



# Oregon's Kitchen Table – Levee Ready Columbia-Values and Beliefs

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In summer 2019, Levee Ready Columbia (LRC), in partnership with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT), conducted a public engagement process to hear from people who work in, live in, or own a business in Multnomah County and its surrounding areas about their knowledge of and values, and beliefs about the Columbia River levee system from North Portland to the Sandy River in Troutdale. The following executive summary provides an overview of the engagement process as well as high level findings. The attached report contains four sections:

- results from the online survey and paper survey;
- themes heard in listening sessions and engagement opportunities with Latinx, Somali, and Russian immigrant communities;
- a brief conclusion; and
- annotated survey results.

## ABOUT OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE

Oregon's Kitchen Table is a program of the National Policy Consensus Center in the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University, and was created by a group of non-partisan, non-profit community organizations dedicated to helping Oregonians have a voice in public decision-making. Oregon's Kitchen Table creates public consultations to allow Oregonians to weigh in on policy questions posed by elected officials and public managers. OKT has been used at the state, local and regional levels to gather feedback from a wide variety of Oregonians using both our online surveying tool to solicit input from thousands of participants and in-person community gatherings of various sizes and formats. The online surveying tool is not intended to be a scientific study; rather it is one way to allow the public to share ideas, beliefs, and values with decision-makers.

We are committed to engaging community members from all walks of life – particularly communities that typically have not been represented or engaged in public processes - to achieve deep engagement. We

utilize translators and interpreters to ensure that both materials and online and in-person consultations are available for non-native English speakers and those who may have lower literacy levels.

## ENGAGEMENT GOALS

The goals of this project were multi-fold: 1. to hear from as many people as possible who work in, live in, or own a business in the Multnomah County area; 2. to gauge what interests or concerns people most about the levee system; and 3. to ask people to begin considering trade-offs among competing values. In addition, a final goal was to lay the groundwork for LRC to then engage more deeply around strategies, solutions, and trade-offs in the future, particularly with historically under-represented communities.

LRC is a group of people from over 20 organizations that have different interests in the Columbia River and the levee system. This includes representatives from communities along the Columbia River from Portland, through Gresham and Fairview, out to the Sandy River in Troutdale. LRC partners promoted the survey through a wide variety of contacts and networks of state, county, and city governments and elected officials, neighborhood associations, community organizations, business groups, and environmental groups.

LRC was particularly interested in hearing from immigrant and non-English speaking communities. OKT created several avenues for outreach and input, including a survey available online and on paper in multiple languages that was distributed through multiple points-of-contact (community-based organizations, community events, businesses, social media, churches, and other venues), and in-person small group listening sessions in Spanish, Russian, and Somali.

Because this engagement is intended for the general public, it assumes that respondents bring different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding the levee system to it. It was our goal to ensure that those who may not have as in-depth knowledge can still respond and share what they believe and have experienced.

## PARTICIPATION

**1047 people** took part in the various engagement opportunities. 820 participants took the survey online (offered in Spanish, Russian and English) and 227 participants provided input on the same questions via paper (in Spanish, Russian, Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, and English). 78 percent of participants indicated that they preferred to receive information in English, 10 percent in Spanish, 6 percent in Somali, and 5 percent in Russian.

The majority (70 percent) of participants said they lived in Portland, with the next largest groups coming from Gresham (7 percent) and Fairview (5 percent).

## FINDINGS: COMMONLY HELD VALUES AND BELIEFS

Across all forms of engagement, the following commonly held values and beliefs emerged:

- People are concerned about future flooding on the Columbia River (88 percent).
- Most participants are willing to support investments of some kind beyond minimum federal requirements (87 percent), though participants are more divided on what those investments should be for.

- The majority of participants (70 percent) support paying a few more dollars per year to make sure that the levees meet federal requirements and provide economic, environmental, or recreational improvements along the river. The remaining 30 percent were divided over whether to pay a few dollars a year, but only enough to make sure that the levees meet federal requirements (18 percent) or not paying anything to repair and upgrade the Columbia River levees even if it means that they do not meet federal requirements and create an increased risk of flooding (13 percent).
- While protecting all of the interests in the areas around the levee were important to people, participants indicated that the following were most important to them:
  - improving the health of the environment and habitat for fish and wildlife
  - protecting places for people to enjoy nature
  - protecting Portland International Airport
  - protecting homes and residents in the area; and
  - protecting educational and training institutions behind the levees.

## SECTION 1: ONLINE / PAPER SURVEY

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The OKT survey provided some background on what a levee is, how the Columbia River levee system operates, some historical background of major flooding events like the 1948 Vanport flood, and what the Levee Ready Columbia partnership is working on. Next, the consultation posed a series of questions about people's knowledge of and concerns about the levee system as well as uses of and interests for the area behind the levee. The next set of questions focused on costs regarding improvement of the levee system. A series of demographic questions also informed LRC of who responded to the survey.

Survey invitations were sent through LRC members, Oregon's Kitchen Table and a number of local partners. Local news outlets, particularly Spanish and Russian language radio programs, also publicized the effort. OKT also worked with community organizers to arrange in-person listening sessions, small group conversations, one-on-one interviews, and paper surveys with those from various immigrant communities.

The raw data was processed and analyzed by OKT staff. The following analysis includes a summary of results and excerpted comments from open ended questions; all responses to these questions will be provided to LRC as a separate file.

## OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

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### KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF ISSUE

One set of questions gauged how participants used the area around the levees water and what people already knew about the levee system. More than half (53 percent) responded that they knew a bit about the levees. More people (28 percent) knew nothing about the levees than those who knew a lot (17 percent). More than half of the people who responded either live or work in the area or often visit (56 percent). Less than 15 percent of those who responded either rarely or never visit the area. The highest use of the area was visiting the Portland Airport (23 percent), with shopping in stores or eating at restaurants in the area the second highest (18 percent). Attendance at a school or training institute was the lowest use (less than 1 percent).

