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Washington State Auditor's Office  
**Performance Audits Town Hall Meeting**  
**Bremerton**

**November 27, 2007**

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**ER**  
**ELWAY RESEARCH, INC.**



**FLT** Consulting, Inc.



Washington State Auditor's Office

**Performance Audits Town Hall Meeting:  
Bremerton**

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## Washington State Auditor's Office

# Performance Audits Town Hall Meeting: Bremerton

November 27, 2007

### INTRODUCTION

In late 2007, the State Auditor's Office (SAO) initiated an innovative program to engage Washington citizens in a discussion of performance audits. The program consisted of three phases, culminating in the first-ever statewide "town hall" meeting telecast live on TVW, the state public affairs channel.

Prior to the live telecast, a community town hall meeting was held in Bremerton. The objective of the Bremerton meeting was two-fold: 1) to engage Kitsap County citizens in the on-going discussion that had commenced last year; and, 2) to test the protocol for the televised town hall.

This report presents the findings of the Bremerton Town Hall Meeting. The results of the Televised Statewide Town Hall are presented under separate cover.

The objective of each of these meetings is to engage Washington citizens in the performance audits mandated by Initiative 900. To this end, the town meetings built on a series of focus groups and statewide surveys, all of which were designed to:

1. Assess citizens' expectations for the performance audits.
2. Explore citizens' evaluation of completed audits
3. Elicit ideas about the direction and focus of future performance audits.

#### **Format**

The Bremerton meeting was similar in format to the town hall meetings conducted by the SAO in April 2006. Sixty citizens were selected at random from the list of Kitsap county registered voters and invited to attend a discussion of state and local government accountability. Some 43 citizens accepted the invitation and participated in a two-hour meeting.

The meeting combined electronic interactive polling and facilitated

discussion with State Auditor Brian Sonntag. Interactive polling is a process in which participants use individual handsets to respond to questions. The tabulated responses are instantly displayed for discussion.

Mr. Sonntag presented a brief background about the performance audits and answered questions from participants. Participants were provided with charts about current levels of state government spending.

The meeting protocol was designed by Elway Research, Inc. and FLT Consulting, Inc., in collaboration with SAO staff. A copy of the protocol is included in the appendix to this report. The meetings were facilitated and staffed by Elway Research and FLT Consulting. Members of the SAO Audit staff observed the meeting.

### **Presentation of Findings**

The findings are presented here in summary narrative and in graphic format. The graphs presented here are the same as those displayed at the meeting for the participants.

The meeting was audio taped. Transcriptions of the tapes are included under separate cover.

## METHODS

**TECHNIQUE:** “Town Hall” Meeting. Electronic Interactive polling and facilitated discussion.

**PARTICIPANTS:** 43 registered voters from Kitsap County

**MEETING DATE:** November 27, 2007

**RECRUITING:** Participants were chosen at random from the list of registered voters in Kitsap County. The sampling was designed to achieve a representative group of Kitsap County citizens.

Recruiting consisted of a short telephone interview to determine eligibility, followed by an invitation to participate.

Recruits were offered a financial incentive of \$50 to participate. A copy of the recruiting questionnaire is included in the appendix of this report.

**DATA COLLECTION:** Citizen input was gathered via facilitated discussion and interactive polling, which allows participants to answer questions using individual wireless handsets. Tabulated results were projected instantly and discussed, then saved in a database for later analysis. The session was audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcript is included in the appendix.

It is important to keep in mind that, even though participants were selected at random and survey-type questions were used, this method does not produce a statistically representative sampling of public opinion. These results can be interpreted only as representing the answers given by these participants in the context of this meeting.

## RESPONDENT PROFILE

In interpreting these findings, it is important to keep in mind the characteristics of the participants. This table presents a demographic profile of the 43 respondents in the Bremerton group.

**Note:** Here and throughout this report, percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

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**LOCATION:** 54% Bremerton  
15% Poulsbo  
12% Port Orchard  
10% Bainbridge  
10% Other

**GENDER:** 54% Male  
46% Female

**AGE:** 0% 29 or less  
2% 30-39  
16% 40-49  
47% 50-59  
28% 60-69  
7% Over 70

**EMPLOYMENT STATUS:** 16% Self-employed or business owner  
16% Employed in private business  
28% Employed in the public sector  
5% Not employed  
5% Student  
30% Retired

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# KEY FINDINGS

## RELATIONSHIP TO STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- ◆ **Most citizens interact with state government infrequently**
  - More than half of the participants reported that their last interaction with the state government was a year (16%) or more (37%) ago;
  - 46% of respondents reported interacting with state government in the last six months (9% in the last week; 14% in the last month; 7% in the last three months; 16% in the last six months).
  
- ◆ **Citizens interact with local government less frequently than state government**
  - Almost half (48%) said it had been more than a year since they had some kind of interaction with local government (v. 37% for state govt.);
  - 41% of respondents reported interacting with local government in the last six months (12% in the last week; 12% in the last month; 7% in the last three months; 10% in the last six months).
  
- ◆ **Just over half of citizens (53%) reported following state government a "moderate" amount**
  - 9% said they followed state government "closely";
  - One-third (33%) said they paid "some" attention to state government;
  - 5% said they followed state government "a little".
  
- ◆ **Citizens reported following local government more closely than state government**
  - 23% said they "closely" followed local government (vs. 9% for state);
  - 42% said they followed local government a "moderate" amount;
  - 30% said they followed local government "some";
  - 5% said they followed local government "a little".

## **GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

- ◆ **Nearly 7 in 10 felt they were not well represented in state government**
  - 42% said they were represented "not very well";
  - 26% said "not well at all";
  - 28% said they were represented "somewhat well";
  - 5% said they were represented "very well".
  
- ◆ **Citizens believed "Effectiveness," "Efficiency," and "Accountability" were equally important in measuring government performance**
  - 32% chose "Effectiveness" as the most important measure;
  - 34% chose "Efficiency";
  - 34% chose "Accountability".
  
- ◆ **Citizens most often described "Accountability" as indispensable to "Efficiency" and "Effectiveness"**
  
- ◆ **Citizens do not know where to find information needed to assess the government's accountability**
  
- ◆ **Most participants believed that most state agencies are not accountable**
  - 28% said most agencies are not;
  - 44% said very few are;
  - 23% said most agencies are;
  - 5% said all are.
  
- ◆ **Local government not seen as any more accountable than state government**
  - 24% said most are not;
  - 41% said very few are;
  - 27% said most are;
  - 7% said all are.

- ◆ **Citizens were most critical of the government's performance on "Transportation," "Environment and Natural Resources," "Health Care," and "Public Utilities"**
  - 65% said the state's performance on "Transportation" was not very good or poor;
  - 42% said the state's performance on "Environment and Natural Resources" was not very good or poor;
  - 37% and 36%, respectively, negatively evaluated "Health Care" and "Public Utilities".
  
- ◆ **Highest ratings for government's performance were for "Public Safety" and "Public Recreation"**
  - 43% said the state's performance on "Public Safety" was very good or good;
  - 31% said the state's performance on "Public Recreation" was very good or good.

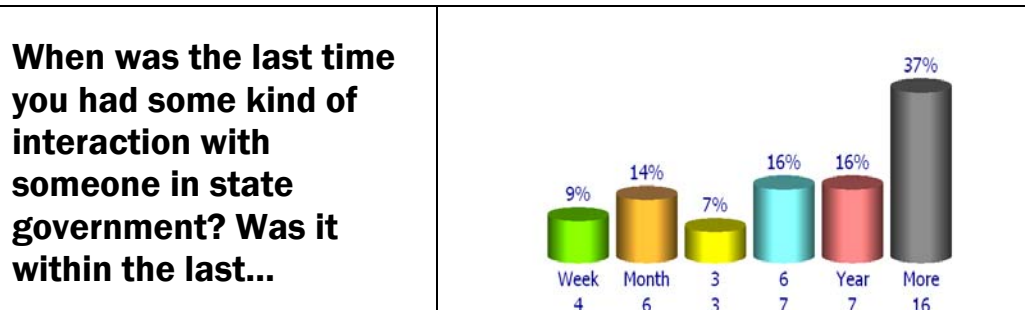
## PERFORMANCE AUDITS

- ◆ **9 in 10 participants believed the performance audits are valuable**
  - 49% said the audits are worth it, "even if they cost money";
  - 44% said the audits "pay for themselves with the savings they identify".
  
- ◆ **Transportation topped the list of priorities for future performance audits**
  - More than one-third (36%) thought a performance audit on transportation would be productive;
  - Other priority areas were "Social Services" (23%); Health (13%); Public Education (13%); and Natural Resources (10%).

