

## **SULTAN CITY COUNCIL RETREAT AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

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**ITEM NO:** D-1  
**DATE:** February 20, 2010  
**SUBJECT:** 2010 Work Plan and 3-Year Financial Analysis  
**CONTACT PERSON:** Deborah Knight, City Administrator

**ISSUE:**

The issue before the city council is to review the financial assumptions (Attachment A), proposed 2011-2014 budget themes (Attachment B) and proposed 3-year work plan (Attachment C).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Review the financial assumptions, proposed budget themes, and three-year work plan.
2. Direct staff to areas of concern.

Discuss the financial assumptions. Use the assumptions to prioritize the budget themes and three-year work plan to achieve short-term and long-term priorities such as meeting state planning mandates, increasing public safety services, supporting economic development and preparing for recovery of the housing market.

**SUMMARY:**

The city council recently completed many of the long-range goals adopted either formally or informally beginning in 2004. These goals included:

- Bringing revenues and expenditures into alignment in the general fund and enterprise funds
- Building savings in the contingency fund (rainy-day fund)
- Stabilizing the police department and improving public safety
- Funding facility maintenance and operations
- Adopting a compliant 2004 comprehensive plan
- Constructing road and park improvements and spending grant funds
- Moving forward with improvements at the waste water treatment plant to accommodate future growth

- Implementing streamline permitting – installing Springbrook building permit module and improving permit applications (packets)
- Updating the development code

With the completion of previous council goals, it is time to set new goals to move the community forward. The purpose of adopting new budget themes is to set the stage for the city council's 2011 budget and 3-year work plan for 2011-2014.

The city council should keep in mind the priorities identified by the community in the citizen surveys and consultant interviews completed in 2009 and 2010 (Attachment D) such as public safety, parks maintenance, and economic development.

With the adoption of the budget themes the city council can align revenues, expenditures and staff resources to move the city towards a specific vision.

### Proposed Budget Themes

The proposed budget themes are divided into four categories:

1. Public safety
2. Economic development
3. Community development
4. Fiscal responsibility

Once the council decides on the budget themes and prioritized implementation tasks, city staff will prepare specific implementation strategies for council discussion between now and the budget retreat in October. The city council should agree on the budget themes to develop the 2011 budget.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **Three-Year Plan Financial Assumptions**

The three-year general fund financial analysis assumes continued flat-line revenues through 2013. Staff recommend using the 2010 general fund revenue assumptions (\$1.9 million) as the basis for the 2011 budget.

Property tax revenues are expected to remain static with few new properties added to the tax rolls and Initiative 767 limited increases to 1% or less. Utility taxes are expected to keep pace with inflation and will continue to be the only growing source of revenue in the general fund.

The city's major source of variable revenue are land use and building permit fees. The city is required to use building permit revenues to support building permit services including land use permit processing, building plan review, building and infrastructure inspections and overhead. The city council should be prepared to match increasing

land use and building permit revenues with staff and/or consultant contracts to maintain customer service levels.

The state's chief economist, Arun Raha forecasts a very slow recovery to the housing market with housing inventory remaining well above the trend.

Sultan is likely to lag even further behind a general King County and Snohomish County recovery due to the city's distance from major jobs markets.

City staff anticipate a slight increase in housing permits in 2012 and 2013 with the next market peak in 2015. This should clear the city's inventory of platted and buildable lots. New land use applications for housing developments will likely be submitted in 2014-2015.

Over the next three years, population growth will range between .5% (22 people or approximately 9 homes) and 2.5% (114 people or approximately 45 homes) over the next three years.

### **Proposed Budget Themes**

The proposed budget themes build on the work started by the city in 2009 and 2010. The focus is on completing projects started in 2010 and setting the city up to move forward in 2012.

### **Proposed Public Safety Goals**

1. Reduce incidents of crime as measured in monthly police reports
2. Reduce the city's transient population and incidents of anti-social behavior not acceptable to the Sultan community.
3. Improve the community's perception of public safety.

There are two types of public safety projects the council may consider: on-going and one-time. If the city council has a goal of improving public safety specific implementation strategies in 2011 could include:

- Adding a police officer - \$106,000 on-going
- Adding security cameras - \$5,000 one-time
- Funding emphasis patrols - \$50,000 one-time
- Increase animal control and code enforcement - \$50,000 on-going
- Working with county parks to master plan Sky View Tracts (on the south side of the Skykomish River) - \$0 on-going.

Out of all of the strategies to improve public safety listed above, adding a police officer and security cameras are on-going expenses. The other tasks are on-time projects even if, like master planning Sky View Tracts, they may go on for several years.

The city council should keep in mind the 3-year fiscal analysis and base-line revenues before considering on-going levels of service such, as adding a police officer, that must be maintained year-in and year-out. Unless additional revenues are available, the city council may have to discontinue other programs and/or services to “buy-in” on-going expenses.

### Proposed Economic Development Goals

1. Seek strategic public and private partnerships to enhance the city’s economic growth.
2. Remove unnecessary bureaucracy and regulatory barriers to encourage economic development while maintaining city standards.
3. Maintain the city’s existing public buildings, parks and streets.
4. Improve and enforce existing land use and building code regulations.
5. Prepare the city’s parks, roads, stormwater, water and waste water facilities for an increasing population and more rigorous state and federal operating standards.

The council should consider efforts to:

- Build relationships with the business community - \$1,000
- Update the city’s code to remove economic barriers - \$2,500
- Improve park maintenance - \$30,000
- Develop camping facilities - \$30,000
- Increase code enforcement - \$0-\$50,000

The city council should also set aside staff resources to support the growing regional effort to use the city’s natural resources and location to draw tourists and support services to Sultan and the Sky Valley.

### Proposed Community Development Goals

1. Stay current with growth management act and other state planning requirements. Update supporting plans as required and needed.
2. Maximize land use strengths such as proximity to US 2 while minimizing land use weaknesses such as proximity to floodplain.
3. Strategically study city owned resources and seek opportunities to lead community development with public investment.

The city budgeted \$300,000 in 2010 to update the comprehensive plan, parks plan, water system plan and general sewer plan. City staff estimate an additional \$124,721 will be needed in 2011 to complete this work.

<b>Comprehensive Plan Element</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Comprehensive Plan	General Fund	\$103,600	\$49,900
Park Plan (PMC)	General Fund	\$30,000	\$5,000
General Sewer Plan (RH2)	Sewer Op. Fund	\$100,000	\$32,150
Water System Plan (RH2)	Water Op. Fund	\$60,000	\$37,671
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$293,600</b>	<b>\$124,721</b>

The lower level of planning in 2011 may allow the city council to invest in other one-time optional services such as public safety, code enforcement, parks maintenance and economic development.

- Finish 2011 planning efforts - \$125,000
- Increase animal control/code enforcement - \$50,000

#### Proposed Fiscal Responsibility Goals

1. Proactively manage equipment replacement
2. Pay off existing loans and reduce the city's debt service payments. Limit future debt obligations until economic recovery is certain.
3. Seek to set aside \$1,000,000 in general fund contingency account and \$350,000 60-day operating reserve.
4. Stay current with utility rates to ensure adequate revenues to meet expenditure assumptions.

The city implemented the Springbrook building permit module in 2009. Work is underway to add public works permits to the system.

The next step is to connect the utility billing, financial services and building permit modules together to reduce redundancies and increase efficiency. The city council should also consider upgrading from the current version (V6) to the .net version (V7) of the software. Springbrook has announced it will not support version 6 after 2011. The wait time to install version 7 is 12 months.

The cost to upgrade the software is approximately \$40,000. Springbrook allows the cost to be distributed at no interest over three years. Springbrook has indicated there is no cost to the city to integrate the modules together.

City staff recommend scheduling this work for the second and third quarter of 2011. The city needs to pay a \$2,500 deposit in 2010 to schedule the upgrade and integration.

- Springbrook upgrade and back-end integration - \$40,000
- Pay-off interfund loan - \$135,000
- Create general fund 60 day operating reserve - \$325,000
- Prepare to replace garbage truck - \$550,000

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Review the 2010 work plan and direct staff to areas of concern. Make changes to tasks and/or timing to meet the city's long and short-term goals.

Review the 3-year general fund financial analysis.

Discuss and prioritize implementation strategies to achieve long-term priorities such as meeting state planning mandates, adding a public safety officer, supporting economic development and preparing for recovery of the housing market.

