



Magellan Strategies

Chaffee Housing Authority Ballot Measure Survey Executive Summary and Topline Results

Magellan Strategies is pleased to present the executive summary and topline results of a survey of 1,214 residents of Chaffee County, Colorado. The interviews were conducted from February 1st to February 20th, 2024. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.72% at the 95 percent confidence interval. The survey data were weighted to represent the demographics of presidential election year turnout in Chaffee County.

Executive Summary & Key Findings

This survey had the following goals and objectives: Evaluate the perception of affordable housing in Chaffee County, measure familiarity with the Chaffee Housing Authority, and measure support for different funding options, primarily a 4-mill property tax increase and a 0.50% sales tax increase.

- A shortage of affordable housing is viewed as a significant issue in Chaffee County, as 91% of respondents believe it is at least somewhat of a problem and an overwhelming majority of 74% consider it to be a big problem.
- 73% of respondents think local governments in Chaffee County should play an active role in providing solutions to the lack of affordable housing for year-round residents.
- When asked about their familiarity with the Chaffee Housing Authority, 14% are very familiar and 47% are somewhat familiar with the CHA and its efforts to address affordable housing in Chaffee County.
- On the informed ballot test, after respondents read messaging about the Chaffee Housing Authority, 59% would vote yes on a 0.50% sales tax, and 36% would vote no.
- “Yes” voters see the need for more affordable housing, believe a sales tax is more fair than taxing only current property owners, and appreciate that visitors to the county will contribute as well. “No” voters believe that residents are already overtaxed, have distrust in government spending and ability to solve the issue, and wish for the county to explore other funding sources.
- Support for the 0.50% sales tax is significantly higher than the support for the 4-mill property tax increase, where on the informed ballot, only 44% would vote yes and 48% would vote no.
- Support for the 0.50% sales tax is also slightly higher than support for a 0.25% sales tax (59% compared to 56%, with 36% voting no on each option).

- The messages most likely to move respondents to support a ballot measure to create a dedicated funding source are: A 10-year sunset on the tax increase, a description of how the shortage of affordable housing erodes quality of life by making it difficult to live in the county, statistics on how many households in Chaffee County are housing-burdened or extremely housing burdened, and findings from a housing needs assessment demonstrating both the increased cost of housing and the need for new housing units specifically for workforce and lower-income residents.
- The results clearly show that with a strong campaign to educate voters on how the CHA will use dedicated funding to help solve this crisis, a 0.50% sales tax has enough support to pass in November. At the same time, there is not enough support for a 4-mill property tax increase, and even with a strong campaign, it would likely come up short.

Topline Results

T1. To begin, could you please verify that you are 18 years old and live in Chaffee County, Colorado?

Yes 100%

T2. How much of a problem is the shortage of available long-term affordable housing rental and homeownership opportunities for year-round residents in Chaffee County?

Big and Somewhat Problem Combined 91%

Big Problem 74%

Somewhat of a Problem 17%

Not Too Much of a Problem 2%

Not a Problem at All 5%

No Opinion 2%

T3. Do you think local governments in Chaffee County should play an active role in providing affordable housing solutions for their year-round residents?

Total Yes 73%

Total No..... 23%

No Opinion 4%

Yes, Definitely 53%

Yes, Probably 20%

No, Definitely Not..... 13%

No, Probably Not..... 10%

T4. Please describe what you think affordable housing is, what it looks like, who it is for, who should provide it, and generally what it should cost.

The top four themes were:

1. **Affordability Based on Income:** Many responses emphasize that affordable housing should be accessible to individuals earning lower wages, with rent or mortgage payments being a reasonable percentage of their income (e.g., 30% or less). There's a consensus that housing should be affordable for those making around \$15 to \$20 per hour.
2. **Government Involvement and Partnerships:** Respondents suggest that local government should play a key role in addressing affordable housing issues, whether through subsidies, tax incentives, grants, or direct involvement in providing housing solutions. There's also mention of partnerships between government agencies, private companies, and non-profits to address the issue collectively.
3. **Workforce Focus:** Affordable housing should primarily cater to the local workforce, including essential service providers like teachers, nurses, police officers, and restaurant workers. It aims to ensure that those vital to the community can afford to live in the area where they work.
4. **Housing Diversity:** Affordable housing should encompass a variety of housing types, including apartments, condos, starter homes, and dorm-style accommodations, to meet the needs of different demographics within the community.

