

Chapter 10: Public Opinion

2010 Plan Update: The public opinion survey discussed in this chapter was a component of Jefferson County's public involvement program that was conducted for the development of the 2002 Non-motorized Transportation and Recreational Trails Plan and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. The public involvement program is discussed in the 2010 Update to Chapter 5 Land and Facility Demand. This chapter has been retained in the original 2002 Plan format.

Public opinions were collected concerning non-motorized transportation and park, recreation, and open space issues from a telephone survey. Following is a summary of major findings.

10.1 Telephone survey

A random sample of resident voter households in Jefferson County were contacted in December 2001 to participate in a controlled survey concerning non-motorized transportation and park, recreation, and open space needs and priorities.

226 households agreed to participate in the survey and were mailed a copy of a summary description of the plan and a copy of the questionnaire. 114 householders (14 more than the survey objective) completed surveys during follow-up telephone calls and return mailings. 53% were male and 47% were female voters. The remaining households were contacted but for various reasons did not complete their surveys by the time the 100-sample group objective had been completed.

The survey results are accurate to within +/-10% of the opinions of the general population (the statistics are rounded and may not add to 100%). The statistics also account for undecided (ranged from 0 to 3% of the total) but do not depict the percents in the tables shown.

Following is a summary of the findings for the total sample group.

Location of residence

The respondent's home address reflects the current distribution of registered voter households:

43% live in Port Townsend,	10% live in Port Ludlow/Shine,
16% live in Quimper Peninsula,	1% live in Toandos Peninsula,
10% live in Irondale/Hadlock,	3% live in Quilcene,
5% live in Chimacum,	2% live in Brinnon, and
5% live in Gardiner/Discovery Bay,	0% live in the west end of the county.

Length of residence

Most survey participants are long time residents of Jefferson County:

0% resident 0-1 years,	17% resident 6-10 years, and
28% resident 2-5 years	54% resident 10+ years.

Type of housing

Most survey participants are homeowners:

92% own their home,	7% rent their home.
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Age group

Most survey participants are from older age households:

1% age 18-24,	50% age 50-64, and
0% age 25-34,	32% age 65+ years.
17% age 35-49,	

10.2 Recreation program priorities

Survey participants were asked if household members had participated in recreational programs provided by the county, city, school district, or another public or private agency in the last year.

51% used program in last year,	49% had not.
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Survey participants were asked to rate the need for the county, city, school district, or another public or private agency to provide recreation programs in Jefferson County in general on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important.

A choice was considered critical or very important if the participants selected ratings of 4 or 5 in high percentages, nice-to-have or medium if the participants selected a 3 rating, and not important if the participants selected ratings of 1 or 2 in high percentages. Following is a rank ordering of their selections.

<i>Recreational program in priority sequence</i>	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
Before/after school childcare/latch key program?	18%	16%	63%
Teen social, education, life-safety activities?	13%	24%	59%
Physical conditioning and fitness – all ages?	23%	21%	51%
Senior social and health activities?	20%	28%	49%
Bicycle safety education programs – all ages?	19%	29%	49%
Aquatic instruction and recreation – all ages?	28%	25%	44%
Nature education programs?	27%	25%	44%
Outdoor athletic leagues and clinics (non-school) – baseball, softball, soccer – all ages?	20%	37%	39%
Indoor athletic leagues and clinics (non-school) – basketball and volleyball – all ages?	27%	36%	33%
Special populations – all skills and disabilities?			
Self-help – finance, health, fashion – all ages?	40%	30%	27%
Skateboard/roller-blade instruction programs?	51%	20%	26%
Music/dance instruction and socials – all ages?	41%	30%	25%
Arts and crafts instruction – all ages?	43%	29%	25%
Skiing, hiking, other outdoor events – all ages?	41%	32%	23%
Drama/performing arts instruction – all ages?	46%	29%	21%
On-water sailing and kayaking – all ages?	52%	31%	14%

Note - the overall results indicate the relative rank-order importance the survey participants gave these needs as a general population - and therefore, which needs would likely receive the highest general population approval ratings where general funds, for example, to be used to finance program services.

Conversely, a low rank-order does not mean the need should or does not need to be provided. Rather, that the need may appeal to a more limited age or

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interest group (on-water sailing and kayaking, for example) and may need to be funded by special means or discretionary revenue sources rather than general monies.

Program costs

Survey respondents were asked to rate the following methods of paying for recreational programs assuming that it would require more money to provide present or future services.

	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<i>Program cost option in priority sequence</i>			
<i>Increase user fees</i> – to finance program services?	21%	24%	54%
<i>Reduce the number</i> – of programs to control costs?	36%	22%	38%
<i>Reduce the content, variety, and duration</i> – of programs to control costs?	27%	34%	36%
<i>Increase county tax revenues</i> – to finance program services?	56%	12%	30%

10.3 Facility priorities in general

Survey respondents were asked how they rated the existing inventory of non-motorized transportation and park, recreation, and open space facilities provided in Jefferson County by the county, city, school district, and other park providers on a scale of 1 to 5?

