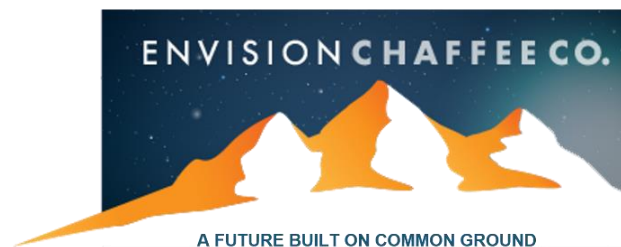


Rural Clean Air Open Space Population Natural Scenery
Small Town Wildlife Recreation Public Lands
River Trails Community Climate
Mountains Quiet Outdoor Location Beauty Hiking
Friendly Safe Weather

Envision Chaffee County

Community Survey Results & Assessment – Executive Summary

November 6, 2017





Community Survey Results & Assessment November 6, 2017

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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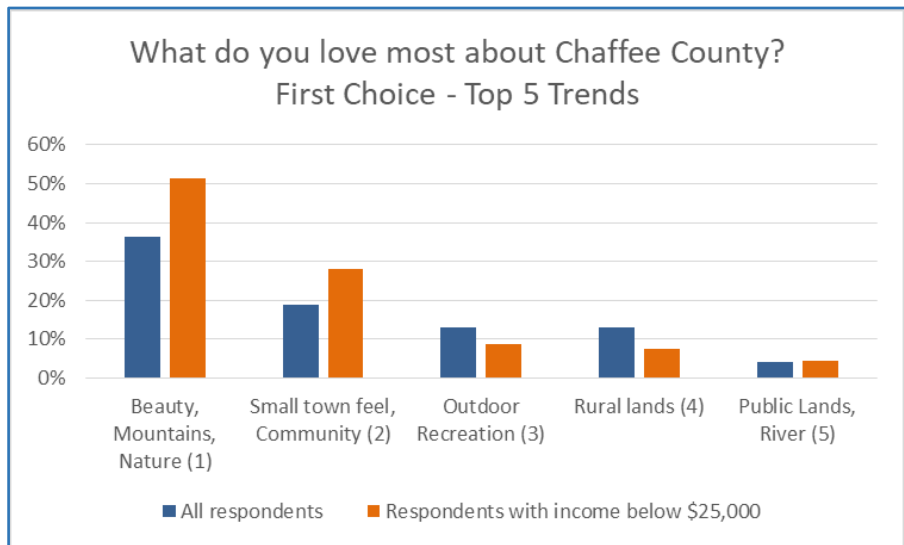
I. What do Chaffee County residents value most?

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):

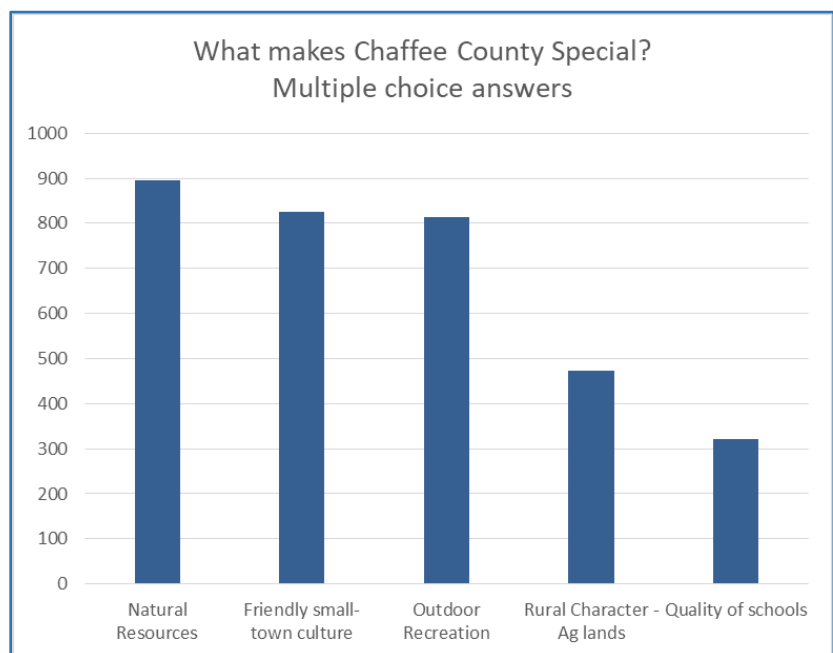
Mountains Beauty Outdoors Community Natural Small Town

