

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 16, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.
1805 Continental Place, Mount Vernon

AGENDA

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 17, 2016
2. Comprehensive Plan Schedule (*Rebecca Lowell*)
3. Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement (*Bob Hyde and Rebecca Lowell*)
4. Noise Mitigation Discussion (*Bob Hyde*)
5. Miscellaneous

City of Mount Vernon
Economic Development Committee
Minutes from February 17, 2016

Vice-chairperson Dale Ragan called the meeting to order. Present were Council members Gary Molenaar, Ken Quam, Mark Hulst, Mary Hudson, Bob Fiedler and Mayor Jill Boudreau. Council member Joe Lindquist was absent.

Staff members Bob Hyde, Ana Chesterfield, Rick Prosser, Rebecca Lowell, Kevin Rogerson, Jerry Dodd and Roy Hari.

Minutes:

Ms. Hudson moved, second by Mr. Hulst, to approve the minutes from January 20, 2016. Motion carried.

Engineering Standards Update:

Mrs. Chesterfield provided a brief overview of the Engineering Standards update explaining the standards are tools that allow users to communicate using the same language. They provide consistency, quality control and predictability. Standards need frequent updates to keep pace with changing technology and adjustments from experience. The current Engineering Standards is dated 2004. The committee working on this update is comprised of city staff and private developer and engineer.

A brief discussion on detention pond fencing ensued. Detention pond side slopes and fences are not consistent with zoning code requirements. DOE requires fencing on ponds with a 3:1 horizontal to vertical slope. The smaller the first number the steeper the slope. The City requires fencing on ponds which are 5:1. Mrs. Chesterfield stated not every pond requires a fence. They can be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Rapid Time Review (RTR):

A newly implemented process called Rapid Time Review has reduced plan review by 50%. Projects with phasing, partial civil design approval and existing stormwater detention, or projects that do not require stormwater detention are eligible for Rapid Time Review.

New Building Code Update:

The City will be updating its building code with the adoption of the 2015 IBC by July of this year. Significant changes include adoption of the IRC 313.1: New townhouses shall have a sprinkler system installed, and the IBC Chapter 34 for Existing Structures will be removed and placed in IEBC (International Existing Building code). There are also flood code changes to incorporate. The Community Rating System (CRS) is due this year as well.

City Facilities Projects Update:

A list of completed facility maintenance projects was provided. These include the Library roof, Sherman Anderson concession stand roof, security cameras installed and a new sally port door at the Police Department. The improvement for the façade at the Police Department should be completed by the end of the month. New safety measures are to be installed at Public Works and the trailer from the Parks Department will be moved to the City Shop for permanent records storage.

Development Project Status:

Mr. Hyde provided an update on the following:

College Way/Riverside – permits have been issued.

Skagit County Jail – foundation & underground utilities installed.

Pine Creek Estates, 33rd Court – civil work has begun.

Cell tower lease agreement - located at Fire Station #3, \$2,000/month and use of their generator.

New parking limits – become effective March 1st.

Downtown summer concerts – increase from 8 to 9; Downtown Association is sponsoring Friday noon musicians.

Planning Commission – New member Chris Bollinger replaces Donny Keltz, and Al Lyon was re-appointed for another 4 year term.

Design Standards for Downtown – Ballard Avenue Landmark District in Seattle may provide guidelines.

A department retreat was held earlier this month to team build and discuss improving customer service.

Comprehensive Plan Update:

Mrs. Lowell provided a briefing and schedule on the status of the update to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan due in June. In response to recent affordable housing discussion she offered a list of assisted, affordable and subsidized housing units within the City. The list also include the types and densities and of housing and the funding the City applied for and awarded that was distributed to several other agencies for housing.

Mrs. Lowell recommends updating Resolution No. 491 GMA, regarding public participation in the Comprehensive Plan Amendment request process. She recommends encouraging or mandating the applicant to hold neighborhood meetings as is required in the PUD process.

Mount Vernon School District Reciprocal Use Agreement Update:

A draft agreement will be presented by the end of March. There is also discussion on selling Sherman Anderson ball field to the District.

Mayor Boudreau invited Council members on a field trip to Ballard in March with local architect Christian Carlson.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.



2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE MEETING/HEARING SCHEDULE**

DATE	TIME	BEFORE	TOPICS
March 1, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Land Use Element & Buildable Lands • Transportation Element
MARCH 8, 2016			DRAFT TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT RELEASED
March 15, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Transportation Element
March 16, 2016	6 PM 7 PM	City Council EDC City Council Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Transportation Element
MARCH 21, 2016			DRAFT LAND USE ELEMENT (AND BUILDABLE LANDS) RELEASED
March 23, 2016	5:30 PM	Citizen Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Transportation Element
April 5, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use Element & Buildable Lands
APRIL 11, 2016			DRAFT HOUSING ELEMENT RELEASED
April 19, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Follow Up on Previous Work
April 20, 2016	5PM 6PM 7PM	Open House from 5PM to 6PM Comments 6PM to 7PM City Council Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing & Land Use • Housing by CEDD staff at CC 7PM meeting
May 3, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Land Use Element & Buildable Lands • Transportation Element
APRIL 25, 2016			DRAFT CAPITAL FACILITIES/ PUBLIC SERVICES & ECONOMIC DEV. ELEMENTS RELEASED
MAY 2, 2016			DRAFT HEALTH & WELLNESS ELEMENT RELEASED
May 17, 2016	6 PM	Planning Commission Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Economic Development • Capital Facilities • Health & Wellness
May 18, 2016	6 PM 7 PM	City Council EDC City Council Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development • Capital Facilities
May 25, 2016	7 PM	City Council Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Statement • Land Use Element & Buildable Lands • Transportation Element
June 8, 2016	7 PM	City Council Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • Economic Development • Capital Facilities • Health & Wellness
June 15, 2016	6 PM 7 PM	City Council EDC City Council Meeting	Discussion items TBD – lingering questions or concerns
June 22, 2016	7 PM	City Council Hearing	Final Hearing – items TBD based on hearings/meeting prior to this date

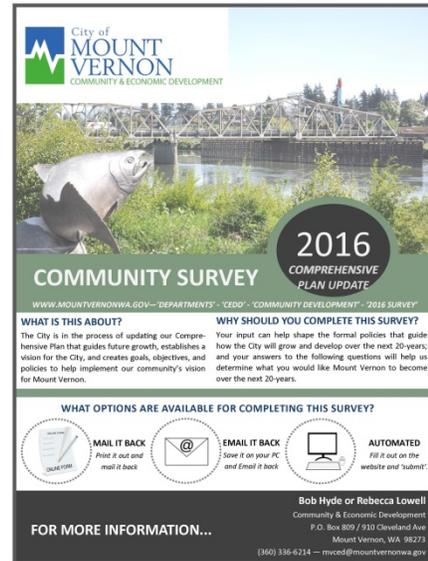
** DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

BACKGROUND

May 1, 2015 the Community & Economic Development Department deployed a survey to gather input for the Comprehensive Plan updated titled, The Future of Mount Vernon. There were 14 questions on the survey. The first several questions established background information on the person completing the survey; and the last question was an open ended question asking if the responder wished to share other thoughts on how they think Mount Vernon should grow.

This survey was launched on-line via a survey service named 'Survey Monkey' and was also made available in paper copy. Over a 10 month period the CEDD received over 500 responses to this survey.

Following is a list of the questions on the survey, the survey results, and all of the comments that were added by those responding.

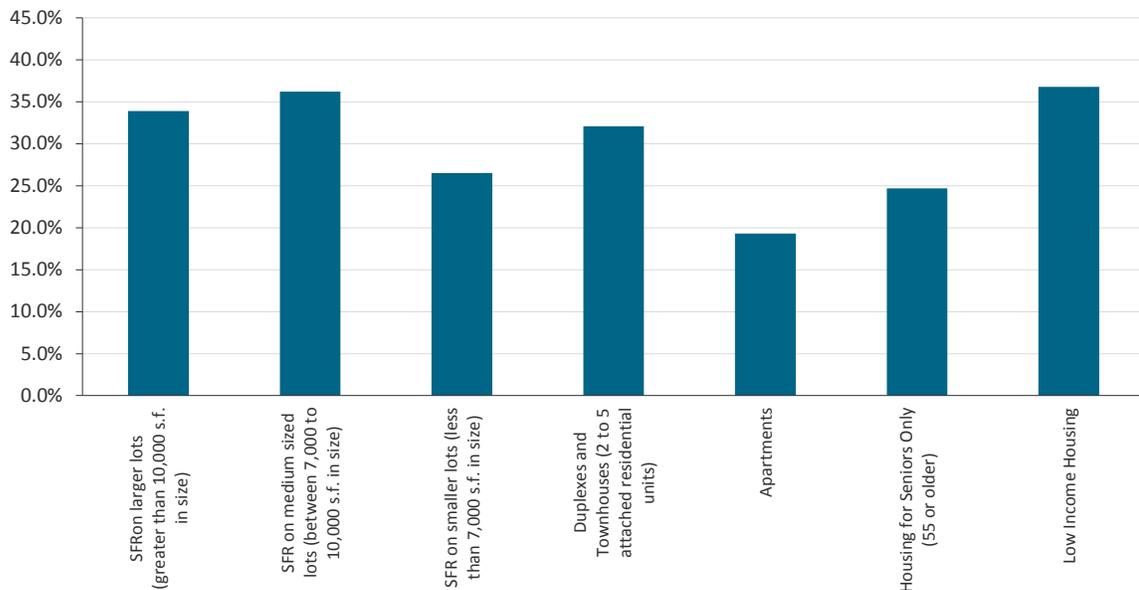


<p>1. Do you live inside the City limits of Mount Vernon?</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>73%</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No	73%	27%	<p>2. If Yes, for how many years?</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Less than 5 years</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 5 and 10 years</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 11 and 20 years</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More than 20 years</td> <td>36%</td> </tr> </table>	Less than 5 years	19%	Between 5 and 10 years	21%	Between 11 and 20 years	24%	More than 20 years	36%
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<p>3. Do you work inside the City limits of Mount Vernon?</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>54%</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No	54%	46%	<p>4. If Yes, for how many years?</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Less than 5 years</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 5 and 10 years</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 11 and 20 years</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More than 20 years</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> </table>	Less than 5 years	21%	Between 5 and 10 years	21%	Between 11 and 20 years	25%	More than 20 years	33%
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<p>5. What age range do you fall into?</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>25 years old or younger</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26 to 35 years old</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>36 to 50 years old</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Older than 50</td> <td>54%</td> </tr> </table>	25 years old or younger	18%	26 to 35 years old	11%	36 to 50 years old	28%	Older than 50	54%				
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26 to 35 years old	11%												
36 to 50 years old	28%												
Older than 50	54%												

6. Please check the following types of residential uses that you feel there is a need for MORE OF within the City:

Single-Family Residential on larger lots (greater than 10,000 s.f. in size)	34%
Single-Family Residential on medium sized lots (between 7,000 to 10,000 s.f. in size)	36%
Single-Family Residential on smaller lots (less than 7,000 s.f. in size)	27%
Duplexes and Townhouses (2 to 5 attached residential units)	32%
Apartments	19%
Housing for Seniors Only (55 or older)	25%
Low Income Housing	37%
Other (please specify)	See below

Please check the following types of residential uses that you feel there is a need for MORE OF within the City:



SPECIFIC COMMENTS WRITTEN WITH THIS QUESTION:

- 1 We need transitional / interim housing for residents that are dealing with mental health issues. We need to allow for more residential development that serves seniors and lower income residents. We need to encourage higher density multifamily housing in the C-1, C-2 and CL zones.
- 2 Condominiums
- 3 Ignore above because Mount Vernon has too many already.
- 4 Senior housing that Seniors can afford not these "Over 55 Communities" that only a senior with a large income can afford.
- 5 Senior housing not restricted to only 55 and older. We need a mix of old, young, and middle aged people.
- 6 I am not sure we need these but I had to give an answer.
- 7 Living units above commercial and not necessarily downtown
- 8 We need to address the issue of homelessness in Skagit County, and Mount Vernon needs to take an active part with other municipalities to working toward solutions. Low income and affordable housing is a strong need. Friendship House, Community Action of Skagit County, Oasis Teen Center, and Family Promise cannot solve this alone.
- 9 No more tiny lots jammed into neighborhoods please, Mount Vernon has more than enough of these types of neighborhoods.
- 10 No idea. In some ways I would say apartments since we have very few rental properties in the city besides low income apartments that lend to a certain demographic.

