

Birch Bay General Survey Conducted May 7, 2024 to July 7, 2024

Report of Results

Presented by the

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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of an online survey of the Birch Bay community that began on May 7, 2024 and collected responses through July 7, 2024. Broad-based publicity resulted in 639 responses (7.2% of the community's total population). The overall response rate, the response rate of respondents within the proposed boundary (574; 6.4%), and the registered voter response rate (568; 6.4%) results in a confidence level near 99%, with an error rate of approximately 1%. The current survey and this report of its results does not replace an expected, third-party feasibility study funded by the Whatcom County Council. We offer this survey, its results, and this report to inform a formal feasibility study and to provide a sense of the community and probable support related to possible incorporation.

Three central issues emerged from the data: a strong desire for local control in decisions that affect Birch Bay (deemed important by 75% of registered voters; see Table 2, Question 5), a strong concern related to financial feasibility and potential tax increases (a general unwillingness to pay more for local control without an increase in services (59%, see, Table 2, Question 6), and a need for more information before making a decision about incorporation (43% of registered voters, see Table 2, Question 9). Of interest is that, while answers to general questions about possible tax increases are negative, in answer to a specific question containing dollar amounts, a majority of respondents (59% of registered voters) would be willing to pay between \$100 to \$400 per year more, on an assessed property value of \$500,000, for local decision-making combined with an increase in services (see Table 2, Question 7).

On July 7, 2024, 57% of registered voters had made up their minds about incorporation (27% in favor; 30% opposed; see Table 2, Question 9). 43% desire more information before making a decision. Given the large number who are undecided, a County-funded feasibility study is critical to provide detailed and supportable information to the community. Especially important would be determination of the desired level of services, potential costs, revenues, potential governance structures, and structural and contractual relationships with the County and State.

We note that the most recent 200 responses trended slightly negative. If an incorporation vote had been held on July 7th, and if undecided respondents would have split evenly across favorable and unfavorable groups, or continued to trend slightly negative, on that day the vote to incorporate likely would have failed. This is a projection only, and does not specify a formal vote's outcome after voters consider additional information. To inform future voters, the survey's results indicate that the following areas should be addressed to inform the community:

- provide additional information and communication containing clear and supportable data about potential costs, revenues, and tax implications;
- conduct a follow-up survey that asks specifically about desired level of services;
- establish the level of support for incorporation within the Birch Point and South Point Whitehorn areas, and the relative costs and benefits of including those areas;
- engage with residents of gated communities to better understand how incorporation would fit with their current management and support services;
- provide specifics about local vs. outside decision-making on issues impacting Birch Bay.

Introduction and Background

This report presents the results of an online survey of the Birch Bay community that began on May 7, 2024 and actively collected responses through July 7, 2024. The survey was publicized in print-based and electronic media multiple times in each of several venues, including the local newspaper (*The Northern Light*), the *Birch Bay Village Bulletin*, the Birch Bay Chamber's *Birch Bay Buzz*, the *Next Door* online community, at post-May 5th, 2024 public meetings of the Birch Bay Incorporation Association's Steering Committee and its Quarterly General Meeting, on the Association's website, on Facebook, and on Readerboard signage placed at the Birch Bay Waterslides. This broad-based outreach and publicity resulted in 639 responses, collected through SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com).

For a population of 10,000, a response rate of 385 would result in a 95% confidence level in survey results (see <https://tinyurl.com/mkm7czju>). As the Birch Bay proposed incorporation boundary includes a population of about 8,900, the survey's 639 response rate (7.2% of the population) approximates a 99% confidence level. We note also that the 8,900 population number, provided by the Washington Office of Financial Management's Small Areas (see <https://tinyurl.com/28nzwant>), likely includes children. The 639 survey responses are from adults, of which 568 self-identified as registered voters in the proposed incorporation boundary. When considering only adult members in the respective population, the response rate and confidence level in the survey's results would be even more compelling.

As is true of any survey, results can be predictive and projected, but are a snapshot in time. Opinions can change, especially after a formal feasibility study and more information is considered by the community. When deciding on implications and how to use the presented results, readers should consider the information available to respondents at the time of their responses together with the survey's confidence level and error rate. Given those caveats, we note the following:

1. The current survey and this report of its results does not replace an expected, detailed feasibility study by a professional third party funded by the Whatcom County Council. We offer this survey, its results, and this report to inform a formal feasibility study and to provide a sense of the community and probable support related to possible incorporation.
2. We believe that a follow-up survey that asks specifically about level of services is needed. While the current survey asked about areas of services that are important to the community, funding of services depends on the amount of service provided, and examining the community's desires in this area should be the next step. Once the desired level of various services is known, costs could then be determined.

The Survey

The survey's 13 questions, absent multiple-choice categories, are shown below.

Q1. Different issues may be central to full-time-permanent and part-time Birch Bay residents, and it's important to understand both groups' needs and wishes. To this end, please indicate if you are a part-time or a full-time resident.

Q2. Where, approximately, is your property located?

Q3. The Birch Bay community may want improvements in areas such as policing, response times for emergency medical calls, road maintenance, snow removal, traffic enforcement, and community planning for new development and construction. If an increase in taxes would be needed to pay for better services, how do you feel about funding an increase in services?

Q4. If taxes did not go up, and services stayed the same as they are now, but incorporation would allow Birch Bay to make local decisions about development, zoning, and permitting, would you be in favor of incorporation?

Q5. Now, decisions that affect Birch Bay are made by the Whatcom County Council, where no members come from Birch Bay. How important is it to have a local City Council making decisions about both services and development, with Birch Bay voters electing local representatives?

Q6. Even if services like policing stayed the same, being a city would allow local representation and local control about zoning, permitting, and development. Would you be willing to pay slightly more for local decision making without an increase in services?

Q7. A formal feasibility study may show that taxes would not go up after incorporation, even for a slight increase in services. But, if a tax increase is needed to improve overall services (policing, emergency response, fire, road repair, snow removal, zoning, development, and so on), how much would you be willing to pay for better services?

Q8. Before incorporation could happen, there would need to be a formal vote. Are you registered to vote in Whatcom County?

Q9. At this time, here's how I feel about incorporation:

Q10. Please rank the following in order of importance to you. Just grab and move the items, placing your most important item at the top, followed by the others in decreasing order of importance.

Q11: Please provide your email address.

Q12. If you provided your email do you want to receive this survey's results? (Email must be provided to receive results.)

Q13. Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions (open-ended, written response).

Each question through number 12 required an answer before moving to the next question. Question 13 allowed respondents to write open-ended comments, but there was no requirement to do so. While several respondents wrote "none," or "no comments" in reply to question 13, 238 respondents made substantive comments. We believe this to be a high number relative to the overall number of responses and indicates that respondents feel strongly about the issue of incorporation and took the survey seriously. Respondents' comments are presented and discussed in a later section of this report.

The decision to require an email address from each respondent was made early in the survey's development. If an email address was not provided, the survey could not be completed. This resulted in a 68% percent completion rate, with six minutes as the average time taken to complete the survey (see Figure 1).

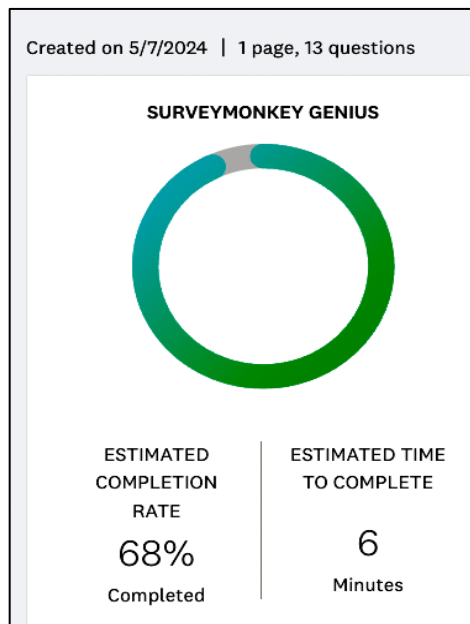


Figure 1. SurveyMonkey Analysis of Completion Rate and Time Required.

Discussion of Results Across all 639 Respondents

This section discusses possible implications of the current survey's results as shown in Attachment A, where response rates and responses appear across four periods of time: May 18th (273 responses), May 26th (336 responses), June 20th (431 responses) and July 7th (639 responses). While the most accurate implications, in terms of confidence in the results, would be from the 639 July 7th data set, looking across the four time periods can provide insight into potential trends as responses accumulated. In the narrative throughout this report percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Percentages through two decimal points are shown in the various attachments to this document.

Does the survey reflect the opinions of the community that would be affected by incorporation?

Of the 639 respondents, 574 (90%) live within the proposed incorporation boundaries and 555 (87%) are full-time residents (see Attachment A, Questions 1 and 2). This supports a conclusion that the survey's responses reflect the beliefs within the community most affected by proposed incorporation.

While there has been some discussion regarding the possible addition of South Point Whitehorn and Birch Point into the incorporation boundaries, only 10 and 23 respondents, respectively, said they resided in those areas—not enough to make reasoned decisions about possible boundary inclusion. A separate, targeted survey of those communities would be needed to address those areas.

What are the issues that respondents most care about?

Two main areas appear to be the most salient to respondents when considering incorporation: local control in decision-making that affects Birch Bay, and financial issues—particularly possible increases in taxes. Each is discussed below.

Local control. Local Control regarding decision-making affecting Birch Bay is likely to be important and influential in the community's decision to incorporate. Local control in decision-making was deemed important by 75% of respondents, with only 157 (25%) of the 639 respondents stating it was unimportant (see Attachment A, Question 5). Areas pertaining to local control, as mentioned in open-ended, written responses, include control related to development, zoning, stormwater management and the like.

Further support for local control being an important consideration comes from Attachment A, Question 4. This question asked if respondents would be in favor of incorporation if services stayed the same as at present, taxes did not increase, but Birch Bay could make local decisions about development, zoning and permitting. Seventy percent of respondents said they would favor incorporation under the above-noted conditions. Clearly, local control is important to the survey's respondents and, by extension, to the Birch Bay community.

Financial issues; tax implications. Concerns about possible increases in taxes and the costs of incorporating and maintaining a city government is the single largest, negative factor that residents identified, and overshadows the issues of local control as a positive factor.

While Attachment A, Question 4 showed that 70% of respondents would favor incorporation if services and taxes stayed the same as now, question 6 shows that 59% would not favor incorporation if taxes were to increase under the same circumstances—an approximate 10% decrease in the importance of local control if taxes were to increase. It is possible that, if taxes

were to increase, the importance of local control would not be salient enough to support a vote for incorporation if services stayed constant.

