



King County

Metropolitan King County Council

King County Auditor's Office

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 23, 2011

TO: Metropolitan King County Councilmembers

FROM: Cheryle A. Broom, County Auditor ^{CB}

SUBJECT: Countywide Community Forums Round 7B Report

Attached for your review is the report on the findings of the "mini-round" of Countywide Community Forums (CCF) as established under Ordinance 15896 on the *Unincorporated King County Round: New Framework for Public Engagement*. The survey was developed in close coordination with the Unincorporated King County coordinators in the Executive Offices who have been briefed about the results.

A series of questions asked participants for their views on the legislation that calls for the creation of Community Service Areas (CSAs), recommends a primary point of contact and aims to improve communications between the county and residents. Overall, the 310 residents of Unincorporated King County who responded to the survey were supportive of the concept and added some specificity about what they view as suitable formats for various methods of communication or interaction, as well as their views on how CSA boundaries should be determined.

CB:CS:lo
Attachment

Unincorporated King County Round: New Framework for Public Engagement

August 19 - September 9, 2011

Final Report

By

Chantal Stevens
Countywide Community Forums Program Manager

October 5, 2011



A King County public engagement program in the King County Auditor's Office





Auditor's Office Mission

Through objective and independent audits and services, we promote and improve performance, accountability, and transparency in King County government.

Auditor's Office Vision

Our work is of the highest quality and integrity resulting in significant improvements in accountability, performance, and efficiency in county government, and it promotes public trust.



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The King County Auditor's Office provides oversight of county government

through independent audits and other studies regarding the performance and efficiency of agencies and programs, compliance with mandates, and integrity of financial management systems. The office reports the results of each audit or study to the Metropolitan King County Council.

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Alternative Formats Available Upon Request



Unincorporated King County Round: New Framework for Public Engagement

SUMMARY

Between August 19 and September 9, 2011, Countywide Community Forums conducted a round of forums that asked King County residents about their views and ideas related to the new framework for public engagement in the unincorporated areas that King County is developing in response to Ordinance 2011-0189.

While 549 responses were received, this report only includes the 310 responses that were received from residents who live in and adjacent to Unincorporated King County. Almost half of the respondents refer to home as a suburban community. Half of them are slightly to extremely satisfied with King County institutions, while a quarter are slightly to extremely dissatisfied. The rest are neutral or failed to respond. Just 22% have not contacted King County during the previous year for any reason. The top six King County contacts relate to, in decreasing order: Sheriff services, Emergency/911, transit, property tax issues and information, elections, and county roads.

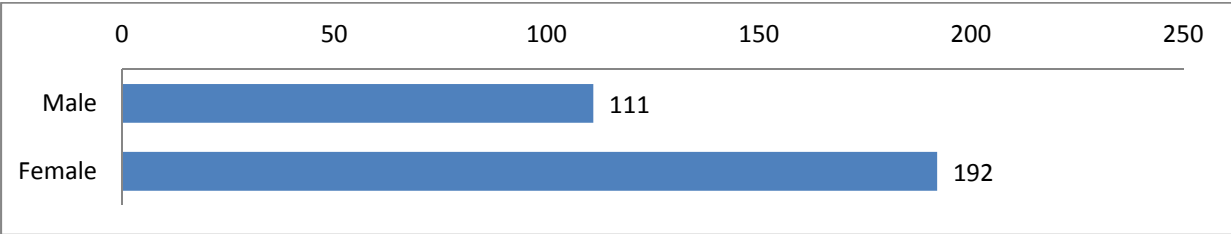
A series of questions asked participants for their views on the legislation that calls for the creation of Community Service Areas, recommends a primary point of contact and aims to improve communications between the county and residents. The most decisive answer from the survey is that three-quarter of respondents feel that having a dedicated staff person as a primary contact encourages better communication. The majority of respondents would be willing to attend a meeting with county officials in their community every two to six months to discuss local issues and concerns. They are more likely to attend if the meeting is about future planning and development, satisfaction levels with county services and programs, or local values and priorities. They are least likely to attend a meeting on how to measure the success of county services or programs or about county fees and revenue sources. They consider the meeting to be most effective if a representative from the County Council or County Executive is present and if it is open to anyone or any organization, but think that an open-ended agenda initiated by participants would be least effective.

The preferred method for public input for 38% of the respondents is online comments. Email is the preferred method of communication for two-thirds of respondents. Responding to inquiries within 24 hours is the best way for the county to show it is listening, followed by having meetings that are collaborative and about two-way communication. Kiosks in the community are least valued.

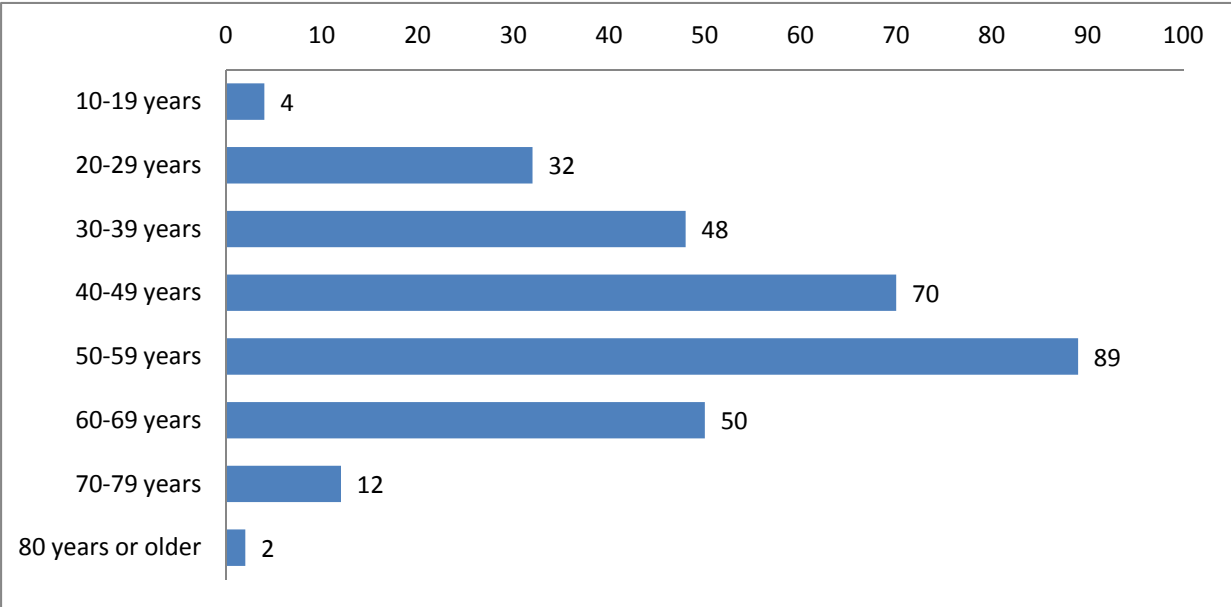
In determining the boundaries of a Community Service Area (CSA), respondents feel that respecting the existing community identity is the best criterion, followed by uniformity of the community (rural, suburban, or urban) and the existence of local government districts. Land use, governance and safety top the list of issues identified by residents as specific to life in Unincorporated King County.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

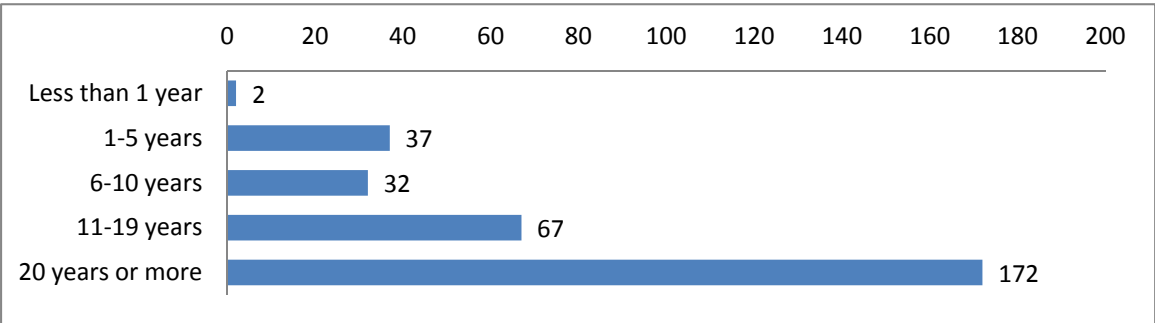
(D-1) What is your Gender?



