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# City of Bellingham

## Financial and Service Priorities and Emergency Medical Services Funding Survey

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June 2004

Prepared by:



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## **METHODOLOGY**

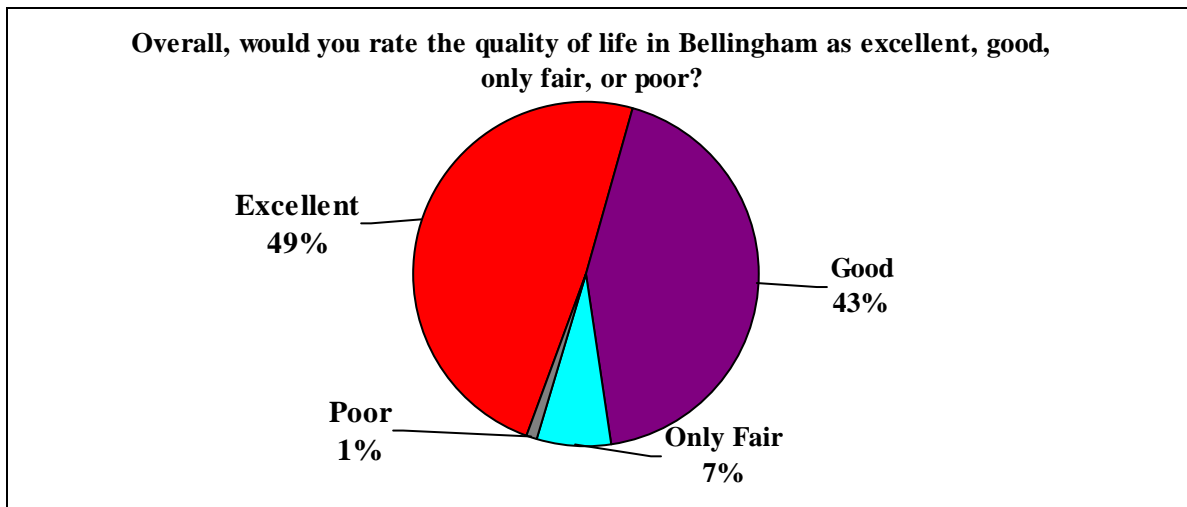
This report is based on the findings of a telephone survey conducted June 17-21, 2004 by Evans/McDonough for the City of Bellingham. A total of five hundred and thirteen (513) interviews were conducted among registered voters in the City of Bellingham at an average interview length of eighteen (18) minutes. Respondents were contacted via voter registration lists, and the sample reflects the universe of voters in the City of Bellingham by age, geography, sex, and vote history. These results have a margin of error of  $\pm 4.5$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

## Executive Summary

### A. General Issue Environment

**The results of the survey reveal that most voters in Bellingham are optimistic and that the City has high credibility among its constituents.**

- Nearly all (92%) registered voters rate the quality of life in Bellingham as either “excellent” (49%) or “good” (43%), and a majority (57%) feel that Bellingham is headed in the right direction.
- An identical majority (57%) say that the City of Bellingham is doing an “excellent” (13%) or “good” (44%) job meeting community needs.
- When asked open-ended, “What is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that city leaders can do something about?” 31% mention growth related issues. Of the 31% who mentioned growth, 9% say “controlling or managing growth”, 6% say “better planning for growth”, and 16% give a general mention.
- All city officials, departments, and cultural facilities receive strong favorable ratings from registered voters in Bellingham.



**B. Priorities**

**Although providing fire protection services, Medic One EMS, and preventing crime rank as the top priorities among those tested, all of the services tested are perceived as being important.**

*Question: I'm going to read you a list of items that the City of Bellingham could spend tax dollars on. For each item, please tell me how high a priority that item should be. Use a scale of one to seven, where one means the lowest priority and seven means the highest priority?*

<b>Services ranked by priority (highest possible mean: 7.00)</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Providing fire protection services	6.40
Providing medic one emergency medical services	6.22
Preventing crime and protecting the community	6.20
Maintaining library services for the community	5.86
Maintaining parks and trails	5.52
Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	5.40
Providing recreational programs for youth and adults	5.36
Providing educational/cultural opportunities through the children's museum	5.30
Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	5.27
Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	4.86
Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	4.66

*Question: Now I'm going to ask you to rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing in providing services which rely on taxpayer dollars—scale: excellent, good, only fair, poor?*

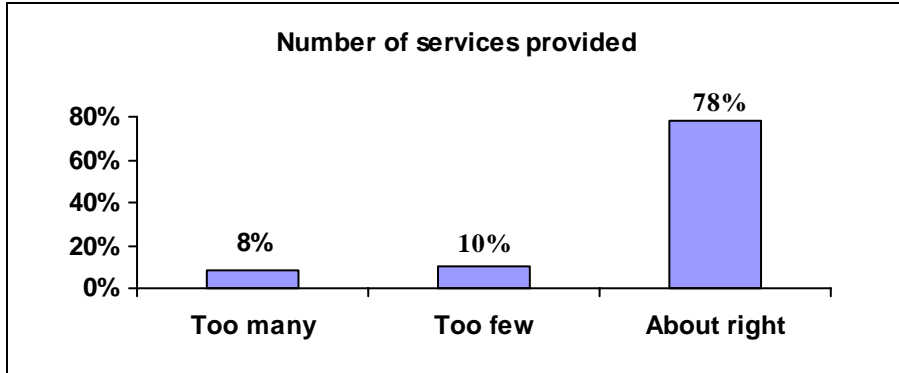
<b>Services ranked by priority</b>	<b>% Excellent or Good</b>
Providing fire protection services	92%
Providing medic one emergency medical services	78%
Preventing crime and protecting the community	74%
Maintaining library services for the community	79%
Maintaining parks and trails	86%
Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	56%
Providing recreational programs for youth and adults	74%
Providing educational/cultural opportunities through the children's museum	64%
Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	50%
Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	71%
Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	71%

- Voters give the services good performance ratings, especially those that are given the highest priority. The lowest job ratings given to any of the services came in the categories of encouraging economic development (50% excellent or good), and improving roads (56% excellent or good).

### C. Taxation and Level of Service

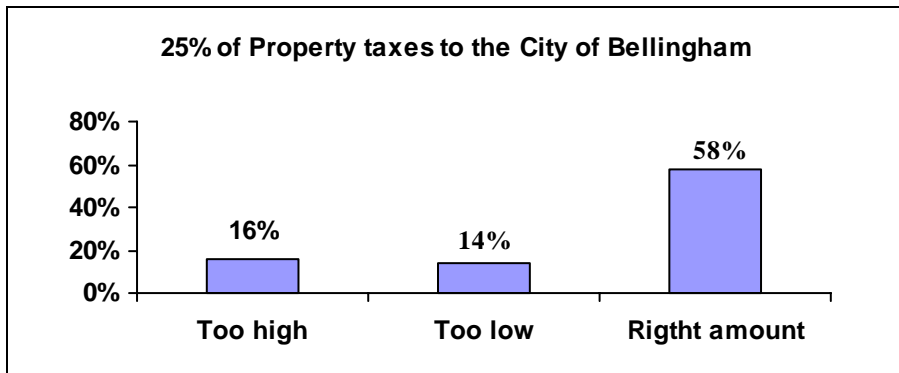
#### Most voters prefer that the City of Bellingham provide a broad balance of services.

**Question:** *Moving on, in terms of public services provided by the City of Bellingham, do you think that overall, the city provides too many services, too few services, or about the right amount of services?*



- Most voters (78%) feel that the City of Bellingham provides about the right amount of services.

