



Signature Report

June 12, 2012

Motion 13682

Proposed No. 2012-0131.1

Sponsors Phillips

1 A MOTION responding to Ordinance 17232, Section 85,
2 Proviso P1, which requires the executive to create a work
3 group to oversee and guide the parks levy renewal planning
4 effort.

5 WHEREAS, the 2012 Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 17232, included a proviso
6 that limits the expenditure or encumbrance of \$100,000 until the King County executive
7 transmits and the King County council adopts by motion a plan for achieving renewal of
8 a parks levy, and

9 WHEREAS, the proviso is in Ordinance 17232, Section 85, Proviso P1, and

10 WHEREAS, the work group called for in the proviso has been created, and

11 WHEREAS, the report called for in the proviso, which was prepared by the work
12 group, has been completed and transmitted to the King County council by the King
13 County executive, and

14 WHEREAS, the report provides background context about previous parks levies,
15 and outlines the planning objectives, a timeline, and an action strategy that details
16 planning progress to date and next steps, and explains the ways that equity and social
17 justice considerations are being addressed in the planning process;

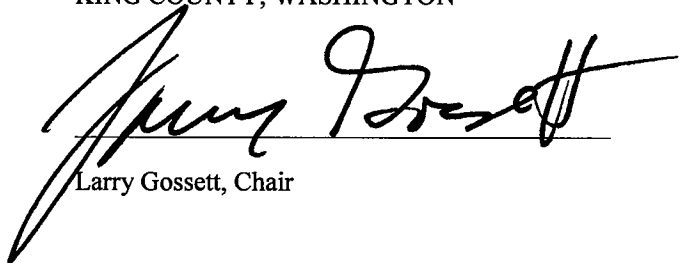
18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

19 Through the transmittal of the report, Attachment A to this motion, the council
20 hereby acknowledges receipt of the report and that the executive has responded to the
21 requirements of the 2012 budget ordinance, Ordinance 17232, Section 85, Proviso P1.
22

Motion 13682 was introduced on 4/9/2012 and passed by the Metropolitan King
County Council on 6/11/2012, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague,
Ms. Patterson, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. McDermott
No: 0
Excused: 1 - Mr. Dunn

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Larry Gossett, Chair

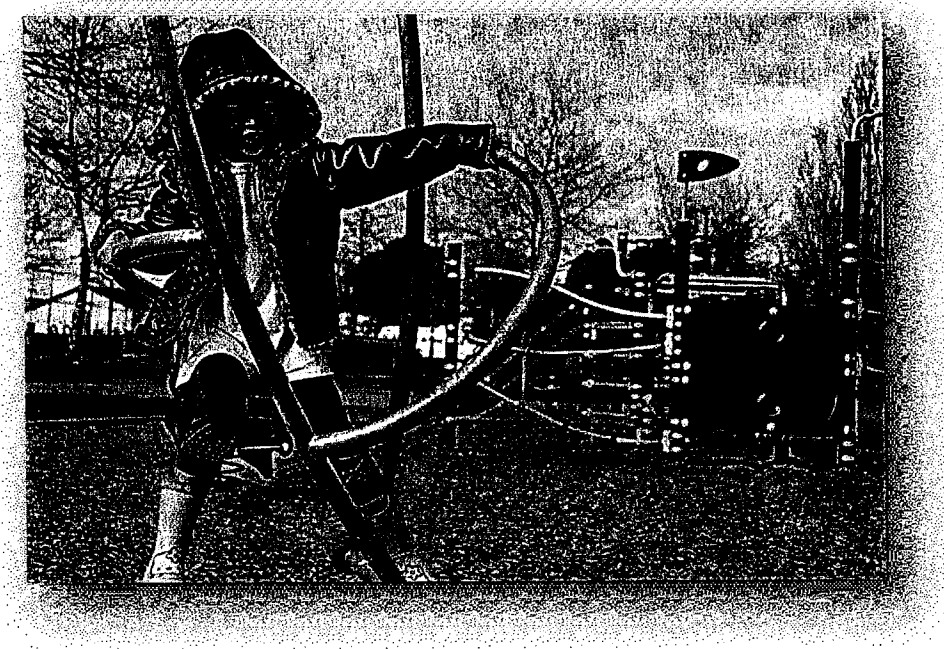
ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: A. Parks Levy Planning Strategy--March 2012, B. Customer Satisfaction Survey

A Report on the Parks Levy Planning Strategy



March 2012

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www.kingcounty.gov/parks

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Executive Summary

This report responds to Ordinance 17232, Section 85, P1, which directed the Executive, by April 1, 2012, “to create a work group to oversee and guide the parks levy renewal planning effort and transmit a report prepared by the work group that outlines a plan for achieving levy renewal.”

As illustrated in the report, the Parks Levy Planning Strategy involves several stages that will take place between 2011 and 2013 and supports the King County Strategic Plan by:

- Developing an understanding of the future parks and recreation needs of King County residents, and how King County parks can meet those needs, through a stakeholder and public engagement process.
- Creating a diverse citizen-based Parks Levy Task Force.
- Proposing a funding approach built on sound economic models that ensure sustainable operations and strategic investments to best serve the residents of King County.

The objectives of King County’s Equity and Social Justice Initiative are reflected in each stage through service excellence, public engagement, sound financial management, and environmental sustainability.

- 2011 - Completed a stakeholder and public engagement process that made a specific effort to reflect the demographic differences across the county’s communities.
- 2012 - Economic modeling to better inform the decisions about funding the agency in the future.
- 2012 - Creation of a demographically and geographically diverse citizen-based Parks Levy Task Force.
- 2012 – Levy Task Force recommendations on a future levy.

BACKGROUND: KING COUNTY PARKS - A DECADE OF TRANSITION

Confronted with a \$52 million general fund crisis in 2002, King County faced the very real possibility of closing its large system of parks, pools, and recreational programs. Informed by extensive public outreach and stakeholder input, as well as by the work of the citizen-based Metropolitan Parks Task Force, the *Parks Business Transition Plan* was adopted by Council and became the blueprint for restoring stability to the county's parks system. The Parks and Recreation Division (Division) began to implement the plan's recommendations immediately. These included:

- Refocusing the agency's mission on providing regional trails, regional passive parks, regional natural area parks, regional active recreation facilities, and local rural parks
- Transferring in-city facilities and those in potential annexation areas to appropriate jurisdictions
- Implementing entrepreneurial strategies to generate revenues and managing facilities in a manner that maximizes cost recovery, with an annual business revenue growth target set at five percent
- Facilitating partnerships that leverage capital funding from the agency with private money to develop and enhance public recreation facilities
- Proposing to the voters, in 2003, a property tax levy dedicated to operating the system, which would substantially replace general fund support
- Focusing on new acquisitions of regional trails and natural areas for recreation and conservation

In May 2003, King County voters approved a four-year, 4.9-cent levy to support operations and maintenance of the King County park system.

By the end of the first levy in 2007, the Division had made great strides in implementing the "new way of doing business". By 2007, nearly 20 percent of the Division's operating funds were derived from a combination of entrepreneurial initiatives, competitively priced user fees, and gifts and grants, which complemented the levy support. Also during this first levy period, the Division honed its mission by transferring 48 local urban parks and pools, comprising nearly 1,580 acres, to cities and other entities, such as school districts and non-profit organizations. The development of successful public-private partnerships and the pursuit of efficiencies further contributed to the Division's ability to leverage resources, creating new public recreation amenities and offering programs, events and other ways for the public to enjoy and benefit from King County's open space system.

The first levy expired at the end of 2007, and the King County Executive created another citizen-based task force, the Parks Futures Task Force, to help chart the course for the Division's future. The Parks Futures Task Force recommended the following:

- Continue to focus the agency's mission on providing regional trails, regional passive parks, regional natural area parks, regional active recreation facilities, and local rural parks
- Propose to the voters a seven-cent, six-year levy for operations and maintenance that would also account for the anticipated decline in Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) revenues and enhanced maintenance
- Propose to the voters a five-cent, six-year capital levy, which would provide three cents for King County Parks' regional trail development and acquisition of natural areas; one cent to the Woodland Park Zoo for capital and education programs; and one cent to King County's 39 cities based upon population and property tax base
- Continue to implement the *Parks Business Transition Plan*, with its emphasis on entrepreneurial activities, efficiencies, and five percent annual growth from business revenues

Ultimately, the King County Executive proposed, and the King County Council approved, a similar set of recommendations; however, the levy rate was set at five cents for the operations levy, eliminating any replacement of REET revenues. The capital levy was approved as recommended. In August 2007, King County voters approved a five-cent, six-year levy supporting the Division's operations and maintenance. The voters also approved a five-cent, six-year levy supporting King County's acquisition and development of trails and open space, with one cent distributed among the 39 cities within King County for acquisition and development of trails and open space, and one cent distributed to the Woodland Park Zoo.

Now, mid-way through the current levy period and ten years after the initial crisis, the Division has truly evolved into an innovative, award-winning agency, dedicated to providing regional trails, regional and rural parks and recreational facilities, and to stewarding the region's natural heritage by working through community and corporate partnerships, business revenue generation, efficiencies and other entrepreneurial activities that help the Division heighten the impact of each taxpayer dollar.

The Division has been successful in continuing to generate business revenue on its evolving inventory, achieving the five percent annual growth target for seven consecutive years until 2011. It has invested strategically in the system, expanding regional natural area parks and enhancing the regional trails system. From 2008 to 2011, the Division also transferred 22 additional local parks and pools, consistent with the County's annexation initiative.

Despite numerous successes, a combination of factors arose that have affected the Division, including:

- a dramatic decline in REET revenues, which has gone down 83 percent since 2006
- elimination by 2011 of the \$3 million general fund allocation which supported facilities in urban unincorporated areas
- new regional acquisitions, such as the Maury Island Site

Coupled with the persistent downturn in the economy, these challenges have meant continual reductions in service and a growing backlog of critical maintenance needs. Although the Division has successfully managed the system during these tight financial times, it has struggled to provide an appropriate level of service and fully realize the vision set forth in the levies, factors that must be considered as it looks to the future.

PARKS LEVY PLANNING STRATEGY

As both of the current levies will expire at the end of 2013, the Division launched an effort in 2011 to begin planning for the agency's future. The division expanded its efforts to include the Parks Levy Work Group, consisting of staff from the Parks and Recreation Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Director's Office, Executive's Office, King County Council, and the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget to assist the Division in its planning efforts. The group has contributed to the development of the Parks Levy Planning Strategy described in this report and will continue to implement the strategy as outlined in the steps below.

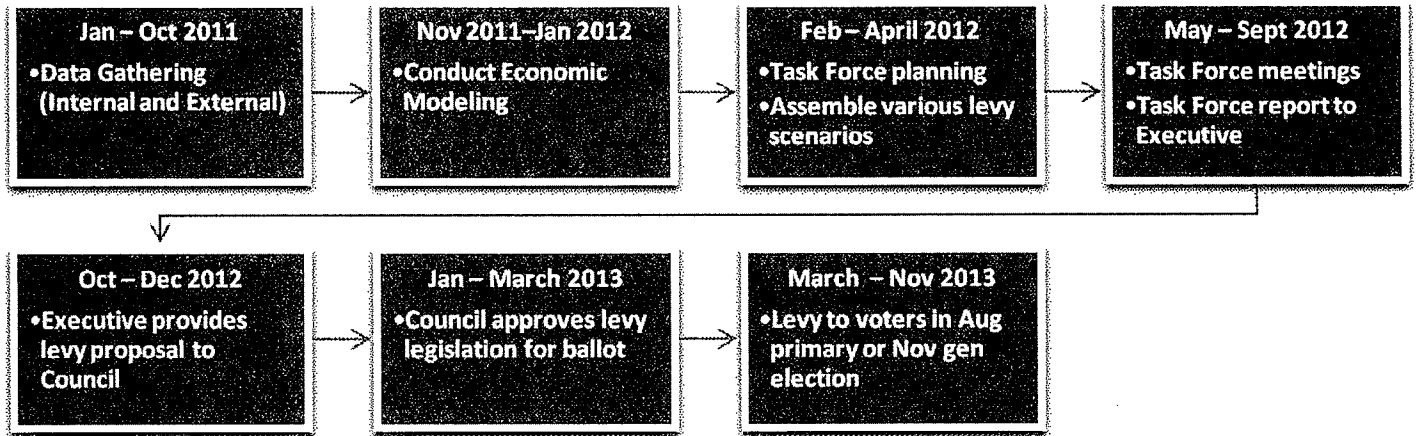
Planning Objectives

Through the levy planning process, the Parks Levy Work Group seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop an understanding of the future parks and recreation needs of King County residents and how King County parks can effectively and efficiently meet those needs
- Propose a funding approach built on sound economic models that ensures sustainable operations and strategic investments and helps the Division best serve the residents of King County

- Ensure that equity and social justice issues as well as King County Strategic Plan priorities, including service excellence, environmental sustainability, and sound financial management, are integrated into the development of a levy proposal

Levy Planning Timeline



Steps in Levy Planning Strategy

1. Data Gathering

In 2011, the Division undertook a multi-faceted effort to gauge customer satisfaction that had the following objectives:

- Determine the level of general satisfaction with the services currently provided by the Division
- Develop a better understanding of the region’s current and future parks and recreation needs
- Identify the roles that King County can play in meeting those needs

Division staff facilitated multiple input gathering meetings with Division employees, King County employees from other agencies, and the directors of other parks agencies in King County.

The Division also worked with consultants to engage the public in a customer satisfaction survey, specifically through the use of focus groups and on-site and online surveying. The consultants were selected in part due to their experience with and proposed approach to addressing customer satisfaction and equity and social justice issues.

Focus group participants came from the general King County population, as well as from a representative list of people who are regular users of King County’s park system. The professional screeners who did the recruiting were instructed to strive for geographic and demographic diversity when selecting potential focus group participants.

Participants in the on-site surveys were approached as they were actively using a King County park or trail, with surveying conducted at varying times and days over a period of three months to capture a variety of park and trail visitor patterns. The on-site survey locations were chosen in an effort to represent the range of recreational activities offered at King County parks’ facilities and to reflect the demographic differences across the county’s communities.¹ In addition, three workshops were held that sought to involve youth, including one involving youth and their families from King County Parks’ White Center Teen Program.

¹ See Attachment B for a map and description of on-site survey locations.

Nearly 400 people took part in the on-site surveys, which on several occasions included the use of translators to help facilitate participation.

More than 1,700 people completed the online survey, which was available from August 17 - September 18, 2011. The online survey was promoted by the Division utilizing a variety of traditional and digital outreach tools, as well as community and corporate partners and other networks further publicized it among their respective constituencies. See Attachment B for the findings from the focus groups and surveying.

2. Economic Modeling

The Parks and Recreation Division has begun an economic modeling effort in order to better inform the decisions about funding the agency in the future. Working closely with the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB), the Division began the process by determining that funding a status quo system would require a 7.9 cent levy as of 2014. Preliminary funding scenarios assembled by the Division include²:

- A status quo scenario augmented by restoring the 2007 Parks Levy Task Force recommendation to address the decline in REET revenues
- A scenario that would enable a greater level of service to be achieved, reflecting recommendations from the 2007 Parks Levy Task Force and the Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Board
- A scenario that would allow for strategic investments in the system's future, informed by the above recommendations and input gathered from internal and external stakeholders

The funding scenarios reflect assumptions based upon estimates for assessed value and inflation based on forecasts by the Office of Economic and Financial Analysis (OEFA) and out year labor and central rate cost growth expectations as provided by PSB.

3. Parks Levy Task Force

As with the past two levy planning processes, a citizen-based Parks Levy Task Force will be convened and appointed by the King County Executive. The members of the Parks Levy Task Force will be asked to provide recommendations to the Executive about the content, structure, and rate of a levy (or levies) to support King County Parks.

Such a task force is anticipated to be made up of 15 - 19 highly regarded civic leaders and representative parks and trails stakeholders that will meet over the course of several months during the spring and summer and ultimately deliver a report to the Executive in September 2012. The task force process will be led by a professional meeting facilitator; meetings will be scheduled at different locations throughout King County and will be open to the public.

As a means for ensuring that Equity and Social Justice Initiative goals are reflected in the final levy proposal, the Executive will appoint members that represent King County's geographic and demographic diversity.

Prior to the convening of the Task Force, the Parks Levy Work Group will be involved in reviewing the Task Force meeting docket, including meeting locations, subject matter covered, and meeting presenters. The Parks Levy Work Group will be kept apprised of the Task Force's progress throughout the process and will provide feedback on the Task Force's recommendations to the Executive.

The Parks Levy Task Force's final report and recommendations will be distributed to the King County Council.

4. Executive and Council Proposals

² The funding scenarios are based upon a 4.8 percent cost growth assumption per PSB and OEFA data.

It is anticipated that the Executive will transmit a parks levy proposal to the King County Council in December 2012 or early 2013.

