

Police Station Study

Research performed by **Research 13**



Research Objectives

This study was designed to help the City of West Linn plan for the future and learn more about citizen's attitudes about a potential police station.

- **Determine** perceptions and attitudes about the City of West Linn.
- **Gather** information about how voters feel about the current police station.
- **Uncover** the attitudes of voters about a potential police station.
- **Examine** how voters feel about the possibility of a tax increase.
- **Explore** what concerns voters have about the potential of a new police station.

Methodology

- Research 13 was hired as a third party to invite residents to participate in a confidential telephone survey.
- Sampling methods included residents on the “do not call” registry, unlisted households and cell phone only households.
- Two hundred and fifty interviews (250) were completed which included residents from all neighborhood associations.

Screening

All respondents were specifically screened to:

- Live in the zip code of 97068, within West Linn city limits.
- Not work in a paid city position or work for a market research firm.
- Roughly 50% Female /50% Male.
- At least 18 Years of age.
- Voted in at least one of the last five primary and general elections.

Demographics of residents surveyed:

- 19% Have children under the age of 18 that live in the home (only 2% have 3 or more children under 18 at home)
- 89% own their home
- Average age is 60-65
- The average participant has lived in West Linn for 15-19 years.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

60% of respondents initially thought the current police station was in fair or poor shape

- 24% did not know the condition of the current station.

The two biggest initial concerns voters had when presented with the possibility of a new station, were location and cost.

- The next three most stated concerns were size, safety, and having “modern” facilities.
- Even among those who specified concerns other than costs, moderation was stressed as a concern (i.e. “but not *too* big,” “but not *too* fancy”). This was especially true of those who agreed a new station was needed.

55% of voters would vote for a new station if it had desired features.

- Of the 23% who said they would not vote for it, more than half (58%) said money/cost was the reason.

Executive Summary

While 55% of voters thought they would vote for it at 60\$/year, 5% more thought they would vote for it at 50\$/year.

- There was only a 1% additional increase at 40\$/year
- A cheaper price was more likely to sway those who were unsure if they would vote for it, than to change the minds of those who would initially not vote for it.

1 in 6 voters (17%) felt the statement E, “A new police station will be safer, and more efficient for citizens and police officers” was most compelling of the given arguments.

- Many mentioned this was because they liked that it would be beneficial for everyone, not just officers.
- The next two highest rated statements were focused on safety.

The least compelling argument was, not surprisingly, that a new building will raise taxes, chosen by 19% of voters.

- Reasons for the other top non-compelling arguments included that voters felt they were exaggerations, or not completely true.

