

Going to the Voters for Funding: Ballot Measure Best Practices, Strategies and Stories



**CCCMA Annual Conference
April 2023**

About Magellan Strategies



We are a public opinion research firm specializing in quantifying, measuring, and understanding resident and voter opinion for governments, special districts, school districts, and public policy organizations. We have conducted more than 1,000 voter and public opinion surveys in Colorado since 2007.

We Are Proud Members & Financial Supporters



Our Awesome Government Clients



**We accurately
predicted the
outcome of
several ballot
measure elections
in 2022.**



2022 BALLOT MEASURE SURVEY PROJECTS

	Magellan Forecast	Actual Yes Result	Difference
Boulder Valley School District Bond Measure	64%	68%	4%
City of Englewood 0.1% Sales Tax for Alternative Police	62%	62%	0%
City of Fountain 6 Mill Increase for Public Safety	57%	55%	2%
Fraser River Valley Housing Partnership 2 Mill Increase for Affordable Housing	54%	57%	3%
Ridgway Fire Protection District Sales Tax Increase for Operations	77%	73%	4%
Weld County RE-4 School District Mill Levy Override for Operations	53%	55%	2%
City of Boulder Climate Tax Revised Climate Tax	72%	70%	2%
Town of Windsor Open Space Acquisition 0.25% Sales Tax	54%	58%	4%

And
several
others in
2021...

Our ballot measure survey track record for the 2021 election cycle was 100%. We accurately predicted the outcome of 11 ballot measures, 10 wins and 1 loss for our government and special district clients.



#	Ballot Measure	Magellan's Forecast	Actual 'Yes'	Percent Difference
1	Town of Monument 2F Police Funding 0.5% Sales Tax Increase	64%	63%	1%
2	Town of Monument 2G Begin Home Rule Process	62%	59%	3%
3	City of Boulder 2I 0.3% Sales Tax Extension for Capital Projects	74%	85%	11%
4	City of Boulder 2J \$110 Million Bond for Capital Projects	65%	79%	14%
5	City of Lafayette 2B 0.27% Sales Tax Increase for Public Safety	67%	66%	1%

And
several
others in
2021...

Our ballot measure survey track record for the 2021 election cycle was 100%. We accurately predicted the outcome of 11 ballot measures, 10 wins and 1 loss for our government and special district clients.



#	Ballot Measure	Magellan's Forecast	Actual 'Yes'	Percent Difference
6	City of Lafayette 2C 0.1% Sales Tax Increase for Mental Health	72%	71%	1%
7	Town of Vail 2A 0.5% Sales Tax Increase for Affordable Housing	57%	54%	3%
8	Mesa County Valley School District 51 \$115 Million Bond for High School	61%	65%	4%
9	EagleVail Metro District Property Tax Freeze	61%	72%	11%
10	City of Golden 2A Allow Retail Marijuana	54%	51%	3%
11	Moffat County School District RE-1 \$40 Million Bond for Schools	43%	37%	6%

Five Steps to Developing a Ballot Measure Survey That Can Lead to Voter Approval





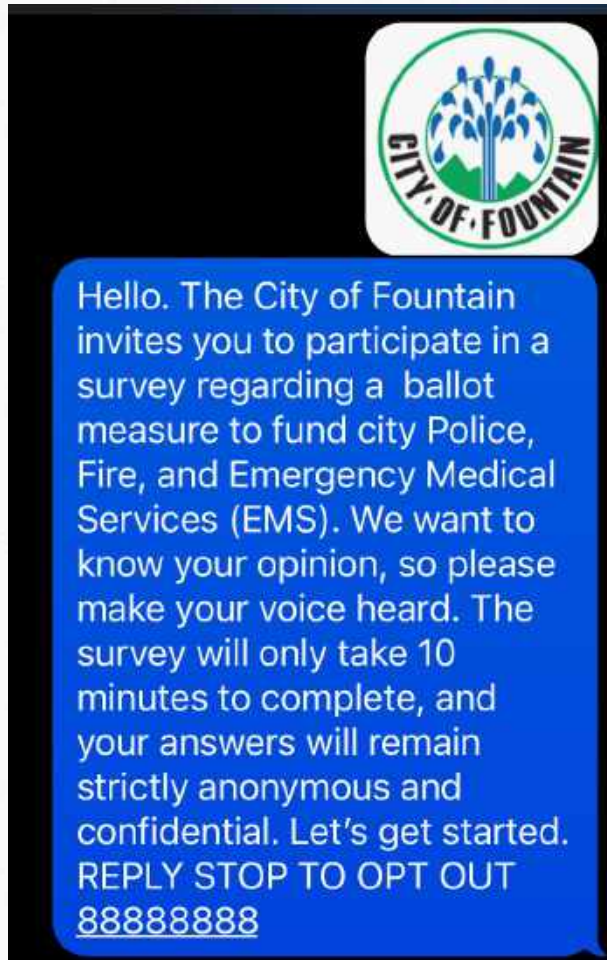
Step 1: Knowing Your Voter Registration and Turnout Demographics



City of Fountain Public Safety Ballot Measure Voter Opinion Survey

May 18th to June 1st, 2022

Survey Methodology



- Magellan Strategies are pleased to present the results of a live telephone and online survey of 853 registered voters in the City of Fountain, Colorado.
- The interviews were conducted from May 18th to June 1st, 2022. The overall survey responses have a margin of error of $\pm 3.26\%$ at the 95% confidence interval. Subgroups of voters will have a higher margin of error than the overall sample.
- The survey results were weighted to be representative of the voter turnout demographics of a midterm election in Fountain, Colorado.

City of Fountain

Magellan Strategies Voter Registration and Past Election Turnout Report

Sex	Registration		2022		2021		2020		2019	
Female	9,958	50.9%	3,934	50.9%	2,086	50.0%	6,369	52.7%	2,304	50.6%
Male	9,597	49.1%	3,795	49.1%	2,090	50.0%	5,726	47.3%	2,246	49.4%
Total	19,555		7,729		4,176		12,095		4,550	

Age Group	Registration		2022		2021		2020		2019	
18-34	7,704	39.4%	1,602	20.7%	618	14.8%	3,693	30.5%	700	15.4%
35-44	4,244	21.7%	1,539	19.9%	673	16.1%	2,576	21.3%	655	14.4%
45-54	2,978	15.2%	1,492	19.3%	756	18.1%	2,197	18.2%	938	20.6%
55-64	2,370	12.1%	1,495	19.3%	965	23.1%	1,949	16.1%	1,102	24.2%
65+	2,259	11.6%	1,601	20.7%	1,164	27.9%	1,680	13.9%	1,155	25.4%
Total	19,555		7,729		4,176		12,095		4,550	

Party	Registration		2022		2021		2020		2019	
Unaffiliated	10,236	52.3%	3,262	42.2%	1,591	38.1%	5,083	42.0%	1,526	33.5%
Democrat	3,793	19.4%	1,773	22.9%	1,013	24.3%	2,814	23.3%	1,095	24.1%
Republican	4,961	25.4%	2,521	32.6%	1,490	35.7%	3,903	32.3%	1,828	40.2%
Libertarian	343	1.8%	107	1.4%	53	1.3%	198	1.6%	60	1.3%
Other	222	1.1%	66	0.9%	29	0.7%	97	0.8%	41	0.9%
Total	19,555		7,729		4,176		12,095		4,550	



Step 2: Asking Voters the Right Questions and Measuring Relevant Opinions

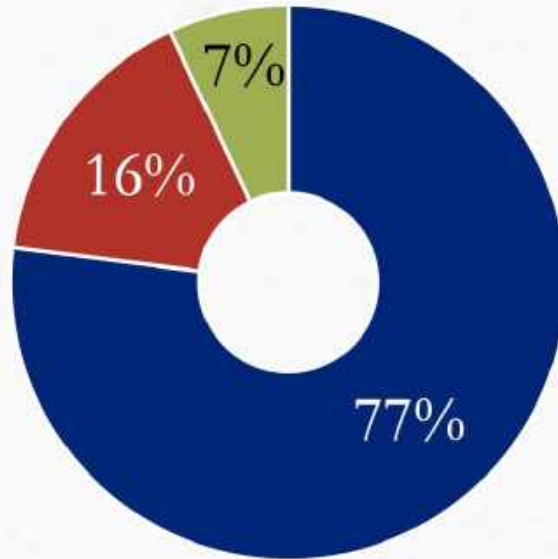
Step 2: Asking the Right Questions

Measuring Relevant Opinions

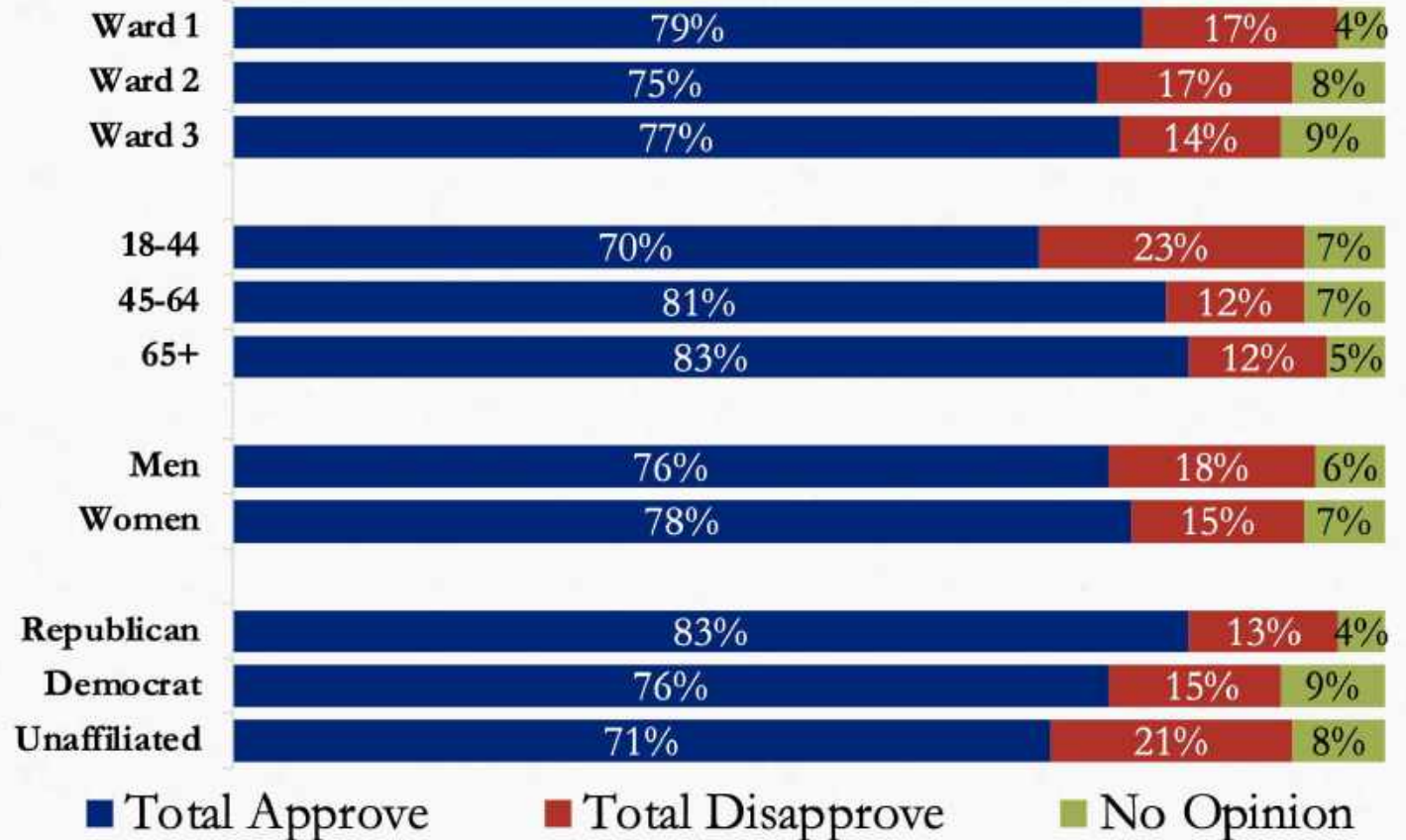
- Measure voter awareness or frequency of usage of services
- Measure department or special district job approval
- Measure opinion of the organization spending funds wisely
- Measure general support/opposition for a tax increase
- Measure support/opposition for actual ballot language or a paraphrased summary including the most relevant information.



