



Appendix B: Community Assessment Analysis

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Overview

Assessment Area

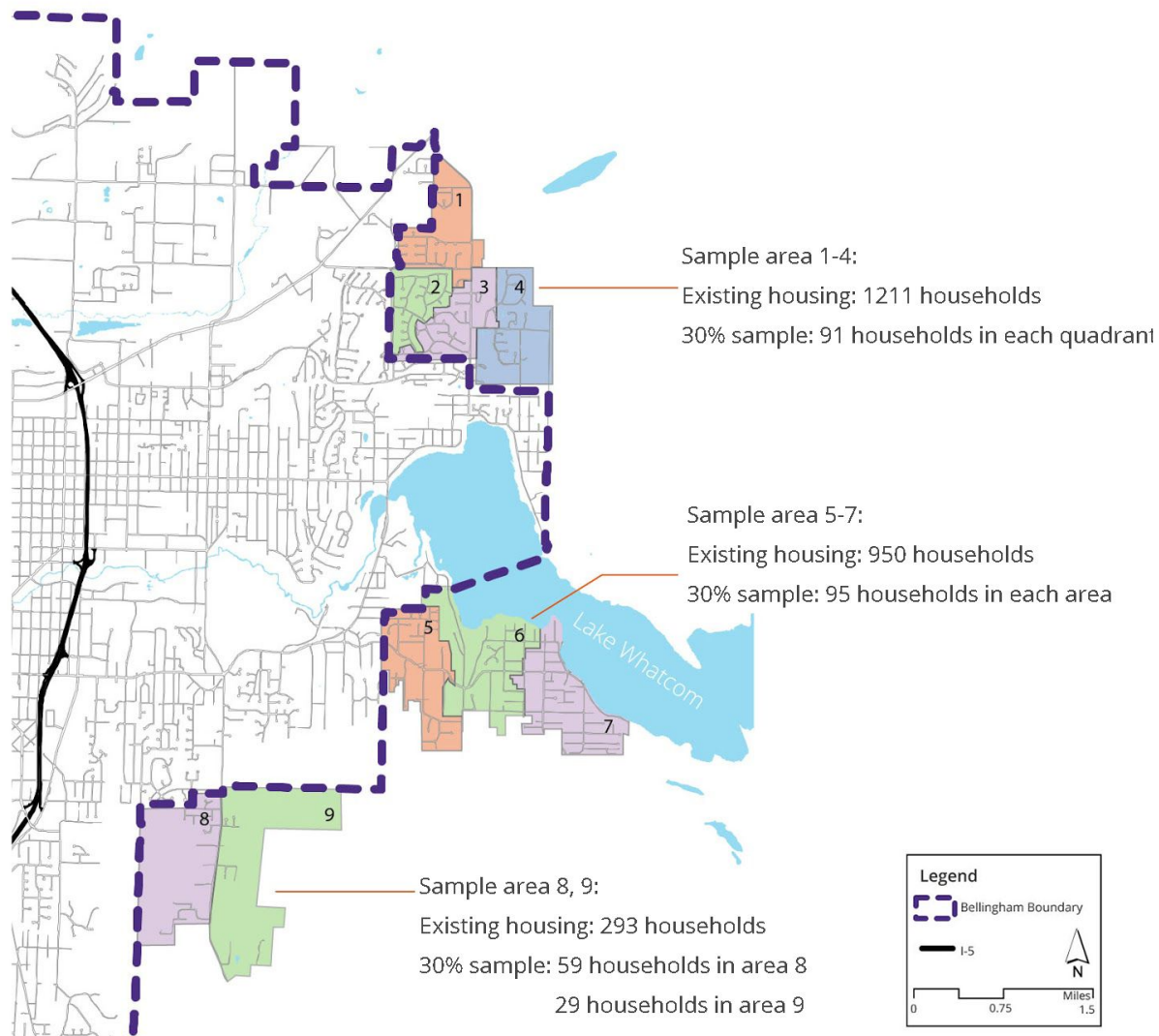


Figure 1. Sample area map showing locations and sample sizes

The UW Team, with the assistance of the COB staff developed sample areas in which to implement the community assessment. These sample areas were constructed by dividing each unincorporated urban growth sub-area into sections, for a total of ten assessment areas. Randomized selections of 30% of properties were made for each of the ten assessment areas. Selections in sample areas 1 through 9 became the subject of the community assessment detailed herein.

Assessment Methodology

The community assessment administered May 11th and May 18th, 2019 consisted of 22 questions focused on four principal areas:

- Support for Annexation
Current level of support for annexation among UGA sub-area property owners; considering support from property owners representing 60% of assessed land value as the threshold for annexation petition approval.
- Information Confidence
Determination of whether property owners feel they have enough information to make a decision regarding annexation
- Knowledge and Favorability
Relationship between understanding of annexation and likelihood of support
- Opinion Elasticity
Relationship between likelihood of support for annexation and potential changes to taxes, fees and public services

Data analysis was completed using statistical computing programs of R and Microsoft Excel as well as data visualization programs of ArcGIS and Tableau. Results organized by principal focus area are detailed herein.

Opinions on Annexation

Annexation support was evaluated primarily through Assessment Question 20, which asked “At this point in time, do you favor or oppose annexation of your area into Bellingham?” with binary responses of “favor” or “oppose”; and Question 7, which asked “How likely are you to approve of annexation into Bellingham?” with responses ranging from “very unlikely” to “very likely”. Outcomes of analysis in combination and by assessment area are presented in this section.

Analysis Map: Opinions on Annexation (Favor/Oppose)

The map below shows the existing support for annexation in each assessment area based upon the results of Assessment Question 20: "At this point in time, do you favor or oppose annexation of your area into Bellingham?"

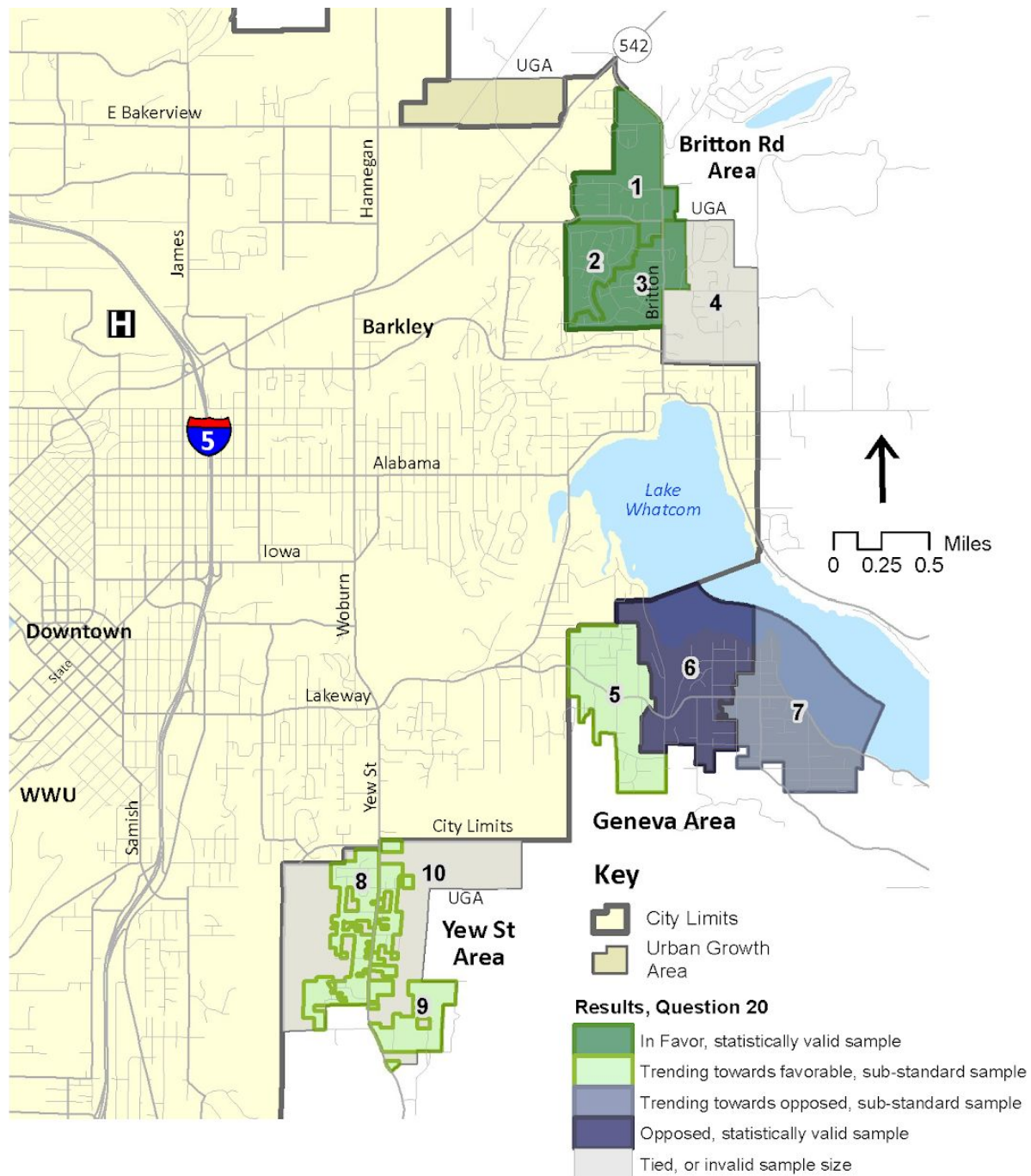


Figure 2. Assessment Question 20: Current support for annexation (favor/oppose)

Summary

The results from the assessment yield five conditions: those that were in favor and provided a statistically valid sample at either the 85% or 95% confidence level, those that trended toward favorable but lacked a sufficient sample size to make a conclusion at useful confidence level, those that trended towards opposed but lacked a sufficient sample size, those that were opposed and had a statistically valid sample, and those that either had an insufficient sample size or tied. These results exclude respondents that declined to answer the question, which comprised from 10-25% of total responses from each assessment area.

Of respondents that identified an opinion regarding annexation, the map shows that assessment areas 1 and 2 are generally in favor at the 85% confidence level, meaning the confidence interval for approval is above 50% with 85% confidence. Assessment area 3 is in favor at a 95% confidence level. Assessment area 4 provided tied results so it is impossible to conclude with any level of certainty regarding support for annexation. Assessment areas 5, 8, and 9 trended in favor; however, the sample size is not large enough to make a conclusive statement in support. Assessment area 7 trended opposed; however, the sample size is not large enough to be conclusive. Lastly, Assessment area 6 is opposed at the 95% confidence level. Assessment area 10 was not surveyed. Due to the exclusion of respondents that declined to answer, the threshold was set at 50% to indicate that there may be enough baseline support in addition to possible additional support for annexation to warrant advancing the process.

Methodology

This map above was derived from the responses from Assessment Question 20. Respondent answers were not weighted due to prior findings that assessed property values for in favor respondents and opposed respondents do not differ significantly. The number of “favor” or “oppose” responses in each assessment areas was compared to the total number of valid responses gathered to determine if the opinion represented more than 50% plus the margin-of-error for the given sample size. Valid samples for conclusive “favor” or “oppose” opinions were determined for areas meeting the 95% confidence interval first, and for the 85% confidence interval second for areas not meeting the 95% criteria. Areas that were inconclusive at 85% were then classified as trending favorable or trending opposed depending on whether the percent in favor was above or below the 50% threshold. These areas were deemed as providing a sub-standard sample due to their inability

to provide a conclusive result at the current sample size. Areas with tied responses or no data were classified as such. These results were then plotted cartographically.

Charts & Tables: Opinions on Annexation (Favor/Oppose)

The below table and figures were developed using responses to Assessment Question 20: "At this point in time, do you favor or oppose annexation of your area into Bellingham?" Responses are color coded as "Favor", "Oppose", or "Did not answer". Green bars show the percentage of respondents in the specific UGA sub-area that answered "Favor." The blue bars show the percentage of the specific UGA sub-area that answered "Oppose." The yellow bars show the percentage of the respondents who did not answer. Response data are grouped by UGA sub-area. The responses are presented as a percentage of the total number of records for Question 20 for each corresponding UGA sub-area. Response percentages are labeled for readability.

Comparative Results (UGA sub-area 11-15)

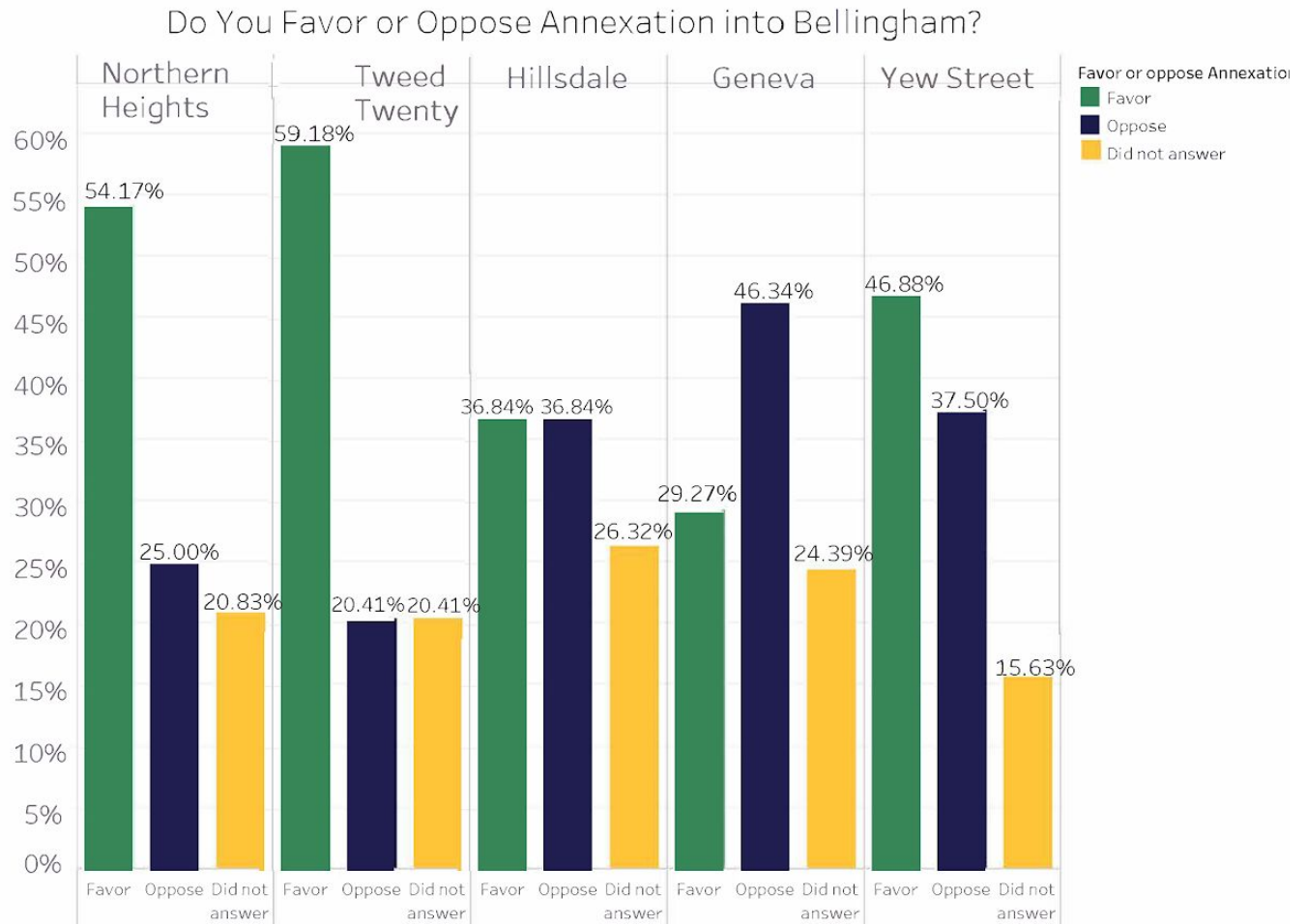


Figure 3. Assessment Question 20: Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

Q20 Favor or Oppose	Northern Heights	Tweed Twenty	Hillsdale	Geneva	Yew Street
Favor	54.17%	59.18%	36.84%	29.27%	46.88%
Oppose	25.00%	20.41%	36.84%	46.34%	37.50%
Did not answer	20.83%	20.41%	26.32%	24.39%	15.63%

Table 1. Assessment Question 20: Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

Summary

The above figure and table provide the breakdown of responses to Question 20 of the Community Assessment. The figure is broken into the five UGA sub-areas looked at for the assessment: Northern Heights (UGA 11), Tweed Twenty (UGA 12), Hillsdale (UGA 13), Geneva (UGA 14), and Yew Street (UGA 15). The important thresholds to consider for each area are greater than 60% “Favor” or greater than 40% “Oppose.” These thresholds align with the level of property owner support needed to advance an annexation petition under the City’s preferred process. When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from the assessment yielded five conditions: those that were in favor and provided a statistically valid sample at either the 85% or 95% confidence level, those that trended toward favorable but lacked a sufficient sample size to make a conclusion at useful confidence level, those that trended towards opposed but lacked a sufficient sample size, those that were opposed and had a statistically valid sample, and those that either had an insufficient sample size or tied.

