National Association of REALTORS®

Richmond Smart Growth Survey

April 2025

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VA - Richmond Smart Growth Survey Methodology

654 (654 weighted)
Richmond, Virginia
Registered Voters

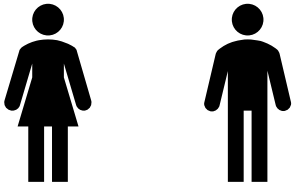
Wireless (263)
Non-wireless (52)
Online (307)
Panel (32)

Interviews Conducted
April 28 – May 2, 2025

The sample was drawn from a third-party vendor file. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.8%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.

Demographics

Gender



Women 55%

Men 45%

Tenure

Less than 5 yrs: 36%
5 to 10 yrs: 22%
11 to 20 yrs: 15%
More than 20 yrs: 27%

Race

White: 54%
African American: 40%
Hispanic or Latino: 3%
Other: 3%

Age

18-29: 22%
30-39: 26%
40-49: 14%
50-64: 18%
65+: 19%

Education

Non-College Graduates: 43%
4 Yr. College Degree: 32%
Post-Graduate Degree: 24%

Region

South Central (CCDs 5, 8, 9): 27%
Northeast (CCDs 3, 6, 7): 36%
Northwest (CCDs 1, 2, 4): 36%

Owner/Renter

Homeowner: 48%
Renter: 41%
Lives w/Friends/Family: 10%

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Executive Summary

Residents are generally happy with the quality of life in Richmond. Three quarters (74 percent) of registered voters rate the quality of life in Richmond as either excellent or good, although satisfaction lacks intensity with only 17 percent describing the quality of life as "excellent."

- *Voters in the Northwest part of the city, households with annual incomes over $75,000 and those with a college degree are more bullish on the quality of life than their lower income and non-college counterparts. Race also plays a role with White voters more upbeat about the quality of life than Black voters. Less than half of Black women and Blacks under age 50 rate the quality of life as excellent or good.*

Mixed assessment of how quality of life has changed. A plurality of 46 percent say that the quality of life in Richmond has stayed the same in the past three years, but nearly one-third (28 percent) feel that it has gotten worse; 24 percent feel the quality of life has gotten better. Lower income, non-college and South Central voters *(Council Districts 5, 8 & 9)* are most likely to feel that the quality of life has gotten worse.

Housing costs and availability tops list of voters' issue concerns. Thirty-eight percent of Richmond voters say that housing costs and availability should be the most important issue for the mayor and city council to focus on. Water and sewer infrastructure (20 percent top issue concern) and crime (18 percent top issue concern) rank second and third. Renters, lower income voters and those under age 50 are especially focused on housing issues.

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Executive Summary

Most see housing affordability as big problem in Richmond; a smaller percentage see housing availability as a big problem. Three-quarters (74 percent) say that housing affordability is either a very (47 percent) or fairly (27 percent) big problem in Richmond. But there is a disconnect among residents between housing affordability and availability; half (48 percent) say that housing availability is a very (24 percent) or fairly (24 percent) big problem. An additional 24 percent perceive availability to be a moderate problem.

- Affordability is a problem across the board, but especially acute among non-homeowners and households making less than $75,000 a year. Women also rate affordability as a very big problem more than men.

- Majorities of Black women, non-homeowners and lower income households see housing availability as a very big or fairly big problem.

Shortage of housing apparent for younger people, middle class people and seniors. Seventy-two percent of Richmond voters say there is too little housing in the city for young people and those just getting started in their careers. Two-thirds say there is too little housing for people with middle-class incomes (67 percent) and housing for seniors and people looking to downsize (65 percent).

Bare majority say too few properties are available to buy but number of rentals seen as adequate. Residents are divided on the availability of homes and condominiums to buy, with 50 percent saying there is too little and 38 percent saying there is about the right amount and 9 percent too many. The number of rentals is seen as less of a problem with with 44 percent saying there is about the right amount of apartments available, 31 percent saying there are too few rentals and 24 percent feeling that there are too many rentals.

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Executive Summary

Richmond voters agree that the city needs more housing. Nearly three-quarters agree that more housing that is affordable needs to be built in their neighborhood. Two-thirds agree that the city needs more housing options and a large majority (59 percent) support changing zoning codes to allow for more homes to be built in their neighborhood. However, only 26 percent *strongly* agree with the latter sentiment; 33 percent *somewhat* agree.

In a different test, only 47 percent favor changing the city's zoning laws to allow for more multi-family housing construction in Richmond; 28 percent oppose the proposal. Many voters (25 percent) are unsure, suggesting the potential for NIMBY opposition.

- *Men over the age of 50, seniors, non-college women, older non-college and people who have lived in the city for 11 years or more are most troubled by the proposal (and are the most likely NIMBY constituencies).*
- *Support is strongest among non-homeowners, people who have lived in the city for less than 11 years, college graduates under age 50, Black men under age 50, college educated men and those aged 18 to 34 (and are the most likely YIMBY groups).*
- *Geographically, those in the Northwest part of the city (Council Districts 1, 2 & 4) are more concerned about the proposal than those in the rest of the city.*

Voters have doubts that new housing construction will solve the affordability problem. While a majority (55 percent) agree that building more housing will help reduce the overall cost of housing in Richmond, only 22 percent *strongly* agree. A large majority (57 percent) are *very* concerned that new units will be bought up by investors who will charge high rents or that developers will just charge higher prices for smaller homes.

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Life in Richmond

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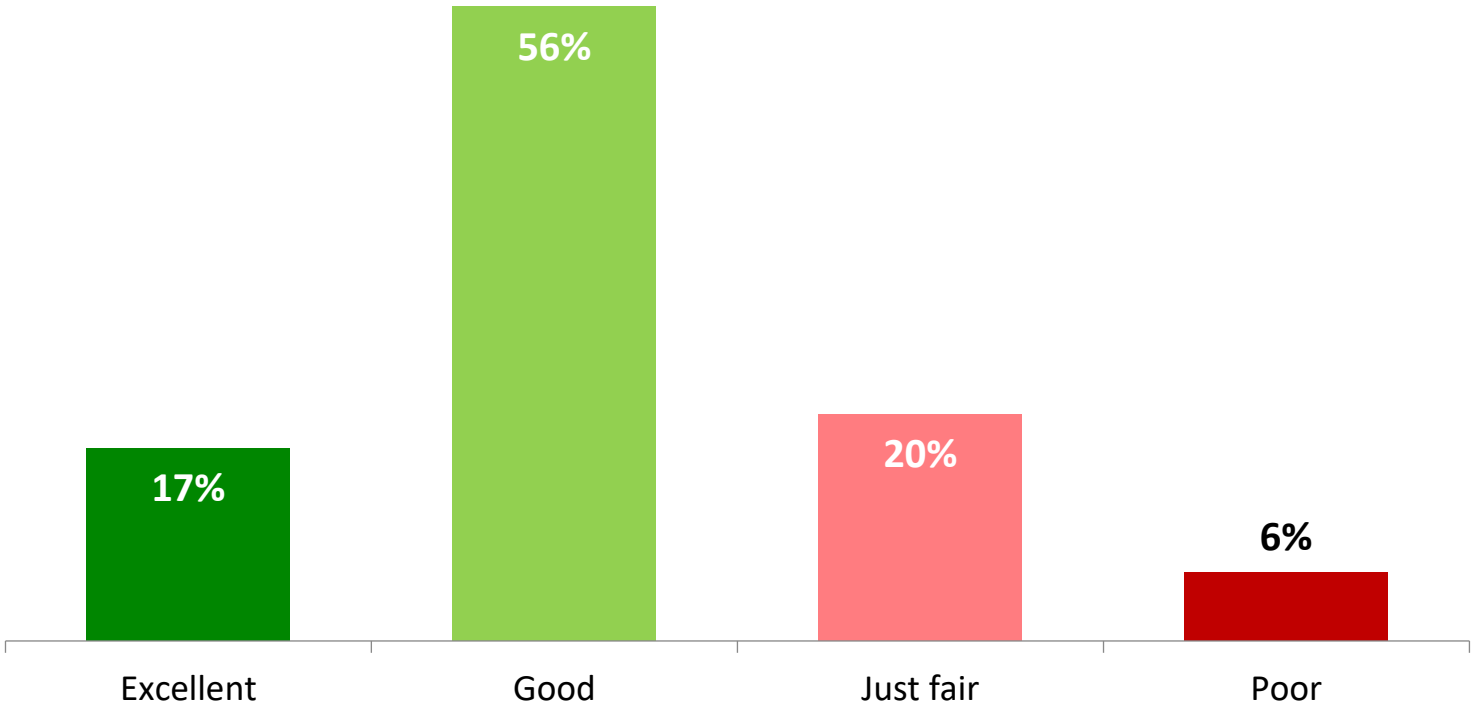
Most Feel That Quality of Life Richmond is Excellent or Good

Quality of Life in Richmond

Excellent/Good: 74% | Just fair/Poor: 26%



Q.4 Overall how would you describe the quality of life in Richmond?

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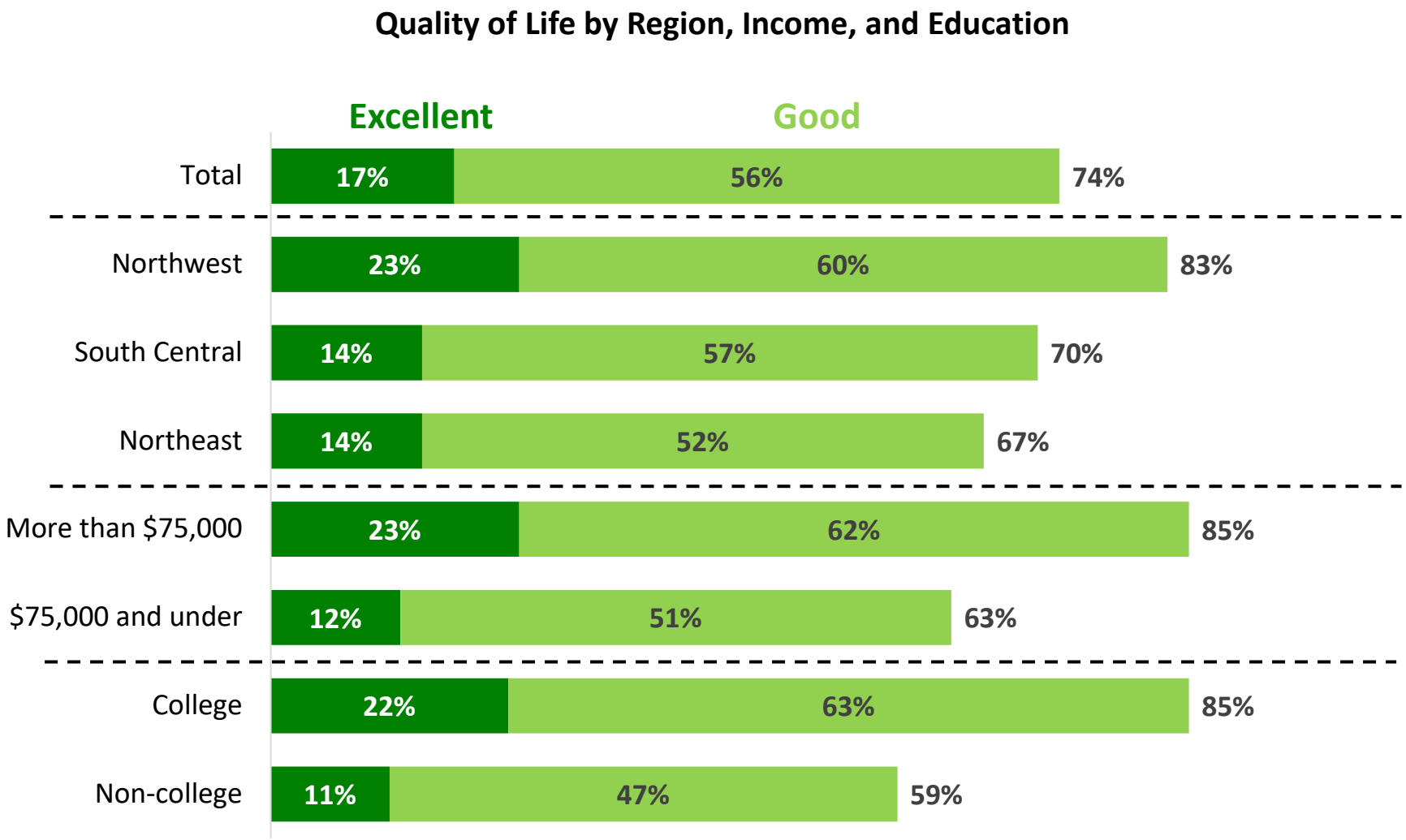
Voters in Northwest, Those with Higher Income, and College Graduates Rate Quality of Life Highest



Q.4 Overall how would you describe the quality of life in Richmond?

