# MOORE: FIRE READINESS

2026

RALLY

## HOW MIGHT WE:

# Bridge the gap between intention and action for homeowners?

FM3 Findings

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

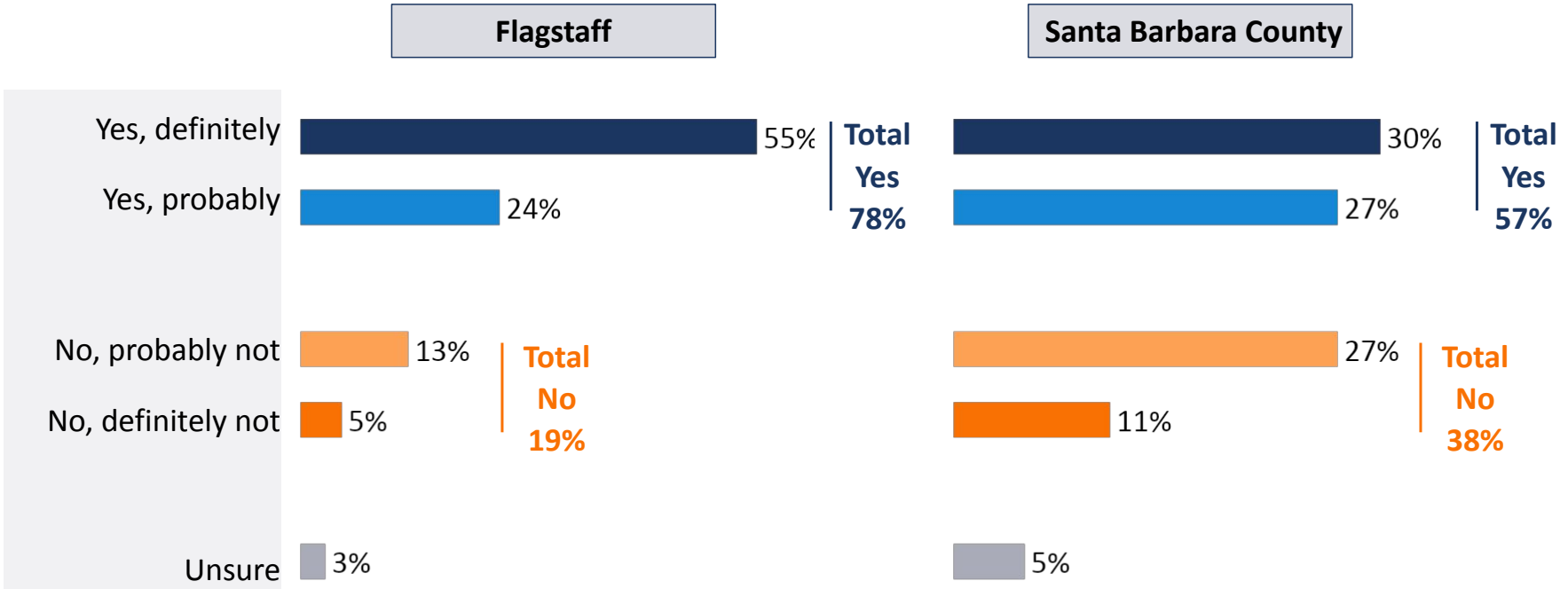
# Research Methodology

| | |
|---|---|
| **Survey Dates** | December 13, 2025-January 8, 2026 |
| **Survey Type** | Dual Mode Homeowner Survey |
| **Research Population** | Single-Family Homeowners in Flagstaff, AZ, and Santa Barbara County, CA |
| **Total Interviews** | 407 (200+ in each area) |
| **Margin of Sampling Error** | (Full Sample) ±6.9% at the 95% Confidence Level<br>(Each Geographic Sample) ±7.1% at the 95% Confidence Level |
| **Contact Methods** |  Telephone Calls<br> Email Invitations<br> Text Invitations |
| **Qualitative Research** | Two online focus groups with 7 homeowners each in Flagstaff and Santa Barbara County conducted Jan. 22, 2026 |

*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*

# Residents are open to fire-safe upgrades when prompted. We don’t need to break resistance or educate deeply.

# More than two-thirds intend to make fire safety improvements, though intensity is higher in Flagstaff.



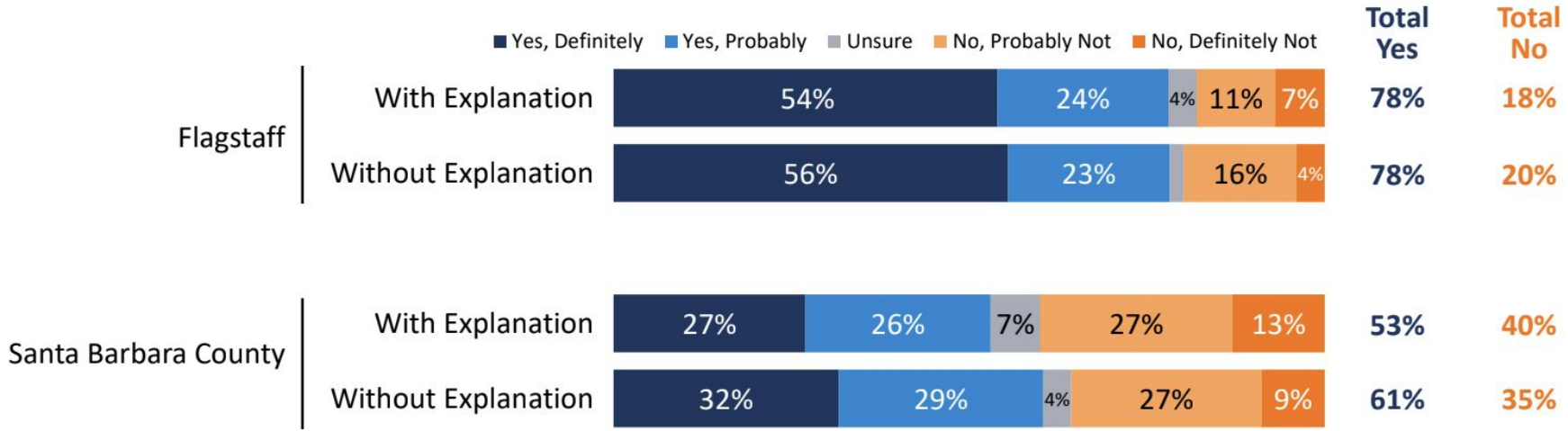

*Q2 (Split C & Split D).* ***(HALF SAMPLE:*** *Most homes don't burn from direct contact with flames. Instead, they ignite from tiny wind-blown embers that can travel a mile or more ahead of a fire.) Fire safety improvements for individual residents can include improvements on and around the home such as gutters, vents, roofs, windows, fences and decks; as well as clearing brush, branches and flammable materials adjacent to the home. Do you intend to make fire safety improvements to your home and property over the next year?*

# Describing ember ignition makes no difference in intention

**(HALF SAMPLE:** Most homes don't burn from direct contact with flames. Instead, they ignite from tiny wind-blown embers that can travel a mile or more ahead of a fire.)

