



2018 Mail Survey Results Carbon County, Wyoming

January 7, 2019

Introduction, Purpose & Approach

This report addresses the methodology and findings derived from public opinion research conducted by George K. Baum & Company on behalf of Carbon County and its 10 municipalities.

A total of 3,596 registered voter households within the county received a public opinion mail survey. The mailing list included all registered voter households within the county, versus a subset of active or likely voter households. The questionnaire served as an invitation for public reaction to a specific purpose sales and use tax proposal.

The mail survey included a total of 10 questions, including two open-ended questions. Included with the mail survey questions was background information on the funding proposal, including specific projects to be addressed within each community.

The mail questionnaire used for this research is not a scientific poll, but a tool for collecting public input and understanding the general tone of the public's receptiveness to the issue presented. The overall summaries and conclusions drawn in this report are therefore not presented as predictors of an issue's likely success or failure at the polls. They are only presented to aid the county and its municipalities with another means for collecting community input and initial reaction to the proposal.



Introduction, Purpose & Approach (cont.)

George K. Baum & Company acknowledges that this particular questionnaire functions as an opportunity to disseminate information and as an information-gathering tool, and in no way represents a scientific survey, or one that estimates statistical margin of error. The chief distinction is that this questionnaire was returned in lieu of people attending a public hearing (a non-representative sample of the registered voter population) as opposed to the returns representing a scientific sub-sample of the registered voter population. The results are subjective and limited in interpretation based on the *volume* of returns, not the *science* of returns.

Think of this document as a written collection of comments from people who would have stood up and participated in a public hearing, but instead preferred to express their feelings through written form.

A total of 535 surveys were completed and processed for responses as of January 2, 2019. This represents a response rate of 14.9 percent. Sixty more surveys were received on January 7, 2019, bringing the total up to 595 and a response rate up to 16.5 percent. These additional surveys were incorporated into the results for the ballot question (including the support levels identified for likely versus unlikely voters). Previous mail surveys conducted by George K. Baum & Company have typically yielded response rates between 8 and 17 percent.



