Rural Clean Air Open Space Population Natural Scenery
Small Town Wildlife Recreation Public Lands
River Trails Community Climate
Mountains Quiet Outdoor Location Beauty Hiking
Friendly Safe Weather

Envision Chaffee County

Community Survey Results & Assessment

November 6, 2017

ENVISIONCHAFFEECO.

A FUTURE BUILT ON COMMON GROUND

Community Survey Results & Assessment
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Executive Summary

Envision Chaffee County is a county-wide community effort to help maintain our natural beauty, special sense of community and rural landscapes as we grow and prosper. As part of identifying what the community values, the Envision Core Team conducted a survey designed to gather input from a representative sample of the County's population. Community engagement in the Envision survey was excellent, with 1,203 total respondents – more than a quarter of whom asked to stay involved in the project.

The demographic summary of survey participants shows a strongly representative sampling of Chaffee County citizens. Coverage by zip code area, age bracket and work force participation is highly representative of County composition. Coverage of all income ranges is also high, but with somewhat of an under-representation of lower incomes and over-representation of higher income ranges. This potential bias was addressed by testing results for each survey question by income range and reporting any significant differences. A broad range of different lengths of county residency was also sampled, even though no county-wide data were available for comparison.

In summary, the Envision community survey is representative; it provides very clear and quantitative information about what the county's residents value most and what concerns them as they consider the County's growth.

At the highest level, the survey respondents envision a future where citizens and county/town governments collaborate to create a future Chaffee County that has maintained or enhanced:

        natural beauty;
        affordability (especially in housing);
        friendly small-town culture;
        rural landscapes and working ranches;
        exceptional outdoor recreation experiences;
        healthy, fire-resistant public lands; and
        a prospering economy.

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I. What do Chaffee County residents value most?

When asked "what do you love most about Chaffee County?" (Question #1), respondents were consistent in their answers. Of 1,190 responses, more than half used the following words (in order of frequency):

Mountains   Beauty   Outdoors   Community   Natural   Small Town

When responses were sorted into categories, five themes emerged, common among all ages and income ranges:

1. Natural beauty
2. Community and small town feel
3. Outdoor recreation
4. Rural agricultural landscapes
5. Public lands and the river
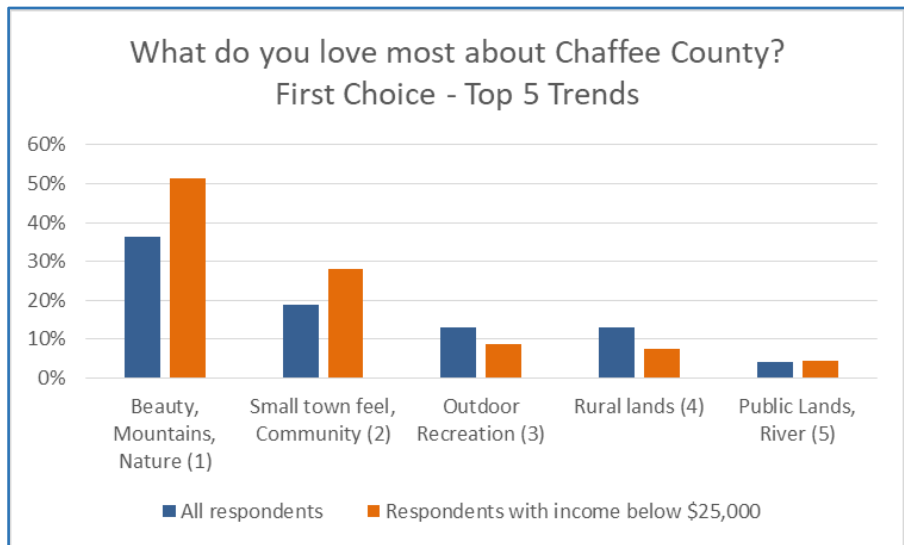
The same top themes are verified by multiple-choice Question #3, asking "what makes Chaffee County special?" Here, 67% of responses identified natural resources, friendly small-town culture, outdoor recreation and rural character/agricultural lands as the most important assets.
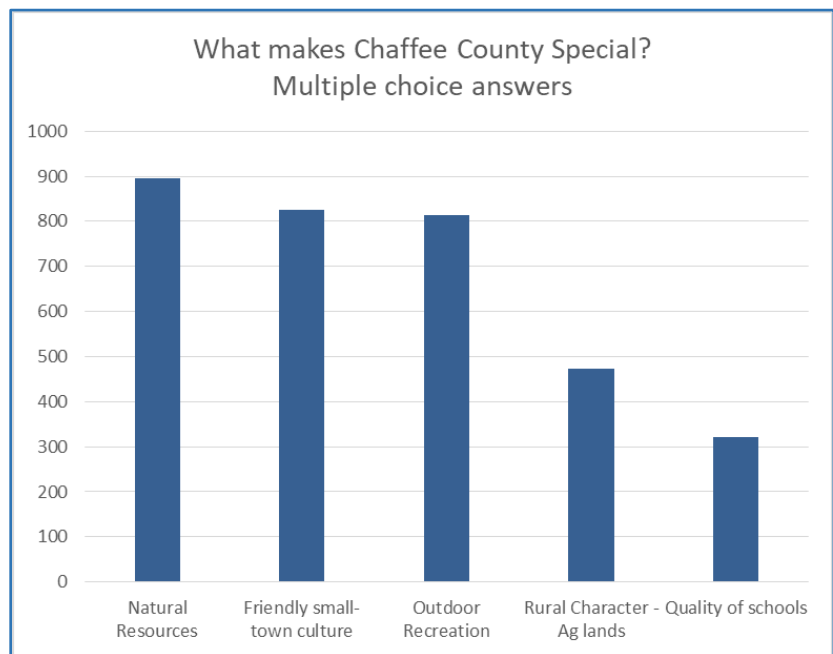
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Additional survey questions provided a deeper perspective on the five things citizens value most (with rank):

A. Natural Beauty (1st), Outdoor Recreation (3rd) and Public Lands and the River (5th)

These physical assets are closely related, and form the core of Chaffee County's identity.

When asked "what are your top priorities for management of public lands and the river?" respondents indicated a priority toward protection versus toward increased access to outdoor recreation (Question #4).

Ensuring public lands are not sold or transferred	24%
Managing the environmental impacts of recreation	21%
Protecting water quality and water supply	20%
Protecting wildlife habitat	15%
Maintaining the quality of outdoor recreation	13%
Increasing access to outdoor recreation	7%

B. Sense of Community (2nd)

Sense of community and small town feel is the second-most valued attribute in Chaffee County (after natural beauty). This attribute was described by words including:

Caring   Friendly   Welcoming   Involved   Slow-paced   Not crowded

Likewise, loss of this special sense of community is identified as a top concern in questions #2 and #9.

C. Rural landscapes and open agricultural lands (4th)

Rural landscapes and working agricultural lands are the 4th most-loved asset by respondents of all income and age classes (Question #1). This theme is further supported by responses to Questions #6 and #8:

97% of respondents believe working lands contribute to Chaffee County's quality of life
96% indicate it is important or very important to support working lands and to maintain open space as the County grows

Do working lands contribute to Chaffee County's quality of life?

How important is it to support working lands and maintain open space as our population grows?
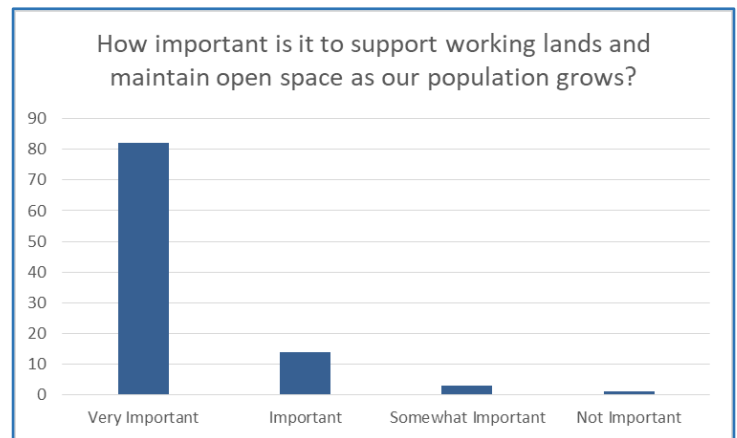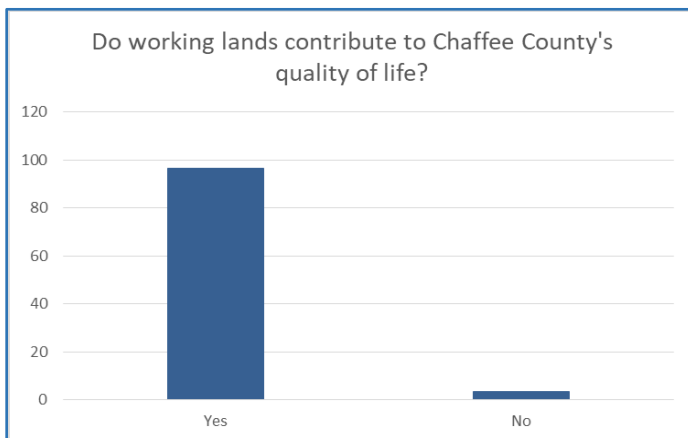
Participants also indicated that they believe working lands contribute to Chaffee County's quality of life not only by supporting open space and views, but also by representing the community and culture, keeping water rights local, providing wildlife habitat, and providing local foods.