Of those who shared another use or interest area not listed, some of the most frequent responses were:

- Visit family or friends who live or work in the area
- Drive along major roads (e.g. Marine Drive) in the area
- Attend meetings or conferences in the area
- Play sports at Delta Park
- Go to Portland International Raceway

The majority (88 percent) had some level of concern about the future of flooding in the area, though that majority was divided on the level of concern (45 percent were slightly concerned and 43 percent were very concerned). Only 9 percent were not concerned.

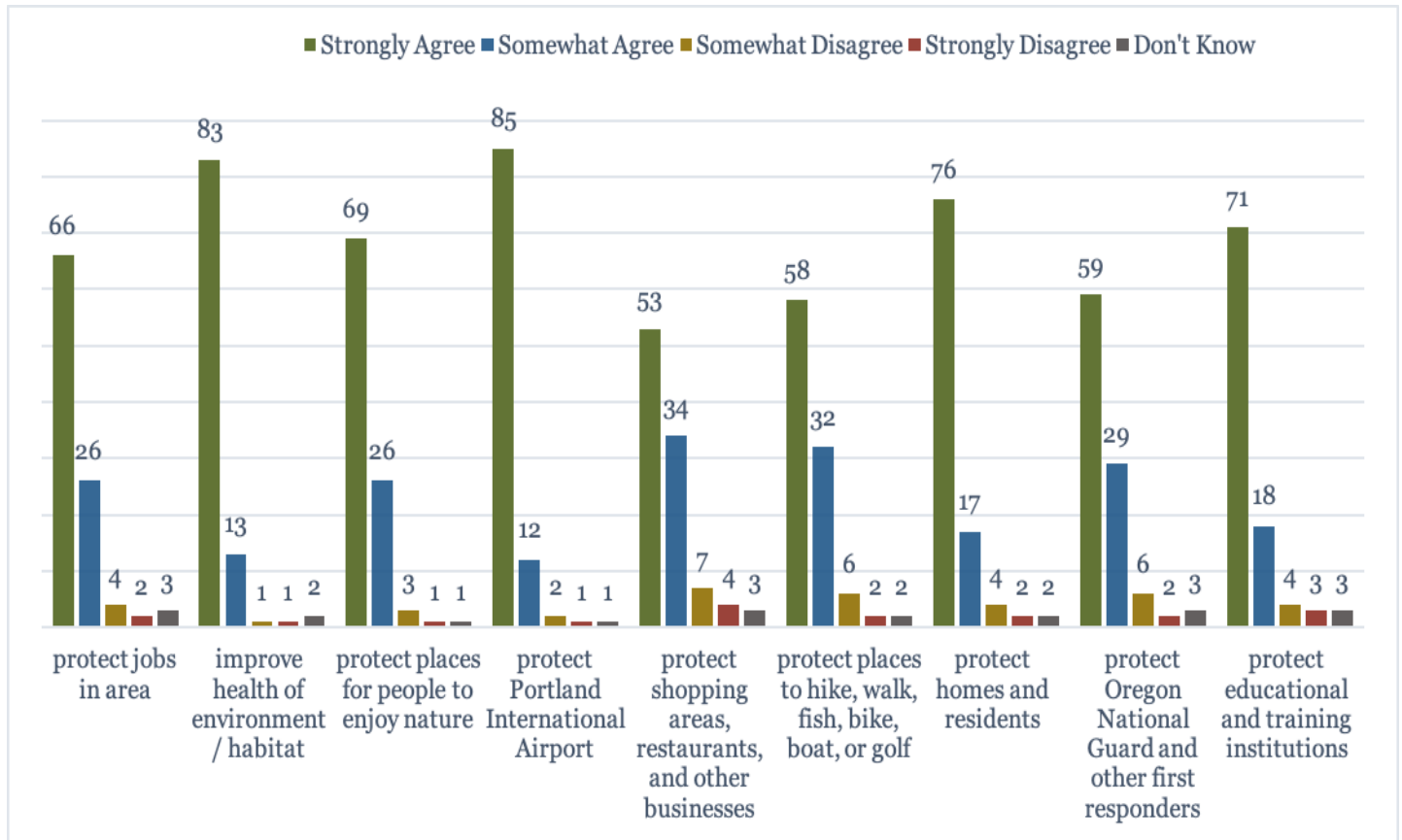
### BELIEFS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE LEVEE SYSTEM

Participants were asked to what degree they agreed with a series of statements that addressed the importance of different interests for LRC to consider while planning for the future of the levees. The following chart shows the percentage of responses by degree of agreement.

While protecting all of the interests in the areas around the levee were generally important to people, participants indicated that the following were most important to them:

- improving the health of the environment and habitat for fish and wildlife
- protecting places for people to enjoy nature
- protecting Portland International Airport
- protecting homes and residents in the area; and
- protecting educational and training institutions behind the levees.

The chart below shows the percentage of participants and their degree of agreement for each statement.



