

Friends of Park County

Promoting thoughtfully planned growth in order to protect and enhance Park County, Montana's vibrant communities, sustainable working lands, and healthy natural resources.

May 2023

Two other polls confirm voters' concerns about sprawl and willingness to support sensible land regulations.

Two polls of voter opinions are providing independent confirmation of the validity of Friends of Park County's 2022 poll of Park County voters, that showed a high level of concern about development and a willingness to support sensible land use regulations.

In February of 2022 New Bridge Strategies polled 300 voters in Park County on their attitudes on growth, development and other matters. The poll was commissioned by the Park County Environmental Council (PCEC.). New Bridge Strategies is identified as a Republican oriented opinion research firm.

In April of 2022, New Bridge Strategy and FM3 collaborated on a statewide poll of Montana voters commissioned by the University of Montana. FM3 is identified as a Democrat oriented firm. FM3 conducted FPC's poll of 306 voters in May of 2022.

The three different polls showed very similar results about voters concerns about growth and development (which are different phenomena, since a lot of development in Montana is unrelated to population growth.) For example, the polls asked voters to rank the seriousness of different problems, including sprawling development:

University of Montana 2022 statewide poll of voters:

"Development sprawling into what were once ranches or open lands."

Total serious 85% Extremely or very serious 52%

Park County Environmental Council 2022 poll of Park County voters:

"Sprawl and development."

Total serious 80% Extremely or very serious 51%

Friends of Park County 2022 poll of Park County voters:

"Working ranches being turned into housing."

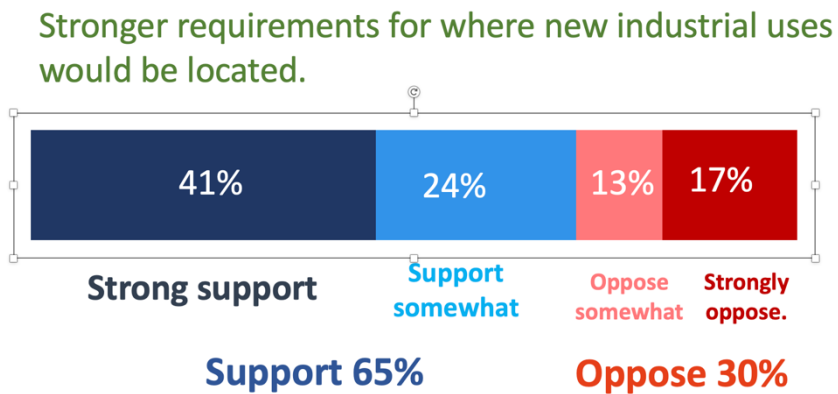
Total serious 77% Extremely or very serious 51%

Park County Environment Council 2022 poll of Park County voters:
 Wealthy second home-owners purchasing property in the County.
Total serious. 80% Extremely or very serious 61%

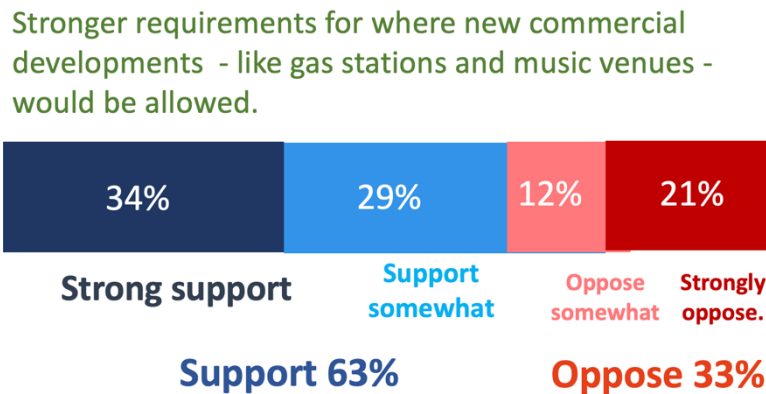
Friends of Park County 2022 poll of Park County voters:
 Development of second homes and vacation rentals in open space.

Total serious 83%. Extremely or very serious 64%

PCEC’s poll found that almost two-thirds of the voters favored stronger requirements to regulate where industrial uses would be located, more than double the number of voters who oppose this idea.



Voters opinions on regulating new commercial development was almost identical to their support for regulating industrial development.



Friends of Park County will be releasing an updated video summarizing key results from all three polls in June.

Now that County officials know that a majority of Park County voters' opinions are not represented by "no zoning" signs it will be interesting to see if that influences their decisions in the coming months on the need for sensible land use regulations.