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Summary of Results

City of Grants Pass Survey

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Introduction

The City of Grants Pass uses a variety of methods to inform its' citizens and to encourage active participation in city government. As part of these efforts Grants Pass has for many years conducted surveys to assess the opinions of residents on the quality of city services, the quality of life in the city, and attitudes toward immediate issues currently before the city government. Working closely with the Grants Pass Interim City Manager, David Reeves, Steve Johnson & Associates planned and implemented a 2012 telephone survey of Grants Pass residents.

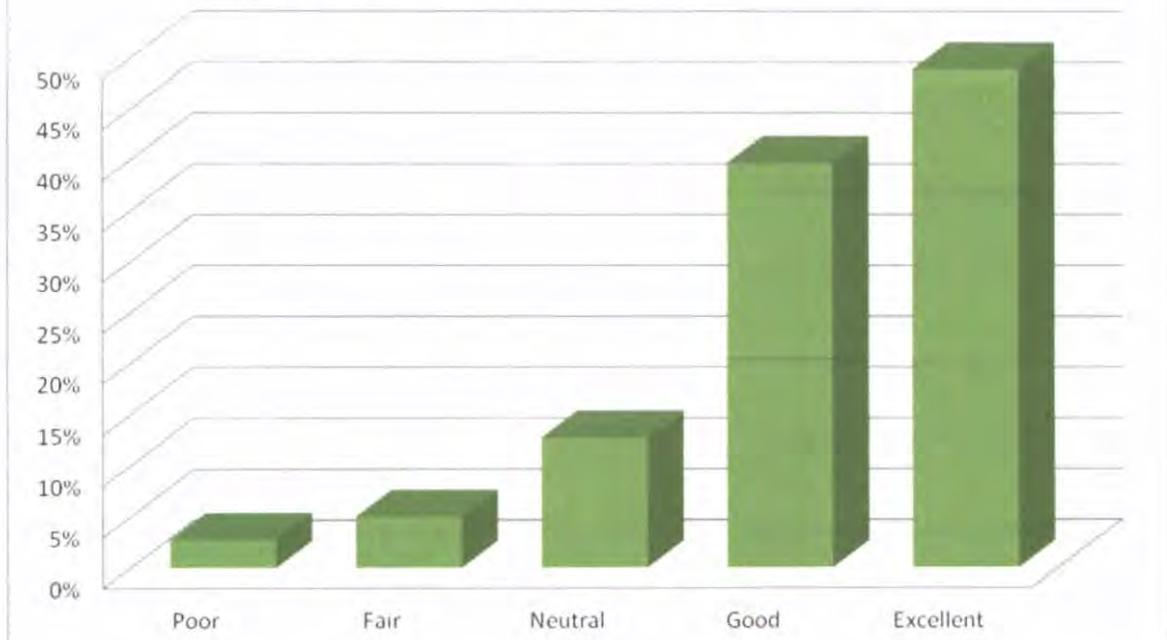
Survey Results

This report summarizes the major survey results. Readers can look at the Topline Results section of the report for the exact question wording and the summarized responses to each question. Readers may also refer to the 44 tables in the Banners section of this report for more detail and to find cross-tabulations of each question with a wide range of demographic information. In addition, readers should look at the open-ended responses inside the Narrative Responses section, where respondents give narrative answers to questions. The open-ended questions asked what residents enjoy about living in Grants Pass; what they would like to change about the City; what was wrong with any City services they rated as poor; what additional recreational services they would like; where they would like new parks with soccer fields located; and if they have any additional comments for the City. Finally, readers should look at the Annual Trends section to see graphs which reflect changes in the responses from 1998 through 2012 to the standard questions that have been asked for many years.

Grants Pass as a Place to Live

In general, residents think Grants Pass is a great place to live. When asked to rate living in Grants Pass on a five point scale, where one is "poor" and five is "excellent," 80% of respondents give Grants Pass a rating of four or five. See Figure One below.

Figure One: Grants Pass as a Place to Live



This score is one percent higher than when the survey was last done two years ago, and only 2% lower than the highest rating of the last 10 years (82% in 2005). In addition, 49% of respondents give Grants Pass a score of "excellent" as a place to live. In fact, "excellent" is the most common rating given. Only 7.5% of respondents gave Grants Pass a rating of one or two as a place to live.

The belief that Grants Pass is a "excellent" place to live is lowest among respondents who have lived in Grants Pass for 5 years or less and among residents younger than 45, both at 37%. Respondents of retirement age, 65 or older, were most likely to rate Grants Pass as an "excellent" place to live, 55%. However, for all age-groups over 35, a least 77% of respondents give Grants Pass a rating of either "excellent" or "good", while even the youngest age-group, those under 35, gave a combined "excellent" or "good" rating of 63%.

Also, as in all previous surveys on this topic, women are slightly more likely than men to think Grants Pass is an "excellent" place to live, this time by the margin, 51% vs. 46%. See Banner Table 40 for more information.

This pattern of generally favorable responses is repeated when respondents were asked to rate how safe they felt living in Grants Pass. On a five-point scale, where one was "not at all safe" and five was "very safe," 65% of respondents gave a rating of four or five, while 14% gave a rating of one or two. This feeling of safety is slightly lower than it was two years ago, but approximately the same as it was three and four years ago. Unfortunately, the percentage of respondents who felt the City to be unsafe is at the highest level since we started working on these surveys 14 years ago. Put in some perspective, the feeling that people are safe living in Grants Pass is primarily due to a rise in the percentage of

people who feel "not very safe", rather than an increase in feeling "not safe at all," which is only at 4%. See the "How Safe Grants Pass Residents Feel" figure in the Annual Trends Section of this report.

