Gilpin County Quality of Life & Communications Survey Results

August 2025

Prepared for: Gilpin County Board of County Commissioners

Prepared by: Gilpin County Community Engagement Officer

Gilpin County | 203 Eureka Street, Central City, CO 80427 | gilpincounty.colorado.gov

Introduction & Methodology

An online survey using Microsoft Forms included 260 online surveys among Gilpin County residents and employees. The survey was designed by the Community Engagement Officer to collect resident input regarding quality of life living in Gilpin County, views on various programs and services, community needs, and communication. Survey design input was provided during meetings and email correspondence with the Gilpin County Commissioners and the Gilpin County Manager.

The survey link was posted on various Gilpin County websites and social media pages. Paper versions were shared at the July 30 Gilpin County Senior Lunch. Flyers were posted throughout the county with a QR code and web link to the survey. The county hosted a table at the Gilpin County Fair with flyers and takeaway cards to the survey as well as the opportunity to complete the survey on an iPad. Social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor were shared on June 26, July 21, July 27, and again July 31. The survey was also shared in the July Gilpin Observer email newsletter and the July staff newsletter.

All online surveys were completed between June 26 and July 31, 2025.

The margin of error for this survey with 260 responses is approximately ± 6.1%, rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent. The results would be expected to fall within 6.1% of the true population value 95 times out of 100 if the same survey were repeated numerous times.

Executive Summary

Community Perception & Quality of Life

- **Rural character and small-town atmosphere** are overwhelmingly valued (93% found this attractive or somewhat attractive).
- **Sense of community** (78%) and **recreational opportunities** (81%) were also viewed positively.
- **Sheriff, first responders, and overall safety** (77%) and **fire protection and mitigation** (75%) were also viewed positively.
- More mixed responses appeared for:
  - **Road conditions** (35% positive, 40% negative)
  - **Access to healthcare** (only 22% positive, 42% negative)
  - **Code enforcement** (31% positive, 36% negative)
- **Quality of life over time:**
  - 45% said their quality of life has stayed the same.
  - 32% reported it had worsened.
  - 16% said it had improved.

Themes in feedback:
- Appreciation for nature, privacy, and quiet.
- Concerns about infrastructure, housing, healthcare access, and transparency in governance.

Key Priorities & Needs

Respondents emphasized the need for:

- Improved road maintenance
- Better access to healthcare and emergency services
- More local events and youth/senior programs
- Affordable housing and childcare
- Better code enforcement, particularly in regards to trash and excess vehicles
- Enhanced communication and transparency from county leadership

When asked where additional resources should be focused, the top areas included:

- Roads and infrastructure
- Wildfire preparedness and mitigation
- Business Development
- Public Transportation
- Sheriff & First Responder Staffing/Resources
- Train Station in Rollinsville

Public Funding Support

Residents showed strong support or neutrality toward all 10 services presented, with less than 10% opposed to any:

- **Top priorities** for funding:
  - Wildfire mitigation & egress (87%)
  - Maintenance & repair of County buildings (75%)
  - Watershed & forest health (67%)

Communications: How Residents Stay Informed

Current sources of information:

- Social media (most used – 73% of responses)

- County website and local newspapers (60% each)
- Word of mouth and email newsletters (58% and 32%)

Preferred methods of communication:

- Email (62%)
- Social media (48%)
- Text alerts (24%)
- Website updates (23%)

How often residents seek updates:

- Weekly: 42%
- Monthly: 28%
- Rarely or never: 20%
- Daily: 10%

What they want more of:

- Emergency alerts (70%)
- Community events (58%)
- Service info (trash, roads, taxes) (53%)
- Public meeting updates and preparedness info (44% and 38%)

Website Use and Access

Ease of finding information:

- 57% found it easy or somewhat easy
- 21% were neutral
- 21% found it somewhat or extremely difficult

Accessibility:

- 95% said county info is accessible in terms of language, format, or disability access.
- A small number noted barriers such as poor internet, no computer use, or lack of translations.

Website Feedback Themes

- Navigation is often confusing, especially for building permits, GIS, and meeting info.
- Many users find the website outdated, jargon- and text-heavy, or not senior-friendly.
- **Key suggestions:**

- Better search function
- Homepage quick links
- Updated department contacts
- Plain language and accessibility improvements
- Central calendar and emergency info section

Communication Improvements Requested

Common suggestions included:

- Use multiple platforms—don't rely solely on Facebook.
- Email newsletters (weekly or monthly, clearly advertised).
- Mailers, flyers, bulletin boards for non-digital users.
- More transparency, responsiveness, and updates in advance of meetings.
- Virtual and evening community meeting options.
- Improve the website, particularly for navigation and timely updates.
- More visible leadership and two-way engagement (e.g., town halls, office hours, listening sessions).

Key Takeaways

- Residents value the **natural environment and community spirit**, but are concerned about **infrastructure, healthcare, communication, and transparency**.
- There is strong support for **investing in services** like wildfire mitigation and business development.
- Communication efforts are improving, but need **more consistency**, **multi-platform delivery**, and a **more user-friendly website**.

Summary of Findings

Question 1: Which of the following do you find attractive or unattractive about living in Gilpin County?
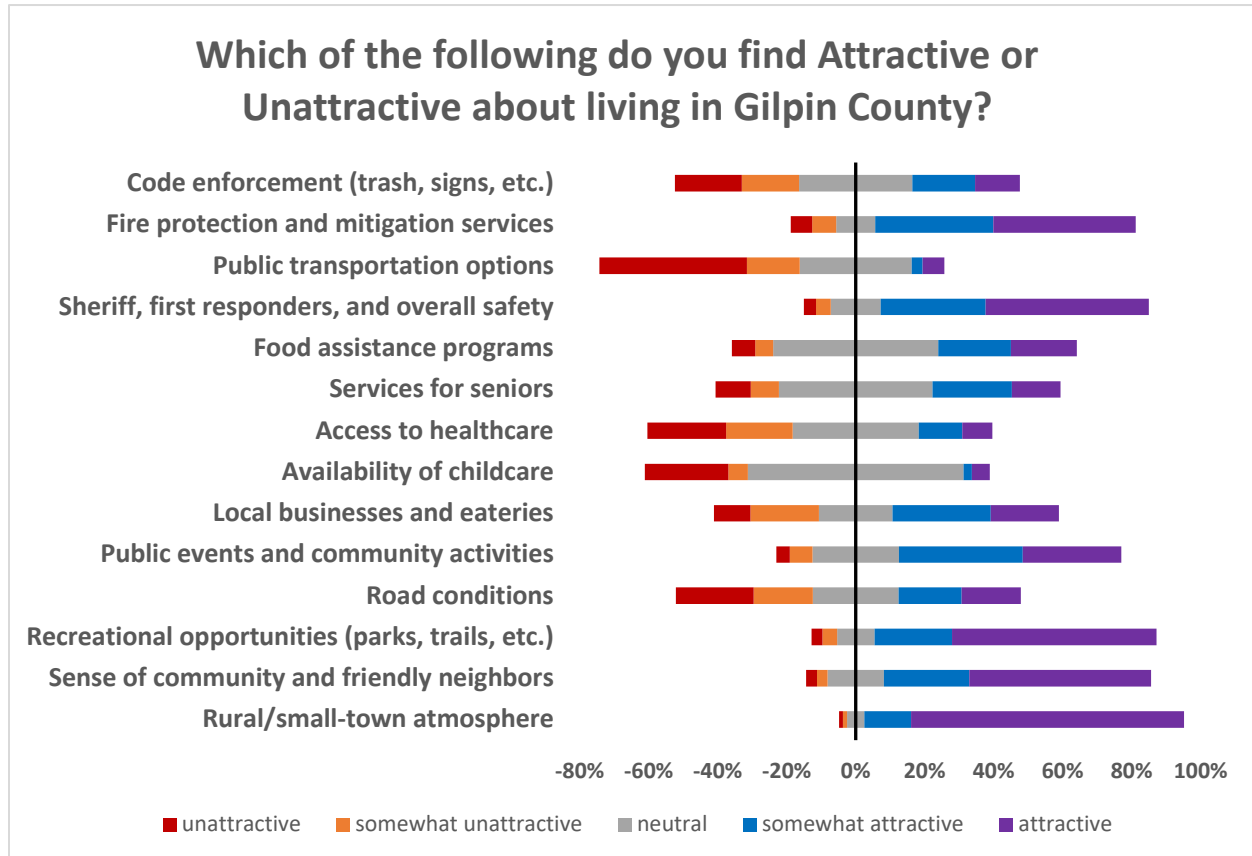
Strengths (Highest % Attractive/Somewhat Attractive):