Thinking now about public safety in the City of Fountain. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Fountain Police Department is doing?

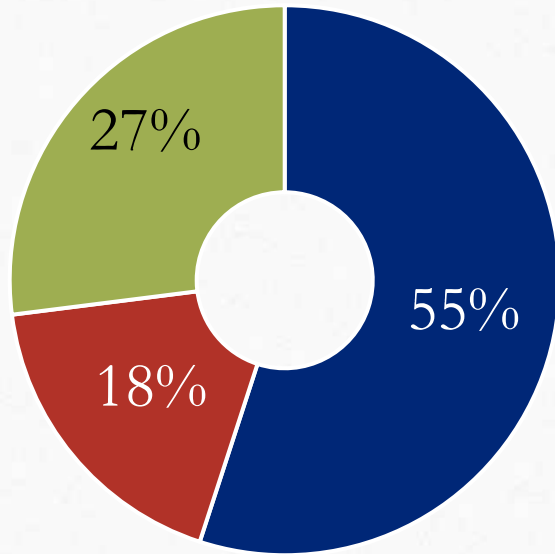


■ Total Approve
■ Total Disapprove
■ No Opinion

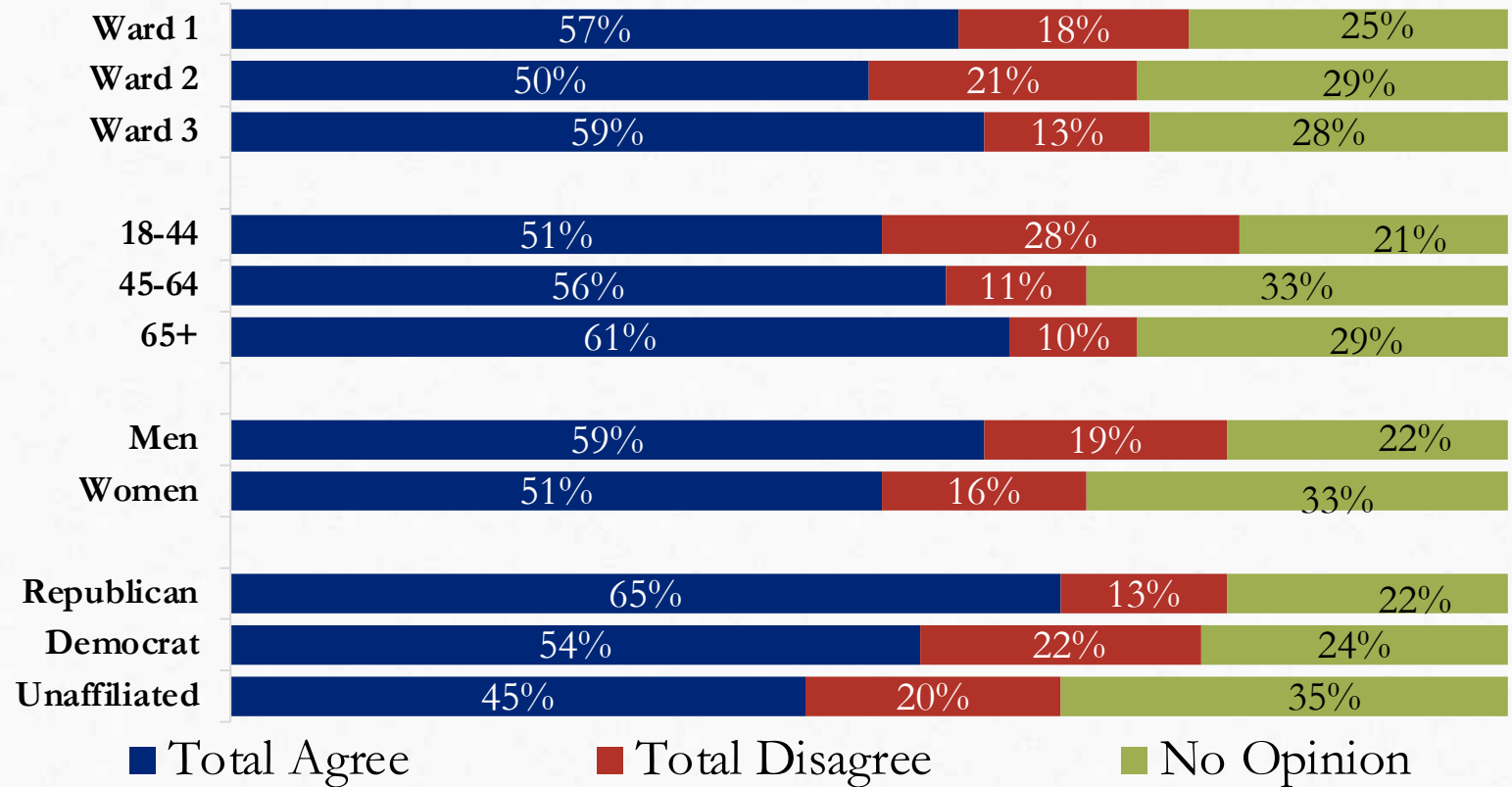


Strongly Approve 47%, Somewhat Approve 30%, Somewhat Disapprove 9%, Strongly Disapprove 7%

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “The Fountain Police Department is fiscally responsible and spends taxpayer money wisely.”

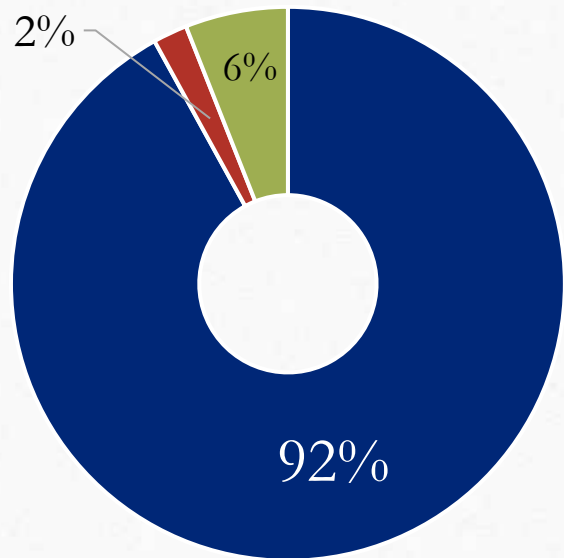


■ Total Agree
■ Total Disagree
■ No Opinion

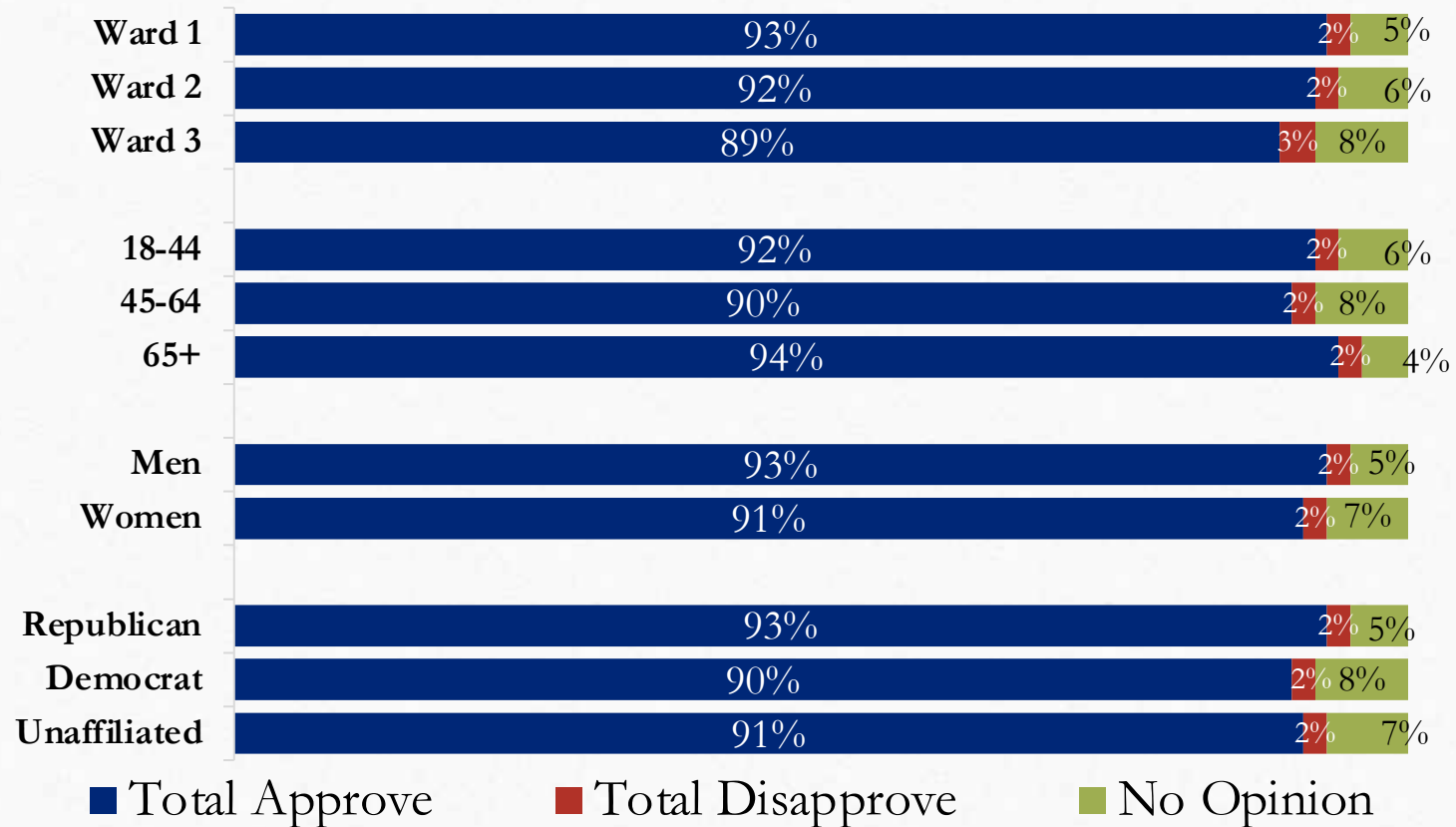


Strongly Agree 32%, Somewhat Agree 23%, Somewhat Disagree 9%, Strongly Disagree 9%

Thinking now about public safety in the City of Fountain. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Fountain Fire/EMS Department is doing?



