

Denver Public Library

Survey of Budget and Financing Issues



Survey of Denver Voters - 2011

Comparison With Denver Public Library Surveys of 2004 and 2003

Presentation by:

Floyd Ciruli



Survey Facts

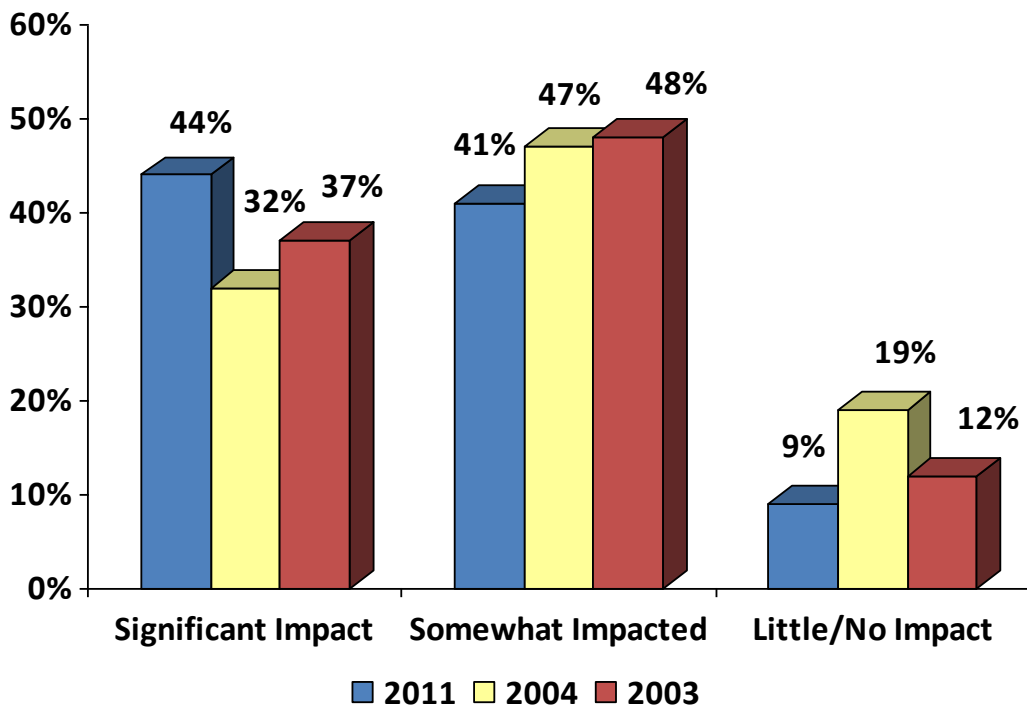
- Sponsored by the Denver Public Library
- Conducted by Ciruli Associates
- Telephone survey of Denver frequent voters
 - 500 voters surveyed March 28-April 2, 2011
 - 350 voters surveyed May 6-11, 2004
 - 500 voters surveyed July 30-August 6, 2003
- Sample margin of error
 - ±4.4 percentage points for 500 in 95 out of 100 cases
 - ±5.2 percentage points for 350 in 95 out of 100 cases



Figure 1

Budget Cuts are Having an Impact

Impact of library budget cuts increasing...



Question 2011:

Next, I'd like to discuss the Denver Public Library and its budget with you. Due to the city budget cuts, the Denver Public Library has lost more than \$3 million dollars, or 10 percent, of its budget in the last two years. The Library has cut back on buying and replacing books and viewing and listening materials by about \$700,000 dollars, reduced more than 42 staff members, cut hours at all libraries, and finally it has closed most branch libraries three days out of each week. Do you believe these cuts are having a significant impact on library users, somewhat of an impact or little or no impact?

