

**City of Bellingham**  
**Service Priorities and Customer Satisfaction Survey**  
**Bellingham Voters**

**June 8 – 12, 2006**

**N=510; M.O.E. ± 4.4 points**

**EMC #06-3501**

When applicable, results are compared to previous survey for:

**City of Bellingham**

**Emergency Medical Services Survey**

June 17-21, 2004

N=513; MOE= ± 4.5 points

EMC #04-3064

**All numbers are reported as percentages unless otherwise noted.  
Some questions may add up to more/less than 100% due to rounding.**

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
2. SEX		
Male	46%	46%
Female	54%	53%

Hello, my name is \_\_\_ and I'm conducting a public opinion survey for EMC Research. This is a public opinion research study on how people in Bellingham feel about some of the issues facing them. This is not a sales or telemarketing call. Your answers are strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only. May I speak to (NAME ON LIST); (IF NECESSARY: did I pronounce that correctly)? (REPEAT INTRO IF NECESSARY) Would you be willing to answer a few questions on a strictly confidential basis?

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3. To start, are you registered to vote at this address?		
Yes	100%	100%
4. Overall, would you rate the quality of life in Bellingham as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?		
Excellent	49%	48%
Good	43%	46% =>94%
Only fair	7%	5% =>6%
Poor	1%	1%
(Don't know)	--	0%

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
5. Do you feel Bellingham is generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten seriously off on the wrong track?		
Right direction	57%	55%
Wrong track	29%	31%
(Don't know)	14%	13%
6. What do you think is the most important problem facing Bellingham today that city leaders can do something about?		
General growth/development issues	16%	21%
Traffic/Congestion	10%	10%
Controlling/Managing growth	9%	9%
Better planning for growth	6%	8%
Affordable housing	3%	5%
Unemployment/Need more jobs	7%	5%
Water Quality/Lake Whatcom	8%	4%
Taxes	2%	3%
Water front issues	2%	3%
City spending/Money issues	9%	3%
Environment	1%	2%
Crime/Need bigger jail/More police	3%	2%
Need voter input/Better communication	1%	2%
Need a better business climate	2%	2%
Big government	1%	1%
Quality of Life	--	1%
Change leaders	2%	1%
Lack of Parking	--	1%
Homelessness	1%	1%
Education	1%	1%
Need more parks	1%	1%
Utilities/Energy/Gas	1%	1%
Maintain Farm Lands	--	1%
Clean up downtown	1%	0%
Health/Human services	2%	0%
Nothing	2%	1%
Other	2%	3%
Don't know	5%	6%
Refused	--	1%

I'm going to read you a list of public figures and organizations. Please tell me if you have a strongly favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or strongly unfavorable opinion of each one. If you have never heard of one please just say so.

**SCALE:** 1. Strongly Favorable 2. Somewhat Favorable 3. Somewhat Unfavorable  
4. Strongly Unfavorable 5. (Can't Rate) 6. (Never Heard)

(RANDOMIZE)

	<u>Strong Fav</u>	<u>Some Fav</u>	<u>Some Unfav</u>	<u>Strong Unfav</u>	<u>(Can't Rate)</u>	<u>(Never Heard)</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Name ID</u>
7. The Bellingham Police Department								
2004	54%	34%	6%	2%	3%	1%	11.0 to 1	96%
2006	51%	38%	5%	2%	4%	--	12.7 to 1	96%
8. The Bellingham Fire Department								
2004	74%	19%	1%	--	5%	1%	93.0 to 1	94%
2006	64%	26%	2%	1%	7%	--	30.0 to 1	93%
9. The Bellingham City Council								
2004	10%	45%	20%	9%	14%	2%	1.9 to 1	84%
2006	12%	47%	18%	10%	12%	1%	2.1 to 1	87%
10. The Mayor of Bellingham								
2004	15%	39%	17%	18%	9%	2%	1.5 to 1	89%
2006	14%	41%	14%	19%	11%	1%	1.7 to 1	88%
11. Bellingham Public Library								
2004	65%	25%	5%	1%	4%	--	15.0 to 1	96%
2006	66%	25%	3%	0%	6%	0%	30.3 to 1	94%
12. (WAHT-come) Whatcom Medic One								
2004	53%	21%	2%	1%	17%	6%	24.6 to 1	77%
2006	48%	29%	2%	1%	15%	4%	25.7 to 1	81%
13. (WAHT-come) Whatcom Museum of History and Art								
2004	53%	28%	3%	1%	11%	4%	20.3 to 1	85%
2006	49%	31%	3%	1%	13%	3%	20.0 to 1	84%
14. Children's Museum								
2004	50%	23%	2%	1%	20%	4%	24.3 to 1	76%
2006	49%	25%	2%	1%	19%	3%	24.7 to 1	78%
15. Bellingham Parks and Recreation								
2004	64%	28%	4%	2%	3%	--	15.3 to 1	97%
2006	59%	32%	5%	2%	2%	0%	13.0 to 1	98%