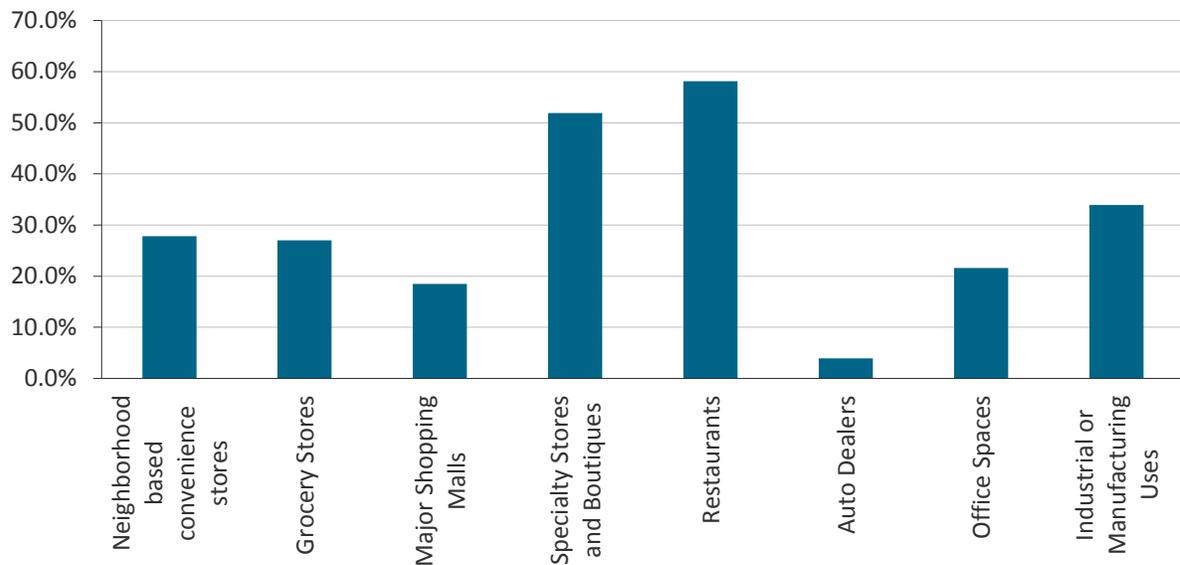
- 11 condos - high end, downtown especially (I only checked SF above, because the survey is flawed and does not allow Other to be checked)
- 12 Small, compact groups of houses of >800 sq. ft. For fixed income and lower income stable individuals or small families. These should include common parking, recreation, and esp finally organized gardening to offset food problems and build community.
- 13 Don't know
- 14 I prefer to see denser residential development with lots of shared parks and pea patch space interspersed. Better for public health. Better for the environment. Cheaper for stormwater mngmt. I also would like for housing to be mixed sizes and affordability - I don't prefer to have homogeneous neighborhoods where only old, rich, etc. people live.
- 15 I also feel there is a needed plan for section 8 people to have the ability to obtain single family homes with out stress. A few more house type for the homeless to enter!
- 16 Townhouses, and condos. Not duplexes.
- 17 Affordable housing is desperately needed.
- 18 Sustainable housing design
- 19 Low income housing for single people not just seniors or families. Allow Tiny Houses
- 20 Access to housing for the homeless. Stable housing allows the flexibility to work on other problems
- 21 No more housing would be nice. No more postage stamp lots and developments where people are squished together, it is fact that it creates more crime.
- 22 High and/or Medium Rise Apartments and Condos downtown.
- 23 While we need to provide adequate housing for low income residents we also need to attract more affluent residents who will contribute to our tax base. We need to make our city a desirable community in which to live.
- 24 Really don't know
- 25 More urban housing in your urban core. This will provide the affordability coupled with ending sprawl and cutting down on infrastructure costs as well as police and other services. It will bring more vitality to the riverfront, building on the river walk. Seek developer's interested in Public Private Partnerships to make this happen.
- 26 I am assuming that Duplexes and Townhouses are considered a Condo
- 27 Affordable Housing!!!!
- 28 Downtown condos.
- 29 Temporal housing. Housing for agro workers. Community housing
- 30 I am not familiar with the current residential uses or needs within Mount Vernon.
- 31 We have plenty of low income housing. Time to start providing higher level of housing including condo type units.
- 32 Mt Vernon should be marketed as a retirement community. Low cost of living, mild climate, close to Seattle, Canada, hiking, fishing. Good medical care.
- 33 In addition to the right mix of sizes there needs to be an emphasis on quality and an analysis of what size/type of lot contributes most positively to the community.
- 34 the new developments that are popping up all over the place end up looking run down and unappealing in a very short amount of time. makes the area less attractive to new residents.
- 35 Need to get rid of all the narrow streets being developed.
- 36 Please no more apartments!
- 37 Accessory dwelling units
- 38 Accessory dwelling units, carriage houses on single family lots
- 39 Stop tearing down our trees. No more building of homes.
- 40 Quality public park places, free of debris and graffiti. Clean streets free of debris and graffiti. Repair of broken garbage receptacles. Beautiful clean spaces you would feel comfortable spending an afternoon at with family and friends.
- 41 Housing (apartments, condos, townhomes) downtown
- 42 There's a need for new housing, small main level masters, for retirees who don't want to sacrifice their style of life for an easier to maintain home. Craftsman style is popular, but also need contractor to introduce Prefab homes with minimal xeriscape landscaping. This valley is very popular and beautiful and should be on the forefront of new green building !!! Seniors need a small but high quality home - one they can leave in the winter if they are snow birds.
- 43 Would like to see some condo type units downtown (main, 1st and 2nd), however only if the architecture matches the aesthetic of old downtown Mount Vernon.

- 44 Tiny houses on shared land - community land trust projects, and other ways of providing innovative housing solutions for low and middle income people. More quality affordable rental options, please!
- 45 I would envision a few condos on the East side of the riverwalk where appropriate. It would keep people in the downtown area if more shops and businesses would come into downtown Mount Vernon.
- 46 Mixed types, income, house size, lot size. No more homogeneous developments with same size houses and small lots. These neighborhoods lack interest visually. Mix single family with duplexes and apartments. Add nice community spaces. Downtown needs loft apartments.
- 47 NO more low income housing!!
- 48 NO further development. Mount Vernon is too crowded now. It was a nice, quiet town when I moved here. The uncontrolled development is destroying the character of Mount Vernon. Your questionnaire will not let me input "other", so my answer above is just to let me get past this point. Fix your "survey"!!!! (unless, of course, you don't want "other" as an answer.)
- 49 Riverview condos
- 50 Seasonal migrant housing
- 51 I think we probably have enough housing now.
- 52 What is needed is not a specific type of residential use but rather a comprehensive plan for getting people from where they live to major transportation arteries and to commerce. Just another neighborhood of some specific residential does not address the types of growth issues that exist in a city.
- 53 Affordable Single-Family Residential on small lots for 55 or older
- 54 Please - no more low income housing.
- 55 downtown apartments/condos
- 56 Without support from family members, many people do not have the ability to get into an apartment (damage deposit, etc.)
- 57 Homeless shelters
- 58 I would love to see a co-housing model set up -such as exists in Olympia, Fairhaven (Bellingham) and other communities
- 59 Mixed use
- 60 My future condo on the river!
- 61 Mixed use housing/commercial
- 62 We don't need more multi family that displaces the urban forests that make mount vernon unique
- 63 Mixed use
- 64 A variety of housing options
- 65 Downtown - higher end condos and apartments as well as working class level condos & apartments
- 66 No more developments!

7. Please check the following types of commercial uses that you feel there is a need for MORE OF within the City:

Neighborhood based convenience stores	28%
Grocery Stores	27%
Major Shopping Malls	27%
Specialty Stores and Boutiques	52%
Restaurants	58%
Auto Dealers	4%
Office Spaces	22%
Industrial or Manufacturing Uses	34%
Other (please specify)	See below

Please check the following types of commercial uses that you feel there is a need for MORE OF within the City:



SPECIFIC COMMENTS WRITTEN WITH THIS QUESTION:

- 1 Call centers. Software testing. Other software industry work.
- 2 Trader Joes
- 3 restaurants that stay open later, that serve good food based on organic food items
- 4 Growing up in San Francisco, we had neighborhood grocery stores that offered fresh produce and whole foods, not just processed food and junk foods. I'd like to see smaller versions of the Skagit Valley Food Co-op in our neighborhoods.
- 5 Since the Tulip Festival centers in Mount Vernon, maybe more specialty shops like LaConner to keep the tourist shopping in Mount Vernon.
- 6 Auto dealers were chased out of Mount Vernon long ago by unresponsive planning.
- 7 Trader Joes.
- 8 less office space for downtown, more stores and restaurants
- 9 College Way has so very many empty storefronts. My dream would be to see them filled before building new buildings for businesses.

- 10 In general, more business to give homeowners relief from increased property tax.
- 11 Tech companies that can utilize our Mount Vernon technology infrastructure. Businesses that support and build up agriculture in the Skagit Valley. Light industrial like food processing. Wineries and craft breweries. Historical museums. Art museums,
- 12 No industrial or manufacturing
- 13 Shopping Mall fair at best same for wall mart more promotions and marketing. better curb side appeal the old Albersonts and rite aide and Urban fitness properties. NOTE: there are many more on College Way and the old town 1st 2nd Kinkade and 3rd st
- 14 Anything that brings more revenue and a better tax base to Mount Vernon. It seems the greater support for taxes comes from a large residential population, versus Burlington's large commercial population.
- 15 Low impact environmental responsible industrial
- 16 Neighborhood based - all of the above PLUS coffee shops, book stores, restaurants, grocery stores, etc. i.e. meeting areas & services within walking distances of residential
- 17 Neighborhood based specialty stores and shops. (ie. A beauty salon or barber at 18th and Blackburn; a small "satellite store of the Skagit Valley Coop)
- 18 Don't know
- 19 office incubator spaces
- 20 I don't really have an opinion on what is needed vs. what we have. I do notice that the south and west parts of town don't have a grocery store (and we need to keep Robert's Red Apple! the nearest one). Its nice to have groceries and restaurants within walking distance of housing. For instance COA is a great restaurant that many folks in the hill-crest-to-high-school area can walk to.
- 21 Homeless out post offices helping with jobs family and health housing
- 22 Trader Joe's
- 23 I think we should promoute more big stories like the empty stores on college way
- 24 Specialty grocery, such as Trader Joe.
- 25 Independent Auto Repair shops
- 26 The system would not let me move on without clicking one of the boxes.
The two major grocery stores only sell their brand - do not want more of that - I do wish there were buses stops closer to Safeway and Haggen's.
More locally owned businesses
- 27 I believe that items checked would bring in more jobs, we need no more fast food!
- 28 I think downtown needs to build up - quit the suburban sprawl, and focus on building a city that has high rise office space, dining and services that people want, and businesses filling our store fronts. We also need to build parking (up would make sense as well).
- 29 Fill the empty stores first with retail/grocery.
- 30 The City needs to attract lucrative businesses that will increase the tax revenue in order to support our school district and other public entities.
- 31 Actually none, it's just that I had to check one box. We have a nice downtown area and large though limited number of supermarkets. Limit the size of the City of Mount Vernon. Keep things compact but not hyperdense. Keep things affordable. We can do it!
- 32 Something other than another antique store or bank.
- 33 A Trader Joe's would be nice competition to the COOP. I am a fan of the COOP, and shop there regularly, but competition benefits all. Consider improvement to downtown by building on its character as a "lifestyle" center...where many larger City's are having to recreate what you already have in place...you just need to build on it.
- 34 light industrial and manufacturing. Filling up the empty stores downtown with something other than 2nd hand stores.
- 35 Community places, Housing,
- 36 This city is missing a big employer or any business that supports a big employer. My example would be Hexcel at the port and their main contract is Boeing, 300 plus employed.
- 37 Retail stores - doesn't have to be "Major Shopping Malls"
- 38 None. Vacant properties need to be filled. Too many vacant commercial spaces.
- 39 it would be nice to see some of the focus directed out of downtown and into the other areas of mv
- 40 Just more commercial development in general. Nothing specific.
- 41 Please fill the vacant lots - downtown and on College Way
- 42 Community based shopping areas...not a mall...but a concentration of shopping in a nice setting(more like UVillage)