Northern Heights (UGA 11)

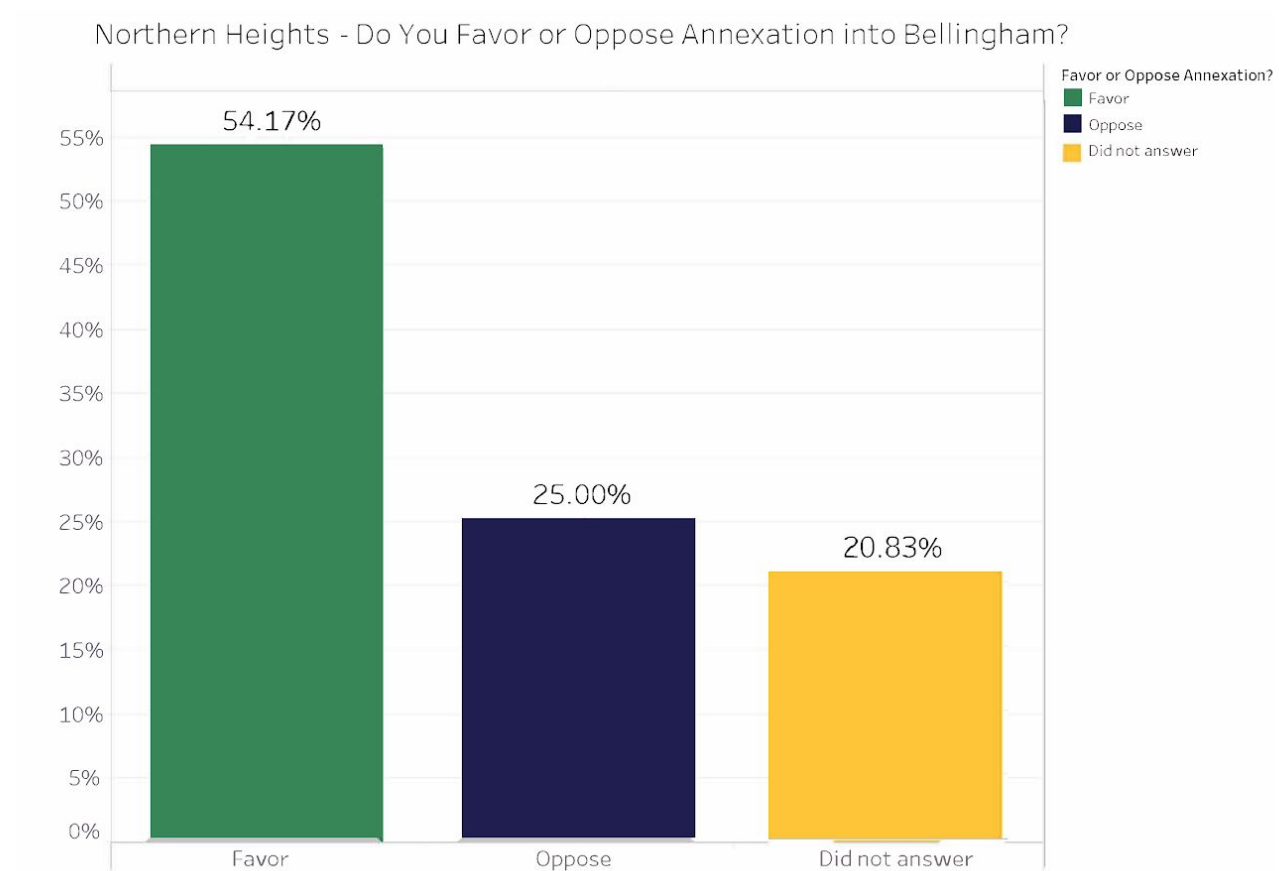


Figure 4. Northern Heights: Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

The above figure represents the Northern Heights UGA sub-area responses to Assessment Question 20. The area sees 54% of respondents in favor of annexation, 25% opposed, and 20% not answering.

When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from Northern Heights yielded 5.9% of the area's property owners with 18 responses, 12 in favor and 6 opposed. The result is inconclusive at the 95% confidence interval; however, the Northern Heights is in favor of annexation with 85% confidence.

Tweed Twenty (UGA 12)

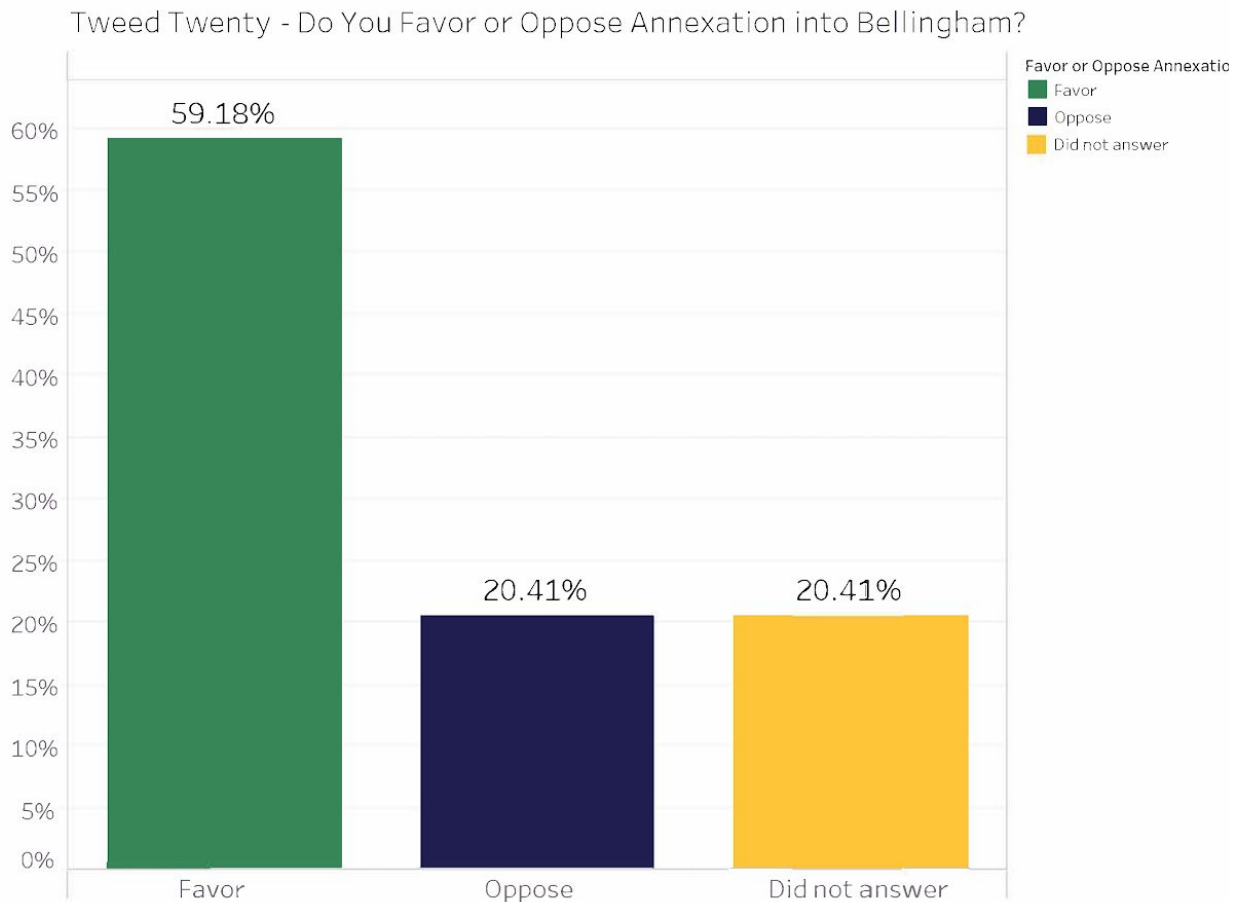


Figure 5. Tweed Twenty: Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

The above figure represents the Tweed Twenty UGAsub-area responses to Assessment Question 20. Tweed Twenty sees 59% of respondents in favor of annexation, 20% opposed, and 20% not answering.

Tweed Twenty is comprised of two study areas, Area 2 and Area 3. When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from the assessment for Area 2 yielded 6.6% of the area's property owners with 20 responses, 14 in favor and 6 opposed. The result is inconclusive at the 95% confidence interval; however, the area is in favor of annexation with 85% confidence. When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from the assessment for Area 3 yielded 6.3% of the area's property owners with 19 responses, 15 in favor and 4 opposed. The result is conclusive in general favor of annexation with 95% confidence.

Hillsdale (UGA 13)

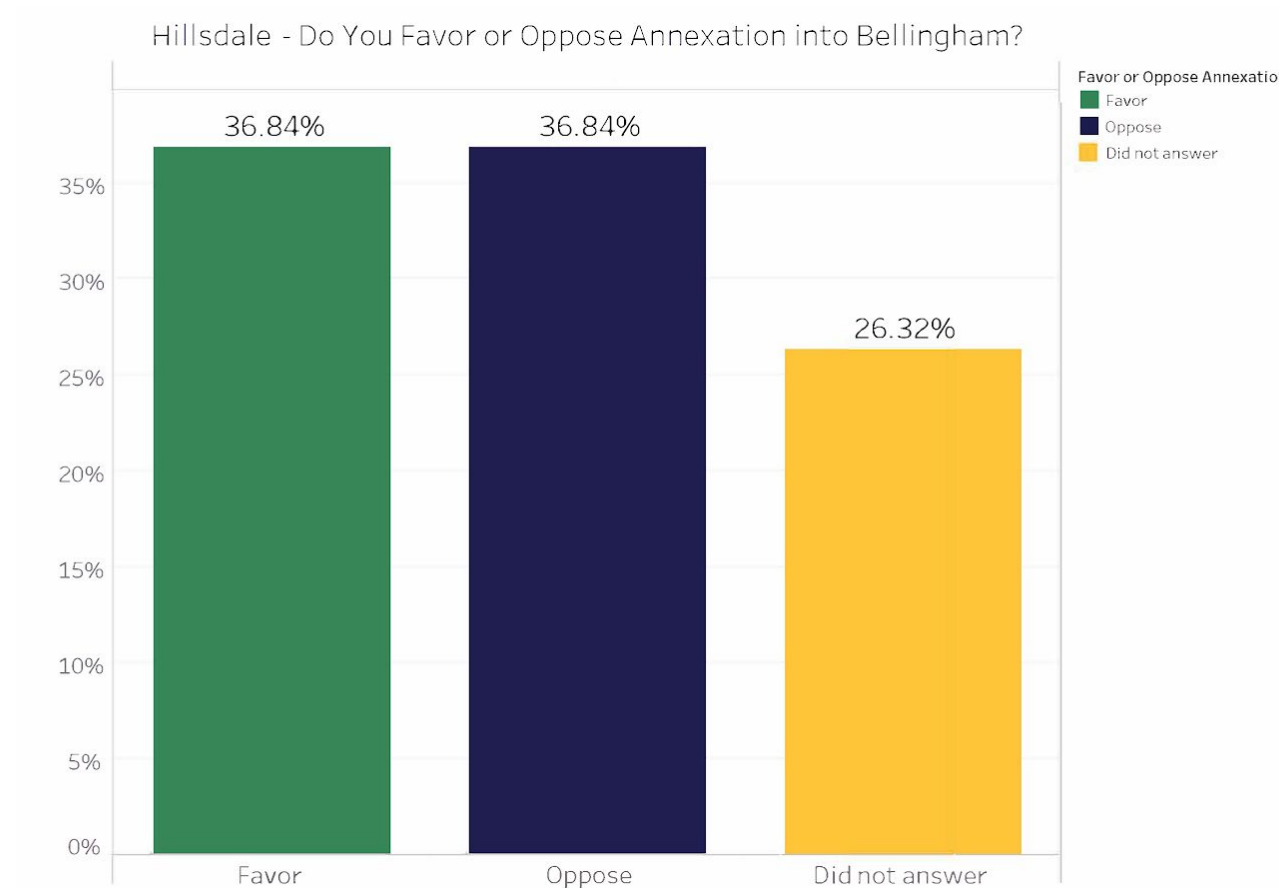


Figure 6. Hillsdale: Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

The above figure represents the Hillsdale UGA sub-area responses to Assessment Question 20. Hillsdale sees 37% of respondents in favor of annexation, 37% opposed, and 26% not answering.

When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from Hillsdale yielded 4.6% of the area's property owners with 14 responses, 7 in favor and 7 opposed. The result for Hillsdale is inconclusive because it is tied.

Geneva (UGA 14)

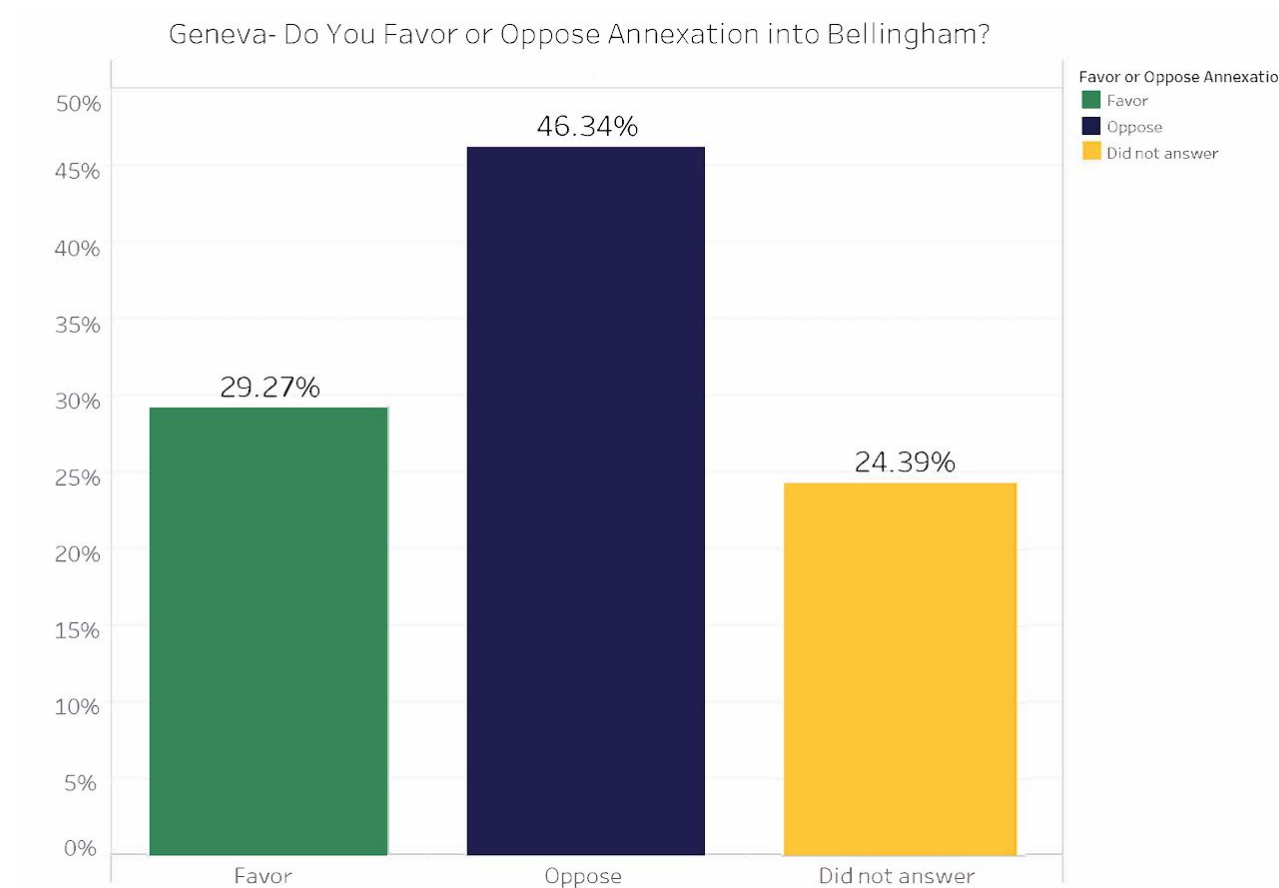


Figure 7. Geneva- Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

The above figure represents the Geneva UGA sub-area. Geneva sees 29% of respondents in favor of annexation, 46% opposed, and 24% not answering.

