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Focus Groups among Residents, Commuters and Students concerning the Southwest Corridor

A report for

Metro

Prepared by



strategic communications, inc.



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INTRODUCTION

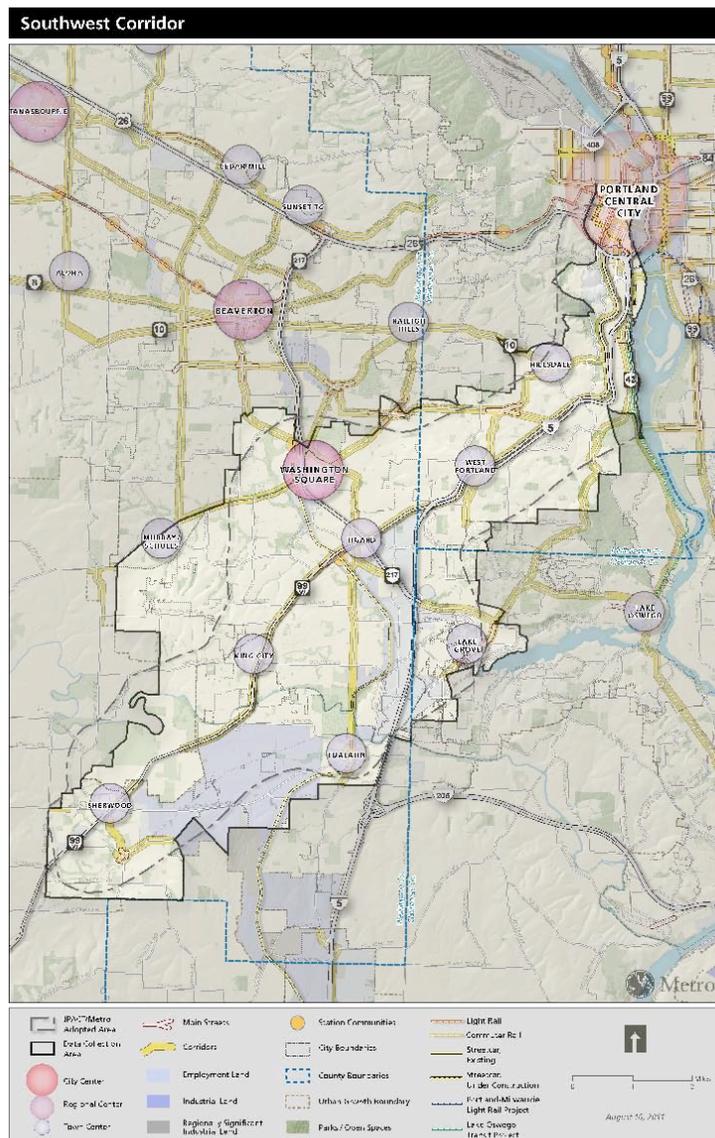
This report highlights the findings of three focus groups conducted for Metro in the Portland, Oregon area. CFM Strategic Communications, Inc., located in Portland, Oregon, conducted the study. The objectives were to assess public opinion about the 99W corridor, identify its attributes and problems, identify specific ways the community thinks the area should be improved and identify how people get information about local issues.

The sessions were held August 4, 9 and 10, 2011, at the Market Decisions Research focus group facility on Barbur Boulevard in Portland, Oregon. The August 4th group consisted of people who lived within a half-mile of 99W, 25 percent of whom were seniors/elderly. The August 9th group consisted of people who commuted along or near 99W. At least 25 percent of the commuters travel at least 15 minutes one-way each day. Both groups were recruited randomly using a list of voters with phone numbers who lived in precincts along and near 99W. The August 10 group consisted of students age 18 to 30 years who attend classes in the 99W area. Facebook and Craigslist ads were used to recruit students. Screening questionnaires and follow-up phone interviews were used to confirm students qualified for the study. Each participant received a \$75 honorarium for attending the session. All sessions were video-recorded.

Participants signed consent forms giving CFM and Metro permission to use the recordings and their images.

Tom Eiland, CFM partner and director of research, moderated each session.

The yellow area in the adjacent map highlights the Southwest Corridor area





SUMMARY

People that live in or near the Southwest Corridor say there are many attributes that contribute to the livability of the area – affordable homes and apartments, easy access to freeways, a variety of convenient shopping options, convenience to work, friendly neighbors, quiet streets, trees, parks, bikeways, walking paths and proximity to family and friends. Students agree these are the types of features they will be looking for as they enter the workforce and settle down.

But people are frustrated with transportation in the Corridor. Residents and commuters say 99W, alternative routes and primary and secondary streets are congested to the point of gridlock during rush hours, weekday lunch time and weekends. The perceived cause of the congestion is too many cars from local traffic and those commuting through the corridor. Simply put, 99W and the network of other roads were not designed to handle the amount of traffic using them. Other factors residents and commuters say contribute to traffic congestion are:

- Stoplights are poorly timed and impede the flow of traffic;
- Intersections are poorly designed;
- There are too many access points to 99W from primary and secondary streets and from businesses and parking lots;
- Left-turns are difficult to make and dangerous;
- Tri-Met buses block traffic when they stop to discharge and pick-up passengers on 99W;
- Few alternative routes are available for residents and commuters; and



- I-5 and Tualatin-Sherwood Highway are overcrowded and congested.

Additionally, people complain that alternative transportation in the area is not adequate:

- There are too few commuter bikeways and those available are poorly designed and dangerous;
- Walkways and sidewalks are poorly designed, if available. Crosswalks East and West across 99W, if available, are dangerous.
- Neither bikeways nor walkways provide uninterrupted paths through or across the Corridor.
- Park and Ride facilities do not provide adequate parking for the demand.

People suggested a variety of potential solutions to address traffic issues in the Corridor, ranging from building a Sherwood to Portland light rail line to constructing an elevated express highway from 217 to Sherwood. Regardless of the recommendation, the goals were to allow people to move through the area faster, improve commuting north and south along 99W, make walking and biking safer and provide alternative routes for local residents to work, shopping and entertainment.

Other recommendations to improve livability in the Corridor include:

- Upgrade and change businesses. People want better restaurants, more family-owned businesses and more modern buildings.
- Connect the network of bike lanes and walking paths from Beaverton to Tigard and Sherwood to Portland.
- Improve safety in parks and walkways.

Interstate Avenue is cited as an example of the type of changes people in the 99W Corridor would like.



People associate a variety of words, phrases and images with the terms *public services, infrastructure, affordable housing* and *public involvement*. Agencies should be as specific as possible when talking about projects related to these terms to ensure people know exactly what is being discussed.

