

A Study of Attitudes of Registered Voters In Boulder County, Colorado Concerning Public Policy Issues

How the Survey Was Conducted

The Public Information Corporation of Littleton, Colorado, conducted a 611-interview telephone survey for the Boulder County Board of Commissioners in June, 2008. The survey resulted in a representative sampling of active registered voters listed in the Boulder County Elections Office's file.

The sampling is balanced within 2 percent, plus or minus, of the actual demographic profile of the total file, as to gender, age, years lived in Boulder County, party registration and which of four geographical zones the respondents reside in. The zones consisted of (1) the City of Boulder, (2) the City of Longmont, (3) Southeast Cities (Louisville, Lafayette, Superior and Erie), and (4) unincorporated areas plus small towns.

A vendor extracted the calling lists from the total file according to our randomization and format specifications. All other aspects, including interviewing, coding and data processing, took place at our office.

The survey questionnaire included general questions about issues that face Boulder County today, and specific questions about the Worthy Cause Sales Tax, sustainable energy, affordable housing, open space, a proposed countywide library tax, and expanding of the Ecopass public transit discount program.

Confidence factor in a 611-interview sampling is 4 percent, plus or minus, in 95 out of 100 cases.

The project results are presented in two sections. Volume 1, which follows, is a detailed analysis of the survey results. Volume 2 contains all of the computer tabulations and cross-tabulations that we worked with.

About the Survey Analysis Format

This Analysis volume presents the results of the survey in text and tables form. The results of related series of questions are presented in consolidated tables for comparison purposes. Otherwise the tables show not only the countywide results but also in the four geographical zones.

In several cases we provide additional tables that track responses where identical or very similar questions were asked in previous and comparable surveys.

Following is an explanation of some of the terms that are used in the analysis:

“Emergent Categories” refers to semantically similar verbatim responses that are clustered into categories during the editing of open-ended questions. Each distinct category then is assigned a unique one- or two-digit number for data entry.

We start with few assumptions as to what the noteworthy opinions and issues will be, although we make certain that categories which likely will be compared with results from earlier years are established in advance. New categories reflecting changing times emerge almost on their own as the early interviews are being conducted, and hence the term “emergent categories.”

“Demographic anomalies” are instances in which individual groupings (e.g., “Boulder,” “Longmont,” etc. responses to particular questions deviate from the countywide results by 7 percent or more and may be useful in understanding trends in the County. Deviations of less than 7 percent generally are not enlightening in a 604-interview sampling. However, with the reciprocal response cells (columns) involving men vs. women there might be only 4 percent differences from the countywide result and yet the 8-point spread between the genders certainly can be of significance to the analysis. We refer to those as “gender divergences.”

Another caveat is that occasionally anomalies reach 7 percent or so but aren’t mentioned in the analyses because we felt that spotlighting them would not be useful. This is particularly true where four-level multiple choice responses are used, e.g. “very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.” Occasionally pointing out “somewhat” response anomalies adds to the quality of the analysis, but usually they do not.

Demographic anomalies are expressed in brief paragraphs in terms of how many percentage points they are higher or lower than the result for all persons who were asked a particular question, e.g. +10% or –12%. For the reader’s convenience each time anomalies are listed we show the actual percentage given by the total number of respondents (e.g. (604=62%) followed by +10% if the anomalous response was 72% or –12% if the response was 50%.

If the all-respondent “total” number is less than 611 it means that some persons were not asked that particular question because of skip instructions.

All demographic anomalies mentioned in this study pertain only to the current project and not to those of previous surveys that are used in trend studies tables.

“Collapse” refers to instances in which related open-ended categories are combined in tables if we feel that it will provide a better focus. Collapses are described by text if they are used in tables.

Double dashes (--) indicate instances in tables where responses were less than one-half of one percent but not zero. Responses of 0.5 to 0.9 are rounded up to 1 by our statistical software.

Question 1 – Single Most Important Issue

In general, what do you consider to be the single most important issue facing Boulder County today? (Open end).

