

SUMMARY OF HOUSHOLD SURVEY

“Hillside residents are largely satisfied with the quality of life on the Hillside.”

Background

The Hillside Area Household Survey was mailed to approximately 10,000 households and property owners in May 2007. The Municipality of Anchorage, planning practitioners, and Anchorage citizens will use data from the survey to help form the Hillside District Plan (HDP), which the Municipality of Anchorage will use to address specific Hillside Area issues.

The intent of the HDP is to implement the goals of the Anchorage 2020 Plan while establishing public policy that reflects the vision of residents and landowners for the future growth and development of the Hillside Area.

Issues such as residential densities, water and sewer service, drainage, roads, and trails and open space were specifically addressed. The Hillside District Plan will consider the provisions of, and eventually replace, the Hillside Wastewater Management Plan adopted in 1982.

Survey Response

The study team mailed the survey instrument to 9,986 Hillside households and property owners in late May 2007. The Survey Area was broken into twelve different sub-areas based on U.S. Census Tracts (See Figure 1.0).

Survey respondents returned 2,157 surveys by the extended cut-off date of July 2, 2007. Thus, the survey's overall response rate equaled 21.6 percent. The average response rate for mail surveys without incentives is currently between 8 and 15 percent. The higher than average response rate for this survey reflects an engaged survey population that was interested in the survey topics.

Survey Analysis and Adjustment, Census Base

A primary concern when using a mail survey is the self-selection bias associated with survey participation. Hence, this analysis compares the characteristics of survey respondents against characteristics of the general population to determine where the survey may have over or under-sampled population segments.

For this particular analysis, the survey corrects for the under and over-representation of certain household characteristics such as number of renters and homeowners, the households' location by sub-area, and household size. The survey does not correct for personal characteristics such as gender or education level.

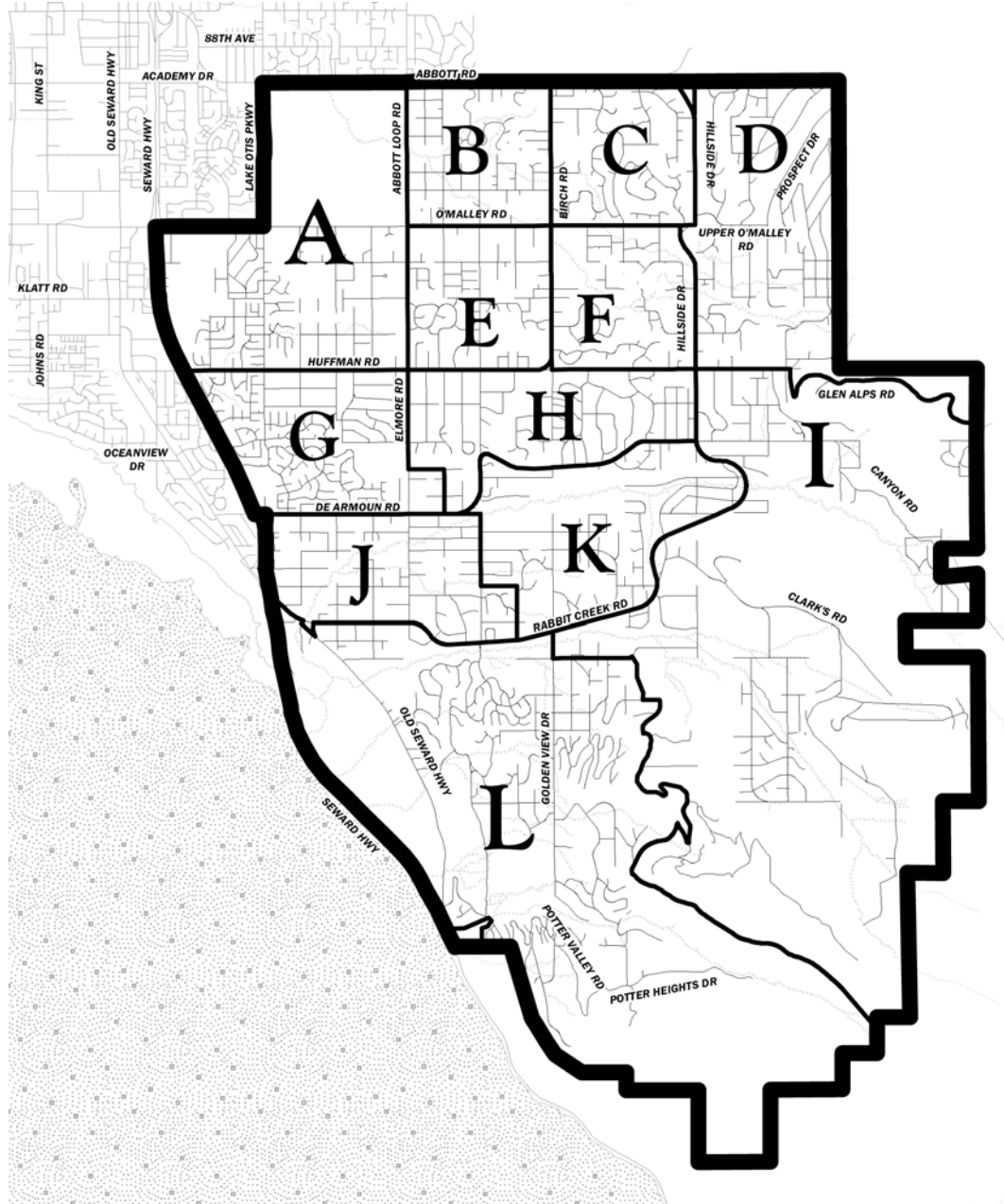
Survey and U.S. Census data indicate survey respondents are highly representative of the survey population-at-large. For example:

