

Technical Report 14-12



Agricultural Experiment Station

College of Agricultural Sciences

Perceptions of Local Officials Regarding Land Use Issues Facing Colorado:

A Needs Assessment for the College of Agricultural Sciences Strategic Initiatives Program

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Acknowledgments: Special thanks to Dr. Donald McLeod, University of Wyoming, Dr. Elizabeth Garner, State Demographer, State of Colorado for very helpful review comments that have clarified this report.

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Executive Summary

In order to understand the land use issues facing the state of Colorado, our team conducted a needs assessment aimed at defining important land use issues across the state. Funded by the College of Agricultural Sciences' as a part of the land use strategic initiative, the primary function of this research was to provide information that would help promote a relationship between CSU and the towns and counties of Colorado related to land use needs in different areas. The research was also intended to provide input on the direction for future research endeavors of the strategic initiative.

In order to analyze and gain perspective on land use issues across the state, conducting a survey was the chosen research method. A mail-in survey, after being pre-tested and reviewed in a small focus group, was sent out to a total of 204 elected and non-elected officials. A stratified sample of government officials including county commissioners, planners, and town and city mayors was compiled using information available through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and various municipality websites. The state was divided into four regions for sampling, which are listed along with the number of recipients in each stratum in parenthesis: Western Slope (52), I-25 Corridor (66), Southeastern Plains (46), and Northeastern Plains (40). Counties within the four regions were chosen at random to assess unique needs in different areas of Colorado. There was an overall response rate of 47.5% to the survey, with 97 out of 204 questionnaires filled out and returned.

The majority of government officials in Colorado are satisfied with the current land use and planning in their jurisdictions. While 68.5% of respondents indicated satisfaction of land use planning in their respective areas, approximately two-thirds expressed that they are concerned with their current land use. Elected and non-elected officials felt that it is important to preserve the rural character of their towns and counties, although this feeling is slightly less robust among the non-elected participants in the survey. Half of survey respondents expected population growth rates to remain roughly the same. Roughly one quarter expected higher growth rates and one quarter lower population growth rates in their area. Their expectations showed strong signs of regional differences across the state; respondents from the I-25 corridor expected a similar or faster population growth rate while those from the other areas expected a slower or similar growth rate.

The largest portion of the survey was taken up by three questions that each used a Likert scale for ranking the level of importance of different land use issues, different county and community opportunities, and the amount of land allocated to different alternative uses. When ranking the relative importance of different land use issues, water supply (for both irrigation and municipal use), road infrastructure, and oil and gas development ranked highest on the level of importance for the entire sample. Water supply appears to be the largest area of concern across the state of Colorado, especially for non-elected officials, which is fairly intuitive. Federal public land management and public transit were pinned as the least important of the fourteen categories. Those surveyed were asked to share their opinion about the amount of land allocated to alternative uses including: industrial, retail, high-tech, business park/professional, agricultural, and residential development, and light manufacturing. Participants' responses were divided fairly evenly between "too little" and "about right" with regards to the allocation of land to high-tech development, business park/professional development, and light manufacturing. Residential development was the only land use category that received a substantial amount of responses suggesting a level of land allocation too high. Most respondents were satisfied with the amount

of land allocated to agricultural uses. Finally, survey participants were asked to rate the relative importance of different tourism and amenity-related developments in their areas. Three amenities were highly important to the respondents: public parks for active recreation (89%); hosting major events (89%); and main street beautification (81%). Where land is relatively scarce, specifically on the Front Range, open space was deemed the single-most important amenity among respondents. Resort developments, pedestrian malls, and agritourism were identified as least important. Respondents were asked to share their opinion on whether there exists adequate access to general recreational facilities in their regions. Just over half of those who responded felt that there is adequate access to recreational facilities. Respondents from the southeastern plains and the Front Range suggested a high level of need for biking and jogging trails. However, the respondents did not believe that voters in their area would approve of tax increases to have access to additional community recreational facilities.

The survey contained a few questions about the existence of impact fees, and whether they had been raised or lowered in the last 10 years. Answers to the question about using ballot issues to raise impact fees indicate the presence of an anti-tax sentiment in the state of Colorado. Taxes and impact fees are issues that appear to remain heavily disputed and difficult topics for both elected and non-elected officials working in local government. About ninety percent of respondents indicated that they had Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) in their jurisdictions, which shows that there is a good amount of cooperation between the cities, counties, and state on different land use issues such as fire protection, law enforcement, and planning and zoning issues.

Participants from rural areas expressed an interest in preserving the rural character in their area. Issues of water supply drew a high level of importance from all areas of the state, while most other issues of importance to respondents varied substantially based on geography. The results of this survey showed strong differences in opinion and need with regard to land use policy and planning across Colorado based on geography. CSU must keep this in mind as they develop relationships between the university and communities throughout the state. A next step might be to get listening sessions to hear what local government officials feel about the results and what it infers about activities for CSU.

The largest limitation to this research is that the survey only captured the opinions of elected and non-elected government officials at various levels, thus missing the direct opinion of the general populace in the state. Given the budget that funded this research and deliberation within our team, it was decided that first gathering the opinions of elected - in addition to non-elected - officials would serve as a reasonable proxy for the opinions of those who elected them. Ideally, this survey would be extended to gather the opinions of people living in the four regions, which would provide a more complete picture of citizen priorities.

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1.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND BACKGROUND:

This project stems from the Land Use Strategic Initiative¹ in Colorado State University's College of Agricultural Sciences, which is one of five Initiatives supporting the College of Agricultural Sciences mission to "enhance and expand programs fundamental to food production and safety, develop technologies and techniques that best utilize limited resources, and conserve our natural resources for sustained production for an ever increasing global population." These Initiatives build upon the 2005 strategic plan, which identified base programs critical to the educational and research mission of the College.² This survey has been completed with the support of a strategic investment made by the College to enhance the impact and visibility of land use research, education, and outreach efforts.

Colorado is situated in a dynamic and growing region of the country, with significant amenities attracting new residents, and with many regions being sources of the natural resources needed for long-term growth of the economy. With this growth and opportunity, new challenges arise for local planners and elected officials: agricultural production is more often located next to residential areas and manufacturing enterprises; firms increasingly want to relocate in new areas that are not congested and offer ease of transport; citizens want increased recreational and other local amenities; and energy extraction is occurring in many areas of the state. These trends result in new tradeoffs and more complex land use and policy challenges.

