



MPACT64

MARCH 26, 2014 MEETING

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MEETING RECORD



## **MPACT64 — Transportation**

**March 26, 2014 Meeting — 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

**Denver Regional Council of Governments — Independence Pass Conference Room**

### **Agenda:**

**11:00 AM Welcome and Introductions**

**11:05 AM January Polling**

- Polling results — detail and analysis

**11:30 PM Federal Transportation Legislation**

- Rick Pilgrim

**11:45 PM Lunch Break**

**12:00 PM Discussion of Strategies for Moving Forward**

- Maintain the Statewide Coalition
- Transportation Symposium/Summit
- Economic Impact Analysis
- Focus Groups
- Grass Tops/Grass Roots Outreach & Education

**12:55 PM Next Steps & Upcoming Meetings**

- Meeting Schedule

**1:00 PM Adjourn**



**MPACT64 — Transportation**  
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**Denver Regional Council of Governments**

**Notes:**

- REMI Modeling as part of building understanding of benefits of investing in transportation
  - Used in Colorado to model economic impacts of Amendment 66 and ban on fracking
  - Talking with owners of model about potential for transportation question analysis
  - Handout on model to be circulated via email
- Support for Possible Funding Sources
  - Trust Fund bankrupt in August
    - Bennett-Blunt doesn't impact solvency of Trust Fund
  - MAP-21 Expires
    - No gas tax change per Shuster
  - Bennett-Blunt Partnership to Build America Act (handout)
    - American Infrastructure Bank - \$50B
    - No taxpayer dollars - use repatriated funds
    - Loan guarantees and financing for state and local governments
    - Funds to leverage private resources
    - Financing for transportation, water, energy, communication and education
    - Companion bill in House
      - Bipartisan support - 25 Republicans + 25 Democrats
    - Staff to draft for letter of support of MPACT64
      - Still require funds to repay any loan from AIF
      - Important tool in meeting critical infrastructure needs
      - Require Congressional leadership on Transportation Bill & Trust Fund
      - Emphasize bipartisan support
  - HR 3636 - Blumenauer Gas Bill (handout)
    - Unlikely to move forward
    - Recommend no position from MPACT64
- Transportation Survey Report - Polling of Jan 5-8/14
  - Geographic breakdown
    - Cannot provide county breakdowns due to sample sizes - except Denver
    - Have pooled counties
  - Understand that the shared data will be disseminated in participant groups
  - Key findings
    - Specific measure unlikely to gain voter approval in this election cycle

- Need to better communicate need and demand for transportation options
- Broader economic worries of consumer are paramount
- Partisan divide evident
- Strong support for economic and jobs messaging, transit that gets cars off road and equitable distribution of funds across state
- Economic stimulus, safety, safe routes to school and senior funding resonate
- People still strongly oppose VMT and gas tax
- Jobs & economy, schools & education are top issues with voters statewide
- State and local tax rates ok with voters in metro - a little less so on Western Slope & El Paso County
- Support for 7/10 low statewide
- VMT opposition above 68% statewide
- Gas tax even less popular
- Transportation - lack of urgency around transportation needs statewide
- Safe Routes to School - perceived as very important statewide
- Bike lanes, paths, safer crossing, sidewalks highest in Denver
- Interregional transit - perceived as less important on Western Slope
- BRT preferred in NW Corridor
- Ballot question gets worse reception after polling - declines in some areas
- Comments
  - Polling demonstrates why P3s have to happen
  - Need a great deal of public education to help voters understand how transportation is paid for
  - Economy is top of mind for voter and transportation has taken backseat
    - Understanding of transportation funding is low
    - Voters don't perceive problem
    - Voters don't understand roads are not free
  - Would be interesting to understand minds of El Paso voters
    - 53% think "needs more work, but mostly ok" in El Paso
    - As regional solutions developed undermines support for statewide solution
    - Focus groups could delve into this
    - Need to better understand Denver - critical to winning any statewide campaign
  - 36% of Denver said "needs significant improvement" on transportation
    - Would be interesting to know what element of transportation they think is in need
    - Did the type of transportation described in poll not resonate with Denver voters
      - Sidewalks, hit and runs, last mile issues top of mind in Denver
    - Do we need to emphasize local shareback
  - Need to help voters understand impacts of state tax on local problems - localize

