

Survey of Public Opinion Regarding a Library District

To Inform Consideration Of Conversion To An Independent Library District

November 21, 2022

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Introduction

Section 1

Purpose of the Survey

The City of Durango and La Plata County have decided to examine the future operating structure of the Durango Public Library and consider the formation of an independent library district pursuant to the enabling language of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. 24-90-107). This survey has been commissioned to inform that examination and contains the results of a survey of public opinion of the voters and residents of the City of Durango and affected areas of La Plata County.

About the Survey

This survey was conducted in September and October 2022 by telephone, electronic and in-person questionnaires. The survey focused on both registered voters of the affected portion of La Plata County as well as residents and visitors of the City of Durango. The survey team obtained 457 responses including 231 in-person and 226 through telephone and electronic means. The La Plata County Elections Office has advised that there are approximately 25,900 registered voters in the affected area. Given the number of registered voters and responses obtained, this survey has a margin of error of +/- 5%.

About the Survey Team

Public Advisory Group is headquartered in Ketchum, Idaho, and provides local government agencies access to high-quality professional services. Our team of former public agency officials understands the operating environment for local government entities. Within that framework, we craft unique solutions to challenging issues for communities. Our team has extensive experience analyzing the creation of special purpose taxing districts and supporting such entities after inception.

Executive Summary

Section 2

This survey of public opinion is intended to inform conversations between the City of Durango and La Plata County regarding future operations of the Durango Public Library and whether to pursue an independent library district. Based on the responses received, the following observations are made.

Observations

- The Durango Public Library is viewed positively in the community relative to other public agencies and services, an opinion that likely increases the opportunities for community support and approval of an independent library district.
- The community appears to favor the creation of an independent library district to support the Durango Public Library.

Analysis

Public Advisory Group has provided public opinion surveys for public agencies across the nation on a variety of issues. When evaluating the public support for a ballot measure, it is rare to achieve more than 60% support during initial surveys; this is especially true of initiatives that have not benefited from a public engagement campaign. The high level of community support for creation of an independent library district exhibited by the survey respondents is unique and indicates that a potential ballot measure may be successful. Moreover, the support was broad-based across all demographic measurements (e.g. age, education, gender and income). The additional consideration of the high levels of familiarity and favorability for the Durango Public Library indicate that the library may be uniquely positioned in the public conscience; further supporting the pursuit of an independent library district.

