Livability in Yamhill County: Opinions of County Voters
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Livability in Yamhill County: Opinions of County Voters

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This report is a collaborative effort. Bruce Weber bore responsibility for writing the parts of the report dealing with interpretation of survey results. Ann Schauber wrote the parts of the report analyzing the respondents' written comments and coordinated county involvement in design and review of the analysis. Robert Mason bore responsibility for design and administration of the survey and the statistical analysis. Financial support for the survey was provided by the Yamhill County Commissioners and Oregon State University (OSU) under an interagency agreement between the Yamhill County Commissioners and the OSU Survey Research Center and the OSU Program for Governmental Research and Education (PGRE). PGRE is a collaborative program of the Department of Political Science and the OSU Extension Service. Bruce Weber is Extension Economist and Director of the Program for Governmental Research and Education at OSU; Ann Schauber is Extension Agent and Staff Chair of Yamhill County OSU Extension Office; and Robert Mason is Professor Emeritus, Survey Research Center, Department of Statistics, OSU. John Fregonese, Growth Management Manager of METRO, helped us understand Oregon's land use and growth management policies, but is not responsible for our interpretations.
Livability in Yamhill County: 
Opinions of County Voters

Bruce Weber, Ann Schauber, and Robert Mason

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A survey of Yamhill County registered voters was conducted by the OSU Survey Research 
Center during the spring of 1996. This survey asked respondents for their opinions about 
livability and growth in the county and about policies affecting livability and growth.

Almost 90 percent (88 percent) of respondents were either fairly or greatly concerned about 
livability. A majority (51 percent) of the respondents is greatly concerned about livability. 
Only 12 percent are not too concerned or not at all concerned about livability. When told that 
livability is “often measured by the quality of characteristics that relate to living a good life, 
such as jobs, fear of crime, environmental quality, good health care, and so forth,”
three-quarters of the respondents rated livability as approaching excellent. When asked what 
issues they feel affect the livability of Yamhill County, a majority indicated land use and 
water quality affect livability a lot. Two-fifths of the respondents feel property taxes (41 
percent) and law enforcement (39 percent) affect livability a lot. The job base mix (that is, the 
variety of job opportunities) is ranked by only one-third of the respondents as affecting 
livability a lot, and adequate transportation is felt by only 22.5 percent to affect livability a 
lot.

Almost three-quarters of the respondents (71 percent) believe that growth will increase a lot in 
the next 5 years in the county. The median estimate of the future population growth is 
9 percent per year. This is higher than the actual rate of growth—2.6 percent per 
year—during the 1990-95 period.

Yamhill County voters in the sample were asked about the impact of growth on property taxes 
and how fair and reasonable property taxes are. They also were asked for their opinions about 
specific policies related to land use, growth management, transportation, water quality, and 
law enforcement—issues related to livability and growth in the county.

Three-quarters of the Yamhill County respondents believe the property taxes they pay to 
support county services will increase if the county population grows over the next 5 years. 
Only 3 percent believe taxes will decrease with growth. Just short of a majority of the 
respondents believe that county property taxes are reasonable and fair. About 30 percent 
believe county property taxes are unreasonable or unfair, with just over 20 percent not 
expressing an opinion about this issue. Judgments about fairness were highly correlated with 
judgments about reasonableness.

Three-fifths of the respondents believe local governments should use land use laws to control 
growth. The tools with the most support (that is, greater or equal to 60 percent) are
(1) limiting the expansion of urban growth boundaries, and (2) charging full development costs (sewers, roads, etc.) on new home construction. A majority of respondents supports (1) refusing property tax breaks for new business construction, (2) limiting building permits, and (3) adopting moratoriums in rapid growth areas. Just less than a majority supports reimbursement of landowners for loss of development opportunities due to adoption of land use restrictions. Only a quarter of respondents supports shifting investment in infrastructure from high-growth to low-growth areas.

There were high levels of support for increasing taxes to support specific county law enforcement and crime prevention activities. More than 60 percent favored tax increases to foster neighborhood watch and other volunteer citizen programs, develop alternative (non-jail) sentences for non-violent offenders, and provide more services to children and families. A majority favored increasing taxes to hire more deputies and for criminal rehabilitation programs such as education and vocational training. There was less than majority support for increasing taxes to build more jail space or to hire more prosecutors and support staff.

In addressing the transportation issue, almost three-quarters of the respondents believe the county should improve roads and highways to accommodate more automobiles rather than support mass transit. Renters were less supportive of roads and more supportive of mass transit than homeowners.

There is almost universal (90 percent or more) support for continuing strategic planning for different aspects of water management, including water supply, water quality, and watershed management.

Respondents were asked whether government or private enterprise should take an active role in developing a new mix of the job base (affecting the mix of jobs in agriculture, small businesses, and electronics, for example). A majority felt both government and private enterprise should be involved in this effort rather than just one or the other. Males were more likely to support private enterprise alone taking an active role in job diversification, whereas women were more likely to support county involvement or both county and private enterprise taking active roles.