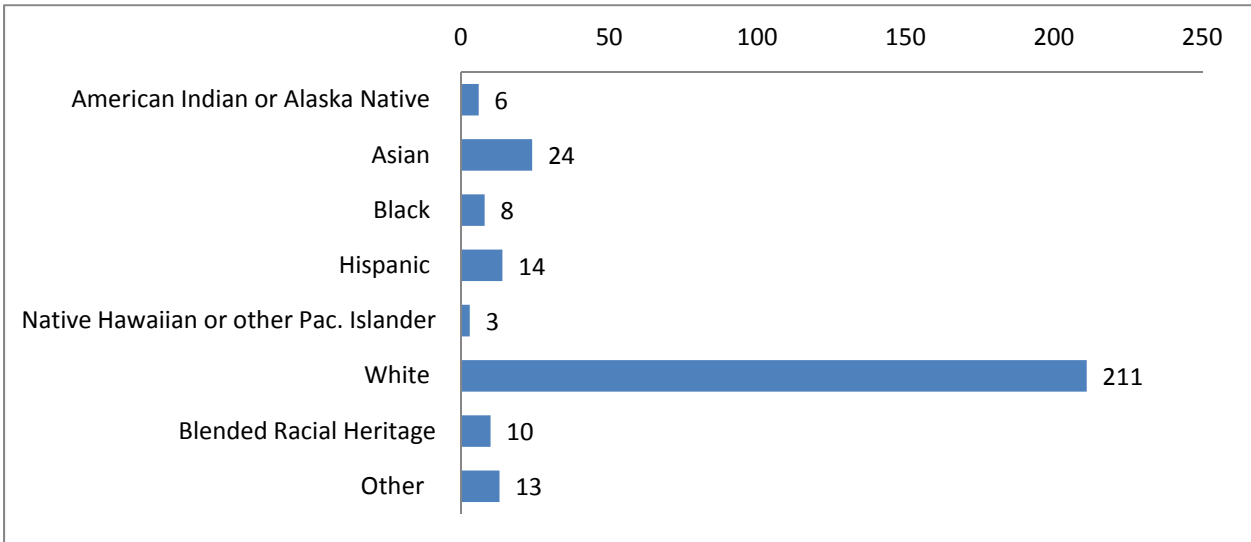
(D-2) What is your Age Range?



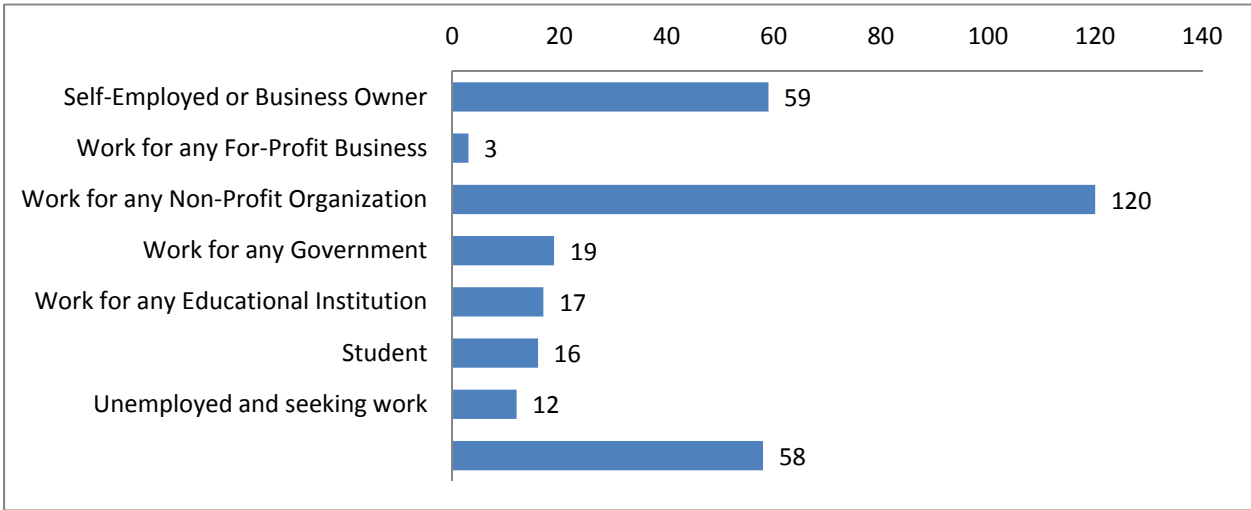
(D-3) Over your lifetime, how long have you lived or worked in King County?



(D-4) What is your primary racial or ethnic heritage?

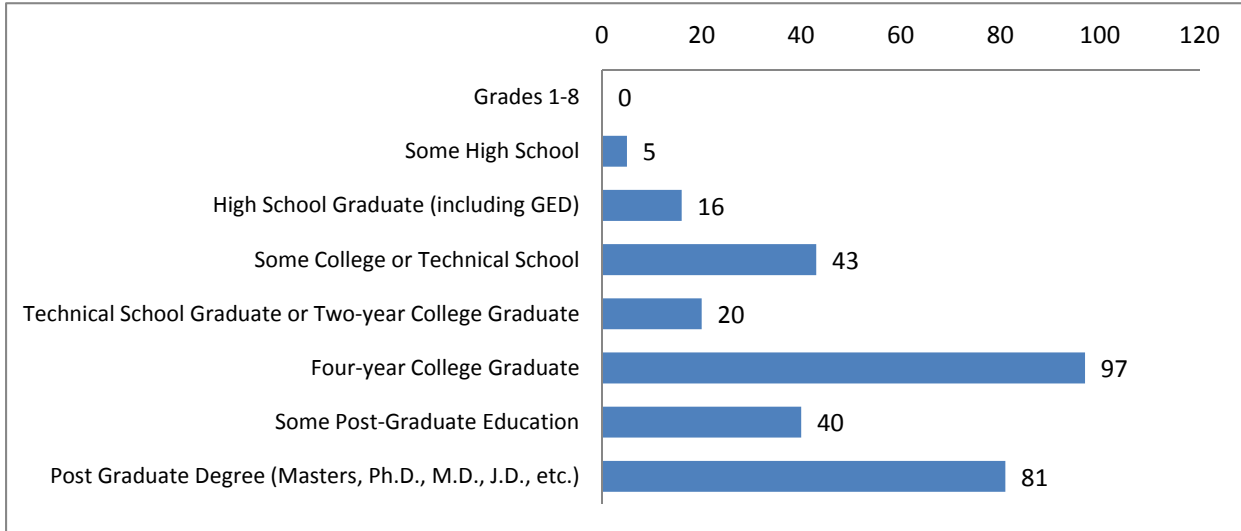


(D-5) What is your primary Employment Status?

