



2007 Listening Tour Community Comments

Comments on PRIORITIZING

- Balance sources of funding between different categories of spending and different departments
- Must manage funds in a balanced format – and a reduction of personnel (rather than a smaller increase in salary and benefits) is not always the answer
- The services that are required should be first, others when the money is available
- Make cuts “big and bloody” rather than incrementally – that might get support for an income tax
- Plan ahead for no timber resources
- Restore programs that have been cut since 1990
- Priorities, priorities, priorities
- Public opinion
- Do not cut departments that provide revenue
- Balancing proactive vs. reactive approaches to being a county (so to speak)
- A holistic approach that combines all of these with a clear good in mind
- Public safety is not the only service we need and not necessarily the most important
- Concerned that we will be forced to focus only on the apparent essentials (public safety and roads) to the detriment of positives like county fair, extension services, lane historical museum, county parks, and any other community events that the county sponsors
- Before cutting positive programs (fair, extension, parks, etc.) ask residents to step up and volunteer
- Without appropriate revenue, it is impossible to do much and keep reducing services to only those mandated
- Identify revenue resources and allocate accordingly. If we don't have it we can't spend it
- Sustainability, focus on “7th generation”, plan for long term (*and several similar comments*)
- Prepare a budget that puts basic public safety above all else
- Prioritize the necessities, then determine the “nice to haves”

- Kitzhaber's priority – funds available
- Ignore marijuana use and possession
- Family and safety for children first
- Common sense
- Openness –admit to agenda bias
- Leverage money from other sources
- Charter requirements
- Don't sell public lands
- Highest to lowest needs partnered with available funds
- Budget constraints have to be No. 1 right now
- Fun - don't forget happiness
- Biggest challenge is dealing with homeland security
- Jail
- Sheriff and police protection
- Biggest challenge we're facing is no sheriff response
- My neighborhood had almost no crime. In the past six months there were 11 break-ins, 1 stand-off and 1 suicide
- Biggest challenge we're facing is substance abuse treatment programs and public safety services to cut down on meth crime
- I would like to see your guys patrolling more
- Need more officers
- Fund public safety fully and cut the rest deeply
- Appropriate prioritization would have to place security (safety) first
- Get cops off the desks and back on patrol. When possible use new sworn officers for internal work
- Do not prioritize jails on public safety
- Violent criminals with jail – have others in ankle bracelet programs
- Move the veterans up the funding list. (*This comment was echoed multiple times, see additional comments under veterans*)
- Substance abuse prevention and control
- Education/youth services
- Youth prevention and health services
- Education reduces need for jail
- Priorities for County should be a long-term focus
- Prevention (*and several similar responses*)
- Prevention and wellness
- Prevention rather than band-aids
- All are important (*multiple similar comments*)
- Long-term quality of life which people come to area to enjoy

Comments on EFFICIENCY

- What is the County doing to match funds or help “partner” with other nonprofit organizations to help people in need (i.e. faith-based organizations)?
- Outsource priorities
- Close down the Forrest Work Camp – sell the property off, move the inmates back into town thus cutting the fuel, per diem, and drive time
- Inventory County services available and reduce/eliminate those duplicated with County dollars
- Can we use the private sector for some services?
- Collaboration, integrated services between state/county/local to reduce administrative redundancy
- Look at non-performing assets
- Increase efficiency – eliminate duplication of services within agencies
- Cost benefit analysis
- Those that provide a service at a reasonable cost
- More bang for your buck from federal government
- Reorganize internal structure to eliminate duplicate costs, condense departments together as possible
- Eliminate duplication
- Find a way to use facilities we have efficiently (juvenile facilities, jail space, forest work camp, etc.)
- Reduce or eliminate services which are provided by city governments or non-profit organizations (except policing services)
- Efficiency in all departments including the sheriff’s – quality control, streamlining work