**Question:** *As you may know, twenty-five percent of your property taxes go to the City of Bellingham. Would you say that amount is too high, too low, or about the right amount?*

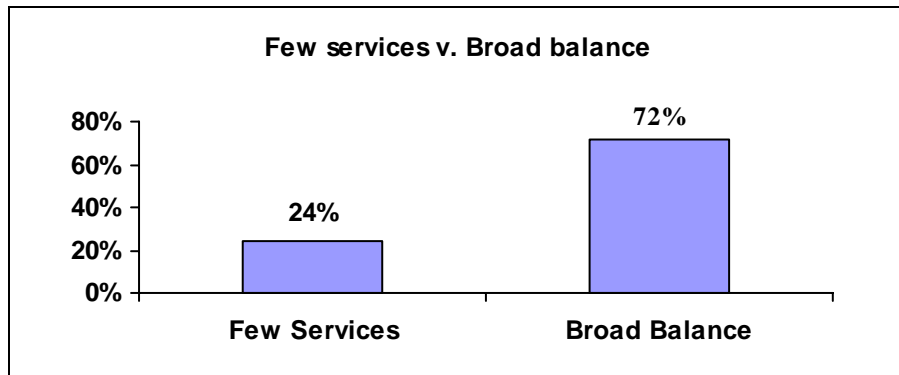


- 72% of voters believe that 25% is either the “right amount” (58%) or “too low” of an amount (14%) to give to the City of Bellingham.
- Of the 16% who think 25% of their property taxes is too high of an amount to give to the City, 63% of them think the city provides the right amount of service.

**Question:** Now I'm going to read you a couple of statements about city government:

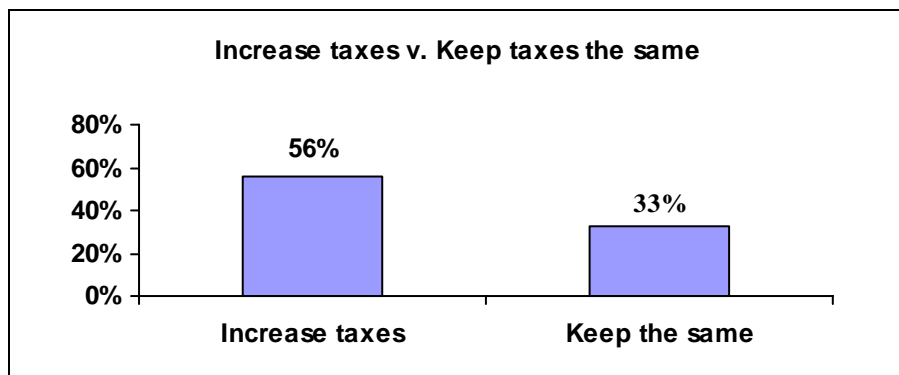
Some people say the city should only provide a few services. These services include general public safety measures such as police and fire departments, courts, and road and sidewalk maintenance including crosswalks, fixing potholes, and placing street signs.

Others say the city should provide a broader balance of services such as public safety, parks and trails, recreation programs, arts and cultural activities such as the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, libraries and other educational activities for community members. Which of the two comes closest to your view on what services city government should provide?



- Most voters prefer that the City provide a broad balance of services, such as “public safety, parks and trails, recreation programs, arts and cultural activities such as the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, libraries and other educational activities for community members”.
- Interestingly, a majority (61%) of those who think city government should only provide a few services think that the City of Bellingham provides the “right amount” of services.

**Question:** If you had to choose only one, which of the following would you choose for the City of Bellingham? Would you choose to increase taxes to maintain city services at current levels to keep up with inflation and citizens’ demand for services or keep taxes the same and cut existing services?



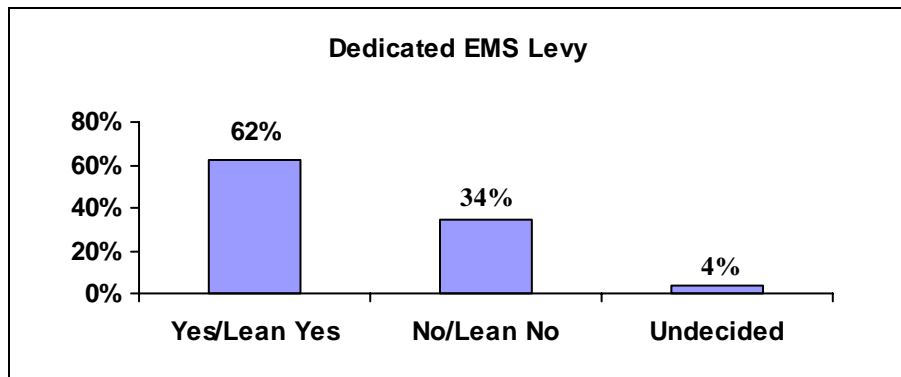
- Voters in Bellingham are a bit more divided on this issue, although a majority favors increasing taxes to maintain city services.
- Voters who feel the city should keep taxes the same are more likely to reside in Legislative District 40, vote more frequently than those who think the city should increase taxes (49% 3

of 4 or better compared to 39%), and have lived in Bellingham longer than the overall voting population (52% 21+ years compared to 38%).

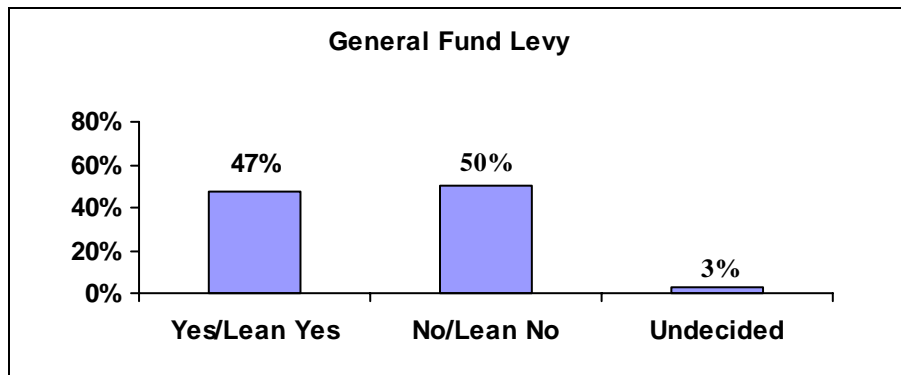
**D. Funding Options for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

**Voters prefer a levy that is dedicated to EMS over that of a general levy used for both EMS and the general fund. It is important to note, however, that these votes were asked of ALL registered voters, and not LIKELY voters.**

*Question: One of the ways the City of Bellingham is considering paying for their portion of emergency medical services is by asking Bellingham voters to approve a levy. If the election were held today and the property tax increase to fund emergency medical services would cost thirty-five dollars a year per one hundred thousand dollars of assessed value, which would equal about fifty dollars a year for the average homeowner in Bellingham, would you vote yes to enact, or no to reject such a measure?*



*Question: Another way the City of Bellingham is considering paying for their portion of emergency medical services is by asking Bellingham voters to approve a property tax levy. This levy would pay for emergency medical services and provide funding to help maintain current services such as public safety, recreation, and community development. The cost of the levy would be fifty dollars a year per one hundred thousand dollars of assessed value, which would equal about seventy-five dollars a year for the average homeowner in Bellingham. If the election were held today would you vote yes to enact or no to reject the levy?*