Two other survey questions (see Attachment A, Questions 3 and 7) also addressed tax implications. Question 3 asked if respondents would be willing to pay more for increased services as well as local decision-making. In answer, 60% stated they would not be willing to pay more. This response duplicates and supports the result noted above for Question 6, where 59% said they would not pay more for local decision-making even if services stayed constant. From responses to these two general questions (3 and 6), one might draw the conclusion that respondents would not be willing to incorporate if taxes were to increase. However, responses to question 7 (see Attachment A), present a counter argument.

Question 7 asks, specifically, how much more in taxes respondents would be willing to pay for increased services and local decision-making, from \$100 per year to \$400 per year more on property appraised at \$500,000. In answer, 60% of respondents would be willing to pay more, with 40% stating they would not be willing to do so. We believe question 7 to be an important indicator, as respondents did not simply choose the lowest possible number (i.e., \$100 more). In fact, almost one-half (29%) of the 60% who said they would be willing to pay more chose an increase of between \$200 and \$400.

We believe that the issue of taxes is extremely important to residents as they consider incorporation. However, specific questions are thought to carry more weight than general questions, suggesting that, when making a forced choice that clearly states possible costs and benefits, respondents may well be willing to pay more—but only if it is clear that services are improved along with local decision-making. It has become somewhat of a "truism" that everyone is against taxes, and especially against increases in taxes. For this reason, general questions (as in questions 3 and 6) are more likely to garner a negative response. Had question 7 also shown a majority of negative responses, it would be clear that concerns about a possible tax increase would likely result in negative outcomes regarding incorporation.¹ However, while clear that possible tax increases will need to be addressed clearly, justified if needed, and match the community's desires regarding services, doing so may well mitigate concerns about financial implications of incorporation.

What Services do Respondents Prioritize?

Question 10 (see Attachment A), asked respondents to rank the following in order of importance: Emergency response times, City Planning and Development, General Fire/Rescue and Ambulance Services, Policing/Public Safety, Public Works (street repair, general maintenance, snow removal), Zoning and Permitting. While we understand that general

¹ Question 7 was inserted specifically to determine whether or not there would be consistency across questions related to tax increases. That is, had responses been consistent across questions 3, 6, and 7 it would have been clear that tax implications would override other considerations. The present result indicates that opinions and concerns about tax implications need to be addressed but are not necessarily a "deal breaker" regarding possible incorporation.

fire/rescue and ambulance services, and the related issue of response times would not be funded within a possible City of Birch Bay's budget, these items were included to gauge respondent's desires in terms of support services. Thus, while these two areas were ranked first and second in terms of priority, when considered in terms of what Birch Bay would be able to control, likely through contracted service with the Sheriff's Department, it is policing and public safety that rises to the top in order of importance, followed by city planning and development (once again supporting the finding that local control in these areas is an important issue). We wish to note that this ranking only provides an indication of what is important to respondents. It does not show what level of services is desired. Determining the level of policing, for example, would have an impact on budget. Therefore, we believe that a follow-up survey to determine level of services is needed, so actual costs can be determined and shared with the community. To this end, we strongly suggest a County-funded, third-party feasibility study to address this issue.

Attachment B shows a summary overview of responses to questions 3 through 7, as related to the above discussion.

How do Respondents Feel About Incorporation?

56% of the respondents stated that they have made a decision about incorporating and do not need additional information (see Attachment A, Question 9). Of these a majority (29%) are opposed to incorporation while 27% are in favor. Overall, 44% of respondents would like more information before making a decision.

We believe it is vital to provide information about services and possible costs related to incorporation to the community, as the above-noted 44% will likely determine the outcome of an incorporation decision. To this end, we again highlight the importance of a County-funded, formal feasibility study.

Also, while some individuals may have good reasons to have made a firm, early decision about incorporation, including having made a conscious decision to live in an unincorporated area or a belief that local control makes all other issues moot, we believe caution is needed before doing so. There is much yet to be known about incorporation over the short, medium, and long terms, including its costs, potential city revenues, its effect on services, effects of various governance structures, effects of new relationships with the County and State, and so on. It is somewhat baffling that over one-half of the respondents state they have made a firm decision—whether for or against—absent much information.

Trends in the Data Over Time

This section examines trends in the survey across the four periods shown in Attachment A. We stress that the most accurate representation of the community's opinions should be taken from the largest number of respondents (639 on July 7th, 2024). However, trends, if moving consistently in one direction or if seen across similar questions that address a common issue,

can be informative in discussing how responses may continue to move in the future. Below, we discuss trends in three areas: responses around the importance of local control including control of services, finances/taxation, and support for incorporation.

Local control. Regarding the importance of local control in decision-making (see Attachment A, Question 5), from May 18th through July 7th, 77%, 76%, 78%, and 76% felt this was important. We suggest that this is a stable result, showing that the importance of local control is likely to remain an important factor as time goes on.

Question 10 asked about prioritizing services, which we believe is related to local control and is thus discussed here. Viewed as a set across time periods, ranks did not change. Emergency response times and related services were first, followed by policing/public safety. City Planning and Development, public works and zoning/permitting. We suggest that the relative importance of these areas would remain consistent as time goes on.

Financial issues; tax implications. Three questions (3, 6, and 7) address financial and tax issues.

Question 3 asked about willingness to pay slightly more if services increased. Over the farthest to nearest time periods the willingness to do so decreased: 45%, 42%, 41%, 40%.

Question 6 asked if respondents would be willing to pay slightly more for local control if services stayed the same. Over the periods shown in Attachment A, results were stable, with 42%, 40%, 41%, 41% noting they would be willing to do so, and a stable majority stating they would not.

Question 7 asked specifically about how much more per year respondents would be willing to pay for local control and an increase in services. With the exception of June 20th, there was a decrease in willingness to pay more and a corresponding increase in unwillingness to do so. (see Table 1, below). In terms of willingness to pay more, the 2% decrease from May 18 to May 26, and June 20 to July 7, in respondents who are willing to pay more suggests that this trend may continue as time goes on. This is consistent with Question 3, noted above.

For an assessed value of \$500,000	May 18	May 26	June 20	July 7
[I] Would pay between \$100 - \$400 more	63%	61%	62%	60%
[I] Would not pay more	37%	39%	38%	40%

Table 1. Responses over time: Willingness to pay more for local control and increased services.

Taken together, results from questions 3, 6, and 7 suggest that future responses to such questions would show an increasing number stating an unwillingness to pay more. We note that comparing any two numbers is likely not significant—for example, a two-point swing between

June 20 and July 7 in Table 1. But this section discusses trends, and the trends, though small, should be considered as somewhat informative.

Support for incorporation. Question 9 asked if respondents were in favor of incorporation, not in favor, or required more information before making a decision. Trends indicate that responses supporting and not supporting incorporation went up over time, although responses not in favor increased slightly more than responses in favor.

For those having made up their minds in favor, response rates were stable over the first three time periods but increased approximately 1% from June 20th to July 7th. For those having made up their minds against incorporation, response rates were stable over the first three time periods but increased approximately 4% from June 20th to July 7th. However, respondents requiring more information, while stable for the first three time periods, decreased by approximately 6% from June 20th to July 7th. Taken together, trends across favorable, unfavorable and responses requiring more information suggest that, if response rates were to increase, unfavorable responses would outpace responses in favor, while responses stating a desire for more information would decrease.

Anecdotal information. We note that the survey received 431 responses through June 20th. At that time, significant publicity occurred within Birch Bay Village and through emails to individuals in the BBIA email list who had not yet responded. As shown in Figure 2, that publicity resulted in over 180 responses received in the week ending June 24th, with a large number of responses appearing to come from Birch Bay Village. Written comments to Question 13 that appeared following the week ending June 17th appear to support this belief, as comments such as the following appeared during that week. "Please leave Birch Bay Village out of your analysis...", "As a resident of Birch Bay Village..." and "A worthwhile option is that Birch Bay Village can opt out..."

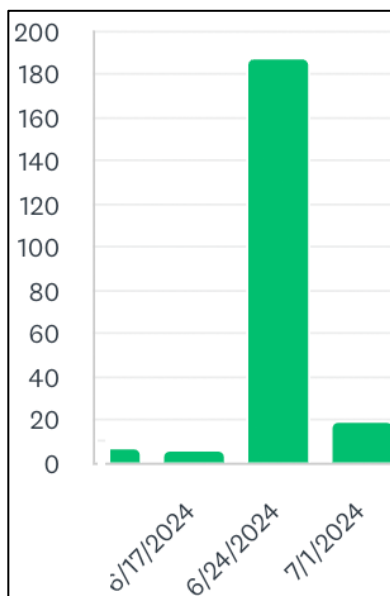


Figure 2 Response rate by week.

Data from a previous attempt to incorporate (add date here) indicate that voters in Birch Bay Village (hereafter BBV) were generally negative in their feelings about incorporation. Thus, it is likely that the drop in the percentage of positive responses, and the corresponding drop in individuals stating a desire for more information, came as a result of an influx of BBV respondents. The following response to question 13 may reflect the feelings of many BBV and other gated-community members' reasoning:

Our community is gated, has its own security patrols and secure access procedures in place; we maintain our own roads, parks, recreational facilities, and community buildings and grounds; we have our own elected Board of Directors, Manager, and supporting Committees in place. Everything an incorporation might provide is already in place...

It is important to note that the opinions of these residents matter. They should not and must not be denigrated or dismissed. However, in future discussions regarding incorporation, and to inform one possible direction within a County-funded feasibility study, informational material to residents could note that, regardless of gated communities' "in-house" systems, the following and other items should be considered:

- gated community residents already pay taxes to the County for services at the same rate as other residents;
- gated-community residents use non-gated roads, facilities, beaches, and parks;
- while general complaints and some low-level crimes are addressed by in-house security, even low-level crimes are often passed to the Sheriff's Department, which is responsible for crime investigations in gated communities;
- decisions made outside the gated area affect gated community residents (the "stop sign" issue, for example, was of concern to BBV and may have had a different outcome given local control).

Themes Within Open-ended, Written Responses

Attachment D presents an analysis, through ChatGPT, of themes within positive, negative, and neutral responses to Question 13: Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions. The full list of responses appears in Attachment E.

