



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND, WA**

**AB 4274
March 3, 2008
Regular Business**

**2009–2010 BUDGET – CITIZEN SURVEY
RESULTS**

Proposed Council Action:

Receive presentation of results and analysis from EMC Research.

DEPARTMENT OF	City Manager (Londi Lindell)
COUNCIL LIAISON	n/a
EXHIBITS	1. Budget Survey Questions and Results
APPROVED BY CITY MANAGER	

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$	n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$	n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$	n/a

SUMMARY

HISTORY OF BUDGET SURVEY

At its 2004 annual planning session, the City Council spent considerable time discussing the budget process and how it could be modified to better meet the Council's needs. Specifically, the Council mentioned a desire to have more information early in the budget process, including "Upfront citizen input on budget priorities." To that end, EMC Research prepared a telephone survey for the 2005-2006 budget process (2004 survey) to gauge satisfaction with levels of service and provide feedback on spending priorities.

EMC is a full service opinion research firm that has been providing opinion research and strategic consulting since 1989. EMC's principals have been involved in thousands of public opinion studies, ranging from political and public policy strategy polls to extensive market share and customer satisfaction surveys. They conducted the Mercer Island Community Center research in December of 2002.

The Council also directed a telephone budget survey be conducted for the 2007-2008 budget (2006 survey) and budgeted funds to allow this citizen survey be conducted in preparation for the 2009-2010 biennial budget (2008 survey).

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The purpose of this 2008 survey is to help the City understand voter priorities, evaluate the City's performance in a variety of service areas, and establish baseline measurements to track changes in these figures over time. Four hundred (400) interviews were conducted among registered voters in the City of Mercer Island. Voters were selected at random from a list of registered voters. Trained, professional telephone interviewers calling from a central, monitored location conducted the interviews during the evening and weekend hours of January 24-28, 2007. When possible, figures have been compared with

results from the 2004 and 2006 surveys, and from the 2002 survey on the Community Center. Finance Director Corder included a number of new questions to track City performance measures.

The margin of error for the overall results is ± 4.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval. This confidence interval means that if the survey were conducted 100 times, it would produce results within ± 4.9 percentage points 95 times out of 100. The results of this survey can be projected to the entire voting population of the city of Mercer Island.

During each budget survey, certain City services may be highlighted for more detailed analysis. For example, the 2004 survey evidenced some unfavorable citizen satisfaction ratings for development and permitting services. As a result of this information, the City Manager directed a DSG Service review and report that resulted in Council approving enhanced staffing and DSG implementing certain operational changes. These actions resulted in favorable ratings in the 2006 survey. These favorable customer satisfaction ratings have continued in the DSG customer opinion survey which is conducted separate from the budget survey and performed annually. In this 2008 survey, City staff and the Utility Board requested the inclusion of certain questions regarding customer satisfaction with Allied Waste services and whether or not citizens would be interested in expanded recycling services.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

During Monday night's meeting, Ian Stewart from EMC Research will be on hand to report on the results of the telephone survey. The written report is included here as Exhibit 1, starting on page 3. Some of the key findings from the 2008 survey are as follows:

- Island voters continue to be in a positive mood (65% Right Direction), and their relationship with City government remains strong.
- Continuing a trend seen in 2006, transportation, traffic, overcrowding, and overdevelopment top the list of the most important problems. The negative rating for promoting traffic safety increased 12 percentage points in 2008.
- Favorable ratings for the City Council remain solid (58%), and a majority give the City positive ratings for their responsible use of tax dollars (56%). The City continues to significantly outperform King County on both of these measures.
- The vast majority of voters (86%) are satisfied with the service provided by Allied Waste because of their reliability and on-time service.
- Voter priorities have remained constant over the past four years, with ensuring prompt fire/medical aid response times and preventing crime at the top of the list. Protecting the environment, a new item this year, ranks third, just above maintaining streets and promoting traffic safety.
- The City receives strong positive ratings for almost all services tested (at least 62% positive). Only preparing for a natural disaster falls short of a majority positive rating.
- A majority (58%) of voters say they are prepared to go without power or water for a week. Renters feel less prepared than homeowners, voters under 50 feel less prepared than those over 50, and homes with children feel less prepared than those without children.
- An overwhelming percentage (86%) feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood or the town center.
- While a strong majority of voters are satisfied with the appearance and condition of the town center (71%) a smaller majority are satisfied with the shopping and dining options there (58%).