	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(Don't Know)</u>
24. The job the city of Bellingham is doing meeting community needs					
<b>2004</b>	13%	44%	30%	9%	3%
<b>2006</b>	7%	43%	34%	10%	6%
25. The job the city is doing protecting the livability of neighborhoods					
<b>2006</b>	7%	42%	31%	15%	5%
26. The job the city is doing planning for growth					
<b>2006</b>	4%	26%	36%	30%	4%

I'm going to read you a list of items that the City of Bellingham could spend tax dollars on. For each item, please tell me how high a priority that item should be. Use a scale of one to seven, where one means the lowest priority and seven means the highest priority.

**SCALE FOR Q27-Q40:**  
(RANDOMIZE)

	<u>Low Priority</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>High Priority</u>	<u>(DK)</u>	<u>Mean</u>
27. Maintaining parks and trails									
<b>2004</b>	1%	1%	5%	9%	29%	28%	26%	--	<b>5.52</b>
<b>2006</b>	2%	3%	3%	9%	24%	25%	33%	1%	<b>5.59</b>
28. Providing recreational programs for youth and adults									
<b>2004</b>	1%	3%	6%	10%	30%	27%	22%	2%	<b>5.36</b>
<b>2006</b>	2%	3%	5%	13%	32%	21%	21%	3%	<b>5.25</b>
29. Providing fire protection services									
<b>2004</b>	--	1%	1%	2%	9%	25%	61%	1%	<b>6.40</b>
<b>2006</b>	1%	0%	1%	3%	13%	21%	59%	1%	<b>6.30</b>
30. Providing medic one emergency medical services									
<b>2004</b>	1%	1%	1%	4%	11%	25%	55%	2%	<b>6.22</b>
<b>2006</b>	1%	2%	2%	5%	14%	24%	50%	3%	<b>6.08</b>
31. Preventing crime and protecting the community									
<b>2004</b>	--	--	3%	4%	16%	22%	55%	--	<b>6.20</b>
<b>2006</b>	1%	1%	2%	5%	15%	22%	51%	2%	<b>6.10</b>

	<u>Low</u> <u>Priority</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>High</u> <u>Priority</u>	<u>(DK)</u>	<u>Mean</u>
32. Improving streets, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights									
2004	1%	1%	7%	14%	27%	25%	25%	--	<b>5.40</b>
2006	1%	3%	5%	12%	27%	26%	25%	1%	<b>5.41</b>
33. Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham									
2004	5%	4%	5%	11%	24%	20%	30%	1%	<b>5.27</b>
2006	6%	4%	6%	11%	27%	18%	25%	3%	<b>5.13</b>
34. Maintaining library services for the community									
2004	--	1%	3%	8%	24%	24%	39%	1%	<b>5.86</b>
2006	1%	1%	3%	6%	23%	25%	38%	2%	<b>5.84</b>
35. Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum									
2004	4%	3%	9%	20%	27%	18%	16%	2%	<b>4.86</b>
2006	3%	3%	9%	16%	26%	20%	17%	5%	<b>5.01</b>
36. Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre									
2004	4%	6%	14%	16%	25%	19%	14%	2%	<b>4.66</b>
2006	5%	4%	9%	18%	29%	16%	14%	4%	<b>4.75</b>
37. Providing educational and cultural opportunities through the children's museum									
2004	1%	3%	6%	13%	27%	22%	23%	1%	<b>5.30</b>
2006	2%	4%	8%	12%	27%	20%	20%	6%	<b>5.13</b>
38. Involving the public in making decisions that affect the community									
2006	4%	4%	3%	7%	19%	21%	39%	2%	<b>5.61</b>
39. Communicating with citizens about city issues, decisions, and services									
2006	3%	5%	6%	9%	26%	20%	29%	1%	<b>5.29</b>
40. Guiding development to protect the environment and promote healthy neighborhoods									
2006	2%	3%	4%	10%	19%	22%	39%	2%	<b>5.66</b>

(END RANDOMIZE)

Now I'm going to ask you to rate the job the City of Bellingham is doing in providing services which rely on tax-payer dollars. Again, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate the job the city of Bellingham is doing...