The feeling of Grants Pass as an unsafe place is higher among women and among those who live in the Northwest portion of the City, while in the Northeast only 1% of respondents felt unsafe. Even with some variations among respondents and neighborhoods, it is important to remember that a vast majority of all groups feel safe living in Grants Pass. See Banner Table 36 for more information.

This general feeling of safety was further reinforced by responses to a follow-up question where respondents were asked to compare the safety of their neighborhood to other neighborhoods in Grants Pass. On this question, 48% of respondents felt that their neighborhood was safer than other neighborhoods while 12% felt their neighborhood was "less safe." This perception of living in a neighborhood that is safer than others has remained very steady for the past 14 years.

However, people's comparative feeling of safety in their neighborhood varied significantly depending on what section of Grants Pass they lived in. The percentage of respondents who were likely to feel that their neighborhood was "less safe" was much higher in the Southwest (15%) and the Southeast (10%). At the same time, the feeling that your neighborhood was "less safe" was much lower in the Northeast (5%).

Over the last few years an important change has taken place with the feelings of neighborhood safety among renters. Five years ago 25% of renters felt their neighborhood was "less safe." Four years ago that number was down to 11%, and three years ago it was only 8%. At the time of the last survey two years ago that number had gone back up to 14%, and today it is 15%, as compared to 10% among home owners. Clearly renters are not as concerned about the safety of their neighborhoods as they were five years ago, but after two years where renters and owners both felt the same level of neighborhood safety, renters are again much more likely to feel that their neighborhoods are "less safe." See Banner Table 37 for more information.

Grants Pass City Services

Respondents were asked a set of questions about 13 City services that people could reasonably be expected to have opinions about, even if they had not contacted the service providers directly. Grants Pass residents rated each of these services on a five-point scale where one indicated "poor" service and five indicated "excellent" service. Any time a respondent rated a service as "poor" they were asked to explain why they felt that way about the particular service.

Of the 13 services respondents were asked about, ten services received "good" or "excellent" ratings by over 50% of respondents. The three services that did not get high ratings were Planning, where only 22% gave this department "good" or "excellent" ratings, Building Inspection, where only 23% gave these scores, and Code Enforcement, where 21% gave ratings of "good" or "excellent." For the last eight years the same 10

services were highly rated and Building Inspection and Planning have had low ratings. This was the fourth time the survey has asked about Code Enforcement, following the 2007 survey where specific questions about the importance of enforcing codes were asked. Code enforcement has in all four surveys received a low percentage of "good" and "excellent" ratings.

It should be noted, however, that the lower rated services, Building Inspection, Planning, and Code Enforcement, were also services where large numbers of respondents reported that they did not know how to rate the services (presumably because they had no experience with the service). In the case of Building Inspection, 47% of respondents were unable to provide a rating, and an additional 20% gave a neutral rating, which may also be an indicator of difficulty in giving a rating. The case of Planning was similar, where 36% of respondents felt unable to provide a rating, and an additional 24% gave a neutral rating. Code Enforcement was also similar to Building Inspection, with 49% unable to give a rating and 21% giving a neutral rating.

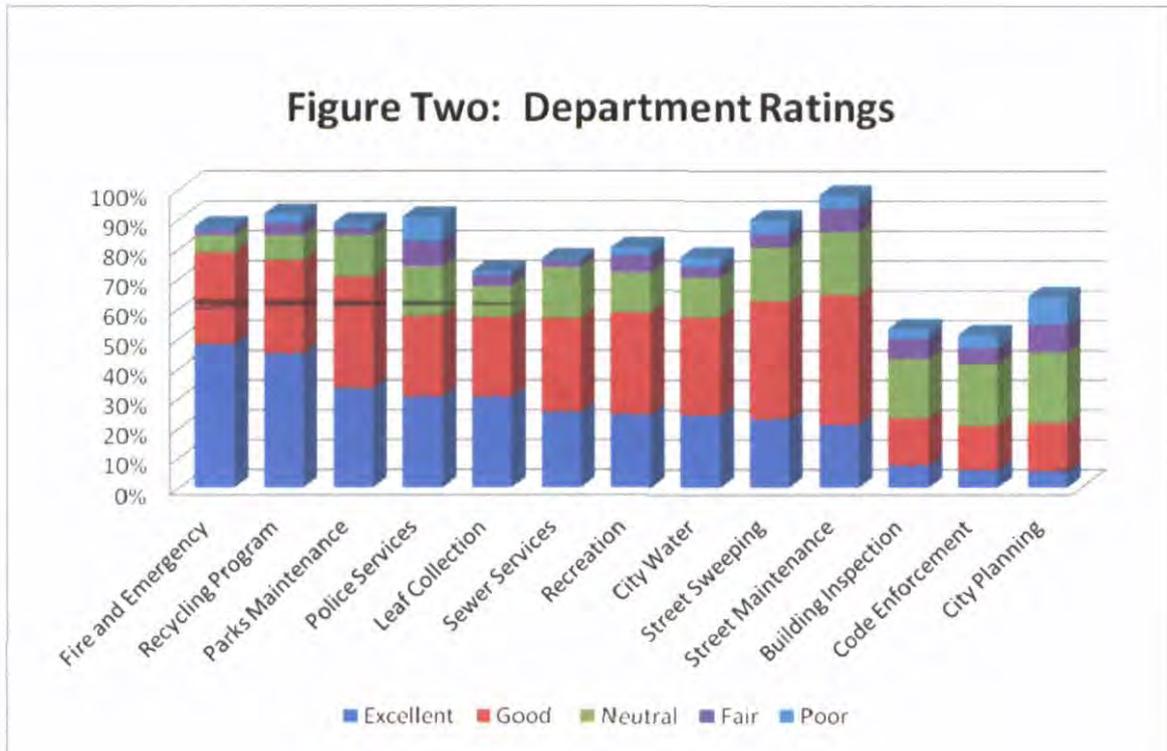
Additionally, in the case of Planning, 19% of respondents also rated the service as "fair" or "poor." This was the largest percentage of low ratings given to any of the City services measured, although it is better than the percentage of low ratings Planning has generally received for the past 12 years. By way of comparison, Building Inspection and Code Enforcement each had only 10% of respondents who thought the service was either "poor" or "fair."

