



Affordable Housing Public Opinion Research

Denver, CO

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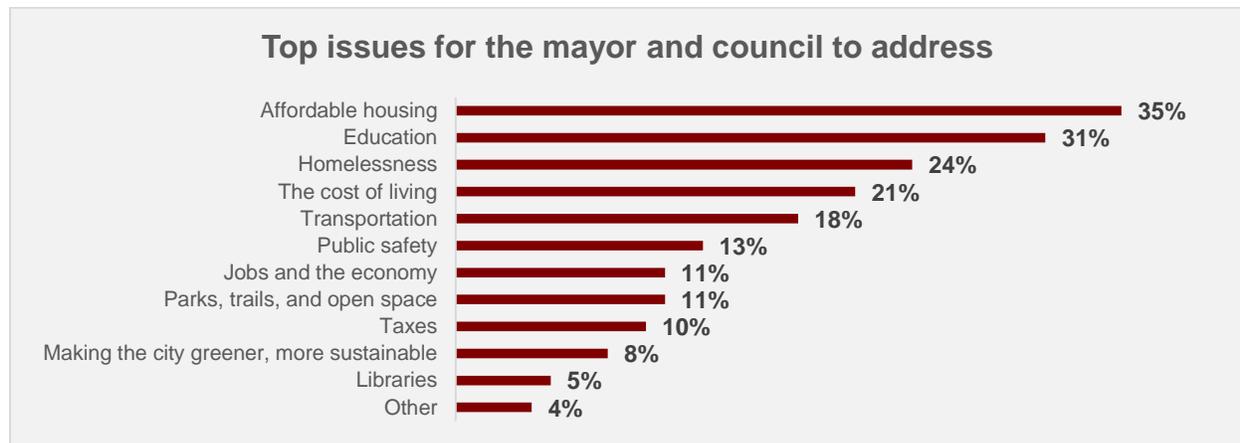
Methodology

Strategies 360 conducted a live telephone survey of 404 likely 2018 voters in Denver, Colorado. Interviews were conducted February 15-18, 2018. A combination of landline and mobile phones were called to ensure greater coverage of the population sampled. The overall margin of error for a survey of 404 interviews is $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level for each individual sample. The research project was sponsored by All In Denver, Close to Home, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Del Norte Community Development Corporation, Denver Foundation, Gates Family Foundation, Gorman & Company, Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver, and the Urban Land Conservancy.

Key Findings

A new survey of likely voters in Denver uncovers the extent to which **housing affordability and related issues have become one of the foremost issues in the public consciousness**. Of course, this does not represent a new trend; a similar survey conducted at this time last year measured the considerable public appetite for new actions to address housing affordability.ⁱ However, the desire for solutions has only grown bolder, and this survey reveals a willingness to reward elected officials who work to advance the cause.

In terms of the top issues that voters would most like to see the mayor and city council address, “affordable housing” has moved from #2 in 2017 (behind only education) to #1 in 2018. “Education” now ranks second, followed by “homelessness” and “the cost of living.” In other words, housing affordability, homelessness, and cost of living issues make up three of the top five issues voters prioritize at the municipal level, having risen in importance to trump other “marquee” issues like transportation, jobs and the economy, and taxes.ⁱⁱ



Furthermore, this issue unites Denverites of all stripes. **When asked how serious the problem of homelessness is in Denver, 96% call it serious, with six in ten identifying it as “very serious.” Similarly, 94% call home purchase and rental affordability a serious problem (64% very serious).** Few issues in our research ever demonstrate this degree of salience.

It comes as little surprise, then, that voters believe their elected officials have not done enough to address these issues. **When it comes to taking action and investing in programs to make housing more affordable and address homelessness, two thirds (66%) of Denver voters say the mayor and city council are doing too little.** Yet voters recognize when credible action is taken: in last year’s survey, Denverites overwhelmingly approved of the mayor and council’s September 2016 decision to establish Denver’s Affordable Housing Fund (74% approved, 19% disapproved). Still, voters want to see more substantive steps taken: **80% say they would**

be more likely to support a candidate for public office who made it a top priority to push for more affordable housing solutions here in Denver. Nearly half (47%) say they would be *much* more likely to support such candidates.

Often, when we measure support for public policy solutions in the abstract, we find that it melts away rather quickly when we ask voters whether they support specific, concrete proposals. That is not the case with housing affordability. **When asked whether they would support raising taxes to support affordable housing fixes, voters broadly respond in the affirmative.** Seventy-three percent would vote “yes” on establishing a new sales tax of one tenth of one percent and allowing Denver to bond on the \$200 million it would raise over 20 years. Another 68% say they would vote “yes” on bonding a new ½ mill in property taxes, and 64% would support bonding on a full mill in new property taxes.ⁱⁱⁱ These proposals garner support across the political and demographic spectrum, with majorities of all subgroups registering their approval for new revenue.^{iv}

ⁱ Strategies 360 conducted a live telephone survey on behalf of Enterprise Community Partners, Make Room Colorado, and All In Denver. 402 likely November 2018 voters in Denver were interviewed between February 11-14, 2017, with a margin of error of ±4.9% at the 95% confidence level.

ⁱⁱ This was asked as a “top two” question, so totals do not add up to 100%. Full question text: “I’m going to read you a list of some issues. After I finish, I’d like you to tell me which two issues you would most like to see the mayor and city council address.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Respondents were provided with the estimated bonding amounts (\$200 million for the sales tax, \$116 million for the ½ mill, and \$232 million for the full mill) as well as the amount of the proposed sales tax and per-household impact for the proposed property tax measures (approximately \$16 per year and \$32 per year on the median home value in Denver, respectively).

^{iv} For exact wording on these or any other questions in the survey, see the survey topline released by All In Denver, and available at AllinDenver.org.