The complete verbatim responses are in a separate document.

T5. How familiar are you with the Chaffee Housing Authority and its efforts to address the problem of affordable housing in Chaffee County?

Very and Somewhat Familiar Combined.....	61%
Very Familiar	14%
Somewhat Familiar	47%
Not Too Familiar	27%
Not Familiar at All.....	11%
No Opinion	1%

T6. Generally speaking, would you support or oppose a ballot measure that would create a dedicated funding source to help fund the construction of affordable housing and affordable housing initiatives led by the Chaffee Housing Authority?

Total Support	69%
Total Oppose	25%
No Opinion	6%
Strongly Support	43%
Somewhat Support.....	26%
Strongly Oppose	18%
Somewhat Oppose	7%

Respondent Information

Before we continue, it is important to understand that no decisions have been made by the Chaffee Housing Authority to put a ballot measure before voters this November to create a dedicated funding source to help fund the construction of affordable housing and affordable housing initiatives. The Housing Authority is considering two different options: a property tax increase (mill levy) or a sales tax increase. There is no scenario where both would be on the ballot. It would only be one or the other, or neither. Your participation in this survey and sharing your honest opinions will influence that decision. Let’s continue the survey now.

The 4-Mill Property Tax Increase Uninformed Ballot Test

T7. The Chaffee Housing Authority is considering a ballot measure asking voters to approve a 4-mill property tax increase that would generate an annual \$3.5 million dedicated funding source for ten years to help fund construction of affordable housing and for affordable housing initiatives of the Chaffee Housing Authority. The property tax increase would expire after ten years to hold the Housing Authority accountable.

A 4-mill property tax increase would cost a homeowner approximately \$29 a year for each \$100,000 of a home’s assessed value. Therefore, a home valued at \$650,000 (the average home price in Chaffee County in December 2023) would cost a property owner about \$188 annually.

Knowing this, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 4-mill property tax to create an annual \$3.5 million dedicated funding source for ten years to help fund the construction of affordable housing and for affordable housing initiatives of the Chaffee Housing Authority?

Total Support	44%
Total Oppose	50%
No Opinion	6%
Definitely Approve	25%
Probably Approve	19%
Definitely Reject.....	33%
Probably Reject.....	17%

The 0.50% Sales Tax Increase Uninformed Ballot Test

T8. Another funding option being considered by the Chaffee Housing Authority is a 0.50% sales tax increase for ten years. A 0.50% sales tax increase would generate \$3.5 million annually and cost consumers 50 cents on a \$100 purchase. The sales tax increase would expire after ten years to hold the Housing Authority accountable.

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 0.50% sales tax increase to create an annual \$3.5 million dedicated funding source for ten years to help fund the construction of affordable housing and affordable housing initiatives of the Chaffee Housing Authority?

Total Yes, Approve	58%
Total No, Reject	36%
Undecided	6%
Definitely Approve	33%
Probably Approve	25%
Definitely Reject.....	24%
Probably Reject.....	12%

Information Questions

We will now share information about the reasons why the Chaffee Housing Authority is considering a ballot measure to create a dedicated funding source, how it will help Chaffee County residents, and the programs, initiatives, and partnerships that would be funded if the ballot measure is approved.

After reading the information, please indicate if you are more likely to vote yes and approve a ballot measure to help fund construction of affordable housing and for affordable housing initiatives led by the Chaffee Housing Authority or if you are more likely to vote no and reject it. Let's get started...