Almost 90 percent of the Yamhill County respondents are fairly or greatly concerned about livability. Land use and water quality were the issues considered to have the most impact on livability; more than half of the respondents thought these two issues affect livability a lot. Most also believe that population will increase a lot in the next 5 years and that population growth will lead to higher county property taxes. There are high levels of support for policies that control growth by limiting expansion of urban growth boundaries and shifting the costs of development of new neighborhoods to new residents. There also is a great deal of support for improving roads, continued water management, and increasing taxes for law enforcement efforts that employ volunteers and non-jail alternatives, and services to children and families.
INTRODUCTION

Take a drive around McMinnville, Newberg, or any of the other eight small towns in Yamhill County and you will see signs of growth. You can see and hear new construction and you probably will need to wait a bit to get through traffic intersections. From an editorial in The Oregonian to the front pages of the local papers, growth in Yamhill County is in the news. What the newspapers print is a reflection of what is on people’s minds. Citizens are concerned about growth and how that translates to a concern for livability in their communities.

Growth in Yamhill County is real. According to 1995 Population Estimates from Portland State University Center for Population Research and Census, Yamhill County is the sixth fastest growing county in the state. The population increased by 13.8 percent between 1990 and 1995 (an annual rate of 2.6 percent). Total personal income in Yamhill County increased 41.7 percent between 1989-1994 (compared to 39.0 percent statewide). Per capita personal income in the county increased 23.9 percent (compared to 25.7 percent statewide) over this same period. In 1994, Yamhill County per capita personal income was $18,244 (89 percent of the state average of $20,471).

Population growth and concern for quality of life raise public policy issues. Local public officials are faced with these issues daily. City and county governments make decisions that relate to land use, water resources, economic development, transportation, and crime. All of these issues affect the livability of a community. As public policy discussions in a growing county lead to the need to make policy decisions, the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners expressed an interest in understanding more clearly citizens’ views about growth and livability in Yamhill County so that they could do a better job of providing services and maintaining or improving the county’s livability as defined by county residents. As a result, they partnered with the OSU Extension Service to conduct a survey of registered voters in Yamhill County to determine their views on growth and livability within the sphere of county government.

This report discusses the findings of that survey. The report has three sections. The first is a discussion of survey results, drawing on statistical analysis of responses to categorical questions. The second section draws on the extensive written comments of survey respondents in response to open-ended questions. This supplements the statistical analysis by providing a feel for the tone of the public discourse around growth and livability issues. The final section summarizes the findings.

LIVABILITY, GROWTH, AND POLICY: WHAT SURVEY RESPONDENTS SAID

During the spring of 1996, the OSU Survey Research Center mailed the Livability in Yamhill County survey to a random sample of about 800 Yamhill County voters. (Details about the methodology and response rate are in Appendix A.) The first set of questions in the survey sought opinions about livability and growth. The second set of questions sought opinions
Livability and Growth

Respondents were asked whether they were concerned about livability, how they rated livability in Yamhill County, what issues they thought affected livability, and how much they expected the county to grow in the next 5 years.

Concern

Almost 90 percent (88 percent) of respondents are either fairly or greatly concerned about livability. A majority (51 percent) is greatly concerned about livability. Only 12 percent are not too concerned or at all concerned about livability (Figure 1).

A respondent's rating of livability in Yamhill County, estimate of future growth, and gender affect the level of concern. The relationship between a respondent's rating of livability and levels of concern about livability did not show a consistent pattern, except that those who rated livability the highest tended to be either not at all concerned about livability or greatly concerned. Those believing the county population would increase a lot were more likely to be concerned about livability than those believing population would increase a little, stay the same, or decrease. Females are more concerned about livability than males.

Rating of Livability

Respondents were told that livability is “often measured by the quality of characteristics that relate to living a good life, such as jobs, fear of crime, environmental quality, good health care, and so forth.” When given this definition, three-quarters of the respondents rate livability as approaching excellent. This means they rated livability in Yamhill County with a ranking of 5, 6, or 7 on a scale of 1-7, where a “1” means very poor livability and a “7” means excellent livability. Figure 2 shows the distribution of ratings.

Education affects a respondent's rating of livability. Those with college degrees are somewhat more likely to rate livability higher than those without college degrees.

Issues Affecting Livability

When asked what issues they feel affect the livability of Yamhill County, a majority believes land use and water quality affect livability a lot. Two-fifths of the respondents feel property taxes (41 percent) and law enforcement (39 percent) affect livability a lot. The job base mix (that, is the variety of job opportunities) is ranked by only one-third of the respondents as affecting livability a lot, and adequate transportation is felt by only 22.5 percent to affect livability a lot (see Table 1).
Figure 1

Question: How concerned are you about livability in Yamhill County? (n=438)
Question: On a scale of 1 to 7, where a "1" means very poor livability and a "7" means excellent livability, where would you rate the livability of the county today? (n=442)
### Table 1. Issues Affecting Livability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>A lot (Percent respondents)</th>
<th>Quite a bit</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property taxes (n=442)</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land use (n=440)</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water quality, quantity (n=441)</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of job opportunities (n=445)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement (n=445)</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate transportation (n=444)</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Growth

Almost three-quarters of the respondents (71 percent) believe that growth will increase a lot in the next 5 years in the county (Figure 3). Respondents were asked for their estimate of future county population growth, but were not given information about the actual growth rates recently experienced in the county. The median estimate of the future population growth was 9 percent per year. This is much higher than the actual rate of growth—2.6 percent per year—during the 1990-95 period. It also exceeds the 2.2 percent annual growth rate forecast for 1995-2000 prepared in July 1993 by the Portland State University Center for Population Research and Census. Homeowners believe population will grow more in the next 5 years than renters, and the self-employed anticipate more growth than retirees, the disabled, or full-time students.