II. What are Chaffee County citizens' most pressing concerns?

Looking beyond what the community values about Chaffee County, the survey explored what residents believe are the most pressing concerns relative to the area's projected growth in population and tourism (Questions #2 and #9), and related to changes in forest health (Question #5).

In response to "what are the top three most pressing challenges for Chaffee County, when you consider coming growth in population and tourism?" top words (in order of frequency) include:

<div align="center">

Housing (with 40% of responses)
Traffic   Growth   Cost   Jobs   Land   Water

</div>

When the responses were sorted into categories, again five themes emerged that are common across age and income ranges:

1. Housing (for employees, seniors, families)
2. Overall affordability and rising costs
3. Growth (too much, too fast, unplanned)
4. Development of rural areas
5. Traffic

A shortage of non-seasonal jobs with higher wages was a sixth theme, for 6% of respondents.

What are the most pressing challenges for Chaffee County? Top Themes

Concerns about housing affordability, rising cost of living and traffic are reinforced by multiple choice responses in Question #9. Responses here also identify loss of small town character as a top 5 concern, especially for people with annual household incomes greater than $25,000.

What aspects of our community will be most challenged by growth in population and tourism?
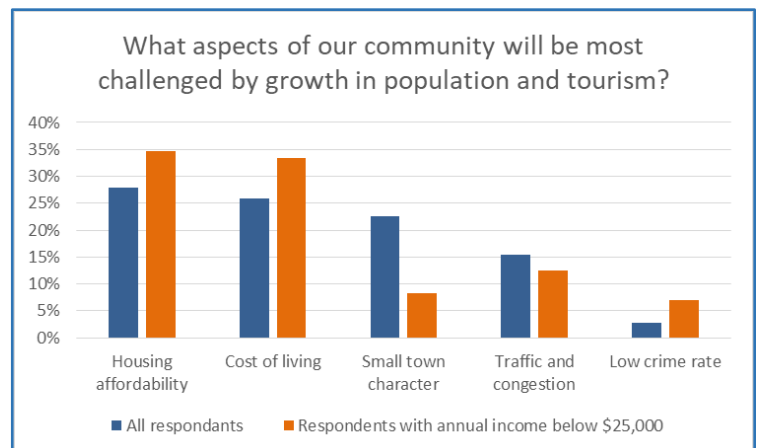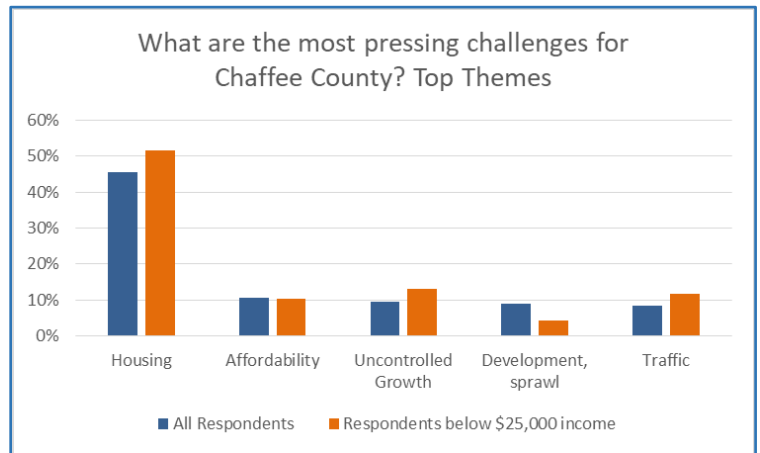
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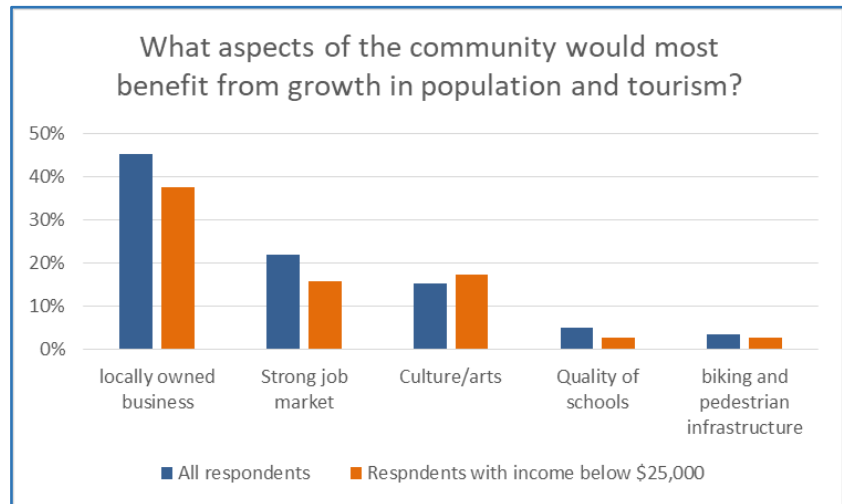### November 6, 2017

With growth, the potential impact of wildfire increases as development increases, especially at our public lands interfaces. At the same time, rapidly advancing beetle infestation in our forest is increasing the risks posed by wildfire. When asked "how important do you think it is for our community to discuss and address wildfire risk?" (Question #5):

How important is it to address wildfire risk?
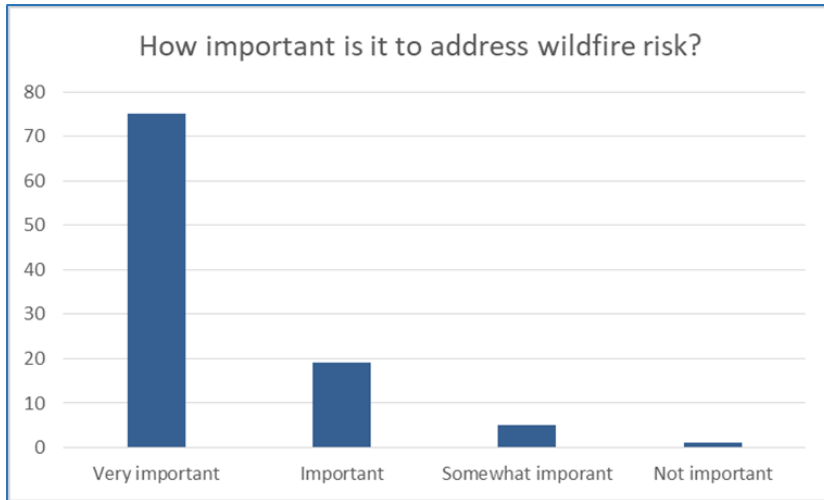
95% of 1,131 respondents indicated that managing wildfire risk is "important" to "very important."

III. Growth-related opportunities

The final survey question asked what aspects of the community could most benefit from growth. Top responses were locally owned businesses, a strong job market and increasing support for the arts community, schools and biking/pedestrian infrastructure.

What aspects of the community would most benefit from growth in population and tourism?

■ All respondents   ■ Respndents with income below $25,000

Thank you!

Thank you to the Chaffee County community for such strong participation and interest in the Envision survey, and the desire to stay involved as the initiative moves forward! More detail about survey methodology, demographics, and data for each questions are available in the full Envision Chaffee County Survey Report that follows.

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Full Survey Report
Introduction

Envision Chaffee County is a county-wide, community-based initiative to identify what residents value the most in their communities and to create a plan to maintain those aspects and features as the county grows and prospers. Whether it is healthy public lands, recreational opportunities, quality schools, rural landscapes or a welcoming small-town attitude, Chaffee County residents are being given the opportunity to share their thoughts – as well as concerns about the future – through the Envision initiative.

Why now? Chaffee County's population is projected to increase 31% by 2030 and 52% by 2050 (State Demography Office). Anticipating such a surge in population and associated changes to the community, the Envision Chaffee County project was initiated in early 2017 by a group of citizens. In September, 2017, the Chaffee County Commissioners unanimously agreed to convene the initiative, with support from the Central Colorado Conservancy. The three-phase Envision project officially began in the summer of 2017 and will conclude in May 2018 with an implementation plan.

