Magellan Strategies

South Durango Urban Renewal Authority Plan Area Survey Topline Results

Magellan Strategies is pleased to present the topline results of a survey of 1,026 La Plata County residents. The survey data were weighted to be representative of the adult population demographics in the county. The interviews were conducted from November 19th to 23rd, 2026. The survey results have a margin of error of +/- 3.03% at the 95 percent confidence interval.

T1. For statistical purposes only, can you please verify that you are at least 18 years old and a resident of La Plata County?

Yes 100%

T2. How familiar are you with the Durango Renewal Partnership's consideration of creating the South Durango URA Plan Area, which includes the potential redevelopment of the Durango Mall?

Total Familiar 51%
Not Familiar At All 49%

Very Familiar 6%
Somewhat Familiar 45%

T3. The Durango Renewal Partnership (URA) is considering creating the South Durango URA Plan Area, about 160 acres at the City's south gateway that includes the Durango Mall property.

Before reading additional information, do you support or oppose the Durango Renewal Partnership (URA) creating the South Durango URA Plan Area?

Total Support 53%
Total Oppose 9%
Unsure/No Opinion 38%

Strongly Support 25%
Somewhat Support 28%

Strongly Oppose 4%
Somewhat Oppose 5%

Each of the following describes a factual aspect of the proposed South Durango URA Plan Area. After each statement, please indicate whether it affects your opinion.

T4. A private developer has proposed rebuilding the Durango Mall as an open-air center of 11 buildings, including a new national organic grocery store, replacing most of the existing empty building. TJ Maxx, Ross, and Old Navy would remain. Construction could start in 2027. Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 65%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 19%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 16%

T5. An urban renewal authority does not set or raise any tax rate. Creating the South Durango URA Plan Area would not increase anyone's tax rate. Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 73%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 6%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 21%

T6. Urban renewal areas are funded through tax increment financing, or TIF. The existing taxes that the area pays today would continue going to the City, La Plata County, the Durango School District, and other taxing districts. Only a portion of the new tax revenue created by redevelopment would be used to pay for public improvements in the area, for up to 25 years. Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 50%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 18%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 32%

T7. The developer pays to build the new mall. If the mall brings in new sales tax, some of it goes back to the developer, up to about $14 million, to pay for some of their infrastructure. If it doesn't generate new sales tax, the developer gets nothing back. Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 54%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 19%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 27%

T8. About $4 million in new tax revenue generated by a new mall could help increase workforce housing at the Rivergate development, 50 for-sale townhomes priced about 40% below market. Twenty-three of the homes are already deed-restricted for local workforce buyers, and this funding would allow the other 27 to be deed-restricted as well, making 100% below market.

Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 74%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 11%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 15%

T9. About $23 million in new tax revenue from the new mall could pay for financial support for a proposed indoor sports facility, public improvements in the area, and improved secondary access to an 8-acre lot for mixed-use housing adjacent to the Durango Mall. Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 70%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 14%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 16%

T10. For up to 25 years, a portion of the new tax revenue created in the area would be used for these projects instead of going to the City, La Plata County, the Durango School District, and other taxing districts. Those taxing bodies are currently negotiating how much of their new revenue to share with the urban renewal authority. After the plan area expires in 2052, all of the new revenue from the new mall would go to each taxing entity as it currently does. Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 44%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 24%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 32%

T11. Some sales at a rebuilt mall would shift away from existing local stores. The October 2026 feasibility report estimates that 19% of the mall's expected sales would come from other local businesses or online sales and removes that amount before counting new revenue. Knowing this information, are you:

More Likely to Support the Urban Renewal Plan Area 25%
More Likely to Oppose the Urban Renewal Plan Area..... 34%
Makes No Difference in My Opinion..... 41%

T12. If the South Durango URA Plan Area is created, how important is each of the following public improvements to you?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not Important at All	Unsure/No Opinion
Workforce homes priced below market at Rivergate	50%	29%	7%	10%	4%
Allowing housing development to occur at the 8-acre lot adjacent to the mall	35%	33%	13%	14%	5%
A rebuilt Durango Mall with a new grocery store	32%	30%	15%	21%	2%
Site work and financial support for a proposed indoor sports facility	27%	30%	20%	19%	4%

No decisions have been made yet. The City, La Plata County, the Durango School District, and other taxing districts are negotiating now. Three public votes would follow: on the revenue-sharing agreements, on creating the plan area, and on the developer agreement. Only City Council can create the plan area, at a public hearing.

T13. After reviewing the information provided, do you support or oppose the City creating the South Durango URA Plan Area?

Total Support	73%
Total Oppose	19%
Unsure/No Opinion	8%
Strongly Support	37%
Somewhat Support	36%
Strongly Oppose	10%
Somewhat Oppose	9%

T14. Please describe the reasons why you support the Durango Renewal Partnership (URA) creating the South Durango URA Plan Area.

Revitalize the Underutilized Durango Mall: Many respondents believe the existing mall is an eyesore, largely vacant, and a waste of valuable property. Redevelopment would transform the deteriorating site into a more attractive, productive space that better serves the community.

