

**COMMUNITY ATTITUDES
TOWARD GROWTH**
Focus Group Research



**Research Conducted
May/June 2008**



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INTRODUCTION

In January 2008, Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc. (CDRI) conducted a community survey for the City of West Linn. Results from that survey revealed a high level of concern among residents regarding growth and development in and around West Linn. In order to explore these issues further, and to gain information to help determine how best to approach the discussion of the possible designation of the Stafford area as either Urban or Rural Reserves, the City of West Linn contracted with CDRI to conduct a set of focus groups. Groups were held with West Linn residents, community leaders, and neighborhood association presidents. This report contains the findings from those focus groups.

The report is divided into the following sections:

- ▶ ***Executive Summary***, highlighting the key findings of the research.
- ▶ ***Research Results***, outlining the findings from the research.
- ▶ ***Conclusions and Recommendations***, providing the next steps we believe should be taken based on the research and our past experience.
- ▶ ***Appendix***, as well as a copy of the screening questionnaire and the discussion guide.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following summarizes key points from the research. To understand the full depth of the research, however, the reader is urged to review the entire report.

METHODS

In late May and early June 2008, Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc. conducted focus groups with West Linn Residents, Community Leaders, and Neighborhood Association Presidents. For full detail on the research methodology, see page 25 in the Appendix. The screening questionnaire and discussion guide are also included in the Appendix.

OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the research is to provide the City of West Linn with a better understanding of the community's attitudes toward future growth in general and the Stafford area in particular.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Issues Facing the West Linn Community

Growth comes up first when Residents are asked for the key issues facing West Linn. Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents think first about the City's finances. Community Leaders believe a lack of consensus on how to best handle growth is also a major issue. Neighborhood Association Presidents have a long list of concerns, largely regarding the relationship between the neighborhood associations and the City.

Attitudes Toward Growth

There is significant fear that growth will have a major negative impact on West Linn's quality of life. Most would prefer a "no growth" policy, even if they believe it is not practical.

Residents in particular have a difficult time thinking of what they like about how growth is currently handled by the City. There is a great deal of concern over what is perceived as "haphazard" growth to-date, with most believing that developers have the upper hand, and a belief that "the managing factor for growth in West Linn is greed" is common.

Residents and Community Leaders accept the statistic that a million new people are coming to the Portland metro area in the next 25 years, but Neighborhood Association Presidents often question this projection.

The biggest concern about growth is increased traffic. There are also concerns about increased crime, loss of West Linn's "backyard" if the Stafford area is developed, increased density, and more noise.

Attitudes Toward Stafford Area

While Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents appear to be following activity in the Stafford area, Residents know little about current events in the area.

Almost all agree that the City should have some involvement in the Stafford area discussion. Ideally, participants say the Stafford area should be designated a Rural Reserve. However, there is also some belief it is probably more realistic for it to become an Urban Reserve.

If the Stafford area is brought into the UGB, participants prefer that development be low-density. There is a strong desire for the area to keep its green, open space look. Residents are generally resistant to the idea of business or industry in the area, while Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents are more interested in this possibility.

Residents split on whether West Linn should take at least some responsibility for planning in the Stafford area. Those who approve of the idea want the City to be able to limit growth in the area. Those who oppose believe the City has done a poor job in this area in the past. Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents tend to believe planning should be a joint venture along with the cities of Lake Oswego, Tualatin, and Wilsonville, and of course, the hamlet.

Most see advantages and disadvantages of the City annexing a portion of the Stafford area. The main advantage is the able to have some control over development. The disadvantage is that it means there will be development in the area.

In final recommendations, Residents say the City Council needs to keep livability in mind when making decisions about growth management. Neighborhood Association Presidents ask that the City improve communications with the neighborhood associations.

KEY CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. HOW GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IS MANAGED IN WEST LINN IS A BIG ISSUE FOR RESIDENTS BECAUSE THEY SEE A DIRECT LINK TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE OFFERED BY THE COMMUNITY.**
- 2. MANY BELIEVE GROWTH HAS NOT BEEN MANAGED WELL IN WEST LINN IN THE PAST, SO THE CITY MUST WORK TO BUILD PUBLIC TRUST ON THIS ISSUE.**
- 3. THE CITY SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN STAFFORD DISCUSSIONS.**

More detailed Conclusions and Recommendations may be reviewed, starting on page 19 of this report.

RESEARCH RESULTS

I. Participant Characteristics

RESIDENTS RECRUITED FROM ALL AREAS OF WEST LINN.

Participants for the residential groups were located using a list of phone numbers randomly generated from residential prefixes in the 97068 ZIP Code. Participant addresses were used to confirm that each participant lives within the city limits of West Linn. As a result, participants in the Resident groups live throughout West Linn, with most neighborhoods in the City being represented by at least one Resident. Community Leaders, which consisted primarily of City advisory board members but also included a board member from the West Linn-Wilsonville School District, also represent a range of areas within West Linn, including Sunset, Hidden Springs, Robinwood, and others. Each of the 11 neighborhood associations was represented by its President, or in one case, an association officer.

PARTICIPANTS ALSO REPRESENT A VARIETY OF HOUSEHOLD TYPES AND OCCUPATIONS.

The Resident groups contain a broad cross-section of West Linn residents. By design, one Resident group consisted of those who have lived in West Linn for less than ten years, while the other included residents who have lived in West Linn for ten years or more. Most of those in the Shorter-term Resident group have lived in the City for three to five years. In the Longer-term Resident group, 5 of the 9 participants have lived in West Linn for between 10 and 20 years, while the remainder in this group have lived in the City for 30 years or more.

A handful of Residents among the two groups still have children in the home, while a few also have grown children living with them. However, the majority of participants have households consisting only of themselves and a spouse.

The range of occupations represented in the Resident groups are primarily professional and include banker, architect, and nurse, as well as several who are homemakers, stay-at-home mothers, or retired.

II. Issues Facing the West Linn Community

GROWTH COMES UP FIRST WHEN RESIDENTS ARE ASKED FOR KEY ISSUES FACING WEST LINN. COMMUNITY LEADERS AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS ALSO BRING UP GROWTH, BUT FIRST MENTION THE CITY'S FINANCES.

All groups were asked what they believe are the key issues facing West Linn today. Results show:

- ▶ **Both Resident groups mention growth/development first.** It is clear from the beginning of the groups that growth and development are key issues for Residents. It is also clear that most, if not all, Residents would prefer that no further growth take place in or around West Linn. Once growth is mentioned, Residents cite a number of issues they believe are related to growth. These issues are discussed below.
- ▶ **Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents both mention financial stability first.** Unlike the Resident groups, the Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents mention “financial solvency” first as a key issue facing West Linn. When asked to explain this further, members of these groups say that the City has “constricted tax revenue” and “lots of old infrastructure.”
- ▶ **Growth mentioned by Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents, but further down the list.** The fourth mention among Community Leaders is growth and development. Neighborhood Association Presidents, on the other hand, never directly mention “growth” but do mention issues associated with it, such as divisions within the community between those who would like to see growth and those who would not, and concerns about development on flag lots within the City.

