

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althausen, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Charlie Schneider, and Eileen Swarthout.

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, and Communications Manager Ann Cook,

2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY: Manager Cook introduced Dan Quatrocelli with GreatBlue Research, the City's consultant conducting the 2022 Community Survey.

Manager Cook reported the community survey focused on three areas of:

- Quality of Life
- Policing
- Supporting and assisting individuals experiencing homelessness

Additionally, an add-on benchmarking survey was included to learn about the perceptions of residents compared against other residents in the state to obtain information on how other individuals respond to similar questions.

Mr. Quatrocelli presented the results of the community survey conducted in early 2022. The survey was conducted digitally to capture the opinions of residents of Tumwater as well as benchmarking data from residents throughout the state.

The benchmark community survey focused on rating overall quality of life in Tumwater, perceptions of homelessness in the community, support for various potential initiatives related to aiding homelessness, general perceptions of safety in the community, confidence in police and comfortability dealing with police, current and preferred methods of communication with Tumwater, and demographic profiles of respondents.

The digital survey was completed by 1,339 community members answering 35 questions. No financial incentive was offered to respondents to participate. The sample of 1,339 represents a margin of error of 2.6% at a 95% confidence level. The survey was conducted from January 19, 2022 through March 7, 2022.

Slightly more women than men participated in the survey with three quarters of respondents identifying as White or Caucasian. One-third of respondents had a bachelor's degree or a four-year college degree. Two-fifths of respondents indicated their household income was between \$100,000 and \$250,000 and more than four-fifths responded that they own their home. Two-fifths of the respondents indicated they were a couple with children in the household while two-thirds reported no children in the

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school system in Tumwater.

The Washington snapshot used the same digital survey methodology with a total of 1,008 participants completing surveys with 35 questions and no financial incentive to participate. Of those surveyed, the margin of error was 3.1% at a 95% competence level. The survey was conducted from February 2, 2002 through March 7, 2022. Slightly more women responded than men similar to the Tumwater survey. Approximately four-fifths of the respondents identified as part of a LGBTQ+ household, four-fifths of the respondents identify as either White or Caucasian, and approximately one-fifth of the respondents indicated some college but no college degree with 23.7% having a high school diploma or less. Approximately 22.7% reported household income between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and 46% reported they currently own their home. Less than one-third are currently single with no children and four-fifths of the respondents do not have any children in a school system.

Mr. Quatrocelli shared some of the Tumwater survey results. Approximately one-half of respondents rate the quality of life in Tumwater as either “very good” or “excellent.” The metric is 11.3 percentage points more than the Washington State benchmark, which was 40.4%. For Tumwater, only 3.4% of respondents rated quality of life as poor. The survey reflects there is a significant frequency of respondents who believe the City of Tumwater is growing too fast with two out of five respondents (40.3%) indicating the City is growing too fast while 44.2% indicated the growth rate is about right, and slightly less than one of every 10 residents indicating the City is not growing at a fast enough pace. Previous Tumwater surveys for comparison reflected that the number of respondents who believe the City is growing too fast increased this year from 40/4% from 26.3% in the 2016 survey but still remains below 44.7% in 2008.

Councilmember Schneider asked whether the survey includes any follow-up questions as to why the respondents believe the City is growing too fast. Mr. Quatrocelli said no follow-up questions were included; however, some demographic segmentation was completed involving a review of different demographic characteristics of the respondents. Follow-up information can be provided on those individuals or groups of individuals who indicated Tumwater is growing too fast.

Councilmember Schneider questioned whether the demographics of the respondents are representative of the City. Mr. Quatrocelli explained that some self-selection occurs in the survey process. A strict quota sample was not included that would have matched the census figures for Tumwater. The goal of the survey was to maximize responses from residents in the City and give as many people a voice to participate as possible in the survey.

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Manager Cook added that Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) data and census data indicates 77% of residents reported as White. The respondents and data from the census and TRPC are close in ethnicity. African-Americans or Blacks are reported at 3% of residents with 2.5% participating in the survey. Other respondents elected not to answer the question on ethnicity or they selected “other” or “mixed race.” Additionally, according to benchmarking results, male respondents account for 32% to 35% of the participants whereas the Tumwater survey reflected 41% participation by males.

Councilmember Althausen noted that 83% of the respondents indicated they own a home, which reflects the survey was biased towards homeowners by at least 20% as Tumwater’s percentage of homeowners is approximately 50% to 60% of the population. In terms of outcomes of previous studies, it would be important to temper the findings by considering the survey generated many more homeowners as opposed to renters.