- Rural/Small-Town Atmosphere – 93% attractive
- Recreational Opportunities – 81% attractive
- Sense of Community – 78% attractive
- Sheriff, First Responders, & Safety – 77% attractive, 8% unattractive
- Fire Protection & Mitigation – 75% attractive, 13% unattractive
- Public Events & Community Activities – 65% attractive

Moderate Areas:

- Food Assistance Programs – 40% attractive, 12% unattractive
- Services for Seniors – 37% attractive, 18% unattractive
- Local Businesses & Eateries – 48% attractive, 31% unattractive

Areas of Concern:

- Road Conditions – 35% attractive vs. 40% unattractive
- Access to Healthcare – 22% attractive vs. 42% unattractive
- Code Enforcement – 31% attractive, but 36% unattractive
- Childcare Availability – 7% attractive, 30% unattractive
- Public Transportation – 9% attractive vs. 58% unattractive

Question 2: Please share why you selected certain items as attractive or unattractive.

Below is a summary of the free responses to this question

Top Strengths to Preserve and Build On

- Rural/Small-Town Atmosphere – overwhelmingly valued (93% positive); central to Gilpin's identity.
- Sense of Community – considered a major asset (78%), though some feel it's declining or fragmented.
- Recreational Opportunities & Events – positive perception (81–65% attractive), with requests for more adult-oriented events, creative programming, and non-casino venues.
- Sheriff/First Responders/Safety – 77% attractive, 8% unattractive; while first responders are praised, comments raise concerns about staffing, response times, and support for emergency services.
- Fire Mitigation – 75% attractive, 13% unattractive; respondents are split between praising efforts and feeling they are either excessive, ineffective, or misdirected.

High-Priority Concerns

- Road Conditions – most divided category (35% attractive vs. 40% unattractive); calling for better grading, drainage, and maintenance. Called for improving culverts, fixing road base rather than surface issues, maintaining smaller roads.
- Public Transportation – 58% found it unattractive with narrative responses repeatedly noting it doesn't really exist and is needed, especially for seniors and teens.
- Access to Healthcare – clearly a pain point (21% attractive vs. 42% unattractive); residents cite few providers, long travel, and difficulty getting appointments.
- Code Enforcement – rated as 31% attractive, yet 36% unattractive and called out repeatedly in written responses for lack of action, inconsistency, and visual/fire hazards.
- Childcare Access – while 62% were neutral, 30% rated it unattractive and many strongly emphasized it in the comments as critical for young families.

Emerging or Divisive Issues

- Senior & Food Assistance Services – seen as valuable and relatively effective (37-40% positive), but some say they're underfunded or underpublicized.
- Local Businesses & Eateries – 48% attractive but 31% unattractive; many want more options outside casinos, especially groceries, healthy food, and community-oriented shops.

Cross-Cutting Concerns

- Spending & Prioritization – multiple comments express distrust of how county funds are allocated, with frequent criticism of perceived overspending on "pet projects" or facilities (e.g., food pantry) while basics go unmet. Some of these comments spoke toward the Cities of Central and Black Hawk which the County has little control over.
- Identity & Vision – some want branding and long-term planning (e.g., arts, small business, trails), while others fiercely resist growth or tourism-driven changes. Several people suggested having a vision or branding for the County to guide future changes and improvements. (Are we a small, rural county or are we trying to improve quality of life for families with young children, those facing food insecurity, and/or seniors?).

Question 3: What are the top 3 to 5 areas that you feel need additional resources?

1. Road maintenance and infrastructure (53%)
2. Fire protection and wildfire mitigation (45%)
3. Local eateries and business development (32%)
4. Public transportation (28%)
5. Sheriff and first responder staffing/resources (27%)
6. Train station in Rollinsville (27%)
7. Access to Healthcare (24%)
8. Affordable or available childcare (22%)
9. Enforcement of code violations (22%)
10. Affordable housing (21%)
11. Aging in place services and home renovations (18%)
12. Feeling safe in your home and community (14%)
13. Recreational opportunities (12%)
14. More public events and community activities (12%)
15. Other (11%)
16. Senior living facility (10%)

17. Septic enforcement (7%)

18. Food assistance programs (4%)

Areas in Need of Resources

Category	Value
Food assistance programs	~4%
Septic enforcement	~7%
Other	~11%
Senior living facility	~10%
More public events and community activities	~11%
Recreational opportunities	~11%
Feeling safe in your home and community	~14%
Aging in place services and home renovations	~18%
Affordable housing	~21%
Enforcement of code violations	~22%
Affordable or available childcare	~22%
Access to Healthcare	~24%
Train station in Rollinsville	~27%
Sheriff and first responder staffing/resources	~27%
Public transportation	~28%
Local eateries and business development	~32%
Fire protection and wildfire mitigation	~45%
Road maintenance and infrastructure	~53%

While **wildfire mitigation** and **local eateries/business development** were seen as positive in the previous questions, they both rank high for need for resources.

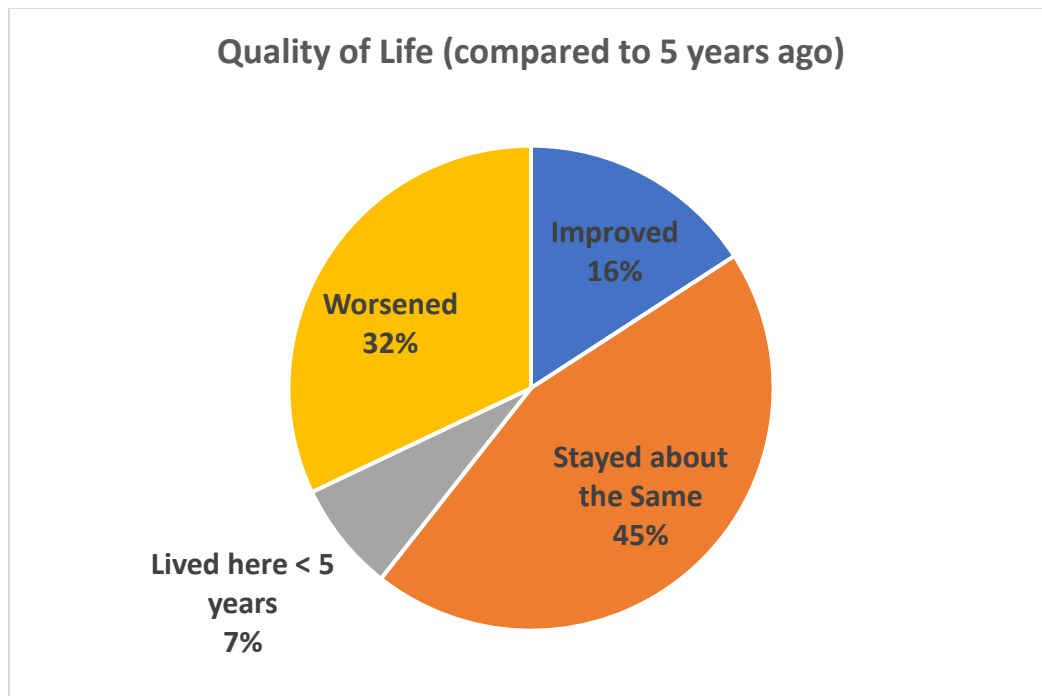**Question 4: Compared to five (5) years ago, do you find that your Quality of Life in Gilpin County has...**

Quality of Life (compared to 5 years ago)

Improved 16%
Stayed about the Same 45%
Lived here < 5 years 7%
Worsened 32%

Question 5: If you chose improved or worsened, what changed?