Even among the 10 highly rated services, eight City services (parks maintenance, police services, street maintenance, city water, leaf collection, recreation programs, street sweeping and sewer) also had large numbers of respondents (23% - 40%) who could not give a rating or gave a neutral rating, depending on the service.

For most of the thirteen services, there were significant differences in how they were rated based on the characteristics of the respondent. The most significant differences were based on age and length of residence in Grants Pass. There is a tendency for those under age 45 to rate about half of the services lower than they are rated by those 45 and older. Higher ratings were also given by respondents who had lived in Grants Pass for 21 years or more. Additionally, women were slightly more likely to give higher ratings for services. See Banner Tables 1-13 for examples.

It is also important to note that Grants Pass services rarely received a large number of "poor" ratings. With the exception of Planning Services as previously discussed, the ratings of "poor" range from 10% to 1%. However, as mentioned above, when a respondent did give a rating of "poor" for any city service, they were then asked to explain why they thought that service was "poor." Most commonly, the comments reflect personal interactions the respondent had with the service in question, or a belief that city government is inefficient. However, there are quite a number of specific comments on Police services and the low priority given to property crimes or difficulty in getting service. In addition, some respondents apparently rate a service as "poor" if they have no contact with it, in particular street sweeping and recycling. Finally, two

respondents commented on their fear that City water was contaminated with chromium. See the Narrative Response section of this report for the exact wording of all comments about why a service was rated “poor.” See Figure Two below for departmental ratings.