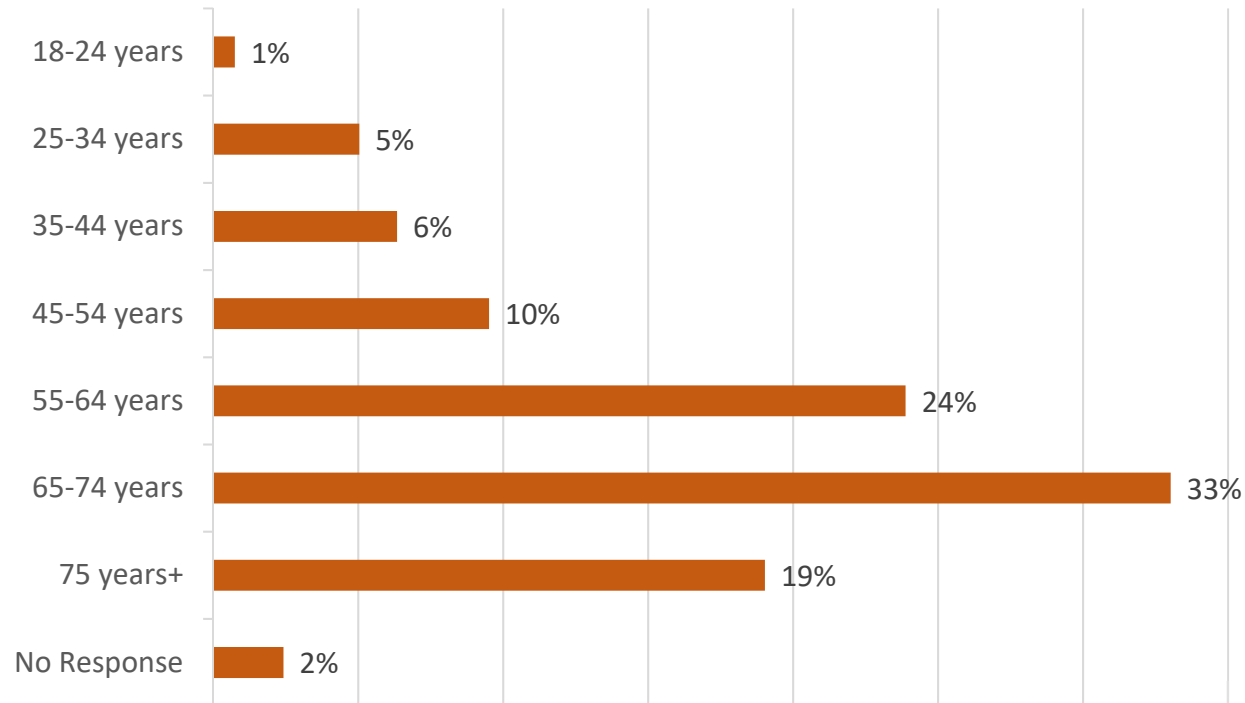
Summary of Approach

- Survey mailed to 3,596 registered voter households within Carbon County
- Expected 8-17% response rate
- 595 replied (16.5% response rate) as of January 7, 2019
- Not a scientific poll
- Not a predictor of a ballot measure's likely success or failure
- Provides general undertone of the electorate



Demographics of Survey Respondents

Age of Respondents



Demographics of Survey Respondents

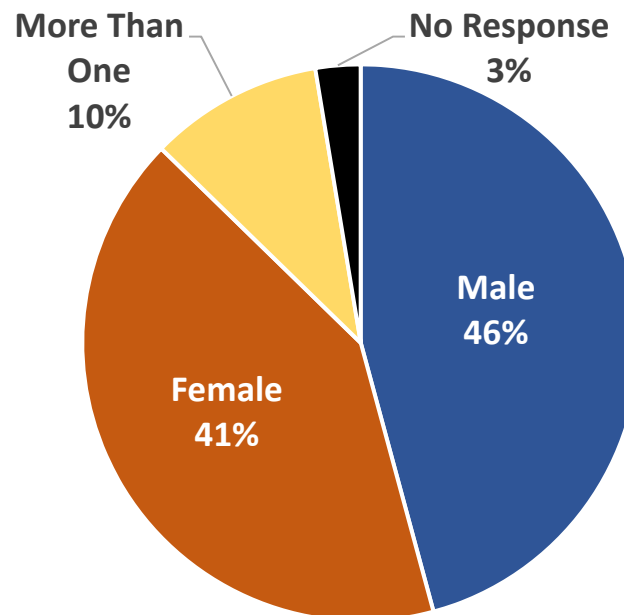
Age of Respondents

	Likely Voter (May 2019)	Survey Respondents
18-24:	0%	1%
25-34:	2%	5%
35-44:	6%	6%
45-54:	12%	10%
55-64:	24%	24%
65-74:	29%	33%
75+	27%	19%



Demographics of Survey Respondents

Gender



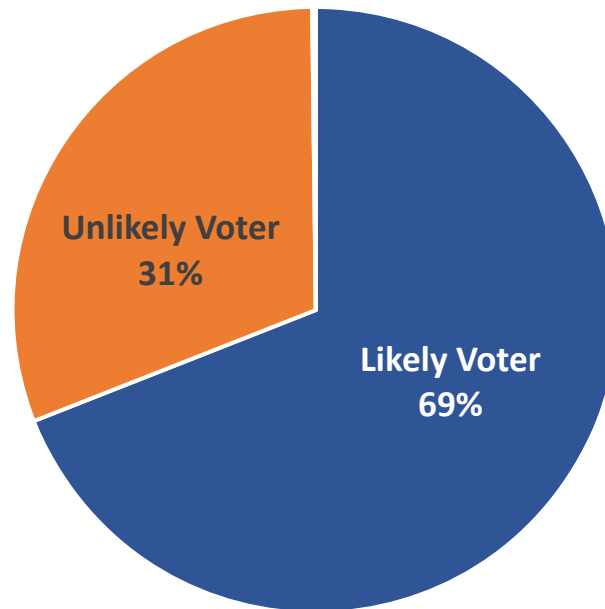
Demographics of Survey Respondents

Community of Residence

	Number of Survey Respondents	% Breakdown of Survey Respondents	% Breakdown of Registered Voters
Baggs	21	4%	6%
Dixon	9	2%	1%
Elk Mountain	19	4%	3%
Encampment	43	8%	5%
Hanna	19	4%	5%
Medicine Bow	18	3%	3%
Rawlins	229	43%	47%
Riverside	24	5%	4%
Saratoga	108	20%	21%
Sinclair	10	2%	4%
Other	29	5%	1%