CONCLUSION

The Parks Levy Planning Strategy outlined in this report furthers the King County Strategic Plan goals of service excellence, public engagement, sound financial management, and environmental sustainability. As such, the Parks Levy Planning Strategy will produce a levy proposal that reflects the needs and interests of King County residents, is consistent with the countywide priority of equity and social justice, and presents the best scenario for successfully achieving levy renewal.

- 2011 - Completed a stakeholder and public engagement process that made a specific effort to reflect the demographic differences across the County's communities.
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King County Parks **Your Big Backyard**  King County



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks - Parks Division

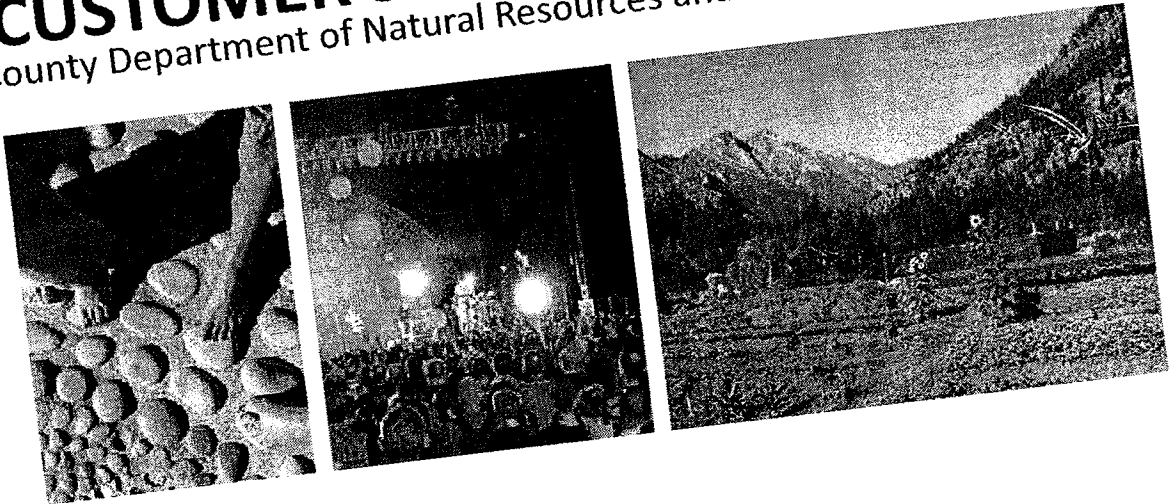


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Executive Summary

“King County Parks really make this area one of the best places in the country to live. Kudos to the Parks Department for their management of the parks and the county for their investment in the parks.”

On-line Survey Respondent

Project Purpose

From July 28th to September 19th, the Site Story team conducted the *2011 King County Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey* on behalf of King County Parks to evaluate the level of customer satisfaction overall and with specific aspects of the parks system. The findings from the *2011 King County Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey* will complement data from King County Parks’ other input gathering efforts and will be used to inform the agency’s decisions about the future of the King County Parks system. Funding for this effort was made possible in part by a grant from the National Center for Civic Innovation (NCCI).

Methodology

The *2011 King County Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey* was carried out on a multi-tier basis, employing an on-site intercept survey and an online survey format. Survey questions were developed in collaboration with King County Parks and the consulting team. On-site survey locations were chosen to reflect the wide variety of property types and recreational opportunities offered within King County Parks’ system and the demographic differences across the county’s communities (See Map 1), and surveying was conducted at varying times and days and captured a variety of park visitor patterns (i.e. informal use, scheduled use, special events, etc).

As a self-selecting survey process, potential for bias in the findings should be kept in mind. Most often, those who respond to self-selected surveys have strong opinions or affinities for the subject matter.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Analysis

Based on 396 on-site interviews and 1,754 completed online survey responses, the research finds strong support for King County Parks overall, with 90 percent reporting they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their “experience at King County Parks’ parks trails, and natural areas”.

Respondents showed strong support for the appearance and cleanliness of King County Parks’ facilities, with 88 percent saying they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied.” While levels of satisfaction related to “safety and security” of King County Parks’ facilities (71 percent) and “information on signage at parks” (68 percent) are still high, the drop is notable and worth looking at more closely.

Although people use parks and trails in King County for a variety of reasons, the most common uses are walking, hiking, enjoying the outdoors and dog walking. In addition, more than two-thirds of respondents reported using the parks and/or trails “daily or almost daily” or “weekly.” The use of parks and trails is spread nearly evenly throughout the year by regular parks users, although there is a slight drop in the winter, which is to be expected given the winter weather in King County. For those who use parks and trails less often, the frequency was focused on spring and summer.

The majority of people visit parks and trails in this area with one to three other people, making it a social activity. In addition, “word of mouth” is the leading form of communication about parks, trails, and recreational opportunities, followed by “searching online.” Because people tend to only recommend activities they value, this finding reinforces the

overall finding about support for King County Parks.

The majority of the on-site respondents learned about their favorite parks and trails through signage and passing by in vehicles to and from their homes.

As the survey dug deeper into specific uses of parks and recreation facilities in this area, one finding was notable: A relatively small percentage of respondents participate in water-based activities, with 72 percent reporting they use them “only a few times per year” or “never.” In a related response 61 percent thought it was important to have affordable opportunities for swimming or to teach water safety.

When asked how to prioritize future investments, respondents pointed to “regional trails” (35 percent), “preserving natural areas” (30 percent) and “local/community parks” (14 percent) as the top three options. Only 6 percent of respondents cited “aquatic facilities” as a priority for future investment. Although demand is low for additional county aquatic facilities, a large number of respondents indicated that when they do use aquatic facilities, they are owned by local municipalities. In addition, respondents voiced concern for the closures of local pools and the deferred maintenance of those facilities left open.

Respondents to the on-site surveys indicated a lack of brand differentiation between King County Parks and state and municipal facilities. Large natural areas were often confused with state parks, and smaller county-owned community parks were frequently mistaken for city parks.

Executive Summary (cont.)

Of those who provided discretionary responses beyond the standard questions, opinions were broad. Leading concerns and comments included:

- concerns for the parks that respondents use most frequently and the ability of King County to maintain its existing assets; in general, these respondents would prefer investment focus on existing parks facilities vs. purchasing new properties or expanding new programming
- many expressed dissatisfaction with other parks users who left animal waste on trails, both that of dogs and horses in parks that provide equestrian trails; many suggested that King County provide bags at trail entries for that reason
- safety at night in the larger natural areas where “squatters” have been found
- more portable restroom facilities on trails on the longer distance regional trails
- adequate signage on trails
- respondents were appreciative of the county’s initiative in asking opinions and conducting the survey at all

“In these trying economic times I understand how incredibly difficult it is for the county to continue to support parks, athletic fields and expand to things like water parks, urban trail systems and the like. We sincerely appreciate all that you do. Keep up all the good work.”

On-line Survey Respondent

Overwhelmingly, respondents call King County Parks a “wise investment by King County residents”, with an astounding 98 percent who “strongly agree” or “agree”. In assessing the level of customer satisfaction, this finding supports the others in showing that respondents value King County Parks, believe they are a wise investment and are central to the area’s quality of life.

**“Thank you for asking my opinion.
I feel like I counted.”**

White Center Youth Respondent

Project Purpose

King County Executive Dow Constantine has made customer satisfaction a key focus of his administration. Performance measures are seen as a critical part of the County’s service evaluation, transparent communication and citizen engagement. After coming into office in 2009, Executive Constantine asked all County agencies to measure performance and report these findings back to the public.

In 2011, King County Parks embarked on a multi-tiered effort to identify and understand levels of customer satisfaction, gaps in services, and future recreation needs in order to provide direction for decisions about the division’s priorities for the future. King County Parks contracted Site Story to lead an engagement strategy involving the general public through direct on-site surveying and online surveying.

The findings from the *2011 King County Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey* will complement data from King County Parks’ other input gathering efforts, which included two focus groups with King County residents and input gathering meetings involving stakeholders such as division employees, directors from other parks agencies in King County, and other King County employees. See Exhibit A for the focus group summary. King County Parks will use the findings from all the data gathering efforts to inform its decision-making about the future of the King County Parks system.

Funding for this effort was made possible in part by a grant from the National Center for Civic Innovation (NCCI).

King County Demographics

King County is the largest business center in both the state of Washington and the Pacific Northwest with cutting-edge companies and an unmatched spirit of innovation. The county is home to some of the world's most successful businesses including Amazon.com, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Costco, Starbucks, Safeco, and many more. The highly educated workforce, exceptional quality of life, entrepreneurial culture, and strategic location - midway between Asia and Europe - attract companies to this area.

King County is a leading global center for several emerging industries, including aerospace, biotechnology, clean technology, information technology, and international trade and logistics. In 2005, Seattle was ranked the most well educated city in the country. ❶

King County, Washington US Census Bureau Statistics 2010

People QuickFacts

	King County	Washington
Population, 2010	1,931,249	6,724,540
Population, percent change, 2000 to 2010	11.2%	14.1%
Population, 2000	1,737,047	5,894,143
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2009	6.4%	6.8%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2009	21.3%	23.6%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2009	10.7%	12.1%
Female persons, percent, 2009	50.0%	50.0%
White persons, percent, 2010 (a)	68.7%	77.3%
Black persons, percent, 2010 (a)	6.2%	3.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2010 (a)	0.8%	1.5%
Asian persons, percent, 2010 (a)	14.6%	7.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2010 (a)	0.8%	0.6%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2010	5.0%	4.7%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2010 (b)	8.9%	11.2%
White persons not Hispanic, persons, 2010	64.8%	72.5%
Living in same house 1 year ago, pct 1 yr old & over, 2005-2009	80.6%	81.1%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2005-2009	19.0%	12.1%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2005-2009	22.9%	16.5%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2005-2009	91.8%	89.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2005-2009	44.8%	30.8%
Veterans, 2005-2009	131,874	615,860
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2005-2009	26.6	25.4
Housing units, 2009	838,734	2,814,238
Homeownership rate, 2005-2009	60.9%	65.3%



People Quick Facts Continued

	<u>King County</u>	<u>Washington</u>
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2005-2009	37.5%	25.9%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2005-2009	\$398,600	\$277,600
Households, 2005-2009	767,486	2,512,327
Persons per household, 2005-2009	2.38	2.52
Per capita money income in past 12 months (2009 dollars) 2005-2009	\$37,797	\$29,320
Median household income, 2009	\$67,706	\$56,479
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2009	9.8%	12.3%

Business Quick Facts

	<u>King County</u>	<u>Washington</u>
Private nonfarm establishments, 2008	64,324	182,207 ¹
Private nonfarm employment, 2008	1,085,826	2,536,645 ¹
Private nonfarm employment, percent change 2000-2008	5.1%	11.9% ¹
Nonemployer establishments, 2008	140,704	400,718
Total number of firms, 2007	196,732	551,439
Black-owned firms, percent, 2007	3.3%	S
American Indian and Alaska Native owned firms, percent, 2007	0.9%	1.2%
Asian-owned firms, percent, 2002	9.6%	5.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander owned firms, percent, 2007	0.3%	0.2%
Hispanic-owned firms, percent, 2007	2.8%	3.2%
Women-owned firms, percent, 2007	29.0%	28.7%
Manufacturers shipments, 2007 (\$1000)	37,390,762	112,053,283
Merchant wholesaler sales, 2007 (\$1000)	41,042,685	76,790,966
Retail sales, 2007 (\$1000)	37,153,888	92,968,519
Retail sales per capita, 2007	\$20,002	\$14,380
Accommodation and food services sales, 2007 (\$1000)	5,478,918	12,389,422
Building permits, 2009	3,186	17,011
Federal spending, 2008	15,075,630	56,435,550 ¹

Geography Quick Facts

	<u>King County</u>	<u>Washington</u>
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	2,126.04	66,544.06
Persons per square mile, 2010	908.4	101.1
FIPS Code	033	53
Metropolitan or Micropolitan Statistical Area	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area	

❶: Washington State Databook www.choosewashington.com

❷: Includes data not distributed by county.

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.

(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

D: Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information

F: Fewer than 100 firms

FN: Footnote on this item for this area in place of data

NA: Not available

S: Suppressed; does not meet publication standards

X: Not applicable

Z: Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown

Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, Census of Population and Housing, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report. Last update June 2011.

Respondents Profile

With more than 1,700 people completing the survey online, the sample size is significantly larger than most surveys in King County. Combining that number of on-line respondents with on-site respondents the overall survey process was completed by approximately 2,150 people. An overwhelming majority of the respondents were frequent park users versus the general resident population of King County

Based on responses, approximately 30% of survey respondents were in the age range of 45 to 54, and the next largest bracket was ages 35-45 making up 25% of the overall group. All other age groups fell below 20%. The household income of respondents is significantly higher than the public at large. (See County demographics pages 4 and 5.)

The zip codes provided in the survey demonstrate that the majority of the respondents live within 2 miles of the parks they frequent. Parks are central to quality of life for respondents, especially in this down economy. The regularity of use across a large sample size points to a level of resilience in the support for parks. Those who live further away, but within the County, choose their park use based on special interests such as leash free areas for pets, biking, trail running, and other personal sports activities.

“I really appreciate King County reaching out to people who use and value the parks we have, I think all the user groups can work together and we should be creative in figuring out ways to enable all user groups (bikers, hikers, horse riders etc.) to enjoy nature and trails and preserve our natural areas as much as we can.”

On-line Survey Respondent

Methodology & Analysis

The 2011 King County Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey was carried out on a multi-tier basis by providing survey opportunities on-line and in person with on-site interviews. Survey questions were developed in collaboration with King County Parks and the consulting team. The overall analysis is based on a response rate of 2,150 completed surveys, which reflects the total number of respondents for both the on-site surveys (396) and online surveys (1,754). The analysis of individual questions does not reflect the level of respondent completion. There were a total of 642 uncompleted surveys. In the case of some multi-choice or open-ended write-in questions, the analysis highlights most frequently repeated themes. All surveys were counted whether complete or not.

The on-site survey strategy conducted in-person interviews over a three-month period in all geographic regions of King County and engaged park visitors at a broad range of events and at a variety of recreation facilities. The on-site outreach provided 396 completed surveys and unquantifiable good will amongst park users. Special emphasis was placed on youth engagement. Three youth workshops were held throughout the summer months that focused on receiving responses from youth who represented diverse ethnic and income backgrounds.

Youth workshops were conducted at Steve Cox Memorial Park in White Center and Marymoor Park in Redmond.



“Thanks for the great opportunities for mountain bikers at Duthie Hill!!!! I can’t begin to explain how it has changed my life. Our community now has a great place to gather, hold events, and ride one-of-a-kind trails.”

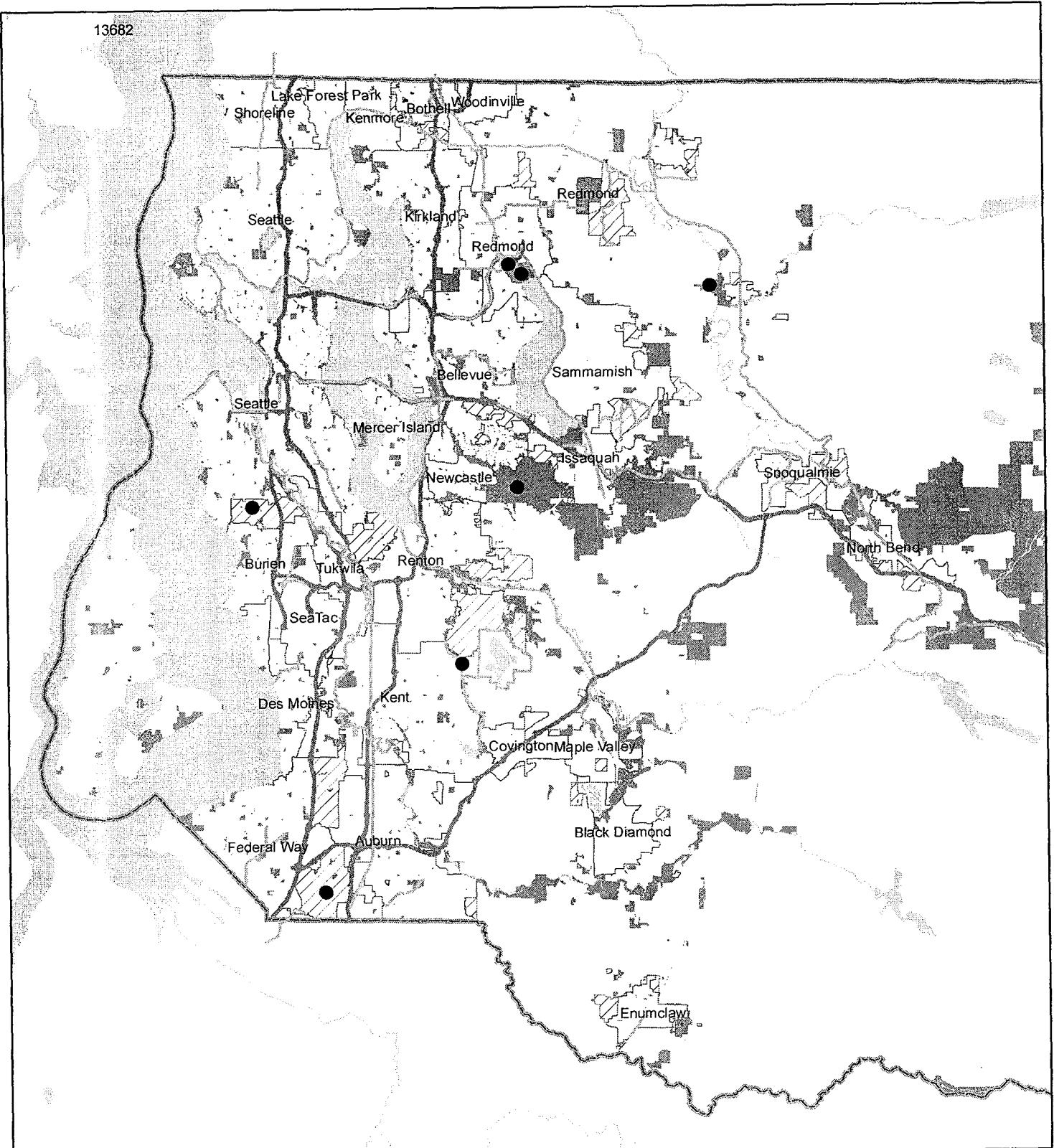
On-line Survey Respondent

Methodology & Analysis (cont.)