- 43 MV needs to allow the development of small urban centers, or villages, that will provide services to nearby neighborhoods, similar to the Haggens development.
- 44 There's a handful of large vacant shopping center spaces. It would be nice to see these get a face lift and some new tenants. Trader Joe's or Nordstrom Rack would be great.
- 45 Burlington Mall is a joke. (I know, it's Burlington) Combine resources and make it a 2-story, and lower rent.
- 46 Restaurants that are different and standout. For example a decent belt sushi place like Blue C Sushi would do well. Please no more Mexican restaurants. It would be nice to see restaurants that make Mount Vernon stand out from its neighboring cities instead of having the same or similar ones. Chick Fil A would be a great idea since we have so many burger joints. Burger Master will be a great addition though since its a drive in.
- 47 Greenspace, public space, undeveloped space, urban trails, nature preserves
- 48 Industrial and manufacturing at appropriate areas like port of Skagit. Attract and retain businesses that require skilled/talented workers and professionals. Elevate income levels to support building the community both physically and socially.
- 49 Trader Joe's would be an outstanding addition to our community, and any kind of vegetarian/healthy option restaurant(s) would be great!
- 50 BOOKSTORE with large area for plopping and reading, coffee sipping, book clubs, writing clubs. Also, downtown needs diversity. Can't just have vintage antique stores. Need outdoor patio or sidewalk dining. the traffic-free mall would be perfect for outdoor dining. We need GOOD restaurants. We need a draw for people to come downtown. totally underutilized.
- 51 light industrial
- 52 bakery, women's clothing store, book store (new books), music store
- 53 Downtown needs additional retail such as clothing and gifts. No more antique stores or service type business especially at street level. Give me a reason to stroll downtown. Downtown restaurants need to stay serve food past 9:00 pm especially after events at the Lincoln or even McIntyre. Would like to walk some place after a show rather than drive to Burlington.
- 54 No further commercial uses (see above) Your questionnaire will not let me input "other", so my answer above is just to let me get past this point. Fix your "survey"!!! (unless, of course, you don't want "other" as an answer.)
- 55 rental locations for small business or start ups
- 56 A musical instrument store, and a bicycle shop would be nice.
- 57 Two reasons: One economic and one convenience.
Burlington is the shopping center for Mount Vernon residents. We need more money from Mount Vernon residents spent within the city limits of Mount Vernon. Money from sales tax is one of the primary aspects of the funding model within the state of Washington and Mount Vernon is not keeping up with that revenue stream. The average distance from a Mount Vernon residence to a grocery store is above the national average. Commerce is not located near (convenient) to the residents of Mount Vernon.
- 58 Restaurants that are not just down town, but ones you can walk to from your home, spread around the residential parts of town. Like COA
- 59 An arts/science center for youth ages 12-17 would benefit the community.
- 60 High Streets' that are close to residential neighborhoods. These would consist of the basic things that people would need without driving all go get. (Groceries, coffee shops, bank branches, Credit Union branches, pubs, diners, etc.)
- 61 Restaurants that stay open past 9pm in the downtown core
- 62 Neighborhood cafes and coffee shops; downtown bakery, bagel shop, Chinese food, and several small restaurants along the river walk, gift shops, places that are open on Sundays.
- 63 County should look at gentrification. Perhaps work with Burlington in see about improving the quality of stores at the mall. Specialty stores perhaps. In addition there will be a large influx of military and their families on Whidbey Island. Why not make MV and or Burlington a place for these new family members to consider living in. Most will not want to stay on the island.
- 64 Anything but antique stores.
- 65 Vendors/store of local produce and flowers (tulips)
- 66 Let the market decide. We have empty stores that potential entrepreneurs could lease.
- 67 I would like to see a dedicated indoor space for farmers markets, and local products made in the Skagit Valley. I would especially like to see more community gathering spaces -meeting rooms and locations for collaboration, a larger library and public restrooms, and a city or County public pool.

- 68 Mixed use
- 69 gasoline stations in the city center
- 70 any high-tech type industry. Bellingham, for instance, has a major Bible computing business (!), a children's game technology company, web-designing businesses for business, etc. Just a few ideas. Small manufacturers also....
- 71 Need to repurpose the many vacancies taking up valuable space already in the commercial district
- 72 Trader Joes
- 73 Parking
- 74 No more big box stores only grocery stores that sell local produce
- 75 We could use a mix of commercial development, mostly infill and renovation/redevelopment of existing properties and vacant retail space
- 76 More mixed use spaces would be great, but limitations on the types of use is needed. We don't need more beer, vape, or pawn shops in neighborhoods, we could use more child care, restaurants, etc. within residential areas.
- 77 Mixed use, especially in old downtown.
- 78 We have vacant buildings, former grocery stores and such. It would be nice to see those filled with something other than an "antique store" or pawn shop. Quality shopping experience, not sure that it would be in the shape of a major shopping mall. This county is having a hard time supporting the one we have in Burlington.
- 79 neighborhood sized retail of all kinds within the residential areas; hotels & convention centers; Downtown: business services (printing, office supply, stationary, book & computer stores); recreation services (bike stores, sporting supplies (NOT GUNS), hiking clubs, ceramics supplies, etc.)
- 80 Fill the empty buildings first
- 81 TRADER JOE'S, Downtown Unique Shops and Tapas Bars, etc., High Tech AND CLEAN MANUFACTURING
- 82 Library, Museum and swimming pool.
- 83 We need light manufacturing mixed into the living residential environment.

8. Following is a list of strengths that other community members have identified for Mount Vernon. Please check all that you believe apply; and add others if you wish.

Downtown	64.8%
Hub	16.0%
Agriculture	69.6%
Home Town	44.6%
Cosmopolitan	2.6%
County Seat	42.3%
Accessibility	29.1%
Arts	35.4%
Sense of Community	43.3%
Proximity to Recreation	70.1%
Proximity to Commerce	30.4%
Cultural Diversity	37.0%
Skagit River	81.6%
Parks	65.1%
Trails	53.3%
Friendly	49.9%
History	39.6%
Food	28.6%

TOP 5 STRENGTHS:

1. Skagit River
2. Proximity to Recreation
3. Agriculture
4. Parks
5. Downtown

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TYPED IN BY RESPONDENTS FOR THIS QUESTION:

- 1 Connected. Perfectly mid-way between Seattle and Vancouver BC for back office operations (accounting, marketing)
- 2 we need an acceptance of ethnic cultures that goes beyond a "tourist" mentality. Nothing is ever said or shown as fact the economic contributions of Mexican and Latino farmworkers to Skagit County.
- 3 Skagit Valley College. Food co-op. McIntyre Hall. Lincoln Theater, Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, Celtic Festival. Tulip Artwork around town. Art Walk. The Riverwalk Park. Saturday Farmers Market, The Flood abatement project along the river. Friendship House. Oasis Teen Center, YMCA programs. Craft Breweries. Wineries. Weekly Coffee conversation with the Mayor.
- 4 Hillcrest Lodge
- 5 More down town focus is needed and connectivity of interurban trails. Need less need for auto transportation.
- 6 The Parks should clean up the trails in mt. vernon
- 7 Community college, top-rate police department
- 8 Public Safety, police and fire do a good job with what they have.
- 9 Look to make Mount Vernon as a destiny. I see no mention of the Tulip Festival and I think this is a huge oversight...unless this is lumped into Agriculture...then I see this as a dumbing down of what is a tremendous opportunity missed to capitalize on the Tulip Festival and build on it for the future by introducing or promoting other annual events and gain funds through tourism.

- 10 A Historical downtown that is waiting to happen - no other town other than LaConner can boast such a great river proximity.
- 11 Friendly approachable mayor that listens and helps find resolution.
- 12 The down town area could be a strength if developed correctly, currently the old empty buildings are not a strength to the city.
- 13 Under the current Mayor (Jill Boudreau) there's more of a "community" feeling within the City. A feeling of inclusiveness rather than divisive.
- 14 Ready access to transportation corridors, both I-5 and rail. Skagit Valley College (education, K-14)
- 15 I'm really pleased with the riverfront improvements downtown. I hope this sparks some more businesses in the area. There are also some great parks, but I think the trail connectivity could use improvement/expansion
- 16 Location between Bellingham and Seattle, in gorgeous organic farming valley, such potential !!!! TRAIN Depot is awesome.

- 17 great tasting water
- 18 Lincoln Theatre
- 19 I would like to see the downtown grow. There are too many empty buildings.
- 20 Minimal traffic
- 21 The arts need more emphasis
- 22 Little Mountain Park is wonderful but getting too crowded. The Lincoln Theater is priceless.
- 23 Natural Beauty
- 24 Library
- 25 Information access--Library
- 26 library
- 27 Center for most businesses and nonprofits. Where the action is for business
- 28 Skagit Valley College, Theaters
- 29 People who care about the environment
Skagit Valley Food COOP
- 30 best library in the county, which could be expanded to include the Mount Vernon School District. Great waterfront, "riverwalk" now---this is amazing! McIntyre Hall is amazing. Skagit Valley College is extremely valuable to the whole city, so I would include education. Transportation hub--Amtrak Skat, and Greyhound (my husband uses a lot). good mix of incomes, good older homes. Need more multiple dwellings---maybe in south downtown, within walking distance of downtown.
- 31 Need more variety of ethnic cuisine and upscale choices.
- 32 We have a great opportunity to promote our local food culture. This is just beginning. The idea of the food HUB is in its infancy. I'd like to see the promoted and increased. It's not there yet
- 33 I think Little. Mountain and the Kulshan Trail are two of Mt Vernon's most unique and endangered features. I'm also concerned about increased rail traffic minimizing access to other features listed, such as downtown and the river. The Parks and parks programs are excellent. Skagit Valley College is an asset. The cost of living is low compared to other areas. The riverfront plaza is really well done.
- 34 Tulip tourism
- 35 Fantastic historic architecture both residential and commercial. I wish the owners recognized and valued it more. Its a marvelous asset!
- 36 Education college, public transportation, hospitals and clinics, courthouse, jail.
- 37 Proximity of farmland and farmer's market.

9. Following is a list of weaknesses that other community members have identified for Mount Vernon. Please check all that you believe apply; and add others if you wish.