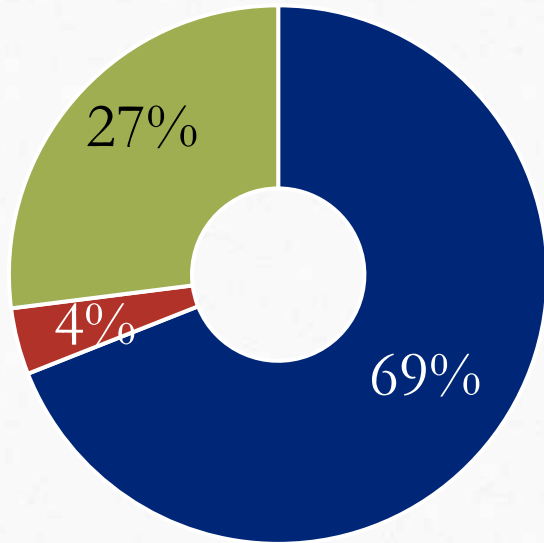
■ Total Approve
 ■ Total Disapprove
 ■ No Opinion



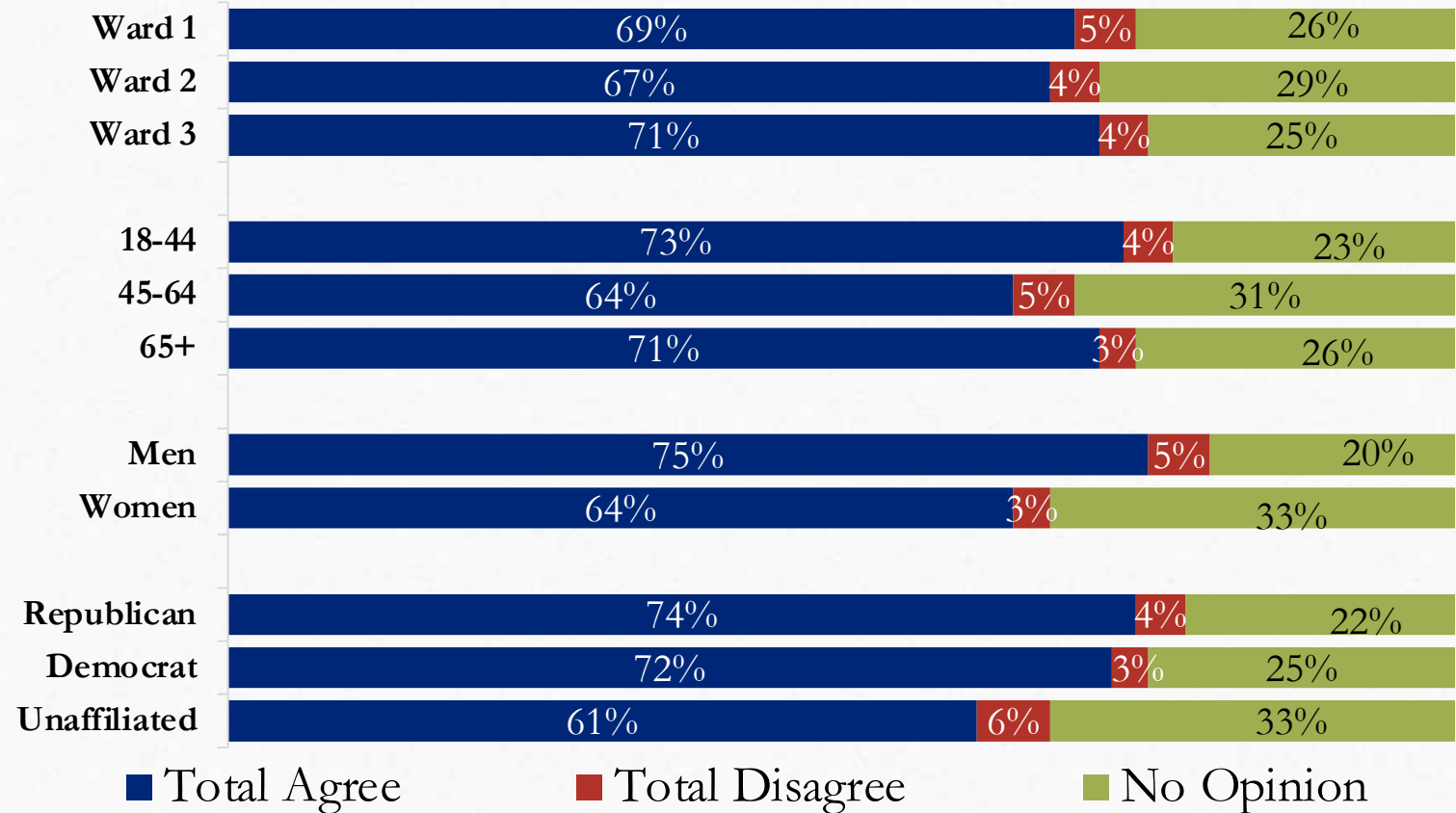
Strongly Approve 74%, Somewhat Approve 18%, Somewhat Disapprove 1%, Strongly Disapprove 1%



Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “The Fountain Fire/EMS Department is fiscally responsible and spends taxpayer money wisely.”



■ Total Agree
■ Total Disagree
■ No Opinion



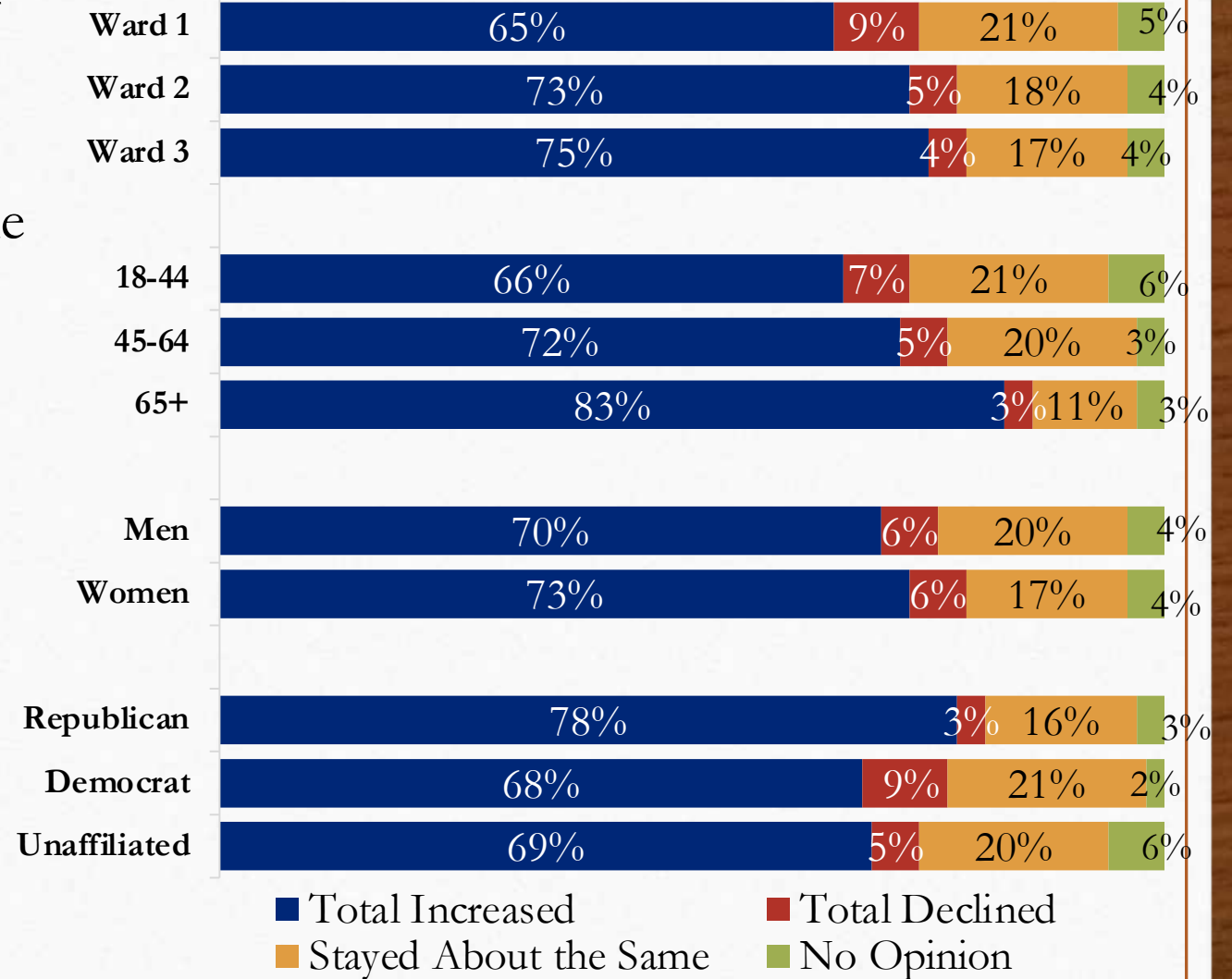
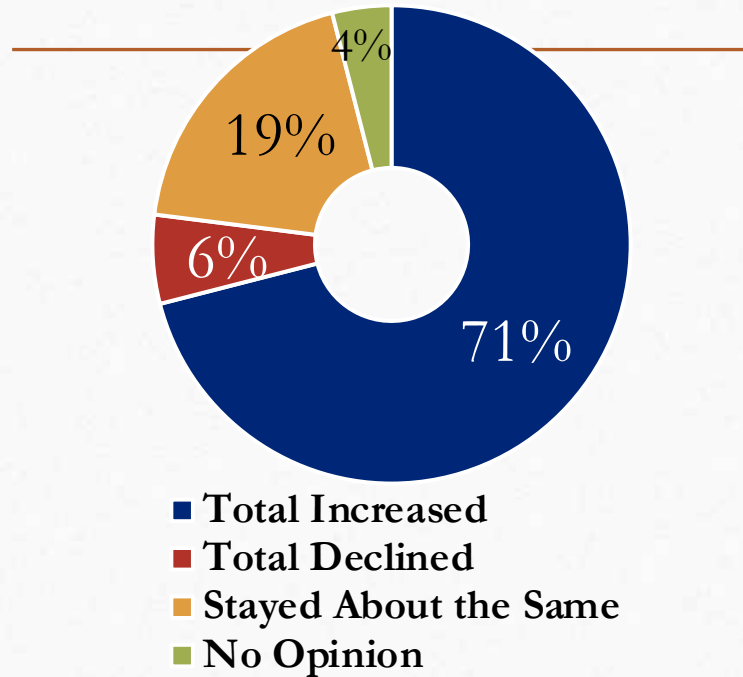
Strongly Agree 43%, Somewhat Agree 26%, Somewhat Disagree 1%, Strongly Disagree 3%