The on-site survey locations were chosen to reflect the wide variety of property types and recreational opportunities offered within King County Parks’ system. On-site survey locations included campgrounds, waterfront locations, mountain trails, running trails, natural and forested areas; community gardens, mountain biking, cycling velodrome, outdoor cinema and concert venues; playgrounds, picnic shelters, playfields, historic structures and numerous other facilities. Locations included Marymoor Park, Tolt MacDonald Park, Cougar Mountain, Five Mile Lake Park and Soos Creek (See Map 1). As Marymoor Park has the highest number of visitors of any facility in King County’s system, the consulting team conducted surveys there on multiple occasions. Survey times varied between mornings, afternoons and evenings; week days and weekends; summer vacation months and in September when children returned to school; and special events and regular usage.

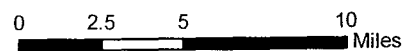
An online survey, which asked very similar questions to the on-site survey, was made available for the public for five weeks at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/parksurvey>. There were 1,754 respondents who completed the entire survey, with 2,396 having started and 642 dropping out. The outreach and promotion of the survey was led largely by King County Parks, as described in Exhibit B of this report.

As a self-selecting survey process, potential for bias in the findings should be kept in mind. Most often, those who respond to self-selected surveys have strong opinions or affinities for the subject matter. These findings both for the online and on-site survey do however demonstrate relative consistency to each other, as well as to similar surveys and other published reports from the Northwest region.



Survey locations for King County Parks

- Survey site
- Youth workshop survey site
- King County regional trail
- ▭ King County boundary
- ▨ Parks in King County
- ▭ City
- ▨ Urban growth area boundaries



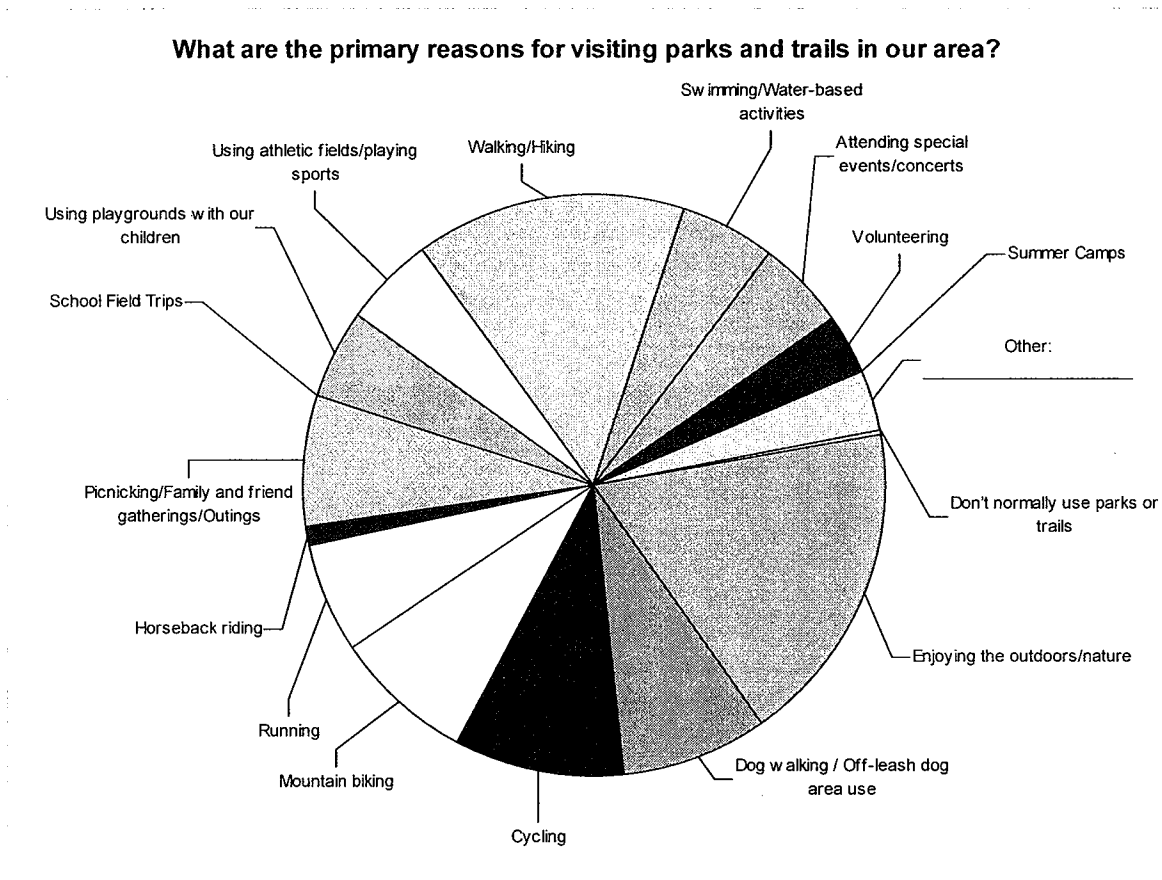
October 7, 2011

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SURVEY QUESTIONS

(% CALCULATIONS BASED ON ESTIMATED TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES: 2,150)

QUESTION: What are the primary reasons for visiting parks and trails in our area?



Enjoying the outdoors/nature	1,511 (70%)
Dog walking/Off-leash dog area use	665 (31%)
Cycling	805 (37%)
Mountain biking	651 (30%)
Running	493 (23%)
Horseback riding	99 (5%)
Picnicking/Family and friend gatherings/Outings	611 (28%)
School Field Trips	5 (>1%)
Using playgrounds with our children	411 (19%)

QUESTION continued: What are the primary reasons for visiting parks and trails in our area?

Walking/Hiking	1,252 (58%)
Swimming/Water-based activities	444 (21%)
Attending special events/concerts	421 (20%)
Using athletic fields/playing sports	418 (19%)
Other	282 (13%)
Volunteering	274 (13%)
Don't normally use parks or trails	15 (>1%)
Summer Camps	4 (>1%)

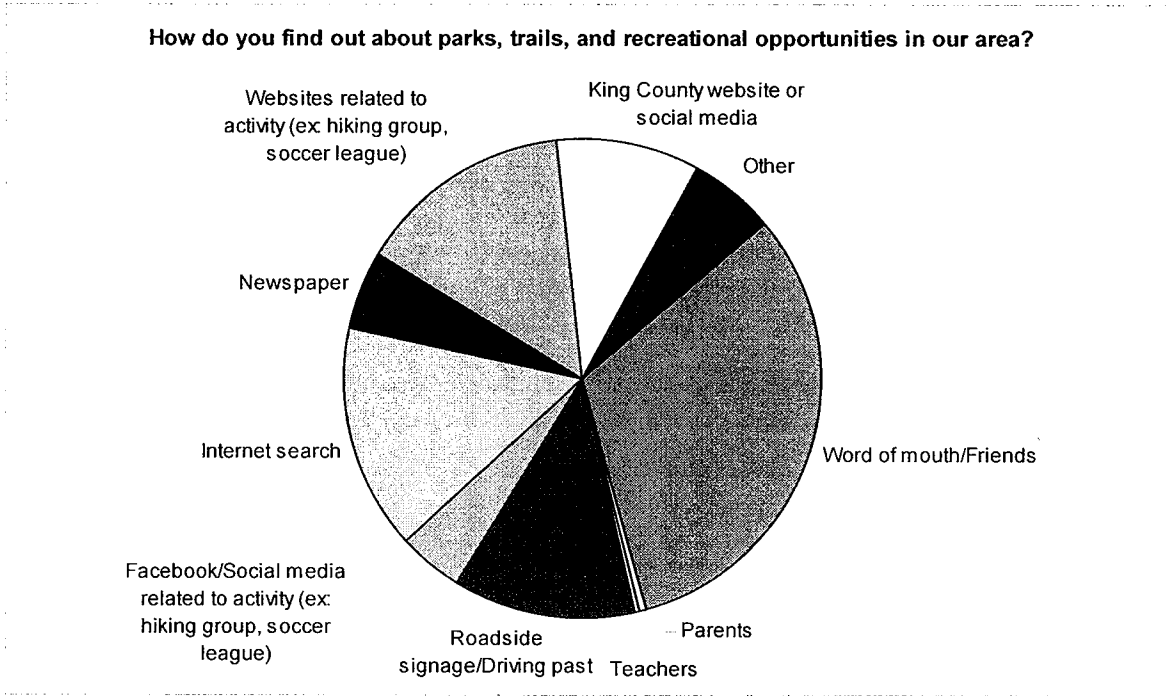
Respondents to this survey overwhelmingly ranked “enjoying the outdoors and nature” (70%) as the primary reason for visiting parks and trails in our area, while “walking/hiking” accounted for 58%. Other high-ranking activities included cycling (37%), dog walking/off-leash dog area use (31%), mountain biking (30%), and picnicking/family and friend gatherings/outings (28%).

Among the activities that fell somewhere in the middle included running (23%), swimming/water-based activities (21%), attending special events/concerts (20%), using athletic fields/playing sports (19%), and using playgrounds with our children (19%).

A total of 274 respondents (13%) said that they volunteer their time at the parks and trails. Horseback riding, school field trips, and summer camps ranked the lowest, accounting for roughly 6%.*

*(Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple answers to question)

QUESTION: How do you find out about parks, trails, and recreational opportunities?



Word of mouth/Friends	1,640 (76%)
Internet search	780 (36%)
Websites related to activity (ex: hiking group, soccer league)	762 (35%)
Roadside signage/Driving past	633 (29%)
King County website or social media	500 (23%)
Newspaper	277 (13%)
Other: _____	304 (14%)
Facebook/Social media related to activity (ex: hiking group, soccer league)	237 (11%)
Parents	31 (>1%)
Teachers	10 (>1%)

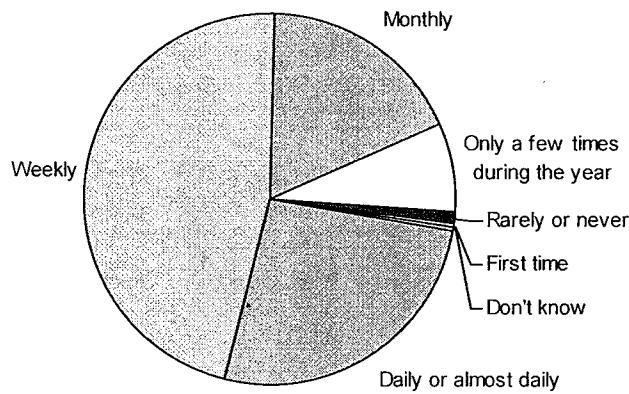
Respondents' knowledge of parks, trails and recreational opportunities in the area came primarily from "word of mouth/friends" (76%). Internet search and websites related to a specific activity (i.e., hiking group, soccer league) each accounted for 35 - 36% of those surveyed. Another 29% cite "roadside signage/driving past" as how they learn about parks and trails.

QUESTION continued: How do you find out about parks, trails, and recreational opportunities?

For 23% of the respondent population knowledge of area parks and trails came from accessing information on the King County website or other social media. Surprisingly, only 11% of those surveyed said they use Facebook or other social media related to an activity to find out about parks, trails, and recreational activities. A similar number (13%) said they use the newspaper as a resource. A very small percentage (less than 1%) said they relied on parents and teachers for this information.

QUESTION: On average, how frequently do you use a King County park or trail?

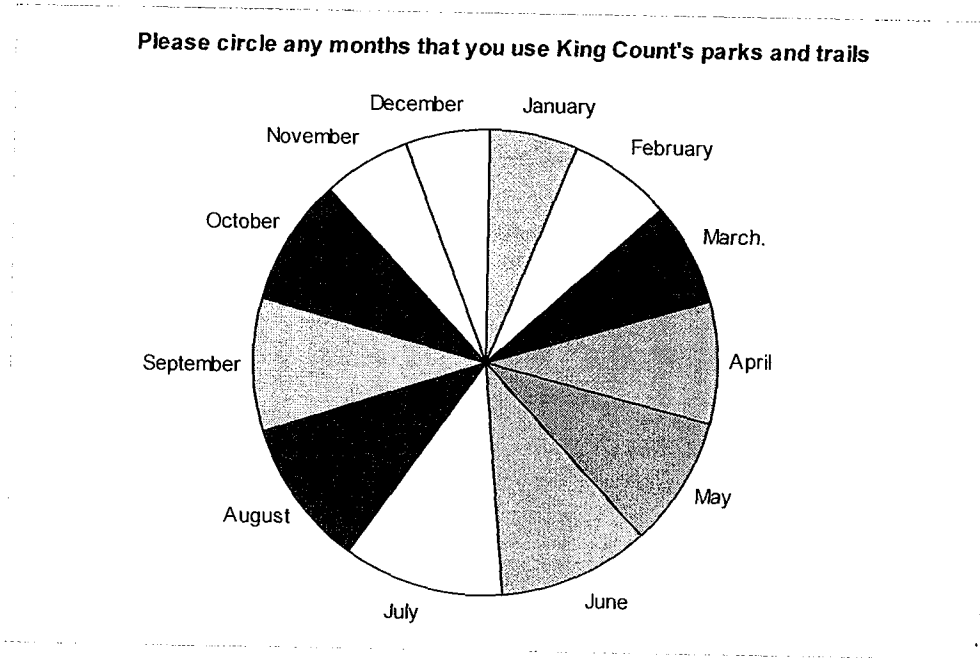
On average, how frequently do you use a King County park or trail?



Weekly	1,021 (47%)
Daily or almost daily	576 (27%)
Monthly	389 (18%)
Only a few times during the year	176 (8%)
Rarely or never	20 (>1%)
First time	6 (>1%)
Don't know	8 (>1%)

Among the respondents included in the survey, almost half (47%) said that they visit a King County park or trail on a weekly basis. The next most frequent park user, accounting for roughly 27% of respondents, said they come on a daily or almost daily schedule. Less than 1/4 (18%) indicated that they visit on a monthly basis. A small number of respondents (8%) said they only make it a few times a year.

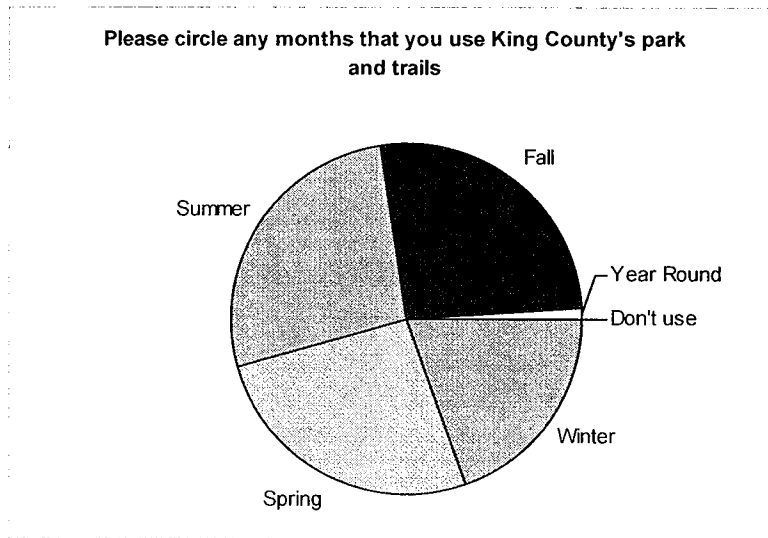
QUESTION: What time of year do you use King County Parks and Trails? (check all that apply)



Jan.	32 %	Jul.	59 %
Feb.	39 %	Aug.	55 %
Mar.	38 %	Sept.	48 %
Apr.	44 %	Oct.	48 %
May	49 %	Nov.	32 %
Jun.	56 %	Dec.	31 %

For this question respondents were asked to check all that apply. This question was asked two different ways by month and by season. See the page that follows for additional results.