Downtown Parking	53.3%
Not Bicycle Friendly	35.7%
Living Wage Jobs	50.7%
Geographic Barriers	10.2%
Welcome to Mount Vernon Signs	11.3%
More Teen/Youth Activities	30.7%
Lack of Cultural Overlap	27.3%
Small Business Opportunities	28.3%
Stores Closed On Sundays (especially historic downtown)	30.2%
Traffic on College Way and I-5	52.0%
Career Opportunities	38.3%
Few Public Restrooms	44.4%
Lack of Restaurants	41.5%
Homeless Encampments	44.6%
Junk Vehicles	27.8%

TOP 5 WEAKNESSES:

1. Downtown Parking
2. Traffic on College Way and I-5
3. Living Wage Jobs
4. Homeless encampments
5. Few Public Restrooms

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TYPED IN BY RESPONDENTS FOR THIS QUESTION:

- 1 Mount Vernon has a reputation of not being business friendly. Burlington has the reputation for being business friendly. The result is that the majority of new retain development has occurred in Burlington over the last 25 years.
- 2 Positive Police interaction
- 3 Empty commercial buildings. Lack of business development compared with Burlington. Tiny library for population.
- 4 Lack of parks for sports advents and family activities. Somehow make Hillcrest Park a more friendly family get together place like it used to be when my children were young.
- 5 I-5 funneling down to two lanes going north is a huge problem in the evening during the week and all day on the weekend, recently we have had two deadly crashes that may have been prevented if the freeway was three lanes travelling both directions and solid barriers in the median, needs to be fixed!
- 6 Drug and Gang problems are a huge weakness in Mount Vernon.
- 7 Lack of police presence downtown, i.e. what happened to the bicycle police.
Too aggressive ticketing of parked cars. Two hours is not enough time to shop and then eat, without reparking.
- 8 Lack of patrol for speeding around the high school. Between 5 AM-8AM commuters speed down 10th and 11th. Lack of city leadership to be open to neighborhood beautification, placement of stop signs or other barriers to slowdown drivers. Presence of attorneys in prime down town storefronts. Lack of summer night activities down town. Pine Square should be full of outside dining, music, movies etc.....
- 9 gang issues

- 10 The train tracks that divide the city. The strip mall appearance of West Mount Vernon....tacky. YMCA facilities, Library facilities and community meeting spaces. More contact opportunities with the City Council - constituent or Ward meetings.
- 11 One thing Mount Vernon does not need is a homeless encampments
- 12 Too many vacant commercial buildings. The speed limit is too slow in some areas (Hoag Rd should be 30 instead of 25). Trains.
- 13 Too many freight trains passing through town
- 14 Crime
Segregated society
Horrible urban planning esp College Way
Wow - this is really poorly written. More teen/youth activities is a WEAKNESS???
- 15 Governmental assertiveness in acquiring and securing open spaces, park extensions and right of ways for walking and biking trails. Example: the green house on Little Mountain Park road near the Yellow Gate is occupied by an elderly woman who would consider selling it to the city to be part of Little Mountain Park. There has been no action on the part of the city to move on this. It could add five crucial acres to the park and a great park headquarters.
- 16 There is a high number of homeless in Mount Vernon today, a lot of teens and woman not enough shelters or programs to help with this .
- 17 I wish we could make parks or low income housing out of all the wet lands areas where so many homeless live in the city limits. I wish there was a better solution for the homeless and drug issues.
- 18 Lax enforcement of basic traffic and noise ordinance laws.
- 19 We need more places for homeless families to stay until they are able to get on their feet.
- 20 Why does Burlington have more new restaurants than Mt. Vernon. We use the same buildings over and over and over. The last new big restaurant built was Max Dales, decades ago. No restaurants to draw folks like Burlington, Red Robin, Johnny Carinos, Olive Garden, etc.
- 21 Lack of walk-able neighborhoods. Way too many cookie-cutter homes on small lots.
- 22 TOO MANY ILLIGAL MEXICANS. Police can't do their job because the jail is full of mostly mexicans.
- 23 the homeless are only weaknesses if we continue to treat them as such.
- 24 Poor commuter connections with Seattle, adjacent towns, and Vancouver, bc. Beautiful train&bus center and too few connections
- 25 Infrastructure cannot handle current population.
- 26 public safety is a huge need. Our law enforcement, EMS, and fire department need better staffing and resources. Drugs (specifically Heroine and Meth) are a huge problem in Mount Vernon, prioritizing public safety would help combat this rather than just treat the effects of it.
- 27 Public Safety, we need more fire and police personnel to perform their duties safely while protecting the community. This also increases publics safety.
- 28 loss of tree canopy (trees along streets and otherwise)
- 29 Again...build on tourism opportunities and capturing Canadians heading to Seattle. Why are they driving all the way to Seattle. Could Mount Vernon offer what they are looking for...i.e. Whole Foods, Shopping, etc... Any downtown parking additions should be coupled with a Public Private Partnership with a developer and bring more than parking, i.e. urban housing.
- 30 Run down/vacant commercial space
- 31 Not a lot of events to bring the community together. I have spent time in other communities that have events that involve the community on a regular basis. Our downtown is not a focal point of town....people should be using it consistently. I will not retire here and really feel sad that Mount Vernon is lacking in recreational opportunities like SAFE hiking trails, easy access biking trails and lanes, community pools and recreation centers and I could go on. There isn't a place to takes kids.... I end up going to Bellingham to enjoy the Pool, ice skating rink, lovely bike and walking trails,great restaurants,and dog parks (ours does not offer much space). I don't feel safe here and I don't feel that is a priority in Mount Vernon.
- 32 I have enjoyed Edgewater park, but would love to see a better location for the homeless occupants.

- 33 We need more industry and business. Also with the amount of money in impact fees for building a house is ridiculous. It's no wonder people look to Burlington, Conway, and Sedro Woolley. Builders and individuals could build nicer, bigger homes on larger lots if the city re evaluated their fees. The city would benefit because with larger lots and nicer homes property taxes increase which is a perpetual resource for money. Instead we settle for small lots with poorly constructed houses closer together. Ex: quadrant homes. If you are to have a UGA area then there should be a timeline you can give property owners like a return on investment. If the city imposes all city impact fees and expects people who build to pay large amounts with no guarantee of return on investment from the city and then imposes rules on larger pieces of land to live by city laws restricting home owners in UGAs to not utilize their land in a way that other people in the county can.
- 34 Roads throughout the city are in poor shape, lack of good middle income jobs allowing for higher quality homes. The homeless population is destroying downtown. College way and I-5 is a problem but so is the westside bridge. we seem to forget that west Mount Vernon is in the city and is dying a slow death.
- 35 Schools. I understand this is not a city responsibility but it is real. The city can have an impact however by creating an impact fee structure such that EVERY new home adds more revenue to the school district than it costs, thereby over time allowing new housing to strengthen schools vs weaken them. Will MV have fewer or less issues over time. Solutions like this are will determine.
- 36 Vacant commercial property/buildings. Gangs. Drugs/heroin.
- 37 Lack of family activities and services, only specialized leagues activities for kids, downtown is not kid/pet/family friendly, lack of restaurant options, trail connectivity not a priority, large homeless population and no City services for them, what is there to do here?
- 38 Downtown stores closing on weekdays at 5 or 6 p.m., which is the time that most of us who are employed could get to downtown after work. That's why Amazon exists, unfortunately.
- 39 Great boardwalk and Kushan Trail but lacking in safe connectivity between West Mount Vernon to the boardwalk and between the boardwalk and the trail.
- 40 Way too many empty buildings.
- 41 Mount Vernon has not established a "car free" downtown on 1st Street that would be "pedestrians only". If so boutiques, specialty shops and restaurants will develop to serve the people. More events in the downtown area year round would encourage people to come and enjoy.
- 42 The view of Mount Vernon from I-5 is terrible. There is no natural entry point to attract visitors and others. Travelling northbound, the first view is of an industrial area. The second view is of the city shops. The area to the north of Fir along I-5 is ripe for redevelopment.
- 43 Many drivers do not obey speed limits, don't use turn signals, don't stop at stop signs. Some have no drivers license, no insurance. HUGE problem is there are homes being built with NO PLACE for the children to attend school. Schools are overcrowded, in disrepair, need new school(s) BEFORE you hand out more building permits!!
- 44 Homeless encampments along the Kulshan trail seem to be getting worse. I also wish there were more local restaurants that were not part of a chain. Gangs violence seems to be an emerging issue as well with recent shootings and stabbings. The overall quality of public schools needs improvement too. I get waivers for my kids to attend Jefferson because it provides a better education than our neighborhood school Madison.
- 45 The Y is so small. We need a Rec Center where the kids can dance, play ping pong, pool, oh yeah, where is the outdoor pool? The young soon-be-adults need something to do.
- 46 No dog parks
- 47 Outdated, smelly, badly located library. It should be on the east side of I-5 where the majority of residences and schools are.
- 48 need support and maintenance of open public spaces, parks, recreational areas, greenspace, wildlife corridors
- 49 More fine restaurants, breakfast restaurants - downtown on riverfront - outdoor seating
- 50 Poor quality of schools
- 51 Lack of downtown live music venues. Besides the Lincoln Theatre and McIntyre Hall on rare (and expensive) occasions, there really isn't live music in our city. Bellingham has many thriving live music venues, but our city has not been supportive of these over the years.
- 52 Getting off hi way on Kincaid could be prettier!!!! Also, JAIL is such a tumor. TEAR IT DOWN. Town needs a major facelift viewed from freeway. Bridge over river is HORRIBLE. Need a pedestrian only bridge. If we're so "bike friendly" in the valley, then why can't we cross the bridge without fighting the cars. Bridge needs work. Or, keep it small, and they won't come -- opposite of "If We Build It - They Will Come"
- 53 Public transportation needs additional routes. Food bank needs major overhaul. Community could be sharing resources more effectively, carpool, surplus garden produce, trade or barter.

- 54 "Not Bicycle Friendly" comes with a caveat. It is bicycle friendly - I love the wide shoulders in West Mount Vernon - but it could be more bike friendly.
Mount Vernon signage could use improvements. It appears to have been designed by someone without formal wayfinding experience ... font use and text size is too small.
- 55 lack of respect and care for the historic downtown's architecture and character; unwelcoming, shabby, unlandscaped north end of town from I 5 exit down College Way; mixing multiple housing units into single family neighborhoods; blind intersections (signs and foliage too close to the corners); inadequate library; no serious arts except for films and music at the Lincoln and occasionally at the McIntyre; empty stores.
- 56 More activity to keep 20 somethings in the area, better mid level starting jobs (tech). Downtown needs a nightlife of music and restaurants open later.
An active vibrant downtown is critical
Bus service from north division to downtown, I could leave my car at home.
- 57 Drug Users
- 58 not friendly towards urban farms (ie- small goats on city lots)
- 59 Train noise, Sewer smells in downtown area, Homeless/Psych Problem people on streets, River access, Duplicated resources with Burlington
- 60 The uncontrolled development of the past 8 years, or so, has made a noticeable increase in traffic, traffic jams, etc. If I wanted to live in a big city, say Seattle, I'd live there. I chose Mount Vernon for the small town feel. That character is now gone, and I'm thinking about moving elsewhere. STOP THE DEVELOPMENT.
- 61 houses/yards not kept up properly- eyesores
25 MPH speed limits almost everywhere
- 62 Downtown is CUT OFF from foot traffic. You take your life in your hands to try and cross the freeway ramps to walk downtown. Bad idea to develop downtown and the revetment when you have poor walking and biking access.
- 63 Library too small
- 64 Lots of homeless people on Little Mountain now camping out when the weather is nice. I think they were camping on the other side of Little Mountain Road before they started logging it.
- 65 Proximity to commerce. (one needs to go to Burlington to do any real commerce.)
High school. There is only one huge school rather than a couple. What is up with a high school that has a sprawling collage feel? Let us have a sense of belonging to something that we have some opportunities to perform.
- 66 I wish there were more restaurants we could walk to from our neighborhood.
- 67 The new "Irises" graphic near Kincaid freeway interchange is so ugly! Better bare concrete. Please remove it.
- 68 Homeless encampments - really? Then perhaps we need to look at ways to alleviate homelessness in the county/city.
- 69 Library in bad location - should be where all the new housing is springing up so it's close to population growth. Also need a new, nicer and bigger library.
- 70 current zoning and regulations
- 71 low wages forces residents to commute (and then they spend money near where they work)
- 72 Understand most homes are not in a "home owners association" but people need to take pride in their homes. Some of these home have junk on the yard or look like sh*t. Perhaps in a few years announce that fines will be given out to those homes that are not taken cared of. A lot of push back will happen but im sure you will increase the quality of people who will be living in the town.
- 73 The schools are outdated and do not rank among schools from neighboring towns.
- 74 Downtown needs businesses and beautification
Restaurants have poor quality and poorly prepared food. There is no where I want to eat out.
Riverfront Walk & Area needs to address homeless loitering and intimidation. My young son is frightened to walk past groups of homeless people even though we feel compassion.
Seedy area of College Way east of Riverside to 18th
- 75 Lack of public meeting rooms
- 76 Mexican gang activity: crime, graffiti, violence
- 77 I would like to see Mount Vernon more environmentally friendly -easier and more convenient to take the bus, banning styrofoam and plastic bags, focus on sustainable design, and partner more/overlap with the Swinomish and Upper Skagit Communities. A LARGER library and a public pool would be great! More events for adults!
- 78 Too many new developments that lack character. Over-crowded schools.
- 79 Unsafe pedestrian traffic on westside bridge. We need that as a priority upgrade if it is not already in a