**ATTACHMENTS**

A – 3-year Financial Analysis

B – Proposed 2011-2014 Budget Themes

C – 2011-2014 Work Plan

D – Public Survey Results and Studio Cascade Interviews

**Three-Year Financial Analysis  
General Fund Revenues**

General Fund  
Revenues

TAXES	2009 Actual	2010 Budget	2011	2012	2013
R&P TAX	\$ 572,959	\$ 584,046	\$ 589,886	\$ 595,785	\$ 601,743
SALES TAX	\$ 276,000	\$ 276,000	\$ 278,760	\$ 281,548	\$ 284,363
Property Tx Int	\$ 181	\$ 200	\$ 590	\$ 1,192	\$ 1,203
B&O Electric	\$ 120,556	\$ 127,000	\$ 129,540	\$ 132,131	\$ 134,773
B&O Gas	\$ 77,378	\$ 83,000	\$ 85,490	\$ 88,055	\$ 90,696
Cable Franch.	\$ 41,950	\$ 47,570	\$ 48,997	\$ 50,467	\$ 51,981
B&O Cable	\$ 58,209	\$ 58,350	\$ 60,101	\$ 61,904	\$ 63,761
B&O Phone	\$ 121,737	\$ 90,658	\$ 93,378	\$ 96,179	\$ 99,064
Water Utility	\$ 43,387	\$ 42,350	\$ 43,621	\$ 44,929	\$ 45,828
Sewer Utility	\$ 61,731	\$ 62,500	\$ 64,375	\$ 66,306	\$ 67,632
Garbage Utility	\$ 29,281	\$ 29,200	\$ 30,076	\$ 30,978	\$ 31,598
Gambling Tax	\$ 4,332	\$ 1,650	\$ 1,683	\$ 1,717	\$ 1,751
Sales Tax CJ	\$ 58,872	\$ 58,837	\$ 60,014	\$ 61,214	\$ 62,438
<b>Total Taxes</b>	<b>\$ 1,466,573</b>	<b>\$ 1,461,361</b>	<b>\$ 1,486,510</b>	<b>\$ 1,512,404</b>	<b>\$ 1,542,652</b>

**Three-Year Financial Analysis  
General Fund Revenues**

<b>Lisc&amp;Permits</b> #LU APPS/# BLDG PRMT	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Budget</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Business Lisc	\$ 16,483	\$ 18,500	\$ 13,600	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Bldgs/Struct	\$ 26,867	\$ 10,500	\$ 11,025	\$ 11,576	\$ 12,155
Permits Other	\$ 5,669	\$ 5,125	\$ 5,253	\$ 5,384	\$ 5,654
Animal Lics	\$ 495	\$ 500	\$ 525	\$ 551	\$ 579
Non Bus Pmts	\$ -	\$ 450	\$ 473	\$ 496	\$ 521
<b>Total Lic&amp;Pmts</b>	<b>\$ 49,514</b>	<b>\$ 35,075</b>	<b>\$ 30,876</b>	<b>\$ 33,008</b>	<b>\$ 34,658</b>

<b>Int Govt</b>	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Budget</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
CTED Plning	\$ 7,228	\$ 17,500	\$ 5,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
WSTC Grnts	\$ 7,525	\$ 95,920	\$ 3,500	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
FEMA	\$ 1,271	\$ 5,440	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
PUD Privilege	\$ 26,642	\$ 30,300	\$ 35,000	\$ 36,500	\$ 36,500
DUI Cities	\$ 1,488	\$ 900	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,050	\$ 1,050
Liquor Exs	\$ 31,436	\$ 21,773	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,550	\$ 22,550
Liquor Profit	\$ 22,107	\$ 37,488	\$ 40,000	\$ 41,000	\$ 41,000
CJ Fund	\$ 1,006	\$ 1,093	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
CJ Special	\$ 2,498	\$ 2,190	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400	\$ 2,400
Hardship	\$ 74,730	\$ 109,600	\$ 50,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 30,000
<b>Total Intergovt.</b>	<b>\$ 175,931</b>	<b>\$ 322,204</b>	<b>\$ 160,150</b>	<b>\$ 161,500</b>	<b>\$ 146,500</b>

**Three-Year Financial Analysis  
General Fund Revenues**

<b>Charges For Svs</b>	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Budget</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Sale of Mps Pub		\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100	\$ 100
Certifications	\$ 245	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
Law Enf.Cps.	\$ 50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Candidate Filing	\$ 90				
Animal Control Fees	\$ 309				
Passport Fees	\$ 10,990	\$ 13,500	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000
L/E Sevice	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Oth Eviron Prtct	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,450	\$ 3,450
Hearing Exam	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ 4,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Cnslt Review Dep	\$ 1,939	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Zoning Fees	\$ 39,100	\$ 5,250	\$ 5,513	\$ 5,788	\$ 6,078
Plan Check Fees	\$ 14,498	\$ 5,250	\$ 5,513	\$ 5,788	\$ 6,078
<b>Total Charges</b>	<b>\$ 67,221</b>	<b>\$ 29,100</b>	<b>\$ 43,225</b>	<b>\$ 45,626</b>	<b>\$ 46,205</b>

<b>Fines &amp; Penalty</b>	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Budget</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Dist.Ct	\$ 26,048	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Violations Bur.	\$ 1,619	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Animal Cntrl	\$ 296	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200
<b>Total F&amp;P</b>	<b>\$ 27,963</b>	<b>\$ 28,200</b>	<b>\$ 28,200</b>	<b>\$ 28,200</b>	<b>\$ 28,200</b>

**Three-Year Financial Analysis  
General Fund Revenues**

<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Budget</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Invest Interest	\$ 13,232	\$ 22,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 65,000
Sales Tax Interest	\$ 915	\$ 1,025	\$ 2,300	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
Rents & Royalties	\$ 46,741	\$ 52,644	\$ 52,644	\$ 52,644	\$ 52,644
Contributions	\$ 2,302	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
WASPC Grants		\$ -			
Admin Fees					
Judgments	\$ 4,695	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Over/Short	\$ (25)				
NSF	\$ 1,159	\$ 1,500	\$ 825	\$ 833	\$ 833
Admin Impact	\$ 1,050	\$ 1,050	\$ 2,600	\$ 2,700	\$ 2,700
Misc	\$ 20,381	\$ 7,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
<b>Total Misc</b>	<b>\$ 90,450</b>	<b>\$ 85,219</b>	<b>\$ 93,369</b>	<b>\$ 108,677</b>	<b>\$ 128,677</b>
Operating Transfer	\$ 13,300				
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 1,890,952</b>	<b>\$ 1,961,159</b>	<b>\$ 1,842,330</b>	<b>\$ 1,889,415</b>	<b>\$ 1,926,893</b>

**Three-Year Financial Analysis  
General Fund Revenues**

**Expenditures**

	<b>2009 Actual</b>	<b>2010 Budget</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Legislative	\$ 11,452.55	\$ 13,120.00	\$ 13,579.20	\$ 14,054.47	\$ 14,546.38
Executive	\$40,810.82	\$ 33,247.67	\$ 34,411.34	\$ 35,615.74	\$ 36,862.29
Finance	\$ 49,438.08	\$ 47,381.00	\$ 49,039.34	\$ 50,755.71	\$ 52,532.16
Grants	\$ 27,841.06	\$ 28,451.00	\$ 29,446.79	\$ 30,477.42	\$ 31,544.13
Legal Services	\$ 85,553.66	\$ 56,324.00	\$ 58,295.34	\$ 60,335.68	\$ 62,447.43
Civil Service	\$ 5,086.65	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Governmental Services	\$ 67,351.00	\$ 54,700.00	\$ 56,614.50	\$ 58,596.01	\$ 60,646.87
Law Enforcement	\$ 949,137.00	\$ 1,082,608.00	\$ 1,120,499.28	\$ 1,159,716.75	\$ 1,200,306.84
Law Enforcement Agency Fees	\$ 113,224.00	\$ 143,400.00	\$ 148,419.00	\$ 153,613.67	\$ 158,990.14
Code Enforcement	\$ 19,611.18	\$ 29,586.00	\$ 30,621.51	\$ 31,693.26	\$ 32,802.53
Planning and Development	\$ 230,119.80	\$ 302,856.53	\$ 313,456.50	\$ 324,427.48	\$ 335,782.44
Building and Development	\$ 64,286.60	\$ 61,520.00	\$ 63,673.20	\$ 65,901.76	\$ 68,208.32
Public Health	\$ 1,356.21	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,552.50	\$ 1,606.84	\$ 1,663.08
Library	\$ 8,717.11	\$ 8,200.00	\$ 8,487.00	\$ 8,784.05	\$ 9,091.49
Parks and Recreation	\$ 78,068.00	\$ 91,407.00	\$ 94,606.25	\$ 97,917.46	\$ 101,344.57
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,391.00	\$ 5,825.00	\$ 6,028.88	\$ 6,239.89	\$ 6,458.28
Debt Service Payments	\$ 42,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operating Transfers	\$ 3,499.60	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 1,798,944.32</b>	<b>\$ 1,954,301.20</b>	<b>\$ 2,022,701.74</b>	<b>\$ 2,093,496.30</b>	<b>\$ 2,166,768.67</b>
					\$ -
<b>Revenue- Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 92,008</b>	<b>\$ 6,858</b>	<b>\$ (180,372)</b>	<b>\$ (204,081)</b>	<b>\$ (211,224)</b>

## **2011-2014 Budget Themes**

### **Public Safety**

1. Reduce incidents of crime as measured in monthly police reports
2. Reduce the city's transient population and incidents of public drunkenness, public urination and defecation, graffiti, and vandalism.
3. Improve the community's perception of public safety.

### **Economic Development**

1. Maintain the city's existing public buildings, parks and streets.
2. Prepare the city's parks, roads, stormwater, water and waste water facilities for an increasing population and more rigorous state and federal operating standards.
3. Improve and enforce existing land use and building code regulations.
4. Seek strategic public and private partnerships to enhance the city's economic growth.
5. Remove unnecessary bureaucracy and regulatory barriers to encourage economic development while maintaining city standards.

### **Community Development**

1. Maximize land use strengths such as proximity to US 2 while minimizing land use weaknesses such as proximity to floodplain.
2. Strategically study city owned resources and seek opportunities to lead community development with public investment.
3. Stay current with growth management act and other state planning requirements. Update supporting plans as required and needed.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

1. Pay off existing loans and reduce the city's debt service payments. Limit future debt obligations until economic recovery is certain.
2. Seek to set aside \$1,000,000 in general fund contingency account and \$350,000 60-day operating reserve.
3. Stay current with utility rates to ensure adequate revenues to meet expenditure assumptions.
4. Proactively manage equipment replacement

**2011-2014 Work Plan**

**Public Safety**

2011

- Update the city's nuisance codes. No direct cost, staff time only
- Implement fire inspections of public and private businesses to ensure public safety.
- Add security cameras to remote trouble-spots - \$7,500 per location plus maintenance and replacement
- Fund emphasis patrols using paid staff and volunteers for drug enforcement, gang activity, auto theft, etc. \$50,000 annually. No on-going commitment.