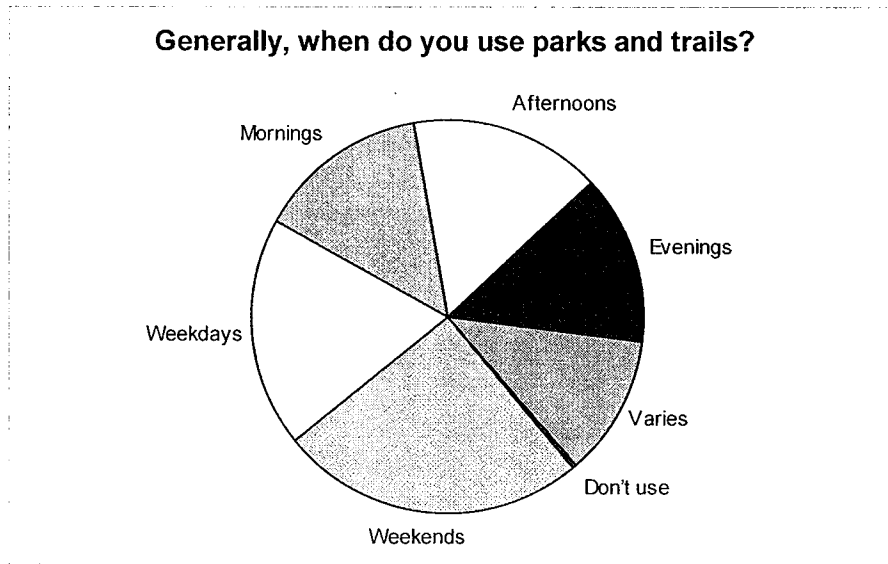
QUESTION continued: What time of year do you use King County Parks and Trails? (check all that apply)



Summer	1,935 (90%)
Fall	1,903 (89%)
Spring	1,897 (88%)
Winter	1,390 (65%)
Year Round	64 (3%)
Don't Use	9

Not surprisingly, the largest percentage of respondents (90%) said they use King County's parks and trails during the summer months. Spring and fall usage dropped slightly, to between 88% and 89% of respondents. Based on subjective responses to the comment section of this survey, during winter, trail use dropped to 65%. Other more general uses of parks such as dog walking, running and family recreation dropped showed more consistent numbers throughout the year.

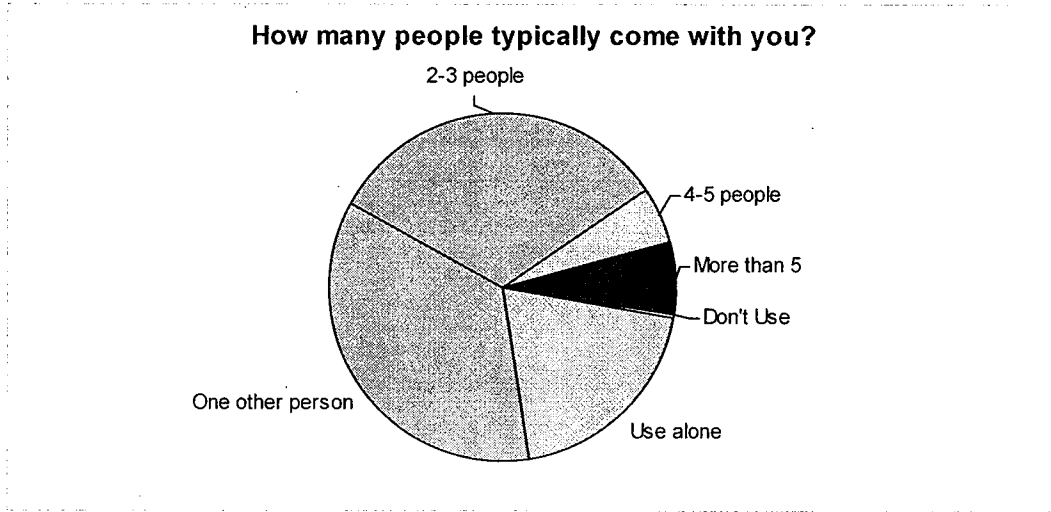
QUESTION: What time(s) of day do you use King County's parks and trails? (check all that apply)



Weekends	1,496 (70%)
Weekdays	1,103 (51%)
Mornings	850 (40%)
Afternoons	927 (43%)
Evenings	814 (38%)
Varies	701 (33%)
Don't Use	10

Survey respondents were closely split between weekdays and weekend visits to area parks and trails. Roughly 70% said they come on weekends, while 51% tend to schedule their visits during the week. Afternoons ranked the highest in terms of park and trails usage, with 927 respondents (43%). Morning visits ranked second (40%), followed by evenings (38%). Roughly 33% of those surveyed indicated they visit at various times of the day, depending on their schedule.

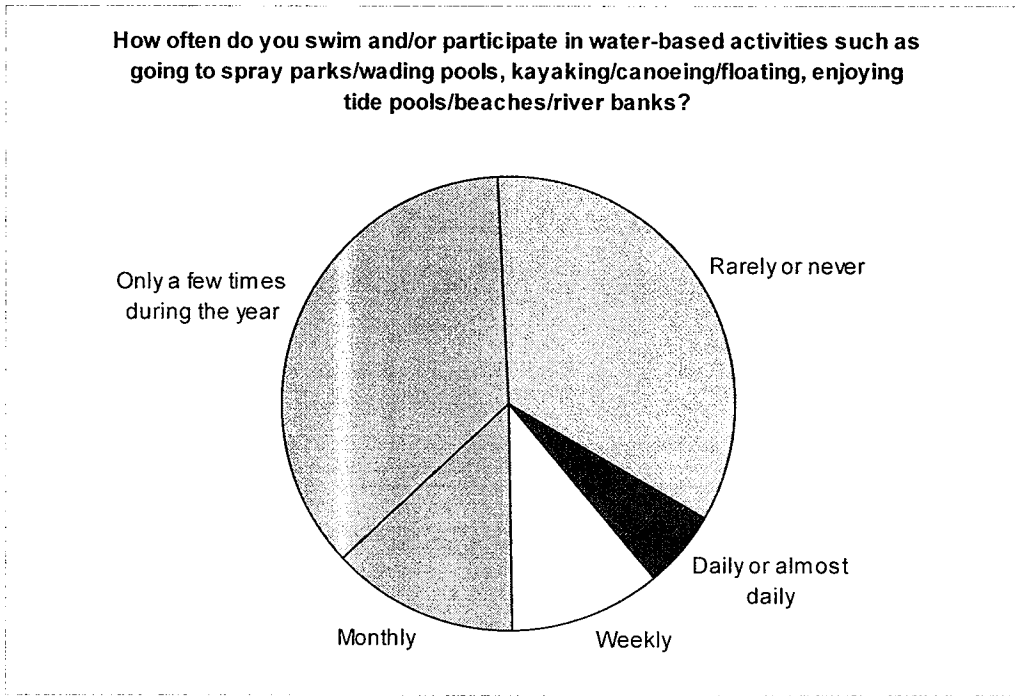
QUESTION: How many people typically come with you?



One other person	768 (36%)
2-3 people	706 (33%)
Use alone	429 (20%)
4-5 people	116 (5%)
More than 5	142 (6%)
Don't Use	8 (>1%)

According to those surveyed, most parks users typically come to the parks with one other person (36%), or 2-3 people (33%). Roughly 20% said that they come alone. Only a small percentage responded that they visit in groups of 4-5 people (5%) and 5 or more (6%).

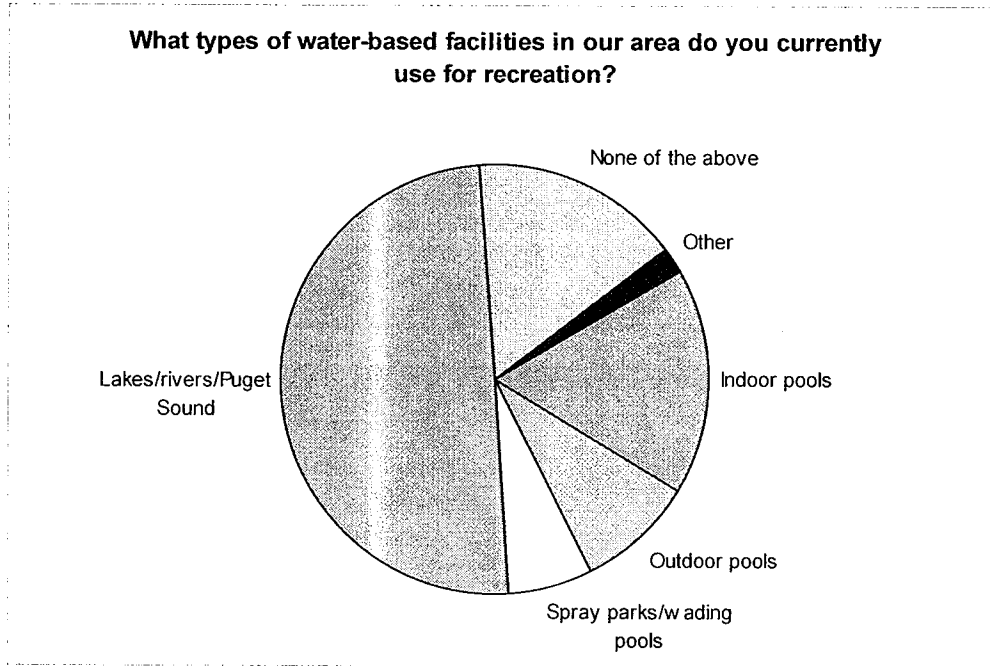
QUESTION: How often do you participate in water-based activities in this area, such as swimming in indoor or outdoor pools; going to spray parks/wading pools; kayaking, canoeing or floating; or enjoying tide pools, beaches or river banks?



Only a few times during the year	763 (36%)
Rarely or never	727 (34%)
Monthly	286 (13%)
Weekly	230 (11%)
Daily or almost daily	115 (5%)

Although King County is blessed with an abundance of natural water resources (beaches, rivers and sounds), a large majority of survey respondents indicated that they rarely participate in swimming or other water-based activities (i.e., kayaking, canoeing, enjoying tide pools/beaches, and river banks). Roughly 36% said they engage in this type of activity only a few times during the year; 34% responded rarely or never. Between 11% and 13% swim and/or participate in water-based activities on a weekly or monthly basis. A small number of respondents (5%) indicated that this is something they do on a daily/almost daily basis.

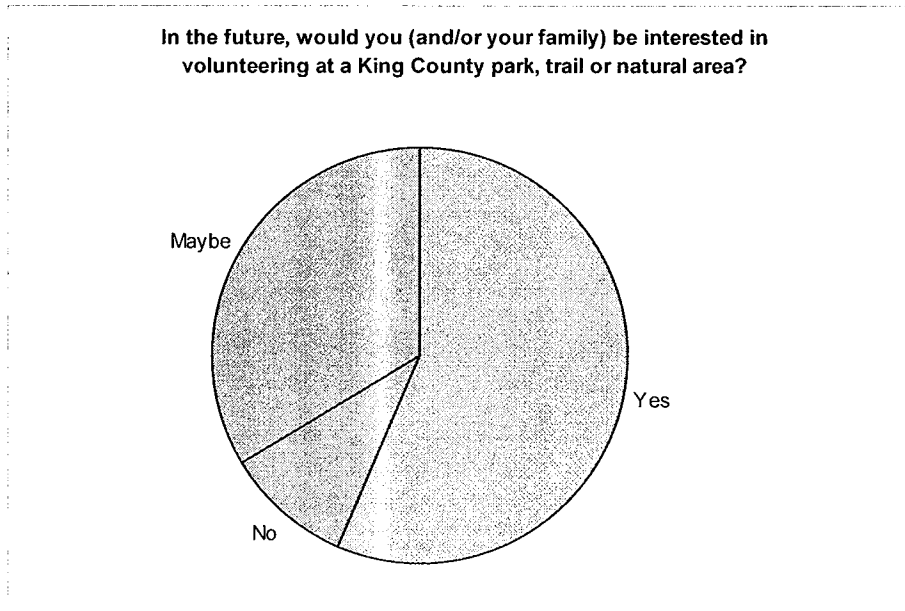
QUESTION: What types of water-based facilities in our area do you currently use for recreation?



Lakes/rivers/Puget Sound	1,426 (66%)
Indoor pools	488 (23%)
None of the above	458 (21%)
Outdoor pools	250 (12%)
Spray parks/wading pools	187 (9%)
Other	55 (3%)

Of those surveyed, 1,426 respondents (66%) said they currently use the area’s lakes, rivers and Puget Sound for their water-related activities. 23% of respondents said they currently use indoor pools, and only 12% use outdoor pools. Spray parks and wading pools accounted for an even smaller percentage (9%) for recreational use among those surveyed.

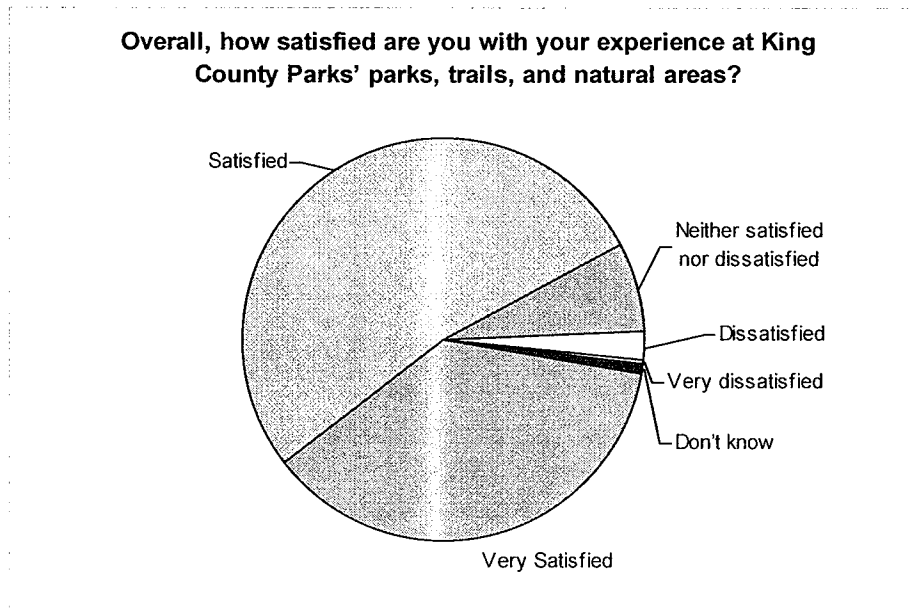
QUESTION: In the future, would you (and/or your family) be interested in volunteering at a King County park, trail, or natural area?



Yes	1,075 (50%)
Maybe	638 (30%)
No	193 (9%)

One half (50%) of those surveyed expressed an interest in volunteering at a King County park, trail, or natural area in the future. Roughly 30% responded with “maybe” and only 9% said they weren’t interested in volunteering.

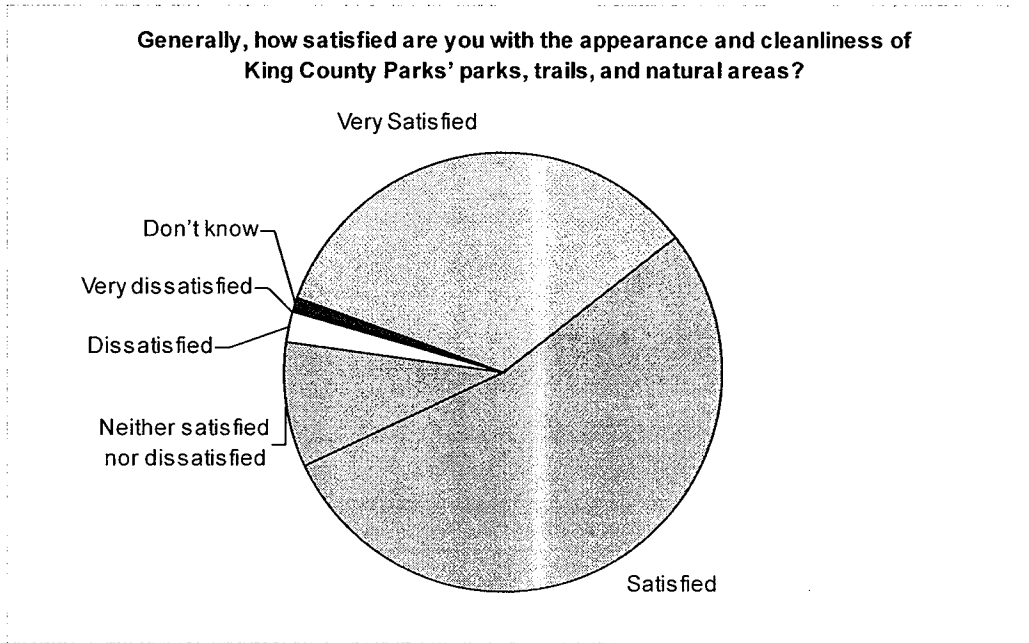
QUESTION: Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience at King County parks, trails, and natural areas?



