

OCTOBER 19, 2020  
For Immediate Release

# A PLURALITY OF CALGARIANS BELIEVE THE CITY IS ON THE “WRONG TRACK”

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**MEDIA RELEASE: COUNTDOWN TO  
THE CALGARY MUNICIPAL ELECTION  
2021**

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# A Plurality of Calgarians Believe the City is on the “Wrong Track”



With a municipal election now less than a year away, there is a prevailing sense of unease among voters about the direction The City of Calgary is headed today. According to a recent ThinkHQ Public Affairs survey of over 1,200 Calgary residents, fully 43% believe the city is on the “Wrong Track” right now, compared to 36% who feel it is on the “Right Track”, and another 21% who are unsure.

Calgary’s battered economy is undoubtedly influencing public sentiment on the city’s direction, with a resounding eight-in-ten (80%) of those interviewed characterizing the local economic conditions as weak compared to only 16% suggesting any degree of strength today.

## Right Track - Wrong Track

Municipal politicians and aspiring politicians may find some hostility on the doors over the course of the next year of campaigning, with a plurality of voters saying they feel the city is on the wrong track. This pessimism is also considerably more intense than optimism, with one-fifth (21%) of voters saying the city is “Definitely on the Wrong Track” compared to only 5% who maintain it is “Definitely on the Right Track”.

- **Right Track Voters:** More commonly women, those under the age of 35, inner city and northeast residents, newcomers to Calgary, renters, those living in multi-family housing, and provincial NDP supporters
- **Wrong Track Voters:** Highest proportions among men, those over 55 years of age (increasing with age), more affluent, homeowners (particularly those in single family homes), those with the longest tenure of residency in the city, and provincial UCP supporters

## Local Economic Strength

Economically, Calgary is not in a good place right now, and Calgarians know it. Voters overwhelmingly believe the economy is weak today (80% overall, with 36% saying “Very weak”).

- Perceptions of economic weakness tend to increase with age, income, tenure of residence in the city, and movement of left-to-right on the provincial political spectrum
- Additionally, homeowners (particularly SFHs), residents of established communities, and those who do not use public transit are more likely to rate the city’s economy as weak right now
- Residents of the northwest and southeast are most “bearish” on the local economy, while residents of the northeast are somewhat less negative

# Commentary



Commenting on the survey, ThinkHQ Public Affairs, Inc. president Marc Henry notes:

“We’re 364 days from the election and there are still a lot of unknowns, but it has the potential to one of the more interesting municipal campaigns in recent memory. Even at this very early stage, we know there will be significant turnover on Council, with a number of current councillors indicating they won’t be seeking re-election. We’re not sure of Mayor Nenshi’s intentions just yet, but if he runs for re-election, he’s already got at least one serious contender in Councillor Jeromy Farkas.

