



PARK COUNTY STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

AN OVERVIEW OF SURVEY RESULTS

December 1999



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PREPARED FOR
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Park County, Colorado

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INTRODUCTION

As a part of the Park County's Strategic Master Plan process a countywide survey was conducted in November and December, 1999. The survey instrument was designed through the collaboration of the Strategic Master Plan Advisory Committee, the Park County Commissioners, and the consultant team, to investigate current county demographics and to evaluate opinions related to lists of specific topics. A number of survey questions were similar to those included in past surveys (1990, 1995), but the questionnaire also included new questions intended to probe topics of interest or concern.

The survey was distributed by mail to 8,089 households; of this number 7,588 surveys were mailed to residents living within Park County, and 501 were mailed to individuals living in Park County but receiving their mail outside the County (for example, in Breckenridge, Pine Junction, etc.). The lists of local residents were obtained from the U.S. Postal Service and homeowners receiving mail outside the county were identified with assistance from the Park County Assessor. Of the 501 surveys mailed outside Park County, a total of 96 surveys were returned, representing a response rate of about 19 percent. Of the 7,588 surveys mailed within Park County, a total of 2,032 surveys were returned, representing a response rate of about 27 percent. This is considered to be an extremely strong response rate for a survey program of this type.

In addition, a total of 1,000 surveys were mailed to a random sampling of second homeowners, that is, owners of improved property in the County that receive tax notices at addresses outside the County. A total of 177 of these surveys were returned for a response rate of about 18 percent.

Surveys were also made available for pickup at various locations around the county. A total of 35 pickup surveys were completed. These survey forms have been processed separately but are analyzed together with responses from the mailed forms.

As illustrated by the chart below, the responses from the surveys that were mailed within Park County are broadly representative of the county as a whole. Although there was some variation in the response rate by geographic area, response rates were typically high (21 percent or greater), and all of the sub-communities within the county were represented with 90 or more responses.

Table 1
Response Rates for Surveys Mailed Within Park County
By Geographic Location

<i>Section</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Number of Surveys Sent</i>	<i>Percent of Total Surveys Sent</i>	<i>Number of Surveys Received</i>	<i>Percent of Total Surveys Received</i>	<i>Return Rate</i>
1 & 2	Bailey	3,792	47%	1,015	43%	27%
3 & 4	Alma/Fairplay	2324	29%	582	25%	25%
5	Hartsel	350	4%	92	4%	26%
6	Guffey	482	6%	110	5%	23%
7 & 8	Lake George	640	8%	135	6%	21%

A Note Regarding Methodology

In order to explore various factors that could potentially account for response differences, a series of analyses were conducted evaluating the extent to which survey results differed because of methodological or demographic characteristics. The responses to selected questions were broken down by the following factors:

- How the survey was distributed
- Age group
- Length of residence in Park County
- Where the respondent originally came from
- Home/land ownership
- Geographic area
- Town or community with which the respondent identified themselves

The appendixes contained in this report (sent under separate cover) present the results of these analyses in a series of charts.

The average ratings were strikingly similar regardless of how the results were broken down. The exception to this pattern was the breakdown of results by the town or community with which the respondent “most strongly identified.” Interestingly, the responses to almost every survey question varied most by community of affiliation rather than by geography.

In other words, it was not where respondents live but where they associate themselves that explained the greatest variations in local opinion. Very little of the variability in the ratings data could be accounted for by how the survey was distributed (i.e., picked up, mailed out of county, mailed in county, or mailed to second homeowners). Because of this finding, this report presents a summary of the survey results based on the aggregated data from all survey sources. What follows is an overview of key findings, with selected questions described in detail and accompanied by graphs to illustrate results.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The survey provides a “snapshot” profile of Park County residents. Table 2 presents a breakdown of the respondent demographics.

- There were slightly more male than female respondents (57 versus 43 percent).
- Seventy-four percent of respondents were married.
- There was an average of 2.9 persons per household.
- The median age of respondents was 49 years.
- About 74 percent of respondents work outside the home.
- Thirty-six percent work in the Denver metro area.
- Twenty-one percent work in the area from Kenosha Pass towards Denver.
- Ten percent work in the area from Kenosha Pass towards Canon City.
- Seventeen percent work in an area not listed among the choices (“other”).
- Retired individuals made up 23 percent of the respondents.
- Professional, government, and high technology were identified as primary sources of income by 11, 10, and 9 percent of the respondents, respectively.
- About 29 percent of respondents report they own their own business.
- Sixty-five percent of these businesses are located in Park County.
- Full-time residents made up 81 percent of the respondents.
- Fifty-six percent of all respondents reporting they moved to Park County from elsewhere in Colorado.
- Forty-four percent of survey respondents have lived in Park County for five years or less.
- Bailey (39 percent), Fairplay (17 percent), and Lake George (6 percent), are the top three communities with which respondents most closely identify themselves.

One of the important uses of the demographic data is to “crosstabulate” responses by different segments of the community; for example, differences in responses by age group, gender or geography can be determined. These breakdowns have been provided to the Advisory Committee under separate cover.

Table 2
Respondent Profile

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>
Male 57%	<30 years 5%	Single 8%
Female 43%	30-44 years 32%	Married 74%
	45-54 years 28%	Living together 4%
	55-64 years 19%	Separated 1%
	65+ 16%	Divorced 9%
	Average age (49.5)	Widowed 3%
	Median age (49)	

What is Your Relation to Park County?

Full-time resident	81%
Part-time resident	11%
Seasonal resident	6%
Owner of improved land	1%
Other	1%

Where Did You Come From Originally?

Born in Park County	1%
Moved from elsewhere in Colorado	56%
Moved from another state	41%
Moved from another country	3%

How Long Have You Resided in Park County?

>1 year	11%
1 to 5 years	33%
5 to 10 years	22%
10+ years	34%

With What Community Do You Associate Yourself?

Alma	5%
Bailey	39%
Breckenridge	2%
Buena Vista	1%
Canon City	0%
Colorado Springs	1%
Como	3%
Crow Hill	4%
Denver	2%
Fairplay	17%
Grant	1%
Guffey	5%
Hartsel	3%
Jefferson	5%
Lake George	6%
Pine Junction	2%
Shawnee	1%
Tarryall	0%
Will o' the Wisp	1%
Woodland Park	1%
Other	3%

Including Yourself, How Many People Live In Your Household?