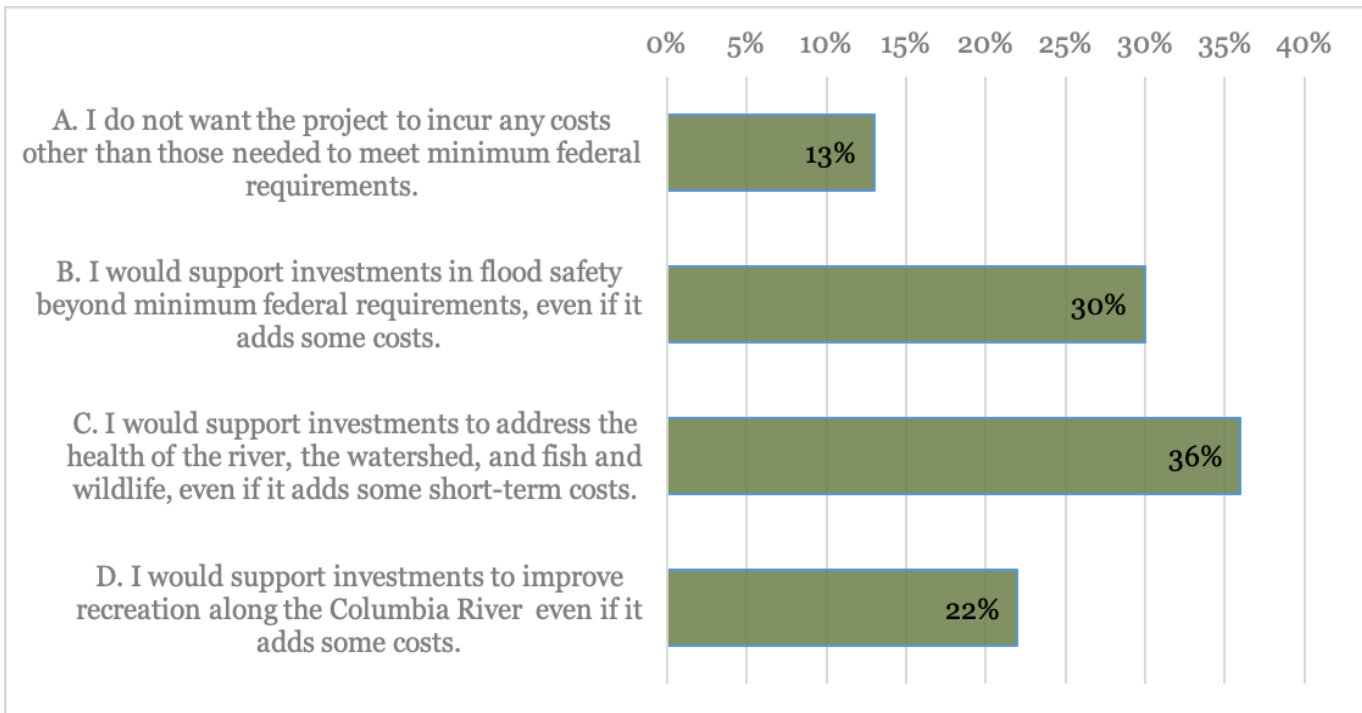
*Statements have been abbreviated to fit the chart format. See Appendix A for the complete statements.*

Participants also provided other interests that are of importance to them regarding planning for the future of the levee system, including the following:

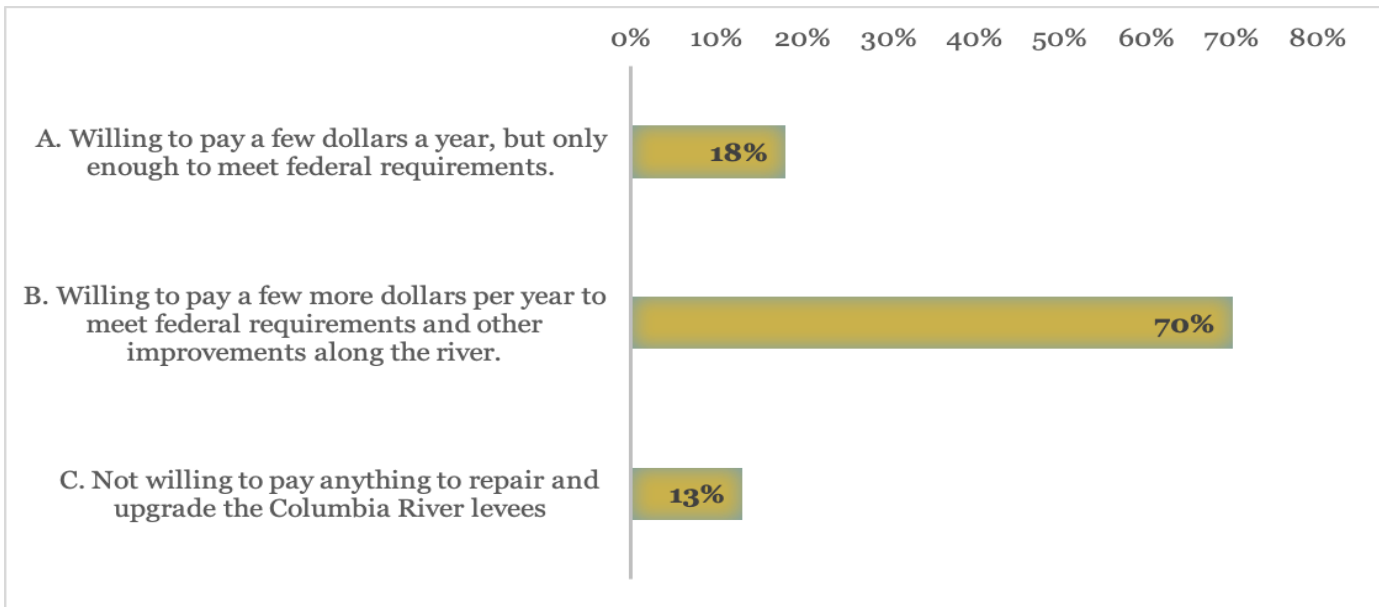
- Portland International Raceway
- City of Portland wells or water sources, especially for drinking water
- Marine Drive
- Areas that are historically and culturally important (e.g. historic Vanport)
- Areas that are culturally significant to native populations (e.g. Delta Park Pow Wow)
- Areas that serve as venues for a variety of cultural and immigrant festivals (e.g. Blue Lake Park)
- Shipping or mailing facilities in the area
- Concerns about environmentally hazardous infrastructure or contaminants (e.g. oil storage facilities or transportation)
- Non-profit and community organizations (e.g. Oregon Food Bank)

- Freight rail lines

Next, participants were asked to consider a series of tradeoff questions around the costs for levee repairs and upgrades. They were provided with some information about possible repairs and improvements. These questions were intended to replicate some of the tradeoffs that decisionmakers feel they face when addressing how to pay to improve the levee system. Participants were able to select as many of the statements as they wished.