Reasons Residents Said Quality of Life Has *Improved* (16%)

1. Expanded Services

- Opening of Clinica for healthcare access
- Reopening or expanded hours at the Community Center
- Growth of senior services, including social programs and transportation

2. Community & Safety

- Stronger presence from Sheriff's Office and first responders
- More community involvement, positive relationships with neighbors
- Residents feeling safe and connected despite broader world challenges

3. Local Development

- Some noted new local businesses and childcare options
- Better fire mitigation awareness
- Return to normal after COVID-19 lockdowns (e.g., events, gatherings, senior lunches)

Reasons Residents Said Quality of Life Has *Worsened* (32%)

1. Decline in Core Services

- Road maintenance was the most frequently cited issue
- Rec Center hours and access have been reduced
- Trash and recycling costs have increased
- Concerns that county services are "*diminishing while taxes rise*"

2. County Spending & Priorities

- Many feel there is wasteful spending on "pet projects" (e.g., new food pantry, administrative hires)
- Perception that leadership focuses on social programs over basic needs
- Distrust of county management and lack of transparency/accountability

3. Cost of Living & Development

- Rising property taxes and insurance
- Increased housing prices due to STRs and demand
- More tourists and new residents, perceived overdevelopment
- Loss of community feel: "Gilpin is becoming a city"

4. Infrastructure & Enforcement Gaps

- Code enforcement is seen as weak or inconsistent
- Growing issues with trash, illegal building, septic, and mining claim development
- Lack of public transportation and limited access to groceries or healthcare for some areas

5. Environmental & Safety Concerns

- Air and noise pollution: more traffic, planes, motorcycles
- Reports of increasing crime, homelessness, and feeling less safe
- Wildlife disruptions and forest health concerns

Question 6: Do you support the county's funding of the following services?

Overall, respondents either supported or were neutral about funding the 10 services listed in the survey (Wildfire mitigation and improving egress, Senior services, Watershed and forest health, NoCo Places, Mental health and health care access, Youth programs, Childcare, Veterans services, Historic preservation of local landmarks, Maintenance and repair of county buildings and equipment). Less than 10% of respondents did not support any one of these services. Wildfire mitigation and improving egress received the highest level of support at 87% of

respondents followed by maintenance and repair of county buildings and equipment at 75%. 22% of respondents needed more information about NoCo Places and 11% needed more information on watershed and forest health.

Support for County Spending

Need more information
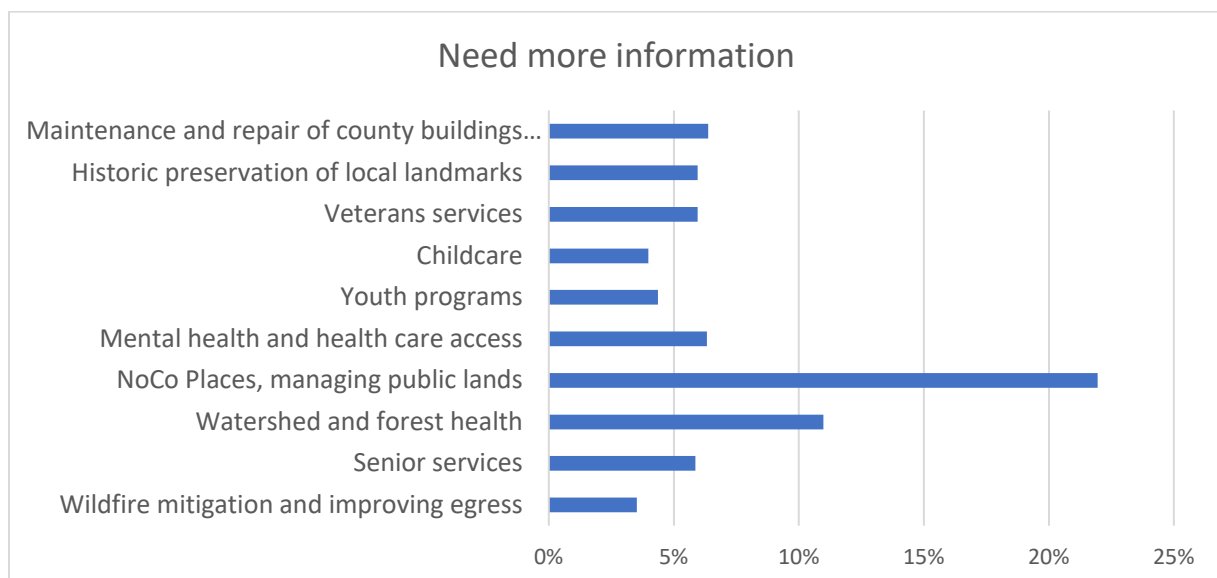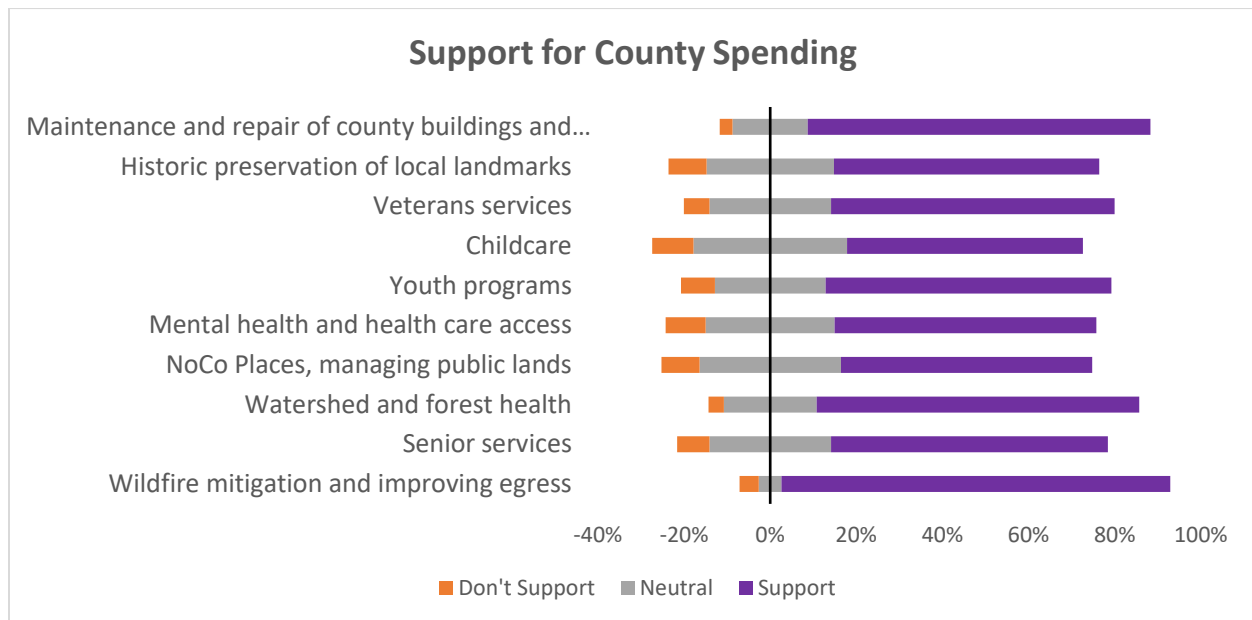
Question 7: What do you envision for the future of Gilpin County or what is your dream for your neighborhood?

