



City of Mill Creek Strategic Plan



April 2012



City of Mill Creek **Strategic Plan**

RESOLUTION NO. 2012-482

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MILL CREEK, WASHINGTON ADOPTING A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CITY OF MILL CREEK

WHEREAS, a Strategic Plan is a big picture document that lays out a city's future and specifies the actions needed to achieve that vision; and

WHEREAS, having such a plan brings focus and accountability to the work of city government and creates a way to measure progress and quickly identify obstacles and overcome them; and

WHEREAS, the process of creating a strategic plan involves many stakeholders – Councilmembers, citizens and staff – in shaping a shared vision that can energize and unify a community; and

WHEREAS, at the direction of the City Council, City staff, and the Consultant, Studio Cascade, Inc., began the process of creating a Strategic Plan in January 2011; and

WHEREAS, the year-long effort included an extensive public outreach program that included a statistically valid telephone survey, three open house events, and outreach at numerous community events; and

WHEREAS, successful implementation of the strategic plan will ensure Mill Creek is well positioned to anticipate and respond to change while honoring the essential characteristics that make it a unique and desirable place in which to live and do business; and

WHEREAS, adoption of the strategic plan will also set the City Council on a course to address the community's fiscal condition and invest in specific actions to maintain what Mill Creek residents value most.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MILL CREEK HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. There is hereby adopted by reference, "City of Mill Creek Strategic Plan" dated April 10, 2012, which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Mill Creek, this 10th day of April 2012 by a vote of 4 for, 3 against and 0 abstaining.

APPROVED:



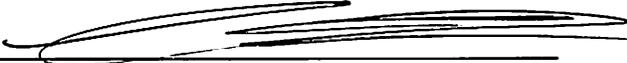
MIKE TODD, MAYOR

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATED:



KELLY CHELIN, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



SHANE MOLONEY, CITY ATTORNEY

Exhibit:

A – Strategic Plan

FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK 4/3/12

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL: 4/10/12

RESOLUTION NO.: 2012-482

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Thanks to City staff members who assisted with the City's Strategic Plan public outreach program at various community events:

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The City of Mill Creek prepared a strategic plan to identify actions it will need to take to address pressing community issues. The strategic plan is a big-picture document directing City efforts and resources toward a clearly defined vision. This Executive Summary summarizes the vision, goals and objectives of the strategic plan, and includes an action matrix and schedule designed to target Council action. The actions respect the larger community picture, reflecting policy direction and vision as provided in the comprehensive plan and based on broad community participation in the plan's development. For more detailed information, please reference the full strategic plan document.

Successful implementation of the strategic plan will ensure Mill Creek is well positioned to anticipate and respond to change while honoring those essential characteristics that make it a unique and desirable place in which to live and do business. Adoption of the strategic plan will also set the City Council on a course to address the community's fiscal condition and invest in specific actions to maintain what Mill Creek residents value most.

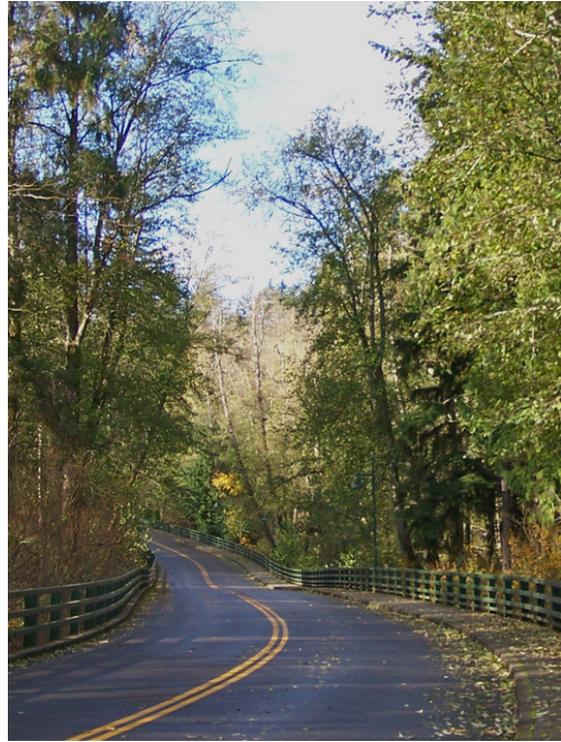


Figure E.01 - Fiscal conditions have changed dramatically in recent years - especially for cities where residential uses predominate. Setting a course to sustain the services, qualities and essential values of Mill Creek is the primary goal of this plan. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)



Vision for Mill Creek's Future

The strategic plan's vision builds on Mill Creek's comprehensive plan goals and policies and reflects guidance from the City Council and from the community's response to this strategic planning process. It provides a vision for Mill Creek in the year 2030. It incorporates the community's priorities and applies them to a desired future state the strategic plan seeks to achieve. The vision is as follows:

"Mill Creek is a safe place.

It continues to feel like a small town while still benefiting from the metropolitan areas surrounding it.

The City maintains high development and environmental standards to ensure that its physical environment is a cut above what might be expected elsewhere and that its natural beauty is retained or enhanced.

Residents enjoy their walkable community, where people stroll during their leisure hours and have opportunities to interact with others.

It provides some local employment for those who want to work locally - but not in the form of heavy industry, transport or warehousing.

Mill Creek acknowledges the needs of those who reside within its urban growth area as well, anticipating that they may at some point be city residents enjoying the same living experience as those within city limits today."



Goals and Objectives

A plan is only as good as its implementation. Below are some of the community's strategic planning goals and objectives, which will provide a specific roadmap for the plan's implementation.

The following goals are derived from the City's comprehensive plan, results from the public outreach conducted during this project, and indications from the City Council on their preference for fiscal prudence. They address the issues motivating this strategic plan, build on its assumptions and reflect direction embedded in the plan's elements. Goals are high-level and inspirational. Objectives are more specific and finite. Attaining the objectives should lead to goal achievement. They set milestones for the City's progress, identifiable landmarks that define and meter the City's course. Each of the objectives identified here relate to the plan's goals, providing discrete and measurable targets the City can achieve as it pursues the plan's implementation.



Goal 1 – Maintain Mill Creek's Community Character

While focus on balancing the City's budget is crucial, fiscal actions should never lose sight of what makes Mill Creek so attractive to its residents and businesses. Mill Creek's streets and neighborhoods are generally well maintained and feel safe, peaceful, beautiful and walkable to its residents and visitors. The community's character must be maintained, ensuring that whatever actions the City takes to be fiscally sustainable it does not sacrifice what is precious.

Objective 1: Ensure that City development standards are maintained or improved to achieve high quality design in new development.

Community character is reinforced by the appearance of the built environment. Public spaces, street corridors, neighborhoods and community institutions convey messages in their physical appearance. Development standards regulate the appearance of the community's built environment, and maintaining the community's character relies on good, effective standards for design and development.

Objective 2: Take steps to ensure that Mill Creek continues to be a very walkable city.

Community members appreciate Mill Creek's scale and their ability to walk along its streets and trails safely and conveniently. Moving about on foot or by bike is part of Mill Creek's character, and the transportation system should be managed and maintained to ensure this can continue.





Goal 2 – Provide an adequate level of quality public facilities in a fiscally prudent manner

Objective 1: Continue to implement a long-term pavement preservation program by the end of 2013. (Also relates to Goals 1 and 4)

Roadway deterioration is a natural outcome of their use, and a regular maintenance program can prolong roadway life. Delays in instituting a comprehensive pavement preservation program will increase the likelihood that roadways will need reconstruction earlier than if a preservation program is in place. By establishing this program now, the City can expect to defer more expensive capital road rebuilding projects.

Objective 2: Identify which new City-owned public facilities are needed in Mill Creek and identify when they should be constructed.

The police department needs more space than it has. Requirements for records and evidence storage and needs for increased staff to keep up with population growth make it increasingly difficult to remain within the existing facility. The City Council has indicated its preference that this large an expenditure should be considered and voted on by the community. The Council also identified the public works facility and new sports fields as important needs, referring to its 2009 community facilities master plan. Finally, there appears to be at least some citizen support for other community facilities, such as a multipurpose community center.



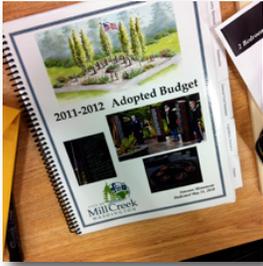
Goal 3– Provide a high level of quality public services to the citizens of Mill Creek

The outreach effort in this planning process underscores the community’s desire to have Mill Creek continue its high service levels, particularly in terms of law enforcement and parks and recreation programs. The community also appreciates the efficiency with which the City provides all its services. These levels of service should not be sacrificed. It is important that the City invest in its facilities and services to support its vision, including retaining police services and providing adequate staff and facilities to support service levels.

Objective 1: Maintain an adequate level of City staff to ensure continued high levels of service to Mill Creek’s citizens.

The City of Mill Creek provides public services that its residents and businesses appreciate. But providing those services requires adequate staffing levels to ensure the community’s needs are met. An underlying theme in this plan’s fiscal strategy is to contain costs. However, adequate staffing is equally important, ensuring that those services the community values are sustained.





Goal 4 – ensure that Mill Creek achieves and maintains a stable fiscal footing.

Objective 1: Attain fiscal stability by the 2017/2018 biennium that does not require annually spending down reserves.

The 2011/2012 biennium is the first in which the City had to augment its revenues by drawing from its reserves. That is forecast to continue unless the City can increase its revenues. The City must overcome its deficit by the end of the 2017/2018 biennium or it will fully deplete its reserves and be forced to make radical reductions in levels of service. The City's current rate of reserves depletion allows it to take time to institute its revenue enhancement/diversification strategies, but it must act before those reserves are gone.

Objective 2: Limit increases in general fund expenditures to the minimum possible to maintain levels of service or to add/enhance services and programs to meet community need.

The community demands high levels of service, and the Council has repeated its commitment to deliver them. The costs to provide those services will likely increase as the community grows and as the costs associated with medical insurance, salaries, purchased services, utilities and other components of running a city also increase. This objective institutionalizes the philosophy of cost containment, reinforcing the need to keep cost increases to the lowest possible levels given the community's need for services. It also recognizes that the community's needs may change over time and that it may cost the City money to respond to those changes in needs.

Objective 3: Establish a desired level of City reserves.

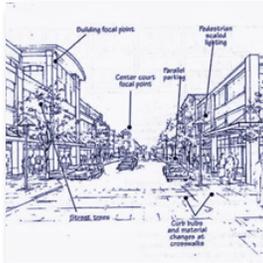
Past fiscal prudence and a high level of building activity resulted in the accumulation of a reserve account five times greater than that required by the City's budgetary policy. That reserve account is now being used due to the downturn in revenues and continuing increases in expenses. This objective speaks to the importance of keeping Mill Creek solvent, even operating at a marginal surplus in the near future to rebuild depleted reserves. Maintaining a positive reserve balance will also help the City weather future economic downturns, an asset whose value this downturn has emphasized.

Objective 4: Institute annual review of economic indicators by end of 2012. (Also relates to Goals 2 and 3)

Mill Creek's City Council is not eager to institute new fees or taxes. By incorporating economic and fiscal indicators into its budget-building process, the City can review the revenue instruments in place and test their appropriateness given economic trends and forecasts. Revenue recommendations included in Appendix A of this plan are based on current conditions and those forecast based on what is known or thought today. Future conditions, particularly related to the scope and pace of economic recovery, may motivate adjustments to the revenue



strategy. Employing these indicators, and having them become an active part of the budget process, may help the City tailor its revenue strategies to ask only what is necessary given the best available and most current information.



Goal 5 – Enhance economic and employment opportunities in Mill Creek.

Objective 1: Encourage development of the East Gateway Urban Village master plan.

Making progress on developing the EGUV is fundamental to this overall strategy. That project will generate property and sales tax income upon which the City’s fiscal models are based. Failing to adopt development agreements for EGUV projects will delay their development and delay the City’s receipt of needed revenue. The City must take the time it needs, however, to ensure that the proposed development projects meet the community’s other needs. Development quality, provision of local employment and compliance with development standards are also important and should not be sacrificed solely in the quest for expedient development agreement adoption.

Objective 2: Encourage high quality design in other commercially zoned properties within Mill Creek.

High quality design will help retain and communicate Mill Creek’s character, and it will also encourage continued investment in Mill Creek’s commercial and residential districts. Quality design promotes activity and resiliency, communicating predictability that is fundamental to economic investment.

Objective 3: Assess the commercial land uses allowed by the City’s land use map and zoning map to ensure they represent an optimal mix for Mill Creek.

Mill Creek’s comprehensive plan designations and zoning districts establish areas for commercial development, but they may not provide for the land use mix or development standards that are appropriate for the type and scale of development desired. An assessment of the plan and zoning will help the City align its land use policy and development regulations with the future type of development the community envisions.



Goal 6 – Ensure that new growth and development is high quality and provides a benefit to Mill Creek.

Objective 1: Annexation proposals shall be carefully evaluated for both short- and long-term benefits to Mill Creek.

Annexations are strategic by nature. They have immediate fiscal impact, but they also may position the City to take advantage of other future opportunities. The City’s present annexation policy focuses on immediate fiscal impact, but it may not adequately address future opportunities annexations may present.



Objective 2: Mill Creek should monitor development proposals within its MUGA and take steps to protect the interests of the City.

Collaboration with Snohomish County, particularly concerning development in the MUGA, is essential to Mill Creek's strategic positioning. MUGA development will impact Mill Creek, either by creating additional demand for Mill Creek's services or by shaping the ways in which Mill Creek is able to annex territory. This is of particular concern along the arterial corridors, where land use, transportation, and economic development planning intersect.



Figure E.02 - This strategic plan is a policy-level document, and serves to support the community vision, advising future planning and implementation choices. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Conclusion

The strategic plan, through a series of goals, objectives and specific actions, provides the City a road map to ensure Mill Creek continues to provide high level services, maintain its valued community character, remain responsive to community needs and practice fiscal restraint. Residents and business owners appreciate the quality of life Mill Creek offers, and this strategic plan will ensure that quality of life is retained, even in the face of economic difficulty or political division.



Table E.01 - Action Items Timeline, by Category & Quarter (■ Denotes Council action. □ Denotes staff activity.)

Tasks	2012			2013				2014				2015				2016				2017				2018				2019	
Quarter	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	
Community Character Actions																													
1. Major comprehensive plan update			□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■																			
2. PROS plan	□	■																											
Public Facilities Actions																													
3. Pavement preservation program	□	□				□	□			□	□			□	□			□	□			□	□			□	□		
4. Local revitalization fund	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
5. Facilities plan update					□	□	□	□																					
6. Transportation benefit district												□	□	■							□	■							
7. Police facility								■	□	□	□	□																	
8. City hall plans								■	□	□	□																		
9. Public works maintenance shop								■	□	□	□	□																	
10. Multipurpose community center study																			□	□									
11. Additional sports fields	□	□					□	□	■																				
Public Services Actions																													
12. Fire district contract															■				■								■		
13. Fee study												□	□																
14. Fee increase																													
Fiscal Balance Actions																													
15. Council retreat - fiscal priorities	■																												
16. Cost containment	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
17. Reserves policy																													
18. Property tax increase 1% minimum																													
19. Utility tax																													
20. Budget monitoring program			□				□				□				□				□				□				□		
Economic Development Actions																													
21. EGUV development agreements	■						□	□	■	□	□	■	□	□	■														
22. Economic development assessment	■																												
23. Economic development plan		□	□	□	□	■																							
24. Land use capacity study	□	□	□																										
25. Streamline development review		□	□																										
Growth & Annexation Actions																													
26. Buildable lands analysis		□	□	□																									
27. Annexation policy update		□	□	■																									
28. Annexation feasibility study				□	□	□																							

Introduction

Purpose

Mill Creek prepared this strategic plan to identify critically important actions it will need to take to address pressing community issues. This document culminates in an action matrix and schedule designed to target Council action in multiple areas. The actions respect the larger community picture, reflecting policy direction and vision as provided in the comprehensive plan and based on broad community participation in the plan's development.

The strategic plan is a big-picture document directing City efforts and resources toward a clearly defined vision for its future. The strategic planning process and plan considered 5, 10 and 20-year horizons to address the following issues:

- *Helping the City of Mill Creek decide what it wants to be in the future, including identification of what makes Mill Creek unique and special, and how the City can position itself to be prepared for the future while still retaining those qualities.*



Figure 1.01 - Mill Creek's City Council worked through numerous workshops, provided ongoing review of process materials, and deliberated findings in several public hearings. Some members even helped staff event booths and open house events, gathering resident input in-person. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)



Figure 1.02 - Residents consistently expressed the desire to maintain or better existing service levels. Public safety is always a priority, and as one of the services spurring Mill Creek's incorporation, is seen by residents as a critical service. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

- *Recognizing economic development potential and ways to diversify the local economy.*
- *Setting a future growth and annexation policy.*
- *Evaluating existing and future public facilities and services, priorities, phasing.*
- *Strategically positioning the City to maximize opportunities, including setting priorities.*
- *Identifying and analyzing potential partnerships with other entities.*
- *Maintaining customer service levels.*

- *Meeting citizen expectations.*
- *Planning for fiscal sustainability.*

Adoption of this strategic plan will set the City Council on a course to address the community's fiscal condition and invest in specific actions to maintain what Mill Creek residents value most. Successful implementation of this strategic plan will ensure Mill Creek is well positioned to anticipate and respond to change while honoring those essential characteristics that make it a unique and desirable place in which to live and do business.

Community participation and extensive City staff and City Council involvement in this strategic planning process focused the plan on **six essential categories:**

1 - Community Character

When asked what they appreciate most about Mill Creek, residents note its quality of life, small-town character, safety, and ability to walk on the community's trails. Mill Creek is perceived by many of its residents as a retreat set in the larger Puget Sound metropolitan region. Though the community's population will almost certainly increase, Mill Creek must not sacrifice the essential parts of its character that define what it is and that compel its residents to call the city home.

Chapter 3 of this plan proposes a working vision for this strategic plan, reflecting what this process revealed as a community vision. The comprehensive plan update, scheduled for 2012 to 2014, will explore the vision in more depth, ensuring that the City's long-range policy is consistent with the community's aspirations for its future.



OPTION A



Figure 1.03 - The City expects to see East Gateway (EGUV) development begin soon - with a resulting increase in property and sales tax revenues - but full build-out and much larger levels of revenues will likely take several years to achieve. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)

2 - Public Facilities

There are several “big ticket” items included in the City’s community facilities master plan. The new police station, City Public Works maintenance shop, expanded sports fields and city hall remodel represent more than \$10 million in needed capital investment. However, the City is not currently in fiscal condition to pay for these items out of its general fund.

The City’s street maintenance responsibilities are becoming increasingly expensive. Many of the community’s roads were built 25 years ago, roughly at the time of incorporation. The streets need attention, and it is straining the City’s

budget to provide it. A proposed long-term pavement preservation program requires from \$500,000 to \$1 million annually to maintain city streets in their current condition.

3 - Public Services

The public’s responses to a telephone survey and other outreach activities were unequivocal. Public services should remain at their existing levels. The community appreciates and relies upon the services the City offers and the role those services play in defining the community’s character. All of these elements can be traced back to the local quality of life, underscoring the attachment residents and businesses have to their community.



Very few would accept a reduction in service levels, even in times of economic distress.

4 - Fiscal Balance

The strategic plan charts a course for City solvency, outlining steps to overcome deficit spending and ensuring an appropriate budgetary reserve. Cost containment, revenue enhancement and diversification, and budget monitoring work together to help the City maintain levels of service while also strengthening its fiscal sustainability. The strategic plan offers a series of revenue enhancement and diversification actions that could be implemented to balance the City's budget in the short term. Monitoring the productivity of the revenue strategies is also essential, ensuring that Mill Creek's residents are assessed taxes and fees only as necessary.

5 - Economic Development

Economic development is a community priority. It may alleviate the City's fiscal strain by making its land more productive, and it may provide local jobs for Mill Creek residents. A more active local economy can translate to a more prosperous and dynamic community, with busier shops, jobs closer to home and a reliable income stream to support the City's provision of high-quality services. Given Mill Creek's current and forecast fiscal condition, the creation of increased economic activity is essential.

This plan recommends Mill Creek begin work on an economic development plan as part of its comprehensive plan update, identifying in more detail how it

can take advantage of its unique opportunities to stimulate local retail activity.

6 - Growth & Annexation

Mill Creek's population is forecast to reach approximately 19,657 by the year 2025 within the current city limits. Additional growth is expected in the City's MUGA, with the total MUGA population expected to reach 56,215 by 2025. Residents appreciate the value growth brings in sharing the cost of public services provision. But there is also concern that growth within city limits, if not properly managed, could threaten the community's character. At the same time, the City has been reluctant recently to annex land, concerned that annexation will cause the City to inherit substandard public infrastructure without a compensating fiscal return.

This plan recommends the City revise its annexation policy to consider the overall strategic and fiscal benefits of a proposed annexation. While some annexations may be fiscally unattractive in the near term, they may provide opportunities for redevelopment or other benefit not easily calculated in terms of property or sales tax revenue.



Setting

This chapter provides an abbreviated description of the City’s existing condition, including brief descriptions of land use, transportation, economics and infrastructure. It also describes the policy and budget environment, providing information on the Comprehensive Plan, budget, and any other public policies impacting the strategic plan. Finally, it outlines the strategic plan’s role in helping shape the City’s future.

City Setting

Mill Creek is located approximately 20 miles north of Seattle, in southern Snohomish County. It lies within Snohomish County’s southwestern urban growth area, a large urban complex of communities including Everett, Mukilteo, Edmonds, Woodway, Mountlake Terrace, Brier, Lynnwood and portions of Bothell. The cities of Everett, Lynnwood and Bothell are its immediate neighbors. Mill Creek, initially developed as a planned community with a golf course at its center, is the youngest of those cities surrounding it, incorporating on September 30, 1983 as a non-charter code city.



Figure 2.01 - Mill Creek’s street network was shaped by diverse topography, the original community’s golf course and rural thoroughfares - but strong branding, and wayfinding elements help make the city more navigable and cohesive. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

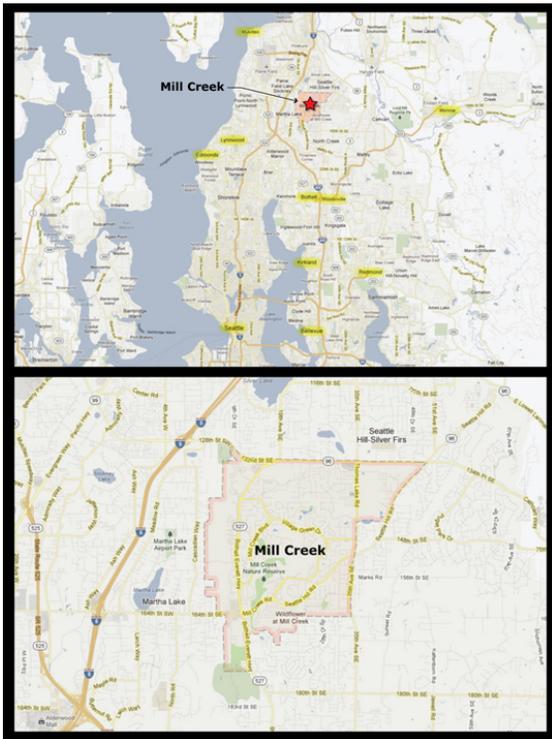


Figure 2.02 - Mill Creek is located approximately 20 miles north of Seattle in southern Snohomish County. It lies within a large urban complex of communities including Everett, Mukilteo, Edmonds, Mountlake Terrace, Lynnwood and Bothell. (Image source: Google™ maps, Studio Cascade, Inc.)

of growth occurred between 1980 and the early 1990s, a period in which the resident population tripled.

Land Use & Community Character

Mill Creek has become a more complex and diverse community as it has grown. The urban development filling in the areas surrounding the original Mill Creek planned community is like much of that elsewhere in suburban Puget Sound. Single-family homes, townhouses, apartments, retail centers, schools and offices have filled in much of what had been an undeveloped landscape. Where Mill Creek was once an island of residential and commercial development, it now is part of a larger suburban mix.

The City operates in a Council-Manager form of government, with individual department heads reporting to the City Manager. There are seven city council seats. The council selects one of its members to preside over meetings and serve as a ceremonial mayor, who has no additional authority.

Mill Creek's population has steadily grown over the last 20 years. Since 1980 the community's population has grown from a population of 1,803 to 18,244 (2010 U.S. Census) reflecting an average annual growth rate of 3 percent. This is due to construction within the original city limits, as well as annexation of areas surrounding the original core. The strongest period

Conceived in the 1950s and developed over several decades, the community retained its country-club atmosphere, with a mix of single-family, townhouse and apartments set in a lushly landscaped, open-space rich and hilly environment. The golf course was the primary focus, and individual, named subdivisions surrounded it. Those subdivision names have since become major identity brands for Mill Creek residents, many of whom associate themselves directly to the neighborhoods in which they reside.

Situated in a park-like setting and nestled among the trails and creeks of the golf course community surrounding the center, Mill Creek Town Center is a new lifestyle center and outdoor mall featuring over 70 stores, retail boutiques, restaurants, and services.

The City of Mill Creek has an extensive system of sidewalks and trails. Many



of the trails are private trails located in neighborhoods throughout the City; however these private trails provide valuable connections to public trails and sidewalks

The Mill Creek Community Association (MCCA) is comprised of more than three-dozen separate divisions consisting of single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums and apartments. Residents of a home, townhouse, condo or apartment complex within the original planned residential development of Mill Creek are voting members of the Mill Creek Community Association. With a membership of about 10,000, more than half the population of Mill Creek are members of the MCCA.

Mill Creek is predominantly residential, and most of that residential landscape is in the form of single-family subdivisions. There is also variety in the single-family type, with elements of single-family attached housing in subdivisions near the golf course. Many of the residential lots are contained within the original planned community boundary, but later development continued the single-family trend into the community's outlying areas, too.

The second most prolific land use is open space. Of the community's 4.68 square miles (2,995 acres), more than 220 acres are dedicated in large tracts to some type of open space. The City has 57 acres of public neighborhood and community park land to serve its residential population. Additionally the MCCA privately owns and maintains over 160 acres of common areas. Both public and private open spaces have been developed for a variety of purposes: Some is developed for recreational purposes – such as the



Figure 2.03 - Mill Creek's second-most prolific land use is open space. More than 220 acres are dedicated as open space, with even more as sensitive or habitat areas. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

golf course and sports parks – some remains in its natural or near natural state, such as the Mill Creek Community Association owned and maintained Nature Preserve. And there is abundant open space even beyond what appears in this calculation. Undeveloped slopes and sensitive habitat areas sharing parcels that are otherwise improved do not appear in this open space category, adding to the visual presence of the community's open spaces and their importance in defining the community's identity. These areas include the wetlands and buffer adjacent to North Creek.

Mill Creek also has a range of general commercial land, mostly located along the primary arterials of SR 527 (Bothell-



Everett Highway), 164th Street SE and 132nd Street SE. The Mill Creek Town Center, conceived as a new downtown with mixed residential/retail/office uses falls into the general commercial category, as does the land developed as more conventional shopping centers. Commercial development along 132nd Street SE is pronounced, hosting the relatively new Lowe’s Home Improvement store, a commercialized edge with Everett to the north and the potential of the proposed East Gateway Urban Village.

There is little land available in Mill Creek for industrial or manufacturing uses. These uses were not included in the initial planned community. Employment was considered to be something offered elsewhere, and it is only relatively recently that local employment options have been developing. Still, there is scarce land available to develop more of this, and much of what is available for light industry or manufacturing is impacted by environmental constraints.

Transportation

When first conceived, Mill Creek was in a rural area, benefitting from convenient highway connections to Everett, Bellevue and Seattle. It promised a unique residential

alternative, with a golf course, quiet single-family neighborhoods and a quick ride to the region’s employment centers. State Route 527 led to I-405 and the jobs centers east of Lake Washington. 164th Street SE and 128th/132nd Street SE led to I-5 and the jobs in Everett and Seattle. The regional transportation network helped Mill Creek attract its residents, providing the connection to employment areas the residents needed.

Since those early days, the transportation system has become more congested. SR 527 is a busy arterial, and 164th Street SE traffic surpasses roadway capacity at peak hour; there is little room for capacity improvement. Snohomish County has declared that it will make no more capacity improvements to 164th Street SE because there are few opportunities to acquire additional right of way to provide relief. SR 527, a highway under WSDOT jurisdiction, is not slated for any capacity improvements, either. This is a regional issue. Mill Creek is not the only source of traffic along these routes. The transportation system’s overall success is leading to its failure, providing access to urban development and single family subdivisions that have extended to, encircled and grown beyond Mill Creek’s borders.

Table 2.1 - Mill Creek, MUGA and Snohomish County Population

	1980	1990	2006 ¹	2010 ⁴	2015	2025
Current Mill Creek City Limits	1,803	7,172	11,525	17,460	18,244	19,657
MUGA ²	N/A	N/A	28,360	N/A	N/A	56,215
Snohomish County	337,720	444,750	606,024	637,500	713,335	862,254

¹ Includes population within current City limits as of April 1, 2006

² Municipal Urban Growth Area; see MUGA discussion in Chapter VI, Land Use Element

³ Based on Alternative 1 of the Draft EIS for the 10-Year Update to the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan

⁴ Counts based on 2010 U.S. Census, DP-1: Profile of General Population and Demographic Profile Data



Table 2.2 - Demographics Estimates – 2010 U.S. Census

Population Profile	Mill Creek		Snohomish County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	18,244	100.0	713,335	100.0
Male population	8,872	48.6	356,958	50.0
Female population	9,372	51.4	356,377	50.0
Median Age (years)	38.9	(X)	37.1	(X)
Under 5 years	1,042	5.7	47,378	6.6
18 years and over	13,985	76.7	539,168	75.6
65 years and over	2,287	12.5	73,544	10.3
Racial Profile				
One Race	17,442	95.6	680,613	95.4
White	13,537	74.2	559,011	78.4
Black or African American	396	2.2	18,168	2.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	92	0.5	9,793	1.4
Asian	3,046	16.7	63,385	8.9
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	81	0.4	3,135	0.4
Two or More Races	802	4.4	32,722	4.6
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,026	5.6	64,249	9.0

The main arteries serving Mill Creek are managed and maintained by Snohomish County and WSDOT. Mill Creek is responsible for the design, construction and maintenance of its local streets, however. Those streets, many of which were constructed during the early years of the Mill Creek planned community, are now needing attention.

Mill Creek’s annexations have also increased the scope of its street maintenance responsibilities. Streets developed to meet Snohomish County’s subdivision standards may not meet Mill Creek’s standards, and, when annexed, can lead to maintenance issues Mill Creek must address. For example, many of the roads in the

northeast corner of the City, annexed in 2005, were constructed to Snohomish County standards and are at an age and condition that additional maintenance is needed.

Demographics

According to the 2010 Census, Mill Creek’s total population in 2010 was 18,244. Of the current population, approximately 78 percent classify themselves as white, with almost 20 percent classifying themselves as Asian. The City has an estimated 7,923 housing units. The 2010 Census revealed that



95.3% of housing units were occupied with only 4.7% of units vacant at the time of Census data collection.

Owner-occupied housing accounts for a majority of the housing in the City – 4,764 units or 63.1% of all housing units in Mill Creek. Renter-occupied housing represents a total of 2,787 units or 36.9% of the City’s housing stock. The average household contains 2.42 persons, and the average family size is 2.99.

The American Community Survey (ACS) reports that more than 46 percent of Mill Creek’s residents over the age of 25 hold a bachelor’s or advanced degree and that more than 96 percent of the city’s residents graduated high school. Mill Creek’s median household income is \$84,779, almost exactly \$20,000 greater than Snohomish County’s median household income. Median family income was estimated to be \$108,412, approximately \$33,000 higher than the median family income in Snohomish County. Slightly more than four percent of families and six percent of all individuals were estimated to have

incomes below the poverty level. Of those over age 65, 2.3% are below the poverty line.

The ACS also reports that Mill Creek residents in the labor force travel an average of slightly more than 30 minutes to work. There are more than 4,000 jobs provided in Mill Creek. Of Mill Creek’s 7,334-strong labor market, however, only 284 live and work in Mill Creek. More than 7,000 residents travel elsewhere for work.

The City’s population is forecast to increase to 19,657 by the year 2025, adding more than 1,400 new residents in 15 years.

Public Services

Mill Creek manages its own storm water utility, and it provides law enforcement, parks and recreation, community development, city administration and public works/streets services. The purpose of the storm water utility is to protect water quality, prevent flooding, control storm water runoff and erosion control, and rehabilitate stream and

Table 2.3 - Employment Forecasts for the City of Mill Creek/Silver Lake

	2000 Employment	2010 Projection	2030 Projection	2000–30 Change
Mill Creek area /Silver Lake (FAZ 7335) ²	5,981	7,083	9,876	3,895 (65%)
Mill Creek Area (FAZ Group) ³	16,950	19,883	28,444	11,494 (68%)
Snohomish County	213,695	249,152	350,001	136,306 (64%)

¹ Year 2000 employment data revised 05/2010 to reflect improvements in the Covered employment database.

² FAZ Forecast Analysis Zone: The basic geographic unit for the data and forecasts, composed of one or more 2000 U.S. Census tracts.

³ The Mill Creek Area FAZ Group includes the Brier area (FAZ 7315), Hilltop (FAZ 7316), North Creek (FAZ 7320), Eastmont (FAZ 7340) and Mill Creek area/Silver Lake (FAZ 7335).

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council (PRSC) Forecasts of Population, Households, and Employment, Version 2006

(The employment forecasts provided in the table above are produced by the Puget Sound Regional Council for units called a Forecast Analysis Zone (FAZ). While each FAZ may be identified by a city or neighborhood name, each is made up of Census tracts, so they do not exactly follow official, jurisdictional boundaries. FAZ Groups represent larger geographic areas. For example, the forecast for the FAZ Group "Sumner/Bonney Lake" contains jobs that are actually located in unincorporated Pierce County, as well as all or part of the cities of Sumner and Bonney Lake. This is also the case with the Mill Creek Area FAZ Group with includes multiple FAZs.

2000 FAZ maps may be found at <http://www.psrc.org/data/gis/map-catalog>, along with GIS inputs to compare city boundaries with FAZs.)



drainage corridors to benefit salmon and wildlife habitat. The City does not provide water and sewer or fire protection services. It has no power utility or municipal library, and it contracts for solid waste management.

Other agencies and special districts provide Mill Creek's residents and businesses with the range of urban services that support the community's quality of life.

- *Everett Water District directly and/or indirectly serves both of Mill Creek's local Water and Sewer Districts – Alderwood and Silver Lake - which provide Mill Creek's residents and businesses with water and sewer service.*
- *Snohomish County Fire District 7 provides fire protection and EMS services to Mill Creek under contract with the City. While the district provides fire and EMS services to all citizens within Mill Creek, the district's total service area encompasses about fifty square miles and provides fire and EMS services to about 50,000 citizens.*
- *The Everett School District operates the public schools located in Mill Creek.*
- *SnoIsle Library District operates the community's library, now located just east of Mill Creek Town Center at Mill Creek Boulevard and SR 527.*
- *Snohomish County PUD supplies electrical service for Mill Creek.*
- *Puget Sound Energy supplies natural gas service for Mill Creek.*
- *Community Transit is the regional public transportation provider.*

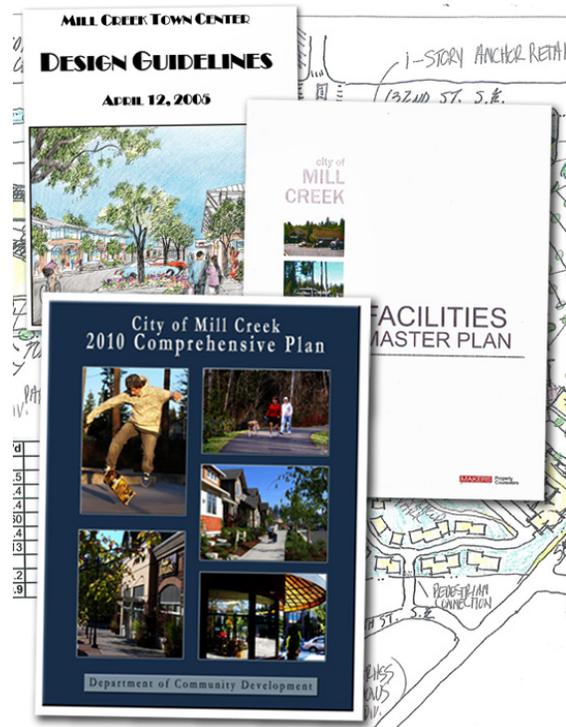


Figure 2.04 - Mill Creek has enjoyed unusual success in its plan implementation efforts, most notably with Town Center. Other recent efforts include preliminary work for the "EGUV" subarea, facilities planning, and the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

- *Waste Management provides residential curb-side garbage, recycling and yard waste services to residents of Mill Creek.*

Adopted Plans

The City has adopted plans and policies that influence the environment in which this strategic plan is prepared.

Comprehensive Plan

Mill Creek adopted its current comprehensive plan in 2006 and has amended it almost annually since, establishing policy direction to guide the City in compliance with



the Growth Management Act. That plan articulates specific goals and policies related to the community's development, hinging mostly on the maintenance of the community's character, its commitment to high levels of service and the creation of unique urban environments like the one at Mill Creek Town Center.

The comprehensive plan calls for the preservation and management of the community's environmentally sensitive areas and their active integration into the community's landscape. This policy direction is consistent with the theme of the initial Mill Creek planned community and its incorporation of an extensive private trails system along the ravines and stream corridors in the community's center. Subsequent development and the popularity of the North Creek Trail underscore the importance of Mill Creek's environment in local policy.

Comprehensive plan policy also directs the community to seek out opportunities for more compact and fiscally productive land use, identifying opportunities for new mixed-use development at the East Gateway Urban Village site and promoting varied housing types similar to what has developed north of Mill Creek Town Center. Mill Creek's comprehensive plan embraces the concept of land use, housing and economic diversity, shaping the community as a prosperous, resilient and increasingly dynamic place.

Facilities Master Plan

Developed in 2007 and adopted in 2009, the Mill Creek Facilities Master Plan presented a series of recommendations for the



Figure 2.05 - This strategic plan is a policy-level document, and serves to support the community vision, advising future planning and implementation choices. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

improvement of various municipal buildings and facilities in anticipation of the community's growth and increased demand for services. According to the plan, "growth of City administration, police and public works responsibility has strained the ability for the City Hall to accommodate these functions." In response, the plan's primary focus is on construction of three major facilities:

- *Public Works shop* – The new shop was proposed to be located north of Town Center, on Dumas Road across from the baseball field. The new shop was forecast to cost approximately \$1.7 million
- *Police department* – The location for new police department offices is to be studied, accommodating more than 12,000 square feet of office. The facilities plan used the City Hall annex as a possible location, estimating the cost at \$4.4 million
- *City hall remodel* – With public works and police leaving city hall, additional work to that building could help accommodate the space needs of the remaining City



functions. The plan estimated costs for that work to be approximately \$4.2 million.

The plan was focused on these three components, but there are other facilities needs that must be considered, as well. A senior center, community center and additional sports fields are on the community's collective mind and may be considered as the City updates its facilities plan, comprehensive plan, and parks and recreation plan.

Budget

Mill Creek is facing a challenge. Its biennial budget now relies on the City's reserves for balance, reflecting a deficit condition that is not sustainable. City budget forecasts indicate that the expected increases in costs and the stasis of revenues will lead to an even greater gap if nothing is done.

Mill Creek adopts biennial budgets, projecting revenues and municipal costs for two years. The next budget will cover calendar years 2013 and 2014. While the budget targets two-year intervals, the City conducts annual reviews of expenditures and revenues and makes adjustments as necessary.

Historically, the City has been able to balance its budgets since incorporation by containing costs and enjoying revenues based on high property values, an active retail market and construction permit fees. This situation allowed Mill Creek to build a significant reserve balance. In 2010, the City had accrued a five-million dollar ending fund balance, five times greater than the minimum its budget policy requires.

Economic conditions, however, are straining Mill Creek's biennial budget, with forecast expenditures greater than forecast revenues. The City's long-standing practice of operating in the black is at an end, with general fund reserves being used to balance the budget for the 2011-2012 biennium. The deficit for the 2011-2012 biennium is approximately \$400,000. The deficit is expected to widen to \$1.4 million for the 2013-2014 biennium.

Even though revenues are currently flat, demand for services and the costs associated with those services continue to increase. The City's budget policy can tolerate continued reliance on its reserves, but only for a few more years. Depending on assumptions applied to the budget forecast models, the reserves could fall below the required \$1 million level as soon as 2017.

Strategic Plan's Role

This strategic plan is designed to build a bridge between the City's existing policies and the actions it takes over the next several years to deliver on its promises. It is intended to support the comprehensive plan, translating its goals and policies into actions the City can take. It is intended to support the City's investment in needed capital facilities, identifying how and when the City should act to secure necessary funding for those projects given what else the City must accomplish. This strategic plan is also intended to help put the current and forecast budget challenge in context, outlining ways in which the City can revise its fiscal model to alleviate the current



vulnerabilities and make itself more resilient to future changes in property tax and sales tax returns.

