

**"No One is Thrown Away":
The West Medford Community Coalition and
Opportunities for Change**

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A Report Presented to
The West Medford Community Coalition

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About the Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy

The Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy was born of the idea that timber harvest could be consistent with sustainable forests. It was formed as a non-profit organization in 1991 to create ways to reshape our economies in keeping with ecosystem principles. Our mission statement is “sustainable forests, sustainable jobs, sustainable communities.” In addition to our work in rural areas which seeks to improve the relationship between people and the land, we also work in urban areas, seeking to improve the connection between everyday people living their lives and the larger social institutions which serve them.

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Executive Summary

The West Medford Community Coalition formed in April of 1994 to address the growing social problems of West Medford. Earlier that year, Children First for Oregon identified the area as one of the twelve most distressed neighborhoods in Oregon. The Coalition is composed of 22 social service providers, police department, city departments, Washington and Jackson Schools, and residents.

The Coalition received funding from the Carpenter Foundation and the Oregon Community Foundation through their Families Initiative program to facilitate a six-month program of assessment, planning and action. The Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy was contracted to: a) identify the issues of the broadest range of residents in the community; b) describe the strengths and resilience as well as the challenges and problems within the neighborhood; and c) identify natural leaders, communication pathways, and opportunities for change to improve the quality of life. The Institute field team contacted over 300 residents and agency officials for descriptions of community life. Their stories and observations are the basis of this report.

The strongest geographic units in West Medford are “pockets.” These are two to four block areas in which, “We watch out for each other around here.” Face-to-face relations and caretaking are strong within the pockets. Main Street serves as a boundary between Jackson and Washington Schools and gives a feel of two neighborhoods in West Medford. Beyond pockets and school areas, residents reported little identity with West Medford as a whole. Beyond the pockets, people said, “We don’t know anyone,” and, “We feel isolated.”

Some issues and conditions extended across the entire neighborhood, with a prevailing concern about the decline of the quality of life. Community-wide issues examined in the report are: 1) Crime and safety; 2) “Cars go too fast.” 3) “Kids run loose.” 4) Property conversion--too many rentals, high densities; 5) Landlord/tenant conflicts associated with declining housing stock, substandard housing, and blight; 6) “Trash is a big problem.” 7) “There’s more graffiti now.” 8) “The area needs more sidewalks and lighting.” 9) “Alleys present special problems” (traffic, density, safety). and 10) Turnover and transiency have increased, leading to less stability.

Eight publics are described in the report: homeowners, parents, Hispanics, senior citizens, youth, underemployed, business, and the homeless/transient population. Homeowners have values for property maintenance and hard work, and expressed concern at the high number of rentals in the area and the loss of single-family residences. The social networks of children and

youth extend beyond those of their parents and offer opportunities for generating greater community identification. Concerns related to unsupervised youth were very widespread and residents commonly told stories of young children in the streets without adults. Youth and their parents related a lack of neighborhood-based activities and wanted a range of recreational opportunities developed.

The Hispanic population has been growing steadily and its percentage of the population reported in the 1990 census was 9% (Census Tract Two) and 16% (Tract One). Schools report that 20-25% of their population is Hispanic. Hispanics have unique challenges due to language and cultural differences, as well as the illegal status of many. An economic incentive to maintain urban blight exists in West Medford because of the rental profits available from a vulnerable population who cannot say much about high rents and low quality housing. Lack of adequate health care was a large concern. Above all, Hispanics have stated that poor wages prevent them from adequately caring for their families or dealing with all the financial responsibilities of families such as car insurance or child care.

Many retired people in West Medford have lived in the area many years, often residing in the same homes in which they raised their families. They are among the most isolated of the community, saying things like, "When it gets dark, we don't go out," and, "When my kids were growing up, I knew the neighbors better." Their support systems appear to be family and agency-based, and not neighborhood. As retired people have aged, it has become ever more difficult for them to maintain their property and they have said that, with some support, they could maintain themselves longer in their homes. As it is now, residents perceive that when these homes change hands, less stable people have come in, or that higher density housing results. Senior citizens have strong values for homeownership, property upkeep and family. They have insisted that they have a contribution to make and want to work to improve the community.

The underemployed refers to the very many low-income people in the neighborhood including those on welfare assistance, the working poor, and single parent households. They have expressed a value for "making it" and fieldwork revealed a large number of people who have successfully achieved independence of "the system." These individuals are a resource for other, more dependent residents. Drug and alcohol abuse, poor social, parenting and budgeting skills, and lack of employment skills are associated with a crisis lifestyle with many underemployed. They expressed issues related to unemployment, low wages, high rents, wanting more activities for their children, and transportation.

Business owners in the area expressed concerns about transiency, trash, graffiti, vandalism, and the need for more lighting. Little to no business employment is local, but the firms have expressed strong support for the Coalition and interest in assisting it. Finally, the transient and homeless populations are part of West Medford. Many of the underemployed are homeless at various periods. Also the homeless shelters, railroad tracks, and low-income housing encourage their presence. Their issues are survival-oriented: food, shelter, clothing, showers, jobs, and safety.

The goal of the Coalition is to improve the quality of life in West Medford. It recognizes that just improving services will not be sufficient. Rather, mobilizing the community and raising the awareness that everyone has a contribution to make have been of central interest. The field team identified numerous ideas from residents about addressing problems. In addition, the Coalition sponsored a “Day of Training and Action” on January 28 which attracted about 150 residents, agency officials and city officials. Issues areas were identified and plans begun to address them:

A Task Force on Neighborhood Blight, operating as a sub-committee of the Coalition, has begun to meet on a regular basis. Its goals are to educate property owners of the programs available for housing rehabilitation, to serve as advocates for tenants who are vulnerable if they protest poor housing conditions, and to promote a “Free Trash Day”, already supported by the City of Medford, as a means to mobilize the community around trash clean-up.

A Task Force on Home Ownership, also under the auspices of the Coalition, is meeting regularly to plan and offer workshops in the neighborhood on home ownership. Its goals are to educate residents about the available programs and to work with residents to develop their capability to qualify over time. It has scheduled an English and a Spanish workshop for April 22 and May 13, respectively, and will repeat them as needed.

A number of Washington School parents and residents from the south neighborhood formed a safety committee and they mapped their area for poor lighting, sidewalk needs, blind intersections and so on. They presented this information to the City Manager and several departments and were very well received. Local input has helped the city establish priorities. The city has agreed to allocate \$142,000 for sidewalks along Columbus, Dakota and West Main and requisitioned 14 new street lights,

A Latino/Anglo Relations Committee has been meeting regularly since late January. They are reviewing problems of Latinos with the immigration service, exploring joint language classes in the neighborhood, and other opportunities to increase the communication between the two groups.

The Coalition will be exploring various options for increasing the involvement of youth in neighborhood improvement and for expanding recreation opportunities for children and youth. Considerable interest has been expressed in youth teams helping to maintain homes for the elderly and doing trash clean-up. Opportunities are being explored to create employment around these needs, and the YMCA is considering exchanging use of the facility in exchange for such work. In addition, youth have been active in designing their ideal youth center and discussions are underway related to funding support and facility.

Finally, a community center and parks have been areas of active interest in the neighborhood. Residents want a gathering place to meet neighbors informally, and a place to host community-building activities such as classes, tutoring, recreation, dances or other social events. The prospects of using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money in the next funding cycle are being explored.

Chapter One

Introduction

The West Medford Community Coalition

The West Medford Community Coalition is an informal coalition of public and private not-for-profit organizations which was formed in April of 1994. Since January, 1994, community meetings were attended by representatives from the Medford 549-C School District, Jackson County Department of Health and Human Services, the City of Medford, the Carpenter Foundation, Adult and Family Services, and State Representative John Watt.

At an organizational meeting convened on June 8, 1994, and at a subsequent meeting convened June 16, 1994, twenty-two public and private organizations pledged their commitment to active participation and collaboration in the West Medford Community Coalition. Participation is comprised of top-level administration from each collaboration organizations.

The impetus for the formation of the Coalition was the belief that the social problems of West Medford are becoming worse. Specifically, a report by the group Children First For Oregon (1994), on the basis of a series of indicators developed from census information, stated that West Medford was one of twelve “severely-distressed” neighborhoods in Oregon. A summary of these problems is provided in Chapter One.

The Coalition's actions centered in the catchment areas for Jackson and Washington Schools, which are Census Tracts One and Two. This area is bordered on the north by McAndrews Road, on the east by Interstate 5, on the west by Columbus Avenue, and on the south by Barnett Road and Stewart Avenue. Appendix A shows a map of these tracts and summarizes census data related to them. In the combined tracts, there are 11,951 residents and 4,796 households.

The Coalition received funding from the Carpenter Foundation and the Oregon Community Foundation through their joint Families Initiative program to facilitate a six-month program of research, planning, and decision making within the community. The Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy was contracted to perform this work. The objectives of the work were to:

- identify the issues of residents in the community on which they wanted action across the range of publics represented in the area;
- describe areas of strength and resilience as well as challenges and problems within the neighborhood;

- identify natural leaders, communication pathways, and opportunities identified by residents for improving the quality of life in order to create an action plan capable of broad public support..

Methods Used in Community Assessment

The Rogue Institute's primary consideration throughout this descriptive work was to accurately reflect the values and issues of local residents. We wanted to understand the points of view of the various people with whom we talked, and to keep our own interpretation to a minimum. Although we had topics of information we were interested in, we most wanted to hear what was important to residents. In our view, it is essential to maintain individual ownership of an issue to guard against over-generalizing and to ensure that issue carriers have responsibility in resolving their own issue. The researchers worked to represent every geographical area in the neighborhood, as well as a wide range of publics (homeowners, parents, senior citizens, underemployed, youth, etc.). Researchers also spent time in social gathering places, listening to locals, and gaining further contacts in the neighborhood.

No formal checklist was used in the interviews, and questions were designed to elicit information on key topics. What do neighbors like and dislike about their area? What would they most want to change? How do the neighbors define the boundaries of their community? How do they relate to each other, and within which networks? Who serves as sources of information in the neighborhood? Who else we should talk to? By being sensitive to whom others relied upon for information and support, we were able to some extent to “map” the networks, that is, to understand how communication occurs. When the same names were often repeated, to us it represented the identification of a communicator or caretaker. These are the “natural leaders.”

Each interview was compared against the others for themes, which are statements that characterize the feeling of a group or area, and issues, which are statements that can be acted upon. Issues were categorized, when possible, under publics. The information was organized for presentation, keeping the original wording whenever possible.

After eight weeks of fieldwork, involving three staff members working half time, the results were 200 pages of field notes, representing the following contacts:

Formal interviews (residents)	100
informal contacts (and repeats, gathering places)	65
Residents attending evening meetings, Latino meeting, High School classes	110
Agency, professionals, churches, city council	60

Organization of the Report

The report is largely quotations in their original language, grouped around particular publics and topics. Numbers in brackets refer to a page number in the field notes. In this way, issues can always be linked to the individuals who carry them, and these persons can be included in the resolution of the issues.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the West Medford neighborhood, starting with the geography, the history, and perceived trends, and reviewing statistical information available for the neighborhood. Themes and issues as expressed by residents which are community-wide are then reported. Chapter Three identifies eight publics and their most important issues. Chapter Four identifies the opportunities for change which were suggested by residents and agency representatives. It also summarizes the results of “A Day of Planning and Action” held on January 28, 1995 at Jackson School which drew 150 residents, city officials and agency representatives to discuss action on community issues. The report closes with a potential model of necessary community functions to continue the work of social change in West Medford.