Increase Affordable and Workforce Housing: Many respondents strongly support creating more affordable housing, particularly for local workers, young families, and middle-income residents who struggle with Durango's high housing costs. Some emphasize the importance of deed-restricted housing to ensure long-term affordability.

Expand Shopping and Grocery Options: These respondents want more retail choices, including affordable grocery stores and national retailers, to increase competition, lower prices, and reduce the need to shop in Farmington or online. Trader Joe's, Target, and Whole Foods are frequently mentioned, although some express concerns about national chains threatening existing local businesses.

Provide More Indoor Recreation and Family Activities: Many respondents support a new indoor sports facility to address limited recreational opportunities, particularly for children, teenagers, and families. Frequently mentioned amenities include an ice rink, hockey facilities, pickleball courts, and other year-round recreational activities.

Overall takeaway: Support is primarily driven by the desire to put the largely vacant mall property to better use while addressing Durango's need for affordable housing, expanded shopping opportunities, and additional community amenities.

T15. Please describe the reasons why you oppose the Durango Renewal Partnership (URA) creating the South Durango URA Plan Area.

Protect Local Businesses from National Chains: Respondents are concerned that bringing in a national grocery chain, particularly Whole Foods, would hurt existing locally owned grocery stores such as Nature's Oasis and Durango Natural Foods. Many believe Durango already has enough grocery options and want redevelopment to prioritize local businesses rather than corporations that send profits outside the community.

Opposition to Taxpayer Subsidies for Private Developers: Many respondents oppose using tax incentives or redirecting future tax revenues to support private development. They believe developers should assume their own financial risks rather than receive public subsidies, particularly when the project could benefit national corporations at the expense of local businesses and taxpayers.

Lack of Transparency: Respondents express skepticism about the project's financial projections, promised community benefits, and long-term accountability. Many want more information about the financing structure, impacts on existing tax revenues, and guarantees that affordable housing and other promised improvements will materialize.

Prioritize Affordable Housing and Community Needs Over Additional Retail: Many respondents support redeveloping the mall but believe the current proposal places too much emphasis on grocery stores and commercial development rather than affordable workforce housing and community amenities. They want a more locally focused plan that preserves Durango's character, provides meaningful public benefits, and addresses existing needs rather than encouraging unnecessary growth.

Overall takeaway: Opposition is driven less by resistance to redeveloping the Durango Mall itself and more by concerns that the proposed plan prioritizes national corporations and private developers over local businesses, taxpayers, and the community's need for affordable housing.

T16. Do you have any other thoughts or opinions you would like to share with the Durango Renewal Partnership (URA) about the proposed South Durango URA Plan Area or the redevelopment of the Durango Mall? (576 responses)

Protect Local Businesses and Reconsider the National Grocery Store: Many respondents take the opportunity to repeat their opposition to adding a national organic grocery chain, particularly Whole Foods, because they believe it would hurt locally owned businesses such as Nature's Oasis and Durango Natural Foods. Respondents want redevelopment to prioritize local businesses, although some favor alternatives such as Trader Joe's, Target, or additional affordable shopping options.

Prioritize Truly Affordable Workforce Housing: Respondents frequently emphasize the need for housing that local workers and families can actually afford. Many want more housing included in the redevelopment, with enforceable affordability requirements, quality construction, and assurances that housing will benefit existing residents rather than primarily attracting newcomers.

Ensure Financial Transparency and Limit Developer Subsidies: Many respondents question the use of tax revenue to reimburse private developers, particularly when that revenue could otherwise support schools, infrastructure, and public services. They want clearer explanations of the financing arrangements, greater public involvement, accountability for promised improvements, and assurances that taxpayers will not assume excessive financial risks.

Revitalize the Mall With Shopping, Recreation, and Community Amenities: Respondents generally recognize that the existing mall is underutilized and want it transformed into a more vibrant destination. Frequently suggested improvements include indoor sports facilities, ice rinks, bowling alleys, family entertainment, restaurants, and additional retail choices. Many also want parks, green space, pedestrian connections, and development that preserves Durango's unique character.

Overall takeaway: Respondents see significant potential in redeveloping the Durango Mall, but want a project that puts local residents and businesses first, delivers genuinely affordable housing, provides meaningful community amenities, and demonstrates responsible use of public tax revenue.

Now, we have a few questions for statistical purposes only.

T17. Are you:

Female	50%
Male	49%
Identify Differently	1%

T18. Are you between the ages of:

18 to 34	23%
35 to 44	18%
45 to 54	16%
55 to 64	16%
65 or Older	27%

T19. Do you rent or own your home?

Own	71%
Rent	25%
Other	2%
Prefer Not to Say	2%

T20. How long have you lived in La Plata County?

Less than 2 years	4%
2 to 5 years	18%
6 to 10 years	15%
11 to 20 years	22%
More than 20 years	41%

T21. Do you live in or outside the City of Durango?

In Durango..... 52%
Outside Durango..... 48%

Survey Methodology

This survey used an MMS text survey data collection method, inviting La Plata County residents to participate. The survey data were weighted to reflect the adult population demographics within the county. The interviews were conducted from November 19 to 23, 2026. The survey results have a margin of error of +/- 3.03% at the 95% confidence interval.