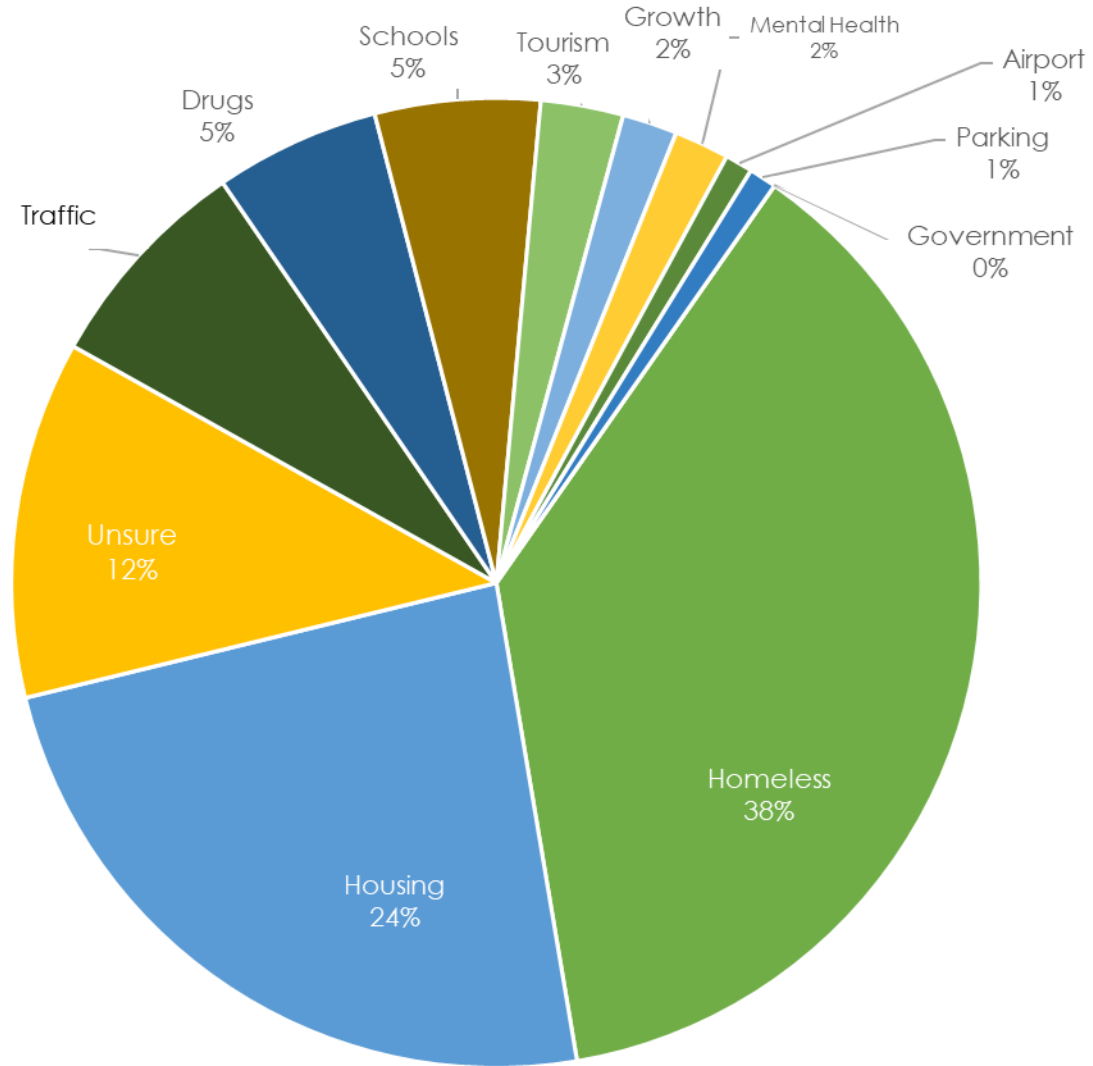
Survey Results

Section 3

The results of the survey of public opinion regarding the Durango community's attitude and usage of the Durango Public Library are presented on the following pages.

Given the sample size of the survey, the margin of error for the data presented is +/- 5%.

The Most Important Issue Facing The City of Durango Right Now



Support For a Ballot Question Regarding Creation of a Library District and Levy

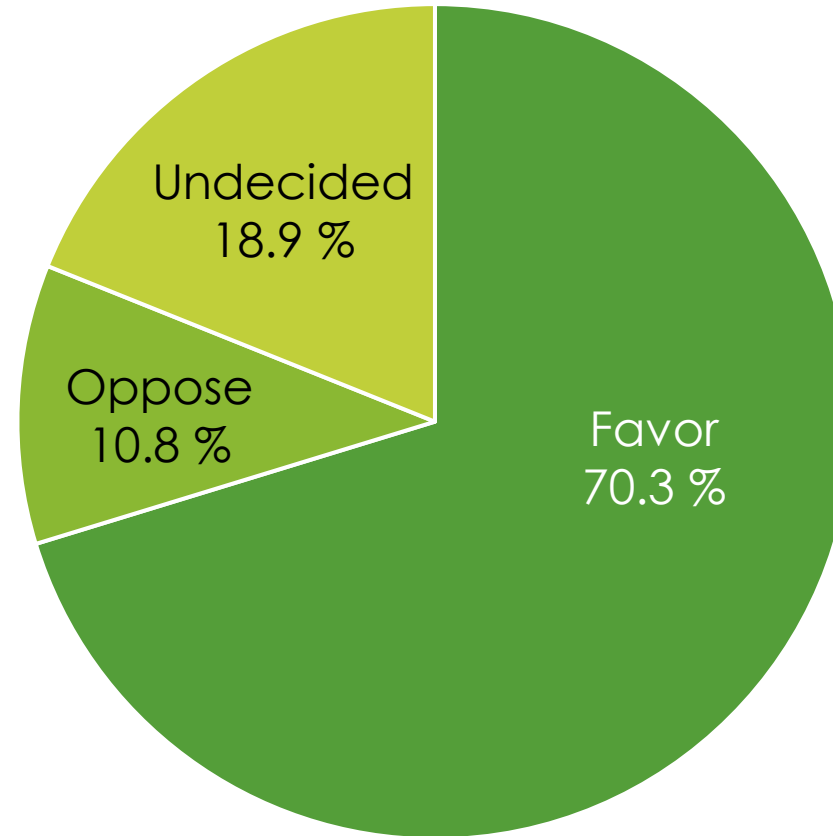
The Durango Public Library is currently funded by a sales tax collected by La Plata County.