2012

- Hire full-time community service officer – additional \$50,000 per year for salary and benefits (\$75,000 total) plus annual cost of living adjustment
- Add code enforcement officer - \$30,000 part-time or \$75,000 full-time plus annual cost of living adjustment

2013

- Add a patrol officer to swing shift - \$106,000 plus annual contract adjustment

**Economic Development**

2011

- Continue business retention and education efforts – roundtables and workshops
- Participate in public/private partnerships to increase recreation and tourism opportunities in the Sky Valley - \$0
- Support efforts like Grow Washington in partnership with the business community to support start-up businesses in Sultan - \$5,000
- Review the city's land use and development codes. No direct cost. In-house staff.
- Complete campground feasibility study - \$30,000

2012

- Rezone urban center, economic development and industrial properties to maximize economic development opportunities - \$45,000
- Economic development strategic plan - \$75,000

**2011-2014 Work Plan**

- Update the city's logo, website, letter head and other printed materials to reflect new stage of growth and civic professionalism \$125,000.

**2013**

- Add code enforcement officer - \$30,000 part-time or \$75,000 full-time plus annual cost of living adjustment
- Identify potential parcels for future park acquisition \$65,000. Set aside park impact fees for specific acquisition strategy \$750,000.
- Complete Waste Water Treatment Plan upgrade - \$18,000,000
- Build high-level reservoir and distribution system to provide fire flow to Sultan Basin \$4,000,000
- Fund road and street maintenance in the historic business district \$650,000 to \$1,000,000
- Fund road and street improvements in the industrial area \$750,000
- Fund capital improvements to enhance public owned facilities such as the Post Office, Boys and Girls Club and Food Bank \$750,000.

**2014**

- Pave unpaved roadways including sidewalks and storm drain systems \$1,000,000
- Public/private partnership to purchase and develop land for retail center - \$5,000,000
- Add planning and building department staff or contract services to meet growing economic recovery - \$150,000 plus annual cost of living adjustment
- Add an economic development specialist - contracted services \$50,000 or in-house staff \$80,000 per year plus cost of living adjustment.

**Community Development**

**2011**

- Complete 7-year comprehensive plan update - \$124,000

**2012-2014**

- Update 10-year watershed management plan \$65,000
- 10-year update to the comprehensive plan – revise urban growth area \$75,000
- Rezone urban center, economic development and industrial properties to maximize economic development opportunities - \$45,000

**2011-2014 Work Plan**

- Rezone low-density, moderate-density and high-density areas to coincide with floodplain \$45,000.
- Master plan First Street property \$85,000

**Fiscal Responsibility**

2011

- Update V6 to V7. Connect the utility billing, financial services and building permits models together to reduce redundancies and increase efficiency \$40,000.
- Pay-off interfund loan borrowed by general fund \$135,000
- Complete cemetery rate study to ensure adequate revenues for perpetual care.

2012

- Pay-off Public Works Trust Fund loan \$625,000
- Create general fund 60 day operating reserve \$325,000

2013

- Update sewer and water rate studies following buildable lands report in 2013 \$90,000
- First dollar investment in contingency fund \$25,000 annually.

2014

- Establish depreciation schedule for equipment replacement Prepare to replace garbage truck and implement toter system \$550,000

May 17, 2010

Deborah Knight, City Administrator  
Robert Martin, Community Development Director  
City of Sultan  
PO Box 1199  
Sultan, WA 98290

**Subject: Interview Summaries**

Dear Deborah and Bob:

Attached are our notes from the interviews conducted with members of the City's staff, planning board, City Council, community residents and business owners. These notes will help us as we review the work the City has performed to date, reconciling those previous efforts with where these interviewees understand the City is today. We understand that this document reports on the thoughts and opinions shared by the interviewees and may not represent the thoughts and opinions of the City staff or the greater community. This is a start to our part in this process, and I believe this information will provide an excellent beginning for our initial workshops and analysis.

Thank you for arranging these interviews and for participating in many of them.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss this in greater detail.

Sincerely,

  
William Grimes, AICP  
Principal, Studio Cascade, Inc.

# Interview Summaries

**Table 1** – Interviewees

Date	Location	Interviewee
May 3	Dutch Cup Vinaccios Ixtapa	Carolyn Eslick
		Dave Wood
		Margaret Biggs
		Nick Weaver
		Janet Peterson
		Bart Delmasso
		Bob Nyquist
		Aaron Day
		Marion Hamilton
		Ryan Marshall
Leanne Marshall		
May 4	Dutch Cup Ixtapa City Council chambers	Rusty Drivsten
		Debbie Copple
		Kristina Blair
		Merlin Halverson
		Jim Flower
		Al Wirta
		James Durrett
		Mike Chambers
		Wendell Smith
		Wayne Alexander
CH Rowe		
Dan Barmon		
Planning Board *		
May 5	City Council Chambers Dutch Cup Sultan Bakery	City employees *
		Jeff Kirkman
		Dave Comstock
		Irene Comstock
		Craig Sears
		Dan Chaplick
		Susan Green
Kermit Moore		

\* Group meeting environment

Studio Cascade conducted a series of interviews of City staff, planning board members, City Council members and community residents and business owners as part of its initial work to assess current conditions in Sultan. This report summarizes the issues as discussed in those interviews and interpreted by the consultant. They are subdivided into three broad categories:

- **Issues and Opportunities** - *identifying what is on the minds of the City's officials, residents and businesspeople, and why they think it is important.*
- **Lessons Learned** - *describing relatively recent activities that provided opportunities for the City to learn from experience.*
- **Landmarks** - *identifying physically prominent or culturally significant elements in the community's landscape, items that came into discussion during the interviews.*

The material here will help shape the process' initial public workshops, presenting issues and framing questions to solicit community response on its overall vision and thoughts on the issues the community faces.

Information presented represents the opinions and comments from those interviewed. Additional information is included to correct factual inconsistencies where available and to clarify or put into perspective some of the comments made during the interview process. The intent of this document is to help the consultant team understand resident ideas and concerns, and to communicate to the City and the community the general content and flavor of the interviews.

Some comments cover issues beyond the scope of this plan update. They are included here, though, because they reflect community perceptions and beliefs - things that may influence the way the community reacts to proposed planning policy.

*Text presented in italics indicates additional information generated in response to interview topics, reflecting our research into the issues and conversations with City staff.*

## Issues and Opportunities

### Youth involvement

Many of the interviewees mentioned that youth appear bored or idle, generally uninterested in their home town's condition. Interviewees acknowledged that there are students who are involved in community events as volunteers and in school activities. Still, the concern was raised that uninvolved youth are less likely to appreciate Sultan's assets and contribute to the community's improvement. One interviewee felt that nearly every member of the high school's senior class couldn't wait to get out of Sultan and leave it far behind, shamed of having to grow up in a town they felt had so little to offer.



*The western bridge into Sultan is both the western gateway into the community and the single transportation link to all areas west. Now 70 years old, the two-lane bridge effectively narrows and slows traffic flow.*

Whatever the cause, Sultan seems - to many of the community's youth - a place to escape. While leaving Sultan may be a necessity for some, particularly those entering higher education or the armed forces, it's an event many appear to be eagerly awaiting.

### Implementation

One interviewee expressed frustration, claiming that Sultan should choose its course and stick with it. This sentiment revolved around the City's past adoption of plans and the apparent lack of success in achieving plan promises. There was also concern with this interviewee, and with others, that the City's past habits of inconsistently applying plan



Downtown Sultan experienced boom and bust cycles, but now one of its major challenges is how to revitalize in the face of changes in retail demand and the constraints to development in the flood plain.

policies and development regulations had weakened the City's position to adopt and effectively implement rules in the future.

## Trust

Concern was expressed that the City misleads its citizens, particularly in matters of code interpretation and budgeting. It is unclear, however, how much of this concern is based on first-person experience and/or how much of it is recent. Examples listed during the interviews included inaccurately citing State law as reason for regulation and the adoption and funding of the stormwater utility. Accurate or not, some interviewees believe City government and the community have a break in trust.

Though some indicated the City's more recent pattern of governance is more transparent than past patterns, and that City staff now seems more accountable and communicative, suspicion still exists among some that City Hall's motives are not entirely above-board.

*If the City is on a good course now, it may simply take time to restore its trust with the community. It is not easy to repair trust, but continuing City efforts at transparency will be helpful.*

## Development fees

Interviewees noted that building in Sultan is expensive, partially because the costs assigned to each unit constructed are so high.

*Today, builders of new residential units pay approximately \$26,000 for each home. These fees are based on water and wastewater system development charges and impact fees for streets, parks and schools. The majority of the fees are a result of the City's need to upgrade both its water and wastewater systems to accommodate forecast growth within the UGA. New reservoirs and an expanded wastewater treatment plant are the big-ticket items. Rulings from the Growth Management Hearings Board dictate that these improvements must be paid for by development anticipated to occur within Sultan by the year 2025. The fees reflect apportionment of the infrastructure costs to new housing units.*

## Downtown's future

Residents understand Sultan's floodplain and current economy present challenges to downtown vitality.

Interviewees expressed thoughts about Sultan's downtown, identifying storefront vacancies, downtown appearance, and the proliferation of absentee landlords as prominent detractors.