Community Leaders see a new phase for West Linn — “a redevelopment of what’s already here.” “We used to be a bedroom community, what’s next?” This group is also the only one that at this point in the discussion mentions the Stafford area as an issue facing the City.
- ▶ **Community Leaders say a major issue for West Linn is the lack of consensus on how best to handle the impact of growth and development.** In addition to mentioning growth and development as issues the City faces, Community Leaders say there is a lack of consensus within the community on how to approach growth management. For example, one Community Leader participant points out that West Linn lacks “overall development consensus. One group wants no development and another group wants sustainable growth.” Participants in the Community Leaders group also say, “We need to do more with good planning and plan for sustainable growth,” and that the City needs “a consistent vision” concerning growth. However, these participants also say that politically, “no one wants to be seen as pro-growth, so they just don’t talk about it.” “People are afraid that if you talk about growth you will be seen as pro-growth.”
- ▶ **Traffic, public transportation issues, and roads mentioned by Residents and Community Leaders as challenges facing West Linn due to growth.** Almost all participants worry about increased traffic that will result as the community grows. In

addition, participants point out that with rising fuel costs, there is a greater need for public transportation. Residents also mention “infrastructure” as an issue, and when asked to clarify, they all say roads are really the issue.

Neighborhood Association Presidents do not mention traffic, transportation, or road conditions.

- ▶ **Business development also comes up in the Community Leaders group as an issue.** This is the only group that talks about the lack of large businesses affecting the City’s tax base. The Community Leaders would like to see the City attract appropriate businesses. Appropriate businesses are often described as “green” businesses or those that would not contribute to increased pollution in West Linn.
- ▶ **Residents do mention the City’s finances as a concern, but much lower on their lists.** In each of the Resident groups, City finances are the third or fourth issue mentioned, as opposed to the first mention in the Community Leader and Neighborhood Association President groups. One Shorter-Term Resident says, “They never seem to have money for anything.” The Longer-Term Resident group mentions the fiscal responsibility of the City as an issue, saying the City needs to be “living within their budget.”
- ▶ **Other issues mentioned by Residents include:**
 - **Shorter-term Residents see City leadership as an issue.** These participants mention a Councilor recently resigning and that “there seems to be lots of division” on the City Council.
 - **Longer-term Residents offer several more issues of concern.** Among the other issues that Longer-Term Residents mention are the need for “one fire station on top of the hill,” school overcrowding and aging schools, lack of youth activities other than sports, and “the extinguishing of local businesses.”
- ▶ **Neighborhood Association Presidents also mention a long list of concerns, largely regarding the relationship between the neighborhood associations and the City.** Issues mentioned by the Neighborhood Association Presidents include:
 - **Division within community.** Neighborhood Association Presidents say: “This town is so divided on different issues. There’s lots of polarization on the issues.” This division, these participants explain, makes it difficult for people to have positions “in the middle,” and contributes to a “lack of true open debate of the issues.” Neighborhood Association Presidents also point out that there are two “sides” in West Linn — “those who like to see progress and growth, and others who want it to stay the same as the last 20 years.” One Neighborhood Association President notes, “The five to ten percent who are bold enough to stand up and have opinions scares the rest of the City away. When debate does occur here, it’s loud.”
 - **Lack of communication with citizens.** The Neighborhood Association Presidents express concern that City does not gather enough citizen input before making decisions. There is agreement among this group that City staff make decisions and “then the community has to push back.” “The City has taken an isolationist approach, on purpose. There’s a lack of community involvement.” Neighborhood Association Presidents also cite a lack of trust between city officials and the community as a major problem facing the City.

- **Problems specific to communicating with neighborhood associations.** A majority of the Neighborhood Association Presidents clearly believe that the City is avoiding involving their organizations in decision making. According to these participants, “One of the challenges facing the City is to open up the process and engage people. Neighborhood associations should be the gateway to talking with residents.” However, these participants also say the City should be aware that the eleven neighborhood associations “are distinctly different, in different parts of the City. Pulling them together can be very difficult.”

THERE IS AGREEMENT AMONG RESIDENTS THAT GROWTH IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE FACING WEST LINN. COMMUNITY LEADERS SEE CITY FINANCES, CONSENSUS-BUILDING AS BIGGEST CONCERNS.

After creating a list of key issues, participants were asked which one is the most important issue facing West Linn. Based on responses, West Linn Residents, Community Leaders, and Neighborhood Association Presidents each have a slightly different take on which issue is the most important the City faces. Findings include:

- ▶ **Residents agree that growth/development is the most important issue.** Growth is clearly the major issue facing West Linn in the minds of Residents. Shorter-term Residents point out that problems related to growth include lot sizes, infill, housing styles, traffic, city boundaries, infrastructure, and the need for more schools.

In addition to saying growth is the most important issue, Longer-term Residents say that given gas prices and environmental concerns, public transportation is also very important. There is also agreement in this group that there needs to be more free activities for children in West Linn. One Longer-term Resident says that the “marginal poverty class is not paid attention to in a positive way in West Linn.”

In addition to growth, a couple of participants in the Shorter-Term group mention City leadership or City finances as very important.

- ▶ **Community Leaders say the City’s biggest issues relate to finance.** For Community Leaders, the City’s financial solvency is the most important issue the City faces and one that affects a lot of the other issues they listed as important. According to the Community Leaders, the issues they listed as important are “all connected” by concerns about how the City can generate sufficient income to solve the problems it faces.

Community Leaders also cite a need for building more of a community consensus and a need for the City to put more effort into working with neighboring communities. “We are kind of adrift. West Linn has always been sort of a pariah.” “West Linn has been under-represented at a county level. West Linn hasn’t really had a seat at the table.”

- ▶ **Neighborhood Association Presidents appear to view City finances, citizen involvement, and planning as the most important issues.** Due to time constraints, Neighborhood Association Presidents were not asked directly what they believe is the most important issue facing West Linn. However, it is clear from the conversation that this group is very concerned with the City’s financial stability, as well as increasing avenues for citizen input, and addressing what they see as poor planning by the City in the past.

III. Attitudes Toward Growth

THERE IS SIGNIFICANT FEAR THAT GROWTH WILL HAVE A MAJOR NEGATIVE IMPACT ON WEST LINN'S QUALITY OF LIFE.

Residents and Neighborhood Association Presidents were asked why they think growth is of such concern to many West Linn residents. (Community Leaders were not asked due to time constraints.)

Whether they moved to West Linn in the last few years or they have lived in the area all their life, West Linn Residents and Neighborhood Association Presidents believe West Linn offers a quality of life that few, if any, other communities in the Portland metropolitan area offer. Growth, however, is seen as having the strong potential to negatively impact this quality of life. In fact, there was little, if any, discussion during the groups of any possible positive impacts of growth. Typical comments include:

- ▶ “I think we all move here for similar reasons — it’s a beautiful area, lots of forest. The fear is that with more people coming in there will be fewer trees. Then it’s not like West Linn anymore.”
- ▶ “I love the trees!”
- ▶ “It’s a quality of life issue. I don’t want to buy a \$1 million dollar house and then fight traffic.”
- ▶ “I moved here for the rural setting. If we lose that feeling, we’re going to lose that end of the market.”