**SCALE FOR Q41-Q54:** 1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Only fair  
4. Poor 5. (Don't know)

(RANDOMIZE)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(Don't Know)</u>
41. Maintaining parks and trails					
<b>2004</b>	31%	55%	12%	--	2%
<b>2006</b>	26%	55%	13%	3%	3%
42. Providing recreational programs for youth and adults					
<b>2004</b>	26%	48%	18%	2%	5%
<b>2006</b>	19%	53%	18%	3%	8%
43. Providing fire protection services					
<b>2004</b>	41%	51%	4%	--	3%
<b>2006</b>	36%	54%	6%	1%	4%
44. Providing medic one emergency medical services					
<b>2004</b>	34%	44%	12%	2%	8%
<b>2006</b>	30%	50%	9%	1%	10%
45. Preventing crime and protecting the community					
<b>2004</b>	21%	53%	22%	4%	1%
<b>2006</b>	18%	58%	19%	2%	3%
46. Improving streets, such as fixing potholes, signage, and traffic lights					
<b>2004</b>	9%	47%	33%	11%	--
<b>2006</b>	8%	44%	36%	11%	2%
47. Encouraging economic development and business growth in Bellingham					
<b>2004</b>	9%	41%	28%	15%	7%
<b>2006</b>	5%	39%	31%	15%	9%
48. Maintaining library services for the community					
<b>2004</b>	19%	60%	13%	5%	2%
<b>2006</b>	21%	61%	13%	1%	4%
49. Maintaining the historic and arts collection museum					
<b>2004</b>	13%	58%	11%	1%	16%
<b>2006</b>	14%	53%	15%	1%	17%

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>(Don't Know)</u>
50. Supporting the Mount Baker Theatre					
<b>2004</b>	22%	49%	17%	1%	11%
<b>2006</b>	16%	54%	13%	2%	14%
51. Providing educational and cultural opportunities through the children's museum					
<b>2004</b>	15%	49%	15%	1%	21%
<b>2006</b>	14%	48%	14%	3%	21%
52. Involving the public in making decisions that affect the community					
<b>2006</b>	6%	32%	39%	18%	4%
53. Communicating with citizens about city issues, decisions, and services					
<b>2006</b>	6%	36%	39%	16%	3%
54. Guiding development to protect the environment and promote healthy neighborhoods					
<b>2006</b>	6%	41%	36%	11%	5%

**(END RANDOMIZE)**

55. Moving on, in terms of public services provided by the City of Bellingham, do you think that overall, the city provides too many services, too few services, or about the right amount of services?

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
Too Many	8%	12%
Too Few	10%	8%
About Right	78%	76%
(Don't Know)	4%	3%
(Refused)	--	0%

56. As you may know, twenty-two percent of your property taxes (25% in 2004 survey) go to the City of Bellingham. The rest of your property taxes go to schools, the port, the county, and state government. Would you say that the portion going to the city is too high, too low, or about the right amount?

Too High	16%	14%
Too Low	14%	14%
Right Amount	58%	61%
(Don't Know)	11%	10%
(Refused)	1%	1%



	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
57. If you had to choose only one, which of the following would you choose for the City of Bellingham? Would you choose to...		
Increase taxes, maintain services	56%	44%
Keep taxes same, cut services	33%	42%
(Other)	4%	5%
(Neither)	3%	4%
(Don't Know)	3%	4%
(Refused)	1%	1%

58. If the City of Bellingham was to cut city services, what services do you think the City of Bellingham should cut when inflation and citizens' demand for services outpace revenues?