- Controversy around 36 corridor highlights education and leadership needs
      - Need someone championing transportation
        - Messaging that roads not free
      - P3s consistently poll in 60s in prior CO transportation polls - does well in focus groups
      - Cost of P3 - voters surprised by true expense
      - Tolls more popular when compared to tax increase
        - C470 example
      - Voters think roads are free and they are not free — we have to educate on this fact
      - Controversy will continue — suit filed today
      - El Paso specificity very different than what is asked in a baseline poll
        - 1st poll did include specific projects (e.g. I70 W)
        - Didn't resonate
        - Conclusion people prioritize roads and improvements in their own neighborhood
    - Did we miss opportunity in poll to point out that all local transportation budgets would have increased by 50%
      - Above 70% in every region said local transportation projects determined by local elected officials very important
- Next steps for MPACT64
  - Support for Transportation Symposium
    - Ongoing meetings to identify timeline, agenda and coalition of organizations
    - Post-November
    - Could be part or full day event
    - Important to keep conversation going
    - Part of education campaign
  - Education Campaign
    - May require multiple leaders & multiple messages
    - Bring up weak points vs. emphasize strengths as strategy
      - PPRTA as example of strength - local accountability
      - Correct misperception that funds are directed to Denver
        - 60% of the state's sales tax is collected in metro Denver
        - Fort Morgan and Sterling 9:1 return on investment
      - Make sure and emphasize that there is a local share
        - 50% increase in local transportation budgets
      - Need to emphasize where major infrastructure is uncovered in areas that have applied local solutions
    - Education efforts must be focused on those who listen and vote
      - Be clear on what the message is and where it goes
    - Develop key message points for education at local level
      - Rural fair share
      - This tax captures dollars from tourists and visitors to address local needs
    - All MPACT64 members should put together ideas for inclusion in the message that reflect their perceptions of the problem

- Need clarity on how the money is divided up to demonstrate that there are fair shares to rural areas
- We can work on this while we wait for focus groups, REMI, and symposium
- Need to reach out to homeowners groups, service clubs
- Funding horizon
  - TABOR refunds as potential funding source
- Next meeting probably in May—4th Wednesday
- Smaller group will meet first to work on message ideas and outreach strategies

## Bipartisan, Bicameral Bill Creates Infrastructure Bank Using Public-Private Partnership Model

January 17, 2014

U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) introduced a bipartisan bill to jumpstart our nation's capability to build and repair roads, bridges, highways, ports, schools, and other infrastructure projects.

Without spending overstretched federal dollars, the *Partnership to Build America Act* will help put people back to work building projects across the country, while helping to improve U.S. competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. It establishes a \$50 billion infrastructure fund that can potentially support hundreds of billions in loan guarantees and financing authority for state and local governments. The fund would finance transportation, energy, communications, water, and education infrastructure projects across the country.

The bill encourages U.S. companies to purchase these bonds by allowing them to exclude a certain portion of their overseas earnings from taxation. The amount that they are permitted to repatriate for each dollar of bond purchases will be determined by a competitive auction.

Representative John Delaney (D-MD) introduced a bipartisan companion in the House of Representatives which has been cosponsored by 25 Democrats and 25 Republicans.

"Our parents and grandparents helped build this country from the ground up, and in the process grew our economy into one of America's greatest assets.

Unfortunately, Washington has failed to fulfill its promise to maintain our infrastructure – from roads and bridges to our energy grid and public schools,"

**Bennet said.** "In Colorado, we do our best with limited resources to keep things in working order and to break ground on critical new projects like the Arkansas Valley Conduit and the ongoing expansion of public transit in the Denver metro area. This bill will help us improve and expand the infrastructure we need to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

"Washington needs to pass policies to help jump-start private sector job creation. American farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and workers are greatly reliant on our nation's infrastructure to move goods and services as quickly as possible,"

**Blunt said.** "I'm proud to support this bipartisan bill, which will help communities in Missouri and across America improve infrastructure and compete in a global economy."

"The American people expect us to work together and find solutions and that's the spirit behind this legislation," **said Congressman John K. Delaney.** "It's clear that we have to upgrade our crumbling roads and bridges and that we must do so in a fiscally responsible manner. Rebuilding our infrastructure will create jobs, make our economy more competitive, and improve our quality of life. I thank Senator Bennet for introducing this legislation in the Senate and Senator Blunt for reaching across the aisle to join him."