Longer-term Residents also mention traffic as a reason they oppose growth and say the current increase in the number of lots being subdivided “makes the neighborhood feel junky.” One Neighborhood Association President mentions that there is a “NIMBY” (not in my backyard) mentality when it comes to more people living in West Linn.

OFTEN DIFFICULT FOR PARTICIPANTS TO LIST WHAT THEY LIKE ABOUT HOW WEST LINN IS CURRENTLY HANDLING GROWTH MANAGEMENT.

At first when asked for what they like about West Linn’s current growth management, participants are slow to answer, as their first inclination is to list negatives — one Longer-term Resident’s immediate response is, “Nothing! It’s out of control!” However, each group does manage to come up with a short list of “likes,” including:

- ▶ **Shorter-term Residents cite the fact that there are “still lots of rules,” big lots, parks.** Despite the negative attitude many Residents have toward the City’s growth management, the Shorter-term Residents do say they like that there are still rules about what you can do

when building and what one can do with one's trees. Also, these Residents like the big lots that are common throughout the City as well as the City's parks.

- ▶ **Longer-term Residents appreciate that to-date, even with growth, West Linn is still a well-kept, safe city.** These Residents also say they like the diversification of different types of homes in West Linn. In addition, one mentions that neighborhood associations “have a lot to say about what goes on in their neighborhood.”
- ▶ **Community Leaders cite advisory boards, Goal 5 inventories, and master plan updates.** Not surprisingly given their level of civic involvement, Community Leaders cite more specific actions when asked about current growth management activities by the City. The creation of the Sustainability Advisory Board and the Historic Resources Advisory Board, both of which had representatives in this group, are mentioned as positive actions. Also, Goal 5 inventories, the updated tree ordinance, 10th Street Task Force, and updating master plans are all mentioned as positive steps the City is currently undertaking to manage growth.
- ▶ **Neighborhood Association Presidents like appeals process.** Neighborhood Association Presidents also indicate that the City may be moving in the right direction to control growth, saying that, “It's beginning to dawn on City Council and the Planning Commission that people actually care what neighborhoods look like.” In addition, one participant in this group notes that overall, the City Council and the Planning Commission are responsive to citizens.

In addition, there is some agreement in the Neighborhood Association group that “a case of how it was done right is the 10th Street Task Force.”

ALL GROUPS SAY THEY DON'T LIKE WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE HAPHAZARD GROWTH IN WEST LINN.

Participants in all groups say that growth to-date in West Linn has not been well planned and there is a strong belief that the City is not strict enough when approving new development. Findings include:

- ▶ **There is general agreement among all groups that developers have the upper hand.** Participants believe that developers can do anything they want in West Linn — for example, one Resident says, “If things don't go their way at City Hall, builders will have the code changed.” There is also concern voiced that fines for developers are low enough that it sometimes pays for developers to simply break the rule and pay the fine. “It is cheaper for them to cut down a tree, say they are sorry and pay the fine.” A Neighborhood Association President says that developers are not made to verify information they give the City. There is also a strong belief among the Neighborhood Association Presidents that “the City grants too many variances.” All of these variances, according to the Neighborhood Association Presidents, are made in order to support new development within the City. Comments include:
 - “The Planning staff acts as advocates for developers.”
 - “The managing factor for growth in West Linn is greed!”

- ▶ **There is also a perception that the City is too lax on restricting and guiding development.** As noted earlier, overall, most participants — particularly Residents and Neighborhood Association Presidents — would prefer that there be no growth at all in West Linn and believe that the City is not doing enough to slow growth down or stop growth. Participants say:
 - “The City is getting more lax, they are letting more people in. There’s more construction, more cookie-cutter houses, and smaller lots.”
 - “Form follows function, and the function is to grow.”
 - “The City doesn’t go to the property before they okay plans.”
- ▶ **Many are unhappy with the aesthetics of recent development.** Participants perceive a great deal of the development that they have seen in and around West Linn as “ugly” or “bad” development and this contributes to their reluctance to support additional growth. Residents, Community Leaders, and Neighborhood Association Presidents specifically mention lack of aesthetics as something they do not like about growth management in West Linn. “McMansions are out of scale with my neighborhood. The sun sets at 2 p.m. in my backyard because of them.” “Some of the development during the big growth period was butt-ugly.” “There’s a lack of aesthetics.”
- ▶ **Development often seen as ruining some of natural beauty of West Linn.** Many participants voice concern that development takes away from what they see as an integral part of West Linn — the natural beauty in and surrounding the City. “I don’t want all the open land filled with houses.” “They cut down all the trees.”
- ▶ **Neighborhood Association Presidents have problems with the development approval process timeline.** A major concern for the Neighborhood Association Presidents is their perception that they are not given sufficient time to comment on proposed new development or infill in their neighborhood. This group says:
 - “The notification process is not right. We don’t have enough time.”
 - “The amount of time given to neighborhood associations and for rebuttals is not enough.”
- ▶ **One Resident has a problem with multi-family housing.** One Longer-term Resident says, “Multi-housing brings in a different element. The less multi-housing we have, the better.”

TO RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, THE PROJECTION OF ONE MILLION PEOPLE MOVING TO PORTLAND AREA IN NEXT 25 YEARS IS BELIEVABLE. MOST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS, HOWEVER, REJECT THESE NUMBERS.

All groups were provided with the Metro estimate that in the next 25 years one million people will move to the Portland area and were asked if this statistic is believable. Overall, Residents and Community Leaders are quick to say they believe this will happen, saying, for example, that people will come simply because “life’s better here.” One Community Leader points out that she

had recently attended a presentation that explained that some of the increase will be the result of people staying in the area during times in their life when there tends to be geographic change — for example, at retirement or as students.

Most of the Neighborhood Association Presidents, on the other hand, are quick to say they do not believe the projection. These participants want to know how much the area has grown in the last 25 years. Some question whether growth is inevitable, saying “you can say ‘no’ to growth. It doesn’t have to happen.” Others see no reason why West Linn has to accept growth. “We don’t want them all in West Linn.” A few in this group say how much growth happens will depend on the economy.

INCREASED TRAFFIC HEADS THE LIST OF WHAT PARTICIPANTS EXPECT WILL BE THE EFFECT OF GROWTH.