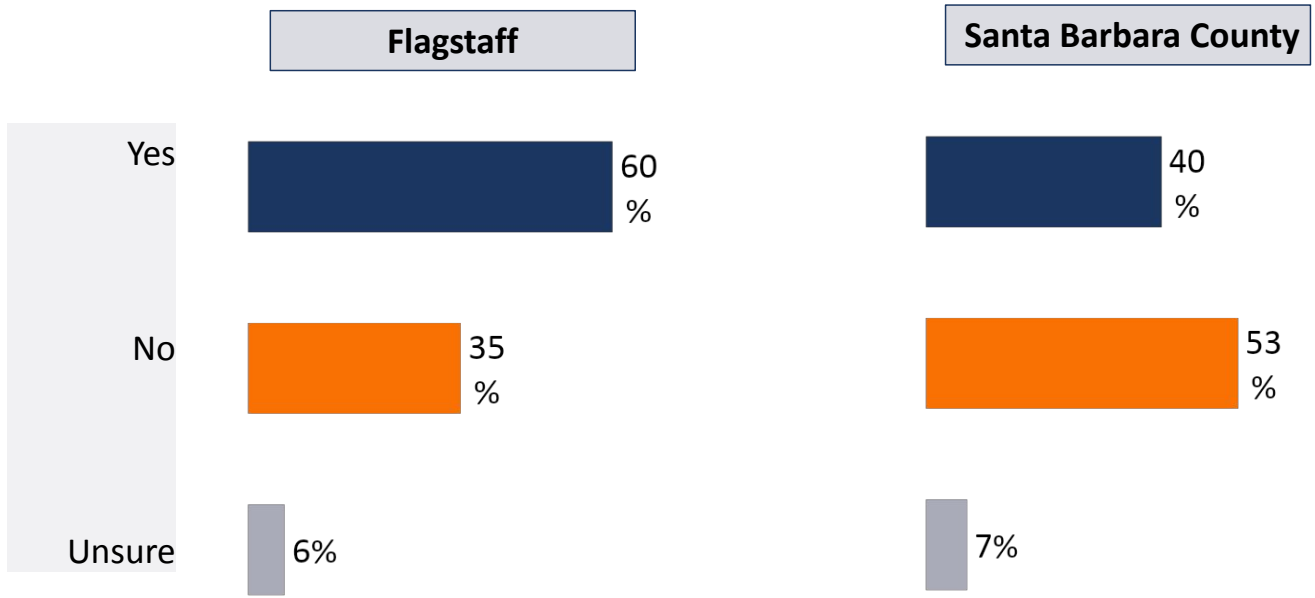
Fire safety improvements for individual residents can include improvements on and around the home such as gutters, vents, roofs, windows, fences and decks; as well as clearing brush, branches and flammable materials adjacent to the home.

Do you intend to make fire safety improvements to your home and property over the next year?



# Three in five Flagstaff homeowners have a plan, while fewer than half do in Santa Barbara County.

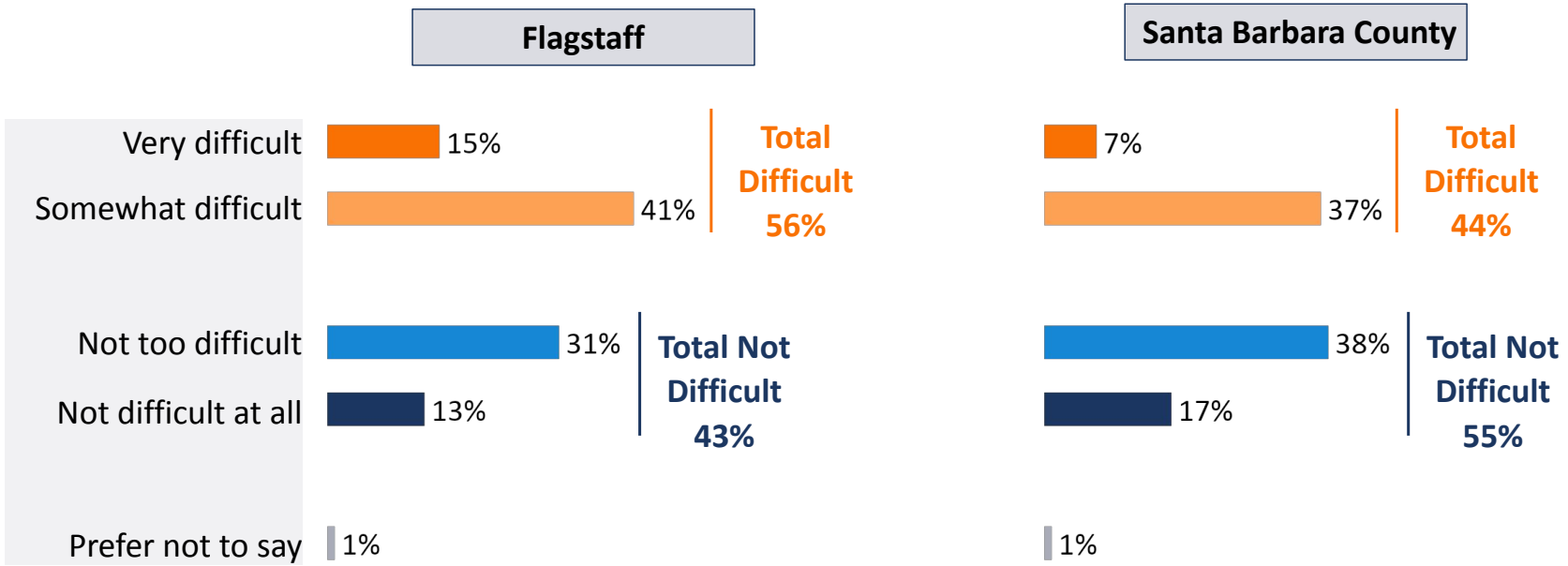
*Do you currently have a plan to make fire safety improvements to your home or property?*




*Q5.*

# Most think it will be at least “somewhat difficult” to protect their home from fire.

*How difficult do you think it would be to protect your home from fire in your home or yard?*



# All were concerned about fire, but level of perceived personal risk to their homes and property varied greatly.

Where my house is actually situated, I'm not overly concerned with it. But I know that there are areas that are at much higher risk than where I'm at.
**-- Flagstaff homeowner**

This is Southern California, and after what happened in the Palisades, it's scary. … It's stressful to talk about it.
**-- Santa Barbara County homeowner**

