

# 2009 BOULDER COUNTY ISSUES SURVEY

Report  
~July, 2009~

*Prepared for:*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Objectives & Methodology .....	2
II.	Key Findings.....	5
III.	The Climate Today.....	12
IV.	Ballot Proposals Tested.....	22
V.	Rating the County's Job Performance.....	36
VI.	Use of the County's Website.....	49
VII.	Likely Participation in the ClimateSmart Program..	54
VIII.	Appendix: Percentage Results.....	61



# **I. OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY**



# OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to track several questions asked in past surveys, as well as test a number of new questions, in order to gauge how voters perceive various County issues today, and how some of these ratings have changed over time. In addition, the survey is designed to test several different ballot issues that may be considered for the ballot in 2009, or in subsequent years.



# METHODOLOGY

Talmey-Drake Research & Strategy, Inc. conducted the 2009 Boulder County Issues Survey in July of 2009. A random sample was drawn from a list of Boulder County voters.

- *Interviews were conducted between July 20 – July 27, 2009.*
- *Results are based on 600 telephone interviews.*
- *The margin of error is plus or minus 4.0% about any one reported percentage.*



## **II. KEY FINDINGS**



# KEY FINDINGS

## I. The Climate Today

**#1.** *Voters in the Boulder County are surprisingly optimistic in the face of some pretty tough economic times: 58% say that things in their community are going in the right direction. This compares favorably to a Statewide survey conducted by Talmey-Drake earlier this year showing just 43% of Coloradans statewide think things are going in the right direction. The bad news: The “Right direction” number for the County back in December of 2006 stood at 70%.*



# KEY FINDINGS

## I. The Climate Today (cont.)

**#2.** *The year 2009 will be a tough year to take tax proposals to the ballot. Unfortunately, the only tougher year might be 2010, when Colorado local governments, as well as the State, that have delayed asking voters for more money, feel they can wait no longer.*

*Several factors combine to make this year a tough sell. First, the economy. 22% cite the economy as the most important issue facing the County, up from just 5% in 2007. Second, just over a third of County voters have either lost their jobs or have been required take a significant pay cut in the past 6 months, on top of another 20% who fear they will in the next 6 to 12 months. And third, satisfaction with Boulder County government is on a downward trend over the past couple of years, and perception of local taxes being “too high” continues to rise, albeit slowly.*



# KEY FINDINGS

## II. Ballot Proposals Tested

**#3** *Of the three tax issues tested, all face an uncertain future if placed on the ballot in 2009, an off-year election. While the extension of the current sales tax for Open Space, as well as a new tax to fund early learning programs for at-risk kids appear at first blush to do quite well, an analysis of those most likely to vote in 2009 suggest they face an uncertain future.*

**#4** *In terms of where support is strongest for the tax initiatives tested, a disproportionate share comes from within the City of Boulder, while the bulk of opposition is found in Longmont and the Unincorporated areas and small towns throughout the County.*



# KEY FINDINGS

## II. Ballot Proposals Tested (cont.)

**#5** *It also appears 2009 will not be particularly kind to proposals to extend the term limits from two terms to three for County Commissioners and the District Attorney: neither garners even a third of the vote in favor. And this issue is not perceived in partisan terms either, as Democratic voters, those most likely to support such initiatives in Boulder County, only account for a 34% to 35% “yes” vote on these two term limit proposals.*



# KEY FINDINGS

## III. Rating the County's Job Performance

**#6** *Voters give the County lukewarm positive ratings on providing its residents with opportunities to be heard, as well as on taking into account what the community feels is important. And those living in Longmont and in Unincorporated areas and small towns of the County offer the most negative assessment.*

**#7** *The County does significantly better in the way it handles contacts from residents of Boulder County, earning an “excellent” or “good” rating of 78% on the way it handled their most recent contacts.*



# KEY FINDINGS

## IV. Use of the County's Website

**#8** *The County's website has at one point or another attracted almost 60% of voters throughout the County, and 70% of those website users appear to find what they are looking for.*

## V. Likely Participation in the ClimateSmart Program

**#9** *Today, familiarity with this relatively new program is limited to just over a third of County voters, with the highest level of familiarity found in the unincorporated and small town areas of the County. And about 20% of homeowners overall say they are likely to apply for a loan offered by the ClimateSmart Program, with a disproportionate percent coming from the SE Cities area. The actual number, however, will likely be closer to 10% of those aware of the Program.*



# III. THE CLIMATE TODAY



# Climate and Overview

2009 will be a challenging year for any tax proposals that are put on the ballot in Colorado. In a Talmey-Drake statewide poll conducted earlier this year, 43% of Coloradans thought things were going in the right direction, while 45% signaled wrong track. In Boulder County, however, 58% reply “Right direction.” Yet this represents a dramatic shift from the 2006 ratings of 70% right direction; 16% wrong. Further, there are some underlying figures that are far from encouraging.

In fact, a third of Boulder County voters say that someone in their household has either lost a job or taken a substantial pay cut in the past year. And another 20% fear that they will at some point in the next six months. Longmont and the Unincorporated areas are being particularly hard hit (15 to 20 points higher than Boulder or the SE Cities).



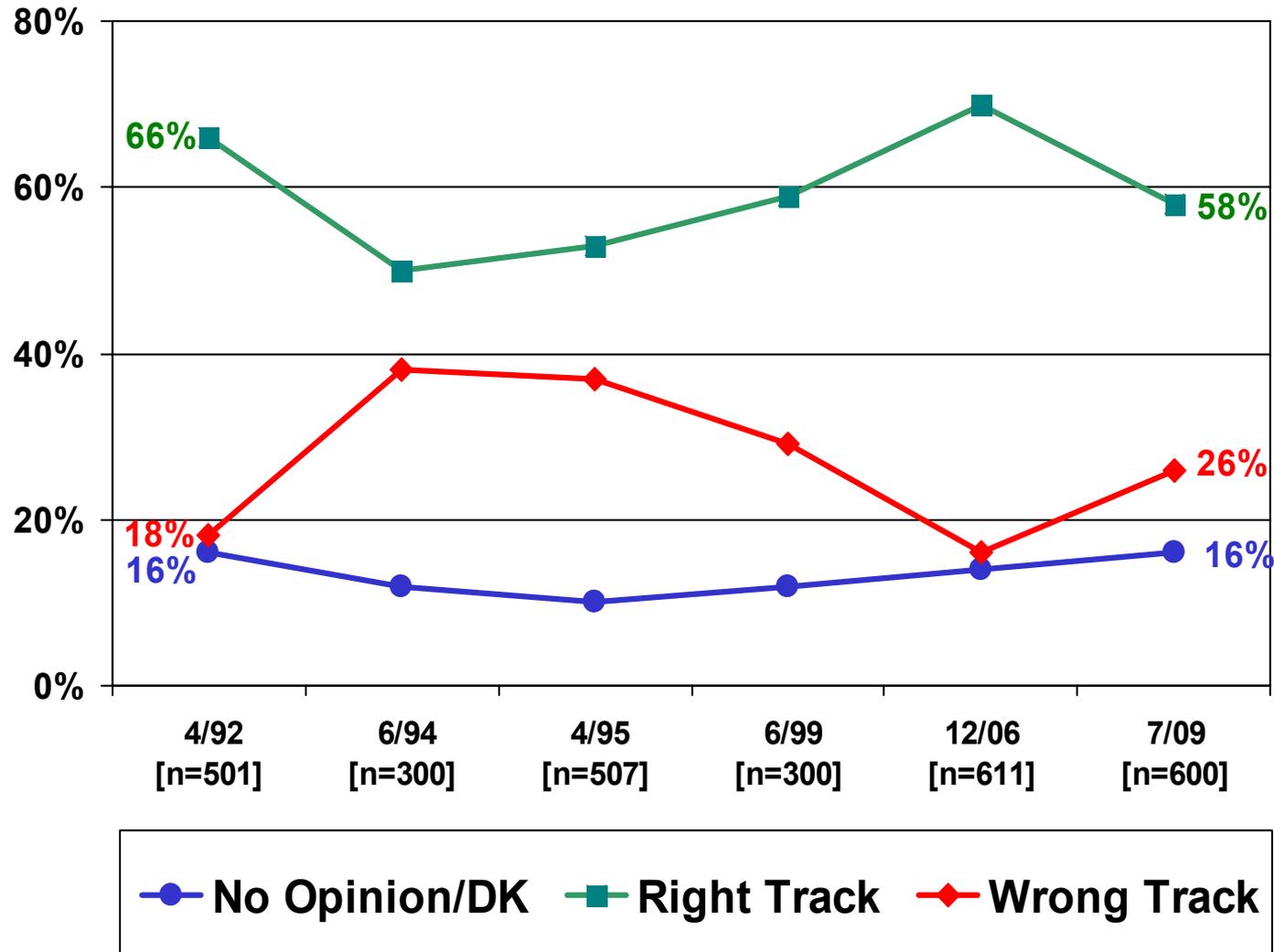
# Climate and Overview *(cont.)*

Further, satisfaction with Boulder County government is on a downward trend over the past two years, though a healthy majority still do express some level of satisfaction, as opposed to dissatisfaction.

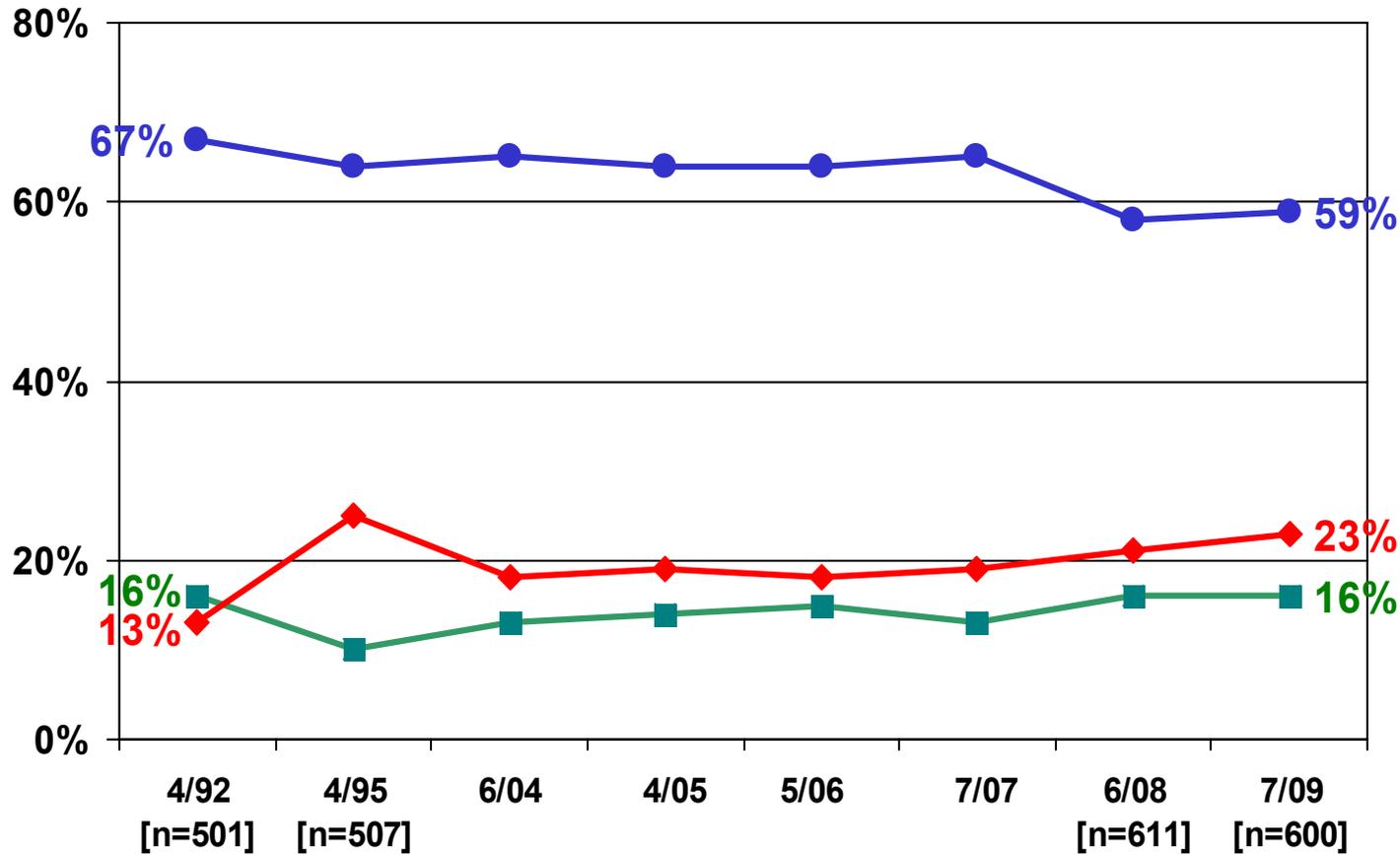
Finally, the perception of local taxes being too high continues to rise, and the 61% saying taxes are either “Way too high” or “High but acceptable” is almost 10 points higher than it was as recently as July of 2007. And voters in Longmont and the SE Cities appear to feel the most strongly about their tax levels, as they are significantly more likely to say “Too high” than are voters in Boulder.



# How are Things Going in Boulder County Today?



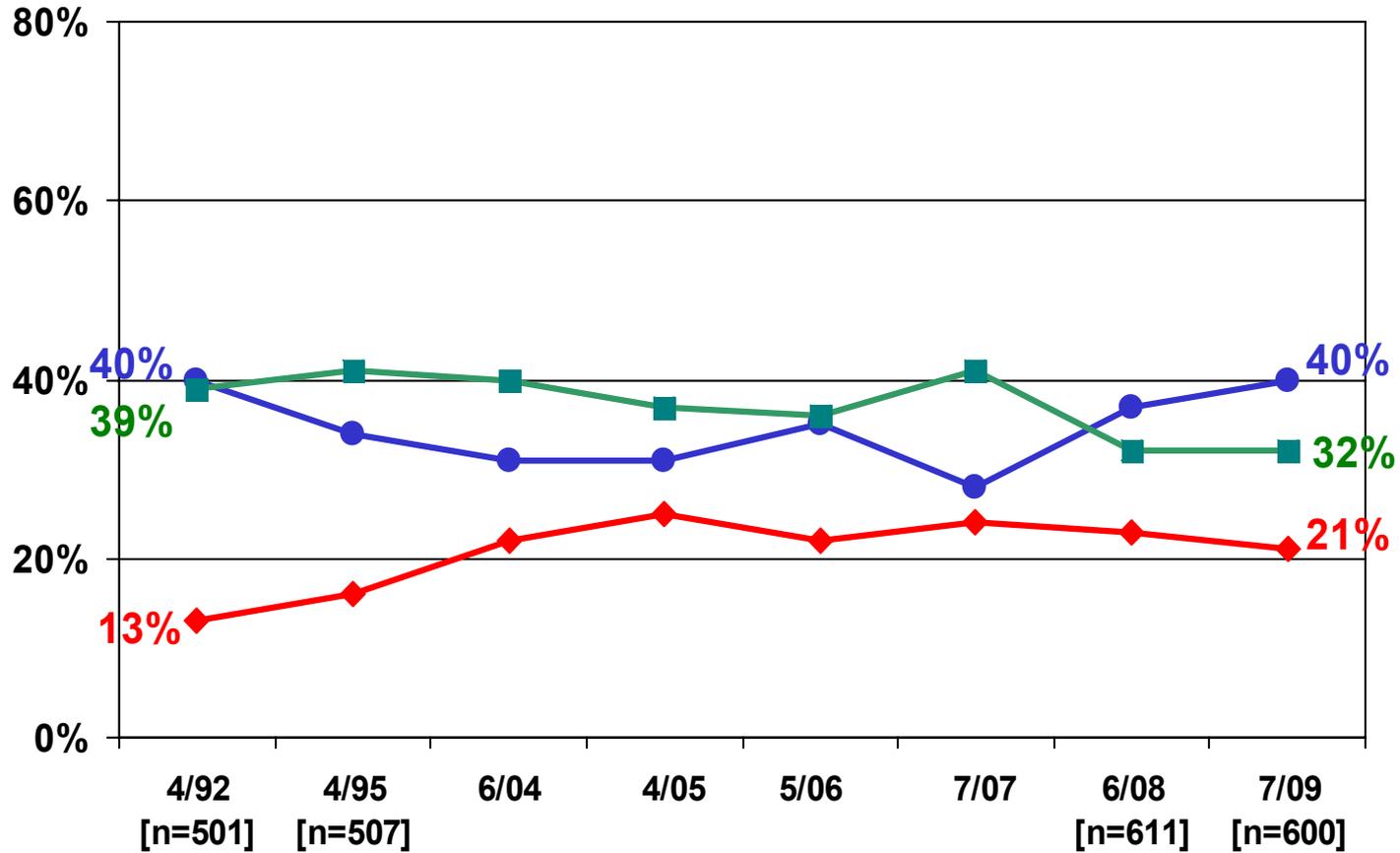
# Satisfaction With Boulder County Government