However, Colorado state law allows the creation of a library district and related property tax to manage and fund libraries. La Plata County already has three library districts that do not include the City of Durango or Durango Public Library. The operations of the Durango Public Library could be funded by 3.65 mil rate. This tax would be about a \$180 annual property tax increase for the average Durango home with a value of \$700,000.

Would you vote in favor of, or oppose, a ballot initiative to create a new library district to fund the Durango Public Library?

- A. Favor
- B. Oppose
- C. Undecided
- D. Prefer not to answer

Support For a Ballot Question Regarding Creation of a Library District and Levy



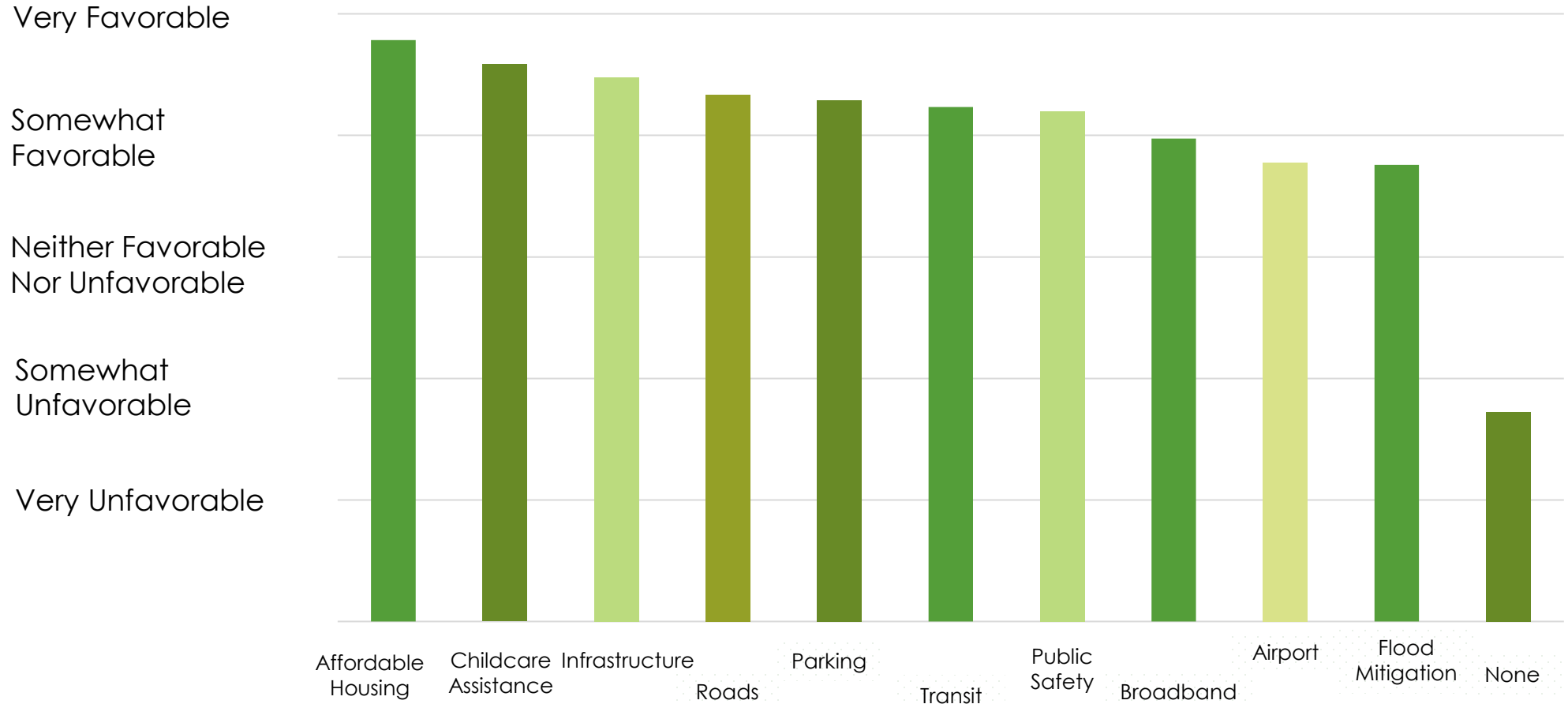
	Likely Voters	Registered Voters	Male	Female
Favor	75.6 %	84.4 %	64.7 %	72.2 %
Oppose	5.5 %	12.5 %	13.7 %	9.3 %
Undecided	20.0 %	3.1 %	21.6 %	18.5 %