Comments on CUTTING EXPENSES

- There are a lot of top heavy departments within the county services than can be cut.
- Biggest challenge facing Lane County is elected officials being unwilling to look at cutting the reserves
- Biggest challenge facing Lane County is the budget cuts Lane has to enact
- Stop funding the reserves
- Make the cuts “big and bloody” rather than incrementally – that might get support for an income tax
- Too many managers? Too many conferences, too many trips to D.C. (i.e. Look at where money is going now and cut extras now – don’t wait until October)
- Reduce administrative costs
- Cut the fat at the top
- Quit buying extravagant supplies

Comments on TIMBER REVENUE AND FEDERAL FUNDING

- Biggest surprise of the evening was learning about the timber revenues and Measure 5

- Would loss of SRS be offset if logging increased?
- Is there any legislative effort to address loss of timber revenue?
- The County must negotiate a contract with the Federal government for services provided or to be provided by the county for federal forest lands (roads, public safety, fire protection, etc.)
- USFS Revenues must increase (Healthy Forest Act, Northwest Forest Plan, etc.) or counties that have significant forest properties must either be given governance over those lands or be fully paid by the U.S. government for the lands
- We need to wean our County government from Federal Welfare. Make no mistake, we are on welfare just like so many unfortunate (some not so unfortunate) families in the area. I can not take pride in the knowledge that if it were not for outside money Lane County would be bankrupt
- Why are O&C lands/ Secure Rural Schools monies still tied to timber harvest? It is because federal lands are untaxed. It should be tied to whatever value that land is generating (tourism, wildlife, recreation...)
- Money from timber
- Log second growth only and wise thinning
- Reinstate timber harvest – trees are a renewable resource
- Work with other counties affected by the O&C and lack of timber harvest to lobby government for access
- More bang for your buck from federal government
- Challenge the federal government to change direction and priorities

Comments on PROPERTY TAXES

- Why is property tax base not enough? Less property owned? Property value decreased? Population increase? Is a different tax base possible?
- What is the taxable/assessed valuation of unincorporated Lane County today vs. five years ago?
- Give resources to property tax appraiser – hire people to bring property appraisals in line with real value. There is huge revenue in under-appraised property
- Property taxes are a valid revenue source but not being levied/collected due to Prop. 5 and inefficiencies with assessor
- Accurate property taxes especially as it relates to farm/forest deferrals and Measure 37 values
- Catch up on assessments so we can collect all the taxes due
- Amend or abolish measures 5, 47 and 50 – the hamstringing measures

Comments on NEW TAXES AND REVENUES

- Can any State taxes help?
- No income tax – DOA
- Consider taxing discretionary spending not earnings or savings

- Revisit taxing ideas – many were not considered because they didn't generate enough, should be brought forward –real estate transfer, auto/boat transfer, sales tax on luxury items, public approval through more public involvement
- Biggest challenge facing Lane County is the taxes are too high
- Fair and graduated tax proposal that gives ample breaks to the poor and taxes businesses appropriately
- Hydropower as a revenue source on our dams?
- Grant opportunities?
- Taxes are a last alternative!
- Equity in taxation! Corporations pay their fair share – no huge tax breaks
- Develop a funding proposal to support “feel good” preventive programs – Veterans Services, Extension, WIC, Pathways, etc.
- Exhibit Hall/Convention Center = Revenue
- No sales tax unless it is statewide
- We need a countywide gas tax. It is the fairest form of revenue for the repair and maintenance of roads
- I believe people might go for a prepared food and beverage tax (like Ashland) if it were left ONLY on prepared food and beverage
- A tax that would affect everyone is better than one that eliminates the federal retirees or the PERS people. I would support a FAIR tax
- Income tax: I would vote to support this if there were no excluded groups PERS, fixed incomes, if all pays, I support it
- Regressive tax opposed to progress tax
- Biggest challenge facing Lane County is high taxes and little representation
- Biggest challenge facing Lane County is taxes
- Increase revenue – gas tax?
- Timber Money owed?
- Carbon tax on polluters
- Don't think increasing revenues is politically feasible right now
- The county should become actively involved with the BLM Western Oregon Forest Plan. The BLM will likely increase the timber harvest levels and the County should be supportive of that effort particularly since funding for Secure Rural Schools will disappear
- Will take assertiveness to keep federal funds and creativity locally
- After public has experienced loss of services and public support for some kind of tax has built propose a tax initiative – perhaps a restaurant tax designed to avoid impact on low-income people
- Gas and restaurant taxes
- Recreation tax
- Concentrate on sources of revenue from outside the county
- Implement a sales tax
- Find new revenue sources