- comprehensive plan.
- 80 trail systems that connect. There are good trail systems but we need more connection so we don't all have to drive
81 lack of night life, lack of community meeting spaces
- 82 Lack of GOOD restaurants. More neighborhood identity. Lack of transparent public process and welcoming public
participation. We have parks but they are not well developed and inviting so people don't use them. Skate Park is
not located well. Sidewalks on both sides of streets. Lack of a bike shop. Diverse retail - not big box like WalMart.
- 83 When new developments are permitted, city must also address the increased traffic those new residents will
impose on existing neighborhoods. We need more ways to access I-5 from east Mount Vernon to even out the
traffic impact on existing homeowners. Put Blackburn through from Waugh as originally promised.
- 84 As a senior, I'm not sure about this. None of these have really affected me personally, but probably some are a
problem. We do have quite a few empty commercial buildings. I know the library welcomes Hispanic and other
groups, now, after not being very welcome. We need to make sure people know they can use it for their children,
free of charge, and are totally welcome.
- 85 The downtown lacks a theme and overall mission statement. I see steps being taken to improve with sculptures
but Mount Vernon should be a vibrant pulse of Skagit County with festivals, music, art and food. We need to get
the economy rolling with events that create jobs, commerce and keep MV on the map as a cultural epicenter.
- 86 Parks - the City needs more parks that allow for weekend tournaments for basketball, baseball, soccer, softball to
draw business in to the city.
- 87 Crime, Low income appearance, lacks pride in ownership, houses look junky, doesn't feel safe.
- 88 Rail traffic is dangerous and cuts off the town into segments when large trains move through. There aren't great
ways to get to downtown on a bike. There is little to no live music or downtown activities besides drinking beer at
night during the week or weekend. There are lots of vacant storefronts downtown with no interim uses. Flood
zoning and rail traffic decrease interest in real property investment for commercial or residential spaces
downtown. There isn't a four year college. The public schools aren't well regarded. Mt. Vernon hasn't encouraged
or promoted its young and old creative types and their talents as effectively as neighbors in Anacortes and La
Conner. There are no vibrant arts organizations promoting contemporary art or music produced or enjoyed locally.
- 89 Our city would be more bikeable for more levels of bike riders if we'd put in bike lanes instead of just painting fog
lines. Gaps in sidewalks. Connectivity to parks and trails by bike and walking. Good restaurants - way to many fast
food types.
Terrible design and location for skate park.
Number of cars at a residence - sometimes during the summer there can be 8 to 12 cars parked at one home, all
over the yard and street.
- 90 Mt. Vernon has the worst street noise I have experienced of the many cities i have lived in. City does not enforce
noise regulations. Citizens have to endure so many "hot" cars and pickups with poor mufflers and after market
exhausts to enhance power and "growl" that is pervasive and unnerving. Then we have the trains blowing horns all
thru town 24/7.
- 91 Environmental policy
Farm to school programs
- 92 Outdated, poorly located library.
- 93 Generally not a friendly or open culture.
College Way is appallingly ugly. The only saving grace is the stretch of gorgeous cherry trees on the south side just
east of the freeway - and many of those have been removed lately.
- 94 NO SHOPS OPEN EARLIER THAN 9:00 OR 10:00 THEN ROLL UP THE CARPET EARLY AND THEN BUSINESSES
COMPLAIN THERE IS NO SHOPPING TRAFFIC.
- 95 Education and re-education, public radio support.
- 96 Need a linking trail system (unpaved) around town for running/walking.

10. Following is a list of opportunities that other community members have identified for Mount Vernon. Please check all that you believe apply; and add others if you wish.

Fill Vacant Storefronts	83.2%
More 'Clean' Industrial and Manufacturing	44.4%
Downtown/Waterfront Opportunities	75.9%
Events Linking East and West Mount Vernon (across the Division Street Bridge)	37.0%
Activities for Children	28.1%
Recreational Activities for all Ages	47.5%

TOP 5 OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Fill Vacant Storefronts
2. Downtown/Waterfront Opportunities
3. Recreational Activities for all Ages
4. More 'Clean' Industrial and Manufacturing
5. Events Linking East and West Mount Vernon

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TYPED IN BY RESPONDENTS FOR THIS QUESTION:

- 1 Need a safe hangout for teenagers. Something along the lines of a 21-and-under club.
- 2 There must be incentives to get developers to invest in Mount Vernon. Developers need to want to develop all types of retail, residential, office and residential. An affordable housing crisis exists because there are no privately developed apartment projects being built in Mount Vernon. Rents are rising rapidly because of this shortage of Multifamily housing. The existing codes make multifamily infeasible. Density constraints and code constraints have totally killed multifamily housing other than the housing built by non-profit housing entities.
- 3 Update of public facilities including parks and public restrooms
- 4 Open up the back alleys in downtown Mount Vernon to artists.
- 5 Again more places for families to gather. More businesses that would bring in visitors or new residents.
- 6 Mount Vernon lags far behind other NW communities
Seek out a diversity of shops to fill in downtown, you can't even buy a decent gift card downtown anymore.
- 7 Children's Museum, Children's Theater,
- 8 library resources
- 9 If the segregated communities could be brought together - a lot of energy could be utilized to improving other elements
- 10 See above comment
- 11 would love to see a more vibrant and thriving downtown. Would keeping county and city govt (including the library) help with this? I'm not sure what "clean" industrial and manufacturing are but I love the idea of MV being a hub for the development and production of green technology. Need better linked/safe/beautiful/green pedestrian routes. Need more parks interspersed throughout the city. Could you explore a partnership with the County to develop/extend Little Mtn park down Cascade Ridge? Would add great value to livability and recreational opportunities of the city/county!
- 12 I strongly agree with filling the vacant stores and business and or adding on to them to keep unnecessary building from occurring.
- 13 Better, more attractive parks. Our park system is dismal. The roads in and out are in poor shape, the grass areas overgrown and unattractive. Hillcrest needs to be 'thinned' of trees to let light in and make it feel safer for families with small children. Bakerview is horrible - terrible road, terrible parking, terrible fields, "caution tape" around playground equipment, unattractive YMCA building w/no landscape (ironic that the City requires developers to install landscape, but skips it all together in their own parks).

- 14 Green jobs, center for locally grown food centered restaurant scene similar to Napa valley
- 15 stop cutting down our forests -renewable, yes, but it seems that trees are cut down and not replaced - less cement and more green please. that's one of the things that makes this such a wonderful home for us all - more bike and walking trails to increase health of citizens and keep our area healthy
- 16 Focus on economics and public safety. When the structures, services, and people are invested in - the opportunities will be created organically rather than trying to "create" them.
- 17 See earlier comments
- 18 Meeting spaces
- 19 Give businesses incentives to come here. Create some great shopping with popular stores. Burlington mall has gone downhill and it would be neat to see a huge beautiful mall like alder wood in south mount Vernon by the freeway.
- 20 agreed
- 21 Love the Riverfront music performances and attempt to include everyone in community activities.
- 22 Converting the Dike Trail to public access with an easement like in B.C. Miles of nice, flat walking trails that are closed to the public.
- 23 Let's have a pedestrian bridge to Edgewater Park. Connect it to the existing bridge or build one from Riverwalk.
- 24 Now is the time to capitalize on the waterfront. Entertainment/dining should be encouraged. I can't think of a single sidewalk café downtown.
- 25 We need more resources for limited English population to learn English. Parents who don't speak English have a VERY difficult time helping their children with school work and difficult time finding employment so continue to need financial help from generation to generation.
- 26 The water park is great!
- 27 Build a new library
- 28 Patio or sidewalk dining. Quality restaurants. Maybe assembly of Food Trucks and live music, shut the street down. Make that bridge bicycle pedestrian friendly. With all our artists, we should have one big warehouse offering pottery, welding, glass blowing, upholstery, wood carving etc.... Portland has a great one. ABOUT ADX
ADX is a hub for collaboration where individuals and organizations make and learn. By sharing tools, knowledge, and experience, we're doing things better – working together. Our makerspace, learning center, and custom fabrication shop allows anyone to bring their idea to life. In our 14,000-square foot facility, high-profile designers work alongside students, retirees share their knowledge with novice builders, and entrepreneurs collaborate with hobbyists.
- 29 Many of the opportunities already exist; the first challenge is how to best communicate them to the greater public. The second challenge is convincing the greater public to participate.
- 30 The city's downtown has great promise if it were planned to be developed as a destination, as some historic towns, Port Townsend for example, have managed to do. These towns start by capitalizing on restoring historic buildings rather than using inappropriate materials or hiding the original attributes or simply neglecting the buildings. Too, there are perfect places for specialty shops not found elsewhere. Forte's chocolate shop is an example. I would welcome a good deli with imported cheeses, and a bakery like The Bread Farm in town. A socks shop. A shop selling local foods year round – pickled vegetables, fish, meats, jams, etc. A tailor who makes custom made clothes.
- 31 Merge with Burlington, Decorate/Light West Side Bridge, Extend River Walk North
- 32 Improve the Eaglemont golf course into a resort friendly layout.
- 33 Mount Vernon should not be fussy about cherry picking "clean" industrial and manufacturing. Choice promotes MV's bad and true reputation as anti-business. Reading the choice in this survey proves and will chase away business location shoppers. It is a very dumb limitation.
- 34 can empty storefronts be used as "pop-up" events and display spaces, especially for the arts
- 35 Increased friendliness for bicycles and pedestrians
- 36 More economic activity for both the young looking for their first job and those looking for a career. For example Mount Vernon has missed the boat, so far, when it comes to service sector jobs in commerce.
- 37 Market MV as a retirement destination; market MV as desirable agricultural regions to current California farmers who may want to move.
- 38 There needs to be a pedestrian/bike bridge linking the east side and west side of the river.
- 39 Really move forward on the new library. We've heard nothing since the study.
- 40 Renovate downtown library to make it more vibrant; update public computers to reflect better technology savvy in Mount Vernon.
- 41 neighborhood groups (like Everett does)
- 42 Don't see much of opportunities.

- 43 No more antique stores
- 44 I really appreciate the listing of free or low cost events in the Skagit Valley Herald, more low cost and community focused activities would be great!
- 45 Downtown waterfront needs to have shops and restaurants that face the water.
- 46 Burlington Parks and Rec seems to have many more supporters and followers. i.e. people from Mt Vernon join their activities but rarely the other way around. Need more attractive offerings for all ages
- 47 Need affordable musical events and venues; better offerings from Parks dept.; Sunday hours at the library, new large library facility or smaller outlet by Haggens; community garden, possibly at PUD; medium sized convention center; more lodging for tourists; develop sister cities program
- 48 Be the leader in working with other jurisdiction to have conversations with Skagit River levy propoerty owners to get public access where possible. Investing in connected trail system and transportation system (for all users) that fosters walking and biking for residents as well as tourism.
- 49 Activities or recognition for special need families
- 50 Active senior center activities (like in Anacortes!).
- 51 All good. I think we need a new library---the old one just doesn't cut it anymore, in light of our population, technology which has made libraries so much more rich in opportunities. We need a couple of good community meeting rooms, too, in the library. We need to work on the homeless folks downtown. They sort of hang out...esp. around the library, which is sort of a family-oriented place. By the way, I also love Bakerview Park, and I walk in it every day. But, I wish there were more kids/youth using it now that it's summer.
- 52 Use of the dikes as recreation resources
- 53 The river boardwalk plaza and plaza by the Thai restaurant are cool but seldom used. Encourage and enable neighborhood gatherings through block party permits. The Fairgrounds is a neat space but underutilized and uninviting from the street with its super high fence. Public art gives people from other areas a reason to come and stay longer downtown. The Farmers Market is a neat attraction but could is held in a marginal space.
- 54 Links to parks and trails. Ability to walk and bike instead of drive.
Mixed use in downtown.
Attract a bike shop. Increase bicycle parking especially long term type.
- 55 Who came up with these
- 56 Concerts
- 57 New Library
- 58 Develop an 'aloha' spirit among citizens. Saying 'hello' to someone you don't know is OK!
Events / ideas for linking cultures - more interaction to enrich all.
Implementing environmentally friendly stormwater treatment landscaping throughout the city.
- 59 More groups: chess readers, tutoring, technology, self learners, outdoors environmental, agricultural, drugs control.
Avoid suburban sprawl. The Quadrant homes development is not ideal. Incorporate light manufacturing and industry into communities to connect sense of place and avoid senseless commuting.
- 60

11. Following is a list of challenges that other community members have identified for Mount Vernon. Please check all that you believe apply; and add others if you wish.