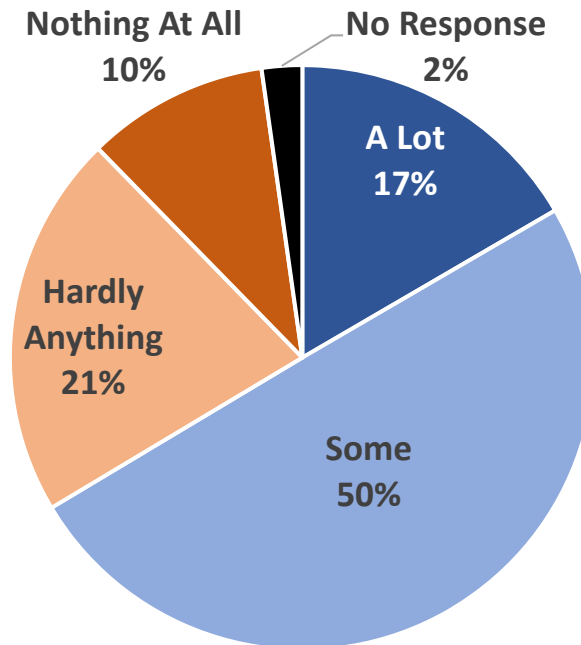


Likely vs. Unlikely Voters



Level of Awareness

Before receiving the enclosed information, how much had you read, seen or heard about Carbon County conserving placing a specific purpose tax proposal on the May 2019 ballot?



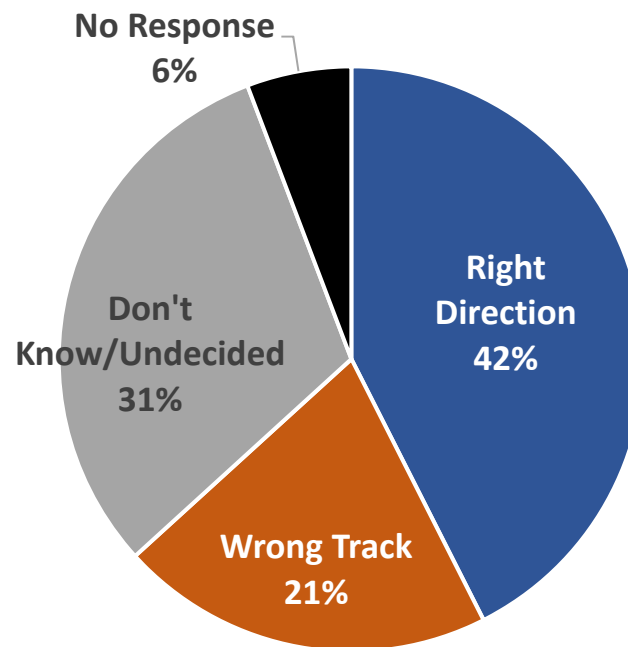
A Lot + Some = 67%

Hardly Anything + Nothing At All = 31%



Right Direction Vs. Wrong Track

Generally speaking, would you say things in Carbon County and its municipalities are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?



Arguments in Favor of Proposal

Argument in Favor	Not At All Convincing (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Very Convincing (5)	NR
Out-of-county shoppers and people visiting Carbon County will help pay for our projects.	11%	8%	12%	22%	46%	0%
Proceeds from the sales tax may only be used for projects in the ballot measure approved by voters.	11%	7%	16%	27%	39%	0%
With wind farm projects being developed, NOW is the right time to implement the specific purpose tax. These projects could bring in millions of dollars in sales tax revenues for local infrastructure improvements and other capital improvements, and allow the tax to be paid off early.	14%	8%	14%	25%	37%	1%
Revenues from the sales tax would be equitably distributed across the 10 participating municipalities and the county, with everyone getting their fair share.	15%	13%	20%	21%	30%	1%
With the State of Wyoming continuing to cut funding, revenues from a specific purpose tax are more important than ever to address high priority infrastructure projects and other capital improvements.	13%	10%	17%	32%	29%	1%
There are 49 exemptions from the specific purpose tax, including real estate, food, fuel, farm equipment, fertilizer, and more.	13%	12%	26%	20%	28%	2%