- Timber money
- Tax corporations at an increased (fair) level
- Get off the backs of the corporate businesses
- Tax corporations more progressively – let them pay their fair share
- Reduce funding industries such as Hynix giving tax breaks
- Levy and collect taxes fairly and efficiently –whatever the tax, everyone pays their share
- Corporate tax increase

Comments on FEES, FINES & COMPLIANCE

- Could you recoup enforcement services costs by levying and collecting more/higher fines for violations?
- Compliance for permits
- If you assess fines – collect them. Don't forgive them. Collect them. If taxes are unpaid and the policy is to foreclose – follow the policy
- Have a traffic school for moving violation – paid for by the violator
- Pursue revenue sources that are currently under-collected or under-valued such as farm/forest deferral reform
- Fee-based services seem good on the face of it but my experience with the planning department makes me believe that they pride themselves on being fee-supported but they don't deliver in a timely manner and some folks have very strange logic which makes unhappy clients and lines the pockets of attorneys who represent them
- Raise fines for violators so there's a disincentive to impose costs on community and to cover enforcement costs
- Impose taxes on various development charges

Comments on ACCOUNTABILITY

- Are departments required to turn in a yearly strategy? How are those strategies measured?
- Transparency in decision making
- Transparency, transparency, transparency
- Cost effective and outcome measures for all programs and departments
- Just be smart and accountable for all actions taken
- Stay transparent with decisions
- Accountability of those who receive services or violate laws
- Let us know what all those 1,500 employees do, focus on the services you provide
- Accurate public feedback about most important services
- Accountability report would cost more than value – same with performance audits so let the managers of the various departments handle this
- No one hears accountability results
- Audits

- Oversight to see that departments are being run as we are told they're being run
- Accountability reports more often
- Full disclosure of all budget expenditures
- Performance audits available in lobbies and on Internet so it is easily available

Comments on COMMUNICATION

- Public opinion
- Getting accurate information on the above
- Government is representative of citizens not the enemy
- Define it then flaunt it – example, change the name to rain county
- Show and tell
- A weekly/monthly column in the RG, Weekly, on KUGN, KLCC and others
- Communication
- Quarterly town hall meetings
- More interactive opportunities rather than comment opportunities
- As long as they are sincere in seeking new levels of public participation
- Regular monthly or weekly articles in newspaper under a certain logo or border so it can be noticed
- Blog conversations on specific issues
- Public comments are limited to daytime hours making it difficult/impossible for the working person to be able to participate
- Education about how system works, 411
- All except personnel info available online, County web site is a can of worms – make it user friendly
- Newspapers/P.R.
- Public forums – Online info, legislation issues, newsletter, blog
- Make report easily available to public

LISTENING TOUR

- These groups are great – can you set aside meeting individually with people or email?
- Ensure officials introduce themselves when speaking
- It appeared many people felt their time here was well spent. Be sure to follow up in a way that engages the recipients - don't just send a report
- Questions too broad: Focus more on priorities, acceptable funding options, ways to communicate, facilitator talk less
- Evening was very informative. Excellent format
- I came to learn more about the concerns of my community. It was interesting if not always enlightening
- Thank you for the hours you are giving to these meetings – and the travel time
- Don't have the public official at each table make the summary. In most cases they did not present the innovative ideas primarily only their own priorities and agenda. That undermined the process!