Perceptions of Crime and Fire Risk in Fountain

Opinion of Crime in Fountain

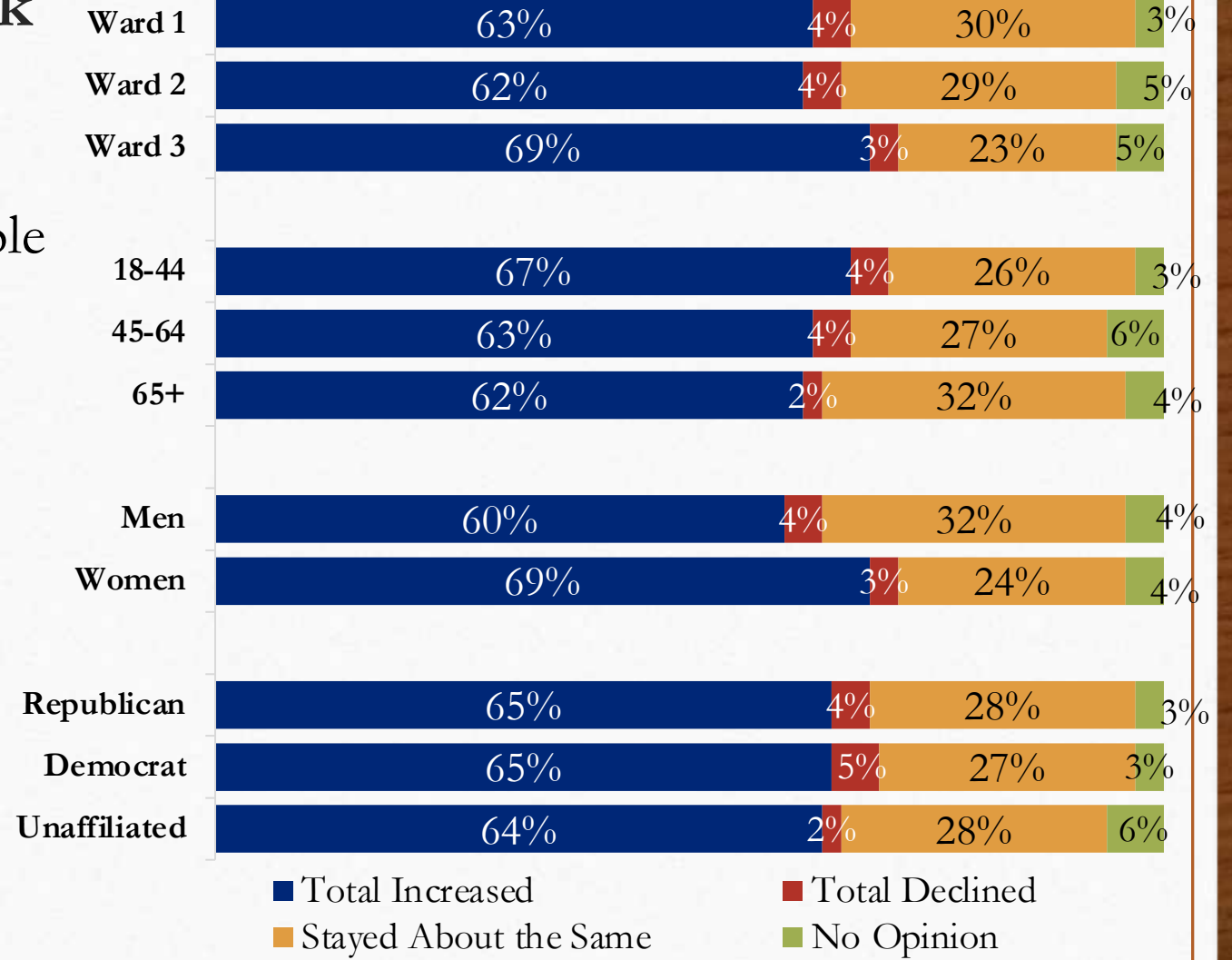
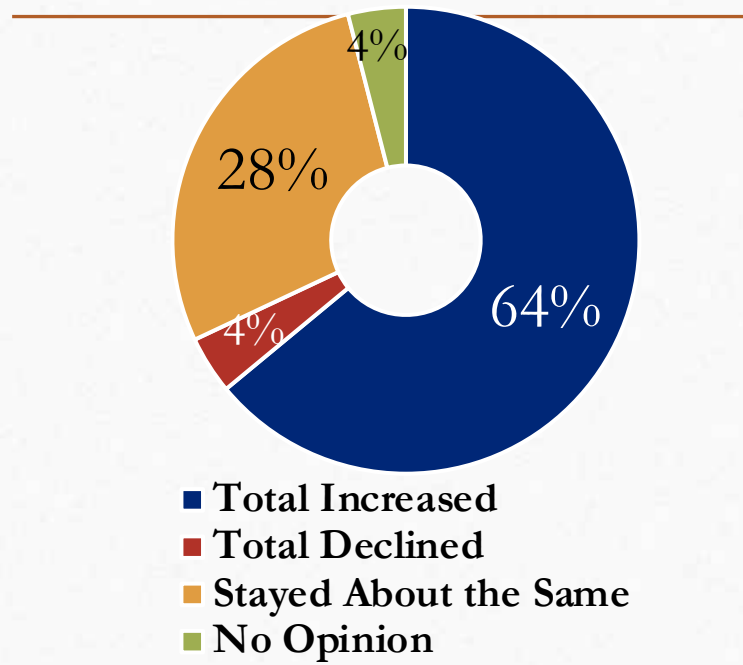
Do you think crime in the City of Fountain has increased, declined, or stayed about the same in the past couple of years?



Definitely Increased 41%, Probably Increased 30%, Definitely Declined 2%, Probably Declined 4%

Opinion of Fountain Fire Risk

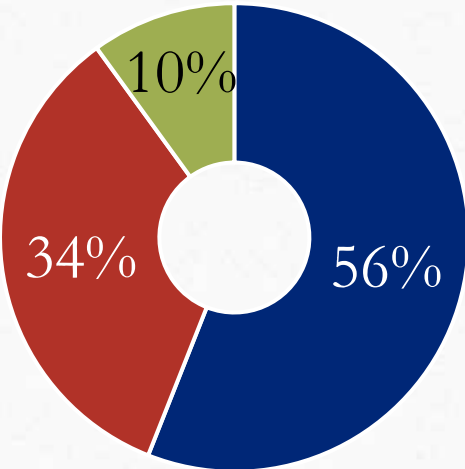
Do you think fire risk in the City of Fountain has increased, declined, or stayed about the same in the past couple of years?



Definitely Increased 32%, Probably Increased 32%, Definitely Declined 1%, Probably Declined 3%

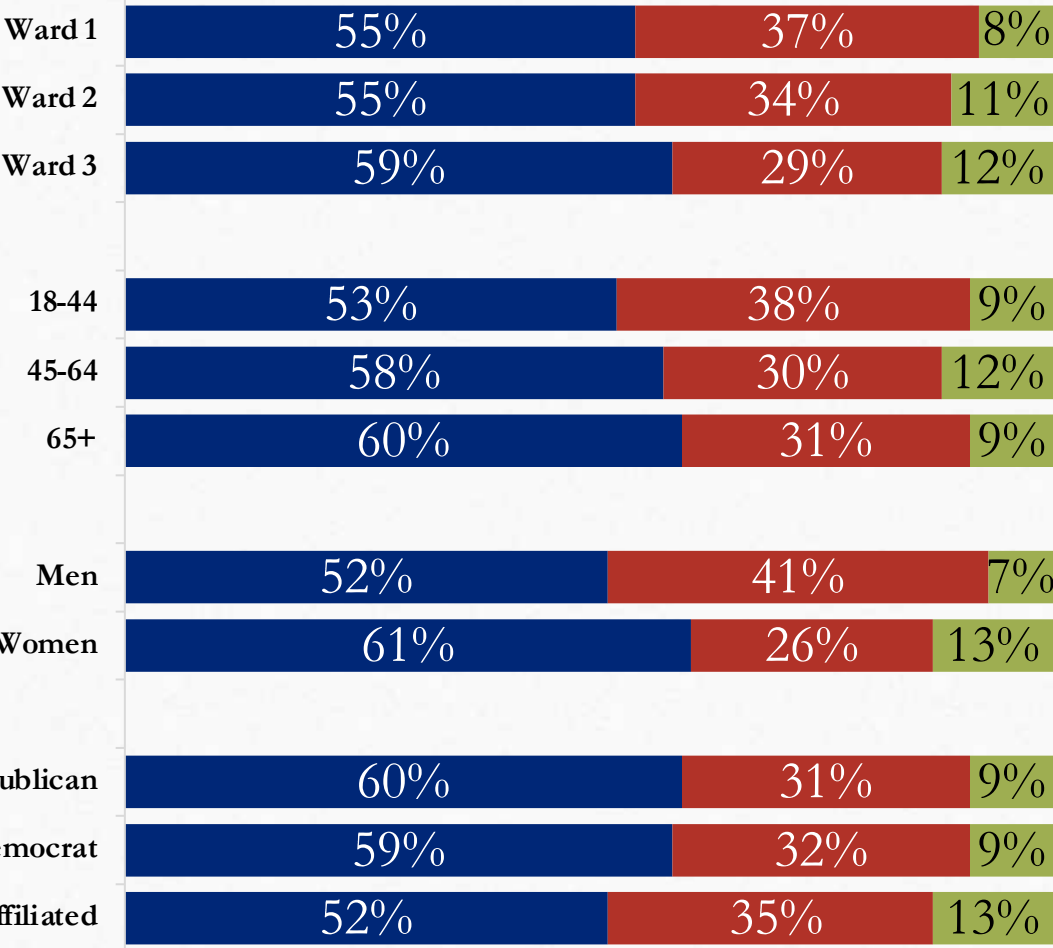
General Property Tax Increase for Police, Fire, and EMS Services

Would you support or oppose a property tax increase to create a dedicated funding source for Fountain’s Police, Fire, and EMS services, personnel, and programs?