With the possibility of one million people moving to the region, participants were asked what effects this growth will have on West Linn and the quality of life they currently experience living here. All groups assume growth will mean more traffic, which will negatively impact their quality of life. In addition, a number of other effects, all negative, are cited, including:

- ▶ **Increased crime.** All groups except the Neighborhood Association Presidents say that with growth will come an increase in crime. There is general agreement that “the more people you have, the more crime.”
- ▶ **If Stafford area is developed, West Linn will lose its “backyard.”** All residents clearly see the Stafford area as providing a protective, green “backyard” to all of West Linn. Shorter-term Residents and Community Leaders specifically mention development of the Stafford area as having a negative impact on the quality of life in West Linn:
 - “If Stafford builds out, it will affect the feel of West Linn.”
 - “Livability is the biggest concern. We have Stafford, the river, and the mountain. If they develop Stafford, the character of this town will change completely and the reason why people live here won’t be there anymore.”
- ▶ **Increased density.** Density of future development is a major concern, with the vast majority of participants believing that increased density in and around West Linn will have a major negative impact. More density and the development of more flag lots in West Linn are perceived as inevitable with more growth, and as one Neighborhood Association President put it, “we’ll end up with places five feet away from each other.”
- ▶ **Noise, mere fact of more people mentioned by all but Neighborhood Association Presidents.** Participants say more people will make the City a noisier place. In addition, the simple fact that there will be more people in West Linn is seen as a downside.
- ▶ **Two groups worry about pollution, while another two worry about the impacts of growth on wildlife.** Neighborhood Association Presidents and Longer-term Residents both mention pollution as a downside to growth. “It’s all related to how infrastructure is planned. We’re a global warming disaster in West Linn — we are not a car-free community.”

Community Leaders and Shorter-term Residents believe more growth will cause a loss in wildlife habitat.

IV. Attitudes Toward Stafford Area

RESIDENTS HAVE LITTLE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN THE STAFFORD AREA.

All participants are well aware of the location of the Stafford area when it is pointed out on a map. However, when asked what is currently going on in that area, both Resident groups know little other than that they are “fighting” and that the area has formed a hamlet, “whatever that is.” Residents also do not know how, if at all, West Linn has been involved with the Stafford area in the past.

Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents are much more knowledgeable about what’s happening in the Stafford area and West Linn’s past involvement. These participants are aware the hamlet has been formed and one Neighborhood Association President mentions that it has become a Community Planning Organization (CPO), “so people can have some say in how it’s developed.” One Community Leader says that the hamlet is doing a visioning process and that a master plan is being developed. Another Community Leader says that the hamlet’s board has recently changed and that “developers” have taken over the process.

It is worth noting that when the moderator told the Community Leaders that the Resident groups had little knowledge of current goings-on in the Stafford area, they were shocked. One Community Leader exclaims, “How could residents not bring up Stafford? That’s all anyone ever talks about!”

When asked about West Linn’s involvement, Community Leaders point out that “it’s been pretty minimal.” This group also mentions that the City has taken a hands-off position — “People won’t touch it with a ten-foot pole. They don’t want to be seen as pro-growth.” Neighborhood Association Presidents say they recall that a few years ago West Linn, Lake Oswego, and Tualatin were working together to have “buffers” around their communities.

ALMOST ALL AGREE THAT THE CITY SHOULD HAVE SOME INVOLVEMENT IN THE STAFFORD AREA DISCUSSION.

When asked if West Linn should be involved in future discussions regarding the Stafford area, almost all, regardless of group, say “yes.” However, most participants also point out that “the hamlet should be making the final decision.” In addition, there are some who believe that since most of the property in the Stafford area is privately owned, no involvement is possible. “I don’t know what role any city can take. The Stafford area is all private property, so there isn’t much that can be done.”

While Residents are hard-pressed to come up with specifics as to how the City should be involved, some type of involvement does make sense because of the proximity of the area to West Linn and the perception that whatever happens in the Stafford area will also affect their

quality of life. In addition, there is some perception that Stafford area residents will use West Linn services. Comments, for example, include:

- ▶ “Anyone next to the Stafford area should be part of the discussion.”
- ▶ “You should always be involved with your neighbor.”
- ▶ “Obviously any decision will affect West Linn because of traffic and schools.”
- ▶ “I want it to stay like it is, but if they are using our services, we need to have talks with them.”

Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents, perhaps because of their greater familiarity with the area, have more specific ideas on how the City should be involved. Community Leaders offer two suggestions:

- ▶ **Work with other affected cities to help plan what will happen.** One suggestion is that West Linn, along with Lake Oswego and Tualatin, should hold a year-long design charrette process to plan.
- ▶ **Turn the Stafford area into a park.** Another suggestion from the Community Leaders is to turn the entire Stafford area into a park. Neighborhood Association Presidents also mention the area being a park.

The Neighborhood Association Presidents, while still believing that West Linn should be keeping tabs on what is going on in the Stafford area, are the least interested of the four groups in the City being involved in planning for the area. One Neighborhood Association President, who is obviously aware of Metro’s new approach to addressing future growth, says that the City should be advocating for a Rural Reserve. Another says, “West Linn should control that rural area.”

However, another Neighborhood Association President asks, “Why would I expect to have control over what someone else can do with their land?” To some degree, this sentiment is echoed in the Shorter-term Resident group, where there is agreement when a participant says, “Leave it to the hamlet, and all power to them in keeping West Linn and Lake Oswego out.”

RESIDENTS LIKE THE IDEA OF METRO PLANNING FOR URBAN AND RURAL RESERVES.

The new process of Urban and Rural Reserves that is being undertaken by Metro as an approach to planning for future growth is met with approval and openness by Residents. Residents particularly like that the process will specifically set rural land apart, and they also believe that “to plan deliberately beats not planning at all.” However, Community Leaders are not so sure. One, who works for Metro, points out that Metro has attempted this sort of effort before and it did not work very well. Another suggests that West Linn, Lake Oswego, and Tualatin should form a committee “and have influence over any decisions.” Neighborhood Association Presidents were not asked this question.

IDEALLY, PARTICIPANTS SAY STAFFORD WOULD BE A RURAL RESERVE. HOWEVER, SOME BELIEVE IT'S PROBABLY MORE REALISTIC FOR IT TO BECOME AN URBAN RESERVE.

In a perfect world, all participants would like to see the Stafford area as a Rural Reserve. It is clear that the open spaces of fields and farms in the Stafford area are, to these participants, part of the charm and beauty of West Linn — participants in all groups mention that they love to drive through the Stafford area at the end of the day because it is so pretty. “It is a great way to unwind at the end of the day.” Longer-term Residents in particular are adamant that the area be a Rural Reserve because they do not want any more people in the West Linn area. This group says, “Stay out of it and let the hamlet decide.” When asked by the moderator where the projected one million people will go, this group responds, “Somewhere else! Hillsboro, Molalla, there’s lots of places.”

Other groups say that it may be more realistic for the Stafford area to become an Urban Reserve. However, even these participants question whether the entire area has to be all of one or the other and want to know if the area can include both Urban and Rural Reserves.

Some participants in the Community Leaders and the Neighborhood Association Presidents groups see development in the Stafford area as an opportunity to broaden West Linn’s tax base with industrial or commercial development. There is, among these participants, general agreement that any “big box” or industrial development should take place in the Wanker’s Corner area. Comments from those who see some increased development in the Stafford area includes:

- ▶ “Either/or doesn’t make sense, can we have some urban and some rural reserves?”
- ▶ “There are areas that should be rural because of the topography, but there are other areas where reasonable, responsible industry can be developed.”
- ▶ “The Stafford area’s more like West Linn, so we’re compatible. Growth is inevitable. Any development that comes into Wanker’s Corner, I want the revenue.”
- ▶ “It’s not realistic to think we can declare the Stafford area a Rural Reserve.”