What Would Help You Support a Ballot Question Regarding Creation of a Library District and Levy

Three Springs



Opinion Of Certain Alternate Uses of the Library's Portion of the Joint Sales Tax

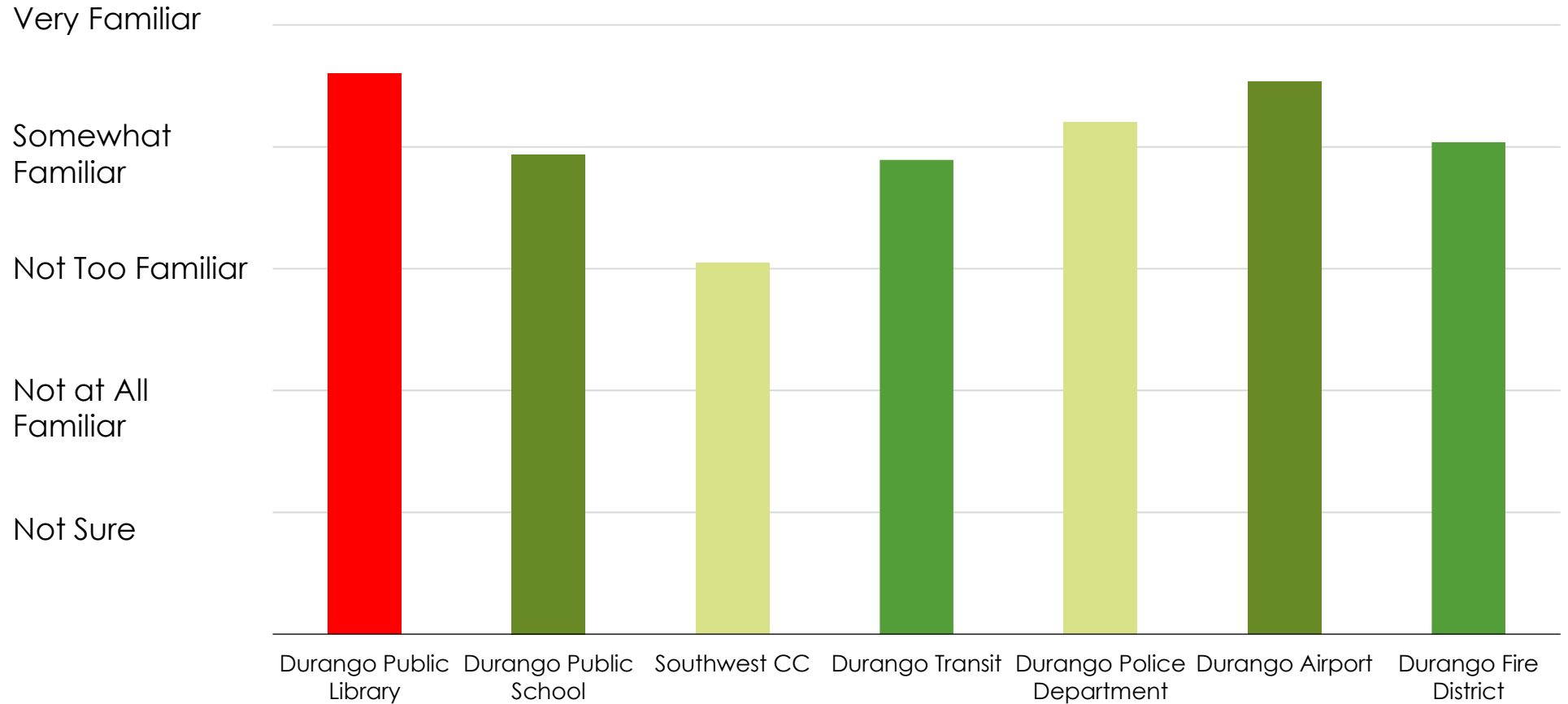


All Responses	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.8	3.8	1.7
Frequent Users	4.8	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.2	3.9	3.6	3.7	1.8
Likely Voters	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	3.7	3.7	1.7

Community Sentiment on Alternate Uses of the Library's Portion of the Joint Sales Tax