■ Total Support
 ■ Total Oppose
 ■ Undecided

Strongly Support	31%
Somewhat Support	25%
Strongly Oppose	24%
Somewhat Oppose	10%



■ Total Support ■ Total Oppose ■ Undecided

6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase for Police and Fire/EMS Uninformed Ballot Test



Before we continue, it is important to understand that the city has not decided to put a ballot measure before voters this November to fund public safety services and programs. However, your honest responses to the following questions will help the city make that decision. So, let's continue the survey now...

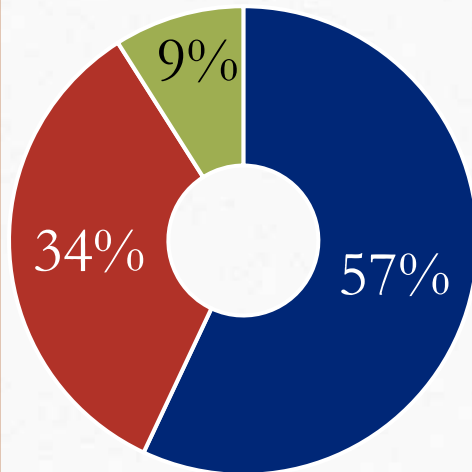
This November, the City of Fountain is considering a public safety ballot measure to create an annual, dedicated \$1.7 million funding source for the city's Police, Fire/EMS services, personnel, and programs.

The ballot measure would ask voters to approve a 6.2-mill property tax increase. A 6.2-mill increase would cost a homeowner about \$178 annually or \$15 per month for a home with an assessed value of \$410,000.

Knowing this information, if an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve a 6.2 mill increase to fund public safety services, personnel, and programs, or would you vote no and reject it?

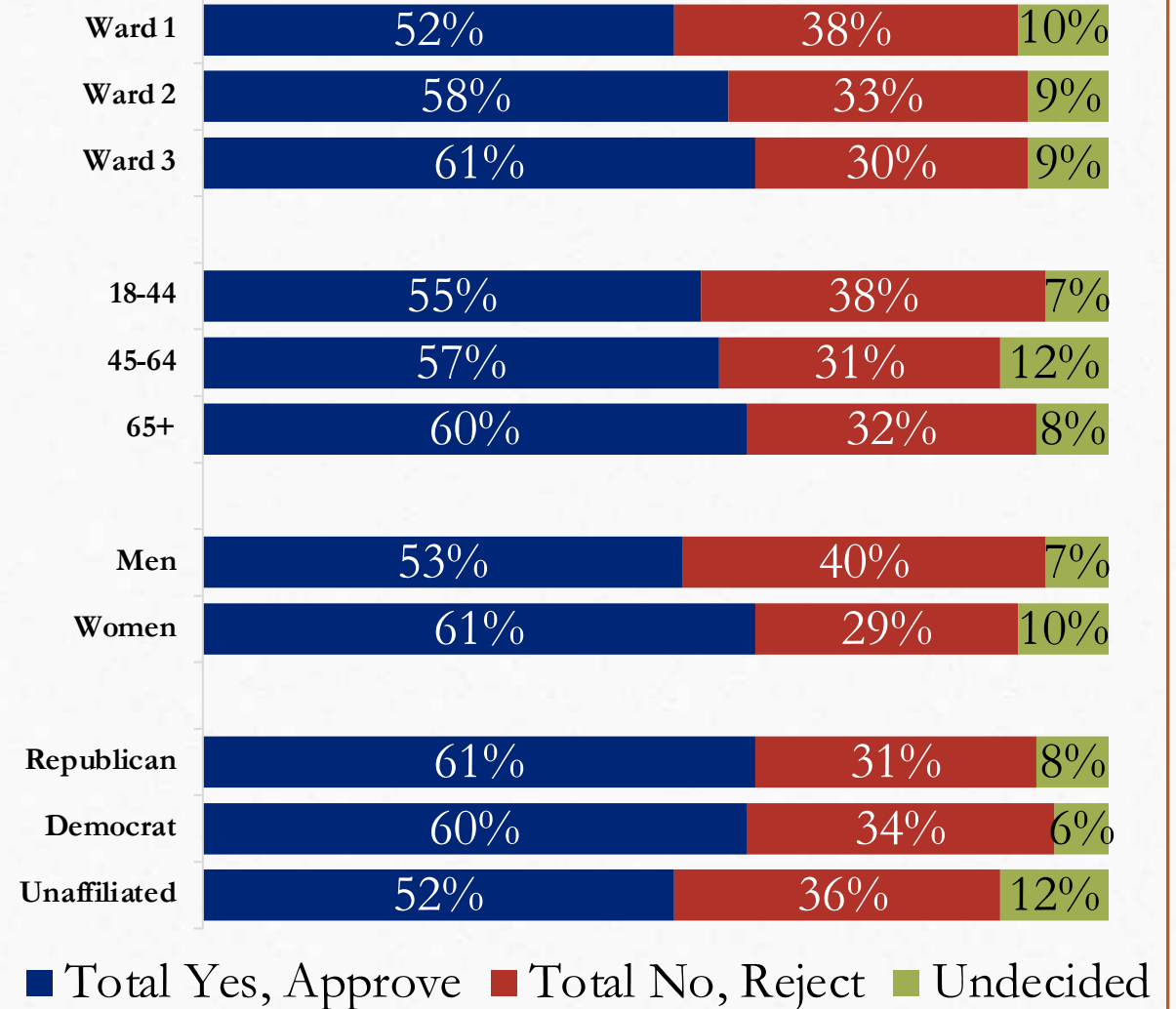
6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase Uninformed Ballot Test

Knowing this information, if an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve a 6.2 mill increase to fund public safety services, personnel, and programs, or would you vote no and reject it?



■ Total Yes, Approve
■ Total No, Reject
■ Undecided

Definitely Yes, Approve	29%
Probably Yes, Approve	28%
Definitely No, Reject	22%
Probably No, Reject	12%





Step 3: Educating and Informing Respondents of the Ballot Measure What and Why...Tell Your Story

Information About Why the City is Considering a 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase



We will now share some information about the reasons why the city is considering a ballot measure to create a dedicated funding source for public safety services, personnel, and programs.

After reading/hearing the information, please indicate if you are more likely to vote yes and approve the ballot measure or if you are more likely to vote no and reject it. Let's get started...

Information Questions on 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase

Ranked by Percent More Likely to Approve

If approved, the ballot measure would fund a third full-time ambulance unit and additional firefighter capabilities.



The city plans to build a new Fire Station with a Police Substation on the East side of Fountain near the intersection of Link and Watchmen Roads by 2025. This ballot measure will NOT fund its construction. However, this ballot measure would pay for the salaries of six new firefighters and paramedics for the new station.



If the ballot measure is approved, six police officers will be hired to support increased traffic enforcement, reduced response times, increased police presence city-wide, and resources dedicated to addressing crimes against children, sex trafficking, and financial crimes.



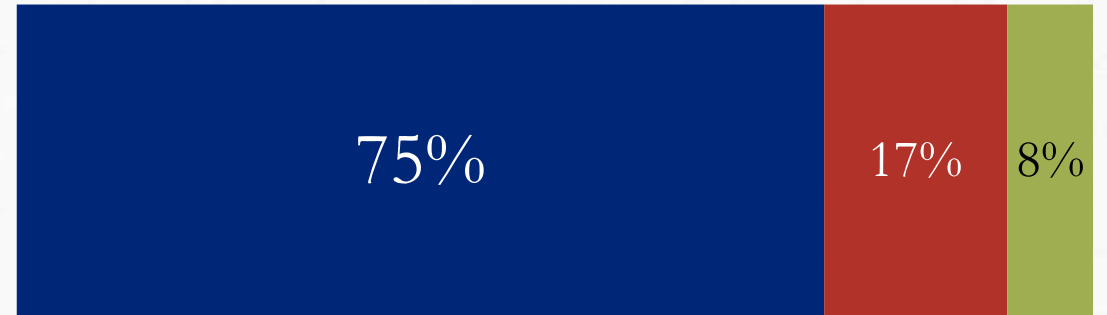
■ More Likely to Approve ■ More Likely to Reject
■ No Opinion

Information Questions on 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase

Ranked by Percent More Likely to Approve

The new Fire Station-Police Substation is estimated to decrease a Fountain homeowner's insurance by \$400 to \$600 annually if the homeowner's insurance company uses the city's Insurance Services Office (ISO) in their insurance policy calculation.

If the ballot measure is approved, funds would be used to address the difficulties in retention/recruiting, enhanced training, officer wellness, and the increased stress our police officers and firefighters are experiencing. Studies have shown overworked and understaffed police and fire/EMS lead to a sense of hopelessness. This environment results in less proactive and productive public safety employees.



■ More Likely to Approve ■ More Likely to Reject ■ No Opinion

Information Questions on 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase

Ranked by Percent More Likely to Approve

The City of Fountain's Police and Fire/EMS services are being stretched due to a growing population and rising crime rates. Residential housing growth in Fountain is accelerating dramatically with an estimated 17,000 to 23,000 people moving into our community in future years. Without additional resources, it will be difficult for our Police and Fire Departments to provide an acceptable level of services to Fountain residents.

Each call received by the Police Department falls into one of two categories. Priority 1 calls are incidents of a violent nature like domestic violence, assault, mental health, suicide, or homicide. Priority 2 calls involve incidents of a less violent nature, like car theft, noisy neighbors, or a burglary/break-in. In the past five years, there has been a 43% increase in Priority 1 calls, which require more time and resources than a Priority 2 call. More police resources are needed to address both Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls in an acceptable amount of time.