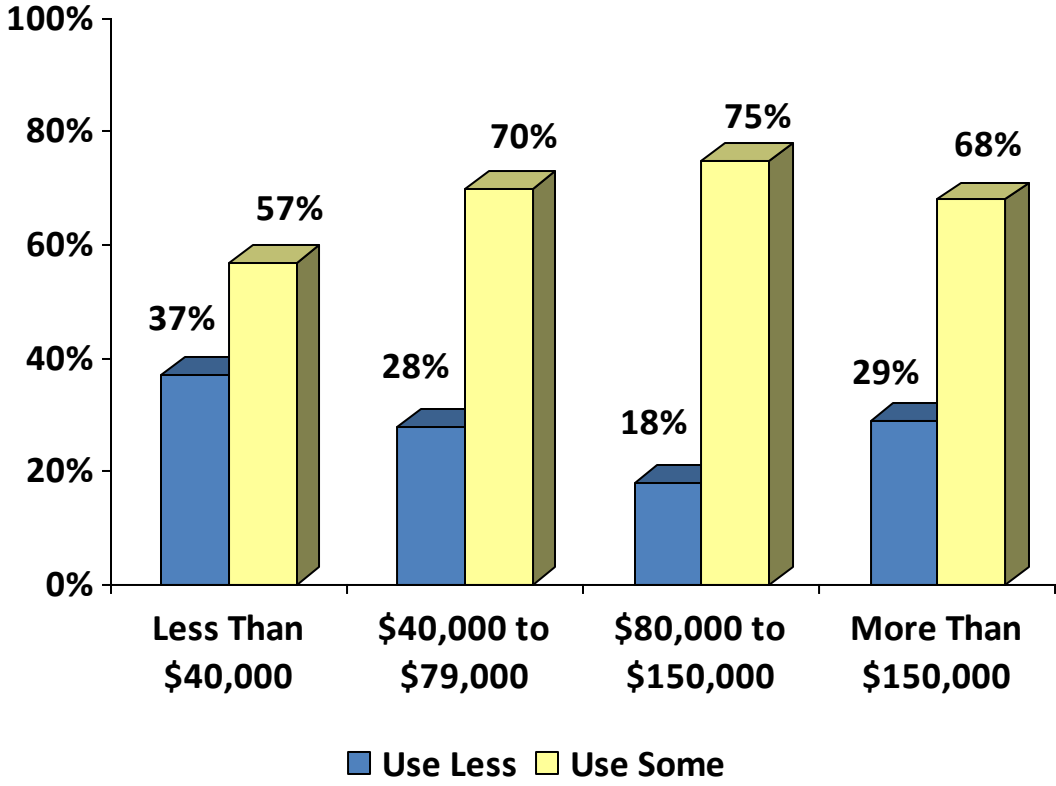
Question 2004/2003: Question had slightly different wording.



Figure 2

Using the Library Less Often

Lower income citizens affected the most by cuts...



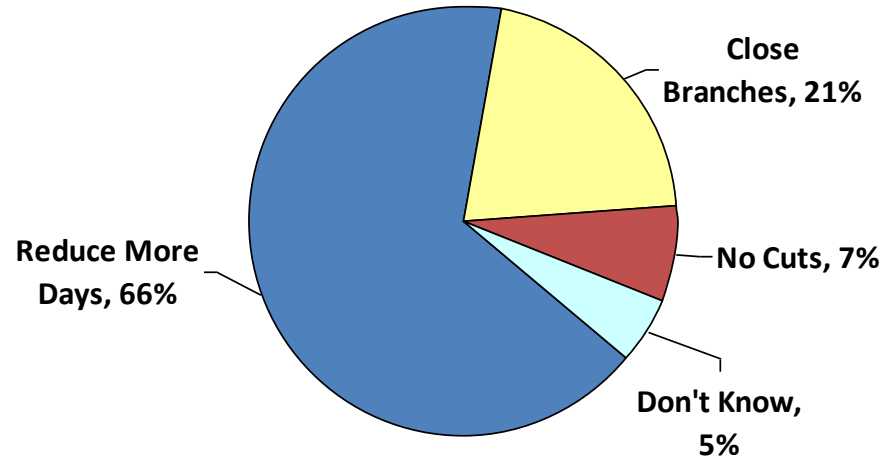
Question: *The Library budget cuts have caused a reduction in the hours and days of service. As of today, are you using the Denver Public Library less often, about the same amount or more often? [READ LIST]*