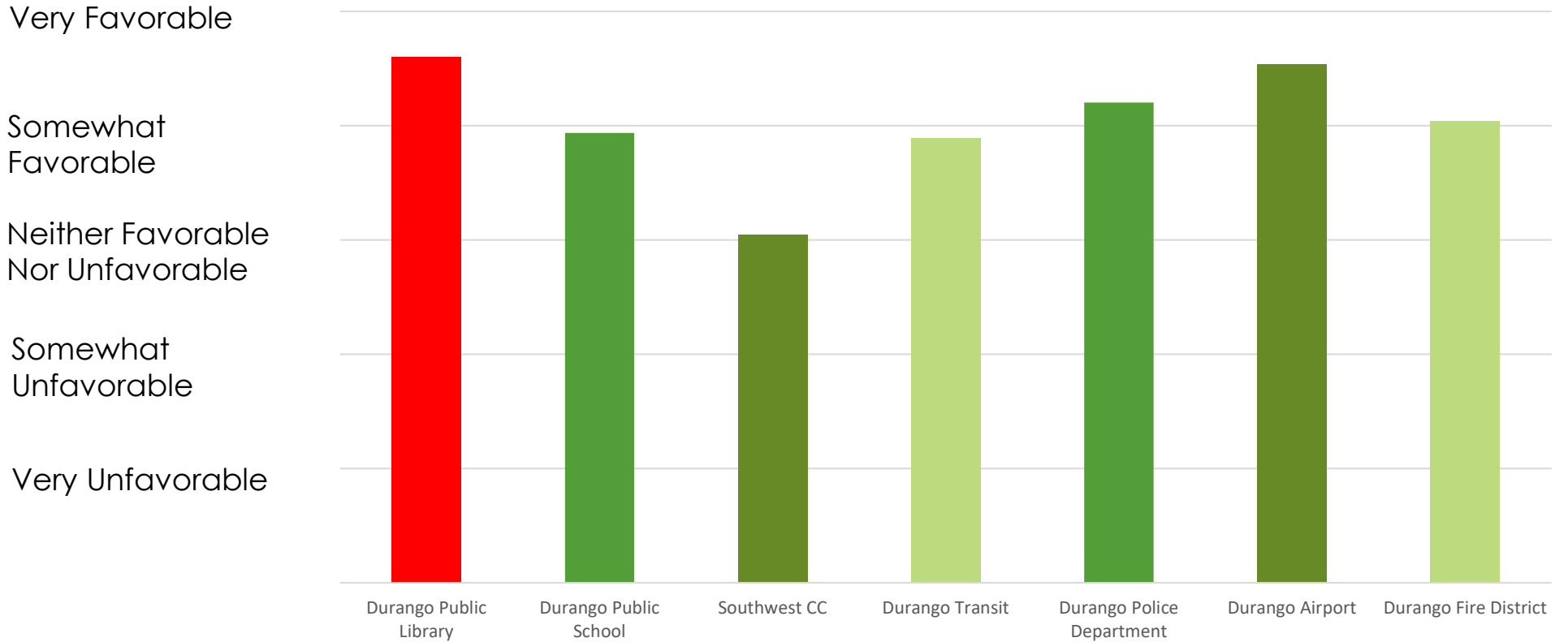


Familiarity With Durango Public Library Relative to Other Public Services



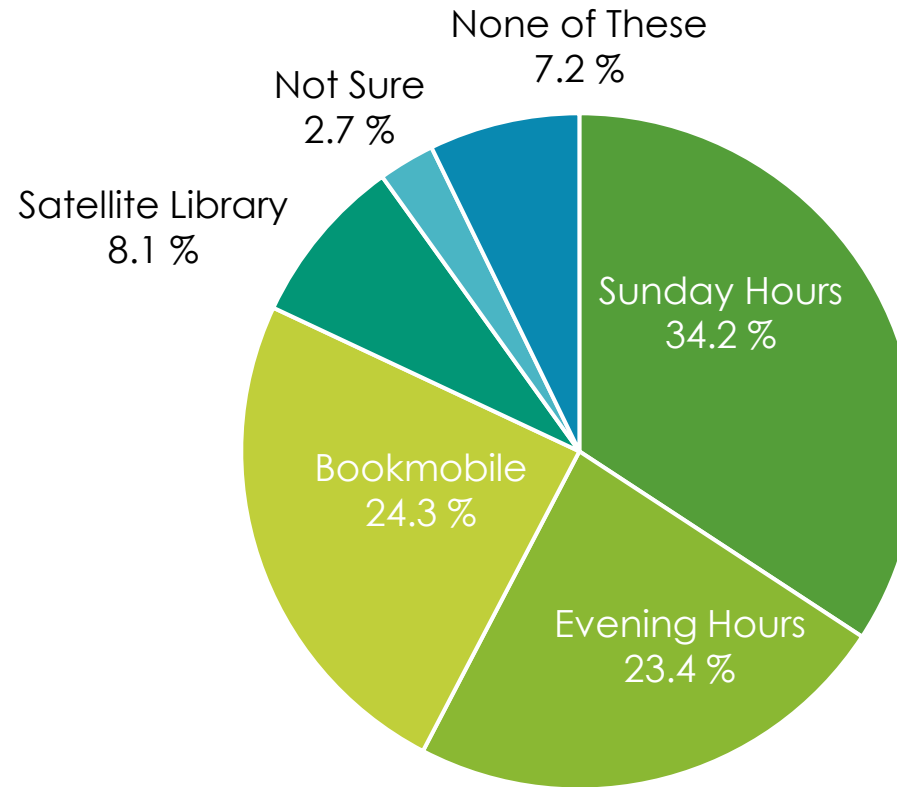
All Responses	4.6	3.9	3.0	3.9	4.2	4.5	4.0
Frequent Users	4.8	4.1	3.1	3.9	4.3	4.5	4.2
Likely Voters	4.7	3.6	3.1	3.9	4.3	4.6	4.2