### Policy

Yamhill County voters in the sample were asked about the impact of growth on property taxes and how fair and reasonable property taxes are. They were also asked for their opinions about specific policies related to land use, growth management, transportation, water quality, and law enforcement—issues related to livability and growth in the county.

### Taxes

Three-quarters of the Yamhill County respondents believe the property taxes they pay to support county services will increase if the county population grows in the next 5 years. Only 3 percent believe taxes will decrease with growth (Figure 4). None of the characteristics of the respondents appears to be related to their judgments about the impact of growth on taxes.

The average 1995-96 property tax rate in Yamhill County was $13.08 per $1,000 of assessed value (compared to a statewide average of $13.20). The property tax rate for county government was $3.00 (compared to a statewide average of $2.39). Just short of a majority of
Figure 3

Question: Do you think the county's population will increase a lot in the next 5 years, increase a little, stay about the same, or decrease?
Figure 4

Question: Do you think the property taxes you pay to support county services will increase, remain about the same, or decrease if the county's population grows in the next 5 years? (n=448)
the respondents believe that county property taxes are reasonable (47.3 percent) and fair (47.7 percent) (Figure 5). About 30 percent believe county property taxes are unreasonable or unfair, with just over 20 percent not expressing an opinion about this issue. Judgments about fairness were highly correlated with judgments about reasonableness.

The education of the respondent affects his or her opinions about the reasonableness of the property tax. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to judge the tax as reasonable than those with lower levels. None of the demographic characteristics is significantly related to judgments about the fairness of the tax.

Land Use and Growth Management

Three-fifths (61.5 percent) of the respondents believe local governments should use land use laws to control growth (Figure 6). One respondent in nine (11.5 percent) believes land use laws should promote growth, while one in twelve (8.8 percent) believes they should be used to stop growth.

Attitudes toward using land use laws to manage growth do not appear to be significantly related to any of the demographic characteristics of respondents—age, years in the county, education, occupation, home ownership, or gender. Nor are they related to expectations about population growth in the county, about the impact of growth on taxes, or judgments about the reasonableness of county property taxes.

Respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved of a number of specific tools for managing growth. The tools with the most support (that is, greater or equal to 60 percent) are (1) limiting the expansion of urban growth boundaries (UGBs), and (2) charging full development costs (sewers, roads, etc.) on new home construction (Figure 7).

Oregon law permits both these policy tools. Oregon law requires that urban growth boundaries contain enough land to accommodate 20 years of anticipated population growth. If a community anticipates more population than can be accommodated within the UGB under current policies, it must change the policies affecting density and infill, for example, so that future growth can be accommodated. Oregon law also permits setting development charges for sewer, water, storm drainage, parks, and transportation so as to recover full costs. Jurisdictions have been reluctant to actually implement such charges because of their impact on housing costs.

A respondent’s occupation makes a difference in judgments regarding UGBs. Employees—those working full or part-time for pay—are more supportive of limiting the expansion of UGBs than the self-employed.
Figure 5
Indication of respondents' opinions about reasonableness and fairness of property taxes paid for county government.

Do you think that the property taxes you pay today for county government are reasonable or unreasonable, given the services you receive? (n=444)

Do you think the property taxes you pay for county services are fair or unfair to you personally? (n=444)
Figure 6

Question: Do you think local government should use land use laws to promote growth, control growth, remain neutral, or stop growth? (n=442)
Figure 7
Respondents' APPROVAL or DISAPPROVAL of local government tools for managing growth.

- Approve
- Disapprove
- Don't know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Description</th>
<th>Percent Approve</th>
<th>Percent Disapprove</th>
<th>Percent Don't know</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refuse new business construction property tax breaks.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n=445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit building permits.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n=444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt moratoriums in rapid-growth areas.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n=441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimburse property owners for development opportunities losses due to adoption of land use restrictions.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n=446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit expansion of urban growth boundaries.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n=445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift infrastructure investment from high to low growth areas.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n=499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge full development costs on new home construction.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n=447</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two demographic factors affect judgments about charging full development costs on new home construction. Those over 65 are more supportive than the young (those under 29). Also, those with more education generally are more positive than those with less education regarding charging new construction for full development costs.

A majority of respondents support (1) refusing property tax breaks for new business construction, (2) limiting building permits, and (3) adopting moratoriums in rapid growth areas.

Oregon has two programs of property tax abatements: the Strategic Investment Program (SIP) and the Enterprise Zone Program. There are no enterprise zones in Yamhill County, but there was an application in 1996 for an abatement under the SIP.