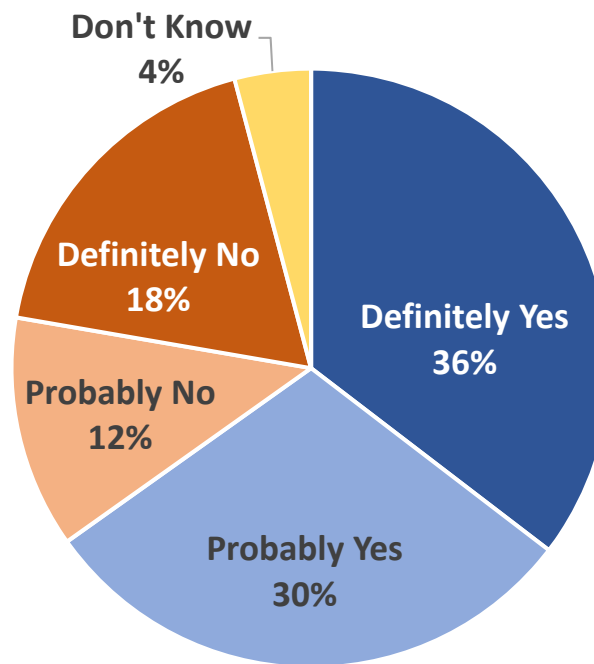
Arguments Against Proposal

Argument Against	Not At All Convincing (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Very Convincing (5)	NR
Carbon County and our local municipalities should be setting aside existing tax dollars to tackle infrastructure projects, rather than seeking to reinstate the specific purpose tax.	20%	16%	23%	18%	23%	1%
Carbon County voters just voted to reinstate the fifth penny general purpose tax. It seems too soon to be seeking approval of the sixth penny specific purpose tax.	24%	19%	22%	15%	10%	0%
Even though the County and municipalities have already scaled back their proposed projects, it still seems like they are trying to do too much.	26%	23%	21%	13%	16%	1%
The County and municipalities should rely on alternative funding sources, like grants, to fund local infrastructure improvements.	29%	20%	25%	14%	12%	0%
Local retailers could be negatively impacted from an additional one penny sales tax increase as a result of fewer purchases being made.	34%	22%	21%	11%	12%	1%
Water and sewer improvements, street improvements and related projects will create traffic problems and related challenges.	57%	20%	12%	6%	6%	0%



Ballot Question

If an election were held today, would you vote “Yes” (in favor) or “No” (to oppose) a specific purpose sales and use tax proposal to renovate and repurpose the Carbon County Courthouse and Carbon Building as well as address high priority water, sewer, street, natural gas and other capital improvements countywide?