1. Preserve Gilpin's Rural, Small-Town Character

- Widespread desire to keep the county rural, quiet, and close-knit

- Resistance to overdevelopment, urbanization, and large-scale tourism (e.g., casinos, resorts, STRs)
- Strong identity as a mountain community, distinct from cities like Boulder or Denver

2. Improve Basic Infrastructure

- Road maintenance is a top concern
- Calls for better drainage, paving, and safer neighborhood roads
- Some support for public transportation, especially for seniors and low-income residents

3. Fire Mitigation and Environmental Protection

- Wildfire preparedness is viewed as essential: more mitigation, egress routes, and dead tree removal
- Concerns about pine beetle infestation and overall forest health
- Calls for stronger code enforcement to reduce junk and fire hazards

4. A More Connected, Respectful Community

- Aspirations for greater civic unity, kindness, and engagement
- More public events, gathering spaces, and programs for youth, seniors, and families
- Requests for leadership that listens to residents and avoids "lip service"

5. Responsible Growth and Smart Development

- Support for non-casino businesses, small local shops, restaurants, and co-ops
- Desire for thoughtful development in key areas like Rollinsville or mid-Gilpin (not sprawling growth)
- Mixed feelings about the Rollinsville train station — some see opportunity, others see strain

6. Affordable Living and Local Services

- Affordable housing, childcare, and healthcare access are recurring concerns
- Strong calls to prioritize funding for core services over expensive new programs
- Repeated desire for grocery stores, hardware stores, and basic commerce closer to home

7. Better Communication and Accountability

- Frustration with county responsiveness and perceived wasteful spending
- Calls for more transparency and citizen input
- Support for fiscal responsibility and focusing on what's already promised

Question 8: Where do you currently get information about Gilpin County government services, programs, and updates?

Sources of County Information

- Social media — 73%
- Local newspaper — 60%
- County website — 60%
- Word of mouth — 58%
- Email newsletters — 32%
- Community meetings or town halls — 19%
- Flyers or posters at public locations — 18%
- Other — 2%
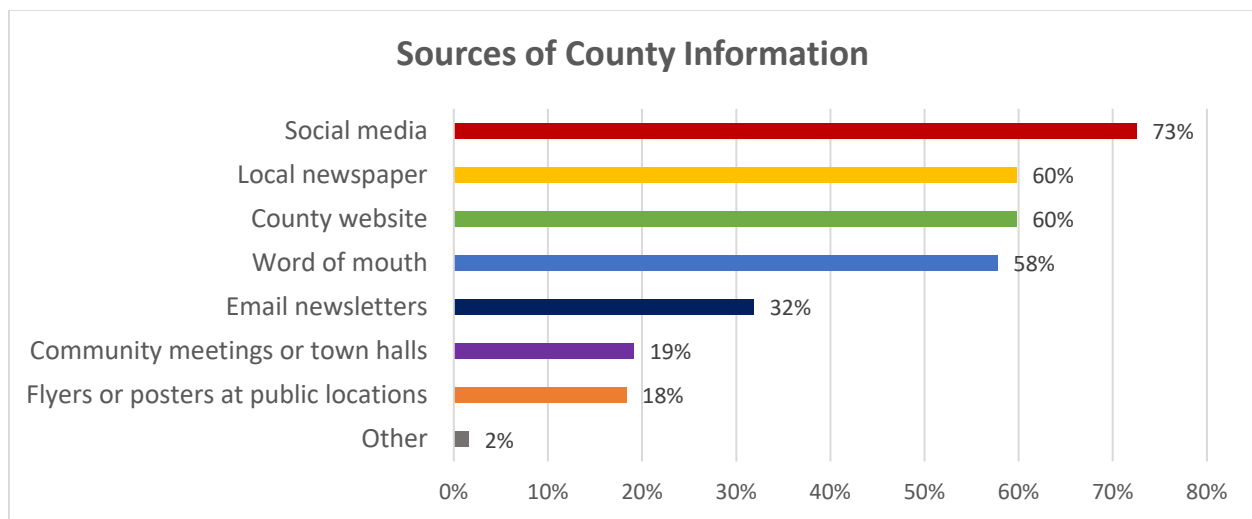
Top Information Sources:

1. **Social Media** – 182 respondents
   The most-used source, indicating that Facebook, Nextdoor, and other platforms are key communication tools for the county.

2. **County Website** – 150 respondents
   A major channel, but frequent comments suggest users want more timely updates and easier navigation.

3. **Local Newspaper** – 150 respondents
   Still highly utilized, especially for residents who prefer traditional media.

4. **Word of Mouth** – 145 respondents
   Highlights the strong community networks in Gilpin, but also shows that informal communication plays a big role — which can be inconsistent.

Secondary but Valuable Channels:

- **Email Newsletters** – 80 respondents
  A preferred source for many, though it reaches fewer people than social media or the website. Opportunity to expand reach.

- **Community Meetings or Town Halls** – 48 respondents
  Useful for engaged residents, but underutilized by the broader population.

- **Flyers/Posters in Public Locations** – 46 respondents
  Still an important offline option, especially for residents without reliable internet.

Key Takeaways:

- Digital outreach (social media, website, email) is critical but must be kept up-to-date and accessible.
- Local news and word of mouth still carry weight — worth partnering with newspapers and community leaders.
- There's room to broaden the impact of newsletters and in-person engagement, especially for harder-to-reach groups.

Question 9: How often do you seek or receive updates from Gilpin County?

How Often do you Seek or Receive Updates from Gilpin County?

Category	Percentage
Never	4%
Rarely	16%
Monthly	28%
Weekly	42%
Daily	10%
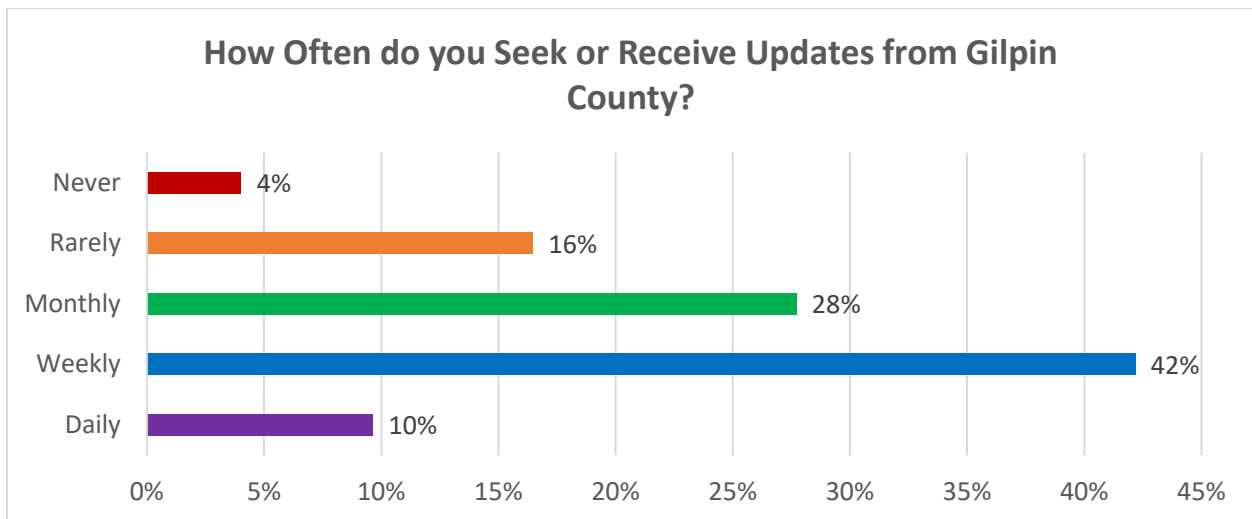
Frequency of Engagement with County Updates

- **Weekly (42%)** – The most common response. Nearly half of respondents check in on a regular, ongoing basis.
- **Monthly (28%)** – Over a quarter stay informed, but less frequently, suggesting they may only look for updates when something impacts them directly.
- **Rarely (16%)** – Some engagement, but minimal or event-driven.
- **Daily (10%)** – A small but engaged group who actively follow updates.
- **Never (4%)** – Very limited awareness or interest in county communications.