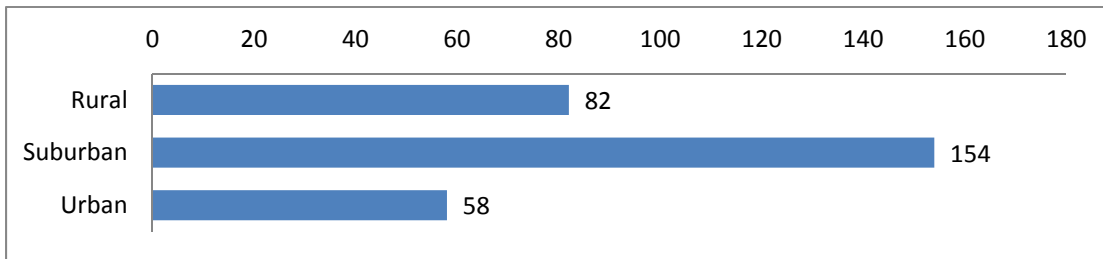


Survey Results

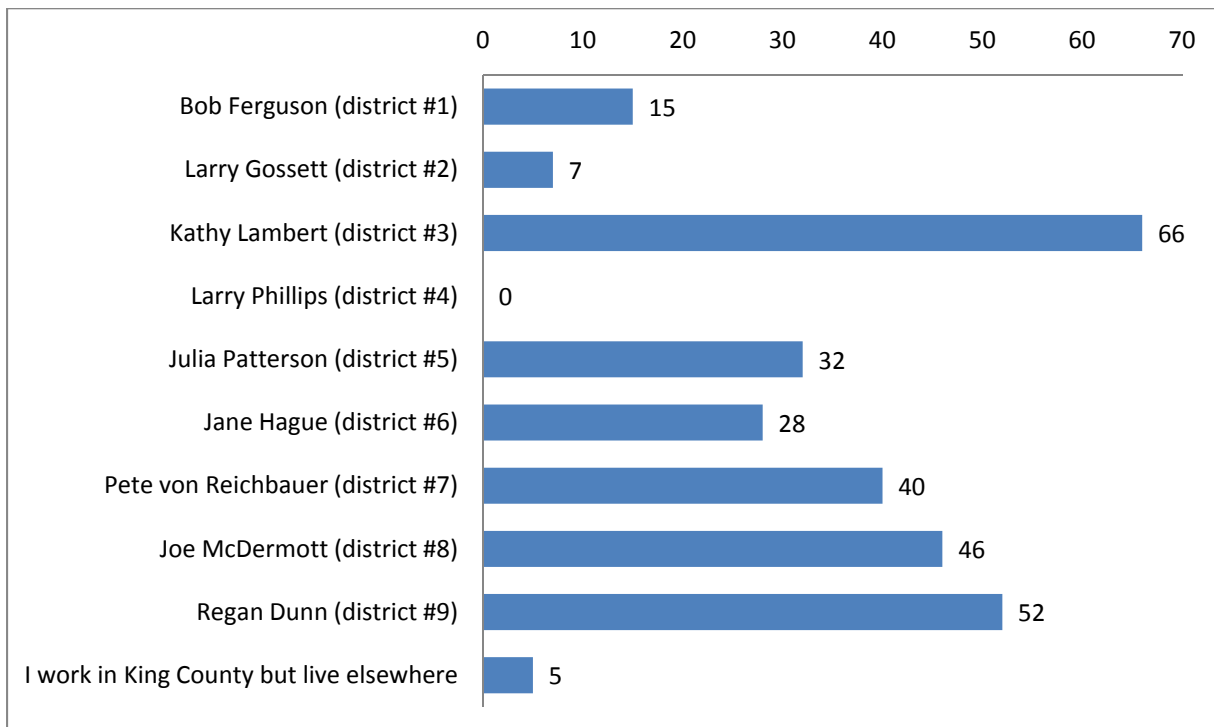
(D-6) What is the highest level of education you have completed?



(D-7) How would you describe the community where you live?

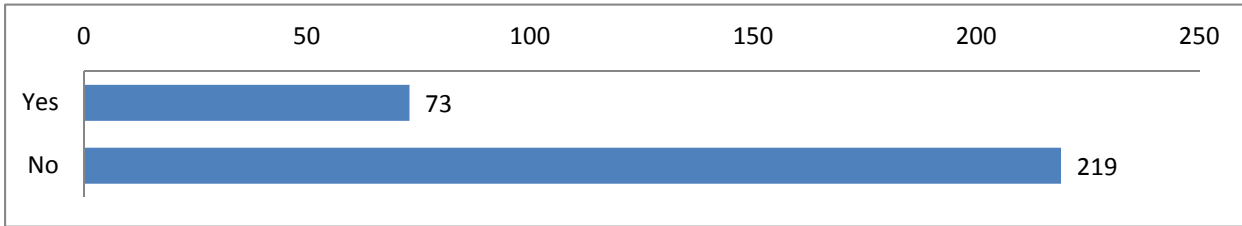


(D-8) If you live in King County, who is your King County Councilmember?

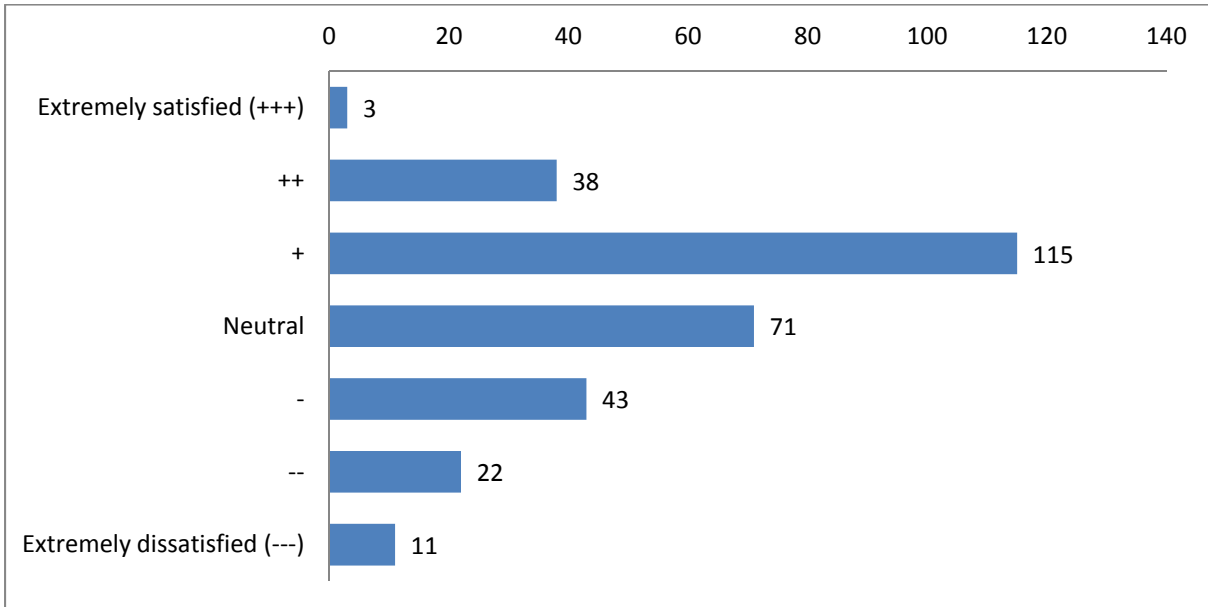


Survey Results

(D-9) Have you ever testified at a King County public hearing or Town Hall meeting?

