO: Hello, my name is _____, and I'm conducting a survey for _____ to find out how people feel about issues and priorities in Kirkland. We are not trying to sell anything and are collecting this information on a scientific and completely confidential basis.

ONLINE:

Your opinions are important! Thank you for participating in this short survey about issues in Kirkland. Please try to answer every question even if you're not sure. If you need to, you may skip a question.

▸ Results include data from respondents who completed the entire survey, meaning results are not biased from respondents who did not complete the entire survey/quit partway.

▸ Throughout the survey, respondents are offered balanced scale options, a question order that releases a little bit of information at a time, randomized question order, and interviewers/web survey that offers the same clarification each time.

Demographics

▸ Surveys conducted with a representative random sample of 18+ Kirkland residents, and then weighted when needed to match Census. An additional confirmation is found with comparing the 2023 election results to what people said in our survey

Demographic Variable		Census Data	Weighted Survey Results
Sex	Male	50%	50%
	Female	50%	50%
Age	18-29	19%	16%
	30-39	23%	21%
	40-49	18%	18%
	50-64	23%	25%
	65+	18%	20%
Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino	6%	6%
	Non-Hispanic White	69%	69%
	Non-Hispanic Black/African American	1%	1%
	Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander	18%	14%
	Non-Hispanic Biracial/Multiracial/Else	5%	4%
	(Refused)	-	6%

| Nov 2023 Vote	Actual Nov 2023: 41% Yes	Our Survey: 37% Yes
	Actual Nov 2023: 59% No	Our Survey: 63% No

**November 2023 Measure
& Issue Environment**

Recreation Facilities Awareness – All Respondents

Nearly three-quarters of respondents reported hearing anything about proposals for new indoor swimming pools, parks, and recreation facilities. Among those who have heard anything, a third noted hearing about the prior ballot measure.

Have you heard, read, or seen anything about proposals for new indoor swimming pools, parks, and recreation facilities in Kirkland?
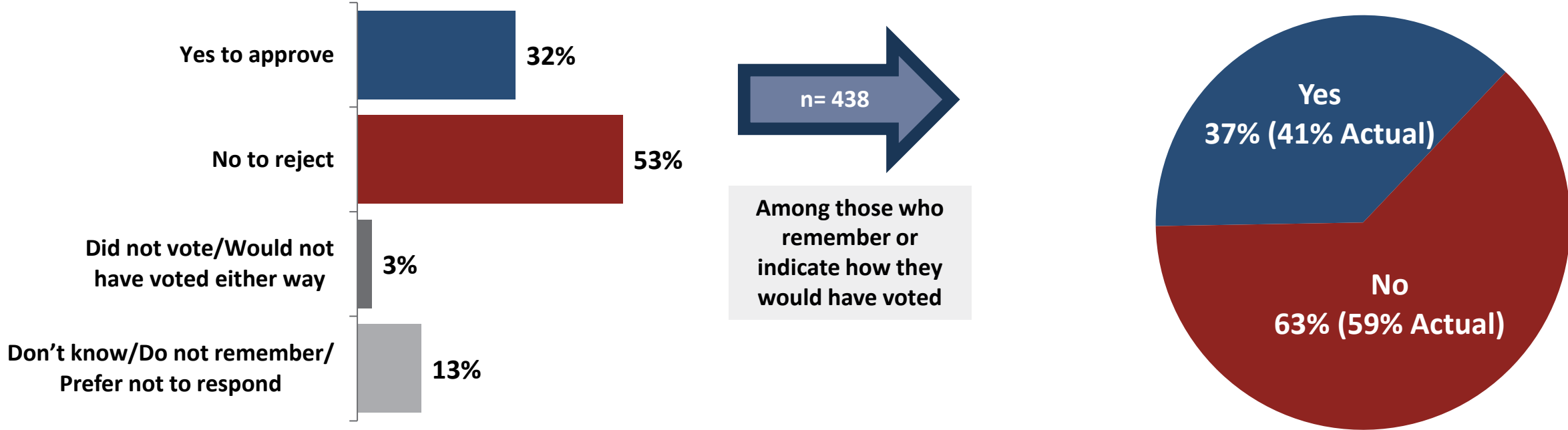
Yes **72%**

No **27%**

n= 455
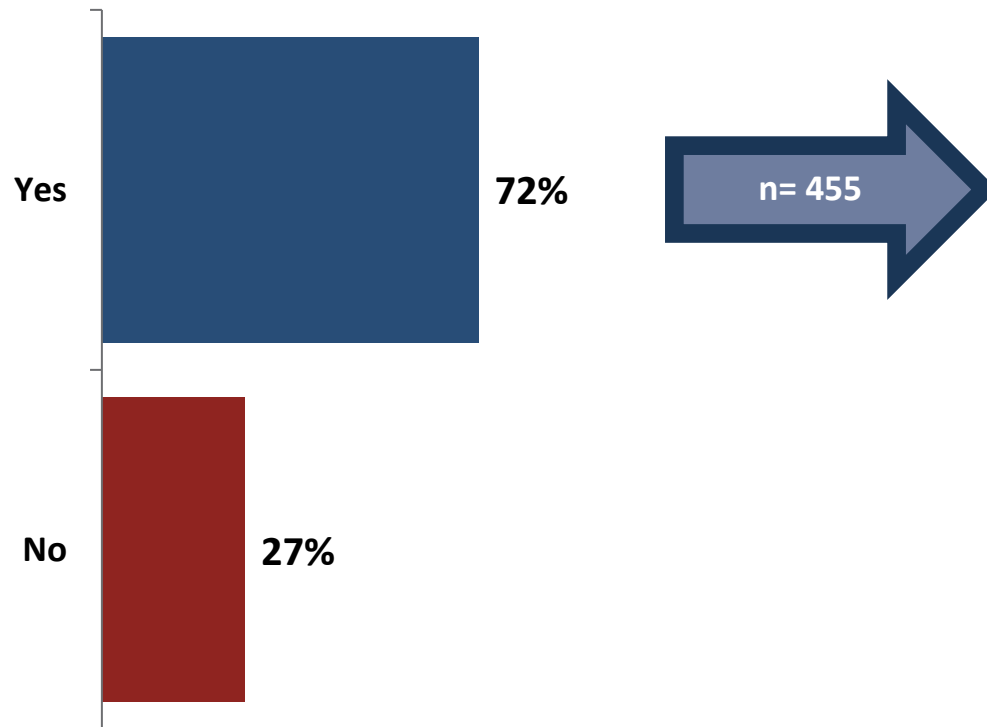
What have you heard, read, or seen?