RECOMMENDATION

Deputy City Manager Londi Lindell

MOVE TO: Receive report.



City of Mercer Island

Mercer Island Voters

January 24-28, 2008

N = 400; M.O.E. ± 4.9%

EMC #06-3488

When applicable, results are compared to previous Mercer Island budget surveys:

April 18-20, 2006	N = 402, ± 4.9 points	EMC 06-3488
May 17-19, 2004	N = 401, ± 4.9 points	EMC 04-3047

Percentages are for 2008 unless otherwise noted.

Some questions may add up to more/less than 100% due to rounding.

		<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
1.	SEX			
	Male	47%	47%	47%
	Female	53%	53%	53%

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

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm taking a survey for EMC Research. We're trying to find out how people on Mercer **(MER-surr)** Island feel about some of the issues facing them. This is not a sales call, and your answers will remain completely anonymous.

2.	Are you registered to vote at this address?			
	Yes	100%	100%	100%
	No--(TERMINATE)			
3.	Do you feel things on Mercer (MER-surr) Island are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?			
	Right direction	73%	64%	65%
	Wrong track	14%	23%	16%
	Don't Know	12%	13%	19%

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
4. What do you think is the most important problem facing Mercer (MER-surr) Island today? (Record one response)			
Traffic/Transp/Parking	14%	26%	26%
Overcrowding/Overdevelopment/Overbuilding	23%	28%	24%
Education	15%	7%	9%
High Taxes/High Cost of Living	10%	6%	3%
Lack of Affordable Housing	3%	3%	3%
City Government/Council/Mayor/Spending	3%	3%	3%
Environment/Preserving Parks/Preserving Open Space	4%	4%	3%
Youth Concerns/Programs	--	--	2%
Road Conditions	--	--	2%
Drugs/Alcohol Abuse	--	1%	1%
Pedestrian/Biker Safety	--	--	1%
Need more Stores	--	1%	--
Public Safety/Crime	2%	1%	--
Need bike paths	--	1%	--
Economy/Unemployment	1%	--	--
Budget/Deficit	1%	--	--
War in Iraq/Terrorism	1%	--	--
Other (SPECIFY)	6%	7%	5%
Nothing	7%	6%	10%
Don't Know/Refused	10%	6%	9%

5. What makes you say that? **(Record one response)**

All the construction adding to traffic/Parking problems	16%
Too many cars on the road, not enough public transportation	14%
Schools need more funding/teachers/crowded classrooms	7%
Too much building	7%
Everything costs more here/Taxes are too high	6%
Too much building taking away appeal of island/Open space	5%
Too many people are moving here causing overcrowding	5%
Government spending is not based on voters wants and needs	4%
Hurting the environment	3%
We need more youth programs	3%
Increase in pedestrians/bikers with no sidewalks bike paths	2%
Changing school administration	2%
The roads need repair, too many potholes	1%
In danger of not getting off Island in emergency	1%
Older homes being replaced by huge projects	1%
None	12%
Other	7%
Don't Know	6%

Please tell me if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or strongly unfavorable opinion of each of the following. If you have never heard of one please just say so. **[NOTE: If respondent says “Don’t Know,” “No opinion,” or something similar that is not Favorable/Unfavorable, probe for Can’t Rate/Never Heard: “Would you say that you have heard of (QX) but cannot rate (QX) or have you never heard of (QX)?”]**

SCALE:

	<u>Strong Fav</u>	<u>Some Fav</u>	<u>Some Unfav</u>	<u>Strong Unfav</u>	<u>(Can't Rate)</u>	<u>(Never Heard)</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Name ID</u>
6. The King County Council								
2004	4%	32%	23%	11%	25%	6%	1.1 to 1	70%
2006	7%	32%	17%	12%	27%	5%	1.3 to 1	68%
2008	3%	32%	19%	10%	32%	5%	1.2 to 1	63%
7. Mercer (MER-surr) Island City Council								
2004	15%	46%	16%	6%	16%	2%	2.8 to 1	82%
2006	12%	48%	14%	8%	16%	1%	2.7 to 1	82%
2008	10%	49%	14%	7%	19%	2%	2.8 to 1	79%