Opinion Of Durango Public Library Relative to Other Public Services



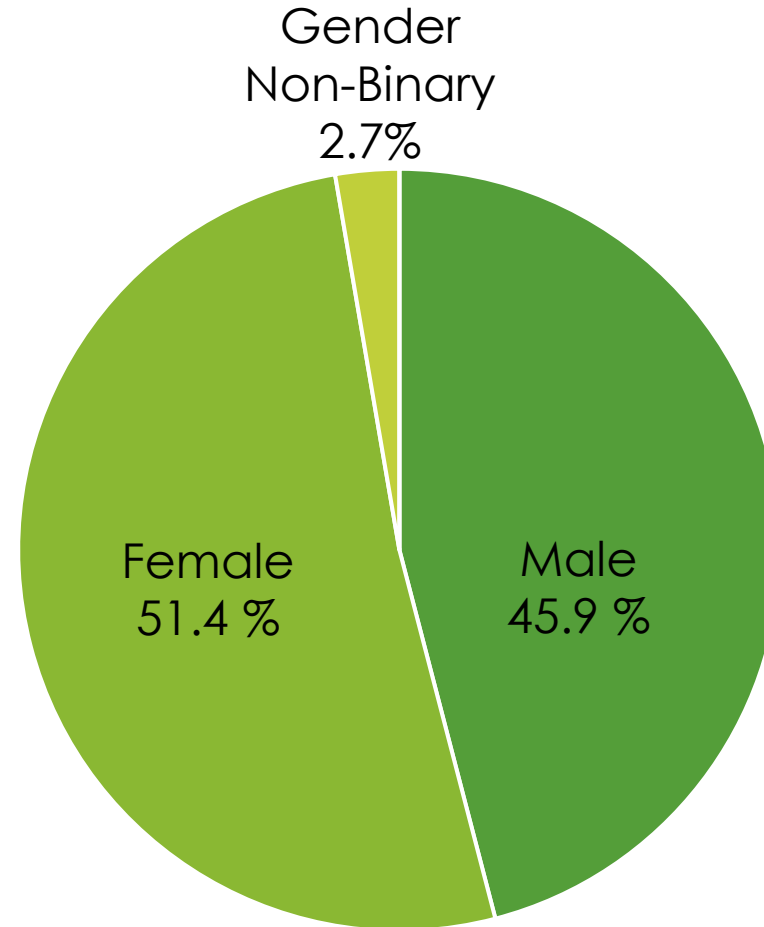
All Responses	4.8	4.0	3.8	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.6
Frequent Users	4.9	4.0	3.8	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.6
Likely Voters	4.8	4.1	3.8	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.7