Figure 3

Reduce Days or Cut Branches

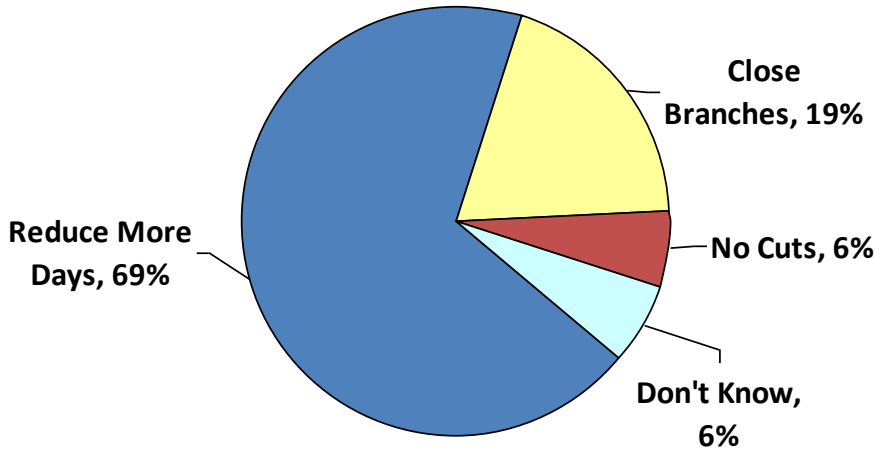
Voters oppose closing branches...

Close Any Branches



■ Reduce More Days ■ Close Branches
■ No Cuts ■ Don't Know

Close My Branch



■ Reduce More Days ■ Close Branches
■ No Cuts ■ Don't Know

Questions: When deciding on further cuts in the Library budget, one choice will be between closing the 23 branch libraries another day each week so they are open only three days or completely closing six branch libraries. If there must be further cuts and the choice is closing all branches more days or completely closing six branches, which would you prefer: close more days or close more branches?

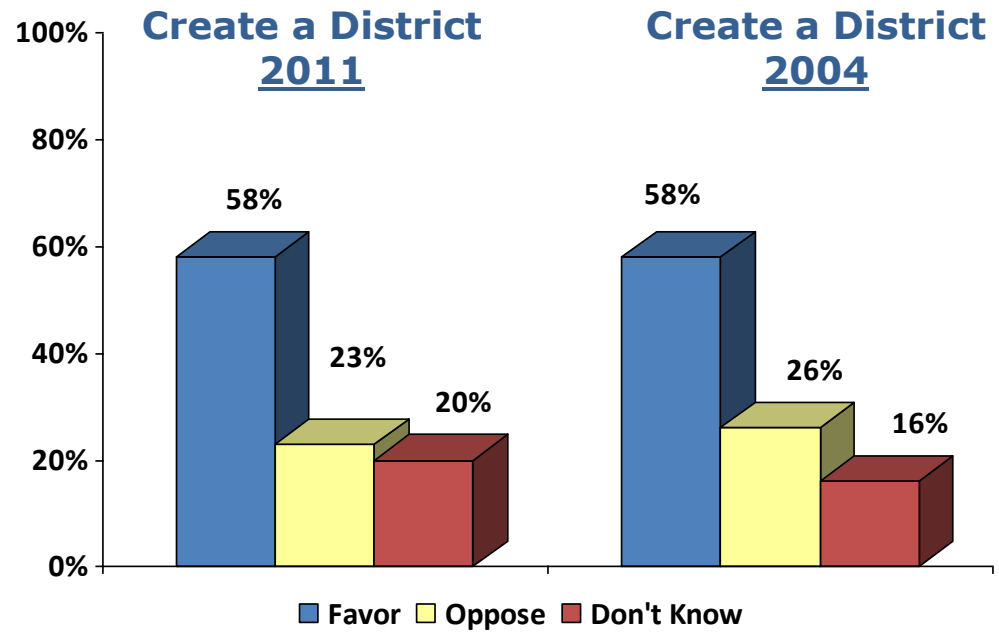
Out of the six branch libraries that could be closed, one may be the branch library nearest your residence. Under that condition, would you prefer all branch libraries to be open only three days, down from the current four, or would you prefer completely closing six branch libraries, including the one closest to your home?



