

# Views on Relocating Rail Lines in Winnipeg

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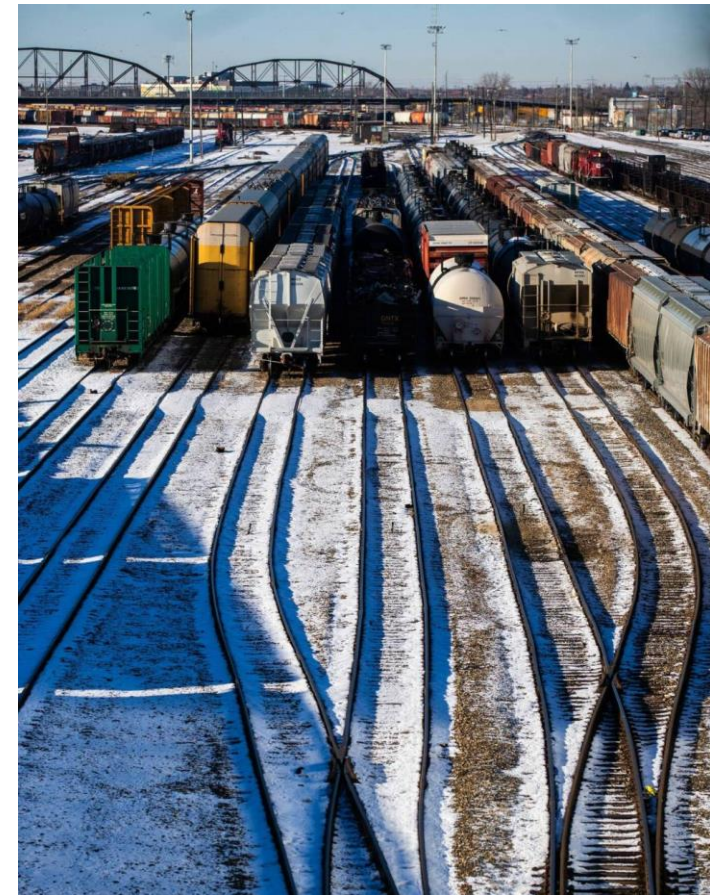


# The Story

Winnipeggers have spent decades debating whether to follow the lead of other large North American municipalities and move rail lines and urban rail yards to the edge of the city. This issue is on the public agenda again, nearly a decade after the previous Progressive Conservative government called off the latest rail relocation study.

Support for rail relocation remains reasonably strong, but Manitobans are still deeply skeptical it will ever happen and are likely to see it as a low priority for government.

The derailment at the CP overpass on McPhillips Avenue in April 2023 – not to mention other high-profile derailments involving dangerous goods – may make Winnipeggers more attuned to the argument that moving the rail lines makes things safer. The potential cost of relocation, however, stands out as a major red flag for Manitobans, many of whom want governments to invest in other priorities rather than moving rail lines outside the city.



# Key Findings

In principle, Manitobans are in favour of moving rail lines outside Winnipeg's city limits, but relatively few have faith this will happen anytime soon.

Following the Manitoba government's announcement that it has appointed former federal cabinet minister Lloyd Axworthy to study this issue again, more than six in ten Manitobans – including nearly seven in ten Winnipeggers – support moving rail lines outside city limits. This includes one-quarter who are strongly supportive of this idea and another four in ten who somewhat support it. This level of public support is comparable to the percentage of Manitobans who favoured rail relocation in 2015, when this issue last made headlines.

Although there is a relatively high level of support for rail relocation, few are confident this will ever happen. Only one-quarter say relocation is likely, including just five per cent who think it is very likely. Nearly three-quarters, on the other hand, believe it is unlikely the rail lines will be moved. Compared to 2015, far fewer Manitobans think rail lines will be relocated outside the city boundaries.

Manitobans are most likely to agree with the safety-related argument for moving rail lines. Nearly three-quarters agree (including more than one-third who strongly agree) that relocating lines will protect people from dangerous or flammable goods being moved through neighbourhoods by rail. Seven in 10 also agree that moving the rail lines could make more land available for housing and make it easier to move goods. Fewer favour the argument that moving the Canadian Pacific yard will better connect the North End to the rest of the city.

