

North Highline Survey Report



July 21, 2005

Project Overview

The Connections Group is working with Nesbitt Planning and Management as part of county - funded study to gauge the effects of governance options, including annexation and incorporation, on local services, taxation and representation. The area of North Highline includes White Center, Boulevard Park, Beverly Park, Top Hat and Northern Shorewood and is one of the most ethnically diverse areas of King County, with large Asian and Latino populations.

Between May 9 and June 1, 2005, The Connections Group dispatched groups of informed, accessible and enthusiastic interns who are well trained and supervised to go door-to-door to survey the North Highline population. They contacted more than 1,500 local residents, provided basic information about the governance options, and gathered survey input from them. This community outreach method not only provided more comprehensive and valid response data but also better-informed replies than a conventional mailed survey. The surveyors also obtained contact information from those who would like to be notified of future public meetings and focus groups.

In August, The Connections Group will organize, recruit and conduct four focus groups to support the outreach effort. After the initial door-to-door survey of community reactions to governance options, we will conduct four focus groups to describe analysis and findings in greater detail and elicit a community discussion about them and about how participants see the tradeoffs implied by the data. This will supplement the survey findings and will give North Highline Unincorporated Area Council additional input to see if there are possible paths to a community consensus on governance options.

The focus groups would be conducted in community locations in North Highline, likely a community center or neighborhood organization. Randomly-select citizens who fit different characteristics will be chosen to spend an hour and a half to discuss the various options.

The second phase of the survey would be initiated in October 2005 when a preliminary preferred governance option or options have been developed.

Timeline

May

First phase of community survey – Initial community reactions to options (More than 1,500 Households)

August

Recruit and conduct four community focus groups

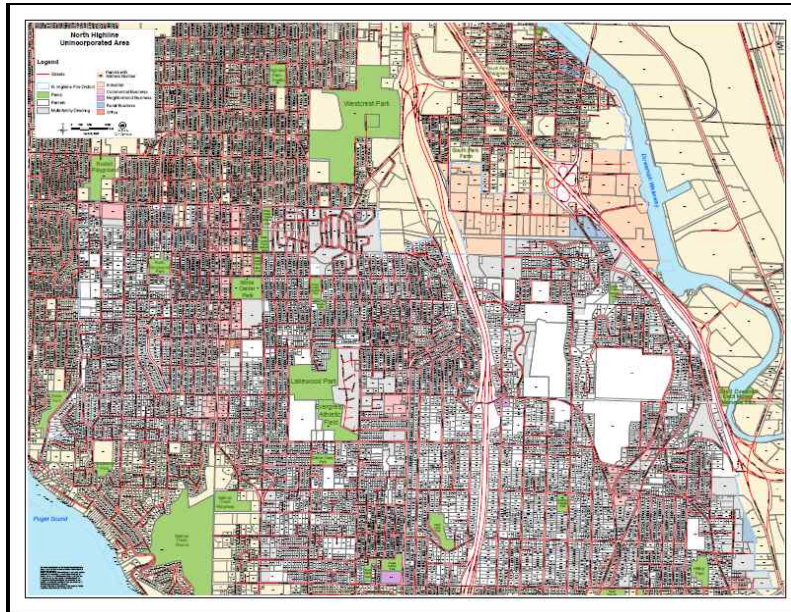
October

Second phase of community survey – Field testing and validation of preferred option or options (About 1,500 Households)