PHASE I	PHASE II	PHASE III
Finding Common Ground	**Building A Plan**	**Moving Forward Together**
✓ Develop a community vison ✓ Decide how to measure results	✓ Develop strategies & plans to achieve the vision through community working groups	✓ Begin to implement the plan and track progress
October	**January**	**May**
(we are here)		

Funding for the program was provided for Phase I by the LOR Foundation ($100,000). This initial funding has been supplemented by: the Colorado Department of Local Affairs ($25,000), and Chaffee County ($5,000). Local community members are also providing nearly $70,000 in in-kind support.

Phase I is facilitating a community conversation about impending challenges stemming from growth through town meetings, a survey and one-on-one interviews. The aims are to create a shared vision for the future, and to encourage citizens to think strategically about how to protect and enhance Chaffee County's best assets as the community evolves. More than 1,200 residents (1,203 total) took the Envision survey, and those results are summarized in this report. They will also play a key role in informing Phases II and III of the project.

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Project Participants

The Envision Project Core Team is composed of the following: *Greg Felt*, Chaffee County Commissioner District #2; *Cindy Williams*, Project Lead – Central Colorado Conservancy; *Joel Benson*, Mayor of Buena Vista; Dave Kelly, Hi Rocky Sports Inc.; *Andrew Mackie*, Central Colorado Conservancy; *Chelsey Nutter*, Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District; *Jeff Post*, First Colorado Land Office; *Wendell Pryor*, Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation; and *Alison Ramsey*, Greater Arkansas River Nature Association.

Project Funders are: LOR Foundation; Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA); and Chaffee County.

In-Kind Contributors include: Zach Alexander Design and Development (logo development); Laura Barton (communications); Ed Berg, Salida Grown LLC (data processing); Svata Louda (grant proposal development); Cindy Williams, GeoInsights Inc. (project leadership); and Joanna Zarach, Glean Consulting (survey administration).

Project Facilitation is by: Bill Fulton, Civic Canopy; Kim Smoyer, Smoyer and Associates; and Amy McNamara, Trust for Public Lands.

Survey Outreach Partners included multiple agencies and organizations contributing essential support to building awareness of and encouraging participation in the *Envision Chaffee Initiative* through outreach to their members, employees, students and others in the community. These organizations included: Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area; Buena Vista School District; Buena Vista Chamber of Commerce; Central Colorado Conservancy; Central Colorado Humanist; Chaffee County Economic Development Corporation; Colorado State Forest Service; Colorado State University – Chaffee County Extension Office; Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA); Guidestone; Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center; Housing Policy Advisory Committee; Salida Business Alliance; Salida Chamber of Commerce; Salida School District; Ski Monarch Corporation; and Dept. of Interior, US Forest Service.

Project Team. More than 100 Chaffee County residents of all ages and backgrounds participated in town meetings that informed early priorities for the Envision project. Their names are included in the Appendix.

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Survey Overview

Phase I of **Envision Chaffee County** facilitated a conversation about what residents value in their communities, and what the impending challenges are from the projected population growth. Input was gathered through the following tools and activities:

- Town Hall Meetings
- Community Survey
- One-on-One Interviews

The Project Core Team designed the survey to learn more about residents' priorities and attitudes about the things that they believe are Chaffee County's best attributes. The survey took approximately 10 minutes for participants to complete, and was administered online at www.envisionchaffeecounty.org from September 16th through October 31, 2017. A total of 1,203 people took the survey, representing approximately 6% of Chaffee County's population.

All survey responses were anonymous and confidential, but respondents had the option of providing their name and contact information if they wanted to be kept informed and potentially continue to participate in the project as it progressed. A total of 298 respondents opted to provide their contact information – nearly one-quarter of all survey participants.

The Envision Project Team promoted the survey to the community via:

- Business cards (900 printed) with the survey link and purpose distributed at local businesses throughout Salida, Buena Vista and Poncha Springs
- Envision Chaffee County Facebook page
- Partner websites and member e-mail communications
- Local newspapers: *The Mountain Mail* and *The Chaffee County Times*
- Local radio public service announcements

A summary demographic profile of survey respondents follows.

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Demographic Profiles: Chaffee County Residents vs. Envision Chaffee County Survey Respondents

The Envision Chaffee County survey asked respondents to provide key demographic information to help the Project Core Team and facilitators understand how well the survey represents the overall community. This information was not a requirement for the survey to be counted.

Every effort was made by the Team to engage a broad cross-section of residents by asking a wide range of local organizations and agency partners throughout the County to promote the survey to their constituencies, by distributing 900 cards with the survey link information, and by providing paper copies of the survey as needed. However, there were notably fewer respondents in the <$25,000 category for household income than other categories; this was taken into account throughout the analysis of the survey data. Chaffee County data was provided by the State Demographer's office, and it is from the most recent (2010) Census.

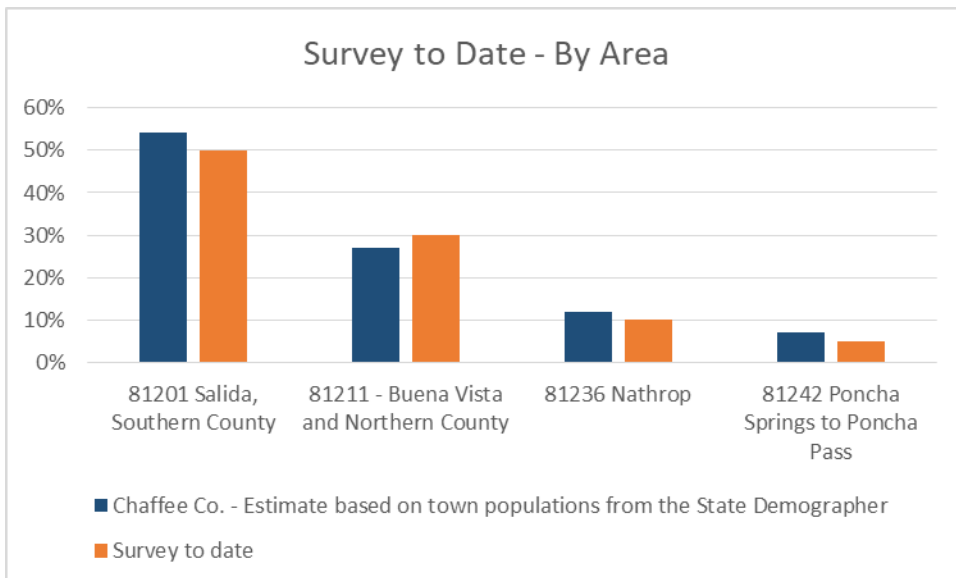## What is your household income? (1,042 responses)
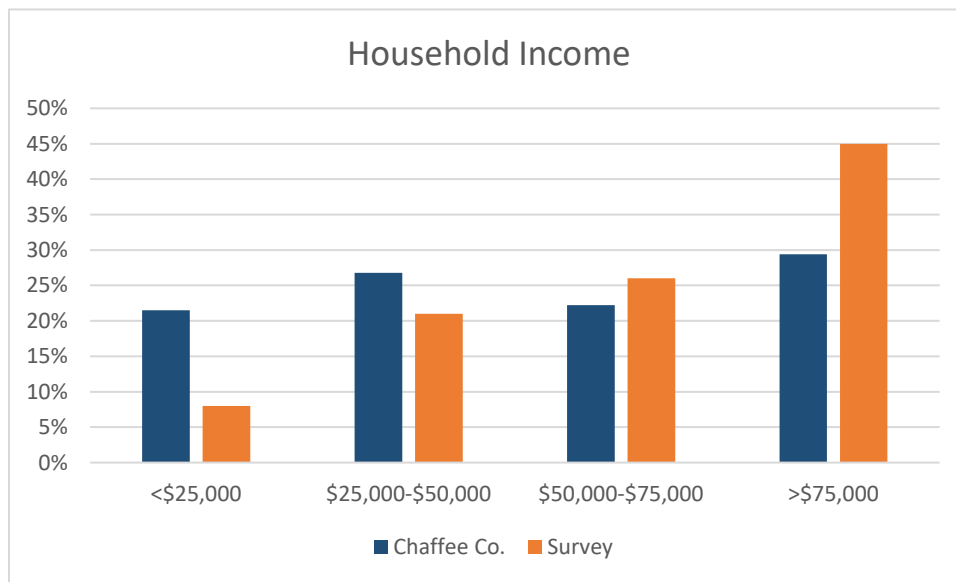
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How old are you? (1,087 responses)