They also mentioned the programming of local activities, the historic building stock and growing desires to mix commercial and residential uses as positives in the downtown. Interviewees mentioned that the downtown may need to go through some level of adaptation, perhaps involving the demolition of some obsolete structures or the construction of residential units above ground-floor retail, as the downtown evolves to meet changes in demand.

The greatest challenge to downtown, however, was identified as its location within the 100-year flood plain and the difficulty that causes for the creation of an active and vital commercial space. While some business owners have found ways to adapt to the

cyclical flooding, others feel constrained by it and by the requirements placed on the City to qualify for flood insurance.

Interviewees noted that they did not think the City was necessarily the sole actor responsible for turning the downtown around. They understood that economic forces will determine the success or failure of downtown. They did ask, however, that the City help by clarifying a vision for downtown and adopting rules to help achieve it.

## Government scalability

Many interviewees reported feeling that the City's budgets are not scaling down proportionately to match the sacrifices being made in the rest of the community. Interviewees acknowledged that the City is responsible for providing core services, like law enforcement, building inspection, and utilities, but they also mentioned that some programs and services may need to be sacrificed to respond to fiscal pressure.

There is a sense among some that government employees are doing better financially than those in the private sector, creating a like measure of resentment.

*Per capita the City of Sultan collects less in revenue than in 2000. Public revenues are limited to increase at no more than 1% per year, but annual costs increases associated with City operations and employee benefits are nearly 20%. This leads to cost reduction through changes to the method and level of services provision. There are fewer employees working for the City of Sultan today than there were in 2000.*



Traffic on US 2 tends to move at a speedy clip through town, even where the speed limit is reduced to 35 miles per hour.

## Outdoors access

One of Sultan's most important assets is its proximity to a rich and unique landscape. However, interviewees noted that some areas that were once accessible have been closed, including DNR Reiter Foothills and the County prohibited use of firearms on PUD land and private forest areas.

## US 2 corridor appearance

Interviewees noted that US 2 is a busy roadway, traveled by locals and those headed elsewhere. Some interviewees wondered if ways exist to improve the corridor's appearance, but others were also concerned that City intervention in establishing design control would create "too much regulation."

## City's role

Interviewees seemed generally split on how active the City should be in imposing and enforcing rules and regulations. Some felt that as an ideal, the best government was the least government. Others noted that market whims and local apathy have tended to serve Sultan's fortunes poorly, and favored a more proactive role for the City - one that sets policy directives, adopts rules and enforces community standards.

## US 2 safety

Several interviewees believe traffic on US 2 moves relatively quickly, particularly so in those areas nearest the city center. While the speed limit in the east area of town is 50 miles per hour, traffic in the 35 MPH area near downtown appears to move more quickly than is safe given the roadway width and the community's reliance on the highway as its primary east-west local connector.



*Tracks through Sultan are heavily traveled, with trains seeming to pass every ten minutes or less. Rail lines accommodate both passenger and freight service, but AMTRAK does not stop in Sultan.*

## Regional partnership

Sultan is part of the Sky Valley, generally defined as the valley along the Skykomish River upstream from Monroe. Whether it's fire protection, economic development, flood management, traffic or recreation planning, the communities in the valley have a common stake in cooperation. Interviewees confirmed that the communities must continue to work together and must improve their relationships to address issues that are challenging and that transcend jurisdictional boundaries.

## Sultan River dams

Interviewees mentioned the damming of the Sultan River and the influence on town living.



Sunset on the Skykomish River reminds community members of the area's beauty and partnership with the river systems.

## Small-town quality of life

Almost all interviewees mentioned Sultan's "small-town character," citing it as an asset upon which the plan should build. A variety of definitions were offered, identifying Sultan's uniqueness of setting and overall scale as factors that contribute to its current small-town feel. At least one interviewee mentioned that there is a sense of familiarity to the town - that residents enjoy a sense of comfort in knowing what the town has to offer. But some believe Sultan is changing, becoming more of a bedroom community to Everett, Monroe and Snohomish due to relatively lower housing prices. These interviewees believe the increasing number of commuter households is contributing to a sense of disconnection between newer residential areas toward the east and the central business district. Even so, residents - whether commuting to jobs outside of Sultan or not - seem to appreciate the lack of big-box stores and drive-through, fast-food franchises.

Two dams hold back water in the Sultan River, generating hydroelectric power and supplying irrigation water to local farms. If the dams fail, downtown Sultan and much of the older residential and institutional areas in town would be inundated in fast-flowing water.

*The schools have evacuation routes, and they drill students in orderly movement to higher ground. The City also participates in hazard planning, attending workshops and exercises to remain prepared to manage events following catastrophic dam failure. The City is in the process of purchasing a new warning siren system.*

*There are specific and defining characteristics that comprise Sultan's small town quality of life that remain unclear. Downtown murals depict a nostalgic small-town picture of the way Sultan used to be, but in what ways do they represent the type of Sultan residents wish to see in the future? If the murals are on target, they recommend a slower paced, more self-sufficient City, satisfied with being somewhat isolated and rural. Such a picture may not reflect current economics, and it did not seem to correlate with the desires of many interviewed. But interviewees did identify Monroe as a place that no longer has a "small-town feel," an outcome they hope Sultan will never experience. Defining Sultan's existing or idealized character - and developing policies to promote it - seems a critical exercise if residents hope to retain those qualities.*

## City capacity

Some interviewees indicated disappointment in the maintenance of community facilities. Others recognized that Sultan's size and limited budget restrict the amount of time available to dedicate to maintenance activities.

*Sultan is a small town, and its public works crew is few as a result. The City's maintenance responsibilities, generally distributed among the three members of the crew, includes cemetery maintenance, roadway maintenance, utilities repair and maintenance, parks maintenance, building maintenance and other responsibilities as may arise.*

## Volunteers

According to many of those interviewed, there are approximately 450 volunteers registered with the City, each willing to donate time toward community events or activities in some fashion. That's approximately 10 percent of the community's population available to help with community-oriented activities.

Volunteers assist with maintaining public landscaping areas along US 2. They help coordinate, staff and run the "Shindig" and other events. They donate time to help with Volunteers of America, the local Boys and Girls Club and other institutions in Sultan.

## Image control

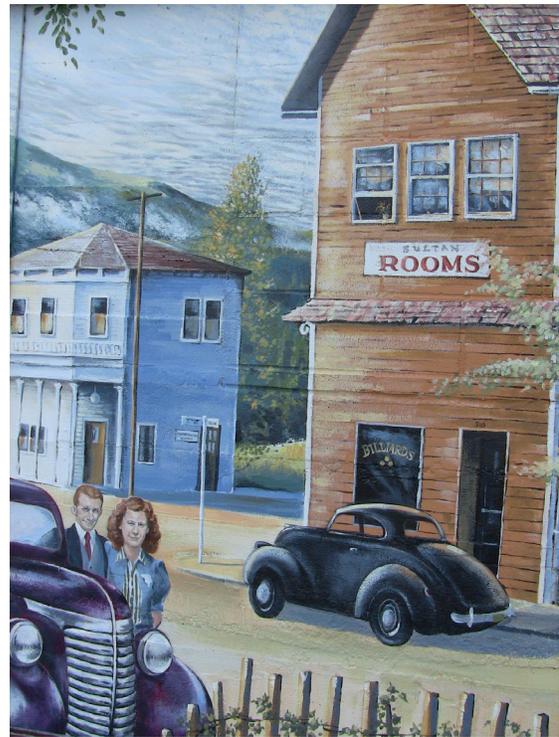
Interviewees felt that Sultan rarely appears in the press in a positive light. Flooding, gang violence, and "peacocks on the loose" made local and regional news coverage. There may be little the City can do about this, but it's on the minds of community residents and does little to reinforce civic pride.

## Demographic shift

Interviewees believe that Sultan's social profile is changing. Its population growth is adding a different dimension to the town, creating a community somewhat different from the one that existed 10 or 20 years ago.

*A recently-completed city survey identified that only 20% of Sultan's residents commute. The School District believes the number is actually much higher. Information from the 2008 Census report on labor and commuting patterns indicates that of Sultan's working population, only 12% work in Sultan and 13% work in Monroe. Forty-two percent work in King County. The information available on the subject is not conclusive, but it does appear that many of Sultan's residents travel outside of town for employment.*

*Additionally, many of those who work at the 1,113 jobs in Sultan travel from elsewhere to do it. A*



*Murals in downtown Sultan remind visitors of what the town used to be like, with a train stop and an active downtown commercial district.*

*total of 14 percent of the jobs in Sultan are filled by employees traveling from Gold Bar, Monroe, Everett and Seattle. Twelve percent of such jobs are filled by employees living in Sultan.*

## Communication

Interviewees seemed concerned about the degree of communication between city government and residents. While they generally acknowledge that the City strives for transparency, there is a sense that decisions are made without adequate and meaningful public conversation. Interviewees did note that communication in recent times has improved, with the City's web site mentioned as one example.

## Phasing of services

Bringing public services on-line to meet community demand was identified as an issue. In some conversations, interviewees mentioned the City's process of annexing land and providing services to newly-annexed land should not encourage leap-frogging over other lands lacking services.

## Annexation policy

The comprehensive plan clearly defines the urban growth boundary, but some interviewees were uncertain about the ways in which the City evaluates which annexations are appropriate given their location and time of annexation request. Annexations are initiated by property owners, and the City responds pursuant to the State's annexation laws. Part of the consideration of annexations is the provision of utilities and other public services to the annexing property to enable its development to urban levels of intensity. Knitting together the various annexation requests that come in increments and at



*City Hall and the Sultan Library building was constructed in 1999, making a significant statement to reinforce downtown's prominence as the community's civic and cultural center.*

intervals determined by those owning property is a challenge to the City that some interviewees recognized.