Preference for Expanded Library Services



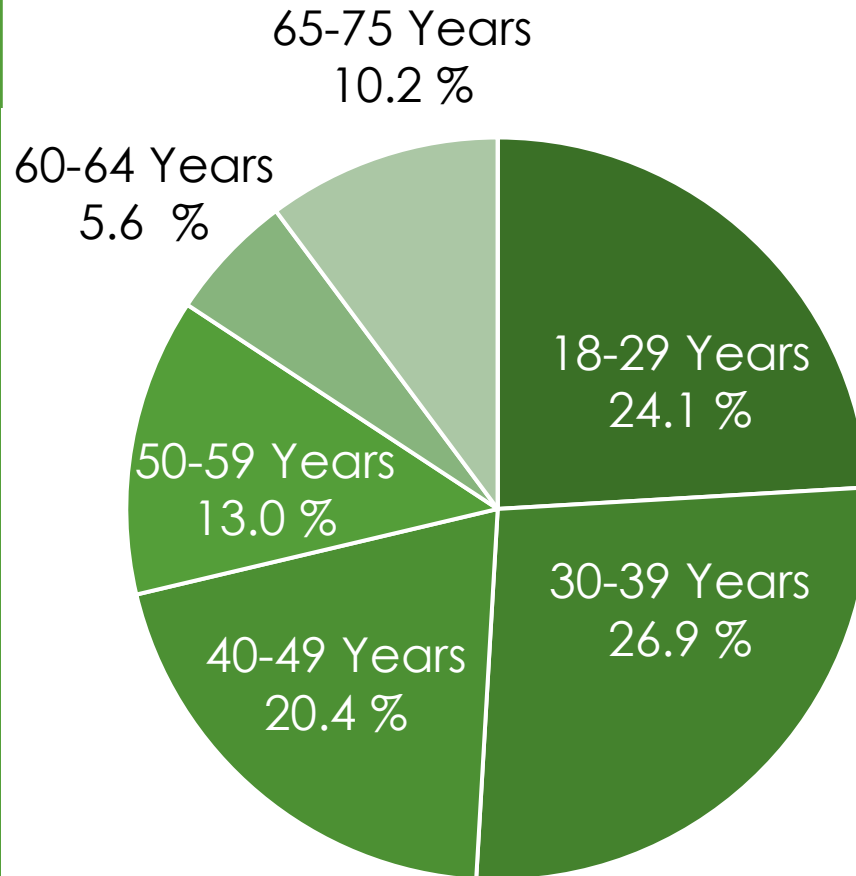
	Sunday Hours	Evening Hours	Bookmobile	Satellite Library	None of These	Not Sure
All Responses	34.2 %	23.4 %	24.3 %	8.1 %	7.2 %	2.7 %
Frequent Users	37.8 %	22.2 %	25.6 %	8.9 %	4.4 %	1.1 %
Likely Voters	41.5 %	25.6 %	22.0 %	7.3 %	3.6 %	0.0 %