Age
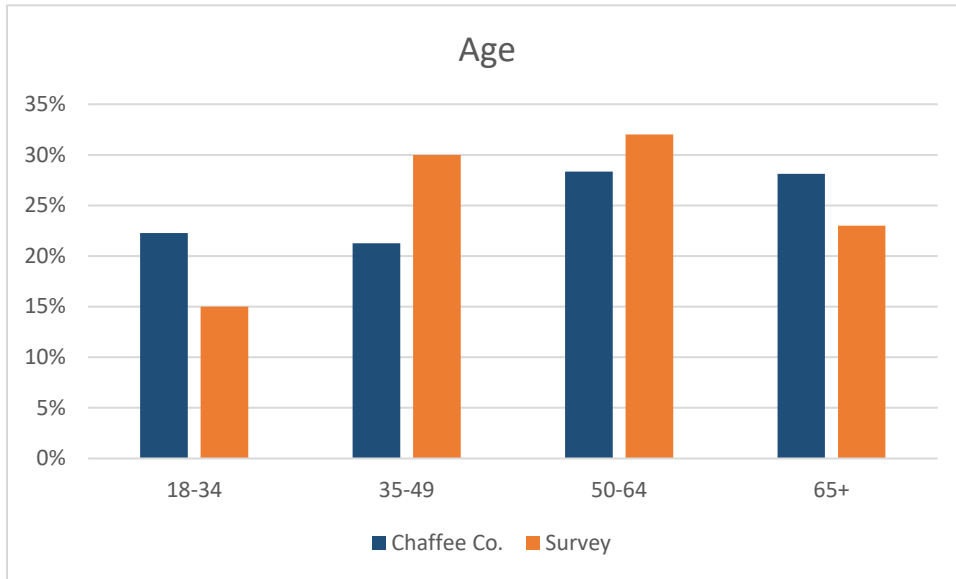
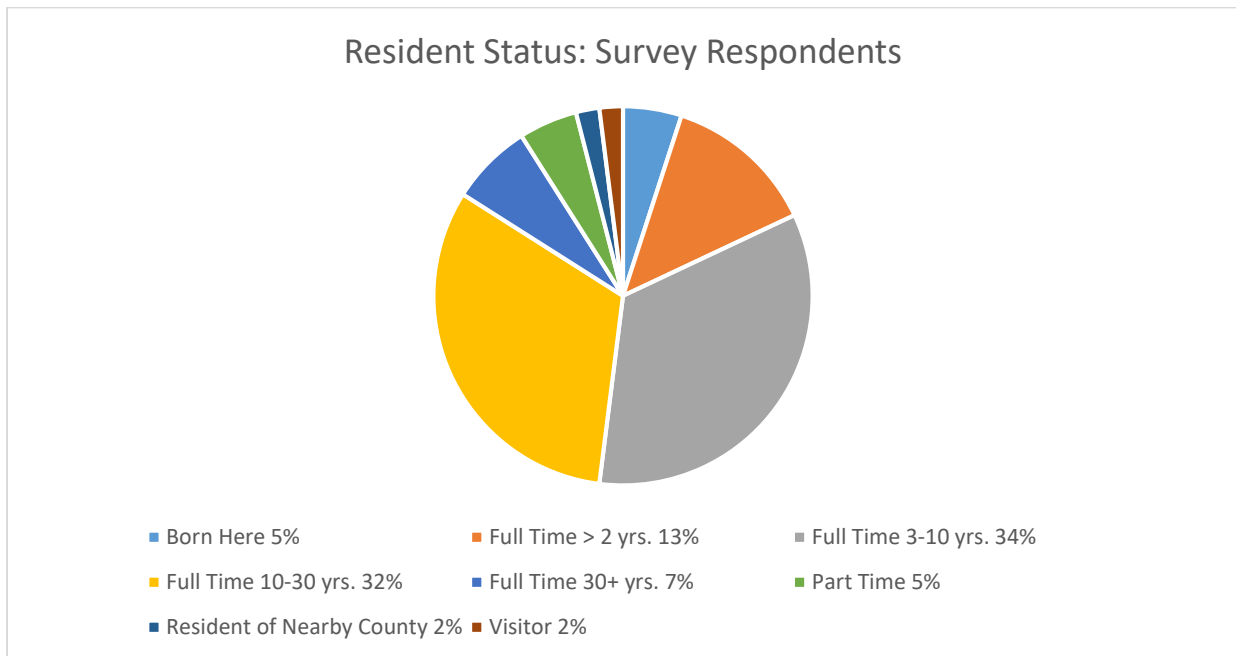What is your zip code? (1,087 responses)

Survey to Date - By Area

Note: Chaffee County data extrapolated from town populations provided by the State Demographer.

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In addition, the survey asked participants to provide information on how long they have lived in Chaffee County and their employment status. State demographic data are not available for comparison of residency length, but a broad spectrum is represented. Respondent employment status is highly representative of the actual population based on census data.

How long have you lived in Chaffee County? (1,093 responses)

Resident Status: Survey Respondents

- Born Here 5%
- Full Time > 2 yrs. 13%
- Full Time 3-10 yrs. 34%
- Full Time 10-30 yrs. 32%
- Full Time 30+ yrs. 7%
- Part Time 5%
- Resident of Nearby County 2%
- Visitor 2%

Describe your current employment – check all that apply. (1,088 responses)

Employment Status: Survey Respondents

- Employed 53%
- Unemployed 1%
- Seasonal Employee 4%
- Retired 29%
- Stay at Home Parent 4%
- Other 15%
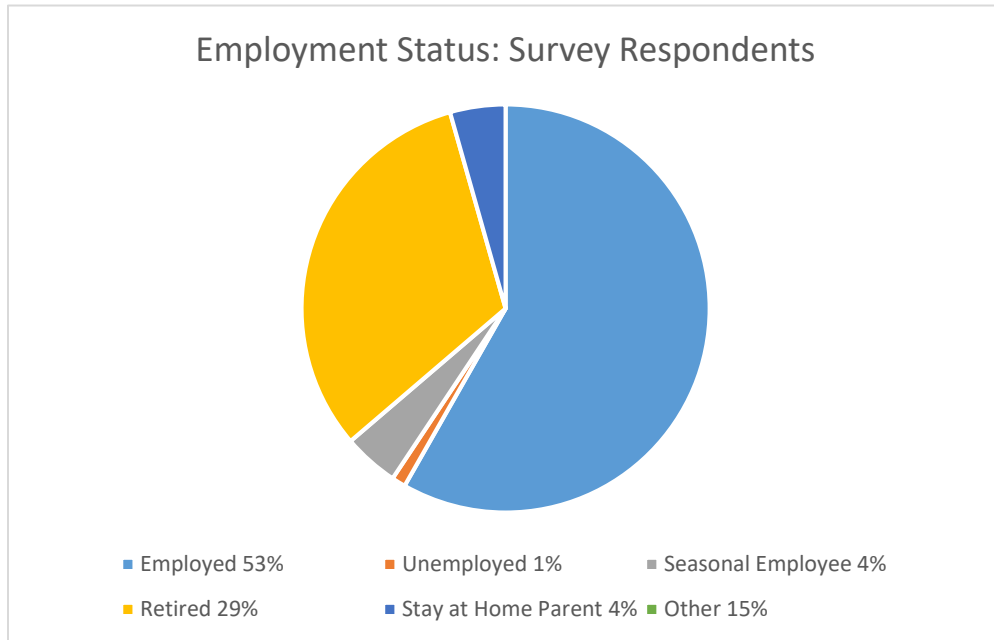
Note: Because survey respondents were allowed to check all categories that apply, the total is greater than 100%.

Employment Status: Chaffee Co.

- Employed 53%
- Unemployed 3%
- Not in Labor Force 44%
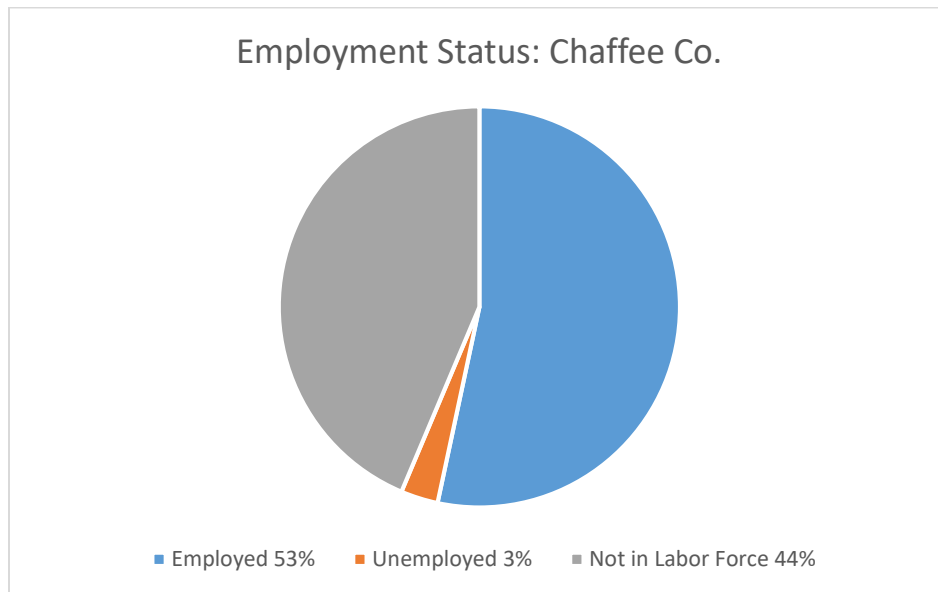
Note: Most Chaffee residents are employed (53.27%), though a sizable portion of the County is defined as "not in labor force" (43.58%). As defined by the Census Bureau, this refers to "All persons 16 years old and over who are not classified as members of the labor force. This category consists mainly of students, housewives, retired workers, seasonal workers interviewed in an off season who were not looking for work, institutionalized persons, and persons doing only incidental unpaid family work (less than 15 hours during the reference week)."