Chapter Two

The Pockets of West Medford: An Overview

Social Boundaries

Social boundaries refer to the identification people develop about where they live. Medford residents for years have identified with "West Medford" and "East Medford" and these distinctions implied differences in socioeconomic status, values and outlook. Our team was told that North and South Medford High Schools were named as such specifically to counter the strong distinctions which have developed between east and west.

The West Medford community defines its boundaries in more than one way. Many people said their neighborhood was just "West Medford" which was defined by Riverside and Stewart to Lozier Lane near Thunderbird and McAndrews. Many residents defined two sub-areas through the catchment area of Washington and Jackson Schools. The schools represent the major social institutions in the area because they draw people together and provide an identity with an area. They also broaden social ties: when the parents don't know each other, the children do. Main Street, especially after its creation as Highway 238, separates the two school areas. Figure One on the following page displays the map of the area the West Medford Community Coalition defined as their primary focus.

Most residents, however, when asked about “their” area or neighborhood, talked about “pockets.”

- “This is not a neighborhood; it’s not cohesive. It’s more like ‘pockets.’ For example, in this block it’s a mix of retirees and young families, but around the corner, you get six rentals in a row.” [82]

Multi-block areas are the usual unit of social ties and mutual support. While some ties naturally extend across the neighborhood and the city, the limit of social ties for support and caretaking more typically extend only a few blocks. The implications of this finding for neighborhood organizing are that a larger community identity will have to be fostered to create neighborhood change. Further, the high level of knowledge and caretaking within pockets represents a strength of the area.

Present Conditions and Trends

This section discusses in general terms the perceptions of residents regarding changes in their neighborhood. The next chapter (Three) will describe in more detail the concerns of each of the major publics in the area.

Figure One: Map of West Medford Study Area

Local residents have described the history of the neighborhood as generally positive. Especially in comparison to the problems of today, they tend to project upon the past a period in which doors were not locked, children could walk the sidewalks in safety, and families were intact with more mothers in the home.

- "It used to be that this area was mostly young families with kids--working people with one parent working and one at home; little traffic, a slow pace of life." [35, a homeowner commenting on life on Fairmont 40 years ago]
- "Thirty years ago, you didn't have to lock your doors." [18e]

Until very recently, the neighborhood was at the edge of Medford with farm land beyond. As population has increased, residential areas have sprung up around the area, increasing traffic, congestion and noise. Residents described the area in the past as working class, with many employed in the timber industry.

- "When we moved in, it was senior citizens who lived here. Now it's young people with young children. There's more noise, more traffic, more passers-by at night." [115, 12 years ago on Hamilton Street]

Today, the predominant family type in the neighborhood is single-parent households, and when both parents are in the home, they are both working. The stress on families created by lower

incomes and by conditions of both parents working is expressed in every facet of neighborhood life, but primarily related to issues of children. Unsupervised children are a major concern of residents as described more fully below. Appendix A reveals that poverty levels have grown substantially in Tracts One and Two between 1980 and 1990.

The housing stock is generally in decline, according to local perceptions, and is low to moderately priced - attracting a working-class population. The economic profile is changing in response to the impacts of regional economic shifts. As the number of timber-related professions declined, residents searched for alternative service jobs, but the choices have paid much less. As the economic shift in the region has continued from timber and agriculture to trade and services related to tourism and retirement, blue collar workers have fared less well than white collar workers. The lack of skills is becoming an increasing liability in the information age and signs of a two-class economic system are emerging.

Tract One supports two public schools (Jackson Elementary and McLoughlin Junior High) and two private schools (Cascade Christian and Sacred Heart). The public schools report that a large proportion of their students are "high risk", which is supported by a Children First For Oregon (1994) report that named Tract One as one of the 12 most "severely distressed" neighborhoods in Oregon. According to Jackson School, 80% of the student population qualifies for one or more publicly-funded social service programs, and over 50% receive welfare benefits. In fact, 90% of children 5 years and younger who come from single female head of household families live below the federal poverty level. The school turns over students at a rate of more than 67% a year.

Social problems have increased tremendously in the neighborhood, related to increased drug traffic and crime, a higher number of rental units, increased turnover of residents, and an increased proportion of people living on public assistance. Some of these problems are highlighted here and further outlined in the following section on statistics.

One quote particularly reveals the complexity of social life presently in the community:

- "We've been here 12 years and there has been two murders. The lady nearby has 5 kids by 3 different fathers. There is a drug house at #915 that gets raided every so often. When the elderly lady across the street died, George bought it who is a dealer. He is facing a long jail term and we're trying to figure out what to do with his daughter. One neighbor moved to Grants Pass because of this stuff. I saw a goat come out of the back room of one neighbor, but the Hispanic family has slowly been doing better and they're turning into good neighbors. The elderly woman across the street is a Christian and is like a grandma to our kids. We helped her out when her husband died a few years ago. The Mexican man across the street is fairly stable; he works the swing shift. He took in a teenage girl whose mother is facing a six month jail term for drugs. Their music is too loud, but they won't turn it down." [31]

There is prevailing concern in West Medford about the decline of the quality of life within the neighborhood.

- "The neighborhood is getting to be an inner city before Medford is even a real city. [We should] prevent inner city from developing." [19]

The local schools (Jackson, Washington and McLoughlin) are seen as rougher schools these days, particularly in the eyes of the alumni, many of whom reside in the neighborhood. Some people expressed concern that the negative image is all that is portrayed, making it difficult to create positive change.

- "All anybody hears about are the bad things. The school has a real image problem but it's not their fault." [206]
- "We love Jackson School. There was a city-wide scouting event held there and no one came because of its [negative] reputation." [81]
- "The neighborhood is going downhill--I hear there are gangs now at McLoughlin." [15]

When residents discussed a declining quality of life, in almost all instances they mentioned problems associated with higher density housing and an overabundance of rentals in the area. A widespread perception exists that property is being converted from single-dwelling houses into higher-density housing and rentals.

- "There are 7 rentals on my block." [190]
- "One unit was torn down and replaced with two houses that became rentals. Another guy bought a place and turned the two-story garage into two apartments which border the alley. Another house was torn down and four units were constructed." [35]

Census data (Appendix A) do not support the perception that density has increased. The total number of housing units actually declined in Tract One. Rental housing as a proportion of total housing has risen significantly, however, and is a major concern in the neighborhood. The proportion of rental units in Tract One rose from 72.5% to 75%, while in Tract Two, the percentage rose from 48.5% to 54.6%. In a study of the sub-area of Beatty/Manzanita (between Central and Riverside), owner-occupied units declined from 61% in 1953 to 31% in 1988 (City of Medford, 1988). Fieldwork data also indicates that the meaning of rentals has changed in the last generation. In the past, the designation did not mean very much because renters were stable and productive members of the community. Today, rentals are highly associated with transiency--people just don't stay long. In many cases, rentals are associated with drug and criminal activity, but residents are careful to point out this is not always true.

It was very common for residents to describe their experiences with drug-related activities. Neighbors routinely pointed out drug houses--their growing awareness of drug activities over time, their efforts to involve neighbors and police in controlling drug activity, and their coaching of their children to avoid drug houses.

- "I tell my kids to avoid certain houses because I know what's going on. I had to fire my baby-sitter because I found out she was using." [15]

Drug activities remain a predominant aspect of neighborhood life, although some residents claim that conditions are improving. [31]

- "Drug houses are getting better. There were five in the past and now only one." [83]
- "There used to be a lot more drug dealers and gangs in this area, but they're gone now." [103]

Despite substantial and often negative changes in the neighborhood, a core of stability remains. It is still common to find long-standing community residents, those with 5, 10 and 20 and even 50 years in the neighborhood, and they offer stability to the area, a watchful eye, and values for property upkeep. However, their numbers appear to be declining. As this generation dies or moves, property conversions to rentals and high density has become the norm, due to favorable zoning and market conditions.

- "Most of the people on our block have lived here for years. It's a stable neighborhood." [116]
- "One home sold on this block in the last 32 years." [131, a block on Washington Street]

Some felt the neighborhood was "turning around", citing as evidence the rates of new home purchase and the numbers of people who are "fixing up" their property. People note younger families returning to the area.

- "In the 4 years that we've been here, we've actually seen the neighborhood get better. People are fixing places up; it may have 'hit bottom.'" [7]
- "The neighborhood is turning around. Younger people are moving in, you can see pride of ownership." [10, 114]
- "Hamilton street is improving; more people are buying back into the area." [84]
- "In the last four years, we've seen less rentals and more home ownership." [120, 600 block Catherine Street]
- "The area from South High to Stewart is now mostly retired and professional people." [148]

A central feature attracting newcomers to West Medford is affordable and desirable housing. In many cases, people were attracted to the area because of particular homes that they found.

- "I love my house. I loved it the first time I walked into it." [18f]

An additional aspect of community life which has become important in recent years is the growth of the Hispanic community. Tables One and Two (Appendix A) reveal that the Hispanic population grew 10% and nearly 6% in Tracts One and Two respectively between 1980 and 1990. That proportion is likely to be higher in 1995. Jackson school reports that 28% of its student population is minority, primarily Hispanic. The presence of Hispanics in the neighborhood has many positive as well as negative aspects, as described more fully in Chapter Three, but regardless, everyone in the neighborhood has had to make adjustments to this new cultural force.

Finally, many residents have noted a stronger presence of social service agencies in this area in the last few years, especially subsidized housing through Housing and Urban Development (HUD), AIDS houses, and drug rehabilitation facilities. It is generally felt that the presence of low-income people and residents receiving one or more of the many kinds of assistance has resulted in more agency presence and a higher proportion of neighborhood-based facilities than other areas of the city. This perception has been shared by City Council officials and appointed City officials, as well as agency representatives and residents. Most people couch their concerns as an issue of fairness and neighborhood impact:

- We get fewer family-owned houses, larger parking lots and high density building. The area has lost its appeal aesthetically. [31, 132]
- "Government will take over. We want the agencies to clean up their act. They create dependency and make things worse." [20]
- "They locate all these programs here, like methadone and welfare, and then they tell us to do a good Neighborhood Watch program. How come I feel like we're doing their work?" [20]
- "Programs are dumped in this neighborhood (migrants, OnTrack). You sure don't see these things in East Medford!" [20a]
- "People don't know what agencies and services are available to them." [40]
- "The welfare system is shot. People are never given a bonus for getting a job. Only the honest people lose." [135]

The strongest statement came from a gentleman who has lived in the area for 44 years:

- "The City has bent over backwards to make this a slum by the concentration of social service agencies." [181]

Multiple demographic indicators demonstrate the needs within Tract One. According to the 1990 Census, 42% of all adults within Tract One lack a high school diploma, 31% of families are headed by a single female, and 41% are living at or below the federal poverty level (Appendix A). The two police beats which intersect Tract One share the highest crime rates in Medford (Coalition documents).