1	15%
2	55%
3	14%
4	12%
5	3%
6	1%
7 +	0%
Average	(2.4)

Including Yourself, How Many People In Your Household Are Employed

0	21%
1	31%
2	42%
3	4%
4 +	1%
Average	(1.3)

Which Best Describes Your Employment:

I work outside my home	74%
I work from home	16%
I am semi-retired	10%

Place of Work in the Winter (all adults in HH)

Park County—Kenosha Pass toward Denver	21%
Park County—Kenosha Pass toward Canon City	10%
Denver metro area	37%
Canon City	0%
Buena Vista/Salida	1%
Colorado Springs	4%
Breckenridge	7%
Other Summit County	3%
Other	18%

Table 2
Respondent Profile
(continued)

<u><i>What is Your Primary Source of Personal Income?</i></u>		<u><i>Do You Own Your Own Business?</i></u>	
Art/galleries/cultural	1%	No	71%
Agriculture/ranching	2%	Yes	29%
Bar/restaurant	2%	<u><i>Is This Business in Park County?</i></u>	
Construction/timber	8%	No	35%
Education	4%	Yes	65%
Finance	2%	<u><i>Internet Access</i></u>	
Government	10%	Yes, at home	57%
High technology	9%	Yes, at work	33%
Legal	1%	Yes, at school	3%
Lodging	1%	No	31%
Medical	4%		
Mining/resource/ extraction	1%		
Parent/relative/inheritance	0%		
Professional services	11%		
Rafting company/ski corp.	1%		
Real estate/property management	2%		
Retail	2%		
Retired	23%		
Service industry	7%		
Other	10%		

COMMUNITY OPINIONS

The survey was used to evaluate respondent's ratings of the rate of growth in Park County, priorities for future economic development, opinions regarding potential land use policies and regulations, efforts to protect the environment and acquire open space, and ratings of basic community services. Respondents were also asked about their degree of support for particular tax revenue expenditures. There was a strong response to the survey from the entire Park County community, with all geographic areas represented.

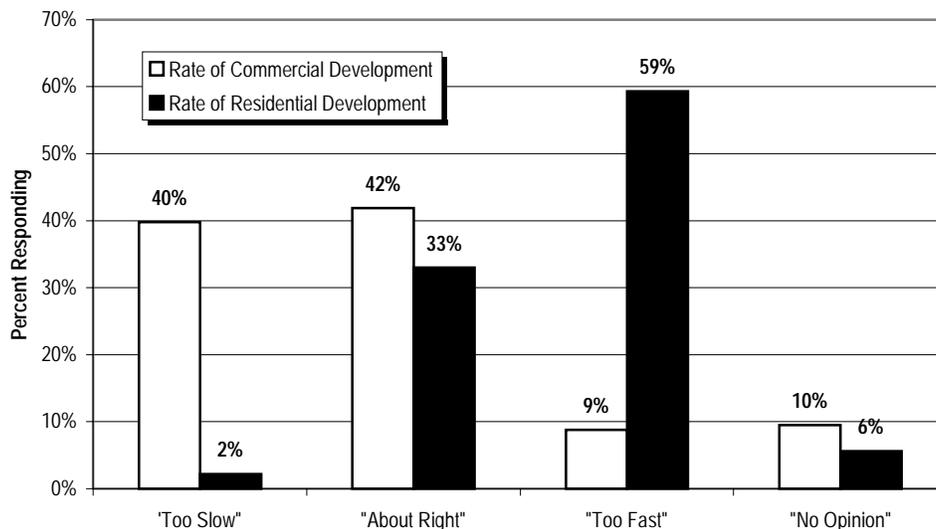
1) Opinions on Development in Park County as a Whole

Respondents were also asked how they felt about the rate of development in Park County as a whole. Forty-seven percent of respondents felt the rate of development was "about right," 29 percent said Park County "could use some growth," and 24 percent thought Park County was "too developed."

2) Opinions on Commercial and Residential Growth

Respondents were asked their opinions regarding the rate of commercial and residential growth in Park County over the last three to five years. As can be seen in Figure 1, most respondents felt that the rate of commercial growth was "about right" or "too slow." Conversely, most felt that the rate of residential development in Park County was "too fast" (59 percent).

Figure 1
Opinions on Commercial and Residential Growth



3) Ratings of the Availability of Stores and Commercial Development in Your Area

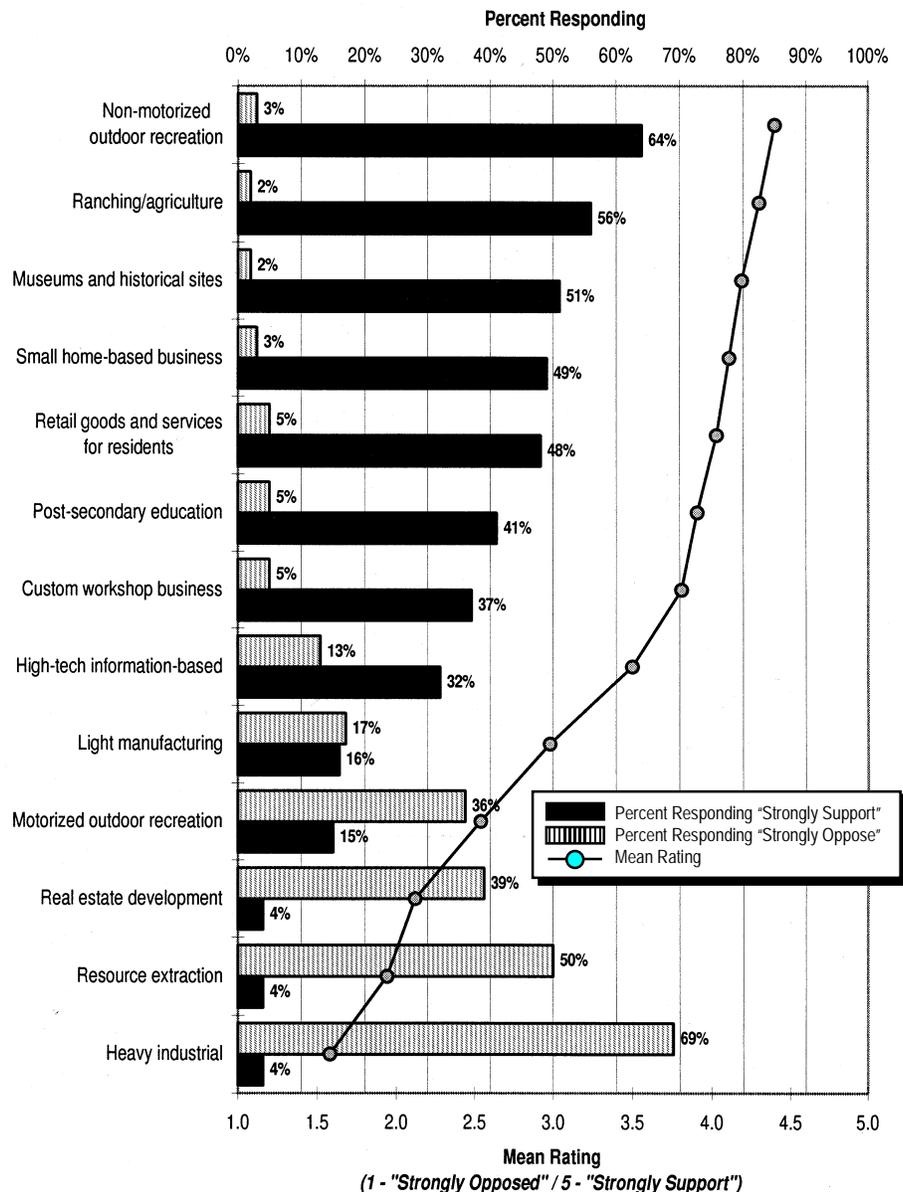
The survey contained a question about the availability of stores and commercial development in the respondent's area. The majority of respondents indicated the availability of stores in their area was low (59 percent), with 39 percent rating the availability of stores to be "about right," and 3 percent indicating there were too many stores.