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Results by Survey Question

Question #1: In a single word or a short phrase - what are three things you love the most about Chaffee County? There were 1,110 responses to the question.

Data are provided on the respondent's first response. Additional analysis was done of second and third responses, which reinforced similar themes.

The word cloud compiled from all responses illustrates the items that were listed most frequently (larger size):

The individual words and phrases were compiled into trends using the categories below:

| |
|---|
| 1. Beautiful scenery, scenery, mountains, beauty, blue sky, landscapes, vistas, views, natural beauty, nature, access to nature, natural resources, outdoors |
| 2. Community, caring community, volunteer community, neighbors, tight knit community, people, authentic people, small town feel, real community, friendly, welcoming |
| 3. Recreation, access to recreation, outdoor activities, 14rs, skiing, trails, adventure, biking, fishing, hiking, hunting |
| 4. rural lands, open space, open land, agriculture, rural, hay fields |
| 5. Public lands, forest, wilderness |
| 6. Climate, weather, sunshine |
| 7. Clean air, clean water, lack of pollution, no smog |
| 8. Quiet, solitude, peaceful |

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Graph illustration of trends for all responses:
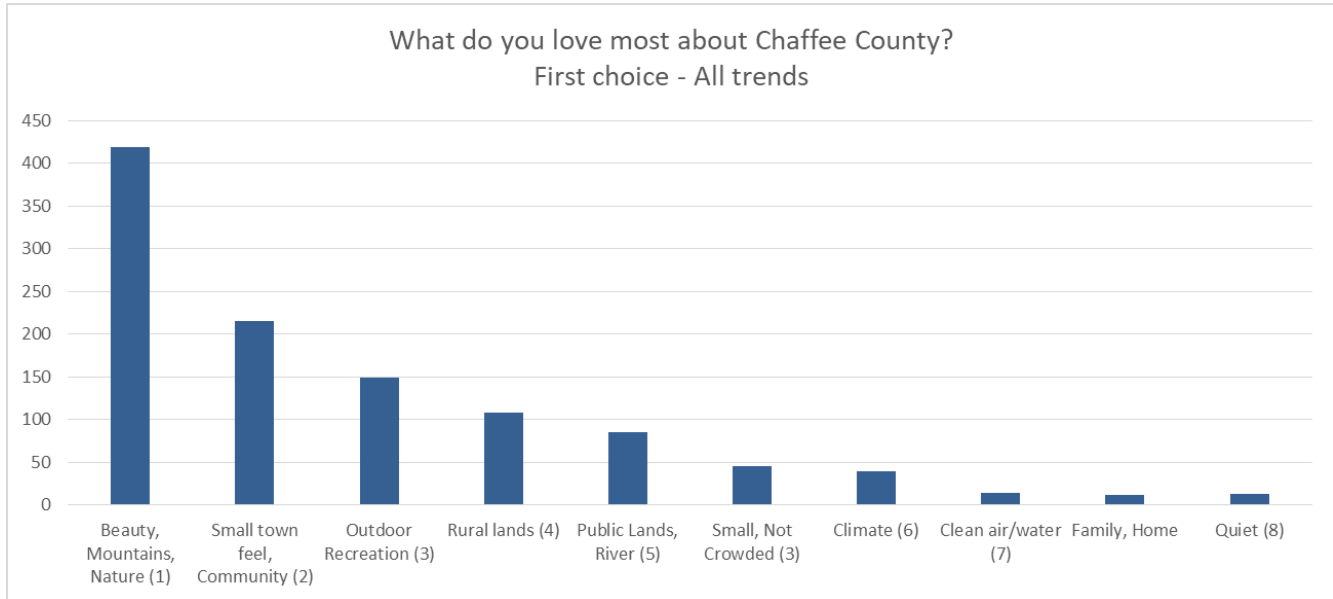
Graph illustration of trends for respondents with household income <$25,000. Note that the top five trends are the same as for the total survey respondents:
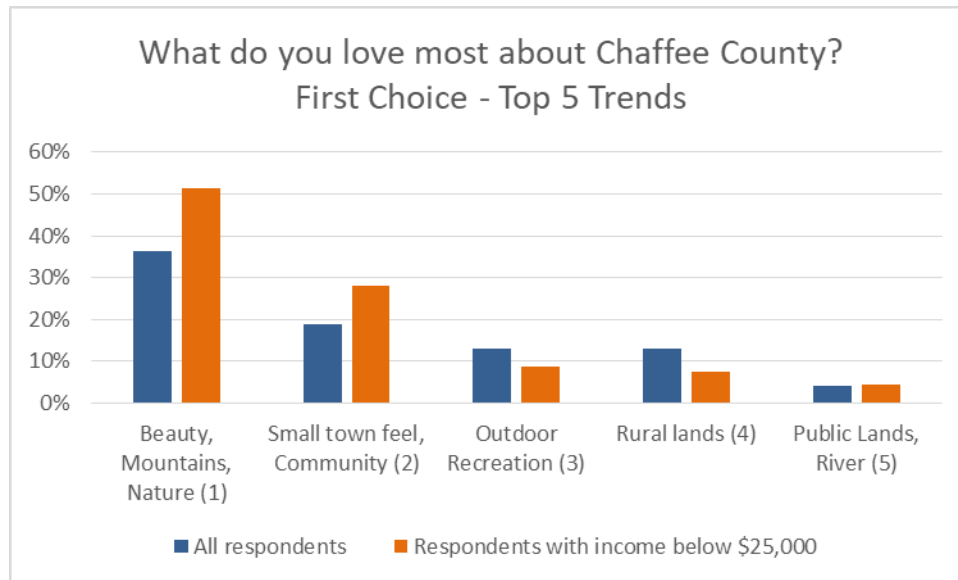
Graphical analysis of respondents' second and third choices and compiled data indicate similar trends and are available upon request.

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Question #2: In a single word or short phrase, what are the top three most pressing challenges for Chaffee County, when you consider coming growth in population and tourism? There were 1,118 responses to the question listing a first choice.

This word cloud compiled from all responses illustrates the items that were listed most frequently (larger size):

The individual words and phrases were compiled into trends using the categories below:

| |
|---|
| 1. Housing, affordable housing, workforce housing, employee housing. |
| 2. Affordability, costs, prices, gentrification |
| 3. Growth, uncontrolled growth, over promotion, over crowding, too much growth |
| 4. Development, sprawl, rural development |
| 5. Traffic, roads, parking, congestion |
| 6. Jobs, wages, non-seasonal employment, full time jobs |
| 7. Impact on beauty, environment, wildlife, open space |
| 8. Small town culture, vibe, charm, culture, authenticity |
| 9. Water, loss of water rights, in-sufficient water |