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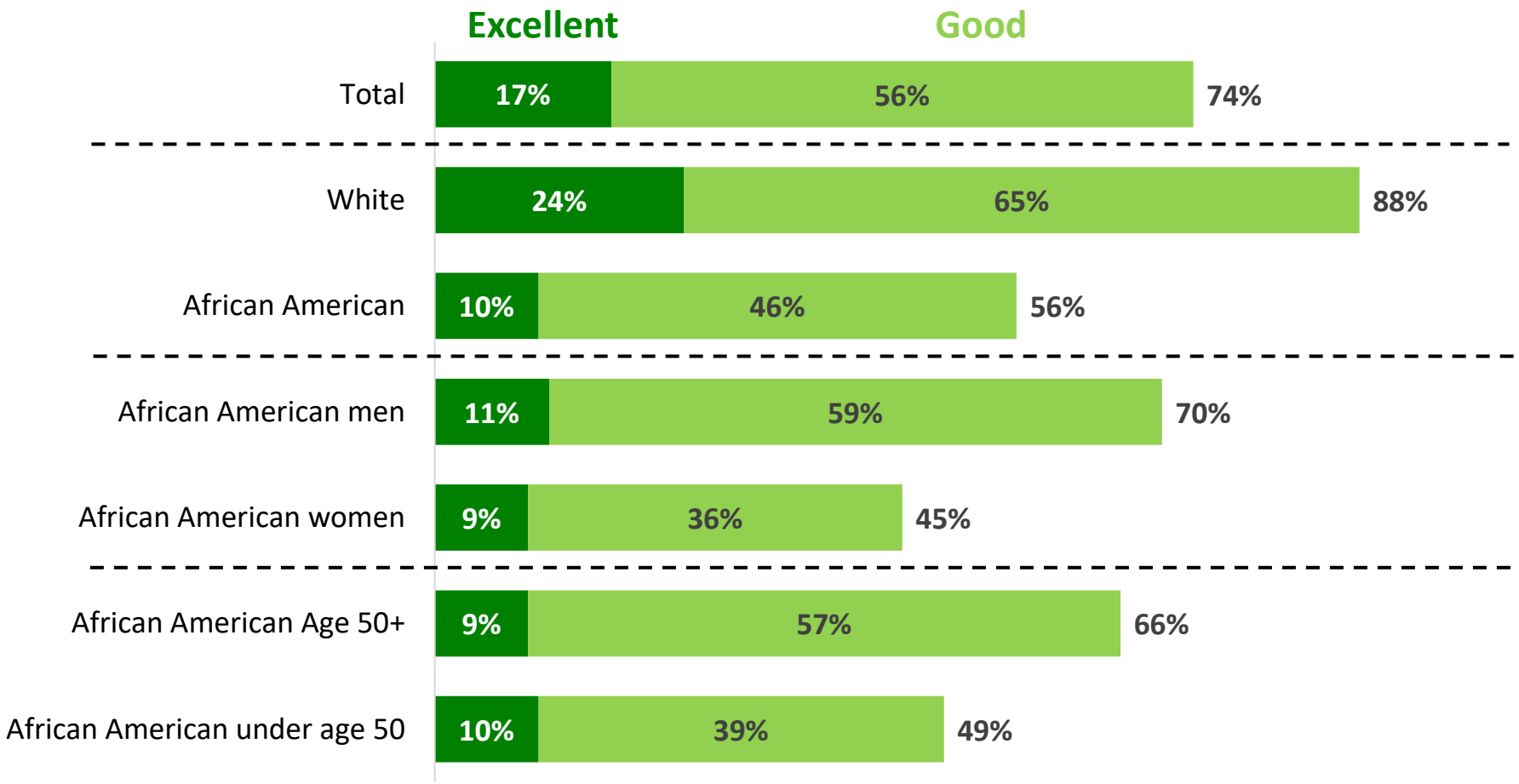
Whites More Positive About Quality of Life than Blacks

Gender and age divide among African-Americans

Quality of Life by Race, Race/Gender, and Race/Age



Q.4 Overall how would you describe the quality of life in Richmond?

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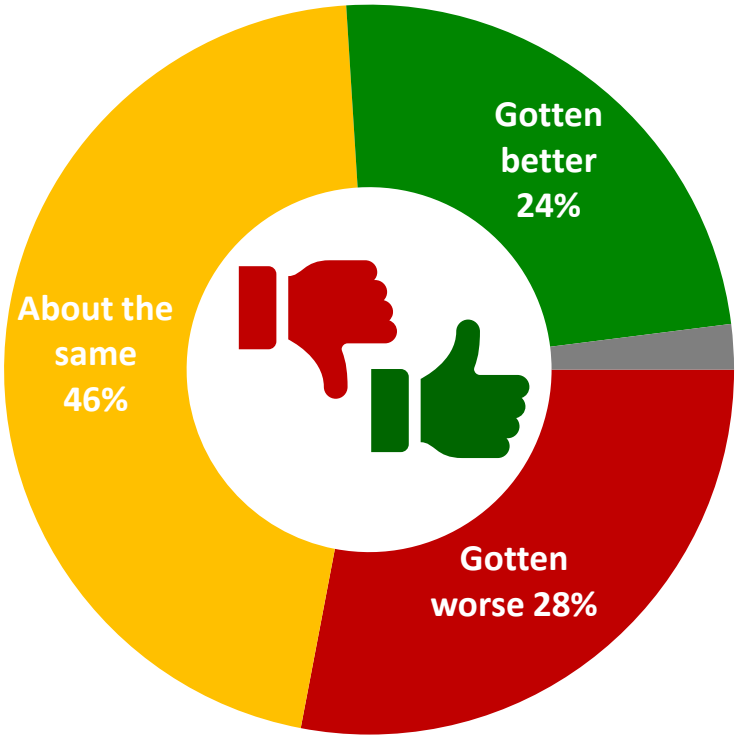
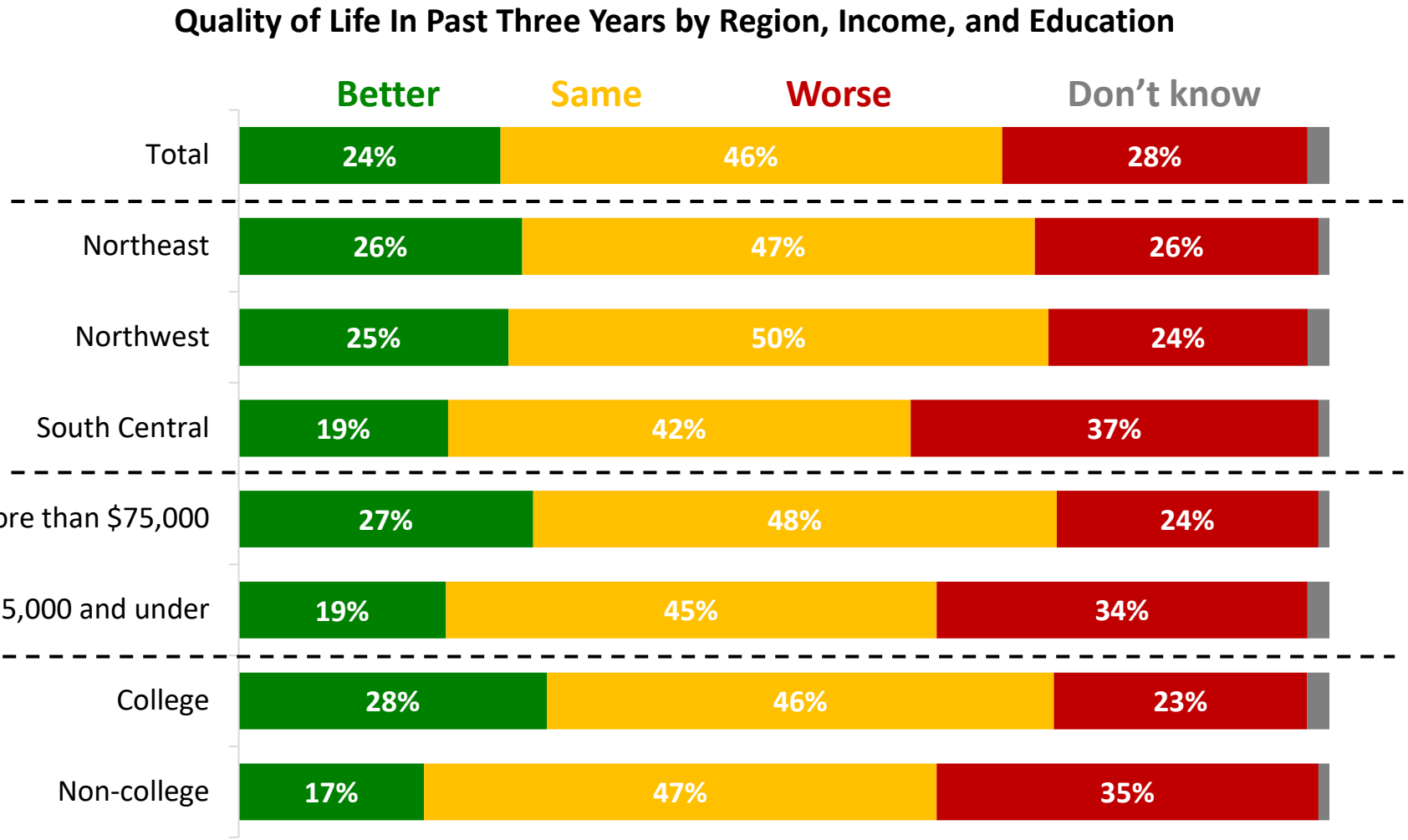
Plurality Feels Quality of Life has Stayed About the Same in Past Three Years; One-Quarter Thinks Things Have Gotten Worse

Quality of Life In Past Three Years



Q.5 In the past three years, do you think the quality of life in Richmond has...

Voters in South Central, Lower Income, and Non-College More Likely To Say Quality of Life Has Gotten Worse



Q.5 In the past three years, do you think the quality of life in Richmond has...

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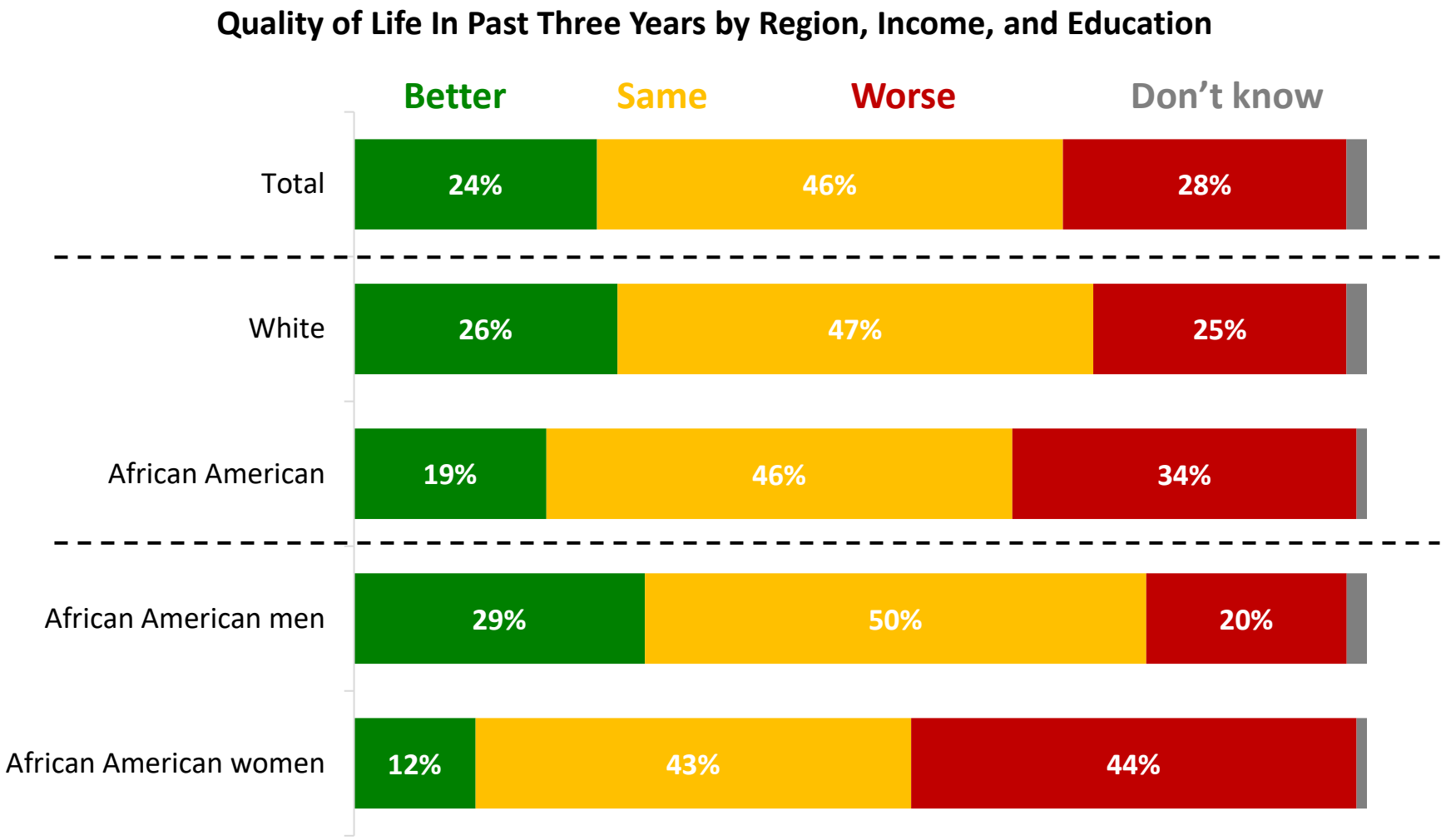
African American Voters, Especially Women, More Likely To Say Quality of Life Has Gotten Worse in Recent Years



Q.5 In the past three years, do you think the quality of life in Richmond has...

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Housing Affordability and Availability

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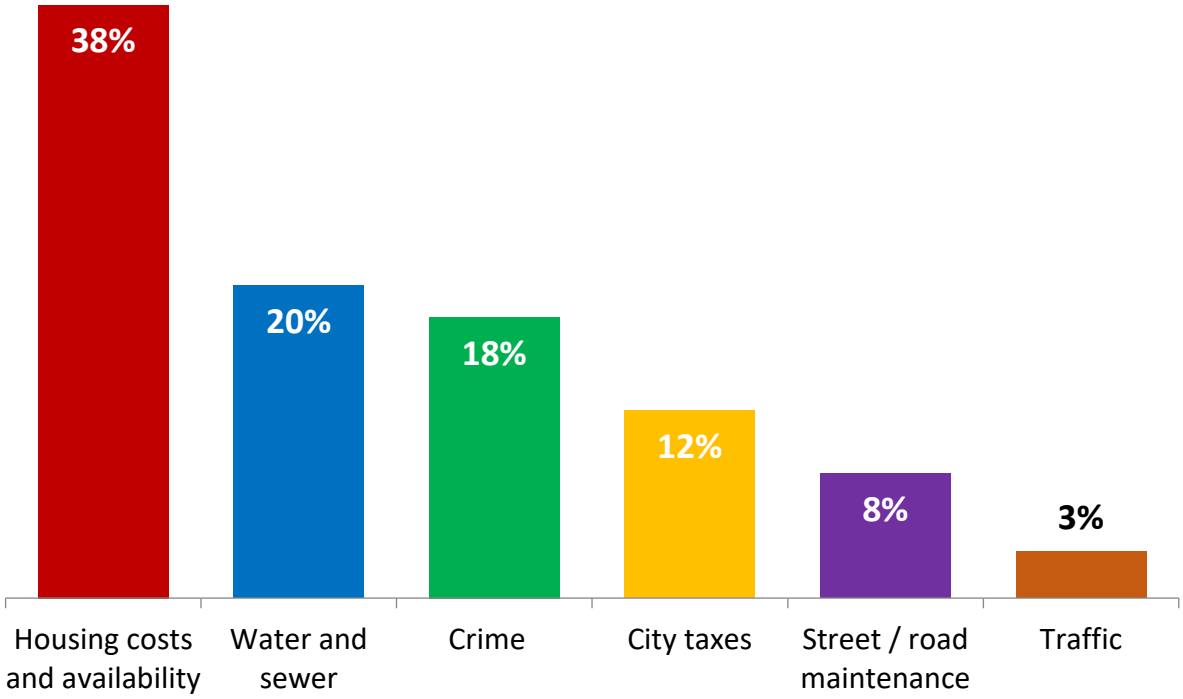
Housing Tops List Of Voters' Issue Concerns, Especially for Non-homeowners, Lower Income and Younger Residents

Top Concern for Mayor and City Council to Focus On



Housing Top Concern by Demographics	
Northeast	48%
Northwest	33%
South Central	31%
$75,000 and under	46%
More than $75,000	33%
Non-homeowner	52%
Homeowner	24%
Under age 50	43%
Age 50+	30%

Q.6 (PHONE) Now, I am going to read you a list of concerns that many people have. Please tell me which ONE of these concerns you believe is the most important for the mayor and city council to focus on.