Public Safety	46.7%
Flooding	33.6%
Graffiti	43.6%
Individuals with Mental Health Issues	64.3%
Safe Trails	39.1%
Ratio of Retirees to Younger Families	13.1%
Rail Traffic and Rail Safety	46.5%
Commuter Community	18.1%
Homeless and Transients	65.1%
Gangs	63.8%

TOP 5 CHALLENGES:

1. Homeless and Transients
2. Individuals with Mental Health Issues
3. Gangs
4. Public Safety
5. Rail Traffic and Rail Safety

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TYPED IN BY RESPONDENTS FOR THIS QUESTION:

- 1 Lack of affordable housing.
- 2 I feel the Mt. Vernon Police do a good job however, as a lifelong resident I feel they need to resolve the gang related shootings occurring in the city, it is getting worse even though its not published in the news media, we hear about about the problem from neighbors, very scary, non-gang folk at risk!
- 3 The police force is invisible around town and unresponsive to citizen complaints. Get out of their cars once in a while and get to know people.
- 4 Speeding of commuters around high school, need to hire more law enforcement officers (yes I will pay hiring taxes to get them)
- 5 We need facilities and accessible services for the homeless and individuals with mental health issues. Friendship House and Community Action are wonderful, but they can't meet all the needs.
- 6 Drugs
- 7 Street cops deal with gangs and Public Safety let Fire and Police Chief deal with growth within the city the have the need data. City couni
- 8 Support for education
- 9 Quality of health care relative to larger urban areas
- 10 Lack of realistic community gardens. Example: kulshan spots garden.
- 11 I chose public safety although its not really a concern I worry about - but I couldn't move to the next set of questions without providing at least one checked box...
I'm not concerned about rail traffic and safety. I AM concerned about the volume and number of train horns. Is it possible to request/require trains coming through MV to have directional horns so that we are not constantly bombarded with train horn noise at all hours? I am regularly woken up by train horns blasting. Seems like the main area needing to be warned of oncoming trains is the tracks a few hundred feet ahead of the train not a mile radius.
- 12 Transportation, where I live the bus stop is blocks away. would use the bus if it was convenient for work and shopping.
- 13 it's great seeing officers and city officials walk down town. this adds to the sense of community and safety. our transit system is good, love the smaller buses - they help keep a sense of community when using them -they're

clean and the drivers helpful - just wish Amtrak did as good a job

- 14 Flooding is largely being handled with the floodwall project. EMS needs to be restructured to take into consideration what is best for the public, Fire and Law should be better staffed and equipped. The river and rail bring a lot of risk that cannot be adequately addressed by our government at this time. Gangs, violence, and drugs drive people away from Mount Vernon - these could also be addressed by taking steps to better fund public safety and have a stronger police presence in the community. Creating and enforcing building codes to address vacant and derelict buildings would also help overcome challenges that keep people from relocating to Mount Vernon.
- 15 Public safety as in police and fire.
- 16 Provide more housing diversity downtown and you will cut down on several of the items in this list. Feet on the street and eyes out windows have a positive impact to these issues. Look to preserve history downtown in existing buildings and build on and around these.
- 17 the round-the-clock coal and oil tank trains will KILL downtown Mt Vernon, create excessive noise and traffic chaos, and seriously impede access to emergency and medical facilities all along the MV corridor.
- 18 See above.
- 19 mv seems to be focused on appearances rather than real issues.
- 20 We could really use businesses in our community. There are too many free hand outs which attracts a variety of people that make the city not feel as safe. We should be a hard working community and empower our residents. Also the migrant housing and apartments really bring down the appearance of the city for example the one by the fairgrounds. Let the police do undercover drug work like Sedro Woolley does so we don't have to wait in drug task force. Drugs ruin a community quicker than anything.
- 21 I don't use the trails, because the neighborhoods they run through I would not go into. Both fire and police are understaffed, and consistently on TV10 I see a lack of support for the fire department.
- 22 Of course, the ones I checked could apply to many communities throughout the country
- 23 Increasing instances of red light and crosswalk running with little or no traffic enforcement from MVPD.
- 24 More affordable housing for people on either Social Security and/or Disability
- 25 Mount Vernon has a high percentage of Spanish speaking citizens yet they are not represented to any great degree in our government. There seems to be two cultures growing side by side rather than integrated. Skagit Valley College offers many diverse cultural activities but the community challenge is to offer many opportunities for cultural exchanges for it's citizens.
- 26 The riverbend area should be isolated from areas to the east by a levee behind Lowes. Economic development continues to be a challenge.
- 27 Many students who attend Mount Vernon schools are limited English speaking which makes learning and doing well in education extremely difficult for them. This creates barriers for them, they continue to have children who don't do well and the cycle perpetuates itself.
- 28 It sounds like you're saying that people who have mental health issues are a problem. I certainly hope you mean there needs to be better places for treatment as well as better treatment itself.
- 29 Poor quality of schools
- 30 Public safety is HUGE. There have been WAY too many shootings, gang-related activities and drug-related activities of late. This was a problem in the past and it's a problem now, however it wasn't as big a problem a few years ago. Living right off the Kulshan trail, I am very concerned about public safety, graffiti, safe trails, gang activity and homeless activity. A group of teens skateboards near my house and I welcome them; we greet each other regularly and their behavior has been one of appreciation and friendliness. My neighbors keep a strong neighborhood watch. Most neighborhoods aren't as lucky (S 27th).
- 31 Encouraging: Activities and entertainment for teenagers; entertainment for young (working age) adults; connecting the town with SVC; multi-generational activities.
- 32 Quality of schools
- 33 growth in Mount Vernon is out of control.
- 34 MV's biggest challenge is your anti business stance keeps you away from any sort of tax base that can support programs to assist with mental health and safety issues. MV needs to recognize that the commuter population is way too large and it is way too difficult to start a seed company here.
- 35 4th Street/Riverside Blvd could use some cleanup. too many empty buildings.
- 36 The frequency of train traffic needs to be addressed. Gangs, homelessness, transients, public safety are all issues the city needs to address, but I'd like to see these issues addressed in a manor that did not demonize the individuals; I'm not a fan of punitive measures. Lets figure out a way to be an expansive community.

- 37 zoning and rules and regulations
- 38 drug use
- 39 More trails! Keep building off of the historic downtown theme. How to grow responsibility with quality jobs and avoid rampant sprawl. Burlington is how NOT to do it.

12. Please rank the following programs in order of importance, according to you, with #1 being the most important program and #9 being the least important program. No two programs can be ranked the same.

- Public Safety
- City Beautification
- Historical Preservation in the Downtown Core
- Transportation Projects to Alleviate Congestion
- Housing Affordability
- Code Enforcement (junk cars, illegal signage, etc.)
- More Recreational Opportunities (trails, parks, etc.)
- More Teen and Youth Programs
- Conservation of Streams, Wetlands & Steep Slopes
- Increase Living Wage Jobs in the City
- Other (please specify)

1. Increase Living Wage Jobs in the City
 2. Conservation of Streams, Wetlands & Steep Slopes
 3. More Recreational Opportunities (trails, parks, etc.)
 4. Public Safety
 5. Code Enforcement (junk cars, illegal signage, etc.)
 6. More Teen and Youth Programs
 7. Historical Preservation in the Downtown
 8. Transportation Projects to Alleviate Congestion
 9. Housing Affordability
 10. City Beautification
- } #s 4, 5, and 6 were tied
- } #s 8 and 9 were tied

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TYPED IN WITH THIS QUESTION:

- 1 increase of wages for farmworkers who harvest our crops, facilitating and encouraging the formation of Unions for farmworkers so that they may have the same benefits as those of us who are in unions.
- 2 Comment: It is hard to list these as more important to less important when so many of them should be checked at the same level.
- 3 #1 aspect of public safety is the oil and coal trains coming through the middle of the towns in this area. We are living in the blast zone and this is very dangerous to our small towns. Oil should not be transported via rail. We need to increase the availability and use of green energy, for our safety and for the environment. I'm surprised that climate change is not even listed above as an important program!
- 4 Schools and Education in all forms are most important #1
A friendly library staff is most important. #1
A Real Senior Center is most important #1
- 5 Preservation of surrounding farm land
- 6 A new Library facility. A new YMCA facility. Viable utilization of the Christian Seed facility

- 7 Higher education opportunities. SVC could be a 4 year institution.
 - 8 New paving of downtown streets.
 - 9 When considering 'housing affordability', please consider apartments. Slamming up cheaply made homes on small lots and inducing buyers who really can't afford them to buy them leads to poorly maintained, crowded neighborhoods that spawn crime and drive AWAY potential buyers with higher mean income levels. MV has all the affordable HOUSES it needs. What we need are apartments, for that segment for whom home ownership is not truly viable.
 - 10 if there are more teen and youth programs, a living wage, affordable housing, ease of travel between cities, pride in the downtown and our outdoors, all these support public safety because individuals become engaged and part of the system, no longer on the outside looking in
 - 11 Jobs, recreation, transportation access will help alleviate many of the problems that come from poverty and lack of opportunity
 - 12 I rank the last three in the top three of importance. This was difficult for me to prioritize like this is set up to do. Mount Vernon is losing, if it hasn't completely lost, it's luster, it's curb appeal. This needs to get figured out. We need charm back in this city, not just in the 5 block downtown area which is charming, but is now overrun with homeless and mentally ill.
 - 13 my #1 is to stop the oil and coal train infestation--everything else falls away in comparison.
 - 14 Less apartments
 - 15 Increase in industry/businesses which would increase city revenue.
 - 16 Redevelopment of aging commercial areas (College Way, I-5 to LaVenture)
 - 17 Really need to get a handle on the drivers in Mount Vernon that show no regard for the speed limit, traffic signs, drive without insurance and with no driver's license. I see very few drivers following the speed limit laws, huge safety issue!
 - 18 Not just 'the city' beautification, but have any of you walked or drove N 1st? We need to clean up our neighborhoods.
 - 19 Even more than any of these, are the schools. Most of them are ancient and busting, not to mention an eyesore. This is where I would like to see funds going. My "yes" to number 13 is for this.
 - 20 bigger better library downtown !!!
better sense of community. Let's be better than Burlington's horrible strip mall after strip mall.
 - 21 The north end of town is depressingly tacky. It's a hodge-podge, a jumble of signs and stores. The parking lots are dirty and trashy and there is no landscaping relief. If my first sight of Mount Vernon from I 5 was College Way and environs, there would be nothing that would entice me to stay and look at the rest of the town. Zoning should include design, not so that everything looks the same but so it looks as if the city and its people care. Also, this town is noisy. The noise is from machines - lawn care, the freeway, trains, and planes, especially the Navy jets.
 - 22 These are hard to choose. I think about 5 of the questions could be most important and then easier to grade the rest of the questions as less important.
 - 23 Good starting jobs for 20-30 age range plus increase nightlife.
 - 24 I would like to see the city change the allowances for goats (less than 130 lbs) to be re-classified as small animals and permitted within city limits on all sized lots (single family homes) as Seattle and Everett both have.
 - 25 We wouldn't need "Transportation Projects to Alleviate Congestion" if Mount Vernon had a sensible outlook on development.
 - 26 These are all important and it isn't really possible to say some are more important than others. All would be worthwhile goals
 - 27 More live music opportunities and venues.
 - 28 Build a new library now!!! in a better part of town!!!
 - 29 New Library with study rooms and meeting rooms and MORE computers!
 - 30 New Library, more hours would be highly ranked if you listed it
More facilities for mentally ill, low income
Have teens involved in beautification projects
 - 31 I really would like the city to ban the use of pesticides like Roundup. I cringe when I see it being used in the Fairground. We have to be smarter for the brighter future we are designing.
 - 32 Employment, joining cultures, less crime
 - 33 stop spending on downtown beautification...start working on riverside and college way. Beautify that!
 - 34 New public library with meeting rooms, youth activities, literacy programs etc.
- NUMBER 1

- 35 We have lovely parks---let's make sure we maintain them, and use them. If we have better jobs, some of the other items will follow. We need to zip up the library---need a new one, so more programs, esp for teens, and meeting rooms, maker centers, etc. can make it a true cultural center.. I'm not so worried about traffic congestion, but am worried about the dangers of oil/coal trains. Maybe I'm just naïve, but it would only take one explosion to do incredible damage. I'm for anything for kids and teens. I worry about traffic/congestion in two spots: LaVenture near Mountain View School, and College Way intersection. I walk both and they are really pretty dangerous---not just College Way, but the hand-operated sign just east of College Way.
- 36 Enforcing standards for neighborhoods. Similar to a HOA. Would like to live in a safer, more appealing area which I believe would increase significantly with more oversight and enforcement.
- 37 Arts, more vibrant downtown
- 38 Make is safer for biking and walking and it would help alleviate congestion.
We have a great variety of youth and teen programs. The City doesn't need to add more but should work with local agencies to ensure access for all.
- 39 flip it
- 40 More downtown economic development #1

13. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes or higher fees to have your highest ranked programs have more City resources focused on them?

