



Citizens' Advisory Survey Results

By Peter Rimpos, Corresponding Secretary

Thank you to all who participated in the **Area Council Biennial Citizens' Advisory Survey**. Close to 7,560 ballots/surveys were mailed to registered voters in the unincorporated area of the Tahoma School District--the Area Council's territory. This was the first time we mailed, in advance, a large post-card to all registered voters announcing the Survey.

We received 282 completed surveys, which we consider good for the first time conducting the Survey completely online (some paper surveys were available at local markets in Hobart and Ravensdale). We are pleased to receive citizens' opinions and concerns on so many key issues.

Below is a summary not the Survey results. Detailed results can be found on our web site: www.gmvuac.org. Under the **Citizen Survey** tab click **2017 GMVUAC Survey and Election — Final Results and Summary (12 29 2017)**.

Demographics

The vast majority of people (94%) own their own property and 66% have lived in the area more than 10 years (note each of these two statistics exceed the County and city averages.). Nearly 1/2 (48%) live on 2 1/2 or more acres. Nearly all (91%) do not want to be annexed by a city. **This is one of the reasons the Area Council repeatedly has voiced to the County that we do not want any urban-serving facilities placed in the Rural Area.**

Development

About 2/3 (68%) do not support additional residential development in our Rural Area. However, a slightly larger majority (71%) believe you should be able to build one home on one vacant lot. There were many written comments concerning development with many having to do with traffic congestion and unwanted industries. **It appears that many want to continue to keep the Rural Area rural—part of the Area Council's Motto.**

Water and On-Site Sewage Systems

A little more than half (53%) have a private or small group well. Few use water for farming (21%). A firm majority (68%) do not want their wells monitored or metered. Almost all respondents have an On-Site Septic System (96%). Nearly 2/3 (65%) have their systems pumped out every 3-5 yr. A very large majority (87%) do not favor any proposals to require monitoring, required pumping, and/or assessment of fees.

Environment

More than a 1/3 (37%) of respondents have experienced odor/noxious smells, primarily from the Cedar Grove Compost Facility. Again, more than a 1/3 (41%) of respondents have experienced noise/excessive sounds, primarily from the traffic and heavy trucks on SR-169 and SR-18, and also from gun ranges. Many (88%) respondents use open space/natural areas for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, sightseeing, etc. About 2/3 (65%) support King County efforts for flood control, flood protection, water safety, fish habitat protection, and flood-endangered property acquisition. **Clearly, local residents care about their shared environment.**

Transportation

Past surveys have shown traffic congestion is a major problem in the greater Maple Valley area. To no one's surprise, this remains the case, as nearly every respondent provided written comments on traffic concerns. Many commute to work (89%). About half (52%) of those who commute do so for less than 1 hour each day. However, a good portion (39%) have commute times that exceed 1 hr daily. Two thirds (67%) would approve making SR-169 four lanes from the City of Maple Valley north to the existing 4-lane segment which starts at 196th Ave SE, but only a 1/4 (24%) would be willing to pay for it. More than 1/2 (52%) want more Park & Ride areas along SR-169).

Because of the consistency in survey after survey on this topic, the Area Council's Transportation Committee continues to jointly work with the other Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils to evaluate both the *sources* and the *uses* of road monies. The goal these efforts is to identify more *equitable* ways to maintain and improve roads that primarily are used by residents who live in cities, not in unincorporated areas. Currently, property taxes paid *only* by unincorporated area residents provide the vast majority of such funding for King County roads such as the Issaquah-Hobart Rd.

Public Services

Over 2/3 (71%) object to the closure or reduction in staff at local Fire District #43 Stations (Hobart, near Pla-Mor Tavern, and Ravensdale).

Marijuana Operations and Facilities

We included a series of questions regarding the siting of now-legal Marijuana businesses, especially with a few recently permitted in our Rural Area. Approval of State Marijuana laws was spilt (46%-Yes, 45%-No). On this issue we received many written comments, mostly against Marijuana Growing Operations, Processing Facilities, and Distribution Businesses.

Obviously, concerns remain, even though the King County Council has taken several actions, at the request of both the Area Council and concerned citizens, on zoning and related regulations since our 2015 Survey. However, there have been a few Marijuana growing and processing permits both vested and approved under the old rules that continue to vex many area residents.

New Members

As a result of the Citizens' Survey, several people volunteered to be considered to serve on the Area Council. At the Area Council's January monthly meeting five new members were accepted and will be sworn in at our February monthly meeting (to be held on February 12 instead on the usual first Monday in the month due to a room scheduling conflict). **We thank our new members for their willingness to serve their fellow citizens of our Rural Area.**

Thank you

The Area Council expresses its deep appreciation to all those who took the time and effort to participate in our Survey. The results of which will better enable us to serve the needs and desires of our community. We especially thank those who took the *extra* time and effort to provide their own valuable written comments—many of them. Numerical results and comments (no names) will be sent to our elected County officials. **Thank you for continuing to help your Area Council understand the sentiments of Rural Area residents and accurately convey them to our elected officials.**

Please visit: www.gmvuac.org for more information on your Area Council and rural issues. You are welcome to attend any of our meetings on the first Monday of the month (when the first Monday is a holiday, we meet on the second Monday) 7 - 9:30 PM, at the Fire Station located on the SE corner of SE 231st St & SR-169 intersection across from the Police Precinct. We hope to see you soon!