Tract One supports two public schools (Jackson Elementary and McLoughlin Junior High) and two private schools (Cascade Christian and Sacred Heart). The public schools report that a large proportion of their students are "high risk", which is supported by a Children First of Oregon report that named Tract One as one of the 12 most "severely distressed" neighborhoods in Oregon. According to Jackson School, 80% of the student population qualifies for one or more publicly-funded social service programs, and over 50% receive welfare benefits. In fact, 90% of children 5 years and younger who come from single female head of household families live below the federal poverty level. The school turns over students at a rate of more than 67% a year.

Themes of Neighborhood Life

Themes are defined as attitudes or values which are widely held in a community. Four themes predominated in discussion with neighborhood residents. Themes are not necessarily factually-based and can even be contradictory, as this section reveals.

1. "We look out for each other around here." [70, 93a]

An outstanding feature of local language is the idea that residents watch out and take care of each other. Informal caretaking systems are strong in the community, center most around children, and are based in the pockets. Numerous residents have described ways in which neighbors watch each other's properties, deal with "drug houses," exchange child care, and assist in property maintenance. Although homeowners have expressed strong frustration with the problems of welfare recipients living among them, connections between such families around children is strong. This language is strong within the pockets.

- "My neighbor and I walk daily, that's how we find out what's going on. ____ and ____ have lived on the corner for 40 years and they watch everything. When my friend ____ leaves her back light on, we call her the next day to see what happened the night before." [16]
- "Everybody has dogs around here--it helps at night." [16]
- "We must work together." [hispanic 84]

2. "We don't know anyone."

Despite a community value of connecting with neighbors, many reported being frustrated at those attempts and in fact feeling isolated. The lack of connection is more acute beyond the 2-4

block “pockets” when residents have to deal with larger neighborhood concerns. It also is felt more strongly within certain publics, such as senior citizens and Hispanics.

- "There's too much turnover around here. I never have a chance to get to know anybody." [34]
- "Fear and defensiveness keep people from reaching out. Most are struggling for survival so they don't have the energy for the neighborhood." [112]
- "We have to worry about our own little family unit." [116]

3. "We support kids."

It is no cliché in West Medford to state that children represent the hopes and fears of adults. Children represent the single greatest link between people who are otherwise very different. "We know each other through our kids," people say. For adults who feel isolated in their pockets or in their homes, children meet others in school from throughout the neighborhood and the city. For Hispanics who do not speak English, their English-speaking children represent an essential link to the larger society. Although residents criticize drug users and welfare recipients, they describe numerous connections with the children of these people. One woman expressed outrage at the "system" and welfare in general. However, she frequently has tea parties with the young daughter of a welfare mother. One couple told us that they didn't know the Hispanic family next door, but their kids are best friends and use the buddy system in going to the local store. It was commonly the case that critics of welfare parents supported programs to help children and even offered their own labor.

- "Let's tutor the kids. The kids are the place for intervention and education. That's the way to break the cycle." [18]
- "This is a great block for kids. They are safe, we are organized to call the police about fast cars." [81]

4. "We like to see people 'make it.'"

Finally, despite the diversity of people living in West Medford, residents shared a value for “making it” and revealed pride in their stories for people who have. When certain Hispanics were noted for their hard work and their progress in developing economic opportunities for themselves, residents said what “good” people they were and how they valued their presence. The value of “making it” means economic progress and family care, even among those for whom such accomplishment is difficult, or who have exhibited high dependency. “Making it” is a model that is widely accepted.

- "Some people make it around here. I have two friends who worked hard for 15 years. They're not wealthy but they're doing ok." [16]

Community-Wide Issues In West Medford

This section reports issues that were widely-reported throughout the neighborhood and across a range of publics. Chapter Three describes issues specific to particular publics.

Economic issues in West Medford center around the lack of jobs, the low-paying nature of available jobs, and high rents. These issues are very widespread and are so endemic that most people mentioned them almost in passing.

- "We need more family-wage jobs here." [30; hispanics 84]
- "Give me a job, let me work!" [70]
- "Rents are so high for what you get. I can barely make it." [102, very common]

Social issues are numerous and will be divided into the following categories, ranked according to the frequency of their reporting:

1. Crime and safety.
2. "Cars go too fast."
3. "Kids run loose."
4. Property conversion.
5. Landlord/tenant issues.
6. "Trash is a big problem."
7. "There's more graffiti now."
8. "The area needs more lighting."
9. "Alleys present special problems."
10. Turnover and transiency.

1. Crime and safety

- "My wife was threatened recently. One time when I motioned a car to slow down, it stopped and two guys threatened to beat me up." [20]
- "One night we confronted two guys siphoning gas on our block. John here had his pumpkins stolen the other night. Helen had her lawnmower stolen." [20]
- "My friend was attacked by a dog recently." [28]

- "I had to tackle a drunk the other night. He was smashing all the terrace lights I had put in." [28]
- "Teens don't follow the curfew." [28]
- "Traffic goes too fast. When we motion cars to slow down, they speed up or sometimes screech to a stop and they threaten us." [28a, 28b, 29]
- "I watched 3 crimes happen in the last 24 hours. That truck window was smashed, and I know the kids that did it--their parents won't do anything." [29]
- "We are grateful for the regular drive-bys of police." [32]
- "You have got to show that you have no fear and that you will fight back, and that they better fear you." [32]
- "One reason people don't get involved is that they have some level of illegal activity, mostly drugs. Nobody wants to 'narc'." [32]
- "The man next door was robbed recently during the day. I should have been keeping an eye on things for him and now I do." [51]
- "In September and October, there was gunfire. Not coming from this street but over to the west. There was a rape down the street. A car stereo was stolen." [spoken through a screen door, 140]
- "Get the drug dealers gone. Protect informants." [16]
- "There is a drug house nearby." [39]
- "There are fewer drug houses now. There were five in my area, but now there is only one." [83]
- "One guy was breaking into neighbors' places nude, causing a stir, and the police would say, 'Oh, we know that guy.' The guy across the street lost several bikes. He just kept buying them. They guy behind him was a felon and he would slip his house shackles and jump the fence. If we knew this kind of information, it would help us." [58]

Consistently, residents reported high crime areas as being somewhere else. People consistently reported their area was not too bad, but that it was terrible over in the next block.

2. "Cars go too fast." [17, 28, 39, 49, 75, 80, 81, 83, 84, 92, 105, 119, 121, 124, 137, 148, 150, 182, 194, 196]

- "People use my driveway to turn around in [she lives across from Washington School]. They drive by my yard so fast that I don't dare let my daughter play there anymore." [53]
- "We need more traffic signs." [83]
- "We want more speed bumps to slow traffic. [137, 182 very common]
- "My neighbor put up a slow sign in the alley." [120]
- "Traffic shifted from Main to Stewart." [133]
- "Diversion of traffic to 8th increased traffic and speed." [181]
- When a girl was hit at Washington School it was discussed frequently, as was a recent case on Columbus.
- "People fly down those roads. We've gotten no help." [185]

3. "Kids run loose." [15]

- "Kids need places to go." [98]
- "Most kids can't afford to go to an arcade. They need places that are free, safe, and in the neighborhoods. Many kids are latch-key; their parents work at night and just have to hope that the kids are doing the right thing." [98]
- "Get kids off the streets." [99]
- Some families were unaware of the YMCA program. Others said they do not let their kids walk that far--"There are too many obstacles between here and there." [16]
- "Some parents get up at 7, push their kids out the door by 7:15 and then go back to bed." [32]
- "Close Remix. It's not good for kids." [17]
- "Kids need something to do. Maybe we should have another Shack over here." [40]
- "Teenagers smashed the snowman the kids made last week. Marigolds stolen. Halloween decorations stolen down the street in daylight. Pumpkins smashed and window broken. Old bike stolen from back yard. Neighbor's car was broken into.

Someone tried to break into my car the same morning when it was parked right outside my window." [138]

- "I pulled a kid in diapers from the middle of the street recently. No adults were around and I had no idea where the child came from." [66]
- "I know an 11 year old girl who has to be alone for a couple of hours after school. She has a history of being abused and has said that it's scary to be inside. She hangs out on the streets except that now, with cold weather, she is less able to do that. I worry about her safety." [teacher 73]
- "I have most of the kids on the block play at my house but they are unaware of traffic dangers and run into the street. Four years ago, a boy was hit and got brain damage, but he was soon out there again." [81]
- "There are lots of kids running around, especially on Oakdale. In the summer, I see little kids 4 and 6 years old running around till 10 or 11 pm." [101]
- "Many kids hang out in that restaurant. You can see 3rd and 4th graders in there at 10 pm. One four or five year old girl hung out there all day once, making trouble. They asked me to take her home. Her mother didn't have a clue about where she was. The parents are too wrapped up in their own world, don't know how to be responsible." [102]
- "I see junior high kids running around at 10 in the morning. Why aren't they in school. In the old days, kids were raised by the neighborhood. today, you can't yell at someone else's kids." [112]
- "Kids hang out at Woodland Market until midnight." [145]
- "Three of our 5 kids have gotten harassed this year. I'm scared to have them play outside. If we could afford it, we'd move somewhere else." [151]

4. Property conversion.

- "Zoning was changed years ago to allow higher density. It began to be a magnet. Now there are often 2-3 houses per lot." [206]
- "The zoning change that allowed Highway 238 to happen occurred without our knowledge. Higher density housing has meant that kids have no place to play. [181]
- "When I moved here 7 years ago, the majority of people had lived here for 40-50 years. The man in the green two-story house across the street has lived here for 59 years. People are dying and going into nursing homes.; New people are moving in.

More people are renting, coming in and out and don't care about what's happening in the neighborhood." [39]

- "The house at ___ Holly is a mess. It's so inconsiderate for the City to let a house look like that. The problem started a long time ago when some stuff slipped in that shouldn't have; it was zoned to allow rentals into areas where homes are owned." [186]

5. Landlord/tenant issues.

Both homeowners and tenants express frustration at their situations in West Medford. The issues of tenants have to do with the lack of maintenance and high rents of the units they occupy. Some have used the term "slumlording" [195] to describe a situation in which landlords do not care about their units or the impacts they create in the community. Many residents attribute the problem to the high number of rentals in the area. Others point out that it is the absentee landlords, those who live outside the area, that cause the major problems, and that their numbers are increasing. Others, notably Hispanics, complain that the rental management companies do not maintain their buildings and that renters are kicked out if they complain.