(Open ended question, verbatim responses coded into categories shown below.)

Prior voting/propositions/ballot measure	33%
New aquatic facility being developed/upgraded	28%
Voted against proposition/failed initiative	16%
Tax increase/levy	10%
Location	10%
Mailings/Flyers/Pamphlets	9%
Costly/Too expensive	8%
Articles/News articles	5%

Support For Nov. 2023 Measure – Registered Voters

Self-reported support among registered voters for the 2023 measure, asked among both those who did and did not vote in November 2023, was similar to actual election results.

As you may know, there was a measure on the November 2023 ballot about funding to expand indoor swimming pools, parks and recreation facilities and programs in Kirkland. It was called Proposition 1 and it would have built an 86,000 square foot aquatic and recreation center on the former Houghton Park and Ride property, funded the operations of the aquatic and recreation center, and made additional park enhancements such as new year-round restrooms, sport courts, and trail networks in the city. Proposition 1 proposed funding these investments with a permanent levy lid lift of 28 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value, costing the average homeowner of a $1 million dollar home in Kirkland about $280/year.

Yes to approve — **32%**

No to reject — **53%**

Did not vote/Would not have voted either way — **3%**

Don't know/Do not remember/ Prefer not to respond — **13%**

n= 438

Among those who remember or indicate how they would have voted

Yes 37% (41% Actual)

No 63% (59% Actual)

Q5. (IF Q4=YES VOTED NOV 2023; n=486) From what you remember, did you vote yes to approve or no to reject the measure, or did you not vote on it either way? (IF Q4= DID NOT VOTE/DK; n=114) If you had voted in the November 2023 election, would you have voted yes to approve or no to reject the measure?
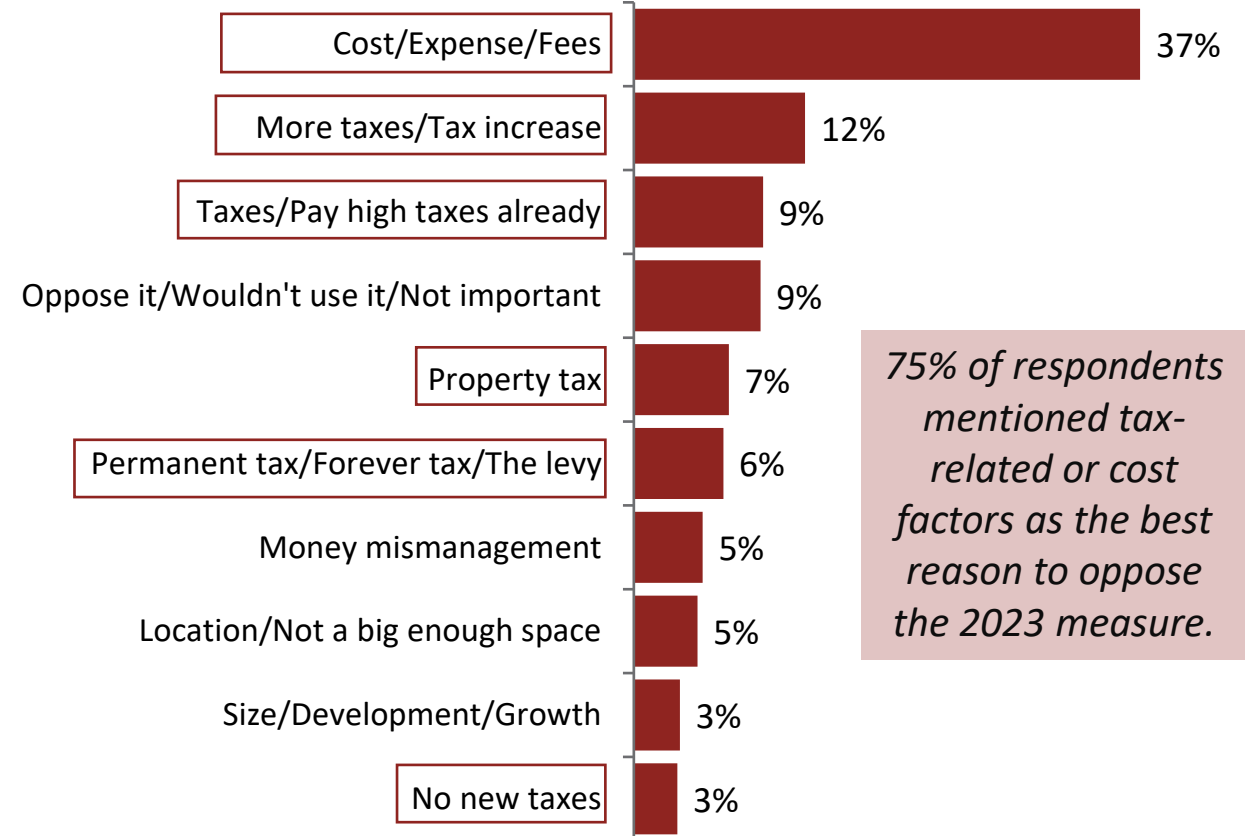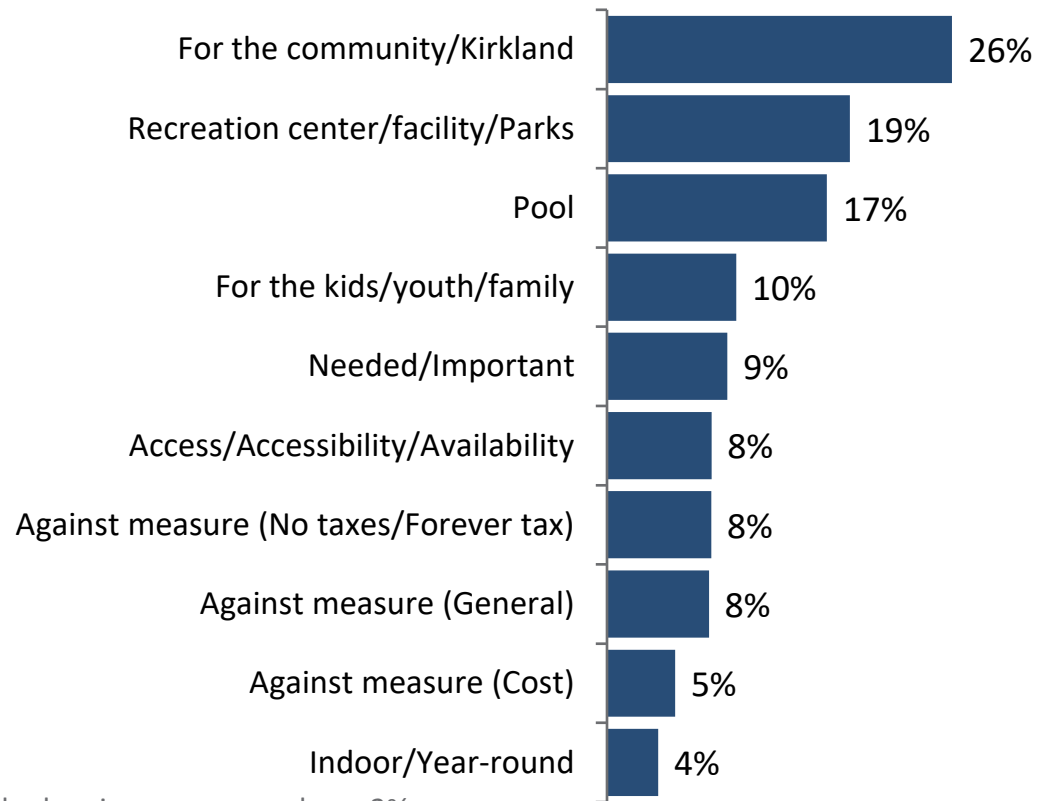
Top-of-Mind Reasons to Support/Oppose – All Respondents