The 1993 Oregon legislature enacted the Strategic Investment Program to encourage investment in Oregon by companies making highly capital-intensive investments, especially in high technology industries. The program abates property taxes on a project’s assessed value in excess of $100 million for a maximum of 15 years. The program requires the county (and city, if the project is located in a city) to approve applications to this program in order for the abatement to be granted. In 1995, a majority of Yamhill County commissioners voted to deny the application of Sumitomo Sitix for a tax abatement under this program. Over 57 percent of survey respondents support a policy of refusing property tax abatements for new investments. None of the demographic characteristics of the respondents was significantly related to this opinion on this policy.

Oregon law does not allow limiting permits and using moratoriums as growth management tools. Moratoriums are allowed only when approved by LCDC for unanticipated emergencies, which must be of limited duration and are allowed only during the period when the emergency situation is being corrected. An example would be when the new sewage treatment plant providing needed capacity is under construction. The City of Wilsonville recently lost a court case challenging its policy to limit building permits. Occupation and gender affect judgments about limiting building permits and adopting growth moratoriums. Women are more supportive of both policies than are men. Retirees and employees are more supportive of limiting permits than the self-employed. Retirees also are more supportive than the self-employed of moratoriums.

There has been much discussion in the national and state legislatures (including Oregon’s) of the idea of compensating property owners for partial loss of property values that are caused by government restrictions. While several states have passed legislation with this intent (including Texas, Montana, and Pennsylvania), such legislation has not become law in Oregon. Just less than a majority (48 percent) of survey respondents support a policy to reimburse property owners for loss of development opportunities due to adoption of land use restrictions. Those not expecting a lot of population growth in the county are more supportive of this tool than those expecting a lot of growth. Those with high school degrees and trade
The shifting of investment in infrastructure from high-growth to low-growth areas presumably would affect the location rather than the amount of growth in the county. This policy tool received the least support, with only 28 percent indicating support for this tool. Almost half of the respondents responded with a “don’t know” when asked about approval or disapproval of this tool. Renters and those without college degrees were more supportive of this tool than homeowners and those with college degrees.

Table 2 summarizes the factors affecting judgments about the growth management tools. For those policies that most limit growth (limiting building permits and moratoriums), retirees and those working for pay are more supportive than the self-employed. Women are more supportive than men of these policies.

For the policy tool that shifts development costs to new residents, the elderly and those with more education are most supportive of charging full development costs.

**Tax Increases for Law Enforcement and Crime Prevention**

Respondents were given a list of activities that the county does to enforce laws and prevent crime. They were asked whether they would favor or oppose increasing taxes to improve each of these efforts to reduce crime, if the crime rate in the county were to increase.

There were high levels of support for increasing taxes to support specific county law enforcement and crime prevention activities. More than 60 percent favored tax increases to foster neighborhood watch and other volunteer citizen programs, develop alternative (non-jail) sentences for nonviolent offenders, and provide more services to children and families (Figure 8). Those who thought taxes were reasonable were more supportive of tax increases for all of these programs than those who thought taxes were unreasonable. In addition, for tax increases for the neighborhood watch and volunteer programs, older people were more supportive than younger; and the self-employed, those not working outside the home, and retirees were more supportive than the unemployed. For tax increases for alternatives for nonviolent offenders and services to children and families, females were more supportive than males.

A majority of respondents favored increasing taxes to hire more deputies and for criminal rehabilitation programs such as education and vocational training. Those who believe taxes are reasonable are more supportive of tax increases for both these strategies than are those who believe taxes are unreasonable. Females are more supportive of tax increases to support these programs than males.
Table 2. Factors affecting judgments about growth management tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy (percent favor)</th>
<th>Growth expectations</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in county</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Homeowner/renter</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refuse tax breaks (57.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit permits (55.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retirees/employees more supportive than self-employed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women more supportive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt Moratoriums (52.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retirees more supportive than self-employed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women more supportive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimburse landowners (47.5)</td>
<td>Those not expecting a lot of growth more supportive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit UGB expansion (64.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employees more supportive than self-employed</td>
<td></td>
<td>High/trade school more supportive than grad work/community college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift infrastructure (27.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge full development charges (60.0)</td>
<td>Over 65 more supportive than under 29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Those without college degrees more supportive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8

Question: If the crime rate in the county increases, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE an increase in taxes to improve the following efforts to reduce crime?

- Favor
- Oppose
- Don't know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire more deputies. (n=430)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire more prosecutors and support staff. (n=415)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build more jail space. (n=416)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop alternative (non-jail) sentences for nonviolent offenders. (n=425)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal rehabilitation programs such as education and vocational training. (n=427)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More services for children and families. (n=433)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster neighborhood watch and other volunteer citizen programs. (n=438)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There was less than majority support for increasing taxes to build more jail space or hire more prosecutors and support staff. Those who believe law enforcement affects livability a lot are more supportive of raising taxes to fund both these policies than those who think law enforcement is less important in affecting livability. Also, those who think property taxes are reasonable and those with more education are more supportive of raising taxes to hire prosecutors and support staff than those who think taxes are unreasonable and those who have less education. Males are more supportive of raising taxes to build jail space than females.

There are some patterns in these responses (Table 3). Those who believe property taxes are reasonable at the current time are more supportive of increasing taxes for all of these law enforcement and crime prevention activities (except building more jail space). Those who believe law enforcement affects livability a lot are more supportive of raising taxes to fund enforcement, prosecution, and incarceration (hiring deputies and prosecutors and building jail space). Females are more supportive than males of increasing taxes to support the prevention and rehabilitation activities, and less supportive than males of building jail space.