## **KEY FINDINGS**

**City officials, institutions, and cultural centers receive strong favorable and job ratings from voters in Bellingham. These ratings compare well against other similar communities in Washington State.**

**Although providing fire protection services, Medic One EMS, and preventing crime rank as the top priorities among those tested, all of the services tested are perceived as being important.**

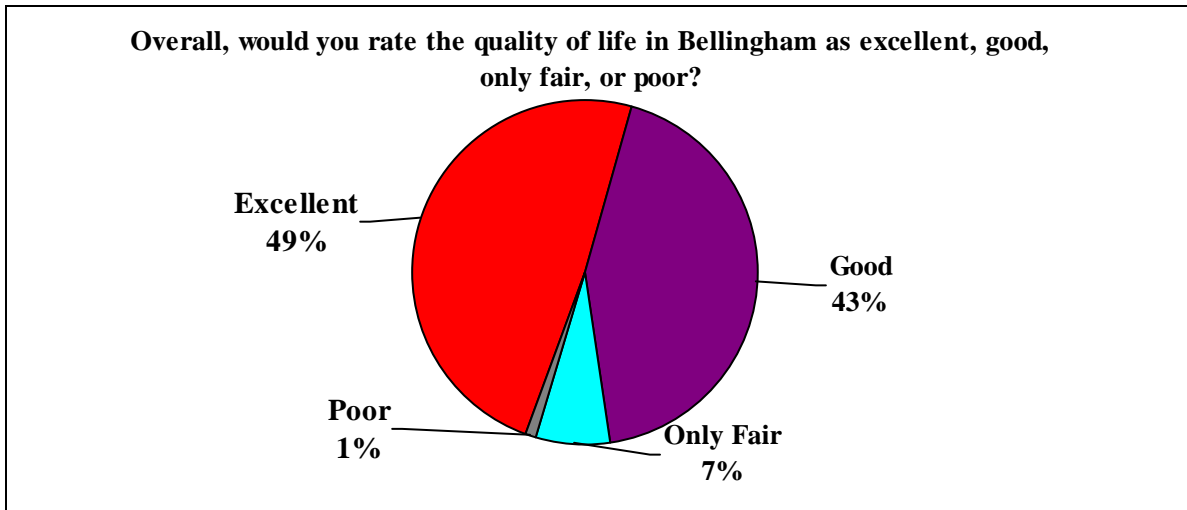
**Most voters prefer that the City of Bellingham provide a broad balance of services. This is reinforced by the high level of priority given to all the services tested in the survey. In addition, most voters feel that the City of Bellingham provides about the right amount of services.**

**The results of the survey reveal that most voters in Bellingham are optimistic and that the City has high credibility among its constituents. This high level of credibility presents an opportune time to consider a voter approved funding measure for emergency medical services.**

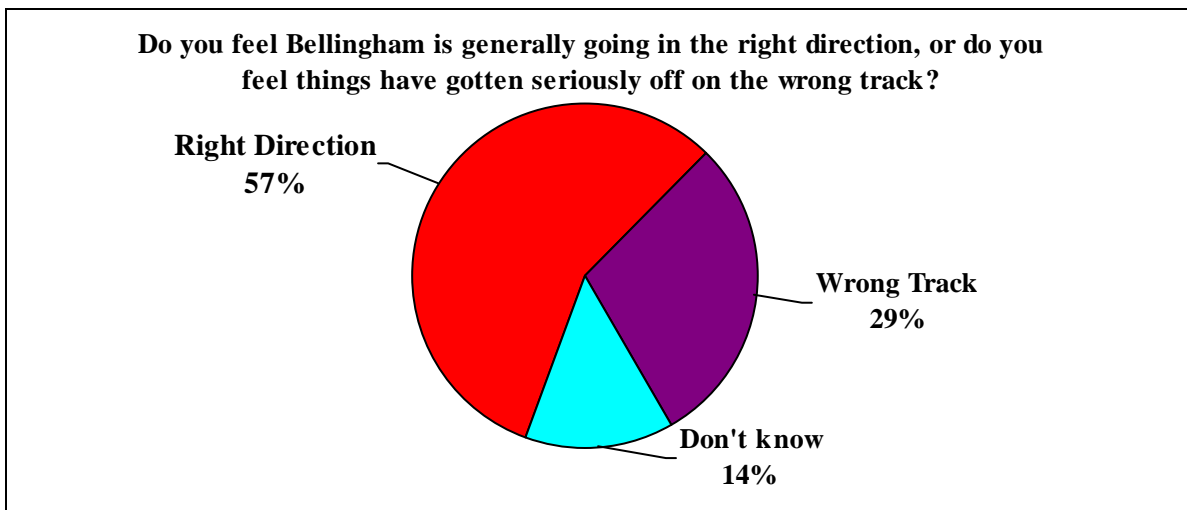
**Voters prefer a levy that is dedicated to EMS over that of a general levy used for both EMS and the general fund. It is important to note, however, that these votes were asked of ALL registered voters, and not LIKELY voters.**

**Almost three quarters (73%) of voters in Bellingham have heard or read something about funding for emergency medical services in the last year. Of those who have heard or read something, roughly three-quarters can accurately recall something about funding issues regarding emergency medical services. This finding indicates the electorate is well informed about the issues surrounding EMS and is paying attention as the issue evolves.**

**The results of the survey reveal that most voters in Bellingham are optimistic and that the city government has high credibility among its constituents.**



- Nearly all (92%) registered voters rate the quality of life in Bellingham as either “excellent” (49%) or “good” (43%).
- In a recent study in a smaller but demographically similar community in Washington State, 87% rated their area as either excellent (38%) or good (49%).

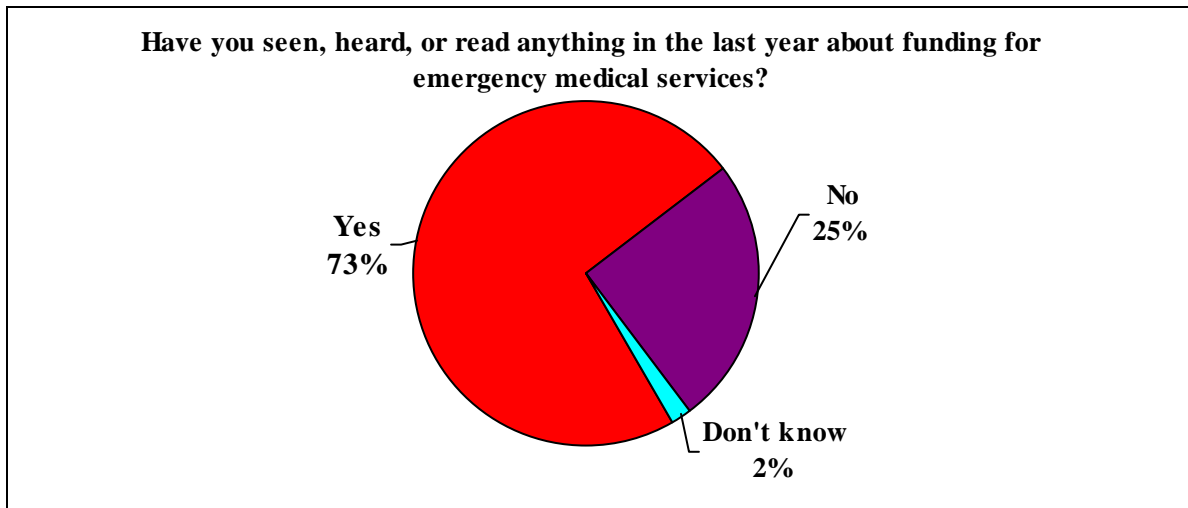


- A majority (57%) feel that Bellingham is headed in the right direction and 29% feel that Bellingham has gotten off on the wrong track. This question is an industry standard which tracks overall mood and is used as a gauge of economic optimism or pessimism. Statewide voters are more divided about the overall direction of the state, with half saying things are headed in the right direction and half saying things are off on the wrong track.
- An identical majority (57%) say that the City of Bellingham is doing an “excellent” (13%) or “good” (44%) job meeting community needs.