Themes within 37 positive comments express appreciation, encouragement and support to individuals in the BBIA, a commitment to future involvement, and support for incorporation. A desire for local control and a desire for more information also appeared as themes within positive written comments. In summary, themes within positive responses collectively demonstrate strong community engagement, support for local governance, and a proactive approach towards the incorporation efforts.

Themes within 98 negative comments included opposition to incorporation coupled with a desire to maintain current lifestyles within Birch Bay. Concerns about possible increased taxes and financial feasibility, and a distrust of Increased bureaucracy and government were also central themes. In summary, themes within negative responses reflect a strong sentiment

against incorporation, driven by concerns over increased taxes, loss of the current lifestyle and freedom, distrust of bureaucracy, satisfaction with existing services, fear of overdevelopment, preference for alternative solutions, and skepticism about the financial feasibility of incorporating Birch Bay.

Neutral comments were generally presented as suggestions, concerns, or desires, in the context of wanting more information to address the concern or suggestion that was stated. Often something like: "I haven't made up my mind but am concerned about costs and need more information about possible tax increases." Or "I hope stormwater management would improve if incorporation were to happen." Thus, while concerns appear as themes, they are not negative in the sense that they are paired with being unsupportive of incorporation.

Themes within 103 neutral comments raised issues and a desire for clarity about finances and taxation, services, community development and zoning, education and representation, environmental and recreational outcomes. In summary, themes within neutral responses reflect interests and suggestions from residents regarding the potential incorporation of Birch Bay, touching on financial implications, infrastructure needs, community development, environmental considerations, governance structure, and a general need for additional, transparent communication.

Discussion of Responses from Self-identified Whatcom County Voters

An analysis of the 568 respondents (see Attachment A: Question 8) who replied "yes" when asked, "Are you registered to vote in Whatcom County?" was undertaken because the final decision about incorporation would rest with voters. Attachment C presents the results from these 568 respondents.

Table 2, below, shows that there is no difference when comparing responses of the 568 self-identified registered voters to the total (639 response) dataset. In every case, responses are within 1% of each other. For this reason, the previous discussion across the entire dataset also applies to the subset or self-identified voters.

Comparison of total responses to registered voters (rounded from 2 decimal points)	Total = 639	Voters = 568
Q2. Answer Choices [I live] Within the Proposed Boundaries	07-Jul 90%	07-Jul 89%
Q3. Answer Choices I would consider paying somewhat more for better services.	07-Jul 40 %	07-Jul 41%

Q4. If taxes did not go up, and services stayed the same as they are now, but incorporation would allow Birch Bay to make local decisions about development, zoning, and permitting, would you be in favor of incorporation?	07-Jul	07-Jul
Yes	69.95%	69.01%
Q5. [Local decision-making is:]	07-Jul	07-Jul
Very important to me	49%	49%
Somewhat important to me	26%	26%
Somewhat unimportant to me	10%	10%
Not important to me	15%	15%
Q6. Answer Choices	07-Jul	07-Jul
Yes, I would be willing pay slightly more for local decision making if services stayed the same.	41%	41%
No, I would not be willing to pay slightly more for local decision making if services stayed the same.	59%	59%
Q7. Answer Choices	07-Jul	07-Jul
Respondents who said they would pay between \$100 to \$400 more per year on a property assessed at \$500,000.	60%	59%
I would not be willing to pay more for better services.	40%	41%
Q9. At this time:	07-Jul	07-Jul
I'm in favor of incorporation and don't need additional information.	27%	27%
I'm not in favor of incorporation and don't need additional information.	29%	30%
I need more information before deciding how to vote on incorporation.	44%	43%

Table 2. Comparison of total responses to registered voters' responses.

General Implications

The survey results reported herein provide a snapshot in time through July 7, 2024 and apply to the 639 respondents at the time of their respective responses. That being said, the survey's responses approximate 7.3% of the population in question. While it may be viewed as indicative of the larger community at the time indicated, opinions may change as more information is provided to the community.

The following discussion is based on the 568 self-identified registered voters (see Table 2, question 9, above), as only those respondents would be able to cast formal ballots to determine incorporation.

We believe, if an election to decide on incorporation had been held on July 7th, the initiative would likely have failed, even if undecided voters split evenly across favorable and unfavorable

groups. On July 7th, 30% would have voted against, and 27% would have been in favor. Regardless of whether a 60% majority or only a simple majority is required for incorporation approval, the survey's results indicate that a majority of registered-voter respondents would have voted against incorporating. Certainly, a supermajority for incorporation was out of reach.

We note that 43% (244) of 568 respondents were undecided on July 7th (see Attachment C, Question 9). Assuming that undecided respondents would split evenly across favorable and unfavorable groups, the favorable group would still be in the minority. However, recall that the most recent respondent pool broke more to the negative than positive side. Assuming a 55% negative to 45% positive split in the undecided group, the "opposed" group would beat the "in favor" group by an even greater margin. We base this statement on the following calculations.

While 43% (244) of 568 respondents were undecided, 27% (154) were in favor and 30% (170) were opposed. If the 244 undecided respondents broke evenly across the other two groups, an additional 122 would be added to each, yielding (154 + 122 = 276 [49% of total responses] in favor) and (170 + 122 = 292 [51% of total responses] opposed). If the 244 undecided responses were to split 45% in favor (110 respondents) and 55% (134 respondents) opposed, then the outcome would be (154 + 110 = 264 [46% of total responses] in favor) and (170 + 134 = 304 [54% of total responses] opposed). In either scenario, the "opposed" group would win.

In order for the "in favor" group to reach a bare majority over the "opposed" group, at least 54% of the undecided responses would have to break positive, compared to 46% negative (see footnote 2 for this calculation).² Recall that, of responses after June 20th, nearly 55% of responses were opposed. To reach a 54% "in favor" split in the undecided responses, a relatively large percentage-point shift would be needed.

To be clear, the above discussion is a projection and not fact. Final voting outcomes depend on many things, with turnout and enthusiasm being extremely important. If those opposed, or in favor, turn out in greater numbers relative to the other group, that could be determinative. Regardless, the results indicate areas that should be emphasized before a vote occurs. Specifically:

- provide additional information and communication containing clear and supportable data about potential costs, revenues, and tax implications;
- engage with residents of gated communities to increase awareness of how incorporation would fit with their current management and support services;
- continue to affirm the benefits of local control regarding decisions that affect Birch Bay.

² 244 of 568 respondents were undecided (43%) while 154 (27%) were in favor and 170 (29%) were opposed. Projecting if the 244 undecided respondents split 54% in favor and 46% opposed: an additional 54% (132) would be added to the "in favor" group, and 46% (112) to the opposed, yielding (154 + 132 = 286 [50% of total responses] in favor) and (170 + 112 = 280 [49% of total responses] opposed).

Concluding Summary

The Birch Bay Incorporation Association's Research and Feasibility Committee conducted an online survey from May 7, 2024, to July 7, 2024, to gauge community sentiment regarding the potential incorporation of Birch Bay. This report summarizes the findings from 639 respondents, representing approximately 7.3% of the local population, resulting in a near 99% confidence level.

Key Findings

1. **Community Representation:**
 - 90% of respondents reside within the proposed incorporation boundaries.
 - 87% are full-time residents.
 - 89% identified as registered voters within the proposed area.
2. **Primary Concerns:**
 - **Local Control:** 75% emphasized the importance of local decision-making on issues like development, zoning, and stormwater management.
 - **Financial Issues:** Concerns about potential tax increases were significant. While 70% supported incorporation if services and taxes remained unchanged, support dropped to 59% if taxes increased.
3. **Service Priorities:**
 - Policing and public safety, along with city planning and development, emerged as critical areas for local control.
4. **Support for Incorporation:**
 - 57% of self-identified registered voters within the proposed boundary had a firm stance on incorporation, with 27% in favor and 30% opposed.
 - 43% desired more information before making a decision.

Recommendations

- **Further Research:** A follow-up survey should be conducted to detail the community's desired service levels and related costs.
- **Feasibility Study:** A comprehensive third-party feasibility study is recommended to provide clarity on the financial implications and benefits of incorporation.

Implications

- The survey indicates strong support for local governance, contingent on transparent communication about tax implications and service improvements.
- The findings will inform future feasibility studies and community discussions on incorporation.

Conclusion

The survey highlights the community's desire for local control and improved services, balanced against concerns about potential tax increases. Ongoing engagement and a detailed feasibility study are essential to guide Birch Bay's decision on incorporation.

ATTACHMENT A

Birch Bay Incorporation: General Survey Through July 7, 2024		N = 639	N = 431	N = 336	N = 273	
Q1. Different issues may be central to full-time-permanent and part-time Birch Bay residents, and it's important to understand both groups' needs and wishes. To this end, please indicate below:		07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
	Answer Choices	Responses				
I'm a part-time, second-home-home resident		13.15%	84	12.53%	11.01%	9.89%
I'm a full-time, permanent resident		86.85%	555	87.47%	88.99%	90.11%
		Answered	639	431	336	273
		Skipped	0	0	0	0
Q2. Where, approximately, is your property located?		07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
	Answer Choices	Responses				
Within the Proposed Boundaries		89.83%	574	91.42%	92.26%	91.58%
Birch Point		3.60%	23	3.25%	2.68%	2.20%
North of Lincoln Rd		2.35%	15	1.86%	1.79%	2.20%
Kickerville		0.16%	1	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Pleasant Valley		2.50%	16	2.09%	2.38%	2.93%
South Point Whitehorn		1.56%	10	1.39%	0.89%	1.10%
		Answered	639	431	336	273
		Skipped	0	0	0	0
Q3. The Birch Bay community may want improvements in areas such as policing, response times for emergency medical calls, road maintenance, snow removal, traffic enforcement, and community planning for new development and construction. If an increase in taxes would be needed to pay for better services, how do you feel about funding an increase in services?		07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
	Answer Choices	Responses				
I would consider paying somewhat more for better services.		40.38%	258	41.53%	42.26%	45.05%
I'm happy with the services we get from the County and would not be willing to pay more in taxes for increased services.		48.36%	309	47.80%	47.32%	44.32%
I'm not happy with the services we get from the County, but would not be willing to pay more in taxes for increased services.		11.27%	72	10.67%	10.42%	10.62%