While three-quarters agree there is a possibility that relocation could lead to cost savings if it means existing overpasses and underpasses do not need to be rebuilt, a higher proportion agree strongly that it will be too expensive to move rail lines outside the city.

The opposing argument that most resonates with Manitobans, however, is that Winnipeg is facing bigger issues right now and that moving the rail lines is not a high priority.

# Methodology

Probe Research surveyed 800 adults residing in Manitoba from Oct. 28 to Nov. 1, 2024.

Those who responded to the online survey are members of Probe Research's proprietary panel, as well as members of another national online panel.

Because an online panel is a non-probability sample, no margin of error can be ascribed. For the purposes of comparison, a probabilistic sample of N=800 Manitoba adults would have a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points, 19 times out 20. The margin of error would also be higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.

Minor statistical weighting by age, region, gender and educational attainment was applied to this sample to ensure it properly reflects the known attributes of the province's population. SPSS statistical software was used to analyze all data.

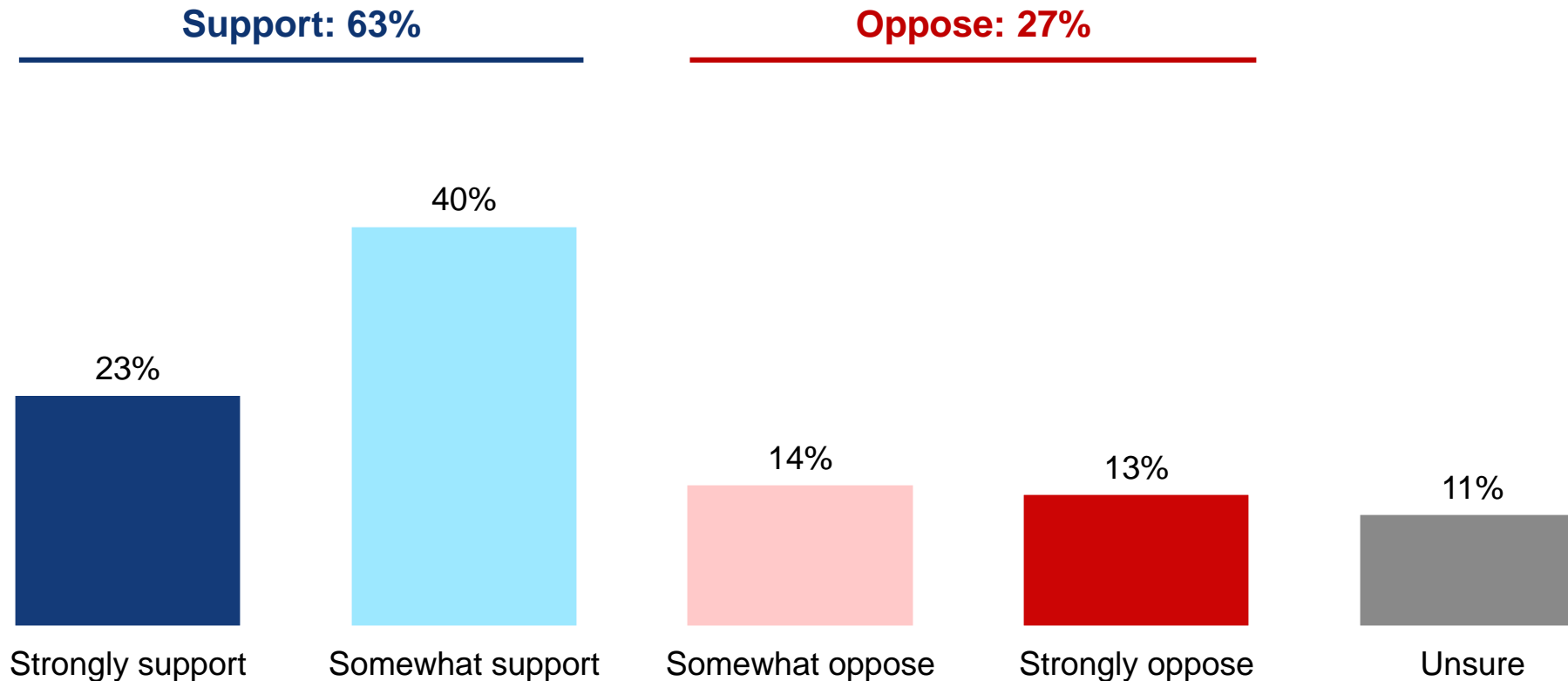
The survey instrument was designed and paid for by Probe Research.