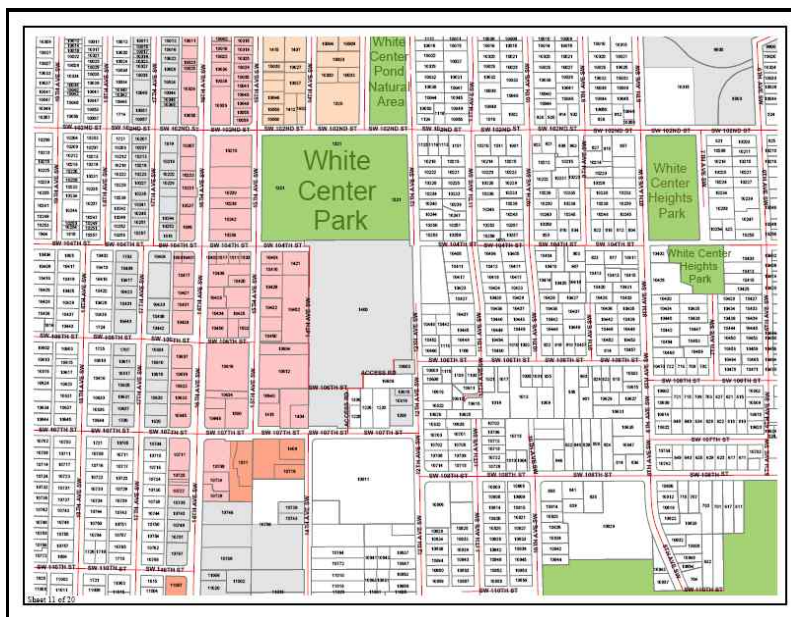
Methodology

The survey is done based upon geographical boundaries of the North Highline Unincorporated Area. The Connections Group purchased a series of maps compiled by King County GIS Center. These maps contain street addresses of all parcels and are highlighted with information about types of residences, businesses, and industries.

Map of North Highline Unincorporated Area



Sample – Smaller walking map of neighborhoods



Each day, surveyors would follow different canvass routes and contacted all addresses in the specified neighborhoods to ask survey questions and obtained basic demographic information about all persons aged 18 or over residing at the address. They conducted the door-to-door contacts during afternoon, early evening and weekend hours.

The Connections Group's surveyors used personal digital assistants to administer the interviews, asking questions as they appeared on the screen and directly entering the responses obtained. Completed interviews were electronically transferred to a central computer where the responses were edited for consistency and various codes were added.

A typical surveyor's workload consisted of about 10 completed surveys a day. One of the most difficult tasks a surveyor faced was obtaining respondent cooperation. In some cases, finding someone at home might require a surveyor to walk back and forth in a neighborhood several times during a 3-4 hour period. The North Highline survey is a voluntary survey, and persuading residents to take the time to answer questions completely and as accurately as possible is sometimes a difficult challenge. Surveyors usually obtained responses from about 35-40 percent of the canvassed homes. The response rate, of course, varies by type of areas and time of day.

The interview began with questions about the housing unit and the people who considered this address their usual residence. Basic demographic information about where they live, work, and shop were collected.

After the demographic information was collected, supplemental questions particular to various governance options and government services were asked. All surveyors have been trained to ask each question exactly as it is worded. Based upon the response entered by the surveyor, the computerized questionnaire determined the next question to be asked. While some questions required simple responses, others required the surveyor to categorize a response into a set of predetermined categories. Sometimes, surveyors had to type in answers directly, rather than selecting predetermined categories.

Additional demographic questions about home ownership, age, household size, race, languages, and education level were asked at the end to add further insights to the data collected.

Design of the Questionnaire

A draft of the questionnaire was prepared by the Connections Group and was presented to the North Highline Unincorporated Area Council (UAC) meeting on May 5, 2005. Several recommendations were received and changes were made in consultation with various UAC members.

Survey Results

A total of 1,562 surveys were conducted between May 9 and June 1, 2005. The interviews were done in all neighborhoods in the North Highline Unincorporated Area. Below is a map showing distribution of all the completed surveys. Each highlighted parcel represents at least one completed survey from that address. Some of the highlighted parcels cover a large area and they are usually apartment buildings, condominiums, or senior homes. No interview was conducted with area businesses and industries.



Part 1: Where You Live/Work/Shop

Question 1: In what neighborhood do you live?