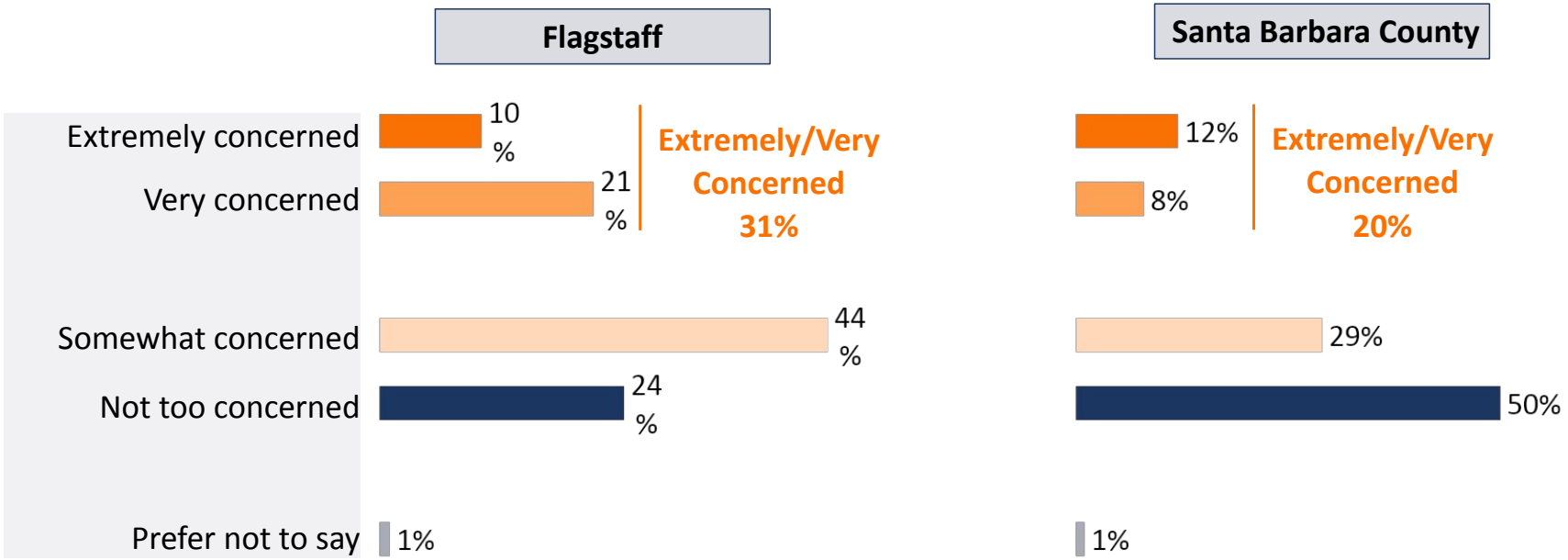
I don't know what I could do to protect [my home] besides weed whack.
**-- Flagstaff homeowner**

We are surrounded by forest. It's more kind of a rural area. Where we live, we haul our own water in, so there's not like a fire hydrant they can hook up to.
**-- Flagstaff homeowner**

- One respondent had lost a previous home in a fire, and another had evacuated five times in a past fire season.
- For others, the risk varied: one in Santa Barbara County described a stucco house with tile roofs and "no huge trees around" as not facing extreme risk.
- Many Flagstaff respondents noted that they are surrounded by trees which increases their risk. Proximity to forest was a key risk factor in their minds.
- However, most admitted that fire is not top of mind.
- Respondents believed fires spread through strong winds. They did not specifically mention embers or sparks, though when that was explained it made intuitive sense.

# Three in ten or fewer are “extremely” or “very concerned” about their home being lost or damaged in a wildfire.

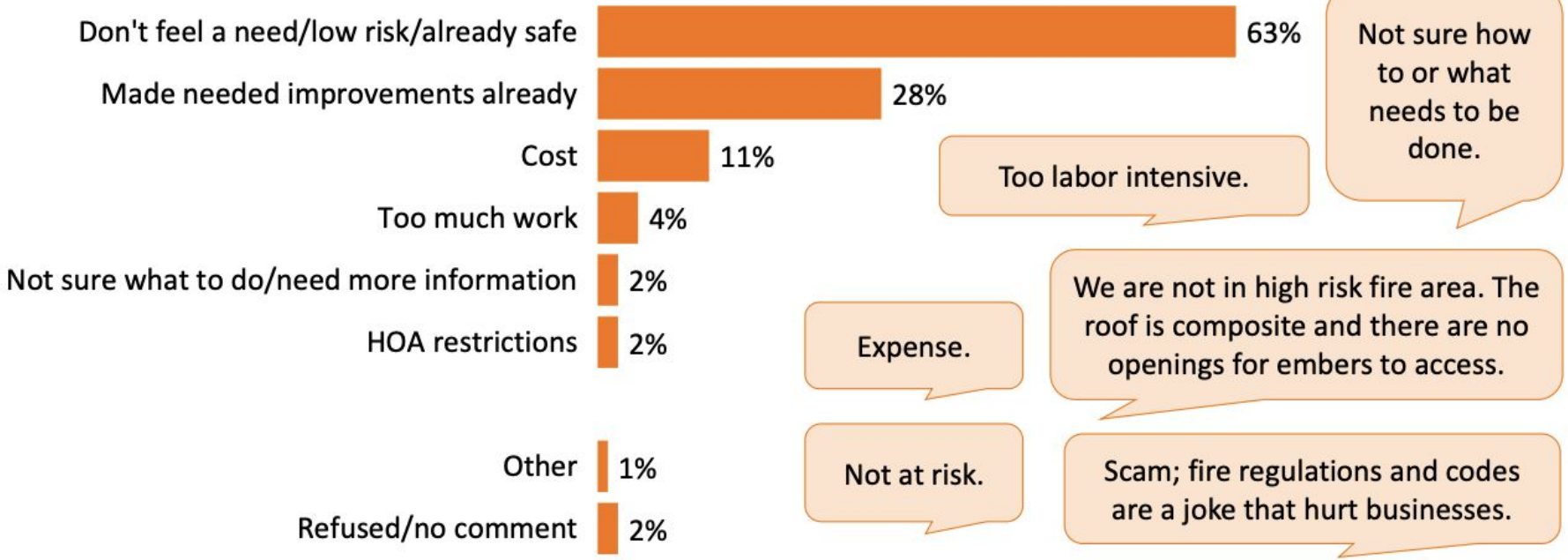
*Next, how concerned are you about your home being lost or damaged in a wildfire?*



