



480 likely voters in La Plata County
Field: May 18-21, 2015

La Plata County Ballot Measure Poll – May 2015

Hello, may I please I speak with **name on the list**?

My name is **name of interviewer**. I’m calling from **XXXX Research**. I’m not selling anything. We’re doing a survey here in La Plata County on some topics that I’m sure you will find interesting.

Screener questions

S1. Respondent type **Don’t ask question**.

- Name on list is available 1 Continue interview
- Other registered voter in household 2 Continue interview
- No voter available in household..... 3 **Terminate interview**

S2. Are you 18 or older and registered to vote in La Plata County, Colorado?

- Yes..... 1 Continue interview
- No 2 **Terminate interview**
- Don’t know / not sure **Don’t read**..... 3 **Terminate interview**

S3. What are the chances that you will vote in the November 2015 election that may include a number of ballot issues – will you definitely vote, probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or will you probably not vote?

- Definitely vote 1 Continue interview
- Probably vote 2 Continue interview
- 50-50 chances..... 3 Continue interview
- Probably not vote 4 Continue interview
- Don’t know / not sure **Don’t read**..... 5 **Terminate interview**

4. Generally speaking, do you think things in La Plata County are heading in the right direction, or do you think things are heading in the wrong direction?

- Right direction 1
- Wrong direction..... 2
- Don’t know / not sure **Don’t read** 3

5. What would you say are the most important issues or challenges facing La Plata County?
Probe: Are there any others issues? **Don't read list. If respondent says the economy, education / schools, marijuana, transportation or government - please ask to specify the issue or challenge. Multiple response question.**

EDUCATION / SCHOOLS

Not enough school funding, funding cuts, schools need more money	1
Improve school quality, schools are poor quality	2
Need more, better quality teachers, teacher pay.....	3
Program cuts like art and music classes	4
Reduce class sizes, class sizes are too large	5

MARIJUANA

Marijuana regulations, laws, implementation	6
Oppose marijuana legalization	7
Favor marijuana legalization	8

TRANSPORTATION

Roads, highways, bridges - repair, safety issues	9
Traffic, congestion	10
La Plata County airport expansion, improvements.....	11

ECONOMY / JOBS

Jobs, unemployment	12
Affordable housing, rising housing costs	13
New industry needed, economic development	14

GOVERNMENT / BUDGET / TAXES

Taxes - too high, need tax cut, too many tax increases	15
La Plata County government - budget problems, deficit, cutbacks	16
City government - budget problems, deficit, cutbacks	17
Homelessness, poverty, hunger	18
Crime, violence, gangs, drug abuse.....	19
Oil and gas development, fracking.....	20
Environment, pollution.....	21
Too much growth, development, population	22
Parks, trails, open-space.....	23
Bike lanes, bikeable shoulders bike paths, bike safety	24
Health care, costs, reform, Obamacare, Medicare, Medicaid	25
Children's issues (not education)	26
Water issues	27
Other issue or problem Specify other issue or problem	28
None / Don't know	29

Ask question 6 on Form X only: n=240

6. While you may or may not be aware of it, this past year there has been discussion that the La Plata County budget will face revenue shortfalls over the next ten years. Now I'd like you to consider a measure that may be on the ballot in November in La Plata County that addresses this issue. The ballot question concerns a 2.65 property tax mill levy dedicated to funding capital improvements to La Plata County road and bridge infrastructure. The measure reads as follows:

Shall La Plata County taxes be increased by **\$5-point-4 million dollars** beginning in 2016 and thereafter by whatever amounts are raised annually from a levy of **2.65 mills** for the purposes of making capital improvements to La Plata County roads and bridges including resurfacing and maintenance, building safe bikeable shoulders, and improving public safety in order to better serve the growing population?

Would you vote yes or vote no on THIS ballot measure? **If respondent says yes or no ask:** Would you definitely vote yes / no or probably vote yes / no? **If respondent says don't know or undecided ask:** Even though you are undecided, do you lean toward voting yes or voting no?

- | | |
|--|---|
| Definitely yes | 1 |
| Probably yes | 2 |
| Probably no..... | 3 |
| Definitely no | 4 |
| Undecided – lean yes..... | 5 |
| Undecided – lean no..... | 6 |
| Don't know / undecided Don't read | 7 |

Ask question 6a on Form X

6a. Let me tell you a little bit more about the reason why this measure is on the ballot.

Due to a drop-off in natural gas development, La Plata County’s property tax revenues have been steadily declining - and are projected to continue to decrease over the next ten years. This decline in property tax revenues is preventing La Plata County from making much needed road and bridge repairs and maintenance.