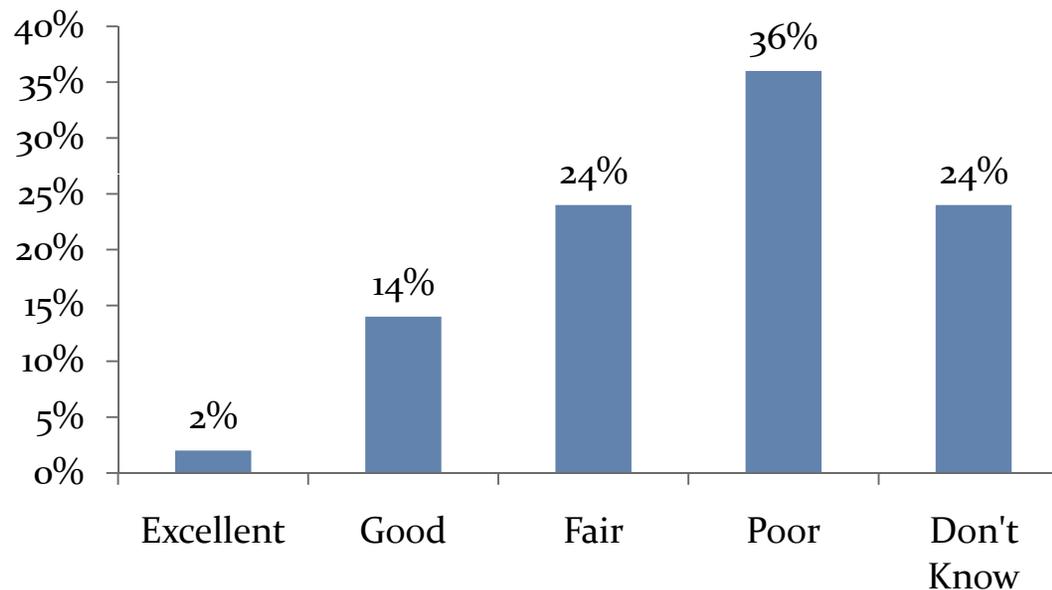
Conclusions

- Most residents recognize the need for a new station. Cost is the primary barrier for those who see the need and do not agree with a new station.
- While 55% of voters said they would vote for it, what doesn't come across is that many of those 23% that are against a new station are pretty solidly against it, making the undecided critically important. More than 1 in 5 voters are undecided.
- While a change in cost from \$60 to \$50 will sway a few voters, it is not enough for most of those solidly against the station. Decreasing the cost to \$40 will likely have little additional impact.
- Location will also be an issue that will likely be sensitive enough to sway votes, especially among undecided voters.
- Even among those that said they would vote for the station if it had the "features most desired by the community" there was a large deal of concern that the project would include to unnecessary additional features or would be too big. To not discourage potential supporters, the size (and cost) of the project should be kept in carefully check.

Police Station Awareness

Current Station Conditions

Q. How would you rate the condition of the current West Linn police station?



More than half of voters (60%) think the police station is in bad shape.

1 in 4 voters (24%) do not know about the condition of the police station.

Initial New Station Concerns

When voters were asked to give their initial opinions of the possibility of a new station, concerns centered on several topics. The most frequently stated were:

1. **Location** - mentioned by a third of respondents who were concerned it should/shouldn't move.
2. **Cost** - mentioned by nearly a third. Concerns included that the building would be "to fancy", taxes are already high, or that cost effective alternatives to building a new one should be considered.
3. **Safety** - one in six respondents were most concerned the building was unsafe (or that additions to the current one would not be safe).
4. **Size** - concerned it needs to be big enough or should not be too big
5. **Modern Facilities**- concerned that the current building is too old and impedes officers doing good work.