- When asked open-ended, “What is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that city leaders can do something about?” 31% mention growth related issues. Of the 31% who mentioned growth, 9% say “controlling or managing growth”, 6% say “better planning for growth”, and 16% give a general mention.

	%
<b>General growth/development issues</b>	<b>16</b>
Traffic/Congestion	10
<b>Controlling/Managing growth</b>	<b>9</b>
City spending/Money issues	9
Water Quality/Lake Whatcom	8
Unemployment/Need more jobs	7
<b>Better planning for growth</b>	<b>6</b>
Affordable housing	3
Crime/Need bigger jail/More police	3
Need better paying/quality jobs	3
Water front issues	2
Change leaders	2
Need a better business climate	2
Taxes	2
Health/Human services	2
Environment	1
Clean up downtown	1
Homelessness	1
Education	1
Need voter input/Better communication	1
Need more parks	1
Big government	1
Utilities/Energy/Gas	1
Nothing	2
Other	2
Don't know	5

**Almost three quarters (73%) of voters in Bellingham have heard or read something about funding for emergency medical services in the last year.**

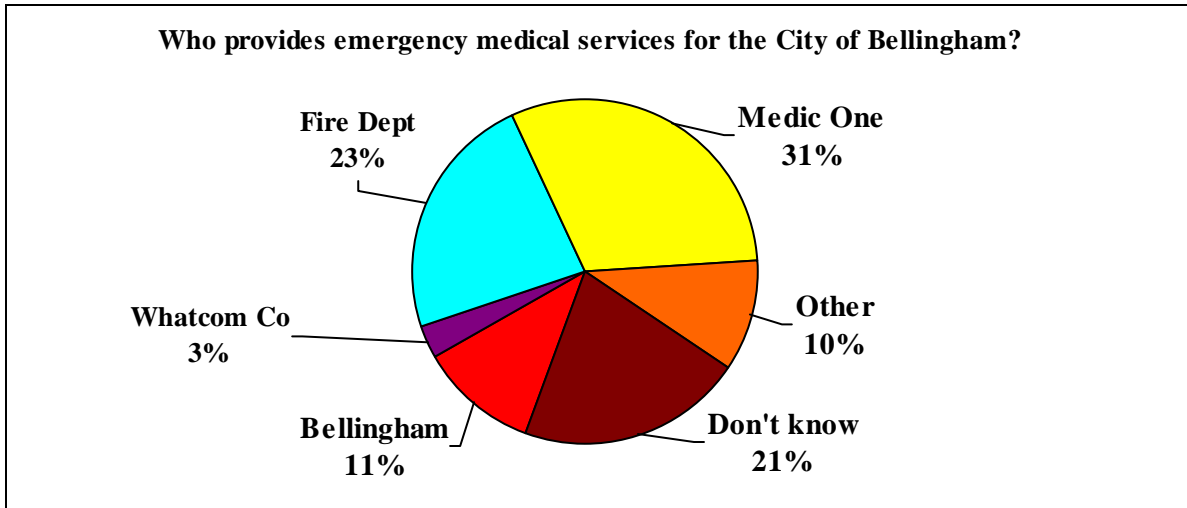


**Question:** *What have you seen, heard, or read?*

	<b>% of 375</b>
Lack of funding	14
Controversy between city/county	14
The levy failed	9
Initiative in last election	7
Levy (General mention)	7
General recall	7
Articles in the paper	7
Looking for other ways to fund	5
County doesn't want to pay for EMS	5
Increases taxes	5
We should increase funding	5
Cutting medic one services	2
Possible fees	2
Existing services are adequate	2
Word of mouth	2
Other	5
Don't know	2

- This question reveals high awareness not only on a general level, but specific issues relating to EMS. “Lack of funding” (14%), “Controversy between the city and county” (14%), and the failure of the levy (9%) are the most popular responses. Roughly three-quarters of the responses accurately recall something specific about the issue.

**Without any help almost a third (31%) of voters can accurately state who provides EMS for the City of Bellingham.**



- While 31% specifically say “Medic One”, a total of 65% say Medic One, Fire Department (23%), or Bellingham (11%).

**City officials, institutions, and cultural centers receive strong favorable ratings from voters in Bellingham.**

*Question: I'm going to read you a list of public figures and organizations. Please tell me if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or strongly unfavorable opinion of each one. If you have never heard of one please just say so.*

<b>Official/Institution Favorable Rating</b>	<b>% Favorable / % Unfavorable</b>
The Bellingham Fire Department	93/1
Bellingham Parks and Recreation	92/6
Bellingham Public Library	90/6
Mount Baker Theatre	88/6
The Bellingham Police Department	88/8
Whatcom Museum of History and Art	81/4
Whatcom Medic One	74/3
Children's Museum	73/3
The Bellingham City Council	55/29
The Mayor of Bellingham	54/35

- A strong majority of Bellingham voters give each of the officials and institutions tested in the survey a favorable rating.
- It is interesting to note that results in a few recent studies in communities of similar scope are nearly identical in their ratings of both the fire and police departments, City Council, and Mayor. Elected officials almost always test less favorably than city departments and institutions that provide specific services, and as a result, should not be compared directly with one another.

*Question: Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate each of the following?*

<b>Official/Institution Job Rating</b>	<b>% Excellent or Good / % Fair or Poor</b>
The job the Bellingham Fire Department is doing serving and protecting the community.	95/4
The job the Bellingham Police Department is doing serving and protecting the community.	83/16
The job Whatcom Medic One is doing providing emergency medical services	82/5
The job the City of Bellingham is doing meeting community needs	57/39
The overall financial health of the City of Bellingham	50/30
The job the mayor of Bellingham is doing	47/48
The job the Bellingham City Council is doing	46/46

## PRIORITIES

**Although providing fire protection services, Medic One EMS, and preventing crime rank as the top priorities among those tested, all of the services tested are perceived as being important.**

*Question: I'm going to read you a list of items that the City of Bellingham could spend tax dollars on. For each item, please tell me how high a priority that item should be. Use a scale of one to seven, where one means the lowest priority and seven means the highest priority?*

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Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	5.27
Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	4.86
Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	4.66

- Priorities among those who think Bellingham is headed in the right direction (q5 57%) **do not** differ significantly from those who think Bellingham is off on the wrong track (29%). In fact, priorities among all demographic and geographic groups rank similarly with one another.
- Next to protection services (police, fire, EMS) maintaining library services for the community ranks as the top priority. In general, police, fire, and EMS rank as the top priorities in other cities in the region.
- All services are seen as being a priority for Bellingham voters. Even the services that ranked at the bottom of the list are still above the mid-point (4.00) of the scale.

**Question:** Now I'm going to ask you to rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing in providing services which rely on taxpayer dollars—scale: excellent, good, only fair, poor?