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:

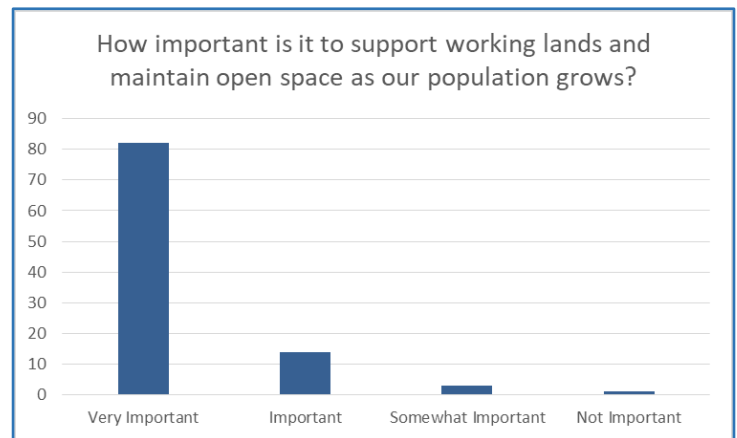
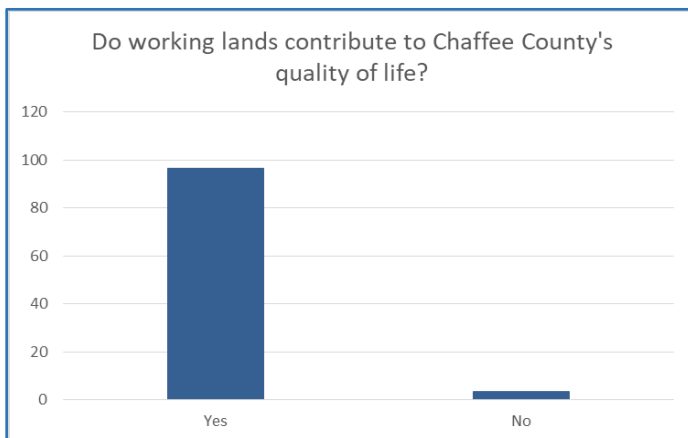
Caring Friendly Welcoming Involved Slow-paced Not crowded

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**





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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:

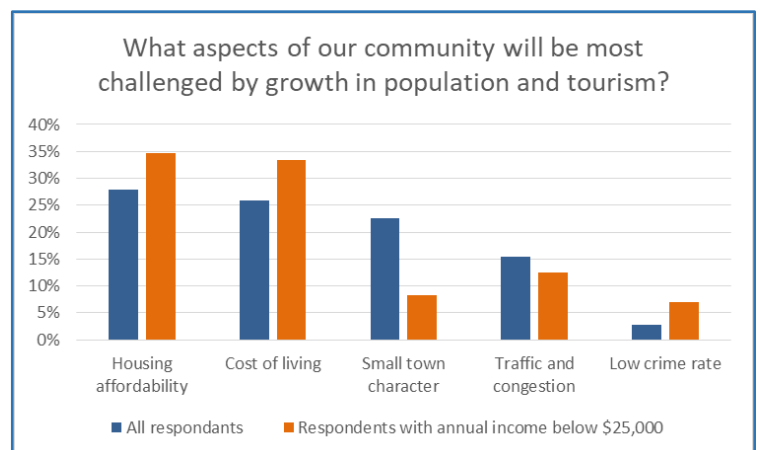
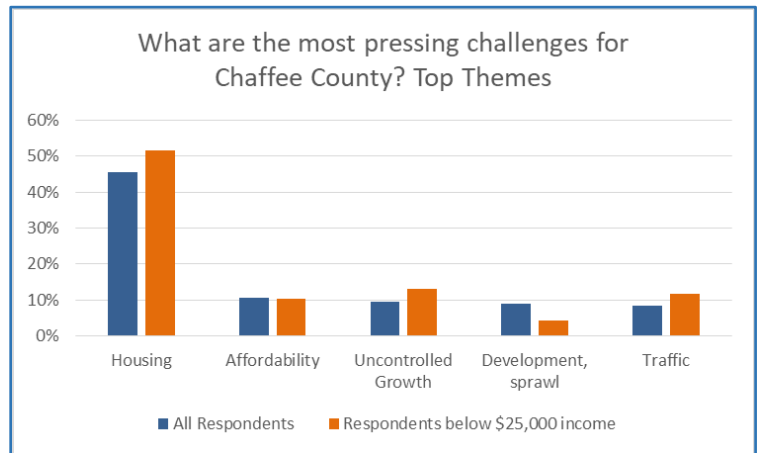
Housing (with 40% of responses)
Traffic Growth Cost Jobs Land Water