T9. There is a shortage of long-term rental and homeownership opportunities in Chaffee County for year-round residents. This shortage is eroding our quality of life and limits our ability to have healthy businesses, great teachers, police officers, firefighters, and public safety professionals, among many others. With a dedicated funding source, more housing opportunities for local residents can be created, helping them remain in the community.

Total More Likely to Approve..... 68%
Total More Likely to Reject 24%
Unsure No Opinion 8%

Much More Likely to Approve 41%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve 27%

Much More Likely to Reject 15%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject..... 9%

T10. Housing is considered affordable if the household spends no more than 30% of their income on housing expenses. Households who spend 30%-50% of their income on housing expenses are considered “housing-burdened,” and households spending over 50% of their income on housing expenses are considered “extremely housing-burdened.”

Currently, in Chaffee County, about 64% of households are considered extremely housing-burdened, and 75% of renters are considered extremely housing-burdened.

Total More Likely to Approve..... 67%
Total More Likely to Reject 24%
Unsure No Opinion 9%

Much More Likely to Approve 44%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve 23%

Much More Likely to Reject 16%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject..... 8%

T11. In 2022, the Chaffee Housing Authority completed a Housing Needs Assessment in cooperation with the City of Salida and the Town of Buena Vista. This assessment found that average rents have increased by about 43% since 2016 and are still rising, and that vacancy is below 5%, showing that finding a place to rent in Chaffee County can be extremely difficult.

Total More Likely to Approve..... 66%
Total More Likely to Reject 25%
Unsure No Opinion 9%

Much More Likely to Approve 42%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve 24%

Much More Likely to Reject 15%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject..... 10%

T12. The Housing Needs Assessment identified a need for 1,105 new housing units in Chaffee County by 2027, including 825 units needed for workforce and lower-income residents.

Total More Likely to Approve.....	65%
Total More Likely to Reject	25%
Unsure No Opinion	10%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	41%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	24%
Much More Likely to Reject	16%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	9%

T13. With dedicated funding of approximately \$3.5 million annually, the Chaffee Housing Authority could generate about 250 rental units through a variety of strategies in partnership with developers and the community over a ten-year period.

Total More Likely to Approve.....	65%
Total More Likely to Reject	27%
Unsure No Opinion	8%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	38%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	27%
Much More Likely to Reject	17%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	10%

T14. Jane’s Place is an innovative and flexible housing project near the heart of downtown Salida at the intersection of 3rd and Highway 291. This project will bring 17 housing units to the Salida community and will directly serve new recruits to the workforce, families and individuals in crisis, and AmeriCorps volunteers. Jane’s Place will also include a nonprofit incubator and a social enterprise coffee shop.



Total More Likely to Approve.....	61%
Total More Likely to Reject	26%
Unsure No Opinion	14%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	34%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	27%
Much More Likely to Reject	17%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	9%

T15. The Chaffee Housing Authority has partnered with Fading West Development on the Carbonate Street project in Buena Vista. Carbonate Street will bring meaningful workforce housing to Chaffee County, and the development includes 30 studios, 24 one-bedroom units, and six two-bedroom units. All 60 units will be deed restricted at area median incomes ranging from 80%-120%. For a one-person household, that range is approximately \$46,050 - \$73,080, and for a four-person household, the range is approximately \$65,750 - \$104,400.



Total More Likely to Approve	63%
Total More Likely to Reject	26%
Unsure No Opinion	11%
Much More Likely to Approve	34%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	29%
Much More Likely to Reject	17%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject	9%

T16. By January 2025, the Chaffee Housing Authority aims to secure formal, diverse developer partnerships, proposing an additional 75 deed-restricted rental units for construction to start in the next three years. Jane’s Place and Carbonate Street are just two examples of these partnerships.

Total More Likely to Approve	64%
Total More Likely to Reject	25%
Unsure No Opinion	11%
Much More Likely to Approve	34%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	30%
Much More Likely to Reject	18%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject	7%

T17. As the Chaffee Housing Authority focuses on public-private partnerships for new developments, many year-round residents want to know where the new developments will be built. That is a good question, and the honest answer is we do not know just yet. However, the Housing Authority is committed to identifying diverse locations throughout Chaffee County.