Explaining change that can directly impact homeowners and businesses is a difficult topic. People suggest that communication to the community should focus on the long-term benefits, such as improved traffic, safer neighborhoods, and more amenities. People say generous compensation rather than words is the best action to take to ease the transition for those homeowners and businesses displaced by change.

People get information about local issues from a variety of sources. The most effective communication plans should include both traditional and Internet-based communication tools. Grassroots tactics will support word-of-mouth communication. Integrating multiple communication tools will enable public agencies to get the most bang for the buck for their communication efforts.



ATTRIBUTES AND ISSUES

99W Corridor: It is Home

People that live in or near the Highway 99W corridor say the area provides a nice balance between what people want and need: affordable homes and apartments, easy access to freeways, a variety of convenient shopping options, convenience to work, friendly neighbors, quiet streets, trees, parks, bikeways, walking paths and proximity to family and friends. Several people admit the corridor was not their first choice as an area to live. However, all things considered, the area has a balance between the amenities, services and family-friendly environment they want.

What people like about the Corridor varies by section of the highway:

- **The North** (Capitol Highway to the Barbur Boulevard/I-405): The close proximity to downtown and Eastside Portland, access to I-5, good public transportation and relatively safe bike lanes.
- **The Middle** (Capitol Highway to Bull Mountain): Freeway access to I-5, I-205 and 217, proximity to work, public transportation (including WES), parks and access to shopping areas.
- **The South** (Bull Mountain to Sherwood): family-friendly neighborhoods, the rural nature of the area and proximity to shopping and work.

Comments people had about the 99W area included:

Residents

*We went with Tigard because it's what we could afford and it kind of matched what we wanted. My wife's parents live in Tigard as well, so that was a factor, too. It's kind of a price thing as well as family. **Resident***



*I live with my mom because I'm going to school full-time. It just makes things easier that way. **Resident***

*I chose it because it has a view and it's a quiet area. Plus it's close to my husband's work. **Resident***

*We're in a little cul-de-sac in a small little place. We chose this particular area because it's within two miles of three freeways, so there's easy access. It's fairly convenient to all shopping and everything like that. There are lot of trees and a creek. We have total quiet back there. We have total shopping within walking distance. I love it! We can walk to the movies, the restaurants, shopping. We can just go people-watch, do the concerts. We're getting close to retirement, so we're considering other alternatives for transportation at some point in time. We have the perfect house, so we never want to sell it. We're just going to live and die there. **Resident***

*The place we found in Tigard was beautiful. We live in a cul-de-sac. It's still close to our family, jobs. Also it's still the suburbs. That's where we want to live. **Resident***

*I moved there because I like the trees and the trails that kind of network through that area. It's fairly quiet. It's close to a bunch of freeways so my wife and I can go to work just about anywhere. **Resident***

*I picked it because I could afford it and it had a large lot. It's a small house on a quiet street. It was close to the freeway and also downtown. **Resident***

*I think we really lucked out with the neighborhood. It's just really awesome. I left my van unlocked I don't know how many times and never had trouble with that. **Resident***

*We go up and down 99 frequently going to movies and shopping and what-not. **Resident***

*I like the shopping that's right there because there's the Tigard Center that has Albertson, Marshalls. We're right by King City, so there's a lot of stuff right there. **Resident***

Commuters

I moved to be closer to my daughter but I couldn't afford Lake Oswego.

*When my wife and I got married we bought a house generally in the area that our family lived in. We just like the area. **Commuter***

*Primarily, it was about halfway between my wife's work in Lake Oswego and my work in Murray Hill. It's low crime. There's pretty good vehicle access to get around the city and the region. The nice thing is we don't need to get on any freeways from where we live to drive to work. **Commuter***



*We were looking for schools and close to where my husband was going to work and a house we liked. **Commuter***

*Well my husband rides WES down to Wilsonville, which has been very nice. He loves it. He rides his bike down to the train station and takes his bike on and rides to work in Wilsonville. I think he likes it because he can sleep. He doesn't have to deal with traffic. He just gets on and goes **Commuter***

*I have family here. It's close to where I work .The sun and the trees and everything. **Commuter***

*I grew up in the area. I've always liked it and felt safe. I like the greens. I like taking advantage of the parks. I like walking and running and stuff. I commute to downtown. I work right across the Hawthorne Bridge. I can avoid the freeways by taking Barbur the whole way, or I can ride my bike over by OHSU and down that way. It seems pretty safe for biking. You no longer have to take the freeways. I bike maybe once a week during the summer. **Commuter***

*I just moved to the Tigard area to be close to a girlfriend. We ended up in Sherwood about five years ago. It's between my husband's work and my work. We have an eight-year-old son. He's in a nice family community with a lot of other kids. It sort of feels like you're out in the country, but you're not out in the country. I can still get to shopping and all the city things, but you still feel like you're in a small, rural community. **Commuter***

*I live there because my parents live there. I just recently graduated from college. I love living where we live. It's about five minutes from downtown. For me it's super convenient, because if I want to get downtown for any reason it's a five or ten minute bus ride or fifteen minutes on my bike. It's perfect for getting downtown on Trimet. I didn't have a car for a long time. **Commuter***

*The grocery stores are good, and I just liked the area. The schools are good. **Commuter***

Preferred Features

Students who use the 99W corridor to commute to and from classes were asked what attributes they wanted in a place to live. Features mentioned were similar to those commuters and residents used to describe the 99W Corridor: a family-friendly environment, parks, trees/green areas, close to shopping, activities and entertainment, well-maintained yards and neighborhoods, diverse architectural



designs, public transportation services, safety/low crime, walkways and bike-ways. One key difference between students and residents/commuters was transportation. Students preferred to live within walking distance of entertainment and shopping and were less interested in using automobiles.

Students

*I definitely would like a family-friendly environment. Somewhere I could plan to be when I'm single or young married and when I start having kids. Something that would be important to me there would be a park nearby. Make sure it's green, like plants around. **Student***

*I'd like to live close to places where you can do things like go to the zoo or museum or something. **Student***

*There's lots of greenery – actual grass and trees. It's well kept. Things are repaired fairly quickly. Good people around the neighborhood. It's close to just everything that you really need; grocery stores, restaurants. They have townhouses, condos, and apartments. **Student***

*Huge trees right on the street that weren't planted as an afterthought. The yards are big. The houses aren't all the same. Close to what you need, but it still feels kind of removed from traffic and people. **Student***

*I would like to have a family-oriented neighborhood. **Student***

*I like living near public transportation best. I think it's better to take a bus than drive a car anywhere. I'd like to live in a place that's safe. Not so much crime. I like the thought of community, too. Everybody getting to know each other and trust your neighbors. **Student***

*I love the public transportation, and being somewhere where you don't have to have a car. I also like to be in the center of excitement. I want to be able to walk to things. I want to walk to a park in place of a yard. I'd like to be able to walk to sporting activities, nightclubs, theaters, shopping, public transit and palm trees. **Student***

*The neighborhood has all of my amenities within walking distance; grocery stores, bars, restaurants. **Student***

Transportation Challenges in the Corridor

Almost all residents and commuters are fed-up with traffic on and near Highway 99W. Traffic flows poorly, if at all, during peak rush hours, weekday lunch-time



and weekends. Side streets are crowded, too. Many avoid the area, if possible.

