

2012 BOULDER COUNTY ISSUES SURVEY

Report

~May, 2012~

Prepared for:



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I. OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY



OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to understand which among several different ballot issues that could be placed on this November's, as well as future, ballots would have a good chance of success. Additionally, the study probes several different issues regarding FasTracks and Boulder County Open Space, and seeks to understand how Boulder County Residents feel about the services they receive from their county government and how they interact with local government.



METHODOLOGY

Talmey-Drake Research & Strategy, Inc. conducted the 2012 Boulder County Issues Survey in May of 2012. A random sample was drawn from a list of Boulder County voters.

- *Interviews were conducted between May 7 & 14, 2012.*
- *Results are based on 605 telephone interviews with voters across the County.*
- *A sample of 605 results in a margin of error of plus or minus 4.0% about any one reported percentage.*



II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY FINDINGS



KEY FINDINGS

I. The Climate Today

#1. *While the economic uncertainty that has existed in Boulder County since 2008 is beginning to ease, voters are still nervous. They do continue to be far more optimistic about how things are going in the County than statewide voters feel about the direction of things across the state: 62% say that things in Boulder County are going in the right direction, compared to just 43% of Coloradans statewide who think things are going in the right direction in our State. This “Right direction” rating is up 8 points from just a year ago, and is at the highest level since 2006.*

(see p20)



KEY FINDINGS

I. The Climate Today (cont.)

#2. *2012 may not be as tough a year to take tax proposals to the ballot as was 2010 or 2011, but it won't be easy.*

First, while the economy in Boulder County is improving, it still has a ways to go. Second, 30% of Boulder County voters are facing serious economic uncertainty, as 18% of them, or others in the household, have either lost their job or have been required take a significant pay cut in the past 6 months, on top of another 12% who fear they will in the next 6 to 12 months. While these numbers continue to improve, 30% is a lot of uncertainty.

Finally, the perception of County taxes being too high has risen 5 points since 2011, with 59% now saying taxes are either "Way too high" or "High but acceptable," compared to 54% a year ago. (see p23)



KEY FINDINGS

II. Ballot Proposals: County Sustainability Tax

#3 *Support for increasing the County sales tax to fund County-wide sustainability programs like EnergySmart faces an uncertain future. Just 57% percent say they would vote in favor of such a proposal that increased the sales tax by .15%, while only 55% say they support it if funded by a 75 mill property tax increase. A rule of thumb is that successful tax proposals should start with a support level above 60%. This proposal, at both different types of tax, falls short of that 60% threshold.*

With both the County and the City sustainability tax measures on the ballot, the likelihood of this proposal passing is problematic with a sales tax increase; unlikely with a property tax increase. (see p31)



KEY FINDINGS

II. Ballot Proposals: City Climate Action Plan Tax

#4 *A proposed City of Boulder ballot initiative to extend the Climate Action Plan tax that expires in 2013 is also included in this study, but was asked only among those likely County voters who reside within the City of Boulder (n=232). Like the County's sustainability proposal, the City's proposal to extend the Climate Action Plan tax also faces an uncertain future. Fifty-seven percent say they would vote in favor of this proposal, while 31% oppose it. As noted above, a proposal to increase taxes should start with a support level above 60%. But while this proposal falls short of the 60% needed for a tax increase measure, it could be argued that it is not a tax increase—but an extension of an existing tax, a distinction anti-taxers find somewhat specious. However, if placed on the ballot this fall, that “grey zone” designation as an “extension” could help it pass. (see p35)*



KEY FINDINGS

II. Ballot Proposals: County & City Sustainability Taxes

- #5** *An analysis of how each one of these two sustainability initiatives does just among City of Boulder voters shows they prefer the County's proposed tax over the City's by a margin of 69% to 57%. (see p37)*
- #6** *Before being asked for their preference on each sustainability tax, it was made clear to survey respondents that both the City and the County sustainability initiatives would be on the ballot. But what if just one proposal were on the ballot, and not both? Would one do better than the other? The answer, while not crystal clear, is nonetheless instructive: As noted below, if the election were held today, voters favor the County tax over the City tax. (see p39)*



KEY FINDINGS

II. Ballot Proposals: County & City Sustainability Taxes

#6 (cont.) Voters who voted “in favor” of both initiatives were asked if they could only vote for one, which would they chose? By a wide margin of 58% to 25%, they picked the County’s tax. But when all the rest of the voters including those who did not support both initiatives were asked how they would vote if there were only one tax on the ballot, the County’s tax again came out on top, but by the much closer margin of 62% to 58%. The hard truth is that if they are both on the ballot, they both may fail, while if just one is on the ballot, it may well pass, particularly the County’s, which starts with a 62% level of support. (see p39)



KEY FINDINGS

II. Ballot Proposals: County Tax for School Children

#7 *A proposal to increase the County sales tax, at some point in the future, to pay for existing programs that address the social and emotional well-being of middle and high school students does quite well, with 66% saying they would support such a measure. But that does not mean they would support that measure this November.* (see p42)

Similarly, a proposal was also tested to increase, at some point in the future, the County sales tax to pay for expanding programs that address the social and emotional well-being of middle and high school students is even more problematic. Support for expanding these programs falls 10 points below it's companion measure, coming in at 56% in favor. (see p44)



KEY FINDINGS

II. Ballot Proposals: Tax for County-Wide Eco-Passes

#8 *Support for increasing the County sales tax to fund a County-wide Eco-Pass program falls far short of what will be need to pass such a tax initiative.*

Just 49% say they would vote in favor of such a proposal, while 43% oppose it. The level of support falls well below the 60% threshold. (see p47)

While support for a sale tax increase to fund a County-wide Eco-Pass is at 49%, there is greater support in the city of Boulder (62%).



KEY FINDINGS

III. FasTracks

#9 *Problems with the NW Commuter Line component of the FasTracks program are well known in Boulder County, with 2/3's of County voters having heard about changes in RTD's plans for serving Boulder County.*

And given these problems, it's quite clear in what direction voters want to go. Given the choice between getting a bus rapid transit system up and running for the short term, with a delay in building out the NW commuter line, or scrapping the bus rapid transit option and building out the commuter line as quickly as financially possible, voters, by a large margin (66% to 26%) opt for concentrating on what they voted for back in 2004—building out the commuter line. (see p55)



KEY FINDINGS

III. Attitudes Toward Open Space

#10 *Given the intensity of debate over the past couple of years about GMO's and Boulder County Open Space, one might be concerned about the level of support for the County's Open Space Program. Those fears are unfounded, as approval of the program is at its highest level since 2002. Today, 80% of voters approve of the County's open space program, compared to 77% back in 1997, with the percent saying they "strongly" approve remaining at about 50%. (see p60)*



KEY FINDINGS

IV. Attitudes Toward Open Space

#11 *Despite strong approval for the Open Space Program, support for preserving additional areas is declining. That said, after having purchased tens of thousands of acres of open space, 58% still believe the County should be purchasing even more -- down from 74% back in 1992, but an impressive figure none the less.*

On the plus side, while 20 years ago 29% of voters agreed that the County had gone so far in protecting the environment and preserving open space that it's hurting the economy, tens of thousands of acres of Open Space purchases later, that figure stands at an even lower 26% today. (see p63)



KEY FINDINGS

IV. Attitudes Toward Open Space (cont.)

- #12** *When given a list of four reasons for having open space lands, as in the past, “preserving wildlife habitat” leads the pack over “providing trails,” “creating buffers between cities,” and “keeping farm and ranch land from being developed.” (see p67)*
- #13** *In terms of the seven open space activities tested, “enjoying nature” and “hiking” receive by far the highest “Very” important rating; horseback riding the lowest. (see p70)*



KEY FINDINGS

V. GMO Issues

#14 *Genetically engineered crops, also known as GMO's, are a growing and controversial force in the food industry in the U.S, and in particular Boulder County. Few in Boulder County (7%) have not heard of them, and 77% claim to be familiar with them (28% "very," and 49% "somewhat" familiar). Awareness of GMO's is highest in the City of Boulder and the unincorporated and small town areas, while lowest in Longmont and the SE cities of the County. (see p74)*

#15 *When given a choice of statements describing GMO's as either harmful to human health and harmful to the environment, or a scientific advance allowing a reduction in pesticides, and helping the environment and better feed a growing world population, County voters are pretty evenly split. But intensity of feeling favors those viewing GMO's as harmful. (see p77)*



III. THE CLIMATE TODAY

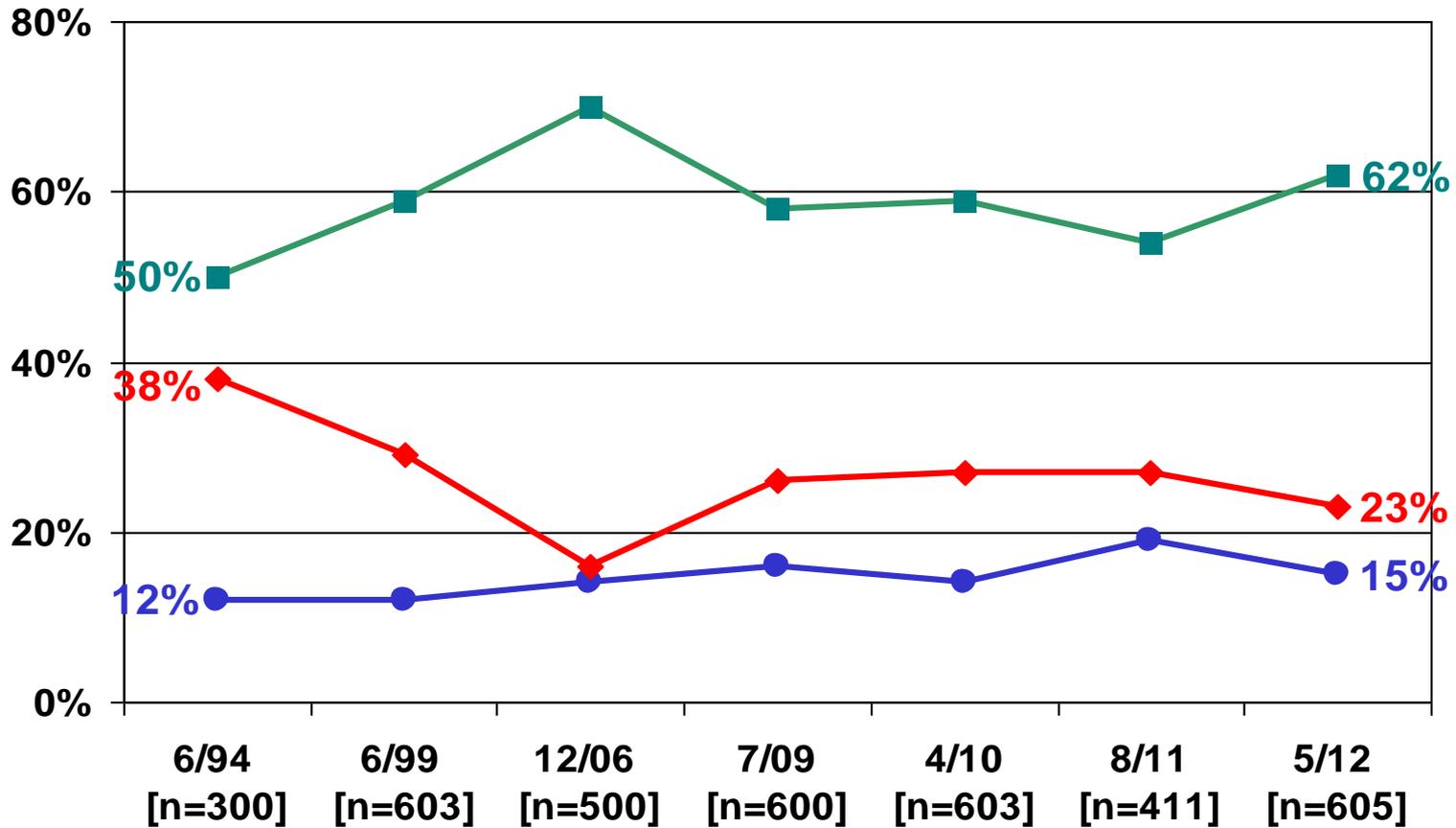


Climate and Overview

While there is still a great deal of economic uncertainty in Boulder County, considering other areas of the State, Boulder County is faring pretty well. Voters here continue to be far more optimistic about how things are going in Boulder County than statewide voters feel about the direction of things across the state: 62% say that things in Boulder County are going in the right direction, up from 54% a year ago. And voters in Boulder and the S.E. Cities feel particularly strongly that things are going in the right direction. This 62% “right direction” total compares favorably to a Statewide survey conducted by Talmey-Drake three months ago, showing just 43% of Coloradans statewide think things are going in the right direction in our State.



How are Things Going in Boulder County Today?