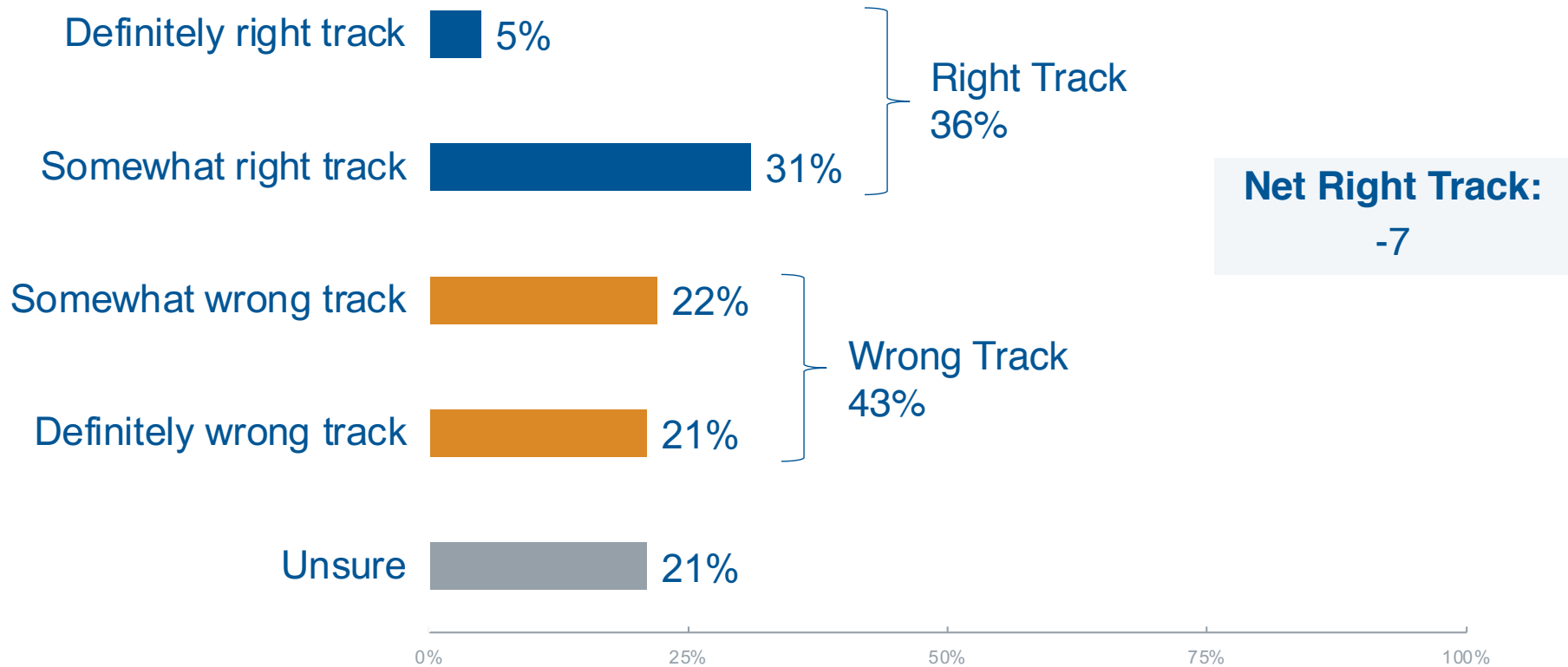
What we do know is that voters are not in a particularly hospitable mood at the moment, which generally signals a tougher time for incumbents. There is considerable dissatisfaction about where the city is going today. We’re also at or near the bottom of an economic rollercoaster in Alberta, and economic anxiety in Calgary is palpable at the moment with few encouraging signals on the horizon.

If this mood persists, look for issues like spending and finance, economic development and business climate and taxes, fees and levies to be very much top-of-mind concerns for voters in 2021, while traditional municipal issues such as infrastructure, transit, and growth management will take more of a backseat.”

# Views on City of Calgary Direction



*"Generally speaking, do you think the City of Calgary is on the right track or wrong track right now?"*



NET Right Track: Right Track minus Wrong Track | Base: All respondents (n=1,237)