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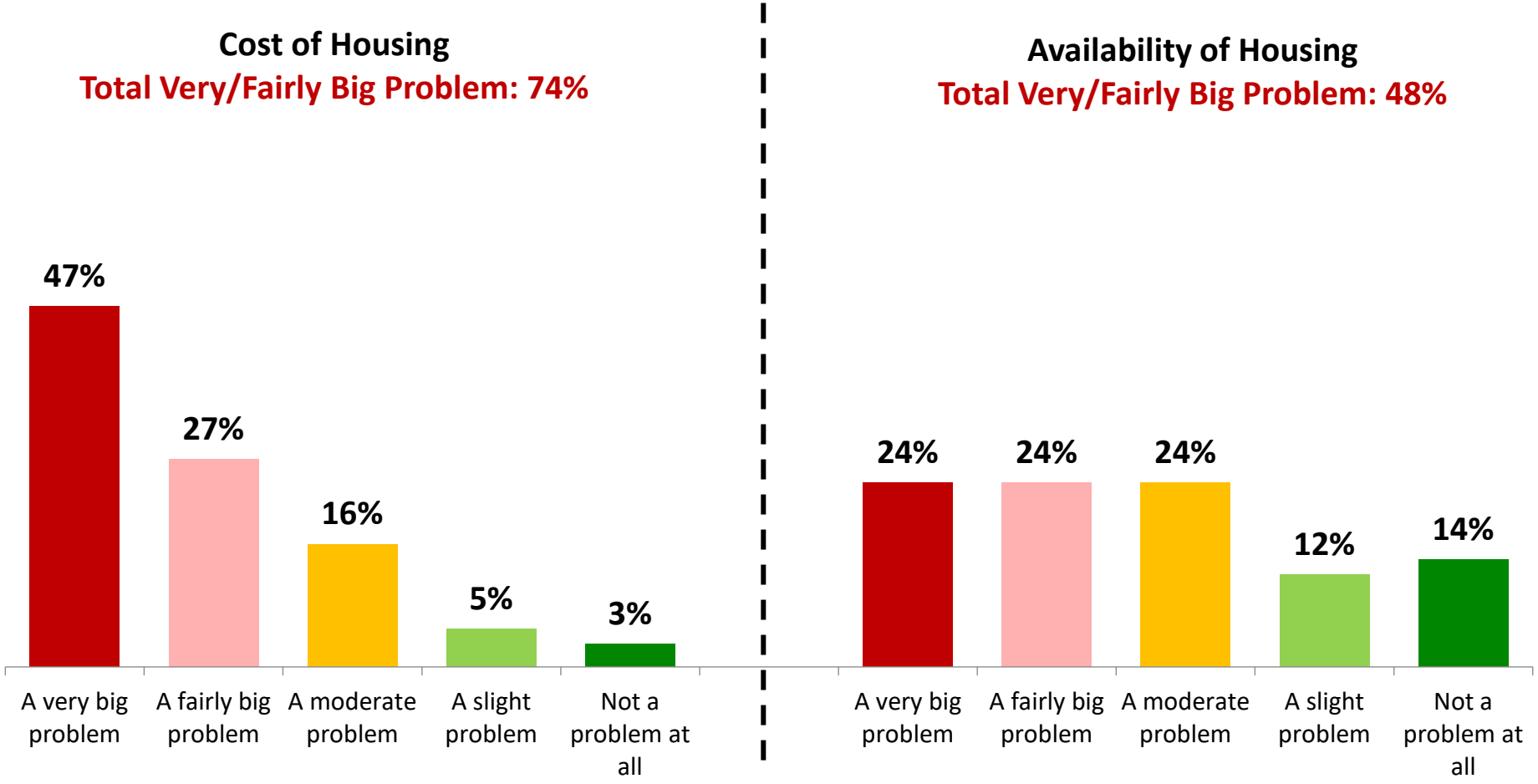
Cost of Housing A Big Problem Overall; Housing Availability Seen as Less of a Problem



Q.7 (ROTATE Q.7 AND Q. 8) How much of a problem is housing affordability in Richmond, that is to say, how much it costs to buy or rent a home?

Q.8 (ROTATE Q.7 AND Q.8) How much of a problem is the availability of housing in Richmond, that is to say, the number of houses, condominiums, or apartments that are available to buy or rent?

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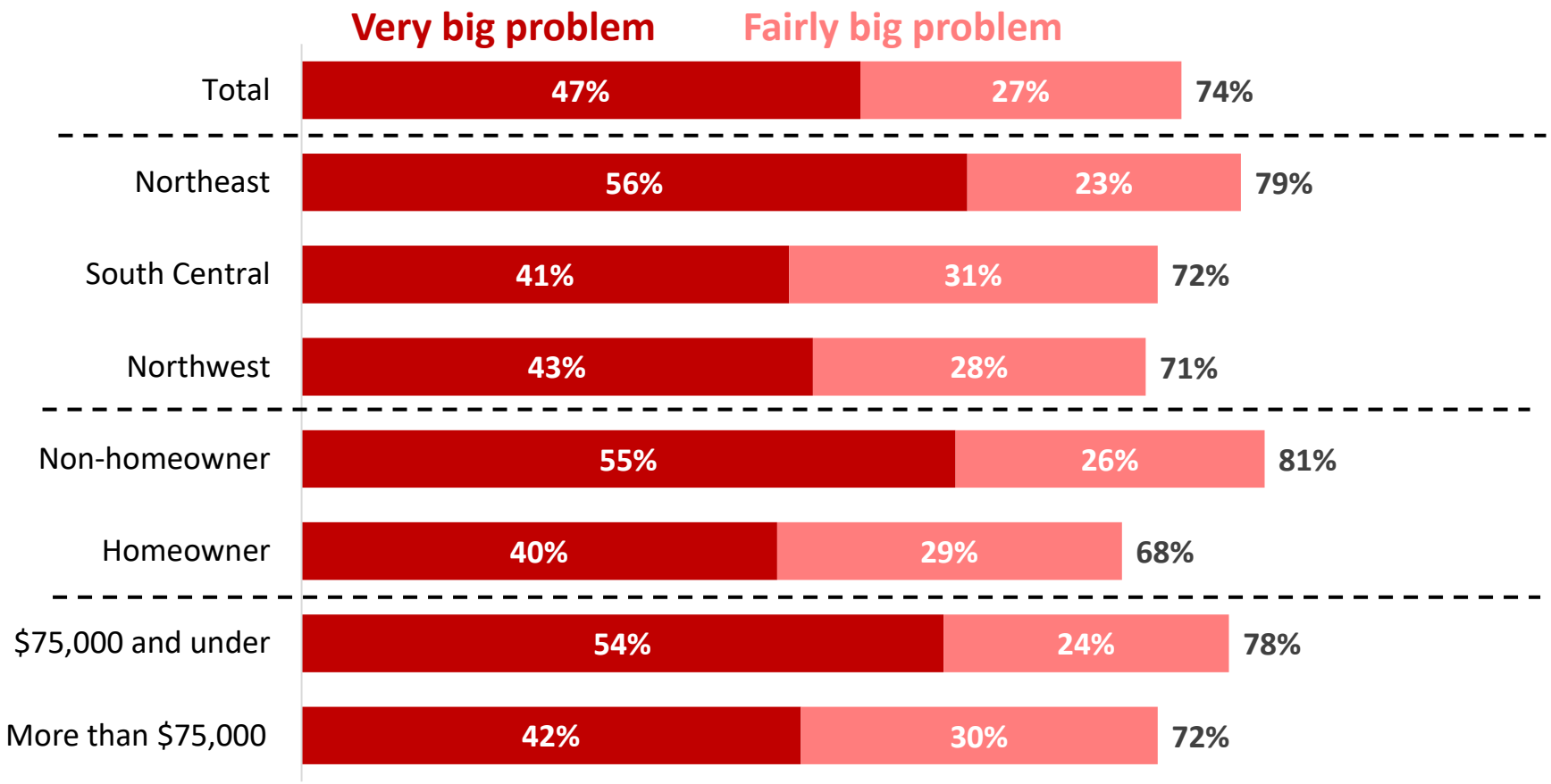
Concern Over Housing Costs Especially High in the Northeast, Among Non-Homeowners and Lower Income Voters

Housing Affordability Problem by Region, Homeownership, and Income



Q.7 (ROTATE Q.7 AND Q. 8) How much of a problem is housing affordability in Richmond, that is to say, how much it costs to buy or rent a home?

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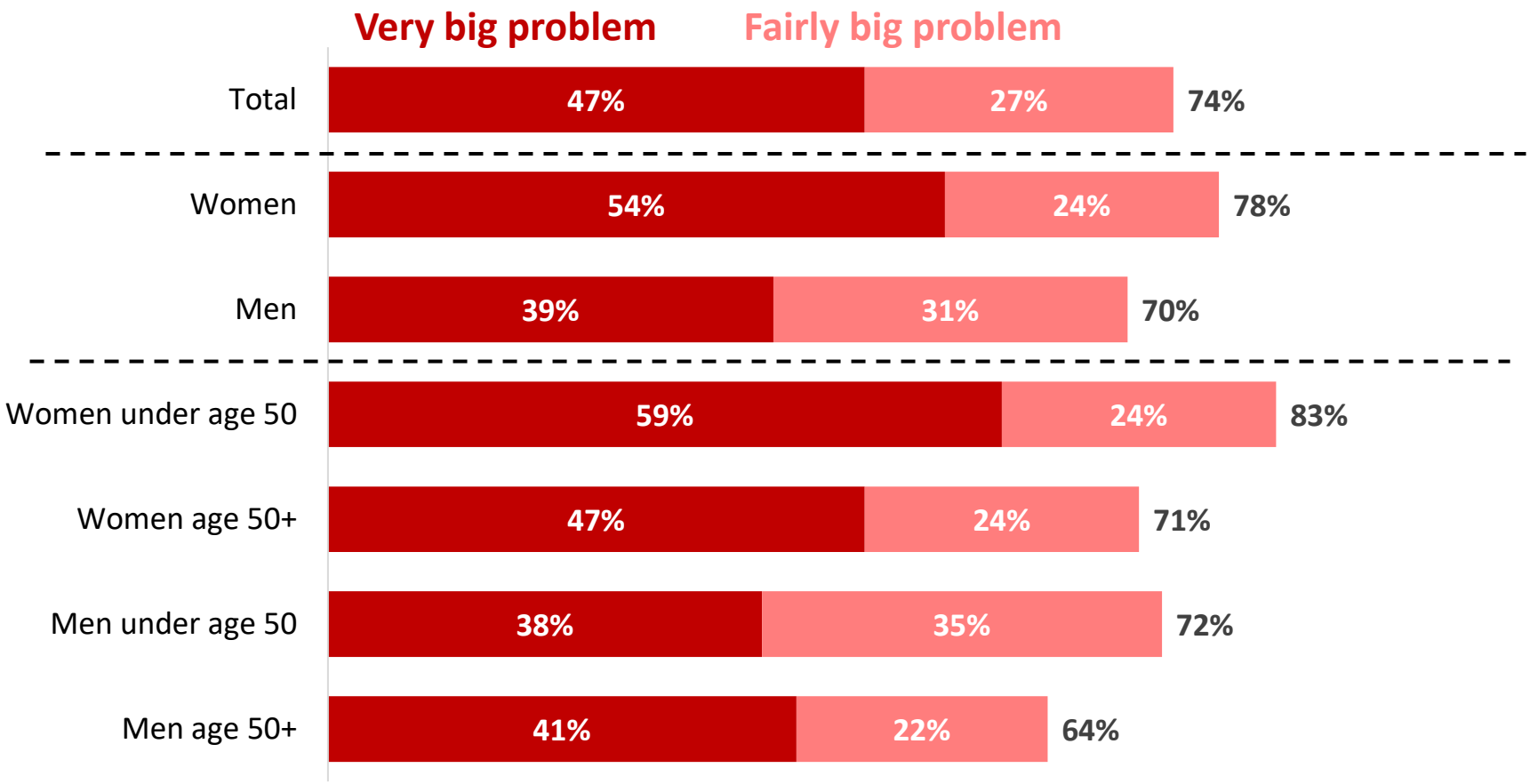
Women, Especially Women Under Age 50, More Likely to See Housing Costs as a Big Problem