● No Opinion

■ Right Direction

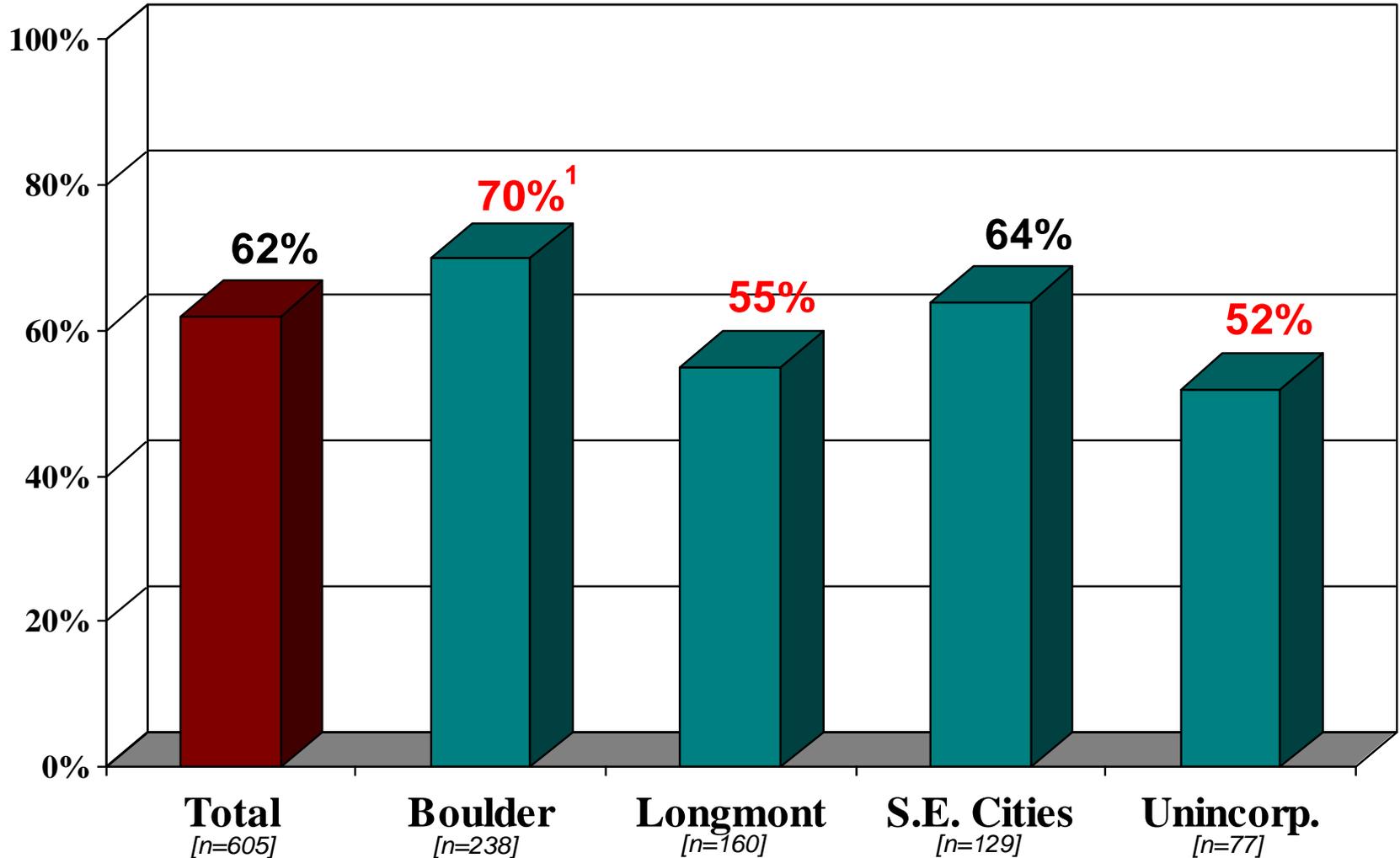
◆ Wrong track



Direction of Things in Boulder County

- Shows percent saying "Right Track" by geographic area -

[n=605]



¹ Numbers in red indicate a statistically significant difference



Climate and Overview

2012 may not be as tough a year to take tax proposals to the ballot as was 2010 or 2011, but it won't be easy.

First, while the economy in Boulder County is improving, it still has a ways to go. Second, 30% (down from 32% in 2012 and from 43% in 2010) of Boulder County voters are still facing serious economic uncertainty, as 18% of them, or others in the household, have either lost their job or have been required take a significant pay cut in the past 6 months, on top of another 12% who fear they will in the next 6 to 12 months. While these numbers continue to improve, 30% is a lot of uncertainty.

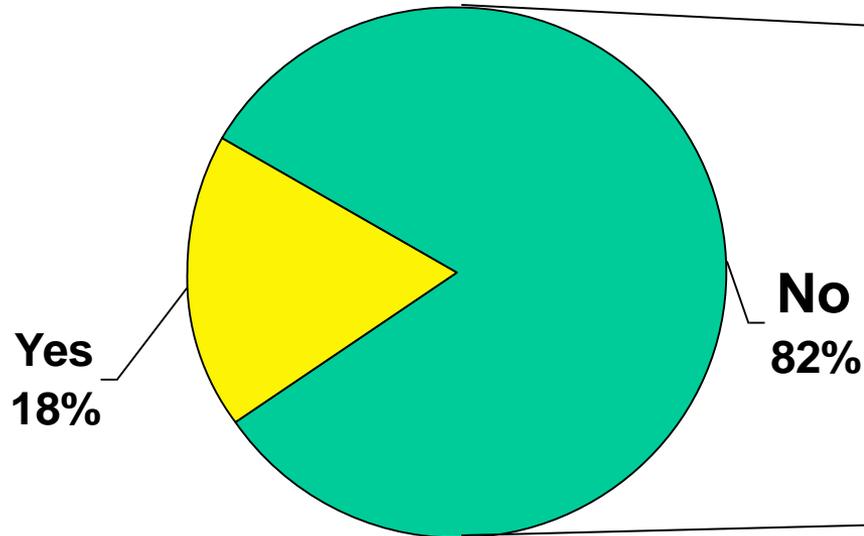
Finally, the perception of County taxes being too high has risen 5 points since 2011, with 59% now saying taxes are either "Way too high" or "High but acceptable," compared to just 54% a year ago.



Percent of Voters In A State of Economic Uncertainty

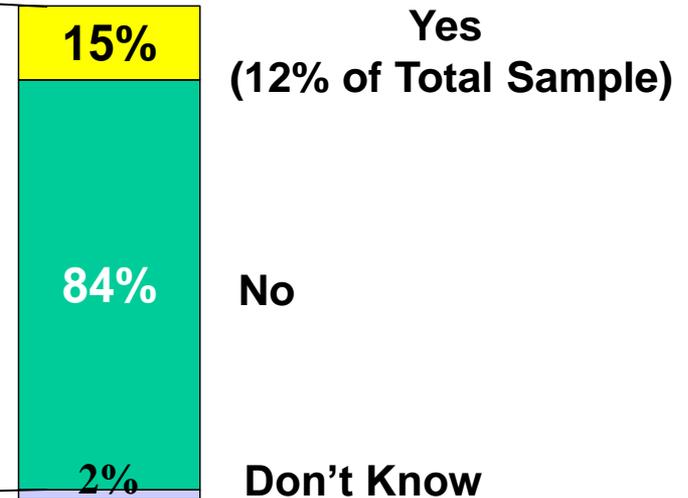
Have You Lost Your Job or Taken Significant Pay Cut?

[n=605]

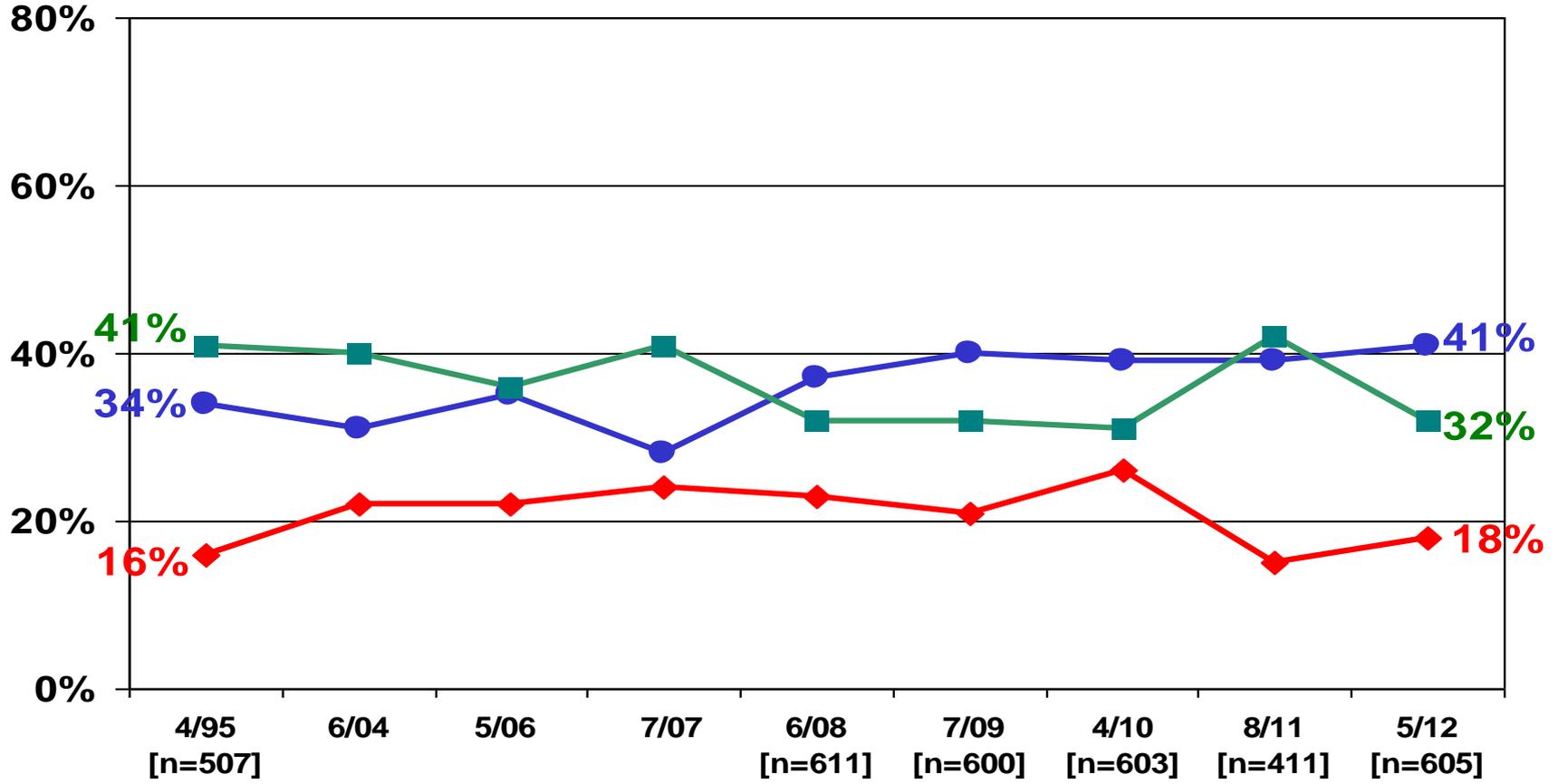


In Next 6 Months, Will You Lose Job/Take Pay Cut?

[n=497]



Perception of Boulder County Taxes

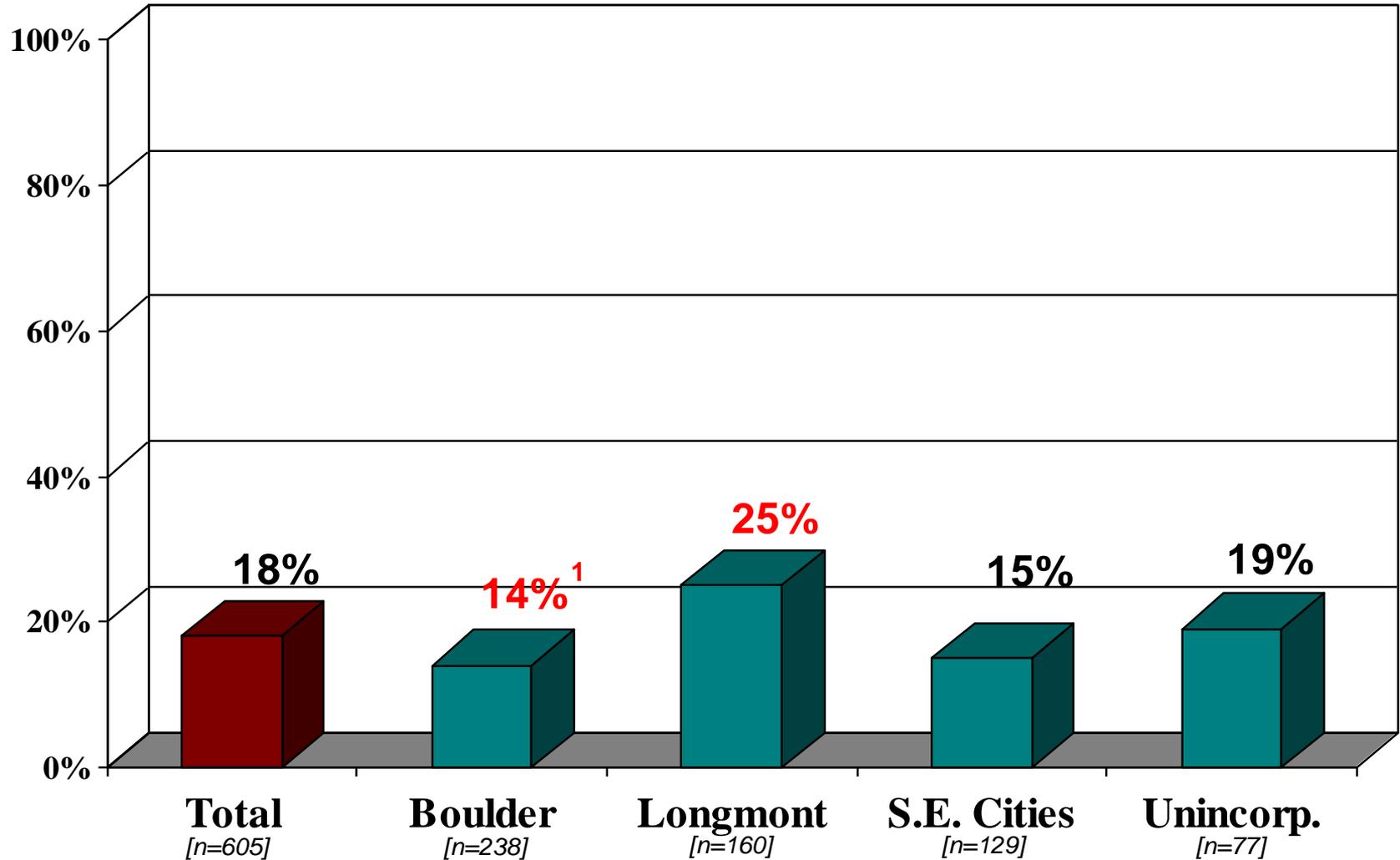


● High but Acceptable ■ About Right ◆ Way Too High



Perception of Boulder County Taxes

- Shows percent saying "Way too High" by geographic area -



¹ Numbers in red indicate a statistically significant difference



IV. BALLOT PROPOSALS TESTED



Ballot Proposals Tested

Voters were read five different tax initiatives that could be on the ballot, two of them this fall, and three of them in some future year, and asked how they would vote on each one. The initiatives tested were:

- A new .15% sales tax /75 mill property tax increase in the County sales/property tax tax to fund sustainability programs in Boulder County;
- An extension of the City of Boulder's Climate Action Plan tax (asked just of City of Boulder voters);
- A new .1%/.15% increase in the County sales tax to fund programs to increase the likelihood children will succeed in school;
- A .15%/.2% increase in the County sales tax to expand programs designed to increase the likelihood children will succeed in school;
- A future proposal for a .2% increase in the County sales tax to provide funding for a County-wide Eco-Pass Program.