● Somewhat satisfied   
 ■ Very Satisfied   
 ◆ Dissatisfied



# Perception of Boulder County Taxes



● High but Acceptable    
 ■ About Right    
 ◆ Too High



# Climate and Overview

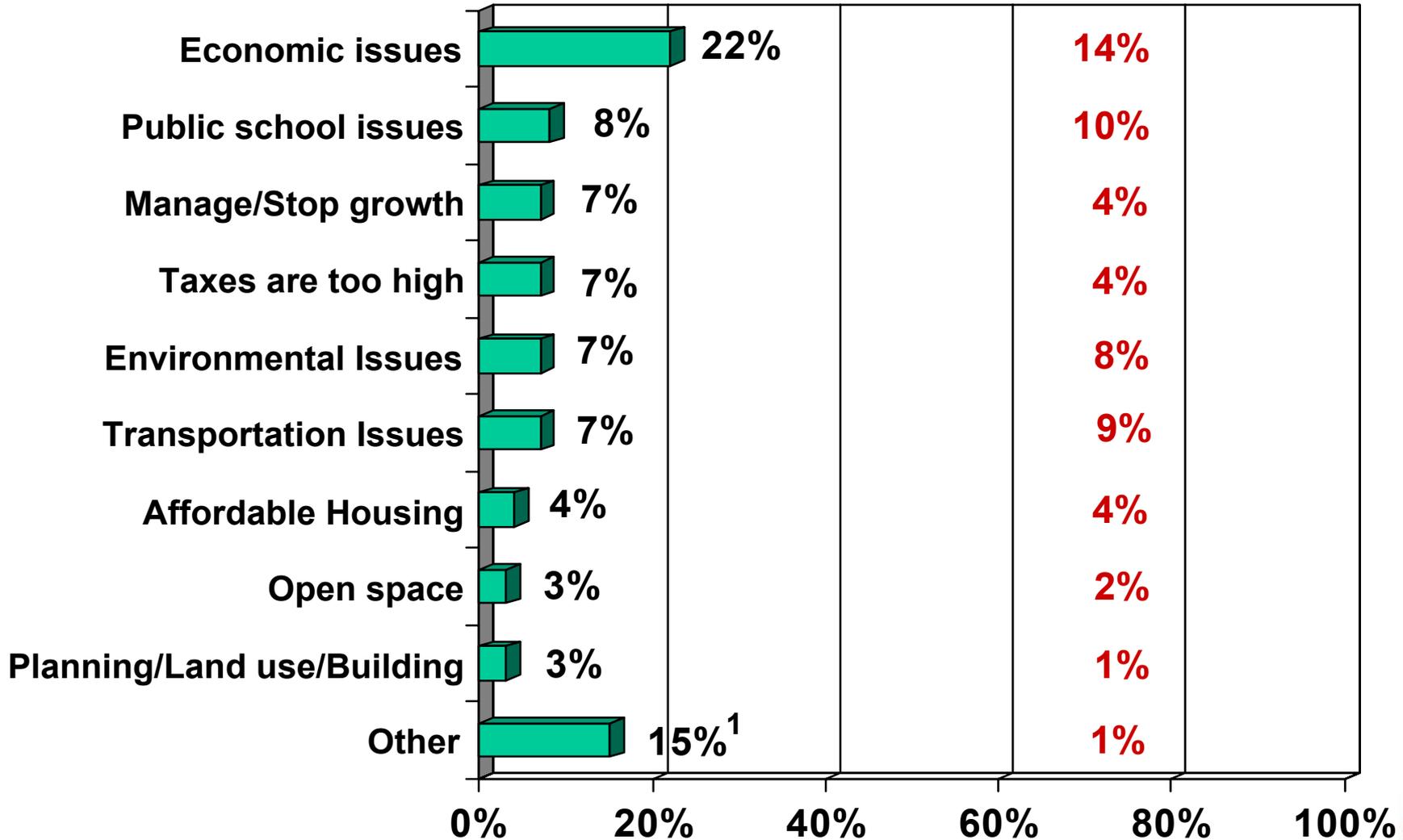
Voters were also asked to name what they feel are the top issues facing Boulder County government today. It is little surprise that the economy (22%) rises to the top. It is also no surprise that concerns expressed about the economy has soared over the past couple of years. While some might suggest that a 22% rating seems low given the economic crises we are facing, people do differentiate between what is a Washington, DC problem and what is a local problem.



# Most Important Issue Facing Boulder County Today

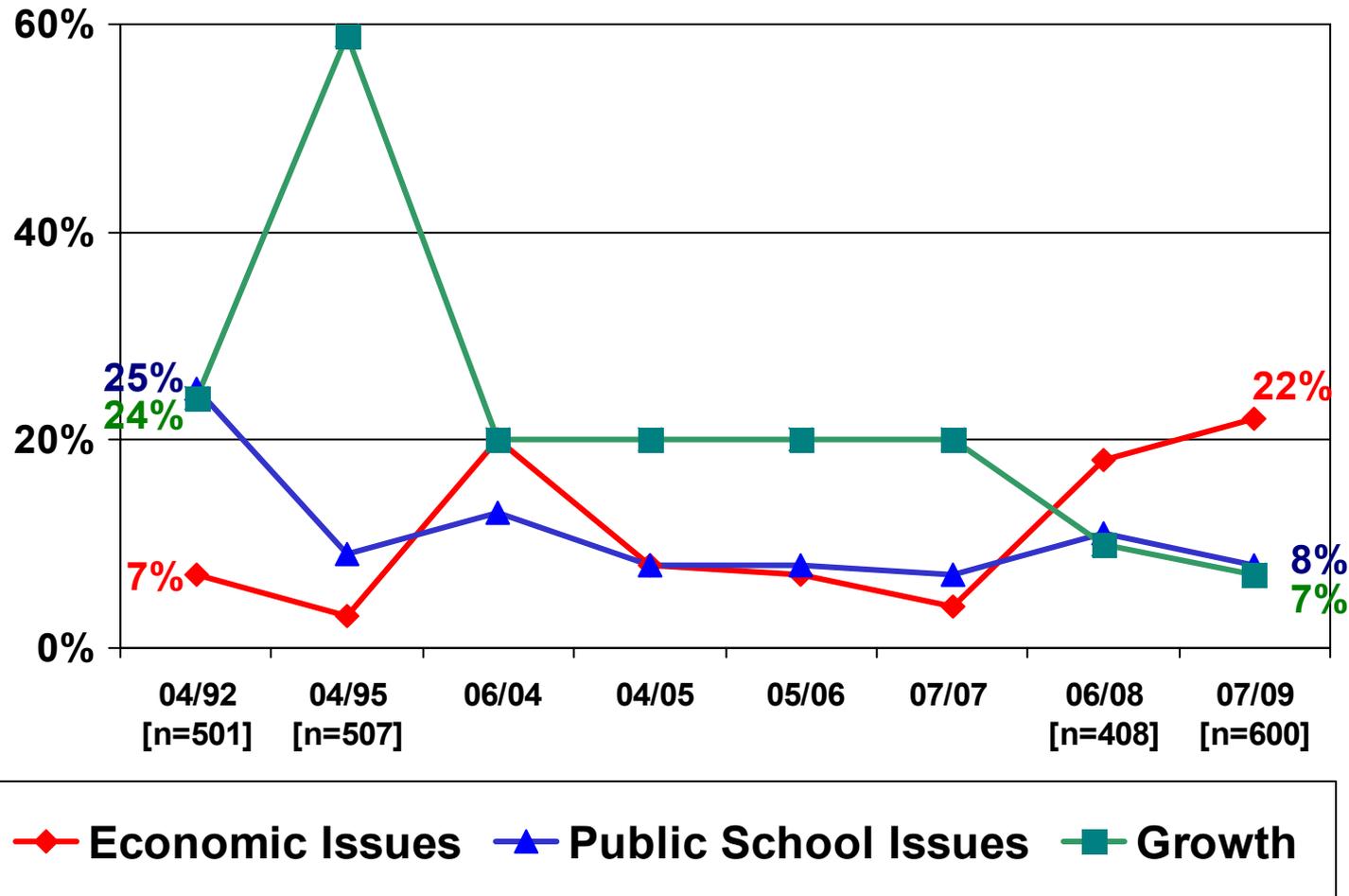
[n=600]

Next Most Important



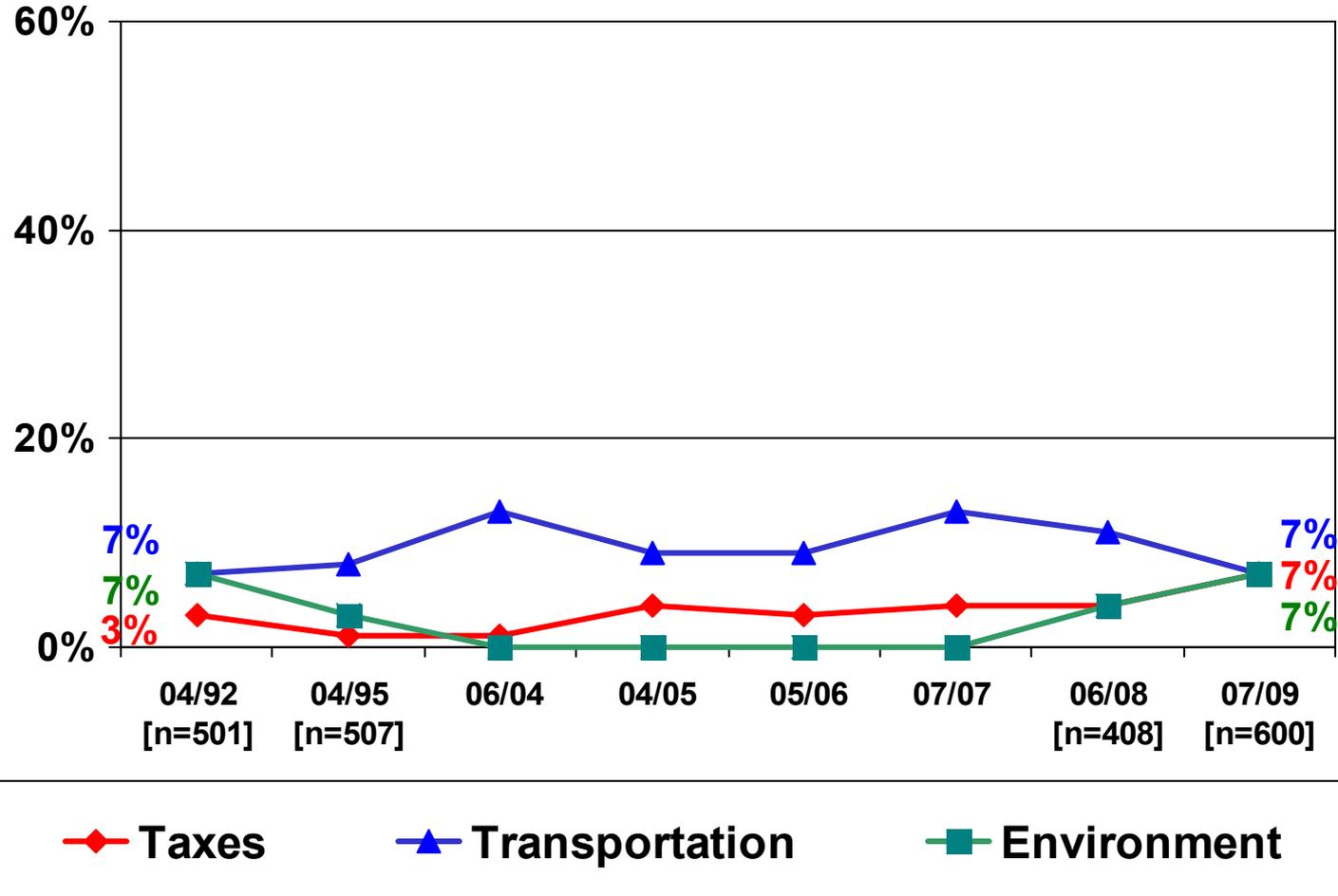
# Trend Line of Most Important Issue

-Top Issues in 2009-



# Trend Line of Most Important Issue

-Top Issues in 2009-



# **III. BALLOT PROPOSALS TESTED**



# Ballot Proposals Tested

Voters were read six different ballot initiatives, and asked how they would vote on each:

- A 15 year extension of the current .25% open space sales tax, set to expire in 2019. Half the voters were given an explanation why it is being requested now, instead of waiting;
- An increase in the County open space tax. Half were read an increase of 1/10 of a cent; half were read 2/10's of a cent;
- A new 1/10 of a cent sales tax increase for 10 years to funding childcare and early learning programs for at-risk kids;
- Increasing the allowed terms for the Commissioners from 2 terms to 3 terms, Half were told it would apply to current office holders; half were told it would not;
- Increasing the allowed terms for the DA from 2 terms to 3 terms, Half were told it would apply to current office holders; half were told it would not; and
- Allow the County to issue an additional \$40 million in bonds, with no tax increase, to fund more low interest ClimateSmart Loans.



# Ballot Proposals Tested

As it turns out, in terms of extending the open space sales tax proposal, providing an explanation as to why people are voting today on extending a tax that doesn't expire till 2019 does boost the vote in favor, but not by a huge amount. But with any tax election, the smallest advantage may provide the margin needed.

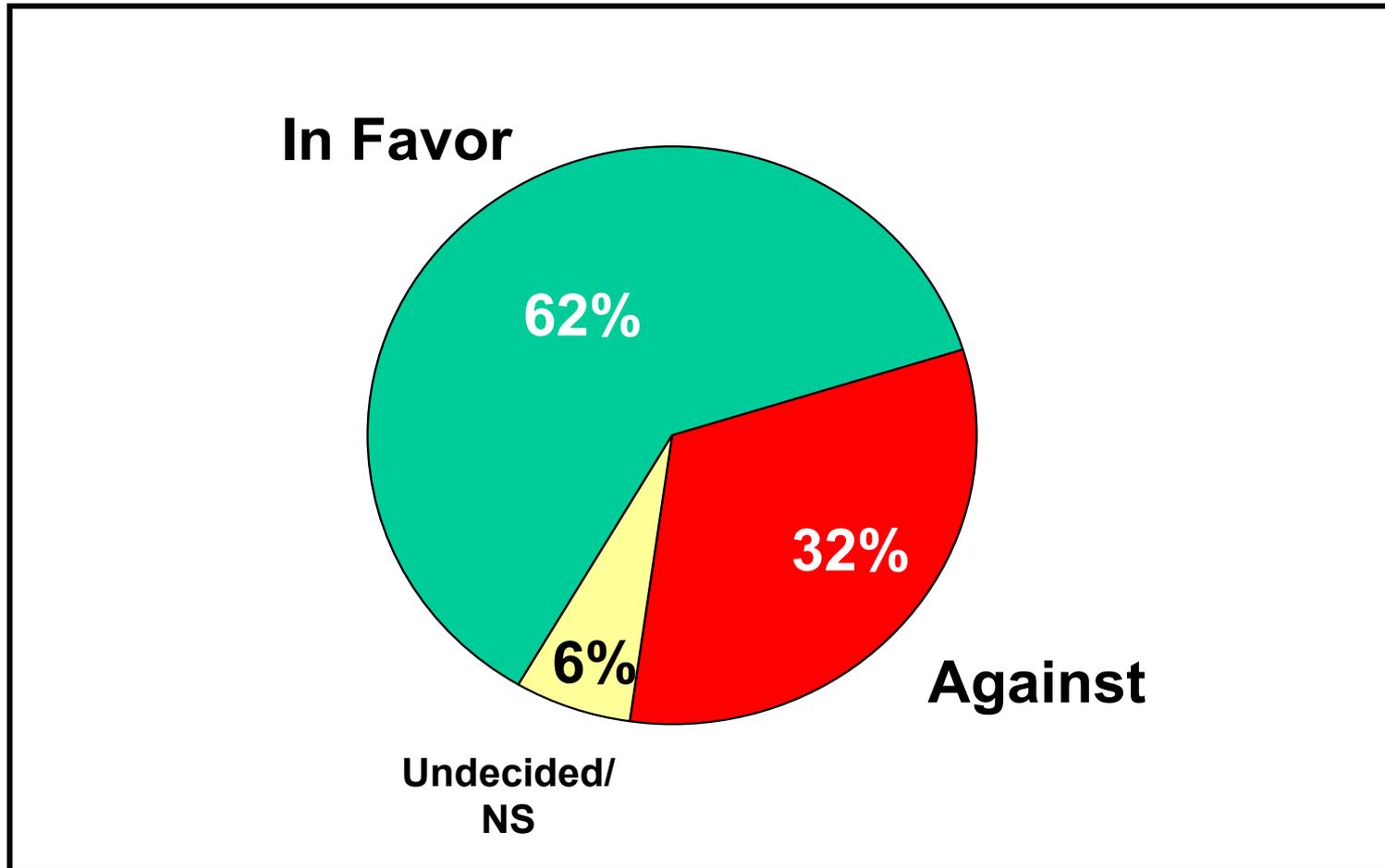
In terms of a new sales tax for open space, the difference in support of a 1/10 and a 2/10's of a cent sales tax increase is minimal, so if one were to go to the ballot with such a proposal, it would make sense to go with the higher level. As will be seen below, however, neither is likely to pass today.

Finally, an extension of term limits that does not apply to current office holders does garner more support than one that does, at least for the Commissioners, but again, in today's environment, neither is likely to pass.