	<u>Strong Fav</u>	<u>Some Fav</u>	<u>Some Unfav</u>	<u>Strong Unfav</u>	<u>(Can't Rate)</u>	<u>(Never Heard)</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Name ID</u>
8. Mercer (MER-surr) Island Parks and Recreation Department								
2004	51%	40%	5%	1%	3%	0%	16.5 to 1	97%
2006	60%	31%	2%	1%	5%	1%	31.2 to 1	94%
2008	53%	37%	2%	1%	6%	1%	30.0 to 1	93%
9. Mercer (MER-surr) Island Police Department								
2004	55%	34%	6%	1%	4%	0%	12.9 to 1	96%
2006	55%	31%	6%	3%	5%	0%	9.7 to 1	95%
2008	47%	40%	7%	2%	4%	%	9.7 to 1	96%
10. Mercer (MER-surr) Island Fire Department								
2006	80%	15%	0%	0%	4%	0%	197.9 to 1	96%
2008	77%	17%	0%	0%	6%	0%	198.3 to 1	94%
11. Mercer (MER-surr) Island Youth and Family Services								
2006	57%	19%	1%	0%	20%	4%	55.4 to 1	77%
2008	55%	23%	1%	1%	16%	4%	39.0 to 1	80%
12. Mercer (MER-surr) Island's Summer Celebration event								
2004	57%	27%	2%	1%	10%	4%	29.9 to 1	86%
2006	58%	28%	3%	0%	9%	2%	29.7 to 1	89%
2008	54%	27%	3%	1%	13%	2%	20.3 to 1	85%

(END RANDOMIZE)

Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate...
(RANDOMIZE)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(Don't Know)</u>
13. The job the city of Mercer Island is doing using tax dollars responsibly					
2004	11%	47%	29%	7%	6%
2006	15%	46%	23%	5%	10%
2008	10%	46%	28%	7%	9%
14. The job King County is doing using tax dollars responsibly					
2004	3%	23%	36%	26%	12%
2006	4%	26%	37%	19%	13%
2008	2%	26%	37%	21%	14%

(END RANDOMIZE)

15. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the garbage, recycling, and yard waste services provided by Eastside Disposal Service, also known as Allied Waste? Would you say you are
- Very Satisfied 50%
 - Somewhat Satisfied 36% => **86%**
 - Somewhat Dissatisfied 7% => **14%**
 - Very Dissatisfied 2%
 - (Don't Know/Unsure) 5%

(IF Q15=1 – 5, ASK Q16. IF Q15=6, SKIP TO Q17)

16. What makes you say that? **(Record one response)**
- Reliable/On Time 25%
 - Get the job done 21%
 - Missed pick ups 10%
 - Have no problems 10%
 - Not enough recycling 5%
 - Offer recycling 4%
 - Too expensive/Price increases 4%
 - Not enough yard waste pick ups 4%
 - Do not leave a mess 3%
 - Leave a mess/Garbage in the street 2%
 - Don't use them 2%
 - Confusing holiday schedule 1%
 - Confusing recycling rules 1%
 - Reasonable prices 1%
 - Other 5%
 - Don't Know/Refused 3%

(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)

17. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the telephone customer service provided by Eastside Disposal Service, also known as Allied Waste? If you've never called, please just say so. Would you say you are
- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Very Satisfied | 25% | |
| Somewhat Satisfied | 18% | => 43% |
| Somewhat Dissatisfied | 4% | => 13% |
| Very Dissatisfied | 2% | |
| (Don't Know/Unsure) | 7% | |
|
(Never Called) |
44% |
=> 44% |

Additional disposal services are available for Mercer Island residents. I'm going to read the options, and after each, I would like you to tell me if you are interested or not interested in that service. (IF INTERESTED) Would that be very interested or somewhat interested?