Satisfied	1,113 (52%)
Very Satisfied	770 (36%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	151 (7%)
Dissatisfied	49 (2%)
Very dissatisfied	8 (>1%)
Don't know	16 (>1%)

Visitors to King County parks, trails, and natural areas gave high ratings in terms of their overall experience. A total of 36% responded with "Very Satisfied" and 52% with "Satisfied." Less than 3% of the users rated their experience as "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied."

QUESTION: Generally, how satisfied are you with the appearance and cleanliness of King County Parks' parks, trails, and natural areas?

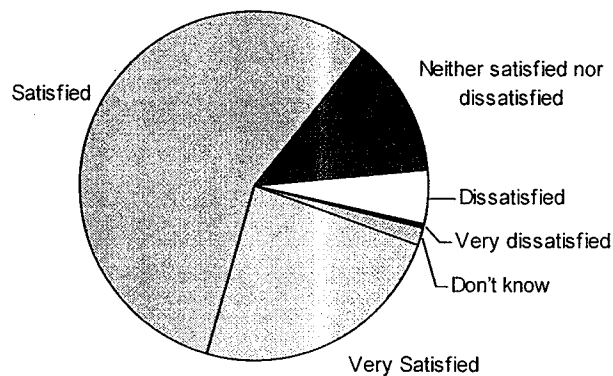


Satisfied	1,182 (55%)
Very Satisfied	709 (33%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	193 (9%)
Dissatisfied	33 (>2%)
Very dissatisfied	13 (>1%)
Don't know	20 (>1%)

Visitors to King County parks, trails, and natural areas gave high ratings in terms of their overall satisfaction with appearance and cleanliness. A total of 33% responded with "Very Satisfied" and 55% with "Satisfied." Less than 3% of the users rated their experience as "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied."

QUESTION: Overall, how satisfied are you with the conditions of features, such as athletic fields, paved trails, natural surface trails, picnic shelters, etc. in King County Parks' parks, trails and natural areas?

Overall, how satisfied are you with the conditions of features, such as athletic fields, paved trails, natural surface trails, picnic shelters, etc. in King County Parks' parks, trails and natural areas?

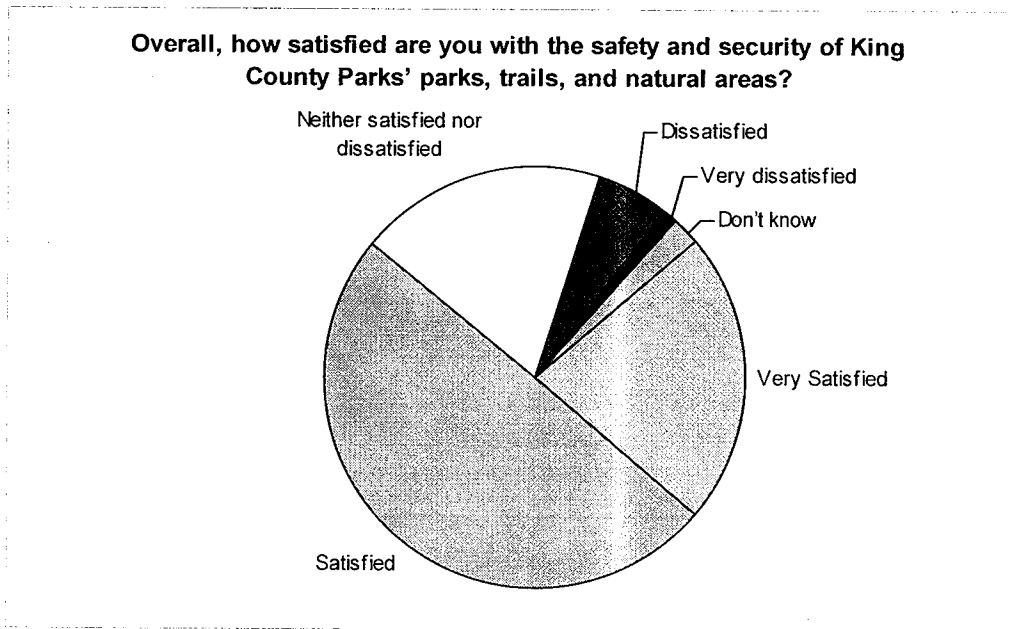


Satisfied	1,247 (58%)
Very Satisfied	494 (23%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	290 (13.5%)
Dissatisfied	81 (4.8%)
Very dissatisfied	17 (>1%)
Don't know	21 (>2%)

Visitors to King County parks, trails, and natural areas gave high ratings in terms of their overall satisfaction with appearance and cleanliness. A total of 23% responded with "Very Satisfied" and 58% with "Satisfied", with 14% neutral in regards to their level of satisfaction. Less than 3% of the users rated their experience as "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied."

This question demonstrated the greatest percentage differentiation between on-site and on-line survey respondents. Approximately 48% of on-site respondents who were surveyed on-site responded to this question with a "Very Satisfied" approval rating.

QUESTION: Overall, how satisfied are you with the safety and security of King County Parks' parks, trails, and natural areas?

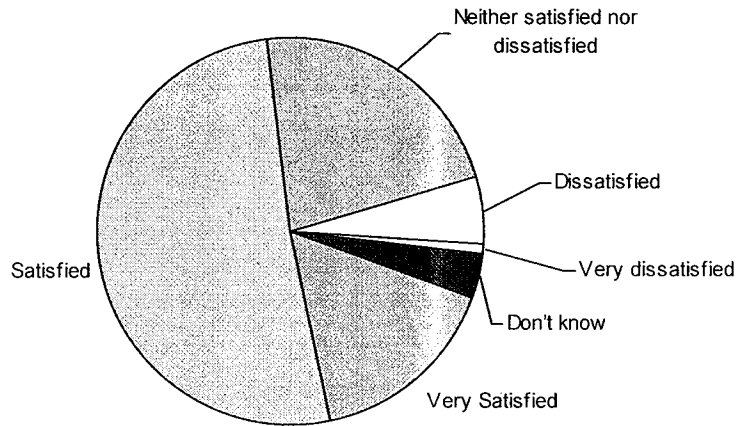


Satisfied	1,097 (51%)
Very Satisfied	473 (22%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	430 (20%)
Dissatisfied	118 (5.5%)
Very dissatisfied	10 (>1%)
Don't know	23 (>1%)

Visitors to King County parks, trails, and natural areas gave high ratings in terms of their overall sense of security. A total of 22% responded with "Very Satisfied" and 51% with "Satisfied." Less than 3% of the users rated their experience as "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied."

QUESTION: In your opinion, how satisfied are you with the information that King County Parks provides about their amenities (including: maps, directional signage, interpretive signage, park rules and regulations, kiosks, online)?

In your opinion, how satisfied are you with the information that King County Parks provides about their amenities (including: maps, directional signage, interpretive signage, park rules and regulations, kiosks, online)?



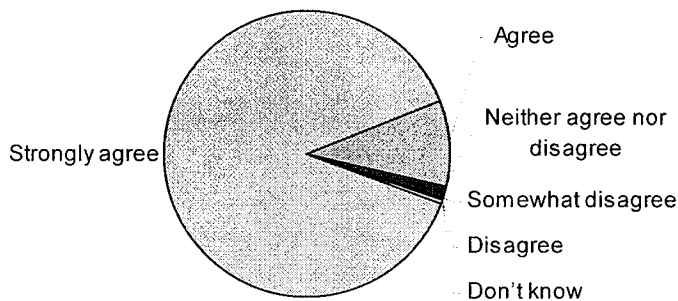
Satisfied	1,118 (52%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	494 (23%)
Very Satisfied	344 (16%)
Dissatisfied	118 (5.5%)
Very dissatisfied	20 (>1%)
Don't know	49 (>2%)

Overall visitors to King County parks, trails, and natural areas gave good ratings in terms of their overall satisfaction with information in terms of maps, wayfinding and signage in general. A total of 26% responded with “Very Satisfied” and 52% with “Satisfied.” Less than 3% of the users rated their experience as “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied.”

The greatest concern for online tools was expressed by on-site survey respondents as well as trail users in both surveys who frequent the parks most often and therefore utilize the online tools more frequently.

QUESTION: In your opinion, King County Parks' parks, trails, and natural areas are important community assets and a wise investment by King County residents.

In your opinion, King County Parks' parks, trails, and natural areas are important community assets and a wise investment by King County residents.

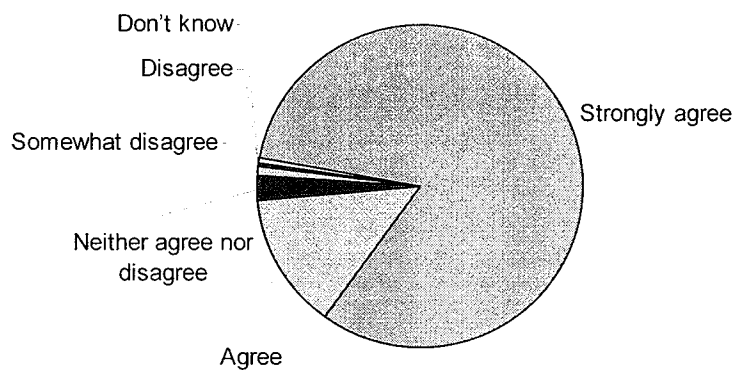


Strongly Agree	1,913 (89%)
Agree	193 (9%)
Neither agree or disagree	21 (1%)
Somewhat disagree	less than 21 (>1%)
Disagree	less than 21 (>1%)
Don't know	less than 21 (>1%)

Nearly 90% of survey respondents strongly agree that parks, trails and natural areas are a high priority investment for the County, with an additional 9% agreeing with that statement. Less than 3% of respondents were neutral or disagreed with this statement.

QUESTION: In your opinion, it is important for King County Parks to preserve natural lands for wildlife and recreation.

In your opinion, it is important for King County Parks to preserve natural lands for wildlife and recreation.

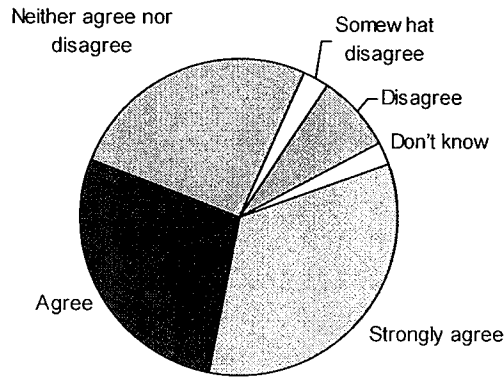


Strongly Agree	1,913 (84%)
Agree	193 (13%)
Neither agree or disagree	21 (1%)
Somewhat disagree	less than 21 (>1%)
Disagree	less than 21 (>1%)
Don't know	less than 21 (>1%)

An overwhelming 84% of survey respondents strongly agree that preserving natural lands for wildlife and recreation should remain a priority investment for the County, with an additional 13 % agreeing with that statement. Less than 3% of respondents were neutral or disagreed with other resident respondents.

QUESTION: In your opinion, affordable or no-cost opportunities to learn to swim and/or learn about water safety are important to me and my family.

In your opinion, affordable or no-cost opportunities to learn to swim and/or learn about water safety are important to me and my family.

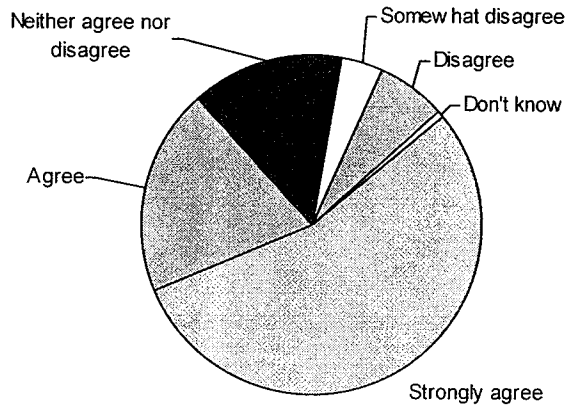


Strongly Agree	795 (37%)
Agree	623 (29%)
Neither agree or disagree	559 (26%)
Somewhat disagree	64 (3%)
Disagree	172 (8%)
Don't know	43 (2%)

There was strong support from survey respondents for the County to provide affordable and no-cost opportunities for swimming and water safety training for families, with an affirmative 66% in favor of this resource. Based on more subjective responses in the "Other" section of the survey, those who were neutral or did not concur with the offerings would be seeking those opportunities at municipal recreation facilities or did not include water sports in their lifestyles.

QUESTION: In my opinion, it is important to me and my family that parks, trails and natural areas are free of tobacco use (such as cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or electronic cigarettes).

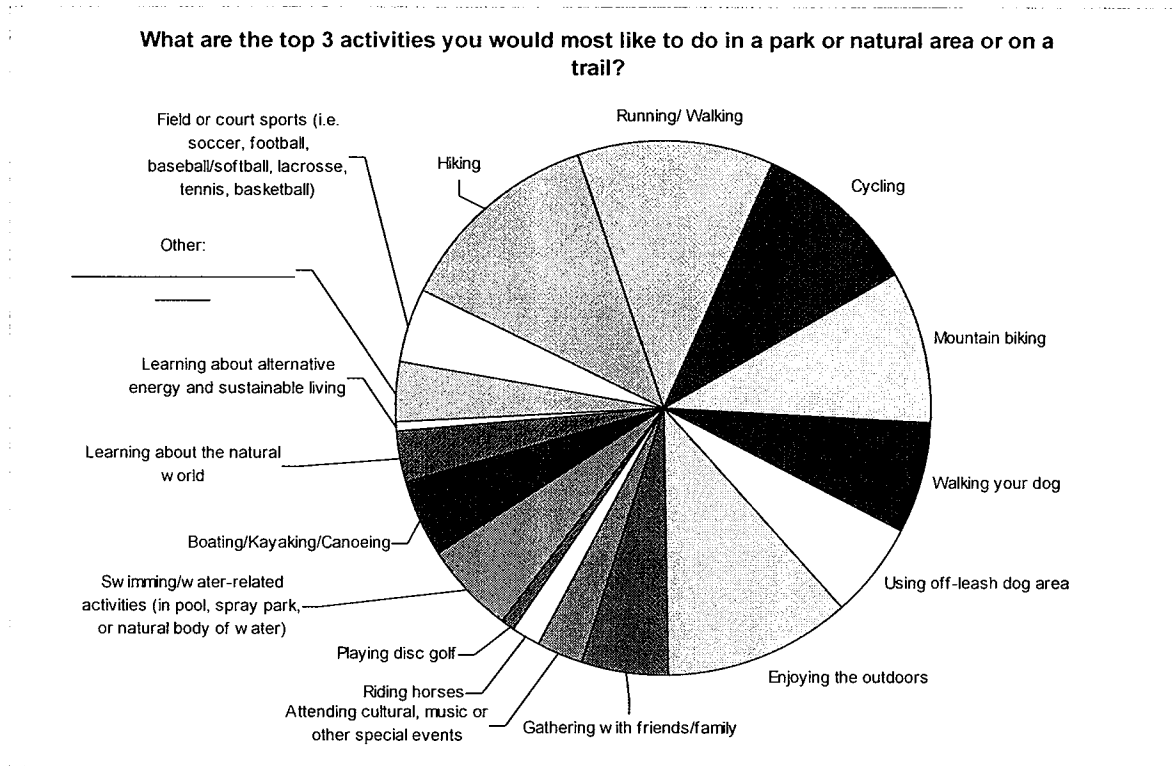
In my opinion, it is important to me and my family that parks, trails and natural areas are free of tobacco use (such as cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or electronic cigarettes).



