



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
COLORADO'S FIRST

Arapahoe County Research Project

Citizens Poll Results

**Floyd Ciruli
Ciruli Associates
Ehlers Group**

July 2019





Arapahoe County Poll Research Design

Polling Methodology: A poll was conducted by Ciruli Associates in Arapahoe County in 2019 with 401 scientifically selected citizens.

- **Conducted By:** Ciruli Associates
- **Sponsored By:** Arapahoe County Research Project
- **Sample:** Random sample of registered voters in Arapahoe County. Data weighted to census data for age and ethnicity.
- **Sample Size:** 401 registered voters
- **Conducted by Telephone:** Landline and cell phone with live interviews
- **Margin of Error:** Total sample: ± 4.9 percentage points in 95 out of 100 cases
- **Date in Field:** July 22-26, 2019
- **Field Service:** Issues and Answers Network



Overview of Polling Topics

Mood of Citizen

- Direction and growth

County Service

- Rating of services and government organizations

Safety and Jail

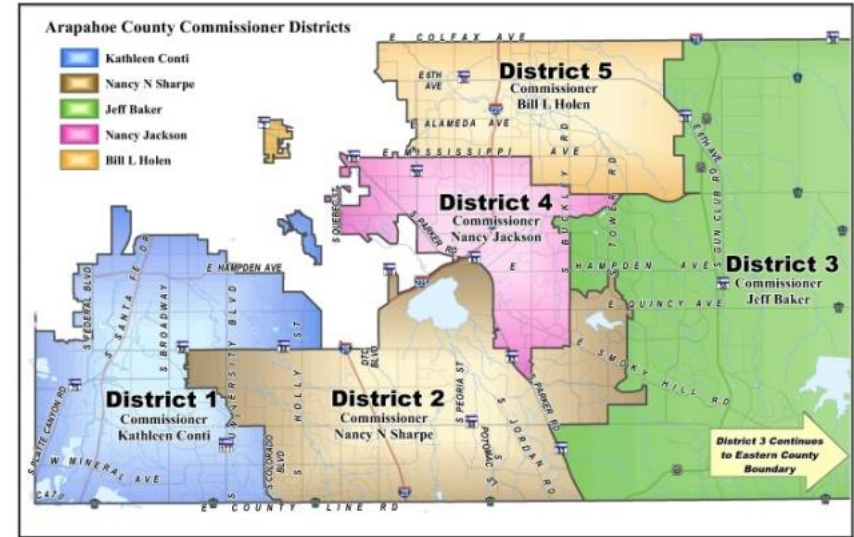
- Ratings and concerns about public safety and jail and courthouse conditions

Revenue Issues

- Test property, sales and TABOR revenue

2019

- Summary of tax sentiment





High Points of Survey

- **Mood and Growth.** Arapahoe residents are generally pleased with the county's direction. Residents share metro area's general concern about growth. Nearly a quarter of residents are new to the county.
- **County Service.** Sheriff's patrol rated highest service, with roads and bridges following. Half of residents can't rate courthouse and more than a third can't rate jail.
- **Agencies.** County government tied with state government in rating. Municipalities highest rated.



High Points of Survey

- **Jail Problem.** Jail seen as problem – crowding, double and triple bunking, and officer safety. Residents like rehabilitation and more room for mental health and drug addiction treatment. Two-thirds believe book and release facility major concern.
- **Jail Awareness.** Most people (58%) unfamiliar with condition of jail, but a majority would fix the problems described (63%).
- **Courthouse Awareness.** Not many knew of the condition of the courthouse and modest support for fixing it (48%).



High Points of Survey

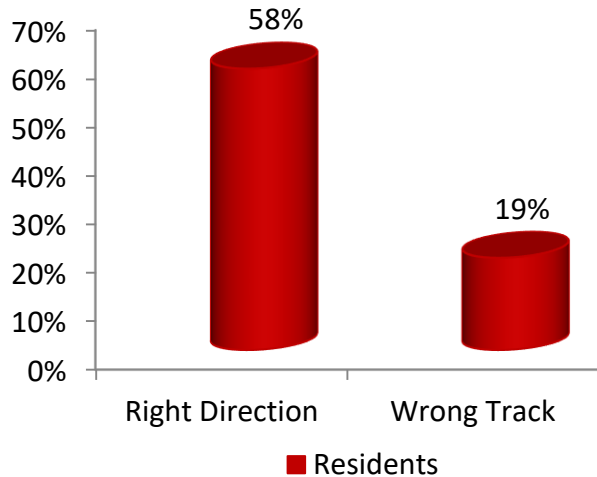
- **Revenue for Jail.** More support than opposition for new property or sales taxes for jail, but not majority (48%) support for either tax.
- **Revenue for Jail/Courthouse/DA.** Bigger, more expensive project (almost \$1 billion) had minimum taxpayer support. Property tax 28%, sales tax 38%.
- **TABOR Override.** TABOR override with a property tax implication has support from half of voters (50%).
- **Communication.** Website used by half of residents (48%).