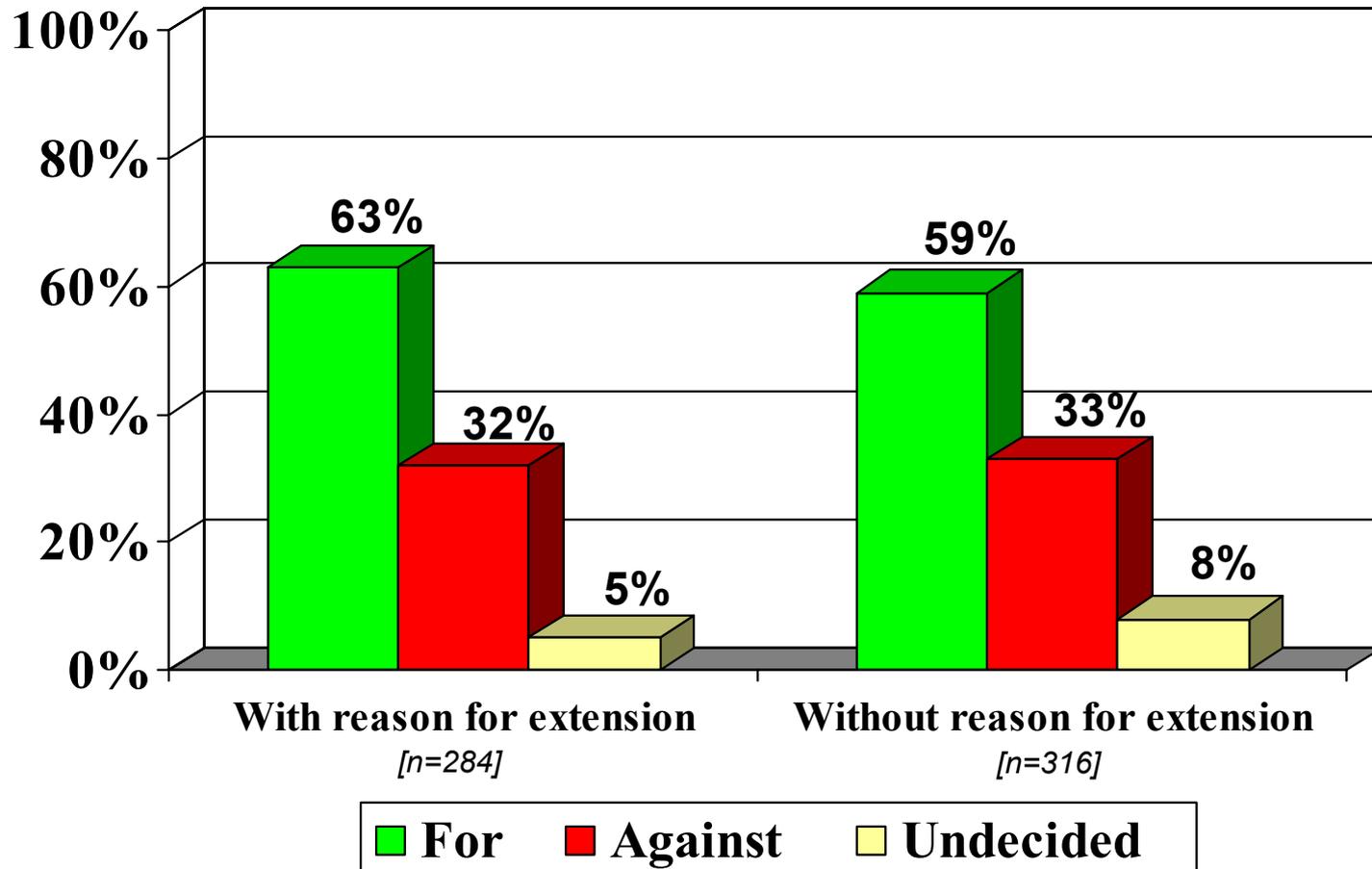


# Results of Proposed 15 Year Extension of the .25% County Open Space Sales Tax

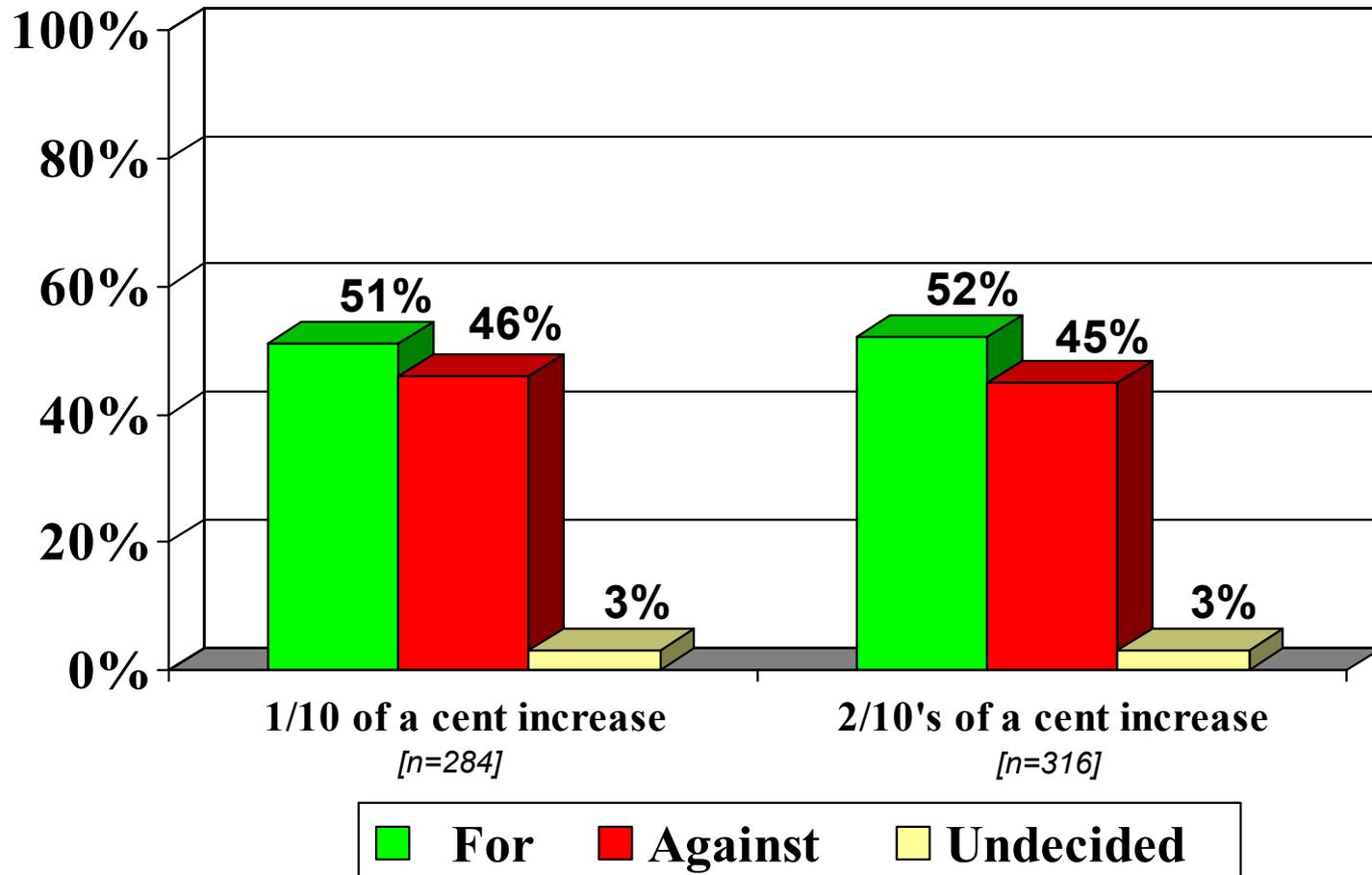
[n=600]



# Results of Proposed 15 Year Extension of the .25% County Open Space Sales Tax

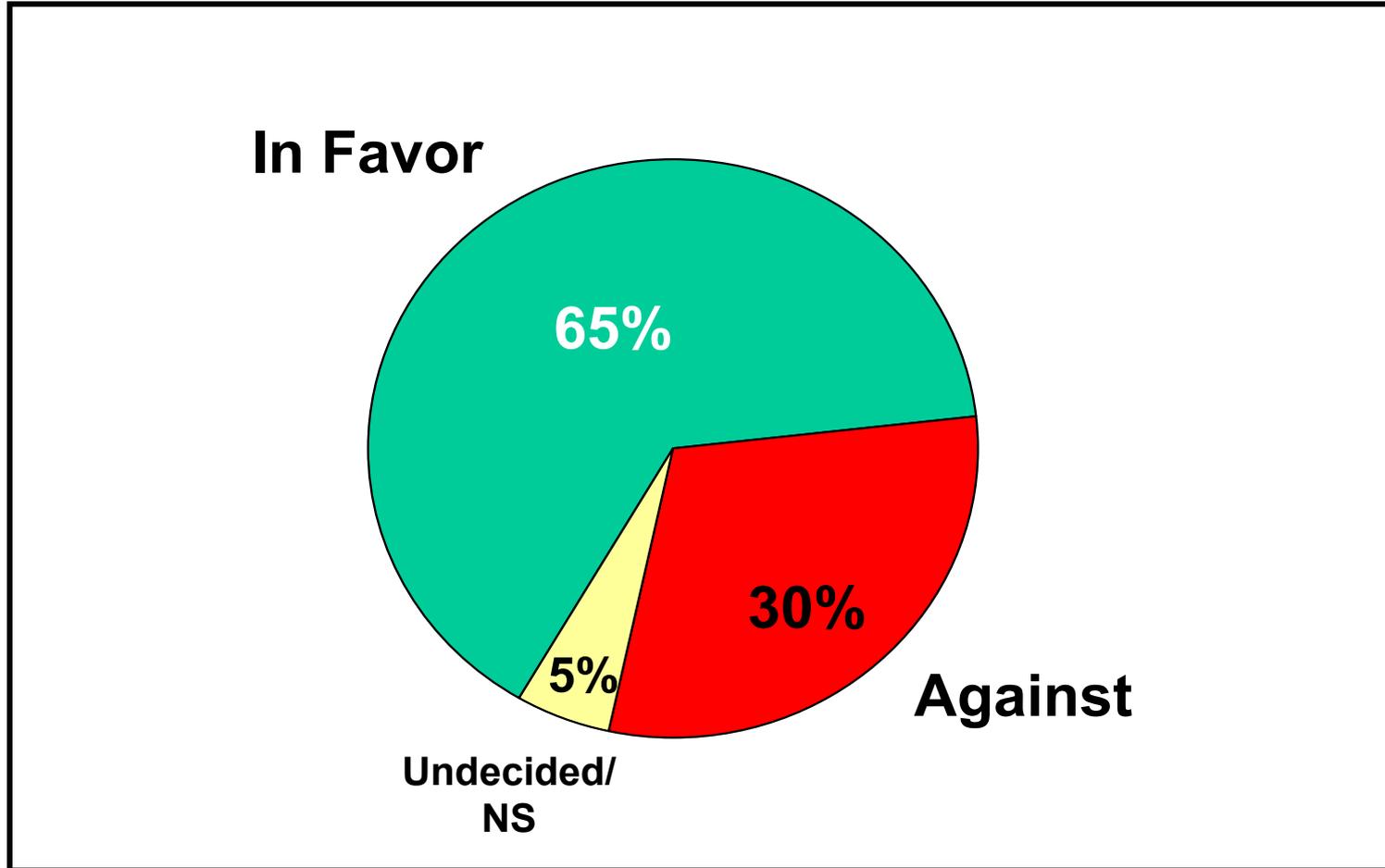


# Results of Proposed Sales Tax Increase to Manage & Acquire more Open Space

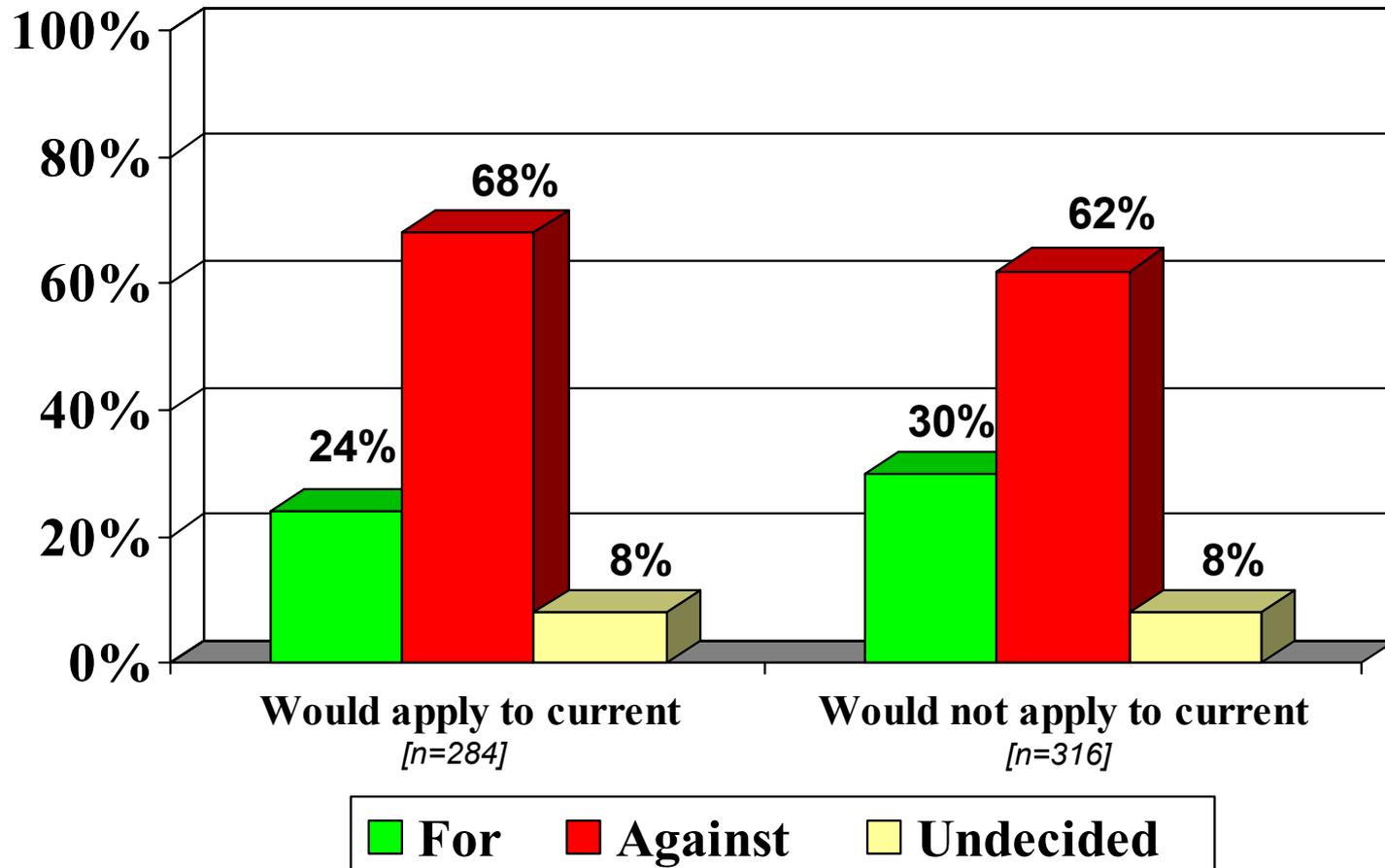


# Results of Proposed New 1/10 of One cent Sales Tax increase for Childcare & Early Learning for At-Risk Kids

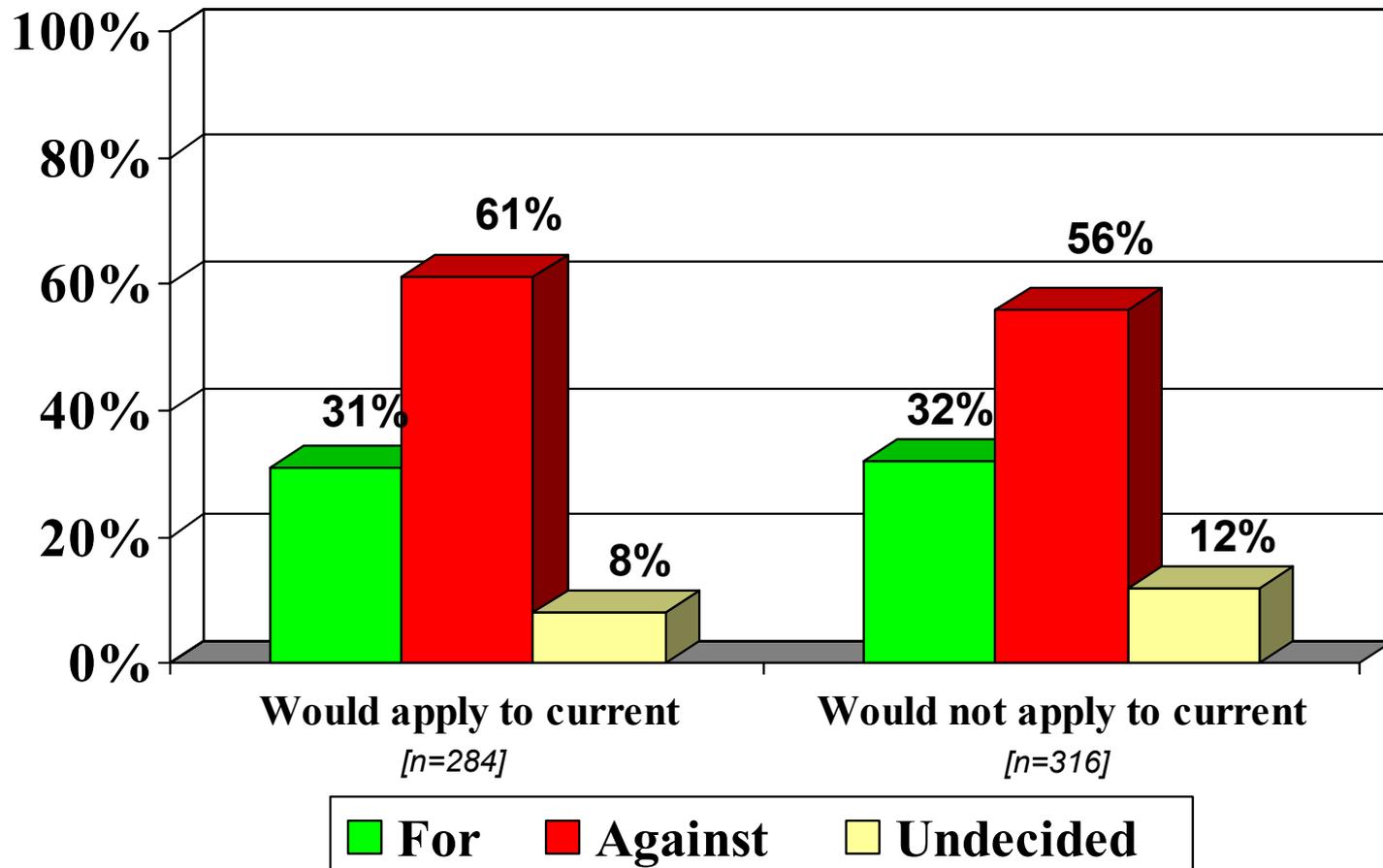
[n=600]