Housing Affordability Problem by Gender and Gender/Age



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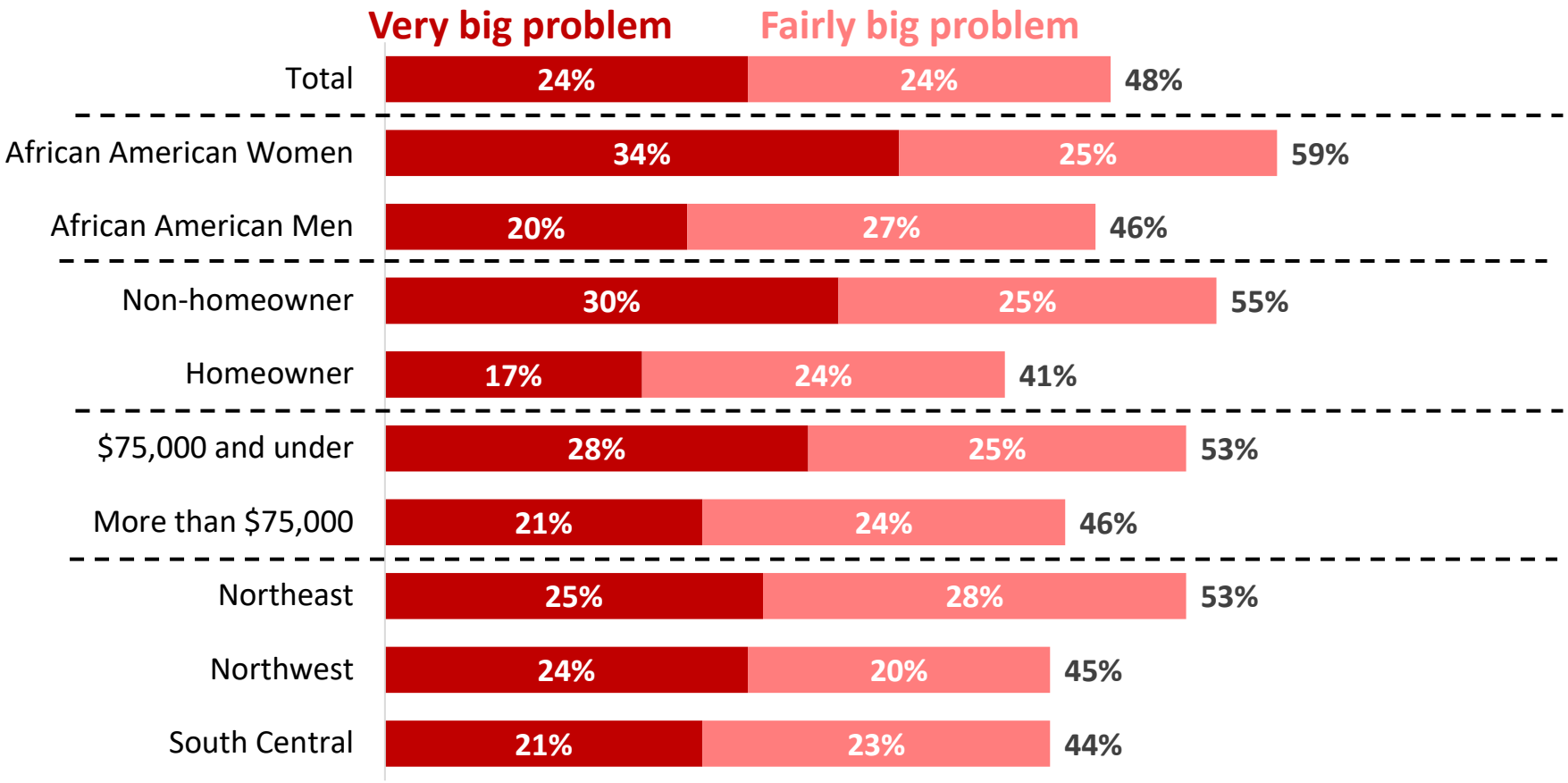
Housing Availability More of a Concern Among Black Women, Non-Homeowners and Lower Income Households

Housing Availability Problem by Race/Gender, Homeownership, Income, and Region



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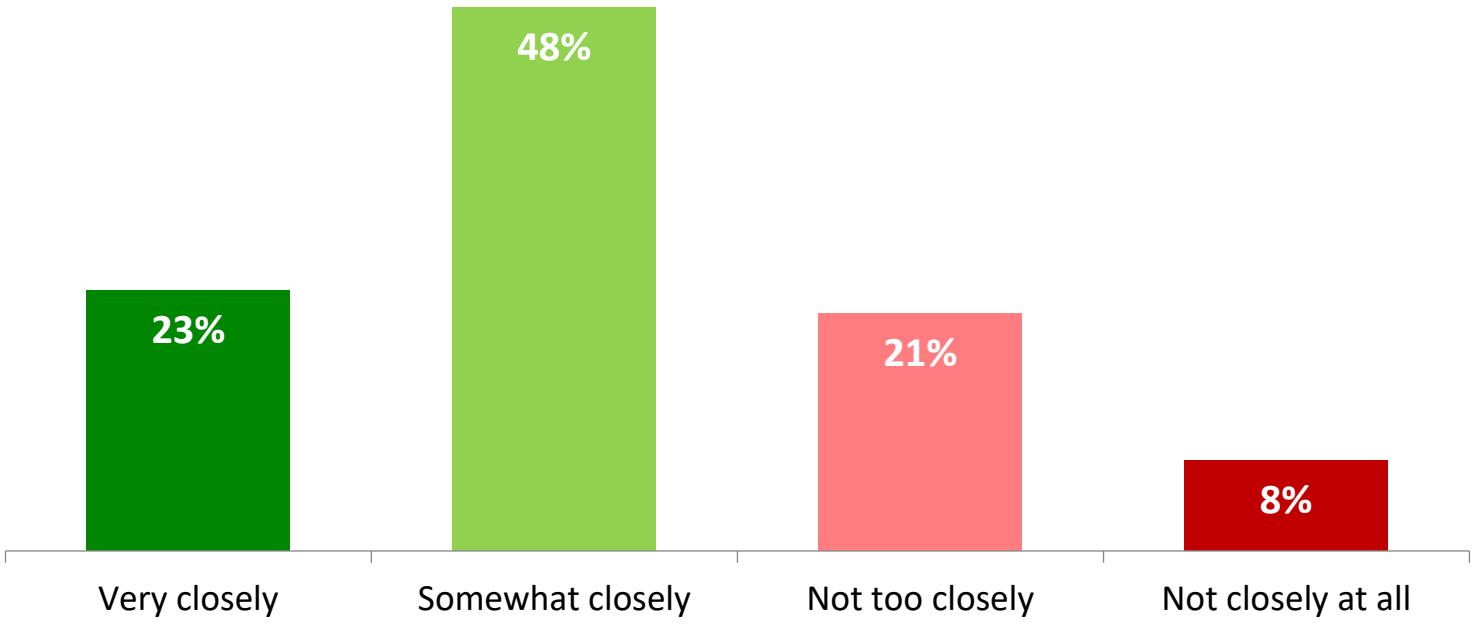
Most Follow Housing Development Issues At Least Somewhat Closely

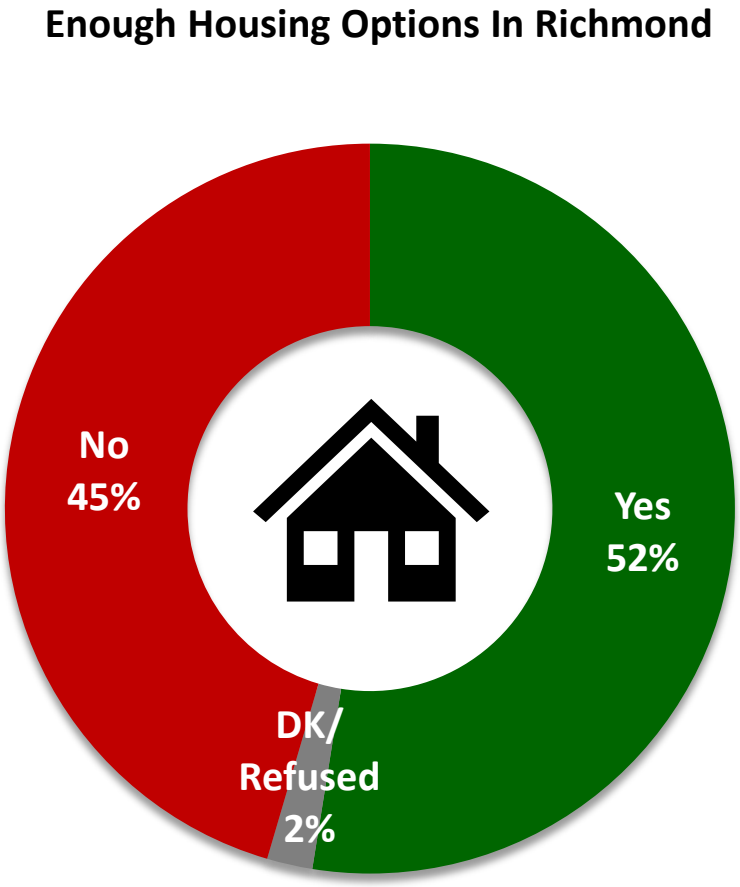
Following Housing Growth and Development

Very or Somewhat Closely: 71% | Not Closely: 28%



Q.9 How closely do you follow housing growth and development issues in Richmond?

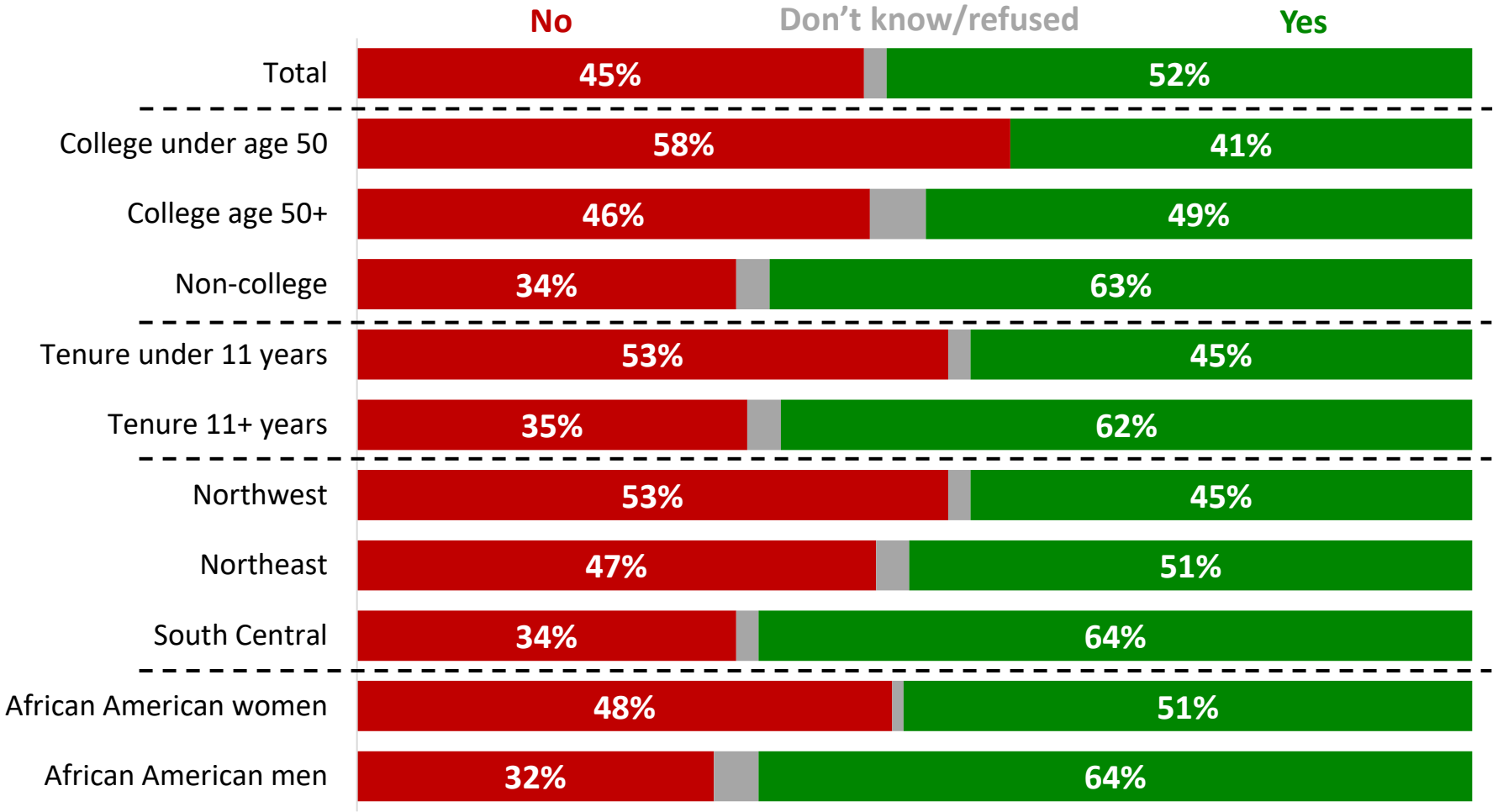
Voters Split on Whether There are Enough Housing Options for People Who Want to Live in the City



Q.10 When it comes to housing options in Richmond, things like apartment buildings, town homes, duplexes, fourplexes, and single-family homes, would you say there are enough different housing options available for people who want to live in Richmond?

Younger College, Newer Residents and Northwest Most Likely to See Shortage of Housing Options

Enough Housing Options by Education/Age, Tenure, Region, and Race/Gender



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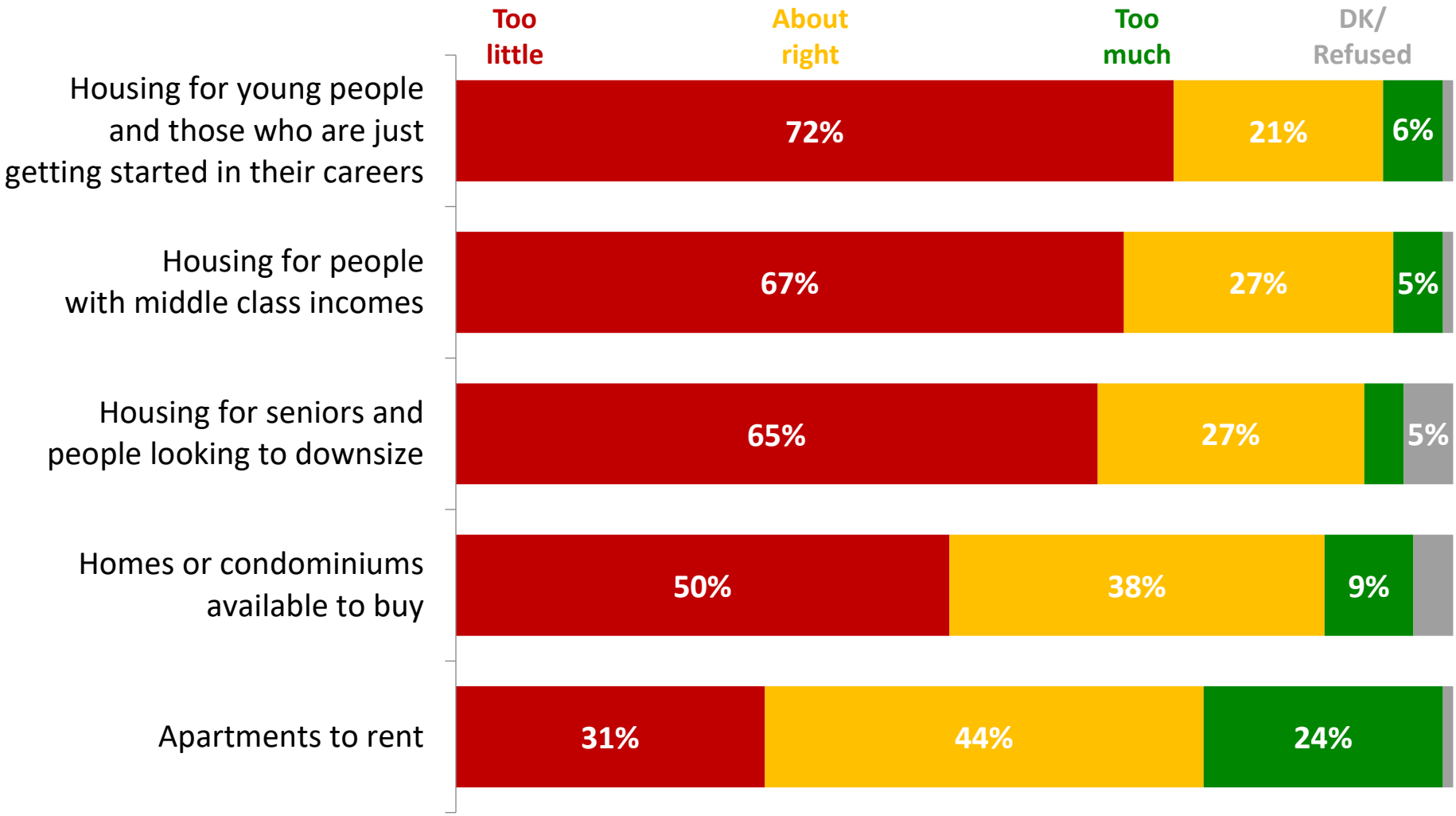
Shortage Of Housing Apparent For Younger People, Middle Class People, And Seniors



Q.12 Please say if you think there is too much, too little, or the right amount of each of the following in Richmond.