In light of this new setting, this report provides the results of a needs assessment conducted by Colorado State University about land use issues facing the state. As part of this effort, we hope to promote a relationship between CSU and the towns and counties of Colorado, but to do this we felt that more needed to be known about the challenges faced, and the information and tools that might help better address those critical challenges.

2.0 QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT, SAMPLING APPROACH AND RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

This section presents general aspects of the questionnaire and sample used in the survey. The first subsection below reviews the process of designing the questionnaire, while the second one gives a brief overview of the general characteristics of the respondents, including location, age, education, and types of employment, among others.

Questionnaire design. The Land Use Strategic Initiative working group, who are all listed as authors of the report, drafted the questionnaire. First, a pretest was given to seven elected and non-elected government officials, with four surveys filled out and returned. Changes were then made to improve the clarity of responses. We also reviewed the questionnaire with a small focus group consisting of CSU community development professionals and Larimer county officials.

¹ The College of Agricultural Sciences Strategic Initiatives program provided funding for this project.

² The full descriptions of the Strategic Initiatives can be found at the following website:
<http://home.agsci.colostate.edu/strategic-initiatives/>

Sampling Frame. The list of county commissioners, planners, and town and city mayors was compiled using information available from the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and various municipality websites. The state was split into four regions for sampling. These regions were initially selected using CSU Extension’s regional breakdown, which has three regions, as a guide: northern, southern, and western Colorado. A fourth region, the I-25 corridor³, was added to these three in order to capture needs of the more urban part of the state. The four regions, with the number of recipients in each stratum listed in parenthesis, are: Western Slope (52); I-25 Corridor (66); Southeastern Plains (46); and Northeastern Plains (40). In general, counties were chosen randomly within four geographical areas, subject to there being a comprehensive list of county commissioners, planners, and mayors available for sampling. The recipients were drawn from the four regional strata to assess the unique needs of different areas of Colorado. Table A.1 in the appendix lists the counties sampled in each of the four regions. Each person in the sample frame was sent a questionnaire, a cover letter, and a postage-paid return envelope. Ultimately, a random sample of 204 county commissioners, town and city mayors, and planners at the county and municipal levels throughout the state received the questionnaire by mail. While using a mail survey increased the cost of surveying, due primarily to printing and postage costs, the method increased the response rate to the survey and the probability of unbiased results.

Characteristics of the Respondents. Of the 204 surveys sent out, 97 were filled out and returned – a 47.5% response rate. Response rates varied slightly between the four regions, with the highest in the northeastern plains and the lowest in the Southeastern plains. Specifically, the number of respondents and the respective response rates from each region were: Western slope, 27 respondents and a 51% response; I-25 corridor, 29 respondents and a 43% response; Northeastern Plains, 25 respondents and a 54% response; and Southeastern plains, 16 respondents and a 40% response.

Males made up a large majority of respondents and of the sample frame. The average age of respondents was 55 years of age, with the youngest respondent being 28 years old and the oldest 80 years old. With 46 elected officials and 50 non-elected individuals - including planners, town managers and clerks - the distribution of the two groups of respondents is fairly even. On average, respondents indicated that they have been in their current position for 8.5 years, with a large dispersion around the mean at a standard deviation of 7.31. Overall, 80 respondents indicated that they work for the government; while 16 answered that they were not government employees. With the exception of nine respondents, all had at least a bachelor’s degree, and 40 officials had a graduate degree.

³ The term I-25 Corridor is used interchangeably with Front Range throughout this report.

3.0 RESULTS

The following five sub-sections provide results and key findings of the survey. The first section addresses the general perceptions of land use and future population growth (Section 3.1). In the next section, respondents' assessment of the statewide importance of different land use issues is provided (Section 3.2). These sections are followed by the sampled officials' opinions about the appropriateness of land allocated to alternative uses (Section 3.3), their estimates of recreational needs (Section 3.4), and a summary of intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) that currently exist (Section 3.5). Graphical and tabular results provided in the following sections refer to statewide responses (i.e. all responses obtained from those surveyed) unless otherwise specified.

3.1 General Perceptions of Land Use and Future Population Growth in Colorado

The survey began with a series of questions regarding the respondent's satisfaction with land use and its planning in their region, and their perception of population growth over a 10-year horizon. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the proportion of respondents who answered "YES" to that question. Table 1 separates the answers into the four regional strata and includes a statewide total, which is a non-weighted average of the entire sample.

Table 1 demonstrates that the majority of government officials in Colorado are satisfied with the current land use and planning in their jurisdictions. Excluding those from the Front Range, the majority of respondents indicate that they live in a rural area. The 68.9% of respondents who come from a rural area feel strongly that it is important to preserve the rural character of their towns and counties – over 95% of all respondents indicated that the preservation of the rural character in their region is important. About two-thirds (68.5%) indicated satisfaction with land use planning in their respective areas. However, 74.4% of respondents expressed concern with current land use. Regions with a lower percentage of respondents satisfied with current land use planning had a higher percentage of respondents showing concern for current land use as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:
 Respondents Perceptions of Land Use Issues, Region and Overall
 (% YES)**

	Western Slope	Front Range	NE Plains	SE Plains	Overall State
Are you satisfied with current land use in your area?	64.0%	64.3%	95.5%	57.1%	70.8%
Are you satisfied with current land use planning in your area?	64.0%	64.3%	95.5%	42.9%	68.5%
Are you concerned with current land use in your area?	64.0%	79.3%	66.7%	93.3%	74.4%
Live in a rural area?	76.0%	39.3%	81.8%	93.3%	68.9%
If yes, is it important to residents to preserve the rural character	95.0%	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%	95.6%

Table 2 displays that a majority of elected officials and non-elected officials that responded in each region are satisfied with the current land use and land use planning. Separating the respondents into two groups, based on whether they are elected officials or non-elected officials, provides an interesting juxtaposition. While over 50% of respondents in each category answered YES to the perceptions of land use issues, a high percentage of non-elected officials reported satisfaction with land use and land use planning in their area. Elected officials expressed a slightly higher level of concern about their current land use, and all of them felt it was important to preserve the rural character. Increased satisfaction is evident in the opinions of non-elected officials, who may be closer and more involved in the planning functions related to land use. Both types of officials also feel that it is important to preserve the rural character of their towns and counties, although this feeling is slightly less uniform among the non-elected participants in the survey.