A quarter of respondents stated that the best reason to support the measure was for the Kirkland community, while three-quarters mentioned a tax- or cost-related factor as the best reason to oppose it.

| Regardless of whether or how you voted, what are the best reasons to **support** this measure? | And again, regardless of whether or how you voted, what are the best reasons to **oppose** this measure? |

(Open ended question; Verbatim responses coded into categories shown below; Up to two responses accepted)

For the community/Kirkland — 26%
Recreation center/facility/Parks — 19%
Pool — 17%
For the kids/youth/family — 10%
Needed/Important — 9%
Access/Accessibility/Availability — 8%
Against measure (No taxes/Forever tax) — 8%
Against measure (General) — 8%
Against measure (Cost) — 5%
Indoor/Year-round — 4%

Cost/Expense/Fees — 37%
More taxes/Tax increase — 12%
Taxes/Pay high taxes already — 9%
Oppose it/Wouldn't use it/Not important — 9%
Property tax — 7%
Permanent tax/Forever tax/The levy — 6%
Money mismanagement — 5%
Location/Not a big enough space — 5%
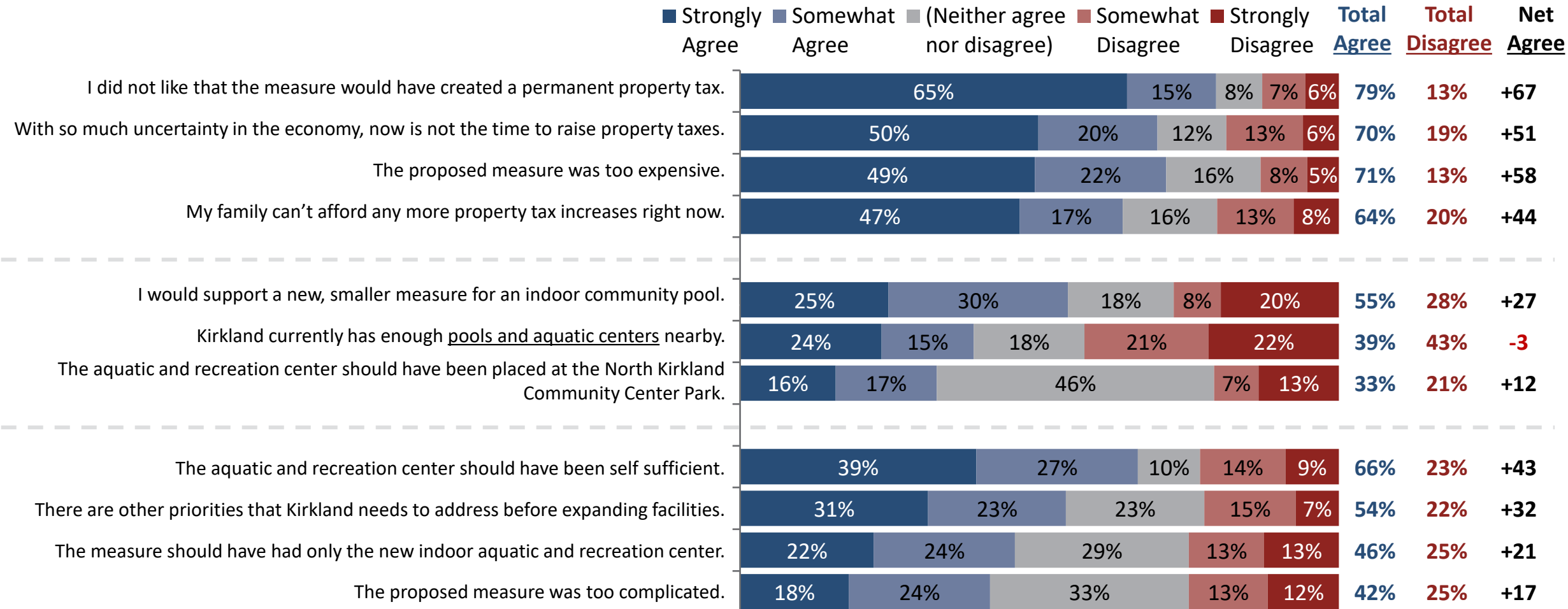Size/Development/Growth — 3%
No new taxes — 3%