When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from Geneva yielded 6.5% of the area's property owners with 62 responses, 24 in favor and 38 opposed. The result is inconclusive at the 95% confidence interval. However, the result is conclusive with 85% confidence that Geneva is generally opposed to annexation.

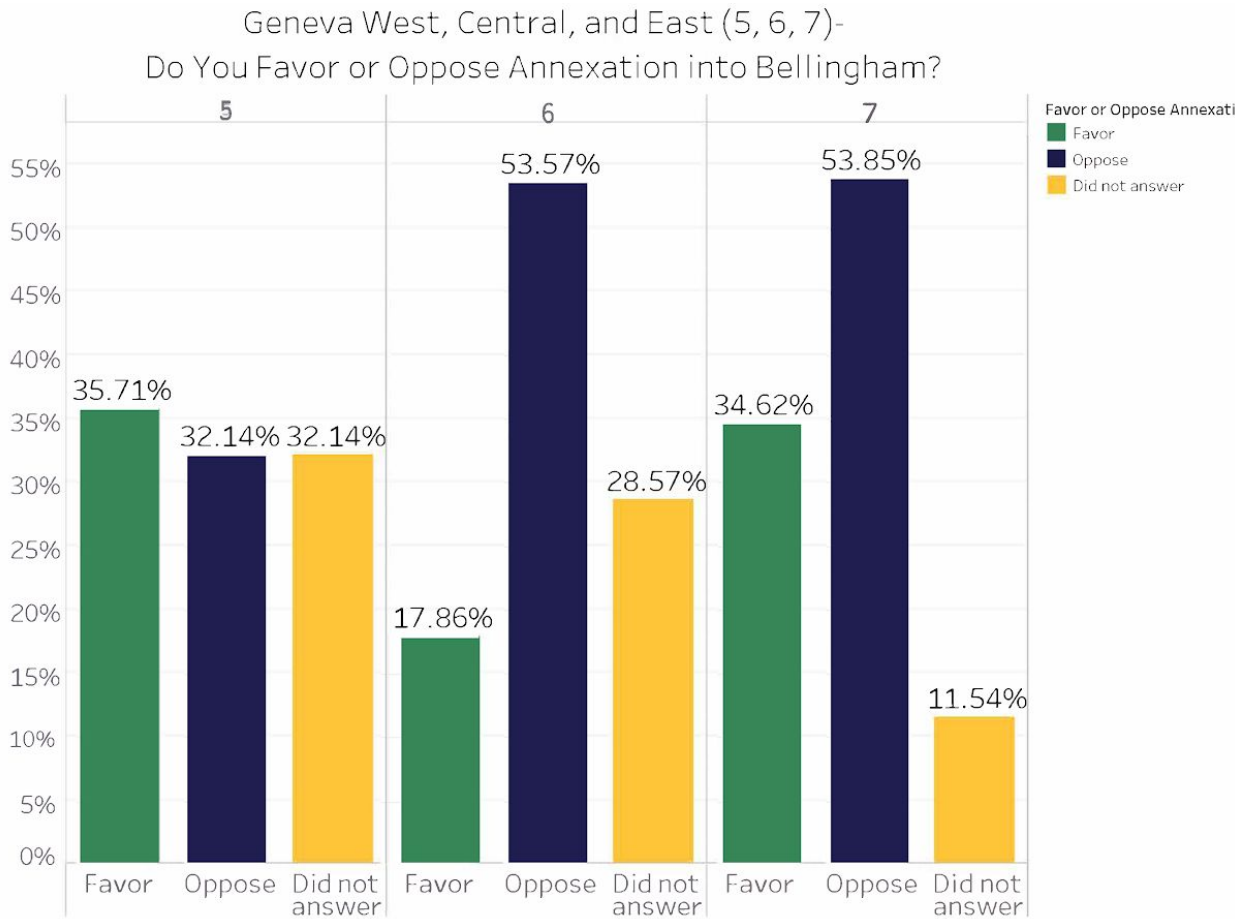


Figure 8. Geneva West, Central, and East (5, 6, 7): Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

The above figure represents the three study areas of the Geneva UGA sub-area to allow for further analysis. Geneva West, study area 5, sees 36% of respondents in favor of annexation, 32% opposed, and 32% not answering. Geneva Central, study area 6, sees 18% of respondents in favor of annexation, 54% opposed, and 29% not answering. Geneva East, study area 7, sees 35% of respondents in favor of annexation, 54% opposed, and 12% not answering.

Geneva is comprised of three study areas, Area 5, Area 6, and Area 7. When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from the assessment for Area 5 yielded 6.0% of the area's property owners with 19 responses, 10 in favor and 9 opposed. The result is inconclusive at the 95% and 85% confidence intervals. When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from the assessment for Area 6 yielded 6.3% of the area's sample with 20 responses, 5 in favor and 15 opposed. The Area 6 result is conclusive at the 95% in opposition to annexation. When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from the assessment for Area 7 yielded 7.3% of the area's property owners with 23 responses, 9 in favor

and 14 opposed. The Area 7 result is inconclusive at both the 95% and 85% confidence intervals.

North Yew Street Area (UGA 15): Favor/Oppose

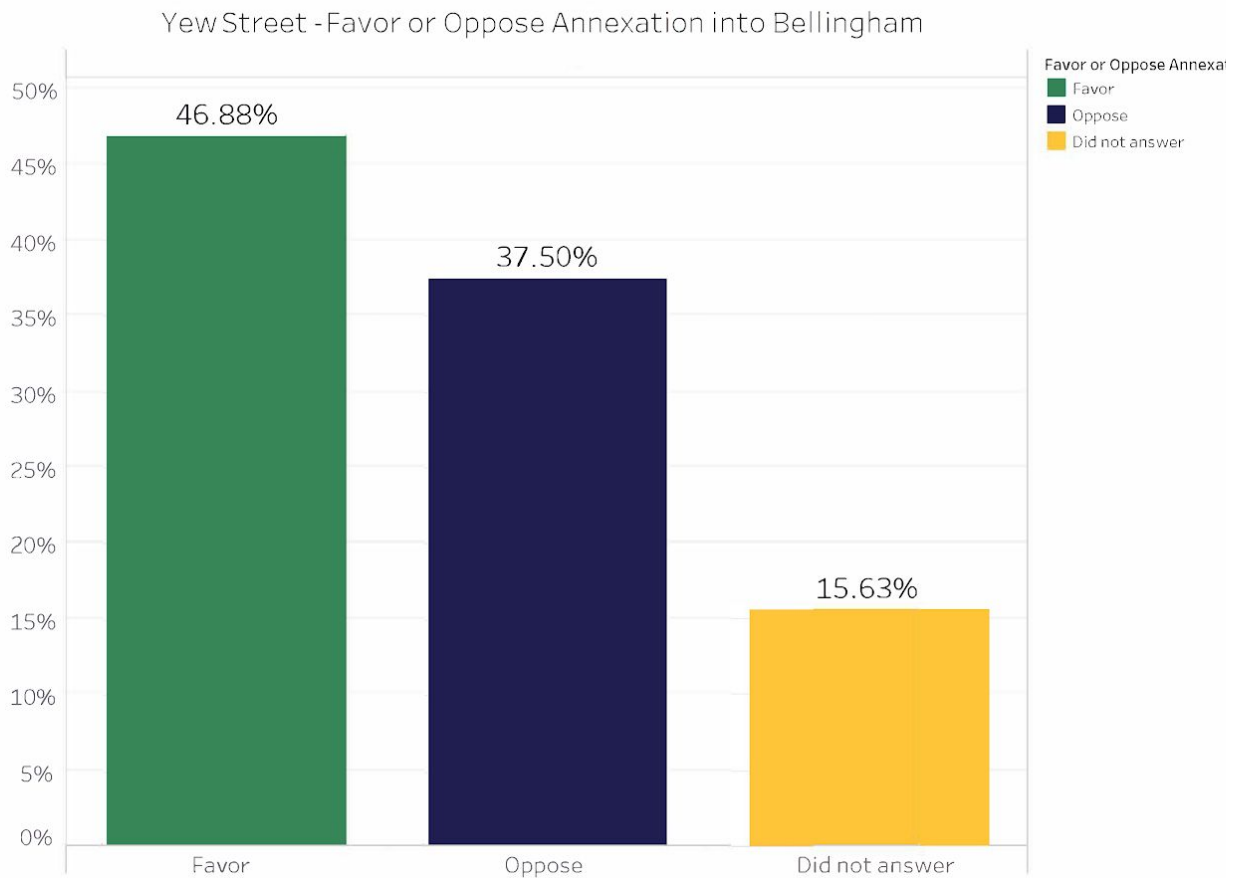


Figure 9. Yew Street: Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

The above figure represents the Yew Street UGA sub-area. Overall, Yew Street sees 47% of respondents in favor of annexation, 38% opposed, and 16% not answering.

When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from Yew Street yielded 9.6% of the area's property owners with 28 responses, 16 in favor and 12 opposed. The result for these areas is inconclusive at the 95% and 85% confidence intervals.

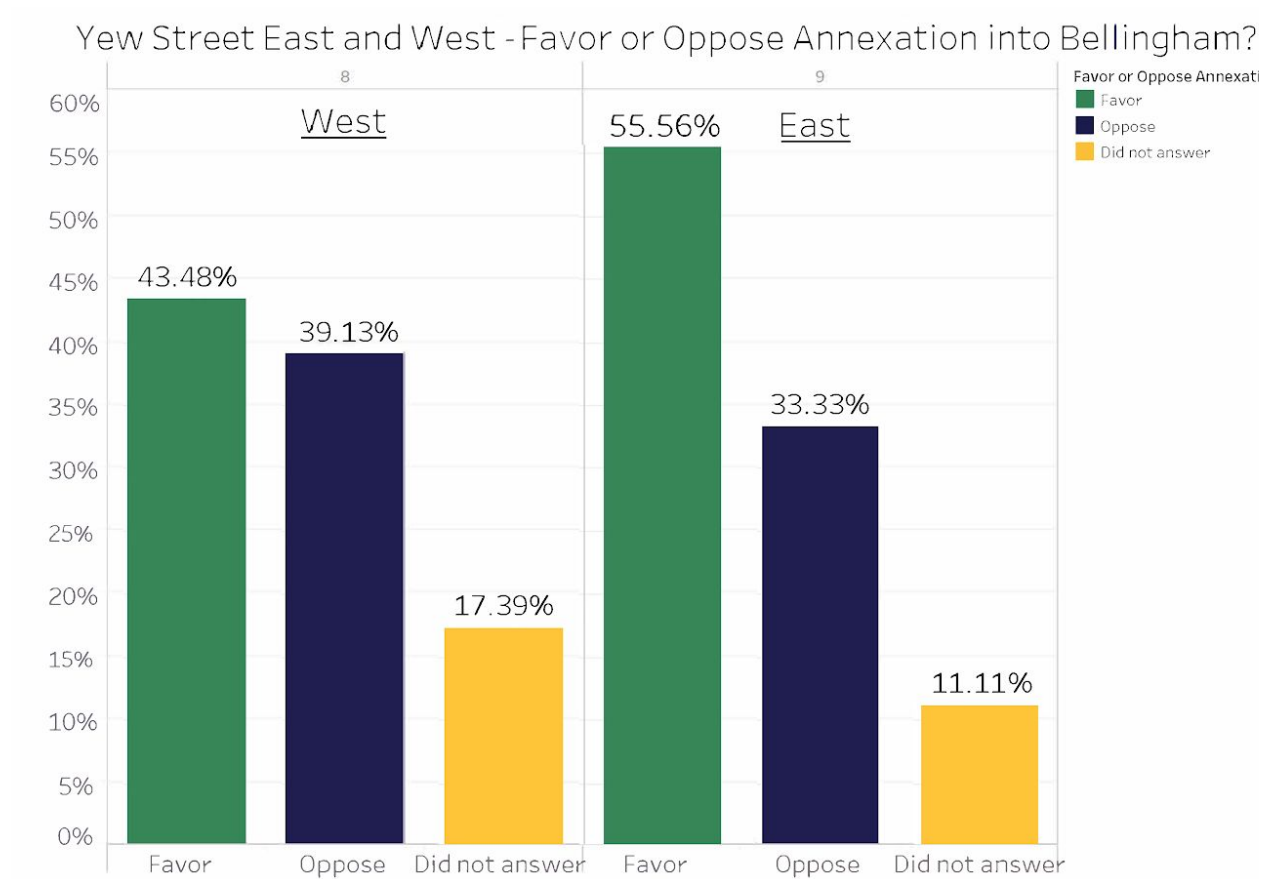


Figure 10. Yew Street West (8) and East (9): Do You Favor or oppose annexation into Bellingham?

The above figure represents the two study areas of the Yew Street UGA sub-area to allow for further analysis. Yew Street West, study area 8, sees 43% of respondents in favor of annexation, 39% opposed, and 17% not answering. Yew Street East, study area 9, sees 56% of respondents in favor of annexation, 33% opposed, and 11% not answering.

Yew Street is comprised of two study areas, Area 8 and Area 9. When excluding respondents who did not answer, the results from the assessment for Area 8 yielded 9.6% of the area's sample with 19 responses, 10 in favor and 9 opposed. The result is inconclusive at the 95% and 85% confidence intervals. When excluding the "Did not answer" responses, the results from the assessment for Area 9 yielded 9.5% of the area's sample with 9 responses, 6 in favor and 3 opposed. The result is inconclusive at the 95% and 85% confidence intervals.

Opinions on Annexation by Average Assessed Home Value

Assessment responses were geocoded to align with City of Bellingham Geographic Information System (GIS) information that contained Whatcom County Assessor data regarding the assessed values of parcels within the assessment areas. Those parcels were isolated and grouped by assessment area and response to Assessment Question 20. The average of the total assessed value for each parcel grouping was computed along with the standard deviation. These results were then plotted as a range of values centered upon the average assessed value with a range equal to one standard deviation in both the positive and negative direction.