The American Society of Civil Engineers gave America's infrastructure a D+ on its 2013 report card. Estimates of how much investment is needed to repair and rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure reach as high as \$2 trillion over the next two decades.

The American Infrastructure Fund created through the *Partnership to Build America Act* will help finance top priority infrastructure projects across the country. The fund will make guarantees or low-cost loans to state or local governments, nonprofits, private parties, and public-private partnerships to finance infrastructure projects that state and local governments prioritize. The Senate bill is cosponsored by Senators Mark Warner (D-VA), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Lindsay Graham (R-SC), Angus King (I-ME), Dan Coats (R-IN), Mark Begich (D-AK), John Hoeven (R-ND), and Mark Kirk (R-IL). This bill is supported by numerous groups, including the American Business Council, the American Planning Association, the Associated General Contractors of America, CEMEX, CH2M Hill, the American Society of Civil Engineers and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, among many others.

# Colorado Transportation Survey

Colorado Transportation Coalition

January 5-8, 2014

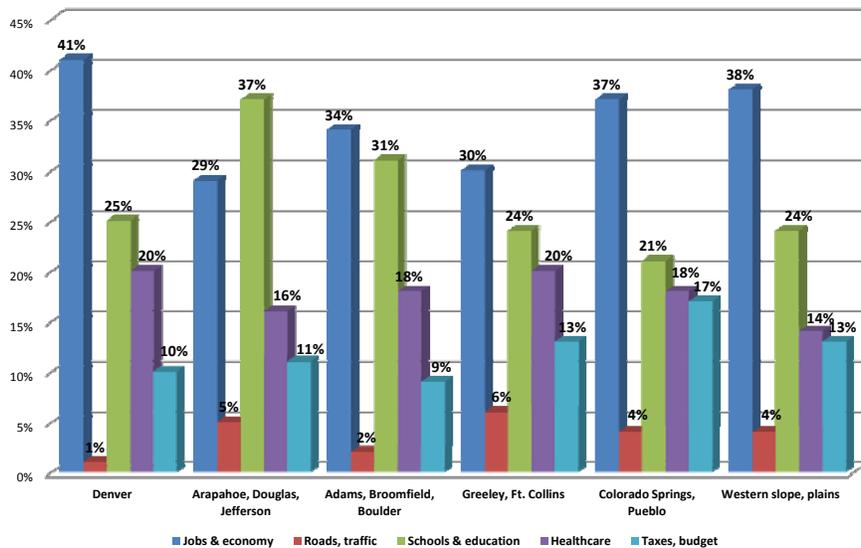
## Key Findings

- **The specific ballot measure tested is unlikely to secure voter approval in this election cycle, even after an education and advocacy campaign.**
- **There is a profound shortage of both demand for improved transportation options and perceived justification for new transportation revenues.**
- **Opposition that is based narrowly and simply on raising taxes and/or the proposed rate of increase does not adequately explain voter rejection of the proposal. But, broader economic worries of some consumers do matter.**
- **Support and opposition closely follow partisan and ideological lines, with Democrats and liberals supporting the plan.**
- **Geography of residence and present transportation habits don't explain voter choices.**