75% of respondents mentioned tax-related or cost factors as the best reason to oppose the 2023 measure.

*Only showing responses above 2%

Agree/Disagree Statements – Registered Voters

The most-agreed-with statements center around property taxes and cost of the past measure, showing that cost sensitivity likely played a major role in November 2023.
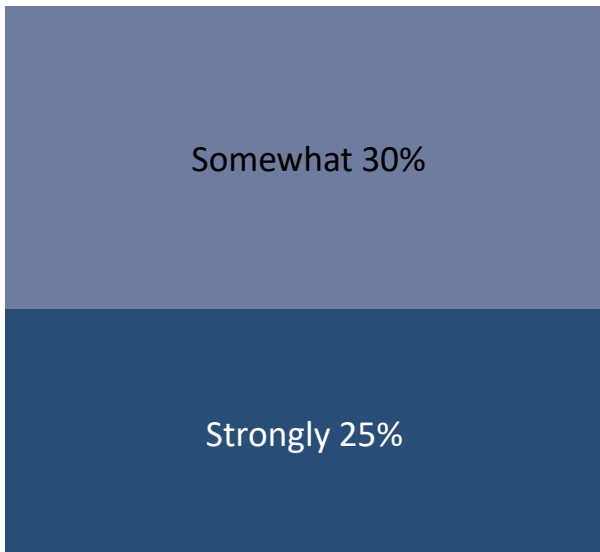
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	(Neither agree nor disagree)	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Net Agree
I did not like that the measure would have created a permanent property tax.	65%	15%	8%	7%	6%	**79%**	**13%**	**+67**
With so much uncertainty in the economy, now is not the time to raise property taxes.	50%	20%	12%	13%	6%	**70%**	**19%**	**+51**
The proposed measure was too expensive.	49%	22%	16%	8%	5%	**71%**	**13%**	**+58**
My family can't afford any more property tax increases right now.	47%	17%	16%	13%	8%	**64%**	**20%**	**+44**
I would support a new, smaller measure for an indoor community pool.	25%	30%	18%	8%	20%	**55%**	**28%**	**+27**
Kirkland currently has enough <u>pools and aquatic centers</u> nearby.	24%	15%	18%	21%	22%	**39%**	**43%**	**-3**
The aquatic and recreation center should have been placed at the North Kirkland Community Center Park.	16%	17%	46%	7%	13%	**33%**	**21%**	**+12**
The aquatic and recreation center should have been self sufficient.	39%	27%	10%	14%	9%	**66%**	**23%**	**+43**
There are other priorities that Kirkland needs to address before expanding facilities.	31%	23%	23%	15%	7%	**54%**	**22%**	**+32**
The measure should have had only the new indoor aquatic and recreation center.	22%	24%	29%	13%	13%	**46%**	**25%**	**+21**
The proposed measure was too complicated.	18%	24%	33%	13%	12%	**42%**	**25%**	**+17**

Q8-Q18. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

New Measure
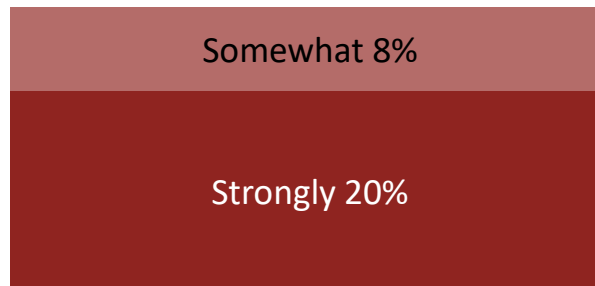
Potential Bond Measure Comparison – Registered Voters

When we narrow to voters, a levy and a bond both get a majority; but only the levy reaches approval territory.

Levy Lid Lift

Assume the proposal is for the construction of an approximately 40,000 square foot indoor community pool with both a family recreation pool and a lap pool for swim lessons, swim and diving meets, and lap swimming, using a 9 year levy lid lift property tax measure which would cost the average homeowner in Kirkland 15 cents per thousand of assessed value, which is about $150 each year. The property tax would expire after 9 years. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that proposal?