- Didn't know I could go to meetings in other districts
- Hope this is the beginning and there will be more of this type of meeting
- This meeting seemed to have a lot of people who derive their income from some form of government
- Have listening tour in Florence several times per year
- Come back to Florence, please!
- Great venue – next time make it clear what the format will be so citizens can prepare
- Publicize “notes” from each of today’s tables
- This was a great venue – keep it up
- This event was good
- Thank you for coming to Florence
- An excellent start has been made with Mr. Fleenor’s coffee and conversations and the roundtable discussions with varied county officials participating

Comments on COMMISSIONERS AND PERSONNEL

- 3 commissioners
- Commissioners access to people
- Reduce the number of commissioners
- Decrease personnel benefits
- Sustain public sector salaries and benefits and require private sector to pay living wages
- Cross-train employees so that interaction will result in better decision making within and without departments
- Require minimum health standards such as no smoking and some sort of attempt to control obesity thus reducing escalating health care costs
- Too many managers? Too many conferences, too many trips to D.C. (i.e. Look at where money is going now and cut extras now – don’t wait until October)
- Involve County employee’s input – it seems that management makes all the decisions which doesn’t always make sense to staff – cutting positions after assuming per capita amount would be up through state legislature. It was up but not to the degree to which was included in the budget. This was in addition to the across-the-board 3 percent cuts
- Increase man hours per labor unit per each county employee
- PERS is out of hand. Too many people in the cart not enough pulling the cart
- Re-evaluate staffing
- Cut wages starting at top
- Provide a living wage employee

Comments on CITIZENS’ EXPERIENCE, ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Can the commissioners get groups like Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Elks, etc., to get involved in solutions to our problems?

- Get every organization to set up groups for ideas – Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Elks, Lions, etc.
- I may move away due to lack of services and a stubborn uneducated community. I don't want to raise a family in an area where general citizens don't help to support lower and needy citizens
- Before cutting positive programs (fair, extension, parks, etc.) ask residents to step up and volunteer
- Encourage communication and participation of the public
- Education of youth about government issues so that we can become active voting adults without apathy
- Lack of participation by the public – apathy – populous unwilling to be taxed for the common good
- Education of the community – no understanding, County issues unproved
- Reestablishing the desire to be part of the community – there is the perception that people are not welcome to participate and that our government is inaccessible – it is a perception not necessarily a fact
- Many getting benefits without a sense of paying
- Establish stronger support groups for the niche areas – more volunteers, foundations, etc., for non-public safety, non-health services
- Most voters are uninformed about costs of services and many are anti-tax/anti-government
- Youth government education and involvement
- Get community members involved
- Government is representative of citizens not the enemy
- Less community input, more common sense

Comments on PUBLIC SAFETY

- Jail costs – supposedly four counties do this at less expense than Lane (according to newspaper). What are we doing wrong?
- Biggest challenge is dealing with homeland security
- Road rage Barger area
- Public safety is not the only service we need and not necessarily the most important
- Close down the Forrest Work Camp – sell the property off, move the inmates back into town thus cutting the fuel, per diem, and drive time
- Appropriate prioritization would have to place security (safety) first
- How will LC be addressing the construction and opening of two new State Facilities – Mental Health Institution and a Prison? Identify policing services which may be required by the Sheriff's department
- Repeat offender task force
- Isn't Weighmaster function an ODOT responsibility? If not, is it self-sustaining through overload fines?

