

# 2007 Lane County Listening Tour Summary Report

The Lane County Board of Commissioners is taking a series of strategic steps to prepare for the future; reexamining County goals, priorities and budgeting options. Commissioners have emphasized the importance of community involvement in this process, developing the Listening Tour as a tool to reach out and solicit the thoughts, ideas and concerns of Lane County residents.

Five meetings were held throughout Lane County from July through September in South Eugene, Florence, North Eugene, Cottage Grove and Springfield. Approximately 250 people participated in the tabletop discussions. Another 157 people added their voice by completing surveys at the 2007 Lane County Fair in August.

The Listening Tour brought together community members and elected officials for a dialogue about Lane County Government. The twist? Unlike a Town Hall or Board meeting, the structure of the meeting was driven by community participation and feedback, not Board members. Community members had the floor while Commissioners and other elected officials listened. Local residents were asked:

- What brought you to the meeting?
- From what you've heard, what surprised you? What challenged you?
- What matters to you, what principles, values, or strategies should guide our County officials as they shape the County's budget now and into the future?
- What are your questions? What would you like to know about Lane County Government?

Responses were captured by elected officials serving as tabletop facilitators. Comment cards were provided so that community members could add additional thoughts and feedback; many participants completed a survey. The results do not necessarily reflect a scientific random sample of community sentiments and attitudes. They are meant to reflect what the community has verbalized to the Board.

The outreach effort amassed 335 individual surveys – more than half of which were completed at the Listening Tour community meetings – and more than 450 open-ended comments. What were Board members told? Read on....

## Community Survey

### What is the biggest challenge facing you (your community) today?

39.7%	133	Crime/lack of public safety services
32.8%	110	Access to affordable health care
26.9%	90	Jobs/Economy

### Which County services are most important to you?

57.9%	194	Public safety
38.8%	130	Public health
29.9%	100	Quality roads/transportation

**How should the County “right-size” or align revenues and expenditures?**

33.7% 113 Evaluate reorganization opportunities for increased efficiency  
32.5% 109 Increase revenues  
25.1% 84 Shift more services to a “self-supporting” model (fee/rate driven)

**What factors should be weighed in determining County priorities?**

31.9% 107 Risk to personal/community well-being and safety  
28.1% 94 All choices  
22.7% 76 Community support

**What goals should Lane County focus on to better serve the community? (Circle all that apply)**

36.7% 123 Sustainability of services  
36.1% 121 Accountability  
34.3% 115 Community trust

**How can Lane County be more accountable to its citizens?**

47.2% 158 More community forums/community involvement  
26.3% 88 An annual “Accountability Report”  
20.9% 70 Performance audits

For a percentage breakdown of all survey answers, please click on [2007 Listening Tour Survey Results](#). The survey also provided a demographic snapshot including age, gender, residence, years as County resident and the last election in which they voted. ([Demographic Results from 2007 Listening Tour and Survey](#))

Community members had much more on their minds as evidenced by the more than 450 comments collected during the Listening Tour outreach effort and from Fairgoers.

## **Community Comments**

Ideas and comments varied but primarily related to several topic areas including:

- Priorities and approaches to prioritizing
- Ideas and feelings about new taxes and new revenue sources
- Questions and opinions regarding timber revenue and Secure Rural Schools funding
- Recommendations and thoughts regarding accountability and communication between Lane County and community members
- Specific thoughts on services, notably public safety, prevention and other human services, and veteran's services
- Land management and growth related issues

A fair number commented on employee and commissioner compensation and benefits.

Some topic areas had widespread agreement. Comments regarding accountability, efficiency, and communication with community members were consistent. Other areas varied widely including thoughts related to priorities and new taxes.

Please see [2007 Listening Tour Community Comments](#) for more detailed responses from the community.