# RELATIONSHIP TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

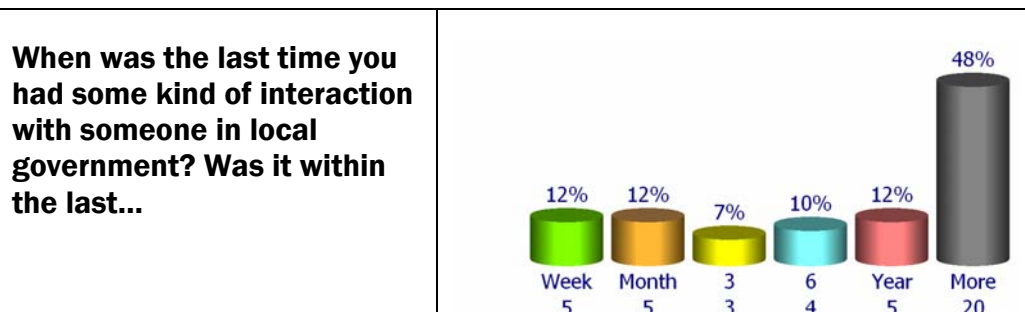
This section presents the findings from interactive polling questions concerning citizens' interactions with state and local government and the level of attention citizens paid to each. The numerical results for each question were presented during the meeting and available for all to see.

## Interaction With State Government



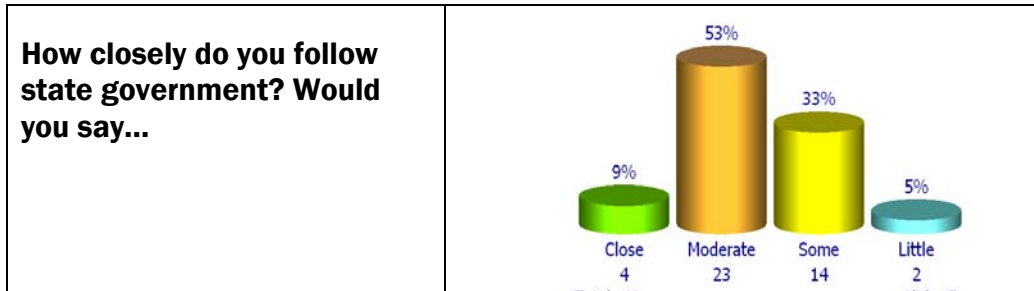
- 1 in 10 (9%) had been in contact with a state government agency within the past week, while almost 4 in 10 (37%) had not had any contact for a year or more.

## Interaction With Local Government



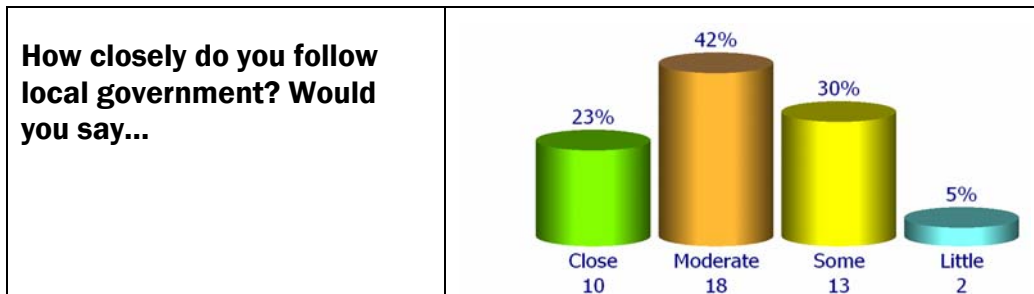
- 1 in 10 (12%) had been in contact with local government within the last week, while almost half (48%) had not had any contact with local government for a year or more.

### Attention to State Government



- Few citizens reported being either closely engaged or disengaged with state government:.
- Over half (53%) said they follow state government a "moderate" amount;
- One-third (33%) said they follow state government "some".

### Attention to Local Government



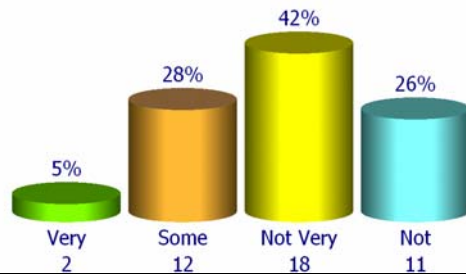
- More citizens reported following local government more closely than state government:.
- 23% said they "closely" followed local government vs. 9% for state;
- 42% said the followed local government a "moderate" amount vs. 33% for state government.

# GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

This section presents the findings from interactive polling questions and a summary of discussions concerning government performance. The numerical results for each question were presented during the meeting and available for all to see. The full transcript of the meeting can be found in the appendix.

## Representation in State Govt.

**How well do you think people like yourself are represented in state government? Would you say...**



## Measures of Govt. Performance

**Government performance can be measured by many factors. Three such measures are Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Accountability....If you had to choose, which one would you say is the most important to you personally?**



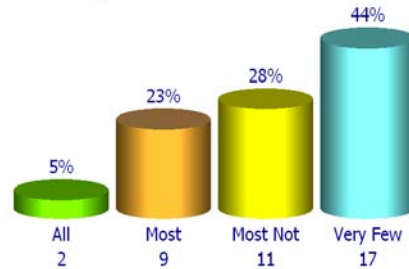
The measures were defined as follows:

- **Efficiency:** Does the government accomplish what it is supposed to accomplish?
- **Efficiency:** Does the government get things done in reasonable time at reasonable cost?
- **Accountability:** Is the government answerable for results?

Citizens believed "Effectiveness," "Efficiency," and "Accountability" were equally important in measuring government performance.

### State Govt. Accountability

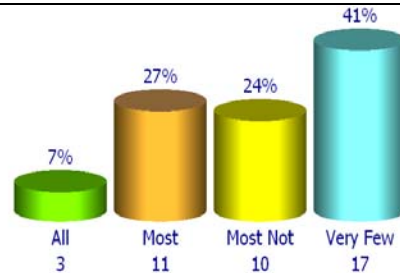
**When it comes to being accountable, which of these statements best describes state government?**



- Nearly half said they believed "very few" state agencies are accountable;
- One-third believed that "all" or "most" agencies were accountable.

### Local Govt. Accountability

**When it comes to being accountable, which of these statements best describes local government?**



- More people believed that local government was accountable than state government.
- One-third (34%) believed that all or most local government agencies are accountable;
- 4 in 10 (41%) believed that "very few" local agencies are accountable.

## DEFINITIONS OF "ACCOUNTABILITY"

### What does "Accountable" mean to you? (Discussion Question)

#### Representative Responses\*

*"Who's making the mistakes...because accountability can lie with us as voters, but oftentimes the people we elect aren't necessarily at the root cause of the problem."*

*"I think with accountability it also means that if a mistake was made, you identify what the mistake is, what steps led to it, and then make changes so that those things don't reoccur."*

*"If you don't have specifics, then how can you hold anyone accountable? How can you know when a job is or is not being done?"*

*"Citizens can't manage employees. I mean we can't...I can't get your job description and then figure out if you're doing a great job."*

*"If my company ran like the government we'd be out of business."*

*"It's hard to measure and hard to quantify....but the role that politics and special interests play in any decision or any plan and how it's done and who it's for and how much money is spent."*

In response to criticism over media coverage of the government:

*"It's a lot more exciting to hear what went wrong and get everybody angry than it is for the news media to tell you how they fixed it; so to try to find that (information) though, as a citizen, is just near impossible..."*

\* Full transcript in appendix.

# STATE GOVT. PERFORMANCE BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

Participants were asked to rate the performance of state government across a range of program categories. The categories represent approximately 90% of the state government budget.

Participants were most critical of the government's performance on "Transportation," "Environment and Natural Resources," "Health Care," and "Public Utilities:"

- 65% said the state's performance on "Transportation" was not very good or poor;
- 42% said the state's performance on "Environment and Natural Resources" was not very good or poor;
- 37% and 36%, respectively, negatively evaluated "Health Care" and "Public Utilities".

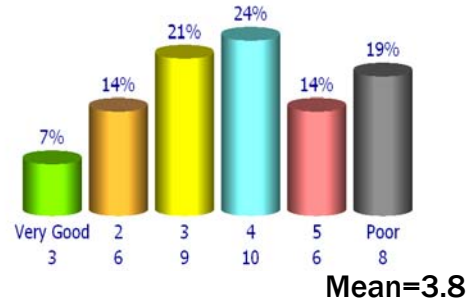
The highest ratings went to government's performance on "Public Safety" and "Public Recreation":

- 43% said the state's performance on "Public Safety" was very good or good;
- 31% said the state's performance on "Public Recreation" was very good or good.