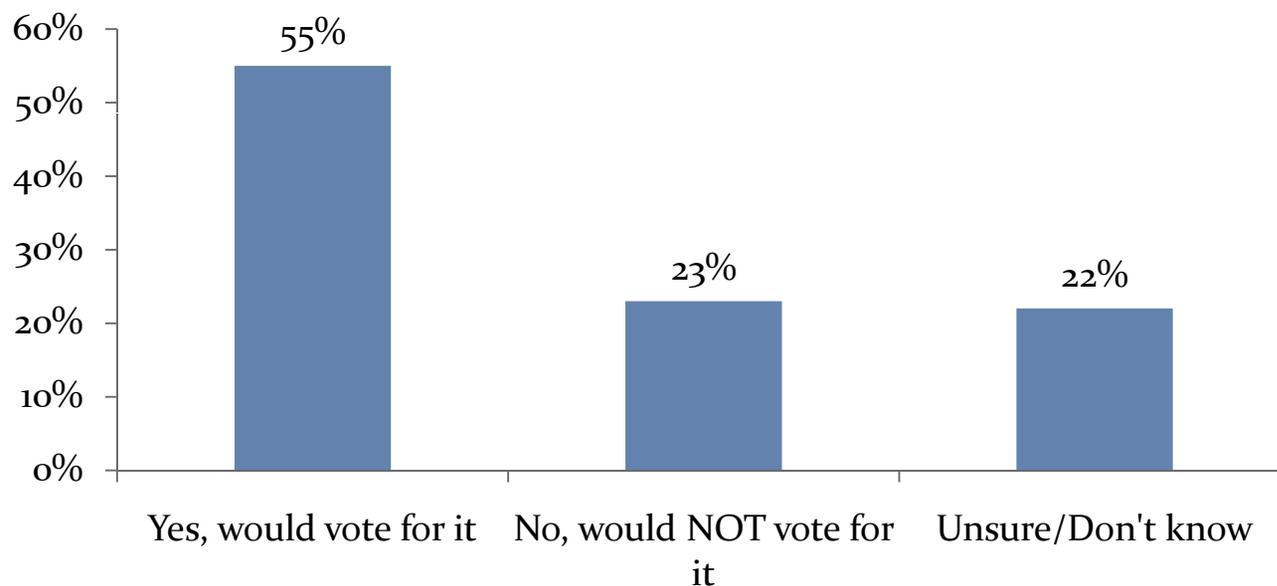
Initial New Station Concerns

1. **Location** - *“Location, location, location. Something that's a little more central to all of West Linn and not just part of it. I live in the lower part.”*
2. **Cost** - *“How much is it going to cost me? That's my first reaction, how much more are my taxes going to go up to have to pay for it? So often they spend way too much money for things like this and go overboard. I agree they need a new one and want them to be economical about it.”*
3. **Safety** - *“Safe, earthquake safe.” “Don't build a real elaborate one, just something that works and is safe.”*
4. **Size** - *“An adequate size but not a bloated size for 70 officers like last time... I don't want a Taj Mahal.”*
5. **Modern Facilities**- *“...I just really hope that when they bring a person in that they don't have to handcuff them to a bench next to the back door...I just want it to work, keep the good guys and bad guys separate.”*

Voter Response