■ More Likely to Approve ■ More Likely to Reject
■ No Opinion

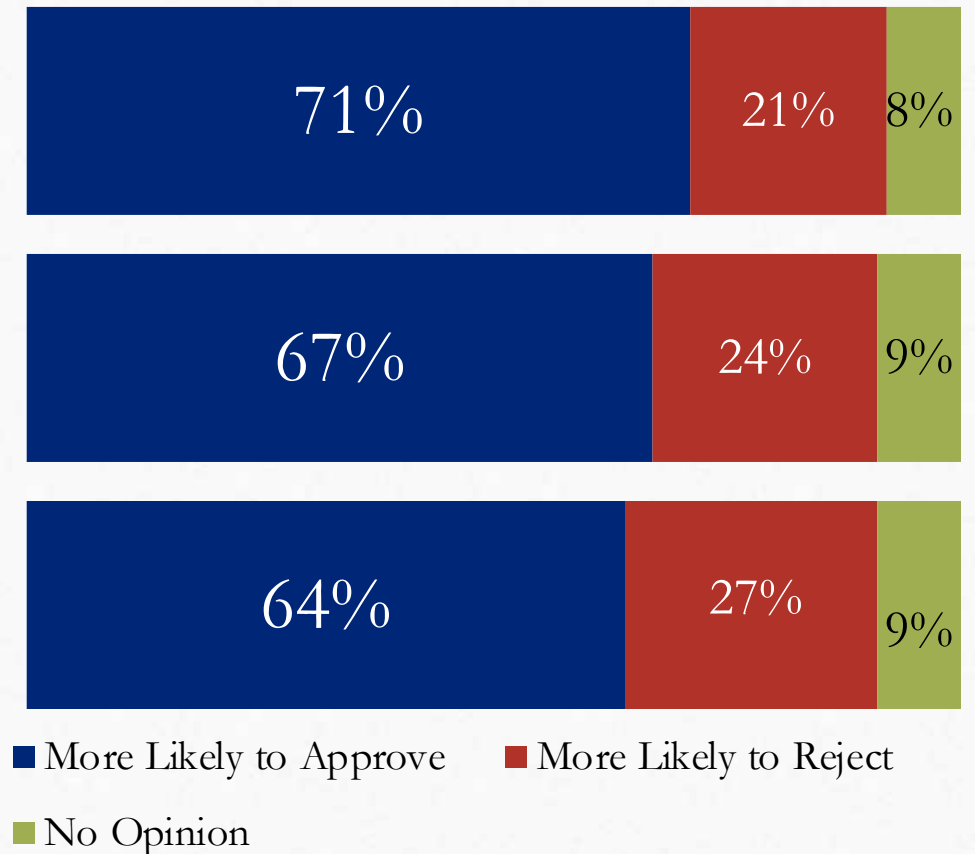
Information Questions on 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase

Ranked by Percent More Likely to Approve

Crime has increased statewide and in the City of Fountain, including assault by 14%, menacing (physical threats) by 19%, burglary by 19%, vehicle theft by 50%, and drug and narcotic violations by 59%. To address these trends and provide an acceptable level of public safety to residents, additional funding is needed.

Fountain District 8 School District plans to build 6 more schools in the next eight years. As a result, the police department will need more officers to fill these schools and maintain officers in existing schools with a growing population.

Unfortunately, law enforcement legislation from the state in the past few years has resulted in less accountability for criminals, the decriminalization of drugs, and lower severity of penalties and sentencing for some criminal offenses. In addition, the Colorado “catch and release” system has made it more difficult for law enforcement to keep people in jail. For these reasons, additional funds will help our police do their job.





Step 4: Measuring Voter Opinion Movement and Understanding Reasons WHY Voters Will Support or Oppose a Ballot Measure

6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase for Police and Fire/EMS Informed Ballot Test



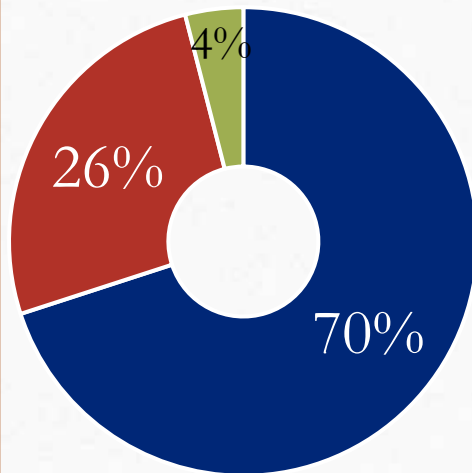
Thank you for learning why the City of Fountain is considering a ballot measure to fund public safety services this November. As a reminder, if approved, the ballot measure would create an annual, dedicated \$1.7 million funding source for Fountain Police, Fire/EMS services, personnel, and programs.

The ballot measure would ask voters to approve a 6.2-mill property tax increase. A 6.2-mill increase would cost a homeowner about \$178 annually or \$15 per month on a home with an assessed value of \$410,000.

Knowing this information, if an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve this public safety ballot measure, or would you vote no and reject it?

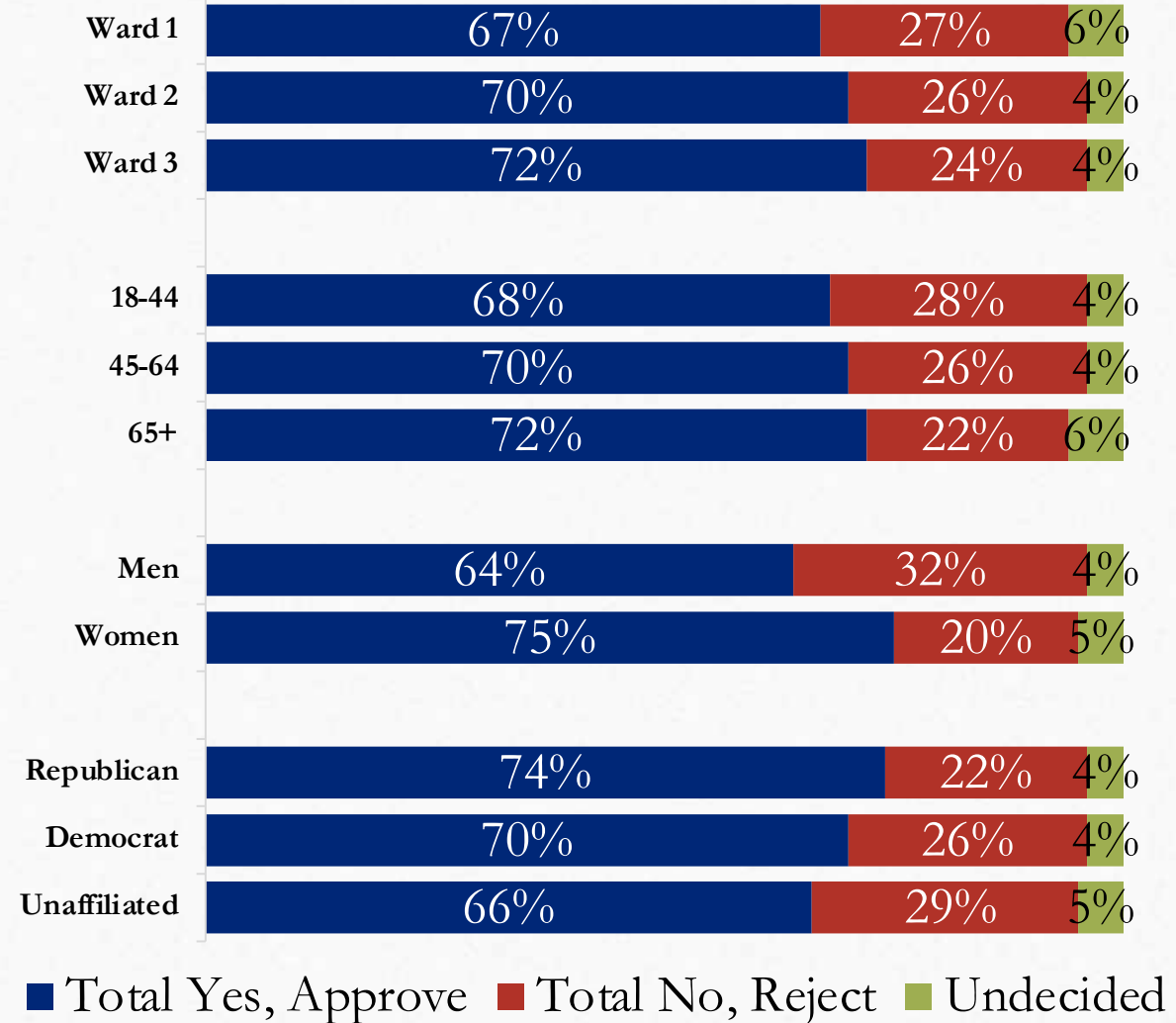
6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase Informed Ballot Test

Knowing this information, if an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve this public safety ballot measure, or would you vote no and reject it?