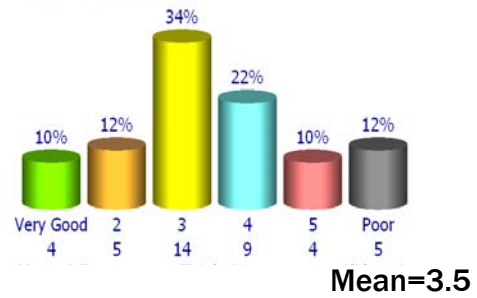
Participants used a 6-point scale to rate the program categories. The ratings are presented below.

On a scale of 1 to 6, where 1="Very Good" and 6="Poor," how well has the state government performed on:

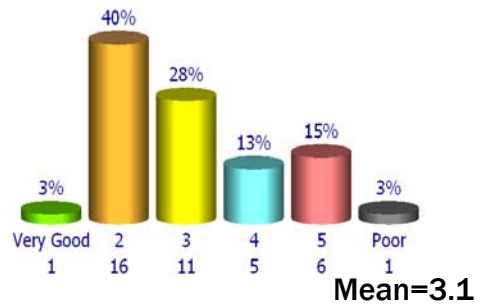
**Public Schools (K-12)**



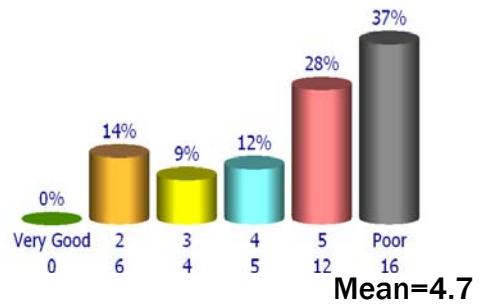
**Higher Education (Colleges, Universities, Voc. Tech)**



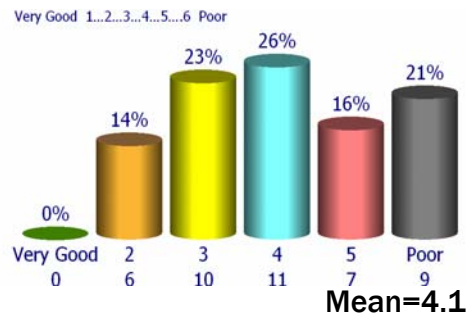
**Public Safety**



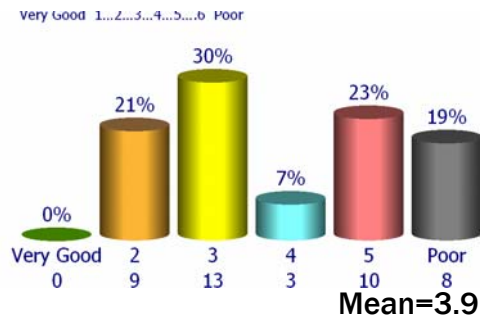
**Transportation**



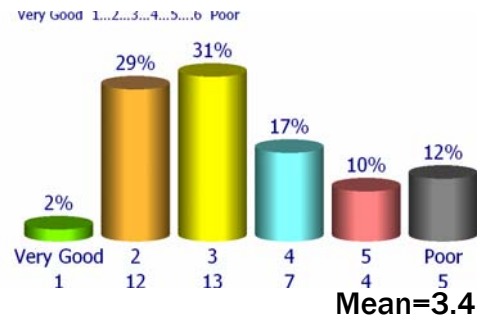
### Health Care



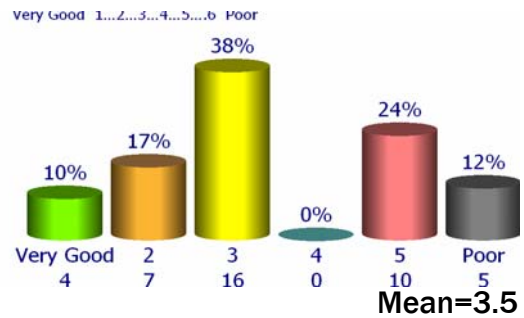
### Environment and Natural Resources



### Public Recreation



### Public Utilities



# PERFORMANCE AUDITS

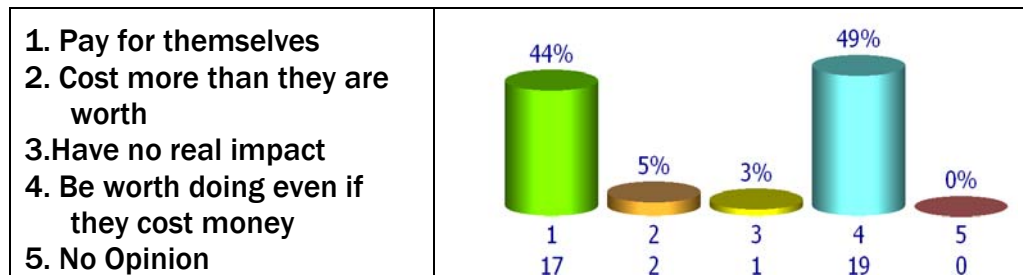
This section presents the findings from interactive polling questions and a summary of the discussion concerning the performance audits required by Initiative 900. When appropriate, the numerical results for each question were presented during the meeting and available for all to see. The full transcript of the meeting can be found in the appendix.

## Value Of Performance Audits

Nine in 10 participants said that the performance audits were valuable:

- 44% said they pay for themselves in savings they identify, and
- 49% said they are worth doing even if they cost more money than they save.

**Of course, performance audits require time, people and money - both on the part of the auditor and on the part of the agency being audited to compile the information. In your opinion, are these performance audits more likely to:**



## Questions for the Auditor

State Auditor Brian Sonntag began this portion of the meeting by briefing citizens on the history of I-900. Listed below is a selection of questions citizens had for Auditor Sonntag concerning his role and the auditing process.

*"Where are these audits? Do you have a website where the public can get it?"*

*"Doing these audits, what teeth do you have to make people comply with what you find wrong - and if they make a recommendation, how do you follow up to see if they did anything or made any changes?"*

*"Do you have oversight over county government too?"*

*"How does the public get to look at something? Where are these audits? Do you have a website where the public can get it...?"*

*"Do elections at all come underneath your jurisdiction?"*

*"Is each department responsible to do their own internal audits and then report back to you? Or do you just do an audit when everything's all screwed up?"*

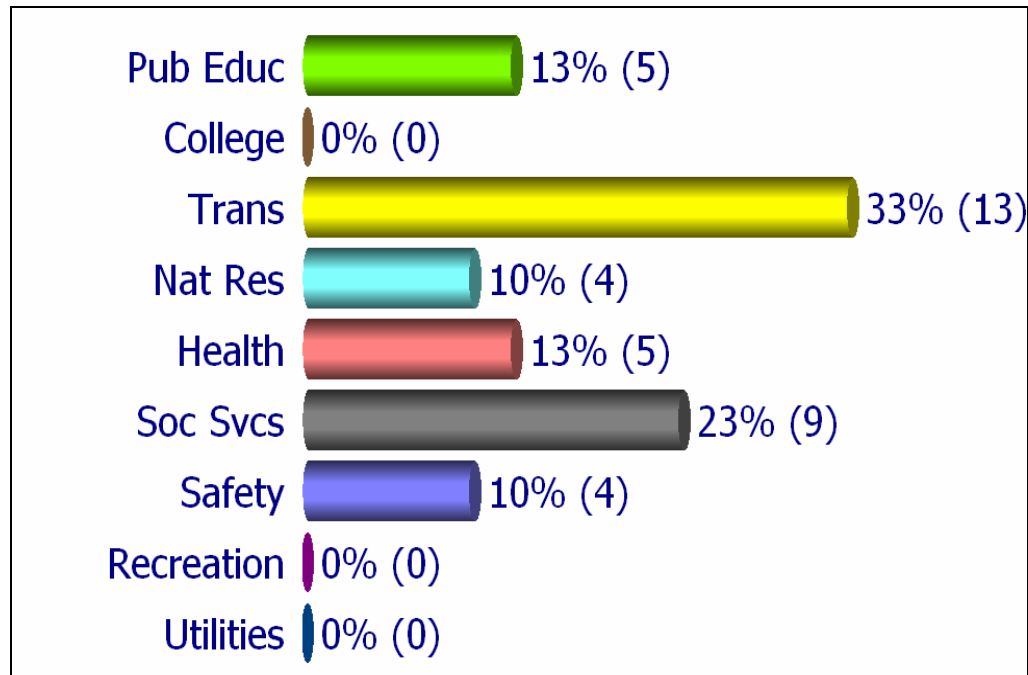
*"Is there any way you can help us get a feel for how expensive the audit is? I mean, say, for example, the percentage of the annual state budget?"*

*"Do you do most of your work by contract with private industry?"*

## AUDIT PRIORITIES

Asked to indicate where they thought performance audits would be productive, participants pointed to 6 of the 9 program categories they had been discussing. Transportation and Social Services headed the list. One-third of the participants chose transportation as their top priority.