Participants were then given information about what it may cost community members to pay for upgrades and repairs to the system as well as additional costs for any other improvements. They were then asked to select from three statements about their willingness to pay for these costs.



Respondents who selected Statement C were also asked to share why they made that selection.

- Some people shared that they felt either taxes were already high and / or they would be unable to pay due to their incomes
- Some participants felt that the levees were unnecessary while others would be willing to pay something towards the costs of relocating people, businesses, and infrastructure but not to improving or upgrading the levees.
- Other comments pointed to a belief that federal funding should pay for improvements.
- Some respondents wrote that they believe only those property owners directly in the areas behind the levees should be responsible for any costs.
- Some participants cited uncertainty about how much they could be asked to pay.

### **EXCERPTED COMMENTS**

*This questionnaire minimizes the cost by doing a per household cost. What are the total cost estimates? You need to compare the cost to other costs like parks and recreation per household. Private and public investments were made in the floodplain knowing the possible risks. No guarantee was ever made that some degree of flooding has some chance of occurring. Taxpayers should be presented with nonstructural alternatives with the costs of these alternatives compared with levee improvements.*

*Because if they are federally-regulated, then they should be federally funded.*

*У нас так выросли property tax за последние 6 лет почти в два раза. Кроме того, собирается еще и art tax 35 \$ с человека в год. Я считаю, что нужно использовать эти деньги более эффективно и не увеличивать налоги. (English translation: "So our property tax has almost doubled over the past 6 years. In addition, an art tax of \$ 35 per person per year is also collected. I believe that you need to use this money more efficiently and not increase taxes.")*

*I would be willing for only a few dollars. Those who built in the floodplain benefited from lands that would not have otherwise been able to build in that area but for the levy. While there is regional and even statewide economic benefits to this area, it should not fall on the burden of those who have/had no control on the upkeep and maintenance, and more burden should fall on those who have received the direct benefit (developable property).*

### **ADDITIONAL CONCERNS**

Participants were given multiple opportunities to share in their own words concerns or thoughts they had about the levee system.

Common responses touched on the following themes:

- A belief that homes, businesses, industry, and / or infrastructure should be relocated if they were in potential flood areas behind the levees. Others shared that they wanted to see restrictions on any new building or development in the areas behind the levees.
- Concern that heavy weight vehicles, commercial trucking, or the railroads were causing ongoing damage to the levee system
- Some participants prioritized protecting people who live in the areas around the levees - whether housed or unhoused populations.



- Concerns about the cost of inaction
- Several participants expressed concerns about whether or how the levee system might withstand an earthquake and what impacts climate change might have on the levee system
- Level of water quality in the event of a flood
- Ensuring that historically under-represented communities were heard in any process related to the levee system

There was disagreement among participants about who should be expected to pay for costs associated with levee system upgrades and improvements. Some people believed that federal funds should cover any costs while others shared that they didn't trust the federal government to oversee levee management or improvements. The same opposing views were also shared regarding state or local governments. While some people shared that they were willing to pay for upgrades and improvements themselves, others felt that only those immediately behind the levees should pay. Some people felt that people throughout the region or whole state benefited from infrastructure in the area and should therefore contribute to the costs.

There was also disagreement about what kinds of improvements should be made, with some people voicing their support for improvements aimed at protecting habitat, wildlife, and nature while others were more interested in people, homes, and jobs and still others shared that different types of recreation opportunities were priorities for them (particularly walking, biking, and water-based recreation like kayaking or swimming).

Finally, some people also requested additional or ongoing information with a couple of requests to see some visualizations (such as video) about what impacts flooding might have. Some people wanted to see ongoing and increased outreach to and communications with communities of color, people living with low incomes, and immigrant and refugee communities.

### EXCERPTED COMMENTS

*dadka qaxooti ga ee xaafadaha degar ha laga war haayo, hana la gaarsiiyo wixii talo iyo tusaale alt (English Translation: refugees in these areas should be kept informed, and provided with advice and information)*

*The Levee protects interests with statewide implications and should be repaired, maintained and funded by the entire state.*

*I support taxing businesses, and homes that make money within a certain bracket. But any low income households should not be taxed.*

*If it was my decision and money was no object, I'd protect only what is absolutely necessary (airports and well fields) and let the river reclaim its natural flood planes elsewhere. Most homeowners and business should be incentivized to move to higher ground.*

### **EXCERPTED COMMENTS (cont.)**

*Businesses, developers and residents should be discouraged from locating or remaining in natural flood plain areas, not enabled and subsidized at public expense through levees and artificial manipulation of the insurance market to protect such developments from the true financial risk and folly of locating in a flood zone. We should be reducing the footprint of businesses and homes in this area; public funding would be better spent helping them relocate. Uses of flood-prone land such as hiking, biking, walking, fishing are much less impacted by increasingly inevitable flooding, and their recovery after such events will much less expensive than rebuilding businesses and homes.*

*How about an estimate of damage to and from industry behind the levee from a flood that resulted in contaminated water and other associated toxic spills that could occur after a flood event? What is the cost of inaction? Forget recreation issues when economy, life safety and environment are inextricably linked.*

*The secondary water system for the Portland Metro area is also located in this same flood plain. Nothing in this questionnaire identifies or provides links to inform how that system would or would not continue to function in the event of a dike breach. Also, a number of major train tracks for the region run parallel to the Columbia River within this flood plain. The Vanport flood was partially caused by the lack of understanding that the RR berms were not structurally adequate to hold back flood waters. Since Union Pacific owns this section of the railroad: Will they be required to pay their proportionate share for the security of this resource?*