Total More Likely to Approve.....	52%
Total More Likely to Reject	31%
Unsure No Opinion	17%
Much More Likely to Approve	25%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	27%
Much More Likely to Reject	18%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	13%

T18. A dedicated funding source would be used to start a Down Payment Assistance program that will provide low-and moderate-income households the opportunity to purchase their first home in Chaffee County. This program will increase a buyer’s purchasing power by bridging the gap between lower wages and higher-cost housing. Preference will be given to borrowers currently living or working in Chaffee County. Borrowers may receive up to \$25,000 depending on purchase price and their qualification.

Total More Likely to Approve.....	65%
Total More Likely to Reject	26%
Unsure No Opinion	9%
Much More Likely to Approve	37%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	28%
Much More Likely to Reject	19%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	7%

T19. The Chaffee Housing Authority will include a 10-year sunset if any measure is placed on the ballot in 2024 or any other year, so that voters are able to hold them accountable. After ten years, voters should be able to evaluate whether the Housing Authority has kept their promises before deciding whether to extend a dedicated funding source.

Total More Likely to Approve.....	69%
Total More Likely to Reject	22%
Unsure No Opinion	9%
Much More Likely to Approve	43%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	26%
Much More Likely to Reject	16%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	6%

The 4-Mill Property Tax Increase Informed Ballot Test

T20. Thank you for taking the time to read information about the housing initiatives and programs managed by the Chaffee Housing Authority. As a reminder, the Housing Authority is considering two different options: a property tax increase (mill levy) or a sales tax increase. There is no scenario where both would be on the ballot. It would only be one or the other, or neither.

One ballot measure being considered is a 4-mill property tax increase on residential and commercial property that would generate an annual \$3.5 million dedicated funding source for ten years. The property tax increase would expire after ten years to hold the Housing Authority accountable. A 4-mill property tax increase would cost a homeowner approximately \$29 a year for each \$100,000 of a home’s assessed value. Therefore, a home valued at \$650,000 (the approximate average home price in Chaffee County) would cost a property owner about \$188 annually.

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 4-mill property tax to create an annual \$3.5 million dedicated funding source for ten years to help fund the construction of affordable housing and for affordable housing initiatives of the Chaffee Housing Authority?

Total Yes, Approve	44%
Total No, Reject	48%
Undecided	8%
Definitely Approve	27%
Probably Approve	17%
Definitely Reject.....	30%
Probably Reject.....	18%

T21. Please describe the reasons why you would vote yes and approve a 4-mill property tax increase to fund the Chaffee Housing Authority.

The top three themes were:

1. **Addressing the Housing Crisis:** Many respondents expressed a strong need for affordable housing in the community, emphasizing that it's necessary to retain workers, teachers, firefighters, and other essential personnel. They believe the tax increase is a small price to pay to address this pressing issue.
2. **Community Investment:** Many respondents see the tax increase as an investment in the community's future and well-being. They believe that providing affordable housing will strengthen the community, support local businesses, and ensure a diverse population.
3. **Fairness:** Several respondents noted that property owners, especially those who have benefited from the rising property values in the area, should contribute to solving the housing crisis. They argue that a property tax increase is a fair way to distribute the financial burden.

The complete verbatim responses are in a separate document.

T22. Please describe the reasons why you would vote no and reject a 4-mill property tax increase to fund the Chaffee Housing Authority.

The top four themes were:

1. **Opposition to Property Tax Increases:** Homeowners, particularly those on fixed incomes, express concern about already high property taxes and the potential for further financial strain if taxes are increased.
2. **Distrust in Government Spending:** Many respondents express skepticism about how the additional tax revenue would be used, citing concerns about bureaucratic inefficiency, wasteful spending, and lack of accountability. They feel that the government has not effectively managed funds in the past and are reluctant to provide more money.
3. **Preference for Sales Tax:** Many respondents prefer a sales tax over a property tax increase, believing it spreads the burden across everyone, including tourists and visitors to the area.
4. **Concerns about Impact on Fixed-Income Residents:** Several respondents, particularly senior citizens or those on fixed incomes, expressed concerns about the impact of increased property taxes on their ability to afford living in the county. They worry about being taxed out of their homes and believe that the burden should not fall solely on property owners.