**Here is a list of the major program areas of state government. These seven categories make up nearly all of the state government budget. If it were up to you, where do you think a performance audit would be most productive?**



### Corresponding Discussion Highlights\*:

- A "Transportation" audit should look at DOT, mass transit, and county/local road projects.
- A "Social Services" audit should pay special attention to issues affecting seniors and people with disabilities.
- A "Health Care" audit should look at the effects on care of low salaries for salaries for elder care, nursing home workers. .
- An audit on "Public Education" should examine:
  - Class-size
  - Redundancy in school districts (too many?)
  - Administrative organizational structure

\*Full Transcript in Appendix.

## INFORMATION IN AUDITS

### What kinds of information would you like to see in a performance audit? (Discussion)

#### Representative Responses\*

*"I want to see a really simple spreadsheet like this that tells me what your recommendations are and which ones they accepted and tackled and what the savings was."*

*"How about a report card, just prior to the election, on how each and every department is doing in meeting their financial responsibilities, meeting the requirements set forth by the government and the public."*

*"One, does the person responsible for that general area agree with those savings and findings? Two, if they do agree, what name is associated with achieving those savings so when the next election comes up we know who did and who didn't?"*

*"Can't you put that on your website? Every week, like on a Friday evening or something, give us a note of what you are currently doing."*

\*Full Transcript in Appendix.

# DISCUSSION

This meeting corroborated the findings of the 2006 town halls in the finding that citizens value the performance audit program. Nine in 10 rated the program as valuable, including half of the participants who said that the program would be worth doing, even if there was a net cost to state government.

This finding reinforces the idea that accountability is a driving force behind support for performance audits. The discussion in Bremerton differed from other communities in that “Accountability” was rated evenly with “Efficiency” and “Effectiveness” as the “most important measure” of government performance. In almost every other setting, accountability was named by about one-half of the participants. The ensuing discussion illustrated that participants see the three concepts as tightly intertwined.

The priorities for future performance audits corresponded with participant ratings of state government performance: transportation and social services were rated lowest for performance and rated #1 and #2 as areas where performance audits would be likely to be most productive. This indicates that citizens see performance audits as a potentially useful tool to achieve results in areas they care about.

Finally, this town hall meeting achieved its objective of helping to focus the protocol for the televised town hall. The discussion allowed us to sharpen the questions and reduce the number of questions to be included in the shorter session.



# APPENDIX

## TRANSCRIPT

The following is a transcription made from the audio tapes of the town hall meeting. Because these transcriptions were made after the fact by people unfamiliar with the project and who were not present at the discussion, there are inevitable gaps and misspellings. The transcriptions are therefore most useful as a guide to the tapes; they are not meant to be a full and complete record of the discussions.

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**BREMERTON TOWN HALL**  
**Transcript**  
**11/27/07**

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**[in progress...] Accountability... I would like to hear some of your thoughts about what accountability means. When you say government is accountable or it is not accountable, what is driving that opinion? What does it mean to you?**

*“Well, I think they ought to clearly define what they want to do, how much they need to do it and where that money actually goes.”*

*“For example, the Hood Canal Bridge, they started to build the grating box to build the pontoons for the canal (inaudible) port. DOT completely blew the whole process, spent millions and millions of dollars of unneeded money and no one’s accountable for it. They said, “Oh well, it was a mistake. Let’s move on,” but somebody has to be accountable for those hundreds of millions of dollars they wasted.”*

**That is a good point. What would that accountability be? What would be the consequence of accountability in that?**

*“Fire people.”*

*“Having a measure of effectiveness in the (inaudible) is nothing. If you can’t hold people accountable, then what good does it do to say you’re ineffective or inefficient? They’re not accountable. They don’t care.”*

*“Yes, like that gentleman said. I mean you could have efficiency of a dictatorship, but in a democracy, presumably, it would be efficient and effective in carrying out the people’s will, but when you see government just go its own way and either shove agendas down the throats that people don’t want or ignore the mandate of the people then I think you’re not in common.”*

**Are there other ways that accountability would take form?**

*“I don’t know if this is it, but this is the first thing that came to my mind. Okay. The exit at Carver and Olympic already had an overpass, okay. The crossroads there at Burley, (inaudible) Road and Highway 16, there’s been so many accidents there, why did they put money into refurbishing that one down at Olympic instead of making that one that needed to be done at that intersection? There wasn’t anything that made sense to me.”*

*“That one is actually worse, if your used to coming from the Gig Harbor side.”*

*“(inaudible) openness. I mean some of the examples of not requiring the request for information that you can’t tell what it is.”*

**Openness and access to information so that you can see how the decisions are being made.**

*“Well, and who’s making them? Yes.”*

*“It kind of goes with your answering that. Who’s making the mistakes and*

*(inaudible) because accountability can lie with us as voting people out, but oftentimes the people we elect aren't necessarily at the root cause of the problem. They're just the head of a department; so we never know exactly where the actual mistakes are made at what level and we then we don't see any consequences so we get the impression that nothing happens when somebody makes a mistake."*

*"The idea on the pontoons. After they found out they had to make a decision to move, a round table on the evening news or a special program with those responsible for what happened and how they missed the boat, or if they actually missed the boat, explain to us why and stand up and be accountable."*

*"Yes."*

*"I screwed up or so and so and so and so and let the people say, "Well, he made an honest mistake," but just to say "Well, we gotta transfer because we found some bones."*

*"I think with accountability it also means that if a mistake was made, you identify what the mistake is, what steps led to it, and then make changes so that those things don't reoccur."*

**It's made known to people. It's then in the open or at least the information is available so once that accountability has been established then citizens and voters and others can see how it happened.**

*"Part of it's the media. In other words, actually covering important topics like in 2003 the Washington State voters passed the initiative to raise teacher pay and lower class size by the largest margins in state history, and the governor annulled those initiatives or suspended them, in those words, the two words he used. I don't know how to get accountability after that (laughs). I mean because if the process of voting doesn't operate in the way that people intended or in the constitution, what do you do? And why isn't the media talking about it? Why is it just mum almost?"*

*"That's a good question."*

*"Yes, exactly in North Kitsap they built a concrete fish-enhanced bridge, extends a culvert, but there's no fish go under that bridge. Why have a fish-enhanced bridge?"*

*"That's a pretty good question too."*

*"I think for the accountability that first they need to determine what their requirements of the job are and who determines that their requirements that are managed the people to the government, but who makes the decision about what the specific requirements of the job are? And if you don't have those specifics, then how can you hold anybody accountable? How can you know when a job is or is not being done."*

**Without the openness, you can't have the accountability without the information.**

*"Citizens can't manage employees. I mean we can't... I can't get your job description and then figure out if you're doing a great job. I mean that just seems insane, that people managing the positions actually have to evaluate the site. That would be a mess."*

*"I don't think the government, the right hand doesn't know what the left hand's doing because they don't talk to each other, or they don't communicate. If they do, they don't do it well specifically. Like the county, the county building inspectors and the plans and inspectors, you go over there and one inspector will interpret it one way and another one will interpret it another way and the third one will interpret it another way. I had plans for my house that were approved. Well, it didn't get approved the first time. The second time, after I spent a couple hundred bucks to have the plans redrawn, went back with those plans and the inspector said, "Sorry, you gotta do it this way," so I submitted my original plans and they were approved (laughing in background). And the county works that way and I'm sure that the state government works in a similar way."*

**It is not even necessarily between one government and another, it is three people in the same office.**

*"Yes."*

*"They interpret things differently depending, and I don't mean this, whether you're a democrat or republican or a tree hugger; it depends on their perspective on how they look at it."*

*"Another example would be term limits. I remember in the early 1990s is we the people, the State of Washington campaigned at great length and passed term limits measures for both congress and for the state government. Well, the federal courts, which are in no way accountable to us, not only acted, irremovable life tenured, overturned the congressional term limits for Washington State and then the state court overturned the legislative term limits, and so this effort, this popular insurgency by the people to cleanse government and stop it's rotation in office was just swept aside by people who were basically unaccountable to us, leave us with no recourse."*