# Results of Changing Commissioner Term Limits from Maximum of Two Terms to Three Terms

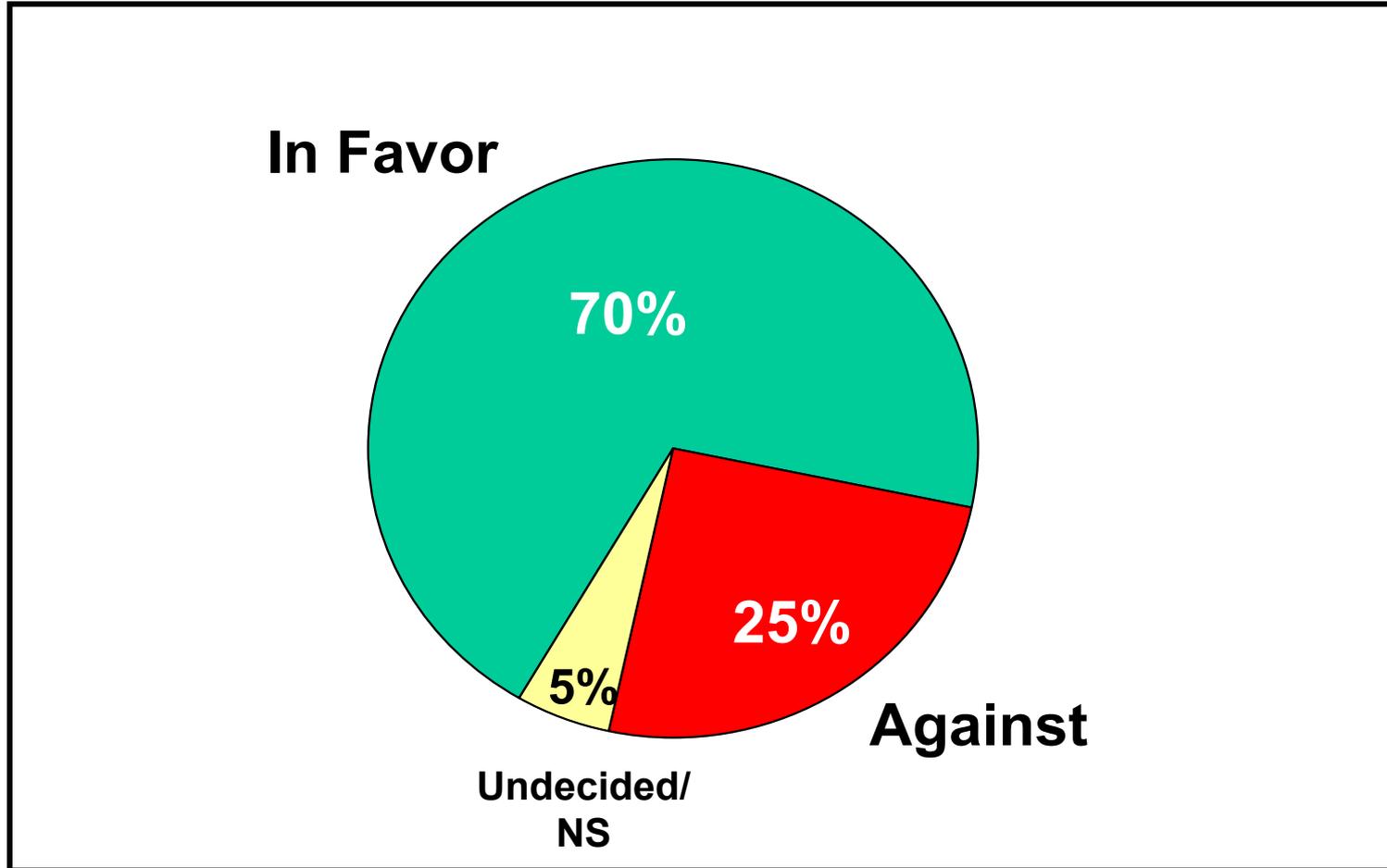


# Results of Changing DA's Term Limits from Maximum of Two Terms to Three Terms



# <sup>31</sup> Results of Proposal to Issue Additional \$40 Million in Bonds for ClimateSmart Program, With No Tax Increase

[n=600]



# Ballot Proposals Tested *(cont.)*

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

- Likely Voters
- Gender
- Age
- Those most affected by the economy

While voters living within the City of Boulder lead the charge in support of all the tax increase proposals, there is a degree of geographic uniformity when it comes to support of extending term limits, with all four areas expressing similar minimal degrees of support.



# Demographic Breakouts of Ballot Proposal Votes

- Shows percent saying “In Favor” -

[n=600]

Ballot Proposal	Total	Boulder	Longmont	SE Cities <sup>1</sup>	Uninc.
Open Space Extension	62%	72%	50%	63%	55%
New Open Space Tax	52%	67%	46%	48%	35%
Early Learning Tax	65%	74%	61%	63%	57%
Commissioner Term Limits	27%	30%	23%	31%	20%
DA Term Limits	31%	34%	26%	35%	30%
\$40 Million for ClimateSmart	70%	76%	65%	69%	66%

<sup>1</sup> As in the past, the “S.E. Cities” category is comprised of Louisville, Lafayette, Superior and Erie, as well as other small towns.



# Ballot Proposals Tested *(cont.)*

The following demographic chart shows the difficulty any tax increase election will face in a 2009 off-year election. Likely voters<sup>1</sup> are not particularly enamored with any of the tax proposals tested, as just 54% and 56% say they will be voting in favor of the two garnering the highest votes: Open Space sales tax extension and the Early Learning initiative, respectively. This is far short of the over 60% level that conventional wisdom indicates is needed in pre-election polls to predict with any degree of certainty that a measure will ultimately pass come the election. While there are certainly documented exceptions to this guideline, our troubling, and uncertain, economic times only serves to reinforce the need for a higher, not a lower, initial polling number.

Further, a significant percent of the vote in favor of the various tax initiatives tested comes from those voters who are most affected by the economy.<sup>2</sup> Between 50% and 65% percent of these economically challenged voters say they will vote in favor of the three tax increase proposals. But in the end, will they really?

<sup>1</sup> Likely voters, which make up 47% of the voters interviewed for this survey, are defined using a combination of how much voters follow and participate in politics, as well as their past self-identified voting behavior.

<sup>2</sup> These voters, representing 54% of the electorate, have either lost their jobs or taken a significant pay cut in the past year (34%), or anticipate they will in the next 6 months (20%)



# Demographic Breakouts of Ballot Proposal Votes

- Shows percent saying "In Favor" -

[n=600]

Ballot Proposal	Total	Likely Voters	Males	Females	Affected by economy
Open Space Extension	62%	54%	62%	61%	58%
New Open Space Tax	52%	40%	50%	53%	50%
Early Learning Tax	65%	56%	59%	72%	65%
Commissioner Term Limits	27%	27%	28%	26%	26%
DA Term Limits	31%	34%	30%	32%	31%
\$40 Million for ClimateSmart	70%	63%	66%	74%	71%



# **V. RATING THE COUNTY'S JOB PERFORMANCE**



# Rating the County's Job Performance

In politics, a key rating on which elected officials often focus is whether voters think their elected officials care about people like them. The same holds true for government. And two indicators of that “caring” is whether voters feel government makes available opportunities for their voices to be heard, and whether their local government actually takes those voices into consideration when making key policy decisions.

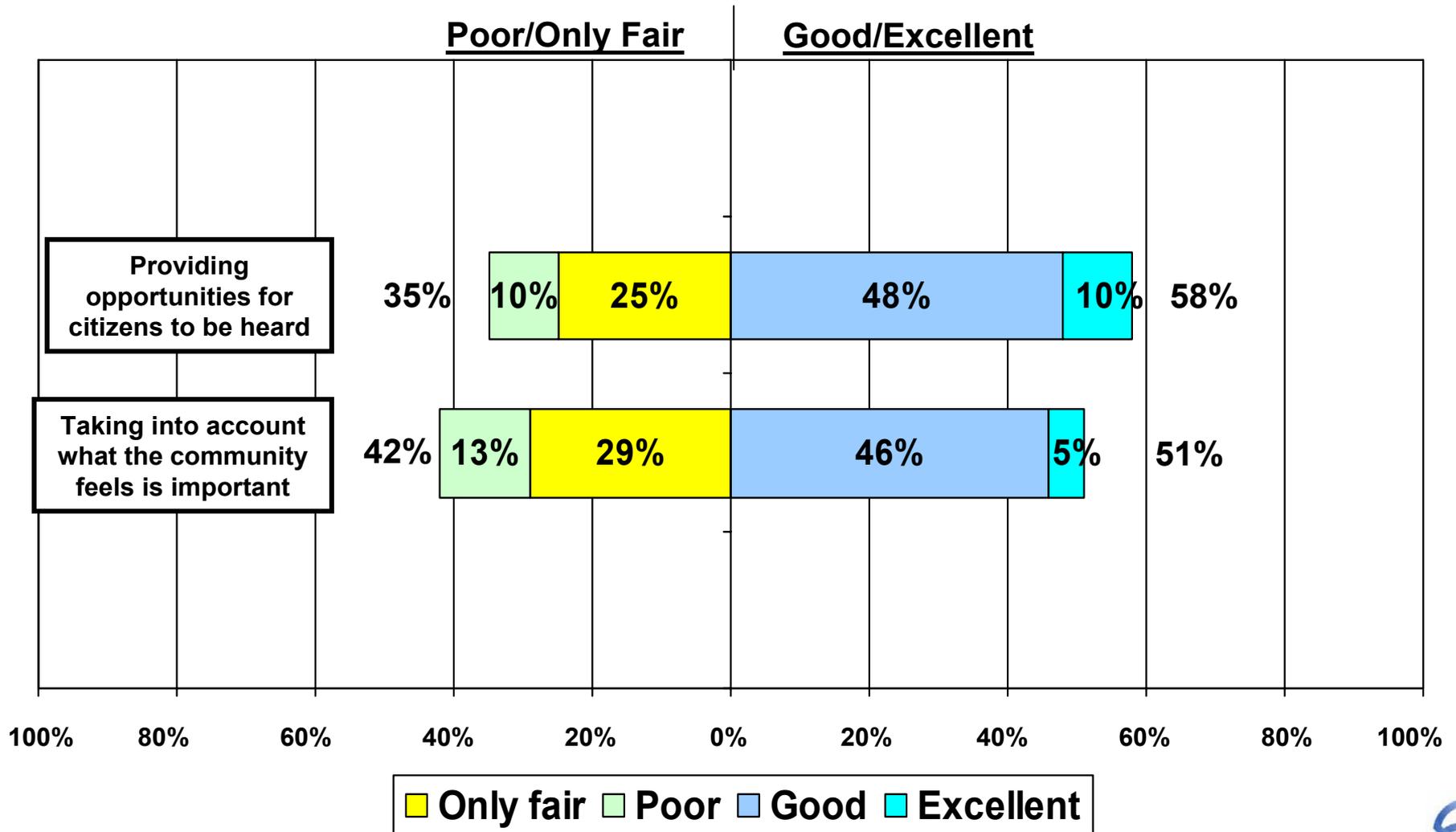
That said, how does the Boulder County government stack up on these two key indicators? Not great. But one does need to keep in mind that government on every level today is held in greater disfavor than in the past, which makes the challenge of earning the trust of its residents today particularly daunting.

What is particularly note worthy is that voters in Longmont and voters living in unincorporated areas appear to feel particularly left out of the decision-making process.



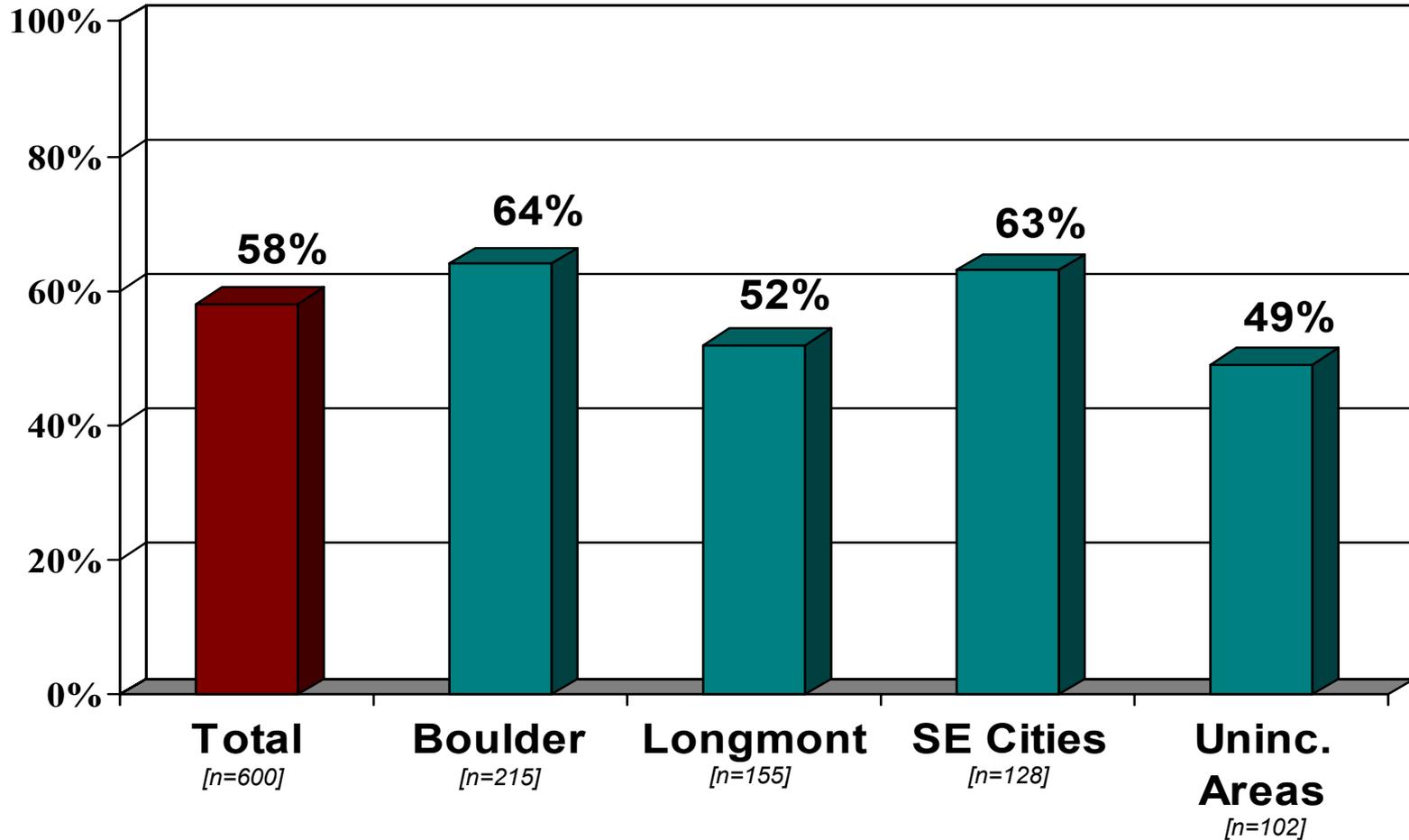
# Rating the County's Job Performance

[n=600]



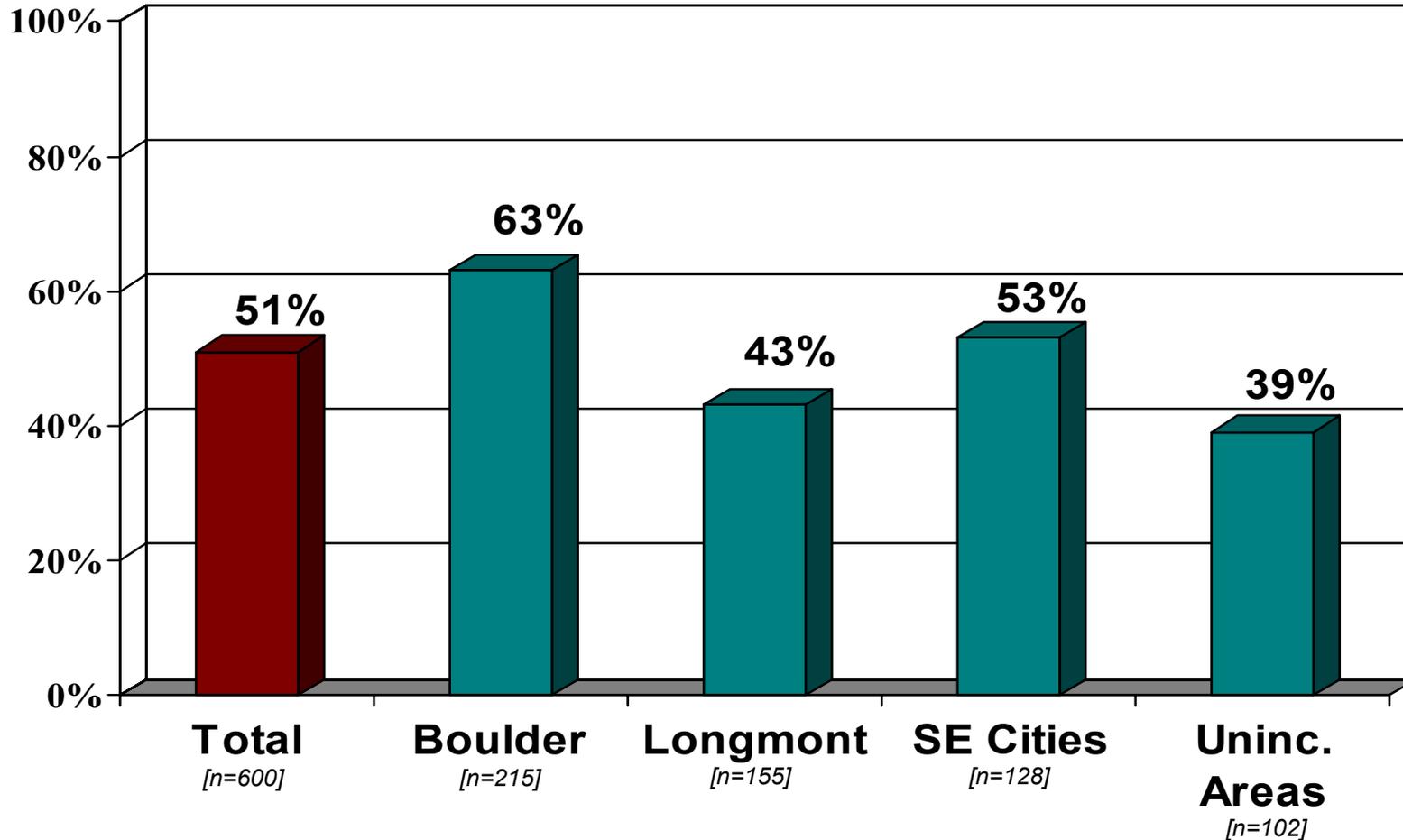
# Rating the County's Job Performance on "Providing citizens with Opportunities to be Heard"