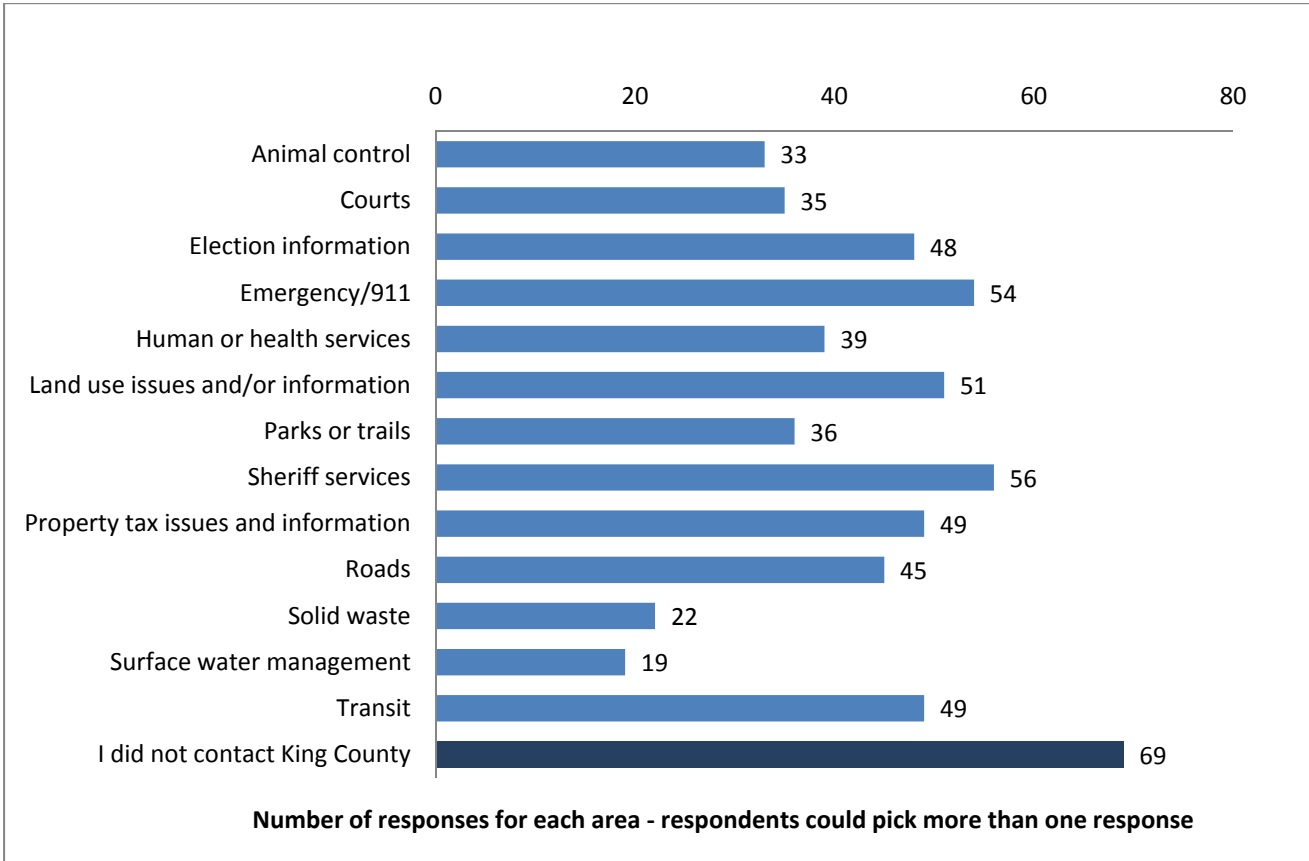


(D-10) Overall, what level of satisfaction do you have with King County institutions as a whole?

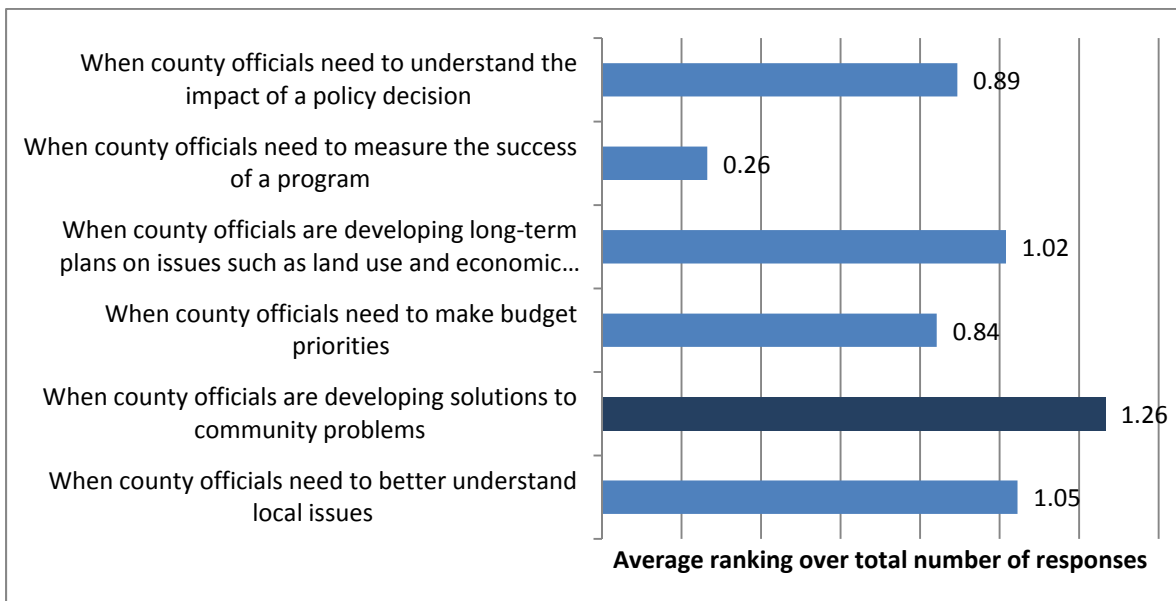


TOPIC QUESTIONS

(T-1) In the past year, what was the reason(s) that you needed to contact King County? Check all that apply

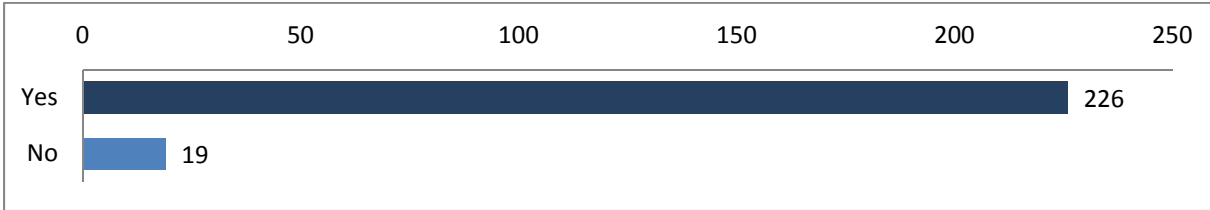


(T-2) When do you feel resident or community input is most valuable to the county decision making process? Rank your top three choices.