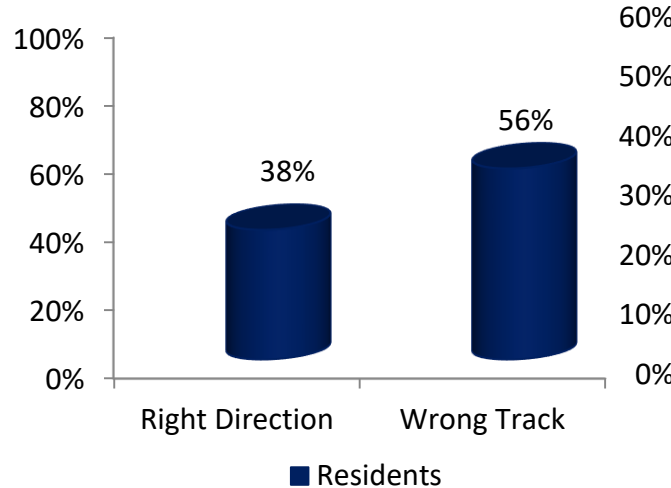
Arapahoe County Mood

Direction Good, But Growth a Concern

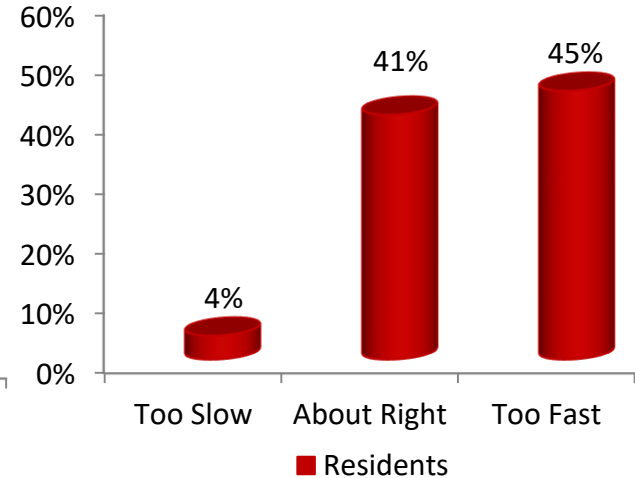
County Direction



U.S. Direction



County Growth



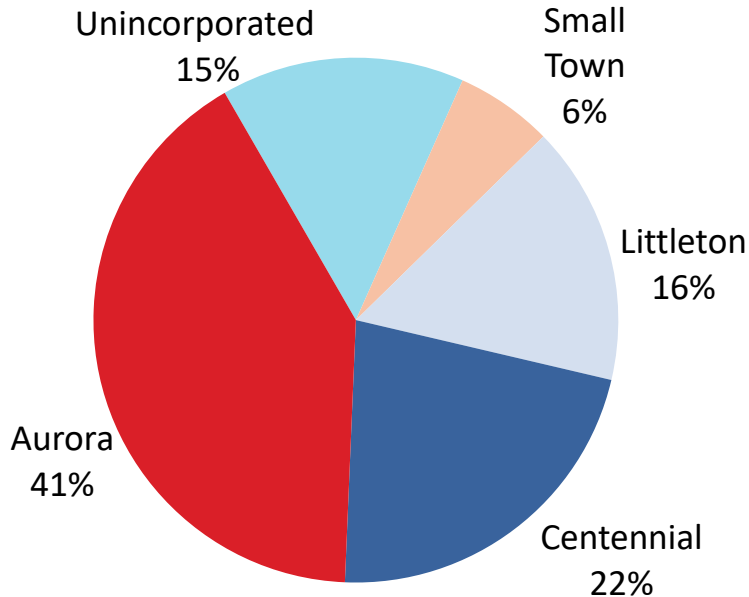
Q: Overall, would you say things are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track here in Arapahoe County?

Q: Would you say Arapahoe County is growing too slow, at about the right rate or is growing too fast?



Areas of County and Growth

Areas of County



Q: How long have you lived in Arapahoe County?

Years in County

5 years of less – 25%
 6-10 years – 14%
 11-20 years – 21%
 20 plus years – 39%

Growth and Areas of County

	Total	Aurora	Centennial	Littleton	Small Towns	Unincorp.
Too Slow	4%	4%	4%	4%	--	4%
About Right	41	44	47	31	55%	31
Too Fast	45	41	41	56	36	54

Q: Would you say Arapahoe County is growing too slow, at about the right rate or is growing too fast?



Ratings of Agencies

Municipalities Rated Highest; County and State Tied

Local Government	Excellent/ Good	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	Don't Know
The city or town in your area, if have one	49%	6%	43%	26%	10%	14%
Arapahoe County Government	42	4	38	36	5	17
Colorado State Government	40	9	31	28	22	10

Q: Next, I'm going to ask you to rate some government organizations. Please tell me if you think they are doing an excellent, good, only fair or poor job. If you haven't heard of the organization, or don't have enough information to rate it, just say so. [IF NO CITY/TOWN, MARK "DON'T KNOW"]



Ratings of Services

Patrol Rated Highest; Don't Know Jail or Courts

Ratings of Services

Service	Excellent/ Good		Good	Only	Poor	Don't Know
	Good	Excellent		Fair		
Public safety, patrol	58%	13%	45%	25%	6%	10%
Roads and bridges	41	3	38	40	14	5
County courts	25	3	22	16	10	49
Sheriff's Dept. Jail	33	6	27	21	8	38

Q: Now I'd like you to rate the quality of each of the following services provided by Arapahoe County. Tell me if you think the service is excellent, good, only fair or poor. If you aren't familiar with the service, just say so.





Residents Agree Jail is a Problem

Public Safety and Jail	Strongly Agree	Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	Strongly/ Somewhat Disagree	Don't Know
The county jail should have space and programs to help inmates with mental health problems and drug addictions	69%	87%	6%	6%
The jail crowding is causing an increase in assaults on Sheriff officers. The jail should be safe for officers and public safety personnel	55	74	6	21
The jail needs to focus resources on alternative-sentencing and rehabilitation programs to reduce people coming into the jail and so that people who are in jail can re-enter society and not return to jail	52	78	11	11
Getting inmates a speedy trial will help reduce jail overcrowding	43	70	12	18

Q: Next, as I read the following statements regarding Arapahoe County, please tell me if you strongly agree with the statement, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. If you do not have an opinion, just say so.





Residents Have Concerns About Jail

Major Public Safety Concerns

Public Safety and Jail	Major Concern	Somewhat Concern	Not a Concern	Don't Know
Inmates enter the jail at what is called the Booking and Release Center. It was built to accommodate 29 inmates, but routinely holds as many as 80. Officers point out that it's dangerous for Sheriff's staff, visitors and inmates	66%	26%	4%	4%
Because of increased county population, the jail now double- and triple-bunks inmates in each cell. Officers say crowding increases security and safety problems for them and the inmates	66	25	5	4
The cost of maintenance of a 30-year-old building has skyrocketed. Officers say it takes money from important programs and needed staff	37	46	10	7

Q: Let me read to you some of the conditions that have been recently described concerning the Arapahoe County jail. Please tell me if you consider it a major concern, somewhat of a concern or not a concern.