# The relatively few who do not intend to make improvements believe their homes risk is low.

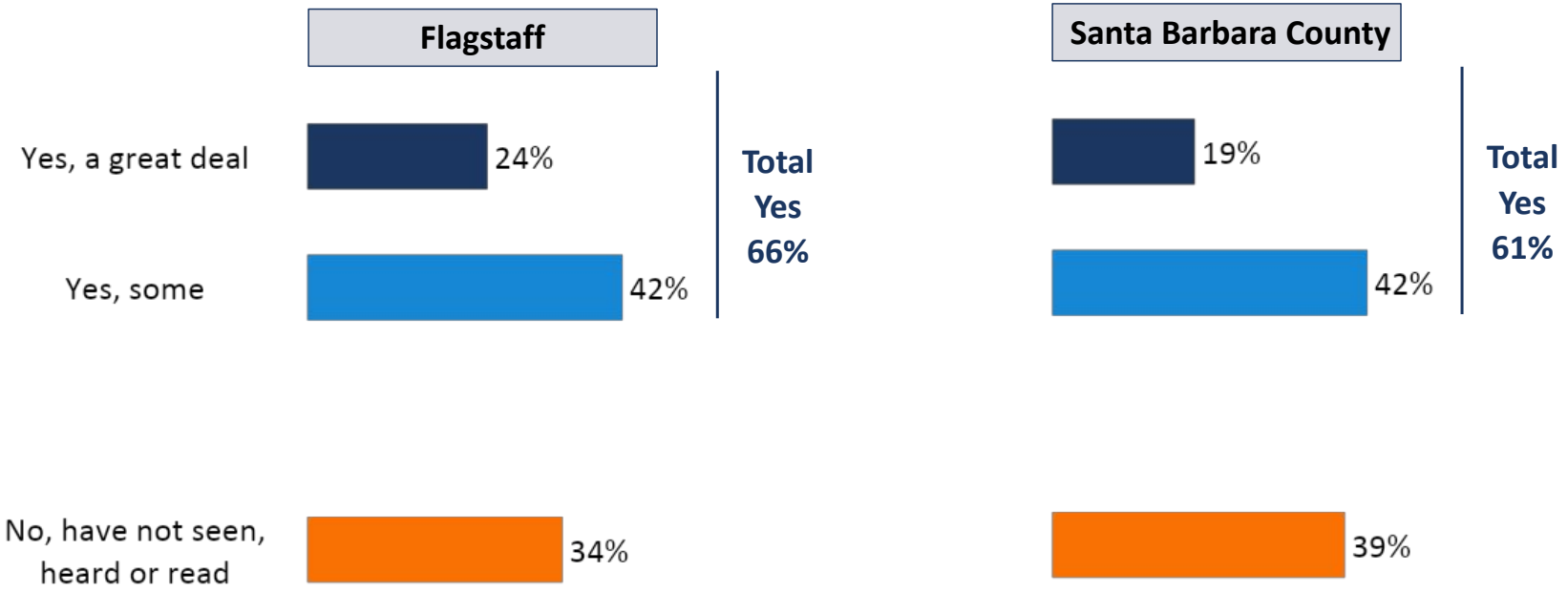
*In a few words of your own, why do you **NOT INTEND** to make these improvements?*

*(Open-ended; Asked of Those who Do Not Intend to Make Improvements Only, n=60)*



# Fewer than one-quarter have heard “a great deal” about reducing fire risk on their property.

*First, have you seen, heard or read anything about reducing fire risk on your property?*



Homeowners have a mental checklist of improvement needs and wants. Work to prepare a home for a wildfire event can be at the top of the list, but the actions need to be the right ones.

# Home improvement projects include “wants” and “needs.”

- No respondents brought up fire-safety improvement projects when prompted to talk about home improvement projects on their to-do lists.

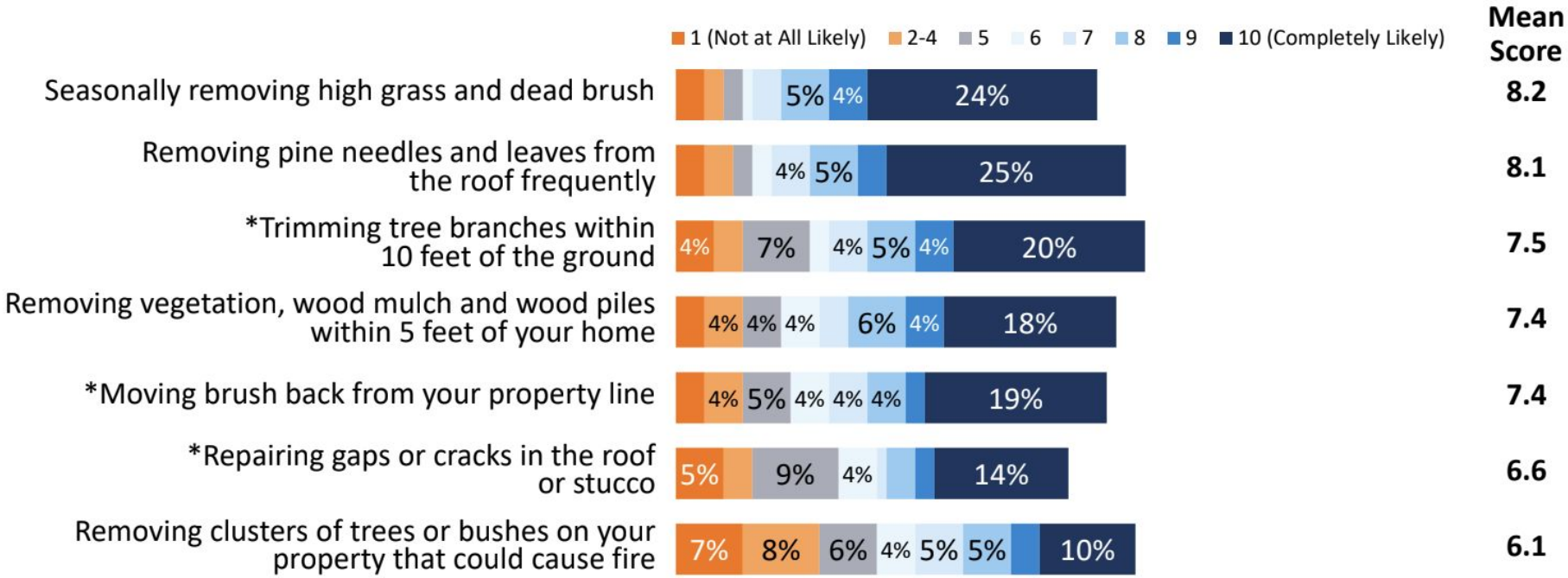
- Respondents divided projects into “needs” (like repairs and appliance maintenance) from “wants” (like a bathroom remodel). While everyone had a to-do list, fire safety improvements weren’t on that list.
- Many said they relied on resources like YouTube for how-to videos for DIY projects.
- They brought in professional help for things like plumbing and electrical. They weigh the cost of bringing in outside help, the tools needed, as well as the level of expertise needed for a project – sometimes after investigating whether they could do it themselves.
- Age and level of physical ability were also factors for those weighing DIY vs. contractor projects.