Results may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding. Numbers of <2% are not shown in the graphs.

# Support for Relocating Rail Lines in Winnipeg

More than six in ten Manitobans believe moving rail lines outside the city is a good idea

1. The provincial government recently announced that it will study whether to relocate all rail lines running through the City of Winnipeg to locations outside of the city limits. In principle, do you support or oppose this idea? (Base: All respondents, N=800)

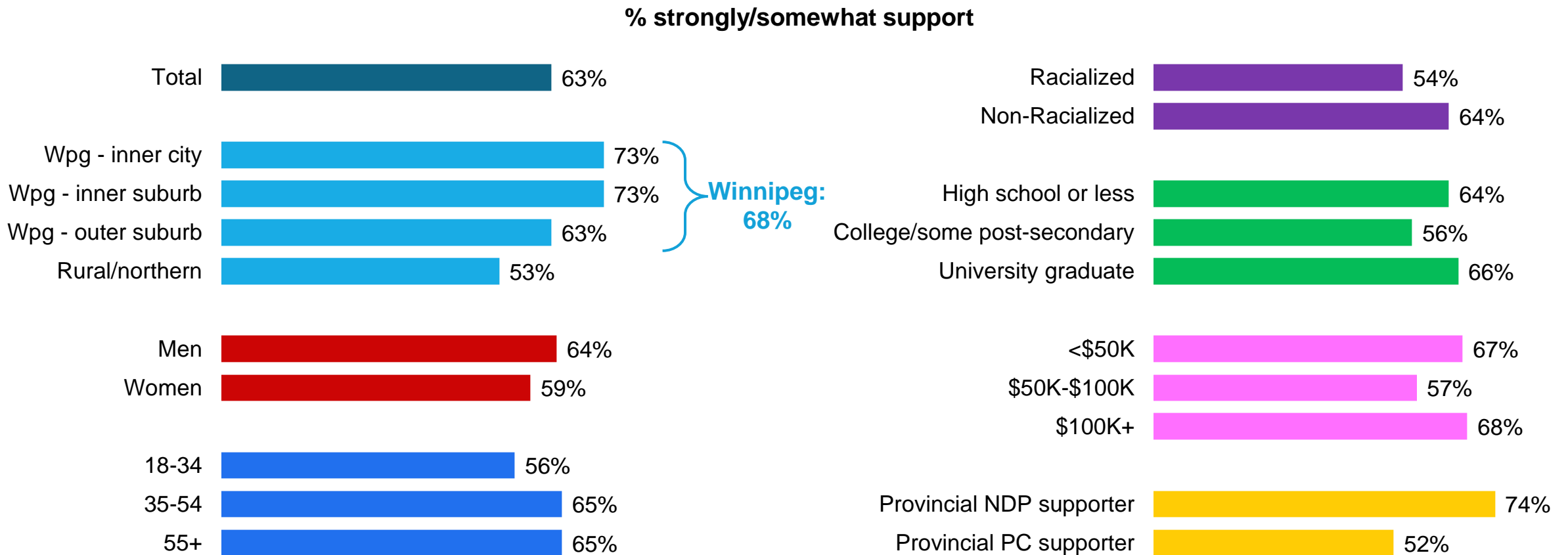


In December 2015, **59%** of Manitobans were in favour of relocating rail lines outside Winnipeg.