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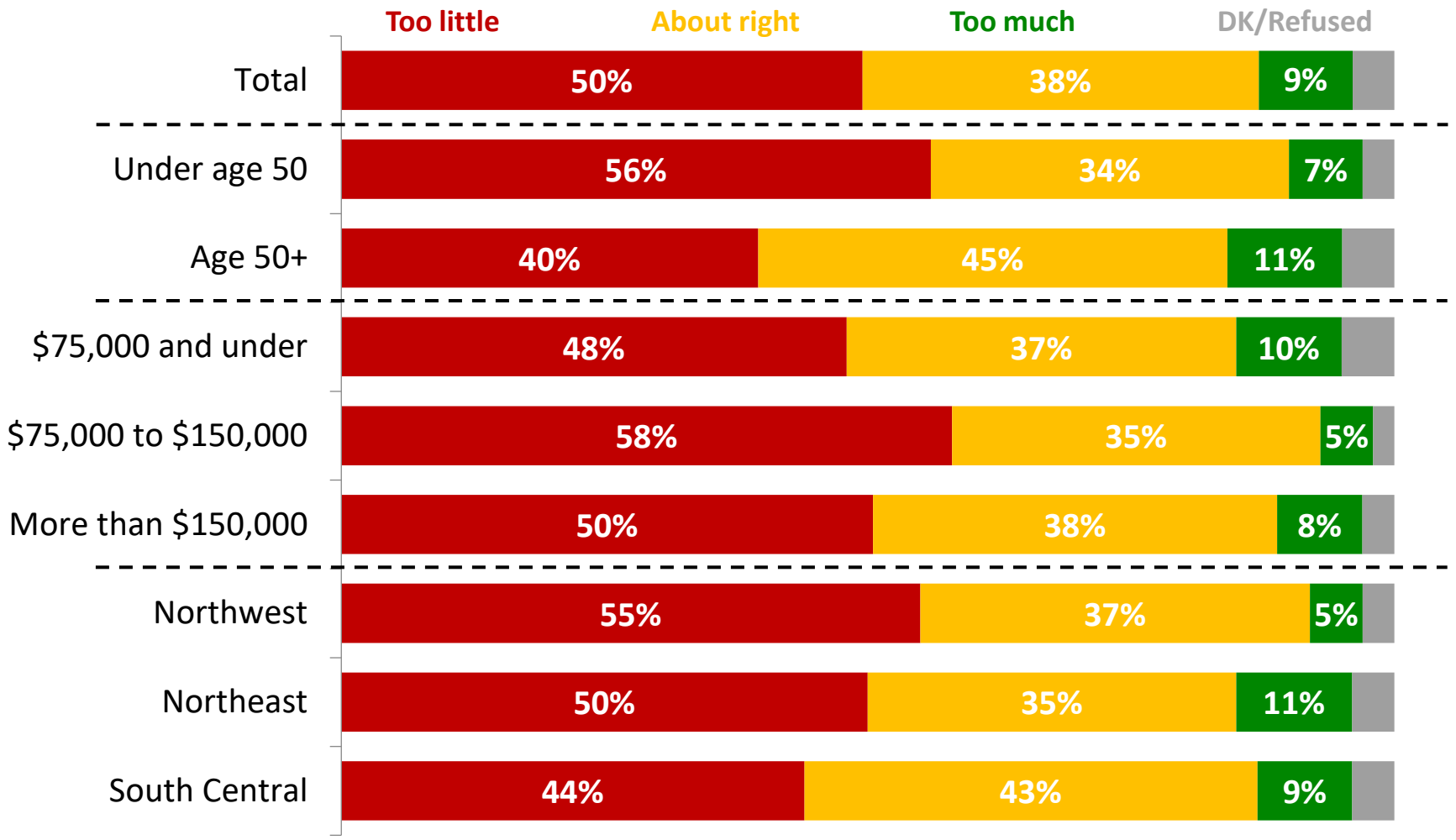
Younger, Middle Income and Northwest Voters More Likely To Think There Are Too Few Homes or Condos to Buy

Homes or Condominiums to Buy



Q.12 Please say if you think there is too much, too little, or the right amount of each of the following in Richmond.

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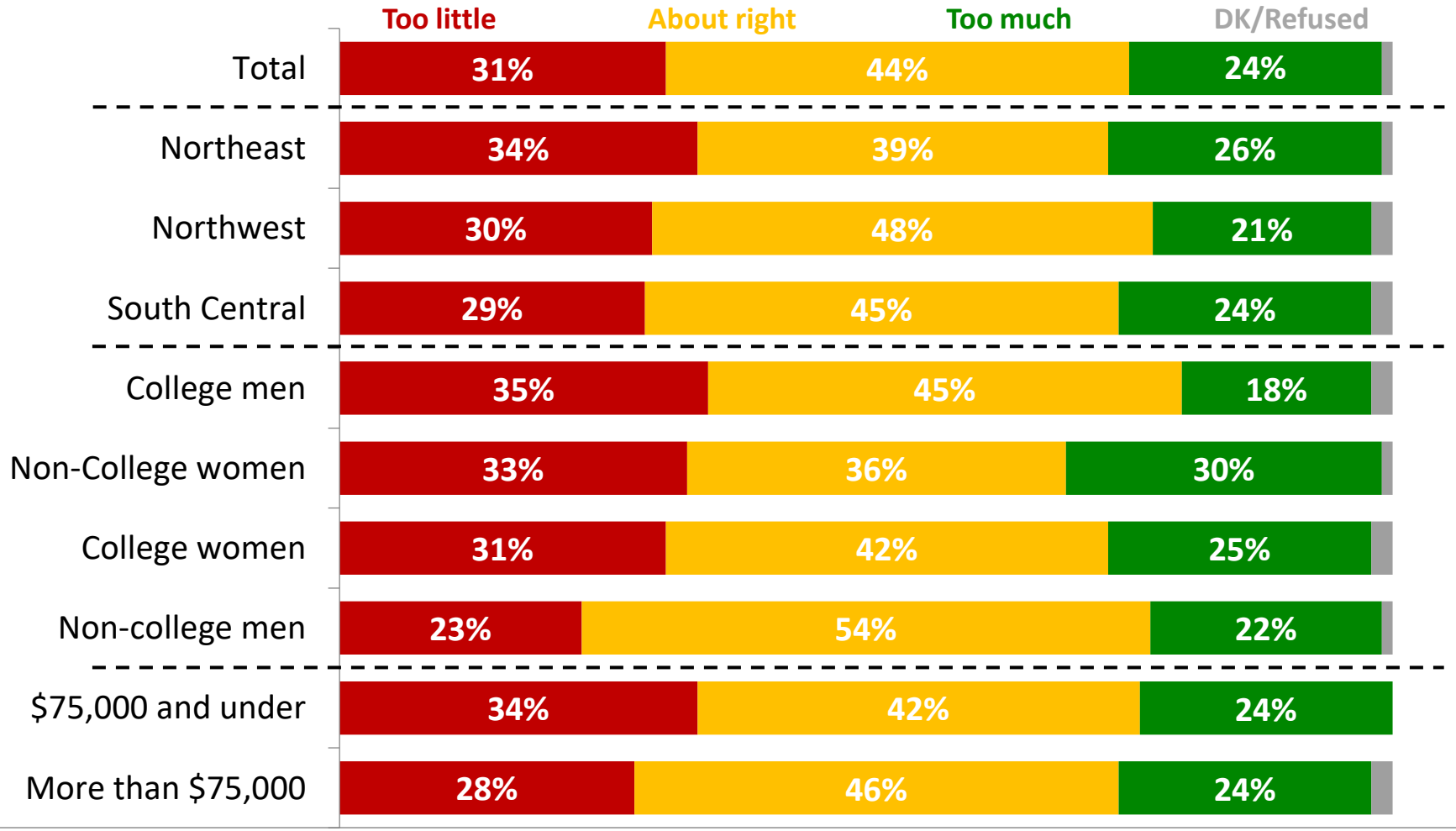
Little Variance in Perception of Number of Apartments to Rent

Apartments to rent



Q.12 Please say if you think there is too much, too little, or the right amount of each of the following in Richmond.

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Housing Growth and Development Statements

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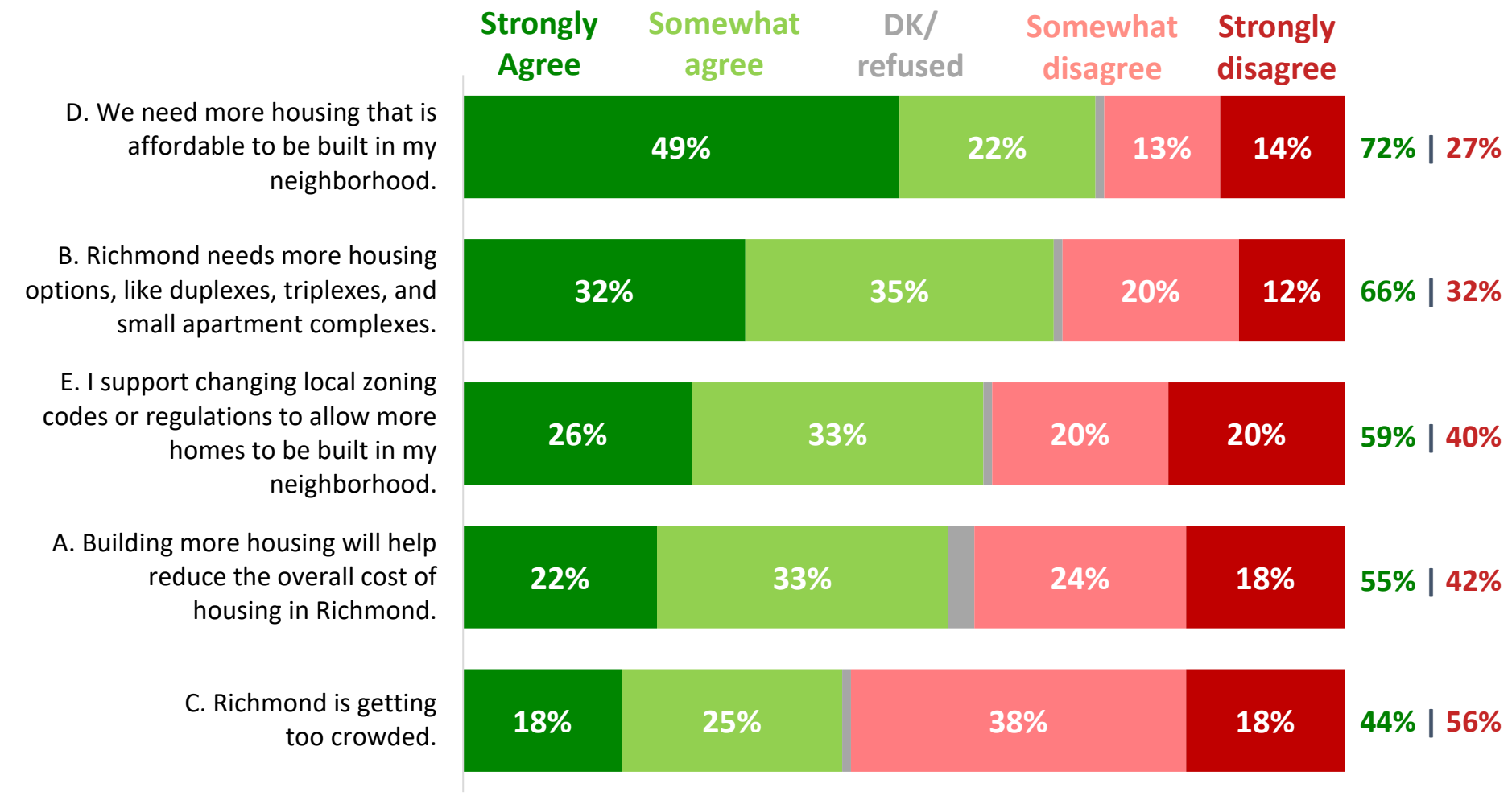
Voters in General Agreement That The City Needs More Housing, Housing Options and Zoning Reform

Housing Growth and Development Statements



Q.18 (PHONE) Now I am going to read you a series of statements related to housing, growth, and development in Richmond. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each.