Other Policy Issues

In addressing the transportation issue, almost three-quarters of the respondents believe the county should improve roads and highways to accommodate more automobiles rather than support mass transit (Figure 9). Renters were less supportive of roads and more supportive of mass transit than homeowners.

There is almost universal (90 percent or more) support for continuing strategic planning for different aspects of water management, including water supply, water quality, and watershed management (Figure 10).

Respondents were asked whether government or private enterprise should take an active role “in developing a new mix of the job base” (affecting the mix of jobs in agriculture, small businesses, and electronics, for example). A majority felt both government and private enterprise should be involved in this effort rather than just one or the other (Figure 11). Males were more likely to support private enterprise alone taking an active role in job diversification, whereas women were more likely to support county involvement or both county and private enterprise taking active roles.
Table 3. Factors affecting support for tax increases to improve specific crime prevention activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity (percent favor)</th>
<th>Law enforcement affects livability</th>
<th>Taxes reasonable</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in county</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Homeowner/renter</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire more deputies (56.3)</td>
<td>Those who believe law enforcement affects livability a lot are more favorable</td>
<td>Those who believe taxes reasonable more favorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire more prosecutors/staff (37.6)</td>
<td>Those who believe law enforcement affects livability a lot are more favorable</td>
<td>Those who believe taxes reasonable more favorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Those with more education more favorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build more jail space (38.5)</td>
<td>Those who believe law enforcement affects livability a lot are more favorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Males more favorable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives for nonviolent offenders (69.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Those who believe taxes reasonable more favorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Females more favorable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal rehabilitation (52.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Those who believe taxes reasonable more favorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Females more favorable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services to children/families (61.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Those who believe taxes reasonable more favorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Females more favorable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood watch/volunteer programs (89.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Those who believe taxes reasonable more favorable</td>
<td>Old favor more than young</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-employed, not working outside home, and retirees more supportive than unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11
Figure 9

Question: Do you think the county should focus on a program of mass transit or should it focus on a program of improving roads and highways to accommodate more automobiles? (n=443)
Figure 10

Question: Should the county and cities CONTINUE or DISCONTINUE strategic planning for each of these features of water management?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Continue</th>
<th>Discontinue</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water supply (n=447)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water quality (n=442)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watershed management (n=442)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent
Figure 11

Question: Should county government take an active role in developing a new mix of the job base, should that be left to private enterprise, or should both government and private enterprise share in this task? (n=443)
WHAT ELSE RESPONDENTS HAD TO SAY ABOUT LIVABILITY:
a look at the open-ended responses

The last page of the survey was left blank for respondents to answer the question, “What else would you like to say about livability in Yamhill County or about county government?” Nearly half (49 percent) of the respondents took time to write in their comments. There were also three other survey questions where respondents could write in an answer. These questions included listing other issues that affect livability (question 3), what kinds of mass transit the county should consider (question 4a), and what things county government could do to foster a mixture of jobs (question 12a).

Livability and Growth

Many commented on how livable they believe Yamhill County is now. One respondent wrote, “We complain about the rain, the few hot days in summer, but I wouldn’t trade with any other place that I have been and Yamhill County and western Oregon are the best.”

On the other hand, respondents wrote about concerns that too much growth would lead to a decrease in livability. “People move here to get away from the commercial aspects of Portland and/or other metro areas. If Newberg becomes another Tigard or Beaverton, it will lose its appeal to me and my family and we will move!”

Several respondents wrote about the need to control growth. “I have lived in McMinnville for most of my life and I appreciate its beauty, friendliness and the many cultural opportunities. I have seen it grow from 3,000 to 22,000 and all growth is not always what we would like to see but it is inevitable. I would like to see the growth controlled but have no suggestions. Most of us are of the thinking not in my back or front yard.”

“I would like to see growth in Yamhill County to the extent of allowing our young people to stay here and work, rather than forcing them to move or have long commutes in order to have good employment.”

“I believe the population is growing too fast in Yamhill County. Many things have to be fixed and plans have to be made before growth gets out of control. ...if this growth develops unchecked and without a definite and viable plan, the county will be a mess and the livability will sharply decrease.”

“A reasonable rate of growth (2.5 - 3.5 percent) is healthy, especially to fund new and replacement infrastructure. Placing barricades at the county line is unrealistic and unfair. Measured annexations to realize an average rate of growth is a viable option.”

In regard to land use, there were varying opinions: “Leave farm land as farm land, no more shopping malls or housing developments.” On the other hand, another respondent said, “If we could put a real mall in this county, it would be great. We also need a Fred Meyers!”
**Roads and Transportation**

What respondents wrote about most on the last page was their concern about improving the roads. They wanted a Newberg/Dundee bypass. "The bypass in Newberg will open up more area for growth (I’m opposed to growth), but must be done to improve livability for Newberg." No one wrote against the Newberg/Dundee bypass.

"Our road ends where the heaviest growth is taking place and becomes gravel, with no one willing to vote more tax dollars."