Looking forward, this plan lays the groundwork for future policy action, identifying how the City can best prepare for its upcoming economic development and comprehensive planning, how it may continue to provide high quality services and public facilities, and how it can assess the value and importance of growth and annexation proposals, all while maintaining Mill Creek's outstanding community character.

This strategic plan, through a series of goals, objectives and specific actions, provides a road map for officials to ensure Mill Creek continues to provide high level services, maintain its valued community character, remain responsive to community needs and practice fiscal restraint. Residents and business owners appreciate the quality of life Mill Creek offers, and this strategic plan will ensure that quality of life is retained, even in the face of economic difficulty or political division.



Strategic Plan Vision

Introduction

Planning recommendations hinge on a clear and compelling vision, capturing the community's aspirations, recognizing its unique characteristics, opportunities and challenges, and providing a snapshot of the community's future. This strategic plan's vision builds on Mill Creek's comprehensive plan goals and policies and reflects guidance from the City Council and from the community's response to this strategic planning process. It provides a vision for Mill Creek in the year 2030. It incorporates the community's priorities and applies them to a desired future state the strategic plan seeks to achieve.

This vision should be considered a work in process, however. More refinement may be necessary as the city moves into its comprehensive plan update, ensuring the vision encompasses all that it should. The comprehensive plan will address land use, transportation, housing, economic development, community design, public facilities, utilities and many other topics, all of which should find roots in the final Mill Creek Vision. For purposes of this strategic plan, the vision below sets the stage.



Figure 3.01 - City staff donated many evening and weekend hours to the Strategic Plan effort, gathering input on community concerns and priorities at civic events and open-house meetings. All helped affirm this plan's vision, and shaped its various objectives and findings. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)



Vision for Mill Creek's Future

The strategic plan's vision builds on Mill Creek's comprehensive plan goals and policies and reflects guidance from the City Council and from the community's response to this strategic planning process. It provides a vision for Mill Creek in the year 2030. It incorporates the community's priorities and applies them to a desired future state the strategic plan seeks to achieve. The vision is as follows:

"Mill Creek is a safe place.

It continues to feel like a small town while still benefiting from the metropolitan areas surrounding it.

The City maintains high development and environmental standards to ensure that its physical environment is a cut above what might be expected elsewhere and that its natural beauty is retained or enhanced.

Residents enjoy their walkable community, where people stroll during their leisure hours and have opportunities to interact with others.

It provides some local employment for those who want to work locally – but not in the form of heavy industry, transport or warehousing.

Mill Creek acknowledges the needs of those who reside within its urban growth area as well, anticipating that they may at some point be city residents enjoying the same living experience as those within city limits today."



Strategic Plan Framework

Introduction

The strategic plan's principal purposes are to help the City do what it must do and prioritize what it wants to do, expending resources, in terms of both money and time, to achieve various objectives. Key in this project's success will be identifying specific budget items over time to accomplish what is most important to Mill Creek. This project is not a comprehensive plan, but it has many points of intersection with comprehensive planning. The strategic plan's proposals will be based on the City's comprehensive plan policy direction. But the strategic plan's focus is much shorter in term, proposing quarter-by-quarter actions over the next six to seven years as informed by strategic thought.

Stakeholder interviews, assessments of the City's budget and budget forecasts, extensive public engagement, and the two Council retreats have helped to identify what is critical in the eyes of many. Community priorities as reflected in this plan are rooted in maintaining levels of public services, preserving Mill Creek's community character, fiscal accountability, compliance with legal mandates, reduction of the City's



Figure 4.01 - This plan provides a "road map" for City decisions in the near-term, including policy and fiscal strategies supporting the community's vision and fiscal sustainability. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

risk exposure, transportation system management, revenue generation, annexation, and economic development. This process solicited and digested public thoughts on issues that will have policy ramifications in this strategic plan and the comprehensive plan. The result will be a strategic plan that addresses a mix of technical and fiscal issues directly related to the City's budget and operations, as well as an introduction to policy issues that likely will be considered in the upcoming comprehensive plan revision.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to establish a "road map" for City decisions in the near term, ensuring Mill Creek's quality of life is maintained for its residents and businesses. This strategic plan suggests actions – both fiscal and policy – to ensure Mill Creek can maintain those attributes of its community character, facilities and services its residents cherish, even in the face of economic instability. The framework presented here outlines the community's strategic issues and the types of actions the City will need to consider to address them.

This plan calls for a series of financial and policy actions to get the City on course. It calls for a reduction in and then an end to deficit spending, relaxing the drain on the City's reserves through a combination of continued cost containment and revenue enhancement and diversification. By 2016, through implementing this plan's integrated recommendations, Mill Creek will enjoy a balanced budget and be in a stronger position to provide public services at the levels the community demands.



Assumptions

In preparing this plan, the City has to make a series of assumptions. They are listed below, with explanations:

Assumption – About the Economy

The economy will experience slow to modest growth, resulting in increases in both sales tax and property tax revenue. The date of the recovery and its resulting impact, however, are difficult to predict. This plan assumes that measurable positive gains in sales and property tax will occur by 2018, and that the City will need to monitor its fiscal strategy to be able to respond if the recovery's impact is delayed.

Assumption – About State Tax Policy

The structural gap between what the City can collect through taxes and what it costs to provide services will continue to widen, even with limited property tax increases. Property tax increases are limited by law to no more than 1% per year, increasing at a rate greater than that in cases of new construction or development. Costs increase with inflation and other forces, and are rising at a rate faster than revenues are increasing. Without legislative intervention to relax the property tax growth limit, and/or local actions to increase fees and charges, the gap will grow.

Assumption – About Mill Creek's Costs to Provide Services

The City will continue to provide its services at the same level of service as today over the next six years. It will not take action to reduce service levels or eliminate services. The City reviews its costs for providing services each year, proposing

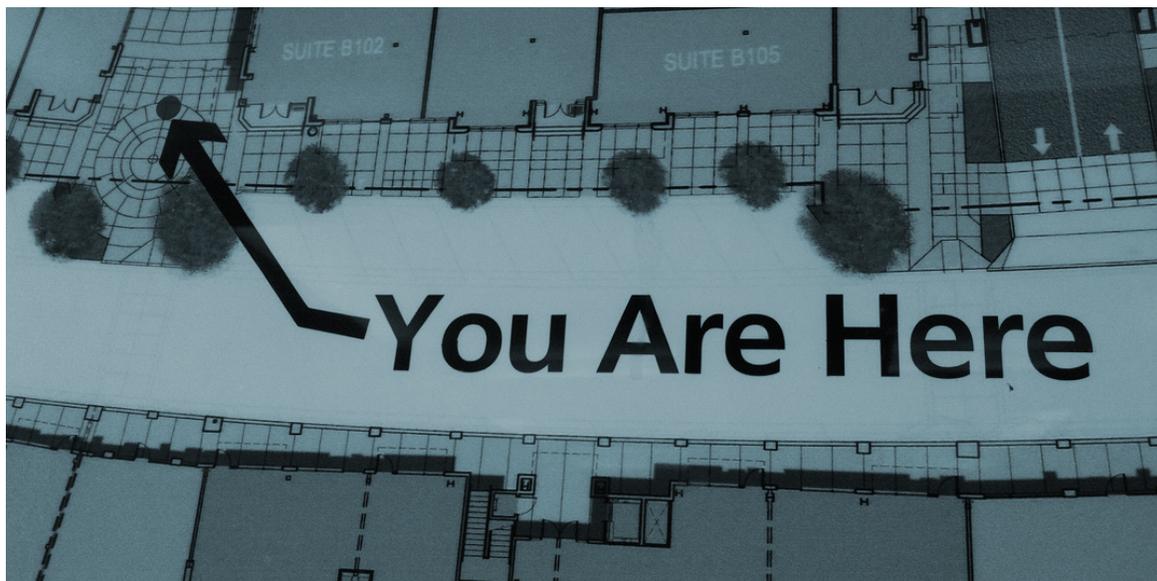


Figure 4.02 - A long-range planning effort begun in 1992 led to the realization of Mill Creek's Town Center a dozen years later. Similar efforts for Mill Creek's future, such as the East Gateway Urban Village and measures articulated in this plan, are already underway. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

staffing, facilities and services budgets and attempting to be as cost-effective as possible. This plan assumes that this process will continue and that the staffing and facilities levels are operating with little to no excess or redundancy.

Assumption – About Fire Protection

The City will continue to contract with the fire district to provide fire suppression and emergency medical services. The fire district and the City will continue to negotiate the price of these fire and EMS services, and the City will consider all options in order to get competitive rates. This plan assumes that the cost of providing fire and EMS services through the District will continue to be equal to what the City is presently paying for fire service plus some inflationary increase. This plan is based on this type of incremental cost increase. This plan assumes the continuation of the existing fire and EMS services contract with the district, though its terms will almost certainly change during the course of the next six years.

Issues

There are multiple issues motivating the preparation of this strategic plan. In the larger view, the community’s economic distress is making it more difficult for the City to provide the services to which its residents and businesses are accustomed. It is placing a greater degree of focus on economic development, the City’s fiscal model and the provision of additional jobs. At the same time, focus on fiscal issues alone may jeopardize the level of attention paid to other aspects of managing a city. The strategic plan must address these issues for it to succeed, resolving the immediate fiscal pinch while reinforcing what makes Mill Creek special.

Table 4.01 - Non-City Service Providers in Mill Creek

Type of Service	Provider
Fire protection	Snohomish County Fire District 7
Water	Silver Lake Water and Sewer District Alderwood Water and Wastewater District
Wastewater	Silver Lake Water and Sewer District Alderwood Water and Wastewater District
Power	Snohomish County PUD
Natural Gas	Puget Sound Energy
Solid Waste/Recycling	Waste Management
Library	Sno-Isle Library
Public transportation	Community Transit
Schools	Everett School District



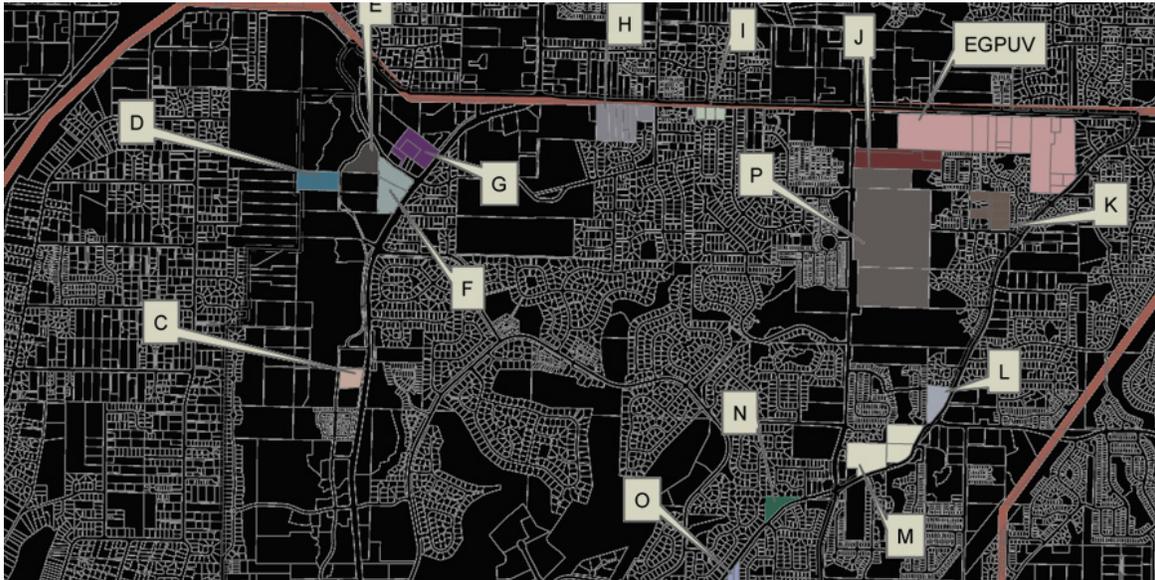


Figure 4.03 - With most of its land area already developed or impacted by wetlands and buffer zones, Mill Creek's ability to rely on development-based revenue is limited. Mapping of developable lands indicates approximately 100 acres - less than 3 percent of Mill Creek's total - remains within City limits. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)

Issue – Delayed Economic Recovery

The slowness of the current economic recovery limits the ability of the City to balance its budget without instituting new revenue sources or cutting levels of service. The reserve balance can carry the City for several years, but every year the recovery is delayed makes larger the difference between revenues and the costs to provide public services. Perhaps as importantly, the delayed economic recovery highlights the community's needs for increased retail activity while providing the opportunity for households to spend less on commuting long distances for work, supporting City involvement in making land and resources available for commerce and industry in Mill Creek.

Issue – Deficit Spending

Mill Creek is spending more than it's collecting. The budget deficit in the 2011/2012 biennium was approximately \$400,000, requiring a contribution from City reserves to cover budgeted expenditures. The reasons why this is occurring are varied. They are economic, structural and political. Property tax revenue is a primary source of income for local governments. Income from property tax, however, can increase by only 1% per year, a limitation put in place by statewide initiative. Costs increase by at least 2.5% per year, resulting in a structural gap that will only widen in time. This places more emphasis on sales tax and other revenue sources to balance municipal budgets. This strategic plan will help Mill Creek wrestle with this situation, proposing a path forward that will eventually lead to stabilizing its budget in the short term and positioning the City for long-term fiscal health.



Issue – Threats to Level of Service

Recent cost cutting has resulted in unfilled staff positions and deferral of capital expenditures. While the City still offers nearly the same services it did when fully funded, the levels of service will likely decrease as community population and demand for services grow and as its facilities wear out and need rehabilitation, expansion or replacement.

Issue – Threats to Community Character

However residents may define it, Mill Creek has a character that attracts them to the community and keeps them there. Whether it is the Town Center, the golf course, the original planned community and its open spaces, the trail system, the parks and recreation system or the way in which the community comes together, there are elements of what is most attractive about Mill Creek that may be at risk because of the City's financial position and the way it manages development.

Issue – Built-out Condition

Land in Mill Creek is almost entirely developed. In the past, fees collected from building permits and land dedicated through subdivision development bolstered local revenue and provided local parks. The pace of development has slowed, and it is unlikely that there will be another wave of development like the one Mill Creek experienced since its incorporation. As a result, development-based revenue support is waning.

Issue – Need for New Public Facilities

The City adopted its facilities plan in 2009, identifying needed facilities. The City has not yet implemented that plan, but the need persists. And, with population growth and the maintenance needs of existing facilities, the need is anticipated to grow if no action is taken.

Priorities

Consistency is crucial. The strategic plan relies on an abiding set of priorities that work in concert with the City's comprehensive plan, budgets, and fiscal strategy. These priorities add to the context within which the strategic plan is set and the actions the City will take to implement it. Some of these positioning components are fiscal, but most relate more to policy interpretation and city administration. In all, they comprise an "attitude check" to help guide the City as it considers how to implement the strategic plan's recommendations. They do not supplant the comprehensive plan's policies. They amplify them.

Priority - Maintaining Community Character

Mill Creek is a unique place, and its residents appreciate its small town feel. Even though it is set in the midst of metropolitan Puget Sound and in Snohomish County's southwestern urban growth area, Mill Creek has maintained its identity and its capacity to make residents feel comfortable, safe and at home in a town they love. The identity rooted in the original planned development and the initial city limits





Figure 4.04 - Mill Creek has embraced natural features such as the North Creek wetland area, bettering habitat, recreational opportunities, and creating the type of feature that residents cite in describing the “community character” they cherish. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)

is relevant still today, with community members defining their place of residence first by neighborhood and then by address. Residents appreciate Mill Creek’s town center, and they appear to be ready to support more development of that type. It may be necessary. It will also be necessary to review the City’s comprehensive plan, zoning and development review practices to ensure that land use intensification, while encouraged, does not threaten the quality of the community’s neighborhoods. Change will occur, but it must honor what Mill Creek is.

Priority - Enhancing Economic & Employment Opportunity

Redirecting Mill Creek’s policy to emphasize economic development is something the community appears to support. This will likely inform policy shifts in the comprehensive plan related to land use, transportation and economic development. It may also influence more immediate work to update the zoning ordinance to verify that tax revenue and employment-generating land uses are allowed in appropriate zoning districts. Existing land available for development, however, is limited. A concerted effort to increase revenue opportunities may also likely involve changes in land use designations to permit different types of development, perhaps including planned reuse of property now dedicated to something else.

Priority - Making Land as Productive as Possible

The urban land resource is a scarce one. Urban growth boundaries restrict the extent to which urban areas can expand, and, more importantly, the increased need to provide public services efficiently argues for more intense use of land within those urban growth boundaries. Roadways, utilities, public safety, school transportation, and public transportation all rely on degrees of compactness to ensure efficient operation. Land use efficiency helps control cost, and, generally, it also helps





Figure 4.05 - Though Mill Creek relies on partner agencies to provide many services, residents look to the City to ensure standards of quality and performance. Many issues that confront the City are issues that the City may not be able to address alone, so strong partnerships between Mill Creek and all service providers is essential. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)

generate increased levels of property tax per acre. Making urban land as productive as possible often translates to increased housing density, mixed residential and commercial uses or smaller lot sizes. But it can threaten the character and composition of existing neighborhoods if not well managed.

Priority - Annexing Land Strategically

Most of the land surrounding Mill Creek is already developed to urban levels, and much of it fails to pass the test of being fiscally attractive if included within city limits. Mill Creek has an annexation policy, but its focus is on the merits and process for individual annexations and not on how individual annexations may fit within a more generalized plan. An annexation of a residential area may not make fiscal sense, but it may be key to a later annexation of property that is now undeveloped or slated for intensification. The City should look at the landscape within its MUGA and identify its ultimate incorporated future state, outlining the annexation steps necessary to get there for those areas deemed strategically attractive. This exercise will be considered during the upcoming comprehensive plan amendment and will rely on active coordination with Snohomish County for its success. Cooperation with the County may help future annexation areas conform to local standards, particularly in regard to streets and development design.

Priority - Shaping Urban Centers

Snohomish County designated areas within and adjacent to Mill Creek's MUGA for higher intensity development, hoping that localizing retail, office and employment uses near higher-density housing will alleviate regional transportation pressures and stimulate economic development. While they are now located within unincorporated



areas of Snohomish County, these centers may evolve into pockets of activity best served by the City and appropriately located within the City's municipal city limits. But, in the meantime, they're in unincorporated territory, so it's in Mill Creek's interest to participate in their shaping and eventual development.

Priority - Strengthening Partnerships

The strategic plan builds on the maintenance of the Mill Creek lifestyle, and it is essential that the City continue to maintain effective relationships with its service providers. Everett schools, the fire district, Sno-Isle Library, and the water and sewer utilities provide a wide array of services that contribute to Mill Creek's way of life. In addition, the City should continue to build and maintain partnerships with other entities in the area, such as Snohomish County, other nearby cities, and the Economic Alliance of Snohomish County. Many issues that confront the City are issues that the City may not be able to address alone, and the very quality of life that Mill Creek residents value is contingent on the ability of other agencies and districts to provide services.

Priority - Managing Transportation

Design and investment in the transportation system will have a marked impact on the City's budget, land use mix and community character. This includes roadways, trails and public transportation. Many transportation services are provided at the state and regional level (WSDOT, Sound Transit and Community Transit), and others are provided locally (Snohomish County, Mill Creek, and private roads/trails). Investment in the transportation system at a regional level has a profound impact on the way communities develop, and Mill Creek's transportation policy will help guide that investment.

Plan Response

The strategic plan includes several action items, each supported by the plan's goals and objectives. The plan is informed by discussion of the community's public facilities, public services, fiscal situation, economic development and growth and annexation. All of these elements add dimension to the City's strategic environment, touching on the context within which the City must work as it sets its course through the coming years.

Response - Community Character

While this plan has many areas of focus, the City should never lose sight of what makes Mill Creek so attractive to its residents and businesses. This plan's primary motivation is to retain Mill Creek's community's character, ensuring that the City's actions reinforce and enhance what residents love about their community. Retaining community character depends on the quality of city operations, patterns and levels of public and private investment, neighborhood identity, the ways in which institutions serve residents and Mill Creek's overall look and function. Residents surveyed in this process confirmed that community character is an important reason for their living here, and many expressed the relationship of the community to its natural environment as essential in maintaining that community character. The



community's trails, the sense of knowing neighbors, a general feeling of safety, and the unique relationship Mill Creek residents have with their home town combine to create and project the character the community appreciates.

Response - Public Facilities

There are several "big ticket" items included in the City's capital facilities plan that were discussed in the second Council retreat. The new police station, City Public Works (PW) maintenance shop and city hall remodel represent more than \$10 million in needed capital investment. And the long-term pavement preservation program requires from \$500,000 to \$1 million annually to maintain city streets in their current condition. However, the City is not currently in fiscal condition to pay for these items out of its general fund. The August 2011 City Council retreat asked City Council members to consider how to fund the community's needed capital facilities. Planned public facilities have been deferred since the facilities plan's adoption in 2009, citing the widening gap between revenues and costs. But the need persists. Council members suggested updating the facilities plan and considered having four of the most important facilities projects funded by community-voted general obligation bonds. In this way, the police facility, City PW shop, city hall remodel, and an expansion in the community's sports fields would be funded through an increase to local property tax. The cost would be shifted directly to this bond initiative, relieving the City of the need to program it into its regular budget. Whether all four would be packaged as a single initiative or whether they would be separated would be decided later. Another option would be to use Reserve funds to pay for one of the less expensive projects.

The facilities master plan identifies a priority order for the public works, police and city hall facilities. The public works shop would be constructed first, and the police facility would follow (along with a corresponding remodel to city hall). The order and phasing of these actions is ultimately up to the City Council and the community if those projects are put forward as voter-approved bond initiatives.

The community has also discussed its need for additional sports fields. Committing to capital expenditure to expand sports field capacity, however, should follow a detailed parks and recreation plan update and discussions with the Everett School District on the potential for sharing facilities for athletic events and league play.

The City's street maintenance responsibilities are becoming increasingly expensive. Many of the community's roads were built 25 years ago, roughly at the time of incorporation. Other streets were built to less demanding standards under County jurisdiction and have since been annexed to Mill Creek. The streets need attention, and it is straining the City's budget to provide it. The August Council retreat addressed this issue, too, considering establishment of a transportation benefit district (TBD) to help offset the City's road costs. A benefit district would assess approximately \$20 per vehicle per year within city limits, with the proceeds dedicated to an established set of street projects. The district would dissolve in six years, with the option to create another one to complete another set of predetermined projects. If the TBD option is not chosen, then other revenue options will be needed to address this pressing need.

Other public facilities will need to be addressed in the future, but tackling these four prominent projects and establishing a transportation benefit district to address





Figure 4.06 - Many of Mill Creek's roads were built 25 years ago, or were built to less demanding County standards and have since been annexed to Mill Creek. Maintenance and long-term replacement needs are a big budget issue, and this plan considers the establishment of a transportation benefit district (TBD) to help offset the road costs. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

roadway preservation would allow the City to address other facility needs more easily. Other public facilities that have been discussed include a community/senior center.

Response - Public Services

Mill Creek provides law enforcement, parks and recreation, streets, storm water, community development, and administrative services to its residents and businesses. The City does not provide water, wastewater, power, library or fire protection services, relying on other districts and organizations to provide them (Table 5.1). The community appreciates and relies upon the services the City offers and the role those services play in defining the community's character. All of these elements can be traced back to the local quality of life, underscoring the attachment residents and businesses have to their community.

While not providing utility services reduces the degree of the City's responsibilities, it decreases the City's control over the quality of services provided by others to its residents and reduces the City's ability to raise revenue for the services the City provides. Mill Creek has only two enterprise funds, parks and recreation and the storm water utility, charging rates that are designed to cover the costs of providing services. Other municipal expenses must be funded from other sources.

The community's voice on this subject is unequivocal: Mill Creek's residents and businesses want to see the level of public services maintained. Survey responses and responses generated from the penny poll underscore the point. Very few would accept a reduction in service levels, even in times of economic distress. When asked how to pay for maintaining service levels, the community generally favored sharing the burden with newcomers through economic development and community growth.





Figure 4.07 - More than ever, city fiscal health depends on land use diversity. Mill Creek's Town Center plays an important role in this regard, and boosts property values, resident quality of life and community identity at the same time. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

It is very unlikely, however, that economic development will generate enough revenues to maintain the desired level of City services. Some agreed that raising taxes and/or fees should be considered, but many of those had varying preferences based on the services funded by those increases. Law enforcement gained the highest approval for increased tax or fee burden, with parks and recreation second. Responses were consistent with the community's attachment to having a local police force and its thorough use of and appreciation for its parks and recreation system.

The community survey measured only initial and generalized preferences for service types and payment options. Revisiting and weighting preferences in light of complex revenue potential versus service level targets are actions still needed to be accomplished by the City Council.

Response - Fiscal Balance

The strategic plan charts a course for City solvency, outlining steps to overcome deficit spending and ensuring an appropriate budgetary reserve. Cost containment, revenue enhancement and diversification and budget monitoring work together to help the City maintain levels of service while also strengthening its fiscal sustainability. This section discusses cost containment approaches, as well as a series of proposed levels of revenue enhancement and diversification designed to balance the City's budget. Monitoring the productivity of the revenue strategies is also essential, ensuring that Mill Creek's residents are assessed taxes and fees only as necessary.



1. *Cost containment.*

Cost containment is based on the City sustaining its levels of service while minimizing the increases in cost it may take to provide them. Staffing costs, energy costs, insurance costs, and materials costs increase every year. Some of these increases are due to inflationary pressure. Some are due to the increased demand for services as Mill Creek's population grows. Cost containment does not mean that the annual expenses remain static. It means that increases are minimized, reflecting only those unavoidable cost increases necessary to sustain provision of the levels of service to which residents have become accustomed. Careful negotiation of labor contracts, continued pursuit of efficient services provision, and strategic spending on capital projects can help contain costs, balancing fiscal restraint with the City's need to provide the high levels of services the community demands.

2. *Reserves strategy.*

The City has built up almost \$5 million in reserves, roughly five times what its own budgetary policy sets as a minimum balance. Part of the City Council's charge over the first part of 2012 will be to determine how it wishes to treat this reserves balance. It now sits as a savings account, with withdrawals being made to offset the current budget deficit. But it represents a potential source for capital investment or leverage for capital investment if the City can find ways other than drawing from its reserves to balance its budget.

3. *Revenue enhancement & diversification.*

Mill Creek relies heavily on property tax and sales tax revenues. Property tax growth is limited by statute at a rate lower than the rate at which costs increase, putting more importance on growth in sales tax revenue. But sales tax growth is unpredictable and significantly impacted by economic forces beyond the City's control. The City's fiscal strategy should investigate and implement new revenue strategies that diversify its income stream and make it more robust, providing for income growth that can keep pace with cost increases. Even with cost containment measures in place, community growth and inflationary pressure on cost items will likely drive Mill Creek's budgets higher. Predictable and resilient revenue sources are essential.

4. *Monitoring.*

There are several indicators that the City can use to evaluate its revenue strategy and guide adjustments as necessary. Employing indicators will require annual budget reviews to update forecast revenues and consider upcoming revenue strategies and cost-containment activities.

Response - Economic Development

Economic development is a community priority. It may alleviate the City's fiscal strain by making its land more productive, and it may provide local jobs for Mill Creek residents. A more active local economy can translate to a more prosperous and dynamic community, with busier shops, jobs closer to home and a reliable income stream to support the City's provision of high-quality services.



Given Mill Creek's current and forecast fiscal condition and the desire for economic development opportunities, the encouragement of increased economic activity is a high priority. At least four issues will shape the City's future economic development policy:

1. *Mill Creek will increasingly rely on sales tax to augment City revenues.*

Property tax revenues are relatively static, but costs to operate local government increase. As with many other jurisdictions in the state, Mill Creek will turn to sales tax revenues to augment weakening property tax receipts. This will put pressure on local land use and economic development policy to stimulate local retail activity, making it more convenient and attractive for Mill Creek residents and community visitors to spend their shopping dollars within City limits. Securing large-format and other types of retailers will be part of the solution. Sustained robust sales tax revenues, however, will also depend on the effectiveness of local commercial districts to serve a wide variety of shopping needs. This will require commercial districts to be adaptable over time, to nurture shopper loyalties and to provide shopping, civic and lifestyle experiences that compel customers to return.

2. *Mill Creek's infrastructure and businesses can serve an increased daytime population.*

The weekday commercial landscape has excess capacity. There are some local employers in and near Mill Creek that contribute to the daytime population, but the community's infrastructure and commercial areas are served primarily to address evening and weekend demand. Increased retail and shopping activity may not necessarily require expansion of retail space. Increasing daytime population can stimulate new activity across the entire services spectrum without straining the community's transportation system or existing supply of commercial space. This is an opportunity Mill Creek can address as part of its review of its land use designations, zoning districts and economic development policy.

3. *Mill Creek appreciates and can learn from its Town Center's mixed-use concept.*

Adaptable and active commercial districts rely on predictable demand, a sense of shared civic space, and an appropriate transportation system. Mill Creek's Town Center is designed in such a fashion, with a pool of residents located within easy walking distance of the shopping and office district, pleasant plazas and trails, and parking and access roads that are provided at a scale consistent with the district's activity. Its mixed-use concept puts shoppers and potential office visitors in immediate proximity to the shops and offices. Its design creates the public spaces that encourage and host civic and social activity. Its parking and transportation system accommodate vehicles without compromising the pedestrian and bicycling experience, and Mill Creek's residents like it. As Mill Creek's population continues to grow, redevelopment opportunities will arise, transforming under-utilized land into something potentially more intense. Lessons learned from Town Center can





Figure 4.08 - As Mill Creek grows, mixed-use areas, whether at the East Gateway Urban Village (EGUV) or elsewhere, provide desirable housing, shopping and employment options for residents of all ages - including older "baby boom" or retiree populations. Lessons learned from Town Center, shown here, can help guide these transformations. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)

help guide these transformations, ensuring that new projects contribute to the dynamic challenges of integrating demand, civic scale and appropriate transportation design in a way that enhances the entire community.

4. *Mill Creek is housing rich and jobs poor.*

Visitors participating in the penny poll indicated that they would like to work closer to home. This may influence the City's existing land use policy to ensure that there are economic development opportunities in the community. Many are employed in professional careers and commute to neighboring, larger cities to work. Increased development of medical, technical, office and light industrial or manufacturing facilities in and near Mill Creek may find success in accommodating a pent-up demand of residents desiring a closer workplace. Existing land use policy now permits development of professional offices in many of its commercial zones, but the emphasis has been on providing services to the local population and not on providing for their employment. The City's upcoming economic development plan and comprehensive plan update will be geared to calibrate this pent-up demand more accurately and to ensure that policies and zoning respond to potential local employment opportunities. Increased local employment will reduce transportation costs for those workers who now commute, effectively increasing local household incomes.

Future economic development planning and strategies can identify and take advantage of the community's opportunities. By increasing local employment and enhancing its civic and commercial districts, Mill Creek





Figure 4.09 - Because annexation opportunities are limited, Mill Creek’s growth will increasingly involve infill and higher densities. In some cases, existing patterns are readily adaptable to such development, but areas already developed in low-density patterns, or that have infrastructure needing repair or adaptation, present challenges. In all cases, Mill Creek must carefully manage growth with respect to its community character. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

can use its existing landscape more effectively and generate the types of household incomes and retail activity that will sustain the levels of service residents expect.

Future Growth & Annexation

Mill Creek’s population is forecast to reach approximately 19,657 by the year 2025 within the current city limits. Additional growth is expected in the City’s MUGA, with the total MUGA population expected to reach 56,215 by 2025. Residents appreciate the value growth brings in sharing the cost of public services provision. But there is also concern that growth within city limits, if not properly managed, could threaten the community’s character. At the same time, the City has been reluctant recently to annex land, concerned that annexation will cause the City to inherit substandard public infrastructure without a compensating fiscal return.

Growth within City Limits

There are several undeveloped properties within the city that are planned and suitable for urban development. Many of them are clustered within the East Gateway Urban Village area. This will result in the development of property that is now largely vacant or rural in character. Other growth opportunities, on smaller sites, are scattered across the community. In some cases, growth in those locations will place new development immediately adjacent to already-developed



neighborhoods, resulting in the intensification of various areas of the community. This may not always be universally acceptable to neighbors, with them fearing that the new project may damage community character, congest local streets, increase exposure to crime or subject existing residents and businesses to noise or other new, objectionable impacts. The community's development regulations and the development/environmental review processes will help identify the scope and magnitude of these issues when projects are proposed, applying mitigation measures and conditions as appropriate to ensure Mill Creek's quality of life.

These issues will play out as the Council considers its land use policy and various development permits. While the community appreciates the need to grow, the Council must balance how that growth within the community is managed with respect to its impacts on community character and surrounding neighborhoods. Conversation within city limits is divided roughly into two topic areas:

A. - Development

The East Gateway Urban Village promises to generate opportunity for employment, commerce, and housing, with a mix of professional office, retail shopping and residential units on land that is now essentially undeveloped. When fully built out, the EGUV could include approximately 350,000 square feet of retail space and between 24,000 and 60,000 square feet of office space. It may also include civic uses, such as a new library.

Results from this process' public outreach confirm that development similar to Town Center is acceptable to the community, and this project promises more of the same. Mixing in a diverse residential component is a key ingredient to its success, and it is also key to meeting the City's comprehensive plan housing and growth targets.

Beyond EGUV, however, the City's prospects for developing land within its existing city limits are fairly limited. Vacant land exists in Mill Creek's extreme southwest along 9th Avenue SE and south of 164th Street SE, and in scattered parcels adjoining residential areas. The 9th Avenue parcels, designated for light industrial use, are severely constrained by wetlands and suffer from a lack of access and visibility. While these constraints can be overcome, the cost to mitigate them may outweigh the benefits the site may offer, particularly since other, relatively unconstrained sites exist elsewhere in the vicinity but beyond Mill Creek's borders. There are other commercial development opportunities on Dumas Road, SR 527 and 132nd Street SE.

B. - Redevelopment

Mill Creek has a well-defined community fabric and is resistant to too much change. Infill development and the intensification of already-developed properties can occur, but it must be designed and managed in a way that ensures the results are consistent with the community's expectations and needs. One example of an infill opportunity is the abandoned mobile home park north of Town Center between Main Street and SR 527. This property, when fully developed, will accommodate 75 to 100 units while still being consistent with the community's character. Intensification opportunities exist in the commercial centers along SR 527 and 132nd Street SE, as well, where residential units could be incorporated as part of an overall



scheme for redeveloping these aging projects. They could be accommodated without threatening the community's existing residential fabric and still contribute significantly to the community's level of activity.

The comprehensive plan calls for urban-style development as well as the continuation of Mill Creek's single-family character. These two directives can be compatible, but they may come in conflict during proposals to redevelop areas of the community into land uses more intense than what they are now. Conversion of low-intensity office, institutional or retail sites into more intense mixed-use projects is consistent with the City's need to use land efficiently, but it may also conflict with neighborhood expectations if not done well.

Growth Through Annexation

Mill Creek has cautiously increased the city's geographic reach over its 25-year existence, annexing first those areas immediately adjacent to and including portions of the original planned community. The pace of annexation has slowed, however, as the City seeks the acquisition of territory that enhances its fiscal position. Earlier annexations were more motivated by encompassing the area clearly identified as belonging to Mill Creek, wrapping city limits around the subdivisions, retail centers and office parks that exhibited an essential attachment to the community. Later annexations were more motivated by opportunity and individual development projects.

Much of the landscape surrounding Mill Creek is already urbanized, developed under Snohomish County standards. And much of what is developed is single family or other lower-intensity residential. These uses generally result in a fiscal loss, where the costs to provide services are greater than what is returned in property and sales taxes. In addition, streets built under County standards may not comply with the City's, resulting in different maintenance requirements, roadway life cycles and development character. Unincorporated development may look quite different than what is within city limits, and the costs to serve it can be disproportionately high because of the increased maintenance demand.

Growth opportunities within the city are limited, yet the City's economic development and fiscal management plans rely on continued and robust development activity within city limits. Targeted annexation, therefore, may play an important part in Mill Creek's future.

Mill Creek's annexation policy prioritizes fiscal analysis of potential annexations, but that level of analysis may not be sufficient to determine the strategic value of annexation proposals. An annexation's strategic value may not be revealed in fiscal analysis, particularly if the City positions itself to annex those areas designated by the County as urban centers. Incremental annexation along arterial corridors may not yield immediate fiscal fruit, but it can help the City influence the character of developing urban centers and ensure that any increased economic activity



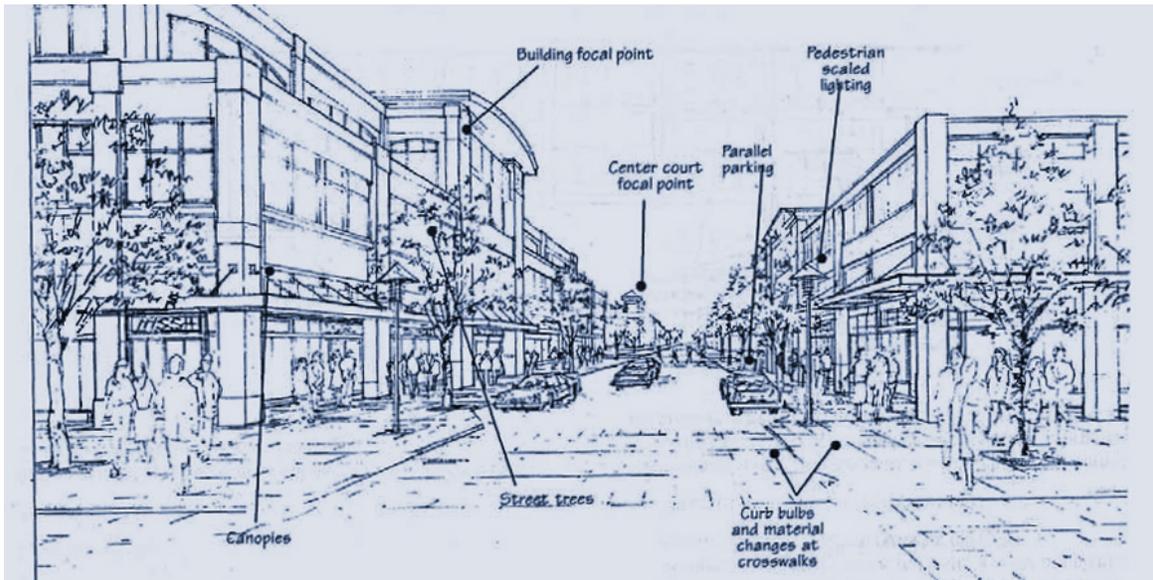


Figure 4.10 - For higher-intensity and infill patterns to succeed in Mill Creek, new development must be designed and managed in a way that ensures results are consistent with the community's overall look and feel. The proposed EGUV development has already developed a set of design guidelines to help with this, including this illustration of the main "spine" road's features. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

occurring there also occurs within city limits. Additional study will be necessary to explore fiscal and land use ramifications in future annexations, but at least four opportunities exist for initial consideration:

- *Commercial corridor on SR 527 from City limits to 180th St SE – The 527 corridor links Mill Creek to Interstate 405 and is a popular route for commuters accessing Redmond, Bellevue and other "east side" destinations. Some of this corridor is within Mill Creek's MUGA and may be considered for strategic annexation. Much of the land along the corridor is developed in commercial use, and the corridor exists as the community's southern gateway.*
- *Urban center on SR 527 – Further south of 180th St SE lies an urban center designated by Snohomish County. Mill Creek may consider annexing south along 527 to the limit of its MUGA, abutting the City of Bothell at the urban center and sharing in some of the urban center's planned activity.*
- *Urban center at 128th & I-5 – Snohomish County's designated urban center at the I-5 freeway interchange with 128th St presents another annexation opportunity. Property tax revenues may be limited in this area since Swedish Hospital has developed there, but increasing activity stimulated by the interchange, the growth in office/medical development, and a potential future light rail transit station may generate attractive taxable land development.*
- *Urban center on 164th & I-5 – More than a mile from Mill Creek's center and within both the City of Mill Creek's and the City of Lynwood's MUGA, this freeway interchange area presents another potentially attractive annexation*

opportunity. But the land between the interchange and the existing western Mill Creek city limits is already fully developed, in the hands of hundreds of individual and institutional owners, and largely residential, making any annexation a difficult proposition and one with doubtful fiscal consequence. While the interchange may offer development and retail sales tax opportunities, the path to reach it may present more trouble than it is worth.



Goals, Objectives & Implementation

Introduction

A plan is only as good as its implementation. This chapter draws clear lines between the framework presented in Chapter 4 and community's strategic planning goals and objectives, and provides a specific road map for the plan's implementation.