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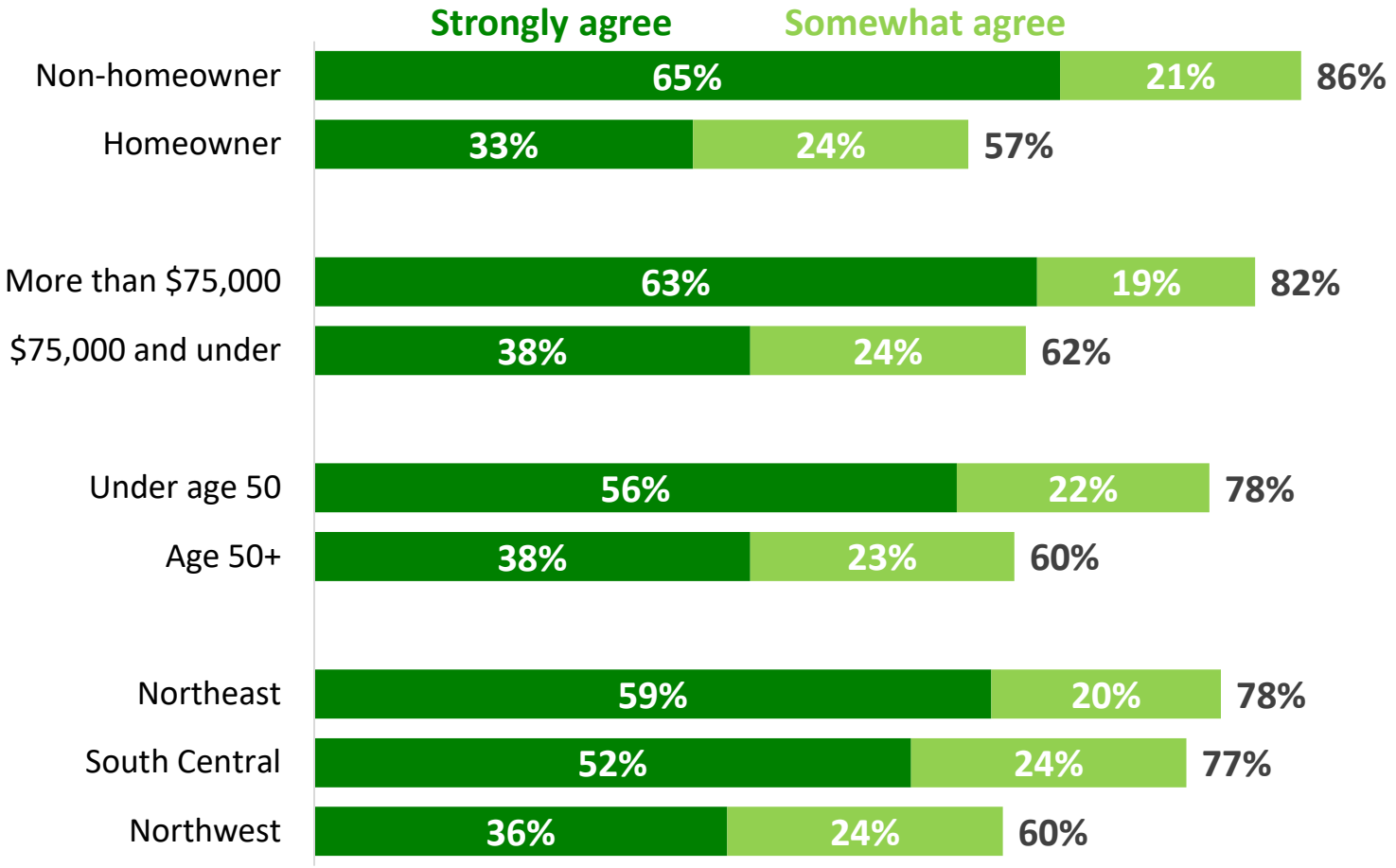
Renters, Lower Income and Younger Voters Most Open to New Housing Construction in Their Neighborhood

D. We need more housing that is affordable to be built in my neighborhood.



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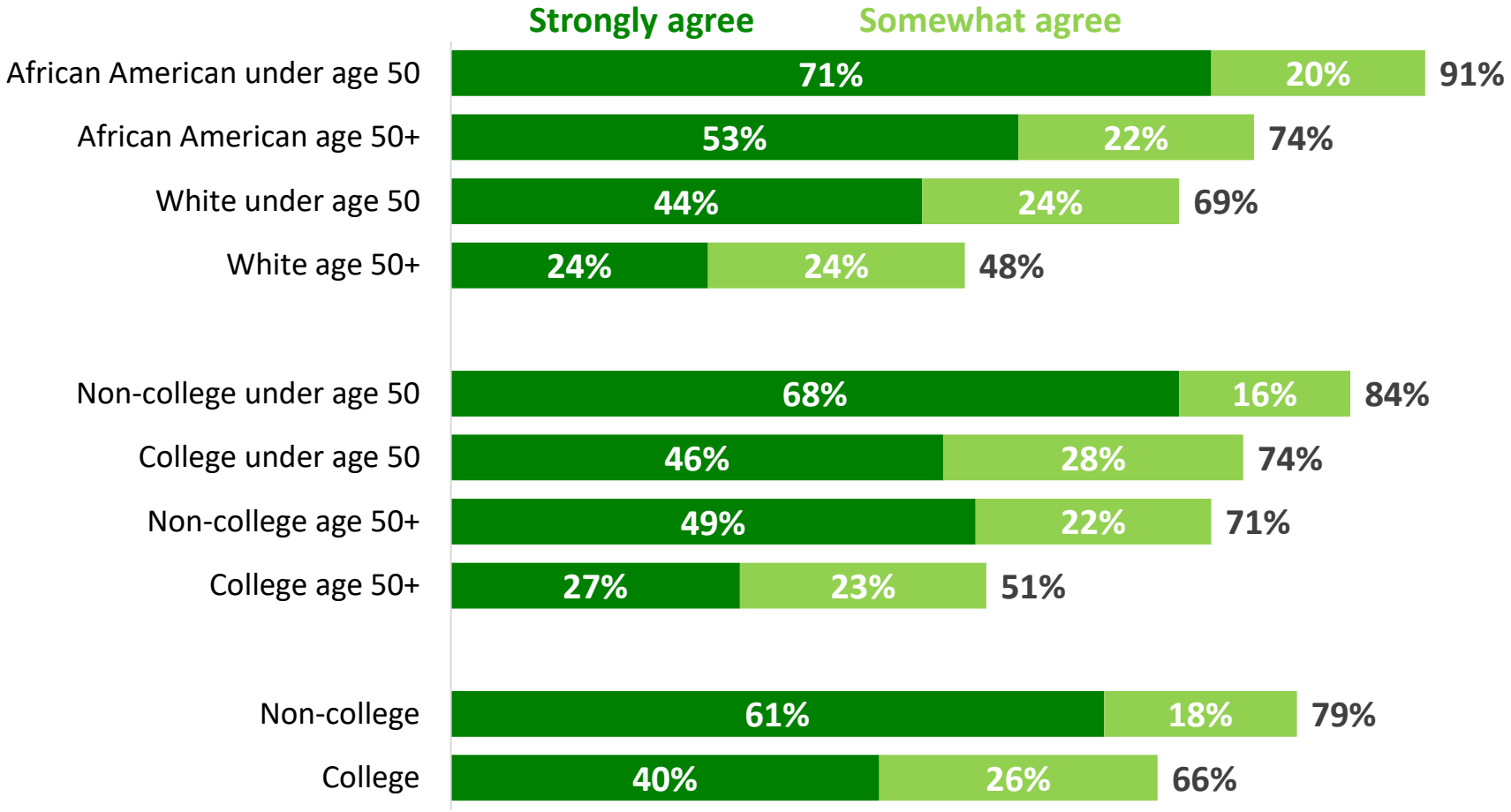
Younger Black and Younger Non-College Voters Strongly Agree on Need to Build More Affordable Homes

D. We need more housing that is affordable to be built in my neighborhood.



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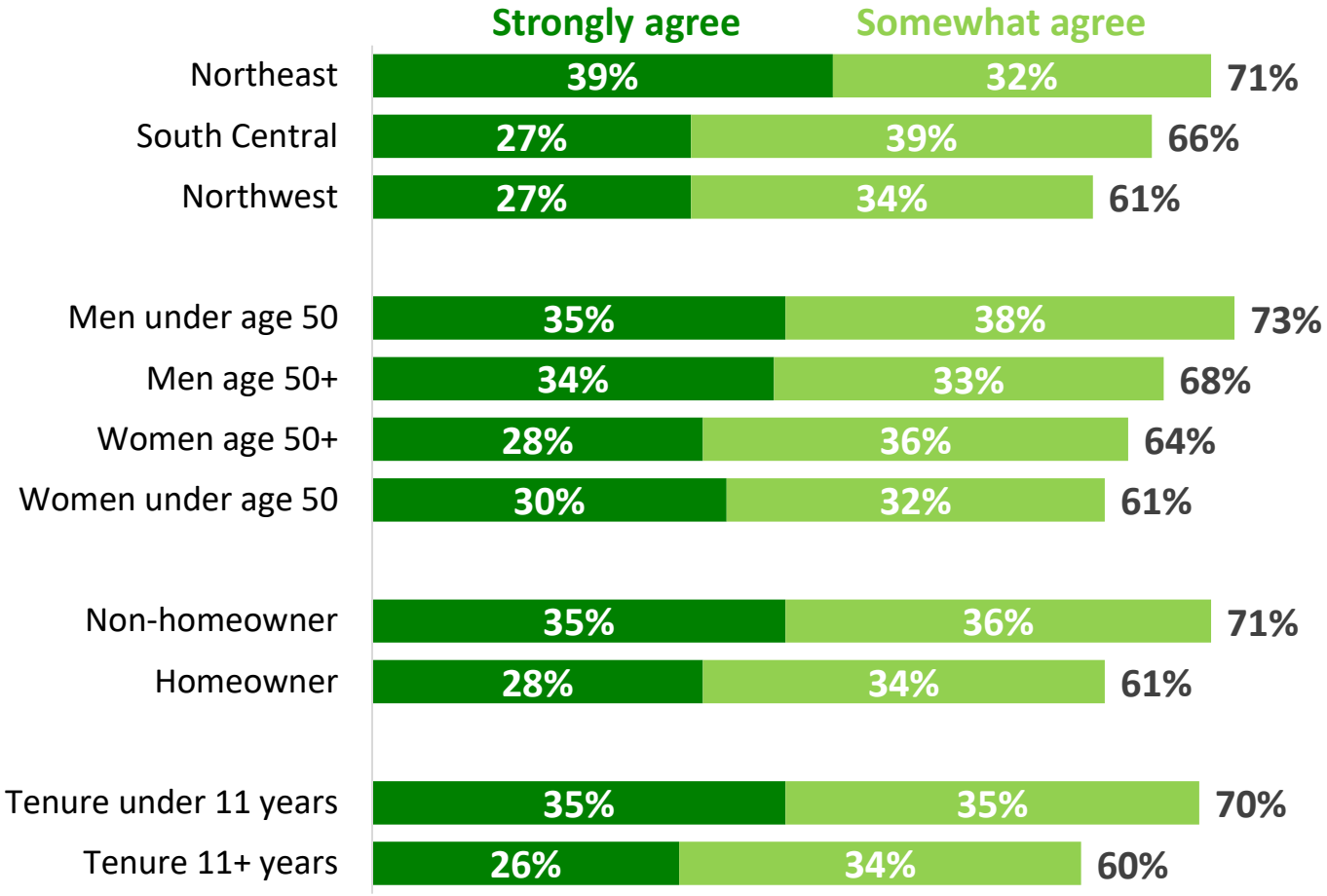
Northeast, Men, Non-Homeowners, and Newer Residents Most Likely to Agree on Need for More Housing Options

B. Richmond needs more housing options, like duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment complexes.



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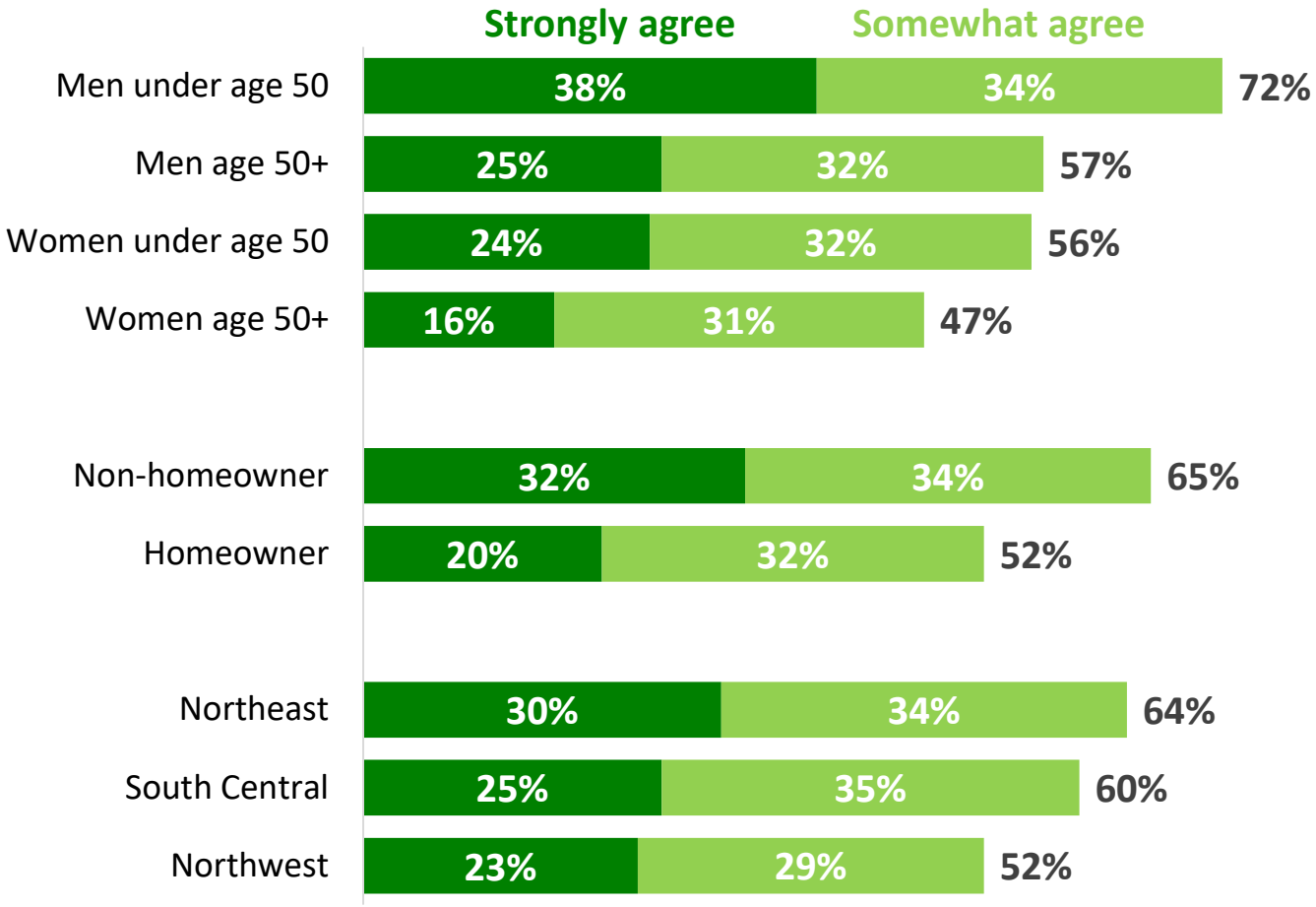
Younger Men, Non-Homeowners and Northeast Area More Likely To Support Zoning Changes in Their Neighborhood