- Percent rating "Only fair" or "Poor" -



# <sup>40</sup> Rating the County on “Taking into Account What Community feels is Important”

- Percent rating “Only fair” or “Poor” -



## Rating the County's Job Performance *(cont.)*

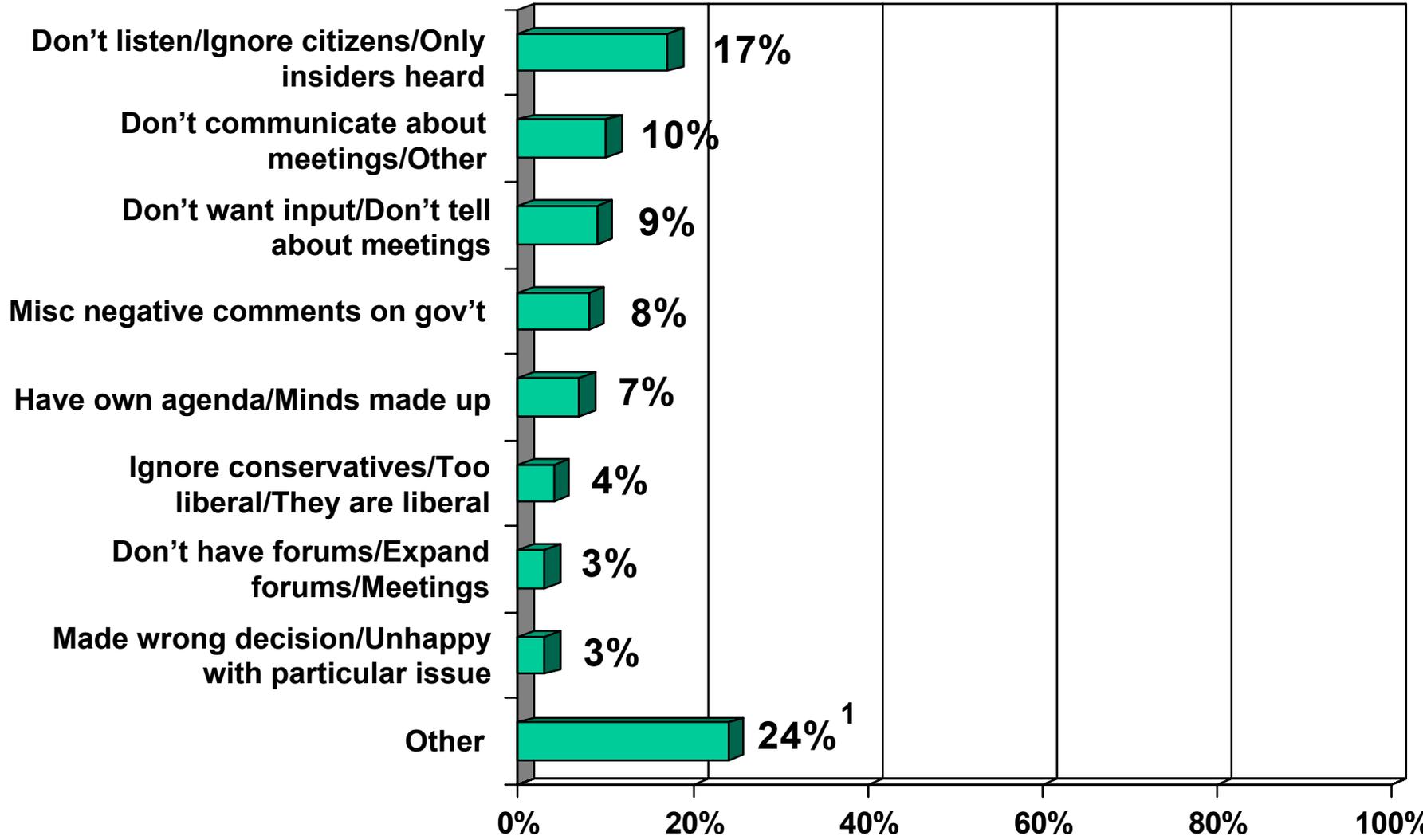
Voters who gave negative ratings (“Only fair” or “Poor”) on the two citizen involvement items just discussed were given the opportunity to say what it is that leads them to rate the performance of the County negatively. A pattern emerges that these voters feel that the County is operating on a predetermined agenda, and tends to listen to most to those who support that agenda, and least to those who don't.

Those, of course, are common responses given by those who disagree with decisions made by any local government. That is understood. In the present case, however, the negative ratings rise to over 40% of the electorate, which is not insignificant. This could be the result of many polarizing issues that come before the County (it is Boulder County), a lack of communication by the County, a way of operating that gives the impression of pre-determined results, or a rising intolerance of voters. Most likely, however, it is a combination of all three.



# Reasons for Negative Rating for “Providing citizens with Opportunities to be Heard”

[n=207]

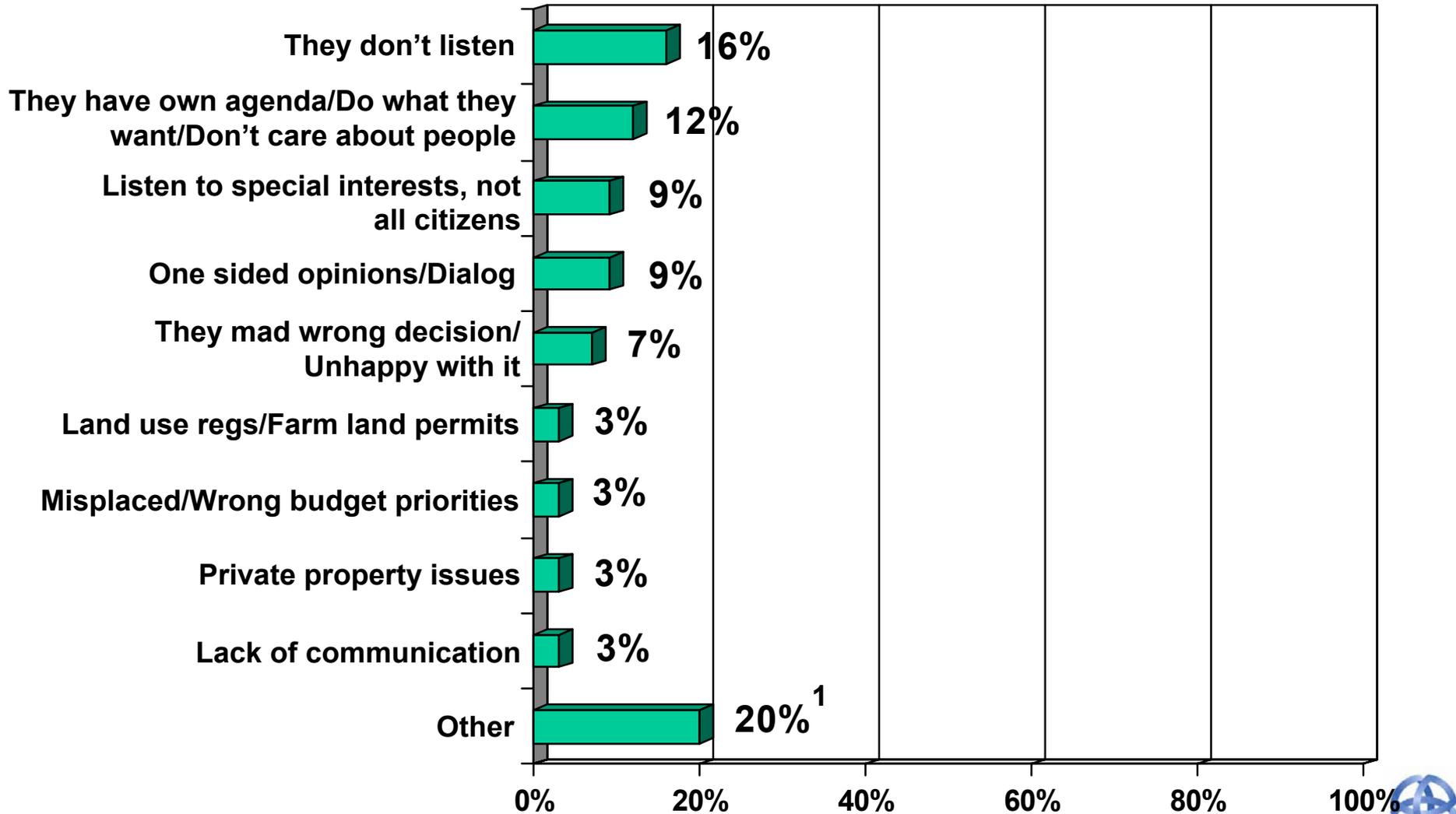


<sup>1</sup> No coded responses included in “Other” exceed 2%.



# Reasons for Negative Rating for “Taking Into Account What the Community Feels is Important”

[n=250]



<sup>1</sup> No coded responses included in “Other” exceed 2%.



# Rating the County's Job Performance *(cont.)*

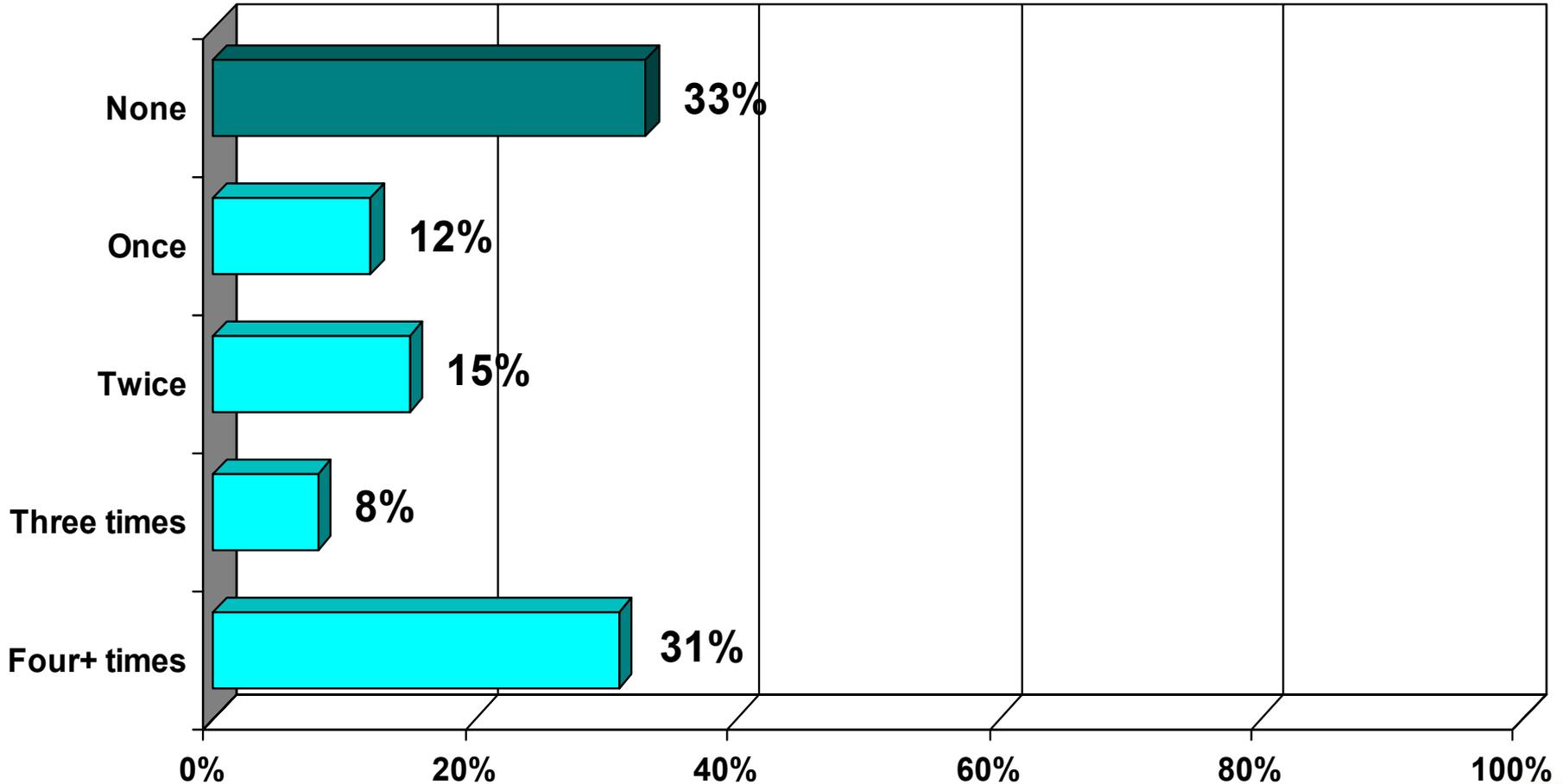
Voters were also asked how many times, if any, they had contacted the County in the past year; and if they had, how they initiated that contact and how they rated the County's handling of their experience.

It turns out that about the same number of people are not contacting the County at all as are contacting it four or more times (about a third). And fortunately, the County receives respectable ratings for the handling of those resident contacts. Further, there is an indication that the County is doing an even better job today than in the recent past—voters rate the handling of their last contact with the County significantly more positively than they do all their contacts combined.



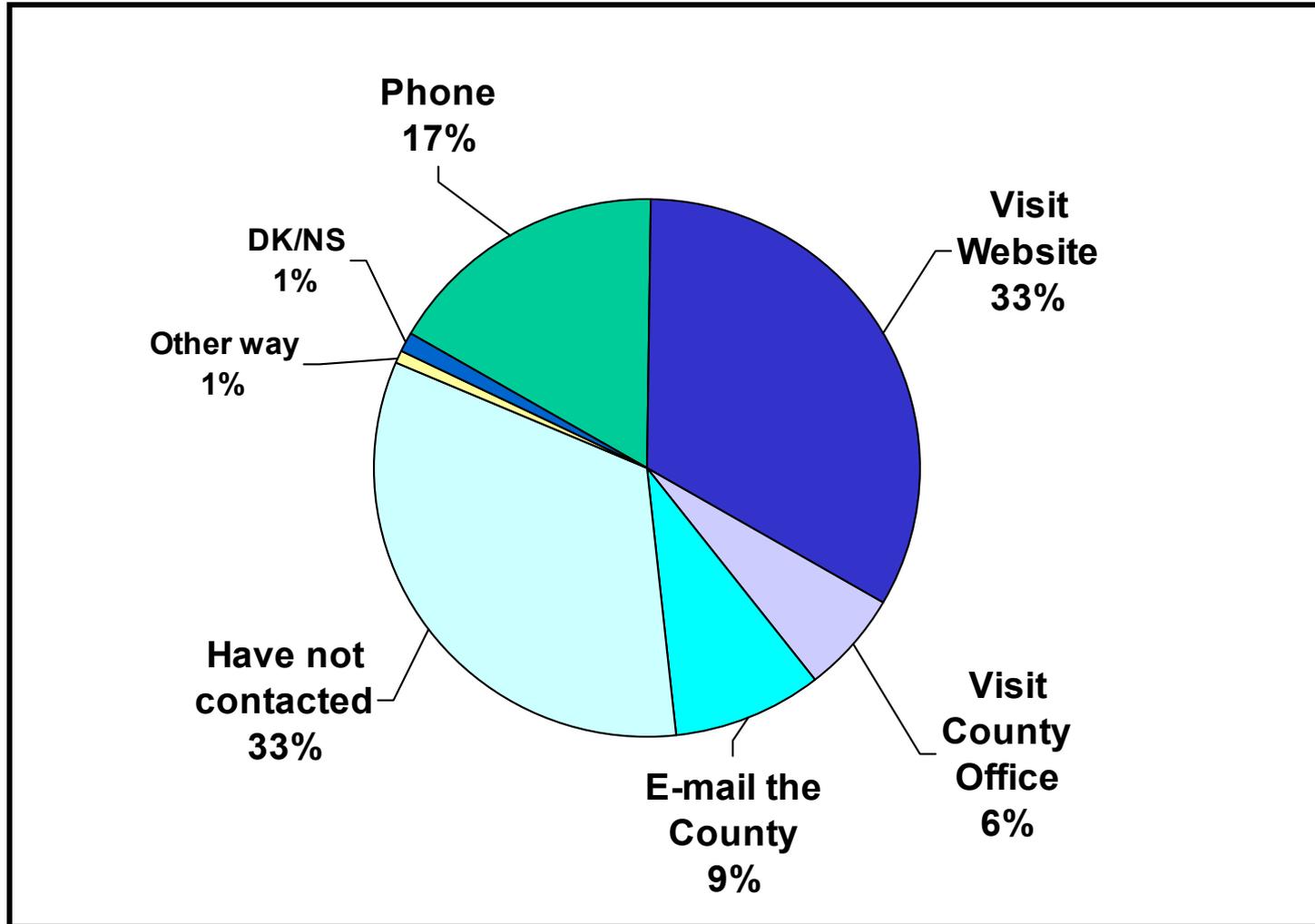
# How Many Times in Past 12 Months Have You Contacted Boulder County Gov't?