Figure 5.01 - Though Mill Creek's far-sighted work on its Town Center project and through fiscal restraint, the City's circumstances are far better than those in many similar communities. Regardless, choices made in the next few years on a range of issues will be critical in maintaining the type of conditions residents cherish. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Goals & Objectives

The following goals are derived from the City’s comprehensive plan, results from the public outreach conducted during this project, and indications from the City Council on their preference for fiscal prudence. They address the issues motivating this strategic plan, build on its assumptions and reflect direction embedded in the plan’s elements. Goals are high-level and inspirational. Objectives are more specific and finite. Attaining the objectives should lead to goal achievement. They set milestones for the City’s progress, identifiable landmarks that define and meter the City’s course. Each of the objectives identified here relate to the plan’s goals, providing discrete and measurable targets the City can achieve as it pursues the plan’s implementation.

■ Community Character

Goal 1 – Maintain Mill Creek’s Community Character

While focus on balancing the City’s budget is crucial, fiscal actions should never lose sight of what makes Mill Creek so attractive to its residents and businesses. Mill Creek’s streets and neighborhoods are generally well maintained and feel safe, peaceful, beautiful and walkable to its residents and visitors. The community’s character must be maintained, ensuring that whatever actions the City takes to be fiscally sustainable it does not sacrifice what is precious.

Objective 1: Ensure that City development standards are maintained or improved to achieve high quality design in new development.

Community character is reinforced by the appearance of the built environment. Public spaces, street corridors, neighborhoods and community institutions convey messages in their physical appearance. Development standards regulate the appearance of the community’s built environment, and maintaining the community’s character relies on good, effective standards for design and development.

Objective 2: Take steps to ensure that Mill Creek continues to be a very walkable city.

Community members appreciate Mill Creek’s scale and their ability to walk along its streets and trails safely and conveniently. Moving about on foot or by bike is part of Mill Creek’s character, and the transportation system should be managed and maintained to ensure this can continue.

■ Public Facilities

Goal 2 – Provide an adequate level of quality public facilities in a fiscally prudent manner



Objective 1: Continue to implement a long-term pavement preservation program by the end of 2013. (Related to Goals 1 & 4)

Roadway deterioration is a natural outcome of their use, and a regular maintenance program can prolong roadway life. Delays in instituting a comprehensive pavement preservation program will increase the likelihood that roadways will need reconstruction earlier than if a preservation program is in place. By establishing this program now, the City can expect to defer more expensive capital road rebuilding projects.

Objective 2: Identify which new City-owned public facilities are needed in Mill Creek and identify when they should be constructed.

The police department needs more space than it has. Requirements for records and evidence storage and needs for increased staff to keep up with population growth make it increasingly difficult to remain within the existing facility. The City Council has indicated its preference that this large an expenditure should be considered and voted on by the community. The Council also identified the public works facility and new sports fields as important needs, referring to its 2009 community facilities master plan. Finally, there appears to be at least some citizen support for other community facilities, such as a multipurpose community center.

■ Public Services

Goal 3– Provide a high level of quality public services to the citizens of Mill Creek

The outreach effort in this planning process underscores the community's desire to have Mill Creek continue its high service levels, particularly in terms of law enforcement and parks and recreation programs. The community also appreciates the efficiency with which the City provides all its services. These levels of service should not be sacrificed. It is important that the City invest in its facilities and services to support its vision, including retaining police services and providing adequate staff and facilities to support service levels.

Objective 1: Maintain an adequate level of City resources to ensure continued high levels of service to Mill Creek's citizens.

The City of Mill Creek provides public services that its residents and businesses appreciate. But providing those services requires adequate staffing levels to ensure the community's needs are met. An underlying theme in this plan's fiscal strategy is to contain costs. However, adequate staffing is equally important, ensuring that those services the community values are sustained.

■ Fiscal Balance

Goal 4 – Ensure that Mill Creek achieves and maintains a stable fiscal footing



Objective 1: Attain fiscal stability by the 2017/2018 biennium that does not require annually spending down reserves.

The 2011/2012 biennium is the first in which the City had to augment its revenues by drawing from its reserves. That is forecast to continue unless the City can increase its revenues. The City must overcome its deficit by the end of the 2017/2018 biennium or it will fully deplete its reserves and be forced to make radical reductions in levels of service. The City's current rate of reserves depletion allows it to take time to institute its revenue enhancement/diversification strategies, but it must act before those reserves are gone.

Objective 2: Limit increases in general fund expenditures to the minimum possible to maintain levels of service or to add/enhance services and programs to meet community need.

The community demands high levels of service, and the Council has repeated its commitment to deliver them. The costs to provide those services will likely increase as the community grows and as the costs associated with medical insurance, -salaries, purchased services, utilities and other components of running a city also increase. This objective institutionalizes the philosophy of cost containment, reinforcing the need to keep cost increases to the lowest possible levels given the community's need for services. It also recognizes that the community's needs may change over time and that it may cost the City money to respond to those changes in needs.

Objective 3: Establish a desired level of City reserves.

Past fiscal prudence and a high level of building activity resulted in the accumulation of a reserve account five times greater than that required by the City's budgetary policy. That reserve account is now being used due to the downturn in revenues and continuing increases in expenses. This objective speaks to the importance of keeping Mill Creek solvent, even operating at a marginal surplus in the near future to rebuild depleted reserves. Maintaining a positive reserve balance will also help the City weather future economic downturns, an asset whose value this downturn has emphasized.

Objective 4: Institute annual review of economic indicators by end of 2012.
(Related to Goals 2 & 3)

Mill Creek's City Council is not eager to institute new fees or taxes. By incorporating economic and fiscal indicators into its budget-building process, the City can review the revenue instruments in place and test their appropriateness given economic trends and forecasts. Revenue recommendations included in Appendix A of this plan are based on current conditions and those forecast based on what is known or thought today. Future conditions, particularly related to the scope and pace of economic recovery, may motivate adjustments to the revenue strategy. Employing these indicators, and having them become an active part of the budget process, may help the City tailor its revenue strategies to ask only what is necessary given the best available and most current information.



■ Economic Development

Goal 5 – Enhance economic and employment opportunities in Mill Creek

Objective 1: Encourage development of the East Gateway Urban Village master plan.

Making progress on developing the EGUV is fundamental to this overall strategy. That project will generate property and sales tax income upon which the City's fiscal models are based. Failing to adopt development agreements for EGUV projects will delay their development and delay the City's receipt of needed revenue. The City must take the time it needs, however, to ensure that the proposed development projects meet the community's other needs. Development quality, provision of local employment and compliance with development standards are also important and should not be sacrificed solely in the quest for expedient development agreement adoption.

Objective 2: Encourage high quality design in other commercially zoned properties within Mill Creek.

High quality design will help retain and communicate Mill Creek's character, and it will also encourage continued investment in Mill Creek's commercial and residential districts. Quality design promotes activity and resiliency, communicating predictability that is fundamental to economic investment.

Objective 3: Assess the commercial land uses allowed by the City's land use map and zoning map to ensure they represent an optimal mix for Mill Creek.

Mill Creek's comprehensive plan designations and zoning districts establish areas for commercial development, but they may not provide for the land use mix or development standards that are appropriate for the type and scale of development desired. An assessment of the plan and zoning will help the City align its land use policy and development regulations with the future type of development the community envisions.

■ Future Growth and Annexation

Goal 6 – Ensure that new growth and development is high quality and provides a benefit to Mill Creek

Objective 1: Annexation proposals shall be carefully evaluated for both short- and long-term benefits to Mill Creek.

Annexations are strategic by nature. They have immediate fiscal impact, but they also may position the City to take advantage of other future opportunities. The City's present annexation policy focuses on immediate fiscal impact, but it may not adequately address future opportunities annexations may present.



Objective 2: Mill Creek should monitor development proposals within its MUGA and take steps to protect the interests of the City.

Collaboration with Snohomish County, particularly concerning development in the MUGA, is essential to Mill Creek's strategic positioning. MUGA development will impact Mill Creek, either by creating additional demand for Mill Creek's services or by shaping the ways in which Mill Creek is able to annex territory. This is of particular concern along the arterial corridors, where land use, transportation, and economic development planning intersect.

Actions

The following list of actions, presented by priority topic, is drawn from the plan framework and designed to attain the plan's objectives and achieve the strategic planning goals. Taken together, they represent an integrated approach to enhance and diversify Mill Creek's revenue stream, to adopt policies that will help ensure the community's continued economic and fiscal prosperity, and to sustain provision of high quality services.

While these actions will influence the City's long-term fiscal health, they are intended as short-term recommendations. The primary focus is on what the City can do within the next six years to help overcome its existing and forecast budget deficit. Longer term actions will also be significant and will be addressed more fully as the City explores its policy options through its comprehensive plan update, capital facilities plan and other efforts that have longer planning horizons.

The matrix presented here lists individual actions, when they are recommended to occur and who has lead and partner responsibilities in their implementation. The matrix also highlights if an action addresses facilities, public services, fiscal balance, economic development or strategic growth and annexation priorities and which of the strategic plan goals it helps achieve. These implementation actions are included on a quarterly calendar (Table 5.07) to illustrate their relative timing and assist in their scheduling in departmental work plans and inclusion in the City's budget.



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Table 5.01 - Strategic Plan Implementation Actions

Community Character Actions

1 Comprehensive plan update

The strategic plan and the comprehensive plan are closely related. The comprehensive plan has a different focus, however. Its policies guide land use, transportation system design, utility planning, housing development and economic development, and these all impact the community's ability to provide services efficiently at the levels the community expects. Comprehensive plan policy can also help the City be more resilient to economic downturns, proposing land use intensities and urban patterns that generate maximum tax revenue and demand fewer services. This will almost certainly be a conversation in the upcoming plan update, particularly in light of the community's commitment to its neighborhoods and "small town feel." Mill Creek's participation in jointly planning for urban centers within its MUGA will occur during the comp plan update, laying the groundwork for what may become future annexations as determined by economic development and annexation policy.

2 Parks, recreation and open space plan

This action updates the City's parks and recreation plan to retain eligibility for State grant funds and to address specifically how the Everett School District and City can share resources for effective and efficient provision of recreation facilities and programs. Results from this work will also inform the facilities plan update.

Public Facilities Actions

3 Pavement preservation program

The pavement preservation program must be designed and adopted by the City if the City wishes to fund it via a transportation benefit district (see below). The program gets implemented as funds are made available. This pavement preservation program would be designed to maintain the community's roads in safe and operable condition to either avoid or defer costly roadway reconstruction projects. To qualify for transportation benefit district funding, however, it must have an identified start and end point, at which point the transportation benefit district would expire.

4 Local revitalization fund

Establishing this tax increment district is designed to produce funds for the construction of roadways and other public improvements to facilitate development of the East Gateway Urban Village. The State of Washington is supporting this action, committed to contributing half of what the district generates in value up to \$330,000 per year. Repayment of the proceeds will be based on tax increment revenues, meaning that the increased property and sales tax revenues resulting from the project's development would be dedicated first to repaying the bonds funded through this program.

5 Facilities plan update

Mill Creek prepared a comprehensive facilities plan in 2009, but trying economic conditions have caused much of the plan's recommendations to be deferred. The City should now update that plan to revisit and reschedule its recommendations, potentially considering how to package some of the larger facilities proposals into a bond request for community approval.



Timing	Lead/Partners	Response	SP Goals
4th Q 2012, completed by 3rd Q 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ All departments ▪ Snohomish County ▪ Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
2nd Q 2012, completed by 3rd Q 2012 to inform possible GO bond package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parks and recreation ▪ Planning ▪ Public works ▪ City manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Character
Timing	Lead/Partners	Response	SP Goals
Adopted in 2nd Q 2012, with work continuing 3rd and 4th Q every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
In place 3rd Q 2012, pending approval of development agreements in EGUV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ Dept. of Commerce ▪ Snohomish County ▪ Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
2nd Q 2013, completed in 12 months to inform potential GO bond package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ Public works ▪ City manager ▪ Parks and recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character



Table 5.01 - Strategic Plan Implementation Actions

6 Transportation benefit district

The pavement preservation program needs a stable, consistent funding source. Establishing a source that is tied to use is preferable to a general tax. The City Council can impose a \$20 per vehicle charge on annual vehicle license renewals without a community vote. The fee can be raised to \$100 per vehicle if approved in an election. In keeping with the Council's preference to increase taxes or fees as little as possible and the need to get funds on line quickly, this plan anticipates a charge at the \$20 per vehicle level. The transportation benefit district would remain in place only long enough to complete the scope of work identified during its formation. The City may consider renewing the transportation benefit district at the conclusion of its pavement preservation program depending on its overall road management plan and the condition of the community's roadways.

7 Police facility

Construct a new police facility or remodel another structure for the same purpose.

8 City hall plans

If plans to relocate the police department and/or public works shop facilities from the current city hall succeed, the City will have an opportunity to consider how best to house its other city hall operations. This may take the form of redesigning the existing facility's interior, seeking another city hall location in an existing building or constructing a new, purpose-built city hall.

9 Public Works Maintenance Shop

The facilities master plan shows the public works shop being constructed on property owned by the City near the Sports Park. Staff is also investigating lease/purchase options at another location for potential cost reductions. The timing of funding for the project will be discussed in the first half of 2012 during preparation of the 2013-2019 Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). Moving the public works maintenance operations from City Hall frees up roughly 25 parking spaces and over 1,000 square feet within the building that could immediately function as much needed storage space with the possibility of additional meeting rooms. This has the benefit of extending the useful life of the existing City Hall without a major capital outlay.

10 Multipurpose community center study

The capital facilities plan revision will address this item in more detail and may propose a schedule different from what is proposed here based on its more in-depth study. While demand for a community/senior center is not as great as for other community facilities, it is an issue that warrants further study.

11 Sports fields expansion

Continue to partner with Everett School District to share sports field facilities and explore options for future field facilities.

Public Services Actions

12 Fire district contract

Costs to provide fire and EMS services have to be reliably forecast into the future. When the current fire district contract expires in 2016, the City should push for some level of stability and cost control and explore all available options to avoid the potential for surprise. Likewise, the fire district should present a workable long-term budgeting scheme that permits the City to plan reliably.



(continued from pg. 5•8)

1st Q 2015, with 6-year sunset to match preservation program, reviewed every two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public works ▪ Snohomish County ▪ Dept. of Licensing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
1st Q 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City Manager ▪ Police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
1st Q 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Works ▪ All departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
1st Q 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City Manager ▪ Public Works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
4th Q 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Works ▪ Parks & Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
2nd Q 2012, 4th Q 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Works ▪ Parks & Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
Timing	Lead/Partners	Response	SP Goals
4th Q 2015 and yearly thereafter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City manager ▪ Finance ▪ Police ▪ Fire District 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character



Table 5.01 - Strategic Plan Implementation Actions

13 Fee study

Users are accustomed to paying for recreation programs, and the community's households are accustomed to paying for storm water utility services. The City charges other fees, too. This action item inventories and evaluates the fees the City charges, suggesting changes to help more closely tie fees to the costs for the services they support. This component of the strategic plan is intended to relieve the general fund from the need to subsidize recreation programs, while, at the same time, ensuring that participation in the various programs is unharmed. Residents appreciate their perception of value in services delivered, and this study and its implementation should remain consistent with that principle.

14 Fee increase

A fee adjustment will implement findings of the fee study, carefully applying fee increases in accordance with the fee study's recommendations.

Fiscal Balance Actions

15 Council Retreat to set fiscal balance priorities

This strategic plan sets out policy direction on balancing the City's budget while ensuring high levels of services provision. The City Council will determine the most effective and appropriate way to accomplish the plan's objectives, and this retreat will be an important step.

16 Cost containment

Limiting the rate at which costs increase is a unilateral action the City has taken and can continue to take to reduce its reliance on increased revenues. This is consistent with the City's long-standing practice of fiscal prudence and is proposed to continue, particularly in light of the slow and relatively flat economic recovery.

17 Reserves policy

Identifying appropriate applications and uses for the reserves fund is an important part of fiscal strategy, outlining the circumstances in which it can be expected to offset budgetary deficit or leverage funding for capital improvements.

18 Property tax increase at 1 percent, minimum

Implementing this is consistent with the City's need to ease deficit pressure and work within its existing financial model. It does not restructure the City's revenue streams, but it does enhance them by putting in place an annual 1% property tax increase. In fact, this increase would have only a modest impact on its own. However, beginning to build in some structural revenue increase may be important, particularly if the City seeks legislative relief to alleviate a chronic fiscal shortfall. Depending on other funding options available, the City may opt to increase at a rate greater than 1%.

19 Utility tax

The City should evaluate the option of a utility tax Revenue diversification can include a marginal utility tax assessment relying on a mix of other revenue sources working in concert to generate reliable revenue resilient to economic change.

20 Budget monitoring program

This program puts into action the indicators, helping the City forecast the coming revenue environment in time to make adjustments to its revenue enhancement/diversification strategy. By incorporating budget monitoring into an annual cycle, the City can decide if other revenue-augmenting measures are necessary or if revenue measures already in place need to be scaled back or terminated. Even though the City operates on a two-year budget cycle, this should be an annual exercise to ensure the City has adequate time to respond to fiscal pressure and community need.



(continued from pg. 5•10)

1st Q 2015, completed in three months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance ▪ Parks and recreation ▪ Public works ▪ City manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden
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TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance ▪ Parks and recreation ▪ Public works ▪ City manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves
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Timing	Lead/Partners	Response	SP Goals
2nd Q 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City manager ▪ All departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden

Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City manager ▪ All departments ▪ Fire District 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden
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TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City manager ▪ All departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves
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TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves
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TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance ▪ Utility providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden
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Ongoing, 4th Q annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance ▪ All departments ▪ Fire District 7 ▪ WA Office of Financial Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden
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Table 5.01 - Strategic Plan Implementation Actions

Economic Development Actions	
21 EGUV development agreements	Facilitating EGUV development and ensuring it develops in a manner that boosts property tax and sales tax revenues is essential to this strategy. Adopting development agreements is an early step along the development process, but it defines terms to which the City and developer will be held. It can specify land uses and timing, and it can obligate the City to certain improvements necessary to help move the project forward.
22 Economic development assessment and economic development plan & 23	The strategic plan's public process identified economic development as a community priority. An economic development plan is an appropriate vehicle to study the potential for economic development in more depth, using its results to inform comprehensive plan policy, land use changes and budget priorities. It focuses more on the community's long-term development, economic prosperity and resulting fiscal stability.
24 Land use capacity study	Analyze undeveloped or underdeveloped parcels for economic development opportunities through potential zoning changes.
25 Streamline development review process	Review permit processing procedures for greater efficiencies while still maintaining high quality development.
Growth & Annexation Actions	
26 Buildable lands analysis	This action links the City's economic development planning with its and the County's required work to update a buildable lands analysis. It will inventory available land and its suitability for development, taking into account land use and zoning designations and environmental constraint. Results will inform the economic development plan and the comprehensive plan update. This analysis should also study underutilized land within the City and its urban growth area, presuming that redevelopment may occur where property is not used to its full potential.
27 Annexation policy update	The City has an annexation policy in place, but the issue of annexation strategy is still an unsettled topic. When reviewing the annexation policy, the City should also consider it in terms of a broader strategy, linking its positions on annexations to what they may enable in terms of community economic development and economies of services. The comprehensive plan update may provide an appropriate vehicle for this discussion, as might the preparation of an economic development plan.
28 Annexation feasibility study	The City should undertake a feasibility study to assess the fiscal and strategic issues related to specific potential annexation areas within Mill Creek's MUGA.



(continued from pg. 5•12)

Timing	Lead/Partners	Response	SP Goals
2nd Q 2012, for first, others to follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ City manager ▪ Finance ▪ Public works ▪ Developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
2nd and 3rd Q 2012, completed in 18 months to inform comp plan update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ Snohomish County EDC ▪ Business associations ▪ Community ▪ School district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
2nd Q 2012, completed in nine months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
3rd Q 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels
Timing	Lead/Partners	Response	SP Goals
3rd Q 2012, completed in nine months to inform County buildable lands analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ Snohomish County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
3rd Q 2012, completed in nine months with targeted revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ City manager ▪ Finance ▪ Public works ▪ Snohomish County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character
1st Q 2013, completed in nine months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilities ▪ Services ▪ Fiscal ▪ Economic development ▪ Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service levels ▪ Reserves ▪ Minimize burden ▪ Character



Table 5.02 - Action Items Timeline, by Category & Quarter (■ Denotes Council action. □ Denotes staff activity.)

Tasks	2012			2013				2014				2015				2016				2017				2018				2019	
Quarter	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	
Community Character Actions																													
1. Major comprehensive plan update			□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■																			
2. PROS plan	□	■																											
Public Facilities Actions																													
3. Pavement preservation program	□	□				□	□			□	□			□	□			□	□			□	□			□	□		
4. Local revitalization fund	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
5. Facilities plan update					□	□	□	□																					
6. Transportation benefit district												□	□	■							□	■							
7. Police facility								■	□	□	□	□																	
8. City hall plans								■	□	□	□																		
9. Public works maintenance shop								■	□	□	□	□																	
10. Multipurpose community center study																			□	□									
11. Additional sports fields	□	□					□	□	■																				
Public Services Actions																													
12. Fire district contract															■							■						■	
13. Fee study												□	□																
14. Fee increase																													
Fiscal Balance Actions																													
15. Council retreat - fiscal priorities	■																												
16. Cost containment	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
17. Reserves policy																													
18. Property tax increase 1% minimum																													
19. Utility tax																													
20. Budget monitoring program			□				□				□				□				□			□				□			
Economic Development Actions																													
21. EGUV development agreements	■						□	□	■	□	□	■	□	□	■														
22. Economic development assessment	■																												
23. Economic development plan		□	□	□	□	■																							
24. Land use capacity study	□	□	□																										
25. Streamline development review		□	□																										
Growth & Annexation Actions																													
26. Buildable lands analysis		□	□	□																									
27. Annexation policy update		□	□	■																									
28. Annexation feasibility study				□	□	□																							

Appendix A

Fiscal Strategy

(Note: This appendix includes sections that were previously located in the "Strategic Plan Framework" Chapter.)

Fiscal Strategy

Fiscal management is a core component of the City's strategy, ensuring Mill Creek can continue to provide the high levels of service that its residents and businesses expect. The community appreciates the levels at which Mill Creek provides its law enforcement, parks and recreation, streets, community development and city administrative services. A fiscal strategy will ensure that this can continue, even in the face of challenging economic times. This Appendix presents a recommended fiscal approach, considering the prevailing community priorities and concentrating on enhancement and diversification of the City's revenue sources to provide for reliable funding of vital City services.

Alternatives

This process involved the consideration of multiple issues, goals, priorities and needs, assembling a strategic planning direction that provides clear direction for a way forward. The recommended draft strategy, described in this Appendix, emerged from consideration of at least three strategic alternatives.

1) Match services to available revenues

This alternative matches service levels to available resources, concentrating on efficiency in services provision and resisting any move to increase local revenues through imposition of new fees or taxes. This approach promotes the idea of economic recovery being the engine of fiscal stability, with new development bringing increased property tax revenue and rising retail sales providing increased sales tax revenue. Until revenues recover and begin their upward trend, the City would concentrate on cutting costs and using its reserves to compensate for budgetary shortfalls. This alternative could also cause reduction in service levels in time, a likely outcome if new construction and retail sales fail to increase as this model might require. Because of the 1% limit on property tax increase, the lion's share of revenue growth would need to be in retail sales. Early development of the EGUV project would be a key requirement for this alternative to succeed, but forecast sales tax revenue from that project alone would not be sufficient to overcome forecast deficits.

2) Institute modest revenue enhancement/diversification



This alternative proposes that the City institute modest levels of tax increases and/or increased or new fees designed primarily to diversify its revenue stream and slow the depletion of its reserves. This approach would put in place an annual city property tax increase of 1% and assess a \$20 per vehicle transportation benefit district tax. It would reduce – but not end – reliance on the reserves, extending the time that the reserves can make up for forecast budget deficits. Hopes behind this alternative are that an economic recovery will take effect within six years and increase property tax and sales tax revenues to the degree that the City’s diversified revenue stream grows to match increased costs for providing services.

3) Overcome deficit in a single action

This alternative would require instituting revenue enhancement and diversification strategies designed to overcome the annual operating deficit in a single action, arresting reserves depletion and funding expected cost increases with a balanced budget. By putting in place a 3% utility tax on phone, gas and sewer services (approximately \$86 annually for the average household) and by instituting an annual 1% city property tax increase (\$7 annually for the average household), the City could overcome forecast budget deficits within one year and end depletion of the reserves. This action would also rely on cost containment practices, but it would provide the City with adequate revenues to maintain services at current levels for at least the next 10 years, even if the economic recovery is delayed or less significant than hoped.

Fiscal Balance

This strategy incorporates the “Overcome deficit” alternative, suggesting several action items, each supported by the plan’s goals. The plan is informed by discussion of the community’s public facilities, public services, fiscal situation, economic development and growth and annexation. All of these elements add dimension to the City’s strategic environment, touching on the context within which the City must work as it sets its course through the coming years.

The strategy charts a course for City solvency, outlining steps to overcome deficit spending and ensuring an appropriate budgetary reserve. Cost containment, reserves strategy, revenue enhancement and diversification, and budget monitoring work together to help the City maintain levels of service while also strengthening fiscal sustainability. This Appendix proposes revenue enhancement and diversification strategies designed to balance the



City's budget. Monitoring the productivity of the revenue strategies is also essential, ensuring that Mill Creek's residents are assessed taxes and fees only as necessary.

1) Cost containment

Cost containment is based on the City sustaining its levels of service while minimizing the increases in cost it may take to provide them. Staffing costs, energy costs, insurance costs, and materials costs increase every year. Some of these increases are due to inflationary pressure. Some are due to the increased demand for services as Mill Creek's population grows. Cost containment does not mean that the annual expenses remain static. It means that increases are minimized, reflecting only those unavoidable cost increases necessary to sustain provision of the levels of service to which residents have become accustomed. Careful negotiation of labor contracts, continued pursuit of efficient services provision, and strategic spending on capital projects can help contain costs, balancing fiscal restraint with the City's need to provide the high levels of services the community demands.

2) Reserve strategy

The City has built up almost \$5 million in reserves, roughly ten times what its own budgetary policy sets as a minimum balance. Part of the City Council's charge over the first part of 2012 will be to determine how it wishes to treat this reserve balance. It now sits as a savings account, with withdrawals being made to offset the current budget deficit. But it represents a potential source for capital investment or leverage for capital investment if the City can find ways other than drawing from its reserves to balance its budget.

3) Revenue enhancement and diversification

A number of revenue enhancement and diversification strategies are available to help close the current and forecast deficit while still retaining levels of service. They can be implemented over time, but the annual deficit will continue to consume reserves at a rate of between \$400,000 to \$450,000 per year until some or all of these items are brought on line. The following is a list, in both narrative and table format, of funding alternatives that the City may wish to consider. The potential funding alternatives could be imposed by Council action or they could be subject to voter approval. Property tax – the City would implement a minimum 1% property tax increase each year to help sustain levels of service. While this does not keep pace with anticipated increases in costs to provide these services, it does help slow the rate of increase in the deficit spending. This would amount to an estimated \$7 per \$400,000 home, resulting in an annual revenue increase of to the City of approximately \$50,000, based on 2011 property tax valuations.



This action should be taken as soon as possible, understanding that increased revenues paid through property taxes will take at least one year before the City realizes any gains.

Local revitalization financing (LRF) – Based on tax increment generated by the development of the East Gateway Urban Village and supplemented by a grant from the State, revenue from this source would be dedicated to pay for improvements necessary to facilitate that project’s development, such as construction of a spine road and other important infrastructure. Revenue would be in the form of proceeds from bond sales, creating debt, half of which would be repaid by the City via increases in property and sales tax proceeds. The other half would be paid to the City through the State’s LRF rebate program. The objective would be to provide a mechanism for paying for infrastructure that would relieve pressure on the general fund, all while leveraging public investment to make development more attractive and more rapid, resulting in earlier and greater returns to the City.

Utility tax – Utility tax is a flexible instrument, and can generate more than \$1million annually. While the City Council is not eager to impose such a tax, even a relatively modest assessment can raise enough revenue to align the budget. And it can be terminated if and when revenues from other sources increase. It also spreads the burden across both owner occupants and renters. Imposing a 3% utility tax on phone, gas and electricity would generate approximately \$600,000 in annual revenue at a cost of approximately \$86 per household. Local jurisdictions surrounding Mill Creek charge utility taxes at rates of 5% and 6%. Mill Creek is the only city in Snohomish County that does not collect a utility tax.

Transportation benefit district – By adopting a \$20 per vehicle charge on license renewals, the City would raise approximately \$300,000 per year. Expenditure of these funds would need to be tied to a specific roadway improvement plan, such as one considered for pavement management, or other specific transportation system improvements.

Banked property tax – Since Mill Creek has resisted annual property tax increases, it has effectively “banked” a 5% property tax increase that it can impose at any time. This would result in a revenue impact of up to \$250,000 per year. Instituting this measure to its fullest would likely result in a \$35 per year increase in property tax for a home valued at \$400,000. The City may need to consider tapping into some lesser amount of this “banked” amount, however, if other revenue enhancements don’t raise enough money to meet the City’s financial needs.



Fee increases – Recreation and the storm water utility are two facets of City services that are fee-supported. Other fees, such as parking fines or traffic violations, also contribute to this part of the budget, though the City may have little control over the fines established by the State. The City should consider incremental fee increases to match the increases to provide these services, understanding that substantial increases in recreation fees may result in the unintended consequence of decreased participation, particularly if non-resident fees are increased beyond the current 15% fee. Every 1% increase in fees and charges results in approximately \$7,000 in annual revenue increase. Adopting a 10% fee increase would result in an increase of approximately \$70,000 per year.

Direct sponsorship and advertising – The City may consider selling space at its ball field, soliciting additional program-oriented sponsorships or other means of attracting private funds to help pay for the costs of providing services. These approaches can be effective but may be challenging to acquire and retain during slow economic periods.

B & O tax – Mill Creek charges no B&O tax. It is a relatively uncommon tax, with only Lake Forest Park and Everett charging local B & O tax within Mill Creek’s general area. Local B & O tax rates range from 0.1% to 0.2% of annual business income. Every \$1 million in business income within Mill Creek would generate \$1,000 in local revenue.

Table A.1 - Revenue Source Examples

Potential Source	Potential Annual Revenue	Annual Cost, Typ. Residence
Property Tax (@ 1% annually)	\$50,000	\$7.00
Local Revitalization Financing	Depends on type and timing of EGUV site development	None
Utility Tax (using 3% on phone, gas and electricity, as example)	\$600,000	\$86.00
Transportation Benefit District	\$300,000	\$20.00 per vehicle
Banked Property Tax (5% initially, then 1% annually)	1st year \$250,000; for future years, \$50,000 each additional year	1st Year \$35.00; for future years, \$7.00 each additional year
Fee Increases (using a 10% increase to Parks & Recreation fees as example)	\$70,000	Depends on usage of Parks & Recreation programs
Direct Sponsorship and Advertising	Depends on amount of sponsorship secured	None
B&O Tax	Every \$1 million in business income in Mill Creek would generate \$1,000 in local revenue	None
Special Sales Tax	N/A at this time	None



Special sales tax – This applies to hotel/motel taxes, rental car fees or other specialized sales items. Since Mill Creek has no overnight lodging facilities and few, if any, rental car facilities, this strategy is essentially valueless to the City at the present time. But there might be other opportunities for this approach that arise within the six-year period of this plan.

4) *Monitoring*

There are several indicators that the City can use to evaluate its revenue strategy and guide adjustments as necessary. Employing these indicators will require annual budget reviews to update forecast revenues and consider upcoming revenue strategies and cost-containment activities.

Property valuation – Increases in property valuation will help indicate how the City's property tax revenues will change, informing the City's revenue forecast and its evaluation of the appropriateness of its revenue strategies. If property valuation remains static or continues its slide, the City may need to consider new revenue strategies. If it increases beyond expectations, then the City may consider scaling back on its revenue enhancements to compensate for greater than expected property tax growth. The annual one percent limit on property tax increase will still apply, but this indicator will demonstrate the reliability of that one percent increase occurring, an important consideration at a time when property values have been in decline.

Retail activity – Increasing retail activity means increasing sales tax revenue. The City could opt to increase its levels of service, restore programs that had been cut or dedicate an additional share to reserves. Or, conversely, if sales tax growth is slow, the City may need to consider additional revenue strategies to help offset deficit spending.

Permit valuation – Valuation of building permits will help indicate future property tax trends. Static or declining annual building permit valuations indicate that property tax revenue will be flat. If permit valuation jumps, then the City may consider tempering other revenue-generating strategies in anticipation of a property tax increase. But there is a delay built into this indicator. Increases in permit valuation indicate that property values may also increase and that property tax revenues may increase as a result. Increases in revenues to the City will be realized at least one year after the permit is issued.

East Gateway progress – The strategic plan still relies on timely development and occupancy of the East Gateway Urban Village, with property tax and sales tax increases creating noticeable revenue gains by the year 2016. This assumes rather rapid pursuit of the project's development, and the City's tracking of its development progress will



help forecast the revenue impact more accurately. Execution of development agreements, approval of any applicable rezones and subdivisions, approval of use permits, application for and approval of building permits, and issuance of final occupancy permits are all trackable components of the development process. Diligent pursuit of the project's development will help the City realize that 2016 goal, but a slowed development process will almost certainly push revenue gains to beyond 2016. The City can use this information to gauge if and when it should consider revenue increases to offset any delays in East Gateway development.

Ending fund balance – Cash on hand at the end of the year is an undeniable indicator of economic performance. The last year saw the ending fund balance in the general fund decrease. Annual review of the ending fund balance will provide the community with a thumbnail assessment of the fiscal situation and hint at the success of this strategic plan and its implementation. It is likely that the ending fund balance will continue to decline through 2016, though hopefully at a slower rate. By the end of 2017 it should be on a marginal upswing, indicating the City's efforts to contain costs and rebuild its reserves balance.



Appendix B

Process

Process

Introduction

Mill Creek sought community engagement in the strategic planning process. It was important to the Council that public input guide the plan, providing direction on priorities and actions. Strategic planning is a challenging undertaking, particularly when the City's fiscal environment is stressed. As a result, the proposed plan includes a focus on fiscal sustainability, and community involvement in deliberating issues and finding ways forward would be essential. But the plan must address more than just the fiscal condition. It must also provide action to ensure the City can continue to provide the services the community expects and values most. The 2011 strategic planning process sought to elicit that degree of engagement, helping the Council adopt a plan that provides a workable course, vetted by the larger community.

The strategic plan's process and its outreach to the community were built around three stages, described in the rest of this chapter:

- 1) Assess
- 2) Engage

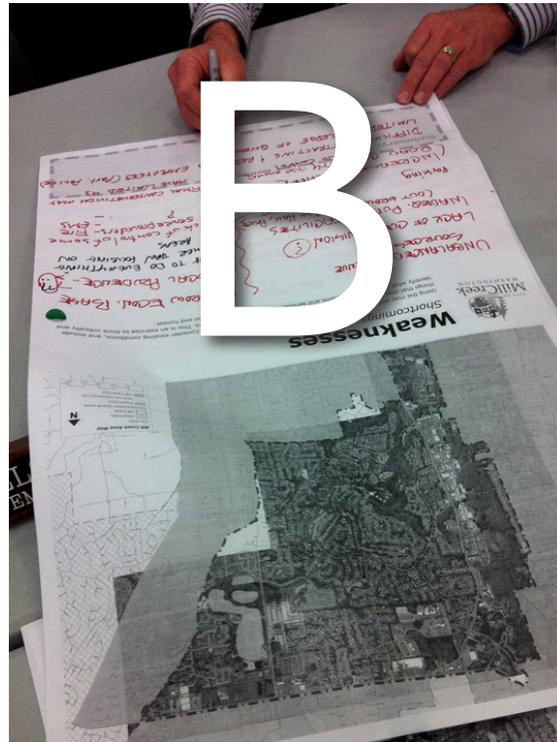


Figure B.01 - The first Council workshop invited members to sketch out SWOT ideas (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) atop Mill Creek maps. Drawings and notes were collated and used to form a list of priorities for the Strategic Plan to address. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)



Figure B.02 - In addition to an extensive public involvement effort, the Strategic Plan process included several Council and staff retreat sessions, informing goal, policy and strategy preferences. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

3) Review

Throughout, community input - in whatever form it was received - was recorded for the record, and typically presented back to the community shortly after each exercise or event. The bulk of questionnaire and polling results were charted and transcribed, and are contained in Appendix C. Other materials, such as records from Council retreats or community open-house events, were collected, reviewed and retained by City staff and the consulting team but are not published in this document. To review these and all materials developed for the strategic planning process, please contact Mill Creek's Community Development department.

Stage 1: Assess

Stakeholder Interviews

The consultant team spent three days at City Hall interviewing numerous community stakeholders, developing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of community priorities, City structure, important issues and Mill Creek's community dynamic. Interviews helped shape the process' working vision and define priority issues the strategic plan must address. They also revealed obstacles and opportunities for public engagement in the process. Results from the stakeholder interviews are included in Appendix A.

Council Retreat 1

All City Council members and city department heads attended the full-day, Saturday retreat on May 7, 2011. The retreat was intended and designed to accomplish multiple objectives, creating a working community vision and winding up with a snapshot of those issues that have highest priority among the City family. Attachment A provides a series of images derived from the individual retreat exercises.

Vision

While the comprehensive plan has no specific, articulated vision, it does have an array of goals and policies that point to what Mill Creek's vision might be. The first step in the retreat was to wrestle with what the City's policies seem to point toward, coming up with a working vision statement that puts the strategic plan into context. The consultant team proposed one and facilitated a discussion to revise it to



match participant perceptions of the community's real, hoped-for, long-range view.

The exercise was just as much about identifying a vision as it was about identifying the gaps between where Mill Creek is today versus where it should be in 20 years. The exercise also identified the City's role, as well as the roles of other groups or agencies, in closing those gaps. The working vision, as adjusted by the City Council, is presented in Chapter 4.

SWOT

Keeping the working vision in mind, participants were asked to identify the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that either impact or will impact Mill Creek today and in the coming years.

Strengths are those characteristics that make Mill Creek a great place in which to live, work and do business. Some of the strengths mentioned include:

- "Beautiful"
- "Community pride"
- "Good stewardship"
- "Good services and staff"
- "Sense of community"
- "Fiscally responsible"

Weaknesses are those characteristics that diminish Mill Creek's ability to serve its residents or are those things that may disappoint those who live or work here. Some of the weaknesses include:

- "Public facilities strained"
- "Traffic capacity near maximum/congestion"
- "Narrow range of revenue resources/fiscal vulnerability"
- "Retail 'leakage'"

- "Public Safety staffing levels low"

Opportunities challenge the community's ability to achieve, relating to advantages provided the community because of its context, population or financial standing. Participants identified the following opportunities:

- "Urban center opportunities"
- "Annexation opportunities"
- "Regional partnership opportunities"
- "Geographic growth opportunities"
- "Un-leveraged income opportunities"

Threats put Mill Creek at some sort of risk, jeopardizing the City's ability to provide services or potentially diminishing the community's

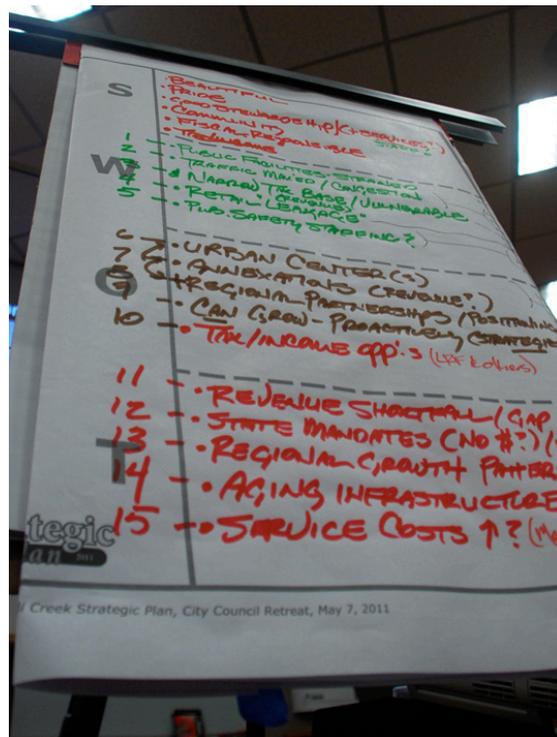


Figure B.03 - Council's initial priorities list, developed among small groups and refined as the basis for much of this plan's eventual focus. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)



attractiveness to residents or business. The identified threats included:

- "Projected revenue shortfall/gap"
- "Unfunded State mandates and restrictions"
- "Regional growth patterns"
- "Aging infrastructure"
- "Rising service costs (medical insurance, etc.)"

Issue Definition

Building on the SWOT results, participants discussed relevant issues that capture the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified earlier in the day. Elements identified as strengths were universally agreed as things to be retained or enhanced, so the balance of the exercise concentrated on the SWOT elements as the key ingredients to issues the City must address.

Priorities

Participants identified how strategic issues related to each other in terms of timing and criticality. Participants worked in small groups to array the various issues on a graph, with the X-axis representing timing (with values ranging from "Immediate" to "Long-term") and the Y-axis representing importance (with values ranging from "Critical" to "Desirable"). Those issues placed nearer the graph's origin were to be considered more essential for inclusion in this strategic plan, while those placed further out may be more effectively addressed in long-range budget planning or in the upcoming policy discussions in the comprehensive plan update.