Support 52%

Oppose 47%

Somewhat 30%

Somewhat 18%

Strongly 22%

Strongly 30%
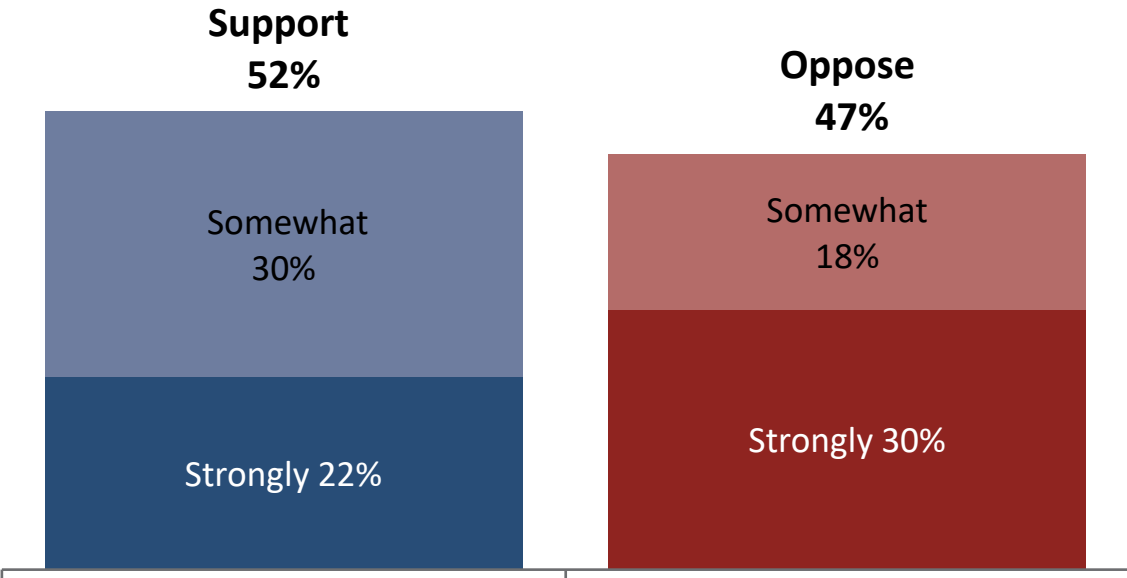
Bond Measure

Assume the proposal is for the construction of an approximately 40,000 square foot indoor community pool with both a family recreation pool and a lap pool for swim lessons, swim and diving meets, and lap swimming, using a 30 year bond property tax measure which would cost the average homeowner in Kirkland 6.6 cents per thousand of assessed value, which is about $66 each year. The property tax would expire after 30 years. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that proposal?

Support 55%

Oppose 45%

Somewhat 30%

Somewhat 17%

Strongly 25%

Strongly 28%
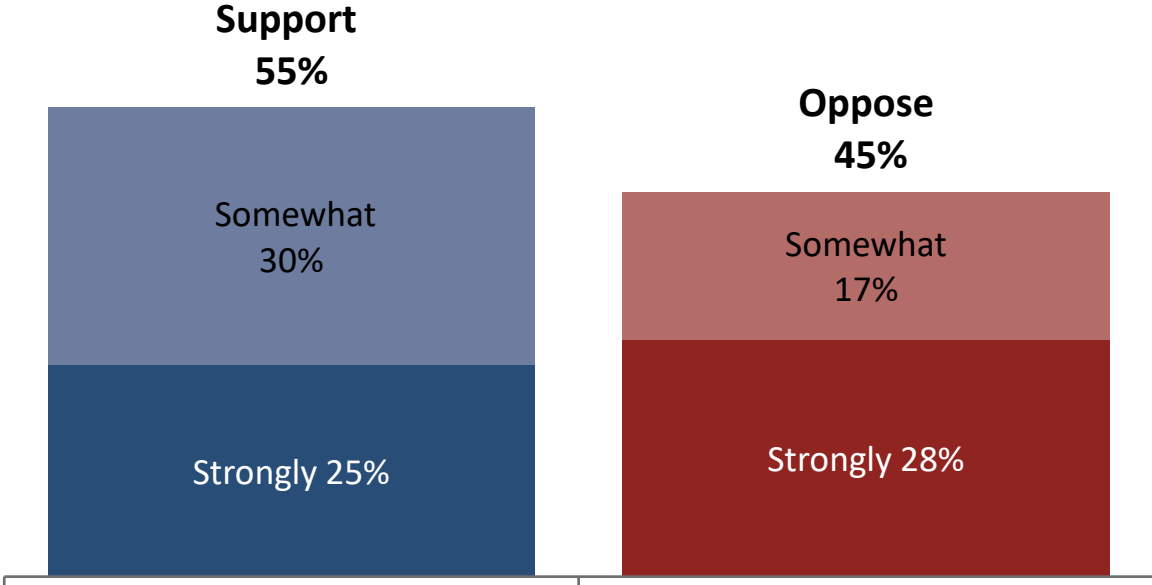
Note: Order of questions were evenly rotated

# Location Preference – Registered Voters

Of the sixty percent of voters who prefer one location over the other, there is a clear preference for the North Kirkland Community Center Park location.

The City already owns two possible locations for the community pool. The first is the former Houghton Park & Ride at NE 70th PL and I-405 in south central Kirkland. The second is at North Kirkland Community Center Park on NE 124th St near 100th Ave NE.

Of these two locations, do you prefer one location over the other?

Which location do you prefer?