**A couple more.**

*"I just have some questions about the accountability myself. I mean how do we really figure out what is being done and how it's done is very important to me, yes. And at the same time, I am thinking about voting, that for somebody just said something about vote now (inaudible), and someone back here said, "No that's a King County kind of thing." Okay. I was very upset about things that happened in King County and I never heard what happened as a result when they found the inconsistencies, and I would like to know where (inaudible) was for that kind of stuff."*

**It is back to information again. You hear the start of the story. You don't have that resolve, so where is the accountability?**

*"Just stay mad."*

*"And part of that again is media."*

*"Yes."*

*"It's a lot more exciting to hear what went wrong and to get everybody angry than it is for the news media to tell you how they fixed it; so to try to find that though as a citizen is just near impossible if it doesn't get (inaudible)."*

*"Well, we have government sponsored channels on TV it seems like. I think we need*

*to break it down to the least common denominator, just speak the truth. (inaudible) do that, then get rid of 'em. I know I'm a business owner and results are what counts. If my company ran like the government we'd be out of business."*

*"Yes."*

*"I'd find out why and anybody responsible for that would be gone."*

*"Or in the case I mentioned earlier about the Hood Canal Bridge, if I did that as an engineer as I work as an engineer, I'd be fired. I'd just be out of a job."*

**[SONNTAG]** *"My definition of accountability, and this has just been from doing this for fourteen-and-a-half years and listening to people, but I define accountability as a government that is open and accessible, responsive, responsible and a government that listens to people and when it talks to 'em tells 'em the truth. Now, I think that definition hit at least a few elements here of government being open, being accessible, telling the truth, and just being available. These are great suggestions."*

*"(inaudible) what's best when he gets up on TV and lies to the American public and gets..."*

**Each one of those points are all variables and they all have to line up. You can be hiring one and there another at a different time and a different place, so it is not easy to line those all up at a high level that we all agree this is accountable government.**

*"Like part of the feeling of the voter is that the government, whether it be more so state government or federal government, it will listen to the people but do what the lobbyists and the corporations want."*

*"Here, here."*

*"Yep."*

*"I just add to him. What's hard to measure and hard to quantify, if we just imagine it, sometimes maybe more severely than it deserves, but the role that politics and special interests play in any decision or any plan and how it's done and who's it for and how much money is spent. There's something... Sometimes I think it's (inaudible) a lot more than maybe it does, but there is no way to know for sure because the same event can be explained by two different people with different perspectives. One can explain it and be really happy about what they said. The other one can explain the same event and you'd be really mad, so it just depends on where you're coming from in your agenda."*

**One more.**

*"I just want to know, is the state having any audits that look into accountability and, if so, what are they doing?"*

(Moderator reads questions on accountability of state government and asks respondents to choose which one best describes state government to them personally.)

*"State or local?"*

**This is state. We are going to do local next.**

*"I'm not sure how to answer that. What if you're not sure how to answer that?"*

**Your initial impression. These are opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. We have 44% who say very few state agencies are accountable, so about seven to ten think that state governments are on the unaccountable side of that ledger.**

(Moderator reads questions on accountability of local government and asks respondents to choose which one best describes local government and then asks them to rate on a scale how well they think government is performing.)

*“It’s hard because, on this one, because if I rated teachers I’d rate... I would be at one end of the (inaudible). If I rated state government it would be at the other end of the (inaudible).”*

**What we are asking is, is this service being provided? Forget about where it is coming from and think about is this service being provided by the public government? On a six-point scale we average about 3.8, so almost half of you are in the middle of that.**

(Moderator instructs respondents to rate how well is higher education being provided at any level of government.)

**The average is 3.5, pretty well balanced.**

(Moderator instructs respondents to rate how well is public safety being provided at any level of government.)

*“Is this at state level or county?”*

**Any. How well is public safety being provided to you as a citizen? A 3.1, so we have most people on the plus side of that scale, but it is not unanimous.**

(Moderator instructs respondents to rate how well is transportation being provided at any level of government.)

*“Port Townsend and ferrying included in?”*

*“The ferry as a whole.”*

*“Does this include the condition of the roads?”*

**Yes, and say streets and transportation.**

**Okay, 4.7, so over half.**

*“Is this different than other areas?”*

**You are the first that we have done it this way.**

*“Oh my God.”*

(Moderator instructs respondents to rate how well healthcare is being provided at any level of government.)

*“Can you give me an example?”*

*“I can’t even think (inaudible). Okay, that makes sense.”*

**There is public health, state regulates healthcare. State and local governments are all involved in providing healthcare at some level or another.**

*“You mean like all those good chemicals the government lets (inaudible)?”*

**Yes, if that is the criteria that you use to answer this question, then Yes. Most people on the downside of the scale, but not everyone, average of about 4.1.**

(Moderator instructs respondents to rate how well the environment and natural resources are being managed at any level of government?)

*“How good we’re doing or how they’re restricting us? (Everybody laughs).”*

**How well is government performing with regard to the environment and natural resources? Difference of opinion here, still more rated very good. Half on the plus side but not very good and half on the downside with one in five people saying poor.**

*“It’s a poorly worded question.”*

*“If you vote poor you may think the state is doing things to such an extreme amount that it’s really causing anti-environmentalism, which is bad for the environment. But if you’re an environmentalist, you’re saying they’re doing poor because they’re not doing anything... You’ve got (inaudible) opposite people voting for.”*

*“That’s why it’s split like that, ‘cause nobody’s down the middle.”*

**That is a valid point, and it is a problem with this kind of a question because everybody brings their values to it and we are not asking that. We are pointing to areas where performance is good or bad, for whatever reason. In the interest of openness and accountability, let’s take a look and see what is going on and then we can decide whether it is meeting our expectations or not.**

*“It’s poorly defined as to what environment and natural resources is supposed to be doing in government, so because we don’t know what their point is it’s difficult to say whether they’re doing well or not.”*

*“Okay, here’s a tough question.”*

*“(inaudible) they even care about the environment for us. Instead of screwing up the trees, you should be taking care of it and not letting everybody go out there and rape the heck out of ‘em.”*

(Moderator instructs respondents to rate how well public recreation is being managed at any level of government.)

*“This is like parks and ball fields and (inaudible)?”*

**Public dollars being spent for recreational opportunities, 3.4; most on the positive side, not everyone. Let’s do one more.**

(Moderator instructs respondents to rate how well public utilities are being managed at any level of government.)

**How well are those being provided to you?**

**Most on the positive side. These are broad categories. In state government, these categories make up 95% of the state budget and we could easily have an hour discussion on each one of these, but for our purposes here we are trying to stay at the 10,000 foot level. Brian mentioned earlier about the performance audits that were put in place by voter people in 2005 and we are going to hear a bit more now about...**

**Discussion... some of the highlights and how it works.**

**[SONNTAG]** “The reason we got into this issue at all, when I first took office in 1993 Washington was the only state in the country with a law on the books that said

the auditor could not audit results and outcomes and efficiency and effective in performance of government agencies. The only one in the country with a law prohibiting. Well, we've gone, after many years of battling this inside and outside of the legislature with... We've got pretty good support in the governor's office now that was not the case previously where even when the legislature passed performance audits a couple of times it was vetoed out of the budget. But, you know, whenever there is a void to be filled in Olympia someone's going to fill it, and in this case it was the citizens of the state; where now we have the strongest, most independent performance audit program of any government in the country, bar none. And let me tell you just a few examples of work that we've done to date. Our return on investment alone, the dollar amount being spent versus the dollar amount of recommended savings in the audits that we've produced so far, the return is about... It's between five and six to one, the return on investments, so cost effectiveness this program's working pretty well. Efficiency wise, we just did a very comprehensive performance audit on the Department of Transportation on congestion relief and where we determined a number of things. One was that the State Department of Transportation did not even have congestion as a priority. It doesn't have to be the priority, but it just wasn't a big deal on their agenda. In addition, throughout the Puget Sound region there are a 128 separate agencies responsible for transportation planning and spending. That just even sounds awkward, and it is, and so we recommended that they come up with maybe one (everybody laughs). (*inaudible*)."