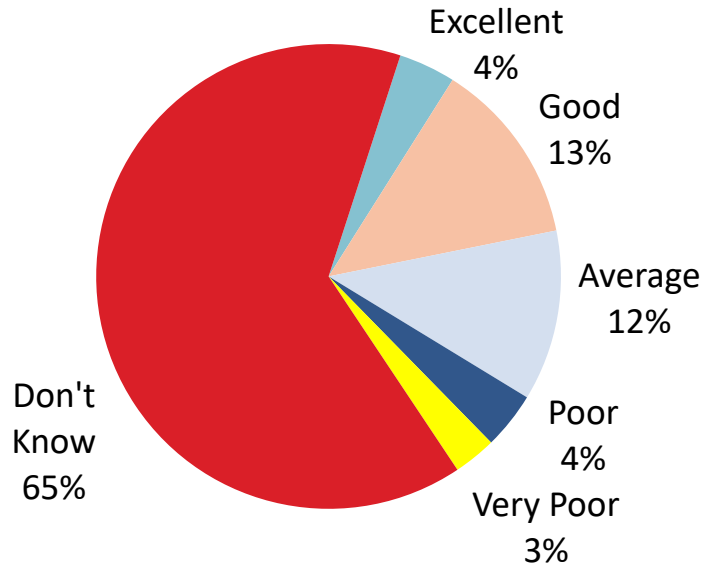


Condition of Jail – January and July 2019

Have You Seen, Heard or Read Stories on Jail Condition?

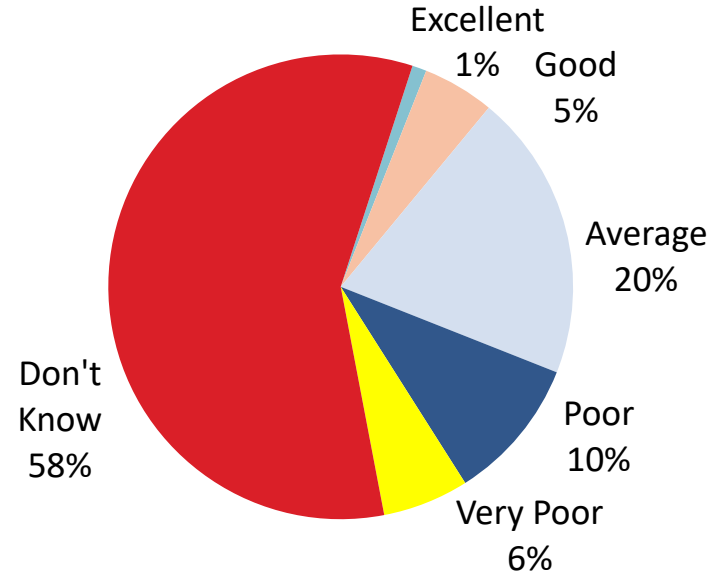
Many – 5%, Few – 19%, Very Few – 14%, None – 58%

Rate Condition of Jail - January



Q: From what you have heard or read, how would you rate the overall condition of Arapahoe County jail: excellent, good, average, poor or very poor? If you don't have any knowledge of the jail's condition, just say so.

Rate Condition of Jail - July

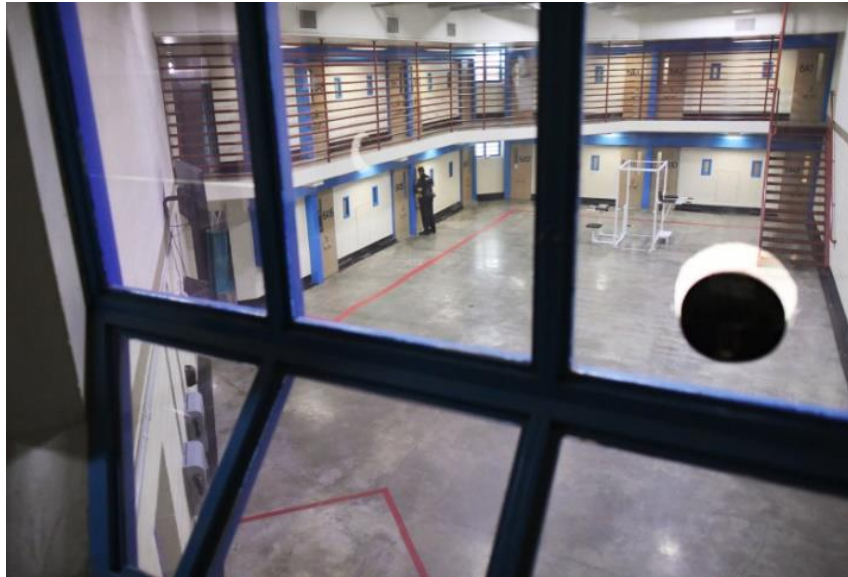


Q: From what you have heard or read, how would you rate the overall condition of Arapahoe County jail: excellent, good, average, poor or very poor? If you don't have any knowledge of the jail's condition, just say so.





Arapahoe County's jail still overcrowded



A deputy works in a pod at Arapahoe County Detention Center, where up to three inmates share a cell, in Centennial on June 20, 2019. New Arapahoe County Sheriff Tyler Brown is saying the county needs to build a new detention facility because of crowding and other maintenance issues | RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post

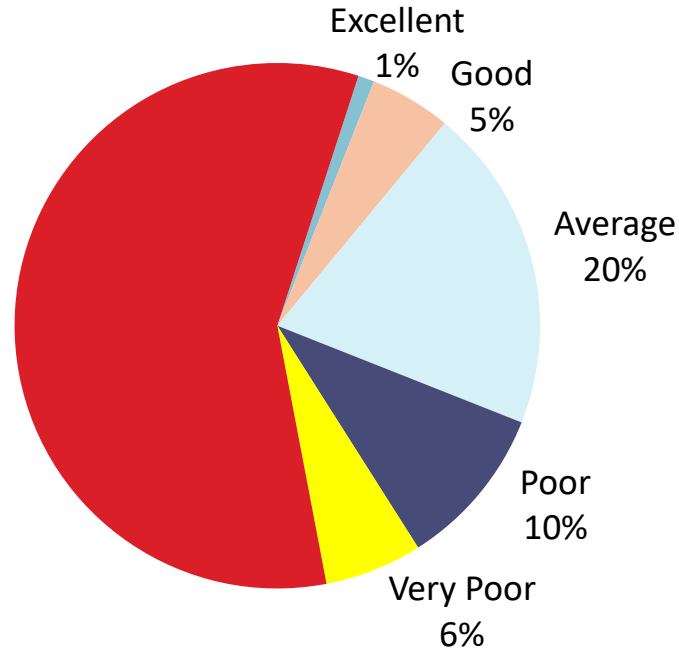
Sheriff has \$462 million solution that could mean a tax hike (6-26-19)