4) Ratings for Types of Future Economic Development

Using a five-point scale, respondents were asked the extent to which they would “strongly oppose” (1) or “strongly support” (5) a number of different types of future economic developments in Park County. Figure 2 shows the average rating given for each type of economic development, and the percent of respondents who rated the development a “1” (strongly opposed) or “5” (strongly support).

- “Non-motorized outdoor recreation” was given the highest average rating (4.4), with 64 percent of respondents indicating they would “strong support” this type of economic development.
- “Heavy industrial” was given the lowest average rating (1.6), with 69 percent of respondents indicating they would “strongly oppose” this type of economic development. Resource extraction, real estate development and motorized recreation also rated relatively low as economic development alternatives.

Figure 2
Ratings for Types of Future Economic Development



Respondents were also asked to select two sectors of the economy in Park County, and two sectors in their area, that they would like to emphasize. Table 3 presents the results from these questions.

Table 3
Economic Sectors to Emphasize

<i>Two sectors of the economy IN PARK COUNTY to emphasize:</i>		<i>Two sectors of the economy IN YOUR AREA to emphasize:</i>	
Retail goods and services for residents	40%	Retail goods and services for residents	41%
Non-motorized outdoor recreation	37%	Non-motorized outdoor recreation	36%
Ranching/agriculture	23%	Small home-based business	26%
Museums and historical sites	18%	Ranching/agriculture	21%
Small home-based business	18%	Museums and historical sites	16%
High-tech information-based	15%	High-tech information-based	13%
Light manufacturing	12%	Custom workshop business	11%
Post-secondary education	12%	Post-secondary education	10%
Custom workshop business	11%	Light manufacturing	9%
Motorized outdoor recreation	7%	Motorized outdoor recreation	6%
Heavy industrial	3%	Heavy industrial	3%
Real estate development	3%	Real estate development	3%
Resource extraction	2%	Resource extraction	2%
<i>n = 2,116</i>		<i>n = 2,095</i>	

Respondents were also asked their opinions concerning the trade-offs between economic development and environmental protection.

- Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated they favored environmental protection even if it requires some compromises in economic development.
- Forty-one percent of respondents favored a balance between economic development and environmental preservation.
- Eight percent favored economic development even if it requires some compromises in environmental protection.

Respondents were asked who should be responsible for addressing the impacts associated with growth and development, their opinions regarding local government regulations governing development, and what Park County's position on growth should be. Table 4 summarizes the responses to these questions. Respondents indicated:

- The public and private sectors should work together (55 percent).
- A large segment of the community is "uncertain" about local regulations (30 percent), with an additional 30 percent saying regulations are not "strict enough."
- A strong majority (78 percent) favors a "directed growth" position by Park County.

Table 4
Summary of Growth Regulation Questions

<i>Who should address the impacts of growth and development?</i>		<i>Are the local government regulations governing development:</i>		<i>What position should Park County take regarding growth?</i>	
The public sector	8%	Too strict	17%	No-growth	13%
The private sector	4%	About right	23%	Directed growth	78%
The public and private sector together (public leads)	55%	Not strict enough	30%	Pro-growth	9%
The public and private sector together (private leads)	26%	Don't know/uncertain	30%		
Don't know/no opinion	7%				
	<i>n = 2,220</i>		<i>n = 2,186</i>		<i>n = 2,225</i>

5) Ratings of Potential Land Use Policies and Regulations

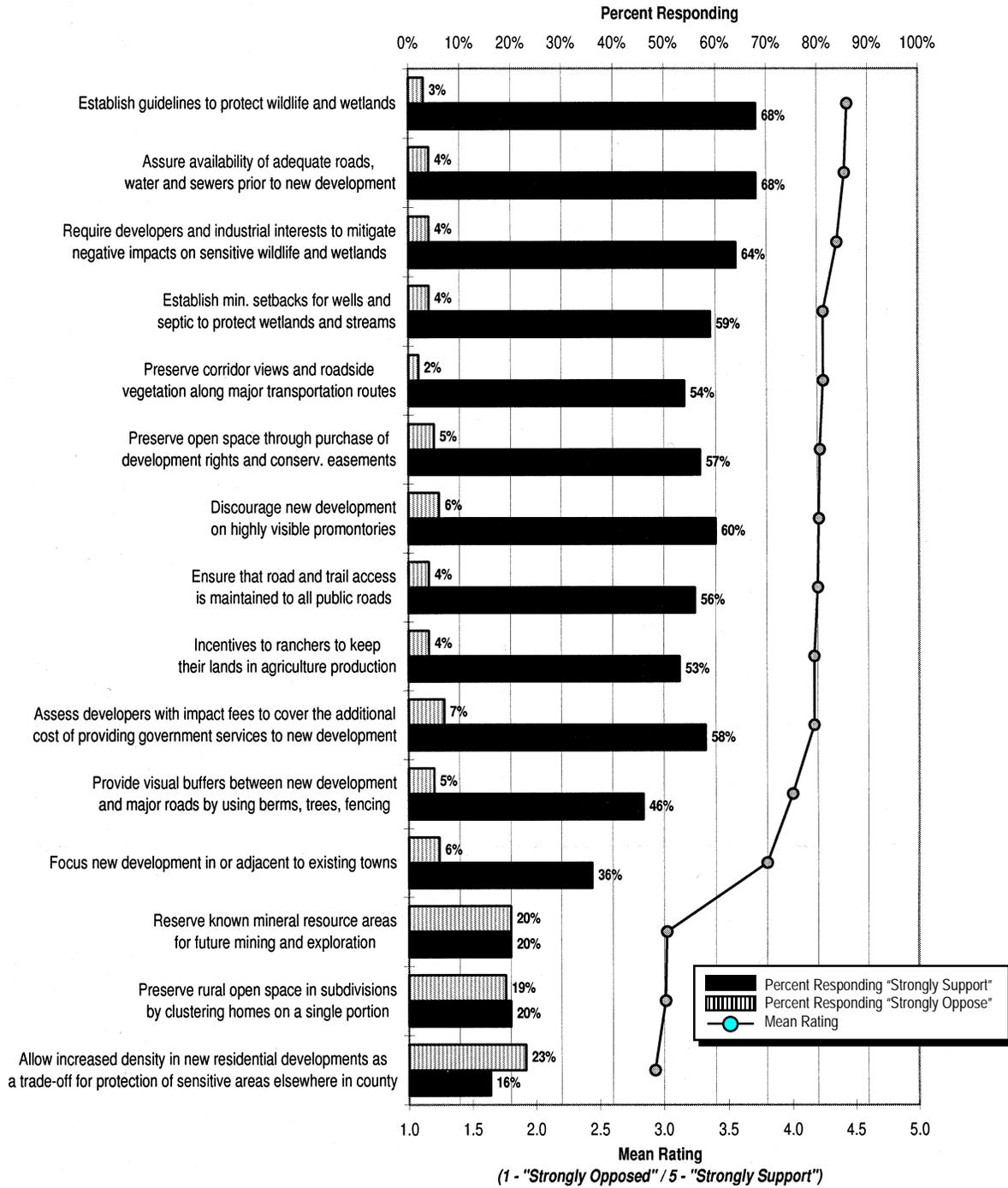
Using a five-point scale, respondents were asked the extent to which they would “strongly oppose” (1) or “strongly support” (5) a number of different potential land use policies or regulations. Figure 3 shows the average rating given for each type regulation, and the percent of respondents who rated the regulation a “1” (strongly opposed) or “5” (strongly support).