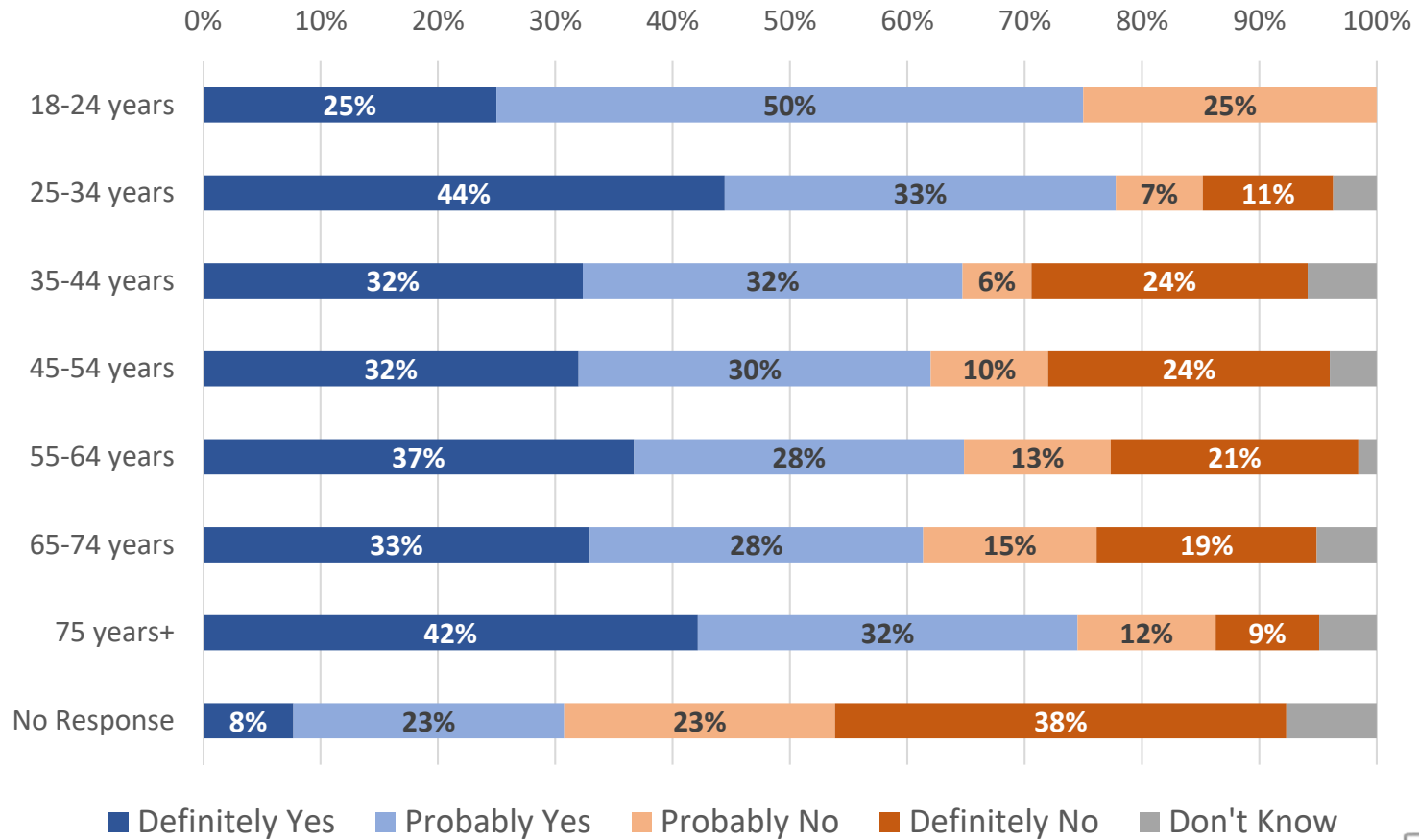


Definitely Yes + Probably Yes = 66%

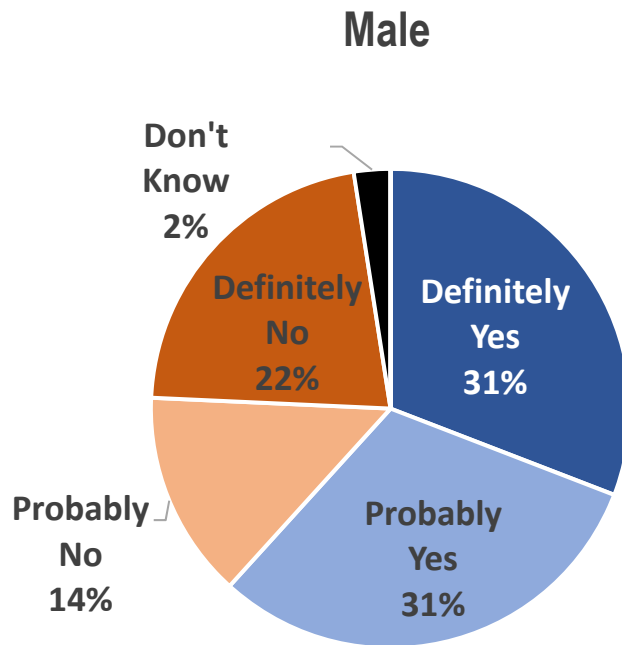
Definitely No + Probably No = 30%



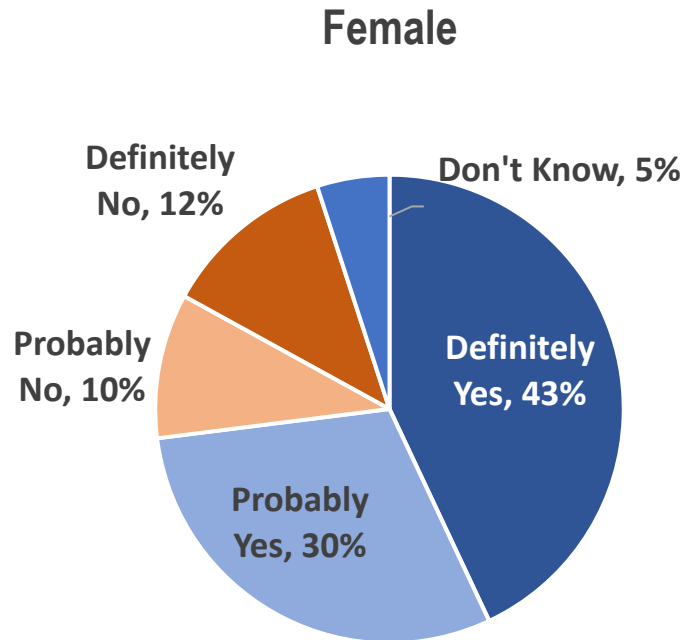
Support for Ballot Question: By Age



Support for Ballot Question: By Gender