Figure 4

Voters Favor Creating a District

Voters would favor creating a library district...



Question 2011: The Denver Public Library governing board is considering options to secure the Library's funding. One proposal is to create a library district. State law allows for creation of a library district with local voter approval. Many libraries in Colorado operate as a district, including most of the libraries in the Denver metro area. A library district is a separate, independent agency with dedicated property tax revenue that is approved by voters. Library districts are governed by library boards appointed by city councils or county commissioners.

In Denver, the mayor and city council could place the question on the ballot to create a library district. From what you have seen or heard, would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose creation of a library district?

Question 2004: Question had slightly different wording.



Figure 5

Support for Library District

Grouped by Geography, Gender, Ethnicity, Party and Library Use

• **Library district – 58% favor, 23% against**

Geography and Gender

Ethnicity and Party

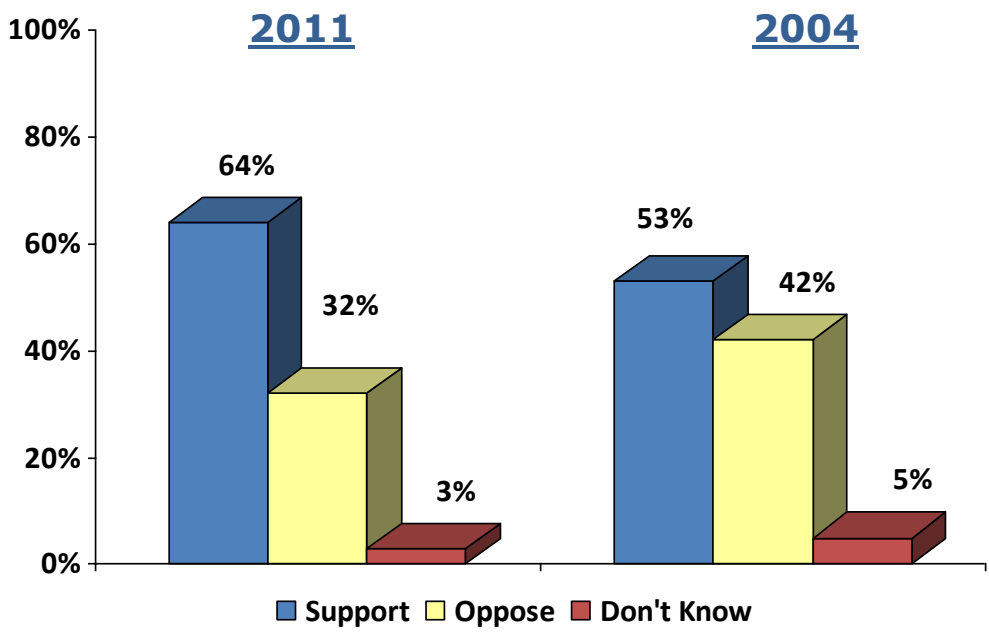
	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Against</u>		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Against</u>
Northeast	54%	22%	Anglo	58%	22%
Northwest	55	25	Hispanic	56	32
Southeast	59	23	Black	48	23
Southwest	61	23			
			Democrat	61%	21%
Men	57%	26%	Unaffiliated	46	24
Women	58	20	Republican	58	24
			DPL card	56%	22%
			DPL visitor	56	21
			DPL website	59	22



Figure 6

Support for Financing With Property Taxes

Support for \$38 million (2011) (\$28 million 2004) in library financing...