- "The owners of rentals need to insulate, fix dripping water, make their units more livable. I read in L.A. where a landlord was sentenced to live in his building which he had refused to clean up. The problem is worse for Hispanics because if we complain, we are kicked out. Rental companies are the worst because it's just a business for them." [Hispanic 83]
- "The landlord [of the one rental on our block] is not very thorough in checking out people he rents to. I think they're HUD renters." [102]
- "I recently remodeled a home where renters had abused the house. The owner had me cover over animal urine rather than eliminate the problem. It's a high cost rental with low investment." [128]
- "The landlord at ___ didn't care who rented the apt as long as they paid; just charged huge deposits which makes it hard to move in." [136]

Landlords and neighbors, in turn, have numerous complaints about tenants:

- "Landlords don't have any rights." We can lose everything and we should have the ability to protect our property, but we don't. Renters know they can get away with almost anything. For example, my lawyer informed me that it is against the law to give a bad reference." [108]
- "They [renters] don't care about keeping the property respectful--neat and clean. There should be a rule that you can't park on the lawn, no littering, a limit on number of people." [117]

- "Those renters left appliances in their yard for a long time and other trash. Mild requests didn't help so we called the City of Medford Planning Department who sent a letter regarding pertinent ordinances. The problem was taken care of." [121]
- Tenant and landlord issues were often the theme of the evening public meetings, especially at South Medford High School.

6. "Trash is a big problem." [113, 186]

Trash takes a variety of forms in West Medford. It includes organic material from tree trimming, gardens and compost that is not cared for, household trash, old appliances left in yards, and abandoned cars.

- "I'd like the junked cars out of here." [39, 145]
- "The City should have an ordinance regarding trash and junked cars." [90]
- "How can you make your neighbors clean up stuff in back yard and alley. It's blocking the alley and they get nasty if you ask. They are druggies, I saw it in the paper." [113]

7. "There's more graffiti now." [39]

- "Kids are litterbugs. We're seeing more and more graffiti. To many, it's just squiggles, but to the kids, it's significant [gangs]." [135]
- "We have gang graffiti on street signs. Police said they'd come out, take pictures and clean it but that was weeks ago and no one has come." [179]
- "Dirty and racial graffiti appeared on the fences on our back alley. We went out to look at it and another neighbor who works as a security guard said that he thought he knew who had done it. He found them and confronted them. He said they needed to apologize and remedy the situation in 48 hours or they would be going to the police. The problem was fixed." [151]

8. "The area needs more lighting and sidewalks." [39, 50, 58, 83, 99, 137, 165]

- "This new light pole was put in three months ago, but the city can't get it hooked up. They claim they are understaffed." [58]
- "There are many areas around Washington School that need sidewalks. It's not safe for kids." [48, 91]

- “On parts of Columbus, kids are forced to walk on the street because there are no sidewalks. There’s too much traffic now on Columbus.” [115]

A citizens’ committee in the Washington School area is now mapping the places which need lighting and sidewalks the most. This group presented the map to the city by March 1, in time for budget considerations.

9. Alleys present special problems. [28,123]

- "There are many apartments now in the alleys. The foot and car traffic is just amazing." [35]
- "The alley has so much trash, I clean it myself and I'm an old woman. I'm afraid of the fire hazard. Lots of car traffic at night in the alley." [57]
- "We've had people running up and down the alley at all hours, running through yards, looking in windows." [53]
- "Our alley is not a throughway and we want to keep it that way. If someone goes back there, dogs bark and someone knows about it." [93a]
- "People rip around the alley." [115]
- "There is a four-way alley that is a dead end on one end; kids sit in there and are very loud at night. I had to get rid of my two dogs because people in the alley would tease them." [124]
- "People cruise the alley in cars." [183]

Porches, however, are an asset. People live on their porches in the summer. They are used for socializing with neighbors and for keeping a watchful eye against potential crime.

10. Turnover and transiency [10]

A presence of a large number people with low-and unstable income in conditions of high rent has contributed to transiency in the community. Many people complain that people do not stay long in the neighborhood.

- "Turnover happens because rents are low, the agricultural work is seasonal, and because of so much HUD housing." [16]
- "There's too much turnover in the area to develop friendships." [32]
- "You don't know anyone anymore--there are too many renters." [35]

- Both Washington and Jackson schools report high rates of turnover in their student populations. [73]
- "There are so many rentals. They don't treat it as a home; there's no upkeep." [75]
- "I've got a rental behind me. Oh my God! I could write a book about it. She kicked out one family but another one moved in..." [117]

People cautioned us on assuming that the presence of renters was associated with more drug activity or with undesirable elements. Prior to 7-8 years ago, renters commonly stayed in one house for many years, we were told. "The renters that are there have been there for 5 years," one person said. [121] What has been clear is that the overall number of renters has increased and that they are more transient than in prior years. Rental units are also associated with rundown houses which add to the blighted character of the area.

Chapter Three: The Publics of West Medford And Their Issues

Publics are distinct social segments of the community which can be categorized on the basis of some common characteristic or interest, such as age, occupation, or background. The line between publics may overlap and the categories are not mutually exclusive. That is, a person could be both a senior citizen and a homeowner, for example. Nonetheless, we believe the concept of publics is useful in outlining the unique interests of different segments of the community. Eight publics are described here: homeowners, parents, Hispanics, senior citizens, youth, the underemployed, business people, and the homeless/transient population. Two publics were identified but no members were interviewed--gangs and home-based businesses.

Homeowners

Affordability and attractiveness have been the major stimulants to home ownership in West Medford. Residents commonly talked about "falling in love" with their houses and of working hard to improve it over time.

- "There's a lot of first-time buyers in this area. They're bringing pride back." [27]

Homeowners represent stability in the neighborhood and also the more conservative element of the community. They value newcomers if they work hard, maintain their property, are quiet, and show an interest in helping out occasionally in a neighborly way. Their concerns relate to the zoning changes which have permitted higher densities, the increased valuations that result from property improvement, and code compliance in housing standards to prevent housing deterioration. Many of the issues reported in Chapter Two dealing with property conversion and high numbers of rental units are shared with homeowners.

- "A house was razed recently, and replaced by an apartment building." [18, 27]
- "There is no incentive to fix up your property. The assessor was out filming our work before we even finished our house. Why should I fix it up? [18a]
- "There's a house at _____ which should be condemned. Jacnet says they sweep it every two weeks for drug activities." [17]
- "People around here live in substandard housing and the City does nothing about it. Somebody is living in that garage and you can see water seeping out under the door in the morning--they either hooked up a shower without plumbing or they run a hose." [29]

- "It's so hard to evict people. There was a drug house across the street and we worked with the landlord to get them evicted. It took 3 months and then 2 more months to fix it up." [29]
- "I'm considered more affluent by my neighbors which is a laugh because I am not rich. So everybody asks me for things, to borrow tools that are not returned, for help in dealing with drug issues or concerns of parents." [31]
- "We want others to have more pride in their homes, pick up stuff. I walk for health, so I notice these things. Our block is one of the worst, cigarette butts. No one rakes. They have no pride in self. I would even be willing to put a garbage can at the curb if people would use it." [57]
- "Whenever you go to city hall, do not expect a pleasant experience. The city has been trying to expand Stewart Street for years, and it looks like they'll finally do it. But no one around here knows what's going on." [93a]

Parents

Children are present everywhere in the neighborhood and family values are strong despite the problems of kids running loose reported in Chapter Two.

- "Parents don't care for their kids. They dump their kids in the morning and take off. PTO can't get anyone to come anymore." [19]
- "The schools are overcrowded and don't receive the budgets they should. They have programs cut. Jackson School has music classes out in the hallway" [9, 156]
- "We don't want to talk just about the problems. This is about resources. We want computers for our students. We want to focus on positive needs and accomplishments, too!" [156]
- "McLoughlin has gotten rougher the last 6 years." [115]. Residents commonly say that everyone knows there are more drugs and rougher behaviors on the part of youth in the neighborhood.
- "Kids need to be street smart-what's safe and what's not." [115, common]
- "I've been here 10 years and the drug use is getting worse. I used as a teenager, but now my kids are the most important thing to me. I just had to fire my baby-sitter because I found out she was using. I have to coach my kids on what houses to avoid. Neighbors need education about how to tell a drug house." [15]

- "There are too many kids wandering the streets here." [27]
- "The Y saved my 15 year old. He does weight lifting, basketball, football in the summer." [183]
- "This year's kindergarten class was shocking to me, the level of immaturity. I can think of 4 kids--I have no proof--that I think are getting abused. Many are homeless. I see kids shut down emotionally." [34]
- "Parents don't get involved at Jackson School. Parents want to let the school do it." [102] The PTO at Washington has 6 parents who show up. [185]
- "I don't like my kids going to Rose's market because they are exposed to all the transients." [83]
- "The city doesn't plan ahead. The sidewalks, the streets, the schools. This area now needs another elementary school." [93a]
- "There's no way for kids to walk safely on Elm to Washington School. The sidewalks are inadequate." [180]
- "The absence of sidewalks along Columbus creates hazards." [181]
- "I had a job and left my 3 year old daughter at a baby-sitter. The babysitter said she stepped into the shower and the 3 year old left, with a 20 month old child. The child went to Washington School and hung out awhile. School people assumed she was there with me volunteering. I turned the sitter into CSD but she is still caring for children in her home." [185]
- "What do you want to know? We got dope dealers across the street working day and night. I've been teaching my kids to hit the dirt when they see a gun." [69]

Hispanics

The primary issues expressed by Hispanics have to do with housing, health, salaries, and relations with the larger Anglo community.

- "We're farmworkers, but in America, you're supposed to have everything." [84]

Hispanics started coming to this area in the 1930s, according to local residents. For years, migrant men were the extent of the Hispanic population. The Immigration Reform Act of 1986 allowed migrants to settle out and men began to bring their families to the area. Citizenship is beginning to happen for those free of crime and off welfare for a period of time. Many still do

not know English, although their children in the schools are learning and are a translating resource for the families in their dealings with the Anglo community. Hispanics have begun to branch out into other forms of employment, notably restaurant and motel work, but agriculture remains the major source of employment, especially for newcomers. Many families are beginning to buy homes.

They report feeling mystified by stereotypes which portray them as taking from Americans and not giving back. In their view, they do work others do not want, work hard, and care for their families.

- "We pay more into the system than we get out." [55c]

Hispanics are a vulnerable population for two major reasons. First, many are illegal. Despite their importance to the agricultural sector of the economy, they are forced to remain "hidden" citizens. Second, their educated, bilingual compatriots in more established positions throughout Jackson County, who might be expected to play leadership roles regarding Hispanic concerns, often find their employment compromised when speaking out on important issues. Because of these conditions, it is unlikely that Hispanics will organize politically in the near term.

The conditions also exacerbate a situation particularly relevant to West Medford residents--housing. A continued incentive to maintain urban blight in West Medford exists because of the rental profits available from a vulnerable population with little power to protest high rents and low quality housing. Housing issues appear to be widespread. Latinos complain that the "rents are too high and the quality too low." [85]

The tight economic situation of many Hispanics has meant an unmet need for medical services, alternative approaches to health treatment, and, at times, desperate, illness-related behaviors. This apparently has been stimulated by the limit to services by Clinica del Valle. This year, migrants started going to emergency rooms again, a practice originally done but not for many years.