Notes:

Most of the residents (71.7%) surveyed identify themselves being part of the many neighborhoods in the North Highline Unincorporated Area: Boulevard Park 28.8%, White Center 21.5%, Shorewood 12.0%, Top Hat 5.0%, Salmon Creek 2.4%, Arbor Lake 1.9%, Rox Hill 0.1%. With 4.7% of the respondents actually know they live in the unincorporated area.

Question 2: In what area do you work?

Notes:

Only 11.4% of the respondents work locally and most of the respondents (63%) work outside of the North Highline area. The survey also identifies relatively large unemployed (6.9%) and retired (18.7%) communities.

Question 3: In what area do you usually shop? (Check all that apply)

• North Highline Unincorporated Area	53.7%
• Burien	59.4%
• Seattle	22.4%
• Sea-Tac	5.5%
• Tukwila	20.9%
• East King County	1.5%
• South King County	5.6%
• Other	4.7%

Notes:

Unlike the work situation, our respondents usually shop locally or at a nearby city. More than half of the respondents (53.7%) shop within the North Highline Unincorporated Area. Almost 60% of the respondents also say they shop in Burien, 22.4% shop in Seattle and 20.9% shop in Tukwila.

Part 2: Governance Definition

Question 4: As you may know, you live in part of unincorporated King County. Public services in this area are either provided by King County with general tax dollars or through tax levies by special districts, such as the North Highline Fire Department and emergency services.

Your community is dealing with the question of whether North Highline should be a part of unincorporated King County, incorporate into its own city, or be annexed into another city.

On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being very interested, how interested are you in what kind of government will ultimately serve this area?

• 1	7.0%
• 2	2.8%
• 3	3.5%
• 4	3.2%
• 5	15.6%
• 6	6.9%
• 7	9.9%
• 8	15.6%
• 9	9.6%
• 10	25.9%

Notes:

More than half of the respondents (51.1%) are very interested in the governance issue and choose 8, 9, and 10 as their answers. The surveyors confirm the interest level is generally very high and many respondents were patient and were willing to talk with us about the survey.

Question 5: As you may know, there has been talk in our community about being one of King County's unincorporated areas, incorporating into our own city, or being annexed into a nearby city. Burien has done a draft study of annexing North Highline and Seattle is working on a study now. If you had to choose, would you rather be part of unincorporated King County, start a new city here, be part of city of Burien, city of Seattle, or pick another option?

- Unincorporated King County 42.6%
- New city 3.7%
- City of Burien 20.7%
- City of Seattle 17.1%

- Another option 2.5%
 - City of Sea-Tac 0.4%
 - City of Tukwila 0.9%
 - Area divided and be annexed into different cities 0.2%
 - Other 1.0%

- None of the above 1.2%
- Don't know 12.2%

Question 6: If that choice had to happen, would you prefer it sooner or later?

- Sooner 37.2%
 - 2005 23.1%
 - 2006 10.4%
 - 2007 3.2%
 - After 2007 0.5%

- Later 22.5%
 - 1-2 years 3.3%
 - 3-4 years 4.0%
 - 5-6 years 3.2%
 - Longer than 6 years 12.0%

- Don't know 40.3%

Notes:

Many respondents (40.3%) simply don't know how to answer this question. For those who prefer to have a decision soon, more than one third of the total respondents (33.5%) choose 2005 and 2006. 12.0% of the total respondents want to delay the decision indefinitely.

Part 3: Levels of Services

Question 7: What government services do you now receive? (Check all that apply)

1. Schools	33.2%
2. Fire	64.9%
3. Utilities	68.7%
4. Police	66.4%
5. Public Health/Clinic/Hospital	31.6%
6. Roads/Transportation	47.2%
7. Housing	6.9%
8. Senior services	6.5%
9. Don't know	16.5%
10. Other, specify _____	5.8%
• None	2.4%
• Social security	0.8%
• Parks	0.5%
• Library	0.3%
• Misc.	1.8%

Notes:

Over two third of the respondents think utilities, police and fire services are the most common government services they receive, while about half pick roads/transportation and one third pick schools. 2.4% of the respondents think they don't get any government services. The most common services not included in the categories but were mentioned are social security, parks, and library services.