"Something has to be done about our poor roads. I have one on our road that has a mini grand canyon on it. And nobody cares."

While roads were a big concern, there were also those who were interested in mass transit. In response to question 4a on the kinds of mass transit the county should consider, 63 respondents mentioned the need for bus service; 47 were interested in either light rail or trains; 30 commented on the need for transportation linkages such as commuter trains or buses that linked with Tri-Met or shuttles to other outlying areas. One respondent said, “The new Columbia Medical Center is a welcome addition, but I’m not sure if there is public transportation to it.” A few people were interested in more bike transportation; and one person suggested a subway and another a monorail. A couple of people suggested a toll road to Portland and the coast.

**Fostering a Mixture of Jobs**

In response to question 12a, 21 percent of the respondents wrote in specific ways that the county could foster a mixture of jobs. The responses were grouped into 13 categories, which are listed below and are followed by a sampling of the respondents’ comments. (The number of responses in each category is noted in the parenthesis.)

The question was, "What, specifically, are some of the things county government could do to foster a mixture of jobs?"

- Tax breaks, incentives, and SIPS for industry (31)
  
  "Be more receptive to allowing initial tax flexibility for select (e.g., environmentally-kind) new businesses and corporations."
  
  "Offer tax breaks for new businesses for say 5 years to help them to get established, then gradually increase 20 percent annually over another 5 years to return to full taxation."
  
  "One or two SIP award maximum and only to industries that meet agreed parameters for wages, water and power usage, etc."

- Support and encourage businesses, work together (20)
  
  "We should work to form effective partnerships between public and private enterprise. Strategic alliances should be formed to maximize planning and development efforts."
“Research and develop a master list of job types and industry that would compliment the county’s personality profile. Ask residents what businesses they’d like to see in the county, and appeal to those industries.”

- Promote training and education of local residents (15)
  “Promote the livability factor and the trained work staff in the area with a good educational system.”
  “Do something to involve youth more, more part-time jobs for youth (who are responsible for much of the crime in the county.)”
  “More training programs for those who can’t afford to go to schools such as colleges and universities, etc.”

- Infrastructure development (13)
  "Determine infrastructure to develop location and incorporate those into surrounding development so that residential areas are not cut up in order to allow access to industrial sites.”

- Agriculture vs. development, zoning and land use issues (9)
  “Protect agricultural and forest land by requiring larger minimum parcel size for dwelling construction and by maintaining low property taxes on ag. and forest use.”

- Encourage small businesses (8)
  “The greatest diversity is with small companies.”

- Promote environmentally friendly/clean industry (7)
  “Work closely with companies so they operate so as not to harm the environment.”

- Maintain character of Yamhill County (6)
  “Invest in downtown, divest from strip malls.”

- Stop government interference with business and industry (6)
  “Allow development of industry with a minimum of government harassment and expense.”

- No tax breaks or incentives for industry (6)
  “Breaks are not fair to existing businesses. If new ones want to come in they should expect to pay full share. No special treatment.”

- No more industries with low-paying jobs (5)
  “Encourage growth of businesses which pay more than minimum wages.”

- Promote industry that has jobs for local residents (4)
  “Make sure that new companies have a variety of positions at various income levels that are open and can be filled by local residents.”

- Miscellaneous (3)
  “Make the feasibility studies more cost effective and within reasonable cost.”

Other Livability Issues

Respondents also mentioned issues that affect livability (question 3) other than those listed in the survey (property taxes, land use, water quality and quantity, variety of job opportunities, law enforcement, and adequate transportation). Education (29 responses) and recreation (10 responses—“The county parks are very good,” said one respondent) topped the list. While education is not a county government issue, it is an issue of concern to voters in the county.
One respondent said, "Recently, there has been a trend to cut education. This trend must be reversed. Education should be our priority."

A couple of voters compared the cost of education to the cost of corrections. "We spend $65-75M per year on a prisoner and $5-8M per school child—We need to only redirect those funds and reduce cost—such as to release."

Another said, "We are spending too many dollars on criminals compared to dollars spent on good people (education). Check the weight room at Sheridan Prison. Compare it with McMinnville schools or other Yamhill County schools."

Some residents commented about whether taxes were fair or unfair, but they did not distinguish between local, state, and federal taxes.

Another issue that was mentioned several times was a concern about how well county officials worked together. One respondent said, "It is vital to good county government to have open exchange of ideas and shared resources. Petty quarreling between departments increases public distrust of government."

A few respondents wrote about a need for services for children and families. "More police—more jails are not the answer—I feel people/families need to become more responsible for their action and choices—before they and their children become angry and then violent. Our society needs to address divorce, illegitimacy—abortion, teenage gangs, drugs... If you want to reach the kids where they are—you have to be where they are."

In regard to people taking responsibility, one respondent wrote, "...the way things are going, people will have to make streets safe." And finally, one respondent wrote, "Quit asking so many questions!"