**Table 2:
 Respondents Perceptions of Land Use Issues, Elected and Non-elected Officials
 (% Agree)**

	Elected Officials	Non-elected Officials
Are you satisfied with current land use in your area?	68.3%	72.9%
Are you satisfied with current land use planning in your area?	65.9%	70.8%
Are you concerned with current land use in your area?	76.7%	72.3%
Live in a rural area?	62.8%	74.5%
If yes, is it important to preserve the rural character?	100.0%	91.2%

Figures 1 and 2 display - in chart form - results to the question about expected population growth. Figure 1 shows that most respondents think growth rates will stay about the same, and those who expected either higher or lower growth are equally split but lower than the group seeing population growth staying the same in the future. As will be further explained graphically by Figure 2, those in the more urban, Front Range category expect population to grow quickly, while those in the southeastern and northeastern regions expect population to grow at the same rate or a slower rate.

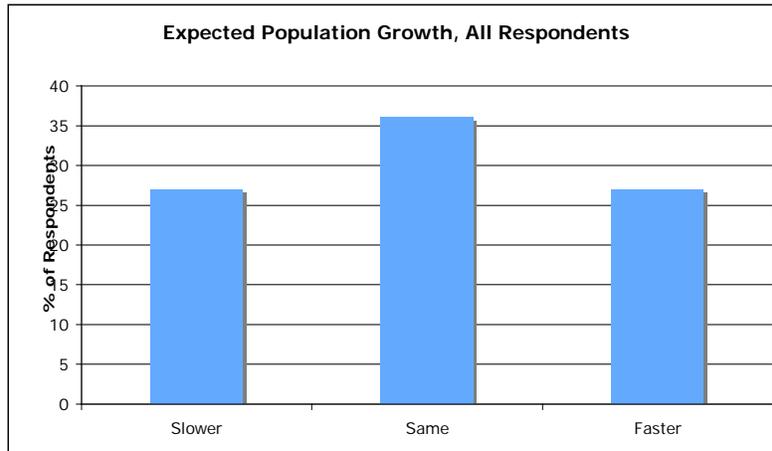


Figure 1: Expected Population Growth, All Respondents

Results, presented by region in Figure 2, show this noteworthy and understandable variation across the different geographical areas of Colorado. The northeastern plains and west slope saw roughly equal proportions of respondents who saw population growing slower, at the same rate, or faster. Responses from those in the front range leaned toward a similar or higher expected population growth rate, while the opposite was observed in the southeastern plains region with most expecting a similar or lower growth rate. These perceptions could be reflected in the concerns for land use planning presented in Table 1 and Table 2, where the Front Range and southeastern plains felt more concern about future land use than in other areas. These concerns, however, may come from opposite ends of the spectrum, with the southeastern plains worried about too little activity and the Front Range worried about too much.

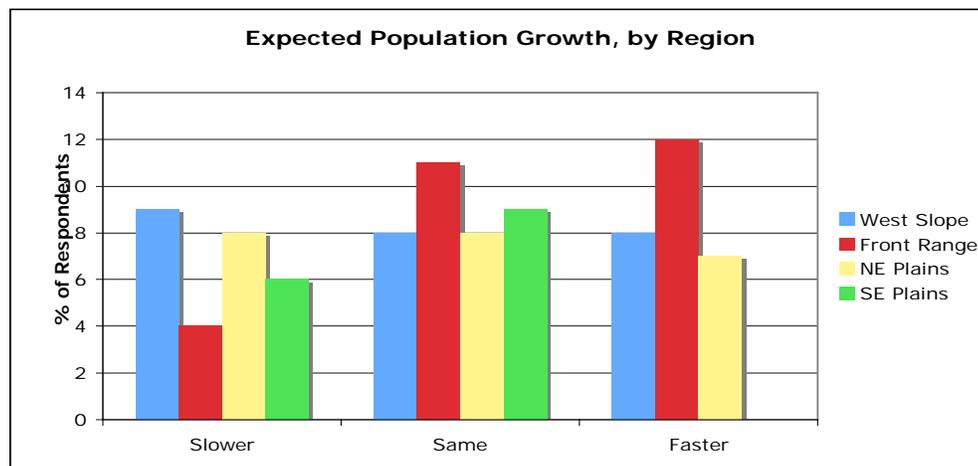


Figure 2: Expected Population Growth, By Region

3.2 Statewide Importance of Different Land Use Issues

A series of questions pertaining to different types of land use issues in the surveyed officials' jurisdictions were asked. The following three charts illustrate the issues perceived to be most important in the respondent's region. Figure 3 shows which issue is of most importance across the entire state of Colorado. Figure 4 breaks the results into the four specific regions. Figure 5 shows a comparison between responses of elected officials and non-elected officials. It is evident that the most important issue to the respondents is water supply for municipal use, a result that was especially prevalent in the northeast plains and on the Front Range. As displayed in Figure 5, water supply is pinned as the highest level of importance for both elected and non-elected officials. Figure 4 shows what different regions saw as the most important land use issue. Municipal water supply was the most important issue for three of the four regions; however, the western slope respondents indicated road infrastructure as their most important issue.