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Concerns about the economy	12%	11%	16%	11%	12%
Public school issues	11	9	16	10	11
Transportation concerns*	11	10	9	11	10
Manage/stop growth	10	9	11	9	10
Inflation, including fuel, food	6	2	8	10	5
Local governance concerns	6	7	1	6	13
Affordable housing/high costs	5	6	4	5	6
Taxes too high	4	3	5	6	5
Social concerns	4	7	2	2	6
Environment concerns	4	5	1	4	4
Open space issues	3	4	2	4	2
Illegal immigrants complaints	2	0	6	1	1
Water supply issues/drought	2	3	2	2	2
Pine beetles infestation	1	2	0	0	1
Public safety issues	1	2	1	2	1
Everything's fine	1	1	0	1	1
* Note: "Transportation concerns " is a collapse consisting of:					
<i>More/better public transit</i>	5	3	7	6	4
<i>Traffic jams/congestion</i>	4	6	2	2	5
<i>More street/road capacity</i>	1	1	0	1	0
<i>Repair roads/streets</i>	1	--	0	2	1

Discussion

By far the largest shift in emergent categories in this open-ended tracking question is the rise of concerns about the economy as the most important issue facing Boulder County today. At 12 percent it's in a virtual tie with three other categories that traditionally rank high among the emergent categories – issues involving transportation, public school and managing or stopping growth.

Also a notable rising issue is inflation, including concerns about the prices of fuel and food, back a bit at 6 percent. The importance of these changes is better illustrated by a consolidated table comparing emergent categories in 2004 through 2008, which is presented following the demographic anomalies discussion.

Demographic Anomalies

With “public school issues” (611=11%) – There was a gender divergence, with 15 percent of women believing that it was the single most important issue facing Boulder County today versus 8 percent of men.

With “local government concerns” (611=13% -- Anomalously high were: Unincorporated area residents, +7%.

With “social concerns” (611=4%) – Anomalously high were: persons 18 to 24, +7%.

Most Important Boulder County Issues – 2004-2008

	<u>6/08</u>	<u>7/07</u>	<u>5/06</u>	<u>4/05</u>	<u>6/04</u>
Economy concerns	12%	4%	7%	8%	20%
Public schools issues	11	7	8	8	13
Transportation concerns	11	13	9	9	13
Manage/stop growth	10	20	20	20	20
Inflation, including fuel, food	6	1	*	4	*
Local governance issues	6	4	3	3	4
Affordable housing/costs	5	7	6	6	3
Taxes too high	4	4	3	4	*
More/maintain open space	3	4	4	7	4

* Was not an emergent category in that survey

Question 2 – Satisfaction With County Government

Please think for a moment about the many things that are the responsibility of Boulder County government. Would you say that you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the job being done?

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Very satisfied	16%	19%	8%	20%	14%
Somewhat satisfied	58	58	61	57	53
Somewhat dissatisfied	15	14	15	13	22
Very dissatisfied	6	5	9	5	6
No response	5	4	7	6	5

Discussion

The County government received a very high positive rating from the active registered voters, with 74 percent indicating they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the job being done.

Also, another way we sometimes use to assess performance is to compare the two extreme categories. In this case it's nearly 3 to 1 positive, with 16 percent saying that they are very satisfied and only 6 percent indicating that they are very dissatisfied.

Demographic Anomalies

With “Very Satisfied” (611=16%) – Anomalously high were: in county 1 to 4 years, +10%. Anomalously low were: Longmont residents, -8%.

Comparative Table of Satisfaction with County Government					
	<u>6/08</u>	<u>7/07</u>	<u>5/06</u>	<u>4/05</u>	<u>6/04</u>
Very satisfied	16%	13%	15%	14%	13%
Somewhat satisfied	68	65	64	64	65
Somewhat dissatisfied	15	13	12	14	13
Very dissatisfied	6	6	6	5	5
No response	5	3	3	2	4

Discussion

The most notable aspect of this consolidated table is how little the perceptions of respondents have changed over the past five years of this tracking question.