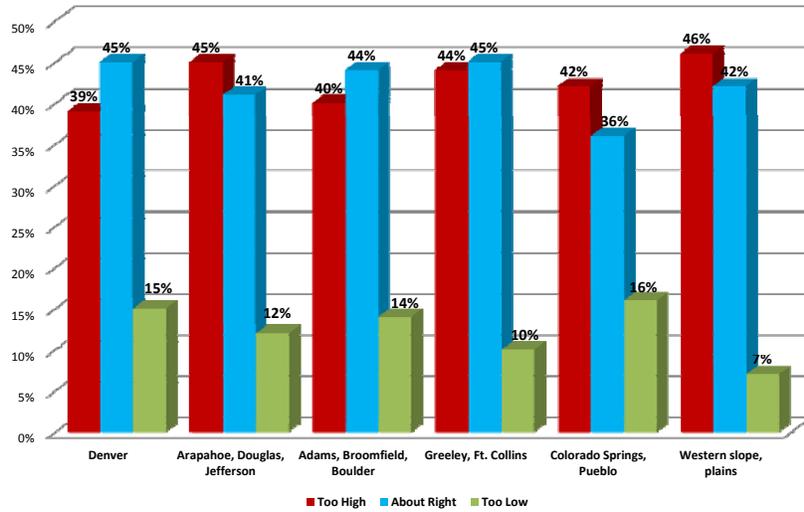
# Key Findings

- Despite their unwillingness to back the plan, voters do strongly endorse three of its goals or objectives:
  1. Keeping Colorado's economy strong.
  2. Supporting transit that gets cars off the road.
  3. Ensuring geographic distribution of transportation dollars to urban and rural areas.
  
- The polling found broad support for four concepts related to this measure:
  1. The economic stimulus and jobs from construction and infrastructure development.
  2. The expansion of transit options of every sort in all regions, but especially for seniors and the disabled
  3. Safety-related improvements, especially safe-routes-to-school
  4. Local influence over project selection funding, voter approval, etc.
  
- Voters soundly reject two alternatives to the sales tax plan:
  1. A vehicles-miles-traveled (VMT) tax.
  2. A 15-cent hike in gas tax.

Q3: Most important issue facing Colorado today?

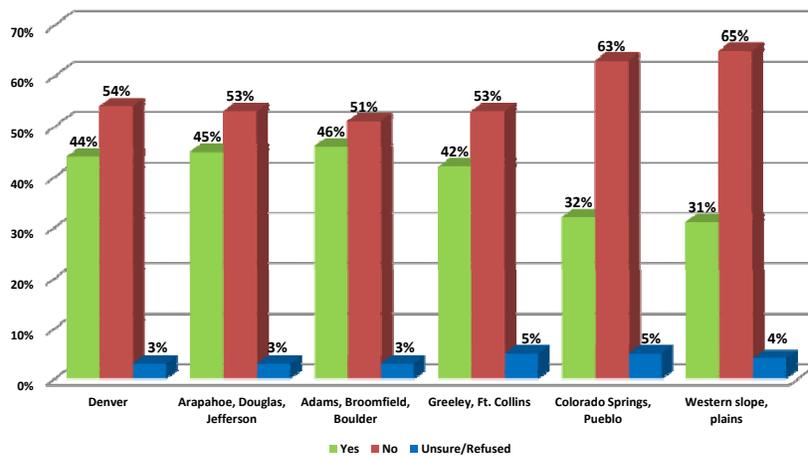


**Q4: Combined taxes paid to Colorado's state and local governments, as well as to local schools and special districts.**

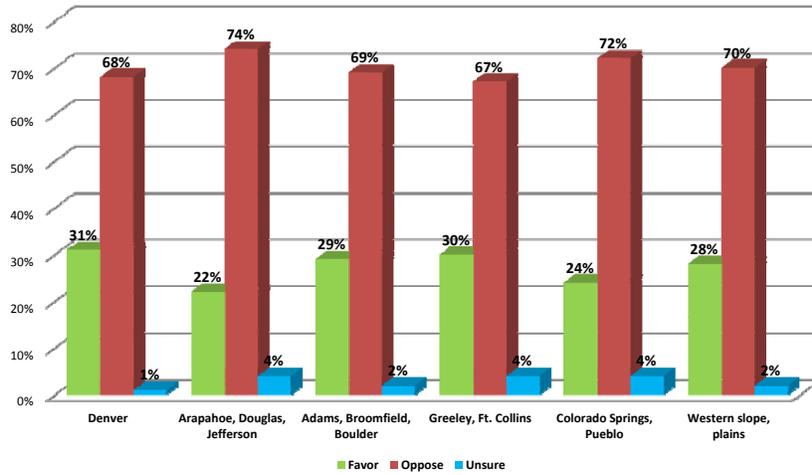


**Q7: Here is a ballot measure that you may be asked to approve or reject at a future election. How would you vote on it?**