	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<i>Non-motorized transportation</i>			
<i>Bicycle system quantity</i> – the number and location of <i>existing</i> on-road facilities including bike lanes, shoulders, and separated paths?	32%	29%	34%
<i>Bicycle system quality</i> – of maintenance conditions of lanes, shoulders, and paths - and furnishings including trailheads and storage racks?	29%	34%	31%
<i>Pedestrian system quantity</i> – the number and location of <i>existing</i> sidewalks and trails?	24%	36%	36%
<i>Pedestrian system quality</i> – of maintenance conditions of sidewalks and trails – and furnishings including trailheads, parking, and services?	25%	37%	33%
<i>Parks, recreation, and open space</i>			
<i>Park system quantity</i> – the number and location of <i>existing</i> park, recreation, and open space sites?	17%	24%	56%
<i>Park system quality</i> – of maintenance and furnishings including parking, restrooms, and other equipment in existing parks?	12%	28%	57%

In general, the respondents gave the existing park, recreation, and open space inventory high ratings. The respondents gave bicycle and pedestrian systems mixed ratings for quantity and the quality of existing conditions.

10.4 Project priorities

Survey respondents were advised the proposed plans may jointly organize the resources of Jefferson County, Port Townsend, school and port districts, State and Federal agencies, and other public and private organizations. Survey participants were also asked to rate project proposals on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was the lowest and 5 the highest priority for specific project proposals that were illustrated. The results indicate how resident voters react to these project concept particulars. Following is a rank ordering of their priorities by project.

	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<i>Project proposals in priority sequence</i>			
<u>Salmon enhancement</u> – restore buffer zones along freshwater corridors to protect fish runs and spawning grounds?	10%	14%	75%
<u>Wildlife habitat</u> – conserve migration routes, nesting or feeding areas for endangered plants and animals?	8%	18%	74%
<u>Prime agricultural lands</u> – preserve orchards, crops, grasslands, and other working farm activities?	13%	12%	73%
<u>Forestlands</u> – conserve and protect working forest and woodlands as resource industries?	10%	20%	69%
<u>Teen centers</u> – jointly sponsor before and after school programs for junior high and teenage youth at existing facilities and/or at junior and high school sites?	13%	17%	68%
<u>Open space</u> – conserve undeveloped lands – which may or may not possess the above characteristics – to provide buffer space between developing areas?	19%	16%	64%
<u>Swimming pool</u> – develop an indoor aquatic facility for instruction, competition, recreation, and therapeutic use?	21%	17%	60%
<u>On-road bicycle routes</u> – develop a network of safe bicycle routes (bicycle lanes, shoulders, and low traffic streets) to business districts, employment centers, schools, parks, and other community facilities?	22%	19%	57%
<u>Playgrounds</u> – improve and develop additional playgrounds at school and park sites in the county?	16%	29%	53%
<u>Pedestrian streetscape</u> – develop a network of safe sidewalk or other walkway routes to school, park, work, and shopping districts in the county?	26%	23%	51%
<u>Recreation center</u> – improve and expand gymnasium facilities at school sites for day use by students and after-hour use by the public as a joint venture with school districts?	16%	31%	51%

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<u>Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT)</u> – develop an inter-county multipurpose off-road hike, bike, and horse trail from Port Townsend to Port Angeles and the coast?	27%	24%	49%
<u>Multipurpose trails</u> – develop a network of other off-road hike, bike, and horse trails within the county?	34%	20%	45%
<u>Shoreline (beach walk) trails</u> – designate and develop access across public and some private tidelands between parks and sites of interest?	36%	18%	45%
<u>Hiking trails</u> – develop an off-road network of hiking trails within major parks and between backcountry sites of interest?	34%	26%	39%
<u>Scenic backcountry bicycle routes</u> – designate a network of backcountry bicycle routes to scenic areas of interest that share low traffic volume roadways?	37%	24%	38%
<u>Basketball and volleyball courts</u> – improve and develop additional courts at school and park sites?	26%	34%	37%
<u>Cultural/historical landmarks</u> – erect historical signs, create touring maps, and generally exhibit important cultural heritage sites?	34%	29%	35%
<u>Group picnic facilities and day use areas</u> – develop day use activities for family or organized group use?	29%	35%	35%
<u>Baseball/softball fields</u> – improve and develop additional baseball and softball fields at school and park sites?	30%	32%	34%
<u>Soccer fields</u> – improve and develop additional soccer fields at school and park sites?	27%	36%	33%
<u>Regional fields complex</u> – develop a regional complex of competition athletic fields at a new central site in the county, such as the airport?	45%	23%	30%
<u>Saltwater trails</u> – develop a network of saltwater kayak and canoe launch sites with overnight campsites?	36%	32%	29%
<u>Skateboard courts and in-line roller-blade areas</u> – develop additional skateboard courts and in-line roller-blade areas at middle and high school sites?	42%	26%	29%
<u>Boat launches</u> – develop additional boat launch ramps to increase public access to fresh and saltwater sites?	44%	29%	25%
<u>Campgrounds</u> – develop additional tent and recreational vehicle campsites for resident use?	38%	34%	25%
<u>Day-use adult gymnasium</u> – develop an adult day-use recreation center with gymnasium and physical conditioning facilities at Chimacum School as a joint venture with the school district?	42%	33%	23%