- The percentages of respondent households with and without children are very close to the percentage of households from the U.S. Census with and without

children. 57.2 percent of respondents' households did not have any children under 18 living in them, while the 2000 U.S. Census found that 54.5 percent of households in the survey area did not have any children under 18 living in them.

- The 2000 U.S. Census found that the population on the Hillside was 50.7 percent male and 49.3 percent female. Survey respondents are 54.0 percent male and 46.0 percent female. Hence, the survey sampled a slightly higher than expected portion of male citizens. However, the over-sampling of males and under-sampling of females is only 3.3 percentage points, which is approximately a 6 percent difference from the norm.

Figure 1.0 Hillside District Plan, Project Area.



Key Survey Results

Analysis of respondents' opinions reveals several broad themes consistently displayed throughout the survey. These are:

- Hillside residents are largely satisfied with the quality of life on the Hillside. Almost 95 percent of respondents indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of life on the Hillside. Less than two percent indicated they are dissatisfied.
- The survey asked residents to rate a number of community concerns as to how much of a problem these concerns represented for their neighborhood and the Hillside in general. The only concern which the majority consistently reported as at least “a problem” was the issue of wildfire safety.
- Respondents indicated that remaining problems, including ice buildup (glaciation) on roads, new residential development, aging of septic and well systems, drainage and runoff from new development, traffic safety, zoning regulation enforcement, more than one route in and out, light pollution (visibility of night sky), traffic congestion, unpaved roads, distance to shopping and other services are issues within specific sub-areas but are not over-arching problems for the majority of respondents.
- Residents are divided on mixed housing development with more of a minority in opposition than those expressing neutral or supportive opinions. Sub-areas with the highest rates of new development tend to report greater dissatisfaction with development related issues while areas with more urban characteristics are less opposed to both mixed housing development and small commercial development.
- Respondents in all areas are consistently opposed to small commercial development and they expressed very limited support for the idea.
- Respondents are very consistently supportive of parks and recreational trails. They indicate a high level of support for creating new trails, connecting existing trails, preserving open space and vegetation, and ensuring access to local parks. Overall, the entire respondent frame and residents who live in areas that are self-described as “more urban” are supportive of the creation of a “trail services area” (similar to a limited road service area - LRSA) to pay for trail maintenance. More than 53 percent of the comments asking for specific roadway and trail improvements call for the expansion, creation, or maintenance of trails.

Cross-Tabs

Cross-tab comparisons show that respondents tend to like and support the expansion of the services they know and that they have become accustomed to during their residency. For example:

- The longest residents of the Hillside are much less supportive of new development features (e.g., sidewalks, curbs and gutters) than residents who have lived on the Hillside for less than ten years.
- Newer Hillside residents are also less opposed to new commercial development than longer term residents.
- Newer Hillside residents are more supportive of trails expansion, retaining trees, and adopting drainage and design standards than longest term residents.
- Newer residents are more likely to support the establishment of a trail service area to pay for trail maintenance.
- Residents who consider themselves urban tend to have street lighting and support it while those who consider themselves rural tend to have less street lighting and prefer not to have more of it.
- Respondents who are served by AWWU are the most supportive of the expansion of AWWU.