Ballot Proposals Tested

When testing tax increase proposals, it is important to keep in mind a common rule of thumb in political circles, that for a tax measure to have a good probability of passing, the vote “In Favor” in pre-election polls should start, at a minimum, above the 60% level. And the higher the better. As will be seen in the following pages, just one of the five proposed tax increase initiatives tested exceed that threshold—and that one is not scheduled to be on this fall’s election ballot. Which might be why it exceeds that 60% threshold.

A final point to keep in mind is the extremely low number of voters who say they are undecided on the issues tested: in all but one (the City’s initiative), the undecided’s are 10% or below.



A. DUELING SUSTAINABILITY TAX INCREASES



Ballot Proposals Tested: A New County Sustainability Tax

The first of the five potential tax increase ballot proposals tested is a proposal to raise either the County sales tax by 15%, or the County property tax by 75 mills, to fund programs like EnergySmart. This would raise the sales tax by 1 ½ cents on each \$10 purchase, or the County property tax by 75 mills which would raise the property tax by seven dollars for every \$100,000 of assessed value on a home.

With the City of Boulder's Climate Action Plan tax on the ballot, the likelihood of this proposal passing is problematic with a sales tax increase; highly unlikely with a property tax increase.

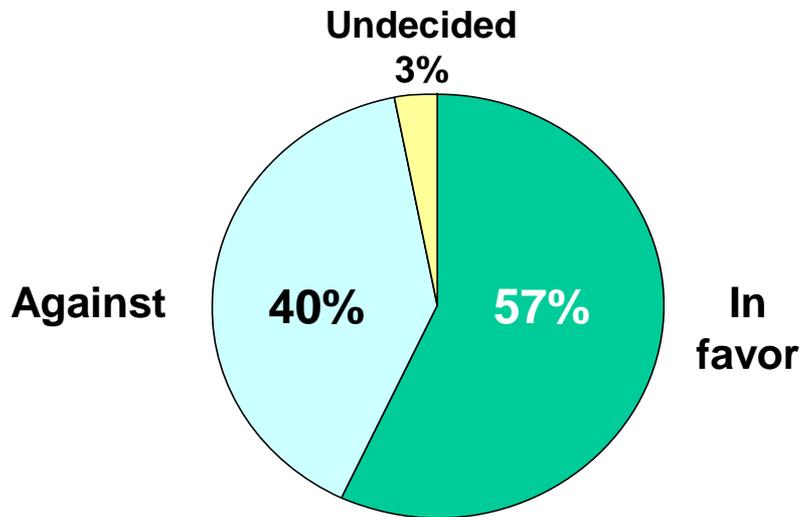


Vote on the County Sustainability Tax

-- .15% Sales tax increase vs. 75 Mill Property Tax Increase --

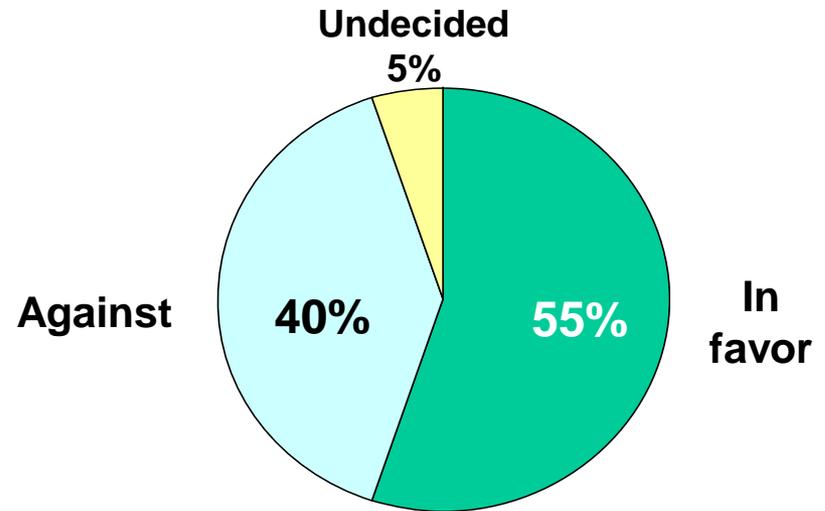
Increase Sales Tax By .15%

[n=300]



Increase Property Tax by 75 Mills

[n=305]



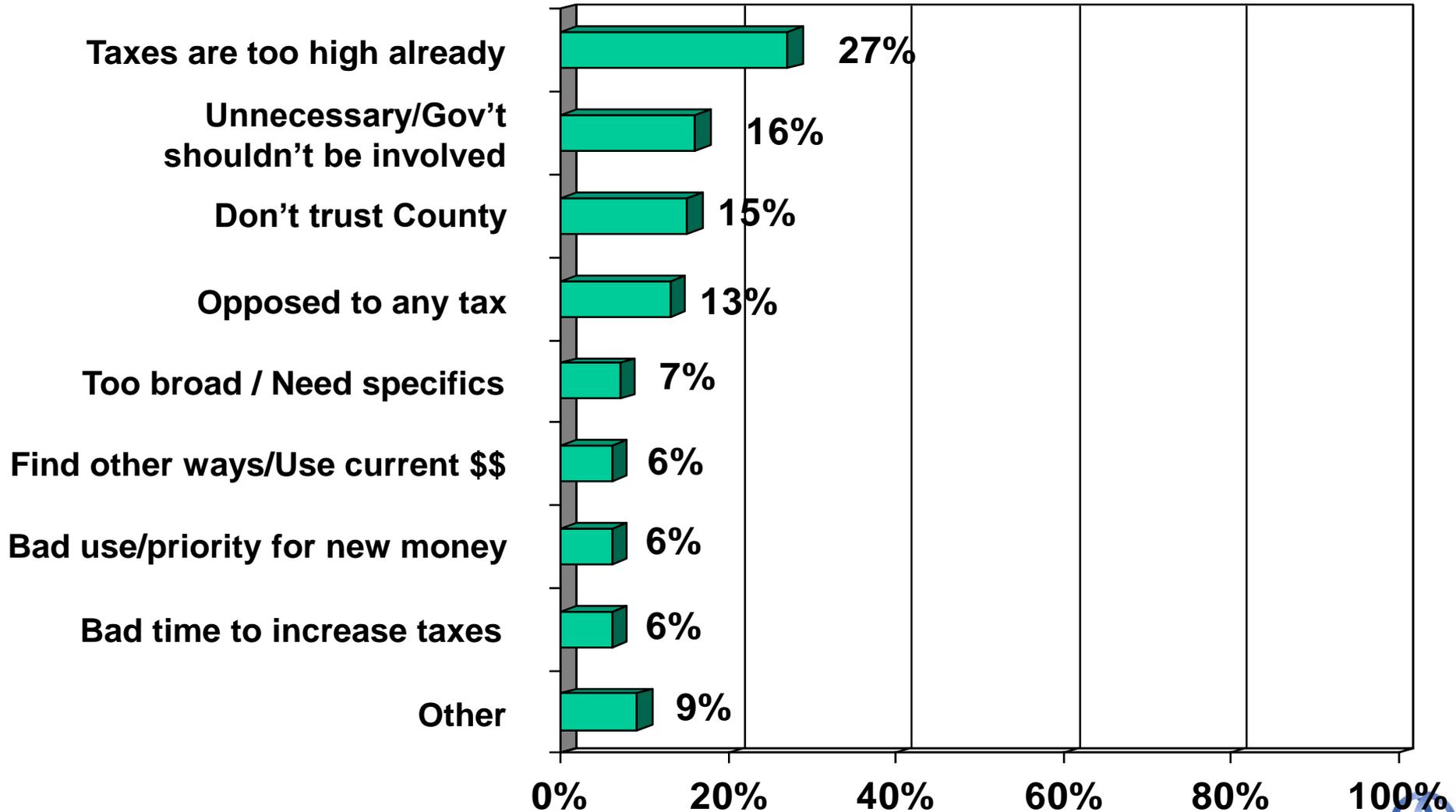
Ballot Proposals Tested: Number One Reason For Opposing the County Sustainability Tax

Voters who say they are against the County's proposed Sustainability Tax proposal were asked why they are not supporting it. Forty-six percent of those opposed cite specific problems with raising taxes, ranging from taxes being too high, to opposed to any tax increase, to the bad timing for new taxes given the economy.



34 What's the #1 Reason You Oppose the Tax to Fund the County's Sustainability Programs?

[n=242]



Ballot Proposals Tested: An Extension of the City of Boulder Climate Action Plan Tax

The second of the five potential tax increase ballot proposals tested was asked of just County voters living in the City of Boulder, and would extend for another 10 years the City's Climate Action Plan tax, now due to expire in 2013.

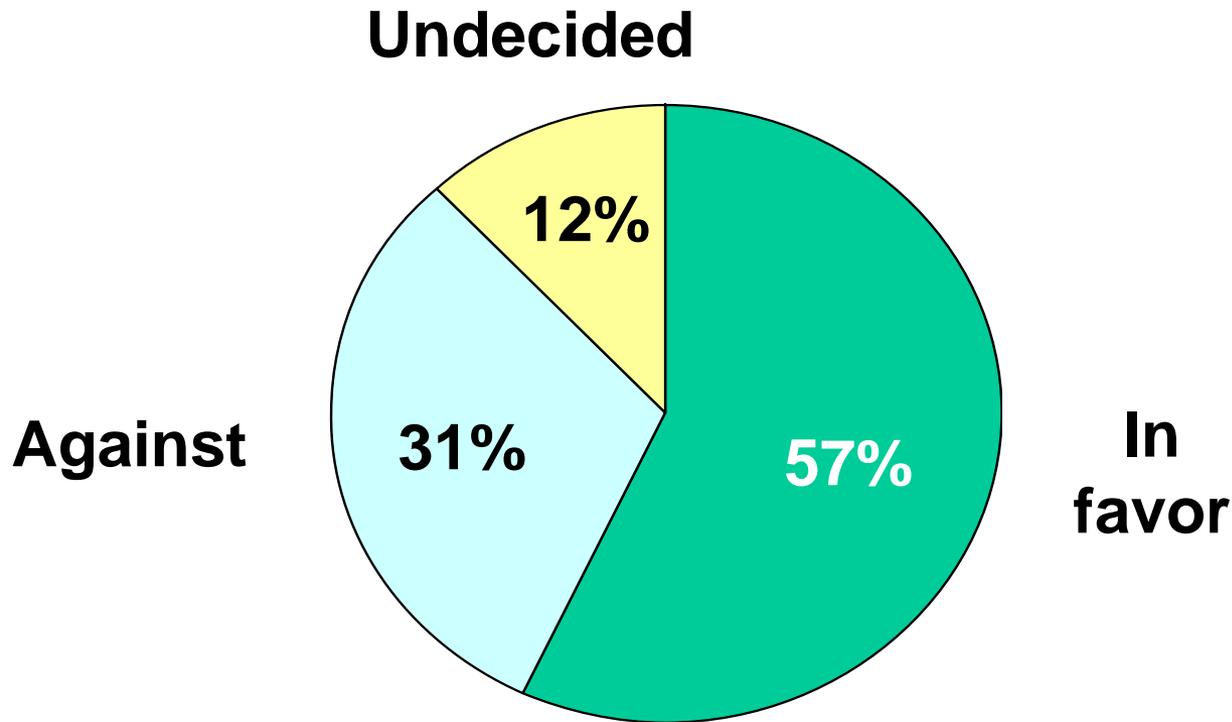
With the County's Sustainability Tax also on the ballot, the likelihood of this proposal passing is problematic, as it garners just 57% of the vote in this pre-election day poll. But while this proposal falls short of 60% needed for a tax increase measure, it could be argued that it is not a tax increase—but an extension of an existing tax, a distinction anti-taxers find somewhat specious. However, if placed on the ballot this fall, that “grey zone” designation as an “extension” could help it pass.



Vote on Extending the City of Boulder's Climate Action Plan Tax

-Asked Just of Voters Living in the City of Boulder-

[n=232]



Dueling Sustainability Initiatives: Which One Do the City of Boulder Voters Prefer?

Another way of examining the data would be to look how just voters living in the City of Boulder voted on the two initiatives when they were told both would be on the ballot. This would give a pretty clear indication of how those living in the City of Boulder rate the two proposals.

Using this analysis, it turns out the County proposal is clearly the preferred initiative of City of Boulder voters—at least if they are both on the ballot.