# Support for Relocating Rail Lines in Winnipeg: By Subgroup

Those living closer to downtown Winnipeg, NDP supporters most on board with relocation

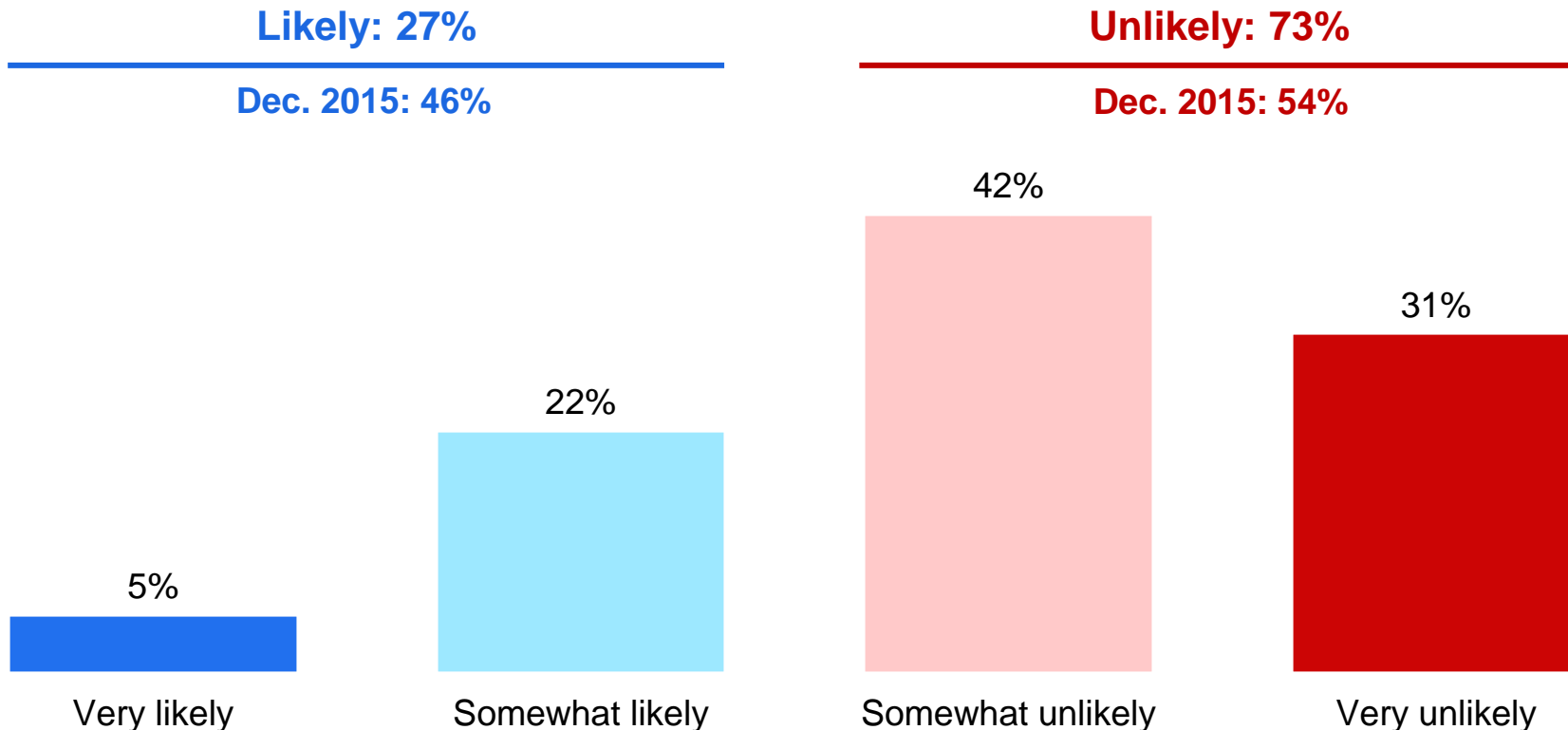
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# Perceived Likelihood of Rail Lines Being Moved

Most Manitobans are very skeptical that the rail lines will ever be relocated

2. How likely do you think it is that either the current provincial government or future provincial governments will successfully relocate the rail lines outside the City of Winnipeg? (Base: All respondents, N=800)