The Survey Respondents Represent the Community

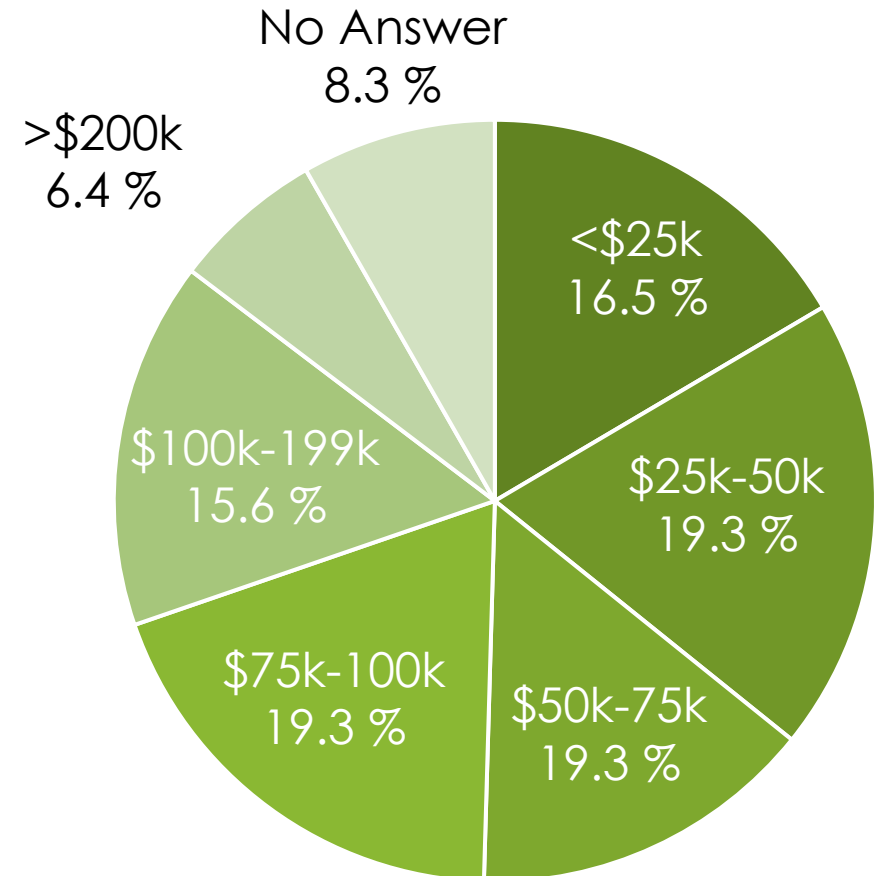


According to the American Community Survey, the Durango CCD is 49% Male and 51% Female.

The Survey Respondents Represent the Community



According to the ACS, 20.3% of the community is 18-29 years old; 15% is 30-39; 12.6% is 40-49; 13.8% is 50-59, 6.2% is 60-64; and 11.6% is 65-75 years old.



According to the ACS, 13% of households earn less than \$25,000; 38% between \$25,000 and \$49,999; 21% between \$50,000 and \$74,999; 13% between \$75,000 and \$99,999; while 16.4% earn more than \$100,000.

Observations & Recommendations

Section 4

Observations

1. The community has identified homelessness and affordable housing as the two largest issues facing the City of Durango and La Plata County.
2. The community is supportive of the creation of an independent library district supported by a levy of 3.65 mils.
3. The community has voiced support for several alternative uses of the Joint Sales Tax funds that currently support the operations of the Durango Public Library. Affordable housing, childcare assistance and infrastructure are the most favored alternate uses of such funds.
4. The Durango Public Library is among the most familiar and favored public services in the City of Durango.
5. The community is supportive of expanded service offerings of the Durango Public Library. Expanded hours in both the week-day evenings and on Sundays are the most preferred service expansions.

Recommendations

1. The City of Durango and La Plata County should jointly explore pursuit of a ballot initiative to create an independent library district in accordance with C.R.S. 24-90. An external support network should be established to assist with the awareness, marketing and get-out-the-vote efforts.
2. There is significant interest in expanding the public hours of operation of the Durango Public Library, both in the evenings as well as on the weekends. City leadership should consider offering such services both in the current operating model as well as a future operating model.
3. The portion of Joint Sales Tax Fund receipts previously allocated to the Durango Public Library should be directed to community priorities, including affordable housing which was the highest rated use.