#### **How is that recommendation received?**

[SONNTAG] "Well, that's a good point (everybody laughs). Some are received pretty well. Some were not received too well. Never mind the fact that a couple years ago the legislature passed a bill, a law directing us to do comprehensive performance audits of the Department of Transportation since we got the initiative and we're going to go do this work anyway. You ought to go look at transportation. Well, then after we got into this about this deep, some legislators decided to ask us that question I mentioned earlier. Why in the world did you decide to go look at transportation? Well, you passed a law saying we should and we thought we'd comply with that (everybody laughs) and beyond that then they said, "Why are you looking at congestion relief?" A two-part answer; one because you're not (everybody laughs) and the second is because citizens literally all around the state, through evenings just as this, told us that it is a top priority of theirs. You told us to look at transportation. Citizens said look at congestion. I'm not real stupid (everybody laughs). We're throwing that in the mix. Also, to show some support by the governor's office, the governor called me and asked me if we could take a look at healthcare professional licensing in a performance audit. Well, we came out, tremendous work. This was not a dollar saving audit. This was looking at the problems in licensing these different, and I need to use quotes "professionals" in some cases, and their own disciplinary. A terrible audit in one regard; a wonderful audit in the regard that it was requested by the governor's office, supported by the Director of the Department of Health and they're really embracing the recommendations in this audit. Not so much with transportation yet, but I think the public will keep moving and we've actually seen some movement already so I don't want to be real critical of them. I really think our best enforcement tool is the public

light of day and the more they hear from people, real people, then that can have an effect. We're really seeing some good examples. The very first one that we entered into, if you even call it not really a full fledged performance audit, but really a stretch on our compliance auditing that we were doing. We looked at the Department of General Administration and their motor pool operation. We came out with a bunch of recommendations. We recommended dollar savings of a million-and-a-half dollars a year over the next five or six years. We spend a hundred thousand dollars to do the audit. This was to get our feet wet, get in there and really show some just an example of where this work can go in a real small simple application and that's really been beneficial to show citizens a small application like that one, a big one like the Department of Health or these transportation audits. We've got one coming out soon with the Port of Seattle. Same kind of thing; it's going to be a little controversial, but that's the place where people have asked us to be, and I think ultimately embraced, not just by citizens 'cause they really are being supportive of this, but it's going to be embraced by the people whose jobs it is to affect this kind of change. Those are my examples."

"Brian?"

"Yes."

*"Quick question. Where are these audits? Do you have a website where the public can get it because..."*

[SONNTAG] "We absolutely do have a web page."

*"If it's available to us, not only can we criticize the things that should be criticized (inaudible), but we can also give kudos for the things that do. I think that most people really think the government's doing a great job."*

[SONNTAG] "And you can tell us what you think of what we're doing with it. You can tell me, Brian you're nuts. What are you looking at this for? You oughta be spending your time over here. We want that as well. Our web page is [www.sao](http://www.sao.wa.gov) (State Auditor's Office).wa.gov and if you just go in and move a Washington State auditor it's going to get you to the right place and you'll find our web page."

*"Can you do that again?"*

*"[www.sao.wa.gov](http://www.sao.wa.gov)."*

*Doing these audits, what teeth do you have to make people comply with what you find wrong and if they make a recommendation, how do you follow up to see if they did anything or made any change?*

[SONNTAG] "Well when I said this is probably the strongest performance audit program in this country, here's an example. Because the legislature didn't deal with this head on and create a constructive performance audit program, and the citizens did, here there are a few essential elements, but this one, it requires, requires every... Any public entity that we do a performance audit of, it's a city, their city council. If it's a school district, it would be their school board. If it's a state agency, it would be the appropriate legislative committee, but that legislative authority must hold a public hearing within 30 days of release of that audit report. They then, the Office of

Financial Management has to report back to us, as does the affected or effective legislative authority, report to us what happened; what's the progress, so that we can monitor that and follow up. Unlike any other audit program that we have, or unlike any other audit program that any other public audit shop has, this has some accountability to it. Yes sir."

*"When I was looking at the one, two, three, four, five, six, seventh, eighth down on the ten performance audits, the intention's ecology, but it is kind of surprising that your focus in the ecological area is debt collection?"*

**[SONNTAG]** "Well, it was a debt collection audit that we were doing of several different state agencies; that was one of them. It was not an audit of the Department of Ecology or we would have been in many different areas. But just looking at debt collection, these were probably the largest state agencies when it came to outstanding debt and money that could be easily brought into the state coffers if they cared enough about going after it.. Yes sir."

*"I loved 2003 for (inaudible). The other thing that happened in 2003 was that Locke convened the Competitiveness Council, and if you compared the budget control by Bainbridge Island, which is about 40 million dollars, and the budget items controlled by this competitiveness council through the legislature, it's about a 20,000:1 ratio, so it's about seven or eight billion in one case and forty million. Is the competitiveness... I don't think they even exist anymore. They came. They completely changed government, influencing, you know, cutting all social programs and raising three billion two for Boeing..."*

"Yes."

*"For a thousand jobs; so we were paid three million dollars per job for Boeing. Is the Competitiveness Council a state agency, or do they just control the budget (laughs)?"*

**[SONNTAG]** "Neither at this point, but your math is good. Every governor who comes into office; every new administration has.."

*"But can you audit them? I want to add."*

**[SONNTAG]** "No, because it isn't there (everybody laughs). Each administration comes in with their own management flavor of the day. You know Governor Gardner had quality circles and was bringing those kinds of things, and Governor Lowry had a different program. Governor Locke had the Competitive Council and a lot of other things as well. Governor Gregoire has her GMAP program, the Government Managed Accountability..."

*"Performance."*

**[SONNTAG]** "Performance. I knew the "P" meant something (everybody laughs), and if when each of those are structured and they follow through on these things, then those programs can work well. But when they live for a special purpose I think people aren't served well. I'm trying to be very delicate and somewhat polite (everybody laughs)."

*"You have..."*

[SONNTAG] “The people in the back will be surprised that I’m doing that tonight.”

*“Do you have oversight over county government too?”*

“Yes, we do.”

*“How do you get you to look at something? How does the public?”*

[SONNTAG] “Oh, well find that web page. You can contact us right through there. You can write me a letter. You can give me a phone call. You can do just about anything you want. We want to hear from people. We have a very active constituent referral program within our office. We also now, the legislature passed last year, a hotline for us, a toll-free number that we also publish on that web page for people to report directly to us, issues of waste, fraud, abuse, inefficiency or efficiency. One legislator wanted that word put in there too in case people want to comment on something that’s working well; you can tell us that too. There are different ways to contact us, but we take those very seriously. At the very least, what we would do with the local government issue or question or concern that comes in, is refer that out to our local audit team that audits that particular county or city or whoever it might be. We have teams of auditors in 14 different cities around the state. I was in county government in Pierce County for 20 years, and the audit team that’s in Tacoma audits Pierce County, all the different school districts, the City of Tacoma (*inaudible*) geographically, so we get your response. Yes maam.”

*“Does elections at all come underneath your...?”*

[SONNTAG] “No (everybody laughs). Elections don’t. And there’s the difference. On Election Day we get a lot of calls from people thinking that the state auditor is the state election person. When I was county auditor in Pierce County, I did do elections. State auditory actually audits. County auditors don’t audit anything; they run elections and licensing. It gets confusing even to me. The Secretary of State is the Chief Elections Officer for the State of Washington, so that’s where those questions go.”

*“Dose he live in Seattle?”*

[SONNTAG] “No as a matter of fact.”

*“It just always strikes me...”*

[SONNTAG] “I know.”

*“That as I talk to people and, you know talk to a majority of the people and they feel one way and then the election comes and it’s totally opposite. It’s like I never heard of anybody that voted that way. How did it come out that way?”*

*“How did we get the governor we got?”*

[SONNTAG] “You mentioned openness. Our first broad look at local governments, when we heard from people and, unlike the chart that was 13/14/14 on those three words, most every place it’s been tipped towards accountability. That definition I gave you earlier of governments being open and responsive and accessible, we’re looking at, I forget the number, thirty some local governments and their, not just compliance, but how they’re meeting requests for public information to citizens

throughout the state. We're finding some, as you would expect, some examples of governments who don't want to even hear from people and don't work very constructively in providing information to people. We're also finding some local governments that are really good, and so our report, it'll be coming out in the near future, will identify both those kinds of things and actually paint a picture of some best practices for some to follow. That's how we're getting into the locals. Yes sir, and I better let Stuart get that."

*"One thing I found about listening to some of these government channels and things and what's going on in the government is to say a lot, but they're not really saying anything. We need less..."*

[SONNTAG] "Well, pretty much when all is said and done, there's a lot more said than done."

*"Yes, just get to the point. Maybe they should, you know, speak English."*

[SONNTAG] "I view part of our job as translating and telling people the truth."