While the 16 percent of voters who gave “very satisfied” marks is the highest in the five-year period, there has been only a negligible 3 percent swing across the years.

Question 3 – Acceptability of County Taxation Levels

Generally speaking, would you say that the taxes you pay to Boulder County government are too high, high but acceptable, about right, or would you say that they are lower than you would expect for the services County government provides?

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Too high	23%	20%	25%	21%	27%
High but acceptable	37	36	41	42	31
About right	32	36	26	31	32
Lower than would expect	4	4	3	4	5
No response	4	5	5	2	5

Discussion

Nearly three-quarters of respondents believe that the taxes they pay to Boulder County government are at least acceptable considering the services that are provided. As will be seen in the consolidated table that follows the demographic anomalies discussion the extreme response categories – “too high” and “lower than you would expect” – have been virtually unchanged during the 2004-2008 period. However, there have been perceptual shifts in the two middle-ground categories, “high but acceptable” and “about right.”

That is particularly the case in a comparison of 2008 results with those in the 2007 survey, with 9 percent moving from “about right” to “high but acceptable.”

Demographic Anomalies

With “too high” (611=23%) -- Anomalously high are: in the county 20 years or more, +8%. Anomalously low are: those in the county 1 to 4 years, -7%, and in county 10 to 19 years, -8%.

With “high but acceptable” (611=37%) -- Anomalously high are: those in county 1 to 4 years, +8%.

With “about right” (611=32%) – Anomalously high were: persons 55 to 64, +8%. Anomalously low were: in county 1 to 4 years, -11%; and persons 35 to 44, -8%.

Acceptability of Boulder County Taxation – 2004-2008

	<u>6/08</u>	<u>7/07</u>	<u>5/06</u>	<u>4/05</u>	<u>6/04</u>
Too high	23%	24%	22%	25%	22%
High but acceptable	37	28	35	31	31
About right	32	41	36	37	40
Lower than would expect	4	4	3	3	4
No response	4	3	3	4	3

Questions 4 through 9 -- Needs and Desires for Services/Facilities

With limited resources, governments at all levels cannot be all things to all people, and so public needs and desires for services and facilities constantly need to be assessed. Boulder County officials are looking at a variety of citizens' suggestions that might, or might not, be examined for future ballot issues. . . . Please tell me whether you might support each of them strongly or mildly, or else oppose them mildly or strongly. What about:

	<u>Support Strongly</u>	<u>Support Mildly</u>	<u>Oppose Mildly</u>	<u>Oppose Strongly</u>	<u>No Response</u>
Q.4. Incentives for using renewable energy alternatives?	65%	23%	6%	5%	2%
Q.9. Expanding the availability of Eco-passes across the county?	50	30	9	6	6
Q.5. Providing more affordable housing?	42	32	13	9	5
Q.6 Acquiring more open space, building more trails?	39	30	15	15	2
Q.8. Adding human services programs to help low income families, children?	36	39	13	8	4
Q.7 A countywide library tax to enhance service?	17	34	24	18	7

Note: The questions are ranked in order of "support strongly" percentages. The rankings would have been slightly different had the "support mildly" percentages been merged with "support strongly."

Discussion

Incentives for using renewable energy alternatives is by far the strongest of the six possible future ballot issues that were tested in this series of questions, with 65 percent of the active registered voters saying that they "support strongly," and another 23 percent indicating mild support, totaling 88 percent. Only 11 percent said they oppose the idea either mildly or strongly.

Expanding the availability of EcoPasses across the county also was exceptionally well-received with 80 percent indicating support – 50 percent "strongly" and 30 percent "mildly." Opposition responses total 15 percent.

The only one of the six possible future ballot issues that showed decided weakness was a countywide library tax to enhance service. While 51 percent indicated some level of support it fell far behind our longstanding rule of thumb in assessing whether a possible ballot question has a good chance of success – 65 percent or better. Moreover, only 17 percent indicated strong support.