They say the primary culprit is the total amount of traffic on 99W.

- Residents blame heavy traffic on those who are using 99W as a major artery to the Oregon coast or to commute to downtown Portland from outlying areas. Residents say people who live in the area are not the cause of congestion.
- On the other hand, commuters say the road infrastructure was designed for fewer cars. Population growth in the Corridor has outstripped road capacity. People driving to the coast or commuting to work from Sherwood are secondary issues.

Other factors residents and commuters say contribute to congestion issues on

99W:

- Stoplights are poorly timed and impede the flow of traffic;
- Intersections are poorly designed;
- There are too many access points to 99W from primary and secondary streets and from businesses and parking lots;
- Left-turns are difficult to make and dangerous;
- Tri-Met buses block traffic when they stop to discharge and pick-up passengers on 99W;
- Few alternative routes are available for residents and commuters; and
- I-5 and Tualatin-Sherwood Highway are overcrowded and congested.

People are frustrated particularly with the Tigard section of 99W from 217 to King City. People say almost all of the problems with 99W are experienced along this stretch of the highway. One man called it “The Gauntlet.”



Not everyone has a problem with traffic in the Corridor. A few people say congestion varies based on time of day and direction – more traffic during commuting hours and noon, less during other times. They say their work and home schedule permits them to avoid the area during these times.

Residents

*Simply a limited amount of arteries going east and west as well as north and south to the Beaverton area and all the Rocky Hills range. It's hard to have really straight throughways like the eastside does. **Resident***

*Congestion. **Resident***

*Taking a left turn takes a long time. **Resident***

*Poor planning. That u-turn at 99 and Hall is a terrible idea and that was very recent. **Resident***

*Light timing. **Resident***

*What's the road by city hall? That light doesn't make any sense at all. You'll be driving and there are no cars and the light turns red. Then you're just sitting at the light. **Resident***

*It's really aggravating when I'm down there at midnight to have one guy stop for a few seconds and then the light turns. **Resident***

*It's actually a matter of a cheaper light that doesn't have sensors. It's just on an automatic timer no matter what. **Resident***

*There's no alternative. **Resident***

*If you are trying to get to Sherwood, 99 is your best option. If you had a better option you'd be on it, but there's no alternative. So you're going to go and deal with what you have to deal with. **Resident***

*Tualatin-Sherwood road when it was designed hadn't been made to take volume, which it's getting. If that had been designed well then 99 wouldn't be a problem. **Resident***

*They could make that a freeway for all I care. **Resident***

Commuters

*The congestion depends on which way I'm going. 99W heading south, maybe 2 or 3 PM traffic starts to build up. It's like "What's slowing everyone down?" There doesn't seem to be an apparent reason why traffic is slowing down up to Garden Road. It's like "what's going on here?" **Commuter***



*I think around lunch time it gets backed up through Tigard on 99. I think lunch hour is bad. **Commuter***

*There are bridges in Tigard. It seems whenever I go I'm stuck for random reasons. It drives me crazy. My wife gets claustrophobic, too. Recently I went to a Walgreens and it took me 45 minutes for what should be ten minutes. Just for whatever reason it took a long time to get through one green light. **Commuter***

*That's why I call it The Gauntlet. (217 to Bull Mountain) I used to commute through there, and now one thing I like about where I am now is I don't have to commute to Sherwood. **Commuter***

*I don't deal a lot with 99, but that's because I work part-time, and I know not to go that route. **Commuter***

*I work in Garden Home. If I leave Sherwood between 7:15 and 7:20 I can get to Garden Home about 7:45. If I leave at 7:25 or 7:30, I won't get there until past 8. It's that ten minutes. I've learned how to time it. It doesn't really make any sense. **Commuter***

*Before I learned to take the back roads, I would come home I-5 and get off on 99 and take that all the way down. You'd hit every light. Then my brother told me to take the back way and get off at Haines. It's about 2.5 miles out of my way, but it takes me 20 minutes. From now on I never go home down 99. **Commuter***

*I think 99 west of I-5 is broken. 99 east of I-5 works great. My commute is about 6 miles. I can drive Garden Home and it takes 15 minutes. I can take the bus in half an hour; ride my bike in 40 minutes. The problem for me is old town Tigard. From 5 to 6 I can't get there because traffic is too bad. **Commuter***

That's one good thing you can say. There's a transit center where I am. I used to take Trimet but it got to a point where it was like how much is my time worth? It takes me 15 minutes by car and an hour and a half by bus.

*I'd say my primary use of 99 is basically the closer-to-downtown section of Barbur. Nine times out of ten it wouldn't take that long. Maybe 15 minutes to get from downtown to sort of around here. It's pretty good getting to Tigard. Then it splits where you can go downtown from Naito, or 4th street. I think people are trying to get on 26 or 405. Trying to get downtown at 4 or 5 can be congested, but I think you're technically off Barbur. **Commuter***

*I didn't have a lot of problems. **Commuter***

*You never had to wait long for a bus on 99. **Commuter***



Fixing Transportation Problems

Residents and commuters suggested several ways to fix transportation problems along 99W, but there was no consensus about the best way to solve the corridor's traffic problems. Among the suggested ways to improve transportation in the 99W corridor were:

- Build a by-pass from the Wilsonville/Woodburn area from I-5 to Highway 26;
- Improve and expand public transportation: add express bus service from the Corridor to downtown Portland, expand light rail from downtown to Sherwood, expand park and ride parking areas and add neighborhood bus or van service for residents and the elderly;
- Build a Milwaukie-like limited access expressway;
- Create bikeways with dedicated lanes and use of neighborhoods for bike routes, add lighting in these areas;
- Add left turn lanes
- Build ramps and bridges over 99W to replace traffic lights;
- Widen 99W, adding lanes or move traffic to secondary streets adjacent to 99W and
- Expand walkways and improve pedestrian safety.