# Views on City of Calgary Direction

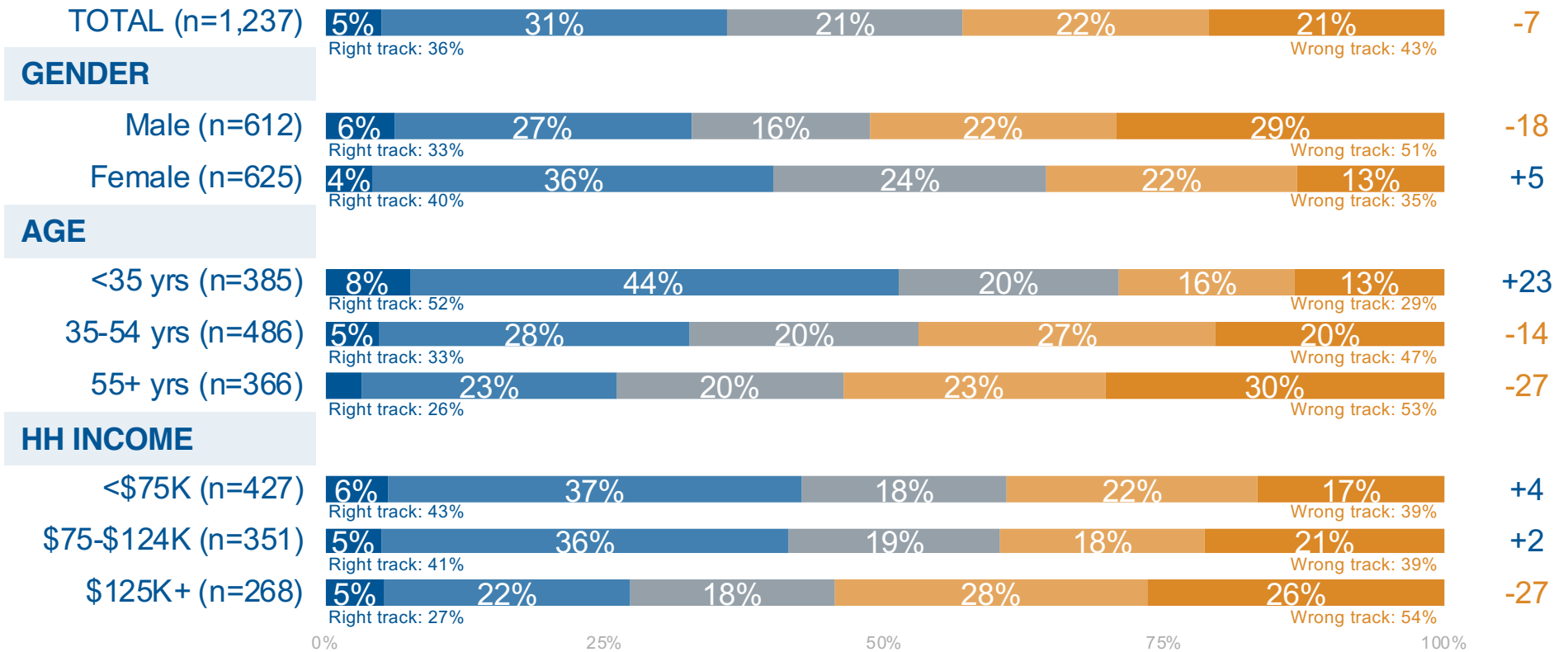
By Gender, Age and Household Income



"Generally speaking, do you think the City of Calgary is on the right track or wrong track right now?"

■ Definitely right track 
 ■ Somewhat right 
 ■ Unsure 
 ■ Somewhat wrong 
 ■ Definitely wrong track

NET  
Right Track



NET Right Track: Right Track minus Wrong Track | Base: All respondents

# Views on City of Calgary Direction

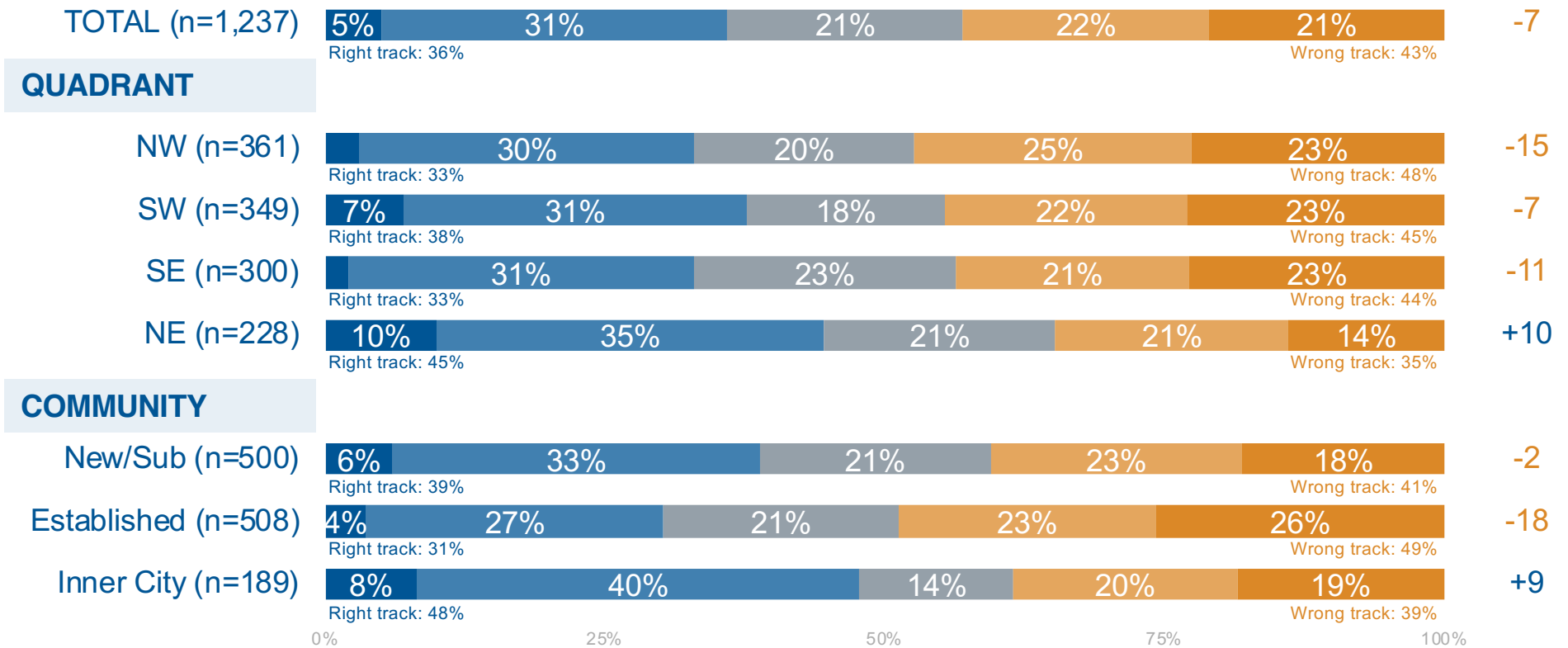
## By Current Quadrant and Community Type