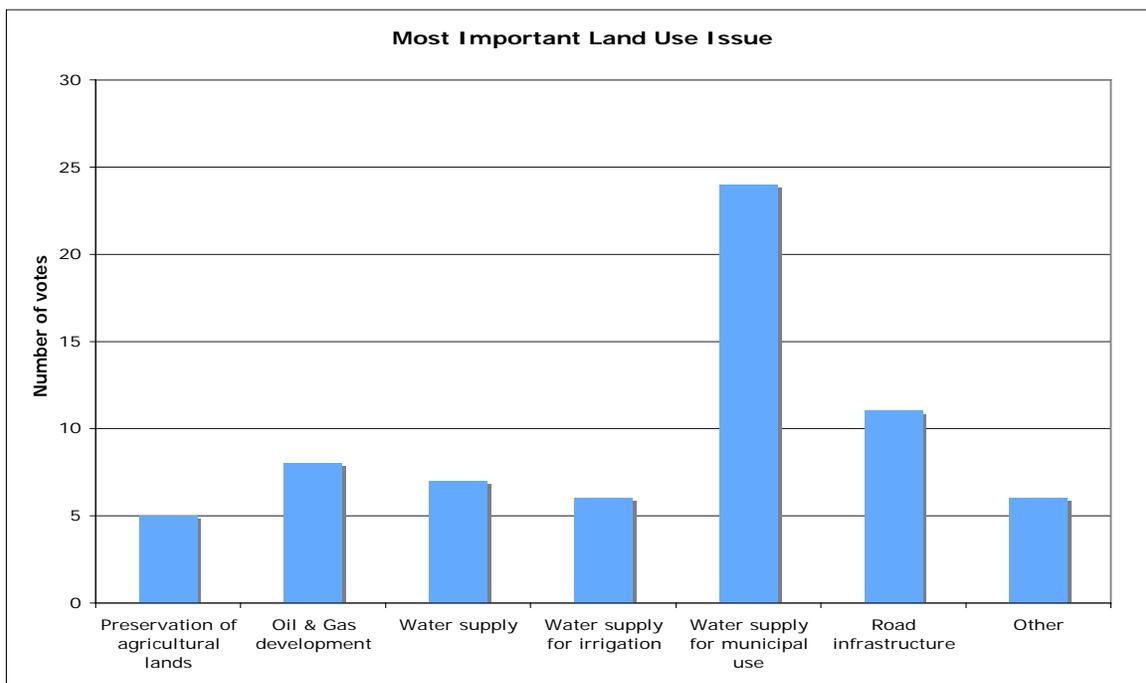


Figure 3: Most Important Land Use Issue, Statewide

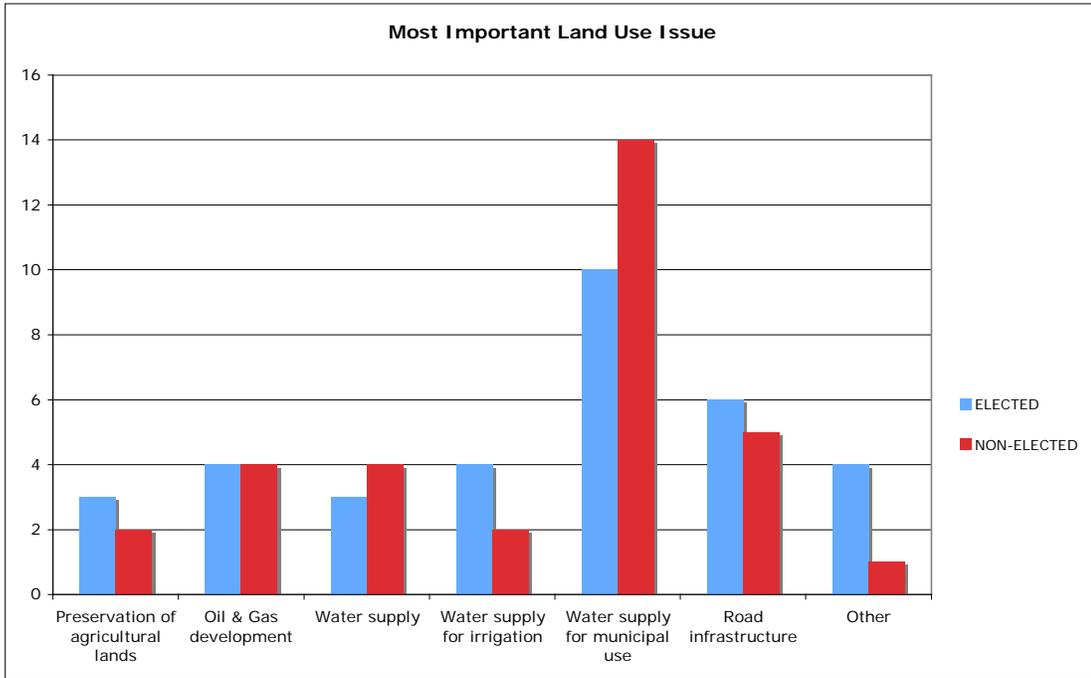


Figure 4: Elected and Non-Elected Officials Most Important Land Use Issues

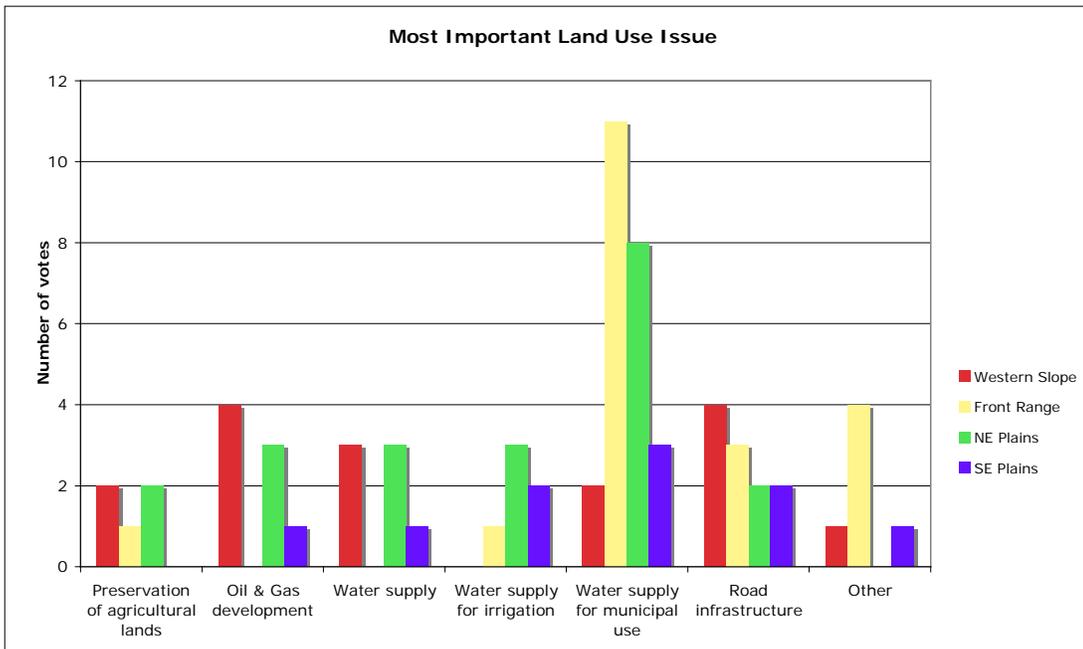


Figure 5: Regional Variation in the Most Important Land Use Issue

The importance of urban sprawl was relatively evenly distributed across all regions. While this land use issue was of slightly higher importance amongst the Front Range respondents, there is not much variation, i.e., it is an important but not a critical issue statewide. The same is true for invasive species and noxious weeds. Statewide, approximately 80% rated it as *somewhat important* or *important*, but only a small percentage rated it as an *extremely important* land use issue. This pattern was repeated in all regions of the state. Road infrastructure was identified as *extremely important* by roughly half of all respondents. Only water for municipal use and irrigation were rated higher.