Not everyone wanted change. Some were concerned that improving transportation would have unwanted consequences for the area such as population growth, impact on neighborhoods and loss of personal property.

Students were less likely to recommend expanding roads and highways as a means to address transportation problems than commuters and residents. Students wanted investments in walkways, biking and transit. Students were



frustrated that walkways and bike lanes were not connected, leaving bikers and walkers to use the side of a road. Investments in new technology, such as bio-fuels and electric cars, are also recommended. Recognizing people won't give up cars entirely, students support expanding park and ride areas near transit hubs.

Comments about improving transportation included:

Commuters

*You know if you wanted to fix the coast traffic issue, I think you'd have a spur that went off of I-5 and started down by Woodburn or something, and it missed Newburg and all that stuff. It would be the fastest way to the coast. It would bypass. It's all farmland. Just put a cut right through there. If you've driven to the coast you've probably spent a half an hour in those little towns. **Commuter***

*I actually think that's a great idea. The people that are heading that way that need to will go down the little roadways. He's talking about Woodburn or further. That's a great idea. **Commuter***

*I actually ride the bus fairly frequently and I would do a commute straight down I-5 and straight into town. It's a little easier. I take the bus downtown because it's much easier than parking and walking. **Commuter***

*I think the bus is a good alternative. I think people will use it if it's easy and not too painful. **Commuter***

*You've got to have parking access. **Commuter***

*The public transit center is pretty good. You do have to get there early. I went midday one day and it was pretty crowded. **Commuter***

*I'm kind of surprised they haven't implemented a light rail along I-5 that comes up to Barbur. **Commuter***

*I think that 99 has expanded beyond what it was meant to be. I think it should be something like an expressway. Kind of like the Milwaukie expressway where you have on-ramps and off-ramps and two lanes. I think 10 miles of stoplights every intersection that stay green for five seconds doesn't work anymore. It needs to keep up with the times. **Commuter***

*I think the idea of an expressway or something that allows cars to still access businesses but still separates the thru traffic is a good idea. We all want to use 99 to shop. **Commuter***



*Businesses would be much better off. They'd grow better. We'd have better businesses out there if there was good access. **Commuter***

*I ride my bike a lot. Actually it's not that bad at downtown Tigard, going to Portland. They've done a lot of good work there. There's a lot of extra space for people on the sidewalk or people on their bike. In between there, there's that bridge. There's one area you can walk and a bike barely fits in that. Then there's this little tiny thing on the bridge pretty much right next to the cars, and big trucks will come by and literally their mirrors will stick out that whole length. I'm in there trying to watch my back instead of watching where I'm going. That area's just not good for bikes. **Commuter***

*When my parents come in from work he bikes through that four-way stop at Capitol Highway and Taylors Ferry. He's gotten to a point where he has to walk the bike because it's gotten too dangerous. Even if he's walking the bike and someone still pulls out and knocks him over. **Commuter***

*I think we need to separate the cars from the bikes. For example, in my neighborhood people ride bikes all the time because there are paths that are separate from the roads. I'll take the kids on the trails. My wife and I we enjoy those trails. I take my wife down to the west, I've got a bike and I can take the west end to work. The part of my commute that I don't like is when I have to compete with the cars. Every few weeks there's someone who gets killed by someone's mirror on a bike. I think the only real solution is to separate them from the cars. **Commuter***

*A lot of 99 is two lanes on one side, two lanes on the other side. In some areas they have a turn lane in between and in other areas they don't. I always think that it's a huge help to have a turn lane just constant. Then they're not backing up traffic just to make a turn. Maybe one time they have to wait to make a left hand turn but at least they're not blocking the entire street. A lot of Barbur toward downtown it just doesn't have that kind of turn lane. **Commuter***

*The way I feel is that Taylors Ferry and Barbur should have a turn lane or something. The third lane, somewhere to free everybody because everybody is in that right lane and it was all backed up to Allen today. I just cruise on through but because everyone is turning they are all halted there. So you can just get in and get on the freeway but its not easy. I mean it probably takes you ten minutes to get through that. The bike lane is great and it needs to be more defined. It's not stupid and it needs to be defined, it needs to be truly marked. There needs to be a turn lane on the other side of the bike lane. It is just a very poor intersection. **Commuter***

This would probably be very expensive, but instead of having lights everywhere what if there was a little ramp that goes onto the bridge? So instead of having lights, people that are turning or going across the other streets or 99 they can just go over 99 rather than making a stop, and then



*it would just be faster to keep going. It would be a lot of bridges and expensive, though. **Commuter***

Residents

*I don't know if it would be the right alignment, but I would love to see light rail out here. Before I made this move six years ago from down Durham road to King City I looked along the light rail corridor. Obviously I chose not to do that, but not because of the light rail. I just didn't find anything that I liked. I don't know that I'll live long enough to see it come to the Metro area, but I sure would like to see it come. I don't know if 99 is the right route. **Resident***

*Maybe less access roads. It just seems like it's kind of almost a freeway, and it's really a highway. It's being used as a freeway, but it's really a highway because there's so many inlets. Like take out every third light. **Resident***

*Part of the problem is that every ten yards you can turn off into a business or side road. Some drivers they slow down to 10 mph for the next half mile to make the turn. All of sudden you realize why is traffic so backed up? **Resident***

*As the towns and cities got bigger develop away from 99. Especially for local residents who would use those services and not have to go on 99. **Resident***

*Along that same line, if business's driveways didn't enter onto 99, if you used an access road to get into the businesses there wouldn't be people slowing way down to try to get into the nook and cranny all the way down 99. If you had to get off it to get in the shopping centers instead of having to make stops to turn and get in it would help some of the congestion. I've always thought they should do overpasses where people have to go to a certain spot to get on and off. Then another road would go across 99, instead of every light getting you on and off and across. There's left turn lights on every signal going four directions. **Resident***

*That's another thing on 99 in Tigard, lots of time where the bus stops are it's like they're stopping the traffic. We've got people slamming on breaks to get around the buses. It's dangerous. **Resident***

*There's a ton of people that use the buses. It would just make life a little easier, but in the short term a lot more expensive. **Resident***

*We have to remember that when we're putting in light rail, we're not putting it in for today. **Resident***

Kind of separating out some of that traffic maybe. Commuters have to make a straight line shot between their communities and downtown Portland. The people who are just driving around within Tigard or



Sherwood, it seems like there could be a separation for that traffic.
Resident

Even widen Hall or something like that where it intersects with Durham by the high school. Making that wider and using it as a back road to avoid 99.
Resident