*Es muy importante mantener los diques seguros para el bienestar de los residentes que viven al rededor del Columbia river. (English translation: It's very important to keep the levees safe for the well-being of the residents who live around the Columbia River.)*

*I would like to see more outreach to the black community and to engage with those who are still in the area and those who have been displaced. Especially if there will be employment opportunities and opportunities for those displaced to be returned. I would like to see an equity lens applied in the wake of the area being gentrified.*

*Businesses should insure themselves against flooding and a minimum of public funding should be spent protecting them. Infrequent flooding of natural areas seems like a natural part of riparian ecosystems and doesn't need to be avoided.*

*I think we have placed our bets on the wrong horse: It's a flood plain in an earthquake prone area and we know we are going to lose everything in that area at some point. If it was my house there I would be looking to sell and move to higher ground. There are plenty of uses of the low level flood plan in the interim but I don't want public funds invested when we could do something else with those funds that better prepare the region for the future.*

## SECTION 2: OUTREACH TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

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### OUTREACH

OKT project manager Andrea Cano worked with community organizers on outreach efforts, particularly to those who spoke Spanish, Russian, and Somali. Community organizers set up small group listening sessions and selected culturally appropriate channels for outreach to their communities. In addition, paper surveys in Chinese and Vietnamese were distributed through Asian Family Health Center in Southeast Portland. Ms. Cano also promoted the survey with other ethnic and cultural organizations, mutual assistance associations, and the leadership of diversity and equity programs and efforts throughout the Portland metro region.

### SPANISH LISTENING SESSION / DISCUSSIONS

Community organizer Maria Delgado and Ms. Cano conducted outreach to Latinx community members and facilitate a listening session and discussions in Spanish. The online and paper surveys in Spanish were promoted through social media, email networks (including Latinx leadership and elected officials in various communities), a Spanish language radio program on KBOO, residents of apartment complexes in the area, and Latinx owned businesses.

A traditional Mexican metaphor was echoed throughout the listening session facilitated by Andrea Cano: *Camarón que se duerme, se lo lleva la corriente* (*The shrimp who sleeps is taken by the tide, or 'if you snooze, you lose', or 'consequences of not being informed'*). Participants expressed repeatedly how important learning about levee issues in the community was to them, how they would share this info with family and friends, and welcomed being included in future discussions and surveys.

Almost all participants had no knowledge of the levee or flood management systems, even though some lived nearby and others worked in the areas between Sandy Blvd and Marine Drive into outer Gresham. The concept of an earthen levee was new; for many participants the word levee in Spanish 'diques' meant (or in reference to their own experiences) a concrete wall or 'dike'. However, they understood when the facilitators explained that parts of Marine Drive which they had driven on or had seen next to the airport was a section of the levee system. They were grateful to know about this and that someone was interested in their opinions. Many asked for follow-up or wanted to be kept informed, especially those living or working in the affected areas.

Participants shared that they did the following activities in the areas around the levees:

- drive on Marine Drive
- go to the airport
- shop at Cascade Station stores as well as stores in Fairview and Troutdale
- play soccer or picnic at area parks
- walk along or swim in the Columbia River
- visit Blue Lake

It was important for them to protect homes and businesses in the flood plains, and be educated in emergency preparedness. People discussed their concerns about what was at risk with increased rain, such as flooding, levee breaches, and the potential for the spread of disease and infections through flooded areas.

The group agreed that it was important the levees system be repaired or updated, and flood safety be assured by the government. Some asked that the government be judicious with the funds at hand and not be wasteful, but were reluctant to pay more taxes, because of their own tenuous economic conditions. The majority of the participants said they certainly could afford the \$15 per year tax. *“De veras, es algo que puedo pagar.”* (It’s certainly an amount I can pay.)

The group also emphasized wider dissemination of levee issues via Spanish language media and press, and on-going education via community organizations, schools and parent groups. They stressed that *‘todo el mundo debe saber...estar al tanto sobre la situación’* or that everyone should know about the issue, flood protection, importance of repairs of the levee system, and receive education and information about emergency preparedness.

### SOMALI LISTENING SESSIONS / DISCUSSIONS

Lul Abdulle organized two listening sessions in the Somali community - one for women and one for men – out of respect for gender separation customs. Ms. Abdulle facilitated the one for women and a male colleague led the session for men. Both used popular education techniques and pictures in leading the discussions. In addition, the organizers conducted outreach to point people to either the online survey or paper surveys at community events, restaurants, and stores.

While most participants did not know about the Columbia River and the levees, they did share experiences in Somalia around river flooding and levees, particularly around how they responded as a community to instances of flooding. They shared concerns about how and when they would receive any information about flooding and levee improvements from government agencies.

Most of those who took part in the discussion groups or in one-on-one conversations shared that they live in the levee areas, have many school age children, and are below the poverty income line. Some participants responded that they were not ready or able to financially contribute to levee improvements.

They also shared the following:

- Most participants had not heard about the levee system along the Columbia and were not aware of flooding dangers in Oregon.
- For many participants, their main concerns related to emergency response in the event of a flood. They shared that they didn’t know what would happen in the event of a flood along the Columbia, what information they would receive, what steps the government might take or what steps they ought to take as residents.
- Some were also concerned about any flooding regarding the Willamette River as that was closer to where some of the participants lived.
- Some people wondered what would happen if there were no financial contributions towards levee improvements from community members and whether that would mean there would be no resources for protection from flooding or information sharing.

### RUSSIAN LISTENING SESSIONS / DISCUSSIONS

Hanna Grishkevich conducted outreach to members of the Russian speaking community through Russian broadcast radio programs on KOOR 1010 AM, Slavic churches, presentations at community events and art classes, and through social media.