Question 8: If there was one service you would pay more to improve, what would that be?

1. Schools	16.7%
2. Fire	3.9%
3. Utilities	4.1%
4. Police	18.4%
5. Public Health/Clinic/Hospital	3.4%
6. Roads/Transportation	12.9%
7. Housing	0.7%
8. Senior services	1.3%
9. Don't know	23.2%
10. Other, specify _____	15.4%
• None, paying enough taxes	6.2%
• Trash, sewer	1.2%
• Sidewalks	1.1%
• Police and Fire, 911 Emergency Services	0.8%
• Parks	0.5%
• All services are important	0.4%
• Misc.	5.2%

Notes:

Respondents are less sure when asked which one service they would pay more to improve. Don't know got the most votes at 23.2%. While Police receives 18.4% of the support, schools get 16.7% and roads/transportation receive 12.9%. The most common services not included in the categories but were mentioned are none (paying enough taxes already), trash and sewer, sidewalks, Police and Fire, 911 Emergency Services, and parks.

Question 9: Which one service you would be willing to pay more to keep?

1. Schools	14.4%
2. Fire	15.4%
3. Utilities	4.2%
4. Police	21.5%
5. Public Health/Clinic/Hospital	3.2%
6. Roads/Transportation	4.3%
7. Housing	0.6%
8. Senior services	0.7%
9. Don't know	23.1%
10. Other, specify _____	12.6%
• None, paying enough taxes	5.1%
• Police & Fire	2.5%
• Sewer and garbage	0.9%
• All services	0.8%
• Parks	0.3%
• Misc.	3.0%

Notes:

Again, respondents are not sure about which one service they would pay more to keep. Don't know get the most votes at 23.1%. While Police receives 21.5%, Fire gets 15.4% and schools receive 14.4%. The most common services not included in the categories but were mentioned are none (paying enough taxes already), Police and Fire together, sewer and garbage, all services, and parks.

Question 10: What's the best part about living here?

1. Close to shopping/businesses/work	22.1%
2. Schools	0.7%
3. Sense of community	18.6%
4. Housing costs	6.3%
5. Low taxes	3.0%
6. Live close to family, friends, and/or the community	5.1%
7. Good government services	0.3%
8. None	2.5%
9. Don't know	3.8%
10. Other, specify _____	37.6%

- Quiet, peaceful, privacy 9.8%
- Close to city, schools, shopping, roads, and everything, proximity 9.0%
- Location, nice community, not a city 3.4%
- Rural 2.4%
- Nice and good neighborhood, safe 1.8%
- Affordable 1.1%
- Diversity 1.0%
- Misc. 9.1%

Notes:

Respondents pick other (37.6%) as their most popular choice. Respondents like the fact that North Highline is close to many places and is in close proximity to where they work, shop or study. They think North Highline is a nice rural community, not a city. The community generally is quiet, safe and is at a peaceful location. Some respondents also point out the diversities in North Highline and enjoy being part of that.

Close to shopping/businesses/work and sense of community reflect the mood of the respondents and both receive 22.1% and 18.6% respectively.

Question 11: What's your biggest concern about this area?

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Poor road repair/sidewalks/repairs take too long | 3.0% |
| 2. Taxes | 5.6% |
| 3. Poor schools | 3.5% |
| 4. Expensive utilities | 1.2% |
| 5. No sense of community | 1.0% |
| 6. Lack of political representation | 1.2% |
| 7. Lack of/poor sewers | 1.2% |
| 8. Economic opportunities/employment | 1.3% |
| 9. Lack of police coverage | 9.5% |
| 10. Poor street lighting | 1.8% |
| 11. None | 16.2% |
| 12. Don't know | 4.9% |
| 13. None of the above | 1.6% |
| 14. Other, specify _____ | 48.0% |
-
- Crime, safety, security 19.7%
 - Drugs, meth labs 3.3%
 - Gangs 1.2%
-
- Airport, air traffic 3.4%
 - Growth, overdevelopment 2.8%
 - Traffic 2.1%
 - Speeding 0.8%
-
- Various annexation concerns 2.3%
 - Misc. 12.4%

Notes:

Respondents overwhelmingly pick other (48.0%) as their most popular choice. We did not include crime and safety in our categories but many do voice their concerns on the issue.