Strongly Agree	1,182 (55%)
Agree	430 (20%)
Neither agree or disagree	301 (14%)
Somewhat disagree	86 (4%)
Disagree	151 (7%)
Don't know	0 (>1%)

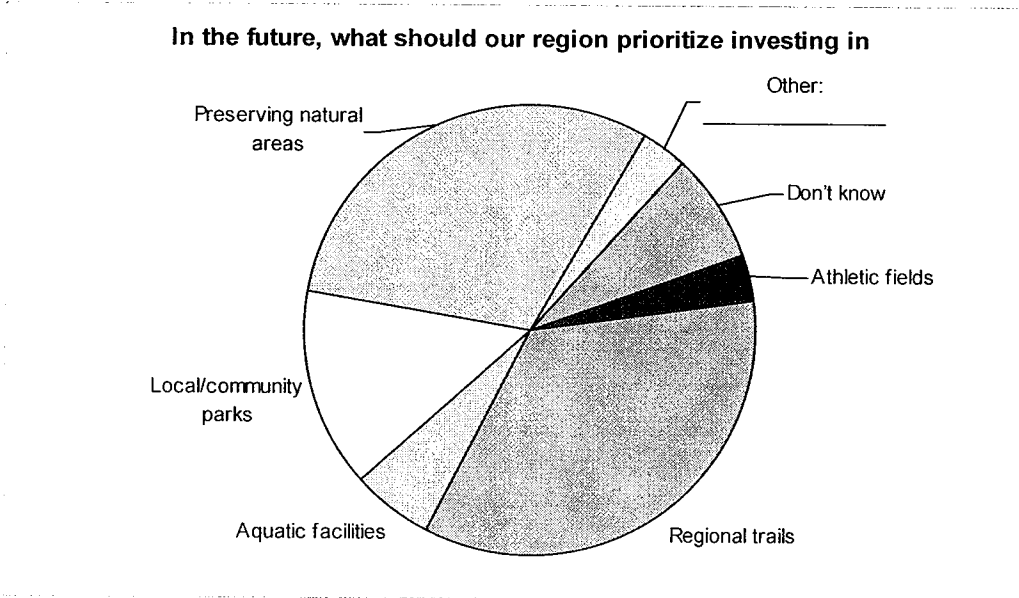
Of the 2150 respondents that completed the survey on-line and on-site, 89% agreed that tobacco use should be restricted in King County parks.

QUESTION: What are the top 3 activities you would most like to do in a park or natural area or on a trail? (Assume you have the time, money, and transportation to engage in activities)



As a multiple choice question, percentages of response varied substantially less for this question than others. Respondents were given the opportunity to choose 3 priority activities that they most like to do while in a King County Park. The highest ranking activities included running and walking; hiking and enjoying the outdoors. The three activities that ranked the lowest overall included playing disc golf, riding horses and learning about alternative energy and sustainable living.

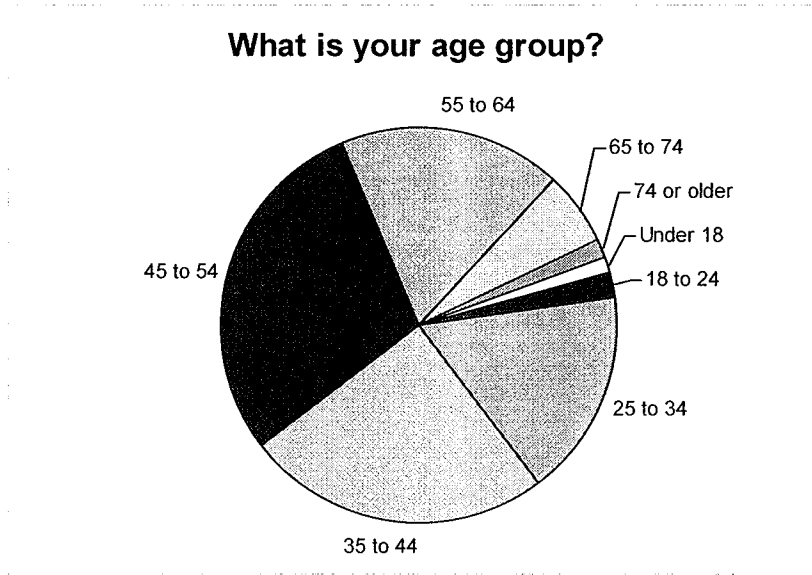
QUESTION: In the future, what should our region prioritize investing in?



Regional Trails	774 (36%)
Preserving Natural Areas	655 (30.5%)
Local Community parks	301 (14%)
Other	178 (8.3%)
Aquatic Facilities	116 (5.4%)
Don't know	68 (3.2%)
Athletic Fields	58 (2.7%)

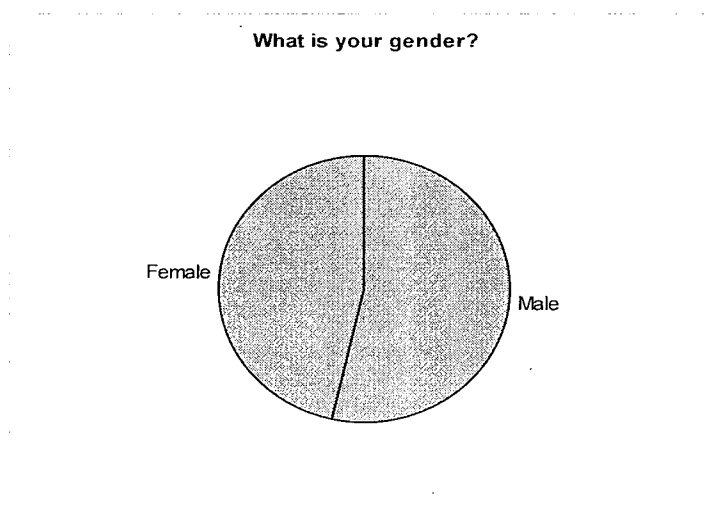
Of the 2150 respondents that completed the survey on-line and on-site, maintaining regional trails and preserving natural areas were prioritized, each receiving in excess of 30% support for future King County Park's investment expenditures.

QUESTION: What is your age group?



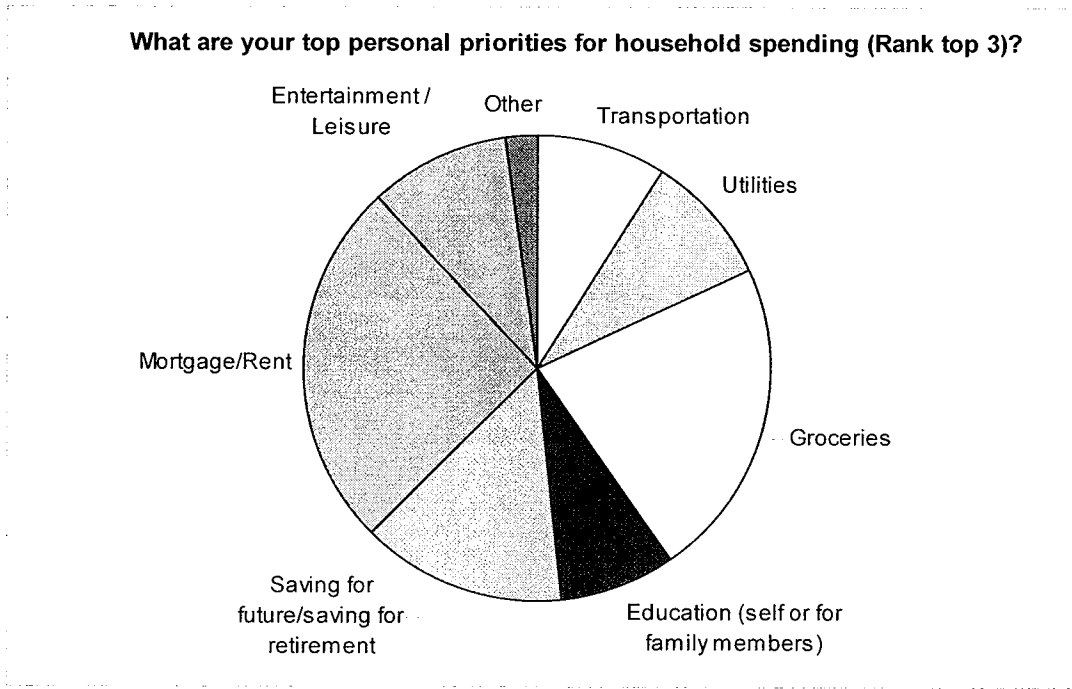
Of the top three responses concerning age groups, 30% were between ages 45 and 54; 25% were between ages 35 and 44; 18% were ages 55 to 64.

QUESTION: What is your gender?



Of the total respondents, 54% were male and 46% were female.

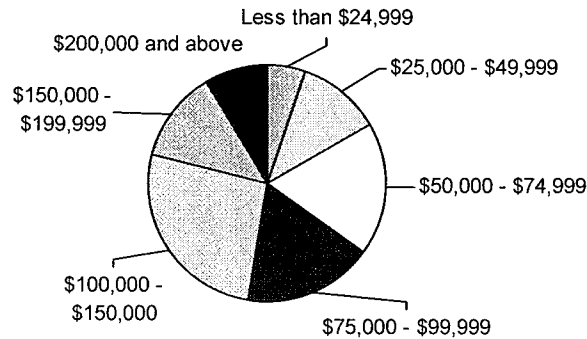
**QUESTION: What are your top personal priorities for household spending?
On a scale of 1-3 please rank your top three priorities where 1 is the highest.**



Respondents were offered three selections for this question. Of the overall responses, mortgage and rent, groceries, and savings for retirement ranked the highest. Despite the economic climate, entertainment and leisure ranked a close fourth similar to transportation and utilities as priorities.

QUESTION: Which of the following best describes your annual household income before taxes?

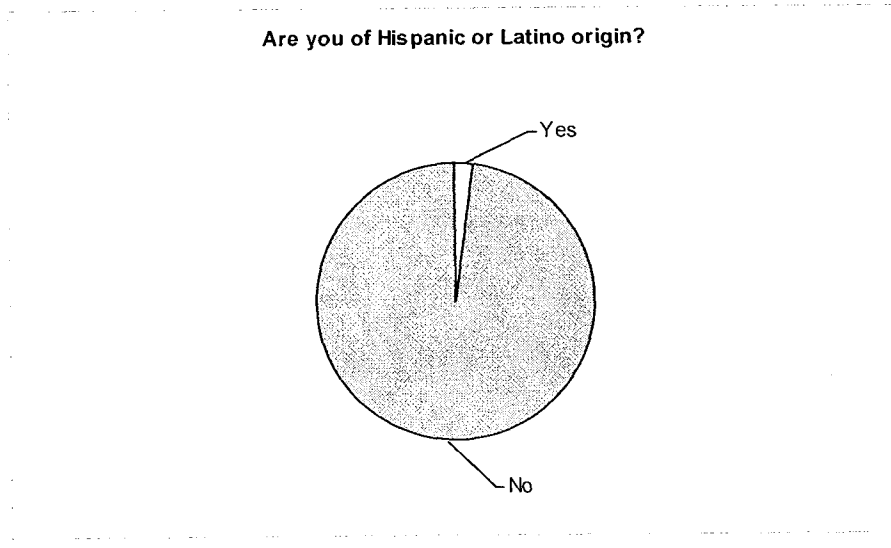
Which of the following best describes your annual household income before taxes?



Less than \$24,999	4.64%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	11.18%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17.95%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	17.66%
\$100,000 - \$150,000	26.63%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	12.96%
\$200,000 and above	8.98%

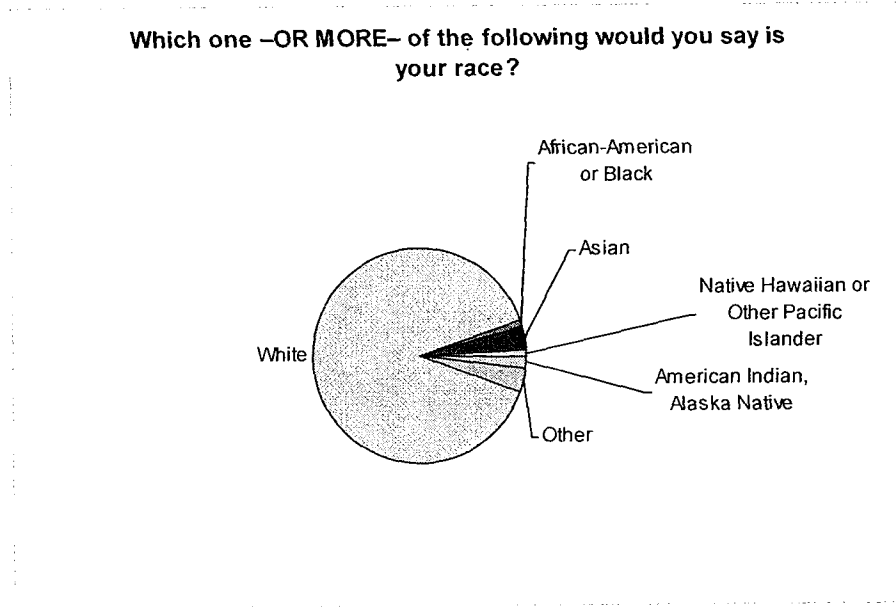
This question was only posed to adults age 18 or older and was not used in the Youth Engagement surveys conducted on-site at County Parks facilities. These numbers reflect combined annual household income. The overall results demonstrate that a diversified income base utilize County Parks.

QUESTION: Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin. *This question was posed only in the on-line survey



Approximately 98% of those surveyed were not of Hispanic or Latino origins; only 2% answered yes to this question.

QUESTION: How would you describe your ethnicity?



Approximately 89% of respondents identified themselves as being Caucasian; the next largest ethnicity group was African-American or Black with a 3% response. The other 8% of total respondents consider themselves as being members of different ethnic groups including Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native; Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; Hispanic or other.

Exhibit A – Focus Group Report

King County Parks and Recreation Division
Summary Report on Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups

August 24, 2011

Prepared for:
King County Parks and Recreation Division

Prepared by:
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- Focus Group Discussion Guide
- Handout for Focus Group Participants
- Focus Group Recruiting Questionnaire

King County Parks and Recreation Division
Summary Report on Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups
Executive Summary

August 24, 2011

King County Parks and Recreation Division commissioned focus group research to increase understanding of King County residents' satisfaction, current use, anticipated future use, and familiarity with King County parks and trails.

Two focus groups were conducted at a focus group facility in downtown Seattle on the evening of July 18, 2011. A total of 21 King County residents participated in the groups. One group was comprised of 10 residents who visit parks, trails, or open spaces in King County at least once a month, "park users"; the other group was comprised of 11 residents who visit parks, trails, or open spaces no more than twice a year, "non-users." Participants included both men and women with differing background characteristics, including a mix of ages, length of residence in King County, incomes, education levels, and occupations.

Key Findings

Factors that make a good park or trail and that make park/trail customers satisfied.

Both park users and non-users identified similar attributes when discussing what makes a "really good" park or trail and what makes them satisfied or happy with a park or trail:

- A place for people to gather and come together to use, care for, and volunteer in parks and trails;
- Natural space that is cared for and well-maintained;
- A safe place, including safe facilities (such as smooth trails) and being safe from crime;
- "Versatility" in the facilities within or across parks to provide opportunities for different activities and interests;
- "Accessibility," in terms of both (1) location (so that residents can easily reach parks) and (2) accommodation for people with disabilities;
- Areas for dogs on and off leashes; and
- Special features, facilities, and destinations, such as views and streams with salmon.

How customers use parks now and would like to use them in the future. As expected, residents described using parks in a variety of ways, including mountain biking, hiking, walking their dogs, riding horses, bringing children to play, volunteering, and going to concerts. In the future, park users and non-users indicated that they would like to use parks in the same way they do now, or in an extension or follow-on to the way they use parks now.

Familiarity with and opinions of King County Parks' facilities and mission. Both park users and non-users indicated that they were unaware of the number and variety of

parks, trails, and open spaces in the King County Parks system. Also, non-users were particularly unfamiliar with the mission of the Parks Division.

Park users emphasized the following when asked about the future of the Division:

- Add reclamation and education to Parks' functions,
- Increase partnerships, and
- Continue community partnership grants.

Non-users' suggested the following in discussing what the Division should do in the future:

- "Get the word out" about parks, trails, and open spaces,
- Keep parks and trails well maintained, and
- Do not charge entrance fees to use parks and trails.

Communicating about King County Parks. Both park users and non-users indicated that they were interested in having more information, from various online modes, about King County Parks in order to be better informed and to better use the parks and trails. Users and non-users suggested more signage; branding, such as putting larger logos on signs; and public service announcements to make it more clear which parks are owned and maintained by King County.

Key Conclusions and Observations

Even frequent users of parks and trails who participated in the focus groups were not aware of the number and variety of parks, trails, and open spaces in the King County Parks system or of all the activities available there. King County Parks may want to increase its online presence to increase awareness of the King County Parks system. With increased knowledge and awareness, residents can use and appreciate the system more fully, which can be expected to increase customer satisfaction.

Parks and trails offer residents a place to gather and come together, providing a sense of community both in the park or trail itself and in caring for or maintaining the park or trail. King County Parks may want to consider providing more information to residents not only about the parks and trail systems, but also about opportunities to volunteer in the parks and trails, which also could increase customer satisfaction.

King County Parks and Recreation Division

Summary Report on Customer Satisfaction Focus Groups

August 24, 2011

Introduction

King County Parks and Recreation Division commissioned focus group research to increase understanding of King County residents' satisfaction, current use, anticipated future use, and familiarity with King County parks and trails. This report describes the focus group research. Research objectives are discussed first, followed by research methods, results, and conclusions and observations. Copies of the focus group discussion guide, handout used in the groups, and the questionnaire used to screen and recruit focus group participants are attached.