Participants shared that they do the following activities around the levee area:

- Drive to the airport
- Watch planes take off on Columbia river
- Shop at Target
- Visit parks
- Attend church
- Drive on routes along the river on a regular basis

Many participants shared that they had never thought about flooding along the Columbia as serious and that it seemed like a secure or safe area to them. Some participants compared potential flooding to warnings about other emergency or disaster situations, such a coastal tsunami, and wondered about the likelihood of such an event actually happening.

While people said they thought steps should be taken to make sure the levee system was secure, they felt like taxes were high enough already and did not want to see an increase. If there were any costs to community members, they only supported covering the basic needs of levee upgrades. They also wanted to know which locations might be the most vulnerable to levee breaks and flooding in the area. Many participants were concerned about the impact of flooding to routes around and to the airport in particular. Some people were apprehensive of government's involvement and shared that they thought their input wouldn't be taken into consideration.

## CONCLUSION

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The results of this engagement provide a sense of the values and beliefs held by those who participated at this particular time around the issue of the Columbia River levee system.

Across the different forms of engagement, some areas of agreement do emerge. A majority of people are concerned about the levee system and are willing to pay a few more dollars per year to make sure that the levees meet federal requirements and provide economic, environmental, or recreational improvements along the river. Protecting the health of the environment and habitat for fish and wildlife and Portland airport are of particular importance to people.

There are also some areas where people hold different values and beliefs about the levees, particularly around what to prioritize when making improvements beyond meeting federal requirements and who should pay those costs. Some of the written comments and thoughts shared in-person demonstrate concerns in particular regarding earthquakes and the levees and in general a lack of knowledge around what to do should there be flooding along the Columbia River.

As Levee Ready Columbia moves forward with strategies and solutions regarding the future of the levee system, there will need to be ongoing engagement opportunities. There are considerable opportunities for Levee Ready Columbia to provide additional information, connect people to resources related to the Columbia River and flooding, and continue to gather community input at different stages. LRC might consider the following, based on what we heard during this engagement opportunity:

- Many people expressed a desire for ongoing communications, particularly with communities of color and those from immigrant and refugee communities.
- People frequently shared their concerns and questions about what might happen in the event of either a flood along the Columbia River or how an incident like an earthquake might impact the levee system. LRC might consider partnering with other agencies or organizations who are already working on community engagement and emergency / disaster response to address those concerns and questions.
- While the majority of people indicated they would support paying a few extra dollars to go beyond meeting federal requirements in upgrading and improving the levees, there was disagreement over what to focus those improvements on. LRC could take a deeper look into how much people might be willing to pay and for what kinds of improvements or investments.

*\*Participation Note:* Participants were asked in multiple places whether they lived in the area immediately around the levees. The percentages who responded that they live in the area differed with each of those questions. Participants had a map to refer to online or in the paper surveys; however, they may not have consistently referred to that map to check what the boundaries were for the levee areas. In addition, we heard during several listening sessions that some people had a residence in one location but picked up their mail and / or worked in a different location so may have been considering that as their “home base.” It is worth noting that the majority of respondents across these questions said they live outside the areas behind the levees.

## Appendix A. Levee Ready Columbia – Annotated Survey

### INTRODUCTION

Some important decisions need to be made that will affect residents of Multnomah County and the whole region. We are asking for your input.

There is a group working to make sure that the Columbia River levee system prevents floods and meets federal requirements. The group is called Levee Ready Columbia and is made up of people from towns and cities along the Columbia River from North Portland, through Gresham and Fairview, out to the Sandy River in Troutdale.

A levee is a natural or human-made mound of earth. It re-routes the flow of water to prevent flooding. These levees protect:

- Neighborhoods
- Businesses
- Natural areas
- Major highways
- The Marine Drive multi-use trail
- One of our region's main sources of drinking water
- Portland International Airport

As this group plans for the future of the levees, it also considers how its decisions will affect the environment and communities that have been historically left out of public decision-making.



*This map shows a layout of the levee area.*

Your voice matters. You are a part of the community and your input means so much. Would you please complete this survey to share about your values and hopes for this important area along the Columbia River? Your input will help Levee Ready Columbia work with the community to plan the future of the levees.

Please fill out this survey if you live, work, or own a business in Multnomah County.

This survey will take just a few minutes to complete and will be open until July 5, 2019.

BACKGROUND

Please read the information below before you answer the 13 survey questions. It is important for those of us that live and work here to know about the levee system.

What is a levee?