Generally, many respondents think crime is getting worst in the area and safety & security have become their number one concern. They see North Highline is having drug problems particularly with the number of meth labs. Gang violence is becoming common as a result.

Other respondents choose growth and overdevelopment as their major concern. Many residents see increased traffic, both from the airport and through roads, as a critical problem.

Question 12: What advice would you give to the governing body that will end up serving you?

1. Improve traffic conditions	3.0%
2. Improve street lighting	1.6%
3. Lower taxes	13.9%
4. Better transportation options	2.3%
5. More shopping near home	1.6%
6. More police on duty	10.7%
7. Better schools	5.1%
8. Better government services (general)	2.1%
9. Better community services	3.1%
10. None	9.4%
11. Don't know	12.8%
12. None of the above	2.3%
13. Other, specify _____	32.1%
• Listen to people, treat us fair, communicate, honesty	5.8%
• Better, improve, more, develop, maintain services	4.3%
• Leave people alone, stay out, less government, keep it as is	3.4%
• Spend wisely	2.1%
• Clean up	1.4%
• Sidewalks	1.2%
• Misc.	13.9%

Notes:

Again, many respondents think outside the box with the question. 32.1% pick other as their most common choice. Generally, we can divide the answers into 3 areas: Improve and maintain vital government services, listen and communicate to the public, and keep a small government with low taxes. In addition, 13.9% choose lower taxes and 10.7% choose more police on duty as their advice to the new governing body.

Part 4: Demographics

Question 13: Do you own or rent your home?

- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| • Own/Buying | 80.0% |
| • Rent | 17.6% |
| • Live rent free | 0.8% |
| • Refused | 1.6% |

Question 14: What is your age? (Read brackets if necessary)

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| • 18-24 | 6.6% |
| • 25-29 | 5.2% |
| • 30-34 | 9.1% |
| • 35-39 | 9.6% |
| • 40-44 | 12.8% |
| • 45-49 | 11.6% |
| • 50-54 | 11.4% |
| • 55-59 | 8.0% |
| • 60-64 | 5.6% |
| • 65-69 | 4.3% |
| • 70-74 | 4.0% |
| • 75-80 | 3.9% |
| • > 81 | 2.9% |
| • Refused | 5.0% |

Notes:

15.1% of the respondents are 65 and older, while 11.8% are under 30. Many of the respondents (35.8%) we surveyed are between 40 and 54.

Question 15: How many people are currently living in your household?

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| • 1 | 13.1% |
| • 2 | 36.4% |
| • 3 | 17.3% |
| • 4 | 16.4% |
| • 5 | 8.4% |
| • > 5 | 5.6% |
| • Refused | 2.8% |

Notes:

More than one third of the households we surveyed are 2 persons household. We think the result reflects the many young families and retirees living in North Highline.

Question 16: What race would you classify yourself as? (Read brackets if necessary)

• African American/Black	4.4%
• Caucasian/White	71.4%
• Eastern European	0.2%
• Latino/Hispanic	7.4%
• Asian/Asian American	8.6%
• African	0.1%
• Middle Eastern	0.0%
• Other	5.5%
• Refused	2.4%

Notes:

About 25.9% of the respondents are from visible minority communities.

Question 17: What other language is spoken at this household?