IF STAFFORD IS BROUGHT INTO THE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY, PARTICIPANTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE LOW-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT. BUT COMMUNITY LEADERS, NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS DO SEE VALUE IN SOME COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

Participants in all groups were asked what type of development they believe is appropriate *if* the Stafford area becomes an Urban Reserve and is ultimately brought into the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). This question is difficult for all groups to answer, as they all would like to see it remain a rural setting. The Longer-term Residents say, “Zip. No development.” However, when pressed, participants say the following:

- ▶ **All want low-density residential development.** This is the first mention in both of the Resident groups. Residents want “large estates on large lots,” “two-acre lots,” “low density,” and “residential homes, not townhouses or apartments.” The other groups also mention

wanting lower-density residential housing only. High-density residential is something that is seen as appropriate for other places — as one Neighborhood Association President says, “You want high density, they’re doing that in Portland. You can live there.”

- ▶ **Strong desire by all to “keep it green.”** An important part of why participants want low-density residential if the Stafford area is brought into the UGB is the desire to keep the Stafford area looking as close as possible to what it looks like now — a somewhat rural area with plenty of green open spaces. Comments include:
 - “That’s why we all move out of the city — so we can look at green.”
 - “I’d hate to see the farmlands go.”
 - “It adds a certain quality of life to have it not overdeveloped, to keep some pastoral quality.”
 - “Stafford should stay as close to what’s there now.”
- ▶ **Most Residents are resistant to idea of business or industry coming into the area.** Shorter-term Residents in particular do not like the idea of industry, businesses, or even retail coming to West Linn. The presiding belief is that West Linn “should stay more of a bedroom/rural community,” and business would negatively impact that desire. Shorter-term Residents also believe that there is plenty of retail near West Linn, including the upcoming Bridgeport Village-type development in Oregon City, and they are happy to drive outside of West Linn for these amenities. Longer-term Residents also see problems with the idea of industry coming into the area, as they perceive it to cause environmental problems. However, these participants are more interested in the idea of professional offices.
- ▶ **Community Leaders, Neighborhood Association Presidents more interested in additional business/industry in or near West Linn.** Likely at least in part because of their greater familiarity with the positive impact business can have on a municipality’s tax base, Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents are interested in seeing some additional commercial activity, including industrial development along I-205 or a Kruse Way-type development of professional offices. “You have to have a balance. If it’s purely residential, there’s a negative implication from a financial standpoint.”
- ▶ **Longer-term Residents, Community Leaders, Neighborhood Association Presidents emphasize a need for planning.** These groups voice the need for “intelligent” planning. One Community Leader suggests a phased approach to developing the Stafford area over the next 20 to 25 years, and another agrees with this approach in order to “hedge our bets on the one million people coming in.” Shorter-term Residents do not specifically mention planning in general, but do say that West Linn needs to plan for better public transportation.

OVERALL, MOST BELIEVE WEST LINN SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN SOME FASHION IN PLANNING AND REGULATING DEVELOPMENT IN THE STAFFORD AREA.

The groups differ when asked who should be responsible for planning and regulating development in the Stafford area, but overall, most believe that it is to West Linn’s advantage to

have at least some responsibility, either by itself or as part of a coalition of other jurisdictions. Responses show:

- ▶ **About half of Residents say West Linn should have a role in planning.** About half in each Resident group believe that West Linn should have a role in planning and regulating development in the Stafford area. These Residents tend to believe that West Linn will do a better job at controlling growth — primarily by limiting it — if it has responsibility. Comments include:

- “West Linn has to be involved.”
- “If West Linn wants to protect their growth, then they need to take the Stafford area in. Tualatin or Lake Oswego is going to take it. They’re pushing on our doors.”

In addition, one Longer-term Resident says that West Linn should be involved along with Tualatin, Lake Oswego, and the hamlet.

- ▶ **Other Residents say West Linn should not be involved, primarily because they do not believe the City has done a good job of planning in West Linn.** On the other hand, many Residents believe West Linn should not be responsible for planning and regulating development in the Stafford area. Distrust of West Linn’s planning ability and a desire for the hamlet to determine its own fate are among the concerns voiced by these Residents:

- “The City should stay out of it, because they’re idiots.”
- “Whichever group has the wisest long-term view of environmental management should have control, and I don’t think that’s West Linn.”
- “I’d rather see Lake Oswego take it. I think they could do a better job than West Linn.”
- “The people who live there fought hard to be a hamlet. Shouldn’t they have a say?”

- ▶ **Community Leaders and Neighborhood Association Presidents more likely to say a number of jurisdictions should have joint responsibility.** Community Leaders and several Neighborhood Association Presidents say that West Linn should be responsible for planning and regulating development along with other jurisdictions, including some combination of Tualatin, Lake Oswego, Wilsonville, and the hamlet. One Neighborhood Association President says, “The hamlet should make the decision. That’s the only way it will work.” However, another in that group says, “We’ll only be happy if we take it and make it look like we want.”

PARTICIPANTS ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED FOR DEVELOPMENT, AND OFTEN SAY WEST LINN SHOULD BE ONE OF THE JURISDICTIONS PROVIDING SERVICES.

Three of the four groups — both Resident groups and Community Leaders — were asked what types of infrastructure is necessary to support additional residential, commercial, or industrial development. All three of these groups mention water, sewer, and roads. In addition, both Resident groups mention schools, fire and emergency services, and parks and recreation facilities, including community centers. Community Leaders also mention energy/gas services, and communications services.

Many also say that West Linn should be one of the entities providing urban-level services to the Stafford area. It is at this point in the three groups that several participants begin to talk about annexation, coming to the conclusion that if West Linn is to provide services in an area, it should probably annex the area into the City. However, most think that West Linn should only provide services to a portion of the Stafford area, and that areas bordering other cities, and/or the hamlet, should have a role. One Shorter-term Resident says, “It seems to me that it should be divided between Lake Oswego and West Linn.” Another Shorter-term Resident agrees — “Obviously, West Linn has the best access to the eastern part and Lake Oswego has the best access to the northern part.” There are mentions in both the Longer-term Residents group and the Community Leaders group that the hamlet, in addition to the cities of West Linn, Lake Oswego, Tualatin, and possibly Wilsonville, should decide who provides services.

MAIN ADVANTAGE TO ANNEXING SOME OF THE STAFFORD AREA IS TO BE ABLE TO HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER ITS DEVELOPMENT. THE DISADVANTAGE IS THAT IT WOULD MEAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA.

With the exception of the Longer-term Residents, all groups discussed the pros and cons of annexing a portion of the Stafford area. Clearly, the biggest advantage, in these participants’ view, of annexing some of the Stafford area is that the City would then have a degree of control in managing its development. Specifically, participants say:

▶ From Shorter-term Residents:

- “If it does come into the UGB, it’s to West Linn’s advantage to be involved. Then we have some control of what happens to it.”
- “West Linn should at least take part in it.”

▶ From Community Leaders:

- “West Linn should have the area annexed in so we have control of what it looks like.”
- “The Stafford area always seemed like West Linn. It never seemed like Lake Oswego or Tualatin.”