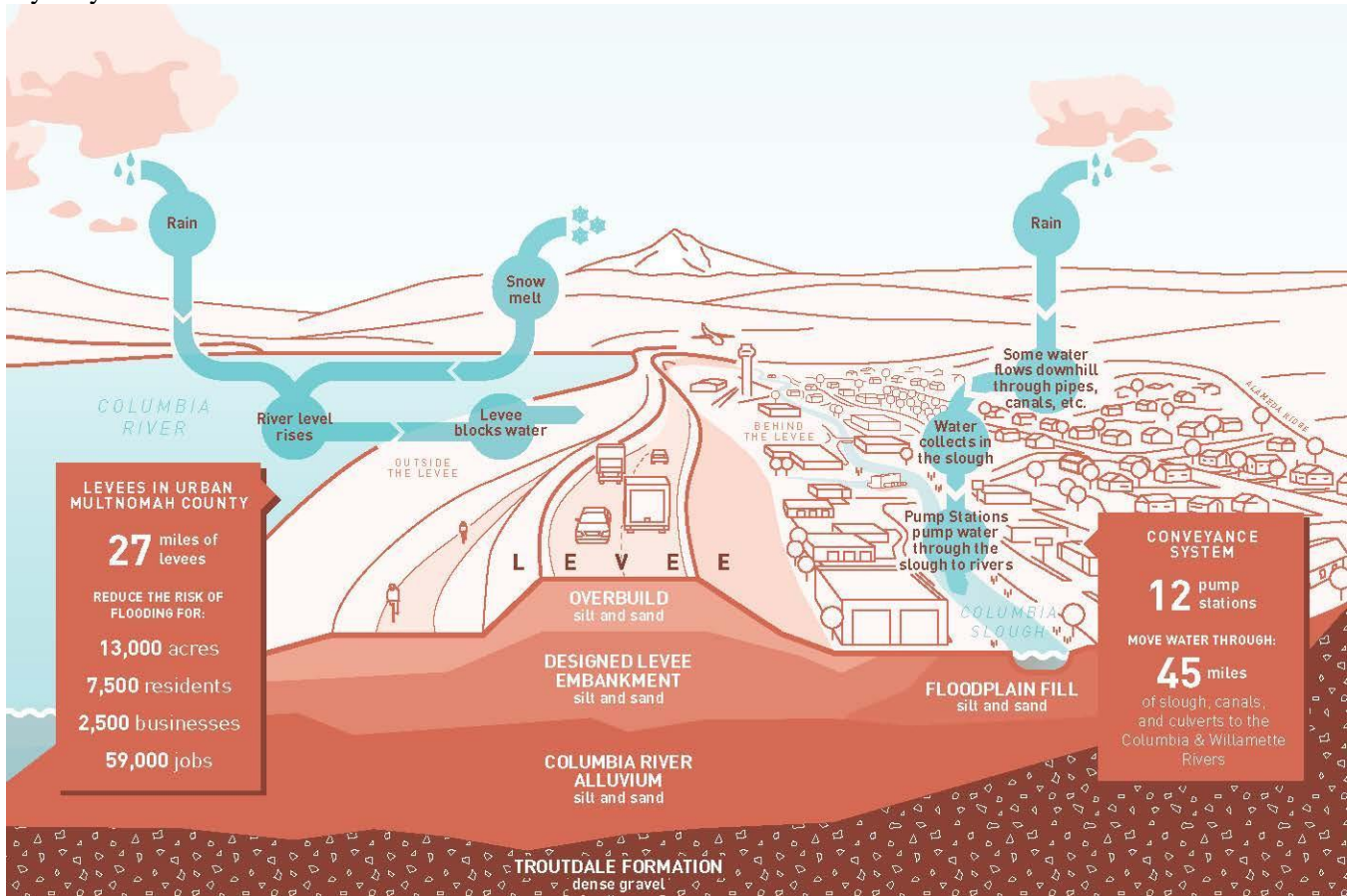
A levee is a natural or human-made mound of earth built to re-route the flow of water. Some levee systems might also include canals, ditches, and pipes that help move water that collects behind the levees. In the 1900s, people built levees to prevent rivers from flooding cities and farms when river levels rose due to storms and spring snowmelt.

What about the levees in our area?

There are 27 miles of levees along the lower Columbia River. This includes the area around Smith and Bybee Lakes to the west and the Sandy River to the east. The levees work as one system to reduce the risk of flooding for a 13,000-acre area that was once a natural floodplain.

What would happen if we did not have these levees in our area?

Without the levees, much of this area would be flooded during certain times of the year. The levees, along with the supporting system of canals, ditches and other structures, divert storm and river water. This keeps the former floodplain dry all year.





## What is Levee Ready Columbia?

It is a group of people from over 20 organizations that have different interests in the Columbia River and the levee system. This includes representatives from neighborhoods, government agencies, environmental groups, and businesses.

This group is working to make sure that the levee system continues to reduce the risk of flooding along the Columbia River. It is also working to make sure the levee system meets federal government requirements. This way, property owners continue to have access to affordable flood insurance. Also, our community can receive aid during and after floods.

## How can I help?

Please share your values about the future of the levee system in our region by filling out this 13 question survey! Also, please ask your friends, neighbors, family members and colleagues to take this survey too.

## Will my answers on this survey be private?

Yes. All answers will be private (confidential). They will not be tied to your name or contact information, if you choose to share those.

You can read about Oregon's Kitchen Table's privacy policy here - <https://www.oregonskitchentable.org/privacy-policy>. If you have any questions, email Oregon's Kitchen Table at [info@oregonskitchentable.org](mailto:info@oregonskitchentable.org).

## How will Levee Ready Columbia use the results of this survey?

Levee Ready Columbia, city and county governments, and others working on the levee system in the region will get a report based on the survey answers. It will help Levee Ready Columbia work with the community to plan the future of the levees. The report will also be posted on Oregon's Kitchen Table's website.

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

Please answer these questions so that Levee Ready Columbia can better understand your ideas and values about the Columbia River levee system.

There are thousands of homes, businesses, institutions, recreational areas, and open spaces protected by the levees. Areas protected by levees include:

- Portland International Airport,
- Columbia South Shore Well Field (Oregon's second largest source of drinking water),
- Expo Center
- Shopping centers like Cascade Station
- Oregon Air National Guard
- Two correctional centers
- A number of regional job training centers

The area is home to over 7,500 people and supports 59,000 jobs. This includes low income housing.

This affects all of us. And your voice counts! Please read each question and answer the best you can.

**1. Before today, how much did you know about the levee system on the Columbia River?**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY              | N=1039 |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| I knew a whole lot about it    | 17%    |
| I knew a bit                   | 53%    |
| I did not know about it at all | 28%    |
| Don't know                     | 2%     |

**2. How concerned are you about future flooding on the Columbia River?**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY  | N=1030 |
|--------------------|--------|
| Very concerned     | 43%    |
| Slightly concerned | 45%    |
| Not concerned      | 9%     |
| Don't know         | 3%     |

**3. How often do you go to the area directly around the Columbia River levees? (Check one)**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY  | N=1035 |
|--|--------|
| I live or work in one of the areas around the levees.          | 25%    |
| I often visit at least one of the areas around the levees.     | 31%    |
| I sometimes visit at least one of the areas around the levees. | 30%    |
| I rarely visit at least one of the areas around the levees.    | 12%    |
| I never visit any of the areas around the levees.              | 2%     |