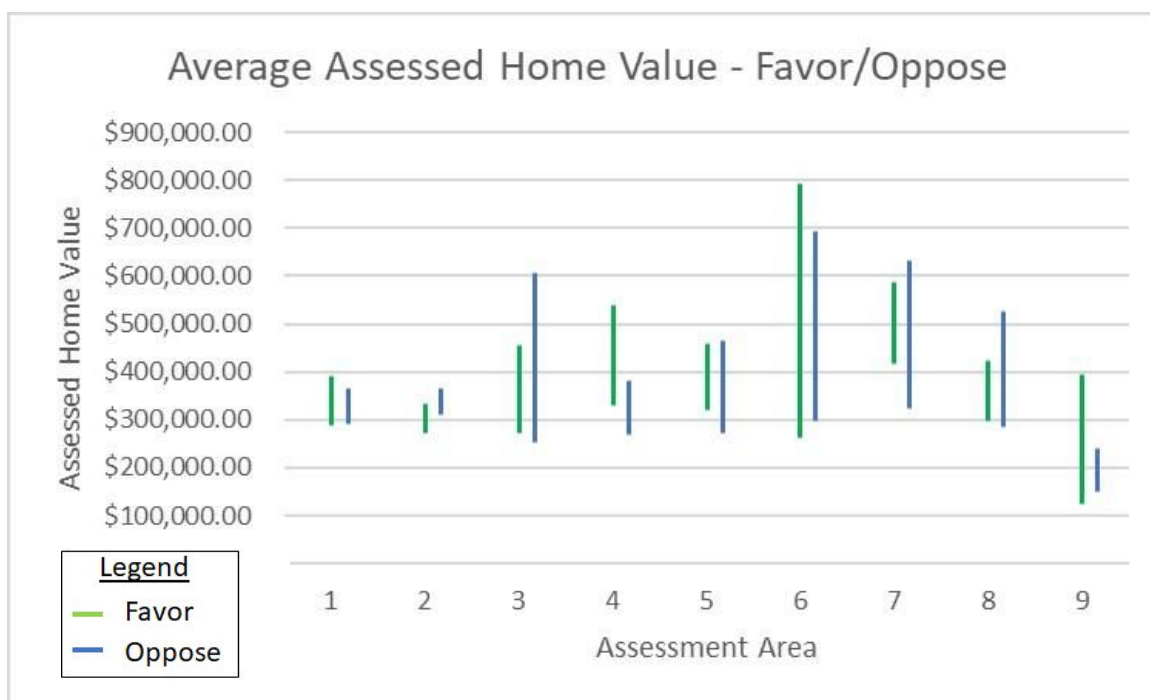


Figure 11. Average assessed home value of parcels that favored or opposed annexation.

The above figure compares the average assessed home value of parcels that responded as favoring or opposing annexation at this point in time per Question 20 of the community assessment. The lines represent these averages plus one standard deviation in either direction of the average values. The green lines show the range for those that favored annexation and the blue lines show the range for those that opposed annexation. The graph shows that, in general, average assessed home values for both favor and oppose votes fall within one standard deviation of one another. Therefore, for the purposes of further analysis, we can reasonably assume that there is no significant difference between the home values of those that oppose annexation and those that favor annexation. Since annexation is based upon the total assessed value of in favor voters relative to the overall

assessed values of the voting area and there is little reason to believe that assessed value plays a significant role determining one's opinion on annexation, we will assume in our subsequent analysis that the votes of respondents in favor have equal weight to the votes of respondents in opposition.

Map: Likelihood to Approve Annexation

The map below shows the percentage of respondents likely to support annexation in each assessment area based upon the results of Assessment Question 7. Question 7 asked respondents "At this time, how likely are you to approve of annexation" and gave a range of responses ranging from "very likely" to "very unlikely". Due to the relatively small number of respondents for each question option, results of the map provide an indication of confident support for annexation though data are not statistically conclusive. The maps show that the baseline support for annexation is stronger in the northern assessment areas, whereas support in Geneva is lacking.

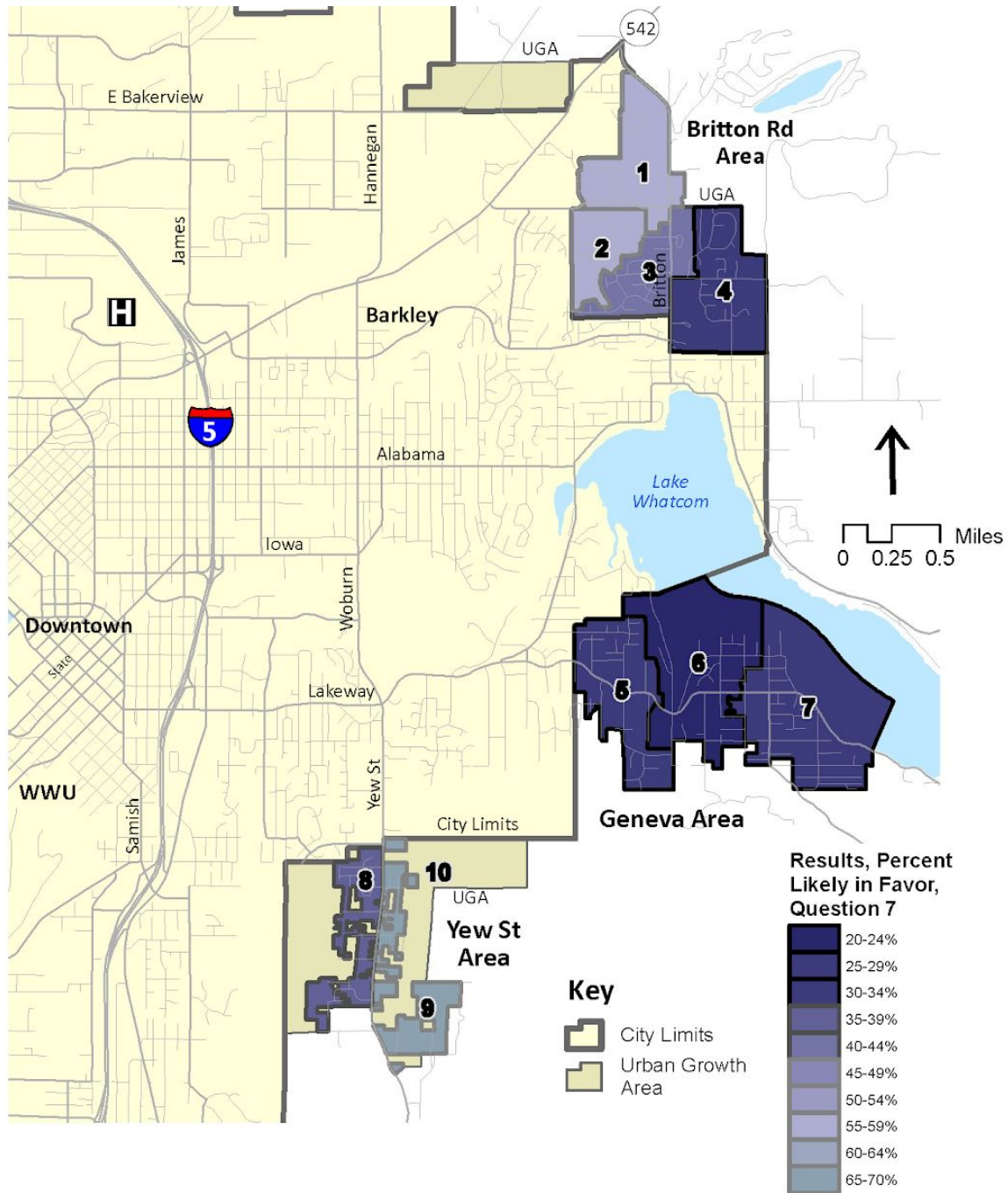


Figure 12. Assessment Question 7: Likelihood to support annexation

The map above was derived from the responses from Assessment Question 7. Respondents that answered "very likely" or "somewhat likely" were coded as in favor. The sum of those responses was then divided by the total number or responses in the assessment area to generate the percentage in favor at this time. These results were then plotted cartographically.

Information Confidence

Information confidence is defined for the purposes of this study as whether property owners feel they have enough information to make a decision regarding annexation. The level of information confidence is based on analysis of responses to Assessment Question 5: “How well do you understand the annexation process?”, and Question 6: “Do you feel like you have enough information to make a decision on annexation?” detailed below.

Comparative UGA Analysis: Annexation Process Understanding

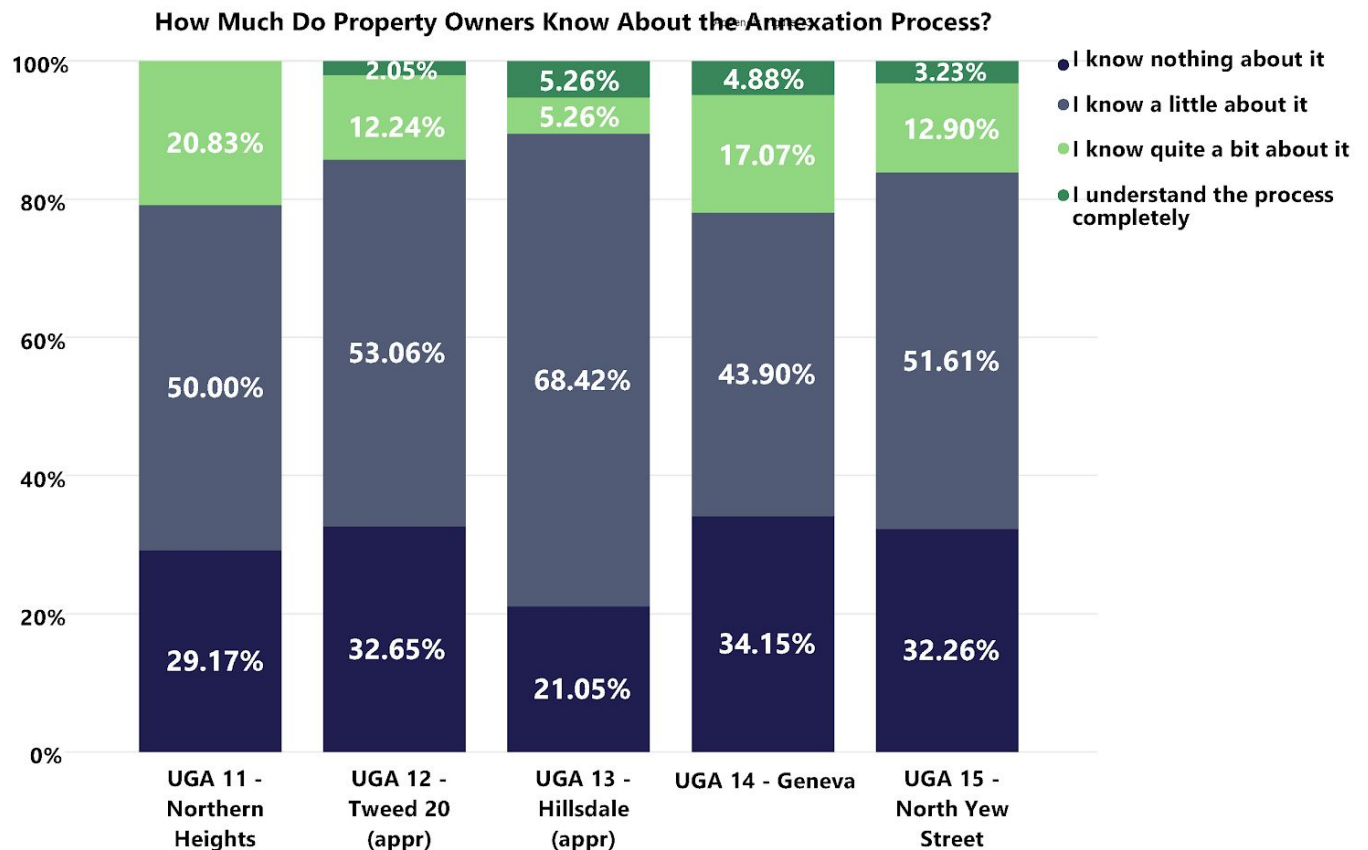


Figure 13. Assessment Question 5: How Much Do Property Owners Know About the Annexation Process?

Summary

The figure above displays respondents' confidence in their knowledge about the annexation process as indicated by their responses to Question 5 in the assessment: "How well do you understand the annexation process?" This figure shows that, in all urban growth areas of interest, the majority of respondents only know a little about the annexation process or know nothing about annexation.

One observation about the limitation of this question was variation in respondents' interpretation of the question. Field administrators of the Assessment observed that respondents sometimes answered the question in terms of their perceptions about the outcomes of annexation instead of their understanding of the process of annexation.

Methodology

The figure represents all responses from the Community Assessment. The responses are grouped and displayed as percentages under one of the four responses to Question 5: "I know nothing about it", "I know a little about it", "I know quite a bit about it", and "I understand the process completely". The responses are presented as a percentage of the total number of records within each respective UGA sub-area for Question 5. Response percentages are labeled for readability.

Comparative UGA Analysis: Information Sufficiency

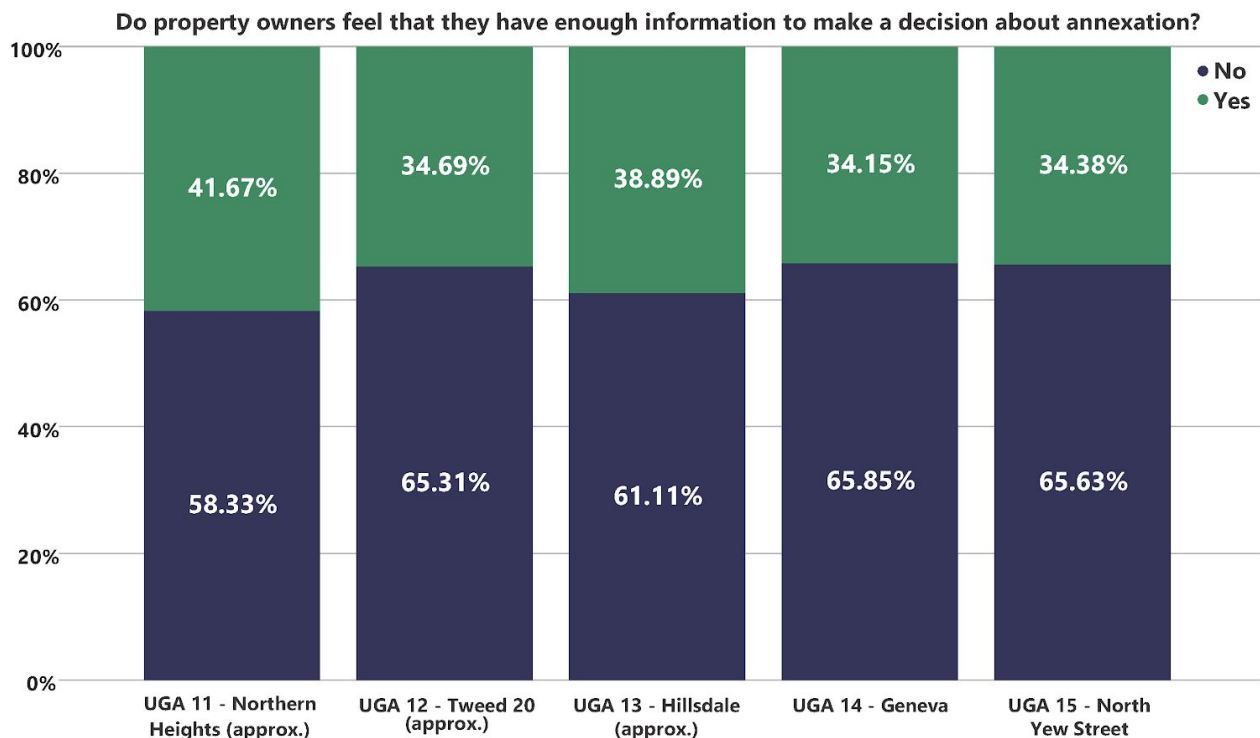


Figure 14. Question 6: Do Property Owners Feel That They Have Enough Information to Make a Decision?

Summary

The figure above displays respondents' answers to Question 6 in the assessment: "Do you feel like you have enough information to make a decision on annexation?" This figure indicates respondents' general confidence in the quantity and quality of information that they have regarding current conditions, the annexation process, and the outcomes of annexation. The assessment results indicate that a majority of respondents in all five areas of interest do not feel that they have enough information to make a decision on annexation.

Methodology

The figure represents all responses from the Community Assessment. The responses are grouped and displayed as percentages under one of the two response options to Question 6. The responses are presented as a percentage of

the total number of records within each respective UGA sub-area for Question 6. Response percentages are labeled for readability.

