

Greater Maple Valley Area Council
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January 9, 2008

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Mr. Sims,

In November 2007 six hundred fifty unincorporated Rural Area citizens within the Tahoma School District participated in the election of members to the Greater Maple Valley Area Council and our Bi-Annual **Citizens' Advisory Survey**. The Area Council has been conducting these surveys for approximately ten years to gain and maintain an understanding of citizens and their opinions on issues of importance to this Rural Area. A summary of the responses follows. Percentages provided relate to the total votes cast.

Most people (88%) own their own property and 60% have lived in the area more than 10 years (Note that each of these two statistics far exceed the County and city averages.). Privacy, preservation of the environment, a good place to raise children, and quality of the schools are the major reasons for living here. Most (71%) do not want to be annexed to an urban area.

A majority (81%) believes that traffic is a major problem in the Maple Valley area, but only 26% believe that proposed improvements would make a substantial difference. Of the major roads into and out of the Maple Valley area nearly half (46%) believe that SR-169 (Maple Valley Hwy.) should have increased capacity. However, when it comes to how to pay for transportation infrastructure, few (26%) favor increased taxes or road tolling (12%).

The survey asked voters to identify, which King County-supplied services they wish to see more, less, or the same. Many wanted to see more: Bus Service and Park & Rides (57%), Streamlining of the Building Permit Process (53%), and Protection of Natural Resources & Amenities (47%). Many were satisfied with *existing* services such as: Fire Protection (62%), Public Health (54%), and Law Enforcement (48%). Finally, a majority wanted to see less of King County selling Open Space (52%).

On environmental issues most (55%) consume products and recycle and most (52%) manage their property--both with the primary goals of preserving the environment. Nearly half (46%) have done volunteer work or contributed money to benefit the environment.

Responses to questions on the economy are interesting. Many people did not feel present regulations encourage businesses to locate in King County (50%); feel incentives should be given to businesses to promote employment (51%); and feel state and local governments should ease regulations to encourage businesses to remain or locate here (59%). However, only 49% feel state and local governments should provide more educational assistance for retraining.

With respect to governance issues, people generally believe King County does not make effective use of its tax revenues (73%), nor does it provide enough data for citizens to accurately assess its performance (67%). Most people (82%) believe King County Departments should be audited by professional outside auditors with local citizen representatives, but less than half (44%) believe some, or all, of King County Government should be run by professional managers. Most people (63%) believe some King County services should be subcontracted using a bidding process. Finally, most (63%) would support an Executive Department of Rural Affairs to provide focus in King County on unincorporated citizens' needs and issues.

Very few people (less than 7%) applied for building, remodeling, or clearing permits in 2007. Of those who did apply most were generally dissatisfied with services provided by the Department of Development & Environmental Services (84%) and the Health Department (78%). Most (59%) would not hook up to a public water system if it were available and costs would be \$14,000 to 20,000 for a 5-acre parcel. The vast majority (78%) also does not support metering of private wells. Very few people (only 10 of those

who voted) developed Rural Stewardship Plans in 2007 to mitigate any impacts or ease any restrictions caused by the CAO.

Concerning the King County Parks planned expansion of Ravensdale Park few (36%) feel there is a need to expand the park to 8 to 12 playfields. Less than half (48%) believe the unincorporated Rural Area is the proper location for a Regional Park, and they also say that such a park would adversely affect traffic. Other factors were not surveyed.

To close out our Advisory Survey we asked residents their feelings on fireworks. A slight majority (55%) does not support any ordinance to ban fireworks in unincorporated King County, with 39% favoring such a ban and 6% undecided.

The Area Council believes this and our other Bi-Annual Citizen's Advisory Surveys **accurately convey the sentiments of unincorporated Rural Area residents**. Detailed results for the 2007 Citizen's Advisory Survey can be found on the Area Council's web site's **Citizens' Survey** page:

<http://greatermaplevalleyareacouncil.org/LatestAdvisorySurveyResults.html>.

Original signed by and mailed 1/9/2008

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Chairman, Greater Maple Valley Area Council

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