I do my research on YouTube, see what it’s going to take, and then I try to do an internal cost benefit analysis of is this going to take a lot of learning and a lot of money for me to spend two days and end up using a contractor, or is it something where I think I can get it done? **-- Flagstaff homeowner**

I definitely have had old historic homes in the past, that if something goes awry, plumbing or electricity, that’s a need. You have to fix it. So the priority list is things that need to be done versus things that I would love to have.**-- Santa Barbara County homeowner**

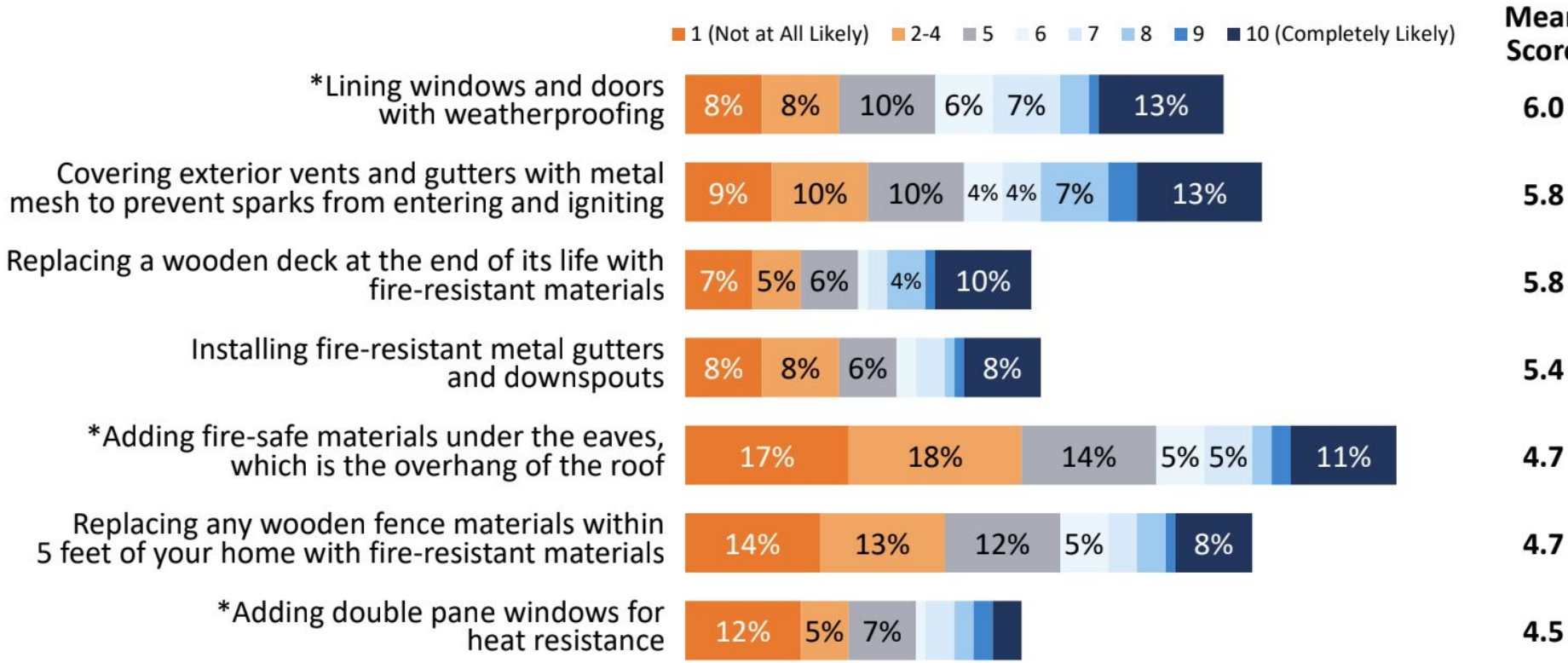
# Homeowners report they are most likely to remove high grass, dead brush and pine needles and leaves; repair gaps

*Likelihood to Complete Fire Safety Improvement Projects*



# They are less likely to add fire-safe materials under eaves.

*Likelihood to Complete Fire Safety Improvement Projects*



# Verbatim Responses from Improvement Intenders

I want to protect my home as best I can.

Small yard in a tight neighborhood, but still need to keep flammable in check in the yard and on the roof.

To prevent fire and prevent loss of homeowners insurance.

I do a yearly assessment of actions I need to take and plan for follow through the coming spring.

For the safety of my family and home.

I respect the responsibility of taking care that my neighbors and my national forests deserve a little bit of my time to help improve fire safety and resiliency.

I live in a forest.

Prepare for worst case scenario, better to be safe than sorry!

Gutter guards, maybe vent guards.

I don't need my house to catch fire.

*Q3a. In a few words of your own, why do you **INTEND** to make these improvements?*

I've already been dropped by insurance for replacing my roof so anything to minimize my risk is necessary.

I know that 90% of structural fires caused by wildfires comes from ember ignition and heat from nearby burning structures.

No plants within 5-10' of house, low water using plants, pruned trees to remove dead wood.

# Respondents saw a list of specific projects, as well as photos and brief descriptions of a few DIY fire safety projects.

- Covering exterior vents and gutters with metal mesh to prevent sparks from entering and igniting
- Installing fire-resistant metal gutters and downspouts
- Removing vegetation, wood mulch and wood piles within 5 feet of your home
- Trimming tree branches within 10 feet of the ground
- Removing clusters of trees or bushes on your property that could cause fire
- Moving brush back from your property line
- Removing pine needles and leaves from the roof frequently
- Seasonally removing high grass and dead brush
- Repairing gaps or cracks in the roof or stucco
- Lining windows and doors with weatherproofing
- Adding double pane windows for heat resistance

It would be nice to know that on this list, which ones are the most important. Is removing pine needles the top priority for us or is it covering exterior vents and gutters with metal mesh? **-- Flagstaff homeowner**

## Cover spots where sparks can land

Covering exterior vents and gutters with metal mesh to prevent sparks from entering and igniting a fire in your home.



- Not everyone fully understood at first
- Some explanation was needed to describe why it's important to cover vents and gutters, and the picture was helpful at both illustrating the idea and making it seem doable.

I think I have them, but if your gutter is metal already, you're just putting metal on the metal, correct? **-- Santa Barbara County homeowner**

I don't really understand the covering exterior vents and gutters with metal mesh. Is that just so as it's on fire, no debris is coming in and getting sucked into the attic space? **-- Flagstaff homeowner**

- This image was less necessary, especially in forested Flagstaff.
- People in the focus groups were processing the fact that this is an ongoing task.

Leaves catch fire. But this is such an easy thing to do. If you are able to do it.-- **Santa Barbara County homeowner**

## Move burnable debris

Removing pine needles and leaves from the roof frequently to reduce flammable buildup that can easily ignite from embers and spread fire to the rest of the home.



- There was no real pushback on this
- People started to bring up removing mulch.
- People were not caught up by the definition of five feet.

## Make space around your house

Removing vegetation, wood mulch and wood piles within 5 feet of your home to create a buffer zone that slows or stops fire.



We never even thought about [this] until the fire chief [came in]. We were all about the garden and plants. So mulch made sense. **-- Santa Barbara County homeowner**

Pine trees usually burn. I don't think we're allowed to cut those trees down. I would have to check my HOA.
**-- Flagstaff homeowner**

- This task was related to general tidiness (sometimes, as enforced by their HOA) and ongoing upkeep as well.
- Some talked about wanting to help neighbors who are less able (or less willing) to clean up brush on their property.

## Remove dead brush a few times a year

Seasonally removing high grass and dead brush to eliminate dry fuels that allow fire to spread quickly across the property and towards your home.