Combined UGA Analysis: Understanding & Sufficiency

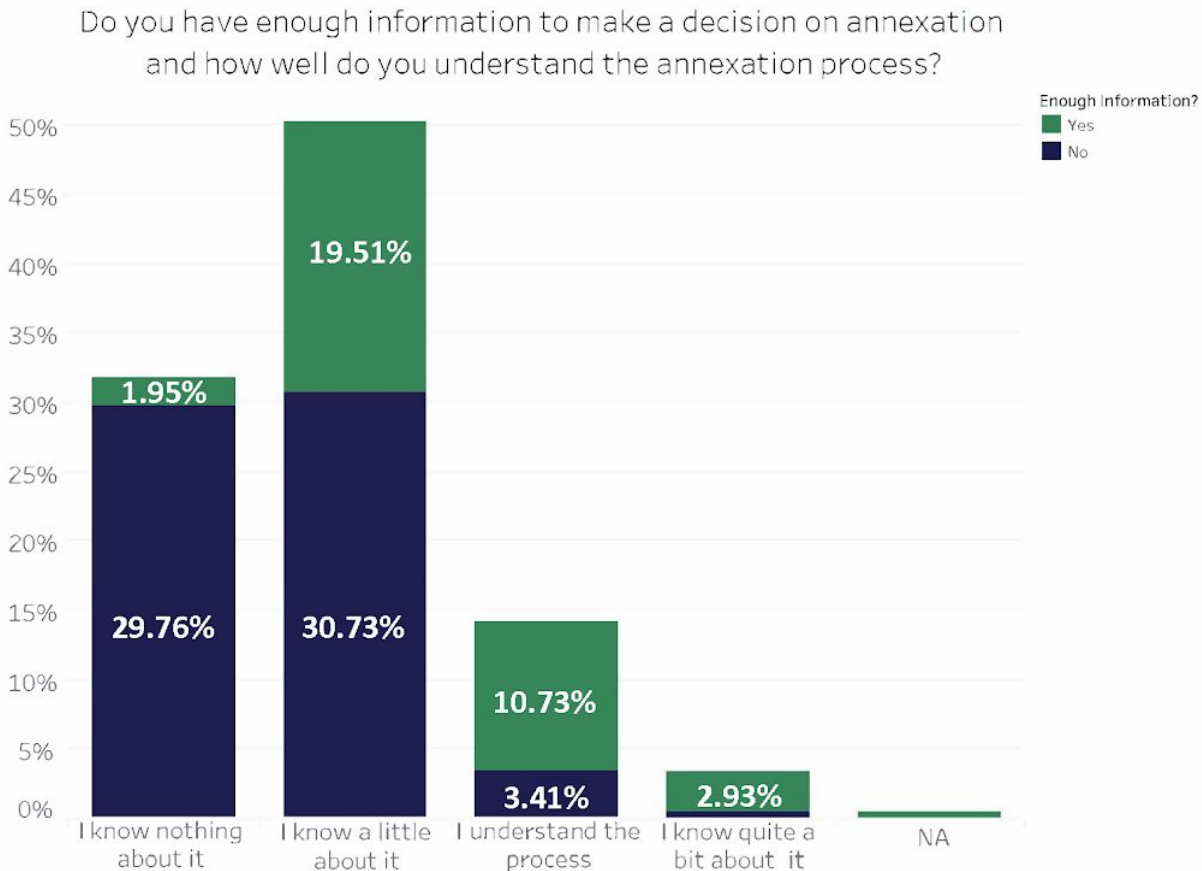


Figure 15. Questions 5 & 6: Do you have enough information to make a decision on annexation and how well do you understand the annexation process?

Summary

The above figure gives the combined responses for Questions 5 and 6 of the Community Assessment: 5. “How well do you understand the annexation process?” and 6. “Do you feel like you have enough information to make a decision on annexation?” The figure represents all responses from the Community Assessment. The green bars show the percentage of respondents that answered “Yes” to Question 6. The figure shows a few important things. First, it indicates the majority of respondents, over 60%, do not feel like they have enough information to make a decision regarding annexation. Second, it shows that around 80% of respondents report to knowing only a little or nothing about annexation. Third, when

respondents report knowing nothing about annexation, they are very unlikely to feel like they are able to make a decision regarding annexation; whereas respondents reporting they know a little about it results in a substantial increase in the confidence to make a decision.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Assessment Questions 5 and 6. The figure represents all responses from the Community Assessment. The green bars show the percentage of respondents that answered “Yes” to Question 6. The blue bars show the percentage that answered “No” to Question 6. The responses for Question 6 are grouped and displayed as percentages under one of the four responses to Question 5: “I know nothing about it”, “I know a little about it”, “I know quite a bit about it”, and “I understand the process completely”. The responses are presented as a percentage of the total number of records for Question 6. Response percentages are labeled for readability.

Knowledge and Favorability

This section evaluates the relationship between likelihood of support for annexation and understanding of the annexation process and potential outcomes among UGA sub-area property owners. This relationship is assessed through evaluation of responses to Question 7: “How likely are you to approve of annexation into Bellingham?” relative to responses to Question 6: “Do you feel that you have enough information to make a decision on annexation?”; and Question 6 relative to individual and combined responses to Questions 13 and 18, which gauge respondent likelihood to approve of annexation if taxes and utility fees slightly decrease (less than 20%) and public service delivery (police, fire, parks) slightly improves. This tax, utility fee, and public service scenario was identified through the UW Team research as the most likely outcome of annexation for property owners currently receiving Bellingham water and sewer service across UGA sub-areas. Combined and individual UGA sub-area results are presented below.

Combined UGA Analysis: Information Confidence & Annexation Support

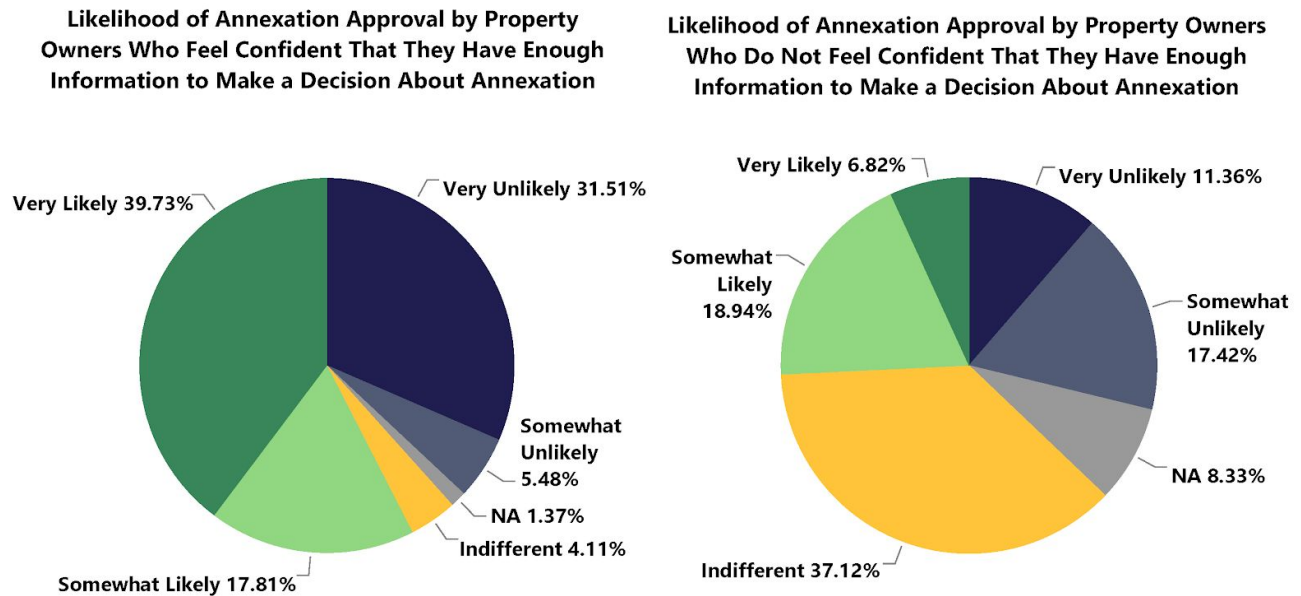


Figure 16. Questions 6 & 7: Comparative likelihood of annexation approval among respondents indicating high and low information confidence

Summary

This figure displays the likelihood of respondents approving annexation based on their relative confidence that they have enough information to make a decision about annexation (measured by their responses to Question 6: “Do you feel that you have enough information to make a decision on annexation?”). This figure displays that, in general, an increase in respondents' confidence about their information is associated with an increase in likelihood of approval of annexation.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Question 7 of the Community Assessment. Sample size for those confident that they have enough information is 73. Sample size for those not confident that they have enough information is 132.

Comparative UGA Analysis: Information Confidence & Annexation Support

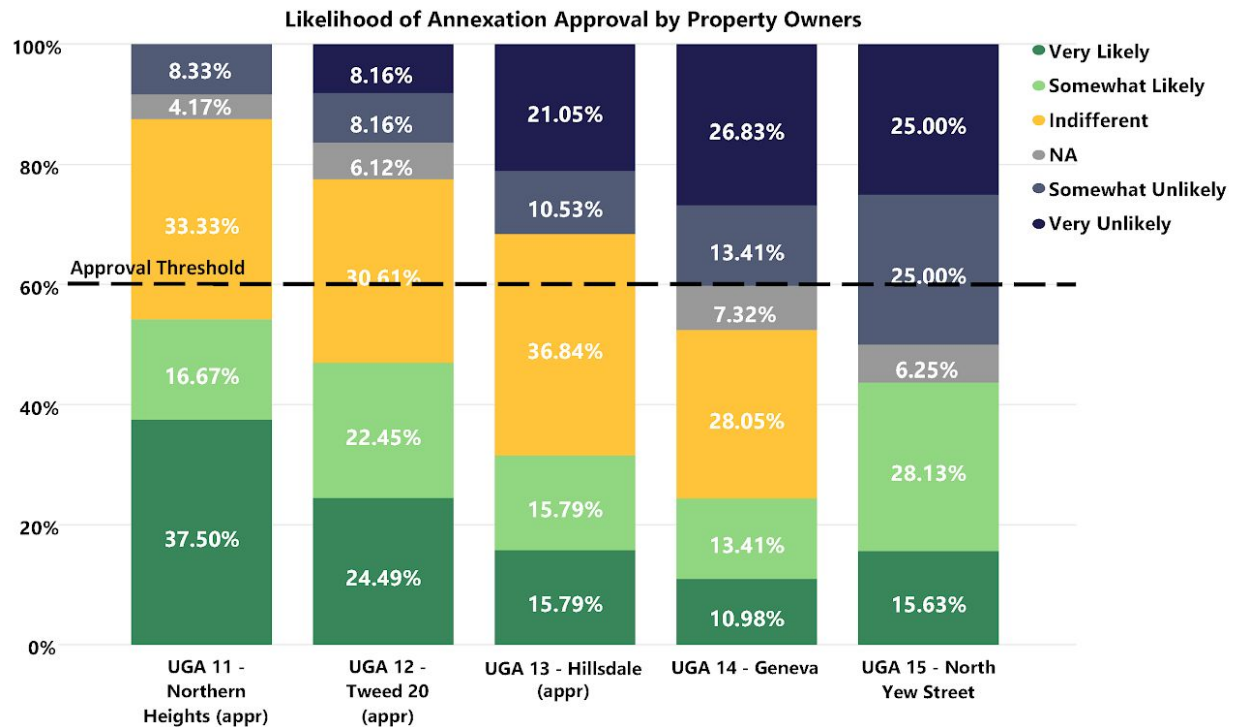


Figure 17. Question 7: How Likely are Respondents to Approve of Annexation into Bellingham?

Summary

The above figure displays the likelihood of respondents approving annexation across UGA sub-areas. The "annexation threshold" line marks the 60% approval margin necessary to advance an annexation petition. This assumes that property values are roughly equivalent among property owners in each UGA sub-area.

This figure shows that, with the exception of North Yew Street, around 30% of respondents in each urban growth area are indifferent to annexation right now.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Question 7 of the Community Assessment. Sample size varies based upon the respective assessment area. Percentages are relative to each respective urban growth area.

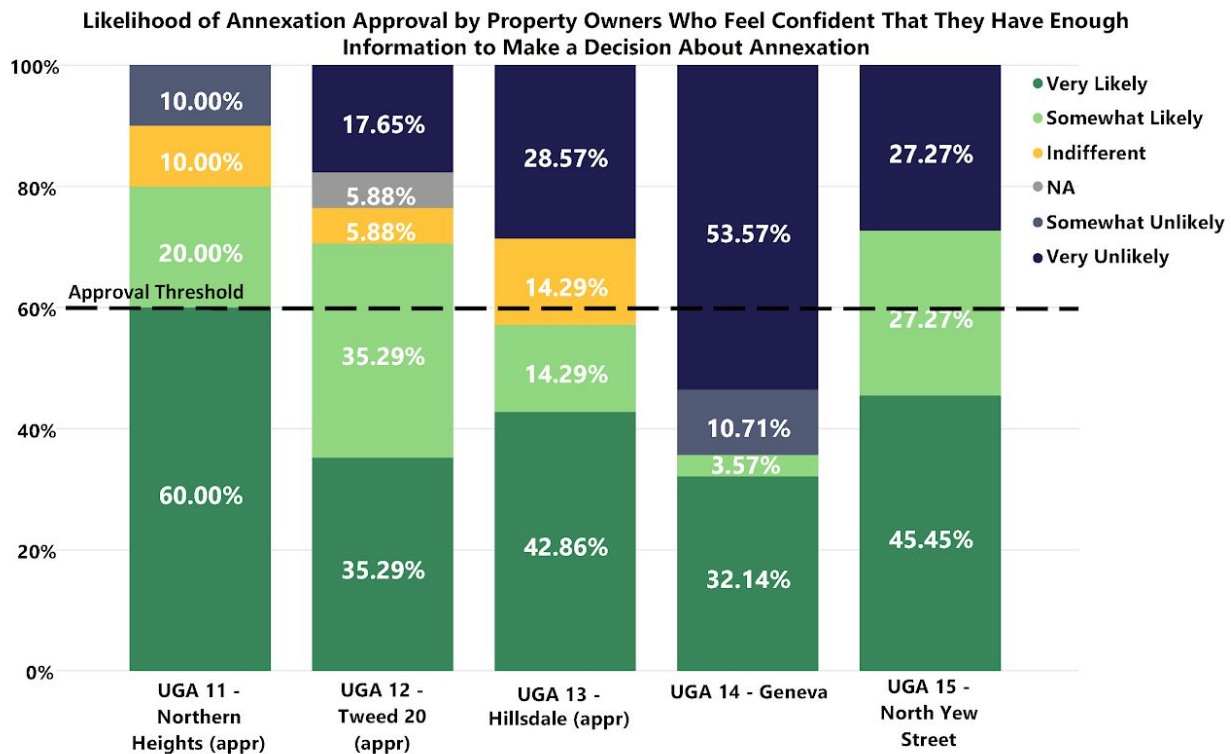


Figure 18. Questions 6 & 7: How Likely Are Respondents to Approve of Annexation into Bellingham if They Are Confident That They Have Enough Information to Make a Decision?

Summary

This figure displays the likelihood of annexation approval for those respondents that feel confident that they have enough information to make a decision at this time. The "annexation threshold" line marks the 60% approval margin needed by an annexation petition. This assumes that property values are roughly equivalent among property owners in each UGA sub-area.

This figure shows that, with the exception of North Yew Street, around 30% of respondents in each urban growth area are indifferent to annexation right now.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Question 7 of the Community Assessment, and only those responses from respondents that also answered "yes" to Question 6 are included. Sample size varies based upon the respective assessment area. Percentages are relative to each respective urban growth area.