Question 10: What types of information would you like to receive more frequently from the County? (Select all that apply)

Increase Frequency of the Following Types of Information

Category	Percentage
Other	3%
Departmental spotlights	13%
Volunteer or employee spotlights	14%
Job openings and volunteer opportunities	24%
Public health updates	29%
Business and economic development	31%
Preparedness information	38%
Public meetings and agendas	44%
County services (trash, roads, permits, taxes,…	53%
Community events	58%
Emergency alerts (fire, road closures, weather)	70%

Residents value urgent alerts, event-based communication, and practical service updates the most. There is also meaningful interest in governance transparency and community resilience messaging.

Top Information Priorities:

1. **Emergency Alerts** (70%)

   o Fire, road closures, weather, etc.
   o Clear priority—residents want timely, reliable communication in urgent situations.

2. **Community Events** (58%)

   o High interest in staying connected through local gatherings and happenings.

3. **County Services** (53%)

   o Includes trash, roads, permits, taxes, and similar topics.
   o Residents want practical, day-to-day service updates.

Moderate Priorities:

4. **Public Meetings & Agendas** (44%)

   o Interest in transparency and decision-making processes.

5. **Preparedness Information** (38%)

    o   Reflects concern about wildfire, evacuation plans, and personal readiness.

6. **Business & Economic Development** (31%)

    o   Residents want to hear more about growth, jobs, and new ventures.

7. **Public Health Updates** (29%)

    o   Especially relevant post-pandemic, but not a top-tier priority.

Lower Priorities:
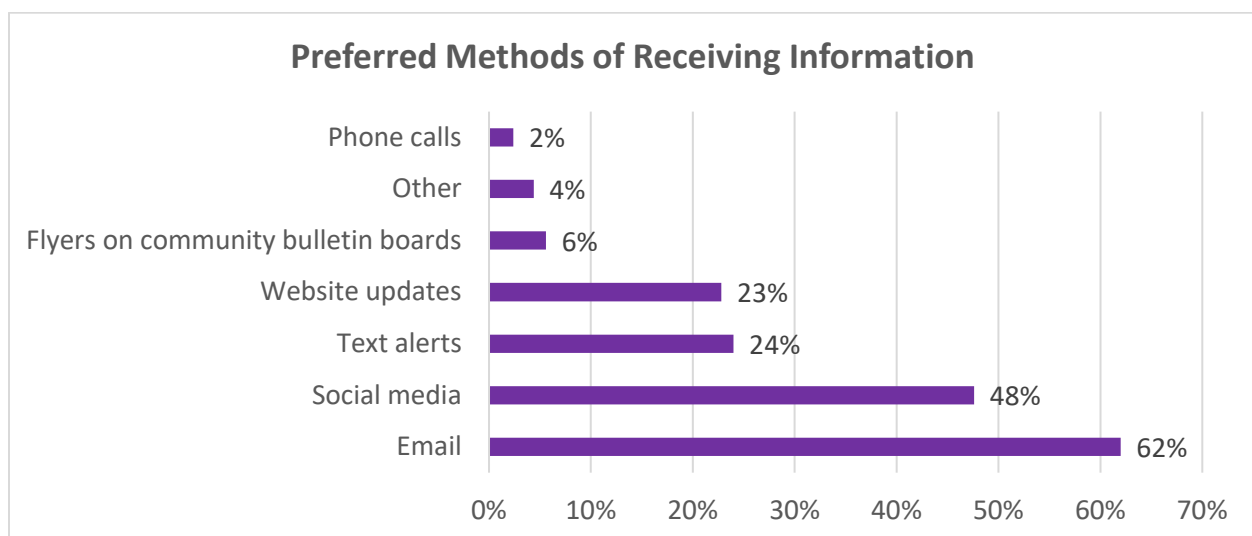
8. **Job Openings & Volunteer Opportunities** (24%)

9. **Volunteer or Employee Spotlights** (14%)

10. **Departmental Spotlights** (13%)

    o   While less critical overall, these can still strengthen community connection and trust and are related to county services.

Question 11: What is your preferred method for receiving information from the County?

Preferred Methods of Receiving Information

Method	Percentage
Phone calls	2%
Other	4%
Flyers on community bulletin boards	6%
Website updates	23%
Text alerts	24%
Social media	48%
Email	62%

Email is the clear frontrunner, with social media also highly effective. To meet community preferences, the County should focus on strengthening email communication, maintaining an active social media presence, and using texts for urgent alerts.

Top Communication Channels:

1. **Email (62%)**

   o The most preferred method, signaling a strong opportunity to expand or improve email newsletters for broader outreach.

2. **Social Media (48%)**

   o Continues to be an essential tool for real-time updates and broad visibility—especially on platforms like Facebook and Nextdoor.

Secondary Preferences:

3. **Text Alerts (24%)**

   o Particularly valued for emergency or time-sensitive communication.

4. **Website Updates (23%)**

   o A foundational tool, but only effective if kept current and easy to navigate.

Less Common but Still Valued:

5. **Flyers on Community Bulletin Boards (6%)**

   o Still important for residents without internet access or who prefer physical reminders.

6. **Other (4%)**

   o Includes newspaper notices, printed newsletters, and emergency alert systems.

7. **Phone Calls (2%)**

   o Least preferred overall, but may still be necessary for targeted outreach (e.g., seniors or emergency notifications).

Question 12: What could Gilpin County do to improve communication with residents and business owners?

1. Diversify Communication Channels

Residents consistently emphasized the importance of using **multiple platforms** to reach all community members:

- **Email** (most frequently suggested)
- **Text alerts** for emergencies or time-sensitive information, as well as website update notifications
- **Social media**, but not relying solely on Facebook
- **Website updates**—frequently requested to be timely, accurate, and easier to navigate
- **Printed materials**, including:
    - Mailed newsletters (monthly or quarterly)
    - Flyers and posters at community hubs
    - Local newspapers
- **Community bulletin boards** and **portable road signs** for events and announcements

---

2. Improve Accessibility and Transparency

Respondents asked for:

- **Timely updates** (especially before meetings or policy changes)
- **Clear, accurate, and proactive information**
- **More transparency** in decision-making (e.g., fewer executive sessions, clearer agendas)
- **Better meeting access**, including:
    - Video/Zoom options with improved audio
    - Evening and weekend times
    - Posting all meetings and workshops, not just formal ones

---

3. Strengthen Email Communication

- Many residents are **unaware an email newsletter exists** or didn't know how to sign up
- Suggestions included:
    - Creating a **simple, clearly advertised signup process**
    - Sending more **regular updates** (weekly or bi-weekly)
    - Including **meeting summaries, department updates, and upcoming events**

---

4. Website and Technology Improvements

Numerous comments called for:

- A **modernized and easier-to-navigate website**
- Better **organization of information by topic or service**, not by department structure
- **RSS feeds,** or ability to subscribe to automated updates
- **Search improvements** (especially for property or code enforcement info, which is not part of the primary website)

---

5. Build Community Engagement

Ideas included:

- **In-person and virtual town halls** throughout the county (not just at the courthouse)
- **"Coffee with Commissioners"** at different times and places
- **Spotlighting residents or businesses** in newsletters
- More **two-way dialogue**, including feedback loops and listening sessions

---

6. Ensure Equitable Access

Residents stressed the need to:

- **Reach people without social media**
- **Address rural internet gaps**
- Make communication **inclusive and accessible** for all demographics

---

General Sentiment:

- Many residents appreciate recent improvements in communication and support continued efforts.
- A minority expressed frustration with unanswered emails or perceived lack of transparency.
- Others emphasized **shared responsibility**, noting residents also need to make an effort to stay informed.