- "There is no quality dental care available we can afford." [68]
- "I referred a family to the Health Department because I was told their vaccinations are free. They have 3 kids, 4 shots each and they got a bill for \$120. Now a white family throws the bill away, but this family feels they now have to pay. It's an additional burden." [27]

The economic picture for Hispanics is oftentimes grim.

- "We cannot make a living in the orchards. Minimum wage is not enough if you consider rent, car insurance and food. If my wife works, \$1.75 goes to child care, so she really makes only \$3.00 per hour instead of \$4.75." [55]

- "At \$4.75/hour, I make \$800 month. Rents are \$425 to \$450, typically. Add electricity, gas, phone, garbage, food, and car insurance, and we can't make it. But then, we're here!" [55a]
- "When I first started coming here in 1976, I could work 8-9 hours and get \$100 for apples. Now I work til I'm dead and I get \$70." [55b]

Finally, relations with Anglo society has generated particular concerns within the Hispanic community. They have expressed a need for meeting spaces of their own for their social events.

- "We need a place to gather for weddings, quinceaneros, and other events." [48]
- "We need a shelter for Hispanics that is Spanish-oriented." [59]

Hispanics have numerous issues about their dealings with the larger community, especially authority figures.

- Lack of response from city/police regarding Hispanic victims of crime [1]
- "The police came after our van was broken into 3 times in four months. They asked a lot of questions, but we never heard from them again." [85]
- "The Medford Police should have more Latinos on the force. We need to feel safe-- that there is no 'us' and 'them'." [8]
- "I watched the police arrest an Hispanic man for drunkenness. They were so rough with him for no reason that I assumed it was racist." [190]
- "People see graffiti and they think it's 'cholo' [Mexican gang] writing. We've had white gangs for years, like the KKK [Ku Klux Klan]. The first drive-by shooting in the Rogue Valley in Shady Cove was white boys, but you say gangs and people think colored." [27]
- "You have to understand the frustration of the Hispanic community, especially with kids. We make calls that don't get returned. We get ignored. The kids see what happens to the parents and they get frustrated. This situation makes gangs attractive because they pay attention, they have an answer." [48]
- "An Anglo boy brought a 45. to school and got 2 weeks suspension. My son took a key chain with a two-inch knife attached and got 'indefinite' suspension. When I confronted the school, they told me I was confused." [142]

- "A woman friend was having trouble with her first husband who began breaking windows. When a man living upstairs came down to help out, the first man had left. Police came and arrested the upstairs man and held him for 30 days." [143]
- "The agencies make money off Latinos through grants but benefits don't always trickle down. Most agencies are too top-down and do not ask the Latino population what it is that they want. Latino hiring is just now becoming noticeable." [54]
- "We are invisible to the agencies." [85]
- "Schools are doing well with Spanish but the courts need more interpreters." [59]
- "Schools expect less of our kids." [48]

Hispanics have indicated an interest in closer ties with their neighbors in West Medford.

- "Hispanics must feel more connected to their neighborhoods. We have no sense of ownership in what goes on. How could we be involved more to take part? For example, Hispanics do not participate in Neighborhood Watch much; they could be encouraged. [8, 84]
- "Language is a barrier. I feel left out at the PTO meetings." [144]

White residents, for their part, have revealed both positive and negative attitudes about Hispanics living among them. Many Anglos expressed appreciation for Hispanic values as they have been played out by local Hispanics, notably their value for hard work, families, cleanliness and celebration.

- "They have values that we have lost, like respect and courtesy." [66]
- "Latinos do not like dependency; they work to get off assistance. They have the values we used to have." [83]
- "A lot of Hispanics live in this area but nobody knows them. We'd like to get them involved in Neighborhood Watch." [39]
- "Hispanics need a role model. They don't know yet that bilingualism is worth money." [27]
- "The house next door was jointly purchased by 3 families who did auto body work out of their back yard. They had a mobile home parked on the street for awhile in which someone was living. They now have opened a shop nearby and only one family lives there." [32]

Some Anglos have disparaged them for living in trashy houses, but Hispanics justify themselves by pointing out that it is all that is available to them and that they get evicted without due legal course if they protest.

- "I have noticed, and this is not meant to be prejudiced, that areas where Latinos have congregated are less attractive. Maybe it's a cultural thing." But then later says, "They can only rent rundown places. Landlords should take more pride." [90]
- "I hate being prejudiced, but there are some big cultural differences. To me, Mexicans mean a rise in crime, gunshots, vandalism and welfare. I need to be educated so that I can understand better." [140]

Senior Citizens

The census data reveal that the proportion of senior citizens in West Medford has actually declined modestly between 1980 and 1990 to between 12 and 13% (Appendix A).

Predominantly, retired people in West Medford are people who have raised their families in the neighborhood and then retired here, and not elderly who have retired in the community after living elsewhere. The Enid Rankin Senior Center reported that 275 of its 574 members come from West Medford. Nonetheless, local senior citizens have expressed interest in a senior center closer to home and more accessible.

- "Most elderly cannot get to the Enid Rankin Center; they are housebound and have no transportation." [40]
- "We want the City of Medford to support the Enid Rankin Center, as other Oregon cities support their senior centers." [106]

Agency personnel have reported high numbers of needy seniors in the neighborhood. [4]

Although some support for seniors comes from the neighborhood, it appears more common that senior support comes from family (who live outside the neighborhood) and agencies.

- "A Loaves and Fishes lunch program has started for seniors at Lions Club building on North Holly." [87]

This group has many shared concerns with homeowners. They have observed the neighborhood deteriorate and are worried.

- "We ask ourselves why we didn't move sooner, but the Good Lord didn't tell us to, so we didn't." [57]

For a variety of reasons having to do with advancing age, reliance on agencies, and worries about neighborhood conditions, senior citizens are among the most isolated in the neighborhood.

- "Dark comes and we don't go out." [133]

- "Seniors won't get involved." [206]
- "I talked to a woman who had lived here 40 years; she promised she would do something but never followed through." [20]
- "When my kids were growing up, I knew the neighbors better." [57]

Older people we talked with expressed a high degree of interest in the neighborhood and in assisting with the effort. Many would preface their statements with comments like, "I don't get around as much, but...", and so on. We believe that senior citizens could be mobilized to undertake key functions in the neighborhood if their efforts could be well-structured.

- "I'm here to stay. I can contribute." [19]

Youth

The children of the neighborhood attend either Jackson or Washington Elementary Schools which service only local students. McLoughlin Middle School and South Medford High School, on the other hand, draw students from a much larger area of Medford, swelling the youth population by day and serving as a magnet for youth in the evening and on weekends.

The presence of youth in the neighborhood has presented challenges to residents ranging from candy wrappers in yards to violent crime. It was a frequent response that when we asked residents what would improve the neighborhood, they would joke, "Jail all the kids." [94]

Residents, as documented in other sections of this report, have revealed incidents of being harassed by youth, or their children being harassed by youth, an increase of graffiti and gang-related behavior, late night noise attributed to youth, and vandalism. It must be pointed out, however, that residents have also indicated positive relationships and a lack of problems with youth. It seemed to our team that residents who developed relationships with youth and confronted negative behaviors did better than residents who were passive or uninvolved in youth.

Our perception is that residents around South Medford High School are much happier with youth and with the school than are residents around McLoughlin Middle School. While our sample is not statistically justified, McLoughlin area residents commonly reported loitering by youth on school grounds and on neighboring sidewalks, foul language from students passing by, more perception of drug-related activity and less receptivity from school officials to work cooperatively on the problems.

The teen outlet, the Shack, located at the northern edge of the neighborhood and administered by Medford Parks and Recreation Department, got mixed but generally positive reviews from youth. Some said it was too far away, but parents on the southern boundary of the neighborhood said it was no trouble to drive their kids there. Two adolescents said it was "stupid" but then

admitted that they had never gone there. Almost all said it was too small but that they liked how it was run as much as possible by youth for youth.

Here is what youth told us about their areas of interest:

- "There's nothing to do. We're not all into drugs." [77]
- "We hear Remix is closing. We like the dancing. We got tickets for sitting at the bus yard nearby. We want freedom to dance, dress and talk as we want. The police always act as if we're guilty of something." [77]
- "The biggest problem is drugs. It's the thing to do. Medford is becoming like L.A. Gangs are coming." [74]
- "The skating rink used to do dances that were great, but they don't do it anymore." [77]
- "We want a youth center that is large enough to accommodate different kinds of kids- a place for dancing, conversation, hanging out. Has to have different uses." [77b]
- "Kids need a shelter that's open all night for when you can't go home. Something like a school dorm, where you pay \$3, to cool off when fighting at home, you need someone to talk with, or you're strung out." [77c]
- "Youth need a shelter and affordable housing for pregnant teens; no one will rent to you if you're under 18." [178, agency representative]
- "Rapes have increased. Maybe Neighborhood Watch isn't so bad. It's never safe at night and daytimes are iffy." [178]
- "I have a young baby but I won't stay at home. Mexicans drive in my driveway and stare in my window. My landlord won't get good locks for the doors." [77d]
- "We need more patrols. We can't get the police to respond. I waited for 35 minutes once, my friend for an hour and a half." [77e]

The Underemployed

The underemployed refers to that category of people living in West Medford with low income occupations, the chronically underemployed, welfare recipients, single-parent (poor) households and poor renters. The underemployed are a significant percentage of West Medford population, and share many concerns with other publics, such as parents.

This public proved difficult to access comfortably and to establish enough trust to obtain an insider's point of view. We gained the best access through agency representatives who were trusted and who set up our contacts. At times, we approached underemployed residents identified by neighbors as causing some degree of impact, but in such cases, it was difficult to engage in any meaningful dialogue about community problems with which they were associated. Rather, it seemed more productive to simply listen and gather issues as they saw their particular situations. One theme that emerged in discussions with underemployed was a pride in "making it" and a value for continuing self-improvement. It became clear that there are numerous success stories of successful independence fostered by agency programs. The stereotype suggested locally of agencies fostering only dependency has to be challenged in light of this discovery. Individuals representing successful transition to independence are a resource for the neighborhood as it struggles to deal with problems created by welfare programs.