"Generally speaking, do you think the City of Calgary is on the right track or wrong track right now?"

■ Definitely right track 
 ■ Somewhat right 
 ■ Unsure 
 ■ Somewhat wrong 
 ■ Definitely wrong track

NET  
Right Track



NET Right Track: Right Track minus Wrong Track | Base: All respondents



# Views on City of Calgary Direction

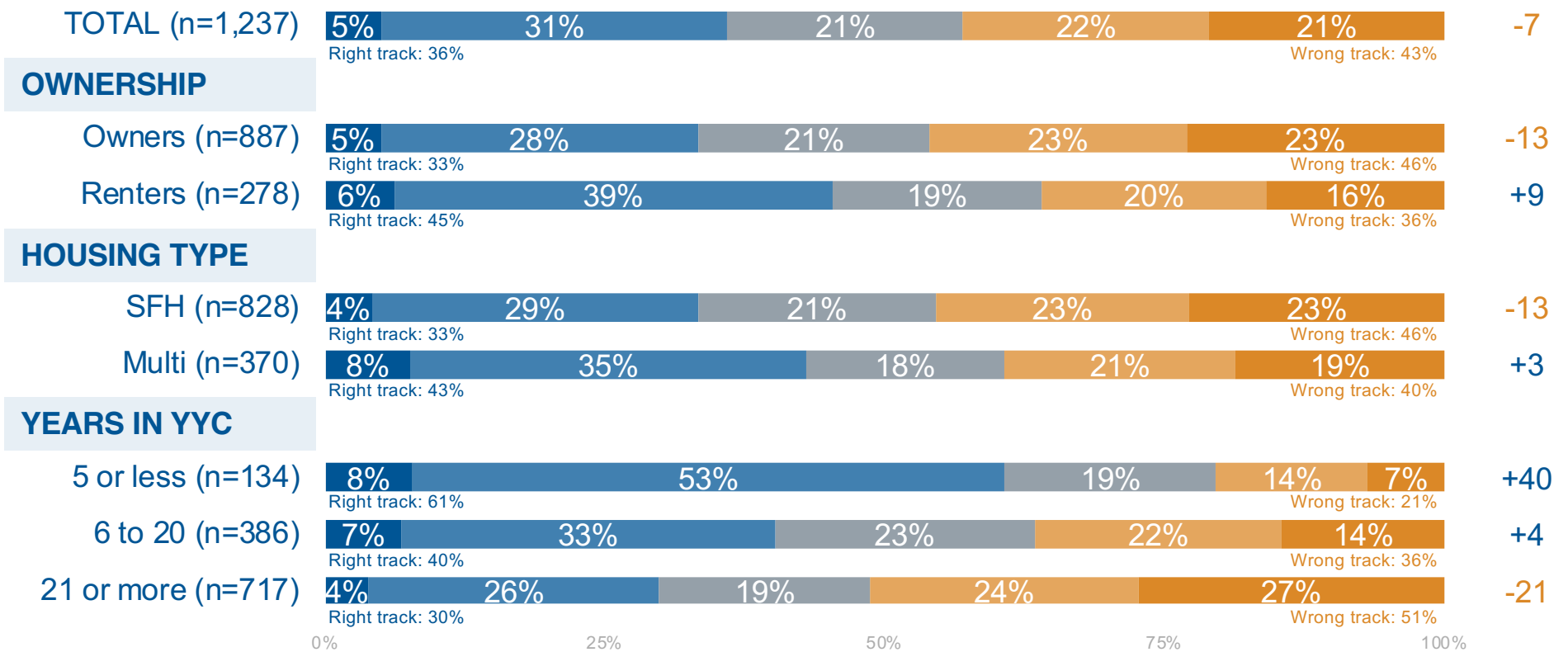
## By Home Ownership, Housing Type and Tenure in Calgary



"Generally speaking, do you think the City of Calgary is on the right track or wrong track right now?"