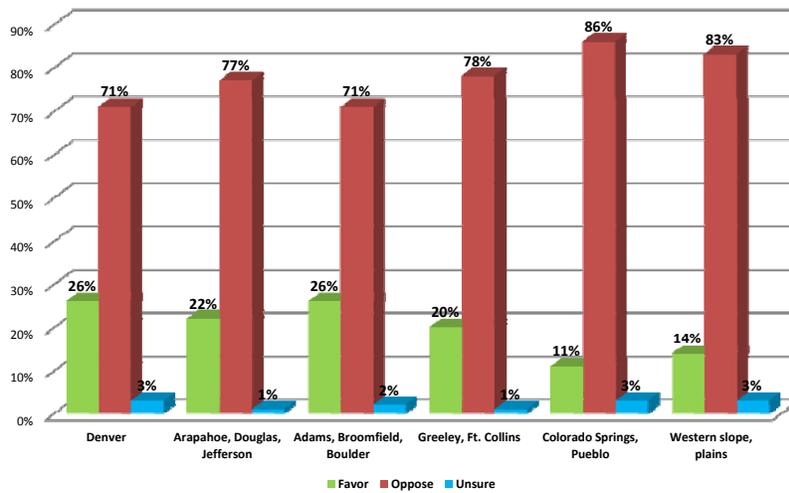
The ballot measure asks: Shall taxes be raised by 659 million dollars annually by means of an increase of seven-tenths of a cent in the state sales tax for 15 years, for the purpose of improving transportation in the state, including roads and bridges and public transit, with two-thirds of revenue going to the Department of Transportation and to counties and cities according to the existing formula for distribution of the motor fuels tax, and one-third going to local transit projects with funding distributed by population? This ends the summary. If the election were held today, would you vote YES to approve this proposal, or NO to reject it?



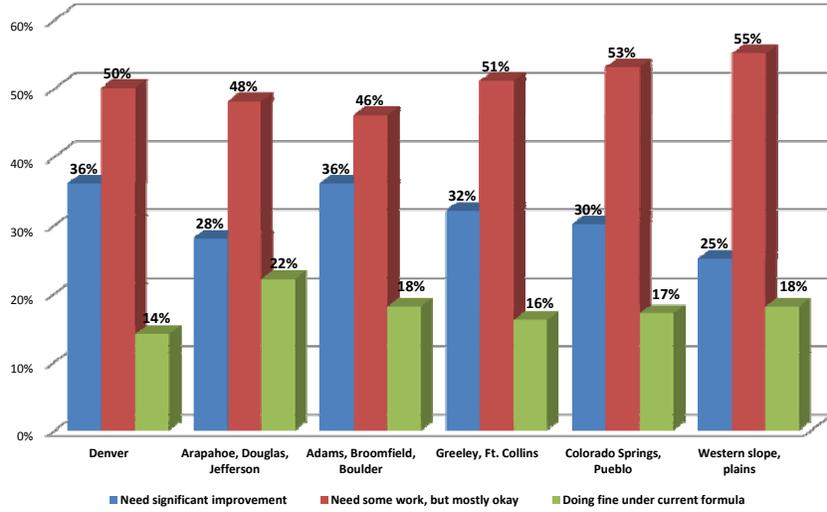
**Q13: Alternative proposal to eliminate both the state gas tax and vehicle registration fees and replace with a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax?**



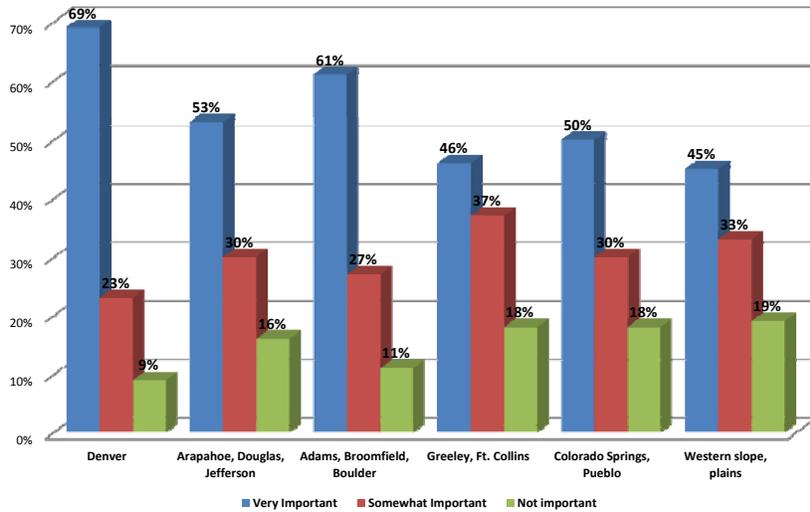
**Q14: Alternative proposal to increase the state gas tax by 15 cents per gallon and index the gas tax so the gas tax rate increases at the same rate as inflation?**