• Speak English	74.8%
• Spanish	10.3%
• Vietnamese	4.5%
• Cambodian	1.2%
• Ethiopian	0.1%
• Somali	0.4%
• Russian	0.3%
• Other, specify _____	8.4%

Notes:

About 25.2% of the respondents speak another language at their households. 10.3% of our respondents come from Spanish speaking households and another 10% come from various Asian language households. Some of the most common other languages are Tagalong, Samoan and Japanese.

Question 18: What is your annual household income before taxes? (Read brackets if necessary)

• < \$15,000	2.6%
• \$15,000 - \$24,999	4.2%
• \$25,000 - \$34,999	6.9%
• \$35,000 - \$49,999	12.7%
• \$50,000 - \$74,999	15.0%
• \$75,000 - \$99,999	8.2%
• > \$100,000	4.9%
• Refused	45.5%

Notes:

Almost half of the respondents (45.4%) refused to tell our surveyors their annual household incomes. Since many respondents refuse to answer the question, it will be difficult for us to do statistical analysis using income level as part of the study.

Question 19: What is the last grade you completed in school?

- Other, please specify: _____ 8.0%
- High School Completion 31.6%
- Some College 31.3%
- College Graduate 23.1%
- Post Graduate 6.0%

Part 5: Community Study

Question 20: Over the next several months the North Highline Unincorporated Area Council will oversee a survey of governing options. Would you like to be kept informed?

- Yes 60.0%
- No 40.0%

Notes:

We have collected 421 email addresses and 411 phone numbers from respondents willing to be kept informed. Another 32 respondents would like to receive updates by regular mail.

Part 6: Focus Group Recruitment

Question 21: We are looking for 50 people to be part of community focus groups in June to share their ideas about governance. Would you be interested in participating?

- Yes 26.8%
- No 73.2%

Notes:

We have collected 156 email addresses and 140 phone numbers from respondents willing to participate in future focus groups.

Key Findings

Governance choices based on self-identified neighborhoods

Total Number of Responses in %	Neighborhood of Respondent	Preferred Governance Option							Total
		Uninc.	New City	City of Burien	City of Seattle	Another option	None of the above	Don't know	
21.7%	White Center	41.0%	5.5%	18.4%	21.7%	2.8%	0.5%	10.1%	100.0%
28.8%	Boulevard Park	44.4%	3.1%	21.2%	14.9%	4.2%	1.4%	10.8%	100.0%
4.5%	Burien	32.6%	6.5%	30.4%	10.9%	2.2%	2.2%	15.2%	100.0%
2.3%	Seattle	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	36.0%	4.0%	4.0%	16.0%	100.0%
1.1%	King County	16.7%	0.0%	33.3%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	25.0%	100.0%
5.0%	Top Hat	47.1%	9.8%	17.6%	9.8%	0.0%	2.0%	13.7%	100.0%
1.1%	South Park	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	58.3%	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%	100.0%
2.4%	Salmon Creek	45.8%	0.0%	25.0%	4.2%	0.0%	4.2%	20.8%	100.0%
12.0%	Shorewood	44.5%	3.4%	14.3%	25.2%	1.7%	0.0%	10.9%	100.0%
1.9%	Arbor Lake	57.9%	0.0%	15.8%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	21.1%	100.0%
0.1%	Rox Hill	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
4.7%	Unincorporated	50.0%	2.2%	34.8%	6.5%	4.3%	0.0%	2.2%	100.0%
0.7%	Sea-Tac	42.9%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%
8.0%	Other	46.9%	3.7%	19.8%	13.6%	0.0%	0.0%	16.0%	100.0%
5.7%	No idea	39.7%	1.7%	24.1%	12.1%	0.0%	3.4%	19.0%	100.0%
100.0%									

Notes:

Overall, staying unincorporated is the most popular choice for respondents in most of the self-identified neighborhoods. Respondents who identified themselves from Seattle and South Park made City of Seattle their first choice, while those identified themselves from King County chose City of Burien.