City Administrator Doan commented that in 2008, the City experienced a significant housing construction boom not dissimilar to what has been occurring in the last two years based on building permit revenue. Growth slowed tremendously in 2012 during the last years of the great recession. By 2016, the growth in housing stabilized but with less development occurring. In terms of respondent answers as to whether the City is growing too fast, too slow, or just right, the comparison from 2008 to the 2022 survey results reflect a higher percentage of people who believe the City was growing too fast, similar to the 2022 survey; however, in 2008, there were only 3.45% of respondents who indicated the City was not growing fast enough, whereas the 2022 survey reflected 9.5% believe the City is not growing fast enough. At both ends of the scale, the City moved up in numbers with more residents believing the City is growing too fast and more residents who believe it is not growing fast enough, which is interesting.

Mr. Quatrocelli reviewed survey responses to the question, “To create equity and opportunity for all, I believe a greater portion of my town/city resources should go to those who are in most need.” Survey results reflected that 46.6% of respondents indicated that they strongly or somewhat agree with the statement while 48.6% indicated that they either strongly or somewhat disagree with the statement. The Washington benchmark reflects respondents agreeing with the statement are higher than Tumwater respondents.

Councilmember Swarthout asked whether the question was included in other Tumwater surveys. Manager Cook advised the question was not included in prior surveys. Councilmember Swarthout commented that the responses are based on opinions rather than fact as respondents were not

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provided with other information. Manager Cook affirmed the question was an unaided question with no other information provided in which to base a response or form an opinion. The question is essentially a perception question. Mr. Quatrocelli added that the question was included to gauge the community's beliefs on the amount of resources that should be allocated rather than requesting input on whether the respondent would support a tax increase or create a new program or service to benefit the less fortunate.

Mr. Quatrocelli said the survey question on whether they agree or disagree that they have good opportunities to get ahead in the community reflected that more than two-thirds of the respondents (69.6%) either strongly or somewhat agree with the statement, which is elevated over the benchmark of 60.8% of all state respondents.

Councilmember Schneider shared that his concern surrounding the community survey is the lack of information as to why some respondents are not happy or satisfied versus those who are satisfied or happy. It appears the survey is based on generic basic questions but does not provide the Council with any kind of guideline as to how the Council could respond. Mr. Quatrocelli explained that the purpose of the survey focused on equity, policing, and their beliefs on interactions within the City and how the responses might differ from Washington State residents as a whole.

Mr. Quatrocelli reviewed other survey results:

- 30.2% of respondents believe homelessness in Tumwater is a significant problem, 37.6% indicated it was a moderate problem, and 2.4% indicated homelessness is not a problem, which is below the state benchmark of 6.5%. In the 2017 survey, results revealed 3% of respondents indicated homelessness is not a problem.
- 32.4% of Tumwater respondents and 24% of state benchmark respondents indicated the lack of visual signs of homelessness makes it a less significant problem. 17.4% of respondents indicated that the issue is present in surrounding cities or areas. It is also a less significant problem because there is a proactive effort and presence from the City, the police, and the community to help combat homelessness. The survey responses (14.4%) were elevated over the state benchmark of 3.8%.
- 12.7% of respondents indicate a less community problem because there are no services or resources for the homelessness. The state benchmark was less by 3.8%.
- One-fifth of survey respondents (26.1%) indicate homelessness is a general problem, 14.7% of respondents indicate the visibility and sitings of homeless populations contributes to their perception that it is

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a moderate or significant problem. The same response by state respondents was 24.7%.