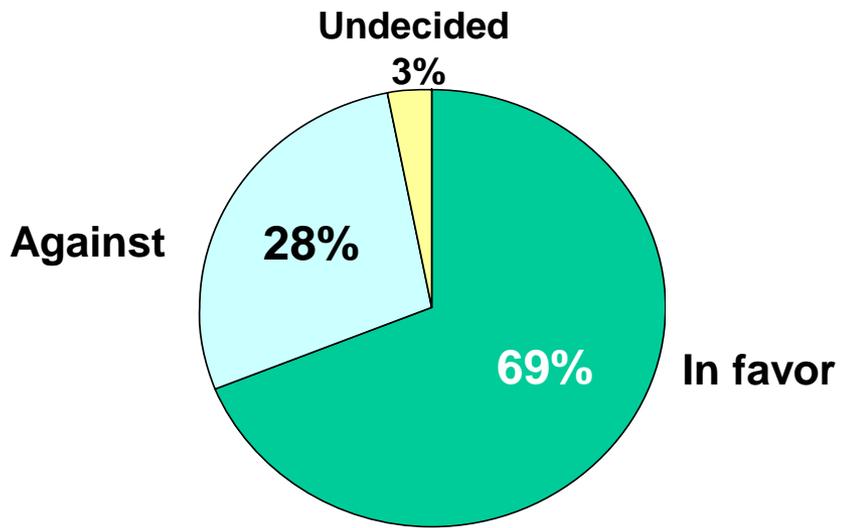


How Do City of Boulder Voters Feel About Each Proposal If Both Are On The Ballot?

-Asked Just of Voters Living in the City of Boulder-

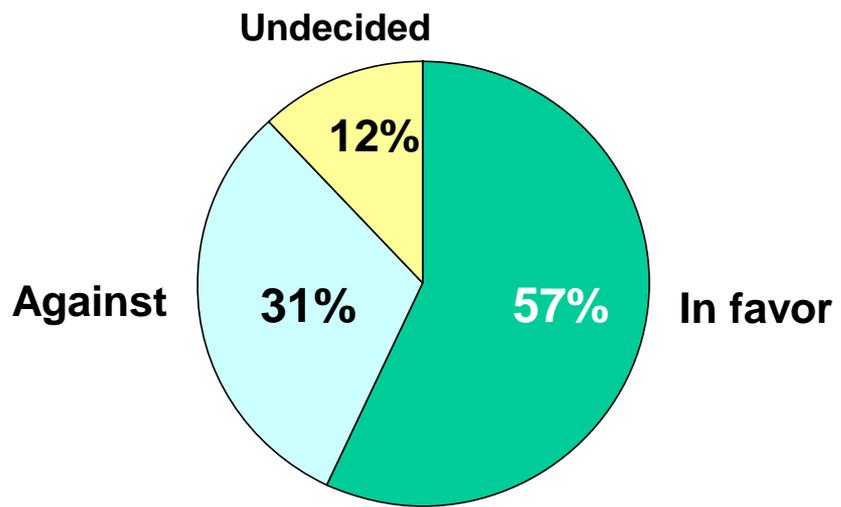
The County Sustainability Tax

[n=232]



The City Sustainability Tax

[n=232]



Dueling Sustainability Initiatives: What if Only One Were On the Ballot

Given that there may be two unrelated but similar sounding sustainability ballot measures on this fall's election ballot, it is important to understand not only how they might do if both are on the ballot, but also if only one were to appear on the ballot. The answer, while not crystal clear, is instructive.

When the 20% of voters who voted in favor of both initiatives were asked if they could only vote for one, which would they chose, by the wide margin of 58% to 25%, they picked the County's tax.

But when the remaining 80% of the voters—those who did not support both of the initiatives--were asked how they would vote if there were only one tax on the ballot, the County's tax again came out on top, but by a margin of just 62% to 58%.

The hard truth is that if both sustainability measures are on the ballot this November, they both may fail. However, if just one is placed on the ballot, it may well pass, particularly if it's the County's, which starts with a 62% level of support.

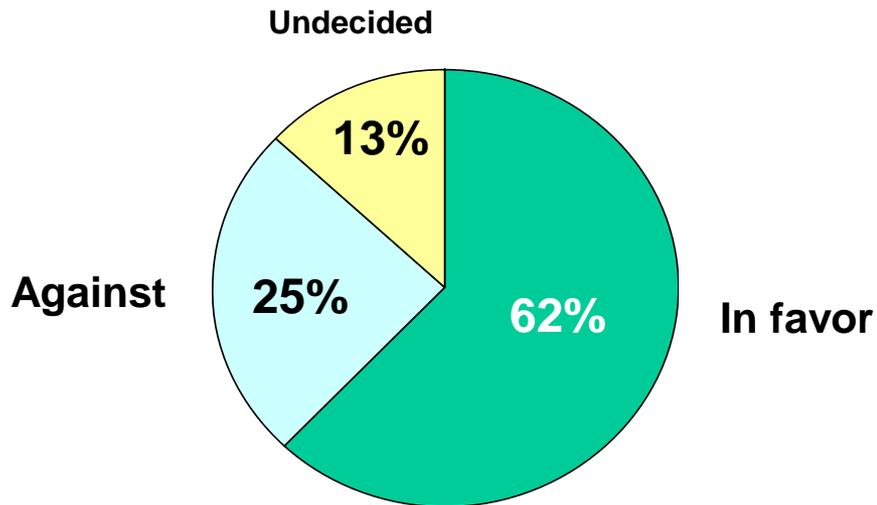


What If Just One Sustainability Tax Were on the Ballot?

-Asked Just of Voters Living in the City of Boulder-

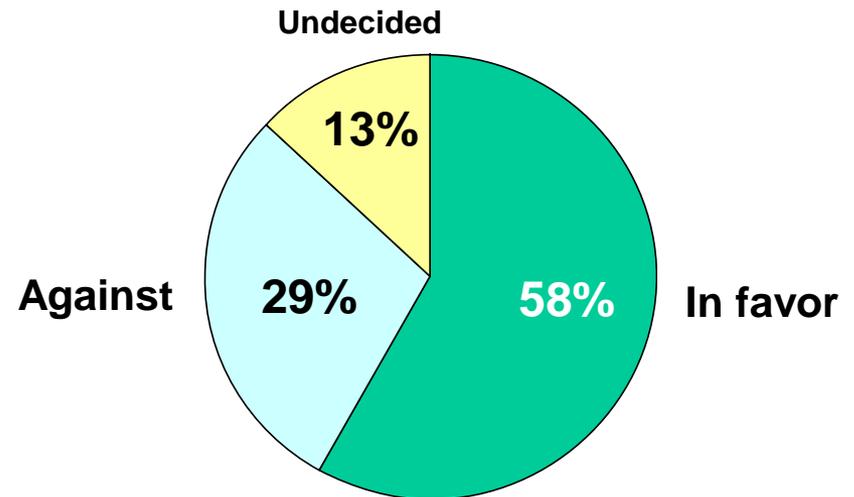
Just the County Sustainability Tax

[n=232]



Just the City Sustainability Tax

[n=232]



**B. NEW TAX TO IMPROVE THE
CHANCE THAT BOULDER
COUNTY CHILDREN WILL
SUCCEED IN SCHOOL**



Ballot Proposals Tested: Tax to Help School Children

Another of the five potential tax increase ballot proposals tested is an initiative likely to appear on a future ballot, but not this November's ballot. This proposal would increase the County sales tax by either .1% or .15%, to fund help EXISTING County programs that aim to increase the likelihood that children will succeed in school.

The likelihood of this proposal passing looks to be very favorable at either the .1% or .15% level of increase. And just because support is greater at the higher level of tax increase does not mean higher is better; it just means that voters don't differentiate between those two levels of tax increase. It must also be kept in mind that voters were told this proposal might be on a future ballot, so professing support for it at this stage has no fiscal downside to survey respondents, which no doubt inflates the "In Favor" percentage.

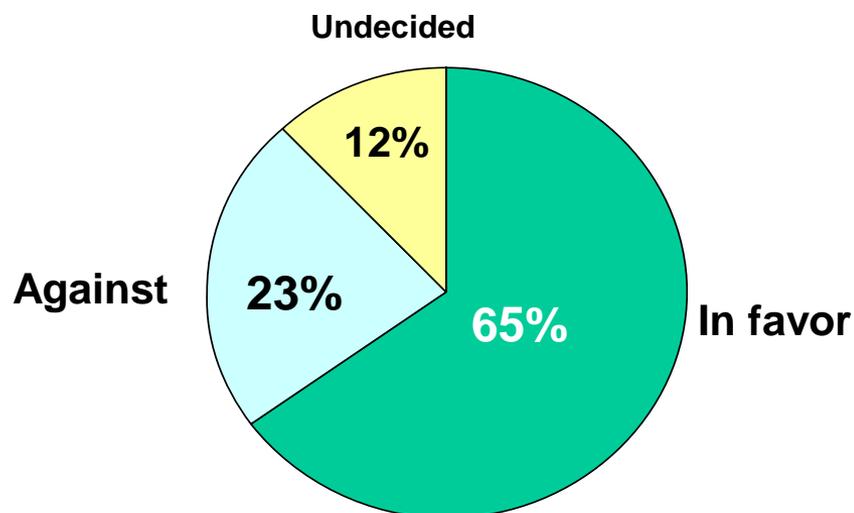


New County Tax to Fund EXISTING Programs to Help School Children Succeed

-- .1% Increase in Sales Tax vs .15% increase in the Sales Tax --

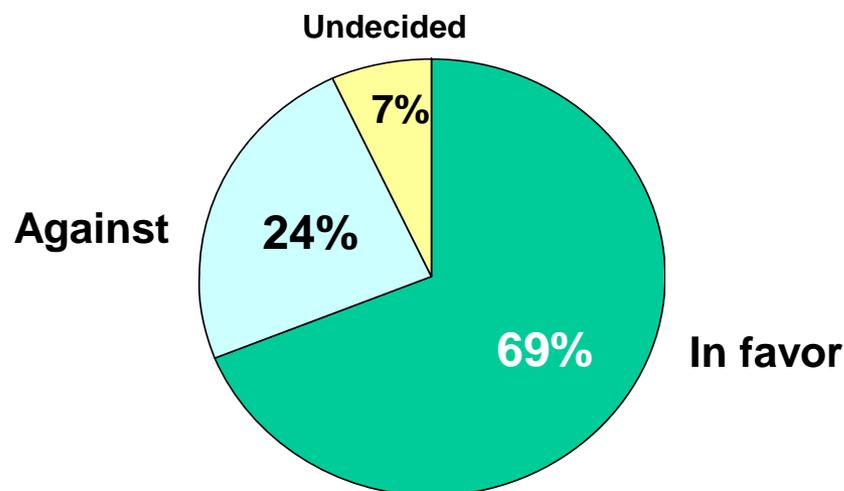
If Sales Tax were to Increase .1%

[n=193]



If Sales Tax were to Increase .15%

[n=111]



Ballot Proposals Tested: Tax to Help School Children

A second potential tax increase ballot proposal likely to appear not this November, but on a future ballot, would increase the County sales tax by either .15% or .2%, to fund EXPANDING programs to increase the likelihood children will succeed in school.

The likelihood of this proposal passing is problematic at either the .15% or the .2% level of increase. It's the opinion of this researcher that the ballot wording "to provide funding to expand programs in Boulder County" is what deflates support for this initiative. It is likely that voters are in no mood to "expand" any programs at this stage of a somewhat fragile economic recovery.

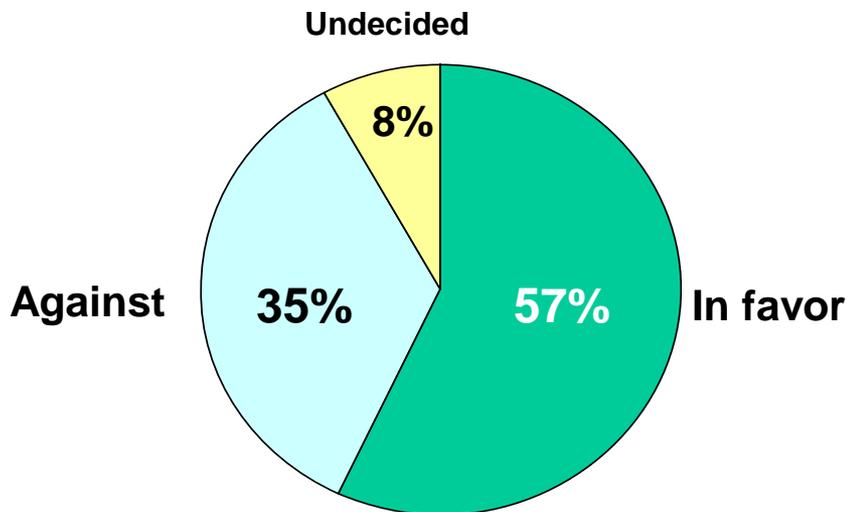


New County Tax to Fund EXPANDED Programs to Help School Children Succeed

-- .15% Increase in Sales Tax vs .20% increase in the Sales Tax --

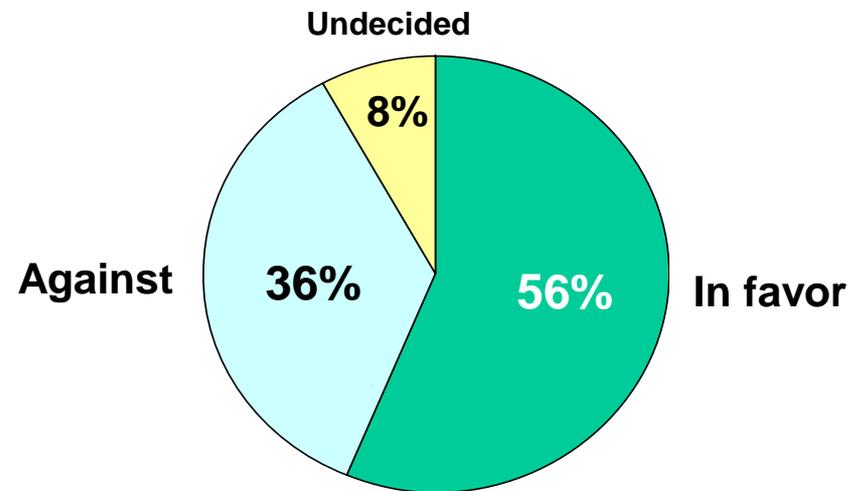
If Sales Tax were to Increase .15%

[n=113]



If Sales Tax were to Increase .20%

[n=189]



C. PROPOSAL FOR A COUNTY- WIDE ECO-PASS PROGRAM



Ballot Proposals Tested: A New Tax for a County Eco-Pass Program

A final tax increase ballot proposal tested is also likely to appear not this November, but on a future year ballot: a .2% increase in the sales tax to provide funding for a County-wide Eco-Pass Program.