Yes	73%
No	27%

14. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share about how you think Mount Vernon should grow or serve our citizens? Please share/describe below:

- 1 Continue to provided events like farmers market and concerts at the board walk.
- 2 More parks and updated park facilities.
- 3 More positive police presence, not JUST in the nicer areas ,we need them to show they care about the people
- 4 We need another bridge across the river near downtown. I suggest at area near the Anacortes water treatment plant on River Bend road crossing over to link with the Memorial Hwy at Avon Allen. This plan would have less disruption of the downtown and residential areas than the other bridge plan. It would cost less as well.
- 5 It is hard to determine if a tax increase is needed to respond to issues without understanding how current resources are being utilized.
- 6 Mount Vernon is perfectly mid-way between Seattle and Vancouver BC, many high tech companies can't move their engineers but may move their back office operations to a low cost locations (LaConner has attracted LyfeBank).
- 7 I think it should grow very slowly, with emphasis on making sure that the crime rate is low.
- 8 Continue good communication with citizens i.e.; city website, Mayor's coffee's, etc.
- 9 I would like to see and be involved in creating a Mexican Cultural Center for art, music, literature and such a place could teach civic studies
- 10 We need to think about the Mount Vernon "brand." What does this city mean to people? I believe that tying its identity in the present to its historical role as a river hub -- and having this reflected in our downtown core -- could offer a way to accomplish this.
- 11 I think we should promote and support local activism in relation to the big problems in the world - #1 being climate change. We live here next to a major waterway, the Skagit River, which is very susceptible to flooding. It's just a matter of time before that 100 year or 1,000 year flood rises up - no telling what damage it will do. Don't think it can't happen here!
- 12 Eliminate the gang activity mainly the shootings, reduce train traffic, reduce I-5 traffic congestion by increasing travel both directions to three lanes.
- 13 Less construction and stores, i.e. less pavement and strip malls. Restrictions on commercialism and crowding with all of the banks and big box stores. Beautiful Skagit Valley has turned ugly with all of this. NO MORE CONSTRUCTION!!!!!! Protect farmland
- 14 I feel we need to get a grip on the drug problem, mental health problem, and the gang problem that we have in Mount Vernon. It's getting worse.
- 15 The tax base needs to be more balanced between housing taxation and getting more commercial sales tax income to the city coffers. The city needs to be more aggressive in attracting commercial business.
- 16 I would hope that we remain a small city.
- 17 Build some more thru streets to make less traffic congestion and safe travel for citizens
- 18 Add bike lanes when streets are resurfaced. Perhaps turning streets in the older part of town into one-way streets where parking on both sides of the street make two lane traffic unsafe; one car must pull over in order to allow the car coming in the opposite direction to pass.
- 19 foot only traffic downtown with more parking options

- 20 MV is doing pretty well. I think that the city need to look at finding ways of opening undeveloped areas for housing. Waugh to Blackburn is an example.
- 21 We are losing the single family homes and neighborhoods that I think are the heart of a community.
- 22 I would like MV to focus on educational programs, and institutions that would enhance quality of life such as a new library and aquatic center.
- 23 More consideration for the growing Latino community.
- 24 I feel that the housing in Mt Vernon is a big issue affordable housing homeless. I have been told by a vast number of housing programs and realities that there is a low available homes in skagit co. Yet there are many homes that are empty for closes and for sale that could and should be bought for rentals then address possible new home builds for rentals . Also more homeless housing centers out branch net work safe housing job and health care is a must This will ensure our community that it will stay clean ,safe, have less crime and become debt free from the homeless and all the extra that comes from the situation.
- 25 we have a huge homeless and drug population
- 26 Bring in more Technology!
- 27 Include more of the West side as part of the city.
- 28 Get rid of the iligals.
- 29 Be smart about planning for industrial uses and don't let cars and parking drive land use policies.
- 30 How much and how necessary is growth? Bigger is not better. Ticky tacky look alike houses are being built that are huge with no space. They look like tenement housing in the making.
It would be great to have at least two places that actually overlook the river: an inexpensive local tea/coffee shop and a nice restaurant.
Thank you for all the wonderful flowers downtown during the summer - they add so much.
A nice hotel that overlooks the river would also be nice if possible
The last mayor talked about expensive condos along the river. that is very exclusive. how many people can really afford that? Community is inclusive. Keeping farming and parks along the majority of the river not only helps keep the rivers scenic, but they also serve as flood plains when needed without incurring the disaster costs that would come from housing and businesses.
Solar, water and wind generated energy have been proven in various counties to be viable. Is it possible that Mount Vernon could be a front runner is this and sell 'surplus' energy to other communities?
- 31 There needs to be a wage increase that is consistent with the cost of living so that people can afford to pay their rent and their bills, and we're all aware that for some time now there's been an enormous need for affordable housing.
- 32 There is a need for shelter space and access support and programs at the smae location to help move people to more stable conditions. The Salvation Army building might be a good place to start.
- 33 I think some of the ideas listed for improvements are good - just 20 years too late. For instance, a major mall would be great for tax revenue and convenience, but we had one (well, a mall at least) and let it go to Burlington, leaving big empty buildings. Too late now to try to compete with Burlington's large retail development. Ditto for auto dealership. But I really would like to see all our empty commercial buildings filled with something -- light industrial or office space.
- 34 We cannot settle for status quo any longer. The city of Mount Vernon needs to take some risk and some steps to move towards an economic hub for Skagit County. This will only happen if we invest in our services and our people.
- 35 See comment on 13. Also work on GETTING A NEW LIBRARY. This seems like a barometer of a healthy community.
- 36 I want to see a plan that includes the growing of City infrastructure. With added property, buildings and population the City should grow internally to manage and keep those services viable.
- 37 Look for other means to capitalize on raising funds to support public needs, i.e. tourism dollars for Tulip Festival, etc.
- 38 M.V. needs to be careful with it's growth desires (there will ALWAYS be costs associated with growth); particularly in adding additional housing stock. Said growth NEEDS to be coupled with additional and higher impact fees, so that the existing citizens aren't stuck with the bills to maintain the new growth in the coming years. Additional service could be done by "fast-tracking" the new underpass at College Way and I-5.
- 39 The gang situation needs to be seriously evaluated & dealt with.
- 40 Mount Vernon has a great location in the county and by the Skagit River. It has many of it's old buildings still, and has the 'horse and buggy' streets, Lincoln Theatre, etc. The efforts to build up the riverwalk are wonderful, but must come to grips with the challenges of a freeway running through it and most of all, the deadly presence of it's likely nemesis--the coal and oil tanker trains!

- 41 I am glad that there is a committee to look at Mount Vernon's future. This is certainly not the same Mount Vernon my children grew up in. We are in desperate need of positive outlets for the youth of this town....recreational facilities. The Mount Vernon Parks does a great job with what is available to them but they are limited by facilities and what they are allowed to do. It is a sad statement to have the YMCA pool as our only option, tiles crumbling off the wall and all! I love to hike and bike but feel the need to go elsewhere as the Kulshan trail is by no means a viable option. Restaurants are definitely lacking....we just lost the Empire as well. I am planning to move to an active community when I retire where there are many opportunities.....I do not feel that Mount Vernon is that place.
- 42 I feel that we should have more opportunities for FAMILIES to come to the downtown area, with children activities, such as sidewalk chalk, a "bubble" pool, face painting, balloon animals, a "farmer's market" type feeling or even incorporate those things into the annual farmer's market.
- 43 Work on building a safe community, recent gun violence is unsettling
Concerned with growing homeless problem
- 44 The city already has resources to make it a great city. It has police officers to improve public safety, especially with traffic enforcement and gang violence. It has a plethora of storefront that are sitting vacant. Make it attractive for businesses to move here like it is in Burlington. What is working there that is not working here?
- 45 Better jobs
- 46 Building permits should not take 2 months. The county and the city should have a better knowledge of how the process works and it should run a lot more efficiently. No one ever wants to give a definite answer. There have been so many times that I have been transferred from department to department just looking for an answer. I think the city employees should always remember that they have their jobs because we as citizens live in this community and pay taxes and should be working with us and when we question something they should honestly consider the questions and work with citizens that do have valid points of concern and help come up with a resolution.
- 47 We must have a forward thinking Mayor and Council who encourage the participation (both socially and in business ventures) of all cultures in our community. A more diverse Council would be beneficial. Some of our Councilmen have "served" so long, they seem to have overstepped their role. New blood and fresh ideas would be welcome.
- 48 Use the code to set us up for success vs stress. Invest in tomorrow vs think short term or politically. New residents should cover all the costs of new residents, vs having existing residents subsidize them really only for the benefits of developers.
- 49 I would like to see emphasis put on other areas on Mount Vernon also, such as west MV and south (by new jail site). They need to be more included in beautification project, helping them to boost their customer base, etc.
- 50 Need to bring in more retail to fill empty buildings. Needs to be retail that will keep residents from shopping in neighboring communities.
- 51 We need to become a tourist destination, with boutique hotels, nice restaurants, and trails leaving from downtown. Please do not turn MV into Marysville with the ugly sprawl and obvious lack of planning.
- 52 Downtown MV needs to have a draw - not just antique or empty store fronts.
There a huge agriculture community that is even showcased like it should be.
Family friendly activities and services are not prevalent. There needs to be a new library with updated services.
There should be a community recreation facility (the YMCA is very outdated), this will help youth find activities to do as an alternative to gang involvement.
- 53 Too many traffic lights on Riverside and College Way along with rail crossing leads to congestion at all hours. It takes 20+ minutes to get a few miles.
- 54 We need to grow in a way that preserves the small town atmosphere while increasing the overall revenue.
- 55 Please don't forget to look at College way...Downtown has had a great focus of ideas for improvement. Meanwhile College way is becoming an eyesore and not friendly to non-motorized transportation.
- 56 Have more programs for people on either Social Security and/or Disability. Solve the traffic nightmare on College way between Riverside drive and Freeway drive in both directions!
- 57 We have a unique community that is evolving to serve it's citizens as it grows and changes. I believe the key to positive change and growth is to involve all members of the community. This survey is one positive way to receive input. If we want a vibrant downtown for the community our city must provide opportunities for citizens to be involved and enjoy being in the downtown area. Businesses locate where the people/customers are going.
- 58 Downtown is dying. Cities that seem to do well create a destination that offer gift shops, restaurants and other specialty shops. Getting those businesses will require some anchor tenants such as a bigger library and possibly a museum.