## Business friendliness

Comments about business friendliness appeared to be more than simply a complaint about regulation in general and more about finding ways to facilitate doing business in Sultan. Interviewees mentioned that the processes required to obtain permits, get information and resolve code conflicts were often cumbersome and time consuming.

## Pace of recovery

While the national and regional economy is clearly beyond Sultan's control, some interviewees believe the economic downturn can provide the City important lessons in fiscal discipline. This was related to making investments in public facilities on-pace with actual development. Some interviewees also noted that there will likely be another surge of demand for residential lots and homes once the oversupply of these nearer I-5 are consumed. Utilizing those residential properties may take time, but once done, Sultan may experience much higher rates of growth.



No Outlet and Dead End signs are a common sight in Sultan, resulting from the challenges presented by topography, the nature of incremental development, and the preferences for developing cul-de-sac streets.

## Flood

Interviewees noted the frequency of flooding seems to have increased in recent years, with two major flood events in the last decade. Some are able to adapt to flood events, and see them as opportunities for community-building and does and/or should help define Sultan's central business district character.

Revised FEMA maps for Sultan will indicate which areas are considered to be impacted by major flooding. Regardless of what the maps say, interviewees understand that downtown's streets flood near the Sultan River, creating retail challenges and requiring special construction considerations for any buildings in that area.

*Flooding stems from the Sultan River backing up from its confluence with the Skykomish. Flows on the Sultan are impeded when the Skykomish is high, causing the Sultan to pond and spread upstream from the confluence. That inundates the lower portion of downtown Sultan.*

## Poverty

Sultan has a wide range of household incomes, and some interviewees felt that a substantial amount of its population lives below the poverty line. Many of these are households with at least one employed adult. Interviewees noted that impoverished families do live in Sultan, and the plan must recognize that their needs also must be met.

*According to the 2000 Census, approximately 14.5 percent of Sultan's population aged 15 years and older were living below the poverty line. According to the Census, the percentage of population in poverty for the US as a whole was 22.7%, the State of Washington was 20.6%, Snohomish County was 15.7%, Everett was 19.2%, Monroe was 18.7%, and Gold Bar was 7.1%.*

*The 2000 Census also described Sultan's educational achievement levels, with 18.1 percent holding an associate, bachelor or advanced degree, 30.5 percent with some college but no degree, 37.8 percent with a high school diploma or equivalent and 13.6 not graduated from high school.*

## Homelessness

According to interviewees, Sultan's homeless are visible. The indigent homeless camp in the community's parks, mostly near the Skykomish River. The City is conflicted in how to respond, with a desire to provide services to those who need them and a concern that increased services availability may attract homeless from elsewhere. The Volunteers of America, the food bank, at least one local

church and others provide meals, find shelter and assist with employment, making Sultan a small city with a rather sophisticated network of social services.

While incidents of violence against others are rare, according to interviewees many community members feel threatened by the homeless, and they are reluctant to visit parks after dusk.

*A recent article in the Wenatchee World quoted City leaders' estimates that "there are approximately two dozen homeless" in Sultan (April 5, 2010). The article also stated that there were 2,362 people in Snohomish County living on the streets or without shelter. At the time of the article's writing, there were approximately 6,000 people in the county on a waiting list for subsidized housing.*



*Sultan's industrial and manufacturing community is surprisingly diverse, hosting companies like Werner Paddles and East Teak - companies that cater to niche and outdoor-oriented enthusiasts.*

## Fire District 5

According to interviewees, the local fire district incorporated the City's fire department more than a decade ago. It serves the City of Sultan, along with a rural district encompassing more than 70 square miles. It is a separate taxing district. The District employs one full-time, paid chief, a volunteer deputy chief, six full-time firefighters and approximately 26 volunteers. Of all calls for service, about 70% are for EMS.

## School district

Interviewees noted the School District has a high school, middle school and elementary school in Sultan. There is also a public elementary school in Gold Bar. The District has an enrollment of approximately 2,000 students and an annual budget of approximately \$12 million. Of that budget, about 10% is devoted to transportation.

*There is a monthly City/School/Fire meeting to coordinate long-range planning and capital projects planning between the various jurisdictions.*

## Housing affordability

Interviewees agreed that, by the numbers, housing is affordable in Sultan. In practice, however, Sultan's incomes are lower than the rest of Snohomish County, making the owning of a home more of a challenge. Home prices vary widely.

## Economic development

Interviewees mentioned that Sultan and the Sky-Valley communities could work better together to develop a collaborative economic development strategy. The strategy would

identify the valley's strengths and target actions each community could undertake to enhance economic activity.

There is a regional chamber of commerce and a Snohomish County EDC, but, according to interviewees, those two groups seem either too busy with whatever else they have going on or are concerned with other priorities. The Chamber is active promoting existing businesses and developing informational material about the valley, but its mission and budget do not support the type of economic development planning the community seems to desire. The Snohomish County EDC appears more focused on the I-5 corridor and the coastal ports, spending little time in the upper valleys.

Interviewees seemed to strongly favor a more collaborative economic development strategy including coordinated actions.

## Public transportation

Interviewees noted that the bus service is important to help the community's lower-income residents access employment and medical care.

*Community Transit serves Sultan, with its line into the Skykomish Valley terminating in Gold Bar.*

## Employment

According to interviewees, the industrial and manufacturing sector is surprisingly robust in Sultan, with new, smaller industry locating in Sultan because of lower land values, convenient access to transportation and availability of power and other utilities.

## Social diversity

Interviewees see Sultan becoming increasingly diverse, with the Hispanic population claiming a growing share of the community's population.

*The 2000 Census indicated that 131 of Sultan's residents were Hispanic. The Neighborhood Link National Network Community web site indicates a Hispanic population of approximately 216.*

## Street network

*Sultan's historic core has an interconnected street network, with much of its property developed along a rather conventional lot and block pattern. Newer areas of town, however, feature more cul-de-sac types of subdivision design, reducing the amount of*



*Annexations can be controversial, particularly when they create a sharp contrast between the rural countryside and urban levels of development intensity.*



*This statue of Chief Tseultd, known as "Sultan John," stands above River Park near the confluence of the Sultan and Skykomish rivers.*

- **West Sultan** - *separated from the rest of Sultan by the Sultan River and resting along the foothills of the valley's northern wall.*

## Lessons Learned

### Consistency

Residents interviewed seemed united in feeling that actions, rules, policies and community goals must act in concert.

### Economic cycles happen

Interviewees confirmed that market forces are strong and can impact communities without mercy. The City may find ways to buffer the severity of the impact, but the community seems very wary of the extent of government involvement. According to comments received, any attempt by the City to intervene must be tempered by fiscal solvency and an overall respect for the market's power to dictate the community's economic context.

### Design matters

Experiences in the design of development projects illustrate that the way a project is sited and the way it looks really can impact a community. Interviewees appreciate the impact design can have on the overall community, but there was little consensus on whether the City should impose design standards and, if so, what those standards should include.

### Public dialogue is important

The City's recent efforts to engage its residents and businesses in governance has resulted in general acknowledgement by interviewees that the City is doing a better job overall than it

*inter-connectivity and increasing reliance on main roads, like Sultan Basin Road and US 2 for local trips. The street network is divided into three general areas:*

- **The core** - *lying in the valley associated with the Sultan River, bounded to the south by the Skykomish River and to the east by the steep wall of the river valley.*
- **The plateau** - *on a bench above the older part of town and east of it, extending from the top of the bluff on the west to the eastern city limits. This area is bounded on the south by the bluff defining the limits of the Skykomish River channel and the railroad right of way.*
- **Lower Sultan** - *occupying a sliver of land between the ordinary high-water mark of the Skykomish and Wallace river systems and the bluff to the north.*

has in years past. While some may disagree with specific actions the City has taken, there seems to be a wider approval of the way the City is going about its business today than a decade ago.

## Plan implementation and relevance

Interviewees identified that the current plan is difficult to implement, and that any plan adopted as a result of this process must be clear and pragmatic, building on what has been done before. It should also help achieve community prosperity.

## Process

Interviewees believe the City's processes should be transparent and that City staff should be accountable for their decisions.

*Sultan has revised its way of acting on conditional use and variance permits, using a hearing examiner to decide on individual requests. This process helps with consistency from one application to another and ensures that actions taken are based on findings of fact made in concert with the City's development regulations. Experience with this process, however, also underscores that the City's zoning standards, particularly those related to design, may need review and revision to ensure the comprehensive plan's policies are carried out.*

*The relationship between the City Council and the planning board indicates that the two bodies share similar philosophies regarding long range planning and community priorities. Planning Board recommendations on legislative items are considered in City Council discussions and actions. This makes the planning board a vital part of the City's land use planning effort and should result in careful consideration of long-range policy in any update to the City's development regulations.*



Known for its famous apple fritters and as a "must stop" for skiers and riders on their way to and from Stevens Pass, the Sultan Bakery stands as an active and sympathetic community landmark.

## Landmarks

The following community landmarks were identified in interviews:

### Mountains

The mountains lining the Skykomish Valley are some of the state's most dramatic, rising steeply from the valley floor. They are powerful landmarks, establishing a prominent visual enclosure for the valley and Sultan.

### Sultan Bakery

Thousands know the Sultan Bakery. It has become an iconic community symbol, catering to US 2 travelers and the local community year-round.