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<i>Environmental exhibits</i> – develop environmental interpretive and exhibition areas at park sites throughout the county?	52%	24%	23%
<i>Horse trails</i> – develop a network of horse trails providing access to backcountry areas and parks, and riding facilities for equestrian events and training?	60%	25%	13%
<i>Off-road mountain bicycle trails and riding areas</i> – develop a network of off-road mountain bike trails?	62%	27%	11%
<i>Motorized trail bikes</i> – develop a network of trail bike routes on power line and other utility corridors?	76%	14%	8%
<i>ATV course</i> – develop a designated site for an all-terrain vehicle course for younger age riders?	78%	16%	5%

10.5 Growth management

All survey participants were advised that in the next 6 years the Jefferson County population could increase by another 2,500 people (or by approximately 9% more than the existing population of 26,600 persons) as vacant lands are developed for more housing. Survey participants were asked whether there would be enough existing non-motorized transportation and public and private agency park, recreation, and open space (not including any of the above proposals) to provide for this population increase.

Approximately 45% of all survey participants indicated the existing supply would not be sufficient, compared with 21% who indicated there would be, and 34% who didn't know.

Project costs

Survey respondents were advised that the *existing* inventory of non-motorized transportation routes and trails is estimated to be worth about \$500 per every vehicle registered in the county. The *existing* inventory of park, recreation, and open space is estimated to be worth about \$1,200 per person or \$3,000 per an average single family house. If the county is to maintain the existing standards for non-motorized transportation and park, recreation, and open space facilities, then improvements of equivalent value must be funded for each increment of residential and commercial development. Given this fact, the respondents were asked to rate the following methods for dealing with impacts.

	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<i>Project cost option in priority sequence</i>			
<u>Collect a park growth impact fee from new housing projects</u> - to pay for park improvements?	25%	17%	54%
	4%	don't	know
<u>Collect a non-motorized transportation growth impact fee from all new projects</u> - to pay for non-motorized & off-road improvements?	27%	23%	44%
	6%	don't	know

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<u>Increase county tax revenues</u> - to pay for non-motorized transportation and park facilities?	61%	16%	18%
	5%	don't	know
<u>Lower standards</u> - for the number of non-motorized transportation and park facilities provided future populations?	59%	19%	10%
	12%	don't	know

Growth impact fee amounts

Survey participants were asked to indicate what amount should be collected for each new vehicle and each new housing unit in the event growth impact fees were to be collected from new developments.

A plurality or 55% of all survey participants would approve a vehicle impact fee above \$125 or 25% of value and 54% would approve a park impact fee above \$750 or 25% of value.

<i><u>If a non-motorized transportation impact fee were to be collected from all new development projects, what amount of this cost would you recommend be charged for every new vehicle or vehicle equivalent parking space added by the project in the county?</u></i>	15%= \$ 500
	7%= \$ 375
	19%= \$ 250
	14%= \$ 125
	18%= \$ 75
	11%= \$ 0
	11%= don't know
<i><u>If a park growth impact fee were to be collected from new housing development projects, what amount of this cost would you recommend be charged for every new single family house to be developed in the county?</u></i>	16%= \$3,000
	4%= \$2,250
	20%= \$1,500
	14%= \$ 750
	17%= \$ 450
	18%= \$ 0
11%= don't know	

10.6 Local Option Taxes

Survey respondents were advised that growth impact fees *can not* be used to expand or improve non-motorized transportation, recreational trails, park and recreation facilities, and open space *for existing residents*. Projects that improve or develop the existing park system *that benefit existing residents* must be financed by other methods. The County Commissioners could assess a variety of optional taxes as a means of financing the acquisition and development of additional improvements. Respondents were asked how they would rate the following methods of financing improvements for *existing residents*?