Condition of Jail and Willingness to Fix It

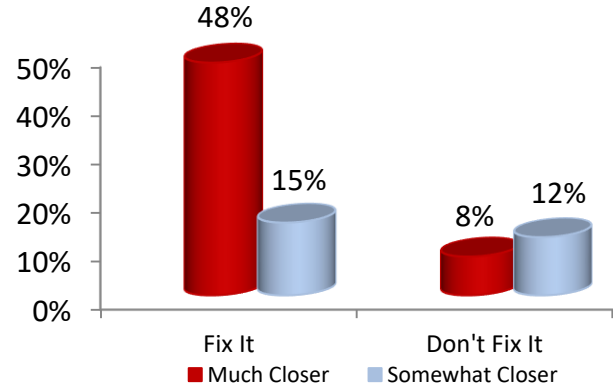
Don't Know Condition of Jail and Divided on Fix

Rate Condition of Jail



Q: From what you have heard or read, how would you rate the overall condition of Arapahoe County jail: excellent, good, average, poor or very poor? If you don't have any knowledge of the jail's condition, just say so.

Jail Choice: Fix It or Not?



Statement A: The Arapahoe County jail is 30 years old and in need of constant expensive repair. The jail has more than 1,100 inmates, three times the number it was built to hold. It does not have sufficient facilities for inmates with mental health and drug problems. It is dangerous for Sheriff's officers, visitors and inmates. Arapahoe County should build a new jail.

Statement B: A new jail is expensive, we can't afford it and we don't need one. We should not replace the jail.

As I read the following statement about the Arapahoe County jail, please tell me which statement comes closest to your view on the topic. Also, please tell me whether it is much closer to your view than the other statement or somewhat closer to your view. **[READ IN ORDER PRINTED]**

[READ FOLLOW-UP AS NEEDED: And would you say that the statement is much closer to your personal beliefs than the other statement or only somewhat closer?]



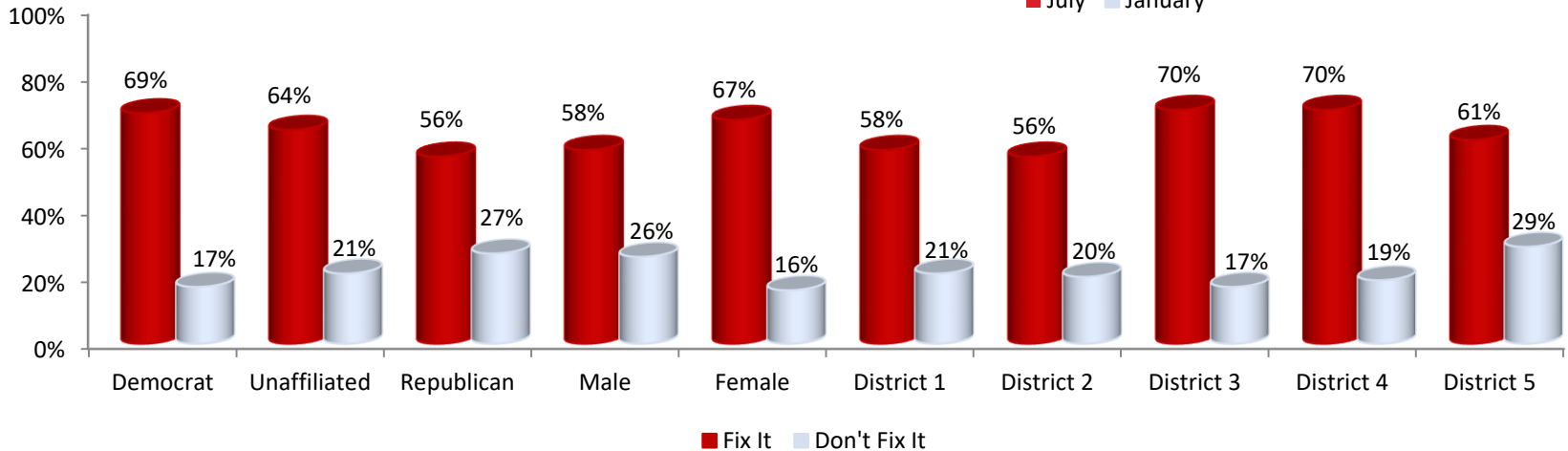
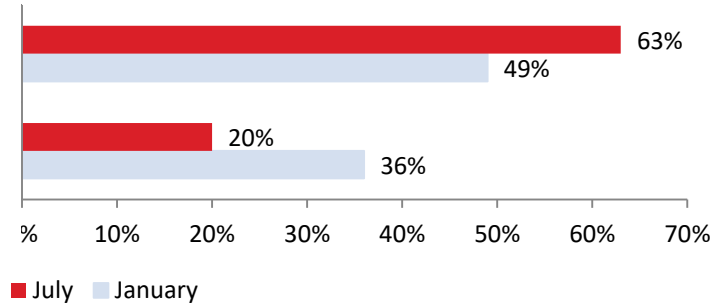


Choice on Fixing the Jail January and July 2019

Choice on Fixing the Jail

The Arapahoe County jail is 30 years old and in need of constant expensive repair. The jail has more than 1,100 inmates, three times the number it was built to hold. It does not have sufficient facilities for inmates with mental health and drug problems. It is dangerous for Sheriff's officers, visitors and inmates. Arapahoe County should build a new jail.

A new jail is expensive, we can't afford it and we don't need one. We should not replace the jail.



Q: As I read the following statement about the Arapahoe County jail, please tell me which statement comes closest to your view on the topic. Also, please tell me whether it is much closer to your view than the other statement or somewhat closer to your view. **[READ IN ORDER PRINTED]** **[READ FOLLOW-UP AS NEEDED]**: And would you say that the statement is much closer to your personal beliefs than the other statement or only somewhat closer?