■ Definitely right track 
 ■ Somewhat right 
 ■ Unsure 
 ■ Somewhat wrong 
 ■ Definitely wrong track

NET  
Right Track



NET Right Track: Right Track minus Wrong Track | Base: All respondents

# Views on City of Calgary Direction

## By Views on Calgary Economy and Last Provincial Vote



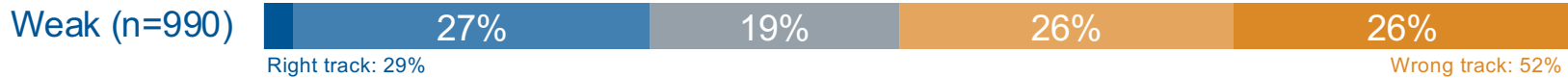
"Generally speaking, do you think the City of Calgary is on the right track or wrong track right now?"

■ Definitely right track ■ Somewhat right ■ Unsure ■ Somewhat wrong ■ Definitely wrong track

NET  
Right Track



### YYC ECONOMY



### LAST PROV. VOTE



0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

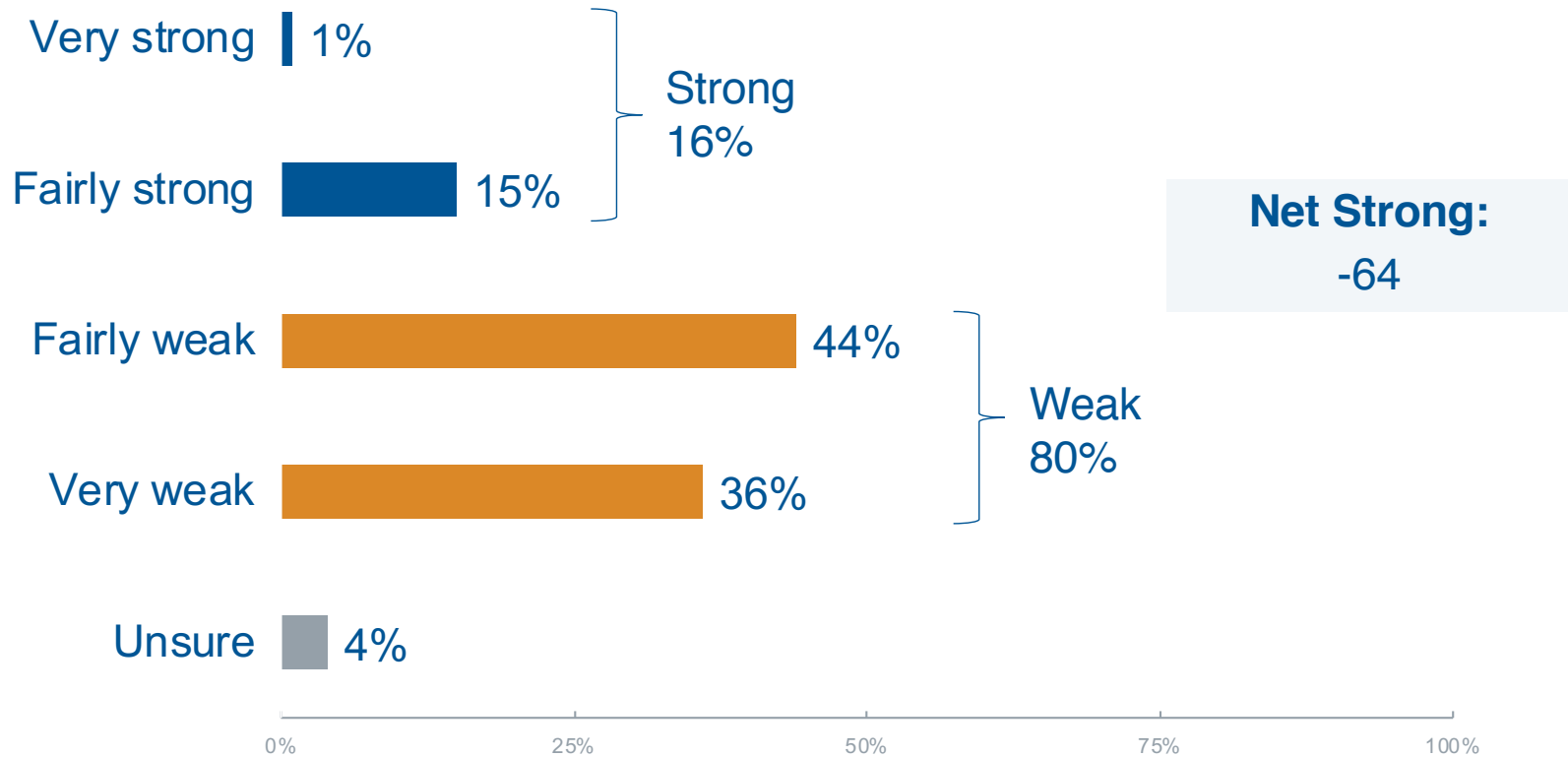
\*Caution: Small sample size

NET Right Track: Right Track minus Wrong Track | Base: All respondents

# Economic Evaluation of Calgary



*"How would you personally rate the local economy in Calgary today? Is Calgary's economy...?"*



NET Strong: Strong minus Weak | Base: All respondents (n=1,237)

# Economic Evaluation of Calgary

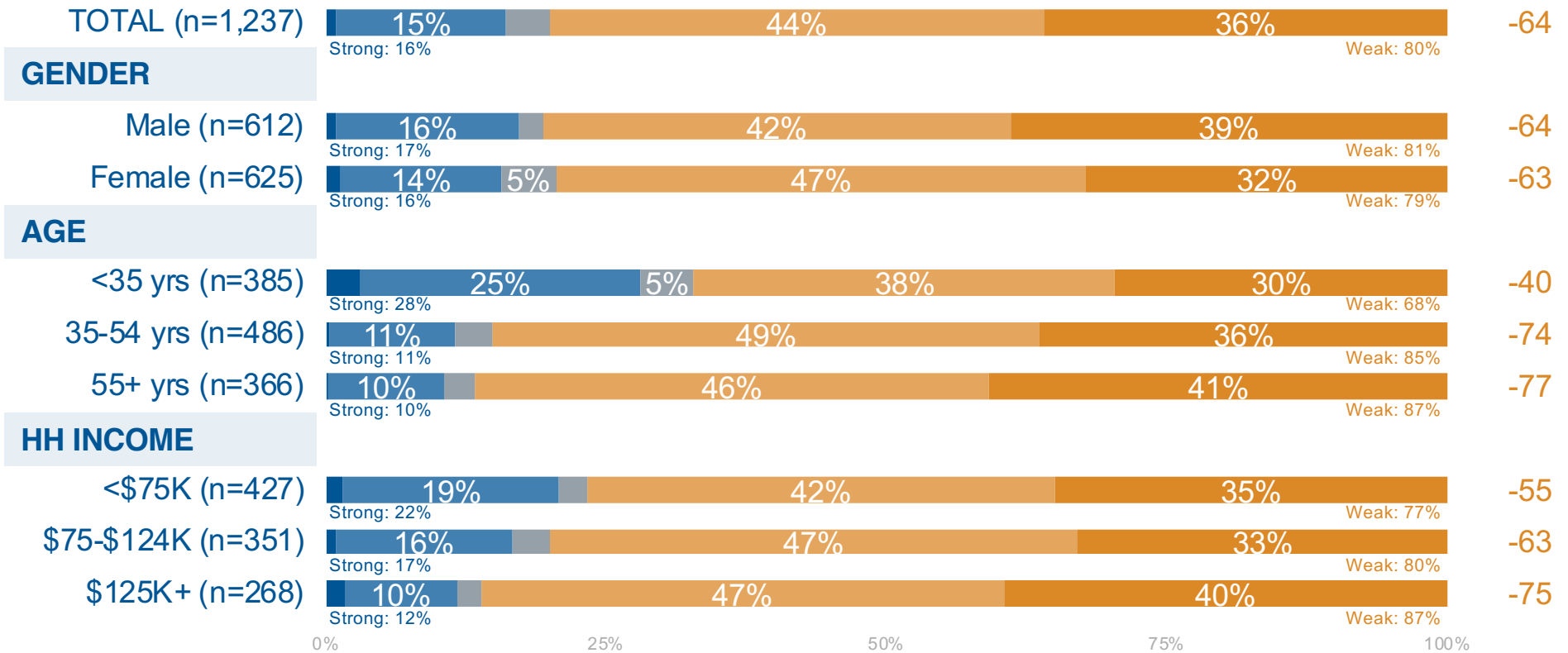
By Gender, Age and Household Income



"How would you personally rate the local economy in Calgary today? Is Calgary's economy...?"