So, this ballot measure increases property taxes, allowing La Plata County to make necessary improvements to its roads and bridges including resurfacing and maintenance, building safe bikeable shoulders, and improving public safety.

Now based on this information, would you vote yes or vote no on this ballot measure? **If respondent says yes or no ask:** Would you definitely vote yes / no or probably vote yes / no? **If respondent says don’t know or undecided ask:** Even though you are undecided, do you lean toward voting yes or voting no?

- Definitely yes 1
- Probably yes 2
- Probably no..... 3
- Definitely no 4
- Undecided – lean yes..... 5
- Undecided – lean no..... 6
- Don’t know / undecided **Don’t read** 7

Ask if vote yes/undecided in question 6a (Q6a=1,2,5,7)

7. What is the main reason why you might vote yes on this measure? **Probe:** Are there any other reasons?

Ask if vote no/undecided in question 6a (Q6a=3,4,6,7)

8. What is the main reason why you might vote no on this measure? **Probe:** Are there any other reasons?

Ask question 9 on Form Y only: n=240

9. While you may or may not be aware of it, this past year there has been discussion that the La Plata County budget will face revenue shortfalls over the next ten years. Now I'd like you to consider a measure that may be on the ballot in November in La Plata County that addresses this issue. The ballot question concerns a 4.75 property tax mill levy dedicated to funding capital improvements to La Plata County road and bridge infrastructure AND improvements to county buildings and facilities. The measure reads as follows:

Shall La Plata County taxes be increased by **\$8 million dollars** beginning in 2016 and thereafter by whatever amounts are raised annually from a levy of **4.75 mills** for the following purposes: Making capital improvements to La Plata County roads and bridges including resurfacing and maintenance, building safe bikeable shoulders, and improving public safety, AND new and improved county buildings and facilities in order to better serve the growing population?

Would you vote yes or vote no on THIS ballot measure? **If respondent says yes or no ask:** Would you definitely vote yes / no or probably vote yes / no? **If respondent says don't know or undecided ask:** Even though you are undecided, do you lean toward voting yes or voting no?

- Definitely yes 1
- Probably yes 2
- Probably no..... 3
- Definitely no 4

- Undecided – lean yes..... 5
- Undecided – lean no..... 6
- Don't know / undecided **Don't read** 7

Ask question 9a on Form Y only: n=240

9a. Let me tell you a little bit more about the reason why this measure is on the ballot.

Due to a drop-off in natural gas development, La Plata County’s property tax revenues have been steadily declining - and are projected to continue to decrease over the next ten years. This decline in property tax revenues is preventing La Plata County from making much needed road and bridge repairs and maintenance, AND improvements to County buildings

So, in order to better serve the La Plata County’s growing population, this ballot measure increases property taxes, allowing La Plata County to make necessary improvements to its roads and bridges including resurfacing and maintenance, building safe bikeable shoulders, and improving public safety, AND new and improved county buildings and facilities.

Now based on this information, would you vote yes or vote no on this ballot measure? **If respondent says yes or no ask:** Would you definitely vote yes / no or probably vote yes / no? **If respondent says don’t know or undecided ask:** Even though you are undecided, do you lean toward voting yes or voting no?

- Definitely yes 1
- Probably yes 2
- Probably no..... 3
- Definitely no 4
- Undecided – lean yes..... 5
- Undecided – lean no..... 6
- Don’t know / undecided **Don’t read** 7

Ask if vote yes/undecided in question 9a (Q9a=1,2,5,7)

10. What is the main reason why you might vote yes on this measure? **Probe:** Are there any other reasons?

Ask if vote no/undecided in question 9a (Q9a=3,4,6,7)

11. What is the main reason why you might vote no on this measure? **Probe:** Are there any other reasons?

Not all of the details of the ballot measure have been finalized, so now I’m going to read a few statements about this ballot measure. After I read each one, please tell me if it makes you **more** likely to vote for the measure, **less** likely to vote for the measure, or would it make no difference? If **respondent says more/less likely ask**: Are you much more/less or somewhat more/less likely to vote for it? First/Next... **Randomize order of statements.**