- I observed not one but two new large full size Dodge vans, identified as Weighmaster. Why do they need new full extra long full size vans? (*Provided examples of other jurisdictions using much older vehicles.*)
- Get cops off the desks and back on patrol. When possible use new sworn officers for internal work
- Biggest challenge is sheriff and police protection
- Biggest challenge is no sheriff response
- Biggest challenge is education/youth services
- My neighborhood had almost no crime – past six months there were 11 break-ins, 1 stand-off and 1 suicide
- Substance abuse treatment programs and public safety services to cut down on meth crime
- I would like to see your guys patrolling more
- More officers
- Youth prevention and health services
- Do not prioritize jails on public safety
- Fund public safety fully and cut the rest deeply
- Raise fines for violators so there's a disincentive to impose costs on community and to cover enforcement costs
- Ignore marijuana use and possession
- Violent criminals with jail – have others in ankle bracelet programs
- Family and safety for children first
- Jail services – leasing of beds to federal how many now? Revenue? Ability to increase beds throughout county?
- Prepare a budget that puts basic public safety above all else

Comments on HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS SERVICES

Biggest challenge facing you (your community) today?

- Bi-polar issues and meds
- Senior services for low-income
- Human services – VA
- Mental health for adults
- Drugs
- Youth prevention and health services
- Access to housing
- Schools and health services
- Meet human needs first
- Low-income housing
- Public education – services for families
- Social services in general
- Substance abuse prevention and control

- Social services
- Housing
- Energy assistance
- Offer drug treatment to all that need it
- Have been on disability and now Medicare won't cover a lot of mental health issues
- Permanently fund Vets (repeated frequently)
- Keep Vet services in Florence (repeated frequently)
- Move the veterans up the funding list
- Why are veteran services not totally funded by the feds?
- Services to veterans
- VA Office

Comments on FAIRGROUNDS

- Exhibit Hall/Convention Center = Revenue
- Protecting fairgrounds as public event center
- Fairgrounds – these are great, terrific asset to this community especially this location
- Move fairgrounds out of town and make that area income producing as in a baseball arena that could be leased to the UO (we love the complex at the west end of Barger)
- Do not move fairgrounds
- Moving the fairgrounds – no
- Leave fairgrounds alone
- Don't move the fairgrounds
- Improve fairground management
- Keep equine venue going people love seeing farm-type animals

Comments on the ECONOMY

- The port money fishing fleet economics
- Help develop sustainable employment that can then afford sustainable, planned County government
- Get aggressive in recruiting business and industry
- Make county more attractive to tourists – find ways to make county more attractive to interstate and international business enterprises
- Attract business, business friendly permitting
- Reduce funding industries such as Hynix giving tax breaks

Biggest challenge facing you (your community) today?

- Better paying jobs
- We are poor
- Poverty
- Local sustainable business development, agriculture, forestry
- Poverty reduction

- Locally-owned small businesses

Comments on GROWTH

- What's the future of the Metro Plan?
- What is happening with the Metro Plan? Did any rules change about getting a tax service district?
- I would like to see the County take a more active role in land use management
- I feel there is a need for a plan for the land surrounding the Eugene-Springfield area to better control development at the interface between urban and rural parts of the county
- Stop promoting growth – if growth is so good why are we worse off as we get bigger?
- Cost of growth vs. benefit to community - Please review the Fodor study
- Help save Florence from becoming an ugly condo town
- Stop special interest continuing growth without proper infrastructure
- Ugly is in an advanced state of metastasis – I mean it is spreading rapidly. A recent entertainer calls us the U.S. of Generica. I recognize this in Florence
- Unplanned excessive development and impact on services and infrastructure
- A city council and planning commission that thinks of our city first and not the developers
- Over growth
- Threat to water quality in Dunes City from careless (development) and over-development
- Uncontrolled growth combined with not enough water to sustain growth. Water lines are too few and in ill repair and can not support new growth
- Overcrowding – too many houses, too much traffic, noise, children without effective parents – clear cuts, paved over farmland
- Relocate McKenzie-Willamette Hospital to a County site, preferably out West 11th by Hundai/Hynex
- Observe the Fodor study (re: growth vs. benefit to community)
- Attract business, business friendly permitting
- Water quality and available quantity

Comments related to OTHER JURISDICTIONS

- All governments need to communicate
- I expect my fire, public safety, education and roads to be provided by Eugene-Springfield for the most part. Why do I need to support what appears to be mostly an unnecessary layer of government at the county level?
- County share of state revenues may have to increase (may have to fight state on that issue)
- Is it time to talk to the state and reorganize the counties into a more equitable size and people distribution using natural (mountains/ranges) separation?