Table 3 provides additional details on the relative importance of different land use issues to the respondents in the survey. Table 3 illustrates the distribution of responses to all of these issues in terms of how important the respondent felt that a particular issue was on a Likert scale. For example, the figures above did not show federal public land management as the most important issue by any of the respondents; however, looking at row g in Table 3, one can see that while federal public land management was least important to nearly one-third of the sample, it was important or extremely important to over 46%. A portion of this difference is due to the relatively lower level of importance in cities along the I-25 corridor (where only 33% said the issue was *important* or *extremely important* there), while it is either *important* or *extremely important* to 90% of respondents from the western slope.

**Table 3:
Statewide Relative Importance of Different Land Use Issues**

Land Use Issues	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Extremely Important	Total
a) Percentage of land in agriculture	20.6%	26.8%	24.7%	27.8%	100.0%
b) Preservation of agricultural lands	9.3%	22.7%	37.1%	30.9%	100.0%
c) Fragmentation of agricultural lands	20.7%	28.3%	32.6%	18.5%	100.0%
d) Urban sprawl	22.9%	34.4%	22.9%	19.8%	100.0%
e) (Renewable) energy development	12.5%	37.5%	32.3%	17.7%	100.0%
f) Oil & gas development	18.6%	15.5%	29.9%	36.1%	100.0%
g) Federal public land management	31.6%	22.1%	27.4%	18.9%	100.0%
h) Water supply for irrigation	9.3%	9.3%	29.9%	51.5%	100.0%
i) Water supply for municipal use	3.1%	5.2%	31.3%	60.4%	100.0%
j) Invasive species/noxious weed management and prevention	5.2%	35.1%	46.4%	13.4%	100.0%
k) Road infrastructure (highway capacity, etc.)	2.1%	8.3%	38.5%	51.0%	100.0%
l) Public transit within or between communities	27.8%	26.8%	26.8%	18.6%	100.0%
m) Access to broadband internet	8.4%	17.9%	44.2%	29.5%	100.0%

3.3 Opinions about Appropriateness of Land Allocated to Alternative Uses

This sub-section explores results from questions asked about the allocation of land to different uses. Surveyed individuals were asked several questions on the topic of land use allocation, including questions about the allocation of land to different uses and the most important community opportunities.

Table 4 presents respondents' views regarding the appropriateness of the amount of land allocated to seven different uses in their jurisdiction. Other than for retail and residential development, very few respondents thought *too much* land was allocated to the different uses. The main category identified as receiving *too little* allocation in the respondent's community or county was high-tech development, where over 57% thought *too little* land was being devoted to that use. This was followed by business park development and light manufacturing development, which were essentially tied as the second category having *too little* land allocated to those uses. Agricultural development was the land use identified by the vast majority (86%) as being *about right*.

Table 4:
Opinions about Amount of Land Allocated to Alternative Uses

Allocation of Land	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Total
a. Industrial development	30.1%	68.8%	1.1%	100.0%
b. Retail development	29.3%	60.9%	9.8%	100.0%
c. High-tech development	57.3%	40.4%	2.2%	100.0%
d. Business park/professional development	46.2%	52.7%	1.1%	100.0%
e. Light manufacturing	42.9%	56.0%	1.1%	100.0%
f. Agricultural development	11.8%	86.0%	2.2%	100.0%
g. Residential development	8.5%	72.3%	19.1%	100.0%

Figure 6 illustrates the officials' perceptions of the single most important issue out of the list of land uses in Table 4. Retail development was identified as the most important issue, and especially important on the western slope and in the northeastern plains. In essence, retail development have been seen as an attainable land use that would generate significant revenue in the form of sales taxes. In addition, the west slope and northeastern plains may have felt underserved by their own retail stores, and as such many residents may be going to other regions to shop with the loss of sales tax to their home regions. In the southeastern plains, those surveyed were most concerned that there may be a lack of agricultural development.

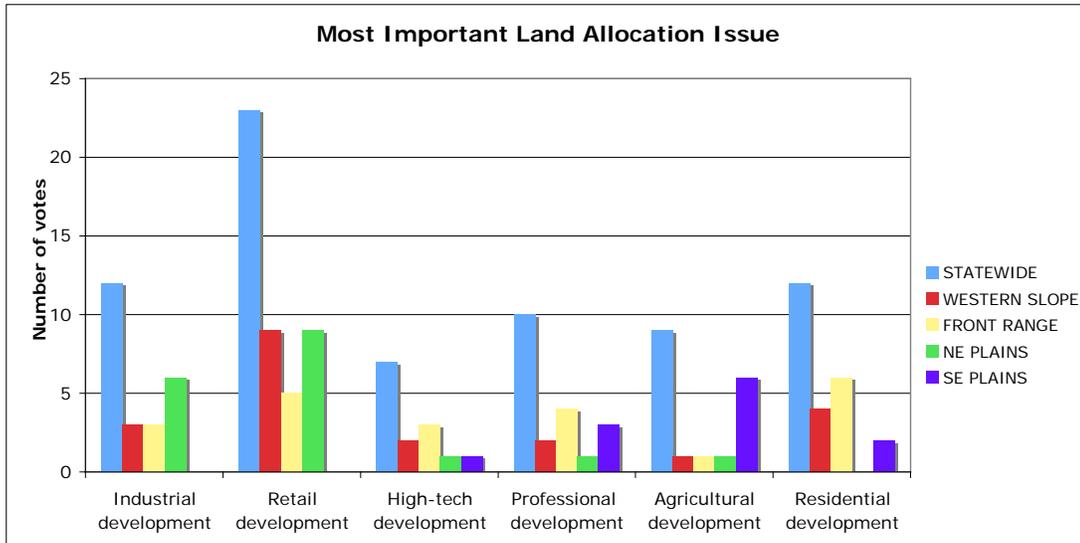


Figure 6: Most Important Land Allocation Issue, By Region

Table 5 presents results on the relative importance of different tourism and amenity-related developments in the survey participants' communities. Combining the categories of *important* and *extremely important*, three amenities were seen to be of high importance to the respondents: public parks for active recreation (89%); hosting major events (89%); and main street beautification (81%). However, at least 40% of respondents felt all potential amenity related investments were *important* or *extremely important*. When focusing only on the responses with the highest level of importance - the *extremely important* category - the respondents saw hosting major events, such as cycling races and rodeos, along with providing biking/jogging trails most often as *extremely important* (48% and 37%, respectively).