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.

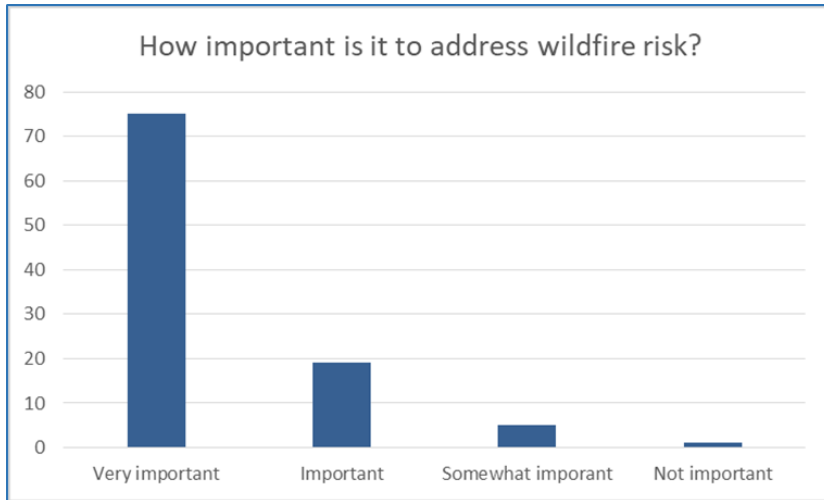
Concerns about housing affordability, rising cost of living and traffic are reinforced by multiple choice responses in Question #9. Responses here also identify loss of small town character as a top 5 concern, especially for people with annual household incomes greater than \$25,000.





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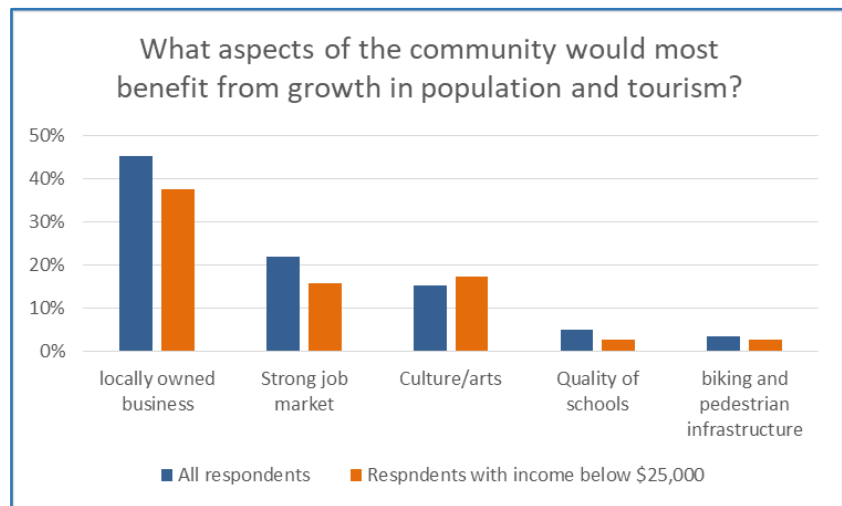
With growth, the potential impact of wildfire increases as development increases, especially at our public lands interfaces. At the same time, rapidly advancing beetle infestation in our forest is increasing the risks posed by wildfire. When asked “how important do you think it is for our community to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



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.



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.