**4. If you do visit one or more of the areas directly around the levees, what do you do there? (Check all that apply)**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY   | N=3155 |
|---|--------|
| I live in the area.   | 8%     |
| I work in the area.   | 6%     |
| I go to the airport.  | 23%    |
| I go to a school, university, or training center in the area. | 1%     |
| I shop at the stores or eat in restaurants in the area.       | 18%    |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| I hike, walk, fish, bike, boat, or golf in the area. | 15% |
| I go to enjoy nature in the area.                    | 16% |
| I go to the Expo Center.                             | 10% |
| Other _____  | 3%  |

**5. Please read the statements below and tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each one.**

It is important to protect the jobs of people who work in the areas behind the levees.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1029 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 66%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 26%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 4%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 2%     |
| Don't Know        | 3%     |

It is important to improve the health of the environment and habitat for fish and wildlife.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1031 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 83%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 13%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 1%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1%     |
| Don't Know        | 2%     |

It is important to protect places for people to enjoy nature in the area.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1038 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 69%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 26%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 3%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1%     |
| Don't Know        | 1%     |

It is important to protect Portland International Airport.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1033 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 85%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 12%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 2%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 1%     |
| Don't Know        | 1%     |



It is important to protect the shopping areas, restaurants, and other businesses in the area behind the levees.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1032 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 53%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 34%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 7%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 4%     |
| Don't Know        | 3%     |

It is important to protect places to hike, walk, fish, bike, boat, or golf in the area.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1035 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 58%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 32%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 6%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 2%     |
| Don't Know        | 2%     |

It is important to protect homes and residents who live in the area.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1031 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 76%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 17%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 4%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 2%     |
| Don't Know        | 2%     |

It is important to protect the Oregon National Guard and other first responders that are based in the area behind the levees.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1028 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 59%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 29%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 6%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 2%     |
| Don't Know        | 3%     |

It is important to protect the educational and training institutions in the areas behind the levees.

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1030 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Strongly Agree    | 71%    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 18%    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 4%     |
| Strongly Disagree | 3%     |
| Don't Know        | 3%     |



**6. Are there other interests you would like us to take into account as we plan for the future of the levees?**

*Responses provided to LRC and available from OKT upon request.*

7. The federal government regulates the safety of the levees. There are a number of places along our levees that do not meet federal standards at this time. This means that the levees are not considered to be acceptably safe. It also means that property owners could lose access to affordable flood insurance. Levee Ready Columbia is working with the federal government to repair the levees to meet federal standards.

At the same time, Levee Ready Columbia is considering other ways to improve the levees and the areas around them. One of the things to take into account for levee repairs and upgrades is cost.

The federal government may cover some of the cost of improving the levee system. But the community will also have to contribute some money to the effort. That money could come in the form of a local bond if passed by voters.

**Please check the statements you agree with. You may check as many as you wish.**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY  | N=1846 |
|--|--------|
| I do not want the project to incur any costs other than those needed to meet minimum federal requirements.                                   | 13%    |
| I would support investments in flood safety beyond minimum federal requirements, even if it adds some costs.                                 | 30%    |
| I would support investments to address the health of the river, the watershed, and fish and wildlife, even if it adds some short-term costs. | 36%    |
| I would support investments to improve recreation along the Columbia River even if it adds some costs.                                       | 22%    |

8. The upgrades and repairs to meet the federal requirements would cost most households outside of the floodplain less than \$15 per year. Additional improvements could cost a few more dollars a year in the short-term.

**Please check the statement you *most* agree with below, even if you don't fully agree with any of them. (Check only one)**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY   | N=1006 |
|---|--------|
| I would be willing to pay a few dollars a year, but only enough to make sure that the levees meet federal requirements.   | 18%    |
| I would be willing to pay a few more dollars per year to make sure that the levees meet federal requirements and provide economic, environmental, or recreational improvements along the river. | 70%    |
| I am not willing to pay anything to repair and upgrade the Columbia River levees even if it means that they do not meet federal requirements and create an increased risk of flooding.          | 13%    |

**If you chose the last option “not willing to pay anything,” please tell us why you feel this way.**

*Responses provided to LRC and available from OKT upon request.*

**9. Is there anything else you would like to share with Levee Ready Columbia?**

*Responses provided to LRC and available from OKT upon request.*



**10. Which races and/or ethnicities do you consider yourself to be? (Mark all that apply)**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY                              | N=1048 |
|--|--------|
| White/Caucasian                                | 68%    |
| Black/African American/African/Caribbean       | 11%    |
| Native American/American Indian/Native Alaskan | 3%     |
| Asian/Pacific Islander                         | 4%     |
| Hispanic/Latino                                | 13%    |
| Middle Eastern / North African                 | 1%     |

If you would like to share in your own words how you describe your race, origin, ethnicity, ancestry and/or Tribal affiliations, please use this space:

*Responses provided to LRC and available from OKT upon request.*

**11. Do you live in an area right around the levees?**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY | N=1024 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Yes               | 37%    |
| No                | 63%    |

**12. Where do you live?**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY                   | N=1081 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Portland                            | 70%    |
| Gresham                             | 7%     |
| Troutdale                           | 2%     |
| Fairview                            | 5%     |
| Wood Village                        | <1%    |
| Maywood Park                        | <1%    |
| Milwaukie                           | 1%     |
| Lake Oswego                         | 1%     |
| Unincorporated Multnomah County     | 3%     |
| Other (please state where you live) | 9%     |

**13. What language do you prefer to get information in?**

| RESPONSE CATEGORY                 | N=1028 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| English                           | 78%    |
| Spanish                           | 10%    |
| Chinese                           | 1%     |
| Vietnamese                        | <1%    |
| Somali                            | 6%     |
| Russian                           | 5%     |
| Other (please state the language) | <1%    |