	<u>Much More</u>	<u>Some More</u>	<u>Some Less</u>	<u>Much Less</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Don't read Don't know</u>
12. The current La Plata County property tax levy of 8.5 mills is the fourth lowest of any county in the state of Colorado and is 13 mills lower than the average Colorado county. If this measure passes, La Plata County property taxes would still be much lower than average.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. The 2.65 mill levy will increase residential property taxes by \$74 dollars per year on the average home valued at \$350 thousand dollars. Ask on Form X only: n=240	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. The 4.75 measure will increase residential property taxes by \$132 dollars per year on the average home valued at \$350 thousand dollars. Ask on Form Y only: n=240	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. La Plata County publishes an annual independent audit and report of government spending on the county website.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. The revenues will be dedicated to La Plata County road and bridge maintenance and improvement projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. The measure will fund road improvements that include bikeable shoulders.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. The measure will fund improvements that increase safety of La Plata County’s roads and bridges.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. The measure will allow La Plata County to maintain the current level of snow removal and plowing services.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. The measure ensures that La Plata County can balance its budget WITHOUT making cutbacks in vital services or road and bridge maintenance.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. A portion of new revenues would be shared with the towns and cities within La Plata County to use on similar projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. The measure will fund improved county buildings and facilities in order to better serve the growing population.	1	2	3	4	5	6

23. Now I'd like you to think about the amount you pay in local taxes and fees for the services and amenities that you receive as a resident of La Plata County - do you feel you are asked to pay more than you should, about the right amount, or less than you should? **Read and rotate the order of answer choices top to bottom, bottom to top.**

More than you should	1
About the right amount	2
Less than you should	3
Don't know / not sure Don't read	4

Rotate the order of the support and opposition statements. Half hear the support statements in questions 24-28 first and half hear the opposition statements in questions 29-33 first.

Now I'd like to read you some statements that some people have made about why they would SUPPORT the mill levy ballot measure. After I read each statement, please tell me how convincing it is as a reason to support the measure – very convincing, just somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or not at all convincing. **Randomize the order of statements.**

24. **Revenue Shortfall Due To Decrease In Natural Gas Revenues In The County.** The tax revenues from natural gas development have decreased sharply over the past five years and now La Plata County faces millions of dollars in service cutbacks – particularly in the area of road and bridge maintenance. This measure will give La Plata County the revenue it needs to fund critical La Plata County services and ensure that our roads and bridges are safely maintained.
25. **Low Property Taxes.** La Plata County has the 4th lowest property tax rate of any county in Colorado and our property tax rates are the lowest in the region. In fact, it's been more than 25 years since La Plata County increased property taxes. Unless we increase property taxes, La Plata County will need to cut spending on vital services and much needed road and bridge maintenance.
26. **A Great Place To Live And Raise A Family.** It's important that La Plata County remain a great place to live and raise our families. In order to do that we need to continue to make these investments in vital community services - such as maintaining the quality and safety of our roads and bridges.
27. **Attracting Businesses and Jobs.** Building our local economy depends on attracting businesses and jobs to La Plata County. We can accomplish this only if we make it a priority to pass this measure to fund important La Plata County services, and making sure that our roads and bridges are properly maintained and improved.
28. **Current Mill Levy Not Enough.** La Plata County's population has grown by nearly 25 percent over the past 15 years. The county has identified significant capital improvement projects including new and improved facilities and buildings and road and bridge maintenance in order to serve this growing population. Unfortunately, at the current mill levy, County revenues are not sufficient to fund these important projects.

Now I'd like to read you some statements that some people have made about why they would OPPOSE the mill levy ballot measure. After I read each statement, please tell me how convincing it is as a reason to oppose the measure – very convincing, just somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or not at all convincing. **Randomize the order of statements.**

29. **Tighten Its Belt.** Instead of raising taxes, La Plata County can find more ways to tighten its belt, cut back on government spending, and find a way to balance the budget.
30. **Unclear Where Money Will be Spent.** Voters should reject this property tax increase because it does not include clearly defined projects that our tax dollars will be spent on. Our tax dollars will be spent on buildings and administration.
31. **Taxes Are Already Too High.** Our taxes are already too high here in La Plata County. Most of us are still recovering from the economic downturn and we can't afford to pay for an increase in our property taxes.
32. **Property Taxes Are Already Going Up.** For many, property taxes have already gone up based on their latest property tax assessment. As the economy continues to improve, housing prices will continue to rise which will further increase La Plata County property tax revenues, so there is no need for this property tax measure.
33. **Job Killer.** This measure will significantly increase property taxes for local businesses, which will hurt our economy and prevent companies from moving here – killing jobs just when things were getting better.

Ask question 34 on Form X only: n=240

34. Now, based on everything you’ve heard, I’d like you to reconsider the ballot measure we discussed earlier. The measure reads as follows:

Shall La Plata County taxes be increased by **\$5-point-4 million dollars** beginning in 2016 and thereafter by whatever amounts are raised annually from a levy of **2.65 mills** for the purposes of making capital improvements to La Plata County roads and bridges including resurfacing and maintenance, building safe bikeable shoulders, and improving public safety in order to better serve the growing population?