Question 13: Do you have any suggestions for platforms, formats, or languages that should be added to better reach your community?

Key Takeaways:

Preferred Platforms to Add or Expand:

- **Text Notifications** – Several respondents want alerts pushed to their phones for emergencies, meetings, and service updates.
- **Instagram** – Suggested multiple times as a **more engaging and visual platform** than Facebook. Note: Gilpin County has an Instagram account as of February 2024.
- **Nextdoor** – A few residents said this is where they already get local information and want the County more active there.
- **Bluesky** and **Twitter/X** – Mentioned by a few as alternatives for broader or younger audiences.
- **Plain, accessible websites** – Strong support for **webpages without login barriers**, organized by topic, and easy to navigate.

Formats & Delivery Suggestions:

- **Weekly Email Update (Fridays)** – With events, meeting agendas, and upcoming deadlines.
- **PDF summaries of meeting minutes** – Easy-to-scan outlines and zoning updates.
- **Published, mailed newsletter or newspaper flyer** – Especially for those **without social media** or reliable internet.
- **Centralized communication "hub"** – A single, well-maintained page linking to all Gilpin info sources (social, news, agendas, etc.)
- **More flyers** at public spaces and USPS

Languages & Accessibility:

- **Spanish translation** was suggested by multiple residents, especially given the presence of Hispanic residents and casino workers.
- Others **opposed translation**, citing English as the only necessary language—but a smaller group.

Other Notable Insights:

- There is **distrust of social media** among some residents who feel platforms like Facebook are full of misinformation.
- Several requested **improved responsiveness** from County officials (e.g., replying to emails).
- A few advocated for **more community input methods** like:
  - Focus groups
  - Town hall forums
  - Open office hours
  - Cross-city coordination between Black Hawk, Central City, and unincorporated areas

---

Question 14 and 15: Is County Information Accessible?

- **95% of respondents said "yes"**, suggesting that most residents feel County information is accessible in terms of **language, format, and disability access**.
- **However, 5% said "no".**

While most residents are satisfied with accessibility, respondents stated the County could improve communication and access by:
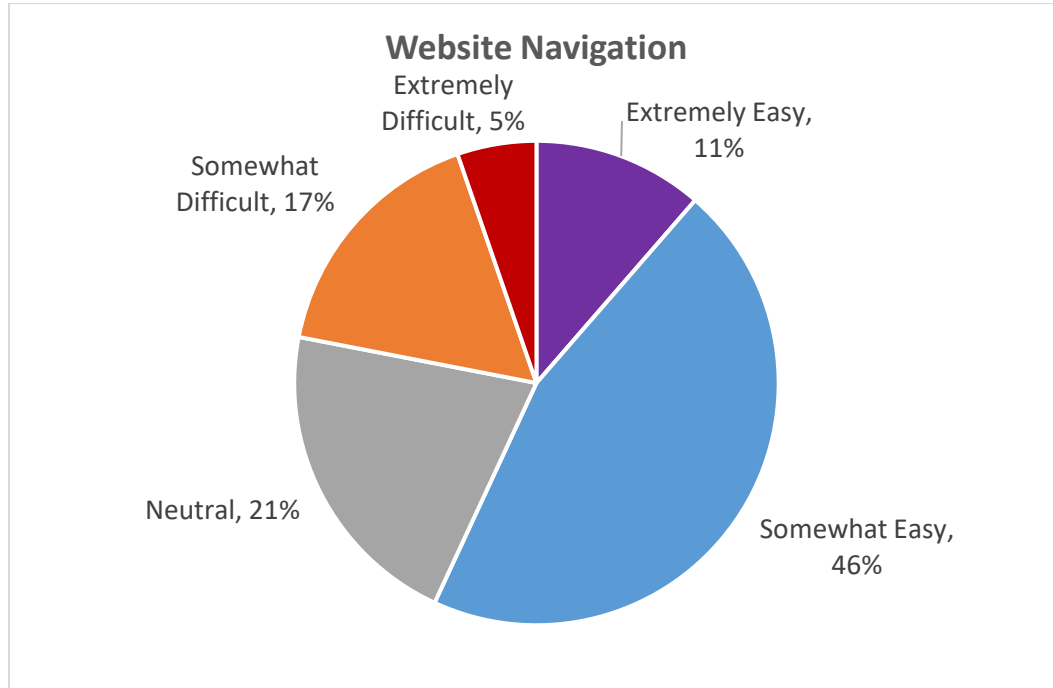
- Enhancing **physical accessibility** at public facilities.
- Expanding **non-digital** communication options (e.g., mailers, flyers).
- Improving the **clarity and navigation** of the website.
- Offering **more consistent updates** across trusted platforms (email, newspaper, public bulletin boards).
- Ensuring **staff responsiveness** and maintaining transparency in public engagement.

This would help close the gap for the 5% of residents who feel left out and reinforce trust in County communications overall.

Question 16: How easy is it to find information on the Gilpin County website?

Website Navigation

Extremely Difficult, 5%
Extremely Easy, 11%
Somewhat Difficult, 17%
Somewhat Easy, 46%
Neutral, 21%

Ease of Use – Resident Experience Overview

- **57% of respondents** found the website **easy to use**:
  - **11%** said it was *extremely easy*
  - **46%** said it was *somewhat easy*
- **21%** were *neutral*, suggesting they may use the site infrequently or with mixed results
- **21% found it difficult to use**:
  - **17%** said it was *somewhat difficult*
  - **5%** said it was *extremely difficult*

Key Takeaway:

Nearly a **quarter of respondents struggle to find information**, which aligns with earlier feedback about:

- Navigation issues
- Outdated or hard-to-find content
- Lack of intuitive search or topic-based organization

This suggests a **need for a user-focused redesign** or improvements like:

- A more prominent and accurate search bar
- Clearly labeled top tasks (e.g., permits, agendas, property info)

- Easier access to current news and meeting information

Question 17: Do you have suggestions for the Gilpin County website?

Eighty people responded to this free response question. Reading the specific comments, it's clear that respondents weren't just offering suggestions for the main Gilpin County website at gilpincounty.colorado.gov; they were also talking about the OpenGov portal and the GIS site.

1. Navigation and Organization Issues

- **Most common concern**: It's hard to find information unless you already know which department handles it.
- Pages like **building permits, GIS, senior services, motor vehicles, transfer station, public records**, and **meeting minutes** were repeatedly mentioned as **difficult to locate**.
- Many asked for:
    - A **better-organized homepage** with **quick links to top tasks**
    - **Topic-based navigation** instead of department-only structure
    - A clear, functional **search bar** (the primary website has a search bar so it's unclear if people have trouble locating the search bar or if they're referring to the OpenGov or GIS sites)

---

2. Outdated or Inconsistent Content

- Residents frequently cited:
    - **Inaccurate or outdated information**
    - Lack of updates on active pages like **department hours or closures**

---

3. Website Design & Usability

- Multiple respondents described the site as:
    - "Clunky," "not user-friendly," and "not senior-friendly"
    - Requiring "too many clicks" or being "too techie" for some residents
- Specific design suggestions included:
    - **Modern UI update**
    - **Expandable outline formats** for dense info (like zoning)
    - More **visual layout** (less scrolling, easier to scan)

---

4. Content Gaps and Requests

Residents asked for:

- **Archived meeting minutes** and **detailed agendas** posted regularly
- **Senior lunch menus**
- **Emergency alerts** on the homepage
- Clearer **permit guidance** and **inspection procedures**
- A dedicated **Parks & Rec site** or section (the merger with the county site caused confusion)
- Better **visibility of department contacts, emails, and phone numbers**