- Support for subsidized housing and a .1% sales tax increase was opposed by approximately half of Tumwater survey participants. The survey reflected an increase in respondents who oppose versus support whereas the state benchmark response was a higher number of respondents supporting those initiatives.
- The main reason respondents would support a proposal was their perception for caring for vulnerable populations and helping those in need as important (2.6%) followed closely by the need for more affordable housing (1 of 5 agreed).
- The main reason for opposition to the subsidized housing proposal, 21.1% indicated they are overtaxed and there is no need to increase that financial burden. 12.2% of Tumwater respondents said it was not their job or responsibility and they do not want to do any more enabling or giving handouts.
- A majority of Tumwater respondents supported services not funded or sponsored by the City of Tumwater, such as food bank, tiny houses, more housing for community, day center, more housing for the houseless, & RV or car camp area.
- A majority (76%) of Tumwater respondents feel safe in their community (compared to 70.8% Washington State benchmark). Of those who reported not feeling safe, the top reason was high crime/corruption/violence (37.3%) Tumwater versus 49.6% Washington State benchmark, followed by those who expressed multiple reasons.
- Tumwater respondents rate police interaction more favorably than Washington State benchmark. Of survey respondents who indicated they have had contact with their police department in the past 12 months, 63.1% of Tumwater respondents indicated the quality of service they received was very good (compared to 31.7% of Washington State benchmark respondents. 7% of Tumwater respondents rated the quality of the interaction as very poor (compared to 12.5% of benchmark respondents).
- 77.1% respondents agreed the police have a difficult job and 56.9% agreed that they trust the police to make decisions that are good for everyone in the City. The lowest rated characteristic revealed 16.1% agreed that the police are not consistent in how they apply rules to people.
- A strong majority of survey responders indicated they would feel comfortable contacting the police department (more than 9 out of 10) compared to 74.5% of Washington State benchmark respondents.
- A strong majority of Tumwater respondents believe School Resource Officers (SROs) favorably impact the community. One of five respondents preferred to see tax dollars invested in other ways rather than funding SROs.

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- Nearly three-quarters of Tumwater respondents (73.7%) indicated they have a very high or high level of confidence in the police force to do their job and enforce the law.
- Over one-half of survey respondents, 56.1%, reported their confidence that Tumwater Police Department treat people of color and white people equally is “very high” (33.9%) or “high” (22.2%). The frequency of those who indicated very high was 11.7 percentage points high than the Washington State benchmark date of 19.2%. In Tumwater, more responders who did not identify as “White/Caucasian; (42.5%) indicated their confidence in equal treatment by the police is “very high” in comparison to “White/Caucasian” respondents (28.3%).
- More than three-quarters of Tumwater respondents, 76%, indicated they either feel “very safe” or “safe” in Tumwater. White 79.2% of Caucasian respondents and 78.3% of Hispanic/Latino(a) respondents indicated feeling safe. Only 64.7% of Black/African American respondents and 61.1% of Biracial or Multiracial respondents indicated feeling safe.
- Among those Tumwater respondents that have had contact with the Tumwater Police Department in the past 12 months, more than three-quarters, 77.2%, indicated the quality of service received during that interaction was either “very good” or “good” (response of 1 or 2 on a 5-point scale). While 90% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander responders and 806% of Biracial or Multiracial respondents indicated the quality of service was “good,” only 72% of Black/African American respondents, 70% of Asian respondents and 67.7% of Native American Indian/Alaska Native respondents indicated the quality of interaction with police was “good.”
- More than three-quarters of Tumwater respondents, 77.1%, agreed with the statement, “The Police have a difficult job.” While 78.4% of Caucasian respondents agreed with this statement, only 68.8% of Native American Indian /Alaska Native respondents and 68% of Hispanic/Latino(a) respondents agree that Police have a difficult job.
- Nine of ten respondents, 90.3% indicated feeling either “very comfortable” or “comfortable” contacting the Tumwater Police Department. While 93.8% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander responders and 90.1% of Caucasian respondents indicated feeling comfortable contacting Tumwater Police, 82.9% of Asian respondents and 82.4% of Black/African American respondents indicated being comfortable doing so.
- Nearly three-quarters of Tumwater respondents, 73.7% indicated being confident that the police do a good job enforcing the law. While 76.5% of Black/African American respondents and 75% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander responders are confident the police do a good job enforcing the law, only 69.8% of Native American Indian /Alaska Native respondents and 63.4% of Asian respondents reported

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the same.

- Over one-half of Tumwater respondents, 56.1%, indicated being confident Tumwater Police officers treat people of color and white people equally. While 57.4% of Biracial/Multiracial respondents and 56% of Native American Indian /Alaska Native respondents are confident that the Police treat people of color and white people the same, only 52.9% of Black/African American respondents, 56.6% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander responders reported the same.
- When asked to indicate the most preferred way to communicate with the City, 35.3% of Tumwater respondents ranked “email” number one (25.9% benchmark respondents), followed by “phone call” (33.2% Tumwater and 30.4% benchmark). Of note 87.3% of Tumwater respondents did not “participate in City forum” in the top three (86.3% benchmark).
- When asked to indicate the most preferred way to learn about what is happening in the City, 32.5% of Tumwater respondents ranked “email” as the number one method followed by visiting the website or social media.
- One-tenth of Tumwater respondents are not using social media. Respondents using social media use Facebook (three-quarters of respondents) followed by Instagram (two-fifths), and YouTube (one-third).