[n=600]



# How Do Voters Contact the County?

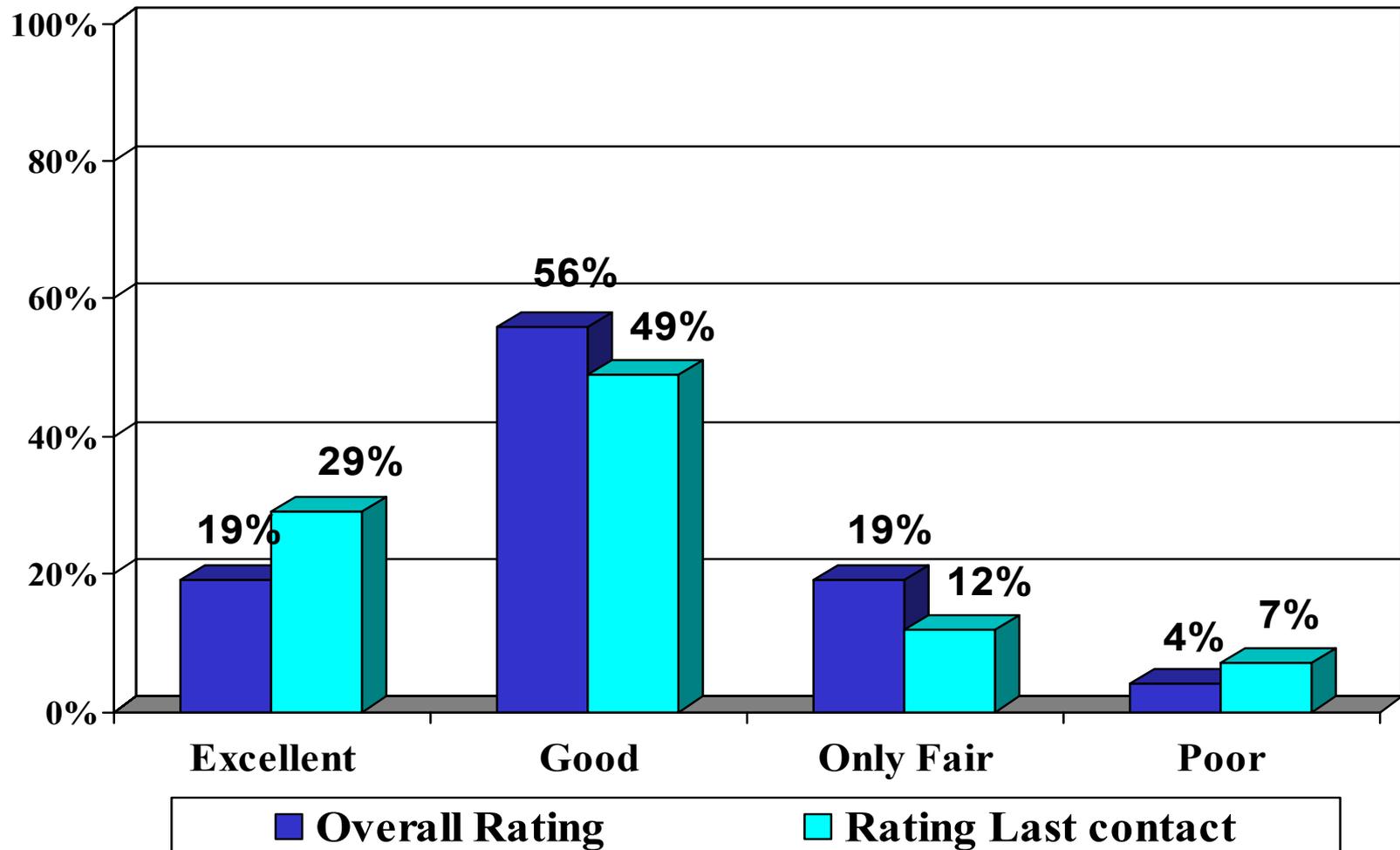
[n=600]



# Rating the County's Handling of Resident Contacts

- Asked only of people who had contacted the County -

[n=398]



# Rating the County's Job Performance *(cont.)*

It is important to understand that residents who contact their local government too often become a missed opportunity. Customer service contacts represent the chance to develop a positive relationship with voters/residents and move those who are dissatisfied into at least the *somewhat* satisfied category. Often times residents call in with a problem, and some are not all that pleasant to talk to. Yet employees need to look at every angry voter calling them with a problem as an opportunity to convert an angry constituent into a friend, rather than viewing customer requests or complaints as simply a problem to be solved. This is, of course, easier said than done.

This is particularly important, however, because people who have the most contact with the County are less likely to be supportive of the ballot proposals tested than are those who have fewer contacts.



# **VI. RATING THE COUNTY'S WEBSITE**



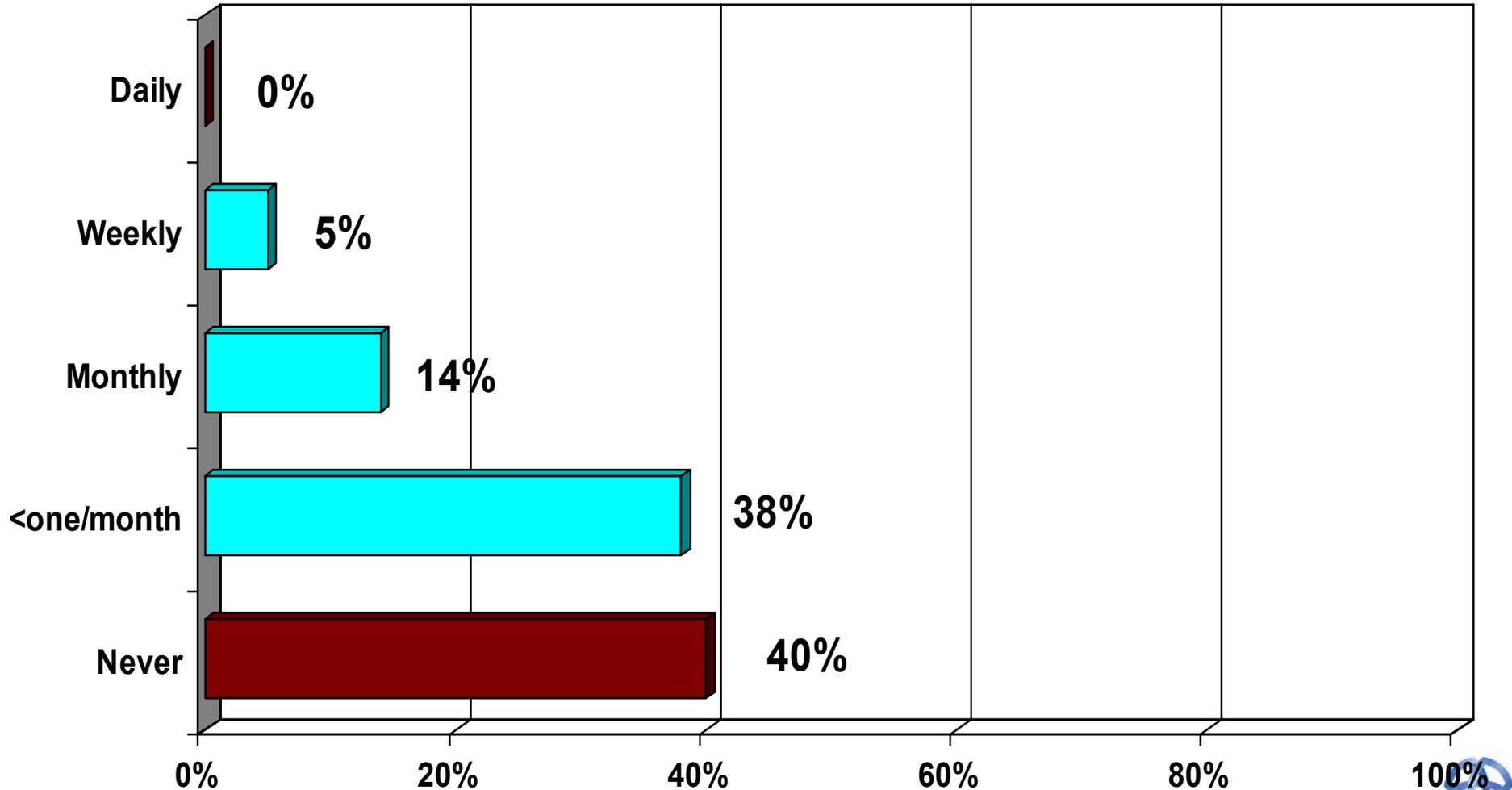
# Rating the County's Website

County voters were also asked how often, if ever, they tap into the County's website, and for those who do, how they rate the experience and what could make it better. Fifty-seven percent of voters say they are using the website at least once every few months, and they tend to give it moderately positive (predominantly "good" as opposed to "excellent") ratings. Fortunately, complaints about what cannot be found on the site are not widespread.



# How Often Do You Visit the Boulder County Website?

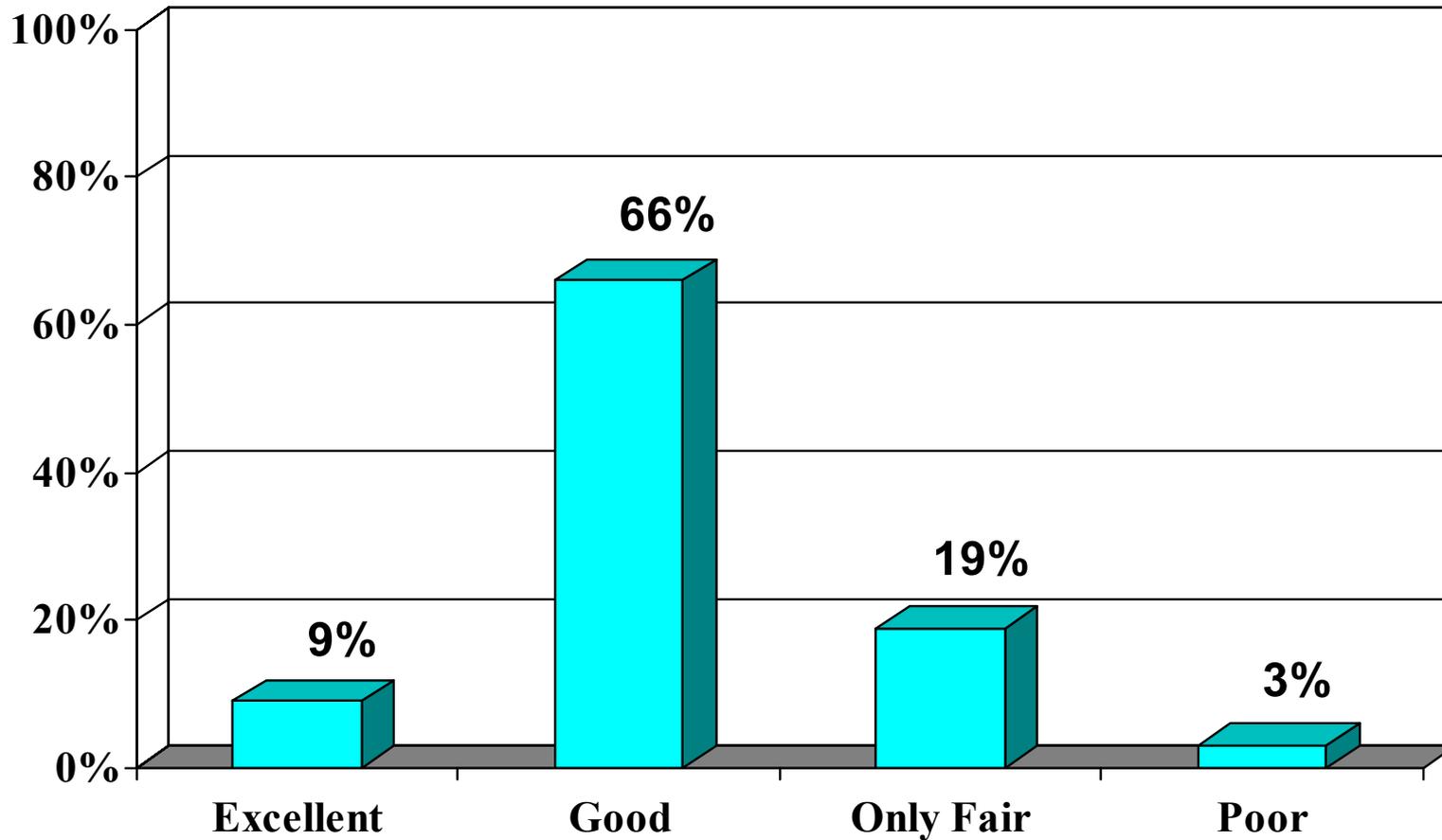
[n=600]



# How Would You Rate the Boulder County Website

- Asked only of those who had visited the County website -

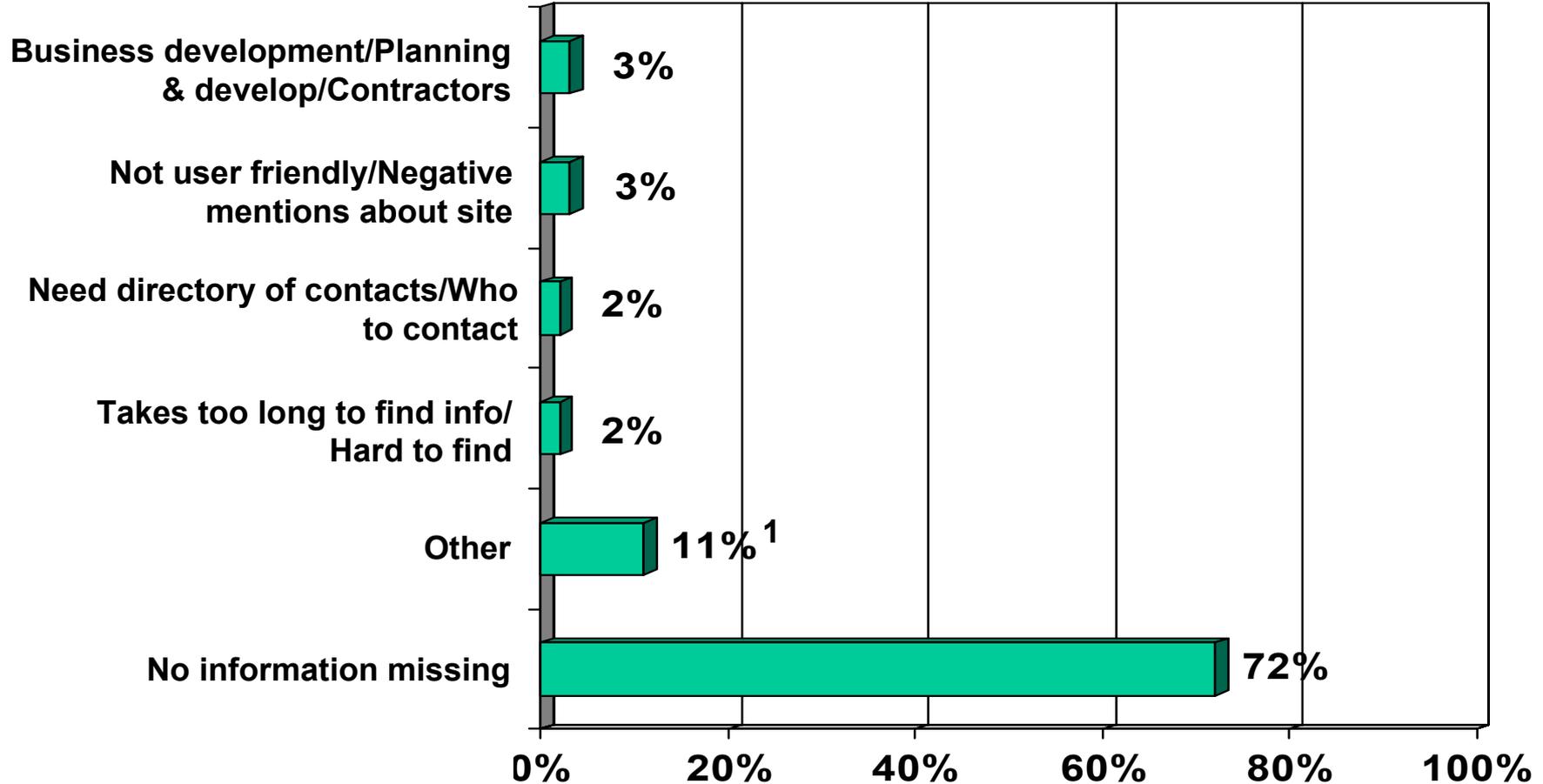
[n=348]



# What is Missing From the Website/ What Could You Not Find?

-Asked of those who had visited the County Website"-

[n=600]



<sup>1</sup> No coded responses included in "Other" exceed 1%.



# **VII. LIKELY PARTICIPATION IN THE CLIMATESMART PROGRAM**



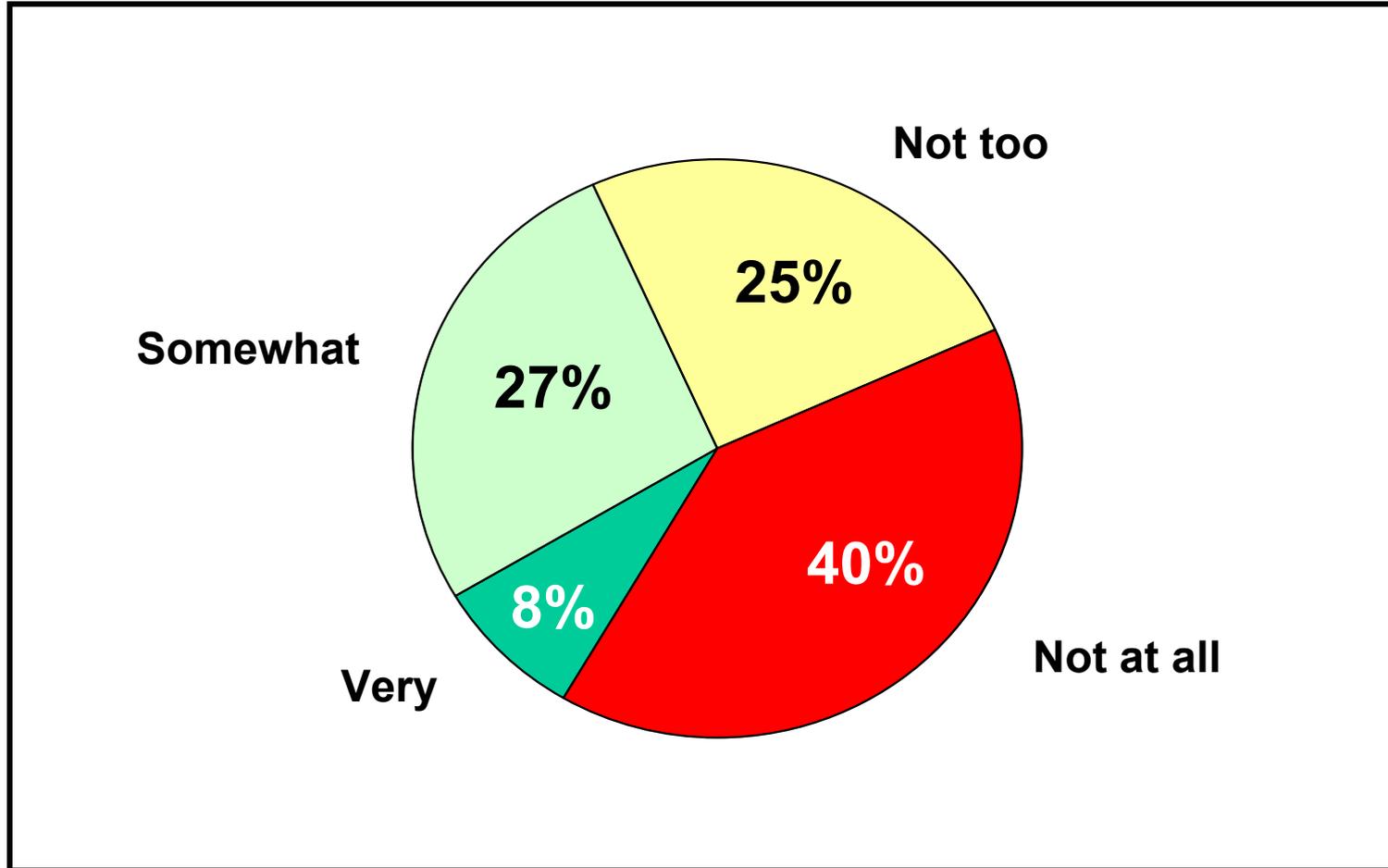
# Likely Participation in ClimateSmart

The final questions of this study concern the Boulder County ClimateSmart Loan Program. All voters were asked how familiar they are with the Program, and homeowners were asked how likely it is that they would take advantage of and apply for such loans at some point in the next year. Today, familiarity is limited to just over a third of County voters, with the highest level of awareness found in the unincorporated and small town areas of the County. And about 20% of homeowners overall say they are likely to apply for a loan offered by the ClimateSmart Program, with a disproportionate percent coming from the SE Cities area.