- 59 Maybe have 'clean your neighborhood day'. Volunteers if needed to help with yard work. Have businesses keep immaculate care of their property; weeds, dead plants, and trash in parking lots and curbside is inexcusable.
- 60 Have a solid and comprehensive plan so growth can be planned.
- 61 For low income families there is such a shortage of dental care, mental health care and affordable HEALTHY food that I see it as a big failure on Mount Vernon's part.
- 62 Our gang issue is alarming. Please provide out mount Vernon police department with the resources necessary to continue to fight crime. We CAN NOT afford to ignore what is happening here. Great officers need resources. Please make this a priority
- 63 Maintain city, urbanscape, history, industry and keep adjacent areas unincorporated in the county
- 64 We need to give law enforcement more officers/cars etc to deal. With gang issues. Top priority if we want to take back our city
- 65 I think the reality of our city's demographics needs to be faced head on. We are a multi-cultural city with a wide variation of income levels. While increasing the beauty of our city and the desirability of living here is important, we should not ignore the needs of current residents, especially regarding affordable housing and living wage jobs. It's also essential to facilitate opportunities for cultural enrichment for everyone. Ideally, we want everyone who lives here to feel welcome and included in city activities and planning for the future.
- 66 We have a river, more activities on the river, beautify the parks, make it accessible, safe, clean, a destination for outdoor movies, concerts, festivals, water based fun.
DOG FRIENDLY BUSINESSES AND RESTAURANTS PLEASE.
- 67 I hope we do not lose open spaces, like vacant lots and large yards, to infill and apartments. We will lose our small town character if that happens. I think many of us live here because it is a small city and do not consider greatly increased growth is "progress." Traffic seems to be getting heavier and as that continues so will traffic problems (accidents, parking, noise, crossing intersections by foot or in vehicles) so accounting for and controlling increasing traffic should be in the planning stages now.
- 68 Bicycle lanes on s 10th safe walking neighborhood. The city lets too many people speed and be dumb on our historic hill community
- 69 Continuing with the projects already on board then look for other improvements that would enhance living in Mount Vernon for the future.
- 70 MV is on the cusp of becoming a vibrant community, especially downtown. I see mostly older adults at events that should also be attracting mid 20s to 40s. In addition, I would like to see events that are more mixed culturally. I am concerned about the uptick in violence.
- 71 If you don't do something about the drug users, downtown will die. We should be taking advantage of the beautiful river walk, and going to the Lincoln, but we don't want to take our kids into the current environment downtown. You can't even get into the library without wading through a sea of drug addicts. We go to Burlington now.
- 72 Actively working to attract & maintain young families in the area seems a very necessary part of developing a strong community.
- 73 This is a bike-unfriendly city. I live 2.5 miles from work, but I'm pretty sure I'd die on College Way so I drive.
- 74 Listen to the citizens.
- 75 Need a new expanded library that would also serve as community meeting space. There is no community meeting space at present.
- 76 Don't grow, or grow way more slowly. Development is destroying the small town character of Mount Vernon. If I wanted to live in Seattle, I'd move to Seattle.
- 77 Remove empty and unsightly buildings in the downtown core
- 78 My mayoral vote for Jill B or possibly Bob F. or? will be 100% determined by my opinion of who will create jobs. I don't care about the revetment or political in-fighting or beautification or coffee. Stop being so hard on business. I am aware of a company today that rents on the Westside and is choosing to relocate and surprise, surprise is shopping hardest in Burlington.
- 79 The loss of the land adjacent to Little Mountain to logging is a terrible situation. The city should have had priority for land use rules for the area. Rail safety is of paramount importance. The city should give public safety situations like this its full attention.
- 80 Purchase the Christian Seed Co. property to plan for downtown expansion in the future. It is undervalued and the only place for down town to grow: more parking? New library? New Fire station? City services. A new park. Much needed in-town gas station. Maybe offices, so close to I-5 on/off ramps.
- 81 Expand library to enhance educational opportunities, programs and increase books, etc.
- 82 Do not develop the woods and wetlands east of Little Mountain Park. Add more speed bumps on the Little Mountain Park Road, people drive far too fast.

- 83 Economic growth is very badly needed. Right now it feels that the only option available to the city for funding project is to raise the property taxes.
- 84 We've only been here for two years. We moved here from Seattle. The quality of life here is so much better than in Seattle. One of my biggest fears is that it will become overcrowded like Seattle, with densely populated neighborhoods and too much traffic for the streets to handle. I think that needs to be controlled.
- 85 Deal with drug use, gangs and mental health issues downtown. Revitalize downtown with places to eat that stay open in the evenings and on weekends (as opposed to places to shop). Build a new library where growth is largest - up on Division.
- 86 Encourage more light industrial on the south side of town;
Build a community center with conference rooms for citizen use and to attract conventions/tradeshows/large meetings, etc.
We need a new library with updated technology ... perhaps in combination with a community center complex. No more big box stores!
- 87 County should look at gentrification. Perhaps work with Burlington in see about improving the quality of stores at the mall. Specialty stores perhaps. In addition there will be a large influx of military and their families on Whidbey Island. Why not make MV and or Burlington a place for these new family members to consider living in. Most will not want to stay on the island.
Have a more "family activities" look at Burlington and Bellingham. Honestly we are thinking of moving because those town have more of a "home/community feel to them"
- 88 Better schools. I do not have my children attend my Vernon schools because of the poorer quality of education than neighboring districts. To the point that I may move before my kids attend middle school. Being in the slag it highlands we travel to almost downtown. There should be newer schools and another high school. For the size of the community, the class size should be smaller.
- 89 The library needs to expand to meet the needs of the growing population. The county seat should have a better library. I attended three youth programs at the library this summer so far that would have benefitted from a larger space or separate meeting room.
- 90 I appreciate the work that Mayor Bordreau has done to create transparency within local government and a sense of community. I would like to see more partnerships with Skagit Valley College, and surrounding communities -maybe a way to help allocate and share resources!
- 91 A large community center with the library at the hub.
- 92 city needs more traffic police to enforce codes/laws already in place and take more of an aggressive stance against gangs (which have now moved into my residential historic neighborhood)
- 93 I really like the new Riverwalk promenade and path. I really believe that westside bridge safety fix is vital.
- 94 This City has a chance to be exceptional. The setting is magnificent and with the River Front done, we can draw in small hotels, great restaurants, galleries. Seattle folk go to La Conner and Edison on the weekend - we should make a goal to attract them here. And not with fairs selling the same stuff year in and year out but with real experiences that are here all the time
- 95 Better transportation options, streetscapes for walkability, neighborhood advisory groups
- 96 I think public safety; including elimination of gangs, transients, etc. is of the utmost importance.
- 97 Mount Vernon has improved so much in the last 30 years. I am very pleased. I would like to see more art and small businesses like a good bakery, etc. Thanks for the survey!
- 98 Higher denisty residential and mixed use. Better connected transportation system that prioritizes people instead of cars, including a good trail network (connected). Paint bike lanes.
- 99 Over haul the city council...same members for years. Maybe that is why we (MV) are not growing positively. Increase volunteer opportunities for our youth. Would love to see City of MV host large athletic events.
- 100 Better coordination with other towns, especially Burlington, to cut down on duplication of services. Encourage B-E and Mt. Vernon school districts to consolidate so planning for future growth is smoother and Skagit Valley feels more unified.
- 101 The city could use more Diversity oriented events because the valley is becoming more culturally diverse.
- 102 There is a need to keep residents from blocking sidewalks with over-grown vegetation, cars, junk, etc. Our neighborhoods need to be "walkable", with sidewalks and trails separated from the street.
- 103 Revitalize Riverside area and the commercial section of college and way and riverside it is ugly and wastes s lot of upfront land areas

- 104 I have always thought downtown Mount Vernon has the potential to be the next Fairhaven. That being said West Mount Vernon could benefit from a giant Bulldozer. Perhaps there can be major changes if and when a new West Side bridge goes in.
- 105 thanks for doing a good job & for including us in this survey. I am a county resident but in west Mount Vernon and MV is my town.
- 106 Music, food and art bring people together as a community. Take a look at Anacortes, that place was a dump 20 years ago and now it's a thriving destination.
- 107 Stop spending\$
- 108 Provide a place for youth to gather and dance. Under 21 on one night, over on Sat. Nothing fun for youth.
- 109 Mindful growth, not just the sprawl that happened in Burlington. Preserve farmland, and fix up what exists before ugly, cheap structures are added. Also, please, please green growth, renewable energy sources like solar panels, more availability for recycling etc.
- 110 Increase Car Taxes to pay for street upkeep.
- 111 I'm excited by the opportunities coming in the downtown core once the flood wall is complete
- 112 As a lifetime resident in Mount Vernon, it is really great to see the amazing changes that have been going on for the City of Mount Vernon. City staff have been working really hard to update and plan for the city's future. I have seen some great changes and improvements be made to this city in the last 10 years and look forward to more to come. Thank You!
- 113 Mount Vernon needs to draw people in. We need more ball parks and basketball courts for tournaments to draw families in.
- 114 I think we as a town we should enforce more regulations regarding neighborhood safety and appearance.
- 115 I'd love to see an expansion of Mt. Vernon's off-trail bike path system, or the creation of a bicycle network through low-cost means like sharrows. I was disappointed by the City's inability to secure the property by Little Mountain that was purchased by a timber company, and the City permitting that allowed that use. I think that quality of life in the city will be greatly diminished by the proposed rail expansion in Anacortes. The city will receive no benefit, but a lot of extra cost.
- 116 NEED NEW MAYOR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ASPA
- 117 A new mayor.
- 118 Streets should have sidewalks and bike lanes. Design mail and garbage pick up for that sidewalks are not blocked or have garbage cans sitting on them. Transit stops should be inset off of the travel lanes so buses can pull off road and not impede traffic. Improve parks - better trees and vegetation, make them vibrant and used (better planning involving people in what they would use at their parks).
- 119 I would like to see a new library being built in the City that will meet the needs of the growing population and the diversity of City of Mount Vernon population
- 120 Enforce speeding. It is dangerous out there! 4th Street going both directions from 2nd downtown and into downtown from 4th is 25 mph. Late at night cars speeding well above limit.
- 121 Rather than focusing on the environment, programs, and stuff like that; Cities should jot down the main detail of being human friendly, I propose that humans are free to do what they want, as long as they're responsible for their actions. I've seen a lot of racism acts, and I don't want my hometown to be infected with the slightest disease of that.
- 122 No
- 123 More political activity
- 124 Maybe provide more recreational activities for youths. Plus add more diversity into the town, rather than just have small markets that only sell food for them.
- 125 The city is nothing without its people, so making sure they are safe, healthy, housed and happy with living wages should be a major focus.
- 126 Please take your library and what it can provide for the community more seriously. It offers a bevy of free programming for children and adults, computer access, literature and movies. its functionality is being reduced by the ability to expand its collection and computers as well as its lack of room for better programming, presentations. It's become a place for drug use and a daytime homeless shelter.
- 127 signs are not as important as people

- 128 I would like Mount Vernon to have activities for families to do (a reason to come here), a Recreation Center, more restaurants, and housing developments that are more than just low income and very close together.
- 129 No
- 130 None
- 131 Our policy makers have to create revenue that will sustain the infrastructure we already have in place. Currently our roads are overcrowded and in poor shape at best. Both fire and police are under staffed to adequately respond to alarms at the high call rate. We have too many low income properties and not enough middle and higher end homes which may correlate to a lack of good paying jobs within our county. We are sort on manufacturing and industrial businesses and only have a couple of big employers in the county. We are missing the big impact company! I support taxes but the city is competing against a proposed school bond for 127 million, Hospital bonds, increasing PUD costs, and the need for replacing current city infrastructure like the old fire station in downtown. We have too many libraries and need to have one regional location or Mount Vernon should incorporate its library with Skagit Valley College.
- 132 Continue to develop waterfront trails along the Skagit River. Housing and shops and restaurants on west side of Riverwalk – probably condos, 2 – 3 stories high with businesses on street level.
- 133 Support KSVR.org. It is very important; specifically to the Hispanic community.
- 134 Good job so far. Impact fees for new construction are too high. This pushes growth to the county and farmland/rural which should be our areas definition and #1 source of pride. Lower impact fees, encourage light manufacturing and industrial jobs. Encourage walkable communities. We also need a better trail system to get from A to B and to foster health and recreation. Paved good for cyclists, but not for runners. Connect SVC to Little Mountain to Downtown. A paved trail with bike shoulders??
- 135 I would like to see recognition and encouragement of backyard agriculture’s importance for “safeguarding our natural resources while building an equitable and sustainable local food system”. (words of Seattle Tilth’s Mission Statement). These values are consistent with Mount Vernon’s agricultural heritage.
I have lived here > 25 years. When I moved here there was a true sense of community; Mount Vernon was smaller and the downtown thrived. Sadly, I don’t feel that way anymore.
- 136
- 137 Responses written in from the Mount Vernon High School Students for this answer:
Give teens more places to spend.
New Library
New larger bridge
Preserve environment, don’t over build
Forest and green space preservation
Alternative energy exploration/conservation
Use vacant buildings for recreational activities for youth/families; preserve green space
Activities focused on conservation
Activities for teens
More community events
Healthy life style/gyms
Business park and Alfco site
Drag strip
Airsoft field
Bike friendly (like Boise)
Opportunities for disabled