Initial Response

Q. Assuming a police station had the features most desired by the community, how likely would you be to vote for a bond measure to finance a police station?



More than half of voters (55%) state that they would vote to finance a new station if it had the desired features. Nearly a quarter of voters (22%) don't know whether they would vote for it or not.

Initial Response - Would not vote for it

Of the 23% of those who stated they would not vote for it, half of them (58%) said the reason was money/cost related. 26% stated that they felt it was not necessary.

Cost:

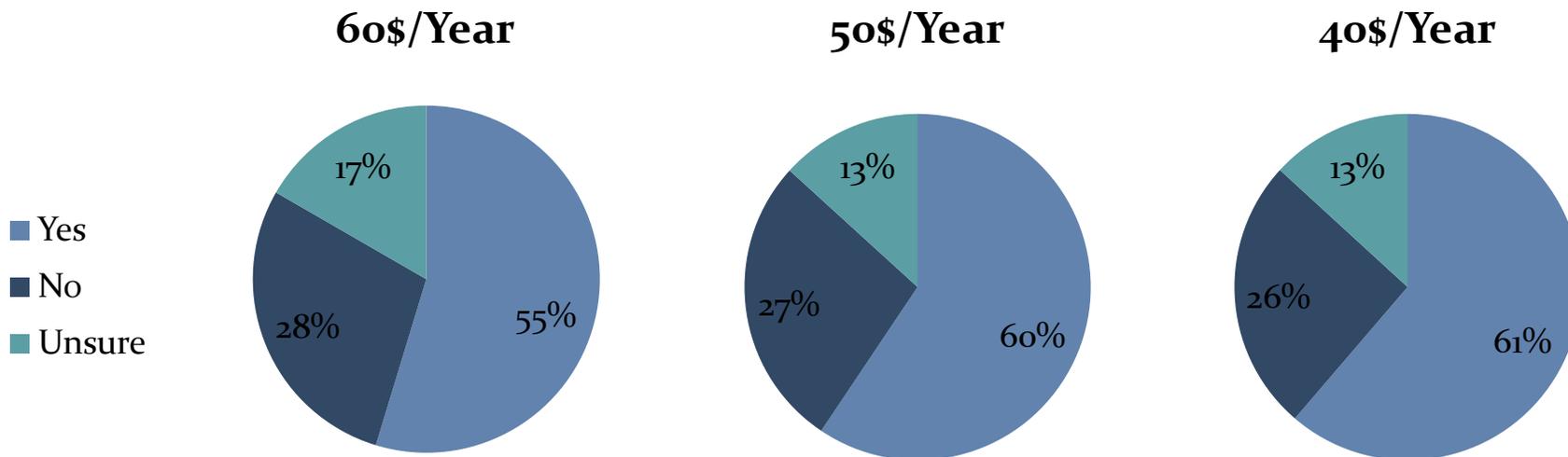
- *“Don't want to vote for something that will cost individuals.”*
- *“Because I'm pretty maxed out as far as taxes and increasing property taxes...I can't afford to build fancy new police stations with community centers and such. I'd like to see them remodel.”*
- *“I voted against it last time. Unless it was most more reasonably priced, I would probably vote against it again.”*