	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
Answered	639	431	336	273	
Skipped	0	0	0	0	
<hr/>					
Q4. If taxes did not go up, and services stayed the same as they are now, but incorporation would allow Birch Bay to make local decisions about development, zoning, and permitting, would you be in favor of incorporation?	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
Answer Choices	Responses				
Yes	69.95%	447	73.09%	72.92%	73.63%
No	30.05%	192	26.91%	27.08%	26.37%
Answered	639	431	336	273	
Skipped	0	0	0	0	
<hr/>					
Q5. Now, decisions that affect Birch Bay are made by the Whatcom County Council, where no members come from Birch Bay. How important is it to have a local City Council making decisions about both services and development, with Birch Bay voters electing local representatives?	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
Answer Choices	Responses				
Very important to me	48.98%	313	50.58%	51.49%	51.28%
Somewhat important to me	26.45%	169	26.91%	25.30%	26.37%
Somewhat unimportant to me	10.02%	64	9.28%	8.93%	8.42%
Not important to me	14.55%	93	13.23%	14.29%	13.92%
Answered	639	431	336	273	
Skipped	0	0	0	0	
<hr/>					
Q6. Even if services like policing stayed the same, being a city would allow local representation and local control about zoning, permitting, and development. Would you be willing to pay slightly more for local decision making without an increase in services?	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
Answer Choices	Responses				
Yes, I would be willing pay slightly more for local decision making if services stayed the same.	41.31%	264	40.60%	40.48%	42.12%
No, I would not be willing to pay slightly more for local decision making if services stayed the same.	58.69%	375	59.40%	59.52%	57.88%

	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	
Answered	639	431	336	273	
Skipped	0	0	0	0	
<p>Q7. A formal feasibility study may show that taxes would not go up after incorporation, even for a slight increase in services. But, if a tax increase is needed to improve overall services (policing, emergency response, fire, road repair, snow removal, zoning, development, and so on), how much would you be willing to pay for better services? Note: The numbers below are based on a property assessed at \$500,000. That's assessed value, not a selling price. So a property assessed at \$250,000 would pay half of the yearly amount shown below, and a property assessed at \$1 million would pay twice the yearly amount shown below.</p>					
Answer Choices	Responses				
For better services, I would pay an additional \$100 per year (28 cents per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.	30.99%	198	29.93%	28.27%	27.84%
For better services, I would pay an additional \$200 per year (56 cents per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.	18.47%	118	20.88%	20.83%	22.34%
For better services, I would pay an additional \$300 per year (83 cents per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.	4.54%	29	5.80%	5.95%	6.96%
For better services, I would pay an additional \$400 per year (\$1.11 per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.	5.95%	38	5.80%	5.95%	6.23%
I would not be willing to pay more for better services.	40.06%	256	37.59%	38.99%	36.63%
Answered	639	431	336	273	
Skipped	0	0	0	0	
<p>Q8. Before incorporation could happen, there would need to be a formal vote. Are you registered to vote in Whatcom County?</p>					
Answer Choices	Responses				
Yes	88.89%	568	89.56%	92.26%	93.41%
No	11.11%	71	10.44%	7.74%	6.59%
Answered	639	431	336	273	
Skipped	0	0	0	0	
<p>Q9. At this time, here's how I feel about incorporation:</p>					
	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May	

Answer Choices	Responses				
I'm in favor of incorporation and don't need additional information.	27.23%	174	25.75%	24.11%	25.64%
I'm not in favor of incorporation and don't need additional information.	28.64%	183	24.59%	26.79%	25.27%
I need more information before deciding how to vote on incorporation.	44.13%	282	49.65%	49.11%	49.08%
	Answered	639	431	336	273
	Skipped	0	0	0	0

Q10. Please rank the following in order of importance to you. Just grab and move the items, placing your most important item at the top, followed by the others in decreasing order of importance.	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May
	Score	Rank	Rank	Rank
Emergency response times	4.91	1	1	1
City Planning and Development	3.04	4	4	3
General Fire/Rescue and Ambulance Services	4.18	2	2	2
Policing/Public Safety	3.89	3	3	4
Public Works (street repair, general maintenance, snow removal)	2.95	5	5	5
Zoning and Permitting	2.03	6	6	6
	Answered	639	431	336
	Skipped	0	0	0

Q12. If you provided your email do you want to receive this survey's results? (Email must be provided to receive results.)	07-Jul	20-Jun	26-May	18-May
Answer Choices	Responses			
Yes	89.36%	571	91.65%	91.37%
No	10.64%	68	8.35%	8.63%
	Answered	639	431	336
	Skipped	0	0	0

Q11: Please provide email address; Q13. Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions.

ATTACHMENT B
Summary Table: 639 Responses

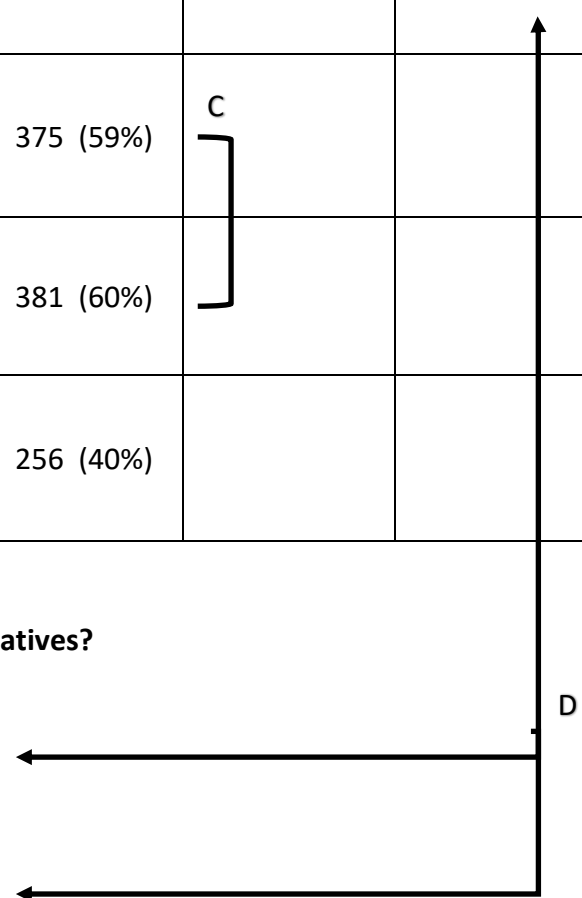
	Would consider paying more	Would pay more	Would not pay more	In favor of incorporation	Not in favor of incorporation
A	Q4: Services <i>stay same</i> , get local decision making and <i>no tax increase</i>			447 (70%)	192 (30%)
	Q6: Services <i>stay same</i> , get local decision making but <i>with tax increase</i>		264 (41%)	375 (59%)	
B	Q3: Services <i>improve</i> , get local decision making but <i>with tax increase</i>	258 (40%)		381 (60%)	
	Q7: How much would you pay for improved service and local decision making (\$100 to \$400 annually)?		383 (60%)	256 (40%)	

Q5: How important is it to have a local City Council making decisions about both services and development, with Birch Bay voters electing local representatives?

Very (313; 49.0%) or somewhat (169; 26.5%) important 482 (75%)
 Not or somewhat not important 157 (25%)

Q9: At this time, here's how I feel about incorporation:

In favor of incorporation, no information needed. 174 (27%)
 Not in favor of incorporating, no information needed. 183 (29%)
 Need more information. 282 (44%)



ATTACHMENT C

**Birch Bay Incorporation: General Survey Using Only Self-Identified Registered Voters
(568 out of 639 Respondents)**

Q1. Different issues may be central to full-time-permanent and part-time Birch Bay residents, and it's important to understand both groups' needs and wishes. To this end, please indicate below:

	I'm a part-time, second-home-home resident	I'm a full-time, permanent resident	Total
Q8: Yes	5.99% 34	94.01% 534	100.00% 568
Total	5.99% 34	94.01% 534	100.00% 568
		Answered	568
		Skipped	0

Q2. Where, approximately, is your property located?

	Within the Proposed Boundaries	Birch Point	North of Lincoln Rd	Kickerville
Q8: Yes	89.44% 508	3.87% 22	2.64% 15	0.18% 1
Total	89.44% 508	3.87% 22	2.64% 15	0.18% 1

	Pleasant Valley	South Point Whitehorn	Total
	2.64% 15	1.23% 7	100.00% 568
	2.64% 15	1.23% 7	100.00% 568
		Answered	568
		Skipped	0

Q3. The Birch Bay community may want improvements in areas such as policing, response times for emergency medical calls, road maintenance, snow removal, traffic enforcement, and community planning for new development and construction. If an increase in taxes would be needed to pay for better services, how do you feel about funding an increase in services?

	I would consider paying somewhat more for better services.		I'm happy with the services we get from the County and would not be willing to pay more in taxes for increased services.		I'm not happy with the services we get from the County, but would not be willing to pay more in taxes for increased services.		Total	
Q8: Yes	40.85%	232	48.06%	273	11.09%	63	100.00%	568
Total	40.85%	232	48.06%	273	11.09%	63	100.00%	568
							Answered	568
							Skipped	0

Q4. If taxes did not go up, and services stayed the same as they are now, but incorporation would allow Birch Bay to make local decisions about development, zoning, and permitting, would you be in favor of incorporation?

	Yes		No		Total	
Q8: Yes	69.01%	392	30.99%	176	100.00%	568
Total	69.01%	392	30.99%	176	100.00%	568
					Answered	568
					Skipped	0

Q5. Now, decisions that affect Birch Bay are made by the Whatcom County Council, where no members come from Birch Bay. How important is it to have a local City Council making decisions about both services and development, with Birch Bay voters electing local representatives?

	Very important to me		Somewhat important to me		Somewhat unimportant to me		Not important to me	
Q8: Yes	49.30%	280	25.53%	145	9.68%	55	15.49%	88
Total	49.30%	280	25.53%	145	9.68%	55	15.49%	88
							Total	
							100.00%	568
							100.00%	568
							Answered	568
							Skipped	0

Q6. Even if services like policing stayed the same, being a city would allow local representation and local control about zoning, permitting, and development. Would you be willing to pay slightly more for local decision making without an increase in services?

	Yes, I would be willing pay slightly more for local decision making if services stayed the same.	No, I would not be willing to pay slightly more for local decision making if services stayed the same.	Total
Q8: Yes	41.02% 233	58.98% 335	100.00% 568
Total	41.02% 233	58.98% 335	100.00% 568
			Answered 568
			Skipped 0

Q7. A formal feasibility study may show that taxes would not go up after incorporation, even for a slight increase in services. But, if a tax increase is needed to improve overall services (policing, emergency response, fire, road repair, snow removal, zoning, development, and so on), how much would you be willing to pay for better services? Note: The numbers below are based on a property assessed at \$500,000. That's assessed value, not a selling price. So a property assessed at \$250,000 would pay half of the yearly amount shown below, and a property assessed at \$1 million would pay twice the yearly amount shown below.