---

5. Accessibility for Non-Tech Users

- Requests for:
    - A **simplified interface** for older or less tech-savvy users
    - Less reliance on dropdowns and jargon
    - Consideration of **print and offline options** for key info

---

6. Functionality Suggestions

- Add or fix:
    - A **working search engine**
    - More visible and usable **calendar function**
    - **GIS map usability** and tutorials
    - Public record access tools
- Suggestions to **spotlight staff or services** and **highlight top-visited sections** (e.g., tax info, DMV, trash/recycling)

## 7. Tone & Trust Issues

- A few responses criticized:
    - "Administrative language" and jargon
    - Poor response times when submitting inquiries through the site
    - The lack of clarity around **what happens after complaints or questions are submitted**

Key Takeaway:

The current site functions, but not comfortably or clearly for many residents. The county could dramatically improve both trust and accessibility by a user-centered redesign focused on:

- **Better navigation**
- **Fresh, reliable content**
- **Clear language and layout**

Question 18: In which part of Gilpin County do you live or operate your business?
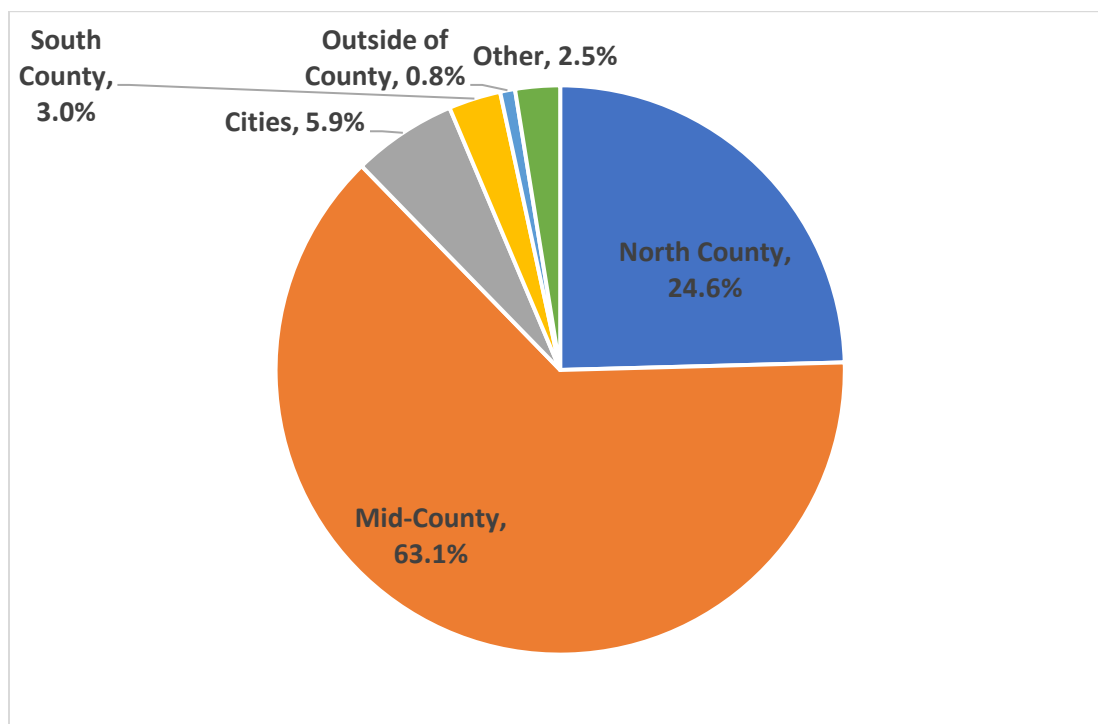
For this question, we used the definitions used in the 2019 Quality of Life Survey for consistency. These do not follow the district definitions. We did combine the cities of Black Hawk and Central in one category to allow more anonymity for those responding from Black Hawk as that population is very small. The options as defined were as follows:

- **North County** (Rollinsville, Tolland, Wondervu, Lincoln Hills, Pinecliffe, La Chula Vista, Whispering Pines), 24.6%
- **Mid County** (Sierra Pines, Braecher Park, Dory Hill, Dory Lakes, Colorado Sierra, Gilpin Gardens, Aspen Springs, Missouri Lakes, Paradise Valley, Golden Gate Canyon, Forest Hills), 63.1%

- **South County** (Russell Gulch, Nevadaville), 3.0%
- Within the city limits of the Cities of Black Hawk or Central (**Cities**), 5.9%
- Outside of Gilpin County, 0.8%
- Other, 2.5%

With the broad definition of mid-county, it's not surprising that it comprised the majority of respondents (63%). In 2019, it was also the largest group of respondents (59.7%). The percent from North County remained the same over both surveys (24.6%). South County is similar across both surveys (3.0% and 3.1% in 2019). Besides the increase in mid-county, the other significant difference is in the percentage of respondents from the two cities. In 2019, there were 2.4% of respondents from Black Hawk and 9.6% from Central City. In 2025, the cities only represented 5.9% of the respondents.

Question 19: Age
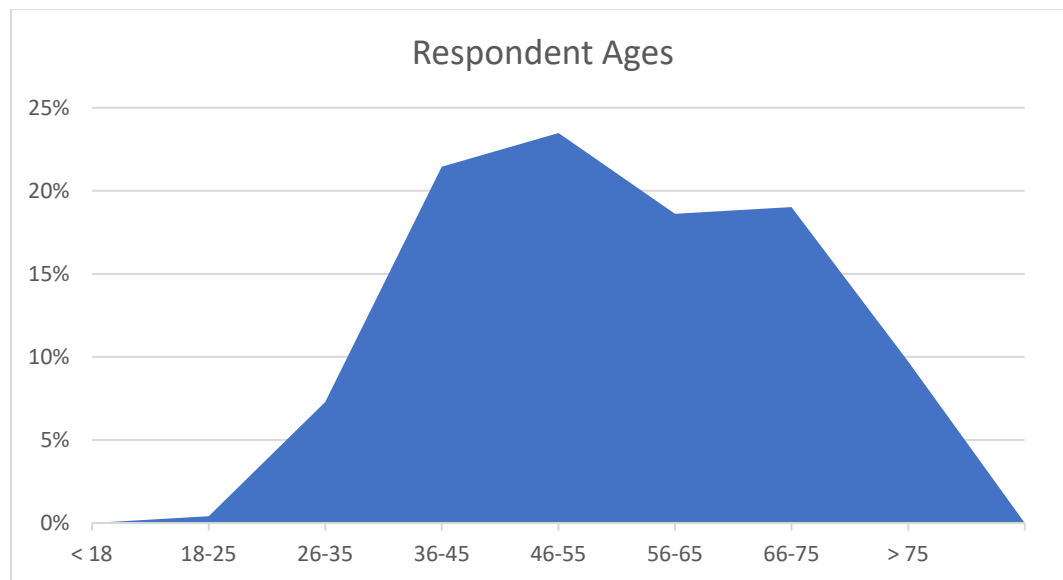
Two hundred forty-seven (247) respondents shared their age range, 10 chose "prefer not to say", and 3 did not respond. Of the 247 respondents, the largest group was within the 46 to 55 age range with more respondents older than 55 than younger than 46. Census data reports that the median age in Gilpin County is 48.7. Since we excluded residents under 18 from this survey, age distribution is relatively similar to the overall population.