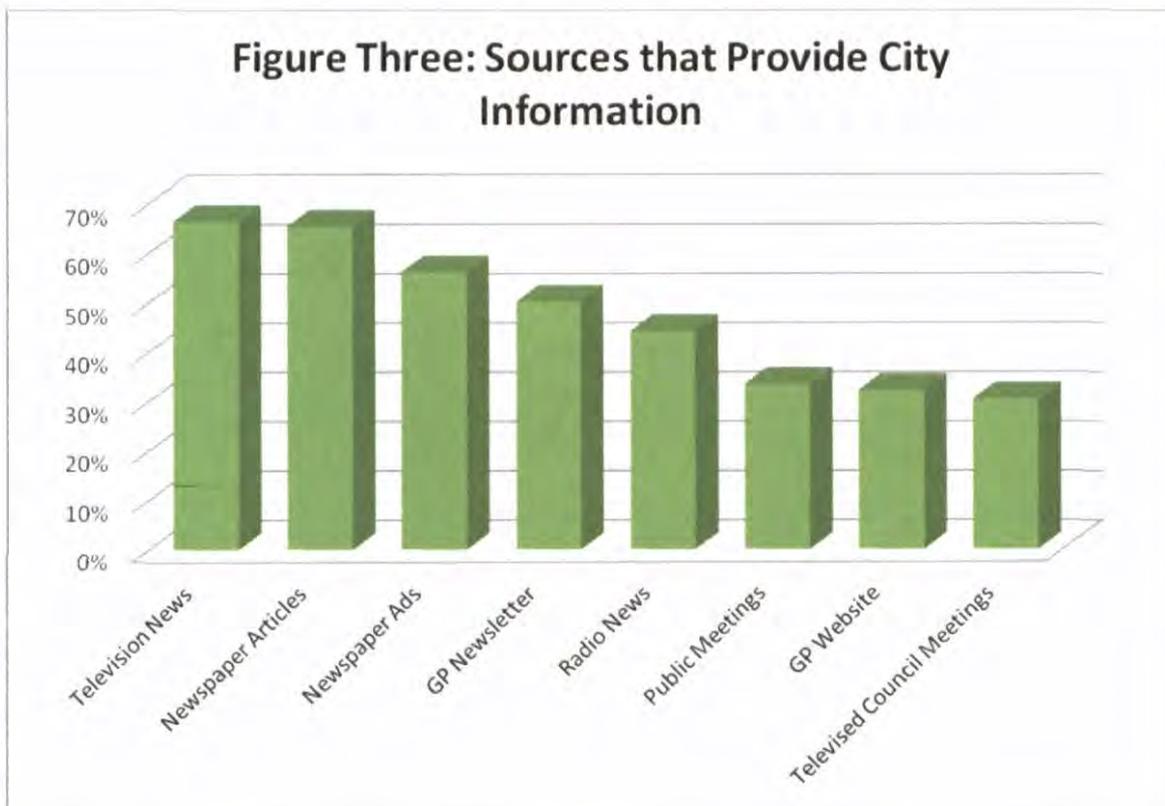
Participation in City Government

Respondents were also asked a series of questions about public involvement and public information (see Banner Tables 16-30). The majority of respondents (55%) felt that the City of Grants Pass provides adequate opportunities for participation and influence in City decisions. Interestingly enough, this belief exists even though only 18% have attended some form of local government or public meeting on City issues during the past 12 months. In fact, those who have not attended public meetings are more likely to feel that it is easy to participate in City government than are those who have attended public meetings, 58% versus 43% – a finding that has been true for the last nine years.

Even though attending public meetings may not be popular, almost twice as many respondents (37% vs. 18%) have volunteered their time on projects or activities that they feel were designed to make Grants Pass a better place to live. There are variations based on personal characteristics in those who are more likely to volunteer. Respondents between ages 35 and 44 are the most likely to volunteer (59%), while those over age 55 are the least likely (33%). At the same time, new residents (5 years or less) are more likely to volunteer than longer term residents. It is also interesting to note that those who volunteer are more likely to have attended a city meeting when compared with those who do not volunteer (64% vs. 31%). See Banner Table 18 for more information.

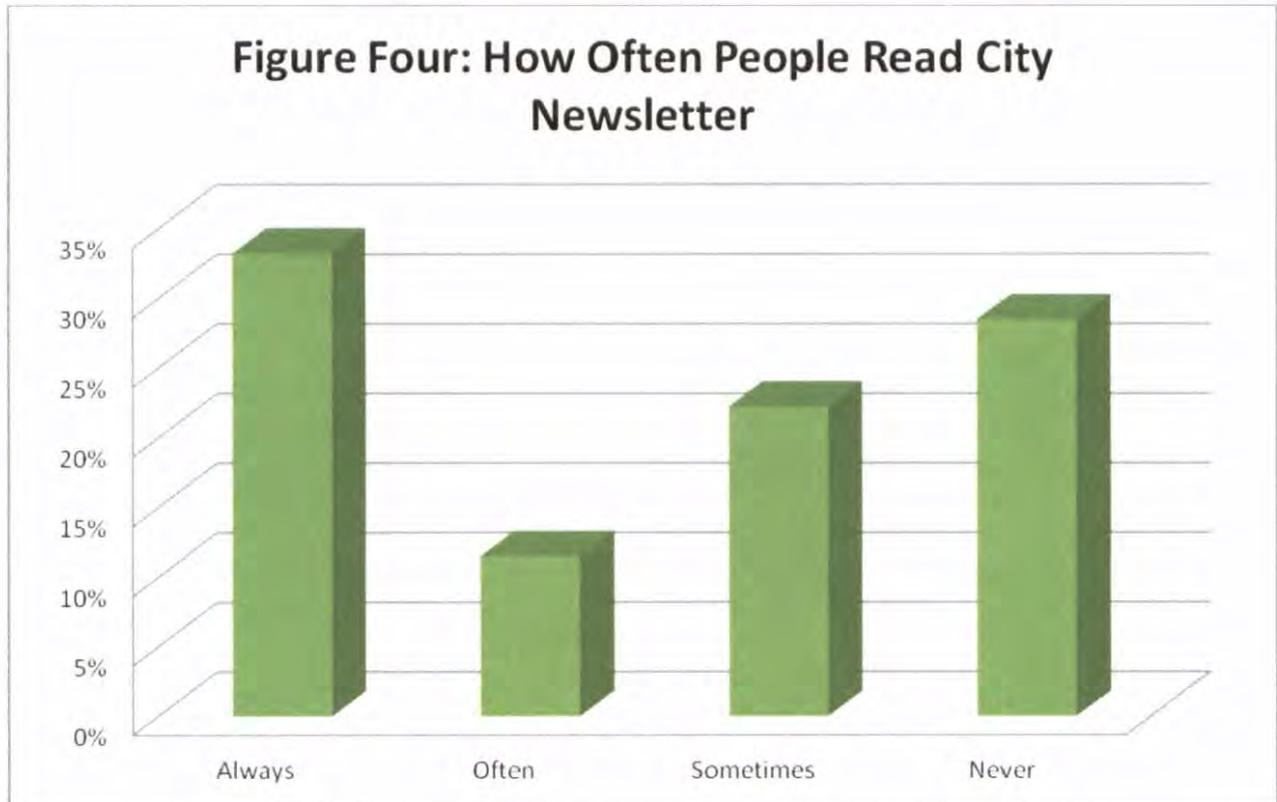
Fifty percent of respondents feel that the City does an excellent or good job of informing them about city issues and 69% answer affirmatively that the City meets their information needs. The scores for informing residents about City issues and for meeting information needs has been at approximately these high levels for the past five years.