Graph illustration of all responses:
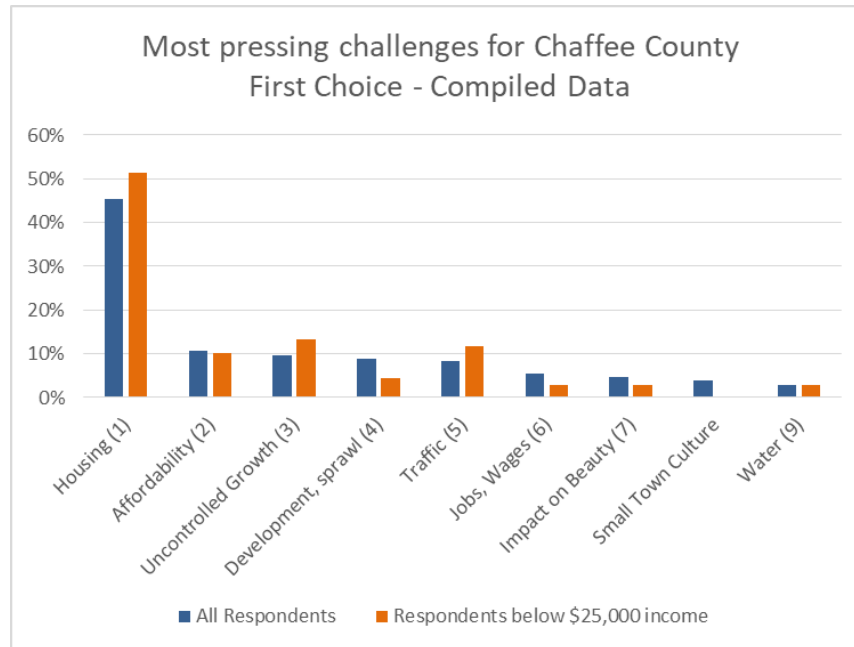
Graph illustration of trends for respondents with household income <$25,000. Note that four of the top five trends are the same as for the total survey respondents:
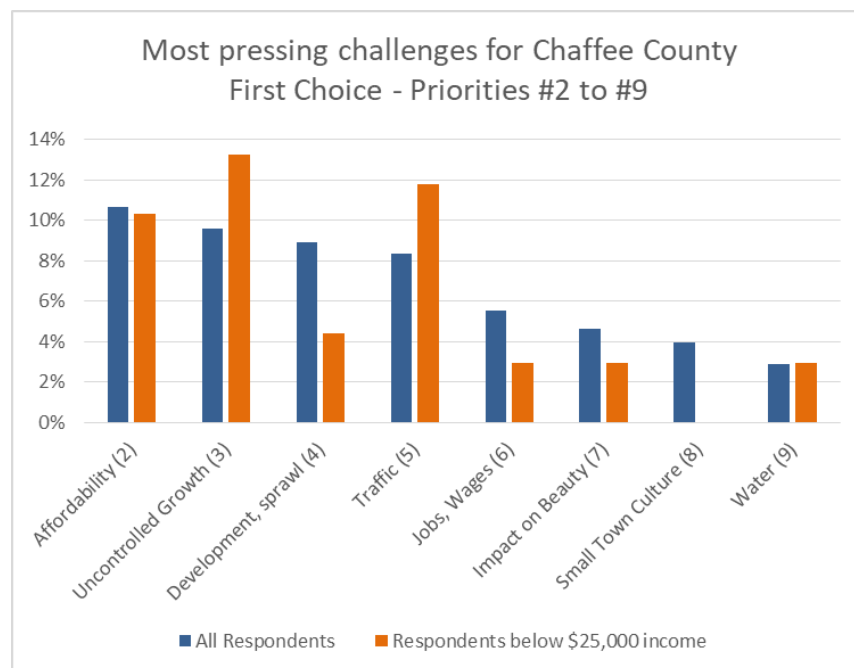

Again, a full analysis of second and third choices reinforces similar themes.

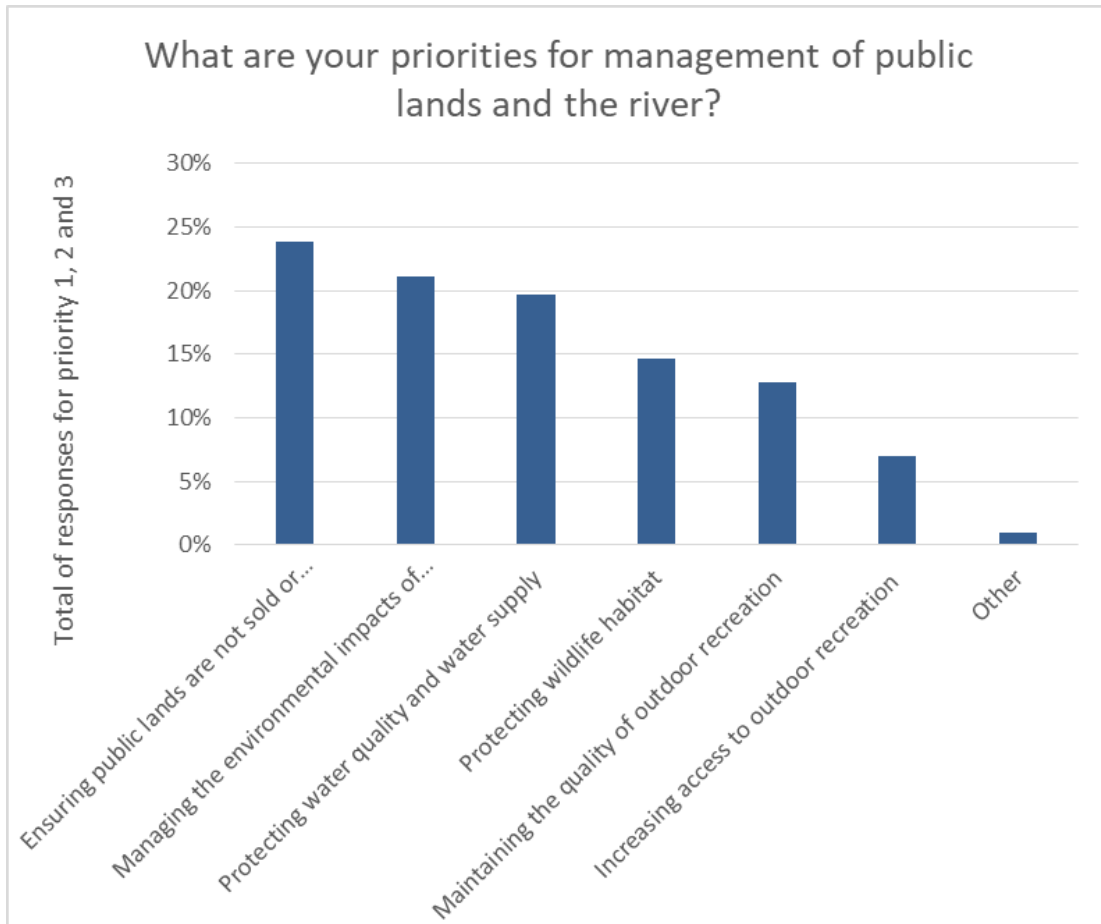Community Survey Results & Assessment
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Question #3: Chaffee County is a special place to live and to visit. In your mind, what are the top four things that make this true? Place a checkmark next to your top 4 priorities in the order of importance – 1 being the highest priority)? (1,163 responses)

What makes Chaffee County Special?
Multiple choice answers
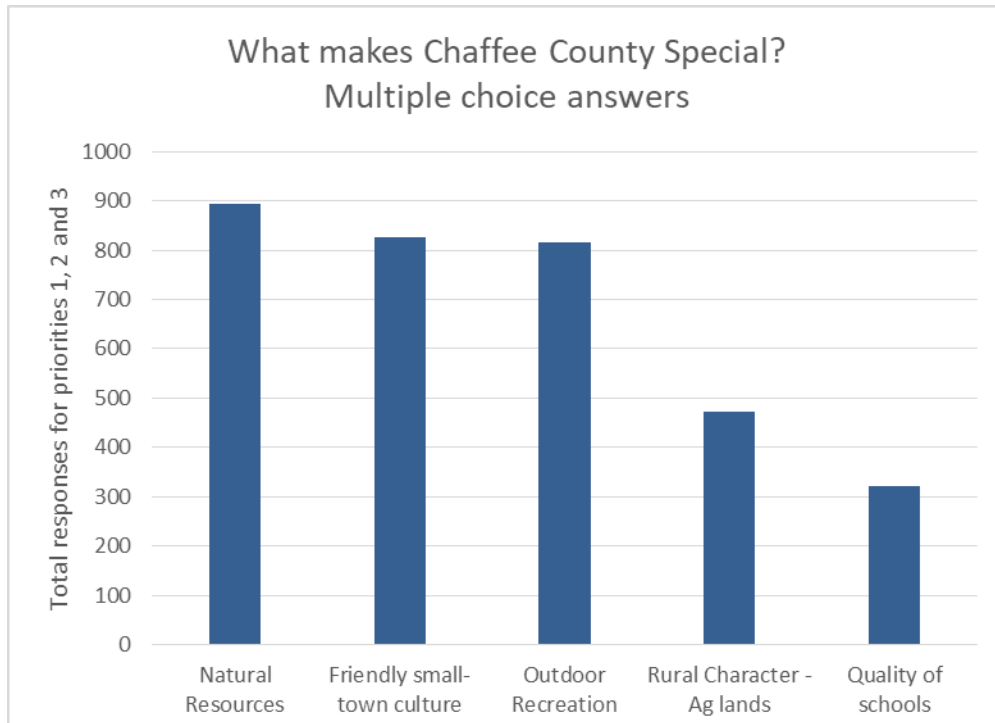
Question #4: More than 80 percent of the land in Chaffee County is publicly owned and managed by state and/or federal agencies. Residents and visitors also enjoy excellent access to the Arkansas River. As you consider the potential impacts of increasing population and visitation to public lands and waters what are your top three priorities? Place a checkmark next to your top 3 priorities in the order of importance – 1 being the highest priority. (1,131 responses)