Not Necessary:

- *“Dont see the need. Building is adequate for a short amount of time spent in the office ”*
- *“I feel that the police are over-stocked...I think there are too many sworn officers for the population and for the crime level... in West Linn.”*

Response to Possible Tax Increase

Q. If the bond measure would increase your taxes by _____, how likely would you be to vote for a bond measure to finance a Police and Public Safety Building?



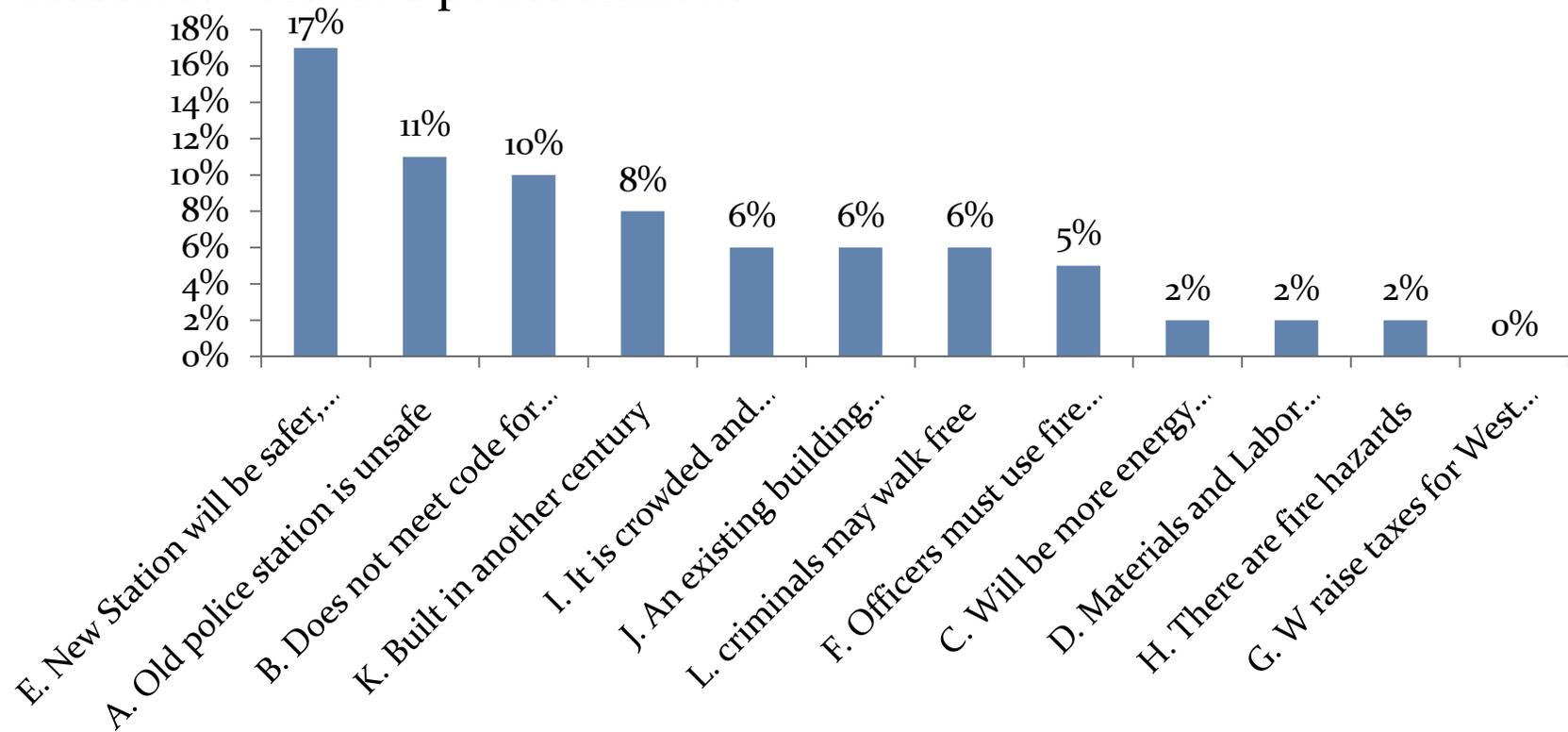
6% more voters think they would vote for the bond at 40\$/year than 60\$/year. 4% who switched were those who were originally unsure, while only 2% were those who originally said no. Only 1% of votes changed between 50\$ and 40\$, suggesting that price sensitivity between \$50 and \$40 is low.