I'd like to see some sort of legal bike lane on Barbur. I like to bike downtown. If I'm going on a bike downtown I'll avoid Barbur because people are going 55 in the bike lane that's literally this big, and it's scary. Even just throw some paint on there or make it wider. Then you could get right downtown.
Resident

Where it crosses over between Terwilliger and the Swan Mart or whatever, there's a little concrete thing where there's no room for a bike or even someone to walk over. It's just sort of pointless that it's there. It serves more harm than good.
Resident

Intersection designs, especially east of the county line on 99W. Capitol and Barbur – that intersection. Cars are running into each other there. There's not enough pedestrian crossings across 99. There's also I-5, there's no crossings to allow for pedestrians and bikers to get across. You have to be in a car to go over the overpasses. Those are all expensive propositions.
Resident

Like 26 just down the street here, you can now walk because they've improved the sidewalks under I-5 there. That's not a bad connection point. You've got a pedestrian bridge that goes over I-5 and the pedestrian bridge that goes over I-5 between the Barbur transit center and the neighborhoods,
Resident

Some parts of Barbur... there's lights but there's no cross walk. More lights on cross walks would help too.
Resident

I live right by the Barbur transit center and when I have tried to commute via bus, maybe during the summer, the issue would be if I got to the transit center after 8:30 there was zero parking available. You'd have to risk parking illegally, and then you're blocks from it. People in the area have the same issues. There's people that would probably prefer to park and ride from there but it's not possible because the demand elements, the capacity for parking.
Resident

More park and rides.
Resident

What if there was, like they have for the elderly, neighborhood loops. So now you have a van like the ones for the elderly to park and rides. This is taking residential off, so the people who want to get downtown aren't dealing with parking or safety issues.
Resident

I really don't have all of these problems. I don't want them to come that way. I don't know if I want light rail to come out to Sherwood. I like my patch of 99.
Resident



*I think if they tried to widen that area on the way to downtown it would kind of mess up the neighborhood feel. **Resident***

Students

*We're thinking about other options and to be more efficient about it instead of driving around and wasting gas. **Student***

*I feel like mass transit should expand a little bit more. There's no public transportation between here and Newberg. If there were, I would take it. **Student***

*I think if you compare other cities to ours, it's pretty good. We have a lot of construction, but you know it's leading somewhere, so I kind of get around it. **Student***

*Transit, biking, making things more efficient, I don't think you need help walking. The biking system is pretty good. **Student***

*It sounds like a theme is going smarter instead of bigger. Instead of expanding out, going and doing smarter things with transportation. Just making it all work together better. **Student***

*Encouraging people to use their bikes, because that system already works really well. Encouraging people to carpool if we already have lanes for it. **Student***

*Yeah, it kind of ties in with roads and driving cars, but if that's the future then making it more accessible and encouraging people to jump on the bike bandwagon. **Student***

*I'd say transit and walking and biking. When I don't use the public transportation, I do like to walk. I live in Tigard and I'll sometimes walk to the Tigard library. Off McDonald there are some places where there aren't sidewalks. If I'm walking with my daughter, you want to walk on the sidewalk instead of the street. **Student***

*I would probably invest in walking, biking, and transit, for the same reasons. There aren't sidewalks out where I live. I've gone on a lot of runs recently, and it's really annoying because part of the road has sidewalk on this side and then it stops on this side. I just wish there was one side I could just run down instead of having to run on the edge of the road, where it's all uneven, and dodge cars. Then definitely, I would encourage biking and transit. **Student***

*I don't think public transportation is for everybody, but I do think it is a very important part. The way I see it, the fact is that a lot of people aren't going to give up their cars. Roads are going to remain an important part no matter what. **Student***

*We're looking into getting an electric car because my commute is not that long. I think alternative energy for vehicles is a great place to go. It would save a lot of money. It would make things cleaner, too. **Student***



*I like the bio-fuel and electric car thought a lot. I studied a lot about that in high school. I think that it's definitely something we need to work on, because the cost of oil is just increasing. I also think that transit is the way to go for now. It's something that people can rely on. I think they should come quicker and maybe there should be more buses and more people working for Trimet. Maybe making some more bus lines that go through certain areas because not everywhere has buses. Also, bigger parking lots in transit centers. There always is a full parking lot. So people can ride the train and park. **Student***

*Expanding the MAX wouldn't hurt either. And parking lots for the MAX. **Student***

Yeah, I don't think they do have a good park and ride at the Beaverton transit. See I go all the way to Beaverton Creek because they have a giant parking lot because of the apartments right there.

*I think it's Sunset transit. **Student***

Biking

Roughly one in four focus group participants bike once a week for work, shopping or exercise. Cyclists and non-cyclists alike would like to see safety improvements, such as dedicated bike lanes, wider bike paths and connections to existing bike/walkways throughout the area – along Fanno Creek from Beaverton to Tigard, from Sherwood to Tigard and Tigard to downtown Portland.

Comments include:

*My daughter rides daily. She goes down Pacific Hwy to Hall by Tigard High School. **Commuter***

*I have a friend who commutes everyday by bike. **Commuter***

*I do it when I don't have a place to go after work. I take my bike to West and then there's a bus from the West Station to work. So that works really well but when its raining or I have something going on after work, like picking up the kids, it's just not a possibility. **Commuter***

My friend rides into work everyday on Barbur. He says it's dangerous. He has to really watch out for cars and act like he is invisible, like the cars just cannot see him. So he has to have his personal sonar and know where every car is at every moment to protect himself. It doesn't matter,



you can have a big bubble around you and they still won't see you.

Commuter

*I'd like to see some sort of legal bike lane on Barbur. I like to bike downtown. If I'm going on a bike downtown, I'll avoid Barbur because people are going 55 in the bike lane that's literally this big, and it's scary. Even just throw some paint on there or make it wider. Then you could get right downtown. **Commuter***

A lot of times my friends and I will bike downtown if we're going to go shopping or just hang out, just because it's easier than finding a parking space. Most of my biking has been social. I used to work at OMSI, and I biked downtown to get to work. Not all the time, but sometimes.

Commuter

*There's enough room that they could do that. You see those bike paths that are along like 84 or something where there's a fence and then a path. It seems like they could do something like that. **Commuter***

*I agree. The people in Sherwood, if you go through there you'll see people biking and running and walking. I bet you they would run on those paths just to go to Starbucks. **Commuter***

*The people in Sherwood are very active. They do a lot of biking and running. There's a lot of trails in Sherwood. **Commuter***

Improving the Area

In addition to improving transportation, residents and commuters want other changes to the 99W Corridor to upgrade the area. Better restaurants, food carts, more shopping and smaller, family-owned business are high on the list of desired changes. Generally speaking, residents and commuters thought businesses along 99W were getting dated and the area needed a face-lift. Several say the strip-clubs and smoke-shops hurt the image of the area. Some advocate more commercial office space and apartments on or near the highway to promote business diversity.