My HOA will give you notice if you don't do it often enough. And then they give you a due date and if it's not done, then they'll send their people out and then they'll bill you for it. **-- Flagstaff homeowner**

# We have powerful messaging available to center resident's agency, show that efforts add up, and strike a balance between personal and collective.

# Respondents considered a list of phrases describing these improvements.

- None had heard of “home hardening” and those who guessed what it meant thought it had to do with the materials your home is made of (like stucco or tile).
- “Zone Zero” was also unfamiliar, with one person guessing it meant the aftermath of a fire, with a “home burned to the ground.”
- “Defensible space” or “buffer” was more familiar.
- “Fire readiness” was the clearest and most straightforward.
- The two four-verb phrases resonated for some. However, they did say it wouldn’t make sense without the discussion and images.

- Defensible space
- Clear, cover, space, strengthen
- Home hardening
- Zone Zero
- Fire readiness
- Clear, screen, space, secure

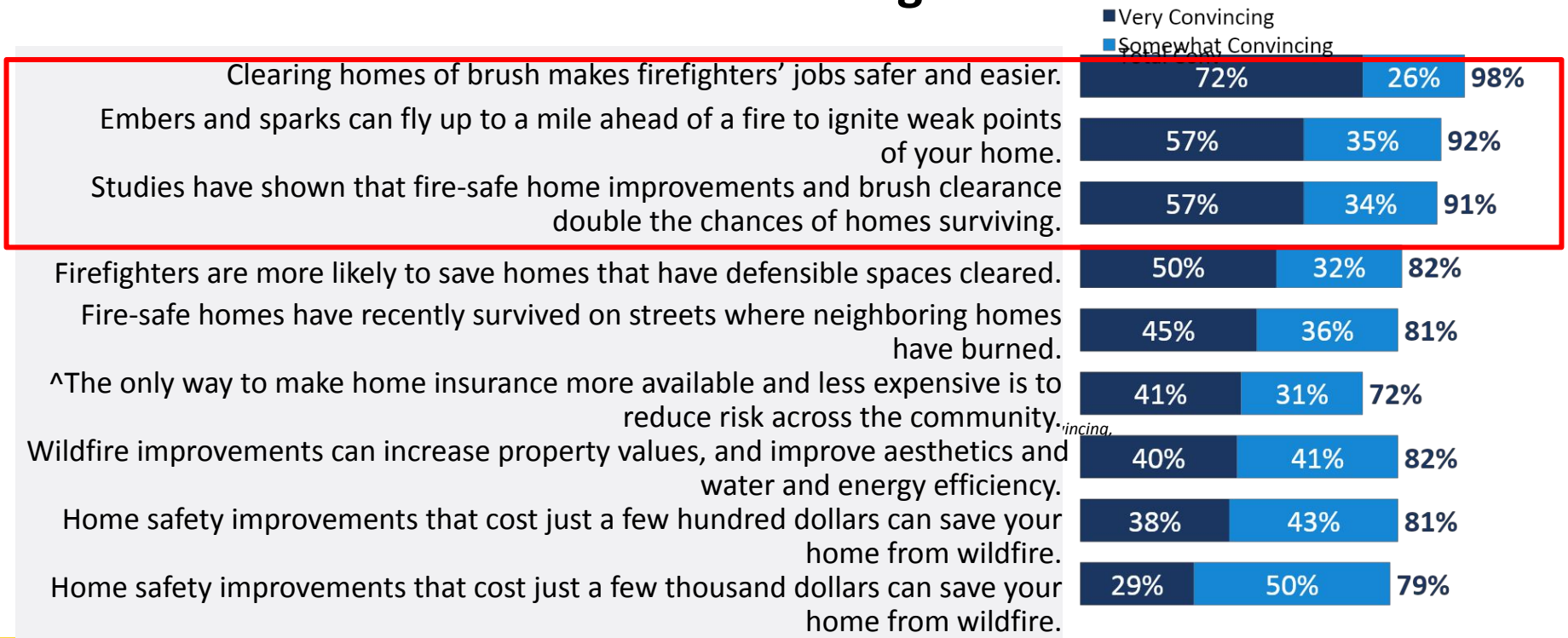
“Clear” could be clear the brush. “Space” could mean to have at least five feet away from your house. So I guess it all depends how you think of the word, what it means to you.. **-- Santa Barbara County homeowner**

# Messaging Motivating Fire Safety Improvements

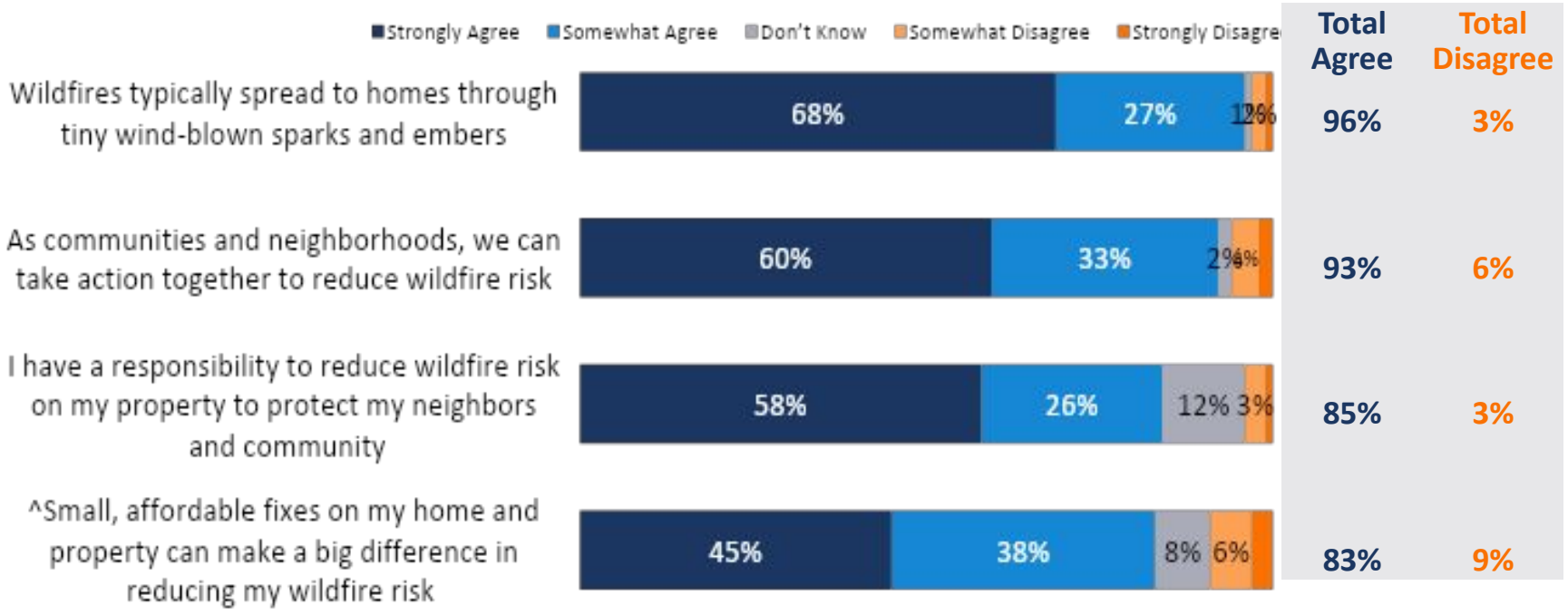
| Ranked by Very Convincing | |
|---|---|
| 48% | **(FIX IT/INSURANCE)** There's a basic concept when it comes to taking care of our homes: if it's broken, fix it. Wildfire is not only threatening our communities, it's driving up our insurance costs and making life more difficult. We can help fix this by making our homes and property more fire safe. We need to do what's under our control to protect our homes, clear brush, stop the spread of sparks and fix what's broken. |
| 48% | **°(FLAGSTAFF/EVERY HOME)** Here in Flagstaff, our community is taking major steps to prevent catastrophic wildfires in surrounding areas. A lot of neighbors are making home improvements to stop the spread of sparks. The last step to be much more fire safe is for every home and neighbor to reduce fire risk so we can all be safer. |
| 47% | **(IMAGINE)** Imagine grabbing your prized possessions to evacuate your family in an instant as a wildfire approaches. Since you have cleared nearby brush and pine needles and enclosed open vents and gutters, small sparks and embers can't light up your home. Firefighters will see your home is cleared and ready to be saved. Imagine coming home with your family to a home still standing. |
| 42% | **(SMALL STEP)** Wildfire is a huge challenge, but we can protect our homes, property and neighborhood with small steps. A $10 piece of mesh for vents, or a weekend clearing brush, can stop the wind-blown sparks that ignite houses. It doesn't need to be difficult, but it's time to get started now. |
| 27% | **~(SB/EVERY HOME)** Here in Santa Barbara County, our community is taking major steps to prevent catastrophic wildfires in surrounding areas. A lot of neighbors are making home improvements to stop the spread of sparks. The last step to be much more fire safe is for every home and neighbor to reduce fire risk so we can all be safer. |

