

December 30, 2013

TO: Kirsten Wyatt, City of West Linn
FROM: Ari Wubbold, DHM Research
SUBJ: West Linn Community Survey Summary

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Residents consider West Linn a great place to live.

- Using a scale from 0-10 to rate the City as a place to live, 85% gave the City a rating of 8 or above. This is a 7% increase from a similar survey conducted in 2008.

Three in four (76%) residents are satisfied with the overall job the City does in communicating with the public.

- Satisfaction ratings were higher among those ages 18-34 (87%) and 35-54 (80%) than those over 55 (65%).

Residents of West Linn think the City communicates well with the public, but some, especially older residents, would like more clarification on how their input is used.

- The highest-rated communication area for the City was *advertising events, programs, and community meetings*, with overall satisfaction (ratings of very good and good) at 77%, followed by *providing opportunities for community members to share their input* (70%).
 - Those ages 18-34 were especially impressed with the City's communications efforts, with over 90% satisfied in these three areas: *explaining the goals of events, programs, and community meetings* (100%), *providing opportunities for community members to share their input* (100%), and *explaining how community feedback will be used in decision-making* (91%).
- The lowest-rated communication areas were *explaining what decisions can be influenced by the public* (48%; only 6% very good), and *explaining how community feedback will be used in decision-making* (55%; only 4% very good).

Two-thirds (64%) said they have visited the City's website in the last 12 months, mostly for information on scheduled events in the community, general information, or to pay their water bill. Satisfaction with the City's website is high.

- Nine in ten visitors (89%) rated the City of West Linn's website as very good (18%) or good (71%). The top concern for those who rated it poorly was that the website was *hard to navigate*.
 - While two-thirds (64%) had visited the website, that number dropped to one-half (51%) for residents over the age of 55.

A plurality of residents (39%) cited the City's website as their most commonly used method for getting information about the City.

- Cited to a slightly lesser degree were the *West Linn Tidings* (26%) and *newspaper ads* (23%). Social media was cited by less than 10% of residents.
 - Usage of the City's website was significantly higher among residents ages 18-34 (41%) and 35-54 (54%) than those over 55 (18%).
 - Residents 55 and older cited the *West Linn Tidings* and *newspaper ads* as their most commonly used methods.

When asked to prioritize a list of ways West Linn can inform residents about issues that are important to the community (given limited time and resources), most residents prioritized digital communication methods.

- On a scale of 0-10, the highest priorities were *email notices to residents who sign up with the City* (mean 7.2) and the *City website* (6.9).
 - Residents ages 18-34 gave their highest priority ratings to *email notices* and *Facebook, Twitter, and other social media*.
 - Residents ages 35-54 gave their highest priority ratings to *email notices* and the *City's website*. This was also the demographic group that most used the City's website.
 - Residents ages 55+ gave their highest priority ratings to *email notices* and *City newsletter mailed to every address in West Linn*.

Though most residents (64%) use social media, only one in four of those residents said they were connected with the City.

- Of those who use social media, the top reasons given for not being connected with the City on social media were that they *don't use social media that often* (28%), *have no interest* (23%), or *weren't aware of the city's social media status* (24%). The latter is a potential area of outreach and public education for the City of West Linn.
 - Residents under the age of 55 were twice as likely to be social media users as those 55 and older. Social media usage was also increased among those with children under the age of 18 in the home.

Attendance to public meetings (including any meeting of the City Council, Planning Commission, Advisory Board, or Neighborhood Association) is low, though attendees tended to rate their experiences at such meetings as positive.

- Though only 23% said they had attended a public meeting in the last 12 months, roughly two-thirds (63%) of those who attended rated the experience positively.
 - Notably, zero residents ages 18-34 who were surveyed had attended a public meeting and only a third of those ages 55 and above had attended a public meeting.

POPULATION COUNTS; SUMMARY OF VALUES

It is important to tie communications to values.

- Though we didn't test values specifically in this survey, across Oregon, the values we see reiterated most often are around the scenic beauty of the state, a connection to the land and the environment, and access to outdoor spaces and parks. In local communities we hear most about jobs and the economy, quality schools, public safety, efficient transportation, and good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Younger residents and older residents have different preferences in communications.

- In this survey we did see that younger residents and older residents had different preferences in communications, we also know that older residents tend to be more active in local affairs as well as more frequent voters. This should be kept in mind when communicating to the public when public support is necessary, whether for a ballot measure or any decision by the City Council for which public support is crucial.

Younger voters are more satisfied with the City's communications efforts, as well as the City's direction overall.

- We also saw that younger voters were more satisfied with the City's communications efforts, as well as the City's direction overall. This is the kind of pattern that we see across all communities, in which younger residents and voters are more satisfied and hopeful when it comes to their public institutions, while older voters tend to be more cautious and skeptical. These general attitudes are important to keep in mind when communicating with the public.

There are differences in the issues that younger voters and older voters value the most.

- Again, while we didn't test these issues specifically in this survey, our other surveys have shown that older residents/voters tend to place a greater priority on issues pertaining to public safety and crime, property values, maintaining the existing character of their community, and issues of taxation/public finance. Younger voters tend to be more interested in issues such as quality schools, parks, alternative transportation, and community amenities like entertainment opportunities. Younger voters also tend to show a greater willingness to support public services with their tax dollars.

City of West Linn: Population Counts			
Age	General Population (18+) (Census 2010)	Survey Counts (18+)	Registered Voters
18-34	19%	20%	18%
35-54	45%	44%	38%
55+	36%	36%	44%
Gender	General Population (18+) (Census 2010)	Survey Counts (18+)	Registered Voters
Male	48%	48%	47%
Female	52%	52%	52%
Unknown	N/A	N/A	1%
Education	General Population (25+) (Census 2010)	Survey Counts (18+)	Registered Voters
High School or Less	13%	11%	N/A
2-Year Degree/Some College	33%	26%	N/A
4-Year Degree or More	54%	59%	N/A
Refused	N/A	4%	N/A