- Eleven of the fifteen potential regulations had average ratings of “4.0” or higher.
- “Establishment of guidelines to protect wildlife and wetlands” was given the highest average rating (4.4).
- “Allow increased density in new residential developments as a trade-off for protection of sensitive areas elsewhere in county” was given the lowest average rating (2.9).

In a separate question, respondents were asked if they would support the types of regulations described, even though they realized that additional regulations might somewhat limit their ability to develop their own land.

- Sixty-eight percent of respondents indicated they would support new regulations.
- Fifteen percent would not support new regulations.
- Eighteen percent were uncertain.

Figure 3
Ratings of Potential Land Use Policies and Regulations

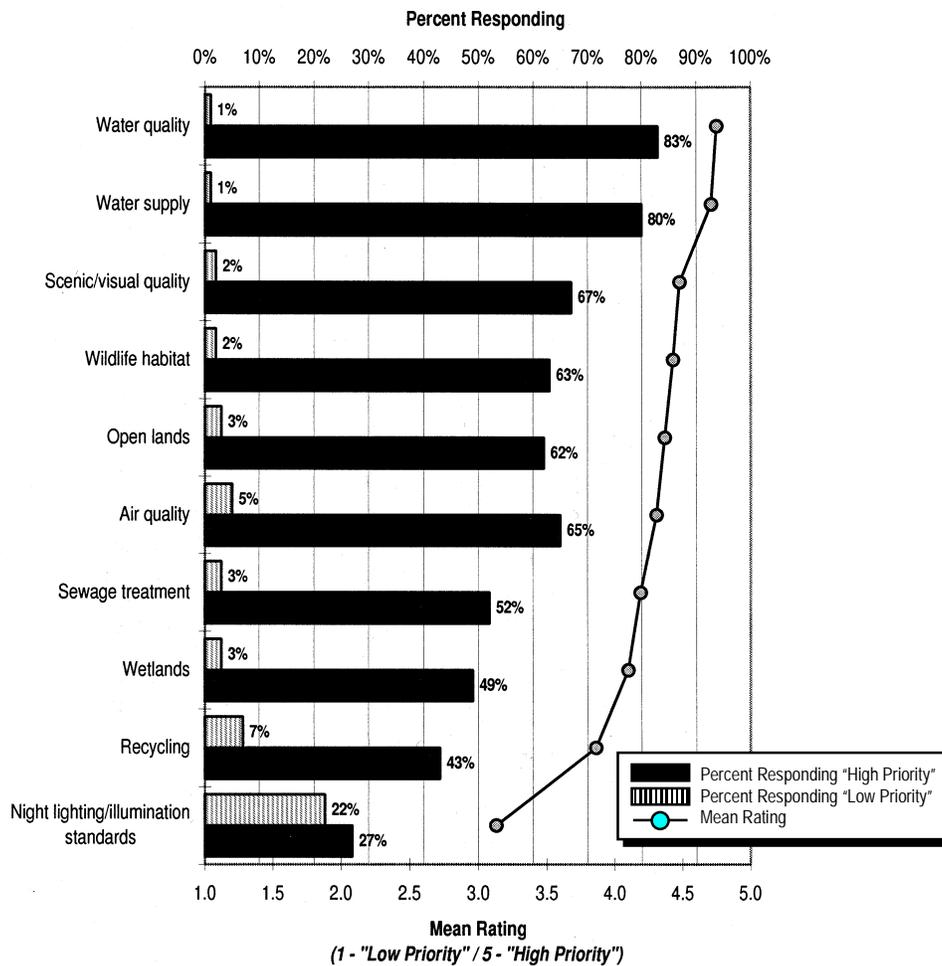


6) Priority Ratings for Efforts to Protect the Environment

Respondents were asked to give priority ratings for efforts to protect the natural environment. Each environmental effort was rated on a five-point scale, with "1" being "low priority" and "5" being "high priority." Figure 4 shows the average rating given for each type of effort, and the percent of respondents who rated the effort a "1" (low priority) or "5" (high priority).

- Eight of the ten efforts received an average rating of 4.1 or greater.
- "Water quality" was rated the highest (average rating of 4.8).
- "Night illumination standards" were rated the lowest (average rating of 3.1).

Figure 4
Priority Ratings for Efforts to Protect the Environment

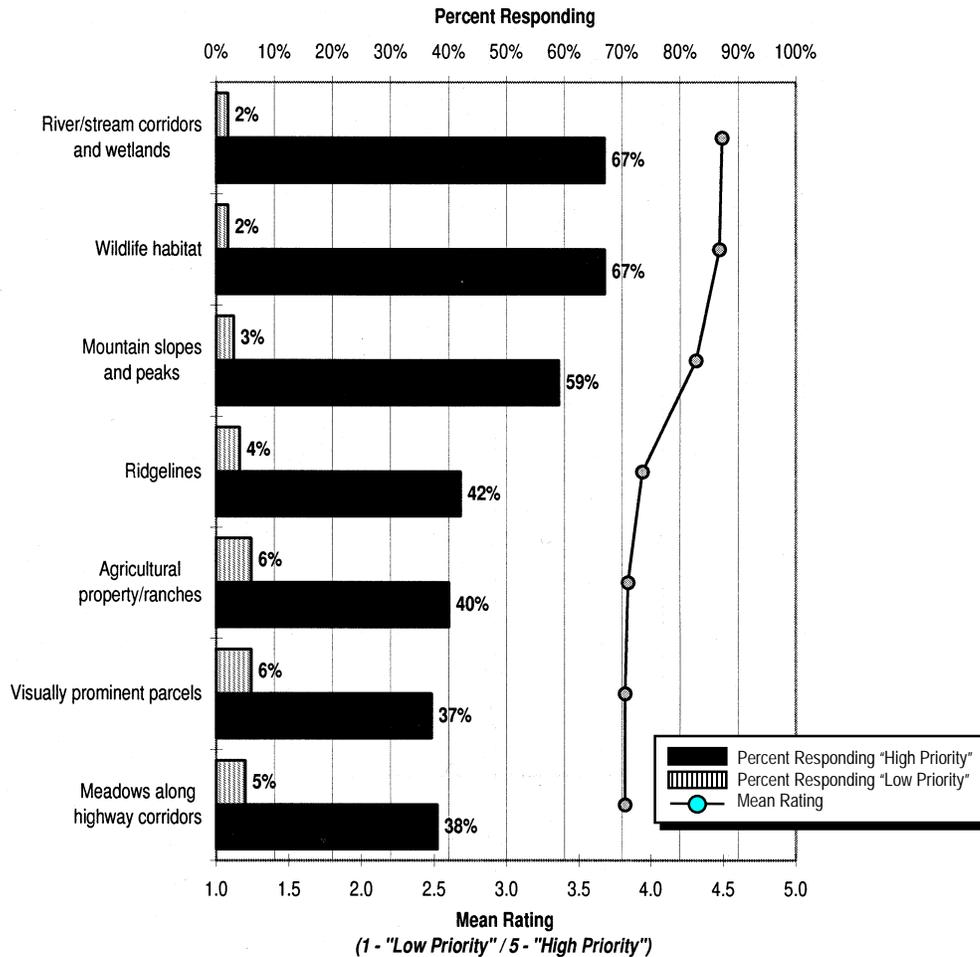


7) Priority Ratings for Preservation of Open Space

Respondents were asked to give priority ratings for types of lands to be preserved as open space. Each type of land was rated on a five-point scale, with "1" being "low priority" and "5" being "high priority." Figure 5 shows the average rating given for each type of land, and the percent of respondents who gave ratings of "1" (low priority) or "5" (high priority).