**SUMMARY**

Almost 90 percent of the Yamhill County respondents are fairly or greatly concerned about livability. Land use and water quality were the issues considered to have the most impact on livability; more than half of the respondents thought these two issues affect livability a lot. Most also believe that population will increase a lot in the next 5 years and that population growth will lead to higher county property taxes. There are high levels of support for policies that control growth by limiting expansion of urban growth boundaries and shifting the costs of development of new neighborhoods to new residents. There also is a great deal of support for improving roads, continued water management, and increasing taxes for law enforcement efforts that employ volunteers and non-jail alternatives, and services to children and families.
APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY AND RESPONSE RATES

Methodology for this study included a random selection of voters, pre-testing and administration of the questionnaire, data entry, and analysis.

The most recent list of County registered voters was employed for sampling purposes. The County clerk, employing random methods, mailed us labels of 840 names and addresses. Thirty-three were selected, at random, for mailing of a pre-test questionnaire.

The questionnaire was developed after meetings with county officials who sponsored the study. A draft of the survey instrument was designed by the Survey Research Center and reviewed by the Program for Government Research and Education (PGRE) and the chair of the Yamhill County Commission. Completed pre-test questionnaires were studied for signs of poor question wording or evidence that the respondent may have had difficulty in understanding the questions or completing the questionnaire. Some pre-test respondents were contacted by phone to learn more about any problems with the questionnaire. The revised instrument (Appendix B) was mailed February 23, 1996 to 807 individuals. A reminder card was mailed a week later to non-respondents, and a second mailing that included the questionnaire was mailed 3 weeks after the first mailing.

A total of 452 usable questionnaires were returned. Dropping duplicate names and undeliverable mailings from the sample gave us a revised or adjusted sample base of 763, and a response rate of 59 percent.

Most survey texts report that a 60 percent rate is a minimum level for general population mail studies without raising concerns of non-response errors (Salant and Dillman, 1994). Even though our return rate was close to the 60 percent minimum, the possibility remains that the data have significant non-response error for some subgroups in the population. A telephone followup of 40 non-respondents showed that most believed they were not well informed on livability issues and couldn’t answer the questions, had little interest in the study, or were too busy to respond.

A 41 percent non-response rate suggests the possibility of bias. For example, look at the marginal distribution of responses to the first item (about concern for livability in the county). Eighty-eight percent of the sample said they were “fairly” or “greatly” concerned about livability. This value may not represent the views of all registered voters nor all adults in the county, given comments by our telephone follow-up of non-respondents. By comparing sample values with population estimates, however, we can determine the extent of bias in the sample.

Bias is of two sorts. First, registered voters may differ from all adults for certain demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, income, education, home ownership, etc. (78 percent of the county’s adults are registered to vote). Second, sampled registered voters who responded may differ from non-respondents in important demographic characteristics as well. We have
1995 Census estimates and estimates for 789 registered voters by gender from the random sample the county produced for the study. Gender differences for the three groups are shown in Appendix Table 1.

The data suggest that females are over-represented among registered voters by 3 percent, compared to the 1995 Census estimates, and that surveyed females are over-represented by an additional 3 percent. We have no estimates of other demographic characteristics for 1996 county registered voters so we are unable to make additional comparisons among respondents, registered voters, and Census estimates of all adults. A statistical analysis showed no significant difference for gender effects between surveyed respondents and all registered voters (t=1.29, p<.19) but a significant one between respondents and all county adults (t=2.59, p<.009). One may conclude that the survey produced sound estimates of gender effects for registered voters. Estimates are less certain for estimating gender effects for all adults.

Appendix Table 1. Comparison of gender differences for surveyed respondents, registered voters, and 1995 census estimates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Survey respondents</th>
<th>Registered voters</th>
<th>1995 census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(452)</td>
<td>(789)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE AND ITEM FREQUENCIES

(Note: All numbers are percentages. Numbers in parentheses are total responses.)

1. How concerned are you about livability in Yamhill County? (Circle one number.)
   2.5 NOT AT ALL CONCERNED
   9.8 NOT TOO CONCERNED
   36.5 FAIRLY CONCERNED
   51.1 GREATLY CONCERNED
   (438)

2. There has been discussion lately about livability in the county. Livability is often measured by the quality of the characteristics that relate to living a good life, such as jobs, fear of crime, environmental quality, good health care, and so forth. On a scale of 1 to 7, where a “1” means very poor livability and a “7” means excellent livability, where would you rate the livability of the county today? (Circle only one number.)

```
Very poor | Excellent
Livability | Livability
---- | ----
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7
0.9 | 0.5 | 4.3 | 16.1 | 44.8 | 28.1 | 5.4
(442)
```

3. Yamhill County is growing and with growth comes a variety of opportunities and concerns about livability. A number of issues that may or may not affect livability are listed below. Please indicate if you think each issue affects livability in Yamhill County a lot, quite a bit, a little, or not at all. (Circle one number for each issue.)

```
A LOT | QUITE | A BIT | A LITTLE | NOT AT ALL
----- | ------ | ----- | -------- | --------
a. Property taxes | 41.2 | 36.7 | 18.3 | 3.8 | (442)
b. Land use | 52.3 | 36.1 | 10.7 | 0.9 | (440)
c. Water quality, quantity | 52.2 | 32.9 | 11.3 | 3.6 | (441)
d. Variety of job opportunities | 33.3 | 36.0 | 27.2 | 3.6 | (445)
e. Law enforcement | 39.1 | 39.6 | 18.4 | 2.9 | (445)
f. Adequate transportation | 22.5 | 33.6 | 34.7 | 9.2 | (444)
g. Other (Please specify) | | | | |
```

27
4. Yamhill County has 72,400 residents, according to the 1995 census. Do you think the county's population will increase a lot in the next 5 years, increase a little, stay about the same, or decrease? (Circle one number.)