The 15 issues are listed below, in no particular order of priority:

- 1) *Public facilities strained (weakness)*

- 2) *Traffic capacity near maximum/ congestion (weakness)*
- 3) *Narrow range of revenue resources/fiscal vulnerability (weakness)*
- 4) *Retail "leakage" (weakness)*
- 5) *Low Public Safety staffing levels due to unfilled positions (weakness)*
- 6) *Urban center (opportunity)*
- 7) *Annexation (opportunity)*
- 8) *Regional partnerships (opportunity)*
- 9) *Strategic growth (opportunity)*
- 10) *Un-leveraged income opportunities (opportunity)*
- 11) *Projected revenue shortfall/gap (threat)*
- 12) *Unfunded State mandates and restrictions (threat)*
- 13) *Regional growth patterns (threat)*
- 14) *Aging infrastructure (threat)*
- 15) *Rising costs (medical insurance, etc.) (threat)*

Of the 15 issues identified, participants agreed on four that were of the highest importance, and three emerged as being recognized as lower priority.

Universal Recognition as Priority Issues:

- *Narrow range of revenue resources/fiscal vulnerability (weakness)*
- *Low Public Safety staffing levels (weakness)*
- *Regional partnerships (opportunity)*
- *Projected revenue shortfall / gap (threat)*



Near-Universal Recognition as Priority Issues:

- Retail "leakage" (weakness)
- Un-leveraged income opportunities (opportunity)
- Aging infrastructure (threat)
- Rising costs (medical insurance, etc.) (threat)

General Recognition as Issues of Lower Priority:

- Traffic capacity near maximum / congestion (weakness)
- Unfunded State mandates and restrictions (threat)
- Regional growth patterns (threat)

By drawing a set of arcs on the composite graph, participants could get a quick, intuitive glimpse at what this strategic plan should address - those challenges that are of immediate concern to the City and demand early attention, as well as those that may be less immediate or less critical. They could also see how some of the identified issues, while still pressing, can be dealt with effectively by considering them first in a larger policy context and then programming them through the comprehensive plan or capital facilities plan processes.

Three other issues, related to each other, generated discussion reflecting different perceptions related to importance and immediacy. Annexation, urban centers and strategic growth received ample discussion, but the various groups located them in different areas on the chart. The three issues certainly are key to the strategic plan, and this process dedicated effort to sort out the ways in which the strategic plan may address them.



Figure B.04 - Community outreach included the development of a tri-fold flyer about the plan, distributed at more than 14 community events, at City Hall, and on-line. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Stage 2: Engage

Eliciting community thought and comment was a priority of the strategic planning process. This phase of the process concentrated on receiving direction from the community related to pressing issues as revealed during the stakeholder interviews and Council retreat.

Community Survey

A Telephone Survey began July 1 and ran through the week of July 18, touching more than 600 Mill Creek residents in the process. The survey asked questions probing how the community feels about the services it receives and how it wants to pay



Which issues are most important?



Introduction

Mill Creek is currently preparing a **strategic plan**, guiding future growth and civic investment. How would **you** balance the City's priorities? Grab a stack of **ten pennies** and "spend" them among the issue statements below. Put as many as you wish in each of the jars, but with only ten pennies, you may need to make some **trade-offs!**

- 1 **Community Character** – The strategic plan should recommend the City work to identify and support features and land-use patterns that give Mill Creek its beauty, charm and character.
- 2 **Town Center** – The plan should promote Mill Creek's town center, helping improve opportunities for businesses, shops and restaurants - and affirming Town Center's place as the "heart" of the community.
- 3 **Local Jobs** – The strategic plan should support new in-town employment opportunities - growing the economy and helping more residents live **and** work in Mill Creek.
- 4 **City Services** – The new plan should recommend existing service levels for police, storm-water control, streets and street maintenance be kept "as-is" or better - including ways to pay for rising costs.
- 5 **Parks & Recreation** – The strategic plan should support the maintenance and growth of Mill Creek's parks and recreational offerings, including realistic ways to pay for improvements.
- 6 **Non-Motorized Transport** – The strategic plan should promote City actions to make walking, cycling and other non-motorized transportation options safer and more convenient.
- 7 **Housing Diversity** – The strategic plan should promote ongoing diversity in housing types - to stay adaptable to market swings, and to help match the cost of housing in Mill Creek with wages.
- 8 **Sensible Growth** – The new plan should establish guidelines ensuring future expansion of Mill Creek makes good economic sense - and won't compromise service levels or building standards.
- 9 **Open Spaces** – The plan should support ongoing work to preserve wetland and other "open-space" areas, helping retain Mill Creek's semi-rural character.
- 10 **Other** – Have another key priority for Mill Creek's strategic plan? Jot it down on a slip of paper, then allocate your pennies in the jar marked "Other."



Studio Cascade penny poll

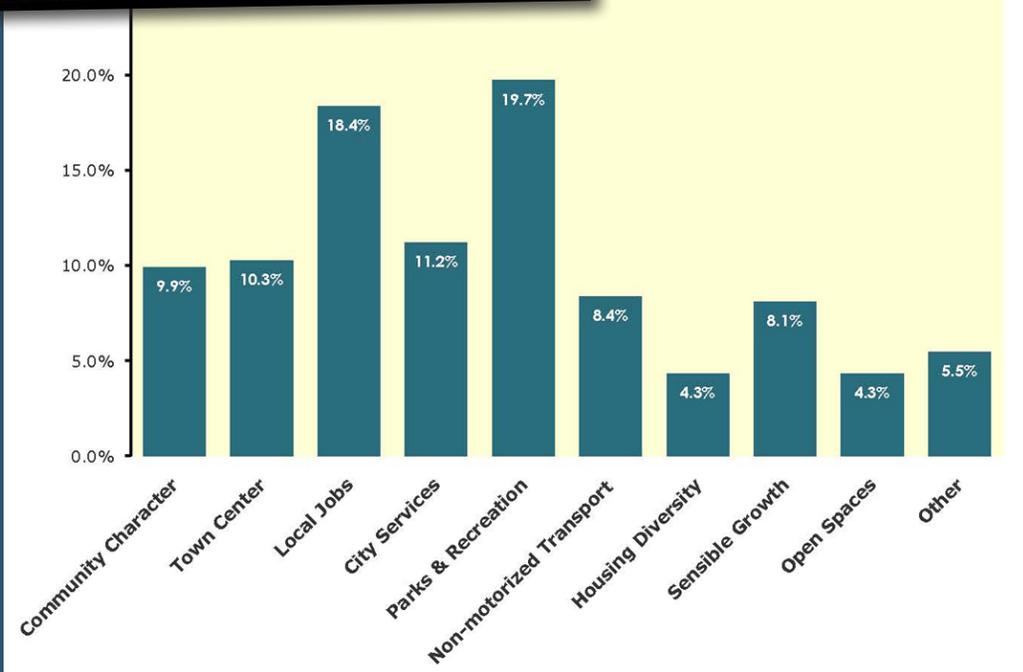


Figure B.05 - More than 700 residents took part in an informal "penny poll" exercise, which asked participants to allocate a fixed budget to a list of 10 plan issues. Across all events where the poll was offered, maintaining parks and recreation services gained the highest percentage of pennies, followed by improving local job conditions, maintaining City services and improving Town Center's success. Priorities generally tracked all input methods, including the scientifically-valid survey. Results played a strong role in Council deliberations in finalizing strategies made part of this plan. A full report on the penny poll results was produced and published on the project website. Copies are available from the City of Mill Creek. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

...e - August, 2011



for them in light of the current fiscal situation. Survey results and a copy of the survey instrument are included in Appendix C.

Instrument

The survey consisted of 16 questions, divided into sections that sought to inform respondents, assess satisfaction with services the City provides and see whether they would support paying for services at a level higher than they do now to ensure they continue.

The questions were predominantly closed-ended, with a few open-ended questions inviting respondents to elaborate on their thoughts or add nuance to their answers. The instrument, designed to take less than 10 minutes to administer on the phone, generally took more than 12 because of citizen interest in the process and a greater-than-expected desire of respondents to converse with those administering the survey.

Responses

The consultant team developed a sample frame of Mill Creek residents, using land lines and cellular phones to administer 600 questionnaires. Counting non-responses and partial responses, the consultant team contacted more than 750 households in the process of attaining the desired level of complete responses. The survey was able to achieve the 4% error threshold at a 95% confidence level, meaning that the results accurately represent the community's opinions with a five percent possibility of it being wrong ranging from -4% to +4% of the answer.

Section 1 - Vision

The first City Council retreat formulated a working vision to help

guide this process. The survey asked respondents to consider elements of that vision to ensure we're on the right track. Support for this vision was nearly unanimous.

Section 2 - Services (City & Others)

Mill Creek residents are generally satisfied with the services they receive, whether those services are provided by the City, by special district or by others.

Public safety and parks rose to the top. Given the City's history behind its incorporation, it is not surprising that residents value the local police department. They also highly value the parks and recreation system in the community. The rather intangible issue of community character also rated highly, indicating that the



Figure B.06 - Creating the Strategic Plan included surveys, booths at more than 14 community events, 10 Council meetings or retreats, several open houses, informal polls and more. (Image source: City of Mill Creek, Studio Cascade, Inc.)



community believes Mill Creek has both an image and a quality of life that it values.

An overwhelming percentage of respondents indicated that Mill Creek's service levels should not be reduced. Of those responding to the question, 66% indicated that they do not want recreation service levels to be reduced, 68% indicated they do not want streets and sidewalk service levels to be reduced, 72% indicated they do not want parks facilities levels of services to be reduced and 76% indicated they do not want police levels of service to be reduced.

Section 3 - Willingness to Pay

Questions asked respondents to consider three different approaches to balance costs and revenues for police, parks, recreation and streets services:

- *Raise fees or taxes to businesses and residents*
- *Create additional income through growth and business development*
- *Reduce service levels.*

For all four types of services, respondents preferred to support existing levels of service and using growth and business development to help pay. Growth is preferred to occur as infill, creating a more full-service community with mixed uses and a compact form. Growth through annexation was not preferred by survey respondents.

While fiscal restraint is a philosophy that runs deeply in the City's policies, the community seems somewhat willing to pay to ensure it receives the services it values. The questionnaire made an effort to describe the current fiscal environment, so respondents were informed that some changes will need to be made in the face of declining revenues and increasing

costs. When given that choice, respondents appeared to prefer retaining services and are willing to consider marginal increases in paying for certain services, if necessary.

Relevance

The City elected to administer this survey early on in the strategic planning process, hoping that the community's responses would influence the plan's structure and its content. Survey results, as well as information derived during the summer's outreach program, defined what the strategic plan contains, what issues are identified as those of community priority and where likely opportunities exist for tackling the City's budget challenges.

The survey focused attention on both the structural and the operational challenges the City faces. The structural challenges concern the trends in cost increases related to the trends in revenue increases - where costs increase at a rate greater than that of revenues. Operational challenges are rooted in the way and efficiencies in which the City provides its services. The survey apparently indicates the community's confidence in the City's ability to provide a high level of services cost effectively. This confirms the City is managing operational challenges well and may eventually result in community support for specific operationally-related revenue increases provided the same cost-effectiveness in service provision continues.

There are issues the City is empowered to address on its own. However, there are also issues where the City will rely on the actions of others. Respondents appear to be aware of this distinction. It appears residents may support City actions to raise local revenue to address



operational issues, but they may not be so eager to do so to alleviate a structural problem where the solution relies partially on the actions of others.

Event Outreach

Mill Creek staff and council members attended multiple activities in July and August, and hundreds of community members participated in this strategic plan as a result. The City's booth and the various exercises associated with it drew out community opinion on the plan and what is important to sustain the essence of Mill Creek.

Staff's efforts to administer the mini-polls and penny polls succeeded in getting the community thinking about the strategic plan and how the City can and should respond. In all, almost 700 community members took the time to complete the penny poll at the 16 public events attended by City staff.

Mini-polls

The mini-polls were intended to get the conversation started, asking quick, polar questions to engage the public in the process, to elevate their interest in what the City's doing and to get rapid feedback on important issues. The mini-poll consisted of six questions, each of which opened a window for conversation with the staff person administering it. Almost 100 mini poll worksheets were completed. Many participants indicated support for both segments of the paired choices, reducing the ability to discern true preferences. Regardless, results show:

- Some degree of preference for maintaining single-family housing



Figure B.07 - The Strategic Plan worked to engage and keep residents informed with web-based tools as well. A project-specific website was developed, along with a Facebook™ page. (Image source: City of Mill Creek, Studio Cascade, Inc.)

patterns, though many indicated strategies should allow for both types

- *The idea of Mill Creek remaining a "quiet residential community" had strong support*
- *Participants favored the idea of Mill Creek becoming a community with increased land use diversity and greater service and employment opportunities*
- *By a sizable percentage, participants supported raising revenues rather than cutting services, though many also indicated willingness to blend the two approaches in closing any funding gaps.*



Penny Poll

The penny poll was a bit more in depth, asking participants to allocate a fixed budget across multiple issues and needs. Participants were provided a stack of 10 pennies and asked to allocate them among nine included categories, plus one write-in "Other" category option. The exercise was extremely popular – nearly 700 visitors completed the exercise at outdoor community events such as the Mutt March, Mill Creek Festival, Children's Concerts at Library Park and the Concerts at the Forum series.

The penny poll seems to provide interesting insight into community. Though the instrument lacked true scientific validity, the level of participation, coupled with general consistency with results from the telephone survey, make it a compelling study. Results are depicted in Figure 3.05.

Open House 1

City staff hosted the process' first open house on July 18, 2011. It was

designed to provide a window to the way the City operates, inviting community members to learn about each of the City's departments and speak with staff representatives. More than 40 community members took advantage of the opportunity to meet with staff and discuss various City functions.

Internet

A project website for this strategic planning process went live on May 26, 2011, providing public access to a project calendar, meeting materials and periodic process updates.

Council Updates

Monthly updates to Council were part of this process, too, with the consultant and staff providing status reports and seeking Council guidance during regular City Council meetings. There were two such meetings during this "Engage" phase, informing the Council of ongoing engagement activities and presenting results as they were available.

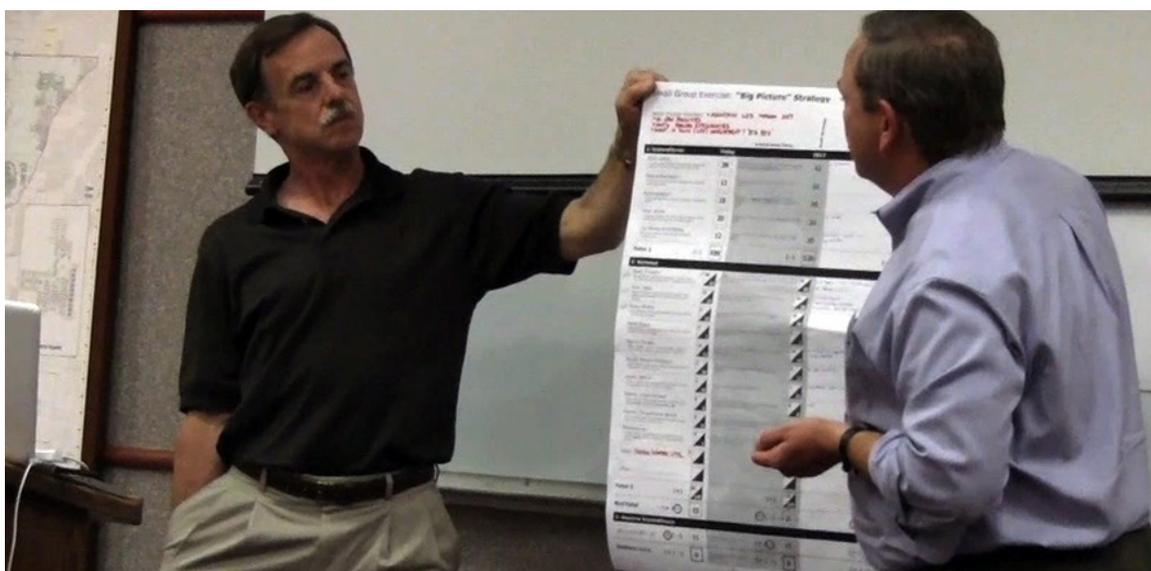


Figure B.08 - One Council retreat exercise paired members to complete a simplified financial framework of their own, with budget figures and resource opportunities scaled proportionately to the City's actual circumstances. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)



Council Retreat 2

The City Council conducted its second retreat on August 29 from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. This six-hour session brought several topics and exercises to the Council, seeking generalized direction that staff and the consultant team could translate into a strategic plan framework. The primary focus in this retreat was to have the City Council work through a budget gaming exercise and provide guidance on specific fiscal strategies to ease or overcome the deficit while still providing the high levels of service the community expects.

Setting the Stage

The retreat's first step was to establish a common understanding of current and forecast fiscal conditions and the community's responses to the various outreach exercises run to that point in the process. The consultant team presented outreach results and a detailed breakdown of the costs and revenues associated with running Mill Creek's City operations. This element of the retreat concluded with an examination of different revenue sources available to local government should the Council decide to enhance or diversify its revenue stream.

Fiscal Exercise

The Council participated in the budget forecast game in groups of two, grappling with strategic fiscal issues and providing direction on cost containment and revenue enhancement/diversification with respect to maintaining high service levels. Council members were asked to tackle the exercise in four sequential steps.

In the first step, council members estimated likely cost increases to provide sustained levels of service in the year 2017. The worksheet

indicated fictional cost levels intended to estimate relative costs for each category of service based on current budgets. Participants were to use these cost levels to help project how costs might increase for each category over the next six years. Based on recent trends, the consultant team provided its estimates for cost increases that the Council could use as a guideline. Councilmembers were free to suggest their own numbers, but, in doing so, they were encouraged to explain why and how their numbers differed from the consultant estimates.

In the second step, participants were asked to identify how revenues would be managed to match the expected increases in costs. As with the cost portion of the exercise, the consultant team provided abstract numbers to represent relative contributions of property tax, sales tax, fees and other revenue sources upon which the City now relies. Council members were to project how these revenue sources, in conjunction with any new sources they might choose to add, would offset the costs to run the City. The consultant team provided revenue strategy recommendations on the worksheet, introducing new revenue options available to overcome the deficit within six years. The City Council participants could deviate from the suggested revenue strategy, and they were encouraged to explain why they did on the worksheet.

The third step asked participants to summarize their fiscal strategy's impact on the City's reserves. Where revenues failed to match costs, the reserves would be depleted. Where revenues matched or exceeded costs, the reserves would stabilize or be restored.

The fourth, and final, step was to present the small group worksheets to the entire Council.



While each of the four groups had different ideas, there was general consensus on several important issues:

- *Service levels cannot be sacrificed*
- *Fees collected should generally match costs to provide those specific services*
- *Revenues will need to increase over time to match even modest increases in costs*
- *The revenue stream should be more diversified than it is now, tapping other sources while still minimizing any increase in taxes or fees*
- *Current reserve levels allow the City to take time in implementing revenue enhancement or diversification measures*
- *The City should plan to balance its budget without drawing from reserves within the next six years.*

This second retreat brought into sharper focus the differing philosophies on the City Council, but it also demonstrated that the different philosophical positions may not be that far apart. Maintaining high levels of service is a constant and repeated priority. And all would agree that considering new revenue sources is a last resort, one that should be pursued only after other avenues to reconciling the deficit issue are exhausted.

Stage 3: Review

This stage of the process focused on generation and review of proposed strategic planning material, encouraging the City Council and community to consider the strategic proposals and suggest modifications.

Draft Framework

The consultant team generated a draft strategic plan framework capturing the results of the August retreat and outlining a preliminary course of action to be included in the strategic plan. That framework articulated strategic planning issues, the community's apparent priorities and how the strategic plan should respond. The proposed responses included a range of fiscal actions to overcome the projected budget deficit and several other actions to help the City facilitate the type of growth and development its comprehensive plan and this process' results endorse.

Open House 2

City staff conducted its second public open house on October 12, 2011 to present results of the process to date and to solicit community comment on local priorities, important capital facilities and the strategies considered for balancing the City's books. This public event was based on the draft strategic plan framework unveiled in September. While the open house was sparsely attended and a limited number of the participants completed the open house worksheets, it did generate interesting information on these three topics:

1 - Priorities

An open house worksheet asked participants to rank eight priorities specified in the draft strategic plan framework. Completed worksheets revealed that participants valued community character most highly by a wide margin and that strengthening partnerships with non-City service providers was second. Results were generally consistent with the results of the penny poll and telephone survey,



except in that participants here felt less strongly about pursuing living wage jobs in Mill Creek.

2 - Facilities & Services

Open house participants considered the proposed police station, public works shop, sports park, and transportation benefit district, noting their level of support and the means in which each should be funded. Of the four, only the sports park received minority support. The other three received clear majority support, with a mix of suggested financing strategies. Bonds were favored over tax increases by a two-to-one margin, with reserves also considered by some as necessary to augment bond or tax proceeds. All participants favored the formation of a transportation benefit district. Participants were invited to add other facilities to the list, with four participants identifying the senior center and suggesting that it be funded by a combination of bond proceeds and City reserves.

3 - Balancing the Books

Participants considered the fiscal crisis, examining ways in which the City could offset its current and forecast budget deficit. Consistent with the telephone survey and penny poll, participants want to retain what makes Mill Creek desirable, maintaining services and community character. Several responses mentioned desires to contain costs, ensuring the City runs as an efficient operation. Even these respondents, however, recognized the need may exist to increase municipal revenue to offset forecast cost increases. When asked, participants generally supported some level of revenue enhancement and/or diversification, favoring imposition of a utility tax over an increase in property tax. But the results were mixed, with



Figure B.09 - Staff worked to keep the community dialogue going from start to finish, including hosting "open house" events upon release of each draft stage of the plan. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)

some offering a wide variety of diversification strategies involving bond funding, transportation benefit district and increased revenue generation from accelerated economic development efforts.

Council Updates

Monthly updates in September and October provided the Council opportunities to question staff and the consultant team on the plan's progress and recommendations. The City Council was generally concerned with the plan's fiscal strategy proposals, ensuring adequate thought was given to containing costs to provide services while still ensuring that the levels of service provided are





Figure B.10 - Council, staff and consultants met with community members at the final open house event, held prior to the Council meeting on February 22, 2012. (Image source: City of Mill Creek)

not compromised. The Council also wanted to ensure that the topics of economic development and growth be addressed in the strategic plan, both as a means to augment municipal revenues and to ensure continued maintenance of the community’s character.

Open House 3

On February 22, 2012, City Staff hosted a final open house event prior to that evening’s Council meeting and presentation of the final draft strategic plan. Approximately 30 residents took part, reviewing the maps, displays and other materials prepared by Staff, and speaking to consultants and members of Council attending the event.

Adoption

Mill Creek’s City Council will be asked to adopt this plan in the first quarter of 2012, committing to the plan’s recommendations and action items.

This strategic plan’s process was exhaustive and comprehensive, establishing a level of community and elected official engagement consistent with the plan’s importance. The community survey, public event presence, penny poll/mini-poll response and open houses provided Mill Creek’s businesses and residents access into this process and power over it. The City Council requested an aggressive public outreach component, and it received clear community direction on local priorities and expectations.



Appendix C

Survey Results

Community Surveys

Strategic Plan City of Mill Creek

The quest for public opinion has been a significant part of this strategic planning process. Unlike many strategic plans, which focus solely on the nuts and bolts of budgeting and policy implementation, Mill Creek's needed to be based on community review and affirmation of overall priorities.

Current and future budget environments will put the City Council in a difficult situation, figuring out how to balance the books while also providing the services the community needs most. Understanding community priorities will help keep these budget discussions in perspective, and the process has emphasized outreach as a major component.

There have been three questionnaire instruments, each designed to engage community residents in slightly different ways. The three questionnaires, intended as an integrated system, provide dimension to community responses, offering nuanced insight into such topics as annexation, local employment and land use planning - topics not often covered in strategic plans but an important part of this one.

I. Mini-Poll

The mini-polls are intended to get the conversation started, asking quick, polar questions to engage the public in the process, to elevate their interest in what the City's doing and to get rapid feedback on important issues. The mini-poll consists of six questions, each of which should open a window for conversation with the staff person administering it. So far, just 77 mini poll worksheets have been completed, so the degree to which results may reflect general attitudes is limited. In addition, many

participants indicated support for both segments of the paired choices, reducing the ability to discern true preferences. Regardless, results show:



Figure 1.01 - Mill Creek commissioned a statistically valid telephone survey as part of this process, polling residents with land lines and cell phones. The penny poll complemented the phone survey, adding nuance and depth to the message of community priority. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

- Some degree of preference for maintaining single-family housing patterns, though many indicated strategies should allow for both archetypes.
- The idea of Mill Creek remaining a "quiet residential community" had strong support
- Participants favored the idea of Mill Creek becoming more of a full-service community, with greater service and employment opportunities
- By a sizable percentage, participants supported raising revenues rather than cutting services, though many also indicated willingness to blend the two approaches in closing any funding gaps.

A copy of the mini poll worksheet is included as Figure 1.02, with charted poll results as figure 1.03.



Strategic Plan Mini-Poll: Strategic Plan Concepts



Mill Creek is preparing a new **Strategic Plan** that will set long-term guidelines for investment, development and decision-making. Issues influencing growth, jobs, and even the city's overall character are being considered. This informal questionnaire addresses just a few of the issues at stake – so tell us what you think. *Help shape Mill Creek's future!*

I reside in: (check one) - Mill Creek - Unincorporated Snohomish County - Other _____

Over the next 20 years:	Yes	No	D/K	Why?
1. Should strategies help maintain more of Mill Creek's single-family residential character?				
2. Should strategies help make mixed-use and higher-density housing like that in Town Center more common?				
3. Should strategies support a more full-service community, where more residents work, shop and find services within City limits?				
4. Should strategies help retain Mill Creek's quiet "residential community" character?				
5. Forecasts show a growing budget gap between costs and revenues. Should strategies direct raising revenues to keep services intact?				
6. Forecasts show a growing budget gap between costs and revenues. Should strategies direct reducing services to maintain tax levels?				

[MP1] Event:

(Provide any additional thoughts on the back of this sheet)

Please complete and leave at our volunteer table, or return to: **City of Mill Creek, 15728 Main Street, Mill Creek WA 98012**

Figure 1.02 - Mini polls helped engage residents and got them talking. They were designed to pose quick choices to participants at public events, asking them to consider different sides of the same issue. Booth staffers picked up on the dialogue, explaining the process and its significance. (Image source: Studio Cascade)

Mini-Poll #1 Results
(All respondents, through August 22, 2011)

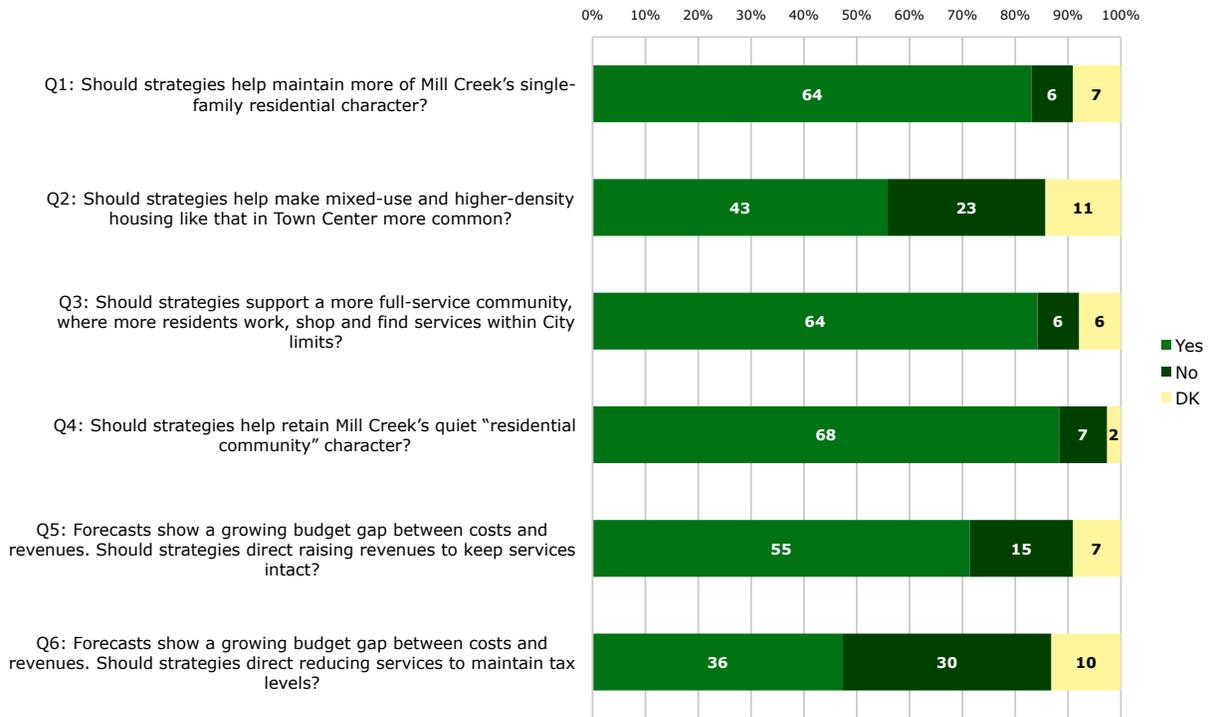


Figure 1.03 - Results are so far limited in number, but show patterns consistent with other methods used. Residents love Mill Creek's "residential community" character, but also strongly support it growing into a place where more jobs, services and shopping opportunities exist within City limits. Interestingly, most indicated a willingness to support new revenues rather than see service levels drop. (Image source: Studio Cascade)

II. Penny Poll

The penny poll is a bit more in depth, asking participants to allocate a budget across multiple issues and needs. Participants were provided a stack of 10 pennies and asked to allocate them among nine included categories plus one write-in "Other" category option. The exercise has proven to be extremely popular - nearly **700 residents** have completed the exercise at outdoor community events such as the Mutt March, Mill Creek Festival, and the Concerts at the Forum series.

The penny poll seems to provide interesting insight into community priorities - insight that may motivate revision of the working vision guiding this process. Though the instrument lacks true scientific validity, the level of participation, coupled with general consistency with results from the telephone survey, make it a compelling complement to the phone sample.

Tabulated penny poll results (to date) are provided in Figure 1.04. The full list of "other" category replies are provided in Table 1.01. A reduced-size version of the exercise poster, which provided details on what each category was meant to include, is shown in Figure 1.05.

Penny Poll Results: June - August, 2011

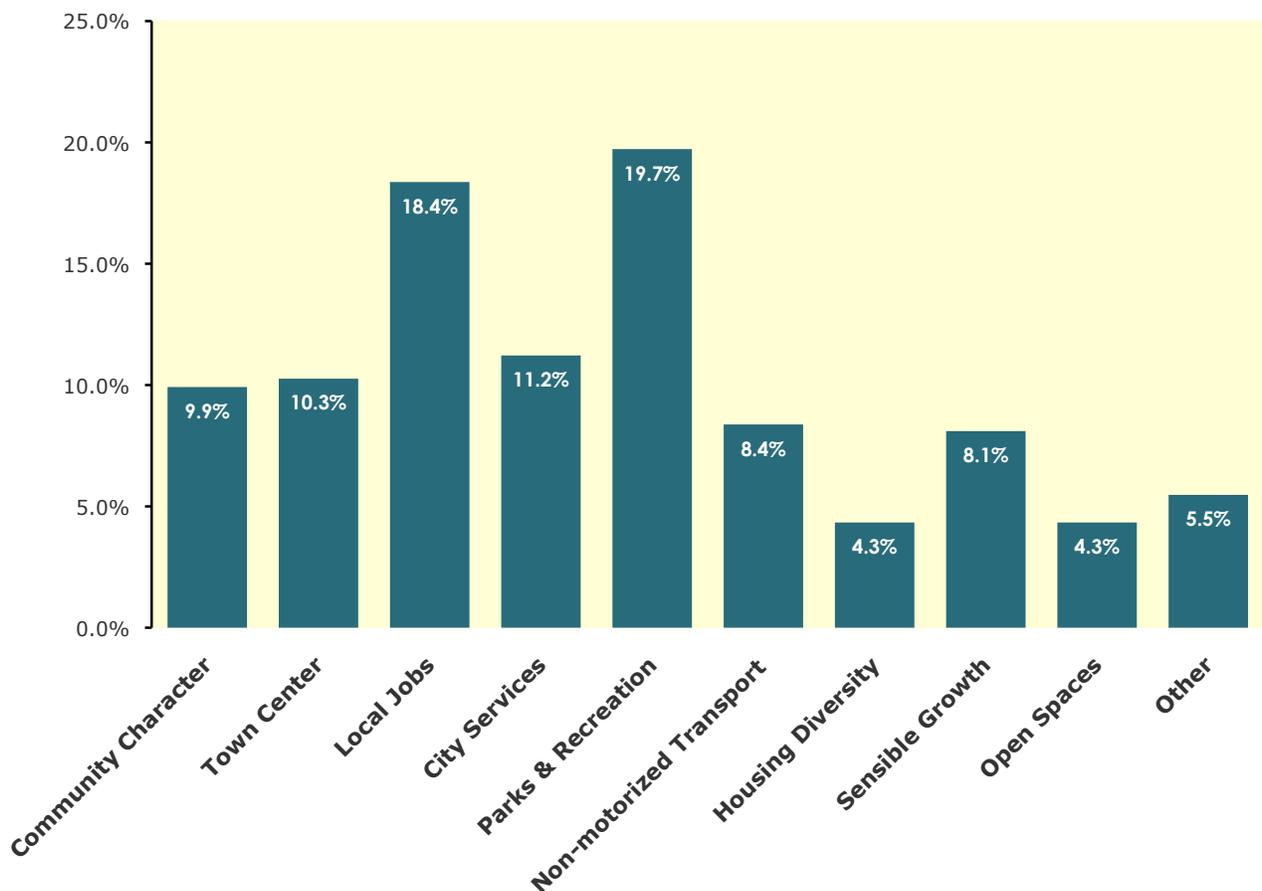


Figure 1.04 - Penny poll results appear generally consistent with phone survey results, but patterns suggest the desire for local jobs is much stronger than anticipated. The phone survey covered this topic much more broadly ("full service community"), but the penny-poll's specific terms and greater allowance for respondent consideration likely played a role. (Image source: Studio Cascade, Inc.)

Table 1.01 - Penny-poll "Other" responses (to date)

Responses	Number
"Senior center"	122
"Library/improved library"	39
"Higher buildings to accommodate density"	20
"Business"	13
"ADA sidewalks at sports park"	10
"Lower taxes"	10
"Community garden/pea patch"	8
"Community center (teens)"	7
"Open playgrounds"	6
"Performing arts theater"	5
"Eastside annexation"	5
"Save animals"	4
"Playgrounds"	4
"More practical shopping"	4
"Community events"	4
"Senior center at Tambark Creek Park"	3
"No-deficit budgeting"	3
"Movie theater"	2
"Dog park"	2
"Wine tasting"	1
Miscellaneous (not defined)	39
Total:	311

Which issues are most important?

Introduction

Mill Creek is currently preparing a **strategic plan**, guiding future growth and civic investment. How would **you** balance the City's priorities? Grab a stack of **ten pennies** and "spend" them among the issue statements below. Put as many as you wish in each of the jars, but with only ten pennies, you may need to make some **trade-offs!**

1

Community Character – *The strategic plan should recommend the City work to identify and support features and land-use patterns that give Mill Creek its beauty, charm and character.*

2

Town Center – *The plan should promote Mill Creek's town center, helping improve opportunities for businesses, shops and restaurants - and affirming Town Center's place as the "heart" of the community.*

3

Local Jobs – *The strategic plan should support new in-town employment opportunities - growing the economy and helping more residents live **and** work in Mill Creek.*

4

City Services – *The new plan should recommend existing service levels for police, storm-water control, streets and street maintenance be kept "as-is" or better - including ways to pay for rising costs.*

5

Parks & Recreation – *The strategic plan should support the maintenance and growth of Mill Creek's parks and recreational offerings, including realistic ways to pay for improvements.*

6

Non-Motorized Transport – *The strategic plan should promote City actions to make walking, cycling and other non-motorized transportation options safer and more convenient.*

7

Housing Diversity – *The strategic plan should promote ongoing diversity in housing types - to stay adaptable to market swings, and to help match the cost of housing in Mill Creek with wages.*

8

Sensible Growth – *The new plan should establish guidelines ensuring future expansion of Mill Creek makes good economic sense - and won't compromise service levels or building standards.*

9

Open Spaces – *The plan should support ongoing work to preserve wetland and other "open-space" areas, helping retain Mill Creek's semi-rural character.*

10

Other – *Have another key priority for Mill Creek's strategic plan? Jot it down on a slip of paper, then allocate your pennies in the jar marked "Other."*



Figure 1.05 - The penny-poll asks participants to consider relative priorities, providing them with a ten-penny "budget" to allocate among a list of issues or others they provide themselves. Categories used for Mill Creek are shown above. (Image source: Studio Cascade)

III. Telephone Survey

The Strategic Plan survey began July 1 and ran through the week of July 18, touching more than 600 Mill Creek residents in the process. The questionnaire, a copy of which is attached to this report, asked questions about how residents feel about the services they receive and how they'd consider the City adjusting to balance its fiscal outlook.

Instrument

The survey consisted of 16 main questions, divided into sections that sought to inform respondents, assess satisfaction with services and gauge support for various approaches to fiscal balance.

The questions were predominantly closed-ended, with a few open-ended questions inviting respondents to elaborate on their thoughts or add nuance to their answers. The instrument, designed to take less than 10 minutes to administer on the phone, generally took more than 12 because of citizen interest in the process and a greater-than-expected desire of respondents to converse with those administering the survey.

Methodology

GMA Research developed a sample frame of Mill Creek residents, using a randomized phone directory of both land lines and cellular phones to administer 600 questionnaires. Counting non-responses and partial responses, GMA staff contacted more than 750 households in the process. The survey was able to achieve the desired 4% error interval with 95% confidence.

The survey employed a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, prompting each question put to the resident with results entered via keyboard. Numbers sampling for the survey accessed a variety of files providing working numbers in the Mill Creek area including cell, land line, listed and unlisted telephone numbers. Source files for these included credit bureau rating services, voter registration databases, and third party records. Procedurally, when contact was made via cell phone, the respondent was asked if they preferred completing the survey using cell service or be contacted via land line. A majority of such respondents opted to continue the survey using cellular service.

Responses

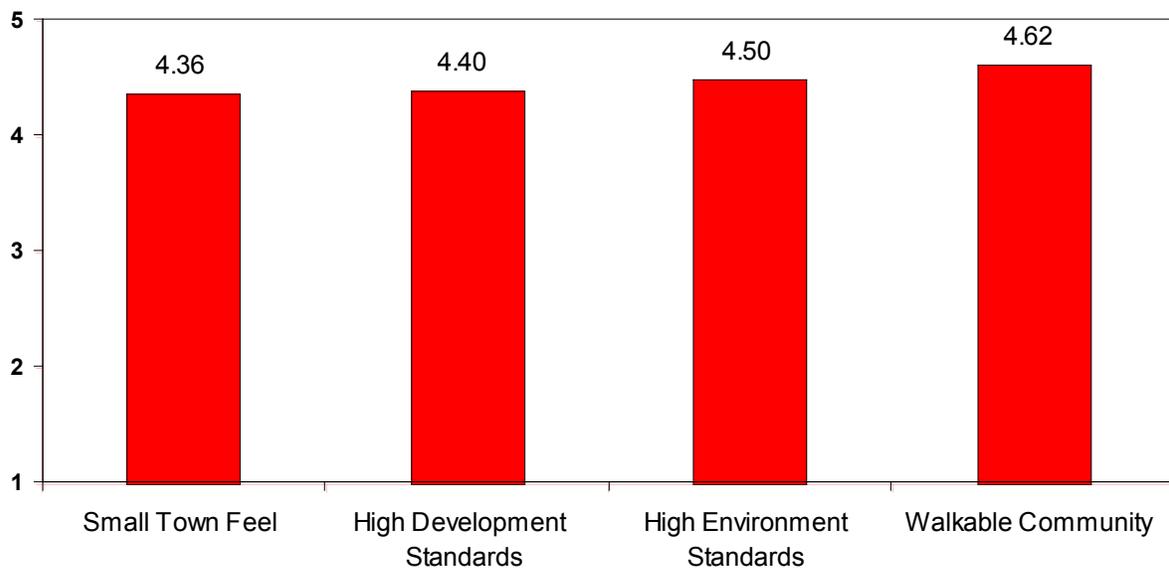
The following pages present bar charts detailing response patterns. Verbatim responses are included as an attachment to this report, documenting comments respondents offered, as well as answers to open-ended questions. For most questions, surveyors probed for "why" responses from only those respondents who were dissatisfied with service offerings. As a result, the general tenor of the verbatim comments seem rather negative. There were actually very few respondents who were dissatisfied (an average of 95% of total surveyed gave scores of "3" or higher), so the written replies, while interesting, represent a small minority of opinions.