City of Burien seems to be a popular 2nd choice if respondents said they are part of Boulevard Park, City of Burien, City of Seattle, Top Hat, Salmon Creek, Arbor Lake, unincorporated, City of Sea-Tac, other, and have no idea.

While City of Seattle is the 2nd choice if the respondents said they are part of White Center, Shorewood, Rox Hill and City of Sea-Tac.

Notes:

Overall, staying unincorporated is the most popular choice for respondents working in different areas or retirees.

Governance choices based on where you shop (Participants can have multiple answers)

Total Number of Responses in %	Where To Shop - Respondents	Preferred Governance Option						Don't know	Total
		Uninc.	New City	City of Burien	City of Seattle	Another option	None of the above		
53.7%	North Highline Unincorporated Area	44.9%	4.5%	18.1%	17.9%	3.0%	0.9%	10.8%	100.0%
59.4%	Burien	43.3%	4.0%	23.9%	13.1%	2.7%	1.0%	12.0%	100.0%
22.4%	Seattle	36.0%	5.3%	15.6%	29.3%	1.8%	0.9%	11.1%	100.0%
5.5%	Sea-Tac	35.7%	5.4%	28.6%	14.3%	1.8%	1.8%	12.5%	100.0%
20.9%	Tukwila	38.1%	4.8%	21.4%	16.2%	4.8%	0.5%	14.3%	100.0%
1.5%	East King County	37.5%	12.5%	6.3%	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	100.0%
5.6%	South King County	47.4%	8.8%	10.5%	19.3%	3.5%	0.0%	10.5%	100.0%
4.7%	Other	42.6%	6.4%	14.9%	21.3%	2.1%	2.1%	10.6%	100.0%

Notes:

Overall, staying unincorporated is the most popular choice for respondents shopping in different areas.

Governance choices based on race

Total Number of Responses in %	Race of Respondents	Preferred Governance Option						Don't know	Total
		Uninc.	New City	City of Burien	City of Seattle	Another option	None of the above		
4.4%	African American/Black	29.5%	6.8%	15.9%	29.5%	2.3%	0.0%	15.9%	100.0%
71.4%	Caucasian/White	47.2%	2.9%	20.4%	14.7%	2.7%	1.3%	10.8%	100.0%
0.2%	Eastern European	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
7.4%	Latino/Hispanic	31.2%	3.9%	20.8%	23.4%	5.2%	1.3%	14.3%	100.0%
8.6%	Asian/Asian American	21.8%	5.7%	23.0%	26.4%	1.1%	1.1%	20.7%	100.0%
0.1%	African	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
0.0%	Middle Eastern	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5.5%	Other	43.9%	7.0%	17.5%	15.8%	1.8%	1.8%	12.3%	100.0%
2.4%	Refused	39.1%	4.3%	30.4%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%	17.4%	100.0%
100.0%									

Notes:

Although sample sizes are much smaller, some of the diverse communities do seem to have other governance preferences other than staying unincorporated. For instance, there are more Asian Americans picking Seattle and Burien over staying unincorporated.

Governance choices based on education level

Total Number of Responses in %	Education of Respondents	Preferred Governance Option						Don't know	Total
		Uninc.	New City	City of Burien	City of Seattle	Another option	None of the above		
8.0%	Other	45.6%	6.3%	19.0%	15.2%	3.8%	1.3%	8.9%	100.0%
31.6%	High School Completion	44.0%	1.9%	22.5%	15.5%	2.5%	1.6%	12.0%	100.0%
31.3%	Some College	43.8%	3.5%	19.0%	15.9%	3.2%	0.6%	14.0%	100.0%
23.1%	College Graduate	41.7%	4.8%	20.6%	18.4%	0.9%	1.3%	12.3%	100.0%
6.0%	Post Graduate	25.8%	6.5%	22.6%	30.6%	3.2%	1.6%	9.7%	100.0%
100.0%									

Notes:

For respondents with post graduate degree, they have City of Seattle as their 1st governance preference other than staying unincorporated.