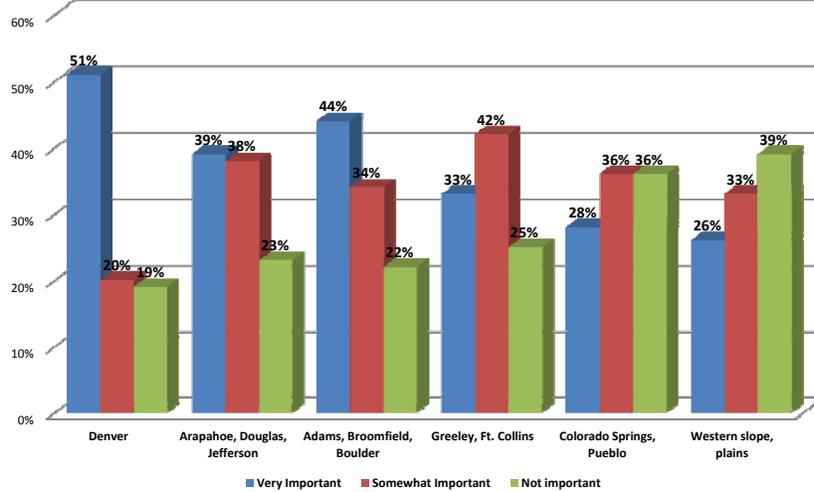
**Q15: When thinking about transportation in Colorado, which of these three points of view is closest to your own?**



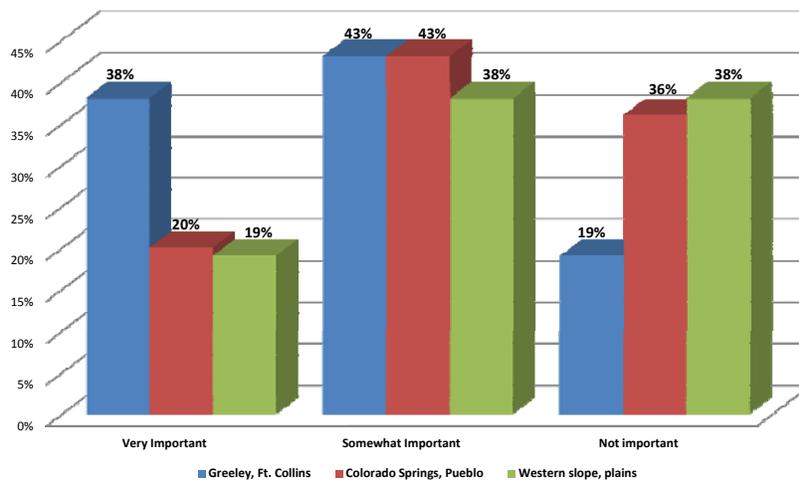
**Q29: Safe routes to school programs designed to make it safer for children to walk or bike to school?**



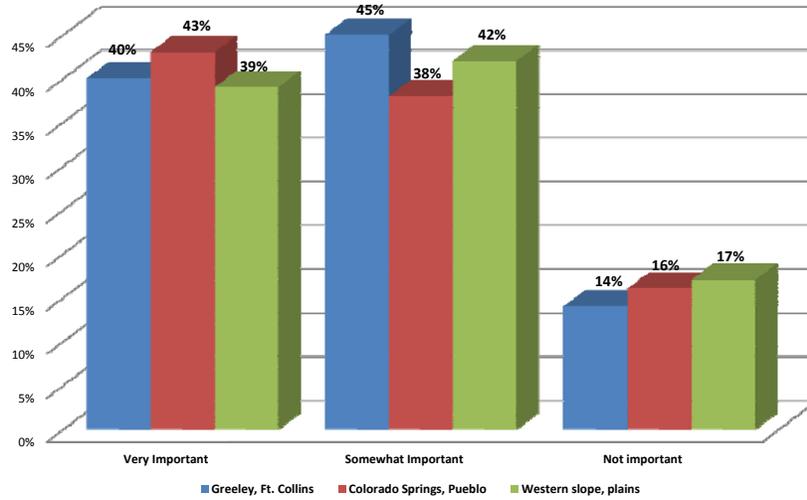
**Q30: Bicycle and pedestrian projects like new bike lanes, paths and underpasses, or improved sidewalks and safer road crossings?**