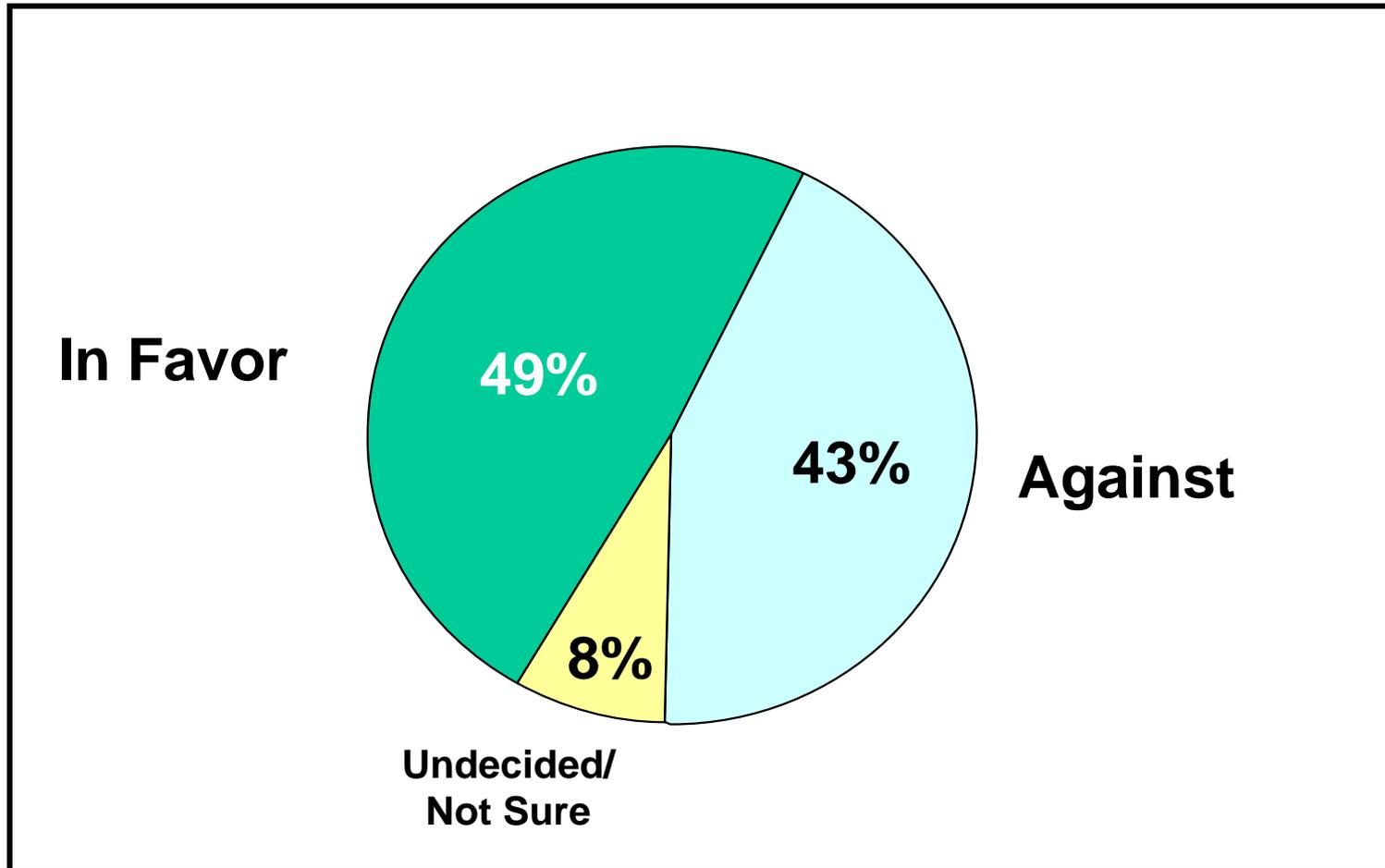
This proposal faces a highly uncertain future, and would not likely pass in November, or in any election in the next year or so—it simply fails to generate sufficient support.



Support for a County-Wide Eco-Pass Program

- A .2% increase in the Boulder County Sales Tax -

[n=605]



V. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKOUTS ON BALLOT PROPOSAL VOTES



Ballot Proposals Tested *(cont.)*

The three charts that follow show how the support for the five ballot initiatives differs by where people live and by some other key demographics, such as:

- Most Likely Voters¹
- Gender
- Age
- Party Affiliation
- Those most affected by the economy²

¹ Most Likely voters, who make-up 64% of the survey respondents, are defined using a combination of age, how much voters follow and participate in politics, as well as their past self-identified voting behavior in previous elections.

²Those most affected by the economy represent 30% of survey respondents, and are made up of those who have either taken a serious pay cut or lost their job (18%), or fear they will in the next 6 to 12 months (12%).



Demographic Breakouts of Ballot Proposal Votes

- Shows percent saying “In Favor” -

Ballot Proposal	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities ¹	Uninc.
County Sustainability Tax	56%	69%	43%	53%	49%
City Sustainability Tax	57%	57%	na	na	na
Tax for Current Programs for Kids	66%	74%	57%	62%	67%
Tax for Expanded Programs For Kids	56%	69%	45%	63%	25%
County-wide Eco-Pass Tax	49%	62%	34%	52%	35%

 Shading indicates there is a statistical difference

¹ As in the past, the “S.E. Cities” category is comprised of Louisville, Lafayette, Superior and Erie, while “Uninc” includes unincorporated areas as well as other small towns. Gunbarrel is included with Boulder.



Demographic Breakouts of Ballot Proposal Votes

- Shows percent saying "In Favor" -

Ballot Proposal	Total	18-34	35-54	55+	Dem	Rep	Unaff
County Sustainability Tax	56%	75%	53%	44%	72%	21%	54%
City Sustainability Tax	57%	70%	44%	51%	67%	23%	47%
Tax for Current Programs for Kids	66%	79%	71%	55%	76%	41%	66%
Tax for Expanded Programs For Kids	56%	72%	47%	56%	76%	27%	51%
County-wide Eco-Pass Tax	49%	60%	44%	46%	62%	22%	48%

 Shading indicates there is a statistical difference



Demographic Breakouts of Ballot Proposal Votes

- Shows percent saying "In Favor" -

Ballot Proposal	Total	Most Likely Voters	Males	Females	Affected by Economy
County Sustainability Tax	56%	51%	50%	62%	49%
City Sustainability Tax	57%	58%	54%	59%	54%
Tax for Current Programs for Kids	66%	62%	61%	71%	68%
Tax for Expanded Programs For Kids	56%	51%	52%	61%	57%
County-wide Eco-Pass Tax	49%	45%	50%	48%	51%

 Shading indicates there is a statistical difference



**VI. VOTER REACTION TO
CHANGES IN THE
FASTRACK'S COMMUTER
LINE**



RTD FASTRACKS ISSUES

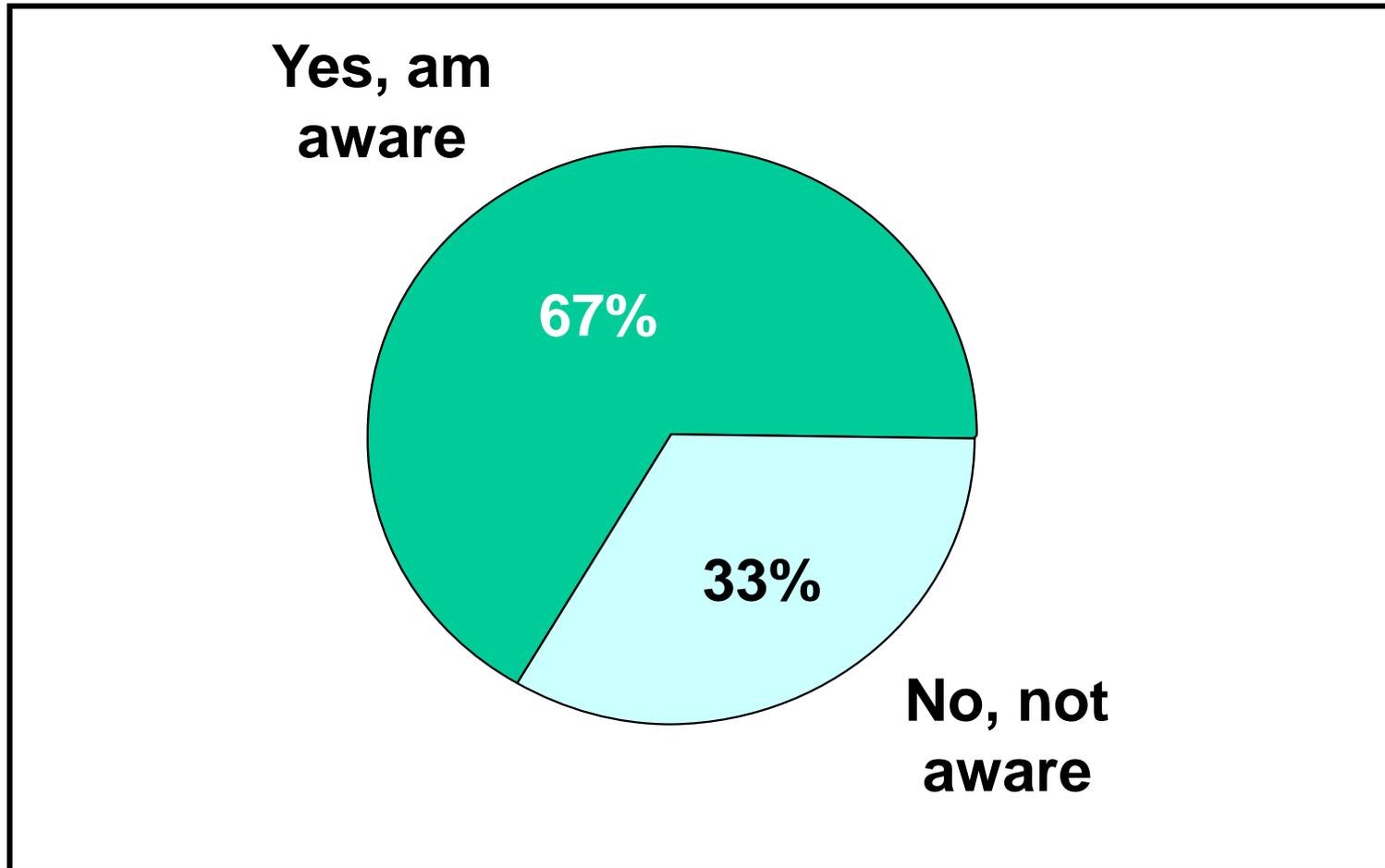
In recent months it has become increasingly apparent that building out RTD's FasTrack plan for commuter rail service connecting Denver to Louisville, Boulder and Longmont is not financially viable, even if a .4% increase in the sales tax were to pass. Instead, RTD has begun talking about a rail/rapid bus hybrid project. But the RTD Board decided even that plan was currently too undeveloped to take to the voters in 2012.

This study sought to uncover just how many voters are actually aware of the unraveling of this component of the RTD FasTracks project, and where they stand on getting at least the hybrid bus-rail concept up and running sooner rather than later, versus keeping to the original plan for a commuter rail line, even if that option were not feasible in the foreseeable future. Turns out two-thirds of County voters are aware of RTD's struggles with the NW commuter line, and most (66%) opt for the original commuter rail, in spite of the financial difficulty of this option.



Awareness of Problems with FasTrack's NW Commuter Line

[n=605]



RTD FASTRACKS ISSUES

And to help understand where County voters stand on the tradeoffs between a shorter-term rail/rapid bus hybrid project and the longer term commuter rail alternative, voters were read two statements, and asked which comes closer to how they feel:

Statement A: *“[Some/Other] people say that bus rapid transit can be built much sooner, will be more convenient, more frequent and faster than commuter rail, and will carry more riders at lower cost than commuter rail. So we should invest more money now in bus rapid transit, even if means that the extension of commuter rail service between Westminster and Louisville, Boulder and Longmont will be delayed even further beyond the projected year 2032 completion date..”*