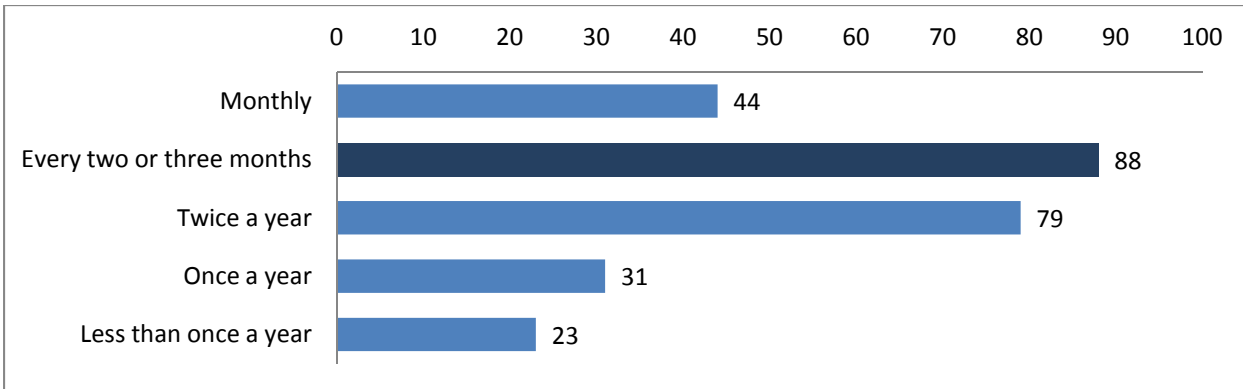


Survey Results

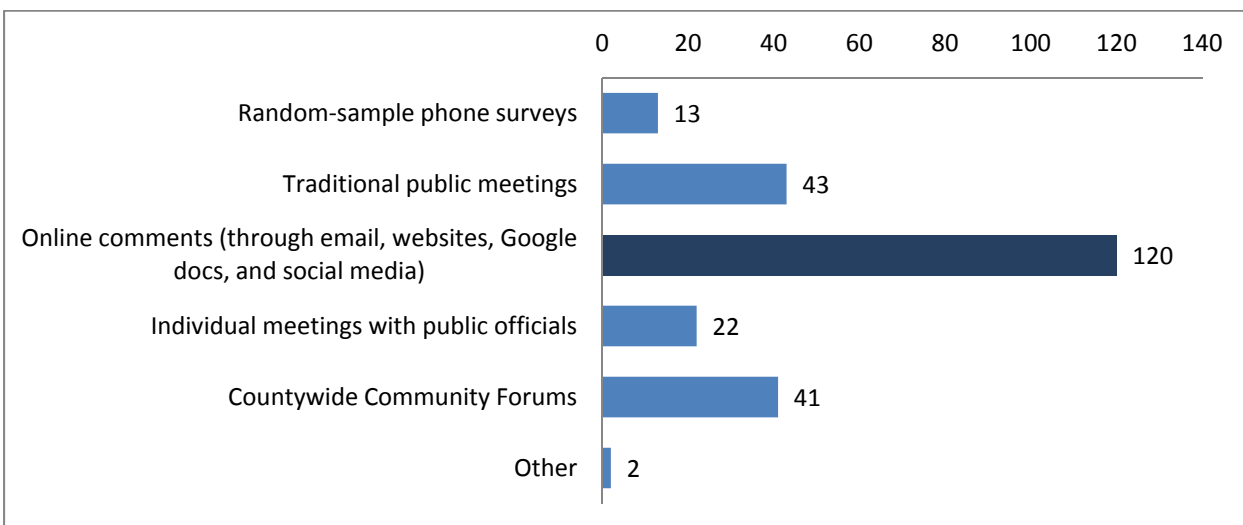
(T-5) Do you believe that having a dedicated staff person as a primary point of contact representing the county within a Community Service Area (CSA) encourages better communication?



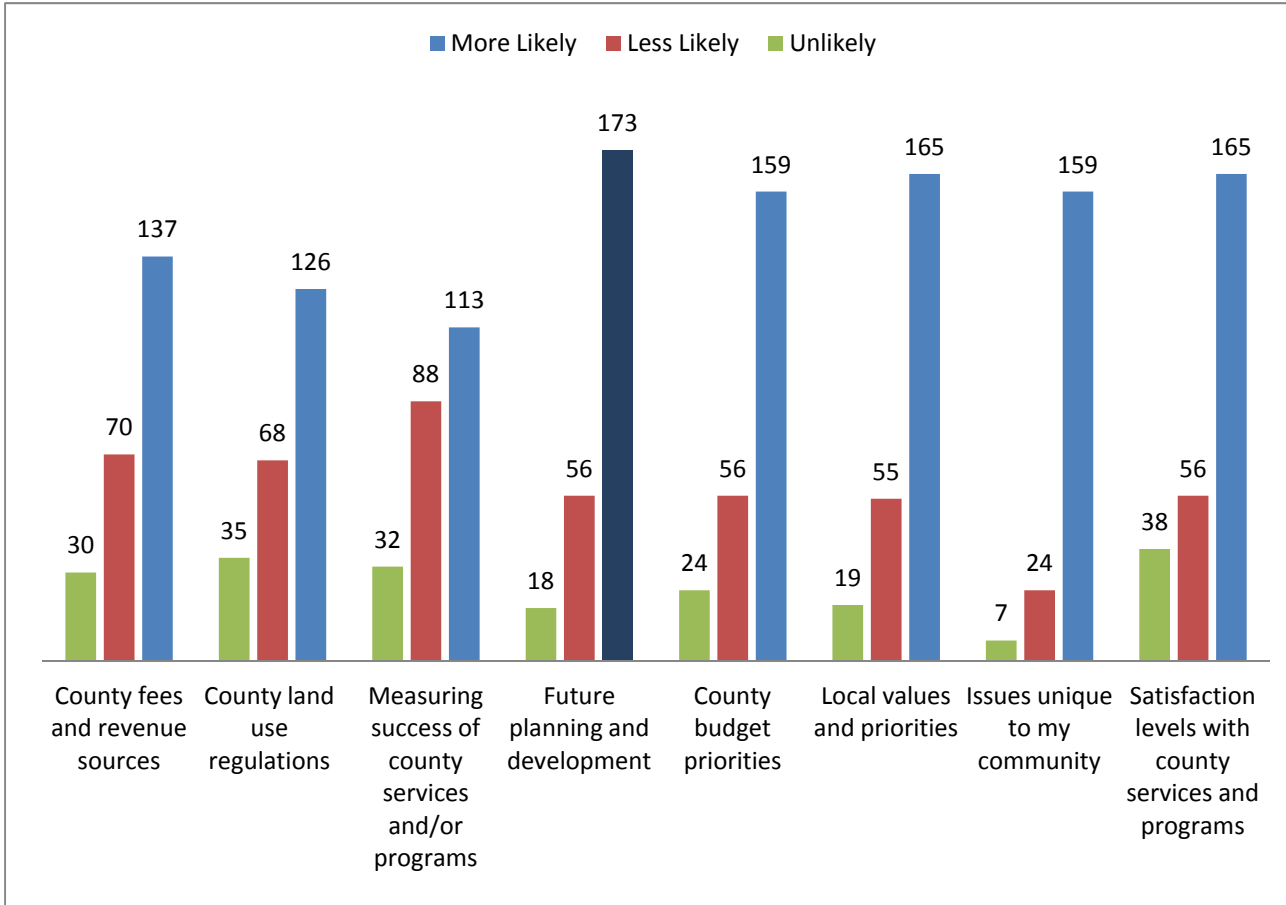
(T-6) How often are you willing to attend a meeting with county officials in your community to discuss local issues and concerns?



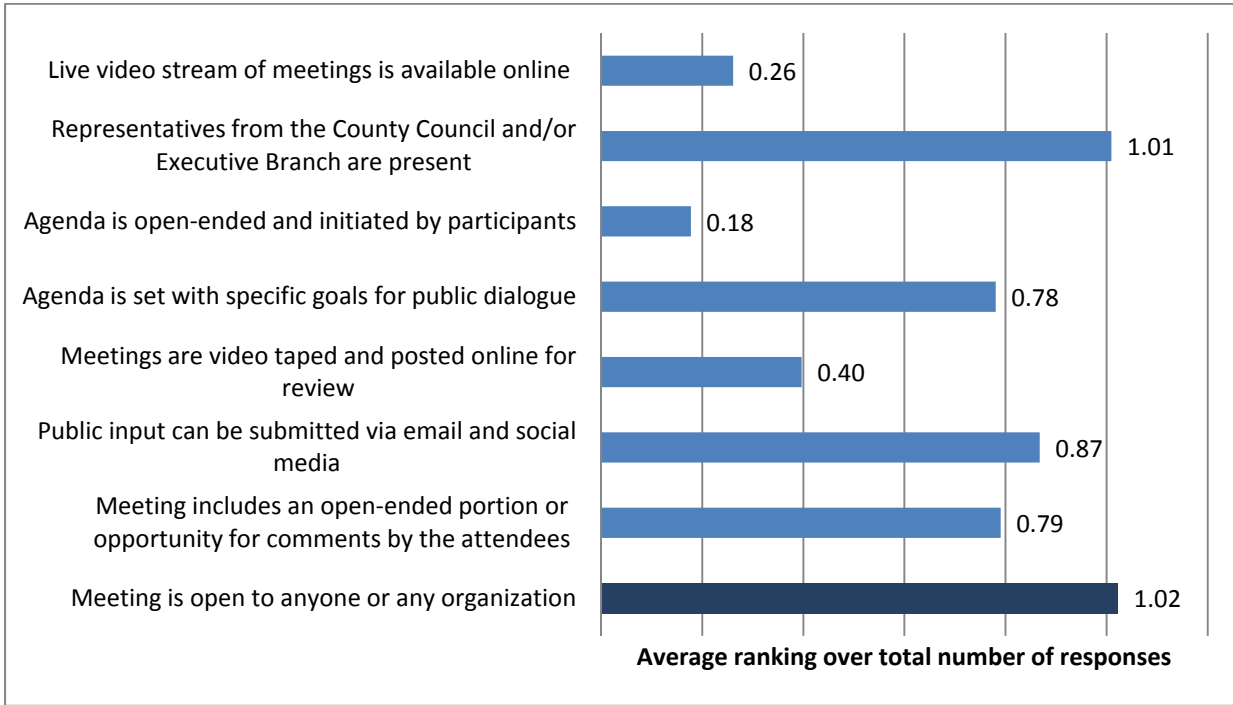
(T-7) What do you think would be the most effective method for public input from your community?