Yes — 60%

No — 38%

n= 309

39%

61%
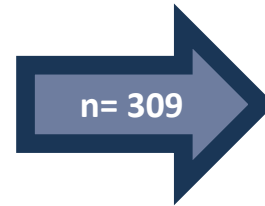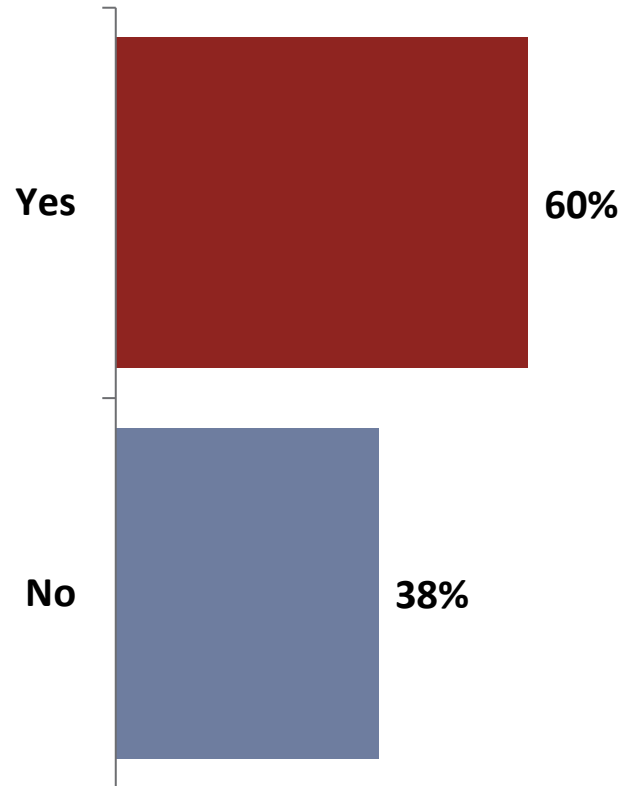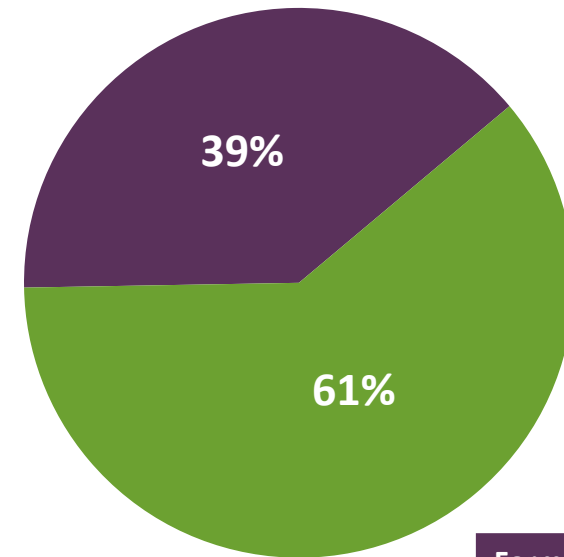
Former Houghton Park & Ride Site

North Kirkland Community Center Park

Location Preference Over Time – All Respondents

Location preference has held very stable since 2023, with over six-in-ten respondents who have a location preference preferring the North Kirkland Community Center Park location in both 2023 and 2024 polling.
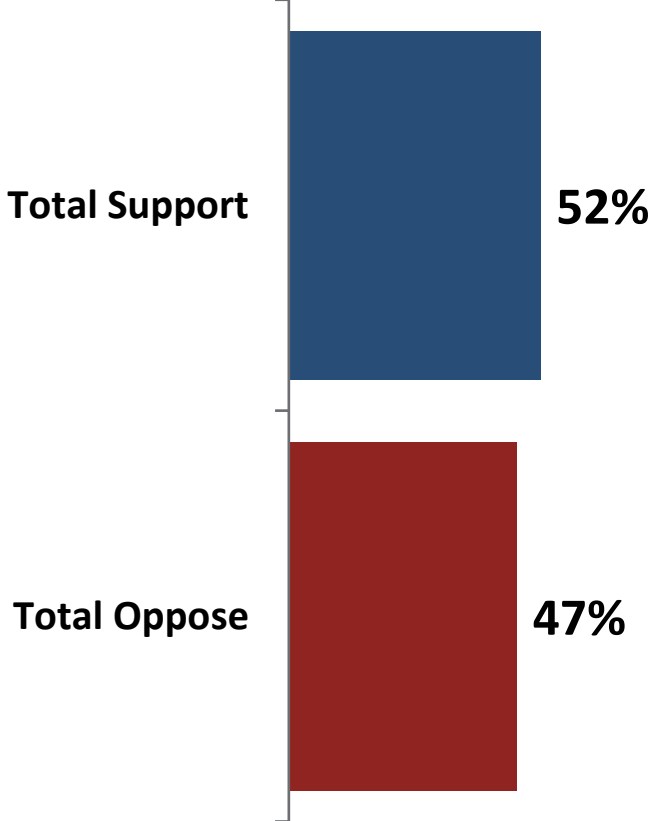
Which location do you prefer?

Asked among those who said they had a location preference in Q21
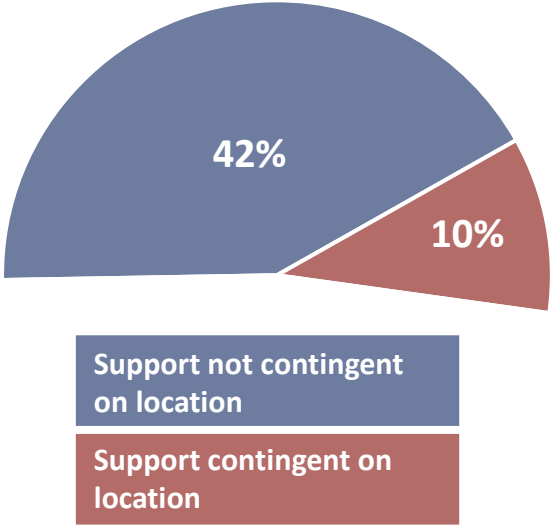*2023 n=256; 2024 n=362*