Issues which were identified by underemployed persons are:

- "Being here has made me care. When Steve mows George's lawn because he's had a by-pass, the neighbors want their place to look good too. In a bad neighborhood, people give up. We feel better about ourselves since we moved here. It's amazing how much has opened up for us." [Housing and Urban Development client, 136]
- "I was a welfare mom, society ridiculed me, but I brought my kid up right." [138]
- "I was on assistance until the end of summer. The system is frustrating. We must reward work and strengthen families. We were not well off growing up but I could always count on Mom fixing us breakfast." [33]
- "You get busted once and they won't give you a break." [52]
- "Our problems are drugs and gangs. I just saved a kid's life this morning because his mother didn't give a damn because she was on drugs. Teenagers have gotten more obnoxious." [52]
- "I need child care. Welfare helps but the rents are too high. Kids could be brought up better." [52, 107, common]
- "Rents are too high for my family and my neighbors who are working at minimum wage. My husband and I try to scrape by without assistance. Most of my neighbors are like that, too. We've used food stamps during bad times. Sometimes we mess up our budget and don't have enough. We don't always get food stamps when we need them and sometimes we get them when they are not needed. Also, they count people's income before taxes. They don't take into account taxes and rents. After those are taken out, many people don't have enough money to make it." [53, 67, 68]
- "I live with my mom and my two kids. I can't get enough on welfare to get my own place." [75]

- "Rent is getting sky high. We pay \$490 for 3 bedroom, two-bath house." [81]
- "I'd like to see a program where welfare people would be able to buy their own homes. Welfare is meant to keep people on welfare." [52d]
- "Things always go against me. I worked for _____, but they didn't care for workers. I worked for Temporary Services and I was led on that I was doing a great job but nothing ever opened up. There's so much automation now, I doubt I'll ever find work." [71]
- "School screwed me out of an education because they didn't recognize my learning disability. I can't even read to my 5 year old daughter." [52c]
- "I get complaints from my neighbors about my rundown house and junk in the yard. I'm trying to repair my car and have another one out there that I'm fixing for a friend. I'd like to sell my house and live in the country where I'd be free to leave things in the yard unhassled." [71]
- "I'm a softie. I can't say no, so I've had lots of kids hanging out here. My neighbors thought I was pushing drugs. My nephew got busted and listed my address so HUD called me." [75]
- "AFS [Adult and Family Services] cut off my son from medical services. My work is seasonal but went over their time limit." [91]
- "As soon as we get ahead, the state takes things away." [98]
- "Most of my day care clients are on some type of assistance. Most are single parents. 95% of them are reliable people who are working very hard.
- "Welfare agencies could save themselves five years of someone on assistance if they were willing to extend their help for six months." [100]
- Welfare should be lost in stages. Once you're off welfare, you lose your medical cards, for example. They should be able to keep their medical cards, do it in steps. [107]
- "Disability is not enough and these are people who need it the most. \$417 and that's it, no subsidized housing, no welfare." [107]
- "Parents have to have hope. I have seen parents improve the way they treat their kids after they got a job." [108]

Agency representatives have characterized welfare recipients as generally of three types: 1) those needing a safety net of temporary assistance until they can recover control of their lives; 2) a large group of multi-generational underclass created by the system; and 3) abusers and cheaters. Officials expressed hope that legislative direction will provide flexible welfare reform to allow local officials to experiment with programs to reduce welfare dependency. [78]

Public health staff who talked to our team are some of the few professionals to enter the homes of the underemployed on a regular basis and have some trusting relationships. They identified the issues of their clients as the following:

1. High rents for what they get: Some clients live in converted garages, or have a bedroom in a house, hoping to save. With only \$460 in welfare, choices are limited.
2. Lots of personal liabilities: With histories of domestic violence or drug and alcohol dependence, the patterns of their parents are often repeated.
3. Occasional or frequent periods of homelessness.
4. High turnover: affordable housing might promote stability.
5. Transportation: They drive cars without insurance or have cars which break down easily or they are not licensed.
6. No alcohol and drug safety: After treatment, they are often back in their old settings with frequent contact with drug and alcohol opportunities.
7. Limited police response who label the area as so bad as to be not worth responding to.
8. Extravagant money habits: They might buy a crib but then not have enough for diapers.
 - "We get them so far, then they can't find housing, or the next set of services is not available, and so they fail." [79]

Many residents expressed anger and frustration at the number of welfare people in their area and the impacts that they caused. Sometimes stereotyping was observed, as when some residents continually referred to "these people." Characteristics attributed to "these people" included: single mothers on welfare, with different males in and out, rough and loud behaviors, drug use and often drug dealing, kids neglected or just dumped, and violent behavior. They have an attitude of "give me," or, "you owe me." [33]

The perceptions of residents related to the presence of underemployed and welfare-oriented people in the neighborhood are as follows:

- "There are too many welfare people in this neighborhood." [15]

- "Welfare is easiest for people in some cases. It's too hard to be both a good parent and a job holder. There's no incentive." [15]
- "The minute they get a raise and report it, they lose everything. They aren't given a chance to get on their feet. For a 50 cent raise, a client's co-pay for child care goes from \$21 to \$100." [a month?] [child care provider 99]
- "Single-parent families bring problems. They get in fights with their boyfriends." [102]
- "I used to manage apartments and I would have liked to be the welfare police. Many people were abusing welfare, lying and saying their husband wasn't there. I know a family that got a lot of help from the church and CERVS to get into a house. As soon as they got in, the man quit his perfectly good job. Now they're living on borrowed money. Makes you feel for the kids." [104]
- "People around here are third generation welfare--they have the attitude of, 'You owe us.' I heard someone say they had to pick up their 'paycheck' when they meant their welfare check." [34]

Business People

Fifteen businesses which are in or border the neighborhood were contacted during the course of our research. Business people expressed concerns over transients [172] and lighting [50], as well as vandalism, graffiti, and trash [50, 172]. Little to no local employment was offered by these firms, but they represent an important resource for the Coalition as it mobilizes action on common issues.

Homeless/Transient

No homeless or transient people were talked with for this report. Local observers told us of a daily influx of homeless people at key spots in the neighborhood such as the railroad areas, Rose's market and the shelters. The Gospel Mission reported that half the women that stay there are neighborhood residents who, for one reason or another, are in between housing.

- "Homeless people get rousted and harassed. They need a place they can be safe from harassment and tickets by the police. We want a camper park for homeless like they do in Eugene." [107, homeless advocate]

Chapter Four: Opportunities for Change

Successful change in West Medford must build upon change efforts already underway, and must include partners from the city and from public agencies which serve the neighborhood. This report has made clear the ample common ground which exists among the various interests in West Medford. Among residents, desires for a better place for children, reducing the blight, slowing the traffic, and eliminating drug activity provides direction enough to begin a process of building partners for change.

This chapter will summarize the major ideas and opportunities residents expressed regarding their issues and the ideas identified by agency officials. It also summarizes the results of “A Day of Planning and Action”, a workshop sponsored by the West Medford Community Coalition on January 28, 1995. On that day, over 150 residents, city officials and agency representatives worked on the seven major issue areas outlined below. The issue areas were developed on the basis of our fieldwork. The intent was to validate issues that had been exposed through the fieldwork, coordinate their efforts, and move towards action. Early in the day, participants were invited to write ideas and comments on sticky notes and put them on flip charts. After a brief morning training in collaboration, participants divided themselves up into groups and discussed their concerns around particular issue areas. Each issue group was charged to discuss the sticky notes, brainstorm for solutions, and start identifying priorities for action through a “what-who-how” framework.

Many participants moved between issue groups, and each group seemed to make different levels of progress. While the Hispanic/Anglo relations group ended up with a seven person committee and meeting time, others were less specific in their planning. However, each area generated plenty of ideas for future planning, which will be the main focus of Phase II.

The seven major issue areas are:

1. Landlords and Tenants
2. Crime and Safety
3. Hispanic/Anglo relations
4. Trash
5. Youth Activities
6. A Community Center
7. Neighborhood Improvement

Landlords and Tenants

The suggestions around landlord and tenant problems, as with many groups, were primarily concerned with communication. Participants suggested a number of ways to informally ease

interpersonal relations, but obviously, formal supports such as regulations and services are important, and can also be improved..

Suggestions

Provide lease with the option to buy, which improves ability to own. Seed funds for assisting the process, and credit counseling for those with poor credit histories.

Improve screening - have residents find renters themselves, as some have done, or pair landlords with renters through Family Services Worker.

Maintain contact throughout rental term. Create in-town representatives for absentee landlords, sources of addresses or phone numbers for unknown landlords

Create incentives for property upkeep for both landlords and renters.

Lower security deposit rates.

Mediate disputes through Community Dispute Resolution Center, or in a group designed to discuss problems for six weeks only and then move on. Follow-up on problems before they escalate.

Education for both landlords and renters on their rights and responsibilities.

Consolidate information sheet on services and programs, such as Habitat, ACCESS, etc.

A credit council of citizens who can give advice.

The police have offered to conduct classes for landlords on how to spot bad tenants. [10; 141]

The Police SMART program can deal with unresponsive landlords, if it involves substandard housing and lack of maintenance, and especially if drug activity is involved. [15]

"Make it desirable to buy in this neighborhood, especially for young families" [20, 35]

"Don't increase the pockets." [i.e., don't allow the clustering of rundown houses; 28]

"Get banks to help with first and last month's rent, so renters don't have to depend on the high rents of rundown places." [78]

How about a committee of landlords and tenants to inspect problem areas? [207]

Identify absentee landlords and organize methods of communication with them.

Get a list of responsible landlords for single parents.

Action Plans

1. Workshops and pamphlets on buying a home - Tenants, landlords, Consumer Credit Counseling employees, and bankers could be involved in creating educational materials around looking for and purchasing a home.
2. Mutual Responsibilities and Rights education - Neighborhood Watch, legal services, apartment owners association, the Building Department, perhaps Medford Better Housing, and experienced landlords and tenants, could organize meetings where speakers from departments would educate the public.
3. Mediation - Community Dispute Resolution Center and the Coalition could help educate community members in dispute resolution methods, and help solve problems.
4. Landlord Accountability - Coalition Legal Services, Building Department and Building Inspectors could help people find out who owns what property.

Crime and Safety

Participants came up with many suggestions for concrete actions that would improve safety and crime rates in their neighborhoods. While speed bumps, streetlights, and sidewalks are expensive, they are clearly rallying points for future community participation. Meanwhile, Neighborhood Watch has the capability of expanding its impact.

Suggestions:

Coordinate effort between police, community programs, and other agencies.

Get to know neighbors, improve community participation and identity.

Reach out to Hispanics through bilingual flyers, lists of available translators, and extended organizational involvement.

Create neighborhood Safe Houses for children.

Slow down speeding cars with speed bumps.

Increase lighting in some areas after dark.

Educate about available resources such as the Jackson County Resolution Council.

"Do a Neighborhood Watch newsletter that is based in the neighborhood and has block information." [119]

More police presence.

Police would be willing to do classes on how to burglar-proof homes;

Flyers could educate the neighborhood on signs of a drug house. [15]

"Sentencing should be stiffer. Pot [marijuana] should be more than a misdemeanor." [32, 33]

Strengthen laws to provide harsher sentences. [47, 51]

"It cost my wife \$50 to even apply for the school cafeteria job. Make it cheaper to do criminal checks." [102]

Action Plans

1. The Crime and Safety activity area targeted three priorities for action planning, but did not appoint a committee for follow up. In the planning, agencies and organizations were given the primary responsibility for mobilization.
2. Hispanic Community Outreach could be accomplished by involving Neighborhood watch, the PTO, various businesses and Spanish and English newspapers, radio stations, the MPD, and Child Care Unlimited in distributing educational flyers on diverse topics. Neighborhood Watch should make a particular effort to involve Hispanic families in their block organizations.
3. Speeding vehicles could be slowed by special speed bumps, installed by efforts of the MPD, Neighborhood Watch, the City Engineer, and the Traffic Commission.
4. Neighborhood identities could be built around block parties featuring food and social activities, or around block-wide garage sales. The Community Dispute Resolution Center could help mediate disputes.