Demographic Anomalies

Question 4 anomalies (re: renewable energy alternatives incentives)

With “support strongly” (611=65%) – Anomalously high were: in county 9 years or less, +8%. Anomalously low were: persons 45 to 54, -13%, and Southeast cities residents, -7%.

Also, there was a gender divergence, with 72 percent of women indicating strong support versus only 59 percent of men.

Question 5 anomalies (re: providing more affordable housing)

With “support strongly” (611=42%) – Anomalously high were: persons 18 to 34, +8%, and in county 9 years or less, +8%. Anomalously low were: unincorporated area residents, -7%; and those 55 and older, -8%.

Also, there was a gender divergence, with 47 percent of the women indicating strong support compared with 36 percent of the men.

Question 6 anomalies (re: acquiring more open space, building trails)

With “support strongly” (611=39%) – Anomalously high were: Boulder residents, +7%; persons 25 to 34, +14%; and in county 10 to 19 years, +7%. Anomalously low were Longmont residents, -7%.

With “oppose strongly” (611=15%) – Anomalously high were: Longmont residents, +7%, and persons 65 and older, +10%.

Question 7 anomalies (re: having a countywide library tax)

With “support strongly” (611=17%) – Anomalously high were: In county 10 to 19 years, +7%.

With “oppose strongly” (611=18%) – Anomalously low were: persons 35 to 44, -8%.

Question 8 anomalies (re: programs to help low income families/children)

With “support strongly” (611=36%) – Anomalously high were: Boulder residents, +9%; persons 18 to 34, +15; and in county 4 years or less, +14%.

Also there was a gender divergence, with 44 percent of women strongly supportive versus 28 percent of men.

Question 9 anomalies (re: expanding availability of EcoPasses)

With “support strongly” (611=50%) – Anomalously high were: Boulder residents, +7%; persons 18 to 24, +8%; and persons 25 to 34, +22. Anomalously low were: Longmont residents, -7%.

Also there was a gender divergence, with 57 percent of women strongly supportive versus 42 percent of men.

Questions 10 and 11 – Worthy Cause Sales Tax Extension (5 or 10 years)

Respondents were read a list of current capital projects for non-profit facilities that are funded by the County's Worthy Cause Sales Tax – one-twentieth of one percent, which would be five cents on a \$100 purchase. This was a split sampling in which about half of the respondents were read question 10, which asks about support or opposition to a five-year extension of the tax, and the others were read question 11, which was identical except that it specified a ten-year extension.

	<u>Extend 5 Years</u>	<u>Extend 10 Years</u>
Support strongly	44%	45%
Support mildly	35	34
Oppose mildly	10	12
Oppose strongly	10	8
No response	2	2

Discussion

There is no significant difference between the responses of persons who were asked about a five-year extension of the Worthy Cause Sales Tax in question 10 and those who were asked about a ten-year extension in question 11. Either way, 79 percent were supportive and 20 percent expressed opposition.

There are, however, small differences to be seen in the geographical zone breakouts with the two questions, as may be observed in the consolidated table below, although none of them quite reached demographic anomaly proportions. The zone results to both question 10 and 11 are shown together.

	TOTAL		Boulder		Longmont		SE Cities		Unincorp.	
	5 yr.	10 yr.								
Support it strongly	44%	45%	50%	47%	39%	41%	39%	47%	44%	43%
Support it mildly	35	34	31	35	39	33	36	35	35	33
Oppose it mildly	10	12	9	14	13	10	12	6	6	16
Oppose it strongly	10	8	10	3	9	13	12	10	8	9
No response	2	2	0	2	1	3	1	3	6	0

Demographic Anomalies

While there were no demographic anomalies among the geographical zone results, that's not the case with other breakouts, and there are differences between those in question 10 responses and those for question 11. They are presented next.

Question 10 anomalies (re: five-year extension)

With “support strongly” (301=44%) – Anomalously low were: persons 18 to 24, - 11%. Also there was a gender divergence, with 48 percent of women indicating strong support versus 39 percent of men.