Information Objectives

The information objectives of the focus groups included the following:

- Explore county residents' (park users' and non-users') opinions of what makes a really good park or trail in the area and what makes residents satisfied or happy with a park or trail;
- Determine the ways in which county residents use parks now and would like to use them in the future;
- Explore residents' familiarity with and opinions of King County Parks and the Parks Division mission; and
- Explore residents' preferences for receiving information from and communicating with King County about King County Parks.

Methods

Two focus groups were conducted with a total of 21 residents of King County. The first focus group of 10 participants consisted of residents who visit parks, trails, or open spaces in King County at least once a month, "park users"; the second group of 11 participants consisted of residents who visit parks, trails, or open spaces no more than twice a year, "non-users." Park users were recruited using lists of volunteers and partners that were provided by King County Parks and Recreation Division. Non-users were recruited from lists of the general population in King County. The focus groups were held at 6:00 and 8:00 on the evening of July 18, 2011, in downtown Seattle.

Participants in each group included men and women who were between 22 and 66 years old and who had differing educational backgrounds and income levels. Most participants worked full time in a variety of positions, including architectural design, childcare, information technology, engineering, and teaching or training. Most focus group

participants were Caucasian, although several indicated that they were African American/Black or Hispanic. Focus group participants' background characteristics are summarized in the next table.

Background Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

	6:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	Total
Number of Participants	10	11	21
Area of Residence in King County			
Northwest (north of 90, west of 405)	3	4	7
Northeast (north of 90, east of 405)	1	3	4
Southwest (south of 90, west of 405/167))	2	3	5
Southeast (south of 90, east of 405/167)	4	1	5
Years in King County			
5 or fewer	1	3	4
6 to 10	2	2	4
11 to 15	1	1	2
15-20	1	2	3
More than 20	5	3	8
Gender			
Women	5	5	10
Men	5	6	11
Age			
19-29	--	2	2
30-39	2	3	5
40-49	4	3	7
50-64	4	1	5
65 and over	--	2	2
Race/Ethnicity			
African American/Black	--	3	3
Caucasian	9	8	17
Hispanic	1	--	1
Education			
High school graduate or less	--	3	3
Some college, vocation, or technical school	1	2	3
Four-year college graduate	3	3	6
Some graduate school or graduate degree	6	3	9
Employment Status			
Full time	7	6	13
Part time	1	1	2
Not employed/Retired	2	4	6
Annual Household Income in 2010			
Less than \$25,000	--	1	1
\$25,000 to \$49,999	--	4	4
\$50,000 to \$74,999	6	1	7
\$75,000 to \$100,000	2	4	6
More than \$100,000 per year	2	1	3

Limitations. A limited number of King County residents participated in the focus group discussions. The discussions were qualitative, exploring participants' experiences with and opinions of parks and trails in the area. Results of the focus groups do not necessarily represent the views of all residents of King County or all users of King

County Parks and should not be used as the foundation for decisions that require quantitative precision.

Summary of Results

The focus group discussions are summarized below for each of the information objectives of the research.

Factors that make a good park or trail and that make park/trail customers satisfied.

Residents who use parks at least once a month and those who use parks no more than two times a year discussed the same sorts of things when talking about what makes a “really good” park or trail and what makes them satisfied or happy with a park or trail:

- A place for people to gather and come together, including coming together to use, care for, and volunteer in parks and trails;
- Natural space, including habitat for salmon and birds, that is cared for and well-maintained;
- A safe place, including safe facilities (such as smooth trails) and being safe from crime;
- “Versatility” in the facilities within a park and/or through a variety of parks to provide opportunities for different activities and interests;
- “Accessibility,” in terms of both (1) location (e.g., on bus routes or near schools) so that residents can easily reach parks and (2) accommodation for people with disabilities;
- Areas for dogs on and off leashes; and
- Special features, facilities, and destinations, such as views, streams with salmon, other water features, or fire pits.

How customers use parks now and would like to use them in the future. As expected, residents described using parks in a variety of ways, including mountain biking, hiking, walking their dogs, riding horses, bringing children to play, volunteering, and going to concerts.

In the future, park users and non-users indicated that they would like to use parks in the same way they do now, or in an extension or follow-on to the way they use parks now. For example, a person working on habitat restoration would like to see salmon in the streams in the future, a person who takes children to parks would like to “relax” in a park in the future, a person who used to be a volunteer parks recreation leader would like to see more volunteers in parks recreation, and some who were unaware of parks volunteer programs before the focus groups would like to become volunteers.

Familiarity with and opinions of King County Parks' facilities and mission. Both park users and non-users indicated that they were surprised by the handout about King County Parks (attached). Both users and non-users were unaware of the number and variety of parks, trails, and open spaces in the King County Parks system. Also, non-users were particularly unfamiliar with the mission of the Parks Division.

When asked about what the King County Parks Division should do, or how its mission should change, park users had a variety of suggestions and emphasized the following:

- Add reclamation and education to Parks' functions,
- Increase partnerships, and
- Continue community partnership grants.

Non-users' suggestions for the Parks Division emphasized the following in their discussion of what the Division should do:

- "Get the word out" about parks, trails, and open spaces – including their locations, activities, and facilities,
- Keep parks and trails well maintained, and
- Do not charge entrance fees to use parks and trails, although it would be acceptable to charge for other services, such as equipment rentals or parking.

Communicating about King County Parks. Both park users and non-users indicated that they were interested in having more information about King County Parks in order to be better informed and to better use the parks and trails.

Park users and non-users suggested that the Parks Division use signage to communicate information about the facilities available (e.g., bicycle trails or picnic tables) and about park and trail features (e.g., types of trees or plants). Some suggested that QR codes could be used to provide links via smart phones to on-line information about parks rather than posting detailed information on the signs themselves.

Both park users and non-users suggested that King County provide information about parks on the Internet, through social media, and through email lists. Non-users also suggested providing information and pamphlets in community centers and other locations in which information about the local area is available to tourists and residents. Also, park users and non-users said that the best way to solicit information from users is via the Internet.

Park users and non-users said that they typically know what entity (city, county, state, federal government) owns and maintains parks or trails if there is a sign at the entrance

and if they notice the sign. Some participants said that they do not pay attention to these signs, and some said that it does not matter to them what entity owns and maintains the parks or trails. Users and non-users suggested more signage; branding, such as putting larger logos on signs; or public service announcements to make it more clear which parks are owned and maintained by King County.

Conclusions and Observations

Although only two focus groups were conducted, the groups generated information that can be helpful in informing decisions about measuring customer satisfaction, increasing satisfaction, and communicating with customers. DVDs of the focus groups are available for further review, but the focus groups strongly suggest the following two conclusions and observations:

- Even frequent users of parks and trails were not aware of the number and variety of parks, trails, and open spaces in the King County Parks system or of all the activities available there. Similarly, park users and non-users were not familiar with King County Parks' social media presence and indicated that it was difficult to find information about King County Parks on the Internet. King County Parks may want to work to increase the visibility and accessibility of its on-line presence and increase residents' awareness of the parks, trails, and open spaces and the variety of services available in the King County Parks system. With increased knowledge and awareness, residents can use and appreciate parks and trails more fully, which can be expected to increase customer satisfaction.
- Parks and trails offer residents a place to gather and come together, providing a sense of community both in the park or trail itself and in caring for or maintaining the park or trail. King County Parks may want to consider providing more information to residents not only about the parks and trail systems, but also about opportunities to volunteer in the parks and trails, which also could increase customer satisfaction.

Attachments

**Focus Group Discussion Guide
Handout for Focus Group Participants
Focus Group Recruiting Questionnaire**

King County Parks Focus Groups
Monday, July 18, 2011 – 6:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

I. Introductions

(5-10 minutes)

Purpose of focus group

To gather your opinions about King County Parks and what makes a really good park or trail

No right or wrong answers, not trying to reach consensus

You were asked to participate because you all live in King County [and use or volunteer in King County Parks or Regional Trails]

To help with reporting, accuracy – discussion will be audio and video taped

Some observers behind the mirror

All comments will be completely confidential

Any questions before we begin?

Introductions

To begin, please introduce yourselves – name (first name only is fine), what you do, and – so we can get started – please tell us what is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of a great park or trail in our area.

II. Really Good Parks and Trails

(20-30 minutes)

(Parks – 20 minutes)

What else makes a park in our area (King County) really good?

Good location

Park features or facilities -- Which ones

Well-maintained fields and grounds

Parking

Enough restrooms/clean restrooms

Garbage cans

Signage/information about the park

Feeling safe

Other?

What is the most important thing that makes you satisfied or happy with a park?

What is second most important?

Why are these important?

(Trails – 10 minutes)

What makes a trail in our area really good?

Good location or connections

Park features or facilities -- Which ones

Well-maintained trails – In what way

Parking

Enough restrooms/clean restrooms

Garbage cans

Signage/information about the trail/trail system

Feeling safe

Other?

What is the most important thing that makes you satisfied or happy with a trail?
 What is second most important?

Why are these important?

III. Use of Parks and Trails

(20-30 minutes)

In our area, why do you go to
 parks and natural areas in our area?
 trails in our area?

What is it you do there most often?
 What other things you do there?

In the future – whether tomorrow, a year from now, or many years from now –
 what would you like to be doing in these parks, natural areas, and/or trails that
 you do now?

In the future – whether tomorrow, a year from now, many years from now – what
 would you like to do in parks, natural areas, and/or trails that you do not do now?
 Why? How?

IV. King County Parks/Roles

(20-30 minutes)

Please think specifically about the parks and trails that King County operates and
 maintains. What parks or trails come to mind when you think of parks and trails
 in King County?

What else comes to mind when you think about King County Parks and trails?

*Here is a brief description of King County Parks. Please take a few minutes to
 read over this. (Hand out written description.)*

First, what did you learn for the first time in reading this? What else?

Looking at the handout and at King County Park's mission --

Do you think anything is missing? Do you wish King County were doing
 something it isn't?

Is there something you think King County is doing that it should not be
 doing?

What do you think is the most important think for King County Parks to
 do?

Why?

What is least important for King County Parks to do?

Why?

V. Identifying Parks

(5-10 minutes)

When you go to a park or trail, how do you know whether it is a city, county, state, or national park or trail?

What would make it easier to know what type of park or trail you are visiting?

What information would you like to have about park and trails in King County?
How would you like to receive that information?

* * * * *

Those are all of my questions. Let me just go see if the observers have any other questions.

* * * * *

Thank you very much. Your comments and opinions are very helpful in our research. Do you have any other comments or suggestions? Thank you. If you return the description of King County Parks, I will reuse and recycle it.



Handout

About King County Parks (

King County Parks stewards 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails and 26,000 acres of open space, including such regional treasures as Marymoor Park, Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, and the world-class Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center. By cultivating strong relationships with non-profit, corporate and community partners, King County Parks provides recreational opportunities for King County residents and protects the region's public lands, leaving a legacy for future generations.

More than 300 community and corporate partners help improve and maintain King County's parks, trails, and other recreational facilities. Community partners include hiking, bicycle, and other recreation organizations, 'Friends of' groups, and sports leagues; corporate partners include companies such as GroupHealth, Starbucks, and Whole Foods.

More than 8,500 volunteers provide 57,000 hours of service in King County parks and trails every year. From planting native trees and removing invasive Scot's broom to building trails and picking up litter, individuals, families, community groups, and local employers support King County parks and trails by helping care for these special places.

Mission

To enhance quality of life and communities by providing environmentally sound stewardship of regional and rural parks, trails, natural areas, and recreational facilities, supported by partnerships and entrepreneurial initiatives.

What can you do in a King County Park?

- Hike
- Mountain bike
- Skateboard
- Football
- Softball/Baseball
- Tennis
- Birdwatch/nature observation
- Swim
- Cultural/historical heritage appreciation
- Cycle
- Roller blade
- Soccer
- Rugby
- Cricket
- Basketball
- Climbing
- Geocache and orienteering
- Float, kayak, canoe (hand-boat launch)
- Walk your dog
- Playgrounds
- Paraglide
- Fly R/C airplanes
- Foot reflexology
- Horseback ride
- Picnic
- Camping (yurts, tents)
- Gardening / Habitat Restoration



www.kingcounty.gov/parks

King County Parks, Natural Areas, and Open Space

- 132nd Square Park
- Ames Lake Forest
- Auburn Narrows Natural Area
- Bass Lake Complex Natural Area
- Bassett Pond Natural Area
- Belmondo Reach Natural Area
- Big Bend Natural Area
- Big Finn Hill Park
- Big Spring/Newaukum Creek Natural Area
- Bingaman Pond Natural Area
- Black Diamond Natural Area
- BN Peninsula Natural Area
- Boulevard Lane Park
- Bridle Crest Trail Site
- Bryn Mawr Park
- Camelot Park
- Canyon Creek Natural Area
- Carey Creek Natural Area
- Carnation Marsh Natural Area
- Cavanaugh Pond Natural Area
- Cedar Downs Site
- Cedar Grove Natural Area
- Cedar Grove Road Natural Area
- Cemetery Reach Natural Area
- Chinook Bend Natural Area
- Christiansen Pond Natural Area
- Coalfield Park
- Cold Creek Natural Area
- Cottage Lake Park
- Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park
- Cougar/Squak Corridor
- Covington Natural Area
- Crow Marsh Natural Area
- Dockton Forest
- Dockton Forest Lease Site
- Dockton Natural Area
- Dockton Park
- Dorre Don Reach Natural Area
- Duthie Hill Park
- Duvall Park
- East Norway Hill Park
- Edith Moulton Park
- Ellis Creek Natural Area
- Evans Creek Natural Area
- Evans Crest Natural Area
- Fall City Natural Area
- Fall City Park
- Fall City Park West
- Five Mile Lake Park
- Flaming Geyser Natural Area
- Flaming Geyser Park
- Gold Creek Park
- Grand Ridge Park
- Green River Natural Area
- Griffin Creek Natural Area
- Hamm Creek Natural Area
- Hatchery Natural Area
- Hazel Wolf Wetland Natural Area
- Hollywood Hills Equestrian Park
- Honeydew Park
- Horsehead Bend Natural Area
- Hyde Lake Park
- Inspiration Point Natural Area
- Instebo Park
- Island Center Forest
- Island Center Forest Natural Area
- Issaquah Creek Natural Area
- Jones Reach Natural Area
- Juanita Heights Park
- Juanita Triangle Park
- Juanita Woodlands Park
- Kanaskat Natural Area
- Kathryn C. Lewis Natural Area
- Kathryn Taylor Equestrian Park
- Kentlake Athletic Fields
- Klahanie Park
- Lake Desire 2 Natural Area
- Lake Francis Park
- Lake Geneva Park
- Lake Joy Park
- Lakewood Park
- Landsburg Reach Natural Area
- Levdansky Park
- Little Si Natural Area
- Little Soos Creek Wetlands N.A.
- Log Cabin Reach Natural Area
- Lower Bear Creek Natural Area
- Lower Lions Reach Natural Area
- Lower Newaukum Creek Natural Area
- Lower Peterson Creek Corridor Natural Area
- Manzanita Natural Area
- Maple Ridge Highlands Open Space
- Maple Valley Heights Park
- Maplewood Heights Park
- Maplewood Park
- Marjorie R. Stanley Natural Area
- Marymoor Park
- Maury Island Marine Park
- Maury Island Site
- May Creek
- May Valley 164th Natural Area
- May Valley Park
- McGarvey Park Open Space
- Middle Bear Creek Natural Area
- Middle Evans Creek Natural Area
- Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area
- Middle Issaquah Creek Natural Area
- Mirrormont Park
- Mitchell Hill Connector Forest
- Moss Lake Natural Area
- Mouth Of Taylor Reach Natural Area
- Neely Bridge Natural Area
- Neill Point Natural Area
- North Green River Park
- North Shorewood Park
- Northhilla Beach Natural Area
- Northshore Athletic Fields
- Novelty Hill Little League Fields
- Nowak Natural Area
- Paradise Lake Natural Area
- Paradise Valley Natural Area
- Patterson Creek Natural Area
- Patterson Creek Preserve Forest
- Peterson Lake Natural Area

King County Parks, Natural Areas, and Open Space, con'd

- Petrovitsky Park
- Piner Point Natural Area
- Pinnacle Peak Park
- Point Heyer Natural Area
- Porter Levee Natural Area
- Preston Athletic Fields
- Preston Mill
- Preston Park
- Preston Ridge Forest
- Quigley Park
- Raabs Lagoon Natural Area
- Raging River Natural Area
- Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area
- Ravenhill Open Space
- Ravensdale Park
- Ravensdale Retreat Natural Area
- Redmond Ridge Park
- Renton Park
- Ricardi Reach Natural Area
- Ring Hill Forest
- Rock Creek Natural Area
- Shadow Lake Natural Area
- Shinglemill Creek Natural Area
- Sierra Heights Park
- Sixty Acres Park
- Skyway Park
- Snoqualmie Forest
- Soaring Eagle Regional Park
- South County Ballfields
- Southern Heights Park
- Spring Lake/Lake Desire Park
- Squak Mt/Tiger Mt Corridor
- Steve Cox Memorial Park
- Stillwater Natural Area
- Sugarloaf Mountain Forest
- Sunset Playfield
- Tanner Landing Park
- Taylor Mountain Forest
- Three Forks Natural Area
- Tollgate Farm
- Tolt River - John MacDonald Park
- Tolt River Natural Area
- Uplands Forest
- Upper Bear Creek Natural Area
- Upper Green River Watershed Forest
- Upper Raging River Forest
- Wetland 14 Natural Area
- Wetland 79 Natural Area
- Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center
- White Center Heights Park
- White Center Pond Natural Area
- Whitney Bridge Park
- Windsor Vista Park

King County Regional Trails System

- BNSF Trail Corridor
- Boxley Creek Site
- Burke-Gilman Trail
- Cedar River to Lake Sammamish Trail Site (includes Fred V. Habenicht Rotary Park, Landsburg Trailhead)
- Cedar River Trail
- East Lake Sammamish Trail
- East Plateau Trail Site
- Foothills Trail
- Green River Trail (includes Cecil Moses Memorial Park)
- Green River Trail Site - Kent
- Green River Trail Site - Tukwila
- Green To Cedar River Trail
- Issaquah Preston Trail
- Lake Youngs Trail (includes Lake Youngs Park and Trailhead)
- Landsburg Kanaskat Trail Site
- Preston Snoqualmie Trail
- PSE Trail Site
- Redmond Ridge Trail (includes Redmond Watershed Addition Park; Redmond Watershed Trail Site)
- Sammamish River Trail
- Snoqualmie Valley Trail
- Soos Creek Trail and Park (includes Soos Creek To Lake Youngs Trail Site)
- Tolt Pipeline Trail
- West Sammamish River Trail

**King County Parks Focus Group Screener
Monday, July 18, 2011, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m.**

Interviewer	Date
_____	_____
Respondent Name	Phone
_____	_____
Address	Gender:
_____	Male 1
City, Zip	Female 2

Note: If respondents ask and want to verify that this work is being conducted on behalf of King County, they can contact Frana Milan, King County, at 206-263-6301.