**We've passed out some material that Brian was talking about, that this lists...**

*"So I was right. It's 30."*

**This sheet has seven items that have taken place and on the back of that sheet are ten items that are in the works now that will be completed by this time next year. The next questions are wrap up kind of questions. How is this program working from your standpoint and where should it go from here? I would like to get your take on this question. Performance audits cost money. It takes a lot of resources to do them and respond to them. You as tax payers are paying for these. Are they worth it? Do you think they pay for themselves with the money savings that they identify? Do you think they cost more than they are worth? Do you think they aren't really having much impact? Do you think they would be worth doing even if they did cost more than they say? Would it be worth doing more audits? Which of those comes closest to your thinking about the performance audits as you understand them from discussion tonight and what you might have known before?**

*"Is there any obligation to follow a recommendation?"*

**Pardon?**

*"Is there any obligations for identity for them to follow the recommendations?"*

**For the audits?**

*"If they make recommendations, what response is (inaudible) to follow them? Can they just ignore their recommendations and nothing happens?"*

[SONNTAG] "Well, the can to a degree, but I answered that a little bit a while ago too with the public hearings, the follow up by that legislative authority and I understand by the Department of Financial Management, and then by our office as we continue to follow those things up. The information on our web page, that Public Light of Day, as I mentioned, is our best enforcement tool. The public attention that these audits are getting are getting people's attention."

*“But the audits, you know, themselves don’t carry weight to them?”*

[SONNTAG] “No, and truthfully they shouldn’t. I mean the auditor shouldn’t be the cop and the judge.”

*“Alright.”*

[SONNTAG] “But our reports should be visible.”

*“Are these... Are you looking to save money or are these to see if people are doing their jobs?”*

[SONNTAG] “Both, and as I mentioned, I mentioned one very significant example of the performance audit we did of the healthcare licensing professions and there were several. That audit didn’t save anybody a nickel, but it recommended significant ways to improve the public safety of that operation so that people who are being licensed truly are professionals in that area, that there is a disciplinary process to follow afterwards. It’s not just about saving money but, by and large, if we get and do a performance audit of any government entity there’s going to be some cost savings. If all we did was do these audits and recommend that agencies be more efficient and effective and it didn’t save a nickel, in my opinion it would be worthwhile if the public service increased. Dollar savings are going to come. Yes sir.”

*“Is each department responsible to do their own internal audits and then report back to you? Or do you just do an audit when everything’s all screwed up?”*

[SONNTAG] “That’s such an appropriate question. Our first year in office in 1993 we were successful in passing what was termed the Government Accountability Act; Performance Based Government Act, excuse me. I’ve got accountability on the brain. One of the provisions in there was that all state agencies do internal auditing. Even at this date, not all state agencies are doing internal auditing. Those that are have a track record that we can prove where they have fewer other problems for our auditors as they go about doing their work, and that lines up the same for local governments too; so as we continue to point that out we do see an increase in internal auditing.”

*“Good.”*

*“On questions one, two and four, is there any way you can help us get a feel for how expensive an audit is? I mean say for example the percentage of the annual state budget.”*

[SONNTAG] “The initiative didn’t call for additional tax dollars. What it did was peel off one-tenth of one percent of state revenue that goes to the state treasurer’s office be diverted into this performance audit fund; so it’s not new dollars, but it is existing revenue. The ratio that I mentioned earlier, if we...”

**The one to six?**

[SONNTAG] “Yes. If we look at the seven that have been done and we look at the Department of General Administration motor pool, over a five-year period of 2.3 million dollar savings we spent, like I mentioned, a hundred thousand dollars to

conduct that audit. That was a significant return on investment. Where we're looking at, Sound Transit, their light rail construction management, five million dollars over a five-year period, is the same kind of ratio; so versus that investment, that's what we're seeing here, or recommended."

*"The maximum you can spend is one-tenth of one percent of the state budget?"*

[SONNTAG] "Yes. Plenty of revenue for us. We are not asking for an additional nickel. We're operating fine and we're contracting out a significant part of our work to people with specific expertise that can bring in, whether it was healthcare and different transportation disciplines we're..."

*"Do you do most of your work by contract with private industry?"*

[SONNTAG] "Most of it yes. Yes sir."

*"How do you prioritize...?"*

[SONNTAG] "This is government."

**You are going to get to do that in just a minute.**

[SONNTAG] "Various ways we do to prioritize, but listening to citizens is a big piece."

**Think about wrapping up this question here.**

[SONNTAG] "It only took me ten seconds to *(inaudible)*?"

**About half-and-half here; pay for themselves with savings and it would be worth it if even if they didn't pay for themselves with savings. Where do they go next? If it were up to you, which area do you think would be a productive place for the next performance audit?**

*"Good grief."*

[SONNTAG] "Some of those will actually never leave."

**To get a general idea of how we should interpret this, what is in transportation? What things were you pointing too?**

*"I was pointing to the document that was given to us. Of the 1.6 billion in savings, 1.5 is associated with the Department of Transportation; so the first test of performance of the audit department is did we achieve any percentage of the savings that we anticipated? Did we see a head count roll out in that department which is included in this savings number, which is not insignificant?"*

**To go hunting where the ducks are?**

[SONNTAG] "I think Jerry McGuire said follow the money."

*"Well, between the ferries, the bridge, highway 305, 3 and 303 interchange, there's plenty of things that the DOT needs to be accountable for."*

*"They've made some really bad decisions."*

**Is it all DOT? Is there anybody thinking about local transportation or something other than dot?**

*"Mass transit."*

*“What mass transit?”*

**Is there any difference in opinion right here in the front row? Are there some other things that were in here that haven't been mentioned?**

*“I see county. I've just watched the county road department on my road this past summer into fall now, and scheduling would definitely save us some money 'cause they have one person come in and do one thing in the spring, which was put down new reflectors. Then they came in and dug up the culverts to clean them out. Then they decided to come through later and tear the roads up and the stuff that wasn't picked up on the trucks was pushed back into the culverts, and then they...”*

**To me, that is clearly a performance question.**

*“I mean that really is. That's a good example. Just looking at the scheduling could help performance; help deliver service in that area. It's not really money, it's performance. It's something, you know...”*

*“Back to the DOT like on highway 305 going through Poulsbo, I think the budget was 20 to 21 million for it. Then when they went to actually do the job they only allocated eight million to do the job through Poulsbo, and with the increase of oil prices the asphalt prices went up so they couldn't actually... So that was really hurting the budget because they already spent 12 million on just overhead, and where did the DOT spend 12 million in overhead for a two-lane addition through probably about three miles? How could they spend that much money?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“That's a fair question.”*

*“And I don't understand how kids have parents who got involved in the ferry business. I've just never been able to figure that out.”*

*“Another performance question.”*

**How about social services, what are some of the things that...?**

*“I think the ones who have the key to this room that we didn't get in (inaudible).”*

*“Oh my gosh.”*

*“I know people that are getting paid to take care of seniors that are actually living together and pretending they have two houses and they oughta get out there and find out who these people are.”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Just like the people on disability. When they start paying people to take care of seniors they oughta find out who's taking care of them and if they're really taking care of 'em or if they're taking money just living together.”*

*“Some fraud or (inaudible).”*

**What are some other things in the social services area that people have in mind?**

*“There seems to be a disconnect some way today with this present federal*

*government between the ability of the federal government to cut off funding to the state. And the state immediately turning around and saying we have to restrict social services when you don't actually see a cost reduction in terms of people being reduced from the social service department. What you see is a reduction of funding for the services provided; i.e., Medicaid."*

**The next top two are health. What are you looking for here?**

*"I had an employee who lost both of his kidneys; his mother gave him one of hers. The government decided that they'd only pay him for one 'cause he had one, but that was donated by his mother. Then he can't work more than part-time or he loses the ability to get coverage for his medicines, which were over two grand at that time, a month, and if he worked... So if he worked more than half time he wouldn't get that. Then if he worked full-time he still didn't make the amount to buy the medicines, let alone pay for his rent."*

**The rules and the regulations and the catch "22"?**

*"Yes."*

*"There's a lot of money in things like the nursing homes where it seems like the people that are providing the care at the bedside are just getting pittance and won't stay around 'cause they're getting paid so little, and there's a lot of money going into those facilities and you wonder where's all that money going to? Somebody's getting paid a lot of money to do something and it's not the care for the people at the bed."*

*"Yes the film by Michael Moore, "Sicko," tends to document a lot of these problems, including the fact that she mentioned that a huge portion of money is going into top CEOs and the people who are sick aren't getting care."*

**Let's move to public education.**

*"One problem I see is we ought to have the initiative for it, but the other one is on Bainbridge they refuse to maximize the use of impact fees so that the public is paying more, at this point, to expand the capital base of education; in other words, build buildings. We built two-and-a-half schools. We started with two-and-a-half. We doubled that, so we're paying as much to build schools because we don't want to charge developers for them as programming, as paying the teachers and getting the kids educated, and that seems completely out of whack."*