Public safety is a core concern. People say homeless people and gangs are taking control of parks and trails. Residents and commuters who use the parks feel threatened and many avoid the areas.

When asked for local examples about the type of changes envisioned, something like Interstate Avenue in North Portland is mentioned. There, the light-rail line improved transportation and encouraged business development. Another example is the commercial area along 99W near Sherwood.

Comments about desired improvements included:

Residents

*There are a couple of okay restaurants in the area. But there aren't really any that I've found any mom-and-pop-type things like you would find all over the east side. It's all chain stuff like Olive Garden, no really good restaurants in my opinion. **Resident***

*In Fanno Creek Park right behind Main Street in Tigard there's a huge transient homeless population. I have taken my dog there and I have found just tent after tent and even going through the Fanno Creek Park behind main street there's tents all over the place. **Resident***

*It not just transients either, it's gangs too. I've seen all kinds of tags on the fencing that goes along the trail on Watercreek. I can't tell you how many times I have walked from Main Street to back home, just walking the dog or whatever, and people are smoking weed or drinking or there's some guy who thinks he's a troll and living under one of those bridges that crosses one of the creeks. **Resident***

*Literally you can see the Police Station and there are all these gang members and transients. **Resident***

*Yeah, I don't know how they cannot do something about it. That's it too, like I won't let my wife go to the park alone. **Resident***

The whole corridor pretty much needs to be flattened and done again. That's not the reality, but it would be nice if somewhere, someplace, I



*don't know where... on the Tigard side of the highway, it would be nice if there was more of a downtown. At the same time, while it's technically part of the corridor, downtown Tigard could use some big time help. Architecturally. Knocking down what's here and starting again. **Resident***

Commuters

*Some decent restaurants. **Commuter***

*Something other than chain restaurants. **Commuter***

*I'd like to see somewhere – food carts. **Commuter***

*Food carts would be awesome. **Commuter***

*Yeah, local business. Like food carts, locally owned restaurants, locally owned shops, small groceries, I don't know. I really hate how they move in, like, strip malls. It's gross. It's ugly. More smaller, locally owned stuff. **Commuter***

*Move all the big box stuff out off 99. Put in commercial space, residential space. Smaller businesses don't have as much crowd turnover. As a common corridor, to not have all of that traffic using 99 to turn into and out of business and use the businesses all the time. **Commuter***

*The two Fred Meyers are crazy. All of the people that go to them, and then you've got to realize that the only way they can go anywhere else is to get on 99. The one in Tigard and then the one they're reconstructing off of Barbur. You have to loop around, so it just sort of clogs up that whole area. Especially now, they're making it even bigger. It's like they had to close down other places just to have parking. If you try to go there on the way home from work, at 5 or 6:30, it's utterly packed in there. The buses – to make it worse, it's the major bus stop. That really slows down everything. Same with the one in Tigard. **Commuter***

*I mean, I'd really like to see them replaced with office buildings or something where people aren't coming and going nonstop. They're coming once per day as opposed to, I mean I don't know what the numbers are but Fred Meyers saw it was worth it to put millions of dollars in and close shop for 6 to 8 months. It's worth it to them. So the turnover that goes on there must be huge. **Commuter***

I used to live in North Portland before I moved here, on Interstate Avenue. Interstate Avenue on a smaller scale was like 99. Not so much the traffic, but now we're talking the retail and everything. While I don't think the 99 corridor and Barbur every got as bad as Interstate was with the kind of businesses that were there. With the light rail now going up Interstate, you don't need to worry about destroying everything because the market does... Interstate is turning into an absolutely wonderful place. Eventually it will be even better than it is now. I suspect that part of the reason is the light rail. I think if the light rail came down here I think it would solve some of the traffic problems. You would have buildings along 99 that would



probably include apartments and condos. That wouldn't happen overnight. But over time, the process of a lot of the ugly buildings would disappear. There's not any building worth keeping on 99 or Barbur.

Commuter

MAX is used as a development tool as much as it is a transportation tool.

Commuter

Well I'm not saying that I necessarily want those things. I think it would be a more attractive place because, if there was light rail, the market is going to change what it's going to look like on this side of the road.

There's easier access to those places.

The west side of Sherwood is like that. It's very nice and they're not all full. Eventually there will be. There's very nice-looking buildings with trees along the side of 99. There won't be the congestion and the traffic right there because it's just office buildings. They've put the Target and stuff off of 99.

To get to it you've got to go off, even though you can see it.

I actually think it's really pretty. There's a YMCA and there's trees.

Shopping and go to work and take their kids to karate.

If you go on the west end of Sherwood that's all there is. There's nice apartments and condos on one side.

I know people that live in those nice apartments.

They have parking spots for them. It doesn't seem like it's congested.

What they could do is change the access. You're not going to take on Fred Meyers, you've got a big thing of people here... we want you to go away. Maybe like they did in Sherwood, you can see the Target but you have to go off of 99 to get to it. Changing the access to some of these businesses so you loop around using an on ramp/off ramp type system more than all crossover lights like they have now.



COMMUNICATION

People in the resident and student groups were asked to describe what the terms *public services*, *infrastructure*, *public investment* and *affordable housing* mean to learn more about how people think about and use these phrases.

Public Services

When residents were asked what comes to mind when they hear the term *public services*, the group was evenly divided between facilities and professional services. Some think sanitation, utilities, roads, public transportation, parks and recreation best describe *public services*. For others, police, fire, planning, children and family services, homeless and health care describe the term. Based on these descriptions, the term *public service* has a variety of meanings for people in the community. Agencies should use specific terms and phrases to describe actions or plans when communicating with the public.

Comments about public services included:

Residents only

Sanitation. Resident

I'd say utilities, police, and fire. Resident

Roads. Resident

Public transportation. Resident

Parks and rec. Resident

Planning. Resident



There's children's services and family services, and also homeless.
Resident

Health. **Resident**

Infrastructure

When residents were asked the meaning of the term *infrastructure*, people talked primarily about structures and facilities, such as roads, bridges, utilities, water, sewer, associated pipelines, street lights, hospitals, schools and parks. One person suggested planning is part of infrastructure but most of the group disagreed. Like the term *public services*, *infrastructure* has a range of meanings but almost all relate to facilities and structures. Again, using specific terms and phrases when communicating about infrastructure issues will ensure the public understands what is being discussed.