Hello. This is _____. I am calling on behalf of King County as part of a research study, and for this study, I need to speak with the [MALE/FEMALE HEAD OF THIS HOUSEHOLD or READ NAME FROM LIST]. Would that be you?

- CONTINUE -- Yes 1
- ASK TO SPEAK TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD/PERSON ON LIST -- No 2
- ASK TO SPEAK TO HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD/PERSON ON LIST -- DK/REF 3

This confidential study is being conducted for research purposes only. This is not a sales call, and no sales calls will result from this call.

1. First, are you a resident of King County?

- CONTINUE -- Yes 1
- THANK & TERMINATE -- No 2
- THANK & TERMINATE -- DK/REF 3

2. Have you or anyone in your household or immediate family ever worked in:

A government agency or department, including local, city, county, state, or federal government?	Yes	No	DK/REF
For or in a local, regional, state, or national park or forest?	Yes	No	DK/REF
Marketing research?	Yes	No	DK/REF
Advertising or promotions?	Yes	No	DK/REF
Television, radio, or newspaper publishing?	Yes	No	DK/REF

IF YES/DK/REF TO ANY, THANK & TERMINATE.

3. Have you or anyone in your household or immediate family ever sat on a King County board or commission?

- THANK & TERMINATE -- Yes 1
- CONTINUE -- No 2
- THANK & TERMINATE -- DK/REF 3

4. How often do you visit a park, trail, or open space in King County?
- At least once a week 1
 - At least once a month, but less than once a week 2
 - THANK & TERMINATE *(Save)* – At least 2 times a year, but less than once a month 3
 - Once a year or less 4
 - THANK & TERMINATE -- DK/REF 5

5. When you visit a park in King County, what do you typically do there? PROBE IF NECESSARY: Do you usually walk, ride a bike, play soccer, volunteer, or do something else? Please be specific.

6. Which park(s) do you visit most often?

7. How long have you lived in King County?

- Less than 1 year 1
- 1 to 5 years 2
- 6 to 10 years 3
- 11 to 15 years 4
- 15 to 20 years 5
- More than 20 years 6

THANK & TERMINATE -- DK/REF 9

RECRUIT A MIX (MOST OR ALL MORE THAN 1 YEAR).

8. Where in King County do you live?

City/ town _____ Zip _____

9. Which of the following best describes the part of King County in which you live?

- Northwest (north of I-90 and west of I-405) 1
- Northeast (north of I-90 and east of I-405) 2
- Southwest (south of I-90 and west of I-405 or Highway 167) 3
- Southeast (south of I-90 and east of I-405 or Highway 167) 4

THANK & TERMINATE -- DK/REF 5

RECRUIT A MIX.

10. Are you employed full time or part time, or are you currently not employed?

- Full time 1
- Part time 2
- Not employed 3
- Retired 4

THANK & TERMINATE -- DK/REF 5

MOST SHOULD WORK FULL TIME.

11. IF EMPLOYED FULL OR PART TIME, ASK: What is the nature of your work?

RECRUIT A MIX.

12. What was the last year in school that you completed?

- High school graduate or less 1
- Some college, vocational, or technical school 2
- Four-year college graduate 3
- Some graduate school or degree 4
- DK/REF 9

13. Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income in 2010?

- Less than \$25,000 per year 1
- \$25,000 to \$49,999 per year 2
- \$50,000 to \$74,999 per year 3
- \$75,000 to \$100,000 per year 4
- More than \$100,000 per year 5
- DK/REF 6

RECRUIT A MIX OF EDUCATION/INCOME.

14. Into which of the following categories does your age fall?

- THANK & TERMINATE -- Under 18 1
- 19 - 29 2
- 30 - 39 3
- 40 - 49 4
- 50 - 64 5
- 65 and over 6
- THANK & TERMINATE -- Refused 9

RECRUIT A MIX.

15. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity?

- White or Caucasian 1
- African American or Black 2
- Alaska Native or American Indian 3
- Asian or Asian American 4
- Pacific Islander 5
- Hispanic or Latino 6
- Specify. Other 7
- Refused 8

DO NOT READ _____

RECRUIT A MIX.

16. Have you ever participated in a discussion group for research purposes for which you were paid for your time?

- CONTINUE -- Yes 1
- SKIP TO INVITATION -- No 2
- SKIP TO Q. 18/INVITATION -- DK/REF 9

17. When was the last time you participated in a discussion group for research purposes?
 THANK & TERMINATE -- Within the past year 1
 CONTINUE -- More than a year ago 2
 THANK & TERMINATE -- DK/REF 9

18. RECORD GENDER (DO NOT ASK):

Female 1
 Male 2

INVITATION

As part of our research, we are inviting people like you to participate in a focus group discussion. Let me assure you that absolutely no attempt will be made to sell you any type of products or services -- these discussion groups are held for research purposes only. The group will be relaxed and informal. You will simply be involved in an exchange of ideas and opinions about parks in King County.

The focus group will be held at our office in Seattle on **Monday, July 18**, at [6:00/ 8:00 p.m.] It will last approximately two hours. Because we value your time and opinions, we are offering a [\$75/\$100.00] cash honorarium to those who participate.

Because only a limited number of people can be invited to participate, it is very important that we are able to count on you to attend. Will you be available on _____ at [6:00/ 8:00 p.m.]?

CONTINUE -- Yes 1
 THANK & TERMINATE -- No 2
 SAVE -- DK/REF 9

May I please have your name and address (or email address) so that I can send you a letter confirming this telephone conversation? PLEASE RECORD ON FRONT PAGE AND VERIFY PHONE.

Both groups:

- Articulate
- Mix of men and women
- All live in King County (most/all for more than 1 year)

Non-user groups (and user groups if lists permit):

- Mix of geographic areas (north, south, east, west King County)
- Mix of race/ethnicity
- Mix of household income/education
- Mix of ages
- Most work full time
- Mix of occupations

Non-users:

- All visit parks once a year or less

Parks users:

- All visit parks at least once a month
- Mix of activities in parks, some volunteers
- Mix of parks

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King County Parks **Your**  King County
Big Backyard

Exhibit B – King County Online Outreach & Media Kit

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King County Parks – Survey Information

Outreach Strategy: Online Survey

The outreach strategy to publicize and encourage participation in the online survey portion of this project was largely coordinated by King County Parks, with the collaboration of the consultant.

The survey was available online from August 17, 2011 to September 18, 2011 at the following url:
www.kingcounty.gov/parksurvey.

King County Parks undertook the following actions to publicize the survey:

- Published two press releases (August 10 and September 9)
- Publicized the survey through the following tools:
 - King County Parks e-newsletter
 - King County Parks blog
 - King County Parks homepage
 - KCNews twitter (multiple posts)
 - King County DNRP e-newsletter
 - QR Code linking directly to survey
 - Facebook (multiple posts and mentions on the Facebook pages and profiles of partners and supporters)
 - King County Unincorporated Area News e-newsletter
 - Special email to King County Parks' volunteers
 - Special email to recent users of King County Parks' facilities (i.e. people/entities who had reserved a facility in 2010-11)
 - Special email to the directors of other parks and recreation agencies in King County
- Sent a personalized request to 38 key partner entities asking them publicize the survey among their respective constituencies. Partner entities represented a geographically diverse user base as well as a variety of user types (cycling, hiking, mountain biking, land preservation/restoration, equestrians, 'Friends of' groups, swimming, team sports, gardening, off-leash dog area, rowing, etc)
- Dissemination on-site at events (United Way Day of Caring volunteer event; OutdoorsFest)

Sample graphic:



Samples of survey announcements provided by others:

- Click 98.9 radio's homepage
- Posts on Facebook pages (ex: Seattle Parks Foundation, REI Puget Sound, Friends of the Cedar River Watershed, EarthCorps, Cascade Land Conservancy, ChinookBook)
- Announcements in online forums and e-newsletters (ex: cycling community, Friends of Marymoor Park)

Exhibit C – Staff & Volunteer Checklist

Staff & Volunteers Tips & Checklist

1. Remember you are an ambassador for KC DNRP; be friendly and professional.
2. Prepare some consistent messages for the survey team including an opening statement and a few vetted responses to questions that might arise. Practice your approach and specific interview questions on friends and colleagues. It's best to test the survey on a few people to gauge your own responses to their questions as well as helping prepare an understanding or length of time to answers.
3. Identify up front and early in the conversation why you are conducting the survey and how the respondent's questions add value to planning for future parks.
4. Do not survey alone. It's best to go on-site in groups of two or more. Safety reasons are obvious, but also in a group situation when you may have more than one person answering the question, its best to have a survey mate available to take notes, ask for clarification of messages, or simply to be on hand to field answers from more than one person.
In the case of the KC DNRP survey when the Site Story team encountered larger groups with both adults and children, we used both surveys. One surveyor spoke with adults and the other separately with the children.
5. Offer to fill out the survey for the respondent so it's an expedient process for them. Offer them a chance to review the written response for clarification once it's completed.
6. If you encounter a person who does not speak English as their primary language or someone with special needs be sure to slow down your pace. Make direct eye contact so they can also read your lips. Speak slowly and clearly. Provide information in small increments, one to three sentences at a time. Pause and confirm they understand your questions before moving on.
7. Do not badger or push reluctant respondents. If you see apprehension on the part of an interviewee then thank them for their time and let them know they can contact the County if they decide to respond to the survey, respond via the on-line version etc.
8. Do not influence interviews by sharing your own opinions. Even when asked by the interviewee, one should avoid sharing personal bias of any kind. Bring the conversation back to the person being interviewed and let them know you are neutral on any subject. It's a great time to reiterate that their opinions matter.
9. Be prepared to be a resource for questions that are not relevant by knowing a helpline phone number or the address for the County's DNRP web site. Its not your job to find answers for everyone's questions, but you can help them resolve any questions or concerns.
10. Be prepared for comments that may not pertain or be appropriate. If it's not germane to the survey, let the respondent know you have a limited role in the work at hand. Again, be prepared to share an information line phone number for comments and suggestions for their "other" concerns. Avoid confrontation and conflict. Remind them that KC DNRP cares about their customers and have other avenues for fielding additional information.
11. For on-site surveys, if the interviewees are sitting down on seats or on the ground, don't stand over them. Ask if you can join them and get down to their level. You're likely to have a more engaged audience and also help relax them into a more fluid conversation.
12. If surveying someone with dogs, be cognizant of who else is around you and if they also have pets. It may be best to ask the interviewees to move aside a few feet OR ask your survey mate to join you so you have an opportunity to help manage the survey environment and avoid conflicts with other dog owners; avoid accidents or even getting bit yourself. If a dog owner is not managing the situation than thank them for their time and let them move on. Do not put yourself or others in danger.

Staff & Volunteers Tips & Checklist (cont.)

13. Review responses when the information is fresh in your mind. Read through your survey results as soon as possible in case you forgot to note a response or comment. It's ok to note some identifiable detail on the survey for your own purposes such as "the man in the purple sweater" etc.
14. You can never say thank-you enough. Be sure to thank respondents for their time throughout the survey process and again at the end when completed.

For the on-site survey, we brought a variety of tools with us for use in illustrating parks assets as well as being a resource to respondents. These were the items on hand:

- 1) Maps of the KC Parks regional trails.
- 2) A list of KC Parks assets.
- 3) KC Parks stickers to wear as an identification tool that you are who you say you are.
- 4) KC Parks stickers also come in handy for kids.
- 5) Know the park where you are conducting the survey. Be a resource to others and point out restrooms, kiosks and other features that the interviewees might need.
- 6) Have a ready grab post card with King County parks information such as the web site, information phone line etc.
- 7) Carry extra pens and pencils.
- 8) Bring at least one clipboard for the ease of the survey respondent to write down their comments.

One of the most helpful and free tools for survey takers is the Harvard University Program on Survey Research Tip Sheet. This tipsheet covers all the basics on preparing and conducting surveys. Within it is also a clearing house for other survey resources and research.

http://psr.iq.harvard.edu/sites/projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/psr/files/PSRQuestionnaireTipSheet_0.pdf

Project Team and Acknowledgments

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Groundworks Strategies

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Thank You

The Site Story team would like to thank King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division for the opportunity to serve the public of King County by way of this project. The Site Story practice is built on the fundamental values of providing a voice for the community, bringing people closer to nature, supporting recreational opportunities and creating a greater understanding of human ecology in the magnificent setting of the Northwest. We were gratified by the openness and enthusiasm of those we surveyed on-site in our parks and along our trails. We were equally thankful for the beauty of the settings in which we conducted our work.

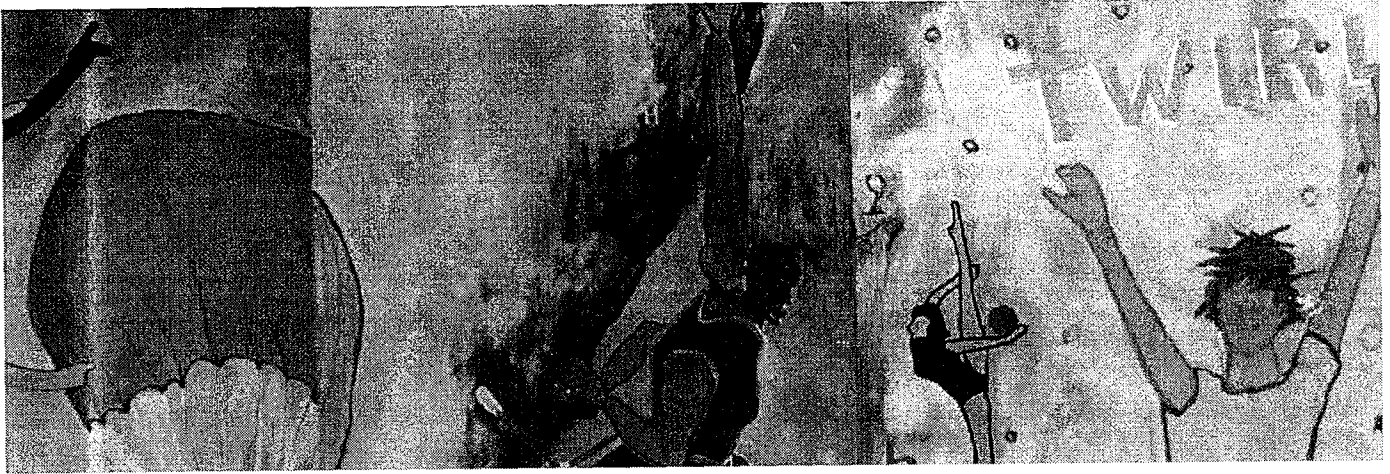
Special thanks to **Frana Milan and Cristina Gonzalez** for their collaboration. They provided a positive and productive partnership throughout the process. A process that will continue to inform and benefit parks users throughout our region.



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SURVEY 2011



Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in,
where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike.

John Muir