*Q12. Now please consider the following statements. For each statement, please indicate whether you find it very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not convincing as a reason to consider fire safety improvements on your property. °Asked in Flagstaff Only; ~Asked in Santa Barbara Only*

# The most persuasive facts are making firefighters' job easier, embers igniting weak points, and doubling the chance of your home surviving.

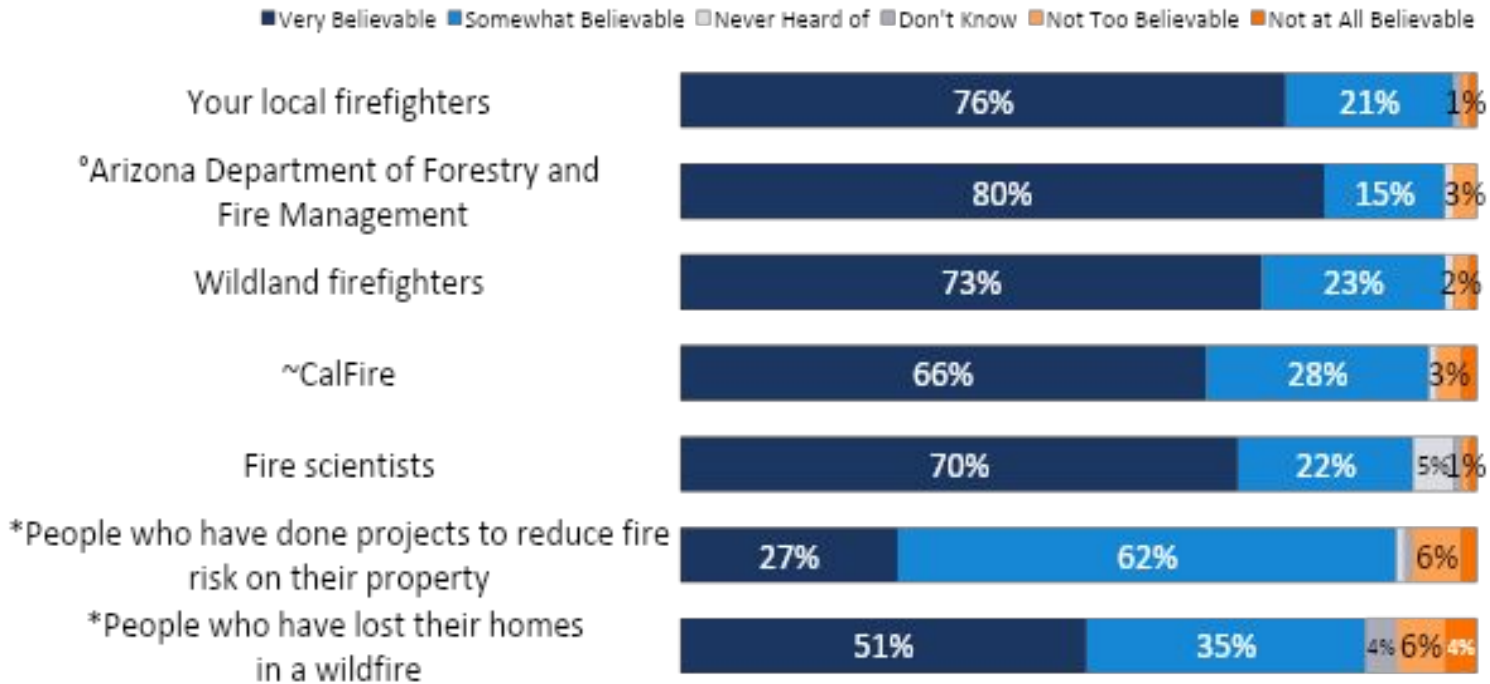


# Homeowners are open to collective action and responsibility framing.



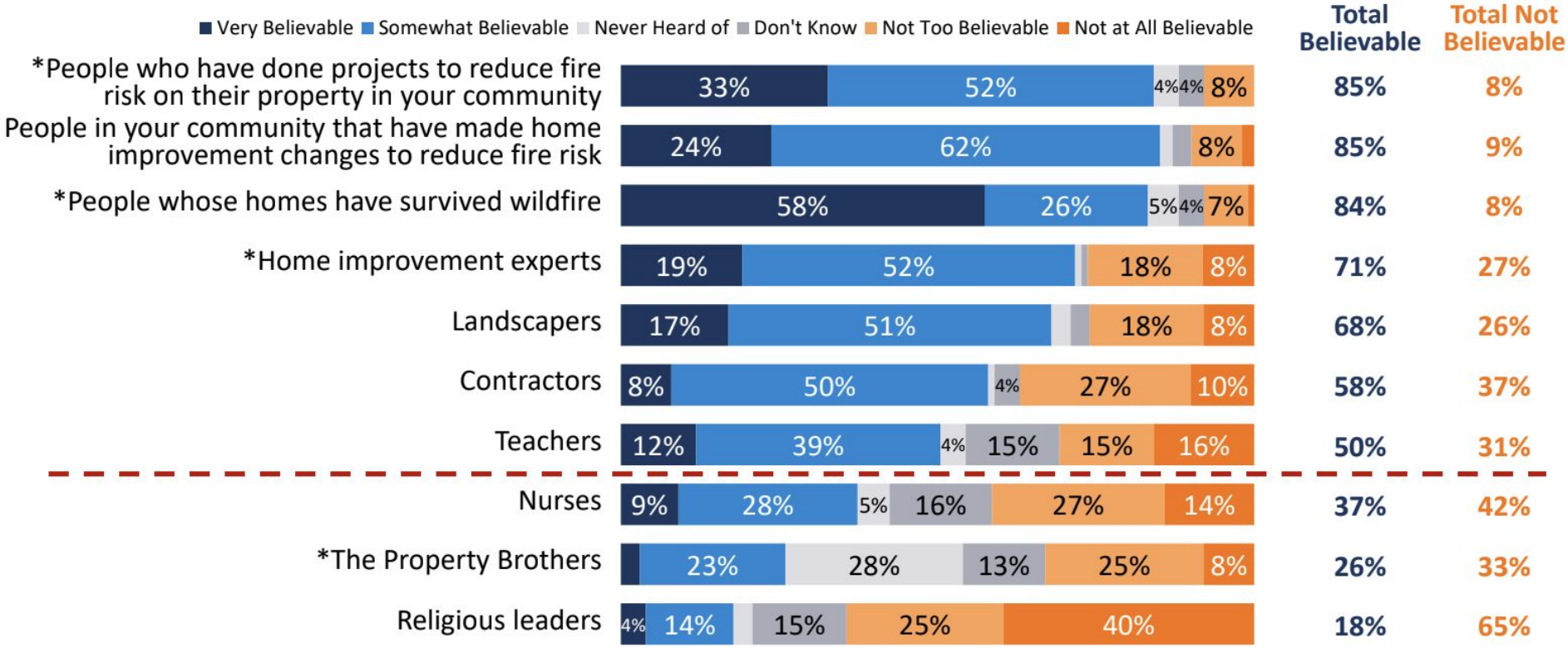

*Q8. Next, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. ^Not Part of Split Sample*

# Firefighters are overwhelmingly seen as the most believable messengers.




| | Total Believable | Total Not Believable |
|---|---|---|
| Your local firefighters | 97% | 2% |
| °Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management | 96% | 3% |
| Wildland firefighters | 96% | 2% |
| ~CalFire | 94% | 5% |
| Fire scientists | 92% | 2% |
| *People who have done projects to reduce fire risk on their property | 90% | 9% |
| *People who have lost their homes in a wildfire | 86% | 10% |

# Homes that have survived wildfires are also of interest



# IDENTIFYING A PATH FORWARD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# REVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In addition to the polling research and focus groups, there are some findings from our other work around wildfire and fire recovery that will inform the direction of our approach.

- Strong existing **awareness of fire risk**, but varying levels of intensity in different communities.
- A stated **willingness to take wildfire-safe action**, but a lack of clarity and focus around priority steps.
- Greater will for **lower-cost** and **smaller-scale actions**.
- **Affordability** continues to be a major factor of the moment, even for actions that are “lower” in cost.
- The **tension around ‘Zone Zero’ mandates** reveal deeper concerns about agency and government trust.
- Existing **guidance is strong, but suffers** from too many steps and options.

# OUR TARGET HOMEOWNER MINDSET

01

**Open minded, limited bandwidth.** They know wildfire risk is real and are concerned about safety, but the steps to take can feel overwhelming. To cope, they might postpone action unless prompted in a way that feels manageable rather than alarming.

02

**Action ready but not decision ready.** There is strong willingness to act, especially on smaller, lower-cost improvements, but homeowners need clear prioritization and reassurance that simple, individual actions truly matter. Too many options stall momentum; clarity unlocks action.

03

**Practical, budget-conscious doers.** Cost sensitivity and competing priorities shape decision-making. They juggle long mental to-do lists and respond best to accessible DIY actions that make fire preparedness feel achievable alongside everyday home maintenance.

04

**Trust is local.** Skepticism of "traditional" government exists but guidance from fire departments carries strong credibility. They're motivated by being good neighbors and protecting their families and community. They respond well to checklists, incentives, and maybe visible signs of participation.

# OUR TARGET HOMEOWNER MINDSET

We can never avoid fires because unfortunately it happens. But we can definitely try our best to minimize it, to reduce the chances of us having a fire at our home.