E. I support changing local zoning codes or regulations to allow more homes to be built in my neighborhood.



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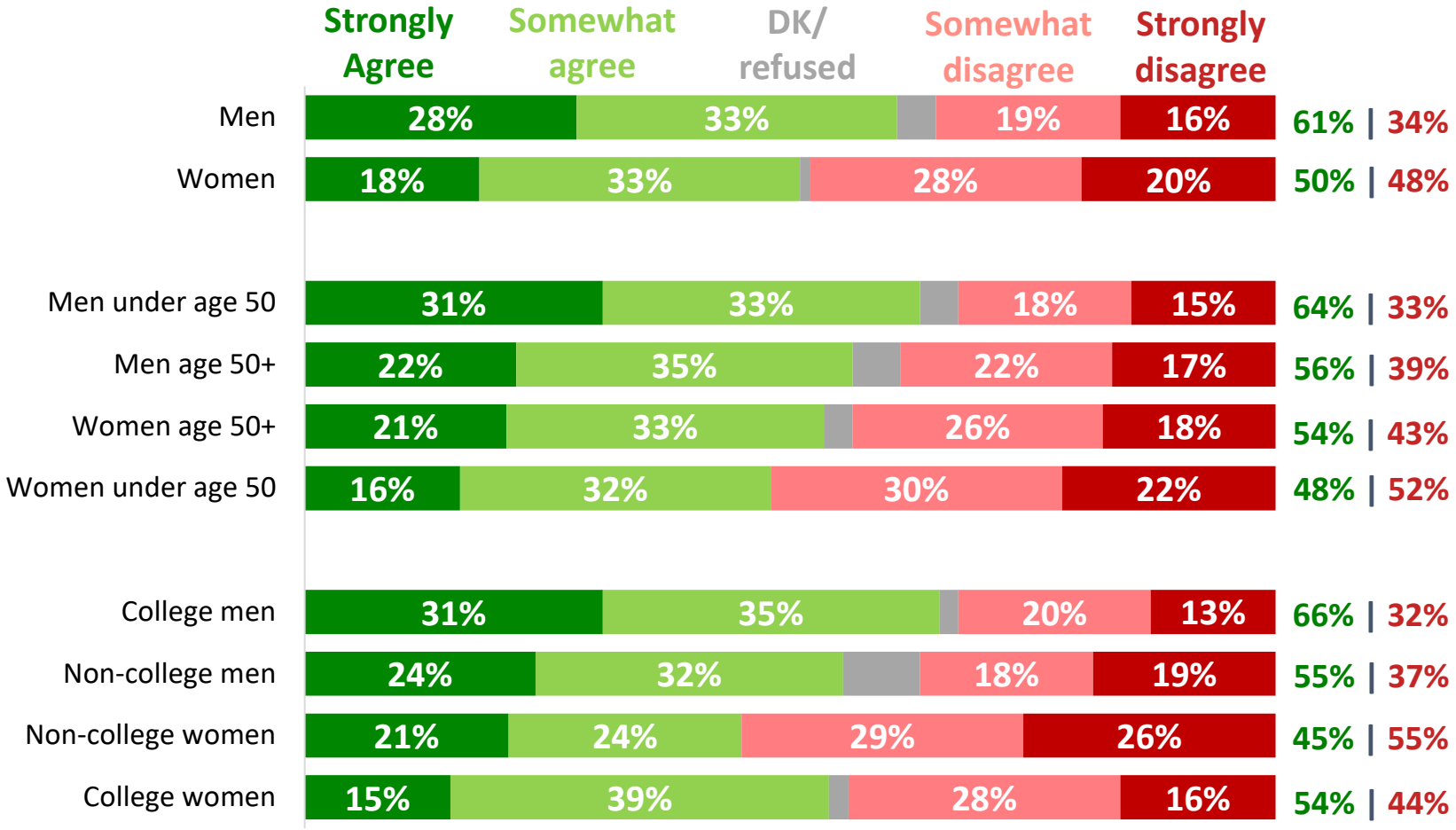
College and Younger Men Agree that Building More Housing Will Bring Down Costs; Women are Less Sure

A. Building more housing will help reduce the overall cost of housing in Richmond.



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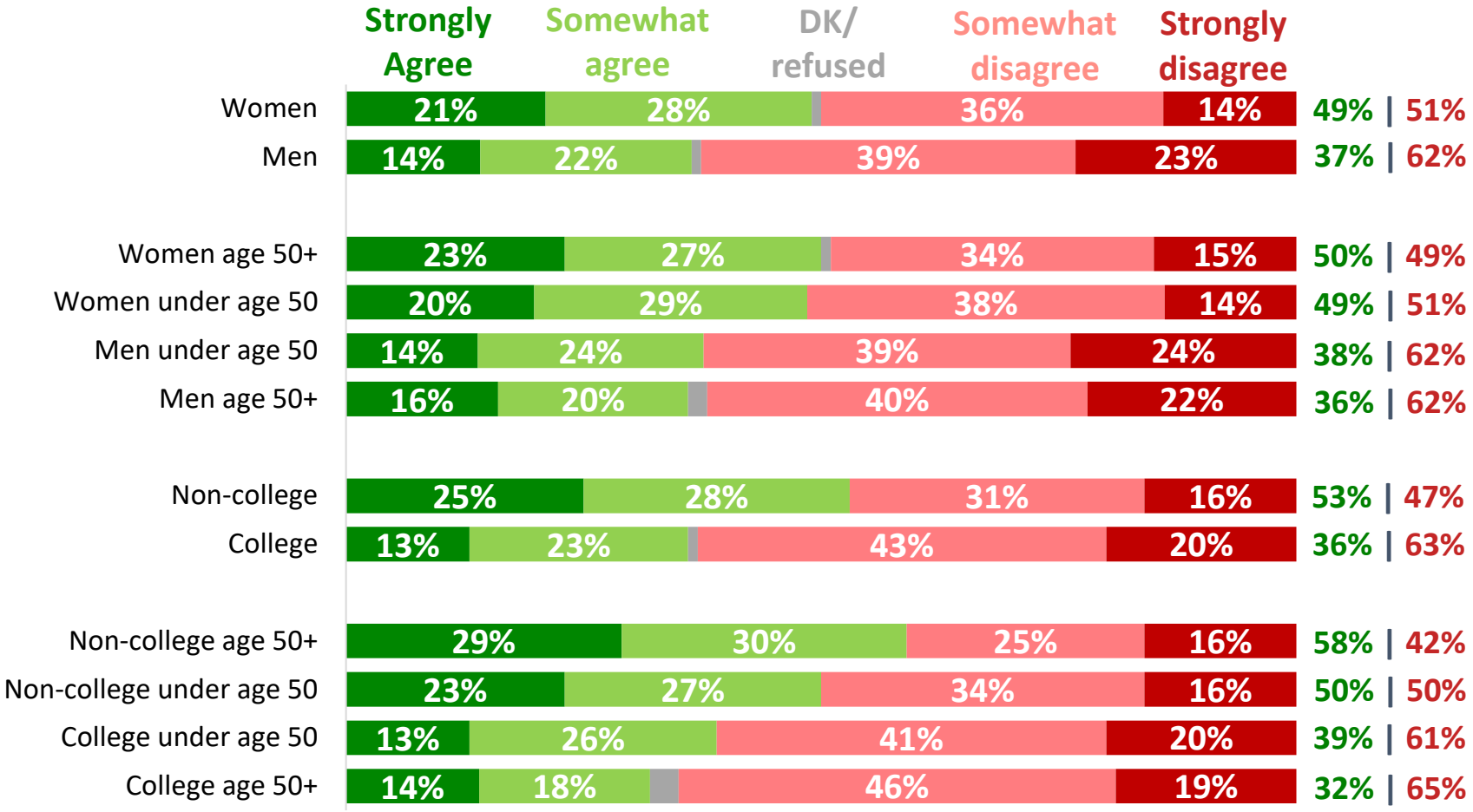
Women and Non-College Voters, Especially Aged 50+, More Likely to Feel Richmond is Getting too Crowded

C. Richmond is getting too crowded.



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AMERICAN STRATEGIES
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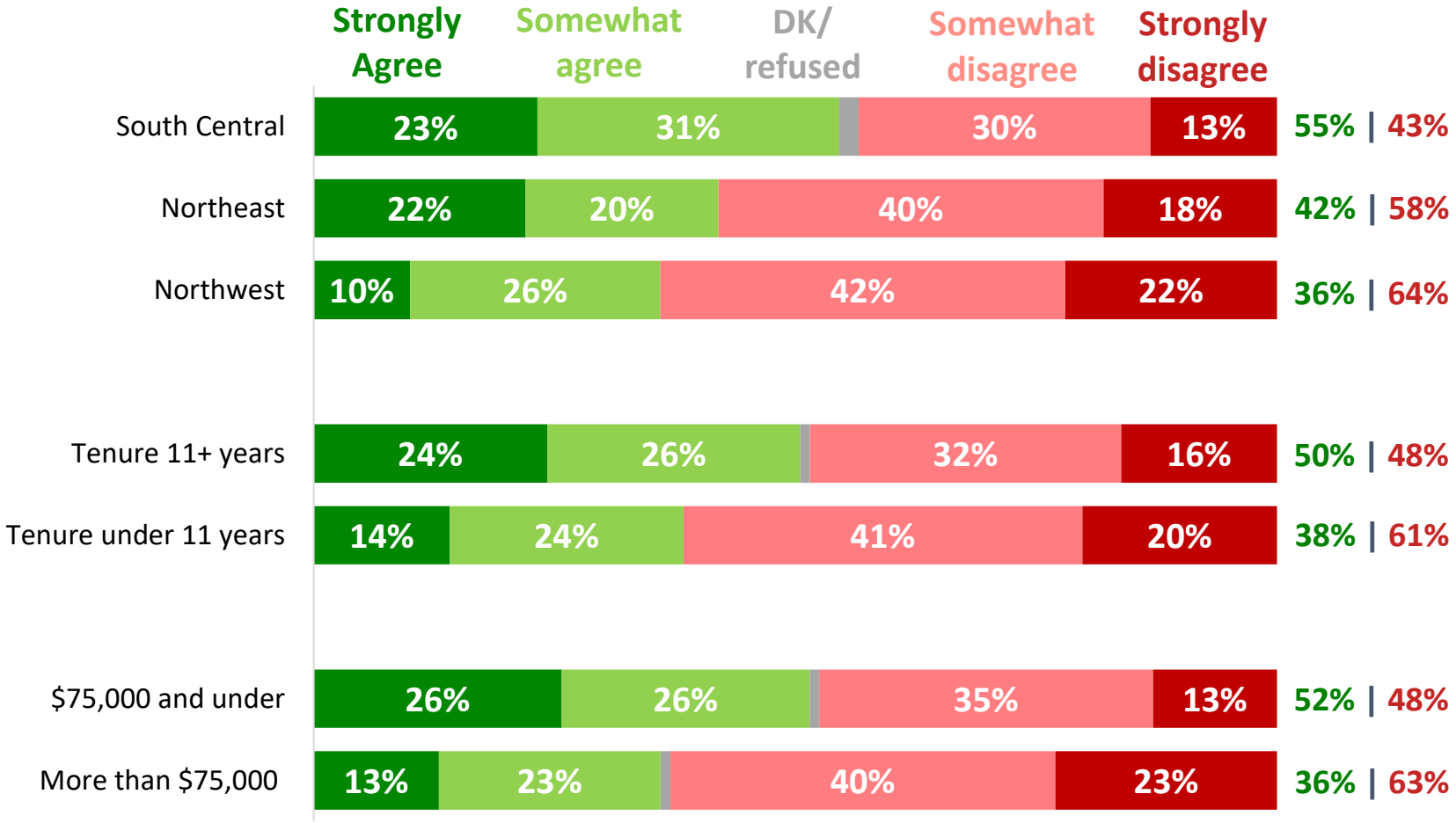
Small Majorities of South Central, Lower Income and Longer-Term Residents Feel Richmond is Getting too Crowded

C. Richmond is getting too crowded.



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Code Refresh

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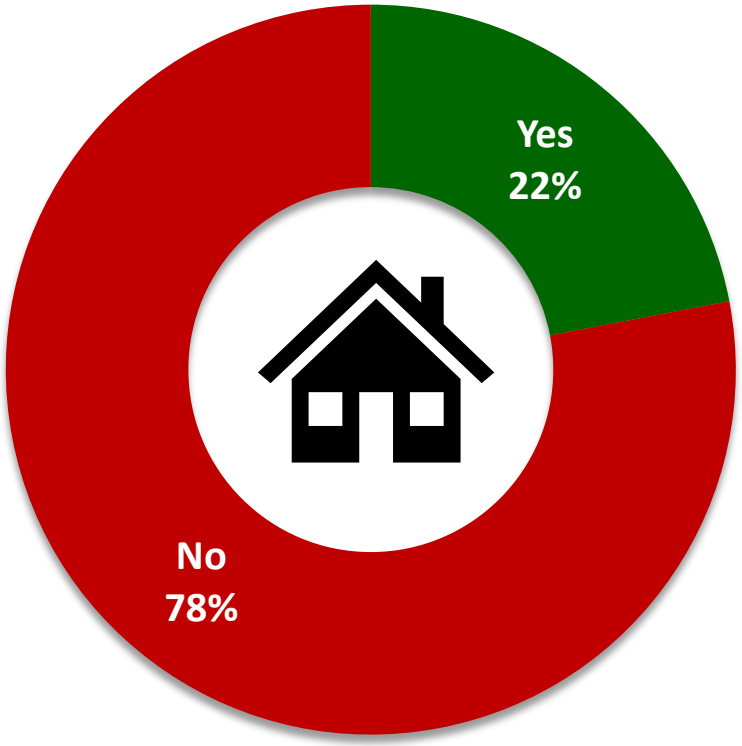
Only One in Five Voters Have Heard of “Code Refresh”

Awareness higher among those with high incomes, over 50 years of age and college graduates

Heard of Code Refresh



Have Seen/Read Something	
Income $200,000+	42%
Men age 50+	35%
College age 50+	35%
Postgraduates	34%
College men	33%
Homeowners	32%
White age 50+	31%
White men	31%
Age 65+	30%

Q.23 Before taking this poll, have you seen, read, or heard anything about something called "Code Refresh," the city's overhaul of zoning codes for residential and commercial development in Richmond which is being done as part of the Richmond 300 Comprehensive Plan?