<u>Tax options</u>	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<u>Local Option Fuel Tax</u> – an additional \$0.023 per gallon sales tax to be paid by residents and tourists to be dedicated exclusively to the acquisition and development of non-motorized transportation and trail improvements.	40%	12%	44%

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<u>Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)</u> – an additional 0.25% assessment of the sales price of real estate property (equal to \$250 per \$100,000 of sale price) to be dedicated to the acquisition and development of trail, park, and open space.	53%	10%	32%
<u>Local Option Vehicle License Fee</u> – an additional \$15.00 per license per vehicle registered in the county to be dedicated exclusively to the acquisition and development of non-motorized transportation and trail improvements.	53%	17%	28%

10.7 General obligation bonds

Survey participants were asked how much, if anything, their household would be willing to pay per year for non-motorized transportation and park, recreation, and open space improvements that would benefit existing residents. The mean amount the respondents would pay was \$142.55 per year per household.

10.8 Recreational service areas

Survey respondents were advised that Jefferson County could also impose a limited short-term (3-5 year) property tax levy as a means of financing the acquisition and development and/or operation of additional non-motorized transportation and park, recreation, and open space facilities and/or programs within specified areas of the county. Recreation service areas may be established for a single facility for a single benefit area, such as a swimming pool for the entire county – or for multiple facilities for a specified portion of the county, such as playgrounds, athletic fields, and indoor gymnasiums for a single school district.

Once proposed, the county residents within each recreation service area vote to determine whether to assess themselves an additional limited short-term property tax increment to finance acquisition, development, and/or operation of the proposed facilities and programs within their service area.

The respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the following recreation service area options.

	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<u>Recreation service areas</u>			
<u>Specific facilities</u> – organizing recreation service areas to finance specific facilities and programs, such as a swimming pool?	30%	22%	36%
	12%	don't	know
<u>Specific areas</u> – organizing recreation service areas to provide a mixture of facilities and programs within a specific area, such as a school district?	37%	25%	29%
	9%	don't	know

10.9 Joint venture opportunities

Survey respondents were advised that besides Jefferson County and Port Townsend, the school and port districts, churches, athletic leagues, and a

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variety of nonprofit, and for-profit agencies own and operate park, recreation, and open space. The respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the following joint venture opportunities with these agencies.

	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<i>Joint venture development opportunities with</i>			
<i>With school districts</i> – for the <i>development</i> of playgrounds and athletic fields at school sites for after-school public use?	19%	17%	60%
<i>With nonprofit organizations</i> – for the <i>conservation</i> of sensitive environmental areas or the <i>preservation</i> of historical areas or the <i>development</i> of community athletic facilities for public use?	19%	25%	52%
<i>With for-profit organizations</i> – for the <i>development</i> of specialized facilities like athletic clubs, swimming pools, and conference centers?	35%	16%	45%
<i>Joint venture operation/maintenance with</i>			
<i>With school districts</i> – for the <i>operation</i> of after school recreational programs in the school buildings for public use?	17%	19%	61%
<i>With nonprofit organizations</i> – for the <i>management</i> of sensitive environmental areas or the <i>operation</i> of after school programs, athletic leagues, or community facilities for public use paid with a fee?	13%	30%	52%
<i>With for-profit agencies</i> – for the <i>operation</i> of specialized facilities like athletic clubs, swimming pools, conference centers, and performing theaters for public use paid with a user fee?	35%	25%	35%

10.10 Jefferson County roles and responsibilities

Survey respondents were asked if it requires more money than is available using current revenues to provide the programs and facilities that the county has funded in the past, how they would prioritize the following functions that should be provided by the county.

	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<i>Facilities</i>			
<i>Regional coordinator</i> – create plans, financing strategies, and implementation programs regardless of who may provide the service?	29% 16%	23% don't	32% know
<i>Regional developer</i> – acquire and develop <i>regional</i> facilities only, such as multipurpose trails, to be used <i>by all residents of the county on a countywide basis</i> ?	26% 11%	30% don't	33% know
<i>Local developer</i> – acquire and develop <i>local</i> facilities, such as playgrounds, <i>to be used by residents of specific local areas in the county</i> ?	48% 12%	20% don't	20% know

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Programs	Ratings		
	1 + 2 Low	3 Medium	4 + 5 High
<u>Landlord</u> – own, develop, and maintain facilities – but have other agencies conduct and operate programs?	33%	25%	27%
	15%	don't	know
<u>Regional operator</u> – organize, schedule, staff, and conduct programs in <u>regional</u> facilities?	20%	34%	28%
	18%	don't	know
<u>Local operator</u> – organize, schedule, staff, and conduct programs in <u>local</u> facilities?	32%	28%	23%
	17%	don't	know

Conclusion

In general, the results of the telephone survey indicate resident County voters will support user fees, growth impact fees, general obligation bonds, and joint venture projects if the programs and projects are conceived along the lines indicated in the survey results.