Respondents were asked about their use of a variety of sources that provide information on city issues. The most useful source of City information was reported to be television, used by 66% of respondents. News articles in the local newspaper was a close second source of City information for 64% of respondents, followed by newspaper ads at 56%, the City of Grants Pass Newsletter at 50% and radio news by 44%. Public meetings, televised Council meetings, and the City website were all used by a smaller number of respondents. Although this question was limited to sources of information on City issues, this was the first time this survey has shown television news with a wider audience than the local newspaper. See Figure Three below for a breakdown on the use of all sources of information.



As part of the last City survey, in 2010 respondents were asked for the first time how often they read the Newsletter. This year that question was repeated. Forty-five percent of respondents claim to read the Newsletter either "always" or "often," while 29% say they "never" read the Newsletter. These numbers are almost identical to

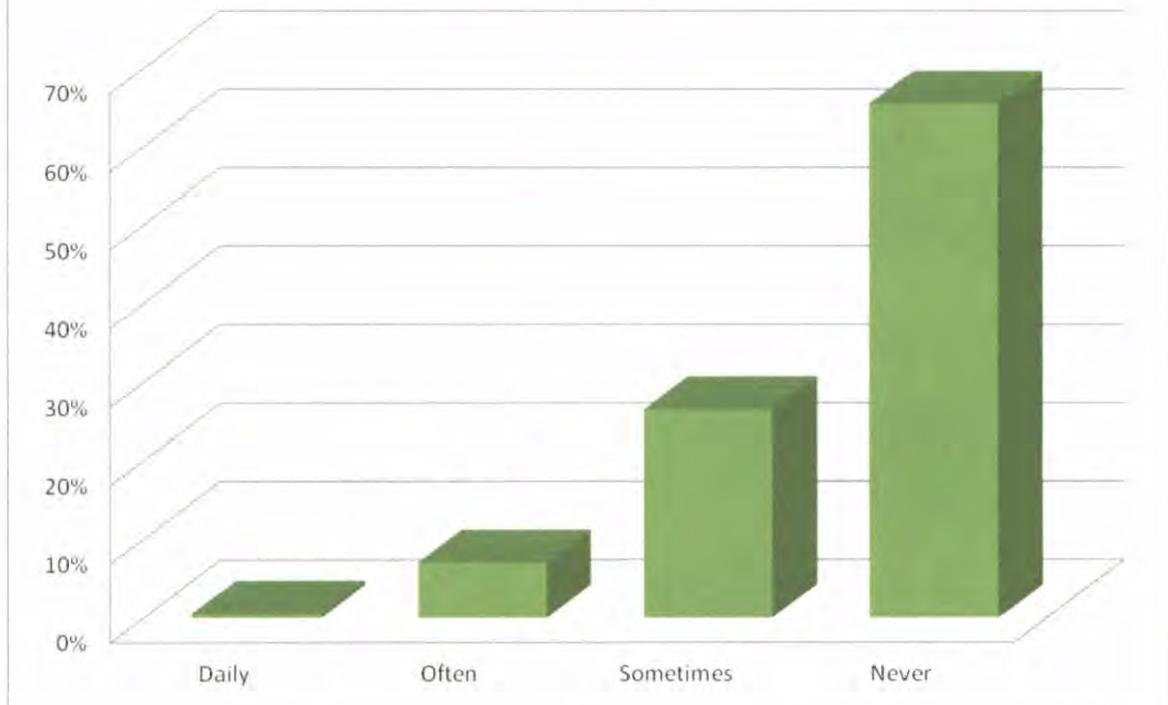
scores from 2010. See Figure Four below for the complete distribution of how often the City Newsletter is read.



The respondents most likely to "always" read the Newsletter are older residents who have lived in Grants Pass for at least 10 years, those who own homes in Grants Pass, and those who attend city meetings. See Banner Table 29 for more information.

In 2010 respondents were also asked for the first time about their use of the City's website. This question was also repeated this year. Most respondents (66%) had never visited the website. Of the 34% who had visited the website, most of those (78%) visited the site infrequently. This reported use of the Website is down slightly from 2010. See Figure Five below for the complete distribution of how often people visit the City Website.