Question 11 anomalies (re: ten-year extension)

With “support strongly” (310=45%) – Anomalously low were: persons 35 to 44, - 7%. Also, there was a gender divergence, with 51 percent of women expressing strong support and only 38 percent of men doing so.

With “oppose strongly (310=8%) – Anomalously low were persons 18 to 24, -8%.

Questions 12 and 13 – Reasons Would Support or Oppose Extending Tax

What one reason caused you to say that you would (support)(oppose) extending the Worthy Cause Sales Tax for (five)(ten) years? (Open end.)

Note: As was the case with the previous two questions, this was a split sampling. The responses to these questions were nearly identical, and to simplify the analysis we present only percentages from question 12. The most frequent emergent response categories were as follows:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
<i><u>Reasons would support</u></i>					
Enhances the quality of life for county	20%	21%	18%	19%	24%
It's just a very small tax	11	13	7	10	10
Helps people truly in need	11	8	15	7	14
Repeated "worthy cause," or similar	9	8	7	7	15
The needs increasing (mostly economy)	5	3	7	4	5
Helps people to be self-sufficient	5	5	3	7	5
<i><u>Reasons would oppose</u></i>					
No more taxes/we're taxed too much	9	8	12	6	8
I oppose government handouts	2	3	0	1	3
Five (ten) years is too long	2	1	3	3	0

Discussion

Comments indicating that extension of the Worthy Cause Sales Tax enhances the general quality of life for Boulder County emerged as the most important category at 20 percent. Statements such as "it's a quality of life enhancement," "it uplifts everybody," "the strong should uphold the weak," "it's a form of social justice," "we don't do enough to help the needy," and "it's a decent cause" were included in this category.

Also in the double digits were feelings that the tax is a small one costing people very little, and that it helps people who are genuinely in need, both at 11 percent. The term "worthy cause," or other terms that echo the official name of this tax, were close behind at 9 percent.

The only important category that emerged among reasons for opposition to the tax, at 9 percent, was made up of comments opposing all taxes or all new taxes. There was virtually no opposition to the Worthy Cause Sales Tax based on which organizations or clients would benefit.

Demographic Anomalies

With “quality of life (294=20%) -- Anomalously high were: persons 35 to 44, +7%.

With “small price to pay” (294=9%) – Anomalously high were: persons 18 to 24, +16%.

With “no more taxes” (294=9%) – Anomalously low were: persons 25 to 34, -7%; and in county 5 to 9 years, -9%.

Questions 14 through 18 – Priorities for Worthy Cause Tax Programs

The following introductory statement was made: *“If the voters approve extending the Worthy Cause Sales Tax, priorities will have to be set on what kinds of programs should be provided with facilities. I will read brief descriptions of several proposals that have been made. Please tell me, on a sliding scale of 5 down to 1, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, how you would rate each of them.”*

(Note: The questions are arrayed in descending order of their scores.* Also, sometimes we give weight in our analyses to comparisons of the raw numbers of persons who chose the highest point on a response scale – in this case “5.” Those numbers are shown to the right of each question’s score italicized and within parentheses.

Q.17. Services for the elderly and people with disabilities	4.02 (227)
Q.14. Basic needs such as food and clothing	4.00 (277)
Q.15. Child care and early childhood education	3.93 (231)
Q.18. Stable, affordable housing for vulnerable populations	3.68 (177)
Q.16. Primary health, mental and dental clinics	3.50 (189)

* (Note: We calculated the score of each program on the 5-point scale by multiplying each point on the scale times its response frequency divided by how many persons actually provided a rating for that question).

Discussion

While “services for the elderly and people with disabilities” received the highest score among the five programs, it came in third in terms of how many persons gave “5” ratings.

Thus it is our opinion that “basic needs such as food and clothing” justifiably could be considered a bit stronger than “services for the elderly and people with disabilities.”

Demographic Anomalies

Because of the complexity of the scoring system we present anomalies only with the upper extreme response scores – “5.” There were no “1” score anomalies.