## Rice Road

Approaching from the east, the rise to the Rice Road portion of US 2, also known as the "three lanes" and the "four lanes," is a community entry. Speeds are fast through this part of town, and this stretch of highway has unfortunately experienced fatality collisions. It marks a clear change in character from the rural landscape that lies just to the east.

## City hall/Library

Constructed in 1999, Sultan's city hall and library mark significant public investment in the community's central business district. The building acknowledges the area's tendency to flood, elevating its ground floor more than three feet above the curbline.

## Murals

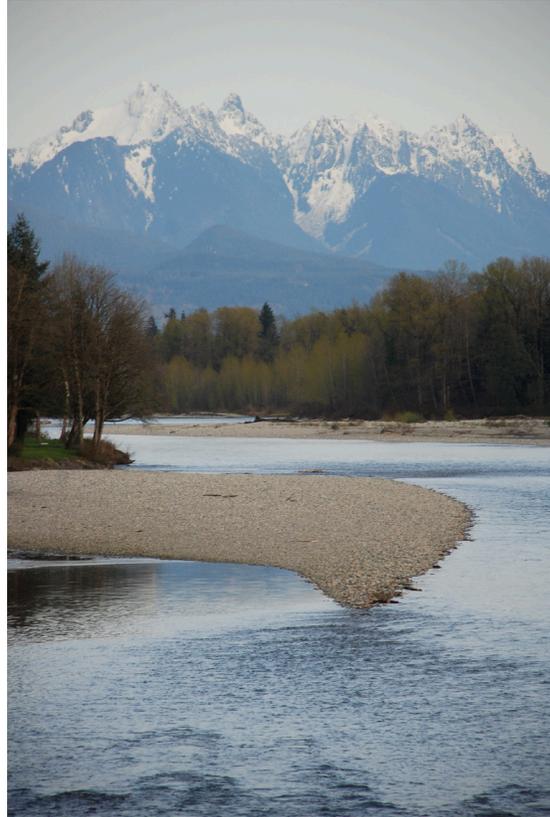
Sultan boasts several murals depicting life in Sultan as it used to be. Otherwise blank walls are painted with street scenes, decorated with a nostalgic flair to commemorate a more active commercial district and a time when passengers could board a train.

## West bridge

Approaching from the west, US 2 travelers cross the highway bridge spanning the Sultan River. This old steel bridge, constructed in 1940, is literally the community's western gateway, carrying more than 20,000 trips per day, and the sole link to metropolitan areas to the west. The railroad bridge of the same vintage parallels the highway bridge, with numerous trains on their way to or from Stevens Pass.

## Skykomish River

The Skykomish River generally establishes Sultan's southern boundary. It flows into the Snoqualmie River and, with that river, drains a watershed of more than 700 square miles. At this point in its course, the Skykomish has a wide and

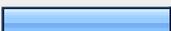


*The Skykomish River and north Cascades mountain range establish a dramatic and unique setting and viewscape for Sultan. Outdoor recreation is immediately available and very popular, especially during fishing season.*

shallow channel along the valley floor. It offers some of Washington's best fishing, supporting wild populations of coho, chinook, chum and pink salmon, as well as steelhead, cutthroat and rainbow trout.

# Sultan Parks & Recreation Plan Update

1. Which of the following describes how often you personally visited any of Sultan's parks during the last year.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Never		10.5%	24
Once a year		25.0%	57
<b>Once a month</b>		<b>36.0%</b>	<b>82</b>
Once a week		15.4%	35
More often than once a week, but not every day		11.0%	25
Daily		2.2%	5
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>228</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>6</b>

2. What is the most important reason for not visiting Sultan parks more often?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
<b>No time, too busy</b>		<b>61.6%</b>	<b>101</b>
Do not go out, not an outdoor person		5.5%	9
Health and age restrictions		2.4%	4
Poor accessibility		4.9%	8
Use parks outside of Sultan		25.6%	42
		Other (please specify)	71
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>164</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>70</b>

3. Which of the following Sultan parks and open spaces do you visit most often?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Cemetery		1.4%	3
Garden		0.5%	1
<b>Osprey</b>		<b>65.4%</b>	<b>138</b>
Reese		7.6%	16
River		13.7%	29
Roadside		1.9%	4
Skatepark		3.8%	8
Sportsman		5.7%	12
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>211</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>23</b>

4. During which season do you typically visit Sultan parks?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
<b>Summer</b>		<b>82.2%</b>	<b>176</b>
Fall		4.2%	9
Winter		2.3%	5
Spring		11.2%	24
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>214</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>20</b>

5. Which days of the week do you typically visit Sultan parks?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Weekdays		44.1%	94
Weekends		55.9%	119
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>213</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>21</b>

6. From the following list of park amenities, please state whether you think Sultan has too few, just the right amount, or too many of each to meet the needs of the community.					
	Too Few	Just the Right Amount	Too Many	Rating Average	Response Count
Passive Recreation (walking trails, open space)	<b>61.5% (131)</b>	37.1% (79)	1.4% (3)	1.00	213
Active Recreation (sports courts/fields, multi-use trails)	<b>68.2% (144)</b>	30.8% (65)	0.9% (2)	1.00	211
Picnic Facilities	<b>61.4% (127)</b>	37.7% (78)	1.0% (2)	1.00	207
Boat Launches/River Access	<b>50.0% (102)</b>	44.1% (90)	5.9% (12)	1.00	204
Wetland/Wildlife Habitat Reserves	<b>48.0% (96)</b>	41.0% (82)	11.0% (22)	1.00	200
Other (please specify)					40
<i>answered question</i>					<b>218</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>16</b>

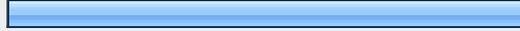
7. Following is a list of outdoor activities. For each, please identify whether the activity is something you always, often, sometimes, or never do.

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Rating Average	Response Count
Walking	<b>41.5% (93)</b>	37.9% (85)	19.2% (43)	1.3% (3)	1.00	224
Hiking	18.0% (40)	31.1% (69)	<b>38.3% (85)</b>	12.6% (28)	1.00	222
Taking a child to a play-ground	11.9% (26)	18.3% (40)	34.4% (75)	<b>35.3% (77)</b>	1.00	218
Exercising your dog at a park	8.2% (18)	19.2% (42)	21.0% (46)	<b>51.6% (113)</b>	1.00	219
Bicycling	11.0% (24)	20.6% (45)	<b>39.0% (85)</b>	29.4% (64)	1.00	218
Picnicking	6.0% (13)	14.4% (31)	<b>46.5% (100)</b>	33.0% (71)	1.00	215
Playing or watching baseball/softball	9.6% (21)	16.5% (36)	33.5% (73)	<b>40.4% (88)</b>	1.00	218
Playing or watching soccer	12.3% (27)	18.7% (41)	<b>38.8% (85)</b>	30.1% (66)	1.00	219
Skateboarding	6.0% (13)	4.2% (9)	12.0% (26)	<b>77.8% (168)</b>	1.00	216
Off Road vehicle use	9.9% (21)	7.0% (15)	13.6% (29)	<b>69.5% (148)</b>	1.00	213
Other (please specify)						18
<b>answered question</b>						<b>228</b>
<b>skipped question</b>						<b>6</b>

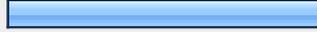
<b>8. Do you believe it is very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant or very unimportant for the City to undertake the following tasks over the next few years.</b>						
	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Unimportant</b>	<b>Very Unimportant</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Acquire land for parks/recreational facilities	<b>45.7% (96)</b>	41.0% (86)	9.0% (19)	4.3% (9)	1.00	210
Acquire land to protect open space and natural resources	<b>40.9% (85)</b>	39.9% (83)	13.9% (29)	5.3% (11)	1.00	208
Increase resources for park maintenance	<b>61.2% (126)</b>	30.6% (63)	5.3% (11)	2.9% (6)	1.00	206
Increase education about parks & open space to young people	<b>43.8% (91)</b>	31.7% (66)	21.6% (45)	2.9% (6)	1.00	208
Increase parks & open space volunteer opportunities	<b>47.6% (99)</b>	34.6% (72)	13.9% (29)	3.8% (8)	1.00	208
Diverse recreational options for all ages & ability levels	<b>59.1% (123)</b>	32.7% (68)	6.3% (13)	1.9% (4)	1.00	208
Improve public access & parking to parks and rec facilities	<b>44.5% (93)</b>	36.4% (76)	13.9% (29)	5.3% (11)	1.00	209
Provide more multi-use trail networks throughout Sultan	<b>56.5% (118)</b>	33.0% (69)	7.7% (16)	2.9% (6)	1.00	209
	<i>answered question</i>					<b>216</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>					<b>18</b>

<b>9. Would you like more small parks (tot lots) dispersed throughout Sultan's residential neighborhoods?</b>			
		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes		<b>58.0%</b>	<b>123</b>
No		42.0%	89
	<i>answered question</i>		<b>212</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>		<b>22</b>

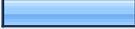
**10. Do you think it's the City's responsibility, the developer's responsibility, or the responsibility of both to pay for new parks and associated maintenance?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
City's Responsibility		13.6%	29
Developer's Responsibility		6.1%	13
<b>Both</b>		<b>80.3%</b>	<b>171</b>
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>213</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>21</b>

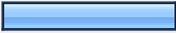
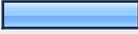
**11. What way do you usually travel to and from the park?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Walk/Jog		40.8%	84
<b>Drive</b>		<b>48.5%</b>	<b>100</b>
Bicycle		9.7%	20
Wheelchair		1.0%	2
		Other (please specify)	24
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>206</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>28</b>