	For better services, I would pay an additional \$100 per year (28 cents per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.	For better services, I would pay an additional \$200 per year (56 cents per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.	For better services, I would pay an additional \$300 per year (83 cents per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.	For better services, I would pay an additional \$400 per year (\$1.11 per day) on a property assessed at \$500,000.
Q8: Yes	30.11% 171	17.96% 102	4.58% 26	6.16% 35
Total	30.11% 171	17.96% 102	4.58% 26	6.16% 35

I would not be willing to pay more for better services.	Total
41.20% 234	100.00% 568
41.20% 234	100.00% 568
Answered 568	

Skipped 0

Q8. Before incorporation could happen, there would need to be a formal vote. Are you registered to vote in Whatcom County?

	Yes	No	Total
Q8: Yes	100.00% 568	0.00% 0	100.00% 568
Total	100.00% 568	0.00% 0	100.00% 568
Answered			568
Skipped			0

Q9. At this time, here's how I feel about incorporation:

	I'm in favor of incorporation and don't need additional information.	I'm not in favor of incorporation and don't need additional information.	I need more information before deciding how to vote on incorporation.	Total
Q8: Yes	26.94% 153	30.11% 171	42.96% 244	100.00% 568
Total	26.94% 153	30.11% 171	42.96% 244	100.00% 568
Answered				568
Skipped				0

Q10. Please rank the following in order of importance to you. Just grab and move the items, placing your most important item at the top, followed by the others in decreasing order of importance.

Emergency response times

	Score
Q8: Yes	4.91
Total	568
	0

City Planning and Development

	Score
Q8: Yes	3.01
Total	568

0

General Fire/Rescue and Ambulance Services

	Score
Q8: Yes	4.2
	568
	0

Policing/Public Safety

	Score
Q8: Yes	3.9
	568
	0

Public Works (street repair, general maintenance, snow removal)

	Score
Q8: Yes	2.94
	568
	0

Zoning and Permitting

	Score
Q8: Yes	2.04
Answered	568
Skipped	0

Q11. Please provide your email address. We won't share it or sell it, and providing your email allows you to receive a report of this survey's results and dates of public meetings. You will have a chance, below, to opt out of receiving results.

Q12. If you provided your email do you want to receive this survey's results? (Email must be provided to receive results.)

	Yes	No	Total
Q8: Yes	88.91% 505	11.09% 63	100.00% 568
Total	88.91% 505	11.09% 63	100.00% 568
		Answered	568
		Skipped	0

Q13. Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions.

ATTACHMENT D
Themes from Positive Comments—Analysis from ChatGPT
Analysis of 37 Positive Comments out of 639 Total Responses Follows

The common themes in the provided list of comments include:

- 1. Appreciation and Gratitude:**
 - Many comments express thanks and appreciation for the efforts and hard work put into the project.
 - Examples: "Thank you very much for all you all are doing," "Thanks for doing the work on this!"
- 2. Encouragement and Support:**
 - There is a recurring theme of encouraging those involved to continue their efforts.
 - Examples: "Great job! Keep up the good work!," "You are doing a great job on this issue. I support your efforts 100%."
- 3. Support for Incorporation:**
 - Several comments show support for the idea of incorporating Birch Bay.
 - Examples: "We believe in incorporation and expect some difficulties will occur and be dealt with," "Wishing we can be a city, and I will register in Whatcom county."
- 4. Desire for Local Control and Representation:**
 - Comments reflect a desire for more local control and representation in decision-making processes.
 - Examples: "If we had representation on the board for making changes in our own community that would definitely make sense," "I love the idea of Birch Bay having its own decisions over permitting."
- 5. Optimism and Caution:**
 - Some comments express cautious optimism about the incorporation efforts.
 - Examples: "I'm cautiously optimistic...," "Every small / new community makes mistakes, either under-reaching or overreaching. We can do it right."
- 6. Information and Education:**
 - A few comments highlight the importance of being informed and educated about the process.
 - Examples: "Information is always the best! Thank You," "Folks are really trying to educate us citizens."
- 7. Commitment to Future Involvement:**
 - There is a willingness to remain involved and contribute to the efforts.
 - Examples: "Please feel free to reach out to me as I believe I can offer relevant experience and skills," "Thank you for including me in this survey. I live outside the proposed area, so I have stopped coming to meetings, but this is more hopeful."

These themes collectively demonstrate strong community engagement, support for local governance, and a proactive approach towards the incorporation efforts.

Themes from Negative Comments—Analysis from ChatGPT

Analysis of 98 Negative Comments out of 639 Total Responses Follows

The common themes from the responses in your list about the incorporation of Birch Bay can be summarized as follows:

1. Opposition to Incorporation

Examples:

- "I moved to BB because it is UNincorporated. I feel a sense of freedom here that I don't feel anywhere else."
- "No I don't want it incorporated!"
- "I am against incorporation of Birch Bay."
- "Please keep Birch Bay the same."
- "NO to incorporation."

2. Concerns About Increased Taxes

Examples:

- "No more taxes. Period."
- "Higher taxes will be inevitable."
- "Most people won't be in favor of paying more in taxes."
- "I am not interested in paying more taxes!!"
- "I do not want to pay any more taxes. Period."

3. Desire to Maintain Current Lifestyle and Freedom

Examples:

- "I feel a sense of freedom here that I don't feel anywhere else."
- "Been there, done that. Perfectly happy to be in an unincorporated area."
- "We bought here because it is rural. I don't want that to change."
- "Leave it the way it is! We moved out here to live in peace and not be governed by a city."

4. Distrust of Increased Bureaucracy and Government

Examples:

- "More bureaucracy is not what's needed."
- "This entire effort is a waste of time and money."
- "No more bureaucracy."
- "I am opposed to anything that would increase bureaucracy."
- "NO to more government."

5. Sufficient Existing Services

Examples:

- "All the services mentioned in the report already exist or are provided by the county."
- "We already provide our own security, road maintenance including snow removal."
- "Blaine does a good job and also the county does a good job with our Fire and emergency dept."
- "I believe we have very good supports in Birch Bay."

6. Fear of Overdevelopment and Loss of Small-Town Feel

Examples:

- "The simplicity of Birch Bay will be lost in the tangle of bureaucracy."
- "Developers are looking to Birch Bay because surrounding areas have restricted them."
- "Birch Bay is in danger of over-commercialization."
- "Don't spoil it."

7. Preference for Alternative Solutions

Examples:

- "Birch Bay needs a council member on the Whatcom County Council to represent Birch Bay."
- "Why don't those interested in making sure Birch Bay has representation at the County Council run for a county office?"
- "Our efforts would go farther if we simply insist on more representation in all county decisions."

8. Skepticism About Financial Feasibility

Examples:

- "Cost estimates of incorporating are not believable."
- "I don't think we have enough of a business base to justify incorporation."
- "Having to set up a new city government and services will be ridiculously expensive."
- "There is no logic in this action."

These themes reflect a strong sentiment against incorporation, driven by concerns over increased taxes, loss of the current lifestyle and freedom, distrust of bureaucracy, satisfaction with existing services, fear of overdevelopment, preference for alternative solutions, and skepticism about the financial feasibility of incorporating Birch Bay.

Themes from Neutral Comments—Analysis from ChatGPT Analysis of 103 Neutral Comments out of 639 Total Responses Follows

Note: These are neutral comments, not negative comments, as they were presented as suggestions, concerns, or desires, usually in the context of wanting more information to address the concern or suggestions that was stated. Often something like: "I haven't made up my mind but am concerned about costs and need more information about possible tax increases." Or "I hope stormwater management would improve if incorporation were to happen."

Based on the numbered list you've provided, here are some common themes that emerge:

- 1. Financial Concerns and Taxation:**
 - Many comments express worries about potential tax increases associated with incorporation.
 - Concerns about property taxes, impact on fixed incomes, and skepticism about financial projections.
 - Examples: Items 1, 4, 9, 15, 21, 26, 31, 34, 46, 64, 76, 78, 89, 91, 95, 97.
- 2. Infrastructure and Services:**
 - Discussions on the need for improved infrastructure such as roads, stormwater management, and beach access.
 - Questions about service levels post-incorporation, including emergency services, schools, and community amenities.
 - Examples: Items 6, 18, 23, 25, 36, 59, 79, 80, 92, 99.
- 3. Community Development and Zoning:**
 - Concerns and desires related to zoning regulations, development control, and preservation of community character.
 - Examples: Items 28, 45, 57, 67, 84, 94, 102.
- 4. Educational Impact and Representation:**
 - Questions about the impact on schools and educational services.
 - Desire for local representation and governance structure.
 - Examples: Items 11, 26, 38, 63, 96, 100.
- 5. Environmental and Recreational Concerns:**
 - Issues related to environmental impact, stormwater management, and preservation of natural areas.
 - Calls for regulations on fireworks and beach access.
 - Examples: Items 6, 18, 25, 35, 70, 83.
- 6. Communication and Information Transparency:**
 - Requests for more detailed information, clarity on survey questions, and transparency in decision-making.
 - Examples: Items 7, 19, 37, 49, 58, 61, 73, 85, 90.

These themes reflect a range of concerns and interests from residents regarding the potential incorporation of Birch Bay, touching on financial implications, infrastructure needs, community development, environmental considerations, governance structure, and the need for transparent communication.

ATTACHMENT E: Written Responses to Question 13

Question 13: Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions. (Open-Ended Response)

Copied directly from responses made to Question 13. These 238 written responses do not include responses that read "none" or "no comment." Current as of July 7, 2024.