Note: with all of the five questions there were gender divergences, with the percentages of women responding “5” being 10 points or more higher than was the case with men.

Question 14 anomalies (re: food and clothing)

With “highest” anomalies (277=46%) – Anomalously high were: persons 25 to 34, +7%. The gender divergence was 10%.

Question 15 anomalies (re: child care and education)

With “highest” anomalies (231=38%) – Anomalously high were: persons 35 to 44. The gender divergence was 17%.

Question 16 anomalies (re: health, mental and dental clinics)

With “highest” anomalies (189=31%) – Anomalously high were: persons 25 to 34, +10%. Anomalously low were: persons 18 to 24, -11%, and in county 1 to 4 years, -7%. The gender divergence was 13%.

Question 17 anomalies (re: services for elderly, disabled)

With “highest” anomalies (227=38%) – Anomalously low were: persons 18 to 24, -27%. The gender divergence was 15%.

Question 18 anomalies (re: affordable housing)

With “highest” anomalies (177=29%) – Anomalously high were: persons 18 to 25, -8%. The gender divergence was 13%.

Questions 19 and 20 – Two Types of Affordable Housing

. . . Some people have proposed that part of the Worthy Cause Sales Tax proceeds, if it is extended, be used for affordable housing. How important do you think it would be to spend Worthy Cause money on:

(Note: Questions 19 and 20 were asked as a rotation but not as a split sampling and presented different possible uses of Worthy Cause taxes. Question 19 dealt with “permanently affordable rental housing units owned and operated by a non-profit housing organization.” Question 20 asked about temporary housing for up to two years for persons working toward self-sufficiency.

(The following table compares the responses to the two questions. Separate tables are presented showing the geographical zone breakouts with both questions.)

	<u>Q.19</u> <u>Permanent</u>	<u>Q.20</u> <u>Up to 2 Years</u>
Very important	22%	27%
Somewhat important	46	49
Not very important	19	14
Not at all important	11	7
No response	3	3

Discussion

Temporary housing for up to two years for persons working toward self-sufficiency clearly is the preferred alternative of the two Worthy Cause Sales Tax uses described, with 76 percent of the active registered voters saying that it would be either very important or somewhat important to spend Worthy Cause money on. There was additional strength in the comparison of the extreme response categories with question 20 -- nearly 4-to-1 “very important” versus “not at all important.”

The other alternative presented – spending Worthy Cause money on permanently affordable rental housing units owned and operated by a non-profit housing organization – also scored fairly well, at 68 percent. The “very important” versus “not at all important” ratio was a credible 2-to-1.

Question 19 (Permanent)

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Very important	22%	25%	21%	18%	20%
Somewhat important	46	39	54	47	46
Not very important	19	20	12	23	20
Not important at all	11	11	10	10	11
No response	3	4	3	2	3

Demographic Anomalies

With “very important” (611=22%) -- Anomalously high were: persons 34 and younger, +10%. Anomalously low were: persons 45 to 54, -7%. Also, there was a gender divergence, with 26 percent of women responding “very important” compared with 17 percent of men.

With “somewhat important (611=46%) – Anomalously high were: Longmont residents, +8%. Anomalously low were: Boulder residents, -7%.

With “not very important (611=19%) – Anomalously low were: Longmont residents, -7%.

Question 20 (Up to 2 years)

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Very important	27%	29%	29%	25%	22%
Somewhat important	49	46	49	51	55
Not very important	14	16	12	16	12
Not important at all	7	7	7	7	9
No response	2	3	2	1	2

Demographic Anomalies

With “very important” (611=27%) – Anomalously high were: Persons 18 to 24, +13%; and in county 1 to 4 years, +10%. Also, there was a gender divergence, with women at 32% “very important” versus 22% of men.

With “somewhat important: (611=49%) – Anomalously high were: persons 25 to 34, +13%, and in county 1 to 4 years, +10%.