**12. What changes, if any, would you and members of your household like to see in Sultan parks? (check up to three (3) choices)**

		<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Improve maintenance</b>		<b>59.4%</b>	<b>123</b>
Improve existing park facilities		56.5%	117
Improve or add programs & special events		31.4%	65
Improve public safety		37.2%	77
Improve access		17.4%	36
Address dog owner's needs		19.8%	41
Improve dog control		17.4%	36
More active facilities (sports oriented)		41.1%	85
More passive facilities (relaxation oriented)		20.3%	42
More trails/paths		56.5%	117
No change needed		3.4%	7
Other (please specify)			21
		<b><i>answered question</i></b>	<b>207</b>
		<b><i>skipped question</i></b>	<b>27</b>

13. There is a proposal to develop a new park in the north-east part of Sultan. The park would include sports fields, trails, picnic facilities and open space. Construction would be funded by an increase in property taxes in the City of Sultan of fifteen cents per one thousand dollars of assessed property value, which is \$40 a year for the average homeowner in Sultan. In general, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Favor		32.1%	42
Favor		26.7%	35
Somewhat Favor		20.6%	27
Somewhat Oppose		9.9%	13
Oppose		3.1%	4
Strongly Oppose		7.6%	10
		<b><i>answered question</i></b>	<b>131</b>
		<b><i>skipped question</i></b>	<b>103</b>

14. With five (5) being the most important, and one (1) being the least important, please rank how important the following park amenities are to you.

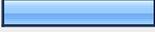
	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
Active Recreation	6.9% (9)	9.2% (12)	21.4% (28)	25.2% (33)	<b>37.4% (49)</b>	1.00	131
Passive Recreation	9.9% (13)	13.0% (17)	27.5% (36)	<b>33.6% (44)</b>	16.0% (21)	1.00	131
Open Space/Natural Reserves	12.9% (17)	15.9% (21)	25.0% (33)	19.7% (26)	<b>26.5% (35)</b>	1.00	132
Picnic Facilities	11.3% (15)	15.8% (21)	<b>33.8% (45)</b>	25.6% (34)	13.5% (18)	1.00	133
Indoor Public Facilities	10.6% (14)	12.9% (17)	<b>28.0% (37)</b>	27.3% (36)	21.2% (28)	1.00	132
Dog-friendly Parks	14.5% (19)	20.6% (27)	<b>27.5% (36)</b>	16.8% (22)	20.6% (27)	1.00	131
Trails & Paths	9.8% (13)	8.3% (11)	12.8% (17)	21.8% (29)	<b>47.4% (63)</b>	1.00	133
	<i>answered question</i>						<b>134</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>						<b>100</b>

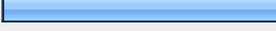
**15. With five (5) being the most important, and one (1) being the least important, please rank how important the following park and recreation characteristics are to you.**

	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
Access	9.4% (12)	8.6% (11)	<b>30.5%</b> <b>(39)</b>	28.9% (37)	22.7% (29)	1.00	128
Parking	17.4% (23)	18.2% (24)	<b>31.1%</b> <b>(41)</b>	18.9% (25)	14.4% (19)	1.00	132
Small Parks (tot lots)	28.0% (37)	20.5% (27)	<b>28.8%</b> <b>(38)</b>	15.2% (20)	7.6% (10)	1.00	132
Large Parks	9.2% (12)	4.6% (6)	22.3% (29)	28.5% (37)	<b>35.4%</b> <b>(46)</b>	1.00	130
Park Maintenance	12.1% (16)	4.5% (6)	6.8% (9)	24.2% (32)	<b>52.3%</b> <b>(69)</b>	1.00	132
Park Safety	9.3% (12)	6.2% (8)	11.6% (15)	24.8% (32)	<b>48.1%</b> <b>(62)</b>	1.00	129
	<i>answered question</i>						<b>133</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>						<b>101</b>

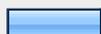
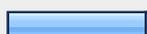
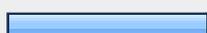
**16. IN YOUR OWN WORDS. Please feel free to use the following space to provide additional thoughts, comments, or further explanations. If responding to a specific question, please reference the question number.**

	Response Count
	70
	<i>answered question</i>
	<b>70</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>
	<b>164</b>

17. What is your age?			Response Percent	Response Count
0-15			14.2%	30
16-30			42.2%	89
31-50			23.2%	49
51-70			17.1%	36
71 and above			3.3%	7
			<i>answered question</i>	211
			<i>skipped question</i>	23

18. What is your gender?			Response Percent	Response Count
Female			57.2%	123
Male			42.8%	92
			<i>answered question</i>	215
			<i>skipped question</i>	19

19. How many years have you lived in Sultan?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0-2 yrs.		12.6%	25
2-5 yrs.		18.1%	36
5-10 yrs.		24.6%	49
<b>10-20 yrs.</b>		<b>33.2%</b>	<b>66</b>
20+ yrs.		11.6%	23
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>199</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>35</b>

20. How many members are in your household (including yourself)?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
1		6.1%	13
2		14.2%	30
3		21.2%	45
<b>4</b>		<b>30.7%</b>	<b>65</b>
5+		27.8%	59
		<i>answered question</i>	<b>212</b>
		<i>skipped question</i>	<b>22</b>

# City of Sultan

## October-Nov 2009 Telephone Survey **DRAFT Report**



**EMC Research, Inc.**

811 First Avenue – Suite 451  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 652-2454

# Methodology

- ▶ Telephone survey of residents in the City of Sultan
- ▶ 300 total interviews
- ▶ Overall Margin of Error  $\pm 5.5$  points at the 95% confidence interval
  - ▶ Expresses accuracy of results
  - ▶ Meets industry standard
- ▶ Conducted October 20<sup>th</sup> – Nov 5<sup>th</sup> , 2009
  - ▶ Longer time in the field than “normal”

*Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.*

# Key Findings

- 1. Despite a negative outlook residents in Sultan are very satisfied with their quality of life.***
- 2. An open ended question about the most important problem in Sultan reveals crime/drugs and economic development to be the biggest overall concerns among residents.***
- 3. Residents give Sultan City Government passing Job performance ratings***
- 4. Residents want to see future development policy that focuses on economic/commercial growth rather than in growing the population.***
- 5. There is a small majority opposed to a town center operating fund, but residents continue to indicate economic growth is important.***
- 6. Majority of residents favor a new sports park proposal, even when presented with cost, a good sign that people are willing to invest in sultan.***

# Issue Environment

# Summary

- ▶ **Only a third (38%) of residents think things in the City of Sultan are moving in the right direction – 43% think things are headed in the wrong direction, 19% are unsure.**
- ▶ **Residents mention Crime/Drugs and Jobs/Economic Development as the most important problems Sultan City government can do something about. Surprisingly, homelessness was the third most mentioned, slightly above roads/traffic related issues.**
- ▶ **Residents are overwhelmingly (78%) positive about the quality of life in Sultan (Excellent: 20% ; Good: 58%). Less than quarter (22%) gave a Fair or Poor QOL rating.**

# Policy Direction / Funding Priorities

# Summary

- ▶ **Residents want to see future development policy that focuses on economic and commercial growth rather than in growing the population. Growth/sprawl was not a major issue mentioned by residents in the open end question, indicating some residential growth is ok.**
- ▶ **Almost half (46%) of residents do not agree Sultan should use tax dollars to encourage residential growth or encourage more urban density.**
- ▶ **Residents view adding an additional police officer as the highest funding priority. Followed by funding an economic development plan. Adding an animal control/code enforcement officers were viewed as the lowest funding priority.**

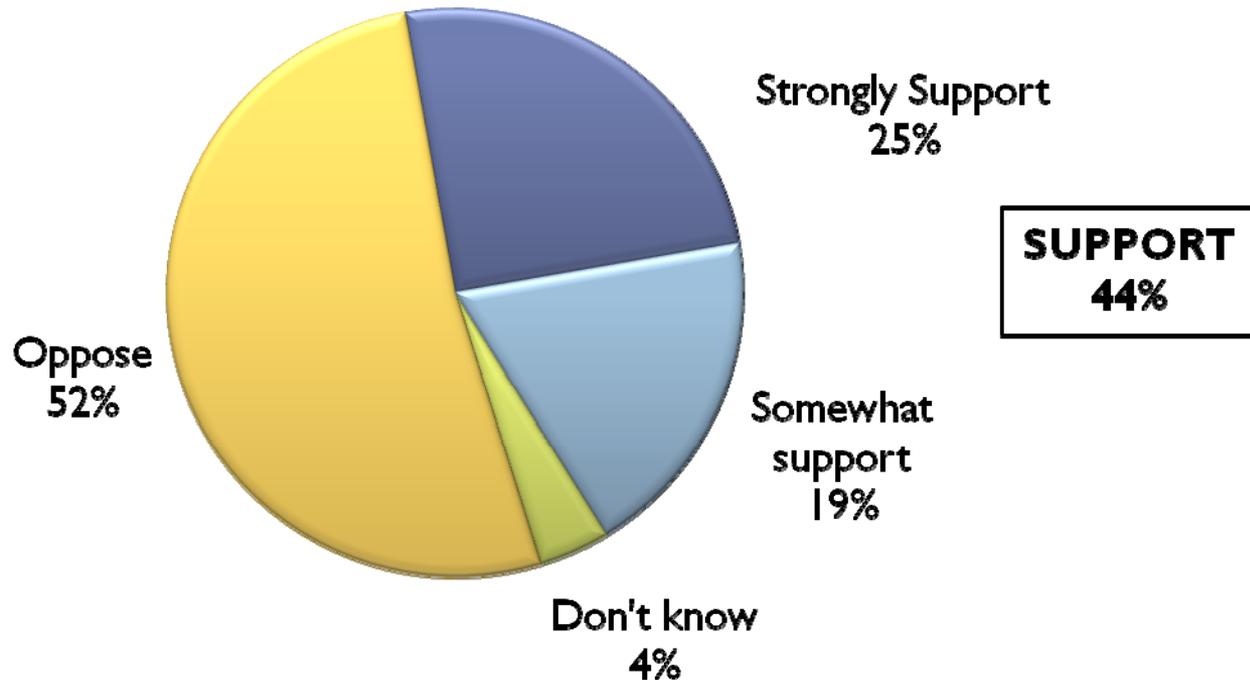
# Support for Operating Fund/Park Proposal