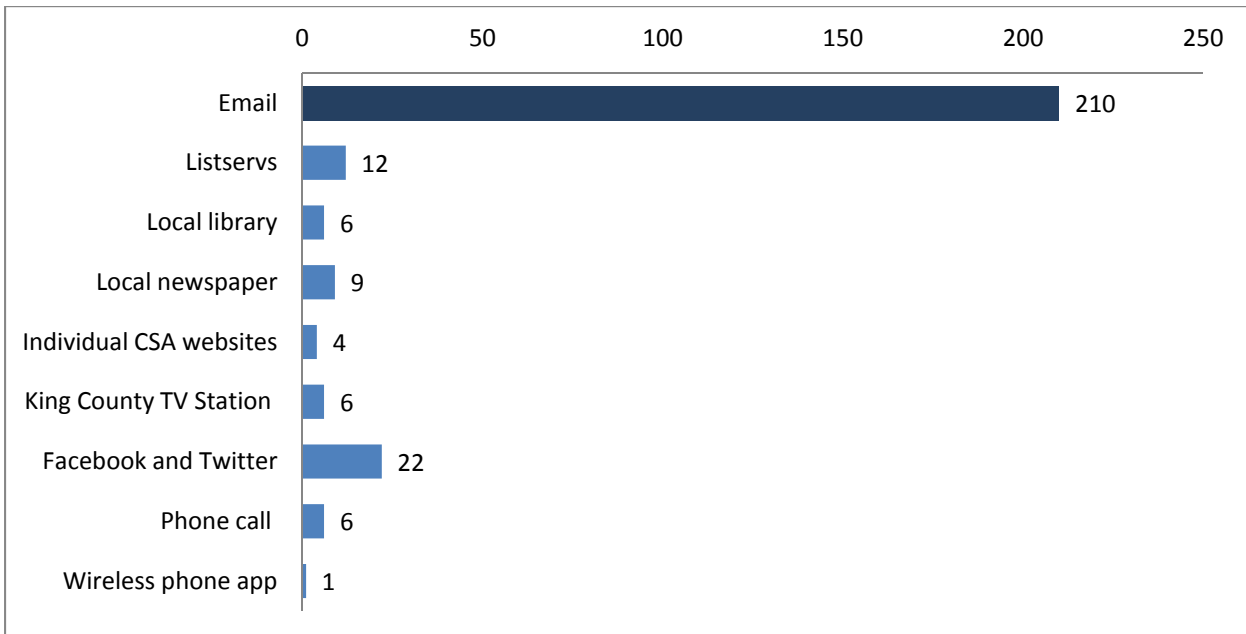
(T-8) How likely or unlikely are you willing to engage with county officials through your local Community Service Area if the following opportunities are available for you to share your opinions about:



(T-9) What should a CSA-sponsored meeting include in order to be effective?

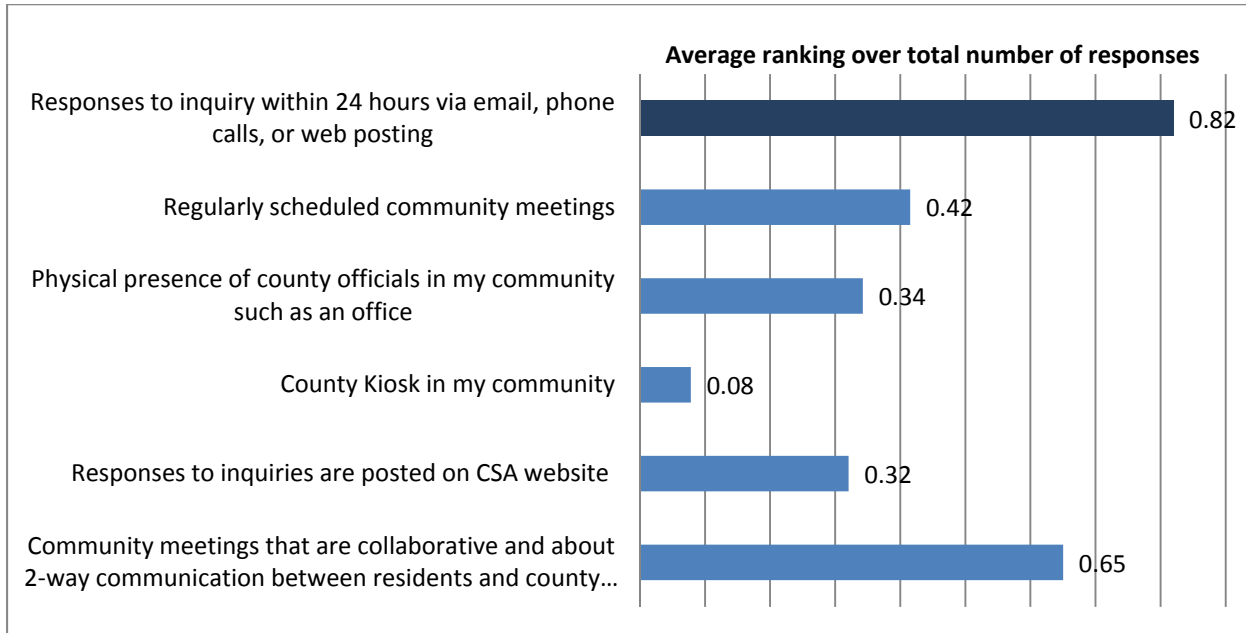


(T-11) What is the one best method for you to be notified about opportunities to engage with a Community Service Area?