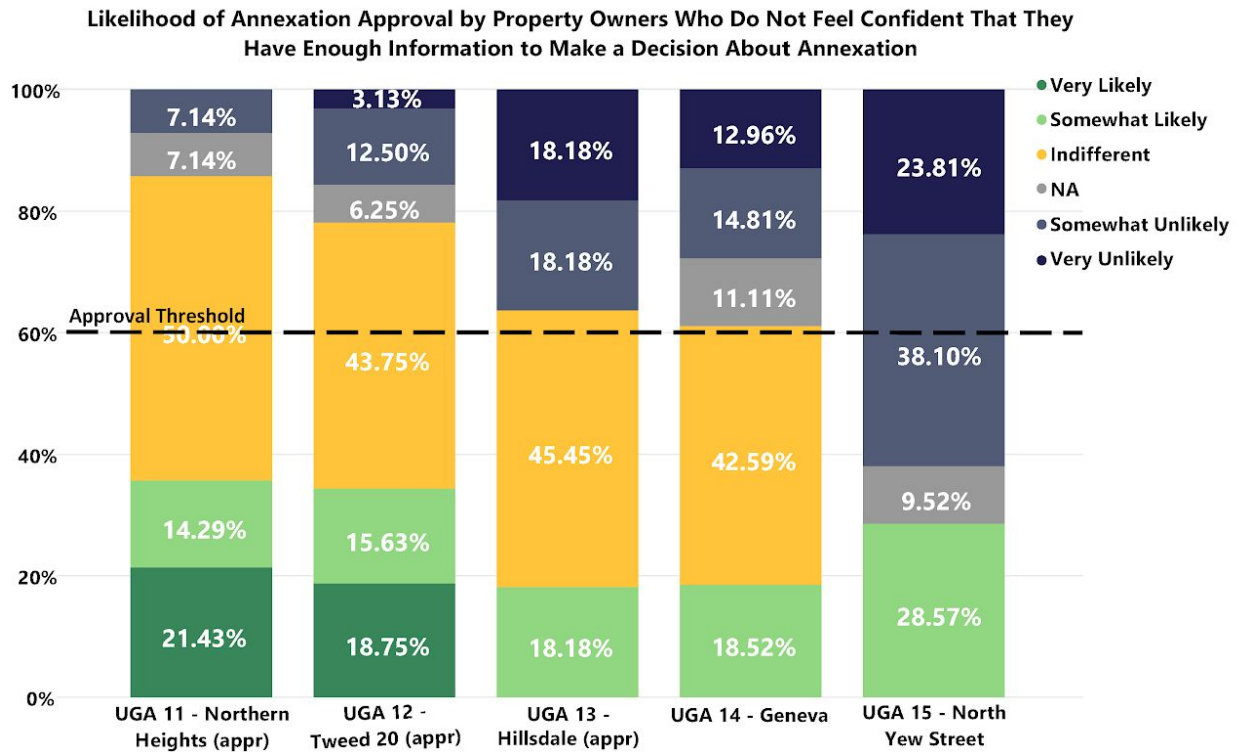


Figure 19. Question 7: How Likely Are Respondents to Approve of Annexation into Bellingham if They Are Not Confident That They Have Enough Information to Make a Decision?

Summary

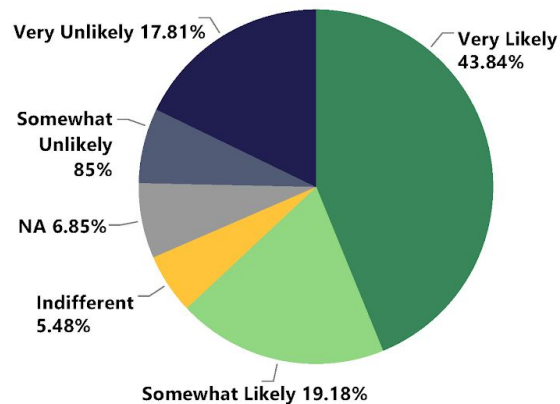
This figure displays the likelihood of annexation approval for those respondents that do not feel confident that they have enough information to make a decision at this time. The "annexation threshold" line marks the 60% approval margin needed by an annexation petition. This assumes that property values are roughly equivalent among property owners in each urban growth area.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Question 7 of the Community Assessment, and only those responses from respondents that also answered "no" to Question 6 are included. Sample size varies based upon the respective assessment area. Percentages are relative to each respective urban growth area.

Combined UGA Analysis: Tax, Fee and Service Changes & Annexation Support

If annexation led to slightly lower annual taxes and fees, how likely are property owners to approve annexation?



If annexation led to slightly improved public services, how likely are property owners to approve annexation?

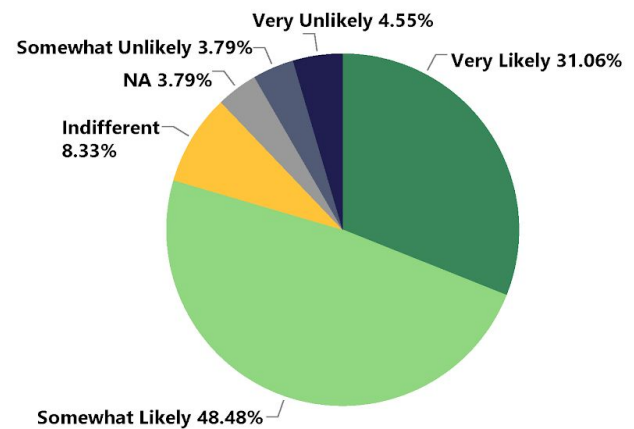


Figure 20. Question 13 and 18 Aggregate Responses: How Likely are Property Owners to Approve of Annexation Given Slightly Lower Annual Taxes & Fees and Slightly Improved Public Services?

Summary

The above figure displays the likelihood of respondents across UGA sub-areas 11-15 approving of annexation given the separate scenarios of slightly lower annual taxes and fees and slightly improved public services upon annexing into the city. In general, respondent likelihood to approve of annexation is reported as higher in the case of slightly improved public services than in the case of slightly reduced taxes and utility fees.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using 205 responses to Questions 13 and 18 of the Community Assessment.

Comparative UGA Analysis: Tax, Fee and Service Changes & Annexation Support

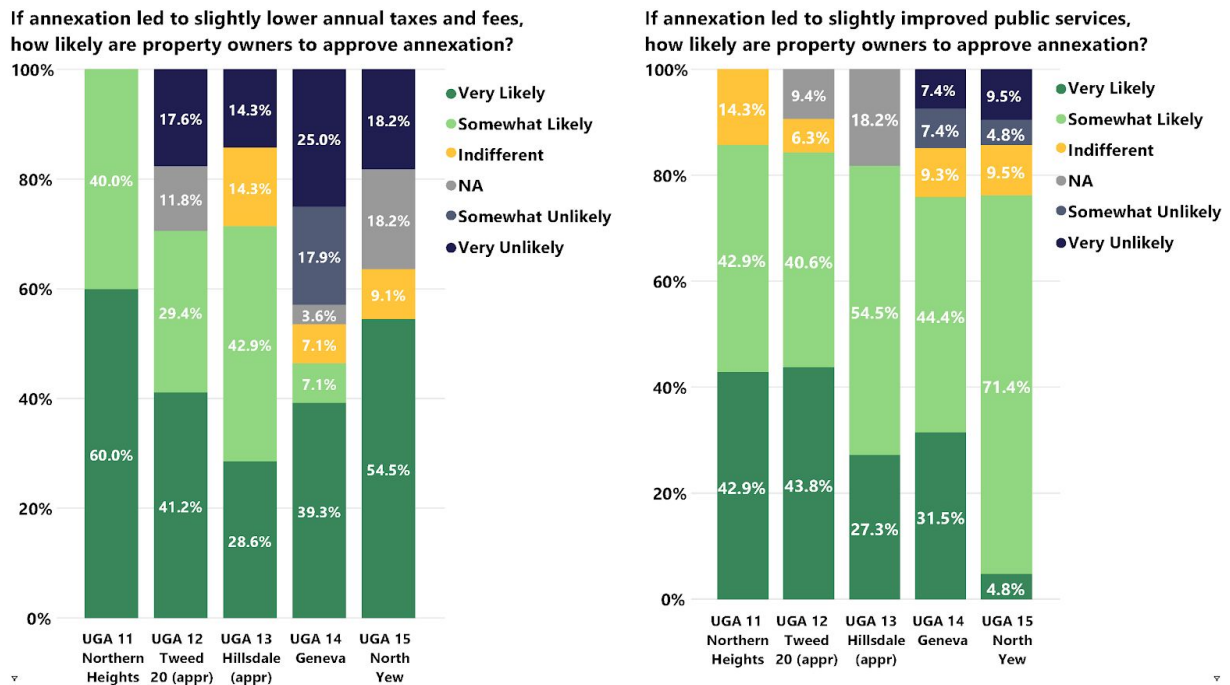


Figure 21. Question 13 and 18 Comparative UGA Responses: How Likely are Property Owners to Approve of Annexation Given Slightly Lower Annual Taxes & Fees and Slightly Improved Public Services?

Summary

The above figure displays the likelihood of individual UGA sub-area respondents approving of annexation measures given the separate scenarios of slightly lower annual taxes and utility fees and slightly improved public services upon annexing into the city. In general and consistent with aggregate data analysis, respondent likelihood to approve of annexation is reported as higher in the case of slightly improved public services than in the case of slightly reduced taxes and utility fees.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Questions 13 and 18 of the Community Assessment. Sample size varies based upon the respective assessment area. Percentages are relative to each respective urban growth area.

Analysis Map: Tax, Fee and Service Changes & Annexation Support

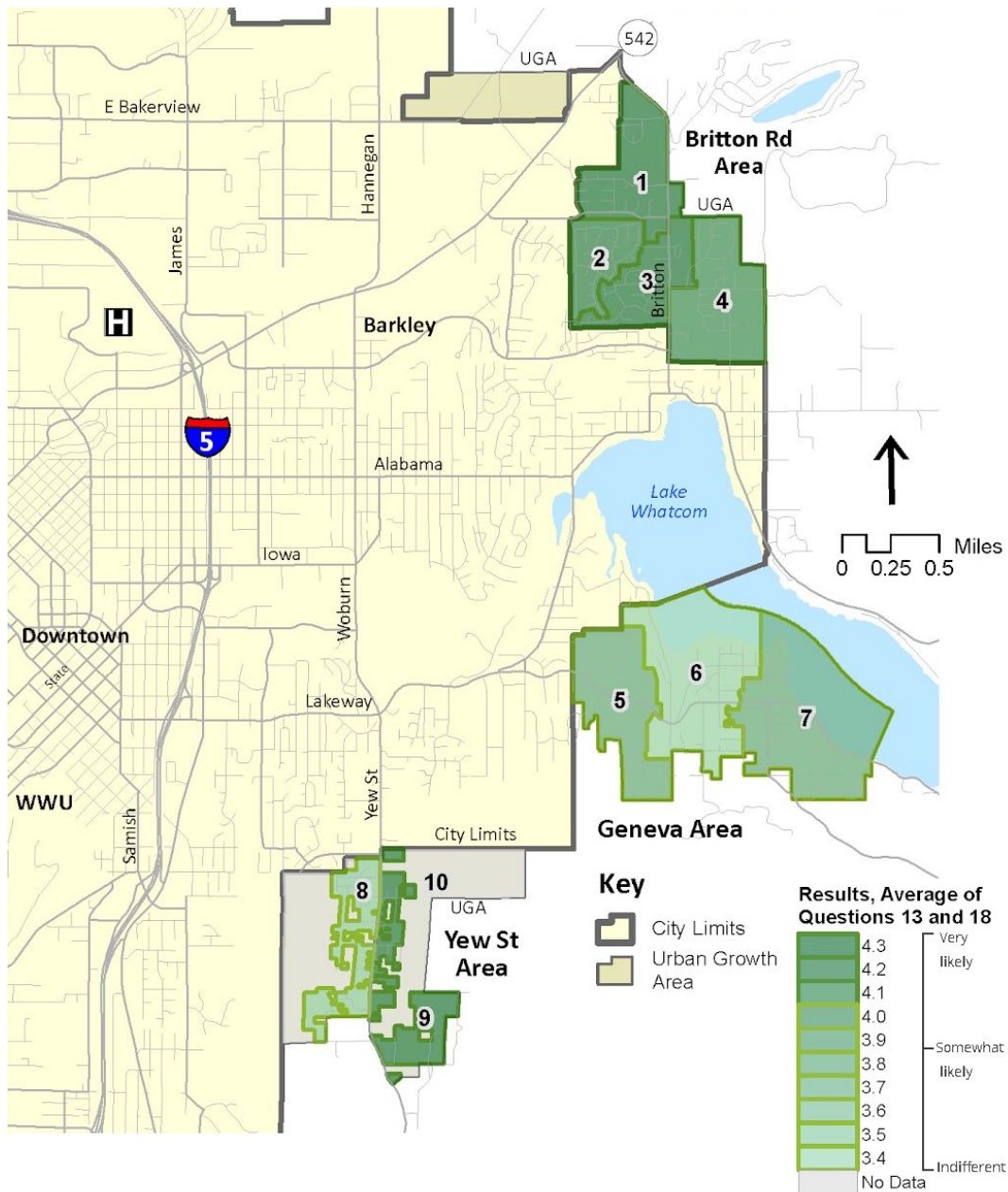


Figure 22. Heat map of average response values to Questions 13 and 18.

Summary

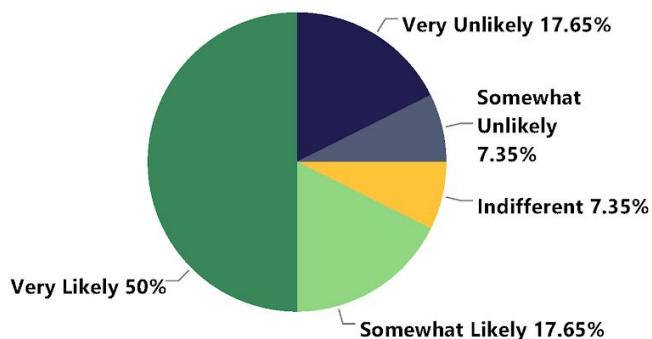
The map below shows the average likelihood of supporting annexation given the expected outcomes of annexation as they relate to level of service and tax and fee changes. Questions 13 and 18 correspond to likelihood of approving annexation if taxes and fees were to decrease slightly and if level of service was to improve slightly. The results of this map should be viewed as an indicator of sentiment, but due to the small sample size for each response, they cannot be considered statistically valid assessments of opinion. Values below 3 indicate that respondents are unlikely to approve annexation, and values above 3 indicate that respondents are likely to approve annexation. The map shows that within the northern assessment areas, on average, respondents are either “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to approve annexation given the expected outcomes. Conversely, likelihood of approval in the Geneva assessment areas is less likely with average responses between “somewhat likely” and “indifferent.” North Yew Street Area results are inconclusive due to sample size, and interpretation is limited to understanding of respondent feedback

Methodology

The map was derived from the responses to Assessment Questions 13 and 18. Responses were coded 5 for “very likely”, 4 for “somewhat likely”, 3 for “indifferent”, 2 for “somewhat unlikely”, and 1 for “very unlikely.” These coded values were then averaged for each respondent and then the average value was computed for each assessment area. These values were then plotted cartographically and assigned a scaled color value, darkening as values increase.

Combined UGA Analysis: Tax, Fee and Service Changes, Information Confidence & Annexation Support

Given Projected Costs and Services, How Likely are Property Owners to Approve of Annexation if They Feel Confident That They Have Enough Information to Make a Decision?



Given Projected Costs and Services, How Likely are Property Owners to Approve of Annexation if They Feel That They Do Not Have Enough Information to Make a Decision?

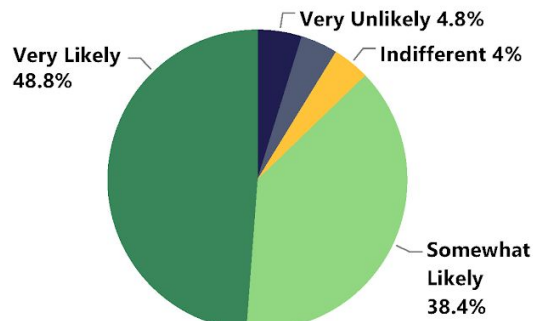


Figure 23. Question 13 & 18 Aggregate Sample Area Paired Responses: Given Projected Costs and Services, How Likely are Property Owners of High and Low Information Confidence to Approve of Annexation?

Summary

The above figure displays the likelihood of respondents with high and low information confidence across UGA sub-areas 11-15 approving of annexation given the paired scenarios of slightly lower annual taxes and utility fees and slightly improved public services upon annexing into the city. In general, respondents who felt they did not have enough information to make a decision on annexation were more likely to approve in the event of slightly decreased taxes and fees paired with public service improvements than those who reported feeling informed enough to decide.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Questions 13 and 18 of the Community Assessment. Sample size for those confident that they have enough information is 68. Sample size for those not confident that they have enough information is 125.