Figure 7 demonstrates the results from the question asking respondents to identify the single most important opportunity for growth in their area. When asked to identify this, most people indicated main street beautification as the most important need, while hosting major events came in second. Open space and public parks were the next most important opportunities that the surveyed officials felt should be pursued.

Figure 8 illustrates the variation across the four regions of the state about which issue that officials felt was most important. In the northeastern plains, main street beautification was seen as the most important investment opportunity, while hosting major events was found to be the most important in the western slope. When asked to identify the single most important opportunity, biking and jogging trails were uniformly the least important, despite having been seen as important or extremely important by two thirds of officials who completed the survey. Where open land is more scarce, specifically on the Front Range, open space was seen as the single most important land use issue among respondents to the survey.

**Table 5:
Importance of Different County and Community Opportunities**

County/Community Opportunities	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Extremely Important	Total
a. Agritourism	33.3%	22.2%	29.6%	14.8%	100.0%
b. Establishing or expanding farmers markets	18.5%	22.2%	44.4%	14.8%	100.0%
c. Eco-tourism	14.8%	44.4%	29.6%	11.1%	100.0%
d. Resort developments	22.2%	25.9%	25.9%	25.9%	100.0%
e. Main Street beautification	0.0%	18.5%	48.1%	33.3%	100.0%
f. Pedestrian malls	37.0%	14.8%	33.3%	14.8%	100.0%
g. Hosting major events (cycling race, rodeo)	0.0%	11.1%	40.7%	48.1%	100.0%
h. Public parks for active recreation (sports field)	3.7%	7.4%	55.6%	33.3%	100.0%
i. Public parks for passive recreation (flower garden, art in public parks)	7.4%	29.6%	48.1%	14.8%	100.0%
j. Community recreation facilities (swimming pool)	11.1%	25.9%	44.4%	18.5%	100.0%
k. Open space and/or community separators	11.1%	22.2%	40.7%	25.9%	100.0%
l. Water-based recreation	7.4%	29.6%	37.0%	25.9%	100.0%
m. Biking/jogging trails	7.4%	25.9%	29.6%	37.0%	100.0%

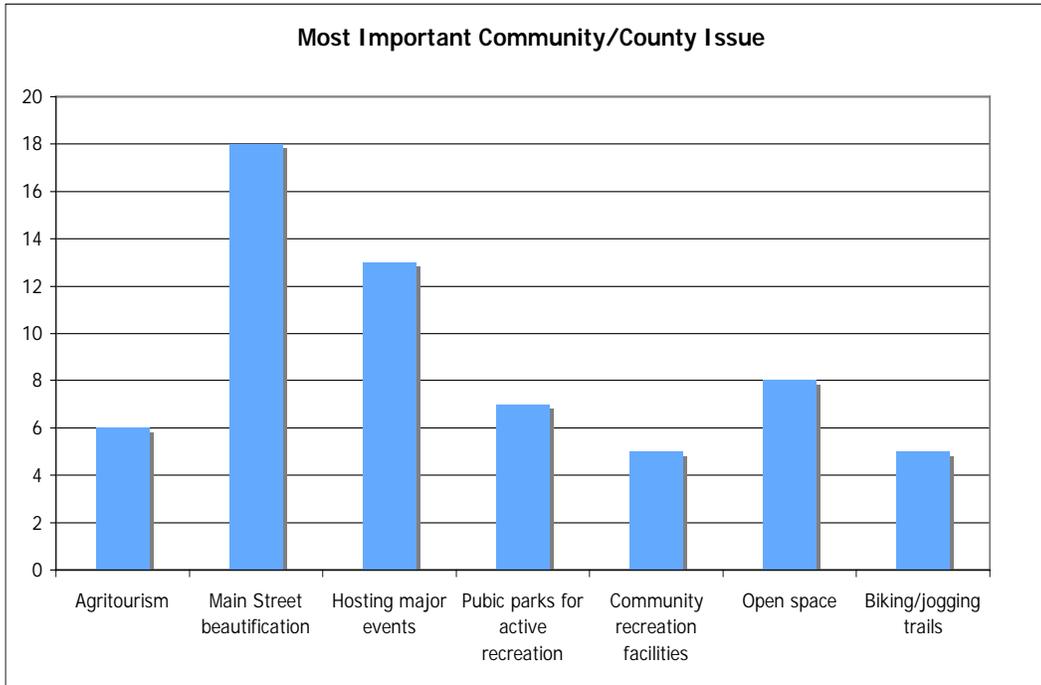


Figure 7: Single Most Important Community Opportunity

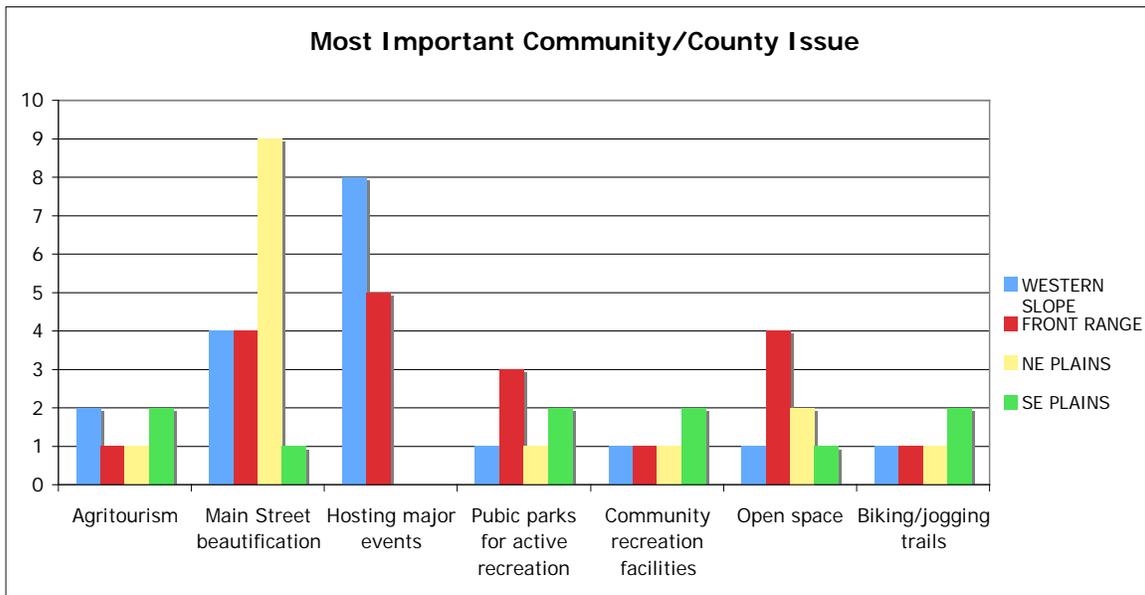


Figure 8: Most Important Community Opportunities, By Region

3.4 Respondent Estimates of Recreational Needs

The survey included selected questions about the perceptions from sampled officials about recreational availability and needs in their regions. It also asked a question about financing these facilities.