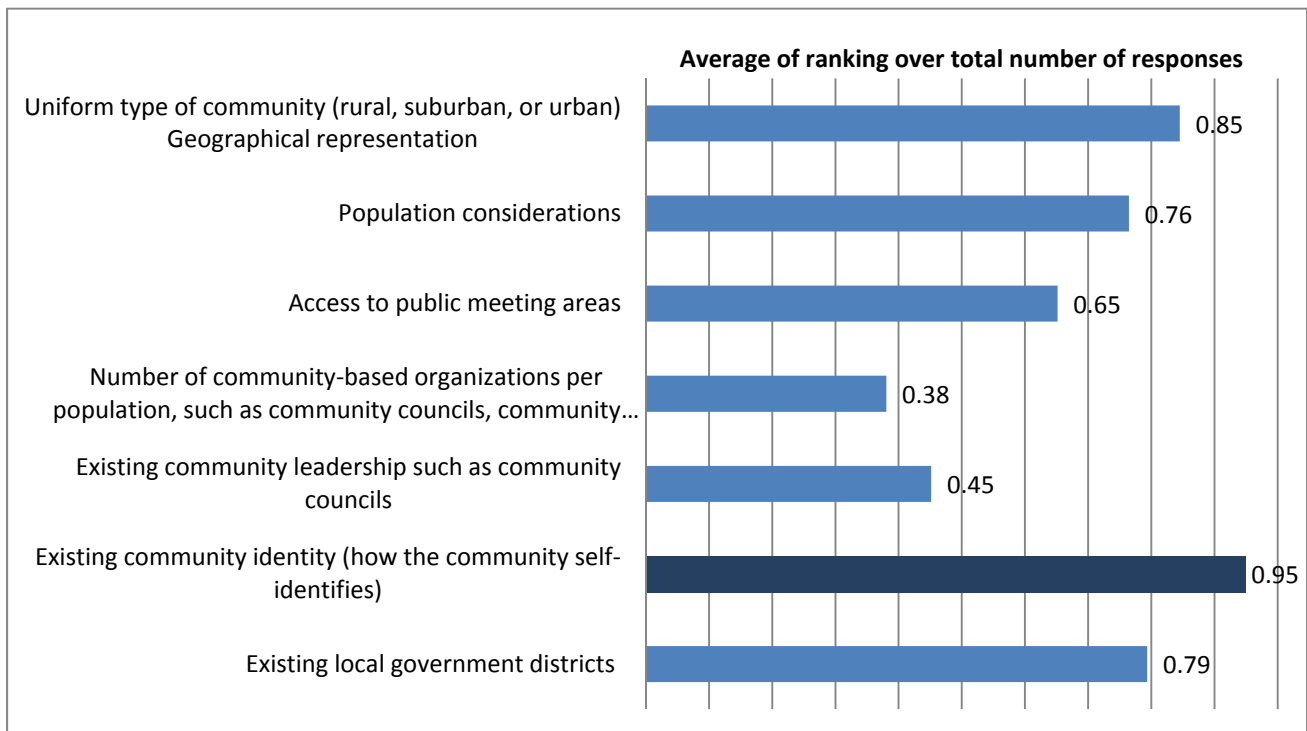


Survey Results

(T-12) In your opinion, what are the best illustrations that the county is listening to you and your community?



(T-16) In determining the boundaries for a CSA, please rank your top three choices:



ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

(T-2) When do you feel resident or community input is most valuable to the county decision making process? Additional thoughts:
After elections.
All Council; Members need to understand how to disengage from UN mandated Agenda 21 initiatives
All of the above.
All the time, good decisions require fairness for the taxpayer
Answers often feel "pre-determined" before input
Any time a decision effects the wallet of the community
At the beginning of the planning stage
At the beginning of the process
Before we elect them, so they won't WASTE our money on projects like the tunnel, that will be less efficient than what we have now
bicycle transit plan for area residents, bike paths, signage, infrastructure
Community input & council understanding the result of the decision is necessary before all policy decisions are final
Community input is most valuable when you actually go to the community and collect information in a very authentic way. The community does not feel appreciated when it is just used for data and research. County officials should care enough to be there for this process. Officials should also understand barriers affecting communities such as language barriers and problems related to class and race
Develop Employment opportunities
Feels like less support for start-ups and entrepreneurs in Uninc. King County. Why? Microsoft & Costco are so close
Growth in rural and green areas
Growth management
Information needs to be sent to officials
Lower B&O taxes, please
Need better protection from police for robbers and vandals
NIMBY issues can result in inaction. Sometimes elected officials have to do what is right for the long-run
Please protect our trails and parks
Residents need to be a part of at least at one level
response time for police and emergency issues
T-2 is just silly. County officials represent us and so should be seeking input on all of the above
the greater good of community
Too much crime in our neighborhoods in these days
Tough to choose or prioritize these... they are all important
Use social innovation to help create jobs but make a difference in our communities too. Why does it always have to be one or the other? We have technology and smart people - is govt using them?
We need officials to understand we need less regulations!!!
Well prior to decision making. At a point of mutual engagement based on give and take dialogue

Survey Results

What is 1, 2, or 3? Good to bad, bad to good?
When County officials are making a decision that favors large developers
When county officials need to facilitate local people developing their own solutions to problems
When political forces are causing leadership to go in the wrong direction. To force electeds to act responsibly
When the county is going to affect the lifestyle in an area
When the official is up for election
when the public effects the budget
Whenever they make decisions that affect me
(T-4) In your opinion, what specific issues do residents of Unincorporated King County face that residents of incorporated areas do not face? (first choice)
a) Emergency, policy, crime
911 response times
Access to emergency services
emergency response time
emergency services
EMERGENCY SERVICES
Emergency services access
Long emergency response times
Slower first response
Slower response times for emergencies
response time for police, fire, and emergencies
speed of emergency services
Access to police. King County Sheriffs have a lot of territory
crime even though most is non violent
cutbacks in law enforcement
depending on King County for local services, such as police protection
Lack of law enforcement protection
Lack of police and emergency response services
Lack of police coverage/resources
Inclusion in policy decisions
Lack of crime prevention, not enough police, lack of funding for youth programs
Law Enforcement
laws and policies that pertain to more urban settings than rural/suburban settings
Less law enforcement
Local police presence & availability, especially for non-911 issues
police and fire
police availability
police cover large areas
Police Coverage and Public Safety
police protection

Survey Results

Police protection
police protection
Police/fire service
long waits for police to help
Not enough police working with small business owners
Public safety (via police) is very different in the county
public safety-speediness of services
safety
safety
Sheriff response (Fall City)
Sheriff support
Security
Security and safety
b) Access to services
Access to administrative services
Access to community programs
access to services
Access to modern day amenities (Internet, Cell towers, etc.)
awareness of county services
Choice to live where fewer services are available
communication: be it permits/policy/decisions that affect me, or who can help me with my problem
Insufficient access to services
lack of access to local city services
Lack of services
lack of services in our local areas
Lack of public services
service cuts
services
Telecommunications access
utility infrastructure
c) Transportation: transit, roads, other
dangerous bicycles on rural roads
Transit
Transit
Transit
Transit
Transit availability
Transit issues - not enough busses
transportation
Transportation
transportation road maintenance

Survey Results

lack of bus service
Limited public transportation
Public Transit
Public Transportation
poor roads, sidewalks
road improvements in unincorporated areas
Roads
roads/transportation
road upkeep maybe
reliable transportation
rural road maintenance and standards
traffic cameras
d) Land use, environment
Annual flooding is a real problem around here
appropriate Land Use
CAO
controlling land use and development
Conversion of agricultural land to recreational uses (like horse riding).
conversion of rural land to urban uses
Development
Encroaching development in rural area
Exploitation by adjacent cities.
Flooding
Growth Management Policy threatening property rights
growth management/land use
land usage
land use
land use
Land Use
Land use
Land use
land use differs in rural areas
land use issues
land use issues
land use policy
burn ban
land issues-disputes or government regulations
Lack of regulation of Growth management
zoning
zoning
making decisions regarding property
Pacific Raceways expansion

Survey Results

Pacific Raceways making too much noise
Oversight of building projects
PRIVATE land use restrictions (development and wetland impact)
Property Rights
Property rights AND surrounding area restrictions
Regulation of private land use.
Unreasonable land use restrictions
Less clarity of what you can do on your land
The CAO is too restricted and created by people living in Seattle
significant volume of yard waste and its cost-effective disposal
water issues
Animal control
Bears and other animals on private property
e) Governance, representation, resources, taxes
County is first level of governance
dilution of voice
do not have direct representation
feel that they are not represented
Having influence on decisions that King County makes
lack of diversity in terms of political representation
Lack of easily accessible and responsive government
Less representation
Less voice in county decisions and affairs
Only have one councilman on a board of 9
Only one council member to represent our area
feeling of being outside the "important" areas of the county
lack of accountability by bureaucrats
lack of representation in relationship to the "Seattle" part of the county
county decisions have no relevance to my area
local city laws
Loss of the local control municipalities posses
Outside of our UACs "the county" is too far removed
ease of contacting representatives
representation
Representation by one that is not local to your area
Representation/Clout
Individuals being heard.
We do not have adequate representation in the government of King County. One representative always gets voted down.
We need better representation!
No clear channels of communication