Would you vote yes or vote no on this ballot measure? **If respondent says yes or no ask:** Would you definitely vote yes / no or probably vote yes / no? **If respondent says don’t know or undecided ask:** Even though you are undecided, do you lean toward voting yes or voting no?

- Definitely yes 1
- Probably yes 2
- Probably no..... 3
- Definitely no 4
- Undecided – lean yes..... 5
- Undecided – lean no..... 6
- Don’t know / undecided **Don’t read** 7

Ask question 35 on Form Y only: n=240

35. Now, based on everything you’ve heard, I’d like you to reconsider the ballot measure we discussed earlier. The measure reads as follows:

Shall La Plata County taxes be increased by **\$8 million dollars** beginning in 2016 and thereafter by whatever amounts are raised annually from a levy of **4.75 mills** for the following purposes: Making capital improvements to La Plata County roads and bridges including resurfacing and maintenance, building safe bikeable shoulders, and improving public safety, AND new and improved county buildings and facilities in order to better serve the growing population?

Would you vote yes or vote no on this ballot measure? **If respondent says yes or no ask:** Would you definitely vote yes / no or probably vote yes / no? **If respondent says don’t know or undecided ask:** Even though you are undecided, do you lean toward voting yes or voting no?

- Definitely yes 1
- Probably yes 2
- Probably no..... 3
- Definitely no 4
- Undecided – lean yes..... 5
- Undecided – lean no..... 6
- Don’t know / undecided **Don’t read** 7

36. If there are other tax measures on the ballot at the same time as the capital improvements mill levy tax question that we have been talking about, which one of the following comes closest to your own opinion on the tax measures. **Read and rotate the order of answer choices top to bottom, bottom to top.**

- You would vote against all of the tax measures 1
- You would vote for all of the tax measures 2
- You would evaluate the capital improvements mill levy tax question on its own merits before you decide how you will vote 3
- Don't know / not sure **Don't read** 4

37. Now I'd like to read an additional measure that is being considered for the La Plata County ballot. Would you vote yes or vote no on a ballot measure that would increase La Plata County property taxes for the purposes of La Plata County acquiring additional water rights in order to maintain access to water in the future? **If respondent says yes or no ask:** Would you definitely vote yes / no or probably vote yes / no? **If respondent says don't know or undecided ask:** Even though you are undecided, do you lean toward voting yes or voting no?

- Definitely yes 1
- Probably yes 2
- Probably no..... 3
- Definitely no 4
- Undecided – lean yes..... 5
- Undecided – lean no..... 6
- Don't know / undecided **Don't read** 7

Demographic questions

And finally, just a few questions for statistical purposes only...

D38. Gender **Do not ask question**

- Male..... 1
- Female 2

Ask only if respondent is other voter in household, or there is no age on the voter file.

D39. Could you please tell me your age? **Read list if necessary**

- 18-24..... 1
- 25-29..... 2
- 30-34..... 3
- 35-39..... 4
- 40-44..... 5
- 45-49..... 6
- 50-54..... 7
- 55-59..... 8
- 60-64..... 9
- 65-69..... 10
- 70+ 11
- Refused **Don't read** 12

D40. Do you have any children age 18 or younger, or not?

- Yes, have children age 18 or younger 1
- No, do not have any children age 18 or younger 2
- Don't know / refused **Don't read** 3

D41. Do you own or rent your home?

- Own 1
- Rent 2
- Don't know / refused **Don't read** 3

D42. Do you think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, or an Independent? **If Democrat, ask:**
 Would you call yourself a strong Democrat, or a not very strong Democrat? **If Republican, ask:**
 Would you call yourself a strong Republican, or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong Democrat 1
- Not strong Democrat..... 2
- Independent 3
- Not strong Republican..... 4
- Strong Republican 5
- Other party **Don't read response, but ask to specify if other** 6
- Don't know / not sure **Don't read** 7

D43. What is the last grade or level of school you have completed? **Read list if necessary.**

- Less than high school degree 1
- High school graduate..... 2
- Some college / 2 year degree / Associates degree 3
- College graduate / BA or BS degree 4
- Postgraduate courses / Masters or Doctoral degree 5
- Don't know / refused **Don't read**..... 6

D44. Just to be sure we are representing everybody, may I ask your race? **Do not read answer choices.**

- Hispanic / Latino 1
- White 2
- Black / African American 3
- Asian 4
- Native American / American Indian 5
- Other **Don't read response**..... 6
- Don't know / refused **Don't read**..... 7

Thank you for taking our survey, your answers have been very helpful.