Comparative UGA Analysis: Tax, Fee and Service Changes, Information Confidence & Annexation Support

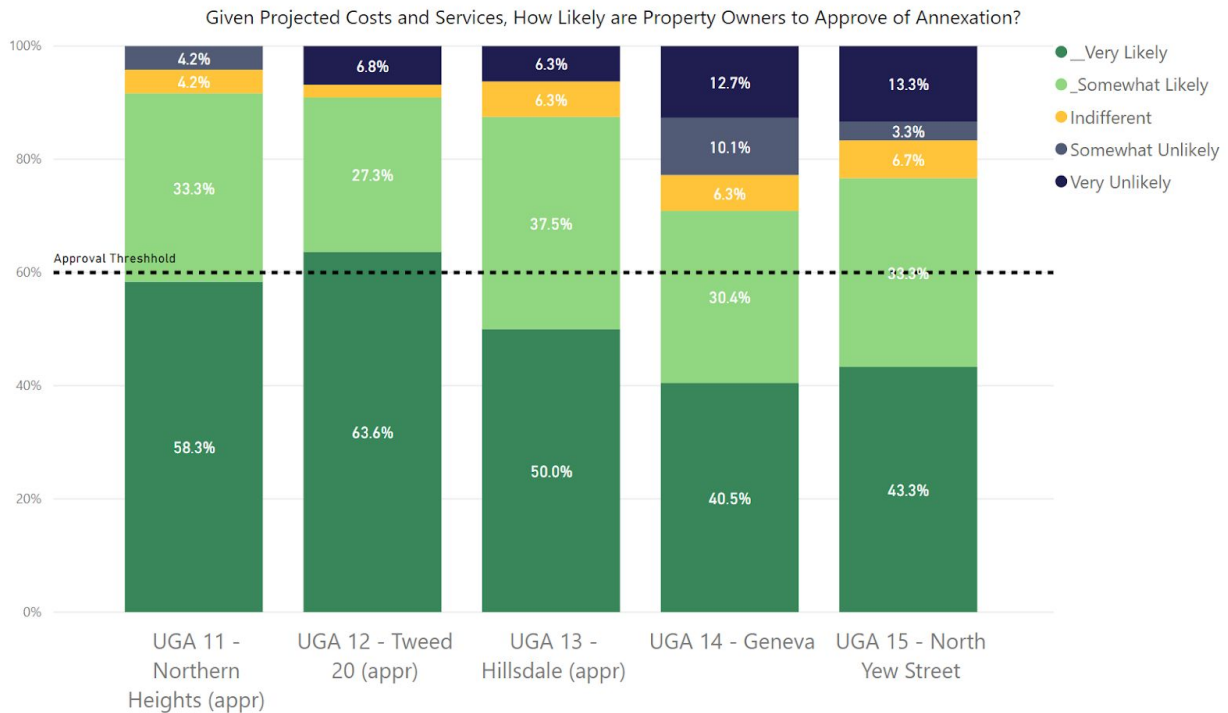


Figure 24. Question 13 & 18 Comparative UGA Paired Responses: Given Projected Costs and Services, How Likely are Property Owners of High and Low Information Confidence to Approve of Annexation?

Summary

The above figure displays the likelihood of respondents across UGA sub-areas approving of annexation given the paired scenarios of slightly lower annual taxes and fees and slightly improved public services upon annexing to the city. The "annexation threshold" line marks the 60% approval margin needed by an annexation petition. This assumes that property values are roughly equivalent among property owners in each urban growth area.

Methodology

The above figure was developed using responses to Questions 13 and 18 of the Community Assessment. Sample size varies based upon the respective assessment area. Percentages are relative to each respective urban growth area.

Opinion Elasticity

This section presents assessment results regarding the relationship between likelihood of support for annexation and potential changes to taxes, fees and public services. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether opinions regarding annexation may be influenced by changes in taxes, utility fees, and public service provision.

Opinion elasticity is evaluated based on responses to Assessment Questions 10 through 19, which gauge respondent likelihood to approve of annexation given particular tax and utility fees and level of service changes. Evaluation is based upon if taxes and utility fees slightly decrease (less than 20%) and public service delivery (police, fire, parks) slightly improves. This tax, utility fee, and public service scenario was identified through UW Team research as the most likely outcome of annexation for UGA sub-area property owners currently receiving Bellingham water and sewer service.

Opinion Elasticity Tables

	Inelastic Against Annexation	Elastic	Inelastic For Annexation	NA	Total
Northern Heights (Approx)	0	24	0	0	24
Tweed Twenty (Approx)	4	40	1	0	45
Hillsdale (Approx)	1	16	0	0	17
Geneva	9	70	2	0	81
North Yew Street	3	26	1	0	30

Table 2. UGA count information of respondent elasticities regarding Tax and Fee changes.

	Inelastic Against Annexation	Elastic	Inelastic For Annexation	NA	Total
Northern Heights (Approx)	0	24	0	0	24
Tweed Twenty (Approx)	3	39	1	2	43
Hillsdale (Approx)	1	15	0	1	16
Geneva	8	71	2	0	81
North Yew Street	3	26	1	0	30

Table 3. UGA count information of respondent elasticities regarding Service changes.

	Taxes		Services		Average Percent Elastic	Margin of Error
	Percent Elastic	Margin of Error	Percent Elastic	Margin of Error		
Northern Heights (Approx)	100%	+/- 16%	100%	+/- 16%	100%	+/- 16%
Tweed Twenty (Approx)	89%	+/- 12%	91%	+/- 12%	90%	+/- 12%
Hillsdale (Approx)	94%	+/- 19%	94%	+/- 20%	94%	+/- 20%
Geneva	86%	+/- 9%	88%	+/- 9%	87%	+/- 9%
North Yew Street	87%	+/- 14%	87%	+/- 14%	87%	+/- 14%

Table 4. UGA elasticity summaries. Margin of error reflects a 90% confidence interval.

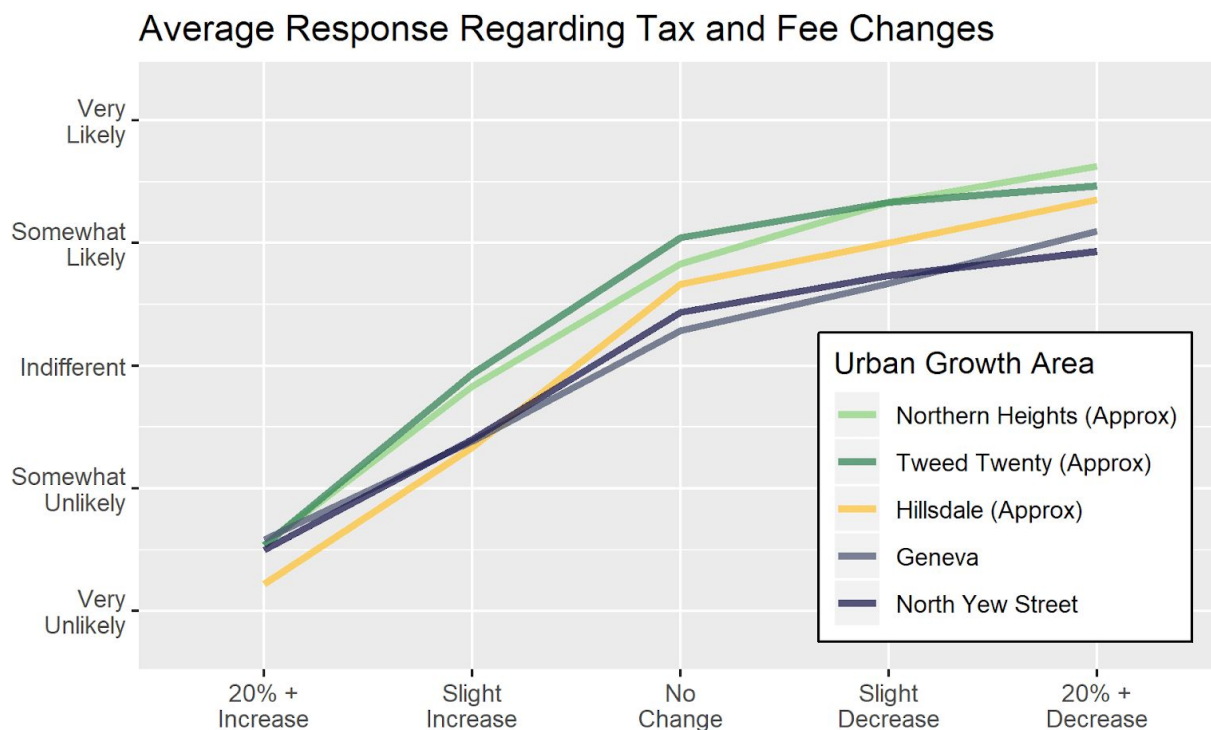
Summary

The above tables show the number of inelastic respondents and elastic respondents by UGA sub-area. These values reflect the percentage of respondents for whom likelihood to approve of annexation may change based on significant changes in taxes, fees, and services. Inelastic respondents are assumed to have a concrete opinion regarding annexation which is unlikely to be influenced by changes in taxes, fees, and services.

Methodology

The tables above were developed using Assessment Questions 10 (likelihood of annexation approval if taxes and fees increase by more than 20%) and 14 (taxes and fees decrease by more than 20%) for tax elasticities and Assessment Questions 15 (services diminish significantly) and 19 (services improve significantly) for service elasticities. Responses to these hypothetical questions were “very likely,” “somewhat likely,” “indifferent,” “somewhat unlikely,” and “very unlikely.” These responses were coded 2, 1, 0, -1, -2 respectively. To determine if a respondent is inelastic in their opinions regarding annexation, the difference between questions was computed. Respondents were deemed inelastic if there was no difference between their responses. The Percent Elastic for the Taxes and Services columns of Table 4 were computed by dividing the number of elastic respondents by the number of total respondents. The Average Percent Elastic column was computed by averaging the Percent Elastic columns for Taxes and Services.

Combined UGA Analysis: Opinion Elasticities



How likely would you be to approve of annexation if the total cost of taxes and fees were to...

Figure 25. Average Elasticity of Respondents Regarding Tax and Fee Changes

Summary

The above graph shows the likelihood of respondents to approve of annexation given specific effects on the total cost of taxes and fees after annexation. The graph illustrates that increases in taxes and fees have a greater effect on respondents' likelihood to approve annexation as compared to decreases in taxes and fees (as shown by the slopes of the lines). The graph further shows the relative likelihood of approving annexation across the UGA sub-areas, with Tweed Twenty and Northern Heights having a more favorable view of annexation as compared to areas like North Yew Street and Geneva. It should be noted that this graph does not exclude inelastic respondents i.e. respondents with identical answers to the 20%+ increase question and the 20%+ decrease question. This condition results in the elasticity lines of Geneva and North Yew Street to be lower than that of the North Britton UGA sub-areas due to their higher percentage of inelastic voters against annexation.

Methodology

The above graph was developed using responses to Assessment Questions 10-14. Responses were coded as 2 for “very likely”, 1 for “somewhat likely”, 0 for “indifferent”, -1 for “somewhat unlikely”, and -2 for “very unlikely.” The data were then grouped by UGA sub-area and the average response for each question was computed. These values were then plotted against one another, grouped by UGA sub-area to generate a line graph.

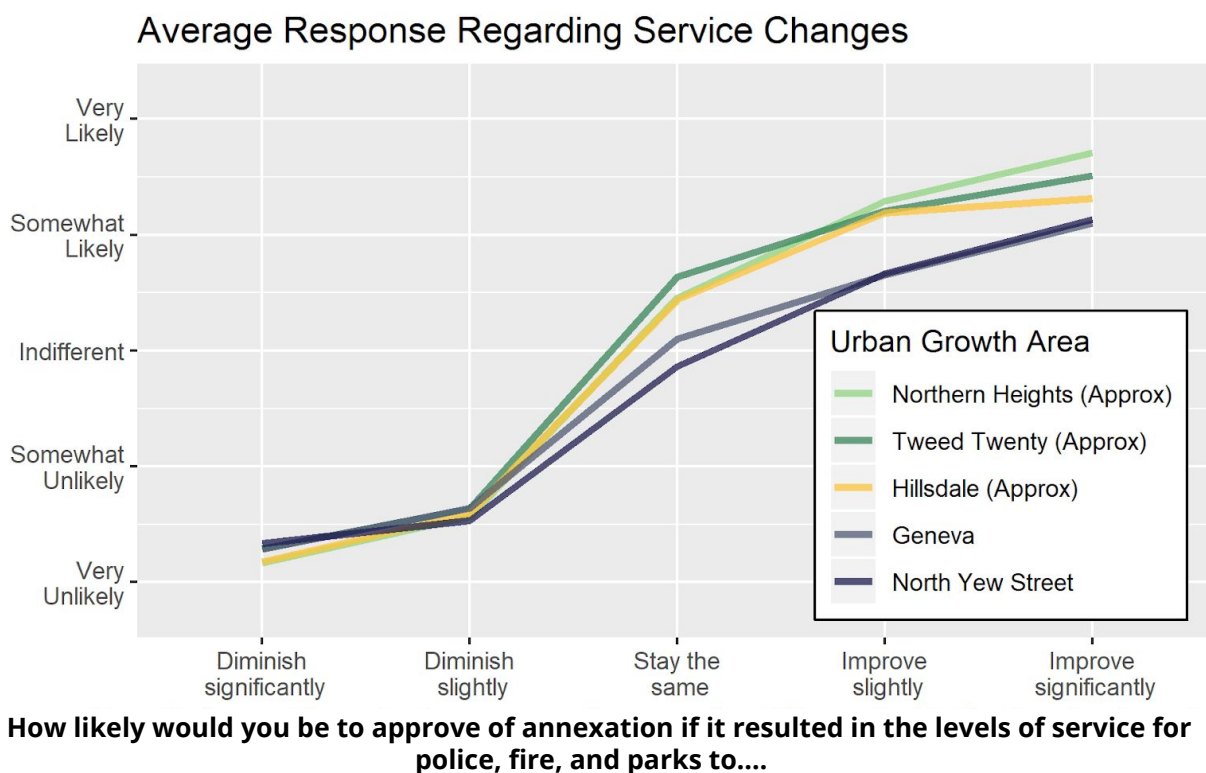


Figure 26. Average Elasticity of Respondents Regarding Service Changes

Summary

The above graph shows the likelihood of respondents to approve of annexation given specific effects on the levels of service after annexation. The graph illustrates that slight decreases in level of service have a greater effect on respondents' likelihood to approve annexation as compared to improvements in services (as shown by the slopes of the lines). The graph further shows the relative likelihood of approving annexation across the UGA sub-areas, with Tweed Twenty and Northern Heights having a more favorable view of annexation as compared to areas like North Yew Street and Geneva. It should be noted that this graph does not exclude inelastic respondents i.e. respondents with identical answers to the significantly

diminish question and the significantly approve question. This condition results in the elasticity lines of Geneva and North Yew Street to be lower than that of the North Britton UGA sub-areas due to their higher percentage of inelastic voters against annexation.

Methodology

The above graph was developed using responses to Assessment Questions 15-19. Responses were coded as 2 for “very likely,” 1 for “somewhat likely,” 0 for “indifferent,” -1 for “somewhat unlikely,” and -2 for “very unlikely.” The data was then grouped by UGA sub-area and the average response for each question was computed. These values were then plotted against one another, grouped by UGA sub-area to generate a line graph.

