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Vision Action Network
Washington County
Westside Economic Alliance
Research Purpose

- Assess values and beliefs in Washington County
- Measure attitudes toward growth
- Determine community preferences
- Explore evolution in values and beliefs

Part of a larger project to understand how Washington County is “growing up” economically and socially
Methodology

- Online survey of N=400 Washington County residents
  - Sufficient to track demographics
  - Margin of error ±4.9%
- Conducted October 5–26, 2018; 11 minutes to complete
- Participants recruited from professionally-maintained online panel
- Quotas and weighting by age, gender, and race/ethnicity to match demographic makeup of the general population and to assure a representative sample
- Due to rounding, some totals may differ by ±1 from the sum of separate responses
Public Engagement Track

- Shorter questionnaire
  - Westside Voices online panel (n=924)
- Results discussed in slide notes
Quality of Life / Growth
Residents rate the quality of life in Washington County 7.6 out of 10. What they valued most were low crime rates and people in the community.
About half of residents think Washington County has become a better place to live. A quarter say it is worse.
Looking ahead to the next 10 years, residents hesitate to be optimistic.

- Getting worse: 33%
- Staying the same: 32%
- Getting better: 29%
Majorities anticipate that housing costs, crowded neighborhoods, and traffic congestion will only get worse.

Over the next 10 years...will get worse

- Housing affordability: 74%
- Neighborhood crowdedness: 63%
- Ease of getting around: 53%
Roads and affordable housing are the top two issues residents want local officials to address near term.
Economy
A solid majority believe the county’s economy is staying the same or improving.
But residents divide evenly between confidence and concern about their personal financial situations.

- Worried: 51%
- Not worried: 48%
They don’t believe that desire and hard work are enough to own a home and raise a family in the county.

Anyone who works hard in Washington County and who wants to can afford to own a home and raise a family.
They aren’t sure whether children in the county will enjoy the same standard of living as their parents.

Washington County children today are likely to enjoy the same standard of living in the county as their parents.
Housing
Most residents think their housing is affordable, but a large minority does not.
Nearly half of residents said they were likely to move in the next five years.

- **Likely to move**
  - Strongly: 28%
  - Somewhat: 24%
  - Total: 52%

- **Unlikely**
  - Somewhat: 18%
  - Total: 39%

- **Don't know**
  - 8%
By far the most common reason for moving was to reduce housing costs.

- 46% Reduce housing costs
- 16% Reduce commute
- 20% Reduce taxes
- 24% To have larger home
- 19% Be closer to family
- 19% To have more land
- 15% To have smaller home
Education
Opinion about Washington County schools is modestly positive.

- Satisfied: 57%
- Dissatisfied: 19%
- Don't know: 24%
Only 16% are aware that Washington County schools serve African American and Hispanic students worse than others.
A large majority believe educational disparity is an important issue, but opinion divides over its urgency.
Racial and Ethnic Diversity
Most think race and ethnic relations in the county are generally good, and are either staying the same or getting better.
Large majorities want racial and ethnic diversity to be encouraged.

*Racial and ethnic diversity should be encouraged in our communities.*

- **Agree**
  - Strongly: 53%
  - Somewhat: 28%
  - Total: 80%

- **Disagree**
  - 5%
  - 7%
  - 12%

- **Don't know**
  - 8%
About half feel that people who work hard and play by the rules have the same opportunity, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Everyone in Washington County who works hard and plays by the rules has the same opportunity regardless of their race or ethnicity.
But most residents also recognize the need for improvement.

*Racism and ethnic discrimination are no longer a problem in Washington County.*
Social Capital and Public Involvement
Most feel they have access to services, but good employment, health services and homeownership are elusive to at least 1 in 10 residents.

Are there any services for which you or members of your household are occasionally denied service or have only limited opportunity to use?

14% Good employment
11% Health services, clinics
10% Homeownership
8% Home rental
8% Job training

70% None of the above
### Likelihood to engage in public involvement activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very / Somewhat Likely</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Very / Somewhat Unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signing petitions</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering time to a civic or community organization</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donating money to a civic or community organization</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood association</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending public meetings</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of a civic or community organization</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributing petitions</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Takeaways
The Big Picture

- Washington County residents appreciate a relatively high quality of life, low crime rates, and the people in their communities.

- But, while many (about half) feel the county has become a better place to live, there is a concerning undercurrent of discontent and uncertainty, fueled by three main factors:
  - Rapid population growth
  - Traffic congestion
  - High housing costs and cost of living
Positives

- Most residents feel welcome, like living in Washington County, and say it is a great place to grow up.
  - Environmental quality, “a place to grow up,” and pace of life are all strong drivers for people to stay in the area.
- Economic prospects strike most as stable or likely to improve.
  - Two-thirds feel that work opportunities are a reason to stay.
- Most also see the county’s schools, road systems, crime rates, and racial and ethnic relations as reasons to stay.
Concerns

- Optimism about where the county is headed is less widespread than one would hope.
- Majorities expect housing affordability, neighborhood crowdedness, and ease of getting around to worsen.
  - Many already see these factors as reasons to leave the county.
- On measures like environmental quality, racial and ethnic relations, quality of K–12 schools, and wage gaps, pluralities expect things to stay the same rather than improve.
Concerns

- Despite widespread belief that the county economy is stable or improving, many residents lack confidence in their financial security, the power of hard work to provide for a home and family, and the prospects for today’s children to enjoy the same standard of living as their parents.