Hispanic/Anglo Relations

The Hispanic/Anglo relations group identified a number of problems involving communication and cultural differences.

Suggestions

Hispanics need to apply for positions on committees, including the County Alcohol and Drug planning committee.

Latinos and Anglos should work harder at becoming conversant in each other's languages. Parents expressed interest in mutual language classes at the schools focused on solving community problems.

Social agencies need bilingual staff.

Both agencies and non-agencies need to recognize the importance of a bilingual view.

People need to improve their motivation to improve their Latino contacts.

"The message to Hispanics should be: 'There's a place for you.'" [27]

Action Plans

The Hispanic/Anglo group appointed a committee and a meeting time to work on these issues further. The committee will concentrate on the action plans developed during the day.

Improved communication by contacts between Neighbors and police, and through block parties.

Decreased feelings of isolation through cross-cultural events.

A list of interpreters and help from the City Council to make bilingual meetings more frequent.

A policy of "meet and greet" to aid the perceived lack of bridges.

The Library and committee members are willing to help with increasing cultural awareness.

Trash

Trash refers to all types of garbage in yards, large appliances and junked cars. It is a subject of widespread complaint in the community. Discussion also included drug houses because trash and poor upkeep are associated with their presence. Moreover, social and legal pressure related to trash has been a means of addressing the presence of drug houses, particularly through the SMART program of the Medford Police Department. Again, mediation skills and communication were cited as ways to help clean up. Agencies and laws have some role in solving the trash problem, but participants also recognized that this area offers many opportunities for citizen action as well.

Suggestions

Inform residents on who and how to contact when neighborhood trash heaps become unbearable.

Enforce existing laws regarding trash, "dumpster diving" violations, and illegal dumping at area service agencies, and create a "sanitation police" to control those who do not cover or secure their garbage.

Have renters get together and clean up the neighborhood, or have clean up be a punishment for ticket offenses. Have community service organizations use existing county crews for clean up, or just mobilize the neighbors (school groups, Neighborhood Watch) to have a regular painting or clean up day.

Have the Dump site charge by weight, not volume, and have ways to help those who can't afford the fees.

Use Neighborhood Watch as a way to contact people with trucks who can help in hauling.

Inform people as to Rogue Disposal's current programs.

Mediation can help with conflicts between neighbors about trash. Neighborhood Watch could also help work out options and inform landlords about problems.

Don't give up when calling city services. If you don't get a response you're happy with, try again.

Drug traffic should be reported to Jacnet.

Handbook of resources and steps. [154] What to do if drug house; landlord issues;

Action Plans

1. In their action planning around trash issues, participants recognized agencies that could be helpful. Although their ideas were broad, and no committee was named, the suggestions could be adopted as intermediate goals by any interested residents.
2. Individuals and groups such as Neighborhood Watch could take advantage of a half price landfill day in the spring, free recycling at the landfill, and other targeted programs.
3. Drug involved displaced children could be aided by schools, CSD, MPD, Foster Parents, AFS, treatment facilities, Crisis Intervention facilities, as they provide guidelines and references for the public and resources for the other agencies.
4. Law Enforcement agencies and citizens could instigate a zero-tolerance program with an integrated intervention plan and high-profile advertising.

Youth Activities

Numerous suggestions were made around possible activities for children after school. Activities for children and youth would also be a primary function of a community center, and many of the suggestions are included in that category. Some of the ideas are only lacking money and staffing.

Suggestions

Activities including dances, crafts, art activities, Bingo nights with prizes, sports, gardening, pool tables.

Smaller neighborhood parks with basketball courts, more water fountains and off-hours bathroom facilities.

Ways for high schoolers to get credit and participate in the community, such as providing a day care service (learn business management), do community service or clean up.

Carpool or shuttle bus to get kids to after school programs, or pool of names for buddies to walk with, involve RVTD.

Parenting classes and support groups.

Parents could take turns working at after-school programs, teachers may be tired and not want to stay longer.

Activities for younger kids, expand Head Start, before and after school day care, and activities for kids (especially in the summer) that are too old for day care.

Supervised as opposed to open programs, to avoid groups of kids "hanging out."

Training for kids to be considerate and polite.

Job network bulletin board for youth.

"Let's get a subsidized after school program that works. It must be low or no cost or parents simply won't do it." [16]

"Get Head Start in the schools. It would give kids a base and a knowledge of the school." [16]

A real community center would bolster parents and kids. Do not provide direct aid to parents because it will never reach the kids. [17, 28]

Make the schools friendly. [18] Keep them open after hours for the gyms, learning programs. [83]

"The schools should be used more by others in the community, such as the gym at night." [40]

"Kids need extra help in the evenings and the Y costs too much. The parents could be educated at the same time."

Strengthen the family structure. For example, offer incentives to get parents to parenting classes. [33]

Create safe houses. [39]

Get high schoolers more involved in clean-up, watching the neighborhood, helping the elderly [39, 154]

"Get a community pool of parents for trading day care so people can get to work." [78]

A Community Center

A community center has the possibility of being a focal point for many of the proposed actions. Even if a site is far in the future, the idea of a center can still help catalyze ideas for community projects.

Suggestions

A center should incorporate artwork created by the community. Local artists could teach children. Connect a center to community resources--have transportation available, which should be cheap, convenient, and timely. Transportation to existing Enid Rankin center should also be provided.

Youth need room for dances, (an expanded "Shack"), a youth cafe and a place for recitals.

Activities should be affordable. The YMCA has good activities, but some low-income people can't afford them. Affordability is an issue with every program.

Young children need Head Start, expanded day care, bilingual child care, drop-off service for children under 6, while latch-key kids need a place to go after school.

The center could educate around cultural differences. Latino and Anglo kids could be integrated into the same programs. Hispanic Boys and Girls clubs are desired as well.

The center could offer educational classes.

Service clubs, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), donations, bond issues, and federal grants may help with funding.

Instead of a center, look at existing facilities such as schools in an area that is convenient. Link schools with programs, as they are already respected, and have supervised activities in school yard.

The community could exert pressure to convert Santos into a multipurpose facility.

Jefferson area would be a good place for a center, because it should be in a different part of town from the "Shack".

The center should not become a place where kids meet to go and cause mischief, as they do at the Shack.

There should be multigenerational interaction.

In their action planning, the group highlighted a few concepts: the Cafe, Day Care, Classes, and Diversity, and the different age groups that they would reach. No committee was formed, but a few concerns stand out--affordability, appropriate location, and wide-ranging programs and services.

Neighborhood Improvement

Although the heading for the group was originally Neighborhood Decay, the participants opted for a more positive outlook. Although problems with high-density housing and deteriorating housing quality are serious, participants felt that combined agency and individual efforts could solve them.

Suggestions

"People don't want to go to meetings but get excited about watermelon feeds and street barbecues." [119] Let's have a street party to show them that W. Medford isn't that bad." [138]

Good neighbors create other good neighbors, and nice houses usually motivate others to fix up their own.

Educate about services and coordinate between them: The Oregon Housing and Community Service is exploring helping low-income people purchase homes. Habitat for Humanity, the City of Medford, ACCESS and the Housing Authority all have programs that can help.

Restrict zoning to fewer multifamily groups, or have the planning commission place a moratorium on high-density buildings.

The League of Women Voters could organize an action committee with base information about regulations and rights, so action could be taken.

Laws should be clear, widely-known, understood, and supported by the public.

Free paint, neighborhood clean up days, tax incentives to keep your house cared for, and a hazardous waste day could encourage action. A little paint does a lot towards improving morale.

Improve blight house enforcement.

Lighting is needed for a sense of security between Prune and Meadows Lane on Chestnut avenue. Grant money should be appropriated for both lighting and sidewalks.

Change the zoning; restrict higher density [18]

One group has begun to mark dark areas of the neighborhood on the map, for future streetlight installation.

One woman suggested a Free Trash Day, when Medford would pick up large appliances and other items that may be too expensive for low-income families to put out for the regular collection, and this is currently being organized.

Police could do classes for spotting drug houses and creating a local response. [10; 141]

Create tax incentives to fix up property. [18, 27, 35, 49] "The assessor was out snapping my picture before I could even finish repairs. Why should I fix up my place when it will be taxed to death?" [18]

Action Plans

A committee of four formed to explore action further and report back to the Coalition.

Toward a Model for Action

On the basis of the fieldwork represented by the this report, the Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy believes that three functions will be important to create lasting social change in West Medford.

1. Function One: A Safety Net for the Vulnerable

Agency members of the West Medford Community Coalition are determined to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the community. They have avidly discussed concrete cases in their efforts to improve coordination. They have engaged trainers in collaboration to provide conceptual development related to the changes they intend. They organized and implemented a half-day workshop for educators in accessing available services. Further, they are committed to developing a plan for re-structuring service delivery in a more efficient manner. The overall goal has been to foster greater independence on the part of residents so that service agencies truly function in a temporary fashion, rather than create multi-generational dependency. What is intended is a case management approach to "integrated coordinated" services which are family-based in their orientation.

Some members of the community have argued against locating further services in the area, or of consolidating services.

- "We don't want a service center here, if it means consolidating services for a population we don't support." [17]
- "The service center would make Columbus a giant bus stop; this area will become a magnet." [17a, 29]
- "We don't want one-stop shopping for welfare people." [28]

- "If the service center goes in, it will get worse around here. We will sell or rent so we can get out of here." [28]
- "Why not put it in your neighborhood?" [42]

Despite these concerns, ample common ground has been identified. That is, both residents and agencies have identified an interest in reducing dependency of many West Medford residents. It is expected that if neighbor concerns can be addressed, a potential partnership in this effort could be achieved.

2. Function Two: Creating A Positive Identity

A community center for West Medford was proposed frequently in discussions with residents and during the planning workshop. Specific ideas for the uses of such a facility were discussed earlier. The purpose of such a facility would be to create positive identity among residents regarding their community. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies or other potential sources of support could be explored.

3. Function Three: Capacity-Building

The level of stress and disempowerment expressed by West Medford residents argues for an advocacy function for a period of time. Its purpose would be to foster greater capacity in local residents to resolve their own issues and to link with neighbors to create a larger community identity in order to address larger-scale issues.

The outcomes desired through advocacy are to address issues currently unresolved and which are not resolved through the other functions. Social service agencies provide services to their clients, and a community center focuses on positive community programs. Workers in this area, which would be hired from the neighborhood and would represent examples of successful independence, would help residents deal with the issues outlined in this report: neighborhood blight, trash, substandard housing, drug activities and other crime, landlord/tenant disputes, and finding positive outlets for youth.

A further goal of advocacy is to develop economic capacity of West Medford residents by linking residents to existing services and supporting policies which promote livable wages in southern Oregon.

Figure Two presents an accountability model to summarize this discussion. It displays how the three functions mutually reinforce each other (the horizontal arrows) to create lasting social change in West Medford.