Positive Comments

1. Thank you very much for all you all are doing
2. Great job! Keep up the good work!
3. Thank you for taking so much of your time trying to move incorporating forward.
4. We moved up from the Woodinville area where the taxes are very high to Birch Bay. We moved here because the cost of living is less and we just retired. We would like to keep costs down. If we had representation on the board for making changes in our own community that would definitely make sense. Thank you.
5. Thank you for all you are doing!
6. You are doing a great job on this issue. I support your efforts 100%.
7. Thanks for doing the work on this!
8. Make us our own
9. Good luck :).
10. Well done, keep up the good work! We need this!
11. Folks are really trying to educate us citizens.
12. We are glad you are doing this.
13. Thank you for looking out for us
14. We believe in incorporation and expect some difficulties will occur and be dealt with. We think you need to increase the incorporated area to include properties that are adjacent to properties owned by BP Cherry Point and any conservancies. Why allow the county to be in-between us and those entities that impact us (and vice-versa). Take out that middle- man.
15. glad this is being discussed, thank you for your time and effort
16. I love the idea of Birch Bay having it's own decisions over permitting.
17. Information is always the best! Thank You
18. Thank you for doing this
19. Keep up the good work!
20. Wishing we can be a city, and I will register in Whatcom county
21. Think Big and make big decisions.
22. I'm cautiously optimistic...
23. Thank you for including me in this survey. I live outside the proposed area, so I have stopped coming to meetings, but this is more hopeful. I'm in favor of incorporation.
24. i would be in favor of incorporation and i do not want to be of part Blaine ever
25. I favor incorporating soon, but then believe we should incorporate and move slowly in develop our city government. Every small / new community makes mistakes, either under reaching (we can't do) or, overreaching (doing things that are legally wrong and getting sued). We can do it right and I encourage each other to work hard at it.
26. thank you for all your work and energy put forth on the project. it's very much appreciated.
27. Keep up the good work
28. Thanks for working on this!

29. Excellent survey. I remain a strong ally of the effort to incorporate and wish to lend my support to this effort. Please feel free to reach out to me as I believe I can offer relevant experience and skills
30. To those who go before us, congratulations on the work thus far. A labor of love for sure but deemed necessary in these high tax times. Congrats to those of you involved to date.
31. Thank you to everyone working so hard on this!
32. Thanks to all who are volunteering and spending time on this worthy project!
33. Bring on Birch Bay City 👍
34. Keep up the great work! I'm looking forward to seeing the results of this survey
35. Keep up the good work. Volunteering for this is a lot of work.
36. Thanks for your hard work on this important issue.
37. Thank you so much for doing all of this!!!

Negative Comments

1. I moved to BB because it is UNIncorporated. I feel a sense of freedom here that I don't feel anywhere else. Now newcomers (?) want to incorporate and provide "services" which means increased taxes and power hungry people imposing rules and regulations. BB will be forever changed and become like all those nasty places people are running from. I do t know who came up with this ungodly idea of incorporation but I d say if you don't like it here go elsewhere. Thank you.
2. Birch Bay needs a council member on the Whatcom County Council to represent Birch Bay. All the services mentioned in the report already exist or are provided by the county.
3. No more taxes. Period.
4. No I don't want it incorporated!
5. Been there, done that. Perfectly happy to be in an unincorporated area.
6. This entire effort is a waste of time and money.
7. Don't incorporate!!!!
8. I'm not in favor of incorporating. More bureaucracy is not what's needed. Representation is needed on the council.
9. I think everything is fine the way it is
10. Higher taxes will be inevitable. As will be more regulations..inevitable banning of fireworks..the simplicity of Birch Bay will be lost in the tangle of bureaucracy.
11. I am against incorporation of Birch Bay.
12. Most people won't be in favor of paying more in taxes or other costs when everything costs so much already. Incorporation is a terrible decision right now.
13. Please keep Birch Bay the same. Let's not allow foreign (Canadian) investors or developers to make this the Millionaires row. We grew up in Whatcom county and understand the easy lifestyle of golf carts and fireworks. No city lights. Local activities.
14. People in favor keep saying incorporation will cost birch bay residents more money, that is either a bold faced lie or they have no idea what it takes to run a city
15. Costs will go up no matter what you say in your proposal. Having to set up a new city government and services will be ridiculously expensive. Costs to home owners are already driving people away. Rent is going ever higher and "affordable" housing is a joke here. Developers are looking to Birch Bay because surrareas have restricted them so now development here will kill the small town feel most people come here to enjoy. There are other ways to accomplish improving services without becoming a city which requires more funding that the local population cannot afford.
16. Again. Why don't those interested in making sure Birch Bay has representation at the County Council run for a county office?

17. I don't think we have enough of a business base to justify incorporation. Property taxes cannot fund this.
18. I am not interested in paying mor taxes!! Life is expensive enough. I also don't want people telling me what I can and can't do on my own property.
19. We bought here because it is rural. I don't want that to change. I don't believe the cost estimates of incorporating.
20. No more taxes
21. Leave it the way it is! We moved out here to live in peace and not be governed by a city. Want to live in a city move to one, do t try to change the county!
22. A real estate agent ramrodding the incorporation movement in the Birch Bay area by serving to have three Canadians sell properties in the area (3 individual LLC's with one address in Vancouver BC) where the planned City Center would be seems more self serving to them than any improvement to be had by the people PAYING for it in the long run.
23. For question 5: we do have representation from the Birch Bay Area on the City Counsel. Ben Elenbaas lives out here. Also, the feasibility study done in 2008 showed minimal to no tax savings. The cost of running a city with the services mentioned is not easily obtained.
24. first of all question #5 has a simple solution, elect someone from Birch Bay to the whatcom county council. The next thing that jumps out to me is that this survey is biased to the pro side as much as the meetings seem to be. I'm in favor of sending out a strait up question to each home owner in the bay on whether they think this is a good idea before we have the county spend \$200,000 on something that will not pass come voting time.
25. I am opposed to incorporation because the community where I live was included in the study area without our consent. Our community is gated, has its own security patrols and secure access procedures in place; we maintain our own roads, parks, recreational facilities, and community buildings and grounds; we have our own elected Board of Directors, Manager, and supporting Committees in place. Everything an incorporation might provide is already in place and adding an additional layer of "representation" can only come at additional taxation and costs. Please leave Birch Bay Village out of your analysis or, if it should come to a vote, please anticipate a concerted effort to defeat the proposal from this community. Should that happen, some 1000 households (i.e., 2000 voters) could help defeat the incorporation effort at the polls. Thank you for your consideration.
26. Some of the questions are not daily phrased and make unfair assumptions. i.e. I'm not unhappy with services, so question #7 is hard to answer properly.
27. At this time with the high cost of living I'm not in paying higher taxes. Washington State taxes are already too high with little benefit for rural areas.
28. Knowing how municipalities are I think this whole discussion is only about two concerns - Planning and life safety issues - there is so much more that a municipality does and I feel that incorporation is just the beginning of a slippery slope. A newly incorporated city would need the support people which adds up very quickly to get all of the expertise. I think you are kidding yourself if you think it can be done for less. Need to get rid of crooked government employees like Natural Resources Planner.
29. If it works don't fix it!
30. Happy with the way the zoning is
31. NO
32. We DEFINITELY DO NOT need another level of bureaucracy in Birch Bay. I see absolutely no valid need to incorporate.
33. Taxes will triple with bb a city. I don't think you folks realize that this is Whatcom county not California
34. I personally see many people moving in from out of the area, bringing their policies, making our housing prices and taxes more expensive. At one time I thought it would be fun to have our own Address instead

- of Blaine. But when it comes down to issues, policing, etc, Blaine does a good job and also the county does a good job with our Fire and emergency dept. I really don't like the policies for the shorelines, they are too liberal and I don't think being our own city will change that.
35. Moved here to escape politics and bureaucrats. This looks like lots more of that.
 36. I am NOT interested in incorporation to provide developers a way around permitting and zoning.
 37. Please don't ruin our amazing Birch Bay by incorporating. I moved from Seattle to live in my grandparents home they built here in the sixties. If you want big city amenities move to a big city!
 38. This will cost tax payers in this area way more than we are paying now. I hope this doesn't pass. Lived in Birch Bay for 40 years. Things are good the way they are.
 39. At this point, I just don't see a compelling case for Birch Bay to be its own entity. While it's worth finding out more, it seems the more economical path would be to compel the leadership of Blaine to meet whatever deficits Birch Bay has.
 40. I am opposed to anything that would increase bureaucracy.
 41. I think incorporation is only going to make the people who are already rich around here richer because those that don't want to pay more taxes will be moving.
 42. No incorporation! We enjoy the quaint community as is.
 43. We've lived in Birch Bay 20 + years and absolutely do not want to pay more in taxes for the privilege of living here! More revenue coming into Birch Bay should reduce our personal taxes and improve the services to our community. [Different IP and email; same last name as similar comment below]
 44. We definitely need more representation in the County Council and I believe there is no way we can incorporate without additional costs which would be a duplication of the infrastructure that is already in place. Our efforts, and money, would go farther if we simply insist on more representation in all county decisions and not let the county off the hook on planning and development. I have no confidence that we would have talented people in place locally just by saying we will incorporate, rather I think it just builds an extra layer of bureaucracy
 45. I have lived here over 20 years and I fear that we are already facing increased taxes due home values rising and I do not want to risk making a decision that will increase them further. We already fear that we are going to be taxed out of our home by the time we retire. [Different IP and email; same last name as similar comment above]
 46. If we want representation in the county someone needs to be willing serve on the Whatcom County Council from the Birch Bay. I presently own in a HOA & since roads etc. are private & funded by the HOA I would be paying twice. Not for incorporation.
 47. As a resident of Birch Bay Village I see no advantage to incorporating. I already pay extra for services and see no need for another layer of bureaucracy. Leave us out of your plans.
 48. nothing to be gained from incorporation except power politics and more taxes/fees. There is no logic in this action.
 49. I live in Birch Bay Village. We already provide our own security, road maintenance including snow removal. These services are already paid for in our yearly dues. Our zoning laws are already provided by our HOA
 50. I feel we pay too much in property taxes as it is and can't see how more services can be added without paying more
 51. my BBV dues keep going up, without anything to show except excuses over cost of living for employees-- I am a disabled senior and my income DOES NOT GO UP anywhere close.. 5% this year with inflation at 20%??? !! this is making it unaffordable to live here, and I am one of the lucky ones with a substantial SS income. Many others CAN NOT afford the increases.. maybe govt employees need a cap on raises--- lets spread the pain of Bidenomics !!

