



March 20th, 2018
MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FR: DAVID FLAHERTY, COURTNEY SIEVERS, MAGELLAN STRATEGIES
RE: TOWN OF TIMNATH FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Research Objectives

The primary research objective of these focus groups was to listen, learn and better understand general viewpoints and opinions of Timnath residents regarding several issues. Overall, these focus groups provided Timnath residents an opportunity to voice opinions and be heard. Each focus group covered the following subject areas:

- Why people choose to live in Timnath?
- General opinions and awareness of Timnath taxes
- Opinions of what Timnath project priorities should be
- General opinions of Timnath management
- Opinions about what residents want Town management to know

Focus Group Details and Criteria

All three focus groups were conducted on Wednesday, March 7th, 2018 at the Fire Station located at 4800 Signal Tree Drive in Timnath, CO.

Group 1, Neighborhood Group: This group contained at least one resident from each of Timnath's eight neighborhoods. Because this group was in the middle of the day, we set a gender quota of 60% female/40% male. An age quota was set from 24 years old up to senior citizens 65 and older. (12 attendees in group)

Group 2, Age Range Group: The primary criteria for this group was to have a range of residents based on age. Two participants were between the ages of 18 and 34, three participants were 35 to 44, four participants were 45 to 54, two participants were 55 to 64, and two participants were 65 or older. (12 total attendees in group)

Group 3, Tenure and Party: The participants for this group were recruited based on the amount of time they have lived in Timnath and their political party affiliation. (11 total attendee in group)

Key Findings

- Many attendees, especially older residents, said the reason they chose to live in Timnath was because of its rural atmosphere and small town feel.
- Many attendees want better communication between the town and residents regarding the town budget. They want basic, easy to understand information about how much revenue the town receives and how it is spent on an annual basis. Many attendees wished they had the budget information so they could have made an educated opinion prioritizing the project categories.
- Many attendees were unaware that the Timnath Police force is not a 24/7 operation. After learning this information, public safety became a top priority for many people. Attendees wanted more information about Timnath's police force.
- Very few attendees were aware of the small amount of property taxes the town receives in comparison to the Timnath Metro District (5 times as much). Many attendees expressed frustration with the Metro District, the amount of resources they receive, and the lack of information on how they spend their money. Several attendees want more information comparing the differences between the town and Metro District's revenue and expenditures.
- A broad number of attendees wanted economic development to be a priority for the town. To these residents, economic development is attracting local restaurants that are not fast food. They do not want strip malls with chain restaurants and big box stores.
- Attendees were asked what they would like to tell the elected officials and town staff. The most common themes were "good job", "please provide me with more information" and "It's OK to slow down."

Why People Choose to Live in Timnath

There were several reasons mentioned why people chose to live in Timnath. Among older residents that were retired or senior citizens, many said they had moved to Timnath to be closer to their children and grandchildren in Fort Collins. Older residents that had moved to Timnath from other states like Connecticut or California said the cost of living was lower and more affordable. However, some older residents from Ohio and Missouri said Timnath was more expensive.

Many seniors also mentioned that they loved the biking and walking trails. Several residents mentioned they liked the small-town, country feel and rural atmosphere that Timnath offered. Among residents with young families, many said they were attracted by the good schools in Timnath such as Bethke Elementary. Another common reason was simply the location of the town being close to Ft. Collins but paying less.



Opinion of Timnath Property Tax Rates and Mill Levy Allocation

In the first group, there was a balanced opinion among attendees of property taxes being too high and just the right amount. For some attendees coming from Ohio, California and Connecticut, Timnath taxes were lower and not an issue. For others coming from Missouri, the taxes in Timnath are higher. It should be noted that many attendees did not have an opinion of their taxes, and were not aware of what they were paying and some attendees did not care. Some attendees were more upset about their housing assessments, and how increasing home prices were increasing their taxes.

More attendees in the second and third focus groups felt their property taxes were too high. Many commented that their Timnath property taxes were higher than what they had paid in Fort Collins and other surrounding areas. There were also several comments that it was difficult to have an opinion if taxes were too high or too low without having basic information of what the town's annual revenue and expenditures were. Some attendees wanted to know the dollar amounts rather than the percentages of Timnath's annual revenue and expenditures. Several attendees wanted to see projections of revenue and expenditures for the next five years.