■ Very strong ■ Fairly strong ■ Unsure ■ Fairly weak ■ Very weak

NET Strong



NET Strong: Strong minus Weak | Base: All respondents

# Economic Evaluation of Calgary

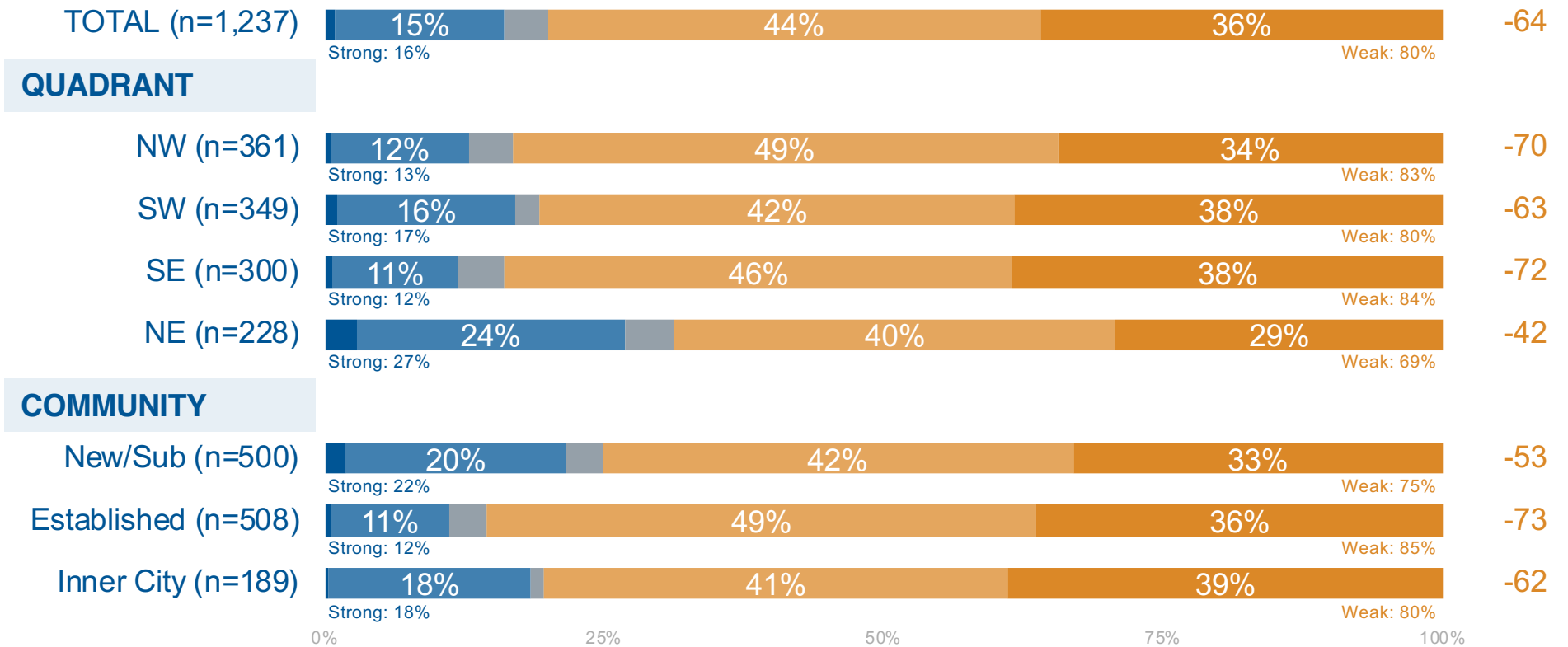
## By Current Quadrant and Community Type



"How would you personally rate the local economy in Calgary today? Is Calgary's economy...?"

■ Very strong ■ Fairly strong ■ Unsure ■ Fairly weak ■ Very weak

NET Strong



NET Strong: Strong minus Weak | Base: All respondents

# Economic Evaluation of Calgary

## By Tenure in Calgary and Commute Type



"How would you personally rate the local economy in Calgary today? Is Calgary's economy...?"