Question 2011: A library district would be funded with a property tax on residential and commercial property. The Library would need to receive about \$38 million dollars a year to maintain the desired level of service, which would include restoring some of the services and materials recently cut. To raise the funds, about 3.4 mills would be added to the property tax. The owner of an average priced home of \$200,000 would pay about \$56 per year in increased property taxes, or \$4.60 per month. If you had to vote today, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose a property tax to fund a library district?

Question 2004: Question had slightly different wording.



Figure 7

Aspects of Creating a Library District

Preference if a library district is created...

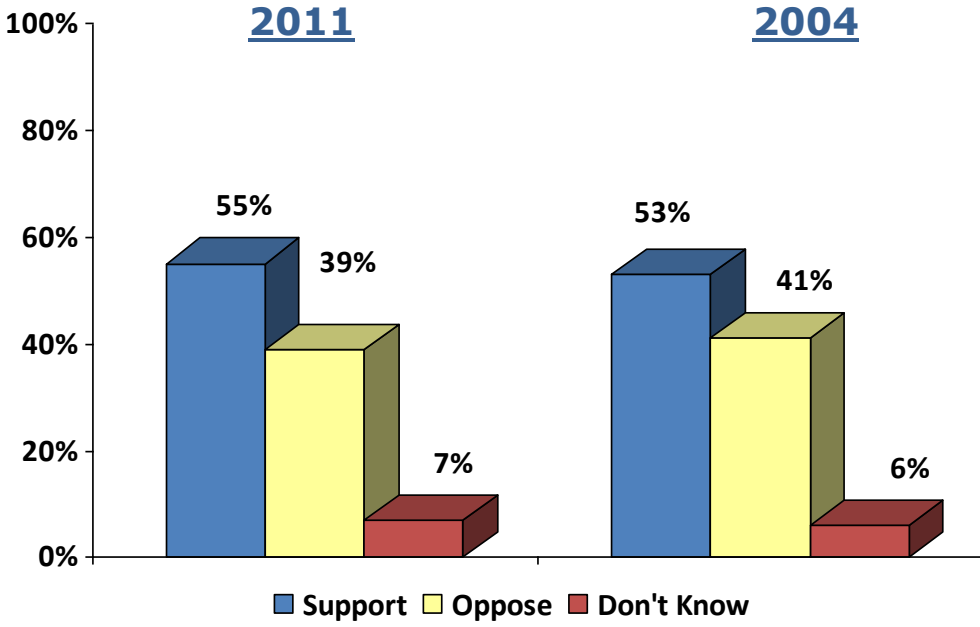
<u>Description of District</u>	<u>Very Good/ Good</u>	<u>Not Very Good/Bad</u>
Restore children’s reading programs	83%	10%
Restore the amount of Internet and online access	77	14
Restore the budget for books and materials	76	15
Restore library hours and days of operation	74	18
Make the Library’s funding independent	72	18
Give voters the right to approve a tax	72	19
Restore library staff	71	20
Appoint a new independent board	59	25



Question: *Next, I will read some factors that could be part of a library district. Please tell me if you believe it is a very good idea, good idea, not a very good idea or a bad idea. A library district could...*
 [ROTATED]

Favor or Oppose Dedicated Funding (County Library)

Support for county library 2011 and 2004...



Question 2011: Another alternative for funding the Library would be to put on the ballot a revenue measure that would raise \$38 million dollars that would be dedicated to be spent only on the Library. This alternative would not create a library district. The Library would remain a part of city government. To raise the funds, about 3.4 mills would be added to the property tax. The owner of an average priced home of \$200,000 would pay about \$56 per year in increased property taxes, or \$4.60 per month. If you had to vote today, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose a property tax to provide a dedicated fund to be spent only for the Library?