Figure Five: How Often People Visit City Website



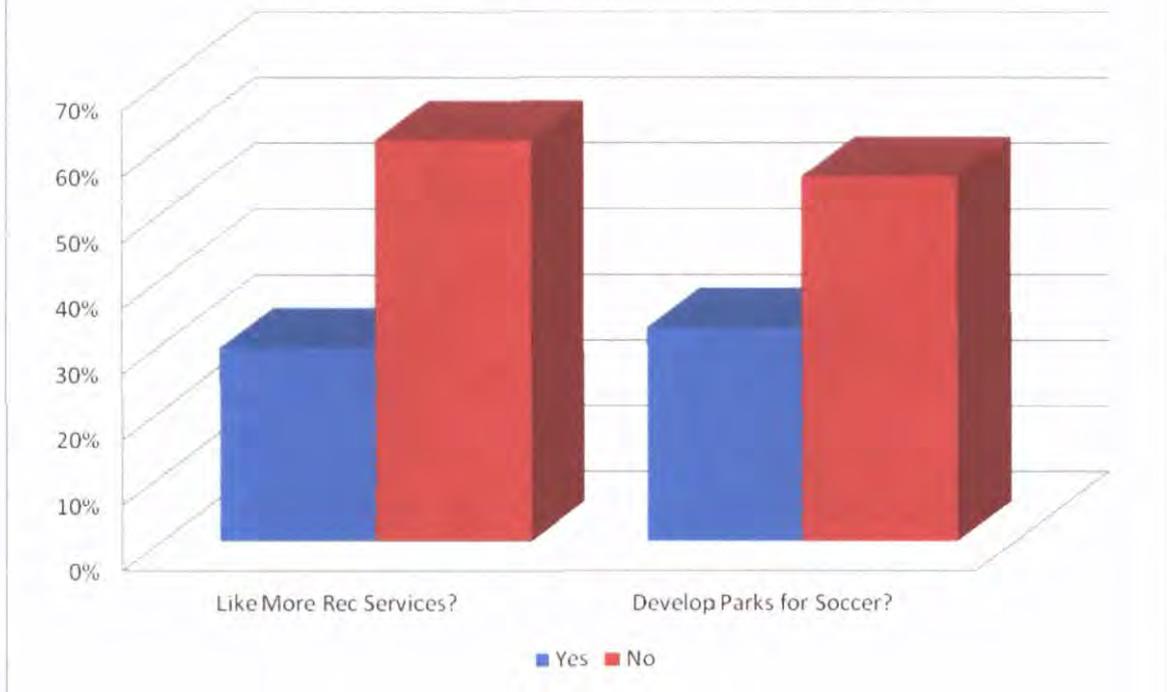
Respondents age 35 and younger were much more likely to have visited the City website (66%). In addition, those who had attended a City meeting within the last year were more likely to have visited the Website than those who had not attended a meeting (47% vs. 31%). See Banner Table 30 for more information.

Recreational Services and Parks with Soccer

Each year the City of Grants Pass adds a series of questions to the survey on issues of immediate concern to the City Council. This year's new questions started by asking about recreational services and the desirability of new parks with soccer fields. When asked if there were any recreational services the City does not provide that people would like to see, most respondents (61%) said that they did not know of any such service they would like. This feeling that the City already provides adequate recreational services, or at least that there is no new recreational service that people would like, was approximately the same among all demographic groups and ages See Banner Table 14 for more information.

Respondents were also asked if they thought the City should develop new parks with soccer fields. Support for this idea was relatively low, at 33%, while 56% opposed the idea. The only demographic group that supported the idea of new parks with soccer fields was respondents ages 35 – 44, with 59% support. Since this is the age of many parents with children who play on soccer teams, the support in this age-group is not surprising. See Banner Table 15 for more information. See Figure Six below for the support level for these two questions about recreation.

Figure Six: Recreation Development



In order to learn more specifically what recreational services supporters wanted, the 30% of respondents who thought there are new recreational services the city should provide were asked to describe the additional services they would like to see. By far, the most common theme mentioned by respondents were any recreational services that would be used by grade school aged children and teens. Among specific services or facilities, the idea of a water park or improved swimming options was mentioned frequently and the idea of a new senior center was mentioned occasionally. See the Narrative Responses section of this report for the exact wording of ideas and suggestions.

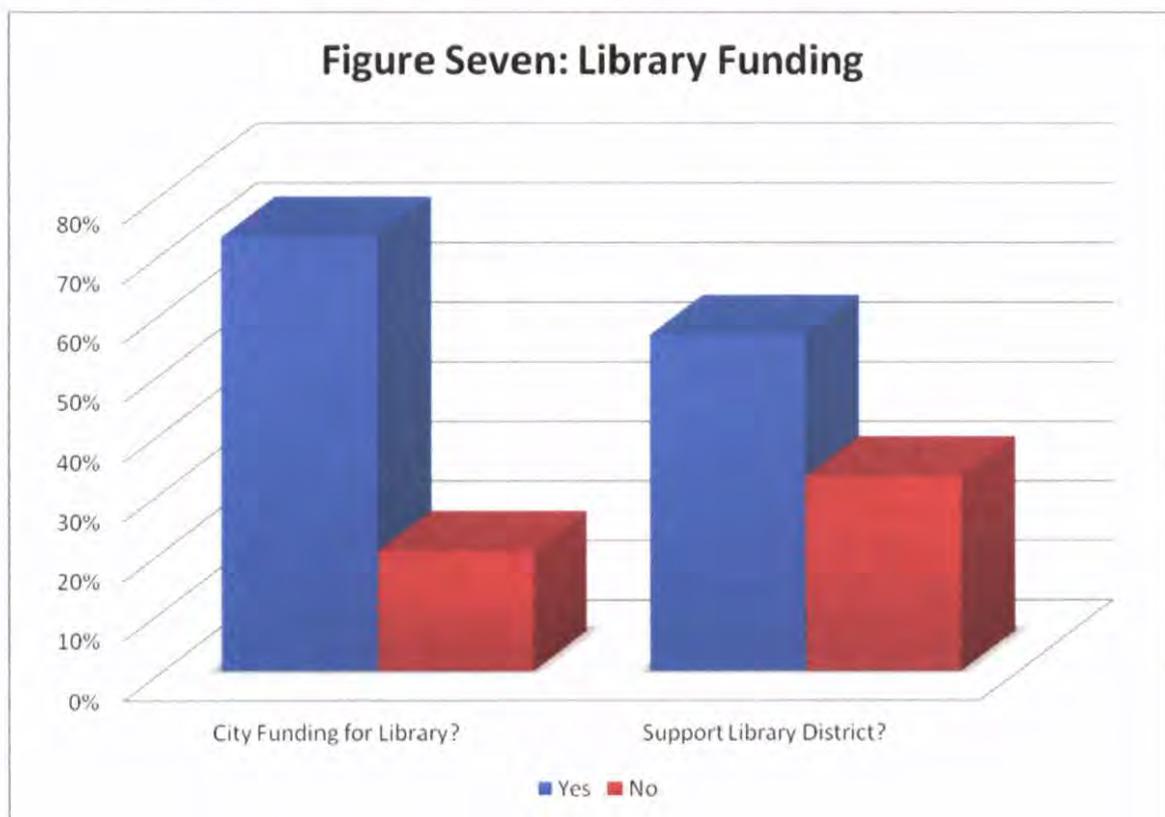
Similarly, the 33% of respondents who thought the City should build new parks with soccer fields were asked where they would like these new fields to be. Respondents were definitely not of one mind on this question and mentioned virtually every part of Grants Pass. However, there were several people who thought the Redwood area and Lower River Road were good areas. Outside of those areas it was somewhat common for people to suggest that new parks with soccer should be additions to existing parks. See the Narrative Responses section of this report for the exact locations suggested.