Question #5: The impact of wildfire increases as development increases at our public lands interfaces. At the same time, rapidly advancing beetle infestation in our forest is increasing the risks posed by wildfire. How important do you think it is for our community to discuss and address wildfire risk management? (1,131 responses)
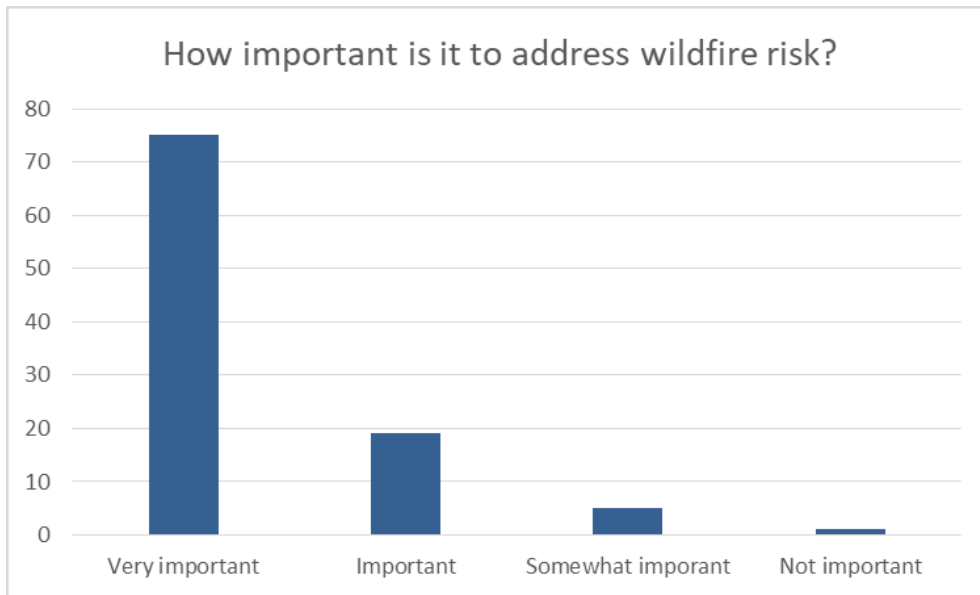

Question #6: The valley bottom lands in Chaffee County are characterized by irrigated fields, working ranches and farms. From your perspective, do these lands contribute to Chaffee County's quality of life? (1,121 responses)
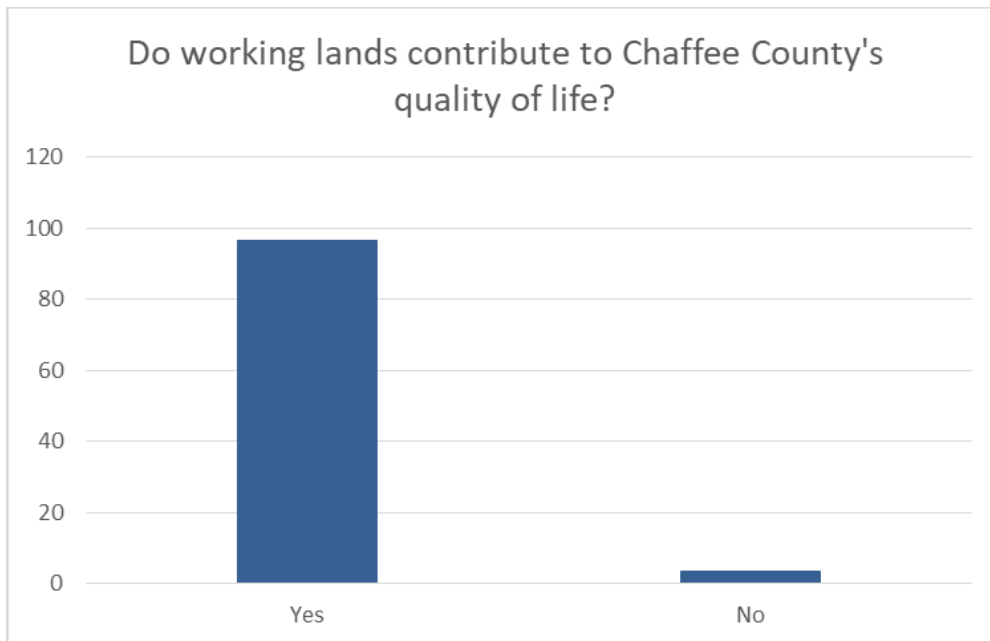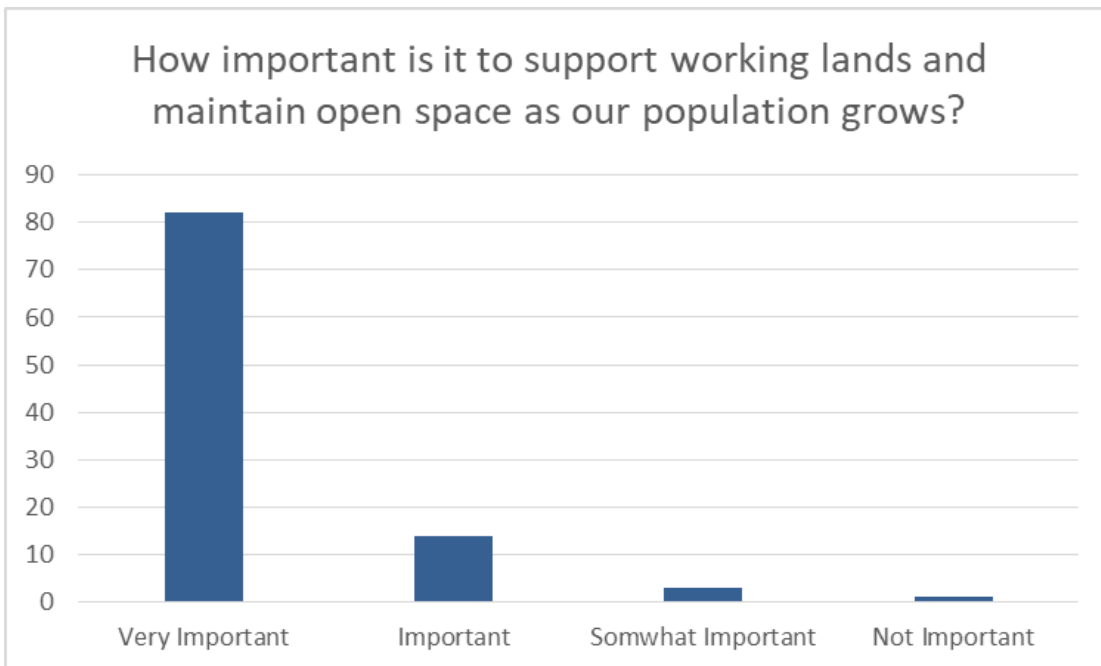
Question #7: How do these working lands contribute to Chaffee County's quality of life? Place a checkmark next to your top 3 priorities in the order of importance – 1 being the highest priority. (1,081 responses)
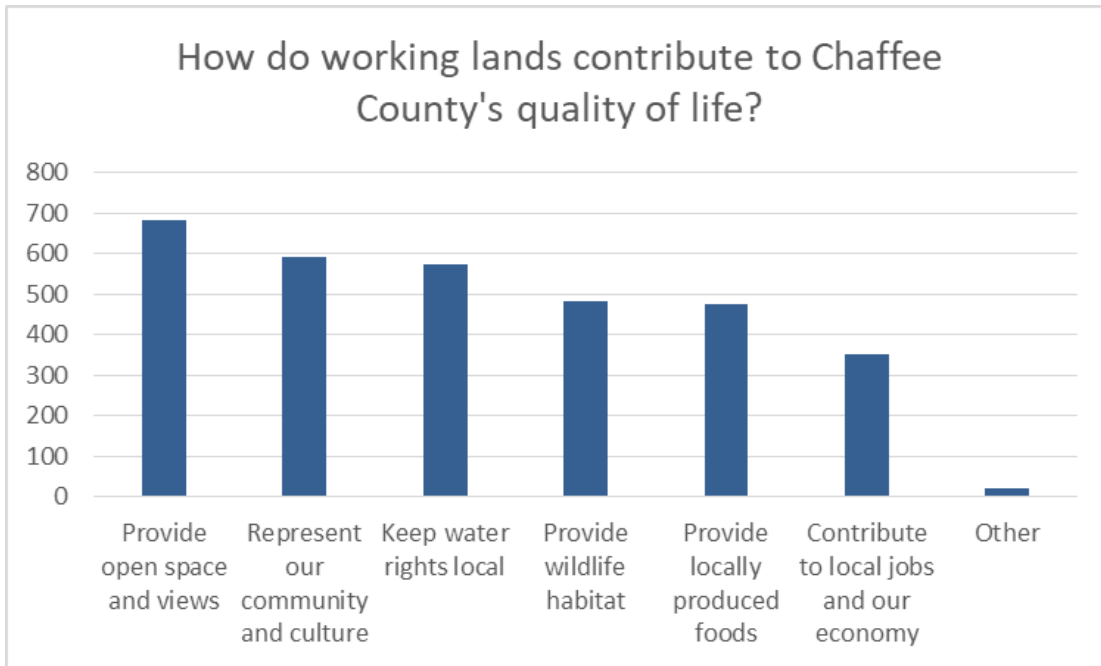