Section 1 - Vision

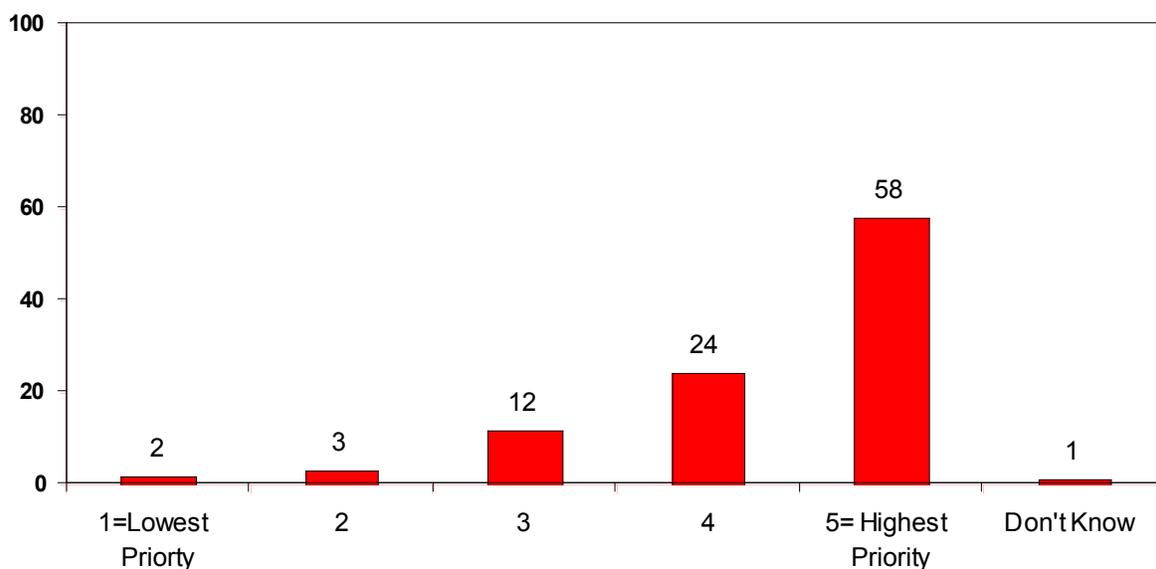
The first City Council retreat formulated a working vision to help guide this process. The survey asked respondents to consider elements of that vision to ensure we're on the right track. Support for this vision was nearly unanimous.

Average scores for each element are provided below with individual response rankings provided on subsequent pages.

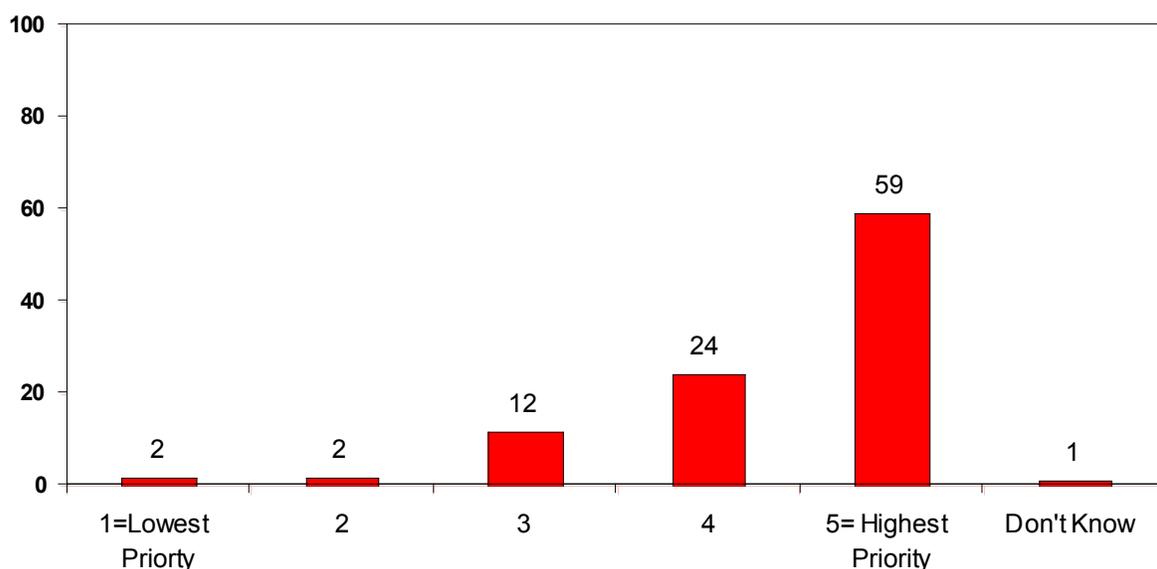
All Factors: Average Ratings



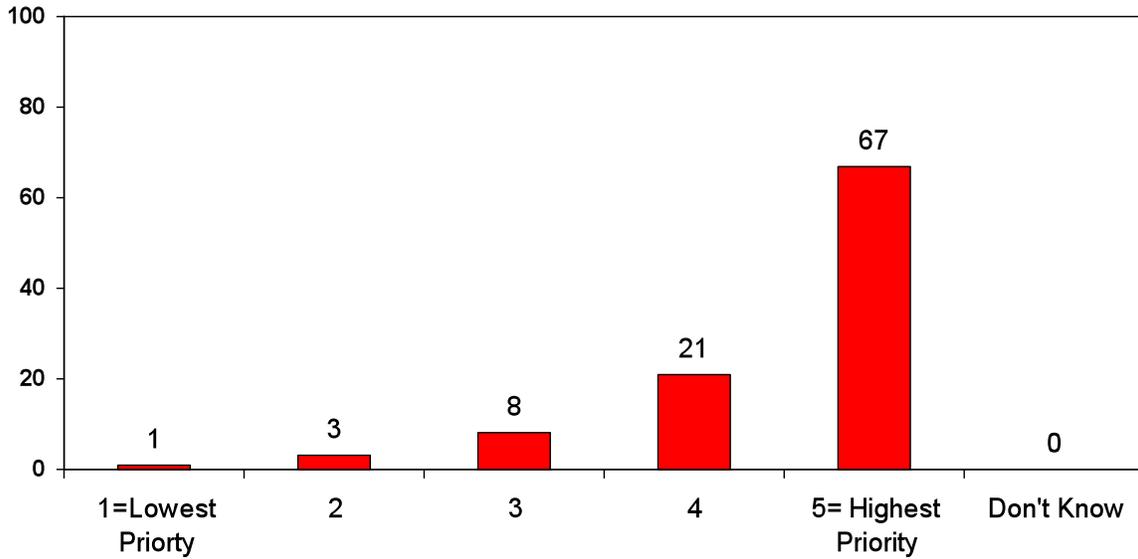
Thinking long-term, please rate each of the following in terms of how important this is for the future of Mill Creek.
Continuing Mill Creek's safe "Small-Town Feel."



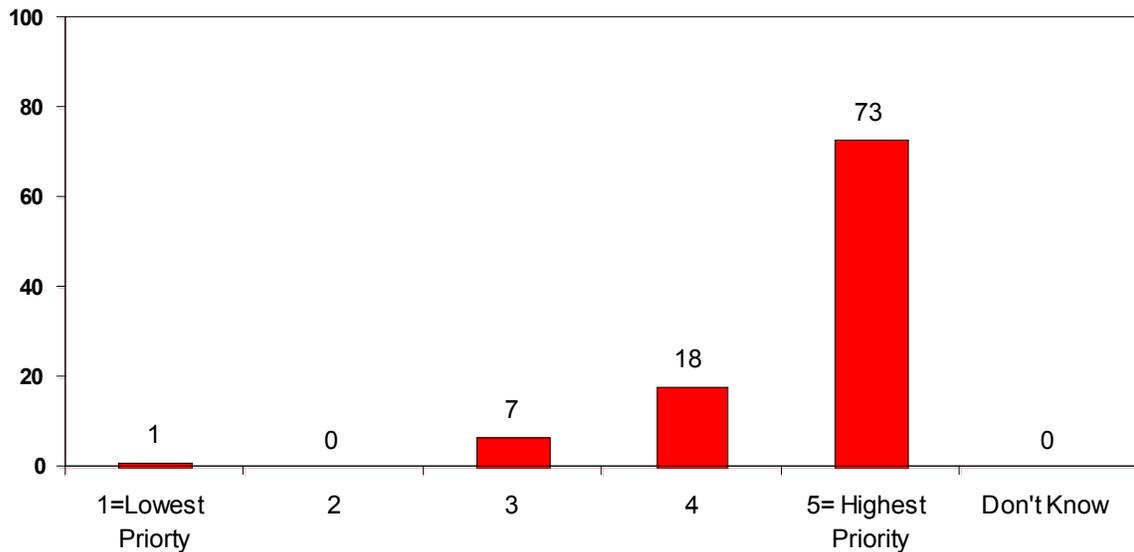
Maintaining Mill Creek's high development standards, ensuring that the city is a "Cut Above" what might be expected elsewhere.



Maintaining Mill Creek's high environmental standards, ensuring that the city's natural beauty is retained or enhanced.



Maintaining a walkable community where people stroll during their leisure hours and have opportunities to interact with others.



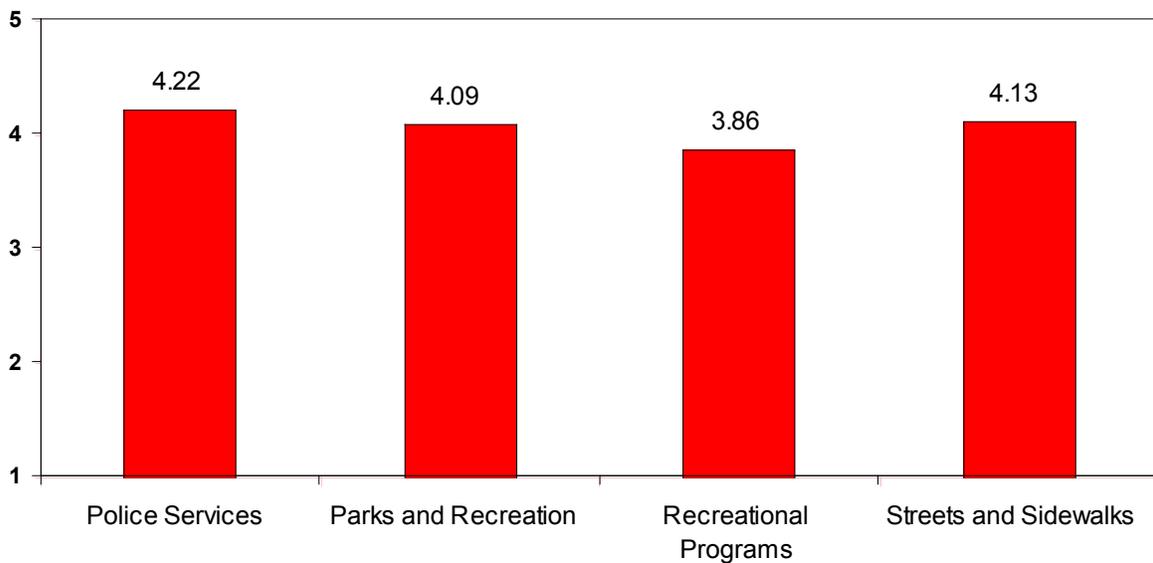
Section 2 - Services (City and others)

Mill Creek residents are generally satisfied with the services they receive, whether those services are provided by the City, by special district or by others.

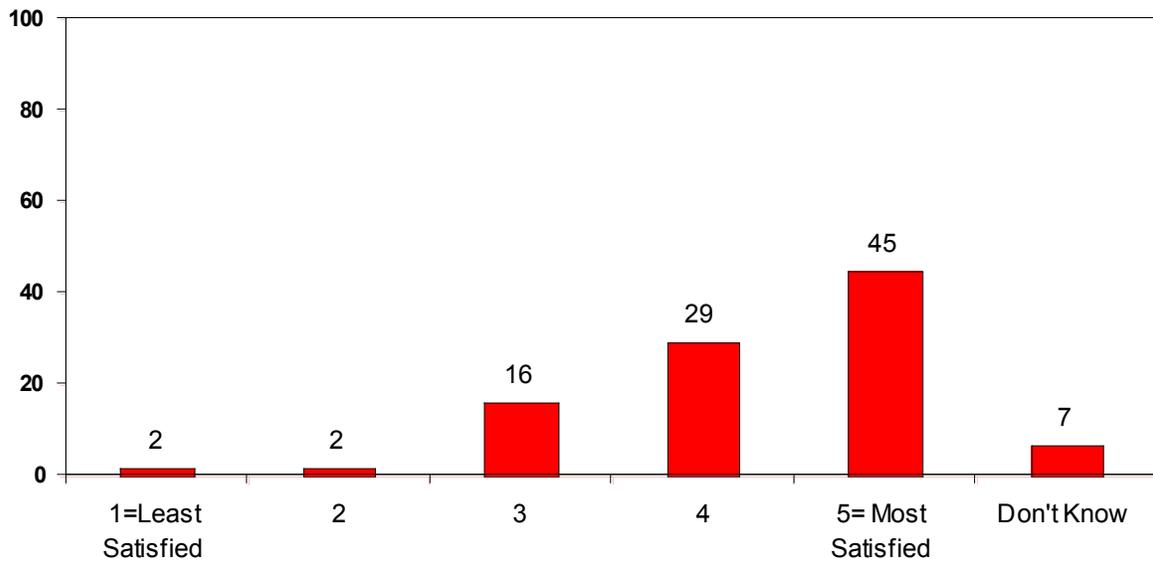
Public safety and parks rose to the top. Given the City's history behind its incorporation, it is not surprising that residents value the local police department. They also highly value the parks and recreation system in the community. The rather intangible issue of community character also rated highly, indicating that the community believes Mill Creek has both an image and a quality of life that it values.

Average scores for service groupings (City versus others) precedes individual response rankings, supplied on subsequent pages.

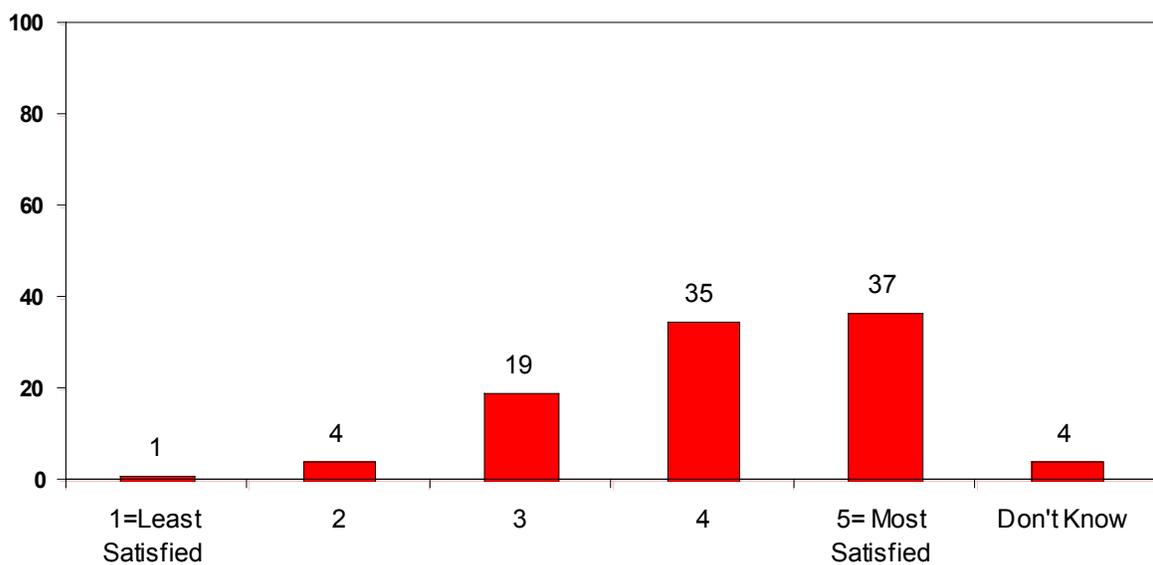
All Services & Programs: Average Ratings



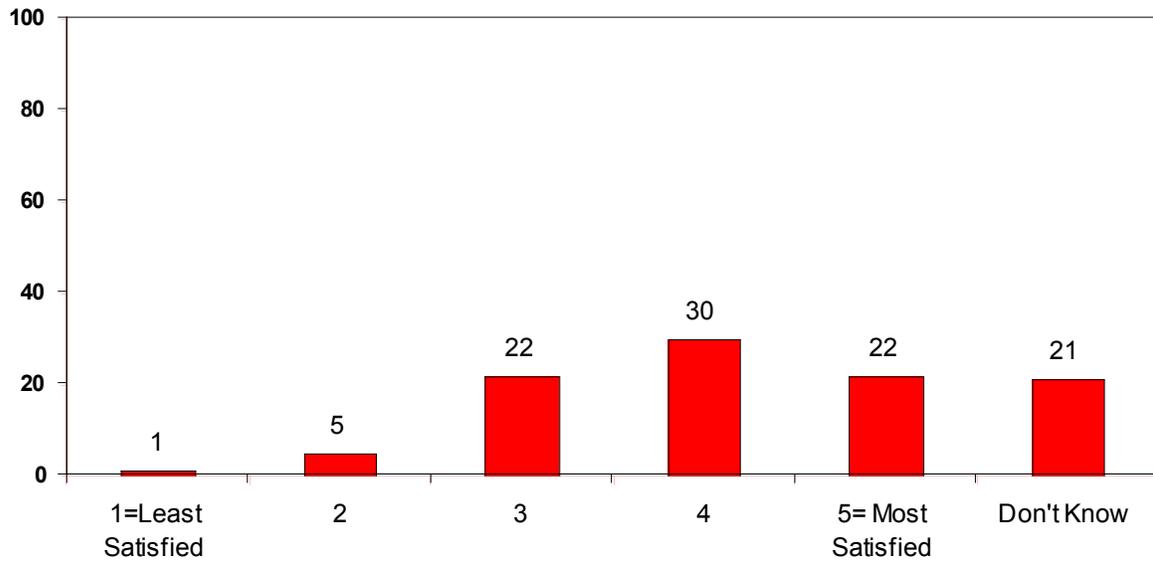
Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following:
Police Services



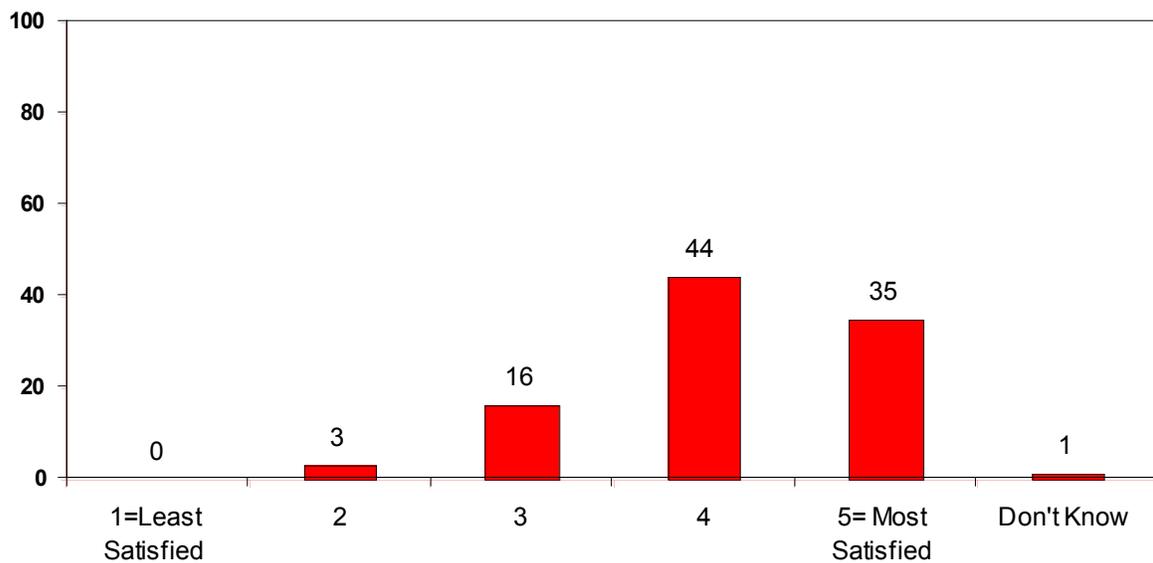
Parks and Recreation Facilities



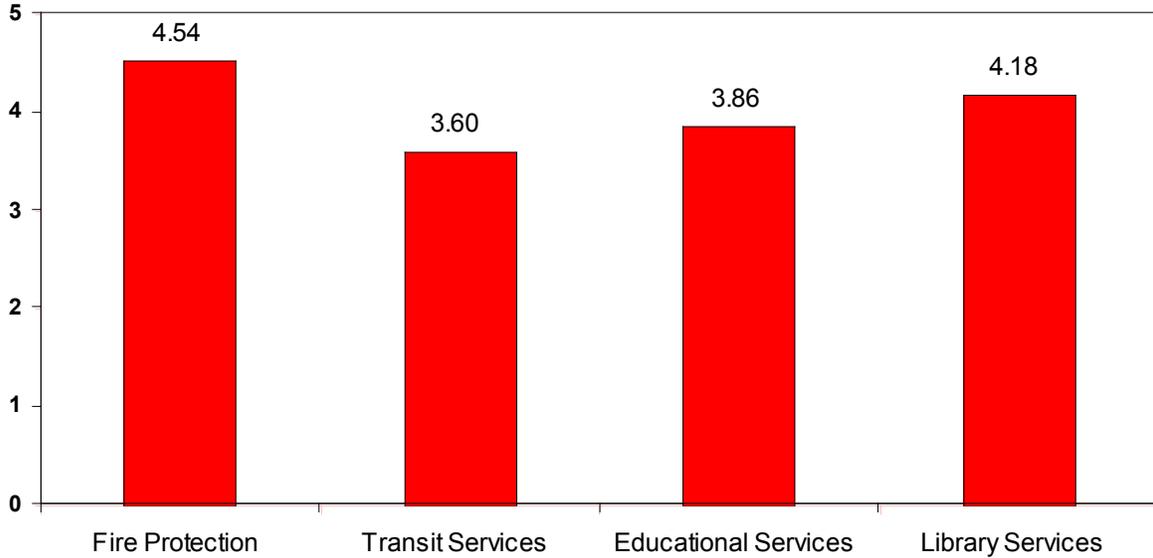
Recreational programs, including pre-school, youth, adult and senior recreation programs



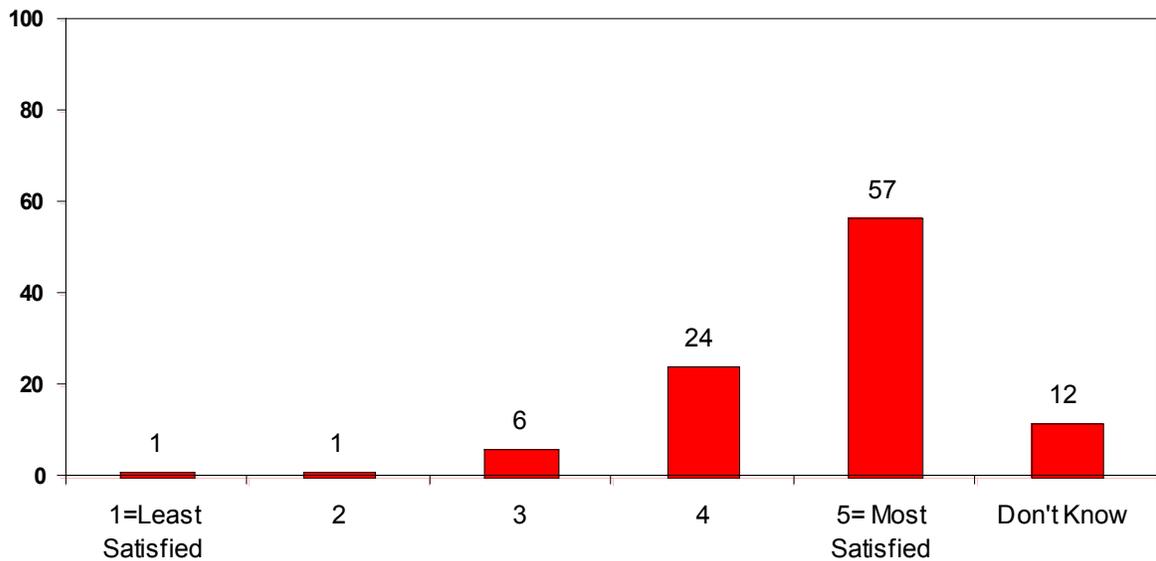
Streets and sidewalks, not including private roadways or those under state jurisdiction



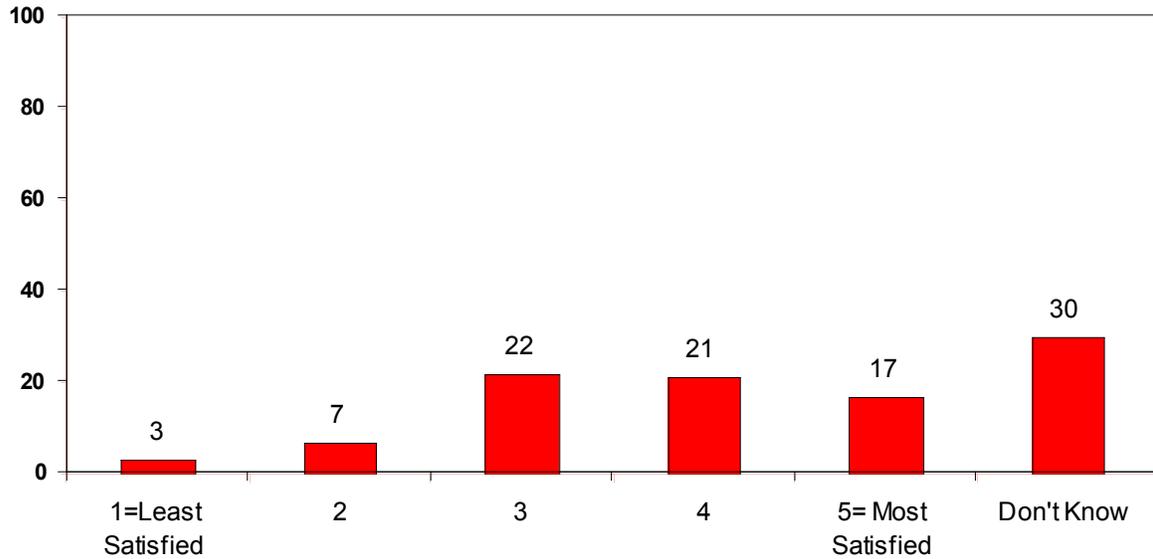
All Services & Programs: Average Ratings



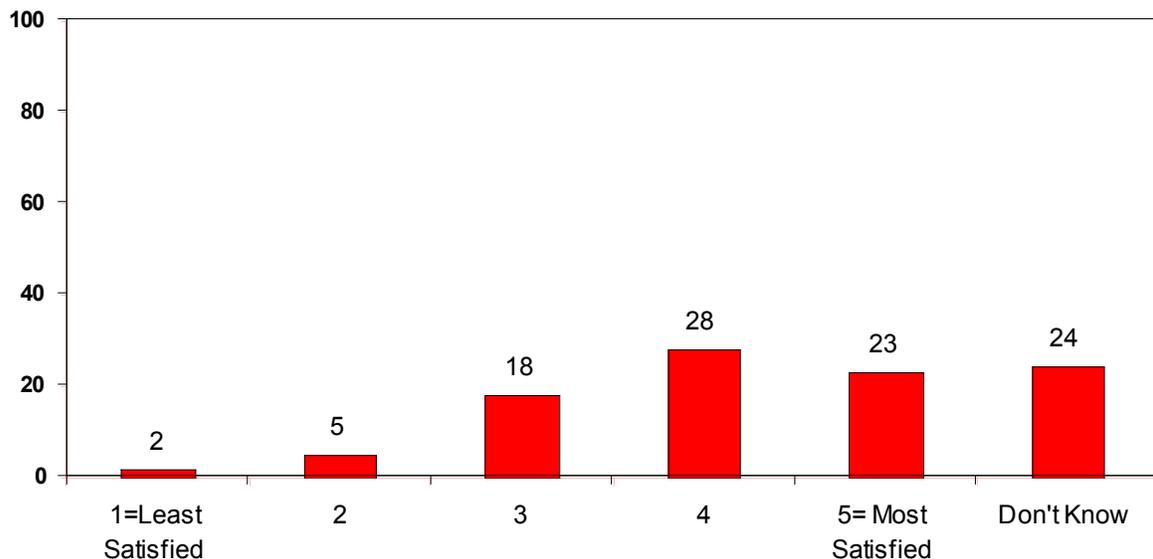
Fire protection services, provided by Snohomish County Fire District 7



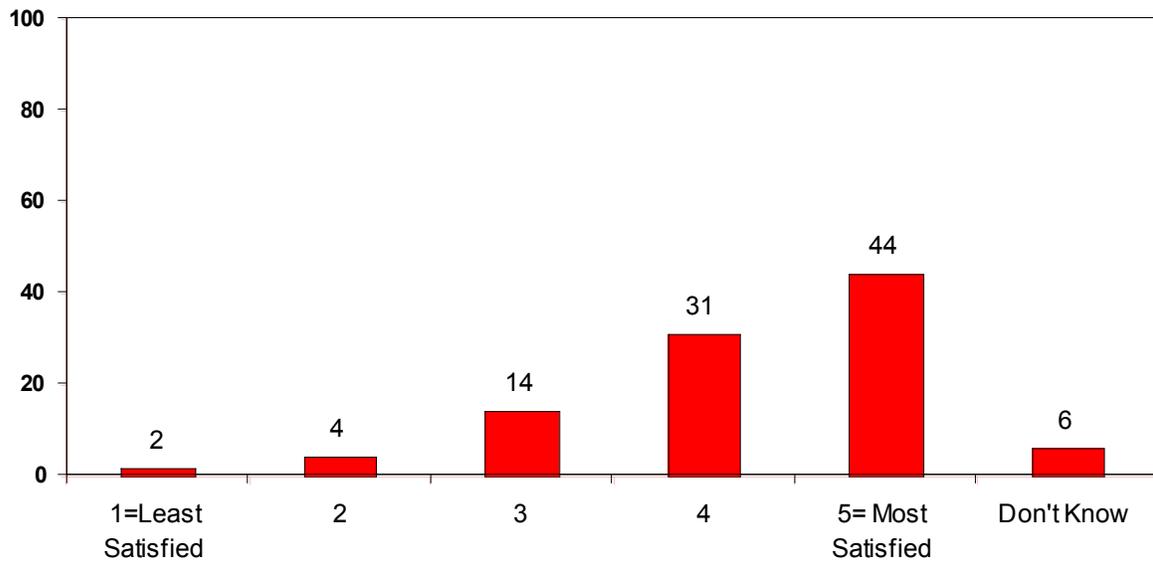
Transit services, currently provided by
Community Transit of Snohomish County



Educational services, including elementary,
middle and high schools operated by
the Everett Public School District



Library services including Mill Creek Library
currently provided by the Sno-Isle Library System



Section 3 - Willingness to pay

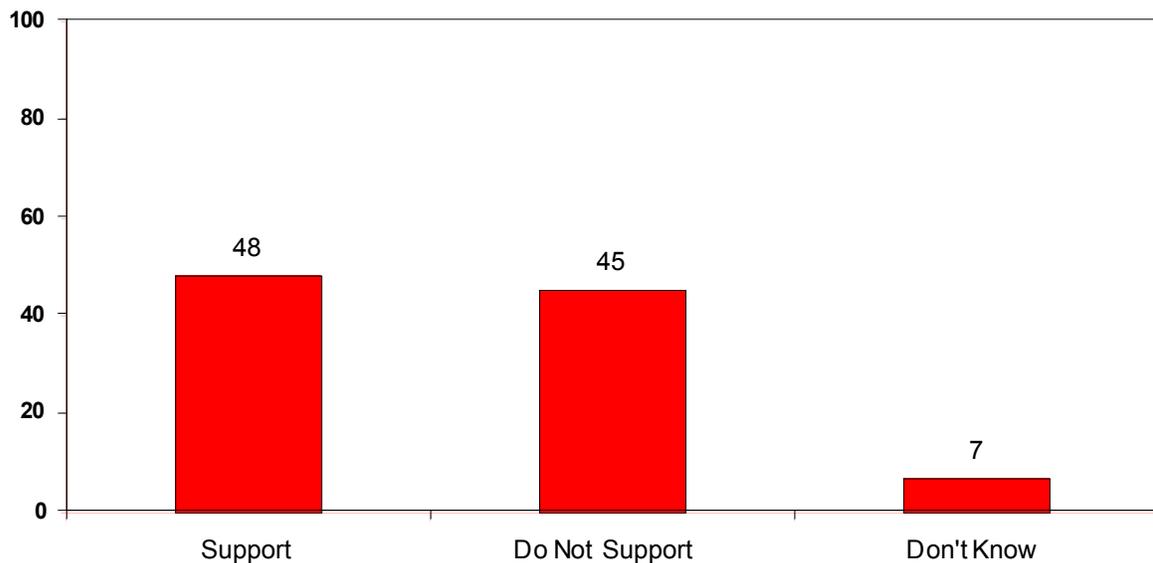
While fiscal conservatism is a philosophy that runs deeply in the City's policies, the community seems somewhat willing to pay to ensure it receives the services it values. The questionnaire made an effort to describe the current fiscal environment, so respondents were informed that some changes will need to be made in the face of declining revenues and increasing costs. When given that choice, respondents appeared to prefer retaining services and are willing to consider marginal increases in paying for them if necessary.

Choices asked respondents to consider three different approaches to deal with police, parks, recreation and streets services:

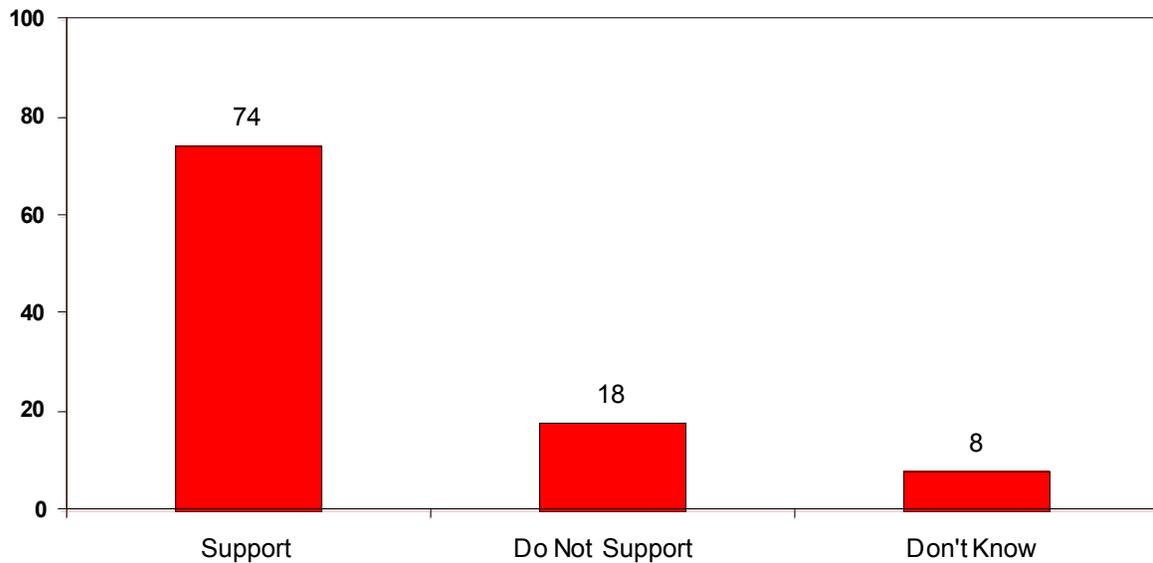
- *Raise fees or taxes to businesses and residents*
- *Create additional income through growth and business development*
- *Reduce service levels*

For all four types of services, respondents clearly preferred to support existing levels of service and using growth and business development to help pay.

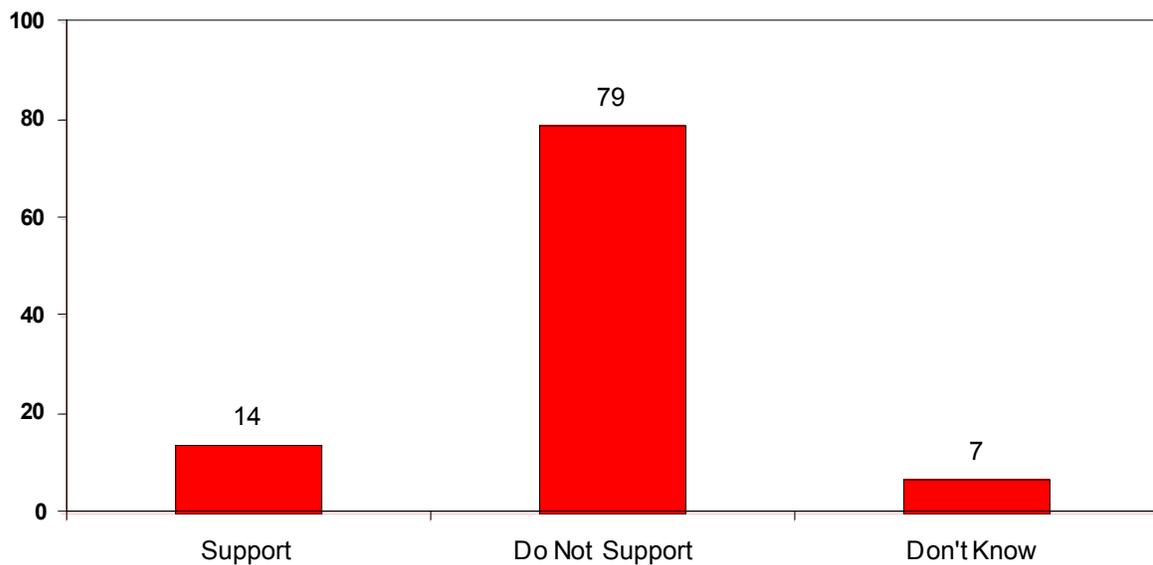
For police services, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek



For police services, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Creating additional income through growth and business development

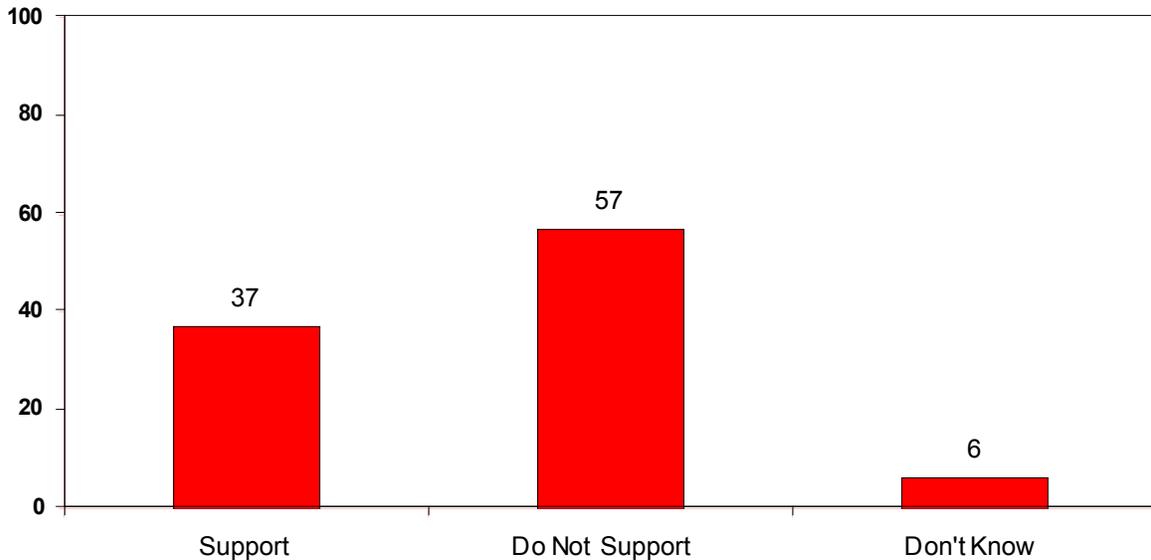


For police services, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Reducing service levels



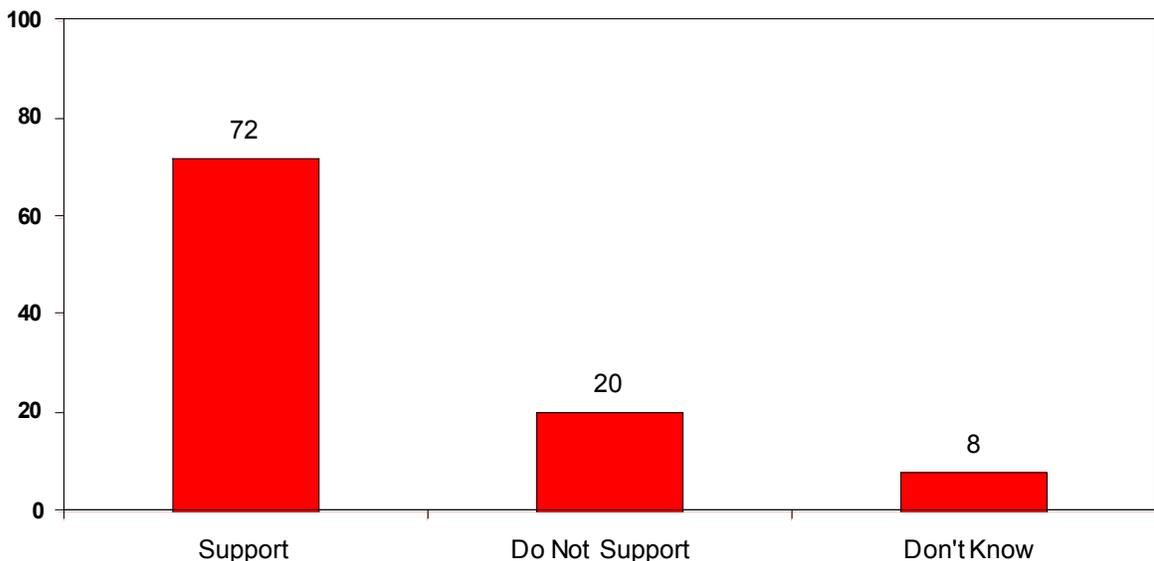
For parks and recreational facilities, currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and rental fees, which of the following do you generally support or not support?

Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek

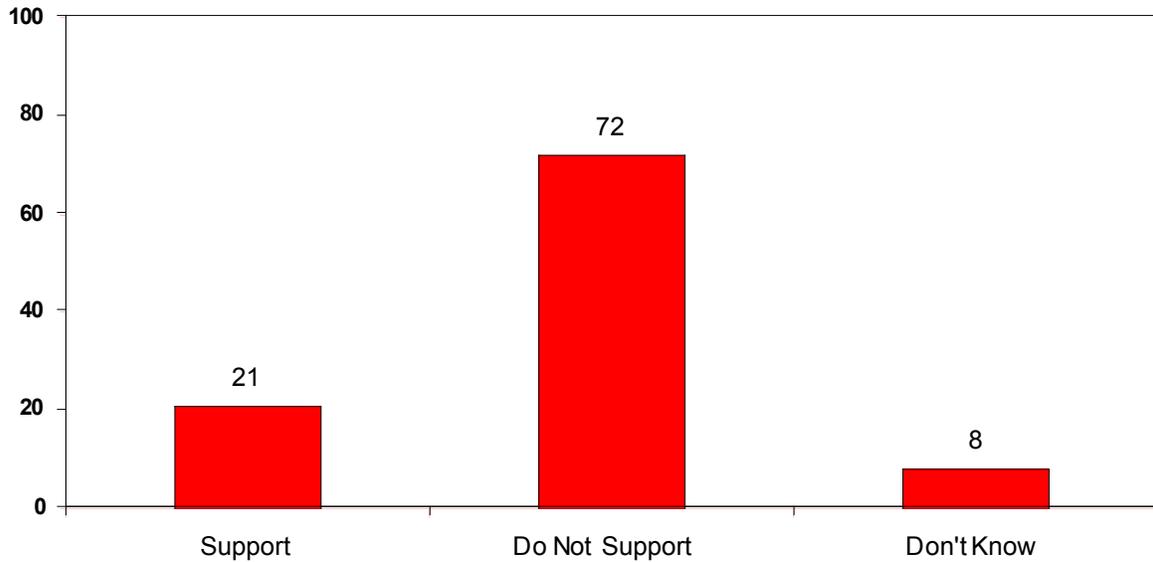


For parks and recreational facilities, currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and rental fees, which of the following do you generally support or not support?

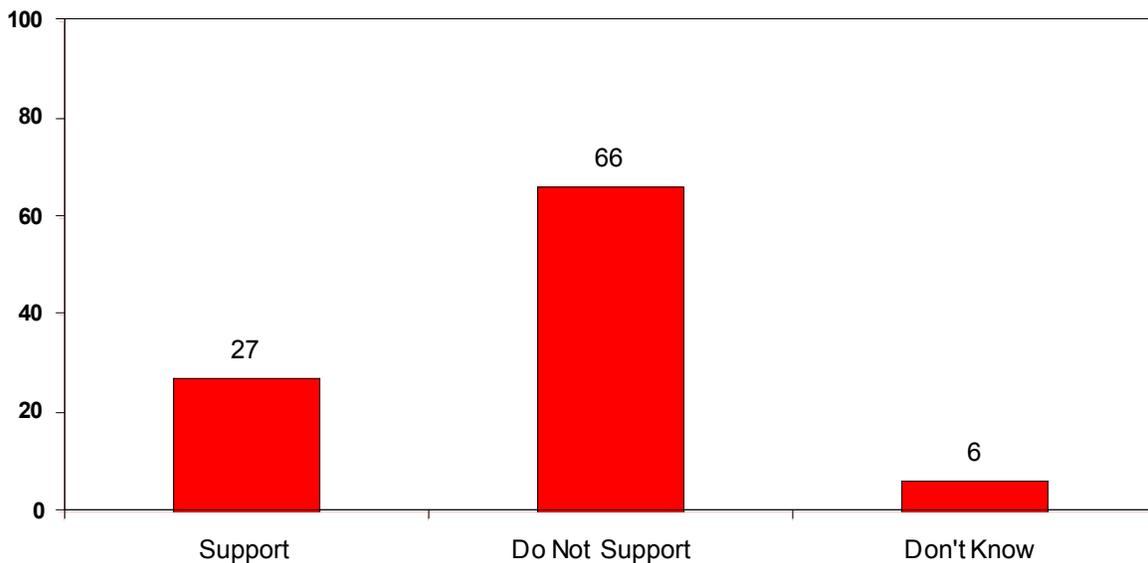
Creating additional income through growth and business development



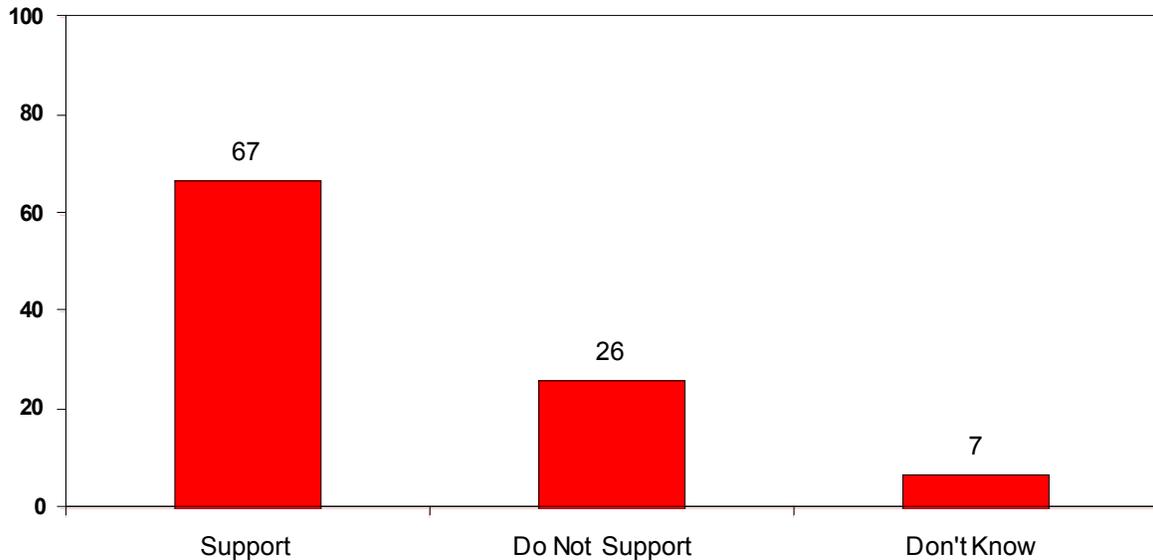
For parks and recreation facilities, currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and rental fees, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Reducing service levels



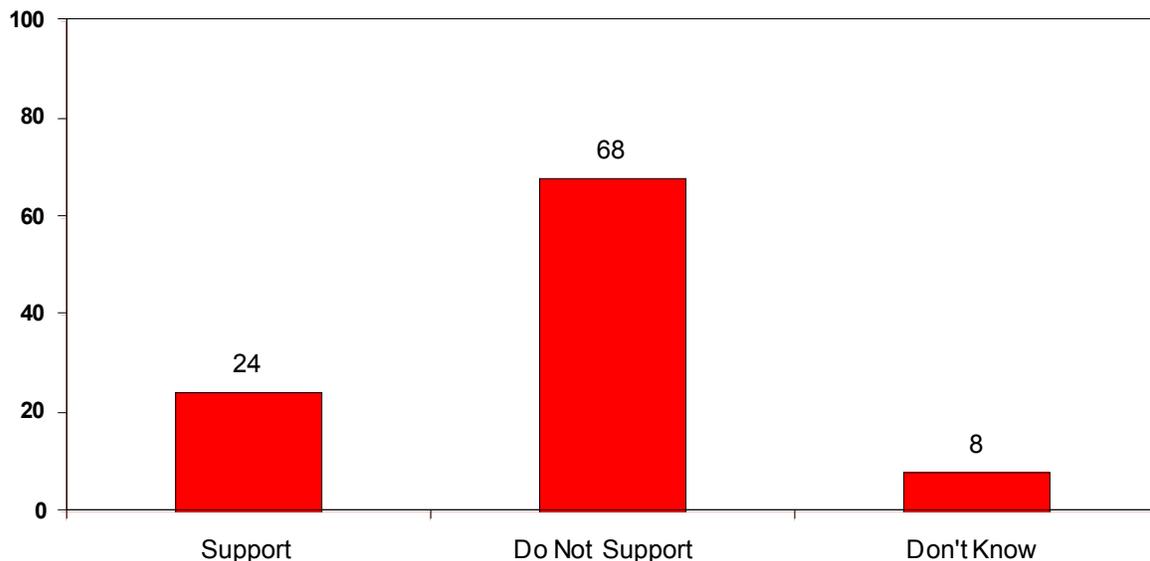
For recreational programs, currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and user fees, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek



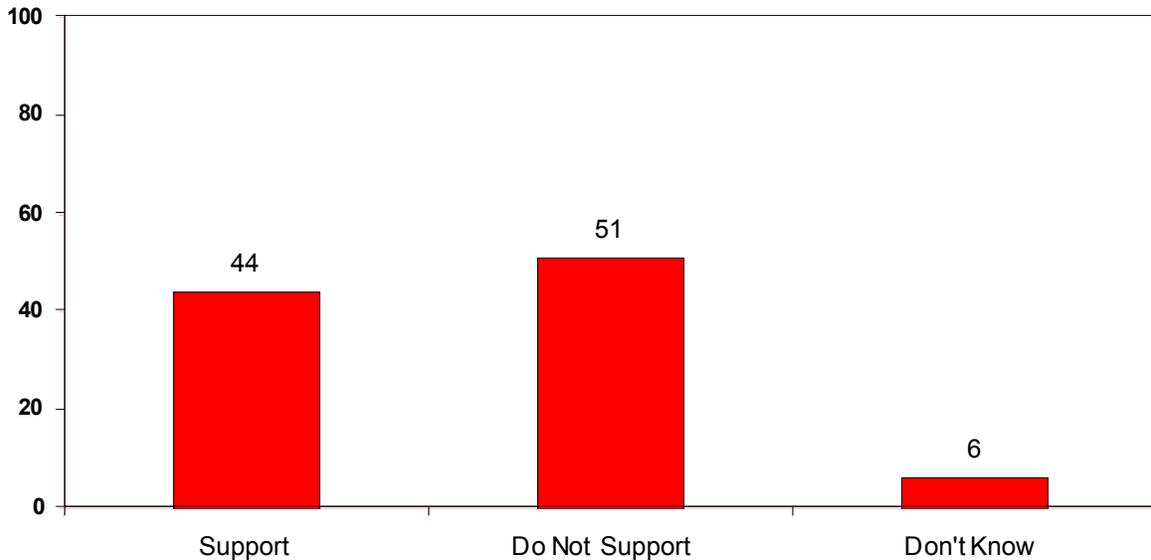
For recreational programs, currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and user fees, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Creating additional income through growth and business development



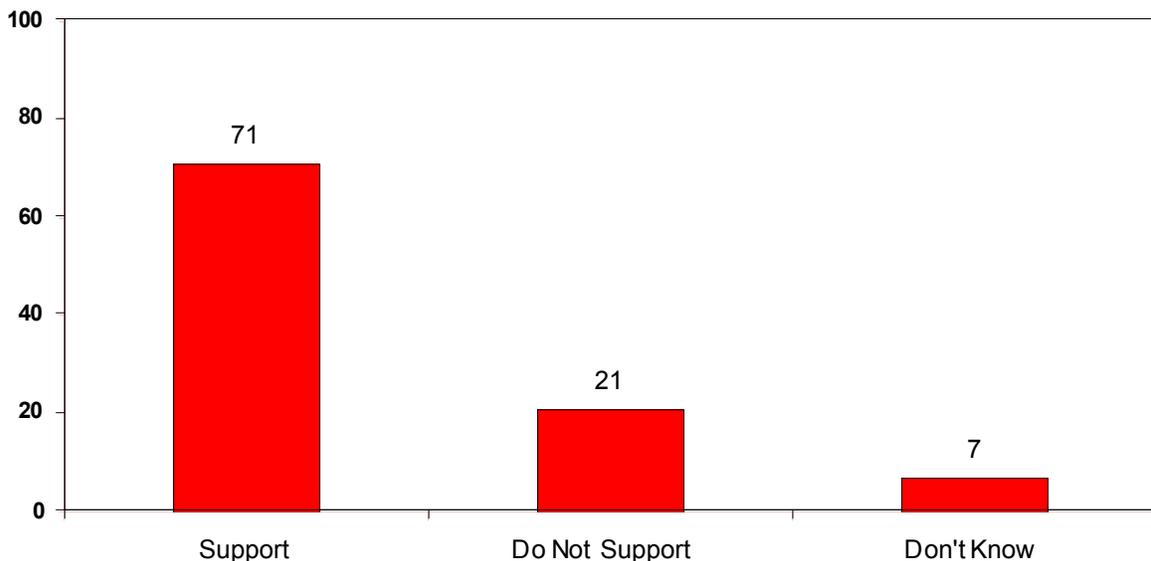
For recreational programs, currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and user fees, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Reducing service levels



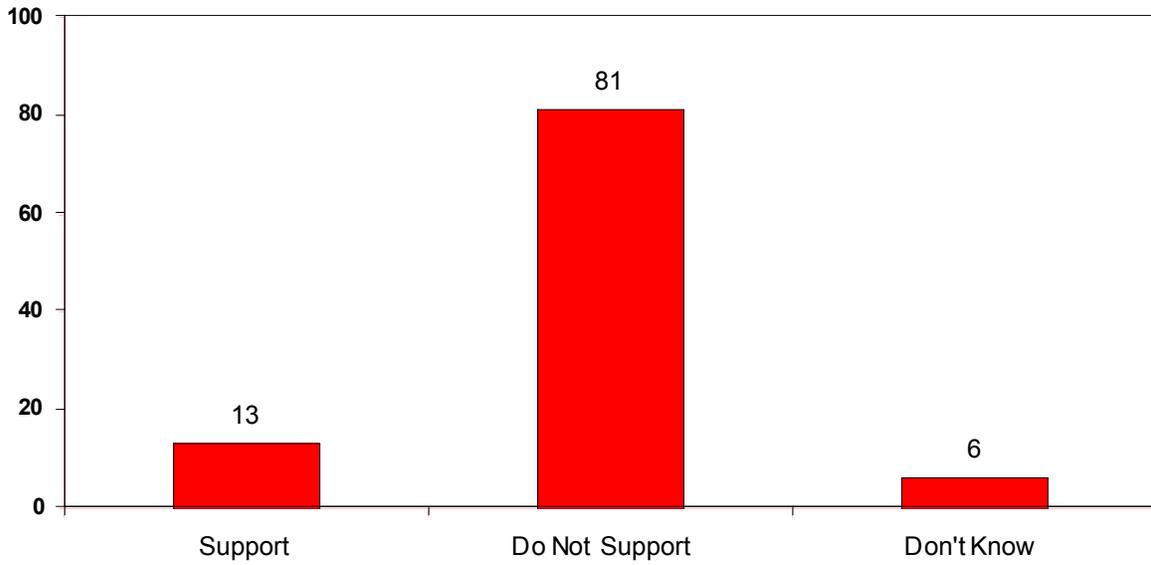
For streets and sidewalks, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek



For streets and sidewalks, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Creating additional income through growth and business development



For streets and sidewalks, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you generally support or not support?
Reducing service levels

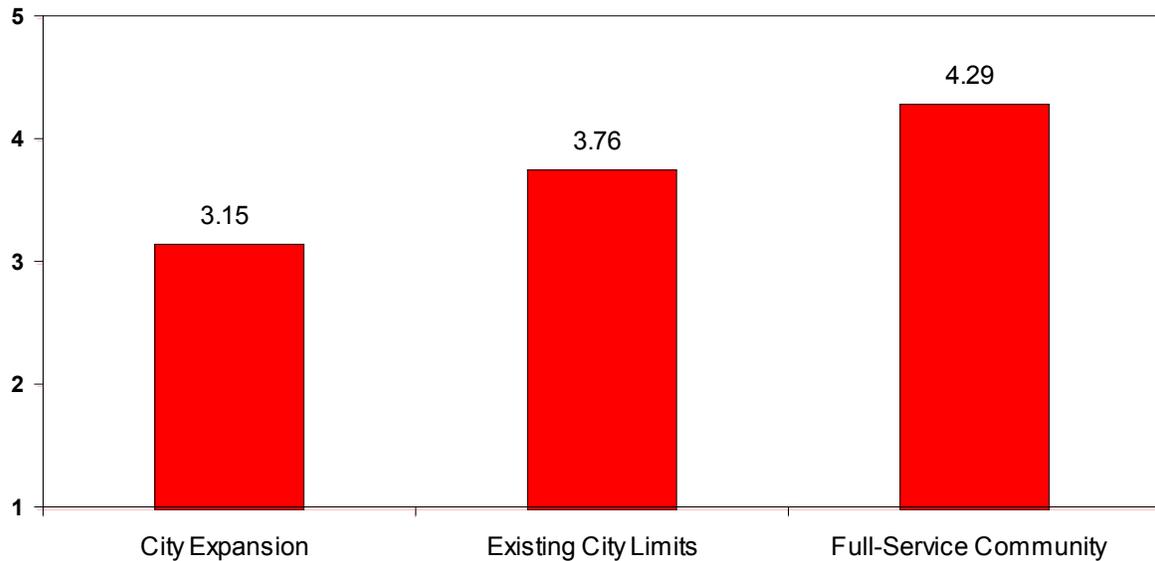


Section 4 - Strategic Direction

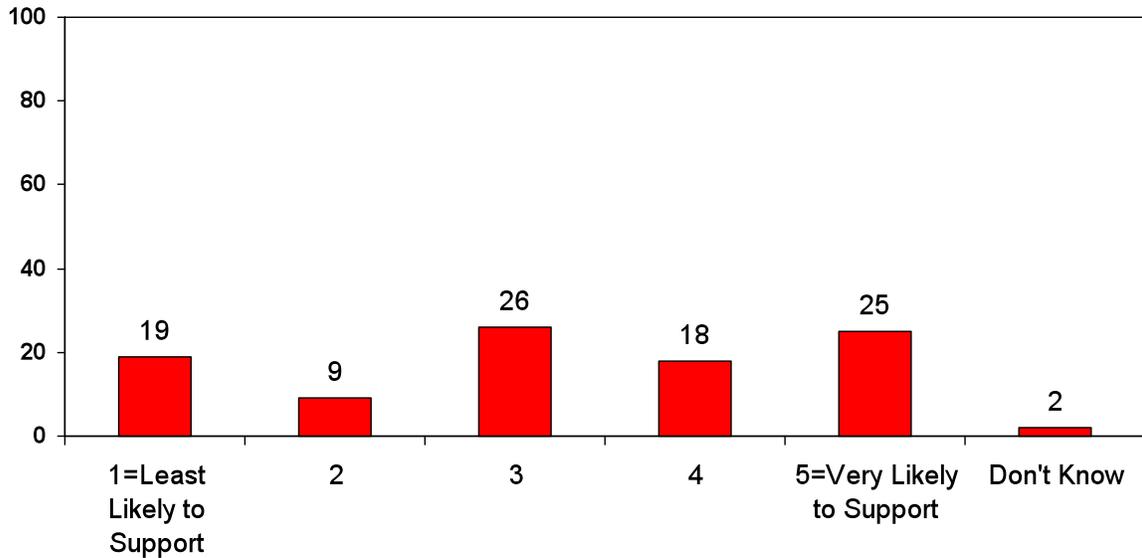
The final main section of the questionnaire presented three policy-level strategies offering potential to address the City's long-term fiscal health. For each, respondents were asked to indicate their relative level of support, where 1 = "least likely to support" and 5 = "very likely to support." In general, respondents favored growth occurring as infill rather than as geographic expansion, and that creating a more full-service community with mixed uses and a compact form was desirable. Growth through annexation was not preferred by survey respondents.

Average scores for named actions are provided below, with individual rankings supplied on subsequent pages.

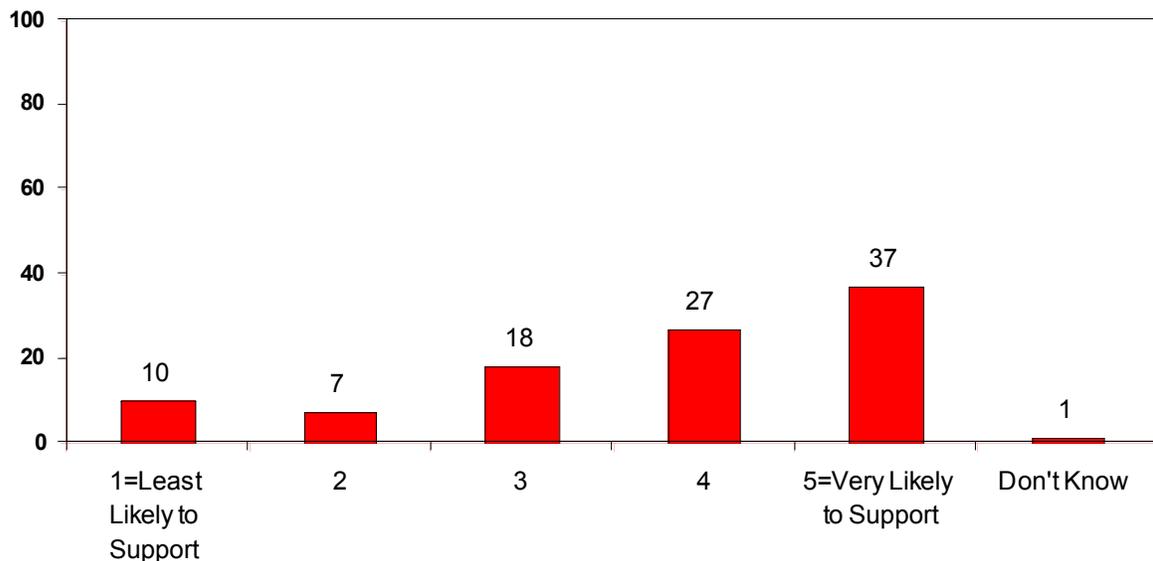
All Actions: Average Ratings



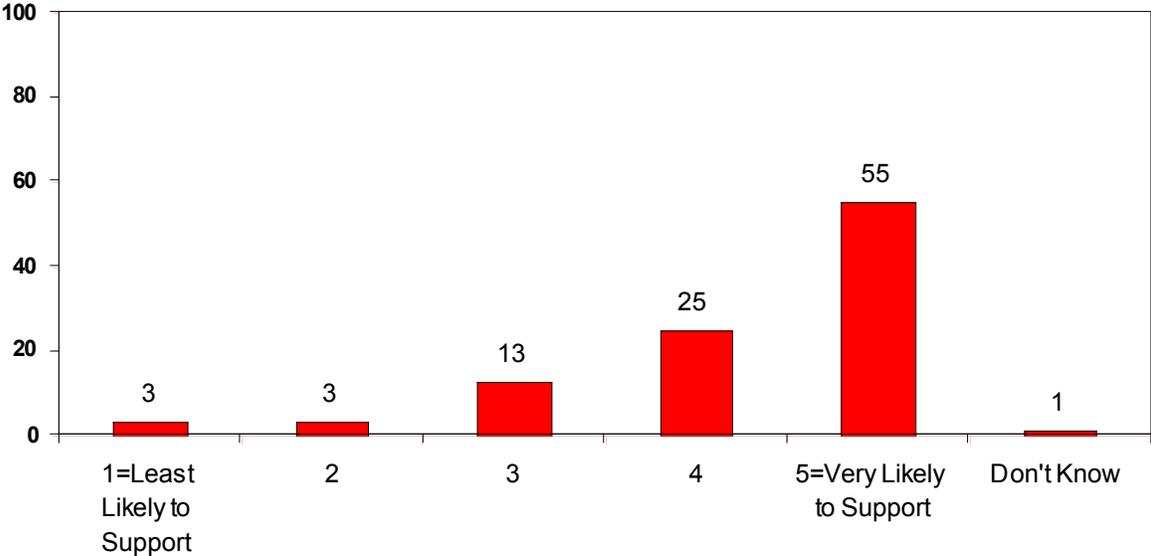
Recognizing that all actions include trade-offs,
please indicate your level of support for each of the following:
Encouraging growth through city expansion, including annexing
unincorporated areas within the city's urban growth area



Encouraging growth within existing city limits, including support for
development of new mixed-use centers similar to town center



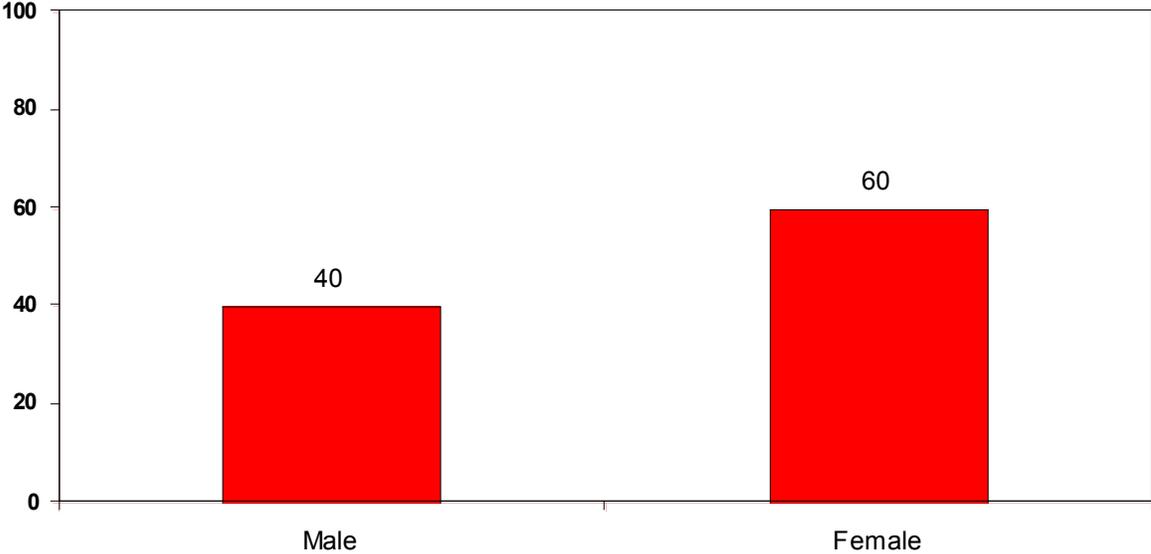
Working to make Mill Creek more of a full-service community,
keeping more retail, service and business dollars in town



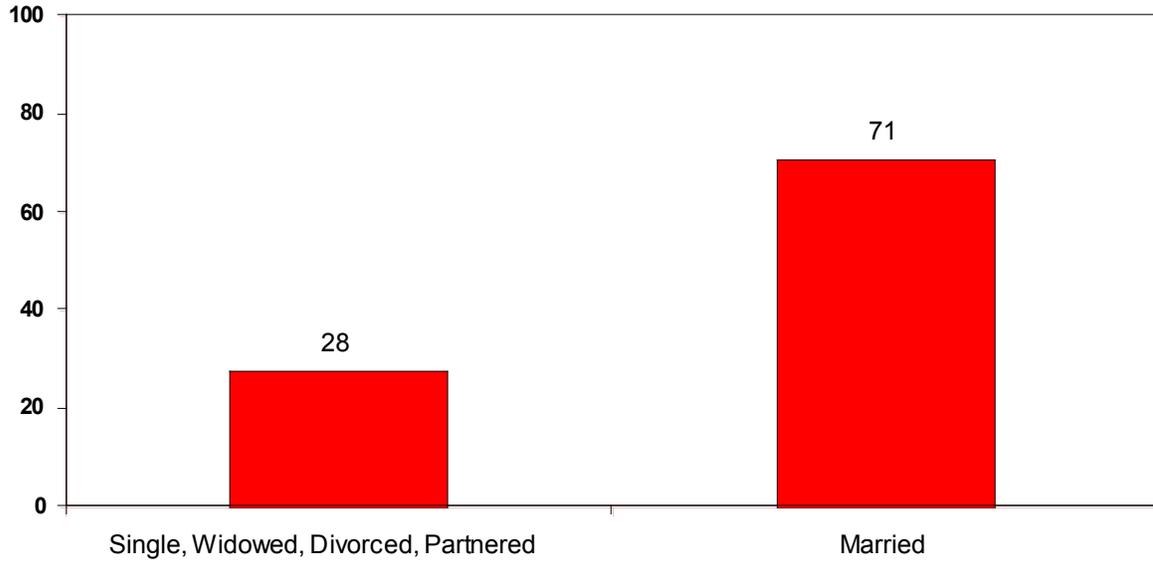
Section 5 - Demographics

The survey also included rather standard questions regarding respondent demographics. The results in this section are generally consistent with the 2010 Census results for adults over 21.

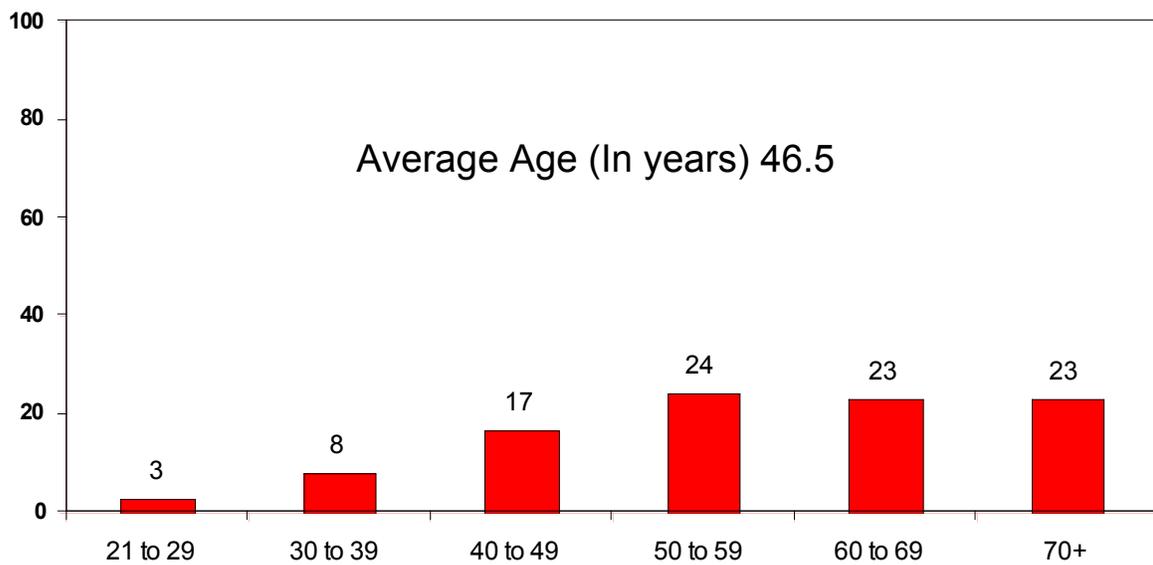
Gender



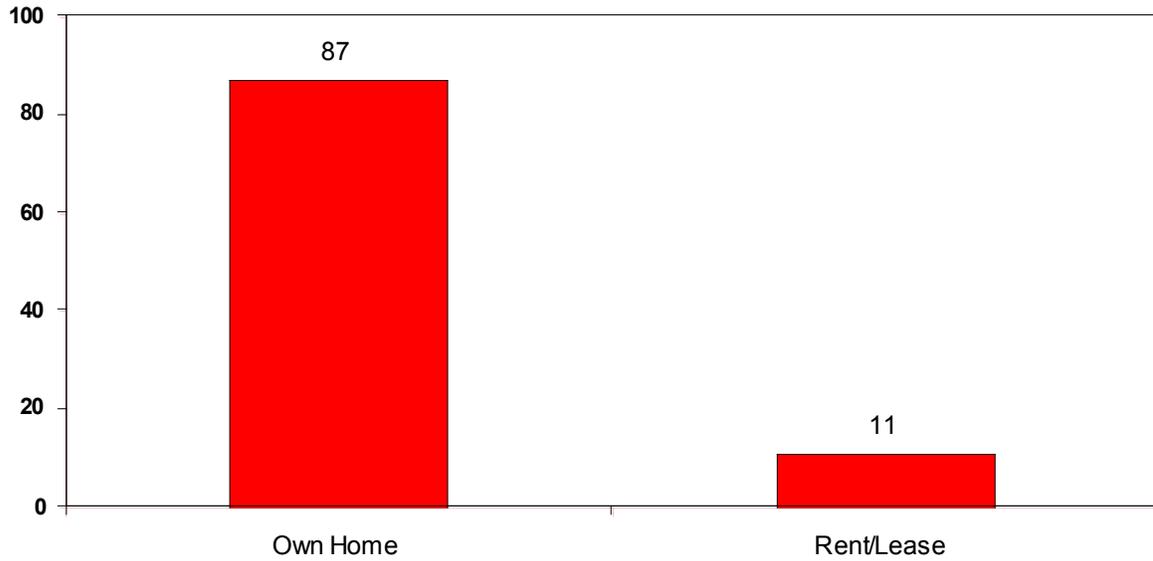
Marital Status



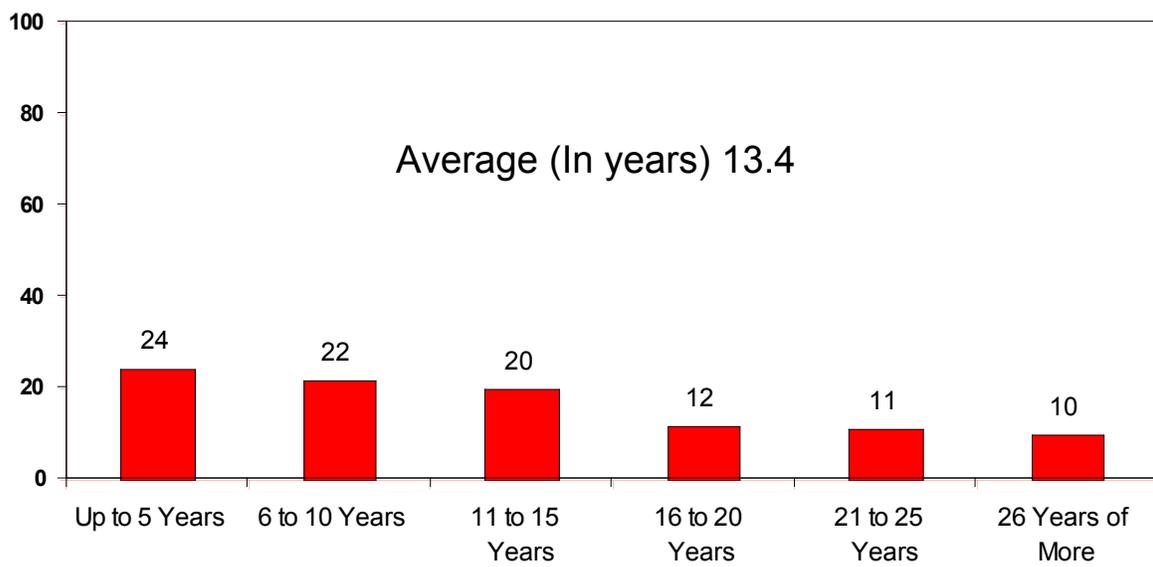
Age Group



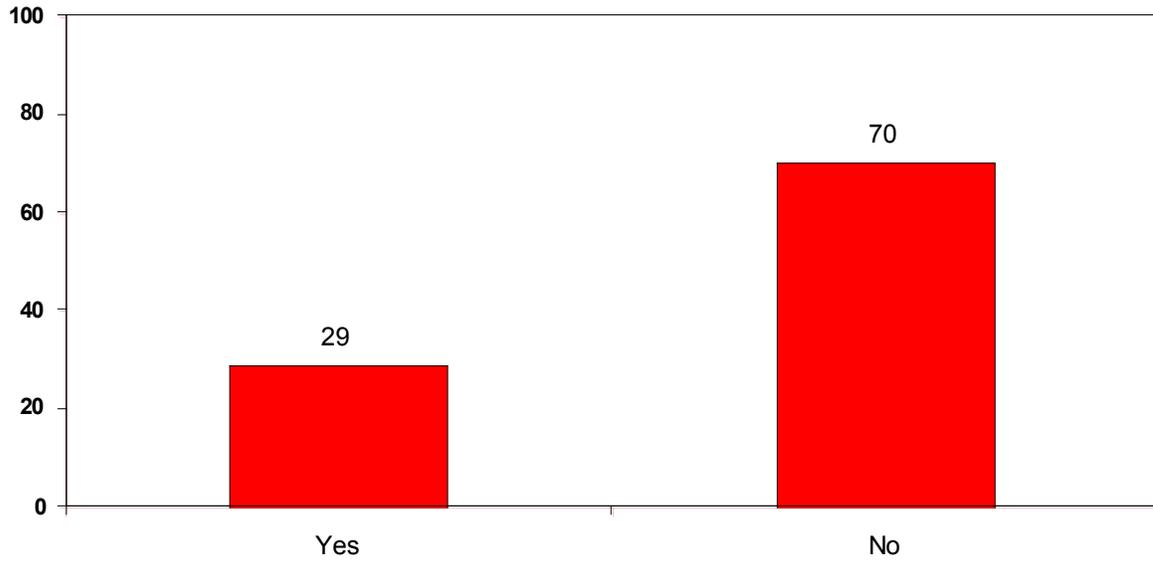
Housing Status



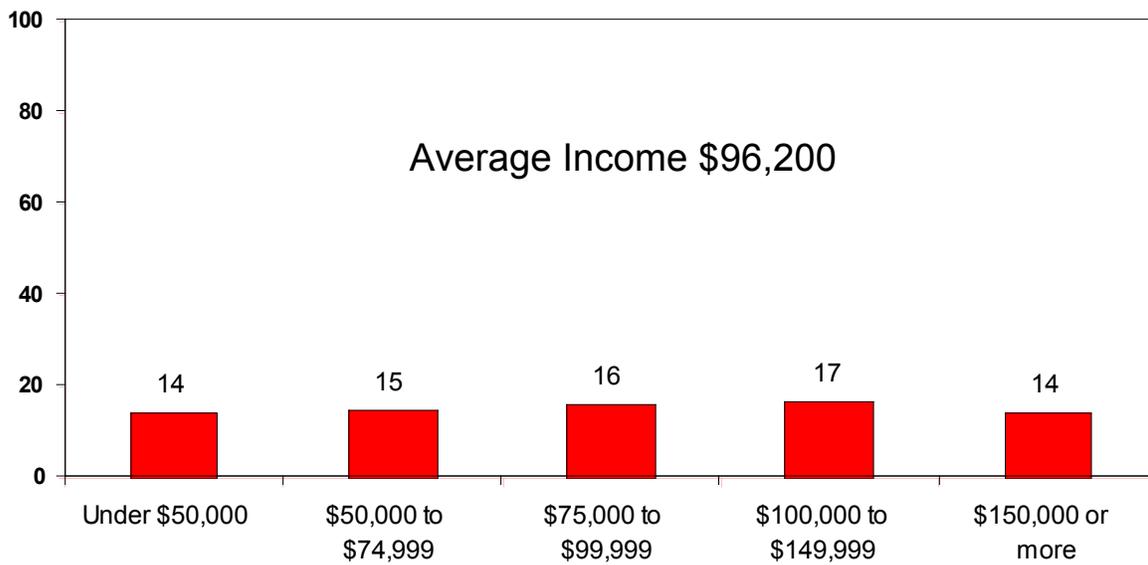
Length of Residence



Children At Home



Combined Annual Household Income



**City of Mill Creek
Strategic Plan Resident Telephone Survey
Draft Questionnaire – V4
June 28, 2011**

Introduction:

Hello, this is _____ with GMA Research in Bellevue, Washington. We are calling on behalf of the City of Mill Creek to conduct a short survey on community priorities, levels of satisfaction with City services and related topics.