SCALE:

<u>Very</u> <u>Int.</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>Int.</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Int.</u>	<u>(DK)</u>	<u>(Ref)</u>
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(RANDOMIZE)

18. Electronics recycling. For a small fee ranging from ten dollars to twenty five dollars, depending on an item's size and weight, you could leave a television set or old computer for pickup
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| 28% | 31% | 38% | 2% | 1% |
|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
19. Yard waste collection twice a month during the winter months, which would cost less than a dollar a month more on your garbage bill
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| 22% | 14% | 57% | 5% | 3% |
|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
20. Increased food waste recycling. For about four dollars more a month you could get weekly yard waste collection and also recycle food waste such as meat, dairy products, fish, and other compostables. When combined with other recycling options already available, adding food waste would mean the average homeowner could recycle twenty five percent more of their total waste
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| 14% | 18% | 62% | 5% | 1% |
|-----|-----|-----|----|----|

(END RANDOMIZE)

Now I'm going to ask you about the City of Mercer Island's park system. For each item, please tell me if you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. If you don't use it or it doesn't apply to you, please just say so.

SCALE:

Very Some Some Very (Don't Know/ (Don't Use/
Sat. Sat. Dis. Dis. Can't Rate) Doesn't Apply) (Refused)

(RANDOMIZE)

21.	The availability of public parks on the Island	75%	16%	1%	2%	2%	4%	
22.	The availability of open space on the Island	59%	29%	4%	1%	3%	3%	0%
23.	The available amenities at the City's parks, such as sports fields, sports courts, playgrounds, and restrooms	51%	27%	4%	1%	4%	12%	

(END RANDOMIZE)

Now, please rate the job the city of Mercer Island is doing...

SCALE FOR Q24-Q33: 1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Only fair 4. Poor 5. (Don't know)

(AFTER EACH UNTIL UNDERSTOOD: Would you say...)

RANDOMIZE)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(Don't Know)</u>
24. maintaining parks, trails, and open space					
2004	30%	55%	10%	3%	2%
2006	35%	52%	11%	1%	1%
2008	38%	48%	9%	1%	4%
25. maintaining streets					
2008	23%	53%	19%	4%	1%
26. maintaining sidewalks, pedestrian paths, and bike paths					
2008	22%	44%	20%	9%	6%
27. providing recreation programs for youth, adults, and seniors					
2008	34%	45%	7%	1%	12%
28. protecting the environment on the island and the water quality around the island (<i>*in 2006, the survey only asked about "protecting the environment"</i>)					
2006	22%	50%	16%	6%	6%
2008	25%	47%	11%	4%	14%
29. preparing for a natural disaster, like an earthquake or a windstorm					
2008	12%	36%	18%	7%	28%
30. ensuring prompt fire and medical aid call response times					
2004	54%	31%	4%	1%	11%
2006	49%	34%	2%	1%	14%
2008	52%	22%	2%	--	24%
31. operating the Community Center at Mercer View					
2008	42%	33%	6%	1%	18%
32. preventing crime and protecting the community (<i>in 2006, this question was specifically tied to the MI Police Dep't</i>)					
2004	35%	51%	9%	1%	3%
2006	35%	49%	9%	1%	6%
2008	37%	46%	8%	1%	7%
33. promoting traffic safety (<i>in 2006, this question was specifically tied to the MI Police Dep't</i>)					
2004	26%	45%	14%	4%	10%
2006	20%	52%	15%	5%	8%
2008	16%	46%	22%	10%	6%

(END RANDOMIZE)

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
34. And in terms of public services provided by the City of Mercer Island, do you think that overall the city provides too many services, too few services, or about the right amount of services?			
Too Many	6%	5%	5%
About Right	83%	81%	83%
Too Few	5%	6%	6%
Don't Know	5%	7%	5%
Refused	1%	1%	1%

(END RANDOMIZE)