Questions 21 and 22 – Support For and Usage of Energy Related Loans

A new state law allows local governments to issue loans to property owners who install energy efficiency or renewable energy systems in their homes. Examples would be several kinds of solar energy systems, high R-value insulation, and energy-efficient windows.

(Note: While these two questions pertain to the same new state law, the contexts were quite different and this was not a split sampling. However, showing the 611-respondent results for both questions on the same table is of interest, and we do so prior to presentation of the individual question geographical zone breakouts).

	<u>Q.21 Support Ballot Question?</u>	<u>Q.22 Take Advantage Of Such a Loan?</u>
Very likely	54%	21%
Somewhat likely	26	28
Not very likely	10	20
Not at all likely	9	28
No response	2	2

Discussion

The results of these questions show that (1) a referendum on enabling the county to issue bonds for energy efficiency or renewable energy systems in homes likely would have been successful in June, and (2) just about half of respondents are potential candidates for utilization of such a program to install systems.

<i>Question 21 -- Support Initiative to Issue Bonds?</i>					
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Very likely	54%	61%	45%	55%	52%
Somewhat likely	26	22	32	25	26
Not very likely	10	9	11	6	12
Not at all likely	9	7	9	13	8
No response	2	1	3	2	2

Demographic Anomalies

With “very likely” (611=54%) – Anomalously high were: Boulder residents, +7%; persons 25 to 34, +22%; and 1 to 9 years in county, +7%. Anomalously low were: Longmont residents, -9%, and persons 45 to 54, -8%.

With “not at all likely” (611=9%) – Anomalously high were: persons 45 to 54.

Question 22 – Would Take Advantage of Such a Loan?					
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Very likely	21%	24%	18%	18%	22%
Somewhat likely	28	25	28	33	27
Not very likely	20	18	24	21	21
Not at all likely	28	32	28	24	27
No response	2	1	2	4	3

Demographic Anomalies

With “very likely” (611=21%) – Anomalously high were: persons 25 to 34, +12%.

With “not at all likely” (611=28%) -- Anomalously high were: persons 18 to 24, +7%. Anomalously low were: persons 25 to 34, -7%.

Questions 23 and 24 – Sustainable Energy Plan Options

Boulder County recently adopted a 15-year sustainable energy plan which lays out a path to move the entire county toward greater levels of energy efficiency and increased uses of renewable energy. Implementing this plan may require additional revenues.

(Note: This was a split sampling in which about half of the respondents were read question 23, which involved a new sales tax to fund the plan implementation, and the other half were read question 24, which described a tax on power and heating energy consumption for the same purpose.

(Likelihood of support and opposition for each of the revenue sources is shown on the following consolidated table. Subsequently each of the alternatives is presented separately, including demographic anomalies).

	<u>Sales Tax</u>	<u>Energy Tax</u>
Very likely to support	29%	28
Somewhat likely to support	35	36
Not very likely to support	16	16
Not at all likely to support	16	17
No response	4	2

Discussion

As was the case with the Worthy Cause sales tax extension questions that tested a five-year extension versus a ten-year extension, the result here is a virtual tie. Sixty-four percent of respondents said they likely would support the sales tax option to fund implementation of the 15-year sustainable energy plan and a tax on power, and 64 percent of those who were asked about a tax on power and heating energy consumption for the same purpose also indicated likely support.

Question 23 received 32 percent “not likely to support” responses, and with question 24 it was 33 percent.

The 2-to-1 favorable ratio indicates to us that either of the revenue sources could be approved by the active registered voters in a referendum, but it’s not quite a comfortable margin to work with.

Question 23 respondents were asked: “How likely would you be to support a new one tenth of one percent sales tax, which would generate approximately four million dollars per year and sunset after 15 years, for the sustainable energy plan?”

Question 23 – Support a Sales Tax for the Energy Plan?					
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Very likely	29%	34%	26%	24%	33%
Somewhat likely	35	32	38	40	30
Not very likely	16	20	15	16	11
Not at all likely	16	14	16	19	15
No response	4	1	5	2	11

Demographic Anomalies

With “very likely to support” (307=29%) – Anomalously high were: persons 25 to 34, +14%, and 10 to 19 years in county, +12%. Anomalously low were: 20 years or more in county, -7%.