May I speak with (name from list)?

Yes

No/Not present (indicate we will call back at another time)

(Re-introduce if needed)

Community Vision:

Q1. This first set of questions concerns things many have said they appreciate or want to see more of in Mill Creek's future. Thinking long-term, please rate each of the following on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means "Lowest Priority" and 5 means "Highest Priority" in terms of how important this is for the future of Mill Creek.

- A. Continuing Mill Creek's safe, "small-town feel".
 - a. If rating of 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- B. Maintaining Mill Creek's high development standards, ensuring that the City is a "cut above" what might be expected elsewhere.
 - a. If rating of 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- C. Maintaining Mill Creek's high environmental standards, ensuring that the City's natural beauty is retained or enhanced.
 - a. If rating of 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- D. Maintaining a walkable community where people stroll during their leisure hours and have opportunities to interact with others.
 - a. If rating of 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?

City Services: Satisfaction

The next set of questions concerns services currently provided by the City and which represent the largest share of the City's budget.

Q2a. Thinking of a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means "Least Satisfied" and 5 means "Most Satisfied", rate your level of satisfaction with the following:

- A. Police services.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- B. Parks and recreation facilities
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- C. Recreational programs, including pre-school, youth, adult and senior recreation programs.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- D. Streets and sidewalks, not including private roadways or those under state jurisdiction.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?

Q2b. Are there any services you would like to see the City provide that it doesn't today? (Probe – if asked for example, say "like farmers market")

Other Public Services: Satisfaction

This next set of questions concerns services currently provided by the County or by local districts, and not by the City of Mill Creek.

Q3. Please rate your level of satisfaction for each on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means "Least Satisfied" and 5 means "Most Satisfied".

- A. Fire protection services, provided by Snohomish County Fire District 7.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- B. Transit services, currently provided by Community Transit of Snohomish County.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- C. Educational services, including elementary, middle and high schools operated by the Everett Public School District.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- D. Library services including Mill Creek, Library currently provide by the Sno-Isle Library System.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?

Service Revenue: General Options

The City of Mill Creek has a long-standing commitment to high-quality, cost-efficient and sustainable services, but projected costs have leaders concerned about the best way for the City to keep service levels high. Of the following basic strategies, which might you support for the services provided by Mill Creek.

Q4a. For police services, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you *generally* support or not support.

- A. Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- B. Creating additional income through growth and business development.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- C. Reducing service levels.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support

Q4b. What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider?

Q5a. For parks and recreation facilities, currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and rental fees, which of the following do you *generally* support or not support.

- A. Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- B. Creating additional income through growth and business development.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- C. Reducing service levels.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support

Q5b. What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider?

Q6a. For recreational programs currently supported by local property taxes, sales taxes and user fees, which of the following do you *generally* support or not support.

- A. Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- B. Creating additional income through growth and business development.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- C. Reducing service levels.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support

Q6b. What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider?

Q7a. For streets and sidewalks, currently supported by local property and sales taxes, which of the following do you *generally* support or not support.

- A. Raising fees or taxes to businesses and residents of Mill Creek.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- B. Creating additional income through growth and business development.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support
- C. Reducing service levels.
 - a. Support
 - b. Do not support

Q7b. What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider?

Future Growth

The next set of questions concerns ways Mill Creek could grow in the future which will have some fiscal impacts to the City.

Q8. Recognizing that all actions include trade-offs, please rate your level of support for each of the following. Think of a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means “Least Likely” to support and 5 means “Very Likely “ to support.

- A. Encouraging growth through City expansion, including annexing unincorporated areas within the City’s urban growth area.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- B. Encouraging growth within existing City limits, including support for development of new mixed-use centers similar to Town Center.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?
- C. Working to make Mill Creek more of a full service community, keeping more retail, service and business dollars in town.
 - a. If rating 1 or 2 ask Why did you give that rating?

Demographic/Classification Data:

Thank you. Now just a few questions for tabulation purposes. All information from the survey is confidential and your answers are being combined with others for reporting purposes.

Q9. Record gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

Q10. What is your marital status?

- a. Single, widowed, divorced, partnered
- b. Married

Q11. In which of the following age groups are you?

- a. 21 to 29
- b. 30 to 39
- c. 40 to 49
- d. 50 to 59
- e. 60 to 69
- f. 70+

Q12. What is your housing status?

- a. Own home
- b. Rent/Lease

Q13. How long have you lived in Mill Creek?

_____ (round to years)

Q14. Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q15. In which of the following categories is your estimated combined annual household income before taxes.

- a. Under \$50,000
- b. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- c. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- d. \$100,000 to \$149,999
- e. \$150,000 or more

Closing:

Thank you. That completes the survey.

Q16. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like me to pass on?
(Record)

Thank you very much for your time and thought regarding the future of Mill Creek. If you would like to follow the progress on the strategic plan including results of this survey you can do so by contacting City Hall or visiting www.millcreek-plan.org

Phone survey comments Reasons & open-ended questions

Collected July 01-18, 2011



Strategic Plan

Creating our Vision for Mill Creek's Future

The following are transcribed comments provided by respondents taking part in the Mill Creek Strategic Plan telephone survey, administered between July 1 and July 18, 2011 by GMA Research Corp. based in Bellevue, Washington.

Except for questions regarding ways the City might consider closing revenue and service gaps, survey administrators probed only those respondents who were dissatisfied with elements of city services to elaborate on their dissatisfaction. As a result, the general tenor of the verbatim responses is rather negative. It's important to note that for service questions, very few respondents were dissatisfied (an average of 95% of total surveyed gave scores of "3" or higher), so the written replies, while interesting, represent a small minority of resident opinions.

In some cases, comments include editorial notes placed to aid interpretation, appearing in brackets [].

Section 1: Community Vision

This first set of questions concerns things many have said they appreciate or want to see more of in Mill Creek's future. Thinking long-term, please rate each of the following on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means "Lowest Priority" and 5 means "Highest Priority" in terms of how important this is for the future of Mill Creek.

1A. Continuing Mill Creek's safe, "small-town feel." [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- "All cities to cut budgets."
- "Because it's growing."
- "Because the City has grown."
- "Do not care about it."
- "That is the way I feel."
- "I always think that a city should grow."
- "I am a big city girl, the bigger the better and I don't want a small town feel - I like Paris and Rome."
- "I don't think it is that all important."
- "I don't think it's that important."
- "I don't think that it has a small town feel."
- "I don't think that it has a small town feel."
- "I don't think that it's a big deal."
- "I'd like to see Mill Creek grow."
- "Just is not important to me."
- "It doesn't make any difference to me."
- "It has only been a small town for a couple of years, and it will not stay that way."
- "It is already beyond 'small town.'"
- "It is fine like it is."
- "It should not be kept as a small town."
- "It's already a small town."
- "Maybe because I don't care whether they grow or not."
- "The economy is bad and I say growth is good."

- *"The new Town Center gives it more enhancement so we need another Town Center like that."*
- *"Traffic."*
- *"We don't feel that it has a town feel now."*

1B. Maintaining Mill Creek's high development standards, ensuring that the City is a "cut above" what might be expected elsewhere. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because development is not important to me by where I live."*
- *"Because I believe the City is going to grow. You can either make good or bad. It's in the hands of the City."*
- *"Because I didn't really want to live in that upscale neighborhood."*
- *"Because it has deteriorated over the years."*
- *"Because [other communities] think that [Mill Creek is] too snooty."*
- *"Cities need to cut budgets."*
- *"Do not care."*
- *"Fine like it is."*
- *"I don't like their projections for the gateway."*
- *"I don't want it to turn into a big city - I don't want more development."*
- *"I would like to see more affordable housing here."*
- *"It is more of a status thing that it not that important to me."*
- *"Making standard higher costs us more."*
- *"Needs to lighten up."*
- *"No more traffic."*
- *"Residential and business areas should not be the same."*
- *"That is the way I feel."*
- *"Too picky - should allow builders to have some leeway."*

1C. Maintaining Mill Creek's high environmental standards, ensuring that the City's natural beauty is retained or enhanced. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"As far as priorities, if you maintain a high standard, then you are protecting the beauty of Mill Creek as you go and develop."*
- *"Because."*
- *[Respondent has a property that has lots of trees that he can't take down.]*
- *"Because I think that the environmental movement is not real."*
- *"Because they are cutting too many trees."*
- *"Enjoy what is done now."*
- *"I think in this economy there are better ways to beautify the area - I think the environment and beautification are two different things."*
- *"If there's a tree on my property, I should have the right to cut it down without their permission."*
- *"It's OK as it is."*
- *"Making sure that they don't cut down too many trees."*
- *"Not important to me."*
- *"Not important to me."*
- *"There is [already] too much emphasis on 'green.'"*
- *"They already spend too much time on environments."*
- *"This has changed - beauty is not the same [as environmental standards]."*
- *"Tired of environmentalists."*
- *"We need to cut budgets."*

1D. Maintaining a walkable community where people stroll during their leisure hours and have opportunities to interact with others. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because I don't live close to that area. I can't take advantage from where I live."*
- *"Because I don't walk around and talk to people."*
- *[Respondent doesn't walk anywhere.]*
- *"I don't think that is a high priority."*
- *"Not a walker."*
- *"Personal priority."*
- *"They're moving into commercialism too fast."*
- *"We need to cut budgets."*

Section 2: City Services

The next set of questions concerns services currently provided by the City and which represent the largest share of the City's budget. Thinking of a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means "Least Satisfied" and 5 means "Most Satisfied", rate your level of satisfaction with the following:

2A. Police services. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because I feel that they do a lot of nothing. They should be putting their efforts toward more useful and important stuff."*
- *"Because there unprofessional and harass a lot."*
- *"Because they don't respond enough in a timely manner and they ignore small problems."*
- *"Because I've had to call the police a couple of times and they seem like rookies."*
- *"Do not believe in public safety."*
- *"Harassment by police for firecrackers."*
- *"I don't think that we get any communication what's going on crime wise. You have to hear it from your neighbor. They don't keep you aware of the dangers going on with the crimes going on."*
- *"I see fewer policeman now than when I used to years ago."*
- *"Negative publicity and inappropriate actions by officers/officers."*
- *"No meaningful police work."*
- *"Not empathetic nor cooperative."*
- *"Not happy - [they] do not enforce important traffic laws."*
- *"Not well trained."*
- *"Police don't police my area at all -but used to when there was drug activity across from my home."*
- *"The police sold me out to the US government."*
- *"Theft in my part of town is out of hand and nothing is being done about it."*
- *"They don't respond as well as they could with ticketed trailers and they have not done anything. I see them sitting around a lot and I don't see them doing anything."*
- *"They need to treat people with more respect."*
- *"Things that are annoying."*
- *"When asked for someone to come talk to Cub Scouts, they wouldn't."*

2B. Parks and recreation facilities. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because the City sold property to Gold Creek Community Church, and they should of kept it."*
- *"Because I hardly see any."*

- *"Because of the baseball field, which is too small, poorly designed and [has] no parking, and because of the skate park, which is in a bad place and wastes time and energy - manage it better so kids don't get hurt."*
- *"Because the way our parks department is set up, we don't have anything for lacrosse or football - no fields."*
- *"Because they don't take as good care of the parks as they used to."*
- *"Because they need to partner with other cities for access for more fields etc., and to develop existing owned land."*
- *"Comparatively, they need more ball fields and tennis courts."*
- *"Don't use that much."*
- *"Don't use."*
- *"I don't see any progress in that area - Mill Creek has had a lot of opportunity to turn land into parks and they haven't."*
- *"I don't think that they offer enough for senior citizens."*
- *"I don't use them."*
- *"I think it's over-emphasized. All you hear is sports for children [yet the] City Council failed to step up and helping fund a senior center."*
- *"I think we should have way more playgrounds for kids."*
- *"I'd like to see more of them."*
- *"Lacking in quality of parks."*
- *"More accessible, more parks, better hours."*
- *"Not enough of them."*
- *"Not important."*
- *"On the corner of Bothell Way and 164th they built a park, but there are very few if any parking spaces."*
- *"The facilities are outdated."*
- *"The parks are really small."*
- *"The people in the neighborhood need to help keep the area clean."*
- *"There aren't any really - haven't built any parks for our kids to play in."*
- *"There aren't very many."*
- *"They are not as good as some other cities."*
- *"They are not maintained - (Blue Park and Cherry Park)."*
- *"They don't do anything for the seniors. They focus mainly on the youth."*
- *"We are more directed to Bothell for those activities."*

2C. Recreational programs, including pre-school, youth, adult and senior recreation programs.
[Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because I don't use them at all."*
- *"Because the offerings are inefficient and sub-par."*
- *"Because there is nothing for the seniors."*
- *"Because from what I've seen, offerings aren't great."*
- *"City has no business - parks are not a legitimate function of government."*
- *"Do not care."*
- *"Do not use."*
- *"Do not use."*
- *"Haven't seen much - difficult to find."*
- *"I don't have any kids and it's irrelevant to me."*
- *"I don't partake in any of those."*

- *"I don't see much of it."*
- *"I don't see the importance of it as far as rankings go."*
- *"I don't think that the community is doing that much."*
- *"I don't use any of them."*
- *"I just don't think that they're doing enough for their senior services."*
- *"Lack of exposure...not senior and don't have kids at home anymore."*
- *"Not a good senior center."*
- *"Not as good as other cities."*
- *"Not aware of very much."*
- *"Not enough activities - not made known."*
- *"Not important."*
- *"Not involved."*
- *"Not sure of any programs I would participate in."*
- *"They are not letting people know what levels of satisfaction they have. No information available to the public."*
- *"They are not that well publicized."*
- *"They don't have the kind of stuff my daughter is interested in."*
- *"They don't really provide services across the board and its too expensive. In a catch 22."*
- *"They have no senior center."*
- *"They really don't have any senior programs."*
- *"Too heavy an emphasis on senior programs and youth programs, poor advertisement and variety."*
- *"We don't have a senior center."*
- *"We pay a lot of taxes for after school programs, and most of the kids play in the street which is not monitored, and I don't think they spend their dollars appropriately."*

2D. Streets and sidewalks, not including private roadways or those under state jurisdiction.
[Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Crumbling cement on center planters - in Highlands."*
- *"Do not improve unincorporated areas."*
- *"I am not very concerned about this."*
- *"I don't feel the City maintains the walkways, like overgrown plants and streets."*
- *"I don't think that they sweep the streets."*
- *"I don't think there's enough sidewalks in the area."*
- *"I have a road near me that is a giant pothole and there is nothing being done about it. It's between 132 and 135th. Close to the border where Mill Creek ends."*
- *"I live in an annexed area and they haven't put sidewalks in yet. They haven't kept up with the annexed area either."*
- *"I live by a small greenbelt that is not kept up."*
- *"Lots of places don't have sidewalks."*
- *"Not being kept up as much as in the past."*
- *"Roads just are not up to my standards."*
- *"Seems to waste a lot of money."*
- *"Sidewalks have gaps and if you are not careful you can trip on them."*
- *"Some areas are poor to walk along and we don't have crosswalks."*
- *"There's room for improvement for street maintenance."*
- *"They can do a better job at fixing sidewalks."*
- *"Too many roads and not enough sidewalks."*

- *"We don't have very good sidewalks in our neighborhood."*

2E. Are there any services you would like to see the City provide that it doesn't today? [All replies to "yes" response]

- *"A better senior center. The facility is very poor."*
- *"A bigger library."*
- *"A bigger library and more parking. More accessible."*
- *"A bigger library, more non-traditional grocery stores."*
- *"A bigger library."*
- *"A city center with a pool."*
- *"A community center."*
- *"A decent senior place to go."*
- *"A flea market."*
- *"A full time community senior center."*
- *"A good senior center."*
- *"A good senior center."*
- *"A larger recreation area in Mill Creek so that our children don't have to go elsewhere for sports. And perhaps a little more diverse shopping."*
- *"A movie theater."*
- *"A movie theatre at the Town Center and a kids playground at the Town Center."*
- *"A movie theatre.a public swimming pool."*
- *"A park."*
- *"A pool or water park."*
- *"A program to control traffic on 164th."*
- *"A real senior center and a bigger library."*
- *"A real senior center in Mill Creek."*
- *"A really good senior center."*
- *"A senior center."*
- *"A senior center."*
- *"A senior center in downtown Mill Creek."*
- *"A senior center on the free property that is being provided to the city."*
- *"A soccer field down by the bus park and ride."*
- *"A teen after school center with homework or computers and to have parties from the City or County and this would keep them from smoking and drinking where they can meet others and not get into trouble."*
- *"A walkway built between Mill Creek Boulevard to the Town Center."*
- *"Adult recreational services, i.e. more tennis courts."*
- *"American people to answer questions."*
- *"An adequate library with much more space."*
- *"Artist market."*
- *"Be much better about the art program. Business-wise it is terrible doing business here, because I tried to donate a bench to the city and I could not get one person to accept the donation - nobody at city hall would accept the donation."*
- *"Better bus service."*
- *"Better care of all the plants."*
- *"Better cell phone reception in the Mill Creek community is drastically needed."*
- *"Better compliances to established covenants. More proactive support regarding the covenants."*

- *"Better or more crosswalks. Make it safer with more crosswalks."*
- *"Bicycle lanes more friendly [onto] side streets. When coming from Mill Creek on 164th Street, turning right is super dangerous."*
- *"Bring back the Mill Creek fair, a Mill Creek dog show."*
- *"Build the senior center."*
- *"Building for senior citizens."*
- *"Bus service for seniors."*
- *"Check all street lights to see if they are working."*
- *"Cinema."*
- *"City community center, senior center for seniors."*
- *"City paper shredding service."*
- *"Clean the salmon ladder where the creek is, its so dirty and gross."*
- *"Community calendars would be helpful."*
- *"Community center for indoor sports."*
- *"Community center that provides programs for the youth and seniors alike."*
- *"Community festival."*
- *"Concerts in the park."*
- *"Courteous clerks in the city building."*
- *"Cracking down on the fireworks on the 4th of July. be a little stricter about cars parking on the roadway and illegal street bikes."*
- *"Disaster preparedness programs."*
- *"Drop-off for toxic waste."*
- *"Enhanced/better police services."*
- *"Expand area of DART coverage to cover all of Mill Creek."*
- *"Expand the Mill Creek sports park."*
- *"Expanded recreational and learning opportunities for seniors."*
- *"Farmers market."*
- *"Farmers market."*
- *"Farmers market."*
- *"Farmers market."*
- *"Farmer's market."*
- *"Farmer's market."*
- *"Farmer's market."*
- *"Farmers market and a bigger library."*
- *"Farmer's market and something special for holidays like a parade, etc."*
- *"Farmers market around the Town Center."*
- *"Farmer's market, community garden, more awareness on environmental cost of maintaining our lawns."*
- *"Farmers market. Bring the Mill Creek festival back. Build a park by the Town Center."*
- *"Farmers markets - I would like that. I would like to see [provision of space] where people could grow a garden - like by 4' by 4.' People could grow their own vegetables to teach kids, educate children."*
- *"Fences facing Seattle Hill need some care or replacement."*
- *"Fire department including paramedics."*
- *"Golf course and a flex car service."*
- *"[To] have a senior faculty."*
- *"I am satisfied with what we have."*
- *"I highly rank the medical and firemen crew. It's for retirees."*
- *"I wish we had a bigger library and a movie theatre."*

- *"I would like to have another library."*
- *"I would like a move toward non-toxic [impacts]...we as a community should use more organic than chemicals for lawns."*
- *"I would like to see a bigger senior center to provide more services."*
- *"I would like to see a farmers market. Organize special days about educating people about things like earthquakes and fires. Emergency situations."*
- *"I would like to see light rail to get you to downtown Seattle. That is for the future and people here are too dependent on their cars. I grew up in Europe and I would love to see that here."*
- *"I would like to see senior housing that is affordable."*
- *"I would like to see some recreational [facilities] that are not sports oriented...like a movie theater. Could show old movie and art."*
- *"I would love to see a senior citizens building where the community can do things."*
- *"I'd like the city to provide space for farmers to have their own market."*
- *"I'd like to see a little more signage for downtown. They have to search for the Town Center."*
- *"I'd like to see an overpass that goes over Everett-Bothell highway."*
- *"I'd like to see some of my friends and the senior center and the city start a commission with those who are disabled to help the disabled. We have a lot of homeless people."*
- *"I'd like to see them have a full recreational center. And then more recreational programs."*
- *"Improved parks."*
- *"Improved senior services and an annual cleanup day."*
- *"Improving sidewalks and lights."*
- *"Indoor tennis courts."*
- *"It would be nice if we had more local fairs or parades or more community celebration events."*
- *"It would be nice if we had our own address like Sammamish."*
- *"It would be nice to have more things for high school kids, such as summer camps, including basketball camps. Science programs for high school kids in the summer."*
- *"It's a comfortable and the yards are beautiful."*
- *"Jobs for needy."*
- *"Knitting classes and farmers market."*
- *"Larger senior center building."*
- *"Less stringent regulations pertaining to tree removal and overall homeowner desires."*
- *"Maybe just more community events that bring people together."*
- *"Mill Creek golf course to be public."*
- *"Monitor drug sales going on by the high schools."*
- *"More bike lanes all around and in and out of Mill Creek."*
- *"More community activities."*
- *"More community classes-like self defense classes."*
- *"More community type of programs."*
- *"More compost facilities."*
- *"More composting options."*
- *"More cooperation between the City and senior centers."*
- *"More crosswalks."*
- *"More education on bullying in the schools, and less urban sprawl."*
- *"More efforts toward hunters' and sportsmen's education."*
- *"More flexibility in taking down more trees."*
- *"More garbage receptacles by the bus stops and have more in the residential areas like apartments and condos near high density residential and commercial properties."*

- *"More involvement with the senior center. I think the city needs to control more of the runoff water."*
- *"More landscape maintenance/fewer security patrols to save money."*
- *"More maintenance concerning grassy areas."*
- *"More painting of traffic lanes."*
- *"More parking around the sports park."*
- *"More parking at Freedom Field."*
- *"More parking at the library."*
- *"More parks."*
- *"More parks and recreation. I would like to see more money put into that."*
- *"More parks. And maintain the parks they already have, and more for kids."*
- *"More police."*
- *"More pre-school options with extended care; toddler classes."*
- *"More preschool programs."*
- *"More programs catering to single people."*
- *"More programs for kids."*
- *"More recreational facilities, like a multi purpose recreational facility."*
- *"More recreational opportunities for teens/informal sporting activities."*
- *"More senior programs."*
- *"More senior services."*
- *"More services for youth, such as more athletic fields. Would like more parks."*
- *"More street sweepers in the neighborhoods."*
- *"More trails."*
- *"More walkways in newly annexed areas."*
- *"More upkeep on city property. Lawn mowing, weed cutting."*
- *"Move senior center closer to swim club."*
- *"Another multi-use sports park - we are lucky for Freedom Field, but we would really benefit with another of the same quality."*
- *"Nature walks."*
- *"Need [to be more] biking friendly. Have more lanes for bikes."*
- *"Need to get more help on the playgrounds."*
- *"North border of Mill Creek would like to have the grass cut."*
- *"Not enough post offices- I have to drive close to four miles."*
- *"Patrol speed limits better."*
- *"Patrolling houses when people go on vacation."*
- *"Pea patch hasn't been done yet - would like for it to be done."*
- *"Promote downtown resident living."*
- *"Recycling center and farmers market."*
- *"Restraint on spending."*
- *"Seminars pertaining to retired or widowed individuals. If the city could have references."*
- *"Signs placed in areas where parking is too tight (like on my cul de sac) More regulation on the parking in the Mill Creek Highlands south area - is where I live. Yellow strips along curb saying no parking would help too."*
- *"Snow cleaning."*
- *"Snow plowing."*
- *"Snow plowing in winter."*
- *"Snow removal."*
- *"Spaces free of blackberry bushes. Landscaping upgraded."*
- *"Speed bumps on Mill Creek Boulevard."*

- *"Spend more on education."*
- *"Stop wasting money on street lights."*
- *"Take better care of the green areas - the weeds are too long and thick in public areas."*
- *"The curbing in the city is disintegrating onto the roadway."*
- *"The foliage by the stop signs need to be cut."*
- *"The light needs to be flashing at Village Green and Mill Creek Boulevard."*
- *"The Sno-Isle library is small and they don't have many books there and the children's section is sparse."*
- *"The street that runs through Mill Creek be a pedestrian mall with no cars."*
- *"The streets in Mill Creek are getting bigger and harder to manage. Some of the large trees should be trimmed for winter time."*
- *"There's no programs for people in their 30's to seniors. Mill Creek newsletter [seems to only] talk about programs for kids, young people."*
- *"They could get rid of their noise ordinance so the school could have a marching band."*
- *"They dropped the speed limit on 164th that becomes Sunset Highway to 25 mph, which is much too slow; the City Council voted this speed limit in even though only 36 people asked for it."*
- *"They need something like having an arborist to choose the colors. They should require Benjamin Moore colors and they should approve [a color palette]. Color match to historical colors - less tacky."*
- *"They used to provide flowers on all the major Mill Creek intersections."*
- *"They're trying to make it another Mill Creek Town Center."*
- *"To have a 4th of July festival."*
- *"To have a driver drive around for community watch."*
- *"Town Center needs to do more advertising for the stores/shops. Flower pots put back instead of the flag."*
- *"Traffic light coordination."*
- *"Trolley service."*
- *"Would like to have the city furnish the flower baskets."*

Section 3: Services by others

This next set of questions concerns services currently provided by the County or by local districts, and not by the City of Mill Creek. Please rate your level of satisfaction for each on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means "Least Satisfied" and 5 means "Most Satisfied".

3A. Fire protection services, provided by Snohomish County Fire District 7. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Acrimony - bad working relationships within that department."*
- *"Because of the strong-arm tactics - the unions made it sound like we would be under dire straits if we did not hire lots more men. We added more firefighters at a large cost - a million dollars - but did not improve services."*
- *"Because they just had a huge tax increase."*
- *"I am in the gray zone - they have been trying to eliminate services within my area along with trying to eliminate paramedics. My taxes went up to provide these services, but they were never delivered."*
- *"Illegal chicanery involving vote and contract."*
- *"Last time I called they took long time to come."*
- *"We paid for 9/11 services and they don't have extra people there."*

3B. Transit services, currently provided by Community Transit of Snohomish County. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"[Lack of] availability."*
- *"Just based on my experience."*
- *"Because buses don't go where I need them to go."*
- *"Because I just don't think that the mass transit or bussing is as user-friendly as in other areas."*
- *"Because it's too expensive."*
- *"Because many buses run empty."*
- *"Because our transit system in Western Washington is not worth even talking about. It's a joke. Also I voted for the rail system up to Everett and now they're changing – it's going to be a rail bus system."*
- *"Because the route 412 is being cut - would like to see this not stopped."*
- *"Because the services are ineffective. We need light rail."*
- *"Because there is not enough bus service. Also it's not frequent enough. You can't really get anywhere."*
- *"Because there's not that much transit service."*
- *"Because they don't provide bus service on Sunday. They don't have any bus service to the Northgate transit center."*
- *"Because they're not mindful of their finances. The agencies don't seem to work well together."*
- *"Difficult to make transfers."*
- *"Don't use it. Its not handy for me at all."*
- *"Hours have been cut - fewer busses and they're packed. Hours are not good. The bus doesn't travel as far/have fewer busses traveling further. You can't get around this area without a car."*
- *"If you can't get to the park and ride you are in trouble. If you are older and can't walk around you can't get to the park and ride."*
- *"I am not that familiar with it. [Information] Not published."*
- *"I don't think it is adequate."*
- *"I don't think that there's enough busses to get where you want to go."*
- *"I don't think they have a good transportation service."*
- *"I don't think they're that accessible to get other areas without taking a lot of buses."*
- *"I don't use community transit and I once tried to ride the bus and it didn't work."*
- *"I don't use it myself and don't see many vehicles around."*
- *"I just don't understand the transit system. There needs to be direct routes to Seattle and Bellevue, Everett."*
- *"I pay [for it, but] will never use it."*
- *"I think that the busses are too noisy. They go too fast."*
- *"I would like to see more transit service on 132nd. It just seems like nothing is convenient."*
- *"It is only 2 busses and no busses on weekends."*
- *"It is real hard to get from Everett to downtown Seattle. You have to transfer twice. I don't know how it is today."*
- *"It took me two or three busses to get to the airport."*
- *"It's not as reliable as it needs to be. I think that a lot of people choose not to use public transportation [because it's] out of their reach."*
- *"I've never used it."*
- *"Long bus rides - too long."*

- *"No busses come close to me."*
- *"No real transit service close to me."*
- *"No Sunday service."*
- *"Nobody really rides it."*
- *"Transit takes money from people, and there is no bus service on Sundays."*
- *"Should have Sunday and holiday service."*
- *"The bus schedule is terrible."*
- *"The busses are almost always empty in our area and it is ineffective."*
- *"There are not enough bus stops."*
- *"There are not enough stops in our area."*
- *"There aren't a whole lot of bus routes."*
- *"They're not frequent enough."*
- *"They discontinued their Sunday service."*
- *"They don't have a lot of busses in our neighborhood."*
- *"They have cut service."*
- *"There needs to be accessibility. It is less expensive for me to drive than to take a bus. We need [better] access."*
- *"They stopped the route on our street."*
- *"They travel with empty busses - too much waste - there shouldn't be any busses."*
- *"They're not using them much."*
- *"Too far to catch a bus."*
- *"We have lousy transit in our City – for example, Portland has great transit."*
- *"We need more transportation. Nobody uses it because it's not very good."*
- *"Because it's really expensive. During the weekdays, number 105 is always late."*
- *"Because they've cut out a lot of bus services on Sunday."*
- *"There's not a lot of bus service to the community."*

3C. Educational services, including elementary, middle and high schools operated by the Everett Public School District. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because from my understanding. Mill Creek's schools don't measure out versus similar community schools. Based on State-wide statics."*
- *"Because I'm very dissatisfied with the school district."*
- *"Because of all the drug problems at Jackson high school."*
- *"Because of higher expectations."*
- *"Because the schools here do not provide anything that would help my family here. My son attends private school because they could not provide."*
- *"Because their classes are over-sized [and they] cut back on teachers. Not enough schools for kids. Classes in portables. Kids have to walk half a mile to get to the schools and to get to the busses. The curriculum on math has low scores."*
- *"Because there is not good transportation."*
- *"Government schools have failed."*
- *"Has two kids in the school district that's not up to quality."*
- *"I am generally dismayed with the public school system."*
- *"I do not like our public school system so we now home school."*
- *"I don't have children and it is not important to me."*
- *"I don't think that the high school is well run; the educational standards are not as high as they should be."*

- *"I have a daughter with developmental disabilities and their special education services need to be more proactive and transparent."*
- *"I'm just unhappy with all the cuts to the schools and I think that they should have some charter schools and more options for kids."*
- *"I'm in a different district - want to be in Mill Creek's."*
- *"Lack of locker room control."*
- *"Mill Creek's schools have better programs for the kids."*
- *"My kids are in the schools and I see a lot of improvements that could be made. I am not happy with the way they are spending their money."*
- *"Need more parental involvement/social classes."*
- *"Need more teaching."*
- *"Need to bring Bible and prayer back, and not immorality."*
- *"Need to teach more on what's going on in the world today."*
- *"Not enough special education services/more education on bullying."*
- *"Not very efficient with their money."*
- *"Our school system stinks - we spend lots of money, but schools are not maintained. We have poor education and poor maintenance."*
- *"Overcrowding in the classrooms."*
- *"Public schools are a joke."*
- *"Schools need better programs."*
- *"Schools were not responsive to needs."*
- *"Significant disparity of what teachers say is done and what's actually done in the schools."*
- *"The school system is very lacking; not enough programs for bright kids."*
- *"The schools near me are not that great."*
- *"The teachers are more concerned with themselves than with the students. There is room for improvement."*
- *"They have far too many people employed."*
- *"They need to accept us. I'm in the Mukilteo school district, even though we live in Mill Creek."*
- *"Too much focus on sports, not basic education."*
- *"We are not meeting international standards."*
- *"We home school our kids, and a lot of services are not available for us."*

3D. Library services including Mill Creek, Library currently provide by the Sno-Isle Library System.
[Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because its really too small and not enough resources."*
- *"Because of insufficient parking, the library is very small for Mill Creek's population."*
- *"Because they need a new library. It's too small."*
- *"Because we have a very small library and small book selection."*
- *"Books at the library are minimal in terms of selection."*
- *"Great staff, excellent job working with resources available, but library is too small and barely any parking. Needs to be bigger."*
- *"I use it all the time, and it's not adequate in size and [has] inefficient parking. The staff is good and everything you ask for you get, but is not user friendly now."*
- *"I wish that it was bigger compared to the other Snohomish libraries."*
- *"Inadequate - too small."*
- *"It is too small and crowded."*
- *"It is too small due to the population."*
- *"It's a small library and they pay lots of access for it. The location should change."*

- *"It's terrible. They could have a nicer library."*
- *"It's too small for the area."*
- *"It's too small. High demand - too small."*
- *"It's very inconvenient to get into the library because there's no parking. And then when you get in, there's not that many choices."*
- *"It's very small, and [has a] lack of choices."*
- *"Library too small."*
- *"More parking at libraries would be good. Larger libraries."*
- *"No use for libraries anymore."*
- *"Not enough parking in their lot."*
- *"Not many books – [and it's] overcrowded."*
- *"Not very many materials available."*
- *"Our library compared to other libraries around the area, it's a very small library. They don't have wide selection of programs versus other libraries. The parking is not the best. Our City can do better."*
- *"Poor parking."*
- *"That library is too small."*
- *"The City has a tiny library that is inaccessible."*
- *"The facility is too small."*
- *"The library is too small."*
- *"The library is way too small."*
- *"The Mill Creek library is not user friendly."*
- *"The parking is horrible, but the library is fine."*
- *"They need more space for the library."*
- *"Very small and limited selection of books."*
- *"Well it's a small library. But technology is taking over. They can order library books on a Kindle."*

Section 4: Service revenue options

The City of Mill Creek has a long-standing commitment to high-quality, cost-efficient and sustainable services, but projected costs have leaders concerned about the best way for the City to keep service levels high.

4A. [Following basic revenue strategy option questions] What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider for Police services?

- *"A good fine dining steakhouse."*
- *"A private foundation of some sort."*
- *"A property or sales tax would be fair."*
- *"A special levy maybe."*
- *"A special levy or bond."*
- *"Absolutely no traffic cameras!"*
- *"Accountability for expenditures."*
- *"Adding businesses."*
- *"Advertising."*
- *"Allow gambling, legalize and tax marijuana."*
- *"Annexing."*
- *"Annexing other areas that are unincorporated and adding them to Mill Creek because they use all of our facilities anyway."*

- *"Anything but raising taxes."*
- *"Anything but taxes."*
- *"Bake sale."*
- *"Bake sales."*
- *"Basically, just try to attract more business."*
- *"Be more productive."*
- *"Better management."*
- *"Better use of technology -including cameras."*
- *"Better utilization of existing resources."*
- *"Bring in other businesses."*
- *"Bringing in new business. There's a lot of space in town Center and in the City. You could bring outside business owners to the Town Center to see what a great City it is - have someone be in business development for the City."*
- *"Budget cuts to other areas."*
- *"Business development projects."*
- *"Business growth."*
- *"Can the County help out at all as far as funds go?"*
- *"Change their budget allocations."*
- *"Charging people who call with faulty fire alarms."*
- *"Continuation of Town Center."*
- *"Cost savings."*
- *"County partnering for funding as well as considering grants."*
- *"Cut City government. The City should not be impervious to economic conditions."*
- *"Cut costs."*
- *"Cut unnecessary spending."*
- *"Cutting some weights in their budgets."*
- *"Decreasing some of the frivolous things."*
- *"Development fees, mitigation fees."*
- *"Eliminate flowers near the country club on Village Green Drive."*
- *"Eliminate the planning department in it's entirety."*
- *"Examine all cost-cutting opportunities for police services."*
- *"Federal grants - combine or partner with County."*
- *"Fees for infractions."*
- *"Fees for non-residents usage - say of library."*
- *"Fees or permits for events."*
- *"Fees or taxes/usage fees."*
- *"Fine smokers."*
- *"Freezing salaries and reducing benefits."*
- *"Fund raiser/auction."*
- *"Fundraising from the community."*
- *"Fundraisers."*
- *"Fundraisers."*
- *"Fundraisers and events to raise money."*
- *"Fundraisers or a meet-and-greet. Allow the people of Mill Creek to know who's protecting them."*
- *"Fundraisers."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising, donations, etc."*
- *"Further expansion and development."*

- *"Get businesses in Mill Creek that would draw people - like Trader Joe's."*
- *"Get rid of the Police Department and let the county [provide services]."*
- *"Go to local businesses and ask them to write off some money to help people, including local hospitals. This depends on the income level of people."*
- *"Good fire protection."*
- *"Grant funding."*
- *"Grants."*
- *"Having more business interest."*
- *"Higher fees for traffic tickets."*
- *"Higher taxes."*
- *"Hire more police officers."*
- *"Hold off on taxing until the economy gets better."*
- *"I do think some services can be doing a lot to save money."*
- *"I don't have another means."*
- *"I don't know of any other way except taxing and I do not want to pay more taxes."*
- *"I don't know - growth?"*
- *"I think they should create some community concert vendor. We need to have an event center that creates money."*
- *"I would support a sales tax but not a business tax."*
- *"I would support more taxes."*
- *"If more shops in the Mill Creek Town Center were to grow, then the revenue would be there. It really needs to grow. It's too small."*
- *"If they would fill up their empty spaces with businesses then they would have more income."*
- *"I'm willing to pay more property taxes for police."*
- *"In previous towns they've had fundraisers."*
- *"Increase a tax on liquor stores."*
- *"Increase in sales tax."*
- *"Increase in sales tax/bump in property taxes. Bump in business taxes."*
- *"Increase property taxes."*
- *"Increase revenues where possible."*
- *"Increasing license fees and fines for parking."*
- *"Invest in money that they already have or that's in slush funds. Have more volunteer programs for the community."*
- *"Just access or vote on a levy."*
- *"Just cut the personnel level."*
- *"Just grow the businesses."*
- *"Keep administration simple and small as possible. And don't hire any planners and studies."*
- *"Local people paying higher taxes."*
- *"Local taxes on small items."*
- *"Long-term tenants like a big box store would help."*
- *"Looking at alternatives to our own services/doing away with Mill Creek Police Department and contracting with the Sheriff's Department, and maybe doing away with the Fire Department."*
- *"Looking at the budget and re-directing costs."*
- *"Looking at the budgets and figuring out what can be cut, etc."*
- *"Lower the administrators salaries."*
- *"Matthew 6:33."*
- *"More accountability in the use of money. The way they use it. Washington doesn't seem to be accountable."*
- *"More business in the area."*

- *"More business, so there would be more tax money."*
- *"More community festivals and interaction supporting businesses."*
- *"More efficient operation."*
- *"More green industry."*
- *"More income by raising taxes - I have seven homes and I don't mind paying more taxes for teachers, policemen and librarians. We've got to raise taxes on the wealthy, and I want my children to have what I have. I will stay, and will keep paying taxes."*
- *"More merchants."*
- *"More parking spaces for business [in the] downtown area."*
- *"More police officers."*
- *"More small business."*
- *"More speeding tickets."*
- *"More speeding tickets."*
- *"More stores for east gateway - revenue from that."*
- *"More taxes."*
- *"Movie theater."*
- *"Old-fashioned fundraisers."*
- *"Commercial development."*
- *"Other federal grants they could get."*
- *"Paying more taxes."*
- *"People and businesses are taxed to death - the Police Department needs to stay within their budget and not increase any taxes for businesses and property because we cannot afford it. If you raise my taxes I would probably go to another community to buy groceries and not give Mill Creek my business. Obama is a crazy nut."*
- *"Promote more business to create jobs."*
- *"Property tax."*
- *"Raise fees for licenses. More for bus service."*
- *"Raise taxes on apartment complexes."*
- *"Raising sales tax."*
- *"Raising taxes."*
- *"Reduce services with those in housing, welfare."*
- *"Reducing staff."*
- *"Run of the Mill/other fundraisers that are helpful to the community."*
- *"Sales tax, property tax."*
- *"Seek another opportunities - to patrol football games or moonlight in another state - that would be fine too."*
- *"Selling off some of its property."*
- *"Senior citizen protection from increases in taxes but taxes raised on others, as in California proposition 13."*
- *"Sin taxes, higher gas tax."*
- *"Small manufacturers, [we] need producers. We only have services such as medical and restaurants and small amount of retail stores."*
- *"Some type of Internet gambling."*
- *"Special assessments."*
- *"Special levies for designated services (for police)."*
- *"Stop annexation. No more, it's already too much."*
- *"Street fair events."*
- *"Taking out some municipal bonds."*
- *"Tax increases."*

- *"Tax luxury items, tax cigarettes. Tax alcohol and taverns. Put tax on people with bars. People drive drunk and improve chances of killing someone. Also property can be damaged."*
- *"Taxes and donations. I think that they could collect more fines."*
- *"Taxing alcohol and tobacco."*
- *"Taxing the businesses that have the shops - the marijuana shops."*
- *"The business owners could pay more taxes."*
- *The cable keeps raising their fees - Comcast has a contract with City of Mill Creek. The City is not doing much to keep the cost down."*
- *"The policemen could get out there cars and patrol the area."*
- *"There is a lot of speeding going on. Police could increase revenue by enforcing speed limits."*
- *"They can do fundraising."*
- *"They can do special fundraisers and events and cut costs and be prudent."*
- *"They need to put a city tax and charge more for services rendered."*
- *"They should be able to advertise it a little better."*
- *"Ticketing people speeding and running red lights."*
- *"To continue to develop businesses, [increasing] the sales tax income."*
- *"To pass a one tenth sales tax."*
- *"To raise the ordinance fees here."*
- *"Traffic cameras at all intersections."*
- *"Trim the budget on non essential services but do not affect police or fire."*
- *"Try raising revenue through sin taxes or fees, or generating revenue through smart lighting on city streets which saves money and electricity also maintenance. Saving money through enhanced efficiencies like hybrid electric cars, compact electric in all city buildings - there is always money to be generated through process improvements like administrative or city vehicle maintenance or other money-saving methods that improve efficiency."*
- *"Try to attract retail businesses that add to tax base. There are now too many rules on businesses that chase out businesses that might come to Mill Creek - if you want a sandwich board out front, it needs to be built by a certain company at a large expense which chases businesses out."*
- *"Use money more wisely."*
- *"User fees."*
- *"User fees."*
- *"User fees and reducing services."*
- *"Volunteers are available. Younger generations could volunteer work to learn and grow."*
- *"Yard sale - charges for everyone who is selling."*
- *"Tourism."*

4B. [Following basic revenue strategy option questions] What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider for parks and recreation facilities?