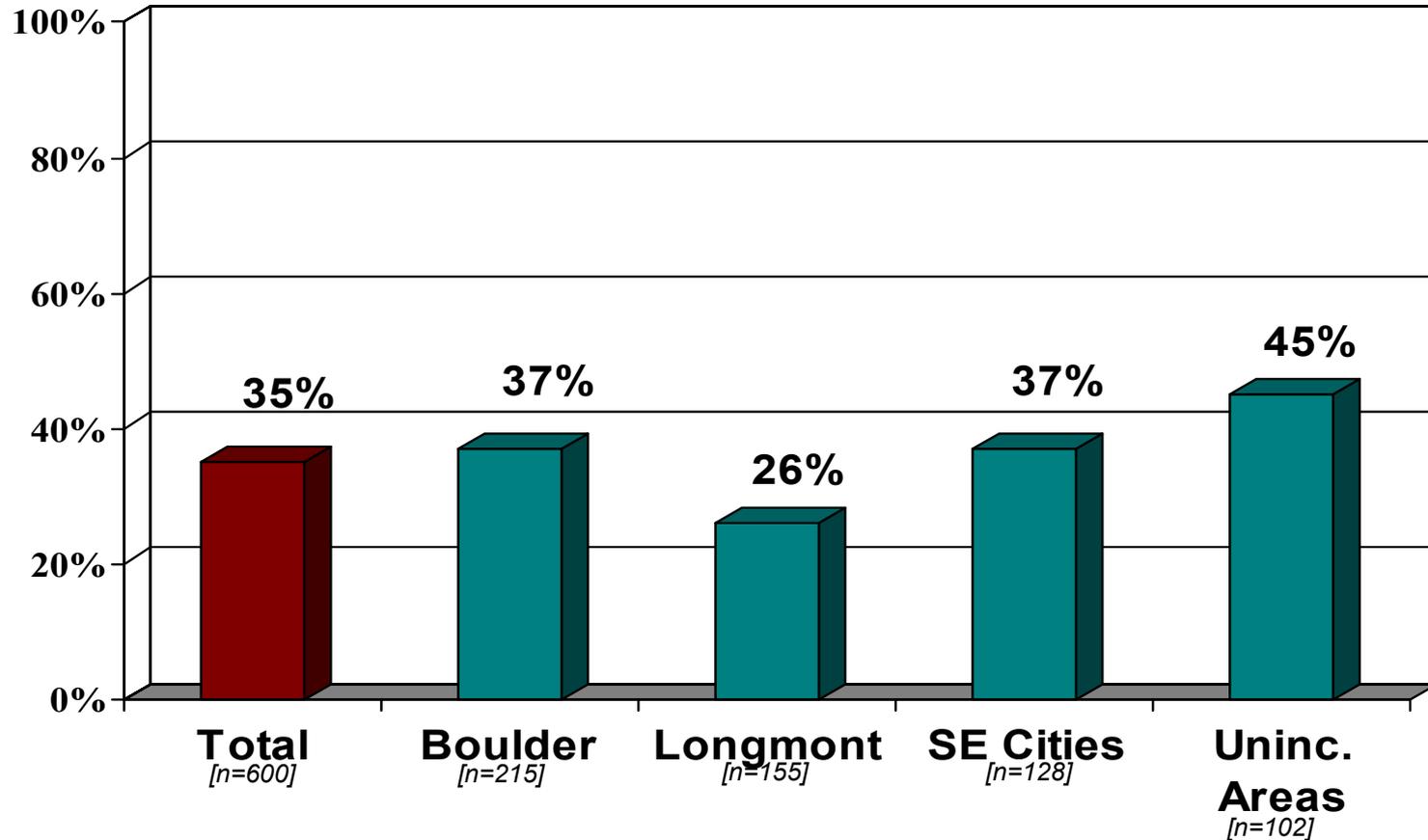
# How Familiar are You With the County's ClimateSmart Program?

[n=600]



# How Familiar are You With the County's ClimateSmart Program?

- Percent saying "Very" or "Somewhat" familiar -



# Likely Participation in ClimateSmart

When using market research to predict future intention, it turns out there is most often a gap between what people say they will do, and what they actually end up doing. Thus, just because a certain percent of people say they will likely apply for a ClimateSmart Loan, does not mean they will all really do so. To better predict expected market share, many market researchers use what is termed the “90/40 Rule,”<sup>1</sup> which predicts that 90% of those who say they will *definitely* do something, plus 40% of those who say they *probably* will, are likely to actually follow through on their intention, over time, once they are aware of the product or service.

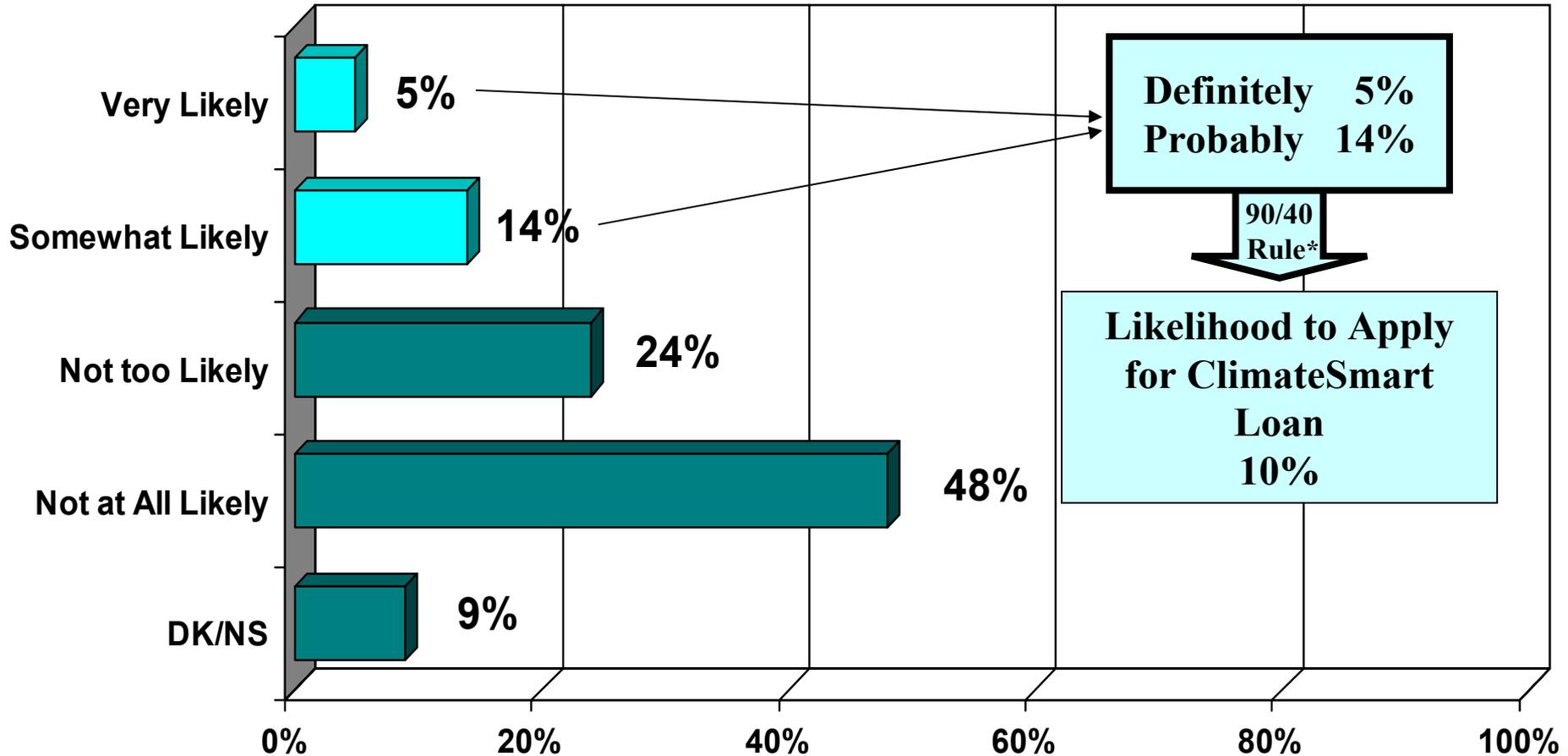
Using that guideline, the percent likely to apply for a ClimateSmart Loan will more likely be 10%, not 20%, of those who are aware of the ClimateSmart Loan Program.

<sup>1</sup> Set forth in Urban & Hauser, 1980; *Design and Marketing of New Products*, Page 282



# Likelihood of Homeowners to Take Advantage of ClimateSmart Loans

[n=528]



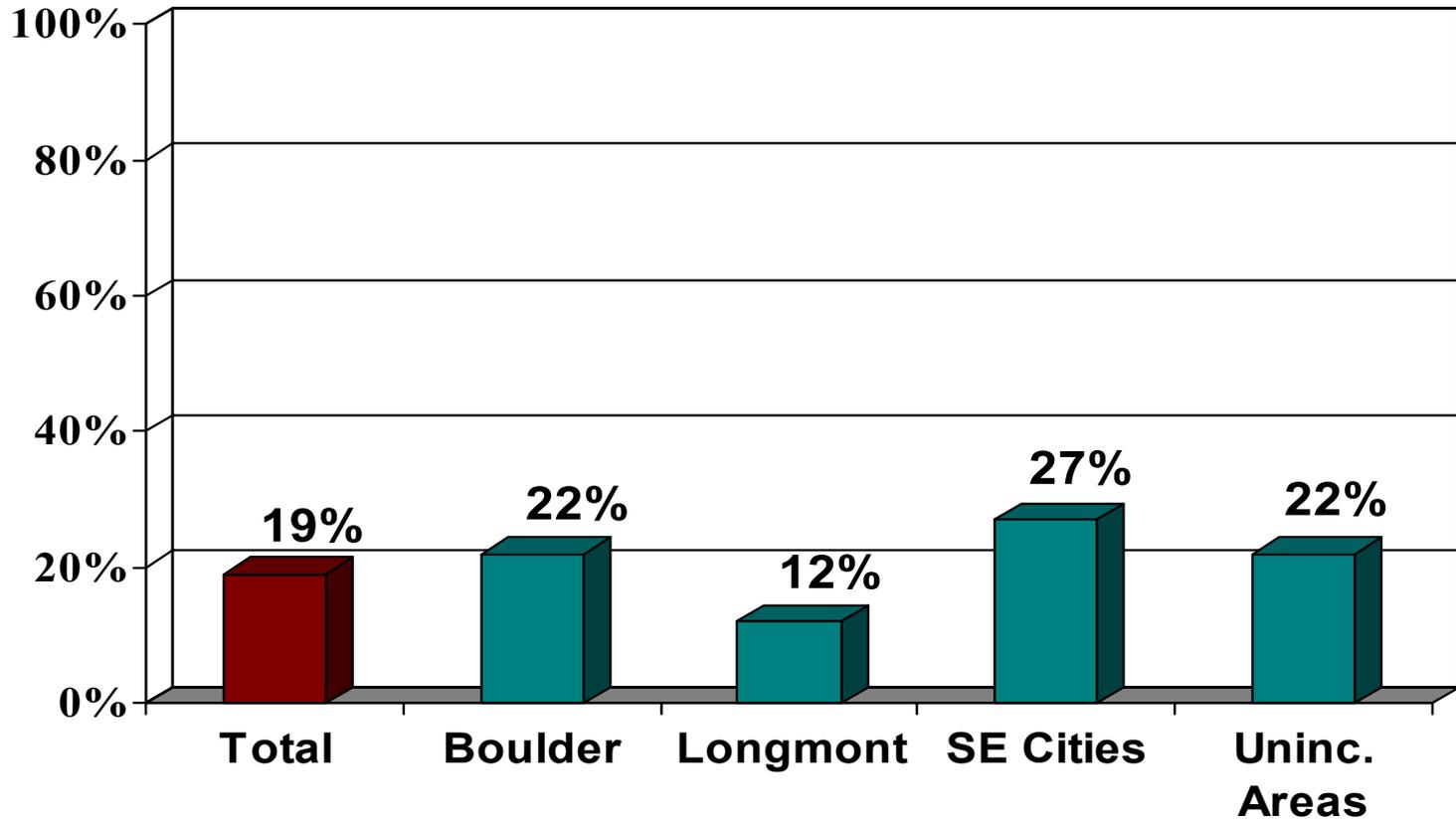
\* 90/40 rule: 90% of those who say they will definitely do something, plus 40% of those who say they will probably do it, will follow through *over time*, once they are *aware*.



# Likelihood of Homeowners to Take Advantage of ClimateSmart Loans

- Percent saying "Very" or "Somewhat" likely -

[n=528]



# VIII. APPENDIX: PERCENTGE RESULTS



## BOULDER COUNTY ISSUES SURVEY

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. First, I want to assure you that we're not selling anything, or asking for money. I'm with Talmey-Drake Research, a public opinion company in Boulder, Colorado. We are conducting an interesting survey with registered voters about local issues in your community, and we would like to include your opinions. Your telephone number was selected purely at random.

### SCREENER

- A. First, I would like to confirm that you are at least 18 years old, and registered to vote in Boulder County?  
[n=600]
- |             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Yes .....   | 100% |
| No .....    | --   |
| DK/NS ..... | --   |
- B. *[Ask only if R says "No" or "DK/NS" in Screener A; else go to Screener C]* Is there someone in this household I can speak to who is at least 18 years old and is registered to vote in Boulder County?
- |             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Yes .....   | % ⇒ <b>Start over</b> |
| No .....    | -- ⇒ <b>Terminate</b> |
| DK/NS ..... | -- ⇒ <b>Terminate</b> |
- C. In which Boulder County City do you live? If you live in an unincorporated area of Boulder County, like Gunbarrel or other unincorporated areas, just say so? [n=600]
- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| Boulder .....   | 35% |
| Erie .....  | 3%  |
| Lafayette .....   | 8%  |
| Longmont .....  | 26% |
| Louisville .....  | 7%  |
| Nederland .....   | *   |
| Superior .....  | 4%  |
| Ward .....  | *   |
| Unincorporated area (and small city/towns)of Boulder County ..... | 17% |
- D. Sex *[Do Not Ask]* [n=600]
- |              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Male .....   | 49% |
| Female ..... | 51% |

\*An asterisk, wherever it appears, means that the result for that response rounds to less than 1%.



1. Generally speaking, would you say things in Boulder County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things here have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track in the past few years?

	<u>7/09</u> [n=600]	<u>12/06</u> [n=500]	<u>6/99</u> [n=603]	<u>4/95</u> [n=507]	<u>6/94</u> [n=300]	<u>4/92</u> [n=501]
Right direction.....	58%	70%	59%	53%	50%	66%
Wrong track.....	26%	16%	29%	37%	38%	18%
No opinion/DK/NS.....	16%	14%	12%	10%	12%	16%

Next I am going to read you several ballot proposals that could be on the ballot at some point in the next couple of years. After I read each one, please tell me if it were the only proposal on the ballot, would you vote in favor of it or against it? The first is: *[Randomize Q2 & Q3 as a pair in that order and Q5 & Q6 as a pair, in no particular order.]*

	<u>In Favor</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>DK/NS/ Undecided</u>
2. A ballot proposal providing for a fifteen year extension of the current point 25 percent County open space sales tax, which is currently set to expire in 2019. <i>[If Sample B read: It is important to extend this tax now, so the County can continue to make additional open space purchases in the next few years while land is still available and relatively inexpensive]</i>			
Sample A [n=284].....	59%	33%	8%
Sample B [n=316].....	63%	32%	5%
Total [n=600].....	62%	32%	6%
3a. <i>[Ask of Sample A; n=300]</i> A ballot proposal providing for a one-tenth of a cent increase in the County open space sales tax to provide more funding for managing and acquiring additional open space. <i>[n=284]</i> .....	51%	46%	3%
3b. <i>[Ask of Sample B; n=300]</i> A ballot proposal providing for a two-tenths of a cent increase in the County open space sales tax to provide more funding for managing and acquiring additional open space <i>[n=316]</i> .....	52%	45%	3%
Total 3a & 3b [n=600].....	52%	45%	3%
4. A ballot proposal for a new one-tenth of a cent sales tax increase, for the next ten years, to provide funding to support childcare and early learning programs for at-risk kids <i>[n=600]</i> .....	65%	30%	5%
5. A ballot proposal to increase the maximum number of terms a Boulder County Commissioner can serve, from the current maximum of two, four-year terms, to a new maximum of three, four-year terms. If approved by voters, this change <b>[Sample A, read: would/ Sample B read: would not]</b> apply to current commissioners.			
Sample A (would) [n=284].....	24%	68%	8%
Sample B (would not) [n=316].....	30%	62%	8%
Total [n=600].....	27%	65%	8%



6. A ballot proposal to increase the maximum number of terms the Boulder County District Attorney can serve, from the current maximum of two, four-year terms, to a new maximum of three, four-year terms. If approved by voters, this change [**Sample A, read: would/ Sample B read: would not**] apply to the current District Attorney.