Library Services

The second set of new questions for this year concerned library services. Respondents were first asked if they thought the City should provide resources to help fund library services. A large majority of respondents, 73%, thought that the City should provide additional resources, and only 20% were opposed to this idea. Support was high among all segments of the population, with the highest support level among respondents under

age 35 (89%), and lowest among those over 65, although still at the relatively high level of 69%. See Banner Table 31 for more detail.

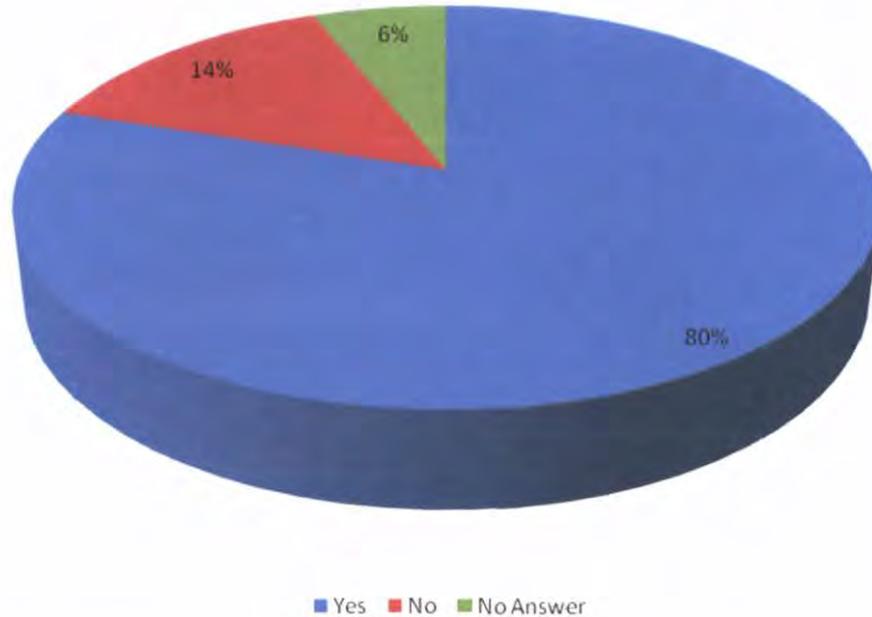
Respondents were next asked if they would support the creation of a new County library district with its own tax base. Once again a majority of respondents supported this idea (56%), even though it would lead to increased taxes. Opposition to a County library district was 33%, with 11% undecided. Here too support levels were greater among younger respondents, although this time the highest level of support was in age-group 35-44 at 77%, followed by 70% support among those under 35. These age-groups are those most likely to have school age children who might utilize improved library resources. See Banner Table 32 for more information. See Figure Seven below for a breakdown of support for these two library issues.



Fire Personnel on Medical Emergencies

Another new question concerned the current practice of sending fire personnel and equipment to residences in response to medical emergencies. Respondents were asked if they thought this service was beneficial. Respondents were unambiguous in their clear support for this practice, with 80% thinking this was a clear benefit, compared to only 14% who did not think there was a benefit. Support levels were almost identical for all groups in Grants Pass. See Banner Table 33 for more information. See Figure Eight below for a graphic view of the support for sending fire personnel to medical emergencies.