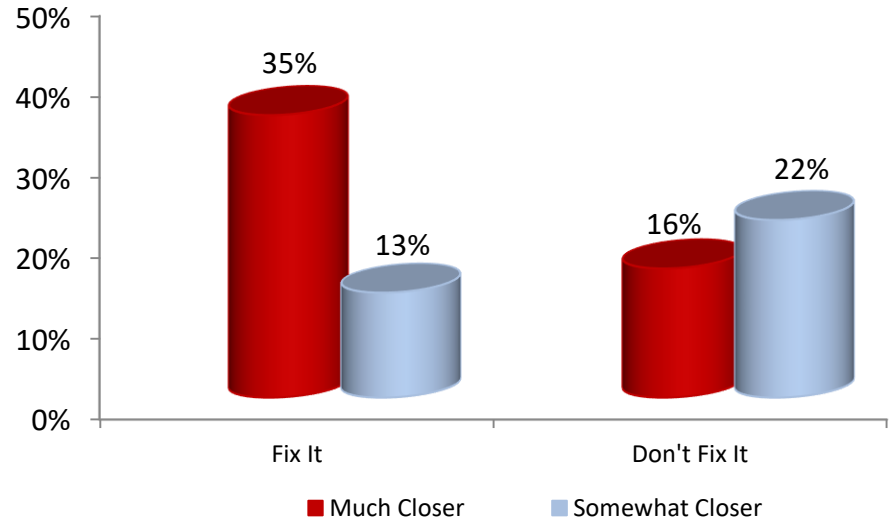


Willingness to Fix Courthouse

Courthouse Choice: Fix It or Not?

Statement A: The County Courthouse is next to the county jail. It is where criminal and civil trials and legal procedures take place. It is 30 years old and needs constant repair. It is considered unsafe because the design puts court personnel, victims and inmates in the same space. It causes delays in justice because court rooms are limited and trials and court proceedings can't proceed efficiently. Arapahoe County should replace it.

Statement B: A new Courthouse for trials is expensive. We can't afford it and we don't need one. We shouldn't replace the Courthouse.

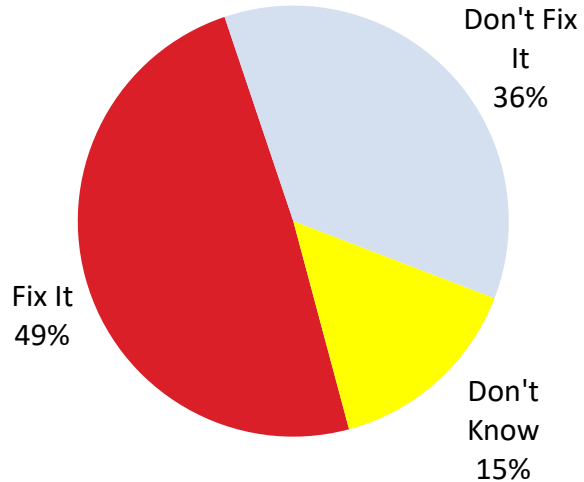


Q: As I read the following statement about the Arapahoe County Civil and Criminal Trial Courthouse, please tell me which statement comes closest to your view on the topic. Also, please tell me whether it is much closer to your view than the other statement or somewhat closer to your view. **[READ IN ORDER PRINTED] [READ FOLLOW-UP AS NEEDED:** And would you say that the statement is much closer to your personal beliefs than the other statement or only somewhat closer?]