	<u>2004</u> <u>(N=179)</u>	<u>2006</u> <u>(N=510)</u>
Parks and recreation	11%	12%
Cut government salaries/Jobs/Benefits	5%	8%
Museums (general)	6%	7%
Economic development/Money to business	3%	5%
Mt. Baker Theatre	6%	4%
Children's museum/Items for children	3%	4%
Road Maintenance	--	3%
Arts	2%	3%
Cultural events/services (general)	7%	2%
Keep necessary/Public safety services	2%	2%
Fire Departments	--	2%
Better spending/money management	3%	1%
Medic One	1%	1%
Library	3%	1%
Social Services/Senior Services	--	1%
Farmer's Market	3%	1%
City Bus/Transportation Services	2%	1%
A little from everything	2%	1%
Police/Law enforcement/Homeland security	2%	1%
Other: Services (General)	3%	1%
Educational Services	--	1%
Stop buying property	2%	0%
Other: Projects (General)	3%	0%
Public should pay for unnecessary items	2%	0%
Bridge/Overpass	2%	0%
Nothing	1%	8%
Other	3%	2%
Don't Know	23%	24%
Refused	--	1%

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
59. Now I'm going to read you a couple of statements about city government. Some people say the city should only provide a few services. These services include general public safety measures such as police and fire departments, courts, and street and sidewalk maintenance including crosswalks, fixing potholes, and placing street signs. Others say the city should provide a broader balance of services such as public safety, parks and trails, recreation programs, arts and cultural activities such as the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, libraries and other educational activities for community members. Which of the two comes closest to your view on what services city government should provide?		
Few services	24%	30%
Broad balance	72%	65%
(Don't Know)	4%	5%
(Refused)	--	0%

60. In general, how interested would you say you are in staying informed on the issues Bellingham City government is working with, and the decisions it makes on these issues? Would you say you are extremely interested, somewhat interested, mildly interested, or not interested?		
Extremely Interested		42%
Somewhat Interested		45% =>87%
Mildly Interested		10% =>13%
Not Interested		2%

I'm going to read you a couple of statements about the City of Bellingham. For each, you can say you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

**SCALE:** 1. Strongly Agree 2. Somewhat Agree  
3. Somewhat Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree 5. No Opinion/DK

**(RANDOMIZE)**

	<u>Strong Agree</u>	<u>Some Agree</u>	<u>Some Disagree</u>	<u>Strong Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion/ DK</u>
61. Bellingham is growing too fast and is losing its character					
<b>2006</b>	40%	31%	18%	8%	2%
62. The City of Bellingham does a good job making sure citizens have access to information on issues the City is deciding					
<b>2006</b>	15%	52%	20%	10%	3%
63. I am able to get involved when the City of Bellingham is making a decision that impacts me					
<b>2006</b>	24%	45%	14%	10%	6%
64. The City of Bellingham listens to neighborhood concerns					
<b>2006</b>	18%	50%	15%	10%	6%

**(END RANDOMIZE)**

I'm going to read you some places you might get information about the City of Bellingham. For each, please tell me if you use that source to get information about City of Bellingham issues and services. You can say often, sometimes, rarely, or never. (AFTER EACH UNTIL UNDERSTOOD: Do you get information from that source about the City of Bellingham often, sometimes, rarely, or never? (RANDOMIZE)

		<u>Often</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>(DK)</u>	<u>(Ref)</u>
65.	The Bellingham Herald <b>2006</b>	63%	19%	9%	10%		
66.	Word of mouth from friends, neighbors, and family <b>2006</b>	51%	35%	8%	5%	1%	0%
67.	Television <b>2006</b>	23%	27%	19%	31%		
68.	Bellingham's City website <b>2006</b>	12%	23%	17%	47%	0%	
69.	Radio <b>2006</b>	30%	29%	15%	25%	0%	
70.	The ( <b>kas-KAY-dee-uh</b> ) Cascadia Weekly <b>2006</b>	10%	8%	10%	69%	3%	
71.	The ( <b>WAHT-come</b> ) Whatcom Independent <b>2006</b>	14%	23%	17%	43%	2%	
72.	Internet news sites or blogs <b>2006</b>	16%	18%	18%	48%	0%	0%

(END RANDOMIZE)

(IF Q67 = 1 OR 2, ASK Q73. ELSE, SKIP TO Q74)