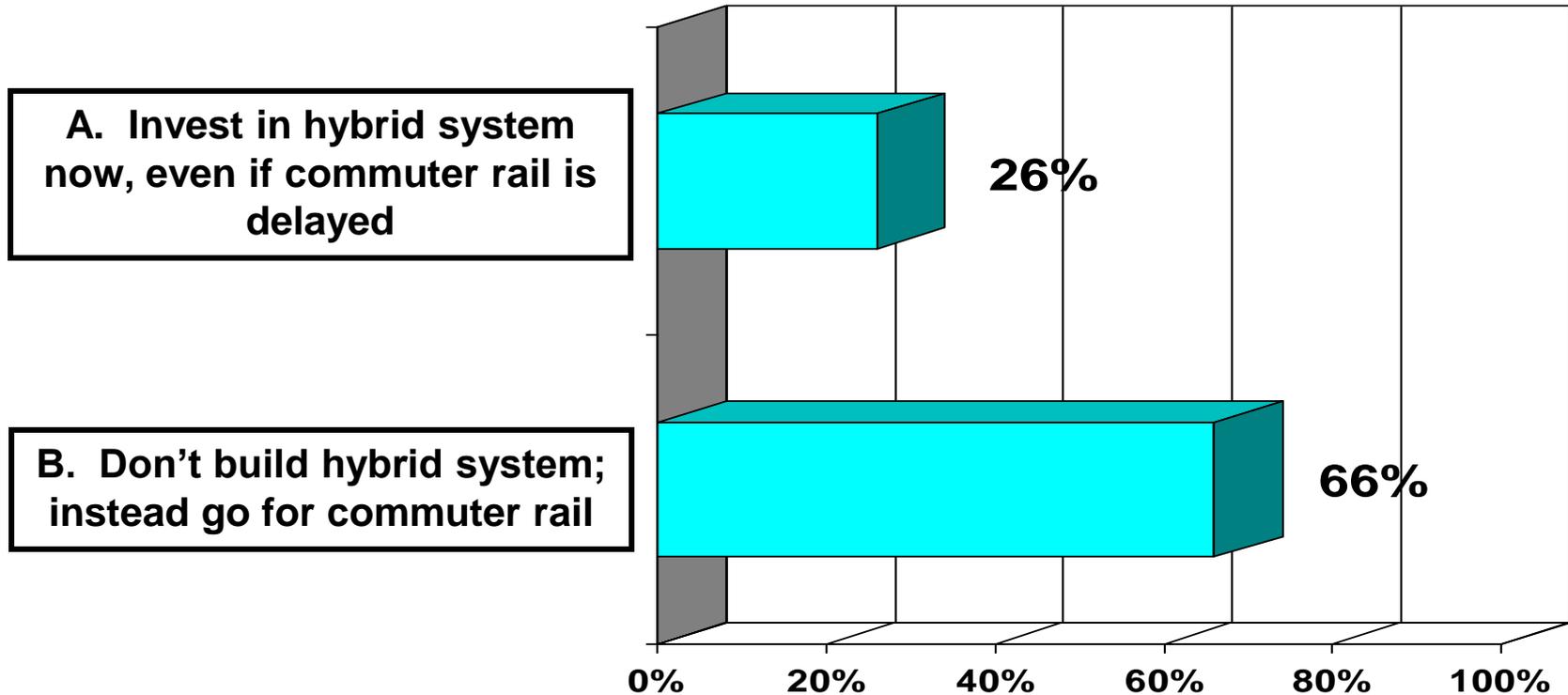
Statement B: *“[Others/Some] say that we should not be building more bus rapid transit lanes if it means delaying the time commuter rail service will be completed. After all, commuter rail service is what we originally voted for back in 2004, it will attract riders who will not ride a bus, it will be more comfortable, and is necessary for a world class region. So the sooner we can complete the commuter rail service between Westminster and Louisville, Boulder and Longmont, the better .”*

It turns out that Statement B is the clear preference.



Attitudes Toward a Rail/Bus Hybrid v. Commuter Rail Service

[n=605]



Which comes closest to how you feel?	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
Statement A	26%	33%	20%	23%	22%
Statement B	66%	61%	74%	66%	62%



VII. ATTITUDES TOWARD COUNTY OPEN SPACE ISSUES



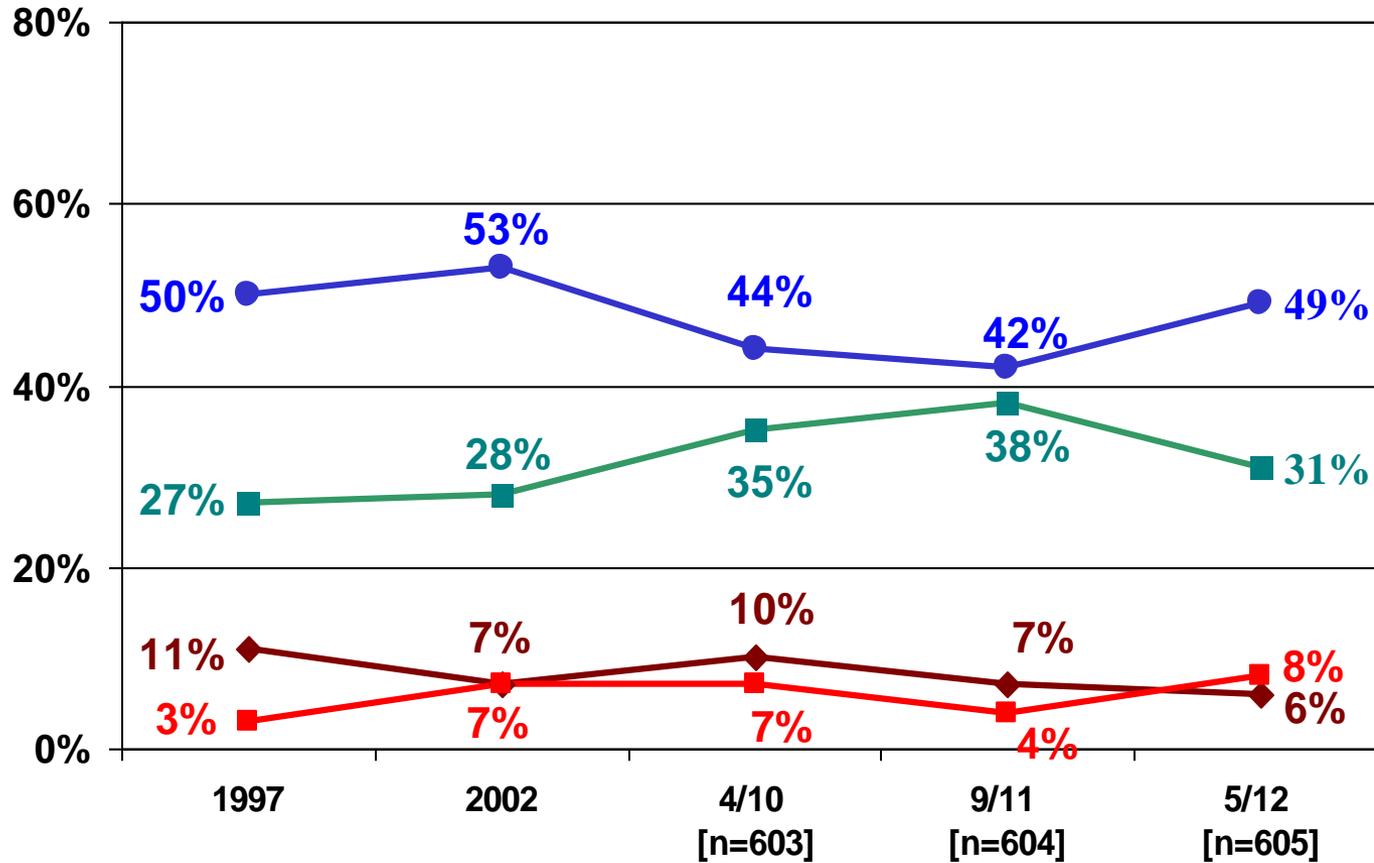
Open Space Attitudes

Given the intensity of debate over the past couple of years about GMO's and Boulder County Open Space, one might be concerned about the level of support for the County's Open Space Program. Those fears are unfounded. While over the past 19 years there had been some slippage when it comes to those who say they "Strongly" approve of the program, that slippage has been pretty much erased over the past year. And the total approval rating ("strongly" and "mildly") is statistically the same today as it was back in 1997, with 80% of voters approving of the program.

And today, the highest "Strongly approve" rating comes from Boulder, followed by the Unincorporated areas of the County. The lowest approval rating comes from Longmont.

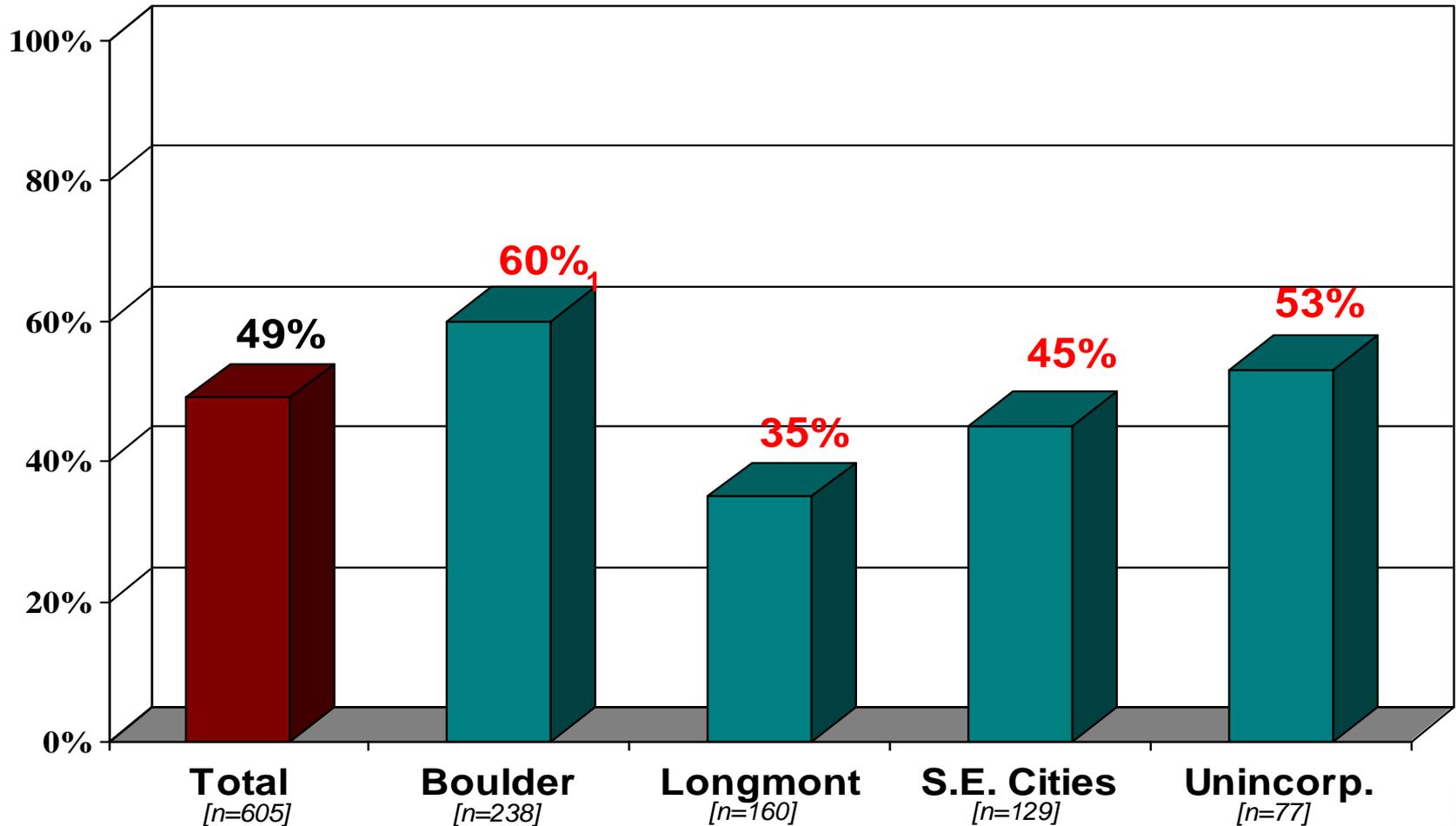


Do You Approve/Disapprove of County Open Space Program?



Do You Approve/Disapprove of County Open Space Program?

- Shows percent saying "Strongly" approve by geographic area -



¹ Numbers in red indicate a statistically significant difference



Open Space Attitudes

Back in 1992, Talmey-Drake asked voters in Boulder County two value statements about open space, to see if they agreed or disagreed with each one. They are repeated in the 2011 and 2012 surveys to see if feelings had changed. Those statements are:

- *Boulder County has gone so far in terms of preserving open space, that it is hurting the local economy*
- *Boulder County should be preserving additional open space areas.*

In 2010 a third statement was added, and repeated again in 2012:

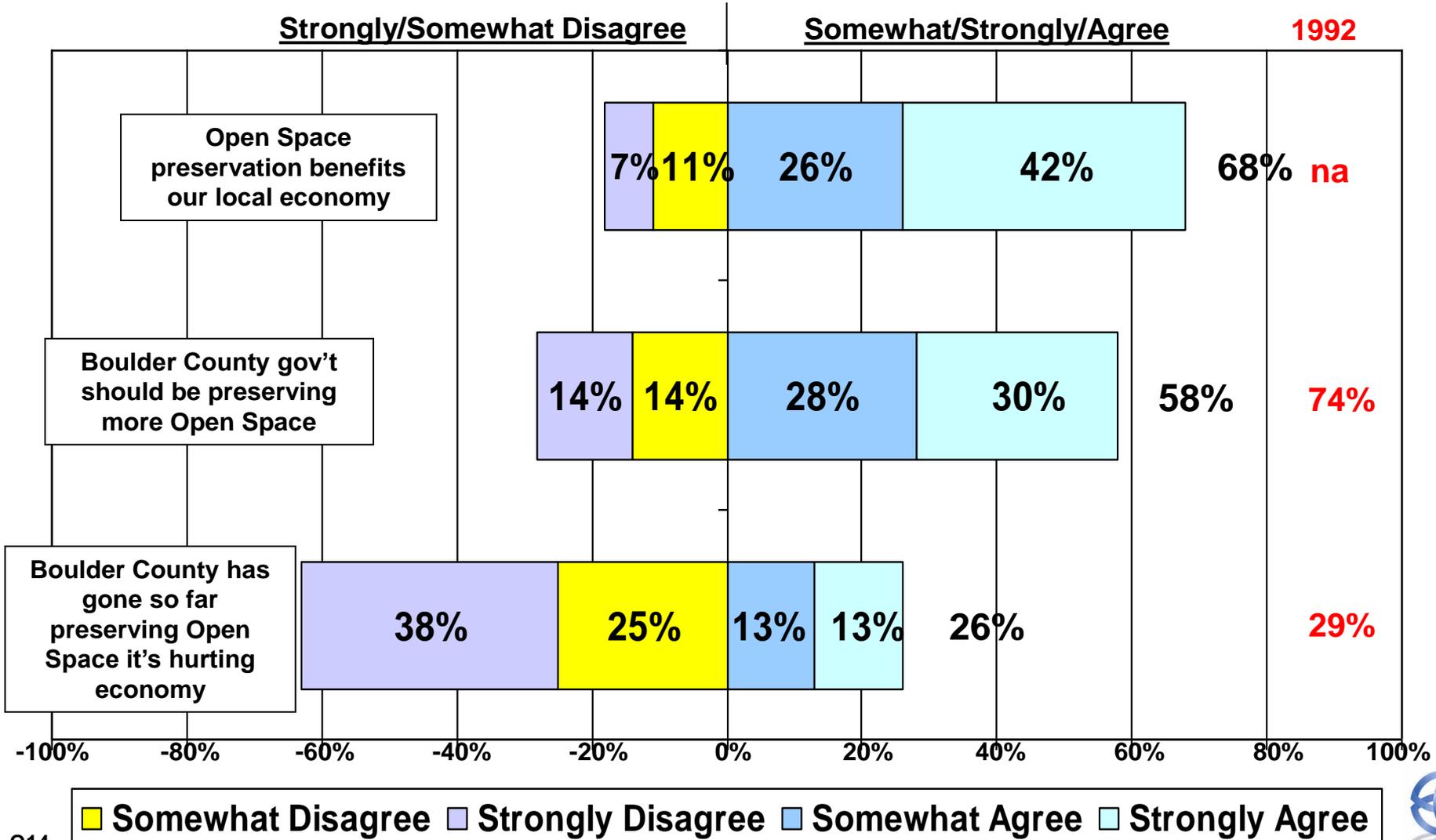
- *Open space preservation benefits our local economy.*

It is clear that there is declining support for purchasing more open space land, that unless reversed, will greatly affect the likely success of future tax initiatives for County Open Space purchases. And geographically, the most challenging area in terms of support of open space comes from the City of Longmont.