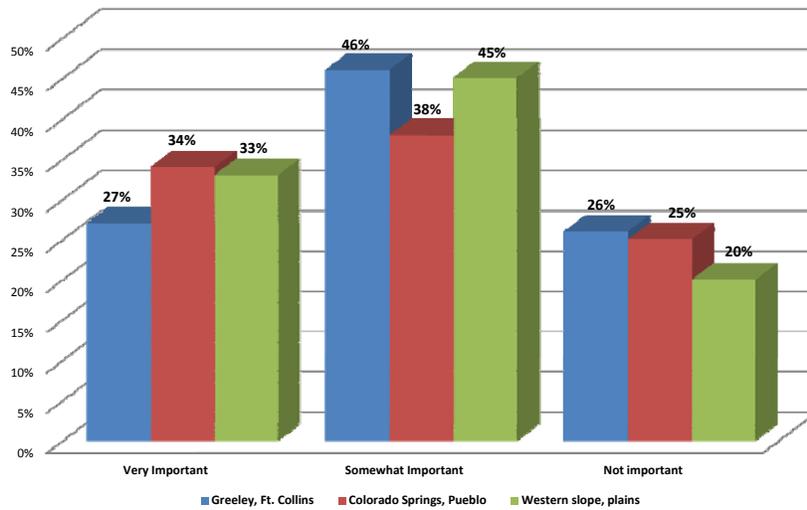
**Q31 (Rural Only): Inter-regional transit services across the state, a competitive grant program, and a fund for initial planning and development of future state passenger rail corridors?**



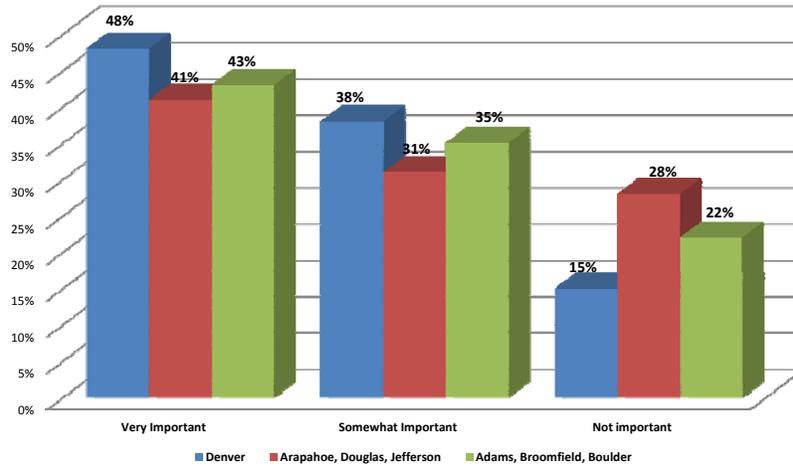
**Q32 (Rural Only): On-demand or point-to-point transit services for the elderly and disabled?**



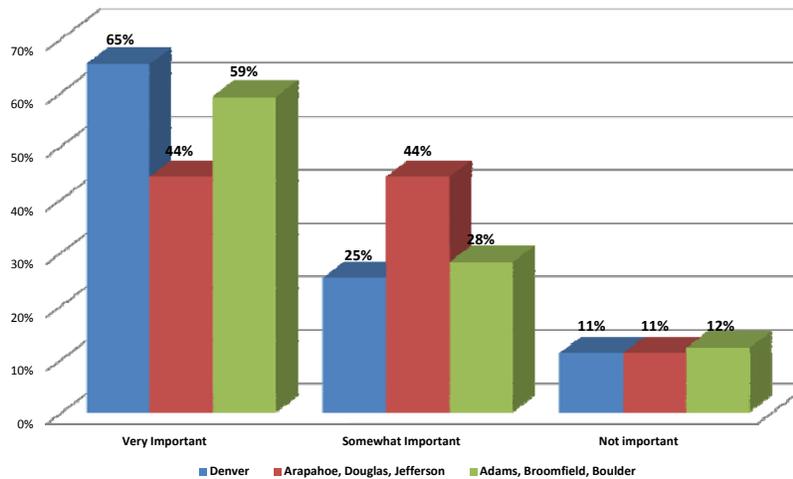
**Q33 (Rural Only): Improve safety on rural roads, including the construction of turn lanes and shoulders?**