- Every type of land received an average rating of 3.8 or greater.
- "River/stream corridors and wetlands" and "wildlife habitat" received the highest average ratings (4.5 each).
- Twenty percent favored the concentration of most development in or near towns on relatively small lots.
- Twenty-seven percent favored the continuation of the existing pattern of scattered small and large lot development. Fifty-four percent of respondents favored a combination of smaller lot development near towns and large lot developments in rural areas.

Figure 5
Priority Ratings for Preservation of Open Space

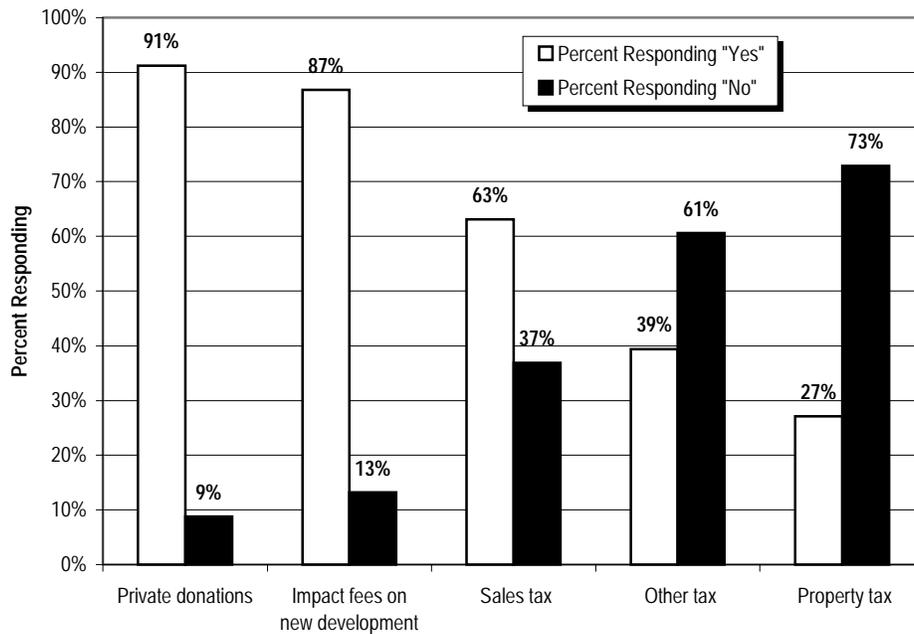


8) Willingness to Finance Open Space Purchases

Respondents were asked what efforts they would be willing to support in order to finance the purchase of open space or sensitive natural areas. Figure 6 shows the level of support for each type of finance effort.

- Ninety-one percent of respondents supported private donations.
- Eighty-seven percent supported impact fees on new development.
- Sixty-three percent supported sales taxes.

Figure 6
Willingness to Finance Open Space Purchases

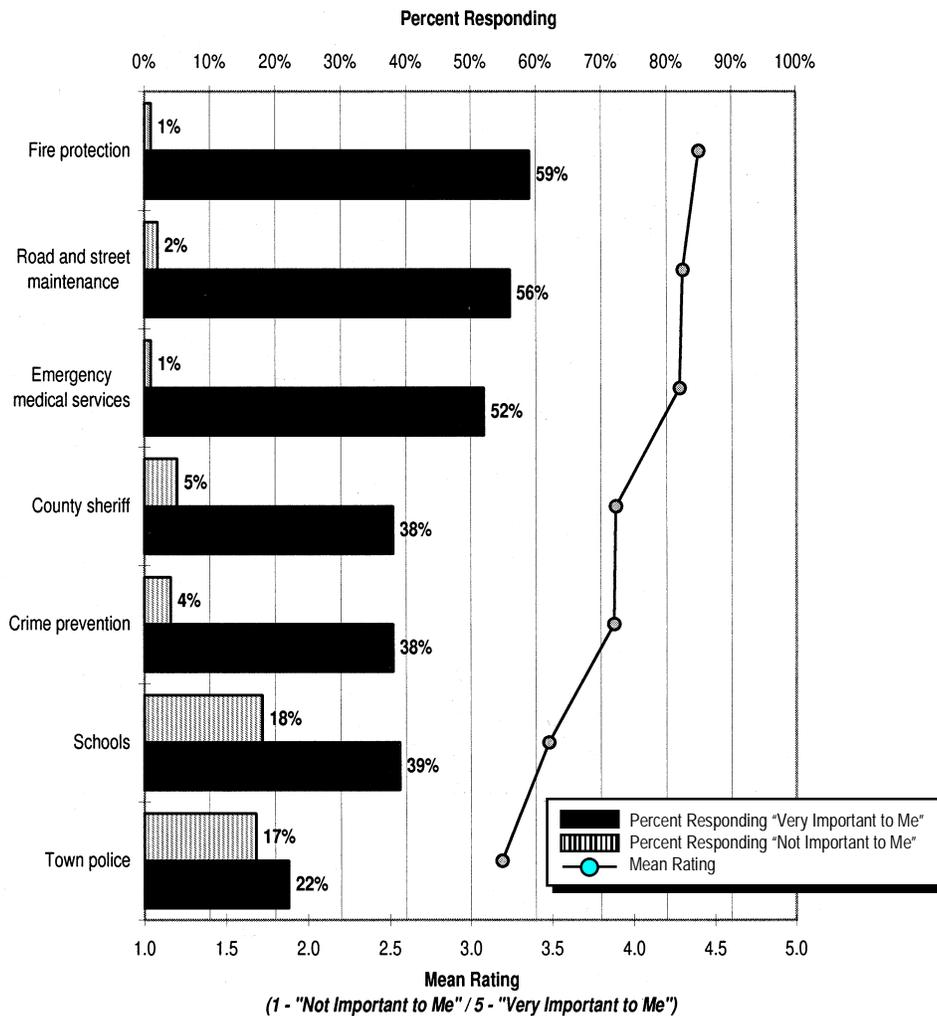


9) Ratings of Basic Community Services

Respondents were asked to give importance ratings for types of basic community services. Each service was rated on a five-point scale, with "1" being "not important to me," and "5" being "very important to me." Figure 7 shows the average rating given for each service, and the percent of respondents who gave ratings of "1" (not important to me) or "5" (very important to me).