<b>Job Ratings (ranked by priority)</b>	<b>% Excellent or Good</b>
Providing fire protection services	92
Providing medic one emergency medical services	78
Preventing crime and protecting the community	74
Maintaining library services for the community	79
Maintaining parks and trails	86
Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	56
Providing recreational programs for youth and adults	74
Providing educational/cultural opportunities through the children's museum	64
Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	50
Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	71
Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	71

- Voters give the services good performance ratings, especially those that are given the highest priority. The lowest job ratings given to any of the services came in the categories of encouraging economic development (50% excellent or good), and improving roads (56% excellent or good).

<b>Job Ratings (Ranked by %Excellent or Good)</b>	<b>% Excellent or Good</b>
Providing fire protection services	92
Maintaining parks and trails	86
Maintaining library services for the community	79
Providing medic one emergency medical services	78
Preventing crime and protecting the community	74
Providing recreational programs for youth and adults	74
Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	71
Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	71
Providing educational/cultural opportunities through the children's museum	64
Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	56
Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	50

## Spending Tax Dollars on Services: Increase, Keep the Same, or Decrease?

*Question: Now thinking about those same services, please tell me if you think the City of Bellingham should increase, keep the same, or decrease the amount of tax dollars it spends on each of the following services:*

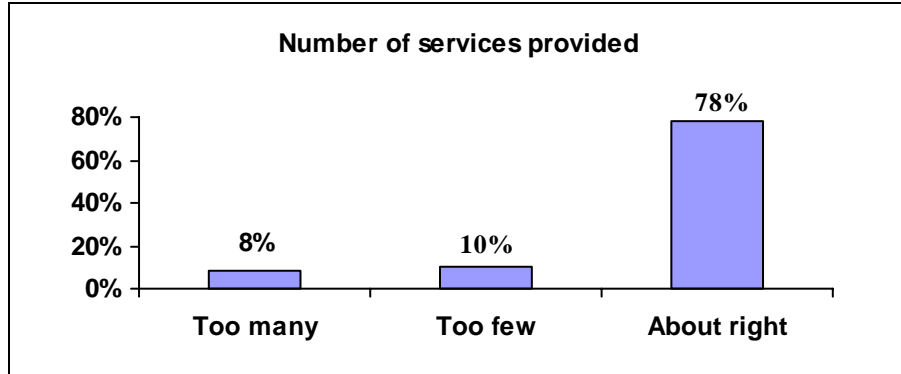
<b>Spending: (ranked by priority)</b>	<b>% Increase</b>	<b>% Decrease</b>
Providing fire protection services	32	1
Providing medic one emergency medical services	43	3
Preventing crime and protecting the community	48	2
Maintaining library services for the community	38	3
Maintaining parks and trails	28	8
Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	40	7
Providing recreational programs for youth and adults	30	7
Providing educational/cultural opportunities through the children's museum	21	8
Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	45	16
Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	14	13
Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	10	22

- Preventing crime and protecting the community (48%), encouraging economic development (45%), providing medic one EMS (43%), improving roads (40%), and maintaining library services (38%) are the services that voters would like to see spending increased the most.
- It is important to note that although almost half of voters (45%) would like to see increased spending in the area of encouraging economic development, a substantial number (16%) would like to see spending decreased. Given that growth is stated as the most important problem, this could be a potentially divisive issue in the community; at least for a significant portion of the voting population.

<b>Spending: (ranked by % Increase)</b>	<b>% Increase</b>	<b>% Decrease</b>
Preventing crime and protecting the community	48	2
Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	45	16
Providing medic one emergency medical services	43	3
Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	40	7
Maintaining library services for the community	38	3
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Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	10	22

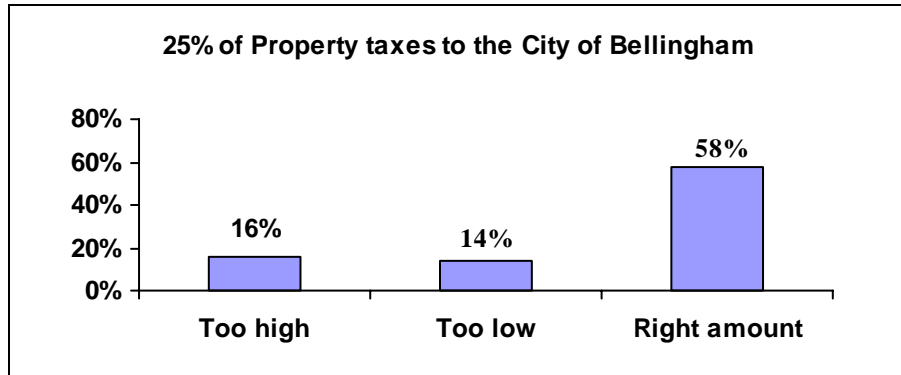
**Most voters prefer that the City of Bellingham provide a broad balance of services.**

*Question: Moving on, in terms of public services provided by the City of Bellingham, do you think that overall, the city provides too many services, too few services, or about the right amount of services?*



- Most voters (78%) feel that the City of Bellingham provides about the right amount of services.

*Question: As you may know, twenty-five percent of your property taxes go to the City of Bellingham. Would you say that amount is too high, too low, or about the right amount?*

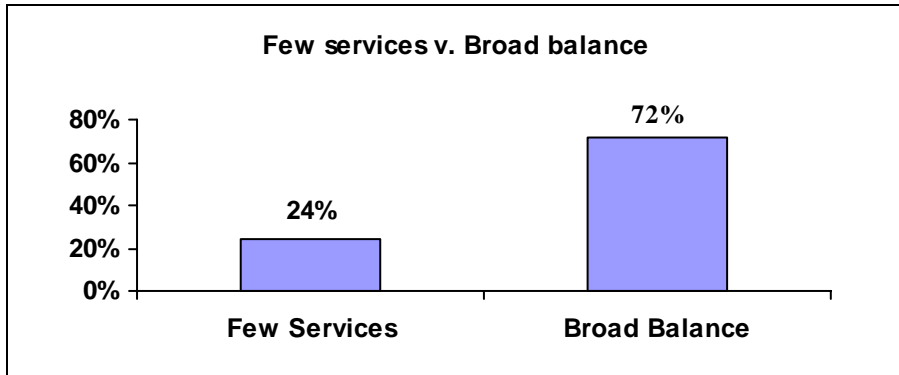


- 72% of voters believe that 25% is either the “right amount” (58%) or “too low” of an amount (14%) to give to the City of Bellingham.
- Of the 16% who think 25% of their property taxes is too high of an amount to give to the City, 63% of them think the city provides the right amount of service.

**Question:** Now I'm going to read you a couple of statements about city government:

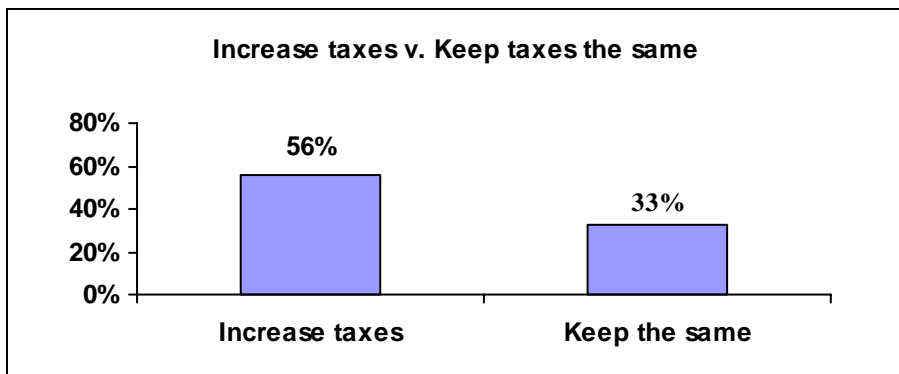
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*Others say the city should provide a broader balance of services such as public safety, parks and trails, recreation programs, arts and cultural activities such as the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, libraries and other educational activities for community members. Which of the two comes closest to your view on what services city government should provide?*



- Most voters prefer that the City provide a broad balance of services, such as “public safety, parks and trails, recreation programs, arts and cultural activities such as the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, libraries and other educational activities for community members”.
- Interestingly, a majority (61%) of those who think city government should only provide a few services think that the City of Bellingham provides the “right amount” of services.