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
45. If you had to choose only one, which of the following would you choose for the City of Mercer Island? Would you choose to...			
Increase taxes to maintain city services at current levels allowing for population growth and inflation	36%	42%	49%
Keep taxes the same, and cut services as needed when population growth and inflation outpace revenues	51%	46%	39%
Other	1%	1%	0%
Neither	8%	5%	5%
Don't Know	4%	5%	5%
Refused			2%
46. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the appearance and condition of the City's Town Center, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?			
Very Satisfied	28%		
Somewhat Satisfied	43%	=> 71%	
Somewhat Dissatisfied	18%	=> 29%	
Very Dissatisfied	8%		
(Don't Know/Can't Rate)	3%		
47. Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the City's Town Center as a place to shop and dine? Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?			
Very Satisfied	13%		
Somewhat Satisfied	45%	=> 58%	
Somewhat Dissatisfied	27%	=> 42%	
Very Dissatisfied	12%		
(Don't Know/Can't Rate)	3%		

SCALE for Qs 48 & 49:

	<u>1-</u> <u>Completely</u> <u>Unsafe</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7-</u> <u>Completely</u> <u>Safe</u>	<u>(Don't</u> <u>Know)</u>	<u>(Re-</u> <u>fused)</u>	Mean
48.	Moving on, I'd like to ask you about your personal safety. Using a scale of one to seven, where 1 is completely unsafe and 7 is completely safe, how would you rate your feeling walking alone in your neighborhood. You can use any number on the scale?									
	0%	0%	1%	3%	8%	23%	63%	1%	0%	6.44
49.	again from one to seven where one is completely unsafe and seven is completely safe, how would you rate your feeling walking alone in the City's town center?									
	0%	0%	2%	9%	26%	60%	3%	0%	6.48	
50.	Shifting gears, if there were an earthquake, and your household lost power and access to the City's water system for seven days, how prepared would you say your household is to be completely self sustaining for this time period? Would you say you are									
	Completely Prepared							12%		
	Mostly Prepared							46%	=> 58%	
	Mostly Unprepared							31%	=> 42%	
	Completely Unprepared							10%		
	(Don't Know)							2%		
51.	How satisfied are you with the city's efforts to keep you informed through newsletters, the City's website, and the Mercer Island Reporter? Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?									
	Very Satisfied							34%		
	Somewhat Satisfied							51%	=> 85%	
	Somewhat Dissatisfied							8%	=> 15%	
	Very Dissatisfied							2%		
	(Don't Know/Can't Rate)							5%		
	(Refused)							1%		

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

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
52. From what source do you receive most of your information regarding issues facing the city of Mercer Island? (IF "NEWSPAPER" SPECIFY WHICH ONE; IF "RADIO" SPECIFY WHICH STATION) (TAKE TWO RESPONSES)			
Mercer Island Reporter	53%	60%	51%
Seattle Times	10%	11%	7%
Word of mouth	8%	8%	7%
City of Mercer Island Web Site	2%	0%	6%
Friends	6%	3%	5%
City of Mercer Island Quarterly			5%
Community Forums	2%	3%	2%
Neighbors	5%	3%	2%
City of Mercer Island	2%	1%	2%
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	3%	2%	1%
Mercer Island Weekly			1%
TV Station – King 5			1%
TV (Specify Station)	2%	2%	0%
Radio (Specify Station)	0%	0%	0%
Radio Station – Komo			0%
Eastside Journal	1%	0%	--
Other	5%	6%	6%
Don't Know/Refused	0%	1%	2%
53. Do you own or rent your apartment or home?			
Own/buying	85%	88%	86%
Rent	13%	9%	12%
Don't Know/Refused	1%	3%	2%
54. How long have you lived on Mercer Island? (RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS, no ranges)			
<5	17%	13%	16%
6-10	16%	19%	19%
11+	67%	69%	65%

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2008</u>
55. How many children under the age of 18 live in your home? (RECORD NUMBER)			
0	68%	64%	60%
1	11%	12%	13%
2	15%	18%	18%
3 or more	5%	4%	7%
Refused		1%	1%
56. What is your age? (READ CODES IF NECESSARY)			
18-24	2%	1%	1%
25-29	3%	2%	3%
30-34	2%	1%	1%
35-39	5%	5%	4%
40-44	8%	10%	11%
45-49	13%	13%	11%
50-54	10%	13%	14%
55-59	11%	9%	8%
60-64	6%	5%	6%
65+	39%	38%	37%
Refused	1%	3%	3%

THANK YOU!

(SUPERVISOR, ATTACH ALL SAMPLE INFORMATION LABELED IN LAYOUT ORDER)