**Flagstaff homeowner**

You've got to do so much to prepare for these wildfires. Sometimes it's a few steps, smart steps. It breaks it down. It doesn't seem like you got to do it all at once.
**Santa Barbara County homeowner**

It's like, "Well, I can pay my mortgage or pay $200 to make my house survivable. If I don't pay the mortgage, I'm not going to have a house anyway.
**Flagstaff homeowner**

I make improvements whenever I see other people making improvements, if I see my neighbors do it or if I hear it on the news.
**Santa Barbara County homeowner**

# GUIDING INSIGHTS

Based on the research, we have identified a few guiding insights that will inform how this campaign shows up and moves homeowners from awareness to action.

**Actionable > Educational.** This campaign is about personal and collective action. We don't have to dwell on wildfire risk or background, we can start with what people can do.

**The homeowner TO DO list.** When homeowners have a running mental list of projects, it can be particularly hard to prioritize proactive measures.

**A *Can Do* spirit, not a mandate.** A focus on being empowered to protect our own homes, and finding the power in personal action.

**Fire ready, not fireproof.** We want more people to take some key actions, rather than fewer people taking more intensive action.

# HOW WE ARE SHIFTING AUDIENCE ATTITUDE

Feeling unsure of where to start or if their individual efforts matter

**Being clear, confident, and willing to take key fire-safe actions**

Normalize and celebrate how and why individual homeowners are shaping their own fire readiness, in ways big and small, with a focus on key actions they can take now and partnerships with local firefighters and neighbors.

# VALUES

What are the values that we are speaking to/from?



# MAIN MESSAGE

How are we approaching our challenge?

Wildfire risk is ever-present and unpredictable, but there are simple actions we can take to protect our homes, families and neighborhoods.

# CALL TO ACTION

How can we get people to take priority actions?

*Act now to make your home and neighborhood more fire-ready*

These three actions meet the bar for cost, ease, and impact. Respondents saw them as distinct and complementary.



**COVER**
Vents, gutters, any place that sparks can land and ignite



**CLEAR**
Pine needles, leaves and dead brush from roof



**CREATE SPACE**
A five-foot buffer of defensible space around your home

# Focused targeting on key audiences

01

## WEEKEND WARRIOR VIBE

**Serious but approachable.** We are developing a brand that will be easily translatable across regions that encourages action around home fire safety.

02

## DESIGNATED TIME BOUND PUSH

**Gearing folks towards an action that everyone can do in a weekend.** Develop digital ads that create momentum around a specific push.

03

## FOCUSED VIDEO CONTENT

**Paid digital advertising and creative video to get folks to take the set of actions.** Based on research findings, use messengers that people trust to move the needle.