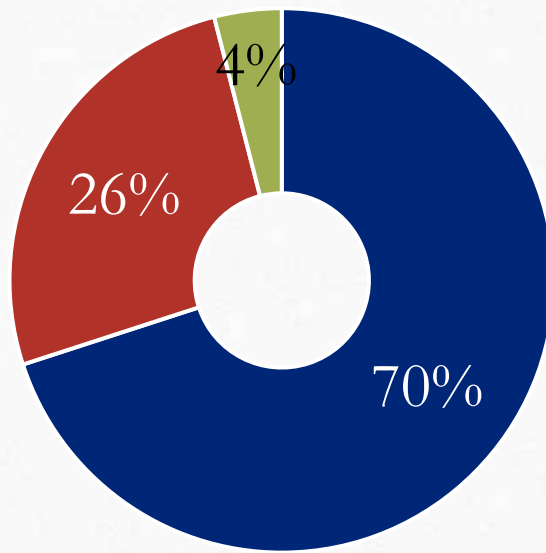


■ Total Yes, Approve
■ Total No, Reject
■ Undecided

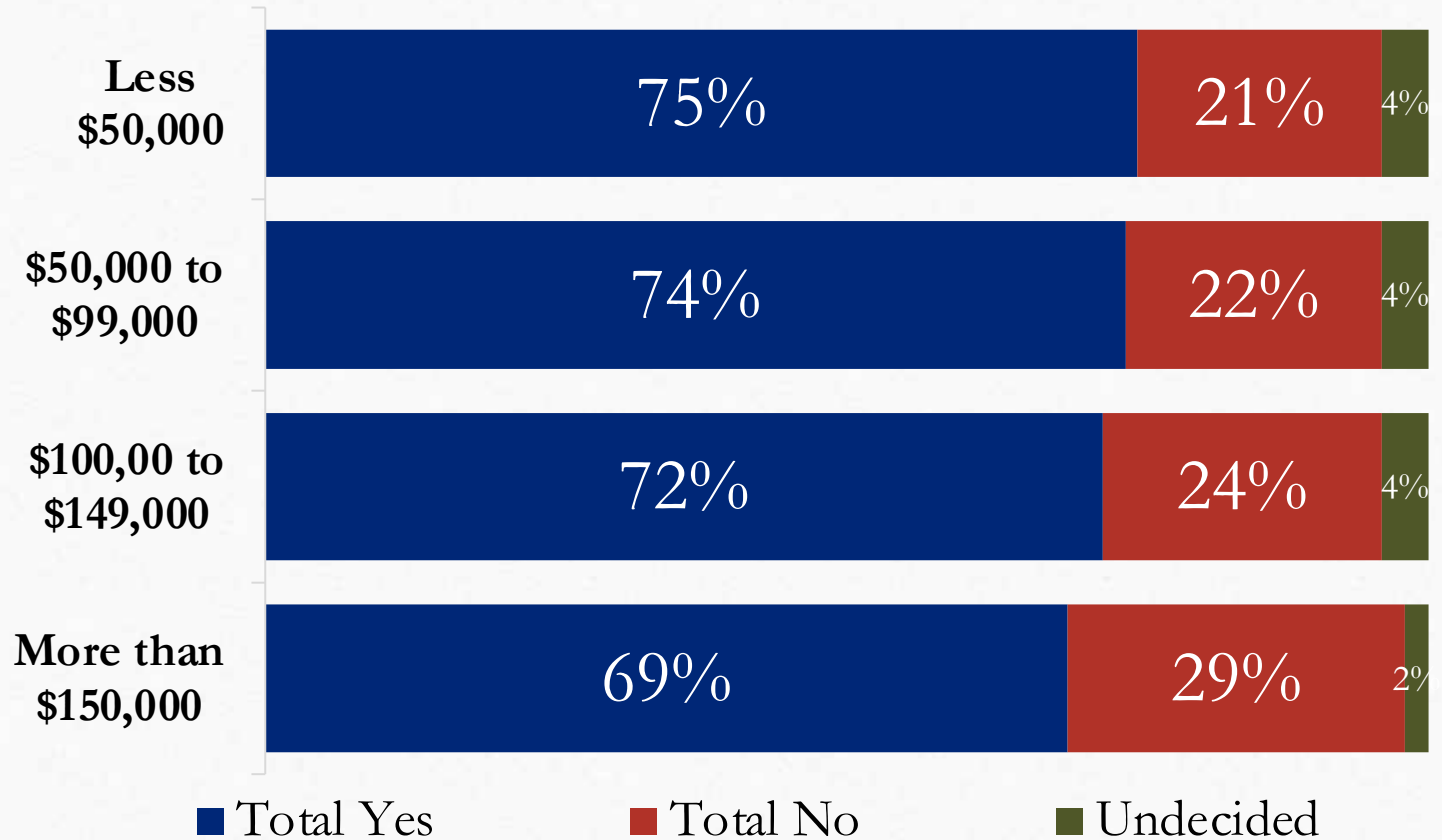
Definitely Yes, Approve	39%
Probably Yes, Approve	21%
Lean Towards Yes, Approve	10%
Definitely No, Reject	16%
Probably No, Reject	4%
Lean Towards No, Reject	6%



Knowing this information, if an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve this public safety ballot measure or would you vote no and reject it?



■ Total Yes, Approve
■ Total No, Reject
■ Undecided



Definitely Vote Yes 39%, Probably Vote Yes 21%, Definitely Vote No 16%, Probably Vote No 4%

Why 70% of Voters Would Vote Yes and Approve a 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase

“Please describe the reasons
why you would vote yes and
approve the public safety
ballot measure.”

Themes

These services are important for
Public Safety

Our community is growing

*“Our public safety people need all the resources that can be made
available to not only ensure our safety but theirs too.” -Female, 55-64,
Unaffiliated*

*“With the population growth steadily increasing, we have an increasing
need for more police/fire/EMS services.” -Male, 45-54, Unaffiliated*

*“Due to increase of crime and decreased response times. Officer wellness.”
-Male, 55-64, Republican*

*“We need a better police presence due to high crime.” -Male, 18-34,
Republican*

*“Increased security. Increased fire mitigation. Decrease in homeowners
insurance.” -Female, 45-54, Republican*

*“The city is growing, and society is getting more desperate. These times
call for law and fire measures to be growing with the times.” -Female, 55-
64, Democrat*

Why 26% of Voters Would Vote No and Reject a 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase

“Please describe the reasons why you would vote no and reject the public safety ballot measure.”

Themes

Taxes and Cost of Living are Too High Already

Don't Trust How Money is Currently Spent

Dissatisfaction with Police Department

“Inflation and can't afford taxes already assessed. Asking for more money at the wrong time.” -Male, 55-64, Unaffiliated

“Pretty simple, with growth of residents there is also a growth in taxes coming into the city. Property taxes have increased dramatically every year. No need to double down. Manage what you have better.” -Male, 35-44, Republican

“The reason I vote no is that there is a huge influx of housing being built. The property value has been going up and taxes are going up. There should be enough money.” -Male, 18-34, Democrat

“The community doesn't need more police it needs more firefighters, mental health resources, and education.” -Female, 35-44, Unaffiliated

“With everything else going up in price, people will lose their homes and then where would the funds come from?” -Male, 35-44, Republican

Why 4% of Voters Are Undecided About a 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase

“Please describe the reasons why you are undecided about approving or rejecting the public safety ballot measure.”

Themes

Need More Information

Services Are Important but Cost is High

“I need more information about how money is spent now. I understand growth in the community but that means more tax money should be given with all the new housing being put up. If housing plans are approved by the city, there has to be plans for community services too. Where’s the money going?” -Female, 35-44, Unaffiliated

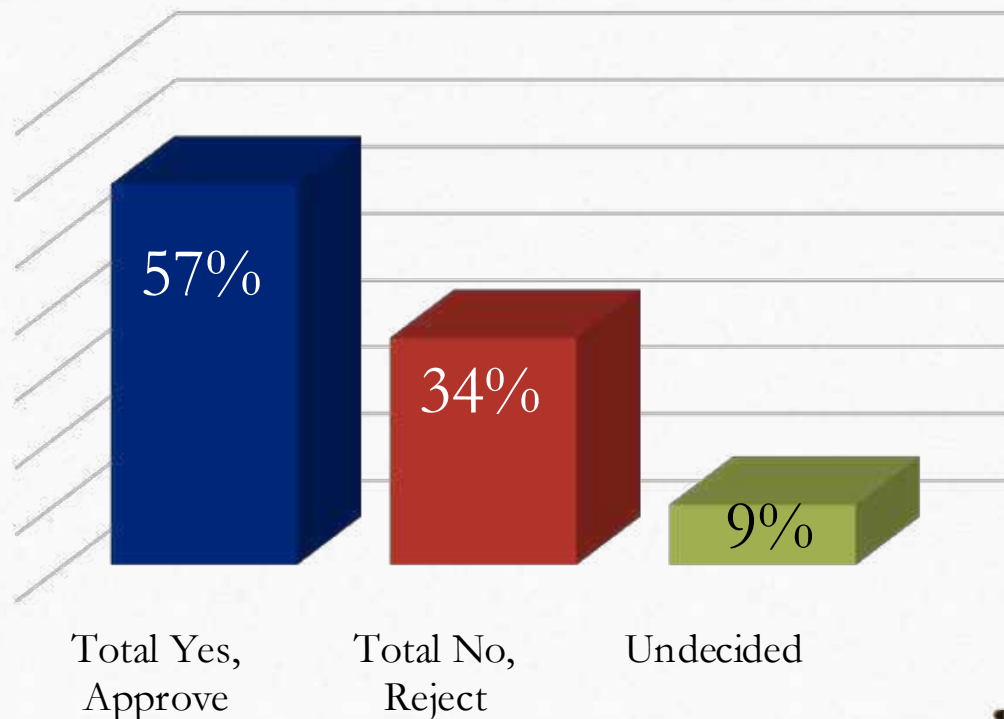
“With the cost of living ever increasing right now with no end in sight and add in living on a fixed income, I am uncertain of being able to cover yet another outlay of dollars.” -Female, 55-64, Republican

“Can’t afford to pay higher taxes but want to be safe.” -Female, 35-44, Democrat

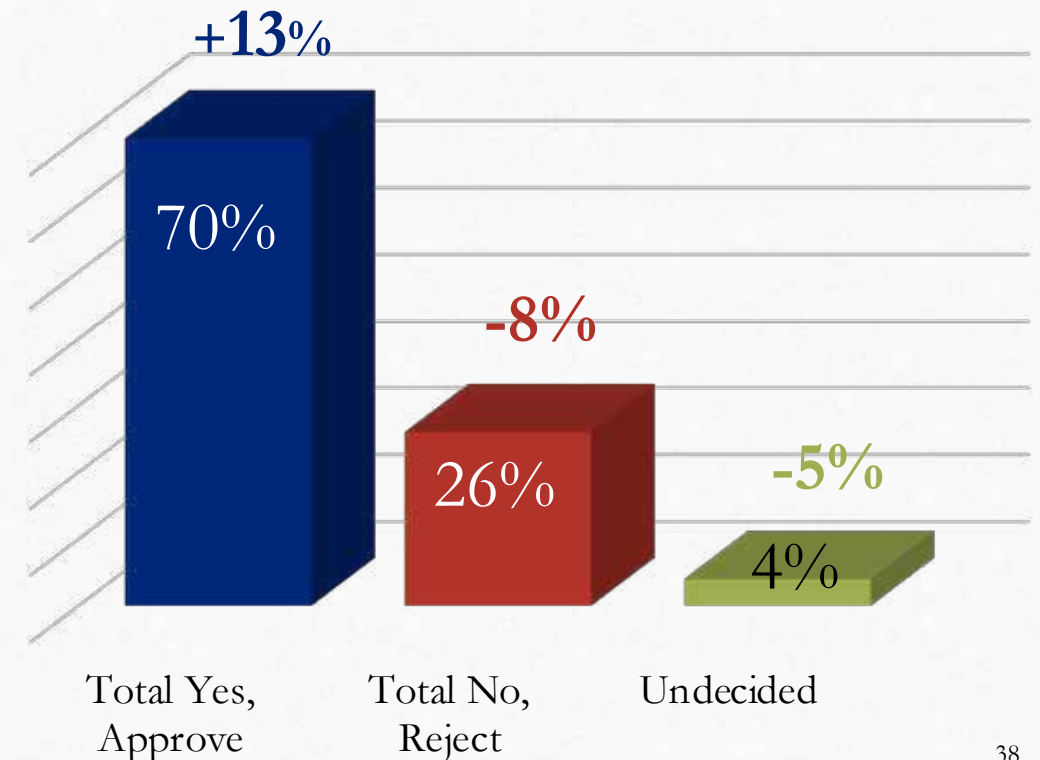
“Because the mill increase has happened before and no action have been made. Why not use government grants?” -Male, 45-54, Republican

Uninformed vs. Informed 6.2-Mill Property Tax Increase Ballot Measure

Uninformed Ballot Test



Informed Ballot Test



Uninformed vs. Informed 6.2 Mill Ballot Test

Comparison Change in Support by Voter Subgroup

	All Voters	Men	Wom.	18-44	45-64	Seniors 65+	Unaf.	Dem.	Rep.
Change	+13	+11	+14	+13	+13	+12	+14	+10	+13
Informed	70%	64%	75%	68%	70%	72%	66%	70%	74%
Uninformed	57%	53%	61%	55%	57%	60%	52%	60%	61%



Step 5: Developing Good Ballot Language

27J Schools Post Election Survey Objectives

The objectives of this survey were to measure and understand:

- Why 52% of voters rejected Ballot Issue 5A, which would have funded teacher salaries and STEM programs.
- What changes could be made to achieve voter approval in the future.
- Why voters approved Ballot Issue 5B, a bond measure for school construction.
- The overall image of 27J Schools and its teachers.