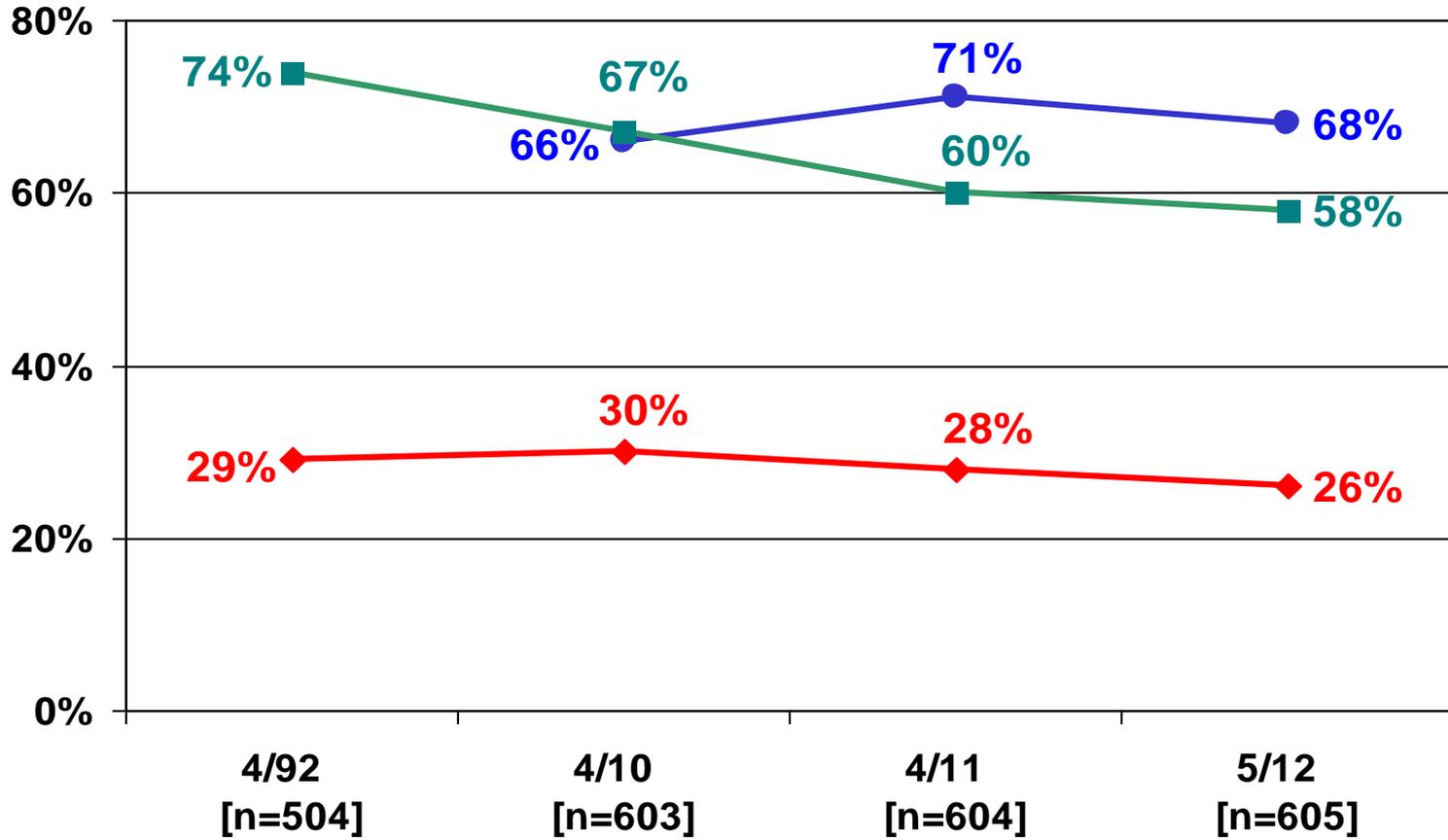
64 Agree/Disagree on County Open Space Issues

[n=605]



65 Agree/Disagree on County Open Space Issues

-Results show the percent agreeing with each statement-



● OS helps economy ■ Preserve more OS ◆ OS Hurting economy



⁶⁶ Agree/Disagree on County Open Space Issues

- Shows percent saying they “Strongly Agree” -

[n=605]

Open Space Issue	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
County should preserve more open space	30%	39%	20%	27%	30%
Open space benefits the local economy	42%	52%	27%	44%	41%
County has gone too far protecting open space—it’s hurting our economy	13%	6%	22%	14%	16%

 Shading indicates there is a statistical difference



Open Space Attitudes

Boulder County voters were asked to rate the importance of four overarching reasons to have open space:

- *To create buffers between communities*
- *To preserve wildlife habitat*
- *To provide trails*
- *To keep farm and ranch land from being developed*

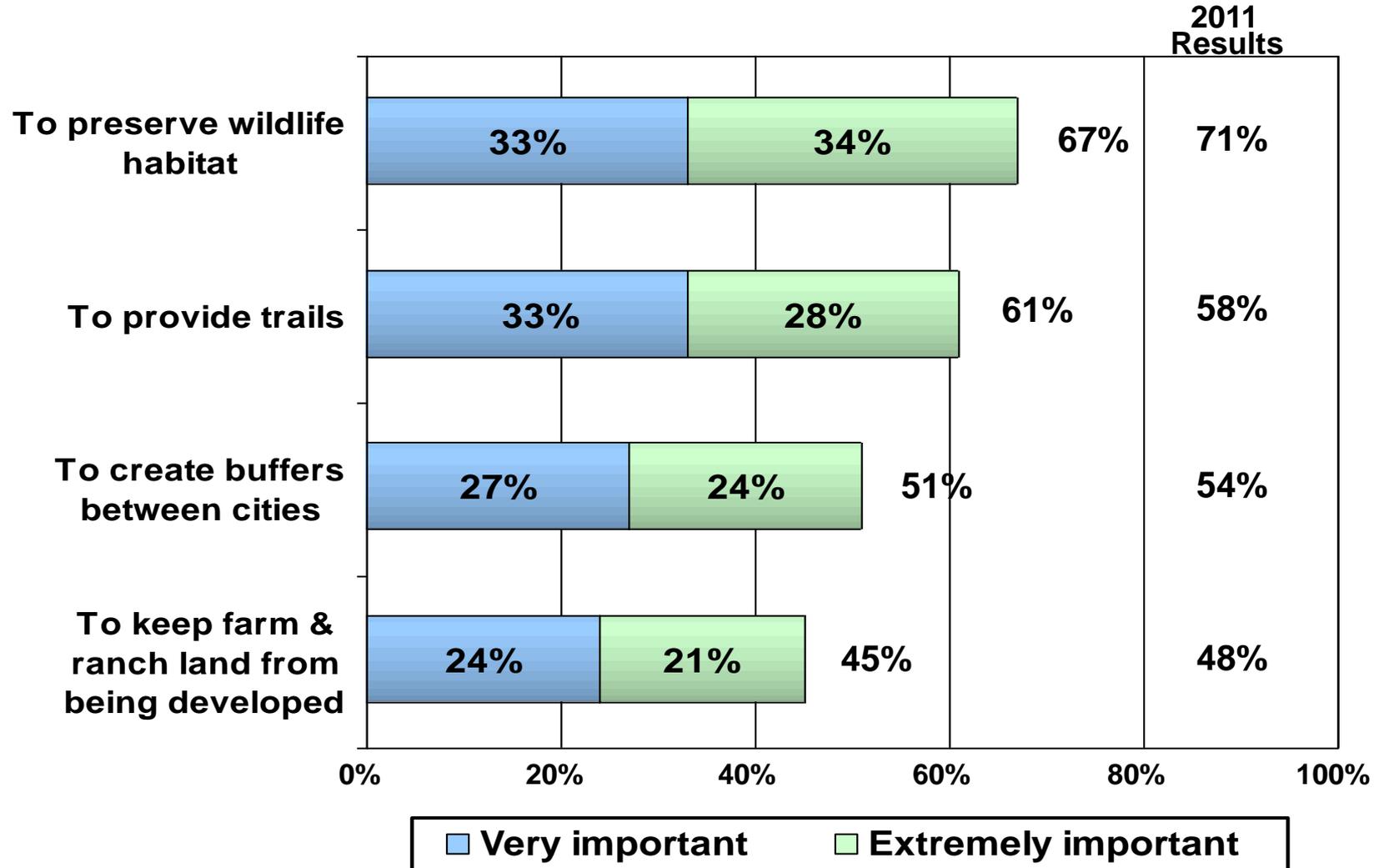
The one reason for open space that scores the highest is “to preserve wildlife habitat,” led by strong support in Boulder.



Reasons to Have Open Space

- Percent saying "Extremely / Very" important-

[n=605]



Importance of Open Space

- Shows percent saying “Very” or “Extremely” important by geographic area -

[n=605]

Purpose of Open Space	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
Preserve wildlife habitat	67%	72%	58%	68%	63%
Provide trails	61%	65%	46%	63%	73%
Create buffers	50%	54%	40%	48%	64%
Preserve farms & ranches	45%	48%	37%	46%	49%



Shading indicates there is a statistical difference



Importance of Activities on Open Space

Starting back in 1997, Boulder County began asking its voters about the importance of different activities in which people can participate on its open space land. Over the course of this 15 year period, certain activities have gained in importance, while other have slipped. Those gaining are:

- *Enjoying nature, and walking dogs*

Those declining in importance are:

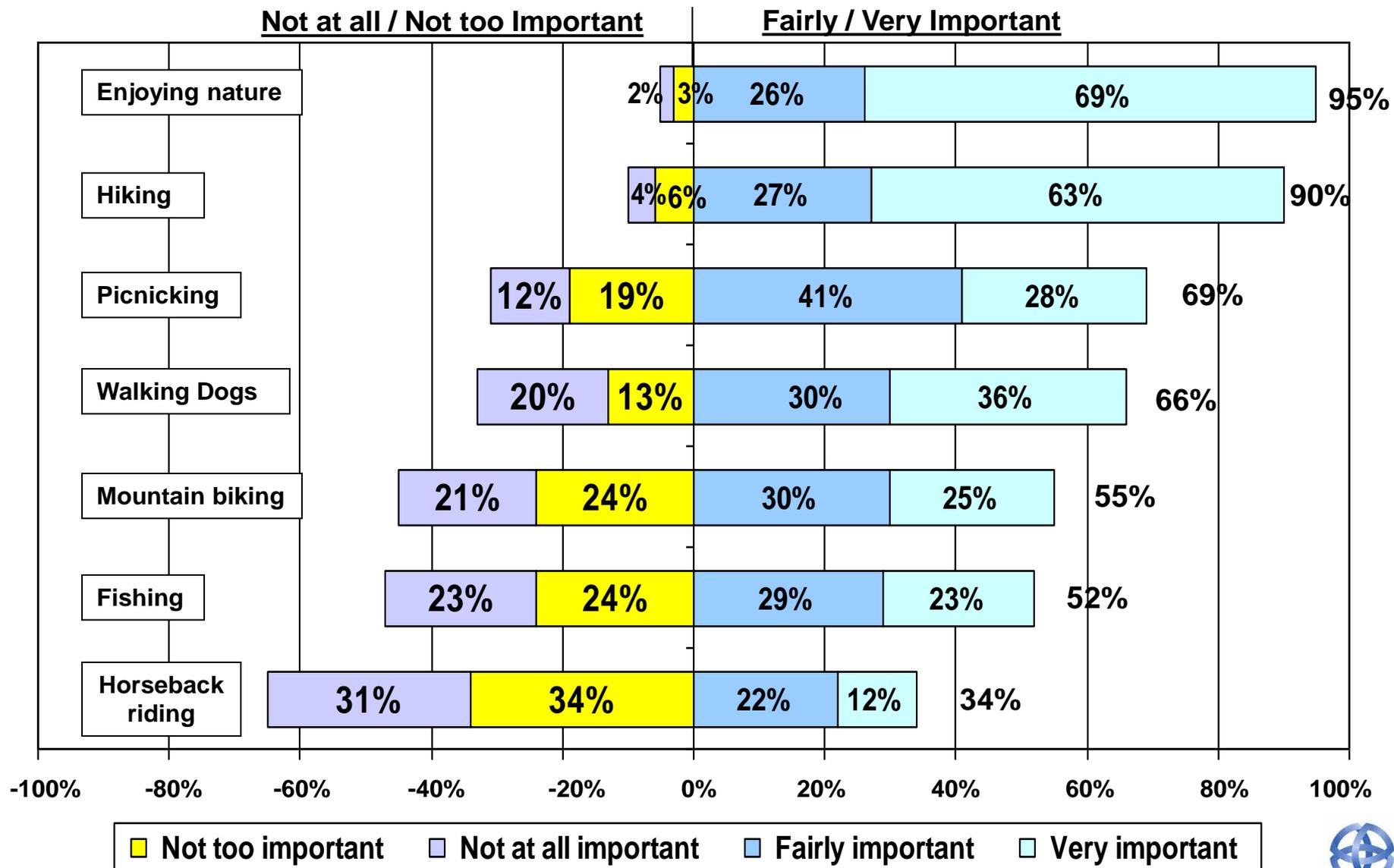
- *Fishing and picnicking*

The chart below shows how the importance ratings for the seven different open space activities stack up against each other.