Comments about infrastructure included:

Residents only

Government planning, your roads, your bridges, utilities. **Resident**

Sewer. **Resident**

Water. Gas. **Resident**

Street lights, probably. **Resident**

Police. **Resident**

Pretty much the same thing as services. **Resident**

I put schools and hospitals. **Resident**

Parks. **Resident**

The only one I question is police. I think it's service, **Resident**

Schools. **Resident**

Drinking water and sewer combined. Delivery of water. **Resident**

Water pipes. **Resident**



*I have such runoff problems at my house that the infrastructure, part of the sewer system is runoff. **Resident***

*Clean water but also getting rid of the water... **Resident***

*Storm water. **Resident***

*I think the word infrastructure is kind of misleading. It kind of has the word structure, but it isn't about something physical. Infrastructure just means what kind of organization it takes to keep things running and running smoothly. It's more about people management; I think, technically, would be the definition. **Resident***

*It's like we invaded Iraq in 2003 and we took out all of the governments and all of that stuff. It was like everything fell apart because there was no infrastructure to keep going. **Resident***

*Not the buildings but police, they kept everything under control. Normally you can't have everybody live in this small of an area without wanting to kill each other without comprehensive police force keeping things in line to some degree. **Resident***

*I think it's pretty much the government that falls under infrastructure to me. **Resident***

*Some people would say infrastructure is primary facilities. David's suggestion. **Resident***

*I think about infrastructure as being physical things. Service is intangible. **Resident** (several agree)*

Public Investment

Residents say the term *public investment* has a variety of meanings. For most, *public investment* implies planning and building for the future. Roads, libraries and schools were examples of public investments.

But investment also implies taxpayers will benefit from the expense. People say return on public investments could include a better education for students, higher property values for homeowners, a more desirable place to live and more jobs and economic development.



Comments about public investment included:

Residents only

*Future planning. It makes me think of something that's going to happen in the future. **Resident***

*To me it means building with consideration for future. **Resident***

*I don't think investments should be considered something that's going to solve something now but something in the future. Like instead of doing 217 two lanes both ways, if they do everything three lanes. That would have been an investment. If you build something now with the ability to handle more than what you're currently using, or something that's easily expandable. I don't know what they're doing with 26 but I thought they ripped that up a few years ago. **Resident***

*Also investment implies that we're getting something back from what we're putting into it because it's an investment. It has to be something greater in return. **Resident***

*Our money. **Resident***

*Like tax money? **Resident***

*Maybe not our money but it's our library. Libraries and schools are investments. **Resident***

*Again our money. Our tax dollars. Whether it's property tax or income tax. **Resident***

*Smarter kids would be an investment. Like kids that are better taught would be a good example of a better investment. **Resident***

*Like the parks they've shown over and over again that when you get good people together in an area they need public space to relax and enjoy nature. **Resident***

*For me, I look at it in terms of property value. If you build something that actually causes my property value to go up – more people want to live in Tigard – then it's an investment. I pay taxes but I get the benefit of my property taxes going up. The city gets a benefit because they can charge me higher property taxes to help secure these things. **Resident***

*And they do. **Resident***

*Basically making areas more desirable to live. **Resident***

*Not only to live but to work. If you spend a million dollars to build a business park, you expect to recoup that in income taxes or property taxes. **Resident***



Affordable Housing

The term *affordable housing* has a negative connotation for students. The term was not discussed among residents or commuters.

Most students agree it implies a building is run down, needs painting and is located in an unsafe area. Several indicate they are finding the Portland rental market unaffordable, particularly at a time when jobs are scarce, incomes low and rents are increasing. Students say affordable housing is a place that requires less than one-third of their income rent or mortgage payment.

Student laughed when asked about affordable housing opportunities in the South Waterfront and Pearl Districts. As one said, the areas were “not affordable by any means.”

Comments about affordable housing included:

Students only

*Especially for apartments, the rent tends to be cheaper when it's in a bad neighborhood or the apartment complex sucks. The building is run down. It probably could have used paint 20 years ago. Things are falling apart. The building managers... there's pee stains on the carpet. Just run down, ramshackled. **Student***

*My husband just got a 2.5% increase in his paycheck for his hourly wage. The reason we had to move in with our in-laws is because our rent increased 10% a month. We went from \$830 a month to \$910 and he's only getting \$12.65 an hour. And I'm only getting five hours a week right now, so we had to move. It's the same exact apartment that we've been living it. \$830 a month was outrageous for us as it was. That was too much for us. **Student***



*It's the trade-off. We didn't want to live in an empty space apartment with loud neighbors. So we took the tradeoff of a small place but in a good area with good people that live there. **Student***

*Bad maintenance and bad landlord and small homes. I've dealt with that in the past before. **Student***

*I want to be really close to downtown. It's just not an option. It might be nice in Beaverton but it adds transportation cost. If my objective is to be under \$1000 and be within 30 blocks of downtown and I can't find that but I find it in Beaverton then I add transportation costs to my rent, I might as well be downtown. **Student***

*I got a place that fit that description out by Irvington but I was right next door to a halfway house. There were scary people at night. It was pretty rundown and the landlord sucked, but I had 1000 square feet. It was fine during the day. **Student***

What about affordable housing in the South Waterfront or Pearl District?

(Everyone laughs.)

*My mom has friends who live in those apartment complexes. If those are affordable then that's really funny. They pay like \$2000 a month. It's not affordable by any means. **Student***

*My husband worked for a security company that did patrol in that area. He said the people that came in that place were like trust-fund babies. The rent there was ridiculous he said. If that's affordable housing... **Student***

*Those whole buildings are rented out maybe 1/3. **Student***

*That'd be affordable but I don't see that in the Pearl. A little further up in northwest, like where I am my 23rd, you could find an apartment for \$720. Again, it's going to be 500 square feet. **Student***

Explaining Change

Residents and commuters were reminded that making changes to an area, such as the 99W corridor, could require some people and businesses to relocate because new roads, light rail and other infrastructure may be best routed through property where people live and businesses are located. With this in mind, people



were asked how to explain the changes to those being impacted and the community at large.

The discussion made participants uncomfortable and the consensus of the groups can be summarized by the comment of one person, “That’s the main reason why I’m not a public official. You can’t satisfy everybody. I can’t imagine the headaches. That’s a tough one.” People recognized that explanations probably weren’t sufficient to satisfy or mollify property owners affected by the change. The best option: offer those displaced a generous compensation package for their property.