	<u>In Favor</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>DK/NS/ Undecided</u>
<b>Sample A</b> ( <i>would</i> ) [n=284].....	31%	61%	8%
<b>Sample B</b> ( <i>would not</i> ) [n=316].....	32%	56%	12%
<b>Total</b> [n=600].....	31%	59%	10%

7. A ballot proposal to allow Boulder County to issue an additional \$40 million in bonds, without an increase in taxes, to offer additional low interest loans for energy efficiency or renewable energy systems, as part of the Boulder County ClimateSmart Loan Program [n=600].....

	<u>In Favor</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>DK/NS/ Undecided</u>
.....	70%	25%	5%

8. **[If R lives in the City of Boulder in Screener C, read: “All of the remaining questions I will ask you in this survey concern the Boulder County government , not the City of Boulder.”]** In general, what do you consider to be the single most important issue facing Boulder County today?

	<u>7/09</u> [n=600]	<u>6/08</u>	<u>7/07</u>	<u>5/06</u>	<u>4/05</u>	<u>6/04</u>	<u>4/95</u> [n=507]	<u>4/92</u> [n=501]
Concerns about the economy.....	14%	12%	4%	7%	8%	20%	3%	7%
Public school issues.....	8%	11%	7%	8%	8%	13%	9%	25%
Manage/stop growth.....	7%	10%	20%	20%	20%	20%	59%	24%
Taxes too high.....	7%	4%	4%	3%	4%	*	1%	3%
Environment concerns/Renewable energy .....	7%	4%					3%	7%
Transportation concerns [Net].....	7%	11%	13%	9%	9%	13%	8%	7%
Traffic jams/congestion.....	2%	(4%)					(5%)	
More/better public transit.....	2%	(5%)					--	
Transportation-General.....	1%						(2%)	
More-better roads/streets/Improvem'ts.....	1%	(2%)					(1%)	
Bike Issues .....	*	--					--	
Affordable housing/high costs.....	4%	5%	7%	6%	6%	3%	8%	3%
Open space issues.....	3%	3%	4%	4%	7%	4%	3%	3%
Planning/Land use/Building issues.....	3%						1%	1%
Establish better budget priorities .....	3%							
Restrictions on property rights .....	2%							
Not business friendly/Encourage business) .....	2%							
Social concerns.....	2%	4%					--	3%
Local governance concerns.....	2%	6%	4%	3%	3%	4%	1%	1%
Healthcare .....	2%							
Illegal immigrants complaints.....	1%	2%					--	2%
Cost of living (Inflation, including fuel, food) .....	1%	6%	1%	*	4%	*		
Balance-Control-Tighten budget.....	1%							
Budget/Funding/Lack of Money .....	1%							
Water supply issues/drought.....	*	2%					--	2%
Public safety issues .....	*	1%						
Pine beetles infestation .....	--	1%						
Other.....	6%	?					5%	4%
Nothing in particular.....	4%	1%					2%	5%
DK/NS .....	13%	?					2%	6%



9. And what do you consider to be the next most important issue facing Boulder County? *[Multiple response OK, accept up to 3 responses] [n=600]*

	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q8&amp;9</b>
Public school issues .....	10%	18%
Transportation concerns <b>[Net]</b> .....	9%	16%
More/better public transit .....	2%	4%
Traffic jams/congestion .....	2%	5%
More-better roads/streets/Improvements .....	2%	3%
Transportation-General .....	1%	3%
Bike Issues .....	1%	1%
Environment concerns/Renewable energy .....	8%	14%
Concerns about the economy .....	5%	19%
Taxes too high .....	4%	11%
Manage/stop growth .....	4%	11%
Affordable housing/high costs .....	4%	7%
Not business friendly/Encourage business .....	3%	5%
Healthcare .....	2%	4%
Open space issues .....	2%	6%
Local governance concerns .....	2%	3%
Balance-Control-Tighten budget .....	2%	3%
Social concerns .....	2%	3%
Cost of living (Inflation, including fuel, food) .....	2%	3%
Budget/Funding/Lack of Money .....	1%	2%
Planning/Land use/Building issues .....	1%	4%
Water supply issues/drought .....	1%	1%
Establish better budget priorities .....	1%	3%
Illegal immigrants complaints .....	*	2%
Public safety issues .....	*	1%
Restrictions on property rights .....	*	3%
Other .....	10%	15%
Nothing in particular .....	9%	11%
DK/NS .....	21%	25%

10. 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?

	<b>7/09</b> <i>[n=600]</i>	<b>6/08</b>	<b>7/07</b>	<b>5/06</b>	<b>4/05</b>	<b>6/04</b>	<b>4/95</b> <i>[n=507]</i>	<b>4/92</b> <i>[n=501]</i>
Very satisfied .....	16%	16%	13%	15%	14%	13%	10%	16%
Somewhat satisfied .....	59%	58%	65%	64%	64%	65%	64%	67%
Somewhat dissatisfied .....	17%	15%	13%	12%	14%	13%	18%	13% <sup>1</sup>
Very dissatisfied .....	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	7%	0%
DK/NS .....	2%	5%	3%	3%	2%	4%	1%	5%

<sup>1</sup> In 1992, the “Somewhat” and “Very” dissatisfied categories were collapsed into a single “Dissatisfied” category.



11. Do you feel that the Boulder County government does an excellent, good, only fair or a poor job providing opportunities for citizen voices and concerns to be heard? [n=600]

Excellent.....	10%
Good.....	48%
Only fair.....	25%
Poor.....	10%
DK/NS.....	7%

11a. [Ask if R says "Only fair" or "Poor in Q11; else go to Q12] And is there anything in particular that causes you to give Boulder County Government a rating of [only fair/poor] in terms of providing opportunities for citizen voices and concerns to be heard? [Multiple response OK, accept up to 3 responses] [n=207]

Don't listen/Ignore citizens.....	15%
Don't communicate about meetings/Other.....	10%
Don't really want citizen input/Not everyone's voice is heard/Do not inform citizens to come to meetings.....	9%
Other negative comments on government/Other issues.....	8%
Have pre-determined agenda/Minds made up.....	7%
Ignore conservatives in the community/They are liberal/too liberal.....	4%
Don't have open forum/forums should be expanded/No public meeting of Commissioners.....	3%
Made wrong decision/Unhappy with particular issue.....	3%
Not everyone's voice is equal/Insiders rule.....	3%
The way they spend money/Too much waste of money/Poor spending priorities.....	2%
Email accessibility/Access.....	1%
Hearing times inconvenient/Hard for the unincorporated people to make it to the meeting.....	1%
More public relations than reality/Lip service/Ineffectiveness.....	1%
Taxation without representation/Property taxes and annexation of taxes/Tax is too high.....	1%
The Government is one way/One-sided/Listen only to the wealthy and not to the middle and lower class/biased/No respect for the citizens/Unfair.....	1%
Other.....	16%
Nothing in particular/None.....	20%
DK/NS/Refused.....	2%



12. When the Boulder County Government makes its decisions, do you feel it does an excellent, good, only fair or a poor job when it comes to taking into account what the community feels is important? [n=600]

Excellent.....	5%
Good.....	46%
Only fair.....	29%
Poor.....	13%
DK/NS.....	7%

12a. [Ask if R says "Only fair" or "Poor in Q12; else go to Q13] And is there anything in particular that causes you to give Boulder County Government a rating of [only fair/poor] when it comes to taking into account what the community feels is important? [Multiple response OK, accept up to 3 responses] [n=250]

They don't listen.....	16%
Have own agenda/They do whatever they want/Don't care about the people.....	12%
They listen to special interest group/Not all citizens .....	9%
One-sided opinion .....	9%
Made wrong decision/Unhappy with particular issue .....	7%
Land use regulation/Farm land permits.....	3%
Misplaced/wrong budget priorities.....	3%
Private property issues .....	3%
Lack of communication .....	3%
Open space concerns .....	2%
Distressing shape roads/Not safe roads/Traffic (about roads).....	2%
Tax issues .....	2%
Handled cases unfairly.....	1%
Overloaded with bureaucratic procedures/Simple/Realistic	1%
Limited outlook on diverse business development.....	1%
Poor handling of finances.....	1%
Others .....	10%
Nothing in particular/None.....	16%
DK/NS.....	5%

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

	<u>7/09</u> [n=600]	<u>6/08</u>	<u>7/07</u>	<u>5/06</u>	<u>4/05</u>	<u>6/04</u>	<u>4/95</u> [n=507]	<u>4/92</u> [n=501]
Too high.....	21%	23%	24%	22%	25%	22%	16%	13%
High but acceptable.....	40%	37%	28%	35%	31%	31%	34%	40%
About right.....	32%	32%	41%	36%	37%	40%	41%	39%
Lower than what one would expect.....	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%	4%
No opinion/DK/NS .....	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	5%	5%



14. About how many times, if any, over the past 12 months have you visited the Boulder County Website, or personally visited, called, or e-mailed any branch of the Boulder County government for any reason, including to get information or to have a question answered, or to make a request, a comment or a suggestion? [n=600]

None .....	33%
One.....	12%
Two .....	15%
Three.....	8%
Four or more .....	31%
DK/NS.....	1%

14a. [Ask only if R says “one or more” or “DK/NS” in Q14 (Q14=2-6); else go to Q15 ] When you do contact the Boulder County government for information or for any other reason, what form of contact do you use most often? Do you most often call the County, visit the County website, or visit a County office in-person, e-mail the County, or do you most often contact the county some other way?

	<b>Q14a</b> [n=398]	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>SAMPLE</b> [n=600]
Call.....	25%	17%
Visit the County website.....	49%	33%
Visit a County office in person.....	9%	6%
E-mail the County.....	14%	9%
Contact the county some other way .....	1%	1%
DK/NS.....	1%	1%
Have not contacted County in Q14.....	--	33%

14b. How would you rate the job the County does in handling your requests or answering your questions? Overall, would you say they generally do an excellent, good, only fair or poor job? [n=398]

Excellent.....	19%
Good.....	56%
Only fair.....	19%
Poor.....	4%
DK/NS.....	2%

14c. And thinking now specifically about the last contact you had with the County, either by visiting its website or by calling, visiting or e-mailing the County government, how would you rate the quality of **that last contact** you had with the County? Overall, would you rate it as an excellent, good, only fair or poor job? [n=398]

Excellent.....	29%
Good.....	49%
Only fair.....	12%
Poor.....	7%
DK/NS.....	3%



14d. How often do you visit the Boulder County government web site? Do you visit it Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Less than once a month or Never? If you are not sure how often you visit it, or don't have access to the Internet, just say so and I will move on to the next question.

	<u>7/09</u> [n=398]	<u>7/09 TOTAL</u> <u>SAMPLE</u> [n=600]	<u>6/08 TOTAL</u> <u>SAMPLE</u> [n=611]
Daily .....	--	--	1%
Weekly.....	7%	5%	3%
Monthly .....	22%	14%	28%
Less than once a month <sup>2</sup> .....	58%	38%	--
Never .....	11%	7%	64%
Not contacted County from Q14.....	--	33%	
Don't have Internet access .....	1%	1%	4%
DK/NS.....	1%	1%	--

14e. *[Ask only if R says "Daily, Weekly, Monthly, less than once a month or DK/NS" in Q14d (Q14d=1,2,3, 4 or 7); else go to Q15]* How would you rate the County's website? Would you rate it as excellent, good, only fair or poor? *[n=348]*

Excellent.....	9%
Good .....	66%
Only fair.....	19%
Poor.....	3%
DK/NS.....	3%

14f. Regardless of the rating you give the website, is there information you have needed to find on the County's website that appears to be missing, or that you could not find? *[If yes, ask:]* And what information is that? *[Multiple response OK, accept up to 3 responses]* *[n=348]*

Business development/Contractors/Planning and development.....	3%
Not user friendly/Negative mentions about the website (general) .....	3%
Directory of contacts/Who to contact for needs....	2%
Takes too long to find/Hard to find .....	2%
Voter registration/People registered in Boulder.....	1%
Reservation for park and recreation/Rental information.....	1%
Health issues (West Nile Disease, mosquitoes) .....	1%
Home developm't/Home appraisal/Housing/Property issues.....	1%
County parks and open space regulations.....	1%
Better-Updated Maps of Boulder County.....	1%
Tax info .....	1%
Energy policies .....	1%
Permits.....	1%
Other problems (general) .....	4%
No information that I couldn't find/none/positive mentions (general) .....	72%
Can't remember/Can't recall.....	4%
DK/Refused/Not applicable.....	4%

<sup>2</sup> The "less than once a month" category is new in 2009.



15. Earlier in the survey, I asked you about a ballot proposal to issue an additional \$40 million in bonds for Boulder County's ClimateSmart Loan Program, which is a program that allows property owners to make energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements to their homes, using a loan from the ClimateSmart Loan Program, which the property owner pays back over 15 years as a property tax assessment. How familiar are you with the ClimateSmart Loan Program? Are you very familiar, somewhat familiar, not too familiar or not at all familiar with the program.

	<b>Q15</b> <i>[n=600]</i>	<b>Own Home</b> <i>[n=528]</i>
Very familiar.....	8%	9%
Somewhat familiar .....	27%	30%
Not too familiar.....	25%	25%
Not at all familiar .....	40%	36%
DK/NS.....	--	--

16. Thinking about the next 12 months, how likely is it that you will take advantage of such loans for energy efficiency or renewable energy systems, to be paid back to the County through assessments added onto their property taxes? Are you very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely to apply for a Boulder County ClimateSmart Loan? If you aren't sure at this time, or you don't own your home, just say so and I will move on.

	<b>Own Home</b> <i>[n=528]</i>
Very likely.....	5%
Somewhat likely.....	14%
Not too likely.....	24%
Not at all likely.....	48%
DK/NS.....	9%

Our last questions are about you and your family. The answers to these questions help us statistically classify the results we obtain and will only be used when combined with the hundreds of other interviews conducted for this survey.

- D1. Some people are always following what's going on in politics and public affairs. Others just aren't that interested. Do you follow what's going on politically and in government all of the time, most of the time, some of the time or almost never? *[n=600]*

All of the time.....	22%
Most of the time.....	40%
Some of the time.....	34%
Almost never.....	4%
Refused .....	--
DK/NS.....	*

- D2. Did you happen to vote in the 2008 election for president between John McCain and Barack Obama, or did you not vote in that election? *[If "Did not vote," ask:]* Why didn't you get a chance to vote? *[n=600]*

Yes, voted.....	99%
No, didn't vote because too young .....	1%
No, didn't vote for all other reasons.....	*
DK/NS.....	*



- D3. Most people do not have either the time or interest in voting in off-year municipal or other elections like for City Council, the school board, or local matters. How many of these municipal, County or School elections would you say you vote in? Absolutely all of them, most of them, about half, some of them, or very few of them? [n=600]
- |                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| All of them .....      | 46% |
| Most of them .....     | 20% |
| About half .....       | 9%  |
| Some of them .....     | 7%  |
| Very few of them ..... | 14% |
| None [NO PROMPT] ..... | 3%  |
| DK/NS.....             | 1%  |
- D4. In the past year or so, have you attended a meeting of your local school board, your City Council or County Commissioners, or a public meeting of any other City or County agency like the Planning Commission, or watched any of these meetings on a local cable channel? [n=600]
- |                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Yes.....           | 46% |
| No.....            | 54% |
| DK/NS/Refused..... | *   |
- D5. Have you or anyone in your household lost your job or taken a significant pay cut in the past six months? [n=600]
- |            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Yes.....   | 34% |
| No.....    | 66% |
| DK/NS..... | *   |
- D6. And do you or anyone in your household fear that you may lose your job, or be required to take a pay cut at some point in the next 6 to 12 months? [n=600]
- |            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Yes.....   | 38% |
| No.....    | 59% |
| DK/NS..... | 3%  |
- D7. About how long have you been registered to vote in Boulder County? [From Sample] [n=594]  
NOTE: 6 records were missing the registered voter information
- |                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| 5 or less years.....         | 32%  |
| 6-15 years.....              | 34%  |
| 16-25 years .....            | 18%  |
| 26-40 years .....            | 13%  |
| 41 or more years.....        | 4%   |
| Median number of years ..... | 10.0 |
- D8. May I ask how old you are? [98=98+ years / 99=DK/NS/Ref] [n=600]
- |                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| 18-24 years .....     | 13%  |
| 25-34 years .....     | 18%  |
| 35-44 years .....     | 17%  |
| 45-54 years .....     | 19%  |
| 55-64 years .....     | 16%  |
| 65 years or more..... | 13%  |
| Refused.....          | 4%   |
| Mean age.....         | 45.5 |
| Median age .....      | 45.0 |



D9. And which of the following income groups includes your family's total annual income from all sources in 2008. *[Read list except refused and DK/NS] [n=600]*

Up to \$20,000 .....	7%	
\$20,000, but less than \$30,000 .....	5%	
\$30,000, but less than \$40,000 .....	7%	
\$40,000, but less than \$50,000 .....	8%	
\$50,000, but less than \$60,000 .....	8%	
\$60,000, but less than \$75,000 .....	6%	
\$75,000, but less than \$100,000 .....	15%	
\$100,000, but less than \$150,000 .....	16%	
\$150,000 or over .....	15%	
Refused .....	10%	⇐ <i>Do not read</i>
DK/NS .....	3%	⇐ <i>Do not read</i>

D10. Finally, so we can ensure that all groups are statistically represented, would you please tell me what racial or ethnic group or groups you consider yourself to be a member of? *[n=600]*

White/Caucasian .....	83%
Black/African-American .....	1%
Hispanic/Latino .....	8%
Oriental/Asian-American/Asian/Pac. islander .....	1%
American Indian/Native American .....	1%
Multi-Ethnic/Mixed race .....	1%
Other .....	1%
Refused .....	4%
DK/NS .....	*

**Thank you for taking our survey, your answers have been extremely helpful.**

## Methodology

The Boulder County Issues Survey was conducted on behalf of the Boulder County by Talmey-Drake Research & Strategy, Inc., a public opinion research firm in Boulder, Colorado. The results of this survey are based upon 600 telephone interviews with Boulder County voters. A random sample of voter telephone numbers was purchased by Talmey-Drake, which was then randomly sampled. Interviews were conducted from July 20 to 27, 2009. Quotas were established to obtain approximately equal numbers of males and females as well as approximate age and geographic distribution. Results of the survey are balanced by age, ethnicity and political affiliation to more appropriately represent the actual distribution. A random sample of 600 has a worst-case 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 4.0% about any one reported percentage.