■ Very strong ■ Fairly strong ■ Unsure ■ Fairly weak ■ Very weak

NET Strong



-64

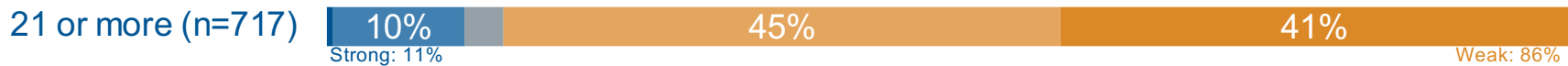
### YEARS IN YYC



-39



-51



-75

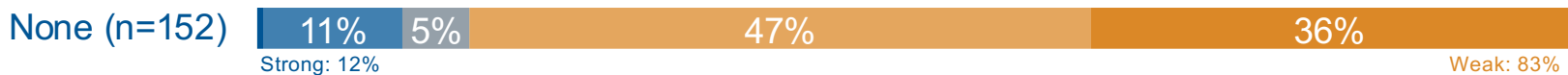
### COMMUTE



-63



-48



-71

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

NET Strong: Strong minus Weak | Base: All respondents

# Economic Evaluation of Calgary

## By Home Ownership and Housing Type



"How would you personally rate the local economy in Calgary today? Is Calgary's economy...?"

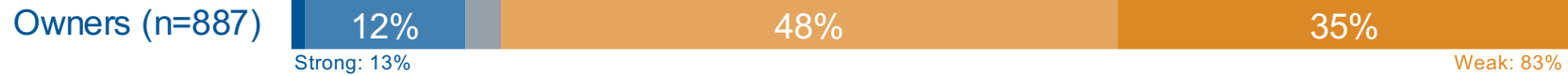
■ Very strong ■ Fairly strong ■ Unsure ■ Fairly weak ■ Very weak

NET Strong



-64

### OWNERSHIP

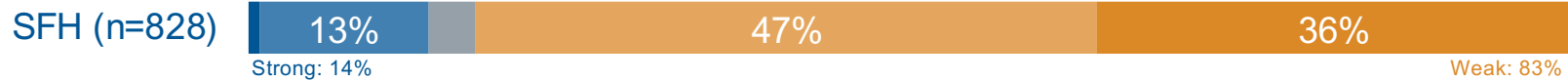


-70



-49

### HOUSING TYPE



-69



-53

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

NET Strong: Strong minus Weak | Base: All respondents

# Economic Evaluation of Calgary

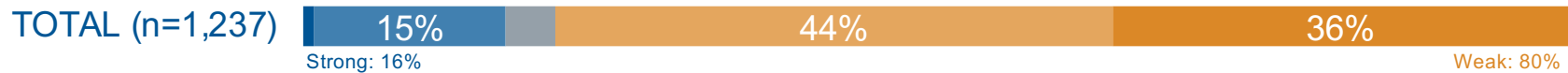
## By Views on City Direction and Last Provincial Vote



"How would you personally rate the local economy in Calgary today? Is Calgary's economy...?"

■ Very strong ■ Fairly strong ■ Unsure ■ Fairly weak ■ Very weak

NET Strong



-64

### DIRECTION



-32



-92



-61

### LAST PROV. VOTE



-82



-64



-43

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

\*Caution: Small sample size

NET Strong: Strong minus Weak | Base: All respondents



## Research Methodology

- Study fielded with adult Calgarians (residing in Calgary Proper), via an online research panel
  - Field dates: September 8 - 12, 2020
  - Panel source: MARU Voice Canada
- n=1,237
- Weighted to reflect gender, age and region of the Calgary population according to Stats Canada
- A random stratified sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from the MARU Voice Canada panel. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of this size is +/- 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20
- Accuracy of sub-samples of the data decline based on sample sizes

# Regional Sample Sizes and Margins of Error



Calgary Region	Total Interviews		Margin of Error*
	Unweighted	Weighted	
CALGARY TOTAL	n=1,237	n=1,237	+/- 2.8 percentage points
Northwest	n=354	n=361	+/- 5.2 percentage points
Southwest	n=388	n=349	+/- 5.0 percentage points
Southeast	n=293	n=300	+/- 5.7 percentage points
Northeast	n=202	n=228	+/- 6.9 percentage points
New / Suburb	n=464	n=500	+/- 4.6 percentage points
Established Community	n=548	n=508	+/- 4.2 percentage points
Inner City	n=190	n=189	+/- 7.1 percentage points

\*NOTE: The margin of error is associated with a probability sample of this size



## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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