Question #8: How important do you think it is to support existing working lands and maintain open spaces as our population grows? (1,121 responses)
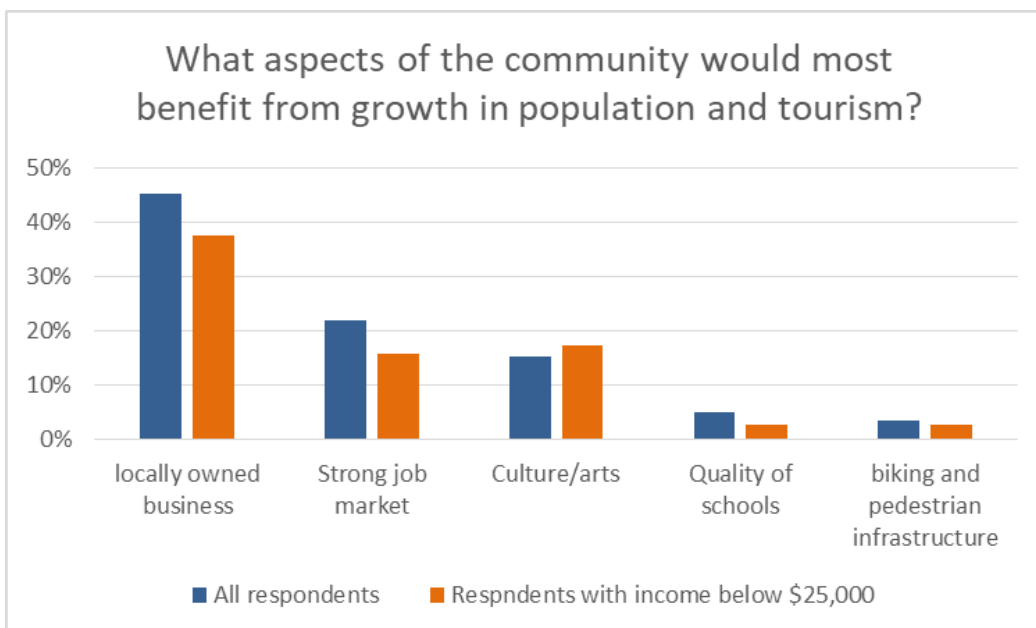
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Question #9: In your opinion what aspects of our community will be most challenged by rapidly growing population and tourism? Place a checkmark next to your top 3 concerns in order of importance – 1 being the greatest concern. (1,113 responses)
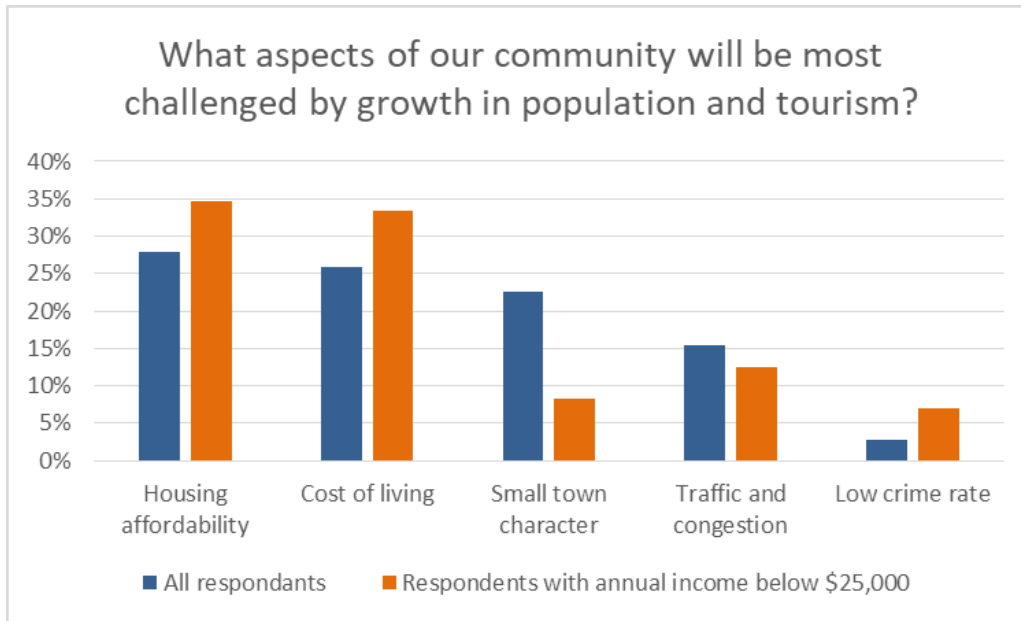
Question #10: In your opinion what aspects of our community would most benefit from growing population and tourism? Place a checkmark next to your top 3 likely benefits in order of importance – 1 being the highest benefit. (1,055 responses)

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Additional assessment was completed for each survey question, including analysis of responses by age and income. This data is available upon request to envision@centralcoloradoconservancy.org.

Next Steps

The results of the community survey will play a key role in informing the remainder of the Envision Chaffee County initiative. These valuable insights into what local residents value, and also what they're concerned about, are the foundation on which recommendations for county-wide strategies will be created in the remaining project phases.

Phase I – Finding Common Ground
- What do we value?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we work together?

Components: town meetings; community survey; interviews – to identify community objectives and measureable outcomes
Status: ongoing through January 2018

Phase II – Building Our Future
- How do we get there?
- What is our plan?

Components: working groups – to formalize recommendations in order to achieve outcomes
Status: Planned for January to May 2018

Phase III – Moving Forward Together
- Implementation

Components: final plan with recommendations to be presented to community leadership
Status: Planned to follow May 2018

It's a great time to get involved! Anyone interested in participating in the Envision project is welcome – please contact:

Terri Scales, Project Director
terri@centralcoloradoconservancy.org
719.539.7700

Visit www.envisionchaffeecounty.org anytime for the latest project updates and news.

Appendix – Thank you to Envision Chaffee County Team participants through November 2017

Dave Armstrong
Chuck Azzopardi
Keith Baker
Christie Barton
Brian Beaulieu
Brian Berger
Keith Berger
Rick Bieterman
Rebecca Biglow
Nicole Blaser
Holly Blitstein
Alison Brown
Cheryl Brown-Kovacic
Josh Buckberg
Lynn Camp
Andrea Carlstrom
Ashleigh Cogan
Brennan Cogan
Bruce Cogan
Kelly Collins
Ed Cooper
Brian Eagleson
Albert Eggleston
Brady Everett
Mike Fay
Samar Fay
Greg Felt
Mike Fischer
Janet Franz
Bill Fulton
Bill Gardiner
Kate Garwood
Katy Grether
Frank Gurney

Kathryn Hardgrave
John Held
Fred Henderson
Anna Hendricks
Jeanne Herrick-Stare
Rick Hum
Jane Jolley
Paige Judd
Jan Justice
Kory Katsimpalis
Dave Kelly
Keith Kirchner
Damon Lang
Ben Lara
Cammeron Larson
Buffy Lenth
Jim LiVecchi
JD Longwell
Andrew Mackie
Billy Marquis
Kim Marquis
Lisa Martin
Ken Matthews
Leslie Matthews
John McCarthy
Katherine McCoy
Read McCullouch
Ken McMurray
Amy McNamara
Brink Messick
Dave Moore
Dominique Naccarato
Susan Nies
Jim Pitts

Jeff Post
Janine Pryor
Wendell Pryor
Alison Ramsey
Nancy Roberts
Susan Roebuck
Eileen Rogers
Lee Rooks
Jon Roorda
Randy Rupp
Terri Scales
Ben Scanga
Norma Seneca Cady
Trey Shelton
Susan Shepherd
Dan Shore
Daniel Smith
Kim Smoyer
Terry Stevens
Aubrey Tamietti
Brittany Tezah
James Thompson
Jim Thompson
Kathryn Wadsworth
Lucy Waldo
Dan Waldvogle
Lois Walton
Angela Welborn
Doug Welch
Katy Welter
Rob White
Forrest Whitman