Those who are **most optimistic about the rail lines moving** include:

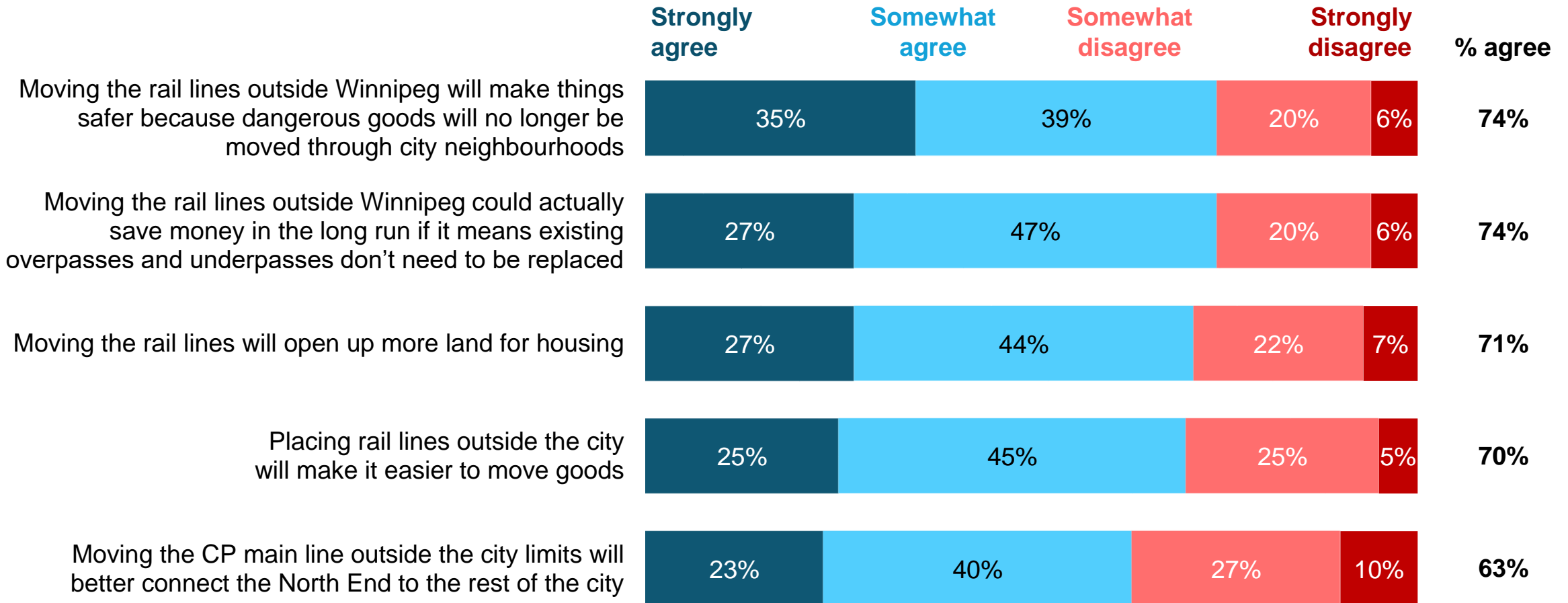
- Those living outside Winnipeg (30% vs. 24% among those in Winnipeg).
- Younger adults (33% among those 18-34 vs. 18% among those aged 35-54).
- Lower-income earners (40% among those earning <\$50K vs. 23% \$100K+).



# Assessment of Arguments in Favour of Moving the Rail Lines

## Manitobans are most likely to agree that relocation could improve safety

3. The following are some arguments people that are in favour of moving rail lines outside Winnipeg. For each one, please indicate if you agree or disagree: (Base: All respondents, N=800)



# Assessment of Arguments Against Moving the Rail Lines

More than eight in ten simply think rail relocation should not be a high public priority

4. These are some arguments against moving rail lines outside Winnipeg. For each one, please indicate if you agree or disagree: (Base: All respondents, N=800)