Mr. Quatrocelli reviewed some major considerations based on survey results in three major areas:

- Target efforts to aid the houseless. Respondents recognized that it is an issue and showed support for efforts to help the houseless.
- Consider marketing the positive police ratings.
- Digital communication is the preferred method for receiving content information either through the website, email, or social media platforms.

Mayor Sullivan commented on how the positive feedback on the Tumwater Police Department would benefit in filling officer vacancies in such a tight job market. She suggested including the positive ratings by the community within recruitment materials to increase the City’s recruitment competitiveness.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether respondent demographics included age. Mr. Quatrocelli advised that he would need to follow-up as he does not believe age was included.

City Administrator Doan acknowledged the efforts of Manager Cook and Mr. Quatrocelli for their work on the survey. He cited the focus of previous surveys and how surveys tend to evolve. In terms of the

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broadness of some of the questions, the answers provide a task for the Council to discern and consider all the data derived from the survey, as well as from relationships with neighbors and contacts with community members and personal judgment in determining how to use the information to create outcomes benefitting the community.

Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended developing a pie chart of the positives and negatives to provide a snapshot of each topic outcome.

Councilmember Cathey agreed that the demographics on age would be very important for the Council as many of the City's surveys have been completed by older women, which is reflective in some of the responses. She recommended consideration of scheduling a worksession for further review of the survey results, as well as using the survey results to assist the Council when it establishes priorities during the Council's retreat.

Councilmember Jefferson supported the comments of Councilmembers.

2022 - 2035 BARNES LAKE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (BLMD) ASSESSMENT INCREASE:

Director Smith briefed the Council on the proposed 2022-2035 Barnes Lake Management District (LMD) assessment increase.

Manager Smith described the background on the establishment of the Barnes Lake Management District in 2004 in response to a petition submitted to the City by residents surrounding Barnes Lake. The district is a self-taxing entity managed and operated by the City of Tumwater. The district was formed for the purpose of treating and managing vegetation in the lake. He outlined how the lake was initially formed and has evolved over the years. The lake district is comprised of 109 properties within six different categories of property membership. Since the establishment of the district and lake treatments, open water space has increased. In 2020, open water is located throughout the majority of the lake resembling lake conditions present in 1970 before the introduction of the fragrant water lily. Over the years, lake aesthetics have slowly been restored.

Over the last 15 years, the City of Tumwater has worked with the LMD to implement contract services for treatments with Northwest Aquatics Systems. Director Smith outlined the treatment protocols on the lake and shorelines services provided to lakefront property owners. Additionally, the contractor surveys the lake electronically for vegetation distribution to determine the amount of vegetation in various areas. Over the years, the treatment has evolved to the recent installation of a water level transducer providing 15 minute information on water level.

Director Smith described earlier treatment methodologies, quality monitoring around the lake, lake level monitoring, and the increase in fish in the lake. Each year, the LMD committee and staff complete a planning exercise with the contractor to ensure documentation is completed of

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previous work and recommendations moving forward. Because of the decision to continue applications of an expensive herbicide, the LMD committee identified the need to evaluate costs required to continue treatments. The LMD has not raised rates since its formation.

Over the last past year, the LMD committee reviewed the forecast and the budget and agreed to recommend an increase in the assessment amount by forecasting costs through 2035 by 5% each year for the remaining life of the program. On March 2, 2022 following notification to each property owner, the committee hosted a listening session. Although lightly attended, property owners in attendance supported the proposal for the LMD| continuing operations and increasing rates. On March 8, 2022 the LMD forwarded a formal recommendation to the City for the increase. On March 17, 2022, the Public Works Committee reviewed the proposal and recommended approval to the City Council. The Public Works Committee advertised and held a public hearing and to consider the proposal on May 5, 2022. None of the property owners attended the Public Works Committee public hearing.

Director Smith reviewed the different tiers of properties and corresponding assessment rates, the current level of annual contributions totaling \$17,305, projected expenditures, and the proposed assessment rates increasing the total contributions by \$113,842 in new revenue sufficient to cover forecasted expenses and treatments. The LMD committee supports the proposed increase in the assessment unanimously. The City received 10 letters and one email conveying support and one letter of opposition from a property owner who wants the lake to revert back to its prior historical conditions. The opposing property owner has requested an appeal if the City approves the increase in the assessment. The basis of the appeal contends the property does not have lake frontage or the ability to access the lake.

Director Smith addressed questions on the reasons for the City's involvement in the LMD.

The City Council supported moving the proposal to the Council's June 7, 2022 meeting for consideration on the consent calendar.

MAYORS/CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

There were no reports.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.