With “not at all likely to support” (307=16%) – Anomalously low were: persons 18 to 24, -10%, and in county 5 to 9 years, -11%.

Question 24 respondents were asked: “How likely would you be to support a tax on power and heating energy consumption, averaging about two dollars per household per month, for the sustainable energy plan? It would generate approximately four million dollars per year and sunset after 15 years.”

Question 24 – Support a Tax on Power/Energy Consumption?					
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Very likely	28%	33%	21	29%	27%
Somewhat likely	36	37	44	26	36
Not very likely	16	18	17	14	16
Not at all likely	17	10	17	27	19
No response	2	2	0	5	1

Demographic Anomalies

With “very likely to support” (304=28%) – Anomalously high were: persons 25 to 44, +10%, and in county 1 to 4 years, +19%. Anomalously low were: Longmont residents, -7%; persons 65 and older, -13%; and in county 20 years or more, -21%.

With “not at all likely to support” (304=17%) – Anomalously high were: Southeast cities residents, +10%, and persons 18 to 24, +7%. Anomalously low were: persons 25 to 34, -10%.

Question 25 – Use of County Internet Site

How often do you visit the Boulder County government internet site? Daily, weekly, monthly, never, or do you not have access to the internet?

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Daily	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Weekly	3	2	2	5	3
Monthly	28	32	20	26	32
Never	64	61	68	67	60
No access to internet	4	3	8	2	4
No response	0	0	0	0	0

Discussion

About a third of the active registered voters said they use the Boulder County government internet site at least monthly, but the number of daily visitors is only one percent.

Demographic Anomalies

With “monthly” (611=28%) – Anomalously high were: persons 25 to 34, +10%; and in county 1 to 4 years, +19%. Anomalously low were: Longmont residents, -8%; persons 65 and older, -13%; and 20 years or more in county, -7%. Also, there was a gender divergence, with 32 percent of men indicating that they visit the county web site monthly versus 24 percent of women.

With “never” (611=64%) – Anomalously high were: in county 1 to 4 years, +7%. Anomalously low were: persons 25 to 34, -11%.

Question 26 – How to Improve Content/Format of County Internet Site

If you have suggestions about how to improve the content or format of the Boulder County government internet site, what would they be? (Open end.)

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Boulder</u>	<u>Longmont</u>	<u>SE Cities</u>	<u>Unincorp.</u>
Leave it as it is	39%	42%	26	54%	32%
Complimentary comments	16	16	19	8	20
Improve search/navigation features	10	9	10	10	10
Screen appearance/fonts too small	2	3	0	3	2
Make it less busy	2	3	0	3	0
Misc. negative/irrelevant comments	6	6	6	5	7
No response	24	19	32	18	29

Discussion

While this questions sought suggestions on how to improve the county’s internet site, 55 percent of the 194 respondents who said that they visit that site at least monthly felt that it should be left as it is or else made complimentary comments.

The only substantive category that contained specific suggestions had to do with navigation difficulties. “The search engine needs improvement” and “make the navigation easier for non-experts” were typical of the comments.

Demographic Anomalies

With “leave it as is” (194=39%) – Anomalously high were: Southeast cities, +15%; persons 45 to 54, +14%; and 5 to 9 years in county, +18%. Anomalously low were: Longmont residents, -13%; persons 18 to 24, -7%; and in county 1 to 4 years, -9%. Also, there was a gender divergence, with 42 percent of men indicating that the site should be left as it is versus 36 percent for women.

With “compliments” (194=16%) – Anomalously high were: persons 65 and older, +17%. Anomalously low were: Southeast cities residents, -8%; persons 18 to 24, -11%; and persons 45 to 54, -8%

With “improve navigation” (194=10%) – Anomalously high were: in county 1 to 4 years, +10%. Anomalously low were: in county 5 to 9 years, -7%.

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