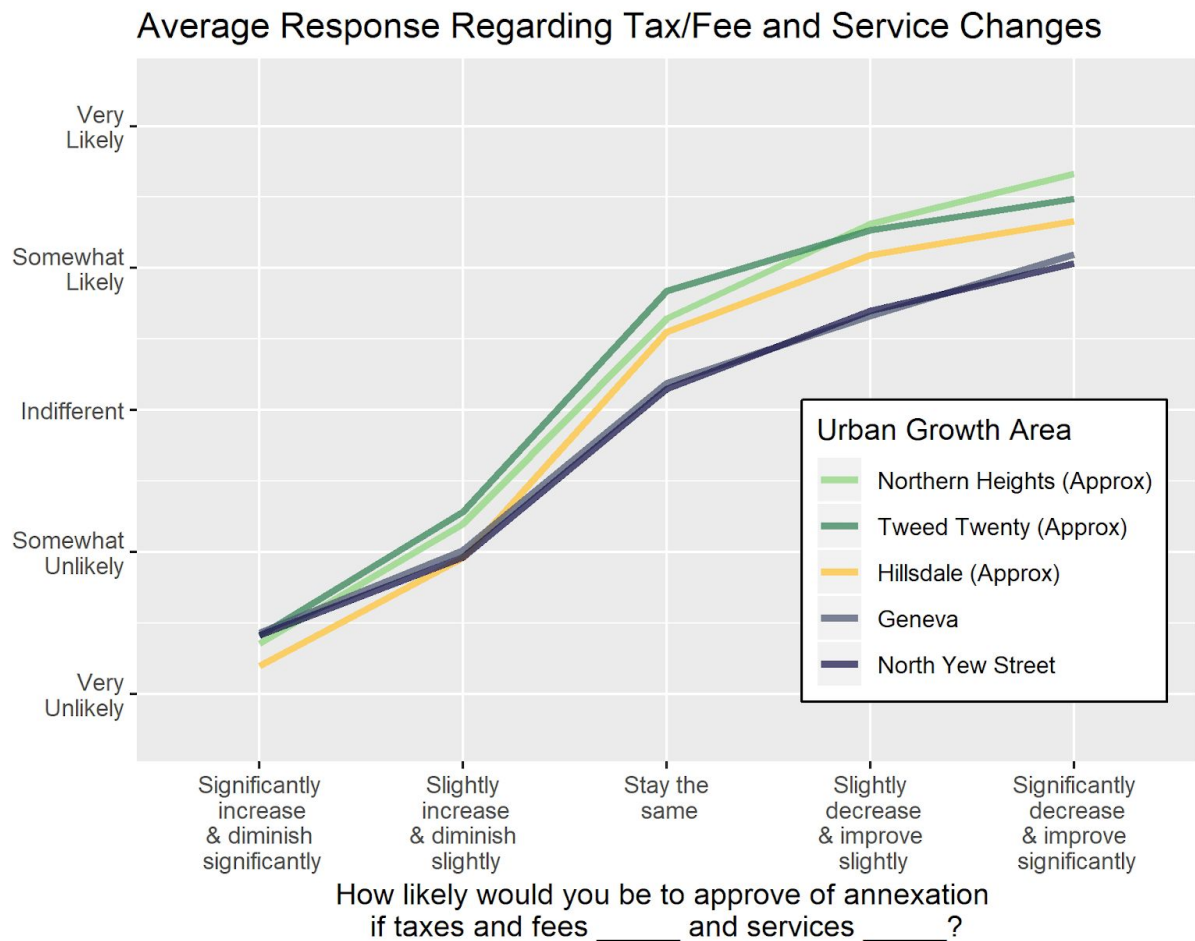


Figure 27. Average Elasticity of respondents regarding Tax and Fee and Service Changes

Summary

The above graph shows the likelihood of respondents to approve of annexation given specific cumulative effects on taxes and fees and levels of service after annexation. The graph illustrates that slight decreases in both taxes and fees and level of service have a greater effect on respondents' likelihood to approve annexation as compared to improvements in services and decreases in taxes and fees (as shown by the slopes of the lines). The graph further shows the relative likelihood of approving annexation across the UGA sub-areas, with Tweed Twenty and Northern Heights having a more favorable view of annexation as compared to areas like North Yew Street and Geneva. It should be noted that this graph does not exclude inelastic respondents i.e. respondents with identical answers to the first and last condition. This results in the elasticity lines of Geneva and North Yew Street to be lower than that of the North Britton UGA sub-areas due to their higher percentage of inelastic voters against annexation.

Methodology

The above graph was developed using responses to Assessment Questions 10-19. Responses were coded as 2 for "very likely," 1 for "somewhat likely," 0 for "indifferent," -1 for "somewhat unlikely," and -2 for "very unlikely." The data were then grouped by question type and UGA sub-area and the average response for each question was computed. Average responses to Question 10 and 15 were computed, same with Question 11 and 16, 12 and 17, 13 and 18, and 14 and 19. These values were then plotted against one another, grouped by UGA sub-area to generate a line graph.

Comparative UGA Analysis: Opinion Elasticities

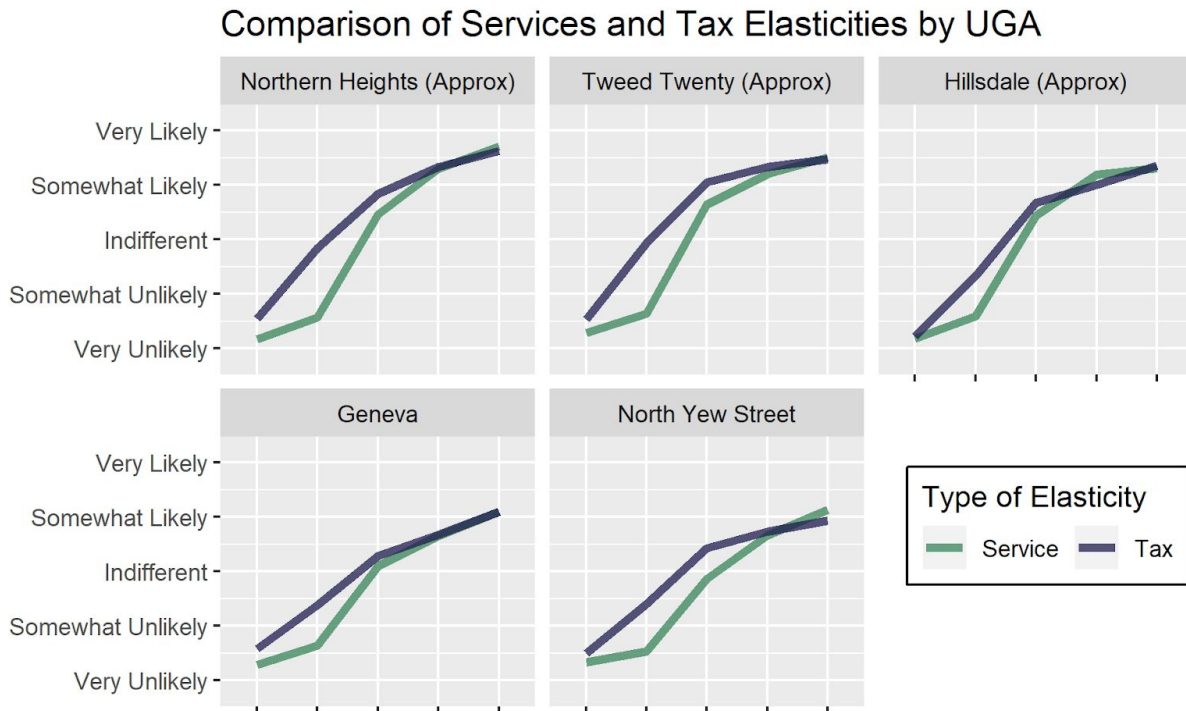


Figure 28. Comparison of Service and Tax Elasticities of elastic respondents by UGA

Summary

The above figure shows the likelihood that a respondent in a specific UGA sub-area is to approve annexation given certain changes in level of service and tax and fees. The graphs pull the trend lines from Figures 24 and 25 and compares them for each UGA sub-area. The graphs provide a scale of relative importance regarding tax and fee changes and service changes at the UGA sub-area. Using these graphs, we could develop a scale for weighting responses to the assessment questions related to services and the assessment questions related to taxes and fees in an effort to standardize the values. Per our projected conditions after annexation for the UGA sub-areas, all areas are expected to see a slight reduction in taxes and fees, and a slight improvement in levels of service. The above graphs show that the likelihood to approve for services and taxes converge at these condition levels, so there is no need to create a weighting scale for standardization in further analysis.

Methodology

The above graphs were developed using responses to Assessment Questions 10-14 and Assessment Questions 15-19. Responses were coded as 2 for “very likely”, 1 for “somewhat likely”, 0 for “indifferent”, -1 for “somewhat unlikely”, and -2 for “very unlikely.” The data was then grouped by question type and UGA sub-area and the average response for each question was computed. These values were then plotted against one another, grouped by UGA sub-area to generate a series of line graphs.

Complete Community Assessment Results

The University of Washington Annexation Assessment took place on May 11, 2019 and May 18, 2019 and consisted of in-person assessments of 30% of the residences within the UGA sub-areas. The assessment collected a total of 206 valid responses across all Urban Growth Areas. 24 responses were collected in Northern Heights (approx.), 49 in Tweed Twenty (approx.), 19 in Hillsdale (approx.), 82 in Geneva, and 32 in North Yew Street. These resulted in margins of error equaling +/- 16%, 11%, 18%, 9%, and 14% respectively for a 90% confidence interval.

A complete listing of community assessment questions and responses is provided herein for reference and further evaluation by the City of Bellingham.

Question 1: Are you or someone currently at home the owner of this property?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	24	27	49	27	19	21	82	30	32	36
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Response	66	73	133	73	71	79	195	70	58	64
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 2: Do you know that you live outside of the city limits of Bellingham?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	24	27	49	27	19	21	82	30	31	34
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Response	66	73	133	73	71	79	195	70	59	66
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 3: Have you visited the University of Washington Annexation Research Initiative website?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	2	2	8	4	1	1	9	3	4	4
No	22	24	41	23	18	20	73	26	27	30
No Response	66	73	133	73	71	79	195	70	59	66
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 4: Did you or someone in your household attend any of the three open houses led by the UW Research Team?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	4	4	3	2	0	0	5	2	0	0
No	20	22	46	25	19	21	76	27	31	34
No Response	66	73	133	73	71	79	196	71	59	66
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 5: How well do you understand the annexation process?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I know nothing about it	7	8	16	9	4	4	28	10	10	11
I know a little about it	12	13	26	14	13	14	36	13	16	18
I know quite a bit about it	5	6	6	3	1	1	14	5	4	4
I understand the process completely	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1
No Response	66	73	133	73	71	79	195	70	59	66
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 6: Do you feel like you have enough information to make a decision on annexation?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	10	11	17	9	7	8	28	10	11	12
No	14	16	32	18	11	12	54	19	21	23
No Response	66	73	133	73	72	80	195	70	58	64
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 7: How likely are you to approve annexation into Bellingham at this point in time?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	0	0	4	2	4	4	22	8	8	9
Somewhat Unlikely	2	2	4	2	2	2	11	4	8	9
Indifferent	8	9	15	8	7	8	23	8	0	0
Somewhat Likely	4	4	11	6	3	3	11	4	9	10
Very Likely	9	10	12	7	3	3	9	3	5	6
No Response	67	74	136	75	71	79	201	73	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 8: How likely are you to reject annexation into Bellingham at this point in time?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	11	12	13	7	3	3	14	5	7	8
Somewhat Unlikely	2	2	12	7	3	3	9	3	7	8
Indifferent	8	9	13	7	7	8	24	9	2	2
Somewhat Likely	2	2	3	2	2	2	9	3	3	3
Very Likely	0	0	4	2	3	3	19	7	9	10
No Response	67	74	137	75	72	80	202	73	62	69
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 9: Do you agree with the following statement? I am currently satisfied with the level of public services in my area (e.g. police, fire, water & sewer, parks & recreation, neighborhood funding, infrastructure).

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Disagree	1	1	4	2	1	1	5	2	3	3
Somewhat Disagree	4	4	6	3	3	3	8	3	3	3
Indifferent	7	8	5	3	1	1	6	2	2	2
Somewhat Agree	9	10	18	10	6	7	33	12	10	11
Strongly Agree	3	3	15	8	8	9	30	11	12	13
No Response	66	73	134	74	71	79	195	70	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 10: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the total cost of your taxes and utility fees to increase significantly (>20%)?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	12	13	29	16	14	16	55	20	21	23
Somewhat Unlikely	11	12	12	7	4	4	15	5	5	6
Indifferent	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	3	3
Somewhat Likely	0	0	2	1	0	0	6	2	0	0
Very Likely	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	1
No Response	66	73	137	75	72	80	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 11: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the total cost of your taxes and utility fees to increase slightly?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	4	4	13	7	6	7	32	12	11	12
Somewhat Unlikely	7	8	7	4	5	6	15	5	6	7
Indifferent	4	4	2	1	2	2	14	5	5	6
Somewhat Likely	7	8	16	9	5	6	11	4	6	7
Very Likely	2	2	7	4	0	0	9	3	2	2
No Response	66	73	137	75	72	80	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 12: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the total cost of your taxes and utility fees to stay the same as now?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	0	0	3	2	1	1	16	6	4	4
Somewhat Unlikely	3	3	1	1	2	2	5	2	3	3
Indifferent	7	8	8	4	3	3	18	6	8	9
Somewhat Likely	5	6	12	7	8	9	24	9	6	7
Very Likely	9	10	21	12	4	4	18	6	9	10
No Response	66	73	137	75	72	80	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 13: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the total cost of your taxes and utility fees to decrease slightly?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	0	0	3	2	1	1	11	4	4	4
Somewhat Unlikely	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	3	2	2
Indifferent	2	2	2	1	2	2	8	3	5	6
Somewhat Likely	9	10	14	8	10	11	24	9	6	7
Very Likely	12	13	26	14	5	6	29	10	13	14
No Response	66	73	137	75	72	80	198	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 14: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the total cost of your taxes and utility fees to decrease significantly (>20%)?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	0	0	4	2	1	1	9	3	3	3
Somewhat Unlikely	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	3	3
Indifferent	2	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	3	3
Somewhat Likely	5	6	6	3	2	2	17	6	5	6
Very Likely	17	19	34	19	12	13	47	17	16	18
No Response	66	73	137	75	73	81	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 15: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the levels of service of police, fire, and parks to significantly diminish?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	20	22	36	20	14	16	68	25	25	28
Somewhat Unlikely	4	4	7	4	3	3	8	3	2	2
Indifferent	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	2
Somewhat Likely	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Very Likely	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	1
No Response	66	73	137	75	73	81	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 16: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the levels of service of police, fire, and parks to slightly diminish?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	12	13	27	15	10	11	46	16	18	20
Somewhat Unlikely	9	10	10	5	5	6	27	10	10	11
Indifferent	2	2	5	3	1	1	5	2	1	1
Somewhat Likely	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Very Likely	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	1
No Response	67	74	137	75	73	81	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 17: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the levels of service of police, fire, and parks to stay the same as now?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	1	1	4	2	2	2	17	6	5	6
Somewhat Unlikely	4	4	2	1	0	0	5	2	5	6
Indifferent	8	9	11	6	7	8	25	9	12	13
Somewhat Likely	5	6	16	9	3	3	21	8	5	6
Very Likely	6	7	11	6	4	4	13	5	3	3
No Response	66	73	138	76	74	82	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 18: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the levels of service of police, fire, and parks to slightly improve?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	0	0	3	2	1	1	10	4	4	4
Somewhat Unlikely	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	3	1	1
Indifferent	3	3	2	1	1	1	8	3	2	2
Somewhat Likely	11	12	19	10	7	8	29	10	17	19
Very Likely	10	11	20	11	7	8	26	9	6	7
No Response	66	73	138	76	74	82	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 19: How likely would you be to approve annexation if it resulted in the levels of service of police, fire, and parks to significantly improve?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very Unlikely	0	0	3	2	1	1	9	3	3	3
Somewhat Unlikely	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	1	1
Indifferent	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	2	1	1
Somewhat Likely	5	6	7	4	2	2	18	6	9	10
Very Likely	18	20	32	18	11	12	46	17	16	18
No Response	66	73	139	76	74	82	196	71	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 20: At this point in time, do you favor or oppose annexation of your area into Bellingham?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Favor	13	14	29	16	7	8	24	9	15	17
Oppose	6	7	10	5	7	8	38	14	12	13
No Response	71	79	143	79	76	84	215	78	63	70
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 21: How long have you lived at this address?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than 1 year	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	0	2	2
1-5 years	8	9	15	8	4	4	17	6	6	7
6-10 years	4	4	2	1	2	2	5	2	3	3
More than 10 years	10	11	29	16	10	11	59	21	20	22
No Response	66	73	133	73	71	79	195	70	59	66
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100

Question 22: Which of the following best describes your age?

	N. Heights (Approx)		Tweed Twenty (Approx)		Hillsdale (Approx)		Geneva		North Yew Street	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
18-35	5	6	6	3	0	0	2	1	2	2
36-55	8	9	25	14	6	7	24	9	11	12
56+	11	12	18	10	13	14	56	20	17	19
No Response	66	73	133	73	71	79	195	70	60	67
Total	90	100	182	100	90	100	277	100	90	100