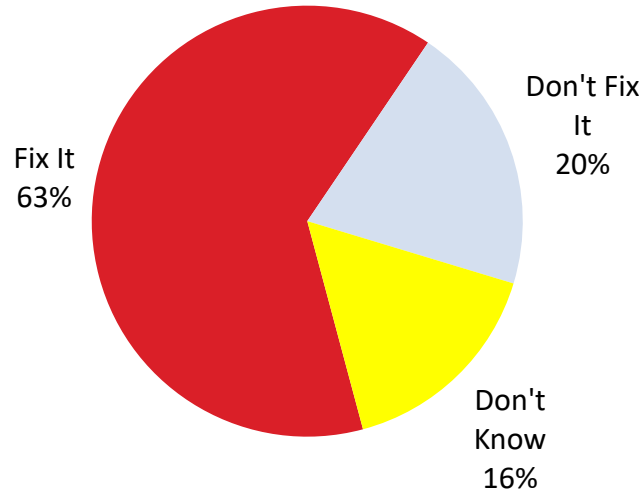


Fix Jail and Courthouse

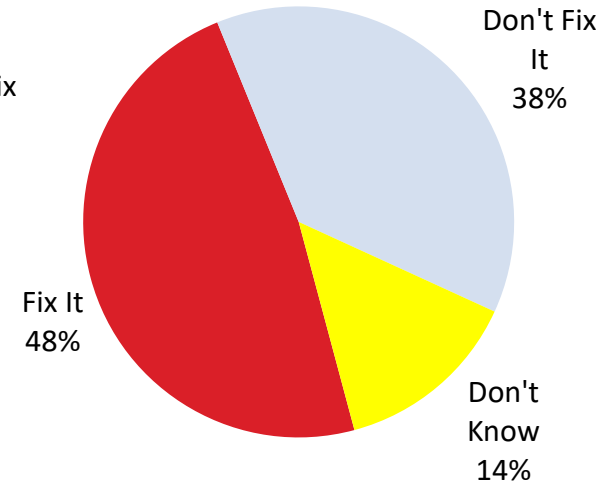
Fix Jail - January



Fix Jail - July



Fix Courthouse





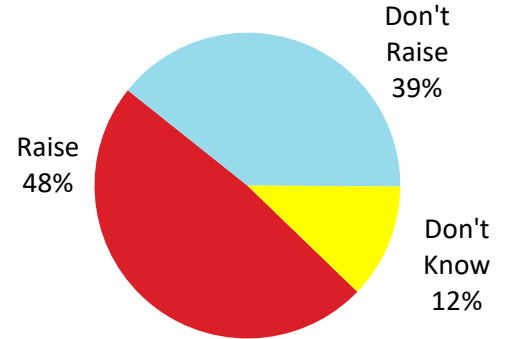
Property Tax for Jail

Property Tax for Jail

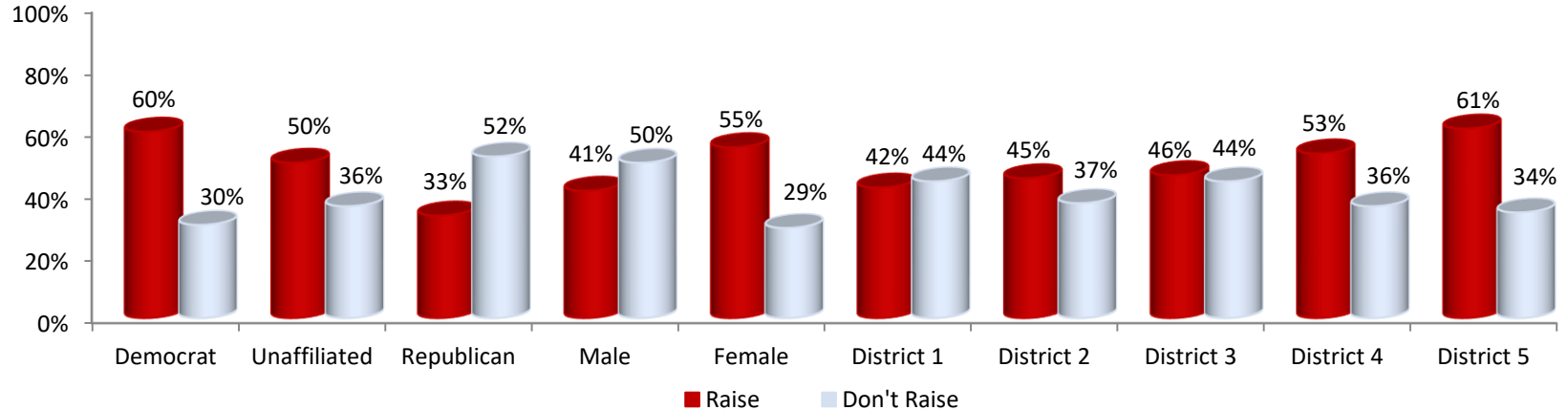
A citizens committee is considering how Arapahoe County could pay for a new jail costing \$464 million and other public safety facilities. They may recommend a tax increase to pay for it.

Arapahoe County has a property tax. The County could raise the property tax by \$50 million annually, which would cost taxpayers \$5.43 per month for a \$380,000 home to fix the jail.

Do you believe the County should raise the property tax to fix the jail or not raise it?



Property Tax for Jail



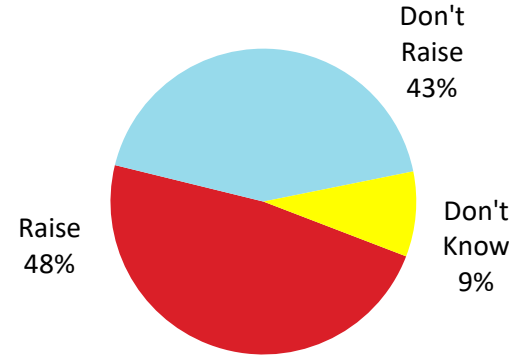


Sales Tax for Jail

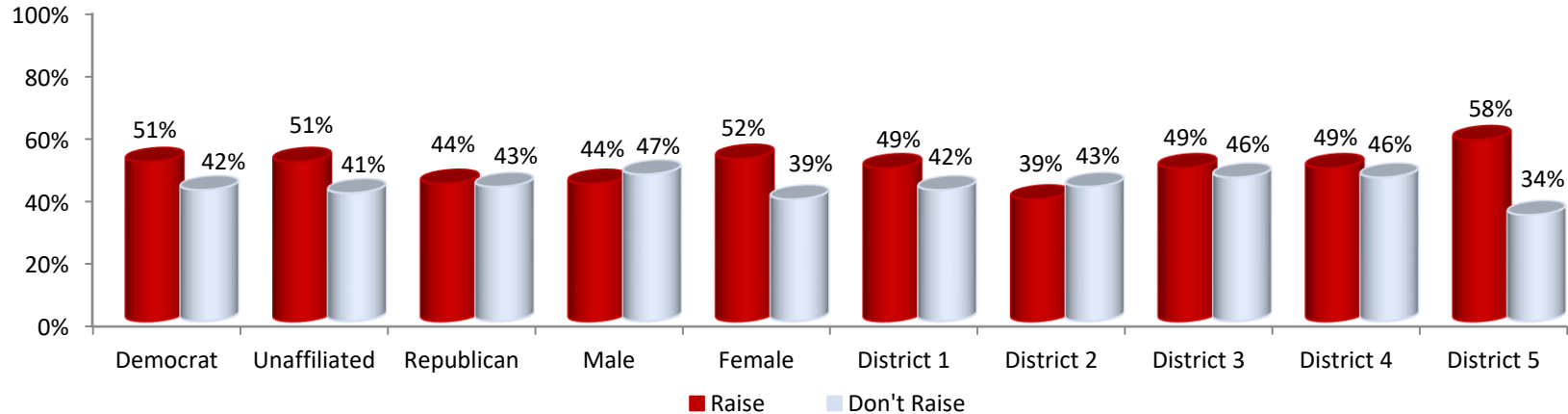
Sales Tax for Jail

Another approach to fund improvements in public safety and the jail could be to use the Arapahoe County sales tax. The County uses a quarter of one-cent of sales tax for open space, trails and recreation. The County could raise the sales tax by \$50 million annually, which would cost taxpayers \$0.41 cents on every \$100 spent to fix the jail.

Do you believe the County should raise its sales tax to fix the jail or should it not raise the sales tax?



Sales Tax for Jail

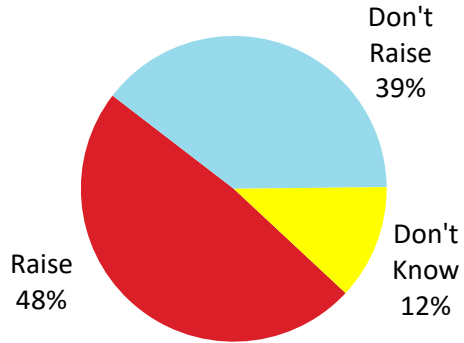




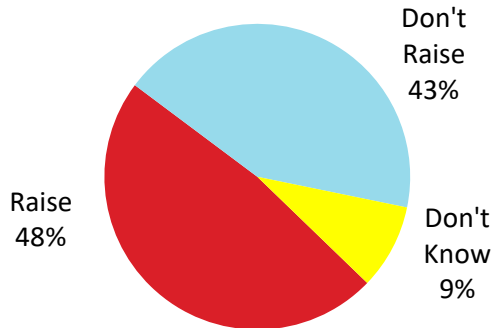
Ballot Language Description

Use of Money

Property Tax – Jail



Sales Tax – Jail



Ballot Description – Read to Respondents

- Constructing, maintaining and operating a new jail that improves officer and employee safety; and
- Expanding programs and activities that address mental and behavioral health concerns, improve neighborhood safety, and reduce the likelihood of inmates reoffending once they reenter the community; and
- Hiring, training, and equipping sheriff deputies, investigators and civilian support staff to safely operate modern facilities; and
- Expanding alternative sentencing programs and activities to keep nonviolent and first time offenders out of jail and improve community safety.