The complete verbatim responses are in a separate document.

T23. If you had to choose, do you lean more toward voting yes and approving the ballot measure, or do you lean more towards voting no and rejecting it?

Lean towards voting yes	39%
Lean towards voting no.....	13%
Still undecided	48%

The 0.50% Sales Tax Increase Informed Ballot Test

T24. As we mentioned, another ballot measure being considered is a 0.50% sales tax increase for ten years that would generate an annual \$3.5 million dedicated funding source that would cost consumers 50 cents on a \$100 purchase. The sales tax increase would expire after ten years to hold the Housing Authority accountable.

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 0.50% sales tax increase to create an annual \$3.5 million dedicated funding source for ten years to help fund construction of affordable housing and for affordable housing initiatives of the Chaffee Housing Authority?

Total Yes, Approve	59%
Total No, Reject	36%
Undecided	5%
Definitely Approve	24%
Probably Approve	25%
Definitely Reject.....	24%
Probably Reject.....	12%

T25. Please describe the reasons why you would vote yes and approve a 0.50% sales tax increase to fund the Chaffee Housing Authority.

The top three themes were:

1. **Fairness and Equity:** Many respondents believe that a sales tax increase is fairer than taxing only current property owners. They argue that it spreads the burden more evenly among residents, tourists, and visitors, rather than solely impacting homeowners.
2. **Need for Affordable Housing:** Many respondents emphasized the urgent need for affordable housing in Chaffee County. They view the sales tax increase as a necessary step to generate funding for affordable housing initiatives and support the local workforce.
3. **Tourist Contribution:** Many respondents emphasize the importance of leveraging revenue from tourism to address the housing crisis. They view a sales tax increase as a way to make tourists contribute to the solution, considering their impact on the demand for housing and infrastructure.

The complete verbatim responses are in a separate document.

T26. Please describe the reasons why you would vote no and reject a 0.50% sales tax increase to fund the Chaffee Housing Authority.

The top four themes were:

1. **Overtaxed:** Many respondents feel that they are already overtaxed and cannot afford any additional tax burden. They express frustration with the current level of taxation, highlighting issues such as high property taxes, inflation, and the overall cost of living in Chaffee County.
2. **Distrust in Government Spending:** There is a widespread lack of trust in government entities, particularly regarding their ability to effectively manage funds and implement projects. Respondents express skepticism about the efficiency and transparency of government spending.
3. **Preference for Alternative Funding Sources:** Many respondents suggest alternative funding sources, such as taxing tourists, second homeowners, or short-term rental owners more heavily. They argue that these groups should bear a larger share of the burden for funding housing initiatives rather than placing additional taxes on local residents.
4. **Regressive Tax Impact:** Several respondents highlight the regressive nature of sales tax, stating that it disproportionately affects low-income individuals and families, making it harder for them to afford basic necessities.

The complete verbatim responses are in a separate document.

T27. If you had to choose, do you lean more toward voting yes and approving the ballot measure, or do you lean more towards voting no and rejecting it?

Lean towards voting yes	21%
Lean towards voting no.....	16%
Still undecided	63%

Respondent Information

The Housing Authority would also like to get your opinion on the following ballot measures for a 2-mill property tax increase and a 0.25% sales tax increase. As a reminder, there is no scenario where there would be two different measures on the ballot.

The 2-Mill Property Tax Increase Informed Ballot Test

T28. Another ballot measure being considered by the Chaffee Housing Authority is a 2-mill property tax increase to generate \$1.78 million annually. This increase would cost a homeowner approximately \$15 a year for each \$100,000 of a home’s assessed value and could generate about 125 rental units through a variety of strategies in partnership with developers and the community over a ten-year period. The property tax increase would expire after ten years to hold the Housing Authority accountable.