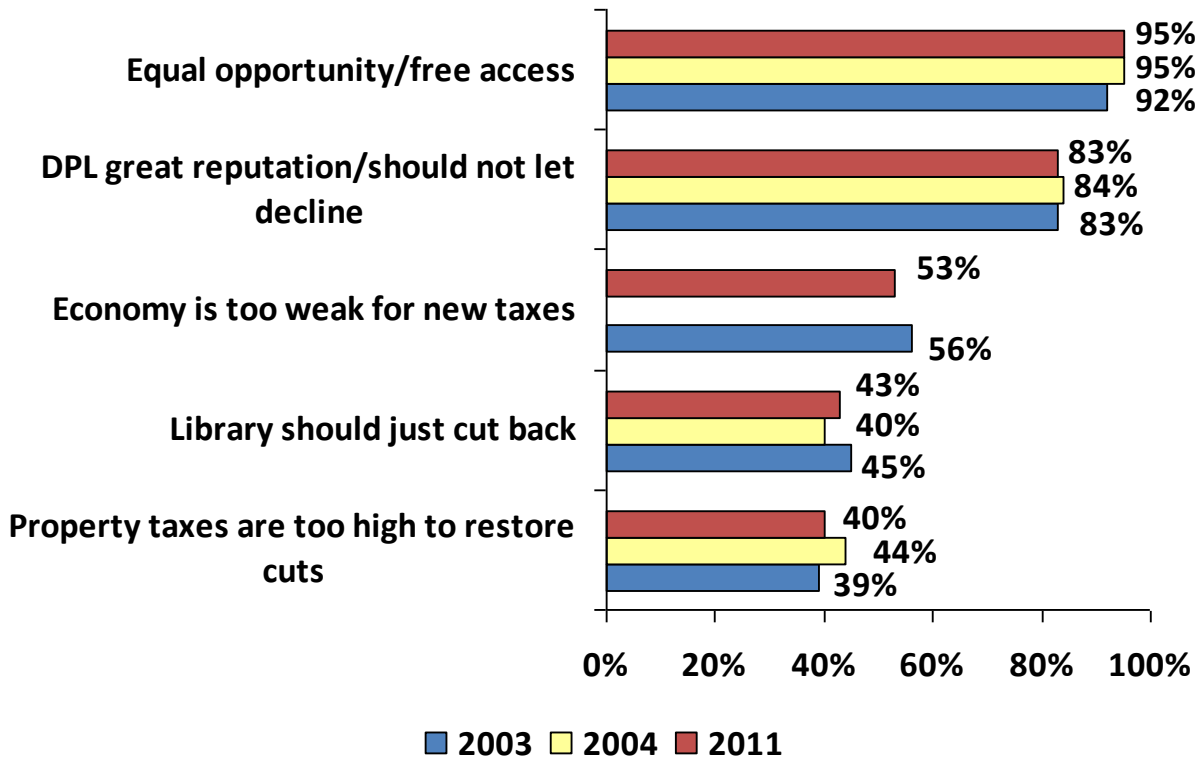
Question 2004: Question wording did not have tax description.



Figure 9

Support for Library's Mission

Percent who strongly or somewhat agree...



Question: The following statements represent different viewpoints about the Denver Public Library. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. If you are neutral on the issue, or don't have a view, just say so.