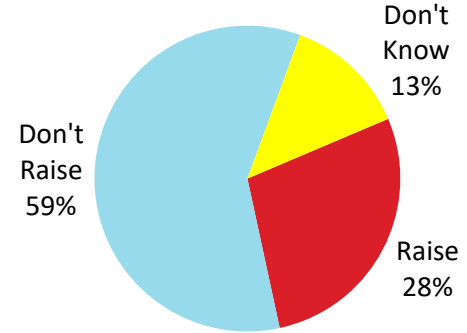


Property and Sales Taxes for Jail, Courthouse and DA Building

Property Tax for Jail, Courthouse and DA Building

We have discussed the poor condition of the courthouse as part of the public safety system. The citizens committee may also recommend building a courthouse and district attorney office along with fixing the jail. The total cost would be almost \$1 billion. The County could raise the property tax by \$69 million annually, which would cost taxpayers \$8.43 per month for a \$380,000 home to fix the jail and the courthouse and district attorney office.

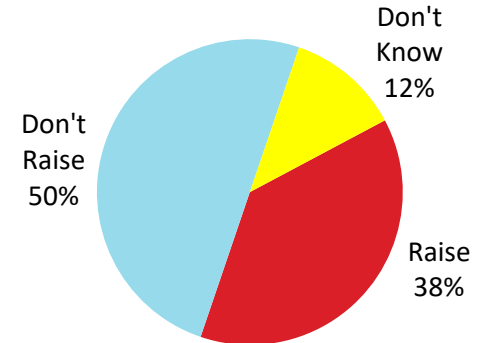
Do you believe the County should raise the property tax to fix the jail and courthouse or not raise it?



Sales Tax for Jail, Courthouse and DA Building

In another way to pay for the public safety improvements, the citizens committee may recommend building a courthouse and district attorney office along with fixing the jail using a sales tax. As I mentioned, the total cost would be almost \$1 billion. The County could raise the sales tax by \$69 million annually, which would cost taxpayers \$0.58 cents on every \$100 spent to fix the jail and the courthouse and district attorney office.

Do you believe the County should raise the sales tax to fix the jail and courthouse or not raise it?

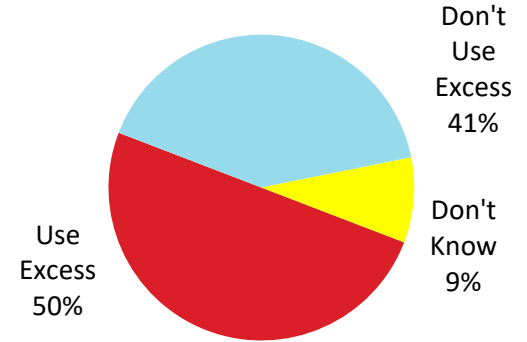




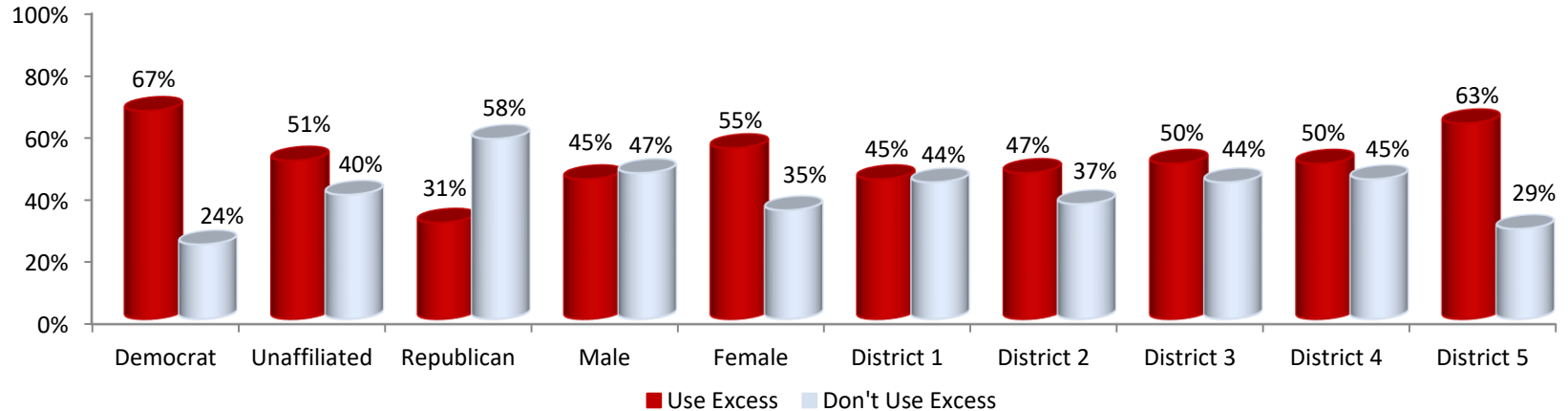
TABOR Override

TABOR Override

One way for the County to raise revenue is to change the rule that says if there is excess revenue in a given year, then voters keep that revenue. If County voters approve changing that rule, then the property tax would increase and cost taxpayers \$4.28 per month for a \$380,000 home because a tax credit would be eliminated. In your opinion, should Arapahoe County ask voters for permission to use excess tax revenue for public safety or not use excess revenue?