52. A worthwhile option is that Birch Bay Village can opt out of being part of the area considered for incorporation.
53. Question #5: We can have local representation in the Whatcom Council. You don't need to become a city for representation. Whatcom County considers Birch Bay a design district. City start up costs would be in the multi-millions. Birch Bay has very small amount of commercial tax income. One may say "no taxes" but they will come (taxes) in large amounts and numbers once Birch Bay becomes a city. Staff to run a city will be in the hundreds, thus increase in salaries, benefits, insurance, etc. All of which increase taxes and duplication of costs and services which is presently being addressed by the County.
54. I do not believe the tax base within the proposed incorporation area can support a city government.
55. People are being taxed out of their homes along with HOA fees.
56. Schools were not mentioned. If incorporation includes building schools, I'm a no. 🙅
57. It is extremely expensive to incorporate. Blaine is barely making it and they have many revenue streams, business. I think it is a horrible idea.
58. Birch Bay does not have enough of a business base to support incorporation.
59. I attended last night's meeting. Looking at the proposed preliminary boundaries I would not be in favor of incorporating as a city. I feel the Birch bay census designated place boundaries would be more in keeping with the population and business growth areas to sustain a city without a huge tax increase. You could adjust slightly to cut off the boundary at Grandview or Aldergrove Rd. I also feel that if a new Feasibility Study is done that a mailing to all of the homes within the Census area should receive a survey. I know funds are required for this but I am not willing to donate any money with the proposed preliminary boundaries, but would if the boundaries were expanded.
60. Sidhu is the very last County official I would want any form of expertise from...That being said WE DO NOT NEED MORE GOVERNMENT FOR THIS SMALL VILLAGE...
61. There is nol large tax base for incorporation. It would mainly fall on the residents. Taxes would increase as the need for infrastructure for a city would increase due to lack of facilities, offices and equipment would be wanted. It is not feasible and would be very expensive.
62. Forming a new city government has same potential for not meeting our needs as county. Depends on who us in charge. Why do we need another layer of government to spend money on. If this incorporation goes thru we believe it would definitely increase our taxes. We are not interested in pursuing.
63. I DO NOT WANT TO CREATE ANOTHER LEVEL OF BUREAUCRACY THAT IS CONTROLLED BY OTHERS THAT ARE DOING IT FOR THEIR BENEFIT.
64. I am at a loss as to why your group is pressing forward with trying to incorporate Birch Bay. This same proposition was hashed out several years ago and suffered a lopsided loss. We as a community do not want or need more government. I still haven't seen any convincing information on how this project would be financed. This is a quite layed back community of retired, vacation and working people that enjoy not being overtaxed and burdened with more government. An old saying is "if it isn't broke don't try to fix it".
65. I am concerned that with a smaller "municipality" that the real estate developments will not handled correctly and friends of those in charge will get their approvals at the cost of the environment and infrastructure because there is not enough knowledge available in a smaller municipality to know how to run the new town of Birch Bay. You are kidding yourself if you think a smaller municipality will be any better. Blaine is already small.
66. I believe we have very good supports in Birch Bay. I would not want developers, real estate agents to over develop and spoil the serene nature of the Bay. Birch Bay is in danger of over commercialization. There are so many nostalgic memories here of a safer, quieter time. Don't spoil it~

67. While I live in the proposed area, I am opposed to our area being included in the defined area to start with. We were not consulted as to whether our community would even want to be included in the proposed area...probably not, because we have little/nothing? to gain through incorporation. These questions show a serious bias by assuming that the respondents want to be included in the defined area AND are willing to vote on it down the road. Also, the results will be suspect in that there is no control over who is responding and the survey sample will not be statistically reliable. Who knows what you will end up with???
68. NO Incorporation. Canadians are backing this C**P shown by the owners of large swaths of land oriented along the Blaine Road. NO INCORPORATION for BIRCK BAY.
69. While I don't LIVE in BirchBay, I do own rental property there. I believe a more logical and economic solution would be annexation by the City of Blaine, which already provides for Semiamoo
70. I do NOT want to incorporate. I do NOT want to pay more
71. These questions do not allow for proper opinions. I believe that incorporating could be be beneficial for the Birch Bay Community if we were to incorporate in to the city of Blaine. Not for "City of Birch Bay"
72. Na
73. You people are messing with my dreams and desires which involve my life's savings. Either shrink your area to exclude me or just fail altogether. I am opposed and will vote no on this political stunt.
74. Leave it as it is. The reason we moved out here is to be left alone by city nonsense. Dont ruin birch bay by turning it into an actual city.
75. No tax increase. Better representation - people from Birch Bay should run for office.
76. If the city of Birch Bay only included the Birch Bay Dr. Area. That would make sense. The current proposed area makes no sense and has no benefits to outer areas.
77. I do not want to pay any more taxes. Period. The rates are already punitive.
78. NO, NO, and NO to incorporation. I am not in favor of any increase in taxes. IF YOU WANTED AN INCORPORATED CITY PLEASE MOVE THERE! I moved here precisely because it was unincorporated. NO TO INCORPORATION.
79. Already being overtaxed on everything not to mention inflation on a limited income. I would have a hard time being convinced our taxes wouldn't go up substantially due to public works, policing, buildings, salary, etc.
80. To state that there will not be increased taxes is not only absurd it is naive and totally unrealistic. Many people are on fixed incomes. Many people are happy to live in this pocket of the world where the City, including planners, code enforcers and bureaucrats are not breathing down our backs,, and getting paid well for it. If people are so set on the City, perhaps they should move into Bellingham,, gee that is going so well there...
81. While I support local input on local matters, I am against another layer of taxes and regulations. As a city we will still be held to all the rules the county has in place. Unless the city has the authority to nullify county rules, I oppose adding another body that has the authority to implement additional rules.
82. If you are not happy that no one from Birch Bay is on the County Council maybe you should run for a seat on the Council. I think all efforts to promote Birch Bay area through County Council needs to be made before the effort to make BB a city and raise taxes.
83. I am NOT willing to pay additional taxesThe people of this state and county are already taxed too much. No one has provided a total for this action, although I keep getting told it won't change taxes. Bul-Hockey!!!!
84. Blaine has a surplus of woke hyper-liberals. The last thing I want is to put these people in power.
85. Stop this nonsense. No birch bay incorporation.
86. Incorporation as a city is a fool's errand for its proponents. But, you will learn the hard way.

87. Less government not more
88. Please stop trying to increase population and density in Birch Bay. The bay cannot handle the increase in population in the watershed. We don't need more people.
89. I chose to live in a rural area and would like to keep it that way.
90. Seems to me like the Friends of BBL crowd are trying to spend my money again. No thanks.
91. Do not want incorporation because of additional taxes and additional bureaucracy which would do nothing but cost us taxes which are high enough in this very high-cost state.
92. Don't add another layer of government.
93. Hard to believe that incorporating with same or more services (and not paying Blaine or subcontracting those services) won't cost significantly more. It would take more than a "study" to convince me.
94. We want things to stay just how they are.
95. I am happy with the services we receive in birch bay!
96. I am not in favor of creating another self perpetuating bureaucracy. I do want a significant increase in public safety in Birch Bay and vicinity with authority to do their job. We need a full time sheriff assigned to patrol and be available quickly.
97. The county is already short-staffed, so I'm curious where all these people to fill all those new positions will come from. Where will they live? Where is all the money coming from for the millions of dollars for stormwater? Who's paying for all these new buildings needed for schools and police departments? Birch Bay is fine just the way it is. I believe the realtors are the ones pushing this. If we wanted to live in a city, we would have moved to one. Birch Bay is not meant to be a city!
98. Birch Bay is doing well. Where will you get the money, aside from taxes, to implement your plans? Is incorporating really necessary? Or is it only to benefit a few? If representation at Whatcom County is the issue, why not run for office so Birch Bay will have a voice? There is NO NEED to incorporate!

Neutral Comments and Questions

1. I appreciate the effort from this committee, even though I am waiting for the financial projections to see what it will cost as an incorporated city.
2. I wasn't sure how to answer #1 and #7 as a renter.
3. Do not RESIDE in Birch Bay, but have full time rental property with long term tenants
4. I'm a full time permanent resident but not a homeowner so the questions regarding taxes don't apply to me. I couldn't finish the survey without answers to those question even if wrong.
5. Need much more detail
6. (1) In Birch Bay we would like to see: A NO BIKES ON THE BERM WALK sign. There is plenty of room for bikes on the shoulder of the road. It is very scary to have bikes (normal and electric bikes zooming by you when we walk on the berm with our small dog. Being hit would cause huge injuries. Children under 5 would be okay. (2) As well, are you aware that there is no access to the beach from the berm walkway that is mean to be accessible for people with walkers/wheelchairs/walking challenges? A huge ditch and hill are between the walkway and the beach. I feel this could be better planned so people can access the beach not just see it from the other side.
7. Waiting for more information.
8. Contract with Blaine PD vice WCSO.
9. Increase taxes on foreign owners and investors, larger than US citizens, before increasing our taxes.
10. I'm worried about prices going up, property taxes, everything will double to cover the emergency services, firefighters/stations, schools...
11. Schools?????
12. How is Point Whitehorn fit into incorporation with it being separated by the Birch Bay State park.

13. I am completing this survey but am not educated on the issues.
14. I would like to see fireworks restrictions enforcement
15. I've been through this several times and it always costs a lot more than stated
16. We are on fixed income. Please do not go crazy on raising taxes. Thanks for all of your hard work. Need new boundaries .. proposed incorporation area too small Although my residence is outside of the proposed area - I do own a waterfront commercial building Zoned Resort Commercial - Whatcom County Planning and Development is a nightmare.
17. Would love an ordinance limiting loud fireworks.
18. Flooding from Terrell Creek has gotten out of control in the past decade. I've had my home flooded 4 times in last decade with zero flooding in 2 decades prior to that. Until water management is addressed so that new development isn't simply routed into the Creek I will vote no on any tax increases.
19. There was no comments or specific mention of how this would or would not help address the significant risk to birch bay waterfront/adjacent properties from king tides and winter storms. Whether or not services increase, /or taxes increase... if there are no waterfront homes to pay those taxes in the future, then none of this really matters. How does local representation and incorporation help or address this very pressing issue? Does the current city council have any/anyone with experience with incorporation? What is the prompt for this proposal? I believe there needs to be better information on what changes with incorporation and what are the pros and cons of each scenario. More information is required for home owners and residence to be able to make informed decisions and responses to any of the questions here.
20. Incorporation would have to include shoreline maintenance similar to berm not just road repair. This is a beach town destination. If you want to collect more tax you need to protect infrastructure
21. I like the idea of Birch Bay incorporating but I'm very concerned about tax increases. It don't understand how we can add the overhead of city management plus keep services the same and not pay more. I'm skeptical of any projections that say we can.
22. we need more control over, A) roads, stop signs, entrance and exit access. B) firework control, allowed areas and allowed fireworks.
23. I live in a HOA (Birch Bay Community Club) could incorporation mean the new city would maintain the roads, storm water and provide snow removal here? We are not a gated community. You would likely be involved in parking issues?
24. this should be put on ballot so everyone can vote
25. A major concern for us is storm water mitigation and building the permitted homes on top of critical drainage which means more flooding of homes closer to the Bay and Terrill Creek. Retaining our natural water ways and forested areas that retain seasonal water is our major worry if a city of Birch Bay is formed. Also the building of homes at family market rate prices onstead of creating more home development meant for summer use only needs addressing for a healthy community. Finally, as a Birch Bay city could we develop a real grocery store with quality produce and medium range pricing?
26. You did not reference or note educational impact of incorporation. I am curious of the impact given lack of representation on Blaine's school board yet significant representation of school aged individuals.
27. Not in favor of incorporating, but need more information to determine final choice.
28. My biggest concerns are zoning changes and redevelopment. I am in-favor of the current progression of existing development plans and am not in-favor of larger commercial area along the water or taller homes, more dense homes.
29. Thank you for all you are doing to find out if incorporation would be beneficial to the residents in this area.