**2006**

73. Which television stations would that be?	
Channel 10/BTV10	25%
Channel 12/KVOS	16%
Channel 5	10%
Channel 4	9%
Local Channel (general)	7%
Channel 7	7%
Other Channels	3%
Anything/All Stations	3%
PBS/Public Access	2%
Channel 2	2%
News (General)	2%
CNN	1%
Channel 13	1%
Channel 9	1%
KING	1%
Channel 6	1%
FOX	1%
Channel 11	1%
KCTV	1%
Channel 30	1%
Community Channel	0%
Channel 26	0%
NBC	0%
ABC	0%
CBS	0%
None	2%
Other	1%
Don't Know	1%
Refused	0%

**(IF Q69 = 1 OR 2, ASK Q74. ELSE, SKIP TO Q75)**

**2006**

74.	Which radio stations would that be?	
	790 AM KGMI	33%
	104.3 FM KAFE	11%
	Other Channels	10%
	1170 AM KPUG	9%
	92.9 FM KISM	7%
	Local Radio (general)	4%
	NPR	3%
	KVOS	3%
	930 AM KBAI	2%
	KUGS	2%
	Public Radio	2%
	KPLU	1%
	104 (Other)	1%
	106.5	1%
	KZAZ	1%
	Various	1%
	DON'T LISTEN	2%
	Don't Know	5%
	Refused	0%

**(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)**

75.	Have you heard of Bellingham's City television channel, known as BTV-ten?	
	Yes	72%
	No	27%
	(Don't Know)	1%

**(IF Q75 = 1, ASK Q76. ELSE, SKIP TO Q78)**

**2006**

76. Tell me which fits you best, do you watch BTV-ten	
Never	27%
Less than once per month	16%
Once per month	21%
Weekly	25%
Many times a week	7%
Daily	3%
(Don't Know)	1%

**(IF Q76=1 OR 8, SKIP TO Q78. ELSE, ASK Q77)**

77. How many times were you tuning in to watch a City Council meeting?	
Always	3%
Sometimes	39%
Rarely	31%
Never	26%
(Don't Know)	1%

**(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)**

78. Have you heard of Bellingham's City website at c o b dot org?	
Yes	53%
No	46%
(Don't Know)	1%

**(IF Q78 = 1, ASK Q79. ELSE, SKIP TO Q80)**

79. Tell me which fits you best, how often do you visit c o b dot org	
Never	21%
Less than once per month	31%
Once per month	29%
Weekly	11%
Many times a week	5%
Daily	2%

**(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)**

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

**2004      2006**

80. Do you own or rent your apartment or home?		
Own/Buying	74%	82%
Rent	24%	17%
(DK/Refused)	3%	1%

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>	
81. How long have you lived in Bellingham? ( <b>RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS/IF LESS THAN ONE YEAR TYPE '0'</b> )			
<5	19%	12%	
5 to 10	23%	19%	
11 to 20	20%	21%	
21+	38%	47%	
82. Do any children under the age of 18 live in your household?			
Yes	31%	25%	
No/(Refused)	69%	75%	
83. What is your age? ( <b>READ CODES IF NECESSARY</b> )			
18-24	2%	2%	
25-29	8%	5%	
30-34	5%	5%	
35-39	10%	7%	
40-44	7%	8%	
45-49	10%	8%	=>35%
50-54	16%	14%	=>65%
55-59	11%	14%	
60-64	8%	8%	
65+	22%	27%	
(Refused)	1%	2%	
84. Please stop me when I read the category that includes your annual household income before taxes: less than \$15,000, at least 15,000 but less than 25,000, at least 25,000 but less than 35,000, at least 35,000 but less than 50,000, at least 50,000 but less than 75,000, at least 75,000 but less than 100,000, or more than 100,000?			
<\$15,000	9%	8%	
\$15,000--\$24,999	12%	9%	
\$25,000--\$34,999	14%	9%	
\$35,000--\$49,999	16%	15%	
\$50,000--\$74,999	19%	19%	
\$75,000--\$99,999	10%	11%	
> \$100,000	8%	8%	
(Refused/DK)	12%	22%	

**Thank you very much for participating in this important survey. Your feedback is important to helping City of Bellingham officials make choices about service improvements and priorities. They appreciate your time and opinions. Thank you, again, and have a good evening.**