- "Fire protection" was rated the highest (average rating of 4.4).
- "Town police" was rated the lowest (average rating of 3.2).

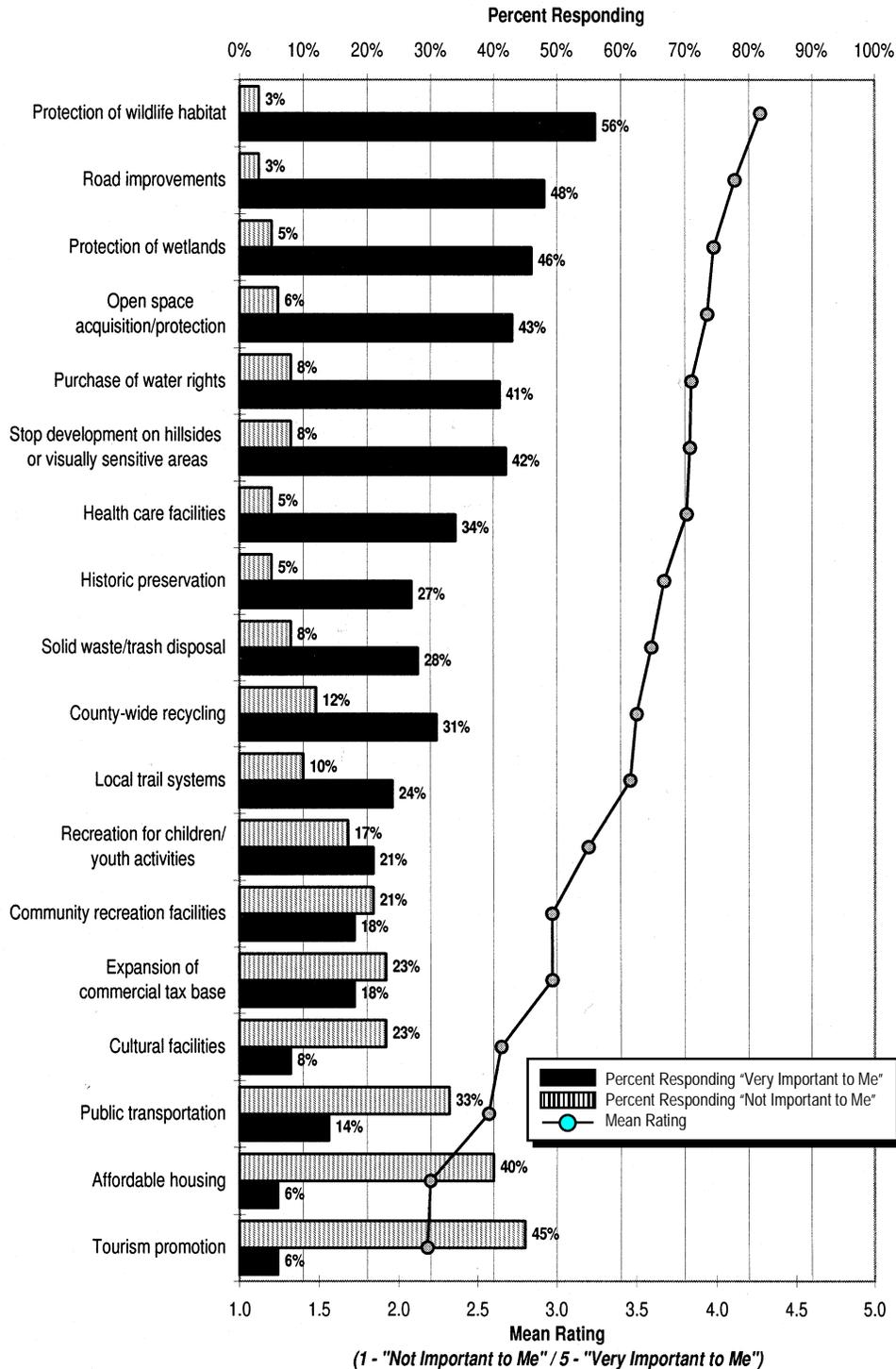
Figure 7
Ratings of Basic Community Services



A second group of community services were also rated on the same five-point scale. Figure 8 shows the average rating given for each service, and the percent of respondents who gave ratings of "1" (not important to me) or "5" (very important to me).

- "Protection of wildlife habitat" was rated the highest (average rating of 4.3), with 56 percent calling wildlife "very important to me."
- "Tourism promotion" was rated the lowest (average rating of 2.2).