Former Houghton Park & Ride Site
- 2024: 38%
- 2023: 39%

North Kirkland Community Center Park
- 2024: 62%
- 2023: 61%
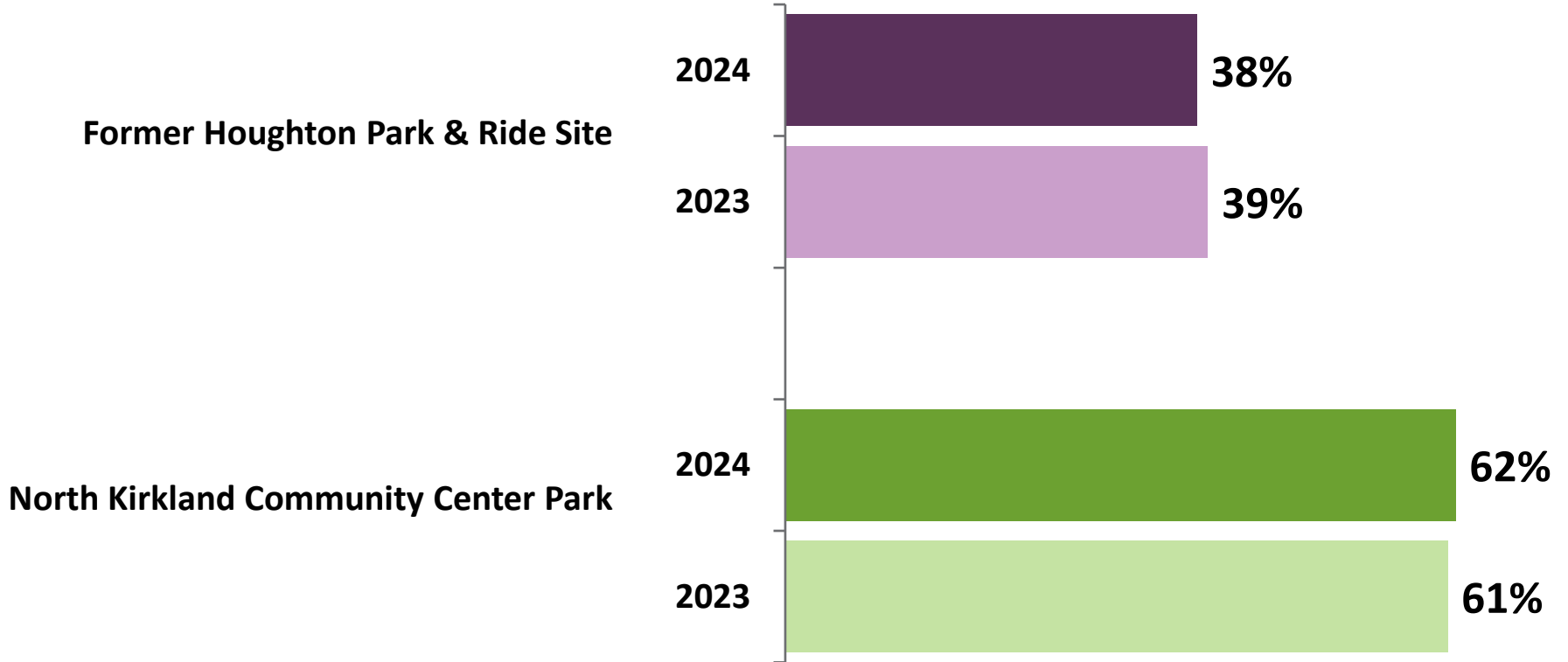
Support for Bond Based on Location – Registered Voters

Digging deeper, it is clear that a bond is not feasible. Initial support fails to meet the sixty percent passage threshold, and when location preference is taken into account, support is even lower (52% at NKCC / 46% at Houghton).
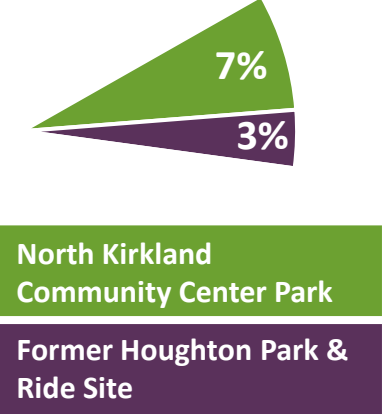
Total support for 30-year bond measure