- *"A small fee to use for parties, etc."*
- *"A small user fee for using it - or fundraisers."*
- *"A tax base where everyone pays and not just a few."*
- *"A user fee for the parks like a BMX park - there is Freedom Field and it is a lovely park - keeping it maintained and available then they should charge a fee."*
- *"A user fee would be appropriate."*
- *"Accountability for choices."*
- *"Additional fees for usage."*
- *"Again, business development."*

- *"Again, cutting expenses and be prudent to what they are spending money on - look at fundraisers without raising taxes for everybody."*
- *"Again, cut costs."*
- *"All the organizations that are using the parks etc., the fees are really low and they can raise fees and not just an overall tax for everybody."*
- *"Allow and charge a fee for larger signs."*
- *"Allowing other profit based organizations to run at Mill Creek recreational activities."*
- *"Allowing rental of park property."*
- *"Apply for grants."*
- *"Attract retail businesses that people will shop at and generate sales taxes."*
- *"Baseball or soccer - charge them fees and others like football - should pay for upkeep of our parks."*
- *"Be happy and live within their budget and cut expenses."*
- *"Be more efficient."*
- *"Better management."*
- *"Better utilization of existing resources."*
- *"Beyond saving money through efficiencies - irrigation water wasting, don't waste fuel on things that tax payers have - no waste."*
- *"Big fundraiser in the park to bring people in and have most of the revenue go towards bettering the parks."*
- *"Bring in new business, broaden tax base."*
- *"Bringing more outsiders into Mill Creek with festivals or activities."*
- *"Budgeting priorities - people first."*
- *"Build more homes and businesses."*
- *"Charge a higher fee."*
- *"Charge for use of facilities."*
- *"Charge the people who use it."*
- *"Charge usage fees at parks."*
- *"Charging for the use of the facility."*
- *"City employees could take a one percent - or more - decrease in pay."*
- *"City of Everett charges more - I would support non residents to be charged."*
- *"Control their advertising signs."*
- *"Cut overhead."*
- *"Cut the salaries of the officials who make too much money that they are not earning. Senior citizens did not get a raise, so why should the officials?"*
- *"Do prioritizations on the services and belt-tightening."*
- *"Dog owners donate time to park clean up."*
- *"Donations."*
- *"Donations."*
- *"Donations or modest fees for events."*
- *"Encourage business growth."*
- *"Farmers market."*
- *"Federal funds."*
- *"Federal or private grants."*
- *"Fees for park use under certain conditions."*
- *"Fees for personal use."*
- *"Fees for the people who use it."*
- *"Foundation support."*
- *"Fund raisers - volunteering."*

- *"Fund raising."*
- *"Fund raising and donations."*
- *"Fundraisers and community involvement like planting trees."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising activities."*
- *"Fundraising by the people utilizing the parks."*
- *"Get more teams in to participate in athletics that would draw more people to Mill Creek who would spend more money at Mill Creek businesses."*
- *"Getting more box stores and taxing them."*
- *"Grant funding - getting State and Federal economic development monies."*
- *"Grants."*
- *"Group usage fees."*
- *"Having a higher property tax."*
- *"Highway toll."*
- *"Holding more events for kids and charging for it - or ask for donations."*
- *"I guess private user fees."*
- *"I think that it's going to be taxes."*
- *"I think that the people who use it should pay for it."*
- *"If Mill Creek was to grow then the revenue would be there to sustain those areas."*
- *"If they could charge admission for certain events."*
- *"If you want to participate you should pay as you go. They should take into account how many retirees they have in the City."*
- *"Increase non resident fees for parks and recreation programs and for everything/reduce employees salaries."*
- *"Increase property taxes."*
- *"Increased access fees and cut spending."*
- *"Increased sales tax."*
- *"Increasing fees for outside organizations with user fees."*
- *"Increasing the fees."*
- *"It's appropriate how it is."*
- *"Just keep things status quo until the economy gets better."*
- *"Keep it the same."*
- *"Lease properties/charging for time spent at the baseball fields. Charge the individuals using the trails."*
- *"Leasing the existing ones that they already have or partnering with the Everett school district and sharing athletic facilities."*
- *"Legalize marijuana and tax it."*
- *"Looking at neighboring cities. Consider a small fee for other city residents to use Mill Creek's parks and recreational facilities."*
- *"Luxury tax for cigarettes, drinking - taxes on bars, taverns. Greater the risk, the greater the taxes. Raise taxes on the wealthy."*
- *"Make the business climate positive."*
- *"Maybe have more volunteers work on them so that they don't cost as much money."*
- *"Maybe they can do some fundraising for the classes they may have. Make a profit on some sort of event. Food for profit at the summer concerts."*
- *"More annexation."*

- *"More equipment for kids/easier access for seniors."*
- *"More facilities."*
- *"More job opportunities and industries."*
- *"More public events."*
- *"More user fees and make it more user oriented/supported by the families in that particular sport or at least supplemented."*
- *"More civic activities for the cause."*
- *"Neighboring jurisdictions. Joint efforts."*
- *"Offering more sports leagues."*
- *"One time fee. Pay \$20 a year to use the restroom plus additional fees for parking services."*
- *"Outdoor theatres and concerts in the park to rent out."*
- *"Outside resident fees higher then regular fees."*
- *"Park fees."*
- *"Parking meters."*
- *"Partnerships with schools or the county, sharing the costs."*
- *"Pay as you use."*
- *"Pay for parking for State parks."*
- *"People who use the sports fields could pay a fee."*
- *"Pick up litter days."*
- *"Possibly user fees, and possibly rent out for the ball games."*
- *"Promote for residents to give money for activities."*
- *"Property taxes."*
- *"Put windmills in Wetland Park, and floor panels in the baseball fields."*
- *"Raising our taxes in any way we can, like on candy, bottled water and all sugar, and on anything that is not good for us."*
- *"Raising the fees slightly on users."*
- *"Raising user fees."*
- *"Re-evaluating their budget and watching how they spend their money."*
- *"Re-budgeting."*
- *"Reduce staff or other services."*
- *"Reduce taxes - 20%."*
- *"Rental space on the fields and parks."*
- *"Rentals for park usage, like reserving picnic areas."*
- *"Renting out facilities and making it fee based."*
- *"Sales tax income."*
- *"Sales tax, property tax."*
- *"Scholarships and generated business revenue."*
- *"Setting up a pay per use process for special events at parks. Fees for some park recreational events. Or setting funds sponsored activities."*
- *"Sin tax for additional revenue."*
- *"Soliciting funds from community to donate."*
- *"Some volunteer services."*
- *"Special fundraisers."*
- *"Special levies."*
- *"Special use fees."*
- *"Street fair events."*
- *"Taxing alcohol and tobacco and casinos."*
- *"The City is overstaffed."*

- *"The City should look at programs that are not being used much and reallocate the money to the more popular programs."*
- *"They can do fundraisers for different kinds to raise money."*
- *"They can put in slot machines - it's fairly harmless."*
- *"They could bring in a full-service recreation center and pool."*
- *"They could charge fees to help people out - I don't know if they have anything fee based."*
- *"They don't collect enough fees for the parks and recreation."*
- *"They need to charge teens who come to town for the ballparks...they need to pay if they don't live here. They need to pay for upkeep of the parks. Also skate parks - those who use it need to pay for it. Charge for parking - for all day parking."*
- *"They need to do more advertising for the City of Mill Creek."*
- *"They need to tap into services for help - Scouts, seniors, Rotary groups and members of the Better Business Bureau."*
- *"Through user fees."*
- *"Ticketing speeding and people running red lights."*
- *"Up to City leaders to come up with plans submit to voters."*
- *"User fees."*
- *"User fees OK."*
- *"User fees for large groups."*
- *"User fees for the parks."*
- *"User fees in the park."*
- *"User fees. Those who want to use services should pay."*
- *"Raise user fees."*
- *"Utility tax fees for things like youth/senior facilities."*
- *"Volunteers. Entertainment where we can go and enjoy it. Build that movie theater."*
- *"Volunteer programs."*
- *"Volunteers to keep the parks clean."*
- *"We need to attract new business."*
- *"Youth fees - charge for use of the baseball fields."*

4C. [Following basic revenue strategy option questions] What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider for recreational programs?

- *"A bond or levy."*
- *"A fee for use."*
- *"A fee system that is structured for people that can afford [user fees] and for people who are unable to afford [user fees] are given a waiver."*
- *"A fee to rent the building; [a fee] to use the classes."*
- *"Accountability for politicians."*
- *"Acquire country club and its assets."*
- *"Add more [increase] preschool and summer camp fees."*
- *"Adding more business. One of the ways to attract people is to have better schools...help to balance the budgets."*
- *"Again, cutting the number of employees."*

- *"Again, just pay as you use."*
- *"Anything they could charge fees for they should."*
- *"Attract high class retail businesses that attract shoppers and add to tax base."*
- *"Be as efficient as possible."*
- *"Be more efficient."*
- *"Better management [of resources]."*
- *"Bring back Walmart Super Center for jobs and taxes that it generated."*
- *"Bring in business, lower taxes."*
- *"Bring in more programs, but I have no specifics."*
- *"Bringing in more hotels/tourism to reap the benefits [of associated taxes]."*
- *"Broaden the tax base and be attractive to new businesses."*
- *"Charge for them. Have day camps for adults and kids; senior citizens [programs] for seniors."*
- *"Charge residents for the usage of the facilities."*
- *"Charge the builders of new development mitigation fees."*
- *"Charge the people who use them."*
- *"Charge users."*
- *"Charitable donations."*
- *"Charitable fundraising events."*
- *"Conserve on energy costs."*
- *"Cut City government."*
- *"Cut costs."*
- *"Cutting down programs that are not popular and not well attended. And, reducing programs that are not popular and well attended."*
- *"Cutting expenses, checking what they can eliminate and decrease, and fund raisers."*
- *"Cutting waste in their budget."*
- *"Direct levies on personal business."*
- *"Donations."*
- *"Each individual paying for their own recreational services that they want to use."*
- *"Enhanced user fees for the people using the service."*
- *"Events and tournaments – like movie night in the park and charge admission."*
- *"Federal or private grants."*
- *"Fees for usage by non-residents."*
- *"Festivals to bring in people."*
- *"[Reallocate funds] from other nonessential services."*
- *"Fund raisers."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising, grants, auctions."*
- *"Get rid of the pay for City Council; [Council work] should be volunteer."*
- *"Grants, user fees and foundations."*
- *"Have family-friendly fundraisers."*
- *"Higher fees for the users."*
- *"Higher user fees."*
- *"Higher user fees."*
- *"Higher fees for recreational activities."*
- *"Hospitality fees."*
- *"I think people who rent houses here should have to pay something because they downgrade our neighborhoods - a renters' fee."*

- *"I think that they should make the cost of those programs more expensive."*
- *"I think they already have a good program."*
- *"I think the City should manage it with fees on the users."*
- *"I would support higher fees."*
- *"Increase fees for the people who use the programs."*
- *"Increase fees of those who use the programs. Look for grants of outside companies to help with money that may be available from outside/global organizations."*
- *"Increasing their fees for residents and non-residents."*
- *"Increasing user fees."*
- *"Individual fees for those who want to use the services."*
- *"Individual user fees being assessed."*
- *"Joint effort."*
- *"Just the same as before."*
- *"Just the same as before."*
- *"Just usage fees."*
- *"Just raise the user fees."*
- *"Legalize and tax marijuana and prostitution."*
- *"Legalizing medical marijuana."*
- *"Liquor taxes."*
- *"Look within and prioritize yourself [the City]."*
- *"Matching funds from the State; also donations."*
- *"Maybe a user fee."*
- *"Maybe greater user fees."*
- *"Maybe higher fees."*
- *"More athletic fields."*
- *"More fees on recreational activities."*
- *"More hands make the workload light."*
- *"More people and businesses."*
- *"More stop lights and make it [Mill Creek] safer. More busses."*
- *"More user fees."*
- *"More user fees."*
- *"Much volunteers like high schools."*
- *[Respondent has] "No more ideas."*
- *"No more growth - it's fine how it is."*
- *"Outside rental of buildings and halls that the City owns - if someone wants to rent a gazebo then there is a user fee."*
- *"Pay to use."*
- *"Participants who want to take advantage of the facilities should pay."*
- *"Pay for use."*
- *"People who don't use them shouldn't have to pay."*
- *"Possibly increasing fees for the users."*
- *"Prioritizing, charge more user fees."*
- *"Private donations."*
- *"Probably a partial pay as you use: In other words, no more free lunch."*
- *"Program fees."*
- *"Promoting the City to draw new business."*
- *"Put the seniors to work with fund raisers."*
- *"Raise fees on non-residents."*
- *"Raise the costs of programs or corporate donations."*

- *"Raise the fees for the people who used the services."*
- *"Raise user fees."*
- *"Raise user fees."*
- *"Raising taxes unless the state provides us extra money for that [recreational programs] but I know they don't have the money for that."*
- *"Raising the fees of the classes."*
- *"Raising the fees of the people who use the facility."*
- *"Recreational classes [should] up the fees for the user."*
- *"Red light cameras."*
- *"Reduce taxes."*
- *"Reduction in senior services."*
- *"Sales tax, etc."*
- *"Should sell excess City property."*
- *"Slot machines."*
- *"Small manufacturing [provides] more job opportunities and introduces more retail. Not many opportunities for young people to work and stay in the community. More jobs [are] needed for the young."*
- *"Special fundraising."*
- *"Stay within budget and lower spending."*
- *"Support for low-income families."*
- *"Support more jobs."*
- *"Tax bigger businesses more or people with higher incomes."*
- *"Tax criminals."*
- *"That is what property taxes are for."*
- *"The City Council whom we have elected should provide that."*
- *"The City should consider qualified user fees based on the ability to pay."*
- *"The users should pay for it [like] pottery classes. We should not be subsidizing them."*
- *"They could finish some of the property that they already own - sports parks they haven't done anything with [for example]."*
- *"They could raise the fees for people using the services."*
- *"They need to cut expenses rather than keep spending."*
- *"They need to gain fees; if they enforce traffic laws they could make a fortune."*
- *"They should be entirely fee-based so the people using pay."*
- *"They should be self supporting."*
- *"They should be self sustaining by user fees."*
- *"They should charge for those classes."*
- *"They should charge what they need and have the people who participate pay for it."*
- *"They should consider sponsorship from outside organizations to off-set the costs."*
- *"They should get a center where they could generate some kind of income. Something different and unique."*
- *"They should have a movie theatre, but there is no room."*
- *"They should increase user fees, not taxes, for the residents of Mill Creek."*
- *"They should increase user fees so the people that use it should pay."*
- *"Ticketing people running in the streets instead of using sidewalk."*
- *"Charge higher fees for people who are involved in the programs."*
- *"To increase the fees for those who use them."*
- *"Usage fees."*
- *"User-based fees, totally."*
- *"User fees."*

- "User fees."
- "User fees, those that use them should pay. Swimming, kayaking - whatever classes they [take] they should pay."
- "User fees."
- "Volunteer work and some way of entertainment to support it."
- "Volunteer programs."
- "We should tax candy, food, alcohol and junk food; also, if we tax the marijuana stores that are next to the liquor stores. We need all our services, so we need to keep paying taxes."
- "Wider variety of activities."
- "Win the lottery - buy tickets."
- "You can't answer [this question] without knowing the budget."

4D. [Following basic revenue strategy option questions] What, if any, other means or sources of revenue should the City consider for improvements and maintenance of streets and sidewalks?

- "15-K run, etc."
- "A run to support streets."
- "A tax on alcohol, tobacco and casinos."
- "A tax on cars."
- "Accountability, better decisions."
- "Add red light cameras."
- "Additional state, county and federal funding."
- "Again, grow the businesses."
- "Again, charge mitigation [impact] fees for sidewalks."
- "Annex more homes to Mill Creek."
- "Ask for a ten-dollar license fee to use paths for bicycles, fees on roads...charge fees."
- "Automobile tax."
- "Be more efficient."
- "Be more selective about who does the work."
- "Become more efficient."
- "Better management."
- "Bond issues."
- "Budget considerations [re-budgeting]."
- "Charge people who use services like the trails and the baseball fields."
- "Community volunteer service."
- "Cut back on waste and bureaucracy."
- "Cut costs."
- "Cut non essential services; more wise use of limited resources."
- "Cutting budget."
- "Cutting superfluous surveys that are redundant and ask five questions instead of fifty."
- "Developer [impact] fees."
- "Development [impact] fees."

- *"Do not hire any more administration. Use the facilities wisely."*
- *"Do not raise taxes."*
- *"Don't do unnecessary changes for businesses that want changes – they [business] should pitch in."*
- *"Eliminate the City Council."*
- *"Enforcing traffic laws."*
- *"Enhanced user fees. Non-Mill Creek residents are using our streets as main arterials, we should get mitigation fees from the County."*
- *"Everything I already said applies."*
- *"Existing revenues/sources."*
- *"Federal grants."*
- *"Federal grants."*
- *"Fire could charge for CPR classes."*
- *"Focusing on business development. We pay enough taxes here and don't need any more."*
- *"Fundraisers."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Fundraising."*
- *"Garden at senior center to sell plants."*
- *"Gas taxes."*
- *"Get more bids than currently get [for public works projects]."*
- *"Get the citizens involved."*
- *"Get together with the other services [providers] so that they don't come along and tear it up right after the City put it in."*
- *"Getting grants."*
- *"Go after the State or Federal government for infrastructure development."*
- *"Go to the State or the Federal government."*
- *"Grants."*
- *"Green industry; encourage volunteerism."*
- *"Have people that rent houses pay a fee."*
- *"Higher gas taxes."*
- *"I think they're pretty favorable."*
- *"I think this is one that can be taxed."*
- *"I would wonder about applying for state grants."*
- *"If the City of Mill Creek worked with other jurisdictions so they could share other responsibilities."*
- *"If we could get more money [from] car tabs."*
- *"Investigate and find out because this is what you're getting paid to do."*
- *"It's just that I'm anti-taxes."*
- *"Just keeping them maintained."*
- *"Keep the same level of maintenance and fees."*
- *"Legalize marijuana and prostitution."*
- *"Legalizing medical marijuana. Hands down, tax it just like you do alcohol."*
- *"Marijuana and the sugar tax."*
- *"Money generated through efficiencies and savings."*
- *"More homes, businesses and people."*
- *"None."*
- *"Not raising taxes."*

- *"Operate a more efficient City government."*
- *"Parking meters."*
- *"Pay to park in Mill Creek."*
- *"Possibly contracting services for operational functions."*
- *"Possibility for offsetting costs by sharing expenses with homeowners associations."*
- *"Prioritizing projects."*
- *"Private grants."*
- *"Put it to a vote."*
- *"Quit grinding up streets before they need to be done. Eliminate the walkway buttons on streets like on a pedestrian lane."*
- *"Raise tax base by attracting good retail businesses."*
- *"Raise taxes for higher income persons."*
- *"Raising a little bit more on gas taxes."*
- *"Red light cameras."*
- *"Reduce taxes."*
- *"Require right up-front that the developers have to put in streets and sidewalks."*
- *"Sales tax, etc."*
- *"See if the transit company (transit provider) can help."*
- *"Should get this from the developers."*
- *"Sidewalk tax."*
- *"Special tax that just pertains to the City. Take all the housing development and make it into one HOA. People would be willing to pay more tax if they got something out of it."*
- *"State and federal grants and scholarships."*
- *"State funds."*
- *"Stop spending so much money, live within the budget and to not raise any taxes for businesses and personal property."*
- *"Talk with [the] State, and no plowing the Bothell-Everett highway."*
- *"Tax renters."*
- *"Tax the builders and those who come in - they need to pay more up front. Also, new employers should pay."*
- *"Taxing electric cars for highways, roads and sidewalks."*
- *"Tell the government to stop spending so much money on weapons of war."*
- *"The City should be responsible for that."*
- *"The City should have the State take care of the shrubs planted; the State owns the median strip. The shrubs are blocking the streets. When you pull out of Town Center you can't see the traffic due to the shrubs. The City doesn't own all of the median strip."*
- *"They could have their own neighborhoods raise money. Like our neighborhood paid for the sidewalks."*
- *"They could probably do a toll."*
- *"They don't need sidewalks."*
- *"They need to look at their priorities."*
- *"Try to attract for business; greater jobs to attract more people and business."*
- *"Use money more wisely."*
- *"User fees."*
- *"Utilize the neighborhood homeowner association to maintain common area sidewalks, streets, etc."*
- *"Walkway overpass."*
- *"We could have some vehicle tax."*
- *"We need to focus on volunteerism - It's a growing and learning thing."*

- *"We pay taxes and they don't maintain sidewalks to the degree that they should."*
- *"Just do what they need to do, but don't waste money on non-essential projects - only necessary ones."*
- *"When a development goes in, they should do the associated road work. Do it with the residential roads."*

Section 5: Future Growth

The next set of questions concerns ways Mill Creek could grow in the future which will have some fiscal impacts to the City. Recognizing that all actions include trade-offs, please rate your level of support for each of the following. Think of a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means "Least Likely" to support and 5 means "Very Likely" to support.

5A. Encouraging growth through City expansion, including annexing unincorporated areas within the City's urban growth area. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Don't need to grow."*
- *"Annexing adds to our responsibilities."*
- *"Because any area annexed has not been established with existing Mill Creek standards - it will change the character of the City."*
- *"Because growth becomes a negative."*
- *"Because I don't believe that we don't need to expand or an annex area."*
- *"Because I don't think it needs to grow as much as it has in the last three years. Our taxes weren't any different."*
- *"Because I don't think we need to incorporate more areas."*
- *"Because I don't want Mill Creek to grow any larger."*
- *"Because I don't want the City to get any bigger and annex more existing neighborhoods surrounding Mill Creek."*
- *"Because I think Mill Creek is a small city, if it was to annex any of the surrounding areas, it would lower my property value."*
- *"Because I think that the City was nicer when it was smaller. Because they are annexing areas that don't live up to the standards of Mill Creek."*
- *"Because I think we are big enough already."*
- *"Because I think we have done enough and a lot of annexing already."*
- *"Because I wouldn't expand our area any further then what it already is."*
- *"Because I'm not in favor of growth."*
- *"Because it costs a lot more money. Bigger is not better."*
- *"Because it spreads the City thinner and not controlled."*
- *"Because it would depend on where they would be annexing; and, [because] we sued to be County and we are annexed now."*
- *"Because of the quality of Mill Creek and unincorporated areas are not going to have the same development [standards] as Mill Creek, such as sidewalks."*
- *"Because there are too many costs for annexations and they never find the revenue to support it."*
- *"Because we were annexed without a vote."*
- *"Because we're big enough."*
- *"Because you expand yourself more thinly by expanding your area of coverage."*
- *"City has grown too far already. Annexing puts a burden on the original people. We don't need to grow more. We have too many apartments."*
- *"The City is big enough - that's your answer."*

- *"Crowded enough; traffic."*
- *"Do not need to make the City larger."*
- *"Do not want higher taxes."*
- *"Do not want more growth."*
- *"Don't want growth."*
- *"Don't need to grow anymore."*
- *"Don't think more homes and people are desirable; streets are already crowded."*
- *"Don't want growth."*
- *"Don't want to incorporate any other areas."*
- *"Don't want to take on other people's problems."*
- *"Eliminate the planning department. City [residents] do not want substandard areas annexed."*
- *"Get too large."*
- *"Grown enough."*
- *"Has lots of empty space around."*
- *"I am fully aware of Mill Creek and it's not the same as non-Mill Creek areas. Values would go down."*
- *"I am in a neighboring district."*
- *"I am not sure where they are looking to annex, and if they are annexing just to put in a huge store, it goes back to wanting to keep it a small community."*
- *"I am very comfortable here and it is perfect and I don't want it to change."*
- *"I believe that there's other ways of raising revenue other than annexing. Consider business growth for revenue."*
- *"I came from a different area. They got too big."*
- *"I don't believe in any more annexation. It changes the character of the community."*
- *"I don't know what's all involved with it."*
- *"I don't know which areas would be annexing; it is too broad of a question and I cannot answer without knowing."*
- *"I don't know which unincorporated areas they are referring to."*
- *"I don't like annexation."*
- *"I don't like the way that they have incorporated some of the areas."*
- *"I don't live in the City limits, and I don't want to be annexed into it."*
- *"I don't (want) Mill Creek to grow any more."*
- *"I don't remember."*
- *"I don't see any value in doing that."*
- *"I don't they need to take in any more."*
- *"I don't think bigger is better. Expansion would be expensive to bring it up to what we have."*
- *"I don't think it's the best way to grow. Gang problems in other neighborhoods."*
- *"I don't think that we can take care of any more people then we already have, I like it small and if they annex would they have the same covenants and rules? That would destroy the neighborhood."*
- *"I don't think that we need to think about expanding."*
- *"I don't think we need more people; we should not compromise our standards by adding people from other areas whose standards are not as high as ours."*
- *"I don't want to annex areas that need lots of improvements."*
- *"I don't want any more annexing done here."*
- *"I don't want it to get any bigger."*
- *"I don't want it to grow any bigger."*
- *"I don't want it to grow too much. Just keep it small like it is now."*
- *"I don't want Mill Creek to get much bigger."*

- *"I don't want our area to be annexed."*
- *"I don't want the City to get bigger."*
- *"I don't want the City to keep getting bigger."*
- *"I don't want to see them annex any other areas."*
- *"I don't want to see the City get bigger."*
- *"I don't want to see the City get bigger."*
- *"I don't want us to grow bigger."*
- *"I feel like we are big enough."*
- *"I have seen the annexing areas and I don't want any more. Some of the areas are not representative of characteristics of what I want in Mill Creek."*
- *"I just don't want the City to get large. I would like to see the City stay small."*
- *"I just think we have enough services."*
- *"I know what expansion entails, and the costs would be too great to the City."*
- *"I like a more small area. I like the quaintness of it."*
- *"I like the City small."*
- *"I like the City the way it is."*
- *"I like the current size of the City."*
- *"I like the idea of keeping it a small town."*
- *"I like the small-town feel of Mill Creek. I don't want a large city."*
- *"I like the way it is right now."*
- *"I like things the way they are."*
- *"I like to keep Mill Creek the way it is."*
- *"I need more information."*
- *"I think as the City gets bigger you have a higher demand on City services with no guarantee of higher tax revenue."*
- *"I think because of the population - traffic is a huge issue."*
- *"I think I like Mill Creek small."*
- *"I think where the City of Mill Creek is, is great. It is nice to have it the way it is."*
- *"I think it is big enough."*
- *"I think it's better to keep it small and exclusive than to have it big."*
- *"I think it's big enough."*
- *"I think it's big enough. They've kept on annexing bits and pieces for years. We've seen this evolve."*
- *"I think that it's big enough now. I think when we expand we inherit other problems too - like an increase in crime."*
- *"I think that it's big enough."*
- *"I think that Mill Creek is big enough."*
- *"I think that Mill Creek is getting diluted out and different areas of Mill Creek are getting annexed in that do not have the same quality of Mill Creek proper."*
- *"I think that they are at their limit now and if they keep on we will become a dirty part of Lynnwood or Everett."*
- *"I think that we are already big enough."*
- *"I think the areas around us are too different than what's within the City limits."*
- *"I think the City is big enough, and enough is enough."*
- *"I think the City is fine how it is. It's already grown too much."*
- *"I think they have annexed enough into Mill Creek and we were annexed years ago and will make Mill Creek too big."*
- *"I think we are large enough, and annexing more territory would take us out of our small-town community; we have grown as much as I would like to see us grow."*

- *"I think we have annexed enough into Mill Creek; when we moved here they said that the property lines would stop here and no more would be annexed. Some of the properties they have annexed into Mill Creek have lowered property values."*
- *"I think we're big enough. Bigger doesn't always mean better."*
- *"I think we've annexed enough property for the moment."*
- *"I want the small town feel."*
- *"I would need to know the parameters."*
- *"I would like to keep the quality of Mill Creek."*
- *"I would not want to see the City expand beyond the current boundaries."*
- *"If its gets too big, it will be more like a city."*
- *"If you included others the schools get over-crowded and less money for schools."*
- *"I'm against any more annexation."*
- *"I'm not that in favor of growth."*
- *"I like the area that we live now. If they can show a gain in resources by expanding, then OK. But right now, we don't have the resources to accommodate a bigger community."*
- *"It conflicts with keeping it small."*
- *"It couldn't be supported without the police and the fire."*
- *"It depends on where the school boundaries would be built."*
- *"It contradicts the small town feel."*
- *"It loses its small-town feel if it grows."*
- *"It's not logical."*
- *"It's too big as it is."*
- *"Just annexed area two years ago - we shouldn't be annexing more."*
- *"Just keep things the way they are. They can afford what they've got now."*
- *"Keep it small and manageable."*
- *"Keep it small."*
- *"Keep the small-town atmosphere."*
- *"We like being unincorporated."*
- *"Like it to stay as-is."*
- *"Like to keep it a small community."*
- *"Lose sense of community."*
- *"Mill Creek has annexed areas that aren't good for Mill Creek."*
- *"Need more specific information."*
- *"Never been a great fan of annexing."*
- *"Nice and quiet 20 years ago, now it is not; it is not what I came to."*
- *"No more annexing."*
- *"No need to grow any more."*
- *"Not a good way to increase revenue."*
- *"Not appropriate now."*
- *"One of the reasons they have budget issues is because they did that already."*
- *"Too packed already."*
- *"Like it the way it is."*
- *"Simply because I don't think it's all that important at this time."*
- *"Size is fine now."*
- *"Stay as is; we're big enough."*
- *"The City is growing too much."*
- *"The growth is too much already."*
- *"The more we annex, the more the services get diluted."*
- *"The town is now big enough."*

- *"They're trying to do this behind our house. And we're at a cal-de-sac."*
- *"There are already too many here – it's too crowded."*
- *"There is not much benefit to annexation of residential areas, but I would support industrial annexation."*
- *"They are growing too fast and losing control over standards of architectural design."*
- *"They can't even keep up; they want to raise taxes and they want to include more areas which they cannot service."*
- *"They can't service the properties well after annexing."*
- *"Things are good as they are."*
- *"Too much growth already."*
- *"Very expensive for the City to do."*
- *"Want [Mill Creek] to stay like it is; exclusive."*
- *"Want to keep the city small."*
- *"Want to keep it small."*
- *"We are as big as we need to be."*
- *"We are at the point of no return - benefits are overshadowed by the costs."*
- *"We are just fine as we are."*
- *"We are stretched too thin already."*
- *"I don't see it getting any bigger."*
- *"We have developed completely."*
- *"We have expanded considerably already."*
- *"We moved to Mill Creek because it was small town and I don't want to see grow."*
- *"We need to control growth."*
- *"We want to be able to walk - I want to walk in the grass and see the trees."*
- *"When you start expanding all you can control is geography. You can't control the neighborhood you want in the City."*
- *"Because they'll just be wanting to build more open space stuff."*
- *"We've grown too much. For a city in the country, it's no longer a city in the country. More apartments bring more crime."*
- *"We've had too much expansion already."*
- *"Where they have annexed they're not managing it well now."*
- *"Where we used to live, we were annexed."*
- *"Would like to see things remain as they are."*

5B. Encouraging growth within existing City limits, including support for development of new mixed-use centers similar to Town Center [Comments from those rating 1 or 2].

- *"A lot of empty stores now."*
- *"Against more growth."*
- *"Anti-growth."*
- *"At this point of the economy we have enough."*
- *"Because I don't really welcome growth, but that's a fairly decent way of doing it."*
- *"Because I don't want any shopping centers in the area – we already have enough."*
- *"Because I know that they are wanting to put in two huge retail stores in pastures - it will bring in more traffic and an influx of people, and I would not want to use the bike trails with my kids and walking the dogs and enjoying our local parks. I would not feel comfortable with all the traffic and people coming through."*
- *"Because I like having it be a small town and I don't want it to be a small city. I like the small town feel."*

- *"Because I think it is extra expense for the City, and there are other facilities where the youth can go like schools, churches and parks."*
- *"Because I think we have enough urban sprawl like Lynwood."*
- *"Because its okay."*
- *"Because of our current traffic impact."*
- *"Because someone was talking about putting a Nordstrom Rack on 132nd Street (buffalo farm area)."*
- *"Because the population is dense enough, and the Town Center has leasing available - maybe 30% - so we don't need to build any more."*
- *"Because there's enough commercialism in Mill Creek already."*
- *"Because they generally constitute trouble; they seem to be a source of difficulty."*
- *"Because we've already expanded and already have a new Town Center."*
- *"Business are here and still closing down and the demographics - people don't have the money."*
- *"Do not need more."*
- *"Don't like strip malls."*
- *"Don't need that many of those."*
- *"Don't really understand the question."*
- *"Economy not strong enough now."*
- *"Got enough, do not need more competition in Mill Creek."*
- *"Have excess retail space now."*
- *"I am opposed to too much expansion."*
- *"I don't want to do it. Already have enough."*
- *"I don't know how it would impact traffic and general density. I don't know where they would put things. They already have businesses with parking issues. Maybe they could improve traffic."*
- *"I don't know where that would go, and would it increase traffic?"*
- *"I don't know where they would put something like that, and Town Center is struggling already."*
- *"I don't think Mill Creek Town Center could support another one."*
- *"I don't think there is any place left to do it."*
- *"I don't think there's any room for that. They'll have to start tearing down housing."*
- *"I don't want to see anymore town centers - I don't want to lose the small-town feel. I did support the annexation to incorporate more residents, but I don't want to see the downtown area become too big like Seattle; we moved over here to get away from Seattle."*
- *"I have no idea."*
- *"I think enough is enough."*
- *"I think that everything that most people need is right here."*
- *"I think that there's enough business in the Mill Creek area."*
- *"I think that there's enough in the area."*
- *"I think that we've grown enough without adding more."*
- *"I think we have enough buildings and trees cut down; we need to support the businesses and we have too high of taxes; people are not coming to businesses because prices are too high. We want to keep the small town feel."*
- *"I think we're pretty well set. No room for development."*
- *"I want them to stay within the borders they have now."*
- *"I want to keep the Town Center; we have it going strong, and if we have an additional one it'll take away from the original."*
- *"I would like to keep Mill Creek residential."*

- *"I would like Town Center further developed, not further strip malls."*
- *"If they're not referring to gateway, I say no."*
- *"If you get more businesses in the area, more people will be moving out and why would you want more stores? For vandalism? This is not the time to do this."*
- *"I'm not in favor of growth."*
- *"I'm not interested in that within existing boundaries."*
- *"It changes the character of Mill Creek."*
- *"It is already sufficient there."*
- *"Keep it small."*
- *"Mill Creek isn't that big of a community. Already have everything we need."*
- *"More crowded, I do not like."*
- *"No need to grow."*
- *"No reason in particular."*
- *"No space."*
- *"No space for it."*
- *"Not a high priority."*
- *"Not in favor because they already have enough retail and I am glad that they didn't put in a Walmart at the corner of 35 and 132nd in Mill Creek – it is an annexed area."*
- *"Not needed."*
- *"Not that high on priority list."*
- *"One is enough."*
- *"One Town Center is good enough- I don't think we need another."*
- *"Adequately covered there."*
- *"Haven't done water studies."*
- *"Simply because there are people out there who are really hurting."*
- *"Small businesses get left behind."*
- *"Small town – difficult to do planned growth and keep small-town feel."*
- *"Opening up to development is not good."*
- *"The amount of traffic is pushing what our City can handle. It is getting too populated."*
- *"The current Town Center has lots of empty space."*
- *"The Town Center can't even survive, now is not the time to add more businesses."*
- *"The Town Center is already large enough."*
- *"There's no place for it."*
- *"They are not using the old Town Center as it is."*
- *"They should just keep that one going strong."*
- *"Think its dense enough."*
- *"This is not the time to spend the money."*
- *"This type degrades our quality of life."*
- *"Too much growth."*
- *"Too much growth already."*
- *"We don't have room for another Town Center."*
- *"We don't need additional expansion of commercial interests."*
- *"We don't need a lot of strip malls."*
- *"We don't need any more."*
- *"We don't want a boys or girls club."*
- *"We feel like they grew too fast with the Town Center."*
- *"We have enough already."*
- *"We have enough mixed-use as it is."*
- *"We have Mill Creek Town Center and we don't have the extra space for visitors."*

- *"We will end up with strip malls and we will be another Lynnwood."*
- *"We're already kind of maxed-out on retail areas."*
- *"We're still trying to get our [existing] Town Center to work."*

5C. Working to make Mill Creek more of a full service community, keeping more retail, service and business dollars in town. [Comments from those rating 1 or 2]

- *"Because I don't like to be told where to shop. It's already a draw for business."*
- *"Because I don't shop that much in Mill Creek for those things they have here, besides grocery stores and the Town Center."*
- *"Changed to a 3."*
- *"Don't like to see all the trees eaten up by growth."*
- *"Don't want (stores) like a Walmart."*
- *"Growth is OK, but don't want (stores) like a Walmart or Costco; want to keep the small-town feel."*
- *"I go shop where I want to."*
- *"I don't see a need for Mill Creek to expand the level of services outside the city limits."*
- *"I don't want any more growth."*
- *"I don't want any more businesses here - the ones we have now are fine."*
- *"I think we already have enough businesses and enough is enough."*
- *"I want to keep it a small town feel."*
- *"I'm quite happy with going to Everett or Lynnwood if I need something."*
- *"It depends on the growth aspect."*
- *"It doesn't seem like it is too inconvenient to get to any place in the Mill Creek area at the moment."*
- *"It's already grown. Any more growth will cause it to lose its personal feel."*
- *"It's increasing businesses to make more money when they really don't need (more revenue). Too worried about money that they don't use wisely."*
- *"Like to stay small."*
- *"Opposed to expansion."*
- *"Small is better."*
- *"The variety of businesses...the city can do something to do a better mix of business. Example - kitchen supply store, small hardware store. Smaller store would useful and convenient. They lost the only women's store because the rent was too high."*
- *"There are enough shopping areas close enough that people can make it over there. I would like to keep the community feel of the Town Center."*
- *"This question makes no sense."*
- *"To cut expenses."*
- *"Too many outsiders in the city, too much noise and traffic."*
- *"Too much growth."*
- *"We are against the growth in town."*
- *"We are in a depression and people don't have money for Mill Creek because it is over-priced, so people shop in Lynnwood or other areas."*
- *"We do not need to be a full service (community)."*
- *"We don't need Alderwood Malls in Mill Creek."*

Section 6: Closing comments

6A. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like us to pass on to the City?

- *"Recommend we have a flex-car service in Mill Creek."*
- *"Maintaining environmental standards and ensuring natural beauty of the city are two different things."*
- *"All programs should pay for themselves."*
- *"The Mill Creek library is spectacular, but the parking and surrounding facilities are dismal and need improvement/attention."*
- *"Heard about the survey in the local newspaper and appreciate the opportunity to participate and provide feedback."*
- *"Good survey. Glad to participate."*
- *" Library is too small...needs to be expanded."*
- *" We need better standards to control the design of commercial buildings in Mill Creek."*
- *"Small increases in fees are okay, but nothing more."*
- *"Would prefer to rate my satisfaction using a scale from 1 to 10 or 1 to 20 or as a percentage vs. the way you are asking these questions."*
- *"Don't like the flower baskets...get rid of them."*
- *"Remove the guy in the small white car."*
- *"Need to know more about what the City wants to do or what it is planning."*
- *"Library is overcrowded, and needs to be expanded with more parking."*