- 0.4 DECREASE
- 1.6 STAY SAME
- 26.9 INCREASE A LITTLE
- 71.1 INCREASE A LOT

4a. About what percent do you think the county's population will increase each year, on average, over the next 5 years? (Just your best estimate.)

5. Do you think the property taxes you pay to support county services will increase, remain about the same, or decrease if the county's population grows in the next 5 years? (Circle one number.)

- 76.8 TAXES INCREASE
- 13.2 TAXES STAY SAME
- 3.1 TAXES DECREASE
- 6.9 DON'T KNOW

6. Do you think the property taxes you pay today for county government are reasonable or unreasonable, given the services you receive? (Circle one number.)

- 47.3 REASONABLE
- 31.3 UNREASONABLE
- 21.4 DON'T KNOW

7. Do you think the property taxes you pay for county services are fair or unfair to you personally? (Circle one number.)

- 47.7 FAIR
- 29.7 UNFAIR
- 22.5 DON'T KNOW

8. Growth is expected to impact land use in the county. Do you think local government should use land use laws to promote growth, control growth, remain neutral, or stop growth? (Circle one number.)

- 11.5 PROMOTE GROWTH
- 18.1 REMAIN NEUTRAL
- 61.5 CONTROL GROWTH
- 8.8 STOP GROWTH
9. Some tools for managing growth are listed below. Please circle if you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE if local government were to adopt each one. (Circle one number for each.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>APPROVE</th>
<th>DISAPPROVE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Refuse property tax breaks for new business construction?</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Limit building permits?</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Adopt moratoriums in rapid-growth areas?</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Reimburse property owners for loss of development opportunities due to adoption of land use restrictions?</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Limit expansion of urban growth boundaries?</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Shift investment in infrastructure from high-growth to low-growth areas?</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Charge full development costs (sewers, roads, etc.) on new home construction?</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Transportation is another issue affected by county growth. Do you think the county should focus on a program of mass transit or should it focus on a program of improving roads and highways to accommodate more automobiles? (Circle one number.)

- 71.3 IMPROVE ROADS
- 24.4 MASS TRANSIT
- 4.2 BOTH

10a. What kind or kinds of mass transit should the county consider?

11. Growth will increase the demand for the county’s water. Should the county and cities CONTINUE or DISCONTINUE strategic planning for each of these features of water management? (Circle one number for each.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
<th>DISCONTINUE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Water supply</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Water quality</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Watershed manage</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Growth may well change the mix or variety of jobs in the county - for example, from agriculture and small industry to electronics and high-tech manufacturing. Should county government take an active role in developing a new mix of the job base, should that be left to private enterprise, or should both government and private enterprise share in this task? (Circle one number.)

38.4 PRIVATE ENTERPRISE
2.5 COUNTY GOVERNMENT
59.1 BOTH

(443)

12a. What, specifically, are some of the things county government could do to foster a mixture of jobs?

13. Growth in the county may produce an increase in crime. Listed below are some of the activities that county government does to enforce laws and prevent crimes. If the crime rate in the county increases, would you FAVOR or OPPOSE an increases in taxes to improve the following efforts to reduce crime? (Circle one number for each.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>FAVOR</th>
<th>OPPOSE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Hire more deputies</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Hire more prosecutors and support staff</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Build more jail space</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Develop alternative (non-jail) sentences for nonviolent offenders</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Criminal rehabilitation programs such as education and vocational training</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. More services for children and families</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Foster neighborhood watch and other volunteer citizen programs</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, a few questions about yourself......

14. How many years have you, yourself, lived in Yamhill County?
    _____ YEARS

15. What was your age on your last birthday?
    _____ YEARS
16. Do you own or rent the place in which you live?
   87.5 OWN
   12.5 RENT
   (447)

17. Which one of the following categories best describes your current employment situation?
   (Circle one number)
   18.6 SELF-EMPLOYED
   45.6 WORKING FULL OR PART-TIME FOR PAY
   2.2 LOOKING FOR WORK
   5.8 NOT EMPLOYED OUTSIDE THE HOME
   1.8 DISABLED
   24.2 RETIRED
   1.8 FULL-TIME STUDENT
   OTHER (Specify) ____________________________
   (447)

18. What is the highest level of school or college that you have completed? (Circle one number)
   0.7 GRADE SCHOOL
   5.8 SOME HIGH SCHOOL
   27.3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
   8.1 TRADE SCHOOL
   10.7 TWO-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
   14.8 SOME 4 YEAR UNIVERSITY
   12.3 UNIVERSITY GRADUATE
   18.6 GRADUATE WORK OR DEGREE
   1.8 OTHER (Specify) ____________________________
   (447)

19. Are you:
   44.0 MALE
   56.0 FEMALE
   (452)

20. What else would you like to say about livability in Yamhill County or about county government?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!