- Raise fees statewide, on vehicle license, gas tax, SDSS
- Can the County do anything about building on the river especially three story condos in view of a predicted tsunami that will happen maybe in the near future?
- City of Florence making decisions that affect everyone but many of us have no voice in those decisions
- A city council and planning commission that thinks of our city first and not the developers
- Corruption in city government
- Amend or abolish measures 5, 47 and 50 – the hamstringing measures
- Concentrate on sources of revenue from outside the county
- Base vehicle registration on value and make it an annual renewal
- Change state laws to reduce benefit package for new PERS employees
- Water quality and available quantity
- Challenge the federal government to change direction and priorities

Biggest challenge facing you (your community) today?

- Education and lowering class sizes
- Education especially to poorer families about lifestyle – budgeting, nutrition, healthier people make better city
- Education/youth services
- Education (quality for all students)
- Lack of education
- Schools and health services
- Education reduces need for jail
- Public education – services for families
- Education

Additional Comments

Transportation

- It appears Lane County is maintaining Eugene/Springfield streets. If so, is County being reimbursed by City and Federal funds?
- Public transportation to the coast LTD two trips a day for starters
- Turn Highway 126 into a toll road
- Biggest challenge facing Lane County is road maintenance
- Biggest challenge facing you is lack of transportation in town (Florence) and to Eugene

Parks

- Protecting open space and parks
- Free the parks

Animal Regulation

- Biggest challenge facing your community? Stray cats

- No kill policy utilizing any/all volunteers
- More money for LCARA

Extension Services

- Continue County support for OSU Extension Service
- Biggest challenge facing your community? Education especially to poorer families about lifestyle – budgeting, nutrition, healthier people make better city
- Too much access to unhealthy food
- Extension service and farmer’s market
- Extension services
- 4-H
- Provide nutrition programs with qualified professionals

Other Comments and Questions

- Is the per capita income (adjusted for inflation) dropping steadily so that we’re all gradually poorer and can’t afford the quality and number of government resources we have had in the past? Example: House prices have gone up 5 or more times in 30 years – wages have not
- State unfunded mandates?
- Let rural residents bear the burden of living in rural areas. Let the roads go. People should live in the city if they want city services instead of moving to rural areas for lower taxes and then demanding expanded services
- If west Lane contributes \$_____, do we get back this amount in services?
- Don’t sell off public land to private persons for timber profits in order to solve the County’s money problems
- I don’t live on the river and have no personal or financial interest in the dock problem. However, I sympathize with those who do
- Conflict of interest: What are state statutes concerning conflict of interest – and management and development – realtors and land owners not removing themselves from committees that make decisions?
- Equitable distribution of taxes to districts (rural areas)
- Do we have any unfunded mandates?
- Iraq
- Lack of impact of Western Lane County citizens – County government is largely irrelevant to us in WLC or overly intrusive
- Possible annexation
- Shortage of federal funding – all our money is going to Iraq
- Libraries
- Arts, access, classes, cultural
- Things for kids to do in Cottage Grove
- Remove silos

- Figure out ways to tap into other resources i.e. UO students – they use the infrastructure but may not contribute
- Look at community needs
- Vote to end Iraq war
- Examine public need – i.e. Jail too crowded, too many people without access to full service for all health needs
- Farm/forest deferral reform measures
- Government serves the people – services to the people create jobs and quality of life
- Access to services seems fine now
- Good quality services
- Examine the feasibility of allowing the western part of Lane County to break away and form a new county
- Run like a business
- Eliminate the deficit
- Minimizing structural deficit
- Creative problem solving vs. “more of the same with more money”
- Make what services available relate well to the community they serve
- You’re doing great now!