**Question:** *If you had to choose only one, which of the following would you choose for the City of Bellingham? Would you choose to increase taxes to maintain city services at current levels to keep up with inflation and citizens’ demand for services or keep taxes the same and cut existing services?*



- Voters in Bellingham are a bit more divided on this issue, although a majority favors increasing taxes to maintain city services.

- The additional 11% are a combination of “other” (4%), “neither” (3%), “Don’t know/Refused” (4%).
- Those voters who prefer that the city keep taxes the same and cut existing services (33%) were asked to name the services they think the city should cut. Although most (23%) responded “don’t know” to this follow up question, many had specific services in mind. They include:

	<b>% of 179</b>
Parks and recreation	11
Cultural events/services (general)	7
Museums (general)	6
Mt Baker Theatre	6
Cut government salaries/Jobs/Benefits	5
Children's museum/Items for children	3
Farmer's Market	3
Economic development/Money to big business	3
Other: Projects (General)	3
Library	3
Better spending/money management	3
Stop buying property	2
Police/Law enforcement/Homeland security	2
Keep necessary/Public safety services	2
Arts	2
Bridge/Overpass	2
City bus/Transportation services	2
Other: Services (General)	2
Public should pay for unnecessary items	2
A little from everything	2
Medic One	1
Luxury items	1
Nothing	1
Other	3
Don't know	23

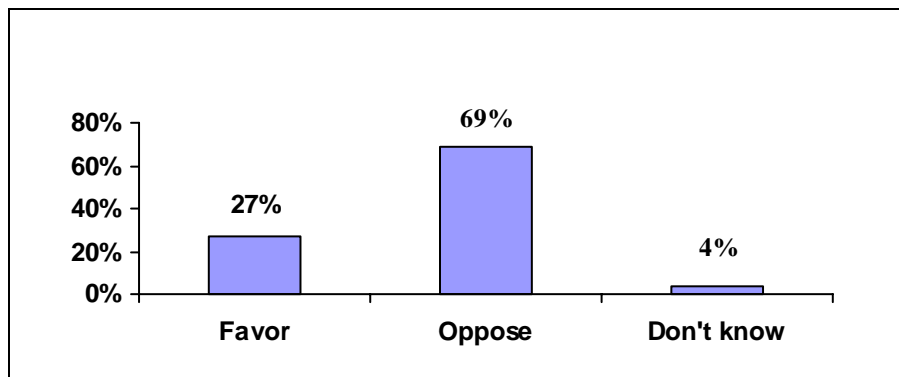
## FUNDING OPTIONS FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

### Conceptually voters prefer a levy over utility fees and shifting the sales tax revenue to pay for EMS.

Funding Option	% Favor/ % Oppose
A city-only general property tax levy that would be used to maintain a balance of services, including emergency medical services	53/42
A city-only voter approved emergency medical services property tax levy	52/42
Shifting a larger portion of sales tax money from street maintenance in exchange for a range of city services, including emergency medical services	45/48
Shifting a portion of sales tax money from the maintenance of city streets into the general fund, and using that money for emergency medical services	43/52
Establishing an emergency medical services public utility, which would be funded through a monthly utility fee	37/58
Cutting spending for other services from the city's general fund	
	41/53

- As a follow up to the option of “cutting spending for other services from the city’s general fund,” respondents were read the following:

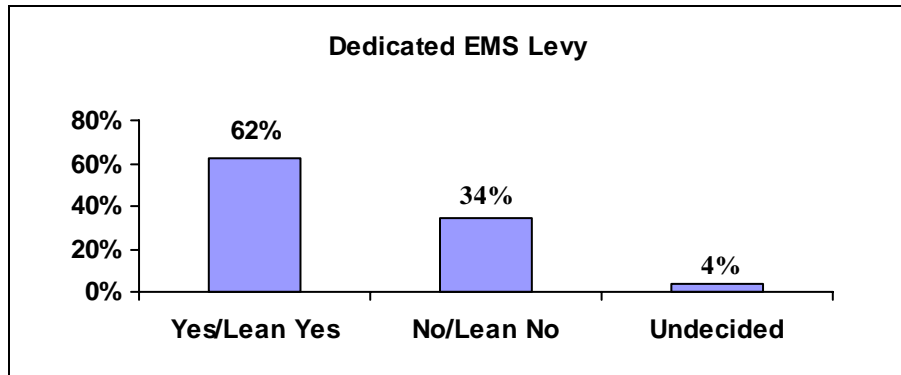
***Question:** What if you knew the services to be cut would include, but not limited to, the following: decreased police and fire services for non-emergency situations, less parks and trails maintenance; fewer library hours; and an additional increase in user fees for park and athletic facilities. If you knew these cuts and others would be made, would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose cutting spending for services from the city’s general fund?*



- When read the potential cuts that would be made there is a net shift of 30 percentage points.

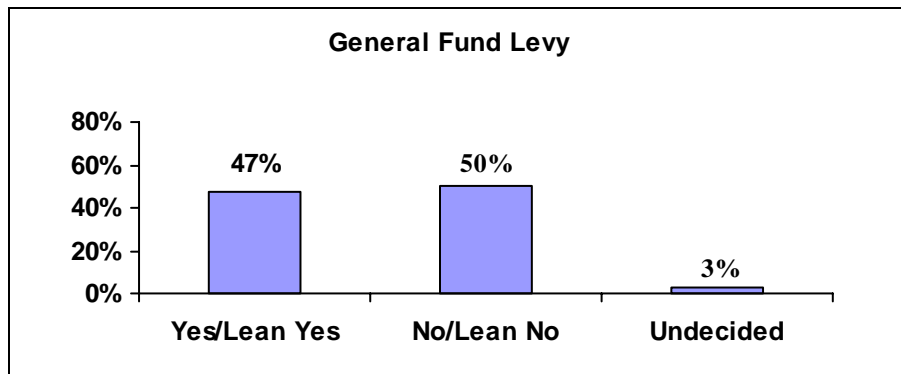
**Voters prefer a levy that is dedicated to EMS over that of a general levy used for both EMS and the general fund. It is important to note, however, that these votes were asked of ALL registered voters, and not LIKELY voters.**

*Question: One of the ways the City of Bellingham is considering paying for their portion of emergency medical services is by asking Bellingham voters to approve a levy. If the election were held today and the property tax increase to fund emergency medical services would cost thirty-five dollars a year per one hundred thousand dollars of assessed value, which would equal about fifty dollars a year for the average homeowner in Bellingham, would you vote yes to enact, or no to reject such a measure?*



- Supporters of the dedicated EMS levy are more likely to be under the age of 50 (52% compared to 43% overall), share the same vote history and income distribution as the overall electorate, and are evenly distributed according to Legislative Districts.