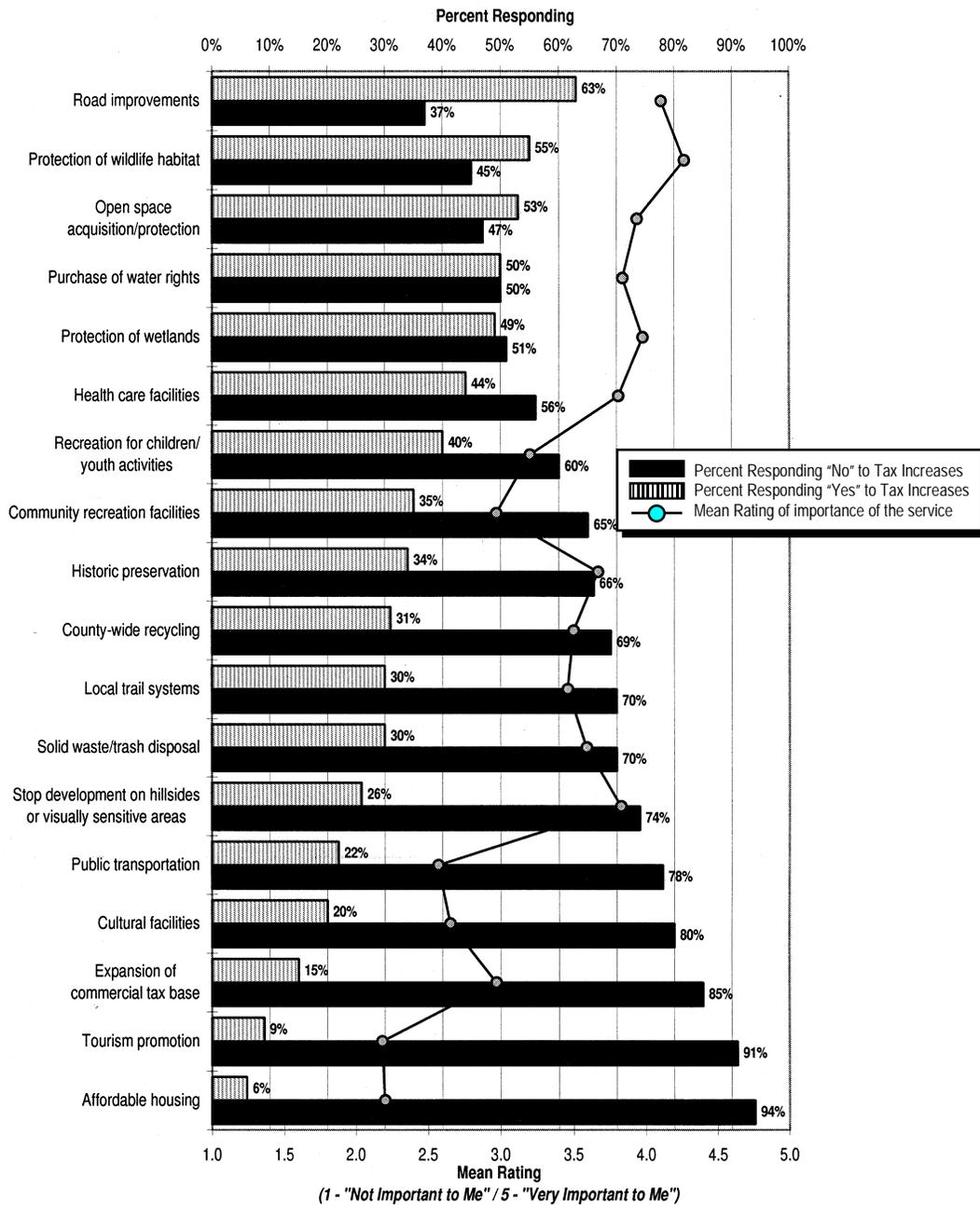
Figure 8
Ratings of Community Services



For each of the items rated in the second group of services, respondents were asked if they would support the specific service through increased taxes. Figure 9 shows the percent of respondents supporting tax increases for each service, along with the average importance ratings for each service. Superimposed on the graph is a line representing the average importance ratings for each of the services (from Fig. 8 previously).

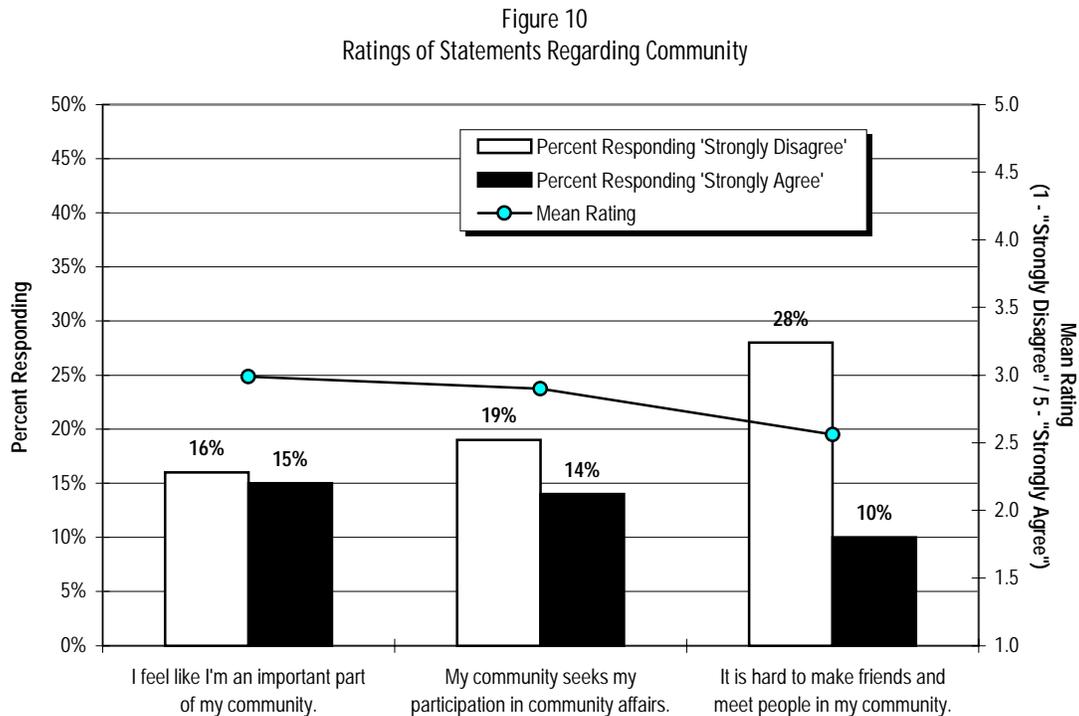
- "Road improvements" were most supported (63 percent "yes").
- "Affordable housing" was least supported (6 percent "yes").

Figure 9
Level of Support for Tax Increases Relating to Community Services



10) Ratings of Sense of Community

Respondents were asked to read three statements regarding their community and rate the extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Figure 10 shows the results from these questions.



Respondents were also asked about how the quality of life has changed in Park County over the last five years, and the extent to which they feel informed about local governmental issues. Table 5 shows a summary of the results for each of these questions.

- Forty-three percent of respondents felt that the quality of life has remained the same,
- Thirty-one percent felt that the quality of life has declined,
- Fourteen percent felt that the quality of life has improved.

- Eleven percent feel very well informed,
- Forty-six percent feel moderately informed,
- Thirty-three percent feel slightly informed,
- Eleven percent feel not at all informed.

Table 5
Quality of Life and Local Information Ratings

<i>Over the last five years, has the quality of life:</i>	<i>How informed do you consider yourself about local governmental issues?</i>
Improved 14%	Very well informed 11%
Remained the same 43%	Moderately informed 46%
Gotten worse 31%	Slightly informed 33%
Don't know 13%	Not at all informed 11%
<i>n = 2,176</i>	<i>n = 2,245</i>

11) Housing

Respondents were asked how they felt about the issue of affordable housing for those who live and work in Park County, and whether or not they would support changes in zoning to encourage affordable housing. Table 6 summarizes these results.

Table 6
Affordable Housing and Zoning

<i>How do you feel about finding affordable housing for those who live and work in Park County?</i>	
Most critical problem in this county	2%
One of the more serious problems	17%
A problem, among others needing attention	37%
One of the lesser problems	24%
I don't believe it is a problem	19%
<i>n = 2,177</i>	
<i>Would you support changes in zoning such as allowing smaller lots sizes to promote affordable housing?</i>	
Yes	18%
No	63%
Uncertain	19%
<i>n = 2,223</i>	