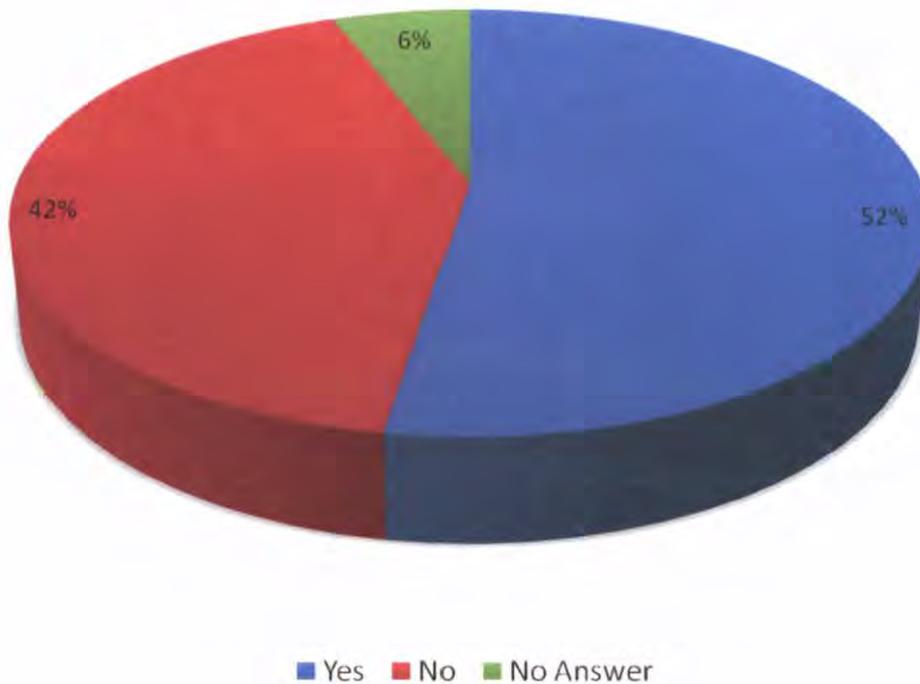
Figure Eight: Fire Services Beneficial on Medical Emergencies?



Red Light Cameras

The final new question this year concerned the use of “red-light” cameras as a tool for enforcing traffic regulations. The use of these cameras has been controversial throughout the United States, including in other Oregon cities. Respondents in Grants Pass were in support of the use of “red-light” cameras, by a majority of 53%. Opposition to the use of the cameras was a strong 42%. In addition, support for the use of red-light” cameras was only above 50% among respondents 65 and older, and those under age 35, where it reached 60% in both cases. See Banner Table 34 for more information. See Figure Nine below for the general level of support for “red-light” cameras.

Figure Nine: Use Red-Light Cameras?



Grants Pass Growth Rate

Toward the end of the survey, respondents were asked their opinion about the rate of growth in the City. The majority of respondents (52%) now feel that Grants Pass is growing at “about the right pace”. A large number of respondents (33%) felt the City was growing “too fast,” while only 9% felt the City was growing “too slowly.” Over the fourteen years that we have conducted this survey for the City, the responses to this question have changed significantly. The percentage of respondents who feel the City is growing “about the right pace” steadily declined from 1999 through 2006. At the same time, the percentage of respondents who feel the City is growing at “too fast” increased about 5% each year from 2000 to 2004 and then jumped 7% in 2005 and an even larger 10% in 2006.

Starting with 2007, for the first time in seven years, residents of Grants Pass increased their support for the idea that growth was at about the right pace. This year the support for the idea that growth is at the right pace increased again by another 4%. In 2007 the increased support came almost exclusively from men. Since the 2008/2009 survey the change in support has come primarily from women. In addition, new residents (five years or less) continue to be much less likely to think growth is too fast, when compared to residents who have lived in the City 5 or more years (9% vs. 34%).

Following changes of the last three years, support for the current growth rate is now approximately the same as it was during the period from 1998 through 2002, while support for the idea that growth is "too fast" is at the lowest level measured in the years of this survey. See Banner Table 38 for more information and see the Annual Trends section for the changes in opinion on this issue over the past 14 years.

What People Would Like to Change and What They Enjoy about Grants Pass

At the end of the standard survey questions, respondents were asked what they would like to change about Grants Pass and what they like most about Grants Pass. The responses to these questions cover a wide range of topics, however, the most common changes people would like to see include: more funding for the police, with increased policing and a reduction in crime; activities for teens and young adults; improvements in traffic control and roads; more growth and business development; less growth and reduction in the size of the City; changes in City government, and improved shopping. In addition, many people continue to express a fear that Grants Pass is losing its small town feel and want to see changes that will preserve the town as they would like to see it.

The things people enjoy about Grants Pass are first and foremost the climate with its dry weather and the scenery. In addition many people list outdoor pursuits and nature issues, in particular the river and the parks. Finally, many people like the nature of the City and value highly the small town atmosphere and the friendly attitude of other residents. The things people enjoy about Grants Pass have remained the same for many years and did not change this year.

For the complete responses to what people would like to change and what they enjoy, see the Narrative Responses section.

Conclusion

Once again this year's survey continues to show that residents of Grants Pass like the community they live in very much and have a high opinion of local government and the services it provides. Residents also feel reasonably informed and able to participate in their government. In addition, they generally feel safe in their neighborhoods.

This year's survey shows the movement back toward the traditional concerns of Grants Pass residents is still continuing. The overwhelming economic concerns that permeated the surveys in 2008 & 2009 are much less in evidence today. While concern about growing too fast is now at the lowest point in the history of these surveys, concern about jobs and economic opportunities are somewhat reduced. Once again, concerns about possible crime and violence remain high, as well as the desire for increased policing. Many of the older concerns about over-development, City aesthetics, and the environment were rarely raised this year.

New for this year is the strong support for library services, including a willingness to create a library district. At the same time, support for recreational services is relatively weak. Respondents also made it clear they want fire personnel to continue to arrive at

medical emergencies, and that they are split on the issue of using “red-light” cameras as part of traffic enforcement.

Finally, since the City has been asking many of the questions in this survey for a number of years, the trends and changes in public attitudes are worth examining. For the seventh year, this report now contains a section of annual trend graphs. Please see this section for a long-term perspective on the reoccurring issues regarding City services, growth, and attitudes about living in Grants Pass.