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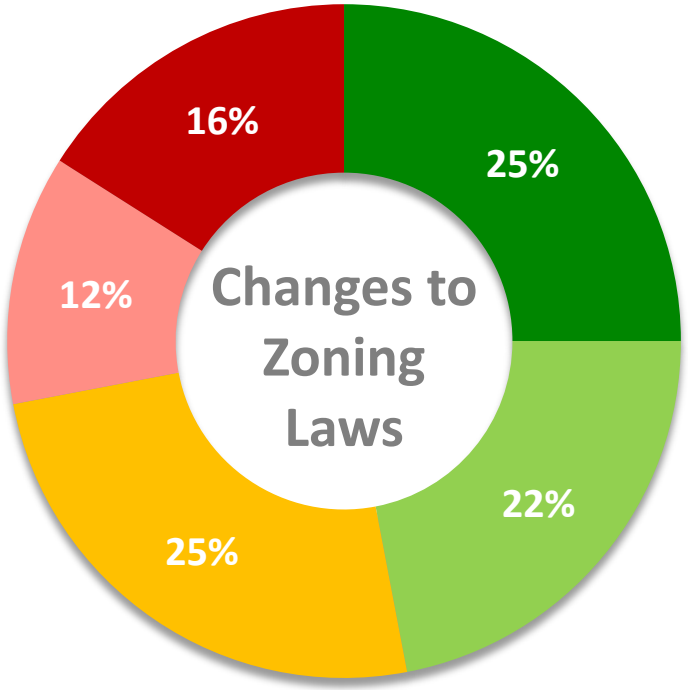
Plurality Support Changing Zoning Laws but Support Lacks Intensity and Majority are Unsure or Oppose

Total Oppose 28% | Total Favor 47%

As you may know, some neighborhoods in Richmond are zoned for single-family homes only. This means that multi-family homes, like townhouses, duplexes, or triplexes, are not allowed in many neighborhoods. Some people say the city's zoning laws should be changed to allow multi-family housing in more neighborhoods. How about you?



Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Unsure/ No opinion	Somewhat favor	Strongly favor

Q. 24 Do you favor or oppose changing the city's zoning laws to allow for more multi-family housing construction in Richmond? If you are unsure or have no opinion, please say so.

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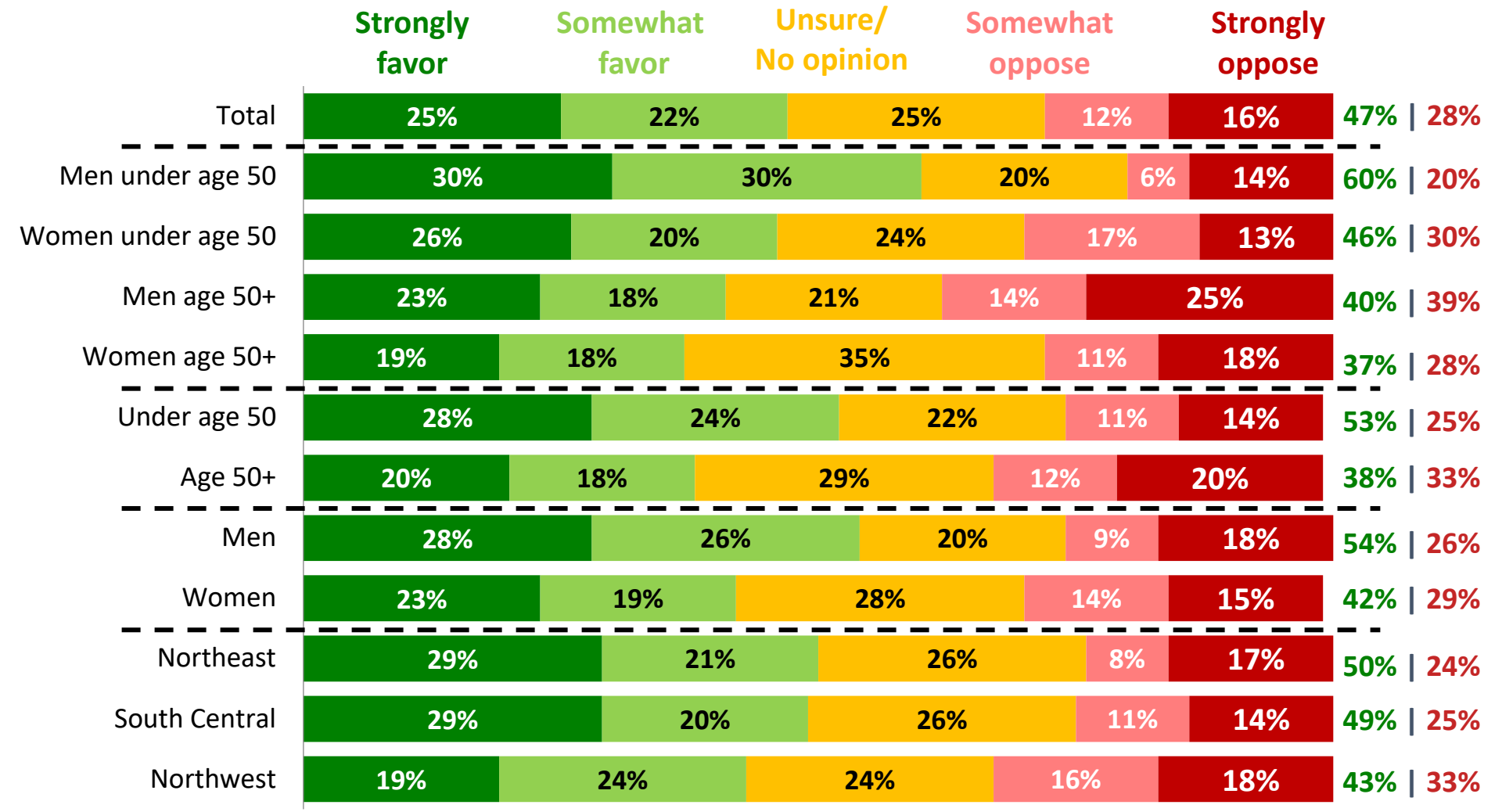
Support for Changing Zoning Laws to Allow for More Multi-Family Construction is Highest Among Younger Men



Q. 24 Do you favor or oppose changing the city's zoning laws to allow for more multi-family housing construction in Richmond? If you are unsure or have no opinion, please say so.

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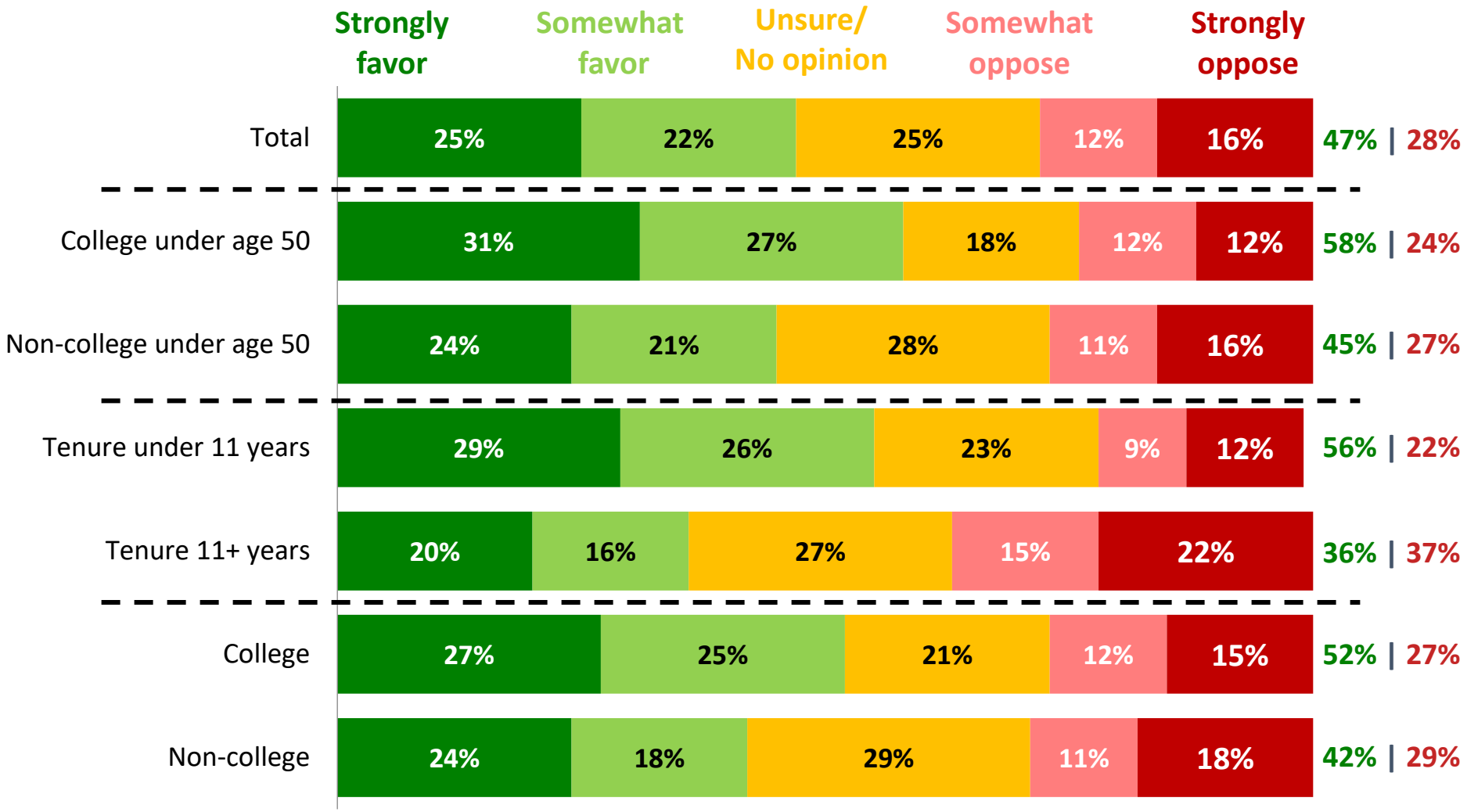
College Graduates, Especially Younger, and Newer Residents More Likely to Favor Changing Local Zoning Laws



Q. 24 Do you favor or oppose changing the city's zoning laws to allow for more multi-family housing construction in Richmond? If you are unsure or have no opinion, please say so.

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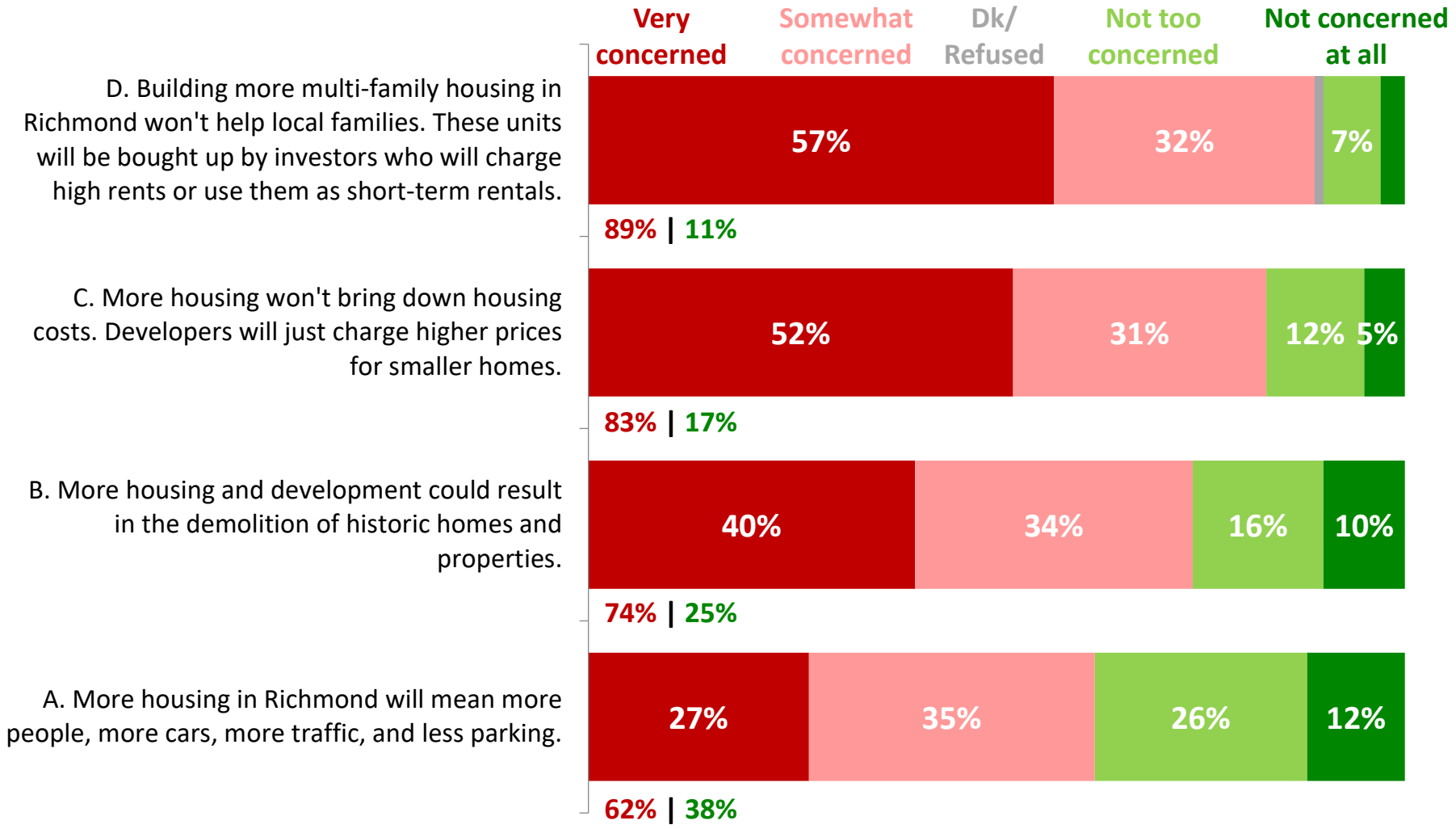
Voters Have Varied Concerns About New Housing Construction

Most worry that new housing will not solve affordability problem



Q.26 (PHONE) Next I will read you some concerns people have about changing local zoning regulations to allow for more housing and multi-family housing. After each one, please tell me how concerned you are, personally, about each.

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National Association of REALTORS®

Richmond Smart Growth Survey

April 2025

American Strategies designed and administered this multi-modal survey conducted by professional interviewers and via an online platform. The survey reached 654 adults (654 weighted) adults, age 18 or older, who indicated they were registered voters in Richmond, Virginia. The survey was conducted April 28-May 2, 2025.

Forty percent of respondents were reached on wireless phones and eight percent on VOIP/landlines. Forty-seven percent of respondents were reached online via MMS and five percent were reached via online panel. Quotas were assigned to reflect the demographic distribution of registered voters in Richmond, Virginia and the data were weighted to ensure an accurate reflection of the population. The sample was drawn from a third party vendor file. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.8%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.

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