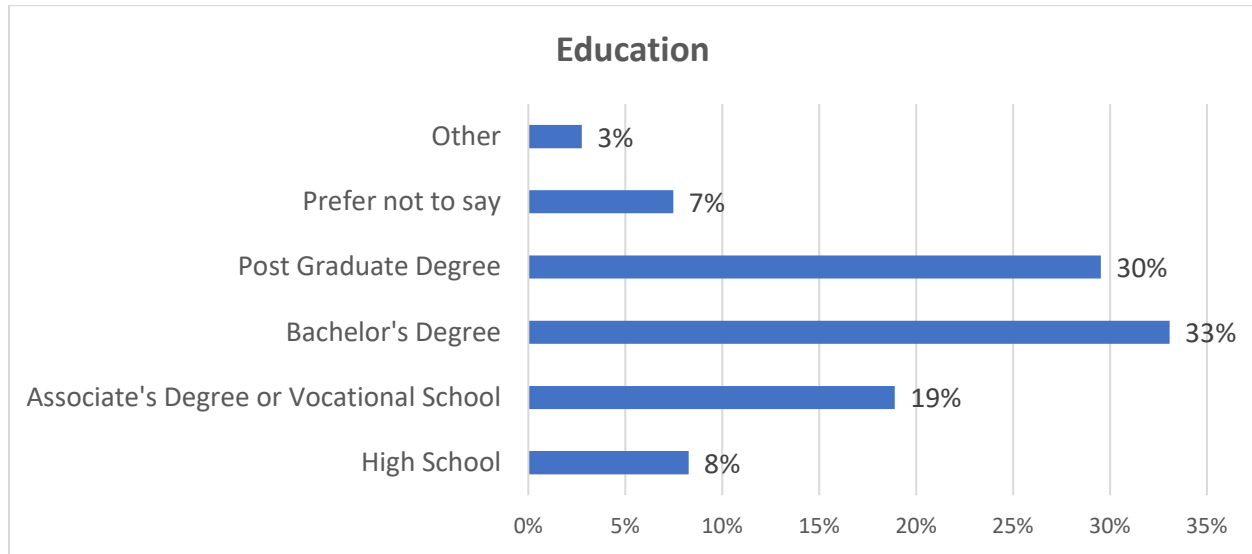| Age Range	Percent of Respondents
< 18	0%
18-25	0%
26-35	7%
36-45	21%
46-55	23%
56-65	19%
66-75	19%
> 75	10%

Question 20: Gender
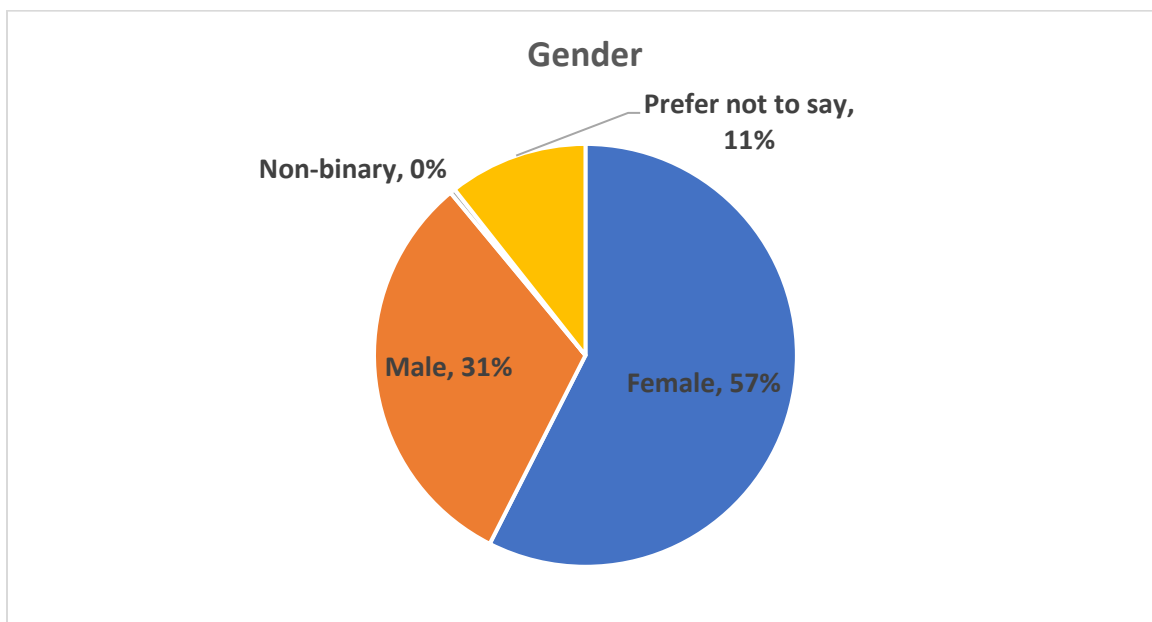
More than half of respondents identified as female, similar to the 2019 survey. According to the Census, Gilpin County is 55% male which indicates a lower response rate among males.

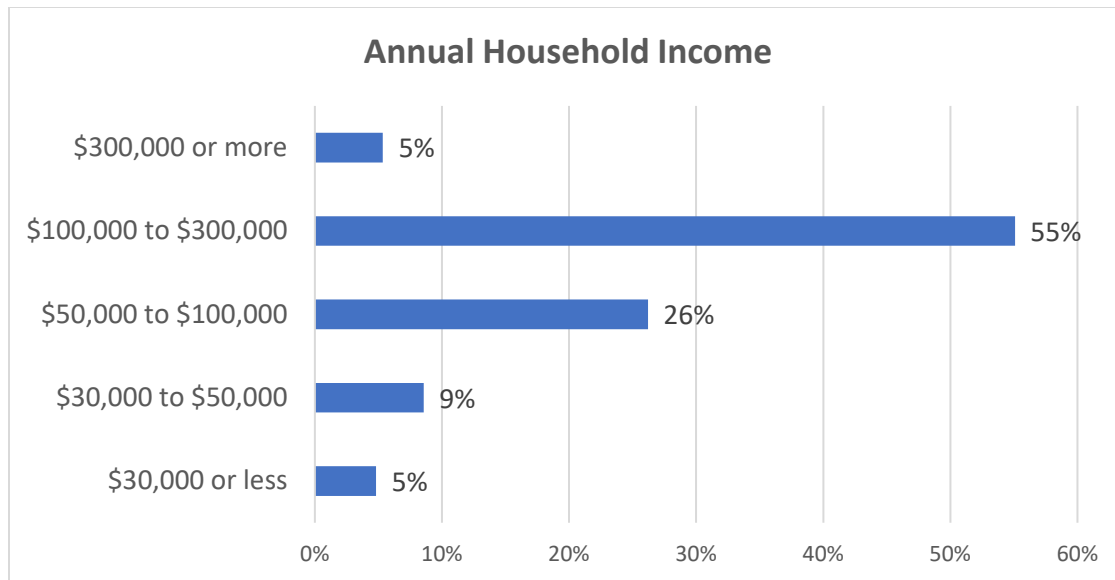**Question 21: What is the highest level of education you've completed?**

Education	Percent of Respondents
High School	8%
Associate's Degree or Vocational School	19%
Bachelor's Degree	33%
Post Graduate Degree	30%
Prefer not to say	7%
Other	3%

Sixty-three (63) percent of respondents have a bachelor's or post graduate degree. The Census data puts that number at 48.4% indicating that college educated residents were more likely to complete the survey.

Question 22: What is your annual household income?

Annual Household Income	Percent of Respondents	Percent of those who Shared Income Range
$30,000 or less	4%	5%
$30,000 to $50,000	6%	9%
$50,000 to $100,000	19%	26%
$100,000 to $300,000	40%	55%
$300,000 or more	4%	5%
Prefer not to say	27%	-

Annual Household Income

Income Range	Percentage
$300,000 or more	5%
$100,000 to $300,000	55%
$50,000 to $100,000	26%
$30,000 to $50,000	9%
$30,000 or less	5%

Over sixty percent (60%) of those who shared their annual household income make over $100,000. According to Census data, 46% of residents in Gilpin County are in that category. By contrast, Census data indicates 26% of Gilpin residents make under $50,000 while the survey respondents were comprised of only 14% in that range.