*Question: Another way the City of Bellingham is considering paying for their portion of emergency medical services is by asking Bellingham voters to approve a property tax levy. This levy would pay for emergency medical services and provide funding to help maintain current services such as public safety, recreation, and community development. The cost of the levy would be fifty dollars a year per one hundred thousand dollars of assessed value, which would equal about seventy-five dollars a year for the average homeowner in Bellingham. If the election were held today would you vote yes to enact or no to reject the levy?*



- Of those who voted “Yes” for the dedicated EMS levy (62%), 30% change their vote to “No” after being asked to vote on the general levy which could be used for EMS in addition to the general fund.

**APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE WITH RESULTS**

**City of Bellingham  
Emergency Medical Services Survey**

June 17-21, 2004

n=513; MOE= ± 4.5 points

EMC #04-3064

\*All numbers are reported as percentages unless otherwise noted.

\*\*Some percentages may add up to more than 100% due to rounding.

Hello, my name is . May I speak to **(NAME ON LIST)**.

Hello, my name is and I'm taking a survey for the . This is not a sales call. We're trying to find out how residents in Bellingham feel about some of the issues facing them. Would you be willing to answer a few questions on a strictly confidential basis?

---

- 2. SEX
  - Male 46%
  - Female 54%
  
- 3. Are you registered to vote at this address?
  - Yes----->CONTINUE 100%
  - No-----> **(TERMINATE)**
  
- 4. Overall, would you rate the quality of life in Bellingham as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?
  - Excellent 49
  - Good 43 => 92%
  - Only fair 7 => 8%
  - Poor 1
  - (Don't know) -
  - (Refused) -
  
- 5. Do you feel Bellingham is generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten seriously off on the wrong track?
  - Right direction 57%
  - Wrong track 29%
  - (Don't know) 14%

6. What do you think is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that city leaders can do something about? (**ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE**)

	<u>%</u>
General growth/development issues	16
Traffic/Congestion	10
Controlling/Managing growth	9
City spending/Money issues	9
Water Quality/Lake Whatcom	8
Unemployment/Need more jobs	7
Better planning for growth	6
Affordable housing	3
Crime/Need bigger jail/More police	3
Need better paying/quality jobs	3
Water front issues	2
Change leaders	2
Need a better business climate	2
Taxes	2
Health/Human services	2
Environment	1
Clean up downtown	1
Homelessness	1
Education	1
Need voter input/Better communication	1
Need more parks	1
Big government	1
Utilities/Energy/Gas	1
Nothing	2
Other	2
Don't know	5

I'm going to read you a list of public figures and organizations. Please tell me if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or strongly unfavorable opinion of each one. If you have never heard of one please just say so.

**SCALE:**      1. Strongly Favorable      2. Somewhat Favorable      3. Somewhat Unfavorable  
                   4. Strongly Unfavorable      5. (Can't Rate)      6. (Never Heard)

**(RANDOMIZE)**

<b>SCALE:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Ratio</b>	<b>Name ID</b>	
7.	The Bellingham Police Department								
	54	34	6	2	3	1	<b>11.0:1</b>	<b>96%</b>	
8.	The Bellingham Fire Department								
	74	19	1	-	5	1	<b>93.0:1</b>	<b>94%</b>	
9.	The Bellingham City Council								
	10	45	20	9	14	2	<b>1.9:1</b>	<b>84%</b>	
10.	The Mayor of Bellingham								
	15	39	17	18	9	2	<b>1.5:1</b>	<b>89%</b>	
11.	Bellingham Public Library								
	65	25	5	1	4	-	<b>15.0:1</b>	<b>96%</b>	
12.	Whatcom Medic One								
	53	21	2	1	17	6	<b>24.6:1</b>	<b>77%</b>	
13.	Whatcom Museum of History and Art								
	53	28	3	1	11	4	<b>20.3:1</b>	<b>85%</b>	
14.	Children's Museum								
	50	23	2	1	20	4	<b>24.3:1</b>	<b>76%</b>	
15.	Bellingham Parks and Recreation								
	64	28	4	2	3	-	<b>15.3:1</b>	<b>97%</b>	
16.	Mount Baker Theatre								
	57	31	4	2	5	1	<b>14.7:1</b>	<b>94%</b>	

**(END RANDOMIZE)**

Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate each of the following?

**SCALE FOR Q17-Q23:** 1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Only fair 4. Poor 5. (Don't know)

**SCALE:** 1 2 3 4 5

17.	the job the Bellingham Police Department is doing serving and protecting the community	36	47	14	2	1
18.	the job the Bellingham Fire Department is doing serving and protecting the community	61	34	3	1	1
19.	the job the mayor of Bellingham is doing	11	36	27	21	5
20.	the job the Bellingham City Council is doing	8	38	29	17	8
21.	the job Whatcom Medic One is doing providing emergency medical services	45	37	5	-	12
22.	The overall financial health of the City of Bellingham	9	41	22	8	20
23.	The job the city of Bellingham is doing meeting community needs	13	44	30	9	3



Now I'm going to ask you to rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing in providing services which rely on tax-payer dollars. Again, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the job the city of Bellingham is doing...

**SCALE FOR Q35-Q45:** 1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Only fair 4. Poor 5. (Don't know)

**(RANDOMIZE)**

<b>SCALE:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
35. Maintaining parks and trails	31	55	12	-	2
36. Providing recreational programs for youth and adults	26	48	18	2	5
37. Providing fire protection services	41	51	4	-	3
38. Providing medic one emergency medical services	34	44	12	2	8
39. Preventing crime and protecting the community	21	53	22	4	1
40. Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	9	47	33	11	-
41. Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	9	41	28	15	7
42. Maintaining library services for the community	19	60	13	5	2
43. Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	13	58	11	1	16
44. Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	22	49	17	1	11
45. Providing educational and cultural opportunities through the children's museum	15	49	15	1	21

**(END RANDOMIZE)**

Now thinking about those same services, please tell me if you think the City of Bellingham should increase, keep the same, or decrease the amount of tax dollars it spends on each of the following services:

**SCALE FOR Q46-Q56:** 1. Increase 2. Keep the same 3. Decrease 4. (Don't know)

**(RANDOMIZE)**

<b>SCALE:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
46. Maintaining parks and trails	28	61	8	3
47. Providing recreational programs for youth and adults	30	61	7	3
48. Providing fire protection services	32	64	1	4
49. Providing medic one emergency medical services	43	48	3	5
50. Preventing crime and protecting the community	48	48	2	2
51. Improving roads, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights	40	52	7	1
52. Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham	45	35	16	4
53. Maintaining library services for the community	38	56	3	3
54. Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum	14	67	13	6
55. Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre	10	63	22	5
56. Providing educational and cultural opportunities through the children's museum	21	61	8	10

**(END RANDOMIZE)**

57. Moving on, in terms of public services provided by the City of Bellingham, do you think that overall, the city provides too many services, too few services, or about the right amount of services?

Too Many	8
Too few	10
About right	78
(Don't Know)	4
(Refused)	-

58. As you may know, twenty-five percent of your property taxes go to the City of Bellingham. Would you say that amount is too high, too low, or about the right amount?