Rather than impact homeowners and business, some suggested planners look at alternative solutions, such as widen I-5, only using public lands or diverting traffic to new roads and highways to less populated agricultural areas, so fewer people would be affected.

After considerable discussion, some suggested that information to the public regarding changes should focus on the long-term benefits for the region and individual residents. They said to highlight how traffic, shopping and property values improve. The tone of the communication should be sympathetic to those



impacted by change, but talk to the community as a whole about the long-term vision and how everyone else will benefit.

Residents

*That's the main reason why I'm not a public official. You can't satisfy everybody. I can't imagine the headaches. That's a tough one. **Resident***

*I'm a firm believer that the regional needs take precedence over the personal or local needs. Without regional needs, nothing would get done. I-5 wouldn't be there. A lot of major construction wouldn't happen if every farmer had to sign off on it and agree to go through there. At some point you need to have a regional outlook that overshadows the locality. **Resident***

*If you displace or move a couple people, I mean that sucks, but they'll give them fifty grand more than their property is worth and call it good. At the end of the day, I think it's good for the public and their needs. I think it's regional and that should take precedence. **Resident***

*Yeah, but you're talking about displacing a lot of people. I mean a lot of business. Is that fair? **Resident***

*We wouldn't have to displace all businesses. **Resident***

*Well it wouldn't be all, but you're talking a huge area. **Resident***

*You have to look at the fewest number of people impacted for the greater good. **Resident***

*One of the dangers of doing the bypass is every time you make an offering you then open up a development around that offering. Things can sprawl. **Resident***

*Just always talk about the traffic. **Resident***

*You have to, I'm pretty sure there's a thing called eminent domain. Pretty much like you look at Russ Chevrolet, they cut way back. They took like 1/3 of their lot away. You have to crack a few eggs to make an omelet kind of thing. It comes down to the greater good. So yes, you displace a few farmers here and there. Yeah, you give them 50 grand but if you're going to cost them, but I think you have to... it has to be a combination of things too. You're talking about this bypass that goes around also improving Tigard itself. It's for the greater good. **Resident***

Commuters



*A government agency is coming in and telling people in the community that this is how it's going to be. This is what's going to happen. You have to shift that paradigm and figure out what it is they want for their community as a whole. If you do that, I think they'll find that maybe people will agree to that and say yeah okay you may need to use some of my property. It's always going to be a fight. It's going to take money. You're not going to get property without compensating people. Let people in those communities decide. **Commuter***

*Depending on what the final outcome, or I don't know what word I'm looking for, show them the advantages of these improvements. It will give them more opportunities. I mean there's not much on 99 that I want to use. I use the Bi-Mart sometimes. And the Mexican restaurant. Other than that, I avoid it. **Resident***

*If someone has been entrenched in a home for thirty years, it's different than a business that's been there for 18 months that's struggling. **Resident***

*One of the things that we would tell those property owners is, even if they didn't lose any property, you probably are going to have long-term property that is worth more. **Resident***

*Whatever is done there, it's not something that is being done for today. It's getting done for some long-term kind of thing. You can't expect that whatever is done, if anything, is going to make huge changes in the first 6 months. **Resident***

Communication

People get information about local issues from a variety of sources. Local newspapers and newsletters, such as the *Tigard Times* and *Cityscape*, are the most frequently mentioned sources of information. Other sources mentioned included the Internet, direct mail, TV, radio, word-of-mouth and planning/community meetings. One student has a smart phone App so, "if there are things going on around Oregon I can hear about it."



CFM survey research has found that the most effective communication plans involving public policy issues integrate traditional and social media tools. This is necessary because how people get information tends to vary by demographic group.

Residents

*Cityscape. Tigard publishes a ten-page thing monthly or so. **Resident***

*Print media is pretty obsolete. People get their information from the Internet. **Resident***

*You know where I get mine? Where they post the notice on the sign. **Resident***

*My wife went to the planning committee. I think we convinced them to move the high-density away from the single-family and put the single-family next to the single-family. **Resident***

*We get information from the planning commission. When there's going to be a change to the property we own, we'll get a notice. **Resident***

*Local newspaper. **Resident***

*Sometimes they put it on the TV or radio. **Resident***

*Word of mouth is the other place. People tell me about what's going on. **Resident***

*Possibly the Tigard Times. I don't subscribe so I'm getting it indirectly from there. Or they're reading Cityscape or going to meetings that I'm not going to. **Resident***

*There is a community newsletter that's dropped off at our door by the gentleman that does it. **Resident***

*I watch the news on TV. A lot of it is Portland stuff but there's sometimes stuff about the suburbs. I'll glance through the City of Tigard and Cityscape stuff. **Resident***

*As far as other services I use Metro and Tualatin Valley water bureau and park and rec. **Resident***

*They're like a brochure. **Resident***

*Tualatin Valley water sends a brochure with the bill. Metro sends out a newsletter that's all about gardening. **Resident***

Commuters



*The Tigard newsletter that comes out every month. **Commuter***

*Nothing else deals with the area. We use to have the Tigard Times but I'm not sure that's even around. **Commuter***

*Word of mouth. **Commuter***

*We get the Sherwood booklet and sometimes I look at that. We get a lot of stuff because it's constantly growing. There's a train track that goes through by our house and there's always rumors that it's going to be a light rail. We just call railway. They answer every question or tell you where to call. **Commuter***

*If you really want to reach out to people you have to reach out face to face. **Commuter***

*I suspect we can find out anything and everything we'd want to find by searching the Internet. I know more about what's going on in Portland city government than I do in Tigard, or in my case King City. That's mainly because the media, the old-fashioned media, focuses more on Portland than suburbia. **Commuter***

Students

Usually the television.

Internet. Oregonlive, KATU's website, or Facebook.

I use Google a lot. Generally whatever my interests are and then what the month is. Or sometimes even Craigslist.

I usually here about something and then I'll research myself via Google or something else.

Exactly. My buddies tell me something. My family told me this happened down the road, did you hear about it? Oh really, let's Google it.

I listen to Think Out Loud on NPR. I read my local paper. They do report about what's going on. It may be a joke half the time but...

I read the Oregonian every once in a while but not on a regular occurrence. Or the Mercury, or the news tab on Google. I definitely don't watch anything on TV. The TV news is crazy.

I like to listen to news radio too. It's more political stuff that I listen to while I'm driving.

I read the paper everyday vigilantly. I know what's going on.

I try to avoid the news because it depresses me. If it's really important I'll hear about it.



I have an app on my phone for news. Like real community stuff. "There's a baseball game going on come join us" kind of thing. If there's things going on around Oregon I can hear about it.