If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 2-mill property tax increase for ten years for the Chaffee Housing Authority?

Total Yes, Approve	44%
Total No, Reject	48%
Undecided	8%
Definitely Approve	26%
Probably Approve	18%
Definitely Reject.....	30%
Probably Reject.....	18%

The 0.25% Sales Tax Increase Informed Ballot Test

T29. Another ballot measure being considered by the Chaffee Housing Authority is a 0.25% sales tax increase that would generate a \$1.78 million dedicated funding source. This increase would cost consumers 25 cents on a \$100 purchase and could generate about 125 rental units through a variety of strategies in partnership with developers and the community over a ten-year period.

The sales tax increase would expire after ten years to hold the Housing Authority accountable. If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve or vote no and reject a 0.25% sales tax increase for ten years for the Chaffee Housing Authority?

Total Yes, Approve	56%
Total No, Reject	36%
Undecided	8%
Definitely Approve	31%
Probably Approve	25%
Definitely Reject.....	23%
Probably Reject.....	13%

Now, we have some questions for statistical purposes only.

T30. Are you:

Female.....	51%
Male.....	48%
I prefer to identify as	1%

T31. Are you between the ages of:

18-34	16%
35-44	15%
45-54	14%
55-64	20%
65 or Older	35%

T32. Are you a year-round resident of Chaffee County?

Yes, lived here for more than 15 years.....	34%
Yes, lived here 6 to 10 years	22%
Yes, lived here 3 to 5 years	21%
Yes, lived here 11 to 15 years	12%
Yes, lived here for 2 years or less.....	10%
No, I am not a year-round resident	1%

T33. For statistical purposes only, are you registered to vote as an unaffiliated voter, a Democrat, or a Republican, or are you registered with another political party, or are you not registered to vote?

Unaffiliated.....	41%
Democrat	27%
Republican	31%
Other Party	1%
Not Registered to Vote.....	0%

T34. Although it is a long way off, how likely are you to vote in a local ballot measure election this November related to affordable housing in Chaffee County?

Extremely	86%
Very.....	10%
Somewhat.....	2%
Unlikely	2%

T35. What is your employment status?

Employed Full-Time.....	42%
Retired	35%
Self-Employed (Full or Part-Time)	9%
Employed Part-Time.....	6%
Multiple Part-Time Jobs.....	2%
Stay-at-Home-Parent.....	2%
Unemployed.....	0%
Other.....	2%
Prefer Not to Say	2%

T36. Do you currently work:

In-Person, and employer is in Chaffee County.....	52%
Remotely, and employer is outside Chaffee County	14%
In-Person, and I own a business in Chaffee County.....	9%
Hybrid, and employer is outside Chaffee County	7%
In-Person, and employer is outside Chaffee County	5%
Hybrid, and employer is in Chaffee County.....	5%
Remotely, and employer is in Chaffee County.....	2%
Currently unemployed	0%
Prefer Not to Say	6%

T37. Are you married or single?

Married	64%
Single.....	31%
Prefer Not to Say	5%

T38. Do you rent or own your home?

Own	72%
Rent	22%
Other.....	3%
Prefer not to say	3%

T39. What race or ethnicity do you most identify with?

White	81%
Hispanic or Latino	6%
Black or African American	1%
Asian.....	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Other.....	2%
Prefer not to say	8%

T40. How would you describe your household income?

Less than \$25,000	5%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	18%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	29%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	13%
More than \$150,000	15%
Prefer not to Say	0%

T41. Where do you live?

Salida	49%
Buena Vista	26%
Unincorporated Chaffee County	19%
Poncha Springs	6%

Survey Methodology

This survey utilized an MMS text survey data collection method. In addition, the Chaffee Housing Authority promoted the survey on its website and social media channels. The survey data were weighted to represent the demographics of presidential election year turnout in Chaffee County. The interviews were conducted from February 1st to February 20th, 2024. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.72% at the 95 percent confidence interval.