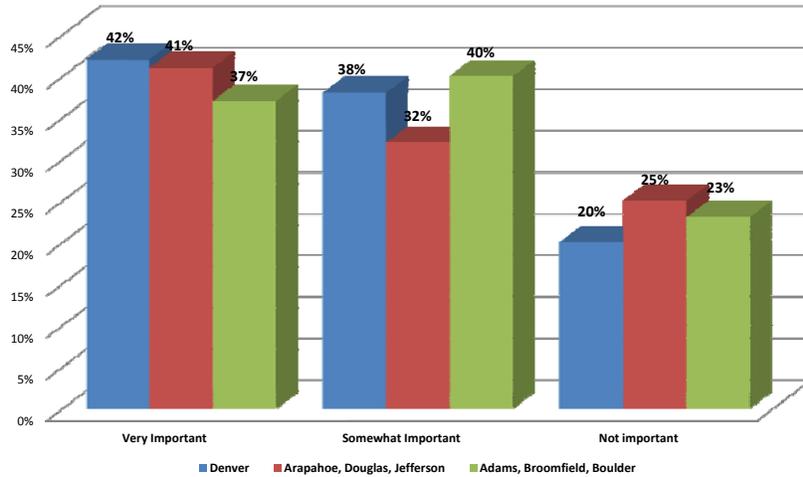
**Q34 (Denver-metro only): Improve bus service connecting employment, educational and shopping areas in the Denver-Metro area?**



**Q35 (Denver-metro only): Increase point-to-point service throughout the metro area for elderly, people with disabilities and those who are unable to drive?**

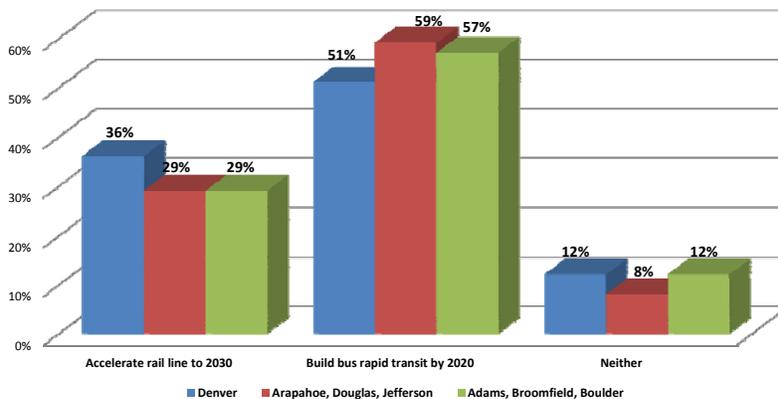


**Q36 (Denver-metro only): Rail lines that were previously approved by voters but that have not yet been completed because of rising costs and declining tax revenues during the recession?**



**Q37 (Denver-metro only): In 2004 voters approved the FasTracks ballot issue, which included funding for rail from Denver to Boulder & Longmont and bus rapid transit along US36. However, the cost of rail has increased to over \$1 billion, and there is not enough money to complete it until 2042. A train on this line would depart once every half hour at peak periods, and once an hour the rest of the day. The train would take 70 minutes from Longmont to Denver, and 50 minutes from Boulder to Denver. An alternative to this line is to build additional bus rapid transit lines, at a cost of under \$500 million, with buses operating in partially dedicated lanes along US 36 and additional corridors connecting Longmont, Boulder, Louisville, Lafayette, Erie and Broomfield. Buses would take 55 minutes from Longmont to Denver, and 40 minutes from Boulder to Denver, and would depart every five minutes during peak periods. Given a choice, would you prefer to see funds used to accelerate to 2030 the construction of the rail line between Longmont, Boulder and Denver with peak service every 30 minutes at a cost of \$1 billion, OR to build the bus rapid transit with service every 5 minutes by 2020 for less than \$500 million?**

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**Q55: Sometimes during polls like this, voters change their minds after hearing more about a topic...**

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