27J Schools Ballot Issue 5A

Understanding Changes That Could Increase Support for 5A

Change #1: *The first paragraph of Ballot Issue 5A mentions an increase of “an additional mill levy of not to exceed 8 mills.” Knowing this, would you be more likely to consider voting yes and approving Ballot Issue 5A if the language included information about how much an 8-mill increase would cost annually on a home valued at \$500,000? The median home value in the school district is about \$486,000.*

Change #2: *Would you be more likely to vote yes and approve Ballot Issue 5A if the amount of the mill levy increase was less than 8 mills?*

Among All Respondents



■ More Likely to Vote Yes

■ No Opinion/ No Difference

★ West Routt Fire Protection District Referendum 6A (Vote For 1)



SHALL WEST ROUTT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT TAXES BE INCREASED \$349,908.00 (FIRST FULL FISCAL YEAR DOLLAR INCREASE) ANNUALLY, BEGINNING IN LEVY YEAR 2022 (FOR COLLECTION IN CALENDAR YEAR 2023) BY INCREASING THE DISTRICT'S EXISTING PROPERTY TAX BY 3.0 MILLS (WHICH AMOUNTS TO \$21.45 PER \$100,000 OF ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE PER YEAR AND \$87.00 PER \$100,000 OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTY VALUE PER YEAR) TO BE USED BY THE DISTRICT FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS OF DISTRICT ASSETS, AND OPERATIONS TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF NEW PERSONNEL. ALL REVENUE AND ANY EARNINGS ON THIS TAX CONSTITUTING A PERMANENT VOTER-APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE WITHIN THE MEANING OF ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION AND AN EXCEPTION TO THE LIMITATIONS SET FORTH IN SECTION 29-1-301, COLORADO REVISED STATUTES, AND ANY OTHER LAW?



★ Ouray County Ballot Issue 1A (Vote For 1)



SHALL OURAY COUNTY'S TAXES BE INCREASED BY \$411,003 BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2022 AND ANNUALLY THEREAFTER IN SUCH AMOUNTS AS ARE RECEIVED EACH YEAR FROM THE IMPOSITION OF AN ADDITIONAL TWO (2) MILLS LEVIED UPON THE TAXABLE REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE COUNTY (\$14.30/year of property taxes per \$100,000 value of residential property); THE REVENUES FROM WHICH SHALL BE DEPOSITED IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH FUND AND USED SOLELY FOR THE OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, AND CAPITAL EXPENSES OF OURAY COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES; AND SHALL THE LEVY AND THE FULL AMOUNT OF ANY EARNINGS THEREON BE COLLECTED, RETAINED, AND EXPENDED AS A VOTER APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE WITHOUT LIMITATION OR CONDITION UNDER ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION AND COLORADO REVISED STATUTES SECTION 29-1-301 ET SEQ OR ANY OTHER LAW, ALL IN CONFORMANCE WITH OURAY COUNTY RESOLUTION 2021-030?



27J Schools Ballot Issue 5A

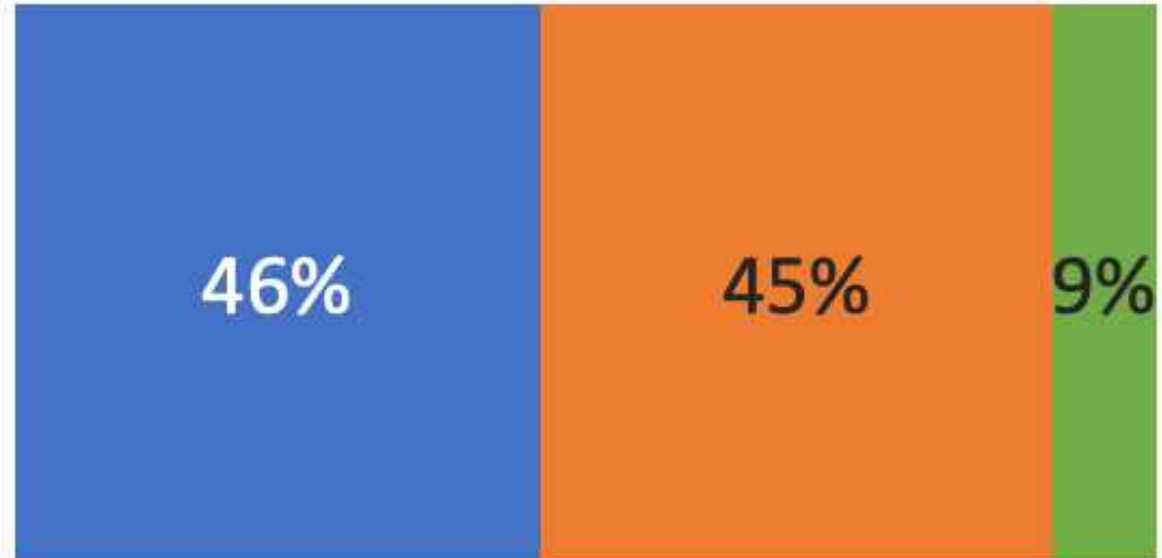
Understanding Changes That Could Increase for 5A

The following language in Ballot Issue 5A describes how some of the \$16 million in education funding would be spent:

- **Recruiting, attracting, and retaining quality teachers and staff by increasing salaries.**
- **Providing enhanced career-focused learning and technical education including science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) so that students can gain the skills they need for jobs and careers.**

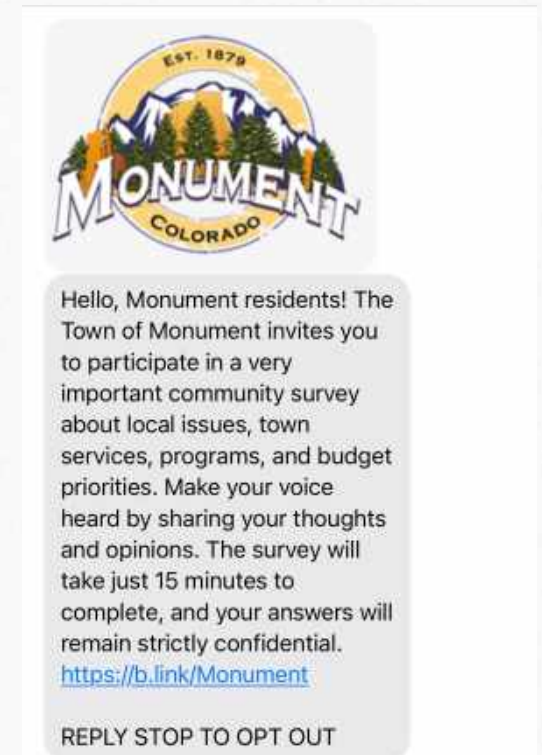
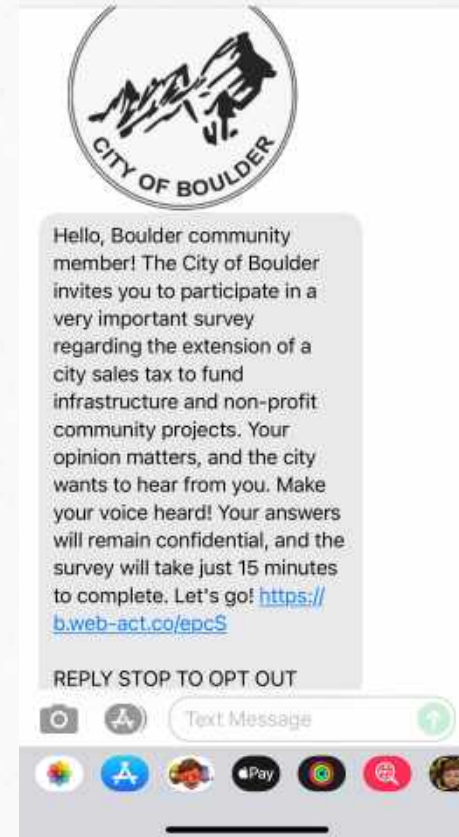
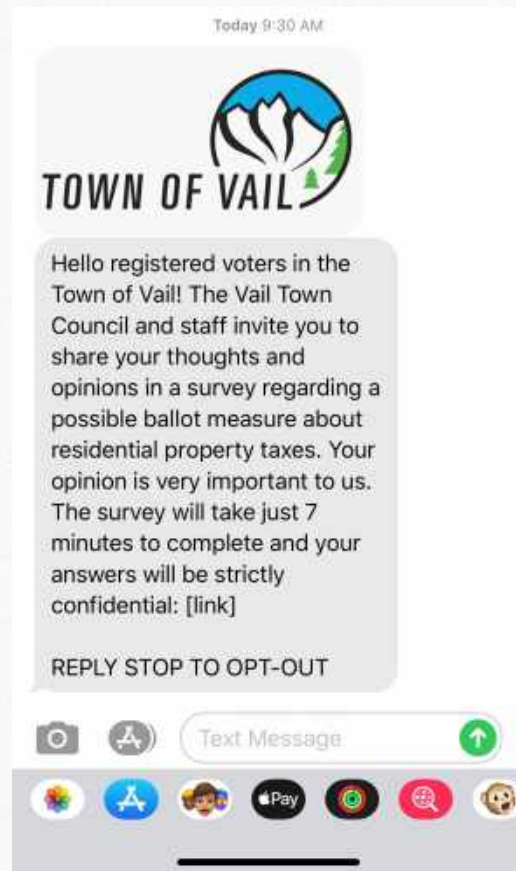
Do you think this ballot language is specific enough describing how the \$16 million would be spent, or would you prefer to see more information and details of the education programs that would be funded?

Among Voters Who Voted No on 5A



- Language is Specific Enough
- Prefer to See More Information
- Unsure/No Opinion

Example MMS Text Invitations



Questions?



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