Figure 10

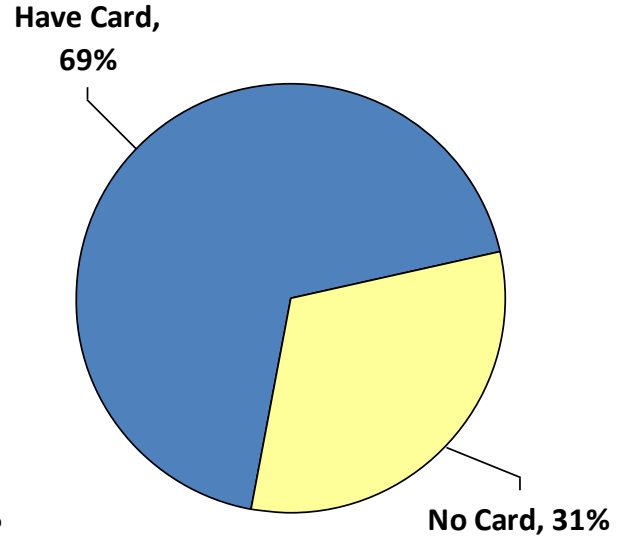
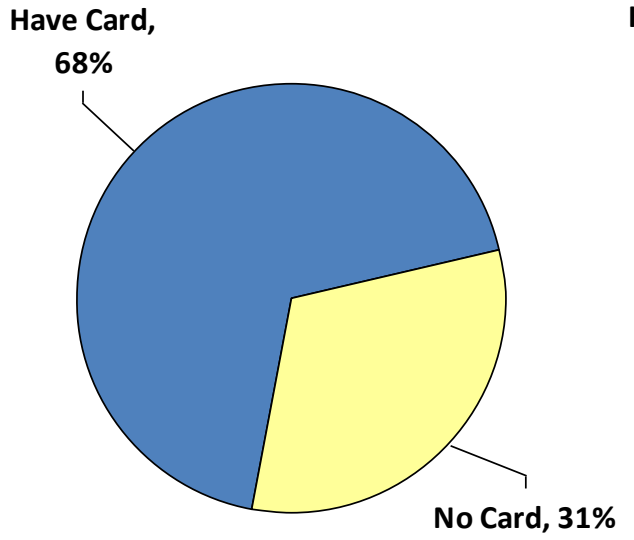
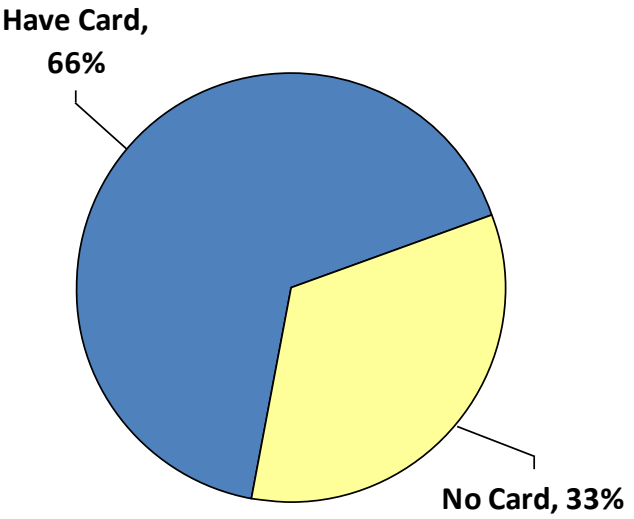
Two-Thirds of Voters Have Library Card

Percent of voters who have library card...

2011

2004

2003



■ Have Card ■ No Card



Question: Do you currently have a Denver Public Library card?

Figure 11

Library Performance High

Percent of voters who rate performance excellent or good...

	Excellent/ Good 2011	Excellent/ Good 2004	Excellent/ Good 2003
Denver Fire Department	--	86%	91%
Denver Public Library	76%	82	83
Denver Parks Department	74	--	--
Denver Police Department	48	56	57
Denver City Government	43	--	--
Denver Public Schools	29	32	36



Question 2011: Next, let me ask you about the performance of local government organizations here in Denver. As I read the following list of local government organizations and groups, would you say they are doing an excellent job, good job, fair or poor job in your opinion? If you are not familiar with the organization, just say so. [ROTATED]

Question 2004/2003: Thinking about job performance, as I read the following list of Denver agencies and groups, please tell me if you believe each one is doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job?

Friends of the Library

Percent who rate excellent or good...