While discussing taxes the moderator informed attendees that the Timnath Metro District receives five times more in property tax revenue than the Town of Timnath. Attendees were also informed that the Town of Timnath receives less than 7% of the overall property tax bill. Only two or three attendees in all three groups were aware of this fact.

After being informed of the mill levy allocation, many attendees had negative comments about the Metro District, how they were spending their revenues, and who they were accountable to. Comments regarding the Metro District included "lack of transparency", and frustrations in scheduling community meetings during working hours. Several attendees asked if it was possible to re-allocate the mill levy allocation from the Metro District to the town.

What Should Timnath's Priorities Be?

In the first group, there was a strong desire to know what the basic revenue and expenditure information was for the town on an annual basis. Respondents said their priorities for the town depended on what they knew about the town's budget, and without the budget information, they had trouble initially answering this question.

Many attendees believe managing growth and economic development was a top priority so that Timnath would not be just a bedroom community. Many attendees asked what the town was doing to attract new business? These attendees want more restaurants that are not fast food, and they all commented on how it would generate more revenue for the town.

Some attendees mentioned they wanted the "essentials", which included transportation to get around town and a fully functioning police department. They wanted the town to



charge money for public events and not spend as much as they have in the past on events.

Opinions of Management of Timnath

Attendees were asked if they approved or disapproved of how the town was being managed. A clear majority of attendees had positive comments about the work ethic and commitment of the Mayor, City Council and town staff and understand there is no pay for elected officials and they are mostly volunteers. The most common theme was “they are doing the best job they can do with what they have.” However, among some attendees there was the impression the elected officials of Timnath and staff are overwhelmed.

Some believe there are too many projects and priorities for a town of 4,000 residents. They wondered if more staff and professional help was needed to help manage the growth of the town. Many attendees also felt they did not know enough to have an opinion of the Town’s management. Many wondered what the right approach should be with a “town going through a lot of growing pains.” There were also comments that having more budget information about the town would help them have an opinion.

Thoughts on Timnath Project Categories

Among a listing of five town project categories, attendees were asked which ones they felt were a priority and which ones were not. The categories were general construction projects, park and trail improvements, community building events, public safety and economic development. Among all three focus groups, most chose economic development and public safety as the top priorities. However, some attendees said economic development was their last priority because it would ruin the small town feel of Timnath.

One important insight in discussing public safety was how unaware attendees were that the Timnath police force is not a 24/7 operation. Once they were aware of that, many attendees chose public education as the top priority. Many attendees mentioned how much they enjoyed the events, but would like the town to pay less money on them if possible. Finally, some attendees expressed an opinion that all three of the proposed building projects (Town Center, Police Facility, Recreation Center) were extremely expensive and not practical for a town of 4,000 residents.

What Would You Tell the Management of Timnath?

- *“Congratulations for putting together some great ideas and having a vision of looking forward for Timnath. We should be a forward-looking community.”*
- *“There are a lot of good things going on, but they have a big vision for the next three years. I would like more information and transparency about the town’s budget.”*



- *“Please be very clear about what you want to spend taxpayer money on.”*
- *“They have done very well with what they have so far. I would suggest some more professional staff to stay on top of things.”*
- *“I would like to see a better description and simplified list of the town’s projects and priorities.”*
- *“I would say you have to do a better job communicating, and I would also say to slow down. I think they are trying to do too much all at once. I think staggering some of these bigger projects in a more meticulous and financial manner would resonate better with residents.”*
- *“The community events are really cool.”*
- *“I would say let’s try and work with neighboring cities and work together on events, trails, highways and things like that so that Timnath is not eating all the cost.”*
- *“I know things are moving pretty fast and there’s a lot of building going on, but I still think they need to take it a bit slower and if they do they can plan out better.”*
- *“Timnath is a beautiful town. They have done a great job with what they have and I think they are doing a solid job if you like.”*