Possible Tax Increase Arguments

Yes to 60\$/year	No to \$60, Yes to 50\$ or \$40	No, not even at 40\$/year
<p>\$60/year is nothing really for making our community nicer. Worth it.</p>	<p>Between \$40 and \$50 a year I could see. My current economic status makes it difficult. This isn't much but I'm cheap.</p>	<p>Because I think they should pay for it out of the general fund. It's not like it's any surprise that they need a new station.</p>
<p>We are fortunate to live in a city with adequate policing.</p>	<p>If that's what it takes to get caught up on technology.</p>	<p>We're on a fixed income.</p>
<p>Because we need a new station.</p>	<p>We are all getting stretched a hundred different ways.</p>	<p>We are already voting for other bonds.</p>
<p>It's good value. Only \$5/month.</p>	<p>The police station does not really need change.</p>	<p>We have high taxes already.</p>
<p>That's not that much money. It increases the worth -- the ability to get quality policemen and the functionality in the city.</p>	<p>I'm a retired fire service administrator, so I know how these increase... I'm concerned about year-over-year increases.</p>	<p>Over funded...why cant they work within the means that they have. Maybe the police could reduce their purse compensation? it is out of line with typical 40k .</p>

Most Compelling Arguments

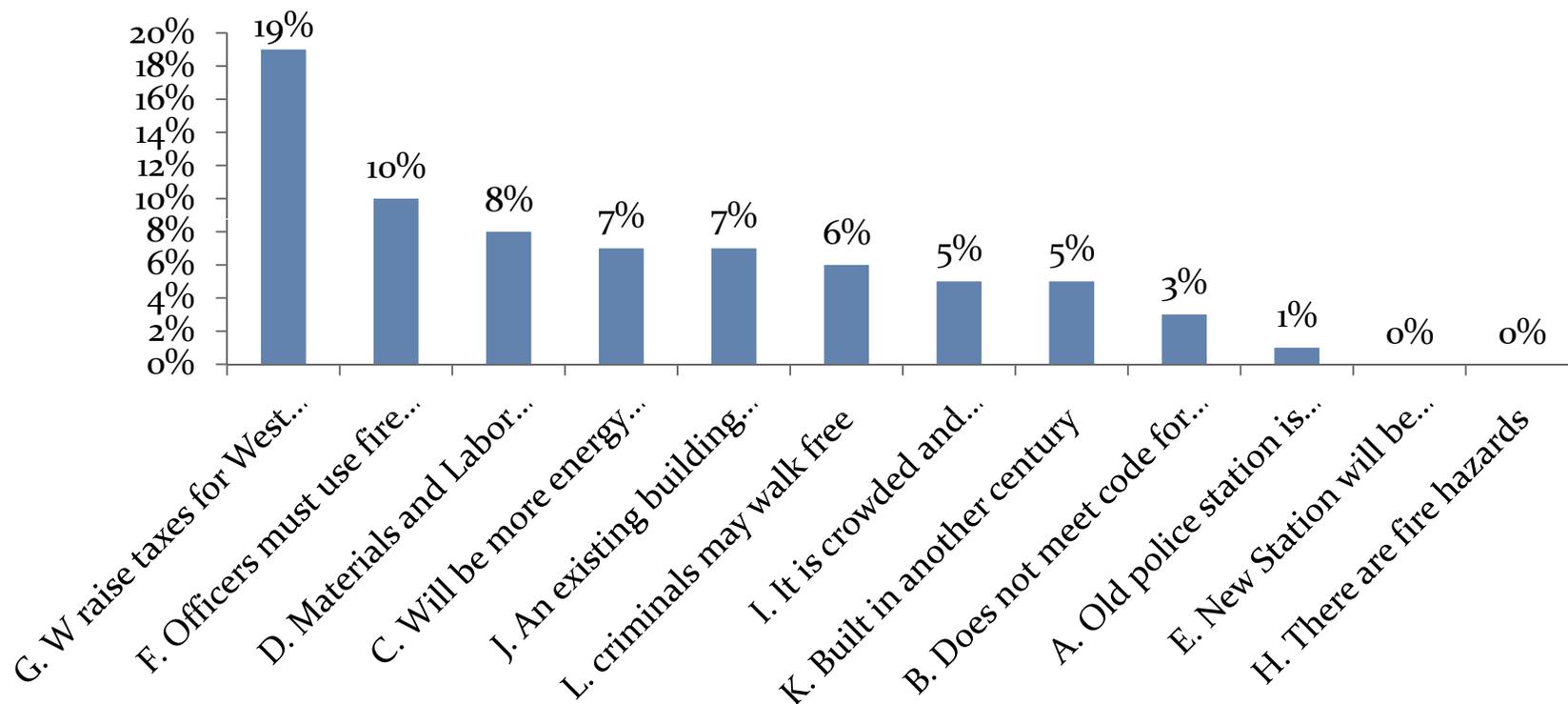
Q. Which one of these arguments do you find the most compelling reason to vote for a police station?



Some of the people who chose “E” stated that they did so because it mentioned being safer for the whole community, not just officers. They liked knowing how it would benefit everyone.

Least Compelling Arguments

Q. Which of these arguments do you find least compelling?



Raising taxes was obviously the least compelling (19%). It may be important to note that the four statements that specifically mentioned safety (B,A,E,H) were the least likely to be chosen as not compelling.

Least Compelling Arguments (Continued)

A dislike of taxes aside, residents felt least compelled by statements they felt were exaggerations or not completely true, specifically mentioning the following:

- **D- “Waiting a few years to build a new police station will cost the city much more because labor and materials costs will increase over time”**
 - *“If we build it now then we'll save money...because nobody knows what the future will hold.”*
- **L- “The old police station may mean local criminals may walk free because of inadequate evidence processing areas”**
 - *“I find that a stretch as to whether they would walk free or not.”*
 - *“Seems ridiculous. I'll campaign against them if they use that argument.”*
- **Voters also seemed wary of any insinuation that just because something is old it needs to be replaced.**
 - *“There are lots of old building around that seem to be made safe. The current system is inefficient, not heated, not cooled, antiquated, and a safety hazard. That's more of an issue.”*