Highest Rating

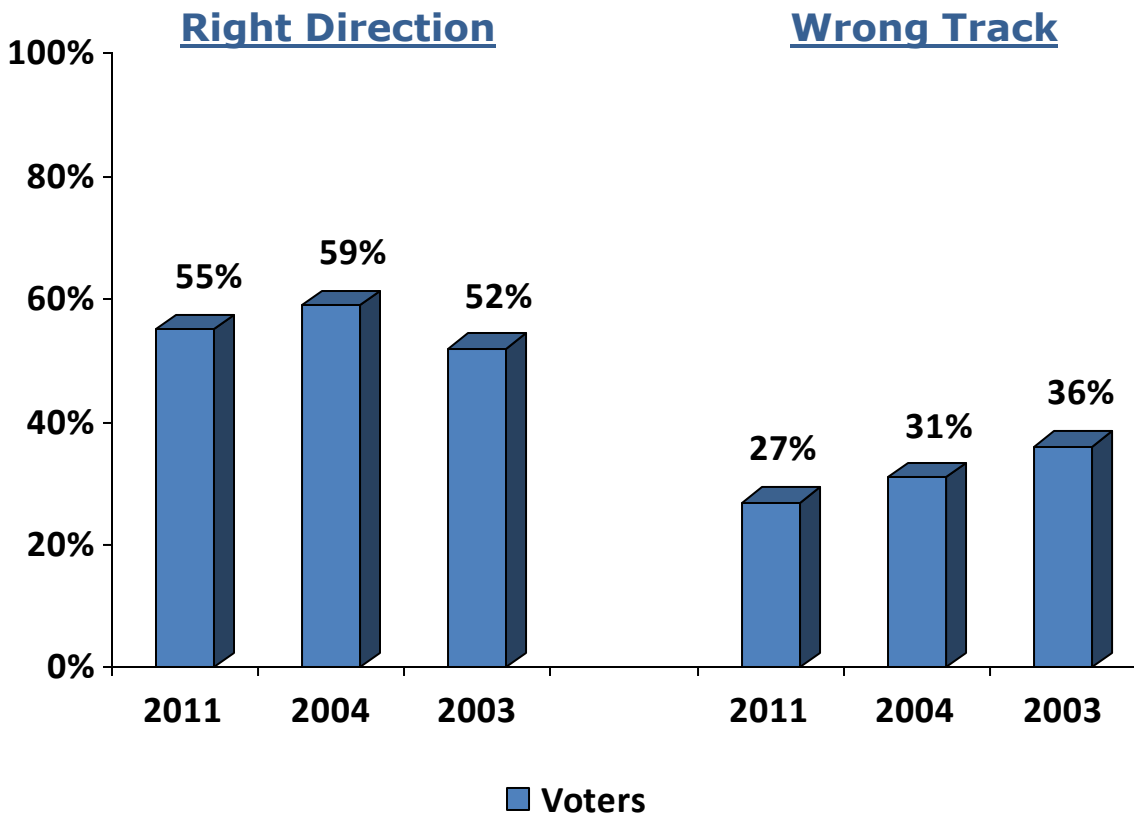
Excellent/Good	76%
Visited library	88%
Use website	87
Liberal	86
Library card	84
18-34	83
Democrat	83
Post college	80
55-64	80



Figure 13

Mood of Denver Voters

Worried about jobs, city budget and low performing schools...



Question: Generally, would you say things are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track here in Denver?

Figure 14

Budget and Economy are Top Concerns

Some optimism the economy will improve in the next year (six months)...

	Next Year April 2011	Six Months May 2004	Six Months August 2003
Get better (improve)	49%	38%	40%
Stay the same	32	36	36
Get worse	15	20	18



Question 2011: Considering the next year, do you expect economic conditions to get better, get worse or stay the same in Denver?

Question 2004/2003: Considering the next six months, do you believe the Colorado economy will improve, stay the same or get worse?

Findings

- Voters believe budget cuts having a negative impact. They oppose additional cuts, especially to branches and material acquisition.
- After description, more than half of voters support creating a district or county library.
- There is support for new taxes to provide revenue needs. Library users are strongest supporters for funding. Tax sensitivity exists due to economy and higher property taxes.
- Restoring children's programs, material budgets and hours are top goals.
- There is less support for a county library; that is, dedicated funding with no district.
- Library valued as egalitarian institution and civic asset. Don't want it to decline.
- Most voters are library users and the library is highly valued and considered well run.
- Considerable concerns about bad economy and additional city budget cuts, but some optimism about future.