▶ From Neighborhood Association Presidents:

- “Sounds like we should annex it.”
- “It’s a great idea to grab the I-205 corridor so that we can get commercial revenue.”

The main disadvantage, echoed throughout the groups, is that if the Stafford area is annexed, it would likely mean development of the area to some degree, and thus the area would not look exactly as it does now. Even with possible annexation to the City, participants would like to see little development, and agree that “doing it right in Stafford is critical.”

Community Leaders also raise the issue of the need for another large high school if the Stafford area is developed. In addition, this group also discusses the negative connotation of the word annexation. One Community Leader says, to general agreement, “We need to find a new word

other than annexation.” Neighborhood Association Presidents say another disadvantage to annexing the Stafford area is that “residential development doesn’t pay for itself.”

RESIDENTS SAY CITY COUNCIL NEEDS TO KEEP LIVABILITY IN MIND WHEN MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT GROWTH MANAGEMENT.

At the end of the Resident and Neighborhood Association President groups, participants were asked what’s most important for the City to keep in mind when making decisions about how to manage growth in West Linn and surrounding areas. Residents cite livability issues when asked this question. Shorter-term Residents are primarily concerned with “preservation of what we have.” These Residents also fear what they call “Beavertonization” — “all franchise fast-food restaurants, concrete, too many condos. Beaverton cuts everything down and plants little trees.” Longer-term Residents cite livability, environmental concerns, and traffic as what West Linn should keep in mind.

Neighborhood Association Presidents cite problems with communication between the City and the neighborhood associations and with citizens as a whole. “There’s a general sense that Council asks for input and then ignores it.” “Meet with the neighborhood associations. It’s the only large group Council doesn’t meet with. They are finally going to on [June] 16th.”

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following provides Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc.'s conclusions and recommendations based on the current research as well as past experiences. This section is intended to provide both a summary of the key recommendations that grow directly from the research and to introduce our further judgments and recommendations based on a comparison of these findings with previous research.

1. HOW GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IS MANAGED IN WEST LINN IS A BIG ISSUE FOR RESIDENTS BECAUSE THEY SEE A DIRECT LINK TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE OFFERED BY THE COMMUNITY.

In January 2008, we conducted a telephone survey of 400 residents for the City of West Linn. In that survey, growth surfaced as an issue of great concern. For example, when asked, "What do you believe is the one most important issue West Linn's City Council needs to address over the next year?" 36% say "growth." This is a large percentage given the open-ended nature of the question. In addition, 52% of residents in this survey strongly agree with the statement, "If the Stafford area is brought inside the Urban Growth Boundary, the City of West Linn should be responsible for planning and regulating development in areas near the City," and another 22% somewhat agree.

As a result of the community survey, these focus groups were conducted to further explore growth and citizens' ideas on how growth should be managed in West Linn, and more specifically, how, if at all, the City should be involved in future discussions regarding the Stafford area.

The reason West Linn residents are concerned about growth is that they believe it negatively impacts their quality of life. And they are not just thinking about growth within the city limits of West Linn. As a bedroom community, residents frequently leave West Linn to work, shop, or a variety of other reasons. When they do, they see and experience "growth" that occurs in neighboring communities on a daily basis.

Many West Linn residents moved to the area because, along with good schools, it offered them a feeling of open, green, rural spaces. Likely as a result, few participants in the groups could provide any positive impacts that growth might have on the West Linn area. Growth is seen as negatively impacting the natural beauty in and around West Linn, and as bringing more people, more traffic, more crime, and more noise. As a result, it is clear that when residents think about growth management, for the most part they are thinking about how to limit growth in the area.

2. MANY BELIEVE GROWTH HAS NOT BEEN MANAGED WELL IN WEST LINN IN THE PAST, SO THE CITY MUST WORK TO BUILD PUBLIC TRUST ON THIS ISSUE.

In the community survey, growth management rated high in importance — just behind the most important services of schools and police. Yet growth management is the lowest-rated service when residents are asked how West Linn is performing. This sentiment is echoed in the focus groups. Ideally, participants would like no growth in the West Linn area, although many freely admit that this is unrealistic. However, it is evident in all four of the groups that citizens do not currently trust the City to do any development — big or small — well. Participants say that the City lets developers have their way when approving new developments and that new development is often perceived as poorly executed and “ugly.”

Because citizens are skeptical regarding the City’s ability to manage growth effectively and in an aesthetically pleasing way, West Linn must begin to build the public’s trust on this issue. This will not be easy. This is a very emotional issue for many who live in West Linn. There is some perception that by talking about the issue, individuals will be labeled as “pro-growth.” However, ignoring the issue will not make it go away and would be the worst thing for the City to do, reinforcing the belief that the City does not know how to manage growth or simply does the bidding of any developer who wants to build in West Linn. Instead the City needs to demonstrate that it understands citizens’ desire to preserve the character of the community and that it will do what it can to ensure that any development (or re-development as Community Leaders suggest) meets the standards set by the community.

3. THE CITY SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN STAFFORD DISCUSSIONS.

Historically, the City of West Linn has had little involvement in discussions regarding the future of the Stafford area. However, it is clear from responses in the community survey and from participants in the focus groups that the City needs to be involved in any future discussions. Residents know the Stafford area is not within the city limits of West Linn, but perceive the area as an important backdrop that contributes greatly to West Linn’s high ratings for livability. It is the City’s unofficial “backyard.” For many it a welcome, calming “green space” on the drive home. Residents want the City involved in order to, as much as possible, protect this vision.

When presented with the idea of the Urban and Rural Reserves planning process that Metro is undertaking, participants in the groups strongly prefer that the Stafford area become a Rural Reserve. However, most also say that given its location it is probably unrealistic that the entire Stafford area will become a Rural Reserve and that at least a portion will likely become an Urban Reserve.

While most believe West Linn should be part of any discussions about the Stafford area, it is also clear that few believe West Linn alone should be responsible for any planning. Instead, most want the City to work with neighboring jurisdictions, including the Stafford hamlet, Lake Oswego, Tualatin, and Wilsonville.

There will certainly be a segment of residents who think West Linn should not be involved — often because they believe the City has done a poor job of planning and managing

growth in the past. However, we believe the segment of residents who think it is *not* in West Linn's best interest to be a participant in discussions is small. Instead we believe that most West Linn residents think that what happens in the Stafford area will always be of great importance to their quality of life and as such, strongly support the City taking a place at the table.

APPENDIX

Methods

RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the research is to provide the City of West Linn with information it can use to determine how to approach the issue of growth and development in West Linn and the surrounding area. Specific objectives include:

- ▶ Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the City's current approach to growth management.
- ▶ Assess whether or not residents want the City to be involved in discussions regarding development in the Stafford area, and why.
- ▶ Assess what residents perceive the City's role should be if the Stafford area is brought into the Urban Reserves or the UGB.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A total of four focus groups was conducted — one with residents who have lived in West Linn for fewer than 10 years, one with residents who have lived in West Linn for 10 years or more, one with community leaders, such as members of city advisory boards and commissions or school board members, and one with neighborhood association presidents.