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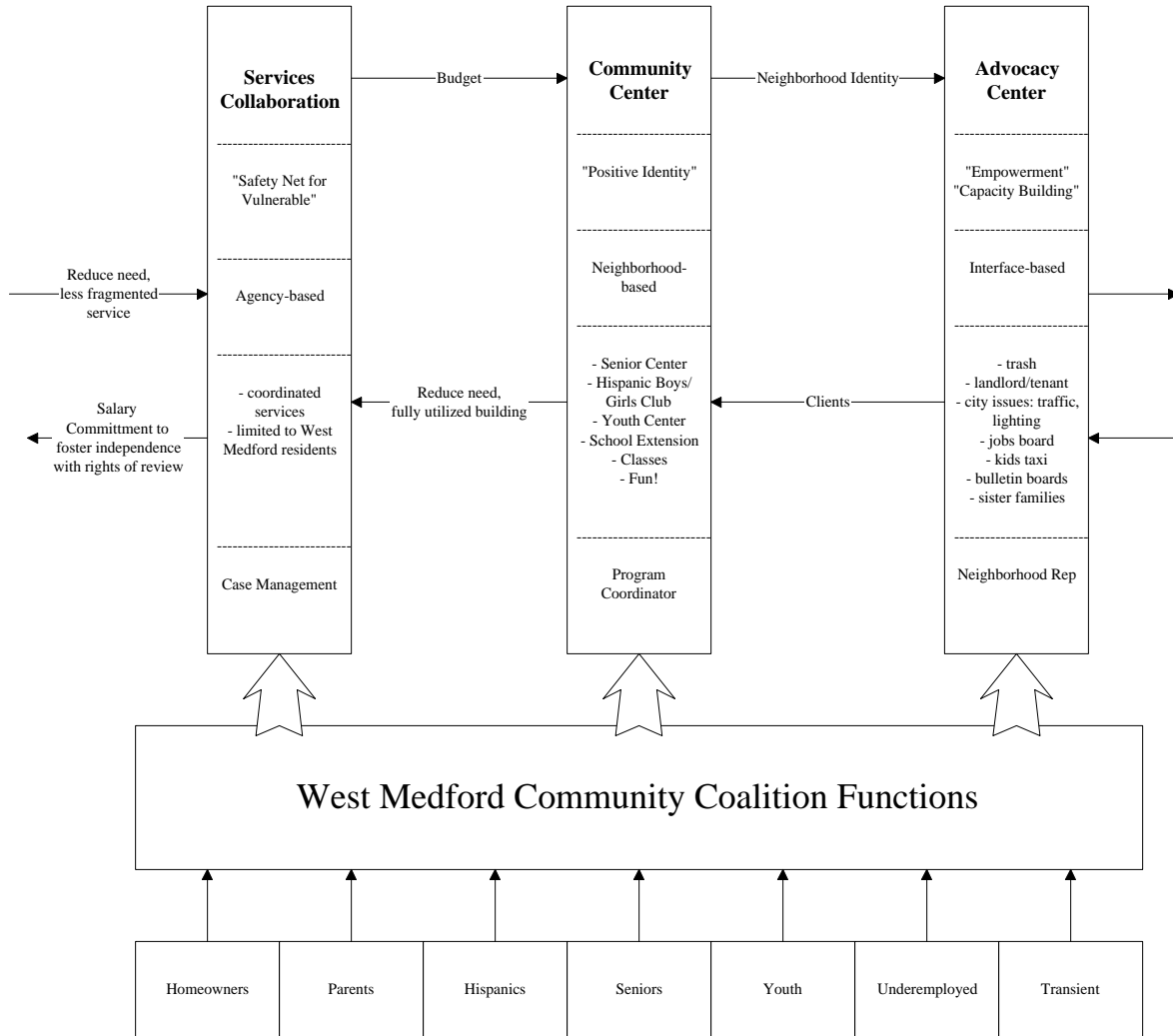
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**Figure Two:
Accountability Model for Action**



Publics of West Medford and Their Issues

Appendix A
West Medford Census Data

Figure Three
Map of Census Tracts One and Two

Table One:
Census Data Related to Tract One

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>t. 1-</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>t.1-1990</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>change</u>
TOTAL POPULATION	1789		1809		
under 5 years	149	8.33	112	6.19	-2.14%
65 and over	312	17.44	252	13.93	-3.51
median	28.8		28.9		+ .1
<u>Household Type and</u>					
<u>Relationship</u>					
Number in households	1702		1710		
persons per household	1.89		2.23		+ .34
<u>Race</u>					
White	1646	92.0	1475	81.54	-10.46%
Black	1	.06	5	.28	+ .22%
Spanish Origin	104	5.81	286	15.81	+10%
Mexican	85	4.75	262	14.48	+9.73
<u>Schooling^{1,2}</u>					
Total Population 25 yrs. & over	1061	59.31	1033	57.1	-2.21%
8 years of elementary	169	15.93	215	20.81	+4.48%
4 years high school or GED	376	35.44	336	32.53	-2.91%
4 years college	104	9.80	35	3.39	-6.41%
% High School Graduates	58.8		57.7		-1.1%
<u>Journey to Work²</u>					
Total Workers, age 16 and up	558	31.19	616	34.05	+2.86%
drive alone	315	56.45	328	53.25	-3.2%
Mean minutes to work	15.8		15.5		- .3
<u>Labor Force Statistics²</u>					
Total persons, age 16 & over	1469	82.11	1331	73.58	-8.53%
in Labor force	785	53.44	732	55.0	+1.6%
Employed	573	39	632	47.48	+8.48%
Civilians, 16-19 yrs. old	130	8.85	105	7.89	-.96%
not High School	71	54.61	25	23.81	-30.8%
graduate					
not enrolled in	112	86.15	36	34.28	-51.87%
School					

Table One (Continued)

<u>Indicator (continued)</u>	<u>t. 1-</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>t.1-1990</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>change</u>
<u>Occupation</u>					
Technical, Sales, Admin. Support	122	8.30	75	5.63	-2.67
Service	131	8.92	14	1.05	-7.87%
Farming, Forestry, Fishing	31	2.11	59	4.43	+2.32
Precision Production, craft & repair	75	5.12	59	4.43	-.69%
Operators, Fabricators, Laborers	97	6.6	30	2.25	-4.35
Manufacturing	69	4.7	59	4.43	-.27%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	122	8.3	285	21.41	+13.11
Professional & related services	96	6.53	55	4.13	-2.4%
<u>Income</u>					
median (\$)	6,509		11,744		\$5232
mean (\$)	10,018		15,660		\$5642
<u>Income Type</u>					
Households	935		720		
with earnings	594	57.11	469	65.14	+8.03%
mean earnings (\$)	9,770		17,493		\$7723
with Social Security	338	36.15	190	26.39	-9.76%
mean Social Security	3,528		6,249		\$2721
(\$)					
with public assistance	191	20.43	132	18.33	-2.1%
mean public assistance	2,380		4,627		\$2247
(\$)					
<u>Poverty</u>					
Total Families	156		146		
below poverty level		40.7		37.7	-3%
Persons for whom poverty status is determined ³	630		757		
below poverty level		36.0		41.2	+5.2%
<u>Housing</u>					
All Housing Units	995		844		
occupied	849		747		
owner-occupied	178	19.8	134	15.88	-3.92%
renter-occupied	721	72.46	633	75	+3.92%
median contract rent (\$)	169		204		\$35
median owner occupied housing unit value (\$)	32,100		42,100	42100	\$10,000

1. Numbers are not cumulative but represent those levels alone.

2. Numbers are figured in proportion to at segment of the population, except for the initial total, which is reckoned in relation to the total population.

3. Poverty Status is determined for all persons except those institutionalized, in college dorm or military group quarters, or unrelated individuals under 15 years old.

**Table Two:
Census Data Related to Tract Two**

<u>Indicator</u>	<u>t. 2-</u> <u>1980</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>t.2-1990</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>change</u>
TOTAL POPULATION	9777		10142		
under 5 years old	913	9.34	1069	10.54	+1.2%
65 and over	1378	14.1	1216	11.99	-2.11%
median	28.1		28.9		.8
<u>Household Type and Relationship</u>					
Number in households	9639	98.59	9941	98.02	-.57%
persons per household	2.41		2.47		.06
<u>Race</u>					
White	9417	96.32	9320	91.89	-4.43
Black	21	.21	58	.57	+.36%
Spanish Origin	355	3.30	900	8.87	+5.57%
Mexican	248	2.54	747	7.36	+4.82
<u>Schooling^{1,2}</u>					
Total Population 25 yrs. & over	5626	57.54	6077	59.92	+2.38%
8 years of elementary	590	10.49	580	9.54	-.95%
4 years high school or GED	2101	37.34	2367	38.95	+1.61
4 years college	517	9.19	347	5.71	-3.45
% High School Graduates		66.2		72.8	+6.6%
<u>Journey to Work²</u>					
Total Workers, age 16 and up	3401	34.78	4224	41.65	+6.87%
drive alone	2383	70.07	3012	71.31	+1.24%
Mean minutes to work	13.8		16.7		2.9
<u>Labor Force Statistics²</u>					
Total persons, age 16 & over	7344	75.11	7630	75.23	+.13%
in Labor force	4257	57.96	4773	62.55	+34.59%
Employed	3541	48.21	4334	56.80	+7.87%
Civilians, 16-19 yrs. old	611	8.32	645	8.45	+.13%
not enrolled in School	372	60.88	382	59.22	-1.66%
not High School graduate	189	30.93	246	38.13	+7.2%

Table Two (continued)

<u>Occupation</u>					
Managerial & Professional	553	7.53	284	3.72	-3.81%
Technical, Sales, Admin.Support	990	13.48	611	8	-5.48%
Service	733	9.98	48	.63	-9.35%
Farming, Forestry, Fishing	100	1.36	204	2.67	+1.31%
Precision Production, craft & repair	398	5.42	479	6.28	+.86%
Operators, Fabricators, Laborers	767	10.44	417	5.46	-4.98%
Manufacturing	545	7.42	700	9.17	+1.75%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	949	12.92	1392	18.24	+5.32%
Professional & related services	672	9.15	726	9.51	+.36%
<u>Income</u>					
median (\$)	11,762		12,536		\$774
mean(\$)	13,540		20,876		\$7336
<u>Income Type</u>					
Households	3961		4076		
with earnings	3048	76.95	3078	75.51	-1.44%
mean earnings (\$)	13,394		21,440		\$8046
with Social Security	1156	29.18	1162	28.51	-.67%
mean Social Security	4,175		6,976		\$2801
with public	503	12.7	531	13.03	+.33%
assistance					
mean public	2,327		3,775		\$1448
assistance (\$)					
<u>Poverty</u>					
Total Families	337		607		
below poverty level		13.2		24.0	+11.2%
Persons for whom poverty status is determined ³	1164	11.9	2725	26.87	
below poverty level		17.4		27.8	+10.4
<u>Housing</u>					
All Housing Units	4270		4283		
owner-occupied	1928	48.2	4301	41.0	-7.2%
renter-occupied	2071	48.5	2377	54.56	+6.06%
median contract rent (\$)	204		321		\$117
median owner occupied housing unit value (\$)	41,800		46,900		\$5,100

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