Yes: 62%
No: 36%

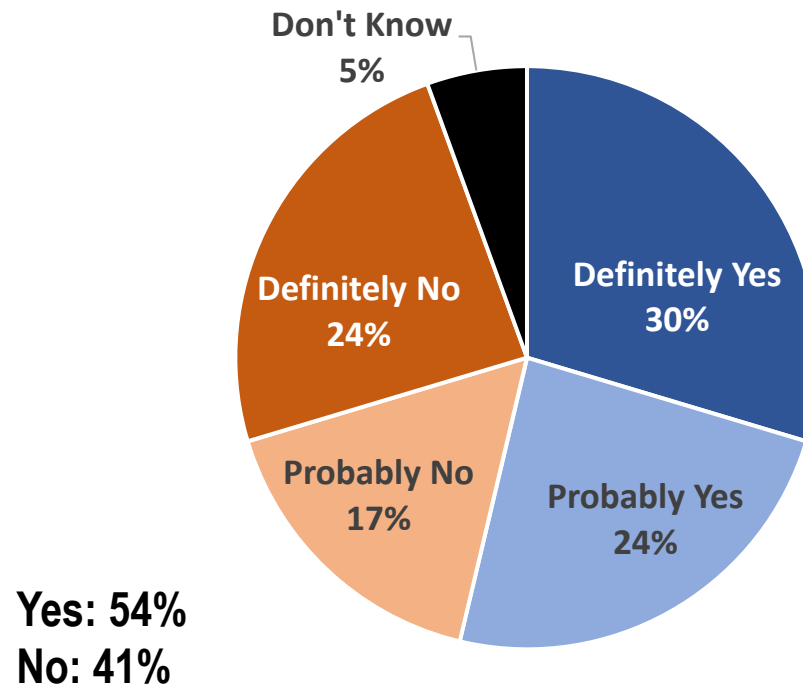


Yes: 73%
No: 22%

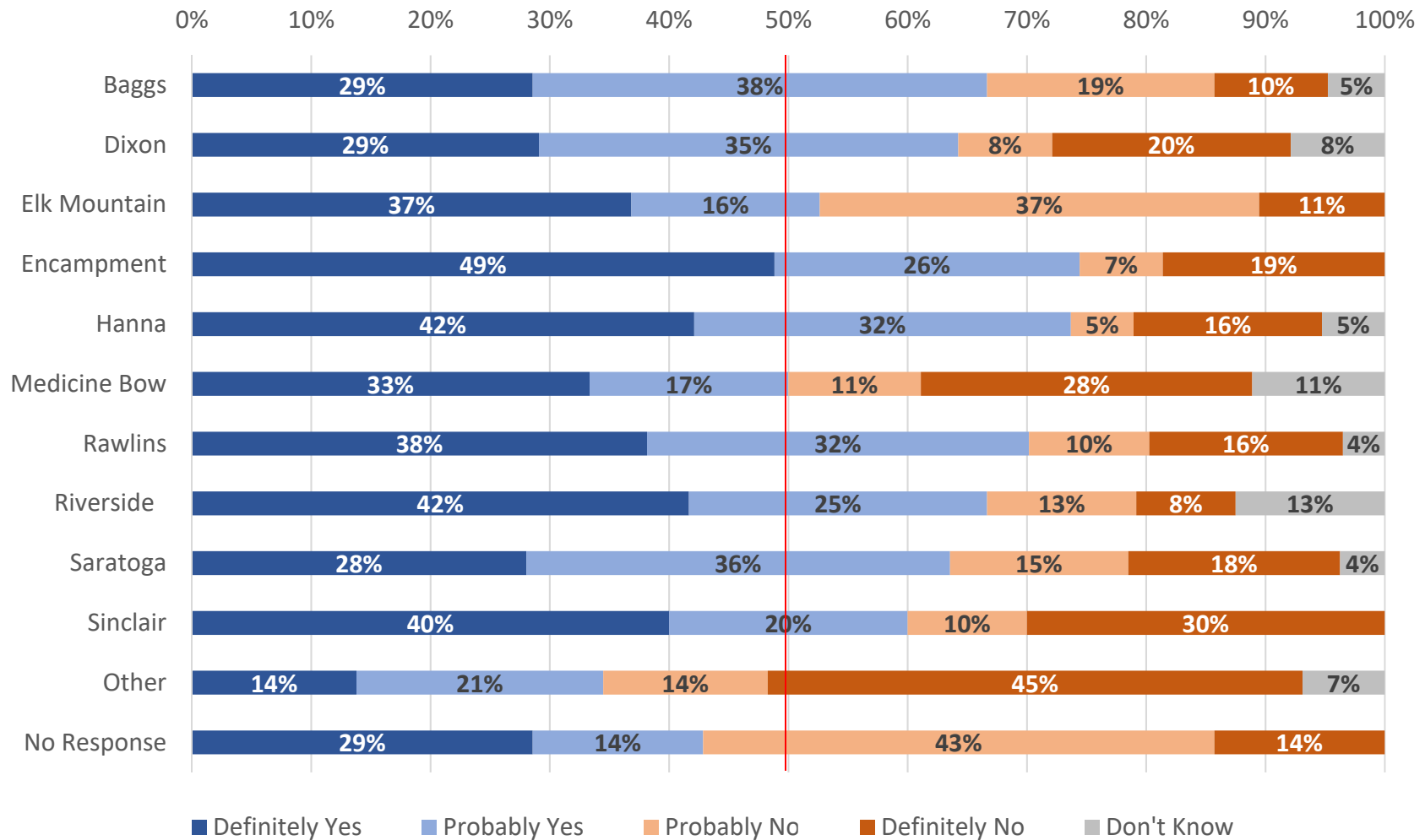


Support for Ballot Question: **By Gender**

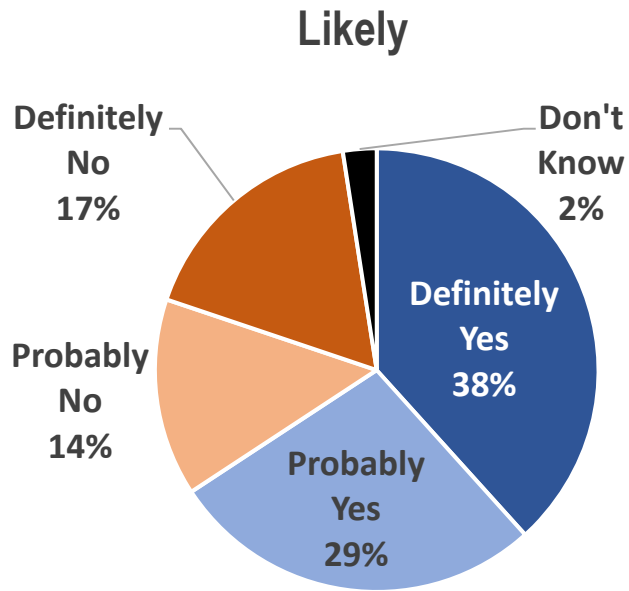
Multiple Respondents



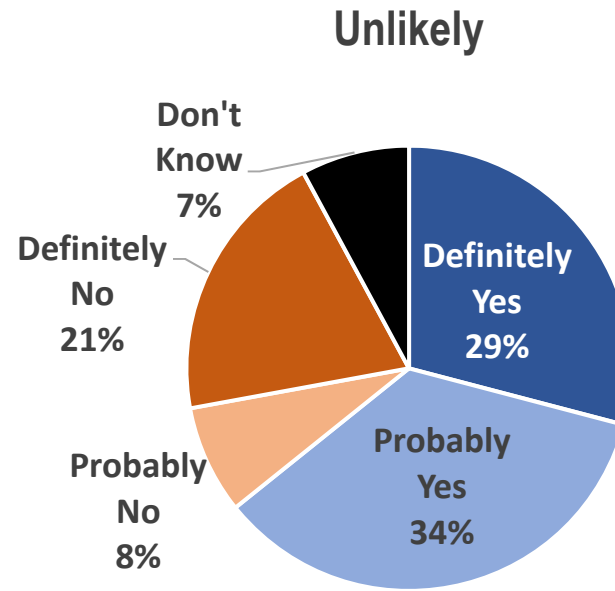
Support for Ballot Question: Community of Residence



Support for Ballot Question: Likely vs. Unlikely Voters



Yes: 67%
No: 31%



Yes: 63%
No: 29%



Main Concerns

What is your main concern, if any, regarding the specific purpose tax proposal?