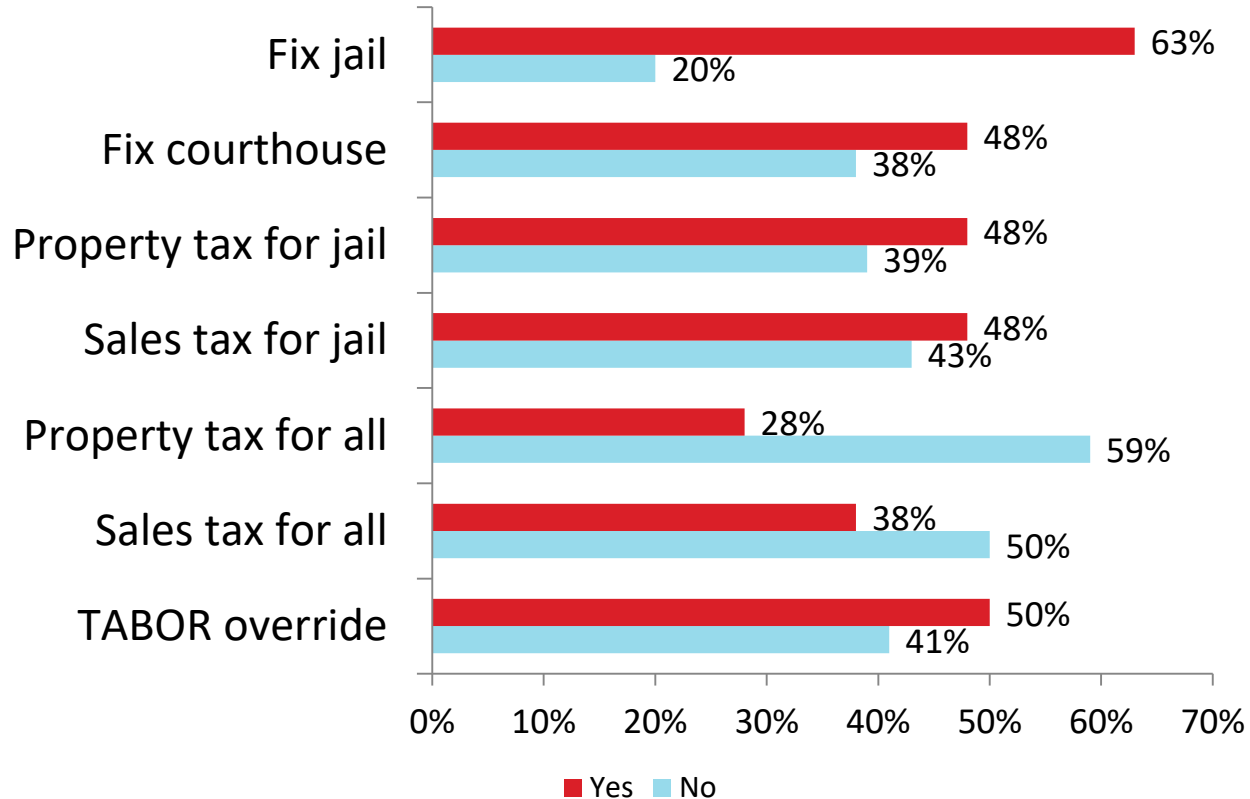


TABOR Override



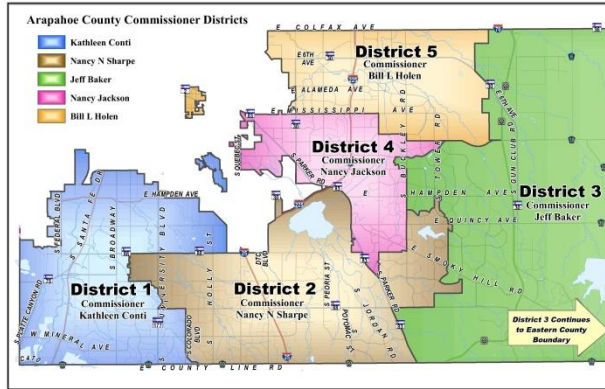


Summary of Voter Sentiment on Fixes and Taxes





Sample Description



- District 1 – 23%
- District 2 – 22%
- District 3 – 22%
- District 4 – 19%
- District 5 – 14%

- Cell phone – 71%
- Only cell – 77%

- White – 74%
- Hispanic – 13%
- African American – 7%
- Other – 6%

- Millennials (18-34) – 25%
- Gen X (35-54) – 32%
- Boomers (55-74) – 31%
- Silent – 12%

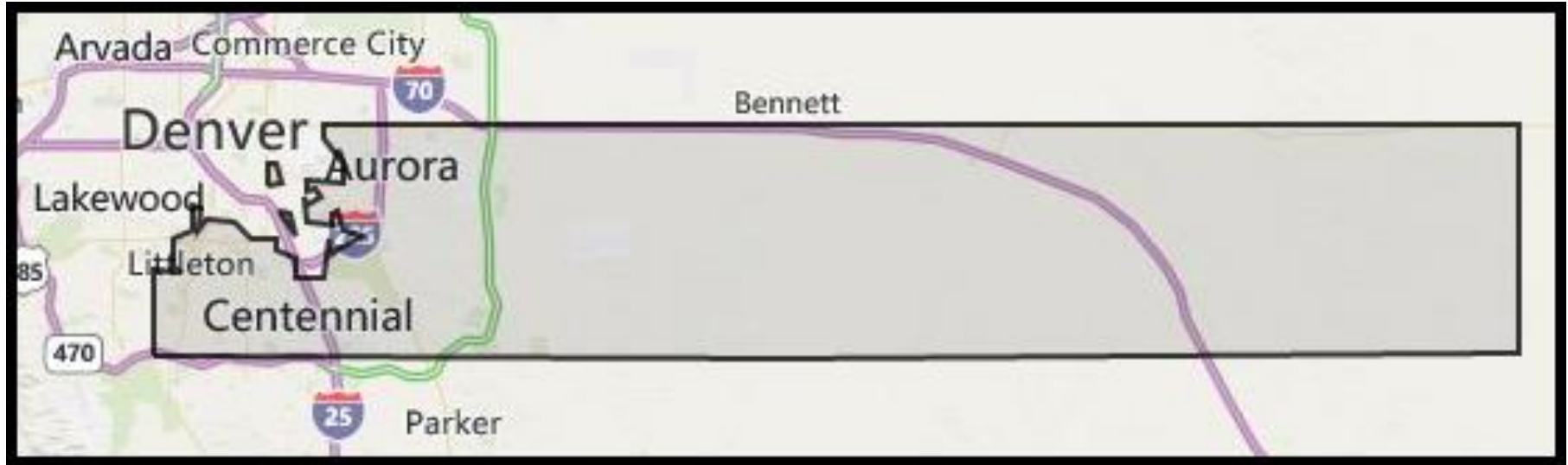
	Registered	Self-Described
Democrat	36%	32%
Unaffiliated	30	27
Republican	32	26





Arapahoe County

2018 – 2019 Research Program



Questions and Discussion