CDRI developed a screening questionnaire and a discussion guide for the Resident focus groups, working in consultation with City of West Linn staff.

PARTICIPANT CRITERIA

All potential participants for the Resident focus groups were screened as follows:

- ▶ At least 18 years old, with a range of ages in each group.
- ▶ Self-identify as living in the City of West Linn, with confirmation based on mailing address.
- ▶ For the resident groups, one group with shorter-term residents — those who have lived in West Linn for fewer than 10 years — and one with longer-term residents.
- ▶ For the Resident groups, an approximate 50/50 mix of male and female residents was recruited in each group.

- ▶ Participants with a range of occupations were recruited for each group. We find that by requiring a range of occupations, we do not need to ask participants about the more sensitive issue of income and yet ensure our clients of a range of socio-economic characteristics within a group.
- ▶ No participants work for the City of West Linn or for a market research company.

Potential participants for the Community Leaders group were determined and invited by the City and the invitees largely consisted of members of one of the City's advisory boards — such as Budget, Planning, or Parks and Recreation. Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce office and the school board were also invited.

For the Neighborhood Association Presidents group, the City invited each of the 11 West Linn neighborhood association presidents to participate.

Participants in the Resident groups were found using a list of randomly generated phone numbers within the 97068 ZIP Code.

FOCUS GROUP LOGISTICS

The focus groups were held at the Adult Community Center in West Linn. The groups with Residents were held on Saturday, May 31, 2008, at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. On Tuesday, June 3, the Community Leader group was held at 6:00 p.m. and the Neighborhood Association group at 8:00 p.m.

Each of the groups lasted approximately 90 minutes and each group was video-recorded. Participants were served refreshments. Participants in the Residents groups were given a \$50 Market of Choice gift card in appreciation for their attendance.

The groups were moderated by Martha DeLong, CEO of Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc.

INTERPRETING FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

Focus groups provide a wealth of information about an issue, product, or service. CDRI has conducted hundreds of groups and has seen the results consistently validated. However, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that the purpose of this project is to explore attitudes, motivations, and opinions, not frequency or distribution. When reading this report and using the information it contains, remember the following:

- ▶ Consistency, consensus, and the range of opinion are what we are looking for in focus group research. The consistency and consensus may be evident among participants in a single group or found in the responses of two or more groups.
- ▶ While focus groups also provide valuable input regarding the range of opinions that exist within a population, when analyzing the focus groups, we are striving to explain how people feel and why they have a particular viewpoint, not to provide a precise percentage.

- ▶ The number of people participating in a focus group is limited and participants have been carefully selected based on specific criteria. As a result, the findings cannot be projected to a larger population on a one-to-one basis.
- ▶ When watching a group live or viewing the DVD of a group, be careful not to give too much importance to the opinion of any one participant. Although that participant may be articulate and express a desired viewpoint, the opinion may not be that of the entire group.

Screening questionnaire

CITY OF WEST LINN

GENERAL RESIDENT FOCUS GROUP SCREENER

774

Spring 2008

DATE _____ Group 1, May 31, 9:00 a.m. _____
RESPONDENT NAME _____ Group 2, May 31, 11:00 a.m. _____
PHONE NUMBER _____
RECRUITED BY _____

INTRODUCTION

TO PERSON WHO ANSWERS THE PHONE: Hello, I'm (FIRST AND LAST NAME) from Campbell DeLong Resources, calling on behalf of the City of West Linn. Today (Tonight) we are conducting a brief study about government services. We are not selling anything and all of your comments will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. May I please speak with a (male/female) household member who is 18 years of age or older? **IF NOT AVAILABLE, MAKE CALLBACK APPOINTMENT FOR FIRST POSSIBLE TIME.**

TO NEW HOUSEHOLD RESPONDENT: Hello, I'm (FIRST AND LAST NAME) from Campbell DeLong Resources, calling on behalf of the City of West Linn. We are conducting a brief study about government services. We are not selling anything and all of your comments will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

SCREENING

First, I have just a couple of questions to confirm that you are the appropriate person to talk with.

1. Gender. **RECORD. DO NOT ASK. CHECK QUOTAS**

- Male1 CONTINUE
Female2 CONTINUE

GENDER QUOTA: 50/50 MALE/FEMALE IN EACH GROUP

2. Do you live within the city limits of West Linn? **RECORD ONE ONLY.**

- Yes1 CONTINUE
No2 **POLITELY DISCONTINUE**
Don't know/refused9 **POLITELY DISCONTINUE**

3. Do you currently volunteer your time for a City of West Linn board, commission, or committee?

- Yes..... 1 **POLITELY DISCONTINUE**
- No 2 **CONTINUE**
- Don't know..... 3 **POLITELY DISCONTINUE**

4a. Do you, or does anyone in your household or in your immediate family, work for the City of West Linn?

- No..... 1 **CONTINUE**
- Yes..... 2 **POLITELY DISCONTINUE**

4b. What about a market research company?

- No..... 1 **CONTINUE**
- Yes..... 2 **POLITELY DISCONTINUE**

5. How long have you lived in West Linn? **RECORD.**

_____ **YEARS**

IF FEWER THAN 10 YEARS, QUALIFIES AS SHORTER-TERM RESIDENT

IF 10 OR MORE YEARS, QUALIFIES AS LONGER-TERM RESIDENT

LENGTH OF TIME IN WEST LINN QUOTAS:

GROUP 1 MUST BE SHORTER-TERM RESIDENTS

GROUP 2 MUST BE LONGER-TERM RESIDENTS

6. What is your age, please? **DO NOT READ LIST. PROVIDE RANGES IF NECESSARY.**

- 18 to 29..... 1
- 30 to 34..... 2
- 35 to 39..... 3
- 40 to 55 4
- Over 55 5

- ✓ **ALL MUST BE OVER 18.**
- ✓ **ENSURE A RANGE OF AGES, AS POSSIBLE.**
- ✓ **MINIMUM OF 2 IN EACH GROUP MUST BE UNDER THE AGE OF 35.**

7. And what is your current occupation?

✓ **ENSURE A RANGE OF OCCUPATIONS**

INVITATION

As part of our research on current issues facing the City of West Linn, we will be conducting a group discussion with West Linn residents like yourself. A limited number of people are being invited. You will have the opportunity to provide your thoughts on important issues facing your community. As a thank you for your participation you will be given a \$50 gift card from Market of Choice. Will you please join us?

- Yes..... 1 **CONTINUE**
- No 2 **POLITELY DISCONTINUE**

This discussion will be held on **MAY 31, AT 9:00 A.M./11:00 A.M.** in the **CLASSROOM #1 AT THE ADULT COMMUNITY CENTER ON ROSEMONT ROAD IN WEST LINN.** It will last approximately 90 minutes. **IF 9:00 A.M. GROUP, SAY:** A light breakfast will be provided. **IF 11 A.M. GROUP, SAY:** A light lunch will be provided.

So we can send you a confirming letter and map, I need your name, email address, and mailing address. I also need a phone number where you can be reached during the day and one where you can be reached in the evening.