71 Importance of Various Open Space Activities

[n=605]



Importance of Open Space Activities

- Shows percent saying “Very” important by geographic area -

[n=605]

There were no statistical differences between geographic areas in Boulder County on the importance of picnicking, mountain biking or walking dogs, so they are not charted

Open Space Activity	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
Fishing	23%	18%	31%	23%	23%
Horseback riding	12%	10%	14%	10%	20%
Hiking	63%	68%	51%	65%	68%
Enjoying nature	68%	74%	61%	65%	72%

 Shading indicates there is a statistical difference



VIII. GMO ISSUES



GMO Issues

In the past few years, Boulder County has been in the midst of a highly charged public debate on the use of genetically engineered crops, also known as “GMO’s,” on the County’s open space lands. In an effort to determine how voters across the County feel about GMO’s, the 2011 Open Space survey asked several questions about GMO’s, and the 2012 study tracks how people now feel about two of those questions:

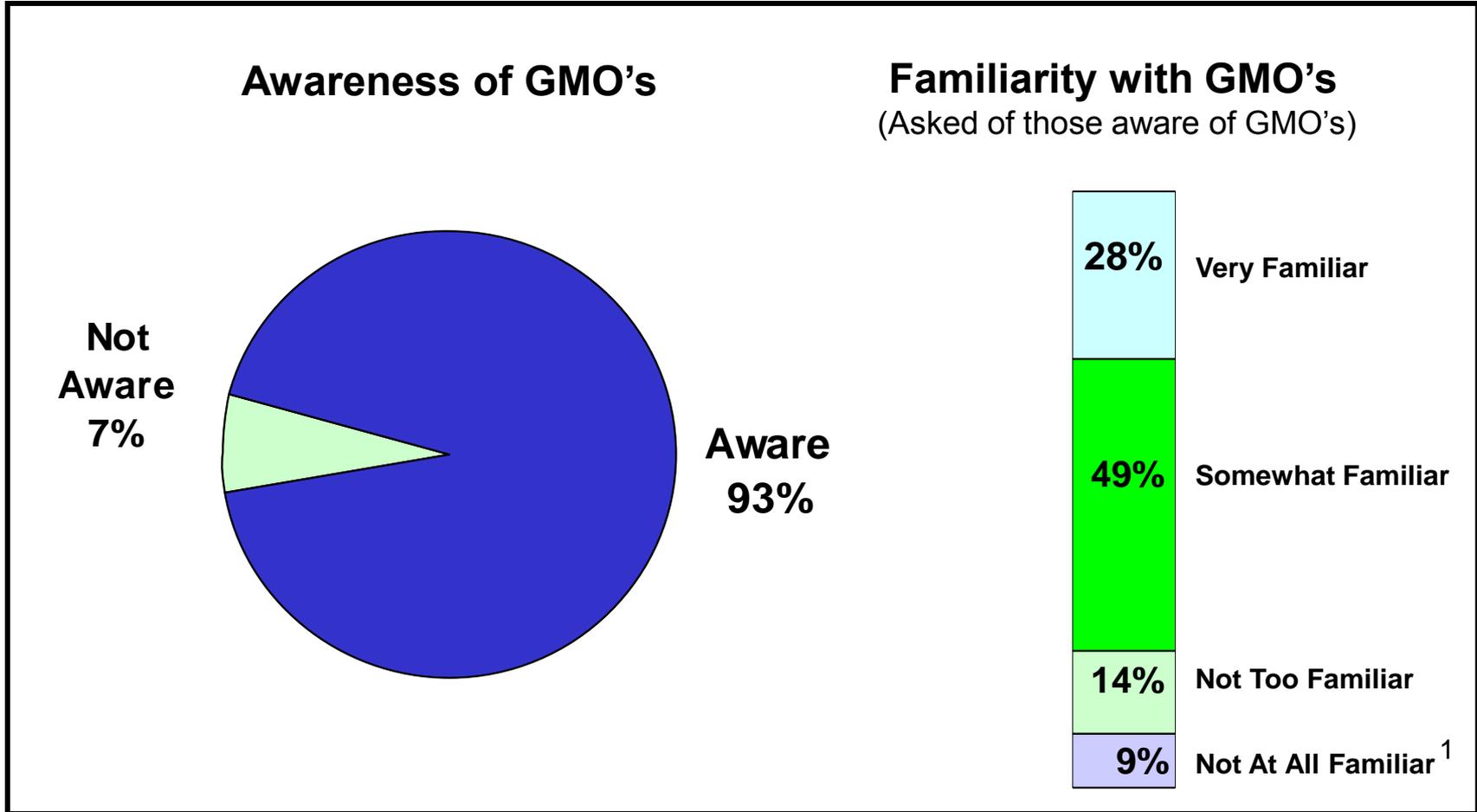
- How many people have heard of GMO’s, and just how much do they know about them?
- Based on what they know, do they see GMO’s more as a threat to human health and the environment, or more as a scientific advance that will help the environment and make farming more productive across the globe?

Additionally, voters were asked whether they approve or disapprove of the action the County Commissioners took last fall on GMO use on County Open Space lands.



Awareness Of, And Familiarity With, GMO's

[n=605]



¹ Includes those 7% who said "Haven't Heard" of GMO's.



Awareness Of, And Familiarity With, GMO's

[n=605]

Both awareness of, and familiarity with, GMO's have some differences among geographic areas in Boulder County

Awareness of GMO's	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
Yes, Aware	92%	96%	84%	94%	98%

Familiar with GMO's	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
"Very" Familiar	28%	34%	23%	22%	27%



Shading indicates there is a statistical difference



Voter Feelings Toward GMO's

Boulder County voters were read two statements about GMO's, and were asked which of the two comes closest to how they feel. The two statements are:

Statement A: *“GMO's are harmful to human health, and crop production that uses GMO technology is harmful to the environment.”*

Statement B: *“GMO's are a scientific advance that will allow us to reduce the use of synthetic pesticides and reduce erosion and carbon footprint of farming and to better feed a rapidly growing world population.”*

Voters are about equally divided on the two statements.



Attitudes Toward GMO's

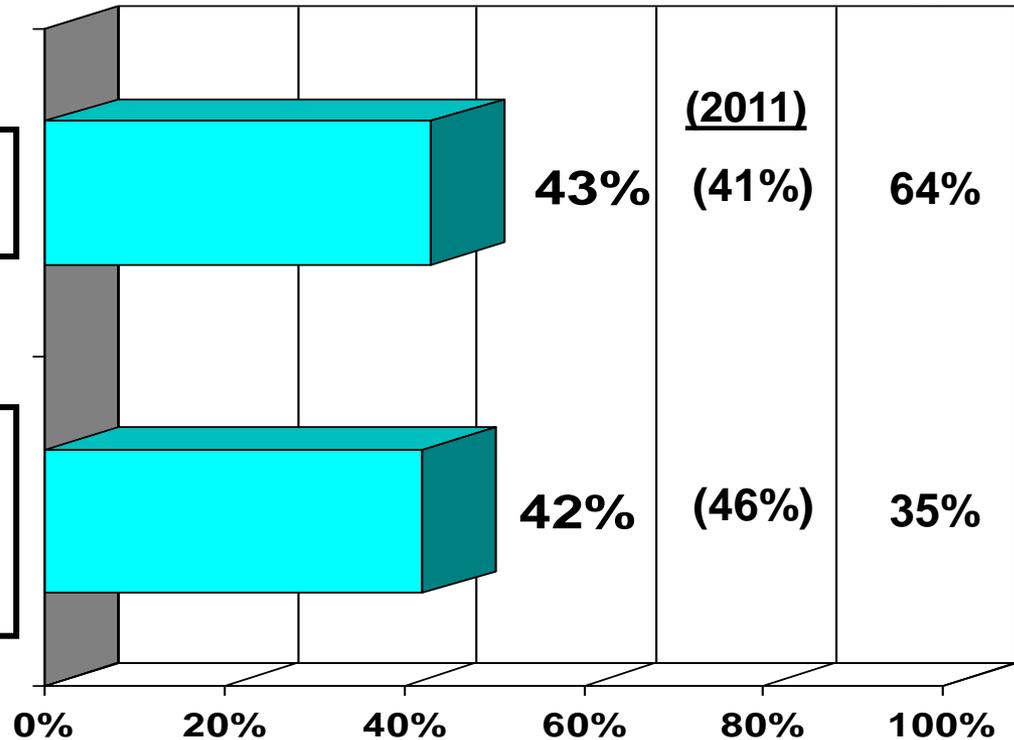
"I will now read you two short statements about genetically modified foods, called GMO's, and after I read you both, please tell me which statement comes closest to how you feel. And when you say you prefer [Statement A / Statement B] is that because it is MUCH closer to how you feel?"

[n=605]

Much closer
to how you
feel

A. GMO's are harmful to health and the environment

B. GMO's are scientific advance that's good for environment and feeding the world



Which comes closest to how you feel?	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
Statement A	43%	50%	38%	37%	41%
Statement B	42%	34%	47%	50%	44%



County Policy on Open Space Use of GMO's

Following a year of informal and formal hearings, the County Commissioners announced their decision on the use of GMO's on County Open Space land. Respondents to the survey were read the following action taken by the commissioners, and were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with it.

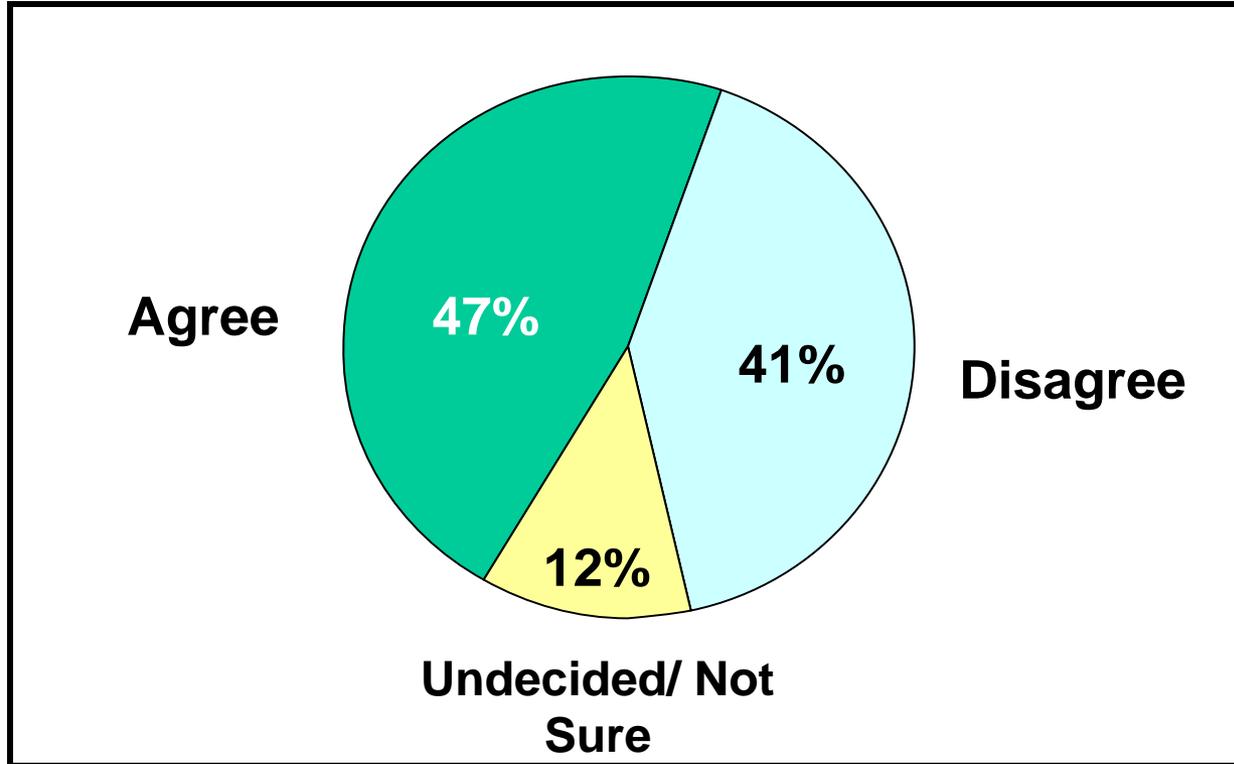
“Boulder County Commissioners adopted a cropland policy which includes the conditional approval of some genetically engineered crops. The policy allows for the growing of GMO corn, which has been allowed since 2003, and directs staff to develop standards for the planting of GMO sugar beets. Additionally, the policy will ensure that Roundup Ready crops are not planted year-after-year and maintain crop rotation to prevent herbicide-resistant weeds from developing on public lands.”



County Policy on GMO's

“Do you agree with this decision made by the Boulder County Commissioners or do you disagree with it?”

[n=605]



Do you agree or disagree with Policy	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities	Uninc.
Agree	47%	41%	51%	53%	49%
Disagree	40%	46%	36%	36%	41%



IX. APPENDIX: PERCENTAGE RESULTS