• No Answer (Left Blank)	37%
• Need for Accountability/Transparency/Only Pursue Projects Defined in Ballot Question	11%
• Tax Concerns/Too Many Taxes	7%
• None/No Concern	6%
• Projects Needed (Positive Comment)	4%
• Need to Live Within Budget Rather Than Seeking New Tax	2%
• Against County Projects	2%
• Wish List Rather Than High Priority Projects	2%
• Afraid it Won't Pass	1%
• No Benefit for Rural Areas	1%
• Prefer Building New Rather Than Renovating Courthouse and Carbon Building	1%
• Tax Lasts Too Long	<1%
• County Road Improvements Should be Included in Proposal	<1%



Concerns...In Their Own Words

NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY / TRANSPARENCY / ONLY PURSUE PROJECTS DEFINED IN BALLOT QUESTION

- *"I just hope the revenue would not be considered a windfall to be squandered."*
- *"Saying one thing on paper and doing something else."*
- *"The county needs to fully disclose where the money goes and what it funds."*

TAX CONCERNS/TOO MANY TAXES

- *"More taxes, bigger government, more waste."*
- *"We're already taxed too much."*
- *"When is it going to stop? We need to live within our means."*

PROJECTS NEEDED (POSITIVE STATEMENTS)

- *"I think it is needed. We all need to do our share in the upkeep of our communities."*
- *"All towns are showing a good need for the money to make the town folks lives better."*
- *"We have had the 6 cent before. What is wrong with not having it again?"*



BUILD NEW RATHER THAN RENOVATE COURTHOUSE AND CARBON BUILDING

- *“I’m tired of throwing good money after bad to prop up old, inefficient buildings.”*

WISH LIST RATHER THAN HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

- *“Seems like projects are a wish list and will only benefit people living on those streets.”*

AFRAID IT WON’T PASS

- *“Too many misinformed voters causing it to NOT pass.”*

NO BENEFIT FOR RURAL AREAS

- *“The projects proposed only help those within the towns not those living outside of a town.”*

COUNTY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE PART OF PROPOSAL

- *“All projects are benefiting city dwellers, while many county roads are terrible.”*



Additional Information Needs

What more would you like to know, or what question(s) would you like answered, about the proposed specific purpose tax proposal?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • No Answer (Left Blank) | 62% |
| • None/Nothing | 7% |
| • Need for Detailed Breakdown of Expenses | 4% |
| • Need for Accountability/Transparency | 2% |
| • Source of Project Recommendations | 1% |
| • Details Regarding the 49 Exemptions | 1% |



Summary of Findings/Conclusions

- The percentage breakdown of survey respondents by community is not significantly different from the percentage breakdown of registered voters by community.
- Voters 18 to 34 years old as well as 65 to 74 years old are slightly overrepresented in the survey compared to those likely to participate in the May 2019 election. Voters 75 and older, on the other hand, are underrepresented in the mail survey.
- There is a moderate level of awareness of the funding proposal with 67% of respondents knowing a lot or some about the funding proposal.
- Twice as many respondents believe that the County and its 10 municipalities are headed in the right direction versus on the wrong track.
- There is strong support for the specific purpose sales and use tax proposal in its current form, with 65% of respondents in favor and 31% opposed.
 - Support intensity is much stronger than opposition intensity (36% Definitely Yes vs. 18% Definitely No)
 - Support is strongest with respondents between the ages of 25 to 34 and those over 75 years old
 - Female voters are more supportive than male voters, however, both support the proposal
 - Likely voters are more supportive than unlikely voters
 - Support varies across communities, with the support level of 60% or higher in 8 out of 10 communities



- All arguments in favor of the proposal tested stronger than the arguments against the proposal.
- Messages that resonated the most with respondents were tied to the following concepts:
 - *Out-of-county shoppers will help pay for the proposed improvements*
 - *Proceeds from the sales tax can only be used for projects identified in the ballot question*
 - *The wind farms will bring in millions of dollars in sales tax revenues*
- Respondents who indicated they had concerns regarding the proposal mentioned things like the need for accountability and oversight, the need to ensure only those projects identified in the ballot question are pursued and tax concerns.
- While there appears to be strong support for the funding proposal, it's important to note that mail surveys often overstate the support level by as much as 8 to 10 percentage points. For the measure to be successful this spring, a strong campaign will likely still be needed.



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In preparing this presentation, we have relied upon and assumed, without independent verification, the accuracy and completeness of all information available from public sources or which was provided to us by or on behalf of Carbon County and its 10 municipalities or which was otherwise reviewed by us. In addition, our analyses are not and do not purport to be appraisals of the creditworthiness of Carbon County and its 10 municipalities, which may affect the results.



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