Too High	16
Too Low	14
Right amount	58
(Don't Know)	11
(Refused)	1

59. If you had to choose only one, which of the following would you choose for the City of Bellingham? Would you choose to...
- |  |    |
|--|----|
| Increase taxes to maintain city services at current levels to keep up with inflation and citizens' demand for services | 56 |
| <b>OR</b>  |    |
| Keep taxes the same and cut existing services  | 33 |
| (Other)  | 4  |
| (Neither)  | 3  |
| (Don't Know)   | 3  |
| (Refused)  | 1  |

**(IF Q59 = 2, ASK Q60; ELSE SKIP TO Q61)**

60. What services do you think the City of Bellingham should cut when inflation and citizens' demand for services outpace revenues? **(% of 179 respondents)**
- |  |    |
|--|----|
| Parks and recreation                       | 11 |
| Cultural events/services (general)         | 7  |
| Museums (general)                          | 6  |
| Mt Baker Theatre                           | 6  |
| Cut government salaries/Jobs/Benefits      | 5  |
| Children's museum/Items for children       | 3  |
| Farmer's Market                            | 3  |
| Economic development/Money to big business | 3  |
| Other: Projects (General)                  | 3  |
| Library                                    | 3  |
| Better spending/money management           | 3  |
| Stop buying property                       | 2  |
| Police/Law enforcement/Homeland security   | 2  |
| Keep necessary/Public safety services      | 2  |
| Arts                                       | 2  |
| Bridge/Overpass                            | 2  |
| City bus/Transportation services           | 2  |
| Other: Services (General)                  | 2  |
| Public should pay for unnecessary items    | 2  |
| A little from everything                   | 2  |
| Medic One                                  | 1  |
| Luxury items                               | 1  |
| Nothing                                    | 1  |
| Other                                      | 3  |
| Don't know                                 | 23 |

**(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)**

61. Now I'm going to read you a couple of statements about city government. Some people say the city should only provide a few services. These services include general public safety measures such as police and fire departments, courts, and road and sidewalk maintenance including crosswalks, fixing potholes, and placing street signs. Others say the city should provide a broader balance of services such as public safety, parks and trails, recreation programs, arts and cultural activities such as the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, libraries and other educational activities for community members. Which of the two comes closest to your view on what services city government should provide?

Few services	24
Broad balance	72
(Don't know)	4
(Refused)	-

62. From what you know or have heard, who provides emergency medical services for the City of Bellingham? **(DO NOT READ CHOICES)**

(City of Bellingham)	11
(Whatcom County)	3
(State of WA)	-
(Fire Department)	23
(Medic one)	31
(Other)	10
(Don't know)	21
(Refused)	-

63.	Have you seen, heard, or read anything in the last year about funding for emergency medical services?	
	Yes	73
	No	25
	(Don't know)	2
	(Refused)	-

**(IF Q63 = 1, ASK Q64; ELSE SKIP TO Q65)**

64.	What have you seen, heard, or read?	<b><u>(% of 375 respondents)</u></b>
	Lack of funding	14
	Controversy between city/county	14
	The levy failed	9
	Initiative in last election	7
	Levy (General mention)	7
	General recall	7
	Articles in the paper	7
	Looking for other ways to fund	5
	County doesn't want to pay for EMS	5
	Increases taxes	5
	We should increase funding	5
	Cutting medic one services	2
	Possible fees	2
	Existing services are adequate	2
	Word of mouth	2
	Other	5
	Don't know	2

**(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)**



Next I would like to read you a bit more about a couple of the options to fund emergency medical services.

**(ROTATE Q72-Q73)**

72. **[One of the ways]** the City of Bellingham is considering paying for their portion of emergency medical services is by asking Bellingham voters to approve a levy. If the election were held today and the property tax increase to fund emergency medical services would cost thirty-five dollars a year per one hundred thousand dollars of assessed value, which would equal about fifty dollars a year for the average homeowner in Bellingham, would you vote yes to enact, or no to reject such a measure? **(IF UNDECIDED)** Well which way do you lean—toward yes or no?

Yes	59
(Lean Yes)	3=> 62%
No	33=> 34%
(Lean No)	1
(Undecided/Don't Know)	4
(Refused)	-

73. **[A different way]** the City of Bellingham is considering paying for their portion of emergency medical services is by asking Bellingham voters to approve a property tax levy. This levy would pay for emergency medical services and provide funding to help maintain current services such as public safety, recreation, and community development. The cost of the levy would be fifty dollars a year per one hundred thousand dollars of assessed value, which would equal about seventy-five dollars a year for the average homeowner in Bellingham. If the election were held today would you vote yes to enact or no to reject the levy? **(IF UNDECIDED)** Well which way do you lean—toward yes or no?

Yes	43
(Lean Yes)	4=> 47%
No	50=> 50%
(Lean No)	-
(Undecided/Don't Know)	3
(Refused)	-

**(END ROTATE)**

74. Yet another way the City of Bellingham is considering paying for their portion of the emergency medical services is through a utility fee, which would be dedicated to emergency medical services. The estimated cost would be between forty-eight and sixty dollars per year per household. Would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose establishing a utility fee to pay for emergency medical services?

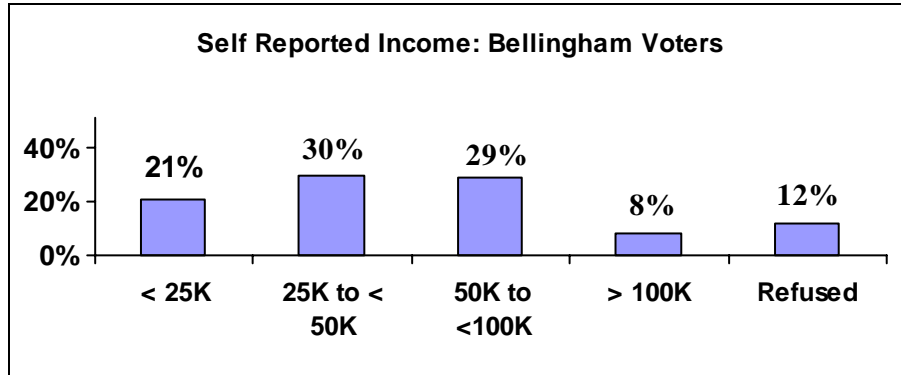
Strongly favor	12
Somewhat favor	31=> 43%
Somewhat oppose	17=> 54%
Strongly oppose	37
(Don't know)	3

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes only.

75.	Do you own or rent your apartment or home?	
	Own/buying	74
	Rent	24
	(DK/Refused)	3
76.	How long have you lived in Bellingham? ( <b>RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS/IF LESS THAN ONE YEAR TYPE '0'</b> )	
	Less than 5 years	19
	5 to 10 years	23
	11 to 20 years	20
	21 or more	38
77.	Do any children under the age of 18 live in your household?	
	Yes	31
	No/(Refused)	69
78.	What is your age? ( <b>READ CODES IF NECESSARY</b> )	
	18-24	2
	25-29	8
	30-34	5
	35-39	10
	40-44	7
	45-49	10
	50-54	16
	55-59	11
	60-64	8
	65+	22
	(Refused)	1
79.	Please stop me when I read the category that includes your annual household income before taxes: less than \$15,000, at least 15,000 but less than 25,000, at least 25,000 but less than 35,000, at least 35,000 but less than 50,000, at least 50,000 but less than 75,000, at least 75,000 but less than 100,000, or more than 100,000?	
	<\$15,000	9
	\$15,000-24,999	12
	\$25,000-34,999	14
	\$35,000-49,999	16
	\$50,000-74,999	19
	\$75,000-99,999	10
	>\$100,000	8
	(Refused/DK)	12

**Thank you very much for participating in this important survey. Your feedback is important to helping City of Bellingham officials make choices about budget priorities. They appreciate your time and opinions. Thank you, again, and have a good evening.**

## APPENDIX B: SELF REPORTED INCOME



- The median household income category for Bellingham voters is \$35,000 to \$49,999. Statewide the median household income for all residents is \$45,776 and nationally it is \$41,994 (Source for statewide and national data: U.S. Census).