# Summary

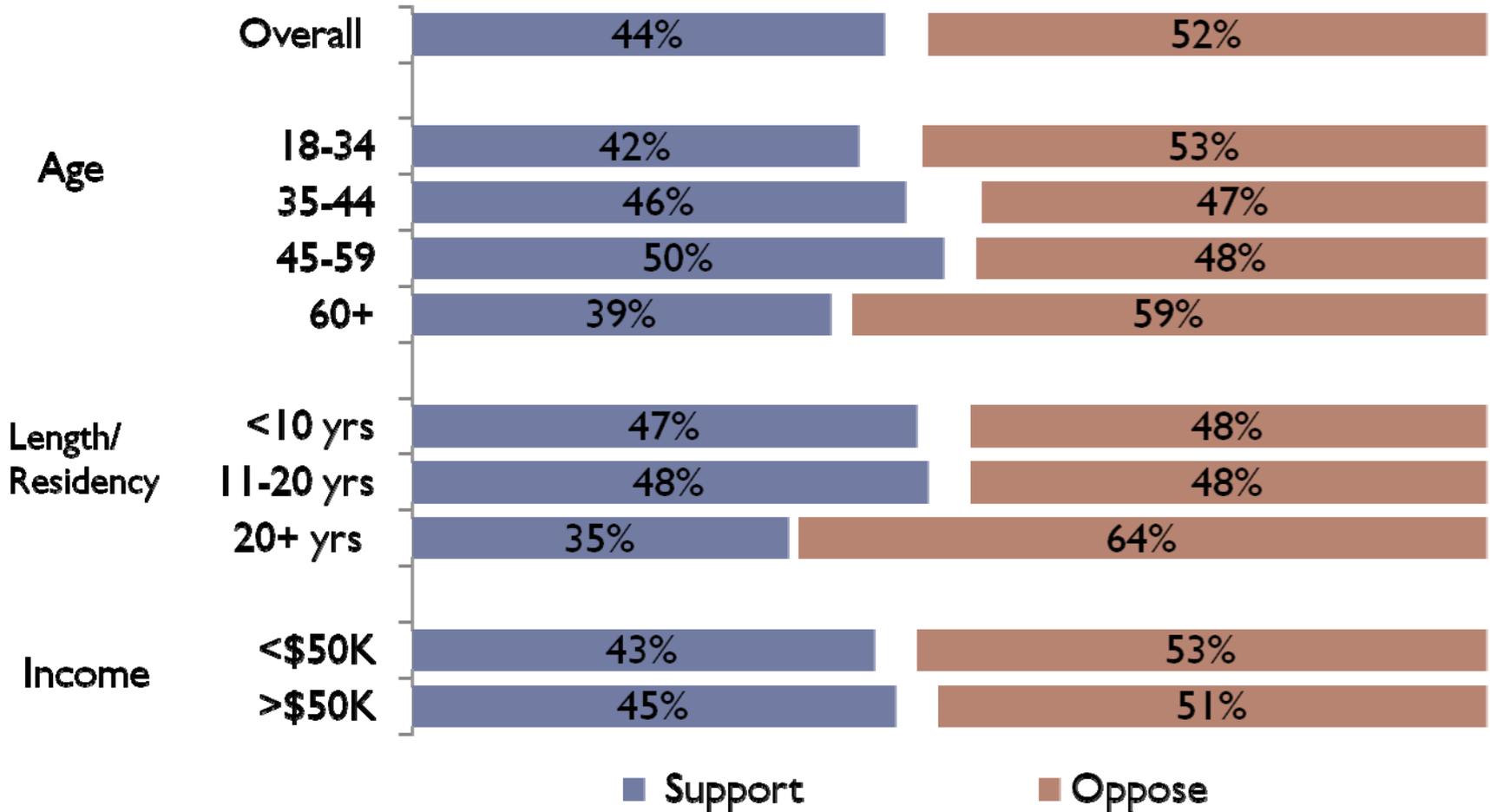
- ▶ **Residents oppose a new town center operating fund by a slim margin (44% support ; 52% oppose). The question text did not include how much the downtown redevelopment to Rice road would cost the individual, so its not surprising there is some slight opposition to a \$5M price tag. Residents indicate in previous questions economic growth is important, so it is possible with more information an operating fund could gain majority support.**
- ▶ **A majority of residents support (51% Favor ; 45% Oppose) a proposal for new sports park. A positive sign that even with a cost, the majority of residents are willing to invest in Sultan.**
- ▶ **Opposition to the town center and sports park funding proposals is highest among older residents and long term Sultan residents, with stronger support among midrange age categories and shorter term residents.**
- ▶ **Residents with a higher income are more likely to support both proposals, though the margin is not as wide as among other demographic subgroups.**

# Support for Town Center Operating Fund

As you may know, Downtown Sultan is inside the flood plain of the Sultan and Skykomish Rivers. There is a proposal being considered to develop a new town center away from the flood plain in the area of Highway 2 and Rice Road. The city would need an operating fund of Five Million Dollars to help develop this new town center. Would you support or oppose setting aside a portion of property and sales tax revenue to help support development of a new town center away from the flood plain?

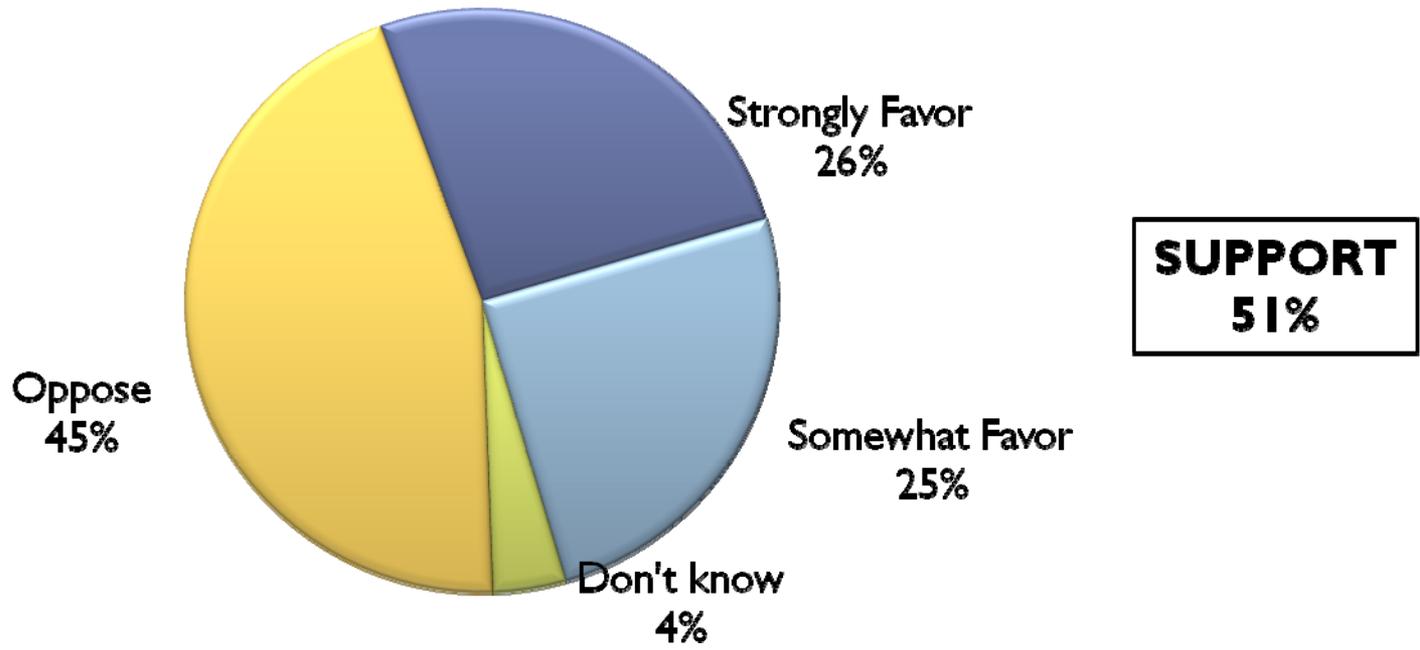


# Town Center Support (Sub-group)



# Support for Sports Park Proposal

*There is a proposal to develop a new sports park in the Sultan Basin Road area. The park would include soccer and softball fields, and picnic facilities. Construction would be funded by an increase in property taxes in the City of Sultan of fifteen cents per one thousand dollars of assessed property value, which is \$40 a year for the average homeowner in Sultan. In general, do you favor or oppose this proposal? (IF FAVOR) Would that be strongly or somewhat in favor? (IF OPPOSE) Would that be strongly or somewhat oppose?*



# Support for Park Proposal (Sub-group)