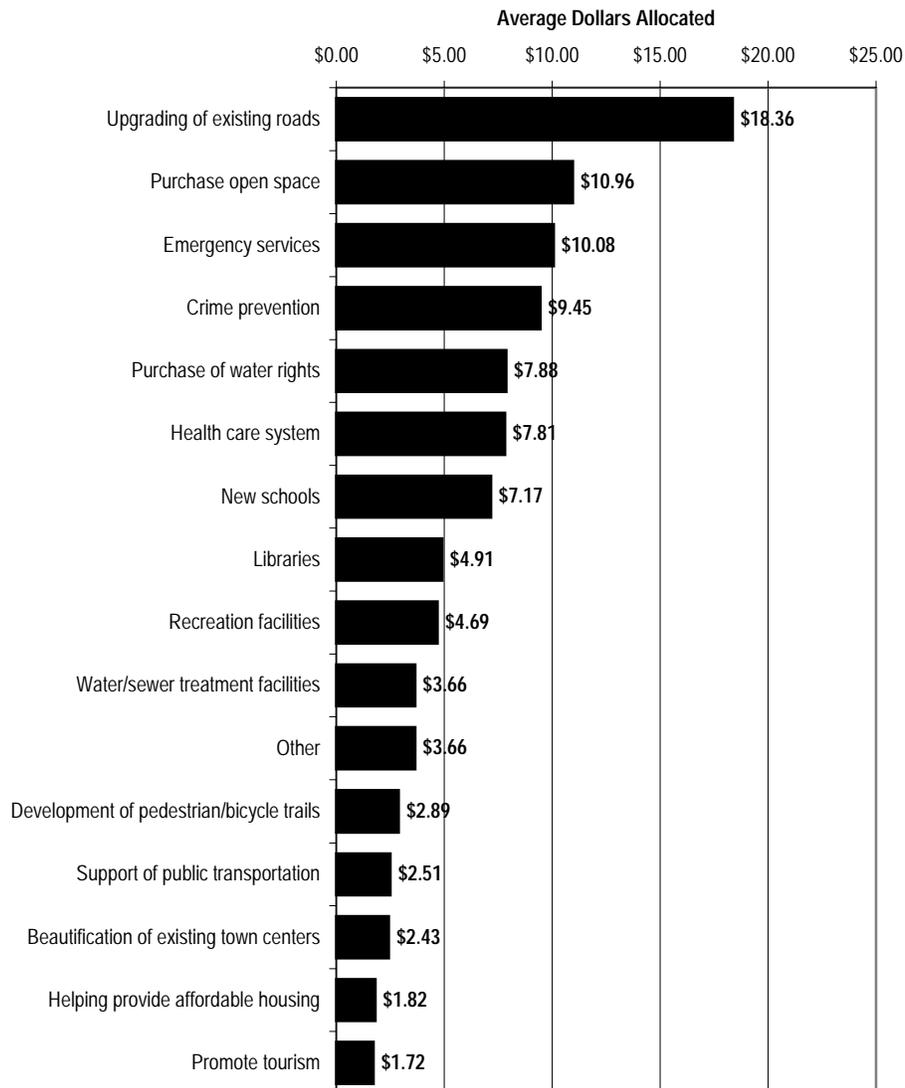
12) Priorities for Budgeting Additional Revenue

Respondents were asked to distribute \$100 dollars of tax revenue across a total of sixteen expenditure types. The respondent could spend all of the revenue on one item or distribute the amount across all items. Figure 11 presents the average amount allocated for each expenditure type.

- “Upgrading existing roads” ranked the highest in average funding (\$18.36).
- “Purchase of open space” ranked second in average funding (\$10.96).

The lower rated group of programs included “beautification of existing town centers” (\$2.43), “helping provide affordable housing” (\$1.82) and “promotion of tourism” (\$1.72). In a further measure of support, the proportion of respondents who allocated at least some money to the programs ranged from 82 percent who allocated money for upgrading existing roads and 77 percent who allocated money for emergency services, to 16 percent who allocated money for “other” and 22 percent who allocated money for helping provide affordable housing.

Figure 11
Budgeting of Expenditures



13) Influences On Decisions to Move to/Leave Park County

Respondents were asked what factors most influenced their decision to move to Park County, as well as what factor would most influence their decision to leave Park County (if they might be considering leaving). Table 7 shows the results of these questions.

Table 7
Influences On Decisions to Leave/Move to Park County

<i>What factors most influenced you to move to Park County?</i>		<i>What single factor might influence you to leave Park County?</i>	
Views/natural beauty	78%	Don't plan to leave the region within 3 years	48%
Peace and tranquility	75%	Growth and change in region	20%
Large tracts of land	36%	Other	9%
Cost of housing	33%	Long winters	4%
Retirement	21%	Desire for change in living environment	3%
Sense of community	13%	Lack of adequate employment	3%
Other	12%	Too expensive to live here	3%
Job/work opportunity	10%	Lack of health care and medical services	3%
Overall cost of housing	10%	Disparity between wages and cost of living	2%
Convenient commute to work	9%	Lack of professional opportunity	2%
Location near family/friends	8%	Locating near family/friends	2%
		Lack of adequate housing	0%
		Return to school	0%
<i>n = 2,259</i>		<i>n = 2,027</i>	

Summary of Selected Open-Ended Comments

At several points in the survey respondents were asked to write down their specific comments, thoughts, or suggestions relating to the questions being asked. The following is a brief overview of these open-ended comments.

1) *What factors influenced you to move to Park County?*

The natural environment, remote location, and low taxes were the three most often listed "other" reasons for moving to Park County.

2) *How can we preserve the things that brought you here in the first place (or, if you are a Park County native, the things you value)?*

The majority of comments mentioned that limiting and controlling growth in Park County would be essential to preserving the character of the area. Keeping taxes low and protecting open space were also mentioned frequently by respondents.

3) *If you were to consider moving away, what single factor would most influence your decision to leave Park County?*

Many of these comments mentioned government policies that would alter the character of the county, or interfere with personal freedoms, as factors that would influence a decision to leave Park County. Also mentioned were "long commutes to work" and "lack of stores."

4) *List two things that make Park County unique:*

The overwhelming majority of comments mentioned the "natural beauty" of Park County as a thing that makes it unique. Many respondents also mentioned Park County's open spaces, rural atmosphere, low population, low crime, and low cost of living.

5) *What services are lacking in your area?*

"Gas stations" and "grocery" stores were the most frequently mentioned services lacking in Park County.

6) *Comments regarding local county government regulations governing development:*

Regardless of whether respondents felt that regulations were "too strict," "about right," "not strict enough," or "didn't know," many mentioned that regulations were inconsistently enforced, changeable, and favored realtors and developers.

7) *Comments regarding Park County's, and/or unincorporated town's, position on growth:*

Most respondents favored "directed growth" (78 percent), and not surprisingly most of the comments from these respondents stress the need for careful planning and regulation of new developments.

8) *Comments regarding land use policies and regulations:*

Many comments mentioned the preservation of the natural environment as a key principle that should guide the formulation of land use policies and regulations. Many comments also expressed frustration with the influx of residents escaping urban growth, who then create a demand for services, which in turn results in the same type of growth from which they fled.

9) *Specific open space parcels mentioned:*

Several comments mentioned areas along the Platte River, as well as the Kenosha and Guanella Pass areas.

10) Comments regarding open space acquisition:

While many of the comments listed in this section expressed a desire to protect open space parcels, most also expressed strong disdain for the notion of increasing taxes to pay for this protection.

11) Comments regarding community services:

The majority of the comments stressed the need for improvements in roads, schools, and law enforcement. As was true for other questions on the survey, many comments were strongly negative about the possibility of new taxes.

12) Why do you feel the quality of life in your area has improved, remained the same, gotten worse, or don't know?

The majority of respondents (43 percent) felt that the quality of life in Park County had remained about the same over the past five years. Uncontrolled growth was the number one reason cited by those respondents who felt that the quality of life had declined over the past five years.

13) By what means could you become more informed?

Several comments mentioned the need for a Park County web page. Other comments suggested that residents subscribe to local newspapers.

14) Other expenditures mentioned:

Several respondents mentioned "historical preservation" as a potential expenditure.