*"I seem to be supporting schools because they want to lower class sizes and they never lower the class sizes. They promise to, but they don't do it."*

**[SONNTAG]** *"Okay, so let's look at that. In the back."*

*"My comment is the redundancy in the school districts."*

*"No kidding."*

*"And county, (inaudible) county has what five super school districts?"*

*"Yes."*

*"And they all have super, superintendents, and they have assistants and if the state can come up with some better system than that..."*

*“There’s too many chiefs and not enough Indians.”*

**What information would you like back as citizens from a performance audit? What kind of information is going to be useful to you so that we can do our part in this accountability equation? What do you want to see?**

*“I want to see a really simple spreadsheet like this that tells me what your recommendations are and which ones they accepted and tackled and what the savings was.”*

*“How about a report card on, just prior to the elections, a report card on how each and every department is doing in meeting their financial responsibilities, meeting the requirements set forth by the government and the public.”*

*“If you do an audit and you do a performance audit and you designate savings associated with that, two questions. One, does the person responsible for that general area agree with those savings and findings? Two, if they do agree, what name is associated with achieving those savings so when the next election comes up we know who did and didn’t?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“That’d be great.”*

*“I was going to say pretty much the same thing is that it’d be good to put people’s names so they get notoriety for being good or for the opposite, because it’s not just finding out who the bad guys are. It’s finding out who the good guys are too.”*

**That has been part of the performance audit, looking for best practices.**

*“What I’d like to have, it’d be that you pursue all the newspapers and ask them to write, run columns. We have columns that show how people vote. We need to have columns that show what they’re doing in the audit department, who’s complying and who’s being bullheaded and not... So that we could go and as we the people can go and talk.”*

*“Can’t you put that on your website? Every week, like on a Friday evening or something, give us a note of what you are currently doing.”*

**[SONNTAG]** *“Those are great ideas.”*

*“Put some cartoons in there too (everybody laughs).”*

**[SONNTAG]** *“I’m so interested in hearing some of the discussions we’ve heard from governments worried about whether or not we’re going to be issuing audit reports right before an election.”*

*“We’re back again to the feeling of the sense that everybody, every household in the state in this country owns a computer.”*

*“They don’t.”*

*“And everybody turns around says well we’ll put it on the website, go to this website.”*

*“Right.”*

*“I don’t have a computer.”*

**If you don’t have a computer, how would you get this information?**

*(Three respondents stated newspapers.)*

*“Go to the library.”*

*“Library.”*

[SONNTAG] *“We do a lot with newspapers and radio as well so I respect that a lot.”*

*“I’d like to hear from Brian what criteria you would use to determine if audits were being used punitively? How would you say that’s punitive?”*

*“Is that the purpose? How do you show if they’re not doing a good job?”*

[SONNTAG] *“Well, not from our perspective. We don’t want the audit to be viewed as a punitive weapon. To me, audit in this regard, our approach to this is a constructive management tool. Part of the audit, of any audit is going to be to identify and point out what was done wrong, was it appropriate, what might have been a fraud; or at the very least, what could be done better, but we want so much of the focus to be on helping those governments improve operations. Most people in public service, whether it’s the person across the desk of that city government department you walk into one time in your life, or most elected officials, most people in public service really care about doing a good job every day and helping people, serving the public. Oftentimes, what gets in the way of that happening are outdated, inefficient, cumbersome systems and processes that prevent people from doing those things. We want to be about busting those. If we can identify systems that don’t work, that get in the way of good public service, providing good public service, that’s the best thing we can do. If we can identify that best practices, as Stewart just mentioned, for Whitman County, for them to be able to have the best idea to do “X” and Whatcom County is looking for a way to do that very same thing and we can help link these two or up. Or we could actually wind up someday becoming a hub, a conduit for local government best practices; well, I think that could be the most constructive role we could play. Our commitment, my commitment is to make this work not be punitive. It’s going to be taking that way. Nobody wants to be audited. Those years I spent in county government I was audited by this office. It was not a pleasant amount of time, but even... Yes, now (everybody laughs), but I’m not the auditor for Kitsap County. I’m not the auditor for the State Department of Transportation. I’m the auditor for the people in the State of Washington. Those are the folks who we audit on their behalf. We have to keep that straight. That is our priority. We know who we work for. We keep that in mind everyday. Constructive, yes, punitive, no, and when we see examples of the audit report being used in such a fashion, and this might finally be answering your question, we see that happen. Where somebody will pick up an audit report and want to wave it around and say, “See, we’re good. We’re perfect.” Or someone else will pick it up in the middle of that same election and say, “Look at these two things that this city screwed up.” Well, it’s not that simple. It’s not either of those things. It’s professional work, it’s objective, and it needs to be constructive. I can’t say that enough. Yes sir.”*

*“The Japanese, in their... may identify a problem, they don’t put a name on it. They*

*just fix it.”*

[SONNTAG] “They just fix it.”

*“And then they go on. But when that person continues to make mistakes and cost the government or the company money, he is fired and he is out of there.”*

[SONNTAG] “It’s swift and it’s sure.”

*“That’s right. Can this? I can’t...”*

[SONNTAG] “We’re talking about systems and processes again, not necessarily individuals. That is what we need to be about identifying. We are infants in this process. The initiative was passed in November of 2005. We actually started doing some work early in 2006 and the bulk of our work has been later throughout that year, and now into 2007 we’ve reported these seven and we’ve got ten more on the plan and we’re going to be looking at building others in. We are infants in this process. We’re this deep into the water and we just want to keep moving in the right direction.”

**One more.**

*“Insofar as this whole process pertaining to us as citizens, it comes really down to whether our vote counts for anything.”*

[SONNTAG] “Sure.”

*“Because if we’re going to have meetings and like this and push buttons but ultimately it’s the vote that makes things happen in a democracy and there would have to be some kind of institutional link between the voters and the oversight committees and the legislature or the governor’s office. Is there even an oversight committee in the house and in the senate, and how well does it operate? Does the governor’s office, does it have a department that relates to the auditor’s office and analyzes and reports on it? What of the audit is how it’s being implemented in terms of the government’s oversight of the bureaucracy? I mean you have to have an institutional reform that really makes the people’s voice count for something.”*

[SONNTAG] “You’re 100% right. It takes that commitment by all these individuals in public service, in government to make it work. Whether it’s a legislative committee, individual legislators, you’re right. We do have bits of (*inaudible*) communication throughout different parts of the governor’s office and they seem to be very supportive of our work. They want to see if we issue findings and recommendations that those are addressed and followed up. Not everything we report in an audit is going to be embraced, but by the time that audit report comes out the issues that we address are real, and maybe they can’t be addressed the first month, the first year, but maybe they can be as we continue to address these things.”

**I want to finish by thanking you again for coming out here tonight. Are there any last words you want to add Brian before we...?**

[SONNTAG] “Yes, I’ve got two words. Thank you. I’ll say it again. Thank you. Your question about your vote counting, well I’ll tell you what. The votes of 43 people this evening counted and they counted each time you flicked one of those funny little buttons, because we’re going to get a detailed report on this and whether it

was this setting or whether it was 50 people in some other room, we've don't a lot of these now. I say we. This is the first one I've attended (laughs), but they've done a lot of this work for us, and this input really, really matters. Don't ever minimize at all the thought that when I'm having a discussion with those state legislators and they're asking me why are you looking at transportation, why are you looking at congestion; and when I can come back to them the best thing I can say is citizens from all around the state told us that they think congestion was an important element that we could look at. They might roll their eyes and tip back in their chair and scoff, but I know we're right and so that was a really long way to say thank you (everybody laughs). *(inaudible)*."

**We want to have an open and candid conversation with the citizens and we've seen in the report but have felt that having the principle here to engage and answer questions we would try it this way this year and it is working real well. I want to alert you to one thing. First, on December 13<sup>th</sup>, on TVW, television Washington's cable channel, i think it is 23, we are going to do a statewide live town meeting with a random sample of citizens selected like you were. We are going to make calls out and have this kind of a statewide town meeting. If you are around that night, changes are you won't get called because we are going to dial so many people, but we are going to phone 20,000 people.**

*"Really?"*

**[SONNTAG]** "If you're having trouble sleeping that night, tune into TVW."

**We expect maybe a thousand of them to stay on and go through it, but what we have done tonight is leading directly to that. We are going to take this information and help us craft that first of its kind television statewide live town meeting.**

**[SONNTAG]** "The first of its kind in the nation ever."

*"What time?"*

**I think seven. The date is the 13<sup>th</sup>, I think at seven pm. There will be some announcement. You will have to be watching for it. We have some copies of performance audits over here that you are welcome to take home.**

THANK YOU