Location preference intensity breakdown among supporters

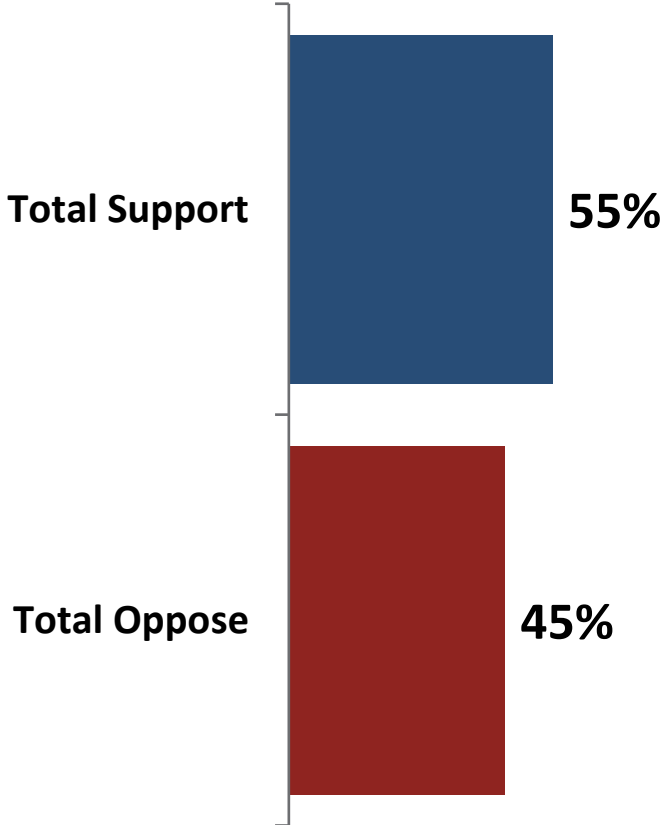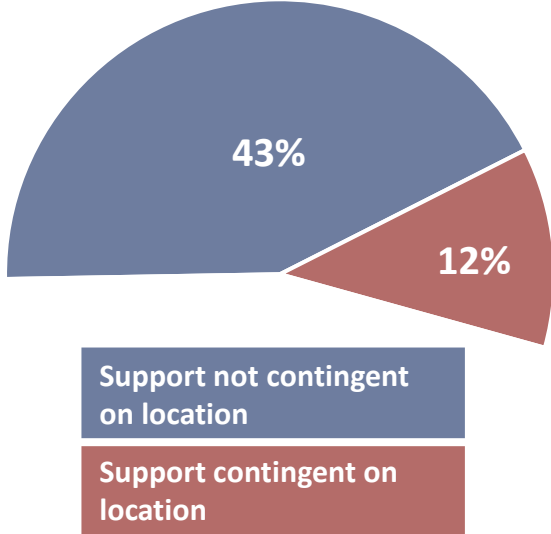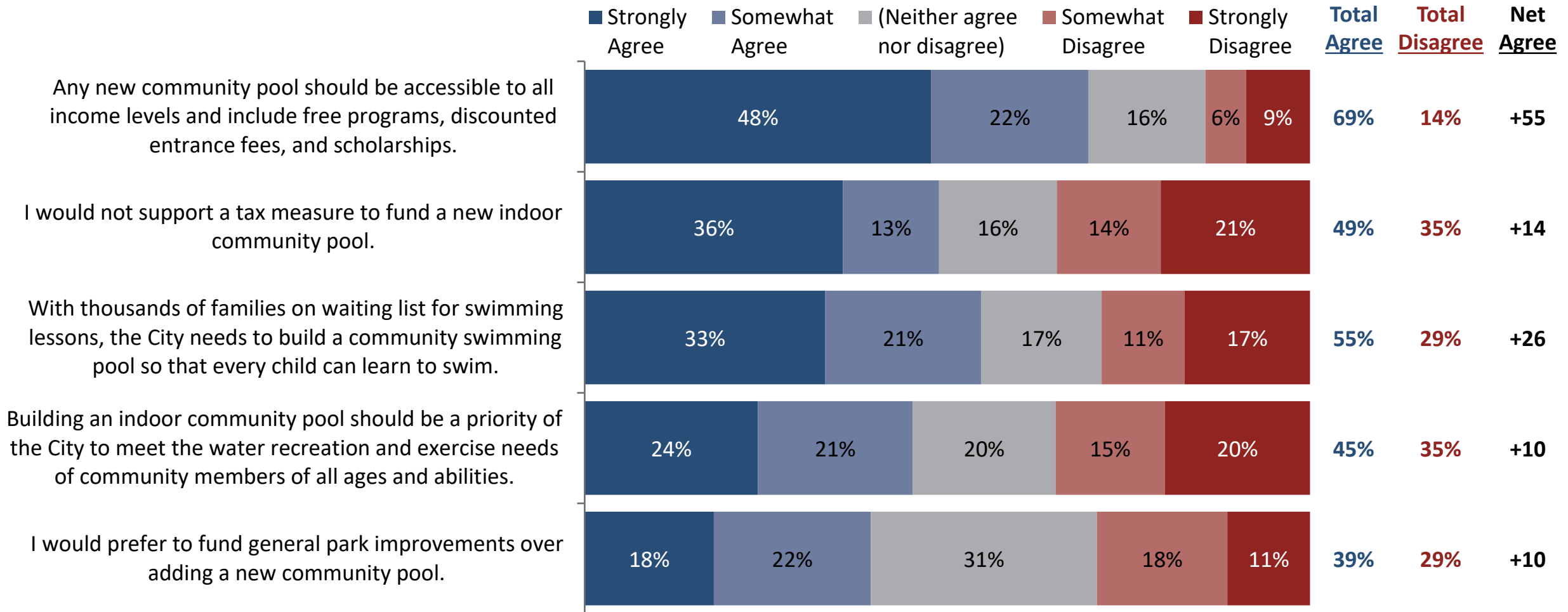**% of all Whose Support is Contingent on Location**

Total Support — 55%

Total Oppose — 45%

43%

12%

Support not contingent on location

Support contingent on location

9%

3%

North Kirkland Community Center Park

Former Houghton Park & Ride Site

Agree/Disagree Statements – All Respondents

Nearly half of respondents agreed that they would not support a tax measure to fund a new indoor community pool; agreement does reach a majority based on waiting list information, but this only matches the high of 55% "general support".

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	(Neither agree nor disagree)	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Agree	Total Disagree	Net Agree
Any new community pool should be accessible to all income levels and include free programs, discounted entrance fees, and scholarships.	48%	22%	16%	6%	9%	69%	14%	+55
I would not support a tax measure to fund a new indoor community pool.	36%	13%	16%	14%	21%	49%	35%	+14
With thousands of families on waiting list for swimming lessons, the City needs to build a community swimming pool so that every child can learn to swim.	33%	21%	17%	11%	17%	55%	29%	+26
Building an indoor community pool should be a priority of the City to meet the water recreation and exercise needs of community members of all ages and abilities.	24%	21%	20%	15%	20%	45%	35%	+10
I would prefer to fund general park improvements over adding a new community pool.	18%	22%	31%	18%	11%	39%	29%	+10

Q24-Q28. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Key Findings

▶ Tax/cost sensitivity is the overwhelming reason in open ended answers (75%), and in a series of tested statements, that people gave for opposing the 2023 measure.

- Opposition to a generic tax measure for a new pool is a majority (49%).

▶ A majority of voters (55%) support a smaller bond and a levy (52%), but the location decision that will be required pushes voter support below 50%.

▶ A large majority says that if built, a new pool should be accessible to all (70%), and a majority (54%) also say the swim lesson waiting list is a good reason to build a new pool.

- At the same time, less than a majority (46%) say that building an indoor community pool should be a priority of the City to meet the water recreation and exercise needs of community members of all ages and abilities.

▶ Ultimately, the City is caught between a majority that generically say they would support a new smaller measure, and the slimmer plurality that would actually support the measure when cost and location are known.

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