30. My initial concern with Birch Bay incorporation is the tax base. To my knowledge there are no major industries or manufacturing in the proposed city boundaries. If true, that leaves primarily individual property owners and small businesses, many of whom are seasonal, as the bulk of the tax base. This is a concern I would need more specific information about in order to make a reasoned judgement regarding incorporation.
31. When I answered policing importance it's traffic policing I am most wanting. Speeders and reckless drivers are in abundance and they need to be ticketed.
32. Is there a way that we could always have a representative on the county council?
33. We are on a fixed income. I hope this does not price us out of living in Birch Bay.
34. The Kask report was written by an employee of Ken Hertz, the biggest landowner of that time. The conflict of interest and the shoddy work demand its elimination from any part of the decisions to be made.
35. When will fireworks be banned in Birch Bay? The water and air is harmful to wildlife and humans exposed to the smoke and trash left behind.
36. My concern is with junior taxing districts, and a resulting deannexation from them if incorporated (example, Whatcom County Rural Library District). Would a further vote be needed to continue those services to re-annex into those districts? What about Fire? Sheriff? Just need to know more I guess!
37. Thank you for providing the survey. Please tell us the % of people who responded out of the number that is eligible to vote.
38. Questions are kind of vague and there's a lot of variables involved with some of these questions so wish there was more meat to the pie. Like how would this affect the schools? Crime?
39. I'd love to get more information on pros/cons for incorporating. I do not fully understand the development possibilities with incorporating. Specifically what community services could possibly be developed with incorporating- does this increase the opportunity for a police station, post office, library within Birch Bay? A pro/con or statement for and against would be helpful in forming my
40. My soul interest is representation.
41. Local elected officials would most likely be no better than the current county council.
42. Look forward to the results and study. Not sold on the idea but have an open mind.
43. Thank you, keep the info coming. Perhaps to let us know the main benefits from incorporating .
44. I think it is important to bring in tourism to the area. I witless suggest an artist/ farmers market that is full time with rental spaces by the week. It would bring many dollars to the city.
45. My fear is who will be elected to the council, will it be people who won't allow development such as tourist oriented food, souvenir and other attractions. That they will restrict development and write laws that are intrusive and restrictive. Things like fire works, beach parties, vacation rentals, parking restrictions, speed bumps, bike lanes etc. could all happen/ be restricted. Some in the community think that building a multi-million dollar library is important but not turning that lot into an arcade with shops, food stalls, banquet room for live events etc. A library won't help year-round or even seasonal businesses, but those elected may not care about such things.
46. We need to be able to provide groceries and other services to residents of Birch Bay without needing to drive to another city.
47. I'm not sure Birch Bay has the essential businesses to provide a solid tax foundation to pay for incorporation. The financial burden of the services we benefit from are shared among all Whatcom County tax payers but if we incorporate, we're on our own.
48. Thanks for all your hard work!
49. I have major concerns about the ease by which property taxes may be increased. Also have concerns about the conflicting interests of permanent residents and vacation property owners.

50. How about being annexed by Blaine instead?
51. Just to note - we will be permanent residents but in the midst of land development and building process
52. You should look at changing the boundaries to grab as much local tax revenue as possible.
53. Thanks to the committee for working on this idea!
54. It's unlikely any proposal showing a need to raise taxes in order to incorporate will pass.
55. Thank you for your work
56. I don't want taxes to go up like most people, but once I saw how much I had to go back and change my answers. So maybe start with the tax amounts next time because knowing changed my answers.
57. I'm somewhat confident that by incorporating Birch Bay, taxes would increase. I bought property in Birch Bay for it's small local community and charm, and would hate to see it changed.
58. Fire and ambulance services are provided by the fire district. The incorporation of the Birch Bay would not change these services or level of service. Including these services is misleading.
59. You didn't say anything about how having a city would impact schools. I would be most interested in understanding whether being a city would help attract local shopping and services to reduce trips to Blaine or Ferndale. Are our population characteristics likely to attract more business. There isn't much on Birch Bay Drive and much of Birch Bay Square is empty
60. It would be beneficial to quantify what an increase in services would look like to the average resident. e.g. 40% faster permit approval, 4 minute reduction in response time to 911 calls, etc
61. Thanks for spending time evaluating this proposal
62. I would like more information about whether the study to be done will examine all options including merging with Blaine given that you're starting anew. I think that public works and police services are so incredibly expensive, wouldn't it be valuable to consider what could be gained by annexation. Ex. Blaine has a viable Central Business District, the opportunity of a shared recreational district, school system, retail corridor, industrial zones. The reports analysis should evidence the economies of scale and make a compelling argument.
63. This should be decided by those people who live in Birch Bay not by those who just play here.
64. Everyone I've talked to in latitude 49 are concerned that taxes would go up. A lot of fixed income people in birch bay.
65. I need more information on area stats such as population, number of voting residents etc
66. I am undecided but am looking forward to better representation for our tax dollars
67. I haven't been convinced yet that there is a need for incorporation. Someone wants local control of development, but why? What needs development that is happening now?
68. When the berm was improved, I suggested to bury the utility lines at the same time. The county did not react. Once incorporation is settled the new city could perhaps re-examine this with all concerned. A BB postal address would be nice too.
69. It looks like the only ones that will be able to vote on incorporation are registered voters. As an owner of two pieces of property that are taxed, it would upset me greatly if my vote to incorporate was not counted. I'm sure there are a number of owners with the same feeling. Better think about that as to the legal ramifications of not allowing non residents to have a vote on this matter
70. Our #1 concern is having better regulations regarding fireworks in July and December, and requiring participants to clean up their own mess or be fined for littering. What the county allows to happen here in BB is disgusting.
71. Who did this survey go to? I hope the results will show the number of responses per area.
72. Thanks for the work you are doing in gathering information so that BB residents can make an informed decision!

73. Please keep our little resort community fun. Some oppose golf carts, fireworks, festivals, all the things that make our community unique. We both grew up in Whatcom county so still have our precious memories. Please stop the development. Now it seems only the wealthy can afford to live here. We live at "The Tides at Birch Bay".
74. People here live here cause of low taxes. If people want better schools they should have bought a house with a goods school district. We need better emergency fire and police response. But less regulation with the county is less hassle but I understand the boomers wanting better ambulances. There are child free millennials that agree with the boomers for better services but no schools or educational tax. I'm for incorporating if it means better service and slight increase in taxes but don't want elementary school built.
75. It is very sad that some of our neighbors aren't willing to seek or at least listen to facts regarding incorporation. Thank you to all those who have taken the criticism and sometimes outright abuse for volunteering your time & talent to pursue what is most advantageous for our beautiful community.
76. I'm concerned that even if taxes didn't go up right away they would go up faster if we were incorporated.
77. Not enough choices on Question #10 - pretty skewed towards police and ems
78. PROPERTY TAX IS UPPERMOST IN MY DECISION. WE ARE ALREADY PAYING HEAVILY FOR OVER EVALUATION OF PRIPERTIES IN WHATCOM COUNTY.
79. Just an fyi. Fire and EMS service is funded separately through a fire levy and is not necessarily part of incorporation cost
80. I think Birch Bay would really benefit from a senior community center.
81. I'm in favor of making a train over pass, like Ferndale has done.
82. If incorporated, will the beach front along birch bay drive towards north be improved just liked the current south with pavement for walkers n cyclists?
83. First & foremost, I feel like we need to get on the speeders on BB DR, it is appalling that these folks consistently drive 35-45 all day long, I hope it doesn't take someone to get hurt or killed to take care of this problem
84. I am looking forward to more information on incorporation. I might be willing to pay higher taxes, but I want to know what that is before I fully commit. I do want to make sure we do not lose services and that includes library service. We are on the edge of getting that service increased and incorporation could jeopardize that. I think that needs to be talked about because I do not think many people understand that.
85. Thanks, keep me informed
86. snow removable? that's a problem? that's a reach.
87. I believe you have some very qualified individuals on the committee that are responsible for the gathering and dissemination of pertinent information. It may be useful to give some brief background information on key members so that the general public will be able to have confidence in the completeness and quality of work being done.
88. Thank you
89. I'm not convinced I need additional taxes to ensure that Birch Bay gets the additional services.
90. Stay the course: give us the information we need, in an easy to understand form, to make informed decisions.
91. NEED MORE INFORMATION ON TAX IMPLICATIONS IF INCORPORATED
92. Include Birch Point down to Point Whitehorn and get all the valuable waterfront/ocean view property owners on board. Services and tax base will skyrocket.
93. I'd like a brief phone conversation with someone on the incorporation committee at their convenience. I live in BBV

94. I only ranked emergency services lower on the survey because they *appear to have good response times. I have not been the recipient, so I don't know if this holds true. I think that zoning and development would need to be high on the list if we want a sustainable community. At this point in time, Whatcom county has made choices that may not be in the best interest for proper growth.
95. Because this is our second house, our registered voting is Ferndale. I am worried I will pay more taxes but have no say
96. I feel it is important to have our own post office
97. I want clarification on taxation for part time inhabitants. If we are to provide year round services for all residences— if there house is on fire we wouldn't put out half the fire. If everyone paid full 12 month occupancy property taxes, wouldn't that pay the cost of incorporation and services? And if they all left, wouldn't that create availability of more housing?
98. We need services for the huge percentage of people over 50
99. I'm curious on where they will build schools, public buildings and improve roads
100. With regard to local representation. What type(s) of civic governance is being proposed?
101. The proposed boundary seems too small. What is the population of this area? Why are the neighborhoods in red excluded from the new city?
102. If incorporation were to happen, I would want to be assured that the city council would not consist of only developers who have a vested interest in development in Birch Bay.
103. We need a school in birch bay