The officials in all four regions responded positively to the question about whether there was adequate access to the general recreational facilities in their regions. The lowest score of 40%, was in the Southeast Plains. The recreational needs results indicated that respondents generally felt that current policy and availability of recreation-based community amenities is about right. In Table 6, the statewide responses referring to the officials’ sense of additional amenities needed, ranged from 22 – 52% for most of the community facilities listed (sports facilities, playgrounds, etc.). Except for biking and jogging trails, no more than a third of respondents thought these needs were very significant. Biking/jogging trails raised the most interest as “a need” in the Southeast Plains and Front Range, where over half of the officials from both areas thought better facilities were needed for this amenity (67% and 55% respectively).

At the same time, receptiveness to new or additional taxes was relatively low (by region in Tables 6, 7) with the Front Range considerably higher than others at 54%, nearly double the next highest. Exposure to high quality recreation resources along the (urban corridor) of the Front Range and fee structures to support resources might explain the disparity.

**Table 6:
Respondent Estimates of Recreational Needs, Region and Overall**

Recreation Needs	Western Slope	Front Range	NE Plains	SE Plains	Overall State
Is there adequate access to recreational facilities in your area? ⁴	72.0%	59.3%	56.5%	40.0%	58.9%
Does your community need:					
Sport facilities	24.0%	37.9%	21.7%	46.7%	31.5%
Public playground	8.0%	31.0%	17.4%	33.3%	21.7%
Biking/jogging trails	48.0%	55.2%	39.1%	66.7%	51.1%
Community swimming pool	24.0%	27.6%	30.4%	46.7%	30.4%
Parks	24.0%	41.4%	8.7%	20.0%	25.0%
Greenways, nature preserves	20.0%	27.6%	21.7%	20.0%	22.8%
Would voters in your area approve tax increases to have these facilities provided?	32.0%	54.0%	23.8%	6.7%	32.0%

⁴ Percent indicates the percent who responded YES to the question: Is there adequate access to recreational facilities in your area?

Table 7 shows little difference between responses of elected and non-elected respondents, with an exception in regard to community swimming pools and parks. Elected officials reported a need for better access to community swimming pools (41%), while non-elected officials see less of a need, at about half of that amount (21%). Conversely, elected officials see little need for additional park space (18%) but non-elected officials suggest a need nearly two times that of elected officials (31%).

**Table 7:
Respondent Estimates of Recreational Needs, Elected and Non-elected Officials**

Recreation Needs	Elected Officials	Non elected Officials
Is there adequate access to recreational facilities in your area?	60.5%	57.4%
Does your community need:		
Sport facilities	36.4%	27.1%
Public playground	22.7%	20.8%
Biking/jogging trails	47.7%	54.2%
Community swimming pool	40.9%	20.8%
Parks	18.2%	31.3%
Greenways, nature preserves	27.3%	18.8%
Would voters in your area approve tax increases to have these facilities provided?	34.1%	30.0%

3.5 Prevalence of Impact Fees and Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs)

Impact Fees. Table 8 provides a review of the extent to which impact fees exist in Colorado. Impact fees are payments by developers to a city or county government to (partially) pay for some of the infrastructure costs of the new development (e.g., upgrades/expansion of water treatment and sewage plants), and to provide services (e.g., police, fire, schools) to the new developments. With the exception of the Southeastern Plains, more than half of those surveyed indicated the presence of impact fees in their area. Slightly over half of the officials who answered “YES” to the existence of impact fees also indicated that they had been raised or lowered in the last ten years. As answers to the question about using ballot issues to raise fees indicate an anti-tax sentiment seems present in the state of Colorado. Beyond responses to the yes/no questions presented in Table 8, several open-ended questions were also asked. Most responses about failed ballot issues mentioned either that people are anti-tax or brought up the poor economy - or both. Lack of public understanding and general apathy were also pointed out as potential reasons for failed tax increases. For about half of the failed increases, officials noted that the funds would have been invested in local schools, public safety or a recreation center.

Taxes and impact fees are issues that appear to remain heavily disputed and difficult topics for both elected and non-elected officials working in local government.

**Table 8:
Prevalence and Experience with Impact Fees, Region and Overall (Percentage Yes)**

	Western Slope	Front Range	NE Plains	SE Plains	Overall State
Do you have impact fees in your jurisdiction?	72.0%	65.5%	68.2%	8.3%	60.2%
Have impact fees been raised or lowered in the last ten years in your jurisdiction?	63.2%	70.0%	60.0%	20.0%	61.0%
Have you had ballot issues to raise impact fees that have failed in your jurisdiction?	52.0%	64.3%	56.5%	71.4%	60.0%

Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs). On average, approximately ninety percent of respondents indicated that they had Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) in their jurisdictions. This was somewhat lower for the Southeastern Plains, at 65%, while more than 95% of the respondents from the Northeastern Plains and Western Slope regions stated that IGAs exist in their region. Most IGAs were between a county and cities or towns within the county, although some mentioned that they existed between neighboring counties or towns. Respondents from the Western Slope mentioned fire protection, Bureau of Land Management, and planning and zoning issues as the focus of existing agreements. In the I-25 corridor, IGAs seem to be more focused on land use, growth management, and water services. The types of IGAs in the Northeastern Plains varied across the board, from sanitation districts to ambulance and jail services. Fire protection was mentioned by a few respondents from the Southeastern Plains, as was law enforcement. As the types of IGAs show, issues of public safety, fire protection, and land use seem to be of importance to the people of Colorado. - as the IGAs show. The answers also indicate that it is typical to see cooperation between county and city governments on several differing issues.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In general, respondents to the survey indicated that they are satisfied with current land use and planning in their respective areas. At the same time, about two-thirds of the respondents expressed concern about future land use policy and planning in their area. Respondents who answered ‘YES’ to living in a rural area were nearly all concerned about preserving the rural character of their town, city, or county. Across the state, respondents ranked water supply for municipal and agricultural uses as the most prevalent issue facing Colorado with respect to issues of land use. The general attitude toward the allocation of land to alternative uses was that it is ‘about right’ on most accounts, although some felt too little high-tech development existed. When asked about the importance of different tourism and amenity-related developments in their areas, respondents tended to favor parks for active recreation and hosting major events as the most important. While respondents from the Southeastern Plains indicated that their community or area lacked adequate access to recreation facilities, they also almost all felt that the citizens

would vote no on increasing taxes to fund an increase in the number of facilities. Although Front Range respondents were least averse to the idea of an increase in taxes to fund recreation facilities, the anti-tax sentiment remained high among all types of respondents. This fact was also apparent in responses to the question about impact fees.

A survey of the general public would complement the response to the questions presented here, and may produce different results. Anti-tax sentiments would likely remain the same in a survey of the general public. Community discussion could be needed as a next step in determining the general public's perception of the pressing issues tied to land use in the state of Colorado - especially at a more local level.

Possible next steps in this research process would be to review our results with stakeholders and CSU faculty for further ideas and suggestions, in particular related to the types of support that CSU can provide to counties and cities in Colorado. A survey of citizens' opinions that could be compared with the findings of our survey of city, county, and town government officials might also be a logical next step in this process, should funding for completing such a survey become available.

APPENDIX A1

Counties Sampled and Received Responses from by Extension Region and Front Range/I-25 Corridor

West Slope	Front Range	Northeast	Southeast
Eagle	Adams	Logan	Alamosa
Grand	Arapahoe	Weld	Baca
La Plata	Boulder	Yuma	Cheyenne
Mesa	Douglas		Conejos
Montrose	El Paso		Costilla
Rio Blanco	Larimer		Las Animas
Routt	Pueblo		

Appendix A2. Questionnaire

Thanks again for completing this survey!

If you have any additional comments or thoughts about any of the topics or the survey itself, please share them in the space provided.

College of Agricultural Sciences
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado



Land Uses and the Future of Colorado

Help Colorado State University Understand Your Needs



College of Agricultural Sciences
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado



1. Are you answering the survey as someone primarily concerned with issues facing
(check all that apply):

Town level City level County level State level

2. Are you satisfied with current land use in your area (town, city, county)?

Yes No

3. Are you satisfied with the current land use planning in your area ?

Yes No

4. Are you concerned with future land use in your area ?

Yes No

5. Do you live in a rural area? (If No, please skip to question #7)

Yes No

6. Is it important to the people living in this area that the rural character be preserved?

Yes No

7. If nothing about your area changes within the next ten years, at what rate do you expect population to grow?

Faster Unchanged Slower

8. Are there impact fees in your area? (If No, please skip to question #10)

Yes No

9. Have impact fees in your area been raised or lowered in the last 10 years?

Yes No

10. Have you had ballot issues to raise taxes that have failed? (If No, please skip to question #13)

Yes No

The following questions are to help us analyze the survey responses by level of government and type of position you have. Only averages will be reported and you will not be identified in any way. All answers are completely confidential and will be used only when aggregated into the four regions.

1. Are you? Male Female

2. In what year were you born? _____

3. How many years have you lived in your area (town, city, county)? _____

4. What is the zip code of your primary residence? _____

5. What is your full-time occupation (planner, accountant, official, etc.)?

6. How many years have you been in your current position? _____

7. Are you an elected official?

Yes No

8. Do you work for the government? (If No, please skip to question #10)

Yes No

9. At what level of government do you work?

Municipal County Other

10. What is your highest level of formal education? *Please check one*

- Elementary School
- Jr. high or middle school
- High School
- College or Technical School
- Graduate or Professional School

11. If you have a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate degree, in what subject your highest degree? _____

4. Please indicate the level of importance in your community. *Please check one box for each item.*

Community/County Opportunities	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Extremely Important
a. Agritourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Establishing or expanding farmers markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Eco-tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Resort developments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Main Street beautification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Pedestrian malls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Hosting major events (cycling race, rodeo)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Public parks for active recreation (sports field)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Public parks for passive recreation (flower garden, art in public parks)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Community recreation facilities (swimming pool)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Open space and/or community separators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Water-based recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Biking/jogging trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Other (Please list: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.a. Which one of the above is the single most important issue ?

Please write the corresponding letter from question 3 above _____

11. If Yes, please explain briefly why you think they failed?

12. What was the subject/purpose of the ballot issue? (e.g. schools, roads, etc.)

13. Do you have Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with neighboring counties and towns?

Yes No

13.b. If Yes, who are your IGAs with? Please describe what management issues are covered in your IGAs.

14. Do you feel there is adequate access to recreational facilities in your area?

Yes No

15. What type of recreational facilities do you think your community needs? (*Check all that apply*)

- Sports facilities
- Public playground
- Biking/jogging trails
- Community swimming pool
- Parks
- Greenways, nature preserves
- Other (elaborate: _____)

16. Do you think people in your area would pay additional taxes to have these facilities provided?

Yes No

1. Please indicate the level of importance in your community. *Please check one box for each item.*

Land Use Issues	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Extremely Important
a. Percentage of land in agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Preservation of agricultural lands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Fragmentation of agricultural lands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Urban sprawl	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. (Renewable) energy development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Oil & gas development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Federal public land management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Water supply for irrigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Water supply for municipal use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Invasive species/noxious weed management and prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Road infrastructure (highway capacity, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Public transit within or between communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Access to broadband internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Other (Please list: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.a. Which one of the above is the single most important issue?

Please write the corresponding letter from question 1 above. _____

2. Please indicate your opinion about the amount of land allocated to the following uses. *Please check one box for each item.*

Allocation of land	Too Little	About Right	Too Much
a. Industrial development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Retail development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. High-tech development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Business park/professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Light manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Agricultural development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Residential development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Other (Please list: _____)			

2.a. Which one of the above is the single most important issue?

Please write the corresponding letter from question 2 above. _____

3. Do you have local land use issues that we could use as an example or case study that illustrates either a "Best Practice" or "Lesson Learned"? *Please outline below.*