Survey Results

Enough voices to be heard
Annexations and changes in rural density of housing
Forced annexation
forced incorporation headaches of who/when
Why is my area being annexed without us knowing about it?
Financial support
funding issues
higher property taxation
Higher property taxation
higher property taxes
I am not aware of differences except for taxes
Fewer resources
Taxation without Representation
Taxes
lack of resources
lack of resources available nearby
lack of resources locally
We pay taxes that get trickled in to the city. I don't want to support things there, or I would live there and use them.
None. The cities just do a better a job of managing the issues and finding \$.
f) Social services and challenges
access to community social services
lack of social services
Homeless/Housing/Food
Homelessness
housing
little or no human services agencies
Less jobs
City Homeless
more homeless shelters are needed year round
Making sure that disadvantaged individuals continue to receive education & health and human srvs
Being in the minority, having no voice
The disparity in the economic opportunities for minorities.
Schools are going down esp in these areas
(T-12) In your opinion, what are the best illustrations that the county is listening to you and your community? Additional thoughts
Might be nice, except that there is a tendency by government employees to send boilerplate responses. They don't really read or give a whit about the constituent's input.
Complaint tracking system for more transparency in how the county handles, and resolves complaints
Actual change that reflects our needs is being made

Survey Results

After the recent \$20 increase in license tab fees, I see no evidence that the county is "listening" to the community
Appropriate action is taken in a reasonable amount of time
Avoid the "appearance" that a matter is settled before citizen input is provided
Council votes that support our interests
Elect leaders to this new CSA thing
Feedback responding to comments/recommendations
Immediate (less than 1 hour) response to most issues
Love my public library! Please have meetings there
Make schools better; our children aren't learning
More than one option should be available.
Newsletters
None of the above, they do not exist
not listening
Phone & mail
Physical evidence of work accomplished within the community
Positive community related actions
Public acknowledgment
Regular newsletters would be good
Seeing action on community issues, not just talk
snow removal
Social Media
that changes are being made
There are few examples of County officials listening
This question is based on urban services. We have no local meeting room, storefront office space or kiosk locations within miles of our rural community.
UAC format works well with officials presenting and listening at open public meetings
Your actions speak the loudest
(T-14) Under the new CSA model, what processes can be adopted to enhance transparency?
Additional thoughts:
All meetings are recorded on video, indexed and kept available online indefinitely
Attended by county council representative
Broad and Accessible FOIA access
CREATE...a cable channel for UKC areas!!!
Decisions are explained

Survey Results

Department of Ecology has a system called ERTS for tracking spill reports. Though not well publicized, I can get my ERTS # for my complaint and follow who it is assigned to, who they contact, what they observe, and any actions taken by the staff or agency to address the problem. The county needs something similar to improve transparency, and allow for better coordination, especially for cross platform or multi-agency matters. This will allow metrics to be applied to how the county responds to problems, better reporting of results, and improvements back to the public, improving the uniform nature of response, quality of response, and public confidence that there actually are responses. It should also add efficiency and reduce costs, redundancies, and more effectively apply and process resources for responding to community issues and complaints.

documentation and everything saved or easily accessible - materials translated

effective meeting invitations

I do not understand the question?

Information on a timely basis

local newspaper, email to those who indicate interest

Meeting agenda and notes posted online

More concerted outreach to communities of color enhances transparency

No local cable channels available in our area

none of the above

Personal answers to questions I present by email or phone or in person

Share info our follow up emails and listservs

Social Media

Timely and broad notification, video available online after the meeting

What good is transparency if the county disregards the will of the people and votes to spend taxpayers money for what the counsel thinks it should be spent on regardless of public input?

Why do we never hear about meetings? Doesn't King Cty know how to find us by mail?

(P-9) If you think any major issues were missed, please tell us here.

Very clear idea for each and every citizen of unincorporated KC that KC is aware of their presence and who in KC's perspective represents them

A major issue is that many members of the UAC's mistrust the objectiveness of 5 and until that can be rectified, those residents will be unwilling to engage with the forum process.

Ask how each community is dealing proactively with the issues listed in the topic discussed in the videos

AWESOME!

Constructing low impact shelters-- along with areas open to camping/street living

County wide planning policies. It suggests that urban services are given to cities. What about the unincorporated areas when a water or sewer district is taken over (assumed) by cities. City boundaries do not follow watershed boundaries used as service areas for water and sewer

Efforts regarding how to engage low income individuals. These individuals are often hesitant to provide input, come to forums etc and yet some of the issues have a significant impact on them.

How King County's tax dollars are distributed

Survey Results

I understand that major changes are being implemented for the existing UAC's, including stripping their funding. I very much object to this unless it is based on specific problems with the individual UAC. The UAC in my area, GMVUAC, provides a high level of service, has strong ties to the community, and is a valued community institution. Implementing the Countywide Community program in a way that damages, or is perceived as damaging our local UAC, will cause resentment and resistance to the program.
Is this another tax?
King County and the King County Council would be much improved if they listened to and abided by the will of the people, never failing to remember that IT'S NOT YOUR MONEY
King County is geographically too large to be governed effectively from downtown Seattle. It is even more frustrating when county resources are used to bolster the Seattle City budget. Strained resources need to be focused on those unincorporated areas where no municipality can provide same.
Long history of not listening to rural opinions on issues that affect rural areas (i.e., CAO)
Make your videos with captions to include people who are hearing impaired
Mass transit spending is out of control, and is of practically no value to rural or even most suburban communities. We keep pouring money into Metro and Sound Transit, with little to show for the investment, all while traffic congestion relief is prioritized lower and lower in the budget. Forcing us to give up our cars is not the solution. We value our freedom of movement, and don't live in areas with the density to support cost-effective mass transit.
Need to address whether Agenda 21 issues will be imposed on us. MY VOTE IS NO!!!
Not sure that it is missed, but I think it is very important to include culturally and linguistically diverse populations, the disabled who may have transportation barriers, and typically disenfranchised populations such as individuals who are homeless. Language and cultural barriers to attendance and participation should be considered in the Forums.
Once again, after years, the main point was missed. Voters are not given the opportunity to impact what happens in unincorporated King County, other than voting for a County council representative who represents a big city as well as unincorporated county. It again feel like an effort to mollify unhappy voters with a complex process that will not make any difference.
Public safety, graffiti (sp), vandalism, gangs, meth use are all more prevalent than ever before east of Kent. I think it's caught the communities off-guard. We need more social service and recreation programs.
Road repair
The "melting pot" issues. Mexicans, Somalis, Afghanis, Bosnians, Russians, Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodians, East Europe, Africa, and other South Americans... What are we doing to help integrate them?
The county gov't needs to get away from the vagueness and propose something in detail and then let it get torn apart and reassembled to the satisfaction of the majority.
The truth about the lack of funds and abilities to perform almost any service under the current tax structure
There's not major issue but I hope you will always keep the many people without computers in mind.
Under the current system, unincorporated areas do not have an adequate voice or representation during the budget process where the level of their local services are weighed against budget considerations that are more regional in nature.

Survey Results

We need to address rampant growth in our rural areas.

What is happening to the existing UACs? They work, are well respected, know the issues. 1, residents in areas without existing UACs should be represented locally, so create more UACs. All the .things listed CSAs will provide ALREADY exist through the UACs. County officials come out every month when requested to talk with our community. The All-UAC Meetings with the Exec., Councilmembers, and County officials ALREADY are held annually in rotating locations. They are very well attended by local people. Are CSAs simply a way to ensure all RA people represented? If so, don't do away with the existing UACs.

What is the goal for participation? Expanded participation? Sadly many only participate when there is an issue directly effecting them and then only for the term of that issue. How do we continue to improve civic engagement and do it in a way that is truly representative of many, sometimes divergent views? How does the County develop adequate and equitable resources to respond to community issues?