NAME _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ **ZIP** _____

DAY PHONE _____

EVENING PHONE _____

Thank you for your assistance. We'll look forward to seeing you on May 31 at **9:00 A.M./11:00 A.M.**

Discussion guide

WEST LINN

ATTITUDES TOWARDS GROWTH

DISCUSSION GUIDE

774

Spring 2008

I. MODERATOR'S INTRODUCTION — 2 minutes

RESEARCHER INTRODUCES FOCUS GROUP PROCESS, INCLUDING USE OF CAMERA, VIDEO AND AUDIO TAPING OF GROUP, OBSERVERS, TAKING TURNS, PARTICIPATION.

II. ATTENDEES' INTRODUCTIONS — 8 minutes

ATTENDEES INTRODUCE THEMSELVES. EACH PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- ▶ First name?
- ▶ Where live? (**SHOW ON MAP**)
- ▶ How long lived in area?
- ▶ Job?
- ▶ Number of people in household?

III. ISSUES FACING WEST LINN COMMUNITY – 15 minutes

- A. We are here today/tonight to talk about West Linn, issues the community faces and how its residents want the City to handle some of these issues.

I want to start by asking simply what you believe are the key issues facing the community of West Linn. You call them out and I will write them up on the chart.

PROBE FOR THE FOLLOWING. CLARIFY REASONS WHY IMPORTANT:

- ▶ Concerns about growth
- ▶ Mentions of the Stafford area specifically
- ▶ Street maintenance
- ▶ Traffic
- ▶ Specific City services such as police, parks, infrastructure
- ▶ Fiscal management issues/concerns
- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Others

- B. Which one do you believe is the most important issue? **VOTE IF NECESSARY. IF MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IS *NOT* GROWTH:** Why is this issue so important?

IV. ATTITUDES TOWARDS GROWTH – 15 minutes

- A.** Earlier this year, our company was involved in conducting a community survey for the City of West Linn. In that study, growth and growth management surfaced as an issue that many residents are concerned about. Why is growth management such an important topic to many West Linn residents? **LIST ON CHART.**
- ▶ What do you like about the way the City of West Linn handles growth management today?
 - ▶ What don't you like about the way the city handles growth management today?
- B.** In the next 25 years it is estimated that 1 million people will come to the Portland Metro area. First, do you believe it? Why? Why not?
- ▶ What effect, if any, do you believe this additional population will have on the West Linn area?
 - ▶ How, if at all, do you believe these additional people will affect the quality of life in West Linn?
 - ▶ **AS NECESSARY:** Most of the land within the current city limits of West Linn has already been developed. So, how, if at all, do you think the addition of 1 million more people to the Portland metro area will affect those of you living in West Linn?
 - 3.6% of acreage within West Linn City limits is buildable, vacant, residential property.
 - Some footnotes to this statistic include:
 - This is referencing land that is zoned residential and is vacant.
 - This does not include the anticipated number of units that could potentially be built on under-utilized residential properties.
 - One inference you could take from the 3.6% is that there is not substantial room to expand or grow within our current boundaries.

V. STAFFORD AREA CONCERNS – 45 minutes

- A.** In the past, one of the areas that has been talked about a great deal when considering how the Portland metro area will grow has been the Stafford area — essentially the area within this triangle on the map (**SHOW AREA ON MAP**). What do you know about what's happening in this area currently?
- ▶ **IF NECESSARY:** There has been talk for a number of years about the possibility of this area being brought into the Urban Growth Boundary and developed. How many of you were aware of this?
 - ▶ Up until now, how, if at all, has the City of West Linn been involved in the Stafford discussion?
 - ▶ Do you think West Linn should be involved in the Stafford area discussion?
 - Why?
 - How should it be involved?
- B.** What do you think would be the advantages of development in the Stafford area?
- ▶ What do you think are the disadvantages?

- C. At the 2007 legislative session, a bill was passed that requires communities to take a new approach to planning for future growth. An important part of the new process will be the designation of land as part of Urban or Rural Reserves. The Urban and Rural Reserves will provide for greater predictability for landowners and farmers, and communicates as to where future growth may take place outside the current Urban Growth Boundary. Let me give you a very brief overview of the process:
- ▶ The Reserves Steering Committee, co-led by Metro and Clackamas, Washington, and Multnomah counties, will oversee the study of the potential urban and rural reserves and advise the Metro Council and the county commissions on the formal designation of these areas.
 - ▶ Urban Reserves will be lands that are outside the current Urban Growth Boundary, but may, in the next 40 to 50 years, be brought into the UGB.
 - ▶ Rural Reserves will be lands that are guaranteed that, over the next 40 to 50 years, *not* to be brought into the UGB.

What's your reaction to this concept? Is it a good idea? Why? Why not?

- D. The Stafford area could be put into Urban Reserves or Rural Reserves, or into neither. What designation, if either, do you think is most appropriate? Why?
- E. While the decision has not been made, if the Stafford area is placed into the urban reserves and then ultimately inside the Urban Growth Boundary, what type of development do you believe is appropriate for the Stafford area?

PROBE SPECIFICALLY FOR:

- ▶ Residential density
- ▶ Desire for commercial/retail development
- ▶ Desire for industrial development

- F.** If the Stafford area is brought inside the UGB, what jurisdiction or jurisdictions do you think should be responsible for planning and regulating development in the area?

PROBE FOR:

- ▶ West Linn
- ▶ Lake Oswego
- ▶ Wilsonville
- ▶ Clackamas County
- ▶ Other jurisdiction

- G.** If the Stafford area is brought inside the UGB, what types of infrastructure do you think will need to be added to the area in order to appropriately handle the increased residential, industrial, and business population?

PROBE FOR:

- ▶ Water
- ▶ Sewer
- ▶ Stormwater
- ▶ Roads
- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Parks
- ▶ Pedestrian & bike paths
- ▶ Sidewalks

H. What jurisdiction or jurisdictions do you think should be responsible for providing these (**REFER TO LIST CREATED**) urban-level services if the Stafford area comes inside the UGB?

▶ **IF NECESSARY:** What do you think the role of West Linn should be?

PROBE FOR:

▶ West Linn

▶ Lake Oswego

▶ Wilsonville

▶ Clackamas County

▶ Other jurisdiction

I. What do you think would be the benefit to West Linn for being one of the jurisdictions involved in providing services to at least part of an urbanized Stafford area?

▶ What would the disadvantages to West Linn providing services to at least part of an urbanized Stafford area?

▶ Should the City of West Linn be prepared to annex a portion of the Stafford area if it is brought inside the UGB? Why? Why not?

VIII. CLOSE — 5 minutes

A. Now I have just one last question. What is the *one most important thing* that the West Linn City Council needs to keep in mind when making decisions about how to manage the growth in West Linn and surrounding areas?

B. Thank you all for coming. Before you go I want to mention just a few things:

- ▶ Importance of participation
- ▶ Contribution
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Gift
- ▶ If asked, video tapes are public information and will be given to the City. If a public information request is made for the tapes, they will be provided

After participants are gone:

- ▶ Staple materials and name tag together

Total time: 90 minutes